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DCM100 | **Constructive Design Research**
Personal reflection | Showroom group 2



Research

During my four years at the Bachelor of Industrial Design I was exposed to several changes in the educational program. All students who entered the faculty one year after I had started were obliged to do one Research Project – during my Bachelor I never did this in such an explicit manner. Therefore I was longing for a course like *Constructive Design Research* in my Master program, in order to gain more knowledge about putting my design and/or design process in an academic context. This is mainly because I am interested in social design, in which I experience that it is sometimes hard to 'prove' the impact or contribution of your design to an academic or industrial audience.

Showroom

I decided to focus this course on Showroom, because I was curious on how to integrate provocative aspects in my approach. I have seen the societal impact of this approach in the project 'De aquatheek' of Renee&Alissa (NULZES) and from several interventions of Afdeling Buitengewone Zaken, and was eager to gain some hands-on experience with this myself as well.

From the experience I had with my group I would say this approach fits me surprisingly well. At first I was a bit skeptical about the relatedness of this approach to art as I am quite pragmatic, but since we focused on relevance and kept our message close to reality I really enjoyed the effect our research provoked. As a social designer I like to emphasize and engage with my stakeholders. A prototype like we used in this showroom research could actually assist this approach very well, as your design provokes opinions while you as a designer can stay open minded for discussions.

Also, this way of setting up research fits my character - I am a control freak but can also adapt really quickly. Showroom research demands thorough preparation in which you design the total experience. Every case can have a different outcome; you have to prepare for the unexpected. Both of these qualities are therefore nicely reflected and extremely useful in this approach.

Lab, Field and Showroom

At first sight I considered myself to be a Field researcher, as I like to dive into the context and from there on build a bottom-up process. However, I might have mingled my role as a designer and the role of my design in such a research process.

From this course I learned that Lab, Field and Showroom research can be applied to various stages of a design process. It is wise to first consider the purpose of your research and choose an approach accordingly. The greatest difference to me is the variation in freedom and controllability, both on beforehand and during testing, for the design, the designer and the stakeholder as well.

Future approach

Thanks to this course I now learned and experienced that a Showroom approach matches both my identity as a designer and my ambitions for the outcome of the process. With this research approach I can create impact and perhaps even a change of behavior. Gathering qualitative data and supporting these statements with collected quantitative data can help me to 'prove' the impact of my design. This combined with the skills I gained with writing my first (draft) research paper might help me with convincing an academic or industrial audience of the value of my contribution!