

ANNOTATED PORTFOLIO

Puck Verbeek

1575589

REFLECTION on Haraway [4]

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

"Think we must; we must think. That means, simply, we must change the story; the story must change. " (p. 40)

Haraway asks us to be more concerned with and aware of what the world does to us. As a designer I want to carry this question into every project. Before I make anything, I need to ask who it serves and at what cost to what or whom.

"... Haraway suggests, a diffractive methodology is a critical practice for making a difference in the world. (...) understanding which differences matter, how they matter, and for whom. It is a critical practice of engagement ..." (p. 90) [1]

We must move beyond seeing ourselves as the central hero of the story, and begin to ask which differences matter, how they matter, and for whom they matter. These are important questions to take with you while designing.

"We are at stake in each other's company." (p.39)

Collaboration is always present, we are entangled with non-humans, materials, and environments before we begin. Going forward I want to let the non-human actors and material histories of a context shape the work, rather than imposing a solution from the outside.

REFLECTION on Barad [1]

"Hence, is it possible for entangled relationalities to make connections between 'entities' that do not appear to be proximate in space and time." (p. 74)

"... diffraction patterns are simply the result of differences in ... overlapping waves." (p.80)

"By contrast, diffraction is not reflection raised to some higher power. It is not a self-referential glance back at oneself." (p.88)

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

Things that seem unrelated are already in relation. As a designer I want to develop the habit of looking for those invisible threads. The connections between a design decision and its consequences somewhere else, with someone else, at a different time.

Where my perspective overlaps with someone else's, something new and interesting can evolve. I need to think about what my terms for finding that overlap are when collaborating.

Writing a reflection risks becoming a mirror that only shows me what I already think. This challenges me to look for the moments of surprise or friction in my process. Those moments are the diffractions, where the work challenged me and my perspectives.

REFLECTION on Bennet [2]

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

"... an actant never really acts alone. Its efficacy or agency always depends on the collaboration, cooperation, or interactive interference of many bodies and forces." (p.21)

No design outcome is ever mine alone. Materials, people around me, environments, and past experiences all co-produce the result.

"There was never a time when human agency was anything other than an interfolding network of humanity and nonhumanity; today this mingling has become harder to ignore." (p. 31)

We are affected by others, but they are also affected by us. Those "others" include the non-human world. As a designer this makes me think about material and environmental actors not as passive resources but as participants in the design process.

QUICK PROTOTYPES

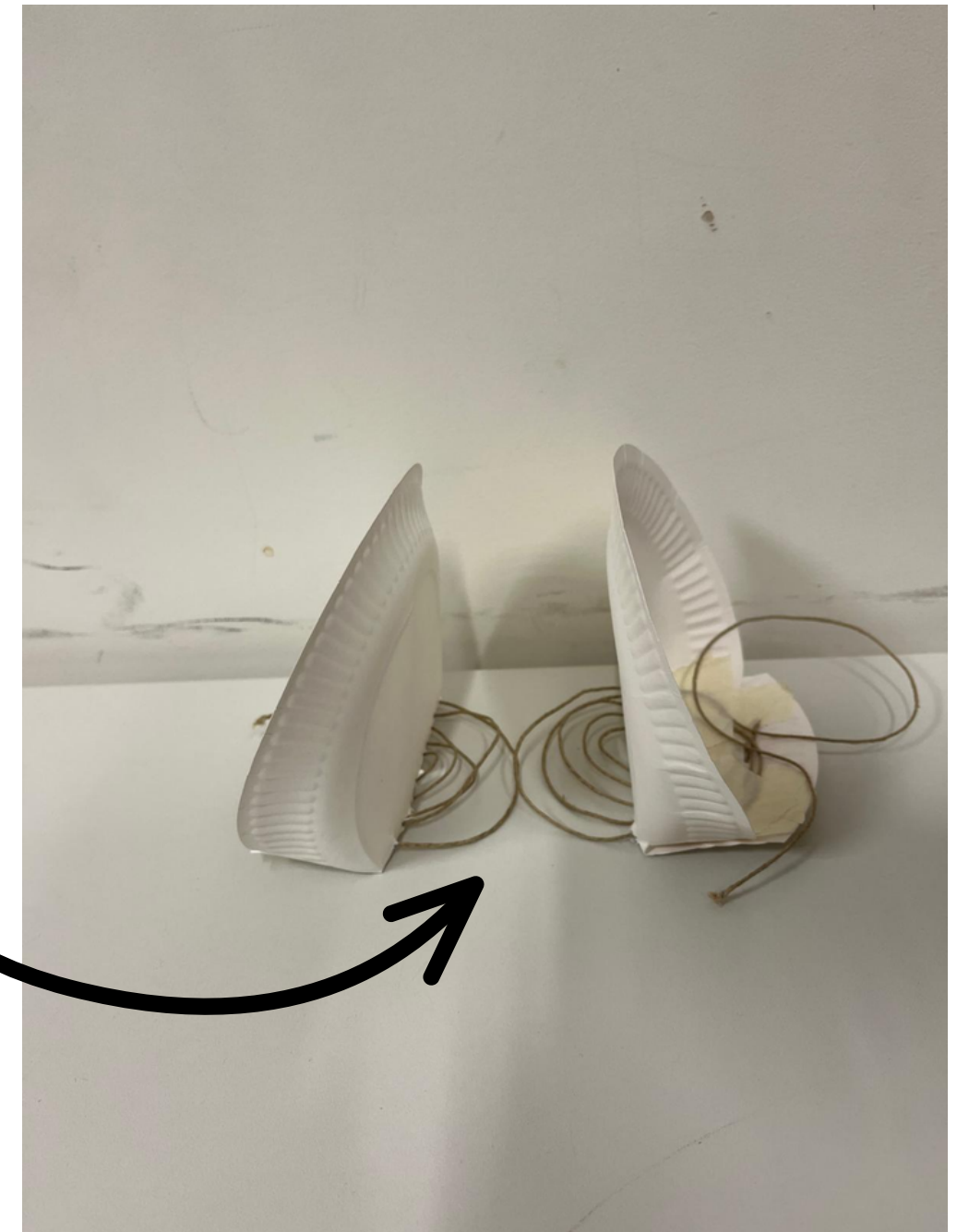


The small hole makes Barad's [1] idea physical. Only looking through your own eyes hides the effects your decisions have on the whole system.

The wires spiralling outward show how everything is connected. What seems isolated at the centre is linked to everything around it.

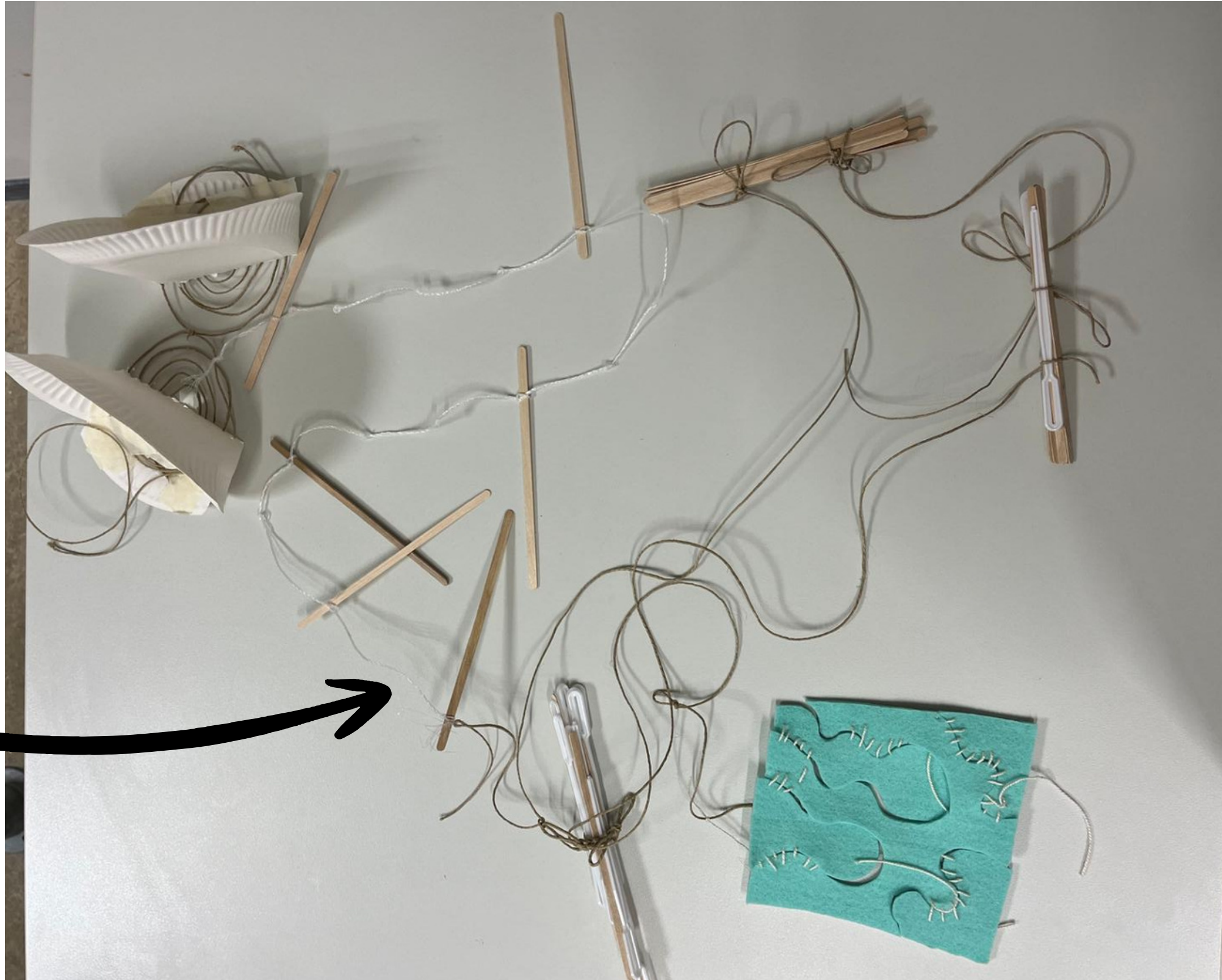
REFLECTION

Making the prototype forced me to make Barad's [1] abstraction concrete. This helped me understand the text I had read and reflect on what that meant to me.

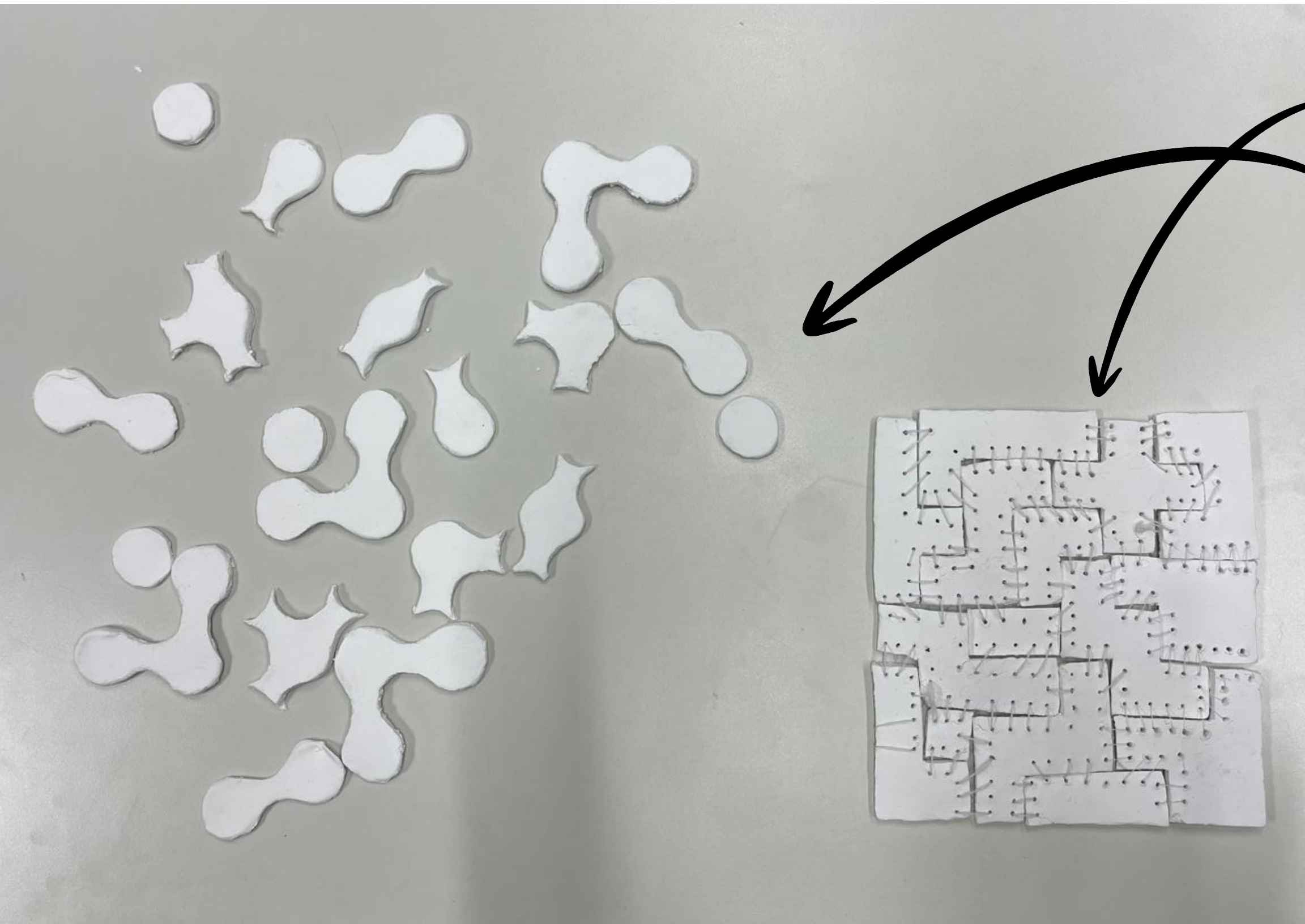


GROUP PROTOTYPE

The group piece explored relationality. The idea that everything is connected and that you carry things with you along the way. The scattered components are not separate; they are already in relation, even when that relation is not immediately visible or known.



PUZZLE RELATIONS



CONCEPT

The conventional puzzle shows fixed, predetermined connections.

The open-form puzzle has no fixed solution. Any piece can fit to any other piece. This makes the invisible relationships we might overlook visible.

REFLECTING ON BARAD [1]

The negative space (gaps) between the open-form pieces say something about us as designers. They say something about what we choose to define and address, and what we leave open and unaddressed.

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

I want to take the idea of making invisible relations visible into future work. Designing systems or objects that reveal connections rather than hide them.

REFLECTION on Malafouris [6]

"... thinking is interactions of brain and body with the world." (p38)

"... owing to socially, environmentally, and culturally caused differences and variations in life and learning experiences, individuals of the same genotype can have different neural, cognitive, and behavioral outcomes." (p. 41)

"... the human brain is subject to continuous reshape, rewiring, and remodeling." (p.45)

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

Start making before I have an answer, because working with material will lead to new insights that thinking alone cannot always lead to.

My design sensibility is shaped by everything I have experienced and made. This means I should pay attention to the environments I put myself in, as they can reshape how I think and design.

We adapt to what changes around us. As a designer this is both a responsibility and an opportunity. The things I make will reshape the people who use them, that process therefore needs as much thought as the qualities of the things I put in the world.

REFLECTION on Halberstam [3]

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

"Under certain circumstances failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world." (p.2)

Failure can lead to interesting insights that success might not have given to you. I want to stop treating a prototype that doesn't work as a problem, and start using it as information that can lead to interesting new perspectives.

"The desire to be taken seriously is precisely what compels people to follow the tried and true path of knowledge production around which I would like to map a few detours." (p. 6)

Detours are where the interesting work happens. I want to be more willing to take a direction that looks uncertain, as the detour is where I might find something new.

"It reminded me to take more chances, more risks in thinking ..." (p.24)

What seems like a mistake can turn out to be an opportunity, but only if I keep going rather than immediately correcting it. I want to have more time in my design processes for not-knowing-where-this-is-going as a design state.

REFLECTION on Stengers [8]

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

"... emergence is nothing other than the consequences of the factual obstacles that they constitute for one another. Each entrepreneur is thus motivated by his or her clearly defined interests. (...) They are persons of 'opportunity', deaf and blind to the question of the world that their efforts contribute towards constructing."
(p. 8)

We all manipulate the terms of our decisions to feel comfortable with them. As a designer I want to actively resist this and keep asking what my decisions are contributing to, beyond what they do for me or my client/user.

"... opening the possibility of the idiot's murmuring being answered not by the definition of 'what is most important' but by the slowing down without which there can be no creation."
(p.15)

I want to be "the idiot" in my future design practice. I want to be the one who asks the uncomfortable question before the group commits to a direction. Slowing down is not inefficiency; it is where space for creation and improvement opens up.

BUTTON ERROR

CONCEPT

The button gives a prompt and responds with an error when you follow it correctly. By inverting the reward system, it forces the user to question why they were following the instruction, and lets the user think about their own actions.

STENGERS [8]

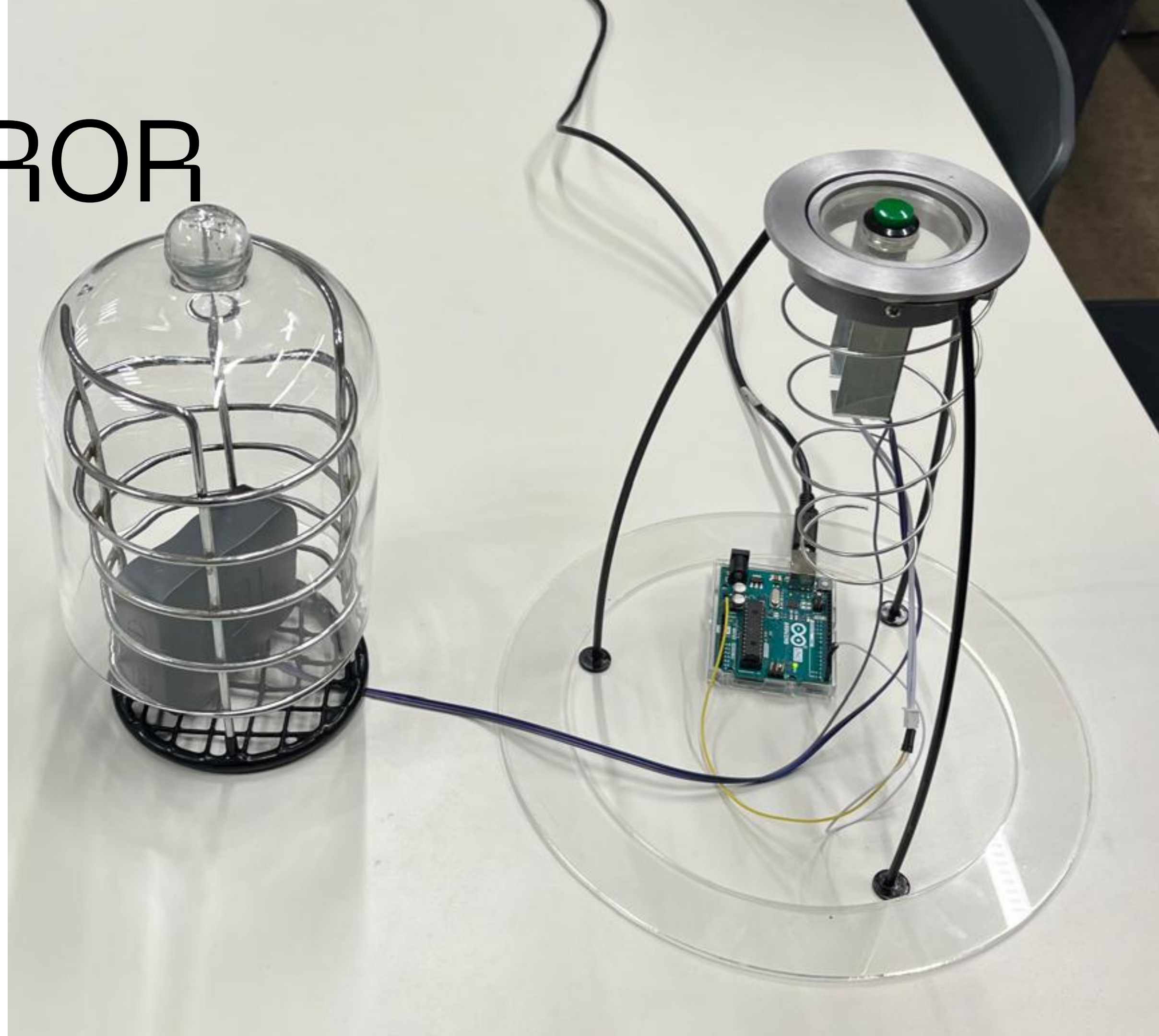
Stengers' "idiot" slows down the rush toward consensus by asking critical questions. The device performs this role physically by having people pause and reflect before they take next action.

HALBERSTAM [3]

"Failing" the task is the path to understanding. The design embodies Halberstam's claim that failure can be more creative and cooperative than success.

REFLECTION

Building a device that performs the theory made the theory better understandable than only reading about it.



REFLECTION on Ingold [5]

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

"... every step is a development of the one before and a preparation for the one following." (p.98)

We carry the past with us when we make something new, and that past actively shapes what the next step can be. As a designer this means my entire history of making matters. Taking time to process each project before starting the next is in itself a design practice.

"It is about becoming rather than being." (p.99)

The process is more important than the final object. I want to design without rushing to close a process. Staying in a process for longer can lead to new things and directions to emerge.

REFLECTION on Pye [7]

"The essential idea is that the quality of the result is continually at risk during the process of making, (...) 'The workmanship of risk' ..."
(p. 20)

"In the workmanship of risk, decisions are very often made by the workman which could have been made by the designer, and the workman may himself be the designer." (p. 54)

PERSONAL TAKEAWAY

When I start a project I do not know what the outcome will be. This is not a problem but the condition of real making. I want to let myself be guided by the material, the machine, and my own hands, rather than trying to pre-determine what I will find.

I can be both the designer and maker simultaneously.

MATERIAL ECHOES



INGOLD [5]

Itinerant making

The assembly process was not predetermined; each step responds to the last. The work (on laptop) was not finished when I was done with my interaction. The work continued with others interacting as well.

PYE [7]

Workmanship of risk

The quality of the outcome was continually at risk during each interaction. Small adjustments could change everything, without clear reasons why. The different tools also led to different interaction possibilities and outcomes.



REFLECTION

Seeing others continue and transform the work made me realise that this open continuation is a form of user research. Their unexpected interactions revealed insights I could never have predicted beforehand.

PH ART

MALAFOURIS [6]

Material Engagement

The maker initiates the process but cannot control the outcome. The material reveals data about the maker who made it, and the making process makes the maker aware of their own health.

PYE [7]

Workmanship of risk

Each piece is unique as the pH level varies, the quality of the result is therefore always at risk. The variation proves that risk is always present in and part of the making.

REFLECTION

I want to know what something will look like before I make it. These papers challenged that feeling, by just getting started. I want to take more of that uncertainty into future work as it can lead to surprising new directions within your process.



URISCAN™



CONCEPT

URISCAN™ pushes the logic of datafication to an extreme. What if your body status can be fully measured? What does that say about what we think counts as a meaningful life? The device critiques the increase in datafication of the body and the reliance we feel toward that data.

HALBERSTAM [3]

Halberstam argues that failure and not-knowing can open up more creative and surprising ways of being in the world. URISCAN™ asks what happens when a system tries to eliminate that possibility entirely.

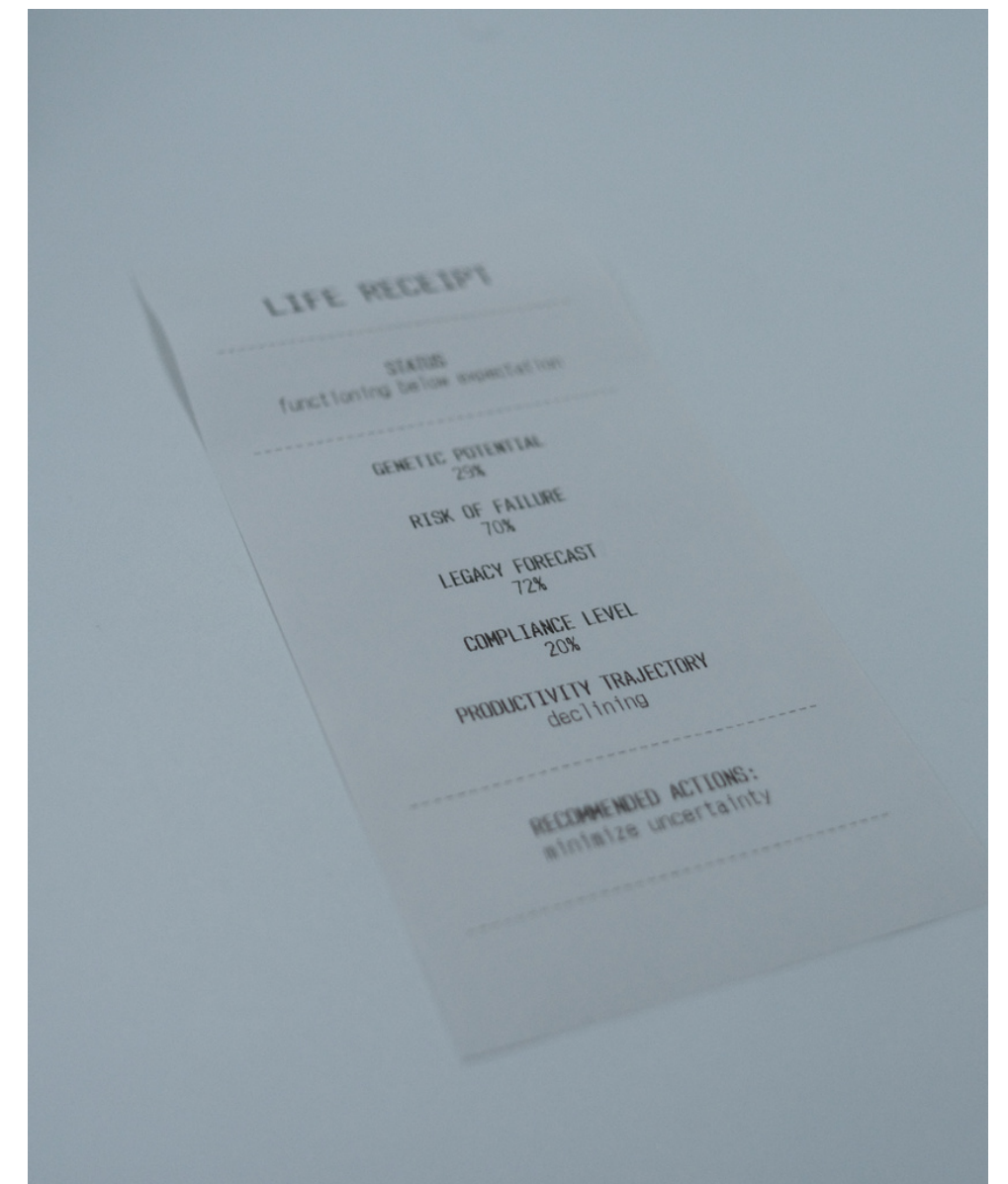
URISCAN™



URISCAN™ looks like a consumer product. The more believable it feels, the more it reveals how naturally we accept systems that promise to tell us who we are and how we are supposed to be feeling.

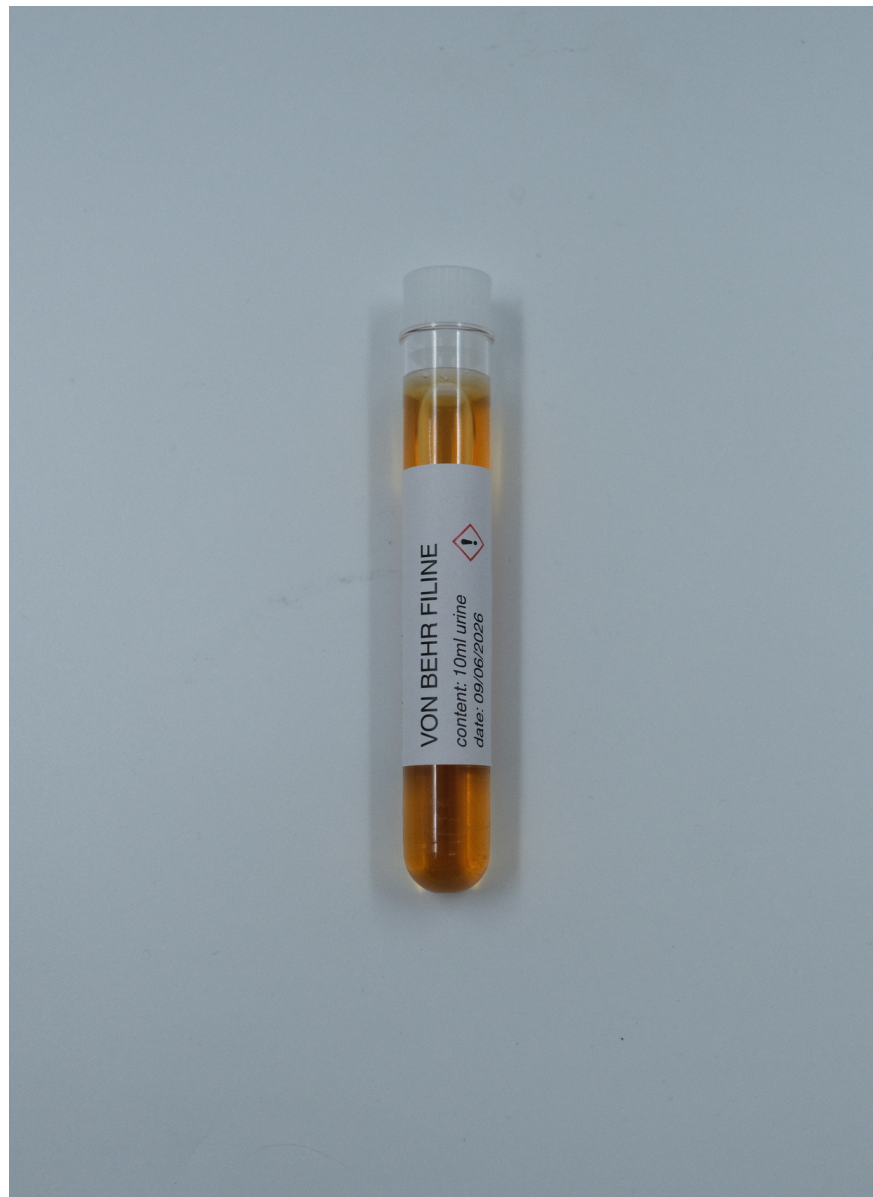


You might feel well, but when the device tells you otherwise, who do you believe? The design asks whether datafication helps us know ourselves and if we even want to know everything. Maybe we should leave some room for uncertainty?



Categories like "Risk of Failure" and "Compliance Level" show how datafication reframes human complexity as something to be optimized. Leaving no room for uncertainty and mistakes that Halberstam [3] argues are where the interesting things can happen.

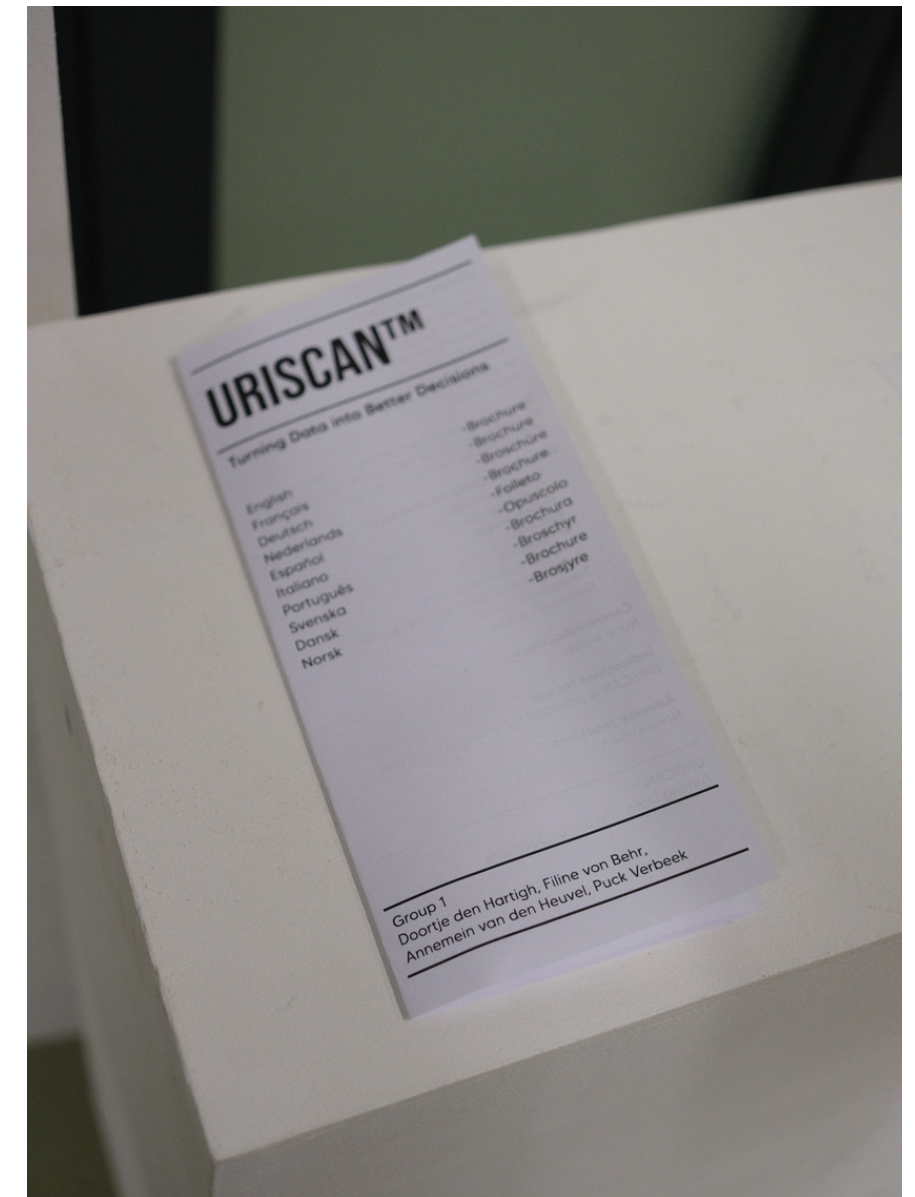
URISCAN™



The personal name on the label closes the distance between data and person. This makes the interaction feel personal and encourages personal reflection: what does this mean and do I want to know this about myself?



Urine samples of all peers were made to confront the viewer with what datafication would look like at scale and to be able to compare with one another. Raising the question whether we always want and need to compare ourselves with others.



REFLECTION
Working on this made me realise I want to design things that leave room for not-knowing. Failure, uncertainty, and the unplanned outcome are where something unexpected and valuable can emerge.

REFLECTION on method

READING TO MAKING

Discussing the papers with my team members made the content clearer. Over the weeks I noticed it became easier to write ideas as they arose while reading.

OTHER FORMATS

Creating moodboards to visualise the text helped me to summarise the papers for myself. The visual representation forced me to decide what the text was about for me.

MAKING TO READING

Making a prototype forced us to commit to our interpretation of the texts. After building a prototype I revisited the text. That commitment then changed what I saw when I revisited the text.

Seeing the prototypes of peers helped understanding the papers on a broader level. As you got to see their perspectives on the paper through their prototype.

REFLECTION

I want to use this reading-making method into my practice. I believe it is an interesting way to summarize the key insights of papers and can lead to surprising perspectives.

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