Designing a story

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1. Introduction
“In my childhood home we always had lots of cook books. Apart from one — a basic recipe book that had belonged to my mom since middle school — they were all my dad’s. He would buy them. His friends or colleagues would bring them as souvenirs when they travelled somewhere exotic where the cuisine was good. He’d get them from me and my sister as gifts for Father’s Day and Christmas.

Dad had specialized books for Chinese food, for cooking pasta, sushi, game, omelettes, for food to go with whiskey, with beer, with beer and sauna, for preparing hand-made sausages or continental breakfasts and even one on Marshall Mannerheim’s favorite dishes. Whenever we ran out of space for more books, he simply installed a new cabinet on the kitchen wall.

Dad always cooked in the weekends. I learnt to eat with chopsticks by the age five – not a usual skill for a toddler living in Lahti in the late 80’s, a small city in Southern Finland, famous for ski jumping and gang fights.

On Saturday mornings after a big breakfast I saw my dad sit down at the kitchen table, pull a few books out of the cabinet and browse them for inspiration while planning the menu for the weekend. He would then close the books, finish his shopping list and head to the grocery store for ingredients. More often than not, I would not see him open any of the books later, while he cooked for the entire afternoon. The books simply served as general guidelines and sources for inspiration, not as manuals for cooking.”
In high school, before even applying to the Helsinki University of Art, Design and Architecture I thought that I would design my father’s cookbook as a master’s thesis project. This thought came back to me when thinking about my thesis topic almost a decade later. Instead of just designing a book about my own dad’s cooking, I decided to create a concept for a cookbook about the cooking of fathers’ over a generation. In addition to my own father, Seppo, I asked a father of my own generation with two small children, Eino to join the project. I built the story around the altering points of view of fathers of two different generations who love to cook for their families and friends. With Eino’s point of view I also found a lens through which I could study my father’s cooking. I hope the stories of these two fathers will not only provide personal accounts of contemporary home cooking in Finland, but also form an interesting dialogue between two personalities and family cultures. Hopefully the personal narratives will start to form another, larger story on how cooking in families our food culture has evolved. Most importantly, I hope to convey the joy and passion for cooking that Seppo (63) and Eino (34) share.

I will use this personal story project as an opportunity to study the relationship between design and storytelling. Can a story be designed? My aim is to understand the similarities and differences between the creative processes associated with design and storytelling to see if there is a meaningful connection there. My interest in the relationship of design and storytelling arose partly due to personal frustration over the vagueness with which storytelling was talked about. I do not think we designers can suddenly also become storytellers by just claiming so. Following current discourses on design, film or pop-culture, one can hardly avoid coming across such exclamations as “Stories sell!” “We live in the age of stories!” “There is a story behind each of us!”. Asked about their sources of inspiration, many writers, film makers, showrunners and even designers say that they’re “foremost interested in a good story”. I wanted to reach beyond the kind of talk where storytelling is used as some kind of a selling point and take a closer look at the process that goes into creating a story. I was curious to see if there was a
meaningful connection with the process of creating design and what these two fields could teach each other. Through research and reflection on the design process, I will explore how (and if) design tools, processes and thinking are applicable to designing a story.

In the first part of the thesis I will define the central concepts and the point of view of my research and discuss the narrative context of the design project. I will discuss my perspective on storytelling from a designer's point of view as well as my understanding of visual communication design. To understand the context of cookbooks, my chosen medium, will take a closer look into the narratives that prominent home-cooking classics have helped build. Next, I will introduce and discuss the design frameworks that I will later use as a perspective to storytelling. To understand a storytelling process through the lens of design, I naturally have to understand design process first. I selected Gerenryd's applied theory of inquiry and the double diamond model by the British Design Council as frameworks for understanding design processes. They share an idea of design as a process of fluctuating choices: expanding the horizons and making selective cuts within the project. I will then apply this framework to the constituents of a story to see if and how they are applicable to a storytelling process. I will end the theoretical part in chapter 4 by discussing my own experience of writing a story as a designer to see how the theory of inquiry and double diamond model applied to my own process. In the final section I will put the theory into practice and reflect on my own creative process of planning, writing and designing a concept for a cookbook. I will end the thesis by discussing the key findings of studying the connections of design and storytelling processes thorough both research and practice.

Overall, I believe that — in the highly specialized professional world of today — interesting findings, thoughts, inventions and discoveries are likely to be born at the crossroads of different disciplines. The act of crossing the line between design and storytelling defines my research question. I want to understand if and how design methods can be applied to a storytelling process, thus creating an understanding of the connections, similarities and differences associated with these fields. I understand visual communication design as the practice of putting a piece of content into a context through the manipulation of form. I am parting from the role I see traditionally associated with graphic or visual communication design by creating the content as well as the form. To cross these professional lines in an honest, mindful way however, I have to study the different working modes associated with the two fields of work. I hope this process not only enhances my general understanding of the different creative processes but also informs my future work as a designer.

While the emphasis on my research is on the play of form and content, I find it important to be aware of and possibly make use of the context of my project. I am interested in the contextualization of cookbooks in crossroads of storytelling, (narrative) design and lifestyle. Browsing the shelves of the Academic Bookstore in Helsinki, one can see that roughly 50% of the published books are built around an individual: a blogger, a celebrity, a chef or a person representing a group. It seems that in the digital age, where any recipe can be found in the internet, the role of cookbooks has evolved from a manual for cooking into a carrier of lifestyle aspirations. I will reflect on the relationship between storytelling and narrative as well as the narrative context of cookbooks before diving into the more practical aspects of creative processes associated with design and storytelling. This will help me in contextualizing my project and seeing what larger discourses and narratives it could potentially participate in, if published.
In terms of scope for this project, my goal was to divide my time between research and the practical design process equally. As I write in the introduction, the project and research are defined by my attempt to cross boundaries of two related fields – design and storytelling and to see what I can learn from it as a designer. Therefore, the emphasis in the written part of my thesis is analyzing the narrative context and the storytelling process through a design framework. In the creative process I put more emphasis on writing than constructing the story and less on the visual and lay-out design. I will describe the concrete visual design process only very briefly and focus more on the connections I found with storytelling while designing.

As actually creating an entire book would be completely out of scope for a master’s thesis project, I decided to design a concept that would be detailed enough to pitch the book for publishing. To determine the relevant parts for introducing the concept, I interviewed a Finnish book published and an editor specializing in non-fiction. In short, the outcome of the book design process should be broad enough in scope to allow me to suggest it for a publisher and to get their feedback on it. The concept will include a few sample chapters, the content and topics of the book, the image concept and visual style.

The language of the concept itself is Finnish. I felt that it made sense to write prose in my native language rather than English, also the book concept is aimed for the Finnish market. I wrote the study, however, in English as I wanted to be able to share and get feedback on it from the students and professors in my master’s program, most of whom do not speak Finnish.
3. Methods

I aim to understand the connection between storytelling and design on three levels: that of form, content and context. Overall, my focus is on understanding the storytelling process through a designer’s perspective - less the other way around. I will first study the theoretical connections of these points of view separately as well as in comparison with each other. I will look for connections, similarities and differences in the creative processes, elements and outcomes associated with designing and storytelling. I will do this by first discussing the design process through theory of inquiry and the double diamond model. I then move on to studying the essential constituents of a story – such as structure, characters and theme – and find design parallels for them to see if there are elements in my chosen design frameworks that apply to storytelling. By discussing these findings in light of my own creative process at hand, my goal is to create a fruitful dialogue between theoretical analysis on design, storytelling and their narrative context and the practical creative process of writing and designing a concept for a cookbook. By putting the theory into practice and reflecting on it, I am interested in seeing how the theoretical understanding of a design process applies to and helps inform my own working process.

To support the creative process, I conducted expert interviews with an investigative journalist as well as an editor specializing in documentary and reality television. I chose these interviewees to better understand a storytelling process that is based on real-life material such as my own. I also interviewed an editor and a head of publishing in a large Finnish publishing house to better understand the market and context of cookbook publishing in Finland. This interview also helped me define the scope for my design work. The role of interviews in my research and practice is simply to support it and does not constitute a method in a scientific sense. In a field where most skillful designers and storytellers never write about their practice – leaving their process and creative thinking to themselves – interviews seemed like a valuable addition to literature.

In the creative process of writing and designing the concept for the cookbook I used a mix of design and participatory methods. I conducted several interviews with both fathers to collect material for the story. I also visited both on a weekday evening to observe them cook for their families. I planned the photoshoots together with the fathers and photographer Jaakko Kahilanmäki who conducted both shoots. I ran a recipe workshop with the fathers to find a balanced combination of recipes that would take into account both
fathers’ expertise and signature dishes as well as different diets, ingredients, seasons and levels of difficulty. I owe the success of this project to Eino, Seppo and Jaakko. I think design is and should be team work, the worn out idea of a lone hero designer should be left to rest in peace. While facilitation and different information gathering methods did play an important part in the project, I will focus on the design and storytelling aspects of it to keep the research in an appropriate scope.

4. Theoretical background

a. Narrative through a designer looking glass
b. The narrative context of a cookbook
c. The design framework: the theory of inquiry
d. Understanding story through design parallels
Narrative through the designer looking glass

Through this research I aim to understand how and if a design process can be applied to storytelling and what the two fields possibly can offer each other. Traditionally design has been mostly concerned with objects and experiences, not stories or narratives. Certainly there are fields closely linked to graphic design that have a direct connection to narratives, such as animation, graphic novels and illustration but even there the designer’s responsibility has often been foremost visual: that of producing the visual landscape of a story, character design or visual lay-out to a pre-existing story. Storytelling as such – or narrative design – that concerns the actual formulation of events in the story has previously been left to writers and other professionals specialized on the field.

Recently, however, storytelling has become a buzzword not only in films and marketing, where it has kind of always been the buzzword, but also in design. There are global trends underlying this development, such as social media shaping our communication to a narrative direction or the technical development of video games that allows for more complicated and immersive narrative structures. Our personal narratives have become not only something we tell ourselves to form our identities, but also share with others. This development has placed design in a situation where professional borders between designers, writers and storytellers are blurring. We need a better understanding of both, storytelling and design as well as narratives that our work helps shape.

The topic of my research arose partly out of personal frustration with the contemporary discourses around storytelling. Considering their prominence in shaping our culture, it is unfortunate how often at the “post-truth age of stories” (i.e. Vihma et al, 2018) the stories themselves are referred to in a self-explanatory way, such as “stories sell” (“How to Sell Anything to Anyone by Telling Great Stories” in a recent blog post by the Entrepreneur) or “a good story is a good story” (James Cameron on his movies in “The Talks”). Statements like these are common as they are deflect the deeper analysis of why a great story sells, what constitutes a good story and how. Instead, they erect “the story” on a mythological pedestal that us designers along with everyone else are invited to join in admiring. In design consulting, where I work, the story is often used as a vehicle to sell a project to a client. In my previous job as the head of communications and marketing in a middle-sized Finnish company “controlling the narrative” in news media or creating “our story” for all employees to internalize and foster the company culture played a somewhat controversial role in the job description. I was frustrated with the vagueness with which stories, narratives and design were talked about in connection to one another. I wanted to reach beyond the fluffy talk around stories and design to see if there actually was a meaningful connection there. As a designer constantly working with and within creative processes, I was especially interested in the similarities and differences in the structure of the working process associated with both fields. I think design and storytelling have great potential at enriching each other especially if we stop merely dropping the word “story” around and dig a bit deeper into the creative processes associated with them.

Since my own background lies in design and participatory methods, I will examine the narrative process through that of design. I will look for connections, similarities and differences in the creative processes, elements and outcomes associated with designing and storytelling. That is to say, I will examine the storytelling process and outcomes from a design angle, and less the other way around (design through storytelling). This is due to a couple of reasons. Firstly, as a visual communication designer with a background in both graphic design and the design of objects, I am simply more experienced with design processes and tools than those associated with creating narratives. It is therefore natural for me to take the design angle as a starting point. Secondly, I find my chosen point of view helpful in informing my own design project at hand, that of designing a cookbook. As a designer attempting to design not only the visual look of a book but also the story it tells, I find it necessary to understand the narrative tools better in order to succeed in the work. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, I find that there is a need for practical research that connects the dots between design and storytelling. While there is no way for any single piece of research to exhaust this topic, I hope that my research can help bridge the gap and connect at least some dots between the two fields.

As I wrote above, I am puzzled by the vague yet self-evident way in which visual design and narratives are tossed together. I wish to make sense of how they actually might connect. The topic has been increasingly covered in design research, not only in connection to visual communication design, but also on such fields as interior design and user-centered design (i.e. Danko, 2006), package design (i.e. Fox, 1994) and many others. Yet, a certain lack
of thoroughness remains. The research has often been focused on a single narrative aspect of a design outcome, while lacking the necessary analysis of the processes or thinking modes that have helped reach that outcome. 

Mark Foxes article “Please Pass the Effigy: Animation and Storytelling in Packaging” illustrates the problem (1994). The writer opens a valuable discussion on storytelling in something as static as food packaging and does this as early as 1994, being at the forefront of fostering the narrative direction of design. However, the analytical take in the article is light at best. The author lists narrative elements in packaging, such as the bear-shape of the E. F. Lane and Son’s honey container probably familiar to most American families’ breakfast tables, that might inspire kids to make up stories. He also discusses the female-resembling shape of the classic Coca-Cola bottle that may elicit pleasurable associations with teens or grown-ups. While these observations certainly refer to narrative elements – or more accurately, the use of identifiable characters – in packaging, they hardly form an example of either the craft of storytelling or the conscious creation and control of narratives. It seems that too often designers and design writers fall guilty of simply illustrating a recent buzzword shaping the profession instead of digging deep into the level of process and analytical thought that goes into creating design. The designer and design researcher Michael Rock (1996) expresses his frustration at the phenomenon while discussing the concept of a designer as author: "Rather than working to incorporate theory into their methods of production, many so-called ‘deconstructivist’ designers instead literally illustrated Barthes’s image of reader-based text – by scattering fragments of quotations across the surface of their ‘authored’ posters and book covers’. As visual professionals, designers are perhaps often more intrigued by the visual outcomes than analyzing the processes needed to reach them. Research that analyzes the connections, similarities and differences of practical design and narrative processes may provide better tools that other professionals may profit from in their practice.

Finally, study of storytelling through a design angle is needed for one more reason that comes from outside of the design field. As I wrote in the opening paragraph, creating the story has previously been the responsibility of writers and other professional storytellers. It has also been thought of as a process requiring special skill. I believe that even though we live in "the age of stories", where every other sales person is a storyteller, this aspect of storytelling has not changed. Storytelling still requires skill. If we as visual communication designers will further take part in blurring the lines of creative professions and participate in storytelling as well, we owe it to writers and other storytellers already mastering the art to actually know what we are doing. We have to understand what we might be able to bring to the "narrative table" and what our stake on storytelling is. By inquiring into the narrative through the perspective of design, I attempt to understand what the designer take storytelling potentially could be.

Defining concepts: Storytelling, narrative and graphic design

To recap, design has traditionally been concerned with the creation of objects and visuals, recently also with that of (user) experiences and scenarios. Many graphic designers have worked on story-related phenomena but have perhaps been more focused on the visuals than with the constituents of the story itself. While especially user-centered design and the creation of scenarios may have a narrative element to them, graphic design as such is seldomly focused on creating a consistent story.

I understand graphic design as the practice of combining a piece of content with a context through the manipulation of form. For example, in book design, the graphic designer’s job is to turn a word document into a book by giving it the appropriate visual context with typography and cover design. She may use the content of the book to guide the typographic choices as well as the cover design or illustrations. The cover design may reflect not only the content of the book but also tie it to a larger conversation in the society through visual design. In another typical job assignment for a graphic designer, visual identity design, the designer creates the visual representation of a social entity – a company, an association, an event. She does this by creating the visual form – a logo, typography, illustrations, photographic style – for any material, print, digital, spatial, that the entity produces. In the best case the visual identity reflects the mission and values of the social entity in an innovative way. The visual identity places the entity into a visual context where it is compared to other similar entities thus visually setting it apart, conforming to, questioning or shaking up the context. In short, visual communication design can be understood as the practice of discussing, mediating and commenting on the surrounding context by creating a form for content. In this project I am consciously expanding the limits of visual communication design by creating not only the form, but also the content in collaboration with the two fathers. I will create and place the stories and
recipes of two fathers in the context of cook books through creating the story and its visual representation.

The act of crossing the line between design and storytelling defines my research question. I want to understand if and how design methods can be applied to a storytelling process, thus creating an understanding of the connections, similarities and differences associated with these fields. I am parting from the role I see associated with graphic design – the practice of combining a piece of content with a context through the manipulation of form – by taking part in creating the content as well as the form. Overall, I believe that in the highly specialized professional world of today interesting findings, thoughts, inventions and discoveries are likely to be born at the crossroads of different disciplines. To cross these professional lines in an honest, mindful way however, I have to study the different working modes associated with the two fields of work. I hope this process not only enhances my general understanding of the different creative processes but also informs my future work as a designer.

Visual communication design and storytelling both require a creative process. The main difference I found in my research, which I discuss further in this chapter, lies in the way in which they are tied to the concept of time. A story always moves through events in time: the timeline may be as short as a few minutes or seconds or as long as centuries, generations or millennia, it may be as fragmented and abstract as ever, but time is a vehicle that carries a narrative forward. Design, meanwhile, mostly does not concern itself with time. To put it bluntly, an object is created and then it exists in the world. The visual design of an object or a lay-out is mostly not concerned with time. Skillful design may certainly help with the correct pacing of visuals, lay-out spreads or animated sequences but a design process may just as well exist without any need to consider time. In storytelling, however, the way time is handled and events are paced is an unavoidable element of the craft. Simply put, if there is any event or a hint of an event that precedes or follows another event, the concept of time is involved. Even in narratives, that tend to be more abstract in nature – which I discuss further below – there is usually a timely development within. A whole narrative does not simply blob into existence in the world but evolves through time. I therefore extract the concept of time as the essential defining line between design and storytelling: in one it is an avoidable necessity, in the other it is not. The line can be blurred and mixed, but it still marks two different modes – and associated methods - of creative work. The division is significant especially from the perspective of the process involved in creating design or narratives respectively.

There are other differences too, of course. There is an expansive body of literature on the art of storytelling that lists and gives advice on elements that are more typical for stories than design, such as characters, a structure, a plot and a theme. For these elements, however, it is relatively easy to find parallels in the design process. On an abstract level a character is often – but not always – the vehicle in a story that allows for the audience to engage in it. A similar feature can be found in design work, such as the engaging features in a user interface, a visual prop or even the users themselves interacting with the designed piece. Internal structure exists just as well in graphic design as it does in a story. Plot, again, is tightly connected to time and therefore it is not as closely related to design as storytelling. A plot, however often does not exist in narratives that evolve more randomly and without the control of a single author. A theme, on the other hand, is extremely relevant in both working modes. It may be even more so in graphic design, which is often concerned with the thematic context in which it places the message at hand. I will further discuss the story elements through the lens of design practice in the following chapter.

**Narrative or storytelling?**

The concepts of storytelling and narrative carry overlapping, yet different meanings so a couple of words of clarification are in order. According to the contemporary source of common understanding –Wikipedia – a narrative is “a spoken or written account of connected events; a story.” By this definition, a story and narrative would essentially mean the same thing. The Oxford Living Dictionary that catalogues current language, however, adds refinement and a contemporary meaning to the word. According to the dictionary, narrative is “the narrated part of a literary work”; “the practice or art of telling stories”, but also “a representation of a particular situation or process in such a way as to reflect or conform to an overarching set of aims or values.” As the word narrative is derived from the latin term "narrativus", meaning "telling a story"; it would seem that the older meaning of the word would be quite simply associated with the practice of storytelling. (Oxford Living Dictionary, 2018). Contemporarily, however, the term narrative has become deeply entangled with representations and discourses of power.

While story usually refers to a chain of events described by someone
("storytelling"), narrative has a wider scope as a concept. Narrative may mean a story or its structure ("the narrated part of a literary work"), but it also may refer to seemingly unrelated events that over time come to comprise a narrative. The creation of a narrative is less intentional than that of story and the structure is less clear. A single action – a writing, a piece of art, and every-day behavior – may become a part of a larger narrative whether the original "doer" intended it or not. Discussing the relationship between truth and narrative, Hannah Arendt writes: "The real history in which we are committed to while we are living does not have any visible or invisible creator, because it is not made. – – Who says what is –λέγει τά έόυτα– always tells a story, and in this story the particular facts lose their contingency and acquire some humanly comprehensible meaning." According to her, the understanding of our being is a result of constant storytelling, based on the process of selecting actions that we decide to include in the narratives of our lives. (Arendt, p. 261–262). For instance, the "metoo" -movement that started in 2017 threaded individual accounts of women and the acts of sexual harassment into a larger narrative whole that revealed new connections on power, gender, sexuality and (in)equality. Neither any single individual bringing their experience forth – and certainly not those guilty of causing such experiences in the first place – could completely control the narrative nor foresee all the dimensions it would form. A single story, however, is much more controlled by the teller – whether it is an artist, a filmmaker, a writer, someone accounting for the day's events over a dinner table or folklore around fire. For the sake of clarity in this work, when referring to storytelling, I mean the practice of intentionally creating a story, fictive or otherwise. The outcome of this process is a story. A narrative, on the other hand, is referred to in the sense of a more abstract story, a process of collective storytelling in the society.

The narrative context of a cook book: from a list of recipes to lifestyle aspirations

Taking a look at the cookbook lineup at the Academic book store in Helsinki, watching cooking shows or reading magazine articles on cuisine, one cannot help noticing gendered tendencies. On a broad glance it seems that books and shows about professional cooking are often authored by men while cooking at homes is still largely represented by women. Books by bloggers special-izing in baking, special diets, cakes and home-cooking seem to represent a well-selling female domain while men are again present in books concerning game, fishing and drinks. All of this feels surprisingly traditional in 2019. Observing the canon of cookbooks, I that a book concept involving home-cooking by men is a fresh departure from tradition. To contextualize my research as well as the design and storytelling process, I will take a closer look at the narrative context of home-cooking by studying a few classics in the genre. I am especially interested in how the themes relevant to my topic have evolved and what they are now, such as narrative representation, storytelling, visualizations and the connection between food and every-day-life. I am not as much interested in the obvious main theme in these books – the food they instruct readers to make – but rather the associated narrative subtext: what these books represent and how their authors have chosen to deal with the topic at hand. What narrative means do they employ? What do these objects represent? How do they deal with their topic visually and stylistically? What are these cook books vehicles of?

To analyze these questions I will compare two iconic cook books that have defined home cooking in the West, especially the United States but also Europe, in two different points in time: Julia Child's "Mastering the Art of French Cooking" and Martha Stewart's "Martha Stewart's Cooking School: Lessons and Recipes for the Home Cook." I chose these two as examples for a couple of reasons. Firstly because due to their prominence and sales they have had a hand at defining the "home-cooking scene" where my “fathers’ cook book” will also eventually be situated. The books in question have been similarly placed on the market, both best-sellers written by charismatic women who have taught a generation to cook. Secondly, they provide a suitable timely distance that makes it easier to see the broad developments in the cook book narratives between the post-war optimism and early modernism of the 1960’s when books, magazines, newspapers and TV were the primary sources of (cooking-related) information and the contemporary times when the internet, social media and blogs have largely grasped the audiences for cooking and other lifestyle related content. Lastly and most importantly, looking at the American and Finnish cook book scene in general, it seems that these two books are quite representative of broader developments in both markets, at least for the limited scope and depth necessary for my research. I will discuss these broader developments – where developments in the Finnish cook books seem to follow American ones surprisingly close-
ly – briefly at the end of this chapter. It must be noted, however, that while the chosen best sellers represent tendencies in cookbooks of their time, they certainly do not convey the whole image. There have been lighter and more visual cookbooks in Child’s time as well as more solely food focused, instructive books in Stewart’s time.

Comparing home-cooking classics

The mothers of domestic cookbooks, the French “Je sais cuisiner” (”I know how to cook”) by Ginette Mathiot (1932) and its American counterpart “Mastering the Art of French Cooking” (1961) by Julia Child were meticulously compiled manuals for cooking that unlocked the methods of probably the single most influential cuisine for the large audience. These books present the learning of cooking as a serious, yet inspiring endeavor. In comparison, a contemporary counterpart, also a best seller written by a charismatic woman, Martha Stewart’s Cooking School: Lessons and Recipes for the Home Cook” does not only instruct cooking, but conveys a lifestyle with rich imagery and visual details. In Martha Stewart’s book cooking is represented as a hearty feast, where the head of the family throws freshly picked ingredients on the pan and an hour later carries the steaming pot on a rustic table surrounded by friends and family.

The transition in the role of a cook book is reflected especially on the visual level. “Mastering the Art of French Cooking” has over 700 pages of recipes with detailed – often complicated – instructions. Visually it is the far opposite of the ludicrous visual feasts of contemporary cookbooks, rather resembling a bible. Pictures are used for solely instructional purposes, with drawings of step by step instructions on filling a bird or assembling a tarte tatin. Meanwhile “Martha Stewart’s Cooking School” contains dozens of carefully styled images, not only of food but also of the gleaming kitchen, table settings, artfully placed ingredients and foremost Martha herself. She is displayed on the cover of all her cookbooks and often on the pages too, cooking the dish in question or simply posing with ingredients. The images are carefully arranged and retouched – often seeming like out of this world and certainly out of any kitchen where actual, messy cooking happens.

On a textual level, however, the findings are surprising. Before looking at these books, I assumed that a “storytelling aspect” would be stronger in the newer books and the older would be somewhat dryer. I assumed that Stewart’s books would convey a lifestyle also on the level of text, while Child’s book would not. However, the case is not that simple. While meticulous, Child’s and Mathiot’s cooking manuals also convey love and passion for cooking in the carefully written introductions contextualizing the recipes as well as special instructive comments for the home cook attempting a recipe. Between the lines the reader finds a story of an inspiring journey through classical cooking that the author has developed a deep personal relationship with, even an entire cooking philosophy. In Martha Stewart’s book, on the other hand, this personal voice seems to be missing. While the author is prominently present in the visuals, the written “voice” is more generic. It is unclear whether Steward has used ghost writers in producing the book. The reader is not given the same impression on being taken along on a personal culinary journey as with Child and her co-authors.

When it comes to the moments of consuming the prepared food or serving it to others, Child’s and Stewart’s books treat the topic very differently. Even though complicated French food is likely to be cooked mostly for special occasions, the moments of consuming the food in question are hardly present in Child’s “Mastering the Art of French Cooking”. If any dealing with “moments” can be found, it is related to the events of cooking: in the rich, apt vocabulary used to describe an especially tricky phase in preparation or the authors reminiscing on the delight over a well-tuned-out dish. In Stewart’s “Cooking School”, however, everything seems to be a special occasion, at least on the level of visuals. In her books, cooking is represented as an artful play of visuals, where eggs are first arranged into a decorated, lacy bowl before being picked up, broken and added to the cake mix. The author herself is certainly dressed up and groomed for a special occasion, even if it is just cooking a Thursday night’s family meal. The book represents every-day life as a chain of pitch-perfect, cozy moments where picking up an egg and breaking it into a bowl is an event in itself.

It goes without saying that both Child’s and Stewart’s works are products of their own time. Printing techniques have evolved and became more affordable thus enabling the rich visuals of cookbooks today. Yet, the change in cookbooks cannot be reduced to only the effects of passing time. As I noted in the beginning of this chapter, Child and Stewart have lead similar public roles: they have both been celebrity personas guiding their fans in cooking and housekeeping. The market needs have shaped the books and their authors: while Julia Child certainly was a personal brand in her time, with her recognizable laugh, a diplomat husband and a badge from the French...
culinary institute, personal branding defines Stewart’s books and career on a whole different level. Her books are sold by her face and name, and she has built an entire industry around her brand with cook books, magazines and household items. For her it also makes more sense to create her books around carefully chosen, focused themes like “cakes”, “vegetables” or “healthy food” as this allows more sales of books than writing a single (or, in Child’s case, a couple of) encyclopedia of cooking.

The Finnish context
As my project at hand is built around Finnish moments of consuming food, a few words must be said of the Finnish context. Overall, the evolvement of cook books in Finland seems to follow American tendencies, but much later. In Finland, a television chef Jaakko Kolmonen was one of the notable figures who taught Finns to cook their own traditional dishes as well as to eat in a more healthy way in the 1980’s. Today, most Finnish homes have their copy of ”Best of Home-Cooking” (Parasta kotiruokaa) by Aura Liimatainen, that lists the recipes for all the basic dishes of Finnish cuisine from oven cooked salmon to Carelian Pies to macaroni, cheese and meat casserole. This book was compiled surprisingly late, however, as late as 1995. The book has similar features to Child’s cooking manual: it is visually scarce, with often small images that portray roughly ¼ of the total amount of dishes whose recipes are listed. The text consists of lists of ingredients and brief cooking instructions.

If we compare “Best of Home-Cooking” to say, the best-selling cook book of 2016, xx, the di are similar to what was described above in the comparison of Martha Steward and Julia Child. The contemporary Finnish cook books are built around narrowly defined concepts, personal brands and lifestyle choices. As in Martha Stewart’s books, visuals have an overwhelming prominently dominant role in the books, portraying steaming dishes, the author in her kitchen, a celebrity chef strolling a market hand-picking ingredients or a TV-host cutting herbs in her kitchen garden. The books often do contain a story element, where the author reveals something about their personal relationship with cooking. However, this element is often surprisingly light, possibly comprising only of a page or two in the beginning of the book. As in Stewart’s case, lifestyle is conveyed foremost visually.

It seems that contemporary cookbooks seem to follow a pattern familiar with news media in general: blogs and internet are used to searching recipes, while books are moving further toward the role of cherished objects, artefacts to display at home. Jean Baudrillard says in “l’Economie Politique du Singe”, that in the contemporary consumer society where most of our consumption is not for satisfying immediate needs but for the satisfaction of social need we buy items in order to display taste, which in turn is tied to our power, wealth and class we want to associate ourselves with (1972). These days any instructions can be found in two seconds by typing the problem at hand on Google or YouTube search field. In the era of internet there is no real need to buy cookbooks. Yet they sell. It therefore seems logical that cookbooks have evolved from cooking manuals into carriers of lifestyle aspirations. They are bought more for inspiration, less for instruction. A similar development can be seen in other books, where novels are bought and read or listened to with digital devices while books are bought in heavily visual, lavishly designed coffee table format, often with a place in mind in interior or decoration. For instance, Pitch Fork is one of the most prominent music media for reviews and recommendations on the internet, yet they decided to also start a magazine as a collectible design item for their readers to have and to hold. Along with other books, a cookbook has become a token, a representation on of intellectual refinement and class, perhaps a representation of a lifestyle that the home chef follows.

The design framework
Design research – along with numerous other fields studying human behavior – have been affected by the post-modern understanding of truth in philosophy and (cognitive) psychology. Design used to be thought about as an objective process where following a set of steps led to a universal outcome. The research often reasoned the preceding process backward from the outcome, following logical principles. Echoes of this type of thinking can still be seen especially in the engineering sciences, which tend to treat design as a foremost technical and only secondarily creative and social process. This, however, has little to do with how designers actually work and the tools they use to reach a successful outcome in their work. The formalistic view has faced several waves of thinking that challenge its core assumptions. (Gerenyrd, 1998). Many designers have been affected by the prominent post-modern philosophers, such as Michel Foucault (1966), who recognized and studied the complicated entanglements of language,
power and representation, thus neglecting the idea of any objective truth that could be arrived at in human sciences. The present times, on the other hand, have seen a rise in popular interest toward cognitive science. Such writers as Kahneman, Duhigg and perhaps even Taleb have popularized their knowledge on how the mind actually works, how it is affected by subconscious and what the common cognitive fallacies are. Design research has followed suit and mostly shifted its focus from a technical understanding of processes toward a human-centered approach. It considers how designers actually work and focuses on a better understanding of the user. The developments in philosophy and cognitive science have and continue to lend design theory important tools to better understand the working process of designers and other professionals involved.

To understand the relationship of design and storytelling, it is first necessary to understand the design process. I will focus on the cognitive and social insights into the design process and leave the technical process understanding to a lesser degree. One of the early, successful attempts to bridge the gap between process-oriented technical design research and the developments in other fields, such as cognitive science, was Gerenryd’s adopted theory of inquiry. In order to take a close look at how a design process unfolds from a designer’s perspective, I will first briefly introduce Gerenryd’s adopted theory of inquiry along with the “double diamond” model that is based on similar assumptions as those of Gedenryd’s but takes the social nature of design into account. Next, I will move onto studying the storytelling process. I will discuss common story elements such as timeline, characters, structure and theme through the theory of inquiry. Lastly, I will take up the task of blending design and storytelling processes together in my design work toward a theme through the theory of inquiry. Lastly, I will take up the task of blending design and storytelling processes together in my design work toward a theme through the theory of inquiry. In order to take a close look at how a design process unfolds from a designer’s perspective, I will first briefly introduce Gerenryd’s adopted theory of inquiry along with the “double diamond” model that is based on similar assumptions as those of Gedenryd’s but takes the social nature of design into account. Next, I will move onto studying the storytelling process. I will discuss common story elements such as timeline, characters, structure and theme through the theory of inquiry. Lastly, I will take up the task of blending design and storytelling processes together in my design work toward a father’s cookbook. I will introduce and analyze the different process stages and tools used in the design process.

The theory of inquiry was originally developed in cognitive science as early as 1930’s by Jonh Dewey who identified a need to understand how the mind actually works instead of representing cognition through formalistic, logical connections of inputs and outcomes that was typical for cognitive science at the time (1938). Gerenryd, on the other hand, later recognized a similar tendency of formality in design literature. The research at the time often reduced the design process into mechanical charts similar to those of cognitive science. He therefore took it up to expand and adopt Dewey’s theory onto the field of design sixty years after it was originally developed, carefully studying with interviews and practical observation how designers actually worked. A more typical approach at the time – one which Gerenryd energetically opposed in his writings – was understanding design as a mechanical inductive process where following specific steps led to a universal outcome. Gerenryd’s goal was to mend the lack of practical understanding he found in both design and cognitive research. (1998).

Gerenryd approached design as a practical process of sense-making and inquiry, where the essential question is “would this work?”. He made an important departure from the common view in design research that creativity and design would happen only inside the mind and thus provide a solution through logical cognition. Instead, he saw design as a practical process heavily connected to the surrounding world. Gerenryd elegantly defines design process as the process of finding “the right question”. A designer constantly tests her chosen approach through sketching and prototyping, inquiring into whether she has chosen the right problem to solve. If the core question is correct, the design process is that of an inquiry where solving one part of the question leads almost organically to the next, and the next after that, allowing the designer to continue. If the designer gets stuck, however, especially in the early stages of a process, that may be a symptom of the approach not being the correct one. This is not to say of course, that there is always only one correct question or solution in each case. The theory simply illustrates the flow of questions, consequential choices, turns and U-turns that form a design process. Gerenryd also made an important recognition in terms of the role a brief or a constraint play in design. According to him, experienced designers are often skillful at creating constrains to guide their design work. Often these constraints do not come from a client but are created by the designer as questions she asks of her own work, bringing cohesion and means for creative innovation into it. A designer moves form stage to stage by altering the questions and constraints according to the needs of the project, constantly seeking “the right question” in each phase. Self-imposed restrictions and “inner rules” are important tools that the designer leans on in the process to help herself find cohesion. (ibid).

A designer can employ an array of creative methods to aid the process described above. Gerenryd highlights sketching and prototyping as strategies to test possible approaches, questions and choices. For him, design remains a solitary mission where it is mostly the designer who observes the
world and works toward a functional solution to the problem she is present-
ed. The contemporary design world, however, has seen a shift toward hu-
man-centered design, where design has become a highly social profession.
The designer is often required to find ways to engage clients, end-users and
other stakeholders in the process, making many designers quite the experts
at facilitating workshops, conducting interviews and collecting feedback.

The “Double Diamond” model originally developed by the British Design
Council illustrates the fluctuation of questions and answers, options and
choices in a way that takes into account the social dimension of design. In
the social approach the design process is divided into two types of phases
that repeat themselves throughout the process: (1) the phase of expanding
the amount of approaches or choices and (2) the phase of filtering or making
choices. This approach is further described in table x. The Design Council
originally stated that the design process has two pairs of these alternating
phases (hence the double diamond). (Design Council, 2005). However, it
does not really seem to matter what aspect of the design task the expansion
and reduction concerns nor is it necessary to specify how many fluctuating
phases there will be in total. I currently work as a service designer heavily
involved in the early ideation and conceptualizing phases of a design pro-
cess. For me, the elegance of this model lies in the understanding of the na-
ture of design activity as a chain of fluctuating options and choices. It comes
close to describing how the design process actually works in the mind of a
designer while also providing a tool to make the process transparent. For in-
stance, the designer can prevent falling into obvious choices by consciously
expanding her horizons as far as possible in the “expansion phase” to ensure
that a maximum number of opportunities and “out-of-the-box” solutions
are considered before making a choice. The understanding of design process
structure also makes it easier to explain and make the design process trans-
parent to team members, clients and other non-designers involved. Even
though the visual representation here is different from Gedenryd’s, the core
of the model resembles his theory. Design process is seen as a process of in-
quiry, a chain of choices, the goal of which is to find “the right question” or

Understanding story through design parallels

The creative process associated with design and storytelling might be
similar, but the things a designer or a writer considers and the meth-
ods they employ to reach a desired outcome are often different. For
the purposes of understanding the structure of narrative I will next
discuss key elements in storytelling and compare them to elements
of visual communication design.

Structure, time and plot

There is an incredible amount of literature discussing the correct structure
of a story starting all the way from Aristoteles’ writing regarding the correct
three-act-structure of a play (384-322 BCE), following centuries of debate
over the universality versus relativity of a story structure (Foucault, Derrida,
Barthes). There are, of course, also countless books trying to teach aspiring
writers how to successfully do all of this in practice. I will therefore intro-
duce the basic concepts underlying story structure in very broad strokes and
focus on the elements that are especially relevant when considering story-
telling through the viewpoint of design.

As I write in the introduction to this research, time is the vehicle that car-
rries a story or narrative forward. It is very difficult for a story to exist without
any connection to time. A piece of design, on the other hand, may just as
well exist without much consideration of time although time or pacing can
certainly be a considered an element in design work as well. The difference
is in the necessity: a story cannot exist without the concept of time, a piece
of design can. This difference is reflected in the way designers and story-
tellers work. The structure of a story is closely tied to its handling of time.
Unlike a piece of graphic design, a story has to accommodate its structure
within itself as the structure is not visual. The structure is reflected in the
events unfolding in a text or moving image. This has to do with the pacing
of the story: how intensively the events follow each other, whether they are
closely connected or loose and abstract and how the main events are paced in relation to one another. Many complicated theories have been developed to understand the way events in a story should be positioned within the story timeline. One prominent example of this is the mythical “hero’s journey” popularized by Joseph Campbell, listing a total of 17 phases in a storyline through which the main character conquers the problem or adventure presented to her in the beginning (1949). Of course, not all or even most stories follow such complicated, culturally bound principles. However, storytelling cannot escape the concept of time as the building block of structure in a story – even if the structure is fragmented or highly interpretable by the audience.

Perhaps the simplest way to understand structure of a story is to state that at the very least, it has a beginning, a middle and an end. This probably occurs almost inevitably, as a story begins somewhere, some events or potential events follow and then the story ends, even if the events in the story are abstract. The storyteller can, however, take advantage of understanding the beginning-middle-end structure by contemplating the placement of events within these sections: how close to the end is the main event in the story (if there is one)? What happens at the very beginning? What is the respective length of these three phases in relation to one another? This type of consideration is especially typical in films, where the time to tell the story is typically constricted by the demands of contemporary movie industry – and has to keep the audience captivated for an intensive two hours – while in books, the structure can often be looser. (Beairsto, 1998, 22–28).

In graphic design, on the other hand, the structure is mostly visible. In lay-out design, for instance, it is reflected in the typographical hierarchy, the use of color, pacing of visuals, the amount, placement and rhythm of alternating content and white space as well as in the use of highlighting visual elements such as symbols and captions. Hence many graphic designers understand the aim of their profession foremost as the task of bringing visual elements such as symbols and captions. Therefore, many graphic designers understand their profession as a sequence of expanding choices and then making selections as described in the “double-diamond model”. The graphic designer perhaps does this by first ideating on the overarching question or approach she wants her design to reflect and then tests this approach through sketching and prototyping. A storyteller, on the other hand, can similarly ideate and plan her approach toward the structure of her story by asking questions of her work, such as “if the theme of my story is x, how should it be reflected in the outcome of the third act?” or “If the aim of my character is y, how does she react to this specific situation?”. She can then, depending on her medium, test her approach to different aspects of the story by writing initial drafts of sketching a visual screenplay. Most stories, however, start from the level of text and then move on to visuals as writing is often the fastest way to test the pacing and functioning of events. A storyteller can plan and sketch the overarching storyline to a certain extent just as a graphic designer can rely on sketching, but in both professions the only way to find out whether the approach works is to write the story or execute the design and refine it.

My storytelling task at hand, developing a story and a book concept based on the experiences of two fathers, required working with real-life material. As opposed to working with fiction, it felt more like creating a documentary. It was inspiring and somewhat relieving to have real material as a starting point. I didn’t have to start creating a story from scratch. At the same time, I had less control over the actual storyline or plot, which had to be at least based on true events and feel “true” to the fathers involved. To understand better how to create a coherent story out of real life – that does not necessarily follow any Aristotle-approved storyline – I interviewed two experts on the field who construct stories based on real material in their work. One of them is Iiro Peltonen, an editor specialized in documentary television shows, and the other is an award-winning investigative journalist Vappu Kaarenoja.

In the interviews, I was interested in the working processes of these experts, how they control the material at hand and how they mold structure into seemingly random events. Interestingly, Peltonen seemed to approach his storytelling task as an editor in much the same way as Gerhnyrd approaches design: he said he experiments with the structure by “asking questions” of his material. For instance, the central question can be about a main character’s emotion, experience or memory that comes forward when facing the theme or events in the documentary. By asking questions, he aims to find a central idea or a viewpoint that he can then build the story around. Peltonen’s description of his working process resembles Gerhnyrd’s (1998) version of the theory of inquiry surprisingly closely: it falls in line with the author’s suggestion that a design process is about finding the right constraints and
testing the chosen approach by a series of questions and answers. Peltonen also pointed out that an audience tends to construct a story between two juxtaposed elements, such as scenes that follow each other, as soon as they are placed in contact with each other. According to him, it was almost more difficult to avoid telling a story than to tell one. However, the degree to which the editor should guide audience to draw the “right” conclusions of events on a storyline and how much to leave on the interpretation is the challenge in his profession. According to him, the short distance on a scale in between giving out too little information and too much information is “the space where the Oscars are won”.

The difference between an editor and a journalist is, of course, that an editor typically works with footage that was already recorded and has no control over what happens in the shoot, while a journalist collects the material herself and can affect the story by the process. This was reflected in what Vappu Kaarenoja told me about her working process. She said she starts working on a story by learning as much as possible about the topic and theme of the story by reading, collecting material and interviewing experts. When actually writing the article, she begins from the ending, thinking about the “destination” where she wants the story to lead. The destination then guides the other choices she makes while planning the structure of the story. She said that she personally often finds creating the beginning for the story the most challenging part in writing: after collecting all the knowledge and material, what is the right starting point to begin peeling off the layers of the story for the reader? Kaarenoja’s practice of choosing the ending first advised my own storytelling process in a valuable way. After conducting several interviews with the fathers, I felt as if I was swimming in an ocean of material, not knowing where to start molding it into a story. However, as soon as I examined the material with the question in mind, thinking “where could each dad’s story end?” I started to see potential structural choices. After selecting the end points, I could think of the high points in their stories (closely preciding the ending) as well as finally the beginning too. Peltonen’s advice on asking questions of the material proved to be especially useful when constructing individual “scenes” or chapters in the story, juxtaposing the two father’s experiences and attempting to create meaningful dialogue between them.

Characters

Along with the concept of time, characters are another aspect where visual design and storytelling differ quite a bit from each other. In a story, character acts as an entry-point for the audience. The events in a story are usually experienced through characters, as things that happen to someone of something. This does not mean that the character has to be human or even a living thing. The “character” can well be an animal, a fictional being, a thing or even a place. It just means that the events and the world of a story are observed somewhat through a character or characters. Like with the concept of time, it is difficult to imagine a story without even a hint toward characters. It is almost like people were subconsciously attuned to looking for stories and characters as we tend to find hints of them in places, images and art whether the creator intended it or not. (Bearisto, 1998). Also the more abstract or reality-based narratives tend to be experienced through a “character”. Studying the narrative qualities associated with severe diseases, the research group “The Perils of Narrative” (“Kertomuksen vaarat”) associated with the Tampere University in Finland has discussed the way people become character-like in social media, providing an access point to their life’s experiences and thus making social media accounts personal, relatable and hard to resist for the audience. Even though in social media the “character” is usually a real-life person, events in social media are constructed in a story-like manner making some features of a person or event visible while rendering others invisible. (2017). Therefore the representation of a person in the course of social media narratives may be be more like a character than an actual, living person. In both fictive and reality-based narratives, a character resembles the way we experience life and serves therefore as an access point to a story.

What would then be a similar access point into design that a character is into a story? In the age of user-centric design it would be easy to point toward the user as the counterpart to character. However, I don’t think a user and a character essentially play the same role in their respective fields. A character exists within a story, while a user exists outside of a piece of design, even though the user may have an active role in experiencing or using the design at hand. A user is more parallel to a story audience such as the readers of a book or movie-goers. If the piece of work in question is a movie, an illustrated book, a game or an animation where writers and design-
ers work in collaboration, the storyteller and designer may end up having the exact same audience to experience their work. Therefore the user and character cannot be parallels. A better parallel to a character would be any access point that a piece of design has. If it is an illustration, it may even be a character. In other design work, a similar function that a character has in a story could be associated with almost any prominent visual element, user interface or structural choice that provides an access point to the user or viewer of design. As these examples highlight, a parallel to user is significantly more abstract in design.

In terms of skillful storytelling, the character cannot be ignored. Since the character serves as the essential lens into the story, the way the character is created is an incredibly important part in the craft of storytelling. The storyteller has multiple means for creating the image of a character: description, dialogue, the character’s verbal and non-verbal reactions to events, other character’s reactions to her/him. A Canadian film writing teacher Ric Beairsto discusses at length the advantages of character-driven storytelling as opposed to plot-driven storytelling in his book “The Tyranny of Story”. He points out that many writers often start out thinking about different events that could unfold within a storyline while a more fruitful starting point would be to think about the specific nature, experiences and circumstances of a character. According to him, this often leads to more intricate, spot-on writing. What happens in a story is less important than how it happens, to whom and how this is told. (1998). For the character to be relatable it is not necessary that they are at all similar to the audience experiencing the story. Rather, it is the level of storytelling that defines how well we are able to relate to a character. Since the character is the access point into the story, it makes sense that storytelling, that relies on the particular intellectual and emotional circumstances and nature of the character in question – rather than just portraying a chain of events – is probably more likely to result in a story that reveals something unique about that particular experience and provides an access point for compassion with the audience.

Considering characters is a vital part of my project. Even though my “characters” are real humans – two dads – it is unavoidable that they will be presented in a character-like manner. Some parts of their personality will come forth in the book concept, others won’t. Perhaps precisely because my “characters” are based on real people, it is especially important to think of their features as characters. It would be quite easy to skip the character approach and forget to introduce them to the audience as I personally know the people I am writing about. This would probably result in vagueness in my writing and make it more difficult for the audience to have access to the story of my “main characters”. Therefore, I must consider how I will present my characters. How do I describe them? How do they speak? How do I distinguish the two dads from each other on the level of text? Upon reading Beairsto’s text on character driven writing I decided to consciously create character profiles and descriptions for my two real-life dads and start collecting material on them that I could use while writing – a process not unfamiliar from the research phase that is often the first step in a design process. I tried to make sense of the attitudes and ways of thinking of my main characters, interesting details about them (that might not be just food or parenthood-related), their way of speaking and favorite idioms and phrases. I thought this would be useful when it was time to think about the distinct narrative voice of my characters. I hoped it would help me bring their personality along with their recipes and experiences as dads alive in the book. As I selected a first-person narration for telling the story, the language of each character came to play an important role. I wanted the characters to sound different from one another – and like their true selves. I felt a sense of accomplishment when – after reading the introductory paragraph describing the origins of his cooking, Seppo said that “this feels like the truth”.

**Theme & Subtext**

Without doubt, both designers and storytellers spend quite a while thinking about the theme and subtext of their work, in explicit and implicit sense. The theme usually deals with what a piece of work ultimately tries to “say”. For instance, in the case of my design and storytelling project, the explicit theme is cooking while the subtext is understanding parenthood through the eyes of a father. According to Beairsto, in fictive writing the “true” theme is often revealed in the final turn of events or resolution in the story. The way the events in the story unfold in the end, how a suspense is dissolved, large often revealed in the final turn of events or resolution in the story. The way the events in the story unfold in the end, how a suspense is dissolved, largely defines the message of the story. (1998). In both storyteller’s and graphic designer’s work the theme or message of the piece of work can be at the forefront of the work or delivered subtly through choices or metaphors. Like in the case of structure, a storyteller must deliver her message through the medium at hand, either only at the level of text or the visual storytelling in a film, animation, graphic novel or illustrated book. However, how the au-
dience perceives the theme of the work can only be controlled to a certain extent. The meaning ultimately forms in the minds of the audience, in relation to their own experiences, culture and interpretation. Like in any creative field, once the piece of work leaves the hands of the creator, they have no control over its interpretation.

In visual communication design, the term used instead of theme is often “concept”. The meaning is largely the same. The theme is an essential part of many graphic designer’s design strategy. I personally often start my working process by hunting down and appropriate concept for their work through research, sketching and testing. The theme or concept helps to define the my approach to the work, to decide parameters according to which I can successfully limit my options and produce consistent design. What is at play here is the process of inquiry. The designer looks for a means to set and alter limitations to her work in order to provide insight and consistency. Gerenryd observed this ability to control and self-impose limitations as one of the essential skills designers learn through years of working – and often the most challenging requirement for beginners. The theme can a pronounced message or line of thinking that is more focused on a visual theme or system. Kenya Hara, the creative director of Muji, described his work as a visual communication designer to be that of creating “conditions” or “circumstances” instead of that of creating “things”. This illustrates the way in which visual communication design necessarily bound to context – accepting, altering and commenting it through the manipulation of form. Therefore, the consideration of theme or concept is often at the core of a graphic design process.

To conclude, the key elements in the theory of inquiry and the double diamond model seem to be surprisingly well suited to the process of storytelling. Finding the right question or asking questions of the material, working with constraints, expanding options and then making choices carry both storytelling and design processes forward. I find that the main difference lies in the craft itself. While designing, I usually try to find the core concept or theme first and then make other choices accordingly. I do not make structural design choices until later. In storytelling, however, it felt necessary to start the planning from structure. Otherwise it would have been difficult to build a meaningful internal structure and tension within the story. After designing the story structure, it was easier to work within each section and improve it. As a designer writing a story, I ran into biggest difficulties in parts of the process that where the furthest away from a design process. However, struggling with finding the structure and core idea for the story is probably also where I learnt the most. Tackling the challenges, I felt like I got a firmer grasp on storytelling and a sense of understanding it more deeply than before.
5. The Design Process

- Introduction to design process
- Designing the "sandbox"
- Designing the story
- Designing the book
- Analysis of the design outcome
In a way, it is silly to even talk about a design process. It is not a physical process after all, at least not in traditional sense. The word “process” is tied to factory production, where one phase follows the next in an order determined by physics and sheer common sense. A factory process is highly tangible, manageable and optimizable. Design process, on the other hand, is a cognitive, social construct that largely happens in the minds and communication of people involved. Thinking around the design process can be thought of as an attempt to understand what goes on in a designer’s head and to tap into it collectively.

Much has been written about the design process in the recent years, especially since the rise of design thinking as a business buzzword (i.e. sources). The benefits of creative thinking have been recognized in contemporary business life. This, in turn, has brought about the need to find tools to understand and to manage it. As many business managers and directors are familiar with theories related to factory production, it makes sense that a process is an appealing metaphor to lean on while navigating the murky waters of abstract leadership. Contemporary working life for leaders and managers is often characterized by high expectations for success, yet little anything tangible to manage - unlike the conveyor belt. To be a Henry Ford of the modern workplace where creativity, not only efficiency, is often required, such terms as design thinking, digital product development and innovation management have understandably become the go-to buzzwords. The underlying business setting is important to understand while discussing the design process, as it is likely to highlight the sides of the process, that are most business-compatible.

Even though the word “process” should be applied to design (or thinking, for that matter) with caution, that is not to say that the recent literature on design process and design thinking do not tap into something useful. Abstract as it may be, some kind of collective understanding of what goes on when designing or developing a new artefact or service is necessary, as design has become more and more of a team effort. Solitary creators are becoming less common in the design and even art world. Instead, contemporary products often require multidisciplinary take, with design, management, prototyping, programming and other types of experts working together. It helps communication, if these multidisciplinary teams are able to develop a common language and have some sort of framework to discuss and compare their working methods. Even if the design process is abstract, formalizing it helps experts from different fields to understand each other.

I use my work on the cookbook and comparing design and storytelling theories as chance to learn about my own design process. In this project I luckily have the freedom to set my own working parameters as I prefer. I focus on the cognitive aspects of my work and the theories that I personally find most accurately fitting together with my own creative process. As the process is always personal and depends on the designer, another designer might find completely different set of theories descriptive. Even though there are clear phases in this project that I work on alone, such as writing the story and the visual design, it also has phases that require deep collaboration. My “team” consists of the two fathers, Eino and Seppo and a photographer Jaakko Kahilaniemi. The content of the book is entirely based on the experiences, anecdotes, food and recipes provided by Eino and Seppo, while we ideated and iterated on the photoshoot together with Jaakko. For me personally, this kind of collaborative approach to solving design tasks has started to feel more and more natural. Creativity does not exist in a vacuum — it is always inspired by something, often other people’s work on different fields — and I find it useful to incorporate collaboration into the design process from the start.

**The aims and tools of the design process**

The goal of my design process was to create a meaningful story about the cooking of two fathers representing two different generations and visualize it in an interesting way in the format of a cook book. To guide my work, I set goals for the story and the visuals. Firstly, my aim in writing the story was to find the personal experiences of the two fathers. I wanted to understand as well as possible how the approached cooking and family life. I was hoping that by digging deep into their personal experiences I would be able to unearth something universal that would resonate with other people as well. I believe that this is what good stories often succeed in: my following a personal theme as deep as possible, they manage to say something that other people with different experiences may relate to. Secondly, I wanted to show and creativity, problem-solving, playfulness and social aspects of Eino’s and Seppo’s cooking. Cooking was a dear hobby for both of them and served as an important balancing counterpart to their demanding jobs. I wanted to respect the role that cooking plays in their lives and show it in an honest way that felt true to them. For the visuals, I firstly wanted them to support
the story in a meaningful way. The same person does not often create both the story and visuals and I wanted to take full advantage of this aspect in my work. Secondly, I wanted to challenge the existing visual conventions in cook books in some way. Social media, especially Instagram has made attractive food photography a commodity that fills our streams, at least if that is something we’re interested in. I thought that the photography and visuals in this cook book should reach beyond Instagram, to offer a perspective that is more ambitious than just taking polished photos of food. With these goals in mind, I set about choosing the tools and design approaches for my project.

I approached storytelling as a designer. It meant that I chose tools and practices that I was familiar with as a designer and experimented on how they could be applied to storytelling. I started by creating a “sandbox” for myself, parameters or constraints within which I was planning to operate. I divided the design process into three phases that are introduced in table x: creating the sandbox, creating the story and creating the visuals. I set the goals, scope and frame of the project as well as the social and physical settings in which worked with the co-authors. In this chapter I will first introduce the phases that I set out to follow in the beginning of this project and the design decisions they include. After the introduction I will move on to describing the phases as the progressed and the different decisions I made along the way. Lastly, I will evaluate the project in terms of both the outcome and the process itself.

**Designing the “sandbox”**

Setting the stage for my project, Gerenryd’s understanding of constraints within a project as tools for design resonated with me. According to him, a skillful designer uses the constraints found within a project as guiding tools for her decision-making. The success of a design process depends on the designer’s ability to alter the constraints when necessary and to solve them in an insightful way. Contrary to a popular view, the best design does not necessarily require circumstances of complete creative freedom or lack of constraints altogether. (Gerenryd, 1998). Recently in my work as a service and visual designer, I have come to appreciate the existence of constraints in the projects I work on. They often give me and the rest of the team a valid starting point to approach the issue at hand. There is something very satisfying about coming up with a creative, non-obvious solution to the existing set of constraints within a project. Probably due to the need to challenge one’s own thinking, battling with constraints and coming up with different ways to solve them often seems to lead to a more creative outcome than working with complete freedom.

As I am used to working on projects with certain internal constraints, it felt necessary to draw some lines as a starting point for myself in this project as well. Otherwise I might have ended up contemplating on an indefinite set of options which, in reality, I had since the brief on this project was self-imposed without being able to get properly started. I therefore decided to create “a sandbox” for myself. The format of a cook book was a starting point for this project from the beginning, as “my dad’s cook book” had been on my “design project bucket list” before I even got accepted to a design school. When thinking about my master’s thesis topic, I felt that this

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**Table: Design process stages**

1. Designing “the sandbox” - the frame of the project
   a. The format of a cookbook
   b. The selection of co-authors - two fathers
   c. Decision to create a cookbook with a storytelling emphasis

2. Designing the story
   a. The story will be created based on the experiences and knowledge of the two fathers.
   b. Designing the structure and arch of the story based on the interviews and observations with the two fathers.
   c. As a consequence of these two choices, as a writer I have more control over the style of writing and structure of the story and less control over the plot or events in it.

3. Designing the cookbook concept and lay-out
   a. Creating the image concept with the photographer
   b. Lay-out and visual choices based on the story and characters of the two fathers
   c. Presentation of the concept
old dream had to be updated to reflect my current thinking. I didn’t think creating a cook book simply around my own dad’s cooking would have potential for the kind of universal relatability or meaning any good project should ideally have. It carried the risk of ending up as merely personal self-reflection and while probably teaching interesting things for myself on my own family history and upbringing, it would have probably offered little to anyone else. Broadening my horizons, I came up with the idea of creating a cook book or two fathers instead of one: my own and a father of my own generation. I thought this idea had potential for interesting dialogue. It would allow me and the potential reader to reflect on how cooking in families and generally in Finland had evolved between the previous generation and my own, 30 somethings, the generation that is currently having and bringing up small children. While the generation was the difference between the two fathers, I wanted them to hold the same role in the family, that of a father’s, to allow for comparison. In addition to finding the main characters, I decided that the theme of the book would be both, cooking and family life, and not just one or the other. Ideally, I thought that the explicit theme of the book would be cooking, while the implicit, actual meaning would lie within the dialogue the stories of the two fathers would form.

To collect material for the book I selected methods I have been using in my work as a service designer. In the “expansion phase” of the double diamond model, I conducted material for the story with two rather lengthy semi-structured interviews with both Eino and Seppo along with some follow-up questions and clarifications later. I also observed both of them cook a meal for their family while asking further questions of their cooking. This proved to be a useful addition to the interviews, as both of them seemed to be more at ease talking about themselves as they had something to do with

> First I asked Seppo and Eino to collect a list of their favorite recipes. We then gathered into a workshop to decide on the final recipe list for the book, eliminating recipes that were too similar with each other and balancing out different ingredients.
their hands. I also asked both Eino and Seppo to provide me with a list of their favorite recipes and ideas for the ones they would like to have included in the book. I then hosted a workshop with them, where we wrote all the recipes on post-its and arranged them to different categories based on the type of meal, season and main ingredients. We then discussed the content and possible overlap of different recipes and created the final recipe list for the book together. For support on storytelling and framing the project, I interviewed an editor specialized in documentary TV shows, Iiro Peltonen and Vappu Kaarenoja, an investigative journalist. To understand the format of a cook book and the Finnish cook book market better, I interviewed an editor and the head of publishing from a large Finnish publishing house.

After setting the stage for my project – deciding on the scope, having found the two dads as co-authors for the project and doing initial research – it was time to step on a path that would hopefully lead to successfully creating a concept for a cook book. At this point I was somewhat terrified actually. I had had the idea for this project in my mind for a long time. It was when I actually started working on it, however, when I realized how much control I would have to give up compared to the other projects I had worked on as a graphic designer. I was to create a story based on other people's experiences. Therefore, their experiences – whatever they might be – and their potential for an interesting story was going to greatly affect the outcome. It was not up to me to determine how well the two father's recipes and stories would work together, let alone if they would make up an interesting story or not. Giving up control and leaving things to coincidence was not easy because of the nature of a designer's work that I was used to. I was used to being part of an entire design or product development process and having quite a lot of control over a project from the early ideation stages to putting final touches on the outcome. Here I had to settle for designing the elements that were “designable” and trust that along the way I would find design tools to make the final outcome successful, even though I had no way of foreseeing what those tools would turn out to be.

I found that one of the most important aspects of creating this process was deciding what I should not try to control in addition to deciding what I should control. This is to say that early on, I recognized the danger that would lie in trying to control the stories the two dad's brought up or trying to force the story or the book concept into a predetermined format. This was also the most important ethical responsibility I bore toward the two fathers while designing their story: I found it important that as they had consented to take in part in this project and help me produce it by giving their free time, skills, knowledge and personal stories to my disposal, it was of the utmost importance that they would recognize themselves from the outcome. The final concept had to feel true to their stories in terms of both the storytelling (writing) and the visual choices.

"Form follows function" is a cliché that many designers build their work upon, but was also a functional guideline in this project. I believed – and still do – that the best outcome was going to be reached if I would design the book concept and visual within based on the unique point of view and the experiences of the two fathers – not vice versa. The important thing was to use design skills and tools to sculpt the best possible story out of their experiences: to execute it skillfully and honestly, not change it. To achieve this, I tried to stick to the design framework described in table x the beast I could throughout the project. I did my best to be patient in recording the two dad's stories and avoided jumping ahead of things, such as designing the visuals before having enough storytelling material at my disposal. In the end, this approach paid off and brought the necessary – but not too much – structure into the process.

**Designing the story**

I decided to aim for a somewhat conventional story structure. This was for two reasons. Firstly, I think a successful project has a good balance of experimentation and elements that are familiar to the audience. As I was already experimenting with the format of a cook book, extending it toward a more story-focused, literary direction and the visuals, I thought it would make sense for the story structure to be something a reader could easily follow. Secondly, I think it is simply always good to first learn the basics of any craft before venturing far into experimentation. I thought that trying to work out a storyline with a clear beginning, ending and high points, would teach me more about the craft of storytelling than creating a, say, highly fragmented storyline would.

I started collecting material for the story and expanding my "design options" by interviewing Eino and Seppo. I asked them about their cooking, their inspiration, their thoughts on family and bringing up children. When interviewing Vappu Kaarenoja, the journalist about her working methods,
she said that she often simply found a starting point for a conversation that would be easy to the interviewee to take up then let the them speak freely of their life. I found this approach useful interviewing the fathers. I first asked how they had gotten interested in cooking and how it had evolved since then. The conversations flowed easily after that. After the interviews I typed them into a transcript and started picking up bits and pieces, comparing and fitting them together, molding a story out of them.

As I wrote in the section discussing the structure of a story, I found it challenging to start creating a cohesive story out of real-life material. I simply didn't know where to start. However, Kaarenajoja's method of finding the ending first, and then building the story “heading to this destination” helped me forward. I started experimenting with different ideas for endings for each dad. After a few attempts, the solution that resonated with me the most was ending Eino's story with his description of how he nowadays gets the most enjoyment out of seeing his family content and his children enjoying themselves. He said he was proud of the way he had managed to change his perspective from seeking personal happiness to seeking happiness for the people close to him. Since this was going to be the end point in his story, it then made sense to start it from how he got inspired to cook in the first place, which was mostly for hedonistic reasons. He wanted to eat the kind of good food he was used to in his childhood home after moving on in his own. For Seppo's story, however, it took more work to find an end point that I was happy with. When comparing Eino's and Seppo's stories I found interesting similarities and differences in the cuisines they were interested in. Both were inspired by the Italian and Chinese cuisine. The difference was, that Seppo did not have a chance to taste Chinese food until well into his adulthood, on a business trip to London, while for Eino most of the basic ingredients had been available at the neighborhood grocery store throughout his childhood. Following this intriguing difference, I realized I could end Seppo's story with his description of being proud of his children who did well in the globalized world that he himself had gotten to know as an adult. From this perspective, it was logical to start his story with a description of his childhood in Oulu, where there was even no chicken available, let alone any exotic ingredients. This storytelling process of following a lead from a revelation to another seemed to fit quite well together with the way I was used to working as a designer: first finding the one essential question or the core of a concept and then making other choices according to this central theme. This process resembled closely the way that Gerenryd described a designer's process as a series of questions and answers to the set constraints (1998). While for design tasks, I usually seek an essential theme or concept first, with storytelling it seemed more relevant to first make the most important structural choices and only then start developing the theme of the story further.

The screen writing teacher Beairsto (1998), whose work I discussed while describing the constituents of a story, argued for a character-based writing as opposed to plot-based writing. According to him, it is more important how a character experiences an event than what happens in a story. When finding the endings for Seppo's and Eino's stories, I realized that both Eino's and Seppo's cooking styles were reflective of their personalities. Eino cooked in a similar way that he was planning his family life too: he described how he had learned to think ahead, to prepare meals, to keep an eye on how tired his kids were in the evenings to be able to put them to bed early enough for a more enjoyable week-day mornings and so on. Seppo, on the other hand, cooked in a more free-spirited, bohemian way to bring enjoyment to his family and friends. For him, cooking was more of a free exploration, which was reflected in his habit of looking at the cook books mostly for inspiration and less for strict following of recipes, while for Eino cooking was an intriguing field of creative problem-solving, where he would learn everything about and ingredient or a cooking process, take it apart and put it back together in a way that pleased him. I decided to juxtapose the way these two dads cooked with the way they talked about their family lives. The similarities and differences in their interest provided an interesting source for dialogue in the story and deepened the picture of their “characters”. We later chose to use this difference in personalities as a starting point for the photographic concept in the project, displaying in Seppo's cooking in a free-form way, almost as abstract paintings, while Eino's cooking was meticulously arranged into a grid system, ingredient by ingredient.

For me, writing the story somehow resembled carving. My creative writing style in usually tight and scarce. I usually try to express the essential with the minimum amount of words. With this stylistic choice, I have to find the exact, most descriptive wording and pace for each sentence. Each word needs find its exact, right place within a sentence – hence the feeling of carving. Developing the story, I did some experiments with the narrative voice. For instance, I contemplated having either my own narrative voice as
a third narrator in addition to Eino’s and Seppo’s perspectives or having a “general” narrative voice describing events and looks in addition to Eino’s and Seppo’s voices. I quickly edited these ideas out, however, since they seemed to add unnecessary complexity to a story that was already comprising of several different events. I also found my own or a general voice somewhat pretentious, it did not seem to fit in naturally with Eino’s and Seppo’s voices. While sticking to my own, scarce writing style, I tried to find a recognizable narrative voice for both main characters. The recording and transcripts of the interviews helped me with this. I used the same idioms and phrases that Eino and Seppo used often in their speech in their stories as well. Seppo’s narrative voice ended up using more of correct, literary Finnish spiced up with his favorite expressions, while Eino’s language was more straight-forward and used more of spoken language. In the end, I was especially happy with their feedback on the story excerpts that I wrote. They said that they felt true to their own experience. I thought that the language I chose probably helped convey that feeling.

Designing the book

Perhaps because I started off as a student of ceramics and glass design, I still sometimes find graphic design too non-tangible. I feel that when designing on screen, I somehow cannot take full advantage of my design skill as some of it seems to be in my fingertips rather than in my mind and eye. Wondering how to approach designing this book, I rummaged through my own book shelf favorites for inspiration and landed on a page of “White” (2008, p 18), Kenya Hara’s classic essay on the role and connotations of white (shiro (Jap.); emptiness, vastness) in design:

“The construction of a book is based on a repetitive rumination on white, involving the eye, the fingertips, the memory. Perhaps information is a product of the collaboration between such experimental acts and the unconscious.”

This describes my understanding of the source of my own design skills precisely. Reading this – and being comforted by that someone as prominent as Hara also relies on his fingertips to support his mind – I realized that instead of resisting the need to feel, touch and experiment in order to design,
I had to find ways to add tangibility to my graphic design process. Instead of proceeding to fiddle with my grids and typefaces on screen, I decided I would try designing the book as if I was carving it. I would build a tangible prototype, cut and paste, experiment with typography, fit sample pages and feel my way through the design process. Maybe I could make my mind, eyes and fingers work together for graphic design as they used to for ceramics.

I was also hoping that approaching the visual design process differently, I could fix another problem I have had lately. Now I have been doing graphic design long enough – in studies and work life – that I have stumbled upon my own manerisms. They are professional comfort zones, tricks and methods that I know will usually work and yield successful or at least passable results. I resort to them easily especially under time pressure and sudden last-minute demands when there is no time for careful consideration but instead a fast work based on gut-feeling is required. Especially the latter, working on gut-feeling, is harmful in a sense that it tends to ground the manerisms deeper into my design practice due to repetition without reflection. As for this project I am in charge of the schedules myself, I decided to take this opportunity to try and break form.

About colors

In his classic book, "On White", Kenya Hara writes about the nature of color (2008). He discusses the distinction between the understanding of color in our culture – through words, concepts and shared moments and memories – and the technical understanding of color produced by physics that we as designers often refer to, sending our designs for print and defining the color of a material. According to him, in a perception of – a moment of experiencing – color the physical color itself cannot be separated from the texture and light affecting the color. He uses a shade of tea in a teacup or the color and texture of an egg yolk as examples.

While Hara discusses the colors in the Japanese culture he was born to – such as tea, indigo, burn orange - it is easy to recognize the same logic applying to other cultures as well. When studying art history as a teenager, I admired the soft light and hues in the paintings of French impressionism especially by Monet. I tried to mimic the hues in my own paintings but, somehow, I just never saw colors the same way. When I travelled to France for the first time at 17 and sat down to admire the landscape in Jardin du Luxembourg I suddenly realized why: the light in Paris was softer. The garden
looked exactly like the paintings of it, the light playing with the leaves having a warmer hue than light in Finland. Later, seeing paintings by Edelfelt that he had painted in both Paris and Finland, I noticed the same difference. On one hand, in the paintings he had painted in Paris, the light was similarly soft and playful to Monet’s or Manet’s works. On the other hand, in the paintings he had painted in Finland the light had a cooler, direct northern nature, like rare rays piercing the otherwise cold environment.

Inspired by Kenya Hara’s thought, and as my design concept revolves around memories and experiences, I decided that I should try to find the exact colors that capture textures or moments, perceptions of color in my childhood home or Helsinki, Eino’s living environment. I was hoping to find a similar experience of northern light that Edelfelt’s paintings manage to capture. I would like the book to capture a glimpse of the material conditions around the story of two fathers cooking. This felt natural, as cooking itself is a process with high regard to the material nature, texture and taste of the ingredients. We do not live inside a color wheel of solid, monotonic surfaces but a three-dimensional world of spaces, textures, haptics, air, emptiness and feelings they evoke. I think this is especially true for homes and I wanted the materials and colors to represent the same warmth.

Lay-out design and photography
It was important for me to create the story first, and only then the visuals to support it. The design of the book relies heavily on the photography. I was very lucky to have Jaakko Kahlaniemi, whom I have studied with, as a photographer for this project. He was recently chosen as a finalist in the Hyères photography competition and has won other prominent awards for young European photographers. We contemplated on different approaches and ideated on the photoshoots together. I then created the mood board for each father’s visual style based on our discussions. What intrigued both of
Seppo - artistic, bohemian, three-dimensional

Eino - systematic, profound, surprising
Cooking - feeling of the every-day life, documentary point of view
us was breaking form compared to conventional cook books and extending the visual style “beyond Instagram”. The central idea we decided on was to base the visual style of the photographs on the different personalities and corresponding cooking styles of Seppo and Eino. In Eino’s photographs, we would break a dish into pieces, showing each layer of flavor within a fish taco. For Seppo, we decided to “paint with food” to reflect his bohemian cooking style. We thought this approach would bring about an interesting pairing of styles and a contrast in the photographs of each father’s cuisine. We organized a one-day-photoshoot for each father in their homes. Jaakko also took documentary photos of the cooking process as well as “every-day life” of Seppo and Eino to be used as a contrast to the artistic food photographs. I was slightly nervous about the food styling beforehand, as I have done other types of styling for photography before but haven’t worked previously with food. However, I was extremely satisfied with the results. Especially “painting” with Seppo’s risotto worked well and some of the photographs turned out to almost look like abstract paintings, which was the original idea. While I was happy how the meticulously arranged look in Eino’s food photographs turned out, in his case, the documentary photographs “stole the show”. Jaakko was very skillful at working with the children, capturing some incredible shots of the playing and cooking with their dad.

As the photography turned out so strong, I decided to build the layout for the book to support it and to showcase it in the best possible light. The visual style and concept for the layout was a logical continuation to the story, book and photographic concept. I ended up mixing elements from “a literary” layout style resembling a traditionally laid-out novel to nod on the prominence of storytelling in this book, an “art book” layout style to complement the artistic photography and elements found in contemporary cook books. Nodding toward the tangibility of a recipe book – both Seppo and Eino had one with folded corners, hand-written notes and recipe cut-outs stacked in between pages – I thought the book could have the feeling of a scrap book, with an air of memories, stories, opinions, fiddlings, thoughts, acts, recipes and an identity such objects carry.

I often feel like choosing typefaces is almost like selecting a wine for the layout, to complement its essence. To go with the strong photography, I thought that a typeface with slightly more character was needed. As my cook book concept is much more storytelling-oriented than most contemporary cook books, I thought the typography could hint toward the design conventions of novels. I therefore selected an antquia as the sole typeface. Instead of choosing one of the very traditional antquias used in books, I decided to go with the typeface “Ariata” that has strong, unconventional characteristics. I thought it balanced the strength of the photography well and also gave the book a contemporary look without seeming slick. To give the book a contemporary look that would still (hopefully) last the test of time, I designed the layout so that different types of visuals were mostly laid out on different pages. This mean that photographs usually had a full page or a spread to themselves, the only text being the captions. Likewise, pieces of story would have their own pages and recipes and large captions bringing structure to the whole book would also comprise of entire pages. I felt that this solution brought clarity and structure to the book.

5.5 Reflections on the design outcome
As the creative process I took up involved writing, facilitating a workshop, conducting interviews as well as visual design, I have described the graphic design choices only very briefly here. I found it most relevant to analyze the visual design of the book in those aspects that supported the rest of the concept and storytelling. Overall, I was especially happy with how the visuals and the stories of the two fathers started working together. I felt that the selected photographic concepts for the images of each father supported their stories and reflected their characters – photographs of Seppo’s food being painting-like and bohemian while Eino’s cooking was portrayed in a highly systematic and organized way. What I wish I had had more time for was playing with different layout choices, possibly researching printing techniques to experiment with and honing the visual and layout concept for the book. I this scope and time frame I felt that the right thing to do was to give precedence to the highly succesful photography and to build the layout around it. However, this seemed to mean somewhat “safe” choices in terms of graphic design. The other aspects of the project, writing the story, creating the structure for the story and the concept, organizing workshops and photoshoots and researching and writing this thesis seemed to eat away a bit from the area that I was originally the most confident in – the graphic design of the book. In a way, however, this was in line with the choice I made planning this project: rather than execute another graphic design project, I wanted to do something that let me experiment with a new domain and expand my horizons as a designer.
6. The Cookbook Concept
Isien ruokaa

Kaksi isää.
Kaksi sukupuolleva.
Kaksi erilaista keittiötä.

Tämä kirja kertoo siitä, mitä kaksi ruoanlaittoa rakastavaa isää, Eino (35) ja Seppo (61), ovat oivaltaneet tehdessään ruokaa perheilleen.
Sunnuntairuokaa
Kantonilainen kana
Puhemies Maon pata
Kung Pao-kana
Moskovanpata
Surffipurilaiset
Tonkatsu

Viihdonleipä
Aamiaisleiä
Uunipuuro
New York sandwiches
Ruiseipä avokadolla ja
lohileitteellä

40
Arkiruokaa
Oyako-don
Sipsimunakas
Pastaa fetalla ja pinaatilla
Pastaa tomaattilla ja
kesäkurpisalla
Pinaattipastaa lohella
Kylmä kalaa ja
pikkelöityä punakaalia
Kanaa sitruunalla ja
kapriksilla
Uunilohi bataattimuusilla
Makkarapata

70
Suuri risottotaisto
Sepon punaviniririsotto
Einon sitruunarisotto
...sekä risottopannukakku
seuraavalle päivälle

62
Sushi, eli lasten
lempari
Sushirii 7 minuutissa
Japanilainen omeletti
Temaki-sushi

76
Kesäruokaa, jota
voi syödä talvellakin
Kesäkeitto
Kylmä kurkkueitto
Sinihomejuustokeitto
Siikacarpacchio
Kuhaa ja inkivääriä
Keyvesti savustetua kalaa
kernaviliikastikkeella
Voileivät friteratulla kanalla
Pastaa tomaatilla ja kuhalla
Kurkkuhakkuelus
Sinappi
Jäätee

98
Klassikot, joiden
receptistä väittellään
vielä pöydässäkin
Lihapullat
Possun ribsit
Pasta carbonara
Lohikeitto
Rössypottu
Ravut
Blinit

117
Välipalat ja herkut
Grissinit
Tonnikalapiirakka
Osterivinokaspiirakka
Juustosarvet
Avokadojäätelö
Ruoanlaitto on sarja peruuttamattomia tekoja.

Se on kemiaa, ainesten yhdistelemistä toisiinsa. Askeleitaan ei voi useinkaan kulkea taaksepäin. Valkoviiniä ei pysty erottamaan risottosta, kakkutaikinaan lorahtanutta suolaa ei saa sieltä pois. Mennyttä on vaikea korjaa.


Mikä on juuri oikean pituinen aika lihan olla uunissa? Millaisessa kypsennysrytmissä risottoon tulee paras rakenne? Kannattaako ensin valmistaa kantonilaisen kanan mausteliemi vai pestä lisukeriisi?

Vanhemmuus taas on sellaista, että vanhemmat oppivat sitä mukaa kun lapsi kasvaa. Esikoisen kanssa jokainen elämän vaihe tulee aina uuteen eteen; samalla edellisistä vaiheista joudutaan päästämään vasta edelleen. Ennakko ei voi harjoitella.


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**Prologi**

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**Prologue**
Puolukasta

"Kotona oli aina puolukasurvosta puussa vissiä parvekkeella. Vanhemmat valmistivat sitä neljänkymmenen litran erän loppukesän aikana keräämistään marjoista. Survoksessa oli sitä verran sokeria, että se ei jäätynyt parvekkeella edes Oulun talvessa, mutta toisaalta säilyi. Pitkin talvea hipsittiin elementtiitalon parvekkeen jääkylmää betonia pitkin hakemaan survosta kipollinen kerrallaan.


"On lingonberry"
The beginning of Seppo’s story
Puolukkatuoremehu

Ämpärillinen puolukoita
50 g viinihappoa
n. 2,5 kg sokeria
5 l vettä

Tarvikkeet:
sideharsokangasta
10 l kattila
lasipulloja
kumikorkkeja
suppilo

Puolukkatuoremehu

Ämpärillinen puolukoita
50 g viinihappoa
n. 2,5 kg sokeria
5 l vettä

Tarvikkeet:
sideharsokangasta
10 l kattila
lasipulloja
kumikorkkeja
suppilo

Puolukkatuoremehu
On pleasure
The beginning of Eino’s story

"Kun olin pari päivää syönyt itse tekemääni ruokaa, tajusin, että se ei ollut yhtään sellaista, mihin olin tottunut.

tella laittamaan sitä itse.

Mulla on sellainen luonne, että jos innostun jostain niin voin hyvin viettää yhden iltapäivän internetin ihmemaassa ja mennä vähän liiankin syvälle aiheeseen. Aluksi seurasin tosi jämptisti reseptejä, enkä hirveästi miettinyt, miksi asiat tehdään kuten ne tehdään. Nykyään vertaileen er
ilaisia reseptejä. Pöllönä on ikään kuin osi ja kasaan uudelleen. Pohdin erilaisia tapoja valmistaa sama ruoka. Yleensä teemat hahmottuvat aika

Tärkeimmät inspiraationlähteet ovat olleet italialainen, raaka-ainei
siin luottava kokkaustyyli sekä Kiinan eri keittiöt. Ensimmäisiä bravuure
jenä on Kung Pao-kana. Pöllin aluksi jonkun äidin keittokirjan ja siinä oli geneerinen kiinalainen kanaresepti. Siitä tuli ihan sairaan hyvää. Se

Haluaisin joskus matkustaa Yunnanin maakuntaan, jossa on kuu

Haluaisin joskus matkustaa Yunnanin maakuntaan, jossa on kuu
lemma jopa tuhat syötävää sienilajia. On kauhean kiehtova ajatus, että niitä voi olla näinkin monipuolisesti tarjolla. Lapset eivät toisaalta ehkä

Varmaan se joskus tulee tehtyä.”

"On pleasure"
The beginning of
eino's story
On pleasure
When Eino moved on his own he realized that the really good food he was used to getting in his child-
hood home required much more ef-
fort than he thought.
Eino story begins from his decision to learn to cook, first taking inspi-
ration from Italian and Chinese cuisines.
Beginning:
His mom cooked mostly some vari-
ety of meat with potatoes. Even
when Eino moved on his own he
heard about sushi.
Eino got interested in Chinese food, pro-
bably because they often looked for it on travel with his childhood family. There weren’t great Chinese
restaurants in Helsinki at the time.
Eino was a musician and his interest
in cooking led him to dig deep into the chemistry
and physics of cooking rice and come up with an effect-
ive shortcut that now allows him to make the cushion
rice in just 15 min-
utes.
The rice cooking experiment works
as a metaphor for Eino’s way of run-
ing family life by planning ahead and prioritizing in order to create
pace moments to the everyday
life with kids.

On boiling rice
Sushi is Eino’s daughter’s favorite
food, however, preparing the rice in
the current Japanese way started to
feel time-consuming.
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"Never discussed raising kids"
Seppo never had discussions with his wife on how the kids should be
raised. It just happened naturally. (Eino has never discussed this
with Niina either.)

"Isn’t cooking a bit of a show-off for men?"
Eino and Seppo talk about their every-
day lives. The material based on interviews is arranged in an dia-
logue to highlight contrasts and sol-
utions in their way of working, seeking
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Eino is content that he has been ab-
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Dialogue on every-day life with Eino and Seppo


Eino jättää ruoanlaittovaiheen vuonna. Olen yrittänyt uudelleen arvoa ja kehittää lasten kanssa. Viikonloppuaanomat ovat lempihetkinä perheen kanssa. Lapset hopottelivat herännyään ensin rauhassa ja Eino keittii itseänsä juustoa päällä sekä hedelmää ja kanaanmanua. Lapsille keitettiin puuroa. (Leipäresepti oheen)


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keskittyä yhdessäoloon. Onhan ruoanlaitto miehillä usein vähän sellaista briljeeraamista. Mukavinta kuitenkin on, kun perhe ja ystävät nauttivat tekemästäni ruoasta.”

Eino: ”Ruoanlaittoon liittyy hyvän maun lisäksi voimakkaasti se, että ruokailu on perheen yhteinen hetki. Se oli sellainen lapsuuden perheessäni ja olen halunnut jatkaa tapaa nyt omassa perheessäni. En voi sanoa, että olisin itse aina työpäivän jälkeen juuri parhaimmillani, mutta päivällinen on usein enemmän tai vähemmän rauhallinen, mukava hetki. Saamme syötyä, kaikki vähän rentoutuvat ja voidaan jutella kuuluisia. Olisi hienoa, jos tämä tapa siirtyisi myös lapsilleni, kun he kasvavat”

Seppo: ”On ollut hienoa nähdä, että ruoanlaittotapoja on siirtynyt lapsilleni. He ryhtyivät kotoa muutettaan lämpimän aterian joka iltana. En usko, että kaikki suinkaan tekevät niin ja olen ollut ilahtunut siitä.”
kantareljeitä tai suppolovahveroita
2 dl aromikasta italialaista punaviiniä
4 dl Arborio-riisiä
1 l kanalientä
0,5 dl oliiviöljyä
2 salottisipulia yrttejä koristeeksi
parmesania voita
The question I set out to answer was: can a story be designed and how? After the research and practical process of designing a story for a cookbook by two fathers, the short answer is yes, a design process can be applied successfully to a storytelling process. However, there are key differences in the structure and working processes of the two fields that should be taken into account when designing a story.

I found the design frameworks of inquiry and the double-diamond model very suitable and useful in guiding a storytelling process as well. Especially Gerenryd’s idea on the design process as that of searching for the right question applied well to a storytelling process. Finding the right question to build the story around then guided the rest of the decisions, following his line of thought on testing different approaches by asking “would this work?”. I found this approach especially useful when trying to find the endings and core structural ideas for both Eino’s and Seppo’s stories. This stage of the working process was also the least familiar to me and took the longest to find a solution to. The double diamond model of consciously fluctuating the amount of choices – first expanding, then diminishing – provided a kind of lifeline in situations where I was stuck with the project. I simply tried to identify whether the next thing to do was to expand or cut my choices and then tried to find an appropriate strategy to do so.

The key differences in design and storytelling processes lie in the outcomes themselves. I found the concept of time to be the single most important differentiating factor in design and storytelling. A piece of design can just come to existence without the consideration of time while in storytelling it is the essential concept that moves the story forward and contrasts its elements. In terms of the creative process, an important difference is that in storytelling, the structure is kneaded into the piece itself, while in visual communication design structure is usually clearly visible. I was used to the visual design process of finding a central concept or a theme first and worrying about the visual structure much later in the process. In storytelling, I had to learn a new way of working, to think of structure first. As a designer writing a story, I ran into biggest difficulties in parts of the process that where the furthest away from a design process. However, struggling with finding the structure and core idea for the story is probably also where I learnt the most. Tackling the challenges, I felt like I got a firmer grasp on storytelling and a sense of understanding it more deeply than before.

The most important things that I learned about storytelling itself were the
related to planning the structure, learning to write from a character perspective and searching for my own voice in storytelling. Starting from the ending felt counterintuitive first, as I am of course used to reading and watching stories unfold from beginning to end. However, once I started playing with different endings, I understood the meaning of starting from the “destination” for the story and building other events from there. One of the single most inspiring aspects of while writing was thinking of characters first and the events only afterward. It helped me to step into the main character’s shoes. I found that it made my writing more interesting and personal. Lastly, this project was an interesting journey into finding my own voice as a writer. I am familiar with and relatively confident in writing academic, communications-related and other professional texts, but I haven’t written fiction or other types of stories very much. I was surprised to find out that I actually had a writing style buried within myself. I noticed that I liked to do writing in a similar way that I often do design: by trying to express the core idea, feeling, atmosphere or unfolding of an event as concisely and aptly as possible, with the least possible amount of words. I felt that this project helped me discover a new creative area that I think I want to learn more about and expand on in the future. Since writing for this project, I have already taken up some creative storytelling projects in my professional work as a service and concept designer. I think that the key learnings from writing and doing research for the cookbook concept encouraged me to take up those responsibilities even though I am new to storytelling.

The goal for the concept itself was to create a storytelling-based cookbook concept around cooking of fathers of two different generations. Ideally, I thought that the explicit theme of the book would be cooking, while the implicit, actual meaning would lie within the dialogue the stories of the two fathers would form. Firstly, my aim in writing the story was to find the personal experiences of the two fathers. I wanted to understand as well as possible how the approached cooking and family life. I was hoping that by digging deep into their personal experiences I would be able to unearth something universal that would resonate with other people as well, as good stories do. Secondly, I wanted to show and creativity, problem-solving, playfulness and social aspects of Eino’s and Seppo’s cooking. I believed – and still do – that the best outcome was going to be reached if I would design the book concept and visual within based on the unique point of view and the experiences of the two fathers – not vice versa. The important thing was to use design skills and tools to sculpt the best possible story out of their experiences: to execute it skillfully and honestly, and truthfully. One of the most moving bits of feedback I got during the project was when my father told me that the opening paragraph I had written about him felt “true”.

I think the collaboration with Eino, Seppo and Jaakko was one of the most fruitful parts of the project. It went smoothly and think that our ideas helped enrich each other. It was of course exciting to work with my own father on this – I believe this was the first time he saw me acting in a professional role as a designer. He seemed to have his doubts about me and Jaakko “painting” with his risotto. However, seeing the end result, he was genuinely impressed by the visual language of the photographs. Eino’s clear and analytical vision for cooking was incredibly helpful when creating the list of recipes for the book. It also served as a necessary counterpart for my father’s more bohemian style. I enjoyed working with his family and some of the shots that Jaakko of Eino cooking with his children were simply incredible. Overall, I could not have achieved the visual aesthetic of the concept without our collaboration with Jaakko.

I think that best creative projects successfully combine the visions and expertise of several minds, not just one. I was very happy to conclude my personal and educational journey by collaborating with people I truly admire.
References


”Tarinankerronta” on ollut erityisesti pinnalla muotoilussa ja muilla luovilla aloilla viime vuosina. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on osaltaan haastaa myyttöjä tarinankerronnan ympärillä tarkastelemalla sitä luovan prosessin näkökulmasta. Samalla pyritään ymmärtämään, mitä kahden luovan alan välisen rajan ylttämisen tarkoittaa – mitä mahdollisuksia ja riskejä siihen sisältyy. Tutkimuksen lähtökohtana on usko siihen, että nykyisesessä erikoistumista korostavassa työkulttuurissa uusia ajatuksia, oivalluksia ja ideita syntyy usein eri alojen risteykskohdassa.

Avainsanat Tarinankerronta, luova prosessi, narratiivi, keittokirja
“Designing a Story” studies the relationship between design and storytelling. The aim of the research is to understand if and how a story can be designed. It focuses on the similarities and differences between creative processes associated with design and storytelling. The design process is discussed through two main frameworks, the applied theory of inquiry and the double diamond model. These frameworks are then compared to a storytelling process, while also discussing the structural differences and similarities in design and stories as well as the narrative context of the research and creative process.

The theoretical understanding of the relationship between storytelling and design serves as a starting point for a creative process of designing and writing as concept for a cookbook, “Fathers’ food". The concept is built around the stories and experiences of two fathers of different generations who love to cook for their families and friends. The stories of the two fathers will not only provide personal accounts of contemporary home cooking in Finland, but also form an interesting dialogue between two personalities and family cultures. The personal narratives participate in a larger dialogue on how cooking in families and our food culture has evolved over a generation.

“Storytelling” has recently become a buzzword in design and other creative industries. The research seeks to challenge myths around it by studying storytelling on the level of the creative process. The aim is to understand the applicability of a design process on another creative field, the merits and possible pitfalls of crossing professional boundaries. It is based on interest in how—in the highly specialized professional world of today—interesting findings, thoughts, inventions and discoveries can be found at the crossroads of different disciplines.

Keywords Storytelling, design process, narrative, cookbook