

Major Studio 1

MID-TERM PRESENTATION

Rachel Gorman



A LITTLE ABOUT ME

I'm a research-driven hybrid creative with a background in anthropology, communications, and graphic design.

PERSONAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

01

Connective

I want to encourage biological beings to connect with themselves, each other, and the natural world.

02

Intuitive

I want to create humble, honest, and easy-to-understand designs.

03

Empathetic

I want to make things that feel accessible, respectful, and gentle.

04

Sensorial

I want my work to appeal to the senses, to prioritize a multi-dimensional user experience.

I hope to design things that generate feelings of abundance, ease, comfort, playfulness, delight, humor, and safety.

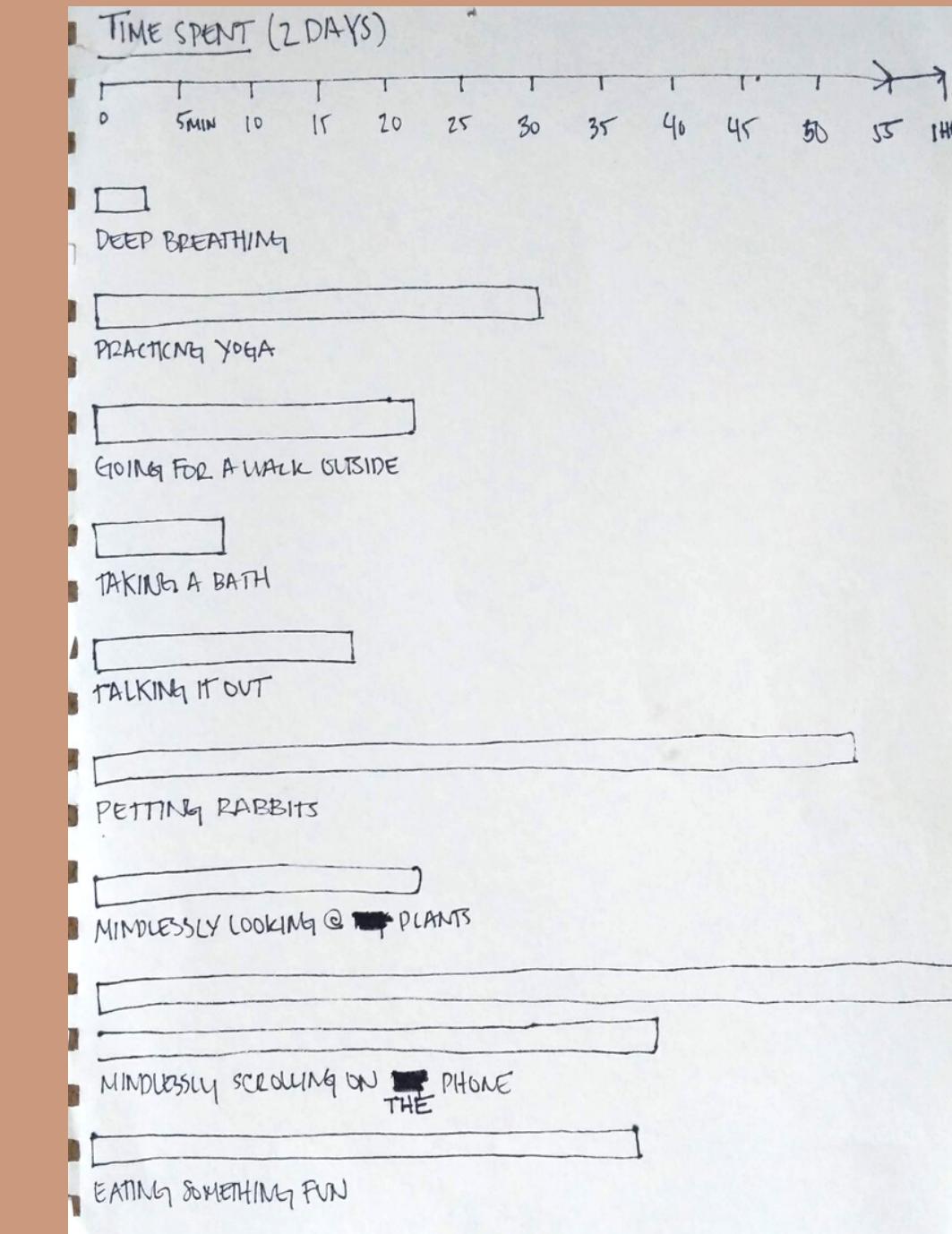
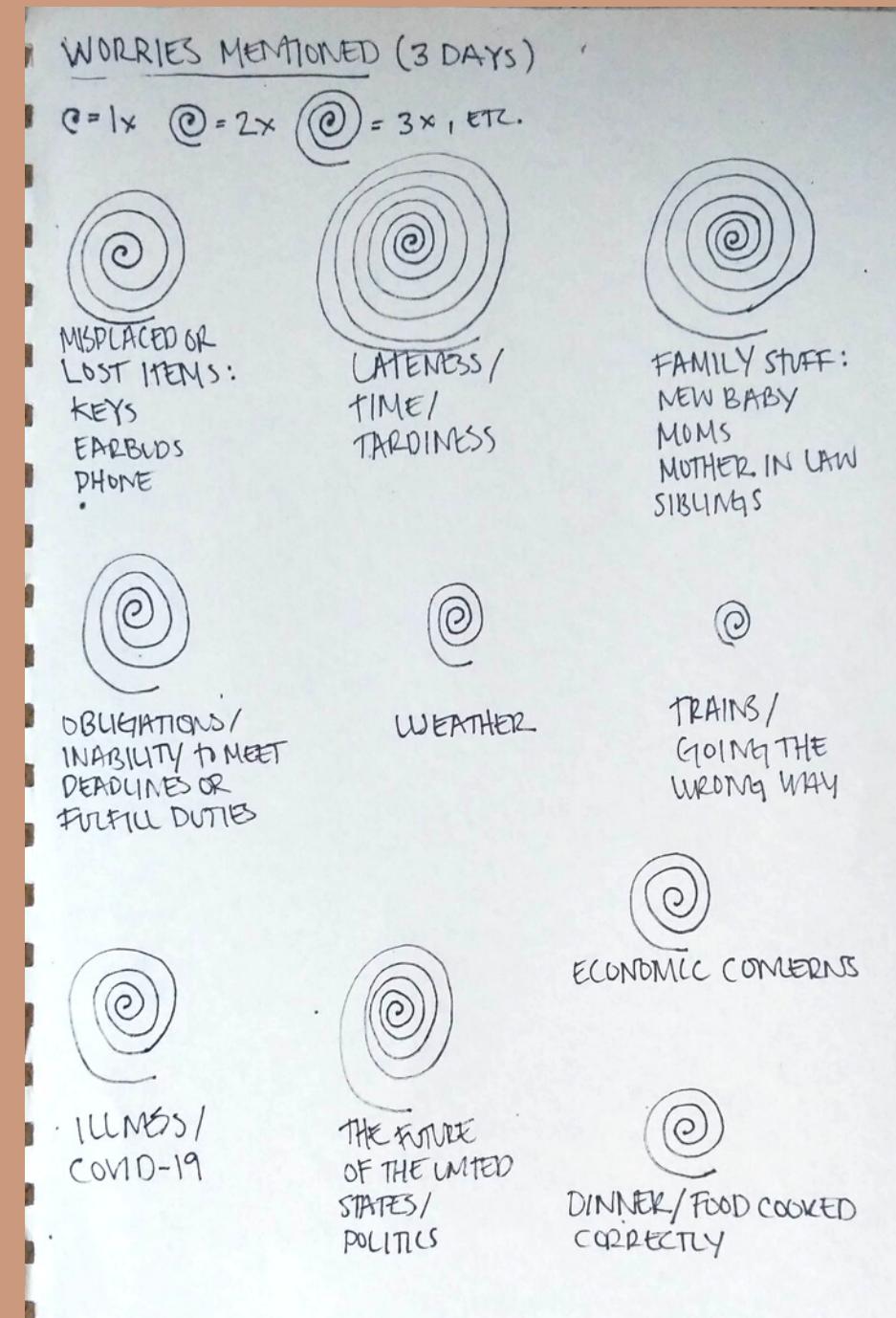
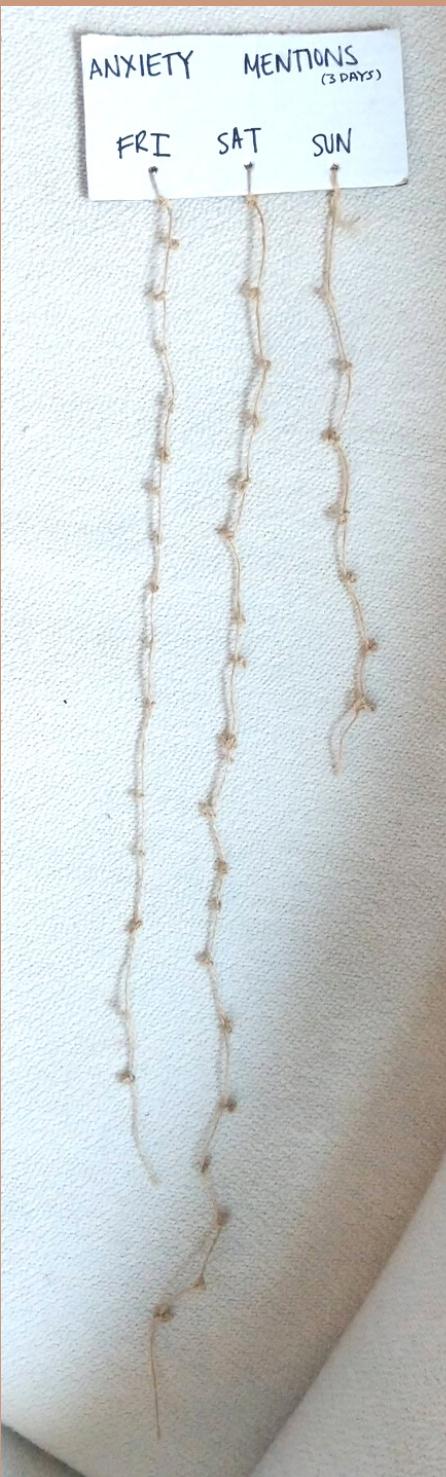
The point is not to provide escapism that perpetuates the status quo; but to supply moments of **rest, reflection, and rejuvenation** that fuel resilience and resistance.

**Moving to NYC has
made me hyper-
aware of the
deleterious effects
of frenzied activity,
stress, and anxiety.**



Are other people as anxious as I am?

...and how do anxious people tend to self-soothe?



Observing Anxiety

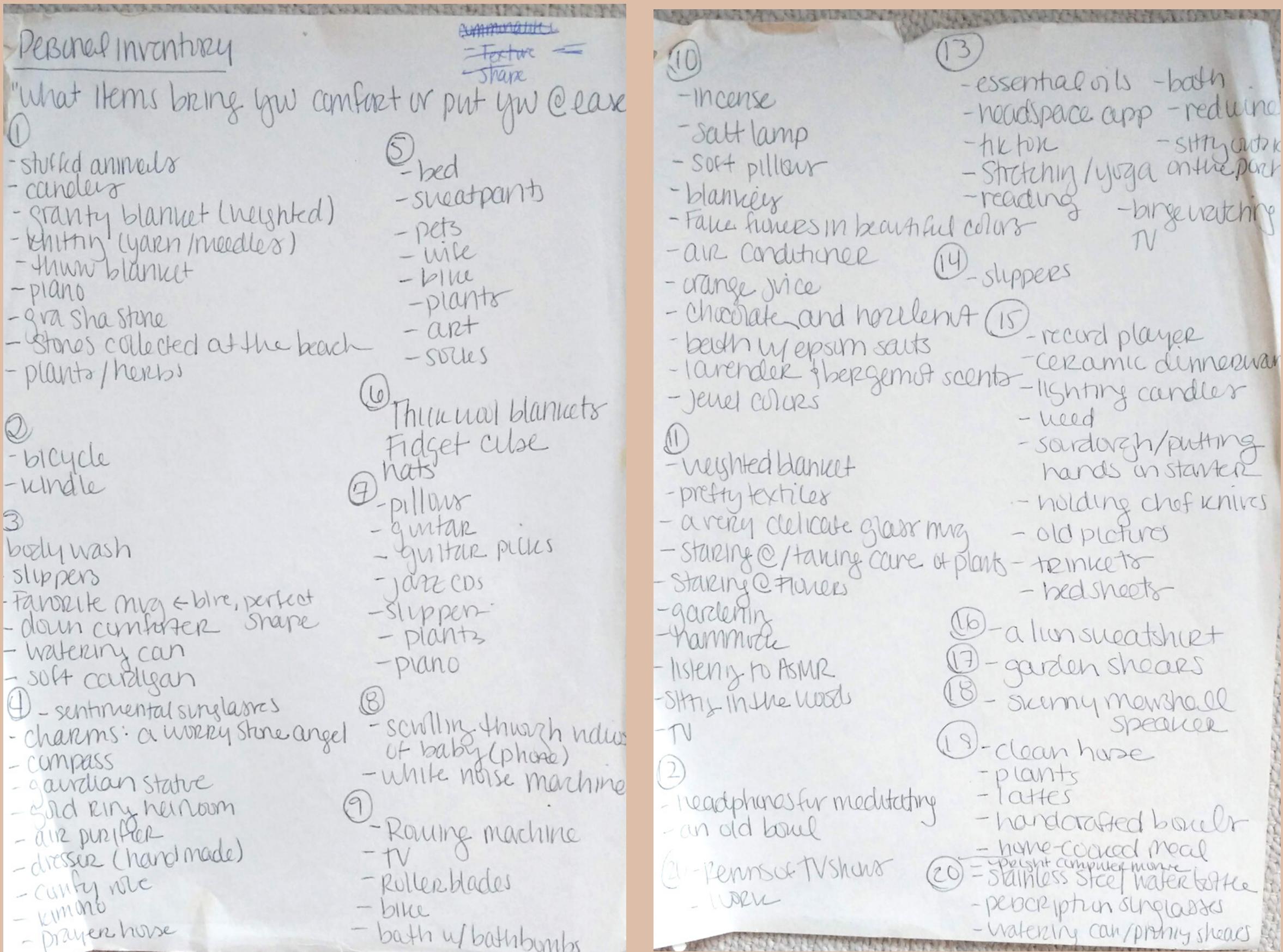
Agitating Topics

Comfort Activities

"What kinds of items bring you comfort or put you at ease?"

Answers included:

- Objects made of natural materials
- Objects that engaged the senses
- Experiences directly related to animals and plants



Comfortable	Uncomfortable
Soft	Rigid, rough
Smooth	Slick, prickly
Gentle	Harsh, discordant
Pliable, adaptable, malleable	Unyielding, stiff
Rounded, ovular	Square, angular
Kind, friendly	Mean, severe
Calm	Obnoxious
Quiet	Loud
Downy, cushiony, doughy, plump	Thin, skinny
Furry	Wet
Convenient, elegant, graceful	Awkward
Pleasant	Revolting
Clean	Foul
Painless	Painful
Intuitive	Frustrating, arduous
Leisurely	Hectic, rushed, stressed
Snuggly, fluffy	Course
Fresh	Stale
Light	Leaden
Placid, restful, sedative	Agitated, anxious, excitable
Serene	Worried
Safe	Harmful, scary
Secure, protected	Vulnerable, endangered
Peaceful	Turbulent, violent

Physical attributes of comfortable, comforting, or cozy Items, environments, and animals

This list was created using the survey results as a departure point and then brainstorming further.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

01

Parsons-associated individuals

I had in-depth conversations with professors and peers about the rituals they perform when they are ready to rest.

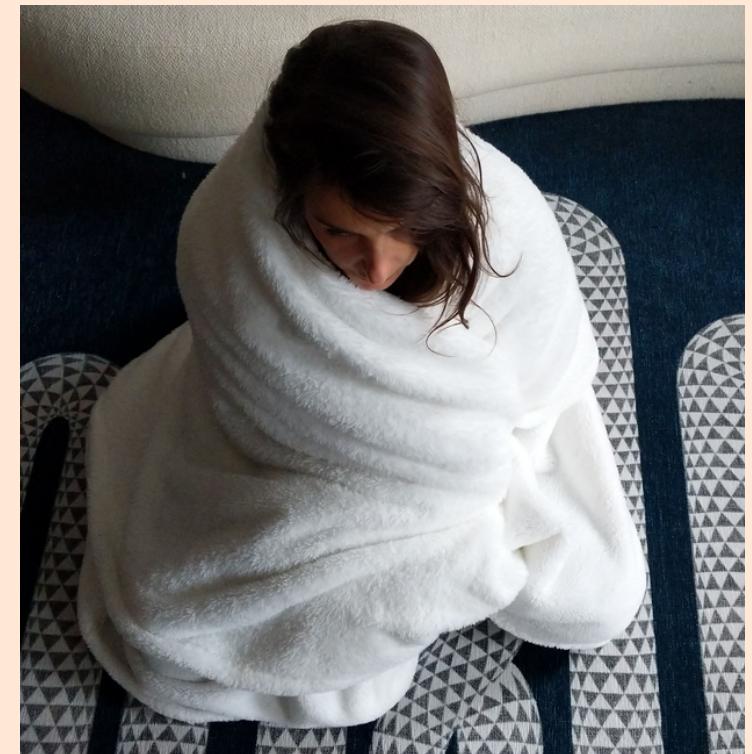
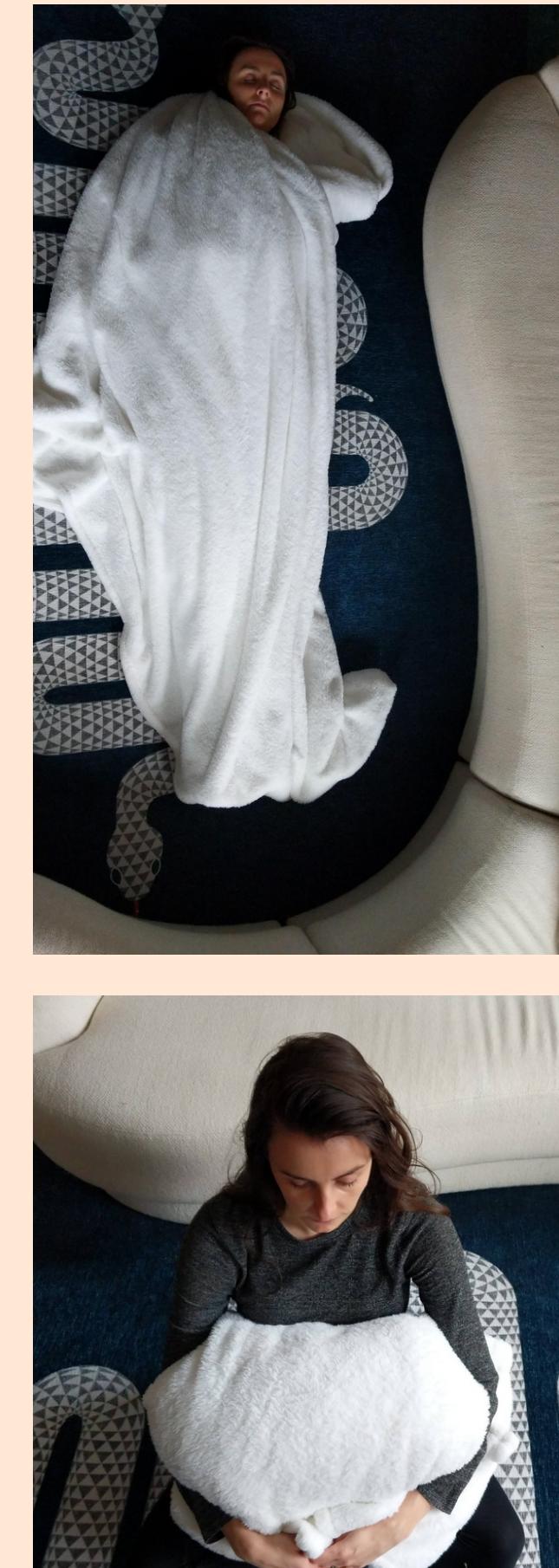
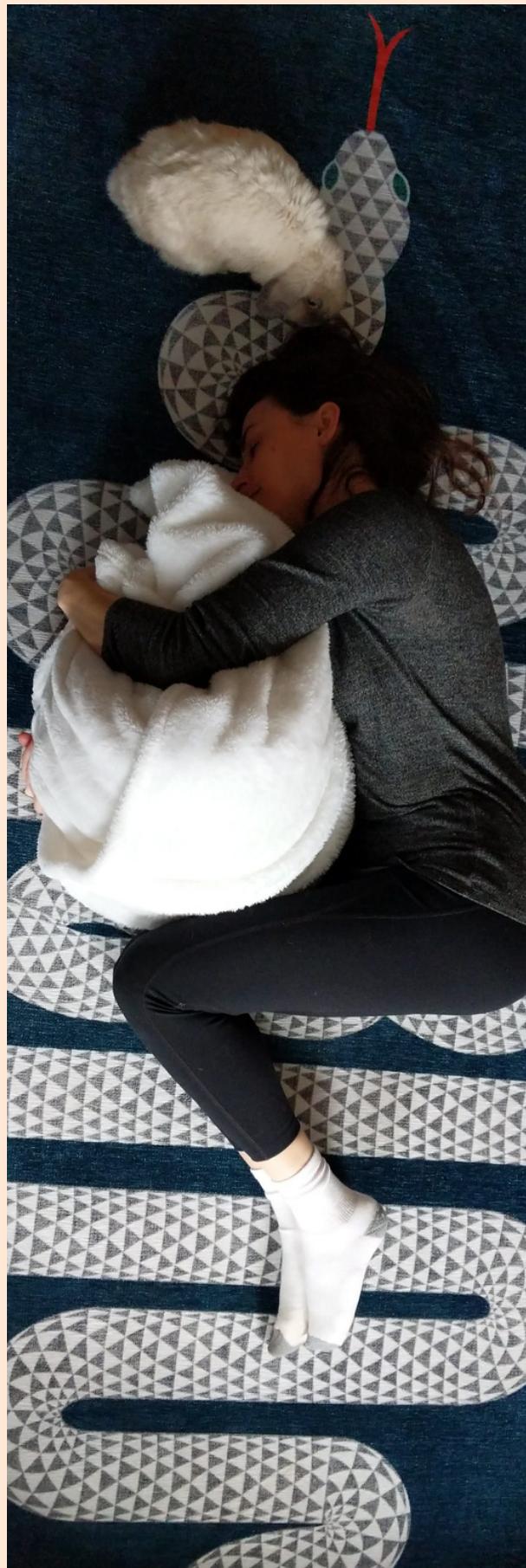
Echoed focus on the sensorial and highlighted the act of holding a stuffed object as particularly comforting.

02

Susan Pitler, MS, LPC

I had an in-depth interview with a therapist who specializes in using somatic experiencing techniques to treat trauma.

Solidified my understanding of the mammalian nervous system, and how comfort is tied to feelings of safety and co-regulation.



Co-regulation, synchronization, and well-being

"Co-regulation refers to a process in which **partners' emotions are bi-directionally linked** and mutually dampening... contributing to emotional stability, or homeostasis for both partners" ¹

"The supportive process...is called “co-regulation.” This term began as a description of adult support for infants, but is now used to describe an **interactive process of regulatory support that can occur within the context of caring relationships across the lifespan**" ²

“A number of studies...have explored various types of synchronization in infants, pairs and groups, indicating that feelings of cooperation, trust, compassion and increased prosocial behaviors depend... **on the establishment of a spontaneous synchronization of various physiological rhythms between individuals.**” ³

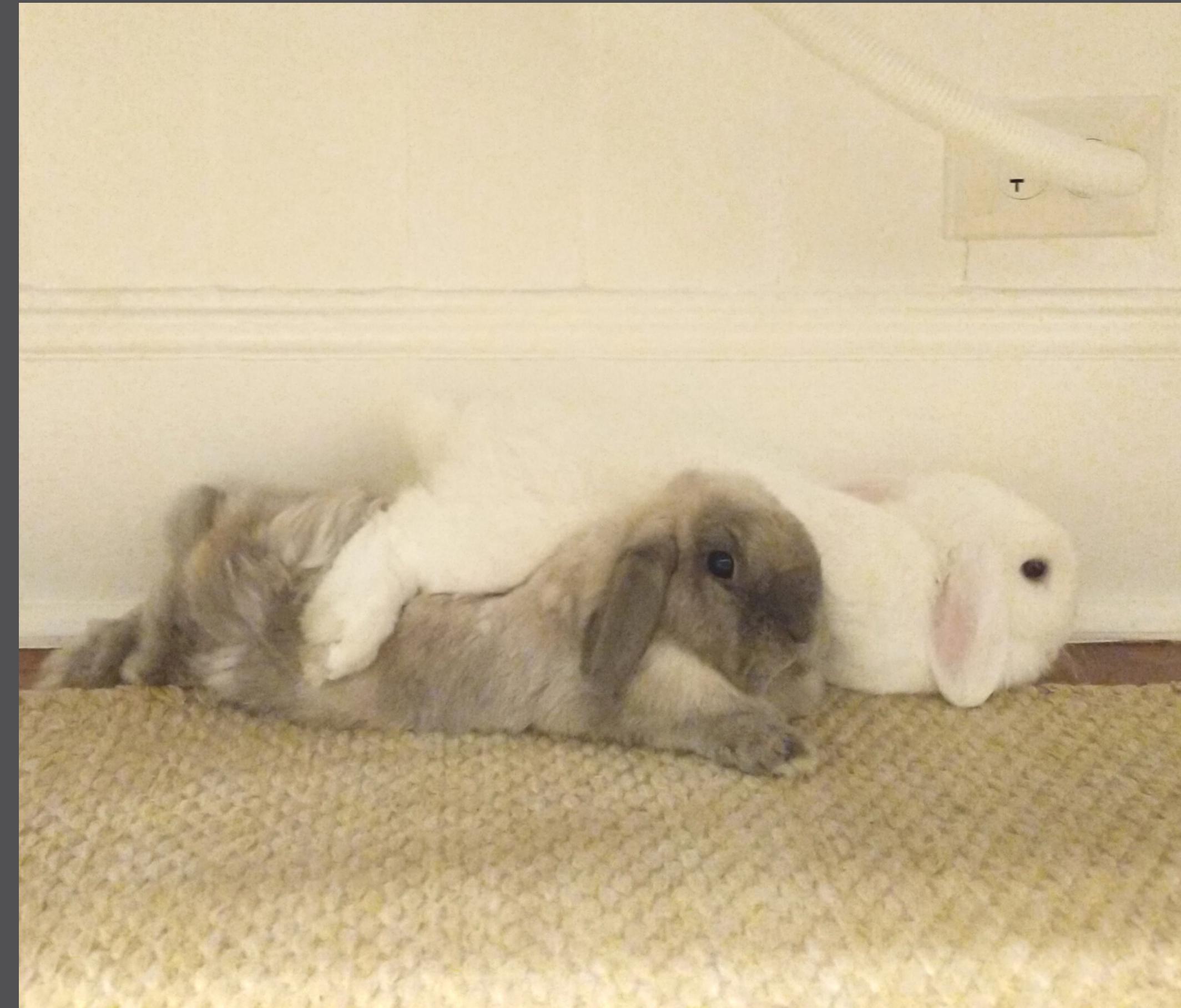
"Our results demonstrate that co-sleeping in the same bed **provides environmental conditions for interaction between heart rhythms.**" ⁴

1. Rebecca Reed, et.al, "Distinguishing Emotional Co-Regulation From Co-Dysregulation: An Investigation of Emotional Dynamics and Body-Weight in Romantic Couples" *Emotion*, 15 no. 1 (2015): 45–60.<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0038561>

2. Heenam Yoon, Sang Ho Choi, Sang Kyong Kim, et. al. "Human Heart Rhythms Synchronize While Co-sleeping" *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10 (2019):190 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fphys.2019.00190>

3. K.D. Rosanbalm, & D.W. Murray, "Caregiver Co-regulation Across Development: A Practice Brief" Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, US. Department of Health and Human Services Brief 80 (2017): <https://fpg.unc.edu/sites/fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/reports-and-policy-briefs/Co-RegulationFromBirthThroughYoungAdulthood.pdf>

4. Rollin McCraty, "New Frontiers in Heart Rate Variability and Social Coherence Research: Techniques, Technologies, and Implications for Improving Group Dynamics and Outcomes" *Frontiers in Psychology*, 5 (2017): 267 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2017.00267>



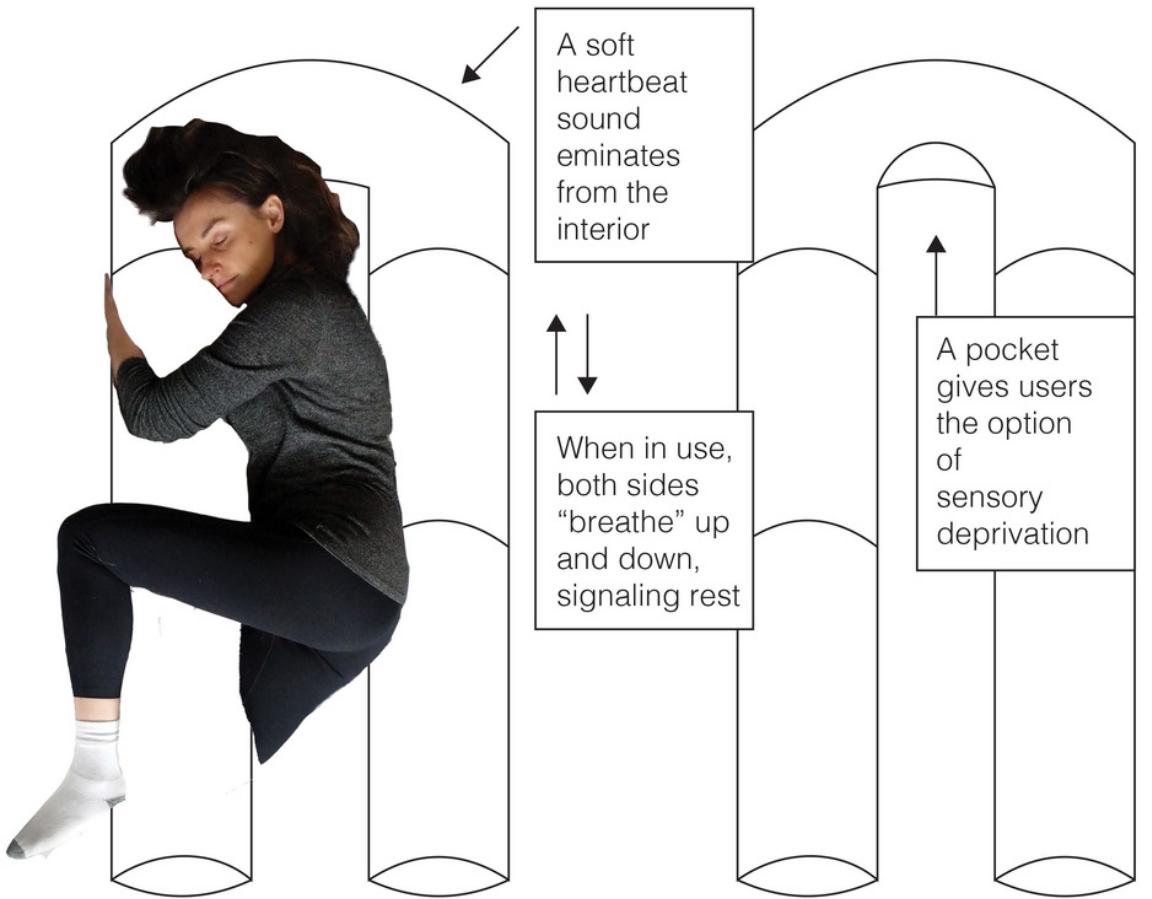
Is living (and specifically, co-sleeping) with other mammals beneficial to the nervous system?

- Human-animal interactions like stroking fur benefit our social, emotional, and mental health
- There's cultural and historic precedence for sleeping with animals to keep warm and maintain security
- Studies have shown that sleeping in a bed with a pet is popular, even though animals can disrupt sleep and create health problems



Final Research Question:

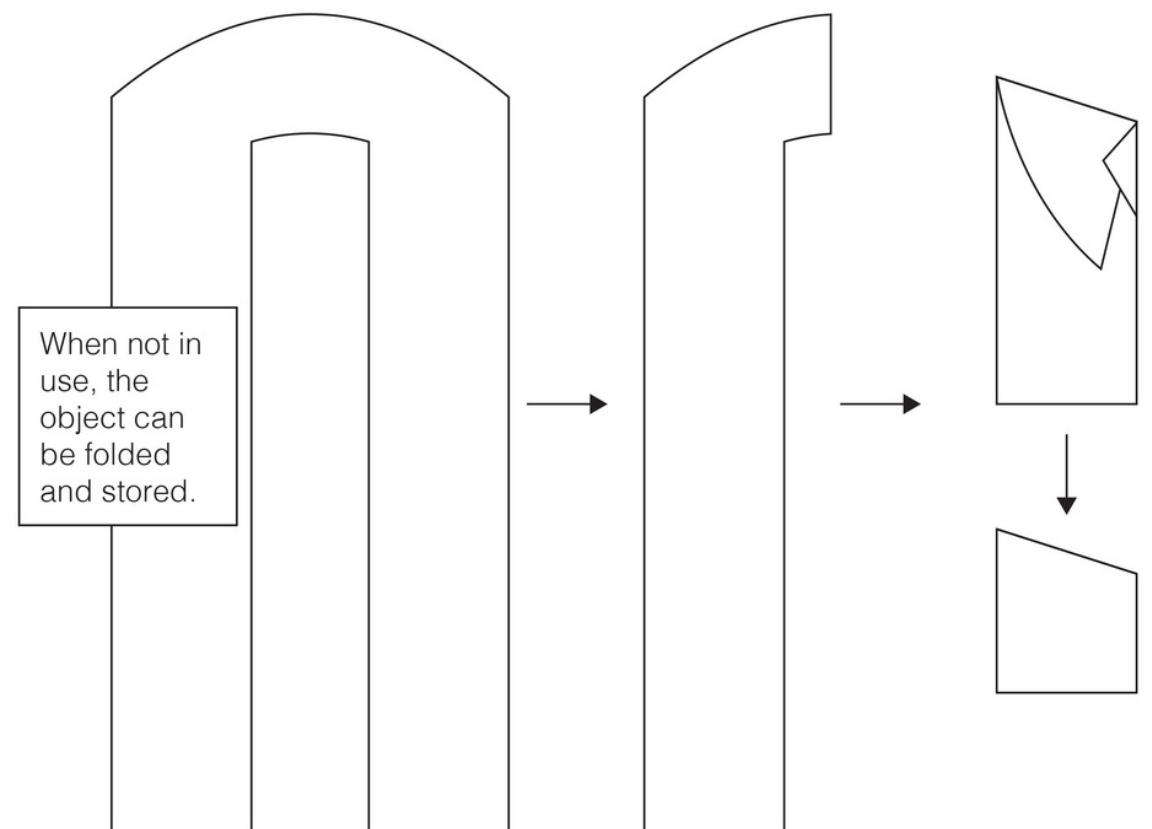
**Can technology take inspiration
from non-human mammalian
physiologies to enhance the
human experience of rest,
comfort, and coziness?**



The Concept:

A multi-sensorial resting object that evokes a cozy feeling of sleeping safely with a pack of mammals.

The object will breathe, have a heartbeat, and offer other experiences that can be modified depending on individual preference.



RELATED CONCEPTS & PRINCIPLES

■ Calm Technology / Warm Technology

Technology that meets human needs while remaining unobtrusive, moving from our periphery to the center of our experience and back.

■ Emotional Design

Design that anticipates and accommodates user needs, evoking an emotional response.

■ Cozy Futurism

A set of principles first established by software engineer Jose Luis Ricón Fernández de la Puente that centers a vision for a *nice* future, not just one that is innovative or technologically advanced.

RELATED WORK



Image Credit: [Martin Dee](#)

The Haptic Creature

A small, animal-like social robot created by Steve Yohanan at the University of Vancouver, CA



Image Credit: [Lovotics.com](#)

Lovotics Robots

Robots designed to love and be loved by humans, created by Dr. Hooman Samani at University of Plymouth, UK.



Image Credit: [Kickstarter](#)

Moflin

An AI-informed robot pet by Vanguard Industries that learns interaction patterns and "grows" a personality.

Fin.

THANK YOU!

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