In my vision I state that “people seem to be less attached to products they buy. This makes it easier to throw something out that, even though it still fulfills people’s needs, is replaced by something new once the novelty wears off. As a designer, my goal is to give customers this feeling of value and attachment that comes with ownership back. I believe this can be done by looking at the way people interact and communicate with products or systems from day to day and understanding their habits.” In my choice for a squad for this semester, this triggered and motivated me to choose DIGSIM. Having been in the seamless squad for a while, I wanted to explore how I could design for this specific product-oriented part in my vision, and designing for value and integration into daily life.

Within our project “ipsum”, I was able carry out this vision even further, as our design stimulates the user to actively think about the state of their house. This promotes for the user to still feel connected to their home and practices, instead of actions being carried out automatically. This inherently comes back to my goal as designer to create value and connection to products and systems. Next to this, Ipsum is able to shift along the Interaction Attention Continuum (BRON) from a peripheral (art) piece to a focused and interactive artefact instead of just a notification device. With newer products and services shifting from physical to digital, our attention has shifted from our surroundings, the context and the people around us, to our devices. Conscious designing of products that are more seamlessly intertwined into daily life, allows users to direct their attention to what they value instead of their devices, which is the case for Ipsum.

During this semester, I have been able to develop my skills and identity as well. I aim to design from a holistic perspective, which means I have a reflective attitude when designing and keep approaching the design process from different perspectives. This helps me communicate the design process and iterations that take place to users, stakeholders and others involved. This was an approach I also adopted this semester, which has helped me and my group members communicate and present our sometimes complex concept to coaches and fellow students since our process was well-documented and considered from multiple perspectives. Usually when designing to enhance a certain experience, the exit entry experience in this case, I aim to involve potential users throughout multiple phases of the design process. This is something I experienced to be different methodology wise in this squad. Instead of a multi-perspective design process, we mainly designed using a first person perspective. We did this by immersing ourselves into the user experience, and focusing on the values and needs that drive the user when it comes to the exit and entry experience. By doing this, I learned that a first person perspective can be equally valuable when supported by the right sources, which posed as a great solution to being limited in involving users due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Next to growing within my vision and identity, I have been able to work on my expertise areas as well.

With one of our goals being enhancing and supporting the user experience of exiting and entering a home, I wanted to make sure the expertise area User & Society was well integrated. In the ideation phase of the design process, I did research into what this experience looks like in different industries and households. From this we were able to

develop a strong vision and problem statement for our project, which our target group empathized with. This vision was therefore used as red thread throughout the whole process. Since there were not many validation moments with users throughout the process, I aimed to develop a proper user validation with our final design. In an ideal scenario, ipsum would have been deployed into multiple family homes for a longer period of time. However, due to the COVID-19 restrictions this was not a realistic and safe way to validate. By creating a list of validation requirements, I noticed the most important aspects to get feedback on from users were understandability and user experience. From this, I was able to set up a 2 way user study which focused on validating multiple smaller parts of our concept.

One of my strengths is using a visual design thinking approach in a design process. I used this approach well into the design process, which helped me communicate my ideas to my team members and allowed for more creativity and shared understanding during the ideation and conceptualization phases. Since our goal for Ipsum was to function as an art piece as well, it's design was very aesthetic-heavy. To achieve this, I looked into forms our concept could take by using sketching as a brainstorm technique. This led us to combining an organic wave-motion with individually movable tiles. Later on this design was reduced from covering the entire wall to just 4 tiles to suit its function as an art piece located in the periphery of the user better.

As can be deducted from the reflection above, my main strengths lie in the Expertise Areas U&S and C&A. This is also reflected in my contributions to this project. During the ideation and conceptualization phase I allowed for shared understanding within the team using my visual design thinking approach and providing structure and a holistic overview. Towards the end of the project, I took responsibility for developing a proper user validation. Since T&R and MD&C are not my strongest, I collaborated more with my teammates in building and coding the prototype, as I still wanted to be involved and learn but could not take full responsibility for developing these parts of the design. Throughout the rest of the design process, I was able to focus my attention to the aesthetics and integration of our design, and developing the sounds, movements and sounds.

Within Technology & Realization and Math Data & Computing, my contribution and development mainly was within (the iterations of) developing our prototype. Since these are not my strongest expertise areas, I collaborated more with my team members in developing the prototype, emergent phenomena and data-enabling of our design. When developing the mechanisms of the tiles, I for example learned more about the use and possibilities of servo's and how to secure these best to reduce the amount of play between them. As part of my PDP, I had the goal to work on data-enabled design. Making designs data driven allows very well for integration into daily life, as designs respond to personalized and situational data. I focused a lot on the data input of Ipsum and what data was needed to realize the different scenarios developed for Ipsum. Lastly, the challenge of the emergent phenomena where we clustered with multiple projects to share data, gave me new insights on how to design for a data-enabled product and what future steps I can take to develop further.

Within the first weeks of the process, I conducted market research to gain insight into existing products for the entry and exit experience, and into how this experience was

established in different industries such as the hotel branche. This helped me find design opportunities on which later our vision was developed. Towards the end of the design process, 2 possible markets were considered that could potentially receive Ipsum. The consideration of the healthcare industry opened our eyes to the possibility of tailoring our design to aid less independant users in living more safely and independant, which we shortly explored. Lastly, we were able to get validation from an external party. The external party featured our design, which showed us we designed for a relevant and recognizable problem, that they appreciated our designed solution and that our design was of a certain level of quality.

I am very satisfied with how our group collaboration went. Our diverse skill set, background and mindset proved to be a beneficial asset for the first person perspective approach and development of Ipsum overall. We were able to communicate well and felt comfortable having critical discussions together, which aided our overall (personal) development. In regards to communication, I had a PDP goal to improve my visual and online communication as I noticed the growing importance of visual communication, especially when designing remotely. By using my visual design thinking approach as mentioned before, I was able to facilitate shared understanding within our group and create strong final deliverables to communicate our design to the outside world.

Upcoming semester I will be able to apply my learnings of this semester into my research project. There I want to research the field of mutual understanding and awareness among users, in combination with (data) visualisations. This project generated a lot of knowledge, resources and handles which I will be able to use within this research and to further strengthen my identity and vision as a designer.