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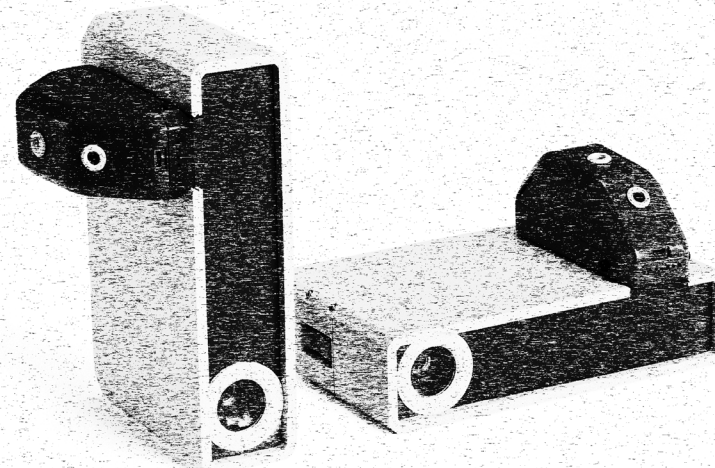
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SPECULATING LIFESPANS OF USE

For the workshop: *The Quality of Speculation: Common
Ground for Speculative Design in Human-Computer
Interaction?*



🌐 How might we design *a slow technology* that is open to occasional, but ongoing interactions aground presence, and non-use over the course of a lifetime? 🌐 How might we design *a slowly expanding personal archive* that supports open-ended, interpretive, and slowly evolving encounters, where traces can reconfigure recall by triggering connections across otherwise unassociated moments, places, and times? 🌐 How might the *qualities of recollection* an artefact affords—its fuzziness, vividness, and the kinds of associations it makes possible—shift as experiences and data accumulate and are revisited across decades? 🌐 How might a lifelong technology support the *intergenerational inheritance, reinterpretation, and re-use of an archive*—such that the same traces can be meaningfully revisited, re-sequenced, and re-narrated across multiple lives and shifting relations to place?

These questions are, in part, shaped by the slow technology philosophy (e.g. [1–3, 5]), which asks designers to consider longer-term engagements between humans and technologies. This philosophy de-prioritizes the functionality of an artefact to “focus on the way in which technology expresses itself in use” [1:30]. There is a growing amount of literature that explores how we might do this with research products [7] that can be lived with over time (e.g. [6, 9, 10]); however, we have also been interested in lifespan and intergenerational timescales. Motivated by this concern, we set out to produce a speculative film that expands the possible temporal research outcomes of a research product called Capra.

We created three Capra systems (see [4, 8]), and deployed them in a first-person inquiry [x]. Capra is a two-part hardware and software system. The Capra Collector is a hiking camera and data-capture device, that collects images from three perspectives every five seconds, and tags it with the current time, altitude, and dominant color. The Capra Explorer is an archival projector, that supports the exploration of the archive through various intersecting filters. We lived with the Capra system over multiple years and reflected on our experiences with it, but we are inherently limited by practical and academic constraints for significantly longer-term study.

1. Speculation

We used speculation to imagine and reflect on how the Capra might be used across a lifespan — how do you design for a lifetime of data, or further, to an intergenerational archive? We wrote the script and completed pre-production, for a 10-minute short speculative film, but were unable to produce the film due to pandemic restrictions between 2020–2022. We did a test shoot under pandemic restrictions with limited access to equipment, crew and actors. While the longer-form film itself does not exist, the script and pre-production does (which we submit along with this short position paper).

The film is a non-linear narrative that spans 70 years, and three generations of a family, using and not

using the Capra. The film was designed as a series of vignettes that move between times and spaces guided by how the Capra triggers memory. The vignettes are organized in a non-linear fashion, unfolding in the same cyclical way that the Capra engages with memory

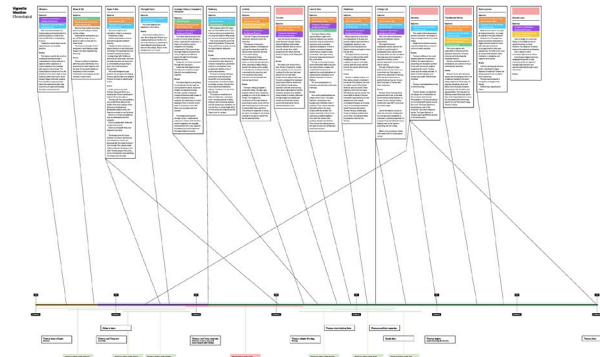


Figure 2. non-linear chronology–presentation of film timeline.

1.1 Speculative Artefact

- Scene overview (non-linear chronology–presentation timeline)
- Script for 10-minute short film
- Test shoot

1.2 Film requirements

To understand if the film was successful, we need to consider it in the context of what we were trying to achieve with it. In developing the film, we established the following requirements:

Trajectory of use over time. Show Capra’s lifelong pattern of engagement as cyclical rather than continuous: periods of use, background presence, and non-use that recur across decades, with gradual yet ongoing return.



Figure 3. Stills from test shoot.

Thingness / Ensembles / Background Presence.

Depict Capra as part of everyday material life: settling among other possessions, taking on a background presence through inactivity, and persisting through “deep storage” before rediscovery and re-engagement.

Precise & fuzzy memory and ways of remembering.

Communicate recollection as non-chronological and associative: sequences that are partly recognizable yet unplaceable, moments of euphoria, shifts from vivid episodic recall to increasing fuzziness, and images that sometimes produce few or no connections.

Archive impurity — human and technological flaws.

Make legible that the archive is imperfect: gaps in memory and data, uncertainty about when/where traces were captured, corruption and loss, and the presence of inappropriate, controversial, or jarring images.

Growth and change over time with increase in data.

Show the archive’s slow accumulation and transformation as a form of possession: sporadic yet continual expansion, and transfer as a ritualized interaction that subtly marks growth over time.

2. Reflection

The speculative process supported us in developing a deeper understanding of how the artefact operates as a slow technology, and we found that the process of developing the story and vignettes influenced how we used the device and understood the way it mediated our nature relations and memory. One such example of this is how some of the wayfinding techniques that we used to navigate the archive in our own practice, began as scene explorations, another is in how we used it as an ambient object.

When we developed a short film that explains the Capra systems, our deep thinking about how to decenter the device in the speculative film, support us in making an explanatory film that was able to

embody the research goal of unobtrusiveness [4].

We were interested in how speculative design can support inquiry into scenarios and temporalities that cannot be explored in a real, situated way—such as a 70-year trajectory of use and non-use across multiple generations. In this way, the speculative film functioned as a method for extending our inquiry beyond the practical limits of deployment. It made legible how the insights, ideas, and concepts surfaced through such speculative work can inform our design practice in the here and now, shaping what we prioritized, how we understood and experienced Capra’s mediations of memory and human–nature relations, and how we articulated the system’s qualities and implications.

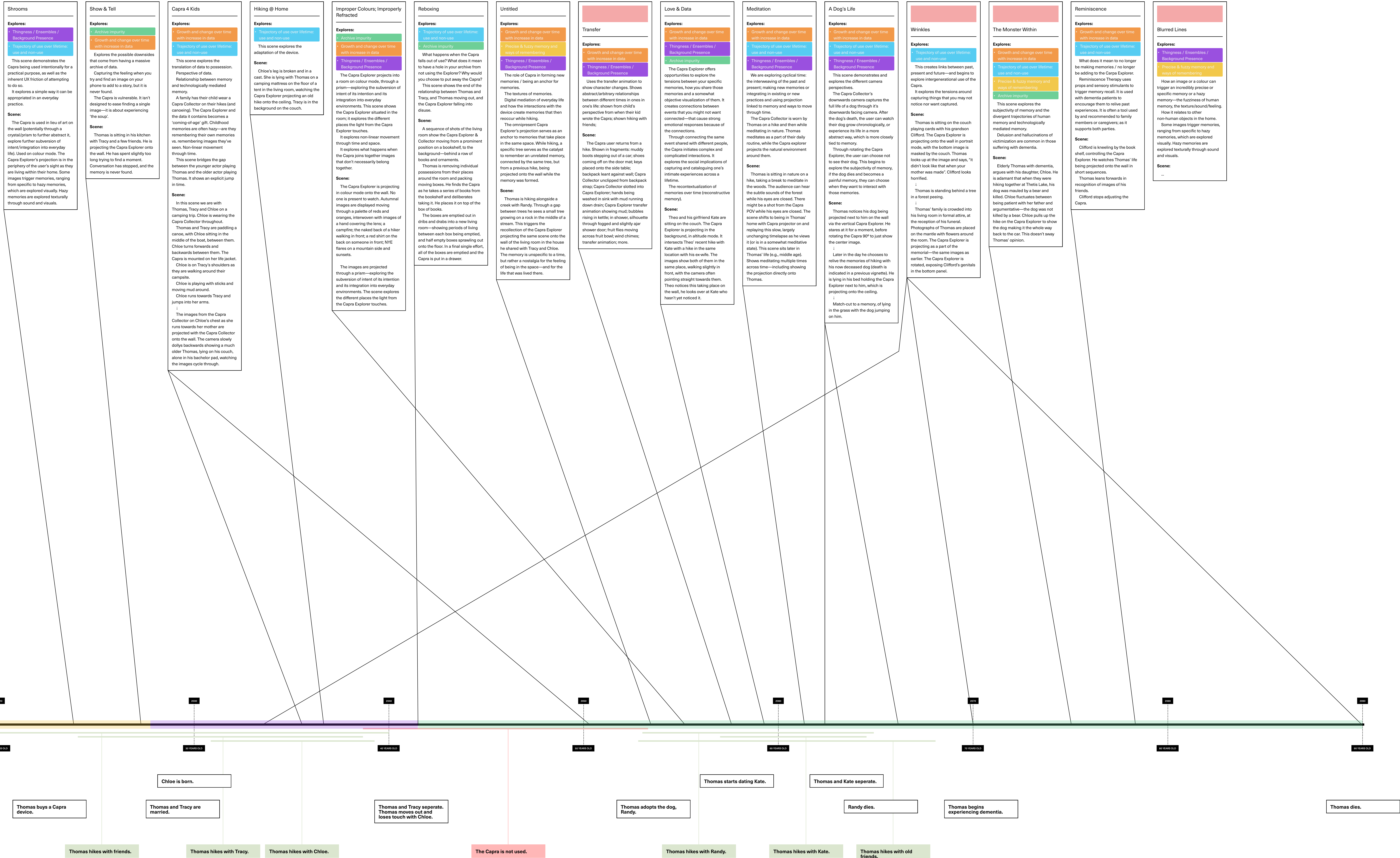


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Appendix 1

Scene Overview + Script



Shrooms

Explores:

- Thinness / Ensembles / Background Presence
- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use

This scene demonstrates the Capra being used intentionally for a practical purpose, as well as the inherent UX friction of attempting to do so.

It explores a simple way it can be appropriated in an everyday practice.

Scene:

The Capra is used in lieu of art on the wall (potentially through a crystal/prism to further abstract it, explore further subversion of intent/integration into everyday life). Used on colour mode. The Capra Explorer's projection is in the periphery of the user's sight as they are living within their home. Some images trigger memories, ranging from specific to hazy memories, which are explored texturally through sound and visuals.

Show & Tell

Explores:

- Archive inquiry
- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use

Explores the possible downsides that come from having a massive archive of data.

Capturing the feeling when you try and find an image on your phone to add to a story, but it is never found.

The Capra is vulnerable. It isn't designed to ease finding a single image—it is about experiencing "the soup".

Scene:

Thomas is sitting in his kitchen with Tracy and a few friends. He is projecting the Capra Explorer onto the wall. He has spent slightly too long trying to find a moment. Conversation has stopped, and the memory is never found.

Capra 4 Kids

Explores:

- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use

This scene explores the translation of data to possession. Perspective of data.

Relationship between memory and technologically mediated memory.

A family has their child wear a Capra Collector on their hikes (and canoeing). The Capra Explorer and the data it contains becomes a 'coming-of-age' gift. Childhood memories are often hazy—are they remembering their own memories vs. remembering images that've seen. Non-linear movement through time.

This scene bridges the gap between the younger actor playing Thomas and the older actor playing Thomas. It shows an explicit jump in time.

Scene:

In this scene we are with Thomas, Tracy and Chloe on a camping trip. Chloe is wearing the Capra Collector throughout.

Thomas and Tracy are paddling a canoe, with Chloe sitting in the middle of the boat, between them. Chloe turns forwards and backwards between them. The Capra is mounted on her life jacket.

Chloe is on Tracy's shoulders as they are walking around their campsite.

Chloe is playing with sticks and moving mud around.

Chloe runs towards Tracy and jumps into her arms.

The images from the Capra Collector on Chloe's chest as she runs towards her mother are projected with the Capra Collector onto the wall. The camera slowly dollies backwards showing a much older Thomas, lying on his couch, alone in his bachelor pad, watching the images cycle through.

Hiking @ Home

Explores:

- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use

This scene explores the adaptation of the device.

Scene:

Chloe's leg is broken and in a cast. She is lying with Thomas on a camping mattress on the floor of a tent in the living room, watching the Capra Explorer projecting an old hike onto the ceiling. Tracy is in the background on the couch.

Improper Colours; Improperly Reflected

Explores:

- Archive inquiry
- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Thinness / Ensembles / Background Presence

The Capra Explorer projects into a room on colour mode, through a prism—exploring the subversion of intent of its invention and its integration into everyday environments. This scene shows the Capra Explorer situated in the room; it explores the different places the light from the Capra Explorer touches.

It explores non-linear movement through time and space.

It explores what happens when the Capra joins together images that don't necessarily belong together.

Scene:

The Capra Explorer is projecting in colour mode onto the wall. No one is present to watch. Autumnal images are displayed moving through a palette of reds and oranges, interwoven with images of a hand covering the lens; a campfire; the naked back of a hiker walking in front; a red shirt on the back on someone in front; NYE faces on a mountain side and sunsets.

The images are projected through a prism—exploring the subversion of intent of its intention and its integration into everyday environments. The scene explores the different places the light from the Capra Explorer touches.

Reboxing

Explores:

- Archive inquiry

What happens when the Capra falls out of use? What does it mean to have a hole in your archive from not using the Explorer? Why would you choose to put away the Capra?

This scene shows the end of the relationship between Thomas and Tracy, and Thomas moving out, and the Capra Explorer falling into disuse.

Scene:

A sequence of shots of the living room show the Capra Explorer & Collector moving from a prominent position on a bookshelf, to the background—behind a row of books and ornaments.

Thomas is removing individual possessions from their places around the room and packing moving boxes. He finds the Capra as he takes a series of books from the bookshelf and deliberates taking it. He places it on top of the box of books.

The boxes are emptied out in dribs and drabs into a new living room—showing periods of living between each box being emptied, and half empty boxes sprawling out onto the floor. In a final single effort, all of the boxes are emptied and the Capra is put in a drawer.

Untitled

Explores:

- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Precise & fuzzy memory and ways of remembering
- Thinness / Ensembles / Background Presence

The role of Capra in forming new memories / being an anchor for memories.

The textures of memories.

Digital mediation of everyday life and how the interactions with the device create memories that then recur while hiking.

The omnipresent Capra Explorer's projection serves as an anchor to memories that take place in the same space. While hiking, a specific tree serves as the catalyst to remember an unrelated memory, connected by the same tree, but from a previous hike, being projected onto the wall while the memory was formed.

Scene:

Thomas is hiking alongside a creek with Randy. Through a gap between trees he sees a small tree growing on a rock in the middle of a stream. This triggers the recollection of the Capra Explorer projecting the same scene onto the wall of the living room in the house he shared with Tracy and Chloe. The memory is unspecific to a time, but rather a nostalgia for the feeling of being in the space—and for the life that was lived there.

Transfer

Explores:

- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Thinness / Ensembles / Background Presence
- Archive inquiry

Uses the transfer animation to show character changes. Shows abstract/arbitrary relationships between different times in one's life: shown from when their kid wrote the Capra; shown hiking with friends.

Scene:

The Capra user returns from a hike. Shown in fragments: muddy boots stepping out of a car; shoes coming off on the door mat; keys placed onto the side table; backpack leant against wall; Capra Collector unclipped from backpack strap; Capra Collector slotted into Capra Explorer; hands being washed in sink with mud running down drain; Capra Explorer transfer animation showing mud; bubbles rising in kettle; in shower; silhouettes through fogged and slightly ajar shower door; fruit flies moving across fruit bowl; wind chimes; transfer animation: more.

Love & Data

Explores:

- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Thinness / Ensembles / Background Presence
- Archive inquiry

The Capra Explorer offers opportunities to explore the tensions between your specific memories, how you share those memories and a somewhat objective visualization of them. It creates connections between events that you might not want connected—that cause strong emotional responses because of the connections.

Through connecting the same event shared with different people, the Capra initiates complex and complicated interactions. It explores the social implications of capturing and cataloguing one's intimate experiences across a lifetime.

The recontextualization of memories over time (reconstructive memory).

Scene:

Theo and his girlfriend Kate are sitting on the couch. The Capra Explorer is projecting in the background, in altitude mode. It intersects Theo's recent hike with Kate with a hike in the same location with his ex-wife. The images show both of them in the same place, walking slightly in front, with the camera often pointing straight towards them. Theo notices this taking place on the wall, he looks over at Kate who hasn't yet noticed it.

Meditation

Explores:

- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use
- Thinness / Ensembles / Background Presence

We are exploring cyclical time: the intertwaving of the past and present; making new memories or integrating in existing or new practices and using projection linked to memory and ways to move through time.

The Capra Collector is worn by Thomas on a hike and then while meditating in nature. Thomas meditates as a part of their daily routine, while the Capra Explorer projects the natural environment around them.

Scene:

Thomas is sitting in nature on a hike, taking a break to meditate in the woods. The audience can hear the subtle sounds of the forest while his eyes are closed. There might be a shot from the Capra POV while his eyes are closed. The scene shifts to being in Thomas' home with Capra projector on and replaying this slow, largely unchanging timelapse as he views it (or is in a somewhat meditative state). This scene sits later in Thomas' life (e.g., middle age). Shows meditating multiple times across time—including showing the projection directly onto Thomas.

A Dog's Life

Explores:

- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use
- Thinness / Ensembles / Background Presence

This scene demonstrates and explores the different camera perspectives.

The Capra Collector's downwards camera captures the full life of a dog through it's downwards facing camera. After the dog's death, the user can watch their dog grow chronologically, or experience its life in a more abstract way, which is more closely tied to memory.

Through rotating the Capra Explorer, the user can choose not to see their dog. This begins to explore the subjectivity of memory, if the dog dies and becomes a painful memory, they can choose when they want to interact with those memories.

Scene:

Thomas notices his dog being projected next to him on the wall via the vertical Capra Explorer. He stares at it for a moment, before rotating the Capra 90° to just show the center image.

Later in the day he chooses to relive the memories of hiking with his now deceased dog (death is indicated in a previous vignette). He is lying in his bed holding the Capra Explorer next to him, which is projecting onto the ceiling.

Match-cut to a memory of lying in the grass with the dog jumping on him.

Wrinkles

Explores:

- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use

This creates links between past, present and future—and begins to explore intergenerational use of the Capra.

It explores the tensions around capturing things that you may not notice nor want captured.

Scene:

Thomas is sitting on the couch playing cards with his grandson Clifford. The Capra Explorer is projecting onto the wall in portrait mode, with the bottom image is masked by the couch. Thomas looks up at the image and says, "it didn't look like that when your mother was made". Clifford looks horrified.

Thomas is standing behind a tree in a forest peeing.

Thomas' family is crowded into his living room in formal attire, at the reception of his funeral. Photographs of Thomas are placed on the mantle with flowers around the room. The Capra Explorer is projecting as a part of the memorial—the same images as earlier. The Capra Explorer is rotated, exposing Clifford's genitals in the bottom panel.

The Monster Within

Explores:

- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use
- Precise & fuzzy memory and ways of remembering
- Archive inquiry

Delusion and hallucinations of victimization are common in those suffering with dementia.

Scene:

Elderly Thomas with dementia, argues with his daughter, Chloe. He is adamant that when they were hiking together at Thetis Lake, his dog was mauled by a bear and killed. Chloe fluctuates between being patient with her father and argumentative—the dog was not killed by a bear. Chloe pulls up the hike on the Capra Explorer to show the dog making it the whole way back to the car. This doesn't sway Thomas' opinion.

Reminiscence

Explores:

- Growth and change over time with increase in data
- Trajectory of use over lifetime use and non-use

What does it mean to no longer be making memories / no longer be adding to the Capra Explorer. Reminiscence Therapy uses props and sensory stimulants to trigger memory recall. It is used with dementia patients to encourage them to relive past experiences. It is often a tool used by and recommended to family members or caregivers; as it supports both parties.

Scene:

Clifford is kneeling by the book shelf, controlling the Capra Explorer. He watches Thomas' life being projected onto the wall in short sequences.

Thomas leans forwards in recognition of images of his friends.

Clifford stops adjusting the Capra.

Blurred Lines

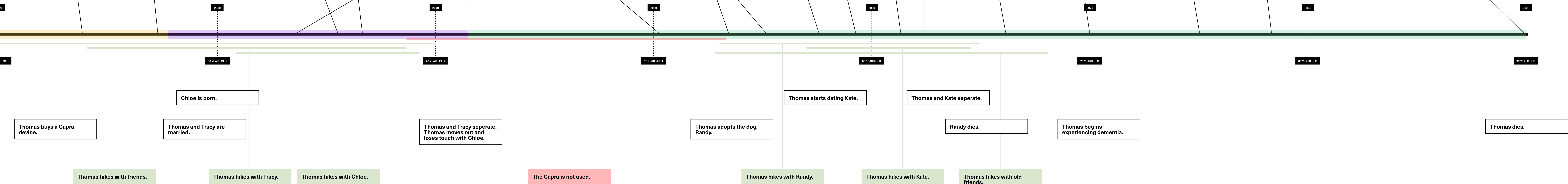
Explores:

- Thinness / Ensembles / Background Presence
- Precise & fuzzy memory and ways of remembering

How an image or a colour can trigger an incredibly precise or specific memory or a hazy memory—the fuzziness of human memory, the texture/sound/feeling. How it relates to other non-human objects in the home. Some images trigger memories, ranging from specific to hazy memories, which are explored visually. Hazy memories are explored texturally through sound and visuals.

Scene:

...



Capra

written by

Author

EXT. CAMPGROUND - DAY - MONTAGE

- 2035. A family camps across the lake. Smoke trails upwards.
- CHLOE (8) splashes back and forth in the shallows-- collecting flat stones for THOMAS (28) to skip. The Capra Collector bounces on her backpack strap.
- Thomas and TRACY (30) play cribbage.
- Tracy stokes the fire. Sparks hiss in the wet air.
- A wet stone slides into a Chloe's shirt pocket.
- Chloe squirms on Tracy's shoulders.
- Chloe builds a stick fort.
- Thomas and Tracy swing gently in the hammock. Chloe runs towards them.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. THOMAS' BACHELOR PAD - NIGHT

2051. Thomas and Tracy grow bigger on the wall, image-by-image, as Chloe runs to her parents -- 20 years ago.

Thomas watches from the couch. He is older and alone. The Capra Explorer and Collector are next to him.

The perspective of the projected images change -- Chloe jumps into the hammock between them. Tracy is laughing -- looking down into the lens from top frame. Thomas laughs from the bottom frame.

Melancholic, Thomas smiles -- extends a hand and pauses the projection.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

We move through the forest, following dappled light on leaves and bark...the subtlety of living textures.

INT. THOMAS'S STUDENT HOUSING - NIGHT

2024. THOMAS (24) paints around the gnarled wood projected on the canvas -- pixels and paint overlap.

He steps back to the Capra Explorer -- picks it up -- unpauses it -- watches the new images project across the wall.

Lobster mushrooms. He pauses the projection.

Thomas juggles the projector, shoving books under it to hold it in place. The mushrooms bulge across the canvas.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

People walk in the distance.

INT. THOMAS' BACHELOR PAD - LOUNGE - DAY

2055. Bright afternoon sun. The Capra Explorer projects into a prism. Shards of rainbow light land around the room.

MONTAGE

- In the shadow of a wishbone chair.
- On the inside of a metal lampshade.
- Through a line of wine glasses.
- In RANDY's fur as he stands in his bed.
- Onto the leaves of propagated plants.
- On the skirting board, where the floor meets the wall.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Afternoon light on the forest floor.

INT. THOMAS'S BACHELOR PAD - DAY

2078. Golden light dapples across the BLUE ARMCHAIR. Thomas (78) is deep within it, disconnected from the shifting glow of the Capra Explorer.

CLIFFORD (18) is kneeling by the book shelf -- his hand on the Capra Explorer's pause button. He watches his Grandfather's life, projected in short sequences...minute by minute.

Chloe appears on the wall, playing on the beach with a younger Thomas.

CLIFFORD

Is that mom?

(pause)

She said you took her camping all the time.

Thomas looks hard at the wall -- remains silent, embarrassed. The faces don't connect to memories. He shakes his head, almost imperceptibly.

Young people are hiking on the wall. Clifford checks for a reaction -- there is none. Thomas doesn't move.

Images flicker. Clifford finds Randy -- a black blur in the top of the frame

CLIFFORD (CONT'D)

It's Randy!

He adjust the Capra's settings, from its global mode, to its single hike mode. He scrubs forwards -- finding Randy, tongue panting. Clifford pauses.

CLIFFORD (O.S.) (CONT'D)

He was so sweet.

Thomas' eyes light up. He leans forwards -- it is his companion.

INT. THOMAS' FAMILY HOME - LOUNGE - DAY

2042. As we move towards the BLUE ARMCHAIR, we move through time, chronicling the end of a marriage.

MONTAGE

- The Capra Explorer is on the side table. A LAMP is behind it. A photo of the family is on the mantle.
- Books are now stacked on of the Capra Explorer. There is a pillow and blanket on the couch. The room is messy.
- The stack of books is pushed back to make room for a vase of flowers.
- Children's luggage by the door.
- The flowers are dead. The vase is on top of the books.
- The vase is gone. Moving boxes are on the floor. The Capra is inside of an old WINE BOX.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. THOMAS' BACHELOR PAD - DAY

The arm chair anchors the new living space. Moving boxes are collapsed against the wall. The LAMP is shining across the bookshelf.

The WINE BOX is underneath a stack of books.

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Islands grow closer. Water foams, pushed aside by the ferry.

INT. THOMAS' STUDENT HOUSING - KITCHEN - NIGHT

2026. All eyes are on Thomas. The guests shift... uncomfortable. Thomas fingers the Capra Explorer, jumping backwards and forwards through colour and time.

A chair creaks. Ice cracks as it is spins in a glass. Cutlery clatters across a plate. Water sloshes into a cup. Someone coughs.

An indistinguishable conversation begins in the background -- laughter.

Shades of blue illuminate the wall -- images cycle.

Thomas never finds what he is looking for.

THOMAS
(under breath)
It was really pretty.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Waves crash against rocks. A whale breaches in the distance.

EXT. BEACH FOREST - DAY

2066. Thomas (66) walks along the shore. Randy chases waves.

EXT. BEACH FOREST - DAY (LATER)

Thomas sits amongst the last trees before the beach -- eyes closed, breathing deeply. The red-orange sky illuminates his face. The Capra Collector is clipped to the backpack strap, recording outwards. Randy sleeps nearby.

INT. THOMAS' BACHELOR PAD - DAY

Thomas sits -- meditating. The view of the ocean through trees is projected onto his face. Colours shift in hazy, fuzzy patterns.

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

- Swirling light through lidded eyes.
- Amber leaves falling.
- Hand running down naked back.
- Chloe (8) laughing. Her hair tumbles across her face.
- Fern blowing in gentle breeze.
- Carpet. Tightly wound threads.
- Clouds moving -- sun -- blue skies.
- Wind ripples on the ocean.
- Plants propagating on the window cil.
- Kate's hair pushed behind her ears.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. THOMAS' BACHELOR PAD - LOUNGE - DAY

2059. Kate sleeps on Thomas' lap. His hand runs through her hair. The Capra Explorer illuminates the wall beside them. Randy sleeps on the floor.

Time spent with Kate and Tracy intersect on the wall. Kate and Tracy climb Cyprus' trails together, separated by time.

Thomas notices - his eyes move across the projection.

They hike in front of him, almost together: on the same mountain path, in different times. Looking back at him -- smiling, loving.

Thomas looks down at Kate, she is oblivious to his pain.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Muddy puddles are disturbed by rain. Water drops from lush green pine needles.

EXT. FAMILY HOME - DRIVEWAY - DAY

2035. Thomas' (35) muddy boots swing out of his car.

INT. FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER - MONTAGE

- Shoes on the door mat.
- Keys placed onto the side table.
- Backpack leant against wall.
- Capra Collector unclipped from backpack strap.
- Capra Collector slotted into Capra Explorer.
- Hands being washed in sink with mud running down drain.
- Capra Explorer transfer animation showing mud.
- Bubbles rising in kettle.
- In shower, Thomas' silhouette through fogged and slightly ajar shower door.
- Wind chimes.
- A sharp line of shadow crosses a potted fern.
- Curtains blow in the breeze.
- Fruit flies circle the counter.
- Cars drive by.
- The tap drips.
- Transfer animation.

END MONTAGE.

INT. THOMAS' BACHELOR PAD — DAY

2068. Thomas is completing a sudoku. He reaches for his tea -
- notices Randy being projected onto the wall next to him.

We watches for a moment.

He shifts a book in front of the Capra's lens. Not yet ready
to relive.

INT. THOMAS' BACHELOR PAD — NIGHT

Thomas lies in bed. The light from the images projected on
the ceiling washes over him.

Randy runs for eternity in the cycle of images.

INT. THOMAS' FAMILY HOME - LOUNGE - NIGHT

2037. Chloe lies next to Thomas on a camping mattress, inside of a half-made tent pressed up against the couch. Chloe's broken leg props up the blanket, her crutches are next to her. The Capra Explorer is projecting above them, filling the tent fabric with images of old hikes.