

Personal Development Plan



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Vision

I would like to see design as a means to simplify life. Not to solve large societal-problems, but rather to make one's life just a little more comfortable. These small improvements can on its turn still add up to society after all. Whilst a product or system should provide an improvement of life, the design of it should provide the integration into a person's life. Design can help to strengthen these improvements and give it extra value.

When I design a product, I aim for a clean, simple and smooth look. The product can be in the center, but it improves life without bothering a user and sometimes even without them being aware of it. The user has to be taken into account when designing, but appearance is just as important.

The look and feel of a product can influence your thoughts and feelings. It's simple design with minimal visual noise that is extremely appealing and makes a person just naturally love your product and crave for it.

A product has a specific function or vision and every design choice must be grounded according to this, making the product impervious. Look, feel and function all have a grounded reason and contribute to the smoothness and integration of the product. A whole construction of thoughts underneath helps to make the product just look, feel and works the way one person wants from the outside.

An example of this is the Rietveld-Schröder house, which is entirely designed with the idea that the house is one with the environment around it, a wide-open grassland as far as the eye can reach. Everything is designed following that specific thought, to the last detail. Without being directly aware of it, these detailed design choices contribute a lot to the experience of the house, which immediately feels pleasant. For example, the window-frames are placed in such position that the contours of the frame go to infinity, just like the grass. This is even done from the point of view of the user, Mrs. Schröder.

When the landscape was interrupted by a later constructed highway, Rietveld wanted to demolish the building because its essence disappeared, diluting the vision of the house.

Identity

By studying at the TU/e, and working with the self-directed learning method, I have continuously been extending my knowledge and improving my skills. I discovered my interest in the thoughts behind designs. How does a designer look at a certain design, what is the reasoning behind specific function and form choices and most importantly, the vision on the product, where does it stand for and what value does it deliver. All aspects of a design, big or small, can be explained by looking at the design with that specific vision.

Because of this way of working, I always want to think a lot about what I want to achieve with my product, and weigh out different ideas. When one idea looks extreme at first, I always try to relativize things, put them in various different perspectives and criticize them, to discover the disadvantages and imperfections and solve them.

I consider myself a team player and a quite assertive person. I value other people's feedback, as it helps me to consider my own opinion. Is the design actually as strong as I expected, or should it be adjusted. As a result, this critique strengthens the product by eliminating weaknesses.

I try to constantly and critically reflect on my own work, relativize ideas, zoom out and put things in a different context, which brings out the best in each design and adds up to my vision of a carefully considered design. I never lose a product's purpose or vision out of sight to be able to always ground every choice.

Where do I stand now?

In the previous projects I have focused a lot on communicating my ideas and vision, as well as making the user experience a design. I practiced sketching, in order to create context and an atmosphere for my designs. I improved on experience prototyping, which taught me that you don't always need to make something happen. Pretending to make it happen can also improve the way of experiencing a certain design.

Moreover, I think I really improved on working with stakeholders in a professional and commercial environment. As I also experienced during my internship, stakeholders can provide possibilities, but on the other hand they can give restrictions. In addition, different production methods can influence the design as well, thus both stakeholders and production methods should be taken into account.

Furthermore, I am familiar with the design process; the different steps that should be taken and things to take into account. This process is extremely important in my future as a designer, since I think it is important to always ground your design choices, whether or not using your own research.

Goals

This semester I am going to do my FBP, combining all the things I learned before, during my curriculum at the TU/e and during my internship. I desire to combine the practical application of design I learned at Balini and the knowledge and design processes from the TU/e.

Creativity & Aesthetics and Technology & Realisation

However, there is still 1 thing that I did not acquire sufficiently, in my opinion. I still want to engage myself more in giving a certain theoretical concept a practical application or integration, during my FBP. The concept might be seamless, but its embodiment should also be seamlessly integrated in designated context of use. It should not only work but also look and feel seamlessly.

I am glad that I was able to join the seamless squad, as I still want to get more experience in designing subtle and humble yet influential products. It does not always have to be a big problem-solving design, it can make life or work just a little more pleasant and enjoyable. Designing a solution that adds up to an existing experience, rather than replace it.

I want to do this by exploring application, appearance and materialization of the product, as well as taking into account the method of production, if possible, as they all may influence design choices. For this, I want to use my obtained knowledge during my internship, regarding the different production methods.

To be able to make a grounded choice for the appearance and form, I want to get more familiar with the principles and history of design. As I have the feeling that I sometimes miss that extra useful little tip, that could help to easily improve a design.

To get to know these principles, I want to read 'Universal Principles of Design' by William Lidwell. Subsequently I want to apply at least 1 principle in the design.

To show this application into the current context, I want to use all my previously gathered knowledge about prototyping, to make a working model that transfers the experience as much as possible. Especially due to Corona-crisis I think that testing parts of the design online can really add up to validating the design.

To be able to transfer this experience and validate the online I want to make use and record a fully working prototype and its functioning. I am going to use these video's to transfer the experience to the participant during an online user test.

Business & Entrepreneurship

With insights of my internship and the upcoming knowledge during the Design Innovation Methods course I want to make a plan that describes the next possible steps in the process of my product. Of course at the end of my FBP, there is a conceptual design, but there is most likely no fully grown company and product. At that point in the process I want to be able to take a look into the future and describe the following steps that could be taken in order to get to that full grown company.

That is why, at the end of my FBP, I want to make a roadmap or business model in combination with a future strategy that describes a plan to further develop the product.

User & Society

In my FPB I want to challenge myself to design a product for 2 different parties in the same context, but with both different values. In order to do this, I have to understand both parties. Not only what they say, but also how they act.

That is why I want to conduct interviews of the users, in order to compare them and map their hassles and values.