

VARA YANG
RISD MID'16

BOOK I

OBSSESSED

WITH

OBSSESSIONS

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OBSSESSED WITH OBSESSIONS

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Industrial Design in the Department of Industrial Design of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island.

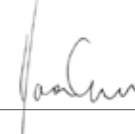
By
Vara, Ya-Ting, Yang
2016

ADVISOR LISTING

SPECIAL THANKS
TO THOSE WHO
MADE THIS
POSSIBLE, OR
MADE ME FEEL
THIS IS POSSIBLE.

PAOLO CARDINI, RISD ID ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
THESIS CHAIR.

AYAKO TAKASE, DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER OF OBSERVATORY,
THESIS ADVISOR.



ILONA GAYNOR, DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF NO,
THESIS ADVISOR.

SPECIAL THANKS TO
LISA Z. MORGAN, CO-FOUNDER OF STRUMPET & PINK,
THESIS ADVISOR.

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OBSESSED WITH OBSESSIONS

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ABSTRACT

Taking the notion of obsessions as the starting point for my thesis, I decided to investigate the daily rituals undertaken by a select group of people. I engaged myself in others' idiosyncrasies, and found myself empathizing with their needs and desires. I found it fascinating how our obsessions vary so considerably. Yet, at the same time, I realized that each of the obsessions I explored was comparable in that the qualities that defined each obsession were essentially the same.

My thesis uses the obsession of Squeegee Girl as an example with which to demonstrate my personal concept of design. For me, designing is focused on individual needs, and a designer takes on the role of a storyteller. These two ideas are at the center of my thesis, and I use them to explore the case studies featured, as well as the design profession at large. Designing for a user's individual needs is the practice of empathizing with users and treating them as a unique person rather than a general public. I believe that it is a designer's job is to make our clients feel as though they are being carefully listened to and, ultimately, very satisfied.

Thinking about the designer as storyteller is an idea that I developed during the process of researching case studies. I realized that, depending on what I am designing, and for whom, the narratives around a product are often far more important, and compelling, than the product itself. My thesis makes an argument for this notion. The products became irrelevant the moment I finished my thesis. However, the story behind each object was established at the moment I started investigating the user's interest in it, and that story became stronger and more enticing as the tangible object was separated from the object's narrative.

Like the people I interviewed for my project, I am very particular about things, understanding what it is like to become fixated with desiring a certain quality or experience or aesthetic. The clients I am interested to design for are those like me, who value the same properties in an object or are clear about requiring a specific kind of experience. Through my designs, I want to celebrate the feeling of desiring something very strongly. To me, obsessions make our lives happy and fulfilling.

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This is a book to make you laugh, wonder and reflect on your life. At its foundation lies a thoughtful design process, but, as a reader, please take things easy and enjoy yourself.

All of the stories included here are based on real people. However, the names have been modified to protect their privacy.

WHAT IS YOUR OBSESSION?

An obsession is a persistent thought lingering in our minds. Obsession equates to having a very strong desire, often a desire to obtain happiness both mentally and physically. Being obsessed about something or someone causes such a potent feeling that we cannot help but respond to such a feeling. It is dangerous to indulge ourselves in obsessions. However, the act of wanting and the contentment that is realized when desire is fulfilled is crucial to our lives. These emotions keep our souls in check. It is delightful to be able to want, as well as to perform what become everyday rituals. For me, the question has always been: how do we sustain everyday pleasure and continuously feel satisfied?

My tendency to obsess over things developed in the early years of my life. It was a trait I got from my father, who is a traveler and collector. He is excited by the sophisticated cultures of Europe and was always keen to recreate that type of environment in our apartment in Taiwan. He only used the glass with the golden rim when he drank whiskey; he always lit the silver candles during dinner. For him, living this well-curated lifestyle brought him joy.

My father's passions inspired me to pursue my own personal happiness. Later on, I realized that what I strive for is to constantly be in a frame of mind where I both desire things and am being satisfied by what I want. I am seeking objects that create sensual experiences and provoke my yearning for pleasure. However, being obsessed and having an obsession often has negative connotations. People often associate it with extreme conditions, such as OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). That is not the case here. The difference between the obsessions that I am referring to and these other extreme cases is that the former brings people satisfaction and joy, whilst the latter causes negative emotions and misery. The kind of obsession which I am referring to is one that defines a desire that leads to feelings of happiness within everyday life. They are more like habits and rituals. It is important to acknowledge that obsessions can be enjoyable.

My thesis is built around this idea of obsessions, and I situate my project in the place that celebrates obsessions. However, before we celebrate this phenomenon, we need to gain a better understanding of it. Therefore, I have divided my thesis into two parts. The first part is this book, which investigates obsessions in relation of our lives. The second part, explored in my second book, is about celebrating them.

To get a clearer sense about what obsessions are and why they develop, I conducted research into the private, obsessive part of people's lives. I present my research here in the form of stories and diaries. The intention of this thesis is that people will have a better idea of what obsessions are and also understand the significance of them. I believe that our lives become complete with these obsessions.

So, what is your obsession?

QUIRKS INTERVIEW

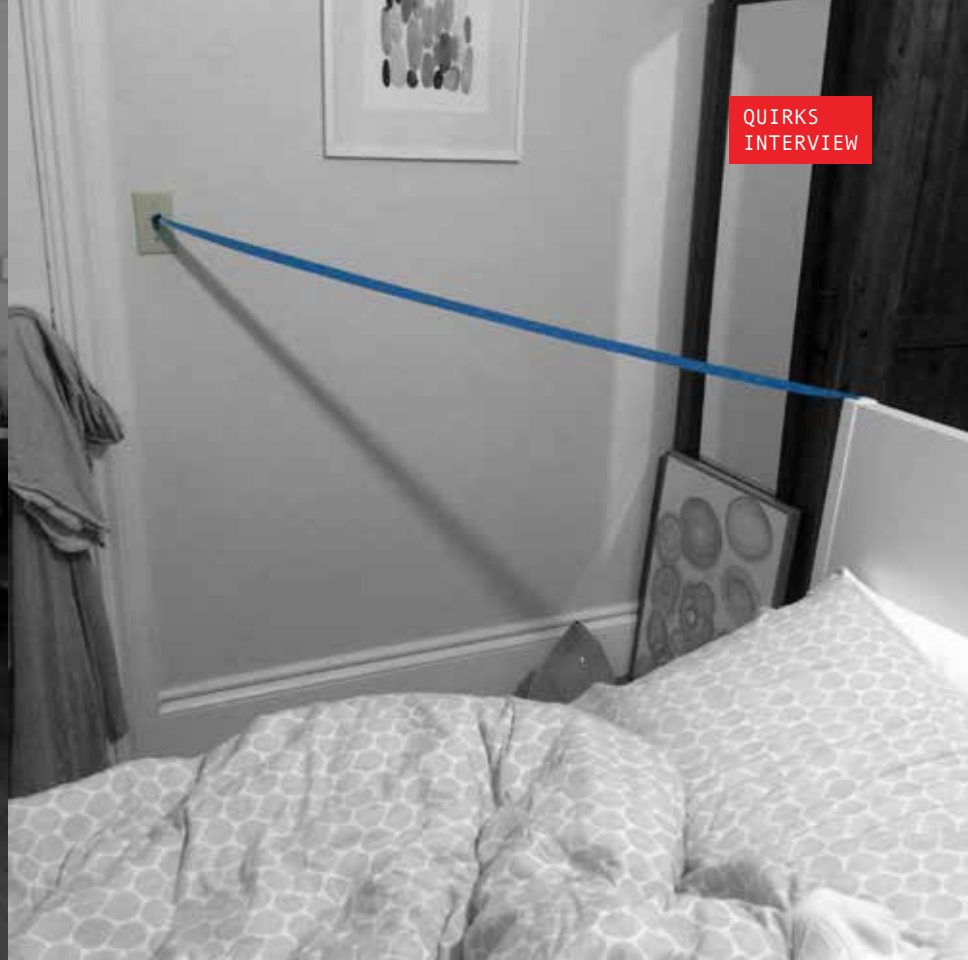
Twenty-two stories from fourteen people disclose idiosyncrasies and illustrate what obsessions are.

DESIGN BRIEF

The Quirks Interview reveals people's obsessions by prompting them to talk about their daily routines and habits. When first starting this process, I interviewed people one by one, and I found that people were unable to recall specific quirks about themselves or explain such traits in detail. Therefore, instead of asking them to talk about themselves, I thought it would be more productive to ask them to talk about their partners, family members, or close friends. This approach resulted in a more successful and engaging conversation.



Amy and Emily are twins. They share their clothes, and even their underwear. They like to go shopping together. They call the decisions they make together “right” decisions. If the decision is not made by both of them, they call it a mistake. “The clothes I bought without her are ugly; I don’t wear them anymore,” Amy said.



Anna didn’t like to get out of bed to turn off the light before she sleeps. So, in order to solve this problem, she put tape on the switch and attached it to her headboard. The result? Now she is happy!



Nao likes to use a squeegee to wipe away water in her bathroom. She spends 15 minutes a day performing this task. A dry bathroom is always of the utmost importance to her.



Alex has a girlfriend. She doesn't like for Alex to put receipts and coins in his wallet. "It is messy!" he mimics. In order to please his girlfriend, Alex puts coins in his pockets instead. Now every time he sits, it feels really uncomfortable!



Alex always takes a book with him, wherever he goes. He likes the idea of reading in his spare time. But the truth is that he never does. Still, he carefully chooses a book and wraps it in bubble wrap every morning before he goes out.



Mary always carries around a cloth for cleaning her glasses "just in case," she says. She also brings a measuring tape with her. "Well...I might need it, sometimes, I guess," she explains.



Alex is obsessed with tape. He likes to put everything up on the wall; that's the only way he can remember things. He only uses a certain type of tape. "The one I use has the perfect stickiness, thickness and color tone," he says.



Henry likes to use a specific mug to get a latte-sized cortado from Dave's coffee shop. "The slightly narrow neck of the mug holds the foam better, and keeps the heat of coffee," he says proudly.



John enjoys writing with his Pilot Razor Point II black pen and relies on it. Without this pen, John feels as though he cannot write properly. He lowers his voice and tells me, "I stole some from a company I previously worked at, because I like these pens so much."



Bill wears two pairs of socks. He has had this habit since he was a teenager. He has skinny feet; the socks help to stabilize his feet in his shoes. On the rare occasion when he wears only one pair of socks, Bill feels like his feet are bare.



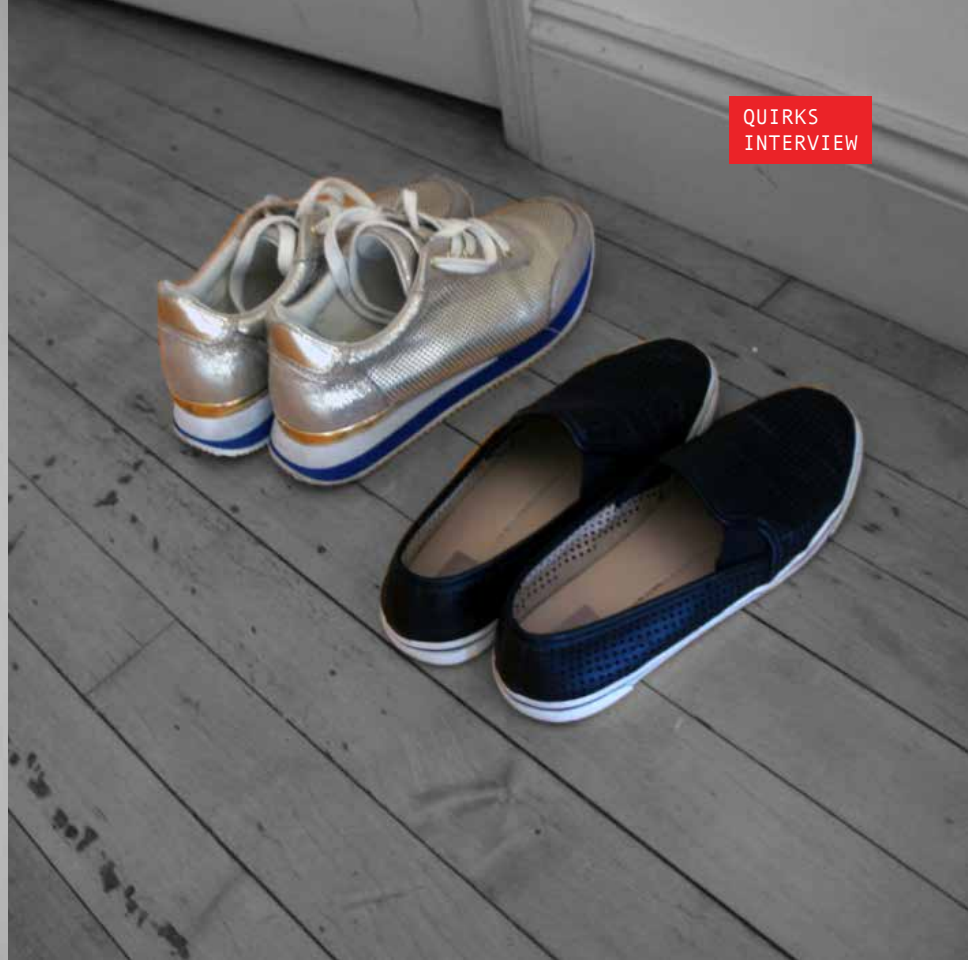
Gary loves his artificial peony. He found it in a flea market in Taiwan. It became part of his apartment, where he keeps it on the table in his bedroom. He insisted on bringing it with him, when he moved to America. "I want it with me!" he says firmly, no matter how crazy it sounds to others.



Joe cares about his glasses. He washes them with a particular dish soap and has never abandoned this habit, even when he moved from Taiwan to Egypt.



Amy shows me her drawing of a mouse with a big, red cross on the top in her living room. “We had a mouse two weeks ago, but after I put this up, the mouse was gone,” she says. The drawing has been there for a year. So far, no other mice have been spotted, according to her report.



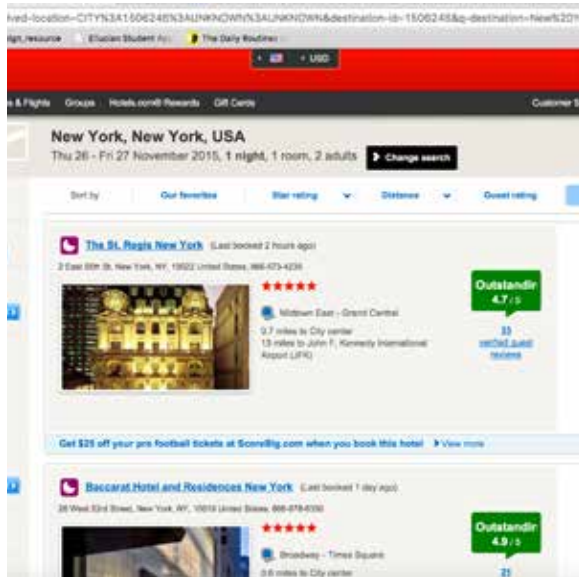
Amy and Emily learned how to drive with two pairs of shoes. These shoes have very comfortable soles and very good ventilation. These shoes helped them to accomplish the first attempt to drive, when they were nervous and sweating. Now, they can't drive without wearing them.



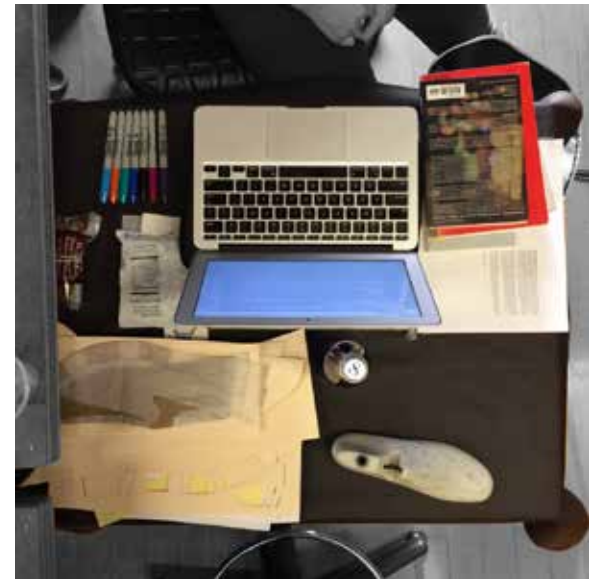
Sally has long hair. She tends to dry it in several stages. She gets bored by the drying process and annoyed by the noise of the hair dryer. So to prevent these irritations, she starts drying her hair, stops, and then does something else, like making a cup of tea or reading a blog. Sally then starts this process again, drying, stopping, and pausing to do something else. "I hate drying my hair" she exclaims.



Anna likes the smell of lavender incense; it calms her down. Every night, she lights some incense sticks, waves them in the air to spread the smell and then places them in a pot to keep them safe and secure. This is her daily ritual.



Amy and Emily like to spend their leisure time looking up hotels online. They fantasize about living in these places. “Staying in a hotel is not always as exciting as the prospect of staying in a hotel,” they say.



Mary is a very organized person. She always sets up her desk before she gets to work with the things she might need, such as a burgundy pen, a measuring tape and a bag of chips. She needs to make sure that everything she will use is readily available to her and situated in the right place on her desk.



Sally has to make sure that her dollar bills are always folded. Corner to corner, edge to edge, each bill needs to be perfectly folded. "I fold one bill at a time, so that I can easily tell how much money I have," she says.



Sally can't stand finding any dirt or dust on her precious laptop. "I use an ear swab to clean every gap on the keyboard," she says.



Mark uses a particular bowl and spoon to eat cereal. He will not use any other crockery. "If I used a different bowl and spoon, the proportion of milk and cereal would be so wrong," he says.



Bill only ever eats an even number of gummy bears or peanuts. He counts out the number before eating them. "The same number for the right side of my teeth and also for the left," he says.

LIFE SWAP CHALLENGE

The activity of swapping lives with someone else reveals the most intimate aspects of a participant's life. "It is a process of both sharing habits and adapting habits. A small part of me changed after the Life Swap challenge," said one of the participants.

DESIGN BRIEF

Life Swap challenge consists of two parts. The first part is playing "life swap cards" in order to find out what kinds of obsessions people have. The second part is to actually carry out the "swap," switching lives with another person for four days.

During this period, participants have to live in each other's houses and use each other's objects. However, to maintain a functional live, and to retain a level of comfort, they do not need to swap laptops, cell phones or underwear.

RULES OF LIFE SWAP CARDS

01. Each person gets fifty action cards and five cheating cards. Action cards assist one to create rules for the other person to follow. Cheating cards record what and why the person wants to cheat during the life swap.

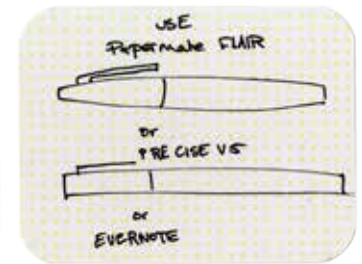
02. Rules are based on the habits that each person has, which are related to the prompts on the action cards.

03. The other person can choose whether or not to follow the rules. If they choose not to, the person loses a point in the game, and he or she needs to write this down on the cheating cards.

ACTION CARD



FRONT

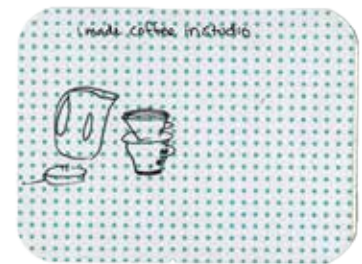


BACK

CHEATING CARD



FRONT



BACK

RULES OF KALI'S LIFE

Kali has two roommates, both female. One is Chinese, the other is Polish. They have a good cultural diversity within the apartment. Kali likes cards and chicken nuggets.

WORKING



Make yourself
a schedule of the
day on a post-it
before you start
working

HAVING A MEAL



Always have mason jar of
water for drinking during
meals



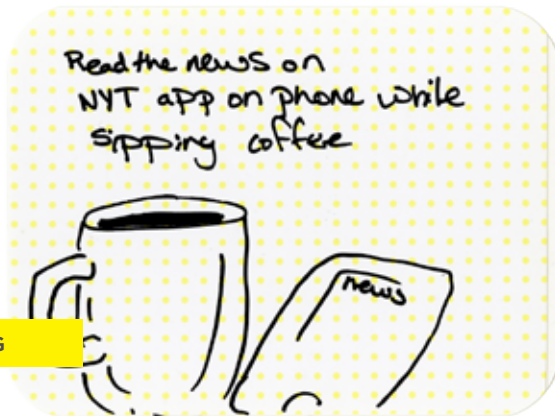
WATCHING A MOVIE



LIFE SWAP CHALLENGE



LISTENING TO MUSIC



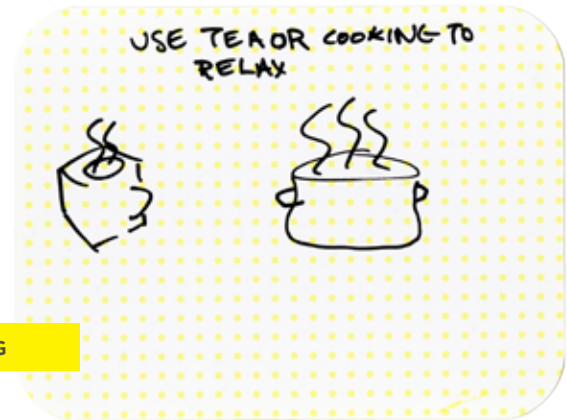
READING



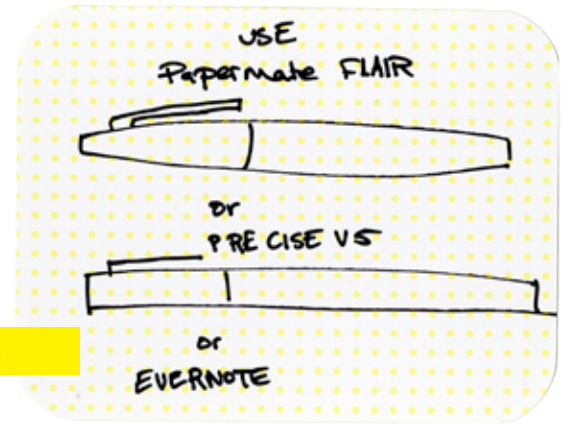
DANCING



TAKING SHOWER



RELAXING



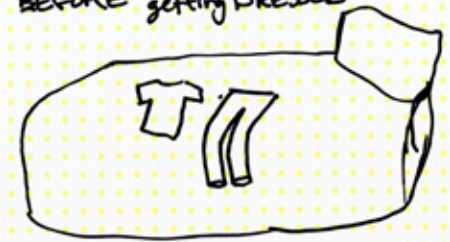
WRITING



Take a minute to
drink some tea in studio.
maybe check out
pinterest for inspiration

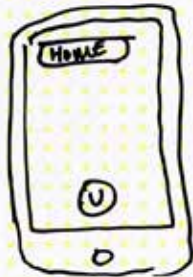
THINKING

LAY OUT OUTFIT ON BED
BEFORE getting DRESSED



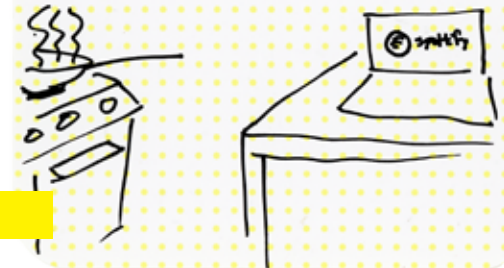
DRESSING

CALL AN UBER IF WALKING
IS TOO HARD



DRIVING

listen to 1950's R+B while
cooking



COOKING

LISTEN TO MUSIC
WHILE WALKING!



WALKING

dry
Put dishes away
before cleaning
more
dishes

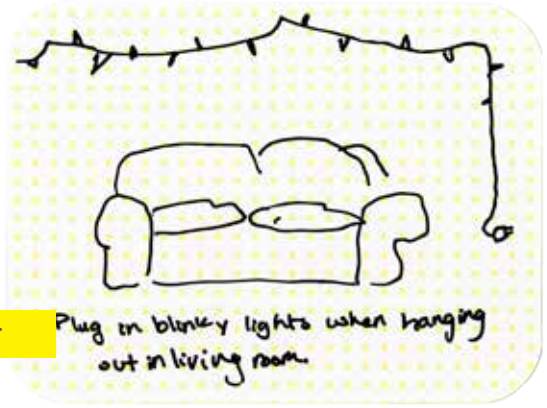


CLEANING

LIFE SWAP CHALLENGE



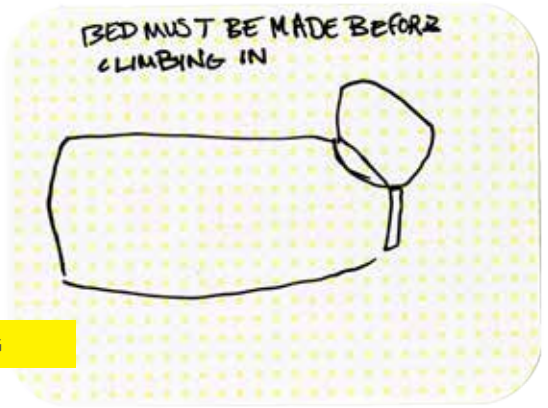
HAVING BREAKFAST



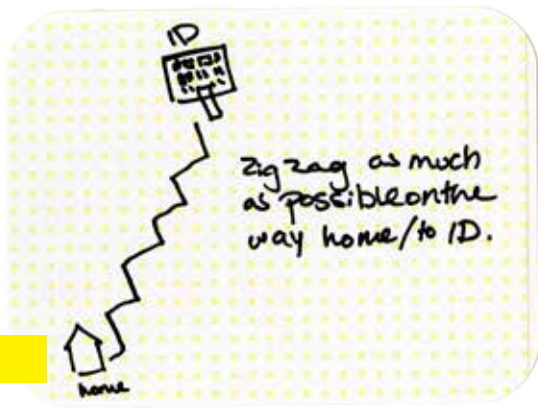
HANGING OUT



GARDENING



SLEEPING



COMMUTING

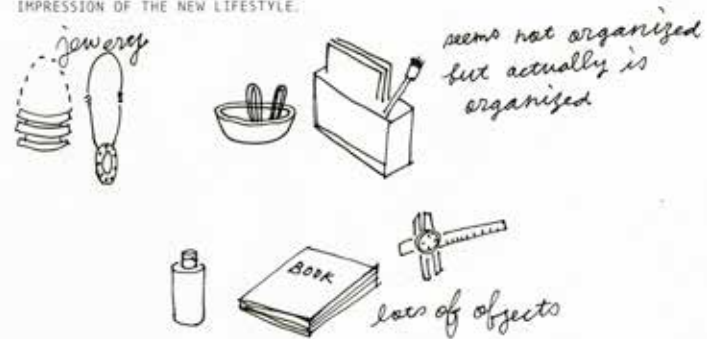


LISTEN, I REALLY CAN'T DO THIS

DAY 01

LIFE SWAP DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO DESCRIBE THE FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE NEW LIFESTYLE.



seems not organized but actually is organized

“Can’t believe life can be so different just a few blocks away,” Aya says.

IS THERE ANY OBJECT/ PRODUCT NEW TO YOU?



organizers



a mesh for earrings

clothes

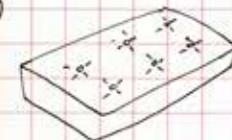


sars for hair bands/ fobby pins

IS THERE ANY PRODUCT YOU WISH YOU HAD?



comb

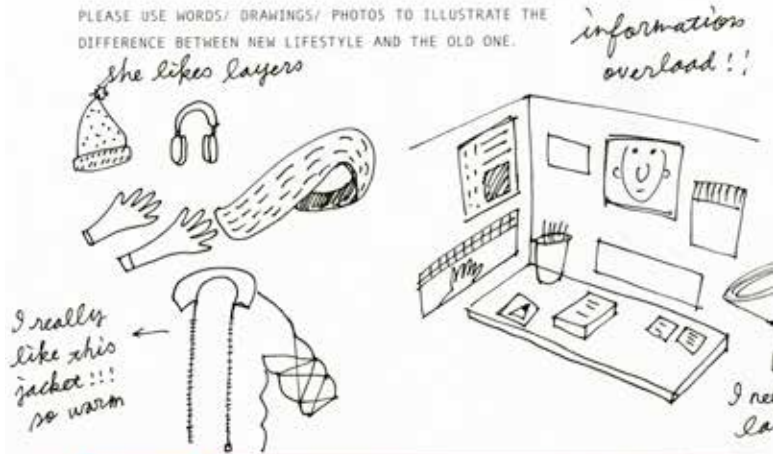


bigger bed.

DAY 02

LIFE SWAP DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEW LIFESTYLE AND THE OLD ONE.

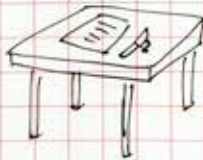


IS THERE ANY INCONVENIENCE?

- no lights!!! lamp lamp lamp.
- I like simple style. don't like to wear / put things on my body.
- (information + objects) overload.

HOW DO YOU ACCOMMODATE INCONVENIENCE?

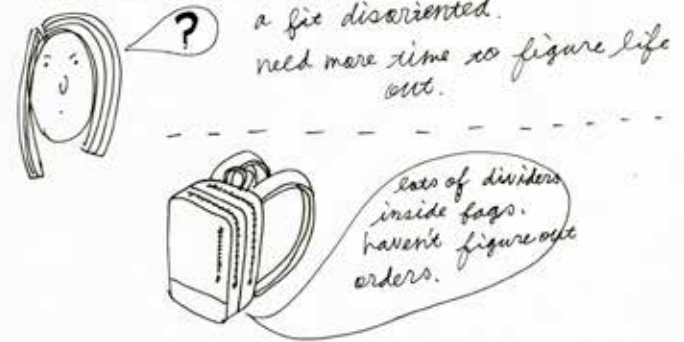
- take a break in ~~for~~ brunch place.



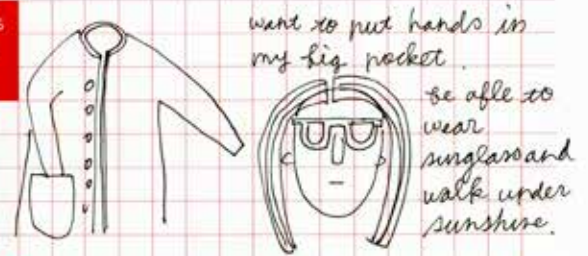
DAY 03

LIFE SWAP DIARY

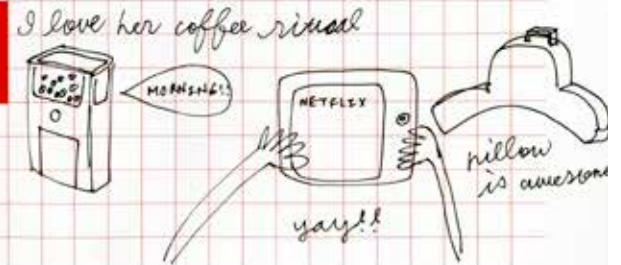
PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT ADOPTING NEW LIFESTYLE.



WHAT YOU MISS THE MOST IN THESE DAYS?



WHAT NEW HABITS DID YOU ACQUIRE?



DAY 04

SHOPPING LIST

- more organizers!!!??
- foods!!!??

(Obsessions)



water containers



post-it



cards

THOUGHTS.



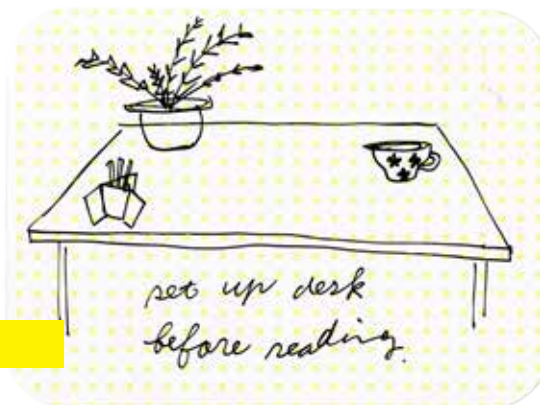
lots of pretty / sexy ladies on the fridge.



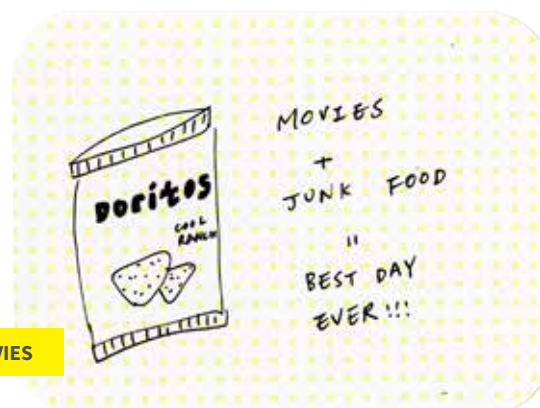
RULES OF AYA'S LIFE

Aya has a lot of dresses, shoes, and accessories. She likes spending a lot of time thinking about creating different outfits and styles.

READING



WATCHING MOVIES



TALKING



- like to write on cards / post - it (rearrange / discard)
- Cheap pen cannot be on my Moleskine notebook or sketch book.

WRITING

- Always walk on the side with sunshine



WALKING

- eating with a book / phone / laptop or something I can read.



balanced food
every bit should be
veggie + meat + rice

HAVING A MEAL

- sit / lay under sunshine and be empty.
- walk a long way to get a good cup of coffee.

RELAXING

- "loud" play music in bedroom and dance in front of mirror.



- don't like head phone wear head phone and not play music.

LISTENING TO MUSIC

- set up environment before working. (clean desk, bag)
- feed myself before working.
- find spots with sunshine

WORKING

- layout all the ingredients first.



- like to eat while cooking



COOKING

emergency water on bed side



THE RSH OF MUG SHOULD BE CLEAN

don't ~~let~~ like feel ~~something~~ bumps when my mouth (lips) touch cups.

DRINKING

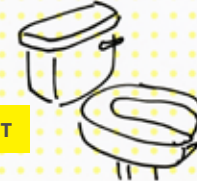
- no stains!!!
- alcohol is the best.

CLEANING



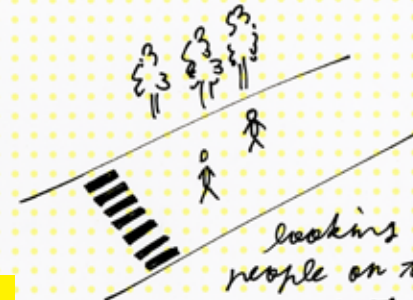
SOMETIMES I SAY HELLO!!!

guess who is the person next door by their shoes.



choose the bigger toilet space. so I can dance a little bit.

USING PUBLIC TOILET



looking people on the street.

THINKING

- wear flip flop while taking shower



- wash hair twice

TAKING SHOWER

- first two buttons should be open on the shirt.
- no nail polish !!!



DRESSING



always write shopping list
(but not follow it)

SHOPPING



- check facebook /
email for ten
minutes before
sleep.

- set alarm half hour
before the time I should
wake up. I can snooze ~~the~~
three times.

SLEEPING



watch people swim
and try to do the
same.

EXERCISING



OBJECTS
OVERLOAD!!!!

I need empty space.

LISTEN, I REALLY
CAN'T DO THIS



INFORMATIONS
OVERLOAD!!!!

need peaceful environment.

LISTEN, I REALLY
CAN'T DO THIS

DAY 01

LIFE SWAP DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO DESCRIBE THE FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE NEW LIFESTYLE.



“I want to dress up every day,” Kali says.

IS THERE ANY OBJECT/ PRODUCT NEW TO YOU?

I LIKE THE THING THAT HOLDS BACK HAIR IN BATHROOM
 I LIKE YOUR SUNGLASSES.
 I LIKE WEARING A DRESS ON A NORMAL DAY
 I DON'T USUALLY EAT YOGURT. IT'S NOT MY FAVORITE
 YOUR NICE HEADPHONES. SO NICE.

IS THERE ANY PRODUCT YOU WISH YOU HAD?

COFFEE
 TOAST
 MY NORMAL HEADPHONES. YOURS HURT MY EARS
 SNACKS

DAY 02

LIFE SWAP DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEW LIFESTYLE AND THE OLD ONE.



IS THERE ANY INCONVENIENCE?

CANT STYLE MY BANGS W/O HAIR STRAIGHTENER
NO POCKETS

HOW DO YOU ACCOMMODATE INCONVENIENCE?

HOLD THINGS IN HANDS



AYA'S DIARY ABOUT LIVING IN TOD'S LIFE.

Tod is a first-year graduate student in Industrial Design at Rhode Island School of Design. He has an Austrian roommate and lives on the north side of Providence. He likes African music.

“I enjoy the awkwardness of living in a house with a twenty-eight-year-old guy whom I just met,” Aya says.

DAY 01

LIFE SWAPPING DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO DESCRIBE THE FIRST IMPRESSION OF THE NEW LIFESTYLE.



IS THERE ANY OBJECT/ PRODUCT NEW TO YOU?

COFFEE MAKING TOOLS (I AM HAPPY TO HAVE IT!!!)



CLOTHES HANGING SYSTEM



FAN

IS THERE ANY PRODUCT YOU WISH YOU HAD?

HAIR DRYER.
PEN!!! ← THE INK LEAKS TO MOON SHAMPOO?? ← NOT SURE

HANGER HOOKS



BATHROOM MAT

DAY 03

LIFE SWAPPING DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT ADOPTING NEW LIFESTYLE.

SCHEDULE
SCHEDULE
SCHEDULE
...

IT LOOKS LIKE A BOTTON, CAN I TURN IT ???

THIS LOOKS FAMILIAR.... MAYBE I USE IT FIRST.

WHAT YOU MISS THE MOST IN THESE DAYS?

- MATTRESS
- COMB
- HAIRDRYER

THINGS I LIKE

- BUELTIS
- TEA
- ROOMMATE RITUALS

CANDLETS + DINNER + FRIENDS

WHAT NEW HABBITS DID YOU ACQUIRE?

- MAKE A CUP OF TEA AND SIT DOWN TO WRITG.

DAY 02

LIFE SWAPPING DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEW LIFESTYLE AND THE OLD ONE.

WAKE UP EARLY TO WAIT FOR HAIRS TO DRY

HAVE MORE CONNECTIONS TO OUTSIDE WORLD.

SURROUNDED BY MORE PEOPLE IN STUDIO MORE DISTRACTIONS

IS THERE ANY INCONVENIENCE?

MOBILITY → DON'T WANT TO GO HOME LATE. CAN'T BE ON TIME. NO POST-IT !!! → HOW AM I GONNA WRITE MY TO-DO LIST.

FOOD IS SO PERSONAL. I DON'T LIKE TO SHARE FOOD WITH OTHER PEOPLE. I DO NOT LIKE TO EAT OTHERS PEOPLE HAVE MY FOOD.

I DON'T HAVE " I LIKE THE IDEA OF HAVING A LAMP NEAR THE NEXT TO BED. (I WANT TO USE IT WHEN I DON'T HAVE IT. I DON'T REALLY USE IT WHEN I HAVE IT) → COMFORT OBJECT.

HOW DO YOU ACCOMMODATE INCONVENIENCE?

BORROW FROM SOMEONE ELSE. CREATE A SHOPPING LIST.

STUDIO SPACE	HOME
- APEN	- FOODS
- POST-IT	- HAIR DRYER
- BIGGER BAG	- LAMP / DESK
- WALLET WITH DIVIDERS	- SMALLER PLATES

EMPTY SPACE ???

TOD'S DIARY
ABOUT LIVING
IN AYA'S LIFE.

Aya has two roommates; one is an American woman, the other is a Chinese man. They live on the east side of Providence. She likes freedom.

**“I need to
rethink my life,”
Tod says.**

DAY 01

LIFE SWAPPING DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO DESCRIBE THE FIRST
IMPRESSION OF THE NEW LIFESTYLE.

Day 1 Midnight - Aya's whiskey
has an incredibly strong + robust flavor.
7:45 am. I overslept no time to shower,
eat, or coffee. Roommate did not offer a
friendly 'good morning' she rushed walk
to RISD was enjoyable. Backpack is
very comfortable. This Desk seems
somehow more spacious, could be the
window.

11:41 - had social w/ upset roommate feelings

IS THERE ANY
OBJECT/ PRODUCT
NEW TO YOU?

Alcohol in the bedroom, hairbrushes,
fridge full of food, stove in
the bedroom.

~~Less dramatic roommates~~
positive aggressive class mates

IS THERE ANY
PRODUCT YOU
WISH YOU HAD?

Coffee, friendliness
Less Dramatic / sensitive roommates.

DAY 02

LIFE SWAPPING DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN NEW LIFESTYLE AND THE OLD ONE.

Didn't get home until 2am. Slept but didn't
 see her. Rushed to get to work by 9am, managed
 to shower but not eat or have coffee. NO
 roommate altercations today.
 The tree free soap was very nice. The
 shower process was also great, and very
 hot.

IS THERE ANY
INCONVENIENCE?

nothing that wasn't my own fault

HOW DO YOU
ACCOMMODATE
INCONVENIENCE?

rethink my life

DAY 03

LIFE SWAPPING DIARY

PLEASE USE WORDS/ DRAWINGS/ PHOTOS TO EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT ADOPTING NEW LIFESTYLE.

↓

WHAT YOU MISS
THE MOST IN
THESE DAYS?

~~reliable~~ reliable comfort

WHAT NEW
HABITS DID
YOU ACQUIRE?

Sleeping through the snore
 Bustin

DIAGNOSES OF OBSESSIONS

A series of interviews and video recordings uncover what, why and how people are obsessed.

DESIGN BRIEF

Diving into someone's obsession and empathizing with it makes this process extremely valuable for a designer. Design should serve people's needs and bring pleasure to their lives.

During the process, I bought a squeegee, started to use organizers and made a decision with someone else's input. I put myself in each participant's shoes and tried to experience what they have been experiencing.

SQUEEGEE
GIRL

My previous roommate, Nao Chang, likes to use a squeegee to clear up the water in the bathroom after she takes a shower.

“This is the most peaceful moment in my day,” she says.

When did you develop the “squeegee” ritual?

It was when I first moved out of my parent’s house. Their house had a big window in the bathroom and a nice fan to clear moisture, which I didn’t have in the bathroom of my own apartment. Since then, I developed this habit of using the squeegee to maintain cleanness and dryness in the bathroom, so that I didn’t need to turn on the fan all the time. It saved energy and money.

Is the squeegee the only tool you use for wiping water?

Yes, my bathroom is small.

Which areas of the bathroom do you use it? Do you focus on the showering space?

In the beginning, I only cleaned the walls. Because bathroom tiles have a rough surface, I thought it wouldn’t work on them. But, it turned out to be good.

How do you clean corners?

I used to clean every corner; it was time-consuming. Then, I realized that as long as I wiped the larger areas of water, the bathroom would dry quickly.

How did you find the right tool for this habit?

Well...when I had the idea of cleaning my shower space, the first thing which came to my mind was the tool for cleaning windows on cars. It is the one that has a sponge on one side and silicon on the other. But the sponge side was kind of useless. Then, my sister found a squeegee in a store. It was \$20 - pretty insane - so I decided to go to traditional markets to have a look. I found a \$2 one!!! It was perfect. However, my sister thought the squeegee was not effective because there were gaps between tiles, so when she used it, the water splashed. Also, for her, it was time-consuming. Therefore, she used rags instead.

It sounds like your sister doesn’t like to clean with the squeegee at all. On the contrary, you seem to really enjoy it?

Yeah, I like to repeat one motion, and I also like to align things. I have been trying different ways to clean the bathroom and make it into my daily routine. For example, I used to clean one tile at a time; then I changed my method, cleaning row by row. I found that it was easier to do it horizontally. Now I have developed a procedure for it. I can demonstrate it. I feel like when we have to do the same thing every day, we will establish a sequence for carrying out the task or routine. So, do you want to design a tool for me? Cleaning the bathroom with the squeegee is actually a boring thing.

NAO SQUEEGEES
HER BATHROOM
AFTER SHE TAKES
A SHOWER.



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DIAGNOSES OF
OBSESSIONS



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DIAGNOSIS OF SQUEEGEE GIRL

She spends ten minutes a day cleaning her bathroom with a squeegee. For her, there is nothing more important than having a clean shower space. The elements that make her smile in the squeegeeing process are the repetitive motions, aligning the blade of the squeegee with the tiles and developing methods to squeegee.

MOTIVATIONS

CLEANNESSE
HYGIENE

THE
"CONTROL"
OF
LIFE

SATISFACTIONS

ALIGNING
THINGS

REPETITIVE
MOTION

THINK
LOGICALLY
DEVELOPING
METHOD

PROBLEMS

WATER
SPLASH

HARD TO
REACH
THE BOTTOM
OF WALLS

DESIGN FOR SQUEEGEE GIRL

There are three different directions I could take when designing for her obsessions: fix the obsession, enhance the obsession, and translate the obsession. The first one "fix the obsession" doesn't fit with this scenario. Because her obsession encompasses many elements, if I fixed the obsession, I would eliminate her enjoyment. Therefore, in this case, I decided to enhance and translate her obsession.

1.
ENHANCE
OBSESSIONS

COLOR
CODED
FOR ALIGNING

MESH
THAT
FILLS
GAPS

CLEAN THE
FLOOR BY
WALKING

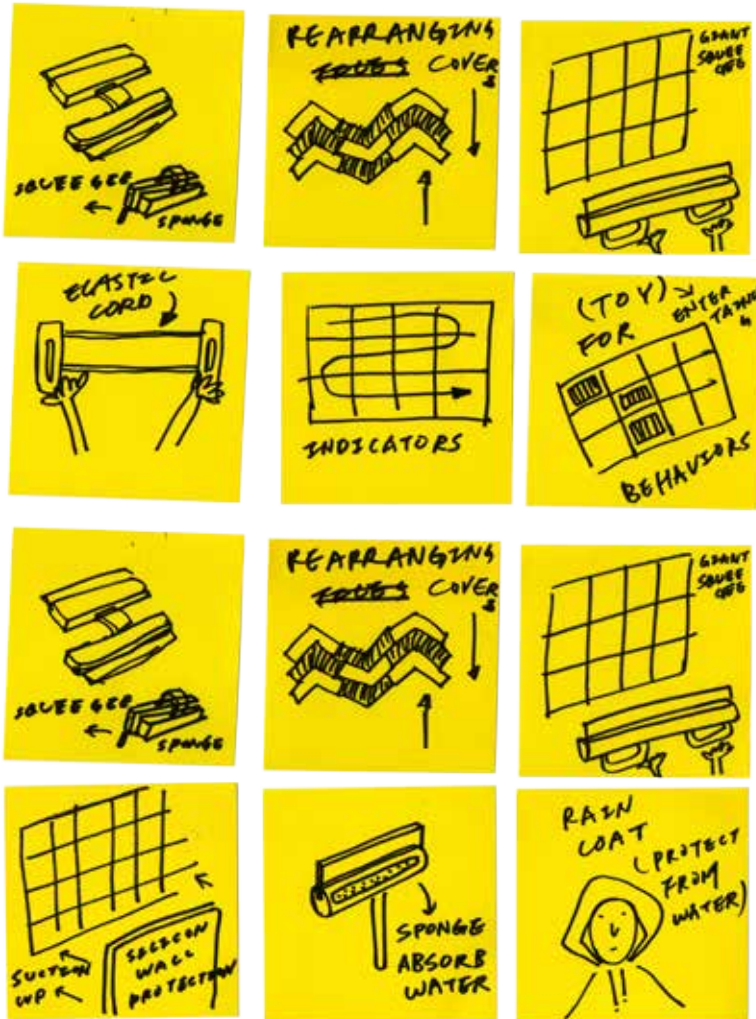
WALKING
SPRAY
PUSH
BACK
GET
RID OF
WATER

WALL PAPER
TILE COVER
change pattern

TILES THAT
WON'T MAKE
WATER SPLASH

AMPLIFY
THE BEHAVIORS
ALIGN

PLATFORM
FOR
SHOWCASING
TOOLS.



2. TRANSLATE OBSESSIONS



ORGANIZER
GIRL

My friend, Kali, has ten different organizers in her bedroom.

“I feel my life is under control.” she says.

How often do you organize your room?

Maybe once a week. When I get busier, I will spend more time on tidying up things. After doing this activity, I will feel my life is under control. I only do thorough organizing once or twice a year. I went through everything and threw away things that I didn't want. Sometimes, I do this before and after I travel. I don't like the feeling that arises from keeping things in a mess.

What is the best part of organizing things? Which part do you enjoy the most?

The process is not particularly enjoyable. But I like the part when I go through things and throw away things that I don't need.

Do you have to deal with any problems when organizing your room or studio space?

My studio space is less organized than my apartment. This is because there are some materials in the studio that are difficult to categorize. However, in my mind, I know where my things are. For example, I know I left some blue foam in the cabinet in room 602 two years ago. So when I need some blue foam, I know where to find it.

I noticed that you have a systematized backpack. Can you show it to me and explain how you pack it?

The pocket for a water bottle is the best. I can store a water bottle there and reach it quickly. The big meshy pocket in the back is for computers, an iPad, or fragile things. There is another small pocket for pens. The big cavity in the middle is for an umbrella, notebooks, and glasses. The pharmacy bag is for cold medicine, like painkillers. The emergency pocket has extra socks for my studio shoes, female supplies, shampoo and deodorant. At the very front, there is a waterproof pocket for valuable things.



KALI'S ORGANIZERS



DIAGNOSES OF OBSESSIONS



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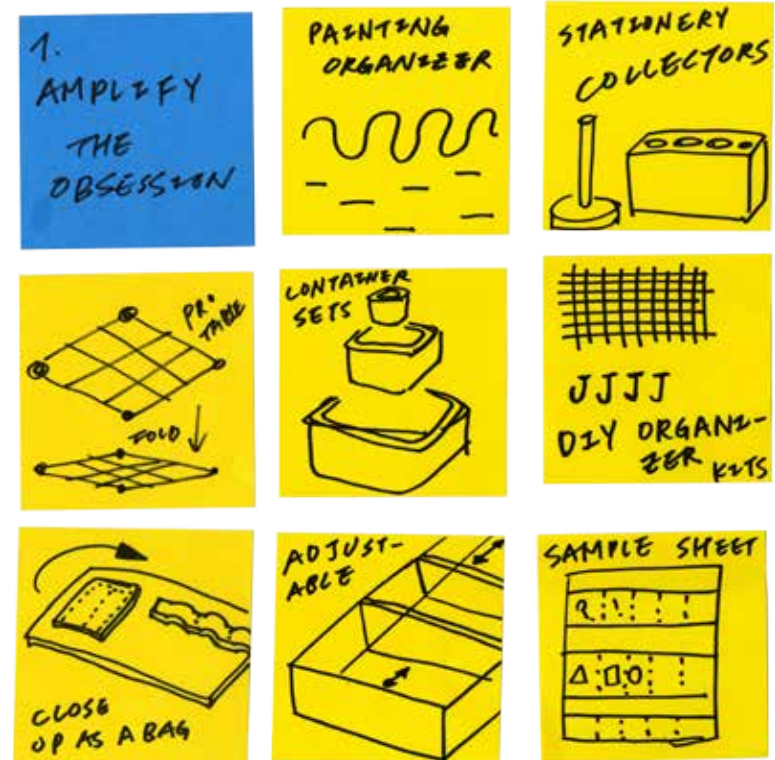
DIAGNOSIS OF ORGANIZER GIRL

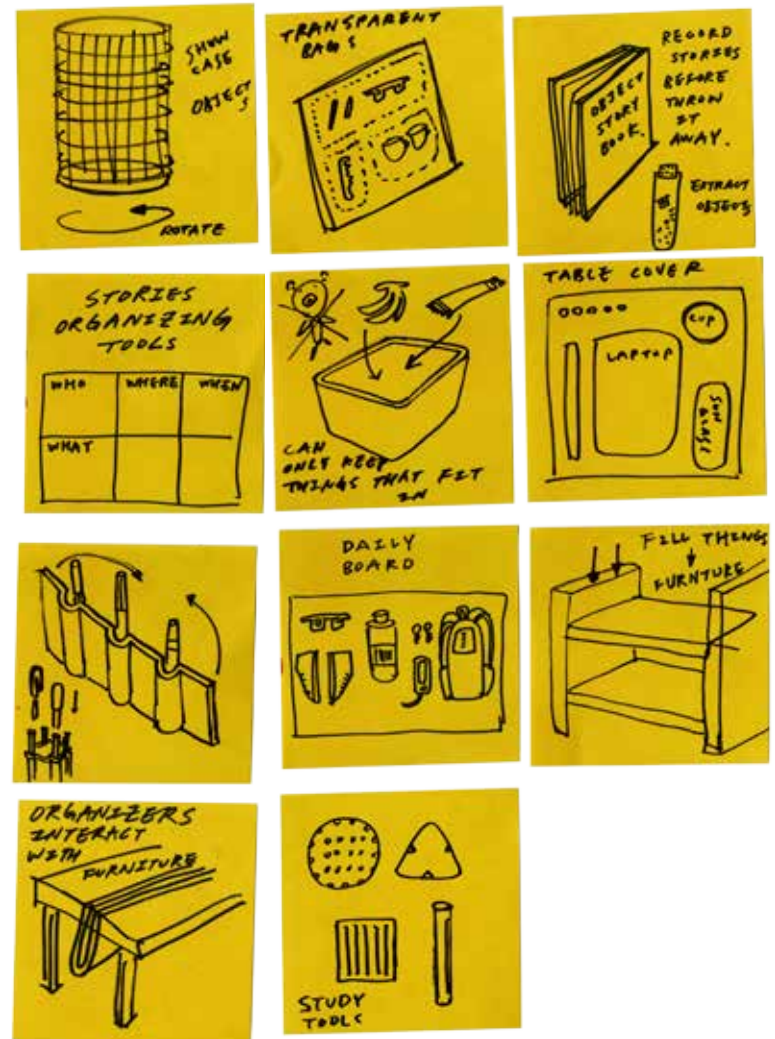
Being able to navigate through objects and find things she needs easily and quickly is the reason why Organizer Girl uses organizers. Organizers are curating tools for her, and the process of organizing gives her the feeling of being calm.



DESIGN FOR ORGANIZER GIRL

Organizer girl is an archivist. She sees stories behind objects. Her life is already organized, so she is not in need of further organizational devices. The thing she needs is a tool to assist her in curating stories and showing stories. Therefore, I decided to enhance her obsession by elevating the categorizing process to storytelling.





SHOPPING
TWINs

Amy and Emily have lived together since the moment they were born. They rely on each other. The longest time thus far that they have not been together is six months.

“We can’t imagine life without each other,” they say.

How do you decide whether or not to buy a product when you go shopping alone?

A: I will send my sister a picture of the item that I want to buy and ask for her opinion. For example, last week I went to buy stationary alone, and I couldn’t decide on the pattern or color. So I sent her pictures, and she helped me to pick one.

(E went into the fitting room)

Do you want to go to the fitting room and help your sister to decide which clothes to get?

A: No, they only allow one person to be in the fitting room. I will go if they let me. Also, it is more efficient that I stay outside and pick out more clothes for us while she is trying on others.

So, in this scenario, how can you make a decision together?

A: She will take pictures when she is in the fitting room and show them to me once she gets out. We will take it in turns to try on clothes.

Does it matter who chooses the clothes and who tries them on?

A: No, it doesn’t matter. Sometimes I have asked her to try on clothes I chosen when I have had doubts about my choices. Also, it helps when we are both unsure about whether or not to buy something. For example, once I found one item, which she seemed to like, but was not sure. I asked her to try it on. It turned out that she didn’t like it anymore after she had tried it on.

Can you describe the decision-making process to me?

A: Yeah. We have a system for decision-making. First, we choose things that we are interested in and then ask the other person “Is it worth trying on?” If the other person says ‘no’, we will drop it. If the response is ‘yes,’ one of us will try it on and make the decision together.

What do you discuss when you are making decisions?

A: When we are deciding what to buy, we work out if we have a similar outfit in the closet or whether it is actually necessary. If it is similar to something we already have, we ask whether we can wear it on a different type of occasion, or if we can differentiate it from the rest of the clothes we have. Or, we work out which size fits us better, because I am slightly heavier than my sister. The conversation is mainly like the conversation people will have with their family. We live together, and share all home goods, so we have to buy things that make both parties happy.

Have you ever been in a situation where you like something, but she doesn't like it at all?

A: Yes. If that happens, I will listen to her and not buy it.

I remember last time you told me that there is a matter of ownership in relation to such items. If you use something more often, it becomes yours and vice versa.

A: Well...that only applies to bags, shoes or pants. It doesn't matter with other objects.

What is the most exciting part of shopping?

E: The moment when we finally buy something that we like.

A: I think the process of finding things is enjoyable. I like the moment that we shop in the same area of the store. There is some space between my sister and me, but we are still within reach of each other. So if I find something interesting, I can share it with her immediately.

Would you ever go shopping with someone else?

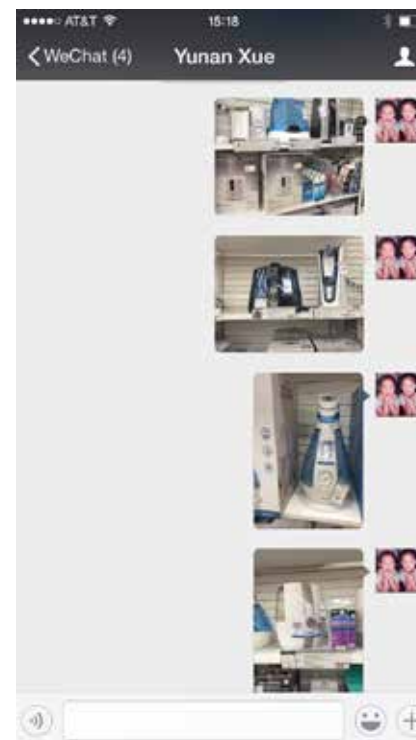
E: We only go shopping with each other.

Would you go shopping with your family?

A: Yes. We would go with our mother.

Would you listen to your mom's opinions?

A: Sometimes. However, if they go against our decision, we wouldn't take them into account.



Screenshot of the conversation of choosing a humidifier between shopping twins when they didn't go shopping together.



DIAGNOSIS OF SHOPPING TWINS

Instant feedback from each other makes Shopping Twins' shopping experiences pleasant. They trust each other's taste and provide emotional support for each other's decisions. For them, shopping is a process of sharing and building connections.

MOTIVATIONS

SHARE

TRUST

EMOTIONAL
SUPPORT

SATISFACTIONS

"INSTANT
SHARING"

CONNECTION

EMOTIONAL
SUPPORT

DESIGN FOR SHOPPING TWINS

The shopping process undertaken by Shopping Twins demonstrates how people make decisions together. They make the process of reaching mutual agreement a fun and enjoyable one. Therefore, it would be interesting to translate their decision-making policy to a game-like app that they can use whenever and wherever.

1. ENHANCE
OBSESSIONS

ASK TO
JOIN SHOPPING
↓
BEST
STYLIST

OFFICE /
INSTITUTIONAL
SHOPPING



"I SECOND"
APP
CROWDSOURCING
DECISION
MAKING
TOOLS

LIFE
DECISION
MAKING
TOOLS



GROUP
DECISION
MAKING APP



STYLE
BOARD

TEAM

NEXT

STYLE
BOARD

SHOPPING
CART

QUESTION
&
COMMENTS

GO

LIVE
SHOPPING
APP

RECORD

DESIGN FOR INDIVIDUAL'S NEEDS

In the process of gathering these stories of obsessions, I felt exposed. This, I think, is because the process not only revealed the obsessions of others, but also reflected my personal desires. It stunned me that the intimacy I built with participants during research and interview activities is much stronger than all of the design projects I have carried out so far.

As a designer, I started to wonder, “how can I bring this level of understanding of participants to an object or idea that everyone can experience?”

Therefore, my project shifted from designing perfect tools to support obsessions, to presenting the desires behind such obsessions and the resulting pleasure that arose from each.

IMAGE LIST

- Page 16. by Vara Yang, 2015
Page 17. by vara Yang, 2015
Page 18. by Nao Chang, 2015
Page 19. by Alex Chu, 2015
Page 20. by Alex Chu, 2015
Page 21. by Vara Yang, 2015
Page 22. by Alex Chu, 2015
Page 23. by Vara Yang, 2015
Page 24. by Vara Yang, 2015
Page 25. by Vara Yang, 2015
Page 26. by Henry Chang, 2015
Page 27. by Joe Yang, 2015
Page 28. by Vara Yang, 2015
Page 29. by Vara Yang, 2015
Page 30. by Vara Yang, 2015
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Page 32. by Vara Yang, 2015
Page 33. by Vara Yang, 2015
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Page 36. by Mark Payne, 2015
Page 37. by Bill Young, 2015
Page 41. Drawing by Kali lohr, 2015
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Page 51. Drawing by Aya Yang, 2015
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Page 80. by Nao Chang, 2016
Page 81. by Nao Chang, 2016
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Page 84. Drawing by Vara Yang, 2016
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Page 88. by Aya Yang, 2015
Page 89. by Aya Yang, 2015
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Page 91. Drawing by Vara Yang, 2016
Page 92. Drawing by Vara Yang, 2016
Page 93. Drawing by Vara Yang, 2016
Page 97. by Amy Xue
Page 98. by Vara Yang, 2016
Page 99. by Vara Yang, 2016
Page 100. Drawing by Vara Yang, 2016
Page 101. Drawing by Vara Yang, 2016

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