

Nanopublication – A civic rebrand supplies the formal layer and skips the intimate one – locals name the gap exactly

by Arnaud Quercy

The line is between codex-as-personal-practice and codex-as-institutional-recipe: the Kingston case gives the framework a real, word-for-word confirmation of what mechanical-without-intimate looks like from the receiving end, but only by sitting just outside the artist/receiver relation the propositions were written for.

WHAT THE SOURCE SAYS [1]

Kingston, NY installed new wayfinding signage designed by an out-of-state firm, meant to unify three districts through color-coded symbols and brick detailing referencing local history. Residents rejected the design en masse as bland, corporate, AI-generated, and disconnected from the city's actual character, objecting also to the outsourcing of design and fabrication despite Kingston's own arts community, the cost during a period of more pressing infrastructure problems, and a spelling error in the county's name. The city's communications director explained the intended logic (color and symbol per district, brick for historic feel) but this explanation did not change the reception.

WHERE THE LENS GRIPS

P14's split between the formal level (rules, system – here explicitly articulated by the city: color per district, symbol motifs, brick for history) and the intimate level (the singular logic of why, felt from within) grips cleanly: the formal level is present and stated, the intimate level is absent, and the predicted outcome – 'mechanical' – lands almost word for word in residents' own vocabulary ('soulless,' 'sterile,' 'corporate,' 'AI-generated'). P21's claim that borrowing another's codex produces counterfeit diffraction and that 'fashion is the name we give to borrowed codices at scale' also grips: the design was commissioned from a Pennsylvania firm and fabricated by a New Jersey company despite Kingston's own arts community, and this outsourcing is precisely what residents cite as the source of the disconnect.

WHERE IT BREAKS

The edge is domain: P14 and P21 are framed around a personal codex – 'you construct it from within,' 'the artist's own ouverture' – belonging to an individual artistic practice with co-evolving feedback. Kingston's signage is a municipal contract executed top-down by a commercial firm with no claim to personal or artistic authorship; it is closer to the 'recipe applied from outside' that P14 names as the negative case, not an instance of codex-building gone wrong. The grip holds as diagnosis of the mechanical-without-intimate pattern, but the case sits outside the artist/receiver relation the propositions were built to describe, so it confirms the shape of the warning rather than testing the practice itself.

PROPOSITIONAL GRID [2]

Read this grid. “Not evaluated” does **not** mean the source has nothing to say about that proposition. It means **the reading did not instruct it**. That is not a result, and it counts in no denominator. A silence, by contrast, is a finding: the reading touched the proposition without concluding, or noted its absence itself.

Evaluated

proposi- tion		audit status	relational verdict
P14	The Codex as Ouverture	not audited	evidence-for
P21	Codex Authenticity	not audited	evidence-for

Not evaluated (35) – P1, P2, P3, P3a, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14a, P14b, P15, P16, P16a, P17, P18, P18a, P19, P19a, P20, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P28, P29, P30, P31

Overall verdict: Bounded – taxonomy of the August 2026 pass, predating the move to relational verdicts. Kept as metadata: the gap between the two forms is data, not residue. This reading’s judgement is in the grid above.

Reading of 2026-06-02 · model claude-sonnet-5 · source 5,941 chars · 3 attempt(s)

FIRST PASS – KEPT AS WRITTEN

Reading produced by the T50 RSS pass, before the boundary lens. It is reproduced UNCORRECTED. Keeping it is the point: without it, a changed title is just a changed title – with it, what the second pass refused becomes legible.

The locals' rejection of the new signage is a rejection of a failed codex. The old signage carried an intentional invariant—accumulated history, local craft, idiosyncratic constraint systems that made each sign *mean* within the specific overture of Kingston's cultural memory. The new signage is 'soulless' because it is codex-less: standardized, algorithmically optimized for legibility and brand consistency, it carries no latent logic, no system of constraints that would demand the receiver's diffraction. It is pure emission without resistance. The ideamorphic insight: 'bland,' 'ugly,' 'sterile slop' are descriptions of *dilution*. The city has replaced a thousand small, diffractive codices (each sign a local overture) with a single, universal one (the corporate design system). This is the dilution crisis in miniature: maximum emission (every sign is now 'readable'), minimum diffraction (nothing demands the receiver's participation, nothing activates what they carry). The locals are not being nostalgic—they are detecting the absence of the codex. They want signage that *resists*, that makes them work, that carries an intentional invariant worth diffracting through.

T50 RSS assessment · 2026-06-02 · remplacée par boundary-lens-2026-08

REFERENCES

[1] Kingston Locals Can't Stand City's "Soulless" New Signage. Hyperallergic, 2026-06-02. <https://hyperallergic.com/kingston-locals-cant-stand-citys-soulless-new-signage/>

[2] Quercy, A. (2026). The 31 Propositions of Ideamorphism. <https://ideamorphism.org/en/publications/2026/03/the-31-propositions-of-ideamorphism.html>

EPISTEMIC PROFILE

Claim type	boundary reading
Voice	third person analysis
Epistemic status	bounded grip
Methodology	Boundary-finding lens applied to one source, model claude-sonnet-5, 3 attempt(s), traceability check passed.

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