Draft 1 — Methods of Iterating

For this project, I chose a mini thermal printer that I had never used before. My reference was Adrian Hanft's *Moth in Flight on Receipts* (Hanft, n.d.). He prints frames onto used receipts and brings them together as a looping animation. I wanted to understand his method through making.

Following his tutorial, I searched Internet Archive for footage and selected a butterfly video. I extracted twenty frames, edited the images in Photoshop and tested them with my printer.

The main difficulty was that the prints did not always match the images on screen. In my first tests, the butterfly was difficult to distinguish from the background. I adjusted the tones and made the background lighter while keeping some texture. This made the butterfly clearer.

I learned that more detail does not always produce a clearer print. The printer influenced my decisions about contrast, texture and what to keep visible. Repeated tests helped me understand the tool.

I have printed tests but have not yet assembled the animation. Next, I want to compare different background tones while keeping the printer settings fixed. I will also try photographing each printed frame instead of scanning it, then assembling the photographs into an animation.

References

Hanft, A. (n.d.) *Receipt animations*. Available at: https://adrian3.com/art/receipt-animation.html (Accessed: 3 November 2026).

Draft 2 — Thermal Printing and the Legibility of Movement

I began by remaking Adrian Hanft's *Moth in Flight on Receipts* with a miniature thermal printer (Hanft, n.d.). I extracted twenty frames from a butterfly video and lightened the background while keeping some texture. The prints did not always match the images on screen. The butterfly was difficult to distinguish from its background, and preserving more detail did not necessarily make it clearer.

For the 23 October tutorial, I used a butterfly video with a white background and extracted seven frames per second. My printer prints only in black and white, so I used dithering to simulate grey tones through different densities of black dots. I then selected one dithered frame and tested more than twenty Photoshop parameter combinations on it. I presented twelve printed samples, including tonal adjustments, inversion and outline effects. Using the same frame helped me compare what each treatment preserved or removed. I selected the setting that worked best, applied it across the sequence, photographed each printed frame and assembled the animation.

I had approached these tests as a way to find one setting that would work throughout the animation. The printed samples helped me judge the butterfly's outline, the detail within its wings and its separation from the background. I made these decisions by comparing the paper prints, because the screen image alone did not reliably show what the printer would reproduce.

Bolt describes "a knowing that arises through handling materials in practice" (2010, p. 29). This helps me understand why printing was part of developing the image. I could adjust a file in Photoshop, but I needed to print it before deciding which details to keep. Each result gave me something specific to respond to in the next test. My understanding of the printer developed through this repeated process of adjusting, printing and looking. The difference between screen and paper became something I could work with as I learned which adjustments made the subject easier to recognise.

Feedback on 23 October encouraged me to try a different image treatment on every frame. Queneau's retellings of the same incident in *Exercises in Style* (2013, pp. 3–5) offer a way to think about this suggestion. The incident remains recognisable across versions, while the language changes how it is told. I had treated my printed styles as alternatives from which to choose one. I now want to test what happens when those differences become part of a sequence. My next step is to apply different treatments to successive frames and see how the changing graphic style works with the subject's movement.

References

Bolt, B. (2010) 'The magic is in handling', in Barrett, E. and Bolt, B. (eds.) *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 27–34.

Hanft, A. (n.d.) *Receipt animations*. Available at: https://adrian3.com/art/receipt-animation.html (Accessed: 3 November 2026).

Queneau, R. (2013) *Exercises in Style*. Translated by Barbara Wright. Richmond: Alma Classics.

Draft 3 — From Image Settings to Thermal Paper

