Draft · 1/3

At the start of Unit 2, my question was whether a system could be neutral. In CONTACT, one rule by Casey Reas passed through three machine vision detectors and produced three accounts of the same footage. Timetable narrowed this into a measurable condition: one railway timetable placed in 8, 20 and 32 column grids, observed for what became legible, comparable or lost. Both projects confirmed the same claim, that an apparatus decides in advance what can be seen. They also gave me a method I still rely on: keep the source fixed and change one declared condition.

Out of the Picture tested this position against history. ∆1 began from one sense of “position”, how parts are arranged, and led me to Thomas Geminus’s 1545 plates, which recombined woodcuts from Andreas Vesalius’s *Fabrica* (1543). In ∆2, Walter Benjamin’s ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ stood in tension with my work. Benjamin measures the copy by what it lacks, assuming an original to return to. His critique belongs to media conditions unlike ours: visual culture today is built almost entirely on reproduction, and every reproduction is already a translation. My material shows this: every image I touched was already a scan of one printed copy, a product of translation rather than a damaged original. My question shifted from what is lost to what travels with an image into a new situation, what is left behind, and who decides.



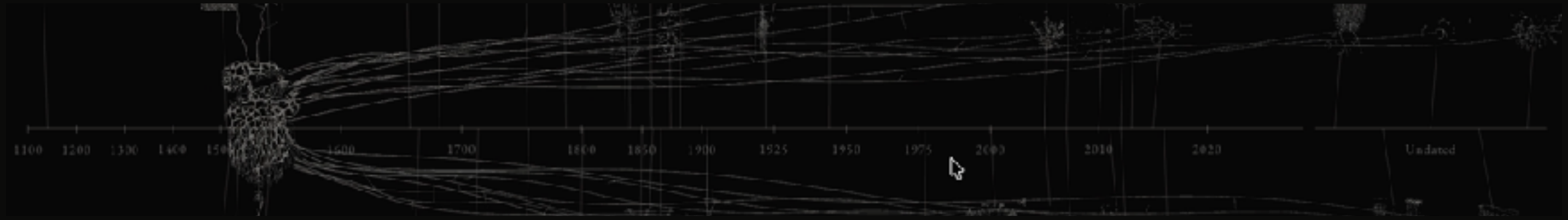
Thomas Geminus, 1545

Draft · 2/3

∆2 also exposed a weakness that this synthesis has to untangle. Cutting, collage and the online archive did not observe recontextualisation; they performed it again. My method replaced the object of study. Looking across the three triangles, the problem was not the medium but the absence of a controlled condition. Timetable worked because the source stayed fixed while one variable changed. Out of the Picture lost that discipline when each cut became a new edit.



My position now joins these two lines. Recontextualisation is not only rearrangement; it often begins with subtraction. When Geminus moved figures onto new plates, much of their surrounding text and landscape did not travel with them. Removed text matters because in an anatomical image the text is part of the image's claim to knowledge. Reading James Langdon's 'A conundrum: the visual communication of neuroscience' in *Revue Faire* led me to see that, from Vesalius onwards, anatomical images have also addressed readers of visual art, so their style can conceal the conditions that produced them. The portal vein figure in the *Fabrica* (pp. 262–263) makes this visible. With its letters, annotations and page, it is a scientific statement. Without them, it can be read as a tree. The image does not change, but the reader stops receiving description and begins to supply meaning from its aesthetics.



Draft · 3/3

Projected forward, I will build a website around this single figure. Rather than cutting or rearranging it again, I will remove its layers one at a time in a declared, reversible order. Subtraction becomes the controlled condition. I am doing this because the question is no longer what the image loses, but at what point it stops working as science and starts working as picture. A fixed order makes that threshold observable instead of performed, and lets later versions, gathered as a network, be read against what each removed.

The project therefore moves from asking whether a system is neutral, to asking what each system loses, to asking what an image needs in order to remain what it claims to be. Next, I want to explore the relationship between composition, text and the reception of information, and how recontextualisation works through it: how what a reader takes from an image may shift when its composition stays but its text is removed or replaced.





Vesalius, 1543, p. 262, detail