

DESIGNING  
USER  
EXPERIENCES  
2023



# THOUGHTSPILL

A mobile app aimed at encouraging reflection

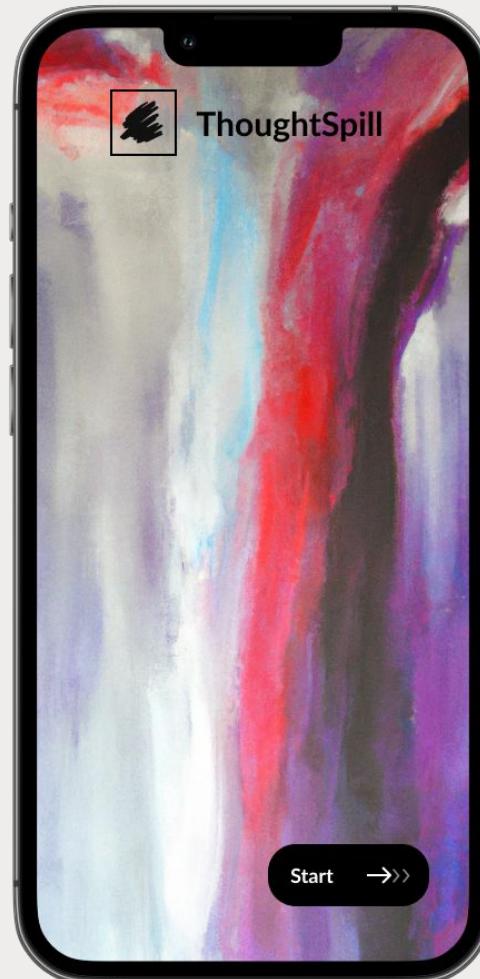
AZIZ IBRAHIM

# 1

# INTRODUCTION

# THE DESIGN

- A mobile app based on the idea of *slow technology*
- Designed to:
  - Support moments of mental rest and creativity
  - Feel more in tune with yourself
  - Promote reflection over time
  - Make speaking about reflective and personal questions more fun



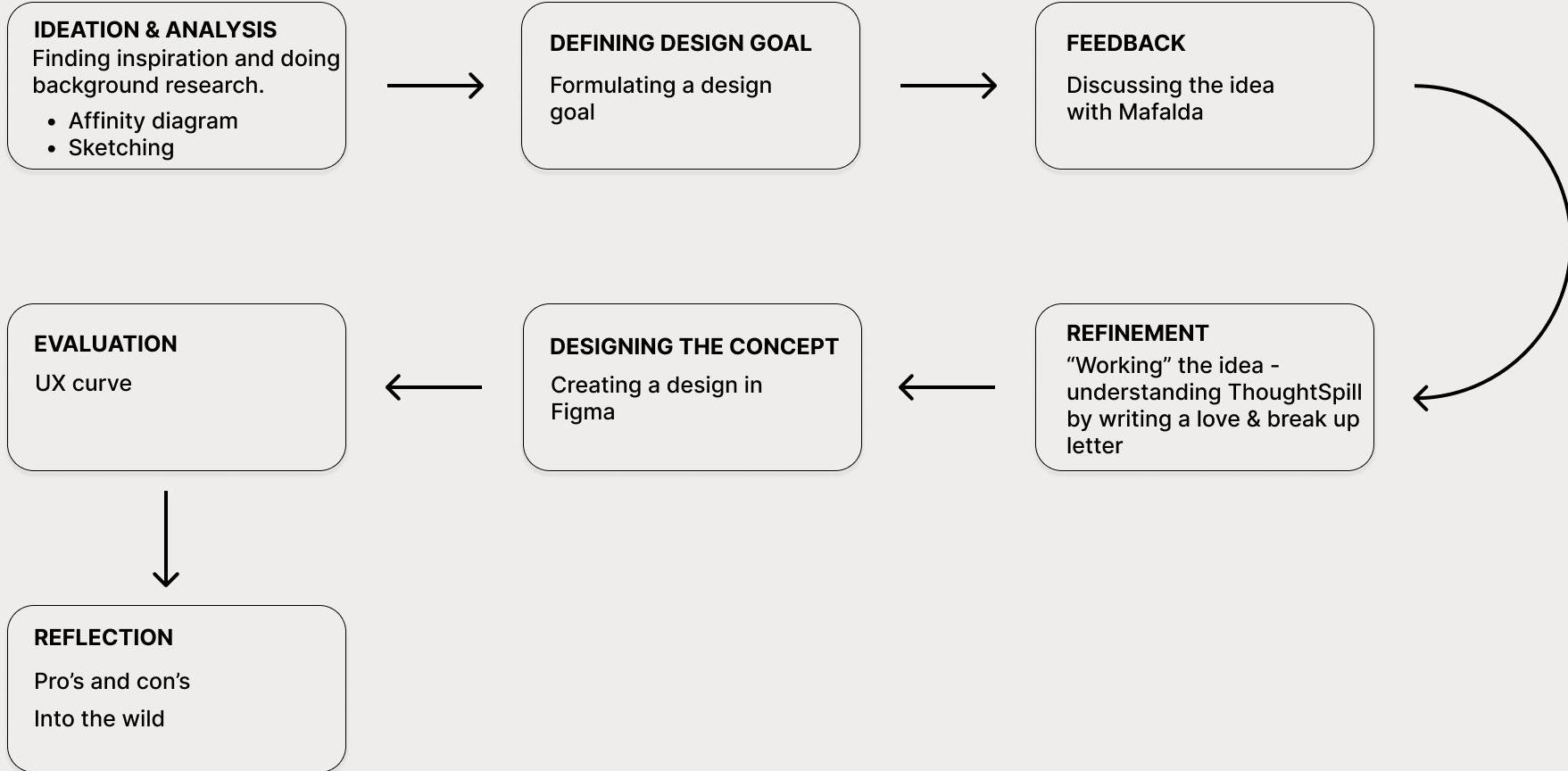
## DESIGN GOAL

“ To speak about one's thoughts surrounding a personal question, and in so doing, be a part of a personal and unique experience of reflection and creative expression through a slowly developed abstract art piece. ”



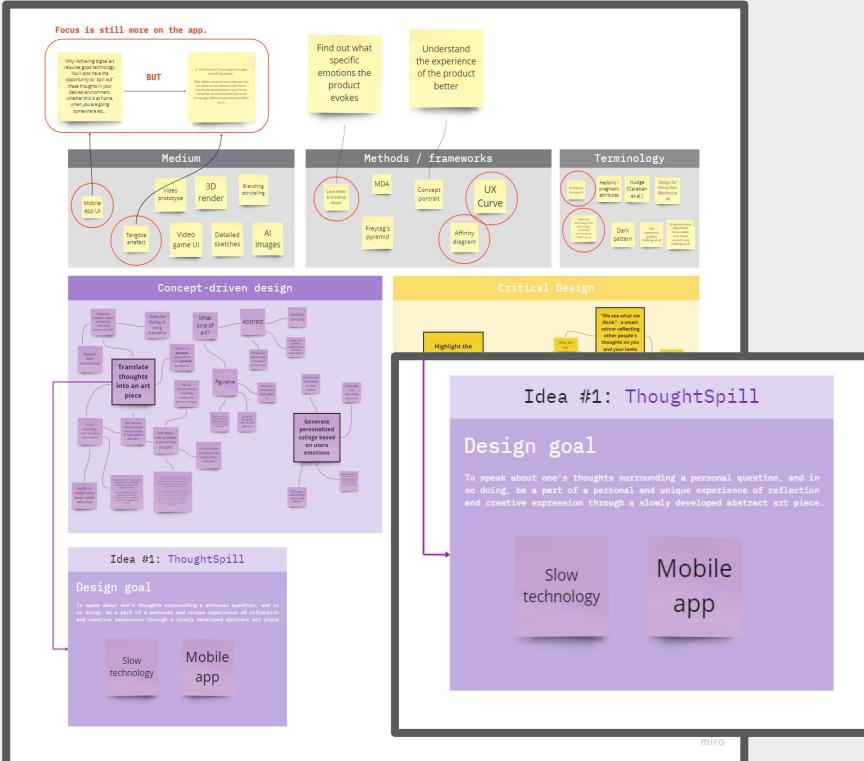
# **2 DESIGN PROCESS**

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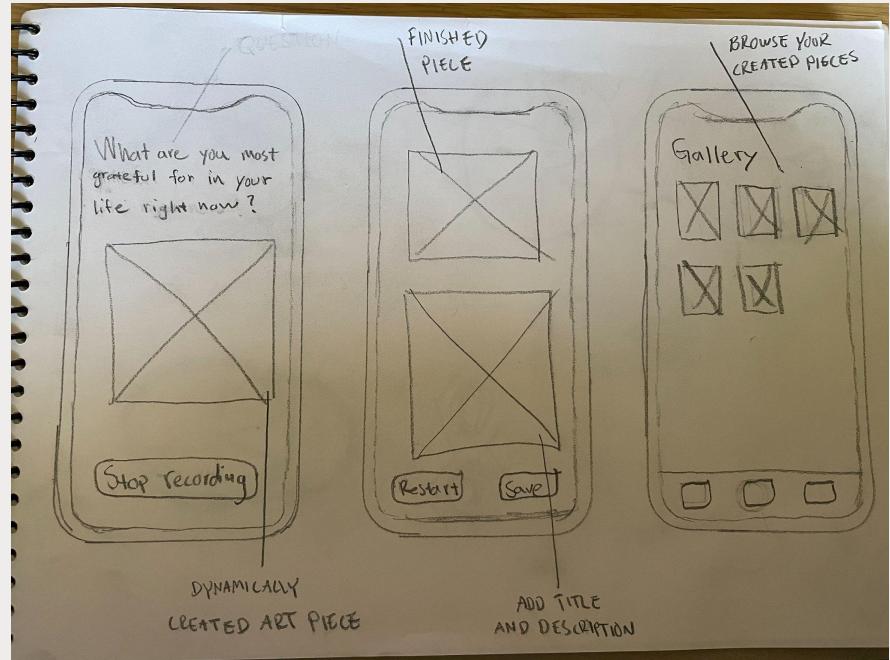


# IDEATION & ANALYSIS

## MIRO BOARD



## INITIAL SKETCH



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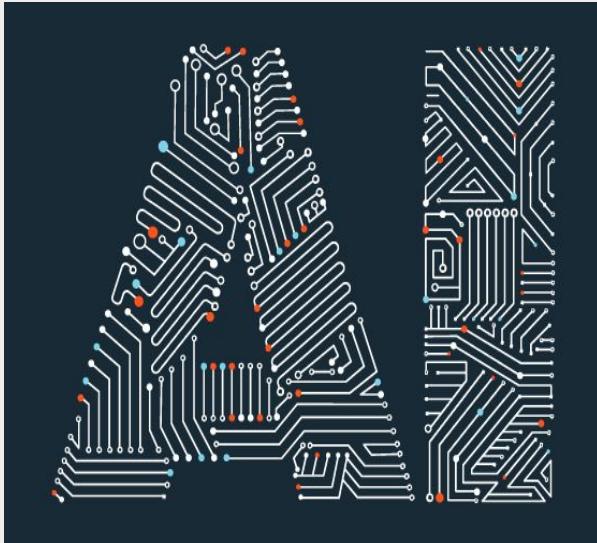
# INSPIRATION

## LIFE IS STRANGE



You play as a high school student with the power to rewind time. Allows exploration of friendship, loss, personal growth, emotions and self-reflection.

## AI MODELS



## REFLECTY



Journaling app that guides users through daily self-reflection.

# UNDERSTANDING THOUGHTSPILL - LOVE & BREAKUP LETTERS

## LOVE LETTER

Dear ThoughtSpill,

From the moment we met I sensed a strong connection between us. Never before had I been with someone that initiated interesting conversations and gave me **room for self-expression**.

The way you absorb my thoughts and translate them into an art piece enables me to **reflect on questions**. I don't always think about or wouldn't think about. To speak while being provided with a slowly developing art piece from the thoughts that evolve during our conversations also **gives me a sense of calm**. Although these conversations typically don't last for long, I really appreciate being able to speak about something that makes me think. Some of the questions as well as the art pieces **inspire** me in different ways, **I'm always curious** to how the end product will look when we meet and how it will adapt during our conversation. As time goes, I'm sure these conversations will be a part of me and give rise to all kinds of emotions..

miro

## BREAKUP LETTER

Dear ThoughtSpill,

I never thought I would find myself writing these words, but the time has come for us to part ways.

When we first met, you captivated me with your innovative concept. You offered a platform where I could express my thoughts and emotions, and your questions and art pieces gave me a time of reflection.

But as time went on, I started to realize that our relationship was becoming stagnant. The questions you posed, once interesting, began to feel **repetitive, predictable** and **boring**. I yearned for deeper exploration. Yet, you seemed content to remain within the boundaries of familiarity.

Your abstract art, **once fascinating**, now feels detached and **lacking in meaning**. The colors and shapes that once evoked different emotions in me now appear shallow and lacking in depth.

Bye.

miro

## SETTLING FOR EMOTIONS



Calmness

Curiosity

Inspiration

## PUTTING IT TOGETHER

### DESIGN THEME

Slow technology

### DESIRED EMOTIONS

Calmness  
Curiosity  
Inspiration

### MEDIUM

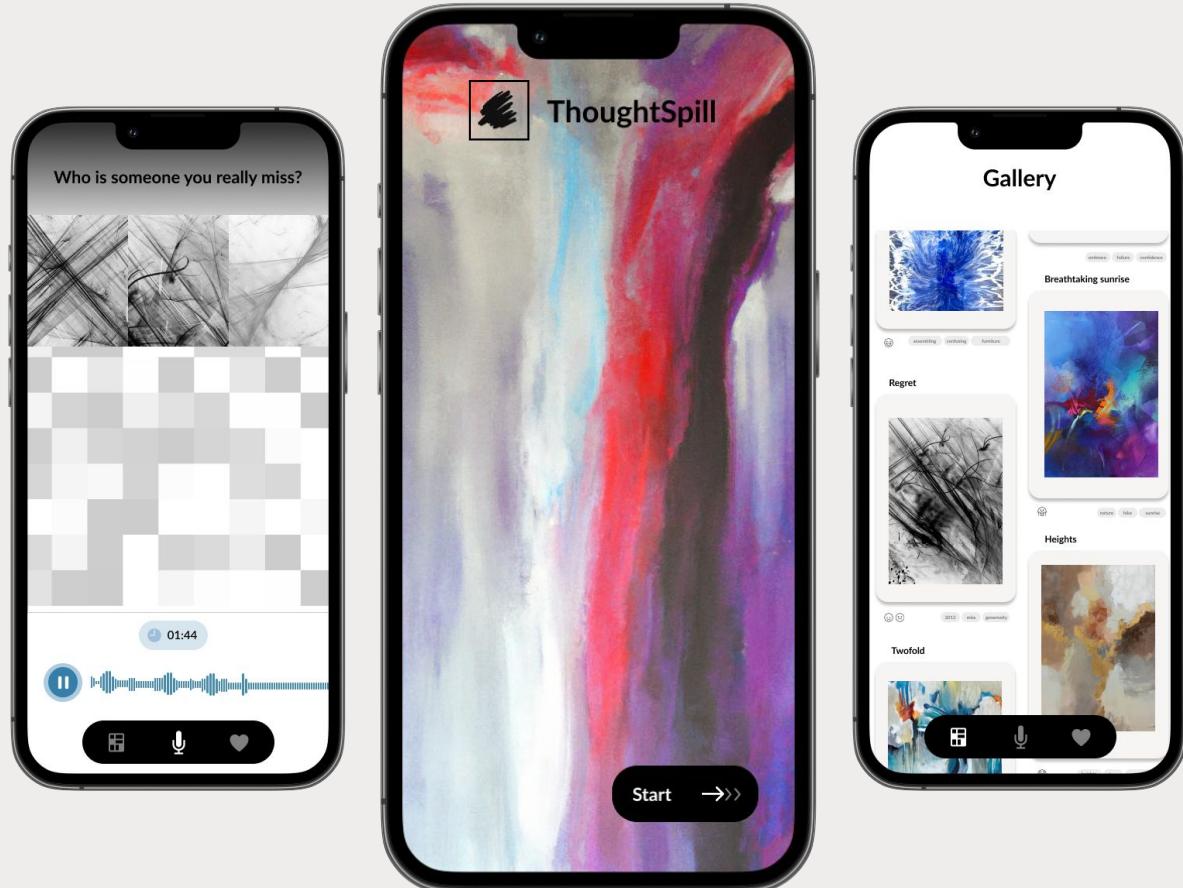
Mobile app (with support of “smart frames”)



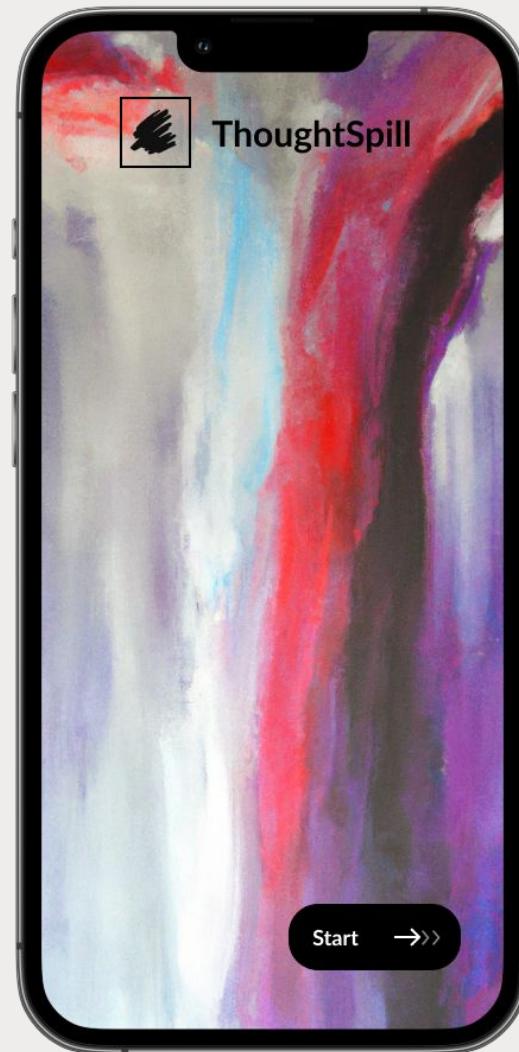
# **3 FINAL DESIGN**

# THOUGHTSPILL

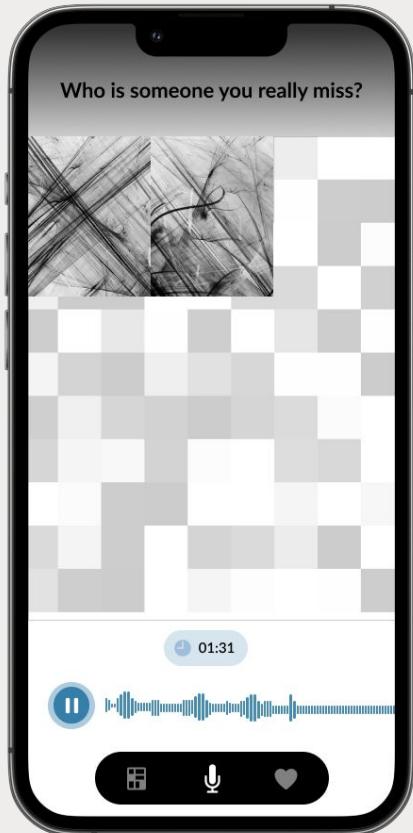
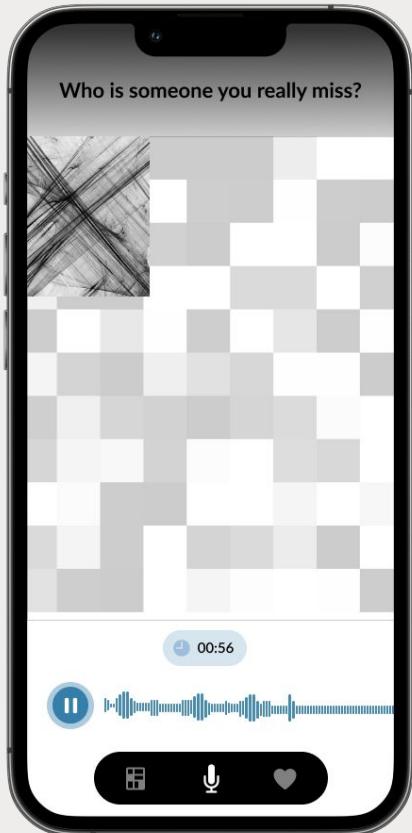
Record your thoughts,  
experience the creation of a unique  
abstract art piece,  
and take part in a moment of mental  
rest and reflection



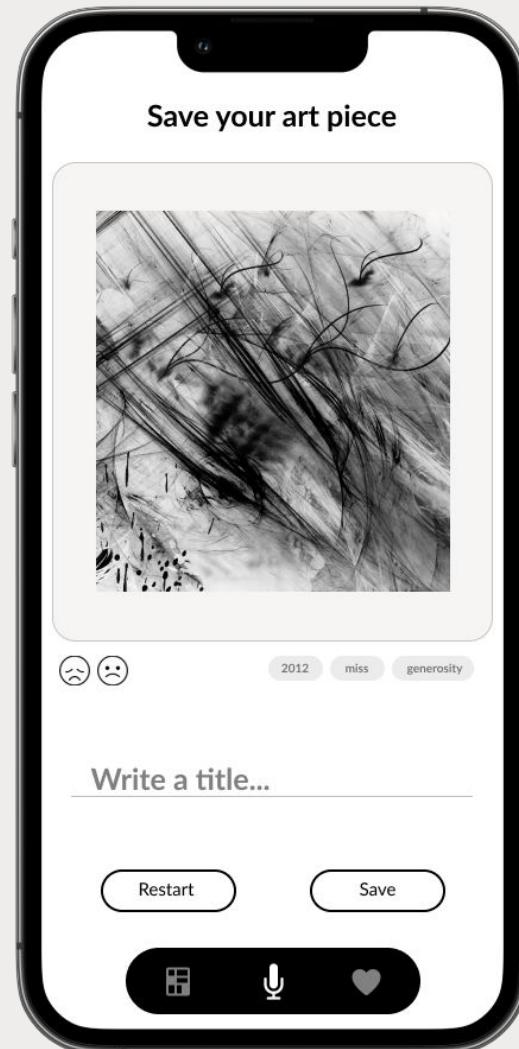
# SPLASH SCREEN



# RECORD



**SAVE**



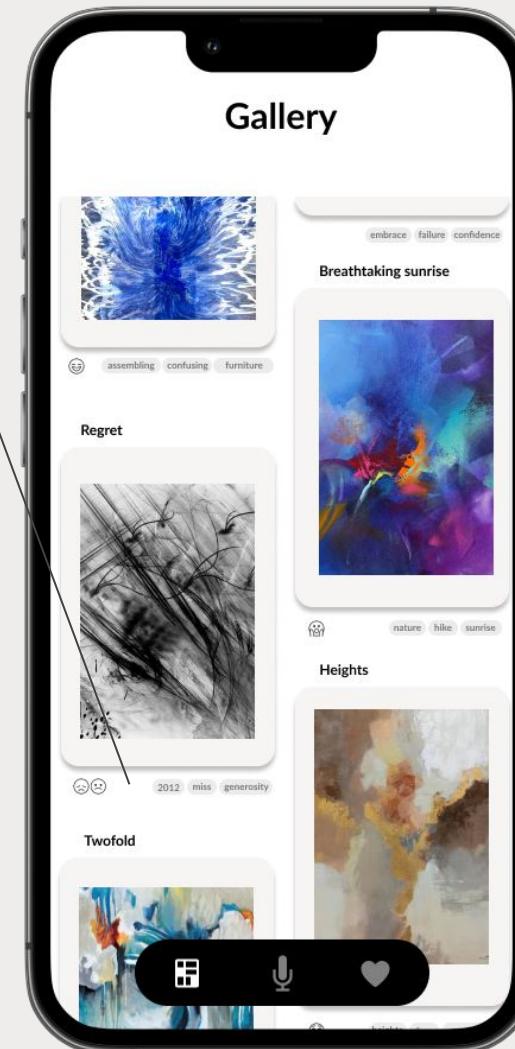
# GALLERY

## Emojis and words

Emojis and words may help make the recording more descriptive and also put more context behind the art piece.



2012 miss generosity



# SMART FRAME



## EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- *If you could have a conversation with your younger self, what advice would you give?*
- *Share a memory that holds a special place in your heart. Why is it significant to you?*
- *Reflect on a moment when you felt truly inspired. What sparked that inspiration?*
- *Describe a challenge you've overcome and what you learned from it.*
- *Think about a fear or limitation that you would like to overcome. How might you approach it?*



# **4 DESIGN RATIONALE**

## SLOW TECHNOLOGY

**Reflective technology:** *Designing technology that both invites reflection and, at the same time, is reflective in its expression*

- The design prioritizes simplicity and creates an environment conducive for reflection
- “Smart frames” may contribute more to reflection as they have similar aesthetics to real paintings
- Invites to reflection by asking questions that are reflective in nature, and through interpretation of an abstract art piece

**Time technology:** *Designing technology that “amplifies the presence of time”*

- May take time to understand how your words impacts the way the art is formed
- Slowing down time by developing the art piece slowly, and thus also makes reflection more in focus
- “Smart frames” enable reflection over time by taking up place in the environment

**Amplified environments:** *Designing technology that “amplifies the presence of things”*

- “Smart frames” creates a visual anchor that directs attention and encourages a deeper engagement with the environment
- Through contrasting elements such as colors and textures, “smart frames” also bring attention to surrounding objects



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# ABSTRACT ART & AMBIGUITY

## Gaver et al. (2003)

*“By impelling people to interpret situations for themselves, it encourages them to start grappling conceptually with systems and their contexts, and thus to establish deeper and more personal relations with the meanings offered by those systems.”*

## Aviv, V. (2014)

*“Abstract art frees our brain from the dominance of reality, enabling it to flow within its inner states, create new emotional and cognitive associations, and activate brain-states that are otherwise harder to access”*

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# THOUGHTSPILL AS A RICH EXPERIENCE

Rich experience: The unreachable, e.g. someone who passed away

Negative emotion: Longing

Positive emotion: Dreaminess

Negative stimulus: A specific question

Subjective transformation:

- Art piece becomes more desirable and significant
- User become more passionate about the art piece

Protective frame: Detachment frame

- User interacts with an art piece that symbolizes losing someone

 <p>The unreachable</p>	<p><b>Longing:</b> To experience a strong and painful desire for someone or something that is out of reach.</p> <p><b>Dreaminess:</b> To enjoy a calm state of introspection and thoughtfulness</p>	<p><i>Profoundly desirable</i></p> <p>People perceive an object or event as more deeply desirable and significant – as something worth investing time in.</p>	<p><i>Dreamily passionate</i></p> <p>People become more passionate about an object or event, but in a passive, dreamily way.</p>	<p><i>Inaccessible object or concept</i></p> <p>e.g., an inaccessible object (e.g., an expensive sports car, the unobtainable piece of a collection), environment (e.g., home, an exotic place), event (e.g., being with a certain person, longing back to one's own childhood), a missed opportunity, etc.</p>	<p>- Control frame (and/or)</p> <p>- Detachment frame</p>
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# HEDONIC ATTRIBUTES

## STIMULATION

"Individuals strive for **personal development**, i.e., proliferation of knowledge and development of skills"

## EVOCATION

"Products can **provoke memories**. In this case the product represents past events, relationships or thoughts that are important to the individual"

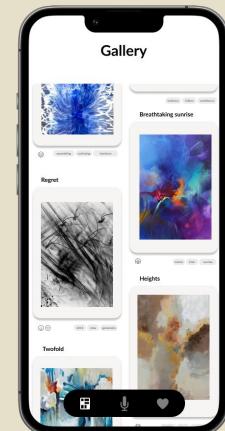
## IDENTIFICATION

"To fulfill this need, a product has to **communicate identity**"

Depending on the question, some may encourage personal development more than others, and some may provoke memories



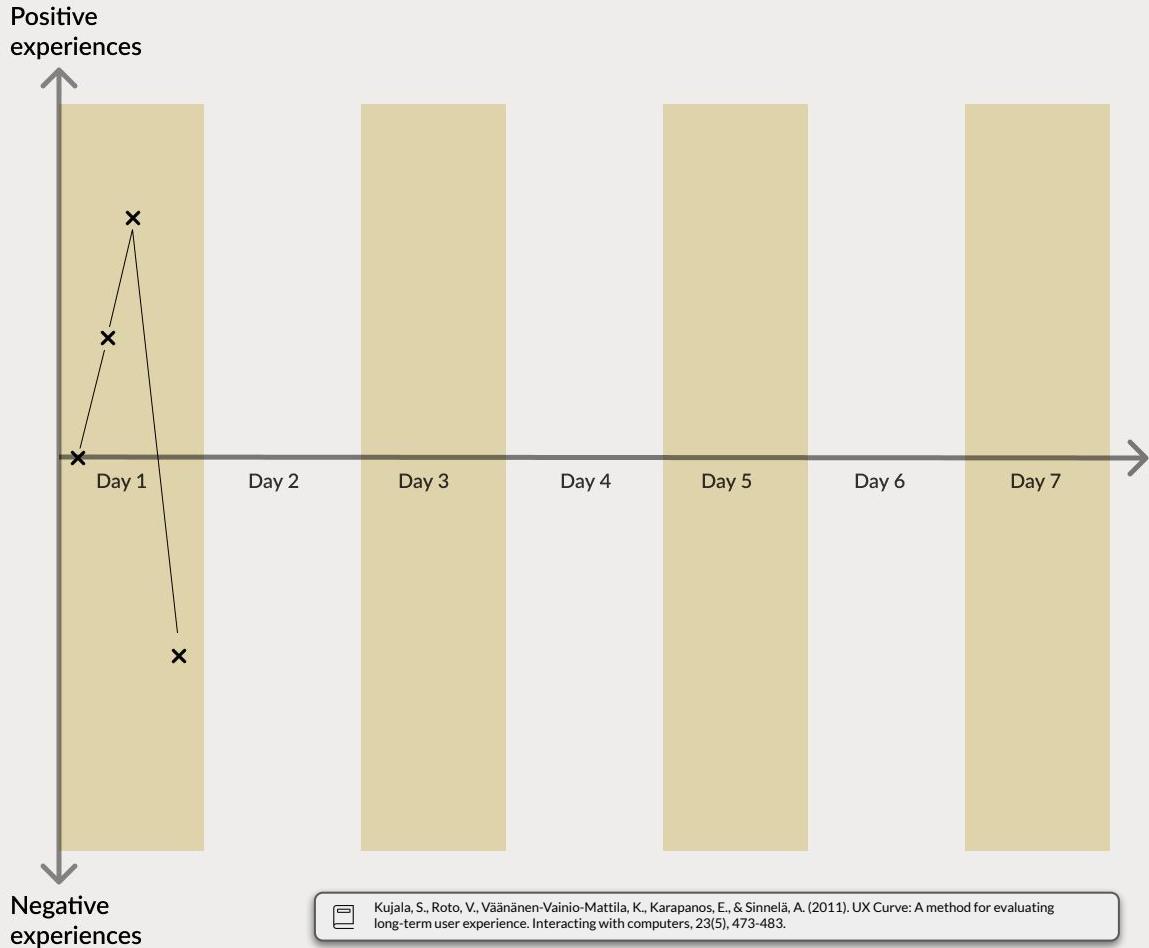
Create unique art pieces through a personal experience





# **5 EVALUATION**

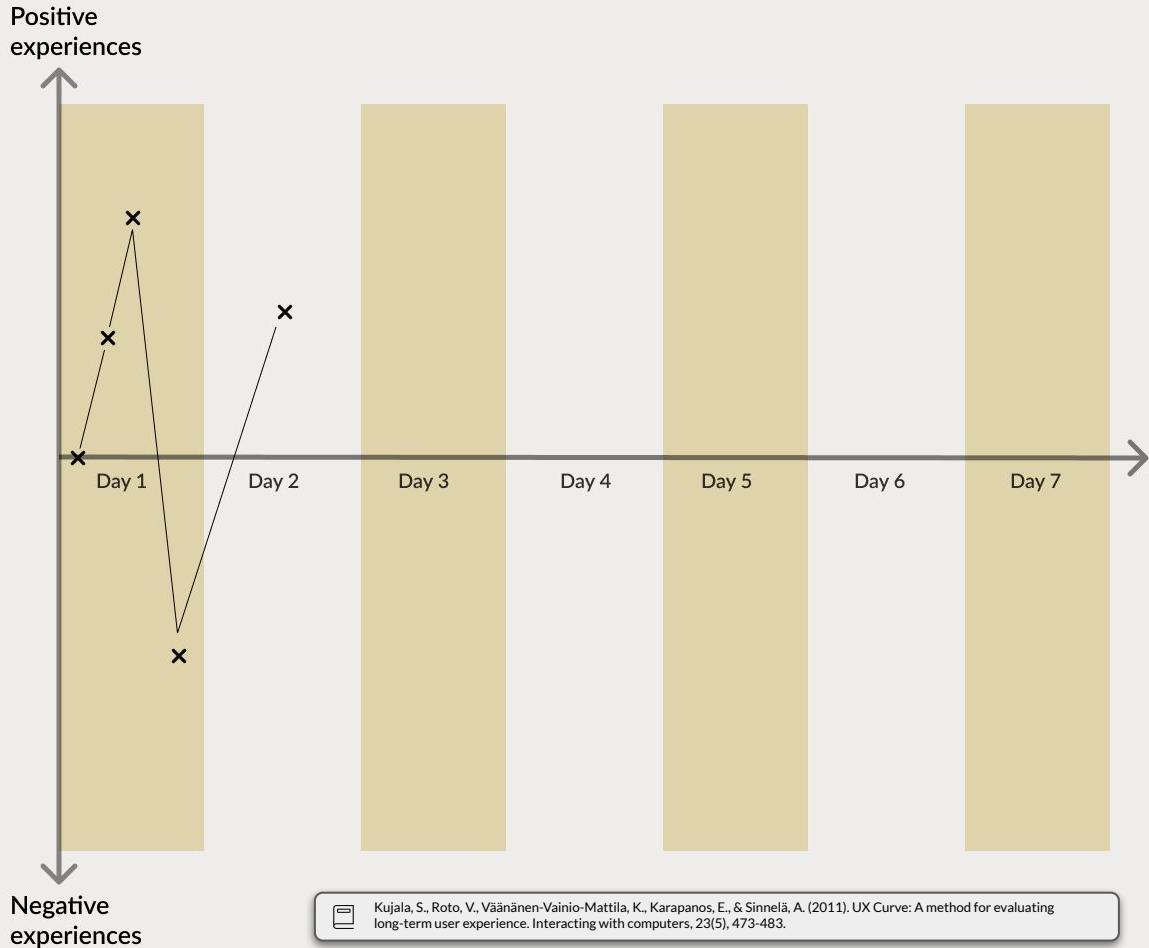
## EVALUATION - UX CURVE



### Day 1

- Installed the app. Explored it a bit, seemed pretty simple in its functionality.
- Started recording myself answering the question "Think about a fear or limitation that you would like to overcome. How might you approach it?". I hadn't thought much about this question before, but it made me realize that I should try to address the things that limit/elicit fear in me, in order to grow more as a person.
- Didn't know what to expect at this point, but then saw an art piece unfold while I was speaking. This really surprised me!
- I stopped the recording, saved the art piece, and then looked at the art piece in the gallery. I didn't understand it because it didn't resemble anything to me.

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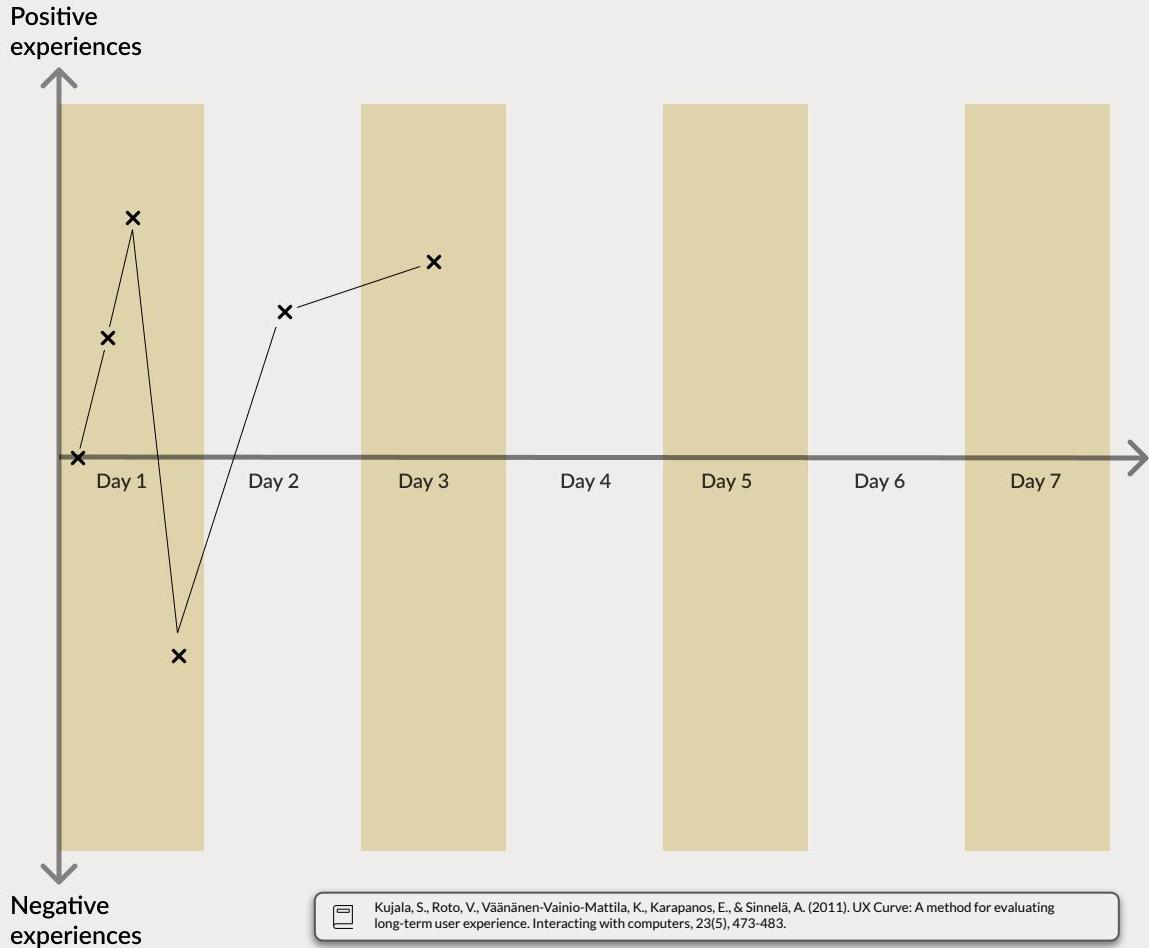
Day 2

I revisited the same art piece again. This time I think it made more sense to me? I interpreted the sweeping brush strokes as the journey of overcoming, and the fragmented or chaotic brushstrokes symbolizing the initial fear or limitation. As the artwork progresses, the brushstrokes becomes more fluid, cohesive, and dynamic, reflecting the process of moving beyond the fear.

Thinking back, I was talking about overcoming a limitation and that the journey wouldn't be easy, but that I eventually would reach that goal.



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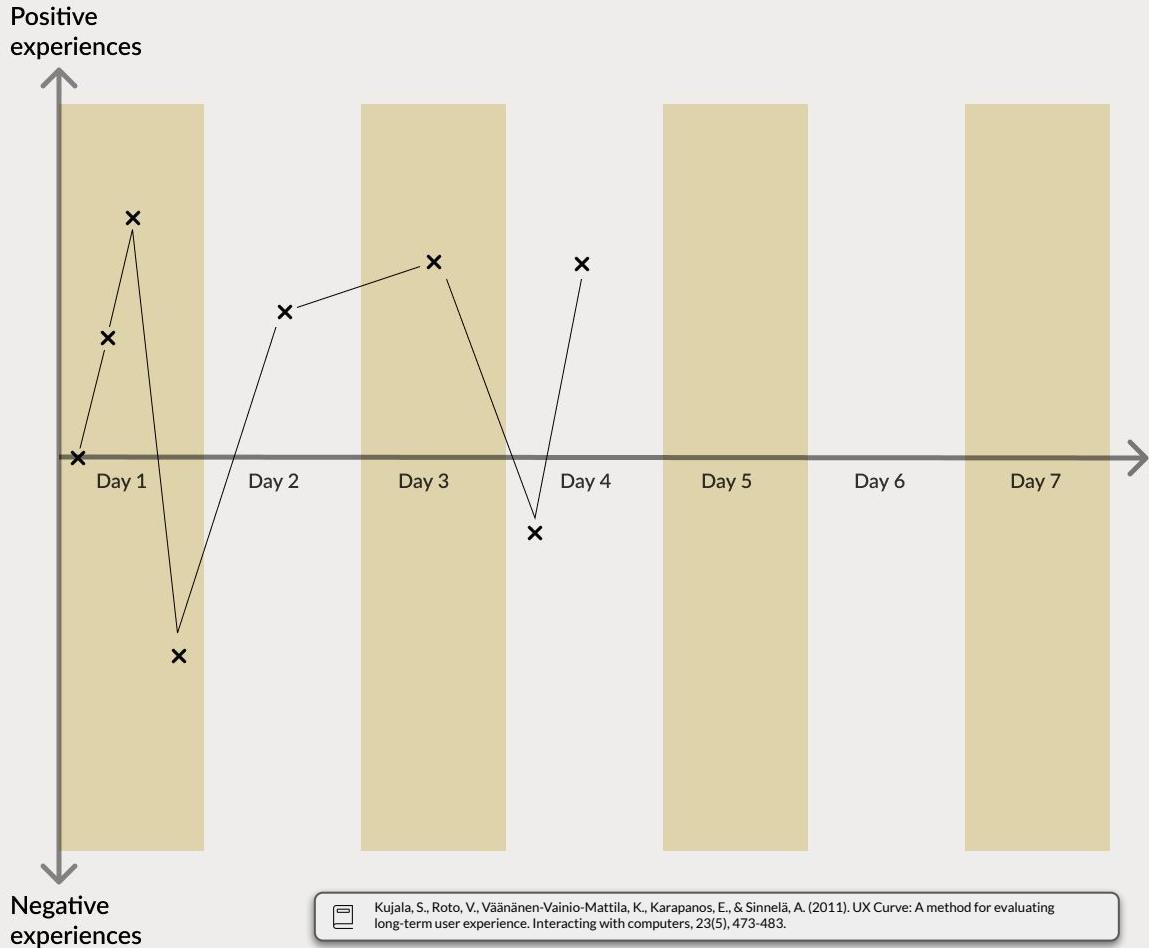
Day 3

I've gotten a hang of the app and made it into a habit to use it because it helps me wind down. I also noticed some details; the app chooses 3 words that are said during the recording as well as associates it with different emotions/physical reactions.

These words help me to reflect on the art piece and thus also the question by easily remembering what the recording was about and without having to actively listen to it if I don't want to. The emojis also gives a sense of the "vibe" of the content in the recording.



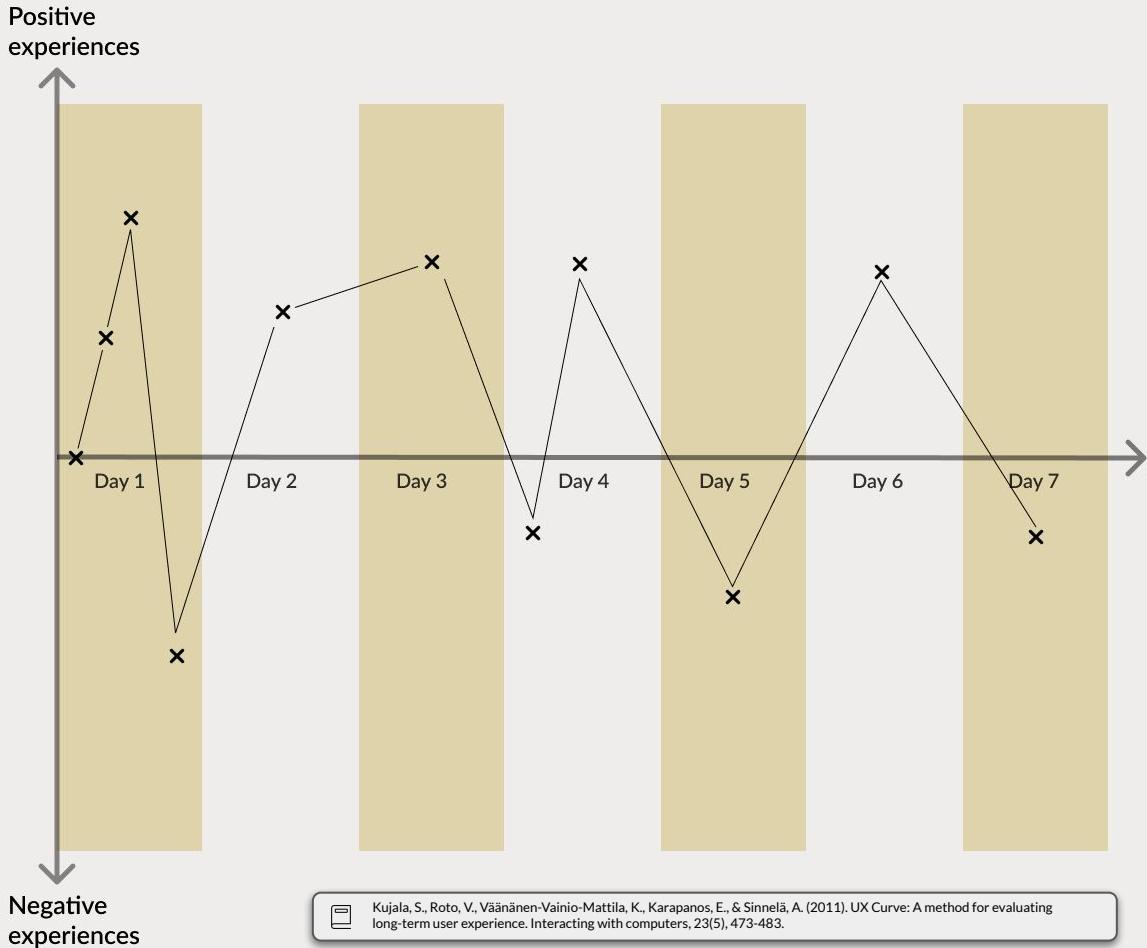
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## Day 4

- I was going to wait until I got home to use the app, but figured why not do it on my lunch break? Being able to record wherever I am is really convenient!
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## EVALUATION - UX CURVE



Day 5-7

I find it really cool that the app mirrors the art pieces directly onto a smart frame. In the beginning I saw it as a way of making my space more lively, but seeing the art pieces change periodically has made me reflect more on the art questions and art pieces over time and not just forgotten about them in my phone.

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The background of the slide features a vibrant, abstract painting style. It consists of broad, sweeping brushstrokes in shades of red, orange, yellow, and blue, creating a sense of motion and depth. The colors are blended together, with darker tones appearing in the shadows and lighter tones in the highlights, giving the image a painterly texture.

# 6 REFLECTION

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## Possible improvements

- Back and forth dialogue with the app to gain more depth out of the reflection
- Be able to store your recurring reflections of a question and its belonging art piece to see how they change over time

## Pros

- Supports reflection and creativity
- Can be a part of the home through “smart frames”
- May encourage personal development and provoke memories

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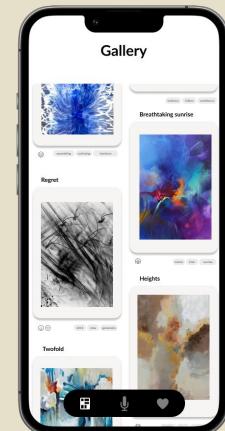
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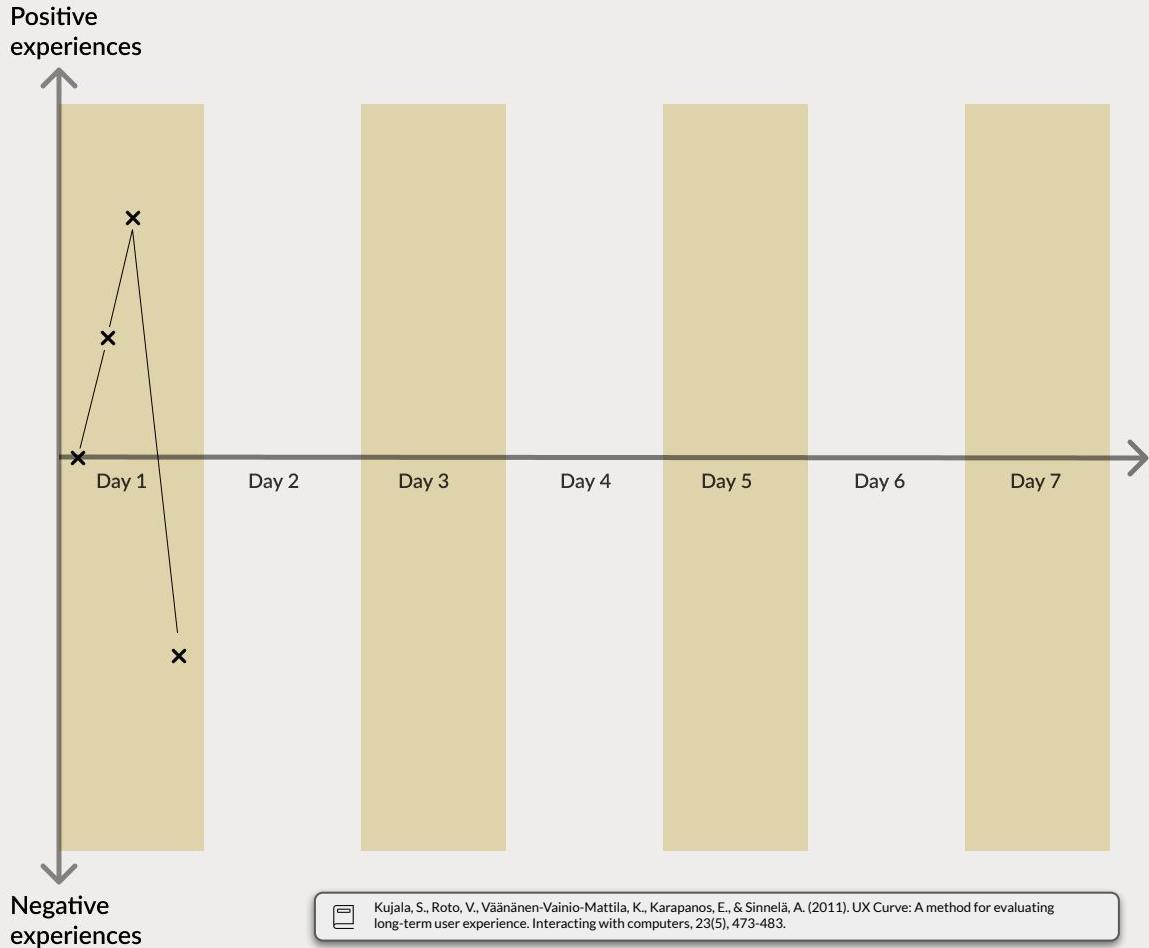
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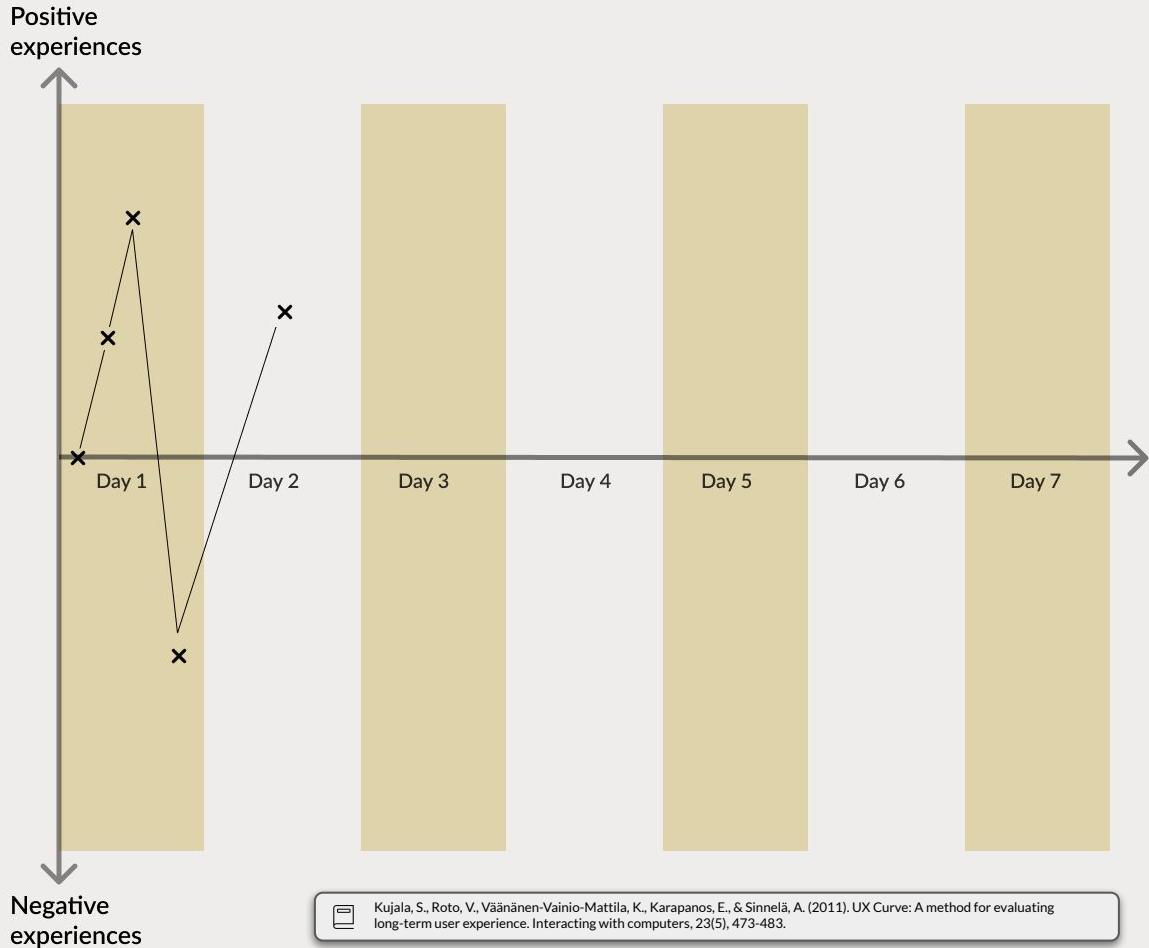
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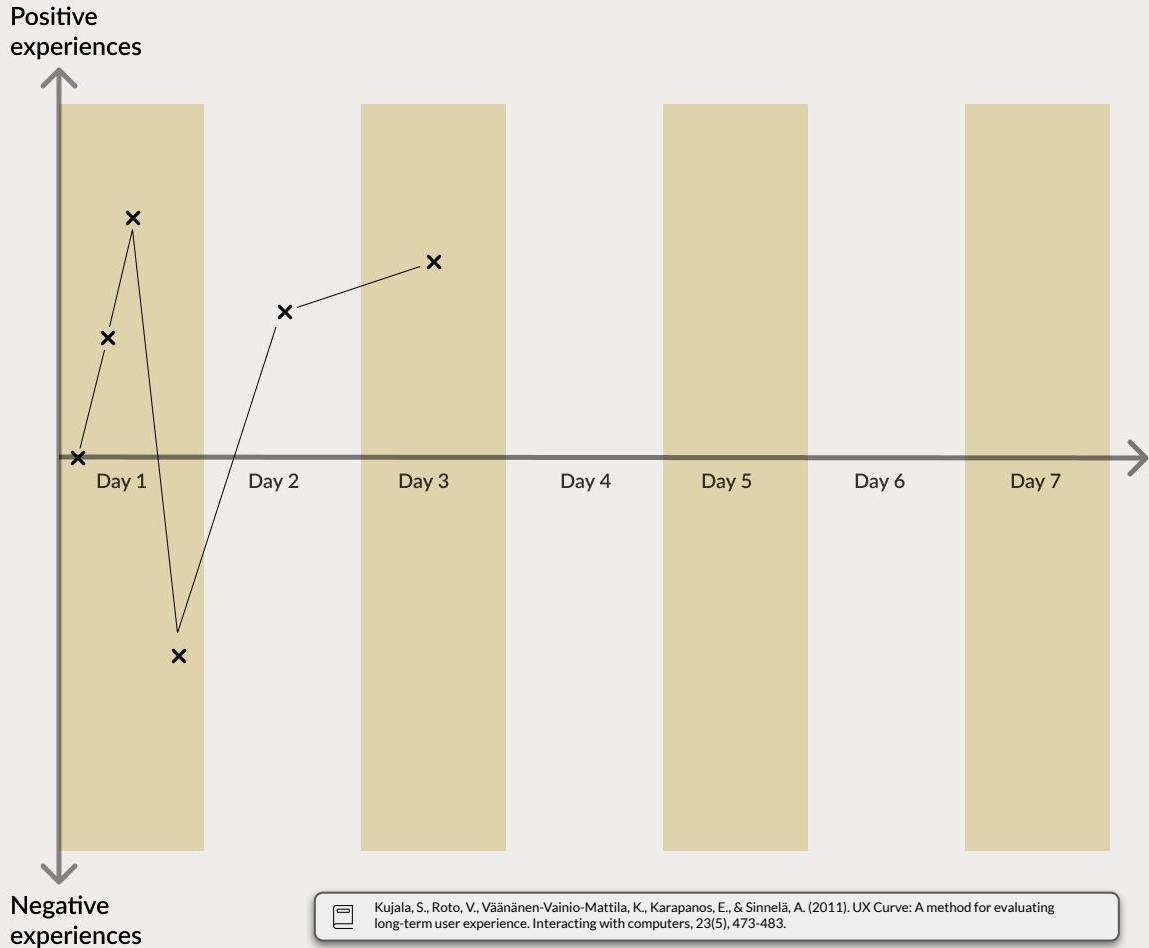
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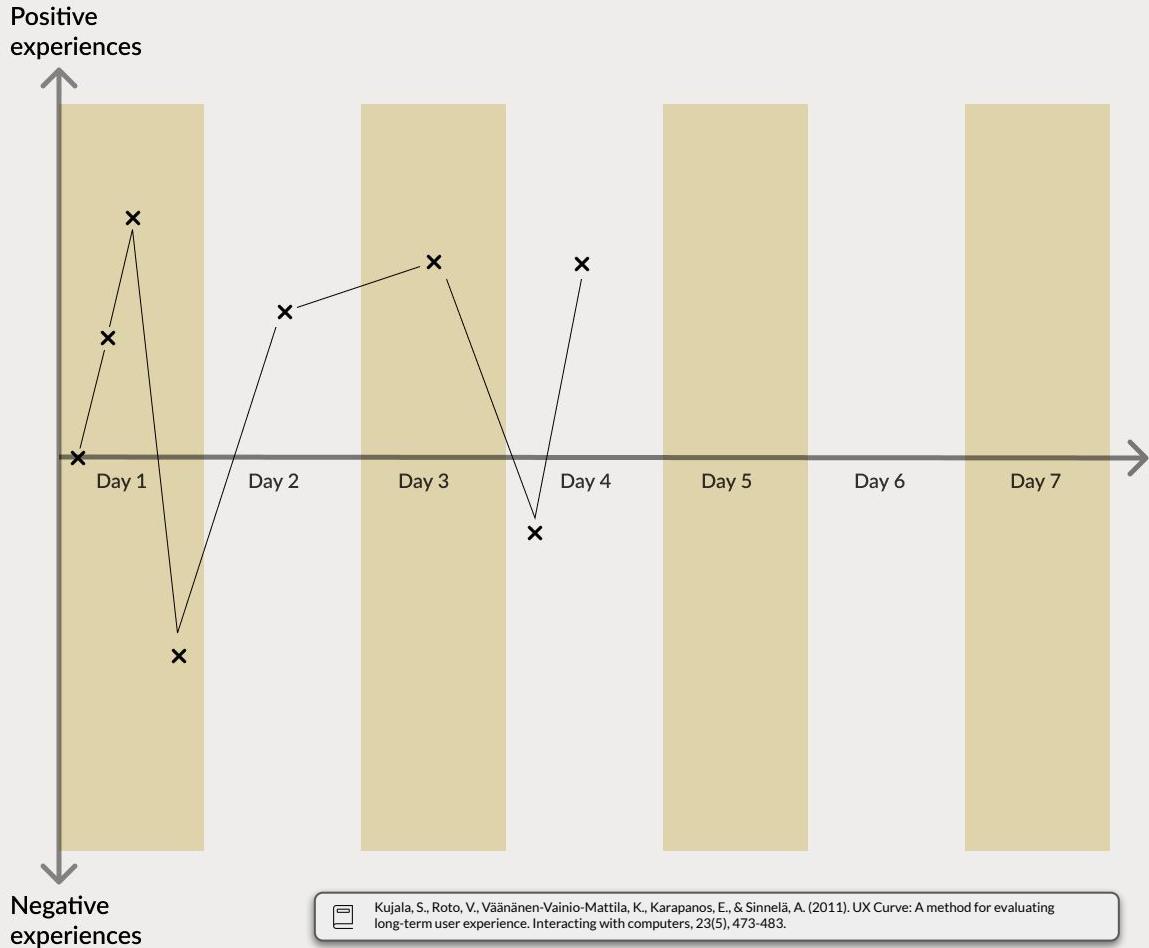
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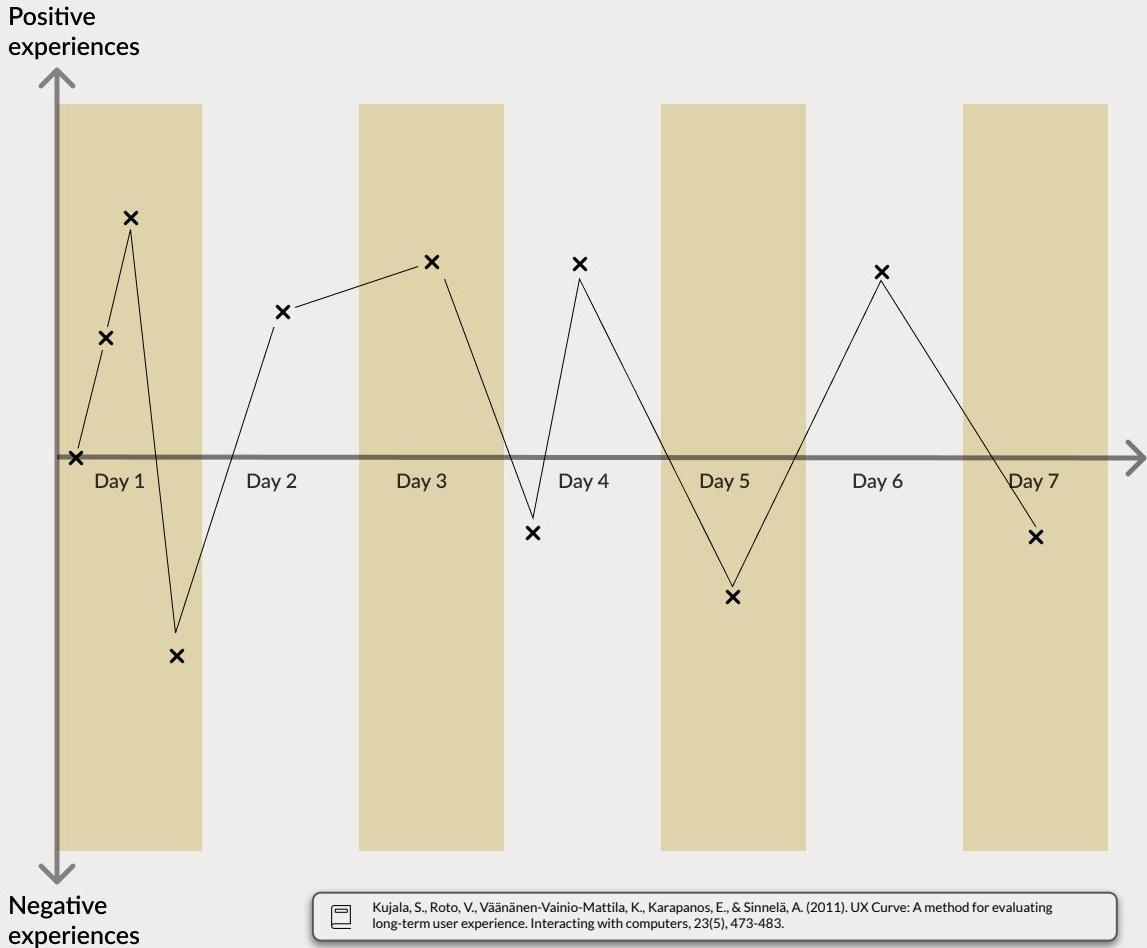
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- Speaking with no clear purpose may not be appealing to most

## INTO THE WILD

- Use it as a fun way to create art and reflect on questions
- Serve as a base for personal development
- Gain more appreciation for art in general and its meaning
- Connect users who share similar thoughts or experiences, and create a sense of community
- Societal consequences:
  - Questions may trigger negative emotions and affect the users
  - Openly sharing thoughts could be a privacy concern if recordings get accessed
  - Artists may become affected negatively

The background of the image is a vibrant, abstract painting. It features swirling patterns of red, blue, and purple paint against a lighter, textured surface. The colors are blended in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement.

Thank you

## REFERENCES

- Aviv, V. (2014). What does the brain tell us about abstract art? *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 8, 85.
- Fokkinga, S. F., & Desmet, P. M. (2013). Ten ways to design for disgust, sadness, and other enjoyments: A design approach to enrich product experiences with negative emotions. *International journal of design*, 7(1).
- Hallnäs, L., & Redström, J. (2001). Slow technology—designing for reflection. *Personal and ubiquitous computing*, 5, 201-212.
- Hassenzahl M. (2018) The Thing and I (Summer of '17 Remix). In: Blythe M., Monk A. (eds) Funology 2. Human–Computer Interaction Series. Springer, Cham.
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- Kandel, E. (2016). Reductionism in art and brain science. In Reductionism in Art and Brain Science. Columbia University Press. P. 58
- Odom, W., Stolterman, E., & Chen, A. Y. S. (2022). Extending a theory of slow technology for design through artifact analysis. *Human–Computer Interaction*, 37(2), 150-179.

## RANKING OF PAPERS

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### Art pieces:

Andrea Dasha Reich,  
<https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/sponsored/2022/10/an-abstract-art-exhibition-presented-by-530-burns-gallery>

Silvia Vassileva,  
<https://www.saatchiart.com/art/Painting-Neutral-and-Gold-Abstract/913390/7724277/view>

Jessica Hendrickx,  
<https://www.littleleloo.com/gallery/>

Circle Art Group,  
<https://www.greatbigcanvas.com/view/free-flow,2403670/>

The background of the image is a vibrant, abstract painting. It features swirling patterns of red, blue, and purple paint against a lighter, textured surface. The colors are blended in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement.

Thank you

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