

I: DISCOVER

***Thing* 1: Acrylic Plastic Christmas Ornament**

The first *thing* is an acrylic plastic sphere that is hollow and can be opened by a seam in the middle. It used to be a transparent Christmas ornament, but I painted it red with diluted acrylic paint and I also added a layer of polyester fiber in the inner layer to diffuse light. I had put an LED strip connected to a battery inside to make the sphere look like a glowing red orb. It is an object that stands out as being man-made and brings curiosity as to whether or not it is more than just a red ball.

A few years ago, I customized this ball to be a prop for a costume. I had handmade the costume for an event, and it was my most successful one to this day. For that reason, it means a lot to me since a lot of effort was put into the making of the outfit and accessories. It was the first time I had used electronics for a costume. It could have been made better, but it still worked out as intended. The portable battery was heavy, and the LED lights were not as scattered as I wanted them to be. It would be nice to revisit this contraption with more functionality and a better structure. I also used similar acrylic spheres to make actual customized Christmas ornaments as gifts to people around me.

I think that clear plastic spheres are fun to work with as light shines through in different ways depending on how you modify the surface. Its ease of customization is one of the most convenient qualities. The surface is smooth and pleasant to the touch. The object itself is not heavy, depending on what is added inside the ball. Since it is simply a plastic container, there is a lot that can be done with the surface and the contents, make it visible or not. It is possible to make holes onto the surface as well. It feels nice to hold the ball but also it can be hung with invisible wires to make it look like it is floating (if the contents of the sphere are not too heavy). If I decide to use a new ornament for a project, the material is originally transparent so sensors could be used inside the ball to track movement on the surface.

Physical Qualities

Acrylic, sturdy, 4.5 inches in diameter.

Conductive Potential

Plastics are usually not conductive; therefore, it should not be used as a conductive material.

Structural Integrity

If it is under enough pressure, the plastic could break apart easily.

Perceptual and Aesthetic Properties

It makes a perfect sphere except for the seam; it is glossy and reflects light like a blurry, slightly frosted mirror. When LEDs are shining from the inside, it appears different on the camera than perceived by the naked eye, the camera captures light artifacts and makes pixels on the photograph at the spots where we can perceive the LED light source concentration. Depending on the LED colors, the ball will emit a different tint combined with the red paint.



Thing 2: Backpack Plushie

The second thing is a plushie of a Pokemon, Jigglypuff. It is also a backpack, there are sturdy straps to wear it or to hold it at the top and a zipper opening at the back to store items in a pocket. It is soft and it has hard plastic green eyes. There are a few scratches on the eyes from being tossed around throughout the years. It has misaligned eyes from a manufacturing defect, but I think that takes part in its charm. It is funny-looking but cute at the same time, which makes it endearing. It being a plushie is comforting, even more so because of its portability of being a backpack as well. A cute, soft, and fluffy companion that you can hold onto at any time is reassuring. It is convenient to be able to store items as well. It is an internationally licensed product from Nintendo, which also gives it some monetary value. It could have been a collector's item, but it is too damaged for it to actually be valuable, it just holds sentimental value to me.

I had this plushie for as long as I can remember. It was given to me by a family member and I used to like it a lot. I remember using it back when I was in elementary school, putting school supplies and random things in the pocket. Now that I inspected it, I notice the pocket lining was sewn back together to fix a hole. I must have damaged it at some point and my mother had sewn it back together. To me, it brings back feelings of nostalgia and comfort along with childhood memories. Jigglypuff is known for able to sing and put people to sleep instantly. So I used to wish for it to be able to speak and sing. It would have been a nice feature for it to have a sound system implemented. It is full of stuffing, so there is a lot of space to add a sound system. It could become even more endearing if it were able to speak, but it could backfire as being creepy. For example, I had a Snoopy plushie that would vibrate and laugh hysterically like a clown by the press of a button, which and made it feel a bit eerie, weird, and creepy, but kind of funny.

Physical Qualities

Its plush quality makes it squishy; the faux fur is short and soft; the straps for the backpack elements are tough but malleable.

Conductive Potential

Mostly cloth and some plastic, therefore not conductive except for the zipper at the back that is made of metal.

Structural Integrity

Its structure will not change even if you put a lot of pressure on it. The stuffing might move around a bit, but it does not change the overall structure. The limbs are sewn on so they could be ripped off if someone would pull hard enough or cut them off.

Perceptual and Aesthetic Properties

Cute, pink, fluffy, as it is a plushie for children. It could also be nostalgic for those who have played Pokemon and recognize the creature, Jigglypuff.



Thing 3: Masquerade Mask

The third *thing* is a masquerade mask that I bought a few years ago in a drugstore, right before Halloween. It was affordable and I bought it only because it was pretty and not for Halloween specifically. I bought it with no real purpose, I thought maybe one day I would find an occasion to wear it, but it never happened. It now stays in my room as decorative purposes, but I feel like it is a waste that I did not get to use it. I have always liked costumes; I enjoy wearing them and making them by hand. When you wear a costume, you feel like somebody else and it is a freeing sensation. That is why the mask is meaningful to me. It helps elevate my self-image and self-confidence.

The mask's pattern is reminiscent of lace, dainty, delicate, and soft, but contrasts with its metallic material that feels cold, sharp, and solid. It creates a disconnect between the perspective and the physical feel. It is ornated with blue plastic rhinestones, pretending to be fancy sparkly gems. When you look closely, you realize that it is cheap; the rhinestones are glued on and the silk ribbon attached is glued on as well; it is a fragile item. Moreover, masks come in such different shape and form that it allows for the freedom of artistic expression. The overall symbolism of masks is interesting to me, it helps conceal your identity and create an illusion. It gives off an air of mystery, elegance, but it also reminds me of fairy tales, princesses, and dreams. But let's be honest, under a typical masquerade mask, people are still easily recognizable as it barely hides anything. Most of the time, the idea of masquerade masks sounds fancy and the item looks elegant by itself, but when you wear it, it could often look just cheap and tacky, or even pretentious. Depending on the wearer, the occasion, the outfit, it could give off a different feel. Often, the effort that you put into a costume will show through. Even if the mask is a façade, it reflects your tastes and artistic expression.

Physical Qualities

Lightweight and cold to the touch because of its metal properties. The mask itself is a metal, coated in black paint, ornated of plastic rhinestones that were glued on. There are two silk ribbons to tie around the head for the mask to hold.

Conductive Potential

It is made from a type of metal, which I would assume to be conductive. However, the rhinestones and silk ribbon would not be conductive.

Structural Integrity

The malleable metal makes the structure bendable, but it still holds its shape through some pressure. The rhinestones are glued on well, but they could still be removed with some force. The silk ribbons could easily be torn or cut off.

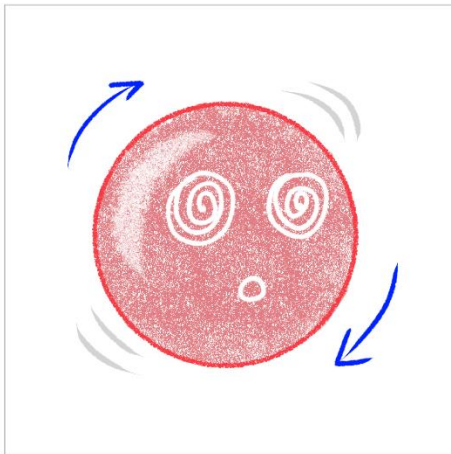
Perceptual and Aesthetic Properties

It is aesthetic; it looks elegant, fancy, and mysterious, but the fake rhinestones make it look cheap.

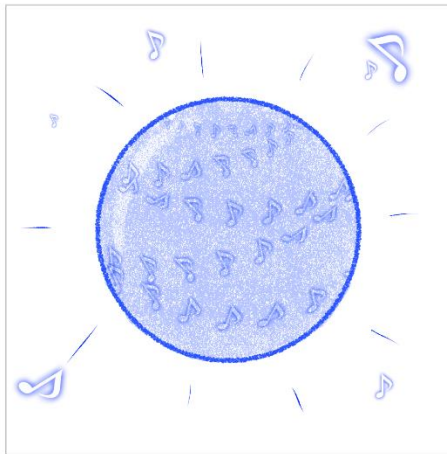


II: DESIGN

3 Examples of Interactive Artifact with the Plastic Acrylic Ball:



1. An interactive companion that shows various expressions to react to being spun, thrown, pat, talked to.



2. An interactive music player. If you hum a song, the ball plays the music and displays visuals that go with the mood and beat.



3. An interactive snow globe, but with the weather of the day. It will display snow if it snows, rain if it rains, fog if it is foggy, etc. If you move the ball, the elements inside will move as well.

Storyboard of the First Interactive Artifact Design:

