This following text is a reconfiguration using the method of "Exercises in Style" to re-present the main ideas proposed by Hito Steyerl in "In Defense of the Poor Image."

In Defense of the Poor Image
Hito Steyerl

Main Ideas

Steyerl positions the 'poor image,' marginalized in the digital world where resolution serves as a measure of value, in contrast to capital-intensive images produced within the massive systems of image production such as advertising or Hollywood films. According to her, the 'poor image,' which exists outside the capital-intensive image production system, has the potential to form a solidarity among digital laborers, connecting them and harboring the possibility of functioning politically. In essence, she views the 'poor image,' an image visible and creatable by the multitude, as an alternative and revolutionary device.

"In this light, perhaps one has to redefine the value of the image, or, more precisely, to create a new perspective for it. Apart from resolution and exchange value, one might imagine another form of value defined by velocity, intensity, and spread. (…) The poor image thus constructs anonymous global networks just as it creates a shared history. It builds alliances as it travels, provokes translation or mistranslation, and creates new publics and debates. By losing its visual substance it recovers some of its political punch and creates a new aura around it. This aura is no longer based on the permanence of the "original," but on the transience of the copy." (Steyerl, 2012)

This text discuss Steyerl's definition of the 'poor image,' the process of its resurgence, and the themes of visual solidarity as the main ideas. Using the three narrative styles of "Exercises in Style," the emphasis will be on highlighting the key content.

Through the process of translating from one language to another and reshaping the content, it becomes evident how the structure of the content is newly formed and conveyed. Steyerl plays the role of an interpreter between the world and the digital realm, focusing on the poor image. Several metaphors in the text illustrate this role.

In the same way that Steyerl translates her language into other languages, I believe that designers should look for ways to translate and communicate their view of the world through another language in a way that is accessible to the public. Whether it's content or layout, that's the essence.

This passage represents a restructuring employing the "Exercises in Style" approach to present Hito Steyerl's key concepts in "In Defense of the Poor Image" in a different manner.

Exercises in Style
Raymond Queneau

Metaphorically   Low Resolutions

Steyerl points out that poor images, at their core, lack the sharpness and resolution found in higher-quality counterparts. Using Woody Allen's films, where the narrative isn't centered around a single protagonist, and referencing the cinematic experience, she illustrates how the quality of an image, namely its sharpness and resolution, establishes a form of hierarchy within the contemporary visual landscape. Essentially, poor images find themselves as *"the contemporary Wretched of the Screen, the debris of audiovisual production, the trash that washes up on the digital econoies' shores"*.

Yet, Steyerl's exploration of the attributes of poor images extends beyond mere mention of their 'low quality.' She astutely observes the life cycle of poor images, involving processes like uploading, downloading, reformatting, and reediting. Through this transformative journey, poor images poetically immerse themselves in the *"digital uncertainty, expensing their own substance"*, embracing remnants of violent *"dislocation"*, *"transferral"*, and *"displacement"*. Consequently, in a metaphorical sense, poor images evolve into not just finished products but rather *"images in the process of creation"*, showcasing the hastened circulation and consumption of images within the realm of visual capitalism.

Retrograde   Resurrection (as Poor Images)

As rationalization becomes pervasive, illegal replication (piracy) and appropriation naturally emerge in the realm of images. Steyerl defines this phenomenon as the circulation of poor images. Going beyond mere downloads, poor images are susceptible to various mutations, making them easily subject to privatization. Simultaneously, Steyerl highlights the editability of open-to-all poor images. Non-commercial images that were once concealed found a gradual "resurrection" through platforms like Ubuweb or YouTube. The shift to online playback dramatically transformed the landscape.

Non-commercial (and generally resistant) visual materials used to exist solely in underground or alternative archives. Due to the promotion of cultural concepts as commodities by neoliberalism, the devalued poor images naturally became marginalized. Steyerl states that about 20 to 30 years ago, with the acceleration of neoliberalism, non-commercial images such as experimental or essay films lost their place.

Litotes   Visual Bond

Steyerl doesn't merely dismiss the possibility that poor images could be completely absorbed into informational capitalism. Vertov's notion of the visual bond, a link that goes beyond mere information delivery or entertainment to organize spectators, is not lost on her. Poor images, with their multitude of users functioning as editors, critics, and (co)authors, create irregular and coincidental links. Through these links, poor images subtly bring to life historical concepts akin to Vertov's visual bond. In litotes terms, the contemporary visual bond is not merely a link directly connected to the present; poor images, in fact, become a nuanced narrative about reality.

Hito Steyerl, 'In Defense of the Poor Image', 2012
Raymond Queneau, excerpts from Exercises in Style, [1947] 1998