

Program Design Document

The Memory Patient: A Character-Guided Worldbuilding Program

Working Draft

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Executive Summary

The Memory Patient is an interdisciplinary participatory arts program that invites participants into a fictional world through guided encounters with a cast of recurring characters. Rather than presenting an elaborate mythology all at once, the program introduces the world through relationships.

Participants enter as *the Memory Patient*—someone who has awakened with no memory of who they are. A guide, known as the *Cleric*, serves as a docent, mediator, and facilitator, helping participants navigate the world through conversations, rituals, creative activities, and documentation.

The project combines worldbuilding, arts facilitation, personal reflection, and playful systems design into a program that can function as an installation, workshop series, educational curriculum, immersive performance, or ongoing community practice.

Program Vision

To create a living fictional world that people enter not through explanation, but through participation.

Instead of asking audiences to memorize lore, the program allows them to gradually discover the world through meaningful interactions with characters, objects, spaces, and creative practices.

Design Evolution

This direction emerged from several intersecting realizations.

From Mythology to Programs

Earlier versions of the Cleric Journey emphasized creating a complete philosophical system.

The current direction shifts toward designing experiences.

Rather than asking:

> *What is this world?*

the guiding question becomes:

> *What programs help people experience this world?*

Cleric as Docent

The Cleric is no longer simply a symbolic figure.

Instead, the Cleric functions as:

- * facilitator
- * museum docent
- * orientation guide
- * researcher
- * host
- * translator between participant and world

The Cleric does not possess every answer.

Instead, they help visitors become curious.

Characters Before Cosmology

One of the strongest insights from this design process is that audiences connect to people before systems.

Rather than introducing an entire fictional universe, participants first meet individual characters.

Those characters naturally reveal the culture, values, aesthetics, and institutions of the world.

Guiding Design Principles

1. Relationship Before Lore

People understand worlds through relationships.

Characters become entry points into larger ideas.

2. Programs Before Philosophy

Instead of teaching abstract ideas, design memorable experiences.

Each interaction should answer:

> What does the participant actually do?

3. Curiosity Before Explanation

Mystery is valuable.

Participants should leave with questions they are excited to continue exploring.

4. Documentation as Creative Practice

Taking notes, organizing information, making lists, and recording experiences become meaningful creative acts rather than administrative tasks.

Core Participant Narrative

Participants enter the experience as:

The Memory Patient

You wake up.

You remember almost nothing.

The world feels strangely familiar.

The Cleric welcomes you and begins introducing you to the residents of this place.

Every interaction helps reconstruct your understanding of yourself.

Program Structure

The experience unfolds through encounters with specialized characters.

Each character embodies a domain of everyday life while also representing a creative philosophy.

Character System

❤️ Cat Daddy

Domain

Patronage

Mystery

Wealth

Power

Role

A quiet benefactor whose motives remain partially hidden.

Questions include:

* Who supports creative work?

* What responsibilities accompany abundance?

* How much should remain unknown?

Aesthetic

- * ceremonial
- * gothic
- * poetic
- * restrained

Misc-kers

****Domain****

Organization

Maintenance

Unexpected problems

****Role****

The keeper of miscellaneous things.

Creates order without demanding perfection.

Guiding idea:

> "Sometimes life is random. Put it with me."

****Aesthetic****

- * construction
- * architecture
- * overalls
- * utility

Dr. Healthkick

****Domain****

Health

Energy

Measurement

Care

****Role****

Tracks physical wellbeing while emphasizing sustainable habits rather than perfection.

Possible activities

- * check-ins
- * nutrition
- * movement
- * recovery
- * body awareness

****Aesthetic****

- * anatomy
- * systems
- * clean design
- * data

 Miss Notesy

****Domain****

Documentation

Memory

Reflection

Archives

****Role****

Supports the Memory Patient through note-taking and organizing knowledge.

Activities include

- * journals
- * gratitude
- * observation
- * conversation records
- * networked archives

****Aesthetic****

- * naturalist
- * observant
- * documentary
- * detailed

 St. Booksy

****Domain****

Learning

Reading

Writing

Scholarship

****Role****

Encourages intellectual curiosity.

Believes books expand possibility.

Core idea

> Inspiration and perspiration.

Activities include

- * reading circles
- * annotations

- * essays
- * storytelling

****Aesthetic****

- * illuminated manuscripts
- * hybrid scholarship
- * mystical academia

🖨️ Print O'Rama

****Domain****

Publishing

Manifestos

Printing

Systems

****Role****

Transforms ideas into physical artifacts.

Prompts include

> If you could print anything, what would it be?

Outputs may include

- * chapbooks
- * tutorials
- * lists
- * posters
- * zines

****Aesthetic****

- * grids
- * puzzles

- * filing systems
- * symbols

📅 Mister Programs

Domain

Program Design

Scheduling

Navigation

Community

Role

Helps participants discover experiences that best fit their interests.

Functions similarly to a museum concierge or festival coordinator.

Activities include

- * orientation
- * pathways
- * calendars
- * recommendations

Aesthetic

- * minimal
- * gallery
- * contemplative
- * structured

🌸 Princess Pillows

Domain

Comfort

Beauty

Home

Gentleness

****Role****

Supports emotional regulation through environmental care.

Questions include

- * Is your room comfortable?
- * Do you have flowers?
- * Are you resting?

Activities

- * cozy rituals
- * environmental design
- * affirmation practices

****Aesthetic****

- * soft
- * lush
- * caring
- * sensuous

🎨 Whimsy

****Domain****

Play

Painting

Experimentation

Creative Flow

****Role****

Invites participants into improvisation.

Begins making before understanding.

Sometimes forgets what they were saying.

That is part of the practice.

****Aesthetic****

- * colorful

- * expressive

- * organic

- * intuitive

Program Themes

Three primary content areas currently organize the work.

Romance

Relationships

Belonging

Identity

Attachment

Friendship

Practicals

Daily systems

Organization

Health

Publishing

Program design

Media

Writing

Print

Documentation

Archives

Performance

Visual art

Facilitation Philosophy

The program is less interested in transmitting information than creating meaningful experiences.

Facilitators emphasize:

- * observation
- * conversation
- * curiosity
- * reflection
- * playful experimentation
- * collaborative discovery

Participants are encouraged to document their own experiences rather than receive definitive interpretations.

Design Influences

Several ideas have shaped this iteration of the project.

Program Coordination

Viewing creative work through the lens of program design clarified that artistic practice can function like educational or community programming.

Fundraising Strategy

Conversations around budgeting, sustainability, and long-term planning reinforced the importance of designing programs that can be clearly communicated and implemented.

Character-Based Storytelling

Rather than constructing a comprehensive mythology first, the project prioritizes memorable recurring characters as the foundation of worldbuilding.

Long-Term Vision

The Memory Patient world may eventually expand into multiple formats, including:

- * immersive installations
- * guided exhibitions
- * community workshops
- * artist residencies
- * educational curricula
- * chapbooks and publications
- * online archives
- * participatory performances
- * touring experiences led by Clerics

Each new program becomes another doorway into the same fictional world.

Success Indicators

The program succeeds when participants:

- * feel welcomed into an unfamiliar world rather than overwhelmed by it;
- * form emotional connections with individual characters;
- * create documentation of their own experiences;
- * leave with a sense of curiosity about returning; and
- * begin imagining how they might contribute to the world themselves.

Design Opportunity

The shift from "building a fictional world" to "designing programs within a fictional world" represents a significant evolution. It grounds the imaginative framework in concrete experiences that are easier to facilitate, fund, and scale. The Cleric's role as a docent provides a clear participant journey, while the cast of characters distributes responsibilities across distinct domains of care, creativity, and everyday life. This structure allows the world to grow incrementally, with each new program deepening engagement rather than requiring an ever-larger body of lore.