BRAND GUIDELINES · V1.2 · NOVEMBER 2026 · DRAFT FOR SIGN-OFF

The brand, explained

for Dr Benjamin J Matthews

Dr Benjamin J Matthews

01 Brand idea

Ben Matthews works on serious things, among them synthetic biology, automation and creative labour, media and the future of design. The work is rigorous, and Ben is light-hearted, which is how most people end up finding their way into it. He is an outsider in every field he enters, a designer in a microbiology lab and a media theorist writing catalogue essays, and he turns out to belong in all of them. The brand pictures him as a small, cheerful ginger spaceship that keeps turning up somewhere new, with a cartoon crew at the portholes.

Underneath the play sits one question that ties the work together. All of it asks how things get made, who gets to make them, and what happens when new technologies such as AI, synthetic biology and platforms change the answer. The jokes belong to the person and the work stays exact, so neither ever undercuts the other.

TAGLINE

None, for now.

The name, the ship and the work do the talking. If a line is added later, the seriousness belongs to the work and the lightness belongs to Ben, never the other way round.

02 Name usage

FORM	WHEN	EXAMPLE
Dr Benjamin J Matthews	Wordmark, page titles and metadata, CV header, press kit, formal introductions, schema.org name (as "Benjamin J Matthews" with honorificPrefix "Dr")	"Dr Benjamin J Matthews is a Senior Lecturer..."
Ben Matthews	Running text in the third person, captions, credits, project pages	"Text: Ben Matthews. Photographs: Katherine Williams."
Ben	Second mention in third-person copy, and casual contexts	"Ben co-founded Wild Yeast Zoo in 2022."
I	First-person pages (About, Currently, Contact, essays)	"I'm drafting a space opera called Atto."
Matthews, B. / Matthews, B. J.	Citations, exactly as the publisher printed it	"Matthews, B., See, Z. S., & Day, J. (2021)..."

Never "Dr Ben", "Benjamin" on its own, or "Dr. Matthews" with a full stop (Australian style drops it). The title "Dr" is used once per page, at the top.

03 Logo

The wordmark is the name set in Unbounded Black, with the J in a ginger porthole. In the stacked lockup the ship flies alongside. All files are outlined SVGs, so they render the same everywhere without the font installed.

Primary and horizontal



Primary, stacked · wordmark-stacked-on-dark.svg / -on-light.svg



Horizontal, one line · wordmark-primary-on-dark.svg / -on-light.svg

Compact marks



Ship badge · social avatar, stickers, slide corner



The ship on its own · ship.svg / ship-on-light.svg



Favicon and app icon



Helmet avatar · stands in for a portrait

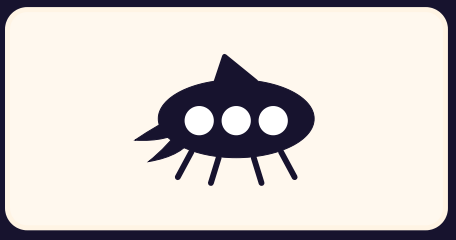
One-colour versions



wordmark-mono-ink.svg · print, embossing, fax-grade



wordmark-mono-cream.svg · on photos with a dark scrim



ship-mono-ink.svg

Clear space and minimum size



Keep a margin equal to the diameter of the J porthole on every side. Nothing else sits inside the hatched zone.

MARK	SCREEN	PRINT
Stacked wordmark	120 px wide	30 mm
One-line wordmark	180 px wide	45 mm
Ship badge (ring text)	48 px	12 mm
Ship alone, favicon	16 px	5 mm
Helmet avatar	24 px	8 mm

Below the badge minimum the ring text blurs, so switch to the ship alone.

Misuse

Don't stretch or squash

Don't recolour the ship or the J



Don't set it straight on a busy photo

Don't rotate (stickers can tilt; the logo can't)

No glows, bevels or soft drop shadows

Don't crowd it inside the clear space

04 Colour

The default is night mode, a warm night sky with cream type. Daylight mode is for the Academic pages, the printable CV and anyone whose system asks for light. Every text and background pair below passes WCAG 2.2 AA (4.5:1 for body text).

Night palette (default)

Night sky
--sky · ground
#17132E
rgb(23 19 46)
hsl(249 42% 13%)

Card
--card · surfaces
#221C42
rgb(34 28 66)
hsl(249 40% 18%)

Moon cream
--cream · text, outlines
#FFF4E4
rgb(255 244 228)
hsl(36 100% 95%)

Muted
--muted · secondary text
#C9C2E6
rgb(201 194 230)
hsl(252 42% 83%)

Ginger
--ginger · signature accent
#FF7A3D
rgb(255 122 61)
hsl(19 100% 62%)

Agar mint
--mint · links, SDGs, success
#5BE7C4
rgb(91 231 196)
hsl(165 74% 63%)

Lilac
--lilac · support accent
#B7A3FF
rgb(183 163 255)
hsl(253 100% 82%)

Sunbeam
--sun · flags, stars, warning
#FFD23F
rgb(255 210 63)
hsl(46 100% 62%)

Daylight palette

Daylight paper
--clean
#FFF8EE · hsl(35 100% 97%)

Ginger deep
--ginger-deep · links, accents
#B4420F · hsl(19 85% 38%)

Mint deep
--mint-deep · SDGs, success
#0B7A61 · hsl(166 83% 26%)

Lilac deep
--lilac-deep · visited links
#5B3FD1 · hsl(252 61% 53%)

Contrast checks

NIGHT PAIR	RATIO	AA
Cream on sky	16.5:1	Pass
Cream on card	14.7:1	Pass
Muted on sky	10.6:1	Pass
Ginger on sky	6.9:1	Pass
Mint on sky	11.7:1	Pass
Lilac on sky	8.3:1	Pass
Sunbeam on sky	12.4:1	Pass
Sky on ginger (buttons)	6.9:1	Pass
Error #FF6B6B on sky	6.5:1	Pass

DAYLIGHT PAIR	RATIO	AA
Sky ink on paper	17.0:1	Pass
Muted ink #4A4370 on paper	8.6:1	Pass
Ginger deep on paper	5.3:1	Pass
Mint deep on paper	5.0:1	Pass
Lilac deep on paper	6.5:1	Pass
Error deep #B3261E on paper	6.2:1	Pass

Bright ginger, mint, lilac and sunbeam are never used for text on daylight paper. They appear there only as fills, with sky ink on top.

CSS custom properties

```
:root{
  --sky:#17132E; --card:#221C42; --cream:#FFF4E4; --muted:#C9C2E6;
  --ginger:#FF7A3D; --mint:#5BE7C4; --lilac:#B7A3FF; --sun:#FFD23F;
  --error:#FF6B6B;
  --bg:var(--sky); --surface:var(--card); --text:var(--cream);
  --text-2:var(--muted); --accent:var(--ginger); --link:var(--mint);
  color-scheme:dark;
```

```
}
:root[data-theme="light"], .clean-mode{
  --bg:#FFF8EE; --surface:#FFFFFF; --text:#17132E; --text-2:#4A4370;
  --accent:#B4420F; --link:#0B7A61; --link-visited:#5B3FD1; --error:#B3261E;
  color-scheme:light;
}
@media (prefers-color-scheme:light){ :root:not([data-theme="dark"]){ /* same as daylight */ } }
```

05 Typography

DISPLAY · UNBOUNDED

Blast off

800 and 900 weights. Headlines, the wordmark, buttons, badges and navigation. Never below 14 px, never for paragraphs.

READING · RECURSIVE SANS, CASUAL

Friendly, a little hand-drawn, and still easy to read for a whole essay.

Its Casual axis is the seriousness dial. Fully casual on the playful pages, turned to Linear on the Academic pages and the CV.

FLAGS · RECURSIVE MONO, CASUAL

`> mission_02 --status=fermenting`

The same family in monospace, so flags and body text feel like one voice. Status flags, labels, metadata, DOIs and credits. Most of the jokes live here.

The Casual axis is the seriousness dial

CASUAL 1 · HOME, PROJECTS, WRITING

Somewhere in a festival forest there is a yeast nobody has catalogued yet, and Ben would very much like to meet it.

LINEAR 0 · ACADEMIC, CV

Matthews, B., See, Z. S., & Day, J. (2021). Crisis and extended realities: remote presence in the time of COVID-19. *Media International Australia*, 178(1), 198–209.

Self-hosting

```
npm i @fontsource-variable/unbounded @fontsource-variable/recursive
/* in the global layout */
import "@fontsource-variable/unbounded";
import "@fontsource-variable/recursive/full.css";   /* includes the CASL and MONO axes */
--display:"Unbounded Variable", "Arial Rounded MT Bold", Arial, sans-serif;
--body:"Recursive Variable", "Trebuchet MS", Arial, sans-serif;
body{font-variation-settings:"CASL" 1, "MONO" 0}
.flag, code, .credit{font-variation-settings:"CASL" 1, "MONO" 1}
.clean-mode{font-variation-settings:"CASL" 0, "MONO" 0}
```

Both are under the SIL Open Font Licence. Subset to Latin, preload only the display weight used above the fold, and use `font-display: swap`.

Type scale

TOKEN	FACE	SIZE (FLUID)	LINE HEIGHT	USE
--step-5	Unbounded 900	clamp(40px, 5.6vw, 72px)	1.02	Homepage hero
--step-4	Unbounded 800	clamp(30px, 3.6vw, 44px)	1.05	Page titles
--step-3	Unbounded 800	clamp(22px, 2.4vw, 28px)	1.1	Section heads, card titles
--step-2	Recursive Casual 600	21px	1.35	Lead paragraphs, pull quotes
--step-1	Recursive Casual 400	18px	1.6	Body
--step-0	Recursive Casual 400	15.5px	1.55	Captions, card text
--step-flag	Recursive Mono Casual 700	12px	1.4	Flags, labels, credits

Rules for citations and long reading

- Citations use APA 7 in Recursive set to Linear, journal and book titles in italics, with the DOI as a link shown as `doi.org/…`. The citation itself is never decorated, abbreviated or joked about.
- "Forthcoming", "in press", "accepted" and "in preparation" appear in brackets after the year, exactly as on the CV.
- No journal-ranking percentages or quartiles anywhere. A single citation line may appear on the Academic page once Ben approves it.

- Long-form text sits in a 65-character column at 18 px with 1.6 line height, and essays use the daylight palette by default.
- Headings in sentence case. No all-caps paragraphs, no justified text, no underlines except links.

06 Voice and tone

The voice is warm, curious, a bit cheeky and never smug, and it never undercuts the work. It sounds like Ben explaining something difficult to someone he likes. The fun comes from specific detail, good pictures and the visual system, not from exclamation marks or forced jokes, and the facts stay exact.

House rules

- Australian English.
- Only facts from Ben's documents or confirmed by him. Anything unsure is marked CHECK until confirmed.
- Never the word "lands".
- No "premise, colon, punchline" sentences, no lists introduced by a colon or strung together with semicolons in running prose, and no short punchy one-line topic sentences.
- No exclamation marks in site copy.
- Laugh with the work, never at collaborators, students or partners. One joke per component.
- Academic pages and the CV are joke-free, apart from the site footer.

WHERE THE JOKES LIVE

- Status flags: `--status=fermenting`, `--seriousness=optional`
- Image captions: "SEM · actual size: tiny"
- Mascots and the status board: "yeasts fed and watered"
- The 404 page and empty states
- The footer: "No robots ate this homework. A few helped with it."

Do and don't

Bio

DO

Ben Matthews is a Senior Lecturer and Discipline Lead in Media and Communication at the University of Newcastle, co-founder of the synthetic biology spin-out Wild Yeast Zoo and an Associate Investigator with the ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology. He works across design, media, art and microbiology, usually with a crew from somewhere else entirely, and he writes about what happens when new technologies change who gets to make things.

DON'T

Dr Benjamin J Matthews is a passionate, award-winning thought leader disrupting the intersection of art and science! A true polymath, he is redefining what an academic can be.

Project blurb

DO

Wild Yeast Zoo is building a Nagoya Protocol-aligned library of wild Australian yeasts and bacteria, collected with members of the public on sampling tours at places like Woodford Folk Festival. Ben leads its strategy, partnerships and funding.

DON'T

The Wild Yeast Zoo: where science meets fun! We're on a mission to save the planet one yeast at a time (and yes, we've tasted the beer).

Publication note

DO

How extended reality offered a sense of presence when COVID-19 kept people apart. Ben's most cited paper.

DON'T

Our Q1 paper (top 10%!) proved that XR is the future of everything. FWCI 10.23, so you know it's good.

404 page

DO

DON'T

Oops!! 404!!! Looks like Ben broke something again, LOL. Better luck next time!

This page has drifted out of orbit, or the robot ate it. Mission control has sent a tug, but it's a slow tug. The missions are this way, and the yeasts are perfectly happy.

Contact prompt

DO

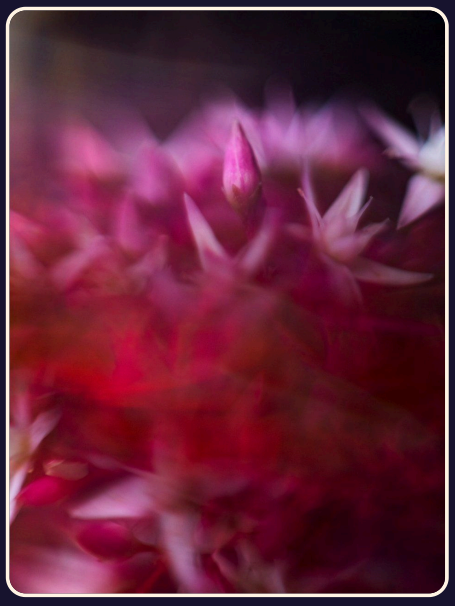
If you're planning a talk, a collaboration, a consulting project or a PhD, send a note about what you're working on and Ben will get back to you.

DON'T

Got a big idea? Let's synergise! Slide into my inbox and let's make magic happen together!

07 Imagery

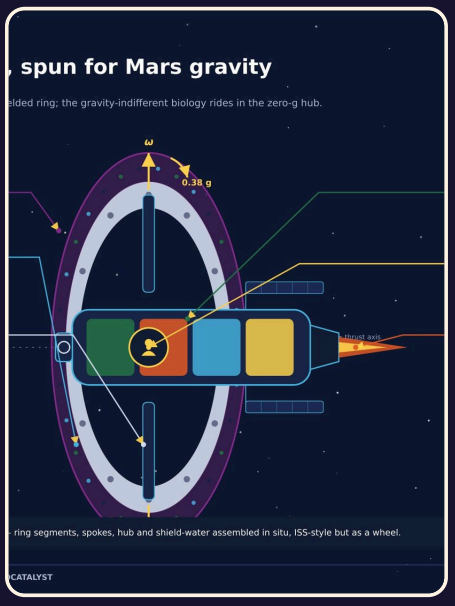
No big photos of Ben, anywhere. Heroes, banners and full-bleed sections use thematic art, photography or the brand's own illustration. Ben's photo appears only small, as an About-page thumbnail, a byline or in the press-kit download. The helmet avatar stands in everywhere else.



Macro · Katherine Williams
Shown large and unaltered. No recolouring, overlays, text on top or mascots. Crops only with her OK. Credit on every use.



Microbes · microscopy
Keep the scale bar where there is one, and caption the method (SEM, brightfield) and the organism if known. Rounded frames are fine. Credit CHECK for current images.



Renders · generated
Every generated image is captioned "generated render" or "generated concept art". Prefer versions without baked-in labels for heroes.

Credits

Credits sit directly under the image in Recursive Mono, in the form `Photo: Katherine Williams, Text: Ben Matthews · Photographs: Katherine Williams` or `Generated render, The Living Spacecraft`. Joint works carry both names, as in *Inbetweenness* (2022), © Katherine Williams & Ben Matthews. Every image in the site's content files carries `alt` and `credit` fields.

Alt text

- Describe what is visible in one or two sentences, in Australian English, starting with the subject rather than "Image of".
- Name the work and artist for artworks, and the technique for microscopy.
- Decorative mascots and stars get empty `alt=""`. Jokes never go in alt text, because screen-reader users deserve the facts first.

People

Anyone other than Ben needs consent before their face is published, and students' images stay as placeholders until permission is confirmed.

08 Graphic devices and motion

THE SHIP (SIGNATURE DEVICE)



A chubby ginger ship with three portholes, a lilac fin, four landing legs and a two-colour exhaust, always flying left to right. It appears in the badge, favicon, stacked wordmark and hero, carries the crew in its portholes, and its dotted flight path links related missions across fields.

OUTLINES AND OFFSET SHADOWS

Cards, buttons and frames take a 4 px cream outline, 18 to 24 px corners and a hard 7 px offset shadow in ginger, mint, lilac or sunbeam. Shadows are never soft or blurred.

The crew



Yeastronaut
Science, Wild Yeast Zoo



Homework robot
AI and automation research



Quill planet
Writing, fiction, podcast



Planet petri
Backgrounds, "culture" moments

Teaching gets a crew member in a later round. Katherine's art never gets a mascot, since her photographs are the picture. The crew is original to this brand and never borrows the Yeasties or the Ben & Mike's cast.

Iconography

Icons use the same 4 px rounded strokes and flat fills as the crew, on a 24 px grid. Status uses filled circles (● ACTIVE) rather than emoji.

Motion

MOMENT	MOTION	TIMING
Hero ship	Gentle vertical bob, 8 px	4–5 s ease-in-out loop
Mascot on card hover	Tilt −10° and scale 1.08	300 ms ease
Buttons	Offset shadow collapses on press	120 ms
Ship on first load	Drifts in from the left with a puff of exhaust	1.2 s, once

With `prefers-reduced-motion: reduce` every animation stops and the page shows its resting state, with nothing hidden behind motion.

09 Components

Buttons and tags

Meet the missions | Transmissions | Download CV | synthetic biology | AI | SDG 9 | SDG 12

Mission card and publication entry



> mission_02 --status=fermenting

Wild Yeast Zoo

A synthetic biology spin-out building a Nagoya Protocol-aligned library of wild Australian yeasts and bacteria, collected through citizen science.

Something wild gets collected, given the right conditions and turned into something useful.

synbio | citizen science | SDG 9 | SDG 12 | SDG 13

TX-2021-03 · journal article · most cited

Matthews, B., See, Z. S., & Day, J. (2021). Crisis and extended realities: remote presence in the time of COVID-19. *Media International Australia*, 178(1), 198–209. doi.org/10.1177/1329878x20967165

Journal article · 2023

Matthews, B., Shannon, B., & Roxburgh, M. (2023). Destroy All Humans: The Dematerialisation of the Designer in an Age of Automation and its Impact on Graphic Design – A Literature Review. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*. doi.org/10.1111/jade.12460

Night version for project pages and Writing; daylight version, set to Linear, for the Academic list and CV.

Pull quote and image caption

> *We assume, rather than know, that every photograph has been tamed before anyone looks at it.*
>
> Ben Matthews, Untamed by Rules (photo essay with Katherine Williams)



Inbetweenness, 2022 · archival print on cotton rag
Katherine Williams & Ben Matthews. Finalist, 2022 Lake Art Prize.

Callout

Prospective PhD students. Ben supervises practice-led and transdisciplinary PhDs, from autobiographical video games to accessible information design. Send a short outline of your idea and why it needs more than one discipline.

Footer

Dr Benjamin Matthews

matthewsbenjamin@gmail.com

LinkedIn UON profile Google Scholar ResearchGate ORCID Substack Wild Yeast Zoo Ben & Mike's Linktree

Ben lives and works on Awabakal and Worimi Country and pays his respects to Elders past and present. CHECK wording

No robots ate this homework. A few helped with it.

10 Applications

Email signature

Dr Benjamin J Matthews
Senior Lecturer and Discipline Lead, Media & Communication
University of Newcastle · Co-founder, Wild Yeast Zoo

benjaminjamesmatthews.com · ORCID 0000-0002-5832-8258

Plain HTML with the badge as a hosted PNG at 2×. No other images, no quotes.

Slide title template



Title slide from a real talk. Speaker line, the ship and planet petri, with body slides in daylight.

Social card (Open Graph, 1200 × 630)



Generated per page at build time, with the page title in place of the default line.

CV header



Daylight only, one-colour ship, ginger rule. Everything below is Recursive set to Linear. Role wording pending the open CV conflicts CHECK.

Conference badge



Brand guidelines v1.2 (ship unnamed, no tagline, Recursive as the reading face), draft for Ben's sign-off, November 2026. Also delivered as brand-guidelines.md and a printable PDF. Logo files: /brand/svg. Photos: Katherine Williams (macro plate, Woodford). Scanning electron micrograph: credit to confirm. Generated images are captioned as such. Fonts: Unbounded and Recursive (SIL Open Font Licence). No robots ate this homework. A few helped with it.