speculative design

design noir
dr. carman neustaedter

50% in each course component

levels and XP posted in WebCT
profile challenge grading

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lab

tell us your team members
design noir assignment

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riddle questions

what is the exact definition of
speculative design?

there is none

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riddle questions

I am not exactly sure how I am
supposed to be answering these
questions. Is there a right or wrong
answer?

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riddle questions

Is the purpose of creating art relatively
similar to the critical design, since
both of them are trying to inspire,
evoke, and to make them reflect on
themselves, society or culture; and they
are moving away from narratives of
production or the aesthetics of use?

riddle questions

What is the biggest difference between critical design and design noir?

this week's goal:
to think about different user needs

what needs does design usually address?

productivity
user friendliness
what other needs exist?

what other needs could design address?

deception
loneliness
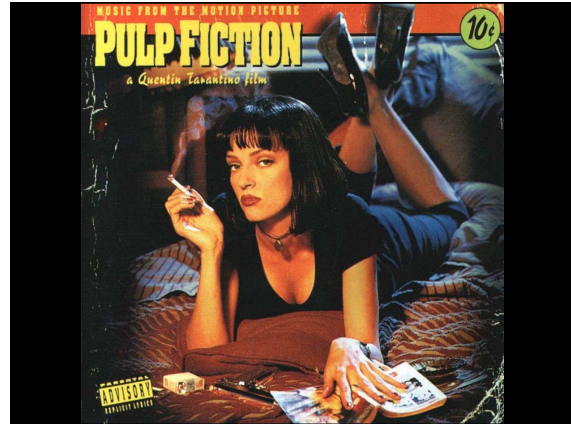paranoia
lust
…

design noir

noir

a genre of film with a dark or disturbing tone
1940s-1950s, classic "noir" time in America

image source: politicsofwellbeing.com

basic instinct

design noir

design that addresses the darker,
underrepresented needs of people

the focus of design noir

design should enrich our experiences
move away from a narrow view of design
perplex rather than comfort
cause drama and narrative

"Norman's approach results in products that will not confuse or disappoint (which is clearly not enough)."

- Anthony Dunne

"Camcorders have many built-in features that encourage generic usage; a warning light flashes whenever there is a risk of 'spoiling' a picture, as if to remind the user that he or she is about to become creation and should immediately return to the norm."

- Anthony Dunne

dunne and raby interview

the placebo project

8 prototypes exploring electromagnetic fields placed in people's homes
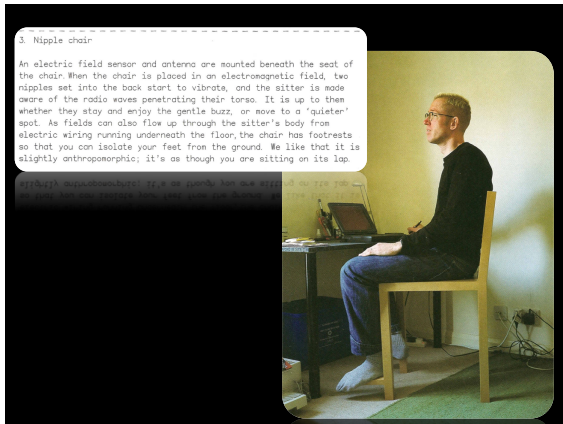elicit stories about objects: factual and imagined

did the object generate any discussions? were there any disagreements between you and your friends over its meaning?

"I think some thought it was totally pointless, because it wasn't a table and it said it was a table, so it's misrepresenting itself as a table. My flatmate agreed that it looked nice, but I don't think she saw why you'd ever have a need for such a thing."

3. Nipple chair

An electric field sensor and antenna are mounted beneath the seat of the chair. When the chair is placed in an electromagnetic field, two nipples set into the back start to vibrate, and the sitter is made aware of the radio waves penetrating their torso. It is up to them whether they stay and enjoy the gentle buzz, or move to a 'quieter' spot. As fields can also flow up through the sitter's body from electric wiring running underneath the floor, the chair has footrests so that you can isolate your feet from the ground. We like that it is slightly anthropomorphic; it's as though you are sitting on its lap.

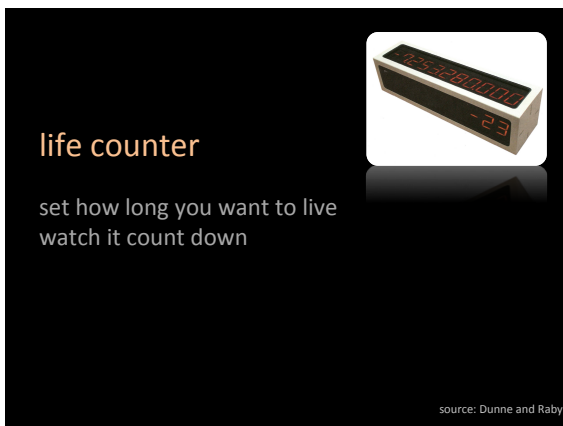**when you talk to your friends, how do you describe the object?**

"It's really difficult to get the concept across – you tell them it's a nipple chair and they think of something really kinky. Then you try and explain that it's a bit of furniture which detects electromagnetic fields. Most people say 'Why would you do that?' I just say it's interesting, it's like having a sort of living thing in your house."

question

It's the night before your best friend's birthday and you realize you forgot to buy a gift (bad friend!). The only store open is the Dunne and Raby Design Shop. You can purchase any of the items described in Chapters 3 - 5 of their book. What do you buy for your best friend and why?

practical

I would purchase the Lonely Men breath expeller for my best friend who misses her long distance boyfriend. This item can satisfy her void of physical contact and presence. It can simulate the warmth from her boyfriend and give her a sense that her boyfriend is near.

life counter

set how long you want to live watch it count down

source: Dunne and Raby

reflection on life

I would buy the Life Counter from the Dunne and Raby Design Shop for my best friend because I think it would make him reflect upon his life and the choices that he makes. His choice in years that he wants to live to or expects to live for would make him reflect on his current situation as he is going through some unresolved health issues. Depending on the rate he chooses to view, he may see that his life is speeding by and make him feel more pressured to accomplish something significant in his life rather than idly letting time slip by him. As I care dearly for him, I think the Life Counter would be the right product to help push him to make better decisions in leading a healthier, more productive life.

alibi CD

ace-alibi.com
CD of background sounds
street sounds, airport announcements, bars, …
make calls from places you shouldn't be

test a friend

I would purchase the Alibi CD, as it presents itself as a unique gift due to its nature of playing recorded natural and man-made environment sounds, thus, allowing my friend to disguise her immediate location at any point in time. As I'm aware of the CD's true nature, I would be very interested to observe her behavior while she's in possession of such a rare gift item, that is, how often she would use the CD and on whom (just on strangers or colleagues or even on people who are close to her). Would she be honest or would she occasionally bluff? And in what circumstances? At first glance, the Alibi CD may seem as a sinister gift that would impose only harm upon my friend and those around her. However, it would not only test her character, but also, add a little more of sophistication in her daily life, and make it more interesting.

affirmative vs. critical design

affirmative design:
reinforces now, conforms to culture & expectation

critical design:
design that asks carefully crafted questions
rejects how things are now

conceptual design *vs.* design noir

conceptual design:
what products might be like
can describe in a book

design noir:
users become protagonist and co-producer of an experience (and the design)

value fictions

science fiction:
realistic technologies, conservative social values

value fiction:
realistic technologies, fictional social values
encourage viewers to question values

examples of design noir

will 'design noir' sell?

does the author mean that critical design will be a popular method of design? Or that products that are created by critical design will never be truly popular?

question

You purchase a new GPS system for your car that helps you navigate as you drive. You didn't read the packaging carefully enough and realize afterwards that the company has programmed the GPS to create dangerous driving situations (e.g., finding the most difficult intersections to turn at) and sometimes lead you astray (e.g., sending you the wrong direction) in order to create new exciting experiences. You can't return it. Do you keep it for yourself or give it as a gift to a friend? Why?

guilt

I would keep the GPS system for myself because I would not want to risk any of my friends in danger. Assuming a friend uses it, I would feel guilty if they got into an accident because they would trust me giving them a device that would not put them in highly dangerous situations on purpose. Since I have experienced where the GPS system will take me, I know not to follow the directions unless I feel like going on a crazy adventure. The idea of being put into a dangerous situation may appeal to some but most GPS systems are expected to be reliable for those that do not know streets very well. The dangerous GPS system will cause too much stress and very little to no pleasure at all.

give to friend; reflection

If I had to choose, I would give it to a friend because I am a terrible driver and would probably die within the first week if I used that. I wouldn't want any of my friends to come to harm, but I have a few friends that might appreciate using something like that more than me. It will also give my friends the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the object.

wrapping up

readings for next week
questions