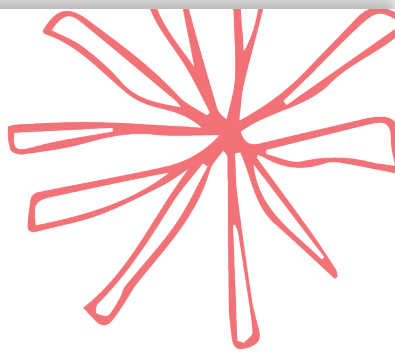
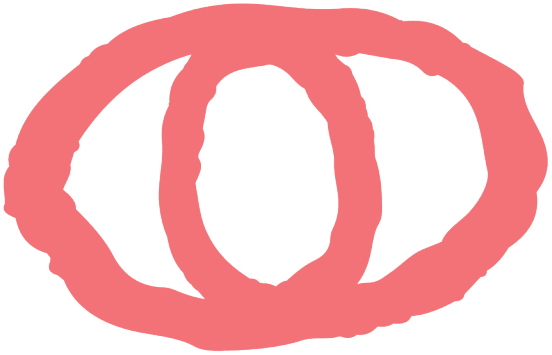
Activity Booklet

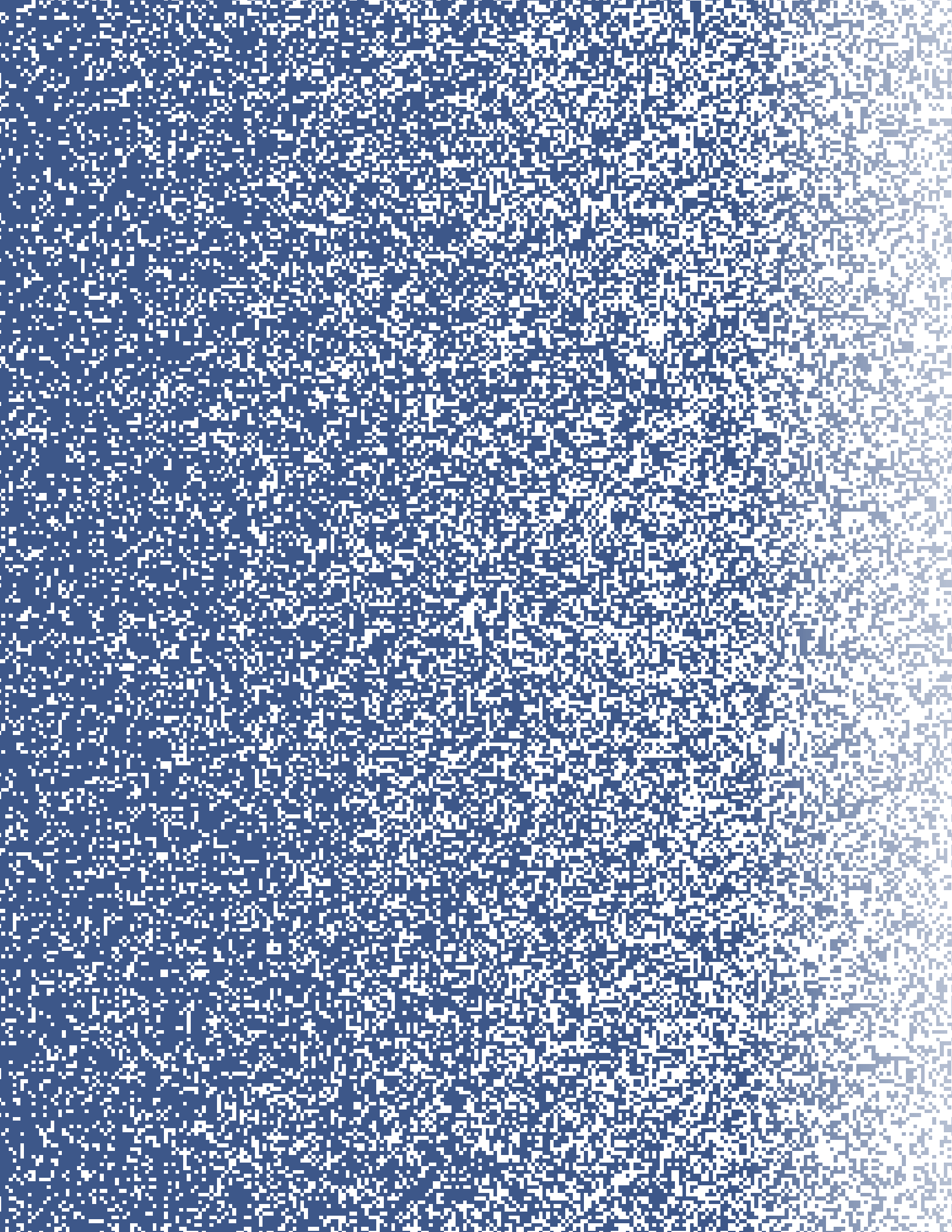




Everything starts from a dot.







This activity booklet was designed by Rutgers University students for the course Design Practicum in fall 2021.

Guggenheim Academic Engagement brings together students from multidisciplinary backgrounds to critically engage with the museum's collection, staff, and building. Academic Engagement offers programs that serve as an entry point for undergraduate and graduate students looking to become meaningfully involved with the museum and with our community. Academic Engagement developed the Innovation Lab to welcome collaboration between students and faculty, offering them a forum to research new ideas, brainstorm solutions, and cultivate relationships. The Innovation Lab facilitates short-term projects that respond to the needs of faculty and students.

In partnership with Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts, the Guggenheim Academic Engagement:Innovation Lab invited students to develop an activity booklet in conjunction with the Poetry Education Initiative in the Aye Simon Reading Room.

Throughout the Design Practicum, students were asked to look, listen, and learn from the artworks and poetry of exhibition artists Vasily Kandinsky (1866–1944) and Etel Adnan (1925–2021). In exploring the connection between visual composition and composed text, students made rich observations about how artists can explore thematic structures with visual and written language. Kandinsky's book *Sounds* (1912) is described by the artist as a "musical album" with thirty-eight poems and fifty-six woodcuts. In *Sounds*, words are repeated for tonal emphasis and to create a cyclical rhythm for the reader—a motif mirrored in paintings such as Kandinsky's *Composition VIII* (1923) through line, shape, and color to create harmonious balance for the viewer. Adnan's book *The Arab Apocalypse* (1980) is a book-length poem consisting of a hybrid of words and hand-drawn graphic symbols that punctuate each stanza. Students were challenged to apply these concepts to an activity booklet that combines text and the elements of design in visually exciting and relevant ways. The full list of poetry books and artworks that inspired the student-designed pages is available at the end of this booklet.

We invite you to respond to the creative prompts included in this activity booklet.

10
It starts with paths

11
It starts with textures

12
It starts with shapes

13
It starts with interpreting

14
It starts with formatting

15
It starts with places

16
It starts with interest

17
It starts with imagination

18
It starts with color

19
It starts with the senses

20
It starts with nature

21
It starts with discovering

22
It starts with arrangement

23
It starts with a character

24
It starts with something new

25
It starts with a dot

Daniela

Davin

Esra

Eve

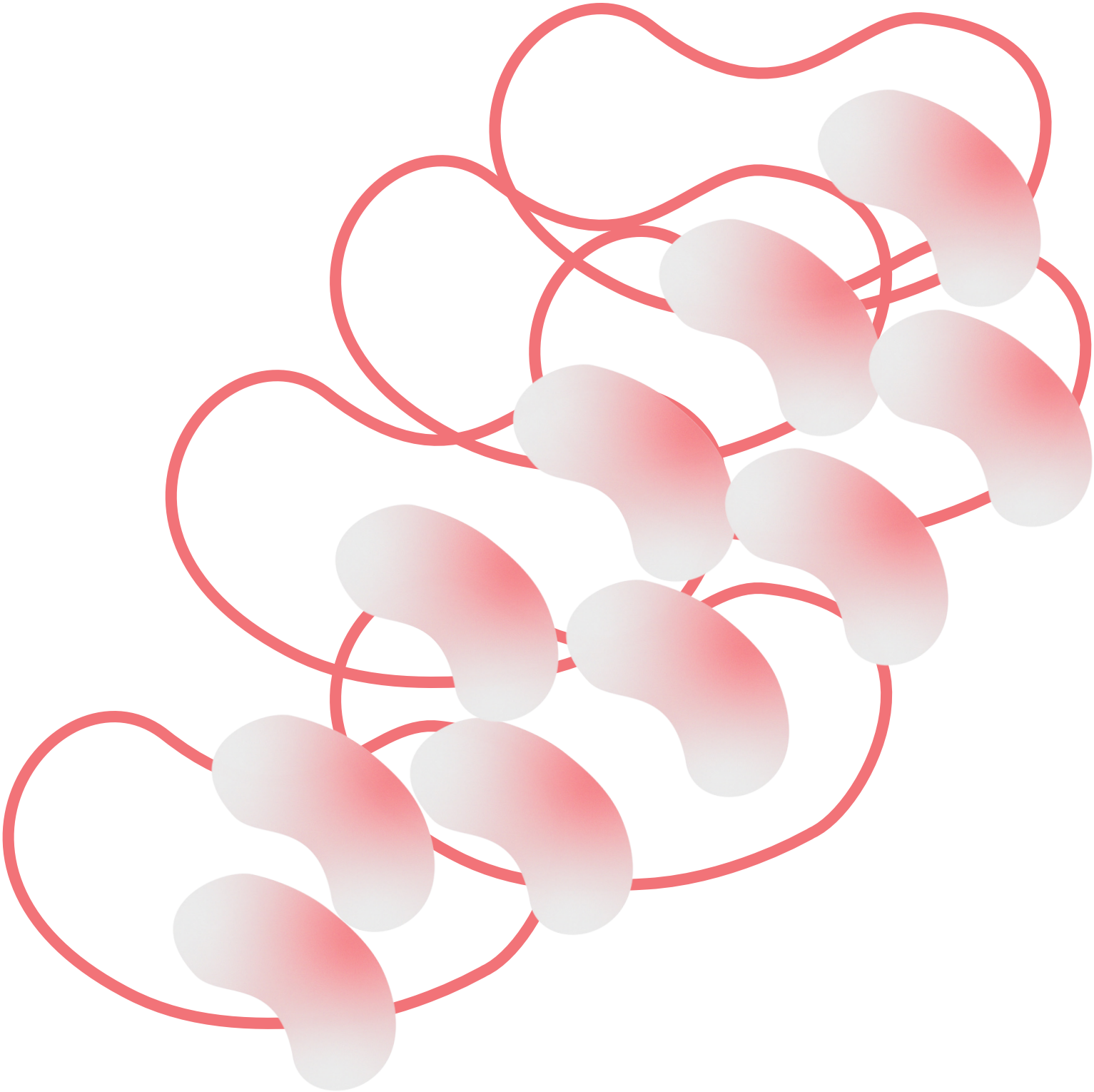
Jaylen

Sarah

Yogini

Katelyn

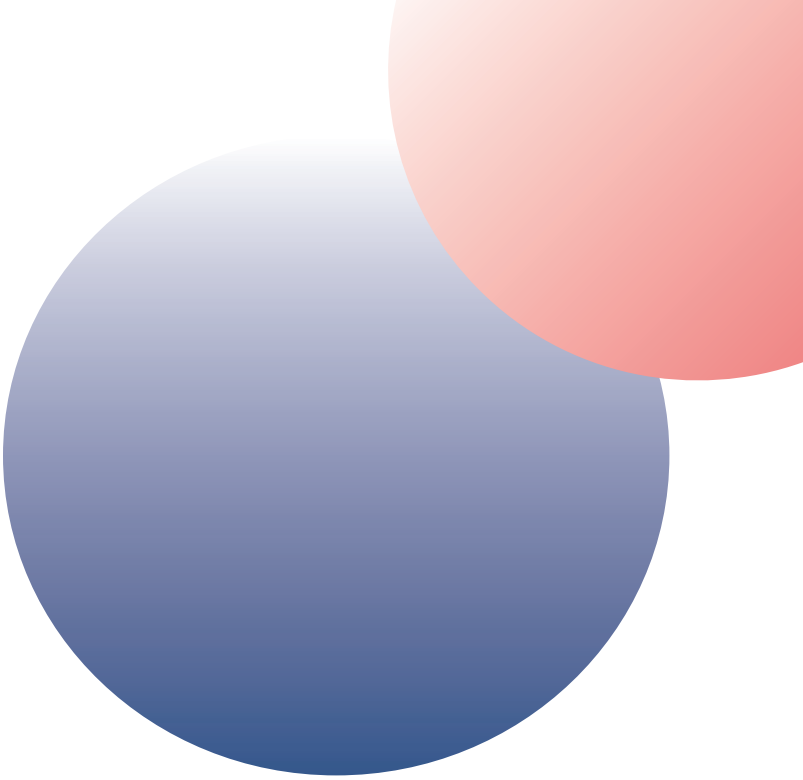
The words of a poem and the shapes of an artwork can be structured into paths. Look at the design on the page and follow the paths. Color in the shapes that you find.



Find a friend to read a poem aloud. Listen to the emphasis of their voice on certain words. Draw textures on the page that mirror the sound of the reader's voice.

Choose three shapes.
Create a drawing with your three shapes in response to a poem.

Examine your drawing on the opposite page. Write a poem where one line refers to each shape.



In the poetry book *Sounds*, Vasily Kandinsky's unconventional formatting of the stanzas emphasizes the pauses between words. Use the space below to write a poem in this style, using line breaks, punctuation, and negative space to organize the words in your poem.

Etel Adnan's artworks and poems are often connected to formative places that have influenced her life. Use the space below to draw a place that is considered home to you.

Read a poem and find a word that interests you. Fill this page by writing this one word as many times as you can.

Read a poem and close your eyes. What do you imagine? What **color** is the poem? Draw an image with that color.

Vasily Kandinsky's work often references the primary colors: red, yellow, and blue. Create an illustration using only these three colors.

Vasily Kandinsky experienced synesthesia, a rare condition that can occur between any two senses. For Kandinsky, it was the combination between color and sound. Read the first three words of a poem aloud. What colors come to mind when you hear these three words? Fill in the three circles below with these colors. Layer the colors until you create something new.

- **Write one word that comes to mind for each season (winter, spring, summer, fall).**

_____ _____

_____ _____

- **Draw something from nature that represents each season.**

Write down three words that you are unfamiliar with. Write a poem in the space below with these words to give them new meaning.

_____ _____ _____

Write a stanza with these unfamiliar words to give them new meaning.

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Etel Adnan's poetry uses word arrangement to create a rhythmic quality.

Use the line pattern below as inspiration for writing your own poem. Write on the lines and experiment with arranging short words, long words, and repeated words.

Poetry can be full of characters, human and non-human. Use the space below to draw a character using dots, colors, shapes, and textures.

Etel Adnan excells in many medias, especially her leporello works that contain hieroglyphic-like symbols. Select any book and randomly flip to any page. Using the first sentence of the page, pick four words and write them on the first line. Create a symbol for each word on each individual line below.

it starts with symbols

Vasily Kandinsky once said, "Everything starts from a dot." For this project, each student designed a dot for the cover. Use this blank page to design your own dot.

The title of this activity booklet comes from the Vasily Kandinsky quote: "Everything starts from a dot."

References

POETRY BOOKS

Etel Adnan, *The Arab Apocalypse*, 3rd ed. (Sausalito, CA: The Post-Apollo Press, 2007).

Etel Adnan, *Seasons*, 1st ed. (Sausalito, CA: The Post-Apollo Press, 2008).

Etel Adnan, *The Spring Flowers Own & The Manifestations of the Voyage*, 1st ed. (Sausalito, CA: The Post-Apollo Press, 1990).

Vasily Kandinsky, *Klänge (Sounds)*. Illustrated book with fifty-six woodcuts, 2nd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019).

ARTWORKS

Etel Adnan. *Key Signs*, 2017. Hardback leporello with watercolor on paper, 114 15/16 x 0 1/16 inches (18 x 292 x .2 cm). White Cube, London

Vasily Kandinsky. *Group in Crinolines*, 1944. Oil on canvas, 37 5/8 x 59 3/16 inches (95.6 x 150.3 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 45.966. © 2018 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/1847

Vasily Kandinsky. *Ribbon with Squares*, 1926. Gouache and oil on board, 16 1/2 x 22 3/4 inches (41.9 x 57.8 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York Solomon R. Guggenheim Founding Collection 47.1141. © 2018 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/2048

Vasily Kandinsky. *Several Circles*, 1926. Oil on canvas, 55 3/8 x 55 1/4 inches (140.7 x 140.3 cm). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York 41.283. © 2018 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York/ADAGP, Paris. https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/1992

Biographies

EFE IGOR is an educator, art critic, and curator. She is currently the Assistant Director of Academic Engagement at the Guggenheim Museum. She leads the Academic Engagement team in its effort to implement the goals in the diversity, equity, access, and inclusion plan, as well as build new partnerships with educational institutions and create opportunities for students and faculty at the museum.

QUEENA KO is an educator and artist based in New York City. She is currently Project Manager, Curriculum Development in the Guggenheim Education Department. www.queenako.com

MINDY SEU is a designer, educator, and researcher based in New York City. She is currently an assistant professor at Rutgers University, Mason Gross School of the Arts, and critic at Yale University, School of Art. www.mindyseu.com

YOGINI BORGAONKAR is a designer interested in creating enjoyable physical and digital products for service through interaction and storytelling. www.yogiborg.com

DANIELA DONALDSON is a designer who aims to create work with high levels of user interactivity and movement. She is an undergraduate student at Mason Gross School of the Arts.

ESRA KARA is a graphic designer interested in experimental visuals through 2D and 3D digital forms, working to create interesting designs through activating space, interaction, materiality, texture, layering, and form. www.esrakara.myportfolio.com

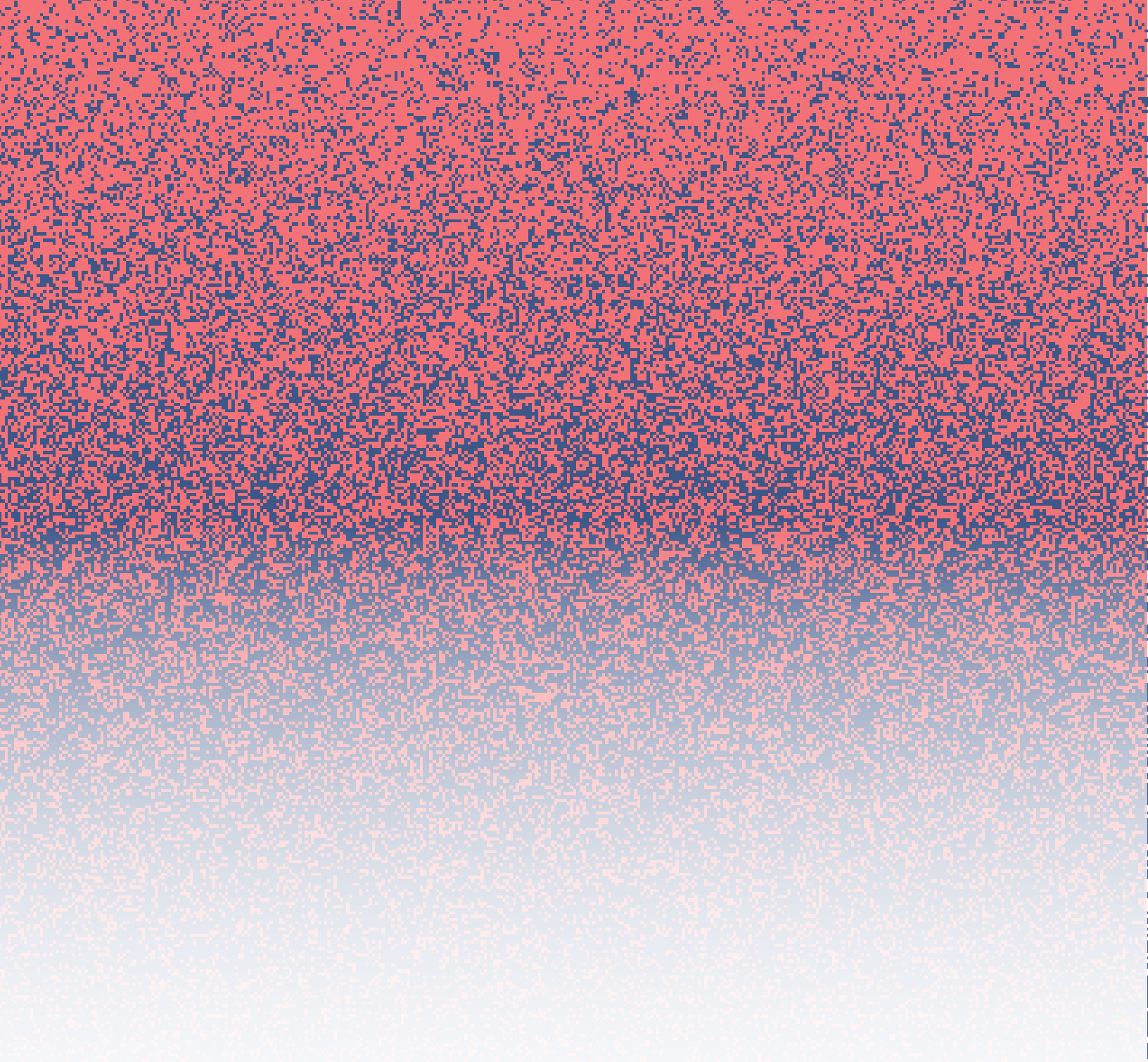
DAVIN KIM is a graphic design student at Mason Gross School of the Arts who is interested in creating immersive work.

EVE KIM is a graphic design student at Mason Gross School of the Arts who is interested in exploring different topics and styles.

KATELYN MORO is a photographer and graphic designer based in New Jersey. She is an undergraduate at Mason Gross School of the Arts and is currently co-curating a project for Connecting U, to help fundraise money for environmental organizations and nonprofits.

JAYLEN ROSS is an undergraduate student and designer at Mason Gross School of the Arts who is focused on interior and graphic design. He is interested in designing for the physical and digital realm and where these intersections exist. www.jaylenross.work

SARAH WISNACK is a quick-witted designer who explores themes of reimagining the future, relationships, movement, and more. She is currently an undergraduate student at Mason Gross School of the Arts. behance.net/sarahwisnack



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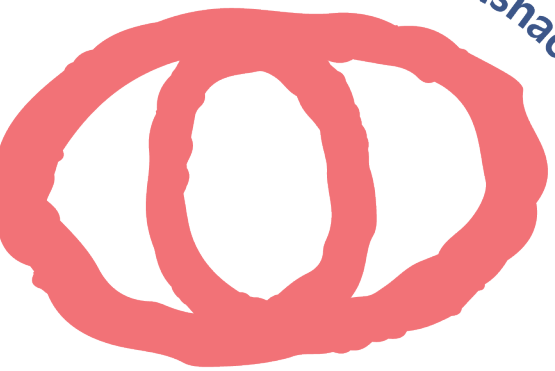

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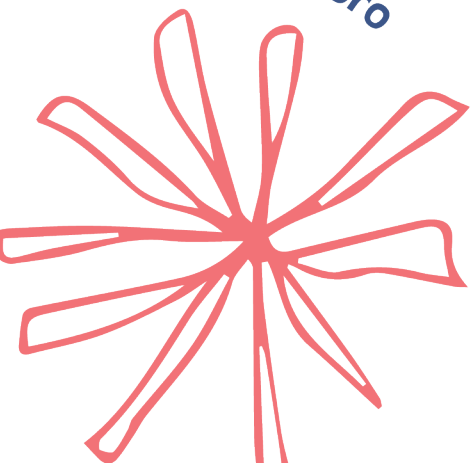

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