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VISUAL ESSAY

This, too, is Protest: Neurodivergent activism through autobiographical comics creation

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Abstract

Presented as a 'formal metacomic' (Cook RT, 2017, Metacomics. In Bramlett F, Cook RT and Meskin A (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Comics.* New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 257–266. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315851334-32) and understood through Gillian Whitlock's 'autographic' (Whitlock G, 2006, Autographics: The seeing "i" of the comics. *Modern Fiction Studies* **52**(4), 966. https://doi.org/10.1353/mfs.2007.0013), this article explores techniques such as abstraction and multiple narrative threads in autobiographical comics, highlighting their storytelling potential from a neurodivergent, ADHD perspective. It aims to advance comic creation as a research and sharing tool for diverse experiences, viewing autographics as a form of critical literacy through which art and activism intersect. The work emphasizes neurodivergent activism through the metaphor of abstraction, which both resists and invites narrative through sequencing. This aligns with the work of J Baetens (2011, Abstraction in comics. *SubStance* **40**(1), 94–113. https://doi.org/10.1353/sub.2011.0004), who describes abstraction as anti-narrative. In this concept, a tension exists, since sequencing superimposes narrative onto abstract images, revealing multiple truths. This aligns with neurodivergent experiences, where various ways of perceiving co-exist. The work positions comics as a form of academic resistance and autoethnographic activism.

Keywords: ADHD; neurodiversity; metacomics; autographics; abstract comics; disability activism

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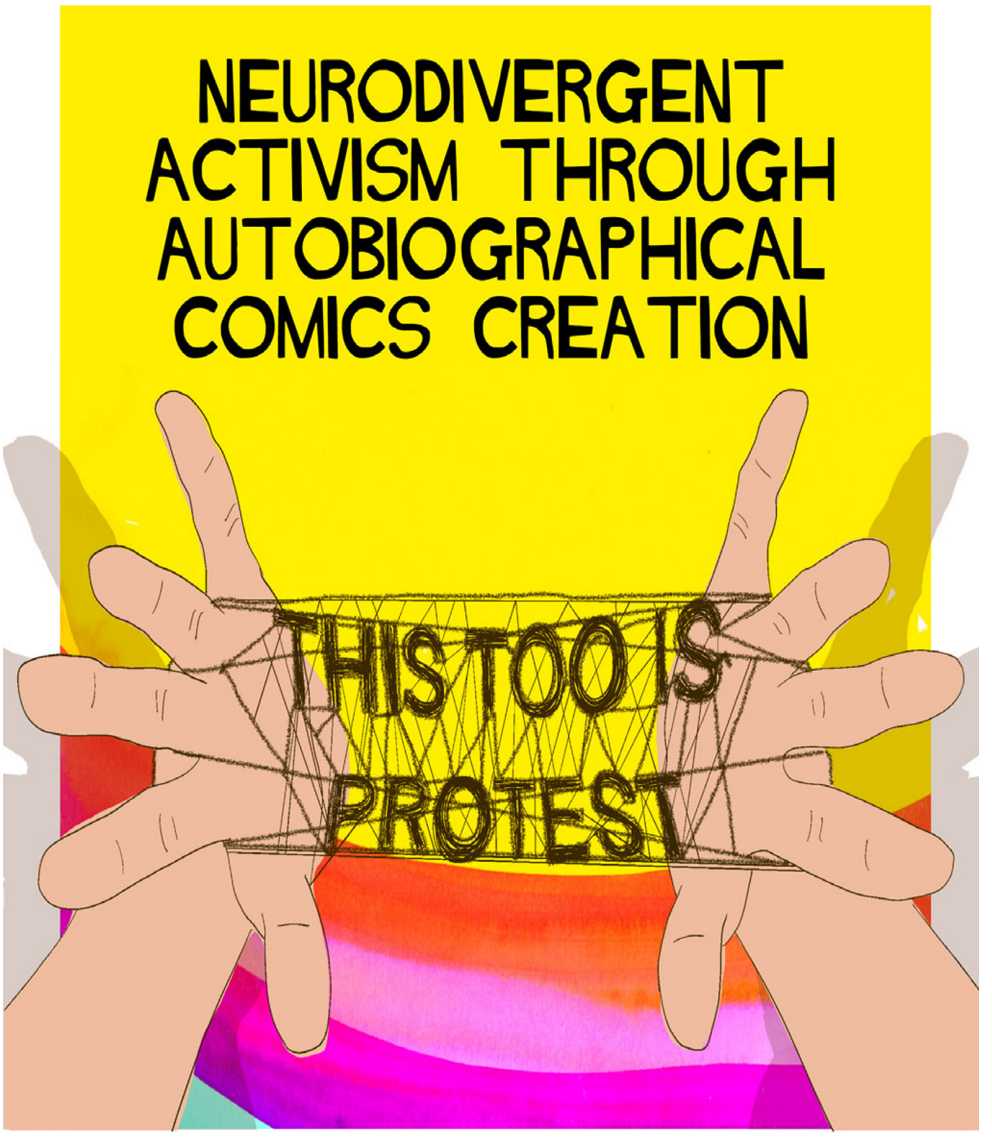


Figure 1. Title Page.



Figure 2. Page One.



Figure 3. Page Two.

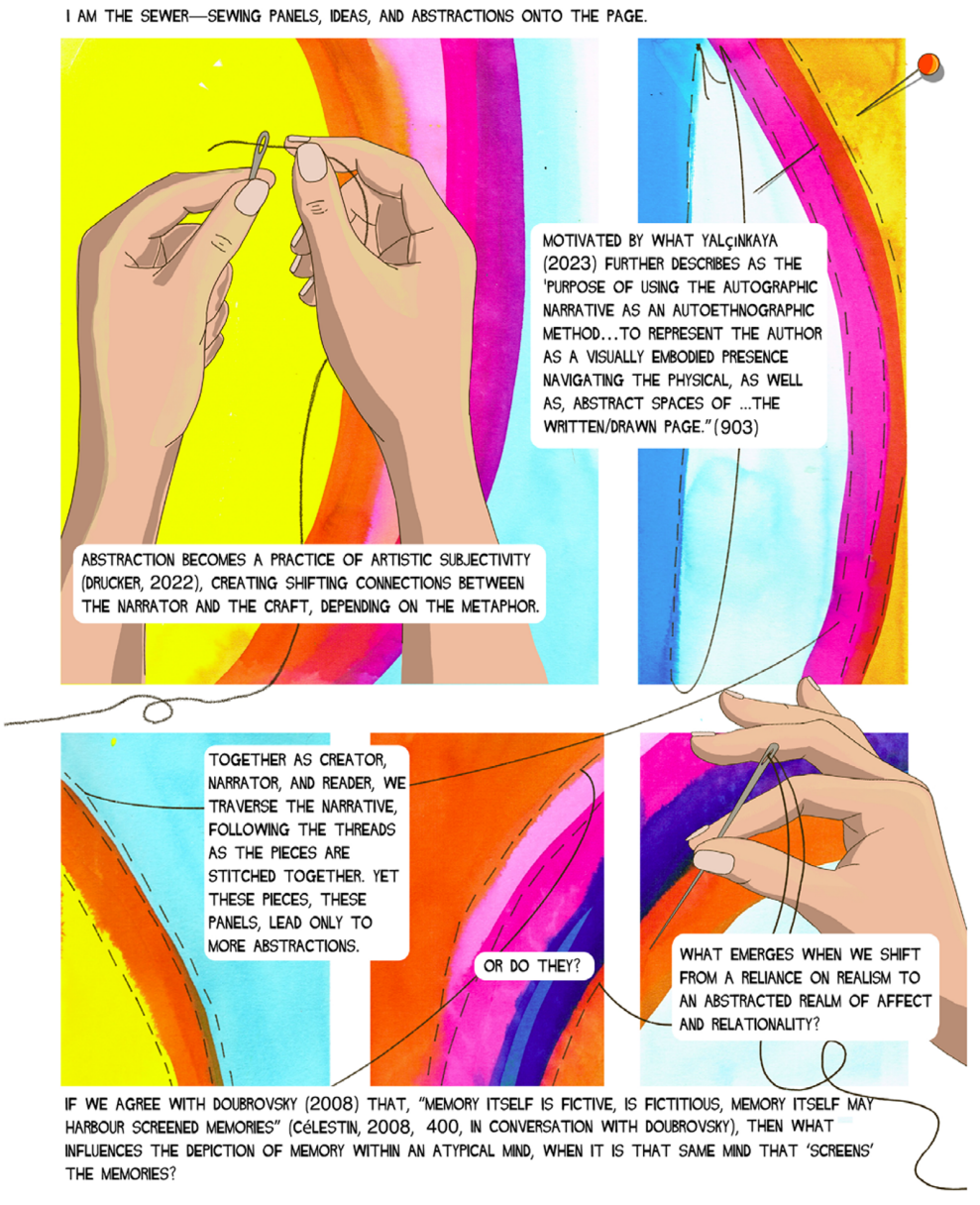


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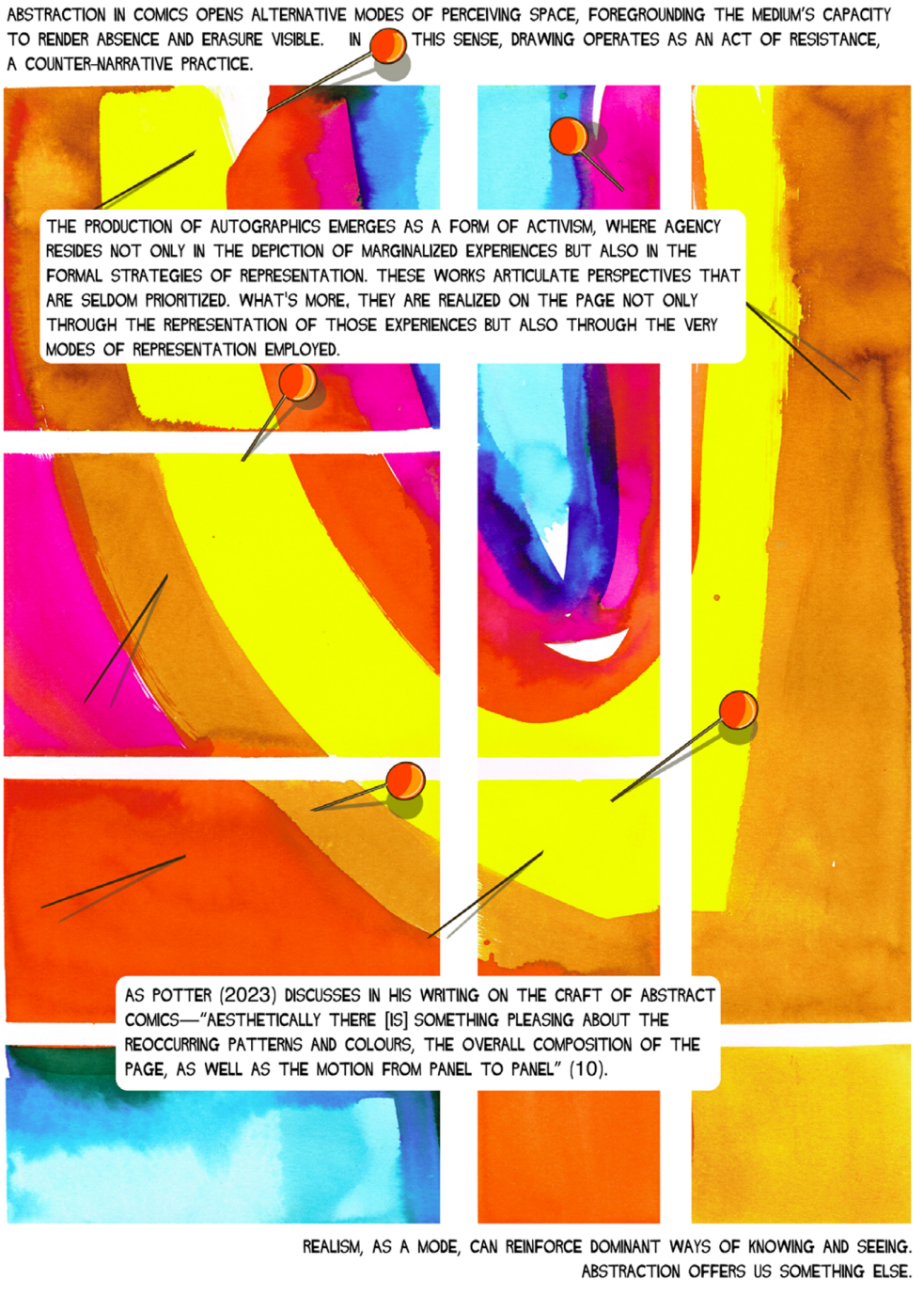


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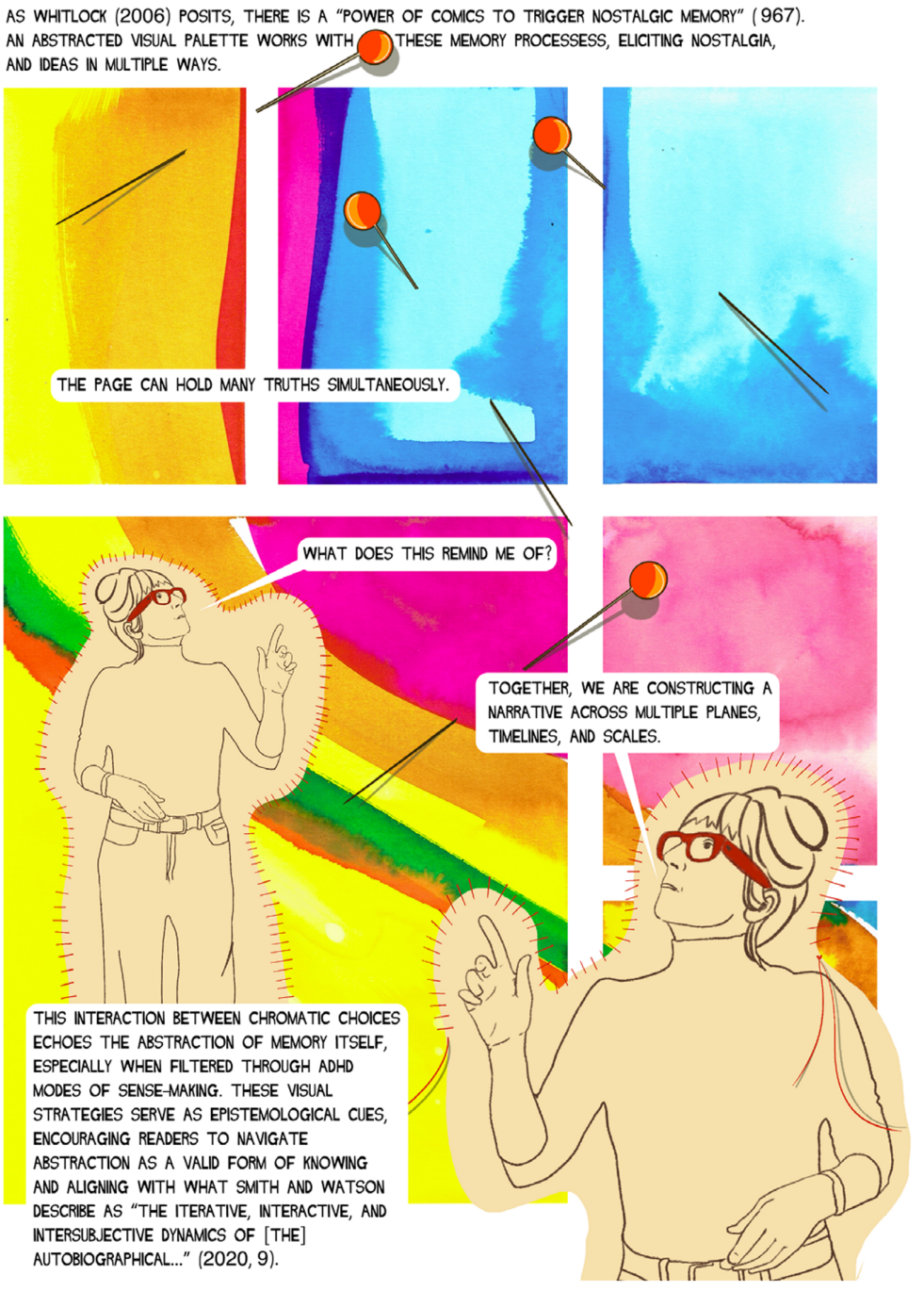


Figure 6. Page Five.

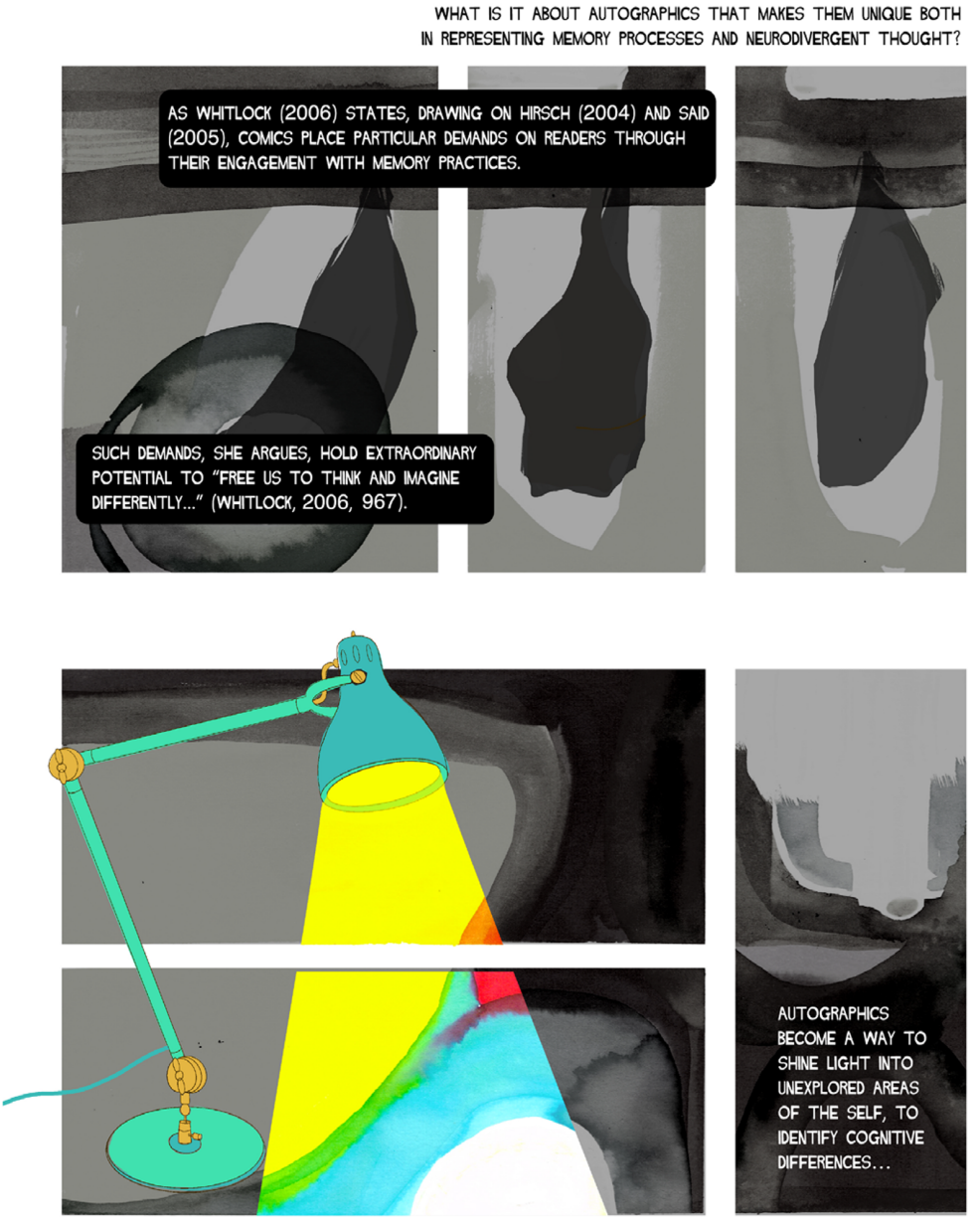


Figure 7. Page Six.

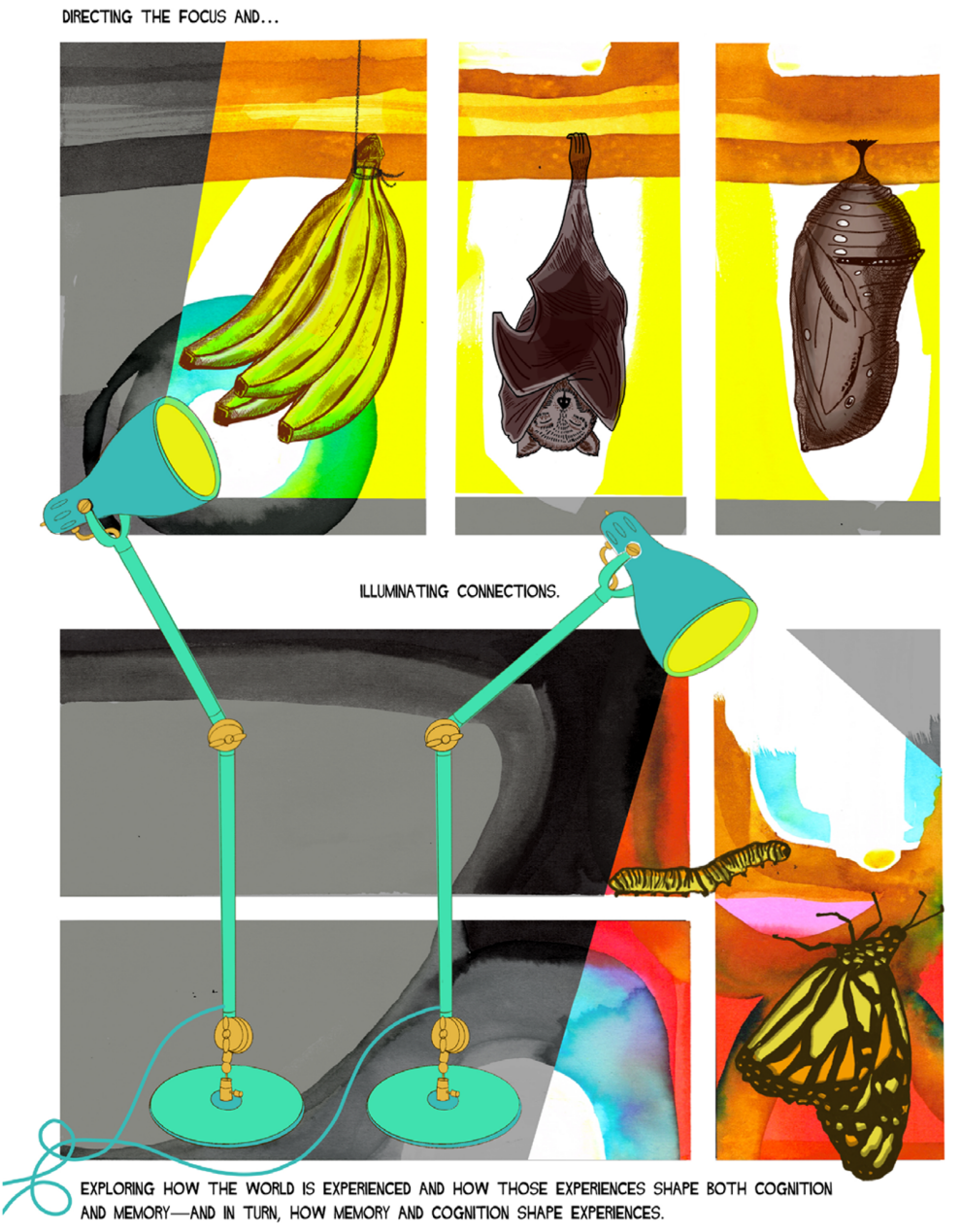


Figure 8. Page Seven.



Figure 9. Page Eight.



Figure 10. Page Nine.



Figure 11. Page Ten.



Figure 12. Page Eleven.

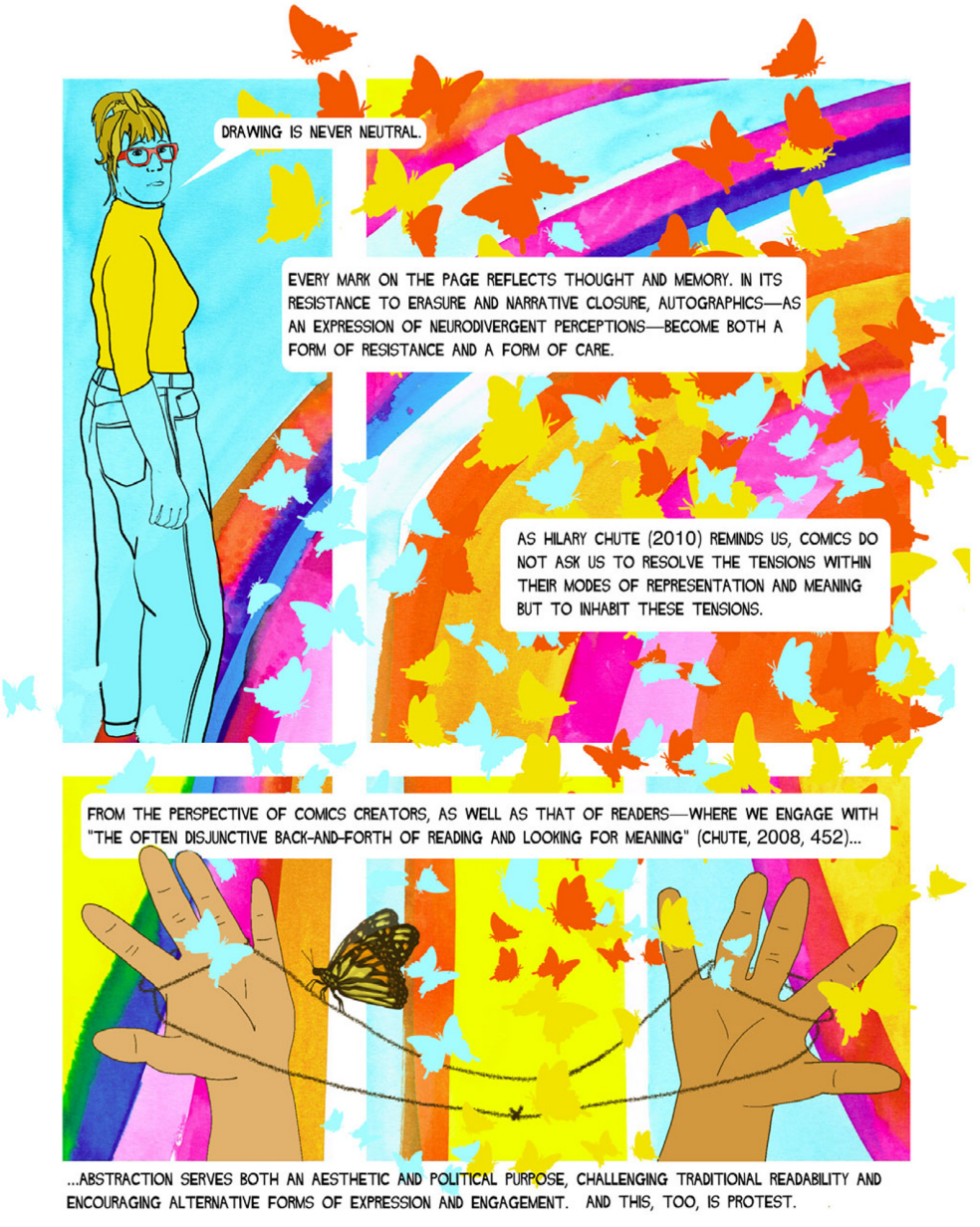


Figure 13. Page Twelve.

Data availability statement. Data supporting this study are included within the article and supporting materials.

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Andrea Hoff (she/her) is a multimedia artist, writer, and educator. She holds a PhD in Language and Literacy Education from the University of British Columbia (UBC). Her ongoing research explores youth empowerment and agency in the climate crisis, using arts-based methods, especially the craft of speculative comics. Her practice in art and academia is often centred on social and environmental justice as they relate to systems and emerging technologies. Andrea is a member of the Public Scholars at UBC. In 2022, Andrea and Cree poet and writer Wanda John-Kehewin co-founded Beyond Collective, an Indigenous/settler feminist studio that employs comics, research, installation, and performance to challenge colonial narratives and collaboratively work towards reconciliation. You can find more of Andrea's work at https://www.andreahoff.com.

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