



THESIS IDEAS: PHASE 2

CLIENT Michael Salamon
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DESIGNER Carly Dutch-Greene

Carly Dutch-Greene
design@carlydg.com
608.444.8063
www.carlydg.com

WHITEPAPER

After not getting the best response from my professors on my 5 minute presentation, I felt kind of defeated. I decided to contact Professor Michael Mages. He and I have developed a fantastic relationship of the last two years and he has completely changed the way I think about design. He also understands me as an individual and as a designer that a lot of other professors might not, so I thought it would help to hear what his response was.

Mages gave me the most in-depth response and we were able to converse back and forth for a few emails (it is an ongoing conversation). He reassured me that I was on a good, if not great track and that my idea has the potential to be very successful

I have come to a few conclusions from our conversation that will undoubtedly help me to refine my idea.

My thesis is linking something that has been so dis-embodied (digital experience) to something that is “of the body”. The community aspect that I pitched might be a bit out of reach. I have begun to think about an embodied relationship between the user and the digital technologies as the key aspect.

I am beginning to research books about the connection between emotion and design, as I think this will be an integral part of creating a successful thesis. My topic is about the connection between emotional and

physical pain. By developing an understanding of the connection between emotion and design I will be able to decide which design medium I will use to make my thesis come to life.

A few books I have come across are listed below:

Emotional Design by Don Norman

Designing for Emotion by Aarron Walter

The Body in Pain by Elaine Scarry.

According to Mages, I think the most worthwhile might be Elaine Scarry’s book. Through an account of torture, Scarry links the idea of physical pain to the concept of why we design.

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For Scarry, all designing comes from the altruistic act of seeing someone in pain, and wanting to alleviate that — she calls it the inherent compassion of the imagination. The act of design flows from the feeling of “pain begone” in the designer.

The trick here will be connecting technology and body instead of creating an inadvertant disconnect between the two. The body, the immanence of physical and emotional pain, and discovering how digital (design) might become a healing extension of such will be my main

goal. “Really, this project is about envisioning a possible future through design that undermines Cartesian senses of duality: mind vs. body.” (Mages, obviously)

I am now really looking forward to this idea and will be constantly refining and researching to render the best version possible.