

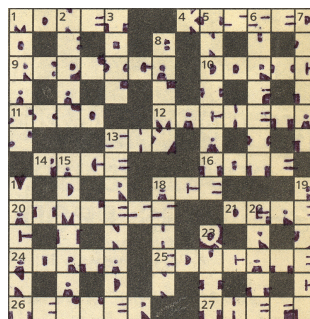
SOLUTIONS : Kevin Jackson

Hand in glove, curiosity and purpose urge solutions into use. - problem, puzzle, solution - In a fiction of ourselves, we solve, sit back smug to take glory and pension - Roll Credits - The End, and an end in itself, but outside of fiction, every solution heralds unimaginable questions that clamour for our attention. It is as if today's answer will solve nothing. Solutions become redundant. Yesterday's solutions make no-sense. They answered the known or the obvious and only through history and imagination can those questions be conceived of. Is this why poser and solution can be unintelligible?

On screen and off, we seem to love solitary game-play like Patience and Sudoku. In the great game of Art I'm used to working alone, studio solo, and at times, playfully pushing stuff here and there just to see. In the puzzling of painting I'm forced into practicing patience, but puzzle not Patience is my game.

There are fewer sudoku puzzles than I had thought. Apparently ref: *Wikipedia*, it depends on how you count. This doesn't much matter for however counted there are daunting millions, and too many for anyone of us to solve. Sudoku's impressive tallies must be eclipsed by the cross-word. Words have power and a completed cross-word grid is potentially a thing of beauty. By comparison a solved sudoku holds no mysteries for all the challenge has been reduced and worked out. Numbers have power too, but are sudoku numbers, numbers at all? *The free-to-view online-primitive (halcyon days) London Times* offered cross-words and sudoku. For reason and in a way I cannot now unscramble, the equally primitive computer I dreamt to be the bee's-knees of tech recorded the sequence of letters and numbers as I entered the *solutions*. I learnt that I could copy, paste and save the sequences.

The strings of letters made nonsense. The numbers made no sense at all. I liked no-sense better.



6	2	9	4	7	8	1	5	3
3	8	5	6	1	9	2	4	7
1	7	4	3	2	5	9	8	6
5	9	7	1	4	6	8	3	2
8	1	6	9	3	2	5	7	4
2	4	3	5	8	7	6	1	9
9	3	2	7	5	1	4	6	8
4	6	1	8	9	3	7	2	5
7	5	8	2	6	4	3	9	1

Once begun, I saved sudoku solution after solution separating each with either 'return', or, there being no noughts, a 'zero'.

In 2010, *The Times* became Pay To View. That spoilt my little game and saved me from myself. I stopped abruptly - there are limits even to having a good time for as with the news, sudokus are available from other providers.



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Surely there were better and more respectable ways of idly interacting with my screen - shopping, selling, planning a holiday, networking, ... gambling? ... Yes, Games! What did such a display of curiosity, but equally of amateur geekery mean? I feel a bit shy admitting it but Solutions was transferred from Hard Drive to Hard Drive to sit on my desk-top still, an idea, or half an idea too fragile and fugitive to pursue, perhaps, a nothing in-waiting to be an idea. *Why couldn't I consign this 'Solutions' document to digital oblivion?*

What to do with pages of nigh nought-less numbers, *are they pretty?* No, not pretty of themselves. *Do they mean anything?* No, again. *Did they ever?* Not really these solutions to problems solving nothing ... a time filler in periods of calm where I was pitted against less than 'fate' and less also than the tribulations and turmoils of daily grinding, and if for that and nothing more, the string of meaningless numbers solved a little something, provided a pause of comfort, security and solace in mini-triumph. Are they beautiful? No they shouldn't be, but the unintelligible solution could be and can.

SOLUTIONS is conceived of, and composed on-screen in digital files made to make the print, and in similar way a copper etching plate is worked to be the *mere* tool that carries an idea from artist to print, to viewer. Every time I review the images the temptation to tinker is ... but eventually the manipulation has to stop and I go to press, to 'printer' and make manifest prints that take up space and have reflective colour and not backlit screen-glow. On paper, the dynamism of each image on takes on a momentum of its own. I'm distracted by the transformation and by the ephemera produced in the printing process ... borders where there weren't and won't be, trim-marks, bleed-edges, paper qualities ... yes, those studio concerns and borders were not in the plan, in the mind's eye, but could they? Now all the rules have changed, could be.

Some don't make out well on paper. I'm struck afresh that images have a 'right' medium. Some work on screen only and that's where they must stay. Some are prints from now on and after appearing here their screen-life is over.

People have seen them, liked with interest and loathed by their indifference. Conclusions cross their faces and questions are posed. Asked bluntly or with care, the questions seem startlingly obvious. Arrantly, I assumed they would answer themselves. Not so. Of course they don't.

They peer closely and try to read. However obscured, abstracted in form or impenetrable in meaning, irrespective of context, numbers and letters where sense and message lie demand the reading reflex.

Q. What do the numbers mean? Q. Is it a book? Q. Will you print it?

The colour borrows from the softwares SOLUTIONS is made in - the blues of



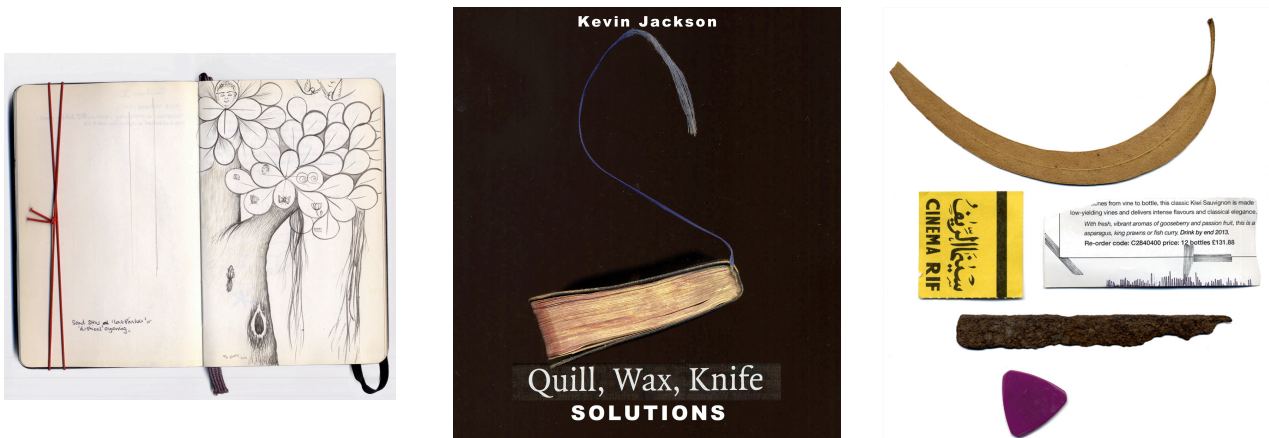
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scroll bar, operating system, highlights and notation. The colours of successful software packages are simultaneously attractive, functional and unobtrusive. This palette is intrinsic.

The bookmarks are a double device - retrieval and colour. A precious love token, even a favoured one's strand of hair can mark a page, ticket-stubs, any tat can - old mail, advertising, ntm custom buys from the trinket counter. There is a fine-craft-art history of bookmarks. We 'mark' books and magazines and the notion persists as 'favourites' and 'favicons' and the personalizing of digital devices.

Explanations don't necessarily explain all. It is tempting not to answer questions, to think 'viewers problem now, I've done my bit', but equally tempting is to fill in the gaps the questions reveal, that I dreadfully realize I've skated over ... or missed. It is lazy not to answer and mysteriousness in not mystery.

Questions? Please ask. I'd welcome them at : solutions@kevinjackson.net



marked SOLUTIONS and **SOLUTIONS two** can be downloaded free from issuu



SOLUTIONS : limited edition prints by Kevin Jackson. Printed on fine mould-made Somerset 285 gm2 paper and signed by the artist in numbered editions of 25. Images from **marked SOLUTIONS** & **SOLUTIONS two**, and custom print formatting by arrangement. info: kevinjackson.net