



Positive Design

Delft students design for
our well-being

Pieter Desmet

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Pieter Desmet
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Preface

In 2015, a new journal was launched: the Dutch Journal of Positive Psychology. The editor-in-chief invited me to contribute with a recurring column that reflects on the question of how design can contribute to the field of positive psychology. I was immediately excited because I saw an opportunity to share some of our students' inspiring work with a wider audience. Hence, we agreed that the columns would serve to present examples of *Positive Design* – design cases that focus on human flourishing by students of the TU Delft Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering.

Over the years, I have witnessed how an increasing number of design students have become inspired by the concept of wellbeing. These are designers who aspire to consciously and deliberately use their design skills in contributing to the happiness of individuals and communities. Rather than being a fortuitous by-product of design, wellbeing has firmly anchored in the heart of these students' design intentions. I hope the columns convey some of their contagious enthusiasm.

This booklet presents the first ten columns, written from 2015 to 2018. Some of the design cases focus on individuals, others on groups. Some help us to rediscover our talents, some support us in forming meaningful relationships, and others enable us to invest in the happiness of ourselves and of the people we care about.

Pieter Desmet

Uniekies: your disability as your superpower

Design by Janine Innemee

What does it feel like to be a superhero? With Uniekies, a game designed by Janine Innemee, you can experience this yourself. The game is intended for children in the ages of 6 to 11 years old. What makes this game special is that it encourages active play between children with and without a physical disability. Uniekies's positive approach is a good example of how you can take someone's own unique strengths as the starting point for an innovative design.

The league of superheroes

Uniekies revolves around the superheroes: children with a disability. There is a whole array of heroes, as each disability represents a specific superpower. For example, there is Lens (the Secrets Master), the superhero character for children with a hearing impairment. Lens is able to communicate at great distances and pass along secret signs. Bumper (the Space Master), the character for children in a wheelchair, is able to clear the playing field fast as lightning and protect his followers. Flow (the Flex Master) has trouble with actions requiring fine motor skills but is also super-flexible which means he can easily crawl through narrow spaces. In short, an entire legion of unique superheroes: the Uniekies.

Fortunately, those powers aren't just for superheroes. Children without a disability can experience them as



well, but they have to make an effort. Together with the superheroes, they make special super powers for dress-up. A bumper suit, for instance, is made by stringing lots of balloons to your body. With this suit, you can 'bump', just like superhero Bumper. At the same time, you experience the challenges of getting around in a wheelchair in a playful way. Once all the superheroes have their costumes on, the children come up with a game together in which they can use their super powers.



Playful solidarity

With Uniekies, the children experience equality by playing with their differences. The game offers a context for solidarity and lots of active fun. The game is very modest in terms of the materials needed. All you need is a set of cards with instructions that you can print and cut out yourself: cards that show the limitations and superpowers of the superheroes and cards that give tips on how you can make the superhero suits. You can use all sorts of materials that can be found in every home: aluminium foil, an umbrella, lots of adhesive tape, etc.

From limitations to possibilities

The main idea behind the project was that removing physical barriers was not enough to encourage play between children with and without physical disabilities. It's just as important to remove social barriers. During her research, Janine discovered that children without disabilities have a double attitude with regards to playing with children who have disabilities. On the one hand, they don't want to exclude any children, but on the other hand they're afraid that playing with them will be dull if they need to adapt to others' limitations. This dilemma trans-



lated itself into the design challenge: Developing a game that promotes social integration between children with and without a disability by positively influencing the children's attitude. With Uniekies, children discover how adventurous and exciting the interaction between limitations and capabilities can be. And this solves the dilemma between playing together and being challenged.

Tape, foil, and rubber bands

What inspires me, is that Janine has made the disability the central focus of her design in a positive way. In the magic of the game, there is equality –

precisely by emphasising the differences rather than minimising them. With the superhero metaphor, the attention shifts from limitations to possibilities, to the unique power of each child. And by encouraging creativity, the children's empathy and understanding of each other is stimulated. Accessibility is just as important: the game's simplicity makes it very accessible to everyone. Eventually, the quality of a design is determined by the meaning and added value to the users, and if that can be achieved with so little material, it makes the design that much stronger.

Uniekies was designed by **Janine Innemee** as thesis project for the master's programme Design for Interaction at the TU Delft. The project was initiated by design agency Panton, and was carried out in partnership with the Nederlandse Stichting voor het Gehandicapte Kind (NSGK) and the Delft Institute of Positive Design (DIOPD). Thesis supervisors were Mathieu Gielen, Deger Ozkaramanli (TU Delft), Joris Swaak and Ingeborg Griffioen (Panton). For more information: www.diopd.org



Konnekt: the barrier as game board

Design by Job Jansweijer

In the Netherlands, over 500 children are diagnosed with cancer every year. During treatment they are often isolated, sometimes for a few days, sometimes for as much as four months. Visitors are limited and are only allowed with protective clothing - and playing with other kids is practically impossible. This causes boredom and sadness, and it hinders the child's social development. This presents a challenge: can you design something that prevents these patients from becoming isolated? Independent designer Job Jansweijer took on that challenge, and his solution is both simple and brilliant: the barrier as game board.

Play

Before he decided to take on this project, Job really had to think about whether he would be able to handle the emotions he foresaw when working with young cancer patients. Now, looking back on the project, he wouldn't have hesitated for a single moment if he'd known what he would experience. Talking and working with these children proved to be the absolute highlight of his project. Those conversations have changed his perception. Initially, he particularly saw the cancer, the pain, the chemotherapy, the nausea and the traumas. But the sessions with the patients proved to be surprisingly open, fascinating and very enjoyable. His most important discovery was that these children could also have a lot of fun. Just like all other kids, they are playful, and if the

situation allows for it, they like nothing more than to play with friends. As it turned out, his project wasn't about cancer, but about children.

The result is KonneKt, a game that makes clever use of the glass wall between the patient's room and the hallway. Job recognised the double meaning of these walls: the glass forms the connection with the outside world, but at the same time it forms a barrier that hinders social contact. KonneKt transforms this barrier into a game board for active interaction.

Dragon

The game was developed together with the children. Job filled a box with all sorts of materials, such as plastic figures, magnets, pieces of string and stuffed animals. He took this box to the patients in the Sophia Kinderziekenhuis, the children's hospi-

tal in Rotterdam. The children immediately started to play with the figures and magnets on both sides of the wall, with the glass serving as a game board. Step by step Job developed a game that consists of colourful shapes that can be connected and attached to the window by means of suction cups and magnets. KonneKt is suitable for three types of games: games with clear rules (gaming), coming up with active games with their own rules (adventuring), and inventing and telling fantasy stories (crafting). For example, you can play tic tac toe, but you can also make a castle or a dragon or create your own fantasy world. The magnets stimulate interactive play, because they will only stay up when a figure is put up at both sides of the window. The abstract shapes appeal to the children's imagination, which means the possibilities are endless.



Suction caps

KonneKt shows that innovation isn't just about innovative technology. On the contrary: with a few coloured shapes, magnets and suction caps, KonneKt's technology is actually very simple. The innovative aspect lies in the social interaction and the effect this has on the children. KonneKt supports and stimulates that interaction. During his project, Job arrived at an important insight: even in a con-

text where the negative is dominant, you can provide an essential contribution with something that's aimed at the positive. That makes KonneKt a great example of positive designing. With a designer who gained a deeper understanding of the children for whom he was designing, and has completely put the result in service of their wellbeing: designing as an act of love.

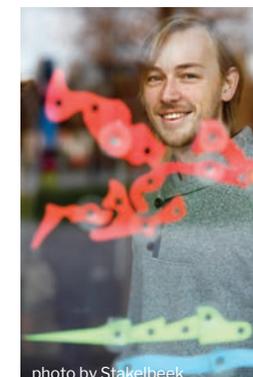


photo by Stakelbeek

Job Jansweijer has developed KonneKt as a graduation project for the master's programme Design for Interaction at the TU Delft. His supervisors were Elisa Giaccardi and Marco Rozendaal (TU Delft). The project was part of a joint research initiative of the Prinses Máxima Centrum voor Kinderoncologie and the faculty Industrial Design of the TU Delft aiming to increase the quality of patient care. KonneKt was partly made possible by Stichting Roparun. KonneKt is a finalist for Shell LiveWire Award 2015; winner of the Interaction Design Award categorie connecting 2014; finalist for Sustainable Healthcare Challenge 2014; nominated for the Wereld van Morgen Award 2014; finalist for Conceptual Design for Innovation for Healthcare Award 2014. More information: www.konnektplay.nl

Present Moments: a relaxing ritual for children

Design by Jonas Bähr

Our house, the spring, a pie in the oven, the laundry drying, a freshly picked strawberry – we are surrounded by scents. We aren't always aware of it, but those scents have a great impact on our emotional lives. They are directly connected to our emotional memory, and that is why the scent of a cookie can bring us back to the happiness of a childhood memory. Can you design that connection between scent and memory? That was Jonas Bähr's design challenge. Jonas aimed to create a design that allows people to approve their moods by means of scent.

Scent and mood

The impact of scent on mood is mainly associative and learned. When you often smell the same scent in the same situation, you will automatically connect that scent to that situation. We recognise this in the perfume of our loved one: no matter where and on whom I smell it, that perfume will always be connected with that one person. The same is true for mood. When we often smell the same scent when we're in a certain mood, this scent is charged with that particular emotion. People who are afraid of horses, will already get nervous when they smell a horse. And people who like to relax in a hot bath, will already calm down just by smelling their favourite bubble bath.



Charging scents

For his design, Jonas used the learned scent-emotion connection. The design is a scent-box for children: Present Moments. The box contains ingredients for a calming ritual. The ritual helps children to relax before going to bed. This stimulates drifting off to sleep and a good night's rest.

The box contains a bottle of perfume, a glass bowl, white scent strips and a transparent container. It works as follows. When children experience a moment of relaxation at home, such as while reading or drawing, they can choose to use the box. First, they put a few scent drops in the bowl. Then they get a scent strip and place it in a slot in the box with the holder. The scent strip absorbs the drops and the scent is then slowly released. When this happens, the colour of the strip changes from white to a rainbow. In this way, the scent is charged with the relaxed feeling of that particular moment.

When going to sleep, the second part of the ritual follows. The rainbow-coloured strip is taken from the box, together with a small nightlight. Now, the children place the strip in the nightlight and place it by their beds as a scented nightlight. The more often Present Moments is used, the stronger the association between the scent and the relaxed mood becomes.

Mood and resilience

In order to create a suitable ritual, Jonas designed Present Moments together with the children from his target group. The children loved to actively work on their own mood. Present Moments turned out to work in different ways. The scent has an immediate, relaxing effect because the children have learned to associate it with a serene mood. The evening part of the ritual stimulates a good night's sleep, which also contributes to a balanced mood. And by making this ritual their own, the children became more aware of their moods and how they can influence their moods in playful ways. With his design, Jonas has shown that it is possible to actively regulate our mood using scents. He experienced this during his project as well: "Now that I pay more attention to scents, I appreciate the little moments in life more, such as during a short walk – simply by enjoying the scents."



Jonas Bähr developed Present Moments as thesis project for the master's programme Design for Interaction at the TU Delft. The project was a joint initiative of International Flavors and Fragrances (IFF) and the Delft Institute of Positive Design (DIOPD) with the goal to explore how scents can contribute to people's well-being. Thesis supervisors were Pieter Desmet, Eric Jepma (TU Delft), Stan Knoop, Jose Santiago Moreno and Marieke Kooijmans (IFF). With special thanks to Jelle and Jip for the photo demonstration. For more information: www.diopd.org



Ready to get started

A pinch of fragrance

Position the card

Remove the card

Assemble the light

A fragrant night light

Billy Cash: saving for happiness

Design by Santiago De Francisco Vela

Money doesn't buy happiness. Or does it? Research has shown that: It is our activities that make us happy, not the products we surround ourselves with. A new TV, smartphone, pair of shoes, kitchen appliances or a car – they may give us brief joy, but the happiness-effect does not last. Activities and the new experiences we gain through these activities have a much longer effect on our happiness. In other words, if you wish to invest in your happiness, you don't spend your money on new products, but rather on new activities and experiences. But, what about saving? Nearly everyone saves or has saved money at some point. Can the activity of saving contribute to our happiness? Designer Santiago De Francisco Vela designed a digital money box that gives saving a deeper meaning.

The money box

Saving is the activity of 'setting something aside for the future'; setting aside part of your income to spend it on something in the future without having to borrow money. Children traditionally save with a money box. The box makes saving literally tangible: The physical presence motivates saving and the weight is an immediate indicator of the progress. Adults usually save digitally, for instance through online banking. Digital money boxes are efficient, but they miss the tangible qualities of the piggy bank.



The meaning of saving

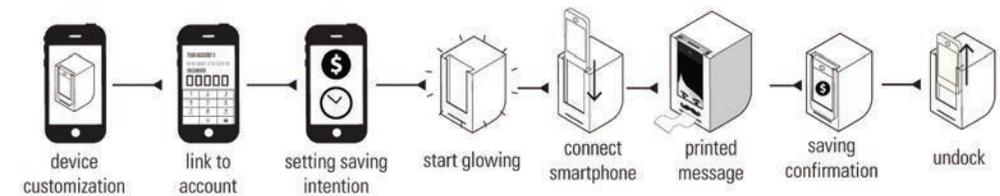
Santiago aimed to design a form of digital saving that can contribute to the saver's happiness by making saving tangible again. In his research, he discovered three key insights. Imagine you are saving up for a new pair of running shoes. The first insight was that saving is more meaningful when the relation to the saving goal is made more tangible – the running shoes. The second insight was that ‘the thing itself’ does not make the saver happier, but rather the activities that he or she will undertake with the product: The activity of running rather than the shoes themselves. And the third insight was that the contribution to happiness is mainly driven by specific and personal qualities of those activities. The joy of exercising outside, the feeling of physical fitness afterwards, the satisfaction of running with friends, or perhaps a combination of those qualities. On the basis of those three insights, Santiago came up with the idea to develop a money box that encourages you to save in a way that makes you more aware of how what you are saving up for will contribute to your personal well-being.

Making saving tangible

The design is called Billy Cash: a combination of a base station (Billy) and a smartphone app (Cash). As soon as you put your smartphone in Billy, it turns



into a money box. Billy Cash helps you to organise saving. You choose a character and enter your savings goal and savings time. Billy gives you the overview of the progress of your savings and motivates you to achieve your goal. But it does much more than that. It guides you in discovering the deeper meaning of the product (or experience) you are saving for, in terms of what you are going to do with it, how it will enrich your life and what personal values it represents. Periodically, Billy prints small labels with questions that stimulate you to think about the meaning of your savings goal. Examples include:

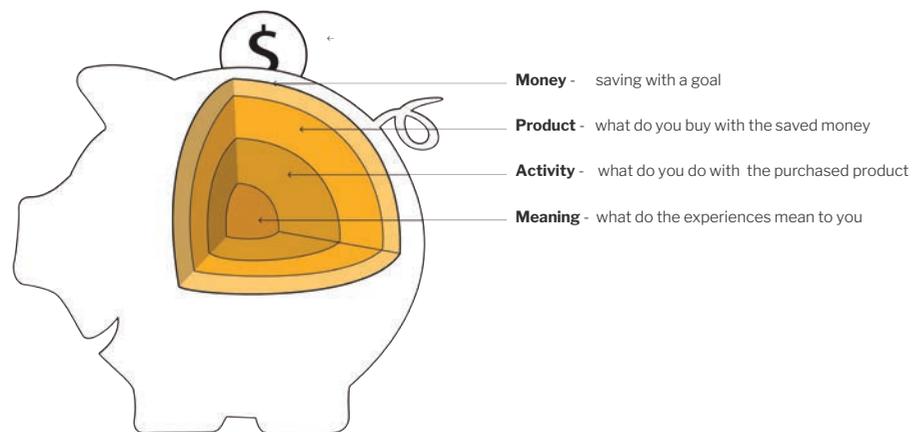


‘Which personal talents and skills will you utilise and develop with your running shoes?’ ‘How will your running shoes stimulate your creativity?’ ‘Can you contribute to your community with your running shoes?’ ‘What can you learn from your running shoes?’ By encouraging reflection, Billy Cash helps you to discover the true value of your savings goal.

Saving for happiness

Santiago has had his Billy Cash tested by various people. Billy appeared to have a stronger impact

on their saving behaviour than he had anticipated. The stimulating questions encouraged people to think about the necessity of their savings goals: ‘Is this product really worth saving for?’ Some users came to the realisation that their savings goal would probably not contribute to their happiness as much as they had initially thought. And so, they adapted their savings goals. ‘I really don’t need a new TV; I’ll save up for a trip to Brazil!’ Saving as time for consideration – and that is how Billy helps you to spend money on what truly makes you happy.



Santiago De Francisco Vela developed Billy Cash as a thesis project for the master’s programme *Design for Interaction* at the TU Delft. The project was Santiago’s own initiative in collaboration with the *Delft Institute of Positive Design* (DIOPD) and Rabobank NL with the goal to explore how saving can contribute to happiness. Thesis supervisors were Pieter Desmet and Mafalda Casais (TU Delft). A film clip of Billy Cash: <https://vimeo.com/101157931> For more information: www.diopd.org

Stadsdorp Story: Designing for the general happiness of the community

Design by Hester van Zuthem

Happiness is personal. I flourish when I am able to develop my talents and when I am able to pursue my personal goals. In other words, well-being is the domain of the individual. Therefore, Positive Design starts with the individual: “Who am I designing for? What are her talents, virtues and goals?” That forms the basis for the design process, resulting in a product that contributes to the happiness of that specific person. But how do you design for the happiness of a community? There is no such thing as the average person: There are as many talents and goals as there are people. How can we handle that diversity? Designers often focus on the similarities between individuals. There is always a shared goal or skill. That approach is effective, but not entirely risk-free. Because consensus does not always lead to creativity. The spark of a design often lies in the extraordinary, the imaginative or the unconventional.

For this reason, designer Hester van Zuthem came up with an original approach: “Imagine that the community is a ‘living being’, with its own needs, like an autonomous entity. When that entity flourishes, that also stimulates the happiness of the individuals within.” With this idea in



mind, Hester developed a design vision, and a design for Stadsdorp Nieuwmarkt, a neighbourhood community in Amsterdam.

Flourishing of a community

Hester analysed a series of existing communities and discovered four basic traits: A community has (1) multiple members, with (2) common goals, (3) a connecting structure between the members, and (4) a clear boundary between members and non-members. Additionally, she discovered four core qualities of flourishing communities. A flourishing community:

- Has a characteristic and unique identity. This is supported by traditions, symbols, achievements and heritage.
- Is resilient. The community maintains itself through changing circumstances, by renewing itself and remaining relevant. Resilience is supported by a flexible organisation and openness to renewal.
- Is active. It actively contributes to identifying and achieving common goals.
- Has continuity. It is not dependent upon specific members for its continued existence.

This is stimulated by a clear long-term mission and shared ownership. Flourishing communities often exist longer than a single human life; they 'outlive' their members.

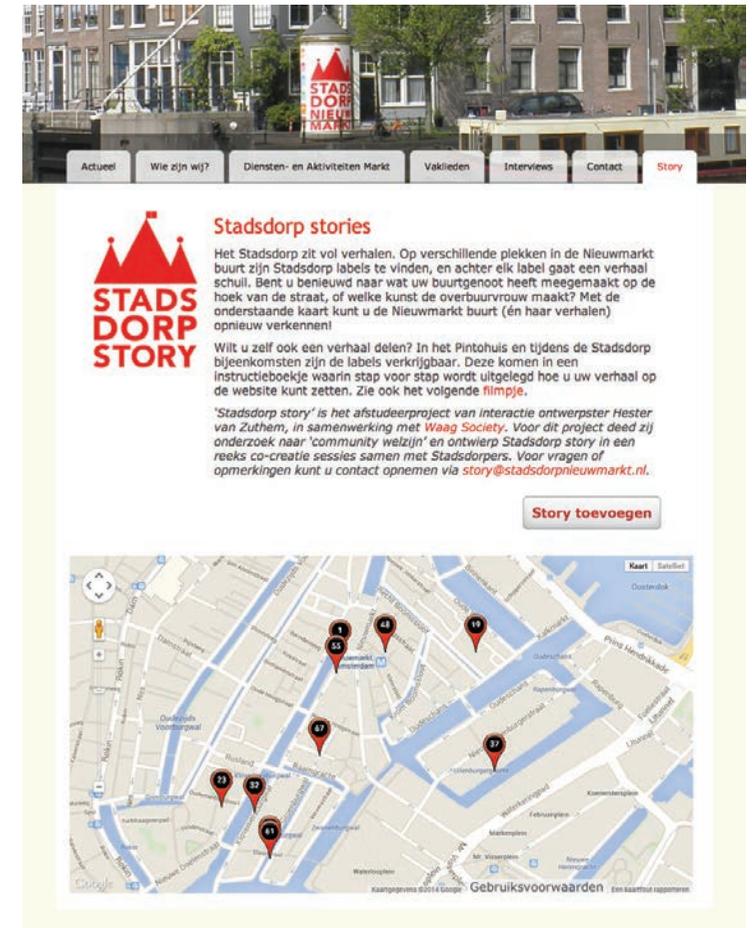
Stadsdorp Nieuwmarkt

Stadsdorp Nieuwmarkt (SDNM) is a citizens' initiative by the Nieuwmarktbuurt in Amsterdam that aims to connect the advantages of a small town with those of the city. Hester interviewed SDNM members to understand what the community's state of well-being was. She discovered an unfulfilled need in the third core quality: A lack of activity. Apart from an active core group, most members have a somewhat passive attitude. New members find it hard to become active. Taking that first step towards a more active membership was the basis of Hester's design.

The Stadsdorp Story

Hester designed 'Stadsdorp Story' for sharing personal stories about the neighbourhood. The design consists of three components: labels, a website with interactive map and an inspirational booklet.

The label - With the Stadsdorp Story label, the Stadsdorp residents can reveal something personal.



You attach it to an object somewhere in the neighbourhood. Think of homemade art in a windowsill or a birdhouse on a tree. It does not matter what it is, as long as it is part of a story. The labels of 6 by 9 centimetres are shaped like the Stadsdorp logo and are made of fluorescent pink plexiglass. The bright colour increases their visibility. They give a hint, but do not reveal the story, which stimulates curiosity.

The map - The second part of the design is an interactive map of the neighbourhood. Each label can be found on the map by means of a unique number. When you have discovered a label in the neighbourhood, you can find it on the map and read the personal story behind it. The number on the label is a subtle clue that more can be discovered; a treasure hunt in your own neighbourhood. Stadsdorp residents get to know each other through the stories, and this leads to a sense of connectedness.

The booklet - The Stadsdorp Story requires active participation of Stadsdorp residents. The inspiration booklet helps them with this. It contains an explanation and inspiring examples about the use of the label. Stadsdorp residents can also invite each other to contribute a story by giving each other a label.

With the Stadsdorp Story, Hester has removed the barrier that hindered active contribution to the community. Stadsdorp residents can get to know each other by sharing something of themselves, and the stories form a collective portrait of the SDNM community. The noticeable labels create recognition and coherence. At the same time, this unity functions as a stage for personal, unique and surprising insights into the world of the various Stadsdorp residents.



Shared ownership

Hester did not focus on the needs of the individual, but on those of the community as an entity. Does this community have a recognisable identity and continuity, is it resilient and active? This approach yielded a surprising additional benefit. She discovered that it is very inspiring for the members to work with the core qualities themselves. In doing

so, Hester was able to let a diverse group of Stadsdorp residents share in the design process. This 'co-design' approach resulted in strong sense of ownership and gave the Stadsdorp residents the opportunity to work on the communal needs themselves. And that is how Stadsdorp Story started to lead its own life, independent of Hester - and for a designer that is a great compliment.



Hester van Zuthem developed the Stadsdorp Story as thesis project for the master's programme Design for Interaction at the TU Delft. The project was Hester's own initiative in collaboration with Stadsdorp Nieuwmarkt (Amsterdam), the Delft Institute of Positive Design, and Waag Society (Amsterdam) with the goal to explore how designers can contribute to the well-being of communities. Thesis supervisors were Pieter Desmet and Marieke Sonneveld (TU Delft), Marise Schot and Sacha van Tongeren (Waag Society). For more information: www.diopd.org/ <http://studiolab.ide.tudelft.nl/diopd/projects/design-projects/design-for-community-well-being/>

Embassy of Youth: Loitering teens of Rotterdam-Zuid discover their unique talents

Design by Lisa van de Merwe

You probably know the headlines “Loitering teens ruin late night shopping around metro station Beurs”, “Loitering teens plague the IJsselmonde district”, “Complaints about municipality of Rotterdam after trouble with loitering teens”, and “Amsterdam district Banne Buiksloot terrorised by loitering teens”. A loitering teen is an infamous phenomenon. When he – usually a boy – makes the news, it is usually due to nuisance, littering or vandalism. In order to reduce that nuisance, far-reaching measures are sometimes taken. In extreme cases, municipalities may impose a restraining order or a ban on gathering in groups, if necessary with police enforcement. Less drastic is installing a so-called Mosquito, a device that produces a high-pitched sound. Inaudible to adults, but particularly irritating to adolescents. That is only one of the means by which teens are ‘chased away’ from their spots, just like experimentation with increased camera supervision, playing classical music, police surveillance and even applying pink lighting.

EMBASSY
OF
YOUTH



ambassy-of-youth.org
#embassyofyouth

**MOONDAY
THE WEEKEND
MOVES ON...**

- EVERY MONDAY DEEP-TECH-HOUSE -

04-05-15 SUN JAMO | YOSH HOUZER

11-05-15 TORUS PROJECT | N.O.B.

18-05-15 EDUARDO DE LA TORRE | TORUS PROJECT

25-05-15 MARINGO | N.O.B. | YOSH HOUZER

01.11.2015

The stereotypical troublemaker

Measures against loitering teens are often understandable, and maybe even necessary. But, at the same time, they leave a bitter aftertaste – solutions such as the Mosquito almost remind me of some kind of pest control. What do these negative associations do to the teens' self-image? Because, of course, not all loitering teens are troublemakers. Most are just normal teenagers; young people with their own values, insecurities, dreams, ideals and talents. Designer Lisa van de Merwe aimed to design something for rather than against these teenagers. The idea is that a positive approach can support the well-being of both the teens and of other residents.

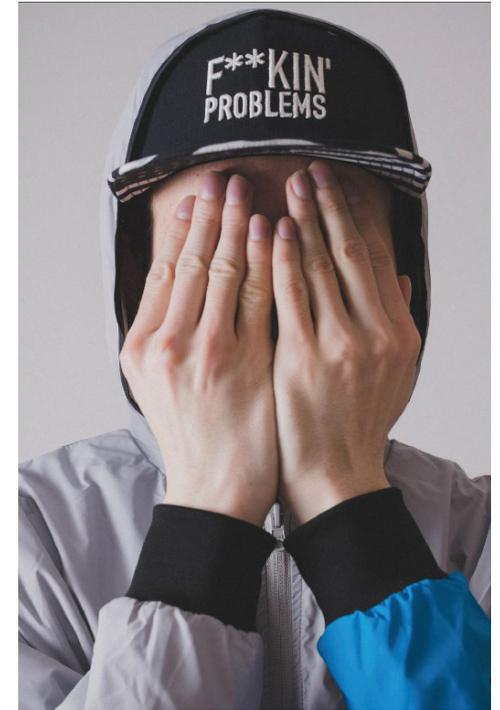
Loitering teens in Rotterdam-Zuid

Lisa focused on teens in the Feijenoord district in Rotterdam-Zuid. This district has a bad reputation and is known to the rest of the world as a 'bad neighbourhood'. She studied the street life of the local teenage boys. They talked about their moti-

ventions and experiences, the meaning of street life and how their self-image is influenced by the residents' responses. Additionally, Lisa also spoke to a diverse group of residents, youth workers and other experts. As it turned out, the boys experience their street life to be particularly positive. In the streets, they are free to express themselves, uninhibited by limitations of family, work or school. Here, they feel connected to their friends and experience the room to develop their personality. In short, they feel at home in the streets, and the streets have become part of their identity. At the same time, neighbourhood residents have a very negative attitude towards them on the streets. They are confronted with rejection and stereotyping. Then, they feel misunderstood, because it looks like their opinion does not count, both in the neighbourhood and in their world.

The Talent Toolkit

Lisa's design focuses on personal talents as that is a field that's often neglected due to the negative approach. Lisa decided to design something that approaches those talents with attention and encouragement. She named her design the 'Embassy of Youth' as a reference to the street as the context of their shared identity. The idea was developed together with the adolescents and youth workers. The key is a toolkit they can use to explore and develop their talents together. The kit consists of a set of cards and an online platform (website and Instagram) with positive anecdotes and tips from local role models. The cards are used in three workshops that are given by the youth workers over a period of three to four weeks. During the workshop, adolescents discover their own talents (workshop 1: Discover), what they can do with these (workshop 2: Do), and how those can be valuable now and in the future (workshop 3: Reflect).





Fifteen talents in the Talent Toolkit

The talent cards

The toolkit contains six sets of fifteen talent cards and eight cards with an activity or a design for discussion (eight different cards per workshop). In the workshops, the teens use the cards to explore which talents make them unique. Each talent card depicts a talent with a description, a photo and a quote from a local hero. The cards give the adolescents a language by which to express their talents (for instance in an interview). In the workshop, they name each other's talents, which is often easier than recognising your own talents. For them, it often proves to be valuable just to realise that those 'roles' on the cards are actually talents, and that they can use these talents. The photos and quotes are connected to personal stories about talents on the website of the Embassy of Youth. Between the workshops, the teenagers work on assignments; something to undertake or think about. Residents can also play a role, for instance by participating in the workshops or by supporting the teenagers.

The online platform

The Embassy of Youth is a website where stories are gathered about the talents of young people in Rotterdam-Zuid. Because negative stories already receive ample attention, this platform only focuses on the positive side. The goal is to make adolescents see how much potential they actually have. The stories are very varied, from unknown teenagers to the local neighbourhood heroes, such as the owner of a boxing school or a local rap artist. They each tell about their own talents and they give tips on how you can use your talents. After the workshops, the participants can also place their own stories on the website.

Beyond prejudice

Lisa was surprised by the people she encountered in her project. Upon the start, she had not foreseen that she would be designing for teenagers in the street, a target group she knew absolutely nothing about. But it turned out to be possible to make a connection –and she discovered that one of her own talents was that of 'the connector'. In her own words: "After spending many nights out on the street with the youth workers, and visiting local football matches and a Christmas dinner in the community centre, I can honestly say I now know Feijenoord better than my own neighbourhood." Lisa was not led by prejudice, and this made her open to unplanned, inspiring encounters. From the connector to the inventor, everyone has talents; sometimes, you just need a little help to become aware of them.



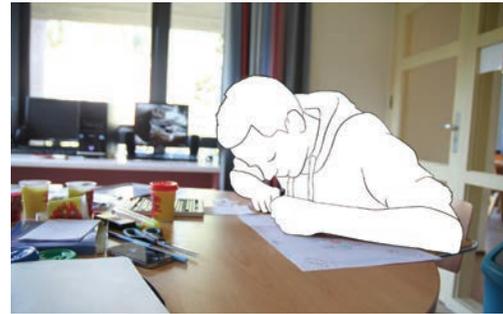
Lisa van de Merwe developed the Embassy of Youth as thesis project for the master's programme Design for Interaction at the TU Delft. The project was initiated by Lisa and Anna Pohlmeier, and conducted in collaboration with Oxfam GB and the Delft Institute of Positive Design, with the goal to explore how designers can contribute to the well-being of teenagers in the Rotterdam Feijenoord district. The thesis supervisors were Anna Pohlmeier, Stella Boess, Jay Yoon (TU Delft), and Katherine Trebeck (Oxfam). www.diopd.org and www.embassyofyouth.org



Punching, kicking, stroking and rocking: Glowb calms you during a psychological crisis.

Design by Maik de Rooij

A ball. That is what this piece is about. So, nothing new. After all, as long as there have been people, we have been playing with balls. In the *Odyssey*, Homer describes the ball game of princess Nausicaa and her friends. Ball games are depicted on ancient Egyptian monuments, and have been extensively described by the Romans. In short, the ball is everywhere. It plays the leading role in more than 50 sports, from football to billiards, juggling, tennis and bowling. And yet, you can design a *new* ball; one that is different from all existing balls. That is what Maik de Rooij did. With Glowb, he designed an interactive ball for a special group in a special situation: A ball to regulate tension during a psychological crisis in adolescent psychiatry.



Research with patients and sociotherapists

Karakter

Maik designed the ball for Karakter, a centre for child and adolescent psychiatry. Karakter offers diagnostics and treatment of ADHD, autism, anxiety disorders, OCD, behavioural disorders, psychosis and other psychiatric problems to children and adolescents of 0-23 years old. Patients can come to Karakter for an Intensive Home Treatment (IHT). This concerns an intensive treatment at home, but during a crisis, temporary hospitalisation is possible in the High & Intensive Care (HIC), a relatively new form of short-term clinical hospitalisation in mental healthcare. Such hospitalisation is used in case of a severe psychological crisis. With HIC, patients can be helped in a dignified manner, in an environment where safety and protection are combined with respectful care and treatment.

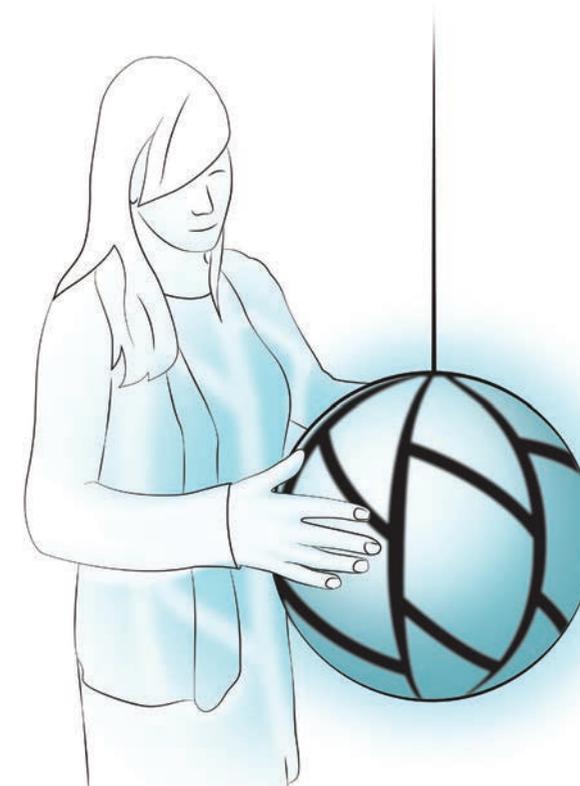
Comfort room

A central location in the HIC centre is the *comfort room*. That is a room where restless or anxious

patients can have a moment to themselves. It is a one-person room, with a possibility for one-on-one supervision. Patients indicate when they wish to make use of this room, on a voluntary basis. In the comfort room, they can relax in a comfortable and pleasant environment so as to prevent further escalation. The preventive effect of this room often means putting patients in isolation is no longer necessary. Comfort rooms have been designed as friendly and tranquil rooms with warm colours and furniture of soft materials.

Safety and autonomy

Maik's challenge was to design an 'object' for the new comfort room of the child and adolescent psychiatric centre in Nijmegen. The design serves to help patients during a psychological crisis. Can an object help regulate tension? In order to explore this, Maik had to study the characteristics of psychological emergency situations. Why causes the patients' crises? How do they cope with them?

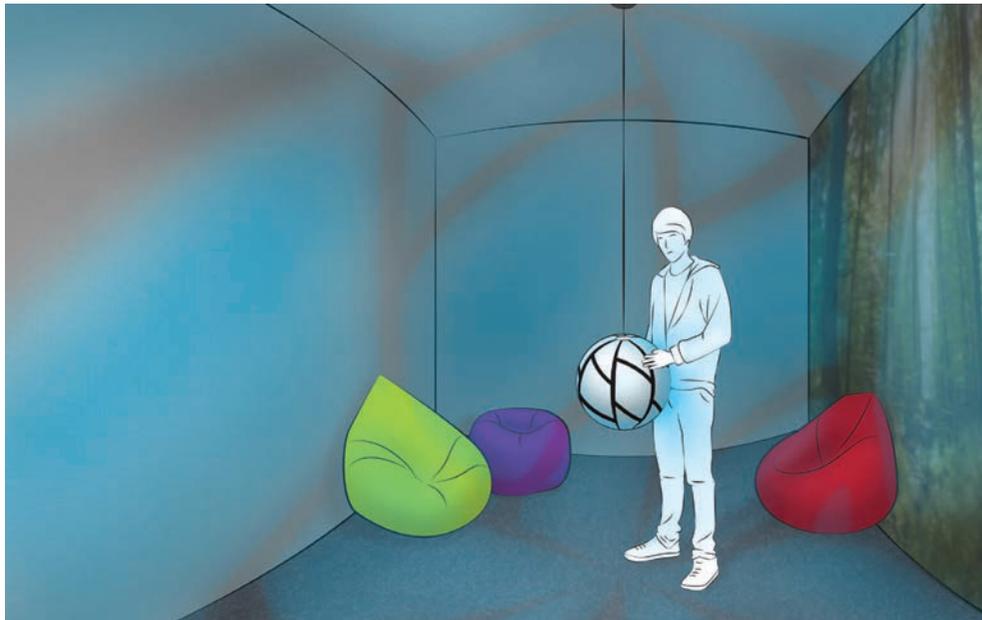


What is the role of their surroundings? What do they need and how can an object contribute to this? Maik observed the current situation. He spoke to carers, patients and parents. He distilled a leading theme from his findings: the balance between safety and autonomy.

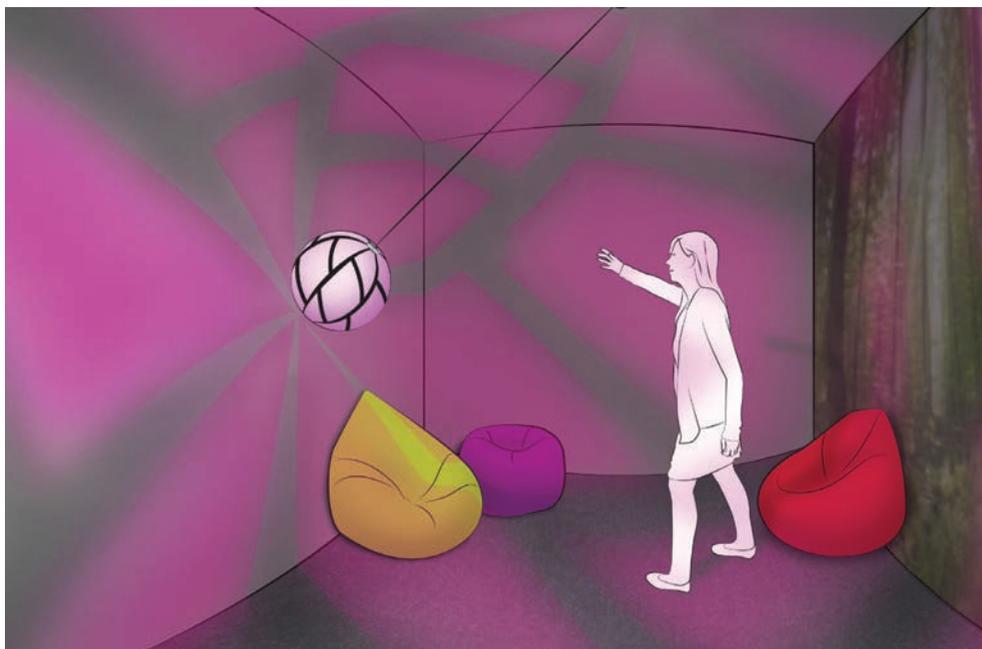
Glowb

During his research, Maik discovered that there is no one single need. There are various strategies to cope with crisis, and what strategy is effective depends on the phase the crisis is in. If you are frustrated or angry, you seek to express your negative energy in a physical way. But if you are anxious or psychotic, you need something that helps you to organise your thoughts. Sometimes, you wish to lose yourself in a fun activity, to escape from your own emotions. Glowb makes this possible. Glowb is a large, soft, elastic ball that hangs from the ceiling in the comfort room. You can use it in a fierce and active way, but also carefully and gently.





Glowb in careful interaction



Glowb in fierce interaction



Fierce interaction

You give Glowb a powerful punch. It bounces off the wall. This converts your negative energy into action. The ball makes a sound, radiates a bright light and bounces back. This demands a response; your attention shifts from your negative thoughts to the returning ball. How do you respond? Do you catch the ball, evade it or punch it again? The bright light reinforces the interaction by changing the entire environment. Glowb clearly shows: I heard you.

Careful interactions

You can also communicate more gently with Glowb. You stroke or rock it, or make it swing or spin. The ball reacts as expected: It moves gently, glows and slowly changes colour. You move your attention to the light effects that fill the room; soft colours that slowly merge into each other. The colours help you to calmly organise your thoughts. You take a moment to sit down and think about the situation. If you stop the interaction, the Glowb continues to glow softly.

Maik built a prototype to test his design. Users were very enthusiastic. They experience the light effects as a reflection of their own emotional condition and behaviour, making them more aware of their own feelings. The focus on the light effects helps to let go of negative thoughts, so new thoughts have room to form.

Psychiatry versus design

Before he met Karakter, Maik never would have thought he would be designing for a psychiatric centre. It was a completely new experience. He was particularly surprised by the similarities in work methods: "For me as a designer, it was certainly worthwhile to work with healthcare professionals. Their patient-oriented approach perfectly matched with how I learned to design: the user is always the focus." Currently, Glowb is being further developed and the design will be installed in comfort rooms. That is the best compliment a person can get for a graduation project.



Maik de Rooij (picture) developed Glowb as a thesis for the master's programme *Design for Interaction* at the TU Delft. The project was an initiative of Karakter child and adolescent psychiatry, with the goal to design an object that can contribute to tension regulation in a new *comfort room*. Thesis supervisors were Marieke Sonneveld, Susie Brand-de-Groot (TU Delft), Josephine Boots and Nancy Degen (Karakter). For more information: www.diopd.org

The Goedzak: Give your old things a new life

Design by Simon Akkaya

“It was a dark winter evening in the centre of Amsterdam. We were on our way to the supermarket for groceries. Suddenly, my friend walked over to a bike that was parked next to the supermarket. He bent over the bike and switched off the red tail light. Apparently, the owner had forgotten to do so. His action fascinated me; it was an act of altruism.”

With this anecdote, Simon Akkaya introduces the subject of his thesis: the social phenomenon of altruism. He based his thesis on the definition by medical humanitarian Steven Post: “An altruist is someone who does something for another, for the benefit of the other person, rather than to promote his or her own well-being.” Simon wondered: can I design products that encourage people to display such selfless behaviour? To find ideas, he studied literature, interviewed sociologists, and analysed existing products that support social behaviour.

Designing for altruism

He applied his insights in three domains: altruism in the context of nutrition, immigration and waste. He designed a concept for each domain. The first was ‘variable bread’ (image 1). You pay a fixed price for your bread, but



the size of the loaf of bread is linked to the fluctuations of the international grain price. The packaging provides information on the current grain price. With this bread, you donate the value for the part you don't eat to those who suffer most from high grain prices. The second design was an 'open postcard' (image 2), with which immigrants and local residents can contact each other. Immigrants can also distribute postcards with a personal interest of theirs on it. The card is stamped and addressed to a central address where they are processed. The location reveals something about his or her interest, such as a library, a music shop, or a coffee bar. The resident can write down an offer and mail the postcard to get in contact with the sender.

The Goedzak

The Goedzak (image 3) was the third design in the series. This striking transparent bag gives your old things a chance for a new life. Sometimes, we throw away things that are still perfectly usable. Perhaps, we are not able to take them to a thrift shop, or we simply think it is too much trouble. The Goedzak then offers us an opportunity to do a good deed: fill it with the things you no longer need, and put it out on the street. Anyone can simply pick what they believe can be of value to them. That is how your old things find a new owner. He or she will feel



The variable bread



good about your altruistic deed, and you contribute to sustainability. The Goedzak keeps the things clean and dry. The bright yellow stripe attracts people's attention, and the transparent part makes the contents visible to passers-by. Remaining items are picked up by the charity shop at the end of the day.

The Goedzak is a surprisingly simple, sustainable and social way to discard the products you don't need anymore. The best ideas are often deceptively simple, and the same is true for The Goedzak - which has become a great success. The design won the 'New Material Award' during the Dutch Design Week and was picked up by international media. Simon works with the municipalities of Amsterdam and Eindhoven, and is now designing a special version for supermarket chain Albert Heijn for children to donate their toys during the holidays (image 4). Currently, an online version has also been launched: www.goedzak.com



The open postcard



Designers with vision

Looking back on his thesis project, Simon says: "This is by far the most difficult project I've done during my studies. Beforehand, I would never have accepted a graduation project if I had known that I'd be designing a garbage bag, a postcard and a bread bag. My friends had a good laugh about it - 'Is that the future of design?' But now I'm proud of the result. For the first time, I was able to design without knowing beforehand what the product would be. That open start was a unique challenge and a

great learning experience. Eventually, I managed to capture a lot of complexity in those few simple objects." By now, Simon and his classmate Maarten Heijltjes have their own design agency, Waarmakers. Their mission is to design objects that make people think, encourage them to put things in perspective, are funny and, of course, are sustainable. In short, designers with heart. Or in the words of the Waarmakers themselves: "We like stuff, but we like people better."



Simon Akkaya developed De Goedzak in 2009 as thesis project at Reframing Studio (Amsterdam) for the master's programme *Integrated Product Design* at the TU Delft. The project was his own initiative and part of a wider study into altruism, with the specific question of how designers can support and encourage altruism. Thesis supervisors were Paul Hekkert, Ruud van Heur (TU Delft), and Femke de Boer (Reframing Studio). www.waarmakers.nl

Fizzy & Stickz: take the woods to the hospital

Design by Boudewijn Boon

A rock isn't just a rock. It's a *gemstone*. An elf lives in a hollow oak, a fallen tree branch is a knight's sword, and you can make a kettle of witch's soup with a bucket full of leaves. The woods are a wonderful place to play. But what can you do if you can't bring a child to the woods? You bring the woods to the child! This is the essence of *Stickz*, a set of soft, ambiguous branch-shaped objects designed by PhD candidate Boudewijn Boon. Sometimes, a design is so apt that you can't help but wonder why it wasn't thought of before. A design with a primary attraction that immediately raises everyone's curiosity. *Stickz* had that effect on me. My first response was 'wow', and I immediately understood the importance of these objects.

Playing at the hospital

Boudewijn studies how young children (2-9 years old) can be encouraged to engage in physical play in the context of a hospital. At this age, children develop important motor skills that form the foundation for their future physical activities. If, due to disease or injury, they are confronted with long-term hospitalisation, the development of those motor skills can suffer. Movement constrictions limit the stamina and muscular strength, which influences their daily functioning in the short and long term.

In order to prevent stagnation, it is very important for these children to stay active. This brings various chal-



lenges. First, physical activity is often impeded by the disease or injury itself. Additionally, many children feel frightened or anxious in the unknown environment with often unpleasant medical procedures. Parents can also have an overprotective attitude, at the expense of the child's initiatives. But, the physical environment also plays an important role. The interior of hospitals is optimised for safety, hygiene and comfort; not for physical activity. Medical equipment limits mobility and the beds discourage children from being active. Boudewijn wondered: "How can designers create space for young children to play and move in a hospital environment?"

Playscapes

Boudewijn was inspired by outdoor play in a natural environment. Particularly in that kind of play, such as in the woods or the park, children get a lot of exercise. On the basis of his analysis, he developed *Playscapes*, a design perspective in which three core qualities of outdoor play can be introduced in a hospital environment: physical, spread out and free play.

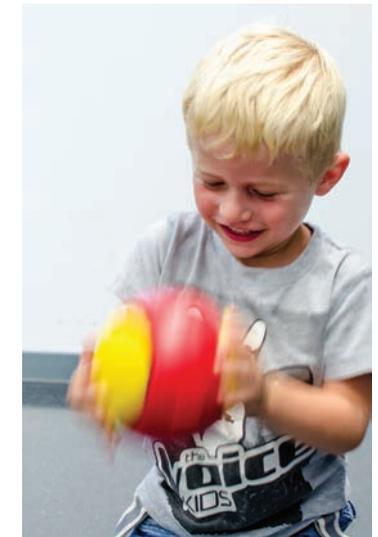
- **Physical play** - Rolling down a hill and climbing trees. Physical play has great variation in terms of gross motor movements and makes use of the large muscles.
- **Spread out play** - Playing in the playground,

but also in the bushes and underneath the picnic table. Spread out play is uninhibited by the boundaries of the appointed playing field.

- **Free play** - A stick becomes a magic wand and pine cones become hedgehogs. Free play is unstructured, spontaneous and without rules set up in advance.

Fizzy & Stickz

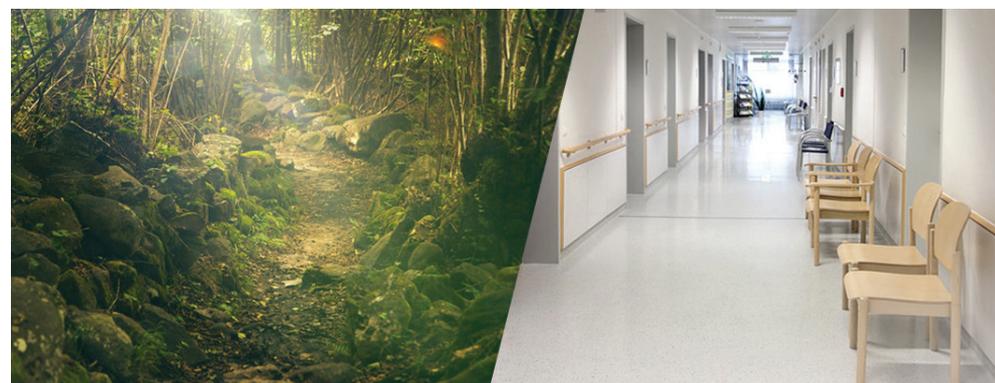
Boudewijn studies how the three Playscape qualities can be used in hospitals by means of design interventions. He does this by means of two designs: Fizzy and Stickz. These are suitable for both playing with others and individual play. Fizzy is a soft ball with a will of its own: It wiggles to draw your attention, rolls away when you approach it, shakes when it's picked up hard and purrs when it's stroked. With this behavioural repertoire, he invites the children to follow him and to play with him, while the child can give his or her own meaning to this (for instance Fizzy as a ball or Fizzy as an animal). Stickz is a collection of soft, branch-shaped objects. The branches differ in shape, colour and size. They have ring-shaped endings that can serve as handles or connections. The Stickz invite children to drag, carry and build. The multiple shapes encourage fantasy. A single branch can be a sword or an animal, a built structure can be a fort, but also an airplane or palace.



Fizzy in action



Stickz in action



The Playscape perspective: outdoor play as inspiration for the design of hospital environments

Research by designing

Fizzy was tested in patient rooms, and Stickz in a semi-public waiting room. For Boudewijn, Fizzy and Stickz are a means to conduct his research: "They are a medium to gain insight into the interactions between the children, their parents, brothers and sisters, and the different healthcare professionals. Fizzy and Stickz have given me greater understanding of everyone's role in encouraging and supporting physical play." By testing the prototypes in the

hospital, he is able to further develop and detail the Playscapes perspective. But Stickz is much more than that - it is a design with a convincing value on its own; a design that deserves to be made and used. Therefore, an alternate version of this is currently being created for application in the Prinses Máxima Centrum. In doing so, Boudewijn develops both knowledge and implementable designs. In my opinion, a beautiful example of how research and designing can reinforce each other.



Boudewijn Boon developed Fizzy and Stickz as part of his PhD research under the supervision of Pieter Jan Stappers (PhD supervisor), Marry van den Heuvel-Eibrink (PhD supervisor), Marco Rozendaal (PhD supervisor) and Janjaap van der Net (external advisor). The study is part of the "Meedoen=Groeien!" project, a collaboration with the Revalidatiefonds and the Prinses Máxima Centrum for children's oncology. Meedoen=Groeien! is financially supported by the VriendenLoterij. Boudewijn is a member of the TU Delft *Connected Everyday Lab* and the *Delft Institute of Positive Design*.

For more information, see:

<http://www.meedoenisgroeien.nl/>

<https://www.tudelft.nl/io/over-de-faculteit/persoonlijke-profielen/phd-kandidaten/boon-mjb/>





Tinytask: Your daily dose of happiness

Design by Hans Ruitenberg

Sometimes I read a book and think, this changes everything, now I've learned something that will really make my life better. That is the experience I had when reading 'The How of Happiness' (2007) by American psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky. First, she gives us the bad news: We often try to find our happiness in life in the wrong things. Things like expensive cars or the latest smartphone. But she has good news as well: We are able to raise our happiness level in a lasting way, you just have to know how. She provides twelve strategies and related happiness-increasing activities, such as, 'showing gratitude' and 'cultivating optimism'. I was inspired. Now I knew exactly what I needed to do in order to become happy! After two months, I took stock; I hadn't undertaken a single happiness activity and my behaviour remained completely unchanged. Mainly, I was frustrated by my failure, so all in all things were worse than when I started. Why had all my initial motivation amounted to nothing? Where had my good intentions run aground?

From insight to action

When you finish a book, you put it on a shelf and that is where it will usually remain. I did the same thing with this 'happiness book'. It literally disappeared into the background of my daily life. Products are different. Products are always around us, everywhere and in everything we do. That gave me an idea. Would it be possible to use a product to turn the insights from the book into some-



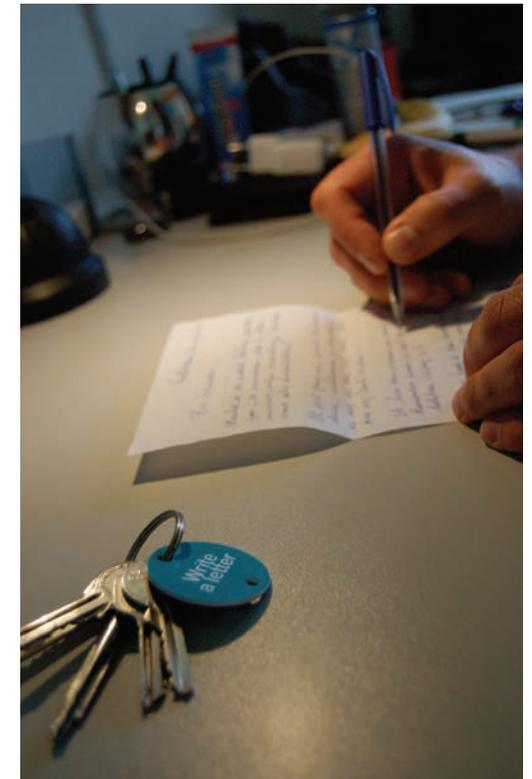
thing tangible, integrating it into our daily routine? That was the question that inspired designer Hans Ruitenberg. He challenged himself to design 'something' that would entice and help people to do the happiness activities. The result is Tinytask, a range of fun key rings.

Tinytask

Tinytask is a collection of brightly coloured coins. Each coin represents a small challenge (a 'tiny task'). This is how it works: You get an envelope containing six coins. The coins have symbols on them indicating the challenges. You pick a coin to start with. You take it from the envelope and read the short instructions underneath the coin. For example: 'Give a sincere compliment to someone who is not expecting it.' Or, 'Turn on your favourite song and dance to it. Don't be afraid to be a little silly.' Then you attach the coin to your key ring. It is a small but significant act; it signifies you committing to the task. Each time you use your keys, it reminds you. When you have completed the task, you pick another coin. You can keep it last coin or give it to someone else as a present. After you have carried out five of the six assignments, you get another envelope with a new set of coins. Hans created fifty small challenges that together represent the twelve happiness activities by Sonja Lyubomirsky.

I do and I understand

In his research, Hans discovered that people encounter all kinds of obstacles when doing the happiness strategies. As a consequence, those activities require surprisingly more will power and discipline than you might have expected. Hans focused on three obstacles in particular. The first one is that it's hard to translate the general strategies (like 'taking care of your body' and 'committing to your goals') into concrete and realistic actions. Second, there is the fact that it's not easy to include those actions in your daily routine, and third is the challenge to stay motivated. Hans was inspired by the famous Xun-

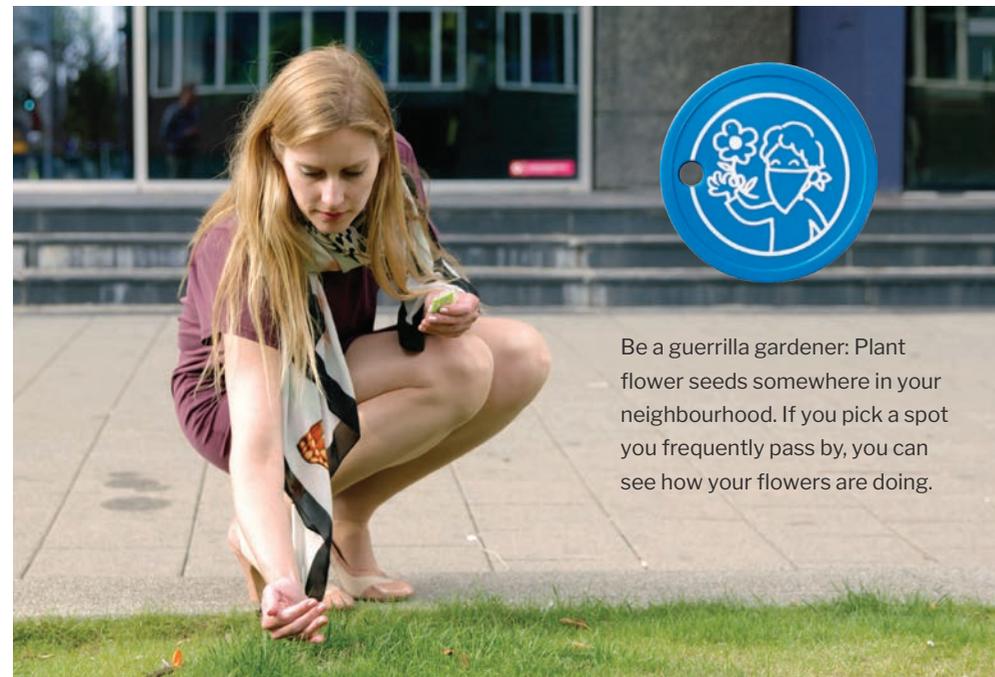


zi's famous quote (818 AD): 'I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.' That is why doing is paramount. Tinytask stimulates you to take action, followed by reflection and insight. The coins translate the abstract strategies into small, manageable challenges and offer a tangible motivation. The wide range of challenges stimulates curiosity and also gives you the freedom to decide the speed and intensity of the activities.

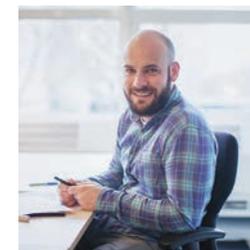
Design as a source of happiness

The project was a challenge for Hans: 'It was an open assignment without any conditions. At first, I relished the freedom. As a designer, you often

have limitations. For instance from a stubborn client, very specific requirements or a demanding target group.' Conditions can be restrictive, but they also give you something to hold on to. For this project, there was practically no limit to what could be designed. Hans found a way by making and testing a wide range of designs step by step. As a result, he involved a lot of people in his design process. That made the project a source of happiness for himself: 'I would unexpectedly get touching responses from people. There was one lady who wrote that after having secretly been in love for months, Tinytask helped her act on it and express her feelings to her colleague. Now they're a happy couple.' A small challenge – with a big impact.



Be a guerrilla gardener: Plant flower seeds somewhere in your neighbourhood. If you pick a spot you frequently pass by, you can see how your flowers are doing.



Hans Ruitenberg developed Tinytask in 2010 as his graduation project at the Delft Institute of Positive Design (DIOPD). The project was started by Pieter Desmet and supervised by Walter Aprile. The Tinytask design was further developed by Steven Fokkinga from Emotion Studio (Rotterdam) in 2017. <http://studiolab.ide.tudelft.nl/diopd/projects/design-projects/tiny-tasks-by-hans-ruitenberg/>

Reference

- Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The How of Happiness: A New Approach to Getting the Life You Want*. London: Penguin Books

Colophon

This booklet was made for the Delft Institute of Positive Design (TU Delft), which aims to advance our understanding of the ways products and services can be designed to foster human happiness. Affiliated researchers develop knowledge, tools, and mythology that enables and support the aspiration to design for durable wellbeing.

Credits

The columns were originally written for the Dutch Journal of Positive Psychology (www.tijdschriftpositiepsychologie.nl); they have been translated for this booklet. Texts by Pieter Desmet. Photographs and other images have been provided by the designers of the presented design cases. Graphic design and booklet production by Rozemarijn Klein Heerenbrink.

Share the examples

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