Design is commonly understood as a storytelling practice, yet we have few narratives with which to describe the felt experiences of struggle, pain, and difficulty, beyond treating them as subjects to resolve. In response, we look to the literary memoir as a relevant exemplar of stories one tells about one’s past experiences from the first-person perspective. In contrast to popular notions of autobiography, memoirs tend to focus on a set of meaningful events rather than a lifetime and often emphasize the subjective or felt experience of that event rather than a recollection of key moments and facts. Design Memoirs are therefore proposed as a form of embodied design that engages and entangles personal and difficult stories within a public context. Design Memoirs are subjective and corporeal in nature and provide a direct and observable way to reckon with felt experiences through, and for, design.

In this class, students will explore emerging methodologies in media design research and practice including autobiographical design [2, 5], design fiction [1], autoethnography, intimate design, and anti-solutionist design [3]. Through deep engagement with texts, audiovisual media, software art, and design objects, we will study the historical landscape within which Design Memoirs are situated. Over the course of the semester, students will create several Design Memoirs that speak to their own unique experiences and interpret them in relationship to those of their classmates. In so doing, we will create a broader space for "troubling" design as a straightforward problem/solution discipline [4].


Additional References


