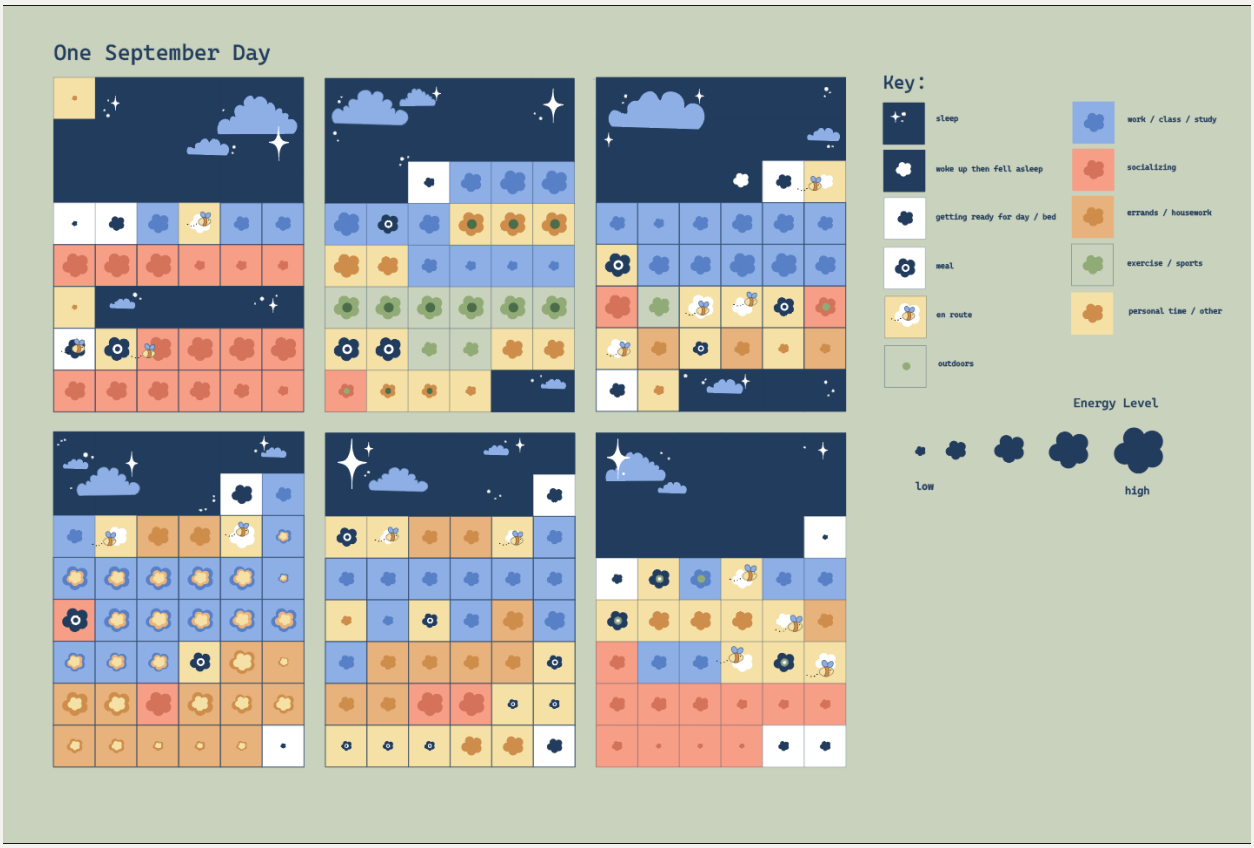
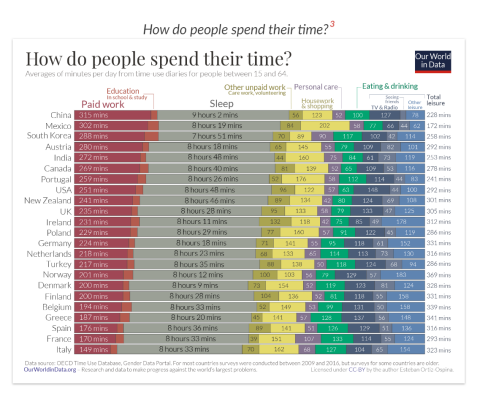
Garden Grid Time Visualization



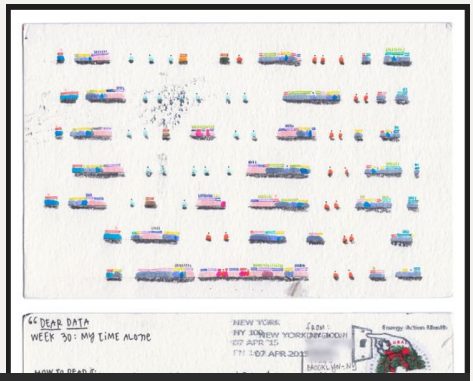
Project Overview:

For this week's topic of data visualizing, I was drawn to the idea of visualizing time, with a focus on personal experiences and how we allocate our 24 hours each day. While we all share the same daily timeframe, the ways we organize and distribute our time to achieve our goals are infinitely diverse.



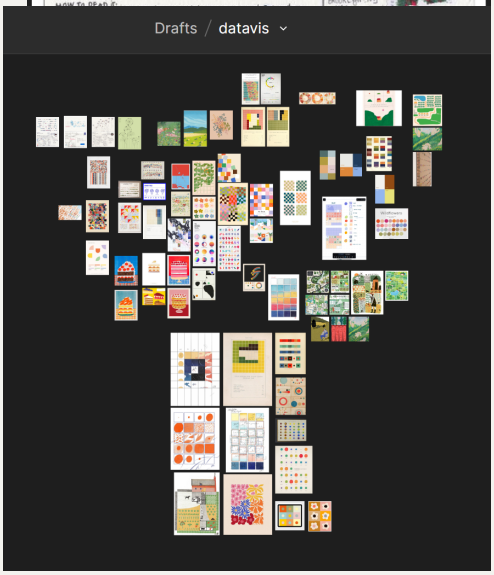
Project Goal:

The primary objective of this project is to create a visually engaging, playful, and abstract representation of a typical 24-hour day.



Inspiration from "Dear Data" Project:

This visualization was heavily inspired by the analog data drawing project titled "Dear Data". The project follows Giorgia Lupi and Stefanie Posavec, two information designers living on different sides of the Atlantic, as they hand draw their personal data and send it to each other in the form of postcards. Each week they had a different type of data to visualize - that week's goodbyes, laughter, indecision, observed beauty, etc. I resonated with the idea of using our personal data visualization as a way to connect with ourselves and others at a deeper level, and decided to go along the route of visualizing a 'day in the life' of the people closest and most important to me.



Visual Research:

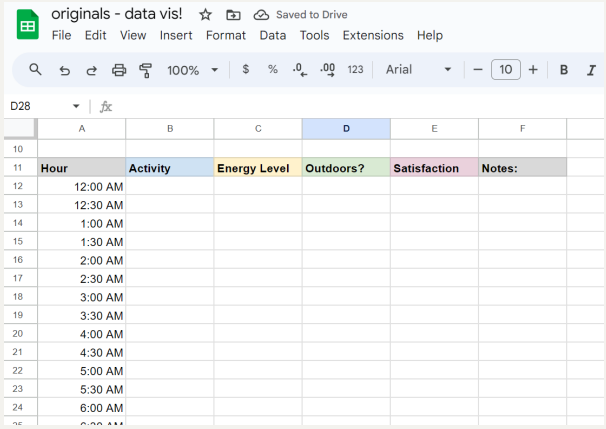
The project began with visual research to explore various methods of visualizing time, including linear, circular, and grid-based systems. Ultimately, I decided to represent time using a grid system to allow more flexibility and creativity with the final drawing.

Data Collection:

To bring this concept to life, I gathered data from my closest family members and friends regarding how they spent their day. This data served as the foundation for creating a coded grid system that represents an individual's daily routine.

I designed an Excel survey and distributed it to six of my close family & friends, including different age groups of working adults, high school students, and college students. They were asked to self-report their activities for the specific day of Friday, September 22nd, 2023, in half-hour intervals. The survey included columns for:

- **Hour:** Time in half-hour intervals
- **Activity**: Main use of time (e.g., sleep, eat, class, etc.)
- **Energy Level:** A rating scale from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating high energy and alertness, and 1 indicating exhaustion
- **Outdoors:** A binary choice indicating whether the activity occurred outdoors
- **Satisfaction:** A rating scale from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating high satisfaction and 1 indicating dissatisfaction or frustration
- **Notes:** A qualitative section for participants to share additional thoughts about each time frame



Data Cleaning:
Following the collection of survey responses, I cleaned the self-recorded data provided by my family and friends. As I cleaned the data, I also created a key and sketched out what each schedule grid would look like under the system.

Color Scheme:
I designed a color scheme aimed at capturing the essence of a harmonious and playful September day. In future projects, I am considering the possibility of using different color schemes for each person to further personalize and reflect their sentiments and unique perspectives on time.

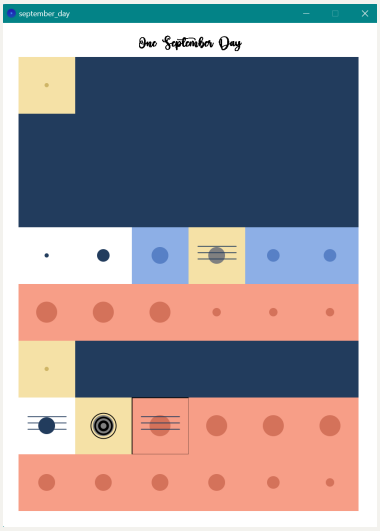
Processing and Illustrator:

After creatin the visualization rules, I wrote code to generate the schedule grid and automatically populate it based on the uploaded CSV file. The output from Processing was exported as an SVG file and further refined in Adobe Illustrator, such as adding hand drawn details.

Iterations & design choices:

I initially represented energy levels using circles, but I felt that this approach lacked cohesion in the overall design. I aimed for a visual style that would provide immediate context and a unified look.

To achieve this, I revisited my visual research board and began incorporating floral and garden elements into the design. With this more focused design direction, the icon choices and drawn



elements make more sense together in painting an image of a garden. The circles became flowers, horizontal lines became a cute bee, the different grid colors are flower patches, and the sparkling night sky acts as a frame for balance.

I also like the symbolism of the garden to represent one's day - a holistic perspective that illustrates the various aspects one nurtures and cultivates throughout the day, encompassing mental, physical, social, and well-being.

Designs for the Key:

- **"En Route" Bee**: I decided to draw a little bee (with dashed lines showing its trail) to represent the movement of being "en route", moving from one place to another, from one activity to another.
- **"Get ready for the day / bed" flower:** Since sleep is being represented by a deep blue, I thought a smaller deep blue flower on a white grid square could represent the transition from state of sleeping to being awake (or the other way around).
- **"Meal" flower:** I drew a flower with concentric circles to represent "powering up" and new energy that comes from eating. The little blue circle inside the white circle can also be the yummy food inside a belly.
- **Size of flowers:** In the visualization, the size of the flower in each cell represents the reported energy level (on a scale of 1-5). I collected data on both energy level and satisfaction, but chose to focus on the energy level to illustrate its fluctuations during the day and not over-complicate the drawing.

Final Design:

For the final design, I displayed the personal garden grids of my six participants side-by-side on a poster. On the right hand side there is a key to read the individual versions of this random September day.