

PREPARATION FMP

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JUNE 2025

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WHO AM I

My work starts from curiosity – wanting to learn from others, step into unfamiliar places, and understand different perspectives through conversation. With a camera in hand, I try to capture the everyday in all its complexity and turn it into something that others can feel and think about.

My design approach mixes technical making with a sensitivity to people and stories. Whether I'm prototyping with Arduino or editing a film, I look for ways to create experiences that make people pause, relate, or reflect. At the core is the creation of empathy, helping us to see each other more as individuals.

I believe design can help bridge social distance by making space for real encounters. That belief runs through this project. It brings together my background in visual storytelling and my drive to design with and for the people.

INTRODUCTION

This semester focused on preparing for my Final Master Project. The goal was to develop and test a working method that I can later use within my own company. In this project, I explored how film can be used in design and discovered the value of approaching it as a participatory design tool. A large part of this method is based on visual ethnography, which offers a way to bring stories and perspectives to the surface. It visually – through photo or video – shows how experiences are felt and lived through.

This semester, I explored how visual ethnography can be used as a design tool within real cases. I started by diving into theory, including the books *Doing Visual Ethnography* by Sarah Pink (2021) and *Designing with Video* by Ylirisku and Buur (2007), and combined these with my own experiences and reflections in the field. Through two projects at cocosmos, a social design studio, I tested what this approach looks like in practice and what kind of value it can offer to clients working on social issues.

This report highlights the key activities I have worked on, such as the different cases with cocosmos that helped shape my method. It includes the expert sessions with visual ethnographers, where we compared our work and gave feedback. I also experimented with building a physical editing toolbox to let participants analyze footage and create videos themselves. This report shares insights and reflects on the design decisions made throughout the process.

THEORATICAL BACKGROUND

Visual Ethnography in Design

Ethnography is a qualitative approach originating in anthropology, where researchers immerse themselves in the everyday lives of people to understand their practices, values, and social structures (Blomberg et al., 2017). It emphasizes the perspective of the participants, with a focus on natural settings and social context. Hughes et al. (1994) and Crabtree et al. (2012) describe several forms of ethnography used in design practice, such as brief field studies and post-implementation evaluations.

"Visual" refers to anything that can be captured visually, such as through photography or video. The advantage is that the camera can be turned on and an experience can be revisited later without the people needing to be present. This also makes it possible to interpret the data from different perspectives.

Traditional ethnography, involves long-term immersion and reflection. In comparison, focused ethnography is used in domains such as human-computer interaction (Bannon and Bødker, 1991). They aim to understand specific interactions or interventions and tend to rely on intensive data collection over shorter periods (Knoblauch, 2001). For example showing the different interactions during a night-time routine (Figure 1). This This Focused ethnography is something that is more suitable in a business perspective, going in the field with a clear scope and research question from the client.



Figure 1: using visual ethnography to show night-time routine (Pink et al., 2017)

With the use of video, designers can not only record but also frame moments and interactions in context.

According to Pink (2007), the camera can serve as a tool for generating insights and hypotheses during fieldwork. Crabtree et al. (2012) emphasize that this form of ethnography is iterative and embedded in design practice, where analysis and action continuously inform each other. Renate Schelwald also points out that this kind of approach can complement other forms of research or projects. It is not about generating large volumes of data, but about surfacing specific stories and perspectives that would otherwise remain invisible.

A common way to use visual ethnography in design is to uncover user needs or to test prototypes in context. In this project, the method is used to make a social setting visible to others. The aim is to show what can be learned from everyday life in a specific community, and to use those insights to create understanding across different groups.

critique

Visual ethnography is often criticized for being intrusive or lacking objectivity. Some argue that film can never fully capture reality and is only ethnographic if viewers find it meaningful in that way. Heider (1976) argues for unedited, objective footage guided by scientific principles, leaving little room for creativity. This strict approach, along with the time it takes to make and analyse such films, makes the method less commonly used.

Yet, in a design or business context, this tension creates opportunity. Here, design filmmakers can make thoughtful choices that balance observation with storytelling. Visual ethnography can then serve as a bridge to connect insight with impact.

Film as a design tool

As mentioned earlier, the process of filming itself can be part of a research or design project. Pink (2007) describes the method "walking with video" as a way to understand how people experience their surroundings. By walking together and filming, the researcher and participant explore a place in a natural and shared way. The camera is part of the interaction. It captures how people move, point, and react, drawing attention to textures, gestures, and emotional moments that might otherwise go unnoticed. It helps create empathy and understanding by placing the viewer almost inside the participant's experience. This method also creates space for conversation with participants or stakeholders.

In the book *Designing with Video*, Ylirisku and Buur (2007) describes how video footage can be used and turned into a video artefact (Figure 2). It can become a link between the generated data and design ideas. The goal is to inform what is relevant, help generalise findings by combining data, support empathy with people, and direct attention in the design process.

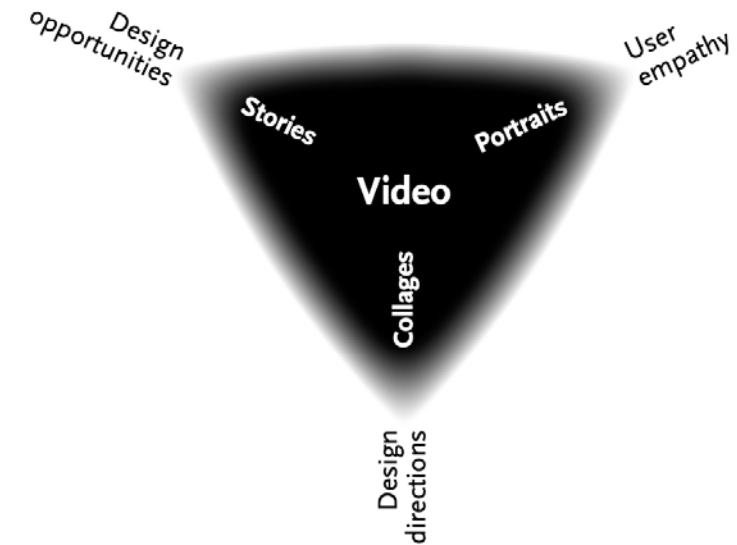


Figure 2: Video artefacts – video stories, collages and portraits – and their roles in design: to discover design opportunities, to convey user empathy, and to provide new directions (Ylirisku and Buur, 2007).

Just like sketches or prototypes, videos can function as a research prope – something people can respond to or comment on. A short video can be shown during a public event or feedback session to spark new conversations or insights (Buur & Soendergaard, 2000). That is why I believe design and film are a strong combination. It mainly comes down to the purpose of the video and how it is used to achieve something beyond itself. This could be a screening with discussion, as seen in the case of Nieuwe Aansluitingen, but also an interactive presentation that enhances empathy during the viewing experience.

The documentary Nieuwe Aansluitingen shows how the energy transition affects daily life in Rotterdam. By following residents and professionals, it sparked conversations about participation and policy. This inspired the PEC case, showing how film can bridge lived experience and decision-making.



Figure 4, 5 & 6: Stills from the documentary: de nieuwe aansluiting (Nieuwe Aansluitingen, 2021)



“Some professionals were moved and became silent. It is confronting to see the personal impact of going gas-free and how much effort goes into involving residents in the energy transition.”

**Researcher and projec lead,
Irene bronsvoort (2021)**

Figure 3: Premiere meeting 'New Connections' in the Princess Theater, Rotterdam (Bronsvoort, 2021)

positioning myself as designer - filmmaker

When working with visual ethnography, the role and position of the filmmaker-researcher must be made explicit. It is widely acknowledged that it is impossible to create a purely objective visual record of an external reality. The presence of the maker, their perspective, and their relationship to the context always influence the outcome.

Rakic and Chambers (2009) discuss Dziga Vertov’s film The Man with a Movie Camera (1929) in relation to ethnography. Filmmakers and researchers can position themselves along different axes – realist or relativist in terms of how they see reality, and objectivist or subjectivist in terms of how they present it. Rakic and Chambers argue that the most viable stance for visual ethnography with moving images is a subjectivist-relativist one. This aligns with a constructivist approach, in which the researcher tries to understand the world through the perspective of the participant rather than staying detached (Williamson, 2006).

In practice taking this constructivist position (Figure 7), this also affects my filming choices. A constructivist filmmaker might choose to shoot handheld, follow the flow of conversation, and embrace the messy, situated nature of fieldwork. What is shown is not an objective truth, but a constructed, subjective representation of reality as it was perceived by the maker.

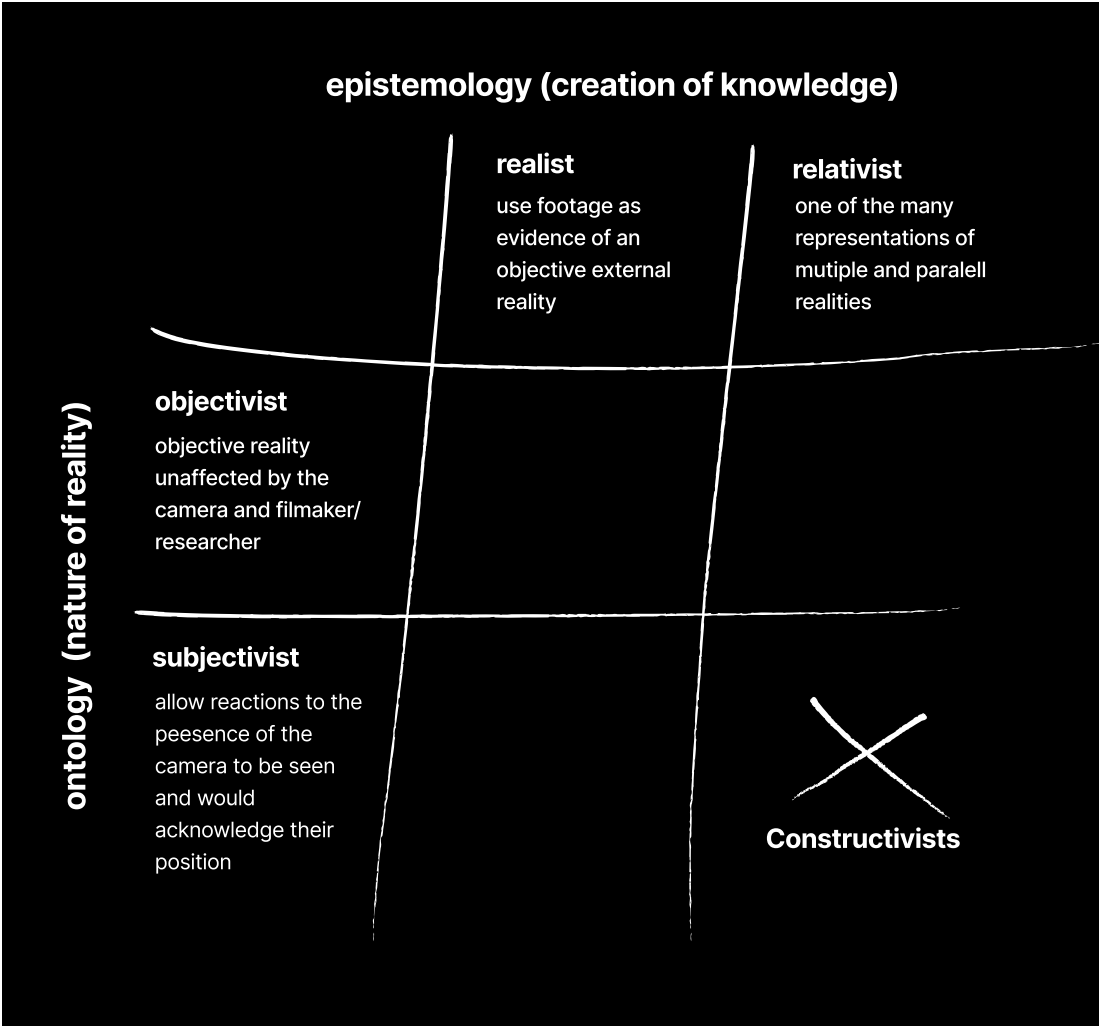


Figure 7: Positioning myself as designer - filmmaker in visual ethnography

METHODOLOGY

I have developed and refined my way of working as both a designer and filmmaker. Through projects like PEC, De Familie van Gestel and visual ethnography expert sessions, I gained hands-on experience while also reflecting (Appendix 1) on how I operate in the field. This created method is not a fixed framework. One of the main things I learned is that visual ethnography always depends on the context. That is why I work with a set of flexible guidelines – tools that help me decide how to position myself, how to film, and how to communicate clearly throughout the process.

The foundation of my approach is built on three main sources. Doing Visual Ethnography by Sarah Pink (2013) gave me both practical tools and examples of how visual ethnography is used in different ways. It also helped me with clear guidance around planning and ethics. Designing with Video by Jacob Buur (2000) helped me position my own style by comparing it to other example cases. It also gave me inspiration from different methods such as video analysis and video artefacts. ViewFinders: Thoughts on Visual Design Research by Raijmakers et al. (2016) showed how video can be used as a research prompt and gave visual examples of different types of design research.

I combined these with business-oriented design processes I encountered during my collaboration with the design bureau cocosmos. There, I learned how to align my creative process with the expectations of real-world clients – for example by working with iterations, offering visual proposals early on, and formulating clear research questions linked to measurable goals. This experience helped me translate my approach into something that also works within a professional context. Out of this, three core principles emerged that now shape the foundation of my method and form the basis for how I want to work within my FMP, creating my own business.

Visual Ethnography as Method

embeds in real-life environments to observe and participate through film. Stories are not extracted but allowed to emerge, slowly and relationally, over time.

co-creation and participation

Reviewing footage together shifts power and opens dialogue. Editing becomes part of the design process.

Creating empathy

It allows people to be seen, heard, and recognized. Film helps uncover the nuance that policies and data often miss.

On the following page (Figure 8), the result of my methodology as a designer-filmmaker can be seen. The next chapters show how the main cases helped shape this approach, and how it evolved into a design method with business potential.

METHOD OVERVIEW



Figure 8: Method overview, images created together with OpenAI (2025)

1.Scoping and framing:

Each project begins with an open question or theme provided by the client. This phase involves developing a clear one-pager that outlines the research question, visual direction, planning, and logistical conditions. The one-pager serves both as an internal alignment tool and as a way to manage stakeholder expectations.

2. Participatory Fieldwork

Fieldwork is approached gradually and with respect. Initial engagement occurs without a camera to build trust within the setting. This is followed by informal interviews, conversations, and "walking with video" sessions. During this stage, the design-filmmaker adopts a dual role of observer and participant.

3.Data Collection through Film

This step focuses on gathering layered visual data including portraits, ambient footage, and moments of interaction. Attention is paid to sound, lighting, and pacing to ensure the material captures not just information but atmosphere and emotion.

4.Analysis and Reflection

Once data is collected, it is analyzed through a collaborative interpretation. This includes showing edited clips to participants or project partners to verify insights and open dialogue.

5. Communication and Output

The final step focuses on turning footage and insights into a communicative designs. These can take the form of short films, video series, or installations. Whatever the format, the outcome should be accessible, applicable, and able to create understanding, empathy, or action

CASE: POSITIEVE ENERGIE CAFE (PEC)



The Positieve Energie Café (PEC) is a collaboration between various stakeholders in Eindhoven working toward an energy-neutral future. The café acts as a social meeting point where residents, energy coaches, entrepreneurs, and local partners talk about the energy transition together.

Goal

How can visual ethnography support social cohesion and multi-perspective understanding in the context of a local energy transition?

Level 1: **Social cohesion**

This part focused on capturing and sharing personal stories of residents and energy coaches to make sustainability tangible. The goal was to create empathy, visibility, and community recognition.

Level 2: **Policy dialogue**

Inspired by documentaries like *Nieuwe Aansluitingen*, the second level aimed to show multiple perspectives and act as a bridge between policymakers and residents. Offering other municipalities insight into how the energy transition can be approached.

Figure 9: Cover image PEC

Approach

This part of the project was used to focus on step two and three of my method: participatory fieldwork and data collection through film. Over the course of six days, I joined Mike, a key figure in the initiative and long-time employee. Together we visited residents across different neighbourhoods, using walking with video to explore how his perspective on the energy transition could be captured through lived experience (Sarah Pink, 2007). Rather than conducting a structured interview, we let stories emerge naturally while moving through real contexts. Mike regularly pointed to details around us and said, "Look, this is what I meant," strengthening the link between space and narrative.

On the first day, the three-hour recording was edited into a 7 minute and 30 second video, highlighting two themes: the thinking behind this project and how to spot inefficiencies or small fixes. After that, we continued filming Mike over several days to connect with more local residents and build toward the larger documentary.



Video: Walking with Mike iteration 1
https://youtu.be/3J_mYW76maY



Figure 10, 11 &
 12: Walking with
 mike

Outcome

The PEC project resulted in a series of small-scale outputs: a portrait of Mike and several short clips used in the café installation. The “Walking with Mike” video functions as a portrait video artefact (Ylirisku & Buur, 2007). It makes invisible work visible and offers a example of how his work unfolds in real life.

Watching the edited video with the PEC team directly sparked ideas. For instance, Mike demonstrating how to identify a drafty door led to the idea of producing a series of instructional clips with the original footage. These are used as educational tools within the café. (FIGURE) Cocosmos colleagues working in the cafés said the videos help start conversations with residents about what the handymen do and how they offer support.



FIGURE 13 & 14: I programmed a Raspberry Pi to loop the videos, allowing new content to be added easily and used as part of a café installation.



Portrait Video Artefact: Walking With Mike
<https://youtu.be/NkvSCMPuB84>

Barriers and limitations

One of the challenges was filming people in a respectful and natural way. Some residents did not want to be recorded in their homes, and at times, it felt difficult to introduce the camera after a conversation. There was a fear of breaking the moment or making someone uncomfortable. Being sensitive to how a camera might be perceived, I approached each situation with care. Sometimes that meant deciding not to ask at all, if it didn't feel right.

From the municipality's side, people preferred not to appear on screen and leaned towards a more formal and controlled communication style. On top of that, the project was facing other external challenges, which pushed this part lower on the priority list. Filming slowed down because approvals, alignments, and communication took more time than expected. In the end, the decision was made to shift focus and not move forward with the full documentary.

At the same time, the cafés where the PEC installation was placed were not yet fully active during my involvement, so I was not able to properly test the impact of the educational videos.

insights

This project was set up to gain valuable insights into working with visual ethnography in the field, especially in relation to steps two and three of the method. It provided a chance to practice navigating ethical questions, managing the practical aspects of filming and observing, building trust before introducing the camera, and adjusting the presence of the camera based on the person in front of it.

It became clear that different stakeholders bring their own sensitivities and thresholds for visibility. Visual ethnography can feel intrusive when there is no existing trust, and not everyone is comfortable being seen in the same way. This highlighted the importance of expectation management – particularly within public sector projects, where every step requires checks, alignment, and shared control. As this was a first experience working in such a setting, it required learning how to navigate these rhythms and clarify the method from the outset, using tools like one-pagers, planning overviews, and shared viewing sessions.

What was still missing in the PEC case was space for co-review with the people on screen. Most of the material was analysed with project partners rather than with participants themselves. In later work, such as Familie van Gestel, more emphasis was placed on this aspect.

CASE: NEOS. WEGGEEF WINKEL: FAMILIE VAN GESTEL

Neos is an organization in Eindhoven that supports vulnerable people, especially those facing homelessness and complex problems. They provide shelter, housing, and guidance in areas like work, education, health, and social connection. One of their programs is HAAKAAN, a daytime activity center where people from Neos can participate in meaningful day activities.

Familie van Gestel: weggeef winkel

De Familie van Gestel is a giveaway shop and community hub located at the HAAKAAN complex in Eindhove. The shop is not only a place where people can bring or take items, but also serves as a low-threshold entry point into broader activities on the site – including day programs, workshops, and shared meals. It aims to create a warm, accessible environment for residents who may not feel at home in existing initiatives.

The shop acts as a tool to strengthen the connection between HAAKAAN and the neighborhood, and to increase name recognition for HAAKAAN.



Figure 15: inside the shop: Familie van Gestel

Goal

How can film help potential visitors of the Gestel store feel connected to its community values – and trigger action like participation or donation?

Level 1: **Visibility**

To make visible the everyday life and meaning of the shop through the eyes of participants, visitors, and staff.

Level 2: **Create empathy for action in neighborhood**

To explore how film could support empathy, engagement, and action with a focus on building a stronger connection to the neighborhood. Such as visiting the shop, donating goods, or feeling part of the community –

Approach:

The visual ethnographic method followed a relational and iterative approach, grounded in trust building and collaboration. Over a period of seven weeks, the research was embedded in the setting for three half days each week. The first phase focused on being present without a camera – observing, joining shared lunches, and gradually becoming part of the daily rhythm. Tasks such as helping to open the shop, making small decisions with the team, and building relationships through informal conversations supported this integration.

As trust grew, filming was introduced to capture different moments and perspectives. In total, fourteen individuals were recorded on camera, representing a range of voices including participants in the day programs, staff members, local residents, and volunteers.

This case focused on step four and five of my method: analysing footage and video communication. The first review session took place after five weeks of observation and filming. It included two sessions – one with the team lead, and another with two participants and volunteers in the shop. The second review session involved the communication lead from Neos, a member of cocosmos, and an online form with a questionnaire for people who were not yet familiar with the shop.



Figure 16: outside
the shop: Familie van
Gestel

Review sessions

In the first review session, a 7-minute edit was created to explore how the video could be used for De Familie van Gestel. The video was screened in two feedback sessions: one with the project lead, and one with participants and volunteers.

The project lead highlighted a scene about someone collecting items for others. It sparked a discussion about how the film could be used to reflect on shop rules and exceptions. The session also showed that some core messages of NEOS were still missing. According to the project lead, the video helped express creative ideas that are often hard to communicate.

For NEOS participants, the video triggered memories and questions. It showed that the material resonated on a personal level. Based on this feedback, the direction was adjusted by filming more outside the shop and bringing in new perspectives. In the next iteration, the aim is to connect the film more clearly to HaaKaaN and strengthen the role of the initiator.

Second review session:

In the second review session, I tested the film with six people with no prior connection to the shop. They were given a short questionnaire focusing on clarity, tone, emotional impact, and engagement. Their responses helped to sharpen the narrative: slowing the rhythm, adding explanatory voice-overs, and refining key transitions (Appendix 6). This iterative feedback confirmed the emotional clarity and authenticity of the film.

NEOS Participant:

'through the film, you see people in a different way – you hear stories that you can talk about again later.'



Figure 17: first review session with NEOS participants



Review session iteration one: Familie van Gestel

<https://youtu.be/CiNHf0kX9AE>

Cargo bike design

The question from Neos was to create more visibility in the neighborhood. This project was also used to explore the fifth step of the method: communication. The aim was to explore how film and creating empathy can function within an installation that is visible in public space, as a way to reach a broader audience. Following a short ideation session, the concept emerged for a simple pop-up giveaway shop that could be placed in various locations throughout the area. Videos were added using project footage to explain the concept in one and a half minutes.

Initially, the idea was to experiment with distance sensors and speakers, where the position of people in front of the stand would influence the audio, adding a layer of interaction. However, the focus shifted toward understanding the role of the videos in a public setting, as testing too many elements at once would have introduced unnecessary complexity. As a result, the videos were shown in digital photo frames with iPads to communicate the story of De Familie van Gestel. See appendix 4 for concept sketches that were shown to NEOS.

Passersby were approached and asked whether they were familiar with the giveaway shop. If not, the idea was explained and the test was introduced.



Figure 18, 19 & 20: Cargo bike



Video showed on cargo bike
<https://youtu.be/m7fQ35LJ6WY>

insights cargo bike

During testing, several things did not work as planned. First, the weather was not ideal, which meant people had less time or willingness to stop and engage. The screens were also sometimes not bright enough to be clearly visible in direct sunlight. Showing one video instead of three and focusing on that single story worked better, since most people only wanted to watch one anyway. A few small adjustments were made during the first session, such as shortening the videos to better match the attention span and setting.

The popup bike definitely helped create visibility, since people mentioned they would come to the shop to drop off items. When it comes to the videos, people shared that this format did not fully fit the setting. Because you had to stop and watch, it pulled you out of your routine while being on the move. Some people did not want to put on the headphones, and the video did not attract much attention since there was only a headphone and the sun made the screen hard to see.

Still, conversations showed that the film gave people a clearer impression of what the shop looks like. They also said they felt compassion for the people in the shop and for the initiative itself. Some said they could identify with the people they saw (Appendix 5).

This short format loses part of the value of the visual ethnography style, which depends on taking time to really dive into someone's story. In the FMP, it will be important to find a balance during installations between keeping people interested and creating space for depth in the story. Another insight was that people who participated to watch the videos often stayed longer to talk about the topic. Watching the video may have given them more to respond to, or it could be that they simply had more time.



Figure 21: Cargo bike in Gestel

Participant 3 'Very nice I like that I see a face with stories. First it was a shop and now you understand the idea behind it and it is much more than that'

Participant 9 'Video lets you know what it looks like there.'




Figure 22: Cargo bike in Gestel

Participant 11 'The film gives depth, nice to see what it does to a person.'

Familie van Gestel film

In parallel with the cargo bike wich focused on outreach and visibility, a version of the film based on feedback from the first internal review was developed. The final film is 16 minutes long and integrates scenes both inside and outside the shop to reflect the wider context of the initiative.



Familie van Gestel Film

<https://youtu.be/qNI3NsINCGs>

This case strengthened the fifth step of my method: communication and output. The film does not serve as a closing statement but as an entry point for ongoing conversation. It demonstrates how visual ethnography can function not just as research, but as a participatory design tool – activating dialogue, recognition, and reflection across social settings. During a meeting with the communications team at NEOS, a brainstorming session was held to explore different applications. This also provided new insights into how, from an organizational communication perspective, film can be relevant and valuable. Together, we came up with the following points.

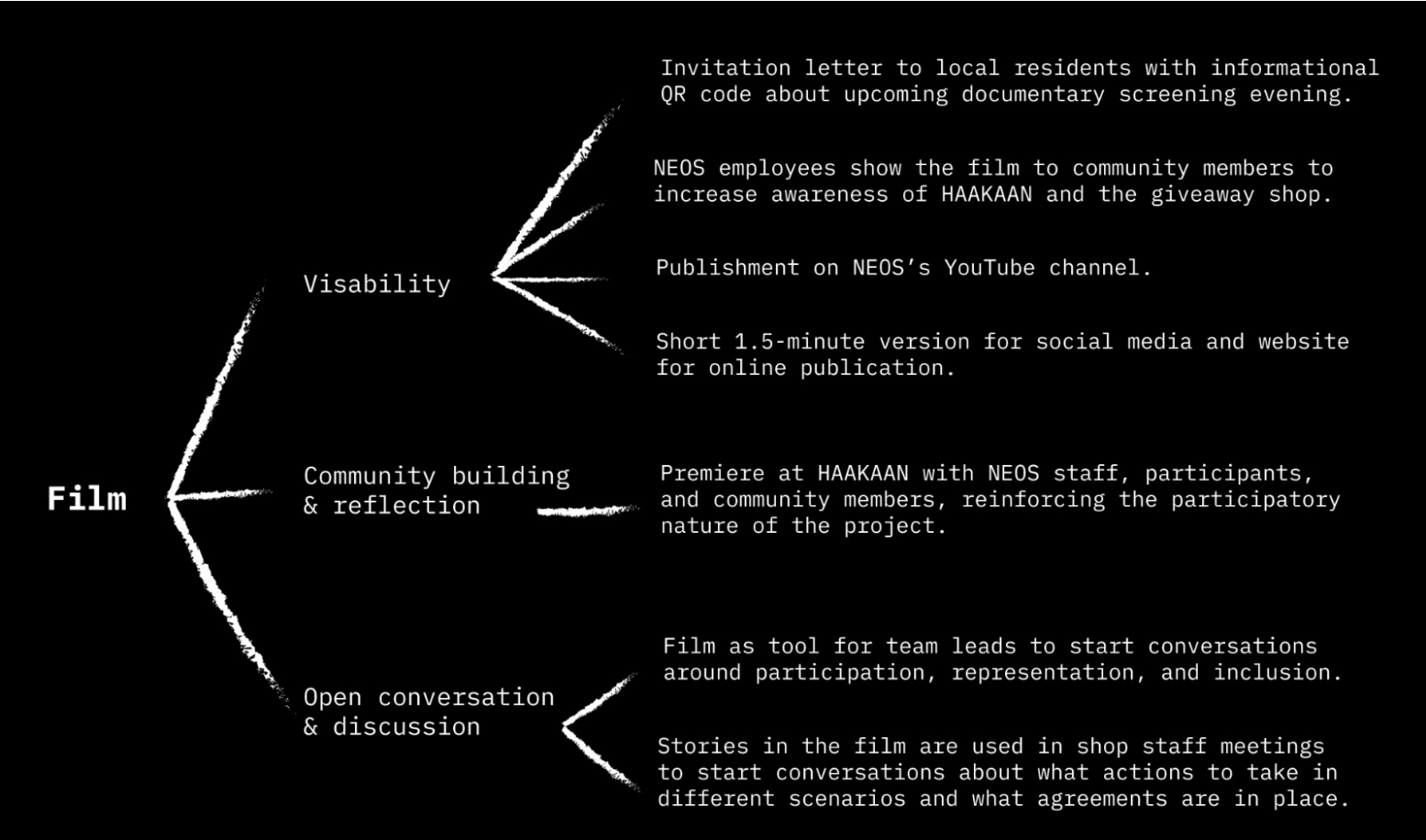


Figure 23:
Familie van
Gestel Film
applications

EXPERT REVIEW SESSION

Inspired by the Interaction Analysis Lab method (Jordan and Henderson, 1995), which focuses on watching video clips in a group setting to share interpretations and uncover new insights, two 3-hour feedback sessions were attended together with visual ethnographers from Erasmus University Rotterdam. One of them was also working on a project related to the energy transition and the other on a garden community research.

In the first session, the Walking with Mike video was presented. Because of the video format, people could immediately connect with the material, which made the conversation very direct and valuable. It reminded the group of the strength of visual ethnography in design research. Methods and practical tips were exchanged using a review form to guide the conversation (appendix 7).

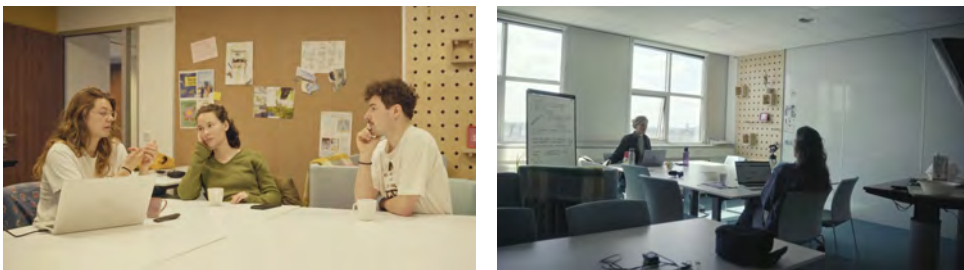


Figure 24 & 25: Review sessions with visual ethnography experts

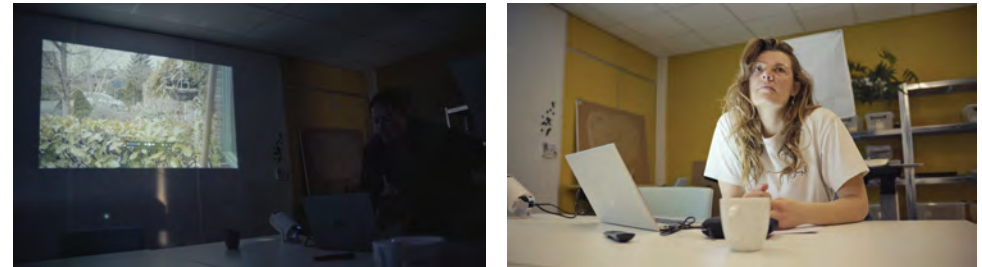


Figure 26 & 27: Review sessions with visual ethnography experts

In the second session, work was shared that was closer to a finished film. The second iteration of Familie van Gestel was shown. The group mentioned that the film felt full and fast, and that there was not enough room to take it all in. Based on this, more wide shots and slower moments were added to give the viewer space.

Insights:

The group also discussed the role of the designer-filmmaker. These sessions clarified my positioning as constructivist style (Rakic and Chambers, 2009) being developed. In this work, the filmmaker is part of the story – with voice, questions, and presence visible. Others in the group had a more distant, observing approach.

CREATING ANALYSING Tool

During this project, a video analysis tool was developed and tested. One of the main challenges with video is the large amount of footage, something also mentioned during conversations with experts. Handling this data takes a lot of time, and from a business perspective, it would be better if the process could be more efficient to save both time and money. In design, the analysis of footage is often done using methods like the video card game by Ylirisku and Buur (2007), but these sessions can last for many hours. It also became clear in practice that the first selection of clips was usually made by the filmmaker, which already introduces interpretation and focus – for example, reducing two hours of material into an initial seven-minute version.

These challenges inspired the development of a tool that could support creative flow and deeper reflection, especially for people who are not filmmakers or editors and who join the project early on.

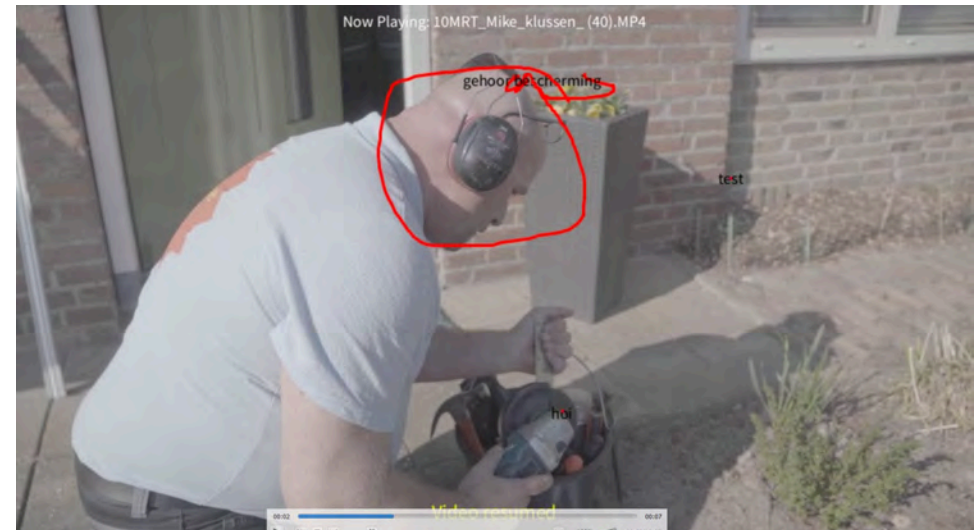


Figure 28 & 29: recorded results from prototyping annotation tool with processing

Iteration one

The first version began as a simple script in processing that played video clips in random order. Inspired by an expert review session where a whiteboard was used for annotation, the tool evolved into an interactive interface that allowed users to draw and write directly on the video. The goal was to discover unexpected visual patterns and storylines by combining randomness with reflection.

After testing it with footage from the PEC case, the tool turned out to be helpful as a playful method during the middle of the process. It supported reflection on creative choices, helped sharpen the direction of the story, and raised awareness of editing decisions being made. The next step was to make the tool more intuitive so that people without technical experience could use it to explore and review video material together.

Iteration two

The goal of this second iteration was to explore how viewers could adjust video variables themselves. A few key values were selected, such as music and the speed of cuts, which are often used during the editing process. Footage was organized into folders based on their function – for example, interviews that could later be used as voice over, or b-roll clips that visually support the story.

Eventually, a combination of sliders and rotary encoders was used to build both a physical and digital interface, made with Arduino and Processing (Figure 30). The tool allowed users to change the background music to influence the emotional tone, adjust the speed of the clips, and apply preset settings that created certain moods, such as through color filters (Figure 32).

The resulting video could be recorded and then reviewed using the earlier version of the tool – where users could add notes on specific frames for further reflection and discussion.



Figure 30 & 31: Working on physical interface



Figure 32: Digital interface iteration two

Insights

Although the prototype functioned fully, the conclusion was that raw footage and randomly selecting files do not work well in combination with the visual ethnography style. The footage had not been recorded with this kind of setup in mind and would first need to be cleaned – for example, by removing moments where nothing happens or where the camera is pointing at the ground. This means the footage still requires manual pre-selection. This could be done with useful video or image recognition tools, but due to time constraints, that would be a separate project.

Still, this iteration helped clarify how a tool like this could be used in future installations, where viewers interact with the video in a more personal and intuitive way. In such a setup, multiple video versions could be created and people could adjust different variables based on what they want to see or hear more of. This could be especially relevant for the FMP, where the focus will be more on the communication side of video.

CONCLUSION

This project explored how visual ethnography can function as a meaningful design tool that captures complexity, builds connection, and invites reflection. Each case provided a different entry point into the shaped method (figure 8). Together, they contributed to the development of a flexible and context-sensitive approach that now forms the foundation for a business practice in social design.

Working within real-world settings helped clarify how film can adapt to different levels of trust, visibility, and stakeholder needs. While filming and analysis, it became clear that new possibilities for how the material could be used within the broader context often arise in the moment. These moments help shape both the direction of the film and its eventual impact. As this project moves into the Final Master Project, the focus will shift toward step 5 of the method (Figure 8): communication and output. The goal is to strengthen professional quality and explore how film can create shared understanding between diverse groups.



Figure 32: Demoday stand

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Parts of this report were supported by the use of ChatGPT as a writing and feedback tool. ChatGPT was used to improve grammar and clarity through the prompt: "Check grammar without changing the writing style and structure." Additionally, it provided critical feedback on content, coherence, and argumentation through a custom prompt simulating a demanding academic supervisor with expertise in both design and business. This helped in strengthening the structure and depth of the report while maintaining full authorship over the ideas and decisions.

SOURCES

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Reflection notes, doing visual ethnography PEC

Week 1: 25 Feb

I went on a walk with Mike, one of the energy coaches, and visited three different homes. This was the first time I entered people's private spaces during the project. Because I was introduced through Mike, people were more open. It went relatively smoothly asking for consent, but I still find it hard to do. This was a key learning moment in how to approach field access through trust.

While filming with Mike, I became more aware of how much the camera shapes what is said. We always began with informal conversations and only later turned on the camera. This helped keep the interaction natural, but even then, asking someone to repeat a moment often felt less authentic. It reminded me that filming is never neutral. Still, by moving together through space, I found a way of storytelling that feels more open and grounded in real experience.

Week 5: 31 Mar

I attended a feedback session with experienced visual ethnographers. It was inspiring to see others' work and be able to show my own. This was a valuable co-creation moment. We discussed not just aesthetics but also practical issues like consent. It confirmed for me that my work fits within an ongoing discourse.

Week 8: 31 Mar

During editing I started to feel the emotional connection. as Bourriaud also writes, empathy is often created during the editing process. I began to understand how crucial editing choices are for viewer empathy. The workshop I joined helped me make sense of how narrative choices shape emotional responses.

Week 8: 31 Mar

I reflected on Pink (2009), who writes that building connections in ethnography takes time. For participants to open up, they need to see value in the collaboration. After five weeks with the giveaway shop community, I've come to know people at many levels. This provides openings to capture diverse perspectives.

This week, I joined Mike and was allowed to film in two households. The residents did not want their faces on camera, but they had insightful things to say. The neighborhood was a strong example of an area that had recently been renovated and disconnected from gas. They now use a heat pump and mentioned that they had never felt as cold during winter as they did now. This made me want to speak with more residents in the area. Reflecting on this moment, I still find it challenging to navigate informed consent when filming people. It is a big step for someone to speak on camera about something negative, especially when it relates to personal experiences or systemic issues. In these cases, film can sometimes be a limiting medium — not everyone is comfortable being visually associated with critique. This raises questions about how to create space for honest voices while respecting privacy and safety.

Week 10: 9 Apr

I realised that as a research filmmaker, many storylines live in your head already. Tools don't always help make decisions. But I see potential in using the tool as a middle step — helping shape selections or perspectives when you're stuck. The tool might evolve into a structured form of visual reflection.

Week 11: Selecting Participants

In practice, it became clear that motivation plays a big role in who is willing to participate. Some individuals are eager to be seen and have their voices heard, while others need more time and reassurance. In the De Familie van Gestel project, a few participants expressed joy in being filmed because it gave them recognition. Starting with a small, trusted group helps build momentum gradually.

Week 12: Field Communication

Distributing a simple flyer with key information about the project proved helpful. It gave participants something tangible to refer back to after signing a consent form. This small gesture adds clarity, encourages trust, and helps communicate the value of the project clearly.

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Week 13: Camera Gear and Quality Expectations

Initially, lo-fi equipment such as camcorders seemed appropriate for creating a low-threshold setting. However, collaborations with professional stakeholders like municipalities revealed a need for higher production quality. A hybrid setup — combining flexible cameras with high-quality directional audio — proved to be a suitable balance between accessibility and professionalism.

Week 14: Video as Research Material

In line with Sarah Pink's view, analysis does not begin in the edit room — it starts in the field. The camera is not only a recording tool, but also a framing device that responds in real time to what unfolds. Filming becomes part of the learning.

Later, when editing, screening videos for those who appear in them offered a key moment of co-reflection. Their input often helped reshape the narrative or bring in new directions. This step transforms the method into a collaborative process rather than an extractive one.

Appendix 2: One-pager PEC


DOEL:
Deze visuele ethografie onderzoekt de energietransitie in Eindhoven, met een specifieke focus op de impact op bewoners in energiearmoede. De documentaire brengt zowel de beleidsmatige kant als de dagelijkse realiteit van betrokkenen in beeld. Het doel is om andere gemeenten en beleidsmakers inzicht te geven in de aanpak, de uitdagingen en de oplossingen die deze transitie met zich meebrengt.

**DE ENERGIE
TRANSITIE IN
EINDHOVEN**



MIDDEL:
Door middel van interviews en observaties van de activiteiten wordt de energietransitie tastbaar gemaakt. Beelden van beleidsmakers, energiecoaches, klussers en betrokken bewoners schetsen een compleet beeld van hoe initiatieven zoals het Positieve Energie Café (PEC) helpen om energiearmoede aan te pakken en beschikbare subsidies toegankelijker te maken.

IMPACT:
Deze documentaire dient als een leerzaam en inspirerend document voor andere gemeenten en beleidsmakers, en laat zien hoe samenwerking, innovatieve aanpakken en lokale initiatieven de energietransitie kunnen versnellen en inclusiever kunnen maken.



Voorbeeld projecten:
DE NIEUWE AANSLUITING, Rotterdam

“De docu was een prachtig begin van de dag: de energietransitie in Bospolder-Tussendijken vanuit allerlei oogpunten bekeken, van het ministerie tot de bewoners in de wijk. Het is heel mooi in beeld gebracht en mooi was ook het gesprek dat daarna op gang kwam.”

— Marianne de Koning, De Verbindingskamer

WIE IN BEELD:

Projectleiders:
Stef Verhoeven (PACT Woensel Zuid)
Ivana Post (Gemeente Eindhoven)
Rick Thijs (Wethouder duurzaamheid)
Milou/lianne (Projectaanjagers)

In het veld:
Klussers
Hartenwarmers
Energie coach
Bewoners in de wijk



Klusser Mike



Bewoner

live video examples

Werving bewoners

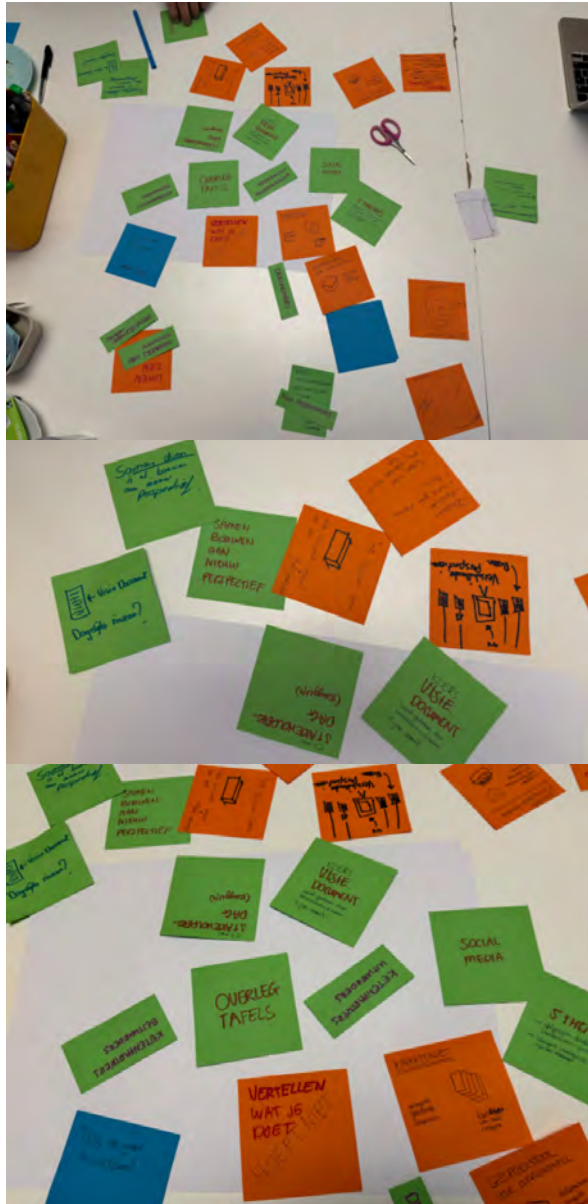
- Social media oproep
- Mond tot mond, Klussers & Hartenwarmers
- PEC Scherm




Communicatie

- Evenement als onderdeel van nationale klimaat week, Film vertoning als gespreksstarter (Okt-Nov)
- Social media campagne, snippets posten om meer aandacht te geven aan de energie transitie
- PEC Installatie

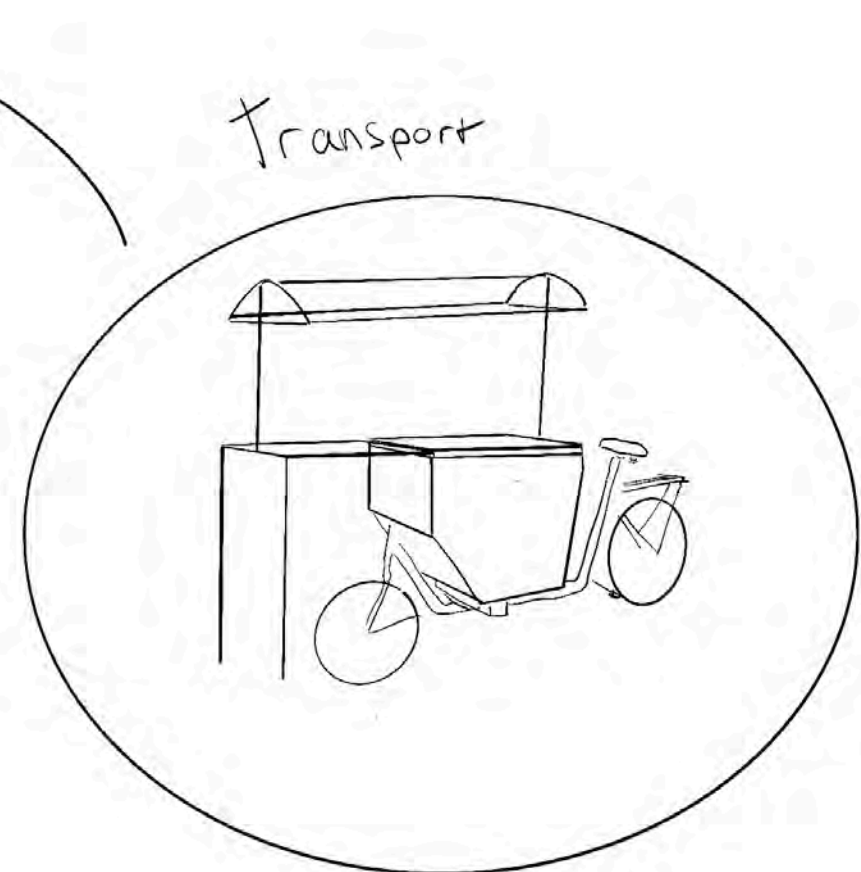
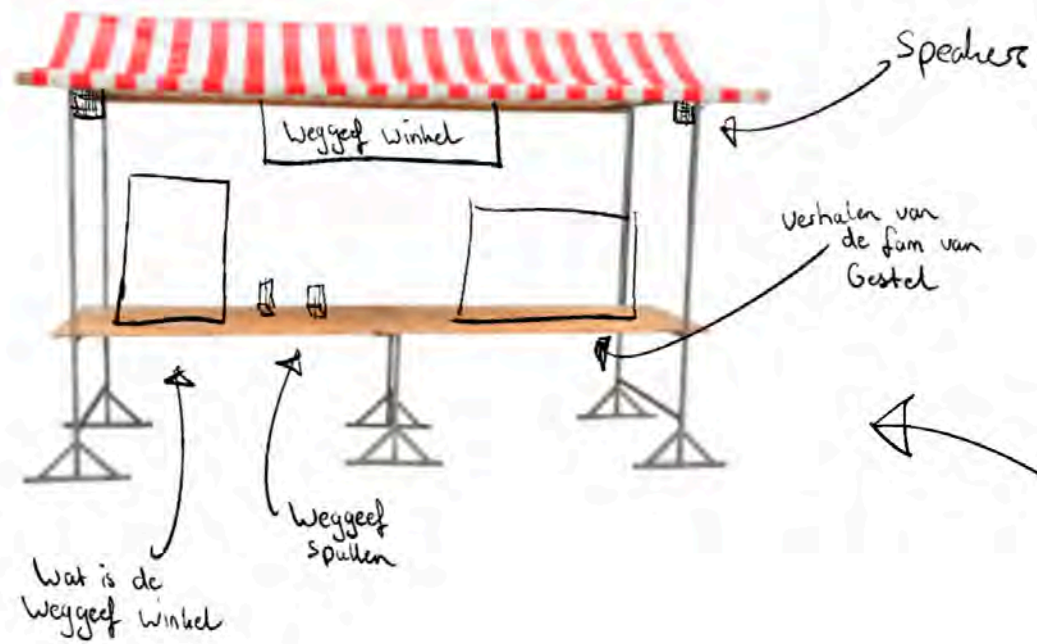
Appendix 3: ideation session NEOS



They are celebrating their 25th anniversary this year and they have asked cocosmos to work on a campaign. This goes hand in hand with the organization of the 25th anniversary party, and we also have

a co-creation that I was allowed to participate in, which was about what happens after the party. The question was actually whether we could think about working together on a new perspective with the slogan. I was asked because we saw a good opportunity to use film to show different perspectives. For example, I had already brainstormed about different ideas for this in advance. In the end, the meeting did not end up using film, because they wanted to go in a different direction. However, the meeting turned out to be a good introduction for another project.

Appendix 4: Concept Cargo bike



Appendix 5: Field notes Cargo bike

Person 1

He asked if I also had free dog food. I told him that it was available in the store. He didn't want to watch the videos, but he will definitely stop by the store to get dog food.

Many people walk by, I see them looking, I don't speak to them. They look curious and read the sign. They don't approach me.

Person 2

Said they didn't need anything themselves, but were clearing things out and would drop off items. "I'll pass it on to my son. I'm leaving now but I think they'll like it."

Person 3

Understood the concept well after watching the video. She seemed pleasantly surprised. "The video helps you understand what it looks like there."

Person 4

Walked by, I spoke to her, but she didn't want to put on headphones and didn't see the screen.

Person 5

Said she lived around the corner. After watching the video she responded: "Surprisingly nice, it gives a look inside what it's like in there. It also gives a better idea of the store's purpose and who goes there."

The weather worsened and fewer people than usual were out.

Person 6

Said it added depth, nice to see what it does to a person. "Very beautiful, I like that I see a face with stories. At first it was just a store, and now you understand the idea behind it and it becomes much more than that."

Next day:

Person 7

"I think a whole group of people can identify with this. I knew about it, but didn't know they did this." The video shows one side, but not a large group. He also mentioned that mostly white women were shown, so he could understand why it might not appeal to others as much. He works in the cultural sector himself and shared stories from his own life.

He said it took him a bit out of his flow. "Usually I'm grocery shopping with a clear goal. I'm not really in the mood to watch videos or sometimes talk to people."

Person 8

Had a surprised expression while watching the video, she even looked at me and said "wow." After the video we talked for quite a while about the concept. She shared stories from her own life and explained why she finds this so important.

Person 9

"I will definitely bring stuff." The person also reengaged in the conversation by sharing examples of what he does for this target group. "We have a fridge here where businesses can place food, it's open 24/7 and available to everyone."

Person 10

Doesn't understand it, only takes things. Has criticism about the system, seems confused.

Persons 11

A woman with children wanted to watch the video. This is how I discovered the setup didn't work. I had a headphone connected, so I quickly disconnected it via Bluetooth so they could still see the video. Due to loud background noise, it was hard to hear. The kids lost attention and the woman started talking over the video and asking questions.

Person 12

Used the word "Compassion" after watching the video. "I can imagine many people feel lonely. And sometimes you don't want to go straight to big organizations. I think this could be a good first step for these people to recognize problems early and address them in an approachable way."

Person 14

Through the video she saw the studio and what's available. "I'll definitely go take a look, because I do a lot of painting and stuff."

Appendix 6: Film Feedback familie van Gestel

What was the most memorable aspect of the film?

- - How much fun people are having there, and the coziness. How being there for each other can improve each other's lives. The openness of the characters in the film.
- - The one woman who, from total loneliness, found her place in the store and rebuilt social contact! Really beautiful to see. And I thought the man with the automatic belt retractor was really cool haha.
- - The gratitude of people for the store and the exchanging, and the importance of social contact and how the store also functions as a meeting point.
- - The social connection between people through the store.
- - The man who is addicted to drugs and picked out a bar of soap to wash himself.
- - There is a place where people rediscover meaning and connection with others that they had lost.

When did your attention drop during the film?

- - In the first half I sometimes couldn't understand everything 100%. Not a big problem, just a bit more effort.
- - Around 8 minutes in, (I think the owner) explains who all comes there etc. There's a lot of cutting in her story which I found a bit distracting.
- - I think halfway through the stories became a bit similar, so maybe it could be cut down to 10 minutes. The pace is otherwise good and the lack of music makes it feel more pure, which suits the store and the no-nonsense story.
- - No.
- - Not really, actually. The return of the interviewees helped create a sense of connection in the whole.
- - No, the diversity of the personal stories keeps it interesting.

How well did you understand 'De Familie van Gestel'? (0–5) – Explanation

- - Score: 4 | Nice that it starts with the store opening and ends with it closing. It really feels like you're following a day.
- - Score: 4 | I would maybe start with a little more introduction, like a short voice-over, because now you're thrown straight into the story.
- - Score: 5 | The concept is explained from different perspectives, which makes it easy to follow and adds depth.
- - Score: 4 | The film consists of fragments from one day. Nice ending. How many people visited?
- - Score: 5 | The lady brought in goods, the shop opened, and it ended with the number of visitors.
- - Score: 5 | Gradually you discover the full range of activities and the full purpose. Maybe start with a summary at the beginning, then unfold it, and repeat at the end.

How logical was the story structure? (0–5) – Explanation

- - Score: 4 | Nice that it starts with the store opening and ends with it closing. It really feels like you're following a day.
- - Score: 3 | I would maybe start with a little more introduction, like a short voice-over, because now you're thrown straight into the story.
- - Score: 5 | The concept is explained from different perspectives, which makes it easy to follow and adds depth.
- - Score: 3 | The film consists of fragments from one day. Nice ending. How many people visited?
- - Score: 5 | The lady brought in goods, the shop opened, and it ended with the number of visitors.
- - Score: 4 | Gradually you discover the full range of activities and the full purpose. Maybe start with a summary at the beginning, then unfold it, and repeat at the end.

How emotionally engaged were you while watching? (0–5) – Explanation

- - Score: 5 | The people working in the store are very open about their stories. Lovely people.
- - Score: 4 | I found it very interesting to see all the different people who came by, each a unique character—from people with a tough past to those trying to help others.
- - Score: 5 | The story of the recovered addict hit hard, especially when he talked about his mother. The emotions were clearly visible on everyone's faces. It touched me, and the sincerity shines through.
- - Score: 4 | The involvement of the people who work there.
- - Score: 5 | I was impressed that so many people genuinely want to do something for others. And the interviewees felt they could contribute to society and each other again.
- - Score: 5 | Beautifully filmed, facial expressions clearly visible. The interviewees clearly explain the personal impact of this project.

Has your perception of giveaway stores or neighborhood initiatives changed?

- - Yes, now I think: it's a shame there isn't a shop like this on every street. It would connect people more and solve many social issues.
- - I honestly didn't know this existed, so my view hasn't changed, but I find it a very beautiful and good concept. As the man who lived across the street said: 'in our society, there are too few places like this'.
- - Not really changed, because I already work more with local initiatives myself, but the concept of a giveaway store inspired me to look for one in my neighborhood to see if I can support it.
- - Yes, the impact of something like this on the people involved.
- - A very special initiative. It would be nice if something like this could be set up in more places in the Netherlands.
- - Yes, I don't really know any, except for the thrift store. There should be more, also integrated into regular neighborhoods—that's a good idea.

Appendix 7: Evaluation Form for visual media

Evaluation Form for (Ethnographic) Visual Media

Project Title:
Creator(s):
Date of Submission:
Evaluator(s):

I. General Information

- 1. Type of Media
- 2. Primary Purpose of the Work
- 3. Intended Audience

II. Scholarly Contribution and Theoretical Engagement

- 1. Does the work demonstrate long-term (ethnographic) engagement?
- 2. Is there evidence of systematic research methods (e.g., participant observation, interviews, archival research)?
- 3. Does the work effectively integrate anthropological theories or contribute to theoretical debates?
- 4. How is theorization made explicit in the work?

III. Technical and Aesthetic Quality

- 1. Does the work demonstrate strong technical execution?
- 2. Does the work effectively use visual and/or auditory elements to convey ethnographic complexity?
- 3. Does the work align theory with documentation in a meaningful way?

IV. Ethical Considerations

- 1. Has the work appropriately addressed issues of consent and collaboration with research participants?
- 2. Does the work engage with the ethical responsibilities of representation and power dynamics?
- 3. Are community voices and perspectives meaningfully included in the project?

Only fill in in case of finished and disseminated media:

V. Impact and Dissemination

- 1. Has the work been disseminated in ways appropriate for its purpose and audience?
- 2. Has the work been reviewed or recognized in scholarly or professional settings?
- 3. Does the work contribute to public understanding or policy discussions?

VI. Additional Comments & Overall Assessment

- 1. Strengths of the Work:
- 2. Areas for Improvement:
- 3. Final Recommendation and Overall Rating:

Evaluator Signature: _____
Date: _____

REFLECTION

Introduction

In this reflection, I look back on my FMP preparation semester. I use the goals from my PDP as a starting point, which were: developing a method with visual ethnography, working on real cases to gain experience, and exploring how film can be used in public installations. Through the different cases, I started to recognize the value of my own vision. Using film helped to capture complex issues in a low-threshold way and made them more accessible to a broader audience. This reflection focuses on how that vision was tested and shaped in practice, with specific attention to ethical questions and stakeholder management.

Creating method and working with visual ethnography

Building experience in the field was essential to shape and understand my method. By combining literature with practice, I started to see how visual ethnography works in real situations. The focus lies in capturing real, personal stories that can create empathy, which also brings a certain tension when filming in sensitive contexts.

There's a balance to be found when starting conversations with new people. I want them to feel as comfortable as possible in front of the camera. From the feedback I receive, I believe this often works, but it's something I'm constantly shaping. This became especially clear during the PEC project, where I struggled to find that balance. Looking back, I now see that a certain level of trust needs to be built before someone is truly willing to open up on camera. Without that trust, the camera can easily feel intrusive. That's why visual ethnography is not always the right fit for completely new interactions. It takes time. I approach this responsibility with care, and over time I've grown in how I handle it. At the same time, I've become more aware that this careful approach sometimes means I miss unexpected or spontaneous moments that could have added a layer to the story.

Film in the output communication

One of the goals I had set in my PDP was to create a physical installation. In the end, this translated into taking a cargo bike onto the streets, using it as a mobile setup to show my videos in public space. While this approach allowed for direct interaction with passersby, I did feel something was missing. I had less time to work hands-on or to build prototypes the way I usually like to. In a client context, the main question is often: does it work? This shift in setting influenced my design decisions. At first, I wanted to experiment with sensors and sound to make the setup more interactive, but I learned to simplify. This helped speed up the process and better matched the expectations of a professional environment. It taught me to focus on clarity and function, and to make design choices that are effective within real-world constraints.

This also made me think about the kind of designs I'm making. The visual ethnographic style I've been developing does not always translate well into short formats, especially for installations in public space. These types of films ask for time, attention, and some emotional openness – things you rarely get from someone walking past a screen on the street. I tried editing some clips down to just a few minutes, but in doing so, a lot of nuance and emotional depth was lost. That depth is often what creates empathy, so losing it changes the whole impact. For future projects, it feels important to stay flexible with output formats. This could mean focusing less on public installations or creating settings where people have the time and space to watch and truly experience the story. For example by creating a mindful space where people can sit down, relax and observe.

In the end, the output format should be tailored to the audience and the role the film is meant to play in the bigger picture. This is something I want to focus on in my FMP.



Working with cocosmos & Stakeholder Management

It was my first time working closely with both a design studio and multiple external clients. The positive side was that I got the opportunity to work on real projects and see where I could make impact. I learned to think in terms of supply and demand, and to recognize what clients value – which often turned out to be quite different from what I would focus on as a student.

Working on larger and layered projects, like those involving the municipality, taught me how to navigate systems where each step requires approval from different people. This process often slowed things down and made me realize that the rhythm of government-led projects does not always match my hands-on and iterative way of working. There were moments when I found my position in the project unclear. For instance, I spent time writing proposals that later didn't match what the client wanted in terms of style. Looking back, I also acted too early in some cases, assuming a project was already moving forward, while it had not officially been confirmed. In my enthusiasm, I skipped some internal steps. It pushed me to be more strategic, to keep my communication lines short within cocosmos, and to stay close to the process even when progress felt slow.

There were moments I felt uncertain, especially when I could sense the pressure and different interests at play. This was my first time being confronted with those dynamics so directly. The biggest insight from all of this is the importance of expectation management. That is something I now see as essential for feeling confident in my role. Having someone within cocosmos to reflect with made a big difference. It gave me space to process what was happening, and to keep learning from it.

Conclusion

This semester helped me shape my method and gain experience working with real clients. It showed me what it means to design within professional settings and what kind of value I can offer. In the first phase of my FMP, I will continue working on real cases to further refine my approach. In the later stages, I want to explore how these films can take shape in physical outcomes, so I can also focus on technology and realisation. The past months have given me a clearer understanding of how I work in practice. Moving forward, I want to sharpen my method and see how it can grow into a business model that is both meaningful and relevant for clients.



PDP M2.1

CREATED 20-02-2025

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



JENS
VERVOORT

M 21 2025

VISION

I believe that design has the power to create empathy, respect, and deeper connections between individuals, regardless of their backgrounds. I want to amplify unheard voices by collecting their stories and finding the right medium to share them. Through design, I aim to inspire curiosity and create understanding between diverse communities.

Society is divided into different social groups, called social bubbles. These bubbles often share the same norms, values, and beliefs. I've observed that living within our own social bubbles makes it challenging to connect with those outside of them. We are caught up in our own lives, often only engaging with issues that directly impact us. This narrow focus distances us from the individuals and stories within other communities, making deep understanding even harder to achieve.

Understanding other bubbles is a fundamental part of respect, and I believe design can play a role in creating empathy. It is a powerful tool for changing mindsets, encouraging people to step out of their comfort zones and engage with new perspectives. Beyond that, I see design as a medium for storytelling and creating meaningful experiences. By crafting narratives, design has the ability to connect people emotionally and making stories more impactful.

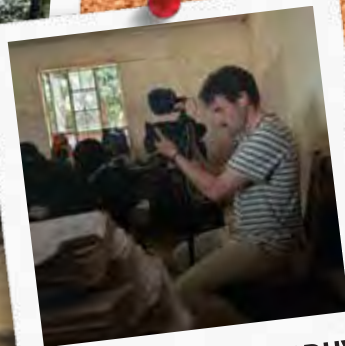
I strive to design experiences that spark conversations, encourage new ways of thinking, and bring people closer together. Sparking spontaneous interactions plays a major role in my approach to design, as it helps bring different social bubbles together. By creating opportunities for unexpected encounters, such as stimulating conversations between strangers in public spaces, design can foster new connections and break down barriers between communities. Public installations and interactive designs can create moments of unexpected connection, helping people feel more present and engaged with their surroundings. This way, design can serve as a bridge between cultures and amplify the stories of marginalized communities.

PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

My professional identity as a designer is grounded in my ability to connect, communicate, and collaborate. Connecting for me means engaging with individuals from different backgrounds, learning from their experiences, and integrating their perspectives into my design process. Communicating involves using film as a medium to find and tell stories, making complex ideas more accessible and sparking discussions. Collaborating allows me to work with diverse stakeholders to create inclusive design solutions. By combining these three elements, I work on projects that bring people together, create dialogue, and highlight societal issues through interactive and immersive experiences.



RESEARCH PROJECT



VISUAL ETHNOGRAPHY

My work is characterized by visual ethnography which enables me to research and document cultural experiences using film as a story-finding medium. I use it to convey complex ideas to diverse stakeholders, including users, clients, and team members. I am driven by a curiosity to learn from people and explore new worlds, listening to their stories and sharing them with others. By combining my entrepreneurial mindset with my empathetic nature, I create designs that spark curiosity and shed light on societal issues. I use film as a powerful tool to communicate visions, start discussions, and prevent misunderstandings.

TANZANIA FIELD RESEARCH

I not only have an eye for finding these stories, but I translate these into mediums. With technical expertise in prototype development and a hands-on design approach, I focus on designing experiences that engage people through interaction. I use my programming and material knowledge to connect tools and programs such as TouchDesigner and Arduino, resulting in interactive installations for public spaces. Such as the post robin hood machine exhibition I made. This installation detected people sitting on chairs and based on this interaction, an immersive sound experience was played in combination with moving images. In this project and in my other designs I encouraged visitors to explore new perspectives, aiming to evoke emotions that inspire mindset change.



THE POST ROBIN



HOOD MACHINE



POSTCAST PROJECT

I strive to make my projects accessible by engaging people in public spaces. I believe that by Involving users directly in the design process, through immersive prototypes or public participation, more meaningful and inclusive design solutions can be created for societal issues. This involves rapid design iterations using the materials and knowledge available to me. For example, in the project called PostCast, the goal was to encourage as many Eindhoven residents as possible to vote on the city's objectives. In this project, I designed and tested rapid prototypes with people on the street to determine what worked and what didn't. By engaging directly with the public as a designer, I was able to interact with people outside my social bubble, gaining new perspectives that enriched my design process.

GOALS

This semester, I aim going to develop my own method for conducting visual ethnography. To achieve this, I will research different styles through literature review, actively engage in fieldwork by immersing myself in projects, and consult with experts to learn from existing methodologies. By the end of the semester, I want to have a well-documented and tested approach that can serve as a foundation for my future work and potentially form the basis of a business model.

In collaboration with CoCosmos, I will put my method to the test in real-world cases. By applying it to different projects, I want to discover the specific value I can bring to design studios. Throughout this process, I will explore key questions such as how to present and communicate my collected data effectively. By working hands-on with actual cases, I aim to refine my method and gain deeper insights into its practical applications. At the end of the collaboration, I will evaluate my approach and determine how it can be further improved.

I want to strengthen my ability to translate visual ethnographic research into physical, interactive design. I want to explore different design approaches, such as empathic design, to convey a story to the people who interact with the physical design in a way that aligns with the project. Over the next semester, I will experiment with TouchDesigner and other interactive tools to convert moving images into installations or tangible experiences. Testing it in a real-world setting to evaluate its impact and usability

FMP PROPOSAL

STUDENT:
JENS VERVOORT

COACHED BY:
BART HENGVELD

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WHO AM I

My work starts from curiosity – wanting to learn from others, step into unfamiliar places, and understand different perspectives through conversation. With a camera in hand, I try to capture the everyday in all its complexity and turn it into something that others can feel and think about.

My design approach mixes technical making with a sensitivity to people and stories. Whether I'm prototyping with Arduino or editing a film, I look for ways to create experiences that make people pause, relate, or reflect. At the core is the creation of empathy, helping us to see each other more as individuals.

I believe design can help bridge social distance by making space for real encounters. That belief runs through this project. it brings together my background in visual storytelling and my drive to design with and for the people.

INTRODUCTION

This Final Master Project (FMP) lays the foundation for the next phase of FORE, my video production company that currently creates promotional films, event aftermovies, and commissioned content. The goal of this project is to shift FORE into a design driven studio that uses film as a tool to design.

Over the past semester, this direction has been explored by experimenting with how film can function within the design process. Through hands-on case work, the project explored how principles from *Doing Visual Ethnography* by Sarah Pink (2010) can be used to capture lived experiences. This method uses video not just to observe but also to participate in communities, revealing stories through expressions, environments, and everyday moments.

This FMP builds on those experiments and lessons learned during my research and preparation phase. It focuses on translating the insights from previous work into a coherent service offering for FORE. The aim is to explore what kind of value FORE can offer as a film based design practice, and how that can be packaged in a way that is clear, credible, and useful for potential clients.

To do this, the project will continue the collaboration with Cocosmos, a social design studio based in Eindhoven. Together, a live case study will be carried out in collaboration with the municipality of Eindhoven as part of the area development project Groots Gestel. This initiative focuses on strengthening the identity of the Gestel district by making local stories visible and encouraging resident participation.

Through this collaboration, the project will test how film can play a role in building trust, sparking dialogue, and visualizing unseen dynamics in a neighborhood. It will also serve as a practical testing ground for what FORE could offer as a future service, from participatory filming methods to story based community engagement.

In parallel, the project will also involve strategic steps toward becoming a business. This includes developing a brand identity, conducting interviews with experts and studios working in similar domains, and exploring business tools like Value Proposition Design and stakeholder ecosystem mapping. These steps help to clarify what FORE stands for, what it solves, and for whom.

The following proposal outlines in more detail how these design and business tracks will be developed.

PROJECT VISION

The goal of this project is about guiding the existing video production company FORE productions (www.fore-productions.com) in making a shift from promotional videos and aftermovies to using film as a tool for social impact.

In the new vision, film is used as a design tool to create connection, spark reflection, and build shared understanding. Each collaboration starts with a client’s research question: whether from a municipality, cultural institution, or organization in transition. From this starting point, a film-based strategy is developed – sometimes to make hidden dynamics visible, sometimes to activate dialogue or collective insight.

So far, the key pillars that have emerged from past activities and experiments are: the method through which FORE operates is based on visual ethnography, with a strong focus on creating empathy. In addition, film will primarily function as a tool for co-creation and participation. This approach forms the foundation of the studio and is being further refined throughout this semester.

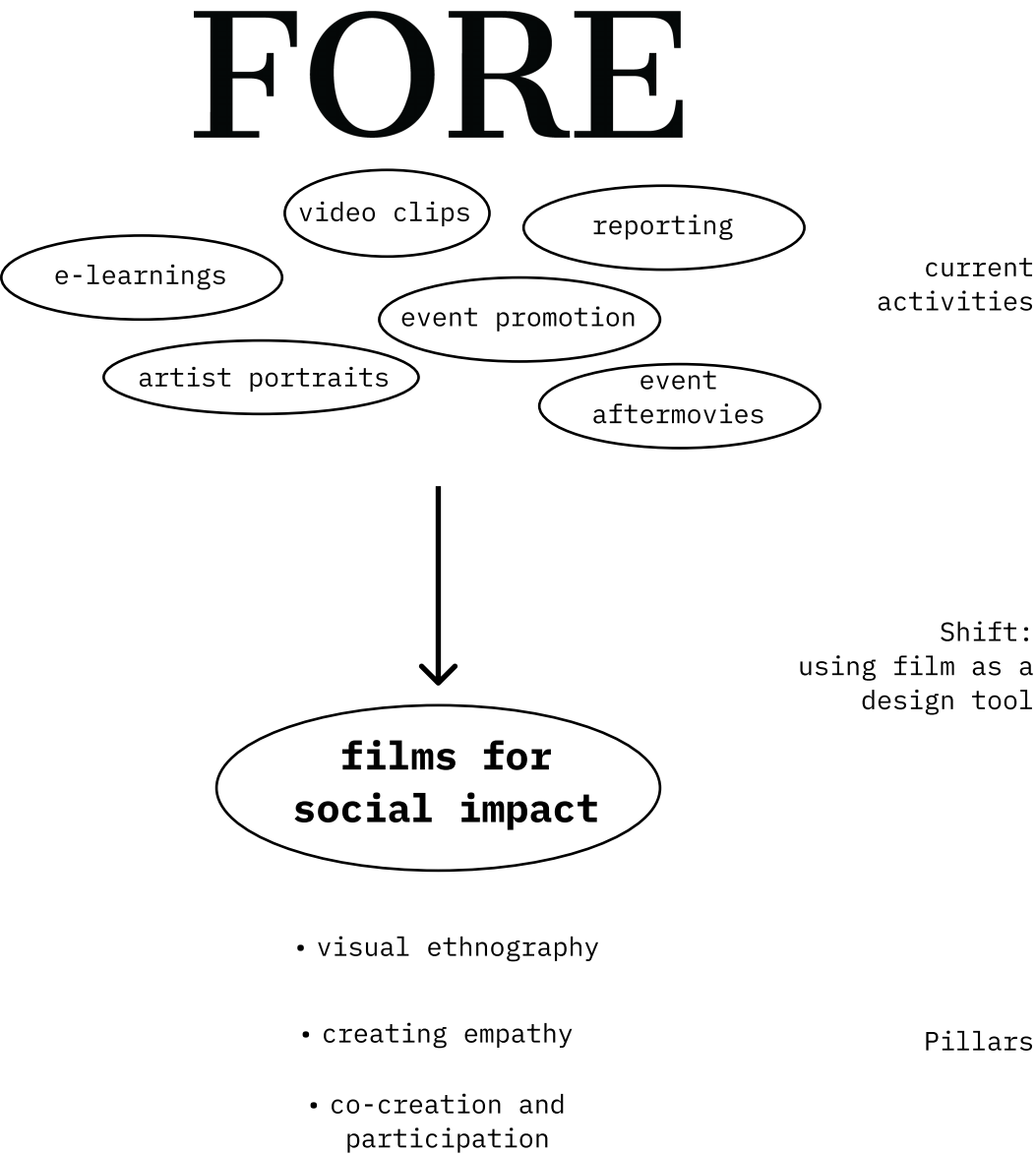


Figure 1: Vision FORE

Why film

Film captures more than just what people say – it shows how they say it. It reveals body language, emotion, space, and atmosphere all at once. That makes it easier to connect with someone else’s world (Raijmakers et al., 2006). The moment someone is filmed can become part of a process itself, to participate and reflect. Film also allows people to revisit earlier moments together, which can support clearer communication and reduce misunderstanding. Sharing the footage with others can open up new conversations and bring different perspectives into the room.



Figure 3: M 1.2 research project

FMP preparation

The Preparation FMP primarily focused on developing a method based on principles from visual ethnography, using the book Doing Visual Ethnography by Pink (2007a) and designing with video by Ylirisku and Buur (2007) as a foundation. As part of this phase, the preparation project participated in several cases at Cocosmos in order to refine this method and explore how video could be applied within social design projects.

One of these cases was the Weggeefwinkel for NEOS, where film was used to explore how film could support local visibility and create empathy within the neighborhood. The project also explored how short video portraits might create a deeper connection between the initiative and the surrounding community. For this, screens were placed in photo frames on a cargo bike (Figure 3). People were in a hurry on the street, and the threshold to stop and watch a video was quite high. This semester will focus more on that part – the communication and presentation of the videos. This is because I want to explore how video can be shared in ways other than social media or online publication – to reach a different audience.

Figure 2: FMP preparation, cargo bike



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Lean startup

The Lean Startup methodology (Ries, 2011) provides a structure for iterative testing and rapid learning. This method is particularly suited to early-stage startups operating under conditions of uncertainty. In this formative phase, many variables remain undefined such as potential clients and market positioning. Lean Startup offers a fitting framework for navigating this uncertainty through small-scale testing and continuous feedback.

Within this project, the Lean approach is applied to evaluate the design offering in a real-world context. Each iteration is guided by a hypothesis and tested by qualitative feedback methods including interviews and observations. Unlike traditional startups that often rely on quantitative data, this project primarily gathers qualitative insights, because it mainly deals with human behavior. However, this also brings challenges in isolating variables during testing. Multiple factors may influence the outcomes, and it is important to be transparent about that.

Film as a (participation) tool

In participatory design, stakeholders are involved in shaping both the process and the outcome (Muller & Kuhn, 1993). Film supports this by creating space for people to express themselves in rich, layered ways (Pink, 2020). It captures more than just words – it shows gestures, expressions, and the atmosphere of a moment. The use of visual imagery (photo or video) to highlight a problem can be especially powerful and effective in communication with policymakers and stakeholders (Novek et al., 2011). It's also widely used in qualitative health research (Baumann et al., 2020; Von Faber et al., 2020; Keller et al., 2008), because it captures contextual details and lived experiences that are often missing in text-based media. In the kind of projects I work on, often around sensitive topics context is really important to understand what is actually happening.

The act of filming itself is never neutral. It influences how people relate to each other and to the designer-filmmaker. But when approached with care, it can help build trust and give people the space to be seen and heard. This matters especially for those who are often underrepresented or overlooked in traditional processes (Rakic & Chambers, 2009). In those cases, being filmed is not just about being visible and taken seriously.

Empathic design

Empathy can generally be seen as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. (Silke et al., 2019) In traditional design thinking, empathy is often treated as a tool for understanding users through perspective-taking. (Battarbee & Koskinen, 2005) This project builds on an extra view like Devecchi & Guerrini (2017) agree: empathy as an experience to design for. Inspired by phenomenology, this projects aims to create moments where viewers can encounter others not by becoming them, but by being present with them. Through film and visual ethnography, this project designs for recognition, highlighting the otherness of people and inviting reflection. This approach shifts empathy from method to meaning, and positions this project as a contribution to designing for deeper social connection.

Building communities

In the groots Gestel case, the focus is on making idenity and connections in the neighborhood more visible. Film can play a role in that. One of the strengths of film is that it lets you step into someone else’s world, even if just for a moment. People share their thoughts on what Gestel means to them, and when others watch those stories, it can open up new perspectives. It creates a moment where you might think: “What if that were me?” According to Berardi et al. (2020), empathy often starts with that individual feeling, but it can grow into something shared. When people relate to each other’s stories, it becomes a way to build community .

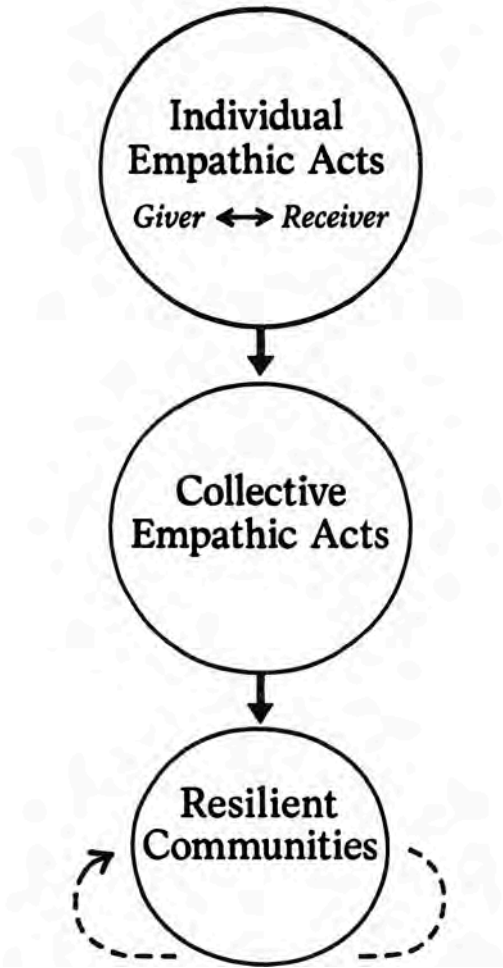


Figure 4: Rebuilding communities with empathy (Berardi et al., 2020)



PROJECT CASE: GROOTS GESTEL

The Groots Gestel vision focuses on strengthening the identity of the Gestel district by connecting local stories, people, and places. It is part of a long-term effort by the municipality of Eindhoven to make the area's diversity more visible and to support inclusive development shaped by those who live there. Participation plays a central role: not only as a tool for collecting input, but as a way to build shared ownership and trust.

In previous phases, the project has explored ways to understand what Gestel means to its residents. Through conversations and participation with residents. The current phase continues this work, asking:

What makes Gestel unique, and how can those stories shape its future?

Approach

The project follows different phases, each using film in public space as a way to engage, reflect, and connect. Inspired by Berardi et al. (2020), the approach builds on the idea that small moments of empathy can strengthen community ties. In practice, this means walking through the neighborhood with a camera (Pink, 2007), capturing lived experiences, and inviting people to respond.

The specific outcomes are not fixed in advance. Within the broader Groots Gestel program, several ongoing activities offer space for different forms of expression. This can be as a public screening, a printed identity book, or a spatial installation. The project aims to respond to these opportunities in a way that fits the stories and insights emerging from the fieldwork.

The role of film is to participate – to create openings for conversation, recognition, and shared understanding. Through this process, the project contributes to the broader Groots Gestel vision by showing how personal stories and collective identity can inform future development.

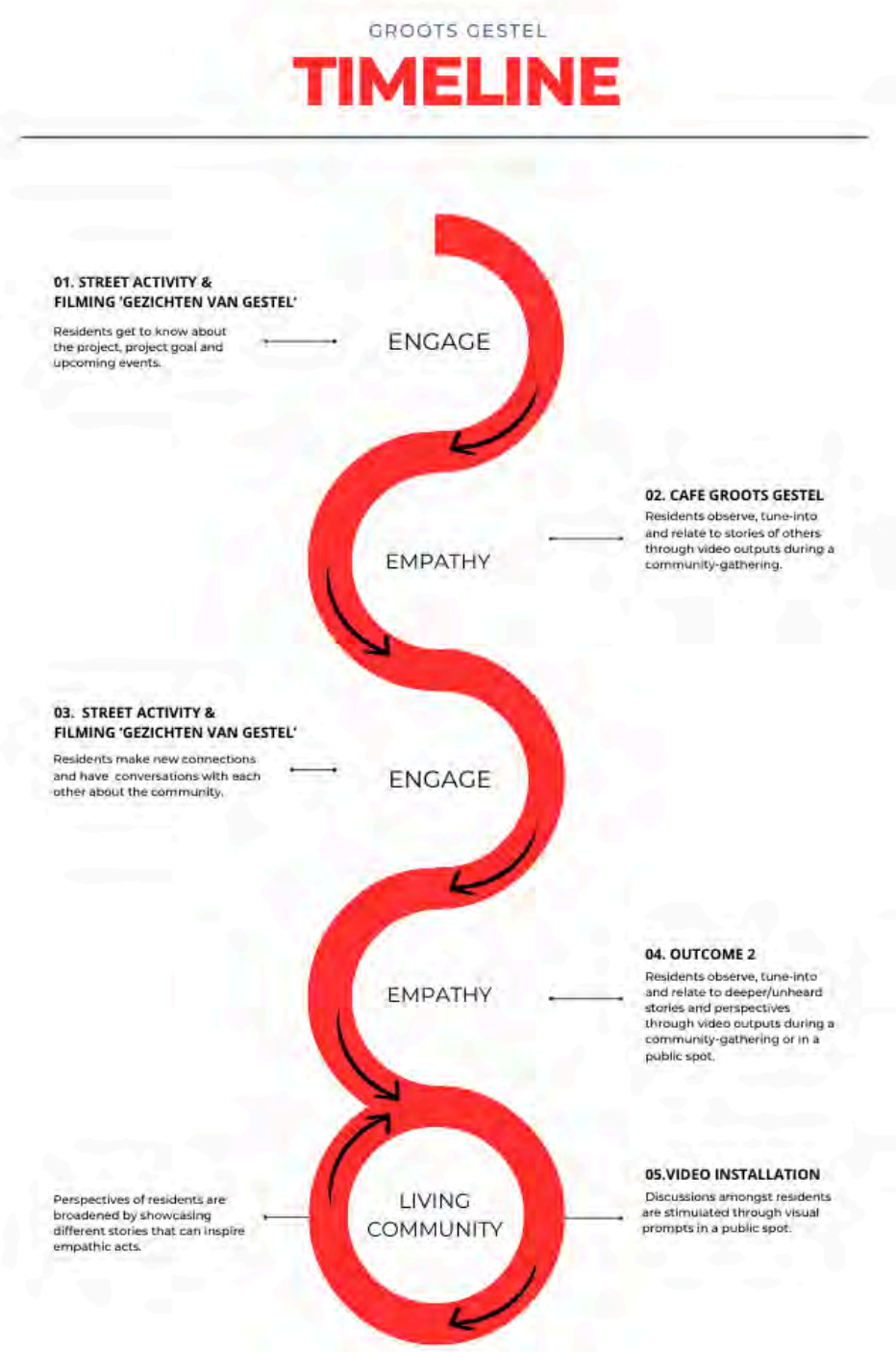


Figure 6: Project time case groots Gestel

PROJECT PHASES

The main goal of this project is to develop a new branch of FORE (an already existing video production company) where film is used to address specific client challenges. The Groots Gestel project, in collaboration with the Municipality of Eindhoven, serves as the main case to gather insights and inspiration that will feed into the development of the business plan. The project is divided into three phases, applying the Lean Startup method to test within the iterations based on hypotheses.

In the first phase, the project will be developed for a fixed public moment at the end of September, during Café Groots Gestel. To accelerate the process, initial video outputs and engagement activities will already start earlier in August and September. During Café Groots Gestel, the project applies the Lean Startup method using a Build-Measure-Learn loop. An example could be that: A short series of local video portraits will be shown at the start of the evening to test the hypothesis: "If residents see familiar or relatable stories on screen, they will feel more connected and engaged during the group conversation." This will be measured through observation, informal interviews, and short feedback prompts. The outcome will inform how video can support participation and dialogue in similar public settings.

In the second phase, FORE will carry out activities to further develop the company, such as conducting interviews with experts or similar organizations, including Kwetsbare Zaken BV (www.kwetsbarezaken.nl). Kwetsbare Zaken is a creative studio that uses visual storytelling to reveal the deeper layers of organizational culture.

The final phase will focus on developing a video installation to enhance FORE's design, storytelling, and realization capabilities. The outcome will be presented during Demo Day. It remains open whether this installation will be based entirely on the work from the Groots Gestel project, or if a new concept will be developed alongside it during this phase.

PHASE 1

Groots Gestel case: First engagement with neighborhood (August - Oct)

- Visual ethnography in Gestel: observing and capturing everyday life and local dynamics
- Collecting resident stories through filmed street conversations and walks
- Creating short video portraits around identity, change, and belonging
- Reviewing footage with Cocosmos and the municipality to define key themes
- Sharing clips during Cafe Groots Gestel to spark dialogue
- Gathering feedback to assess how film supports connection and reflection

PHASE 2

Deepening stories and testing application (Oct - Dec)

- Conducting interviews with other companies or initiatives (e.g. Kwetsbare Zaken)
- Value Proposition Design (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2015): defining what FORE offers to clients such as municipalities, cultural institutions, and community organizations
- Strategic Benchmarking: researching 5-8 relevant practices
- Stakeholder Ecosystem Mapping: visualizing the relationships between users (audiences), clients (commissioners), and intermediaries (e.g. curators, producers)
- Developing the brand identity (Fasil & Birla, 2017)
- Creating a business model based on the lean startup method: focussing on value, service structure, and early-stage validation.

PHASE 3

Demo Day final presentation (Oct - Jan)

- Designing and building an installation for Demo Day (e.g. modular video station, immersive storytelling setup)
- User-testing different forms of interaction with video in a installation
- Experimenting with different tones of storytelling (personal, poetic, critical, observational)
- Reflecting on technical and production possibilities for future use

INTENDED OUTCOMES

The main outcome of this project will be a business model for FORE – supported by insights and examples collected across all three phases. Phase 2 will be especially focused on developing the strategic and structural aspects of the business, including interviews, benchmarking, and value proposition design.

Case: Groots Gestel

The first public outcome will be presented during Café Groots Gestel, where selected video portraits will be shown to spark dialogue and reflection among residents and local stakeholders. Following this event, further activities – such as community screenings or online formats – may be developed to continue the conversation and reflect on emerging themes.

Demoday

This installation can be an invitation for the audience to experience personal, local stories in a public space. The goal could be to use the collected stories and images from Groots Gestel to reflect the identity of the neighborhood, but also to invite visitors to reflect on their own connection to their community. It explores how film can live beyond the screen.

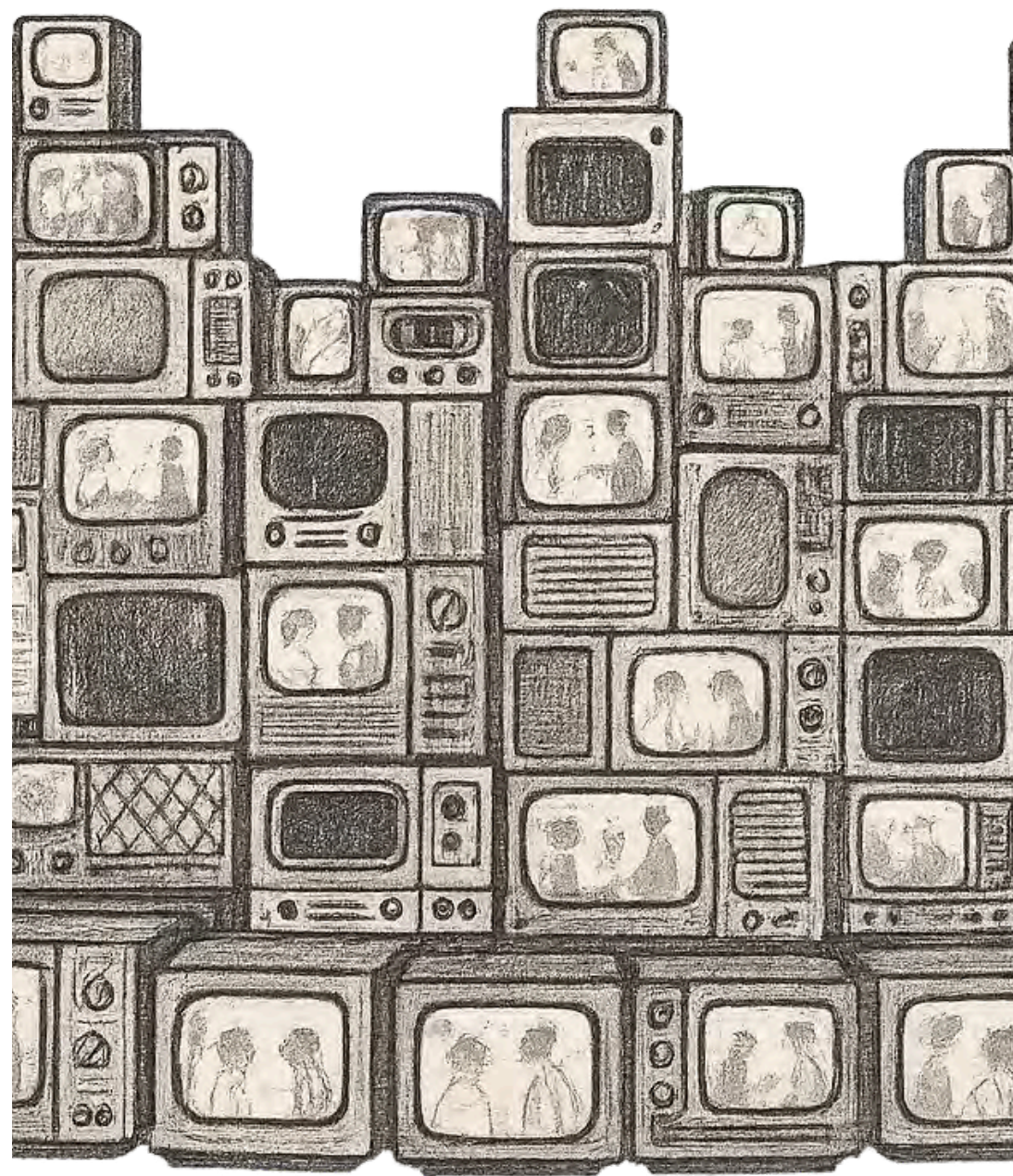


Figure 7: Conceptual visual for Demo Day demonstrator. image created together with OpenAI (2025)

RISK MANAGEMENT

Ethical concerns

Using film in combination with people and real stories about their living environment carries ethical responsibilities. For example, misrepresentation of participants must be carefully avoided.

All participants will be informed about the project and their role in it. Informed consent will be central, and options for anonymity or non-visual participation will be provided. Participants will also be invited to review their footage if possible, to ensure they feel represented. Stakeholders in the project, such as Cocosmos and municipality of Eindhoven, will also help ensure during review sessions that people are portrayed in a respectful and accurate way.

Low engagement with video content

Even when the videos are produced and well-made, there is always a chance that they will not reach or resonate with the intended audience. Videos might be viewed passively, not provoke discussion, or be overlooked.

This challenge reflects the value of using the lean startup method (Ries, 2011). If a certain approach does not work, it can be adjusted and tested again. This way of working keeps the project responsive, focused on learning from practice, and able to adapt to what the context really needs.

Appearance on camera:

In addition, working with people and real stories in a home setting is new for the participants. One of the main risks is that residents may be hesitant or unwilling to be filmed. Reasons may include privacy concerns or discomfort with being on camera.

To address this, the project starts early to allow extra time for building trust in the neighborhood. Multiple filming days will be planned to increase the chance of finding people who feel comfortable participating. In this phase, clear communication and ethical transparency will be central.

Stakeholder management

Each stakeholder has its own expectations and goals, which can sometimes shift during the process. A potential risk is that these overlapping interests might lead to a loss of focus or make it difficult to follow my intended methodology.

This will be managed by clearly setting expectations with all partners at the beginning of the project. Discussions will clarify what is needed from both Cocosmos and municipality of Eindhoven, and what they can expect in return. A shared planning and a limited number of structured contact moments will help preserve the integrity of the design process. At the same time, I stay open to adjusting my approach if certain methods, like co-creation or filmed reflections, turn out not to work in practice.

Lack of market demand for design-film services

A broader risk lies in the long-term viability of FORE as a business. It is possible that companies or institutions do not yet recognize the value of film-based design methods, or are unsure how to apply them to their own work.

To mitigate this, the project focuses on case-based experimentation. By carrying out multiple real-life cases, a portfolio will be built that shows the added value of film as a design tool. These examples will help make the concept tangible and show potential clients how it could work in their context. In addition, interviews and benchmarking with similar businesses will help position FORE and find ways to match the needs.

Q1

| Week | Main Focus | Deadlines / Key Moments |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Week 1 (11 Aug) | Intro visits: filming with area coordinator | |
| Week 2 (18 Aug) | Filming in public space: first story collection round | Start editing first videos |
| Week 3 (25 Aug) | Filming in public space: second story collection round | Review footage + align on themes |
| Week 4 (01 Sep) | Follow-ups + editing video portraits + analysing with participants | Rough cuts ready + meeting with Cocosmos |
| Week 5 (08 Sep) | Final edits + select material for Café Groots Gestel | Final selections made for screening |
| Week 6 (15 Sep) | Prepare Café Groots Gestel event | |
| Week 7 (22 Sep) | Café Groots Gestel: show videos + gather feedback | Public screening + feedback |
| Week 8 (29 Sep) | Analyze feedback + discuss next steps | Feedback review + direction setting |
| Week 9 (06 Oct) | Concept phase next actions and prepare community reflection moment | |
| Week 10 (13 Oct) | Define follow-up format or outputs | |

Q2

| Week | Main Focus | Deadlines / Key Moments |
|------------------|---|--|
| Week 13 (03 Nov) | First draft Value Proposition + expert interviews | |
| Week 14 (10 Nov) | Refine brand identity + benchmark studios | |
| Week 15 (17 Nov) | Stakeholder ecosystem + installation concept | |
| Week 16 (24 Nov) | installation concept | Business model draft + feedback session |
| Week 17 (01 Dec) | Build prototype+ user testing | |
| Week 18 (08 Dec) | Build prototype + user testing | Functional prototype and user tests |
| Week 19 (15 Dec) | Final installation testing + DEMO DAY (15 Dec) | DEMO DAY installation complete and presented |
| Week 20 (22 Dec) | Start writing final report and documentation | Document Demo Day reflections |
| Week 21 (29 Dec) | Continue writing and finalize FMP report | Final report due 6 Jan |

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Parts of this report were supported by the use of ChatGPT as a writing and feedback tool. ChatGPT was used to improve grammar and clarity through the prompt: "Check grammar without changing the writing style and structure." Additionally, it provided critical feedback on content, coherence, and argumentation through a custom prompt simulating a demanding academic supervisor with expertise in both design and business. This helped in strengthening the structure and depth of the report while maintaining full authorship over the ideas and decisions.