UNPLUGGED
A SERIES OF PUBLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Unplugged is a series of weekend retreats where analog and creativity-inducing activities take place. The Unplugged community strongly believes that in a digitally powered world, analog breaks are absolutely necessary and essential to our well-being as humans.

Taking this in consideration, the main objective for this project was to write a ten point manifesto for Unplugged and, subsequently, design a series of publications that thoroughly illustrate and communicate these statements.

Since manifestos are known to be a strong call to action, it was fundamental to incorporate interaction in the conception of the design in order to provide a platform for a potential response or intervention. Furthermore, it was key to directly come in contact with these analog approaches and transmit them daringly and inventively through a potent graphic design treatment.

KEY WORDS

- Manifesto
- Interactive
- Creative
- Playful
- Analog
INTRODUCTION
WHAT IS UNPLUGGED?

UNPLUGGED is a series of weekend retreats where each participant is responsible for an analog workshop. These workshops include creativity-inducing activities, do-it-yourself projects and products, as well as meditation exercises.

The idea for this community was conceived by a group of four creatives who felt they needed to disconnect and unplug from screens, algorithms, swipes, and clicks in order to reconnect with themselves and what it means to create and think with their hands and bodies. Time learning, living and actively making as a community led to the belief that in a digitally powered world, analog breaks are absolutely necessary and essential to our well-being as humans.

WHAT DOES IT NEED

The Unplugged community needs a MANIFESTO as a means to understand and delineate what UNPLUGGED stands for. It also requires the conception and completion of a visual language in order to communicate upcoming retreats and activities.

A MANI-WHAT?

A manifesto functions as a statement that outlines ideas and intentions and also functions as a call to action. Manifestos have been created in different ways throughout history. Some examples are the Dada Manifesto, the Communist Manifesto, The Laws of Sculptors by Gilbert & George, and the Guerrilla Girls slogans.
OBJECTIVES AND CHALLENGES
OBJECTIVES

THE OBJECTIVES

The main objective for this project was to write a ten point manifesto – a decalogue – for Unplugged and, subsequently, design a series of publications that thoroughly illustrate and communicate the Unplugged Manifesto.

Since manifestos are known to be a strong call to action, it was fundamental to include an interactive element in the design in order to provide a platform for a potential response or intervention.

The third objective was to find a way to incorporate the analog nature of the retreats.

Lastly, it felt crucial to look for a format that could be easily reproduced and distributed.
THE CHALLENGES

Every objective in this project has a challenge of its own. The biggest challenge is to keep a cohesive visual and graphic language throughout. Maintaining a homogeneous aesthetic will not only create Unplugged’s graphic identity but will also ensure the publications feel like a part of a unified series. Furthermore, this visual code will act as the foundation for the treatment of upcoming material.

Making an interactive manifesto is complex. The question of what will incite the call to action and how it should be accomplished within the publication poses an interesting challenge since a fortuitous attempt will only weaken the final product. Therefore, all elements need to be considered thoroughly to ensure their purpose is evident and their connection to the decalogue is clear.

The definition of analog within this project and its treatment will also be key. The analog portion should be approached strategically so that it doesn’t impede or jeopardize the reproduction of the pieces or the graphic design system.
The conceptual tone references Fluxus Movement, performance and feminist art, Alan Kaprow, Something Else Press, the Photographer’s Playbook, Surrealist games as well as various manifestos and activities that take place in the Unplugged Weekends.
**TONE**

**OBJECTIVES**

**TONE.**
The overall tone of the publication is bold, whimsical and analogic.
Futura has been used in the art realm to make bold statements. Artists like Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer use this font to convey strength and urgency. Film director Wes Anderson uses this typeface because of its geometric quality in a couple of his films.

**BARBICAN ARTS CENTER**

The Barbican Arts Center identity uses only the Futura typeface.

**THE GENTLEWOMAN**

The Futura typeface has also been used for a wide range of commercial work for bands like Vampire Weekend, magazines like The Gentlewoman, and brands like Celine and Jill Sander.
FUTURA HEAVY

The main typeface that will be applied throughout will be clean, geometric, bold and non-decorative. Futura seemed like a good choice for the treatment of this piece.

Futura PT Light

Futura PT Light Oblique

Futura PT Book

Futura PT Medium

Futura PT Demi

Futura PT Heavy

Futura PT Bold

Futura PT Condensed
Various performance artists used typewriters to write down their instruction pieces. Some of the artists are Bruce Nauman, Yoko Ono and Lawrence Weiner.
The secondary typeface will be a monospace font that mimics the typewriter. This look will not only reference the analog quality but also contrast the primary typeface making it a good typographic pairing.
REFERENCES

BOOKS!

Herman Eidenbenz’s *Teaching Graphic Design, Process — Visual Journeys in Graphic Design* and *Femme Type* amongst others.
MINIMAL AND BOLD

The graphic style of the publications will be clean, minimal and bold. The use of black bold strokes will be the main component used in the graphic treatment of this piece. It will help convey strength while maintaining a harmonious and consistent aesthetic.
SOMETHING ELSE PRESS

Something Else Press printed out a series of 216 x 139mm publications and used colored paper to differentiate each edition.
**OBJECTIVES**

**DIN A5**

The size of the publications will allow easy distribution and space to develop different kinds of content. A5 was a good compromise between the A6 format usually used for zines and the A4 used for magazines.
CASE STUDIES
WATER YAM BY GEORGE BRECHT, 1963

An artist book that consists of a cardboard box that measures 15 x 16 x 4.5 cm with offset label, containing sixty-nine offset cards.

Water Yam is considered one of Fluxus’ most influential artworks and has been re-published many times. The box contains cards that act as performance scripts as well as instructions for the creation of objects whose realization leaves everything to the realizer. They could be performed in private, in public or left to the imagination. In this art piece, chance played a central role.

Also, the bullet point (·) was an important graphic symbol since it was used to distinguish the performance from the title and it remained constant throughout the versions as well.
WALL DRAWING 181 BY SOL LEWITT, 1971

Sol LeWitt’s Wall Drawings, consist of a series of instructions that determine and detail certain parameters for the execution of his drawings. LeWitt was intentionally vague so that he was not in full control of the end result.

The wall drawings were usually executed on-site and only existed for the duration of an exhibition. After this period of time, they were erased. These pieces had an ephemeral and nomad quality to them in as much as they only lasted for a limited amount of time and the instructions were then usually used by another institution at a different location.
IDEO designed a game that gets players to try out different methods of user-centric design by illustrating how they apply these methods on a real-life projects. The method cards are divided into four categories: learn, look, ask, and try. These cards are meant to be used in the design process as guides and inspiration. They are meant to help explore and develop new approaches.
METHODOLOGY
METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH

RESEARCH

The first step in beginning this journey was to create the Unplugged Manifesto. I needed to set up the groundwork and structure in which I would build upon.

To create the manifesto, I needed to think about the pillars and values of Unplugged. I considered what is important to this group of people who wanted to reconnect with themselves in order to create authentically and spontaneously sans plugs.

In addition to taking into account the Unplugged community, I read David Sax’s *The Revenge of Analog: Real Things and Why They Matter* to understand the context and the research that explain the relevance and weightiness of the physical and tangible.

Besides understanding what I wanted to communicate, I also needed to research how. In order to do so, I read different manifestos including the famous Surrealist and DADA Manifesto.

Lastly, I trusted my intuition. An image of Bruce Nauman’s Body Pressure echoed repeatedly in my head and I had a feeling I needed to draw inspiration from this piece.
MANIFESTO

The culmination of my initial investigation is a ten point decalogue that states:

DIGITAL IS GOOD... BUT ANALOG FEELS BETTER
Every time a new digital technology is created, it unveils an analog experience that we had forgotten about or that we had taken for granted.

WE WANT TO CHANGE HOW WE PERCEIVE TIME
Analog forces us to slow down.

WE ARE ALL ABOUT THE PROCESS
Analog process gives us purpose.

WE LOVE TO EXPERIENCE WITH ALL OF OUR SENSES
Analog reminds us how good it feels to touch, to smell and to listen - sometimes even to taste!

LIMITATIONS BECOME OUR NEW POSSIBILITIES
Analog constraints induce our creativity.

WE MISS BEING ABLE TO DO ONE THING AT A TIME
Analog is demanding and requires our full attention.

WE LIKE TO GET PHYSICAL
Analog requires us to move and to interact with our whole bodies.

WE WANT TO ENCOUNTER CHANCE
Analog reacquaints us with Lady Serendipity and invites us to find pleasure in letting go of control.

WE SEEK TO CREATE SHARED EXPERIENCES
Analog allows us to participate with each other IRL. No intermediaries needed, it’s the real thing.

WE CAN’T UNDO BUT THAT’S OK
Analog is unapologetic.
CONCEPT

The idea for the manifesto was not only to consider analog methods of creating but to comprehend and discern what it means to be working/living/interacting in an analog manner. Eventually, I concluded it was a call to living in the present moment, remembering to move and use our bodies as instruments, experimenting and reacquainting ourselves with chance as well as creating in synergy with others.
METHODOLOGY

APPROACH

After creating the backbone for my project, I questioned what each of these points meant, what they would look like, and how they would feel like. I started with point number 8, WE WANT TO ENCOUNTER CHANCE. I thought of Merce Cunningham and John Cage’s creating methodology. They relied heavily on the I Ching to assemble their performances and let go of control of the final outcome. The image of shaking dice came to mind. I translated this to typography by breaking the word in three parts, printing it and scanning it while moving the paper. The result captured movement and uncertainty which to me, defines chance.

In addition to type I felt color should be taken into consideration as well. To me chance feels purple. I started out by creating a purple gradient on Indesign. After some thought, applying the color digitally did not feel appropriate so I spray-painted it instead. In this manner, I was also participating and creating analogically.

Next, I recalled a game I used to play with my friends when we were young called “exquisite cadaver”. The game consists of folding a paper in three parts. The first player draws the head of a made-up character and folds the paper so the second player does not see it. The second player draws the body and then folds the paper so the third player can draw the legs and feet. The result was always a funny and unusual character that we could not have thought of on our own.

I wanted to share this method in the chance publication. My first instinct was to show renowned examples of the Surrealist’s Exquisite Cadaver but after creating a draft with explanations and examples I was unimpressed. I felt that doing this defeated my whole purpose of creating a manifesto. It was then that I realized it was fundamental for the publications to invite to act, to incite to create and to intervene. The user needed to play a participatory role in this experience. Reading, in this case, was too passive. After giving it some thought and referring back to Bruce Nauman’s piece, I decided I should formulate a set of instructions that could be executed on a page of the booklet. This way, the instructions acted as an invitation to experiment and the work page provided the first step in this process.

The objective of this structure is to first introduce the idea, then interpret it through color and typography and later, place it in a broader context by connecting it to an activity. All these exercises are meant to stimulate and activate creativity by bridging concepts.

In order for me to complete the subsequent nine publications, I worked on the activity first and then proceeded to develop the color and typography sections.

For the most part, I started off by reading the prompt and writing down everything that came to mind. After brainstorming, I thought of a game that I knew to see if I could work from it. If nothing came to mind, I researched the concepts I had written down to see what they looked like or to see where they would take me.

Sometimes, in this search, I would encounter ideas or images that I had not taken into consideration. This process not only aided in deciphering how to approach each prompt but it also helped me comprehend what I was trying to communicate by understanding the relationship between elements.

The creation of content, specifically for the color and typography portions, was time consuming and creatively challenging as it required many trials and experiments before getting to a satisfactory outcome.
THE COVERS

The next step was to design the covers. I knew that they should be very clean and minimal and allude to Unplugged. The first draft of the covers consisted in two grey circles and the backgrounds moved from white to black going through the gradient of grey.

The next idea was to use the “no signal bars” and each publication would be a color. The problem with this idea is that there are ten publications and only seven color bars.

Next, I thought of a series of abstract analog photographs that I had taken last year. I was very confused at this stage and the most frustrating part was that I did not know how these covers related to Unplugged.

I went back to the covers I had done initially with the two vertical circles and decided to place them horizontally. At this point I realized the resemblance to holes in a socket. I researched kinds of sockets and found ten different ones. Illustrator was my next step. I drew out all the circles/sockets and designated one to each publication.
Once the publications were completed, I needed to device a way to hold and present them together. I had to keep in mind that this, too, had to be interactive.

At one point, I thought of connecting them through the sockets on the cover with velcro. But the velcro was really strong and it ended up damaging the pages when pulling the booklets away.

After some serious thought and lots of headaches it occurred to me to have a plug in the cover and an indication that said “open to unplug”. However, I discarded the idea because the user should just have to unplug to discover the publications not open.

So I began experimenting and figured out that I wanted to achieve three layers. The first, would be the image of the plug; the second, the image of a cut out socket revealing the publications and the third the publications. I constructed the box with a hole in the shape of a plug. Next, I made the plug with another sheet of cardboard and attached it to the box (covering the hole) with velcro. It did not work very well.

The next idea was to create a longer plug so that the top would act as a hook. This worked. The construction of the box, even though it looks simple, took several hours to perfect.
In addition to the publications, I also developed a series of posters. The main challenge was to translate the participatory nature of the booklets into a poster format without re-using the activities I had previously developed.

After brainstorming, I thought of “connecting the dots”. Connect the dots is a very popular children’s game where the child must form lines between dots by following a number sequence to uncover an image.

I decided to modify this idea and opt for creating hidden phrases that describe the nature of Unplugged. Once the user connects all the dots, not only will they see a message but they will complete the poster. In turn, giving the user an indispensable role in the interaction and completion of every application is not only fun but important in generating a bond between them and the Unplugged community.
UNPLUGGED MANIFESTO

The manifesto consisted of ten publications in DIN A5 (148 × 210mm) booklet format. Each booklet consisted of eight pages. The covers were printed in 170g colored paper and the inside was printed in 120g recycled paper.

In order to print in different kinds of papers and to print images in full bleed, I separated the covers from the insides in separate files.

The covers were printed in DIN A4 paper and the insides were printed in super A4 to get the full-bleed images.
The main typeface for the project is Futura. The version Futura Heavy was used throughout the publication.

The “Unplugged Manifesto” was rendered in size 13pt for the cover pages as well as the Manifesto explanation on page three. Size 52pt was used for the number and the manifesto prompt. The titles of each page were also written in Futura Heavy at a size 30pt and the “steps” for the instructions were applied with a size 11pt.
The complimentary typeface is called Nexus Typewriter Pro. This font was applied in the top left corner of the pages to name each section of the booklet in a size 7pt and with a spacing between letters of -25. In addition to the sections, the texts on the pages for the instructions were also Nexus in a size 9pt and a spacing between letters of -25.

HOW TO UNFOLD YOUR POSSIBILITIES

STEP 1
Cut the dotted line, then flip the paper over so that the text is facing down.

STEP 2
Fold all four corners so that they meet in the center of the page.

STEP 3
Flip over again and fold all corners to meet in the middle.

STEP 4
Flip over one last time and fold all corners to meet in the middle.

STEP 5
Fold in half from side to side, then fold in half from top to bottom.

STEP 6
Use your thumbs and pointer fingers to fill in the peaks.
LAYOUT AND COMPOSITION

All pages had margins of 12mm all around the page.

The cover pages were divided in three columns with a gutter of 4.233mm.

The instruction and exercise pages were divided in two columns and a gutter of 4.233mm as well. The space between each step in the instructions page was a 7.9mm.

The manifesto-talk page as well as the color feels and the type it out pages had only one column.
Instead of using numbers to identify the pages, bullet points were used as a reference to the sockets on the cover. They were also in Futura Heavy in size 30pt with a spacing of 280.
The Unplugged poster is made in DIN A3 and it is printed on color paper of 80g. The margins are 13mm, the title is Futura Heavy size 30pt and the date is Futura Light size 30pt as well. The rest of the text is Nexus Typewriter Pro size 13pt. The information is in regular weight and the call to action is in bold.
UNPLUGGED BOX

The Unplugged box is made of 370g white and black cardboard. The measurements of the closed box are 213 X 154 X 15 mm.
DOCUMENTATION OF FINAL RESULTS
FINAL RESULTS

COVERS
FINAL RESULTS

COVERS
Final Results

Manifesto

Page 44

WE CAN’T UNDO AND THAT IS OK

Analog is unapologetic.
WE MISS BEING ABLE TO DO ONE THING AT A TIME

ANALOG IS DEMANDING AND REQUIRES OUR FULL ATTENTION.
FINAL RESULTS

COLOR AND TYPE SECTIONS
FINAL RESULTS

COLOR AND TYPE SECTIONS
ONE MINUTE

STEP 1
Let’s get physical with Erwin Wurm’s One Minute Sculptures. Look for two sticks around the house. One must be 80 cm and the other 100 cm. They can be broom sticks, mop sticks, whatever you can find.

STEP 2
Place the sticks accordingly on the wall and press your body against them. Remember, you must hold this position for one minute.

STEP 4
Have somebody take a picture of you and place it in the following page.

LETS GET PHYSICAL

STEP 5
Erwin’s instructions suggest that in order to complete the following pose you must “glue your brain to the wall and think about Adorno”. Remember, you must hold this position for one minute.

STEP 6
Have somebody take a picture of you and place it in the following page.
ANALOG TAROT

STEP 1
In order to find out your analog art tool for your next place, you must first get a hold of a coin.

STEP 2
Next, use the coin to scratch the metallic paint off the tarot card to find your destined analog instrument.

STEP 3
Now that your tool has been revealed, use it in all the ways you can think to create your analog artwork.

SCRATCH TO DISCOVER YOUR DESTINY
FINAL RESULTS

UNPLUGGED BOX
FINAL RESULTS

UNPLUGGED BOX
FINAL RESULTS

UNPLUGGED POSTER

LET US PLAY

UNPLUGGED WEEKEND
OCTOBER 25-27

UNPLUGGED WEEKEND
OCTOBER 25-27

UNPLUGGED WEEKEND
OCTOBER 25-27
CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION
Overall, the process of conceptualizing and designing the Unplugged Manifesto has been satisfying as well as challenging. The conception of the structure and sections was critical but I think I met the objectives well. The creation of the content was the most demanding part since it required me to think through and test out the ideas. Usually for every page of the color and type section I had a few ideas that I had to try before documenting them and placing them on the page.

The activities and instructions were also modified to fit the structure. All of them needed to be executed on or with the help of the following page. If I found an interesting activity but it did not require paper then, I had to discard it.

In addition, to creating specific and refreshing content I also focused on making a layout that was clear and systematic. In some cases the instructions required diagrams so I took a chance in drawing them out as well. Going through the whole process of creating a project from start to finish has been the most fulfilling part since it has given me a good grasp of what a project of this magnitude entails.

I feel that some of the choices that were made in the design of the booklets were conducive to making them easily reproducible. For example, the use of black font and colored paper makes the production easy and customizable as well as environmentally friendly.

In terms of viability, I think the booklets could be taken to a real-life situation, and potentially function in different ways. For instance, in some circumstances the color and typography sections could be left blank for the user to develop. At a more advanced stage where the user is familiar with these kinds of prompts it would be interesting to construct a blank booklet to see what the user conceives. Ultimately, a compilation of booklets completed by various users would generate an assortment of perspectives and results on each of the prompts. This could be used for analysis and research to develop new booklets.

Lastly, I hope the booklets and the posters get intervened in the time they are exposed at Barra de Ferro so I can document their evolution. The beauty of the project is that it is a collaboration and the user gets to close the circle in this process.
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