w r i t t e n a s s i g n m e n t

Collecting information, objects, techniques and tools. Bring different elements and stories together. Create visible links and create a new view or function for something. These are things I want to achieve with my work.

For me, all of these things start with simplicity. I would love to create a new point of view, a new experience for the spectators.

Reading the book 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction' by Walter Benjamin made a lot clear about that feeling of mine. After reading this book, the thing I remembered the most is his theory about the 'aura' of art and design.

He writes that by using mechanical reproduction techniques, million of images of an original piece are circulated around the world. All without this 'authentic aura' of it's original source.

Walter Benjamin is talking about the reproduction techniques in the late 19th century, like film and photography.

This isn't comparable anymore to all the techniques we got at this moment, and what we can do with it. We're able to make everything we need our self really easily. Examples for these reproduction techniques are the 3D printer and robots that are taking over a lot of human work.

Also the Internet is making reproducing open and a lot easier. All we have to do is search for something on Google, and we can get to the information we want and need, like manuals, 3D drawings etc.

That these reproduction techniques exist is fantastic, and created a lot more possibilities and new things. But art and design that is made by techniques without that authenticity lose their aura, and I think that this aura is what a piece of art makes or breaks.

It's not that digital techniques take away the authenticity. It's the personal touch, and for me especially interaction, that makes art and design authentic and personal, and in that way with an aura.

By using different disciplines and inviting a viewer to the installation, I want to create an intimacy between the viewer and the installation.

I think it's really important to stimulate and to create interaction between the object and its viewer, because then, the spectator has the possibility to use his or her own inspiration and fantasy. In this case, an object or piece of art can be interpreted in all different ways, by staying the same.

Just a few little elements can create something big. The interesting thing about simplicity is that you can reach something really strong with it. Simplicity starts most of the time with experimenting. Finding how you can control something, what the result will be by just doing something, until you'll find something, maybe even something you didn't expect; a beautiful, new technique.
An example of this, which gives me that feeling, is the project of Zilvinas Kempinas:

He shows us something open, yet incredible smart and above all, really simple. But an aspect I find really interesting in a project like this is the use of natural elements, like air.
Bringing all these elements together, basically 'collecting' elements, is what strikes my interest.
The combination between different disciplines, and creating a product with this is something I find interesting. This because you can control it in someway, but you also have to let it go, and find it's own way.
'Newton's Bucket' made by Silo shows exactly what I mean by saying this.

They're using movement, a spinning table and paint to create something new.
I think it's interesting that there are a lot of possibilities in techniques that already exist. By combining old crafts with new, digital crafts, and also with nature, there are a million ways and techniques to develop, which is something I want to search for and experiment with.

I think it's important to create something yourself, instead of letting a machine do all the work. By putting your own effort in something, which will get that 'aura' where Walter Benjamin is talking about. And with this aura, you'll reach a lot more people, and most important, it will be remembered by more people.

In all of these works, there is a tension between revealing and mystifying. Because of its transparency and simplicity, it's easy for a viewer to see how something works. But these objects have something more, and that's a human touch, which you can feel and see. I think this is the most important part. Machines will do their work anyway, but we can give a machine something personal, and make this machine of a bigger value.

In the work called 'Ninety six' by Nils Voelker, there is a tension between digitalization, nature and imagination.

The sequences of inflation and deflation create the impression of lively movements.

At first glance at Nils Volker's One Hundred and Eight appears elusive. Literally, one hundred and eight plastic bags appear to breath in and out as viewers pass from one end of Volker's installation to the other.

The work can remind you of a plastic bag that's blown by the wind. Because of it's rhythm, it will remind you of breathing. But because you, as a spectator, are in a museum or gallery, you know it isn't any of this. It's clear and logical that the inflation and deflation are digitalized and programmed.

It'll always get back to that simplicity. Telling a story with almost nothing.

This is something Lernert and Sander are really good at. The thing they ad to this simplicity is a lot of humor.

By reducing last season knitted garments from Fall/Winter '13 to balls of yarn, they create space for the new collection in the store of Kiki Niesten in Maastricht. It's quality is that it's easy to understand and it gives you all the information you need to know by doing something unexpected.

One and Three Chairs, 1965, is a work by Joseph Kosuth. An example of conceptual art: the piece consists of a chair, a photograph of this chair, and an enlarged dictionary definition of the word "chair". The photograph depicts the chair as it is actually installed in the room, and thus the work changes each time it is installed in a new venue.

Every exhibition it's is, the chair is the element that's changing, and is changed by the installer. One and Three Chairs demonstrates how an artwork can embody an idea that remains constant despite changes to its elements and asks every exhibition for interaction and refreshment.

I think creating an aura is possible in all different ways. But there is one thing I know for sure what you'll need to 'create' this aura, and that is passion.

In the first thousand words that I wrote last period, Walter Benjamin and his book 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction' were my 'red thread'. Especially his way of thinking about an piece of art and its aura. By using mechanical reproduction techniques, there are a million of 'identical' objects and products. All without this 'authentic aura' of it's original source, were Walter Benjamin is talking about.

Working with the authenticity of art and design in de back of my mind, I asked myself how I could create this by giving some ingredients to people, and let them create something their selves, this more from a product design point of view.

What will be their experience? And what will be the goal of this object; is it about the magic of making, or will it be more about creating awareness of material, surrounding and value?

Getting inspired by great artists as Miranda July, KesselsKramer and Studio Moniker I wanted to develop a interaction, a experience for people who are participating in the project.

I started with making two kind of manuals. The first manual gives you the instructions to start a video recording program. The other manual gives you instructions of what to do with the second package. There are elements and tools included in this bag, where you are asked to make a object with. This object is partly based on the size of your hands.

The overall style will be visible and will show you that all the other are doing the same.

I want to give a intensification of the starting point and view of notion on personal production. You actually buy an experience: It is what you do with the tools, what the object will be and what the object does to you. That was what counted the most by creating and giving this project to people.

To get some inspiration, I looked at artists who worked with ideas I wanted to work with. Examples of these ideas and ideals are an open-ended project, were the spectator will become the one who will complete the project. Another essential starting point were the instructions I gave by making a manual. By giving a manual, I could take control until a specific point. At that point, the one who's completing the project, is the one who'll use their fantasy and creativity.

Hans Ulrich Obrist, curator and artist, was concerned about the formats of exhibition and wanted to create something more flexible and open-ended. He created a format where a exhibition was created by the instructions of artists. From this point, the exhibitions were always different because each artist would interpreted the format in a different way.

The exhibition and idea draws from Conceptual art, Minimal art of the 60's and 70's as well as Fluxus and Dadaism. The rules and exhibition started from a book, and this book would circulate widely. Individual instructions can open empty spaces for occupation and invoke possibilities for the interpretations and rephrasing of artworks in a totally free manner.

'Do it' let spectators integrate and think about art in a different way. With their thoughts and answers to the instructions of the artists, they become part of the exhibition.
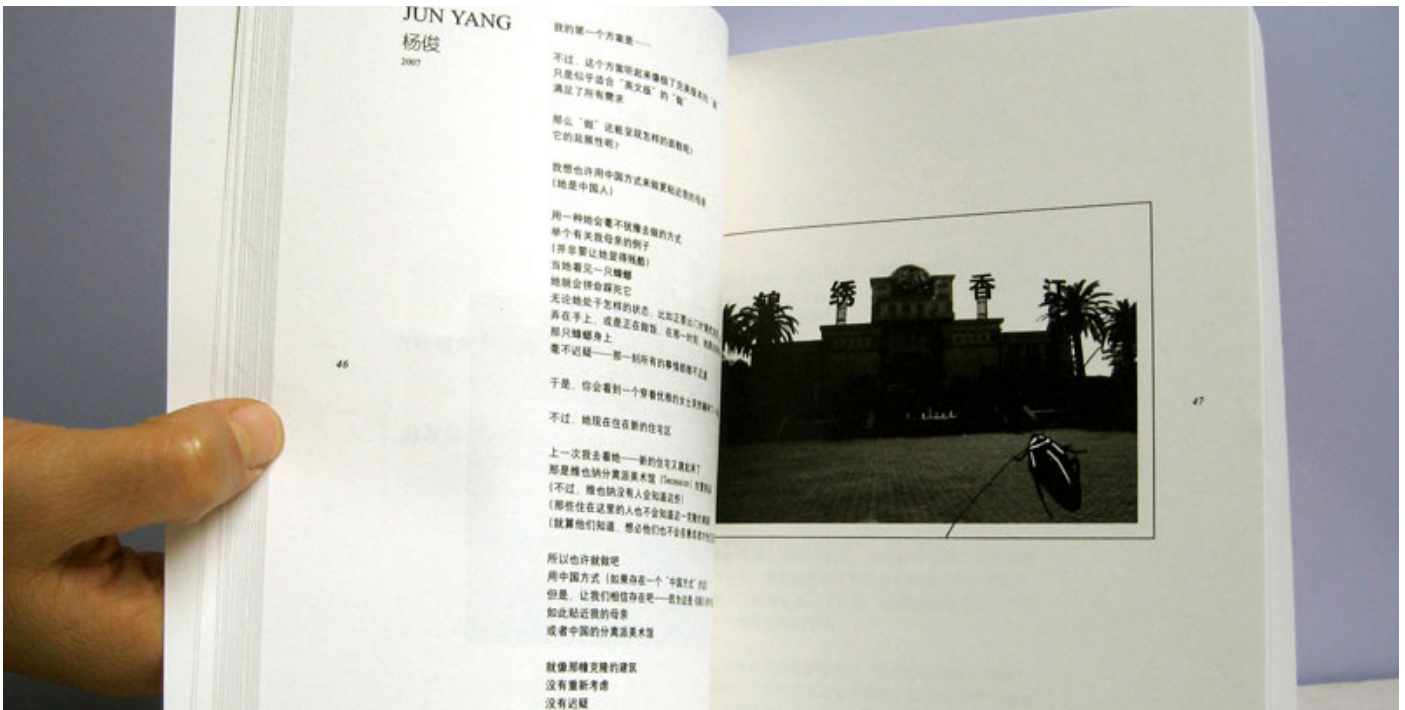
Miranda July launched a website called 'Learning to love you more' in 2002. On this website, participants accepted and adhered to an assignment, completed it by following the simple but specific instructions, sent in the required report, including photographs, text, video etc. and saw their work posted online.

Miranda July's goal was to guide people towards their own experience and to make people aware and think of life and what's around them. It was an ever-changing piece of art spanning the physical, digital and emotional ranges of everyday people.

To create this sense of accepting and self-exploring by giving people specific assignments, Learning to Love You More has become an ever changing piece of art spanning the physical, digital, and emotional ranges of everyday people.
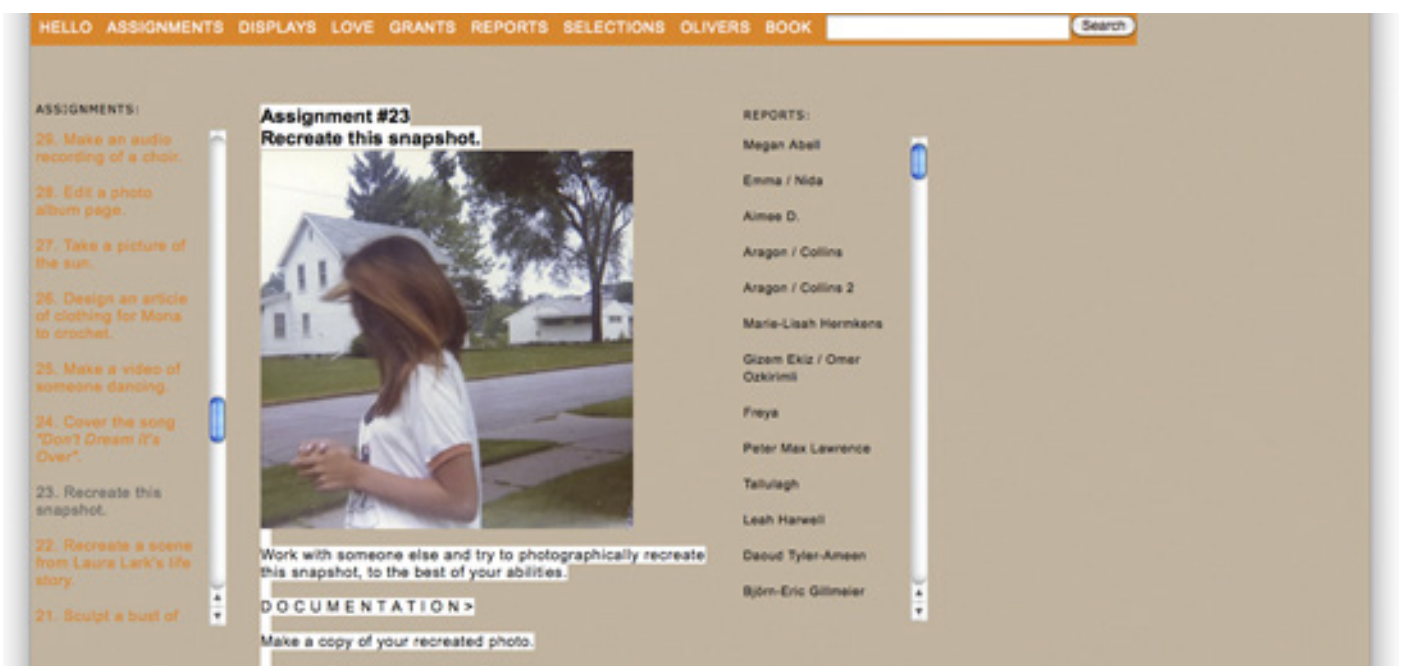
Because Studio Moniker didn't wanted to operate under the terms Graphic Design, Interaction Design, Media Art or Sound Design, they introduced 'Conditional Design' as a term that refers to their approach rather than their chosen media.

They explore the social effects of technology; how we use technology and how it influences our lives. Their projects ask most of the time for interaction and participation.

The influence of media and technology in the world, our lives are increasingly characterized by speed and constant change. Studio Moniker focuses on processes rather than products.

Their goal with the project 'Your Line or Mine' was to let the visitors interact by their instructions. In the space were piles of preprinted sheets of A4 paper, containing short drawing instructions. Once a drawing is finished, the visitor scans it. It is then directly added to the animation and projected onto projection screens in the space. Each drawing is a project and drawing of it's own, but all together the drawings will be a animation, made by all those 'personal' drawings.

The idea of a immediately action and interaction between participator, a digital reproduction technique like a scanner, and after scanning the drawing already seeing it in the animation I find really interesting. In this way, the participator immediately feels part of the project, which will create a special connection between the participator and the project. The project will be personal for every participator and the participators will always remember that they've once been part of a poster-animation for Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

This personal touch is also excellent shown in the project 'Do create' by KesselsKramer. With this project, KesselsKramer worked together with design studio Droog. They have a totally different starting point; Design. They asked several big designers, like Marti Guixe and Marijn van der Poll, to design objects and products that need to be finished. They each worked on the challenge at the heart of the "do brand": how to make consumer products less passive?

They're giving a intensification of their own starting point and a different view of notion on personal production. Within the do Create project consumers are invited to interact and play, and thereby influence the design. You buy an experience: it is what you do to the object or what the object does to you that counts.

Kesselskramer carried on with this project and mindset, and also created a book 'One hundred and one thing to do'. With this book, they want to inspire and challenge, and it requires active involvement and creativity of people. It all goes out from this 'do' spirit and challenge that they want to awake in people.

The keyword in all these great projects is the interaction and challenging of the spectators. The people who'll get involved in these projects can develop a new point of view for the other spectators and participators.

Working from a starting point, like a manual, is one way of avoiding subjectivity. It also takes away the whole point of designing a specific end result because every participator will interpret it in a different way. The manual in combination with the participator will design the work. In each case, the manual will be the basic form with rules, and the participator will govern the solution of restrictions of the manual.

By giving the restrictions to participators, you as the creator of the manual are the one who controls the outcome until one point. The form itself is of very limited importance, but it will become the grammar for the total work that someone else will finish. The process and how the participator will get to the end result by following the steps of the 'original' artist will be part of the end result. If the participator carries through his idea and makes it into visible form, then all the steps in the process are of importance. The idea itself, even if not made visual, is as much a work of art as any finished product. The products that show the thought process of the participator, are sometimes more interesting than the final product.