

Methods of Translating  
Ver. 2

## Introduction

The ***Conditional Design Workbook*** by **Blauvelt et al.** structures ideas as evolving processes rather than static conclusions. It presents concepts through open-ended rules, frameworks, and participatory methods, encouraging iteration, adaptation, and engagement. Rather than prioritizing a finished product, it embraces unpredictability and transformation.

Applying this approach to **Hito Steyerl's *In Defense of the Poor Image***, I will reframe her argument as a process-driven manifesto that is structured as a set of rules and instructions that reflects the circulation, degradation, and political potential of the poor image.

## Conditional Design Manifesto for the Poor Image

Materials:

- Low-resolution files
- Compressed formats
- Screens, networks, servers

Rules of Engagement:

### 1. Degrade

- Compression is not destruction; it is distribution
- Loss of quality enables movement >> each pixel lost marks a journey taken.
- The poor image is not broken, but it is mobile, shifting across screens and platforms.

### 2. Distribute

- Circulation over perfection: value is not in pristine resolution but in reach.
- The more an image is shared, the more it exists.
- Ownership dissolves into collective access.

### 3. Subvert

- High-resolution is a luxury, whereas low-resolution is a necessity.
- The poor image undermines exclusivity, bypassing institutional control.
- It democratizes visual culture, making images available beyond elite spaces.

### 4. Archive & Erase

- Every compression creates an artifact of history.
- Loss is an inherent part of digital existence.

- The poor image resists static preservation; its instability is its archive.

#### 5. Reclaim

- What is dismissed as low quality is often radical in form.
- The poor image carries forgotten, suppressed, or marginalized narratives.
- Its roughness reflects the conditions of its production >> resistance, necessity, and adaptation.

#### Process:

1. Take an image. Compress it. Share it
2. Observe its transformation. Track its journey
3. Accept that it will never be the same again

#### **Conclusion:**

Like Conditional Design, the poor image is a system in motion. It rejects stability in favor of circulation, challenges traditional hierarchies of value, and finds strength in imperfection. Its instability is not a flaw but a strategy to subvert control, redefine visibility, and remain in constant flux.

#### **Bibliography**

Blauvelt, A., Van Middendorp, C., & Luna, S. (2009) Conditional Design Workbook. Amsterdam: Valiz.

Steyerl, H. (2009) 'In Defense of the Poor Image', in The Wretched of the Screen. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 31–45.