

In The Land of Punctuation.

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by Christian Morgenstern (Author), Sirish Rao
Rathna Ramanathan' art

First published in 1905, German poet Christian Morgenstern's piece is a darkly comic.

In the Land of Punctuation a beautiful and clever type-art adaptation of German poet Christian Morgenstern's darkly delightful 1905 poem "Im Reich der Interpunktionen," illustrated by Indian graphic artist Rathna Ramanathan and translated into English by Sirish Rao.

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Illustrated with punctuation marks, the text is a romp, and yet the political undertones are unmistakable, suggesting menacing systems of control.

Rathna Ramanathan's art and design invoke icons, styles and genres of early twentieth century western and Russian avant-garde traditions to make a compelling argument about freedom of expression.

In The Land of Punctuation

The peaceful land of Punctuation
is filled with tension overnight
When the stops and commas of the nation
call the semicolons "parasites"
Within the hour they form their troops,
an anti-semicolon group
The question marks avoid the scrape
(as always) and quietly escape
The semicolons' mournful racket
is drowned out by surrounding brackets
And then the captured creature freezes
Imprisoned by parentheses
The dreaded minus sign arrives
and – slash! – ends the captives' lives
The question marks, now homeward-bound,
pity the corpses on the ground
But, woe! A new war looms large,
as dashes against commas charge
And cut across the commas' necks
so that the beheaded wrecks
(the dashes delight in gore)
as semicolons hit the floor
Both semicolon types they bury
in silence in the cemetery
Those dashes that still remain,
Creep blackly behind the mourning train
The exclamation holds a sermon
with colon's help, right on the spot
Then through their comma-form free nation
They all march home: dash, dot, dash, dot...

Im Reich der Interpunktionen

*Im Reich der Interpunktionen
nicht fürder goldner Friede prunkt:*

*Die Semikolons werden Drohnen
genannt von Beistrich und von Punkt.*

*Es bildet sich zur selben Stund
ein Antisemikolonbund.*

*Die einzigen, die stumm entweichen
(wie immer), sind die Fragezeichen.*

*Die Semikolons, die sehr jammern,
umstellt man mit geschwungnen Klammern*

*und setzt die so gefangnen Wesen
noch obendrein in Parenthesen.*

*Das Minuszeichen naht, und – schwapp!
da zieht es sie vom Leben ab.*

*Kopfschüttelnd blicken auf die Leichen
die heimgekehrten Fragezeichen.*

*Doch, wehe! neuer Kampf sich schürzt:
Gedankenstrich auf Komma stürzt –*

*und fährt ihm schneidend durch den Hals,
bis dieser gleich – und ebenfalls*

*(wie jener mörderisch bezweckt)
als Strichpunkt das Gefild bedeckt! . . .*

*Stumm trägt man auf den Totengarten
die Semikolons beider Arten.*

*Was übrig von Gedankenstrichen,
kommt schwarz und schweigsam nachgeschlichen.*

*Das Ausrufszeichen hält die Predigt;
das Kolon dient ihm als Adjunkt.*

*Dann, jeder Kommaform entledigt,
stapft heimwärts man, Strich, Punkt, Strich, Punkt . . .*

- Christian Morgenstern

<https://pin.it/2IHvViB>

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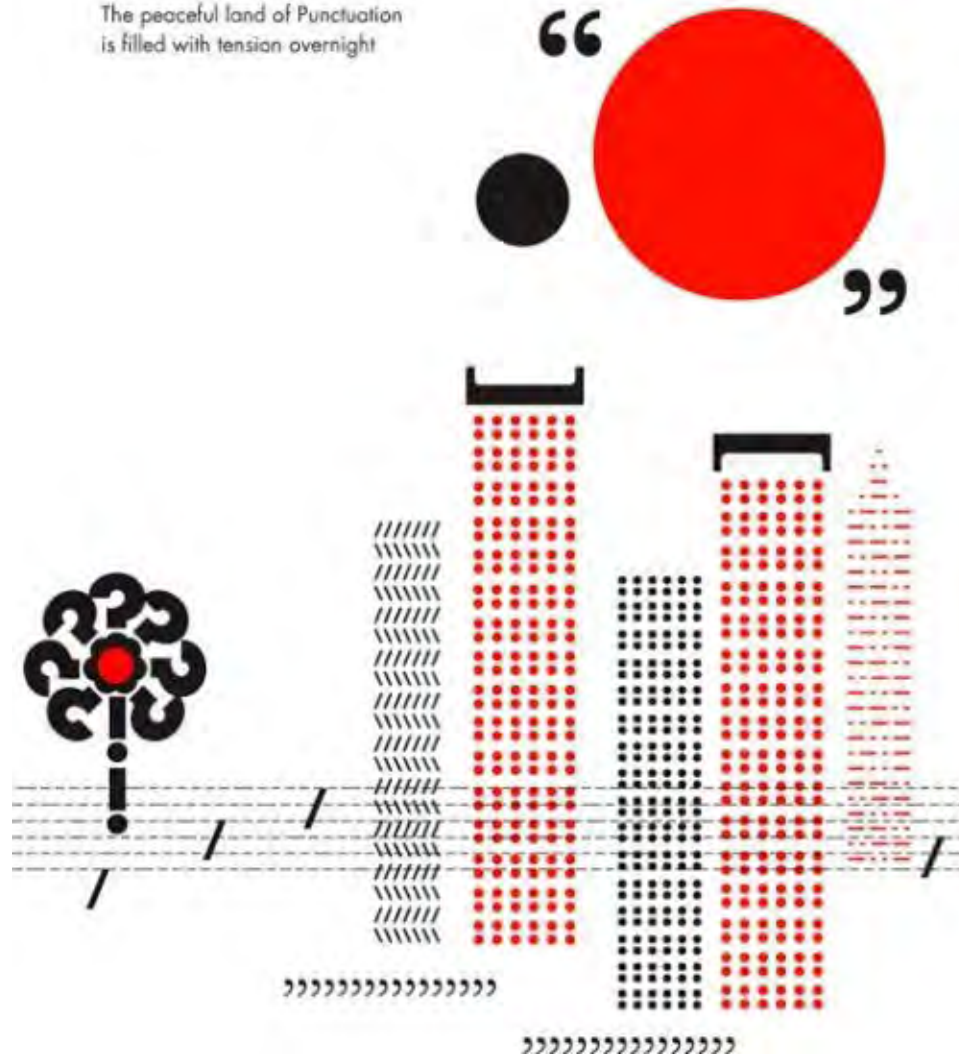
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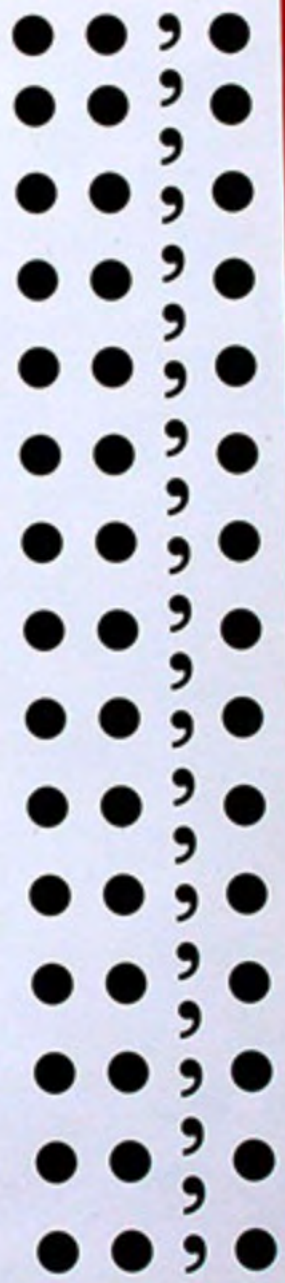
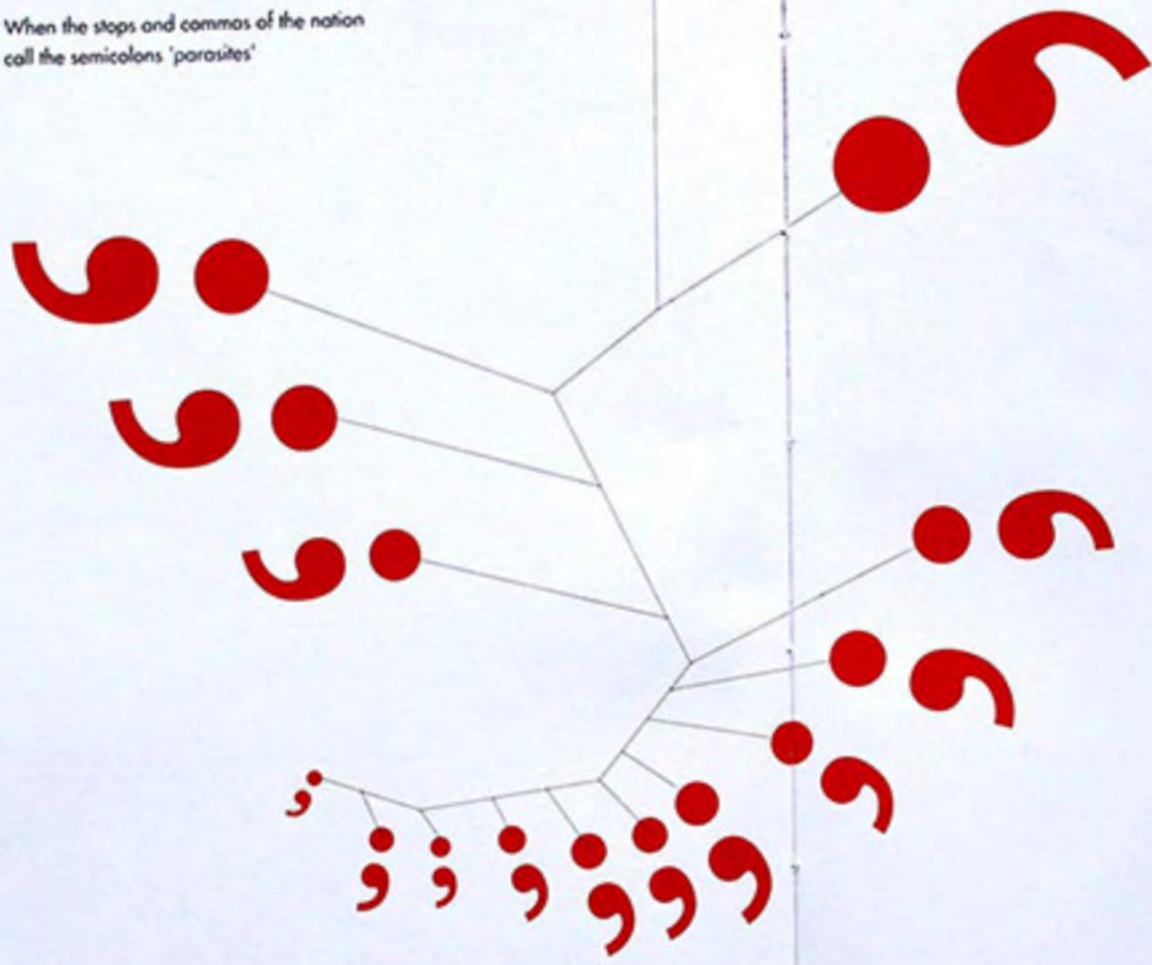
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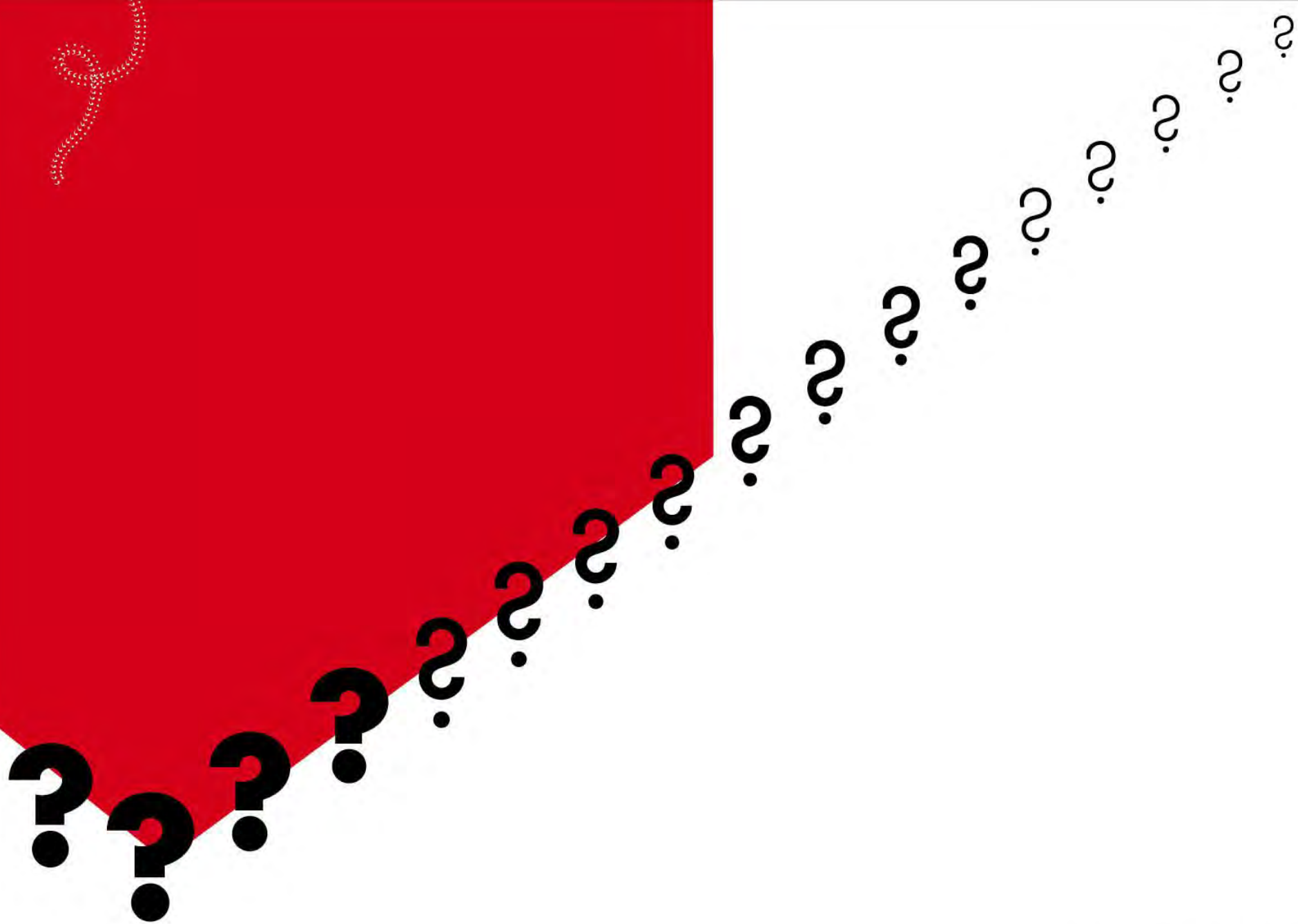
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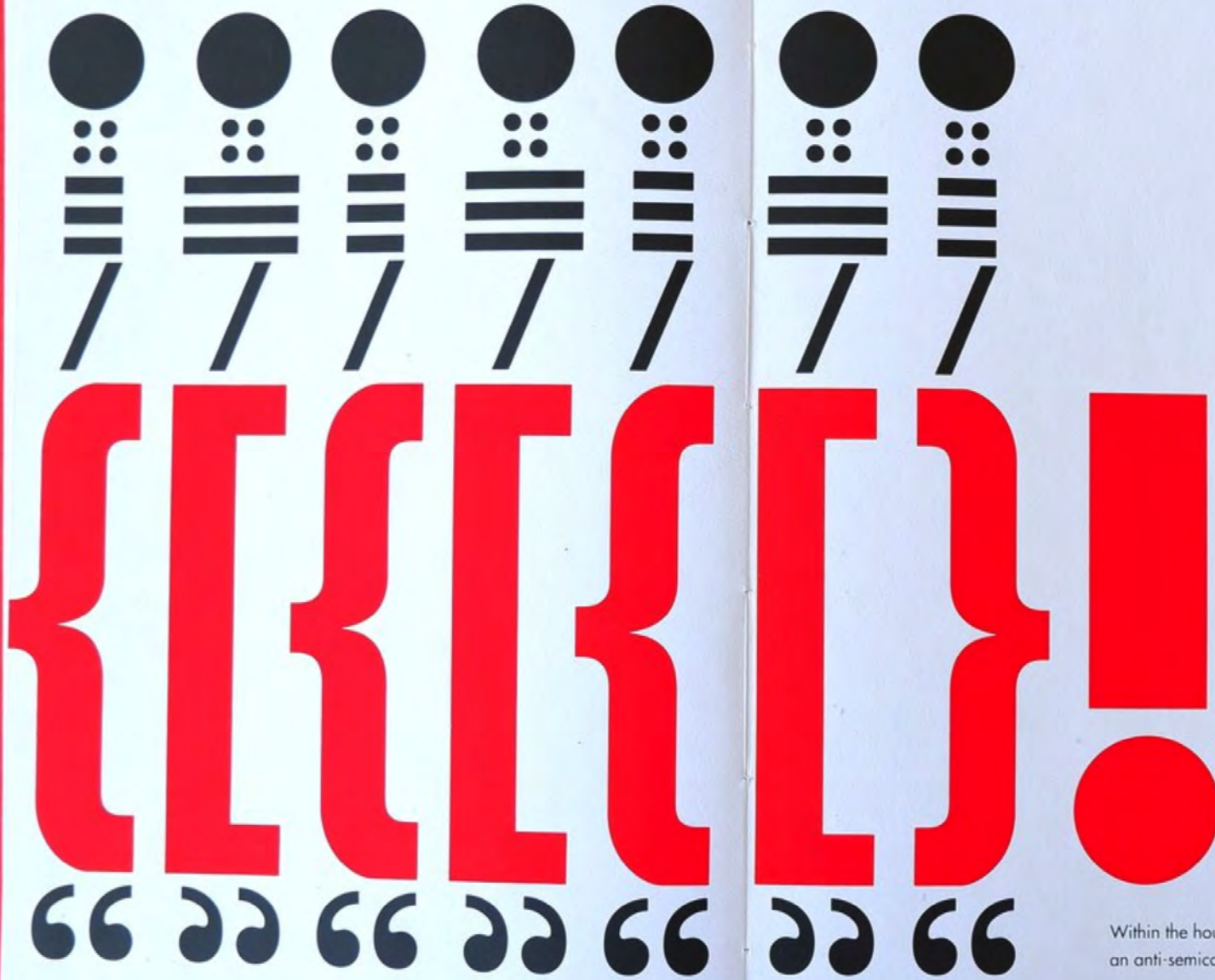


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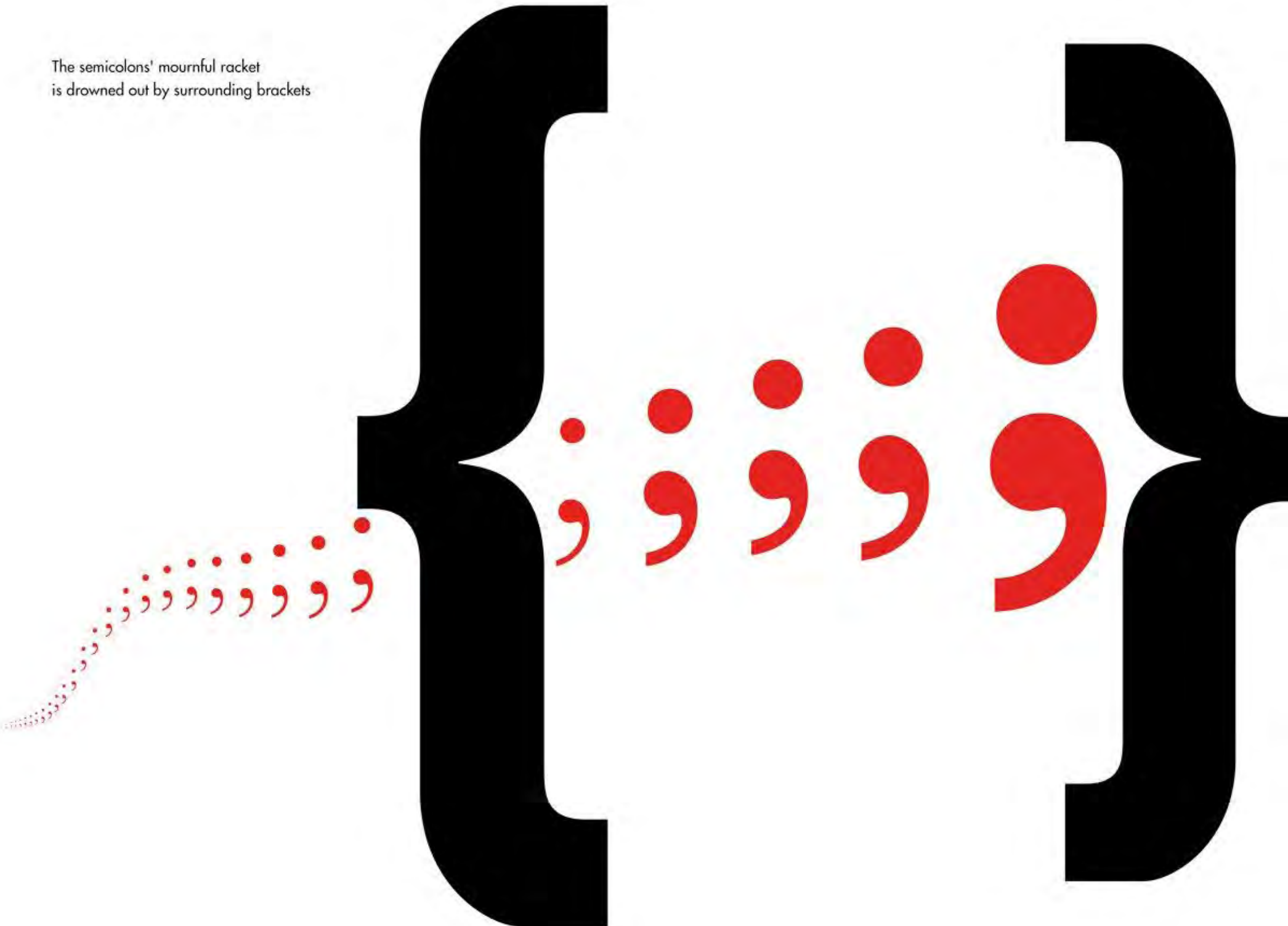


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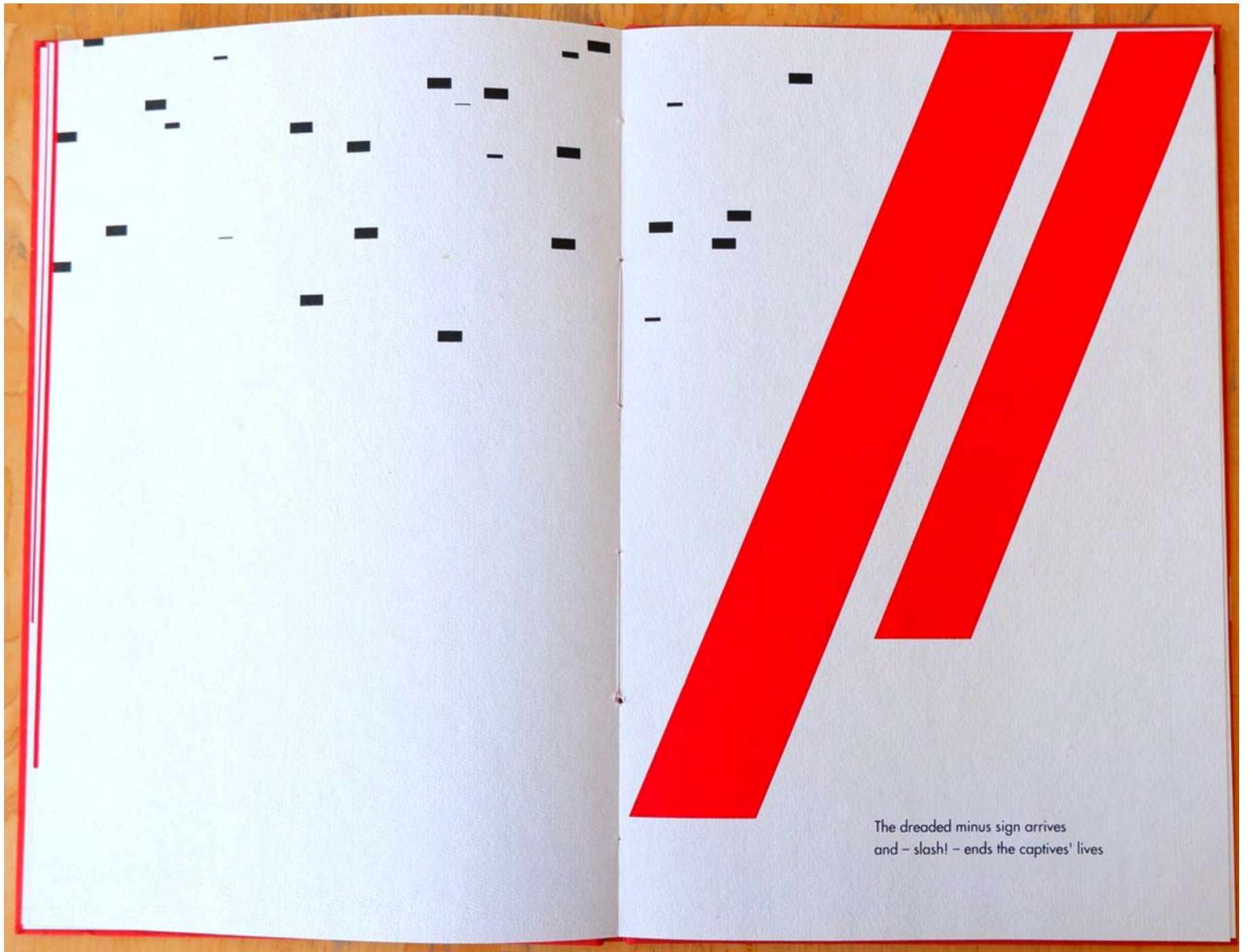
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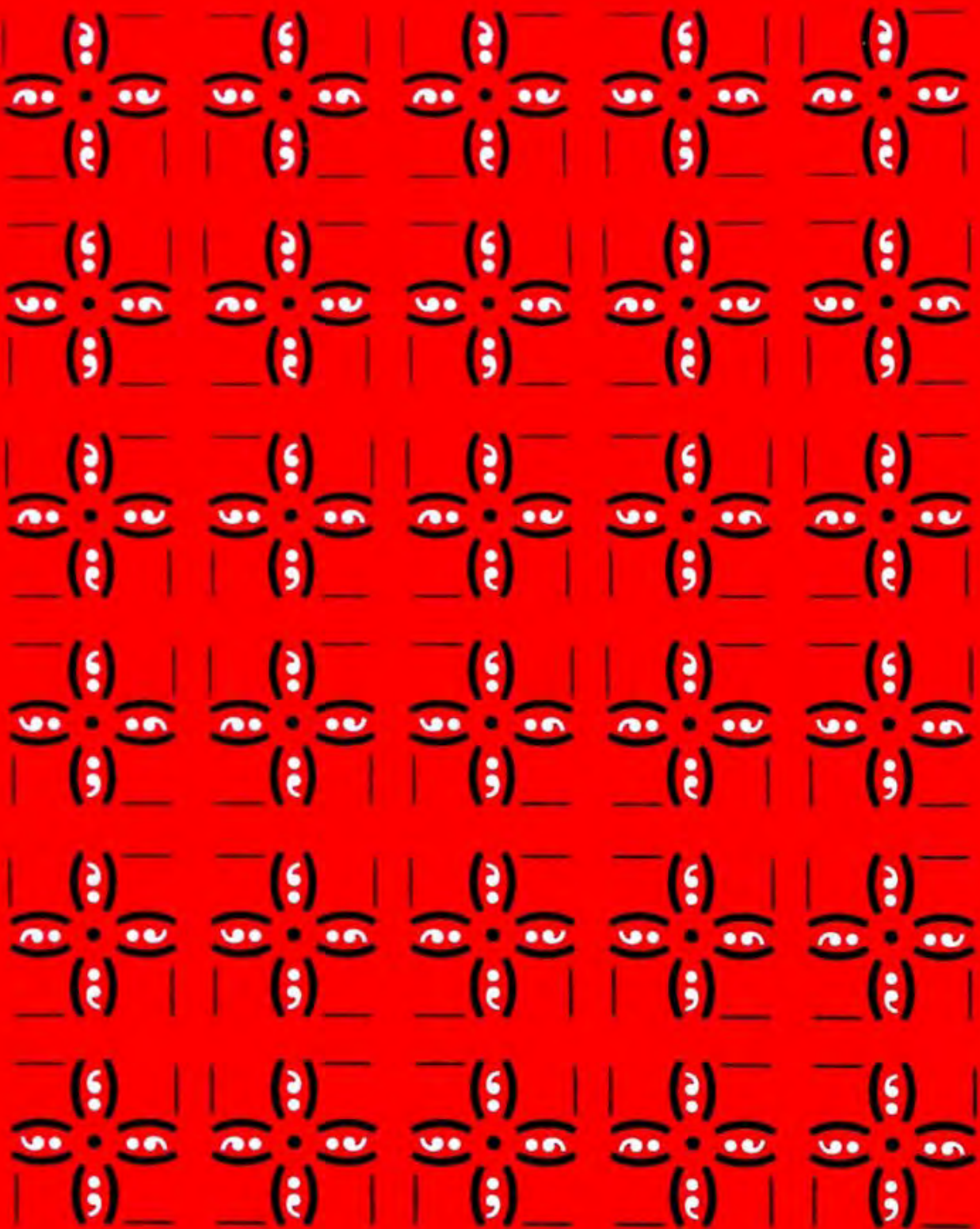


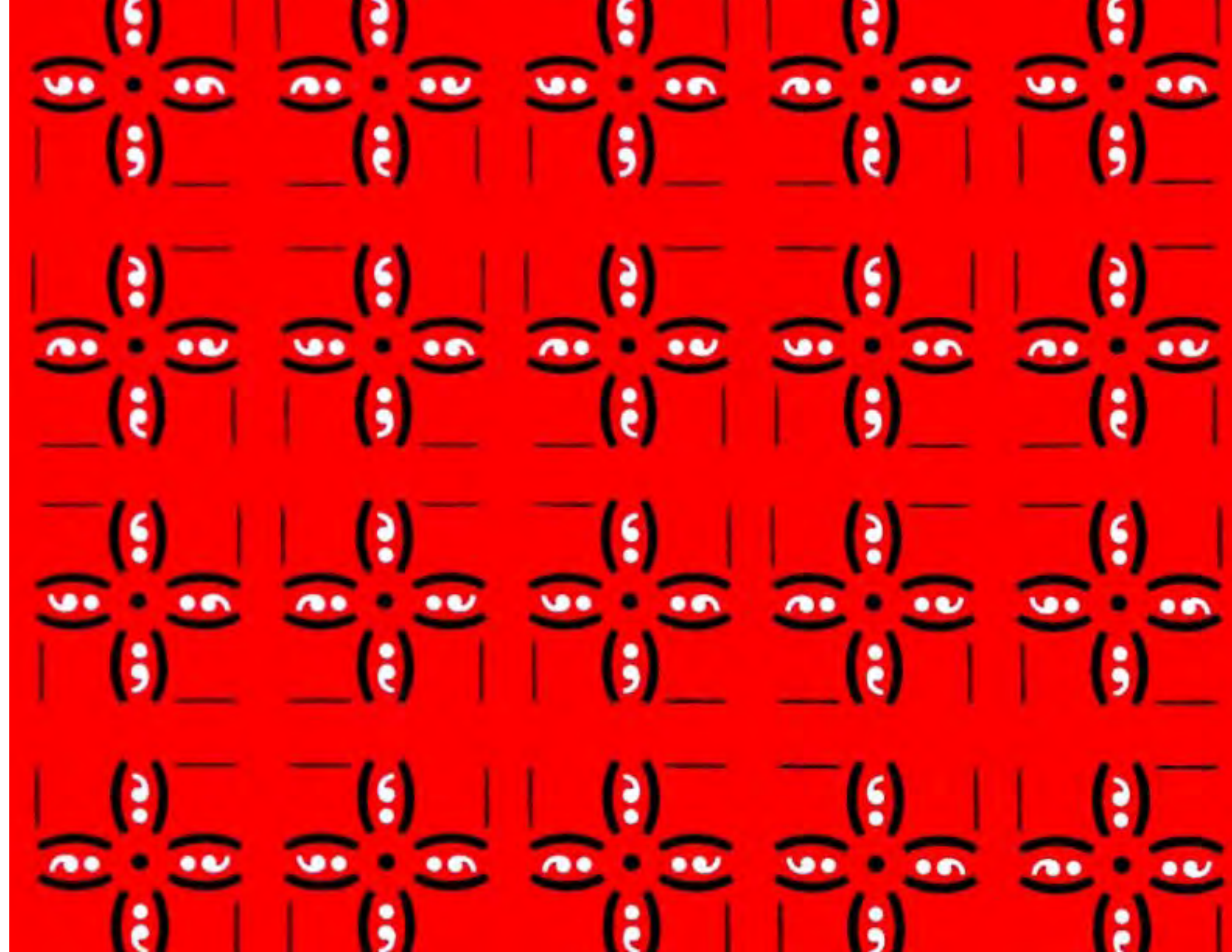
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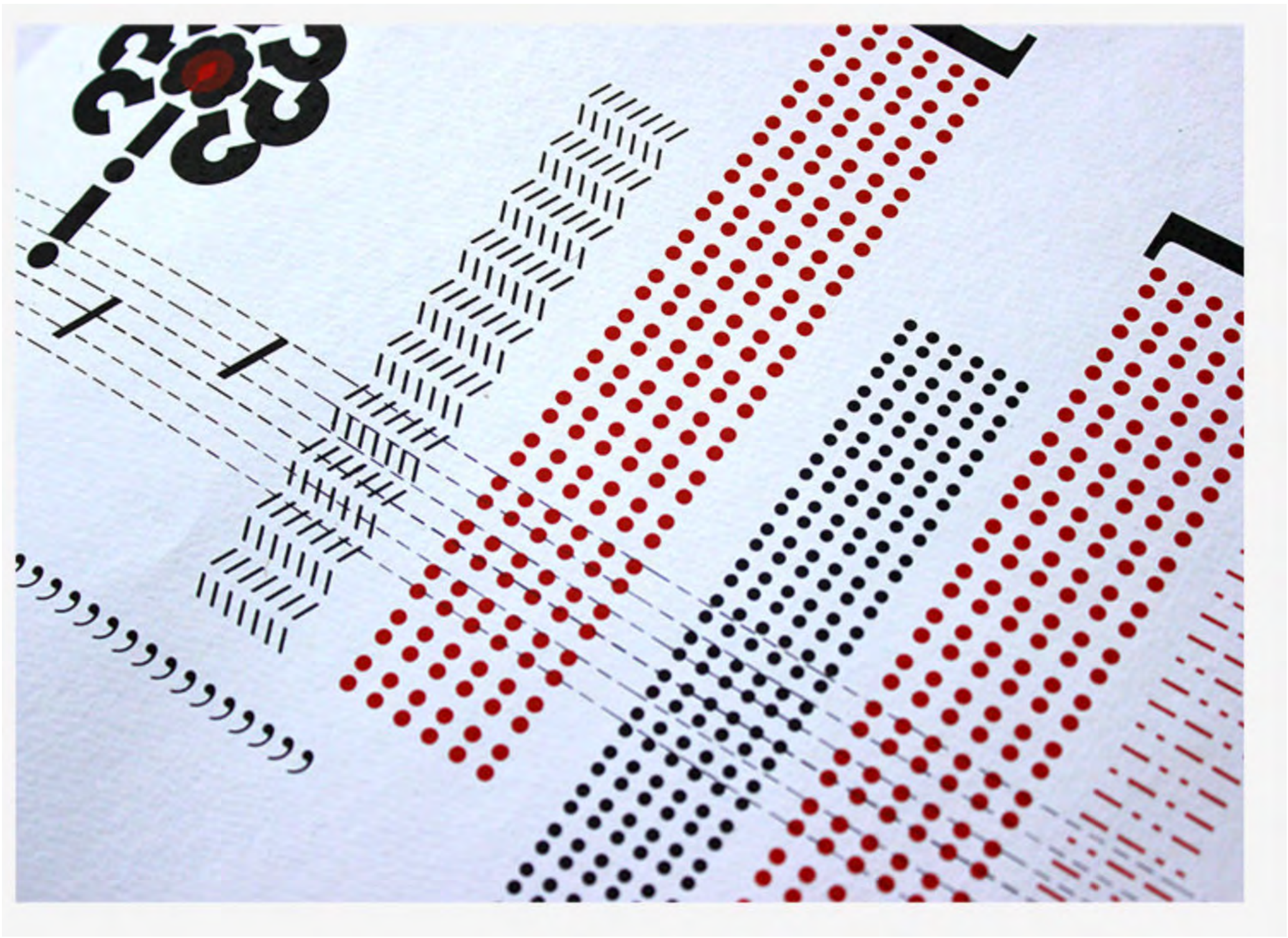


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