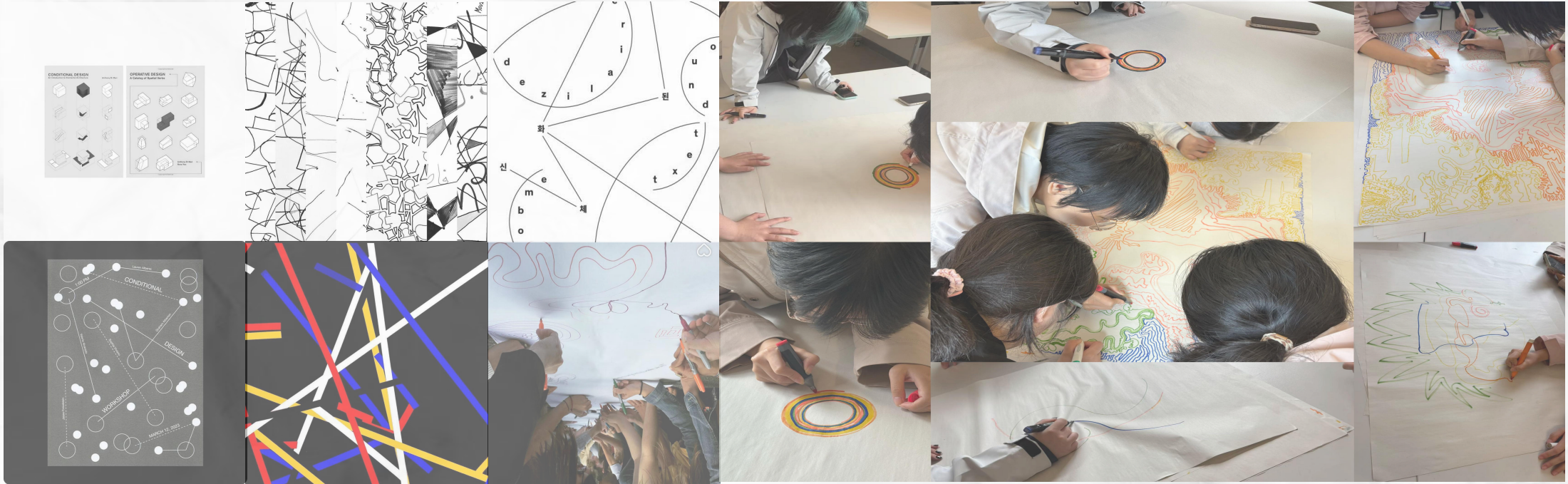


Ghost in the Machine



This project explores **Conditional Design** as a collective and rule-based process shaped by constraint and chance.

Working with **time limits, silence, and continuous mark-making** shifted the focus away from individual authorship toward responsiveness and shared decision-making. A dice-based drawing system further revealed how simple rules can generate complex outcomes.

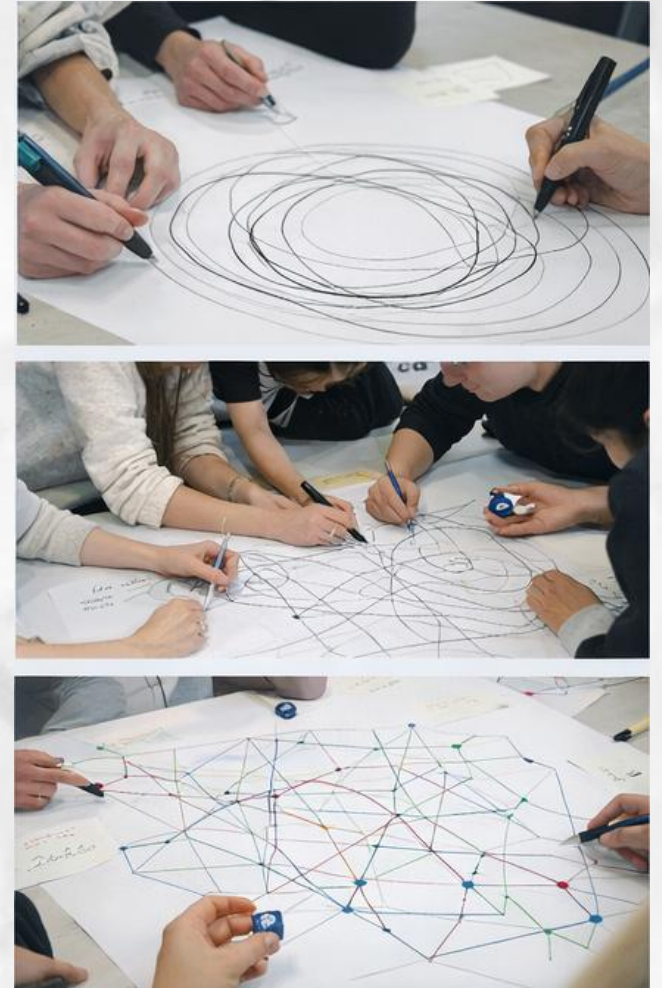
The process was presented through **stop-motion animation** to emphasise design as an unfolding action rather than a fixed result.

What is conditional design?

Conditional Design is a rule-based design approach focused on process rather than fixed outcomes.

It uses chance and collective behaviour as active components, letting forms emerge through participation instead of individual control.

- Rule-based processes over fixed outcomes
- Chance as a design agent
- Collective authorship
- Embracing imperfection and constraint



Atlas For The Journey

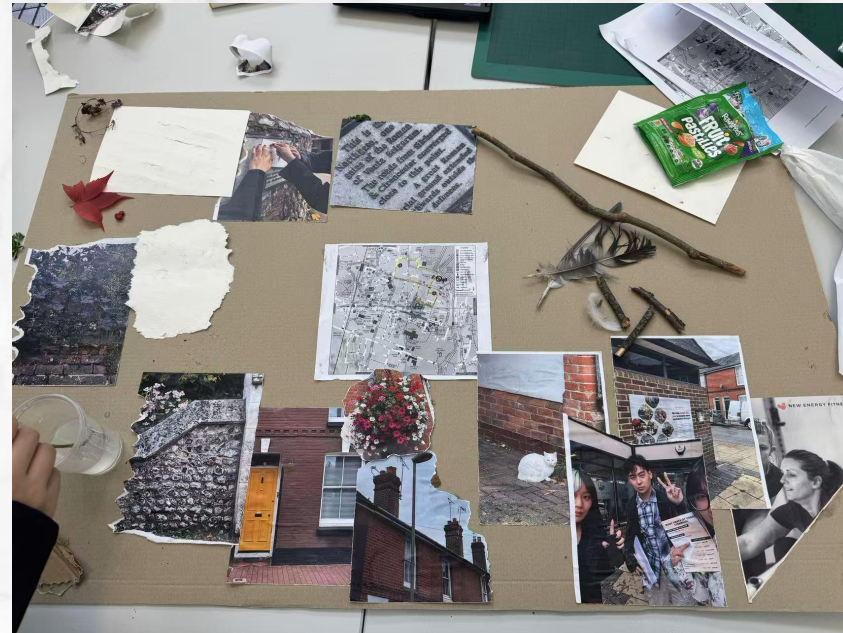
Group Activity: Groups of three participants

Rule: A pen is dropped freely onto the map to randomly determine two points. These points are then connected to define the area each group will explore.

Duration: 2 hours



Outcome

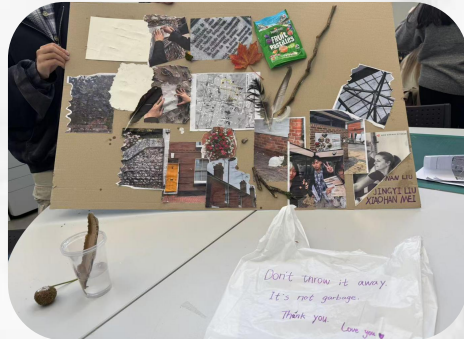
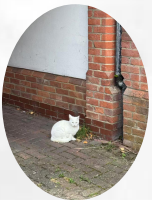


The first part was a semi-finished product. We collected many meaningful items along the way based on the map and pasted them onto the cardboard. We didn't have enough time on the first day, so we came back on the weekend to finish it.



These discarded objects, either abandoned by people or fragmented by biological forces, have taken on varied forms. Some resemble **flowers or letterforms**, while traces of their original shapes remain faintly visible. I see them as subtle indicators of the area's everyday rhythms and patterns of life.

Research



A route generated by chance guided the journey, with the final map emerging from movement, observation, and lived experience rather than geographic accuracy.

Workshop 01: Following Rules

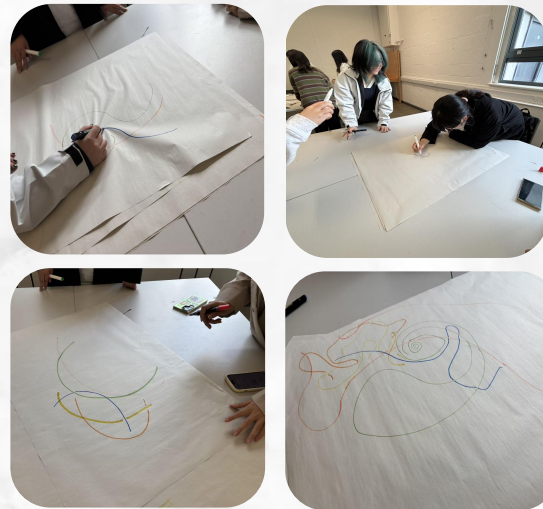
Tutor-led Conditional Exercises

Workshop 01 - Expanding the Circle



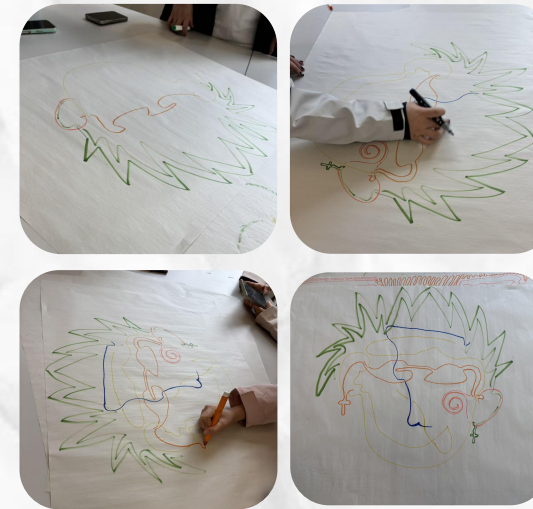
The exercise began with a **small filled circle** at the centre of the page. Each participant expanded its edge in turn until the group agreed it was “**perfect**.” As the circle grew, maintaining balance became harder, and participants often corrected earlier imperfections, showing how collective attention shaped the final form.

Workshop 02 – Line Intersection



Participants took turns **drawing a single line**, each required to cross and extend the endpoint of the previous one. While early marks were loose and expressive, the increasing density of lines gradually **restricted** movement, revealing how early actions **shape later possibilities**.

Workshop 02 – Silent Face Drawing



Faced with more **complex rules**, I simplified each line and focused only on following the process. This uncertainty revealed how unexpected outcomes can emerge, and how design can turn uncertainty into clarity through exploration.

Workshop 04 — Continuous Lines Under Constraint



Participants continuously drew lines on a **shared surface under the rule** of avoiding others' marks. As the space gradually became constrained, lines began to surround and restrict one another, revealing tension, endurance, and ongoing spatial negotiation.

In early exercises, we worked **under strict conditions** such as time **limits** and the **absence of verbal communication**. Tasks involved tracing and expanding circles and responding to existing marks, requiring constant attention rather than planning. These constraints reduced **individual control** and **redirected** focus toward the shared process.

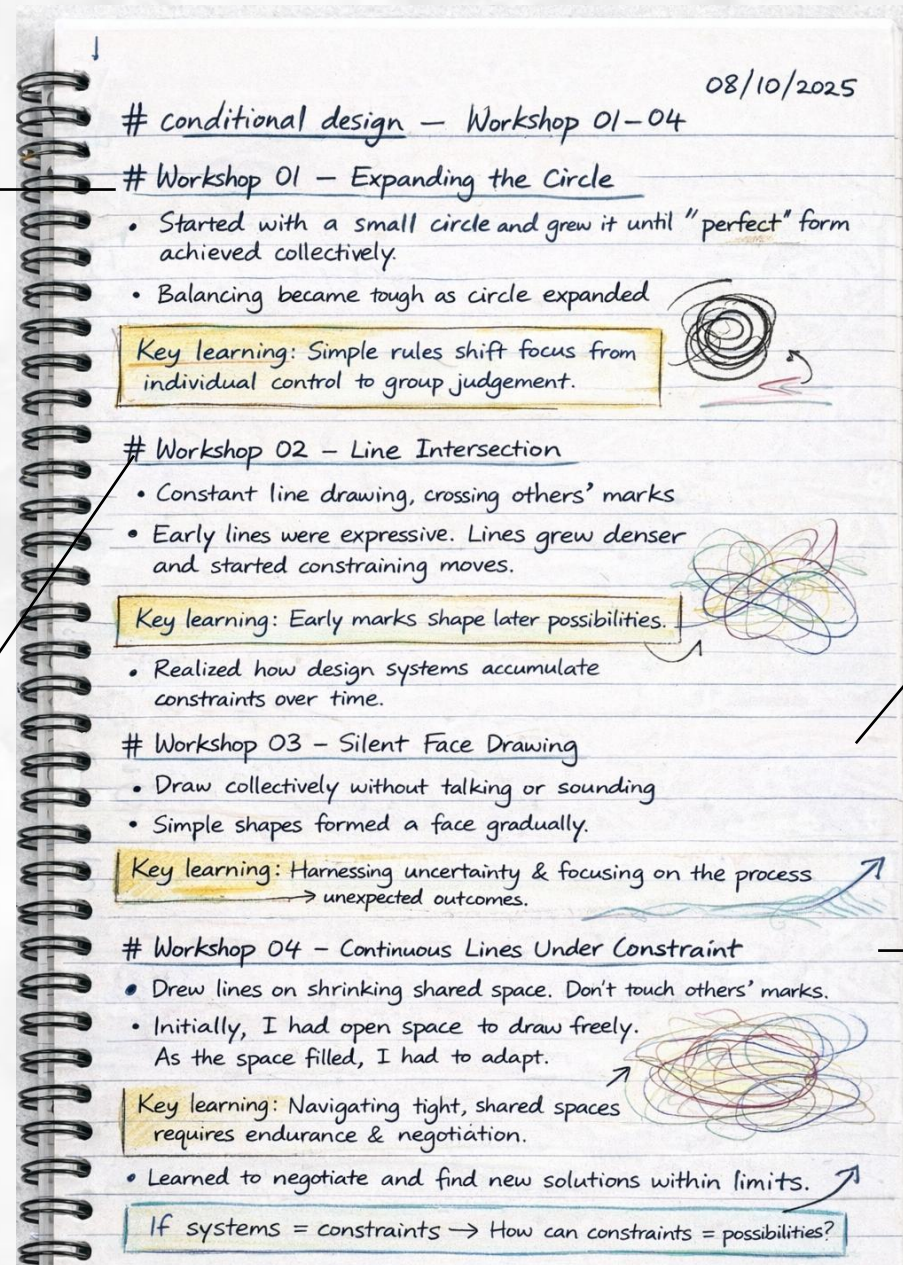
PROCESS

WK01

I experienced how simple rules can shift attention from individual control to collective judgement. As the circle expanded, maintaining balance became increasingly difficult, and I noticed how participants naturally corrected earlier imperfections. This process made me realise that shared attention and mutual adjustment play a crucial role in shaping a collective outcome.

WK02

During this exercise, I became aware of how early decisions strongly influence later possibilities. While the initial lines were free and expressive, the growing density of marks gradually restricted movement. This made me reflect on how design systems accumulate constraints over time, limiting future actions through past choices.



The absence of verbal communication made the process more challenging but also more attentive. Without discussion, I had to carefully observe others' marks and respond through drawing alone. This restriction deepened my understanding of non-verbal collaboration and how collective forms can emerge without direct coordination.

At first, the exercise felt open and manageable, but as the shared space gradually filled, I became increasingly constrained by others' lines. I learned to respect existing boundaries while adapting my actions within limited space. This experience highlighted negotiation, endurance, and responsiveness as key aspects of working within constraints.

Workshop 02: Designing Our Own-rules

CONDITIONAL RELAY DRAWING

Number of participants: 4-6 people
Duration: 15-25 mins (including rules explanation and briefing)

Game objectives:

- Practice quick thinking and creative expression
- Foster a spirit of cooperation under constraints
- Enjoy the fun and unpredictable results of collective creation

Materials needed:

- 1 large sheet of white paper
- Colored pens
- 10 condition cards

Game Introduction:

"Conditional Relay Drawing" is a simple and fun group creation game where players **take turns** drawing on the same piece of paper, each time following a **randomly drawn** condition. In this way, everyone collaborates to complete a painting full of surprises and creativity.

Game Rules:

1. Sit around the table and **decide the order of play**.
2. Each player takes turns drawing a condition card from the container.
3. Draw one stroke or a simple shape on the paper according to the card's condition
4. After drawing, **return the card to its original position and shuffle the deck** (cards can be drawn repeatedly).
5. Continue with the next player until the paper is mostly filled or time is up.
6. Give the completed artwork a name.

Notes:

- Be careful not to draw too much at once.
- **Condition cards can be reused** to increase randomness.
- Use your imagination and don't worry about drawing poorly.

Expanded Gameplay:

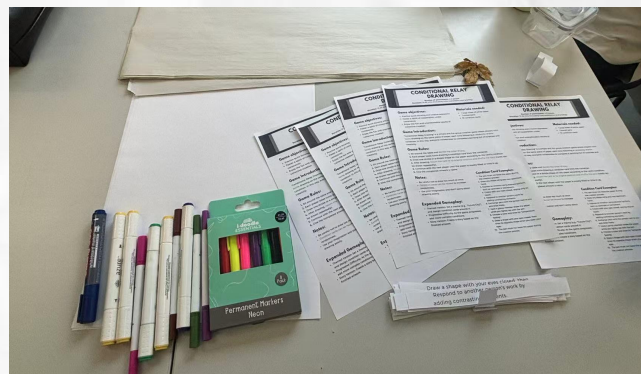
- Themed Version: Set a theme (e.g., "Future City") and design condition cards around it.
- Progressive Difficulty: As the game progresses, add more complex conditions.
- Story Version: Create a story based on the finished artwork.

Condition Card Examples:

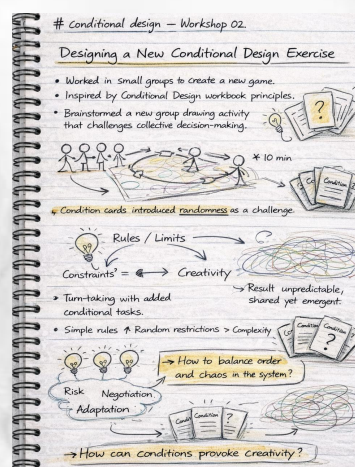
1. The pen must not leave the paper during the creation process.
2. Draw any shape using your non-dominant hand.
3. Express an emotion using abstract symbols, such as calmness or excitement.
4. Create with your eyes closed, relying only on touch.
5. Respond to another person's work by adding contrasting elements.
6. Exchange pens with the person next to you and draw freely.
7. Have a group member shake the paper while you lightly tap with the pen.
8. Choose a color and draw its "temperature feeling".
9. Draw a shape with your eyes closed, then draw its opposite shape when you open your eyes.
10. The pen must not leave the paper during the creation process.

In the wk02 workshop we were in small groups designing a complete new game of Conditional design exercises from workbook.

The diagram on the left shows the game rules designed by our group.

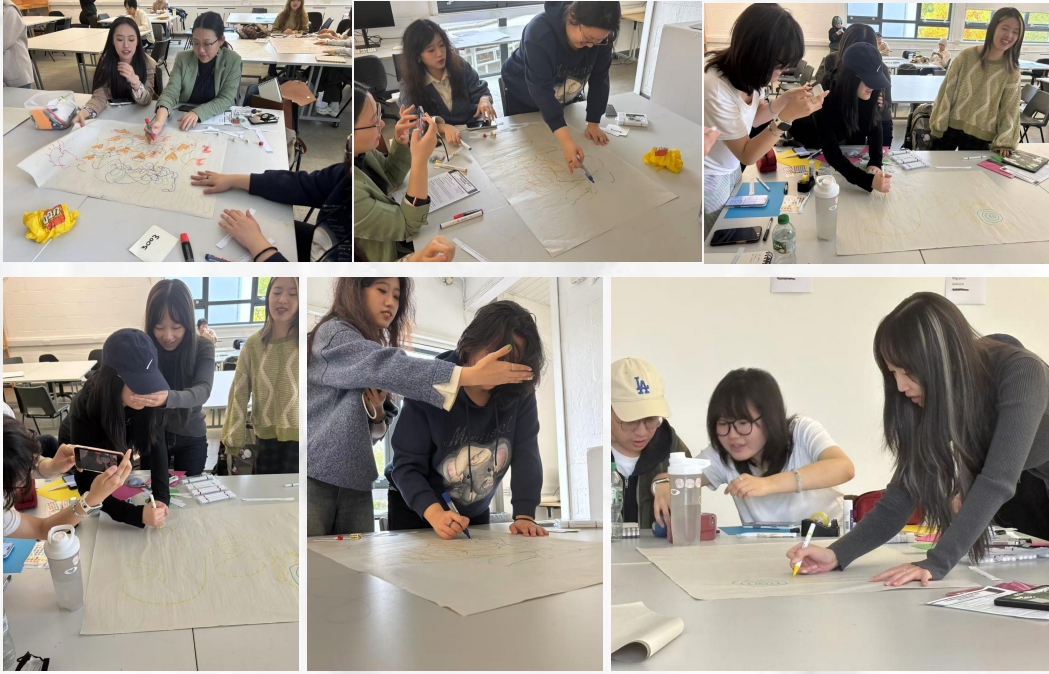


After designing our own game and experiencing it ourselves, we printed it out a day in advance.



This game encouraged participants to let go of individual control and engage with drawing as a **shared system**. Through random conditions and turn-taking, uncertainty became a productive force rather than an obstacle. The exercise highlighted how simple rules can foster collaboration, redistribute authorship, and generate outcomes that no single participant could have planned.

Process Observation



From observing the workshop, I noticed a clear shift in both body posture and behaviour as the drawing evolved. Participants gradually leaned closer to the paper, slowed their movements, and became more attentive to others' actions. Decision-making became cautious and responsive, revealing how spatial constraints and accumulated marks shaped collective behaviour beyond individual intention.

The presentations of the other groups



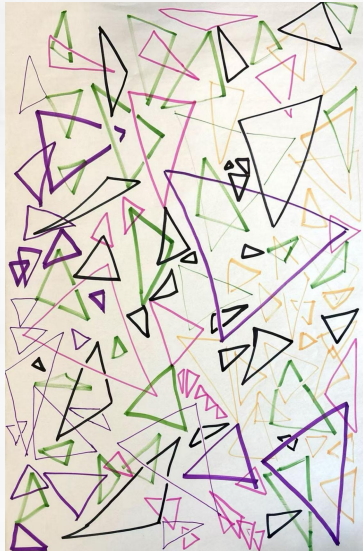
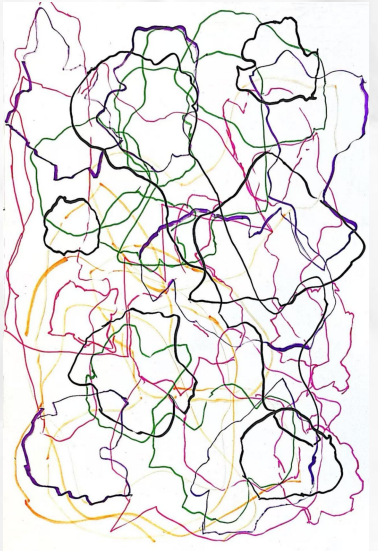
Project Summary

This project explored **Conditional Design** through collaborative, rule-based **drawing workshops** that shifted focus from individual expression to collective process. Constraints such as **turn-taking**, **silence**, and **randomness shaped** behaviour over time, encouraging responsiveness and negotiation. In the Create phase, Conditional Relay Drawing introduced chance through condition cards, **redistributing authorship and generating unexpected outcomes**. Variations in group-designed rules produced diverse results, demonstrating how simple constraints can act as catalysts for collaboration, attention, and emergent creativity.

#Rule-based process
#Chance and randomness
#Distributed authorship
#Emergent outcomes
#Process over result

Team workshop

Other team activity outcome



Other Group Exercise 01--Dice-based Triangle

Drawing

Participants generated drawing rules by rolling a die, taking turns to draw a single triangle each round. All marks began from the same basic unit, while changing dice outcomes determined how triangles could connect, intersect, touch, or remain separate. Working within finite constraints, each action influenced subsequent decisions, allowing an overall composition to emerge without pre-planning. The final image functioned as a visual system co-produced by rules and chance rather than individual intention.

Other Group Exercise 02 — Edge Tracing

Participants used cut-out shapes and were restricted to tracing along their edges. Each new line was drawn tangentially to the previous shape, without directly touching or connecting to the earlier mark. These constraints demanded precise control over spacing and direction, gradually reducing the available drawing space.

Other Group Exercise 03 — Folding and Crumpling

Participants folded or crumpled the paper into various forms and traced the edges and contours created by these transformations. The drawing emerged from the physical manipulation of the material, allowing form to develop through interaction with the paper rather than deliberate mark-making.

This workshop shifted focus from the final image to how rules and time constraints shaped collective decisions. As space filled, open exploration turned into careful negotiation, revealing the impact of small constraints on shared outcomes.

This exercise shifted my focus from expression to spatial negotiation. By responding carefully to distance and direction, I learned that Conditional Design values precise reactions to constraints, allowing outcomes to emerge through restraint rather than intention.

This exercise foregrounded the material agency within Conditional Design. By folding and crumpling the paper, form emerged through physical interaction rather than intentional composition. The process embedded design decisions within material actions, repositioning authorship from the designer to the system itself.

REFLECTION

Personal critical reflection



Through this project, I came to understand Conditional Design not only as a method of rule-making, but as a reflective practice grounded in documentation and analysis. I realised that rules must be logically connected and intentionally structured; otherwise, exercises risk producing visually appealing outcomes without generating meaningful learning, as observed in Workshop 2. Although different groups introduced uncertainty through methods such as random pen drops or card-based conditions, randomness alone did not guarantee insight.

The contrast between rule-based exercises and the painting collage activity further highlighted this issue. In the absence of clearly defined constraints, the activity resulted primarily in aesthetic resolution rather than critical reflection. This reinforced my understanding that rules must be critically considered from the outset, rather than applied superficially.

Throughout Workshops 1 and 2, I observed that lines functioned as traces of decision-making and images as records of process. If redesigning the activities, I would introduce variables such as time pressure or resource limitation to intensify negotiation between order and uncertainty. Ultimately, this project shifted my focus from producing refined outcomes to examining how design systems shape behaviour, making the act of recording and reflection more significant than achieving visual perfection.