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Out of the Cave

Traveling as Experiential Pedagogy in Design

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Out of the Cave: Traveling as Experiential Pedagogy in Design

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Abstract: COVID-19 affected the regular development of education. Academic trips were officially suspended in the whole of Spain, and university students had to give up the possibility of going abroad. The School of Architecture and Design of Universidad de Navarra (Spain) sought an alternative to these regular trips that could provide students with an experience as meaningful as traveling can be. This article explores the concept of travel as a transformative life experience and a tool for redesigning and creating frames for thinking. Drawing from a range of theoretical perspectives, it narrates the different phases, results, and reflections on a project developed by the faculty. Students were asked to bring their suitcases to the University Museum (MUN), which served as a platform for a different kind of journey. The project aims to reframe the concept of travel to help students navigate their own creative trajectories and approaches with an explorer's perspective and to make them aware of their patterns and limitations; this article argues for the importance of experiential learning and reflection in the classroom, with students actively involved from the start. Throughout the article, the authors provide diagrams, illustrations, and testimonies from students.

Keywords: Travel, Journey, Learning, Design, Pedagogy, Creativity, Frames, Conceptual Thinking

The Approach

Travel for Creative Thinking. Redesigning Frames of Thought

As human beings are involved in activities, they also engage in the creative process of designing and framing of the experiences that may arise. These frames orient our thinking (Bruner 1996) and ultimately construct a map for navigating the many experiences that make up reality.

Traveling may be one of the most impactful experiences human beings can undertake. It removes the individual from habit and familiar models and potentially exposes them to a new system of meaning. This often demands a creative response from the individual: a redesigning activity in which available models are transformed through each creative process. Hence, rather than asking “what does travel mean?” in this context, the question “where does it start?” seems more fitting.

If the understanding of travel stems from an objective perspective, the focus would be mainly on the spatial change. But a change of space without a change in thought often results in the definition of a new place with the same tools and approaches. As a result, it gets invaded with the same patterns.

The journey should start before displacement, that is, an inner journey that becomes the sketch, the blueprint for movement to become transformation (Orna Schatz-Oppenheimer and Esther Kalnisky 2014). Traveling starts in its design or conceptualization and becomes transformative as it evolves and responds to a new environment. Without an adequate frame, traveling becomes meaningless movement; without movement, there is barely any change in the structure. It is a dance, just like designing, between the familiar and the uncharted, the models

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one knows how to interpret and the meanings that need to be made. This idea travels from one work to another, from one creative life to the next.



Figure 1: Astronaut

Source: <https://www.radiosaw.de/file/astronaut-110801280jpg>

Within the postmodern globalization frames, the concept of destination is blurred and assimilated: one travels to find the same brands and franchises; food tastes almost identical; music no longer belongs to a place—it requires an active role to make an experience unique by shifting the focus of traveling to the process. Traveling involves a swirling movement that forces the individual to abandon their safety and wander into the unknown, although provisional.

This aspect doesn't deny that traveling is often extrinsically motivated, as it promises future, change or at least surprise. With those hopes, Odysseus and his heroes journeyed through the Mediterranean; the Silk Road was paved with that unmistakable yearning; the Atlantic yielded to the adventurous spirits of men looking for gold; even the Moon knows men, these creatures driven by an intrinsic force that struggles to breathe (Figure 1). From the beginning of time, man has moved. Human beings are perpetual passers-by seeking higher summits, granting that inner force all its wishes as if it were a matter of life and death.

The journey begins with an inner motion, and the firm decision to abandon what's safe and known. Maybe we are seeking to widen our current world; perhaps we need a new sphere to inhabit. The hope of finding it lives with us from the moment we are born. The value of the journey rests weighing our findings against the price paid for leaving the familiar.

It is clear, then, that traveling entails much more than physical movement. It is, above all, a movement of the mind, the heart and our volition, emotions or abilities to adapt and create meaning in uncharted territories. Traveling shakes the sleeping self into awareness, forcing it to travel across layers and labyrinths like Theseus (William Cannon Hunter 2021). It connects us not just with the heroes of humankind but the artist and designer that needs to craft and interpret

new spiritual landscapes. Such a journey would never leave the traveler the same as before. That is indeed the charm of traveling.

These reflections led Kierkegaard to proclaim life as the most important journey—the inner journey that allows us to meet at the depths of the self and conquer our centers (Nielsen 2017). It is such a vital journey that plenty have died before joyfully reaching this inner destination. Poet Machado insisted on traveling light, being able to inhabit the many subtle and weightless worlds one may encounter.

But how can we incorporate these dimensions into our pedagogical practice, especially during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic? For example, is it enough for students to analyze references and be exposed to stories, or do they need the experience? And yet, are all experiences guaranteed to transform and challenge past conceptualizations?

In the following pages, we introduce a project that draws from experiential learning and conceptual thinking through representation, analysis, and application of the meaning of traveling as a tool for designing and rethinking professional and creative journeys. This activity is part of the concept of comprehensive pedagogy focused on “educating the person” and not just the subject. We are convinced that students learn what they live, so pedagogy with a conscience emphasizes the education of the whole person above all else (Dobson 2011).



Figure 2: Prof. Alonso del Val, Dean of the School of Architecture and Design. Design Virtual Journey. Museo Universidad de Navarra April 13, 2021. Opening Speech. Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

The Experience

How to Integrate Travel (Legally) in the Classroom in COVID Times

A big part of teaching design entails teaching how to respond to different circumstances. It also entails teaching how to understand and think about things and experiences and finding connections and possibilities where conventional thought would find none (Crutchfield 1962). The approach does not disregard traditional thinking; it instead finds its root in it and aims to grow in many different directions. The project described in this article is an example of this kind of response.

The tradition to integrate and promote academic traveling and creative journeys has been a hallmark at the Universidad de Navarra School of Architecture & Design. Before the pandemic broke out, undergraduate students traveled to several destinations such as Berlin, Jerusalem, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Venice, and other western capitals. Professors had been adopting the role of academic guides and life guides, providing the students with a guided traveling experience, central to their development as humans and designers. In 2019 students completed the “Le Corbusier” route, visiting his main works in central Europe and exploring Rome, Amsterdam, and Vienna as European destinations. In the end, they landed in Bilbao and ventured into nearby villages to rediscover northern Spanish charm.

In the middle of a global pandemic, with shut borders and suitcases gathering dust inside our closets, it became more palpable than ever that students needed a reminder of the central importance of travel and where it starts (Figure 2):

Good evening everyone. Welcome to this marvelous journey through the world of Design. The school (of Architecture and Design) will provide you the opportunity to travel; what the pandemic stole from us we wish to give it back to you through this event, with this gathering that involves all what traveling means. It means to open a door, and every time we open one and venture outdoors we also discover something new, a window to ourselves. To travel is to look both outwards and inwards. What we see on the outside, which disrupts the familiar, reflects back to uncharted parts inside ourselves; new opportunities and features to our personalities through new ways of being, doing, interacting with new surroundings and environments. If we really dare to travel, we will be able to emulate, to transform, to change our interior.

[...]

Many move from one place to another, but remain unchanged. The real journey is that that transforms us in some way. That is how the greatest creators understood it throughout history: traveling was always a way to transform, change and become. These creators started traveling when borders started to open, unlike now, and when war surrendered to peace between European countries: Spaniards traveled to Italy and Flanders, Flemish to Spain, and thus the Grand Tour became a tradition. Why this yearning for travel? We all need to transform, to break with our day to day. This evening aims to provide that longed for rupture: a journey through a different reality that helps change your own. I hope this journey will transform you. [...] (Alonso del Val 2021).

The Project

“Virtual Design Journey”: Content and Purpose

The event was designed in place of the academic exchanges for the 2019–20 academic year.² It was meant as a reconceptualization of the activity of travel and not as an on-campus replica of an exchange, given that the two activities are different in nature, although both aimed at the development and learning of the students. The participants were a total of 154 students in their second and third years. The event gathered both Architecture and Design Degree, the first one represented by Professor Mario Galiana, who organized a virtual route through the work of the renowned French architect Le Corbusier, with the help of important architects and architecture professors of the national panorama who contributed their testimonies in relation to what the Swiss master of the twentieth century had meant to them.

The Design Degree owes this experience to the guidance of Professor Juan Roquette, with the invaluable collaboration of Professor Silvia Soler, which helped make the event a meaningful and memorable transformative experience for both students and teachers. Professors, invited artists, and brand managers also participated in the event. The guests shared their own interpretations, which helped the students create different paths of interpretation.

The main goal of the project aimed at generating a (guided) seism to shake the dust off the trunks that many of our students carry and help them reach an adventurous and open state of mind. It is a journey of the soul and mind, which, luckily, can elude global pandemics. Given the current inability to travel in the traditional sense, the event sought to become a rupture in the landscape of routine, pushing the students to tear open the tissue of the ordinary and dare to see themselves from a different perspective. A reflection around travel and design guided their journey.

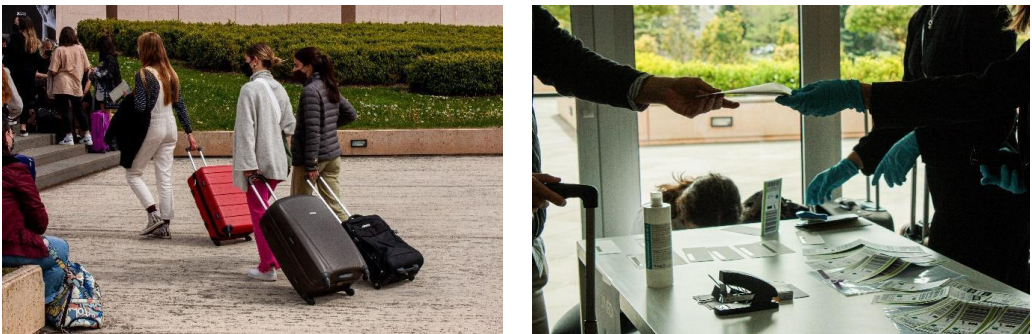


Figure 3: Design Virtual Journey. Arrival of Students.
Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021. Kickoff.
Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

² This event took place on April 13, 2021 at Museo Universidad de Navarra (Pamplona, Spain). It was coordinated by Professors Mario Galiana and Juan Roquette and managed by Maite Gil and M^a Jesús Freire, with the invaluable collaboration of the following: Silvia Soler; Lala Herreros; Marisa Oropesa; María Toral; Fernando Echarrri, Vicente Briñas, Izaskun García Ederra, Marcos del Pozo, Miren Clemente, Rocío Gracia, Fernando Alonso, Marta Contreras, María Mediavilla, Patricia Carnero, Elena Vadillo, Naroa Jiménez, Juan Carlos Sánchez, Marina Vidaurre, and Santiago de la Puente (Mago Numis). Many thanks also to the guests invited to participate in the event: Miguel Á. Alonso del Val; Alberto Campo Baeza; Emilio Tuñón Álvarez; Jesús Aparicio Guisado; Mariano González Presencio; Alberto Morell Sixto; Héctor Fernández Elorza; Luis Suárez Mansilla; Asier Santas; Jorge Tarrago; Conrado Capilla; Eduardo Pérez Gómez; Cristóbal Toral; Antonio Marcos (The Cut Project-Made in the Neighbourhood); David Iglesias and Melina Carranza (Oficio Studio).



DEPARTURES				
TIME	DESTINATION	FLIGHT	GATE	REMARKS
12:39	LONDON	CL 903	31	CANCELLED
12:57	SYDNEY	UQ5723	27	CANCELLED
13:08	TORONTO	IC5984	22	CANCELLED
13:21	TOKYO	AM 608	41	DELAYED
13:37	HONG KONG	IC5471	29	CANCELLED
16:00	MUN:DIS	192021	02	ON TIME
14:19	BERLIN	AM5021	28	CANCELLED
14:35	NEW YORK	ON 997	11	CANCELLED
14:54	PARIS	MG5870	23	DELAYED
15:10	ROME	RI5324	43	CANCELLED



Figure 4: Design Virtual Journey.
 Boarding Passes, Baggage Check-in Identification Code, Flight Panel at the Event
 Source: Illustrations by Izaskun Garcia. Universidad de Navarra ©

The sequence was carefully drafted from start to finish. The atrium of Museo Universidad de Navarra (MUN) transformed into an airport hall for a day, where students arrived carrying their suitcases (Figure 3). Initially, students had been told to come prepared with their suitcases to embark on a “different” trip (Figure 4). On purpose, they had no further information about the content of the journey, the guests or the activities they would experience. Through curiosity and surprise, it is intended to activate the proactive learning capacities of students, following a pedagogical technique for transforming a traditional studio environment into one where Guided Critical Questioning (GCQ) is at the forefront (Westervelt et al. 2011).

They only knew that they had to come with their “empty” suitcases in which they could put some “treasure,” like those *objets trouvés* found by surprise while traveling and carefully stored and brought back home as precious souvenirs.



Figure 5: Design Virtual Journey. Meeting and Discussion with Experts.
Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021. Kickoff
Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

This became the landmark of their first encounter with prestigious personalities from the worlds of Design, Architecture, Business, and Arts, who devote their creativity to working and reflecting around the idea of traveling: students met artists, architects, designers, businessmen, artisans, curators, and relevant people in the world of architecture and design. The professional and academic level of the guests was very high (Figure 5); for instance, Architecture students received the live testimony of Alberto Campo Baeza³ (2019 Gold medal of Spanish architecture), Emilio Tuñón,⁴ and other relevant architects, while Design students met with Antonio Marcos,⁵ the former creative director at *Carolina Herrera* and *Oscar de la Renta*, and with Cristóbal Toral, an internationally awarded artist who dedicated his life to reflecting around suitcases as “mobile closets,” “essential containers,” or “second mind,” conceptualizations that help take on the inner journeys of the soul.

³ Professor Emeritus of the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Madrid and Visiting Professor at the main Schools of Architecture and Design worldwide. Among the latest distinctions, the following are remarkable: Tessenow Medal; “Arnold Brunner Award” from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York; Honorary Fellow by the American Institute of Architects (2019); Gold Medal of Architecture awarded by the Superior Council of the Spanish Architects’ Associations (2020) and National Architecture Award of Spain (2020).

⁴ Professor of the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Madrid; Cyprus Association of Architects Award 2016; COAM PRIZE 2016.

⁵ Degree in Fine Arts (University of Salamanca), Degree in Design (Edinburgh College of Art) Master in ISEM. Prestigious graphic designer with clients such as *Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza*, *Ministry of Culture of Spain*, *Chupa-Chups*, *Iberia*, *Fiera di Bologna*, *The Bikuben Foundation* (Denmark), and so on. Head of Design for *Loewe*, *Scalpers*, *Carolina Herrera*, *Massimo Dutti*, *Purificación García* and *Adolfo Domínguez*. Creative Director of *El Ganso* and *Óscar de la Renta*. Founder and creative director of his own brand “THE CUT PROJECT: Made in the neighbourhood.”



Figure 6: Design Virtual Journey. Guests & Students Sharing Experiences at the Main Theater.
Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021

Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

Several talks and exchanges took place around these and other topics related to the role of designers and architects in the world of travel and movement (Figure 6). The invited architects reflected on the importance of Le Corbusier's works and explained how it had influenced them in the development of their professional careers. As per the Design guests, different perspectives and stages of the designing process were discussed: the making of traveling products, the generation of user experiences, and the cultural reflection of our times through fashion surrounding travel. Among the speakers, artist Cristóbal Toral, fashion designer Antonio Marcos, and artisans David Iglesias and Melina Carranza⁶ discussed questions regarding the designer and artist way, their life journeys with its many twists and turns, and the relationship between the designer and the world. Some extracts of the conversations follow. To the question of how a creative person can build their own trajectory, Cristóbal Toral, self-made artist and avid traveler, provided the following answer:

For me traveling is something I've been experiencing from the start of my life. My first trip was to the marshes of Seville, they paid well; I was on the fields with my dad, which made coal. And then I learned you could make good money at the marshes and that's where I first traveled carrying my suitcase, leaving my home behind [...]. After that, I moved to Seville with a scholarship to study Arts and—with that same eagerness to travel—I moved to Madrid two years later to continue my studies. I ended up in New York with a March Foundation scholarship [...]. This was my start towards new horizons... I think traveling is so important, essential to human beings, that from the very beginning humans were nomads, looking for better climates, better lands [...]. It is a constant of humanity: looking for that essential journey in life. (Toral 2021)

⁶ David Iglesias (Law degree from Universidad Complutense de Madrid) and Melina Carranza (Architect from the Universidad Iberoamericana de Puebla) are founders and directors of *Oficio Studio*, workshop dedicated to the production of handcrafted leather products of high quality and good design. Oficio Studio is one of the 10 founding members of the Spanish Society of Contemporary Crafts (SACO).



Figure 7: “Art Installation with Luggage” by Cristóbal Toral/Artist Cristóbal Toral at His Studio

Source: Cristóbal Toral ©

Cristóbal Toral, like other creatives, exemplifies the ability of artists to abandon their *microcosmos* and dare to explore the bigger world, opening up a dialogue that lasts for life (Figure 7). On a similar note, fashion designer Antonio Marcos described his career as a long journey of discovery, where a straight path doesn’t always lead to our preferred destination. To the question of how he would describe his professional and personal journey, he described the different obstacles he faced and how a creative approach allowed him to keep moving forward:

I started like master Toral, studying Arts. In my case, I didn’t know the path towards fashion, or maybe fashion had not presented itself as my calling yet [...]. I studied arts with the idea of becoming an artist, but I soon realized that was not my path and I saw I had something to give to the fashion world: functionality through creativity; we were talking about transversality before; during my years of study in Edinburgh, I coexisted with students of design, architecture, painting, and I realized that art wasn’t that different from design, especially fashion design, which involves drawing, illustration, sculpting, and notions in architecture and communication. It was this broadness that seduced me. (Marcos 2021)

Antonio sees his life and career as a never-ending journey. Always on the move, he provided an insightful experience of what it means to be an explorer of life and how that may demand moving forward continuously. Almost eighteen years after he started his journey, he founded his brand “The Cut Project,” a landmark after nearly two decades of seafaring through the infinite world of fashion design.

David Iglesias and Melisa Carranza shared their journey toward their leather shop, the importance of working and “thinking with your hands” and the challenges of abandoning known and familiar routes, and the growth that stems from it (Figure 8). Both their journeys required a challenge and a turn. Creatives often face these scenarios that later become a work of art: the craft of an individual path through a creative response to life’s innumerable questions (Sennet 2008).

Wanderers, seafarers, passengers; crew, pilgrims, pilots; explorers, passers-by or hunters... the project’s primary goal was to encourage students in their journeys without shying away from its demands; to shake away defeat and trace their routes with a finer compass, discovering unexplored lands. The event encouraged them to inhabit and wander these new rooms and landscapes and to make meaning on their own.



Figure 8: David Iglesias at Oficio Studio
 Source: David Iglesias and Melina Carranza, Oficio Studio ©

The act concluded with a graphic work by each of the students participating in the event, expressing their own experience graphically throughout the different phases of the journey. A final piece was composed with all their contributions. Lastly, architecture students exchanged their boarding passes for their suitcases, filled with the five volumes of Le Corbusier's *Œuvre Complete* (the complete works edited by Willy Boesiger). On their side, Design Students retrieved their luggage filled with a high-definition tablet that the School gifted them, alongside a course in digital illustration (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Students Surprised with the Gifts that University of Navarra Gave Them as Souvenirs of Their Virtual Journey: Le Corbusier's *Œuvre Complete* ed. by W. Boesiger and a High-definition Tablet, Including a Course in Digital Illustration

Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

This unique “voyage” allowed the students to reflect on many of the deep issues behind the designing activity. Unfortunately, the urgent often overshadows the important. Therefore, the event allowed students to reflect on topics such as the integration of their own experiences as part of their creative trajectory; collaborations between artists and designers; the management of creativity within a team working for a brand; the economic viability of creative ideas; craftsmanship and technology in the twenty-first century; the manual and the digital; sustainability and honesty in a job well done; luxury and needs, and so on. An exciting roundtable discussion ensued in which both guests took part and students took the floor to engage in a genuine conversation that enriched all the interlocutors. After this peculiar journey, students will face new horizons and uncharted seas (Figure 10): “Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar”⁷ (“Walker, there’s no path, the path is made by walking”).



Figure 10: Students Check Out After Retrieving Their Suitcases Filled with “Educational Souvenirs.”
 “Design Virtual Journey.” Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021
 Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

The Goal

Experiential Knowledge in the Classroom: Learning as a Transformative Experience

The way we understand learning derives significantly from the way we have been taught and the models we encountered in the process. Instructional activity in higher institutions has been experiencing a long-needed change. However, it is still stubbornly focused on models as goals and learning as work, and creative activities are often understood as complements to a system built to extinguish creative play.

Project-based learning, gamification, and other approaches have become popular within higher education institutions. However, the frame with which students understand and make sense of these activities prevails; even well-intended and carefully designed teaching opportunities can lose their impact and become meaningless, sometimes more demanding tasks. This explains why many of our students still understand learning and creativity in the same terms, which often leads them in the wrong direction.

We need to design learning experiences that allow students to meaningfully engage with the learning process (Burns and Heather 2013), not just isolated activities or tasks—this would

⁷ Famous words written by Spanish poet. Antonio Machado. “Proverbios y Cantares” (XXIX) at *Campos de Castilla*.

rather make sense later, once the context has been transformed and redesigned. It requires teachers and mentors to rethink the metaphor we use to understand learning and creativity, reconceptualizing them as journey and play.



Figure 11: Students Make Diagrams that Graphically Express the Evolution of Their Creative Trajectory. “Design Virtual Journey.” Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021
Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

From a pedagogical point of view, we turn to a sociocultural perspective (Guerra García 2020), rooted in Vygotskian psychology. A deeper understanding of the terms is required in order to apply them in pedagogical contexts and creative projects. Firstly, a reframing of learning as a journey changes the focus from results to process and from destination to the journey in itself. Learning starts with each student, and it began way before they entered a higher education institution. The force that keeps them going should not be extinguished once they enter but rather transformed and redesigned to suit each learner to help them become designers of the self.

This transformative developmental force (Negueruela-Azarola 2020) is creativity as play. The term should move beyond its normal apprehension: although it might bring joy, fun, or excitement to some learners and improve the general attitude of a group toward a project, it is its transformative and developmental potential that argues in favor of its application as a frame for instructional activity as well as a tool for the students to face the different challenges that learning and developing demand.

From a SCT perspective, there are four features of developmental play as outlined by Vygotsky (1978). It is characterized for being historical, since it promotes going beyond the present; it is also imaginative and regulatory, as it creates alternative rule-based worlds; it is intentional in the sense that it promotes self-regulation and autonomy; and it is finally conceptual, as input is internalized and transformed into concepts that later guide the learner’s worldview.



Figure 12: Students Make Diagrams that Graphically Express the Evolution of Their Creative Trajectory.
 “Design Virtual Journey.” Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021.

Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

Incorporating meaningful play into those terms reframes creativity as a tool for integrating past, present, and future and transforms the designer into an historical being (Schatz-Oppenheimer and Kalnisky 2014). It is not about amusement or excitement but about identifying learning with a process where creativity is needed at different stages, in different ways, to help the learners become someone different through it.

This was exactly the purpose that moved us to organize with students and guests at several participatory workshops during the event. One of them was that the students had to represent what luggage they would put in their “intellectual and sensitive suitcases” if they had to start their professional career imminently toward a utopian destination. Another workshop consisted of students making their academic careers, their interests, their difficulties, and opportunities visible through visual codes of graphic design. Other workshops allowed students to explore the possibilities of taking abstract videos that symbolized different ways of overcoming obstacles and professional growth, and so on (Figures 11 and 12).

This article recounts an enjoyable activity aimed at finding new ways of experiencing situations and feelings that can be made in complex moments such as those of traveling. It does this through the use of various collaborative design and project-based learning tools. Graphic results expressed by the workshop and the articulation of the activities pretend to show the ease of replicating this academic experience by other institutions facing the same issues. A schematization of the total process, in the form of a list with a hypothesis of timing, is provided to make the experience easier to replicate (Figure 13).

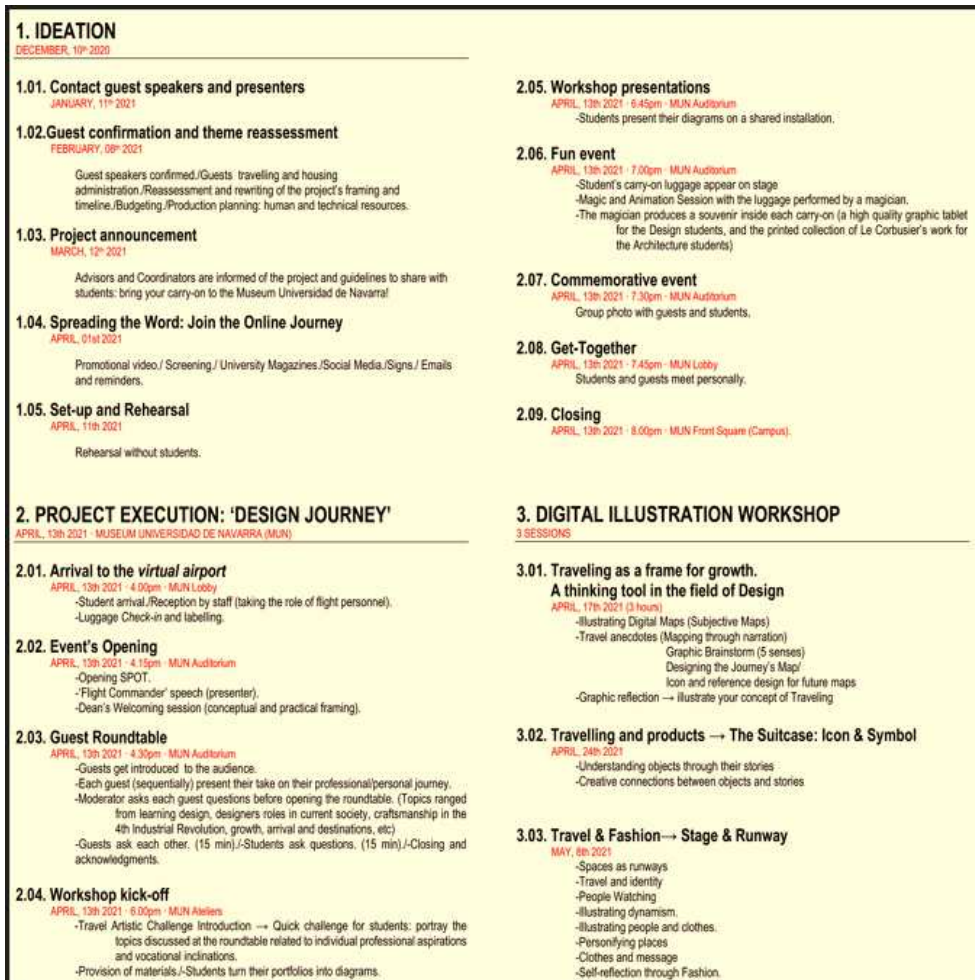


Figure 13: Total Process. Schematization. Timing.
“Design Virtual Journey.” Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021.
Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

The Training

Designers as Explorers of Life

The “Design Virtual Journey” continued with a digital illustration workshop carried out by freelance illustrator and comic artist Isabel Torrubia, which contributed to the graphic course that later helped explain the vision of the different creative paths a student may take. The workshop was designed before the event to ensure that it fit the project’s goals and consisted of three main sessions revolving around the concept of travel and its graphic expression. The focus was also on developing a unique drawing style through illustration, exploring the limitless features of this approach to graphic expression.

The first session discussed illustrated maps and the concept of a map itself. Students drew from traditional features of a geographical map and translated them into personal reference for a map that helped navigate their creative journey. The idea of place was also discussed to help students see how the same place may be perceived and navigated differently depending on our inner map and what we consider relevant as individuals.



Figure 14: Students' Portfolios Showing the Evolution of Their Creative Trajectory.
 "Design Virtual Journey." Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021
 Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

The students took their own academic and professional portfolios as a starting point (Figure 14). From these, they reinterpreted the evolution of their own trajectory. Then they expressed it through a conceptual map to understand the formal consistency in how they think and execute their projects. In this way, each student found diagrams that better explain their system of thinking and their approach to creativity.

The second session revolved around travel and objects. With the suitcase as reference, students were asked to repurpose this object and rethink how they think about objects in general. How we interact with them through design and creativity can make an object a reflection and extension of ourselves.

The final session discussed fashion and travel. Fashion can become a form of traveling through our different selves, a door to our identity, and a way in which we can orient ourselves around the world. Fashion design is in its way world building, and illustration can help capture an identity or create one. Students were asked to design pieces they would never wear and reflect on the implications of the relationship between fashion and identity as designers. They also illustrated a city, dressing up a mannequin instead of turning to buildings, streets, and parks.

Throughout these exercises, they discussed style and the experimentation that illustration requires. Just like traveling, it opens up a new world where they are asked to make creative decisions to arrive at a destination that is their own identity as illustrators, designers, and artists. The workshop closed with two sessions where students presented their portfolios as maps to understand their creative journeys. This exercise helps them gain perspective on their path, the places where they may get lost, and the resources they have to conquer uncharted territories. The goal is not a finished product but an exploration of their creative abilities, a never-ending project that stays open and changes alongside the traveler.

The experience provided by the School of A & D served as a model for the students to understand not only traveling and its key importance in any creative life but also their own life as a journey and design as a choice and tool in the process of becoming. By the end of their “Design Virtual Journey” at MUN, students presented their portfolios as their personal trajectories so they could use them not just as platforms to showcase their work but also as a tool for reflection and a map to understand their own journey, find direction, or identify possible problems they may now be able to anticipate. Designing projects based on experiential learning means guiding the student through their own experiences so they become able to reconcile both parts, past and present, through creative means and ultimately become an explorer with their gaze onward.

The testimonies and examples are many, but we chose an umbrella to include those who lived the experience from two main perspectives: that of the wanderer (second and third testimonies) and that of the student (first and last). Designing projects based on experiential learning means guiding the student through their own experiences so they become able to reconcile both parts, past and present, through creative means and ultimately become an explorer with their gaze onward. This experience helps students to find their “creative identity” as a zone of encounter that engages the designer, the client, and the audience. This provides opportunities for student designers to explore their own emerging values while also seeking to engage with society, with our time, and with their own trajectories (Fairbairn 2009).

Roots and Travel

Maintaining Cultural Identity through Consistency and Simplification, some students found the best self-explanation to their trajectory as creative people. By simplifying and searching for the essentials in their local traditions, some students can find their identity as creatives and project their work into the future (Figure 15).



Figure 15: Portfolio Excerpts. Creative Trajectory Interpreted within the Concept “Roots and Travel.” “Design Virtual Journey.” Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021
 Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

Time and Travel

Transforming Old Models to fit Current Demands and Merging Past & Present, students can find a creative strategy consisting of analogy, flexibility, and adaptation. These techniques, which relate to Darwin’s laws of evolution of the species, make more sense than ever in a changing world where one of the mottos is “adapt or perish” (Figure 16).

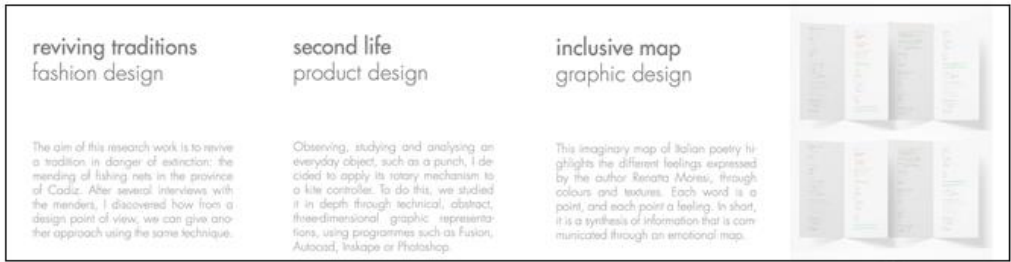


Figure 16: Portfolio Excerpts. Creative Trajectory Interpreted within the Concept “Time and Travel.”
 “Design Virtual Journey.” Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021
 Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

Mind and Travel

Designing Habitable Worlds by Simplifying Routes is directly related to the techniques commonly used in the sciences applied to artificial intelligence and the handling of Big Data. The application of statistical mathematics, stochastics, and correlation analysis between data lines shed light on the most feasible forecasts that can be applied to future scenarios, also in creativity. This way of proceeding, quantifying reality as much as possible, and measuring it with parameters that can be represented graphically, sheds light on how a creative person approaches the construction of their professional and creative path (Figure 17).

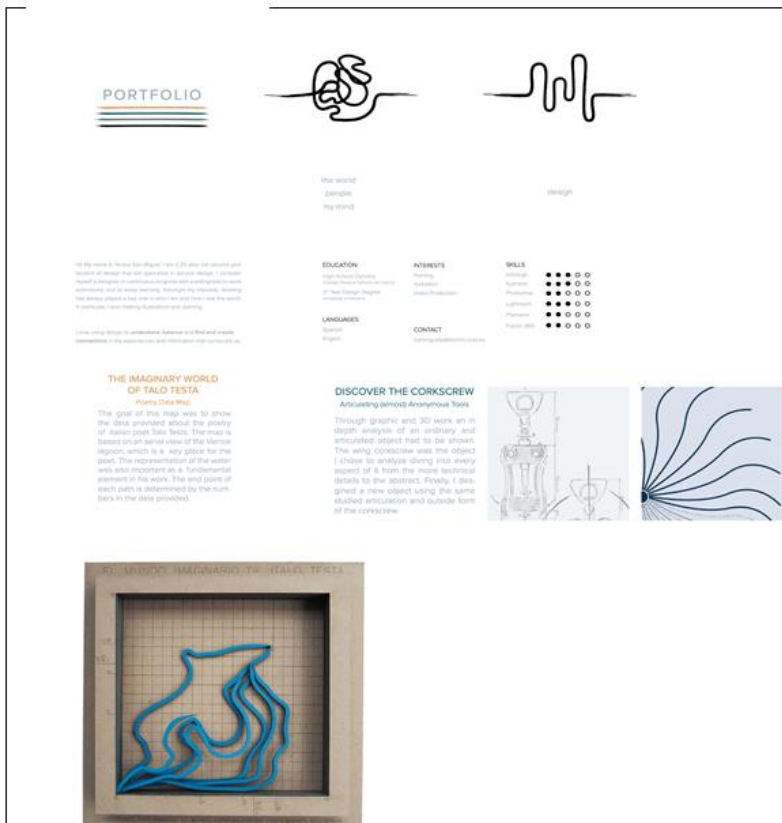


Figure 17: Portfolio Excerpts. Creative Trajectory Interpreted within the Concept “Mind and Travel.”
 “Design Virtual Journey.” Museo Universidad de Navarra. April 13, 2021.
 Source: Universidad de Navarra ©

The project also helped professors and mentors better understand their students, their creative tendencies and reasons, and how their journey could go astray. From observing this particular group of students, we came up with different archetypes of travelers. But the ultimate goal is to help them become explorers, that is, to integrate the element of play into their life, without excluding it out of fear or misunderstanding, and without relying solely on its driving force without direction:

- In black, the tendencies that each student manifests in their work. These tendencies are often automatic and come from a tradition of understanding and framing experiences in a given way, not transformed or interpreted.
- In red, the route redesigned: aims at maximizing the experience of the journey by incorporating or adapting play in a way that serves each designer.

From Target to Surroundings (Figure 18)

Some students find comfort in complying with the norms and find nonpersonal projects reassuring. They don't have to wander too far off or abandon familiar models. They are usually very responsible, honest, and humble. But these qualities shine brighter when they dare to explore the dark corners of their personality, when they dare incorporate their history and memory into their creative process. They're usually efficient and very aware of what limits them and the projects they partake in:

We have the fact of doing things or watching things being done. The most literal emulation of a journey or trip can work if the rest of the context fits, responding to the loss of something and not its substitute.



Figure 18: Diagram "From Target to Surroundings"
Source: Isabel Torruba ©

From Heeling to Direction (Figure 19)

Other students benefit from an almost endless driving force. But without context or direction, their work can lack coherence or structure and become cryptic or too chaotic to comprehend. Design and art is a dialogue of the artist and designer with the world, and direction not only helps the student orient their work but also guides others throughout its interpretation.



Figure 19: Diagram "From Heeling to Direction"
Source: Isabel Torruba ©

From Past to History (Figure 20)

Memory is essential for the artist and designer. However, the present needs the same attention and care that some students give to the past. Although past experience is a powerful creative resource, it has to constantly move forward by recreating the myth and redesigning paths that respond to current needs. Helping the students incorporate this baggage without it becoming too heavy but without losing its original value is key to their personal and academic development.



Figure 20: Diagram "From Past to History"
Source: Isabel Torrúbia ©

From Peaks to Curves (Figure 21)

Understanding the creative process as part of the greater journey of one's life is a reframing that could help students regulate their efforts and energy when they undertake a new project. It is ultimately a change in perspective, so they become aware of the whole map, their current location, and the meaning of their project in that whole.

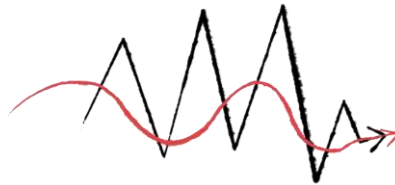


Figure 21: Diagram "From Peaks to Curves"
Source: Isabel Torrúbia ©

From Comfort to Controlled Crisis (Figure 22)

Comfort threatens creativity. Learning and developing create crises, and it takes time to understand what they are, to master the creative process of surviving them, and to integrate them as part of life's journey. Some students experience their first crisis during this part of their journeys. Understanding their value and use for creativity is essential to create a steady growth and help the student shake the convulsion and be ready for the next.



Figure 22: Diagram "From Comfort to Controlled Crisis"
Source: Isabel Torrúbia ©

From Closed to Open (Figure 23)

To design and make art is to be brave. To explore is to be brave. But nothing we tell our students, no matter how inspirational our words, will impact them without the right experiences.

Most of them need to experience before they believe; they need implicit models, references, and reflection more than the overt instruction (Cope and Kalantzis 2009).



Figure 23: Diagram "From Close to Open"
 Source: Isabel Torrubia ©

The foregoing figures should be interpreted as part of a more extensive journey, the journey of becoming through challenges and creativity. They represent stages more than destinations, and they're journeys in themselves, because they could become models of interpretation and orientation in the learner's creative pursuits. They also represent challenge and victory, a dance that never ends, the ultimate work of the designer, which is a work of reconciliation and resolution (Munari 1971).

The Aftermath

Testimonies and Reflections

Testimonies and reflections in this section illustrate the impact and nuance the event had on the students:

The journey to MUN was an innovative idea, and I think it's an interesting initiative in response to COVID times. One of the activities I liked was the online participation of the guests and them sharing their vision of Le Corbusier. **It helped me understand** the different guests but also Le Corbusier through them. The gift at the end was a beautiful detail (books) and it will **help us interpret** the work of the Swiss architect.

It's quarter to nine and we need to get going. We walk through campus, lifting our suitcases to avoid their noisy rumbling, and praying not to come across any acquaintances... We reach the museum. We are probably the last ones and everyone waits at the entrance, buzzing chatter and gossip. We don't know what to expect. **We are surprised** by a check-in stand at the entrance, where we leave our suitcases. We enter a spacious conference room, ready to depart. Before our eyes, some familiar faces and others we yet don't know start revealing us their secrets. **We wander through** the work of Le Corbusier. Without barely moving from our place, it feels as if we traveled half the world in a second [...].

Despite not having traveled due to COVID-19, this experience made me **appreciate what traveling means**, since it's not just about going to a specific place, but also about spending time with the people you're traveling with, or **meeting new interesting ones**, like the guests. The journey is about **growing in knowledge** and education in multiple disciplines, I believe. [...] Above all, we learned what a journey is without explicitly traveling, and that's incredible.

The experience was presented to us as our study trip substitute, and I think that for obvious reasons it's a stretch [...]. The conversation with the guests was interesting; speaking about different business models, alongside their experience of **getting there**. I'm grateful for some aspects, but the topic of traveling seemed forced, and it didn't help when someone talked about the experience some of their previous trips had provided.

The testimonies and examples are many (Figure 24), but we chose an umbrella to include those who lived the experience from two main perspectives: the one of the wanderer (second and third testimonies) and the one of the student (first and last). Designing projects based on experiential learning means guiding the student through their own experiences so they become able to reconcile both parts, past and present, through creative means and ultimately become an explorer with their gaze onward.

DN

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PUNTO FINAL Oroz



...OH, SI...
**VENGA...
SORPRENDEME...**



Como 'premio', los participantes se llevarón en sus maletas "La obra completa de Le Corbusier", y una tablet y un curso de Diseño Gráfico.

Magia para viajar

Alumnos de Arquitectura y Diseño, que vieron truncados sus viajes el año pasado por la pandemia, acaban de experimentar una travesía virtual para conocer las obras de Le Corbusier, así como las principales capitales de la moda

NOELIA GORRIBEA *Perpleja*

DICEN que la magia te transporta allí donde el diseñador desea. A ese mundo en el que los vasos de plástico son capaces de volar, dablarse las cucharas o ver cómo las monedas se multiplican ante tus ojos. Magia, ese

concepto que nos atrapa y nos intriga casi a partes iguales fue precisamente el hilo conductor que elevó a la categoría de "real" un viaje imaginado por la pandemia.

Un total de 151 estudiantes de los grados de Arquitectura y Diseño de la Universidad de Navarra acaban de tener la oportunidad de realizar aquella experien-

BLANCO SOBRE NEGRO
Dulanz

AYUSO, BOSÉ, ¿Y QUIÉN MÁS?

LOS socialistas tienen entre ceja y ceja a Isabel Díaz Ayuso. Allí donde tienen ocasión, y eso que está en pleno fragor la campaña madrileña, aprovechan para alzarle. Que venga a cuento ya es otra historia. Pero hay que seguir el hilo escrito por Ferraz. En el último pleno del Parlamento de Navarra, la presidenta María Chivite aludió en varias ocasiones a la política de la presidenta y candidata del PP en Madrid para criticar a Javier Eguaras, al que equiparó con Miguel Bosé y sus ideas negacionistas. Castañeda Salido le faltó buscarle un hueco a Rocío Chivite acusa a Navarra Soma de instrumentalizar el dolor genero con la pandemia, pero le faltó tiempo para decir que Madrid tiene un 55% más de fallecidos en pleno debate con Eguaras. Aunque no lo parezca, las urnas para votar el 4 de mayo las van a poner en la capital, y serán los madrileños los que tendrán que solucionar sus propios problemas. En Navarra bastante tenemos con los nuestros. Y ahí, la presidenta tiene torca.

cia por las principales capitales europeas que deberían haber tenido hace un año. Un periplo diseñado para conocer las obras de Le Corbusier (villa Savoye, la capilla de Ronchamp...), además de los centros neurálgicos de la moda (Milán, París, Viena...), y que, contra todo pronóstico, se realizó dentro de las paredes del Museo de Arte de la Universidad.

Un obra real

Ataviados con sus maletas, los jóvenes vivieron una "experiencia formativa" de la mano del mago Numis. En estos viajes virtuales, los 62 estudiantes de Arquitectura tuvieron que enfrentarse a varios retos que tenían como punto central el conocimiento de la obra del afamado padre de la materia, Le Corbusier. Incluso compartieron experiencias con profesionales como Alberto Campo Baeza (Premio Nacional de Arquitectura 2020) o Emilio Tuñón (Premio Mies Van der Rohe).

En cuanto a los 89 alumnos del grado de Diseño, el viaje imaginario llevó al escenario del MUX al artista Cristóbal Foral (cuya obra escultórica toma precisamente a la maleta como elemento central); a Melina Carranza, Antonio Marco y David Iglesias. Tras la mesa redonda, los estudiantes contruyeron su propia obra artística con la interpretación que "el no viaje" les había evocado; obra que se expone en la propia Escuela de Arquitectura de la Universidad de Navarra.

Figure 24: Event was Covered by the Main Regional Newspaper. Article Entitled "Magia para viajar" (Magic for Traveling). Diario de Navarra (Saturday, April 24, 2021) Source: Diario de Navarra ©

Downloaded by Juan Luis Roquette Rodr?guez-Villamil on Mon Feb 05 2024 at 03:27:05 AM CST

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Conclusion

A Roadmap for a Future in Design

How students usually understand traveling is very often predetermined by context and has seldom been challenged or questioned in a discipline that nurtures and develops significantly because of it. The Design Virtual Journey offered students an opportunity to rethink their framing around what traveling entails. In this way, the deeper meaning of traveling emerged as a transformative experience instead of a mere change of scenery.

The event closed with a call to memory and reflection, in words we would like to translate here, whose message resonates with the idea that inspired this project: that life and journey are one and the same, and the student who becomes designer can travel between different realms, make meaningful connections and ultimately create a better world, regardless of the scale. With that spirit, care, and optimism, the event concluded, but the journey did not:

We reached the end of the event, of this day about suitcases and baggage.

You are a suitcase. Not because some of you come from far away; not because you move from one place to the next; not because you have wheels instead of legs. You are, because your selves are containers, filling up with many ‘things’. The important part is that this suitcase carries enough good things for your lives. Suit up well! Equip yourselves with all that serves you, with all that is useful for good and bad times. Be mindful of what you allow inside. Pack smart, weighing the usefulness and versatility of a piece of clothing in case the cold bites... one doesn’t carry seven pairs of shoes and just one shirt... Suit up smart! This is a magnificent moment in your lives to get prepared, to pick and choose everything that helps build the self. This is the most valuable equipment that this University can provide.

Let’s also include journeys and memory. Traveling, journeys, they open our eyes. Traveling helps us discover outward and at the same time explore inwards. “We can only design from memory; we can only project from memory,” I often tell my students: “Only those who remember can create.” This is the great paradox: the greatest creators are always those with extraordinary memory. Recall Picasso’s eyes, camera-like, always reflecting and capturing? He was not the most intellectual, or even skilled. There were probably other painters even more talented than him. But he had the ability to gather and carry references, to memorize them. The greatest creatives, the ones with oceanic imaginations, also possess great memory. And I’m saying this when memory is threatened in our education. Without memory, we can’t create; it is simply not possible. The connection between mind and hand needs memory, and now more than ever needs travel. (Alonso del Val 2021)

The way we think about traveling is often mediated by the culture of image and pleasure that plagues our time. Being such a central element of creative and personal development, pedagogical approaches that seek to challenge shallow conceptualizations while providing the experience to rebuild and examine ideas are fundamental. The Design Virtual Journey offered an opportunity for students to redesign what traveling entails. Thinking through designing was the goal of the project, not as an end destination but as a tool for continuing each individual journey.

We recognize that a deeper analysis of the students’ individual work could offer a more detailed trajectory on their transformation. However, from the students’ testimonies and

projects, an awareness emerged where they could examine their thinking processes, identify obstacles, and sketch pathways to overcome setbacks. The event modeled a creative response to challenging times, both in content and in form.

Experiences and practices that model responses and attitudes offer a solid and coherent approach to teaching creative disciplines, such as Design. Students need to be engaged within higher education institutions to become involved humans and professionals once out in the world. Although this particular project was designed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it offers a model that could be replicated in other contexts and institutions that seek to enrich students' trajectories and learning outcomes through experiential learning.

By introducing experience, we allow learners to become active participants in their learning process. Future studies could examine how experiential learning impacts and changes the roles of educators and students and what practices encourage an active and self-assessing development in the learners. We hope this work encourages other academics and creatives to use their resources and life journeys in the context of teaching and learning Design.

Attached is the diagram (Figure 25) that illustrates the foundations of this pedagogical approach to travel as an experiential learning activity that fosters the design and consolidation of a creative identity in the learners:

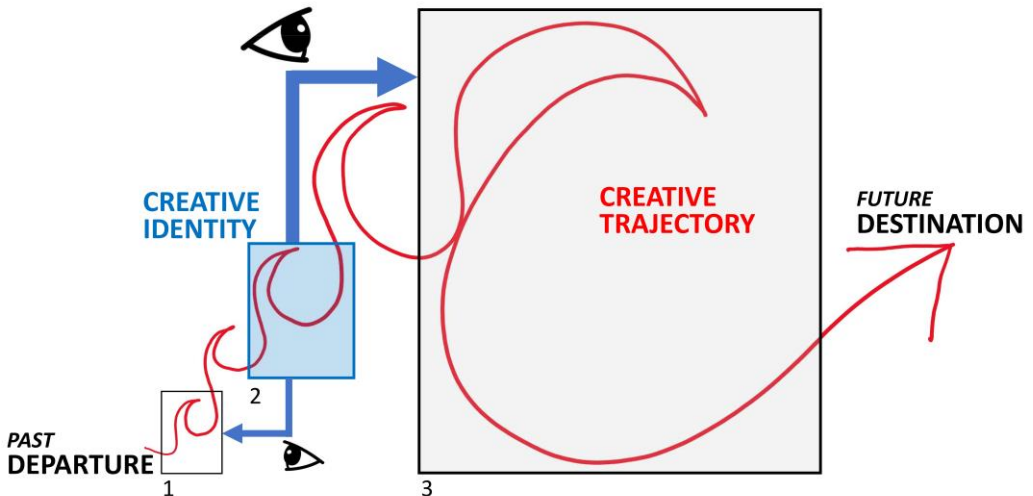


Figure 25: Conceptual Diagram
Source: Juan L. Roquette ©

Points 1, 2, and 3 correspond to the following subjects:

1. Early Experiences/First Impressions.
2. Creative Development/Conscious Journeys (projects)/The Self versus the World.
3. Creative Trajectory/Journeying Toward the Unknown/Professional Direction and Personal Achievement.

Design's Virtual Journey constitutes an example of Phase 2: a conscious and sought-after journey where physical movement isn't as crucial as the individual's inner motion and creative response to external demands. From this outside-of-the-self journey, one returns with a consolidated creative and personal identity from which to project a future trajectory.

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