

EMMA: Embodied Memorial Maker

Designing for private and communal grieving experiences through craft

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ABSTRACT

As both an end and means of memorialization, EMMA is a hybrid system that ties the physical practice of handcrafting with the digital affordances of web interfaces and Arduino technology. Through participation in slow-natured sewing activities, an assembled kit provides a personalized mourning experience that provokes emotional reflection and results in a tangible embodiment of one's grief. The digital intervention is imbued in the crafting tool, a paper piecing template used for hand-sewn quilting projects. When a participant uses the tool -- attached to the computer through an Arduino Uno -- the sensor detects their activity and sends the data to a web interface that generates additive visual imagery in the form of flower-like renderings. The interface acts as a channel for communal grieving, as participants can see the visualizations rendered from others' crafting sessions generated in real-time. By merging the shared and private spaces, a participant can focus on their individualized experience while also receiving validation that they are not alone in their grief. This diegetic intervention ensures that the final crafted piece remains free of wires and electric power, preserving the slow nature of this established cultural practice while remaining aligned with traditional paper piecing techniques. Prioritizing an accessible, low-tech approach, this craft kit is designed to offer a constructive, cathartic method of processing grief and loss.

Keywords

Grief, paper piecing, craft research, embodiment, memorialization, memory

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2018, my great-grandmother passed away, and due to financial and logistical difficulties, my family wasn't able to arrange an in-person funeral service. Without that physical event to mark our loss, many family members turned to social media and expressed their grief digitally in the form of sharing pictures and memories. While posting these tributes provided an accessible outlet to mourn with others, we ultimately felt unfulfilled as our personal memories faded into feeds, blurring with political rants and dog pictures. It was clear that social media was not built for the bereaved. Individually, we craved both a private space to reflect on our personal and intimate relationship with this person as well as a shared space to sit with others who we knew were feeling the same pain.

This experience opened up an opportunity space that was both personal *and* shared as well as digital *and* physical, with the two intersecting axes representing the private-shared and digital-physical

polarities (Figure 1). While digital practices are accessible for shared grief, they lack an embodied experience and the space for private reflection. On the other hand, physical experiences like funerals or cemeteries exist only in that shared reality, often lacking the benefit of digital permanence and the opportunity for private memorialization.

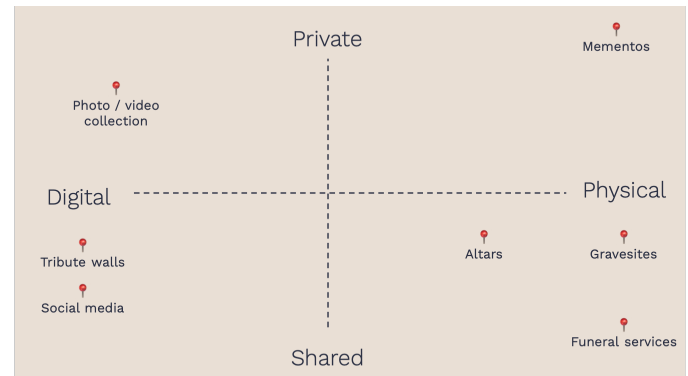


Figure 1. Memorialization Matrix A matrix representing contemporary American memorialization practices. The vertical axis has two poles ranging from private to shared, and the horizontal axis ranges from digital to physical.

Situated in the context of this (working) matrix, my research question is then posed at the intersection of the two axes: How can a memorial experience be simultaneously digital and physical while offering both private and shared space to grieve?

The answer to this question depends on the cultural framing. A Shinto-inspired mourning practice might differ from a Muslim or Christian one. Thus, one given context is that of a particular cultural framing.

Aside from the in-person (often expensive) event of a funeral service, few opportunities exist for families and friends to collectively grieve a loved one. Barriers such as cost of travel, work schedule and availability, physical distance, and other logistics often make it difficult for someone who desires such closure to physically attend a service. That person feels the brunt of the accessibility gap between physical and digital experiences. They have no other choice but to use the computer as a communicative tool to process difficult emotions. A person may post a memory to a tribute wall (created by the family), share videos/pictures on social media, or try to mourn through other digitally-focused channels. Aside from sending messages and clicking pixels, they do not have access to closure, or connection, in the physical world.

Through the coronavirus outbreak in 2020, the tensions between the poles of the matrix were exacerbated — the pandemic caused anxiety and loss, and, at the same time, separated us. In consideration of current global lockdowns, a system for mourning that accounts for social distancing is sorely needed. As COVID-19 claims the lives of hundreds of thousands, people are forced to wade in their grief.³ Funeral homes, event planning services, and places of worship are no longer able to host in-person memorials, leaving families and loved ones to mourn mostly through video conferences, social media, and other forms of digital communication. While

adapting to unfavorable circumstances is necessary during uncertain times, it doesn't change the ephemeral nature of digital memories and moments. Tribute walls, Facebook pages, and other means of online memorialization only last as long as your browser is open -- they do not exist in physical reality.

Regarding the intersection of the matrix, I believe craft practices are uniquely positioned to occupy that space. Material practices (i.e. burials, cremations, altars, temples, etc.) have long been associated with memorialization practices, especially in the context of personal and collective trauma. In discussing the history of craft as memory, Adamson describes it as "providing a crucial service: the task of memory."¹ Craft acts as "powerful mediator between the present and the past,"¹ allowing the bereaved to not only creatively contribute as an individual but also to share in the making of cultural practices that have been passed down for generations, reinforcing a connection with the collective.

In discussing the history of craft as memory, Adamson describes it as "indeed providing a crucial service: the task of memory," and in speaking to its temporal structure,

Drawing upon research about memory and grief, handcrafts, and digital media, I set out to develop a system that incorporates digital and physical embodiment while providing space for private and shared grief. The Embodied Memorial MAKer, or EMMA, is a tool that supports such an experience.

2. Related Work & Considerations

Within the field of craft research lies a concept of embodiment, which fits well within a discussion on memorialization. In this context, embodiment addresses how "material things are endowed with meanings that transcend the materials themselves in the making and using processes."²² Through handcrafted practices, what an artifact might "embody, represent, or symbolize through the use of materials and employment of knowledge, skills, and experience determines the values of the craft itself and its maker."²² It's an extension of the self, and the self includes the emotional reality of that moment. As Glassie discussed in his work on material culture, "Art embodies, and insistently exhibits, personal and collective identities, aesthetic and instrumental purposes, mundane and spiritual aspirations." When we align embodiment with memorialization, I suggest that embodiment is a form of memorialization. What is a handcrafted artifact if not a memorial to that moment, of that context? As Glassie continues, "Artifacts set the mind in the body, the body in the world."⁵

A key paper in my research is Rosner's [Spyn](#), a craft system that utilizes computer vision techniques and infrared-inked yarn to correlate knitted stitches with recorded messages from the maker.¹⁶ Messages are recorded during the knitting process, and once the artifact is gifted away, the recipient can play back the messages via an application. Rosner's work examined how "the visible (the artifact and physical attributes of the artifact) and the invisible (memory and social context)" may come together in a digital-physical hybrid system.¹⁶ The terms "embedded" and "embodied" were also frequently used in reference to how a handcrafted artifact is "charged" with history, narratives, and

memories.¹⁶ As a result of the team's fieldwork, they developed a framework of three key design principles for their system which includes 1.) *Capturing*, 2.) *Connecting*, and 3.) *Making Seamless*.¹⁶ The paper's emphasis on preserving the crafting practice while enabling new avenues for creative expression through digital affordances further clarified my goals for this project, and even led to one of my design guidelines -- maintaining a balance of digital and physical engagement (more on this in **Section 3.4**).

Following Spyn's lead, I reviewed other projects that bridged physical and digital practices, including some that spoke to memory and craft like the infamous AIDS quilt², Tanenbaum's Reading Glove¹⁸, and Heitlinger's Talking Quilt.⁴ To deepen my understanding of how these projects stand with each other and with EMMA, I plotted them within a venn diagram (**Figure 2**). Furthermore, Golsteijn et. al. made headway in terms of developing a more refined framework for hybrid crafting, a phrase the team defines as the *everyday creative practices of using combinations of physical and digital materials, techniques, or tools, to make interactive physical, digital creations*.⁶ The researchers' approach to a hybrid model by centering materiality and accessibility further underscored the intellectual foundation for this work.

These research insights provided the groundwork to approach the questions of *how* and *which* craft will be most appropriate for the purposes of this project.

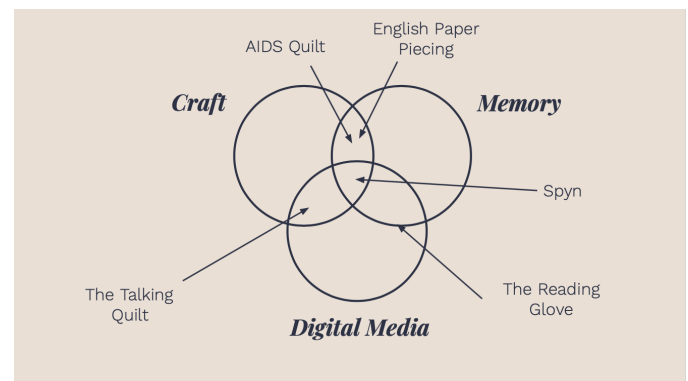


Figure 2. The three intellectual pillars of this project include research on memory, craft, and digital media. Four influential projects are labeled here as well as the cultural craft practice of English Paper Piecing.

3. APPROACH

3.1 Brief History of English Paper Piecing

English Paper Piecing (EPP) stands out as an appropriate practice through which to explore this research, especially given its cultural history and its resistance to technological advancement over the centuries.

Originating in England in the early eighteenth century, EPP is a hand-sewn quilting technique that uses paper templates to stabilize fabric for precision and accuracy. The technique made it to the Americas in the late eighteenth century and became increasingly popular as a leisurely activity.¹² The oldest known paper-pieced coverlet is dated 1718 and currently being preserved in the UK Quilters' Guild collection¹²(**Figure 3**). Scholars were able to deduce

its age based on the preserved materials. Its paper templates were maintained within the quilt, which is usually a sign of an unfinished project; however, upon closer analysis, they actually reveal information that situate the piece within the context it was created. For example, old receipts, shopping lists, and newspaper clippings communicate demographic information about its maker, such as their class, location, and skill level.¹²

Thus, EPP is an example of how we've come to understand craft as a form of memory, occupying the overlapping space between those two spheres in diagram in **Figure 2**. That 1718 quilt and others preserved like it become a sort of a tangible time capsule, telling the story of its context and creator.

Furthermore, this technique is historically a slow-natured leisure activity and remains so to this day. Since paper itself was an expensive and rare commodity in the late 18th and early 19th centuries²¹, this technique was often reserved for wealthy families, primarily upper class white women who had leisure time to spare for the intricacy of these hand-sewn projects. The finished quilts were then shown off as a proud representation of talent and skill, often used as a decorative statement in a sitting room.¹² Today, while quilters use sewing machines to create quilts that are more for utility, EPP is still widely viewed as leisure. Its hand-sewn nature requires a close attention to detail that compels an intentional, quiet experience. The very fact that this technique is done by hand negates the need for outside technology like sewing machines, scales, and other major advancements in craft. Aside from fabric glue (in lieu of pins -- and still that's a preference), this practice has largely been untouched by technology. This cultural research led to another design guideline aimed to uphold the mindfulness of this slow craft (more on that in **Section 3.4**).



Figure 3. Famous 1718 Coverlet. A photograph of the oldest known paper-pieced quilt, dated 1718 and currently being preserved in the UK Quilters Guild collection. Although the maker of this quilt is unknown, they stitched their initials "EH" into the fabric.

3.2 Material Culture

Crafters are uniquely-positioned makers in that their material decisions are quite literally woven into their projects. From fabric to paper to pattern, the parts become a mouthpiece for the whole; storytellers in their own right.

Like many crafts, EPP is personalizable, allowing space for creative expression through colors, shapes, and fabric types. As personal as those choices may be, they stand as more than just preferences. Crafted pieces are memory capsules, tacitly communicating the context in which they are created. The capability of scholars pinpointing geographical locations and time periods based solely on a quilts' materiality further supports the notion of *embodiment*, harkening back to the inspiration from Rosner's Spyn. These artifacts are indeed products of their makers; and their makers, products of their physical and emotional environment.

3.3 On Grief Counseling: Subject Matter Expert Interview

In order to better understand how grief is situated in the context of craft and community, I personally reached out to a Georgia Tech staff member who is an Associate Director at the Counseling Center. As a licensed psychologist, he oversees the center's training program and runs a weekly "Grief & Loss" counseling group for undergraduate and graduate students.

First, we discussed the limitations of the staged models of grief, like Stanton's famous 5 to 7 stage model⁷ and Westberg's mainstream 10-stage model.²⁰ He pointed out that while grief is a universal human feeling, it still evokes infinite individualized experiences:

"These stages models are good because it helps people understand that there is some progress happening, you know, there's a progression," he said, "But the stage theory I use is a little bit more general, in that, yes, it does have the initial stage of being in shock, disbelief. That is pretty universal... *I can't believe this happened*, this *shock*. And then after that it gets a bit more individualized... Not everybody has a period of time that they're angry, not everybody feels depressed, or even has this final 'acceptance.' I usually look at the middle area as a little bit more general... there's a bit more individuality or flexibility with that middle part, which is where the emotions are most powerful."

Methods of grief can be as personal as the loss ("It's not a one-size-fits all kind of thing," People ultimately channel their emotions across an array of approaches including but not limited to spiritually (i.e. prayers, religious rituals), verbally (i.e. journaling, talk therapy), visually (i.e. pictures / videos, art therapy), physically (i.e. exercise), and so on.

This understanding of "individuality" inspired not only a design criteria (outlined in the next section) but also an acceptance that EMMA is not meant to be a universal product. I am not designing for *everyone* who experiences grief, but those who find comfort, closure, and connection through tactility and togetherness.

In addition to clarifying this project's position as an individualized activity, this conversation also highlighted how crafts addresses the fundamental pain of grief, how the *making of something* speaks directly to the feeling of loss, of *nothingness*, that encompasses grief. It's in the act of creating, with one's own hands, a thing that did not exist before that combats the pain of mourning someone (or something) that does not exist anymore.

"There are some people who don't acknowledge [their grief], or who would rather not deal with it. They're the ones who may need a little bit more help to access their emotions. Others may not need as much

prompting. They may need more help in sort of containing it, or moving it into a creative place.... And so, yes, I understand you feel really sad about this, is there a way that you can make something beautiful out of that?"

Processing emotions from this "creative place" does not have to happen in total isolation; in fact, he suggested that while making something that you can keep is a welcomed part of personal grieving, the validation in sharing and connecting with others is just as valuable.

Sharing one's experience offers "this sense of cohesion and connection with others who are experiencing a similar thing... [it doesn't have to be] that they all lost the same person, but they may have had similar types of loss in their life to the loss that you had in your life. And so in that way, it makes for more of a healing experience... that can be a real meaningful, healing opportunity within the context of grief."

This affirmation that collective validation holds healing potential comes back into play during my iterations in **Section 4.2**.

3.4 Design Criteria

Based on this foundational research, I arrive at the following guidelines for my own design. These criteria reflect the core values that I hope to imbue within the experience of EMMA.

The design must:

a. Allow and / or create space for creative expression.

Users may choose the fabric, thread, size (of final piece), and other material aspects of the crafting process. The aim is that, by avoiding prescriptive elements, users may more naturally engage with *craft as embodiment* through the personalization of their artifact. Thus, their finished piece will reflect the investment of their choices, and the emotions motivating those choices.

b. Facilitate mindfulness.

Drawing on the popular appeal of craft practices, this project aims to maintain or enhance the mindful nature of handcrafts. This core value is embedded with EMMA's initial motivation of providing a personal outlet for grief and mourning. This project aims to be a memorial activity that leans into the emotional reality of the user's present moment. This value is prioritized and reinforced through the next and final guideline.

c. Maintain a balance of digital and physical engagement.

While it may seem that physical craft and digital media are antithetical of each other, this project aims to merge them without intervening in the tradition of craft practices. Digital media should not be the focal point of this experience or detract from the expressive or mindful nature that this project aims to facilitate. The digital realm should be abstract to a degree of almost second importance, an added element that quietly, unobtrusively addresses *lack* in contemporary, available grieving methods -- especially in the era of social distancing and stay-at-home guidelines.

4. Design Process

Over the two years of this program, EMMA iterations occurred in two separate phases, with each phase revolving around how digital media will intervene and manifest in this work. The first phase focused on the use of LEDs embedded in the crafted artifact, and the second focused on a touch sensor embedded in the crafting tool.

4.1 First Phase: LED as Candle

Given the cultural association of candles to memorial rituals, I was initially attached to the idea of embedding LEDs into EMMA as part of a "DIY kit" for users. The aim was for the lights to serve as "flameless candles" that invite reengagement with the crafted item, thus extending the time and space for private grieving even after the item is completed or the "kit" is assembled. Determined to make it work, I went through several rounds of iterations both to understand how the circuits may integrate with the crafting process (**Figure 4**), and more importantly, to make them look like they belonged in that process. In short, they didn't; the lights neither *looked* like they belonged nor *actually* belonged in this project. To validate this failure, I sent out the first version of EMMA as a kit to a user who has familiarity with circuits (**Figure 5**), and his attempts at fiddling with the circuits further proved that this project needed to course-correct. This first iteration had put the focus on the construction of working circuits, yet EMMA was never meant to be a circuitry project. With the digital interventions overshadowing the mindfulness of the craft, this phase was not meeting two of the three criteria. Plus, the addition of circuits raised the barrier to entry, putting EMMA at odds with one of my core values: accessibility.

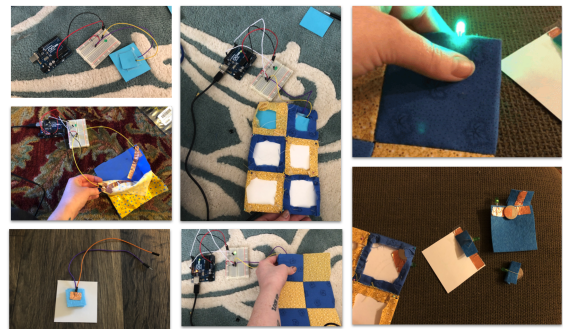


Figure 4. LED iterations. Examples of first iterations that focused on building circuits.



Figure 5. EMMA V1. *The first assembled version of EMMA as a kit and its components.*

4.2 Second Phase: Touch Sensor as Tool

Revisiting the inspiration of Rosner’s Spyn as well as the conversation with the grief counselor, I pivoted the project in two ways. First, inspired by Rosner, I decided to intervene in a crafting tool in order to keep the finished crafted artifact free of circuits and to maintain the cultural and practical integrity of paper piecing. Second, I wanted digital media to serve as a window for communal grieving in order to create space for the collective validation the counselor mentioned.

Feeling confident in these pivots, I began prototyping by fixing a capacitive touch sensor onto one of the sewing templates and running code that turned on a light when touched (**Figures 6 and 7**). These iterations revealed a couple obstacles moving forward: the touch sensor didn’t cover the full surface area of the template, and its fixed placement meant users were limited to that one template shape (unless embedding sensors to multiple templates which would exponentially increase the number of wires). In addition to the iterations, I also prototyped a container for EMMA’s hardware components (**Figure 8**). By enhancing the tool, the exchange between maker and materials remained unaltered, and to maintain that balance of engagement, I considered a web connection could serve as visual output for the tactile input. This web interface would then serve a dual purpose: keep the handcrafted artifact free of circuits, and open a channel to communal grieving. Moreover, the output, depending on design, may add value to the quilting process by means of further facilitating a mindful experience, another design guideline.

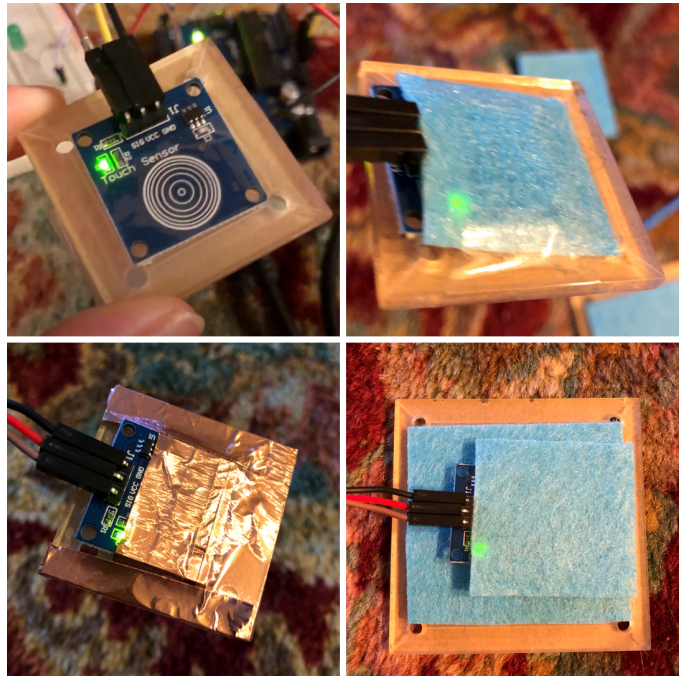


Figure 7. Touch sensor iterations. *After revisiting the role of digital media, I prototyped several versions of a sewing template affixed with a capacitive touch sensor.*

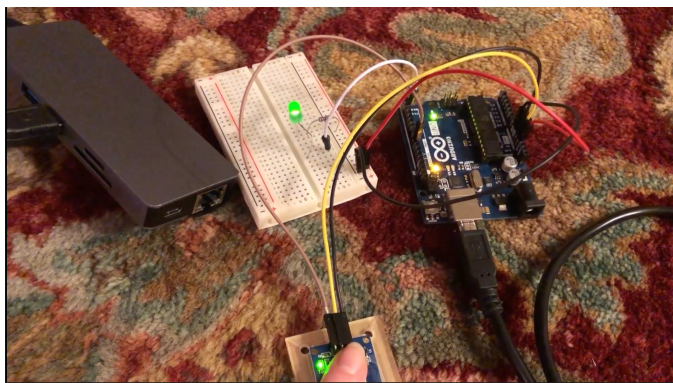


Figure 6. Touch sensor coded to an LED. *To begin iterations, I attached a XX touch sensor to a small sewing template and ran code that turned the sensor into a switch for an LED.*



Figure 8. EMMA V2. *Following this next round of iterations, I prototyped how the hardware components may be contained in a box.*

5. Final Phase: EMMA’s First Full Prototype and Implementation

The third phase of iterations combines the touch sensor as part of the quilt-making tool with a digital visualization. In its design, this prototype conceptually bridges the central themes of my project, outlined in the working matrix, by opening a channel of communal

grief through private memorialization and by connecting handcrafting with digital tools.

EMMA, as an embodied memory maker, merges personal handcrafting in the form of EPP with shared validation in the form of digital visualizations. It consists of a wooden box (**Figure 9**) that contains an Arduino Uno that's connected to the digitally enhanced quilting template and to a computer, which runs a Processing sketch. A participant uses the template to size and trace the necessary pieces for their individual paper quilt. As they use the tool, the touch sensor registers the pressure applied and records the length and frequency of use as one makes their quilt. The connected Arduino sends the data to the Processing sketch, which then generates additive visual imagery.

To address both the limitations of shape and surface area, I covered different sized templates with felt and cut a 1.2in slit to act as a pocket (**Figure 11**). The felt also increases the touch sensor's range of detection; if a user presses down on a felted corner of the template that's not directly over the sensor, the felt is pushed down and still registers as contact between user and sensor.

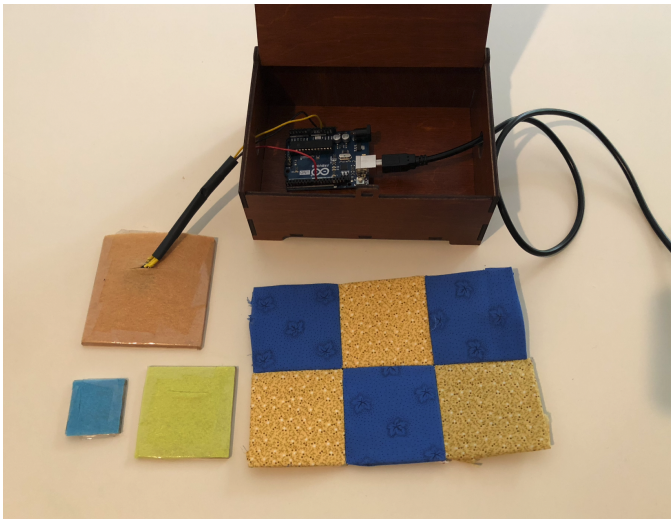


Figure 9. EMMA fully assembled with the sensor embedded in one template, and the Arduino Uno contained in the wooden box.



Figure 10. When in use, the box is closed, showing an engraving.



Figure 11. Templates covered in felt. The slit in the felt allows for easy access and removal of the touch sensor while simultaneously extending the sensor's range of contact.

Regarding the web interface, I used a combination of code from Processing and P5js to render flower-like visualizations that respond to contact with the touch sensor in real-time (**Figure 13**). When a user touches the tool, a flower begins to grow from the center growing in scale for as long as the tool is being used. When a user removes their hand, the visualization pauses and begins again from the center, adding atop the rendering already there. In this way, the visualization acts as a record of frequency and length of use, creating a completely unique stamp of a user's private crafting session each time. To allow for communal grieving, while a user is crafting, other users' flower renderings would appear in real-time, populating the screen around their center flower (**Figure 14**); thus, the digital media intervention creates a window for collective validation without disrupting the private space of someone's memorial craft experience.

To push this deliverable further, EMMA "lives" in an engraved and customized wooden box to act as a container for EMMA's hardware components (**Figure 10**). Wood as the chosen container speaks to the material culture inherent to this project while also allowing for laser-cutting customization. Two holes on either side of the box support and protect a seamless connection between sensor, Arduino, and computer.

After initial testing, the prototype worked as expected (a screenshot from a demo video is included in **Figure 12**). Further user testing was developed for social distancing, as detailed in the next section.



Figure 12. A screenshot from a video demonstration.

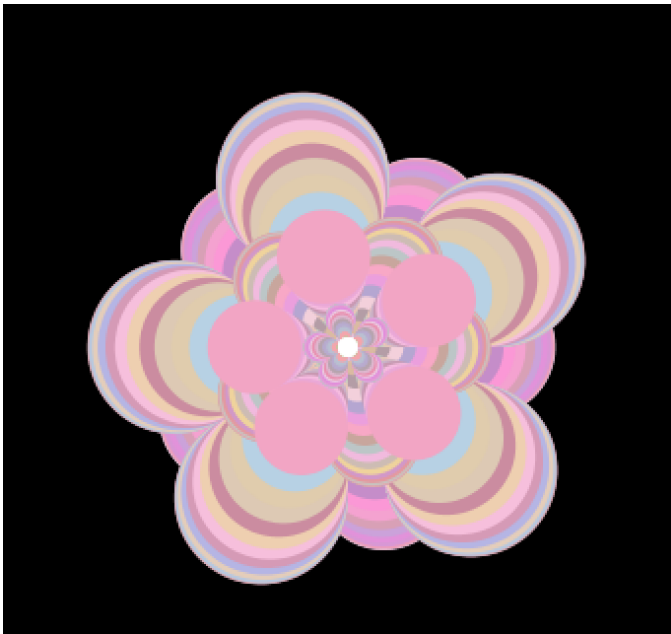


Figure 13. Flower visualization. *When the touch sensor is activated, a flower-like visualization renders on the connected web interface. The visualization is additive; when a user removes their hand, the rendering pauses, and when they touch it again, the flower begins to “grow” from the center outward.*

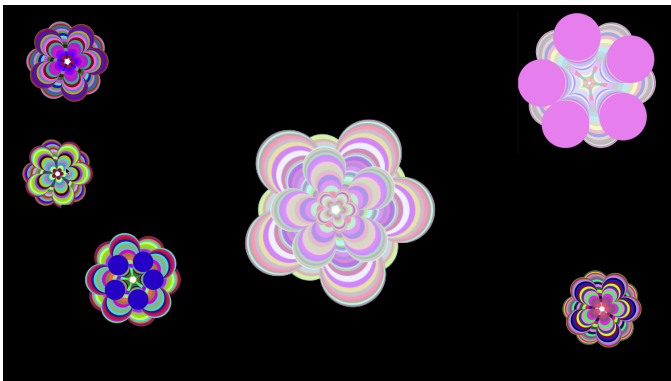


Figure 14. Interface populated with several flowers. *To merge shared and private spaces, these visualizations represent other users engaging with EMMA at the same time. The current user is represented by the flower in the center.*

5.1 User Interviews & Insights

Due to limited opportunities to test a prototype in person, I adapted user interviews to the work-from-home world by creating a thorough slide deck that introduced the problem space and provided a walk-through of both traditional English paper-piecing and the proposed intervention. In the user interviews, we discussed EMMA through the lens of the design criteria outlined in **Section 3.4**. The feedback and insights are summarized below.

a. On personalization and creative expression

Users agreed that paper piecing as a craft enabled creative expression, believing handcrafted practices to be “a healthy medium to process grief” and an intuitive means of translating emotions into tactile activities. One user mentioned the practice “seems limiting in terms of shape,” referencing the exclusive use of squares in this project. Another user was concerned that paper piecing would “still be something I’d have to learn,” which immediately led to considerations about refining the accessibility of this project for non-crafters.

b. On mindfulness

Mindfulness resonated with the users with one stating they would “equate it to meditating” and another seeing it as “therapeutic.” However, a concern that surfaced a couple times included the fact that EMMA introduces a screen to a practice that was previously screenless. One user spoke to this saying, “While it’s a low-pressure environment, you’re still looking at a screen. You’re also looking at other people interacting in your own interaction, so that could take you out of it.”

Based on this feedback, I’d want to refine and further test the web engagement in order to make sure it’s adding value to the experience. These interviews also inspired the idea of enabling further personalization for the visualizations, so users aren’t limited to flowers of a certain range of colors.

c. Balance of physical and digital

While the web engagement still needs refinement, users agreed to a balance of *interaction* between the material and digital components. Identifying a parallel to journaling their thoughts on paper, a user mentioned that “translating your mental thoughts into physical activities is something a lot of people do, so this feels like a form of that.” Regarding refinement, one user called out the sensory experience of the template itself, an aspect I hadn’t yet thought about; they said, “As long as the tool doesn’t feel weird or heavy, like as long as there’s no structural barrier, it seems fine.” Their comment brought to mind the desire for a free-standing tool, untethered to an Arduino or computer.

6. Discussion

Situated at the intersection of a memorialization matrix (**Figure 1**), EMMA operates within both a private, embodied space and a digital, shared space. By using a sewing template embedded with a touch sensor, a user may participate in English Paper Piecing (EPP) while receiving visual feedback through flower-like visualizations of others who are sharing in this practice.

Pedagogically, this project is in conversation with other digital media projects that bridge craft practices with digital engagement, like Heitlinger's "The Talking Quilt"⁴ and Golferign's framework on hybrid crafting.⁶ In particular, Danielle Rosner's Spyn system is the most influential to this work, as it exemplifies the concept of *craft as embodiment*. Drawing inspiration from the Spyn system, EMMA also explores digital intervention "without requiring changes to the finished product or the production process."¹⁶ With EMMA, the cultural practice of EPP still remains untouched by technological enhancement, just as it has been since its inception in the early eighteenth century. Supported further by research on grief and memory, including an interview with a subject matter expert, the digitally enhanced tool provides a window to shared grief, and thus, collective validation -- without disrupting the personalizable nature of the handcrafted practice.

In the future, I would like to focus on expanding accessibility efforts to further lower the barrier to entry, not only in terms of technical understanding but also craft enjoyment; the hope is that EPP will not be an intimidating practice to learn for craft beginners. I also want to make this experience more personalizable to deepen participants' emotional projection unto their handcrafted work.

7. Conclusion and future work

As a crafting tool, EMMA aims to support a personalizable, memorial crafting experience that exists in a private and shared space.

For future iterations, I want to revisit the digital visualizations and refine the meditative quality while incorporating personalizable options. The structure of the tool itself should be revisited as well with the aim of making it a free-standing sewing template. As a crafter myself, I found the templates available for online ordering unsuitable for beginners and ultimately for EMMA; because of that, I'd like to create my own resin molding of a template that will better support accessibility and the technical requirements of the touch sensor. On another note of accessibility, I'd also like to create instructional cards, or even a video, that will further lower the barrier to entry.

The impetus for emphasis on accessibility and personalization comes from seeing how this project has evolved in the context of current global grief. EMMA may have originally been intended for people wanting space to grieve and mourn a loss, but its applications unexpectedly and thankfully extend to those desiring a personal, tactile activity to process emotions with the reassurance that they are not alone.

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