

IDENTITY

I don't design to instruct; I design to invite.

To invite people into a moment of presence. A breath. A shift. A full body experience they can surrender to.

Design, to me, is not just a tool to fix things. It is a language of experience. A way to shape stories that people can live through, not just remember but *feel*. My work doesn't need to be quiet to be meaningful. It can be bold, loud, playful, or even spectacular, what matters is that it offers people a space where they can let go, immerse themselves, and reconnect with what matters to them. Whether through theatre, film, interactive objects, or game-like installations, I want to create experiences that reach people emotionally, where they are, and open them up to something new.

The goal is not to distract, but to *disarm*, to captivate, not to control. The result I seek is a shift, however subtle or profound, that leaves space for clarity, reflection, or comfort. I design for presence: deep engagement with the moment, with the self, and with the world around them.

This identity was shaped through real experience. In *Crescendo* theatre décor, I saw how physical space and emotional rhythm could combine into atmosphere before a single actor spoke. In CBL3, I challenged myself to lead and design within my physical limits, learning that meaningful contribution doesn't require volume—it requires intention. Conversations with P&P Projects affirmed that my conceptual thinking, rooted in narrative and imagination, has real value in spatial and themed environments. In all these cases, the emotion wasn't the byproduct, it was the goal.

Living with a disability has influenced not only how I work, but *why* I design. I live with chronic pain and limited physical strength, which means I often can't work traditionally. But I've developed systems and tools that make my process more sustainable and more precise. I use Blender for 3D modelling, Illustrator for rapid visual iterations, and digital fabrication (laser cutting, 3D printing) to bring ideas to life without over-exertion. My condition doesn't limit my creativity, it shapes it. It teaches me to work strategically, to rest without guilt, and to focus on what matters.

Because my energy is finite, I plan with care. I don't just pace myself for productivity, I pace myself for *quality*. For presence. And this has led me to explore not only what I design, but *how*. This year I developed the Pyramid Method, a personal brainstorming technique that begins with three core emotional or narrative intentions. From these, I build inward, layering meaning, tension, and form until a coherent, focused experience takes shape. This method reflects how I think: wide, deep, and grounded in feeling.

In group settings, I often take the role of the dreamer, the one who sets the conceptual bar high and pushes for emotional clarity. My vision tends to come early and in abstract form, but I've learned to translate it into tangible outcomes by guiding others, adapting methods, and focusing the team on shared impact. I often use the Disney Method, dreaming freely, grounding ideas in practical feasibility, and then refining them through critique and iteration.

My values as a designer are clear. I design for:

- Emotional depth over surface interaction
- Immersion over distraction

- Reflection over instruction
- Care over correctness
- Intention over output

I want users to feel safe, seen, and moved. I want them to give themselves to an experience fully, not because they must, but because they *can*. Because something in the design invites them in.

This belief is rooted in lived experience. During my trip with the Peter Pan Vakantieclub, surrounded by other youth with neuromuscular disorders, I experienced a rare kind of presence. We didn't have to perform. We didn't have to explain. That space of unconditional being gave me mental rest, clarity, and strength. It was a turning point, not just personally, but professionally. I want to create that kind of presence for others.

This vision came to life in *Doorspelen?!*, the short film I co-created on peer pressure. I saw how a narrative could open conversations in classrooms and give students a language for their own experiences. I felt it during the colour run I designed, watching children and families play without hesitation or fear. I saw it when the curtain rose on our *Crescendo* set and the entire audience gasped. And again, in CBL2, when users responded to our project not with critique, but with emotion.

These are the moments I work for. Not when people say, "it's well made," but when they say: "this meant something."

My work with #WijDoenHetAnders continues this thread. Through film and gamification, we create accessible spaces for dialogue, discovery, and social awareness. Our projects don't force change, they *invite* it. They create light entry points to heavy topics, so that people can explore rather than defend, reflect rather than resist.

That is the identity I carry as a designer. One shaped by lived limits and chosen values. By emotion, imagination, and storytelling. By vision, care, and strategy. By being a dreamer, who knows how to build.

And it's an identity I continue to shape, not by aiming for perfection, but by holding space for meaning.

VISION

The world today is overstimulating, fast-paced, and increasingly overwhelming. Especially for those navigating invisible challenges like chronic illness, sensory overload, or burnout, it can feel nearly impossible to find rest. I've lived this personally: when I tried to do too much, taking too many courses, juggling too many responsibilities, I ended up burned out and disconnected. Only when I deliberately slowed down, reduced my study load, and focused on what mattered, did I start passing courses and finding joy again.

This shift is the heart of my design vision: I want to create what I call "distractions for reflection." These are immersive, emotionally resonant experiences that invite people to pause, reset, and reconnect with themselves. Not escapes, but focused moments of presence, spaces where mental noise quiets, and something meaningful can emerge.

I experienced this kind of clarity during my volunteer trip with the Peter Pan Vakantieclub. It was a trip free from expectation, where the outside world, school, future plans, stress, just... faded. For the first time, I felt completely present, and that emotional reset changed everything. I found motivation again. I passed my classes. I knew I wanted to become a designer. That experience didn't just entertain me, it transformed me. And that's the kind of design I want to create, experiences that stay with people long after they end.

Distraction, to me, doesn't mean disengagement. It means joyful immersion. It's about being so fully absorbed, by a story, a sensory moment, a shared interaction, a project, that your usual worries disappear. This doesn't require silence or solitude. It requires depth, clarity, and intention.

Examples of this vision already live in my work:

- **MySupportPin**, a wearable tool that silently signals a need for help without having to speak.
- **Puffaroo**, a soft, huggable object that offers emotional comfort by returning a physical hug.
- **Crescendo décor**, where light and structure were used to evoke emotional rhythm within a theatre performance.

These aren't huge inventions, but they create emotional resonance. That's what matters.

As technology continues to evolve, AR, VR, affective computing, responsive environments, we're gaining new tools to support this kind of design. Yet too often, these technologies are used for novelty, not depth. I believe in using them with empathy, to build moments of connection, calm, and reflection.

I position myself within emotional design, experience design, and slow design. In contrast to fast, data-driven innovation, I design to slow people down. To create presence, not productivity. Depth, not just feedback.

Entertainment, through games, theatre, or themed environments, is my preferred medium. Not because it's light or fun, but because it naturally blends narrative, sensory input, and interaction. It's a space where reflection can be disguised as play, and where emotional transformation can occur through engagement.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

THE DESIGNER I NEED TO BE TO REACH MY VISION

To create emotionally engaging, immersive, and reflective experiences, I need to grow into a designer who balances visionary thinking with practical execution. My professional identity as a storyteller and dreamer is already well-formed. I can imagine bold concepts, create atmosphere, and build narratives that invite users into layered, meaningful experiences. But in order to truly realize my design vision, to create “distractions for reflection” that are emotionally resonant, inclusive, and immersive, I need to further develop the practical, technical, and collaborative skills that help me turn dreams into deliverables.

I need to become the kind of designer who can:

- Translate abstract vision into clear, testable concepts
- Understand how people think, feel, and respond in designed spaces
- Prototype complex ideas in ways that work with my physical capabilities
- Collaborate effectively with professionals from other disciplines
- Communicate design decisions in both emotional and analytical terms
- Build tools, environments, and narratives that scale without losing emotional depth

This clarity shapes how I approach my next steps. The choices I make moving forward, whether courses, collaborations, or personal projects, are all meant to help me develop the skills, mindset, and context needed to turn my vision into a lasting contribution to the field.

KEY DEVELOPMENT THEMES & PLANNED STEPS

EMOTIONAL AND COGNITIVE UNDERSTANDING: DESIGNING FOR THE MIND AND SENSES

To design immersive experiences that gently support emotional clarity, I need to understand how people process space, sound, touch, and story. Emotional impact isn't just created by what people see, it's what they *feel*, consciously and subconsciously.

- Course: Brain, Body & Behaviour
This course will help me understand how the body and mind respond during interaction. It's essential for designing environments and moments that aren't just functional, but feel safe, calming, and intuitive. I expect this knowledge to deeply inform how I create reflective spaces, whether in theatre, product design, or future game environments.
- Course: Design and Sensorial Form
This elective will give me the chance to expand my work beyond the visual. I want to develop design language that includes texture, materiality, proportion, and sound, which are essential tools for building full-body experiences. This connects directly to both my theatre work and my longer-term interest in neuroarchitecture and multisensory interaction.

IMMERSION, STORYTELLING, AND INTERACTION

To realize the vision of distraction for reflection, storytelling alone isn't enough. I need to know how to build interactive systems and environments where the story unfolds through exploration, movement, and interaction. This is especially important if I want to move into areas like games, installations, and themed spaces.

- Course: Designing for Games and Play 1

This course will help me structure my stories into staged experiences and explore how gameplay principles can amplify emotional engagement. I want to experiment with segmented storytelling, emotional progression, and world-building through mechanics, space, and pacing. This course will also help prepare me for my Final Bachelor Project, where I intend to focus on interaction and immersive narrative.

- Film Project (Self-Initiated)

In addition to academic work, I plan to develop another film-based project, either independently or in collaboration. This will support my growth in visual direction, emotional narrative, and symbolic language, all key skills for storytelling across mediums.

TANGIBLE PROTOTYPING AND ACCESSIBILITY

Given my physical limitations, I need tools and workflows that are effective without relying heavily on manual labor. At the same time, I still want to produce detailed, expressive prototypes that communicate my ideas clearly.

- Course: Digital Craftsmanship

This course offers a chance to explore alternative workflows using programming, material simulation, and digital craft techniques. It's a way for me to discover new ways of making that are both technically rich and physically sustainable for my body. I also expect it to strengthen my understanding of computational form-making, which will help me in both visual prototyping and interaction design.

- Advanced Blender Skills (Self-Directed Focus)

I want to continue building my Blender skills, especially in animation and rendering. These techniques allow me to visualize atmospheres, emotions, and interactions in a way that's accessible to clients, users, and collaborators. They'll also allow me to explore visual rhythm, timing, and light, important for immersive storytelling.

- Multicolor 3D Printing & Maquette Building

I'll continue prototyping for Crescendo theatre productions, exploring how color, form, and modularity can be prototyped quickly and meaningfully. This also supports my growth in collaborative design, where form must balance vision with practical constraints like budget, weight, and transportability.

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE & INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Working with real clients and across disciplines is where I feel most inspired. My experiences with Crescendo have shown me how much I grow when I collaborate with others, especially when I have room to shape the atmosphere and flow of a space or experience. But I want to expand beyond theatre alone and explore immersive storytelling across other cultural and professional contexts.

- Continue Theatre Work with Crescendo

These productions allow me to experiment in real time with emotional tone, visual rhythm, and narrative expression in physical space. They also give me the constraints and feedback I need to grow my decision-making and communication skills.

- Internship Abroad (Preferred: Japan or another cross-cultural setting)

I hope to do my internship with a company or collective that works on environmental storytelling, installations, or themed experiences. Ideally, this would happen in a culture very different from my own, such as Japan, so I can experience alternative design languages, team dynamics, and aesthetic sensibilities. I want to learn how immersion is approached in different parts of the world and what stories are told through spatial experience elsewhere.

- Student Team (Optional)

I'm considering joining a student team with a social or emotional focus, so I can explore collaborative impact-driven design outside of traditional academic structures. This could be especially valuable in improving my stakeholder communication, planning, and real-world scaling of emotionally grounded designs.

YEAR 4 PLAN & ADAPTABILITY

In Year 4, I aim to take on a Final Bachelor Project (FBP) that reflects everything I've learned so far, both in skill and identity. At this moment, my most likely direction is to design a dark ride experience, either in collaboration with a company like P&P Projects, or as a self-initiated concept if the opportunity doesn't arise through external partners.

A dark ride is a perfect embodiment of my vision and learning path:

It integrates storytelling, atmosphere, interaction, sensory design, technical realization, and emotional engagement into one cohesive experience. It challenges me to bring together all areas of expertise, from 3D modelling and narrative development to user psychology, sensory storytelling, prototyping, and collaboration. Whether through staged scenes, soundscapes, lighting, or spatial rhythm, it would allow me to practice building an immersive world that speaks emotionally without relying on words.

To support this project and my broader growth, I'll tailor my course selection and workload around supporting this goal. However, I've also intentionally left space in my elective planning. After completing my current courses and applying what I've learned in more real-world contexts, I want to pause, reflect, and redirect if needed. This gives me the flexibility to select future electives based on who I've become, not just who I thought I would be. It's a way to keep my development responsive, intentional, and aligned with the designer I am still becoming.

I've created two potential planning scenarios:

- One assumes I will complete both my internship and FBP within the standard timeframe.
- The other allows for a flexible, health-based extension, in case I need more time due to energy limitations.

The most important thing is not to rush but to ensure that the outcome truly reflects my vision and capabilities and gives me space to push creative boundaries while working within a sustainable rhythm.

LONG-TERM OUTLOOK

While I don't yet have a clear or fixed idea of what my Master's path will look like, I do have a strong sense of the direction I want to move in. I'm drawn to studies that allow me to continue developing emotionally resonant, immersive experiences, likely in fields like design, game development, or theatre and performance design. These areas all align with my core values: storytelling, reflection, and creating presence through designed experience.

That said, a master's is still at least three years away for me, and I want to use that time intentionally. Rather than rush into a decision, I see this as a valuable opportunity to explore different formats, environments, and methodologies, both academically and professionally. The next few years will help me test what kind of setting supports me best:

Do I want a research-based program? Something applied and collaborative? Something more artistic and conceptual? Or something industry-driven?

Whatever direction I choose later, I know that the essence of my work will stay the same:

Designing experiences that gently invite people to pause, reflect, and reconnect, with themselves, with others, and with the world around them. Whether that's through games, themed environments, or narrative installations, I'll keep developing my ability to turn abstract emotion into tangible form.

Right now, my priority is not choosing the "perfect" master's program in advance, but continuing to build the foundation, in skill, mindset, and confidence, that will guide me when I'm ready to take that next step.