

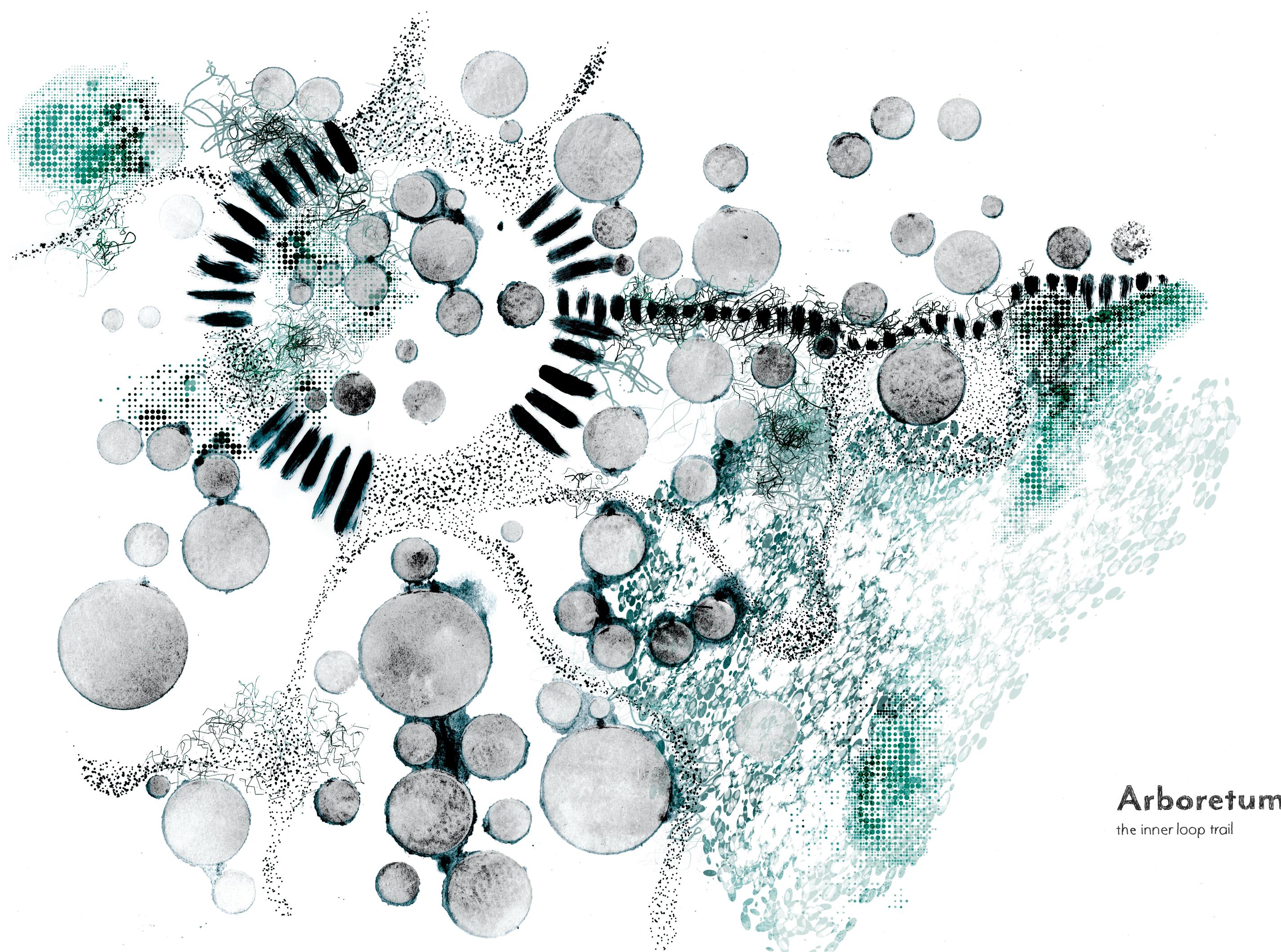
Marking and Meaning

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Arboretum: the inner loop trail is an interpretive sound map of a trail in the Houston Arboretum and Nature Center. It is a form of cognitive map that combines methods from the visual arts to diagrammatically represent the acoustic qualities of the environment. Beneath the surface of the map's specific details is a conversation about abstraction and iteration in graphic design practice.

The map is the artifact from developing a design methodology for sourcing visuals and to represent experiential information.

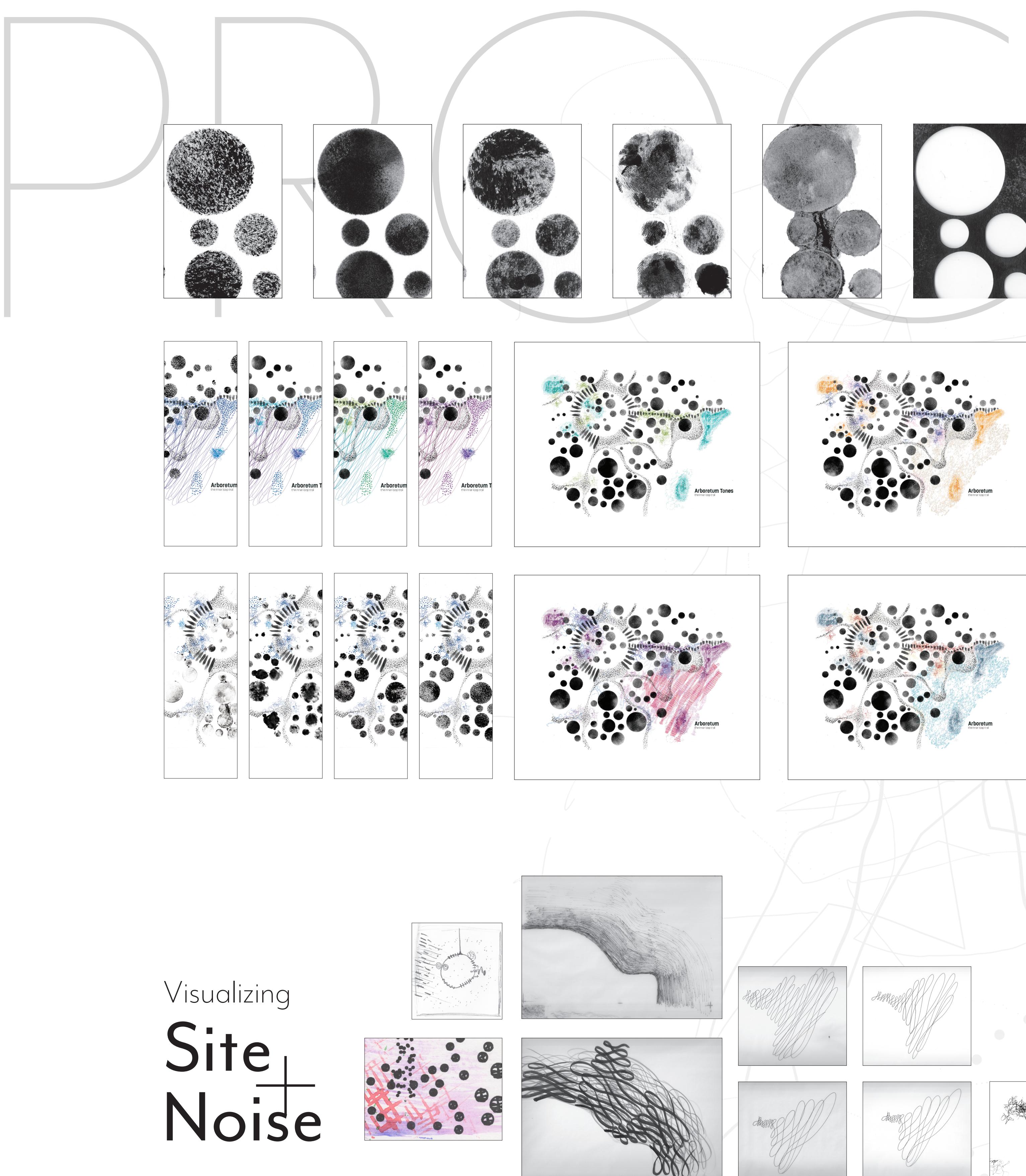
This is the personal, working approach of a graphic designer, and my contribution to the discipline is in how I uniquely conceptualize and use abstraction, iteration, and then synthesize these in my work. The critical discourse I have in my field is about how this process informs means for rich visual communication.



Arboretum
the inner loop trail

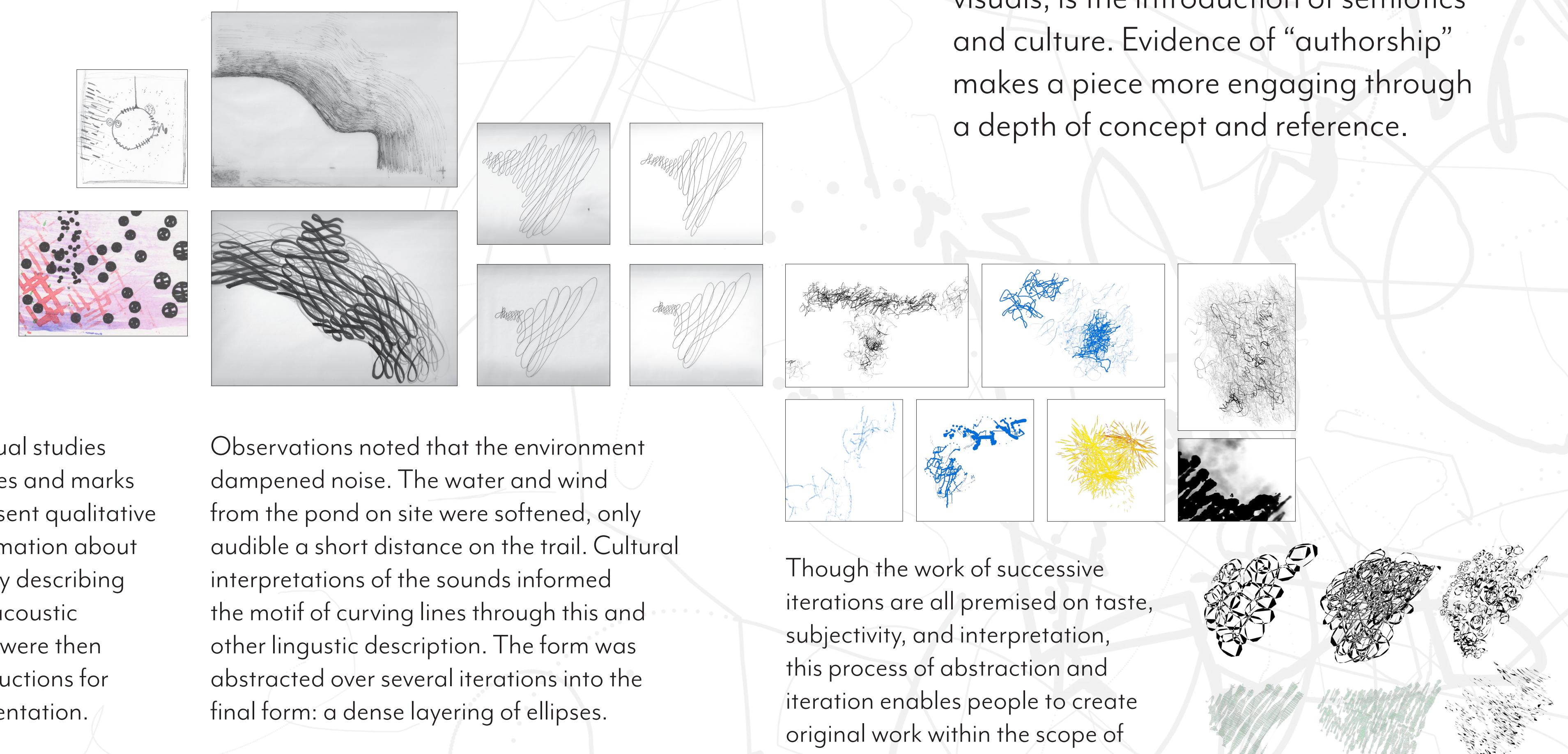
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Visualizing Site + Noise

The forms in these visual studies show the variety of lines and marks that are used to represent qualitative and experiential information about the site. In linguistically describing the sounds and their acoustic properties, semantics were then be used to derive instructions for their graphical representation.



Observations noted that the environment damped noise. The water and wind from the pond on site were softened, only audible a short distance on the trail. Cultural interpretations of the sounds informed the motif of curving lines through this and other linguistic description. The form was abstracted over several iterations into the final form: a dense layering of ellipses.

Though the work of successive iterations are all premised on taste, subjectivity, and interpretation, this process of abstraction and iteration enables people to create original work within the scope of their technical or artistic skillsets.

ABSTRACT

The power of abstraction is in removing the constraints of the immediate context. It allows unrelated concepts to be connected, and it's use here to represent sounds visually allows for variety, avoiding cliché, and communicating a broader range of descriptive qualities.

ITERATE

Iteration is fundamental to a design process. It is the manner we use to test our ideas, to free-associate and draw connections between disparate topics, to introduce objectivity through creative distance, and it serves as inspiration, ideation, and implementation.

AFFECT

The value of using human interpretation for visual representation, over generative visuals, is the introduction of semiotics and culture. Evidence of "authorship" makes a piece more engaging through a depth of concept and reference.