

Case Study #2

This case study examines and describes the process and product of a female student age 19. This student was an academic freshman and a first year interior design student enrolled in Design Fundamentals I in the fall semester of 2001. This student had taken drawing and art classes during high school.

The researcher interviewed the student asking about the process that appeared in her journal. Her process was largely written thoughts. She referred to all of the written text as “her thoughts about the project”. In this case, she spent much of her process time in verbal thought. Once she had worked through which story she would use as inspiration and her concept for her project, she went to sketches to help her develop the form of her final product.

She was especially interested in the story about how time was frozen in the center and moved gradually faster as it moved away from the center. She wanted the center of her project to be “frozen” but she also wanted her project to have a sense of movement. Ultimately, her design would be still at the center and appear to move faster and faster as it moved away from the center.

She spoke of how the people who sought the center of time were people who were in harmonic relationships and sought to prolong time. From this thought, she developed the idea that her project should utilize natural materials that expressed a natural harmonious relationship. She decided on paper and wood because of their symbolic relationship to each other.

Journal Process Discussion

On the first page of the student's journal, section A appears to be notes taken during the assignment of the project. Following that section, in section B the student has listed out the elements and principles of design for her consideration during the project. In section C the student has paraphrased the stories from the text as a reminder of possible conceptual foundations for the project. In section D she has simply the words "contrast" and "relativity" possibly a start in the process of verbalizing of her concept statement.

On the second page of her journal in section E the student has some process that she has marked out. This was an abandoned idea but may have influenced thinking on the project. Abandoned ideas can serve, if not in the actual solution of the design problem, as definers of the design problem. When a possible design solution doesn't work, there are still valuable insights to be gained from that part of the process. In this area she looked at using circles and abandons that because everyone is using circles. She pondered a box of light with pinholes that would act to concentrate light into small beams close together and moving further apart as they get further away from the center.

It is also interesting to note that when she did sketch in this area, the sketch viewed the product as a three-dimensional design. This form thinking appears to aid the student in "seeing" their solution better. From the initial cube in area E to the more developed rectangular solid with extensions at the four corners, there is a sharpening of vision.

PROJECT 12: Wednesday

Einstein's Dreams Light Piece!
 Not time piece

26 April 1905 one accent color A

14 May 1905 due Dec 12th!

22 May 1905 *journal also due*

3 June 1905

20 June 1905

Elements: space, point, line, shape, light & form 12/3/2001 B

principles: movement, texture, balance, symmetry

- rhythm
- fluid

STORY-TIME

26 April - social issues
houses on stilts
time slower higher up

22 May: glimpse of future
- allow it to happen
- not allow it to happen
chaos of change - following
future - inevitability

20 June: time moves at different
paces in different
areas - isolation, no
travel C

• non representational
 ↳ conceptual

14 May: center = frozen time = faster/control
farther away = freedom

3 June: all life in one
day - life dependent
of time you're born
time dictates life cycle
& life style.

• CONTRAST • Relativity D

DEFEND ZONE - SIGNS - DISCORDS

Figure VIII Case Study #2, Journal – Page 1

In the solution explored, again verbally, in area F, the student wrote, “concepts of interrupted motion and abrupt stoppage are going to be used”. Apparently this student had a hard time developing a conceptual starting place for her project. She explored several of the stories for ideas before deciding on the story that inspired her the most.

Also in this section there is evidence that the student is considering the use of materials at a very early stage. Perhaps the consideration of materials in the process end of the design solution allows the student to design within the constraints of the materials. Another thought is that this material consideration early in the process enables the student to highlight and embrace the inherent material qualities in the design.

Section G is a continuation of the concept that was explored in section F. After the material consideration the student proposed that she might “use only $\frac{3}{4}$ of shape or form – make it look like it was on an assembly line & the electricity went out... conical?” Another idea that she explored utilizing this story as inspiration was to “expose the inside of the light, take casing off...show wires & other side shows finished products.”

The student sketched a section view of this idea and noted that she was looking at extremes and was uncomfortable not having any sort of transition from one extreme to the other. She also considered how her light would be displayed. Mentioning that it should hang from the ceiling. It wasn't until page three of her journal process that she finally decided on a story for inspiration and developed a concept that would allow her to solve the design problem.

PROJECT # 12: LIGHT PIECE 12/01

26 april 1905 -

height = status
central = faster
far away = slower

using height & the idea of a faster movement in the center I will construct my light piece



Small lights concentrated in center **E**

materials - use pure (white) light to show status & affluence



poor people use candles & yellow light
poke holes in casing to allow light to shine through

motion - contract light & background

materials that seem impersonal & frozen... like they just stopped - no growth & personality

if electricity... give only enough to just barely light it... almost out, or only allow it to be on for a moment.

expose the "inside" of the light, take casing off... show wires & internal switches on one side... other side shows finished products.

(not so representational) of "light" or "knip"



light bulb or candle? *flashlight.

rem. structured & rigid - extremes - chaotic asymmetrical

huge jump from one extreme to the other no transition. → allow transition...

* 14 may 1905 - *

interrupted motion = stops abruptly & never starts again

light is diminished to almost nothing at center - farther away = brighter farther away

fixed & frozen

no light at center = darkness or no light **F**

concepts of interrupted motion & abrupt stoppage are going to be used...

materials - transparent: plastics glass

no vertical or horizontal emphasis; contract R → L L → R

metals unpolished metal

- cold & motionless
- fixed, non-moving
- very industrial & unfinished

use only 3/4 of shape or form - make it look like it just stopped - like it was on an assembly line & the electricity went out...

~ conical? ~

movement - ... → **G**

only allow light to be on for a moment; use

? hang from ceiling... use

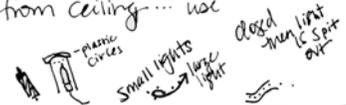


Figure IX Case Study #2, Journal - Page 2

The third page of the journal contains the majority of the sketches utilized to solve the design problem. Starting in section H, the student is finally able to verbalize her design feelings about this particular story and connect with them a design solution. In section I she started to verbalize her concept statement but has a visual idea to pursue. She pursued this visualization in sketches J through O.

In sketch J, the student begins with a form that she decided was “too seashell-ish”. After recognizing that her first sketch is representational she levels the next sketch, sketch k. Sketch K shows more of the essence of “wrap” that she was hoping for in the first sketch. Also in these sketches as in her earlier abandoned sketches, the visual thinking that is evidenced in the sketches is three-dimensional in nature. The student started thinking about the solution to the problem as a three-dimensional form.

There are three small sketches associated with “L” in the journal. These sketches are still leveling the original seashell shape casting around for the best twist and form to communicate the design concept. In sketch M a sharpening occurs to the form as the student added lines of texture (?) to the form. The two sketches associated with “N” in the journal are further sharpening of the student’s visual process. The lines now seem to fan off of a central spine like veins in a leaf. The annotations included with these sketches are potentially to remind the student of her desire to have a central focus and that the form needs to emit light. Some structural concerns come up with these notes as well. The student was trying to figure out how to deal with the light bulb inside the form.

Sketch O, two drawings are further sharpening of the design solution. The naturalistic lines of structure are organized and the form is becoming more developed. The student noted that the original material she wanted to use to construct her light was not available. Then she found that Basswood could be bent with pressure after it was soaked. Additionally in area “P” the student has defined the use of materials. There is a subtle symbolic significance to the relationship of paper and wood to the relationship of lovers and parents and children found in the story.

In area “Q” the student has finalized the conceptual argument for her project. She discussed her focus on relationships and decided that suspending the light would allow it to move in a naturalistic way. This idea furthers the conceptual development of the final product.

The sketches labeled “R” and “S” are structural sketches for housing the light inside the paper and wood form. During the interview the student verified that these sketches were her development of a structure to integrate the light into the form. The light was fixed to the interior of the form as it was to be “frozen” in the center of the form. The student also determined that the structure of the form was to have a “naturalistic flow...like water”.

This elegant naturalistic form is evident in the final product. The use of bent Basswood and paper enhance the naturalistic qualities of the light fixture. The organization of the structural elements makes them simultaneously functional and aesthetic. The spiraled form successfully portrays the elegance of the natural relationships she sought to illustrate.

interrupted motion: slowed motion
 instead of being cold & mechanical
 allow the light to be warm & "homey" (yellow)

lovers & parents wish to travel to the center of time; show gradual, slow movement & ~~use it to~~ use it to create a path to the focus... where is the focus, what is the focus - the focus is on the change of light → dark. NOT necessarily white → black.

materials are natural - paper & wood, as the relationships presented in the center of time are natural - love & parenthood.

reed can't be found in Blacksburg or Christiansburg but Bass wood works well after it is soaked. spacing is even

too seashell-ish

central focus light

small suspended light inside button? ep.

OR SPACING IS UNEVEN WALL SPACE

Suspend for movement!

center does not move

Naturalistic flow... like water for spacing of the word.

light inside is also hung on a string. make a "cap" out of wood for it

OR

Focus on progression from light to dark as movement centralizes inspiration from the story, mainly the relationship of the people - & the loving relationship of these people - this allows for the use of natural materials w/ a soft warm light. It will be suspended for movement.

INCEPT STATEMENT:
~~Project will be~~
 inspired by the 14 May 1905 story
 Einsteins Dreams - this project will focus on the slowing of motion
 gradual movement

Concept Statement:
 Focus on progression from light to dark as movement centralizes inspiration from the story, mainly the relationship of the people - & the loving relationship of these people - this allows for the use of natural materials w/ a soft warm light. It will be suspended for movement.

Sketches labeled H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S.

Figure X Case Study #2 Journal – Page 3



Figure XI Case Study #2, Final Project

Analysis

This case study was selected based on the strength of the final product in comparison to the way the student processed her ideas. The unique thing about her process is that it is largely written process instead of drawn. Perhaps this indicates that the quality of the process is important and the quantity of sketches is less important. This idea is also supported by the fact that, while there were relatively few sketches, the sketches were readable and communicated visualization information very clearly.

Perhaps an indicator of design maturity is sketch maturity. It seems that when the student is thinking in three-dimensional forms and communicates through drawing that three-dimensional form the resulting project is well developed as a three-dimensional form. Additionally the student was able to utilize drawing skills to communicate several different ways of creating the structural framework. Again, maybe, because of this ability to externalize or represent visualization a student may be better able to sort out these design decisions before production begins. In their future career, this ability will be very helpful because experimenting with materials in real world production is not cost effective.

The written words and annotations of her sketches provide evidence of the communication that occurred between the designer and the process in the journal. Additionally, the sketches with their minute changes where the student was working out issues of form and structure are also evidence of the communication that is occurring. Finally, her process also illustrates that process

is not linear and that the first idea is not always the best idea in the pursuit of a solution.