

IML 575: Design Memoirs

Meet: Monday 10 am – 12 pm

Location: SCI 109

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Office: MAP offices, 101g

Office Hours: Thursday, 11:00am – 2:00pm (or by appointment at other times)



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].

Laura Devendorf, Kristina Andersen, and Aisling Kelliher. 2020. *Making Design Memoirs: Understanding and Honoring Difficult Experiences*. In *Proceedings of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '20)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1–12.

Laura Devendorf, Kristina Andersen, and Aisling Kelliher. 2020. *The Fundamental Uncertainties of Mothering: Finding Ways to Honor Endurance, Struggle, and Contradiction*. ACM Trans. Comput.-Hum. Interact. 27, 4, Article 26 (August 2020), 24 pages.

Additional References

- 1. Mark Blythe, Kristina Andersen, Rachel Clarke, and Peter Wright. 2016. Anti-Solutionist Strategies: Seriously Silly Design Fiction. In Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '16). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 4968–4978.
- 2. Audrey Desjardins and Ron Wakkary. 2016. Living In A Prototype: A Reconfigured Space. In Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '16). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 5274–5285.
- 3. Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby. 2002. The Placebo Project. In Proceedings of the 4th Conference on Designing Interactive Systems: Processes, Practices, Methods, and Techniques (DIS '02). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 9–12.
- 4. Donna J. Haraway. 2016. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Duke University Press Books, Durham.
- 5. Carman Neustaedter and Phoebe Sengers. 2012. Autobiographical Design in HCI Research: Designing and Learning Through Use-it-yourself. In Proceedings of the Designing Interactive Systems Conference (DIS'12). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 514–523.