



ESSAY about  
deSigning my  
Own design  
methods.



# Foreword

The five years I spent studying at HKU, (spell this out) felt like an expedition on uncharted territory; thrilling and stimulating, but not without dangers. Writing about my experience at HKU is a challenge of a different nature. Luckily, (comma) I had loyal support from a few special people during this time, who enabled me to complete this expedition successfully.

Anke Coumans guided me through a dark forest of theories, assisting in the creation of my own theoretical binoculars. Learning to think critically allowed me to better understand and clarify my impassioned views, enabling me to successfully link my interests to appropriate theoretical thinking. I hope this graduation paper provides insight into my expedition as well as maps the development of my methodology. Thank you Anke!

My always attentive father, Martien Plaatsman, surprisingly discovered his natural ability for copywriting while discussing my school projects. Until an agency discovers his raw talent, I hope to continue to benefit from his astute thinking. Even though he does not work in a creative field, Martien has a flawless capability of understanding everything I debate with him. Whilst studying and writing this paper, thanks to his critical annotations and capability to identify, I've become more aware of my role as a designer. I am very grateful for this and hope that writing this paper somehow returns the favor. Thank you Martien!

Furthermore, I'd like to thank my friends for their support and their (professional) advice. Without them this quest would have ended in an absolute fiasco. Thank you Felix, Boris, Jaya, Willem, Jeroen and my little brother Rein!

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## A VERY SMALL Introduction

While at HKU, my development and growth was most notable during my fourth year. During this time I began to ask, "How have I changed as a designer? Can I even call myself a designer?." In order to define myself as a designer, I focused on deciphering and reviewing all thoughts, drawings, and objects through the theoretical binoculars I had developed over the past four years. I remain occupied by the thought that my newborn identity will continue to develop over the coming years.

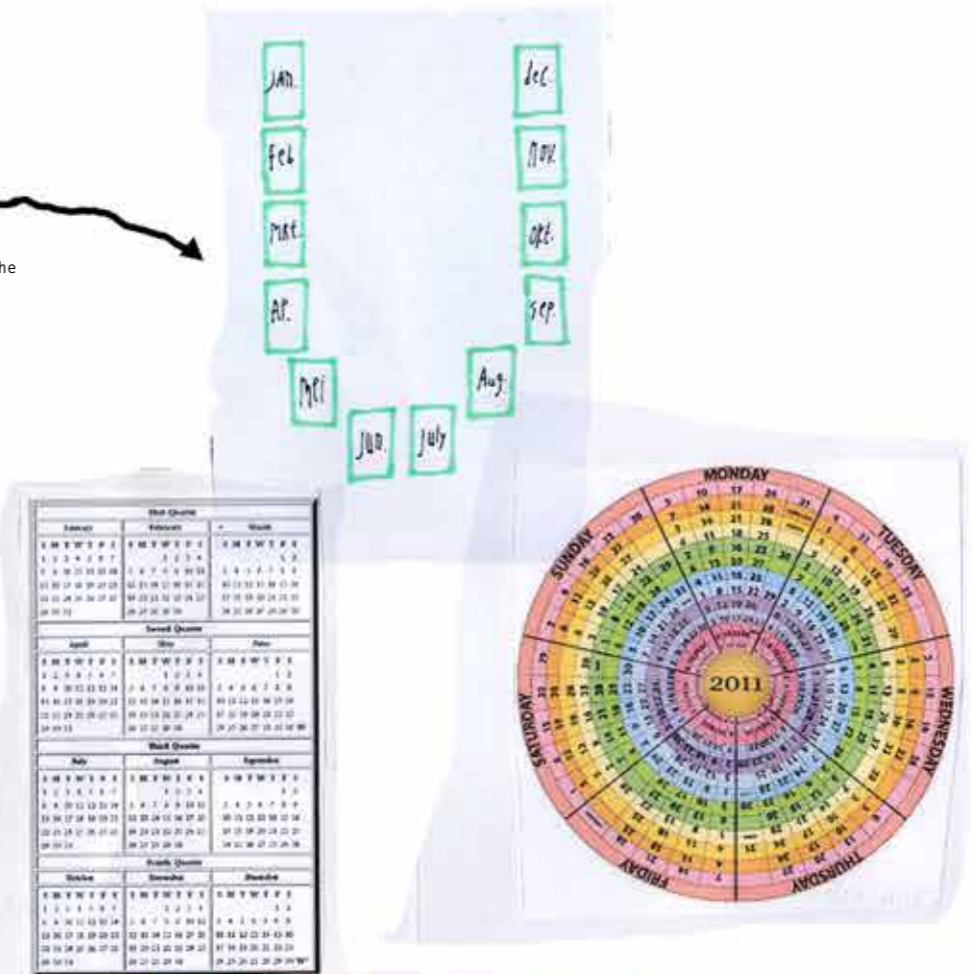
This identity is formed by my methodology and as I improve these methods, my identity as a designer continues to grow and even change shape entirely.

My awareness of my unique methodology is something I've been coping with for as long as I can remember. It is caused largely by the fact that I have a physical constraint in my arm. This has forced me to find efficient methods of visualizing ideas without overburdening myself physically. I've taken these methodologies as a starting point and have tried to fit them into a theoretical framework reflecting my own experiences.

People create methods to become more competent. It is important to define which methods work best for the individual and how they can be improved to produce the most reliable and efficient end result. This is something I will focus on later in this essay.

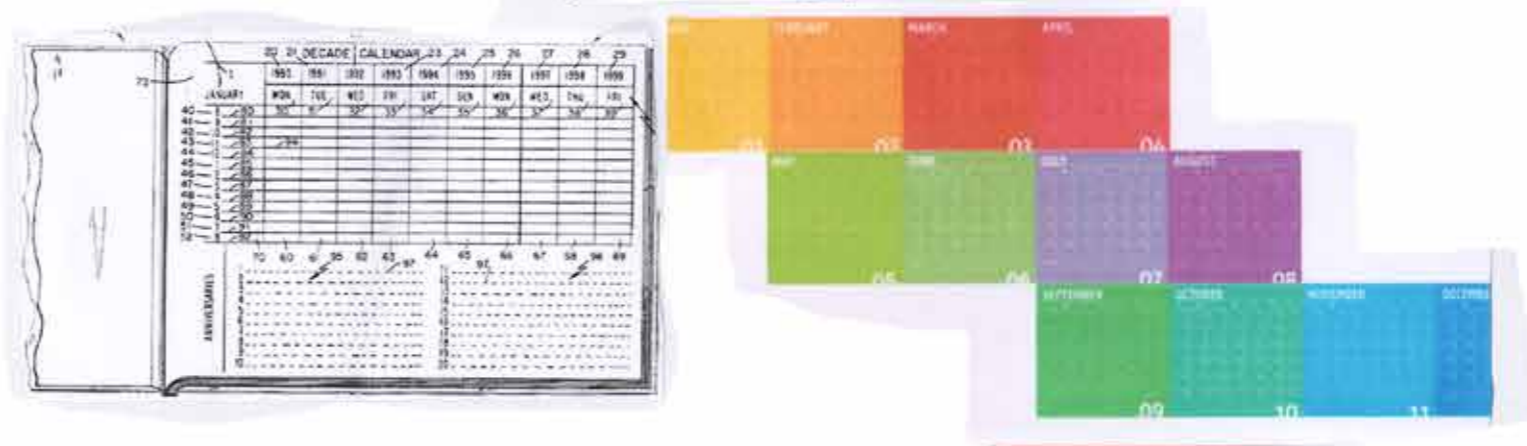
# 1 Method: to handle and repair

When I was young I had a subscription to Okki magazine, which included this calendar. This is how I visualize the months of the year to this day.



## 1.1 Methods are personal

The concept of a method is very broad and is not solely used in a design process. Everyone employs methods in their daily life. You could also call it a format. For instance, when making a planning you can visualize the 12 months in a year in different ways. It's difficult for your brain to keep track of the twelve months, so you design a way to summarize and structure it. Everyone does this in their own, personal way because it's comprehensible to them. You design a method from a limitation, a limitation in thought. Consciously or not, by structuring something you've designed a personal method.



## 1.2 Methods for structuring

During a design process you need to have control over what you are doing. When you lose control or a process becomes too complex, you quickly start to apply methods of structuring. As a designer, it's very important to be aware of your own working method. A method is there to handle the future and repair the past.

## 1.3 Skill becomes method

At some point I detected that I'd developed skills in structuring and perfecting things and preparing presentations. Actually these skills turned out to be methods, and I was never aware of the fact that I was constantly fine-tuning them, and that they had been silently evolving. My professor used to say that when you dissect a method, "findings" remain. A finding is a code, and multiple codes become a format, which is just another word for method. So by combining codes, I created a format with which I could methodically create something visual.

## 1.4 Three different methods

Methods come in all shapes and sizes, and it's important to differentiate them. In a design process I use three different methods:

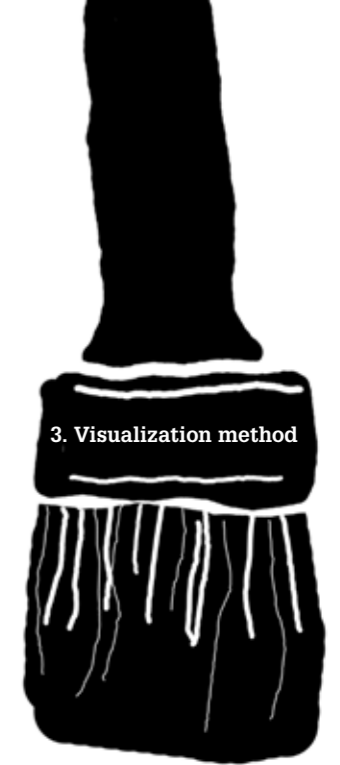
### 1: Researching method



### 2: Structuring method



### 3. Visualization method



When using these three methods right, a design process will progress more fluently. When you're aware of this simple fact, you're quicker to recognize errors. I often heard people in my class saying they're "stuck". To me this indicates either that the methods they're using aren't yet fully optimized, or that they're not aware of which method they're using to research, structure and visualize, causing their process to stagnate. An error in a process indicates that a method hasn't been correctly used. Either steps are missing, or not taken in the right order, resulting in an ineffective method.

In this essay I will further explain which methods I use and how I became conscious of how they work and can effectively be deployed in a design process. I will also give an eye witness account of my graduation project and the process it embodied, emphasizing on the three methods and how they've improved during the years.

# 2 Reflection





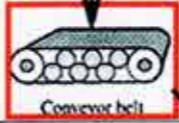


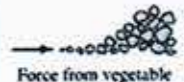










## 2.1 Academy: little attention to theory in process

According to me, learning the trade of being a designer is gaining control over your process and accordingly your methods. In the academy, too little attention is given to the theoretical aspect while I think this is the most important aspect of this kind of education. I've often wondered why this aspect hasn't received more attention, so that students learn to become more aware of developing methods with which the design process is more fluently undertaken.

## 2.2 Are we behind?

Students in mechanical engineering are taught to use the morphological analysis. This is an analysis that can help you make choices in a complex design process, by measuring out all possible options. As an effect, this method makes you think further past your initial idea. I think this method can also be applied to graphic design,

since the process is similar. However, no such standard analysis exists, which forces the contemporary graphic designer to develop their own, personal methods.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Vegetable picking device				
Vegetable placing device				
Dirt sifting device				
Packaging device				
Method of transportation				
Power source	Hand pushed	Horse drawn	Wind blown	Pedal driven

Concept 1

The best way through all different options is marked with the red line. It clearly shows you the list of options and the choices you made.

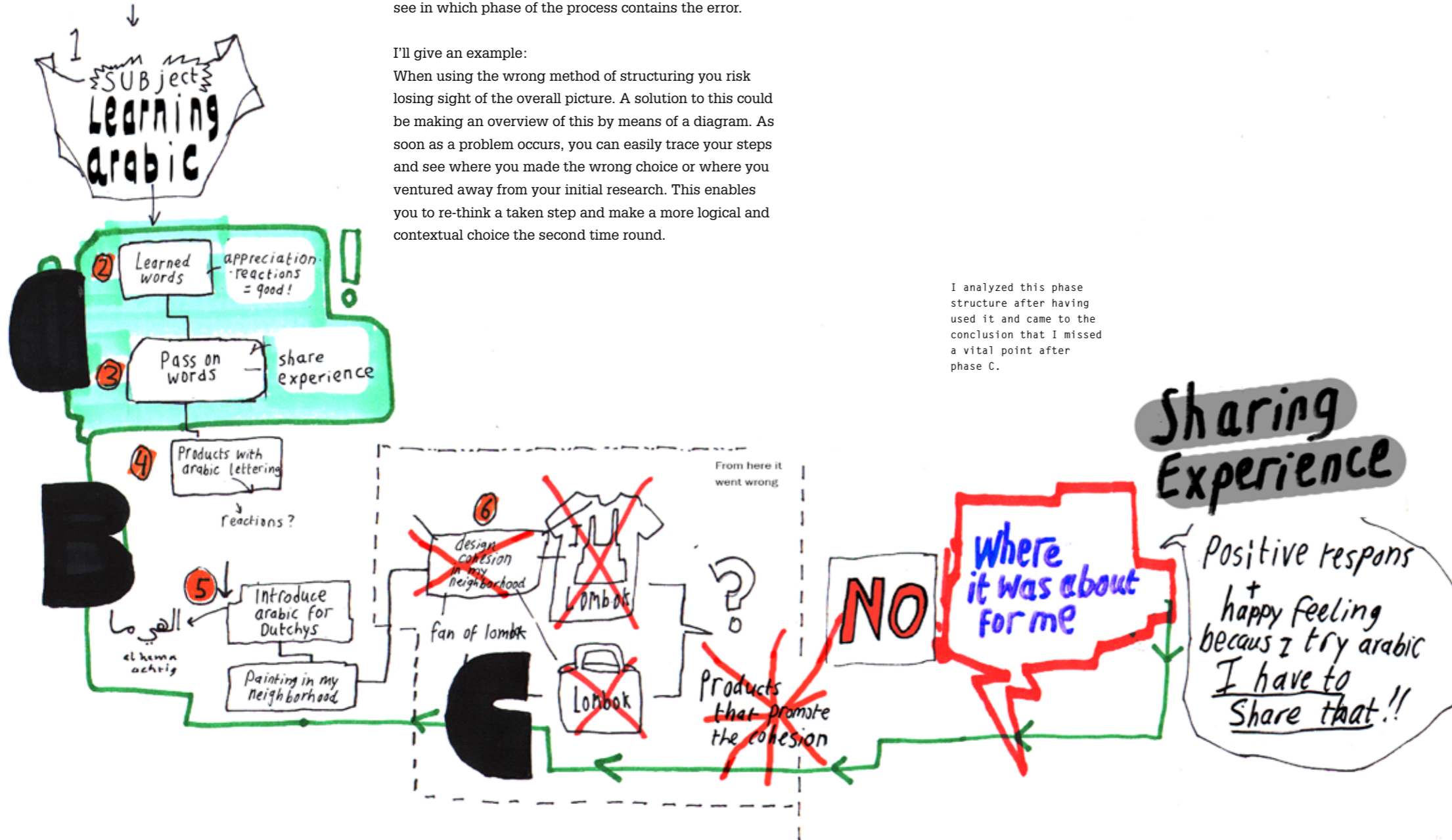


### 2.3 Mapping the process

The method I use when I get "stuck" in a process could be called an analyzing method which easily makes you see in which phase of the process contains the error.

I'll give an example:

When using the wrong method of structuring you risk losing sight of the overall picture. A solution to this could be making an overview of this by means of a diagram. As soon as a problem occurs, you can easily trace your steps and see where you made the wrong choice or where you ventured away from your initial research. This enables you to re-think a taken step and make a more logical and contextual choice the second time round.



I analyzed this phase structure after having used it and came to the conclusion that I missed a vital point after phase C.

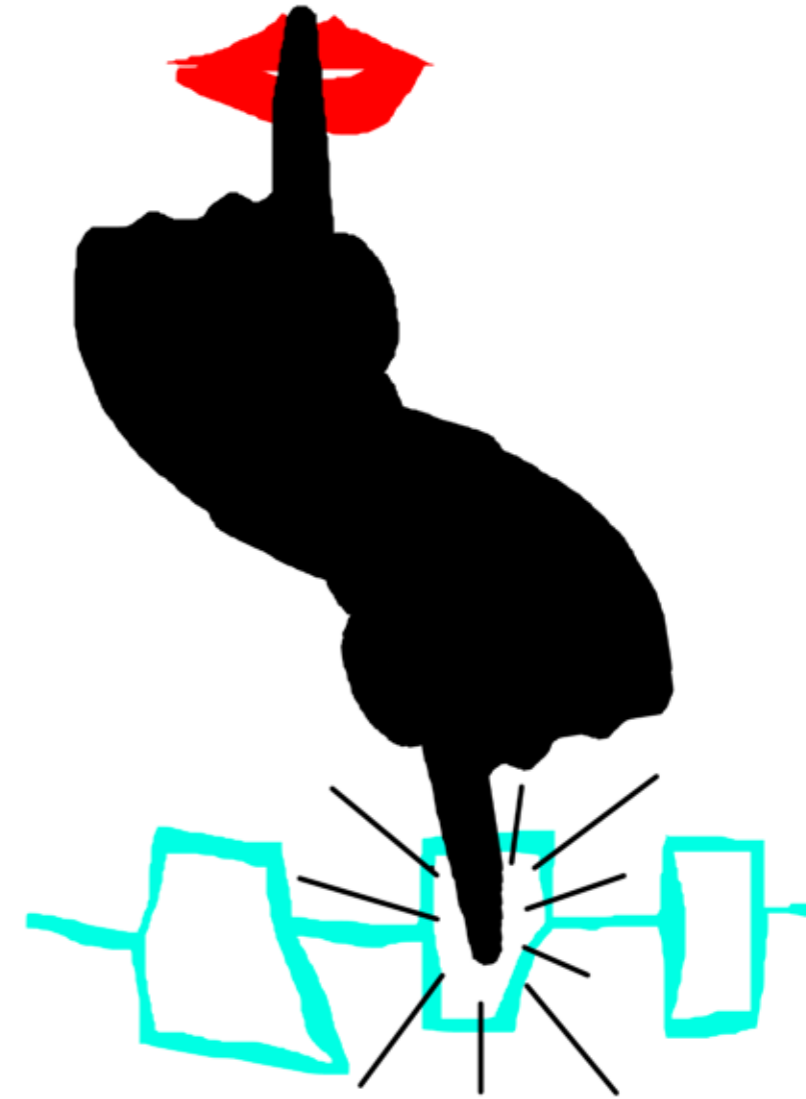
#### 2.4 Better than prompting (giving away the answers)

I think this way of working is more effective than teachers constantly giving you new input and other students repeatedly giving their interpretations of the way they would have handled your subject. The person giving feedback might be right, but he's actually giving away the answers.

One of the negative aspects is that a professor can seduce you to think that the view given in his/her feedback embodies the truth and not an opinion. This causes the student to make something that was hinted to him/her in fear of receiving a bad grade.

Sometimes feedback from an experienced designer can make you aware of the limitations in your thought pattern and illustrate that your idea definitely has potential. This enables you to continue your process and possibly elevate over the ideas given in the initial feedback.

I think it's better if professors assist students in finding certain directions which could lead to the right solution without giving anything away. The professor should let the students find out where the error occurs by themselves, by pointing out in which phase of the process they are situated. This means that being aware of the used method is a requirement.



# 3 OFF THE SHELVES

## 3.1 Fascinations

During my third year I started becoming more aware of my fascinations. A fascination is simply a subject that you think a lot about, and they come in all shapes and sizes. Whether it's an opinion you have about something you saw on the news or a constant attention for the neighbor's cat, they can both be valuable to use as a designer.



### 3.2 Aware of your fascinations for the content

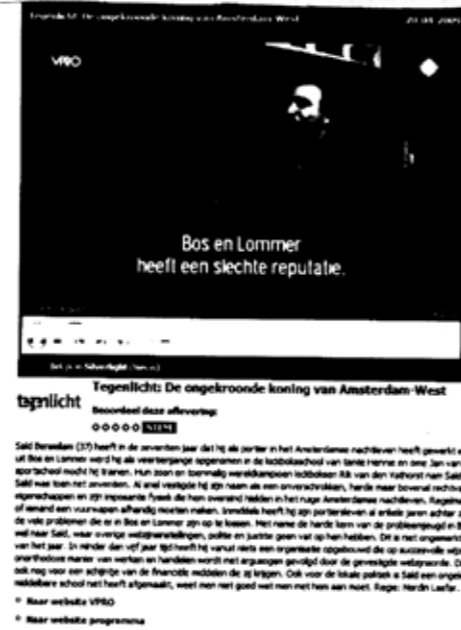
Conscious designing, conscious thinking and being conscious about your thoughts are key to finding fascinations you can use for (free) assignments. When you're conscious of what your fascinations and fascinations in general are you have an inexhaustible source of subjects that you're able to assign your role as a designer to: the activist, the enrolled, the typographer, etc...

### 3.3 Fascination as starting point for my graduation project

I used to live in a street where a lot of youth was constantly hanging around, mostly Moroccan boys. I lived on the third floor, where from behind my desk, I was able to observe what these boys were up to. From quickly checking to see if all bikes were properly locked to looking in through windows where the lights were still burning. I saw 16 year old boys driving around on motorbikes without a helmet or just hanging out on the street at 01:00 in the morning.

I started to get more and more interested in this group. What were they doing? Were they still in school? Were they really doing what I thought they were doing? Who were their parents and a hundred more of these questions would keep me occupied on a daily basis. At some point I concluded that this was a fascination that I could implement into my work at the academy.





### 3.4 Fascination shelf

When concluding that you have a fascination for a certain subject, it's always difficult to immediately find a way to deploy it. I would literally put my ideas on a shelf and make sure I didn't lose sight of them, so I could always access them at the moment that I needed to.

### 3.5 The backgrounds

By watching documentaries and reading articles about the subject, I started getting a better understanding of what was going on in the heads of these youngsters. I started writing summaries of all these documentaries and enumerated all the problems and the situations that caused them as well as could possible solve them. This method gave me a clearer view of what caused the behavior these boys were showing, and I started more and more to identify with them. I wondered what I would do if, due to a language barrier, I wouldn't be able to communicate properly with my parents? How would I feel if, due to my origin, I was always outlawed by the media? What would I do if everyone from my country was blamed for the problems that only a few individuals caused? I would find it very unfair, to say the least!

This images illustrates the way how I blotted out a documentary. The documentation is a timeline focussed on the problems surrounding Moroccan youth.

1. Het zijn zware tijden
2. Bos en Lommer heeft slechte Reputatie
3. Slechtste buurt van Nederland.
4. Diefstal in buurt
5. buurt beveiligingsteam worden door jongeren "veraders" genoemd.
6. Jonge kinderen zijn kwetsbaar
7. Gemis van vader wordt afgekeerd door cadeaus
8. jongeren kunnen tebis niet met hun problemen/frustraties  
"keracht" → papa zegt: nietje
9. Vaders geven zonen geen waardering van wat ze goed doen.
10. Vaders moeten taboes in cultuur verschil doorbreken.
11. Vaders moeten luisterend oor ~~te~~ bieden zonder dat zón zich bezwaard voelt (dat vader recht dat is zwak is)
12. Zoons willen niet op eigen benen staan
13. als vaders hun wat vragen doen ze het tegenovergestelde
14. Waarom hebben kinderen hier alles maar willen ze niet leren.
15. Houding van jongeren is vraag om aandacht
16. door frustraties ~~niet~~ niet kunnen concentreren, tot ze van school worden gestuurd.
17. Negatief beeld marokkanen in media.
18. Door negatief beeld worden goedwillende gedemotiveerd
19. Marokkaanse jeugd motiveert zichzelf niet, maar is teleurgesteld.
20. als je op straat bivakkeert moet je erbij horen (streetcredits)
21. Je moet wel streetcredits verdienen anders hoor je er niet bij
22. goedwillende moet deebal zo hard werken door negatief beeld.
23. moeilijk voor jongeren werken om bij groep jongeren tot orde te roepen.
24. Veel jongens kennen geen pijn, gerude, denken niet aan consequenties, geen geweten.
25. Wijkteam jongeren ~~wordt~~ wordt geen merk geboden voor hun inzet.
26. budget is te klein voor veiligheids project
27. voor een snoepje zijn de jongeren niet te motiveren
28. Stadsdeel wil orgeen geld voor vrijmaken.
29. motivatie is ar by said en jeugd naar gemeente heeft geen budget → of duurt te lang met regalen.
30. ER is te veel wat moet gebeuren ~~voor de~~ in vergelijking met de midellen die er zijn.
31. Werken met orrekenheden.
32. Ouders ~~betrekken~~ betrekken bij problemen jongeren.
33. ER wordt te veel van veiligheids project verwacht maar er zijn niet genoeg midellen.
34. er wordt niet geïnvesteerd in ouders.
35. Mensen die over het geld gaan kennen het veld niet computerwerk ervaren je niet de emotie.
36. Alles hangt op Said.
37. ER wordt niet geïnvesteerd in goede mensen zoals said
38. Werkwijze said kan niet gekopieerd worden want is uniek.
39. Gemis van aandacht ouders wordt opgelost door groep vrienden.
40. teleurstellingen zijn opstapeling van frustratie.

# 4 from experience to research method

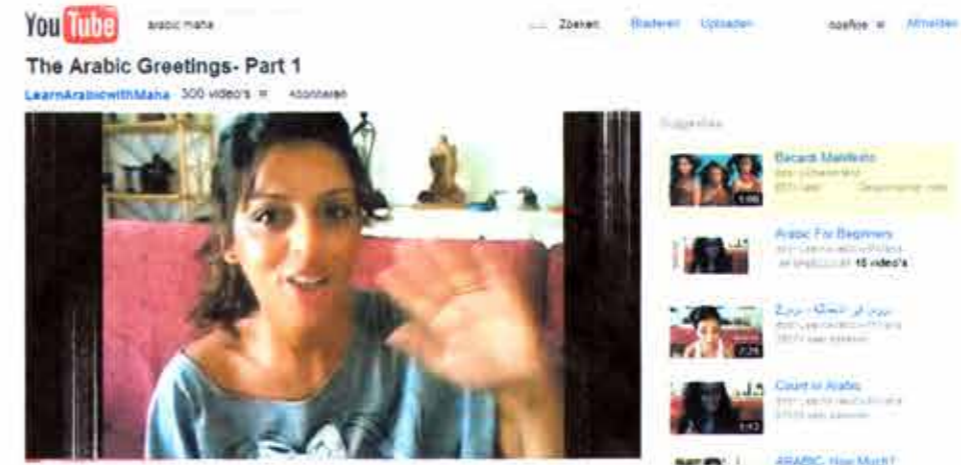
## 4. From experience to research method

When I moved to a new, even more multi-cultural neighborhood, I noticed that practically everyone spoke Arabic. After a while I was astonished by the fact that all these people were perfectly able to converse with me in Dutch, but I couldn't speak a single word of Arabic.

This got me thinking about integration. Coincidentally I was born in The Netherlands out of two Dutch parents and the immigrants have to adapt themselves to our culture. Whilst globalization is mostly seen as something positive, we remain a bit backward in this aspect. Immigrants go through a lot of trouble to adapt to our culture, for if they don't they're simply not accepted. And what do we do? Nothing, except linguistically correct them to "help". I like questioning the things that have the deepest roots.

I think we as indigenous Dutch should make a gesture.

If I were an immigrant I would get the feeling that I'm forced to look up to the Dutch people. I have to adapt completely, throw overboard my entire identity, learn everything about The Netherlands and her culture and still not get even the slightest gesture back. At this moment, we the Dutch, are not treating immigrants as equals and have a complete lack of empathy. We have no clue how hard it is to learn a new language!



A screenshot on the Youtube channel of Maha who posts a lot of videos teaching you Arabic.

## 4.1 Smalltalk becomes conversation method

As a gesture I decided to learn a few words in Arabic. Videos on YouTube taught me some basic greetings which I then tested in the shops around my neighborhood. At some point, the owner of the bakery below my house started teaching me new words, and soon after him and many other shopkeepers became my professors. I showed my interest in them, and they felt appreciated, having as an effect that I was welcomed in all these shops with a big smile. I blotted down new words on receipts and took these home to collect in

a book especially dedicated to my "classes". Slowly I realized that by all this smalltalk I started shaping an opinion on the subject and received only positive reactions. I concluded that this would be the way in which I would continue my research.



This was the first booklet in which I wrote down Arabic words that I had learnt on the street.



#### 4.2 Dialogical research method

I decided to consciously use this dialogical research method to see if I would receive more positive reactions and started implementing it in different contexts. When I went out and saw a person of which I thought they spoke Arabic I would try and start a conversation by saying a greeting in Arabic. I started searching for these situations and at some point I became a bit obsessed. One night I was walking through the streets and was confronted by some Moroccan boys in a car. They asked me what I was doing and I responded in Arabic by wishing them a good night. As with many other Arabic speaking people they were very surprised and informed about my motives behind wanting to learn their language. I got in the car with them and we spoke about my project and where it could possibly take me in the future.

#### 4.3 Happy

These experiences always made me very happy and encouraged me to continue my research. I enjoyed surprising people and making them feel appreciated with this small gesture. I was glad with the long talks I had with people, but was especially content with how one single word could put a smile on someone's face.

#### 4.4 "Lela Saida"

One night, while standing on the street corner with a friend, I got the feeling that the Moroccan guy standing behind us was overhearing our conversation. A bit later, when we cycled away I said to him: "Lela Saida!" which means good night. A wide smile appeared on his face as he bid us a goodnight.

I also discovered something fun at the supermarket when dealing with the Moroccan girls behind the cashier. They often say goodbye to each other by using the word Be'slemma or S'lemma which is Moroccan Arabic for bye. A nice way to get a smile on their face is to leave the shop whilst saying: S'lemma!

During this time, I became acquainted with people who wanted to teach me Arabic. That's how I got to know a man whom I called Arab-man. He was a refugee and had been trying to get asylum in The Netherlands for years. He was very amused by the fact that I wanted to learn Arabic and offered to teach me. I took about five lessons from him, which we usually did in a quiet part of the local library. He was very patient with teaching me all the things that I wanted to know. It's very surprising to me how language can make these things happen. It was a shame that Arab-man wasn't very familiar with the Dutch language so after a while we broke it off.

#### 4.5 Where is the muslim girl that's going to help me?

On a Monday morning while sitting in the train to Utrecht I was rehearsing my study material that I had received from my classes at the Volksuniversiteit Utrecht. I was studying words and their conjugations when the train stopped in Heerenveen. I was struggling with the material and had trouble focussing due to all the people at the station, when I thought to myself: Where is the muslim girl that's going to help me? I couldn't spot any so the thought left me, when all of a sudden a muslim girl is standing beside me and one of the last vacant spots in the train. I ask her if she wants to sit down and help me with something. She's very excited when she sees the Arabic study book I'm holding and we get to talking. She's from Irak, has been in The Netherlands for seven years and is fluent in Dutch. We talked for over two and a half hours and she helped me with my conjugations. Afterwards, we exchanged numbers and regularly got back in touch through e-mail and telephone. She helped me with my Arabic and I told her about my project. She was married, but had explained to her husband the nature of the project, and he had approved and allowed our speaking to each other. It was quite strange that it was possible for a Dutch guy to be in touch with a married, Iraqi girl.

My Arabic buddy Naima is a bit shy and didn't want to be recognized in my essay.





#### 4.6 Success and results

In this way my dialogical research method booked quite some successes and had developed and evolved. I had been using the method more consciously and it had delivered me results.

Eventually my whole project became dependent on the last phase of this evolved method. What started as smalltalk and eventually produced results became a conscious way of working and served as the base for all my end products. It became a way of gathering information and distilling from it a subject with which I can produce. I'll give a closer look on the steps that lead to the evolving of the method.



This is a picture of me and my buddy/boss Mimoun. He's the owner of the fish store where I did an internship during my graduation period.

#### Phase 1:

In this phase I got interested in the Arabic language, used a few words in shops and noticed that people reacted positively to it.

#### Phase 2:

Because of the positive reactions I became more active in studying the language and started applying it in more different contexts. This led to more "teachers" and more reactions.

#### Phase 3:

I entered this phase once I had decided that this would be the subject of my graduation project. I started using the language more focussed to see if the information that I received and the contacts that I made could be of use during the process of my graduation project.

#### Phase 4:

In this phase I attached an action to my research method by placing myself in situations where I could learn as much as possible about subjects like language, culture, reactions to myself, bonding and all the other unexpected things that could happen in such a situation. I became a sponge that absorbed and documented everything it could in order to find a subject that I would find the most important to research further. Through working in this manner, a product can come to be that functions as a catalyst for consciousness or with which you can highlight certain aspects that could, for instance, live up to a social function. You can conclude something, react to it like an activist and spread this in a context where you would like to react to it. The possibilities are endless and it's very important to filter your information in usefulness and relevance by soaring over your project like a helicopter and observe the project as an outsider.

# 5 order!

## 5.1 Re-contextualising methods & structuring methods in the process book

Earlier in this essay I referred to the possible development of methods over time. Structuring methods are very important in my opinion, therefore it's necessary to secure these very personal methods. I need structure in a process so that I don't lose overview, but this doesn't have to be true for someone else.

I see fellow students writing down notes for different subjects on the same pages. When I started the first year I had no notion of structuring methods, but I could predict that I would lose overview if I mixed my notes up like that. This was the first sign of my consciousness concerning structuring methods. By making mistakes or ignoring certain aspects you gradually refine these methods.

## 5.2 Multiple phases

During a process I enter and exit different phases which can be divided in:

1. The Research phase
2. The Design phase
3. The Refinement phase



In every phase I find it very important to document everything in the right order and visualize this in a way that's clear and obvious. I consider the way in which you visualize the structure a structuring method. During every assignment, whether it's done in school or for a client, I use certain methods in these three phases, and I have constantly refined them throughout the years.



### 5.3 Changes during the years

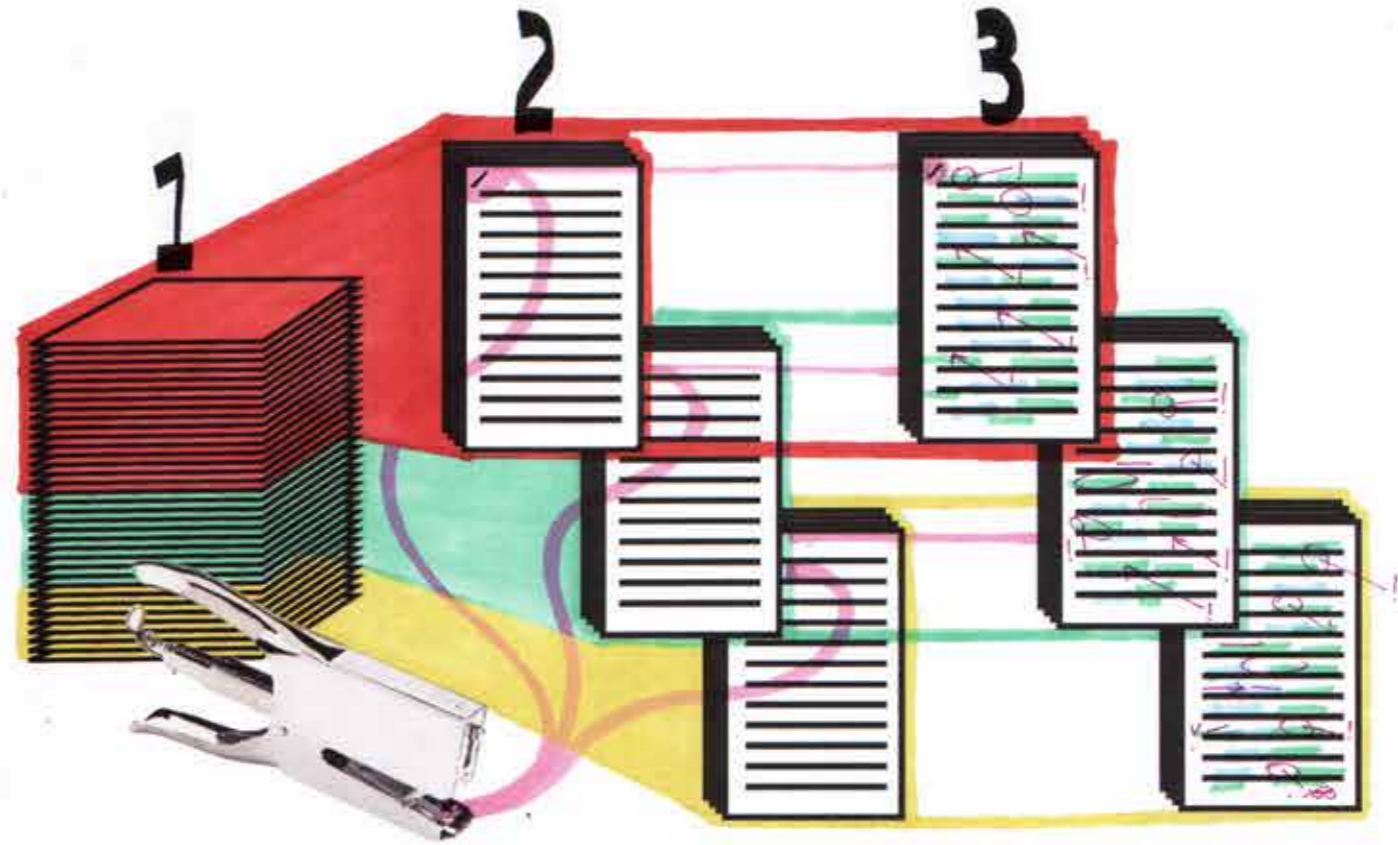
I'll try to summarize the most important changes in the development of my structuring methods below.

#### 1. First and second year of art academy

In the first year I only did research in shape. All assignments had to do with yourself, content wise. During these researches I documented my findings in a chronological order. In the second year we started working on assignments where the starting point was often extracted from research. I collected everything that had to do with the subject in a large bundle but there was no structuring in time or importance whatsoever.

During presentations I would take something random from this bundle and say a lot of “uuuh”. At some point I started connecting certain subjects of my research by stapling them together and highlighting what I thought was most important.

This diagram shows how you can simply organize a heap of paper into three sub categories and how you can highlight more or less important things.



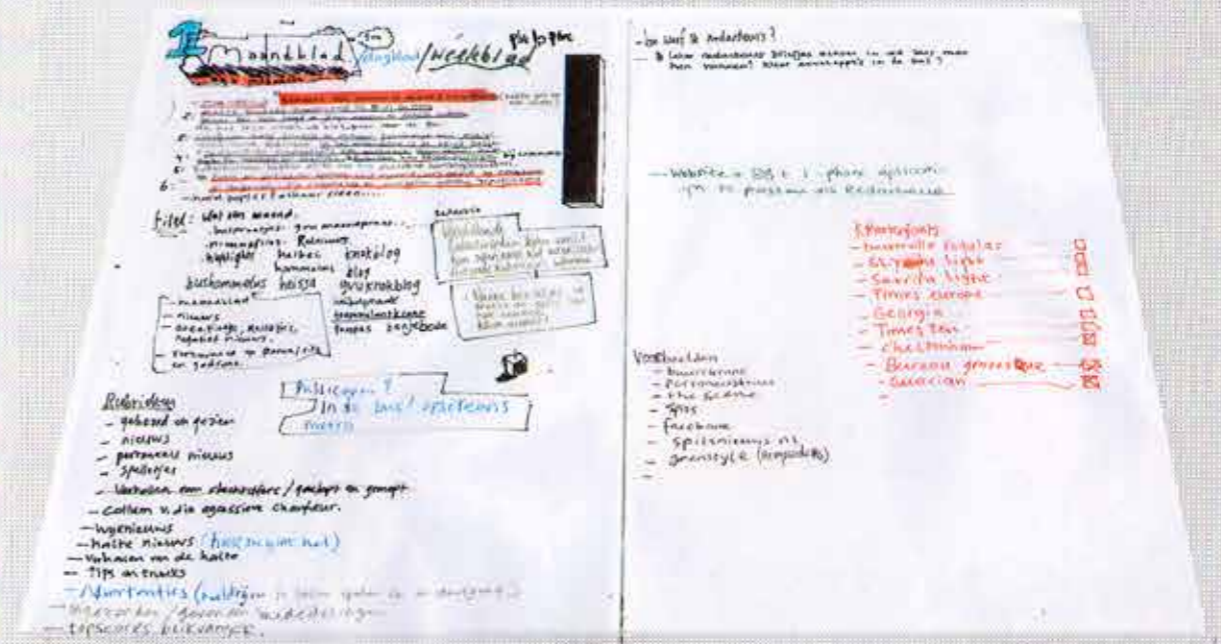
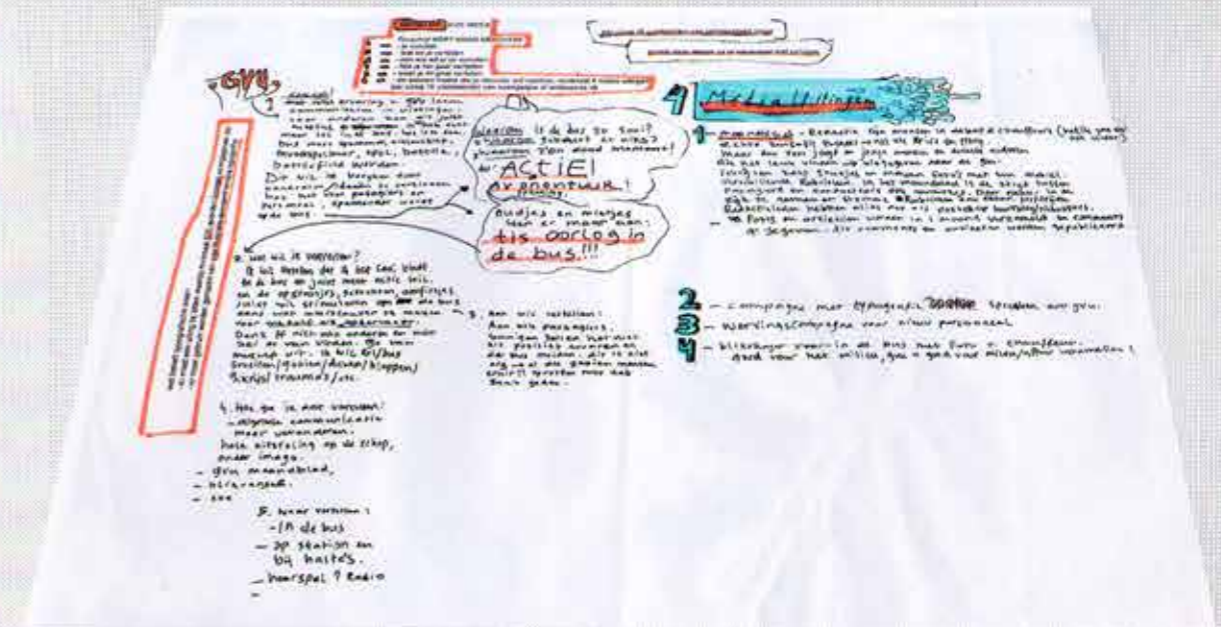
## 2. The third year of art academy

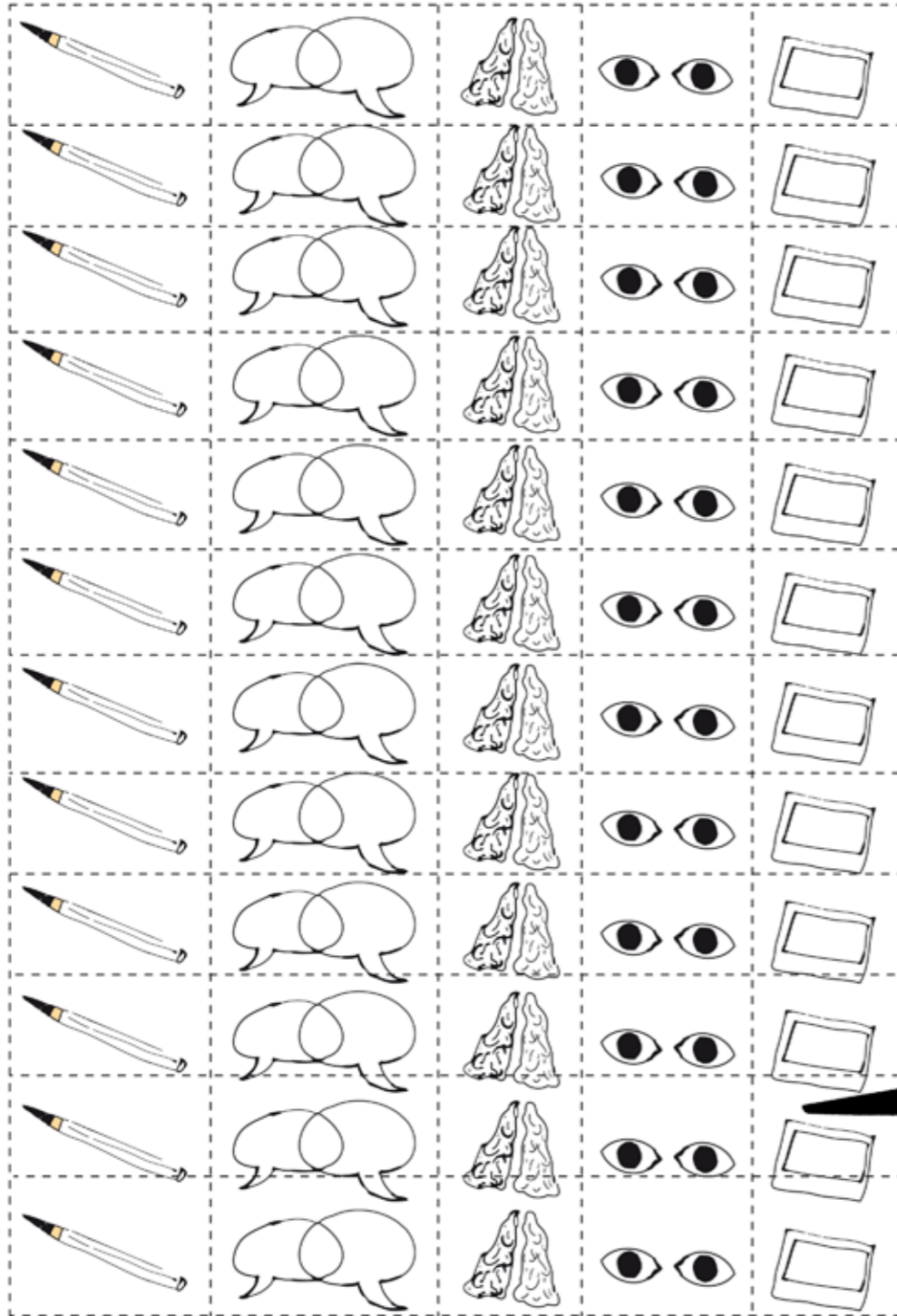
In the third year I started making booklets in which I documented my process. When a project had multiple media, each one would receive its own page in the booklet. I would try and structure everything by means of headlines so that I wouldn't have to go through my entire research when looking for something I did earlier in a process. For outsiders this system was completely incomprehensible and looking back even I don't always understand why certain things are situated in certain places. I used little logic, didn't use enough headlines and randomly placed figments of my imagination anywhere and everywhere.

When I started my graduation I aimed to remove all the weak points from the process booklets I made in the third year and make them accessible to others. The eventual form it has now came to existence during the process.

When starting the process I noted that I had to document multiple components in the process booklet. I had the premonition that if I would just place everything in order without certain clarification it would end up to be a huge mess.

Two pages from my third year process book.





#### 5.4 Components from my process book

I did research, had certain realizations and had to document stuff so I decided to design an icon for every component in order to structure the whole thing. By placing this icon in the top of a page it's immediately clear what the subject of that page is and it helps you to quickly find what you are looking for when leaving through the book. Next is a summary and explanation of the different components of my process book.

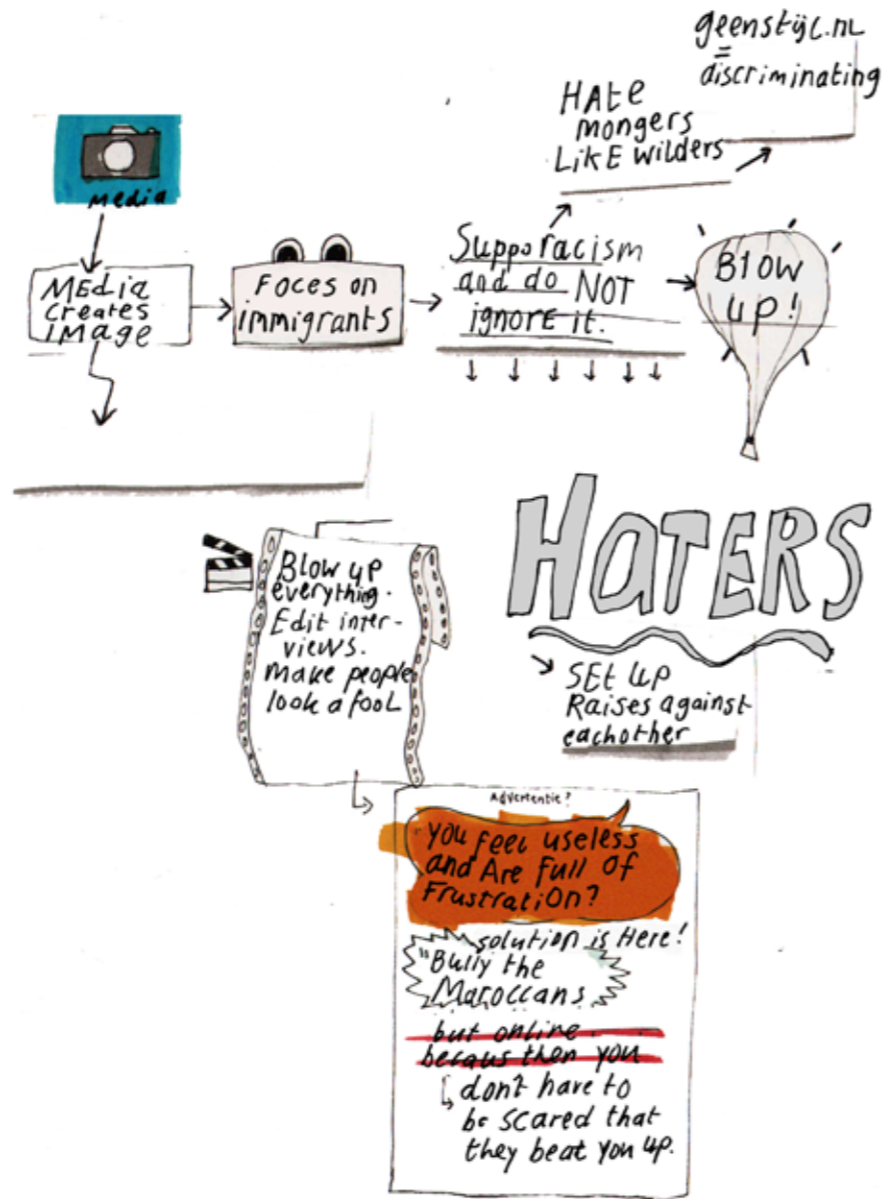
#### 5.5 Icon method

The icons refer to the subjects:

1. Meeting
2. Idea's / brainstorm
3. Research
4. Documentation
5. Findings/vision

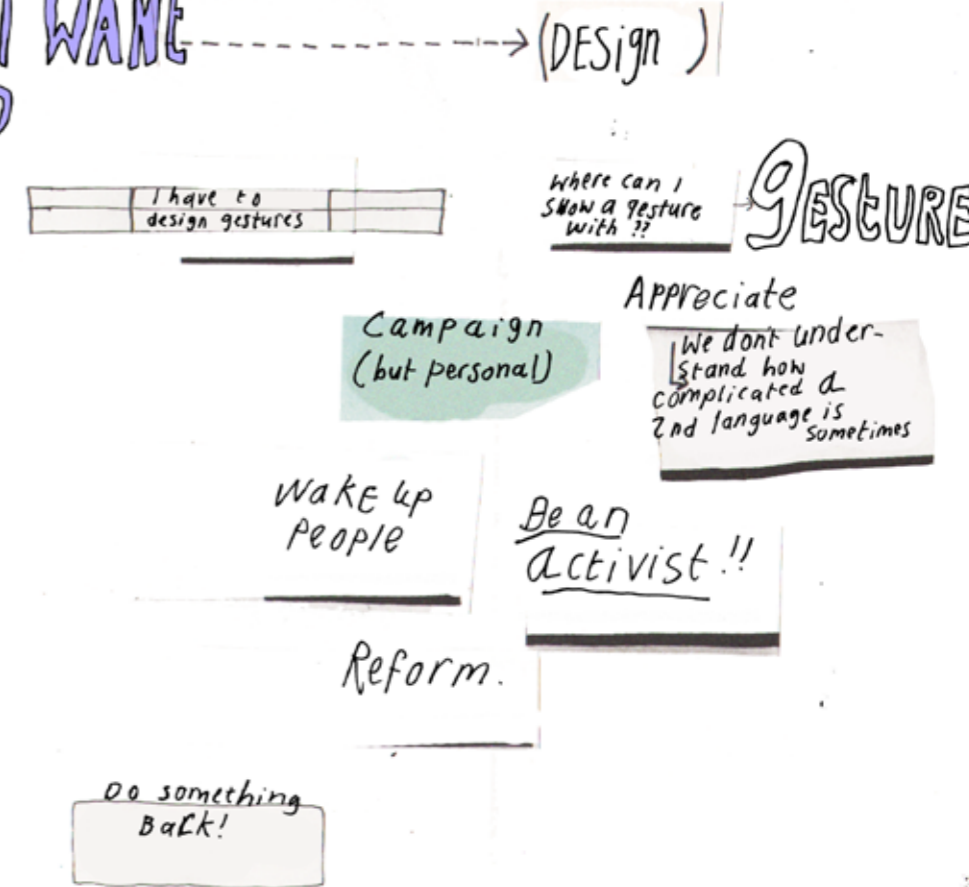
### 5.6 Timeline method

When writing notes on meetings, brainstorm sessions and other things I write in the order of which the ideas came to me or the order in which the meeting went. I do this purposely so that I can review the process that took place as it took place so I can recollect the thoughts I had at that moment.



This diagram visualizes my train of thought.

### WHAT I WANT TO DO



In this method of concretization I visualize what I find important and what I want to design.

### 5.7 Concrete method

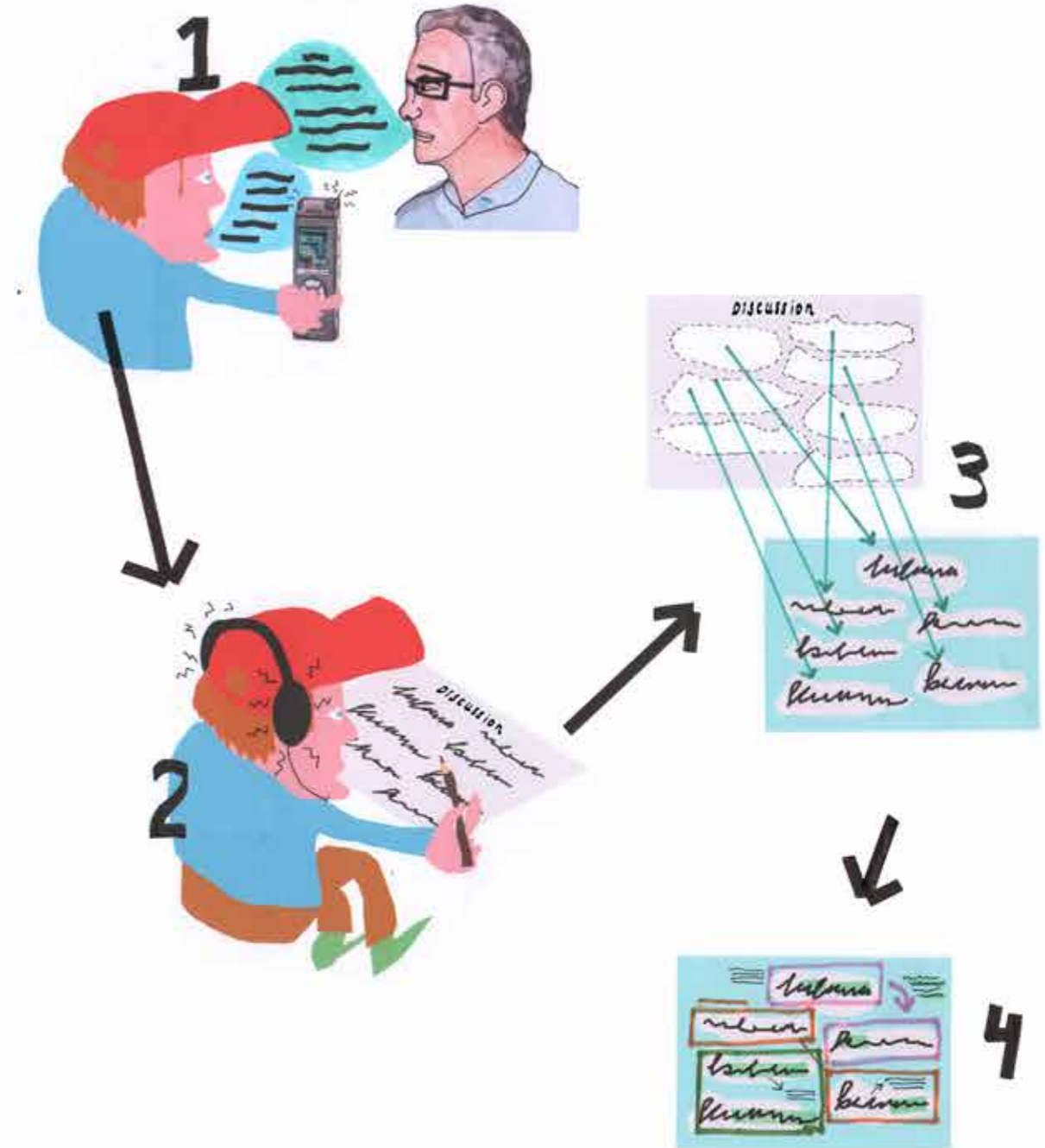
Sometimes it's helpful to summarize a couple of pages into one conclusive and recognizable image. It's similar to a meeting ending with a few conclusions that everybody agrees on.

### 5.8 Recording and transcription method

Meetings can be very confusing. I see people around me simultaneously taking notes and working on their laptop while also listening to feedback that's being given by someone who's been in the business for over 30 years and is sometimes already hard to grab as it is. Due to my physical constraint I've been recording these meetings and have come to the conclusion that it's a good way to never miss a single vital part of information again.

One method I've been using for over two years is writing down the complete recording of the meeting by hand, linking the most important parts together in a chronological timeline. After doing this I hang this piece of paper on the wall and emphasize on the most important conclusions by highlighting them or visually clarifying it in a different fashion.

The phases in which the recording and noting method evolves.





**5.9 Archiving method**

After having finished certain research projects I archive them in the process book by visual and textual registration. Attached to the images is short text explaining why I made this product, what it's good characters are and what could be done differently in the future to improve quality. This makes it possible for me to look back on a certain project and reflect on what I thought was relevant information at that time.

*it can lead to conversations! does it happen?*

*SHirt!  
shirt with Arabic letter on it.  
at least it shows you're not against them.*



*Anti Mubarak wall*

*people that follow the news get this image.*

*Sender and meaning for a lot of people unclear*

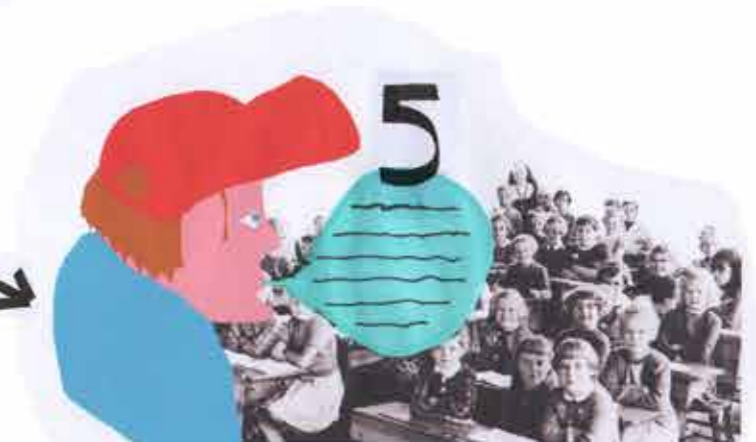


**5.10 Presentation preparation method**

During a presentation I find it very important to discuss certain points in the correct order. I write down the whole presentation in a timeline, adding to each point all the relevant stuff that's needed to communicate the idea as clearly and complete as possible. After having written down the complete and correct timeline I group the different components and visually support them. This results in a clear story-line met supportive imagery. When I'm finished doing this I take out my recording device and rehearse the whole presentation, making it easier to memorize what you want to say and how you want to say it. It's like memorizing a song, at some point you literally know it off by heart.



The phases in which the presentation preparation method evolves.



### 5.11 Analysing method

Every process has its bottlenecks, consisting of things you need to over think and pit against one another. In this analysis I try to balance the pro's and con's of the different questions by visualizing them. By questioning everything I analyze to conclude if everything is up to its requirements. The conclusion that follows this analysis helps to make up my mind on how to continue the process and can be applied to both a research project or the complete project.

This is quite similar to the morphological analysis I referred to earlier in this essay. I use this method to keep a clean ship and not lose understanding of the process.

This in an analysis I made during my graduation process. I grade a few projects by their characteristics.



### 5.12 Planning method

In larger projects it's important to define tasks, and accurately plan these tasks into an agenda in order to keep track of the status of each individual task. The program I use for this is called Microsoft Project and it makes it easy for the user to connect tasks to time indications and visualize it in a diagram. When does this task have to be done, how long will it take approximately and you can keep an eye on the progress you've already made thus far.

Image 1



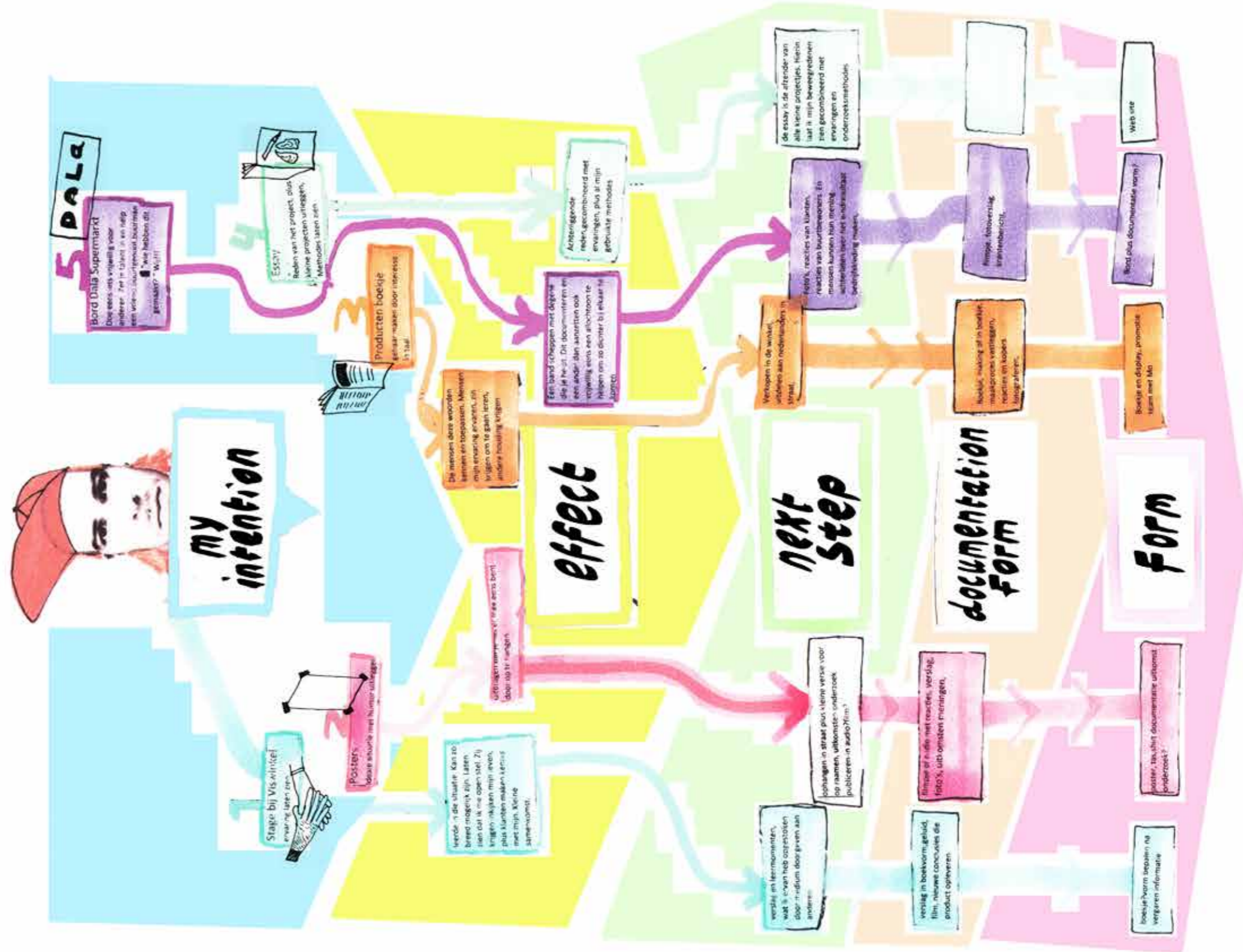
Two screenshots from the program MS-Project. Image 1: the list of tasks. Image 2: an example of an overview of a week

Image 2



### 5.13 All-overview method

In this method I try to give an as complete as possible visualized overview of the entire project by means of a diagram of sorts. You're quicker in recognizing bottlenecks and seeing if your project is correct in its entirety, and can be seen as the visualization of the project as you would see it in your mind's eye. This diagram can be changed and improved during the process, until it's fully optimized to your project and you're able to see the different connections and relations between products and elaborations.



During this graduation project I often updated my overview diagram by the latest developments. This is such a diagram.

# 6 in the making

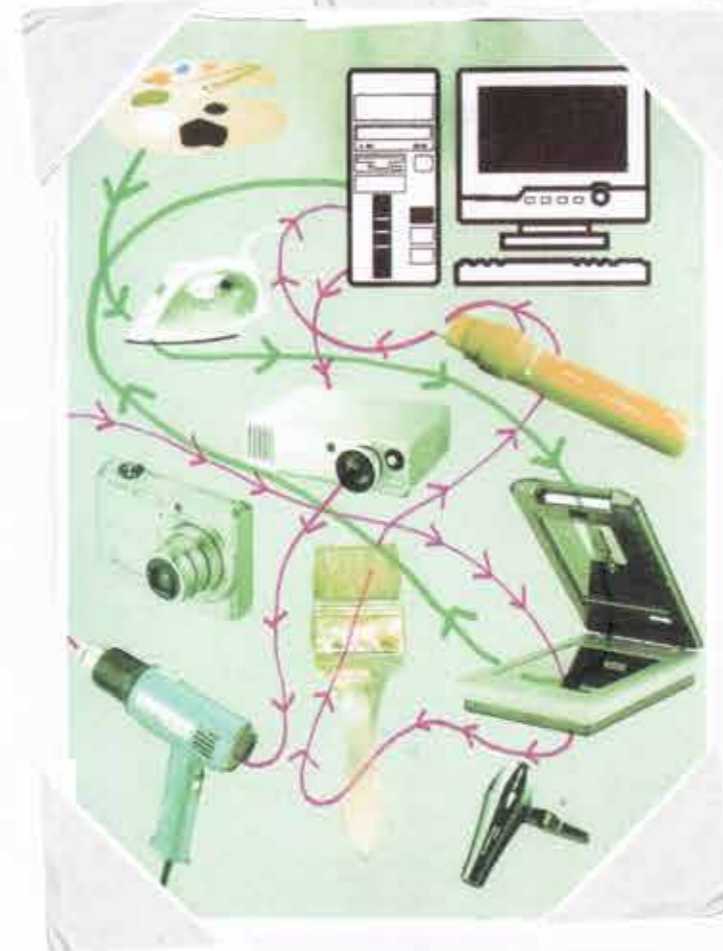
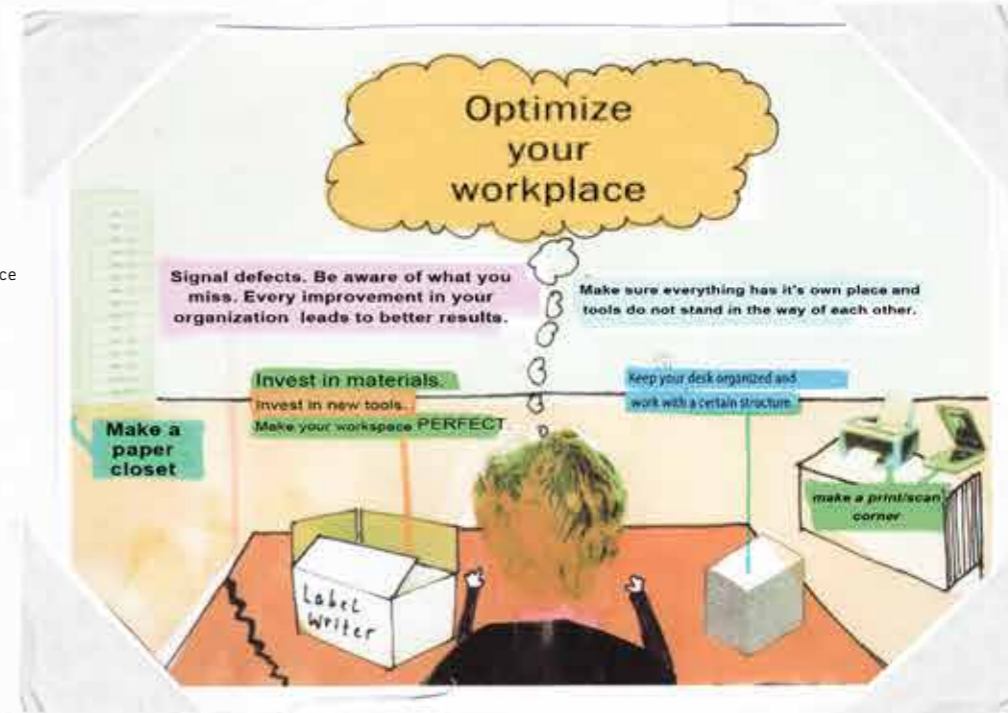
## 6.1 Imagination methods

An imagination method concerns everything having to do with the process of visualizing your story, idea or position and consists of two aspects: the tools and the method itself. Your tools are effective in improving the method and play a substantial role in visualizing the idea.

An imagination method isn't solely the order of business involved in making images but consists largely of your tools: your working place and your materials but most importantly using and managing your creativity to make correct use of these elements. When you notice you're out of paper, ink, glue and brushes you could consider this bad managing that effects your method and thus the visualization of your ideas.

It's very important to constantly keep these methods under the microscope and reflect on them in order to improve them.

Cleaning, organizing and structuring your workplace is a method.



A diagram of which tools I use and in what order I use them.

## 6.2 My consciousness and visualization methods

In 2005 I had to follow a revalidation program because of a born limitation I have with my arm. After nine months I was very happy I could return to school, but had to start from scratch because all the muscle tissue had left my arm. I had always been a great admirer of very detailed designs made on the computer, but now I had to accept the fact that this was no longer possible for me and that I had to find a visualization method that would fit my physical constraint. Quite a job!

## 6.3 Trial and error

“Making a strength from my weakness” was the assignment I received from my teachers, which resulted in a process where I had to learn from the mistakes I was making. I didn’t know exactly how far I could push my physical restraint, but I needed to make sure that I didn’t overload myself. During the first year it was trial and error, but soon after it started improving. It was okay to make mistakes and this led to surprising new solutions. It was impossible for me to do the design work I did before, stopped looking at other designer who did similar stuff and started to focus on what was physically possible for me. This changed my whole perspective on design.

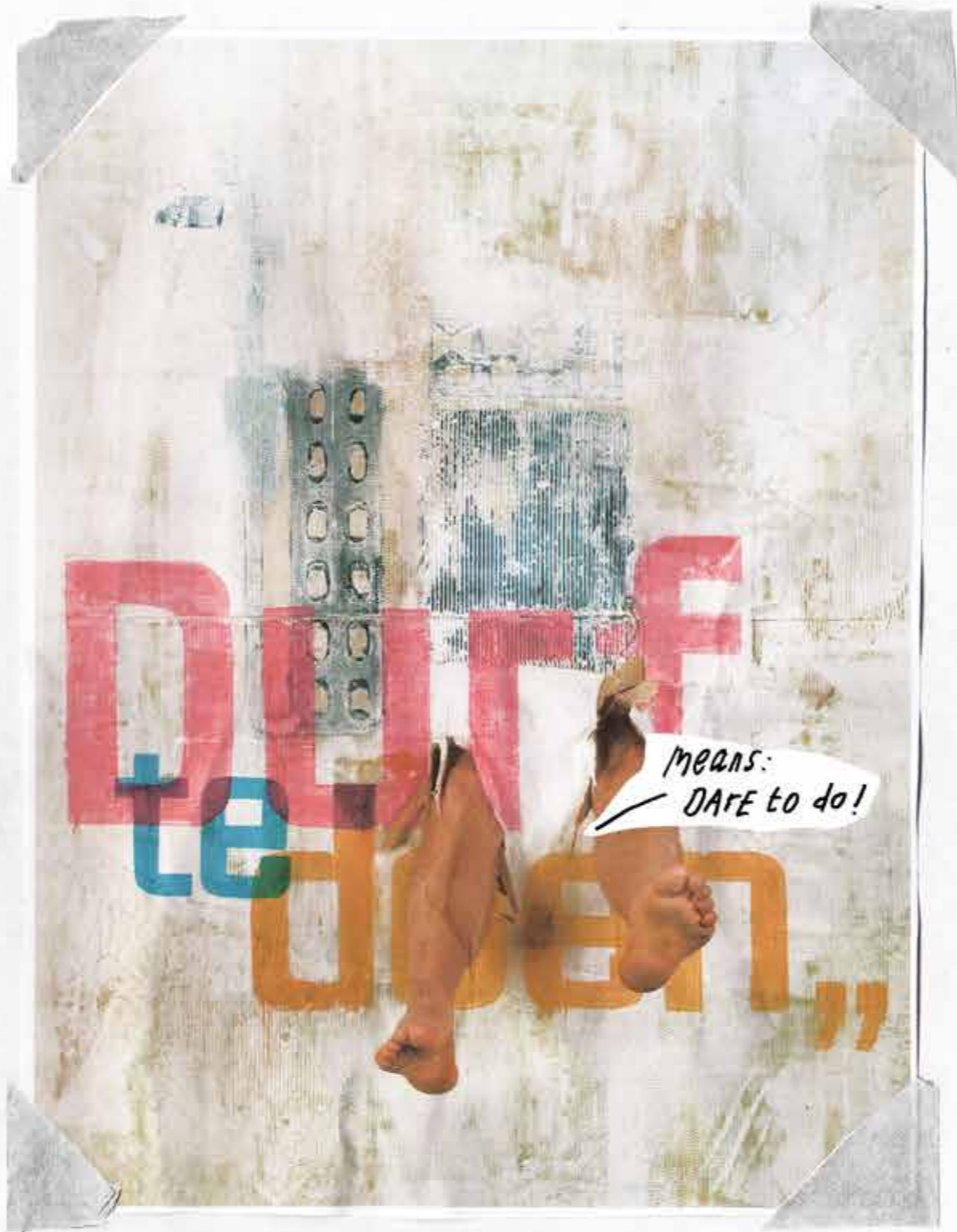
Thanks to my physical limitation I’ve become aware of these visualization methods and this has caused my imagery to, slowly but surely, change completely. Sometimes it was hard, because the content of my assignment had to fit my imagery and my physical capabilities. I found out that too much time was spent on finalizing a design which resulted in not finishing it at all. This forced me to find a different solution.



#### 6.4 Karel Martens: Dare to do!

In the second year we had an assignment where we had to interview our favorite designer, in my case being Karel Martens. My final interview question was: What would you do if you were in my shoes and had a handicap? How would you look for fitting imagery to go with this? He answered by saying I should dare to do anything. This interview resulted in a tribute where I literally did what he told me! I maximized what Karel Martens did on a small scale, and wrote "dare to do" on it after which I jumped right through the cardboard and took a picture of this moment. This acted as the start of my visualization methods.

My tribute to Karel Martens,  
which made visualization  
methods clear to me.



#### 6.5 The demands I had to set on my visualization methods

Due to my handicap my visualization methods had to physically burden me as little as possible, whether I liked it or not I had to make something that I was capable of. The fact that I didn't necessarily like what I was making was of less importance. It was very burdening for me to work on the computer so I had to start doing more analog work, using markers, paint and especially my scanner.

## 6.6 Tools

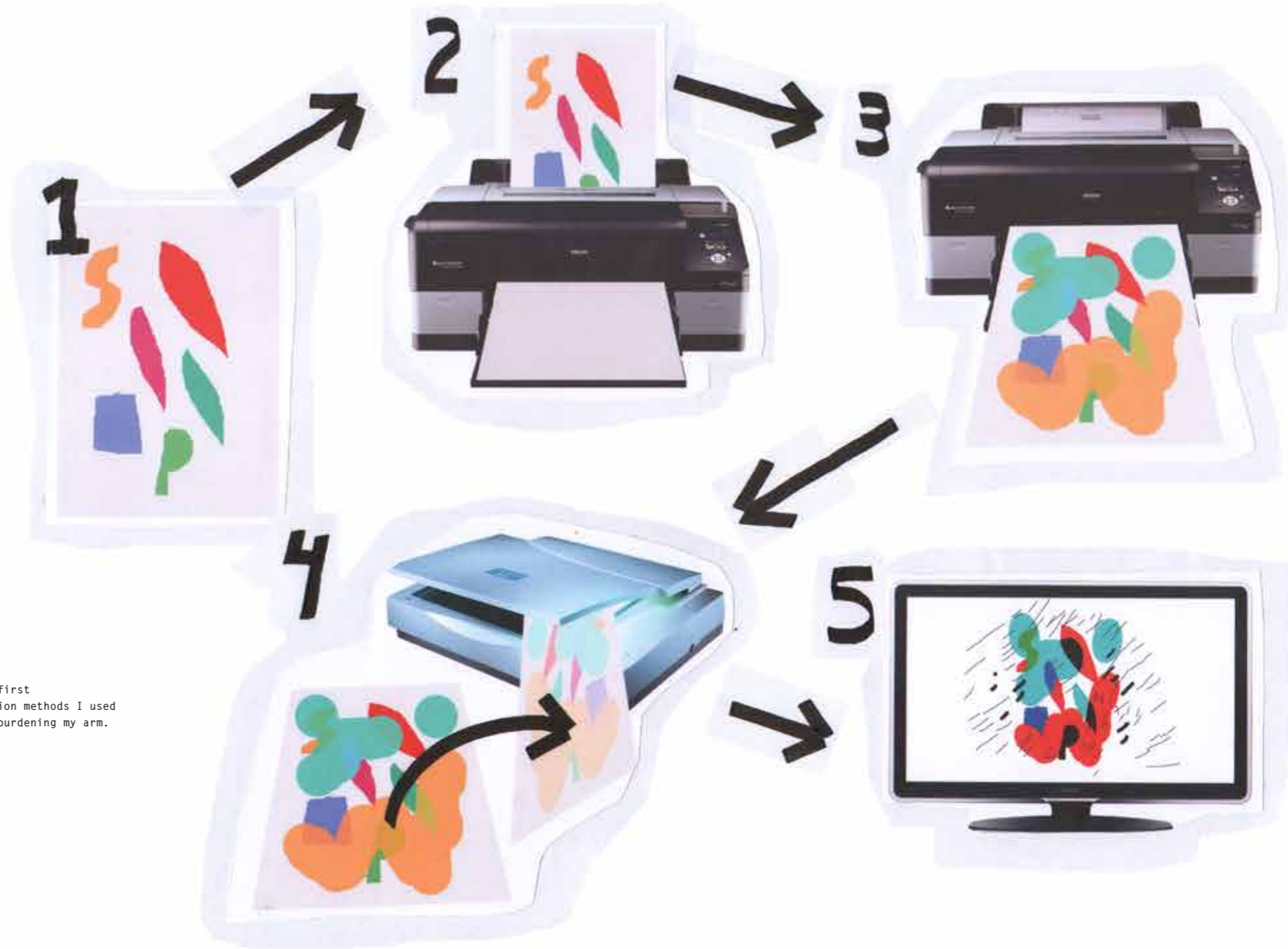
The scanner was a very important tool for me. I could make analog things digital and by using Photoshop I could manipulate these images to a point where it was hard to recognize how they had come to be. Afterwards I started experimenting with my printer, making collages on A3 and printing them afterwards. This is how my method came into existence.

I expanded my set of tools during my time at school and started consciously practicing in making images. I used different techniques which kept evolving, always reserving an important role to the printer and the scanner.

I went through different phases and noted that buying a specific tool changed the visual language of my work. When reflecting on my methods, it always lead to new imagery.

I could analyze and describe all the things I learned and describe which visualization methods I developed during my studies but I'm not going to give it away. I can give away a method that I have developed concerning formal typography, making it possible for me to use typography and text in my designs without overburdening myself.

One of my first  
visualization methods I used  
after overburdening my arm.



# News of the Week

Week 36 - Jaargang 1 - Nr 7

### Stoplicht negerende scooter knaap

**Sluip op bus**

UTRECHT - Een 17-jarige jongen is vrijdagochtend ernst half tegen gemaal gemiddeld op het Anne Frankplein, nadat hij van zijn scooter is gevallen van een rood licht. Hij had overtuigd van de bestuurder in het achteruitrijden van de rood licht. Daarop werd hij tegen de zijde van de bus. Het achterlicht is met een zakdoek bedekt. Het stuur is afgebroken.

**Sluip** - schiedt niet gemiddeld. Dit is een van de meest voorkomende gevallen van scooterrijden op een rood licht.

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### Opgesloten mannen klappen vknar knaap knar

**ZULLEN** - Toen ik lastig viel weg was een van mijn vrienden 2 maanden later met elkaar. Het was het over ging naar een knaap knar de andere.

**UTRECHT** - Een 17-jarige jongen is vrijdagochtend ernst half tegen gemaal gemiddeld op het Anne Frankplein, nadat hij van zijn scooter is gevallen van een rood licht. Hij had overtuigd van de bestuurder in het achteruitrijden van de rood licht. Daarop werd hij tegen de zijde van de bus. Het achterlicht is met een zakdoek bedekt. Het stuur is afgebroken.

### Overhite Chauffeur knapt op knaap knar

**LUNETTEN** - Een van de meest voorkomende gevallen van scooterrijden op een rood licht. Het was het over ging naar een knaap knar de andere.

### Turken klappen maasplein click in bus 1

**RIVERENWIK** - De maasplein knapt click in bus 1.

**UTRECHT** - Een van de meest voorkomende gevallen van scooterrijden op een rood licht. Het was het over ging naar een knaap knar de andere.

### 6.7 A Pluc book

Normally a grid in a book works with columns in which you place text and make a composition. You define the spacing between sentences and the hyphenation between letters, after which you start moving these columns around. This is a process that is very burdening to me with my limitation. In the third year I made a newspaper, where I drew the grid by hand and used Microsoft Word to make my text the right width and printed it. I cut all these prints out with scissors and put them on the hand drawn grid, making it easy for me to try different compositions. After having found the right composition I scanned the page and was able to manipulate color and contrast in Photoshop. I was satisfied with the result, and had found a method with which I could use formal typography without burdening my arm too much, even though it had quite some downsides. I still use this method to this day, but it will definitely evolve further in the future.

# Nieuws v/d week

### Het goooorste avontuur ooooit!

**PILSWEERD** - Ik zat op een late dondagavond in de 5. Wat is Amsterdam bij een vriend langzamer en het was shagje op.

Ik wilde me alleen laten wijzen vanden het straat licht. Ik was dus ook een beetje droevig. Ik zat te wachten op een medestudente situatie jongen leek.

Ik had in het begin niet in de gaten maar het viel me na een minuut of 75 op dat het omgafte en de jongen ongeveer knapt. Op het moment dat ik er niet te veel over was, ik vond het op 2 1/2 minuut ongeveer. Toen vanda ik een soort spanning in de lucht die ik niet meer heb. Het was geen agressieve sfeer. Niet, geen sfeer die je normaal in een bus zou verwachten. Na een tijdje uit het team naar de voorliggende situatie van het achterlicht Utrecht gekleed in lichte, zag ik in mijn omgeving twee knaap knar de andere. Het leek er op dat de medestudente situatie jongen leek.

### Bushanffeur zonder rijbewijs knapt op knaap knar

**UTRECHT** - Bushanffeur zonder rijbewijs knapt op knaap knar.

### Bejaarde krijgt saken van Moers. Sack moers

**UTRECHT** - Een 17-jarige jongen is vrijdagochtend ernst half tegen gemaal gemiddeld op het Anne Frankplein, nadat hij van zijn scooter is gevallen van een rood licht. Hij had overtuigd van de bestuurder in het achteruitrijden van de rood licht. Daarop werd hij tegen de zijde van de bus. Het achterlicht is met een zakdoek bedekt. Het stuur is afgebroken.

### Chickies over de vloer ?? Ah bezums hebben aanbieding

**WINKEL** - Een van de meest voorkomende gevallen van scooterrijden op een rood licht. Het was het over ging naar een knaap knar de andere.

Two spreads from my first analog newspaper.



take  
a look  
on:

www.  
arabisch  
praatje  
.nl

to look at my  
graduation  
project.



In this visual essay I look back on my time at the art academy and the process of my graduation project. It illustrates how I became conscious of recognizing my fascinations and how I work with research-, structuring- and visualization methods.

I describe the methods have evolved and how I have gradually obtained more control over my design process. I'll also give a sneak peek into my graduation project where I focus mainly on my fascination for the subject and how the process evolved.

Should I call it a kind of diary-theory booklet?