

Explorative Research and Praxis

Storytelling in advertising

We all have stories, here is mine ...

Worked in a community centre drawing posters.

Studio role working on newspapers and magazines.

Trained as a graphic designer as a mature student.

Worked at graphic design agencies.

Joined the world of advertising.

Worked at a top 30 UK agency in many roles including: Graphic Designer, Art Director, Copywriter and Creative Director.

Mentored students whilst in the advertising industry.

Guest lecturer positions at various universities.

Part-time lecturer, now Programme Director at University of Wales Trinity St David.

What's your story?

(Just something to think about)

**Why does advertising
need stories?**

“Storytelling is still fundamental to our experiences.

Despite the incredible explosion of technology, we still love stories.”

John Hegarty

Global Creative Director, BBH

They're in our DNA ...

Stories are part of our genetic make up.

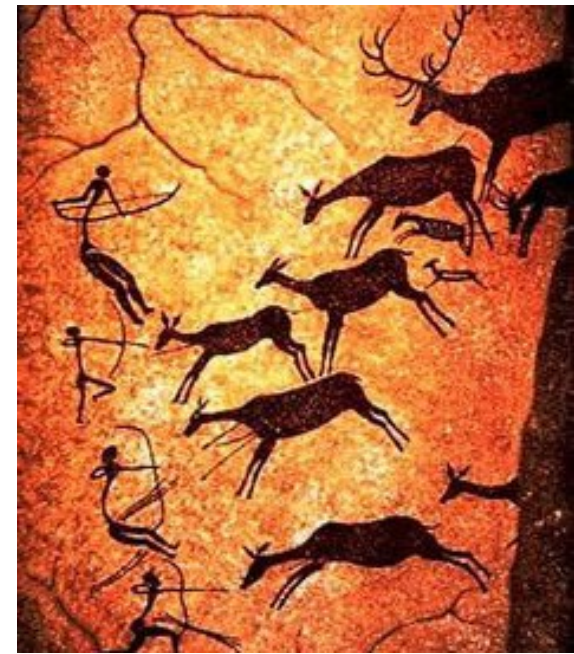
Many historians and psychologists believe that storytelling is one of the many things that define and bind humanity.

We are probably the only animals that create and tell stories and have done since the beginning of time.

The art of storytelling has a long and illustrious history. Storytelling has been around as long as the human race.

Prehistoric paintings

The tradition of storytelling is reputedly as old as mankind.



Carbon dating places the drawings in the Lascaux Caves somewhere between 15000 and 13000 B.C.

Scientists and folklorists suggest one particular composition has all the elements of a narrative (a story).

Word of mouth

There is further historic evidence of early storytelling coming from ancient Mesopotamia.

The stories were about the epic of Gilgamesh, a Sumerian king who was reported to live in about 3000 B.C. They are reported to be the source of the oldest pieces of epic literature in the world. The 'fear of meaningless' theme has been explored by writers and philosophers from antiquity right up to today.

The stories were passed down by word of mouth and likely went through many versions until the story was printed on clay and fired in about 700 B.C.

The function of storytelling

Storytelling has helped adults pass on wisdom, knowledge and culture through the generations well before the written or printed form.

Tales were told to mark an occasion, set an example, warn about danger, procure food or explain what seemed inexplicable.

People told stories to communicate knowledge and experience in social contexts.

The Bible as conduit

Biblical stories were told through parables as it made them easy to remember and pass on.

The biblical story invites us to reflect on our deepest experiences. The reader cannot remain passive; biblical stories demand their readers participate “in an unfolding conversation with the text.”

Rather than telling us how, or what to think, they force us to find out what we think and how to respond.

Stories are how we impart information in a way that people will want to listen to.
To respond to a story is ultimately to be human.

The need for stories is deeply rooted in the human psyche.

It's the way we understand and explain the world. It's the way we've always done that down through the ages.

Stories allow people to **understand** and **remember** and this is the essence of all effective advertising and branding.

Therefore, story-driven advertising
illustrate a form of communication that
traditional marketing is unable to achieve.

Storytelling is a natural part of the human experience and brands that can recreate this kind of communication in their marketing will evoke strong emotions among their audiences which help establish personal connections with their consumers.

Stories rely on the audience to take part and to co-create, whereas brand content does not. Content is created in the mind of the originator, and therefore will always remain 'pushed' information.

Contemporary consumers are hyperconnected and social. They now have an increasing number of different communication platforms at their disposal, especially through social media. Agencies and brands are now moving away from branded content and embracing true storytelling on all platforms.

The relationship between marketing and consumers has shifted in favour of consumers in recent times. Brands now need to be less like marketing machines and more like 'friends', telling stories, sharing experiences and good news.

Not all stories are inherently emotional, but engaging human emotion can be a sure way to connect with customers on a deeper and more personal level, and thereby retain their attention and loyalty.

Creative storytelling can evoke emotions and generate strong personal connections to a brand, its' mission, its' message, and its' products. It is the most authentic way to create and sustain longer lasting engagement with customers.

Consumers are increasingly searching for brand communications that are more genuine and human –storytelling is a means to that end.

Let's explore some commercial storytelling ...

adam&eveDDB

Monty the Penguin

John Lewis



Sometimes it can just be the craft of the storytelling that elevates a simple message into the sublime.

Someone who watches a lot of films must be great at making films, surely?

BETC Paris
The Bear
Canal+



The creation of a story can turn the mundane into something entertaining and personal. It can turn average messages into a conversation and this is what creates brand loyalty.

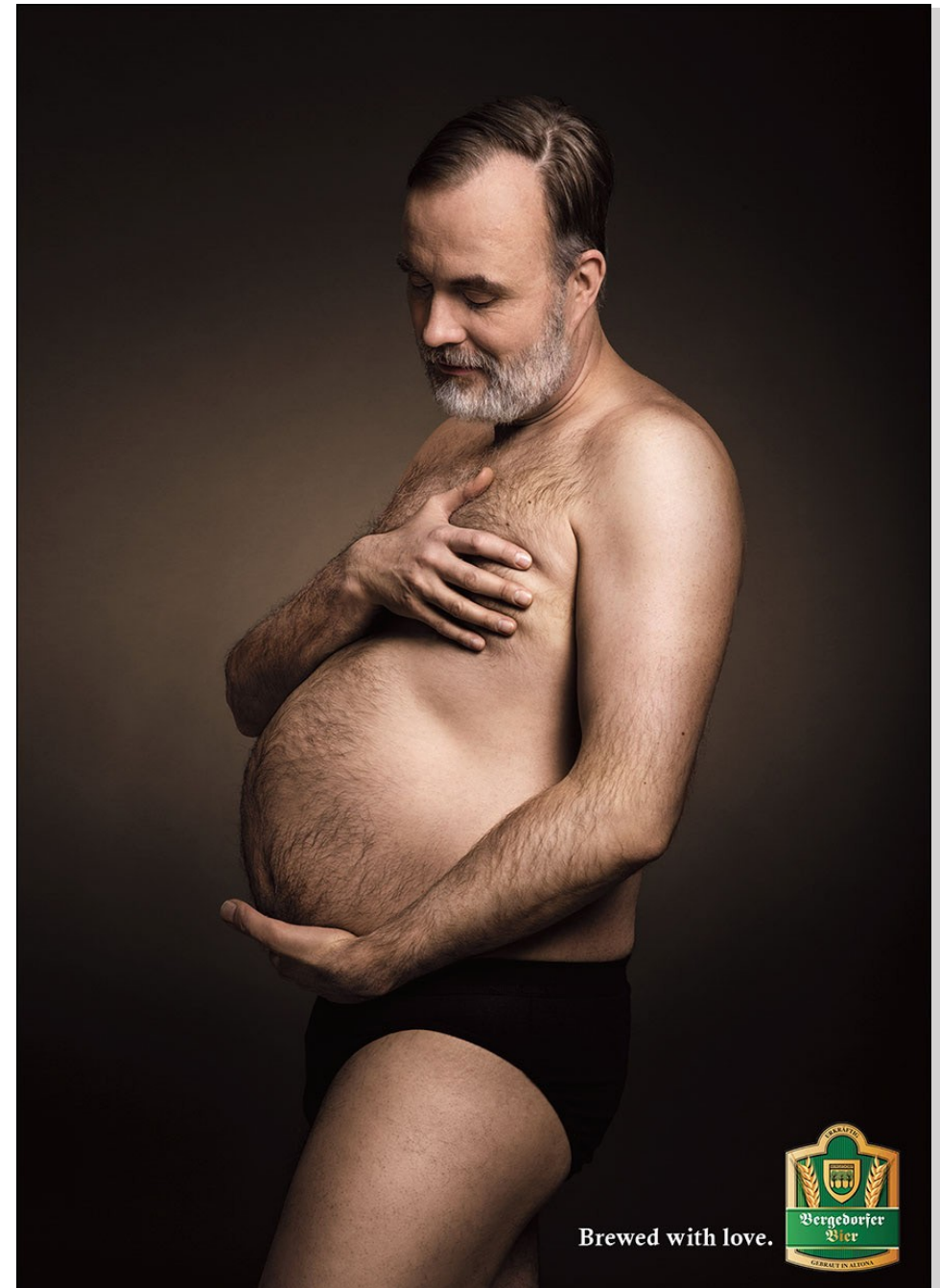
You don't always need moving imagery to tell a story. You can often rely on shared cultural terms of reference or personal experiences.

This postmodern print advertisement for a beer brand reappropriates imagery from popular media culture.

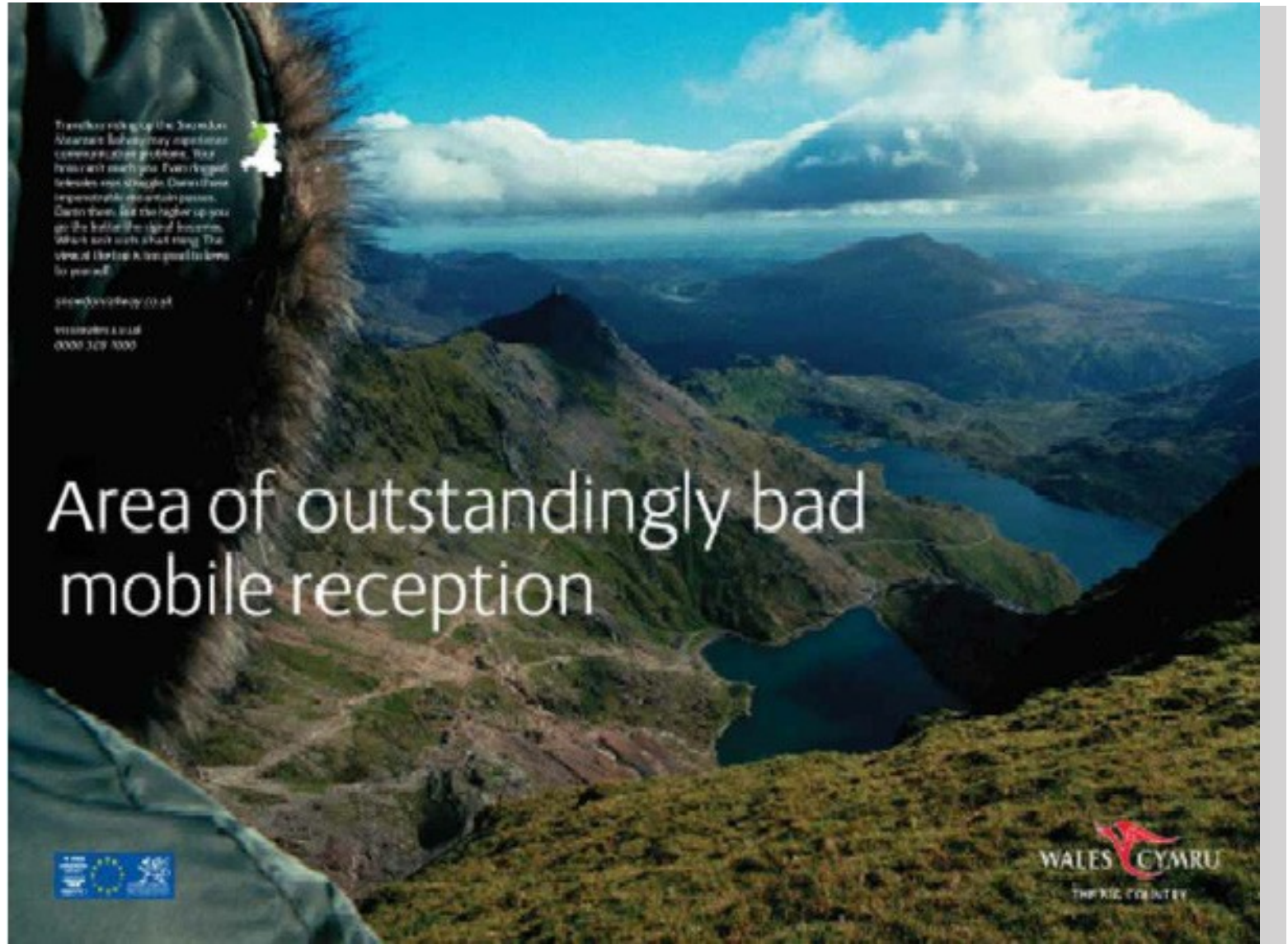
Annie Leibovitz
Demi Moore 1991
Vanity Fair



Jung von Matt
Brewed with love
Bergedorfer Bier



VisitWales



As we have seen previously, good design can even communicate complex narratives like the confusion of living with Parkinson's disease in order to raise awareness.

The Assembly Network

Making a cup of tea

Parkinson's UK



The Assembly Network

Making toast

Parkinson's UK



The Assembly Network

Putting on a pair of shoes

Parkinson's UK



The Assembly Network

Switching on a light

Parkinson's UK

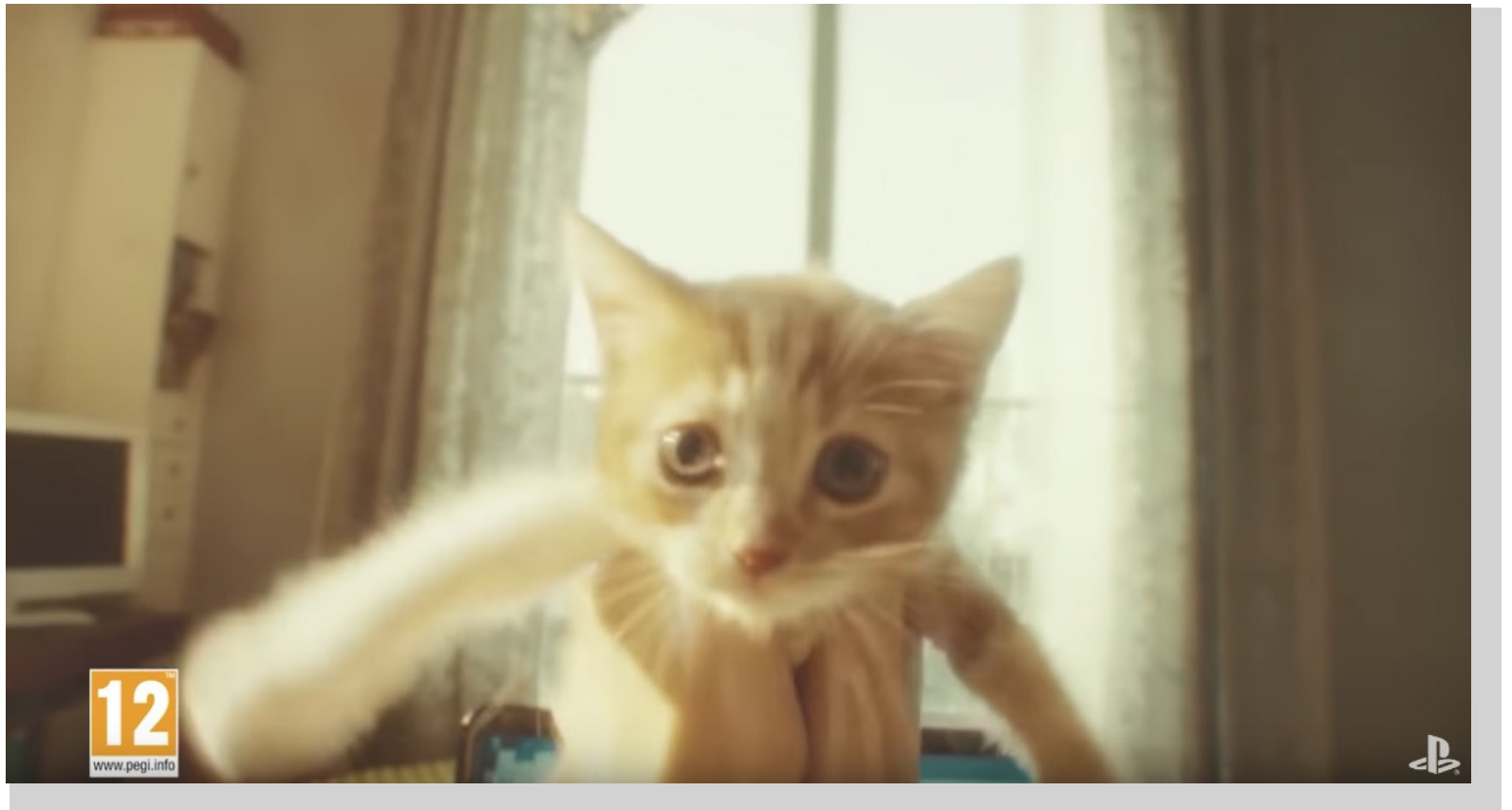


Some stories are created just to get attention.
Introducing the viral ...

PS4

Gravity Cat

Gravity Rush 2



But if you're in the business of telling stories,
ensure they are authentic.

Dove

Real Beauty Sketches

Ogilvy Brazil



So to finish up, can brands really tell a stories within the confines of short timescales?

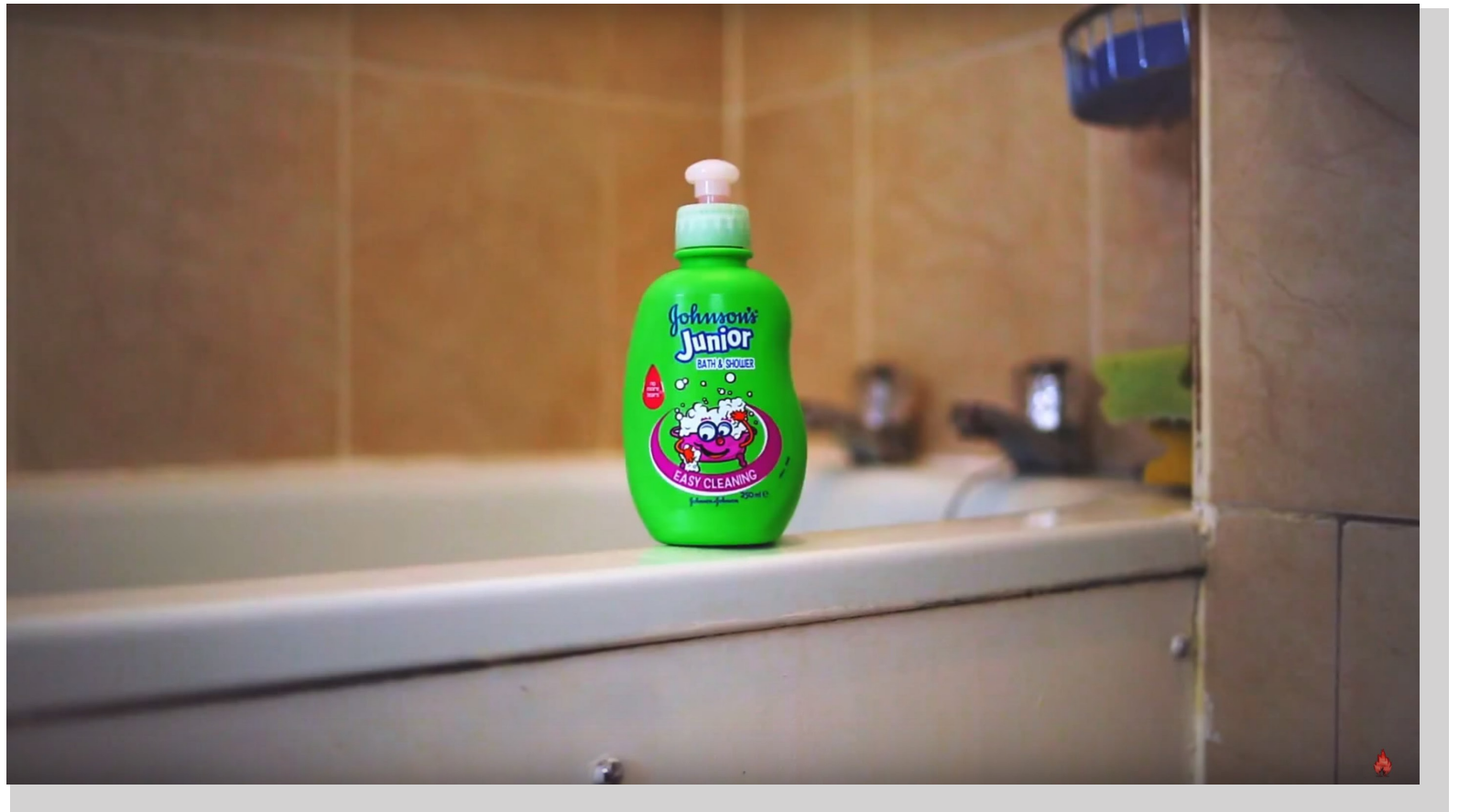
Getty Images

85 Seconds

Almap BBDO Brazil



Music Promo
Mad Lifeline
Battle Box 003 -
3D Remix



We are all storytellers - so tell your stories!

THE END

Next lecture:

Creative experimentation