

# Personal Reflection Aesthetics of Interaction

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## READING MATERIAL/PRESENTATIONS

Most importantly, I learned that no clear definition for Aesthetics of Interaction exists. The presentations and reading material broadened my understanding of both interaction design and Aesthetics of Interaction (AoI). Especially, I learned about different perspectives on the Aesthetics of Interaction and the importance of making & prototyping.

### Perspectives on Aesthetics of Interaction

The Interaction Frogger paper [1] taught me about designing for intuitive interaction through feedback/feedforward. Next to that, intuitive interaction allows freedom of expression which relates to aesthetic experiences.

From the lecture about Pragmatist's aesthetics and the paper by Marianne Graves Petersen [2], I learned the difference between pragmatic vs. analytic aesthetics. I learned that aesthetics does not only involve appearance but rather beauty in interaction. The instrumentality of aesthetics was most interesting to me. The fact that aesthetics is part of everyday-life, helping users to understand the interactive system by its emergence in use, inspired my vision.

Sietske Kooster's lecture and the paper by Ross and Wensveen[3] inspired me to involve bodily movement in future design projects. I learned that using bodily movement and choreography as means for acting out interactions or behaviors helps the designer in the ideation process and to understand interaction problems.

### Importance of making and prototyping

From Experience Prototyping [4] and Interaction Relabelling[5] I learned that when designing for Aesthetics of Interaction making and prototyping is key. From the lecture by Kristina Andersen I got inspired to use physical prototyping more often in my design processes. I learned that it is not only useful enhancing your creativity flow but also to better understand a design iteration and for the communication with team mates or stakeholders. I better understand that making helps getting to underlying feelings and exploring experiences.

## AESTHETICS OF INTERACTION

By critically analyzing the content shared in the lectures and papers, I created a personal perspective on Aesthetics of Interaction. While reflecting on the meaning of aesthetics of interaction, it triggered me to think about in how far ease of use can be considered as aesthetics of interaction.

For me, ease of use is associated with intuitive interaction because this helps the user feel in control. Interaction Frogger [1] argues how to create intuitive interaction. However, what does intuitive interaction say about the Aesthetics of Interaction? And what does intuitive

interaction say about freedom of expression, and so creating Aesthetics of Interaction?

Intuitive interaction avoids that the user is getting lost in an overload of action possibilities by information on how actions are coupled to the product's function [6]. However, the interaction still allows exploitation of the user's rich perceptual motor skills, which is the base for freedom of expression [6]. To me this means, when the user experiences freedom of expression he/she experiences a balance between excitement of using rich perceptual motor skills (AoI) and being in control (intuitive interaction). That is why, Aesthetics of Interaction is about experiencing surprises by attractive feedforward or unexpected feedback and slightly touches the concept of intuitive interaction.

The instrumentality of aesthetics explains that aesthetics helps the user understanding objects by using it in an improvisational way [7]. Aesthetics of interaction can become an integral part of daily activities.

Concluding, Aesthetics of Interaction for me can be described best as experiencing excitement/surprise slightly touching the concept of intuitive interaction, as being in control rather than ease of use, while taking into account the instrumentality of aesthetics.

## DESIGN AND DESIGN PROCESS

Because of the late defined goal for the design of the alarm clock we lacked conscious application of some provided knowledge. In the beginning I already felt this was a constraint in the group communication, so in future projects I should communicate this to the group earlier on. Despite that, I made sure to include lots of knowledge from the presentations and papers into the design and process.

In the ideation we used Interaction Relabelling [5] with a nail clipper taking the context of a student willing to sleep into account. This helped the group exploring nail clipper features and alarm clock functionalities to focus on but also to reflect upon the sequence of action-reaction loops.

With the first alarm clock concept in mind, we used Experience Prototyping [4] to make foam prototypes. This, to find a common understanding of the shape, the experience created and the goal for the clock (see Figure 1).

Because Aesthetics of Interaction slightly touches intuitive interaction, Interaction Frogger's framework [1] got us thinking about couplings through feedback and feedforward to refine the design. This concept has been incorporated by adding pressure to pendulum when stretching it out further, LED's that indicate the amount of hours the student will sleep, adding a wooshy sound indicating the clock is set and two black shapes clock illustrating handles to grab.

We linked the instrumentality of aesthetics [7] to the goal of our design, calming down students after a long day at university making the alarm clock less disruptive. Our design makes sure it becomes part of the sleeping experience by the pendulum's wooshy sound and its understandability.



**Figure 1:** Foam Prototypes by means of Experience Prototyping

#### VIDEO

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRSKNR\\_Q8NE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XRSKNR_Q8NE&feature=youtu.be)

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