LUV: To The One Beloved

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LUV
To The One Beloved

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ABSTRACT
Love; which is something that everyone pursues for in life, and technology; which is something that we uses everyday in life, and with both combine there is the Luv, a perfect way to express the love using technology on daily life. Luv consisted of the three main elements of love, including passion, intimacy and commitment. Not only can the user of Lux expresses their love with their partner but one can achieve self-pleasure with Luv. This was never seemed before in the combination of technology and love. Thus it would be the first in history where women can finally wear a set of self-pleasure tool while not being accused of, and not only that the other half can expresses their love and she would be able to receive such message on one end.
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Before the beginning

When I started to think about my thesis, the first thing that came to my mind was a product for women. As a designer, my goal would be to improve the experience of women using my designs. At first, I planned to develop sex toys for women. I did some marketing research; the results showed that sex toys have great market value potential. Furthermore, the psychological causes and effect of using them interested me. Why do people choose to use them? What is the most popular one? What are people’s perspectives about them? All these questions pushed me to go further with my thesis idea.

After some time brainstorming, I came up with a tree-structure for sex toys. There are many directions to expand these ideas, such as cleaning methods, storage methods and the form of sex toys.
Although sex toys have a large market and a large number of users, the types and designs are still very limited, in part because of the small number of designers of sex toys. The taboo of sex, and particularly sex toys, makes it difficult for designers to come out with new and usable ideas. It is also important that the idea be appropriate and appealing to the public. With a focus on this element, I decided that my goal was to combine my product with a typical, daily object that would hide the fact that it was a sex toy. Unlike an obvious sex-related product, my product would be designed to cause less embarrassment so people would be less nervous while facing it. Thus people will be more likely to try the sex toy I designed.
In the 21st century, women are more willing to give self-pleasure than ever. However, sex toys still carry a stigma in contemporary society, especially for women. Changing people’s perspectives on sex toys is one of the main issues I want to deal with. Another issue is to change sex toys themselves to be more acceptable, and less taboo, to the public. The three designs of sex toys beneath are a combination of jewelry and toys. The functions of the toys are hidden, so at a glance these just look like pieces of jewelry. The designs of the toys also provide a new way for women to pleasure themselves.
However, to develop a simple series of sex toys that just reduces embarrassment is not the only thing that I wanted to do in this thesis project. I also decided to create something different, something out of the ordinary. Industrial design should not only be focused on satisfying the needs of a limited target market, but should also lead people to explore the expression of humanity behind the products. To explore what the product can do other than its original function and aesthetic beauty became the purpose of my thesis. I then started to think about sex and its origin, love.

What is Love?

Before I came up with my thesis, the whole concept of combining sex toys with love had me thinking about “what is love?” and what can love bring us? How do people feel when they love or are loved? In the Webster’s dictionary, love is defined as “A feeling of strong attachment induced by that which delights or commands admiration.”
However, is there a better definition of love? When this question came to me, I started to think about how to present what love is through my products.

Next, the word “pleasure” also came to mind. Psychological and physical feelings are the two components of pleasure. Psychological pleasure is a satisfying mental state when people give love and feel loved. Physical pleasure is linked to physical touch and intercourse. People tend to look for love and these two types of pleasures throughout their lives.

After considering both psychological and physical pleasure, I decided to go deeper into the field of psychology to look for the answer to “what is love?” Robert Sternberg, a well-known contemporary psychologist who is known for his triarchic theory of intelligence, is also known for his triangular theory of love. Sternberg built his theory on the idea that there are three components of love. These three components are intimacy, passion, and commitment. Passion is the strong emotional drive of a person that connects to both limerence and sexual attraction towards someone else. Intimacy contains as elements the feelings of attachment, closeness, connectedness, and bondedness. Commitment contains the elements of decision about keeping a relationship as short term or as long term, and making life plans with one another. All these three components establish the foundation of consummate love. Based on this theory, pursuing the three components of love is one way to approach the pleasure of love. I then had my basic theory of love, which I would use to develop my products, a series of products that convey the idea of love.
PASSION

LOVE

INTIMACY

COMMITMENT

Target
As a modern woman, I understand how complicated it is for women to balance relationships and careers. There can be many obstructions that influence the health of a relationship, such as living apart, or exhibiting distressingly different opinions and habits. Even simple things like one partner having a diet plan may cause both physical and mental distress because it affects the pleasure people get from food. Therefore, love seems to be a major issue in women’s lives in both psychological and physical ways. I would like to help modern women enjoy love and life by having pleasure.

Women are thought to be more emotional and sensitive about love than men from “Are Women the “More Emotional” Sex? Evidence From Emotional Experiences in Social Context”. They pursue many different things in a relationship in order to feel that they are in love, especially young women who are not yet married. This makes them an appropriate target audience for products designed to foster the concept of increasing pleasure and love. According to a British website, women ages 24 to 34 feel pressure from families about climbing the career ladder. Also, 67 percent of them suffer from stress every week; the average woman gets stressed 208 times per year (Styles 1). What we can see here is that women who are between the ages of 24 and 34 are busy with their careers and relationships, and perhaps are more stressed because they do not feel settled yet; most of them are not yet married but more likely in a relationship or dating. As they are under a lot of pressure they need a way to relax, to escape and to feel pleasure. Women at this age also have the ability to afford the products that they desire as they have more stable careers than women ages under 24. Thus, women who are between the ages of 24 and 34 would be an appropriate target market for a product about love.

On the other hand, women who are around 24-34, turn our to be heavier consumers than was previously thought. They like shopping online and not hesitate to buy things such as sex toys.
In the past, those toys were more aimed to men than women. One of the most important reasons is that women were more embarrassed to purchase such products in store. Since the online shopping gets more and more popular now, the potential of sex toys purchase by women is going to be higher than before.

Persona
Based on the information above, I started to build a persona in order to study the target more. Linda, who is 28 years old, has worked as an accountant since she graduated from college. She earns around $60,000 a year in New York City. She has been in a relationship for one year with Jack, who is an engineer. They live separately: Jack lives in Brooklyn and Linda lives in Queens. Linda works five days a week. Sometimes, she has to work overtime in the busy season. She usually meets friends and does some laundry during weekends. Linda and Jack meet three to four times a week. They usually have dinner or watch a movie after work. Since they live in different areas of New York City, it is difficult for them to meet whenever they want to. Linda has a good career and spends a lot of time working diligently. Although this relationship is a big part of her life, she doesn’t have enough time to meet with her lover. But she does desire pleasure like other women. She wants to have more time to connect with her partner and find a way to feel happy every day.

Designing a product for women, I thought about what women would like to purchase the most. According to economyofstyle.net, accessories is the second biggest purchase made by women, after clothing. Accessories are mostly to decorate body with multiple ways to make the whole look pretty. Why not make those accessories give women both beauty and pleasure? Accessories include handbags, watches, jewelry, eyewear, and scarves. How to combine those with love and pleasure became my main goal.

**Ideation**
I thought about how to present the idea of love through the product, which I then studied further by dividing the idea into different branches.

**Passion**

What is passion in love? Passion encompasses drives connected to both limerence and sexual attraction. The most common way to express passion is through sex. The best way to present sex through a product is sex toys. They give people sexual pleasures. Also, through the research many people who are struggling with a long-distance relationship use sex toys when their partner is not nearby.

I then researched the history of sex toys. The use of sex toys is considered very common throughout human history. The first dildo found by paleontologists was from the Paleolithic era. Sex toys were widely used in ancient Greece and Rome. In Aristophanes' anti-war comedy "Lysistrata," both men and women use sex toys. Women used dildos to get pleasure when their husbands were away fighting in a war. Men give their partners “olisbos” in order to prevent the lack of sperm. Those dildos are made of different materials and the most common one is made of wood with lacquer in decoration. On the other side of the world, Chinese women also used dildos, but those were commonly made of bronze with liquid inside. In the tomb of Shen Liu, a ruler from the Western Han Dynasty, anthropologists found dildos buried with his wives. It is believed that because he had a lot of wives, in order to prevent them cheating on him in the next life, he decided to bury the dildos with them. Although there is no historical document to prove this, it was rumored that Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt, designed the first vibrator. She asked the makers to make a hollow wooden dildo and put angry bees in it to make it vibrate.
Since sexual pleasure is an element of being human, the pursuit of such pleasure will never cease. Even though thousands of years have passed, there remains a taboo regarding sex toys; most people do not want others to know that they use them. In some cultures and religions, it is even a crime to use them. As aforementioned, the taboo of sex toys is one thing that I want to counter with my product designs.

I have completed some sketches products that combine a vibrator with jewelry. Jewelry is usually made of metals like silver and gold so they are easy to clean. These materials would be the most appropriate for making sex toys because of this characteristic. My first sketches explored different approaches to combining the two features of the product: the vibrating function and the beauty.

After a few drawings, I determined that the best method to fit a vibrator into jewelry is to make a pendant because its size is perfect for holding a vibrating device. It is not common for other people to touch one’s pendant, making their additional use hidden. The concept of circles and lines is like the relationship between people. We are all just dots; lines make us connected. I
hope the products will enhance the connection between lovers. Thus in my design, the pendant consists with a big dot with two little ones next to it and then they are connected to the chain.

The biggest dot will be the main vibrator. The other two are for batteries and holding by user.

The next problem is how small the motor can be, as well as how to make a vibrator work. I bought several vibrators and disassembled them. Below is the smallest one that I found. It has a mainboard, a battery and also a motor inside, and seems to be the perfect size for my pendant.

After that, I started to draw the inner construction of the technological part.

Intimacy

There are a lot of different things that connect people to their partners, including touch, smell, and kisses. An article on CNN.com in 2011 shows that physical contact and affection can bring positive effects to human. The memory of sense is much stronger than memory of things. Sense memory will be a reminder of the intimacy felt between two partners.
What I want to pick up is that warm feeling people get from their partner when they touch them. People feel positive when they are being hugged and hugging reduces stress and increases trust. The decreasing oxytocin will release the bonding and make people more comfortable. The warm feeling from another body not only shows the intimacy of two people, but also conveys trust and reliability. I followed the necklace style by using dots and lines as basic elements to sketch the bracelet.

The biggest circle in the center in the above figure provides heat. The smaller circle on its right adjusts the temperature. There is a sensor inside that will adjust the temperature.
automatically. However, if users want to adjust the temperature manually, they can turn the temperature adjuster, which is the circle on the right. The left circle is the on and off button. In regard to the interior construction, the mini heater will be in the middle. It will be an induction heater, which heats an electrically conducting object (usually a metal) by electromagnetic induction.

**Commitment**

A ring is the most common symbol of romantic commitment between two people. The history of rings goes back to 4000 BC. According to Greek mythology, Prometheus was the first person who wore a ring. “Zeus had Prometheus carried to Mount Caucasus, where he was bound to a rock and consigned to eternal misery. Each day an eagle swooped down on him and ate the lobes off his liver, which would grow back each night. Prometheus was eventually freed from his chains as a returned favor from Hercules. Since Zeus’s word was law and could not be repealed, Prometheus was destined to bound to the rock for eternity. To appease the law, a ring was made out of a link of the chain and a chip of the rock was mounted on the ring, which Prometheus wore forevermore.” This is the beginning of the ring in western culture. A ring represents commitment. Ancient Egyptians gave finger rings as a New Year’s gift. Ancient Romans and Greeks used rings to represent wealth and power.

My design expresses that two people should not only be connected by words and symbols but also physically connected through the ring. When you miss your partner, you can squeeze the two round ends of your ring. Your partner's ring will respond with the same gentle compression.
It will go back to the original shape after a few seconds. The rings provide a reciprocal action like a lover's embrace. The dots and lines elements are also used in the ring design.

There is a set of sex toys made by a company called LovePalz. They use wireless technology to connect two partners who are in different places to enjoy the video sex by using these toys. When one part is moving, the other one will move as well. The ring will use the same technology.
**Computer Modeling**

After I formulated the final design ideas and determined the interior construction, I started to build the model on the computer in order to refine the design. Then I printed a model on a 3D printer to see the size and test the products.
Final Model

After some adjustments with the sizes and shapes, the final products were completed.
User Book

I also created a user book to better understand the functions of these products.

Take the pendant off the chain

Use the second finger to press the button at the back. The pendant starts to vibrate.

Use the pendant anywhere on your body to make you happy!
Both partners wear a ring

Squeeze your ring a little bit. at the same time, your partner's ring will compress as well

Enjoy the little secret with your partner!

Wear the bracelet

Turn the heater on by twist the small button on the right to the right temperature you like

The bracelet starts to be warm like your lover. Enjoy the warmth!
After the model came out, I started to test my products. I did a survey to get feedback from people in order to know how people feel when they see the products.

Twenty people, ten male and ten female, completed the survey. Here are some results:

- Women generally like the concept more than men, but they expect in more varieties of styles.
- They'd like to try it but depends on the price. They feel the purpose of the bracelet to be the most confusing and the ring to be the most exciting.

**Conclusion**
During the exhibition, many people expressed interest and curiosity about the product, LUV mention the name of the product earlier. A lot of viewers said that if the products were produced, they would try them. I was proud that people were willing to accept my ideas. However, I saw some people talking with lower voices, and they seemed to want to hide from other people when they stopped to look at the posters. I understand that such products are not like the other products that people can see, buy, and use in public. I do not expect all people to accept my products. After all, sex toys are still considered taboo in our society. But making people understand and give a new product a try is what a good designer should achieve in the design. Humanity is always behind the product. If one day design can lead people to know themselves better, it will be a new era of design.

References


