

MACD

Final Project Proposal

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Working Title: The Art of Almost — A Self-Rescue Space for Perfectionists (Subject to change)

A/B Manifesto Influencers (Dunne & Raby, 2013)

1. Problem Finding ↔ Problem Solving

This project does not aim to solve perfectionism, but offers a reflective space—like a fragile coral system—where users can gently explore the emotional roots of their need for control.

2. Functional Fictions ↔ Fictional Functions

Instead of correction tools, the project uses symbolic interactions inspired by coral: layered, delicate, and responsive. Users navigate emotional patterns through gestures that echo coral's sensitivity and quiet resilience.

3. Satire ↔ Fun

Soft visuals and imperfect movements evoke coral's porous beauty, inviting playful engagement with perfectionism's rigidity—through empathy, not discipline.

4. Makes us Think ↔ Makes us Buy

Beyond aesthetics, coral becomes a metaphor: when under stress, it bleaches. So too do perfectionists risk collapse. The project encourages letting go—not as failure, but as a form of survival.

Design Goal

Perfectionism often carries a quiet tension beneath its polished surface—a constant cycle of self-criticism, control, and emotional exhaustion. As a perfectionist myself, I know this paradox intimately.

This project, The Art of Almost, creates a poetic, interactive digital space to help perfectionists gently loosen their grip on control and explore the beauty of imperfection—not by rejecting high standards, but by softening the fear beneath them.

Inspired by the natural structure of coral—delicate, intricate, and easily stressed—the experience invites users on a symbolic journey: from rigid composure, through quiet collapse, toward emotional regeneration. In this space, fragility is not failure, but a quiet beginning.

Theme

Loosening control and embracing imperfection — using coral-inspired digital metaphors to help perfectionists soften their rigid patterns and accept emotional fragility as part of growth.

Insight

1.Perfectionism often hides behind a polished exterior, but beneath it lies constant self-surveillance, anxiety, and emotional fatigue—much like a coral reef that appears intact but is quietly bleaching under stress.

→ POV: A perfectionist needs non-judgemental, symbolic interactions—gentle enough to interrupt the cycle of self-monitoring and make space for self-compassion.

2.The more we try to control life, the more fragile it becomes. Like coral under pressure, perfectionism may crack under rigidity—yet in collapse, a softer, more authentic self may emerge.

→ POV: A creative person needs to reframe collapse not as failure, but as transformation—releasing the fear that messy outcomes erase personal worth.

3.Delicate, playful imperfections—like asymmetrical coral patterns or slow regrowth—can gently dissolve harsh inner criticism and reintroduce emotional balance.

→ POV: A young adult balancing ambition and anxiety needs visual metaphors that remind them: softness is strength, and letting go is not giving up.

HMW

Main HMW:

How might we design a coral-inspired, emotionally resonant interactive experience that helps perfectionists gently release control, embrace fragility, and practise self-compassion?

Secondary HMW (Optional):

How might we translate coral's textures, rhythms, and subtle imperfections into visual and verbal metaphors that form a comforting emotional brand—one that users can not only experience, but carry with them?