

“Dear Design” Postcard Compendium

Archive of student postcards made as a part of three
Dear Design seminars in 2020 and one seminar in 2022
at the Human Centered Design & Engineering Department
at the University of Washington

Cindy Atman, Grace Barar, Yuliana Flores, Kathryn Shroyer, Khadijah Jordan,

About This Project & Introduction

This is a compendium of postcards created by students who participated in 10-week seminars in 2020 and 2022 called “Dear Design: Creating your ideal design signature”. The title and postcard format was inspired by Lupi and Posavec’s beautiful book [Dear Data](#)*.

The goal of this work is to help students gain awareness of their design processes**.

Each week, for nine weeks, the students were asked to create representations of a design process on a postcard. They represented design projects they observed, projects they had done in the past and projects that they did and captured specifically for the seminar. Students used a different lens each week to interpret their selected design process. Example lenses include: “what counts as design”, “many design models”, “expert design processes” and “good designers do X.”

The student’s final Dear Design postcard was their “Ideal Design Signature”, a representation of the way they hope their design processes will look in the future.

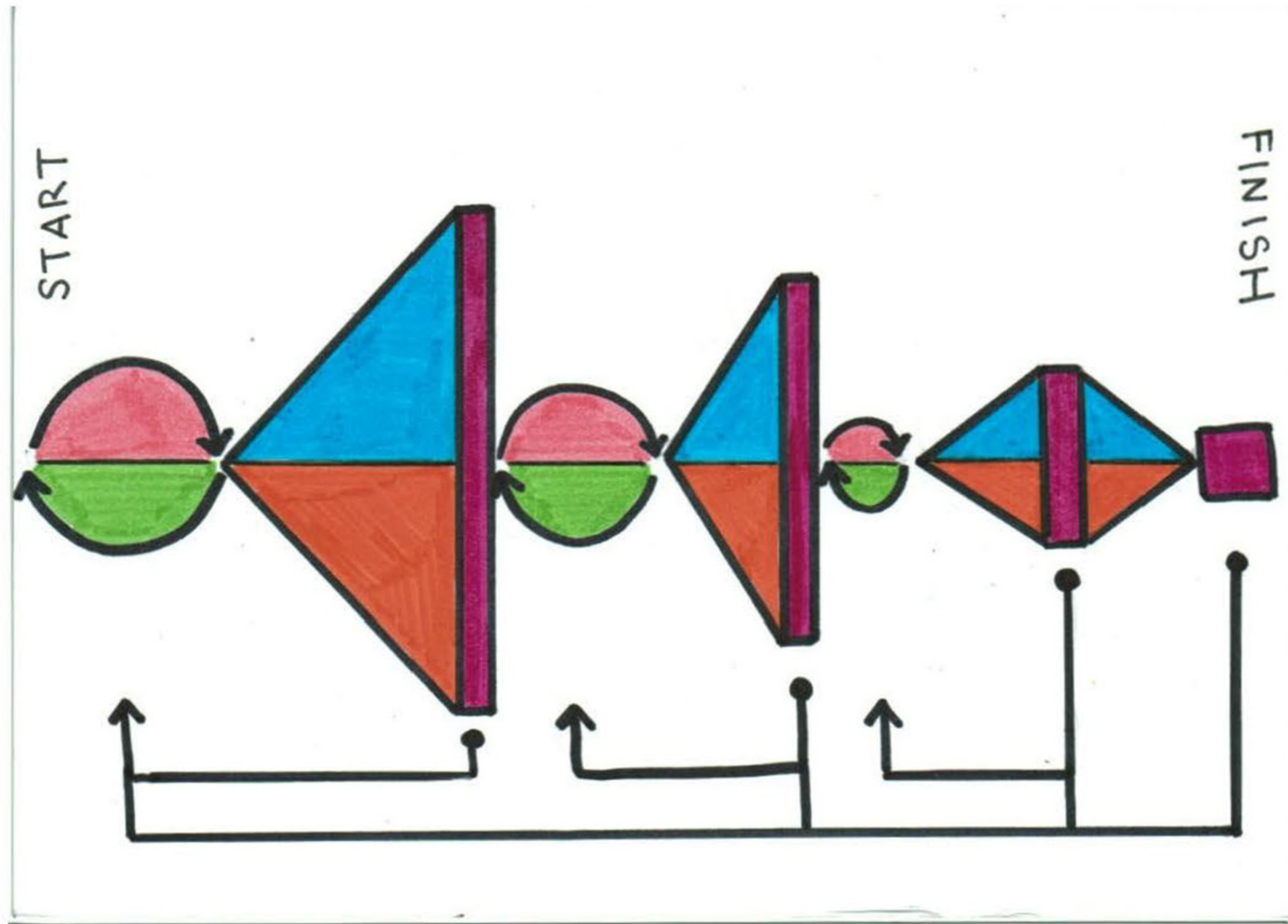
* Lupi, G., & Posavec, S. (2016). *Dear Data*. Chronicle books.

** This work is a continuation of Cindy Atman’s research on design process expertise (see, [Design Timelines: Concrete & Sticky Representations of Design Process Expertise](#)). For more information please contact Cindy Atman at atman@uw.edu.

01

Ideal Design Signatures

Student samples of ideal design signature postcards



Dear Design,

- week 9 -

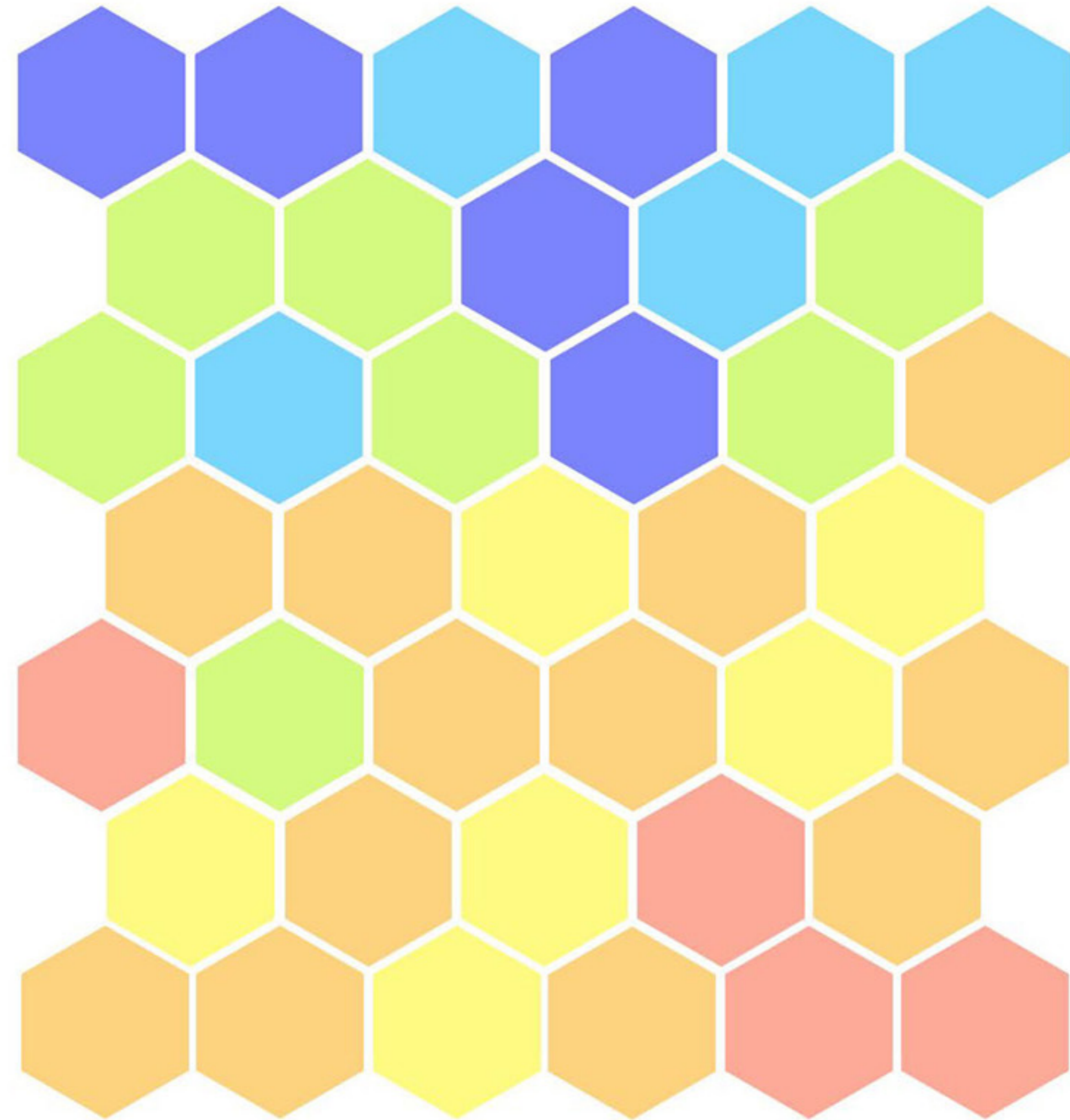
Title: My Ideal Process
 The design: A visual representation of my ideal design process.

How to read:
 Each color represents a different design process activity.
 The size of the shape shows the amount of time spent.
 Arrows on the bottom show iteration.

- problem definition
- gathering info
- modeling/action
- generating ideas
- evaluate



Cindy Atman
Human Centered Design + Engr.
University of Washington
Seattle, WA

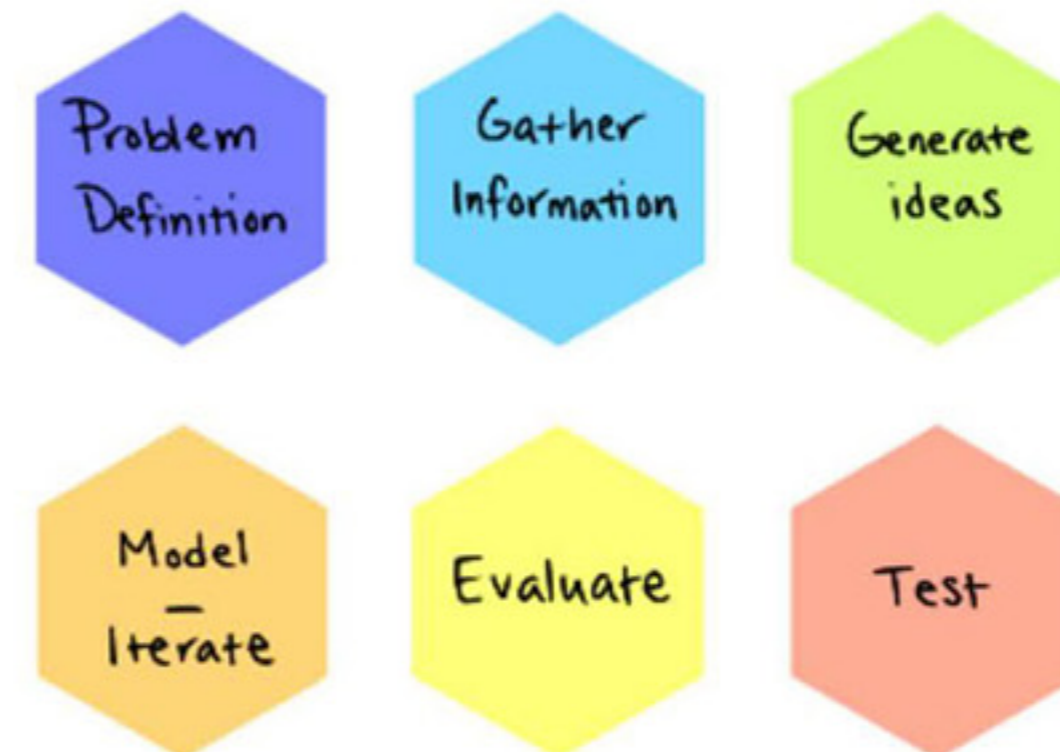


Dear Design,

Title: My Design Signature

The Design: Visualizing my own ideal design process

How to Read: From left to right, top to bottom, each hexagon represents a design step.

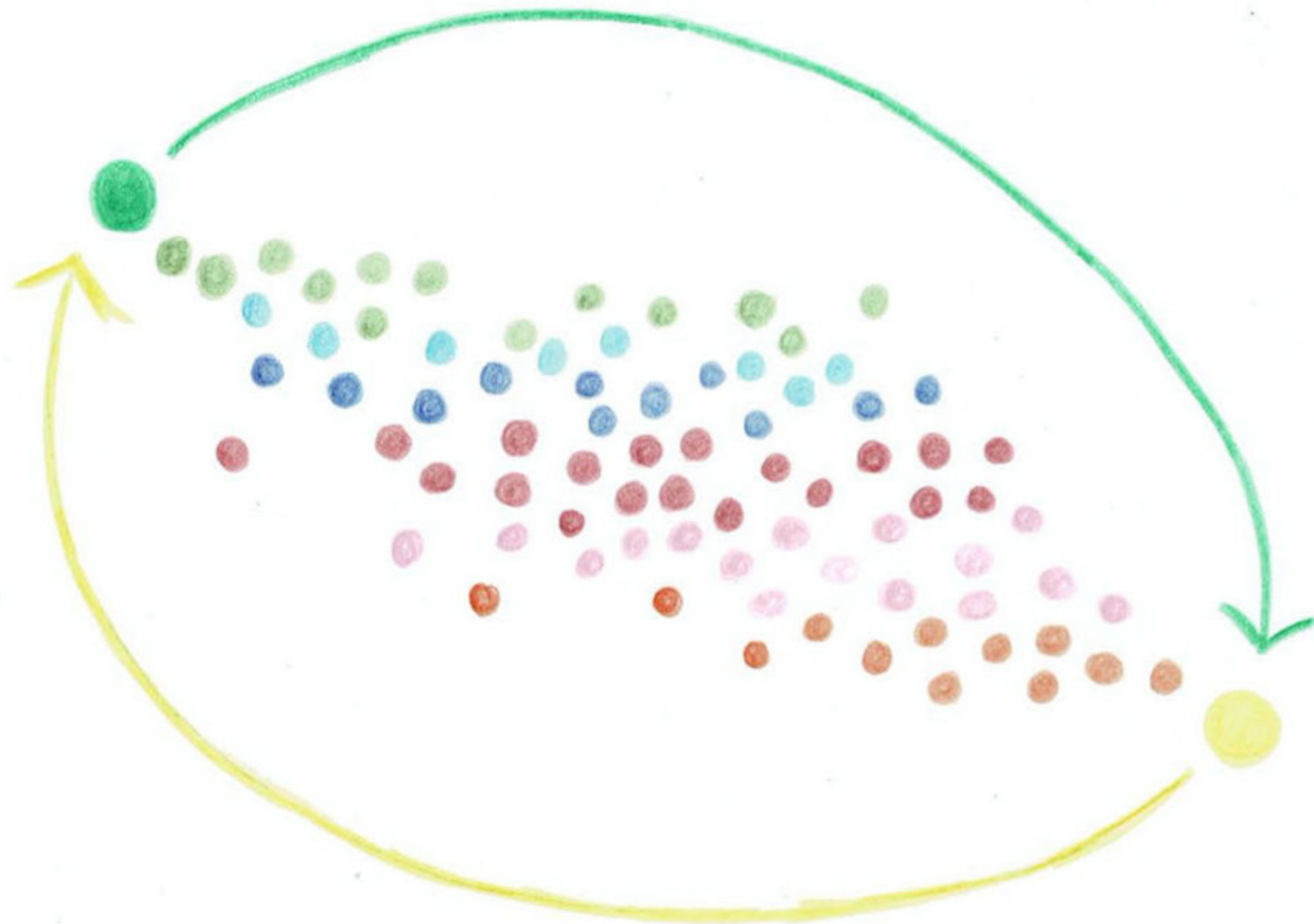


Cindy Atman

Human Centered Design + Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105



Dear Design
Week 9

[My Design Signature]

The Design:

I combined elements of the Ideal project envelope, Complex linear model and the HCDE design process model. These elements are shown both in the shape of my design signature and the steps in the process.

How to Read:

→ Timeline: Left to Right
→ The arrows show the process is cyclical

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| ● Accept | ● Prototype |
| ● Research | ● Evaluate |
| ● (re)define | ● Implement |
| ● Ideate | ● Reflect |

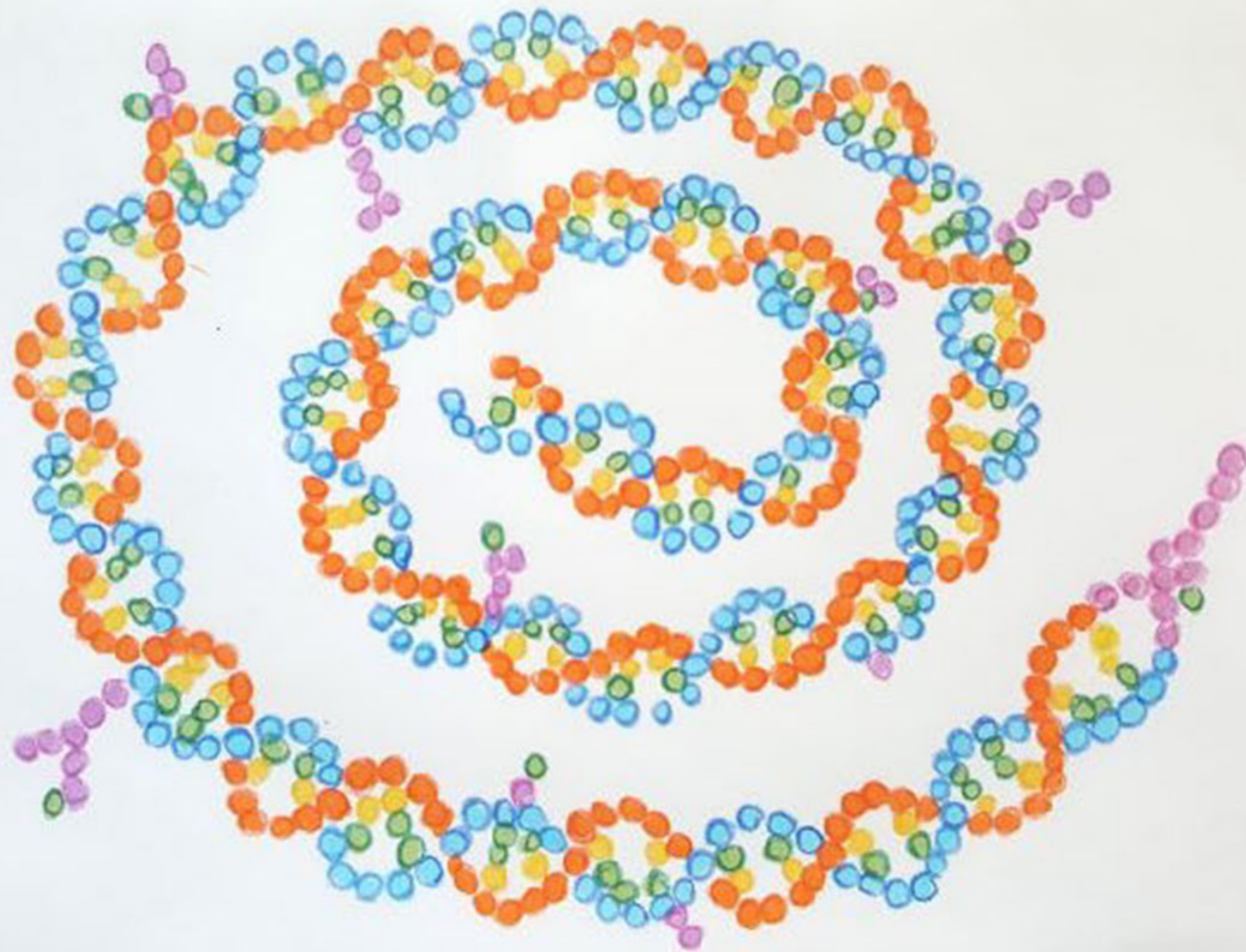
Place
Stamp
Here

Cindy Atman, Khadijah Jordan, Kathryn Shayer

Human Centered Design & Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA



Dear Design,

Title: The Ideal Design Protein

The Design: A molecular representation of an ideal design process

How to Read:

Each 'atom' represents a different category of design activities:

- Planning next steps
- Research, Problem defining
- Evaluation of product and process
- Big + Small decision making
- Making, building, creating

The double helix and spiral structure represents the iterative nature of the design process!

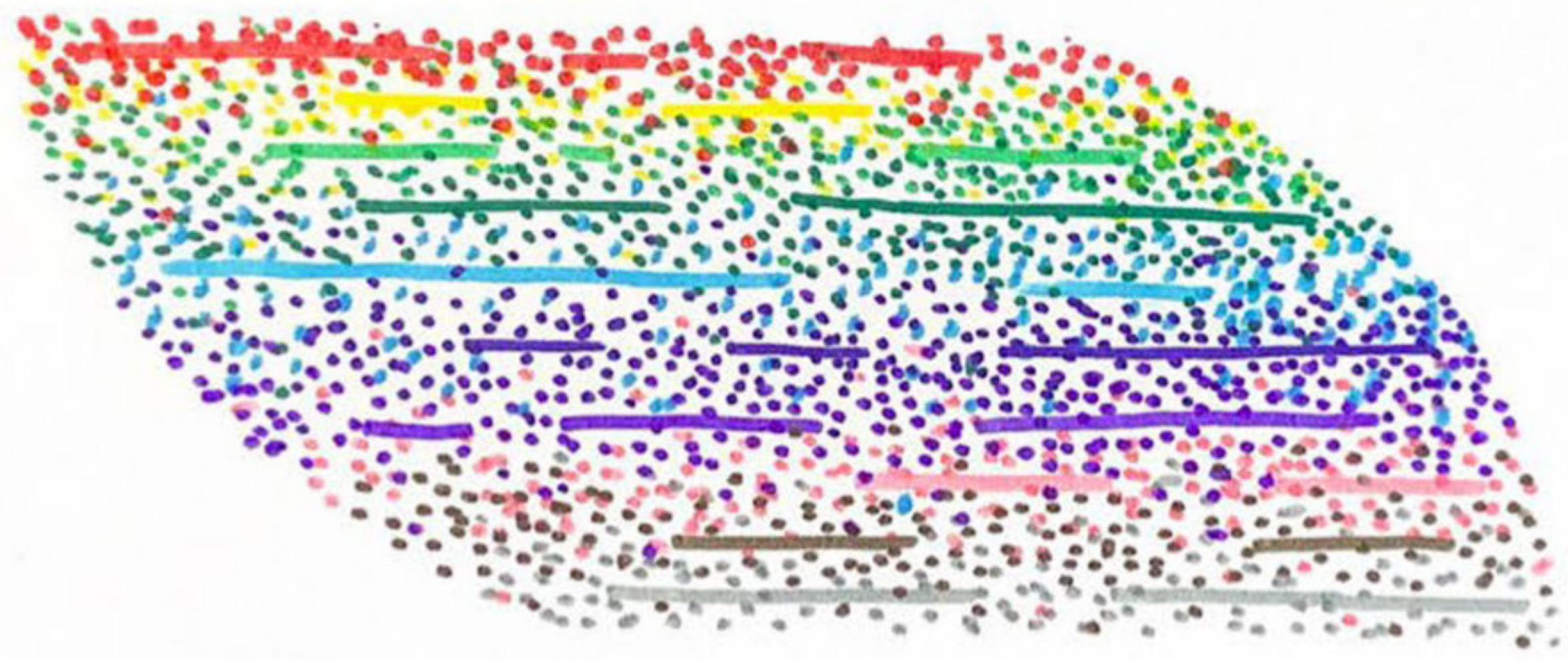


Cindy Atman

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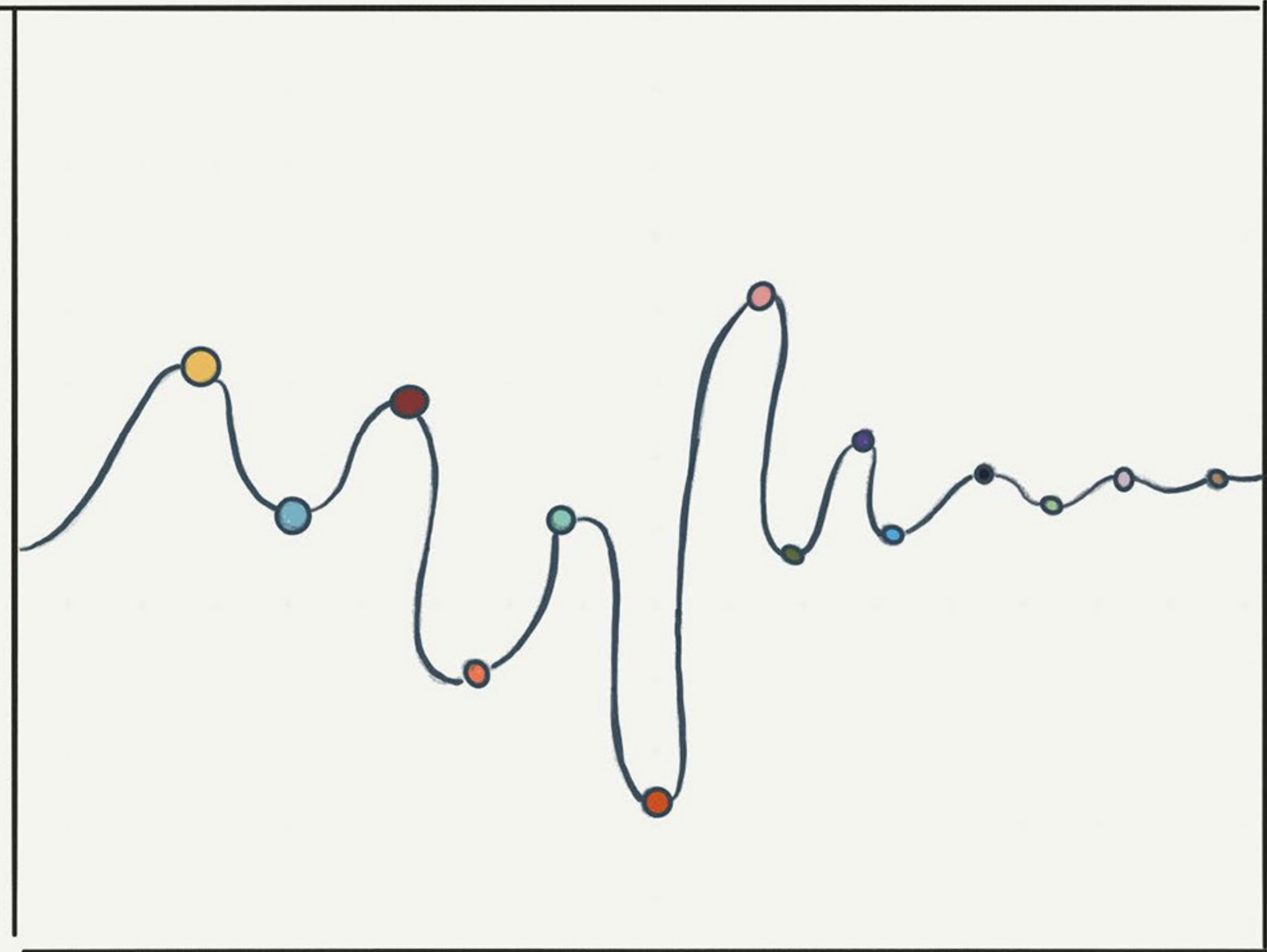
Dear Design | FINAL DESIGN SIGNATURE

This design signature is an abstract representation of an ideal design signature, based on Cindy Atman's design timelines. The overall shape resembles the IDEAL PROJECT ENVELOPE and different colors represent different design activities. The pointillist nature of the signature represents the great diversity of, many transitions between, and blurred lines between design activities.

Place Stamp Here

Cindy Atman & Kathryn Shroyer
Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA


Jordan Yoon-Buck, Winter 2020




Dear Design,

This is my design awareness
aid.

How TO READ:

 = divergence/
converge process

 = diff process



Dear Design - Week 9: Your Ideal "Design Signature" | postcard #9

Title: my design signature (design awareness memory aid)

HOW TO READ:

This is my design compass, ^{general} process order.

- 1 identify problem/need
- 2 gather information
- 3 planning
- 4 ideate
- 5 make prototype
- 6 evaluate
- 7 make decisions
- 8 revise

However, the needle can move?
adjust directions as you move through
the process.

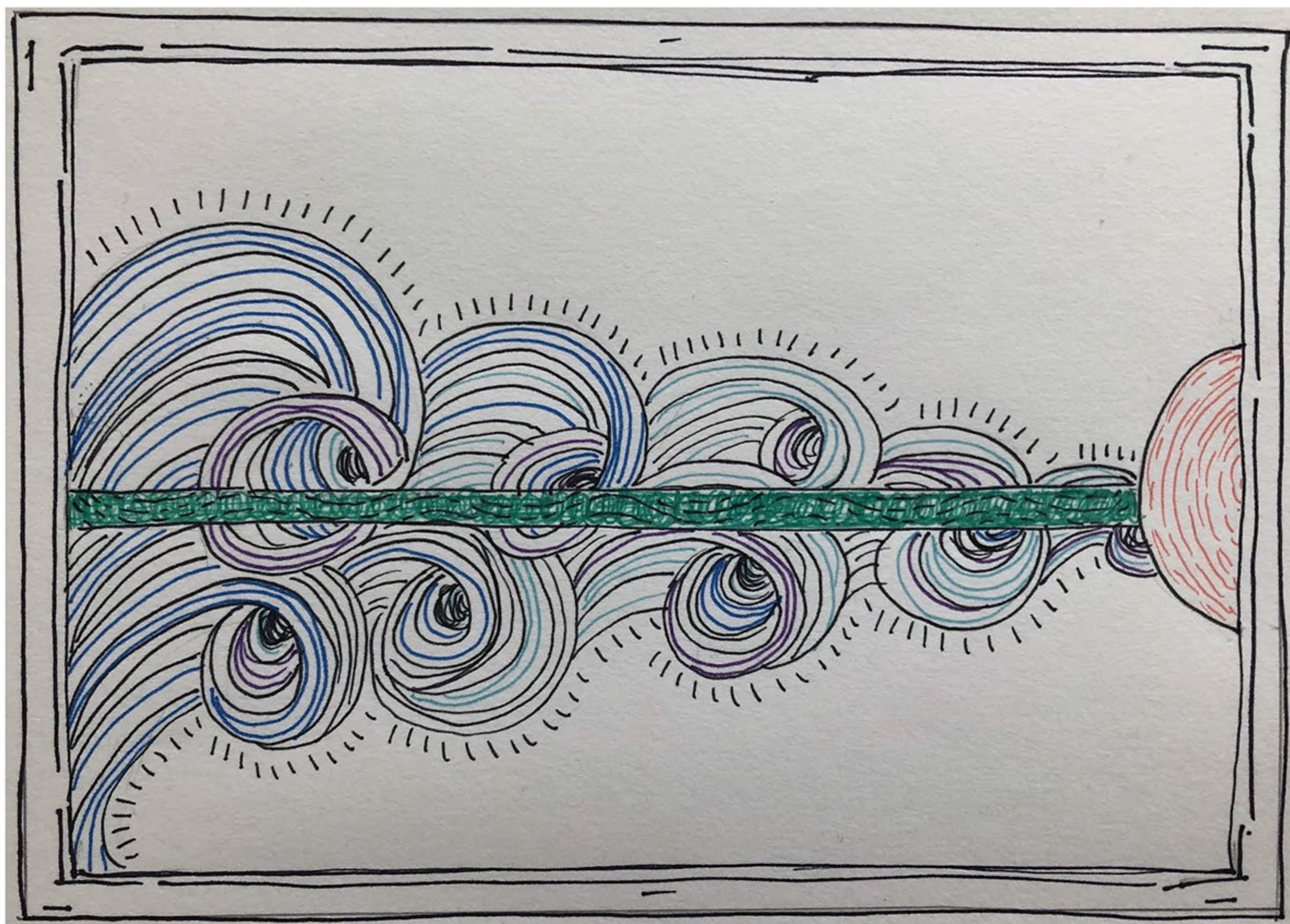
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Cindy Atman + Kathryn Shroyer



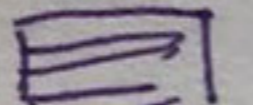


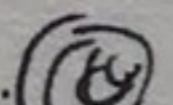
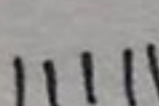
Human centered Design & Engineering

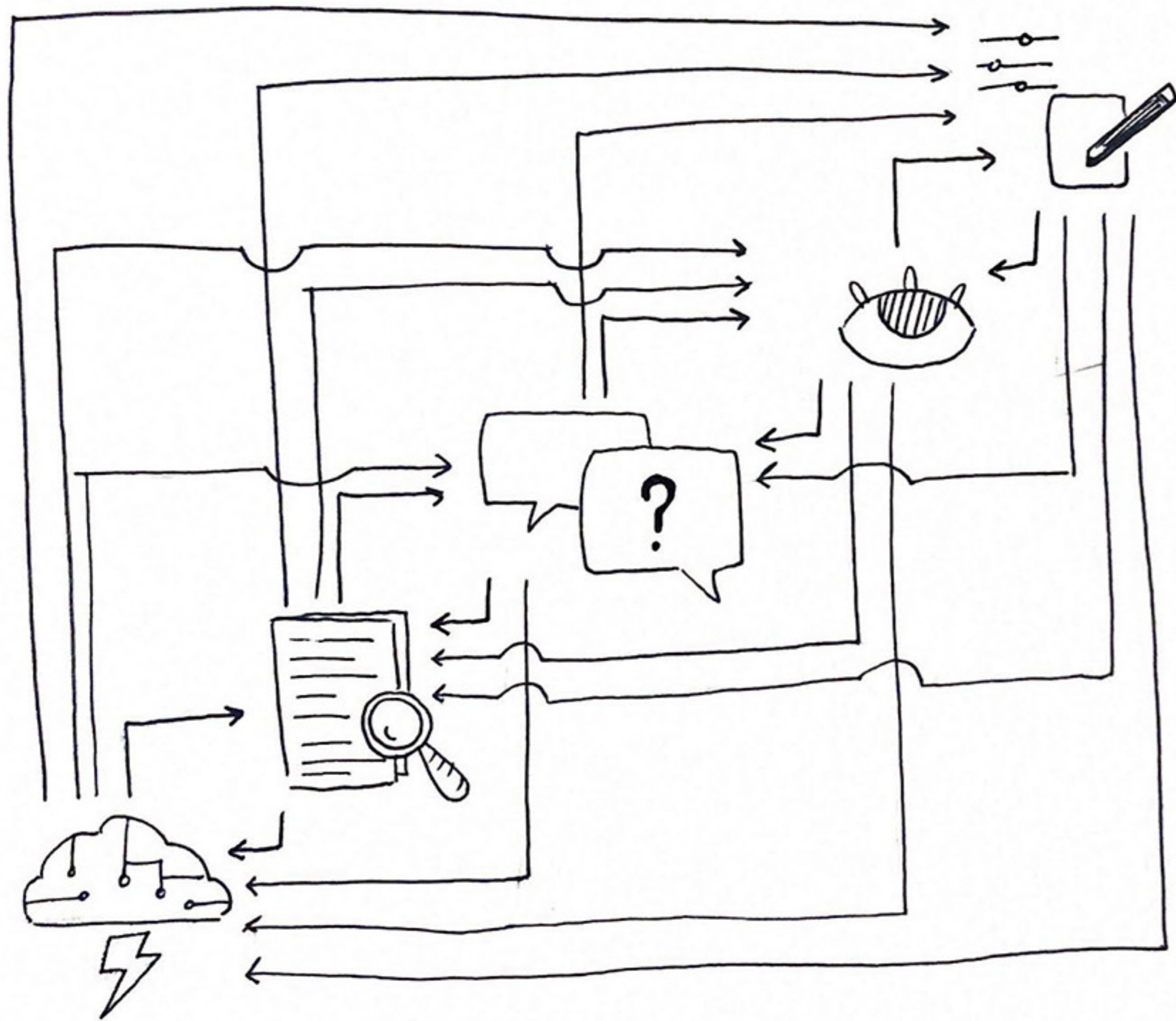
University of Washington

Seattle, WA



Anonymous, Spring 2020

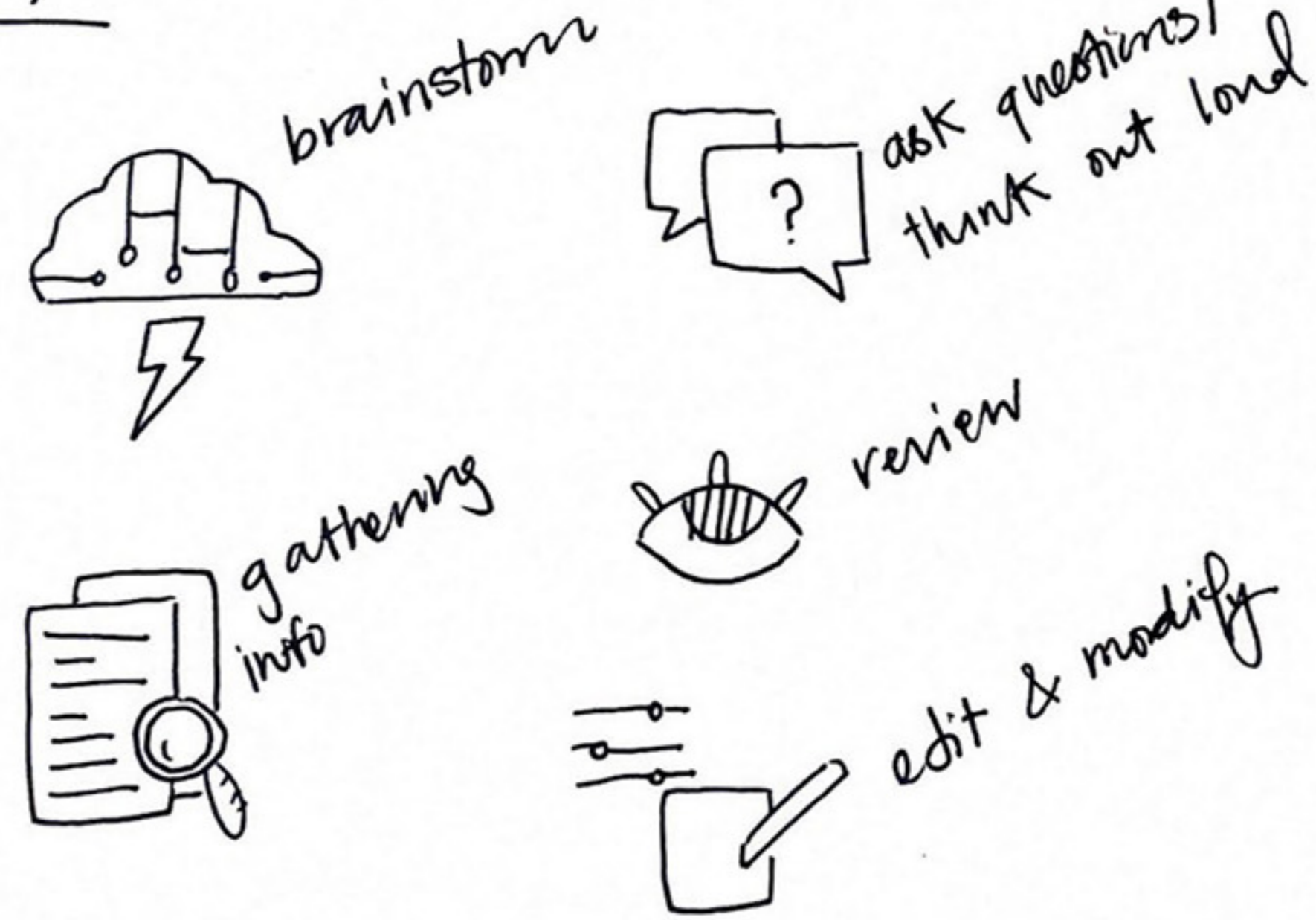
<p>Dawn Ferguson Design Signature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RESEARCH & PLANNING EVALUATION DECISIONS COMMUNICATION GOAL POCKETS FOR GROWTH AWARENESS	<p style="text-align: right;">Post</p> <p><u>Cindy Atman</u> <u>DEAR DESIGN</u> <u>HCDE UW</u> <u>SEATTLE</u> <u>WA</u></p>
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Dear Design
[week 9]

TITLE: DESIGN SIGNATURE

KEY:

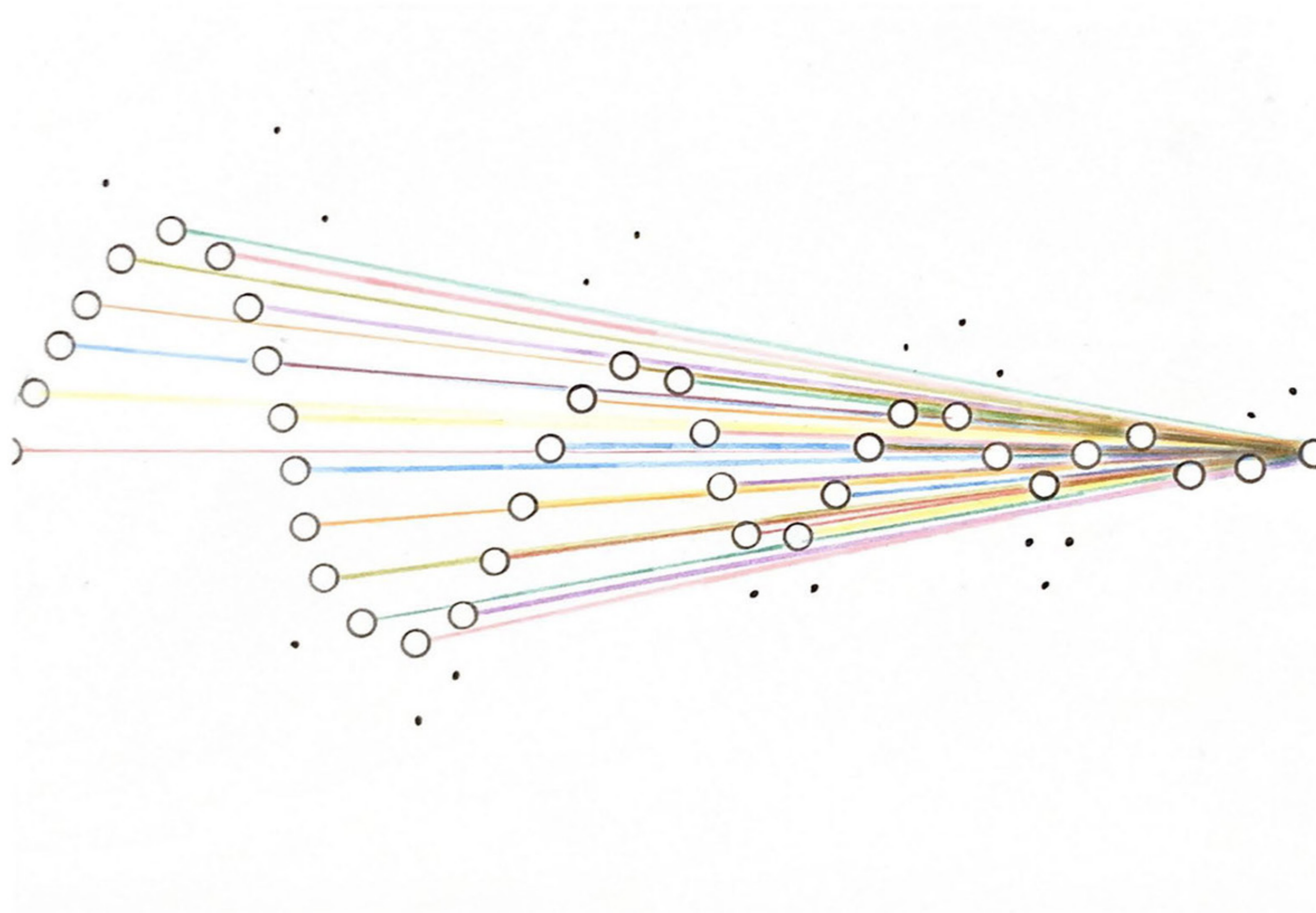


Cindy Atman

HCDE

Smith
University of WA

Seattle, WA



Dear Design - week 10
My ideal "design signature"

How to read it:

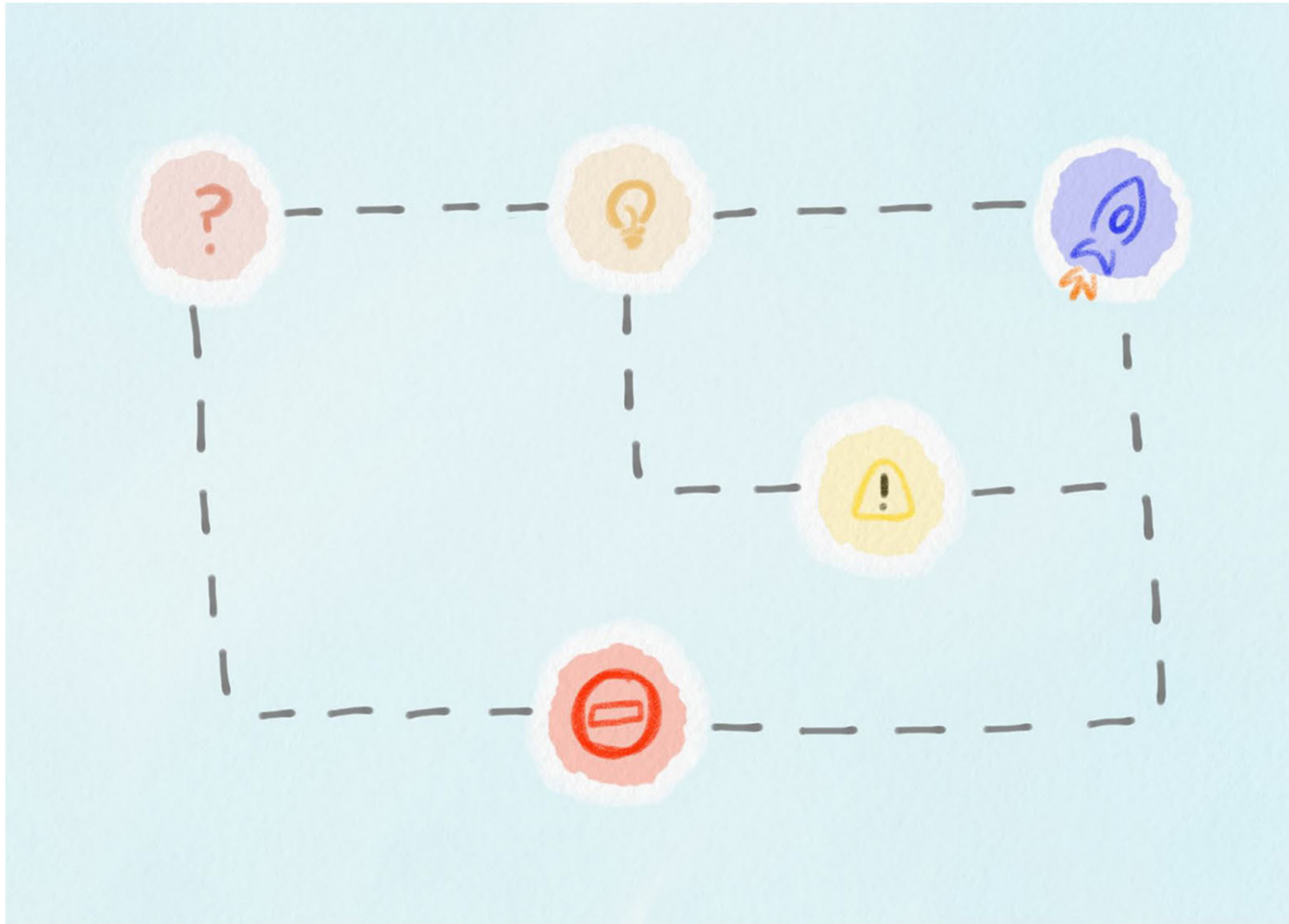
From left to right, each bubble represents a step in my design process. I hope that as I go on, my process will become more streamlined + unique to me, with outside influence (the extra bubbles on the sides).

Place
Stamp
Here

Cindy Atman + Kathrin Shroyer

HUDE, University of Washington

Seattle, WA



Anonymous, Spring 2020

dear designer,

Signature:

problem? Ideate Test!

redesign

Restart

♡ andrew

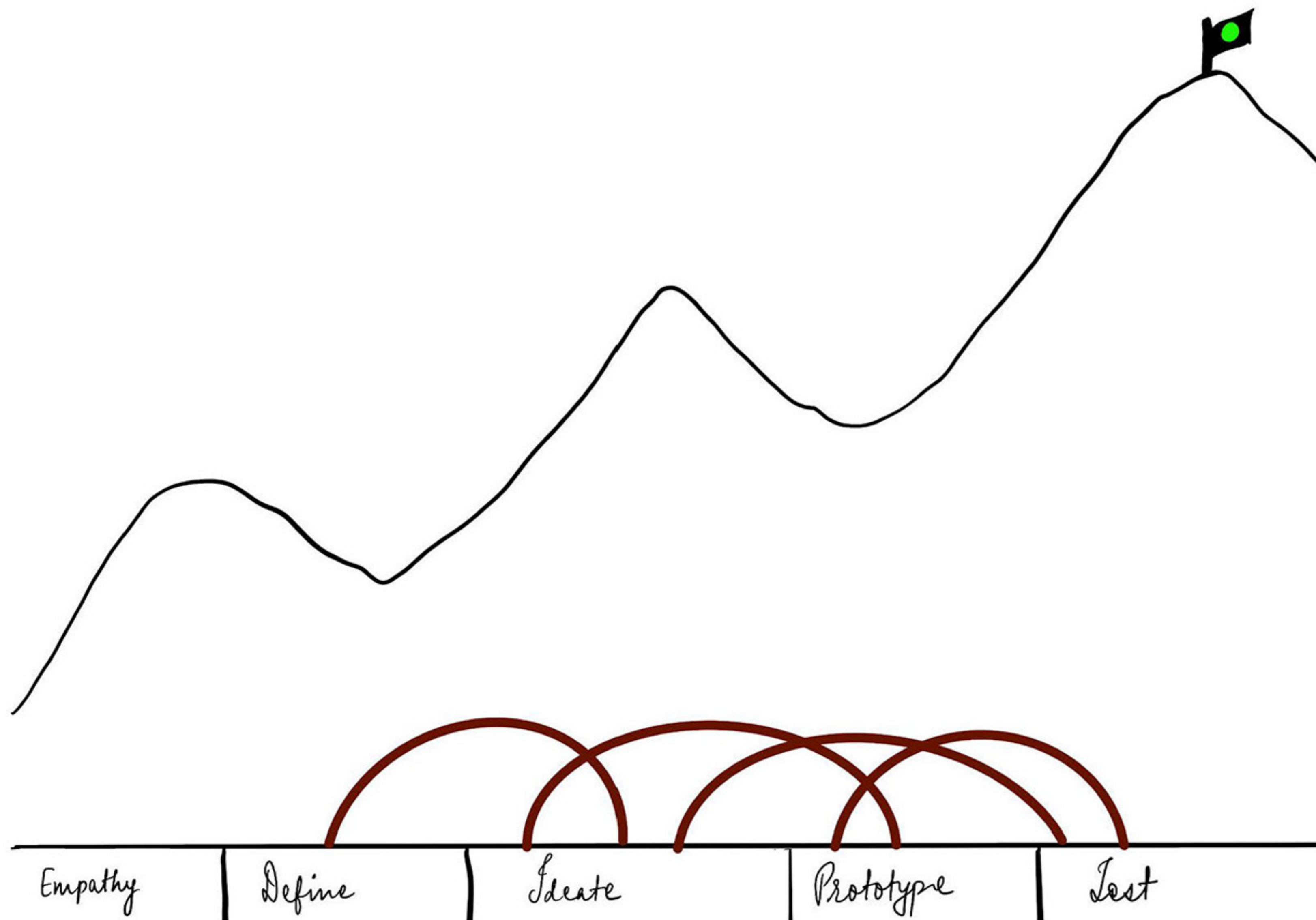
1¢
 Atman

Cindy Atman

H.C.D.E.

University of WA

Seattle, WA



Nisha, Autumn 2020

Dear Design,

Week 9

Title: My design journey

The Design: Design Signature

Empathy: Focusing on user needs, wants, pain points

Define: Understand and define the problem scope

Ideate: Brainstorm solutions and weigh the pros and cons of each

Prototype: Converting ideas into design

Test: Gain feedback and iterate your work.

*Length of each slot resembles represents the time consumed in each slot.

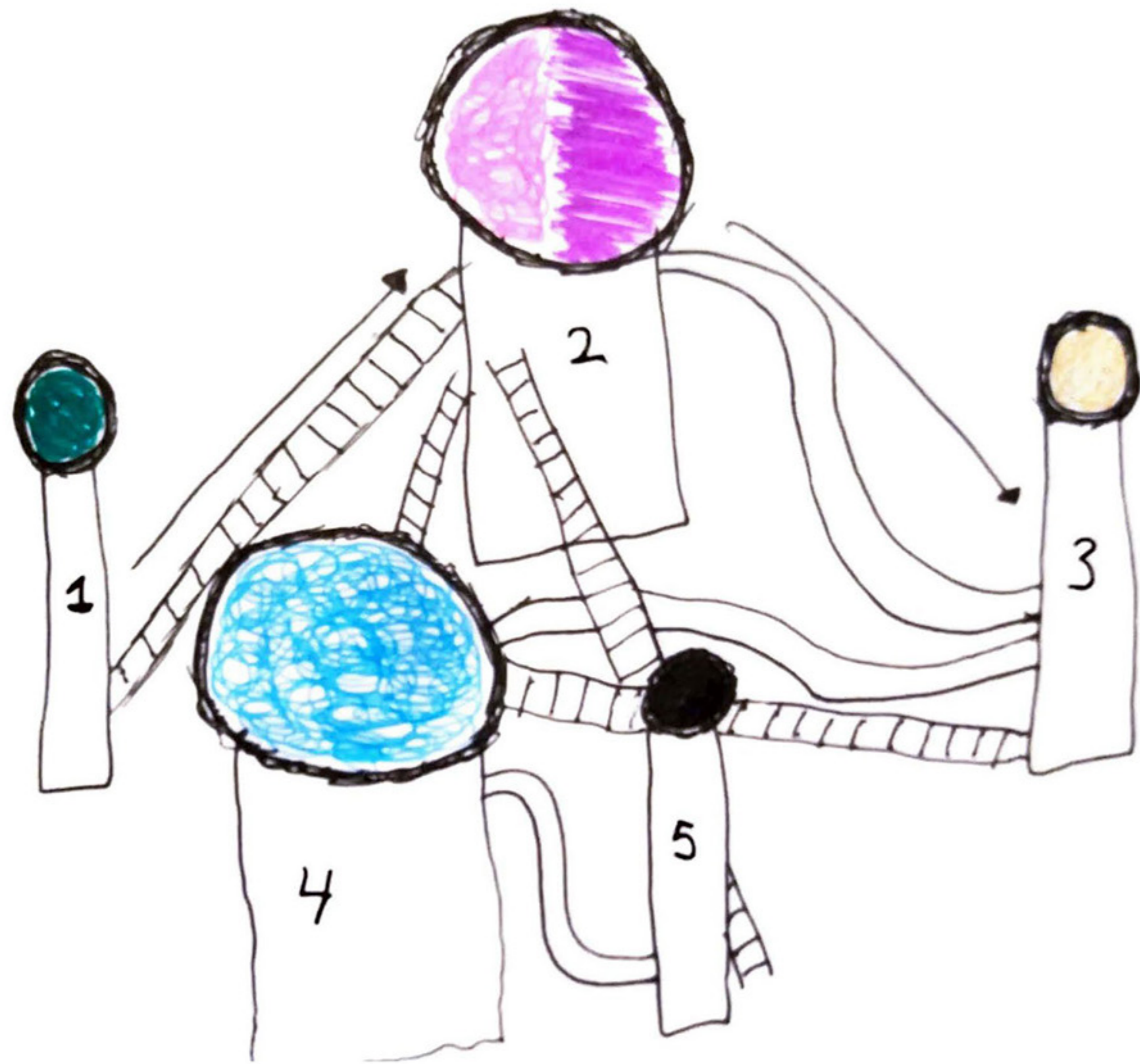
The number of peaks, resemble the hurdles encountered in the process.



Cindy Altman & Khadijah Jordan
Human Centered Design & Engineering

University of Washington,
Seattle, WA

98105



Dear Design,
 Week 9: Ideal Design
 Signature

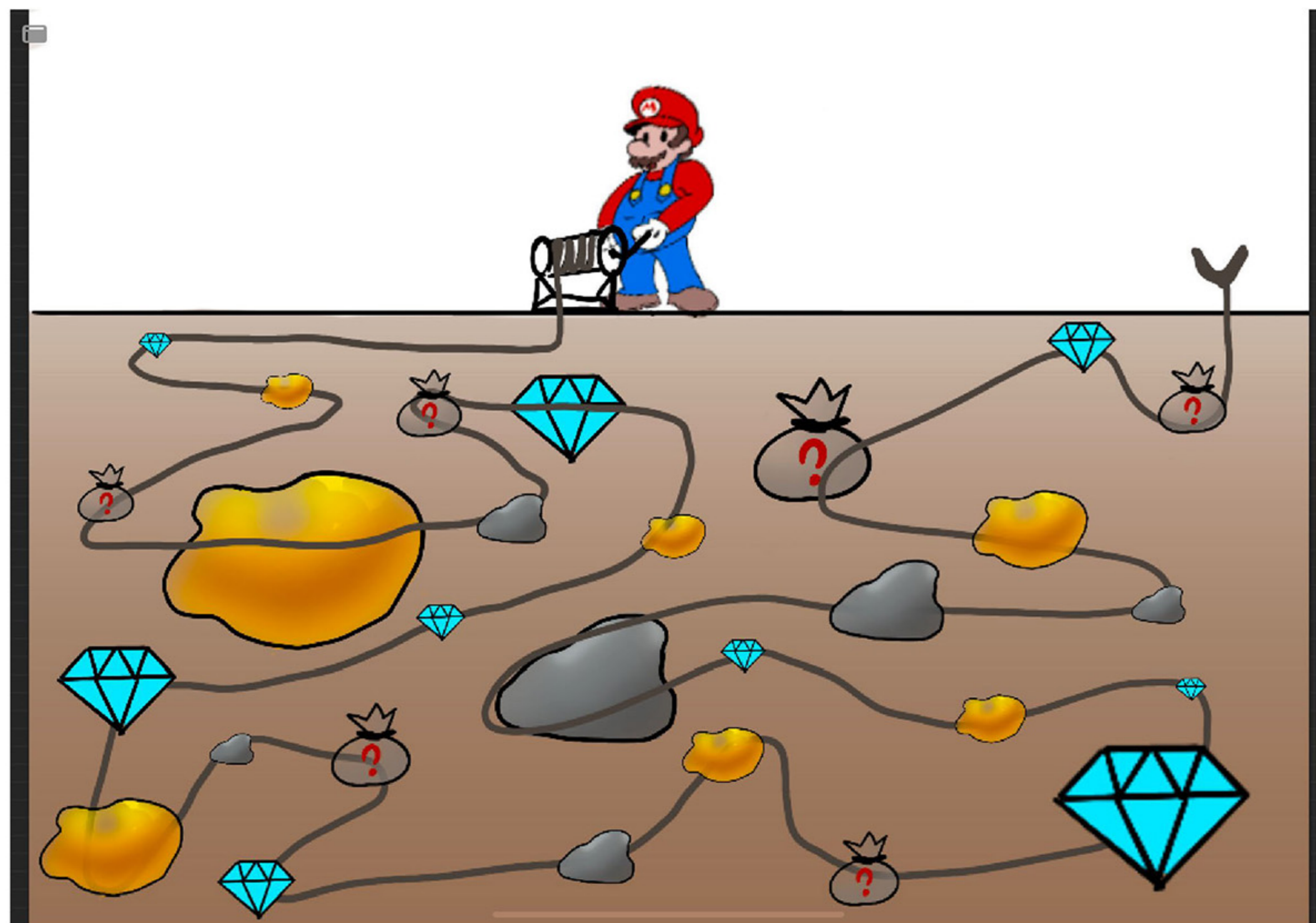
Design Awareness Question:
 In which steps can I Think
 Less?

How to read:
 # = more thinking
 ~ = less thinking

Problem Definition
 Gather Ideas
 Generate Ideas
 Gen Making Prototypes
 Evaluating Ideas
 Implementing Ideas

Place
 Stamp
 Here
 Text

Dear Design
 Human Centered Design + Engineering
 University of Washington
 Seattle, WA 98105



Dear Design

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:
How did I explore my design awareness?

How to Read:

🟡 Findings/Practices

💎 Inspirations

👑 Questions Met

🪨 Obstacles

🛠️ Thoughts/Design Awareness



Me digging

my design awareness

and design processes



Dear Design

Human Centered Design
and Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA, 98105

Mingyue Weng



Dear Design,

Ideal Design Signature
DA question: How can I be aware of my level of engagement w/ my design projects?

This postcard is an abstract representation of my design process and serves as a reminder for myself.

From left to right, the growing tree represents a design/project as it progresses.

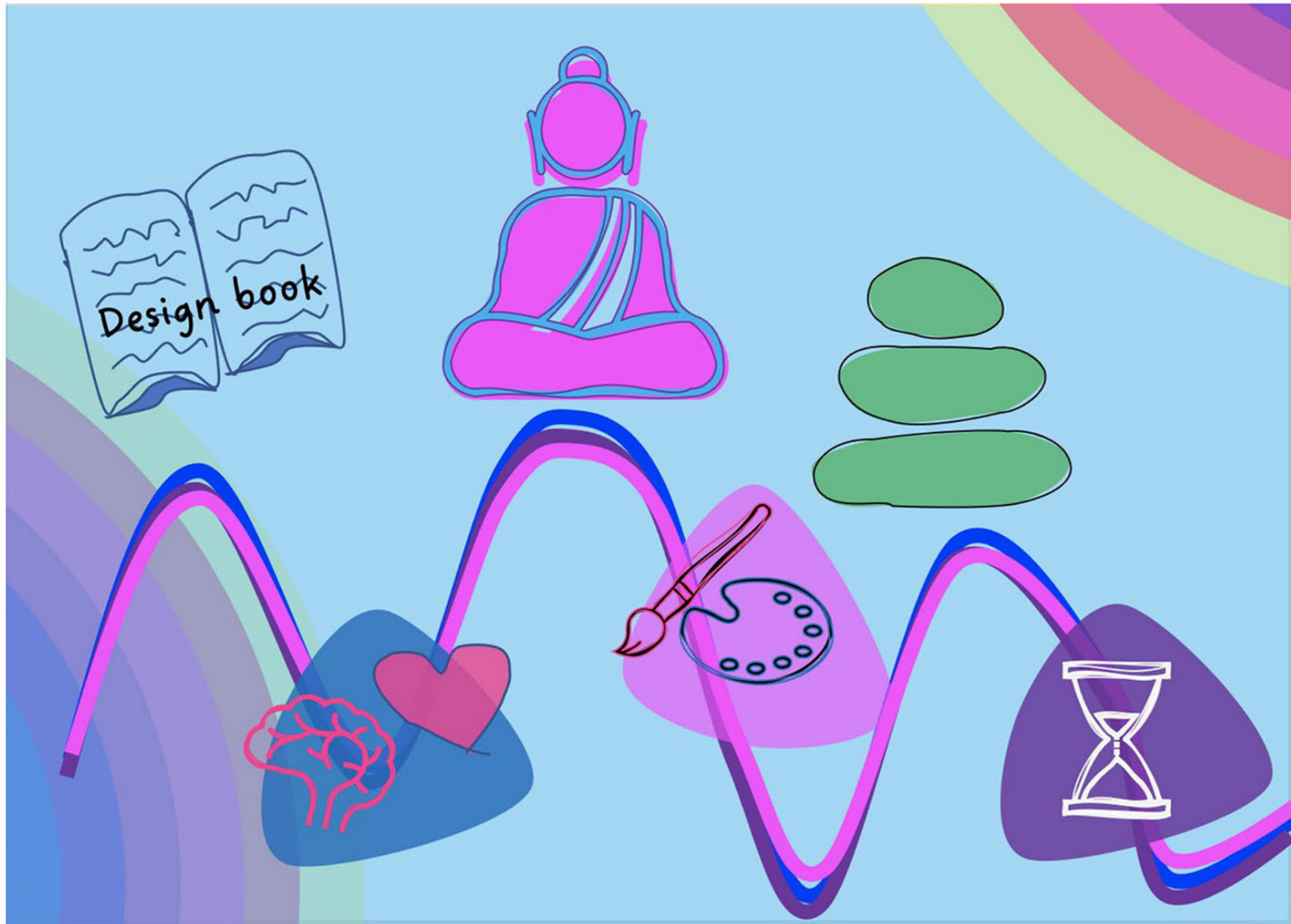
The increased intensity of the water source over time = more effort, engagement, & involvement throughout the project.

This postcard reminds me to stay committed to my work, even when it is hard.



Dear Design
Human Centered
Design & Engineering
University of
Washington
Seattle, WA 98105

Mileena Ros



Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:
How can I be more intentional about my process?

How to Read:

-  Being Mindful about my process
-  Striking a Balance in different phases of design process
-  Positive vibes
-  Reflecting on my process
-  Time
-  Developing skills and tools as a designer
-  Recording Design Process

Dear Design
Human Centered Design
& Engineering

Univ. of Washington
Seattle WA 98105

Lubna Razaq



Julian, Winter 2022



DEAR DESIGN
DESIGN INSPIRATIONS
FINAL DESIGN SIGNATURE

HOW TO READ

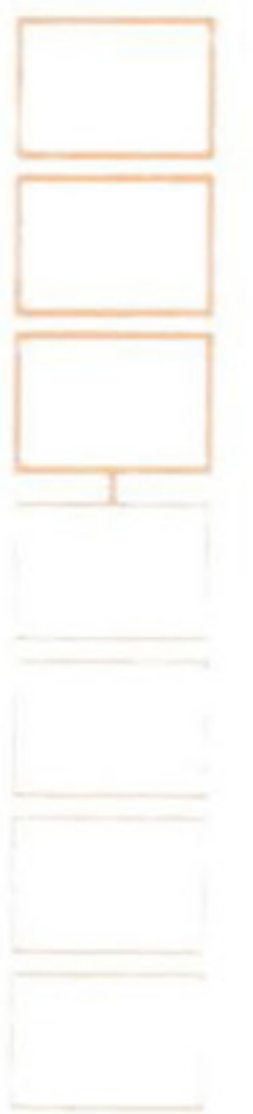
This is a blind contour drawing I made of myself. It represents the unpredictability of the creative process, but it also speaks to unique joy of embracing ambiguity.

I contrast this with a soft background reminiscent of a summer sunset. Despite the ambiguity, I'd like my process to smoothly envelope from one stratum to the next like the sky approaching dusk.

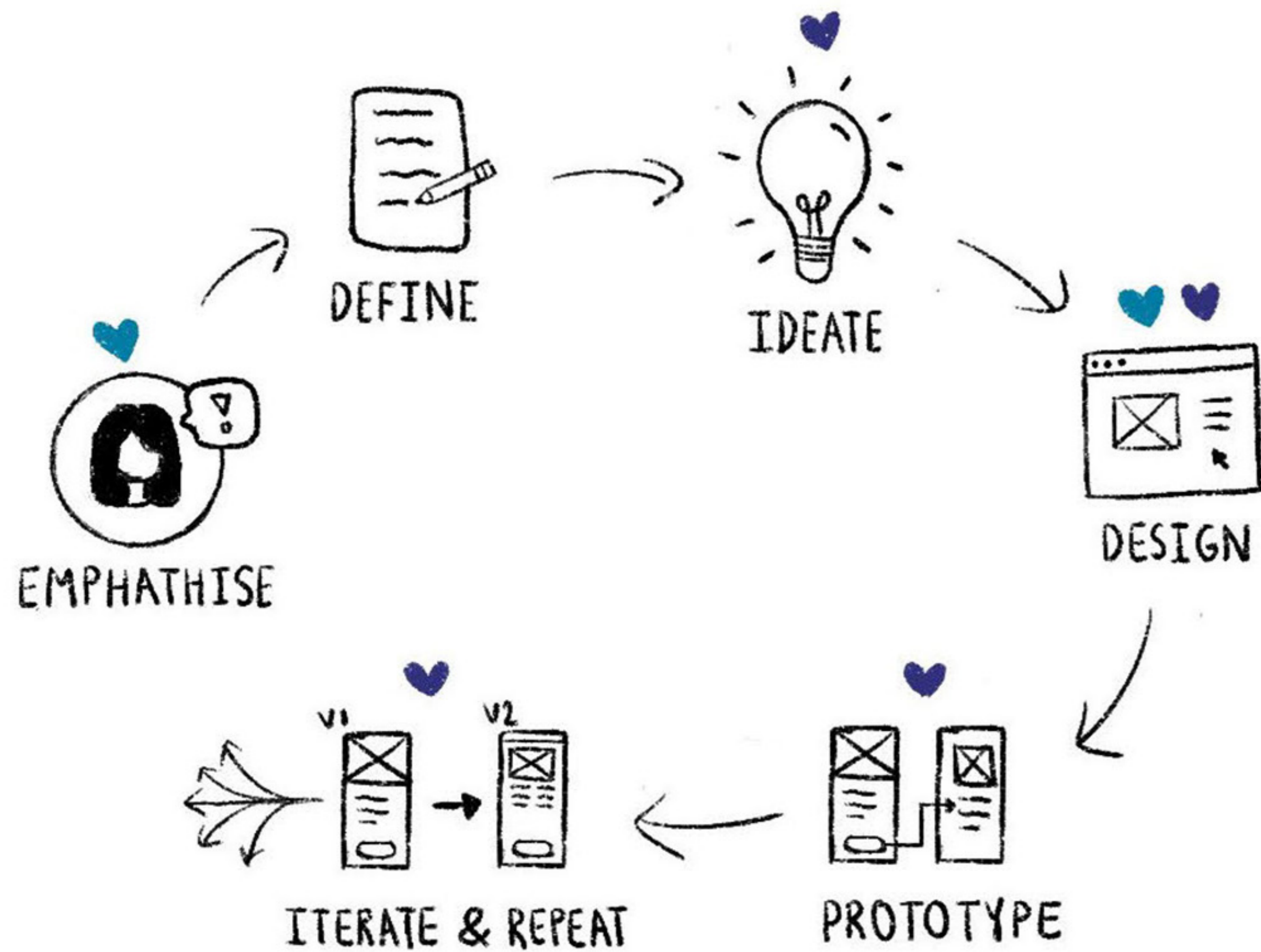
There is no particular way to read this postcard. If you'd like, you can interpret the work from top to bottom as a timeline of my design journey, or you can view it holistically as a landscape of my creative process.



JULIAN BODY
HUMAN CENTERED DES. & ENG.
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE, WA 98105



郵便はがき

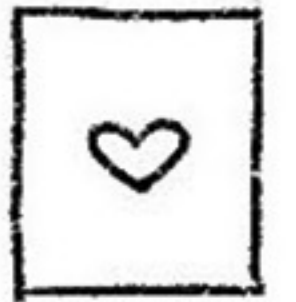


Dear Design,
 Week 9: Ideal Design Signature
 Design Awareness Question: How do I incorporate my values into my design process?
 How to Read:

Hearts = grounding?! I will ask myself

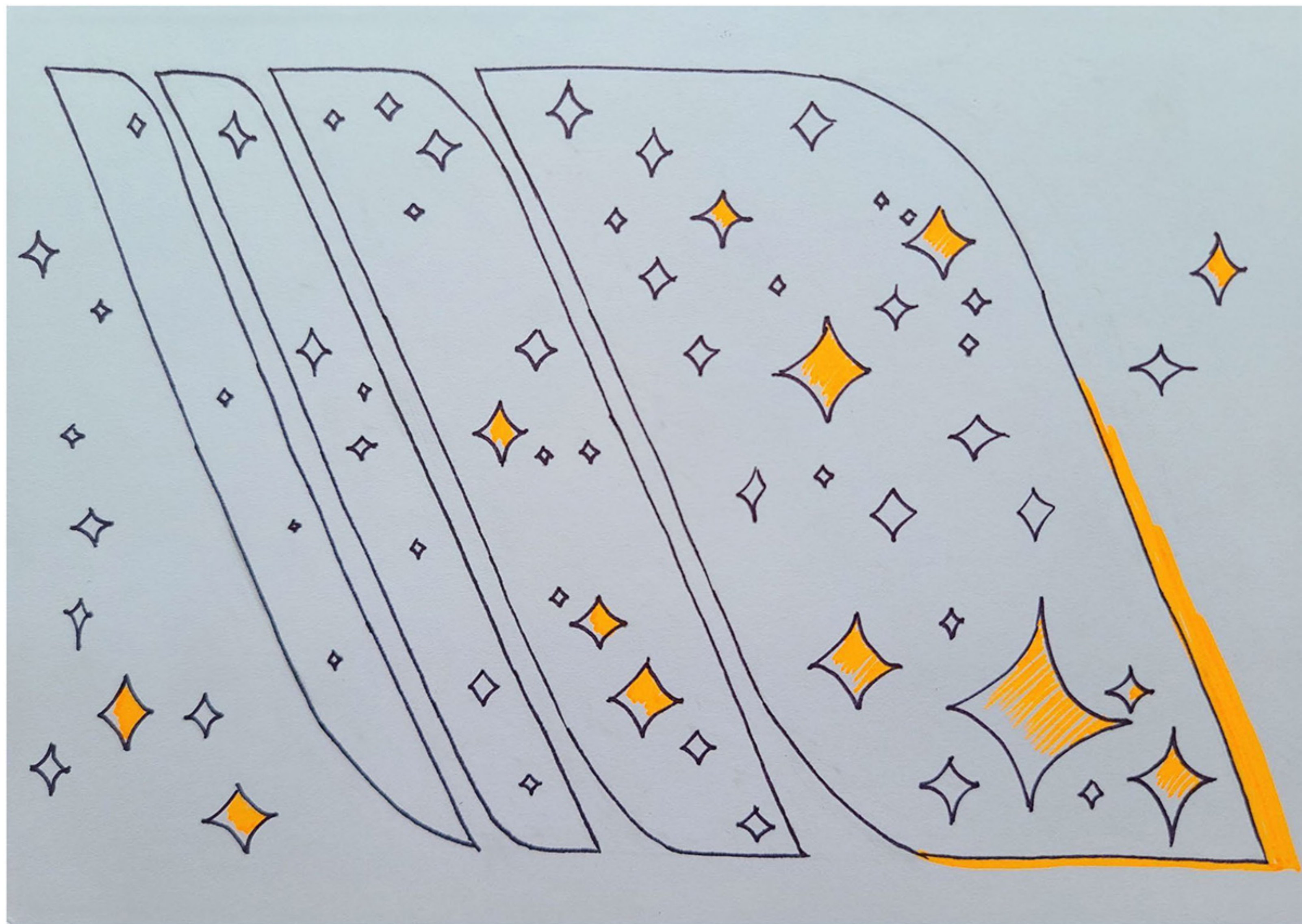
♥ = is it meaningful to me?

♥ = does it follow the humane design principles?



Dear Design
 Human Centered Design + Engineering
 University of Washington
 Seattle, WA 98105

Kayla



Eileen Zhang, Winter 2022

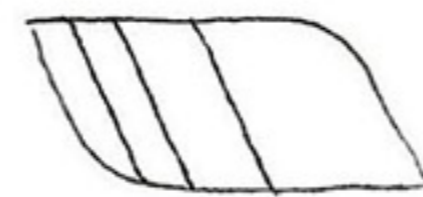
Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:

How do I want personal meaning to manifest in the process?

How to read:



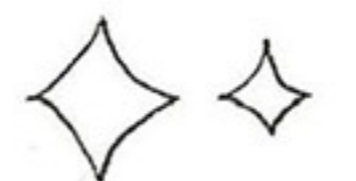
Ideal Project Envelope
(stages divided by work flow + ability to enter flow)



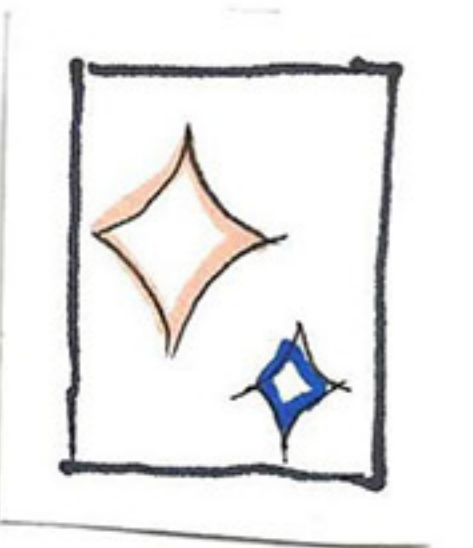
Project meaning & significance



Personal meaning & significance



Size = impact

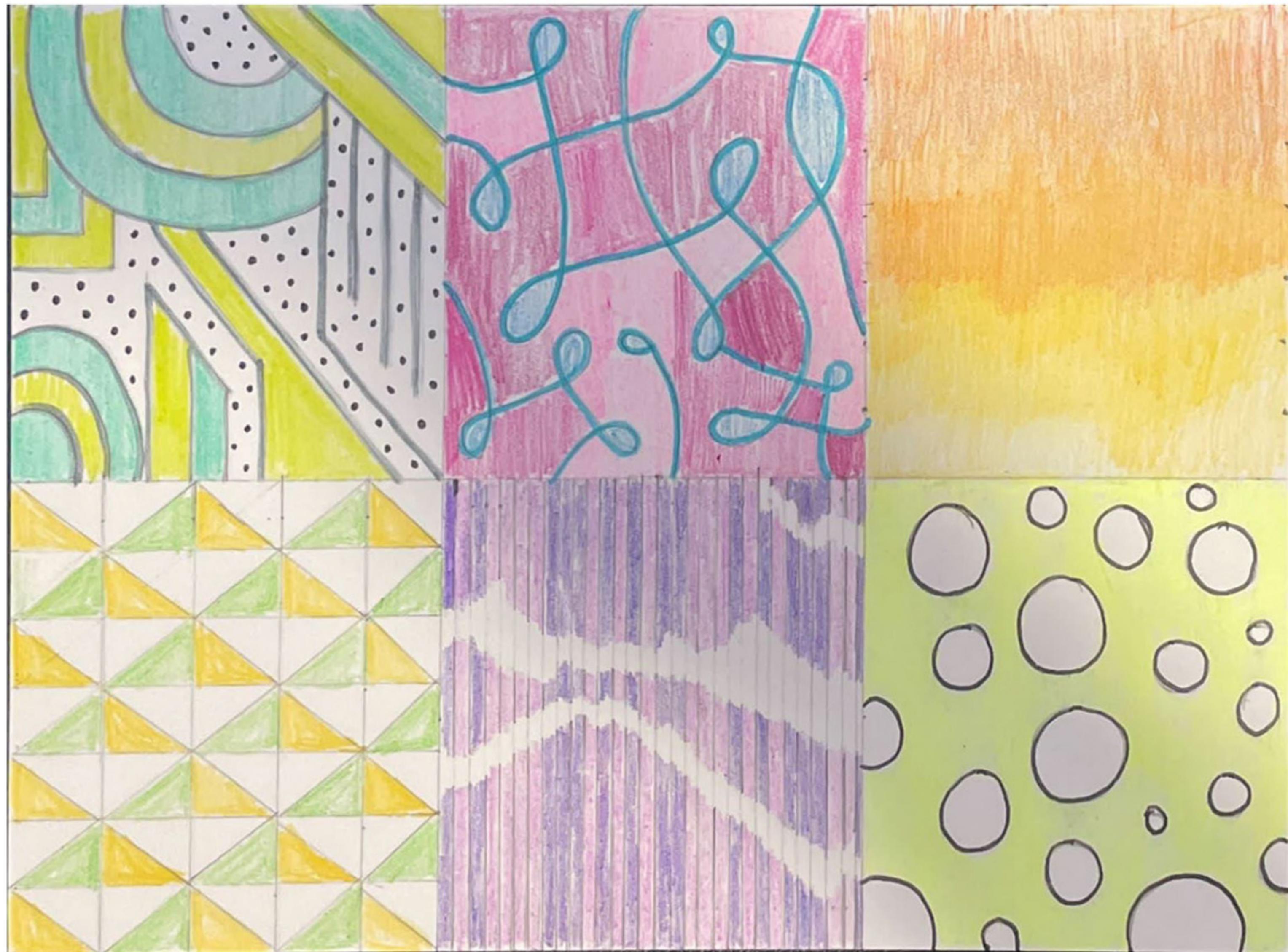


Dear Design

Human Centered Design & Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105



Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question: What are the guiding principles of my design process?

How to Read

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
- 1- values: personal values
 - 2- inspiration
 - 3- creative thinking
 - 4- action
 - 5- evaluation: lines simulate audio frequency for feedback
 - 6- inaction: breaks-spaces in circles

Values: geometric shapes, lines, points represent the basics of visual design which I like to the basics of my design

Inspiration: lines cross over each other to show the interconnectedness nature of finding inspiration

Creative thinking: bright colors to simulate the stimulation of the mind

Action: shapes and colors in a pattern to show the intentional decision making of the design



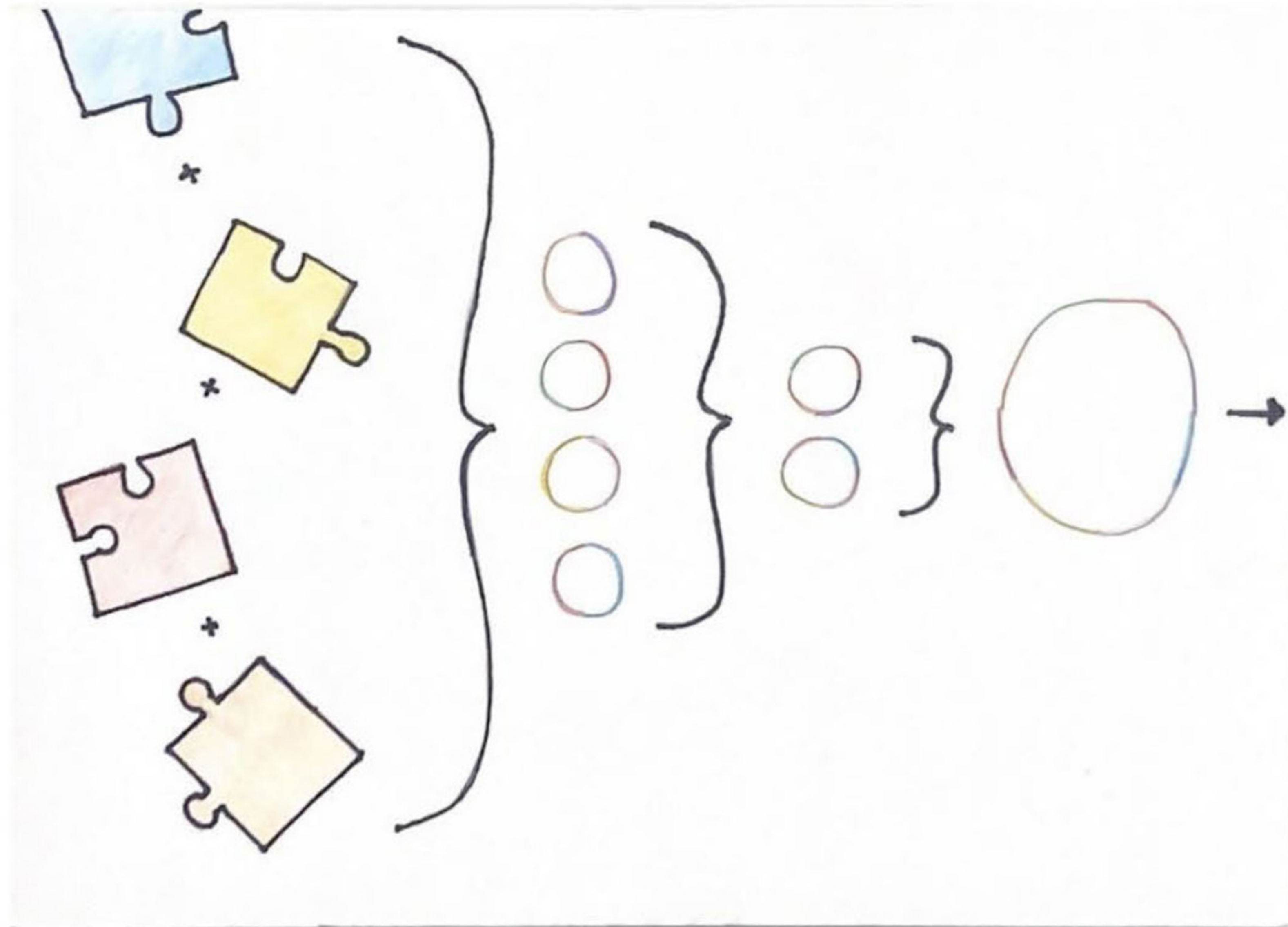
Dear Design

Human-Centered Design & Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105

LB Sobayo



Dear Design

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:

Am I incorporating my design influences in a drawn out plan for ideas to come?

How to Read:

Each color represents potential influences that are to be included throughout my in-depth problem solving process

Ex.

- = Stakeholders
- = Sustainability
- = Ethicality
- = Family

Dear Design

Human Centered Design & Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105

Christian Ramos



Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question: How do internal and external inspiration affect my design process?

How to read:

- wave: timeline of the design process
- sky: external inspirations
 - raindrops: the external inspirations that affect my design process
- ocean: internal inspirations
 - seaweeds: the internal inspirations that affect my design process

Dear Design

Human Centered Design & Engineering

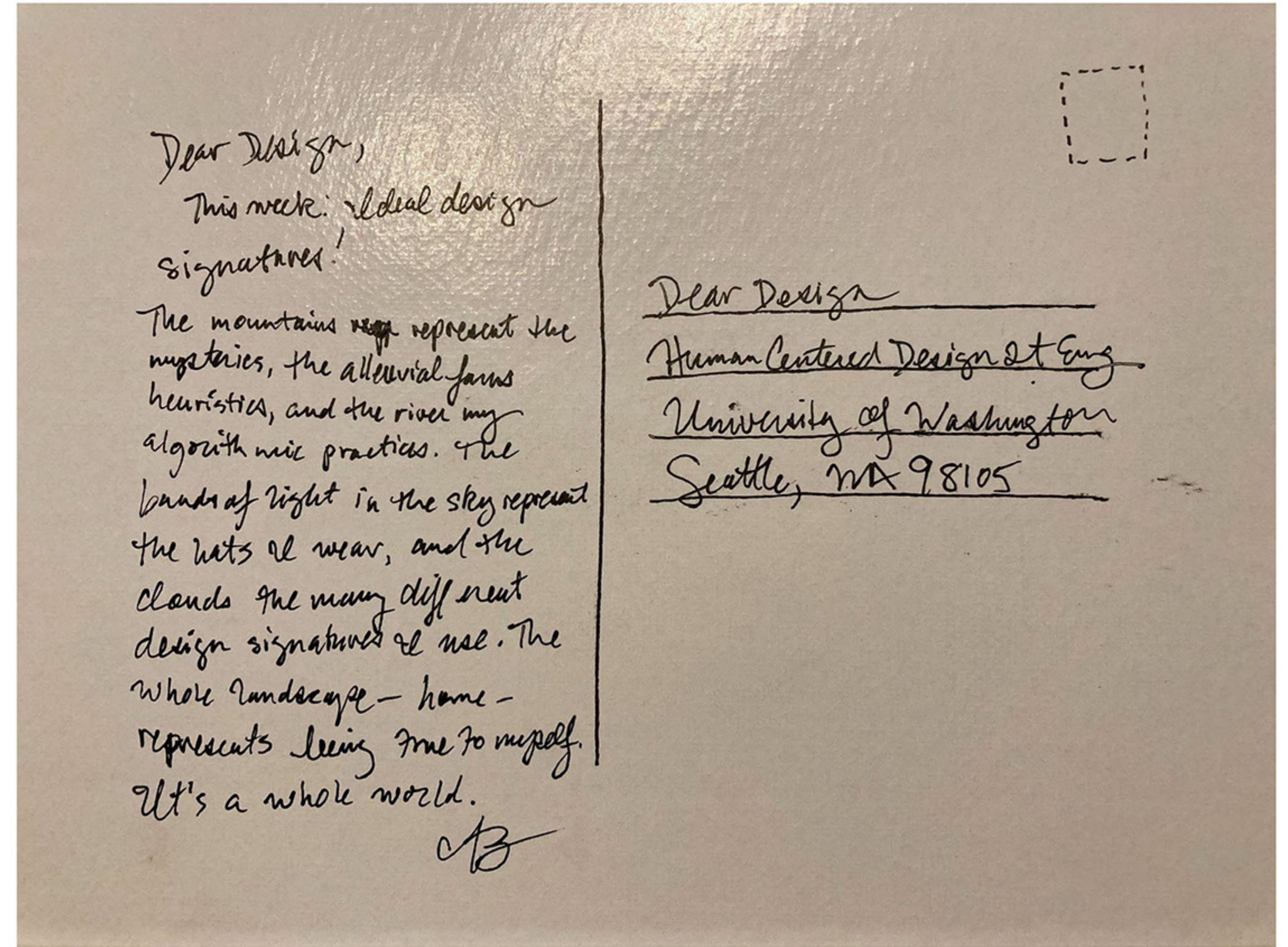
University of Washington

Seattle WA, 98105

Christina Kuo



Alainna Brennan Brown, Winter 2022



Dear Design,

This week: ideal design signatures!

The mountains represent the mysteries, the algorithmic practices, and the river my algorithmic practices. The bands of light in the sky represent the hats I wear, and the clouds the many different design signatures I use. The whole landscape - home - represents being true to myself. It's a whole world.

AB

Dear Design
Human Centered Design & Eng
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105



3/09/2022

Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness:

Mindfulness/Reflection, Planning, distractions

How to read:

▨ problem det.
 ▨ gather info.
 ▨ generate ideas

▨ model
 ▨ evaluation
 ▨ implementation

= size = impact, frequency, over-arching

black = hard
 equity, meaningful, "correct", reflections

blue = medium
 distractions, good + bad

green = "easy"
 planning, documenting, notetaking

Place Stamp Here

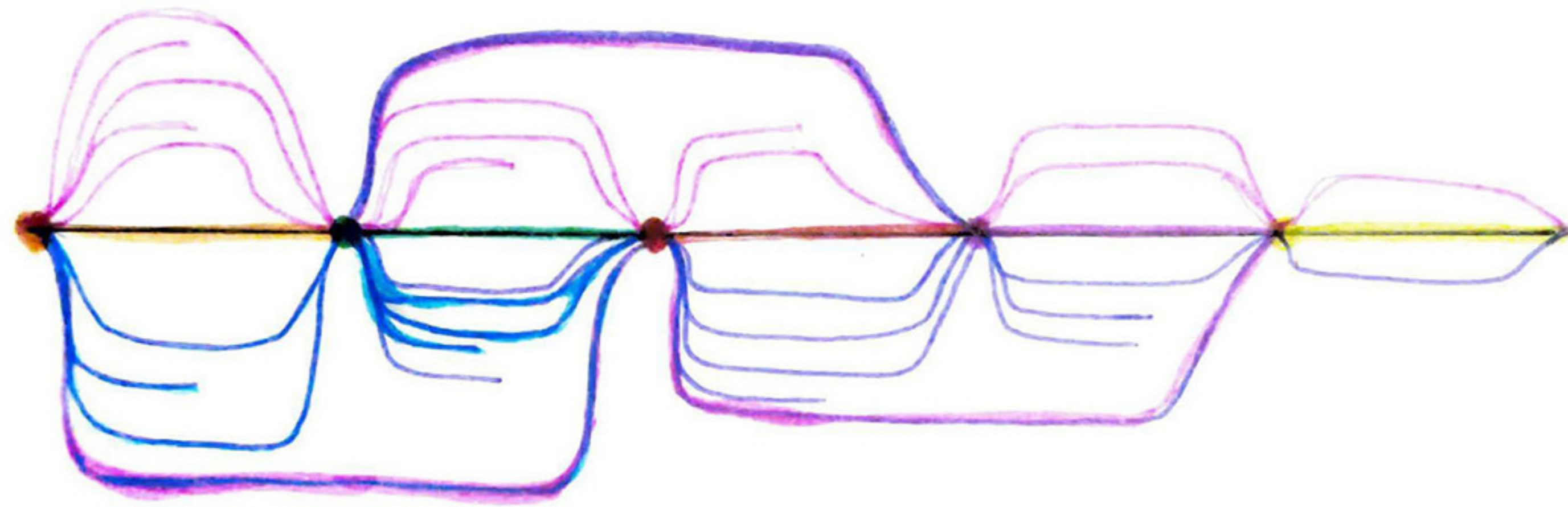
Dear Design

Human Centered Design + Eng.

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105

Anika Mishra



Dear Design,

TITLE: Ideal Design signature

DESIGN AWARENESS QUESTION:

How often does others' and my thought process diverge & converge in an iterative design?

HOW TO READ:

The diverging and converging lines indicate an iterative design process. The colors represent mine and my team/stakeholders thought or decisions in that design stage.

— Me — collaborators

— Research

— Ideate

— Prototype

— Evaluate

— Produce

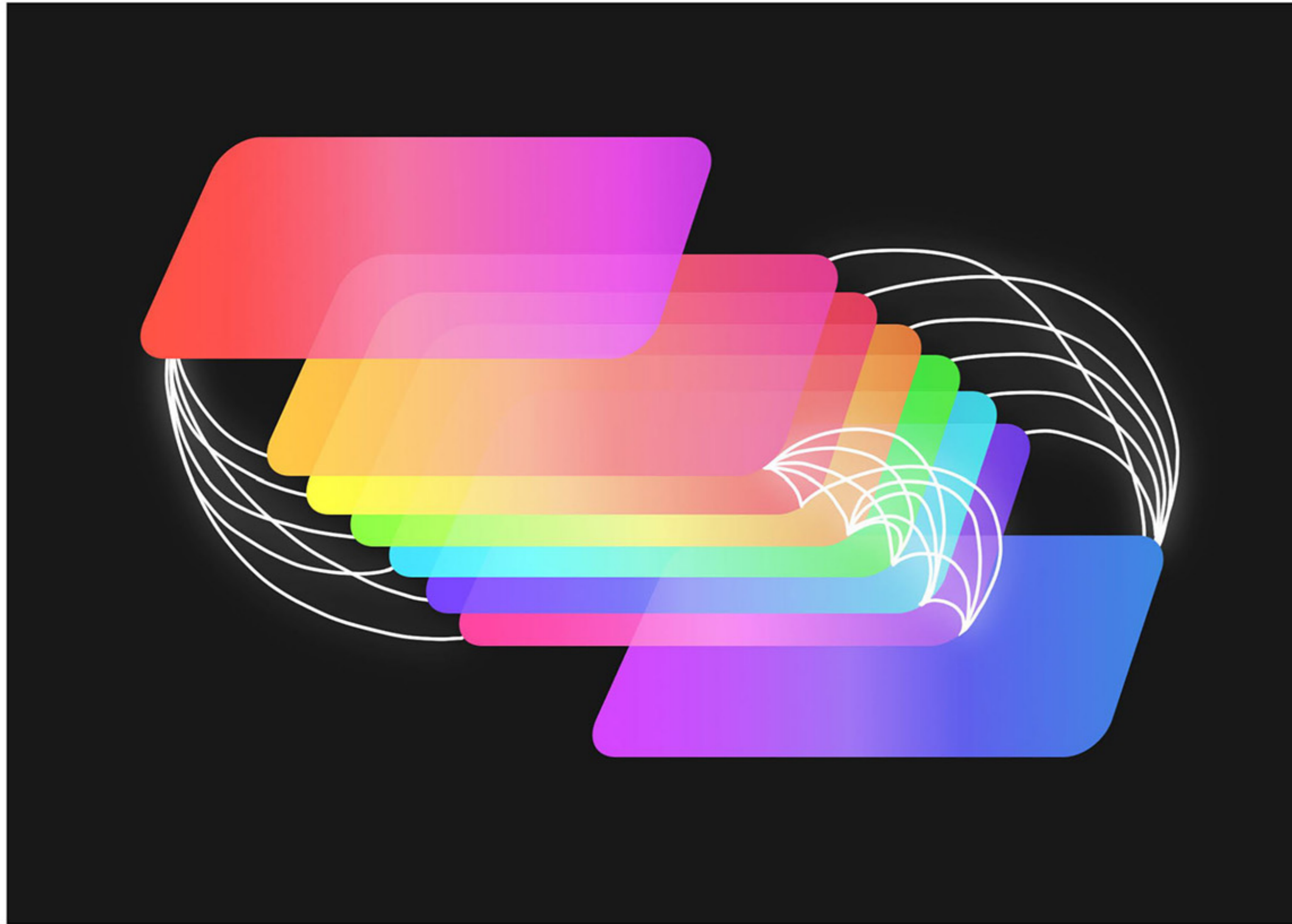
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Dear Design

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Seattle, WA



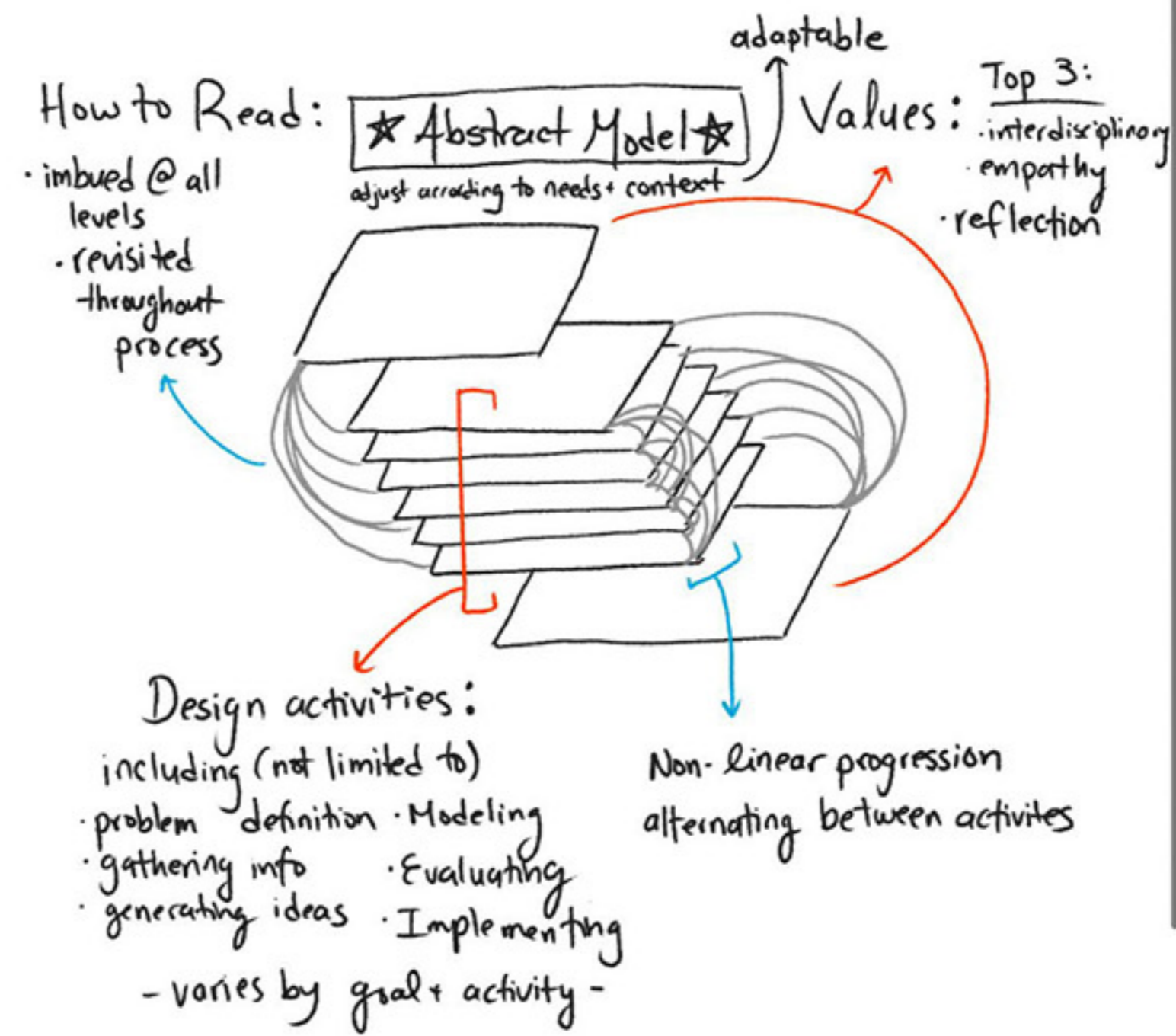
Petrina Chan, Winter 2022

Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

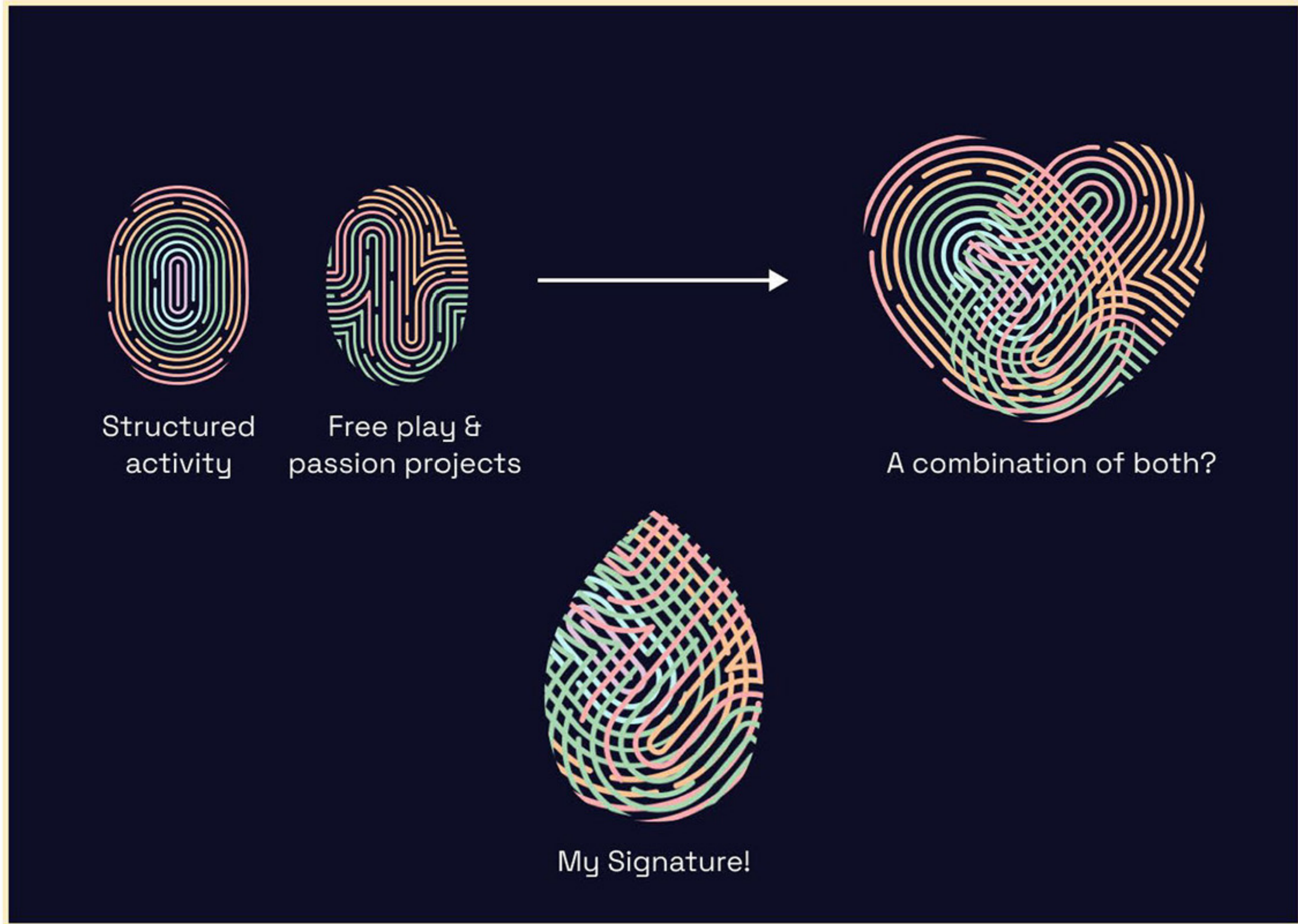
Design Awareness Question:

What are the high level guiding concepts, goals, & processes that I should keep in mind throughout the design process? How do I ensure progress toward a well-rounded & informed result?



Dear Design
Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98105

Petrina Chan



Dear Design


Week 9: Ideal Design Signature

Design Activity: Designing an app (for a client or for fun!)

How To Read:



Each line represents design stage & time taken

 The fingerprints represent my design process

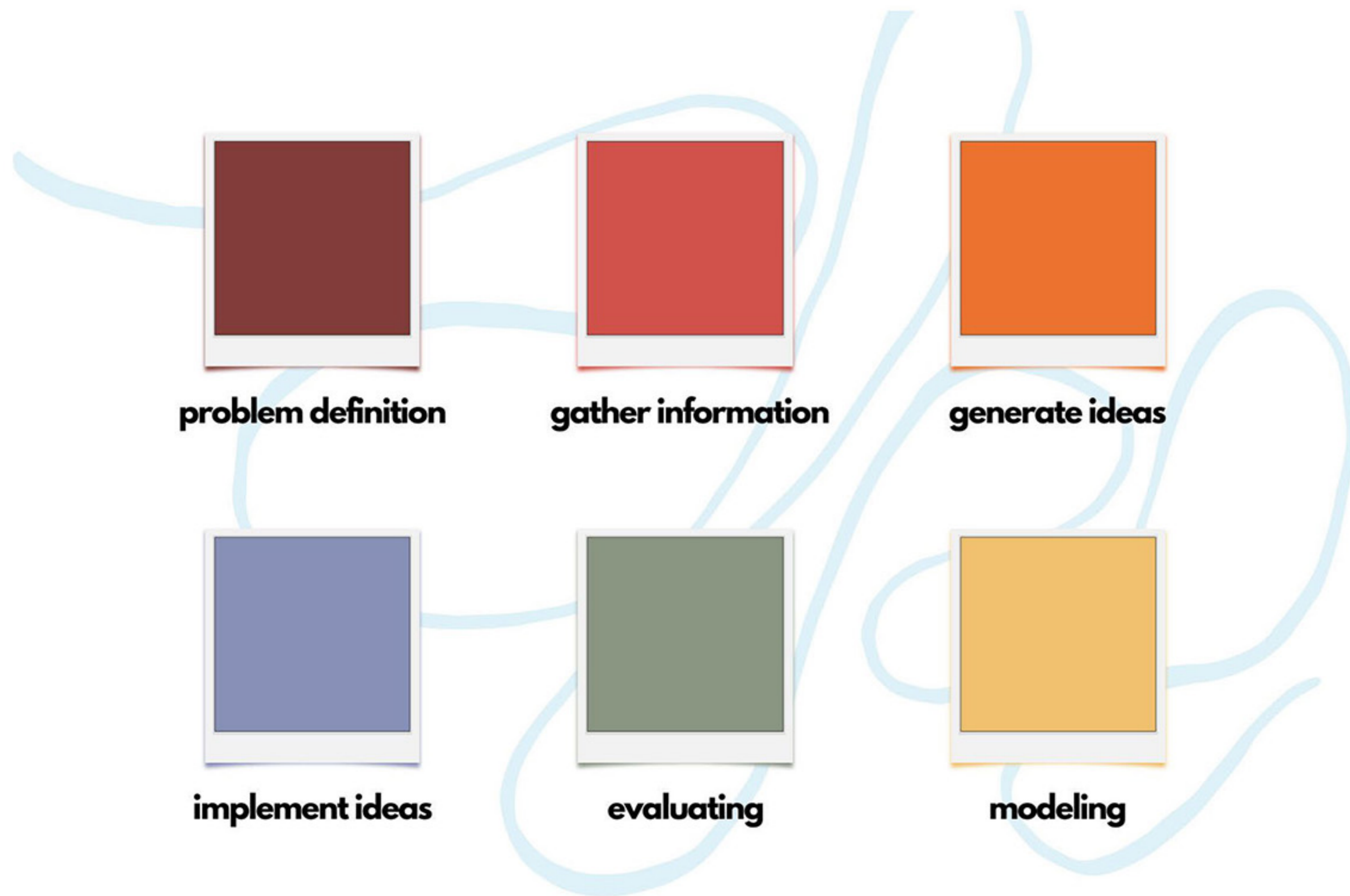
The arrangement of each line represents the structure of my design process.

- 
Research
- 
Ideation
- 
Prototyping
- 
Testing
- 
Ship



Dear Design
 Human Centered Design & Engineering
 University of Washington
 Seattle, WA 98105

Pallavi Bagchi



dear design

WEEK 7: IDEAL DESIGN
SIGNATURE

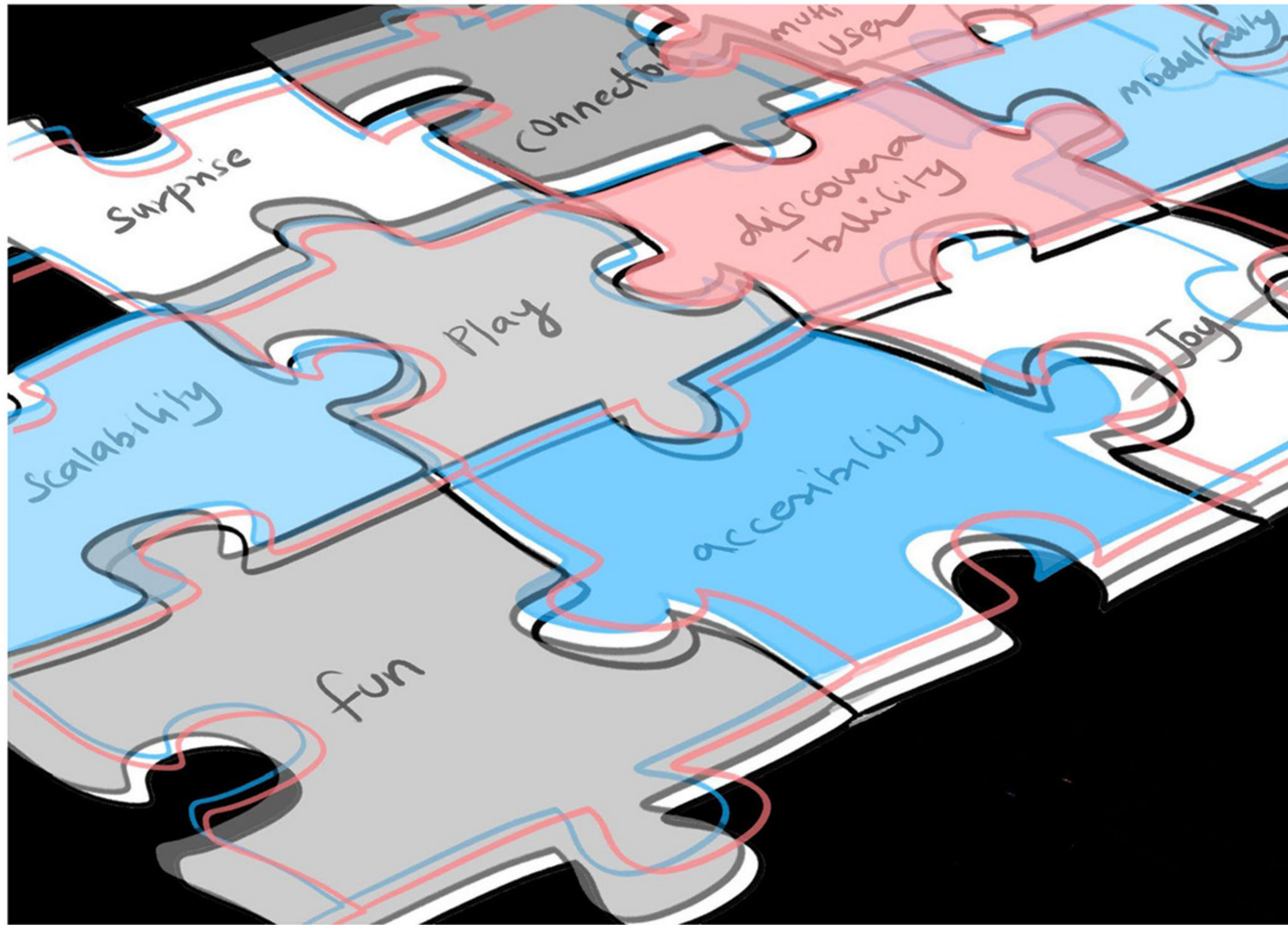
TITLE: GO WITH THE
FLOW

HOW TO READ:

THE SWOOPING LINE IN THE
BACK REPRESENTS MOVEMENT
FROM PROBLEM DEFINITION TO
THE END OF THE DESIGN
PROCESS. I HOPE FOR MY IDEAL
SIGNATURE TO NOT HAVE A
DEFINITIVE PATHWAY, BUT FOR
EACH STEP TO BE CLEAR AND
FOR ITERATIONS TO BE
INEVITABLE!



DEAR DESIGN
HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN AND
ENGINEERING
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
SEATTLE WA 98105



Isha A, Winter 2022

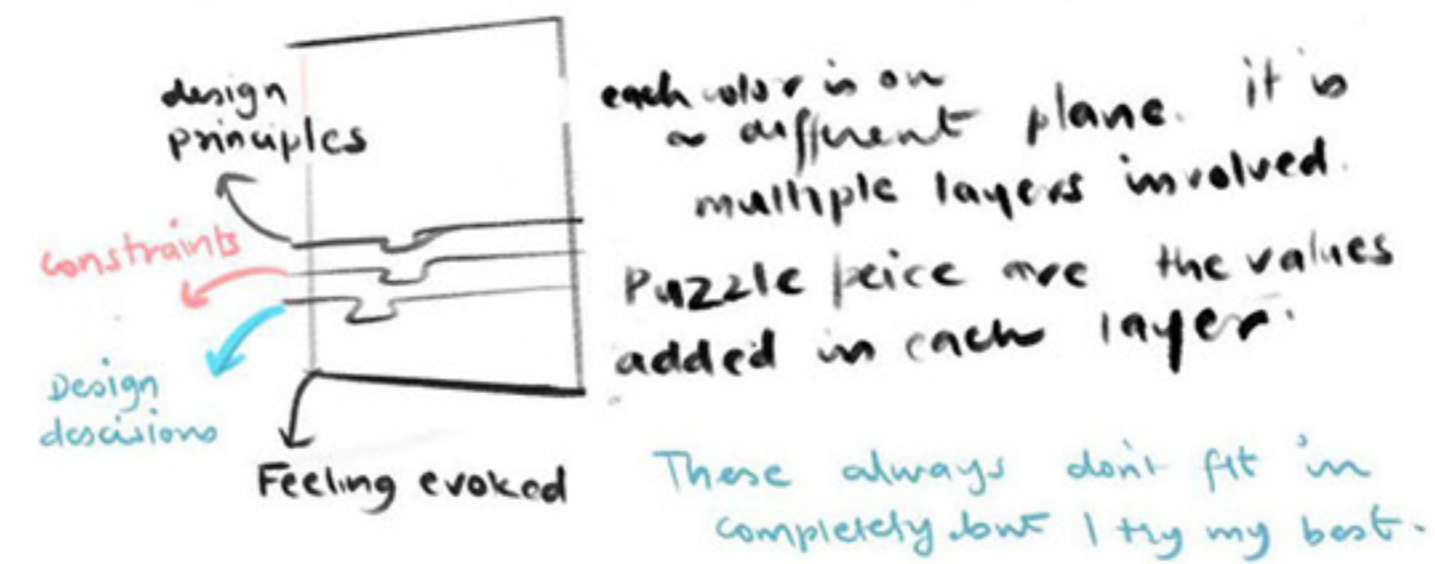
Dear Design,

Ideal Design Signature

Context - working on a design prototype.

Question - What values do I keep in mind when designing.

Chart

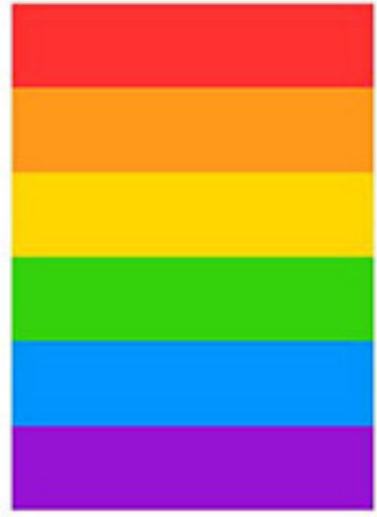


Dear Design
 Human Centered Design
 and Engineering
 University of Washington
 Seattle, WA 98105

Isha
 Agarwal



Dear Design
Week 8: Ideal Design Signature
Design Awareness Question:
What's the most important elements in my design process?



How to read:
Use the pride flag as inspiration to represent different important values of the design process by different colors.

Dear Design
Human Centered Design + Engineering
University of Washington
Seattle WA 98105

- Life ----- Self-Awareness/Reflection
- Healing ---- Empathy & Compassion
- Sunlight --- Ethics
- Nature ---- Design Justice
- Serenity --- Design Process
- Spirit ----- Constraint Mindset



Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:

What do I value the most in my design process?

How to Read:

Each color represents a different part of my design process. The length of each line represents the time spent on each phase.

Dear Design

Human Centered Design + Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle WA, 98105



Dear Design,
Title: Ideal Design Signature
Design Awareness Question: What design stage do I spend the most time on?

How to Read:

The number of snowflakes is the amount of time invested into the design stage

Layer by layer:

Empathize
Define
Ideate
Prototype
Test



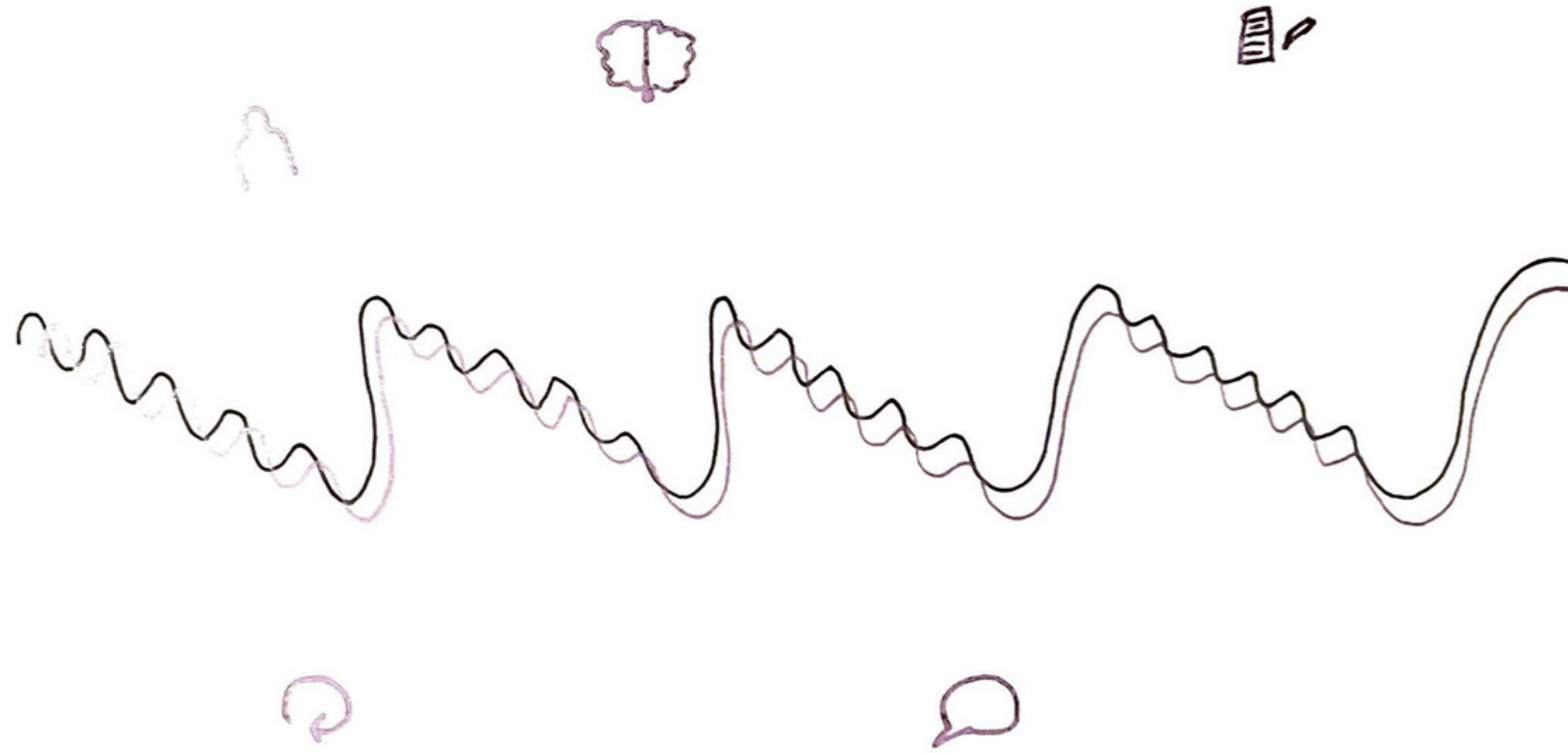
Dear Design

Human Centered Design & Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle, WA 98105

Anonymous, Winter 2022



Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:

How does allocation of time to different parts of the design process affect the final product?

How to Read:

- the line in the middle is a representation of multiple design processes in the form of "expert design", each sequence is slightly different to show how design processes are different
- pictures around the postcard represent steps of the process and important design aspects



Dear Design

Human Centered Design & Engineering

University of Washington

Seattle WA 98105



Dear Design

Title: Ideal Design Signature

Design Awareness Question:
What goes on my design process from start to finish

How to Read:

The Ocean reflects everything that goes on the backend of my design process. As you move up, the process get clearer & the sky is what the external stakeholders see.

Place Stamp Here

Dear Design

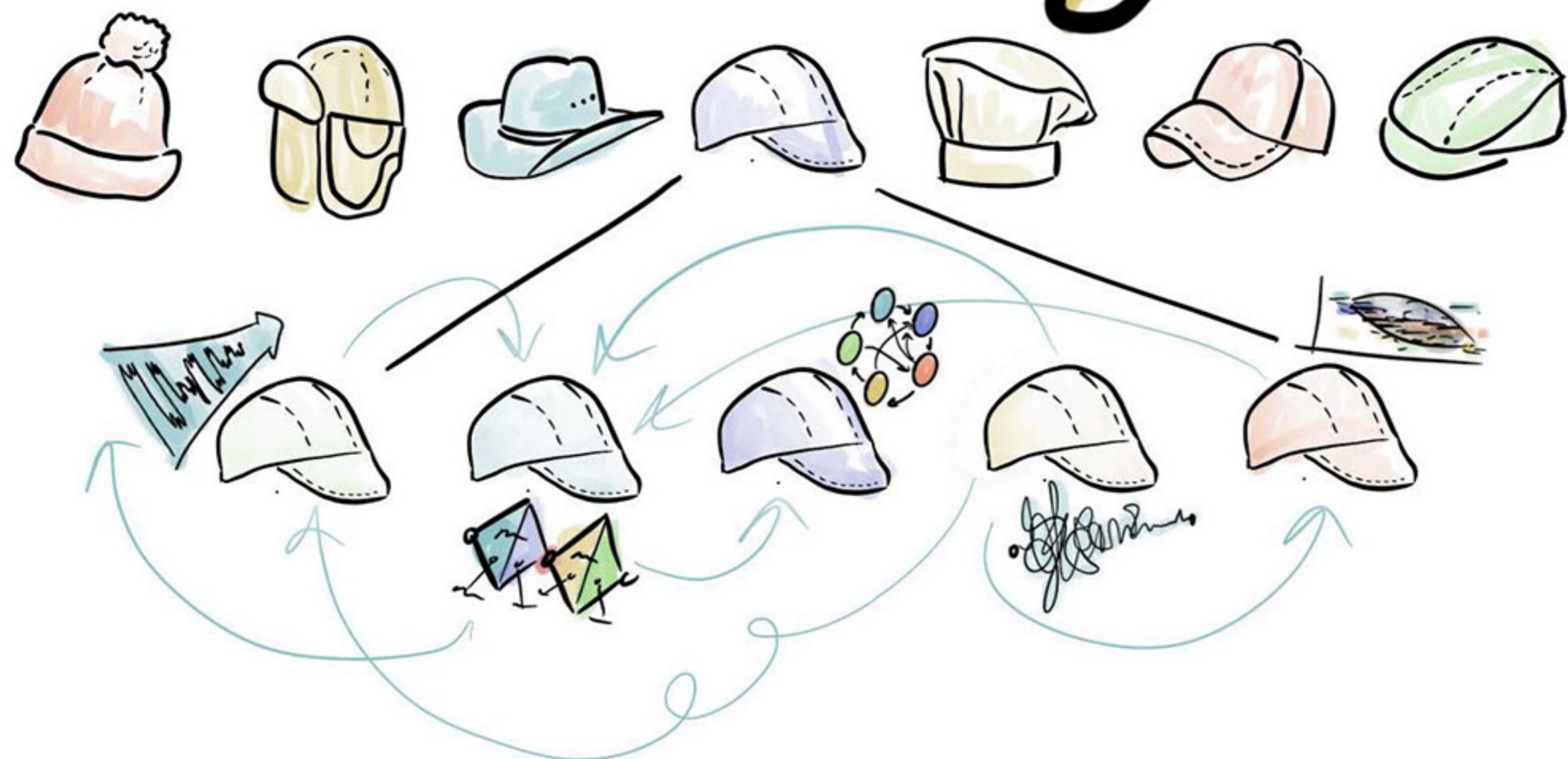
HCDE, UW

Seattle, WA

98105

Adoniah, Winter 2022

DONT FORGET TO PUT ON YOUR *design* HAT(S)



Ideal Design Signature

Models help us make sense of the world's complexity. Design is complex. There are a number of models for making sense of design-process. Different models highlight different things. It's important to use different models to see situations in new ways.

In my postcard hats = lenses or models for seeing the world. It's a reminder to try different lenses and know that there are different design models for highlighting different aspects of design-process.

= models for making sense of the world

= design as a model

= b/c hat b.c. well it's the hat i most frequently wear

= cross diverge/converge so you can converge

= double diamond

= cyclic model

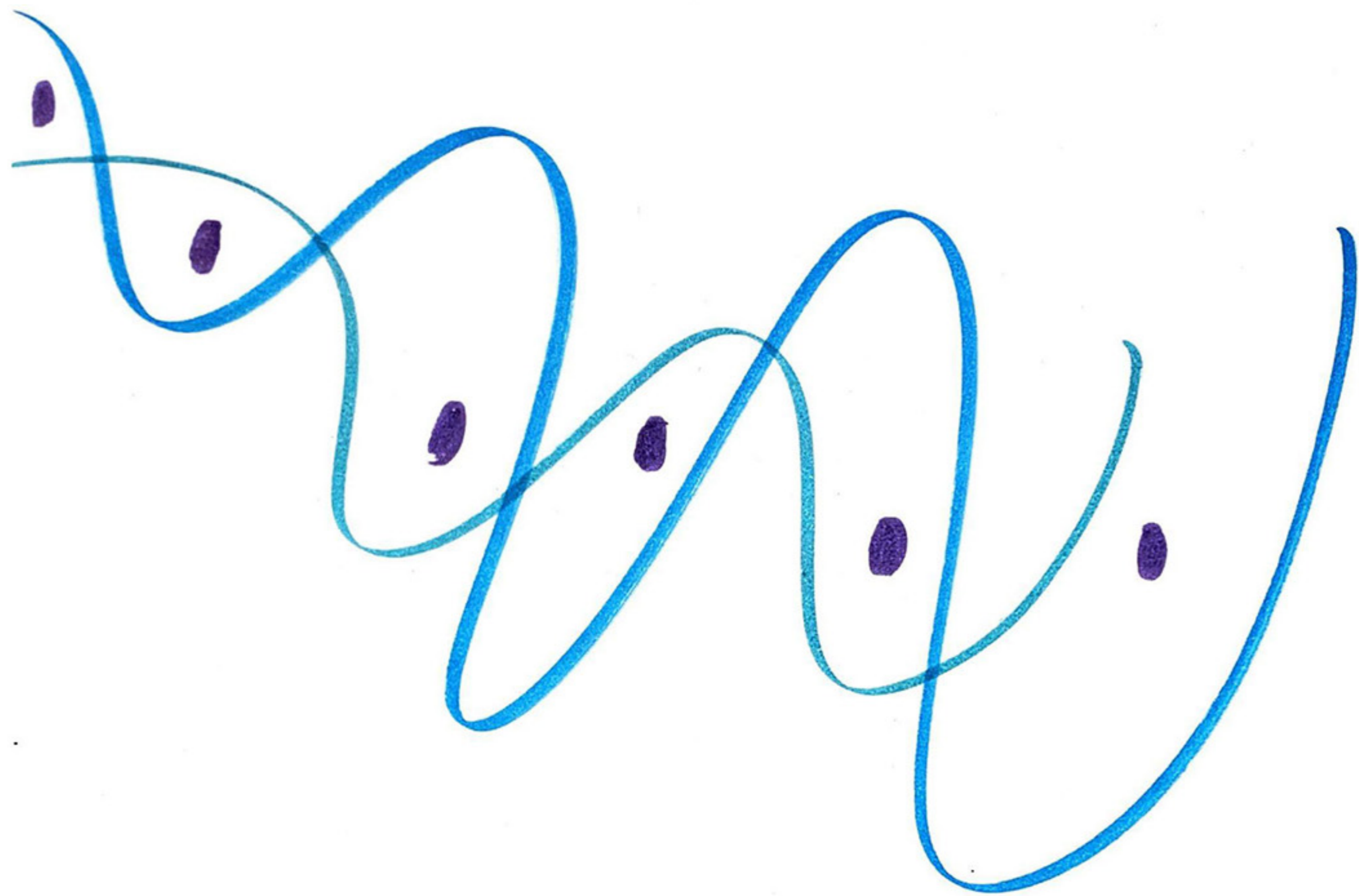
= mess

= Atman model

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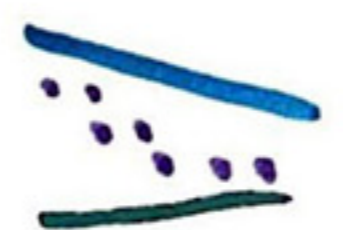




Dear Design,

Title: Ideal Design Signature

My ideal design signature has a convergent, cascade shape. It includes a nod to the concept of the wave/particle duality. In a design process it is important to be both fluid/open and concrete/decisive, with an interplay of the two.

- Key:
-  Wave - open to input
Gather information, Ideate, Evaluate
 -  Particle - decisions/doing
Model, prototype, implement
 -  Shape - cascade, convergent
ideal project envelope



Dear Design

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