

Reflection

In the "Collect Discover Understand" course this semester, we studied four modules of knowledge. The core was to cultivate critical thinking and analytical skills, integrate interdisciplinary design methods, explore the changing social productive forces, enhance design skills and master efficient project management techniques, combine external resources, be able to effectively discuss issues from experimental and critical thinking perspectives, and ultimately be able to transform complex problems into specific design solutions, achieving a broader and more profound understanding of design works. Next, I will elaborate on my learning process for two of these modules.

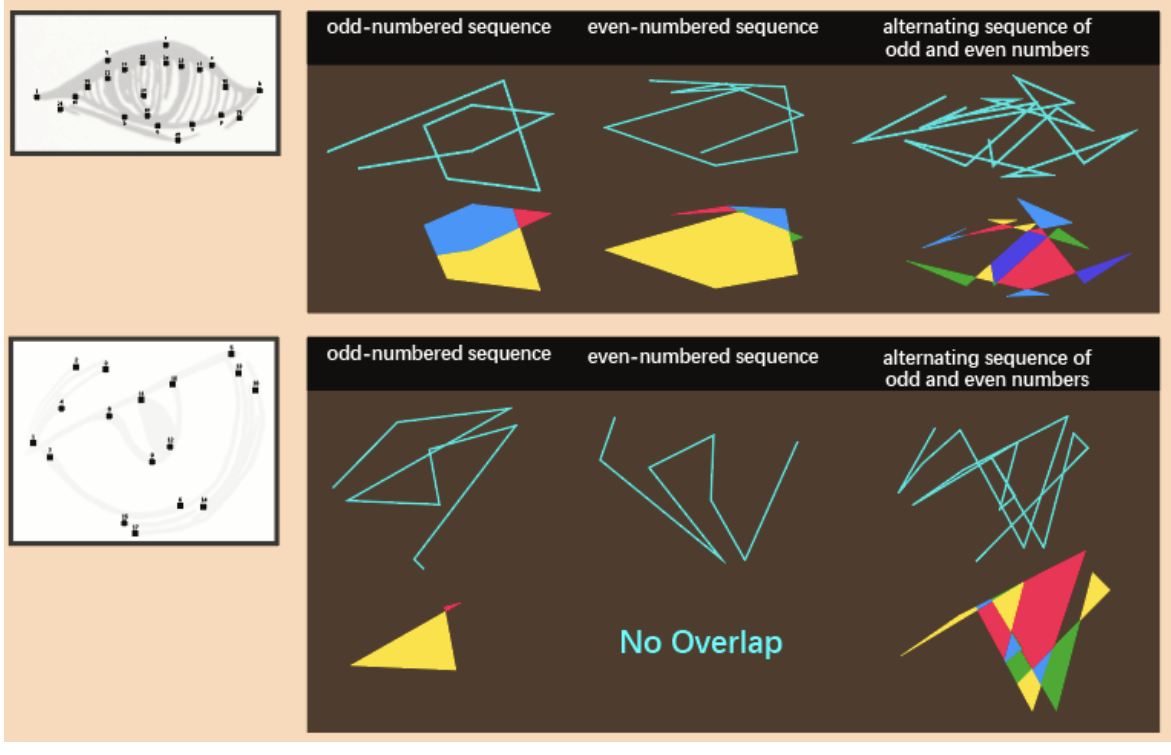
Describe:

The first section, "Ghost in the machine", centers around "Conditional Design", emphasizing that in future development, "the interaction between technology and humans" will reach a new stage. The project process should break away from conventional thinking and no longer focus on the traditional result-oriented design process. Instead, it should shift towards "utilizing imperfect objective environments combined with conditional rules", integrating logic, process, and input materials as the three key elements, to achieve "breakthrough" and "meaningful" interactive outputs. Especially in the current environment where the interaction between machines and humans is increasingly close, we need to think about "the invisible logical rules between machines (rules/systems/environment) and subjects (humans/non-humans)", think about the speculative/narrative nature of the project, and make the "interaction process" of the subject the core, rather than blindly pursuing results.

At the practical level, group exercises and individual design projects were carried out under pre-defined conditions. (In group exercises: the originality of hand-rolling paper creates the appearance of wrinkles, which is also the basis for displaying lines. The number limit of eye patches makes this process speculative and social; in individual works: the various forms of eyes are unrestricted, but after a "connection sequence" is specified, the entire process requires logical thinking. Different attempts at connection sequences result in the final output being full of spontaneity and creativity). This limits the excessive divergence of thinking and maximizes the application of design skills within a limited scope. At the same time, the use of interdisciplinary materials is also one of the core aspects of "condition design", and the use of different materials not only breaks the limitations of conventional visual materials but also diversifies the forms of visual expression. In the early stages of design, I began to break away from traditional realistic expression, from cute to terrifying styles, from realistic to abstract styles, all in an attempt; under the connection rules, I broke the conventional clockwise order and tried unconventional thinking (odd sequence, even sequence, odd-even alternating sequence) to connect the digital nodes, in order to obtain various bold and innovative shape expressions.



Reference: Finger rubbing paper.



Reference: Connection sequence.

In terms of theory, as in "Linear Iterative Design", Nigel Cross proposed "Clear Phase + Iterative Cycle", emphasizing that each stage requires feedback and optimization; and Bill Buxton proposed "Design Funnel", which also encourages early production of prototypes and through multiple trial-and-error iterations to narrow the design scope, obtain feedback, and ultimately complete the output of the design plan. In group project practice, initially, we found that the overlapping and interweaving of lines would cause confusion in the participants' vision, so we optimized the rule to "Lines meet, do not interweave, and do not overlap", and limited the length of the lines by the number of eye stickers (no more than 3). Shorter lines are easier to reduce the difficulty for participants and increase their enthusiasm, and large-scale line intersections can clearly highlight the wrinkled and undulating characteristics of the picture.

Interpretation:

"The core of 'condition design' is 'rule design + creative material input + logical process'. 'Rule design' is not a constraint; rather, it is a catalyst for creative ideas. This precisely aligns with the unchanging principle in the design field - 'innovation within limited conditions'. In this project, the learning outcomes I obtained were that within a limited scope, through continuous optimization thinking and multiple attempts of experiments (such as the rules and setting techniques of condition design, how visual symbols encoding can be combined with practical behavior), these iterative optimization rules and processes narrowed the scope of thinking for the design direction, transformed the vague creative direction into a practical design path, focused on creative ideas, avoided overly divergent thinking, and stabilized the direction of the project's conception.

Evaluate:

At the project level: We understood the "conditional design" methodology and made it proficient through group exercises, which were fully applied to individual projects; in individual projects, we set conditions and restructured "points, lines, and surfaces" to design new graphics and achieved good creative results.

At the personal ability level: We have made new progress in design skills, expanded design thinking, learned and strengthened the logical thinking of "decomposition and reconstruction of conditional rules", and successfully solved the problem of translating visual symbols.

Weaknesses: The logical thinking and reconstruction ability of "conditional design" have not been fully utilized in other projects yet. More practice is needed.

Describe:

The second section, titled "Making the Invisible Visible", follows the design theme of "information collection + story line narration + user-centered design". It focuses on the complex and overlooked information in daily life from three dimensions: information collection tools/research methods/think tank-driven thinking. Through narrative organization, it aims to identify the transmitters and receivers of the information, observe its effectiveness in transmission, and consider whether there is a story line and whether the core users' needs are met. Further, by introducing psychological research, it actively explores the significance of these node information and their existence, and fills in the missing effective details in the information transmission design chain. If explored further, a complete "hidden abstract information being transformed into visual content" system can be constructed.

The learning in this section perfectly aligns with the concept of communication design - through the three steps of "media selection", "symbol translation", and "scenario practice" in the communication chain, it brings the invisible symbols back into the public's view and transforms them into current acceptable communication content.

Interpretation:

During this section of study, I learned how to screen information and establish a storyline. For example, in class, we looked at the cave paintings of Lascaux. This demonstrated that in ancient times, ordinary information, when supported by effective narrative techniques, could transform into a logical and emotional story, breaking the information gap and effectively conveying information. In my design project, many daily texture patterns (such as road graffiti letters, tree bark textures covered with paint) due to the lack of original information transmission, were difficult to enter the social information chain. However, according to Gestalt psychology, their "essential" attributes can be continued to be transmitted through the "automatic completion" function of the visual system, but the directness and narrative nature of information transmission are lost, so they are overlooked.

"Making the Invisible Visible" refers to the process after "purposeful extraction and transformation", where it not only maintains the hidden logical connections but also enables the information to change from "invisible" to "visible" state. The information then re-enters the communication design chain, maintaining the important role of the service recipients in empathizing with life. In the project, I extracted curved graphics, broken gaps, etc. from the collected pattern and letter images, through hand-drawn experiments and software modifications, retaining the characteristic of "automatic completion" in Gestalt psychology, while also ensuring that the fonts maintain universal recognizability on the basis of strong decorative style. The entire set of fonts transforms "neglected traces" into visible symbols, allowing the originally hidden language of life to enter the design and communication scenarios through this medium of fonts. It retains the genuine warmth of daily details, and also gives these marginalized visual languages the opportunity to be seen and used.



Reference: Project 2 - Collected information from daily life.



Reference: Project 2 - Font Design.

Evaluate:

At the project level, the collection of information requires conditional screening, and the establishment of the storyline also requires a comprehensive review of elements. These skills have been fully applied to individual projects.

In individual projects, the design of the font has undergone multiple revisions, and through practical visualization effects, the final effect and application scenarios were finally determined.

Areas for improvement: The design of the font has sufficient recognizability, but its uniqueness is slightly lacking. The application level of the scene is not wide enough. This can be mastered and understood through further practice.

Plan:

- Short-term Actions (1-3 months): Continue with continuous practice and consolidation in the software field, and attempt to learn a new software. Regarding the limitation of design thinking, through daily small exercises, it can help stimulate divergent thinking and break through the barriers left by previous design experiences.
- Long-term Plan (6-8 months): Complete the learning of two software programs and be able to apply them proficiently in projects. Try to incorporate more hands-on creative workshops in the upcoming new projects, break away from the industrialization brought by full digital editing, and return to the flexible and unexpected nature of design through manual debugging.

Link address : <https://2026.macd.work/wj1n25/>