

(ABSTRACT)

MIN. 200 WORDS

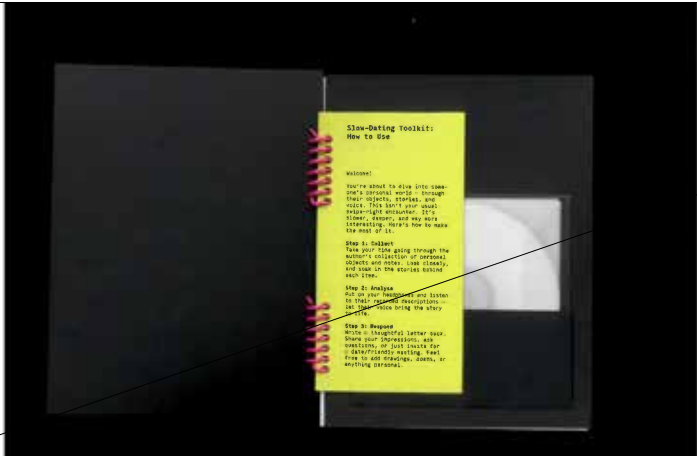
(WHAT IS YOUR ENQUIRY? HOW HAVE YOU ENGAGED WITH IT THROUGH STUDIO PRACTICE (METHODS, MEDIA, ETC.)? WHO IS THIS QUESTION RELEVANT TO (WHETHER FROM INSIDE OR OUTSIDE THE FIELD OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION DESIGN)?)

I CREATED A SLOW-DATING TOOLKIT IN MY STUDIO PRACTICE TO PUSH BACK AGAINST DATING APPS' FAST-PACED, DEPERSONALISED NATURE. TO EXPLORE THIS IDEA, I USED A RANGE OF MEDIA, EACH LINKED TO A CORE STAGE OF DATAFICATION. THE COLLECTION PHASE IS A PRINTED PUBLICATION THAT CAPTURES PERSONAL OBJECTS, TURNING INTIMATE MEMORIES INTO VISUALISED DATA. ANALYSIS IS EXPRESSED THROUGH A CD RECORDING, WHERE THESE OBJECTS ARE DESCRIBED AND BROUGHT TO LIFE THROUGH SOUND AND EMOTIONAL NUANCE. A HANDWRITTEN LETTER-INVITATION REPRESENTS THE APPLICATION PHASE. IT MEANS SHIFTING DATA INTO A PERSONAL AND RESPONSIVE EXCHANGE.

INTENTIONALLY BREAKING THE PROCESS INTO SEPARATE PARTS (FRAGMENTATION), I ACTIVATED DIFFERENT SENSES, SIGHT, SOUND, AND TOUCH, TO SLOW DOWN THE EXPERIENCE. THE ENGAGEMENT BECOMES MORE THOUGHTFUL, AND FAR MORE HUMAN. THESE SMALL, INTERACTIVE MOMENTS INVITE THE READER TO REFLECT, AND FEEL, SOMETHING THAT'S OFTEN MISSING IN THE SWIPE CULTURE OF DATING APPS.

I WAS AIMING TO HIJACK THE PROCESS OF DATAFICATION BY USING THE CONTRAST BETWEEN DIGITAL AND ANALOGUE MEDIA. IT HIGHLIGHTS HOW WE'VE MOVED FROM DEEP, SENSORY CONNECTIONS TO FAST, FRICTIONLESS INTERACTIONS. THIS TOOLKIT TRIES TO REVERSE THAT, TO MAKE DATING FEEL MORE PERSONAL AGAIN. IT USES SLOWNESS AS A FORM OF CARE.

THIS PROJECT IS ESPECIALLY RELEVANT FOR PEOPLE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING MORE AUTHENTIC IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS. IT'S FOR THOSE TIRED OF SHALLOW EXCHANGES AND CURIOUS ABOUT HOW DESIGN CAN CREATE SPACE FOR EMOTION, PRESENCE, AND CONNECTION. BEYOND GRAPHIC DESIGN, IT SPEAKS TO ANYONE INTERESTED IN HOW INTIMACY, TECHNOLOGY, AND PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE OVERLAP AND HOW WE MIGHT RECONNECT OFFLINE.



FINAL OUTPUT, TOOLKIT

(CONTEXT)

MIN. 600 WORDS

(WHAT SPECIFIC PRACTICES AND DISCOURSES ARE KEY REFERENCE POINTS FOR THIS WORK? WHAT SPECIFIC SYSTEMS OR NETWORKS IS THIS ENQUIRY SITUATED WITHIN? WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC PRACTICAL, THEORETICAL, OR PROFESSIONAL CONDITIONS OF THIS WORK?)

THIS WORK DRAWS ON HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL REFERENCES TO EXAMINE HOW DIGITISATION SHAPES MODERN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, PARTICULARLY IN DATING AND MATCHMAKING.

DATAFICATION BECAME THE CENTRAL CONCERN OF THIS PROJECT. IT REFERS TO TRANSFORMING ASPECTS OF THE WORLD AND HUMAN ACTIVITY INTO DIGITAL DATA FOR ANALYSIS AND INSIGHT. THIS PROCESS INCLUDES COLLECTING, ANALYSING, AND APPLYING DATA FROM VARIOUS SOURCES: DEVICES, SYSTEMS, SENSORS, AND INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS (WIKIPEDIA, 2024).

I BEGAN BY QUESTIONING THE EARLY STAGES OF THE DATAFICATION OF LOVE AND WAS DRAWN TO A FOUNDATIONAL REFERENCE: THE TIME OUT ARCHIVE'S LONELY HEARTS SECTION (1970-80). THIS COLLECTION OF PERSONAL ADS REVEALS THE TONE, LANGUAGE, AND STRUCTURE OF PRE-DIGITAL ROMANTIC EXPRESSIONS. I FOUND THESE ADS SINCERE, OFTEN AWKWARD, AND DEEPLY HUMAN. THEY CONTRAST SHARPLY WITH CONTEMPORARY PLATFORMS LIKE TINDER (SEAN RAD & JUSTIN MATEEN, 2012), WHERE BRANDING, BEHAVIORAL DATA, AND INSTANT RESPONSES SHAPE LOVE. TINDER ENFORCES A LOGIC OF EFFICIENCY. IT REDUCES PEOPLE TO DATA POINTS AND TRANSFORMS CONNECTION INTO AN ALGORITHMIC TASK.

AS MY RESEARCH CENTRES ON HOW DIGITISATION INFLUENCES HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, I BECAME CURIOUS ABOUT HOW PEOPLE FORMED CONNECTIONS BEFORE THE ACCELERATION OF DIGITAL CULTURE. HOW DID OUR PARENTS OR GRANDPARENTS FORM RELATIONSHIPS THAT OFTEN SEEMED MORE PROFOUND AND SIGNIFICANT? ONE POSSIBLE EXPLANATION IS THAT INTIMACY DEVELOPS SLOWLY AND GRADUALLY.

WHEN COMPARING THE TWO ERAS, THERE WERE SIGNIFICANT DISTINCTIONS. THE NEWSPAPER'S FRAGMENTED PAGE STRUCTURE IN THE LONELY HEARTS SECTION ENCOURAGED READERS TO INTERACT WITH IT PHYSICALLY. BECAUSE THE ENTIRE PART TOOK UP ONE SPREAD, THERE WAS LESS SPACE AND FEWER OPTIONS. IN CONTRAST, TINDER PRESENTS AN ENDLESS SELECTION OF SWIPES. IT IS AN ABUNDANCE THAT FLATTENS MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT. THE PHYSICALITY AND ANALOGUE NATURE OF THE EARLIER METHOD ENGAGED MULTIPLE SENSES, ENCOURAGING READERS TO SLOW DOWN. THIS PROCESS LED ME TO ASK:



CALLE, S., 2007. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

WHAT IF WE COULD HIJACK THE PROCESS, TRANSFORMING DATAFICATION FROM SOMETHING DEMATERIALISED AND IMPERSONAL INTO SOMETHING INTIMATE AND SENSORY?

IN RESPONSE, I CREATED ANALOGOUS ITERATIONS COMPARING BOTH ERAS. THESE HIGHLIGHTED CHANGES IN LITERACY, ATTENTION SPAN, AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF HUMAN IDENTITY. TWO KEY ITERATIONS I DEVELOPED BECAME DIRECT CRITIQUES OF THE CAPITALIST SYSTEM THAT HAS ACCELERATED DATAFICATION, AND THE TOOLKIT EMERGED IN RESPONSE, OFFERING AN ALTERNATIVE ROOTED IN CARE AND HUMAN CONNECTION.

THIS ENQUIRY LED ME TO ANOTHER KEY REFERENCE: SOPHIE CALLE'S TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF (2007), IN WHICH A SINGLE BREAKUP EMAIL BECOMES THE SUBJECT OF INTERPRETATION, TRANSLATION, AND COLLECTIVE REFLECTION – IN OTHER WORDS, DATAFICATION. CALLE'S WORK IS ESSENTIAL FOR ITS EMOTIONAL DEPTH AND METHOD: TRANSFORMING THE PERSONAL INTO SOMETHING PUBLIC AND THE INTIMATE INTO A FORM OF SOCIAL RESEARCH.

THE LOGIC BEHIND THE TOOLKIT I CREATED IS SIMILAR. IT ENCOURAGES READERS TO PARTICIPATE AS CONTRIBUTORS, GUESSERS, AND INTERPRETERS IN ADDITION TO OBSERVING. THE BREAKUP LETTER BECOMES A SHARED OBJECT OF ANALYSIS, A RITUAL WHERE IDENTITY IS MEDIATED, EVEN JUDGED, THROUGH FRAGMENTED COMMUNICATION. THIS CALLS INTO QUESTION THE DEMATERIALISATION, SIMPLIFICATION, AND DEPERSONALISATION OF IDENTITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE. MY PROJECT SPECIFICALLY AIMS TO ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS. GIVEN THAT DEPERSONALISATION IS AT THE HEART OF DIGITISATION, CAN IT ACTUALLY REPLICATE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION?

THIS EXPLORATION ALSO LED ME TO SITUATE MY WORK WITHIN MEDIA ARCHAEOLOGY AND EARLY COMPUTING. ONE OF THE FIRST KNOWN PERSONAL ADVERTISEMENTS APPEARED IN THE SAME YEAR AS ELIZA (JOSEPH WEIZENBAUM, 1966), THE FIRST CHATBOT THAT COULD SIMULATE HUMAN SPEECH. ELIZA SERVES AS A LINK BETWEEN ANALOGUE AND DIGITAL DATAFICATION. HOWEVER, ELIZA WAS NEVER ABLE TO COMPREHEND THE CONVERSATIONS IT MIMICKED. ITS LOGIC, WHICH IS INSTANTANEOUS, SURFACE-LEVEL RESPONSIVENESS, LIVES ON IN TINDER. ELIZA IS THE ANTITHESIS OF THIS PROJECT. IT EXPOSES THE LIMITATIONS OF TECHNOLOGY IN REPLICATING THE NUANCES OF HUMAN CONNECTION. AUTOMATION MIGHT SAVE US TIME, BUT IT RISKS DISSOLVING OUR INTIMACY.

BY THE END OF PROJECTIONS 2, I HAD SEEN TIME AS A CENTRAL FORCE IN MODERN DATING. THROUGHOUT THE ITERATIVE PROCESS, I USED A "TIME METHOD" TO CRITICALLY EXAMINE EACH STAGE OF DATAFICATION. THIS APPROACH AIMED TO SLOW DOWN THE VIEWER AND QUESTION THE CAPITALIST SYSTEMS THAT SHAPE OUR EMOTIONAL LIVES.

THE PROJECT CREATES SPACE FOR SLOWER, MORE INTIMATE FORMS OF INTERACTION THROUGH PHYSICAL ARTEFACTS SUCH AS PUBLICATIONS, SOUND RECORDINGS, AND HANDWRITTEN LETTERS. PRACTICALLY, THIS REQUIRED ME TO DEVELOP ACCESSIBLE, USER-FRIENDLY FORMATS THAT INVITE MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT. WORKING ACROSS THREE MEDIA PUSHED ME TO LEARN NEW PRODUCTION AND SENSORY-BASED DESIGN SKILLS. IT ALSO ALLOWED ME TO EXPLORE ANALOGUE METHODOLOGIES AS I USUALLY WORK IN DIGITAL FORMATS.

THE PROCESS WAS CHALLENGING, PARTICULARLY STAYING ALIGNED WITH MY ENQUIRY, AS THE DATAFICATION OF LOVE OPENS UP MANY POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS. MY BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SUPPORTING PRACTICES WERE KEY IN HELPING ME NARROW THE FOCUS. STILL, THERE IS ROOM FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION AND UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS. THIS STAGE OF MY PROJECT REMAINS OPEN-ENDED, INVITING FUTURE DEVELOPMENT, BROADER PARTICIPATION, AND DEEPER REFLECTION.

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Welcome to
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      EE    LL   II    ZZ  AA  AA
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Eliza is a mock Rogerian psychotherapist.
The original program was described by Joseph Weizenbaum in 1966.
This implementation by Norbert Landsteiner 2005.

ELIZA: Is something troubling you ?
YOU:   Men are all alike.
ELIZA: What is the connection, do you suppose ?
YOU:   They're always bugging us about something or other.
ELIZA: Can you think of a specific example ?
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WEIZENBAUM, J. (1966) ELIZA

(PROJECTED CONTRIBUTION)

MIN. 200 WORDS

(WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS QUESTION TO GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION DESIGN (PRACTICALLY, THEORETICALLY, OR PROFESSIONALLY)? HOW WILL THIS PROJECT CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR PRACTICE BEYOND THE LIMITS OF THE COURSE?)

MY ITERATIONS AND INTERACTIVE METHODOLOGY IN PROJECTION 1 INVESTIGATED THE POTENTIAL OF DESIGN AS A THERAPEUTIC TOOL. RESEARCH SHOWS THAT INTERACTIVE FORMS OF CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY CAN HELP RELIEVE PTSD SYMPTOMS SUCH AS ANXIETY, PAIN, AND EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT. THESE PRACTICES ALSO HELP REDUCE FEELINGS OF ISOLATION BY CREATING COLLECTIVE SPACES FOR EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION AND SHARED UNDERSTANDING (NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS, 2021). SUCH APPROACHES CAN OFFER POSTWAR COMMUNITIES A PLATFORM FOR EXPRESSION AND MAY SUPPORT PTSD RECOVERY THROUGH SHARED EMOTIONAL CONNECTION.

AS MY ENQUIRY SHIFTED IN PROJECTION 2 TOWARD THE ROLE OF TIME IN THE DATAFICATION OF LOVE, ALONGSIDE A CHANGE IN MEDIUM, IT OPENED UP NEW WAYS OF RESPONDING TO MODERN DATING AND RECONSIDERING THE ROLE OF GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION DESIGN. THIS APPROACH SEEKS TO PROMOTE DEEPER CONNECTIONS FOR PEOPLE FED UP WITH DIGITAL AFFECTION'S SHALLOWNESS. THE TOOLKIT REMAINS INTERACTIVE AND INTRODUCES A LEVEL OF INTIMACY RARELY PRESENT AT THE START OF A TYPICAL DATING APP INTERACTION.

THIS PROJECT CHALLENGES THE DEPERSONALISATION ROOTED IN MODERN DIGITAL DATING CULTURE. HERE, GCD DEMONSTRATES HOW DESIGN MAY USE ITS TOOLS TO CHALLENGE AND TRANSFORM CULTURAL TRADITIONS TO AFFECT HOW TECHNOLOGY MEDIATES HUMAN CONNECTION.

IN THE FUTURE, I PLAN TO EXPAND THIS PROJECT BY INVOLVING MORE PARTICIPANTS, REDUCING THE NUMBER OF POTENTIAL MATCHES, AND ENCOURAGING USERS TO MAKE THOUGHTFUL INVITATIONS FOR REAL-LIFE MEETINGS. THE PROJECT WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS ADDITIONAL INTERACTIVITY, EXPLORING DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO GROWING INTIMACY. AS A CONCEPT, IT ADVANCES MY WORK AS A DESIGNER BY PROVIDING A CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND AN OPEN-ENDED RESPONSE TO THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION, WHICH IS HOW HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS ARE AFFECTED BY DIGITALISATION.

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