



Poetry in Design

L'infinito - Giacomo Leopardi

Final Report

Wouter van Geesink
Virginia Patricia Rispoli
Angelique Witte

CONTENTS

Abstract	3
Conceptual map	4-5
Poem selection	5
Poem translation	6-7
"L'Infinito"	8
"La quiete dopo la Tempesta"	9-11
"Il Sabato del Villaggio"	12-13
Moodboard	14-15
Moodboard Redesign	16-17
First Iteration	18-19
Sensorial Boots	20-21
Second Iteration	22-23
Sounds of the Day	24-25
Third Iteration	26-27
Sound Pillow	28-29
Fourth Iteration	30-31
Sensorial Headphones	32-33
Fifth Iteration	34-35
SoundStone	36-37
Cultural Values	38-39
Context	40-41
Design Subtleties	42-43
Discussion	44-45

Abstract

The elective Poetry in Design challenges students to dive into a poem and its (cultural) subtleties. These subtleties are then used as a guideline in the redesign of a product. In this report, the design process of SoundStone is described. The iterative process of this redesign started with a literature review on poetry in design. After the selection of three poems, they were translated which led to the choice towards one, L'infinito by Giacomo Leopardi. This poem was analyzed and the subtleties were translated into the final design of SoundStone; a device that encourages the user to take a moment to center oneself during the hectic of everyday life.

Project video <https://vimeo.com/170442532>

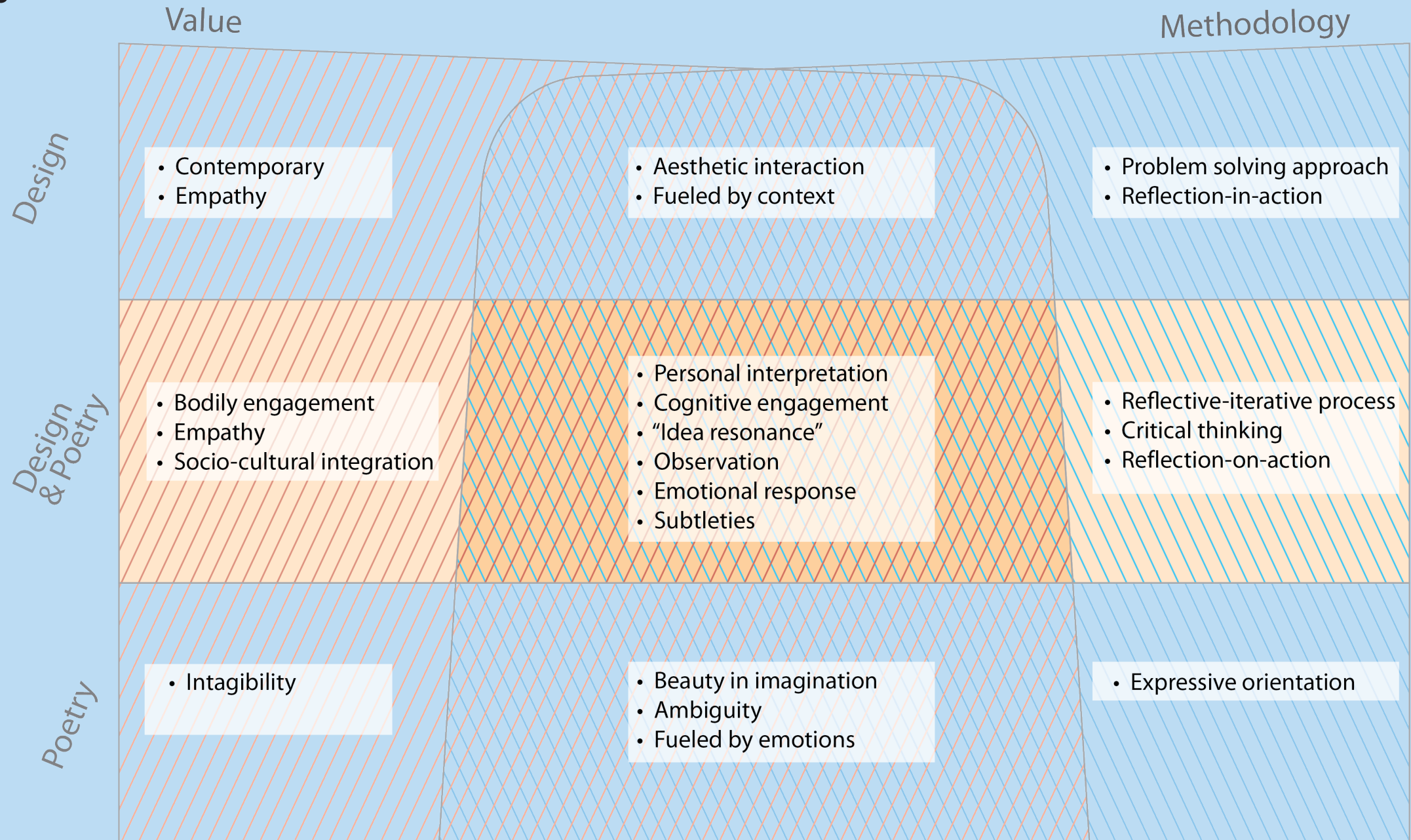


Conceptual Map

Conceptual Map

The first step in the process was a literature review of poetry in the context of design. Each group member extracted values and methodologies that were emphasized in the literature.

In the making of the conceptual map, we explored where these values and methodologies were leaning more towards Design or Poetry. More importantly, where do the methodologies connect and Design & Poetry melt together. Where is there an interplay between both areas and connect with each other.



Poems selection

The group decided to focus the work on the poetry of the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi. The reasons behind this choice were multiple, but the fascination for the work of Leopardi weight the strongest.

Each group member selected a poem of the poet, namely *L'infinito*. *Il sabato del Villaggio* and *La quiete dopo la tempesta*.

All the three poems were written between the 1826 and 1829 in Recanati, a small village in the region of Marche in Italy, were the poet lived.

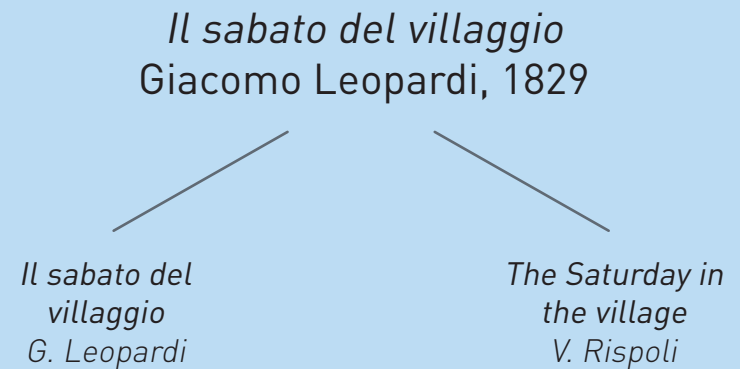
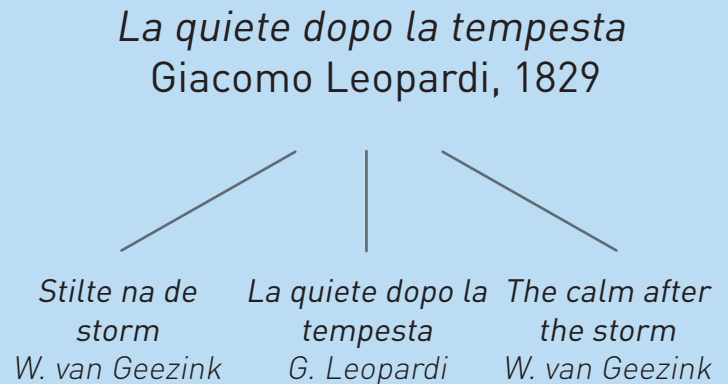
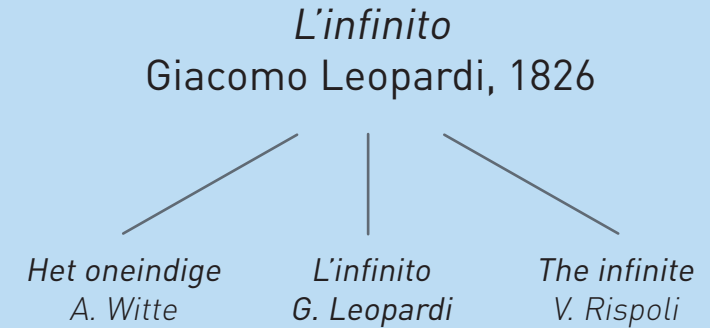
Translation

The language used by Leopardi to compone these poems is old italian since they were written in 1826. This makes the translation difficult since certain words have evolved over the years to have different meanings. Also the structure of the poem is important, in fact Leopardi used a structure of eleven syllables for each verse, and the verses are called 'free' because no rhyme is used to connect the verses together.

In the language of the poem we can notice the presence of classical words, for examples the word *ermo*, a word that comes from the ancient Greek.

Words with smooth sounds have been used for the translation to maintain the overall melodic rhythm of the italian poem.

Already the translation has given insights on the values and the meaning of the poem; the effort put in the redesign of the poem in two others languages has been crucial to understanding all the layers and the structure of the poem, and the group has selected the final translation after many iterations done together.



L'infinito

Giacomo Leopardi 1826

Sempre caro mi fu quest'ermo colle,
e questa siepe, che da tanta parte
dell'ultimo orizzonte il guardo esclude.
Ma sedendo e mirando, interminati
spazi di là da quella, e sovrumani
silenzi, e profondissima quiete
io nel pensier mi fingo; ove per poco
il cor non si spaura. E come il vento
odo stormir tra queste piante, io quello
infinito silenzio a questa voce
vo comparando: e mi sovvien l'eterno,
e le morte stagioni, e la presente
e viva, e il suon di lei. Così tra questa
immensità s'annega il pensier mio:
e il naufragar m'è dolce in questo mare.

Het oneindige

W. van Geesink, V. P. Rispoli, A. Witte May 2016

Hij is me altijd lief geweest, deze eenzame heuvel,
en deze haag, die zoveel van de verste horizon
aan het oog onttrekt.
Maar hier zittend en turend stel ik mij eindeloze
ruimten erachter, en stilten bovenaards,
en de diepste rust voor; tot mij gevoelens
angst benaderen. En als ik de wind
door de bladeren hoor ritselen, begin ik
deze eindeloze stilte met deze stem
te vergelijken: en ik wordt herinnerd aan het eeuwige,
en de dode seizoenen, en het huidige en levende,
en het geluid van deze. In deze eindeloosheid verdrinken
mijn gedachten: en schipbreuk
is mij heerlijk in dergelijke zee.

The infinite

W. van Geesink, V. P. Rispoli, A. Witte May 2016

Always dear to me was this solitary hill,
and this hedge, which of so many parts
of the farthest horizon the sight prevents.
But sitting and gazing, endless
spaces beyond that, and inhuman
silences, and depthless calm,
I think to myself, pretending: 'till before
the heart doesn't scare. And as I hear
the wind swishing through these bushes, I, this
infinite silence, to this voice,
compare: and the eternal occurs to me,
and the seasons passed away, and the present,
and the living one, and the sound of her. So in this
immensity my thoughts are drown. And
sinking is sweet to me in this sea.

La Quietè dopo la Tempesta

Giacomo Leopardi 1829

Passata è la tempesta:
Odo augelli far festa, e la gallina,
Tornata in su la via,
Che ripete il suo verso. Ecco il sereno
Rompe là da ponente, alla montagna;
Sgombrasi la campagna,
E chiaro nella valle il fiume appare.
Ogni cor si rallegra, in ogni lato
Risorge il romorio
Torna il lavoro usato.
L'artigiano a mirar l'umido cielo,
Con l'opra in man, cantando,
Fassi in su l'uscio; a prova
Vien fuor la femminetta a còr dell'acqua
Della novella piova;
E l'erbaiuol rinnova
Di sentiero in sentiero
Il grido giornaliero.
Ecco il Sol che ritorna, ecco sorride
Per li poggi e le ville. Apre i balconi,
Apre terrazzi e logge la famiglia:
E, dalla via corrente, odi lontano
Tintinnio di sonagli; il carro stride
Del passegger che il suo cammin ripiglia.
Si rallegra ogni core.
Sì dolce, sì gradita
Quand'è, com'or, la vita?
Quando con tanto amore
L'uomo a' suoi studi intende?
O torna all'opre? o cosa nova imprende?
Quando de' mali suoi men si ricorda?
Piacer figlio d'affanno;
Gioia vana, ch'è frutto

Del passato timore, onde si scosse
E paventò la morte
Chi la vita abborria;
Onde in lungo tormento,
Fredde, tacite, smorte,
Sudàr le genti e palpitàr, vedendo
Mossi alle nostre offese
Folgori, nemi e vento.
O natura cortese,
Son questi i doni tuoi,
Questi i dilette sono
Che tu porgi ai mortali. Uscir di pena
E' diletto fra noi.
Pene tu spargi a larga mano; il duolo
Spontaneo sorge: e di piacer, quel tanto
Che per mostro e miracolo talvolta
Nasce d'affanno, è gran guadagno. Umana
Prole cara agli eterni! assai felice
Se respirar ti lice
D'alcun dolor: beata
Se te d'ogni dolor morte risana.

The Calm after de Storm

W. van Geesink, V. P. Rispoli, A. Witte May 2016

Gone is the storm:
I can hear the birds again, and the hen
Returning to the road,
Repeating her song. Look how the blue sky
Breaks through in the west, over the mountain;
Clearing the countryside,
In the valley the river reappears.
Every heart is happy, everywhere
One hears the sound of the people
Returning to work.
The craftsman gazes at the humid sky,
With his work in hand, singing,
On his doorstep; out runs
A woman to fill her bucket
With fresh rain water;
The huckster renews
From street to street
His daily cry.
Look the sun is out, look it's smiling
On the hills and homes. Balconies are being
opened,
Terraces and porches are being opened by
families:
And from the highway, you can hear in the
distance
The sound of harness bells: as the squeaky
traveler's carriage
Resumes its journey.

Every heart is happy.
When is life as sweet, as welcome
As it is now?
When with so much love

Does a man bend to his studies?
Or tend to his work?
Start something new?
When is he less aware of his troubles?
Joy is born of pain;
Vain joy, it is the fruit
Of past fear, and makes even one
Who loathed his life,
Tremble and fear death
Thus in long-drawn torment,
Cold, quiet, pale,
The people sweat and tremble, seeing
Moving in to threaten them
Lightening, clouds, and wind.

O gracious nature,
These are your gifts,
These are the delights
You give to mortals. To be free from pain
Is our pleasure.
You scatter sorrow with a free hand, grief
Spontaneously appears, and the happiness, that so often
Through a freak of nature and some miracle
Grows out of trouble, is a great reward. Humanity
Dear to the gods! Happy to find
Some breathing room
From sorrow: is blessed
When all sorrows are finally relieved by death.

Stilte na de storm

W. van Geesink, V. P. Rispoli, A. Witte May 2016

De storm is voorbij,
ik hoor de vrolijke vogels, de hen
terug op pad
haar gekakel wederkeert. De lucht sereen
breekt door het westen, over de bergen.
Verheldert het platteland
De rivier glimt weer door de vallei
Ieder hart is vrolijk, waar dan ook.
Geluid van werkende mensen keert weer terug
De ambachtsman tuurt naar de waterige lucht.
Met werk in zijn hand, zingend
in het portier, haast
een vrouw om de verse druppels te verzamelen.
Zoals van ouds, van deur tot deur
hervat de verkoper zijn dagelijks liedje
De zon komt weer tevoorschijn, zie haar lachen
naar de bergen en huizen.
Balkondeuren gaan open
Families openen verandas en terrassen.
Van de snelweg in de verte reikt je
het geluid van klinkend harness en bellen,
Wanneer het rijtuig weer voort gaat met zijn reis.

Ieders hart zit vol geluk,
wanneer is het leven zo zoet, zo welkom
zoals het nu is?
Wanneer boog men
met zoveel liefde
over zijn studie, of over zijn werk?
Aan iets nieuws beginnen?
Wanneer is hij minder bewust van zijn zorgen?
Vreugde ontstaat in pijn
vruchteloze vreugde, het is de fruit

van verleden angsten, en doet iemand
wiens walgt van zijn leven,
trillen en vrezen voor de dood.
Dus in uitgerekte torment,
koud, stil, leeg.
De mensen zweten en trillen, zien
dreigend naar hen toekomen
bliksem, wolken en wind

O, goedhartige natuur.
Dit zijn jou giften,
Dit zijn de verrukkelikheden.
Die jij toekend aan ons, de stervelingen.
Om vrij van pijn te zijn
is onze genot.
Je verspreid verdriet met je vrije hand, harteleed
ontstaat spontaan, en de vrolijkheid
dat zo vaak
Door de gedrochtelijkheid en wonder,
voortkomend uit kwel, is de grote beloning
mensheid.
Dierbaar voor de goden!
Blij de verademing te vinden.
Van verdriet: gezegend
Als al het verdriet wordt verheven door de dood.

Il Sabato del Villaggio

Giacomo Leopardi 1829

La donzelletta vien dalla campagna
in sul calar del sole,
col suo fascio dell'erba; e reca in mano
un mazzolin di rose e viole,
onde, siccome suole, ornare ella si appresta
dimani, al dí di festa, il petto e il crine.
Siede con le vicine
su la scala a filar la vecchierella,
incontro là dove si perde il giorno;
e novellando vien del suo buon tempo,
quando ai dí della festa ella si ornava,
ed ancor sana e snella
solea danzar la sera intra di quei
ch'ebbe compagni nell'età piú bella.
Già tutta l'aria imbruna,
torna azzurro il sereno, e tornan l'ombre
giú da' colli e da' tetti,
al biancheggiar della recente luna.
Or la squilla dà segno
della festa che viene;
ed a quel suon diresti
che il cor si riconforta.
I fanciulli gridando
su la piazzuola in frotta,
e qua e là saltando,
fanno un lieto romore;
e intanto riede alla sua parca mensa,
fischiando, il zappatore,
e seco pensa al dí del suo riposo.

Poi quando intorno è spenta ogni altra face,
e tutto l'altro tace,
odi il martel picchiare, odi la sega

del legnaiuol, che veglia
nella chiusa bottega alla lucerna,
e s'affretta, e s'adopra
di fornir l'opra anzi al chiarir dell'alba.

Questo di sette è il piú gradito giorno,
pien di speme e di gioia:
diman tristezza e noia
recheran l'ore, ed al travaglio usato
ciascuno in suo pensier farà ritorno.

Garzoncello scherzoso,
cotesta età fiorita
è come un giorno d'allegrezza pieno,
giorno chiaro, sereno,
che precorre alla festa di tua vita.
Godi, fanciullo mio; stato soave,
stagion lieta è cotesta.
Altro dirti non vo'; ma la tua festa
ch'anco tardi a venir non ti sia grave.

The Saturday in the Village

W. van Geesink, V. P. Rispoli, A. Witte May 2016

The youthful girl comes from the fields,
during the setting of the sun
in one hand her sheaf of grass, in the other
she carries a bunch of roses and violets:
cause, as is her custom, she is getting ready
to make herself beautiful
for tomorrow's holy day.
On the stairway with her neighbours
sits the old lady spinning,
turning herself where the day is lost,
and telling tales, she remembers her youth,
when on holy days she used to make herself beautiful too,
and still lively and lightly
the evening she used to dance
with those that she had as companions
in her fairest season.
Already the whole air darkens,
the sky turns deep blue; return down
from the hills and roofs,
the shadows of the pale moon.
Now the toll proclaims
the holy day's approach:
and at that sound you'd say
that the heart finds
comfort, once again.
A crowd of children
shouting in the tiny square,
leaping here and there,
make a happy noise;
meanwhile returns to his simple meal
whistling, the farmer,
imaging himself in his day of rest.

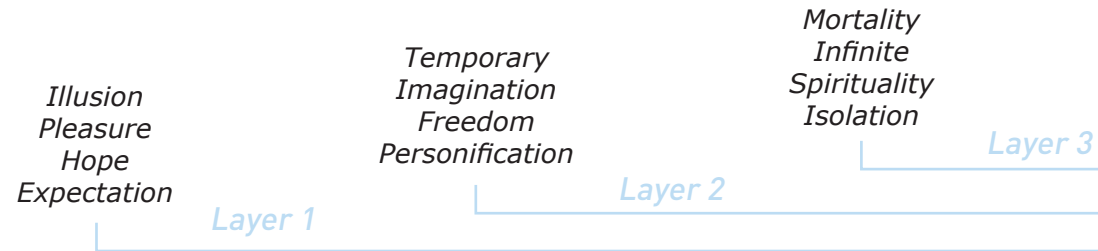
And when all around every other light is out
and everything else stands silent
I hear the hammer beating, I hear the saw
of the carpenter: he is still awake
in his shut workshop in the lamplight,
hurrying and straining
to deliver his work before the light of dawn.

This is the most appreciate of the seven days,
full of hope and joy:
tomorrow anxiety and sadness
the hours will bring back, and everyone
will go back to think at the usual toil.

Playful boy,
your age's sweet blooming,
is like this day of gladness,
a clear day, unclouded,
the herald life's holy day.
Enjoy the sweet hours, my boy,
this pleasant, delightful season.
I'll say nothing more; let it not grieve you
if your holy day, like mine, is slow to arrive.

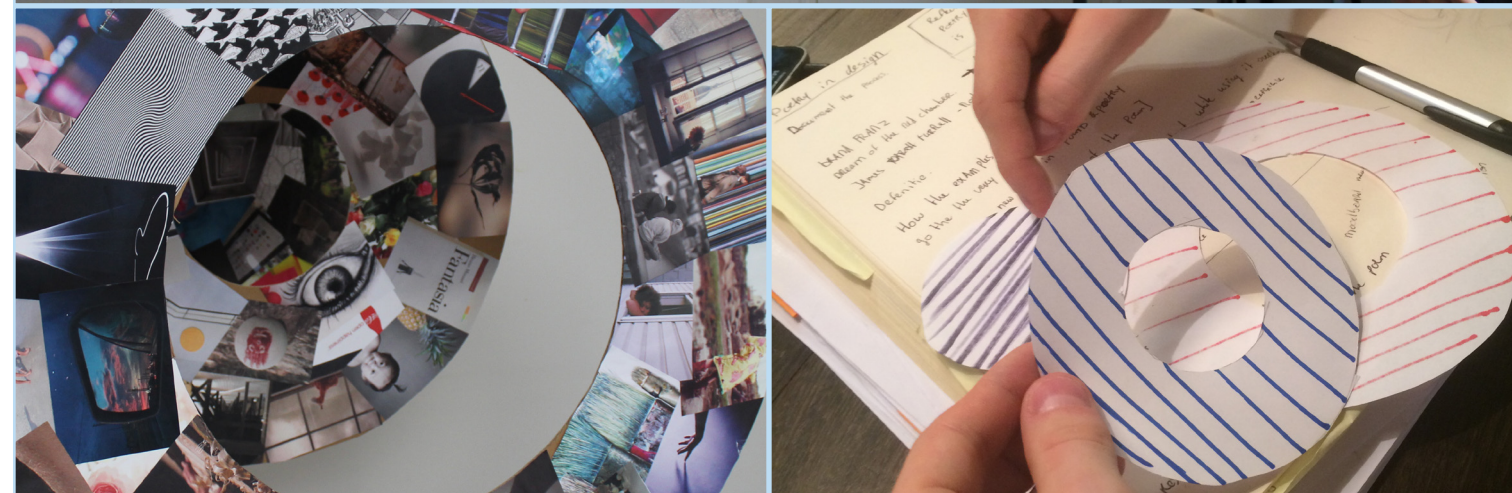
Moodboard

The moodboard was based on the value analysis of three of Giacomo Leopardi's poems; *L'infinito* (1826), *Il sabato del villaggio* (1829) and *La quiete dopo la tempesta* (1829). The poems were a personal selection of each group member who individually analysed and extracted values from their selected poem. In a group discussion the values and interpretations were shared where similarities and differences emerged. Below we describe the (main) values we extracted from all three poems which were grouped into three 'layers'.



The analysis pointed out that the poet writes from an observation-perspective, describing the events and view before him. This perspective resulted that the poet never was an active participator in the poems.

Furthermore, there is a lot of complexity and layered meaning within the poems. A first interpretation can initially mask a deeper meaning but later guide you to this deeper meaning. To illustrate and let the observer experience this, a layered moodboard was made, as shown in the pictures on the right. Layer 1 hides parts of layer 2, and layer 2 hides parts layer 3 - by moving the body or the moodboard, the observant can discover more imagery. However, the full image can only be seen by stepping outside the frame. Additionally, the assigned values and parts of the poems are pasted on the relevant parts of the moodboard on the backside.



Moodboard Redesign

Analyse on original moodboard / Feedback

The original mood board was based on three poems from Giacomo Leopardi which provided a lot of input. The design acquired unintended qualities such as chaos and disorganization. The process demanded for one poem, *L'infinito*, to be selected in order to fit within the design frame of the elective. Singling out one poem enabled us to focus most relevant values and images that expressed the poem best.

Digital Redesign

Further analysing and discussing (the imagery of) the moodboard enabled us to select the right imagery to express the values for the selected poem, *L'infinito*. The images were digitally modified to create a cohesive whole while maintaining individual value. Also the combination of certain images enhanced the expressive qualities of the whole mood board. For example, the clock combined with the floating seeds and partially broken wall express 'Temporary', as can be seen in left bottom image.



Iteration 1

focus: fear of the unknown

*'till before
the heart doesn't scare.*

During the first analysis of the poem *'The infinite'* by G. Leopardi, the focus lied on the sound and on the general rhythm of the words. Each analysis has been done with all the three versions together (Italian, English and Dutch).

It has been noticed that the analysis was started already during the translation and the redesign of the poem in Dutch and in English. We present the analysis of the English version only, but the same values are applicable for also for the Italian and the Dutch version. The first analysis had a focus on the 'fear of the unknown', and the fear of what it is possible to find behind the hedge. The poet describes something that is happening behind this limitation, and he can perceive everything without seeing, only listening to the sounds of the nature around him.

the fear of the unknown,
of the limitation

The Infinite

Always dear to me was this solitary hill,
and this hedge, which of so many parts
of the farthest horizon the sight prevents.

But sitting and gazing, endless
spaces beyond that, and inhuman
silences, and depthless calm,

I think to myself, pretending: 'till before
the heart doesn't scare. And as I hear

the wind swishing through these bushes, I, this
infinite silence, to this voice,
compare: and the eternal occurs to me,
and the seasons passed away, and the present,
and the living one, and the sound of her. So in this
immensity my thoughts are drown. And
sinking is sweet to me in this sea.

the sound
of the words
is smooth

perceiving
without
seeing

the sound of the words is smooth

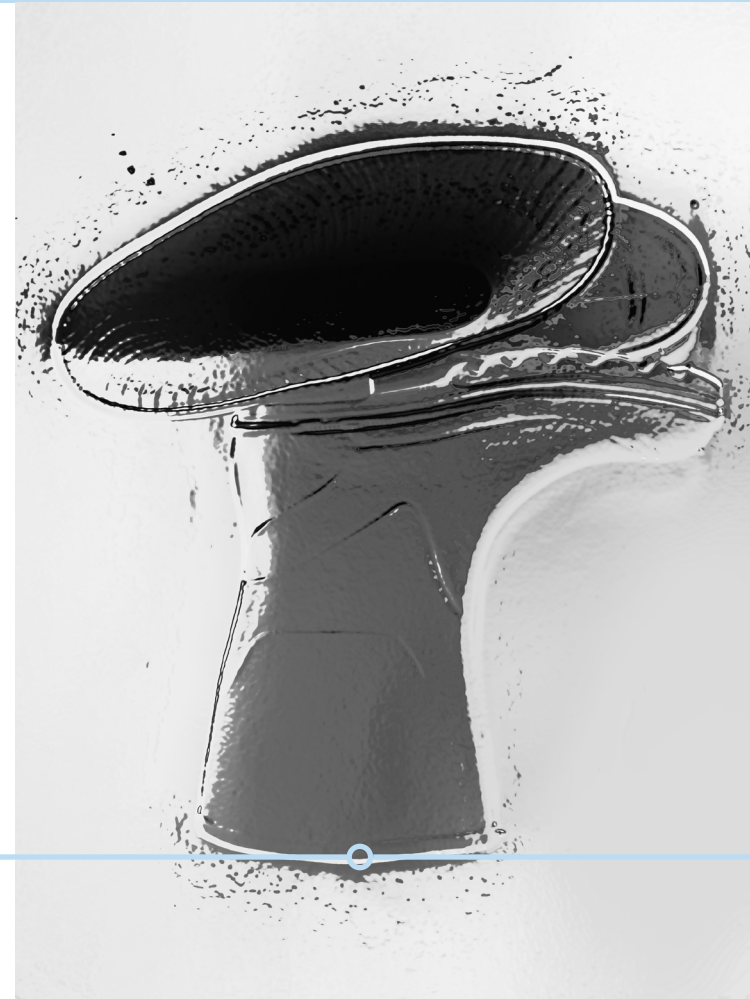
Sensorial Boots

The Sensorial Boots visually resemble regular rubber boots. However, they make use of the moment of fright many people experience before inserting their foot in such a boot. This fear originates from the possibility of something unexpected being inside since there is no way to see the inside. The Sensorial Boots actually bring this unexpected sensation. Only once one places a foot inside, the difference between them and regular boots can be experienced.

In *L'infinito*, Giacomo Leopardi expresses fear of unknown places. This is the main value from the poem that is translated in this design. Here, the unknown doesn't refer to a place but to a tactile sensation which also connects to the poem in the value of perceiving without seeing.

The focus on perceiving without seeing that causes the fear of the unknown, can be really interesting because it focusses on an experience. However, there was a gap between the (values of the) poem and the object. The concept needed a bridge between the subtle and the concrete. A further analysis of *L'infinito* would shed focus on the 'perceiving without seeing'. Searching a context or situation that promotes 'perceiving without seeing' could help to decrease the gap and bring poem and concept closer together.

In the picture an image that explains the first iteration in the design process.



Iteration 2

focus: perception and distortion

*endless spaces beyond that,
and inhuman silences*

The second iteration in the process has started with a new analysis of the poem. In this second iteration the focus was on the idea of the perception that the is expressed throughout the entire poem. First of all, perception; seen as perceiving without seeing, hearing sounds and noises from the environment around. All the poems refer to sounds and noises that the poet describes as if he is living the moment. This descriptiveness give the reader the idea of being transported to a different place, a place immense and completely new. At the end of the poem the perception becomes distorted, and let the reader, with the poet, sink in the sea of imagination.

the fear of the unknown,
of the limitation

The Infinite

Always dear to me was this solitary hill,
and this hedge, which of so many parts
of the farthest horizon the sight prevents.

But sitting and gazing, endless
spaces beyond that, and inhuman
silences, and depthless calm,

I think to myself, pretending: 'till before
the heart doesn't scare. And as I hear

the wind swishing through these bushes, I, this
infinite silence, to this voice,

compare: and the eternal occurs to me,
and the seasons passed away, and the present,
and the living one, and the sound of her. So in this

immensity my thoughts are drown. And
sinking is sweet to me in this sea.

the sound
of the words
is smooth

perceiving
without
seeing

imagination and
distortion

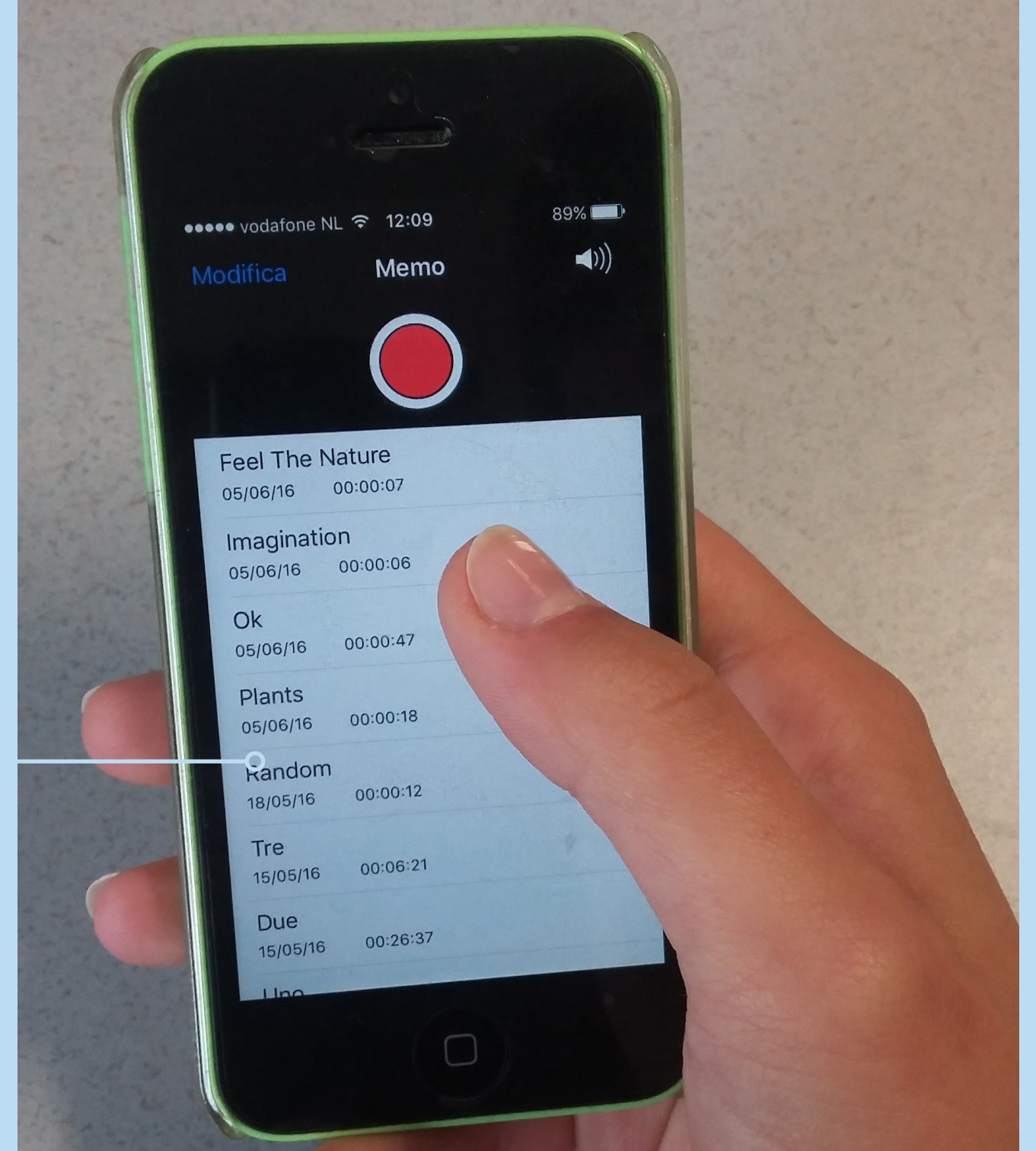
the sound of the
words is smooth

Sounds of the Day

Sound can evoke a very personal experience. In the Sound of the Day Alarm Clock, sound is used as a trigger for reflection upon the previous day. This alarm clock awakens users by playing back a sound that was recorded earlier in the user's day. These sounds can be recognised, taking the user back to a specific moment, or indistinct, triggering the imagination.

The focus on sounds is connected to both the rhythm of the poem as well as the words and meaning. Sounds from everyday differ greatly. When the user selects moments to record for the alarm clock, he needs to really consciously engage with the alarm clock during the day which takes away from the concept. When using sounds from random moments, the recordings might occur at strange or really quiet moments which might not wake the user or bring him back to strange moments.

In the picture some of the random sounds collected during the experiment done by the group.

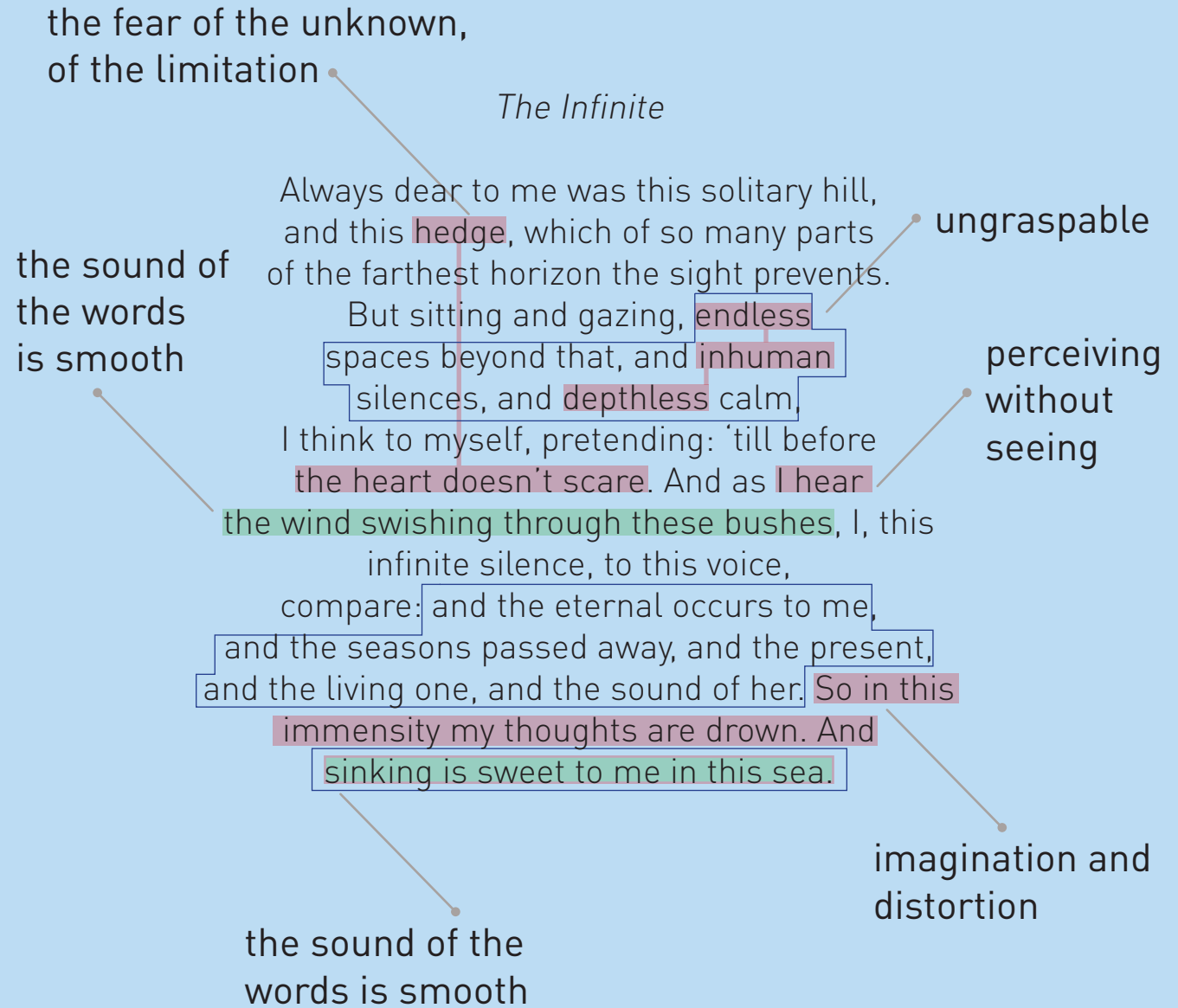


Iteration 3

focus: imagination

*endless spaces beyond that,
and inhuman silences*

Because throughout the poem the value of the imagination is really strong, it has been decided to use this value as the new focus for the third iteration in the process of the development of the concept. In every new iteration, even if the group has decided to change the focus, they have tried to maintain the previous values analyzed earlier. In this new iteration, the value of imagination is strongly connected to the perception and the idea of the *fear of the unknown*. Imagination in this case is seen as the tool to go beyond the fear, and we are able to do that through the sensorial perception of the environment around us.



Sound Pillow

Hypnagogia

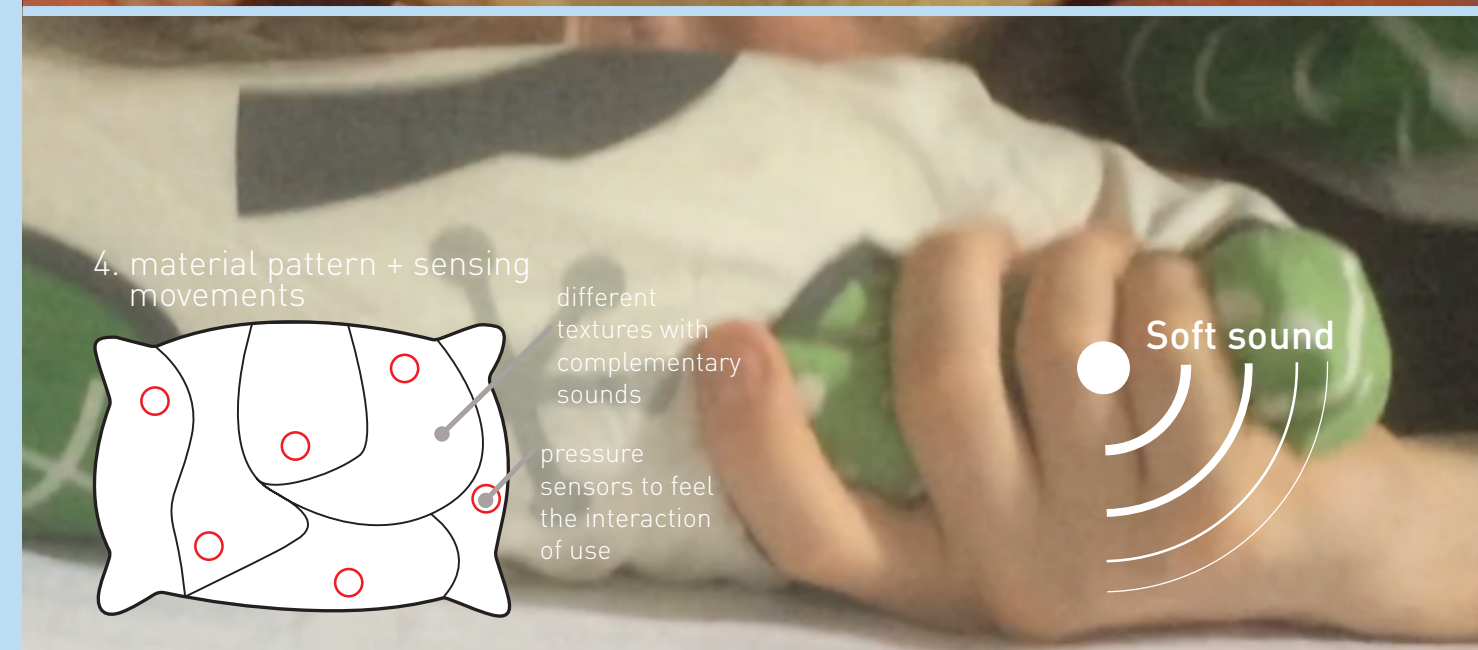
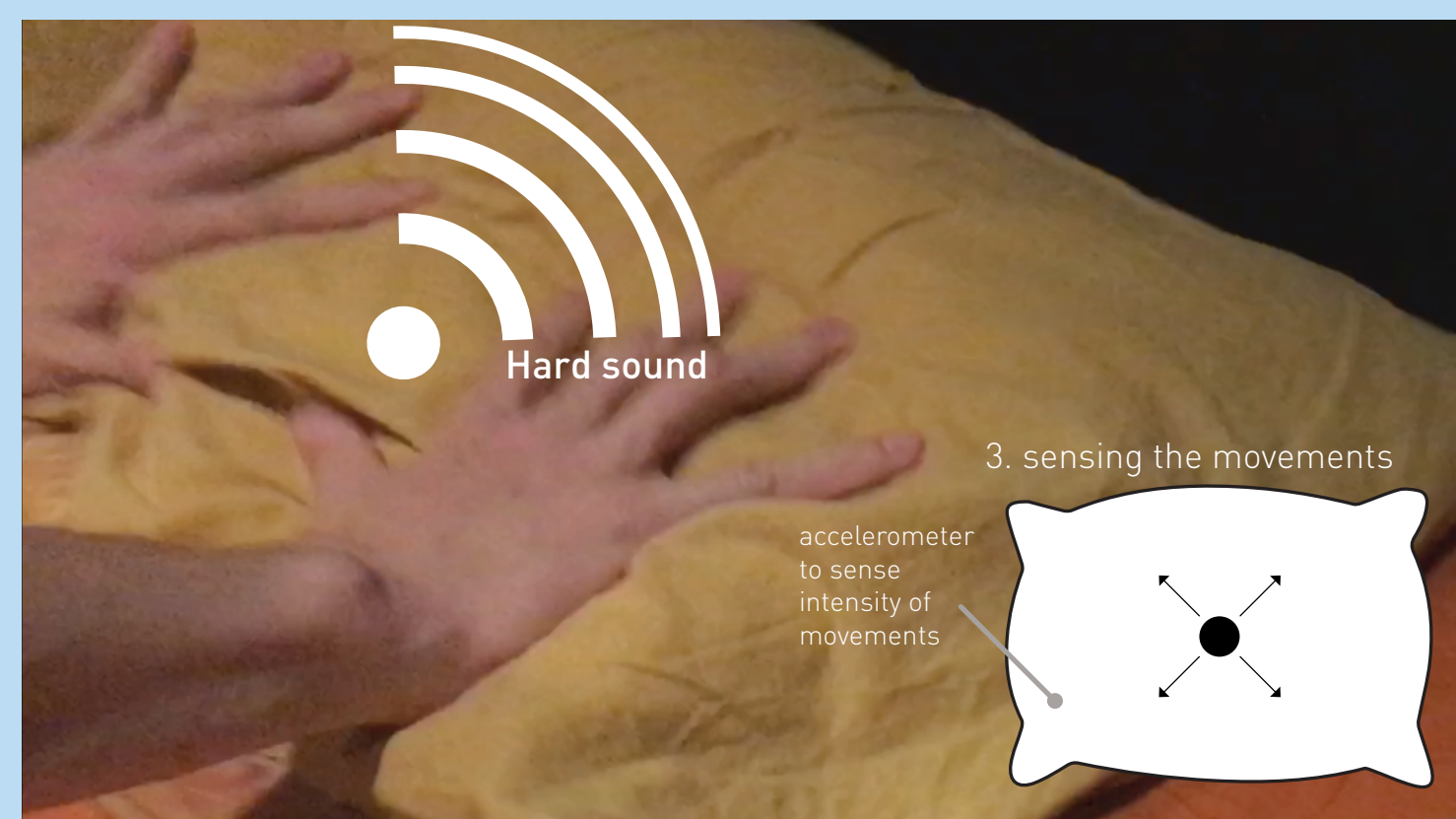
Hypnagogia was found as a design context where 'perceiving without seeing' is prominent. "Hypnagogia is the experience of the transitional state from wakefulness to sleep" [1]. Within this context our goal was to find subtleties in the interaction and in the usage of the pillow during the moment of hypnagogia. "Part of your brain is still in the waking world and part of it is not, and so you see things that are not there. It's very similar to the dreaming stages of sleep." [1]

Sound Pillow Concept

The Sound Pillow reacts to movement and pressure of the user with calming sounds. The pillow will produce louder sounds when, for example, the user flips the pillow, while a slight re-adjustment of the arm only results in a soft echoing sound. The goal in this concept was to play into the imagination of the mind to evoke pictures by use of sound only. The specific sounds could provide a lot of depth to the concept but hadn't been decided on yet.

Critique / feedback

Although the concept focuses on a subtle interaction possibility, the manner of user engagement mismatches with the situation. A person/user trying to fall asleep should not be exposed to stimulation interfering with sleep, especially with overstimulation we experience nowadays. Therefore a further refinement to match the concept intention with the manner of interaction.



Iteration 4

focus: feel the nature

*endless spaces beyond that,
and inhuman silences*

In this iteration it has been decided to analyze how the poem is able to transport the reader into a different place only by the use of words and descriptions of sounds.

The place where the poet transports the reader is in the nature, which is achieved with the use of images that can recreate the idea of sounds. As previously stated, also the sound of the words is an important part of the voyage into nature.

In the verse 'And as I hear the wind swishing through these bushes', the sound of the words reproduces the sound of the wind between the branches.

The poet imagines inhuman silences in that place behind the hedge, silences that do not belong to humans.

the fear of the unknown,
of the limitation

The Infinite

Always dear to me was this solitary hill,
and this hedge, which of so many parts
of the farthest horizon the sight prevents.

But sitting and gazing, endless
spaces beyond that, and inhuman
silences, and depthless calm,

I think to myself, pretending: 'till before
the heart doesn't scare. And as I hear

the wind swishing through these bushes, I, this

infinite silence, to this voice,

compare: and the eternal occurs to me,

and the seasons passed away, and the present,

and the living one, and the sound of her. So in this

immensity my thoughts are drown. And

sinking is sweet to me in this sea.

ungraspable

perceiving
without
seeing

the sound of
the words
is smooth

be one
with the
nature

the sound of the
words is smooth

imagination and
distortion

Sensorial Headphones

Headphones are used to close oneself off from the world. This redesign emphasizes the sounds of the body and breathing in order to take a moment during a busy working day to come to rest. Taking such a moment increases creativity and effectiveness of your work afterwards. These headphones can be used to listen to music while working, but also to take a personal break. This is done by unplugging them from the computer and plugging them into the object that was designed to help you focus on a specific sound from your body or the world around you. The functionality of our design is similar to that of a stethoscope. It enhances the sound of the object you touch.

Taking a break during the day is a great way to relieve stress and focussing on one's breathing is a great way to centre oneself. Besides this, breathing is often taken for granted. Focussing on it once in awhile is important in order to bring balance to one's life. The headphones were not really redesigned, this could be taken further in order to really embody the poem in the design.

In the pictures on the side we show some explorations on the shaper of the sensorial headphones, and some interactions with them.



Iteration 5

focus: connect with your body and allow yourself to be transported

endless spaces beyond that, and inhuman silences

The last iteration puts the focus on the connection of the body with the nature around. This is possible through the imagination and through the opportunity to let your body be transported in a different place. The focus is on the introspection, a personal moment to focus your perception on your body. Personal moment to let yourself be carried away, to enhance the connection with the mind and the body. The sounds of your body will connect you with the nature, and the idea of the nature will relax you and let you experience a moment of relaxation. During the five iterations that the group has done in the process of extraction of the values, the reanalysis of the poem together has been the tool and the methodology used to find new inspirations for a new concept.

the fear of the unknown,
of the limitation

The Infinite

introspection

Always dear to me was this solitary hill,
and this hedge, which of so many parts
of the farthest horizon the sight prevents.

ungraspable

the sound of
the words
is smooth

But sitting and gazing, endless
spaces beyond that, and inhuman
silences, and depthless calm,

perceiving
without
seeing

I think to myself, pretending: 'till before
the heart doesn't scare. And as I hear

personal
moment

the wind swishing through these bushes, I, this
infinite silence, to this voice,

compare: and the eternal occurs to me,

and the seasons passed away, and the present,
and the living one, and the sound of her. So in this

immensity my thoughts are drown. And
sinking is sweet to me in this sea.

imagination and
distortion

let yourself be
carried away

the sound of the
words is smooth

SoundStone

SoundStone is a device that encourages its user to take a moment to center oneself during the hectic of everyday life. The object is designed to be placed on a desk in the work environment, consisting of two parts; a listening stone and a soft squeezable listening end. The object stimulates a break after lunch, resembling the Italian riposo, in order to come to rest during the day and be able to start with a refreshed mind afterwards. To use it, simply put the stone to your ear and explore the sounds of your body with the other end. Through squeezing this object, SoundStone transports you to another place using sounds from the nature in your area, based on your GPS location.

In the picture on the right the prototype of the final concept.



Cultural Values

The analysis of the poem has given to the group the opportunity to compare the values with the cultural background of the poem. Already during the extraction of the values, it has been noticed that some parts were interpreted differently by the members of the group.

The endless horizon has been imagined flat from the Dutch students, and instead fragmented by the Italian student.

For this reason the decision was made to work with two really different aspects from the analysis of the poem from the Italian and the Dutch perspective.

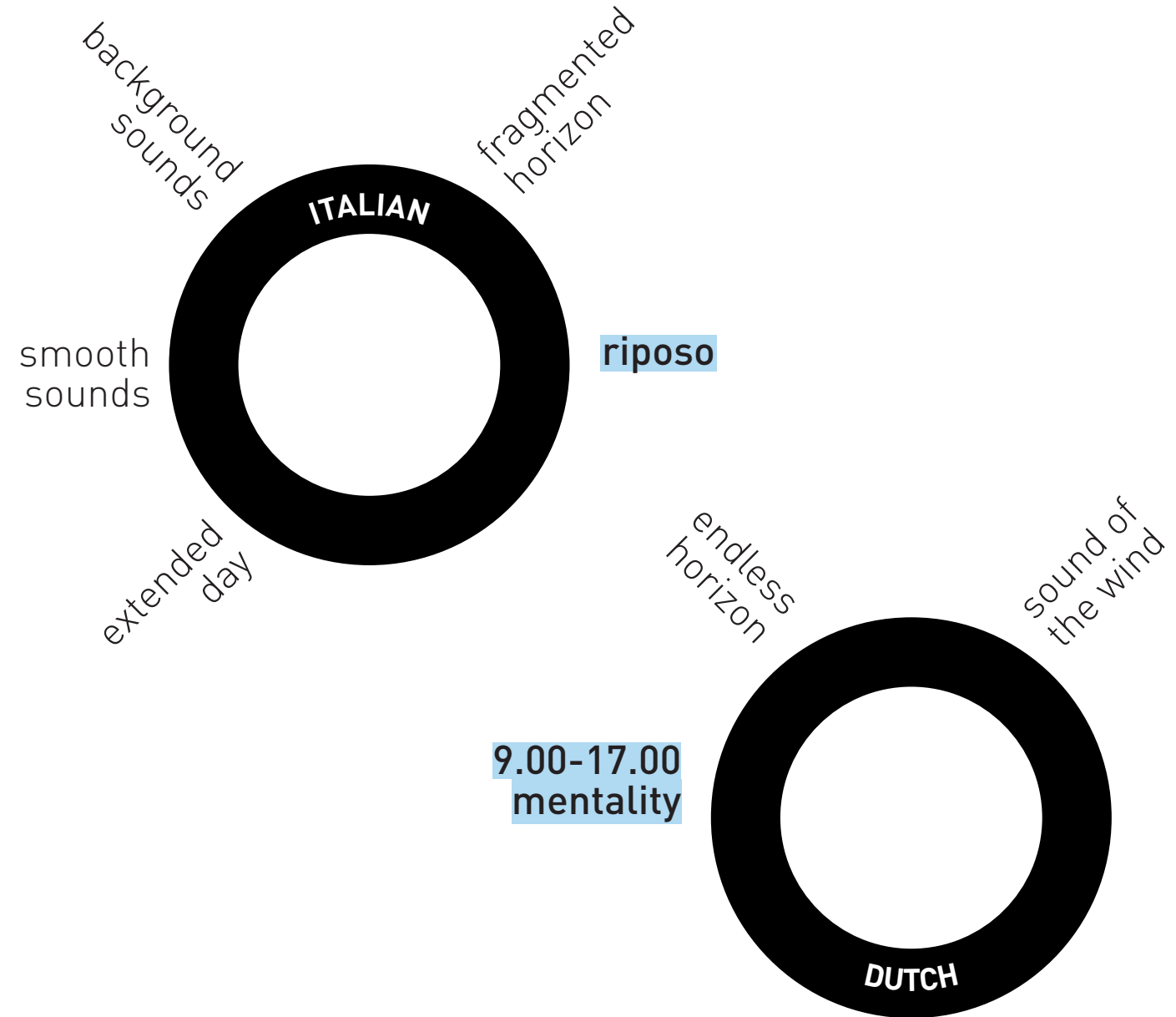
The group has tried to bring the Italian cultural aspect of break after lunch, the *riposo*, in the frenetic and functional 9.00 to 17.00 Dutch mentality. In Italy the lunch is an important meal, and the break between the morning and the afternoon could be from 1 hour to 2 hours long. In this way you have the time to relax and get ready for the afternoon work.

In the Netherlands, instead, the lunch break is shorter, and sometimes is done in front of the laptop with eating a fast sandwich, in order to be sure to conclude the daily tasks in time, and be able to go home at 17.00 to spend the free time left with family and friends.

This short break sometimes doesn't give to people the time to disconnect the mind from the job, and could be stressful.

For this reason the decision was made to design for a short personal moment, seen as a tool to connect yourself with your body and experience a moment of relaxation, to restart the job with a fresh brain.

Bring the Italian *riposo* into the Dutch 9:00 to 17:00 mentality. Riposo is a moment for yourself during the lunch break or during the afternoon in the work environment.



Context

a moment
to center
yourself
during the
working day

The context selected for the redesign of an everyday object with the values from the extracted poem, is the after lunch moment in the work environment.

The goal is to create an introspective moment to relax and create a connection with the body; in order to center oneself. Focusing on the perception of the inner sounds of your body, feeling the respiratory pace for example, or listening to your heartbeat, the user is engaged to connect mind and body in a moment to center himself, feeling his body again. The work environment could be the office, the private home or even the university, and this moment could be experienced in all these places.



Design Subtleties

The shape of stone fits into hand, and invites the use.

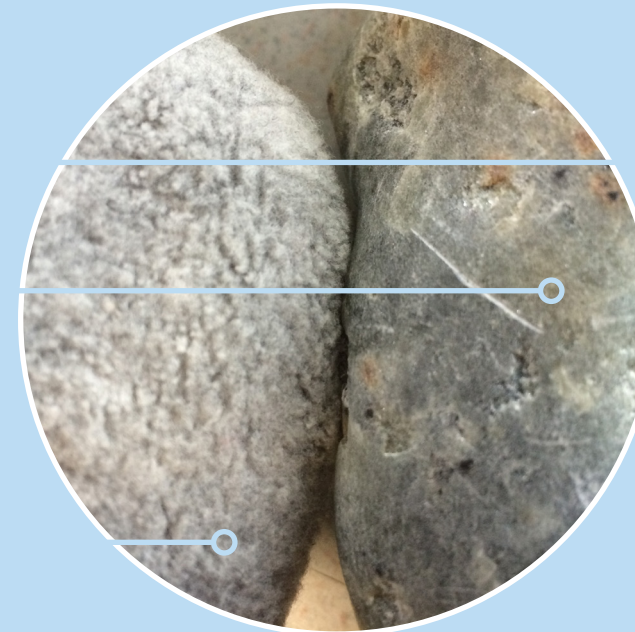
The material of the soft end, memory foam, invites the holding and creates a nice contrast with the stone part.

The position of the tube gives the feedback on how to hold the stone in the hand.

The material contrast is also expressed in the different smoothness and roughness of the surface of the stone.

The stone part is the hearing part, it is provided by a hear-piece to facilitate the experience of the listening to the sounds.

To give a sense of relatedness to the users environment, the soft end has a device inside that reproduces sounds recorded in the environment. With a geolocation sensor, the device connects to sound banks related to certain locations. For example, a workplace near the sea generates sounds of waves.



Discussion-SoundStone

Future development

The soundscape in relation to the interaction.

The concept produces sounds of nature (digitally) according to the user squeezing the soft end. The intention of this aspect is to help the user imagine the transportation to a peaceful place. However, the subtleties of the manner of squeezing connected to the generated sound was not fully explored. We expect that more in depth exploration on this interaction can enhance the product's poetic value. As in our stethoscope experiment where we found out that the handling of the material and the produced sound can lead to resonating experience.

Aesthetic alignment.

In the process, we found conceptual alignment between context, interaction and appearance. Though the final prototype has been an aesthetic improvement over earlier iterations, it can be improved significantly. Aspects that can be improved are for instance, the tube connection, the composition of the two halves and the materials that are used. The material for the listening part of the object needs to be explored further. The stone-like look worked different to our expectation due to its soft texture, both visually and tactile, and its uniform color. A more rustic and coarse fabric, and perhaps filling with a different material like pits can provide more grip.

Breathing.

SoundStone provokes self-centering through transportation using imagination and promotion of proper breathing. A proper breathing rate is required to relax and balance the body and focus on the self. SoundStone intends for the user to focus on the respiratory rate, remaining passive in this process. Further development can focus on how the device can guide or engage the user actively in finding the proper breathing rate and possibly posture.

