METALHEART

WITH_THEATER_SUPPORT

この肩
君美弾君この肩
君美君この肩

Zoe

Metalheart

Art, text & design by:
Zoe Allgaier

Inspired by the work of:
Anders F. Rönnblom
Andreas Lindholm
& many more

Created:
01/2025

METALHEART

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.
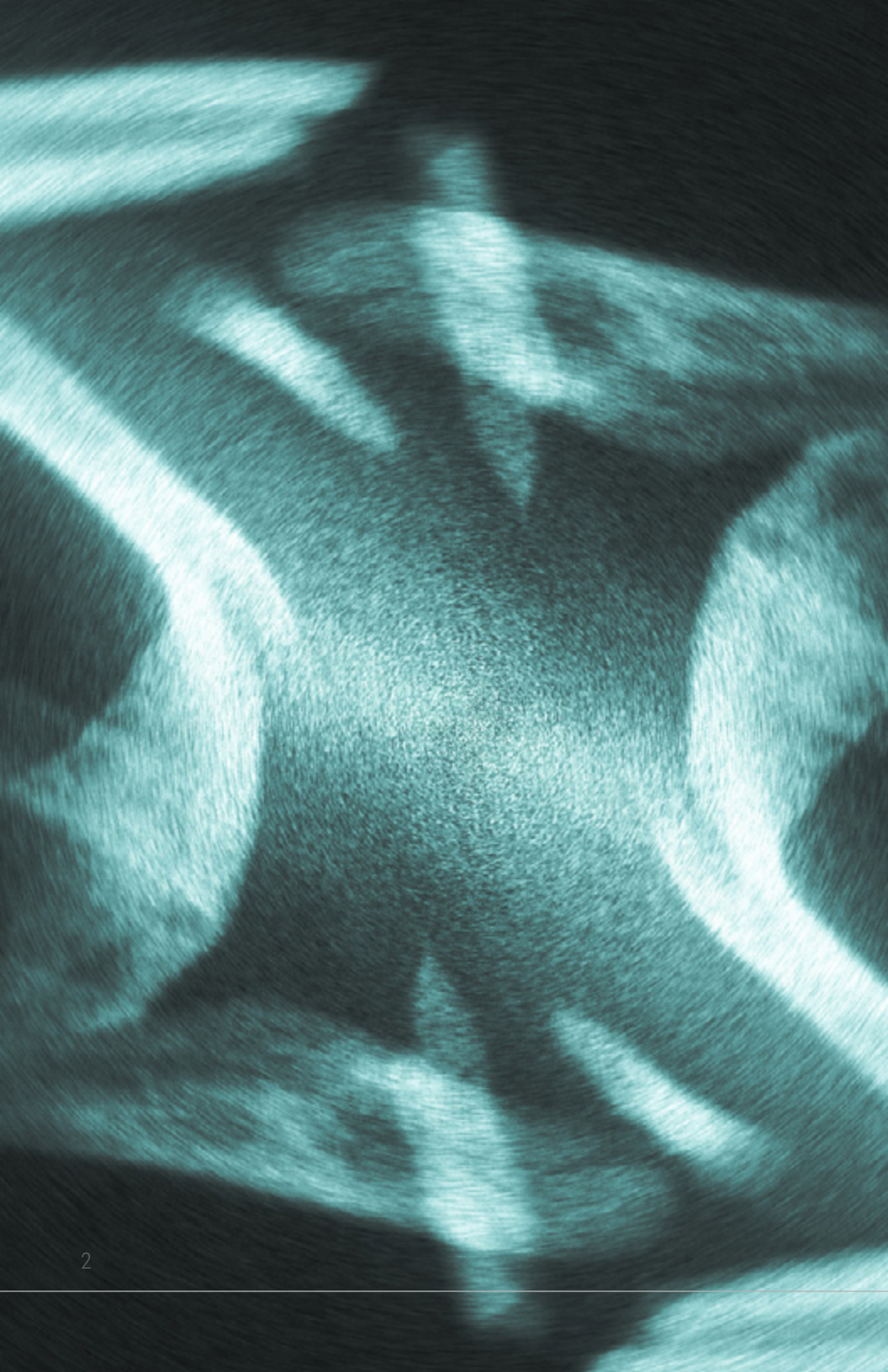
Metalheart

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.
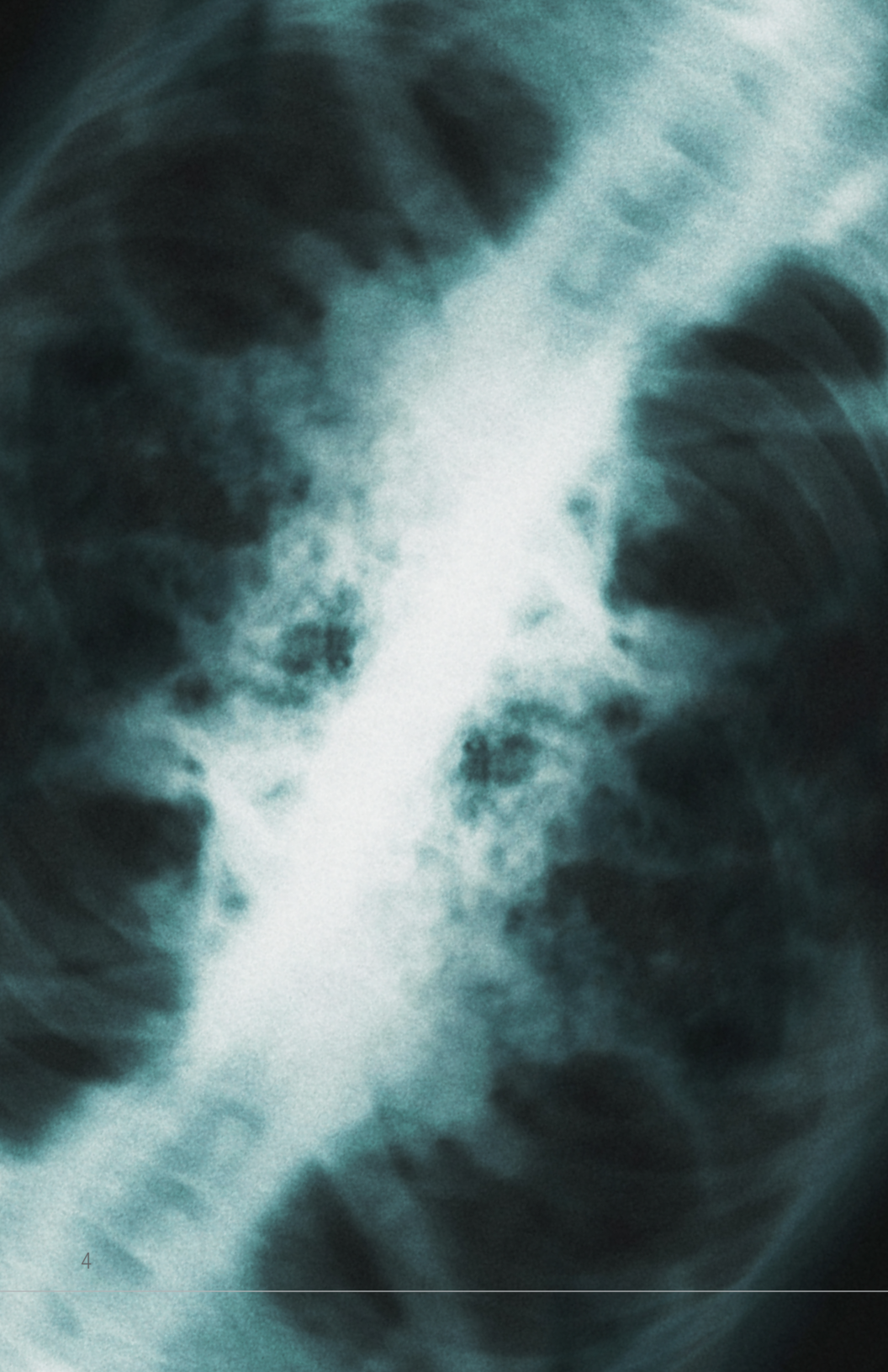
Metalheart is Endeavor

"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.
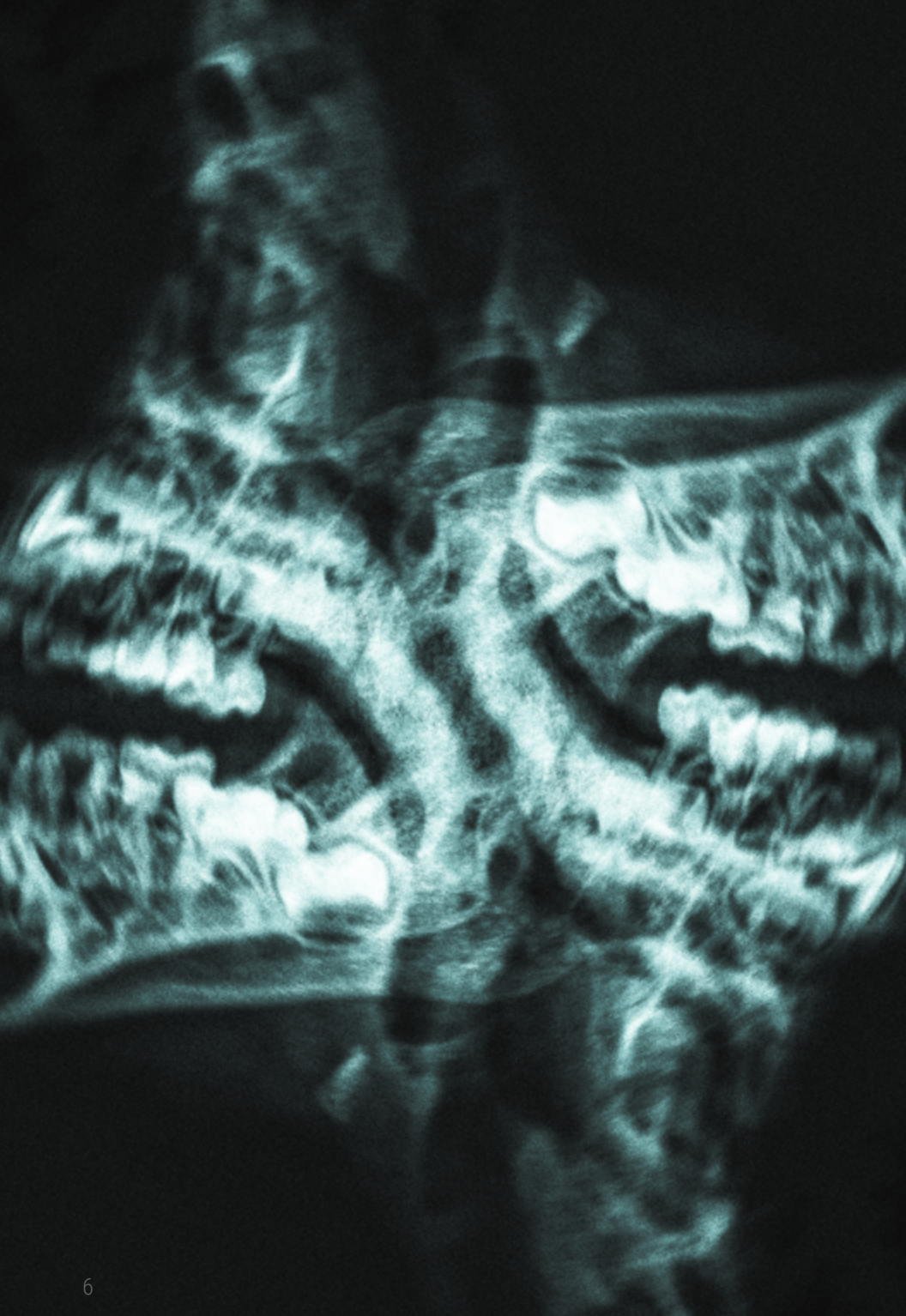
Metalheart is Harmony

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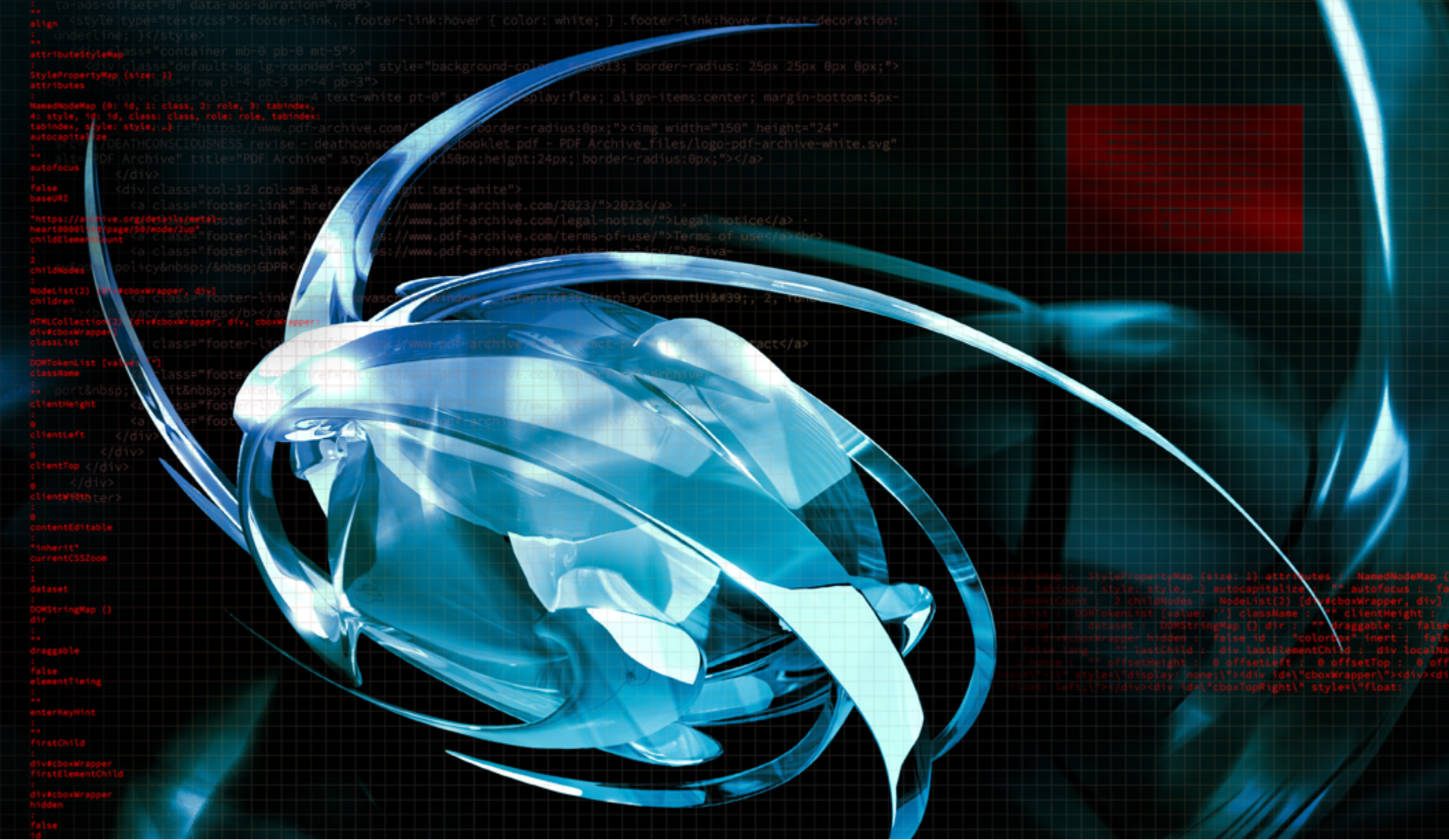
Some may have fewer layers, some may have more. Each layer is customized and distorted until I feel it has visual harmony. In some pieces, I've experimented with written text rather than digital fonts, because I find the contrast of handwritten text and digital imagery quite fun.

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

この煙る混沌の中で
肩甲骨が触れ合った
君を見つけた
美しい君を見つけた
弾ける君を見つけた
君を見つけた
この煙る混沌の中で
肩甲骨が触れ合った

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

LIQUID GEOMETRY

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

LOVE IS A STATE OF BEING. YOUR LOVE IS NOT OUTSIDE: IT IS DEEP WITHIN YOU. YOU CAN NEVER LOSE IT, AND IT CANNOT LEAVE YOU.

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

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

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

the soul is too heavy to carry alone

comments: Handwritten text from my journal.

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

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

INDUSTRIAL INTELLIGENCE

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.

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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