



**EDUCATORS**  
SUMMIT

# Games That Care: Lessons From Teaching Grief Based Game Design

Dr. Sabine Harrer  
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# GDC

**GAME DEVELOPERS CONFERENCE**

MARCH 18–22, 2019 | #GDC19

# **WHAT IS OUR JOB AS GAMES EDUCATORS TODAY?**



**GENERATE HIREABILITY**



**GENERATE HIREABILITY**

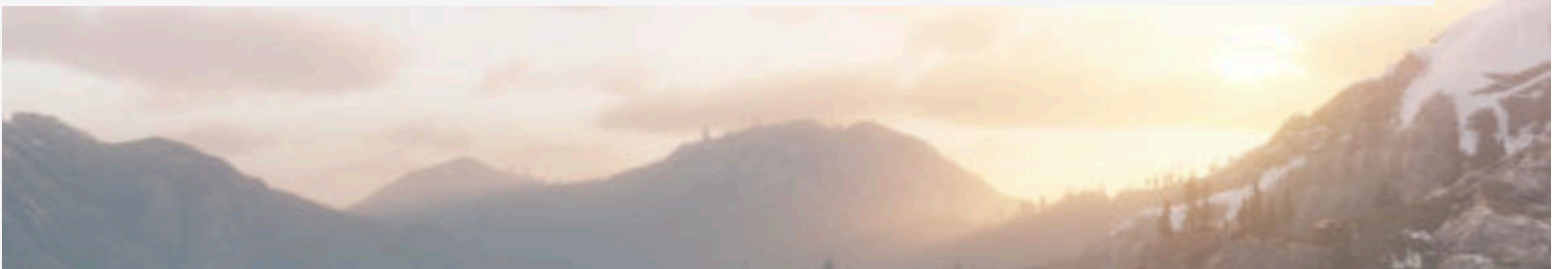


# Making games for a living means being in constant fear of losing your job

*Letting go of the fear was a mistake I won't make again*

By **Katie Chironis** | Mar 5, 2019, 12:57pm EST

Why are game studios run like sweat shops? The human toll of 'crunch time'



## Guild Wars 2 Developer ArenaNet Plans For Mass Layoffs

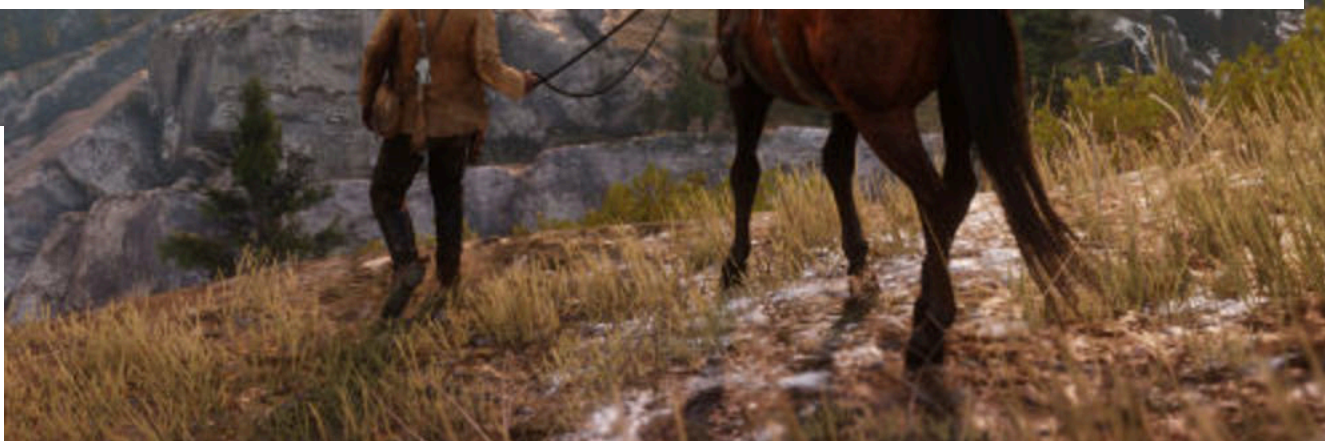
Jason Schreier  
2/21/19 5:13pm • Filed to: ARENANET

141.9K 241 3



# 15 Video Games Companies That Died Because Of Bad Decisions

BY **LEO RYDEL** - ON MAR 19, 2017 IN **LISTS**

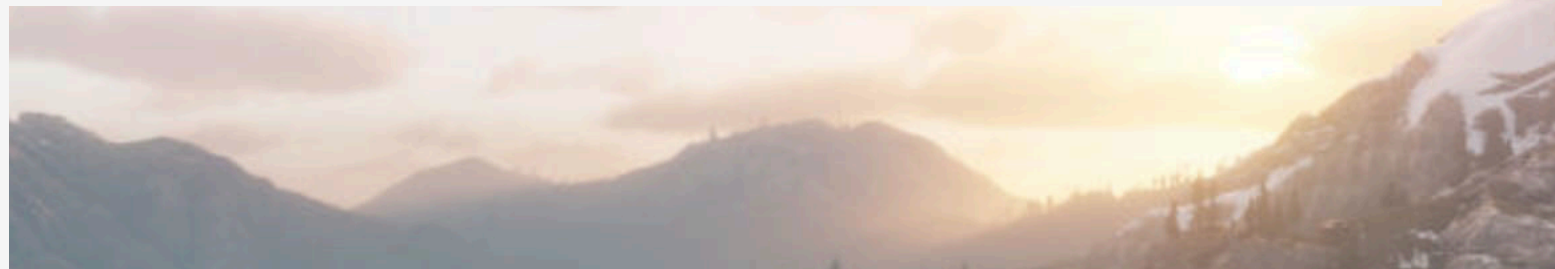


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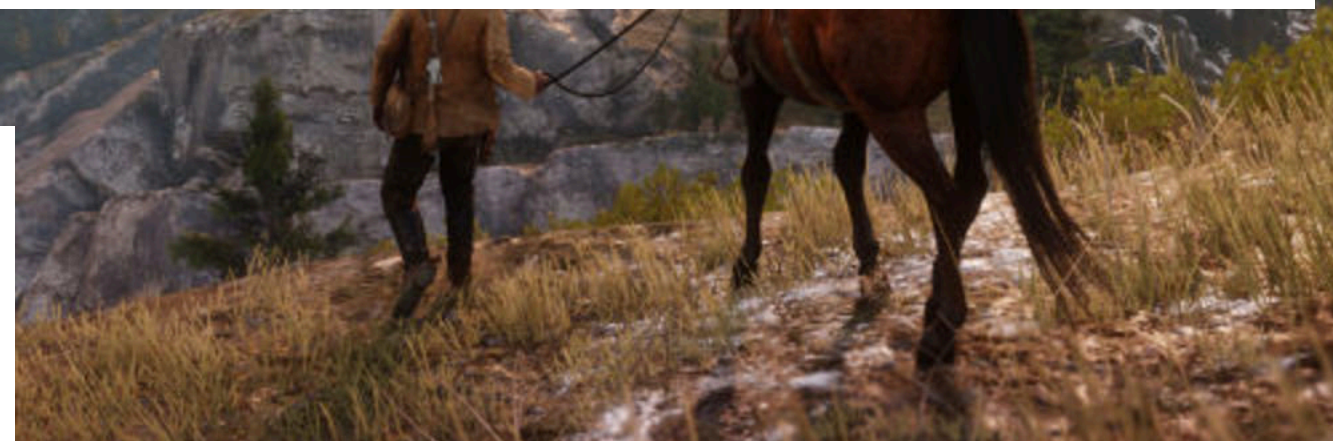
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**“TO FINISH THE GAME I HAD TO BREAK UP  
WITH MY SIGNIFICANT OTHER”**

**– games student 2019**



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EXIT

A STORY ABOUT  
LEAVING GAME DEV

PEOPLE WOULD  
ASK ME  
TO DO A LOT OF  
EXTRA STUFF



I TALKED AT  
SCHOOLS, CONFERENCES  
DEMOS, MEET N GREETs

*I kept working hard*

EVERYTHING ELSE  
IN MY LIFE SUFFERED

It would  
MEAN MORE  
coming from you ...  
... think of it as an  
OPPORTUNITY!





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**HOW DO YOU HAVE A STABLE LIFE IN AN INDUSTRY  
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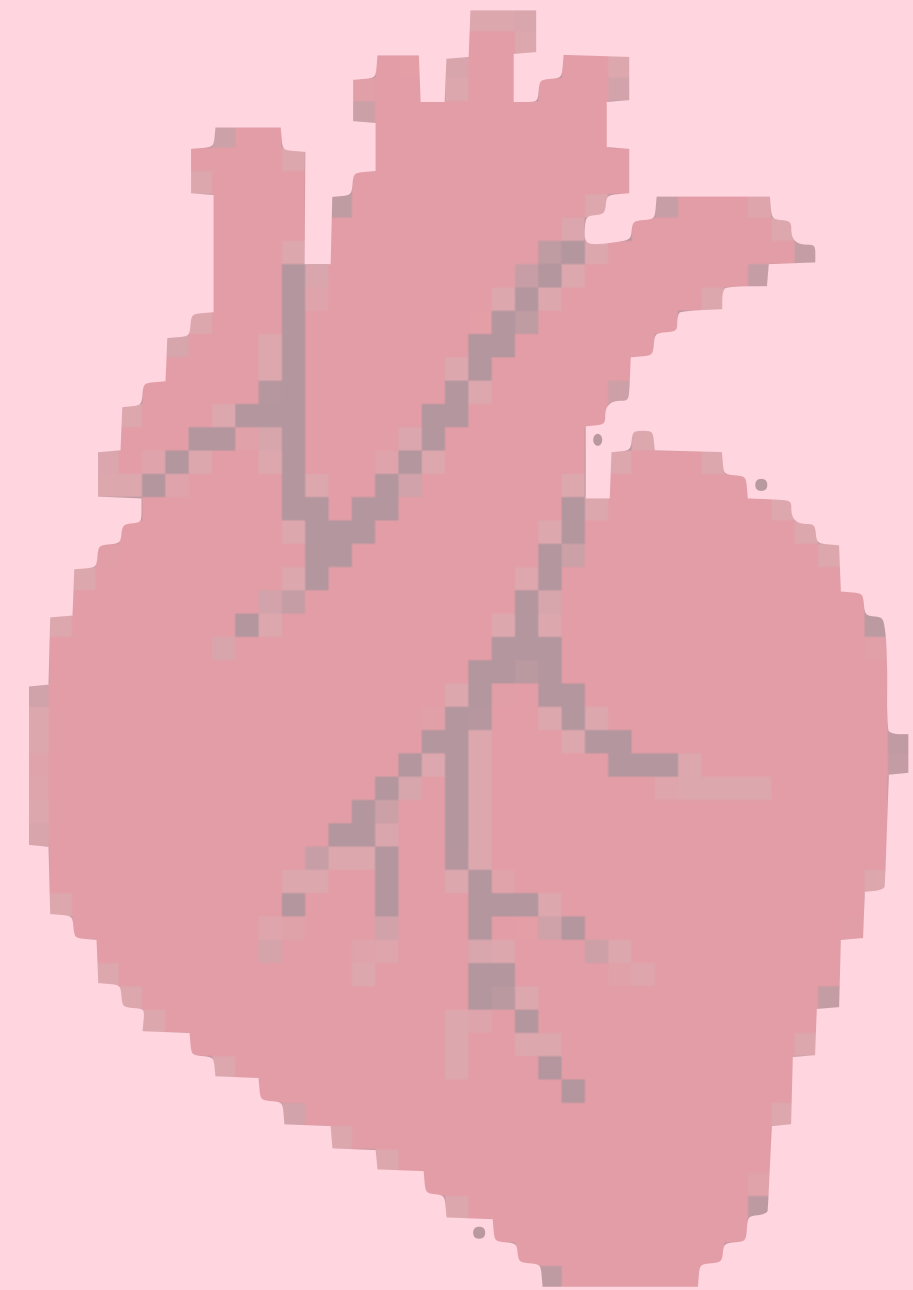
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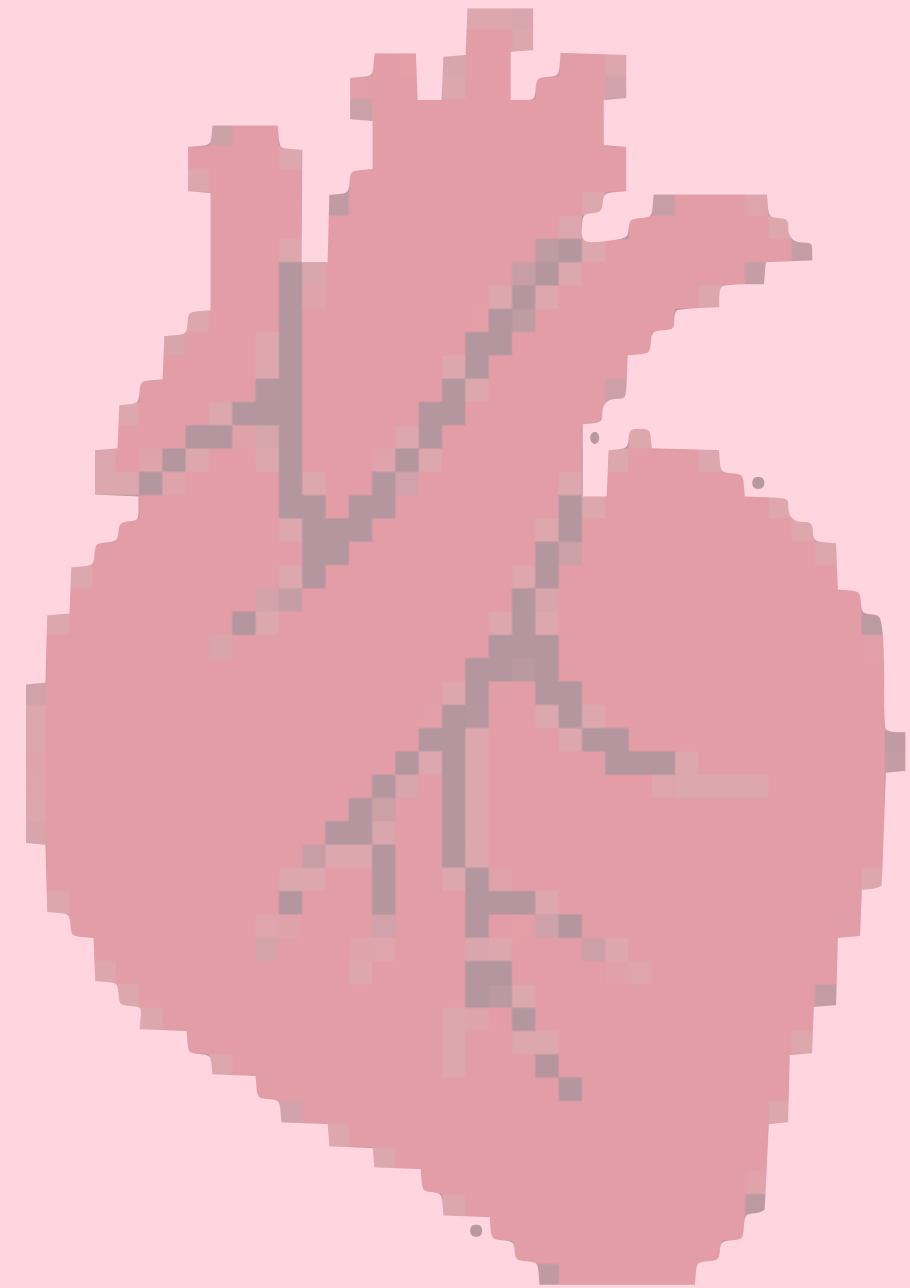
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**HOW DOES MY COURSE EQUIP YOU  
TO DEFINE YOUR SPACE IN GAMES  
CULTURE?**

# DISCLAIMER



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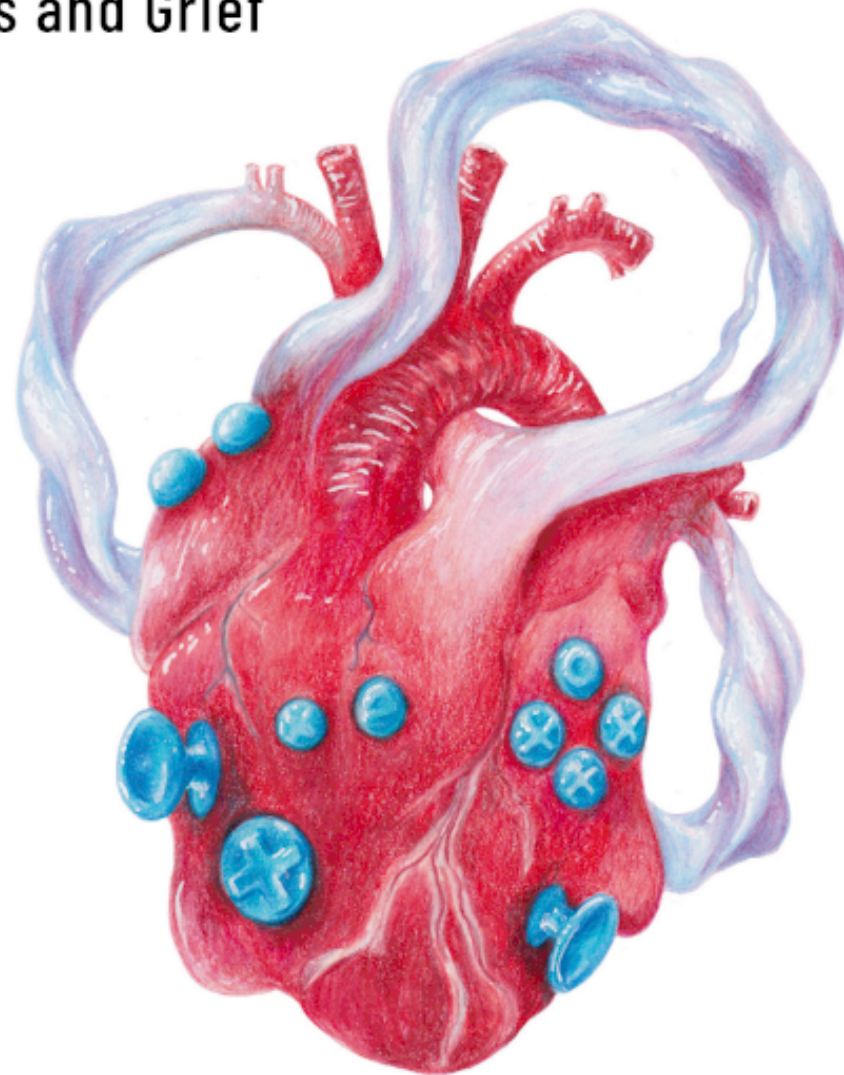




Sabine Harrer

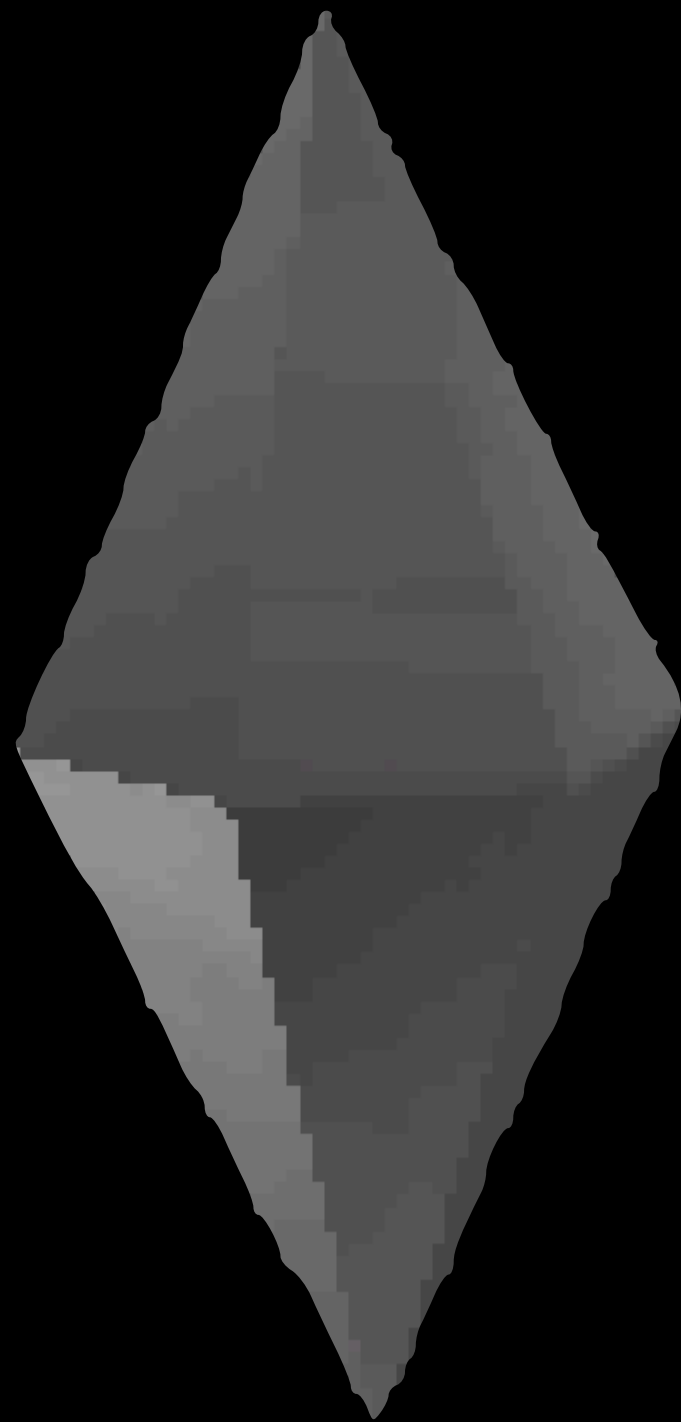
# GAMES AND BEREAVEMENT

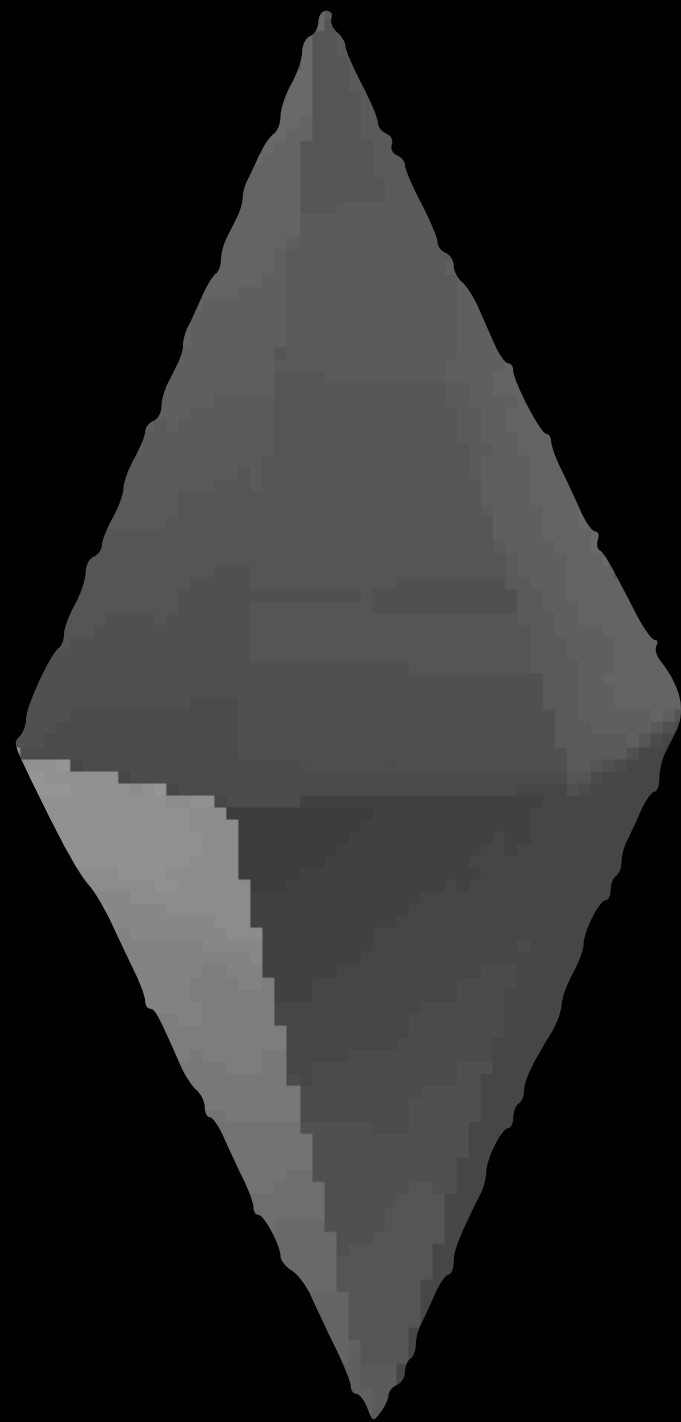
How Video Games Represent Attachment,  
Loss and Grief

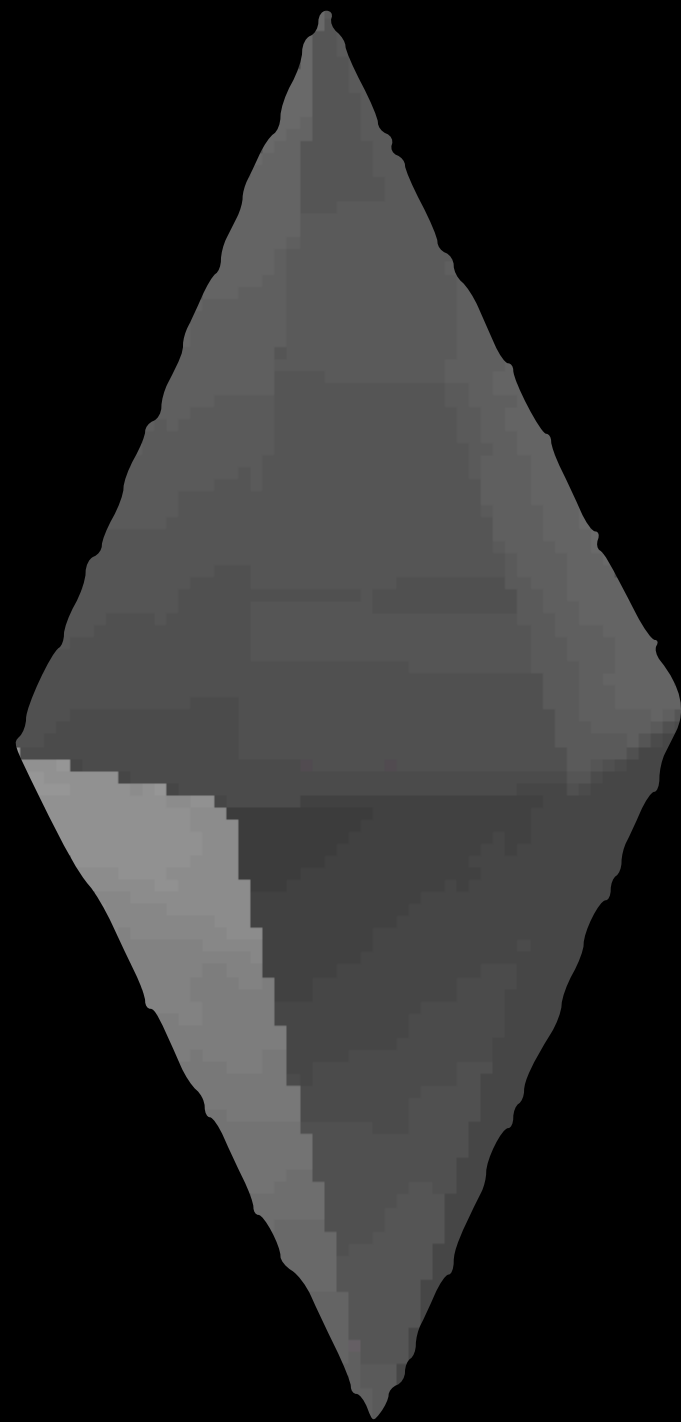


[transcript] Media Studies

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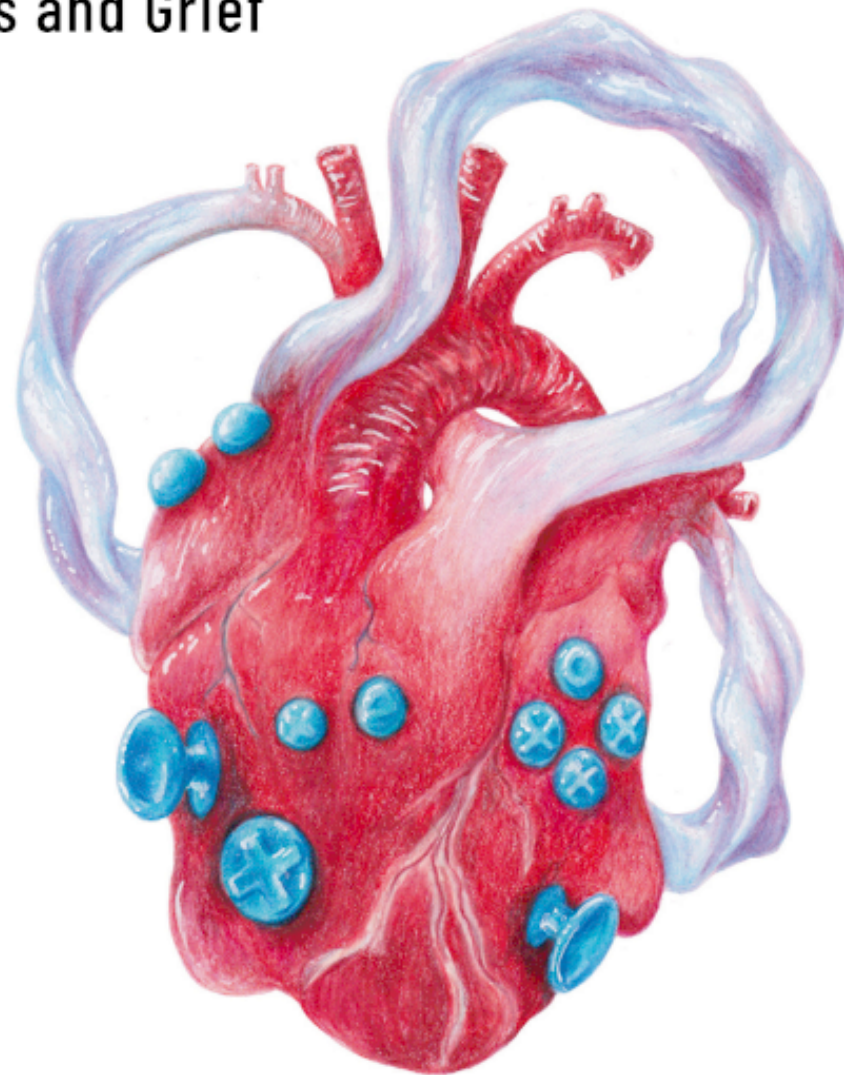




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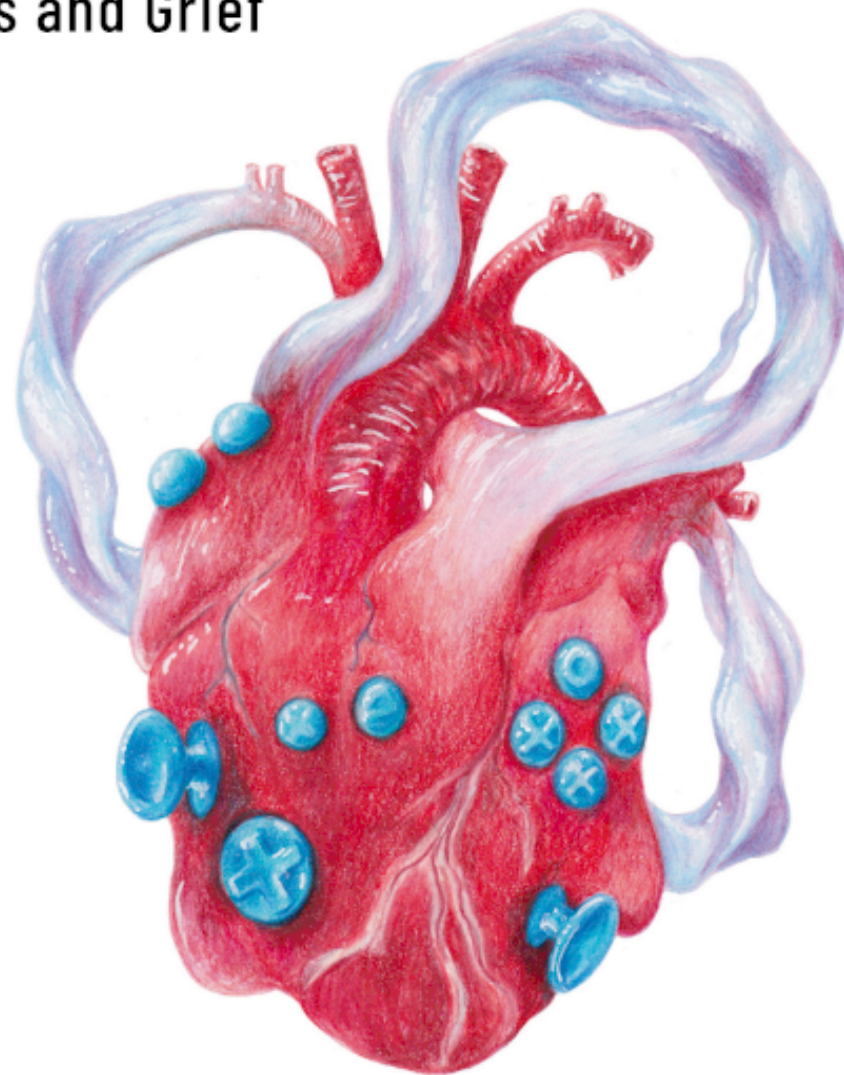
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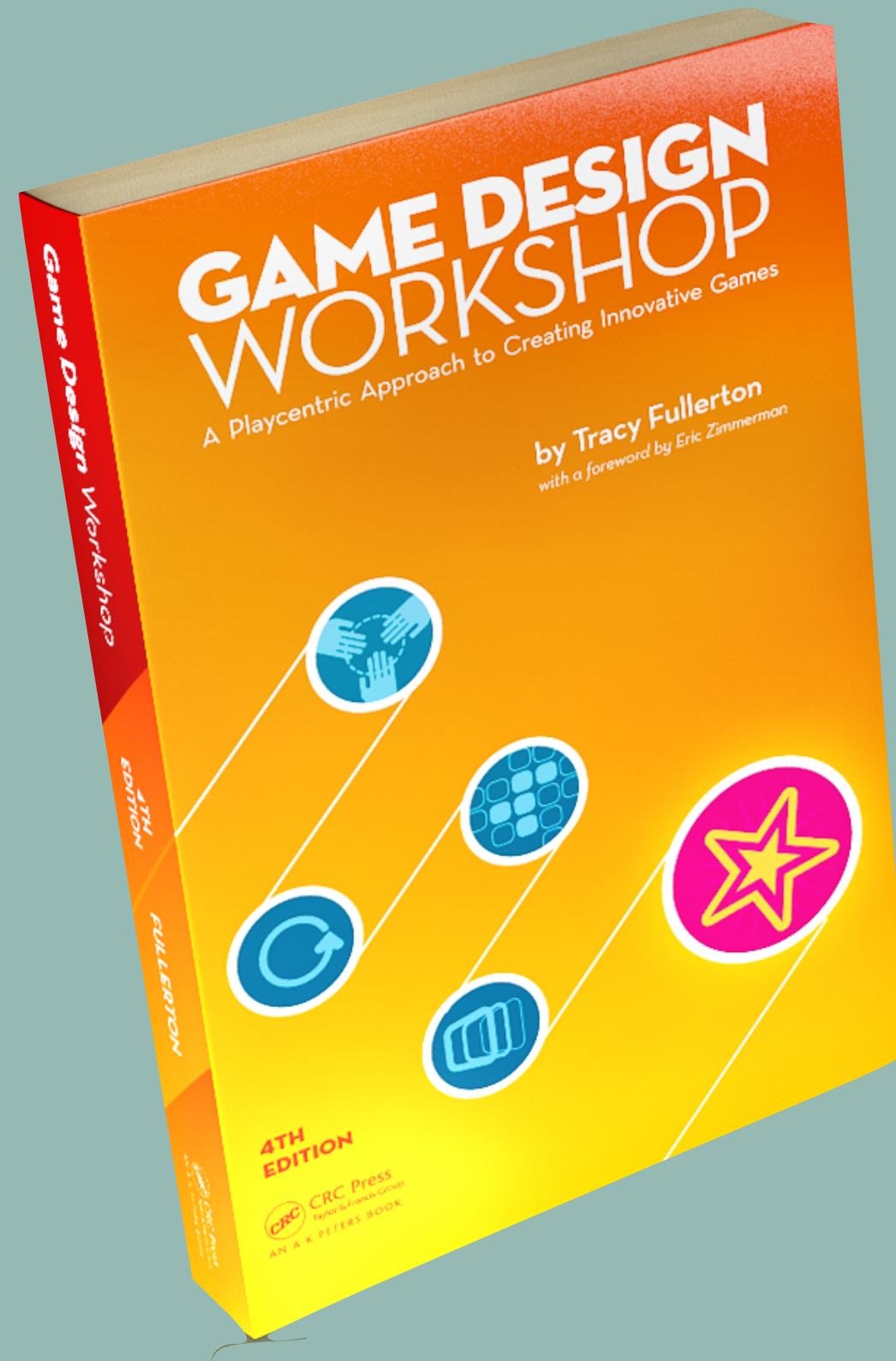


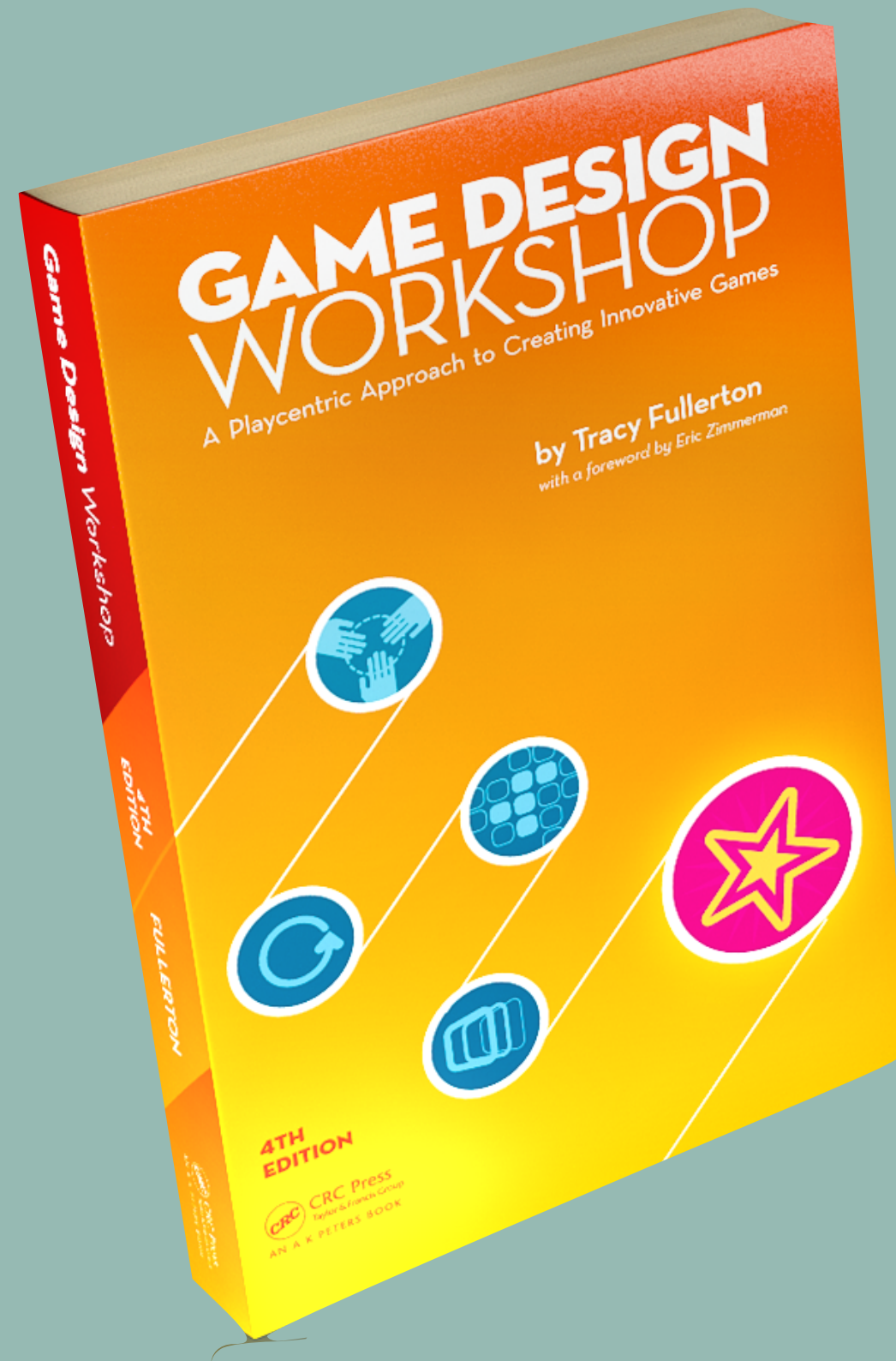
A person's hands are visible in the foreground, working on a craft project. The background shows a desk with various supplies: a stack of yellow sticky notes, a pen, a dice, a small red cube, a stack of books, and a colorful, abstract craft project on a green base. The text "PARTICIPATORY GAME DESIGN" is overlaid in the center.

# PARTICIPATORY GAME DESIGN









A person's hands are visible in the foreground, working on a craft project. The desk is cluttered with various items: a stack of yellow sticky notes, a pen, a small red die, a crumpled piece of paper, a stack of books, and a colorful board game with a green base and various pieces. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the desk and the person's head. The overall scene suggests a creative and collaborative environment.

# PARTICIPATORY GAME DESIGN

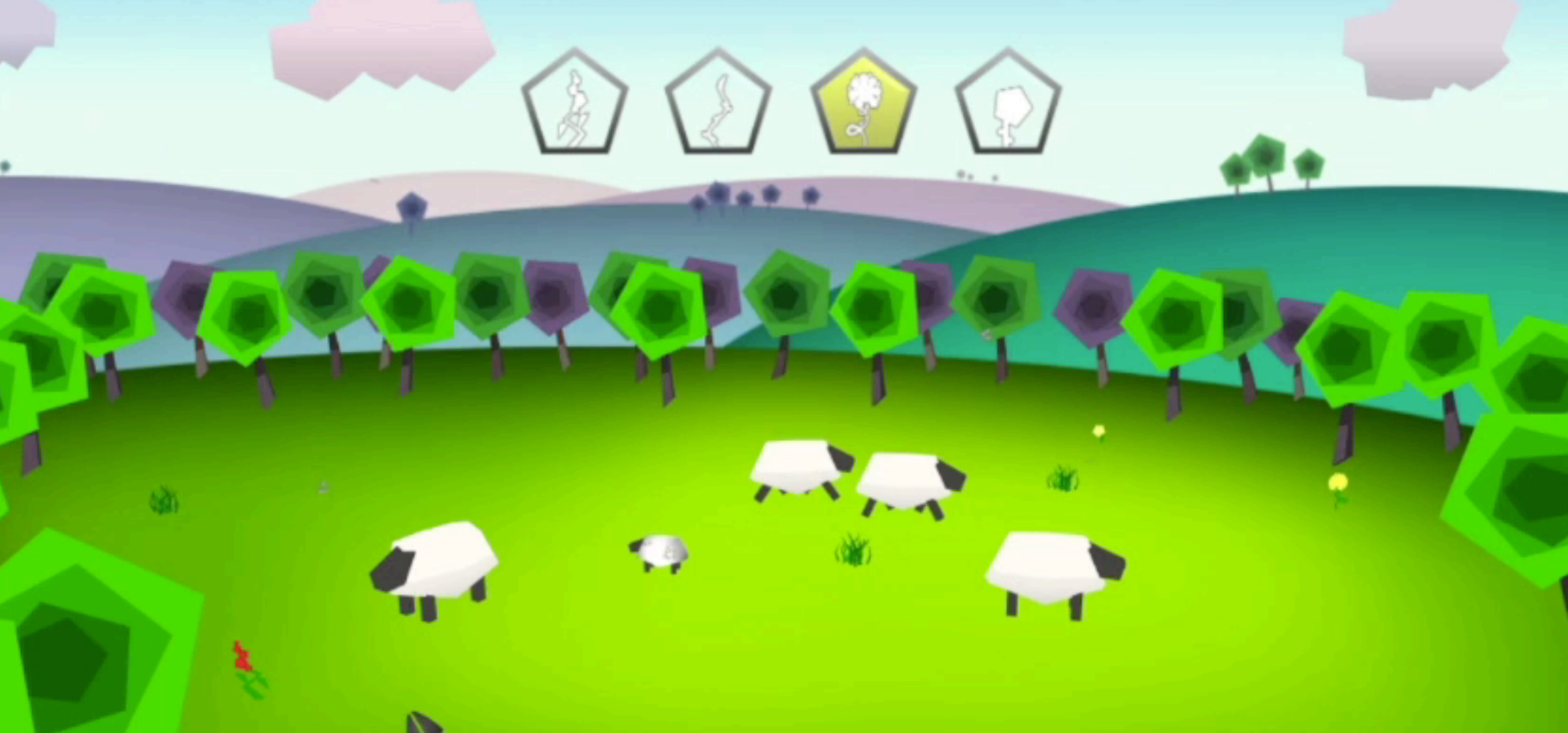












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# TEACHING JOCOI

1. Course Context
2. Preparing Course Materials
3. Guiding Ideation
4. Running User Tests
5. Why Care?

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5. Why Care?

# 1. COURSE CONTEXT



**AALBORG UNIVERSITY**  
DENMARK

**Bereavement self-help  
group Regenbogen (Austria)**

**game development  
project course (Denmark)**



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# MUSE-BASED GAME DESIGN



Rilla Khaled

**[M]use- based game design [is] an experimental empathic design approach foregrounding a dialogic artist – muse relationship between a game designer and player. Following a user research stage focused on learning about the player, the designer forms idiosyncratic design constraints inspired by and relating to the player, which are then used to inspire ideation.**

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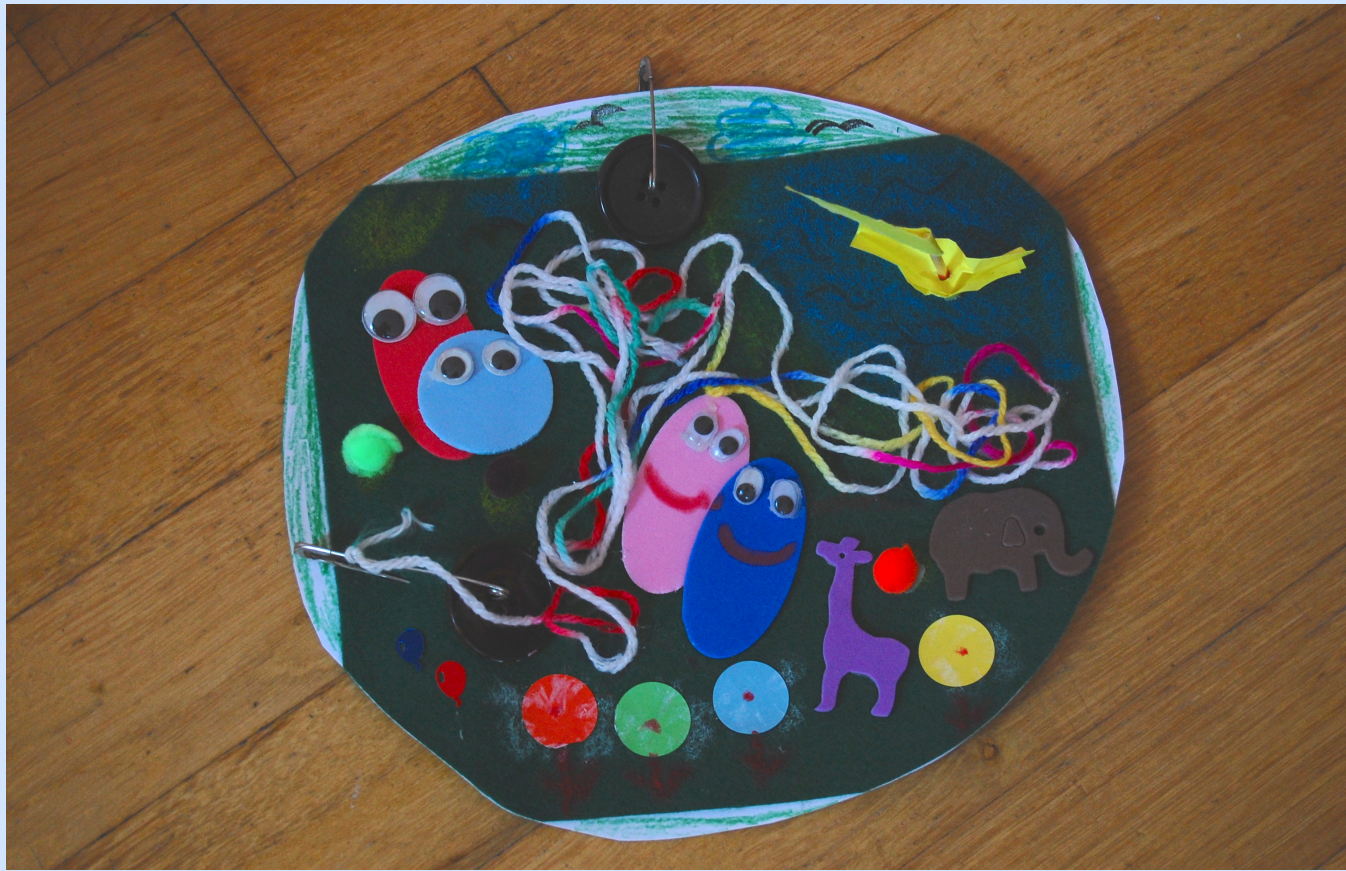
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## 2. PREPARING COURSE MATERIALS

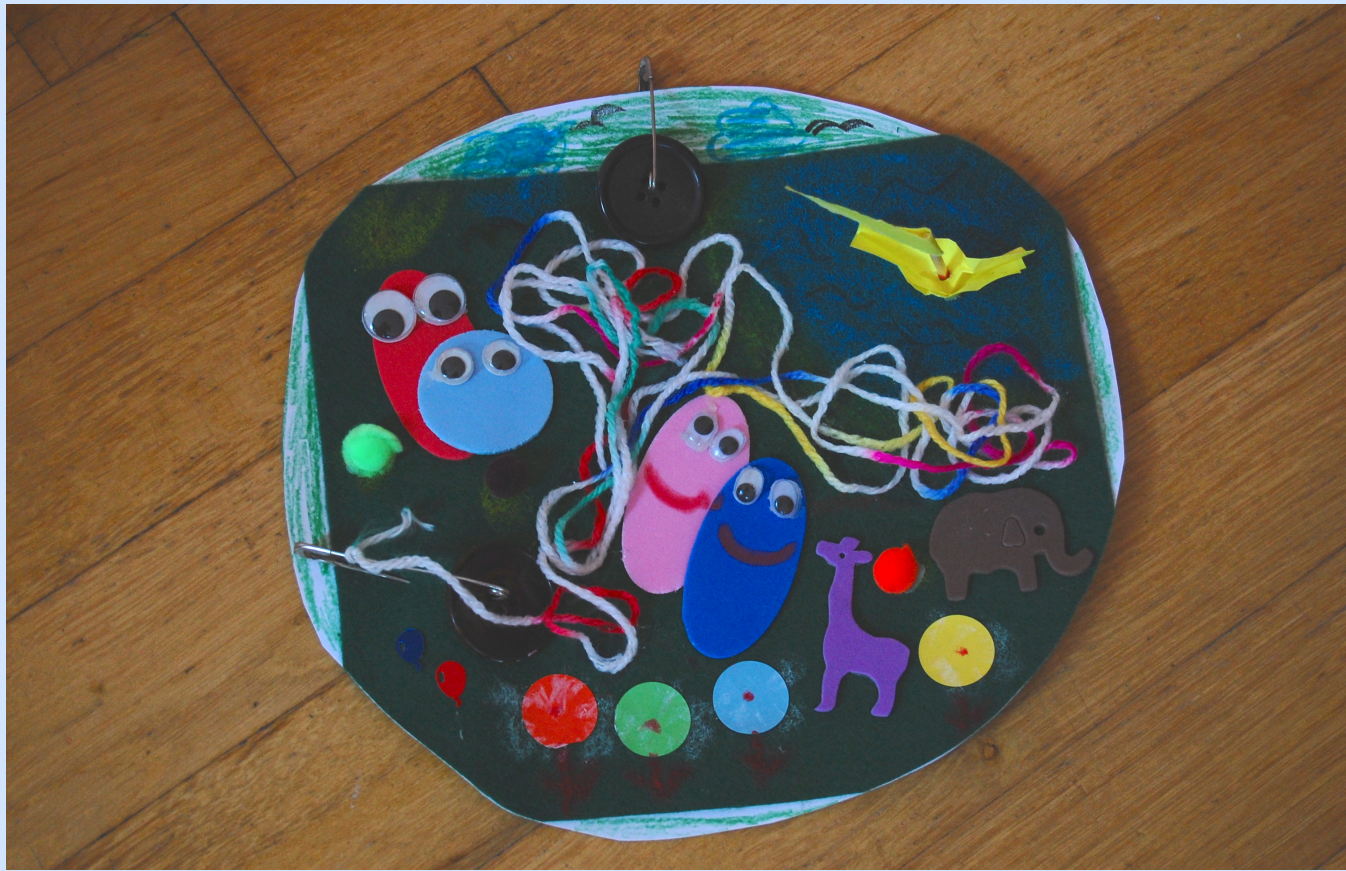




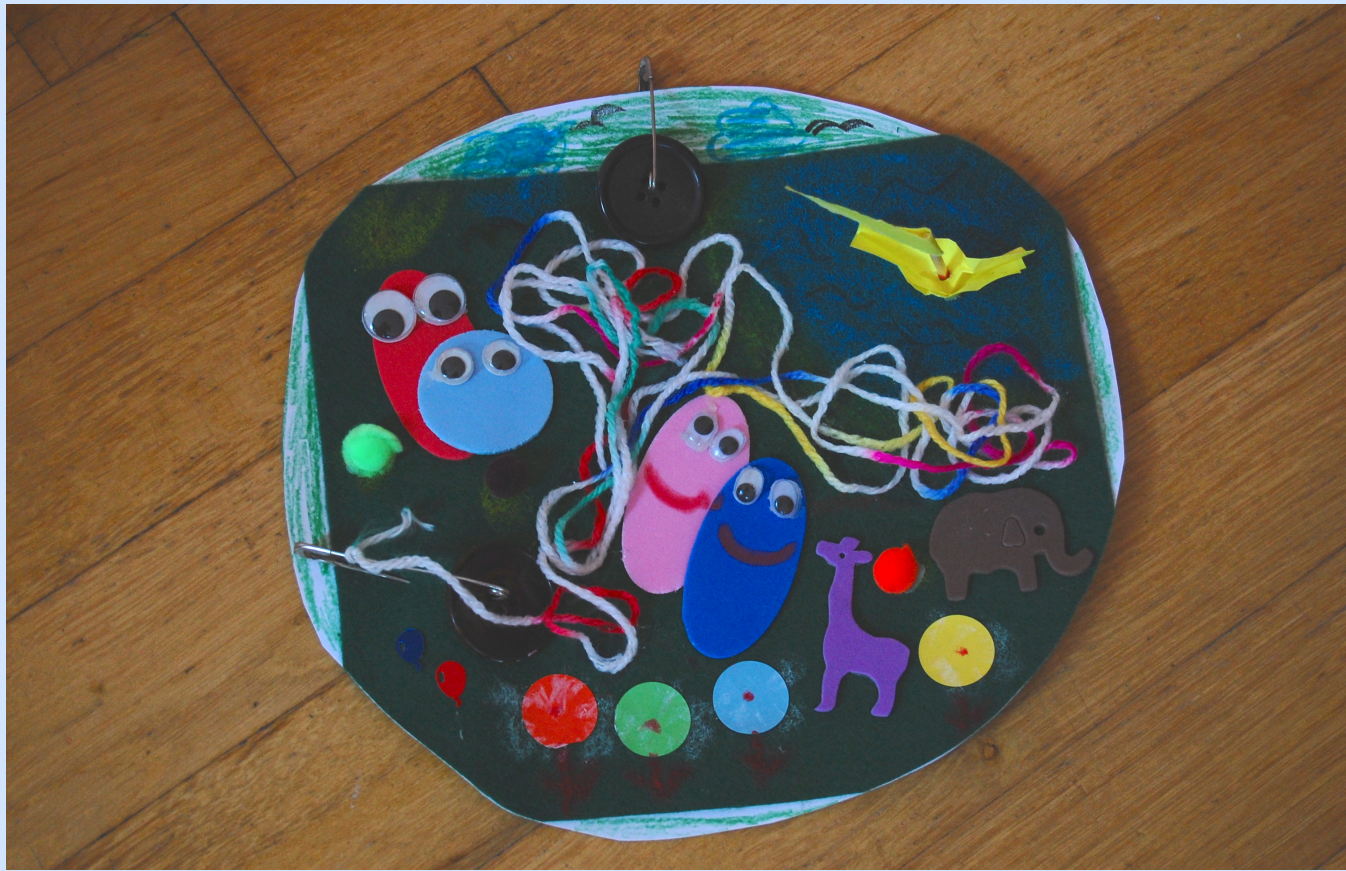


















# 3. GUIDING IDEATION

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Gestalt

"Barbapapa"

wachern

Personen auswählen

Personen auswählen

Gestalt ändern

Personen auswählen

Personen auswählen

Seite  
Hidra

100

100  
Gestalt





Gestalt

"Barbapapa"

von  
Gretchen





Gestalt

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wachern

Personen auswählen

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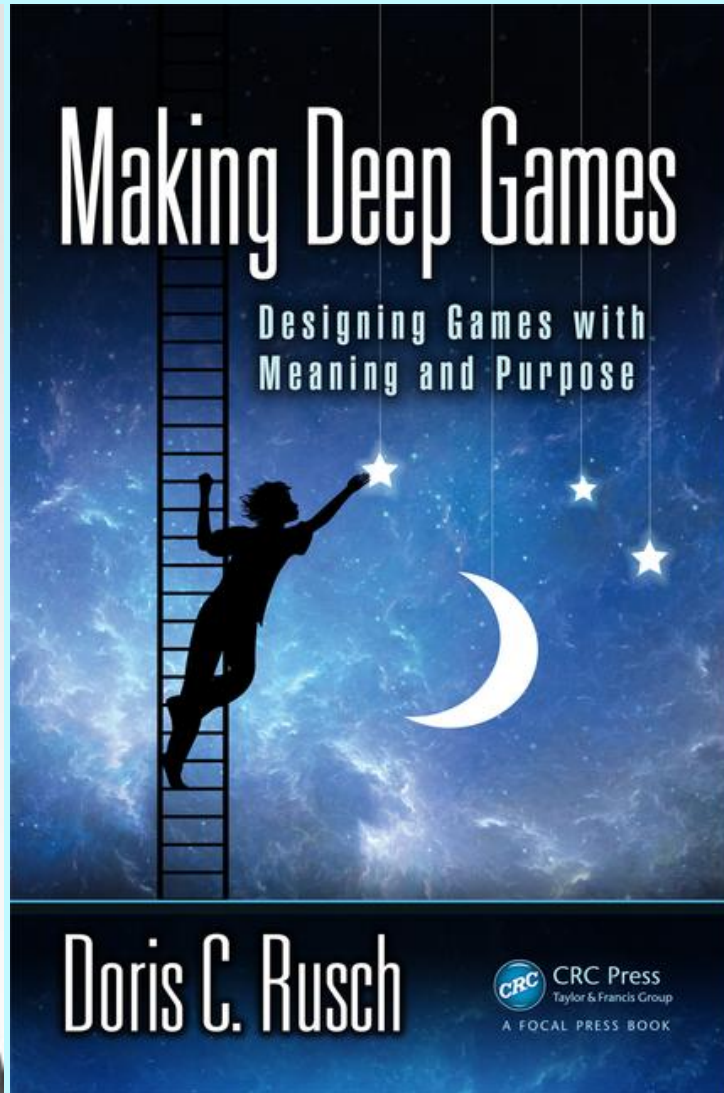
**[R]epresentation is not outside the event, not after the event, but within the event itself; it is constitutive of it.**

**– Stuart Hall, Representation & the Media**

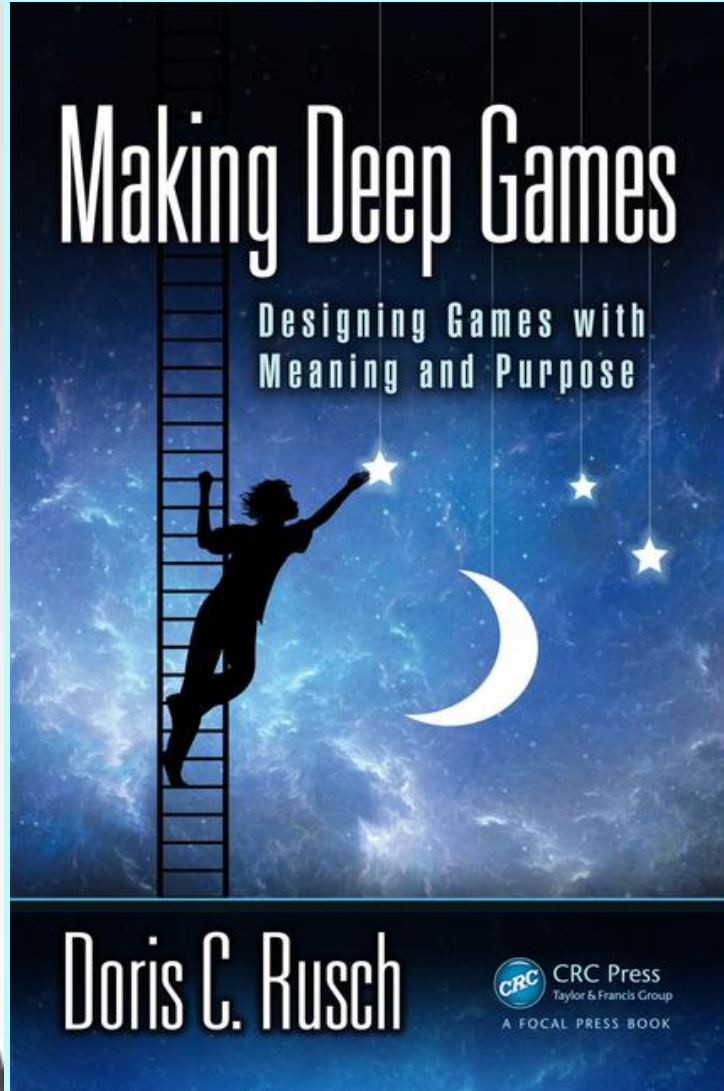


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# SYMBOLIC MODELLING

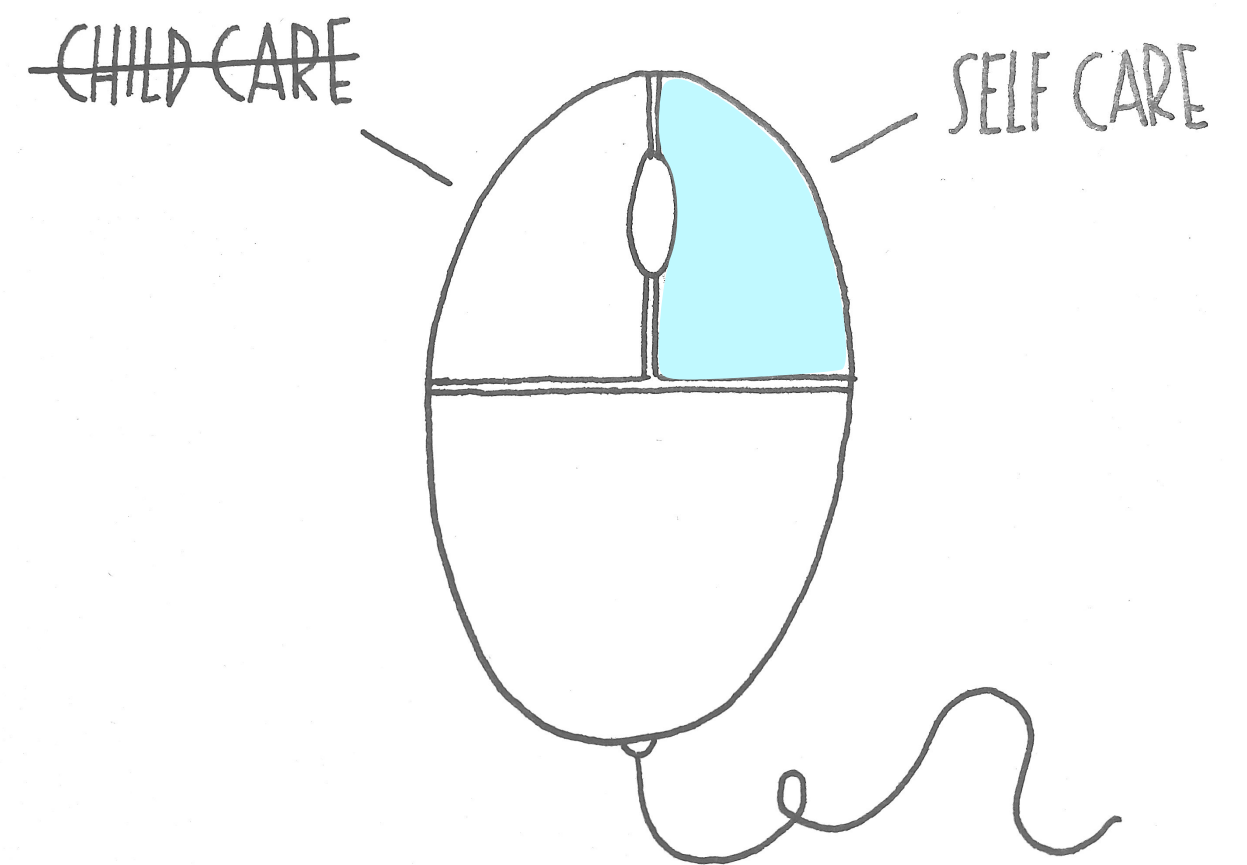
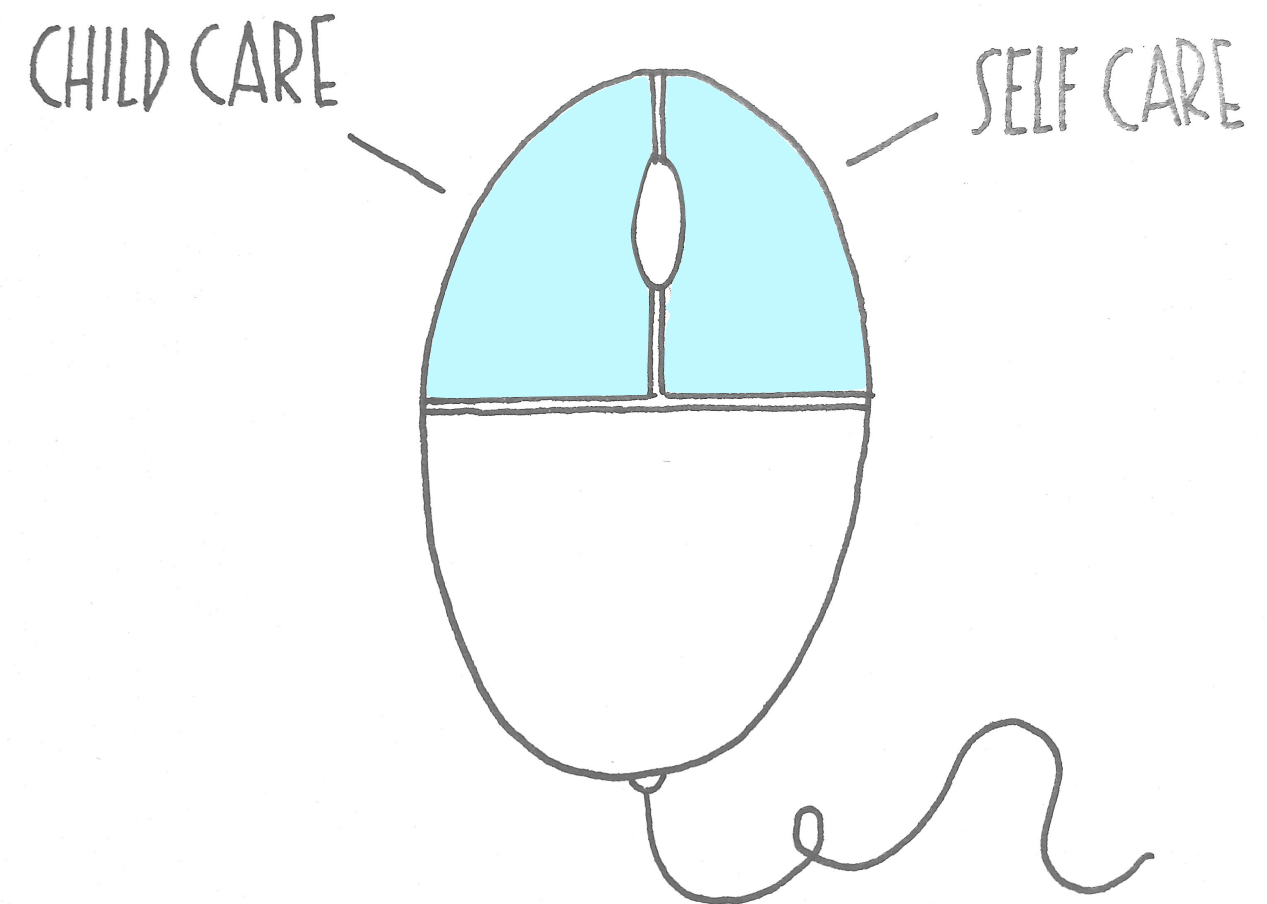


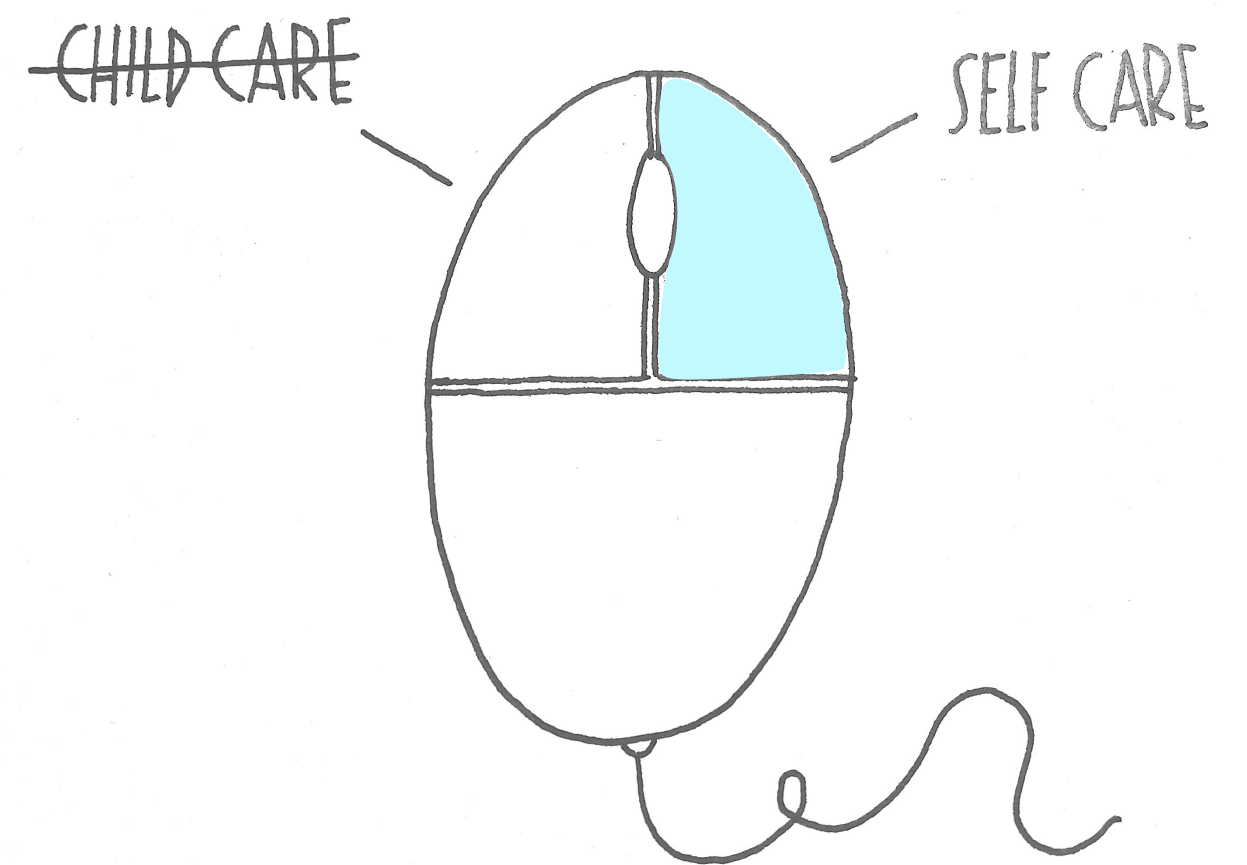
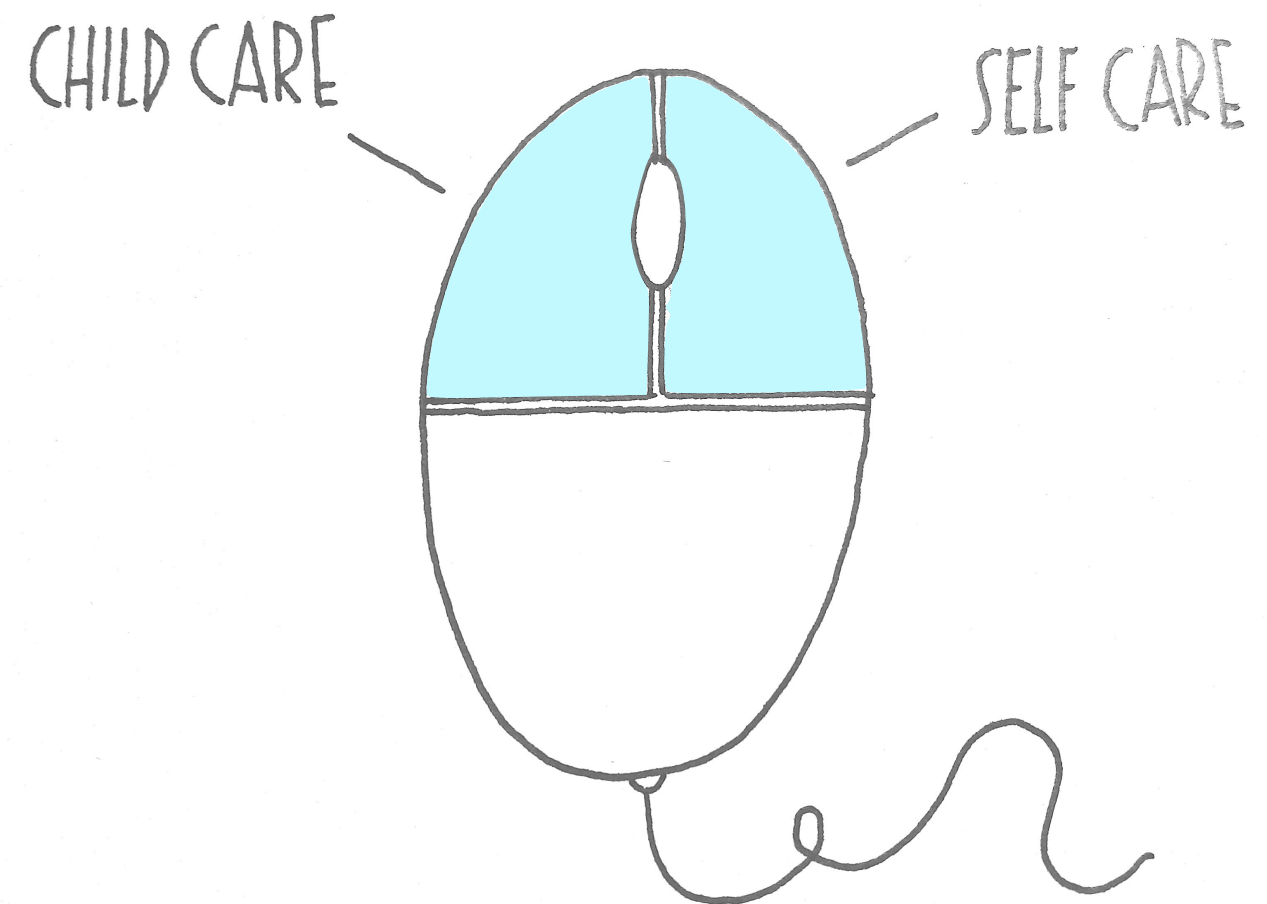
# SYMBOLIC MODELLING

**BEING VULNERABLE IS A  
GAME DEVELOPMENT SKILL**



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# 4. RUNNING USER TESTS



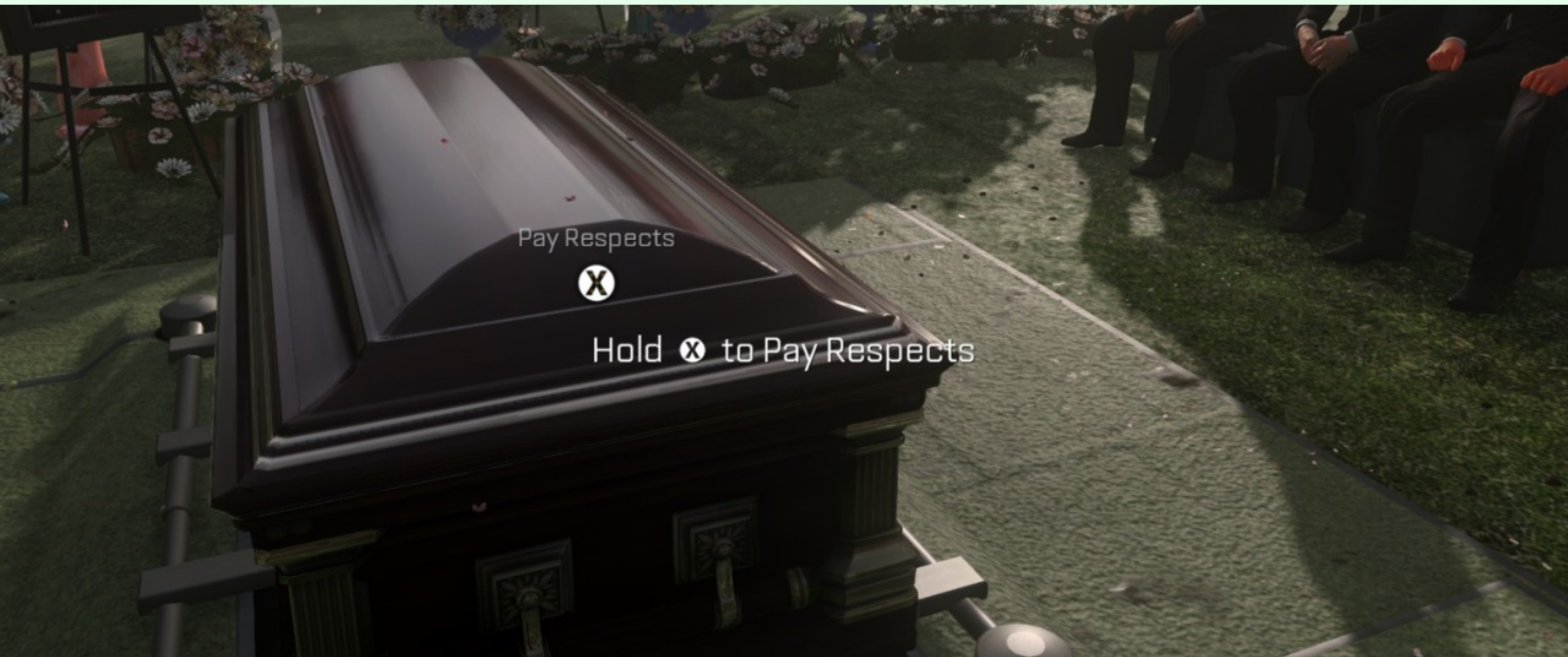
# 4. RUNNING USER TESTS



# MEASURING EMOTION?







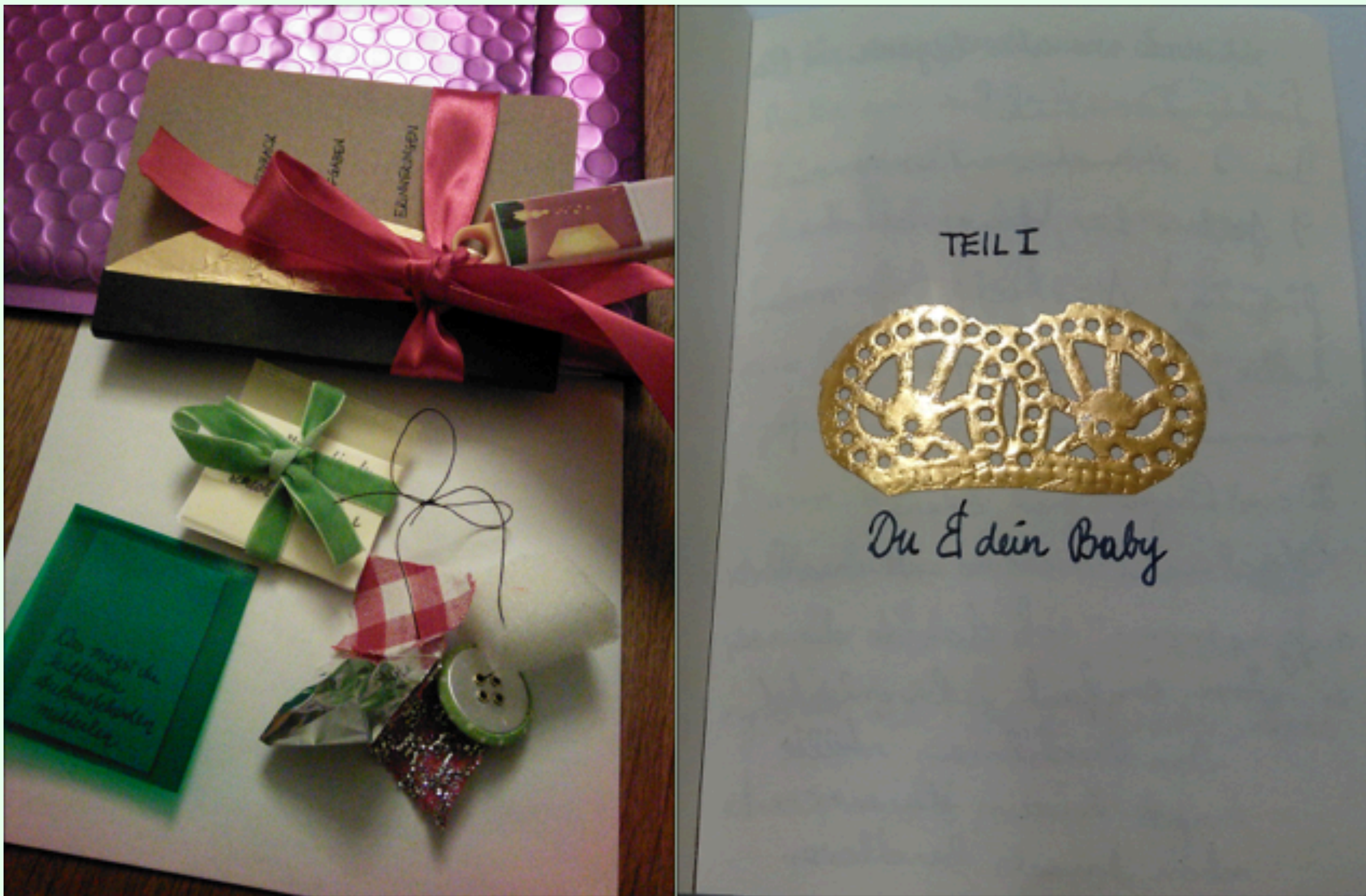


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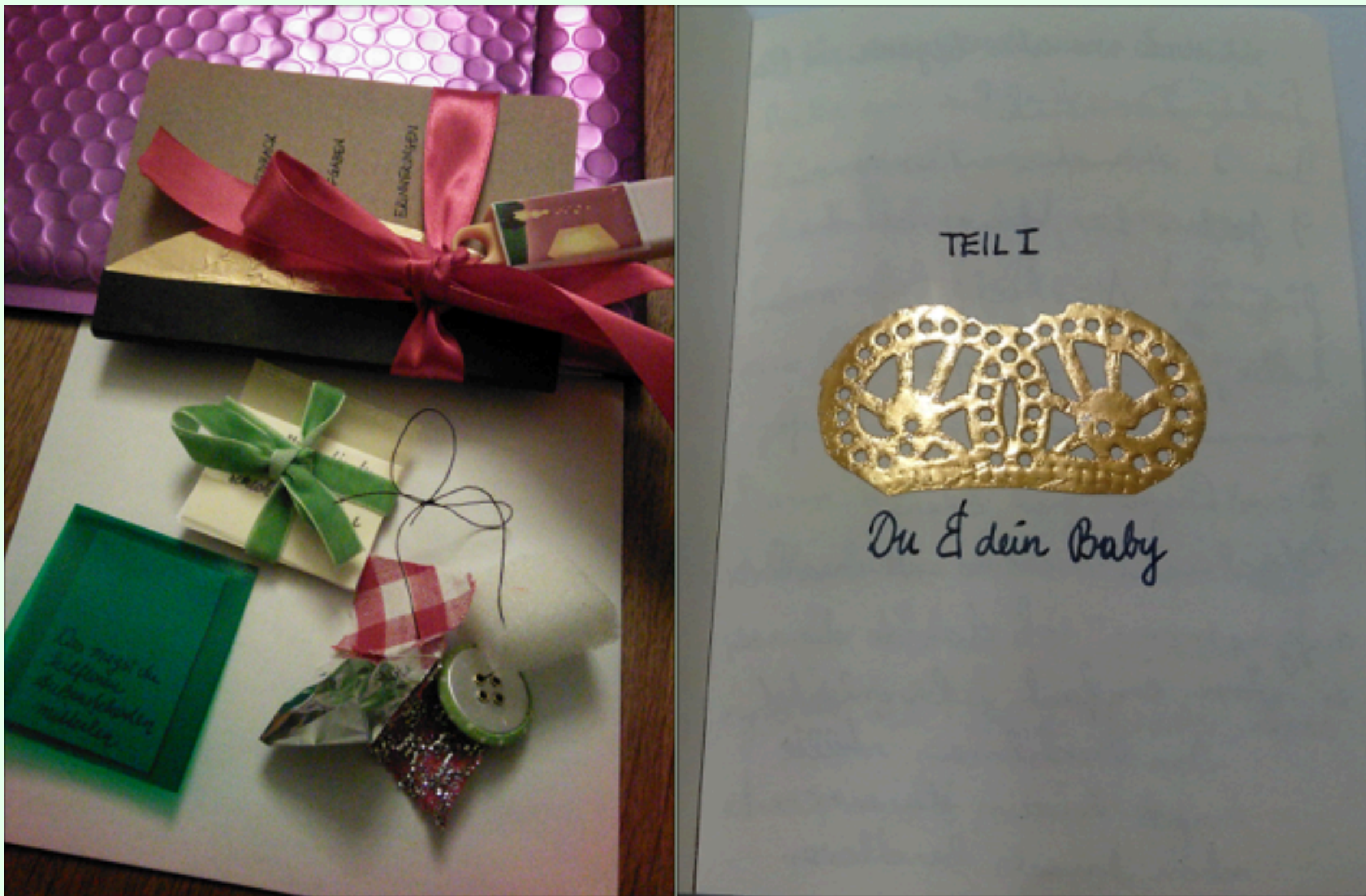


# CULTURAL PROBES

Bill Gaver et al

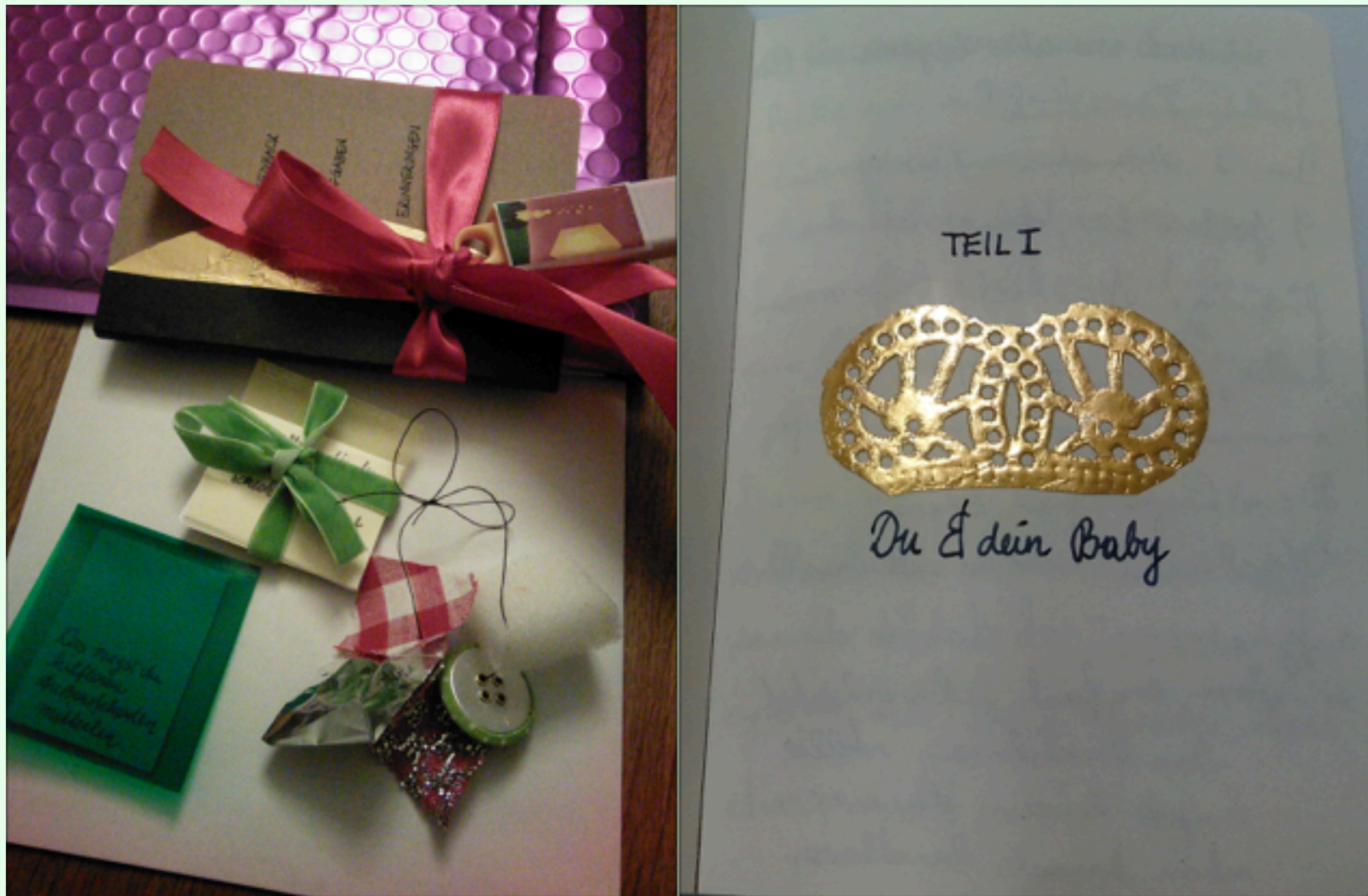
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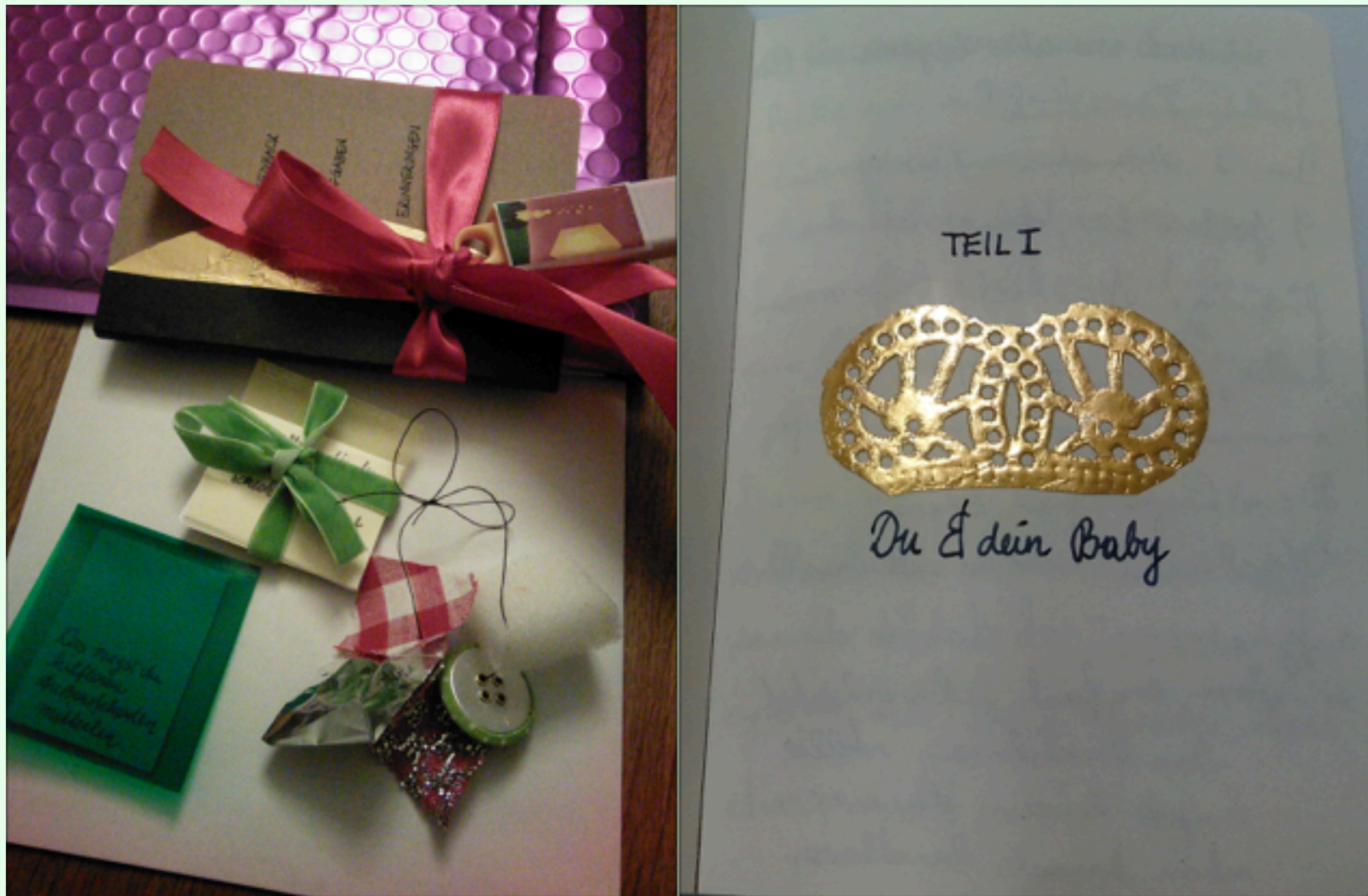
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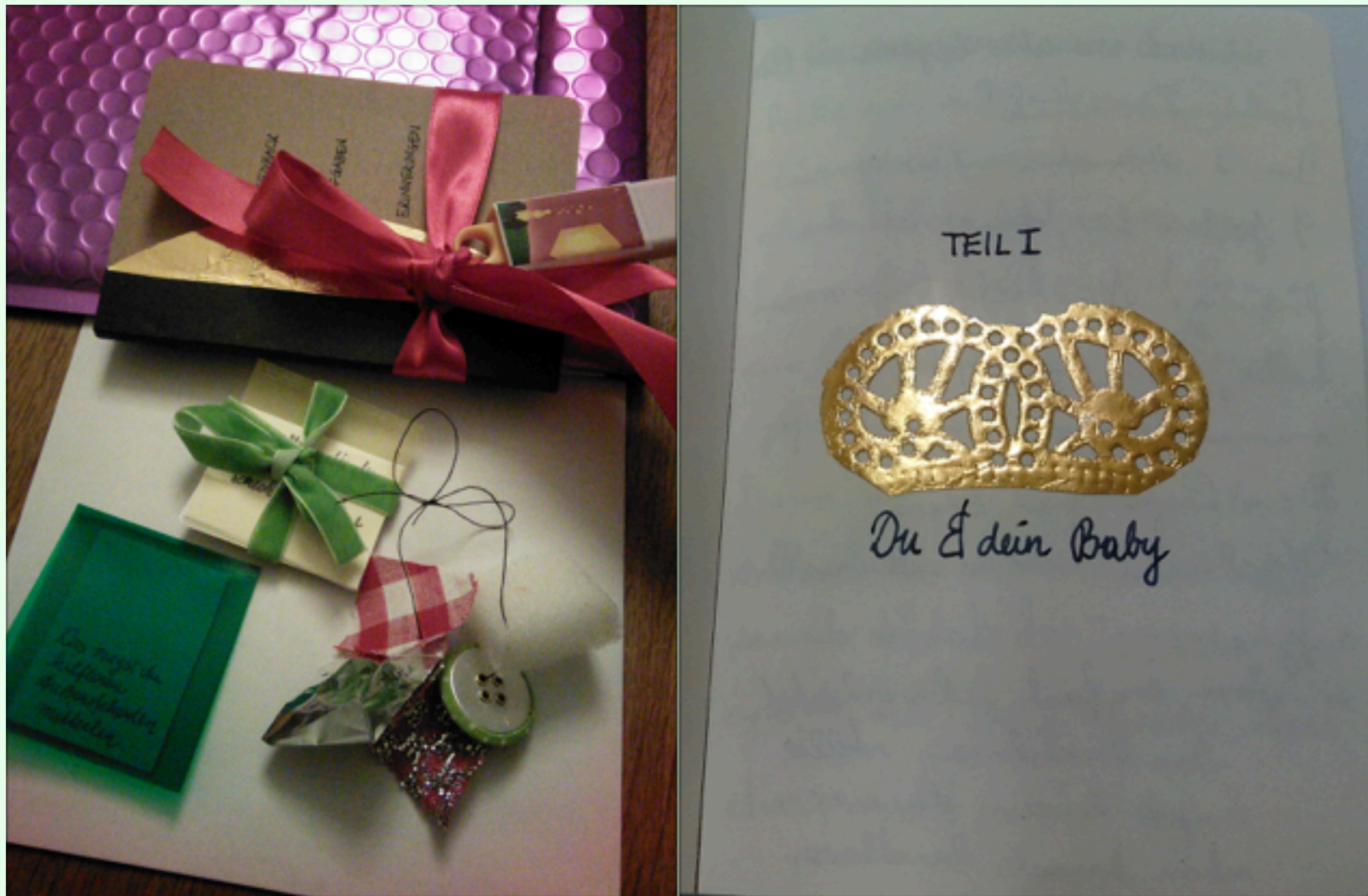
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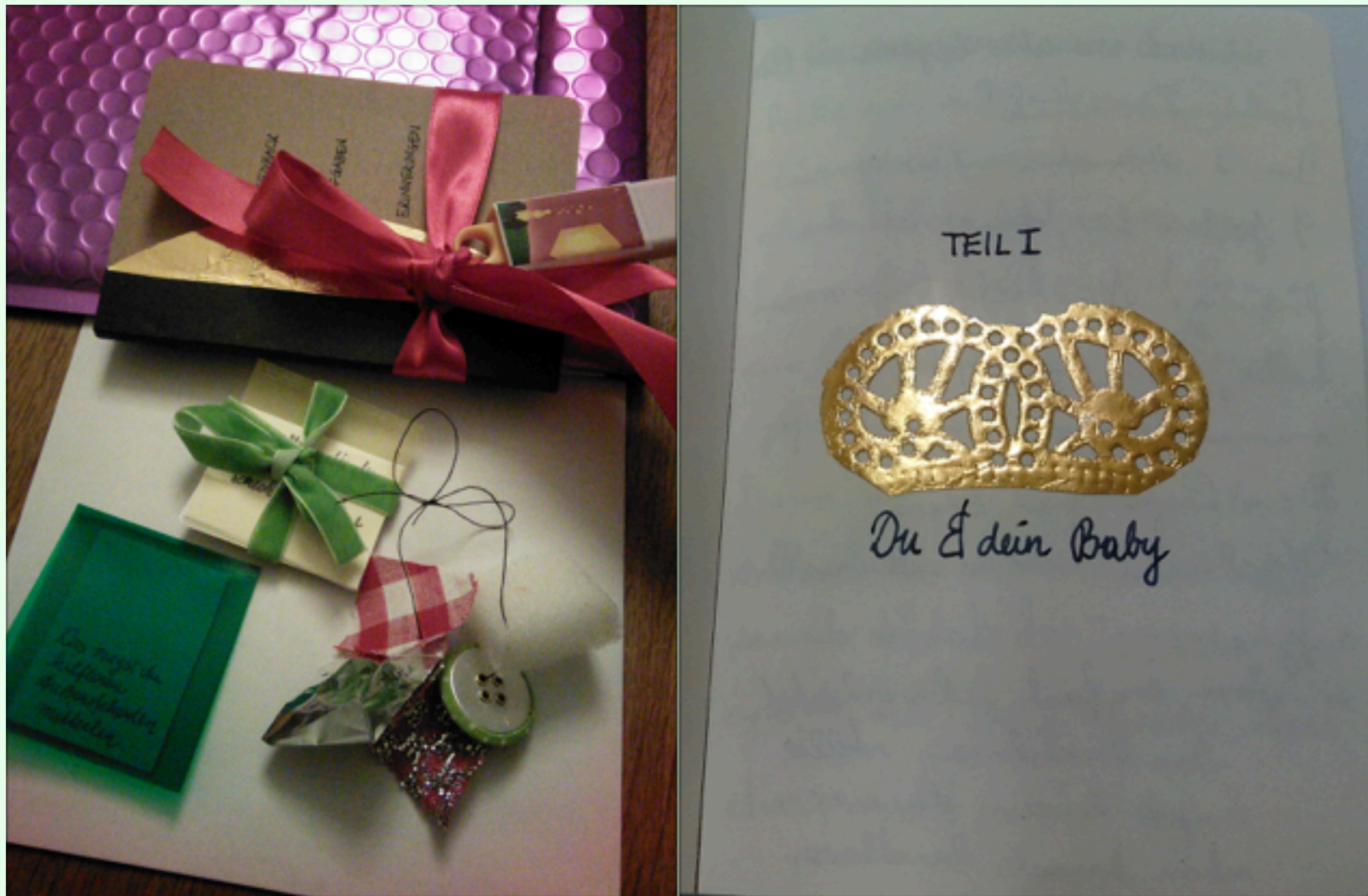
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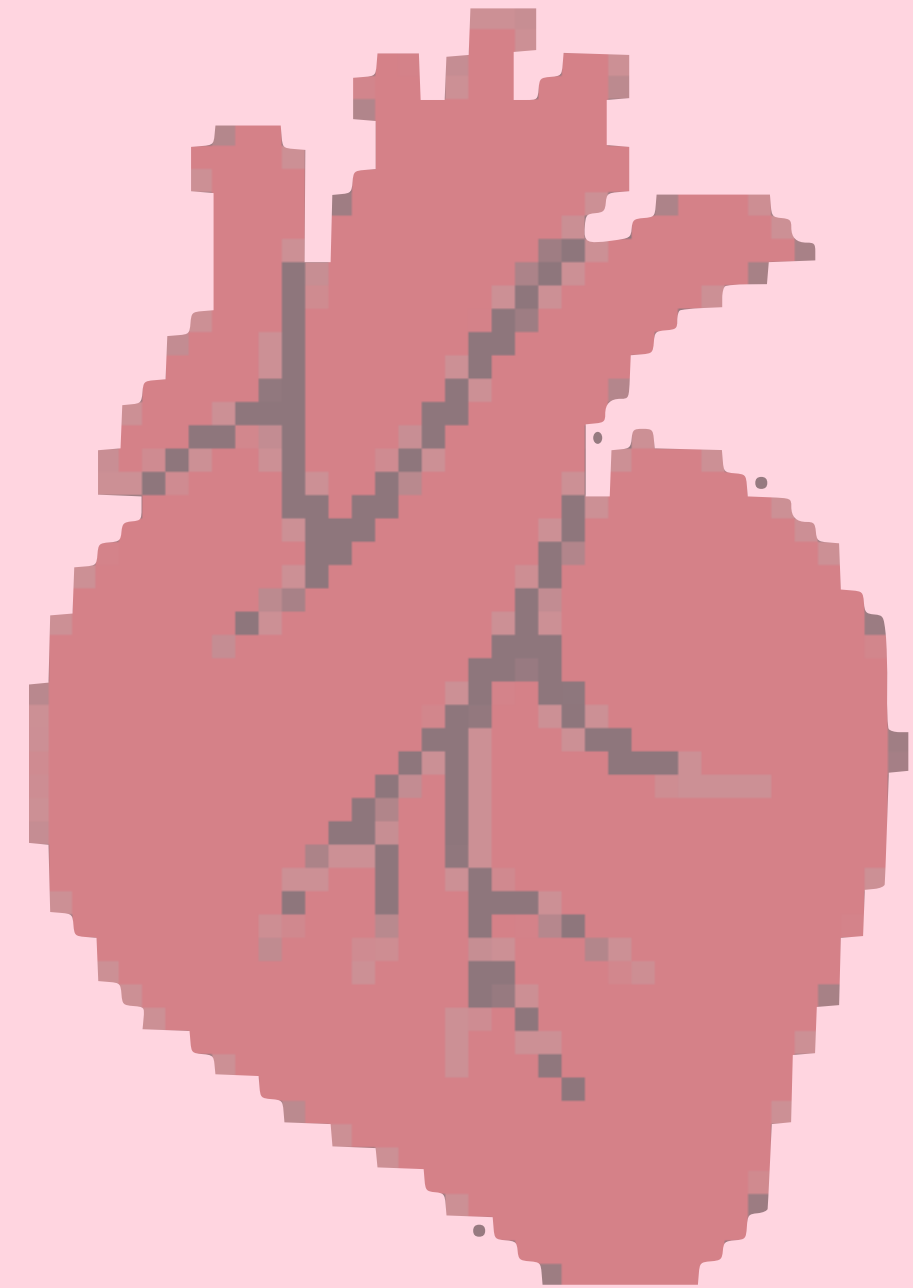
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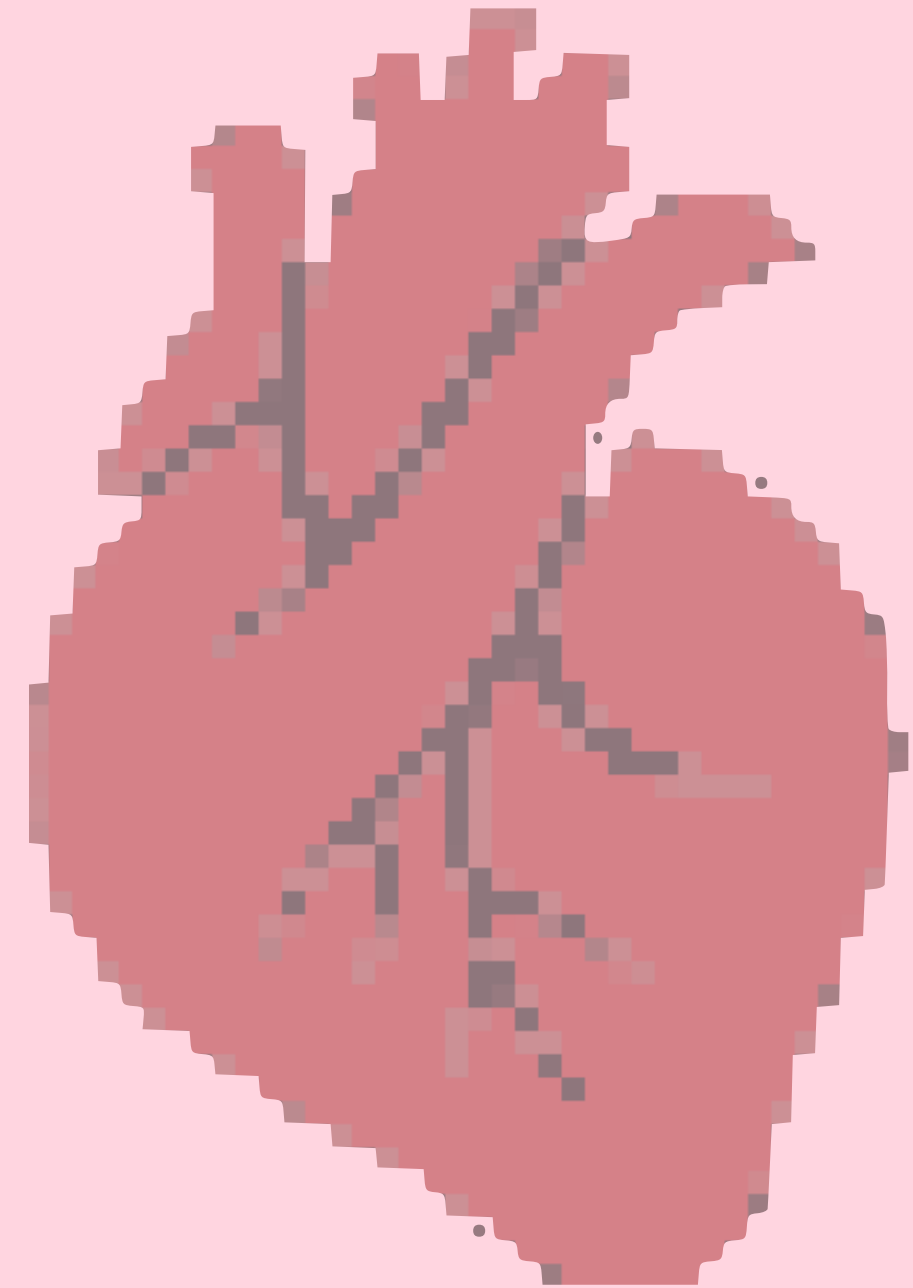
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# WHY CARE?

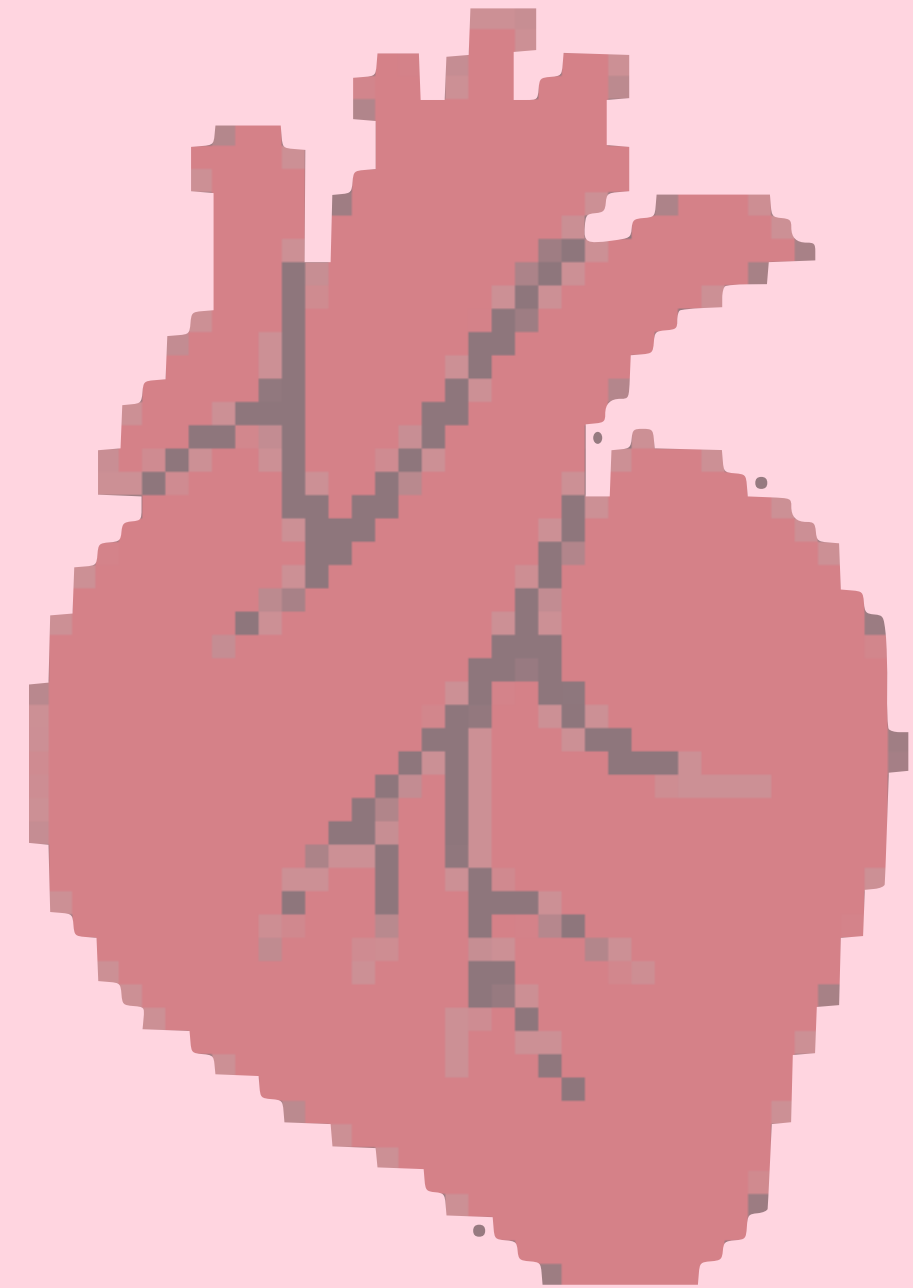




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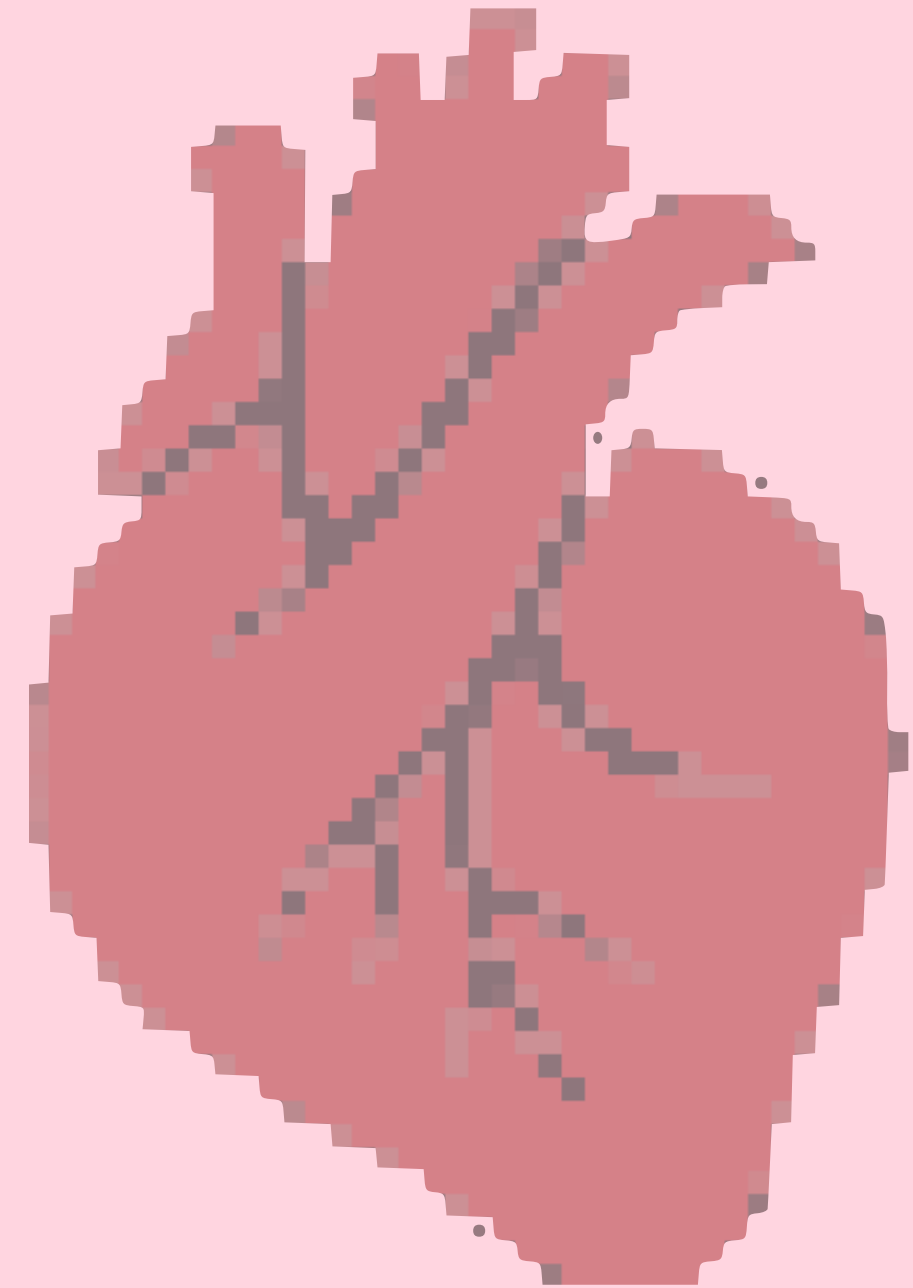


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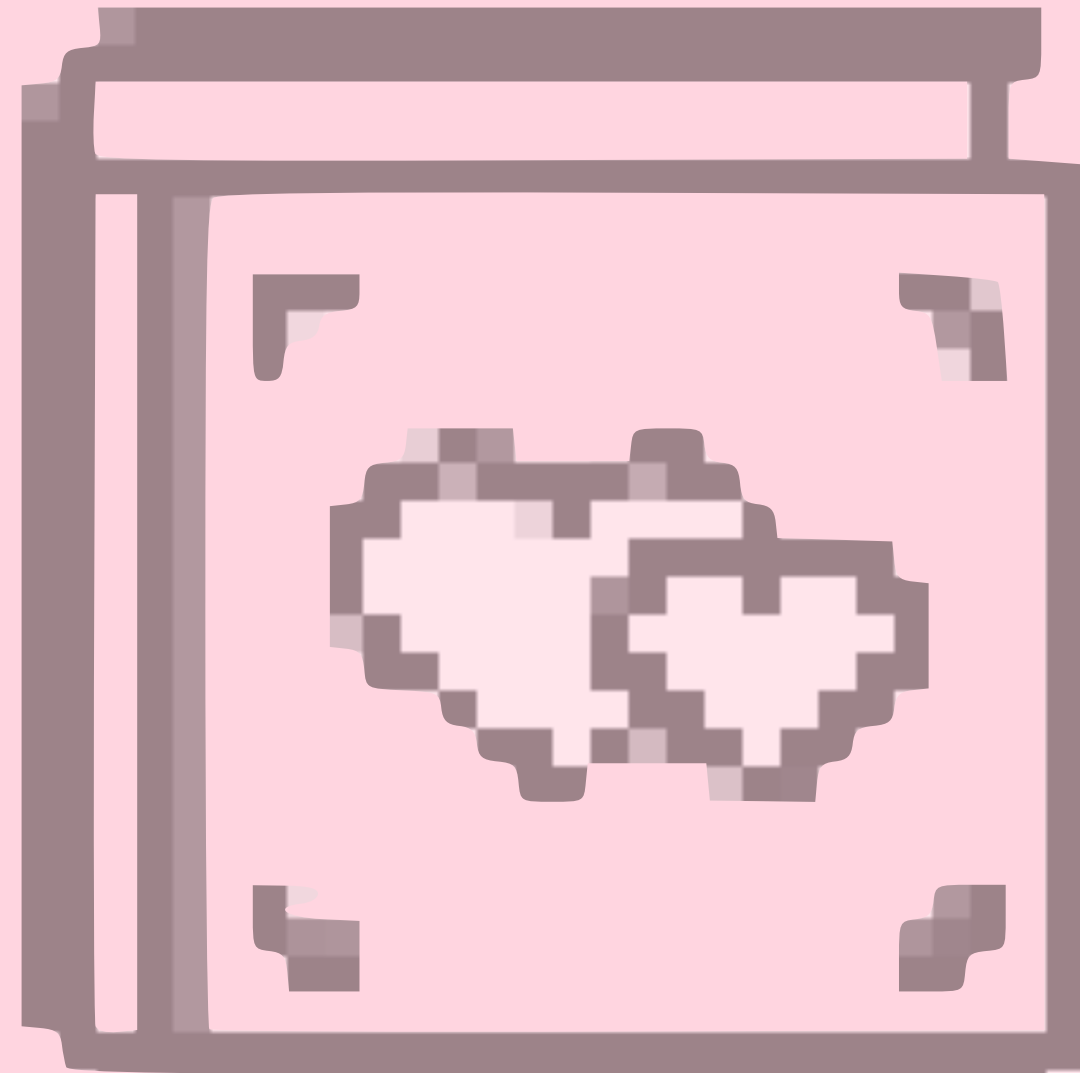




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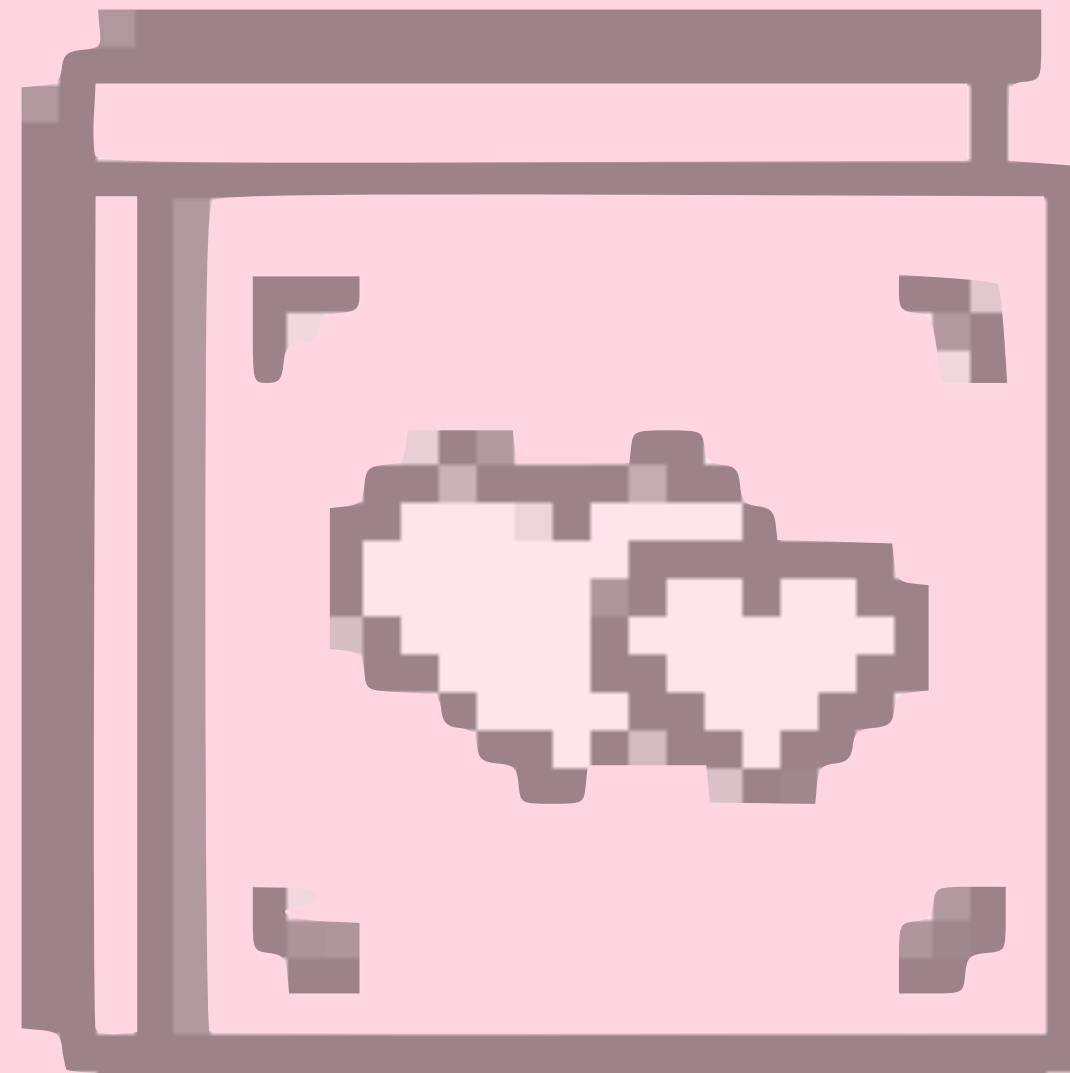


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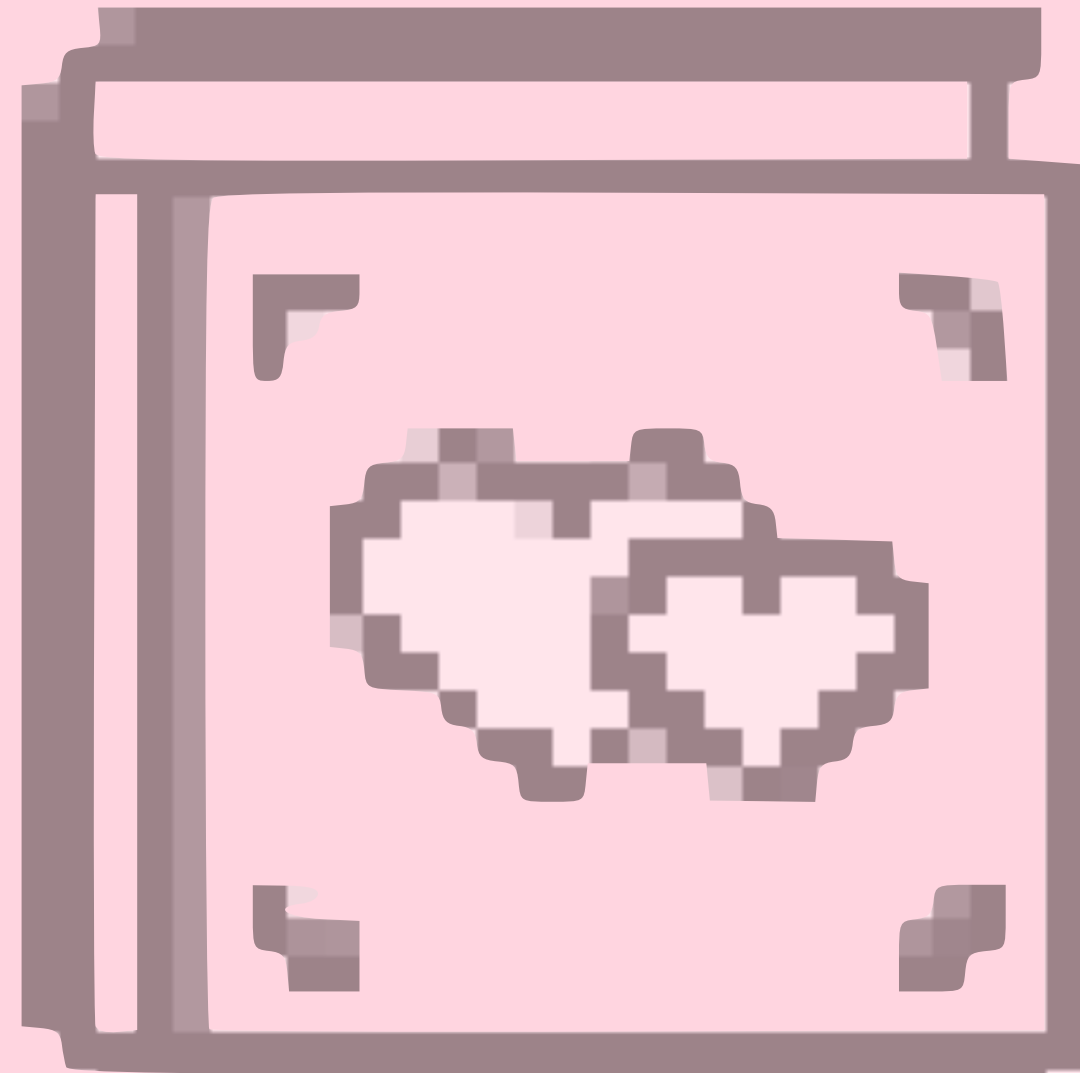




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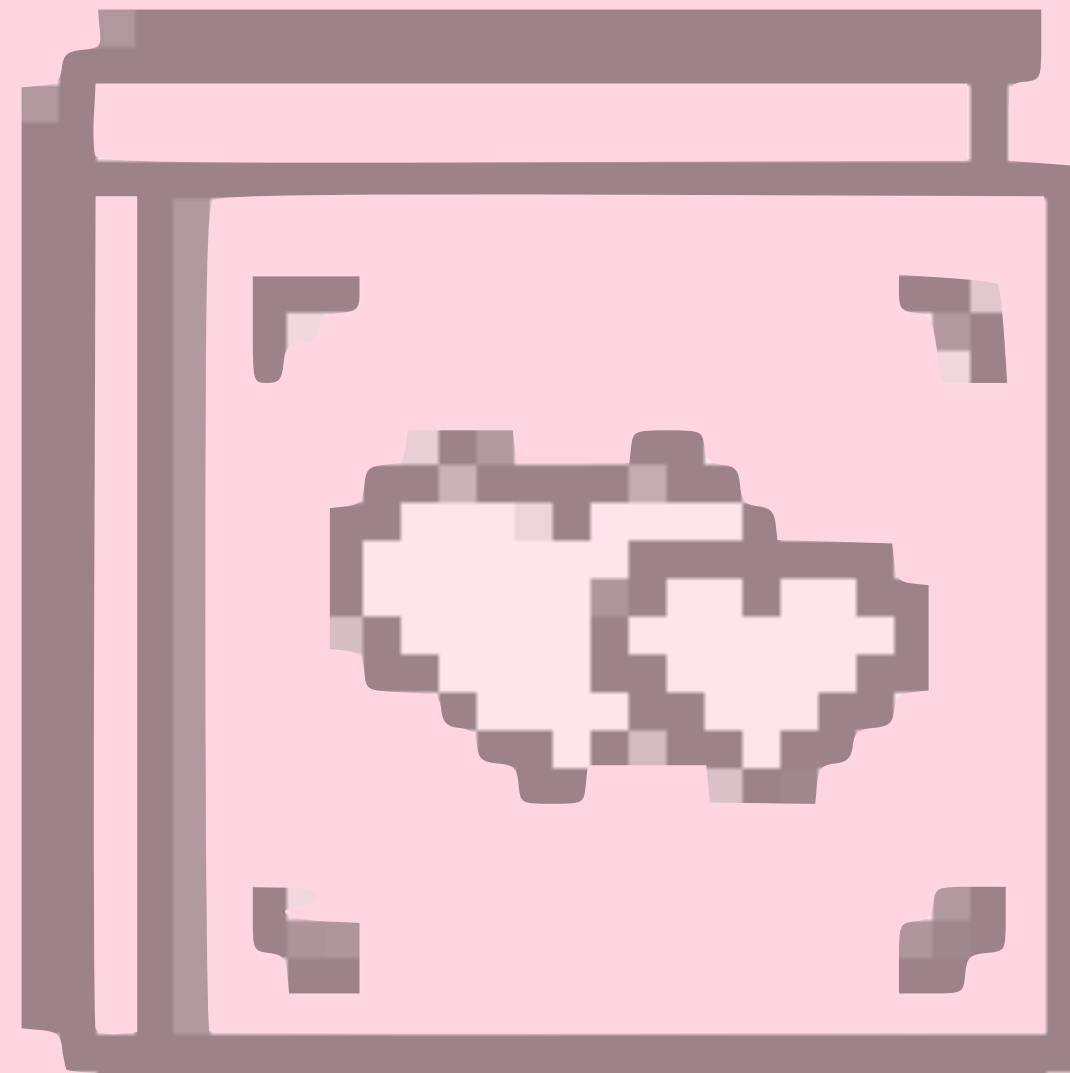


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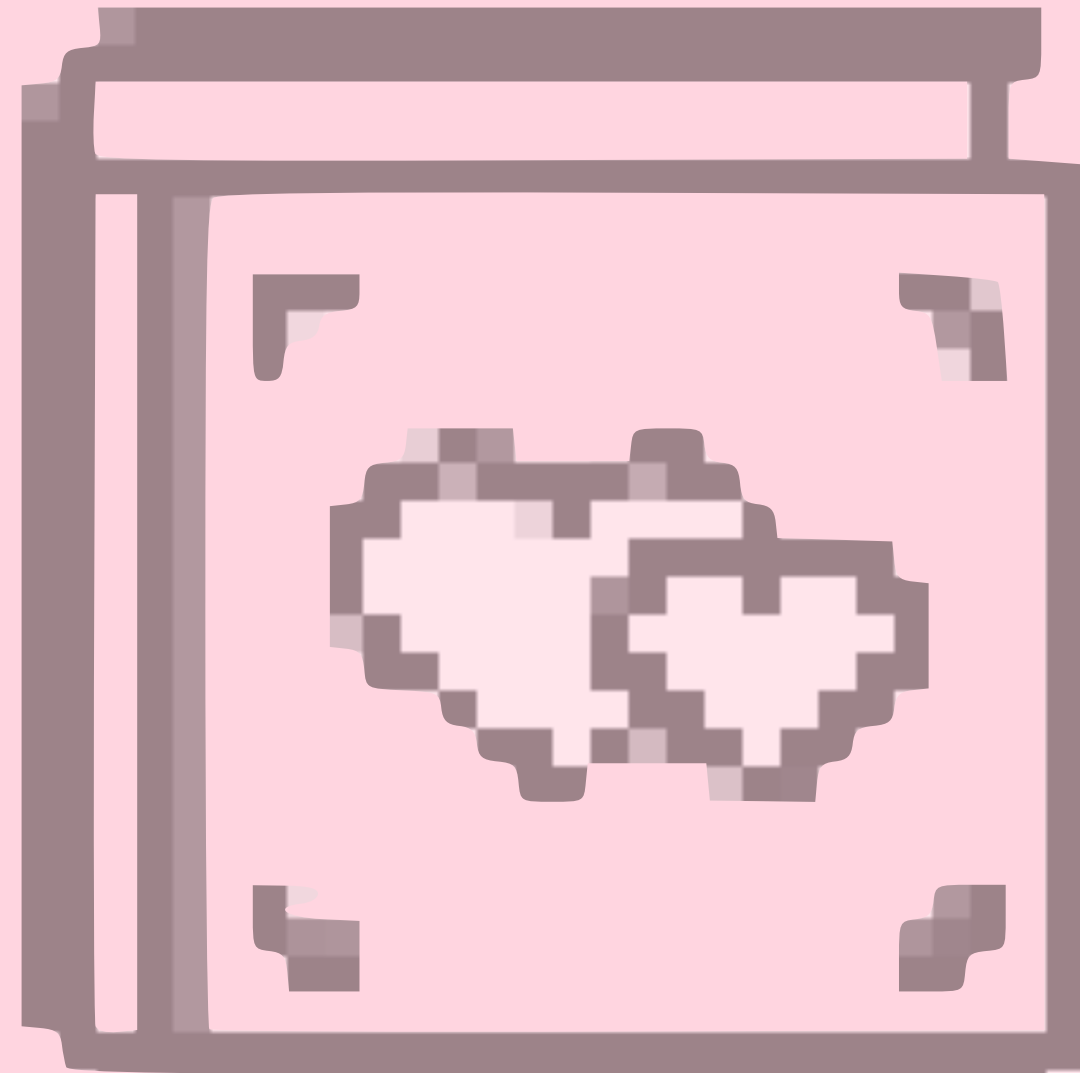




# EPILOG



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**THANK YOU**  
**Ida Toft &**  
**Simon Nielsen**

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## References

- Katie Chironis, Making games for a living means being in constant fear of losing your job, Polygon
- Tracy Fullerton, Game Design Workshop
- Deep Game Lab, DePaul University
- Game Girl Workshop, Denmark
- Rilla Khaled, Muse-Based Game Design
- Stuart Hall, Representation & the Media
- Doris Rusch, Deep Game Design
- Kirsten Boehner et al, How Emotion is Made and Measured
- Bill Gave et al, Cultural Probes

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