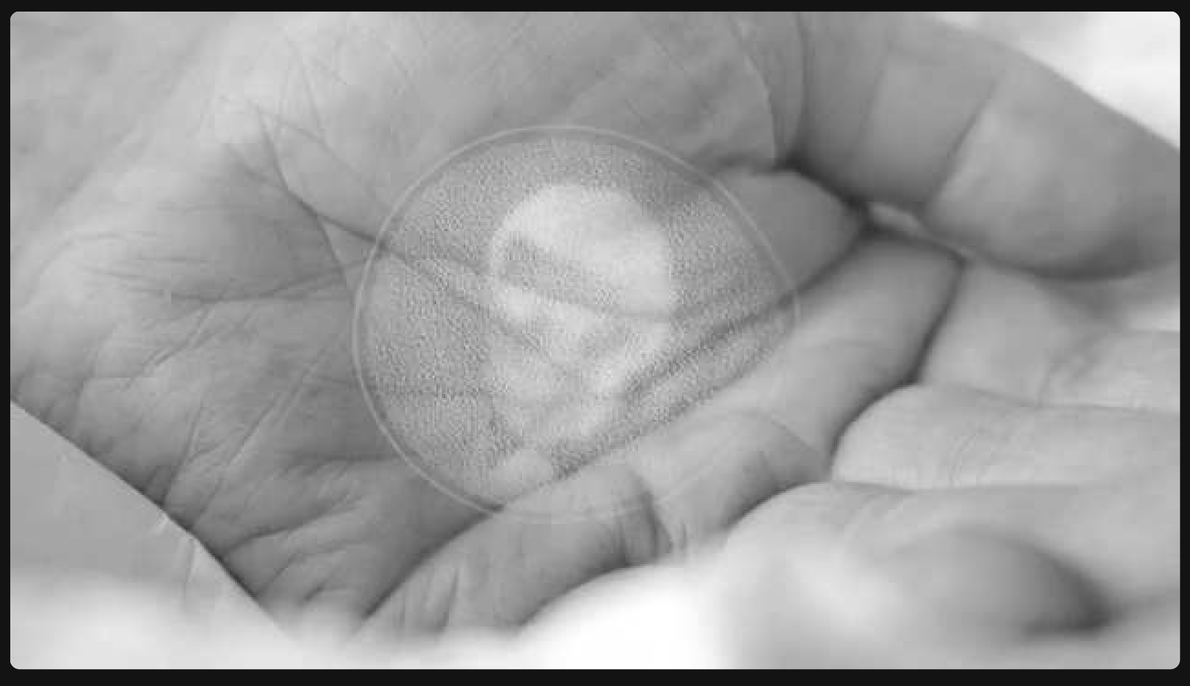
Hardware abandons graphic design

Gilbert 0x6e31 March 5th, 2024

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There is a nascent movement among hardware founders to save us from graphic design. The screenless Humane Ai Pin, soon to market, proposes a fundamentally different computing paradigm to the total, can't-look-away screens of the Apple Vision Pro. The Ai Pin's only visual interface is a monochrome laser projector that presents graphics on its user's outstretched hand. Humane are careful not to market the device, at least not in its first version, as a smartphone replacement, but by labelling it "standalone" that aspiration is made clear.

The company's rhetoric would have its customers believe that a voice-first interface is a *demediation*, a more humane computing paradigm that will enable the user to abstain from the visual clamour of the web, keeping their attention in the IRL moment. It might better be described as a *disintermediation*, entirely consistent and complicit with too-late capitalism's techniques for centralising and *personalising* access to online spaces.



A loose through-line of dissenting graphic design practices connects the unruly margins of early European print culture, the de-professionalised aesthetics of self-publishing and small-press scenes in the twentieth century, and the gratuitous degradation of the contemporary technological *poor image*. It follows that there are generations of visually literate viewers skilled in decoding graphic design's multiplicitous appeals, and distinguishing the corporate from the unsanctioned. If the irresistible allure of graphic design displayed on 240Hz retina-resolution OLED smartphone screens causes personal technology to shift away from visual interfaces, what awaits future users, deskilled in interpreting graphic design?

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