METALHEART

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ITH_THEATER_SUPPORT



HOULD_BANNER_DISPLAY_FOR_USE

Metalheart	
Art, text & design by:	
Zoe Allgaier	
Inspired by the work of:	
Anders F. Rönnblom	
Andreas Lindholm	METALHEART
& many more	
Created:	
01/2025	
zoeallgaier.com	
	Zor

Introduction

Metalheart is an artistic experiment and the first installment of my digital art series. Having worked on developing and curating this art style for over a year, I felt it was time to share my art with the world.

My goal with these art series is to explore visuals that are complex and unique. I'm not particularly interested in the usefulness of my graphics, as they are not made for a specific purpose, except to exist as art.

I hope you enjoy reading this zine as much as I have enjoyed creating it. Thank you!

_Zoe A.



Metalheart

In 1998, Swedish Designers Anders F. Rönnblom and Andreas Lindholm released the emBox/Brainreactor CD – a disc containing fonts and 3D typefaces for artists to experiment with. After experimenting themselves and gathering contributions from other artists, the designers published their work: a book titled Metalheart. This book, and the assets included contained much more than digital files.

Metalheart, at its core, is entirely abstract. The assets enclosed in the emBox CD seem to be designed for the sole purpose of pushing design software to its limits. Andreas himself states:

"Brainreactor fonts are something else. Not always readable, very rarely made by hand, and far from perfect. Some people like them, some people don't."

Considering what computers are capable of now (2025, at the time of writing), it surprises me that this trend hasn't been revived in much capacity.



Metalheart is Endeavor

"Illustrations, compositions, graphic effects or art?"

The graphics themselves can't really be defined; that isn't the purpose of Metalheart. Metalheart is not just about designing with new technology, it's the culmination of communal artistic endeavor – based on a unique, optimistic vision of the future of art. Metaheart is so much more than a design style, it is an artistic movement. An entire community of artists and designers became inspired, energized and connected by this movement.

The compositions in this book are my own explorations in Metalheart. I never quite got ahold of an emBox CD (yet), so the assets involved in creating my Metalheart have been obtained through the web, or created from scratch by yours truly.

Software used includes: JWildfire and Chaotica – for some backgrounds and textures; Blender – for 3D assets; and Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop and Indesign – for final design and layout. Images, overlays, textures and fonts were found throughout the internet.



Metalheart is Harmony

These designs are composed of various assets (textures, images, grids, text, shapes, shadows, etc.), all of which are distorted in more than one way. The main layers comprising my take on Metalheart are as follows: a textured background, a few layers of abstract metallic shapes, grids, text, and a paper-like overlay (as an homage to the original printed publication). Each work has its own variation of these layers.

Some may have fewer layers, some may have more. Each layer is customized and distorted until I feel it has visual harmony. In some pieces, I've experimented with written text rather than digital fonts, because I find the contrast of handwritten text and digital imagery quite fun.

Most of my free (and not so free) time is spent listening to music. I listen to music the same way I find and enjoy art – through niche artists online – because I like hearing sounds I've never heard before. Music is a very important part of my artistic process. When designing these compositions, I listened to music that specifically matches the design style of Metalheart. The companion playlist linked in this book contains trip-hop, DnB, breakcore and techno music (mostly from the late 90s and early 00s). They were included because of the synergy felt between the music and the visuals that were created while listening to it.



10 of my favorite compositions

METALHEART



comments: Is it too pretentious to have the cover in here as a full page? Idc. It's my zine and I want to.

artwork title: Bile software used: Photoshop, Illustrator



comments: Named after the song, by Joji. The red rectangle (top right) is from an old Xbox warning screen.

artwork title: Reanimator software used: Photoshop, Illustrator





comments: Among the first graphics I created using fractal art. I'm really happy with how the bubbles turned out here.

artwork title: Liquid Geometry (rev. 2025) software used: Photoshop, Illustrator, JWildfire



comments: Really leaning into the "heart" aspect of Metalheart here...

artwork title: This is Love software used: Photoshop, Illustrator

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comments: Inspired by a darker take on the Frutiger Aero design language/style.

artwork title: Metadata Construct software used: Photoshop, Illustrator



comments: I'm really proud of the lighting on this one.

artwork title: Aero software used: Photoshop, Illustrator



comments: Handwritten text from my journal.

artwork title: Soul software used: Photoshop, Illustrator, Jwildfire

I will swim forever. I will die for eternity, I will berome the mater. I will become the mater. If I cannot change myself. In this act of magical transformation I recognize myself again. I am groundlens and boundless movement. I am one with the darkness and the wet. And I on enraged. Here at last is my strength. Here at last is my strength.

I as not the water-I as the wave, and rage is the force that moves me. Rage gives me back my body as its own fl uid medium. Rage punches a hole in water around which T coelesce to allow the fl ow to core through me. Rage constitutes me in my primal form. It throws my head back pults my tips back over my teeth ochas in through my rage. No sound exists in this place without language my rage is a silent raving Rage throws me back at last into this wardshe reality in bitching my rage, In bitching my rage, In bitching my rage, and a language has restricted me.

comments: Excerpt is from Susan Stryker's essay: My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamounix.

artwork title: Rage software used: Photoshop, Illustrator



comments: A reflection on the intersection of natural and "unnatural."

artwork title: Industrial Intelligence software used: Photoshop, Illustrator

WHEN YOU WERE A SMALL CHILD YOU FOUND YOUR DIGITAL HEAVEN AND YOU MET A GIRL WHOSE CODE WAS CHISELED BY THE GODS. SHE LAUGHED IN HEXADECIMAL AND TOOK YOUR HAND AND GUIDED YOU TO THE SKYBOX AND THEN YOU FORGOT HER FOREVER.

SOMETIMES, COMPUTERS ARE A VARIETY OF ANGEL

comments: In the sense that computers are humanity's most connective creation; there is an angelic quality to them.

artwork title: Divine Machinery (rev. 2025) software used: Photoshop, Illustrator



About the Author

Zoe Allgaier is a digital artist from Utah. She is inspired by the early age of digital art; Her abstract work explores the intersectionality of digital and physical life. Using overlays, textures and recursive geometry, Zoe creates graphics that explore visual nuance, as well as reject the minimalist design trends that have become the standard in the postmodern era. She has a lifetime of experience as an artist, and 7 years of professional experience in digital media and design roles.

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Metalheart is an abstract visual experiment and an homage to the early age of digital art. Originally an art style created in 1998, Metalheart is characterized by it's use of layering many textures, metallic shapes, text and more. With the turn of the century, Metalheart lost popularity, only to be found on a few websites with limited information.



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