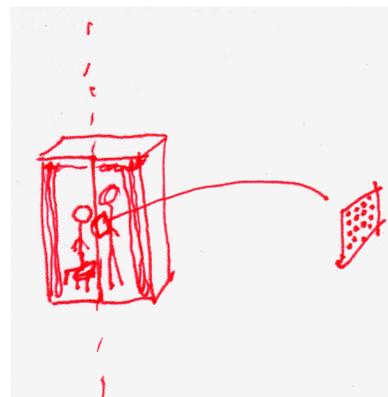
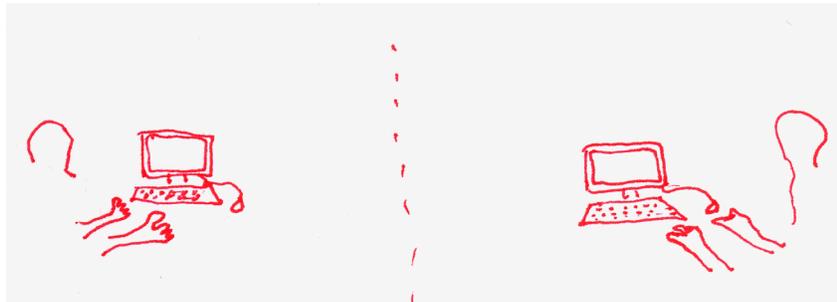


# utterlounge

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My explorations this semester focused on the act of utterance: the effect-- emotional, moral and physical-- of a vocalized confession or admission. In the design process, I used several reference points to explore varying circumstances of vocal unburdening: my own mutterings in the isolation of my motorcycle helmet, religious confession booths, online chatrooms and relationships, psychotherapy, reality tv confessionals, confessions in the criminal system, a confessional postcard website ([postsecret.com](http://postsecret.com)) to name a few. These circumstances were mapped out in terms of the hierarchies involved in each: spatial dynamic, relation of confessor to present or potential listeners, performative elements of the utterance, desired result or reward for successful vocal expression of secret thoughts or truths.

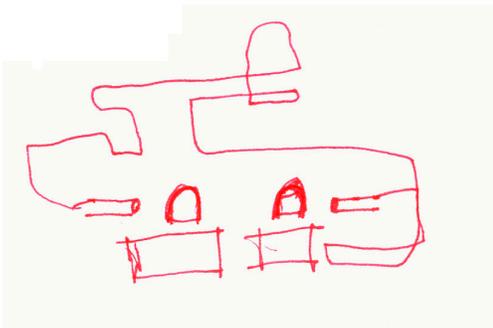
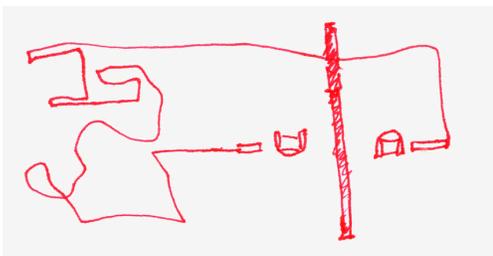


My initial project proposals came from efforts to complicate or stretch the hierarchies found in existing confession models. In one, the confessor and potential listener are separated by a strata of earth between subway platform and grate on street level. In another, the space of utterance is found embedded in a wearable, a skirt which is employed both to provide an isolated space for the wearer while also extended to suggest a space for the second person with whom one might converse.



The utterlounge, the final result of the semester's explorations, is a chaise designed with an attached sound conduit, made of pvc pipes and connectors. Both ends of the piping are integrated into the top area of the chair, and the pipe travels away from the chair, turns a corner from a secluded space to a more public cafe area, and then returns. In effect, the user is speaking to themselves, though their voice, their utterance, will travel away from and then return to them having been altered both by the passage through the sound environment of the pipe as well as the sound picked up from the cafe and returned to the chaise.

A peculiar sound environment is created for both the speaker and the people around the corner in the cafe, who may hear some sound passing through the pipe beside them or beneath their feet, but don't have a direct visual relationship with the source of this sound.





Ultimately, the utterlounge proposes that the act of speaking can be just as profound, if not more so, should the speaker also be assigned the role of a listener. Though a larger audience is engaged with the project, the most important act of admission is a more individually oriented one of self-admission (rather than a performative or reward-driven system of separate speaker and listener).

