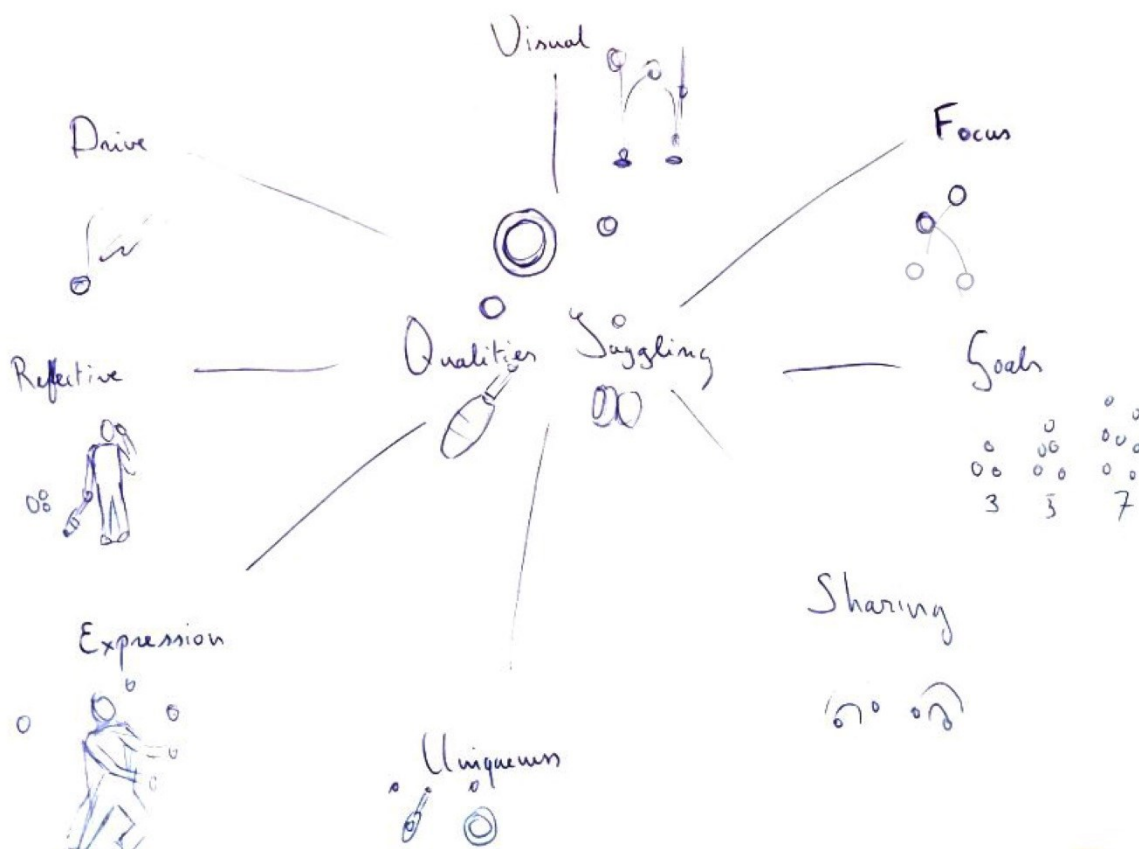


# HOW JUGGLING INFLUENCES ME AS A DESIGNER

Since I'm thirteen years old, juggling has been my main hobby and passion. But it has become much more than a hobby alone. It has shaped me as a person which also influences me as a designer. In order to better understand what the key objective qualities of juggling are, this report has been written.

## BRAINSTORM

First a small brainstorm has been made to see which qualities can be come up with right away. Already a lot of conversations have been made with international jugglers about what juggling means to them. The individual points on this brainstorm will be explained further. After that we will try to combine different qualities or try to find holes.



## VISUAL

Juggling creates patterns and patterns are visually appealing. Human try to find structure in nature giving them calmness. It can be compared to Kinetic sculptures that have a natural beauty with an mathematical explanation. Already in my last project Everlasting Beauty I used an kinetic sculpture to express the key qualities of natural light. It consisted of a moving mobile with light giving spheres. A video can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFxWQAeUZ5I> . The patterns that the balls create are experienced as calming and in juggling this works the same way. This visual effect works both for the juggler himself as for the audience. So based on this, on of the objective qualities of juggling is calming which is caused by the visual patterns it creates.

## FOCUS

In juggling you keep focus on one point. No matter how many balls there are flying in the air, the only point you look at is the turning point of the ball. That means that of the 1 second that the ball flies in the air, you only take 0,1 second to look at the ball's position and know what to do with it. It requires a good focus in order to keep a pattern running. It is almost a cliché of keeping all the balls in the air. But the resemblance with juggling and keeping activities in your life going is not for nothing. Also in my own life I keep a lot of different activities going on the same time. In order to not "drop a ball" I stay focused on one activity at a time, finish it and move on to the next ball.

## GOALS

In order to become good at juggling, you have to set goals for yourself. When a goal is achieved you set a new even higher goal. Also in our study we have to set goals for ourselves. They guide you in where you want to be and give handholds to measure how good you are doing at that moment. What I also see is that it is important to have a clear view of what level you want to be part of. In my youth I always compared myself with the world's best jugglers making me the best juggler of the Netherlands. With the introduction of Youtube, more jugglers over the world had a higher view of at what level they had to be. Already for the last 10 years, juggling has taken enormous improvements in the level of skill. At conventions 10 years ago you would be considered a good juggler if you were able to juggle 5 balls. Now you're not even called a juggler if you can't juggle 5 balls and you're a normal juggler when you can juggle 7 balls, something that 10 years ago was exceptional. Setting goals is not something specific for juggling but has shown me what you can reach doing it. By this it fits more in a life lesson that juggling has taught me more than a quality of juggling itself.

## SHARING

Share to grow is also something that I saw was important in the pastry world during my internship. In the juggling world it is exactly the same. Almost all jugglers have videos of themselves on Youtube sharing their tricks with the world. Also people give workshops on convention or acts in shows for free just to share their passion with others. This open attitude to help others to get the best out of themselves is something closely related to my vision. At the moment I try to organise juggling convention to give jugglers the opportunity to grow in their juggling. It gives a lot of recognition for the job you do so and is much appreciated. Also this is more a life lesson rather than a quality of juggling. But it definitely also thought me that you can learn from anyone. Even children of 10 years old have taught me tricks which for me are incredible because it totally denies the hierarchy that we see so much in this world. In design I also try to break this hierarchy, enabling individuals to be able to compete with big companies. Luckily, by the internet already a lot of knowledge has become open source free for everyone to use.

## UNIQUENESS

With a lot of videos only of jugglers exploring their own tricks, it also raises the question for yourself what makes you unique. What style of juggling do I have and with what can I perform? These questions make a juggler reflect and by this better understand themselves. Also in our study we are almost forced to think about this by every half year writing a showcase with a vision and identity. When doing the same things as everyone you will not stand out and don't get recognised.

## EXPRESSION

Just like with dancing, it is possible to express your feelings with juggling. Often juggling is combined with dancing to emphasize certain elements. I like to see juggling by itself as an art which can be combined with much more than dancing alone. You find new input when trying to combine two in the first point of view distant properties. I think for me juggling is this distant inspiration source for designing. At the start of the study I tried to make a clear separation line between the two. But multiple assessors and coaches saw that juggling brought me more than just a hobby and that is also why I am now investigating it further. I use designing also as a way to express myself with the influence of juggling. But back to the qualities, expressive is a quality of juggling in which also the uniqueness part of juggling lays.

## REFLECTIVE

You drop, but why? Reflecting on the juggling pattern and you mistakes is a constant process in juggling. Becoming better at juggling often has to do with your base. If you become too fast too good, often your posture is bad or you lack skill in other props (rings, clubs etc.). Reflection is important to become a good juggler since it is an individual sport. You don't have a coach who tells you what to do. You will have to come up with your own training methods in order to nail that hard trick. Also reflecting is something that is more general and not specific for juggling.

## DRIVE

You don't juggle for other people, you juggle for yourself. Juggling is a process of learning from you mistakes. Practising hundreds of hours to be able to do a trick on stage for a few seconds takes an tremendous own drive. You want to prove yourself that you are capable of setting new boundaries for yourself. Also this part of juggling has thought me more the importance of having your own drive and where it can bring you.

## LIFE LESSONS

Based on the above analysis, I think that not the qualities of juggling have influenced me as a designer but more the life lessons I got out of it. It has taught me a certain way of working since it has brought me success in the past (multiple Dutch Champion). I my juggling as a career that is at its ending point. The first 2 years I got familiar with juggling and was guided by other people at my local juggling club. After that I started to compare myself with other jugglers and wanted to become just as good as them. Reaching their level made me an example for others as well and by this it was important to find my own style to share with others again. I made a lot of videos and performed on multiple conventions. Now I'm at the end of my juggling career, organising conventions for other to give them the opportunity that the juggling world has given me. I coach other jugglers and are called the father of modern Dutch juggling by an famous English juggler. I am not as good as the current new upcoming jugglers anymore, yet people appreciate me for what I have done in the past and do for other now at the moment. This small 7 year career is much the same as I see how my design career will be. It helps me to guide and understand the current situation where I am in.

## SKILLS

By all the extra activities I do for juggling I gained a lot of skills that are also useful as a designer. By performing I learnt to present myself for an audience, how to speak, be confident etc. Giving workshops helps me to explain my expertise and coach other people trying to learn it. Organising conventions has taught me a lot. How to be a leader, take responsibility, let people execute tasks,

how to do finance. Also presenting myself as a professional juggler made me interested in graphic design in the first place. I wanted a website so I learnt how to make a website and how to design it. Year by year I learnt more about marketing, PR, competition, identity etc. All things that I also use now at my clients. This year I took the biggest challenge of them all, designing the identity of the European Juggling Convention 2016. I will design the logo, corporate design and website and think about how we can make this EJC memorable in events at the convention itself. I can work together with jugglers with all different professional background to make it happen. It will continue to use the juggling world as a playground to explore my design interest since here it is valuable for others and educative for me.

## CONCLUSION

The way the juggling community works has showed me how this can also be used in relation to product design. More the side activities juggling brings me has given me certain skills and the life lessons I found out when analysing the juggling world has influenced me as a designer. Juggling will remain a way of escaping all my thoughts and going to juggling festival has become the same as seeing my friends again. I focus less on becoming a good juggler but still want to see what happens if I use my design knowledge with creating a juggling act. I think the EJC will be an ending point for me of things I will do for the community and from there on I will have to focus more on my career as a professional designer. Still juggling has taught me a lot already and it will continue to do this just for a little while.