

PERFECT
CIRCLE
GOD
SPEED

Perfect Circle / God Speed

GOOD:AM

Mac Miller

2015



Written, designed and created by
Nicolas Distasi, 2023.

Featuring a Hypebeast article by
Austin Boykins (2015) + photos from
Justin Boyd and Christopher Polk.

Built using Bodoni URW
by URW Type Foundry.

Lots of frustration went into this creation,
please enjoy it.

Contents

4	Why This Song? <i>(My Song Selection Rationale)</i>
6	Song Covers
7	Assignment 2 <i>(Composition + Space)</i>
13	Assignment 3 <i>(Composition + Space + Pt. Size)</i>
19	Assignment 4 <i>(Mixed Font Weights)</i>
25	Assignment 5 <i>(Mixed Weights + Italics)</i>
31	Assignment 6 <i>(Mixed Sizes + Weights)</i>
37	Assignment 7 <i>(Rules + Blocks)</i>
43	Assignment 8 <i>(Type + Color + Sound Notation)</i>
49	Assignment 9 <i>(Type + Image)</i>
56	Animation Screens <i>(Assignment 10)</i>
58	Artist Interview
60	Discography

Why This Song?

My Song Selection Rationale

“Perfect Circle / God Speed” was written and performed by Mac Miller for his 3rd studio album, “GO:OD AM.” To me the song feels like an embodiment of all the main themes and messages in “GO:OD AM,” an album which is all about Mac reflecting on his growth in dealing with fame, drugs, and other struggles in his life. Split into two distinct sections, as referenced by the split song title, the song presents two sides to Mac’s life: his past and his future. Both sections follow the same general theme, delving into Mac’s complicated relationship with drug abuse and the trouble it has caused for him, however there is a clear tonal separation between them. The first half, “Perfect Circle,” is very downbeat and gritty with dark lyrics looking back on the bizarre life Mac lived while under the control of substances. He is honest and open about his troubled past in order to be able to come to terms with the mistakes that he made. On the other hand, the second half is just the opposite; bright and full of emotion, with introspective lyrics that bounce between hope for the future and fear of falling back into his old ways. Mac expresses his desire to change his ways and break free of his drug dependencies, but also

his fear that he could so easily fall back into his old ways.

“GO:OD AM” was released in 2015, which would have been quite early in Mac’s career if not for his tragic passing in 2018 due to a drug overdose. His cause of death being so synonymous with the subject matter of “Perfect Circle / God Speed” brings so much additional weight and meaning to its core message. Now you listen to Mac express his fears of living and dying exactly the way he ended up doing. Even though I don’t relate to the lyrics in “Perfect Circle / God Speed,” as Mac indulges in struggles that I have no experience with, the song still resonates deeply with me because of the story behind it. In a way, the song is a reminder for me and anyone else who listens to stay away from the substance-controlled lifestyle that Mac lived.

At its core, “GO:OD AM” is a rap project, though many songs, “Perfect Circle / God Speed” included, are somewhat genre-bending as they infuse rap with various jazz and sometimes classical elements. The melancholic, jazz-infused nature of my chosen song in particular takes me back to a cold, gloomy winter day. I envision myself listening to this



song in my room, staring out at a rainy day through my window. It doesn’t make me want to dance or sing or even cry, but I always just end up sitting and reflecting on my life. Ironically, I discovered this song in the middle of the summer after my junior year in high school. COVID-19 was beginning to clear up and I was feeling the most hope for the future that I had felt in a long time. In a way, discovering this song was like a wake up call for me, reminding me before I entered a new chapter to be grateful for my life and not take it for granted. Even amidst this terrible, disruptive time, I still had so much to appreciate that could, realistically, be stripped from me at any moment.

Listening to Mac Miller’s music is a meaningful experience for me, and I believe that “Perfect Circle / God Speed” is one of his greatest songs. The song’s powerful lyrics, melancholic, jazz-infused sound, and its bizarre correlation to the course of his life and his death make it stick out above the rest. The messages and themes explored in the song are universally provocative to anyone, regardless of their own personal experiences with substance abuse.

Overall, “Perfect Circle / God Speed” is a powerful and emotional song that delves into Mac Miller’s complicated relationship with drugs. The song is divided,

PERFECT
CIRCLE /
GOD
SPEED

SONG COV- ERS

ASSIGNMENTS 2-9

ASSIGNMENT 2

COMPOSITION + SPACE

Composition + Space - 2

Composition + Space + Pt. Size - 3

Mixed Font Weights - 4

Mixed Weights + Italics - 5

Mixed Sizes + Weights - 6

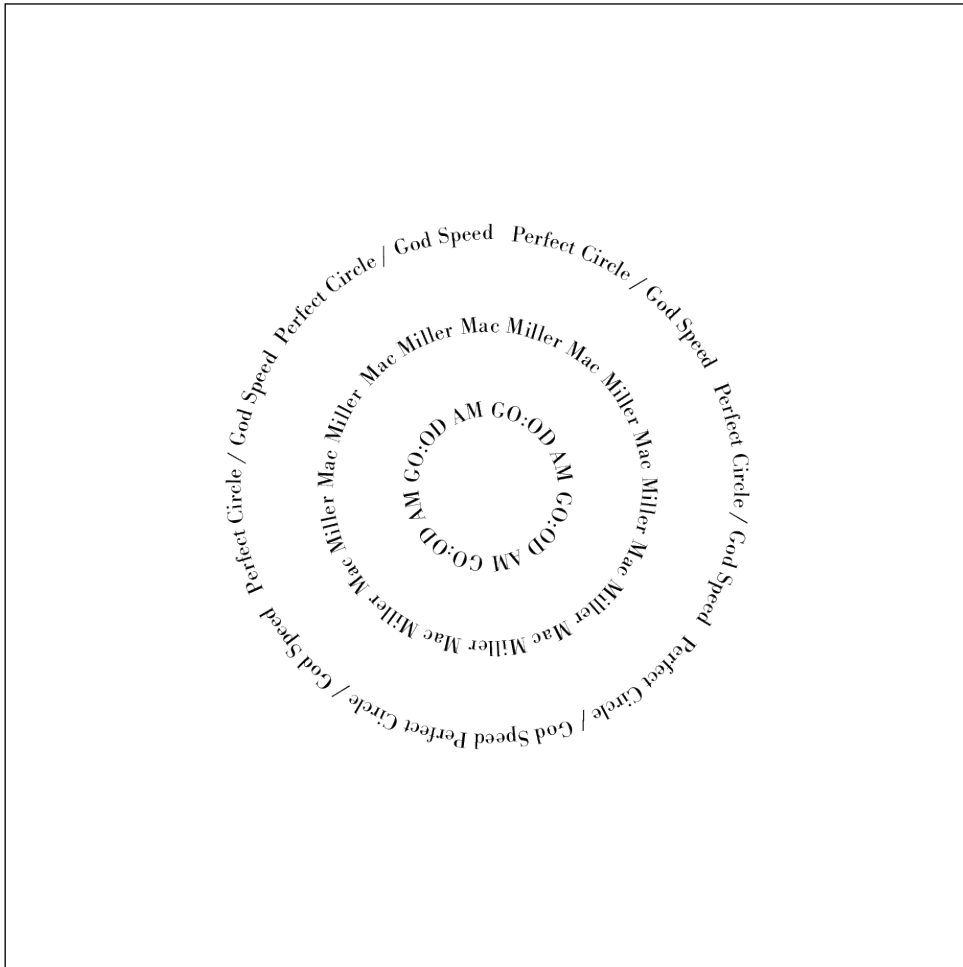
Rules + Blocks - 7

Type + Color + Sound Notation - 8

Type + Color + Image - 9

01/40

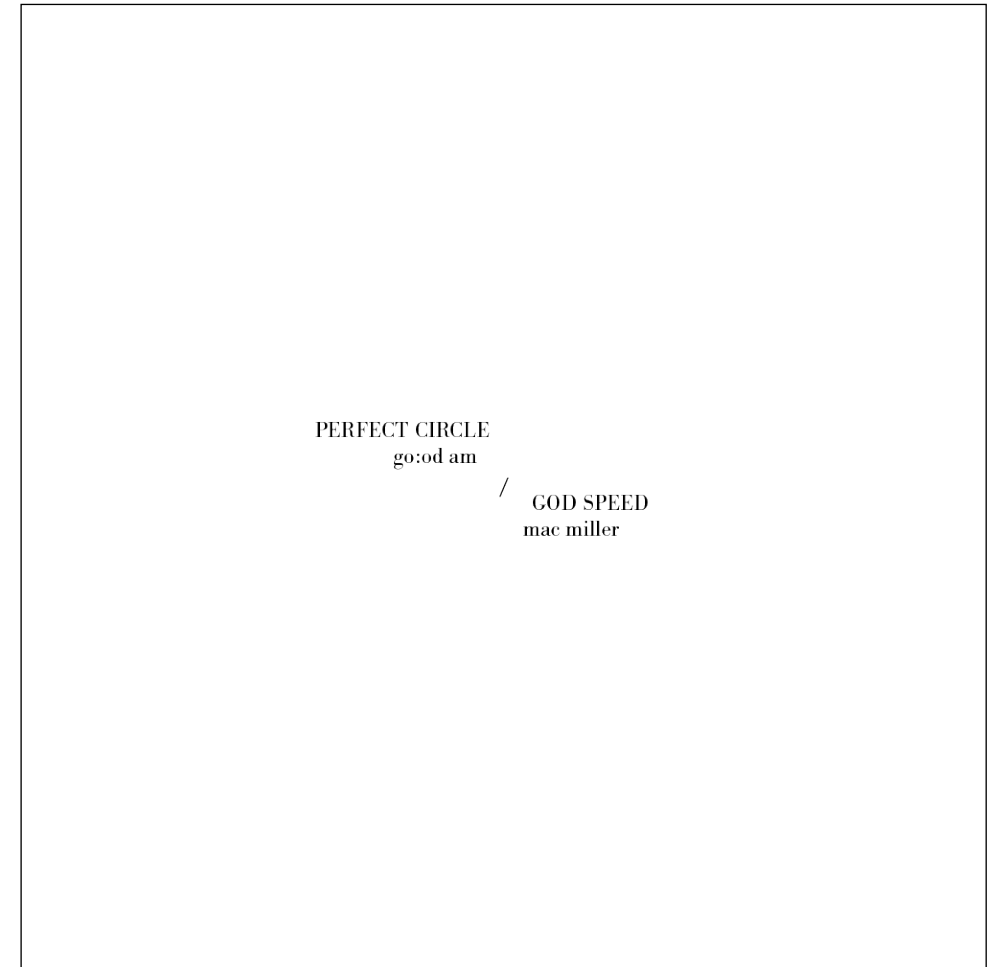
1/15/23



Below is the first design of Assignment 2 and the very first design of our type journey. 01 is a primitive exploration of the “perfect circle” in reference to the song title.

02/40

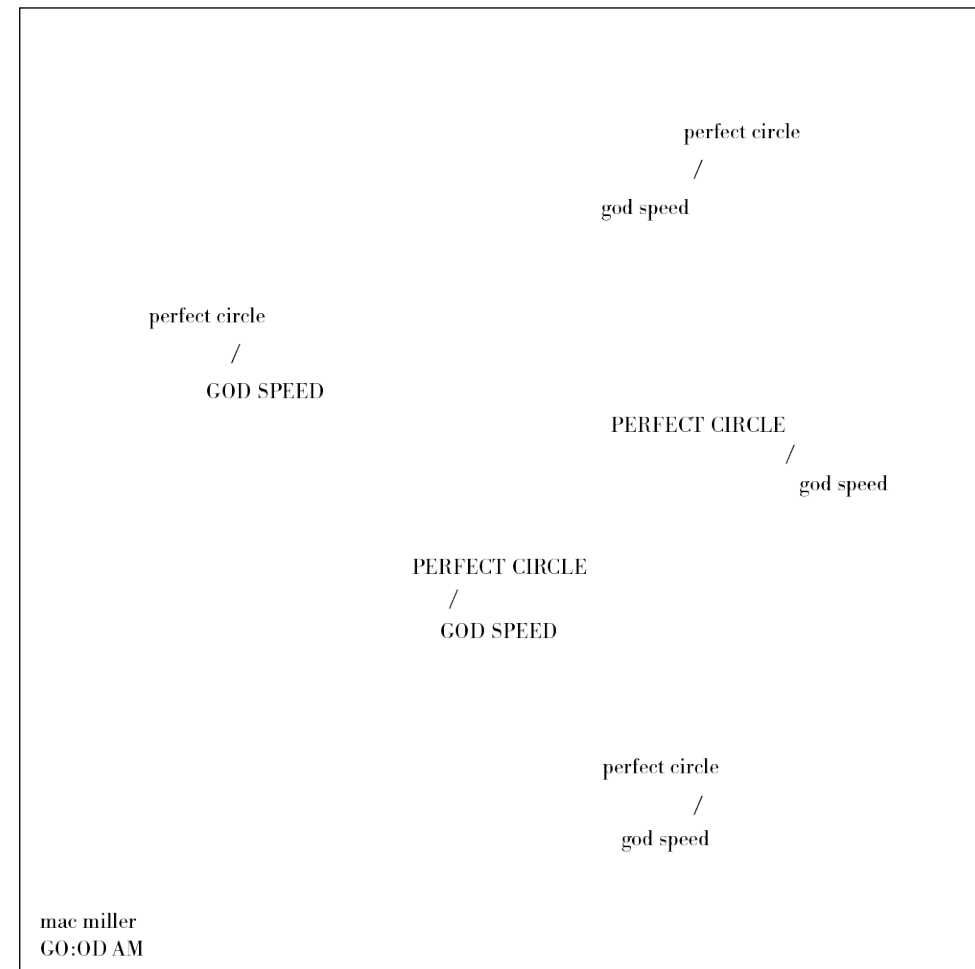
1/16/23



The second design of Assignment 2. The goal was to create a strong, unique textual heirarchy and emphasize the negative space that inevitably comes with such minimalistic elements.

03/40

1/16/23



Moving on to design #3, a more complex exploration of the white space-text relationship. The ‘/’ is used in a way which represents the loose connection between the two distinctly different halves of the song.

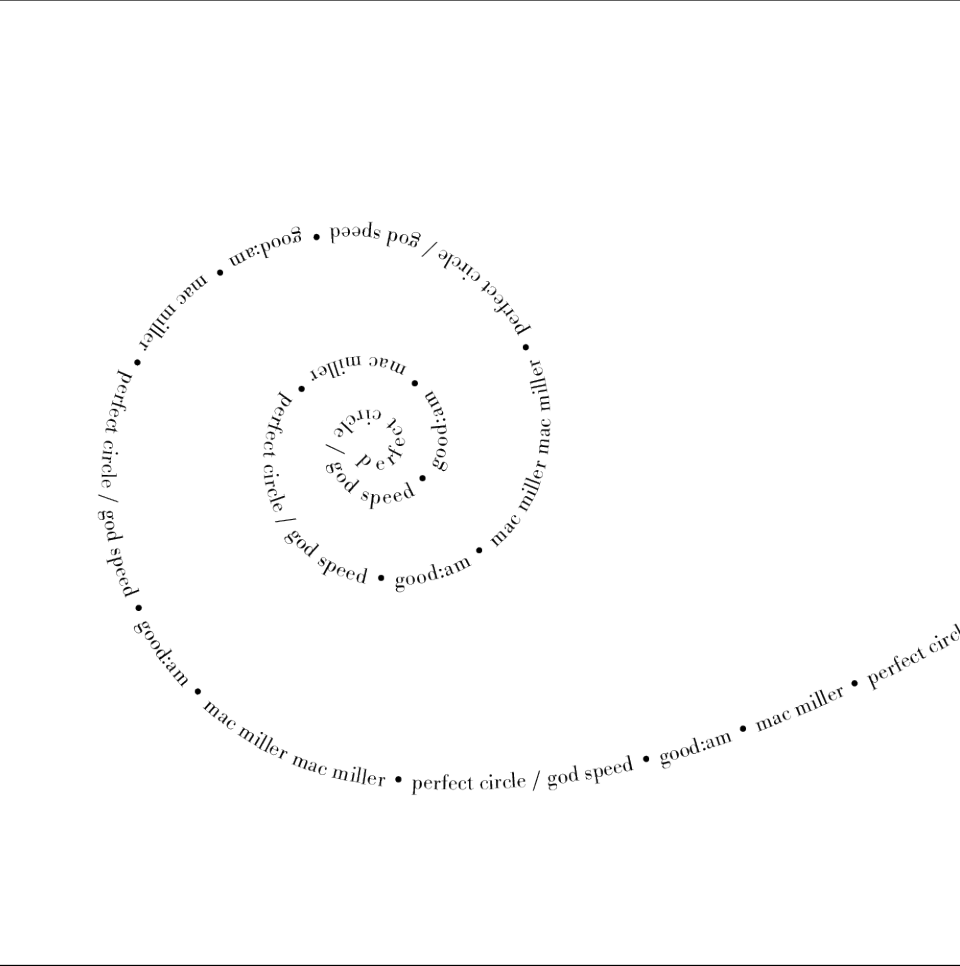


04/40

1/17/23



Design #4 is somewhat reminiscent of design #2, providing the same visual idea of the two title halves dividing the composition. However, in this case there is a much more equal balance of white space between each element.



This final design of Assignment #2 explores the idea of a downward spiral, which is a frequent theme in the song.

ASSIGNMENT 3

COMPOSITION
+ SPACE
+ PT. SIZE

06/40

1/19/23

G
O
D
PERFECT / CIRCLE
S
P
E
E
D
2015 2015
go:od am go:od am
mac miller mac miller

For Assignment #3, each design was restricted to one point size. Design #1 uses 14pt. font and represents the intense themes of death in the song's lyrics.

07/40

1/19/23

PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
MAC MILLER MAC MILLER
GO:OD AM GO:OD AM
2015 2015 2015 2015
2015 2015 2015 2015
GO:OD AM GO:OD AM
MAC MILLER MAC MILLER
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED

Design #2 uses 32pt. font size. Returning to the idea of the 'perfect circle', this design explores emptiness in relation to the circle using white space.

08/40

1/20/23

2015

PERFECT CIRCLE / GODS P E E D

mac miller

go:od am

In design #3 of Assignment #3, kerning is used to visually represent the idea of speed. 24pt. font size.

09/40

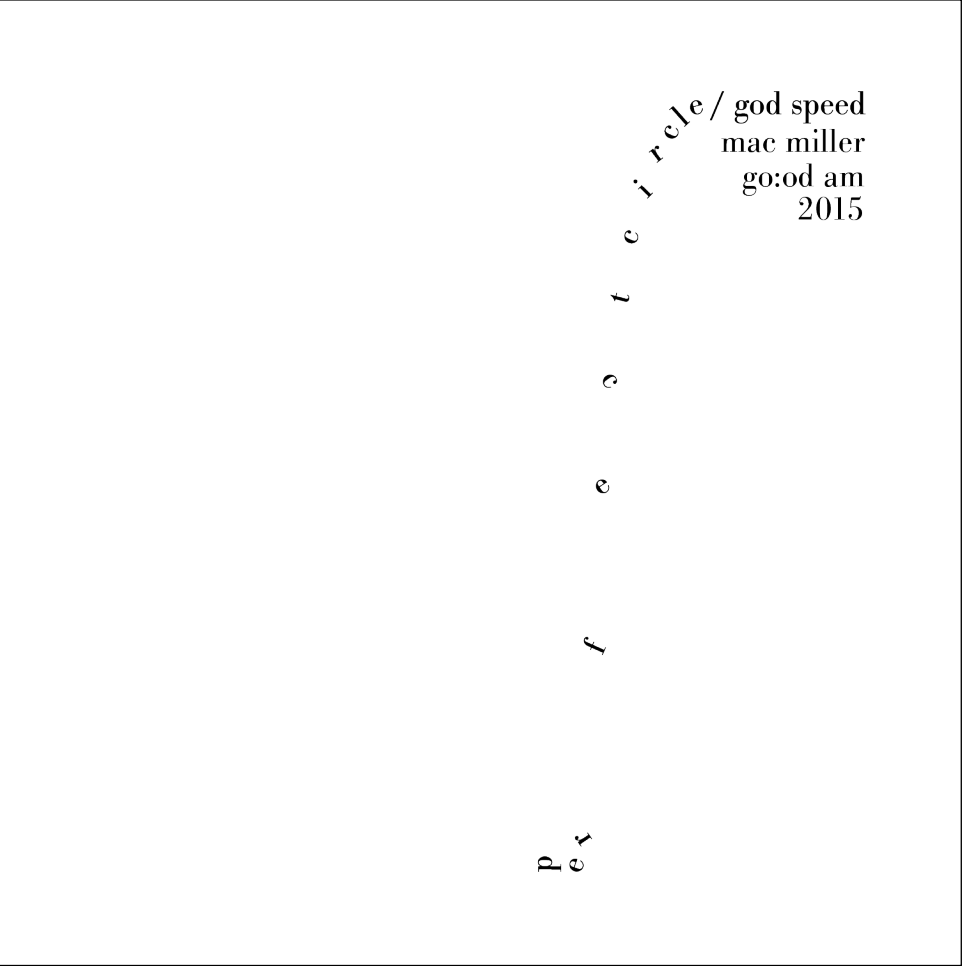
1/21/23

G O : O D A M
PERFECT 2015
CIRCLE / GOD
M A C SPEED
M I L L E R

For the 4th design, the goal was to create a 'perfect' composition out of the unfavorable constraints. Varied tracking sizes were used to convey hierarchy and create a clean square of type. 84pt font.

10/40

1/21/23



The final design of Assignment #3 illustrates the idea of ‘falling off the edge’, losing one’s grasp on their own life. 18pt. font size.



ASSIGNMENT 4 MIXED FONT WEIGHTS

11/40

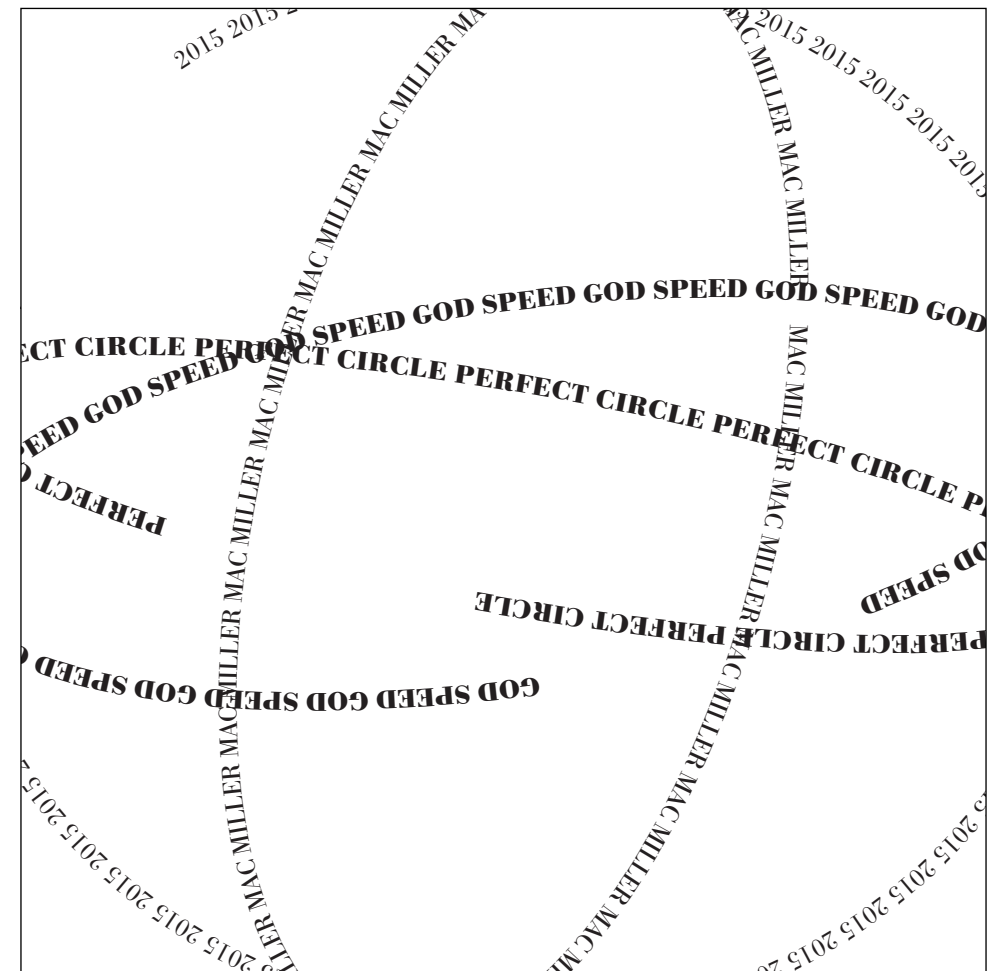
1/23/23



With the inclusion of mixed font weights, assignment #4 allowed for experimentation with somewhat illegible compositions, relying on the varied font weights for visual separation of elements. Design #1 shows the letters falling down to the bottom of the composition. 114pt font size.

12/40

1/23/23



Design #2 returns to the idea of the 'perfect circle' once again, this time utilizing depth and a more clear hierarchy of elements. 14pt font size.

13/40

1/24/23

2015

PERFECT CIRCLE / GO:OD AM
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
PERFECT CIRCLE / GOD SPEED
MAC MILLER

Design #3 explores repetition, using a string of connected dashes as the center point of the composition. 16pt font size.

14/40

1/24/23

PERFECT
/ GOD SPE
ED 2015 R
GO MAC
OD:AMILL
ER

Design #4 again relies strongly on the varying font weights to convey visual heirarchy. Letterforms overlap and intertwine in this composition, distinguished only by their differences in weight. 92pt font size.

15/40

1/24/23



The final design of assignment #4. This design references the original GO:OD AM album cover, portraying a cloud made out of type positioned above where Macs head would be on the cover. 8pt font size.



ASSIGNMENT 5

MIXED
WEIGHTS

PLUS
ITALICS

1/26/23

The introduction of italics in assignment #5 opens up new opportunity in explorations of directionality. This design plays into that with this diagonal fading effect using decreasing italic weights. 42pt. font size.

1/27/23

Design #2 is a wave-like gradient which utilizes italics to create the illusion of swaying in your peripheral vision. 16pt. font size.

18/40

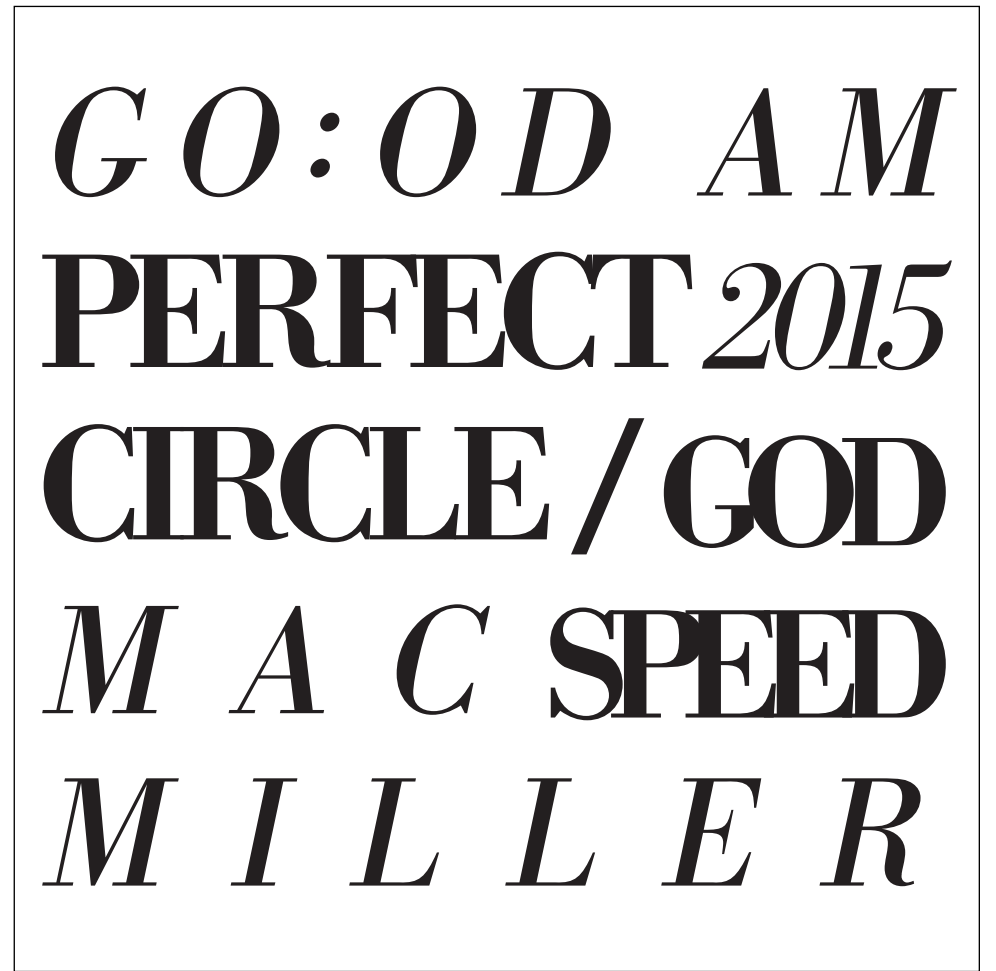
1/28/23



Thinking about being stuck in an endless loop like Miller describes in the song can make you feel trapped. This design utilizes the maximum possible font size, sacrificing almost all readablilty and resulting in a claustrophobic composition. 180pt. font size.

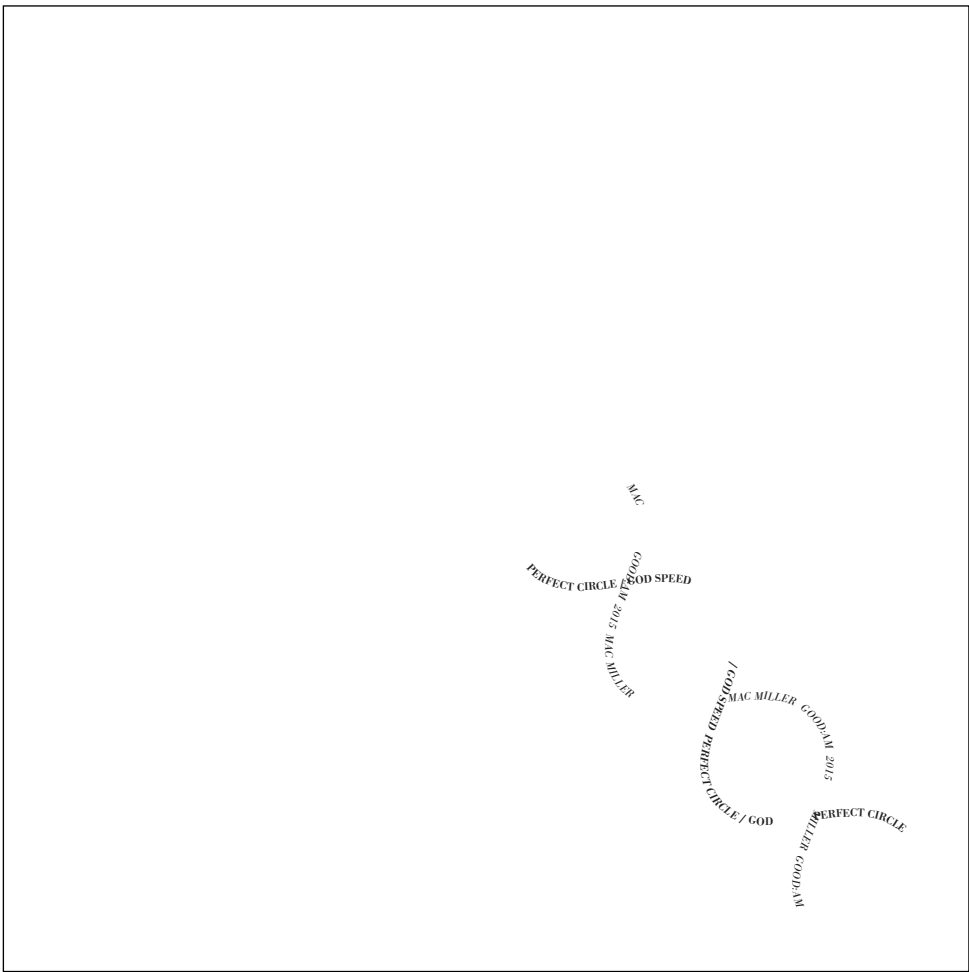
19/40

1/28/23



For the 4th design of assignment #5, the goal was to fight against the title's imperfect nature and create a perfectly square composition. It utilizes varied letter spacings and weights for visual heirarchy. 84pt. font size.

1/29/23



The final design of assignment #5 explores the emptiness and damaged state of the lifestyle Mac describes in the song. Font weights and italics are used to distinguish textual elements within the helix. 6pt. font size.



21/40

1/29/23



The ability to use multiple font sizes in assignment #6 allows new opportunity for exaggerating and emphasizing certain letter forms. This design takes advantage of that, using large letter forms to create a maze-like composition.

22/40

1/29/23



Design #2 portrays a bloated, fisheye-esque title repressenting a sense of warped reality.

23/40

1/30/23



MAC MILLER
GO:OD AM

Design #3 gives a feeling of movement and the idea of “god speed” through the use of scale and italics tilt.

24/40

1/30/23



Perfect Circle / God Speed

Mac Miller
GO:OD AM
2015

In this design, all the letters have fallen from their correct places in the composition, creating a sea of letters at the bottom.

25/40

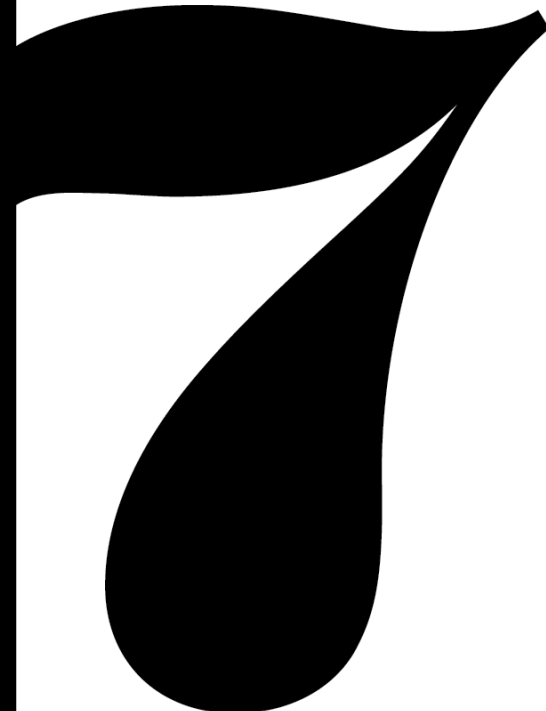
1/30/23



The final design of assignment #6 emphasizes two letters, 'g' and 'm', which connect to every element of the composition.



ASSIGNMENT



RULES



BLOCKS

26/40

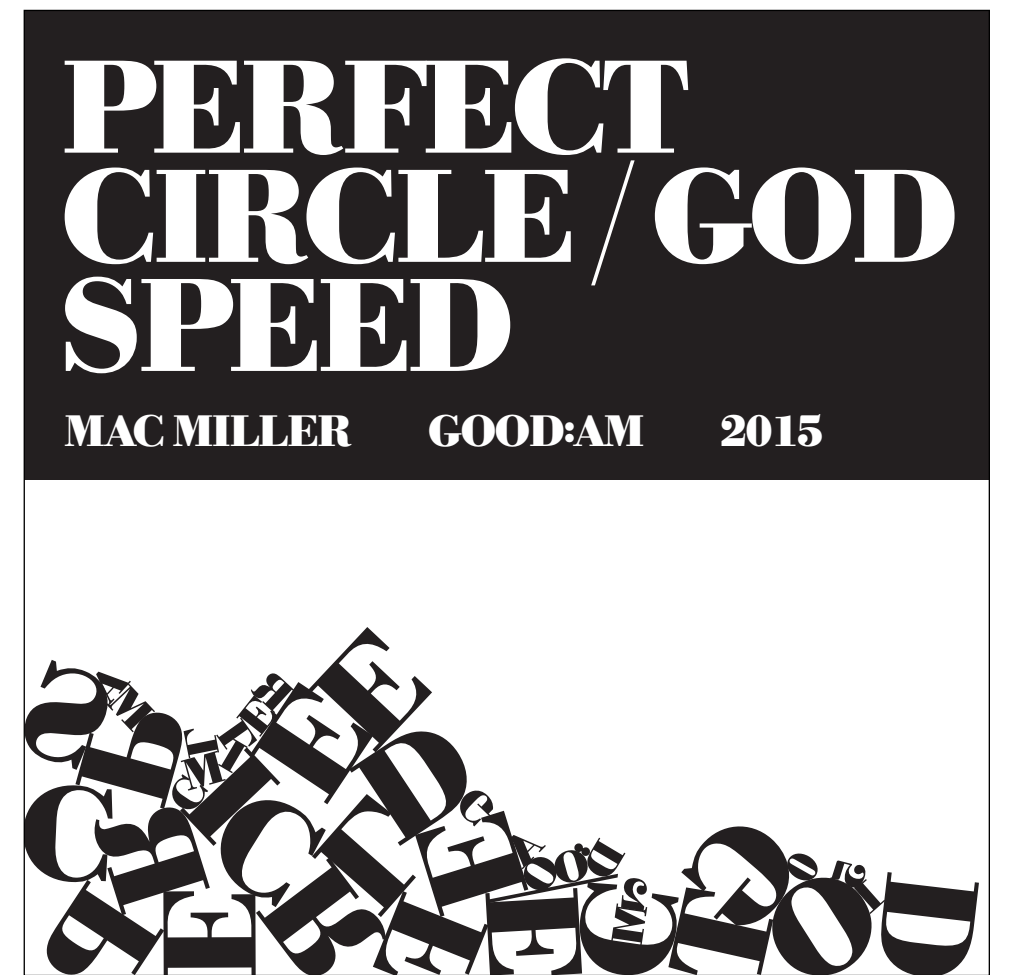
2/2/23



Rules introduced in assignment #7 allow for this effect of cages being made for each element.

27/40

2/3/23



Design #2 uses black as a foreground and white as a background, creating the effect of the letters having been clipped out of a punch sheet, piling up at the bottom of the composition.

28/40

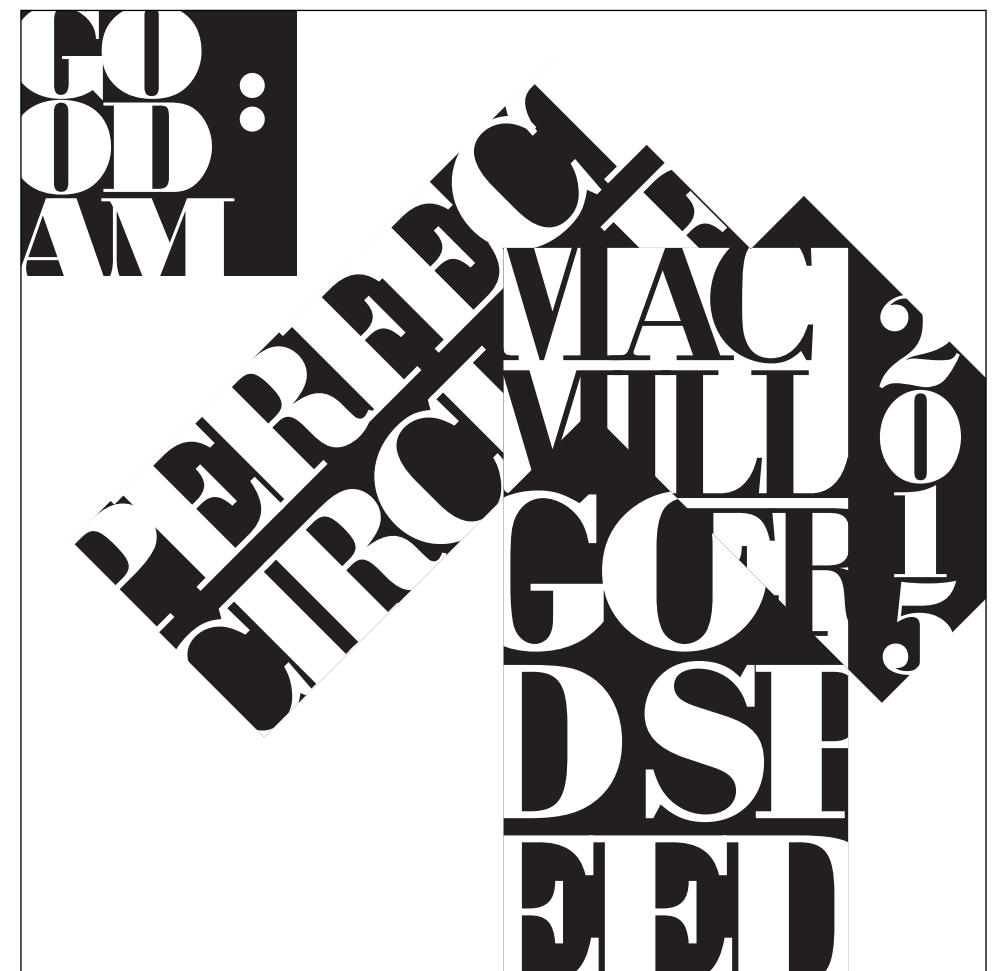
2/3/23



Design #3 is an experiment in using rules to make exciting compositions and direct eyesight in the right directions.

29/40

2/4/23



Again assigning foreground to black and using white text as an extension of the background, this design utilizes negative space between elements to create contrast. This allows for highly visible individual elements in a compact space.

30/40

2/4/23



The final design of assignment #7 uses an excess of rules and blocks in combination to create a glitched effect.

ASSIGNMENT 8

TYPE + COLOR + SOUND NOTATION

31/40

2/7/23



The first sound notation exploration uses a warped perspective and blurry, grainy text to emulate the state of mind that Mac writes about in the songs.

32/40

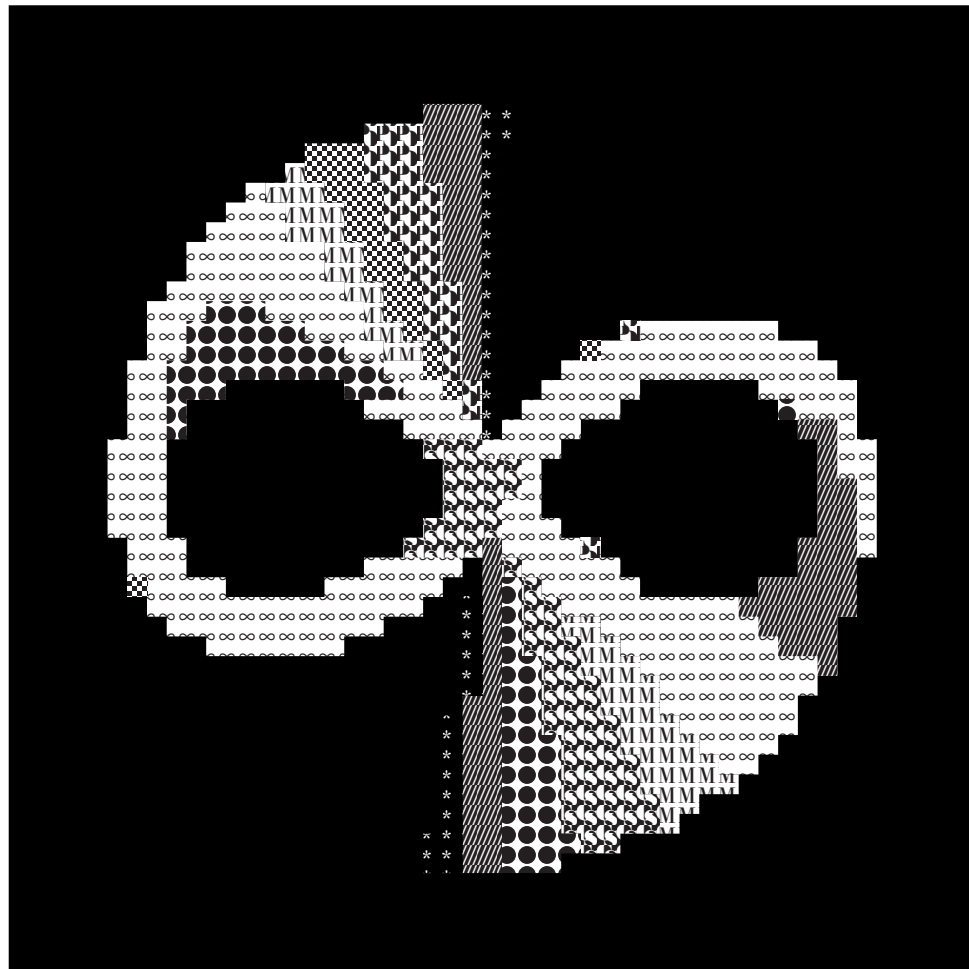
2/9/23



The second soundscape focuses on the second part of the song with colorful, loud colors and a shattered “wake up” emulating the shakey promise Mac makes to himself to be better.

33/40

2/10/23



The final sound notation exploration is a combination of both halves, using patterns to create a warped infinity symbol which represents the lifestyle patterns that Mac is trying desperately to escape.

34/40

2/10/23



Design #4, the first of two designs in the series which use the original elements, is meant to represent the distinct sonic differences between the two halves of the song.

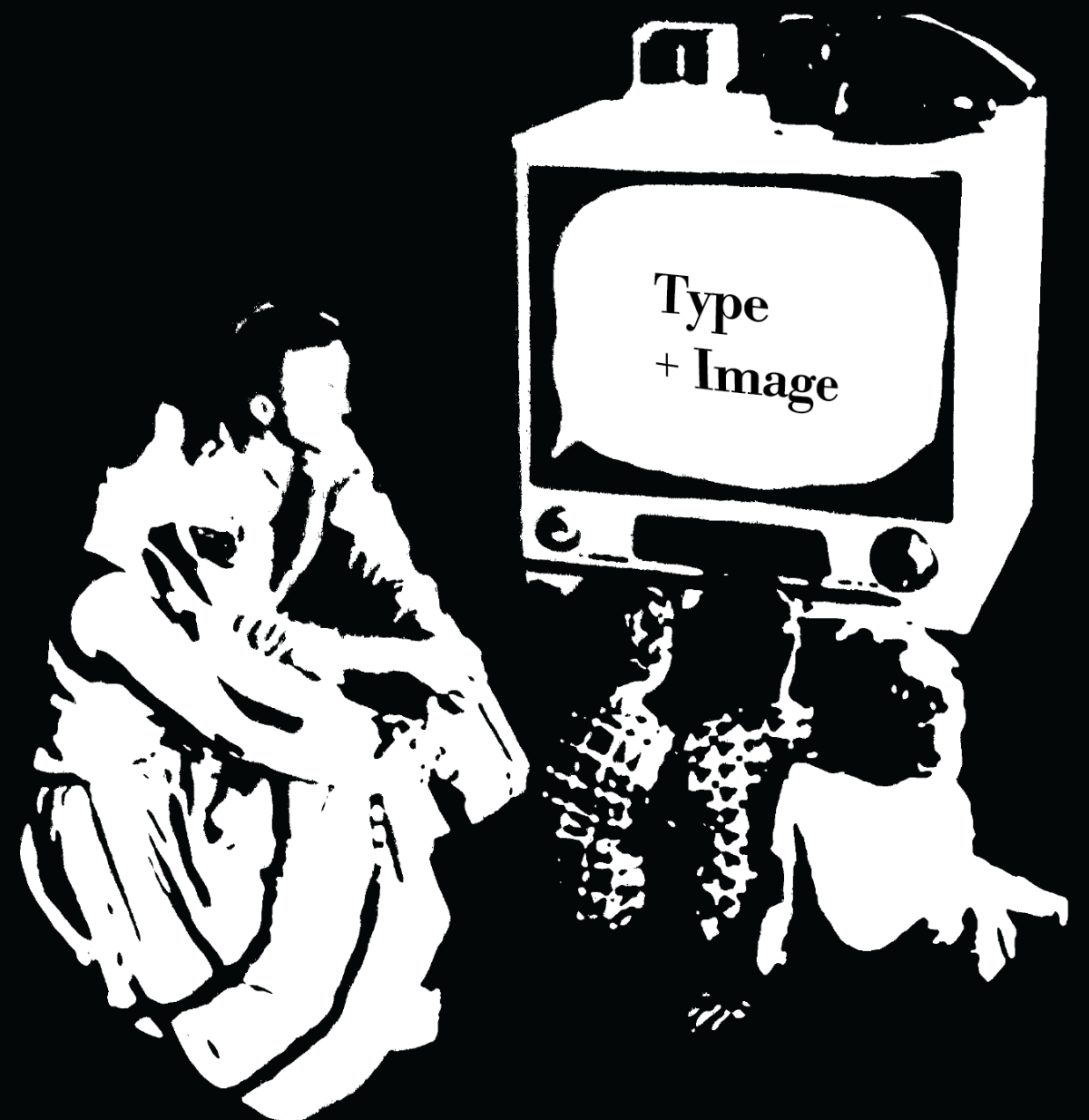
35/40

2/11/23



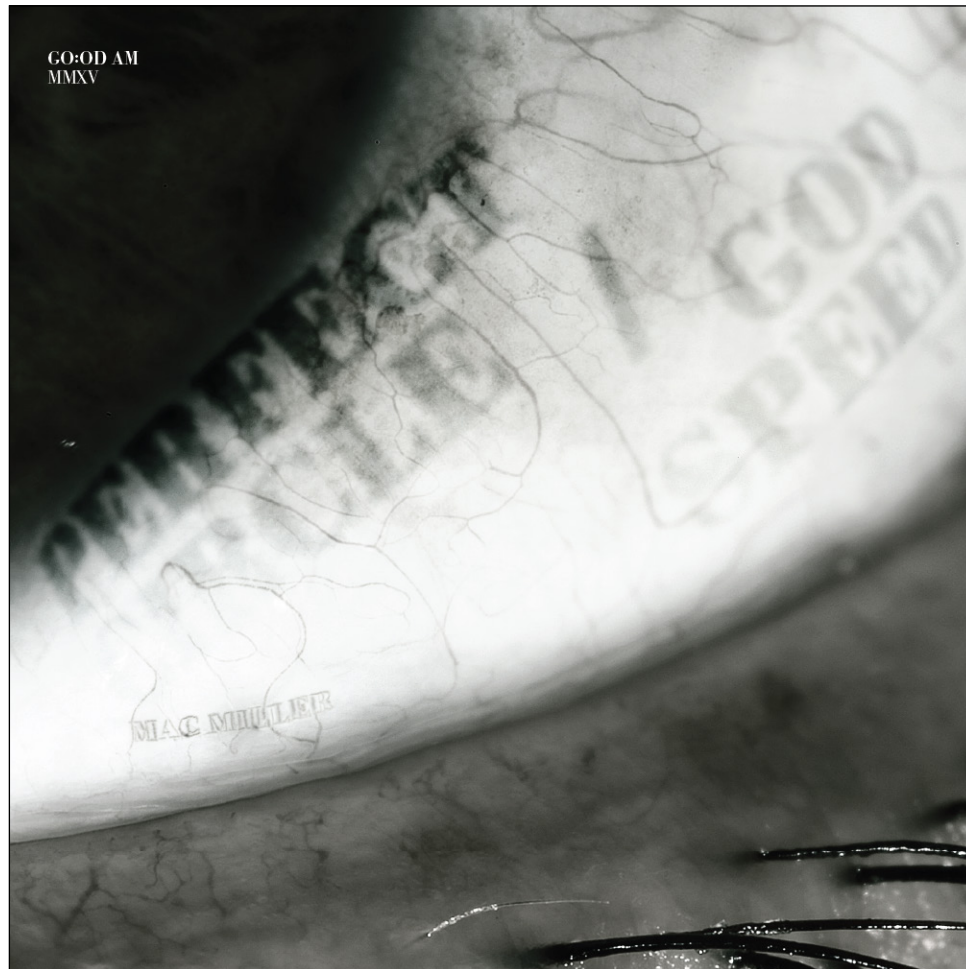
The final design of assingment #8 uses a liquified pattern filled in with type.

ASSIGNMENT 9



36/40

2/13/23



This is the first design of assignment 9: exploring the relationship between image and type. In this particular artwork, the type is integrated into the image, with the song title reflected in the eyeball and the artist's name integrated into the vein structure.

37/40

2/13/23



The second design of series #9. Continuing with the prompt of image in combination with text, this design puts a gritty spin on the album's original album cover. The title text is a collage of miscellaneous Bodoni lettering sourced from around the internet.

38/40

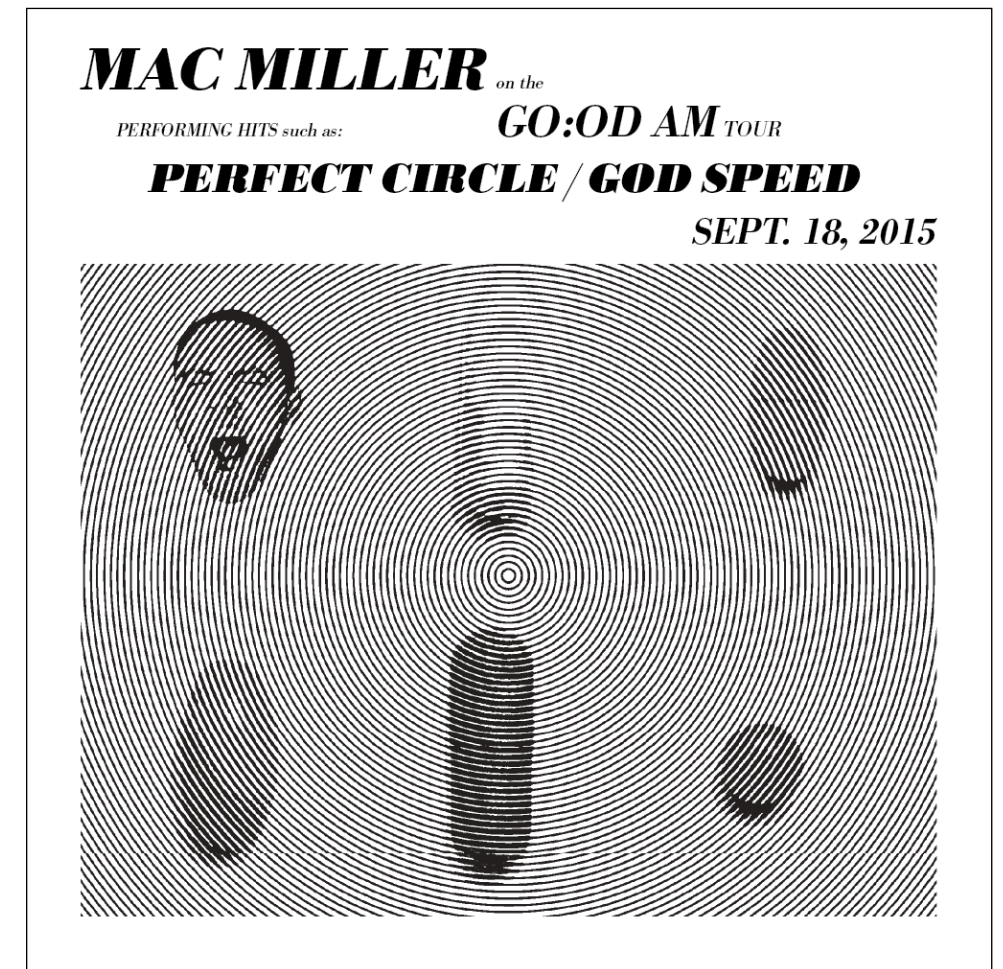
2/14/23



Design #3 is pretty straightforward, utilizing the new accessibility of image to literally represent the song as a CD.

39/40

2/14/23



This composition was created with concert posters in mind. The gritty graphic, made up of circles with different weights, works with the text to create an underground-rave style poster.

40/40

2/14/23



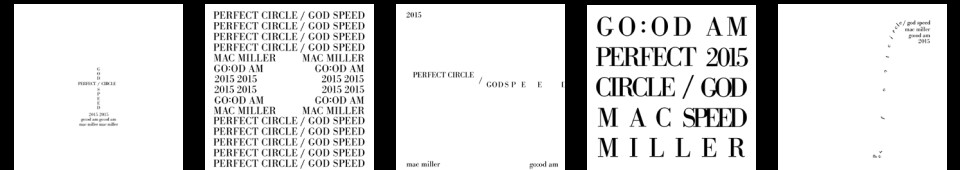
The final design of assignment #9 utilizes the lyrics and other notable elements to fill out a newspaper-inspired composition.



ASSIGNMENT 2



ASSIGNMENT 3



ASSIGNMENT 4



ASSIGNMENT 5



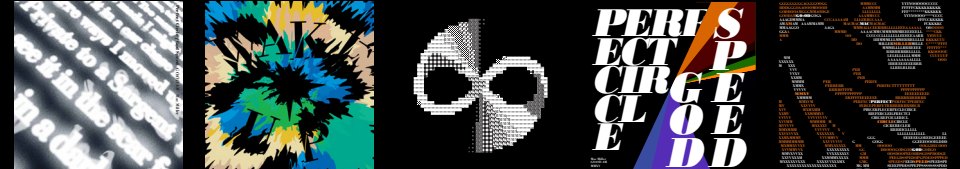
ASSIGNMENT 6



ASSIGNMENT 7



ASSIGNMENT 8



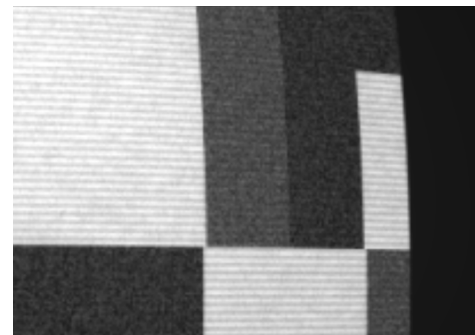
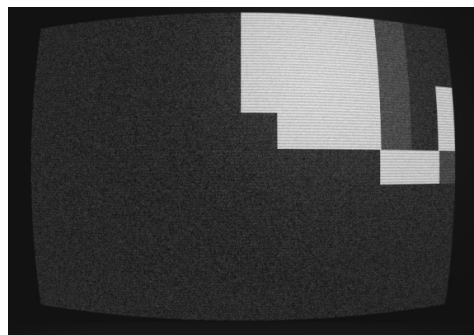
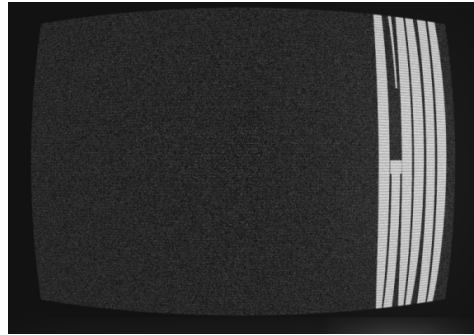
ASSIGNMENT 9



Type Animation

Style

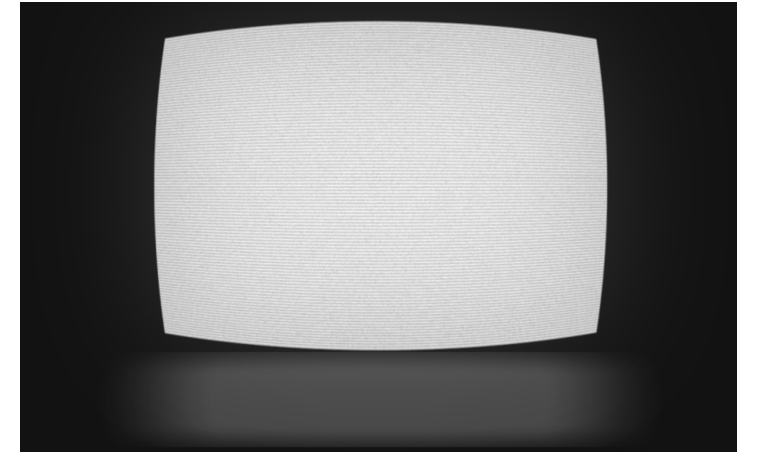
On every beat in the animation, where an element is entering, exiting, or moving, there is a jittery, ‘glitchy’ transition style. This transition masks the otherwise rigid cuts and smooth motion that would come with these transitional points. Observing the following four frames (left) shows exactly what methods of warping, transforming, and distorting work to make these transitions.



Close-up snapshots of the CRT screen, pixelated transition frame, and surface reflection.

Composition

The animation takes on a ‘screen within a screen’ composition, emulating the look of an old tape being played on a CRT television. The curved screen and visible scan lines contribute to the look of the screen, while a subtle glow and surface reflection work to ground it in space within the composition.



Artist Interview

Mac Miller Reflects on his Hiatus, Label Transition and ‘GO:OD AM’

“Coming off of his latest album drop GO:OD AM, Mac Miller has been on an interesting journey as of late. Recently, the 23 year-old Pittsburgh native was able to sit down with HYPETRAK to discuss his two year hiatus, the transition between moving from an independent to a major label and his growth as an artist.”
- Austin Boykins for Hypebeast, 2015

HT: So this is obviously your first project being signed to a major. How’s transition been like? Sometimes with a major you don’t have full creative control –

MM: No we set everything up so I’d have complete creative control. There’s nothing different in the way that things are done. There’s no A&R, no executive producer. It’s just me doing the same shit I’ve always done and that was really important to me. To come out and do the first major and have all of these really big players a part of it – maybe at some point, like maybe at some point I’ll sit and work with Timbo and shit – but it’s not time for that yet.

HT: What sparked you to do music again during those two years?

MM: It’s been in the process of being created for a long time, and I wanted my next statement to come from a place of confidence. I had to get myself in a state of mind that was comfortable with myself and what my life is. So I wanted this album to be more upbeat and fun. There’s nothing wrong with having fun. A lot of people are like “Having fun is corny.” Nah dude, having fun is tight and it’s way better than being depressed.

HT: So tell us about the people you worked with on this album.

MM: As far as production ID Labs did six of them. I went back home and worked with the home team. I didn’t do any of the beats on this one. Sha Money XL did a joint; Sounwave did a couple; Frank Dukes did a bunch of shit on it because he’s fucking crazy with it. The only feature that was made together was with Ab-Soul. He was at the studio when I was making something and I was like “Yo, let’s make this song.” But everyone else that’s featured on it was after the fact, like after I made the record I was like “I want this person to do this.”

MM: ... Juicy J does some ad libs and has a line; Schoolboy Q has a skit and sings



background vocals; Little Dragon sends the album out – Yukimi sings and the rest of the band plays on this one record; and Lil B does some spoken word poetry shit on it. At this point I knew what I wanted to do with this album, and I have relationships with people where I can be like “Yo, can you do this on this” and not “Hey man, can I get a 16?” So it’s more like that.

HT: What’s the meaning behind the title?

MM: It’s split like a clock – like how 12:30 is four digits. So G, O, colon, O, D and then AM. It’s more like clarity – if you were on a weeklong acid trip and you sleep for two days, and you walk outside and you’re like, “Oh shit, reality.” That’s what the album is – back to reality.

HT: I’ll be good in the AM.

MM: Yeah, that’s exactly the point.

“I’LL
BE
GOOD
IN
THE
AM”

GO:OD AM

Tracklist

Doors

Brand Name

Rush Hour

Two Matches (*feat. Ab-Soul*)

100 Grandkids

Time Flies (*feat. Lil B*)

Weekend (*feat. Miguel*)

Clubhouse

In the Bag

Break the Law

Perfect Circle / God Speed

When in Rome

ROS

Cut The Check (*feat. Cheif Keef*)

Ascension

Jump

The Festival (*feat. Little Dragon*)

1h 10m

© 2015 Warner Records Inc.