

# BLOCKS OF \_



ABBY GASKIN

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Blocks Of \_ is all about finding the meditative moments in daily mundane tasks. Nineteen looks or “uniforms” were designed specifically for a block of time or a moment that happens to most of us every single day. Six of them were made from upcycled bed sheets and the remaining 13 were digitally rendered using the software program Maya. Moments explored were ones such as brushing your teeth, washing your face, making the bed, checking your email, doing the dishes, making tea and more.

**Blocks Of \_ is about bringing full focused energy to tasks that tend to go unnoticed. If this is done, it will dramatically improve the quality of your life.**

The point of highlighting these typically looked over tasks, is that I believe if more focus and awareness is brought to them, this deeper awareness will permeate into larger areas of life, such as your relationships, your work or your hobbies. This is what the butterfly effect is. To test this theory, I created an intentional tooth brushing club.

My system of focused awareness is also brought into the digital architecture space. I built a house with rooms made for each of the six physical looks and the tasks they represent.

The final major component of Blocks Of \_ is its Instagram platform, @blocksofprocess. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, are typically used in a way to distract the user from the present moment. It is very easy to fall into a mindless scrolling loop. This is what my system is trying to get people away from. So, I designed an account to act as the opposite of Instagram itself.

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# Chapter

# 1

## Brushing Your Teeth

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### OVERVIEW

There aren't many things that most people no matter age, race, size, beliefs or nationality do every single day. An anomaly to this concept, however, is the act of brushing your teeth. In a way, the brushing of teeth creates a commonality among us all, it strings everyone together. Brushing your teeth is a universal task.

On the next page is a snippet of the multitude of teeth brushing videos that were collected in my thesis research process. Included, is documentation from my friends, from family and from others who I reached out to.

In these films, the teeth brushers might have slight variation in their brushing technique or use a lot of toothpaste vs. a little, but in the end, they are all doing the same thing- striving for clean teeth.

I chose "brushing your teeth" as one of the six mundane tasks to analyze in this collection. They were chosen because of their universality across all people. Moments such as brushing your teeth, are incorporated into so many people's days, but is the act of brushing your teeth (or doing the other six tasks) truly appreciated?



## TIME SKIP

The speed of time isn't linear. It can be incredibly inconsistent. Sometimes a task or a duration of time can occur in slow motion—other times it can completely flash before your eyes. The latter is what I like to refer to as a “time skip.” With the name being an indicator of what I am referring to, a time skip is when your life goes into auto-pilot. While experiencing a time skip, the person in it can become completely unconscious of its occurrence.

This way of living creates an underappreciation of the essence of life. Whether it's one task or longer duration, living inside of a time-skip under-values the moment that is taking place.

A simple example of a frequently time-skipped task is brushing your teeth. Because of its repetitive nature, and the fact it happens every day, for some people multiple times a day, the act of brushing your teeth is easily underappreciated. This lack of acknowledgement of this moment, this universal moment that is shared by billions, is the reason I decided to highlight this task of brushing your teeth.

## HIGHLIGHTING THE TASK

What is meant by “highlighting a task” is the deep study and acknowledgement of that moment of the day. If you can imagine your day broken down into each activity that you do (see the example to the right), you may notice that certain moments (such as brushing your teeth) don’t seem as important to the entirety of the day.

In contrast, however, it’s these simple moments that make up our days and ultimately our lives. So in a way, these simple moments are some of the most important things we do.

The importance of these simple moments is the reason I decided to highlight brushing your teeth as one of my main task studies. Highlighting means to bring that task to the forefront and give it the attention it has been lacking.

## UNIFORMS FOR A

4:00 am - Wake Up/ Brush Teeth/ Wash Face  
 4:30 am - Paint  
 6:15 am - Make Tea, Play With Dog  
 6:45 am - Work  
 7:30 am - Run  
 8:30 am - Shower/Get Ready For Class  
 9:00 am - Zoom Thesis Class Part 1  
 10:45 am - Thesis Make Tea Break  
 11:00 am - Zoom Thesis Class Part 2  
 11:40 am - Make/Eat an Acai Bowl  
 12:30 pm - Zoom ULEC Class  
 1:30 pm - Walk and Facetime Olivia Q  
 2:30 pm - Work  
 5:00 pm - Yoga  
 5:30 pm - Make/Eat Dinner  
 6:30 pm - Read  
 7:00 pm - Work  
 8:00 pm - Tai Chi Class  
 9:00 pm - Go To Bed

NORMAL  
 TUESDAY



## MAKING A UNIFORM

One method of highlighting the six mundane tasks that I explored was designing a “uniform” for each of these moments.

On this page is a frame from the documentation of Olivia Q. brushing her teeth (a friend of mine). On top of this image, I drew various garments specifically tailored to the movement of her arms and shoulders. The shoulders are the key areas in the body for the movement in this activity.

Therefore, the uniform for brushing your teeth needs to have maximum shoulder mobility. It needs to have an antique amount of space given to that area of the body.



## BUTTERFLY EFFECT

The butterfly effect is the theory that a small change can have huge implications. This theory was mapped into a mathematical equation by a man named Edward Lorenz. Lorenz’s equation maps the wind generated from the flap of a butterfly wing. The wing flap generated push of air exponentially grows in size as it travels, resulting in monstrous waves on the other side of the world.

This theory is my “why” for highlining a handful of simple moments that most people around the world experience daily. My concept is, that if we can bring more intentionality into these actions, then other, seemingly more impart parts of our days, will be carried out with a deeper appreciation.



## CREATING SPACE

As mentioned in the previous section, an effective tooth brushing uniform has ample space in the shoulder region. In this example, the act of brushing your teeth is still used as the process explanation. However, this system of “making for the moment” is applied to each of the six tasks.

Shown on the right side of the page is an example of some of the testing that went into the making of the shoulder of the teeth brushing uniform. The fabric needed to be draped around the joint and upper arm to ensure its range of motion. (See the Draping section of this chapter for more information.)

Also presented in these images is the difference in main-body fabric strain between the two shoulders. The sleeve on the left is the one opened up for maximum shoulder mobility and on the right, is a traditional set-in sleeve. The pull of the chest fabric is visible in the traditional sleeve. This fabric tension would not be ideal for a tooth brushing uniform as this arm movement is a part of the series of actions taken in the tooth brushing process.



## DRAPING

To pattern the open-ness of the toothbrushing sleeve, it needed to be draped around the shoulder. I started with a large rectangle of fabric and pinned it around the armhole.

Through the process of moving my arm, pinning the fabric around the shape, cutting away excess fabric and repeating with the next movement, I was able to achieve the shape of this sleeve.

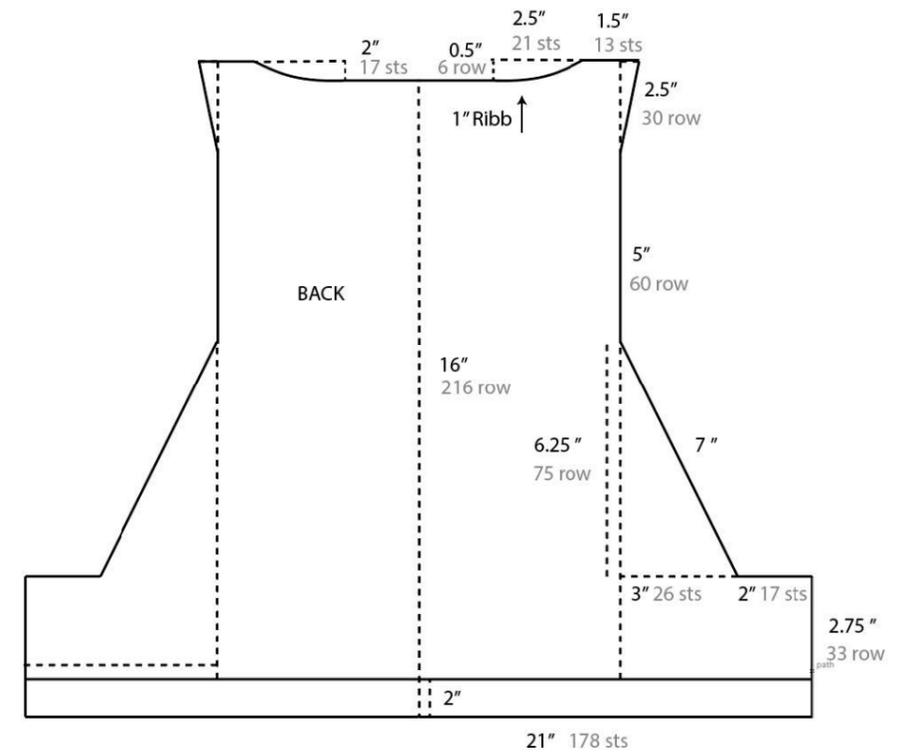
After the drapes were translated into a paper pattern, it was then converted into a knitting pattern. This garment knitting pattern is for an industrial knitting machine.



## KNITTING PATTERN

This page shows the knitting pattern for the front of the toothbrushing shirt. As mentioned in the previous section, after the garment was draped on the body then turned into a flat paper pattern, it was converted into a knitting pattern.

This process of taking a woven pattern and turning it into a piece of knitwear only occurred in the shirt for brushing your teeth and the shirt for making your bed. The other garments in this collection skipped this step in the system.





## KNITTING MOTIF

In the center of the knitting pattern for the brushing teeth uniform is a motif developed from the documentation of Oliva Q. brushing her teeth (see “Designing For The Task” section of this chapter for more information).

A close-up still image was taken from the video, cropped into a circle, mapped using a live-paint system on Adobe Illustrator and then added to the knitting pattern.

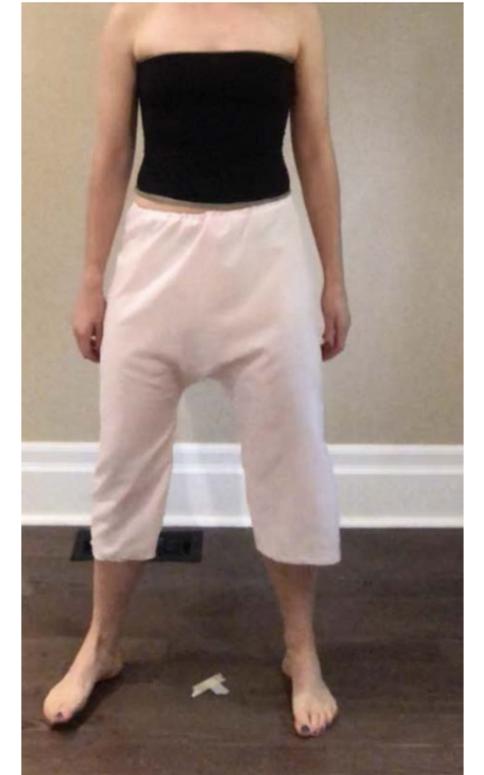
This teeth-brushing motif is knit into the sweater by using the knitwear method of intarsia- when multiple colours of yarn are used in the same row.

## STANDING PANTS

To accompany the knit tooth-brushing t-shirt a pair of pants for this task were also designed. These pants are called the “standing pants.” They were originally developed within the 19-Looks-On-A-Tuesday collection (see “Highlighting The Task” section of this chapter for more information). These pants were designed to be worn only in a standing position (while brushing your teeth). The tight drop-crotch would cause them to rip if worn while seated.

To make these pants more practical, the waist measurement was quadrupled in size then cinched in with an elastic. This way, the shape of the pants remains the same, but sitting and moving about daily life is encouraged.

This process of designing “standing pants” only applies to the uniform for brushing your teeth. The other looks had similar methods in terms of designing for a moment and then making it wearable, but the exact way of multiplying the waist for example, which was used for this look, only occurred for this one look.



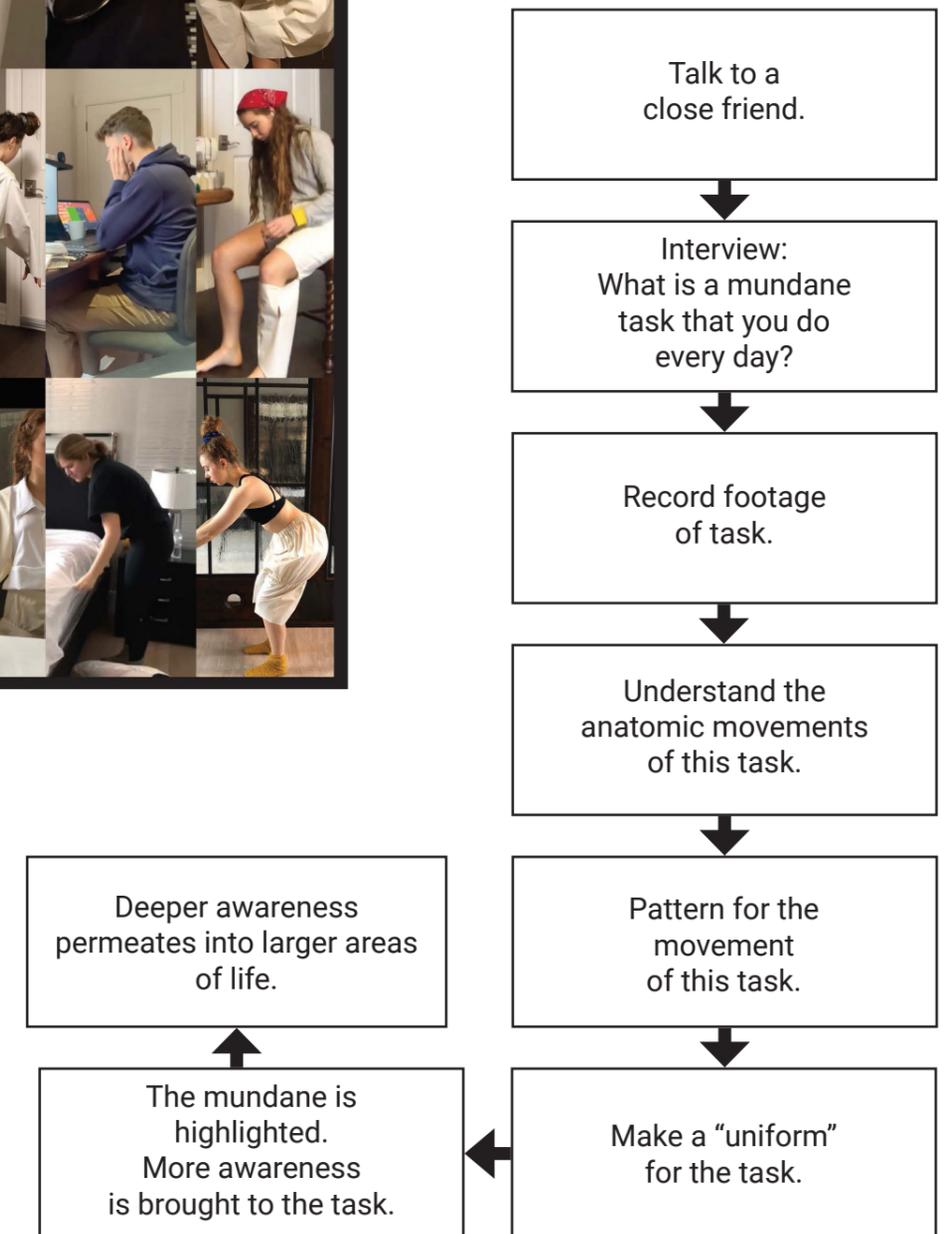
# Chapter

# 2

## THE SYSTEM MAP

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THE MAP



# Chapter

# 3

## Unloading The Dishes On Camera

20	OVERVIEW
21	LIKELY PLACES
31	STRANGE SETTINGS
34	STUDIO
55	CG ROOMS

### OVERVIEW

The six “mundane” tasks highlighted in this collection were shot in four different locations. Each setting frames the task being done in a specific way. They were first shot in their likely, natural settings. The second shoot was of the tasks in strange settings. This second shoot takes the activity of brushing your teeth out of context allowing it to represent something deeper (your state on concentration). In these out-of-context photos, brushing your teeth is metaphorically a stand-in for existing in a state of higher consciousness. The third shoot was taken in a studio setting. The oddness of the doing of any of these six mundane tasks in front of a white backdrop brings the moment to the forefront. The studio shoot nods to the fact that this collection is using these typical moments as representations of heightened awareness, possibly a meditation. The final location is one of the digital world. Each room that was designed was made just the same as the garments, specifically for the actions being done. Building these CG rooms in this way, following the same making system as the clothes, highlights each task in an extreme way.

## LIKELY PLACES

The following images are of the six main mundane tasks, being done in their likely places.





An image of Maddy unloading the dishwasher in garments specifically for unloading the dishwasher.





An image of Maddy brushing teeth in garments specifically for brushing their teeth.





An image of Maddy washing their face in garments specifically for washing their face.

An image of Maddy making tea in garments specifically for making tea.





An image of Maddy checking email in garments specifically for checking email.



An image of Maddy making the bed in garments specifically for making the bed.

## STRANGE SETTINGS

The looks were taken out of context and placed in strange settings. The idea behind this was that brushing your teeth could represent something other than that mundane moment. This highly recognizable activity that people do across age, race, nationality could stand in as a representation of being present with what you're doing. The randomness of the moments captured while brushing your teeth explains how this extreme focus or attention to detail can be brought to everything we do, not only the "important" parts of our days.





## STUDIO

From the usualness of the bathroom to the unusualness of the basketball courts, the actions of doing these tasks were then taken out of context once again. They were brought into a studio setting. These images were captured by Chloe Lukas and Blake Keen at Neighborhood Studios in Toronto. This location also highlights the tasks, but in an extreme way.

The strangeness of the brushing of teeth in front of a white backdrop, once again, brings that “mundane” moment to the forefront. As previously mentioned in this chapter, the tasks not only represent the actual tasks being done, but also a higher consciousness. They symbolize a state of mind completely focused on that present moment with heightened awareness and attention to detail. One could say that the tasks in this collection represent a sort of meditation in the things we do every day.



A KNIT SWEATER FOR  
MAKING A BED  
WITH INTARSIA DESIGN





**PANTS DESIGNED  
FOR MAKING THE BED**



**A SHIRT DESIGNED FOR  
WASHING YOUR FACE**



**SHORTS DESIGNED  
FOR STANDING AND  
WASHING YOUR FACE**





**A DRESS DESIGNED  
FOR UNLOADING A  
DISHWASHER**

**A DRESS DESIGNED  
FOR UNLOADING A  
DISHWASHER**





**A JUMPSUIT DESIGNED  
FOR MAKING TEA**





**A JUMPSUIT DESIGNED  
FOR MAKING TEA**





**A SHIRT DESIGNED FOR  
CHECKING YOUR EMAIL**

**PANTS DESIGNED  
FOR SITTING AT A DESK  
CHECKING YOUR EMAIL**



## CG ROOMS

Through the extraction of the six tasks that were shot in the studio setting, they were brought into another dimension. They were brought into the digital world. Six rooms within the digital house (see page 93 for details) were built specifically around these mundane moments. Each room, just like the garments, is designed for the actions being done. This highlights that particular moment and brings a heightened awareness to what many people consider meaningless parts of their day.





An image of Maddy making the bed in the room specifically built for making the bed.



An image of Maddy unloading the dishwasher in the room specifically built for unloading the dishwasher.



An image of Maddy washing her face in the room specifically built for washing her face.



An image of Maddy making tea in the room specifically built for making tea.



An image of Maddy checking email in the room specifically built for checking email.

# Chapter

# 4

## Melting Into The Digital Realm

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72	FAKE GARMENTS + REAL BODY
73	FAKE GARMENTS + FAKE BODY
76	REAL GARMENTS + FAKE BODY

### OVERVIEW

Throughout this entire exploration of mundane tasks, the contrast between digital and physical was explored. Between the CG house and the 13 digital looks of this 19 look collection, the difference between what is "real" and what is "fake" was put into question. This chapter dives into the melting that occurs between these two realms within the Blocks Of\_ world. It dissects how technology can bring our level of conscious awareness down and why creating the opposite of Instagram was necessary (see chapter 127 for more information on the opposite of Instagram).

## REAL GARMENTS + REAL BODY

We all wear “real” clothes. Clothes such as the ones Maddy is wearing in the image on this page. Is the fact that the garments are made out of fabric the thing that makes them “real”? Or, is it instead, the fact that the clothes on a human body make them real? What classifies these garments as being “real” things?

A similar question of realness can be made with the human interaction with technology in relation to the usage of time. This was the question I asked myself in the development of the opposite of Instagram on Blocks Of\_ and why I thought this was necessary.





## FAKE GARMENTS + REAL BODY

When we are using technology, our “real” life morphs into one that fits into the digital space. Who we are, fundamentally changes. The nuances that make up our personalities are shrunk into computer recognizable data. Is this digital-based avatar version of ourselves “real”? Is it the person behind the data, that is controlling this digital avatar the element that classifies this digital person as “real?” What is it about existing in the digital space that makes it real or fake?

For example, the garments that Maddy is wearing to the left have been digitally rendered using the program Maya. This look is depicted on a real body, the question then is, does the realness of the wearer make the clothes being worn, also “real” (despite being a computer-generated version of physical fabric)?

## FAKE GARMENTS + FAKE BODY

Now to take this idea of realness one step farther, if the human user is omitted, and only a computer-based avatar exists with digitally rendered garments, are these same clothes still "real"?

It seems the more time spent immersed in technology, the more of a blur begins to form between our digital-self and our physical self. This leaves what makes us human or "real" questioned.





## REAL GARMENTS + FAKE BODY

Experiencing the digital world, may also mean feeling a deep distortion. A distortion of who people are (as previously mentioned in this chapter - that our characteristics are compartmentalized when living through our digital avatar), of our time and how we spend it.

The digital world creates a massive "time skip" (see page 4 for more information on this) when used as a pacifier for thought or action. Finding solitude is increasingly challenging in today's heavily tech-integrated world.

The final question that then remains, is there be a balance that exists between the use of technology and living in the present and how can we maximize this relationship between international use of time and not? The Instagram account Blocks Of\_ (see Chapter 127 for more information) was created to challenge this use of technology to live in the present.

To experience "realness" may not be found only in the physical world. Maybe it is possible to find this realness in the digital world too. It is all about the intention of the user who decides to be online or off and what they do in these realms of existence that categorize the activity as living presently or in a blurred-state.

# Chapter

# 5

## Workwear For The Digital World

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87	A KNEELING CHAIR
88	ASHTANGA STYLE YOGA
89	READING
90	TAKING A TAI CHI CLASS
91	GOING TO SLEEP

### OVERVIEW

Now that the melt from the physical world to the digital world has taken place (in the previous chapter), the remainder of this collection exists in the 3D-renderable cartesian plain of Maya 2020. The 13 looks on the following pages have been roughly sampled in physical fabric, then iterated and digitally rendered on a computer. Each look, just the same as the six physical looks, have been designed for a very specific task or moment of the day.

These tasks were explored because there were a part of my original "19 Looks On A Tuesday" exploration (see page 6 for reference). I took a typical Tuesday of mine and broke it down into each individual task. From here, a "uniform" was designed and constructed for each moment of that 24-hour window.

## TAKING A TAI CHI CLASS

A: Extra-long sleeves that can be flung around and chewed on by a dog.

B: Fabric of ends of sleeves thicker for strength while being chewed on. This reduced the potential of holes in the garment.

C: Garmrnet with no legs or feet attached so the wearer has extra grip on the floor for quick pivot-directional movement.

D: The fabric used to make this garment is extra stretchy. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, when a dog grabs the sleeve, it can be pulled out into a long shape. Secondly, so the user can easily move from the ground to stand up, or sit in any position easily (the dog this was designed for is small and low to the ground, so playing while seated is necessary).



## PAINTING

A: The shirt is the inside-out uniform for washing a face in the morning to promote painting as the following activity.

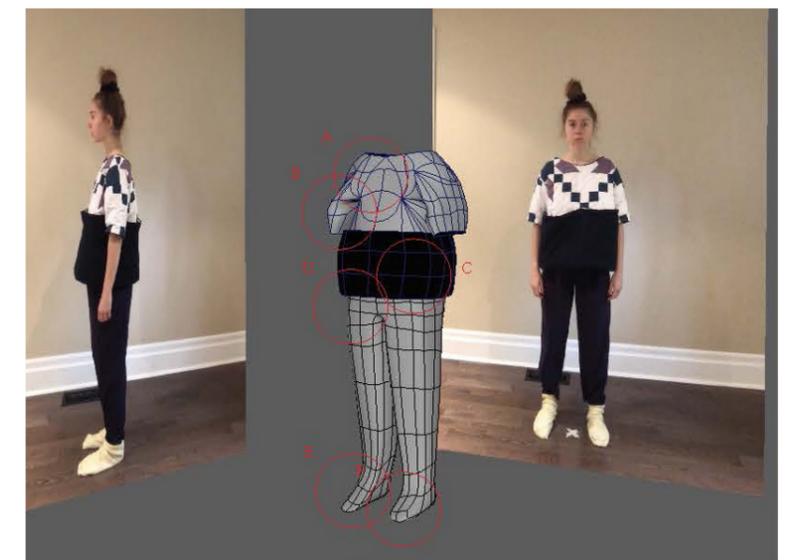
B: 3/4 length sleeves so when mixing paint, the garment stays clean and out of the pallet.

C: Button-connected folded pocket on the front of the garment to hold extra paintbrushes for easy access while painting.

D: Draw-string at the waist of pants for comfort in the alternation between standing and sitting during painting (can expand and contract).

E: Socks connected to the pants for extra foot warmth while painting in a basement.

F: Grips on the bottom on sock attachments for the walking of two flights of stairs in the dark to paint in the basement.



## WASHING A FACE

A: No differentiation between front and back so it can be put on easily in the dark.

B: Wide neck hole for ease of wear after waking up, and for quick dressing.

C: Lined with quilted fabric for a comfortable transition between sleeping in a warm bed, to life.

D: Sleeves that end above the elbow so drips of water do not run down the arm and wet the sleeves.



## GOING TO SLEEP

A: Loose-fitting garment for maximum comfort during sleep.

B: Open bottom so pants can be worn if cold or omitted if hot.

C: Wide sleeves so no tightness if moving around at night.

D: Extra wide neck hole for ease of breath.



## MAKING GREEN TEA



A: The ties on the garment used to time the steeping of the tea. I prefer my morning green tea to be steeped for 2 minutes. This is the equivalent of 120 seconds. The upper half of this uniform has 20 ties lining a portion of the bottom circumference. Each of these strings takes approximately 3 seconds to tie and 3 seconds to un-tie. This means, after the boiling water is poured into the cup with tea-bagging, each tie would be tied and then un-tied three times to time the steeping process. This tying method will ensure the perfect cup of tea every time.

B: The loosely tied skirt is for the comfort of sitting in a kneeling position, a body arrangement I typically take while drinking my tea.



## PLAYING WITH A SMALL DOG



A: Extra-long sleeves that can be flung around and chewed on by a dog.

B: Fabric of ends of sleeves thicker for strength while being chewed on. This reduced the potential of holes in the garment.

C: Garmrnet with no legs or feet attached so the wearer has extra grip on the floor for quick pivot-directional movement.

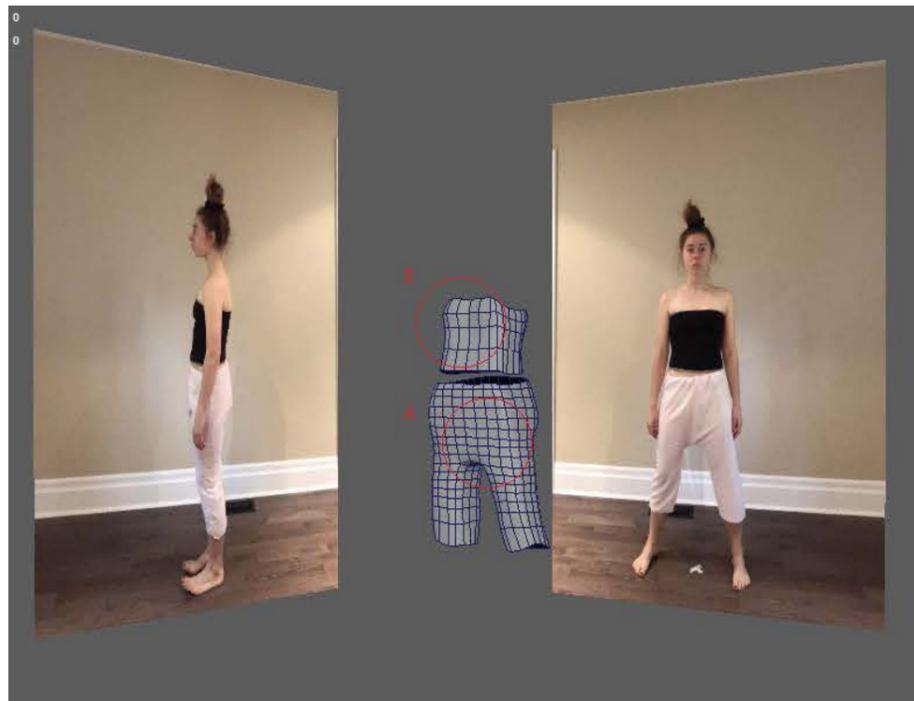
D: The fabric used to make this garment is extra stretchy. This is for two main reasons. Firstly, when a dog grabs the sleeve, it can be pulled out into a long shape. Secondly, so the user can easily move from the ground to stand up, or sit in any position easily (the dog this was designed for is small and low to the ground, so playing while seated is necessary).



## A STANDING DESK

A: Pants that are specifically drop-crotched and tight around the butt so if put into a seated position, they will rip. This keeps the user wearing the pants in a standing position to work.

B: The Top was designed to leave the shoulders and arms completely free of textile. This is to promote maximum shoulder and arm mobility while working and standing up.



## MEDITATING

A: A seam runs around the crease of the hips that was draped and patterned while the body was in a full lotus position to ensure no bunching of fabric in the groin area and a more comfortable seat.

B: Drawstring waist so while in a seated position, the wearer can loosen it enough to have a full range of motion in the diaphragm for focused breath.

C: The chest area of the garment is extremely loose to maximize the ability to breathe easily and not feel restricted during a meditation.



## THESIS CLASS ON ZOOM



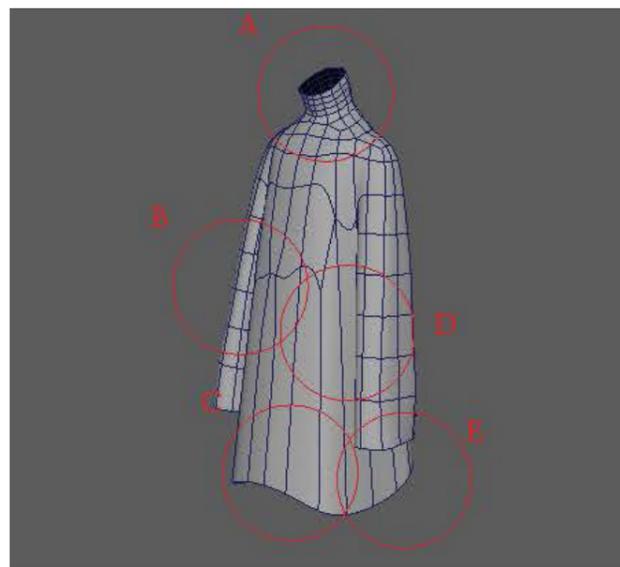
A: Turtlenecked upper part of the garment so garment appears conservative or slightly formal for class.

B: Long sleeves to add warmth as I usually take this class in a cold basement.

C: The exposed bottom half of the body below the knees to allow for pants to be worn underneath if the basement feels extra cold or omitted if drinking a warm tea and the body needs to reduce heat. These pants can be as casual as sweatpants because, in zoom class, the legs of the participants are not shown.

D: There is no waist on this dress design to further allow the addition of pants underneath the garment if needed/ desired.

E: Dress designed to fall just above the knees while the user is sitting in a kneeling chair for extra comfort in this position. (I would typically take this class while sitting on a kneeling chair).



## GOING FOR A RUN



A: Sportsbra with thin straps for shoulder comfort while bouncing up and down in a running motion.

B: Sports bra low-neck for ease of breathing. At times, even a light touch of a sports bra to the neck while running can feel restrictive.

C: Sports bra ends just after the bottom of the breasts for full lung expansion capacity. No feeling of tightness on the lungs.

D: Shorts have a drawstring so they can be tightened will stay in place above the hips without the need for adjustment.

E: Shorts are high waisted so the hips hold them in place and once set, there is no need for adjustment during the run.

F: Shorts are long enough to cover the butt cheeks even in a high knee position so they will not need to be pulled down or adjusted mid-stride. This provides a lesser potential for a wedgy.



## A KNEELING CHAIR

A: Short seams along the creases of the hips, draped and patterned in a kneeling chair seated position.

B: Waist of the pant slightly too large while standing but fills in while in kneeling position.

C: Shirt length ending just above the hip crease and butt (while kneeling) to prevent getting caught under the body in this action.

D: 3/4 length sleeves so elbows are exposed during this task at hand and arms have increased mobility. This was implemented because typically at a kneeling chair, people use computers. The arm position when working on a laptop for example has slightly bent elbows.



## ASHTANGA STYLE YOGA

A: Sleeveless for Kukkutasana pose (Rooster pose) so arms can more easily slide between thighs without the bulk of the extra fabric making the arms thicker.

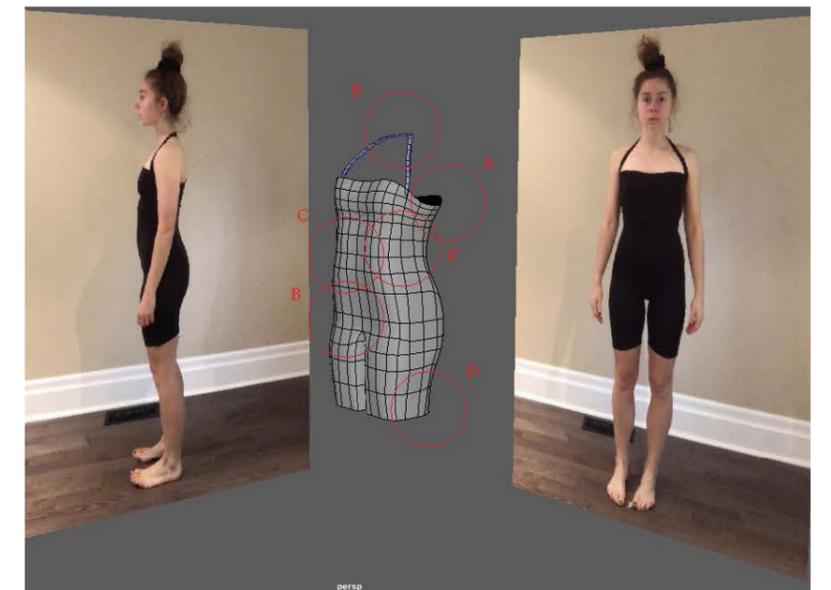
B: The bottom half of the garment is tight and ending just above the knee so in Kukkutasana pose (Rooster pose) the bare arms can slide against the fabric easily.

C: Garment is composed of a tight fit knit so during practice, it stays in place.

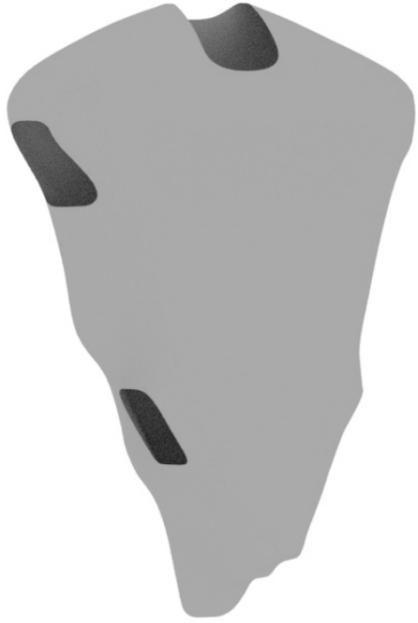
D: Leg portion of the garment to the knee so in poses such as downward dog, the body is sufficiently covered from the back.

E: Strap wraps around the back of the neck so the top part of the garment stays up covering the chest (easily needed in poses such as chaturanga).

F: Fabric below the chest, around the lungs, is not as snug to allow the breath to enter and exit the body more freely.



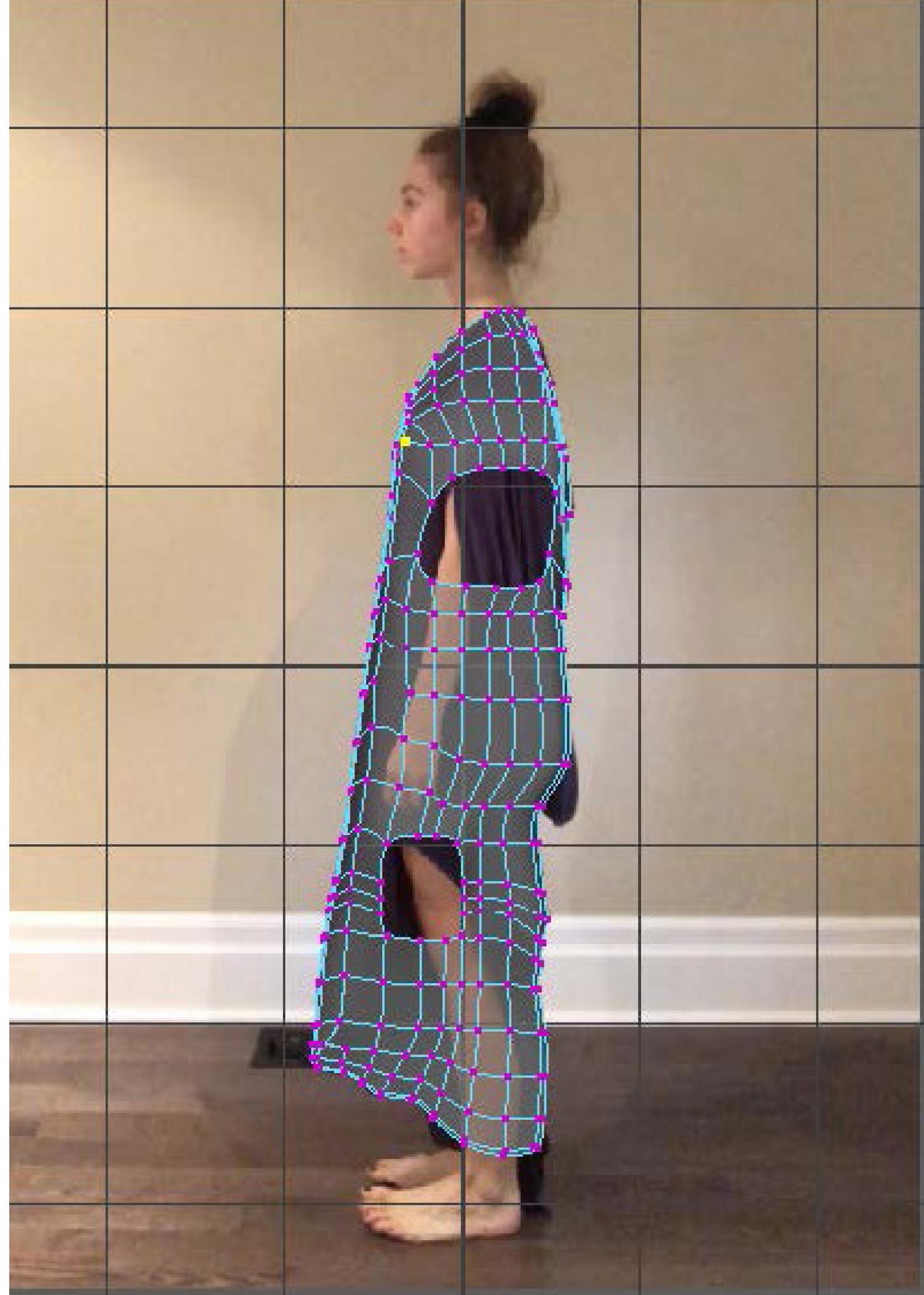
## READING



A: One large shape with holes for the head, arms and legs so the body can be in virtually any position while holding a book.

B: No sleeves or pant legs so the wearer can choose to put as much of each limb out the holes as they want to depend on the position they are reading in.

C: Garment is made from a very stretchy knit textile so it can “shapeshift” into the perfect reading position (lying down, crouching, sitting on a chair, etc...).



# Chapter

# 6

## The CG House

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97	ROOM FOR MAKING THE BED
97	ROOM FOR FACE WASHING
100	ROOM FOR UNLOADING DISHES
101	ROOM FOR CHECKING EMAIL
101	ROOM FOR BRUSHING TEETH
103	ENTER THE HOUSE

### OVERVIEW

A CG house was built to support this collation of task-based uniforms. It was constructed using the same thesis system that was used to design the 19 looks in this collection. Each room in the house was built for a very specific block of time or task. These rooms highlight that moment, bringing deeper importance to something that's often overlooked. In each of these rooms, Maddy, the human model, is edited into the scenes. She wears the uniform for the task that was intended to be done in the room. Hypothetically, if this house existed in the real world, visitors could come to The Place and involve themselves in these simple tasks, immersing themselves in the true nature of what it really means to do things such as brushing your teeth or checking your email.

## ROOM FOR TEA

This is the room for making tea. There are close to an unlimited amount of tea flavours to choose from when brewing in this room. When a visitor of the house, enters the space, they can walk up to the wall, pull a hanging tea bag from its nailed position and make a cup of whatever they choose. In the corner of the tea-making room is a large kettle that is continuously being filled up with water so tea is always ready to be made. There is also an abundance of teacups ready to use. They line the cupboards as well as fill the top of the cabinet.



## ROOM FOR MAKING THE BED

This is a corner of a room that was specifically built for making the bed. The bed in the room can be done-up by the guests visiting the Blocks Of House. After the bed has been made and the guest leaves the room, the bed, shortly after, is messed up by a member of the staff of the house. The bed will constantly stay messy so it can be made at any time by a visiting person.



## ROOM FOR FACE WASHING

This is a room for washing your face. The essentials are provided. There is a sink with warm running water, a large bottle of soap sitting on the shelf adjacent to the sink, and many face towels that can be used in the actual washing process or just the drying of the skin.



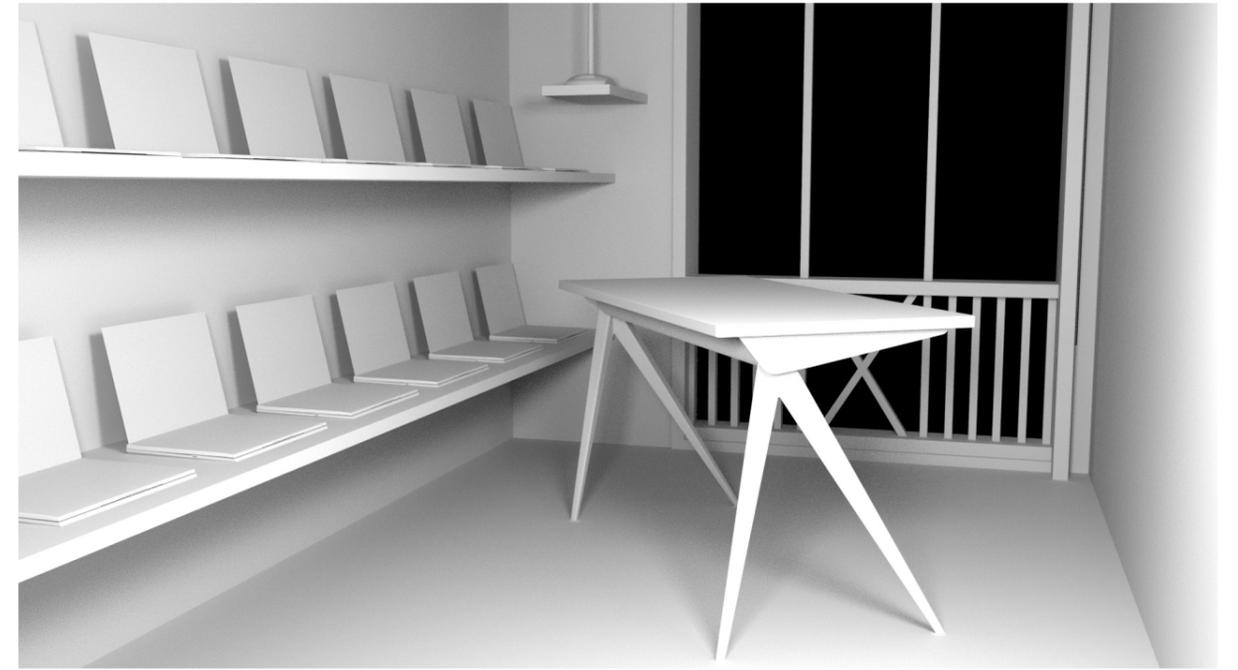


## ROOM FOR UNLOADING DISHES

This is a room designed for unloading the dishes. There is an industrial-grade dishwasher that cycles the same water through the machine over and over again (for the purpose of reducing water waste). When a guest of the house enters this room, they can unload the dishes into the cabinets on the wall. There are always a few plates or bowls that are ready to be put away. Once removed from the machine and put away, they would eventually be loaded again by staff members of the house after the guest has left the room.

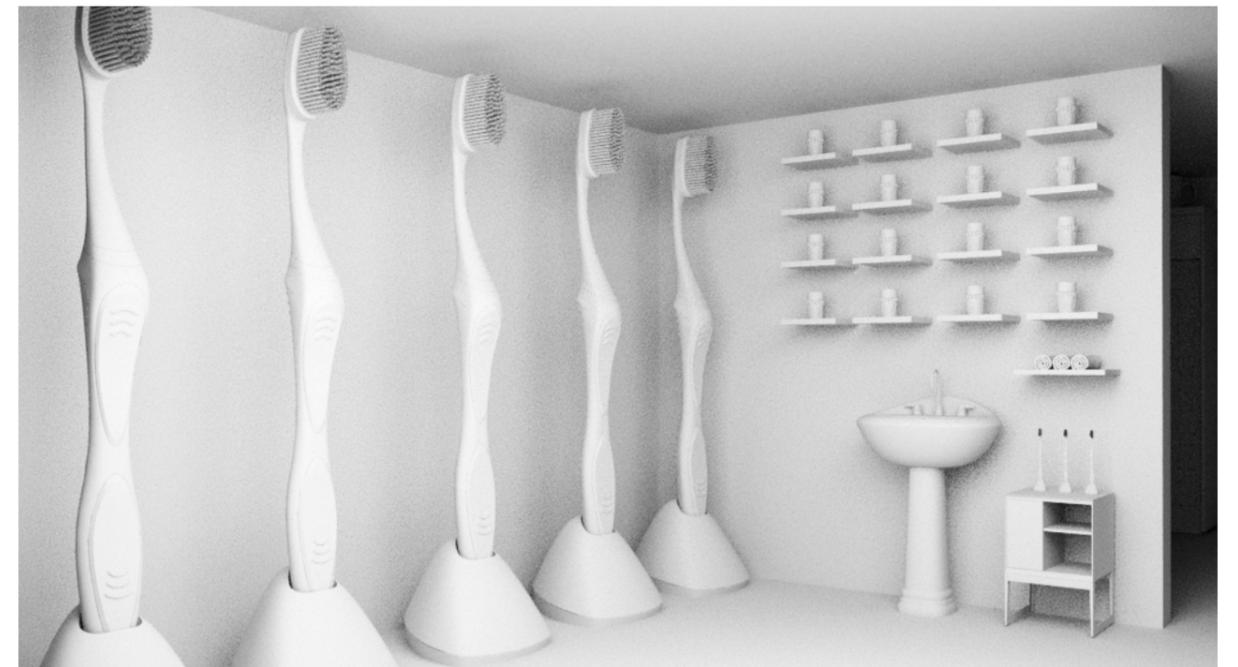
## ROOM FOR CHECKING EMAIL

This is the room that was designed for checking email. At the entrance of the room (out of this frame), is a large wifi router. This is the main source of connectivity in the house. All guests have access to free wifi while visiting The Place. Along the wall of this room are password-free computers with various email applications pre-downloaded onto the devices. In the corner of the room is a desk that can be used to do the actual email checking. Next to the desk is another, wifi booster that ensures the speed is top quality.



## ROOM FOR BRUSHING TEETH

This is a room specifically built for brushing your teeth. The ridiculous wall of toothbrush statues guides the guest to the sink where they can brush their teeth in house. There are a selection of toothbrushes available and a single tube of toothpaste located on the small table next to the sink. After the brushing is complete, the guest can choose from the wall of cups of water, which one they would like to use to rinse out their mouths.



## ENTERING THE HOUSE

With the help of Unity engineer Alex Wang this house model was brought into Unity, a gaming platform that would allow users to walk through the house. Once the house experience downloads onto the user's computer, they can walk around and explore each room from the perspective as if it were visiting in person.



# Chapter

# 7

## Fibers and Sustainability

106	OVERVIEW
107	FROM BEDS TO BODY
107	FROM TREES TO BODY
109	FROM FEILDS TO BODY
110	FROM SHEEPS TO BODY
112	DIGITAL SCRAPS

### OVERVIEW

It was important to me to use fibres in this collection that were highly intentional. Not only did they need to be responsible, sustainability-wise, but they needed to have a direct correlation to the essence of the message being told in the Blocks Of \_ story. Through the use of natural materials (cotton, wools, silks and cellulosic yarn), the process of upcycling, and zero-waste sampling, this collection was created.

## FROM BEDS TO BODY

In this collection, the mundane task of making your bed was one of the moments of the day that was explored. To bring the doing of this task into the design of the garment (for this task) and also into the fabric used to construct the look (and other looks), the mega Canadian bedding company Sleep Country Canada was contacted. One of the founders of Sleep Country Canada, Christine Magee, also believes in the importance of sustainable alternatives to traditional ways of working and excitedly supplied deadstock cotton bed sheets to be used as fabric. These bedsheets, which would have been discarded in the trash otherwise, are now utilized as a perfect textile to make numerous garments in this collection.



## FROM TREES TO BODY

Eastman Naia is a textile manufacturing company that makes fabric out of cellulosic yarn. This type of yarn is made completely out of wood pulp sourced from pine and eucalyptus forests and plantations that are being sustainably managed (to make sure not too many trees are taken down). This is a closed-loop system, meaning that no materials in the making of their fabric go to waste. This Naia fabric is compostable and bio-degradable, meaning once garments are made with such textiles, if they do end up in a landfill, they will break down much faster than plastic-based textiles (that can take thousands of years).

The attention to detail, as well as their incredible sustainability initiatives that Eastman represents, made them a perfect supplier of textiles for this collection. Pieces of Naia fabric are used thought this collection.



## FROM FEILDS TO BODY

To align with the idea of making this collection of garments out of bedding textiles, cotton lines from the Canadian-based company, Simplifi Fabric were sourced to construct elements of the garments. This company is an eco/organic fabric supplier that ensures their fibres are sourced from mills that use purely electricity supplied solely from renewable energy sources and are OEKO Tex certified (meaning they are certified free from harsh chemicals).

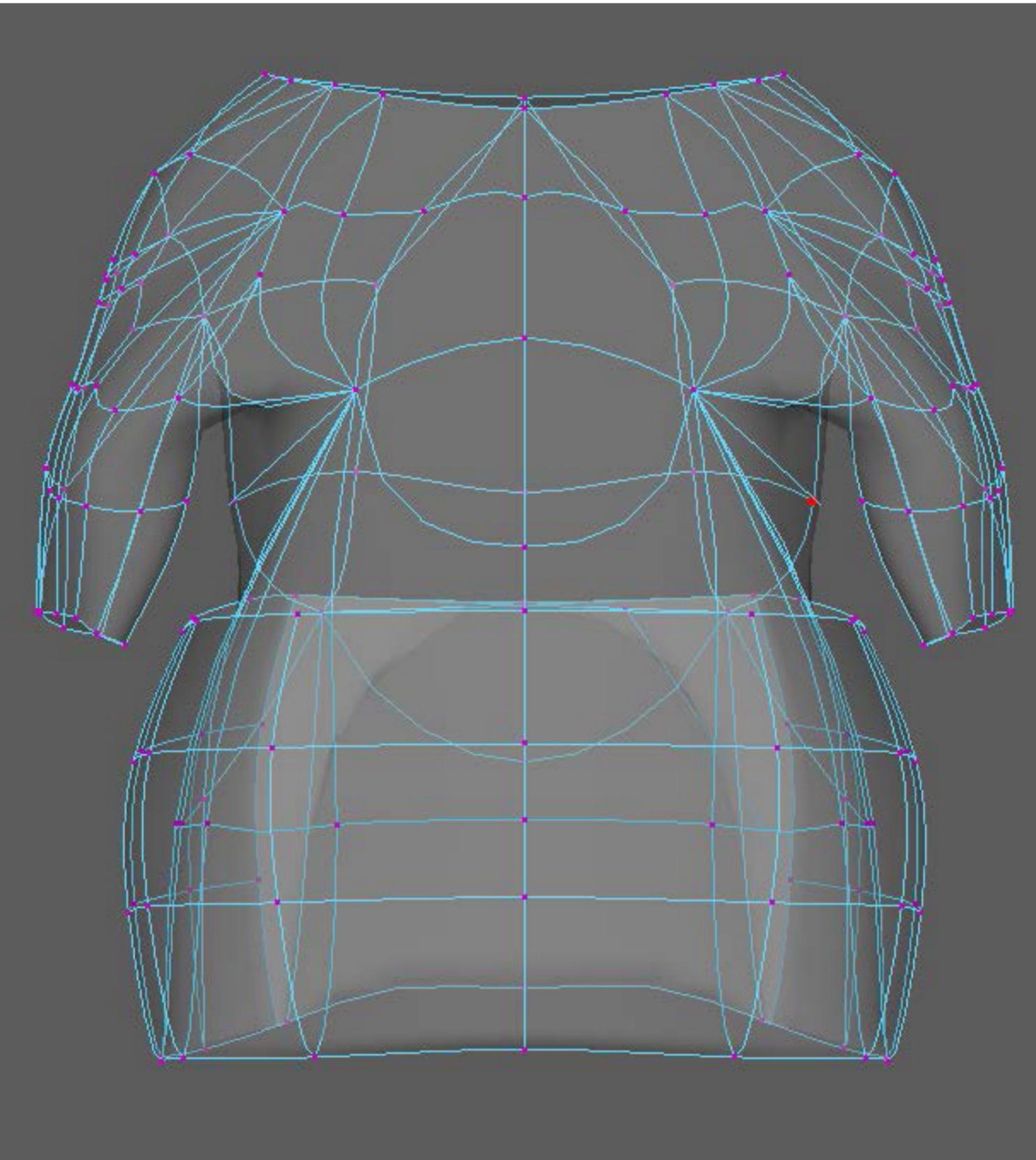


## FROM SHEEPS TO BODY

There are two knit garments in this collection. Both of these shirts were knit using organic wool and silk blends from a local wool dealer, Linda Benne, in my hometown. She buys and sells high-quality yarn from both Canadian and Peruvian farms.

The colourful motifs that were knit into these shirts, using an intarsia method were drawn using the originally collected footage of members of my community taking part in tasks they deem to be mundane. The motif that is knit into each garment reflects the task that the uniform was designed and created for. See page 14 for more information on these knit motifs.





## DIGITAL SCRAPS

More than half of this collection was digitally sampled and constructed using the program Maya 2020. This program allows for the manipulation of polygons into shapes and planes that in the context of this collection, were used to represent fabric. This way of digital making meant that no tangible fabric or paper was used in the design and making of these garments. This “fake” textile produced virtually no waste, making it an incredibly sustainable option for designers who want to experiment with ideas but who don’t want to waste paper in the patterning process and fabric in the sampling process.

# Chapter

# 8

## The People And Their Mundane Moments

114	OVERVIEW
115	OLIVIA BRUSHING HER TEETH
117	VICTORIA MAKING HER BED
119	SOFIE UNLOADING THE DISHWASHER
121	SAM CHECKING HIS EMAIL
123	GRAEME MAKING TEA
125	MADDY WASHING HER FACE

### OVERVIEW

The people selected to be interviewed about the most overlooked or mundane moments of their days were close friends and family members of mine. Each one of them explained to me what these daily tasks are, documented them and from there garments were designed to suit each task.

## OLIVIA BRUSHING HER TEETH

Olivia Q. is a close friend of mine. She is 22 years old and also lives in Canada. Olivia and I became close friends after travelling to Costa Rica on a service trip in High School to build a road for an underdeveloped community. After that trip, we realized we had so many things in common and became close friends after that, we still are to this day.

When Olivia Q. was asked about what a “mundane task” that she “pretty much does every day” is, she responded with the task of brushing her teeth. From this brief interview, I requested that she documented this “insignificant” moment of her day to analyze how it typically works for her. This document was in the form of a film. A still from the film is on right side of the page.

Beside the still of the teeth brushing is the finished garment, the uniform for brushing your teeth. To understand how this garment was designed and constructed, visit the chapter called “The System” on page 17.

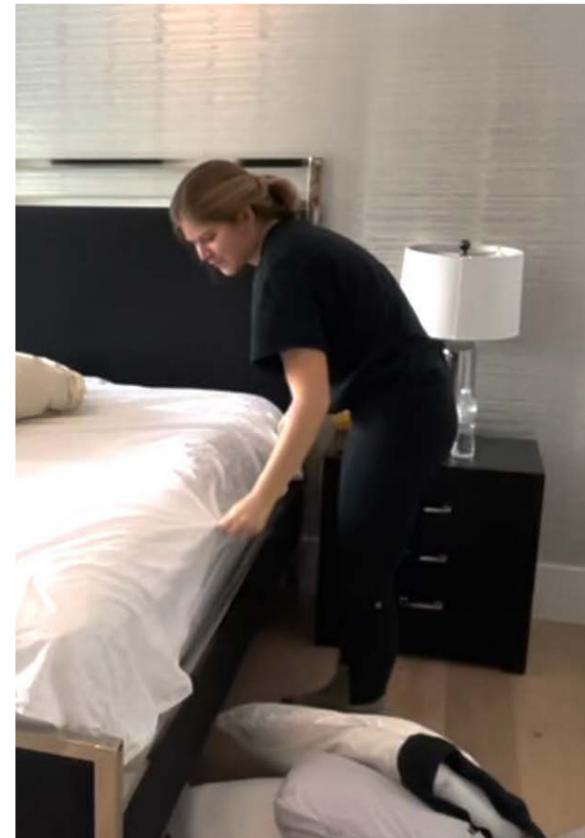


## VICTORIA MAKING HER BED

Victoria A. is 22 years old and also lives in Canada. She is a close friend of mine. We met when we were practically babies. She and I were so close when we were very young but due to going to different schools while growing up and meeting new groups of friends we drifted apart. In the summer of 2020, still living in the same hometown, we started to hang out again. Victoria and I have managed to become just as close once again.

When Victoria A. was asked about what a “mundane task” that she “pretty much does every day” is, she responded with the task of making her bed. From this brief interview, I requested that she documented this “insignificant” moment of her day to analyze how it typically works for her. This document was in the form of a film. A still from the film is on right side of the page.

Beside the still of the making of the bed is the finished garment, the uniform for making your bed. To understand how this garment was designed and constructed, visit the chapter called “The System” on page 17.

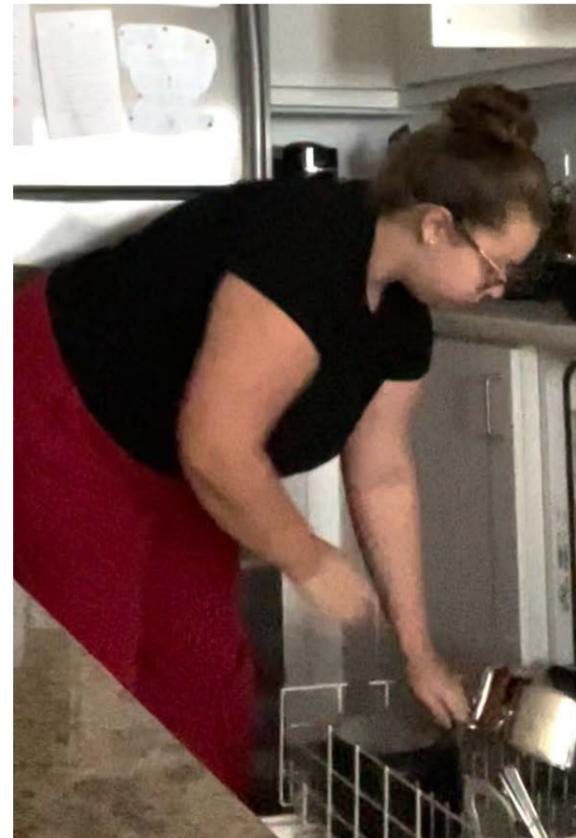


## SOFIE UNLOADING THE DISHWASHER

Sofie W. is 21 years old and also lives in Canada. She is a close friend of mine. In first grade, our families started to go on vacation together. We weren't necessarily friends before these childhood trips, but after a few trips to the beach, we pretty much became cousins. We are still pretty much cousins.

When Sofie W. was asked about what a "mundane task" that she "pretty much does every day" is, she responded with the task of unloading the dishwasher. From this brief interview, I requested that she documented this "insignificant" moment of her day to analyze how it typically works for her. This document was in the form of a film. A still from the film is on right side of the page.

Beside the still of the unloading of the dishwasher is the finished garment, the uniform for unloading the dishwasher. To understand how this garment was designed and constructed, visit the chapter called "The System" on page 17.

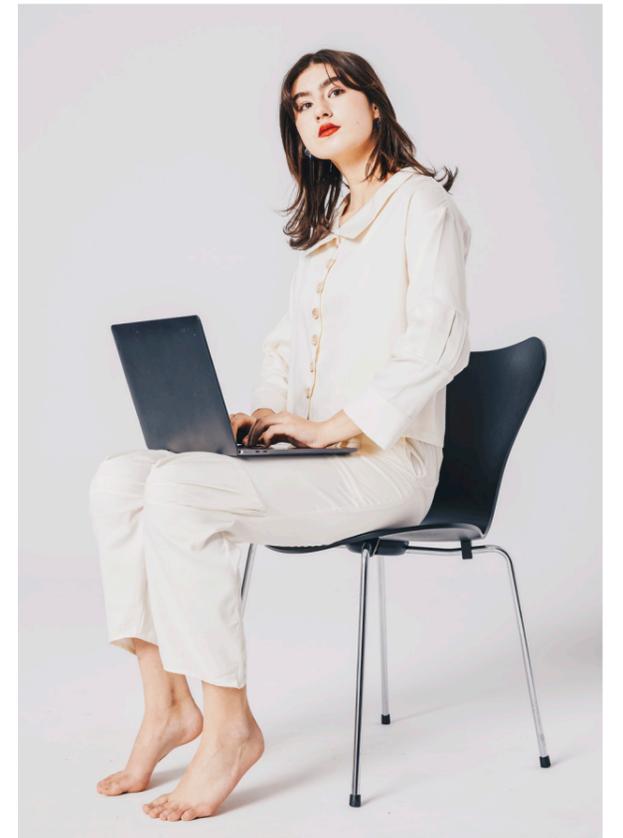
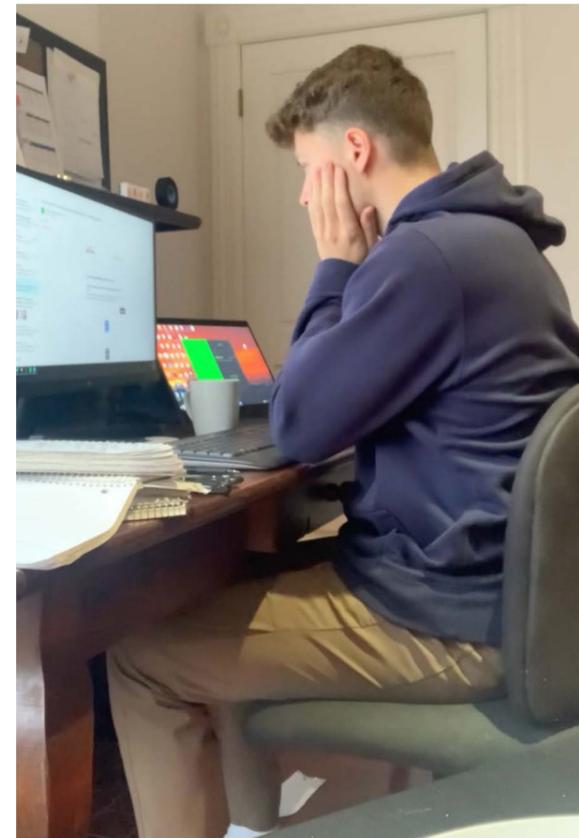


## SAM CHECKING HIS EMAIL

Sam G. is 21 years old and also lives in Canada. He is my brother. We are very close despite not living under the same roof as we both live in different places now that we are getting older and go to different universities.

When Sam G. was asked about what a “mundane task” that he “pretty much does every day” is, he responded with the task of checking his email. From this brief interview, I requested that he documented this “insignificant” moment of his day to analyze how it typically works for him. This document was in the form of a film. A still from the film is on the right iside of the page.

Beside the still of the checking of the email, is the finished garment, the uniform for checking emails. To understand how this garment was designed and constructed, visit the chapter called “The System” on page 17.



## GRAEME MAKING TEA

Graeme M. is 18 years old and lives in New York City. He and I went to the same high school and bonded over art, Japanese culture and the experience of life as a whole.

When Graeme was asked about what a “mundane task” that he “pretty much does every day” is, he responded with the task of making tea. From this brief interview, I requested that he documented this “insignificant” moment of their day to analyze how it typically works for them. This document was in the form of a film. A still from the film is on the right side of the page.

Beside the still of the making of the tea, is the finished garment, the uniform for making tea. To understand how this garment was designed and constructed, visit the chapter called “The System” on page 17.

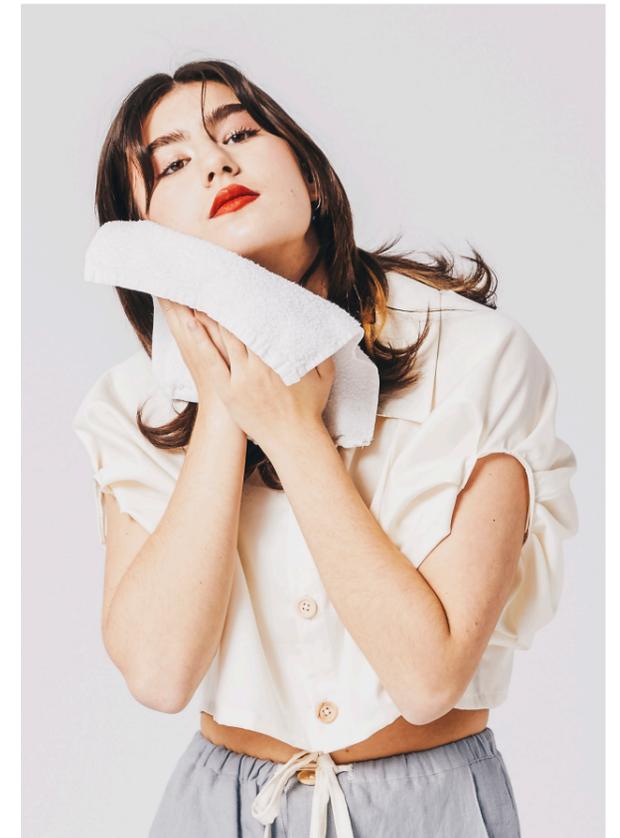
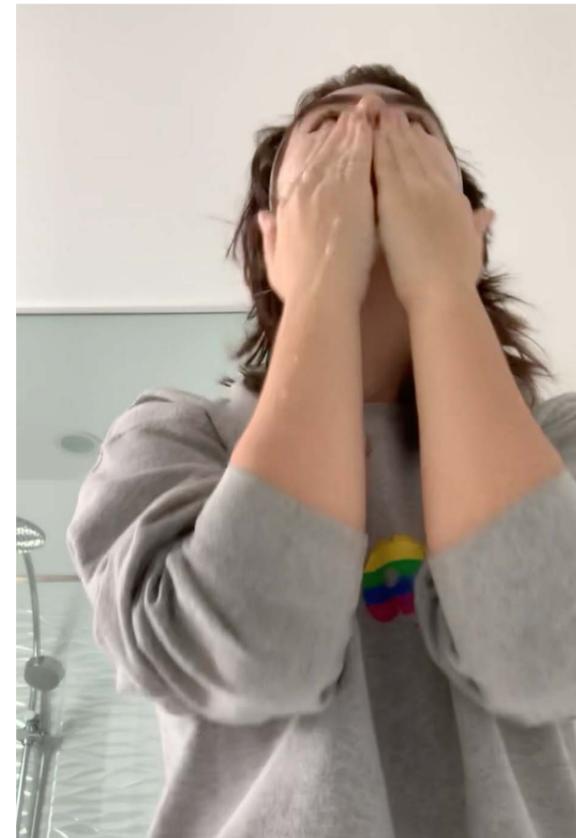


## MADDY WASHING HER FACE

Maddy D. is 16 years old and also lives in Canada. We are cousins. After growing up living so close to each other, and having a family that frequently gets together, we formed a strong relationship. Maddy, although my cousin, is one of my closest friends.

When Maddy D. was asked about what a “mundane task” that she “pretty much does every day” is, she responded with the task of washing her face. From this brief interview, I requested that she documented this “insignificant” moment of her day to analyze how it typically works for her. This document was in the form of a film. A still from the film is on the right side of the page.

Beside the still of Maddy washing her face, is the finished garment, the uniform for washing a face. To understand how this garment was designed and constructed, visit the chapter called “The System” on page 17.



# Chapter

# 9

## The Opposite of Instagram

128	OVERVIEW
129	THE OPPOSITE OF INSTAGRAM
130	FULL-SCREEN USAGE
131	SITTING IN FRONT OF A WALL
134	ZEN IS NOT MANDATORY
135	LIVE TAKEOVERS
136	SOUND
137	OTHER POSTS
138	COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

### OVERVIEW

Instagram consumes a lot of time for a lot of people. Based on Instagram's generated statistics, there are over 500 million users daily, scrolling, clicking stories and interacting on the platform. There are noticeable benefits to using Instagram, such as connecting with others, educating or sharing your experiences. But, Instagram can be a massive time blackhole. With the endless available content to consume, it's no surprise that social media users in 2020 spent an average of two and a half hours a day on platforms such as Instagram.

Social media, especially Instagram, is addictive. It has been engineered to get users on it, checking it and scrolling as much as possible. The mindless scrolling, however, has abolished moments of solitude. Now, people have a distraction or a time-filler at any moment of the day. This distracted state of living makes it challenging to truly exist in the present moment, the "here and now."

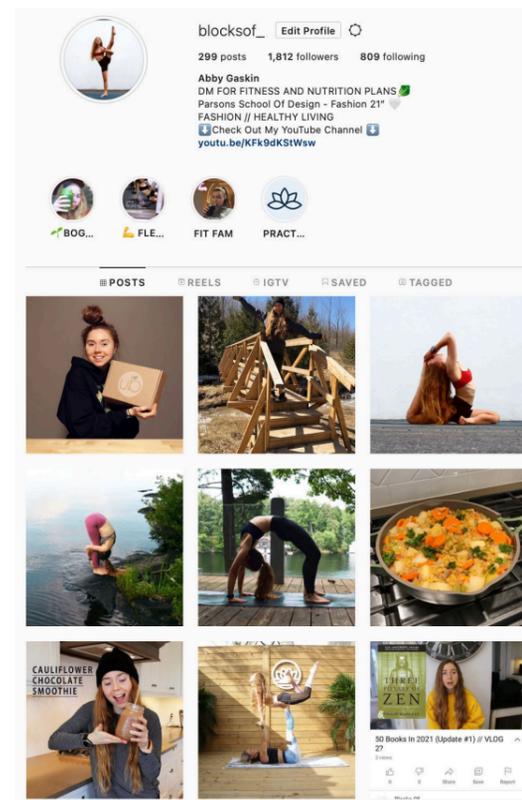
This chapter dives into how the Blocks Of \_ Instagram account was designed to act as the opposite of the platform itself. The opposite of Instagram.

## THE OPPOSITE OF INSTAGRAM

The Instagram account “Blocks Of \_” challenges Instagram. It questions what it might mean to experience the opposite of the platform.

First and foremost, Blocks Of \_ wants users to get off their device and take part in an activity or do something with their full attention. Directing attention purposefully is going against the zombie state of a scrolling mindset that can occur on Instagram fairly easily.

There are two main methods in how Blocks Of \_ approaches experiencing the opposite of Instagram. The first one being the use of strategic live streams and the second one being the posting of reminders about the user’s present state of Instagram usage and overall awareness of how they spend their time.



## FULL-SCREEN USAGE

The main tactic used by the Blocks Of \_ Instagram account, to achieve the notion of existing in the “the opposite of Instagram” is through strategically designed live streams. When an Instagram live stream is activated, the user’s entire phone screen becomes consumed by whatever is being streamed. This full-screen usage that the stream results in leaves the phone unable to complete other tasks. In other words, when there is an I.G, live-stream being watched, only at that moment, can the device be used to continue watching that live stream. There is no possibility for texting or using other applications during the watching of an Instagram live stream.

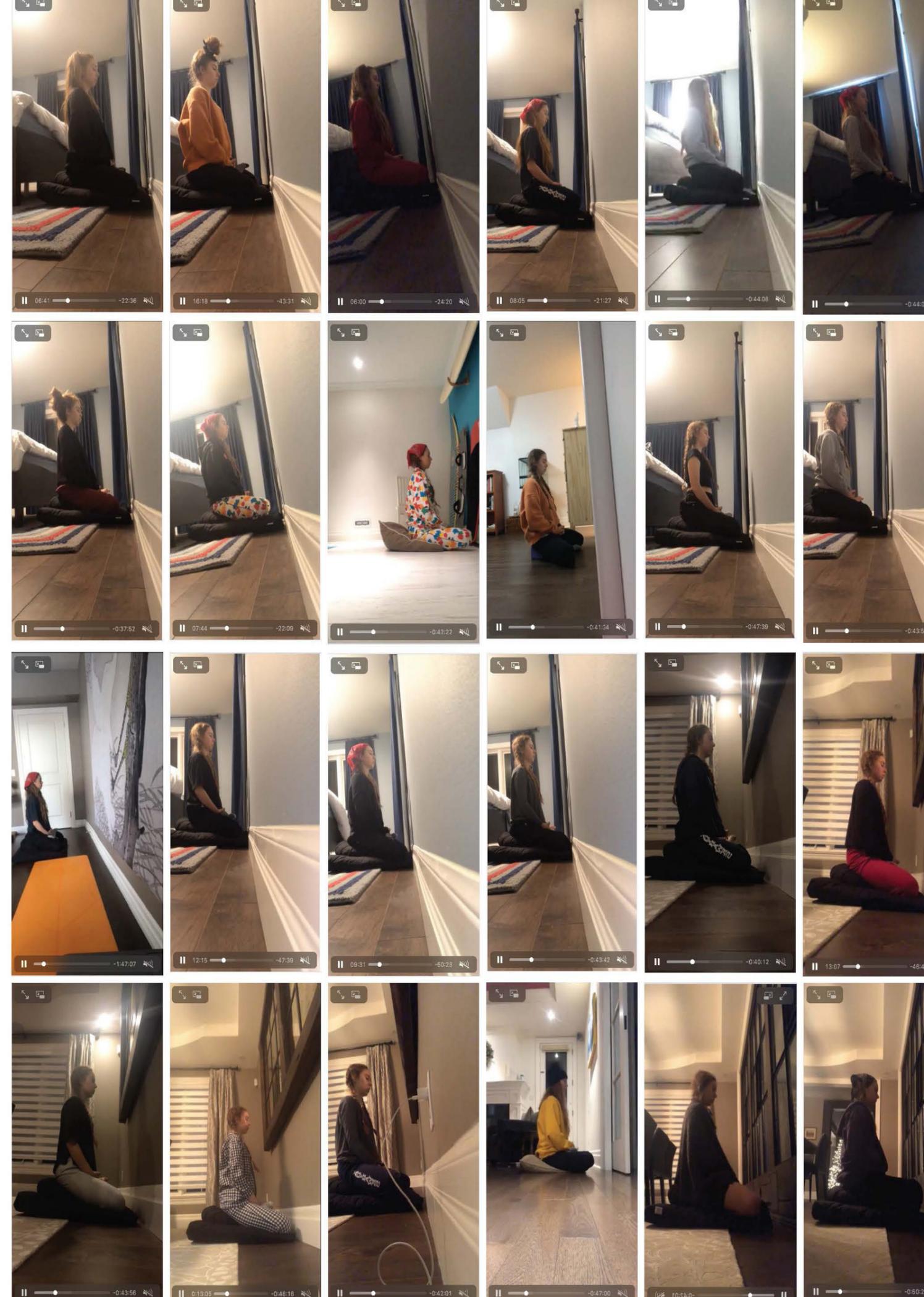
The question then contemplated in the development of Blocks Of \_ became: what could be live-streamed that would not be interesting enough to want to be watched yet still present a doer of a task at 100% effort? Providing an example on an intentional “block of time” to the participant yet simultaneously be not distracting?



## SITTING IN FRONT OF A WALL

When the question of what would be live-streamed on Blocks Of \_ was brainstormed, I knew it needed to be a task so un-interesting to watch that the user would continue the stream yet put their phone down to do their own intentional task. This is when the idea of doing "nothing" or sitting in front of a wall in silence came to mind.

Practicing a zen style of mediation was something I was already doing. This meant that streaming my process was not an additional task added to my day. This daily live stream was therefore already built into my routine.





## ZEN IS NOT MANDATORY

Despite the Block Of \_ live-streams being primarily footage of mediation, there is zero expectation that the participants of these blocks also part in a mediation. Any intentional task, away from the phone screen, is welcome. Every week or so there are posts on the Blocks Instagram page, reminding users of this.

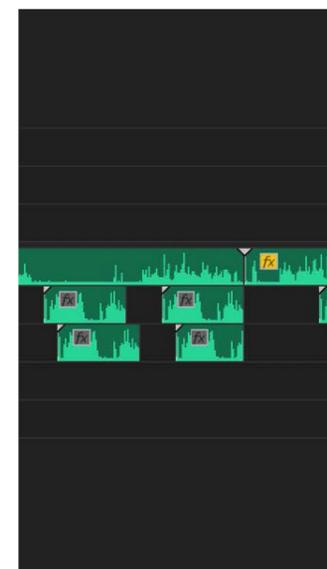
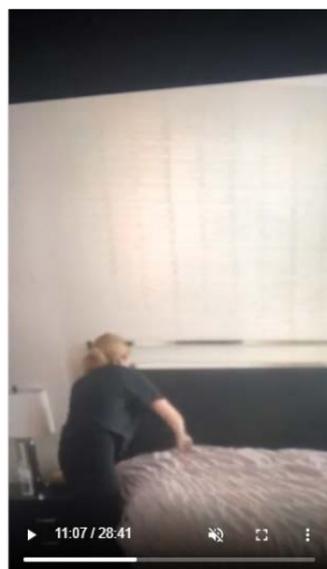
To the left, is a frequent Blocks Of \_ live-stream go-er, Jeanelle, practising Her contortion in their intentional block of time.

## LIVE TAKEOVERS

Every few Blocks Of \_ live streams, there is something called a “Live Takeover.” These are streams of other members of the Blocks community leading the time block on Instagram.

Any task is welcomed to be streamed, as long as it is NOT interesting to watch for an extended period of time. For example, shown on this page, are the example takeovers from Victoria (making the bed), Sofie (unloading the dishwasher), and Heewon (checking his email). If the task was pre-recorded and sent in (as Victoria’s was) the sound was removed and it was put on a loop for the duration of the block (her’s was 30 minutes).

The Blocks Of \_ live-stream takeovers not only get the community involved, but they provide an alternative (but not interesting enough to watch) stream that breaks up the series of zen sits keeping the live-stream content fresh.



## SOUND

Although the live-streamed zen sits are composed in silence, the Blocks Of \_ “takeovers” by community members are not. A way to unify the community live streams was to have a consistent sound playing in the background for all the videos despite what was going on.

Much like the content being streamed, the sound accompaniment needed to be non-distracting so viewers could focus on their activity of choice.

Audio from the six mundane daily tasks was recorded and then manipulated to form hour-long soundtracks. Some of the tracks, such as “Checking Emails” (image on this page) or “Making Tea” was created by overlapping the sounds of the tasks to generate a more abstract soundscape. Others, like “The Dishwasher” are full hour-long recordings of that task being done.

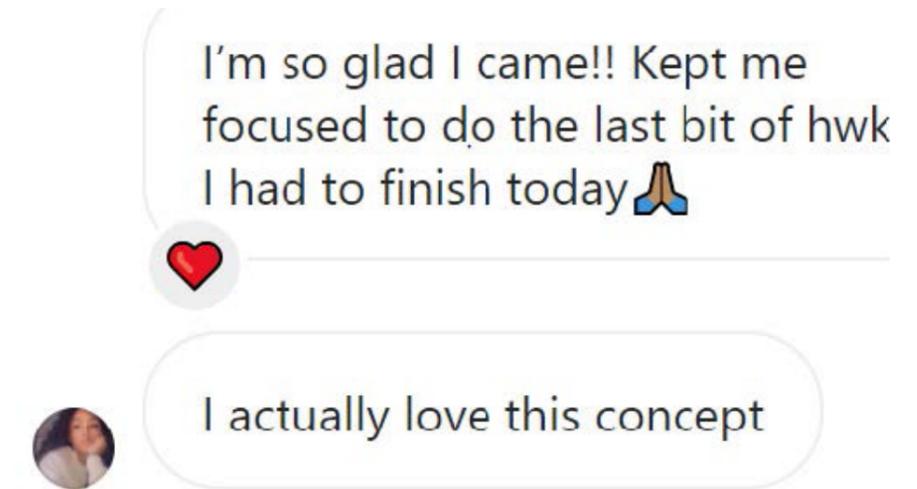
These task-generated soundtracks are then overlaid on top of the Blocks Of \_ live-stream takeovers. The purpose of this is ultimately to make the live-streams fit together in the same series regardless of who’s taking over the account or the task being done.

WHEN WALKING,  
WALK,  
WHEN EATING,  
EAT.  
ZEN PROVERB

## OTHER POSTS

The second method on the Blocks Of \_ page that attempts to get the users off the platform is a posting strategy. Posts exist that question how the I.G. users are spending their time. Highlighting that there may be other, more purposeful things that they could be doing that would ultimately make their lives feel fuller or more meaningful.

Aside from the post-types that have been previously mentioned, there are also quotes that emphasize the values of Blocks Of \_ and the magic that can occur if intentional focus is brought to the task at hand.



## COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

It's exciting when members of the Blocks Of \_ community share their experiences with the opposite of Instagram. A great example of a Blocks member is Jeanelle. She is a 22-year-old student from Canada. Jeanelle used her block of time to complete her French homework. She then direct messages the Blocks Of \_ I.G. account to share her success after taking part in a super-focused session. Jeanelle continues to come to the daily blocks.

# Chapter

# 10

## Brushing Your Teeth Club

140	OVERVIEW
141	MEMBERS
142	PROCESS
143	THE FIVE QUESTIONS
146	OUTCOME

### OVERVIEW

Brushing your teeth is an incredibly mundane moment of the day that billions of people experience in an autopilot state. As mentioned in previous chapters (refer to page 1), the universality of this action made it a perfect activity to use as the foundation of a five-day club I started called the Intentional Teeth Brushing Club. The purpose of this club was to set my system in motion and see if adding a high level of focus to mundane moments (such as brushing your teeth) would cause a butterfly effect of positive benefits to larger areas of life (such as relationships, work or hobbies).

## MEMBERS

To assemble individuals who would be interested in participating in the Intentional Teeth Brushing Club, an announcement was sent out on the Blocks Of \_\_ Instagram. The announcement was vague saying that a free five-day club was going to take place that only required two minutes of your time and could completely change your outlook on life. People from all over the world were interested (Canada, USA, China and Barbados), and everyone regardless of age, gender, beliefs or nationality were welcomed.



## PROCESS

For five days, each morning, the members of this club would receive a direct message on Instagram with a question. They were instructed to brush their teeth with intention, thinking about the feeling of the teeth brushing, what they typically think about during the process and what it means to be brushing your teeth while being fully present. After they were finished brushing (with added focus) they answered the question that I sent that day. This process could happen at any time of the day (it didn't need to be specifically in the morning or the night).

I instructed the members of the club to not think too hard about their answers and to send me the first thought that came into their minds. To record each of these daily questions the members were given the option of filming themselves, recording their audio or typing a text-based answer.

## THE FIVE QUESTIONS

1. What do you usually think about when you brush your teeth? Rate how focused or aware of the present moment you typically are during this task. (1-10 but no 7)
2. After the highlighting of this particular moment of your day, does this heightened state stay with you into your next “block” (task) or do you immediately resume your normal state of being?
3. After three days now of conscious brushing, has it gotten easier to brush your teeth with this headspace? Do you find yourself returning to this type of awareness in other tasks now that it’s a part of your daily routine?
4. Do you think treating these small tasks/ moments with such importance is even worthwhile?
5. Have you noticed any changes, big or small in any moment of the past week after these hyper-focused teeth brushing? This can be in any area of your life.





## OUTCOME

The outcomes of the Intentional Teeth Brushing club had a wide variety of results. Some members, such as Sam (21-year-old, male, living in Canada) found brushing his teeth with an extreme focus didn't lead to any significant or at least noticeable changes in his day/life. He said that he "resorted to [his] normal state of being" after the brushing. The only difference Sam found through this activity was that he "thought more about [his] teeth while brushing them."

Other members, such as Jeanelle (23-year-old, female, living in Canada) had incredible results. She stated that after these five days of awareness-based teeth brushing, she had "been thinking a lot more about how [she] can be very distracted in other areas of my life." She also discovered that by...

"Treating smaller tasks with such importance has a rippling effect in other aspects of one's life. In other words, by making something mundane, such as brushing one's teeth an intentional activity, one is more likely to be intentional about larger tasks such as completing a work assignment. It is important, I believe to bring awareness to small things for this reason."

Jeanelle's answers were exactly what I predicted might occur if involved in deep blocks of focus. It was responses like these that proved the Intentional Teeth Brushing Club was a success and the butterfly effect was set in motion.



Model: Maddy Djuk  
Studio Photographers: Chloe Lukas and Blake Keen at Neighborhood Studios  
Unity Engineer: Alex Wang



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# BLOCKS OF \_

ABBY GASKIN

