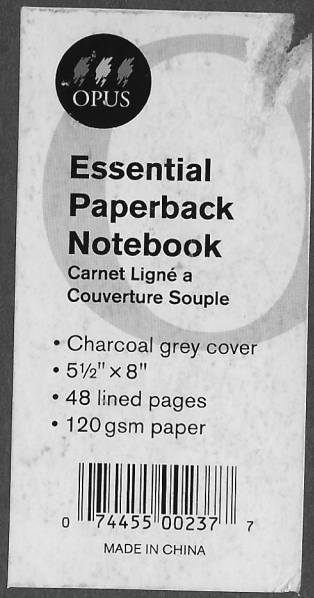
Curious Markings
Vol. I



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Sigils / Runes

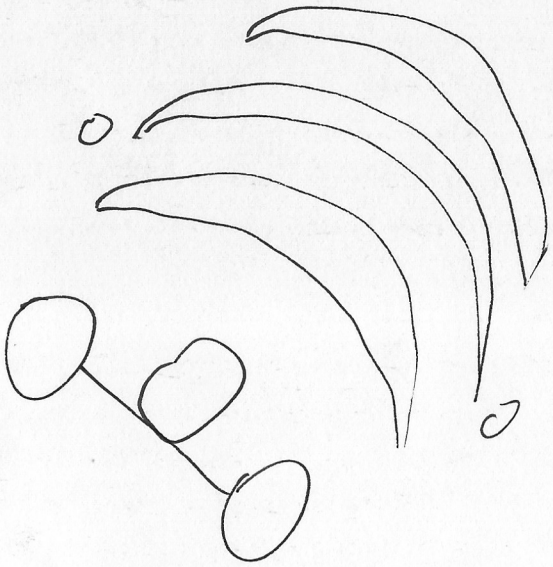
12/27/17

The first sigil I created was about 3 months ago when I came up with an idea that I later found out was quite similar to what 'The Mysterious Package Company' does. This sigil represented the idea of 'Protection' and was the first of what could have been many. The idea was eventually scrapped, but I like what I had created and let my thoughts on why I would create more percolate. A couple months passed and nothing progressed.

Then, I came across a website/app called Simbi (simbi.com). Simbi is a place where people can offer services doing things that they love to do in exchange for services from other people, or the platform's currency that is only exchanged on the website.

On Simbi, I decided to offer a service called 'Random Sigil Design'. I didn't (and still don't) know what I would do with the sigils, but I knew I wanted to grow my portfolio of them, and I thought Simbi would be a great place to not only

'Protection'



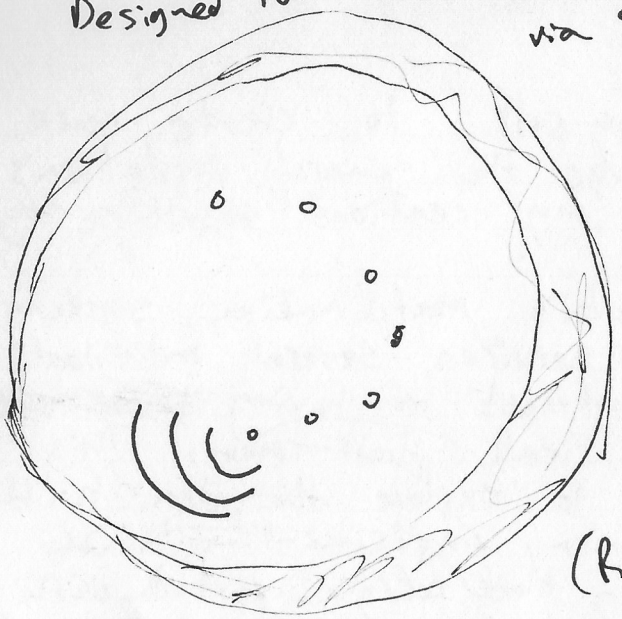
Rough sketch of the sigil that started this path of exploration.

Motivate myself to create more, but to gauge the general population's interest in my creations of this style.

Through Simbi's matchmaking system for peoples services, several individuals expressed interest in having a sigil to call their own. This inspired me to explore the idea further. I have been experimenting with different papers, using black acrylic, printed with an ink-jet printer, indian ink, and archival ink pens.

An expansion of the sigil designs on Simbi can be found through a new service I'm offering on Simbi where I send out a 'Mysterious Letter.' The envelope of the letter possesses the 'Protection' sigil. In the letter, I claim that I can see sigils everywhere, and that I can see specific ones when I'm thinking about someone. I include a sigil that represents when I'm thinking about them. I claim that I don't know what it means, but will follow-up with them if I learn

"Growth"
Designed for Jenn Danielson
via Simbi:



1/18/18
"Oshlaseen"

(Rough sketch)

Jenn wanted the sigil to represent "the highest good."

My response:

The highest good - My interpretation of that, for me personally, is growth. This sigil resembles a fetus in the womb with its spine spiraling out in a fibonacci sequence. With growth comes knowledge, understanding, wisdom. The more we grow, the more we can create and perpetuate goodness.

anything new.

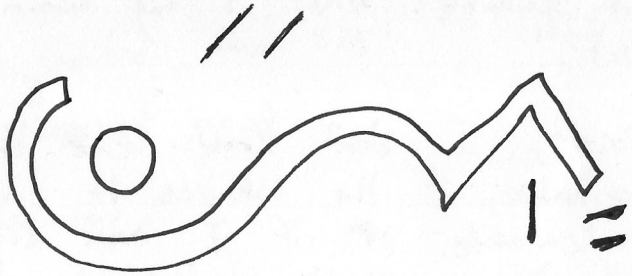
So, at this point I have a way to motivate myself to consistently create more designs, and with the letter, a potential avenue to make the story of these sigils more interesting.

With my background in having dipped my toes into the tech startup world, I'm continually asking myself, "does this have value? Is it scalable? What is my minimum viable product?"

At this point, I don't know if these sigils have value, if the avenues it could take are scalable, or if I can create an MVP. At the same time, this is Art, and artistic pursuits do not necessarily need to have monetary value, and certainly not need to be scalable.

But what if the artist of a particular work has a business oriented mind? A natural salesman? A full stack web developer with an education in marketing and graphic design? Do these aspects

Sigil 'representing' Danielle Starita, a Simbi customer of the Mysterious letter.



(Rough sketch)

of the artist exist independently of said artist's art? If the answer is no, I think that would be a terrible shame.
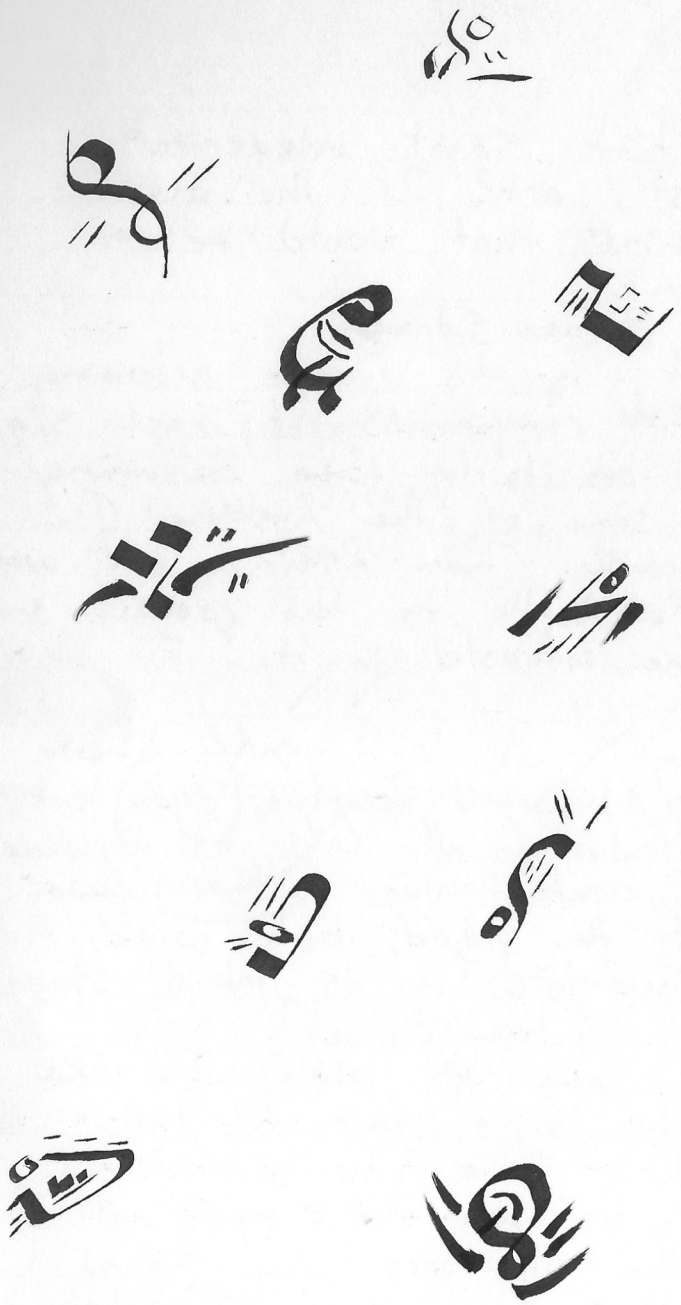
12/28/17 → Some Ideas

One thought is to create meaning from individual components of each sigil. This would be fairly time consuming and remove some of the mystery I'm trying to create. Then again, It would add substantial depth to the project and engage anyone interested in it.

Another thought is to engage those interested to try and decipher each one's meaning by analyzing all sigils as a whole. This would create value further down the path of the project, but would make it seem incomplete in its initial stages.

Whatever I come up with, I'd like there to be a degree of the unspoken. Where those who are curious enough to investigate the sigils will likely be the only ones who know anything about them.

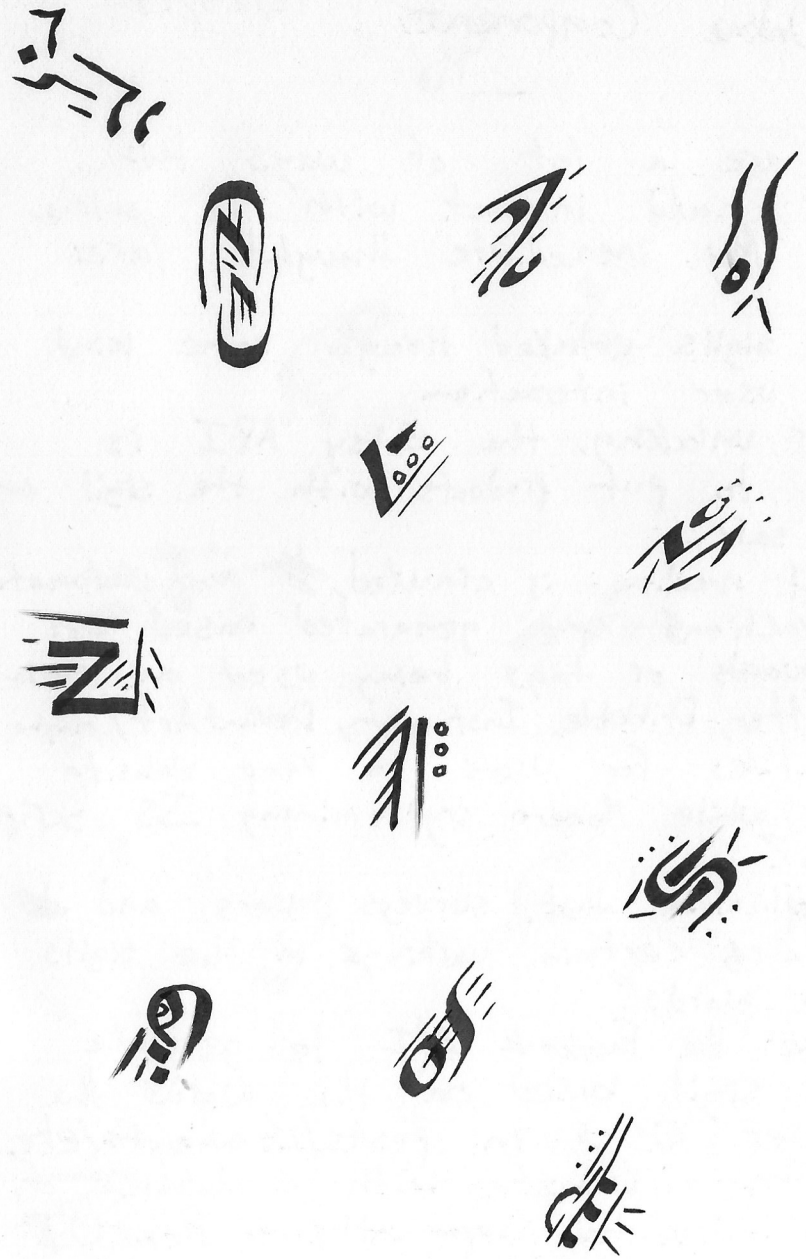
Thumbnails



An Online Component 12/28/17

There are a lot of ways this project could interact with the online world. My immediate thoughts are:

- New sigils unlocked through some kind of user interaction
- After unlocking, the Etsy API is used to put products with the sigil on for sale.
- Social media is crawled, and automatic interactions are generated based on keywords or tags being used on social (Twitter, Dribbble, Instagram, DeviantArt) maybe other
- Incentives for users to keep website open while Monero cryptomining JS script runs?
- An application that surveys users and associates certain markings in the sigils with words?
  > Use the Facebook API to generate a sigil based on the words the user uses in posts/comments/etc.
- Creating a website with a database of sigils. Use this opportunity to flex UI design/CSS/JS muscles.
  > tag sigils by its components
  > searchable by components and description



Mediums 12/28/17

Small scale:
- Hand painted
- Wood burning
- Hand drawn
- Individual letters

Medium scale:
- Lino stamps
- Ink-jet printed
- Copy shop printed

Large scale
- Online component
- Screen printing
- Bulk discount shipping

How did big artists:
- Start off?
- Grow?
- Scale?

AND:
- How can I utilize my skills to blow them out of the water?
- Think of Keith Haring - any others like him?



The Unknown Language 12/28/17

Since I was in my early twenties, when I am all alone, I speak in jibberish. I do it in different voices, different tones, and the vernacular seems to be ever-evolving. I don't know why I do it, but it is somewhat therapeutic, and makes me feel like I'm speaking my mind to an unknown audience.

In a sense, this jibberish I've been speaking is the vocal equivalent of these sigils. I wonder to myself if this is a justifiable component to these sigil designs.

If so, is it a language? Do I create meaning in it? Or is it for others to decypher? Again, additional mystery could lead to potential consumers being alienated. Maybe that's okay. Maybe I only want to be appealing to those who are naturally inquisitive.

If that's the case, the real question at hand is, does jibberish hold any value to the naturally inquisitive? Likely not, once they realize it is indeed jibberish.



What is the MVP?

Is there an MVP?

12/30/17

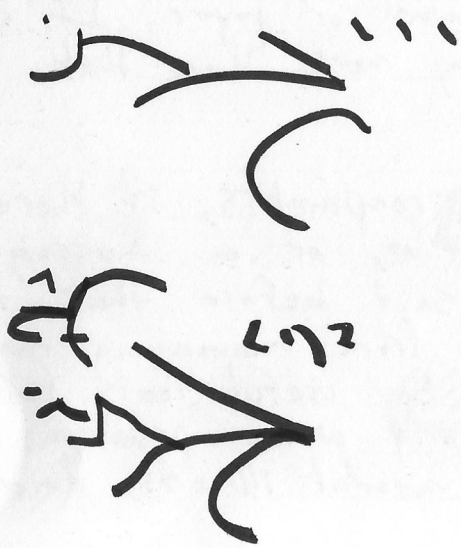
At its most basic level, these sigils could simply be pieces by themselves, ink or paint on a canvas or paper. It could easily be something more than that, but what?

If there are other components, is there a story, a narrative, or a message? ~~Could~~ Brittany has said before that the things I've learned from managing my schizophrenia could be useful tools for other men struggling with problems like relationships, mental illness, and addiction.

Throughout my process, I've wanted to attach a title and description to each sigil. Perhaps these additions could act as bits of wisdom I've learned from my experiences. Perhaps this could be the sigils' primary value propositions.

I seem to have some talents in design, typography and copywriting. This concept would effectively draw on all of these strengths. But, is it scalable?

Seeing sigils everywhere



Above are rough sigil sketches by Brittany when we were seeing sigil forms in a foggy, dripping window. Some of my interpretations are on the previous thumbnails pages.

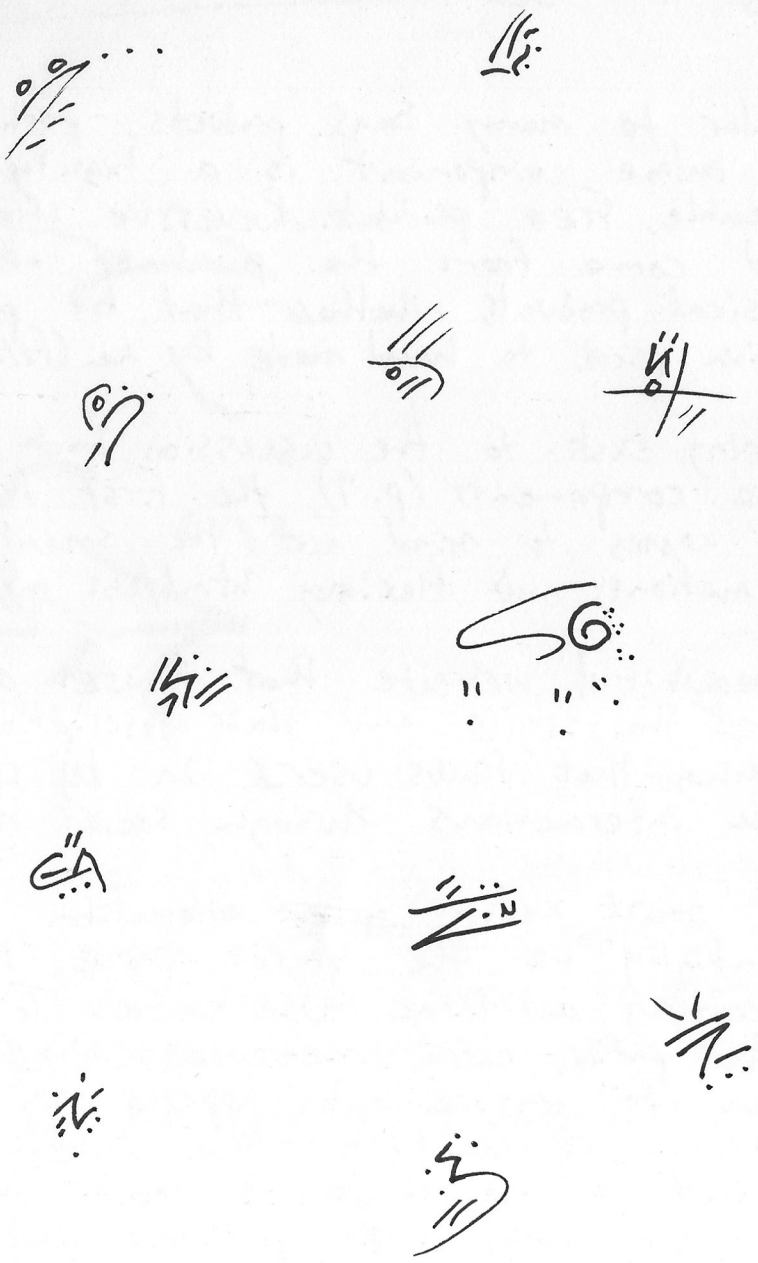
Is it scalable? 12/30/17

Similar to many SaaS products, perhaps the online component is a highly shareable, free product. Revenue streams could come from the purchase of physical products, whether that be printed (medium priced), to hand made by me (full price).

Referring back to the discussion back to online components (p. 9), the first thing that comes to mind are the social media automations, and flexing html/css muscles.

A beautiful website that focuses attention on the sigils and their descriptions. Something that draws users in by creating online interactions through social media.

This social media automation could potentially be the secret sauce to generating a large user base. To keep a low profile, extra measures should be taken to ensure it appears as if a human is creating these interactions. I think if big companies copied this idea, it would make platforms like Twitter and Instagram horrendously unpleasant and result in a policy change in API utilization



Initial series:

How many sigils? 12/30/17

I think this may be more of a question of how much time I want to spend on this.

One sigil

- Thumbs: 1 hour
- Painting: 1 hour
- Vector: 2 hours
- Title: 0.5 hour
- Description: 1 hour
- Data entry: 1 hour
- Scope creep: 2 hours

Total: 8.5 hours

10 sigils: 85 hours

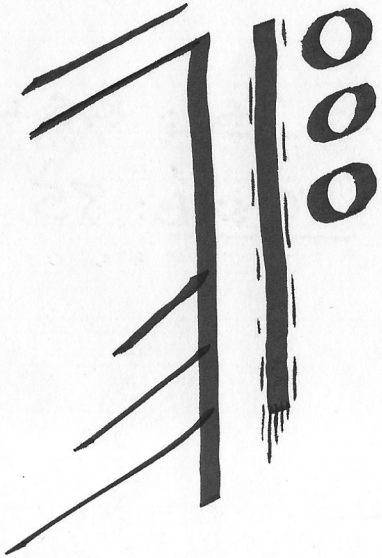
One-time tasks

- Website backend: 20 hours
- Website frontend: 30 hours
- Paper selection: 4 hours
- Ink/paint selection: 4 hours
- Scope creep: 20 hours
- Conceptual development: 20 hours

Total: 98 hours

Total w/ 10: 183 hours

This roughly equates to ten weeks of 50% MRI work, 50% sigils work. Then again, I tend to work a lot faster than my time projections.



"SAKROLOS"

"Sakral'os" | Leading while Following

12/30/17

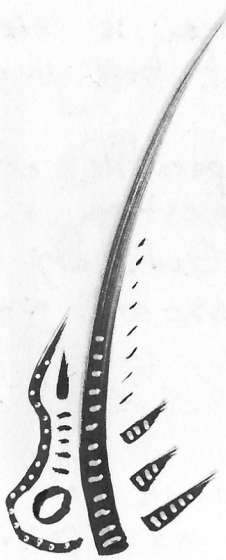
Whether you're following your parent, an employer, an authority, or a higher power, it's important not to lose sight of leadership. No one is ever a true authority, and we all must be accountable for that.

It is an imperative of the human condition to question eachother, the universe, and even God. By doing this, we question ourselves, and grow closer to all three.

//////////////////////////////

This is a sample of what could be done as far as pairings go. There is the jibberish used as the title, the subtitle being the rough translation, and the description being the meaning of the sigil based on my experiences and how I've become healthier and more at peace with myself and the world around me. The first paragraph seems to be a warm-up. The second paragraph doesn't feel like it was written by me, and this is not the first time I've found myself writing a seemingly profound description independent of my way of thinking.









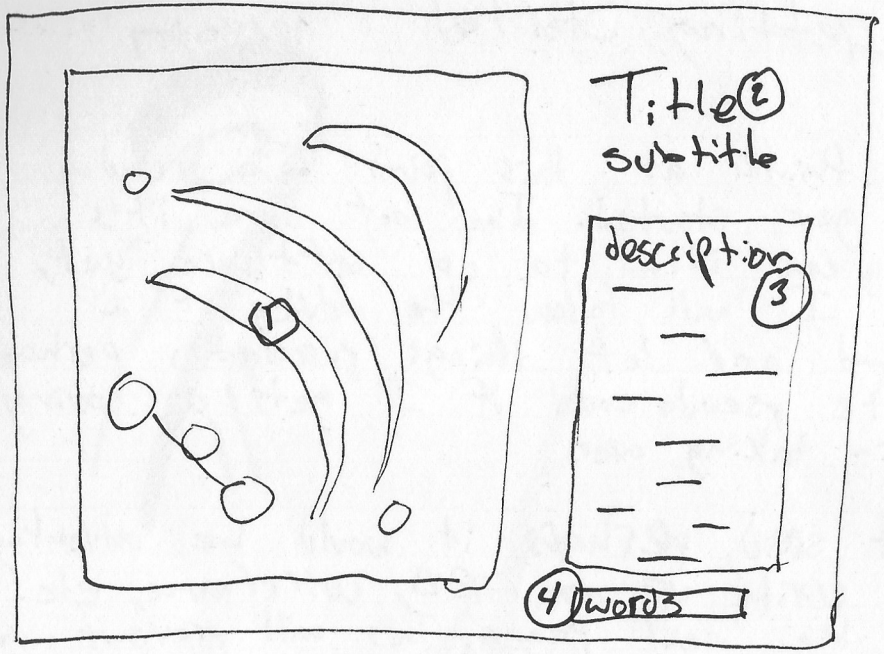
Getting Started 12/30/17

I think at this point I'm ready to get started. I'm not sure it's a great idea to do software yet, but I will follow the advice of a friend and let things percolate, perhaps write pseudo code if I get a coding brain taking over.

That said, perhaps it would be advantageous to write up an ERD, wireframe, etc. on the next pages. This will prevent me from bogging myself down in too much code.

In the meantime, I will continue with thumbs and creating finished sigils. Or, 'finished' in the sense of the concept I currently have laid out for them.

Wireframe



(1) Components of the sigil are certain colors (greyscale?) → on hover/tap, they become black. As components become black, more of the description is revealed.

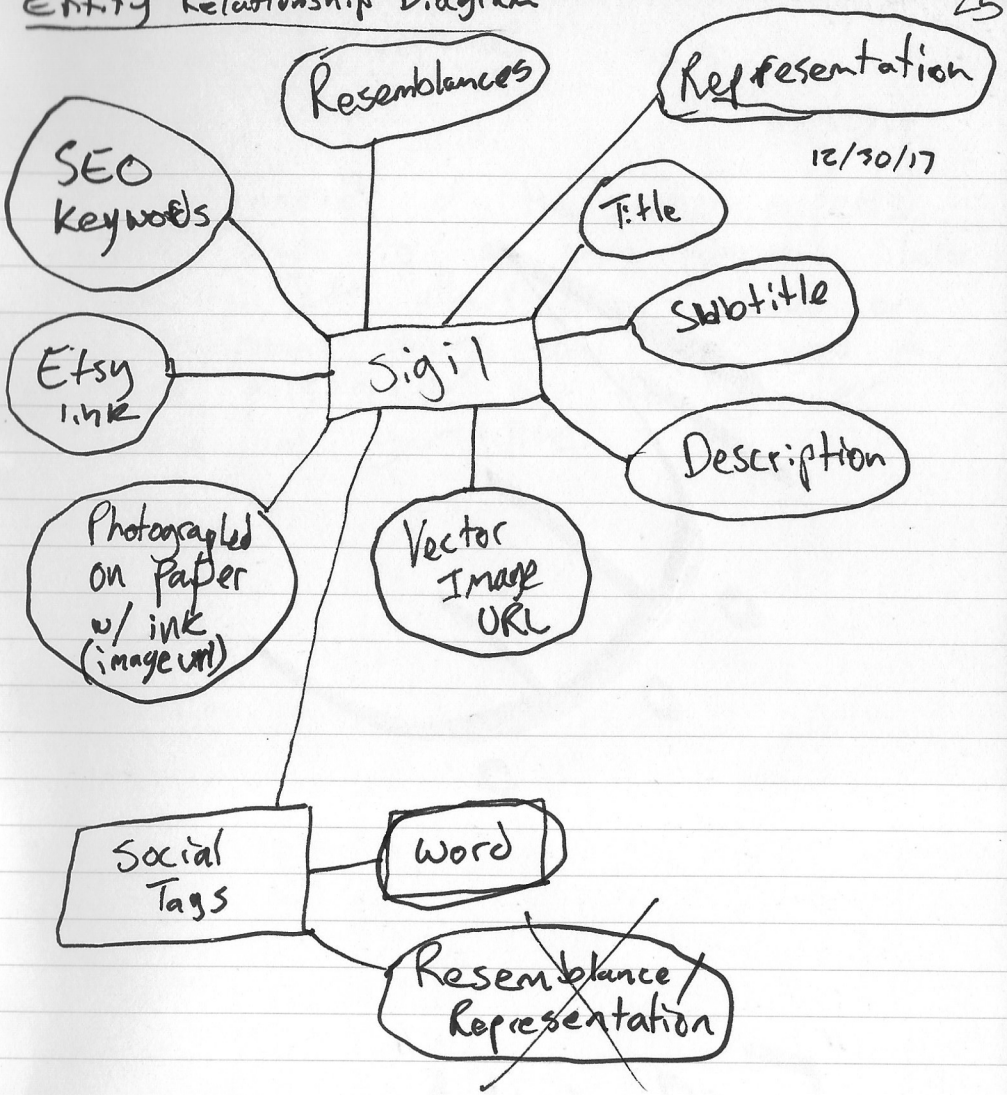
(2) Title in unknown language with subtitle being a loose translation.

(3) Only parts of the description are visible until all components of the sigil are interacted with.

(4) A field for users to enter words that they associate with the sigil.

Entity Relationship Diagram

12/30/17





"EZROGNA"

"Ezrogna" | Acceptance

12/30/17

Releasing control of the smaller aspects of life leads to a more peaceful state of being. It allows you to focus on the important things and gives you a clearer perspective on the grander scheme of your life.



Etsy Shop

12/30/17

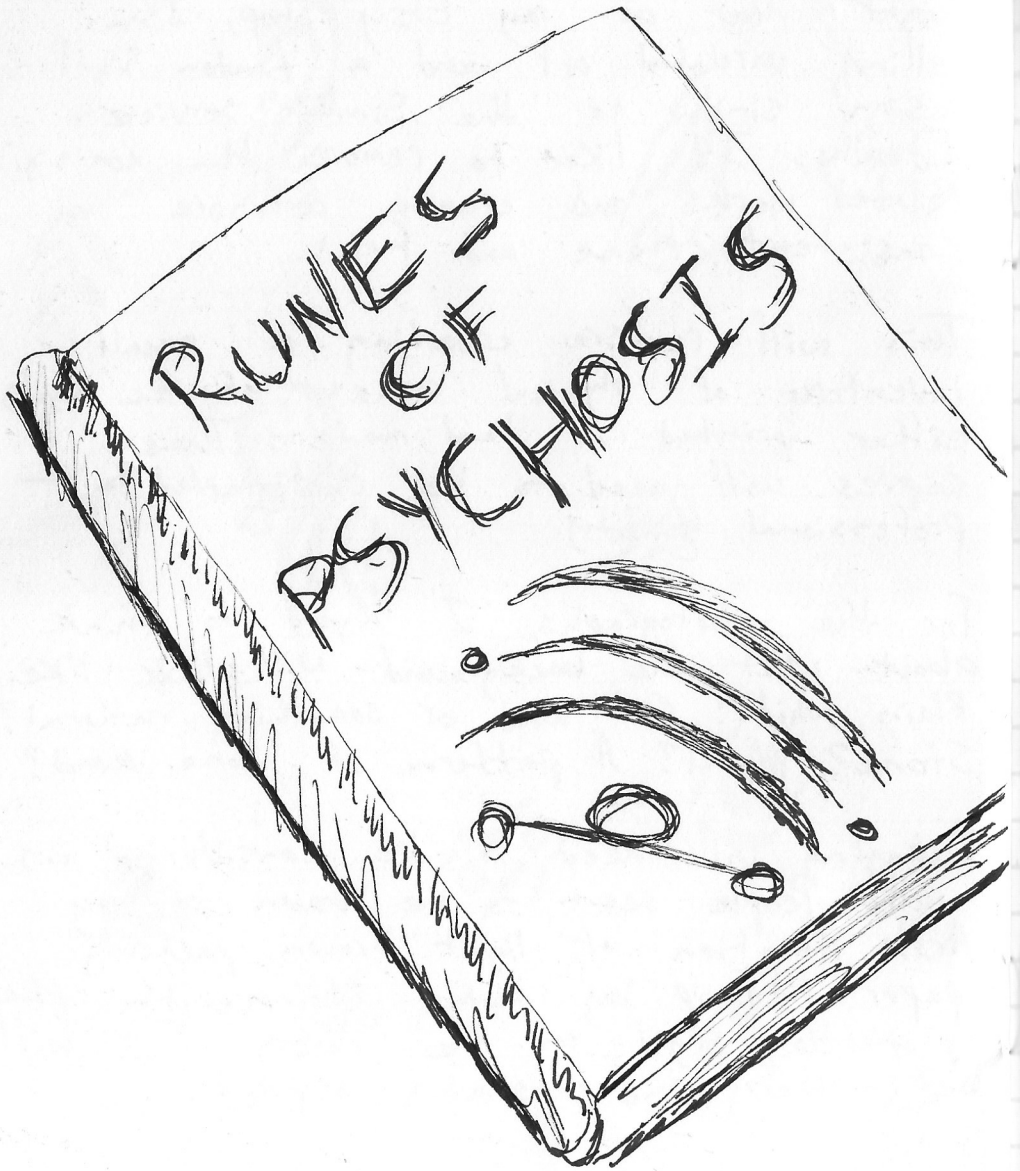
12/30/17

Right now on my Etsy shop, I'm selling unrelated art and a 'Random Sigil Design' similar to the Simbi service. Ideally, I'd like to remove the non-sigil related works and create a more consistent theme and feel.

This will require creating a small inventory of physical copies of the sigils either printed or hand made. These copies will need to be photographed with professional quality.

For the photographs, I need to think about what the background will look like. Plain white? Cut wood or something natural? Stone? Metal? A pattern of some kind?

Packaging will need to be considered as well. People seem to be drawn to my first iteration of light brown packing paper tied up by twine string with the protection sigil on the cover. This will be another time-consuming aspect.



What is it called?

12/30/17

When I think about this project and the concepts I've developed for it so far, my first thought for a name is 'Runes of Psychosis'.

I'm not particularly sold on the name, especially because most people don't even know what psychosis means. Worse yet, some people think they know what it means by drawing incorrect conclusions due to the word 'psycho.'

So, how can a name capture what these sigils are? I think to determine that, I need to explore their purpose.

What problem is being solved? What is the reason for any of this? So far, it seems I want to cater this project to the male audience. Self-help, self exploration, introspectiveness, discussing mental health - these are not seen as masculine activities.

This leads to an important point about not just the name of this project, but about the overall design, typography,



Appealing to the Target Audience

12/30/17

mark-making, user experience, etc. How can all of these things be crafted to appeal to, and inform, a male audience?

People have often commented that my designs are masculine, so I should be sure to embrace and perhaps exhaggerate that.

In addition to a name, I need to formulate in one to two sentences what this is, why it exists, and what it does.

On top of that, if I'm to follow any of Guy Kawasaki's advice from 'The Art of the Start 2.0,' I need to come up with a three to five word mantra. A very brief encapsulation of what this is.

While I'm on this train of thought, I should be mindful of other behind-the-scenes work needed for a project like this. Next page.



Doing my Home work.

12/30/17

Things I need to think about:

- Anyone else trying to do this?
- Methods and procedures?
- The 4 P's? (marketing)
- Business plan?
- Business model canvas?
- Value proposition canvas?
- How did they start?
- How did they grow?
- How did they scale?
- How did they change?
- What worked?
- What didn't?

Contexts

- Social movement for men & mental health
- Social media automation tools
- Artists selling their work
- Authors selling their work.
- Self-help/motivational personalities

12/30/17



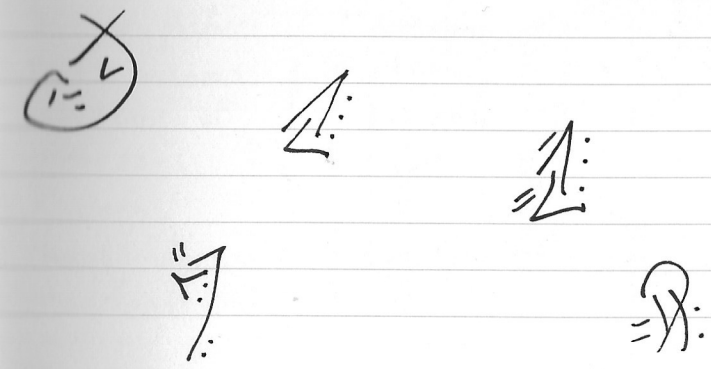
Social

IG, Twitter, Tumblr, Facebook 12/30/17

Via IG, Twitter, & Tumblr, I would make sense for the comment and interaction automations. These automations would be triggered by tags or keywords attached to each sigil.

One thing that cannot be ignored is selling through Facebook. But I wonder about the appropriateness of this avenue, given that the FB marketplace is primarily peoples used items. Posting it there may devalue the products.

It would make sense to have a continual stream of posts on these socials accounts of new sigils. In a world where 'content is King' I wonder if there's anything else I could post that would have value?



Losing direction 12/31/17

My first sigils all had a word or intention behind them. With my recent thumbs both in this book and others, I made whatever my hand led me to. No words or intention behind them.

As a result, I find them getting redundant and overly-elaborate. I still think there's value in the intention-less doodles, but I think I should explore creating more sigils with a concrete thought behind them.

It would be useful to have a list of words to work from, even if the end product is completely different from the word.

Words of inspiration 12/30-31/17

- Hope
- Forgiveness
- Mourning
- Calm
- Prayer
- Soothing
- being surrounded
- harsh winds
- Moonlight
- Silence
- abundance
- gratitude
- direction
- Fortitude
- contentment
- completion
- warmth
- serenity
- energy
- seeing the bigger picture
- self awareness
- awareness of others
- Kindness
- thoughtfulness
- manifestation
- Wonder
- awareness of ignorance
- missing someone/ something
- presence
- movement
- interpretation
- sincerity
- self respect
- bonding
- dream
- embrace
- anger
- hatred
- fury
- defense
- sorrow
- pity
- exhaustion
- annoyance
- itch
- breath
- fear
- rejection
- cacophony
- restlessness
- desperation
- loneliness
- hunger
- rhythm
- intention
- attraction
- failure
- success
- judgement



Judgement



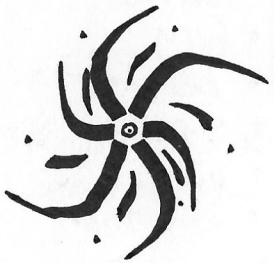
silence



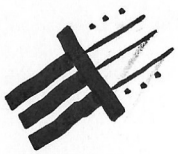
self respect



Forgiveness



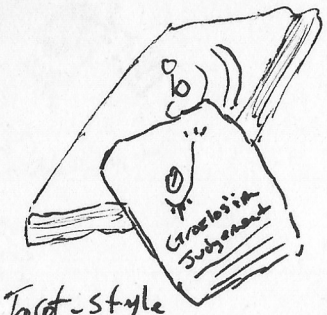
seeing the bigger picture



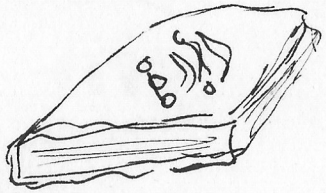
Sincerity

1/1/18

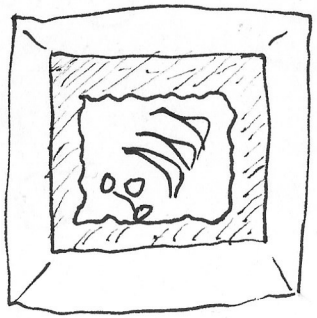




Tarot-style cards



hand-bound journals/sketchbooks



hand-crafted prints on unique paper
↳ possibly framed?

→ Prints could be uniform for off-the-shelf framing option

A storefront?

1/1/18

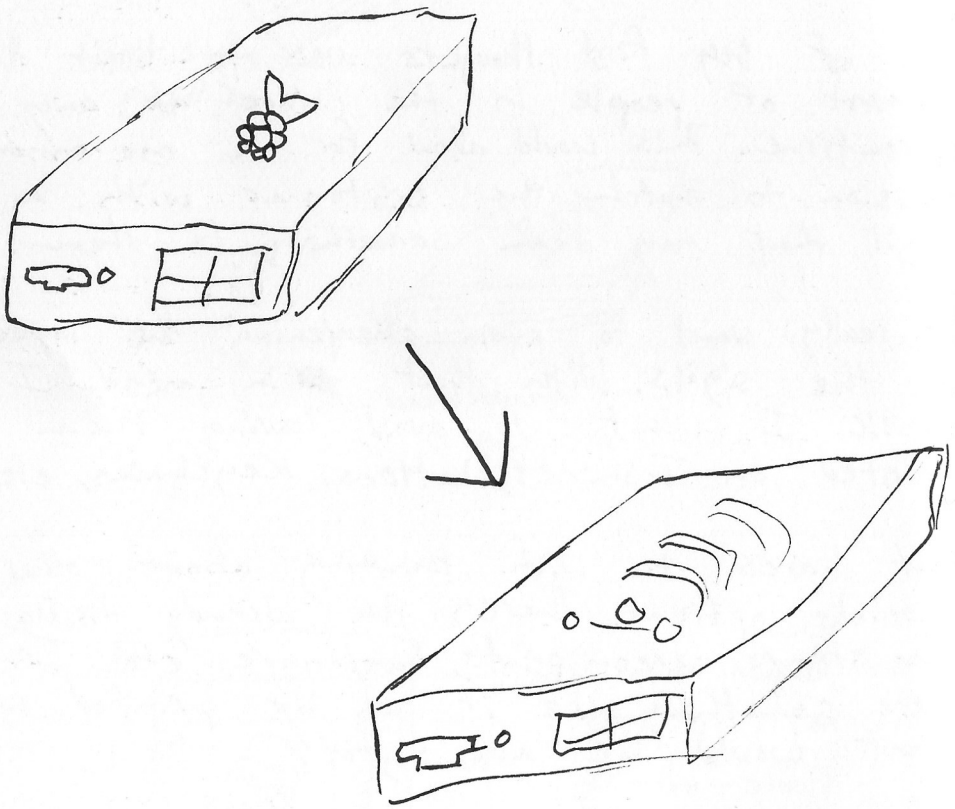
When passing a vacant storefront, I jokingly said, "That's where my sigil store will be." I began thinking more about that possibility today.

One of my first thoughts was to limit the amount of people in the store at any given time. This would allow for a one-on-one session to match the customer with a sigil that may mean something to them.

I really want to avoid 'cheapening' the impact of the sigils. With that ~~in~~ in mind, I think I want to avoid having them printed on T-shirts, buttons, keychains, etc.

That leaves me with thinking about other possible options. There's the already discussed lino stamps, screen prints, hand-made, etc. Is there something else it can be printed on that would be meaningful?

My friend Rob suggested Tarot card style prints. Given my obsession with notebooks and sketchbooks, that would be a logical choice. For all of these products, I would want to utilize local producers for those products.



More Products

1/1/18

I'm not a religious person, but I do know God exists. I do not believe that this knowledge is a contradiction to science. To me, science is a system that reveals more of God to us. In essence, God and science can coexist. God is not an absolute based on what we know now. Our perception of God changes as more of God is revealed to us through the scientific process.

With that in mind, I believe a computer with a custom sigil casing is very much in line with a notebook or sketchbook with custom sigil covers.

The minimum viable product, I think, in this case would be Raspberry Pi computers with a casing with sigil designs on it. Perhaps later on, more powerful systems could be used.

That said, custom decals could be found for existing towers. There is an entire industry already built around doing this kind of thing.

Usque
Ad
Finem