

Brichnology

Brichncolage

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Bricolage

The bricoleur's...universe of instruments is closed
and the rules of this game are always to make do
with "whatever is at hand."

—Claude Levi-Strauss

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Bricolage, as defined by Wikipedia in regard to the practical and fine arts is, “the construction or creation of a work from a diverse range of things that happen to be available, or, a work created by such a process.” The inspiration for this publication, however, was primarily based off of how bricolage manifests in the liberal arts (specifically social psychology). The term social bricolage introduced by cultural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss in 1962 is defined by studies that stemmed from an interest in how societies create novel solutions by using preexisting resources from a collective social consciousness. Creative cognition, is a similar approach that studies how individuals retrieve and recombine knowledge in new ways. Psychological bricolage, therefore, refers to the cognitive processes that enable individuals to retrieve and recombine previously unrelated knowledge they already possess.

This project stems from concepts of relational design, anticipatory design and performative approaches; all contemporary models for designers which call for more improvisational and situationally-based approaches to a design process. Questioning the proliferation of ‘choice’ in contemporary Western society, both Relational and Anticipatory design methodologies propose that designers place more focus on developing constraints for a design project, to result in more generative processes and performative experiences. This project exaggerates upon these methodologies and rebels against a traditional, linear process of design by setting up a project with the absence of goals and utilizing performative investigations to develop content.

Alex Liebergesell

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Technology, Design Convergence

This essay gives a contextually broad definition of technology, traces its relationship to cultural formation and examines the effect technological convergence has on art, design and social practices. It also argues for an interdisciplinary mindset for designers in addressing extrinsic and intrinsic human needs, as well as the emerging technological and social conditions of ambiguity and variability.

Technology Beyond Tools

Technology, from the Greek techné (art, craft) and -logy (study of), is defined as tools derived from the deliberate application of knowledge. Everyday, we know it as all the man-made artifacts and connected systems which surround us. The simple tools, compound tools and complex systems used for natural resource extraction, material processing and finishing, energy production, construction, transportation, communication, medicine, scientific research, analysis and weapons platforms define our technological world. Today, the term has become near synonymous with the management of information and media, and it's easy to see why. With less than a century of development, the computers and global network structures of our information age have given us a significant evolutionary boost, where dematerialization and diffusion of information and ideas overshadows the achievements of the mechanical and scientific ages, and which are disrupting what had appeared to be the enduring economic, social and political models borne out of the Industrial Revolution.

The conventional understanding of technology implies a strong dependency between technology, industry and scientific knowledge. But it doesn't give a complete picture of how technology emerges and manifests itself. A look back at the record of our evolutionary ancestors and the artifacts that they left behind reveals their capacity for processing natural materials and reshaping their environment well before they possessed the ability to imagine and apply abstract scientific concepts. As early as two million years ago in the Pliocene epoch, *Homo habilis* ("handy man") of the Olduvai Gorge fashioned flaked pebble choppers with no understanding of materials science. 1.5 million years later in the Lower Paleolithic epoch, *Homo erectus* ("upright man") discovered fire unaware of the physics of combustion. And 12,000 years ago at the onset of the Neolithic, our *Homo sapiens* ("wise man") ancestors established the first agrarian communities and subsistence economies, though they had no grasp of civil engineering principles or macroeconomic theory. If technology is assumed to only be the tools and systems built upon underlying scientific knowledge and produced by some level of organized manufacturing capacity, then primitive man can be said to have had no technology at all.

But the archaeological record clearly attests to proto-human technologies, and they appear to have originated even earlier than we had thought. Engraved notations on *Homo erectus* artifacts discovered in Indonesia provide strong evidence that as far back as the Lower Paleolithic, cognition and neuro-motor control were advanced enough to permit them a certain degree of purposeful analytical observation and written communication, skills previously assigned only to our own species. However rudimentary their skills might have been, our distant ancestors followed the very steps that we do today when inventing the means for communication and survival — by giving form to speech and objects through trial and error, managing perceptions, sharing and testing acquired knowledge, assigning significations and institutionalizing tasks repeatedly in order to create even more forms, ideas and structure. At a fundamental level, the tasks of observing, experimenting, creating, testing and teaching are themselves technologies, because they are all deliberate, conscious acts which ultimately seek to extend our human physical and mental reach. Therefore, technology can be defined as the

tools and systems derived from knowledge, as well as human perceptions, processes and practices, whether or not they are based on science or industry.

Technology and Culture

A pair of hands scooping water or a stick used as a spear or lever; the preparation of foodstuffs or the stitching of leather garments; a cairn marking a grave or a notch carved on a tree: all came before the invention of ceramics and forged utensils, weapons and armies, agriculture and cooking, textiles and fashion, social rituals and symbols. Handed down from generation to generation, slowly improved upon and committed to learning, tools plus perception-and-knowledge-as-technology are tantamount to the formation of what we call culture. Humans (as well as some lower primates and corvids) shape and organize tools and independent of instinct and biological programming, pass such skills onto their offspring. This transmission of knowledge and skills is the essence of culture; without it societies stagnate, wither and die. Our culture appears to be dominated and defined by technology, because culture itself is technology.

Given that, can we make a positive correlation between a high level of technological attainment and an “advanced” culture? The answer is yes, but only if the technology is found to be used appropriately, otherwise the negative affordances of a badly implemented technology, however sophisticated it may be, can be a weakening force for the culture in which it operates. At a basic level there is really no good or bad technology, just good and bad applications of it. The answer of course also depends on one’s cultural bias and attitudes. By the standards of contemporary market economics and social development indices, a nation possessing a large industrial base, sophisticated banking structures, an educated and productive workforce and broad-based trade practices is “advanced,” while one on the periphery of global trade and affairs and low manufacturing capacity is “primitive.” But consider any so-called primitive society’s history, beliefs, customs, language, and self-perception within its own unique context. It may not be rich, powerful or modern, but one might find that the aggregate strength of its heritage can position it high in the areas of “social” technologies, where cultural practices hang in balance with the right level of technological adaptations. Then consider an indus-

trialized nation that perhaps possesses the means to project power and influence policies on a regional or even global scale. It can be built upon a heritage that promotes healthy competition, innovation and individual initiative, but it can be a society that nonetheless creates economic and social imbalances. A primitive society can carry on restrictive social practices, but they may be a reflection of enduring traditions which serve to cement group cohesion in difficult environments, and such traditions can in turn inspire artistic expression with subtle use of abstract symbolisms, techniques and materials. Such a society can be successful, as long as it is able to accommodate incongruities wisely and maintains adequate channels for personal expression. True that such a society may not have access to the level of comfort enjoyed by those living in a more industrialized nation, but the latter can present its own dangers, and through its enormous resource demands, consumption and material waste, threaten to irrevocably damage our natural ecosystems on a planetary scale.

Thus when considering technology and culture, it’s important to recognize that a low level of technological development does not necessarily mean a low level of culture, or that a high level of technological development guarantees a high level of culture. There is only a proper or improper application of technology as it aligns with cultural expressions and ideals. Moreover, a technology can only truly be advanced if it can demonstrate its benefit consistently with an optimal level of articulation and resource use. And while a primitive technology may lack the performance features of its modern counterpart, calling something a primitive technology is to tacitly acknowledge that it still most likely “gets the job done.”

As we continue in our effort to analyze and break down technologies, we can assign them as being either simple tools, compound tools or complex systems, and measure their utility, efficiency and levels of alignment with extrinsic and intrinsic human needs. While the following examples focus on artifacts and organized human activities, this taxonomy of simple tools, compound tools and complex systems can apply equally well to concepts, perceptions, processes and practices.

Simple Tools, Compound Tools and Complex Systems

At first glance, what we call a simple tool or a compound tool might

seem self-evident, but when we consider an artifact either as one part of a collection or a specific instantiation within an adaptive development matrix, the distinction becomes harder to make. At what point does a simple tool become a compound tool, and in turn when does a complex system begin?

At the most fundamental level, we can think of a simple tool as one being made from a single elemental material and which requires little or no external energy input for it to attain its basic utility. A good example is the *Homo habilis* stone chopper. The chopper is a single piece of found stone, usually flint, roughly knapped by hand with another stone, and used for splitting, shredding or crushing softer materials. Their overall physical features are generally similar to those of subsequent hand tools made by *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens*, suggesting that not much had changed over a period of nearly two million years. But these tools and their utility have evolved in ways that are not immediately apparent. Evidence shows that already by the Lower Paleolithic epoch, *Homo erectus* began to differentiate the use of their choppers, attaching hafts on some and using unique bi-facial flakings on others in order to meet a range of needs. These artifacts thus became part of a tool kit, evidence of our predecessors' ability to make classifications, establish patterns, systematize procedures and adjust techniques accordingly. In this case a simple tool, through its grouping and refinement, can become a single part of a larger compound tool, although it is a discrete component that isn't literally connected to another.

Take also the example of the steel hand axe, the modern incarnation of the Paleolithic chopper. Comparatively speaking it remains a simple tool. But it won't take much to see that it is a compound tool. For one thing, unlike the proto-human chopper, the typical modern steel axe is made up of discrete parts, and the parts assembled together carefully (one hopes) in order to attain specific performance characteristics when applied to a particular purpose. The articulation and the specificity of such an axe, precision-engineered and fabricated in a complex manufacturing setting, make it unmistakably a compound tool. When the axe is adapted further, its utility potential can quickly multiply and become an integral feature across a number of different systems. Plasma cutters,

grain harvesters, or miniature diamond blades are precision or even high-precision adaptations which are assigned to function within their respective manufacturing, agronomic or life science systems, which in turn draw on a wide range of technical expertise and social intelligence in order to meet complex needs in specific ways.

In the same way that a compound tool's articulation reveals degrees of refinement and its place within its own development matrix, a complex system can be described by its articulation and its up- and downstream dependencies. Compound tools become complex systems when refinements and dependencies grow. A complex system organizes its articulations as sub-assemblies which work in coordination with each other, while it seeks to subsume as many refinements and dependencies under its authority and control as it can. For example, in order to maintain its flagship operation, a global shipping company manages tightly coordinated warehousing and sorting facilities, land and airborne fleets, administrative functions and the personnel necessary to man them. Clearly such an enterprise is already a complex system. The complexity of this system expands dramatically when the company sources its own fuel, services its own fleets, provides just-in-time logistics for customers, manages a credit union, stores its own data and institutionalizes redundancies for the prevention of systemic failures. The global shipping company no longer simply moves and delivers packages, it technologically, economically and culturally ties numerous high human-factor systems and complex social practices in an unending web of mutual dependencies and needs. Complex systems create other complex systems, and gather power over space and time.

Notwithstanding these examples of the modern hand axe and the shipping company, advanced technology and industry are not necessary preconditions for complex systems. Similar to the way in which the level of technological attainment and cultural development aren't always correlated, complex systems can arise in the sparest of environments. What makes a system complex is not only its size, articulation, degree of refinement or extent, but also in the degree to which it organizes social intelligence and skills. Ancient irrigation systems and fortifications, armies of conquest and nascent world religions sustained entire

civilizations in the past not with earthmovers and steel, guns and mass media, but by amassing powerful cultural forces to mobilize human potential and resources. Meanwhile, in their time even the most technically advanced civilizations in antiquity succumbed to the assault of less sophisticated, but nonetheless determined invaders; and all the complex and automated systems which exist today would sooner rather than later cease to function were it not for a dependable energy source and regular service by people.

So we see that when ascribing definitions as to what constitutes simple tools, compound tools and complex systems we can set some parameters, but we need to recognize that the definitions are fluid depending on a number of contextual dimensions. For a tool to be simple, we can say that it needs to be fashioned out of basic materials, be singular and non-specific in use. A simple tool can become a compound tool when grouped in a set. A compound tool is one that is articulated, more specific in use, and requires a greater degree of assembly and external inputs. A complex system is a collection of compound tools and sub-assemblies which absorbs a wide range of up- and downstream dependencies, and exerts its influence over space and time. Finally, social intelligence and skills can overcome limitations in — and beat — technological capabilities, while even the most advanced technology will always need energy and people to operate and maintain it.

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Human Needs

In order to further excavate the relationship between technology and culture, it is useful to match them to the concept of extrinsic and intrinsic human needs. Extrinsic human needs — little changed from the time of our Pliocene, Neolithic and Paleolithic ancestors — can be broken down into four key elements: food, water, shelter and security. (To these, we can today add energy as a vital element for survival). The knowledge and techniques needed for resource acquisition (hunting and well-digging), making tools (a spear) and building defensible structures (a bower) are examples of technologies which allowed our ancestors to survive and generate progeny. Social rituals (induction ceremonies), status symbols (a decorative shield) and kinship gestures (blessing a communal home) were the cultural expressions which served to strengthen social

hierarchies, shape labor forces, build trust and a sense of belonging and protection.

In general then, we can say that technology allows for survival and optimization in a physical sense, while culture gives meaning and context to life activities in a meta-physical sense. Today, people in wealthy industrialized societies have largely surmounted foundational extrinsic needs, often take technology for granted and reflexively demand intrinsic value in whatever is made, exchanged and consumed. For those in so-called under-developed or emerging societies, factory-based manufacturing industries still represent the most direct means by which to attain extrinsic progress — even as intrinsic cultural practices still form the basis for stable communities. A good example of a foundational manufacturing sector is the textile industry, which through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries served as the mainstay of economic expansion for the United States and England. Today it remains a viable entry-level industry for emerging economies and traditional societies in parts of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. The workshops and factories that turn raw materials into export commodities have relatively low barriers for entry and start-up; the added social and economic benefit of providing women with the opportunity to transcend traditional roles by accessing education and the labor force is a feature that is embraced in some societies, fiercely rejected or exploited in others. A relatively new development is the rise of information technology sectors in emerging or mid-tier economies such as India, South Africa and Lithuania. Such countries are augmenting their manufacturing, agricultural or mineral extraction capacities or bypassing them altogether, and in the process of creating competitive services that can be easily disseminated across a global marketplace, they are discovering adaptations suited to their own unique domestic requirements.

While alignment of extrinsic and intrinsic values is desirable in any society, measured disruption of this alignment even if just symbolically can have positive effects. By sanctioning departures from established norms, communities and individuals can imagine and aspire to new organizational frameworks, social models and expressions through means as varied as re-enactments, demonstrations, role-playing and storytelling.

Exploring possibilities beyond normative boundaries circumscribed by laws, customs or habits promote adaptations to shifting circumstances and evolving public sentiment, while in some cases it serves to reaffirm consent on previously held beliefs or practices. Sometimes a society faces a real need to shift cultural paradigms in order to survive and grow, and when such changes occur disruptions are sure to follow. In engineering practices, pushing past performance barriers spurs invention and innovation; disruption, even destruction, is usually part of the research and development process. Decoupling the extrinsic and intrinsic values of a technological artifact or system can result in unexpected uses and new meanings, and as we see from the example of Carl DiSalvo's discussion of agonism, embodiment, social robots and the uncanny in his text *Adversarial Design*, such deviations can provide critical insights into our everyday social and political practices.

For all the differences in technological attainment and cultural expressions found across societies, commonalities are more prevalent when it comes to fundamental human practices and aspirations. Human behavior patterns are universally consistent, as are our responses to the affective signs — no matter the differences in superficial aesthetic details — which give value and meaning to everyday objects. Both the cosmopolitan urban dweller's search for "authentic" experiences and the emerging economy's desire for global name brands spring from this common human affinity for salutary gestures and symbols. As for describing fundamental mental activities, the knowledge process dimensions from Lorin Anderson's Bloom's Revised Taxonomy provides an up-to-date list of essential cognitive skills that not surprisingly mirror key affordances of our information age systems (and which happens to be just as useful for hunting bison), while George Murdock's Cultural Universals and content theory's Hierarchy of Needs by Abraham Maslow are two typologies of cultural expressions and emotional needs which relate to all cultures at all stages of technological development. All the point values from these classification systems can also be directly correlated to familiar tools and complex systems, which enable us to trace the connections between technology, tools, cognition and cultural practices within a historical, evolutionary framework.

Open and Closed Systems

Looking at the correlation between any given technology's extrinsic performative values and its cultural expression (as an embodiment of intrinsic values) can help us make a critical assessment of the utility and appropriateness of the technology itself and the nature of the culture from which it originates.

A symmetry between technology and culture reveals for the most part a peaceful and stable condition of existence while an asymmetry reveals conditions of material shortages, environmental gaps or war. This angle of study can in fact illuminate many of the underlying causes of conflicts that can arise between nations, regional states, communities and even individuals. The forces of globalization, population movements, territorial expansion — and the occasional natural cataclysm — can give rise to asymmetries between competing technological, cultural and economic imperatives, where "advanced" and "primitive" (or "good" and "bad") values are locked in opposition. Often the solution — by those who have it — is to apply more technology, an auto-catalytic process where even good intentions can sometimes push complexity onto systems already overwhelmed by too many inputs. As we've noted, positive cultural values have the capacity to neutralize adverse conditions, but any community under stress has the potential to express negative impulses, misdirect human labor and materiel, and invest enormous amounts of energy toward asymmetrical confrontations that seek to attain equilibrium on its own terms under the cover of cultural grievances.

As we can see, in these kinds of scenarios the discussions are often framed in terms of advanced or primitive, good or bad, rich or poor. An alternative, more objective measure of "open" and "closed" can help us overcome some — if not all — of the usual biases than arise when we compare technologies and cultures, and which limit our thinking as we approach problems. Is a culture open to assimilating the influence of other cultures, and what opportunities and challenges does this openness create? What does a closed culture stand to gain or lose? An open society that permits cultural assimilation is one that likely democratizes knowledge and champions equal and fair access to education, economic opportunity and various modes of expression. But it is also one that can

spark resentment if it extracts unreasonable or unequal concessions from some of its co-participants, or if one group consumes too many resources at the expense of another. A closed society can seek to protect seemingly successful cultural values by imposing consensus order and limiting access to disruptive external influences, but over the long run it pays a price in economic, intellectual and demographic isolation.

And what of the benefits and pitfalls of an open or “shared” technology as opposed to a closed one? The open and closed dialectic applies directly to one of the principal challenges we face when refining the tools and systems of our information age. An architecture system based on neutral access and open-sourced commonalities distributes information, spurs invention and promotes collaboration — think of Wikipedia — but it can be vulnerable to malicious attack and misuse. A closed system might better preserve data integrity and mitigate security breaches, but its isolation from the systems that surround it can limit its utility and flexibility. In complex human-factor environments such as an automated manufacturing plant, a precision research lab or a modern fly-by-wire cockpit, engineers constantly seek to find a balance between an open system’s interoperability and a closed system’s discrete functional autonomy, between interface maximization and minimization or a choice between primary and secondary telemetries. Often the fundamental objective in such instances distill down to determining when and under what circumstances a technological system should be “open” or “closed” to human access and intervention.

Whether it be in the operation of tools and systems or the spread of ideas, this notion of what is open and closed — or put another way, what is permitted and what is not — seems like the most commonly applied benchmark when it comes to basic performance attributes and interaction models. While useful and often practically necessary, this approach is not enough basis for uncovering new value potentials in tools, systems and people. By first adopting a new kinesthetics of language we can shape new ways of seeing, acting and thinking, thereby freeing ourselves from preconceptions and biases which reify fixed orthodoxies and procedures. Thinking of something as being open or closed (and even better, open and closed), rather than good or bad or advanced and primitive is

a good starting point if we are seeking to set new terms of engagement with the world around us — a generosity of perception which enables us to create new models for living, creating and communicating.

As we have seen from our discussion thus far, technology can be understood as the purposeful application of knowledge, as well as of perceptions, processes and practices. We see that technology can grow independent of science and industry, and that culture itself is technology. Both technology and culture need to be studied together in the context and circumstances in which they operate. Furthermore, we can analyze and categorize almost any technology as being either a simple tool, a compound tool, or a complex system, as long as we do so with an understanding of the complex and fluid relationships between them. A technology’s success can be measured by its utility, efficiency, refinement, degree of articulation and alignment to extrinsic and intrinsic human needs.

And finally, we can discover new value propositions by adjusting our language to imagine conceptual models that allow new types of human engagements.

Art, Design and Technology

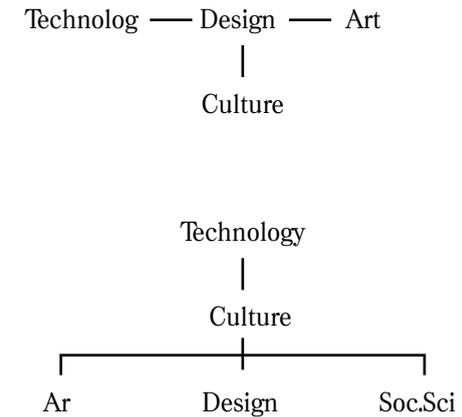
The term design (Latin *designare*, to designate) is defined as a plan or an intent. Technology is defined as the deliberate application of knowledge, and as we have seen from its classical etymology, related to the study of art and craft. Design and technology, then, are inseparably tied through their common meanings of deliberate intent and purpose, and in turn to art and craft through the physical instantiation of ideas. Vilém Flusser, in his 1993 essay *About the Word Design*, explains design as a “bridge” born during the Industrial Revolution which attempted to close the “sharp division between the world of the arts and that of technology,” which he notes had been in place since the Renaissance despite the conceptual affinity between the two. For Flusser, design is nothing less than a reunion of equals which makes “a new form of culture possible.” Designer and educator Louise Sandhaus simplifies the formulation and calls design the synthesis of perception, form and tools: a definition essentially indistinguishable from that of technology — and art. Much of design

practice today is engaged in syncretizing two or more contesting sets of procedures in a continuous process of convergence. As an example: one set of tasks may consist of the acquisition of information, knowledge and artifacts over time, while another may consist of their classification, assembly and redistribution in real time. This melding of longitudinal and latitudinal procedures relies on the integration of abstract classification concepts with systems-level engineering know-how, and lies at the core of industrial production, communications and information technology.

Through a somewhat analogous process of convergence and amalgamation, design as a whole seeks to influence our collective human enterprise by reconciling extrinsic and intrinsic needs through deliberation, knowledge distribution and production. But is it really a reunion of technology and art as Flusser claims? His is a useful typology, but a formulation which, in the face of converging trends in technology, art and design, seems somewhat immutable and outmoded. Flusser's view still maintains technology and art at diametrically opposite ends while assuming a limited definition for both. While he laudably ascribes a strong causal value to design, he over-expresses design's dependency on technological systems and under-expresses art's role as an intrinsic expression of technology — and therefore of culture. In short, Flusser defines neither art or design as technologies, and simply designates design as the sole product of his equation. Moreover Flusser's typology provides little room for liberal arts and social science co-products such as philosophy, political theory, religion, ethics and the institutional structures which sustain them, nor an acknowledgment of the crucial role that technology plays in their formation.

However, if we designate both art and design as technologies, and accept that the former as being primarily preoccupied with intrinsic cultural expressions and the latter with extrinsic functionalities, we can more readily grasp that technology, at whatever stage it may be, is the creator of all the necessary auto-catalytic conditions from which inventions, knowledge and extrinsic and intrinsic values emerge. By assigning equal value to art and design as manifestations of technology and culture, we can better appreciate how fixed demarcations between technology, art and design have been long outstripped by the convergence in methods,

procedures and intent over the last century. As an added benefit, this formulation gives room and equal footing to liberal arts and social science disciplines as technologies in of themselves, and brings into sharper relief their relevancy to art and design practices as a whole.



Design and Convergence

Fundamental two-dimensional visual organization principles, three-dimensional spatial-temporal experiential modalities and formal post-modernist and post-structuralist deconstructive strategies are the axioms which inform virtually all contemporary studio-based practices today. Creating functional and symbolic value for commodities and services is to describe the essential task of advertising, branding, service and product design, while re-designating materials and their properties, or stripping artifacts of their utility value in order to assign new meanings — whether by removing them from their original context or some other type of restatement — is to describe the strategies of key art movements of the last one hundred years. However, important as these axioms are, they are not sufficient for addressing emerging needs spurred by technological convergence. Convergence demands the adoption of conceptual frameworks and methodologies from a variety of disciplines that thrive on and near the intersection of technology, applied science, social sciences and design.

For example, architecture, urban planning, cinema, theater, dance and music operate in spatial-temporal dimensions where formal structural

principles and performative elements combine with technical innovations that together channel human perceptions and experience. Systems engineering and computer science are seeing advances in distributed information systems, dynamic, multi-dimensional visualization platforms, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and ubiquitous computing (UbiComp). Urban planners, civil engineers and government and non-government agencies, sometimes through unexpected alliances, are defining new multi-modal approaches to the funding, administration and execution of new systems for transportation, housing, ecological management and resource allocation. And a new generation of industry aggregators and application developers are creating virtual ecosystems characterized by object impermanence and non-linear narratives which influence how we create, relate and behave in real life. All of these practices are redefining participatory and prediction routines, and are spurring further development of open-ended and omni-directional communication and feedback structures which can accommodate a great degree of ambiguity and variability. To be sure, art and design's shared intent already bestows them with many useful syncretic procedures for generating meaningful responses, but we can see that convergence calls for the leveraging of methodologies from co-collaborators in innumerable other disciplines.

Through all this, the struggle to remain true to the value propositions of one's own work and discipline remains. Moore's Law applied to conditions of ambiguity, variability, modularity, automation and abstract representation promises exponential increases in speed, distribution and replication, further eroding the importance of the fixed, singular work and the primacy of place. In their respective responses to such challenging conditions, the artist and the designer are however compelled to deploy adoptive strategies from contrasting positions. The artist is free to exercise a great deal of latitude in the choice of mediums and subjective interpretations, and may routinely apply procedures such as dematerialization, dispersal and duplication to dissemble and layer his real intent. But in order to maintain significance, he finds himself — as do the museum and gallery complexes through which he operates — forced to actively assimilate and engage with the very same mechanisms of commodification and distribution which he may be attempting to deconstruct, critique or transcend. It's a difficult and delicate balancing

act, and contemporary art can sometimes lapse into an uneasy oscillation between aimless kineticism, commercial cynicism and affective surface ornamentation. The designer seemingly has a clearer mission because for the most part she responds directly to practical market imperatives and appears to be tied closer with technology. But for her the conditions of dematerialization, dispersal and duplication, not to mention the rapid prototyping and information tools on which she is reliant, describe the very strata through which her formal instantiations and content significations have little choice but to pass. This demands that she perform an immediate process of material and content transmutation, then navigate entirely through virtual information and production systems, an almost infinite range of human responses that are subject to wide interpretation, all the while remaining responsible for meeting concrete performance benchmarks in real world settings.

Without a robust preparatory framework that includes — and anticipates — multiple process dimensions, design can come up short by being inert and unresponsive to actual human needs, and often end up substituting gestures for any real regard for meaning and intent. Such shortcomings appear even more acute when we consider them alongside rapid advances in speech recognition, artificial intelligence and robotics, all fields which require a deep understanding of human cognition and behavior. In each field, ambiguity and variability define the terms of engagement. The challenge in speech recognition lies in systematizing and correlating spoken words with their subjective meanings while predicting and adjusting for shifts in situational contexts. Artificial intelligence and robotics development proceeds on from these linguistic and communicative problems to include a wider set of motor-kinetic command responses and environmental feedback that emulate human behavior in real world scenarios. In such instances, technical progress relies on advancements in machine learning and quantum computing, where rather than with conventional 0 and 1 binary values, a new generation of integrated circuits and computers perform massive calculations in which values can be 0, 1 or both.

Design and Interdisciplinarity

Designers function today under a unique set of circumstances in which

the transformative nature of the digital revolution and the information age requires us to reformulate much of our understanding about the primacy of place and location, the nature of representation, and human adaptive responses during rapid technological innovation cycles. Conditions at this point in time and history impact design practice by presenting us with deeper ontological questions to a much greater degree than in the past, because for the first time our collective material existence is insistently co-located with virtual realities whose extent and influence make the acceptance of disembodiment and uncertainty not just desirable, but compulsory. This line of inquiry, which knits philosophy, epistemology, post-modern critical theory and aspects of quantum theory with a largely concrete discipline, is not entirely new. But the digital revolution presents added complexities beyond those found in mechanical production and the familiar affordances ascribed to historically conventional communication mediums and techniques of the last century. Digitization renders endless simulacra into constantly changing, diffuse entities as they are repeatedly manipulated and presented over time and distance. Transmutation and spatial-temporal dissipation challenges the fundamental terms of design's permanence, notions of hierarchy, human relationships to artifacts and space, and the cultural role of designers as both producers and consumers. How are we then to imagine a unified process in which knowledge, perception, design and technology can be applied in tandem to begin addressing some of the fundamental communicative, social, economic or environmental problems of our time?

One clear approach is to always fully address human dimensions before a technological response is even proposed. Even given that technology and culture are so inextricably connected, considering fundamental intrinsic issues independent of tools and technological systems allows designers to work toward solutions that are properly aligned and scaled. Essential utility and use case characteristics can be built out and test-demonstrated through observation, documentation and participatory experiments, all of which draw on various ethnographic, etiologic and taxonomic methodologies. Linguistic analyses can provide deeper engagement with communication, language and speech, and in turn stimulate interest in mathematics and computer science, where equa-

tions and programming languages are expressed in terms of mnemonics, logic and syntax. An examination of system level up- and downstream dependencies can draw on numerous applied and social science research methodologies and expressed through various design modalities, be they the transmission of messages, interaction models, visualizations or social critiques. A practice that by-passes crucial investigations and focuses prematurely on technical choices and features will unwittingly lead designers to put gesture and form ahead of content, meaning and real intent; the result is scenarios where users and participants are the ones forced to adapt to technology, rather than the other way around.

Of course not every design response need to be a catalyst for the creation of new communicative models, inventions, or social paradigms. In the overall design development schema much of what we create are incremental refinements, attenuations and extensions of already established artifacts and systems. The products, services or systems that appear to have suddenly, and successfully, imposed dramatic new norms on entire industries are always the result of collaborative long-term research, trail-and-error development and discrete adaptations. What this does highlight is the designer's embedded position within complex systems and the necessity of engaging with all the up- and downstream dependencies, social intelligence and practices contained within them.

As it is, creating new norms in a mature industry with a well-established user base, manufacturing and distribution infrastructures may not be the most pressing design challenge. The real challenge today may be in applying complex systems to the needs of technically under-served societies or communities; this problem becomes greater still when we introduce open technologies, and their underlying values, to closed ones. In order to successfully address any pragmatic and social objectives at all in such wider contexts, it becomes even more essential that design be pursued as an interdisciplinary endeavor. Whether they emanate from art, engineering or applied and social sciences, we must first and foremost be fluent in the language and practices of multiple disciplines. Our responsibilities in a complicated and often asymmetrical global landscape demand that we act as progenitors who understand fundamental human impulses from a variety of viewpoints and contrasting or

even conflicting modes of expression, all the while recognizing the role extrinsic and intrinsic values play in the creation and exchange of just about everything that we can say, imagine and assemble.

Speculative design practices that model experimental scenarios and envision the future have invigorated the design discipline overall, and design propositions that arise from a holistic worldview and complex epistemological inquiries are starting to address a whole range of issues. But in the case of critical design practices, the trap lies in the kind of tautologies in which post-modern and post-structuralist theories can sometimes get caught. Designers must direct efforts toward imagining and creating new conceptual, performative, utilitarian and communicative values, but the mere act of creating a physical instantiation of an idea is not an adequate substantiation if underlying assumptions are not based on a credible foundation of knowledge, empirical evidence, objective standards and intent. The idea has to embrace the full breath and scope of whatever the problem is at hand, and just calling something true, doesn't mean it is (and that seems especially true today).

What is indisputably true is that design is supported institutionally and recognized by informed publics as a critical and deeply embedded discipline; the modern information and media landscape only serves to amplify our role as important arbiters of culture and social progress. The impulse to preserve cultural legacies — and we can use this term generously to include anything from entire societies to specific individuals — in the face of technological convergence and the need for sustainable practices in consumption-driven societies further add to the demand for collaborative teamwork, new incentive models, evolving technical skills and bold design responses. In many cases, such seemingly lofty goals lies at the heart of almost every challenge we take on, big and small. To act based on an understanding of our evolution within a historical continuum, of the deep commonality of our needs, and of the shifting contexts in which language, perceptions and form operate is the essence of what it means to design. We must, in short, constantly prepare ourselves, and others, for change.

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Events

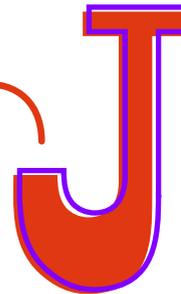
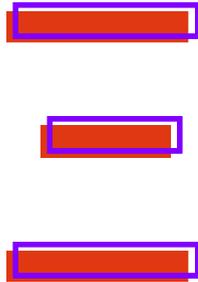
Description of what “Events” are

In the essay: The Subject and Power, Michel Foucault defines but to understand the subject.

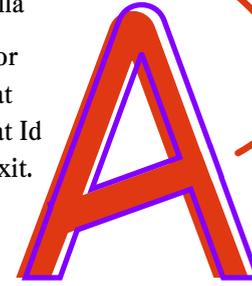
Concept Introduction

In this project, each student has provided one article from their thesis bibliography that stands in to represent their respective thesis topic. Each student has been assigned another's topic, and will use the designated article to create an experiential interpretation of this article's complex subject matter, otherwise known as the "event." During each event, the host is required to document the experience and save any artifacts from the experience to serve as content for the website. After each event, all six participants submit a response about the event back to the host. The host will then analyze these responses and synthesize them into a larger conclusion that will serve as the content for the print publication.

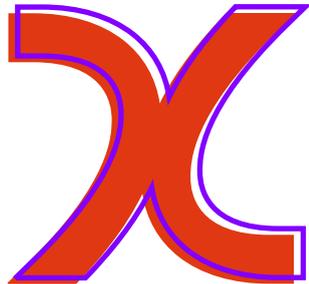
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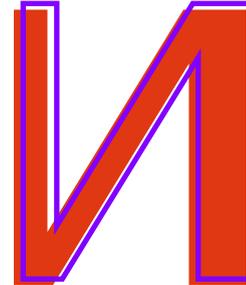
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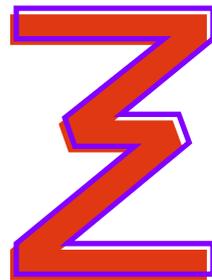
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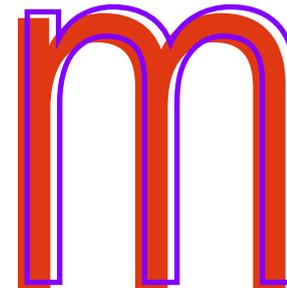
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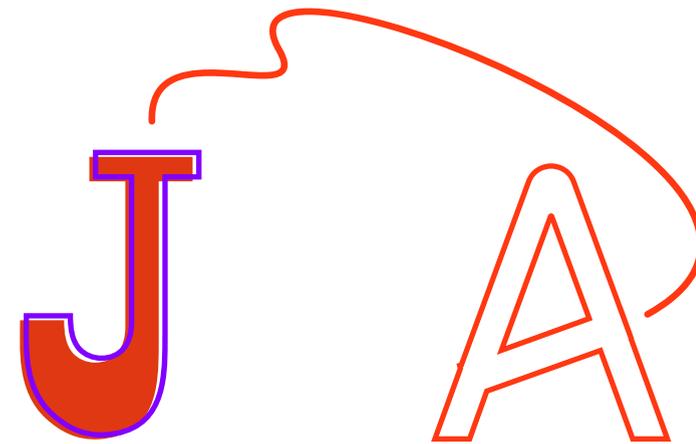
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“When an image or idea is recreated time and time again, its form and content are subject to change as different people derive and give, or create, meaning in incredibly personal ways. One way to view this process is as the destruction of an idea, as an idea losing its value or as an idea alienating from its original form and ultimately becoming lost or misconstrued. Another way to frame this concept is to appreciate the new, and potentially distant, ideas that may emerge from a reproductive process whose end results are infinite and unknown.”

Ctrl+C



Seven-thirty in the evening on
October 2nd, 2015 at 159 East
30th Street for four hours.

Event Introduction

Hrag Vartanian's text, *Holy Holy Copy Copy Culture Culture*, A Manifesto, addresses copy culture and the notion of originality. When an image or idea is recreated time and time again, its form and content are subject to change as different people derive and give, or create, meaning in more subjective ways. One way to view this process is through the destruction of an idea, or as a process in which an idea deviates from its original form or intended meaning, becoming lost or misconstrued along the way. Another way to frame this concept is to appreciate the new and potentially distant ideas that may emerge from the process of reproduction where the end results are infinite and unknown. It is interesting and incredibly valuable to track this process of evolution. If broken down and examined up close, it may be possible to see where new meanings are derived from and what cues or indicators give rise to new ideas. For designers, this process can serve as a way to examine issues from multiple perspectives as well as offer a valuable study in semiotics. Most importantly, it is a process through which a diverse range of backgrounds can influence a new and unexpected outcome.

In an attempt to mimic this process, our cohort assembled to play a game of Writey-Drawey. Each person

was provided with a spiral-bound book containing seventy-one blank pages. Given "the unknown" as the starting prompt, each person had one minute to write a sentence related to "the unknown." After one minute, the books were passed to the left and each person was given two minutes to sketch a visual response to the sentence. The books were then passed to the left and without referring to the previous entry, the new receiver had to write a sentence in response to the image that the previous person had drawn. This process continued, alternating between sentence and image, one minute to two minutes, until all seven books (totaling 497 pages) were completed. The intent was to circulate each book ten times such that when the books were passed around clockwise, they would eventually return to their originator. Due to a miscount, as well as an unplanned change in seating rotation, the books switched hands at unanticipated points but were returned to their person of origin for the final round of the game.

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a sentence in response to the image that the previous person had drawn. This process continued, alternating between sentence and image, one

“With each of us in a completely different state of mind that evening (tired, sick, stressed, annoyed....), we embarked on this first of a series of events inspired by our theses topics that would ultimately form the content of this publication. What ensued was part translation, part performance, and part speculation. It was an activity with a simple prompt, but in its simplicity came confusion and misinterpretation, which quickly became one of the most reoccurring—and interesting—themes of the night. All seven of us became responsible for initiating a unique conversation within the group.⁴ Despite the unpredictable nature of the exercise there were several common factors that contributed to the way the ideas and content developed and evolved.⁷”

WoW Jackie

How nice are U?

I won't be late

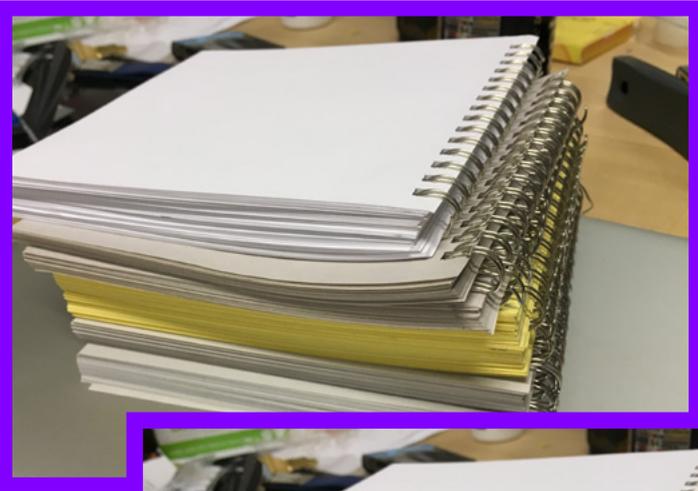
We'll start on time

Emilia dealing w flood crisis at her apartment, Nicole filming Ryan and the rest of us tired and hungry and annoyed lol

Can we start pleasee

Please

I'm dying



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minute to two minutes, until all seven books (totaling 497 pages) were completed. The intent was to circulate each book ten times such that when the books were passed around clockwise, they would eventually return to their originator. Due to a miscount, as well as an unplanned change in seating rotation, the books switched hands at unanticipated points but were returned to their person of origin for the final round of the game.

With each of us in a completely different state of mind that evening (tired, sick, stressed, annoyed...), we gathered as a group to initiate what would develop into a series of seven events inspired by our theses topics. What ensued was part translation, part performance, and part speculation. It was an activity with a simple prompt, but in its simplicity came confusion and misinterpretation, which quickly became one of the most reoccurring—and interesting—themes of the night.

All seven of us became responsible for initiating a unique conversation within the group. Despite the unpredictable nature of the exercise, several common factors developed that contributed to the joint ideas and content that resulted in each of the seven books.

One factor that became apparent that night was the “need” to loosen up, which has become a crutch for many people, including our group of seven. Because it is something that is executed occasionally and isn’t necessary to function as a society, it cannot be considered an intrinsic need. However, one might argue that we are becoming more and more dependent on some sort of catalyst for social interactions, which in the absence of, we tend to feel paralyzed. Perhaps this is due to all the virtual socializing that we are inclined towards or maybe it is just a matter of our time! Although it was a marginal and supplemental piece of technology, alcohol played a crucial role in our event— as it does in many social gatherings. I am certain that without it, our event might not have even begun as our moods were shaken from preceding incidents as well as environmental factors courtesy of Hurricane Joaquin.

The seven different books circulating that night also affected our mindsets. Inherently, books with different ideas and themes influenced each other, causing us to subconsciously use ideas and feelings that we may not have experienced had we only been passing around one

mood

book. We took a few breaks during the event, pausing and changing positions several times in an attempt to create a new and unique seating arrangement for each “round.” As a result, ideas introduced in one book often reappeared in the other books.

As the event progressed new sets of rules were defined. This added another layer of “randomness” to the exercise. As the original structure was repetitive, it proved beneficial for us to make changes that allowed each person to receive input from more than just one person. This perhaps contributed to one of the most exciting parts of the exercise; the surprise of what you would end up with next. It’s interesting that topics were often repeated, causing thematic patterns to emerge. Across seven books, each with completely different starting points, there grew to be consistent themes and feelings. Perhaps this was due to the very personal nature of the process as it involved subjective ideas and feelings, which although scattered, became contagious as the game progressed.

Subjective interpretations acted as points of deviation where new concepts were introduced and “conversations” changed directions.

“Miscommunication”, or misinterpretation also caused new, perhaps unrelated, elements to emerge, which in turn, became beneficial to our process. If everything followed a predictable path, the event would not have triggered as many insights and reflections as it did. It was at those deviation points that new concepts and vocabulary were introduced, ultimately enriching the experience.

In some cases, communication was completely broken during the process of being translated from drawing to sentence as the receiver was unable to interpret the sender’s intended idea. For example, a weather radar map became astronomy, which then became a keyhole and then eyes. Those miscommunications were not ideal as they interrupted the meaningful circulation of information. As previously mentioned, however, the miscommunications were embraced for their spontaneous nature and the unexpected and interesting translations that followed.

(figure 3)

Conversely, when the communication was fluent, the outcome felt like a loop. It flowed from a concept

in a sentence to a drawing, then back to a sentence and finally, to a similarly exceptional drawing. Given that the participants were directed to interpret, rather than modify or distort what they had been presented with, this confirms that in the absence of any deliberate or accidental subjectivity, “copy-culture” does not thrive.

For example, the subject “darkness” was interpreted differently in several sentences. Some responses were very fact-oriented and translated only the information that had been depicted in the previous drawing. Others were poetic or fictional. Although the subjective interpretations shifted and were sometimes lost in the process, keywords like “darkness” remained. (figure 2)¹

In the process of information transmission, images and text were meant to provide a framework for the next receiver to interpret and manipulate. During this process, “original” information was lost and morphed to create new meanings. For example, based on different understandings of the visual perception of the “sun”, people created different interpretations of nature cults, which are formative of diverse religions. Similarly, these evolutions

reflect how “memes” act within contemporary society. A meme, as defined by Wikipedia, is “an idea, behavior, or style that spreads from person to person within a culture”. So, can it be said that misinterpretation is technology or that it contributes to the ways in which technology evolves? As demonstrated during our event, when concepts are transformed with new significance a type of evolution takes place. Zebras.

There were several different factors that affected the process of translation throughout the exercise. Jump!

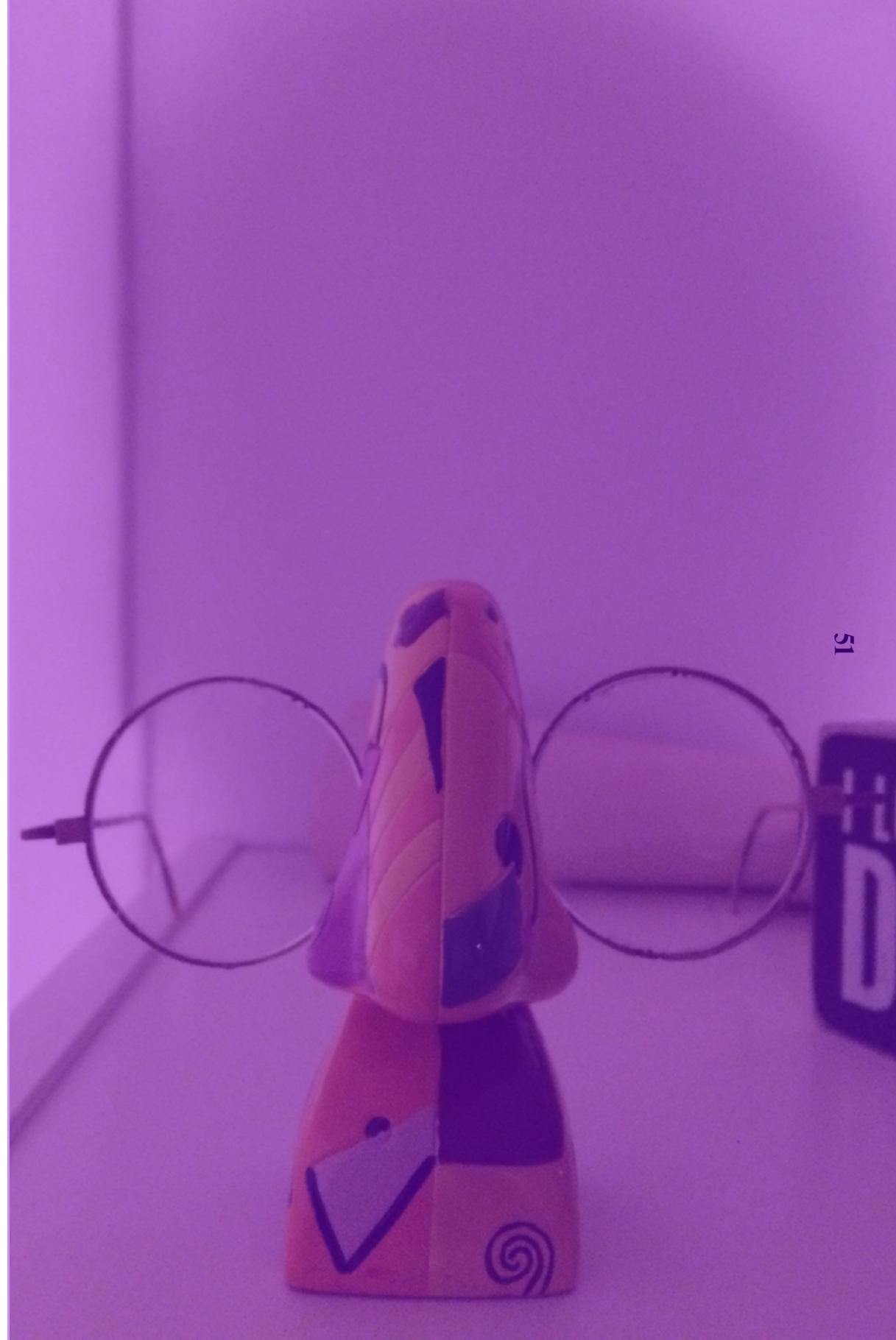
It’s interesting to experience how limiting the written word can be when compared to imagery. Symbols and images can have different interpretations and designers can profit immensely from the responses they elicit. Additionally, different cultural contexts as well as the conscious or subconscious influence of current events affect the way people interpret what they see. Due to time constraints and varied writing and drawing abilities, we developed adaptations, such as relying on semiotics, in order to communicate quickly and manipulate or trigger desired outcomes.² A quick moment of reflection and

Conclusion

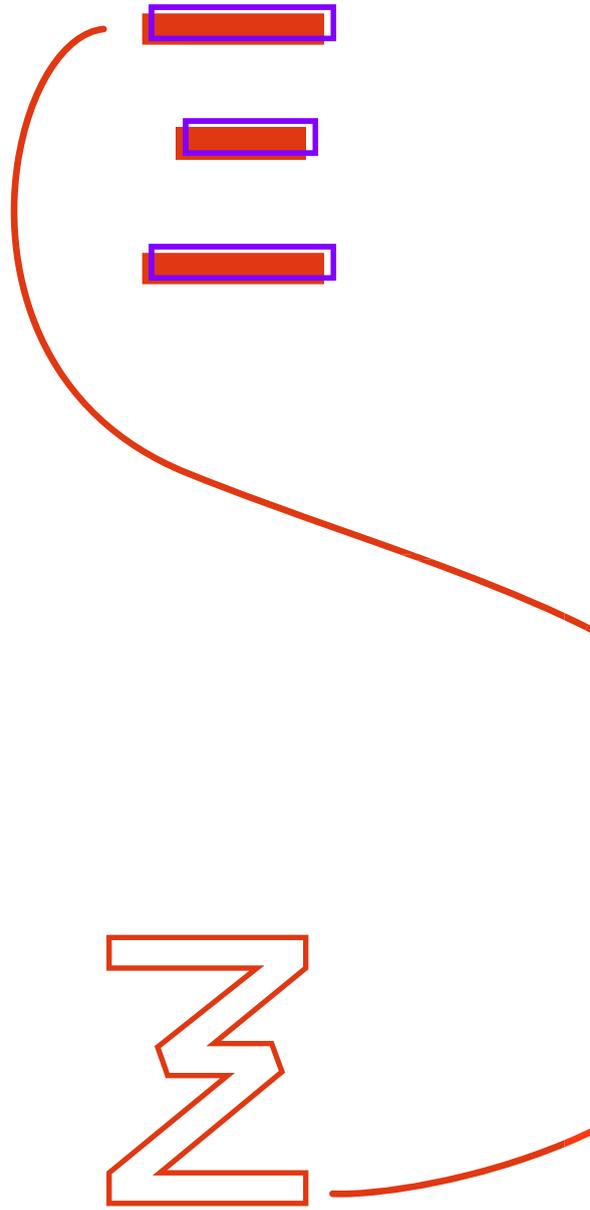
translation would precede another contribution to the conversation— either through words or pictures— resulting in yet another layer of meaning that would have to be interpreted and expressed visually.

Knowing what one's own strengths and weaknesses are and Without knowing what the others Where (and how) to improvise is an important exercise for designers who are reliant on others and vice versa. In our case, seven responses, these themes, despite the confusion and misinterpretation they would suffer, managed to live on over the course of 497 pages of language, shared vocabularies, re-imagined and re-contextualized knowledge, and semiotics to transcend us towards new and useful design tactics and methodologies? Perhaps the answers lie in the unknown.

For further experimentation of the processes explored during this event, it may be beneficial to consider additional and/or different constraints as well as a desired end goal(s). It would have been interesting to see, for example, what would have happened if each of the seven participants had been assigned a different initial prompt. Let's just be clear, this is not to say that this event did not have or reach an end goal; the end goal here was met as it succeeded in offering insights into how this methodological approach may be used to develop unique content in unconventional ways through the process of repetition.



The Angry and the Desperate



In the essay: *The Subject and Power*, Michel Foucault defines through several examples the relation of power. Not to clarify the definition of power but to understand the subject in relation to complex power relationships. I have designed an event that consists in changing our group dynamic where the order of the normal structure is intervened.

Event Introduction

In the essay, *The Subject and Power*, Michel Foucault uses several examples to define the subject of power in relation to complex power structures. In an attempt to better understand these structures, I decided to design an event that would change our group dynamic by disrupting power structures that we often take for granted.

By changing the pattern of communication and defining different hierarchies within a pre-existing system or community, I wanted to build comparative framework for understanding our daily social structures and behaviors.

Inspired by Foucault's essay, I decided to focus on the "individual" as an attempt to understand behaviors and the development of human systems within a defined power relationship.

I chose to use a personal device, a smartphone, as an interchangeable object through which a new group structure could be established; one in which certain participants would exercise control and power over others.

My intent was to emphasize how individual and group dynamics change under a particular power structure in an effort to provide a new way of approaching our daily routines and structures.

For this event, I referenced an exhibition at the Simon Bolivar Museum in Bogotá, Colombia in which children were asked to surrender their most precious toys for use in the exhibition.

The argument used by the museum curator was that once you make things personal, people begin to view them differently. After the toys had been handed over to the museum, the children commented on how their bears, Barbie's, and car toys were placed in the bed of Simon Bolivar and compared their own homes to Bolivar's "home".

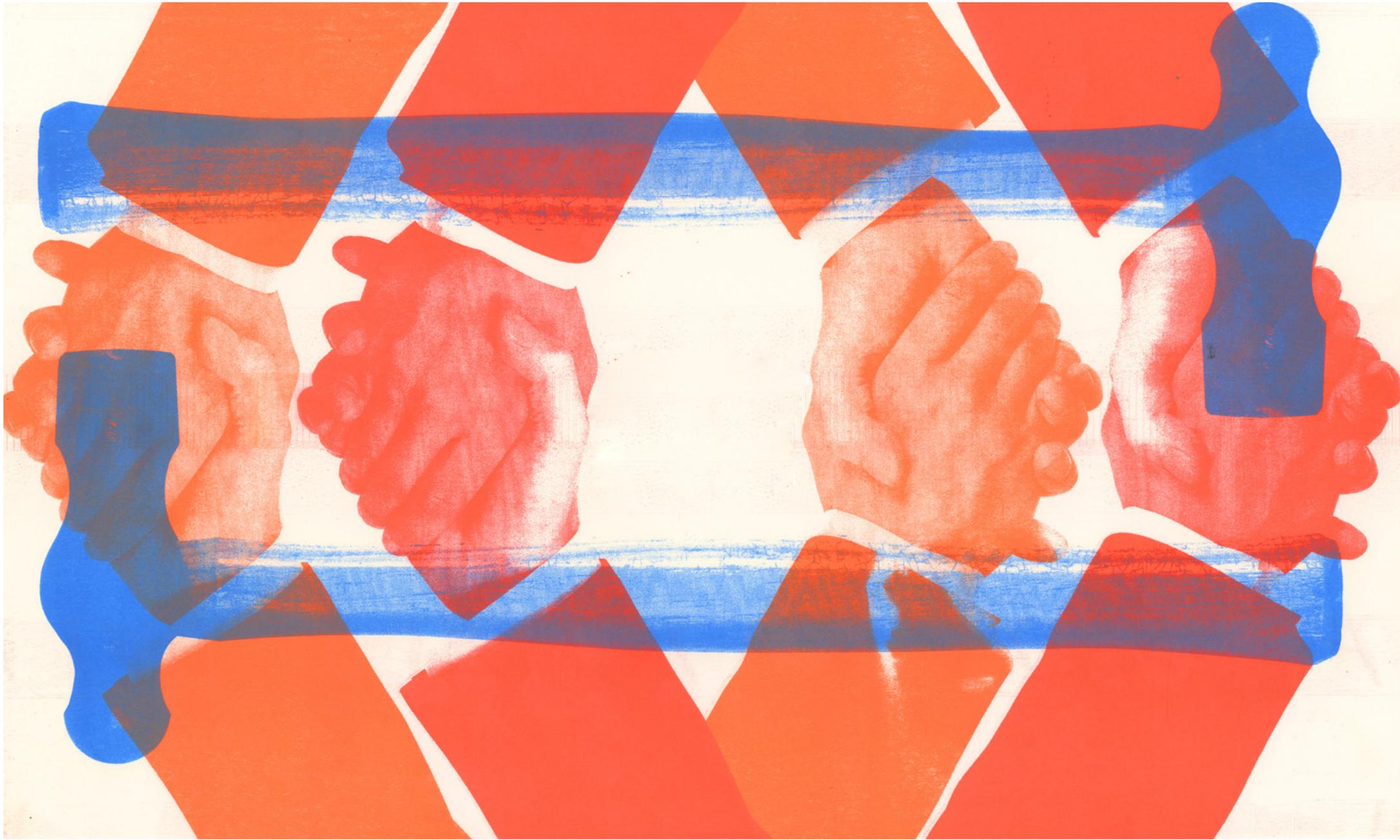
Using this example as a frame of reference, I wanted to use a personal object that has come to define contemporary culture—the smartphone—as it's an object that illustrates how quickly power structures can shift the instant it changes hands.

When one defines the exercise of power as a mode of action upon the actions of others, when one characterizes these actions by the government of men by other men—in the broadest sense of the term—one includes an important element: freedom. Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free.

Michel Foucault

YOU WILL SURRENDER
YOUR PHONE!!! FOR
A WEEK!!! TWO PEOPLE
WILL BE IN CHARGE
OF YOUR PHONES!!!

IF YOU WANT IT, YOU WILL
HAVE TO PAY!!!



XINYI, MOEIN... YOU'LL
BE IN CHARGE OF THE
PHONES...

I WANT YOU TO SPY, AND
GET ME ALL THE INFOR-
MATION YOU CAN GET
FROM THE DEVISES.

I WANT YOU TO IMPER-
SONATE THE OTHERS
AND MANIPULATE THEIR
PHONES... AND I WANT
REPORTS!!!

Event Journal

Entry 1

Jackie was the most adamant that I should be part of the experiment and follow the same rules as the others.

That night Nicole bought me something from the store, which I intend to reimburse her for, of course. When she gave it to me I replied: "Well, now you've earned an extra day with your phone". I couldn't believe myself.

62 Entry 2

Today was a disaster. I didn't think we would last until Friday, but I thought the event would have lasted longer than two days.

They smiled and seemed very willing to give me their phones; I didn't even have to ask!

Moein was obviously feeling betrayed and angry. For me, it was not an easy task to invade his privacy. I was trying for the most part not to hurt anyone's feelings given the circumstances, but no matter how little or innocent the disruption of privacy was, the

results were still the same.

Entry 3

There was a noticeable feeling of anxiety and then Aryn and Nicole came to collect their phones.

I wondered if Michael ever found other means of communication?

Why couldn't he find another way to do what he wanted?

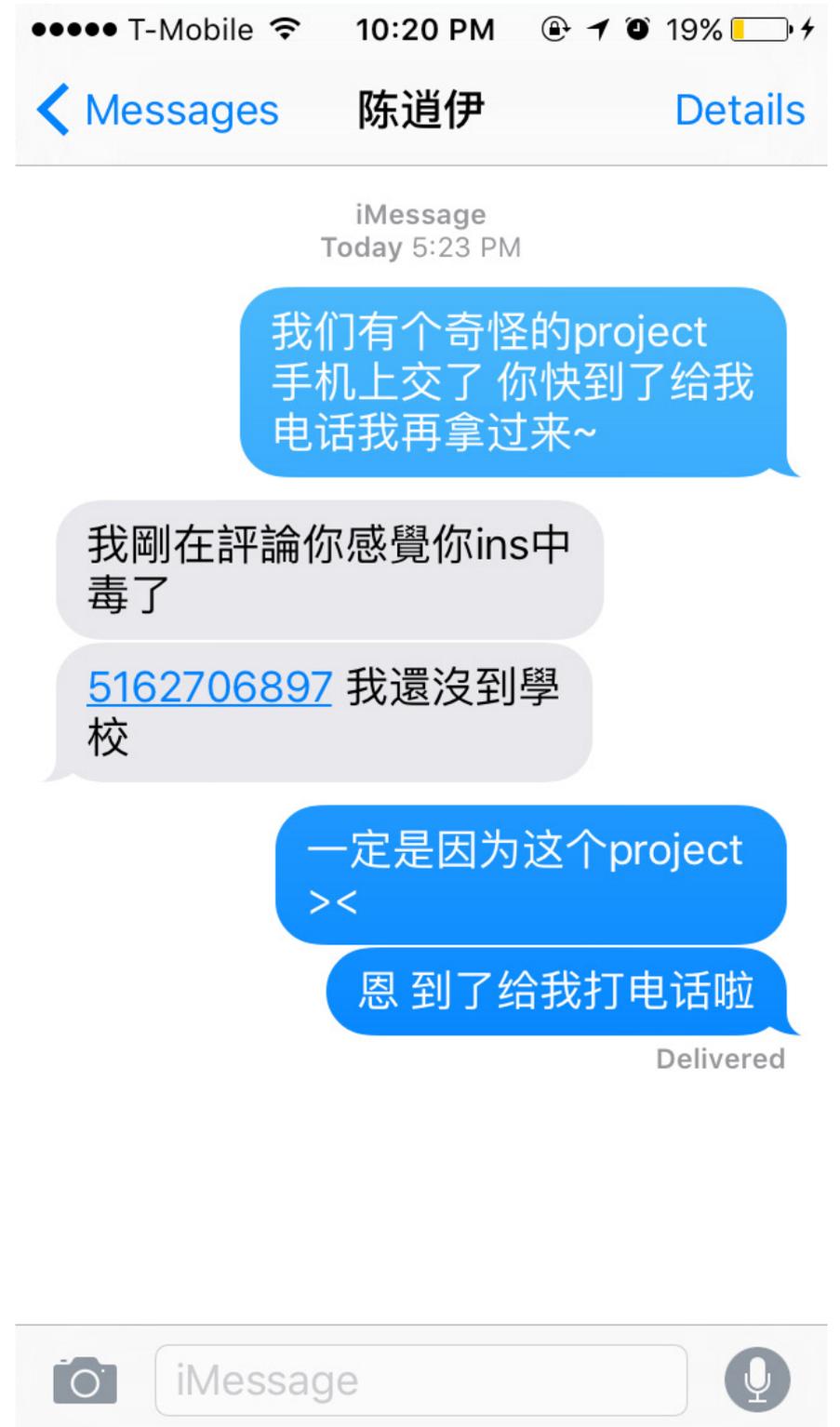
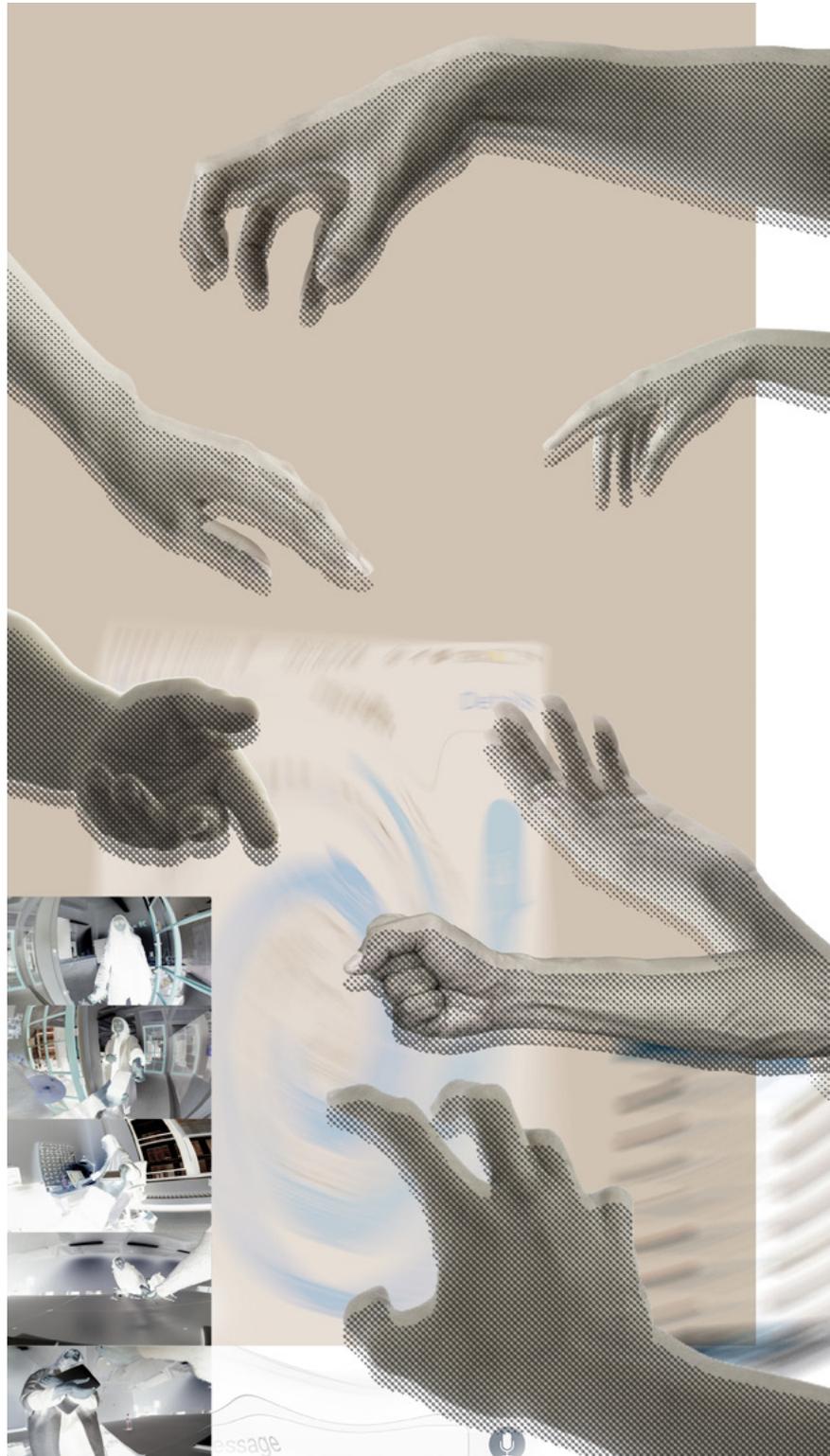
Why did he need his phone with such urgency?

It had only been a couple of hours and he was growing more desperate.

I thought, "God no, not another panic attack!"

THIS DAY WAS A DISASTER...





**FINE. FINE...
YEAH BUT...
FINE,
TAKE IT...**



69

I AM NICOLE, THIS EVENT MADE ME REFLECT ON THE SOCIAL/POWER STATUS THAT I HAVE. AFTER MY PHONE WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM ME PHYSICALLY NOT JUST LOGICALLY I HAD TO BUY XINYI STRAWBERRIES AND LOST SOME MONEY. I THINK MOSTLY I WAS JUST PARANOID BECAUSE SOMEONE WAS GOING TO SWIPE MY PHONE FROM ME AT ANY MINUTE. MY RELATIONSHIPS DIDN'T CHANGE BUT WHAT WAS INTERESTING WAS THAT I ENDED UP ACTING TOWARDS EMILIA AND XINYI THE SAME WAY I WOULD ACT TOWARDS A COP OR AUTHORITY WHO WAS UNJUSTLY PUNISHING ME/TAKING AWAY MY RIGHTS. I HAD AN AUTOMATIC RESPONSE TO BE KIND OF BITCHY/SASSY TOWARDS EMILIA AND XINYI. IT WASN'T ABOUT THEM EITHER; IT WAS JUST ABOUT THE SITUATION. WHEN XINYI ASKED ME TO GET HER STRAWBERRIES IN EXCHANGE FOR MY PHONE I APPROACHED IT WITH A BAD ATTITUDE KIND OF MOCKING THE SITUATION. AGAIN, I DIDN'T DO THIS CONSCIOUSLY, BUT THE SITUATION PROVOKED THIS NATURAL RESPONSE IN ME.

THERE WEREN'T REALLY ANY CHALLENGES; IT WAS MOSTLY THE PARANOIA, LIKE I SAID. I WAS MOSTLY PISSED BECAUSE I WANTED TO LISTEN TO MY MUSIC AND BE ABLE TO TAKE PHOTOS/VIDEOS/SOUND RECORDINGS.

AS FAKE AS THIS SITUATION WAS, IT WAS ALSO VERY REAL. THE WAY THAT THE POWER ROLES WERE JUST GIVEN TO XINYI AND MOEIN, AND TAKEN AWAY FROM MICHAEL, ARYN, JACKIE AND I WITHOUT JURISDICTION IS A SITUATION THAT COULD TECHNICALLY (NOT LEGALLY) HAPPEN AT ANY TIME IN OUR SOCIETY, AND OFTEN DOES. IT WAS A GOOD REMINDER TO KEEP AWARE OF THESE SITUATIONS AND HELP OTHERS BECOME AWARE OF THE 1984 SOCIETY THAT COULD BE ON THE HORIZON IN WEB CULTURE IF WE DON'T PAY ATTENTION.

I THINK THE EVENT WAS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE IT WAS SO DRAMATIC AND DID ACCOMPLISH WHAT (I THINK) EMILIA WAS TRYING TO DO -- TRANSMITTING THE FEELING OF POWER STRUCTURES. IT'S A LITTLE BROAD TO BE CONSIDERED IN ITSELF A DESIGN METHODOLOGY, BUT I THINK DESIGNERS CAN USE THIS EVENT AS A GOOD CASE STUDY ON HOW TO SET UP METAPHORICAL SITUATIONS THAT RELAY BROAD CONCEPTS SUCH AS THIS ONE.



67

I DON'T THINK THIS EXPERIMENT WAS SO PERSONAL, OR RATHER, I DIDN'T TAKE ANYTHING PERSONALLY. I THINK THAT I'VE DEFINITELY BEEN ABLE TO DERIVE AN OBJECTIVE ANALYSIS OF HOW I ACT IN DRASTIC SITUATIONS THAT UNFAIRLY REMOVE MY HUMAN RIGHTS, AND UNDERSTAND THAT THESE SITUATIONS HAPPEN NOT ONLY IN A LARGER SOCIAL ORDER BUT ALSO WITHIN MUCH MORE INTIMATE SITUATIONS.

REQUEST FORM

To be filled by Keeper

Cellphone Owner	Time	Place	Request	Fee	Notes
Xinyi		Studio meeting room	Have her phone back for a night	Tasks completed with two other people's phone	
<u>Aryn</u>		Studio meeting room	Have her phone back for a night	Buying me d dinner for tomorrow	
Nicole		Studio meeting room	Have her phone back for a night	Bring me strawberries tomorrow	
Xinyi	2:06pm	301	Give phone to Emilia		
<u>Aryn</u>	5:15pm	301	Give phone to Xinyi		
Nicole	5:15	301	Give phone to Xinyi		
Nicole	5:20	<u>studio</u>	Get phone back to text	Been video taped	
<u>Aryn</u>	5:20	<u>studio</u>	Transferring voice memo	Been watched	
Nicole	6:11	301	Returning phone		
Nicole	8:00	301	Have her phone back for a night	Give Emilia Cigarettes	
<u>Aryn</u>	8:00	301	Have her phone back for a night	Bring snacks for our class tomorrow	
Xinyi	8:10	<u>studio</u>	Have her phone back for a night		
<u>Aryn</u>	2:30pm	301	Give phone to Xinyi		Smiled and seems very willingly!
Nicole	2:05	301			Give strawberries to Xinyi



In 1996, American cypherpunk, Eric Hughes, penned the [Cypherpunks Manifesto](#), a call for widespread privacy via the act of people coming together to deploy anonymous transaction systems for the common good. Hughes states, "Privacy is necessary for an open society in the electronic age. Privacy is not secrecy. A private matter is something one doesn't want the whole world to know, but a secret matter is something one doesn't want anybody to know. Privacy is the power to selectively reveal oneself to the world." More than twenty years later, the issue of privacy continues to impact our day-to-day lives as we become more and more screen-dependent, and yet we seem more willing to hand over our personal information; it has almost become necessary to function in contemporary society. But if privacy is the power to selectively reveal oneself to the world as Hughes suggests, then what happens when someone takes control of one of your most personal (and prized) possessions: your iPhone?

When Emilia ordered us to hand over our iPhones and passwords for a week we all thought she was kidding, but when we realized she was being completely serious, our moods quickly shifted from entertained to irritated. The thing about privacy is that when you have it, you take it for granted and when it's taken away from you, you can't help but feel helpless. And while I didn't feel particularly helpless (I was fairly certain that Xinyi, the assigned "keeper" of my iPhone, wouldn't do anything malicious with my information), I did feel inconvenienced and that made me realize just how much we rely on our smartphones. It's fair to say that we've evolved into a screen-dependent culture that is becoming increasingly impatient and over-stimulated. Had my iPhone been confiscated by someone that I didn't trust, my experience would have been completely different; I would have felt violated and furious, but knowing that it was in the hands of Xinyi, I felt almost grateful. Not only was she respectful of my privacy, but she also created a physical barrier between me and my iPhone screen. And that's an experience every smartphone owner should welcome from time to time. Just make sure that it remains a private matter.

Aryn Beitz | 10.25.15 | New York, NY





**I THINK
THIS EVENT
SHOULD
END... LIKE...

NOW!**

I AM, AS DEFINED BY HUMAN STANDARDS, A "TWENTY-SOMETHING" GRADUATE STUDENT, A DAUGHTER, A SISTER, A MOTHER (OF SOME SORT), A FRIEND AND A FOE. I AM AMBITIOUS AND AT TIMES UNREALISTIC, HOPEFUL AND OVER EXPECTANT. I AM SOMEONE WHO CAN'T SEEM TO MAKE AMENDS WITH BUT TWO PEOPLE THAT I'VE KNOWN THROUGHOUT MY SHORT LIFE AND I AM IN PERPETUAL FLUX. I AM UNDER STANDABLY CONFUSED AND A WALKING CONTRADICTION.



INITIALLY, I DIDN'T MIND HAVING MY PRIVACY STRIPPED FROM ME, IT'S THE CONVENIENCE/INSTANT GRATIFICATION THAT MY CELL PHONE GIVES ME THAT I AM TRULY ADDICTED TO. I DIDN'T HAVE INSTANT ACCESS TO PEOPLE, WHICH IS SOMETHING THAT I THINK ABOUT A LOT; HOW SPOILED AND SOCIALLY INEPT WE ARE SOMETIMES BECAUSE WE ARE ABLE TO COP OUT INTO OUR CELLULAR WORLDS. OR HOW WE CAN DISTRACT OURSELVES FORM LIFE, EVEN IF JUST FOR A SECOND, BECAUSE OF THESE DEVICES ON WHICH WE ARE SO DEPENDENT.

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT I HAVE PRIVACY TO INVAD. BY THIS I MEAN THAT I AM AN OPEN BOOK WITH MOST OF MY FRIENDS AND SINCE MY PEERS ARE MY FRIENDS I HAVE NOTHING TO HIDE FROM THEM. I PRESUME THAT I BEGAN TO FEAR WHAT OTHERS MIGHT FEEL SHOULD THEY SEE SOMETHING ON MY PHONE THAT WASN'T INTENDED FOR THEM. THE FEAR HERE BEING THAT THEY WOULD BE OFFENDED AND ULTIMATELY SAD AND/OR UPSET. I GUESS ONE OF MY BIGGEST FEARS OR ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKES ME MOST UPSET IN LIFE WOULD BE/IS HURTING SOMEONE THAT I CARE ABOUT.

I THINK I WAS ALSO LUCKY WITH WHO WAS HOLDING MY PHONE, I DON'T EVEN WANT TO BEGIN TO THINK OF THE HORRIBLE THINGS THAT COULD COME OF SOMEONE HAVING THIS SORT OF PERSONAL HOLD OVER ANOTHER PERSON. IT'S BRINGS ME BACK TO A TRAUMATIC CHILDHOOD MEMORY WHERE ONE OF MY "FRIENDS" KNEW A SECRET THAT, IF SHARED, WOULD HAVE REALLY HURT ANOTHER FRIEND OF MINE'S FEELINGS AND ULTIMATELY RUINED THE TRAJECTORY OF OUR FRIENDSHIP.

RELATIONSHIPS ALSO CHANGED IN A WAY THAT THE PROJECT COORDINATOR DID NOT EXPECT. FOR EXAMPLE, AN ALLIANCE OF SORTS WAS FORMED BETWEEN ME AND MY PHONE'S KEEPER. ADDITIONALLY, I WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE THE EVENT COORDINATOR, WHO WAS THE HIGHEST FORM OF POWER, TO PUT AN END TO THE EVENT BECAUSE, DUE TO CREATIVE/MAKESHIFT METHODS OF COMMUNICATION, I WAS EXPOSED TO HER SENSITIVE PERSONAL INFORMATION.

ACTIVITY

FOLLOWING

YOU



jennnnnnnuil liked your photo. 2h



zhuenjia liked your photo. 2h



yizhi_w liked your photo. 3h



mmmmxia liked your photo. 4h



nicothephreako liked your photo. 4h



nicothephreako liked your photo. 4h



zzzheen liked your photo. 5h



I'M MICHAEL ZIBIN YUAN, A 24-YEAR-OLD GRAD STUDENT IN PRATT GRAD COMMUNICATION PROGRAM. I COME FROM THE PEOPLE REPUBLIC OF CHINA. I ALWAYS NOTICE THE NEGATIVE PART OF EVERY SOCIAL/POWER STRUCTURE, AND I ALWAYS TRY TO FOUND A "UTOPIAN STRUCTURE". AS SOMEONE COME FROM A NON-DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY, I CAN SEE MYSELF ALWAYS FOLLOW THE REGULATIONS, AND I BELIEVE REGULATION AND PROTOCOL IS GOOD. HOWEVER, I ALSO QUESTION BUREAUCRACIES BECAUSE IT CAN TURN INTO A BAD USAGE WHEN HUMAN-CONDITION ENGAGE IN IT. I FEEL LIKE SOCIAL/POWER STRUCTURE REFLECTING ON ME AS A PARADOX.

THIS IS ANARCHY!



I THOUGHT I CAN'T MAKE IT BECAUSE I ALWAYS PLAYING MY PHONE IN CLASS. BUT ACTUALLY I FORGOT IT WHEN MY PHONE HAS BEEN TAKEN.

I FORGET MY PHONE WAS ON MOEIN'S HAND UNTIL I SAW HIM USING MY PHONE TAKING VIDEOS AT ME. AND I'M SURPRISE I'M ACTUALLY MORE FOCUS ON CLASS. AND I ALSO FEEL SAD BECAUSE I REAUZE ACTUALLY NOT THAT MUCH PEOPLE IS CONTACTING ME.

ACTUALLY NOTHING CHANGES... BECAUSE MOEIN AND I ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH EACH OTHER. (AND HOSTLY HE CAN'T READ CHINESE...) HOWEVER, I DO SEE MOEIN AND XINYI BECAME "SPECIAL" PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY BEEN SELECTED AS PHONE KEEPERS. EMPOWERMENT CHANGES THE RELATIONSHIP. I TRY TO FIGURE OUT WHY EMILIA SET UP DIFFERENT ROLES. AND I ALSO TRY TO FIGURE OUT TIME BY LOOKING AT OTHER PHONE KEEPER'S PHONE.

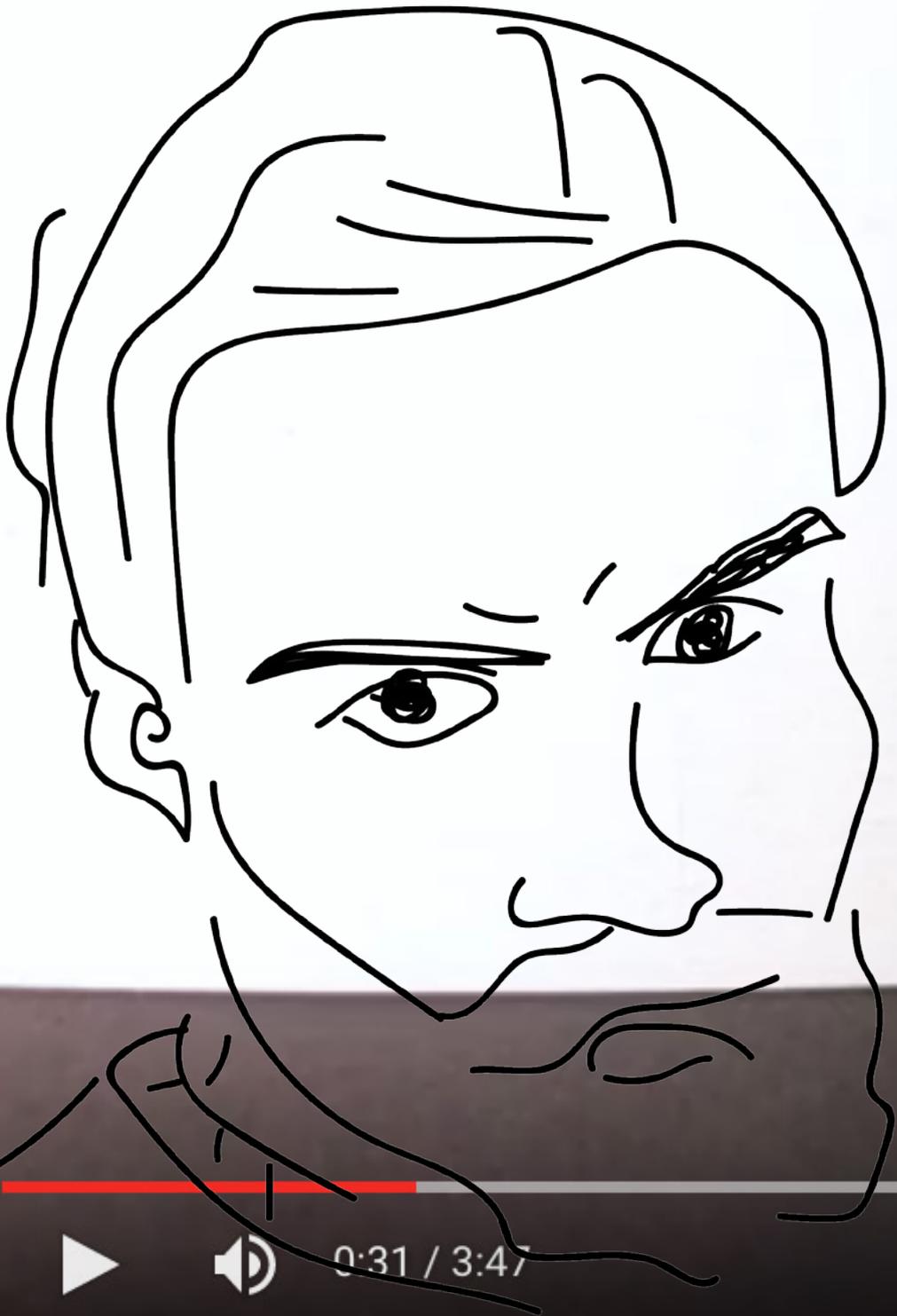


I THINK I WILL QUESTION HOW HUMAN... AFTER THEY BEEN EMPOWERED. MOEIN WAS SO NICE TO ME BECAUSE WE ARE FRIENDS. BUT IF THERE IS A STRANGER HOLDS MY PHONE, WHAT REQUEST HE/SHE WILL ASK? SO THAT BRINGS ME THINK ABOUT THE PROCESS OF EMPOWERMENT. WE EMPOWERED EMILIA TO DO THIS PROJECT, BUT WE KEEP QUESTIONING AND COMPLAINING ABOUT THAT. SAME, WE EMPOWERED OUR GOVERNMENT, BUT WE KEEP COMPLAINING ABOUT THE BUREAUCRACIES. WE EMPOWER GOOGLE TO BE THE ENTRANCE OF THE INTERNET, BUT WE KEEP COMPLAINING THEY TAKE DATA FROM US.

I WILL THINK ABOUT DESIGNER'S ROLE IN A CONVERSATIONAL COMMUNICATION. DESIGNERS ARE BEEN EMPOWERED TO CREATE VISUAL LANGUAGES TO COMMUNICATE AND INTERACTIVE, SO DESIGNER ACTUALLY HOLDS A SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL ROLE. I WILL THINK ABOUT WHO EMPOWERED DESIGNERS? CLIENTS OR AUDIENCES? WHEN WE LET AUDIENCE TO LOOK THROUGH ALL THE CONTENTS BY READING A WHOLE BOOK, WE ARE ACTUALLY FORCE THEM GO THROUGH A KIND OF BUREAUCRACY. POWER IS INTANGIBLE, IT ONLY EXIST UPON ACTIONS. AS DESIGNERS WE ARE ACTUALLY EXPRESSING THE POWER FROM MESSAGE SENDER, BUT HOW CAN WE EXPRESS THE POWER FROM THE AUDIENCE?

OBJECTIVITY CAN BE GAINED FROM THIS EXPERIMENT BECAUSE I REGARDING TO POWER, IT EXIST INTANGIBLY, AND I CAN SEE HOW SIMPLE EMPOWERMENT WILL CHANGES THE STRUCTURE. POWER EXIST IN EVERY HUMAN RELATIONS, AND IT WILL BECOME OBVIOUS WHEN ACTION IS MODIFYING ACTIONS.

**I WILL
NOT DO IT!**





**I JUST WANT
YOUR F...ING
EVENT TO BE
OVER**

**SHE JUST
GAVE ME
HER PHONE...
I DIDN'T
EVEN ASK**





Moain and Xinyi were interviewed and were asked to respond to a series of questions by addressing themselves in the third person.

This exercise allowed them to evaluate their roles in the event as the assigned “phone keepers” from an objective perspective.



The idea was to understand their experience as “phone keepers” and to uncover the ways in which certain power structures can influence a design outcome.

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO HIDE...



98

I AM ARYN, I'M A VERY PRIVATE PERSON. I RARELY POST PHOTOS OF MYSELF ONLINE AND I TRY TO KEEP MY ONLINE PRESENCE TO A MINIMUM. KNOWING THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAD ACCESS TO MY PHOTOS AND INFORMATION WAS NOT ALL TOO DISTURBING. MOSTLY BECAUSE I KNEW THAT XINYI WOULD NOT POST ANYTHING INAPPROPRIATE, HOWEVER, I WOULD HAVE FELT DIFFERENTLY IF MY PHONE HAD BEEN GIVEN TO A STRANGER, OR TO SOMEONE WHO DIDN'T UNDERSTAND OR RESPECT MY PRIVACY.

INITIALLY, THE ENFORCED SOCIAL/POWER STRUCTURE MADE ME FEEL A BIT ANNOYED AND ANXIOUS,

BUT MOSTLY ANNOYED. GENERALLY SPEAKING, I USE MY PHONE TO LISTEN TO MUSIC, CHECK MY EMAIL AND TO COMMUNICATE WITH MY FAMILY. MY MAIN CONCERN ABOUT NOT HAVING ACCESS TO MY PHONE WAS THAT I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH MY PARENTS. MY DAD AUTOMATICALLY ASSUMES SOMETHING IS WRONG IF HE DOESN'T HEAR FROM ME WITHIN A CERTAIN TIME FRAME. ALTHOUGH ANNOYING, IT'S JUST HOW HE OPERATES AND I WAS GENUINELY CONCERNED THAT IF I DIDN'T HAVE MY PHONE, THAT HE'D WORRY ABOUT ME AND MY WHEREABOUTS.

WHEN MY PHONE WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM ME, I JUST KEPT THINKING ABOUT WHO MIGHT BE TRYING TO GET A HOLD OF ME (MY PARENTS, NOT MY FRIENDS PER SE). I WAS NOT THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE.

RELATIONSHIPS DID NOT CHANGE MUCH, EXCEPT I NOTICED THAT SOME PEOPLE WERE EXTREMELY ANNOYED WHILE OTHERS DID NOT SEEM TO TAKE THE PROJECT SERIOUSLY.

CHALLENGES WERE MOSTLY THE INCONVENIENCE OF NOT BEING ABLE TO TEXT. I DON'T HAVE FACEBOOK OR TWITTER AND I POST TO INSTAGRAM MAYBE ONCE A WEEK, SO I WAS NOT EVEN THINKING ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA. I WAS ONLY ANNOYED THAT I COULDN'T TEXT PEOPLE WHEN I WANTED/NEEDED TO.

I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE HOW THIS WOULD WORK AS A METHODOLOGY FOR DESIGN. UNFORTUNATELY, I THINK MOST PEOPLE WHO ARE DESIGNING APPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS CANNOT BE TOO CONCERNED WITH PRIVACY AS THE FOCUS SEEMS TO BE MORE ON GAINING INFORMATION FROM USERS RATHER THAN KEEPING IT PRIVATE. GIVEN THAT THEY WANT ACCESS AND DEPEND ON IT,

I DON'T THINK IT WOULD HAVE HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE ON THE WAY PEOPLE DESIGN (IN REGARDS TO SOCIAL MEDIA, APPS, ETC). IN REGARDS TO OTHER FORMS OF DESIGN, I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE IT'S APPLICABLE. IF I'M DESIGNING A BOOK FOR A MUSEUM,

I'D ASSUME THAT THE CONTENT THAT WAS PROVIDED HAD GONE THROUGH A VERY SPECIFIC CURATION AND EDITING PROCESS AND THAT COPYRIGHT AND PERMISSIONS HAD BEEN PROPERLY ADDRESSED BEFOREHAND. I THINK THIS TYPE OF EXPERIMENT CAN ONLY RESULT IN A VERY SUBJECTIVE RESPONSE GIVEN THAT EACH PERSON USES THEIR PHONE IN VERY DIFFERENT WAYS AND FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES.

Conclusion

Although the original plan was to keep the event going for one week, it only lasted for two days, proving that we are dependent on technology and have become a culture addicted to our smartphones. Throughout the event the group began to question the name “phone” as it clearly has many other functions beyond just making and receiving phone calls.

Smartphones have come to represent something different to us now; we often think of our phones as an extension of ourselves. During the project, some reacted in a very personal way, while others just accepted the situation and looked at it from an objective point of view.

Those who had strong reactions to having their phone taken away from them were observed as experiencing major shifts in behavior, especially regarding their interactions with others. Because the event took place in a personal environment (our studio) and with people we know well (our cohort), a level of comfort was maintained despite some random irritation and anger that developed over the course of event. In general, everyone wondered how things would have changed had

complete strangers also participated in the experiment as the assigned “phone keepers.”

While few saw a potential for this kind of methodology to exist in the realm of graphic design, there was one specific approach (Michael’s) that expressed how this experiment is a reflection of what designers are, what their role is as content managers and message translators, and how they exercise this kind of power.

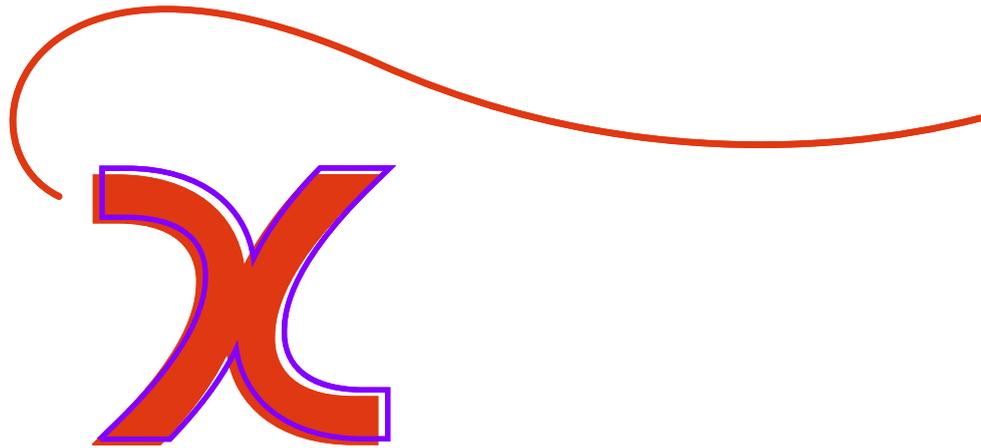
For me, this event was a methodology that addressed how you can find objectivity in such a personal and uncomfortable scenario. In design, we seldom encounter exercises that force us to respond to specific briefs based on subjectivity and self-reflection. We are always asked to look at things from a neutral point of view and to understand language in a specific context, but in doing so we forget the affect power structures actually have on us. We might be subjective in the way we express ourselves, but in a given design scenario, we are taught to look at things as objectively as possible.

When things become personal, it is hard to be objective about anything as was the case when I changed the power dynamic during my event. I wonder how much of our personal input we are letting go of for the sake of being neutral in design. As seen during the event, being put in an unfair and compromising situation caused disruption among the group and caused each of us to examine our actions in different ways.

Although uncomfortable and strange, it's worth considering how certain shifts in power structures can influence design outcomes.

Awareness

92



Xinyi Li

Two o'clock in the afternoon on October 16th
From 123 W 18th St to Central Park for two hours.

Using performative methods to trigger self reflection and improvisational pieces, this event aims to help participants quickly grasp the five key insights offered in the article *Five Things That Make You Metamodern*. This event tries to create conditions to let participants experience those concept, and raise awareness of cognitions and emotions, probably even use the event as a diagnose opportunity to trigger understanding of oneself.

93

Event Introduction

Using performative methods to trigger self reflection and improvisational pieces, this event aims to help participants quickly grasp the five key insights offered in the article *Five Things That Make You Metamodern*. This event tries to create conditions to let participants experience those concept, and raise awareness of cognitions and emotions, probably even use the event as a diagnose opportunity to trigger understandings of oneself.

The first prompt—pay attention to the encounters that makes you feel bad/good—were given on the day we went for another field trip to Eastern State Penitentiary and Mutter Museum in Philadelphia, and the rest of the prompts were revealed on Friday during the event. The choice of hosting this event in a natural environment without office equipment was to experience the idea of reconstruction, utilizing whatever items we had at hand to create and facilitate a spatial-temporal experience. Participants were asked to bring whatever they think will make they feel more comfortable. The original intended meeting space is Bryan Park, a place to seek for quiet moment in the middle of the busy New York city that will cause contrast. Unexpected disruptions such as the construction work at the originally

planned meeting space, become part of the experience, forcing us to let participants take the lead and quickly determine an alternate venue, Central Park, that would be conducive to the nature of the intended experience. A few other exercises were executed during the event, such as writing a poem about the word we picked, adding one concept to other people's words, and doing an improvisational piece with what we have brought. The overall experience is an immersive design intervention.



#E3D7 #X

I knew that the trip to Philadelphia would break our routines and there would be a lot of conceptual inputs, so I gave Prompt 1 on that day, hoping to get a mix of daily emotions and conceptual ideas like critical theories. Half of the people got the bad one and the rest of them get the second.

We talked about what we brought today—some are more practical, such as picnic blanket, foldable chairs, and food; some are helpful in a conceptual way, such as Nicole's incense and Moein's collection of small objects.

I think poetry is a medium of art and a "good" thing. Using the methods of writing a poem could add another layer of meaning to it, and potentially change the cognition of the original concept. This exercise could become emotional reconstruction and maybe create transcendence from the feeling. I also let people read the poem and reflect on the exercise.

Prompt 1

Pay attention to what you will encounter during the day. Especially those make you feel bad.

Pay attention to what you will encounter during the day. Especially those make you feel good.

Prompt 2

Write down a word or phrase according to the prompt you got on Tuesday. It could be either a conceptual subject or a physical subject.

Prompt 3

Write a poem based on the word.

Prompt 4

Read the word, and the poem.

How you feel about the word and the poem? Does writing the poem change your emotion?



#E3D7 #X

Prompt 5

Take one word from another person randomly, then write down a concept that you can relate to the word, not necessarily the contradictory one.

Prompt 6

Take one word from another person randomly, then write down a concept that you can relate to the word, not necessarily the contradictory one.

This part provides an opportunity to see others' interpretations that you haven't thought of, the subjective nature of the things that people have either negative or positive emotional responses. There are chances to get the opposite concept and by creating another piece addressing both concepts might generate a sense of *both-and*.



anxious (AB)

When I was asked to pay attention to the things that make me feel bad during our group field trip to Philadelphia, I found myself thinking about how I was feeling both physically and emotionally. I remember waking up that Tuesday morning feeling tired, nauseous, and incredibly anxious. It was technically our fall break and I just kept thinking about all the work that I needed to finish before Wednesday. Knowing that we were

I awoke with a headache, I had barely slept. I arrived at Jackie's, no deadlines met. So many thoughts in my head, so many books left unread. I just wanted to sleep but there was no time to weep, I closed my eyes and tuned out the noise, we were on our way to Philly to play with toys. ü (AB)

about to spend a majority of the day inside a car only made my anxiety worse. In reality, the change of scenery and break from our normal schedule and routine was nice, but in my tired and clouded state of consciousness, I just kept thinking about how much time I was “wasting” and how “unproductive” I was being. Sadly, we can’t always turn off the voices in our head even when we want—and need—to. As the day progressed, my anxiety moved through various states as I encountered different situations at both Eastern State Penitentiary and The Mutter Museum, but it never eased. So naturally, when we were asked to pick one word that would represent our initial prompt (pay attention to what you will encounter during the day, especially those things that make you feel bad), I chose the word anxious. It’s a feeling that not only sums up that particular Tuesday in Philadelphia, but it also sums up the past year and half—otherwise known a graduate school.

In my family, food is v^{er}y important. Mor^e than food itself it is the tim^e when w^e all g^et tog^eth^er and shar^e the sam^e int^er^est. It is a fun proc^ess to discuss food and to l^earn about oth^er cultur^es, ^esp^ecially when you ar^e sitting at a tabl^e with amat^eur's ch^efs that ar^e obs^ess^ed with cooking shows. Probably ^everyon^e r^ef^ers to his or h^er Moms as the b^est cooks th^ey know, and so it happ^ens to b^e the cas^e in my family. Sh^e can tak^e c^el^ery and a tomato and mak^e a d^elicious dish. When I was young, I was not so ^engag^ed in cooking, but sh^e always tri^ed to t^each m^e tips. Not I'm thankful sh^e did b^ecaus^e it has mad^e my lif^e so much ^easier and I actually find it r^elaxing to cook.

B^ecaus^e of this lov^e for food and ^exp^eri^enc^e, most of our troubl^es hav^e b^een c^ent^ered around that, you can l^earn no much of a plac^e and cultur^e just by the way th^ey cook and ^eat. And also, the journ^ey to look for the b^est plac^e to ^eat can b^ecom^e a ^enriching ^exp^eri^enc^e in itself. In the cas^e of Philad^elphia, a plac^e that I had b^een only onc^e, I n^ever got to ^eat a Philly-ch^ees^e-stak^e. And when I found out w^e w^er^e going, I was so ^excit^ed to actually try on^e. You n^ever know what you can gain from an ^exp^eri^enc^e and food will always provid^e on^e, only if it's just to satisfy your pallet. I had b^een talking about it for w^eeks and I was r^eally ^excit^ed to go and shar^e this with ^everyon^e. But in the ^end, I sort of f^elt lik^e a nuisanc^e. It had b^ecom^e an obligati^on to ^everyon^e to tak^e m^e to a plac^e to ^eat the Philly-ch^ees^e-stak^e and nobody saw it as I did: A pot^ential to gain insight and shar^e with you.

When w^e finally arriv^ed to the r^estaur^ent, ^everyon^e was a littl^e bit annoy^ed with my nagging. But I didn't want to l^et it go. I kn^ew it could b^e gr^eat so w^e had to giv^e it a try. In the ^end: What a bum^mer! The plac^e was not the b^est on^e, and ^everyon^e complain^ed of the food th^ey got, ^esp^ecially thos^e who ord^er a v^eg^etarian sandwich. Sinc^e it was not a traditional Philly-ch^ees^e-stak^e r^estaur^ent, my ord^er was not good at all. The br^ead was stiff and dry. And that's when I f^elt it. The bitt^erswe^et moment. Som^ething that you n^eed to do and you ar^e happy about it but it's also a disappoint^ement. Don't g^et m^e wrong. I'm grat^eful to ^everyon^e who ^endur^ed my constant nagging, but it wasn't my b^est food triumph. ^Even in food, or ^esp^ecially with food, disappoint^ements can b^e hug^e. B^ecaus^e tast^e do^es not li^e! So I was pr^epar^ed for the worst but I hop^ed for the b^est... the bitt^erswe^et.

COOK
DOUBTFUL
Louds
😊

Do Do Do Do cannot
Do
out
Full of Doubt
You are Full and I am
CANT FINISH
NOT MAKING
WHAT IS THIS
ABOUT FULL
THE ONLY ONE WHO JUDGING YOU
IS YOURSELF
Anti-Doubt
Self-Doubt
Doubting THE DOUBT
I SING TO MYSELF @ NIGHT THESE THINGS
SO I CAN WAKE UP AND FEEL LESS
POWERFUL, NEVER WORKS, SOMETIMES
WORDS
STILL CANNOT OVERCOME THE ONE AND
BECAUSE OF THIS BECAUSE I DUB
MYSELF TO INFORM YOURSELF I WILL
NEVER BE AND YOU WILL ALWAYS BE
AND I WILL SIT IN THE SAME PLACE
AFTER ALL OF THIS. 😊

Knock knock...
...inferiority
😊

😊
Bittersweet
moments
NOT A TRIUMPH

😊
I woke up with excitement,
I thought about it all day,
when I got up,
when I went to take
the subway.
I've been dreaming about
it for months,
and the day has finally
come. There is a smile on
my face! I can't wait!
It's here! It's happening.
but,
but,
but,
what a disappointment.
😊

😊
I am happy.
but I am sad,
I feel bad,
But I feel great,
It's what I wanted
But not what I imagined.
I love it,
But I hate it.
It's my dream,
But it's also my worst
nightmare.
😊

We spent Tuesday as a class in Philadelphia visiting the Eastern State Penitentiary and the Mutter Museum, two considerably morbid places. In hindsight, I wish I had chosen to say something about driving as I find driving to be incredibly cathartic and relaxing and I spent most of the day driving; Instead, I chose "the people I love" as my response to the prompt "pay attention to what you will encounter during the day, especially those make you feel good," as parts of the trip, and perhaps being overly hormonal, triggered feelings that provoked thoughts about my closest friends and family.

~~Jack~~ Jacqueline
The people I love.

-The group activity
0-0

A bunch of people or things located close together, thrown together, considered together or classed together is called a group. What I like about a group is that even the most lurid things, as long as they are group members lose their independent meaning and become a component. Beside that whatever goes with the whole, pleasant or nasty, is shared and sharing is fun, intimate and humane.

In the morning of Philly trip, the moment that I read "things that make you feel good" I knew that no matter what happens during the day, I like that we, although being tired, grumpy and stressed-are going somewhere to do something together.

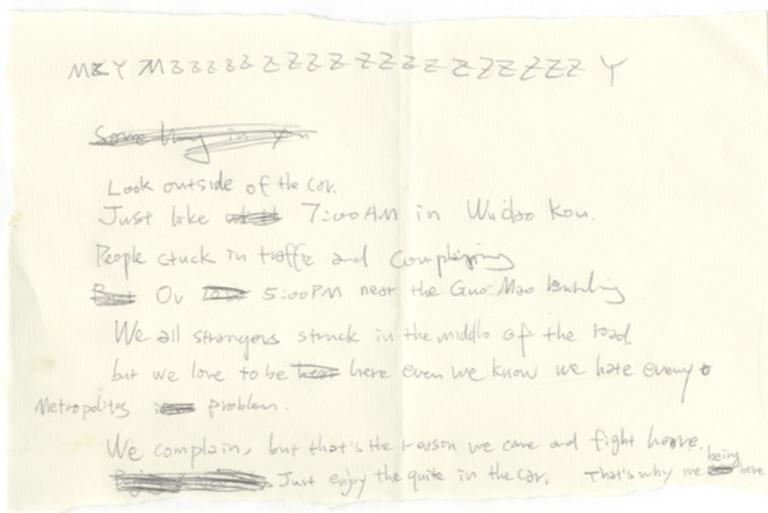
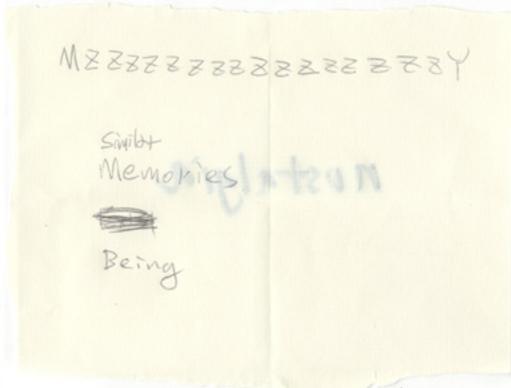
I don't have to see you,
I just want you near
~~at the end of the day~~
~~at the end of the day~~
For when I'm alone
I encounter great fear
~~At the end of the day~~ At the end of the day
it doesn't matter when you are
Because we all die alone.

THE PEOPLE I LOVE
I LOVE THE PEOPLE I LOVE
THE PEOPLE I LOVE.

Some are sleeping
Some ^{are} stressed
One ~~was~~ ^{was} driving
All of them dressed
There ~~is~~ ^{is} Prison
lots of detainees (?)
There ~~is~~ ^{is} collection
some fetos pressed
All of them happy
albeit exhausted
Cause ~~all of them~~ all of them
together carressed. ^{are}

In praise of the poop monster
(?)
Friday Oct. 16 2015 4:20 P.M
Central Park 0-0

I've chosen two words: Similar Memories and Being. I chose these two expressions based on the requirement of "things make me happy". When we are on the way to Philly, we got stuck in the middle of the road because of the traffic of Manhattan. Usually people get in this situation for wasting time. However, I felt peaceful and calm at that moment. It reminds me the time 2 years ago that I was sitting in a bus on the way to work when I was in Beijing. Since I moved to New York, I always take subway to transport, and haven't really experienced the traffic jam in New York at 9:00 AM in the morning. That's why I chose the phrase "Similar memories" because I realize Beijing and New York are both metropolises, and waiting in traffic jam is how we live there. I always claim the time I was in Beijing is the best time in my life because I always fighting by myself in a metropolis, and I felt I truly exist in that city at that time. I moved to Beijing from my hometown because of my expectation of exploring myself in a large platform, and I've moved to New York 5 years later because of the same reason. I felt my being in the city at that moment because I try to think what make sense I exist in the current city. I try to recall my journey of these years and see the path of my life. My existences in New York and Beijing overlap with each other and their fusion became the significance of my being.



1



2

LOWE
TO
THEM A
THURSDAY.

3



4



5

6



Conclusion

The first prompt let you being hyperaware of your situation and feelings, potentially act like a first step to help develop metacognition, a state which your are aware of your mental allergies and managed not to let them influence your mind in making objective judgments. Since negative emotions might be more impactful, the state of metacognition is also important in design process. Having an awareness of what is subjective and what is objective will help you separate emotions and facts, thus enables better understandings of the context and audience.

The act of writing a poem and doing improvisations as response to your own word and other people's adds-on brought out a sense of inbetweenness of opposite or related concepts. Some people came with positive words but ended up with depressive poems, which generated a feeling that one thing won't be either good or bad, but it is both-and. The temporary medium of this improvisation response piece also speaks to the instability and flux of the two poles of good and bad.

This exercise also reveals the complexity of human nature, and subjectivity and self awareness of emotion can be considered as ways of technology under its

broader definition. We were in the same space and experienced the same trip, but we produced totally different contents, yet normally we don't think about this. The subjective interpretation acts as the deviation point, where new concepts are introduced and make our world a great diverse place. Our emotions are extensions of ourselves, an enhancement of what is happening to the world.

The fact that the event is about another event, the Philly trip, also adds to the meaning of meta. The whole event could be considered as design intervention and influenced people's emotions and behaviors, and it tested that interventions could be used as method to generate contents. Subjectivity, too, if being used properly is a way to produce contents. The latter half of the event has been commented as an immersive experience and almost therapeutic. Being at the place at the moment really helps people stay involved and concentrated. To the design field, this process could serve as an inspiration of experiential and performative approach to present a complex concept.

Maurice Blanchot writes in his essay, *Everyday Speech*, “One can say that in this attempt to recapture it at its own level, the everyday loses any power to reach us, it is no longer what is lived but what can be seen or what shows itself.” The idea of capturing, or recapturing, moments in time became the inspiration behind my event—an investigation into the everyday lives of seven people. When seen through a series of images, we begin to understand what the everyday represents and more so, how easily it’s lost.

110

The Everyday in Seven Days



Aryn Beitz
Seven o'clock in the evening on
October 31st, 2015 at a studio
apartment in Lower Manhattan

111

Event Introduction

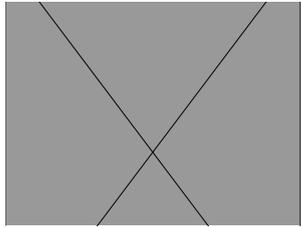
Looking at the everyday as a way to better understand its meaning—the meaning posed by writer and theorist, Maurice Blanchot, who believed that the everyday is lost the moment it is captured—I wanted to create an event that would call attention to the banal, day-to-day moments that often go unnoticed. Given that we are so used to being inundated with photographs of mundane objects and places thanks to social media, I thought the act of photographing and cataloging the everyday for seven days might encourage people to think differently about the everyday moments that we attempt to capture (and recapture) through technology.

The prompt was simple: For seven days, create a collection of photographs that represent the everyday as it relates to your own day-to-day life and routine. Organize your collection by day and time and think about what you're photographing and why you're photographing it. Additionally, I assigned each person one constraint in the form of a topic: Jackie: People; Nicole: Above and Below; Moein: In Between; Emilia: Chaos; Xinyi: Order; Michael: Structures (of any type); and Aryn: Patterns. The constraints were provided as to encourage a more cohesive collection of photographs, while remaining broad enough to allow for complete

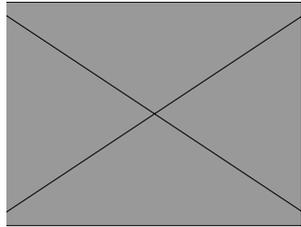
creative freedom. The seven topics were selected based on our current surroundings which in my opinion, and abstractly speaking, make up New York City and are at the core of the everyday.

Following seven days of photographing, we gathered at my studio apartment to assemble our collections into one giant collection of the everyday. The event itself was an example of the everyday in the sense that things didn't go as intended, as is usually the case in daily life, however, it was Halloween, which is the exact opposite of the everyday—it falls into the category of the extraordinary, a term that over the course of the event, would add a new layer of meaning to the everyday and how we view it.

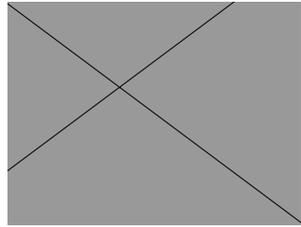
The results, as seen in the following photo essay, represent this exact contradiction: that the everyday and the extraordinary exist side-by-side, with everyday moments passing over into extraordinary territory as soon as they are captured by the human eye.



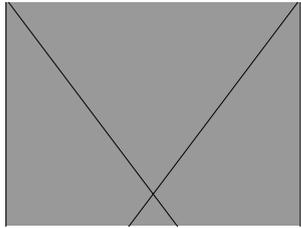
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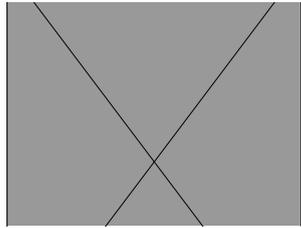
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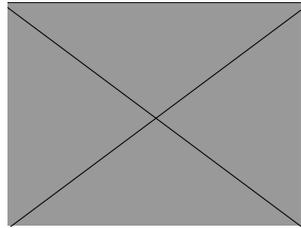
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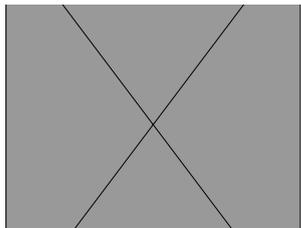
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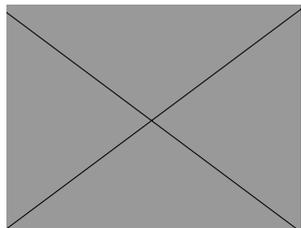
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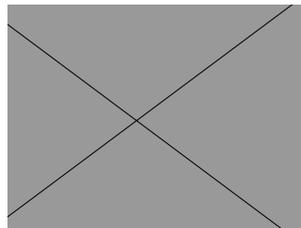
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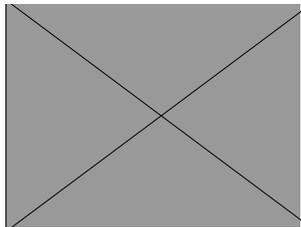
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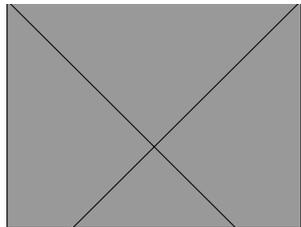
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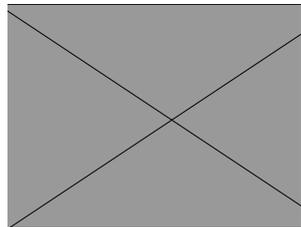
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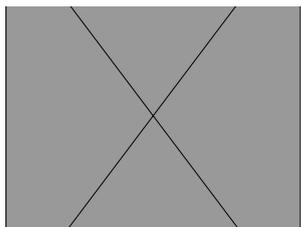
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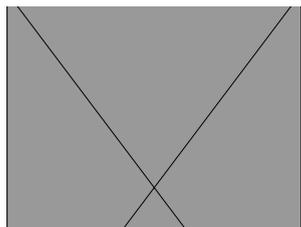
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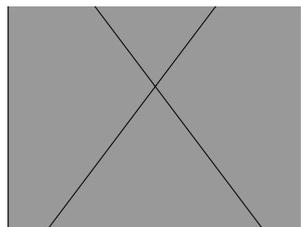
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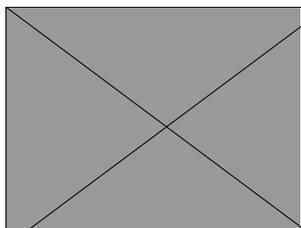
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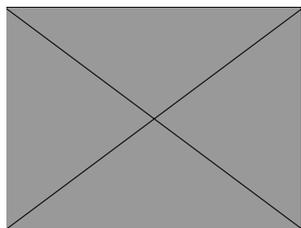
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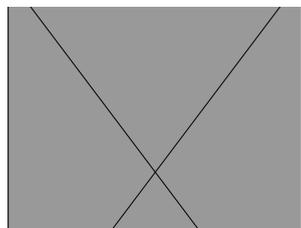
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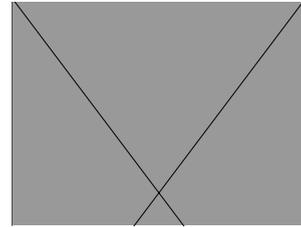
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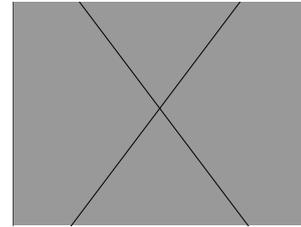
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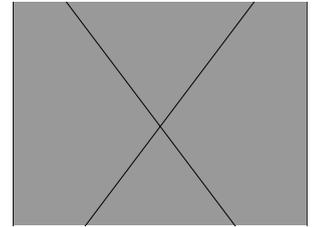
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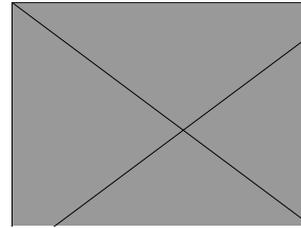
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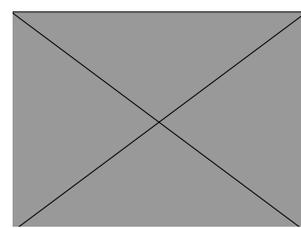
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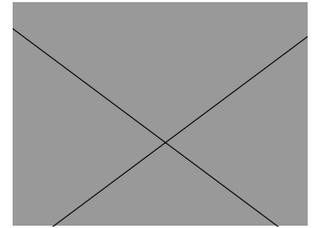
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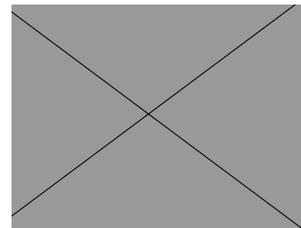
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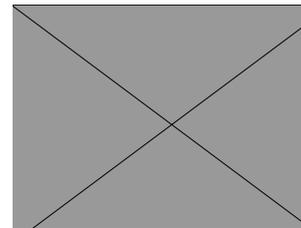
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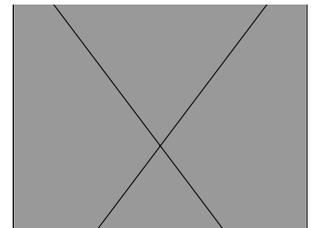
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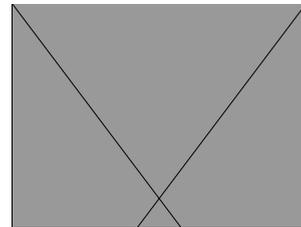
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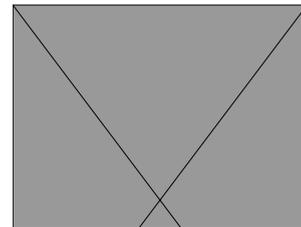
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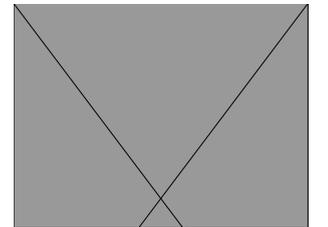
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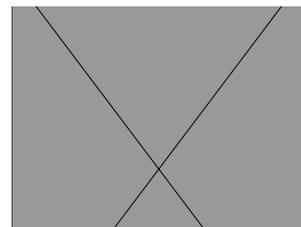
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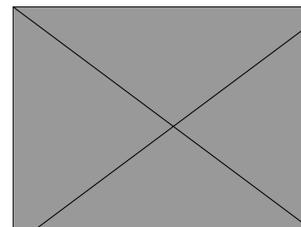
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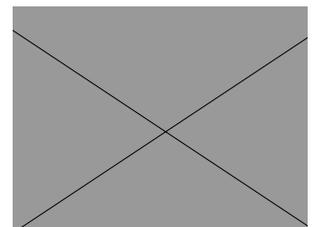
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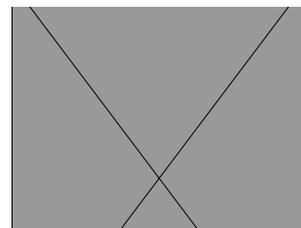
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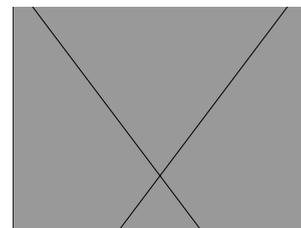
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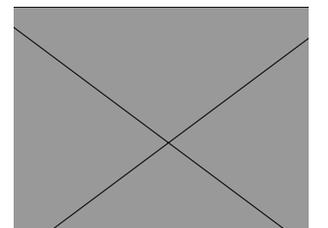
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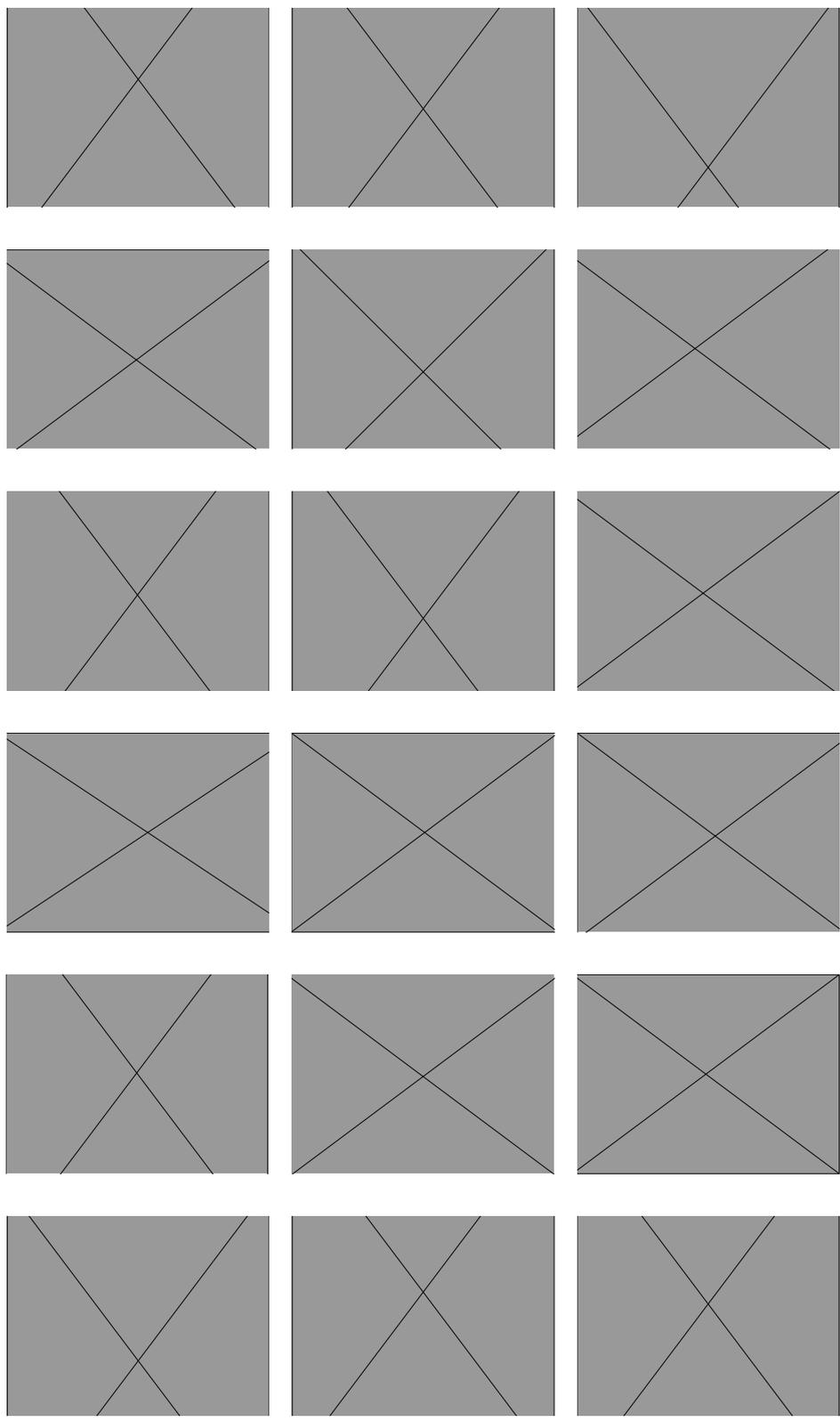
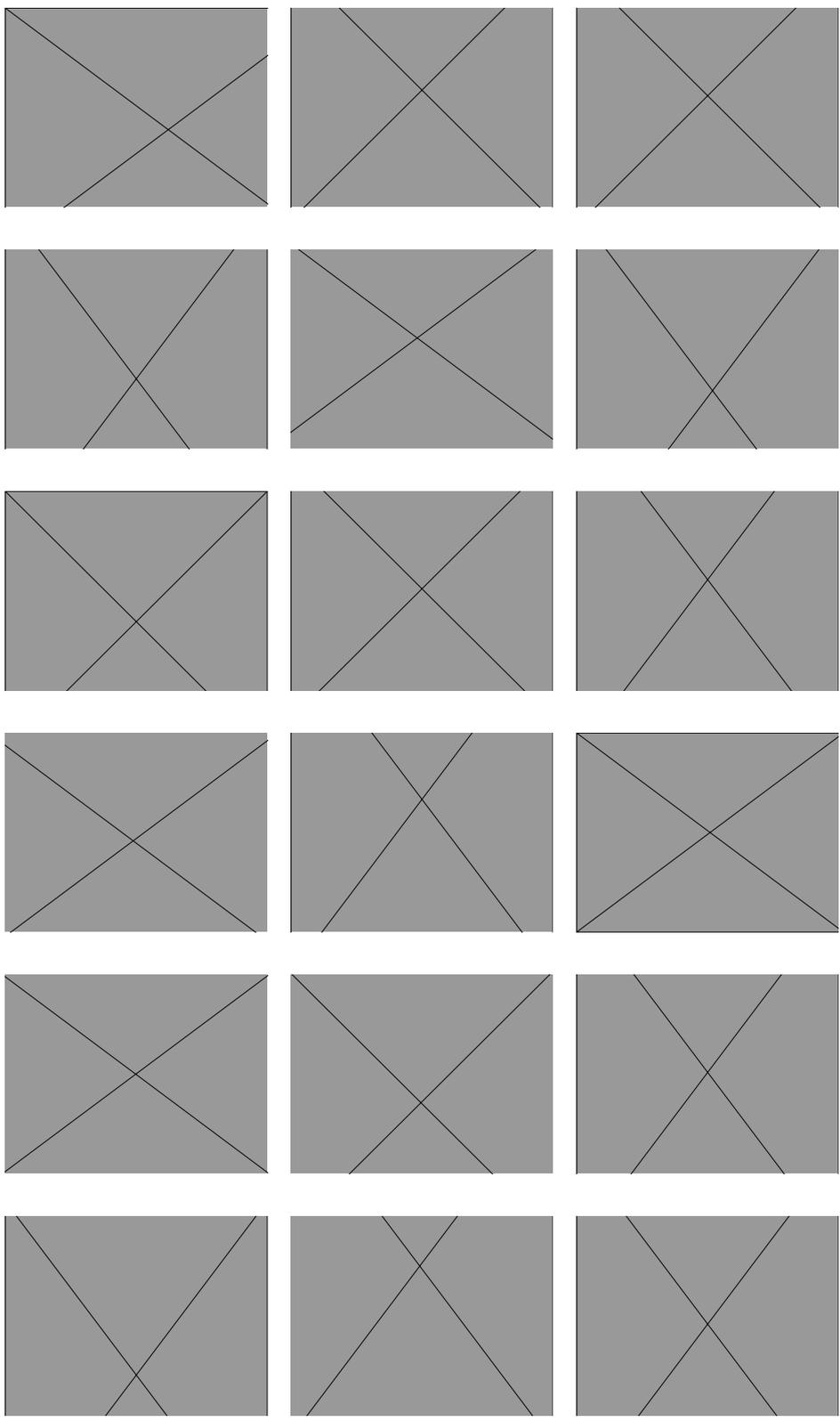
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Z 10.27 3:01pm



Z 10.27 3:11pm



Artist Statements

ARYN BEITZ

Born in 1982 near Ann Arbor, MI. Resides in NYC, postcode 10038. Has lived in the suburbs of Detroit, the mountains of Colorado, on various streets in Chicago named after trees, in the Presidio of San Francisco, in the NW8 postcode district of London, on a gentrified street in Oakland, and inside a very tall building in Lower Manhattan. Would like to reside in Berlin at some point in the near future. Is drawn to patterns, forms, seriality, collections, archives, typologies, materiality, presence, coincidence, language, and the written word. Finds patterns anywhere and everywhere and enjoys discovering peculiar things that often go unnoticed. Is particularly drawn to patterns that draw attention above and below eye level and towards strange, in-between places and moments. Is intrigued by patterns formed in moments of chaos and order and by people and structures. Draws correlations between patterns and everyday life on a daily basis. Sometimes writes about patterns in design and architecture for various publications and online journals. Currently studies and practices graphic design, patterns of repetition, and form making in New York City.

MOEINEDIN SHASHAEI

My name is MOEIN. In fact, it is MOEINEDIN but few people in the world call me that. I lost my EDIN a long time ago. Here in New York, my friends often call me MO, so the whole EINEDIN of me is lost somewhere in-between my home in Tehran and my place here in New York! I was born in 1989 somewhere in-between East and West. Wherever I go, there has been something before me and something after; something sits to the right of me, something to the left of me. I am always surrounded by stuff, in-between things and things in-between each other. Rumor has it that once, some

thirteen billion years ago, nothing was nowhere and in-between nothing but suddenly, there was a BANG and stuff got plunged in-between each other and started moving unintentionally. For whatever reason, I now have the chance to be in-between all of this stuff, taking photographs and sharing them with you. So enjoy looking at them because they won't last forever and neither will you.

NICOLE SALAMONE

Nico Saladrone is a self-proclaimed half real, half fictional photographer living above and below ground, U.S.A. After spending years in the suburbs of New York City, Saladrone began to develop a severe cognitive dissonance that has influenced her to never be able to experience one perspective at a time. Following this realization, Saladrone has begun to exercise her inherent dissonant consciousness to develop a distinct body of work that consistently explores two opposite extremes simultaneously. For her most recent project, Above and Below, Saladrone extracts from her everyday surroundings to depict situations that are both above and below the middle ground.

JACKIE ANERELLA

Jacqueen, a born and raised New Yorker, began her career as a creative practitioner in 1991 when she exited her mother's womb. Her work is often characterized by a myriad of disparate ideas and themes. Through a blend of reality and irony with humorous overtones, she creates works across multiple mediums including but not limited to music, dance, sculpture, painting, design and the occasional ode.

She currently lives in Manhattan, alone, but travels to her hometown in Queens often to spend time with her sonsband, a quadruped of the trinomen canis lupus familiares. In her collection, *Excraftures*, *Jacqueen* showcases the false reality of “individuals” that populate her “existence.”

XINYI LI

Xinyi Li, a designer currently living in New York City, enjoys wandering around and capturing moments with her iPhone 5 and occasionally, with a DSLR. She accidentally started a series about expressing order through photography, which emphasizes formal qualities of everyday scenes but viewed through a conceptual lens. Her photographs simplify the world through structured visual representations, thus some black and white photography has been included. These snapshots are natural and spontaneous while still maintaining a sense of control. Her work is full of subtleties and sensitivities that aim to awaken the consciousness of viewer.

MICHAEL YUAN

Michael Yuan’s most recent collection titled, *Structure*, was inspired by his daily routine in and around New York City. In his attempt to collect and analyze the concept of structure in a more conceptual way, Yuan avoids taking photographs of traditional architectural structures and prefers to think of structure as a set of components that when combined, create a stable assemblage, either permanent or temporary. In this latest collection, he documents multiple types of structures, including both physical and non-physical assemblages that reflect the everyday. Through his work, he attempts to challenge what a structure is and can be by questioning the distinction between structures and non-structures while simultaneously establishing his own typology of structure based on his daily routine.

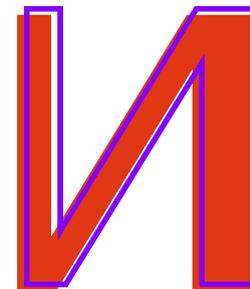
EMILIA ARAGON

Emilia Aragon, a Colombian artist living in New York, sees beauty in everyday chaos and believes that the most chaotic thing in the world is to try to make sense of it, or to go against nature’s tendency towards disorder. She relies on commonsense as she walks the streets in search of chaos and believes that in our attempt to make the world a better place, we have further disrupted natural systems, losing our symbiotic relationship with the environment in the process. In her work, she refers to humans as the culprits of inexplicable chaos as human actions typically go against the natural order of things, an idea that both fascinates and frustrates her. Aragon believes that chaos is everywhere and manifests itself over a series of events as expressed in her work, where images are often nonsensical, encouraging the viewer to get lost in the randomness and question their meaning. Creating such inexplicable collections has become Aragon’s recent obsession as seen in her latest project, *Human Chaos*. At first glance, the collection has no apparent connection but upon closer inspection, the photographs tell a personal story that Aragon has loosely woven together, forcing the viewer to experience a moment of chaos as they attempt to understand their relation to one another.

“At no point can we say, ‘Here it commences, now; last minute was night and this is morning.’ But insensibly we are in the day. If we care to look, we can foresee growing knowledge, growing order, and presently a deliberate improvement of the blood and character of the race. And what we can see and imagine gives us a measure and gives us faith for what surpasses the imagination.”

-H.G. Wells

Board of Fortune



Nicole Salamone
November 2nd, 2015 -
November 13, 2015
New York City, NY

Event Introduction

“At no point can we say, ‘Here it commences, now; last minute was night and this is morning.’ But insensibly we are in the day. If we care to look, we can foresee growing knowledge, growing order, and presently a deliberate improvement of the blood and character of the race. And what we can see and imagine gives us a measure and gives us faith for what surpasses the imagination.” (Wells 17).

According to HG Wells in his 1902 lecture, The Discovery of the Future, personal prophecy and fortune-telling will never be possible, but a general knowledge of future events is certainly attainable. Wells states that humans naturally view the future as a distant entity; an alternative world that is generally thought to be centered around the unknown. However, he argues that the growth of the human population has allowed for an “averaging out” of human behavioral patterns which makes it more possible to generalize about how the future of mankind will unfold.

Instead of viewing the future as a mystical, supernatural entity, one can look at patterns of the past to generalize an understanding of what’s to come. When designing this event, my objective was to construct an experience that would force others to practice this method of speculation discussed in Wells’ lecture. I looked to complex strategy games like Risk and Diplomacy which force players to recall on the patterns

of past moves in the game as a way to speculate about different possible future scenarios for moving forward in the game. However, I also knew that there was a level of empathy involved in being able to decipher these patterns. Thus, the event would probe participants to use strategy tactics, but also would depend on their own understandings of each other’s behaviors.

About the Event

You will move to a place that is 5 minutes away from a gas station	You won't own a red car, but you'll be in one a lot	A lot of enjoyment reading books on very long train rides	 You will come up with a brilliant idea one day while wearing a blue shirt	You will purchase a box of tea bags	 In the act of losing one friend, you will gain another friend	 You'll sleep next to a friend	
A chart reading "NEGATIVE"	 You'll spend a lot of time with a significant other whom you will not marry	You'll spend 10 years living in the country, up north	You're going to be around someone who hirts a lot	You will realize you need to cut down on a habit, most likely involving food or drugs	You'll have to make a big decision between the colors BLACK and GREY	You will receive a bad sound which starts a conversation with a person whom you will marry	You will buy a car washer that's a different color
At one point in your life you will have a spouse with thick and dark hair	You will find yourself using the word SECURE a lot	There will be a man with the initials J.L. in your future	 The color purple becomes a big theme for you	You will run your fingers through your hair while listening to a song you used to like in high school	One day, you will use a printer and be in a good mood, both on the same day	You will be involved in a creative project that references a popular film	You'll go on a long hike and bring a bag of large chips with you
 You will eat something with cherries in it	You will smoke a cigarette	You will be using yellow paint and some of it will get on you	 There will be lots of MORMS, but it doesn't seem to bother you	You will want cookies	There will be a woman named Miranda in your future	You'll be in a place where you notice a lot of surveillance cameras	You will sip a delicious coffee but also spill some of it on your paper
Thursdays will have a certain significance for your career	 You'll regularly use a product that reads ENERGY on its label	You will work somewhere where you travel up and down a lot	There will be an opportunity for a lot of money, doing something you're not interested in	You will be petting a cat named Barbard a lot	Someone will read you your fortune and it will be extremely accurate	You will get arrested for a petty crime that was influenced by alcohol	NULL

Board of Fortune, Round 1

You will move to a place that is 5 minutes away from a gas station	You won't own a red car, but you'll be in one a lot	A lot of enjoyment reading books on very long train rides	 You will come up with a brilliant idea one day while wearing a blue shirt	You will purchase a box of tea bags	 In the act of losing one friend, you will gain another friend	 You'll sleep next to a friend	
A chart reading "NEGATIVE"	 You'll spend a lot of time with a significant other whom you will not marry	You'll spend 10 years living in the country, up north	You're going to be around someone who hirts a lot	You will realize you need to cut down on a habit, most likely involving food or drugs	You'll have to make a big decision between the colors BLACK and GREY	You will receive a bad sound which starts a conversation with a person whom you will marry	You will buy a car washer that's a different color
At one point in your life you will have a spouse with thick and dark hair	You will find yourself using the word SECURE a lot	There will be a man with the initials J.L. in your future	 The color purple becomes a big theme for you	You will run your fingers through your hair while listening to a song you used to like in high school	One day, you will use a printer and be in a good mood, both on the same day	You will be involved in a creative project that references a popular film	You'll go on a long hike and bring a bag of large chips with you
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Board of Fortune, Final Round

Board of Fortune became the outcome of a similar strategy game to Risk and Diplomacy, but instead of a fictional fight in a World War II combat zone, the participants were battling each other to gain the most and the best future fortunes. Players were able to move their "fortune bags" around the board to occupy desired fortunes and take fortunes from other players. The game began by each participant choosing a number which revealed their first fortune. Each round, players were able to move their three bags into any 1-3 adjacent spaces on the board as well as deciding to remain in their current space. Players would submit to me their moves and at least one prediction for where another player would move that round. Forcing players to think ahead about the other players' moves helped

direct each person's thinking towards the behavioral patterns that direct our everyday decisions, and also allowed players to test out their own understanding of each other. The strategy element of Board of Fortune was created to help participants flex their thinking to occupy a vision of future outcomes, and the choice to make the game a theme about fortunes was to help embody and visualize future thinking. Although players didn't put as much consideration into gaining desired fortunes, the object of obtaining and potentially losing these fortunes became a metaphor for the simultaneous plausibility and uncertainty of future predictions. The game began with participants each playing individually, however after the first

four rounds, players were allowed to form alliances in order to more forcefully occupy and defend desired fortune spaces. The element of alliances in the game helped to simplify the way participants were able to envision strategic patterns of the other opponents.

It seemed players were very anxious to form alliances and they all stated that this was their preferred way of playing the game. The players orga-

nized themselves evenly into two groups of three, and ended up playing in these teams for the duration of the game. Even though the players knew that the winner could only be one person, they decided to stick with these alliances and aim to have their team win, rather than shooting for an individual win. The benefits of the alliances became that the players would consult with each other on best strategies to move forward based on the perceived mentality of the

ALLIANCE 1

Emilia
Aryn
Xinyi

ALLIANCE 2

Moein
Jackie
Michael

opposing group

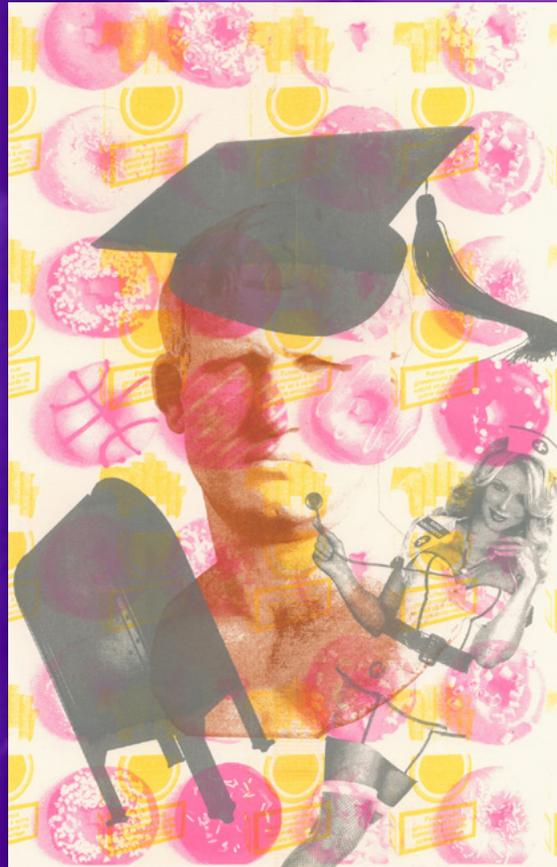
The outcome of the game favored Moein from Alliance 2 as the winner, however Alliance 1 ultimately achieved more spaces on the board. Regardless of the game objectives, each player naturally formed their own objectives for the game and so the outcome was seen differently from each of these perspectives.

At the end of the game, I asked each player to respond to me as their future self as a product of the fortunes they received from the game. This exercise was made to further explore future envisioning, and to see if the participants' practice of future thinking had changed since the beginning of the game.

Michael's Fortune

- You will find yourself using the word "DEGREE" a lot
- You will smoke a cigarette in the future
- I see a mailbox in your future
- You will realize you need to cut down on a habit, most likely involving food or drugs
- I see you running your fingers through your hair while listening to a song you used to like in high school
- At some point you'll have to make a big decision between the colors BLACK and GREY
- You will receive a bad wound which starts a conversation with the person whom you will marry

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#503

Hello Xinyi,

I hope you're doing well.

I'm writing to you while chewing gum after enjoying eggplant benedict (weird haha) with this guy who is my best friend now. The tea is amazing too. I don't know if it is worth enough but New York is the nicest city I could stand. Everything will be fine. Probably you would want a blue shirt.
keep going. Start running!

xx
X 2015

FROM
ME
TO
YOU
LIGHTS USA

Xinyi Li
123 18th St
3rd floor.
New York, NY
10011



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Xinyi's Fortune

- You'll spend 10 years living in the country up north
- you're going to be around someone who flirts a lot
- you will come up with a brilliant idea one day while wearing a blue shirt
- you will purchase a box of tea bags
- I see Eggs and Eggplants
- In the act of losing one friend you will gain another
- You'll be running, either physically or metaphorically
- I see a pack of Orbit gum (sweet-mint)

#501

Emilia's Fortune

- You will go on a hike and bring a bag of Lays chips with you
- You will sip a delicious coffee but also spill some of it on your paper
- You'll be in a place where you notice a lot of surveillance cameras
- Someone will read your fortune and it will be extremely accurate
- You will get arrested for a petty crime that was influenced by alcohol
- I see fire
- One day you will use a printer and be in a good mood on the same day
- You will want cookies
- The color purple will become a big theme for you



#504



#505

Moein's Fortune

- you won't own a red car but you'll be in one a lot
- there will be a chart reading "NEGATIVE"
- you will have a lot of enjoyment reading books on very long train rides
- you will spend a lot of time with a significant other whom you will not marry
- I see a bar of SOAP
- there will be a man with the initials J.L. in your future
- there will be a woman named Miranda in your future
- you will be involved in a creative project that references a popular film
- you will buy a new sweater that's a different color
- you will sleep next to a friend

H: Is everyone coming? Is Miranda there?

M: Uhh yes... of course she's here you know she's the project chief. But J's also here this time! You know, JL, who you haven't met yet. He's such an interesting guy.

H: Okay, whatever. Just wanted to say I miss you. Do you even care?

M: Um, yes of course I care baby.

H: Honestly its hard to believe. It feels like all you care about is this stupid project and chief Miranda and Jay Leno.

Conclusion

Overall, this game experimented with a few different experiential/pedagogical tactics in order to help participants practice pattern analysis and future envisioning. The element of human interaction in the game was a key component to fostering the same type of future thinking that was discussed by Wells in his lecture. Not only was it crucial for players to use their own understanding of each other's character in order to effectively strategize, but an overall empathy of human behavioral patterns in strategy games was necessary for success in the end.

In addition to incorporating strategy game thinking, I simultaneously designed other thematic elements to the game that were representations of concepts from Wells' lecture. There was always an element of uncertainty in the structure of the game. I told the players that they were to pick desirable fortunes because it would impact their status in the end of the game. All the fortunes were relatively neutral, so it wasn't clear which ones were favorable. Also, there were fortunes with just images, that would pertain to multiple degrees of interpretation. These rules made it so that participants were ultimately forced to construct their own perception of the game narrative.

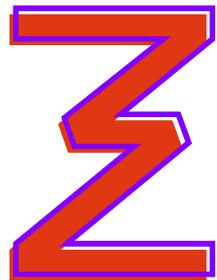
In general, because this game explored a few different methods of probing future thinking, it could have been executed more extremely using just one. I believe that

Bridge the Gaps

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Zibin Yuan

Four o'clock in the afternoon, on the twelfth of November, of the year two thousand and fifteen, in Chelsea, Chinatown and Union Square, for three hours.



Generation gaps were created by divergences of different technological frameworks. To bridge these gaps, we need to find the commonalities behind them, which according to the definition of technology, is the connections between different collections of methods and techniques to archive same goals. The intention of this event is to experiment using experiential knowledge to bridge the gaps.

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Event Introduction

The objective of this event is analyzing the relationship between technological framework and generation gap, and trying to create the methodology to bridge these gaps. In the article “The Children of Cyberspace: Old Fogies by Their 20s” the author used multiple examples to illustrate the different experiences of using technology formed generation gaps because these differences create diverse knowledge frameworks, such as calling a Kindle a “book” and calling a robot a “pet”. Generation gaps also reflect on behaviors. People from younger generation have their unique expectation to interact to the world, such as expect people respond every message immediately or get use to multitasking. These technological frameworks are already embedded in our daily routine because we are depended on these technologies. Moreover, Generations are broad and open typologies. Besides the technical development of different period, technology also influences the modalities of each generation in multiple aspects, such as cultural diversity.

Base on the definition, technology is the collection of techniques, methods, process and skills. Hence these gaps are the divergences

to archive the goals. In terms of bridge these gaps, finding the commonalities behind these collections might be the key to connect the divergences. I assume these commonalities are experiential knowledge. Because of the power of Information Communication Technologies, our experience is attached to these electronic devices because a phone can almost provide any information or assistant: finding the direction, checking time, translates languages, taking pictures or team management. We ask for solutions instead of create or finding solutions. Hence the gap became thicker because the sharing experience is lost.

The intention of this event is using our generation as a test model to uncover the common experiential knowledge, in order to see the bridge between generation gaps. All team members had been divided into two groups and they need to finish all the tasks in a scavenger hunt without using any Information Communication Technologies (Such as cellphone). These tasks include mathematics, language translation, communication and finding directions. The team leader of each team had to organize their strategies to finish all the tasks. Since the absence of using the phone, team members had to use their experimental skills to figure out how to archive all the goals in 3 hours. And after the game, team members had to evaluate the performance of themselves and their team.

The processes of the event and the responds from the team members reflect how people encountering gaps and how they bridge this gaps base on knowledge from different technological frameworks.

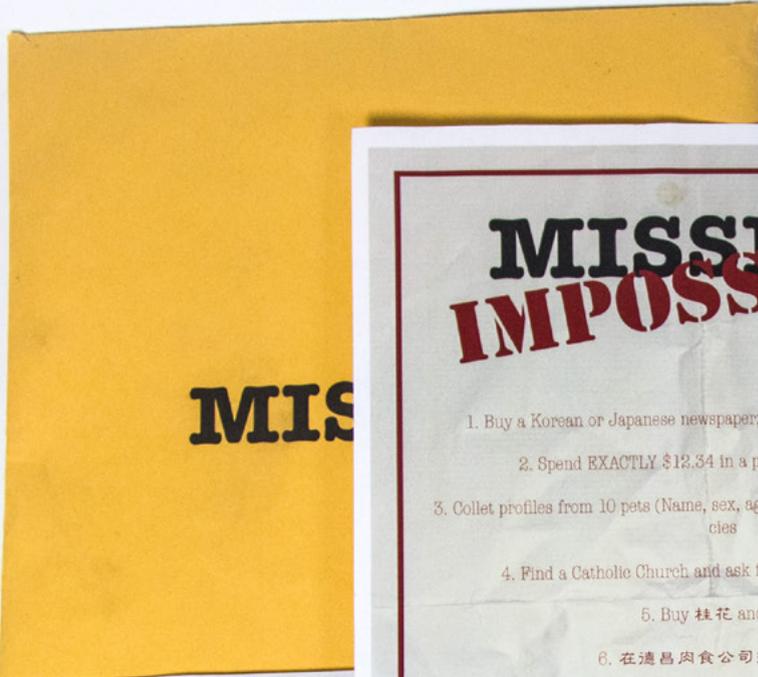
This game was a competition. All the group members except the host (Michael) were divided in two groups by a draw. Each group has 3 people, including one group leader. Before the game start, each group leader got a package of all the information, including all the information, tasks and tools for the game. Each group has 30 minutes to plan their strategies to finish all the tasks.

Rules

1. No Information Communication

Technology Devices

2. Organize strategies on paper (Attached in toolkit)
 3. Document every process and results in the boxes
 4. Measure how much time spend to finish every task
 5. Find a clock to take a picture with it on Exactly 4:30, 5:30 and 6:30
- Each group has 2 chances to use their phone to look up information. However, they should take a selfie with the device by using the instant camera.



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

1. Buy a Korean or Japanese newspaper; translate at least 3 headlines
2. Spend EXACTLY \$12.34 in a pharmacy including tax
3. Collect profiles from 10 pets (Name, sex, age, profile picture), at least two species
4. Find a Catholic Church and ask for a priest
5. Buy 桂花 and 桂花酒
6. 在滬昌肉食公司买猪肉
7. Figure out where best Falafel in Chelsea (And why)
8. Get a subway performer, or group of performers, and get their "artist bio"
9. Get five cigarettes from one pack
10. Each group should have a street performance and share it on social media

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

Rules

- No Information Technology devices
- Please organize everything on paper (At least 10 photos)
- Please document every process and results in the boxes
- Please try to measure how much time you spend to finish every task
- Please find a clock to take a picture with it on Exactly 4:30, 5:30, 6:30
- You have 2 chances to use your Phone to look up information. However every time you use it, you should take a selfie why it by using the instant camera
- Please meet at the secret base no later at 7:30 PM The Address is: 35 Hart Street, Apart 3, Brooklyn, NY, 11206



Group Name:



Buy a Korean or Japanese newspaper, translate at least 3 headlines

Spend Exactly \$ 12.34 in a pharmacy including tax

Collect profiles from 10 pets (Name, sex age, profile picture), at least two species

Find a Catholic Church and ask for this Sunday's schedule

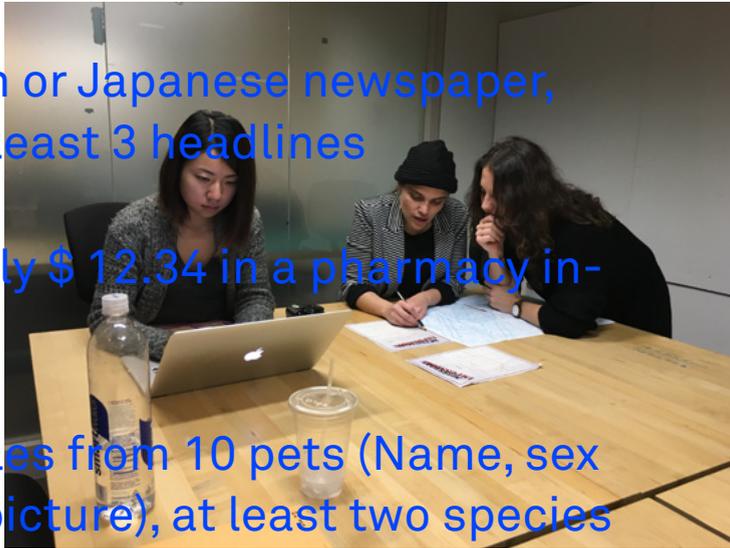
Buy 桂花 and 瑶柱

在德昌肉食公司拍一张自拍

Figure out where best Falafel in Chelsea is and find out why it's the best

Get a subway performer, or group of performers, to help you write their artist bio

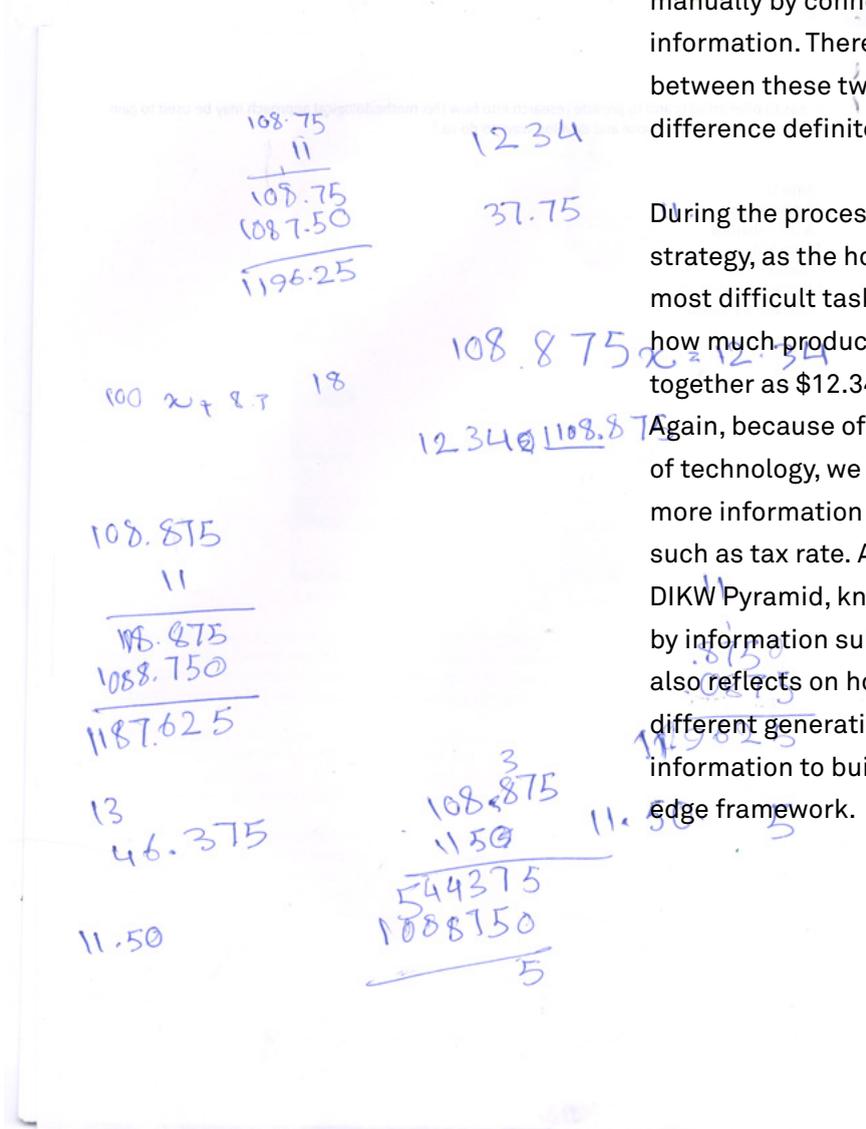
Get five cigarettes from (one or multiple) strangers



The tasks of this game covered multiple places in Lower Manhattan. Participants should plan their path on the map the host provided in the package. These settings were base on the technology framework of older generation: They used to plan everything because starting it,

and always had the expectation to spending time to search information. The main feature of the screen of Information Communication Technology is the "Meta-information". After we request, the screen will generate the result for us on the interface, and this process had made us have less patience. Before these ICT devices, the information is static, and people need to find them manually by connecting clues of information. There is no good or bad between these two types, but the difference definitely reflect the gap.

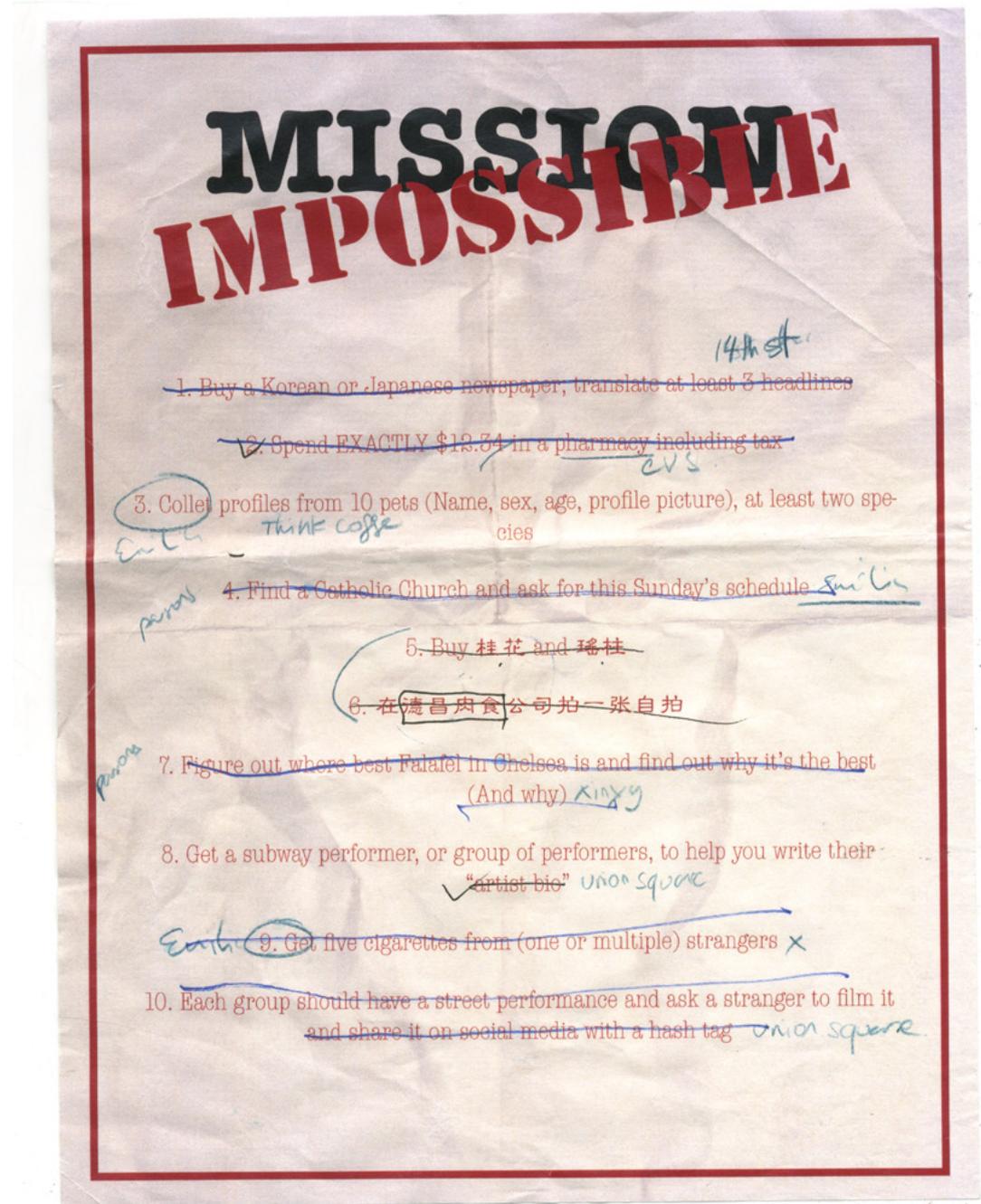
During the process of planning the strategy, as the host expected, the most difficult task is to calculate how much product combines together as \$12.34 including tax. Again, because of the developments of technology, we began to filter more information we used to know, such as tax rate. According to the DIKW Pyramid, knowledge is formed by information subjectively. The gap also reflects on how people from different generations filter different information to build their knowledge framework.



Conclusion

Technology, as mentioned in the introduction, is the collections of method, techniques, skills and process to archive the goal. Just consider, we, as a society, have become extremely dependent on technology, technology can be incredibly liberating. It also has given us the opportunity to be more connected to one another than ever before, we have grown more isolated as a result. The main characteristic of “cyber-generation” is the lack physical/real human contact. We didn’t realize how much of a habit we had gotten into of relying on these devices for information. Since screen is the basic interface of these devices, the “cyber-generation” already got used to the “meta-contents” of on the screen, the information is so easy to be accessed in this technological channel. As result, we lack of awareness of the process of getting information and knowledge by physical/human interaction.

In the responds from the team members after the event, they all mentioned the difficulty of interact with strangers. In general, people have no problem talking to new people. But because of the comfortable of using “meta-contents” we didn’t see asking people is an option to archive the tasks. As result, the skills of interact with strangers had degenerated because we are not under this mindset. Meanwhile, the group dynamics also affect the consequences. For group A, they separate the tasks nicely, and each person is respond for their job based on whety they good at. They finish the entire assignments base on this setting. However, another group experienced a group fight because of the disagreements. Again, Information Communication Technology provides people many ways to organize themselves. We have



Facebook, Slack, group message, Gmail, etc. This old school style group works was tried to demonstrate how we use technology as frameworks to structure human working relationships.

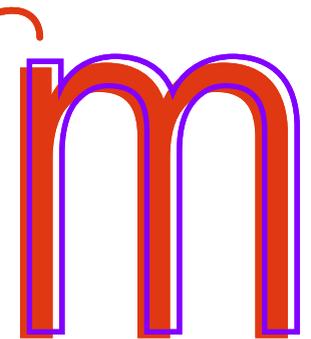
Base on the conflicts people experience, "Gaps" are not necessarily between two generations, but as disagreements of certain methods and techniques base on different mindsets. In order to bridge the gaps, finding the commonalities behind these different technological frameworks, which was the common experiential knowledge behind it, can make agreements. For example, how would people use the experience about sense of direction and how do people find a place to eat base on stranger's recommendations. Google Map was made by people's contributions; as same as Yelp, we check the rate of the restaurants base on vpeople's comments. To bridge the gaps between different generations and design for them, we need to catch the sharing knowledge and analyze how these knowledge and experience transmit into different technological frameworks. Hence, the bridge will been established.



This chapter is devoted to the concept of lightness and the contradictions and coexistence of light and heavy both in the world of concrete objects and abstract concepts. Inspired by a written but never delivered lecture of Italo Calvino on lightness, it focuses on the examples of the concept of weight contradiction, the politics of transmutation of heavy to light and maneuvering on the periphery of them.

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Poor Bewildered Quills



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Moeinedin Shashaei

Four o'clock in the afternoon on November 13th, 2015
for six hours.

Event Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the concept of lightness and the contradictions and coexistence of light and heavy both in the world of concrete objects and abstract concepts. Inspired by a written but never delivered lecture of Italo Calvino on lightness (Six Memos for the Next Millennium, 1988) it focuses on the examples of the contradiction we faced with during our event, the politics of transmutation of weight to lightness and maneuvering on the periphery of them.

Calvino investigates the meaning of lightness in literature, philosophy, science and gives us abundant quotations of literature works covering different aspects and levels of lightness, the value of it and possible ways to achieve lightness in literature. Here before you is some investigation in that respect, in the context of daily life; a normal friday evening that our group walked through a series of staged micro-events in different locations. The evening consisted of sequences of tasks that the group was asked for as the mission in the event, while a hoax planned by me alongside some other unprecedented external factors pushed the whole night into a different level of weight.

Being based on an event that was staged, but not thoroughly directed, this chapter more focuses on the genuine improvisations that my peers had in each organized situation and their assumed collateral actions and less revolves around their active responses to the prompts they were given. So, I believe it is a reliable example for understanding the abstract notion of weight in our routines and how we manage to lighten the heavies in a daily life situation; also it is a good example of a probe for design research and observation of the user/audience in a given context.

A Metaphor We Live By

The quality of weight, beyond its literal meaning, has quite an extensive presence in our language.

We tend to use it metaphorically so much in our basic colloquial that the figurative aspect of it is almost stripped. Surprising as it sounds the metaphor of weight as a concept has become hardwired to our linguistic imagination and real cognitive experience in a way that when we talk about a light sleep or a heavy task, we mean “literally” we think! The threshold for that metaphor to be considered poetic is so high that we do not get stunned by it unless it is way too flamboyant as in unbearable lightness of being.

In the now-classic book *Metaphors We Live By* (University of Chicago Press, 1980), George Lakoff and Marc Johnson argue that our language, thought and action is fundamentally metaphorical and the way we think, the world we experience and our reality in general, is defined by metaphors. Regarding that, I believe we can deem metaphors in general as a technology that we

evolved to utilize, in order to facilitate our cognition. “To learn easily is naturally pleasant to all people” Aristotle said in *The Rhetoric* “and words signify something, so whatever words create knowledge in us are the pleasantest.”

We use the qualities already familiar for us to conceptualize new matters; in that sense the dichotomy of light and heavy is pervasively used in reference to contradictions, oppositions or the ends of any given spectrum as both are tangible qualities in obvious contrast that we learned quite early in our life and developed a personal feeling for each.

In some cases the figurative meaning of weight works almost alongside the literal one. A light weapon for example is defined as ‘man-portable’, yet as the arms control protocols get more specific, the definition of weight shifts toward the destruction capability (mortars are considered light weapons as long as they are of calibers of less than 100 mm). So is the case with heavy



(= powerful) vehicles, or heavy (=resilient) fabrics. Sometimes the gap gets larger — although heavy cream is literally heavier than light cream, it is not the weight that we care about, it is the fat concentration more so. We take weight to conceptualize the density (Also look

at heavy fog and heavy traffic).

And we can go further as the weight gets more and more abstract, to a point that there is no physicality left in the qualities it encapsulates. Think of the hardship in digesting a heavy meal, excessive habit of a heavy smoker, the intensity of a heavy discussion, the grief in a heavy heart all the distortions, massive beats and loudness of heavy metal music. Heavy is ample, harsh, rough, intimidating, gloomy, oppressive and too much. Accordingly the absence of it is light. The lightness unfolds as soon as the least unpleasant or controversial element is reduced just as a matter of some PPMs — What is the opposite of light as in Marlboro, Coca or Corona? Of course the regular; for their regular is the de facto heavy, not being acknowledged! So given the familiarity of weight’s figurative meaning, I found it crucial to make a point clear at the beginning of my event, when I asked my friends to bring the lightest thing they could find around as their first assignment:

“...Do not get too conceptual and come to me with 35 seconds of

silence, or a smelly fart (Something I would have totally done, had I been asked for this task). I mean an actual thing that I can weigh with a scale.”

I ended up with a strand of hair, a safety pin, a little strip of paper, a matchstick, a bobby pin and an iPhone charger cable; all of them showing 0 on my scale except the last one, which was 16 grams but for Michael who brought it “charging a phone before it dies is light, also the cable [in fact the connection type] is

called lightning”. Still it was not the only case of referring to the figurative weight. Xinyi told me, having her tiny blank piece of paper in her hand, that it was cut from the same roll of paper she had used to write pretty heavy stuff for a friend. “I have poured some thoughts and emotion on the paper and added to its weight. It is physically light but I find it heavy now. yet again, the fact that it is saved as a leftover of a previous project makes it light.

Beside that, seeing the heaviness brought up by the lightest objects was interesting. Emilia, having issues finding the bobby pin in her pocket, called it a heavy task to carry around a tiny light object. Aryn cringed away from the strand of hair: “I have this thing with hair”.

Yes there is a thing more or less in anything we brought to the table that night, a thing potentially in any object found around us. A thing in the weightless paper of a break up note. A thing in the hair you find in your sandwich. A thing in the cable that you do not see before stepping on it and hearing the sound of your phone cracking. A thing in the safety pin accidentally penetrated your body (or again, was in your sandwich). A thing in the matchstick that can set the whole city ablaze. A thing in the unfamiliar bobby pin that a woman finds on her husband’s pillow. Any given lightness is just a thing away from getting unbearable.



How Light is Light?

*We are the poor bewildered quills,
the little scissors
and the grieving penknife*
Guido Cavalcanti

For us, weight, even in the concrete physicality is a nebulous quality dependant to the subject, the context and our mindset. For example I believe most of us have experienced the surprising lightness of an object (could be our own body) when it is submerged fully or partially in water; we know this happens due to the buoyant force of the displaced water (Archimedes Principle). Or consider the image of a feather or a dandelion afloat in the air—a classic visualization of lightness, while we know physically, this phenomenon has nothing to do with their weight and is a result of the aerodynamic drag of air, in other words mass does not affect gravitational pull; theoretically, all things should fall at the same rate, regardless of how heavy they are (as was stated by Galileo in 1581 and confirmed in 1971 when Apollo 15 commander David Scott dropped a

feather and a hammer on moon and they hit the ground simultaneously).

Finding more such examples of weight in the physics of our cognition and conception of weight in our daily life is easy. The point is that after all, even the concrete light and heavy are very relational concepts when it comes to us encountering them. Lift twenty pounds. Heavy? Now lift forty pounds (at least try) and go back to the twenty. Much lighter, right? And of course the same rationale is applicable to the metaphor of weight, or any other binary qualities—when the dark gray seems black in a white background and white in a black one. There is always a superiority to which any harshness seems mellow! there is always another layer of heavy awaiting to be added to our burden just when we think it can not get heavier. Sure enough when it unfolds we can find lightness in what we already had.

That is what we experienced on the infamous evening of Friday the November 13th, 2015. The unpleas-

ant act of waiting in a crowded restaurant to sit and eat became somewhat relaxing and euphoric for a group that just had a nervous breakdown and a bit later whatever frustration lost its weight when put next to a terrorist attack!



I had told the group that for my event we were going to have some plays and experiments around the physical and mental heaviness. We did actually. We compared the lightest thing they could find in their home and discussed them. We blew up balloons, carried them around the street, took them to a crowded restaurant and ate while having them in our hand. But the main weight of the night came from a disappointing, crude email that Christina, our teacher sent, early in the evening, telling us that this whole project sucks! She and department does not understand it and we are not capable of determining where we want to go with it and what we really want to say and “How do you all expect to get jobs when you leave school?”

The email actually was a prop! I had asked for it and after a series of back and forth she—hoping it was not a prank on her—and I agreed on a mild but still roasting text:

Hi All,

Thanks for a good working session in class this past week.

I've spoken with the department, and frankly they just don't understand what you are trying to achieve with your efforts on this publication; it was critiqued as being really confusing and self-involved.

I am also a bit concerned that this project just continues to make no sense at all to me. I have no idea what most of you are saying or doing and how your work is reflecting anything coherent or related to design. Seriously, how do you all expect to get jobs when you leave school?

I really need you all to step up your game and figure out a way to make some damn sense. I would like, next week, to see a performance, in class, that communicates conceptually and coherently how all of your ideas can become comprehensible. I'm having a hard time continuing to support something that I just don't understand.

let me know if you have any questions,

all the best

Sure enough we got paralyzed for a bit, especially for we were at the beginning of the last event of our series and were having a feeling of accomplishment. The frustration, anger, humiliation and bewilderment that dominated group, our individual or group reaction can be seen the documentation video. We were on the verge of a group emotional collapse, and what we did to make the the rest of the night bearable, became the point of focus for me, although for my friend it was what derailed the whole night.

succeeding immediately by another one:

I want to hear an update by Monday afternoon
Moein, please take the lead in organizing this ask—I want to make sure you are pulling your weight.



Politics of Weight

164 In his aforementioned essay, Italo Calvino brings up the example of the famous myth of Medusa and how in order to defeat this hideous monster Perseus “supports himself on the very lightest of things, the winds and the clouds, and fixes his gaze upon what can be revealed only by indirect vision, an image caught in a mirror”. He kills Medusa and “for the severed head, Perseus does not abandon it but carries it concealed in a bag. When his enemies are about to overcome him, he has only to display it, holding it by its snaky locks, and this bloodstained booty becomes an invincible weapon in the hero’s hand. It is a weapon he uses only in cases of dire necessity [...] Perseus’s strength always lies in a refusal to look directly, but not in a refusal of the reality in which he is fated to live; he carries the reality with him and accepts it as his particular burden”.

For me, one of the most inspiring parts of the story is when after a battle Perseus wants to wash his hands and has to put the head somewhere. This is where the poet shows us the extreme delicacy



that Perseus, a killer of monsters has in his spirit: “So that the rough sand should not harm the snake-haired head, he makes the ground soft with a bed of leaves, and on top of that he strews little branches of plants born underwater, and on this he places Medusa’s head, face down.”

165 I agree with Calvino that “the lightness, of which Perseus is the hero, could not be better represented than by this gesture of refreshing courtesy toward a being, so monstrous and terrifying yet at the same time somehow fragile and perishable. In physical term, there is a certain level of delicacy—as technology that we learn to maintain in our daily life to face the lightness. Like when one catches a butterfly and does not want to hurt it in their hand. Or taking care of a balloon in a crowd or carrying a tiny object (we practiced the two recent examples and of course some failures were not avoidable)

Also some basic techniques for dealing with heaviness. We learn for example that for moving a heavy box pulling tends to be easier than pushing (When the box is pushed, the vertical component of the push increases the normal force. Hence, there is an increase in friction.) Also look at some basic primitive technologies that human utilised: wheel, ramp, pulley. They were answers to the question of how to tackle heaviness.

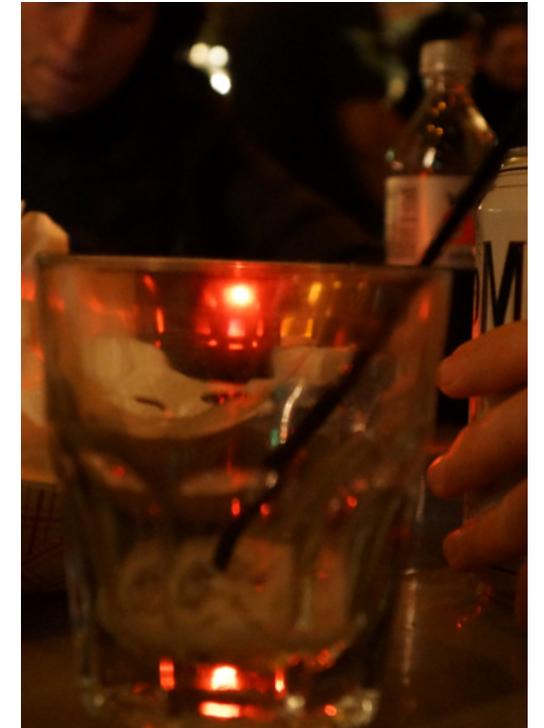
In terms of weight as a metaphor, things are more nebulous and personal. It is believed that expressing and sharing the heaviness, makes it light, even if it has no useful feedback coming after (ask your therapist about it). I agree that Christina’s email would have hurt more if we had not seen it and discussed it while being all together.

Sometimes denying, disregarding or a momentary distraction becomes the technology of dealing with heaviness. Like when after half an hour of awful conversation about the email, Nicole lowered her voice and altered her tone abruptly to change the topic of discussion. If the distraction does not happen voluntarily and we can not push our state of mind we tend to seek the help of some catalyst—viva tequila (here let me pay tribute to fermentation as one of the main technologies of survival for human. First and foremost, for preserving the drinks in old days and yet for unpreserving the minds, now!)



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Leave it to get old, I believe is the ultimate and inevitable technology of dealing with heaviness. Like a fresh wound that turns to a scar any given heaviness, even the one that seems fatal in the first impression gets bearable (unless it really kills us). The heavy does not get light, but it is us who just look around after a while, shrug and say “so what?” maybe only based on our survival instincts. As Calvino says “everything can be transformed into something else, and knowledge of the world means dissolving the solidity of the world”.



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Conclusion

Experience is in the mind of the user

Jorge Luis Borges wrote once that “The taste of the apple... lies in the contact of the fruit with the palate, not in the fruit itself; in a similar way... poetry lies in the meeting of poem and reader, not in the lines of symbols printed on the pages of a book. What is essential is the aesthetic act, the thrill, the almost physical emotion that comes with each reading.”

I believe the exact same rule is valid in the world of design. There is no achievement in a product, an environment, an interface etc. unless when it is in the possession of the audience/user. And a designer, who wants to make a change (however much subtle and small that change be) can not claim the accomplishment unless turn the whole outcome of his practice, the whole aesthetic act, the thrill, the almost physical emotion, to an experience that dominates the moment of the one who receives it. Even then who knows what mood the user is in at that time! In other words, I believe that lightness for example, can not be achieved in design through a light material, a light composition or — if you can define it — a light typeface, unless the designer be such a great master who can turn the whole work into a piece so affecting, touching and dominating that the one who stands on the receiver end get fazed by it no matter how one was

feeling before getting hit by it.

Honestly I want to argue that unless we design for a specific — very very specific — audience in a specific context, that attempt is moot! Who knows in whose hand will a design work end? Or maybe designers need to take one step back and start from training their audience to see and feel and experience what they believe is the valuable, because just like the beauty that lies in the eye of the beholder, experience lies in the mind of the user.

Interviews

Interviews with Alex Liebergessell,
Megan Xyz and Andrew Blauvelt

Tech B studio
Graduate Communications Design
Pratt Institute
New York

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Interview Title

We are a group of seven second-year MFA Communications Design students at Pratt Institute in New York City. For the past semester, we've been working on Technolage, a project that stems from concepts of relational, anticipatory and performative design approaches and explores contemporary methodologies and practices that call for more improvisational and situationally-based approaches to design. The project exaggerates upon these methodologies and rebels against a traditional, linear design process by building upon a concept that restrains from predetermined goals, embraces constraints, and utilizes performative experimentations to generate and develop content.

You've been writing about relational design methodologies since 1998, long before it was embraced as a valuable design approach. In your opinion, how has the discourse shifted and evolved since you first began writing about the subject? Have designers responded and/or reacted to relational design approaches as you imagined they would?

Based on how the field of graphic design has evolved over the last decade, do you think relational design methodologies have been explored to their full potential? Is there room for further experimentation?

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How important is it for today's designers to let go of control and to invite (and embrace) external influences and input? What are some of the most effective ways to establish more open systems of working and generating content?

In your essay, *Ghost in the Machine: Distributing Subjectivity*, you discuss open and closed systems and raise the question, "Where does control and design happen in an open system? You also call for a radical rethinking of the designer as only a manipulator of tools. In your opinion, what is the role of today's graphic designer? Has it moved beyond designer as author/creator of systems/manipulator of tools to something more profound as your text begins to suggest?

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Are there any particular designers actively practicing relational design that you think are creating truly exceptional work?

What are the main differences between conditional and relational design methodologies?

In your essay, *Towards Relational Design*, you state, "We might chart the movement of these three phases of design, in linguistic terms, as moving from form to content to context; or, in the parlance of semiotics, from syntax to semantic to pragmatics." Given how quickly things move in contemporary society, do you anticipate a fourth phase of design? Have we already begun to move beyond form as context?

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As we've experienced in our project thus far, embracing constraints, dilemmas, and even uncertainty has been an extremely important approach and has allowed us to generate some truly interesting and unexpected content. In your opinion, how important is it for designers to embrace contradictions, dilemmas, and constraints? Are today's graphic designers taking enough risks?

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Do you think practicing graphic designers have as many opportunities to explore and employ relational design methodologies as graduate design students do?

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Finally, it can be said that relational design encourages the circulation, reception, and reaction of ideas as to provide feedback that, in turn, creates more open-ended systems that can reach beyond the creative class. In your opinion, has relational design succeeded in creating a platform in which generative and open-ended systems are preferred over highly controlled and prescribed systems or is there a need for further, more radical experimentation?

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Appendix

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