



**SAPIENZA**  
UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Master of Science in  
PRODUCT AND SERVICE DESIGN  
a.y. 2023-2024

Final Work

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Yanan Liu - Title (product name)

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# Slow interaction and Community Happiness

-design an interactive installation.



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Faculty of Architecture

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## **PART ONE RESEARCH**

**Slow technology and the community investigation**



# 01 Background of the idea on being slow

## 01.1 The Optimal Flow in Modern Life and Its Drawbacks

The Seamless Society: The Pursuit of Optimal Flow in a Fast-Paced Digital Era Optimal flow refers to a state of seamless and efficient user experience, where interactions with technology are smooth and uninterrupted. In modern life, optimal flow is highly valued as it aligns with the fast-paced, productivity-oriented culture. This flow is prevalent in various digital platforms designed to maximize user engagement and satisfaction through minimal friction and rapid feedback loops.

The primary value of optimal flow lies in its ability to enhance efficiency and create a fluent user experience. For instance, applications that implement optimal flow can significantly reduce the time users spend on completing tasks, thereby increasing productivity. Additionally, a smooth user experience tends to attract and retain users, as they are less likely to encounter frustration or delays (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). This efficiency is particularly crucial in competitive markets where user satisfaction can make or break a product's success.

### The Drawbacks of Optimal Flow

However, the relentless pursuit of optimal flow is not without its drawbacks. One significant issue is information overload. As systems strive to provide more information quickly, users can become overwhelmed, leading to reduced decision-making quality and increased stress levels (Bawden & Robinson, 2009). Furthermore, optimal flow can contribute to a decrease in attention and reflection. Continuous, rapid interactions with technology limit opportunities for users to pause and reflect, diminishing their ability to engage in deep thinking and long-term planning (Carr, 2010). Lastly, the emphasis on efficiency often results in weak ties between people. Interactions facilitated by technology become superficial, weakening the depth and quality of personal relationships (Turkle, 2011). *interdum. Mauris tempus ipsum id justo tristique, eu aliquam urna faucibus. Mauris eget mattis leo, a commodo dui. In eleifend erat at quam vestibulum, et suscipit sem interdum. Mauris tempus ipsum id justo tristique, eu aliquam urna faucibus. magna quis, vehicula dapibus lectus. Ut ullamcorper ligula mauris, sed sollicitudin nulla sollicitudin eget. Mauris eget mattis leo, a commodo dui. In eleifend erat at mauris, sed sollicitudin nulla sollicitudin eget.*

## 01.2 Pause&Slowness, Design for Reflections

“...pauses should not be regarded as something to be avoided, but as moments where reflective reasoning can more effectively take place.”[6]

To counteract the drawbacks of optimal flow, the concept of slowness has been introduced in human-computer interaction (HCI). Slow technology advocates for the intentional incorporation of pauses and delays in the user experience. This design philosophy starts to encourage users to slow down, reflect, and engage more deeply with both the technology and their own thoughts and feelings (Hallnäs & Redström, 2001).

## 01.3 The power of slow interaction on relationships

### Researching Feedback on Existing Slow Interaction Designs

#### Case: FutureMe

A notable example of slow interaction design is FutureMe, a platform that allows users to write letters to someone in the future. This tool embodies the principles of slow technology by introducing a significant delay between the action (writing the letter) and the feedback (receiving the letter). Research (Odom, 2015) on FutureMe has shown that this delay can enhance users' ability to reflect on their lives and future goals, fostering a deeper sense of connection with their past and future selves.

#### Detailed Feedback

This study reveals the positive impact that FutureMe has on personal growth, self-actualization, and more meaningful relationships by allowing users to communicate with themselves or others in a thoughtful and reflective manner, which is the gift of slow technology. Based on this, it can be boldly inferred that, with the appropriate medium, slow technology may broadly have the advantages of strengthening interpersonal relationships and promoting personal reflection.

#### Case of the impact between people

In Odom's study, two sisters used FutureMe to send emails to each other. The analysis highlights how this practice helped them strengthen their emotional bond. They would write to each other about significant events, future aspirations, and shared memories. This asynchronous communication allowed them to maintain a deep connection despite physical distance, reinforcing their relationship over time.

#### Case of the impact to the user him/herself

Another participant in Odom's study used FutureMe as a motivational tool during their journey to quit smoking. By sending emails to their future self, the individual set goals, reflected on their progress, and offered words of encouragement. This practice provided a sense of accountability and support, which was crucial in their recovery process.

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## 01.4 The Framework Above the Field of Slow Interaction Design

Based on current experiments and research, a comprehensive framework for slow interaction design can be outlined. This framework includes:

1. Core Concepts and Definitions: Slow interaction design focuses on creating technology that encourages reflection and deep engagement by intentionally incorporating delays and pauses.

2. Values/Direction: The goal is to break away from the optimal flow, extend interaction time, and promote thoughtful reflection on life and activities.

3. Process: Introducing randomness and waiting periods in fast interactions to disrupt the continuous flow and encourage users to pause and think.

4. Tools and Methods: Utilizing slow technology and designing long-term interaction devices that embody these principles.

5. Evaluation: Conducting evaluations to assess the impact of slow interaction experiments on user experience and determine how well they achieve the intended purpose of fostering reflection.

## 01.5 Extending the Framework: Physical Interaction

### Other Cases

#### Slow Game by Ishac Bertran

The Slow Game project by Ishac Bertran exemplifies slow technology by simulating real-world physical interactions in a detailed and deliberate manner. The game requires players to engage in slow, thoughtful movements, mirroring real-life actions and promoting a deeper sense of immersion and reflection (Bertran, n.d.).

#### The Storefront Theater by Matthew Mazzotta

The Storefront Theater by Matthew Mazzotta transforms a typical urban space into a temporary theater, which only operates under specific conditions—waiting for the right weather, time, and audience. This project emphasizes the importance of patience and the confluence of natural elements, contrasting with the immediacy of typical technological interactions (Mazzotta, 2016).

The original framework for slow interaction design is rooted in addressing the deficiencies of optimal flow in digital products. These deficiencies include the loss of opportunities for deep engagement and reflection. However, similar issues are emerging in the physical world due to efficiency optimization.

#### Examples of Efficiency Optimization in Traditional Practices

In traditional rituals and activities, efficiency optimization is evident. For instance, rituals that once required meticulous preparation, such as folding paper money or crafting lanterns, have been simplified through online purchases and quick deliveries. Similarly, festive activities like making lanterns or participating in street performances have become mere spectacles rather than immersive experiences. The convenience and speed of modern life have eroded the rich, reflective experiences these activities once provided.

#### Conclusion

To broaden the scope of slow interaction research, it is crucial to extend the framework beyond digital interactions to include physical scenarios. This approach recognizes that efficiency optimizations in both digital and physical realms can diminish opportunities for deep, reflective engagement. By applying the principles of slow interaction design to real-world activities, we can reclaim the valuable experiences lost to the relentless pursuit of efficiency, fostering a more mindful and connected way of living.

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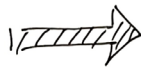
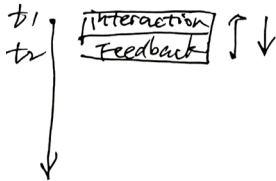
VALUE

Efficiency

Product usability



"Time" / "Speed"



VALUE

THE QUALITY OF DEEPER USER EXPERIENCE

Reflection

Deeper Social Connection



Type 1



Type 2



# Write a letter to your future self

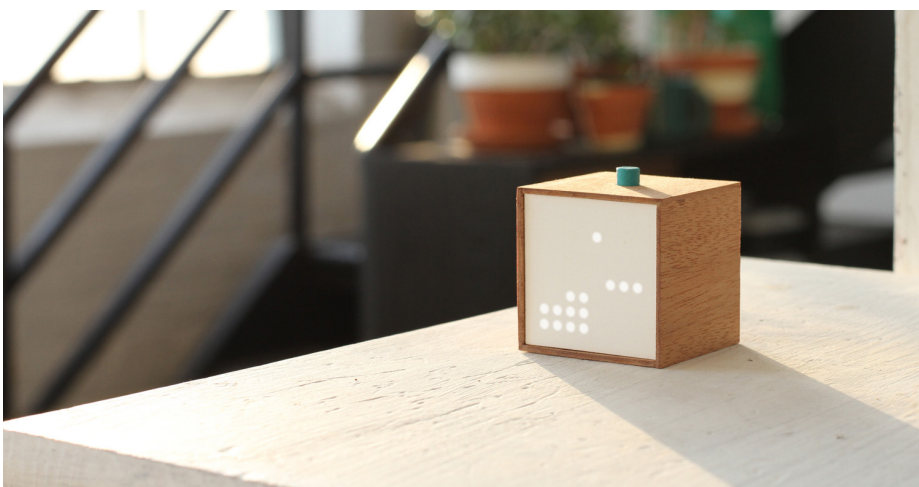
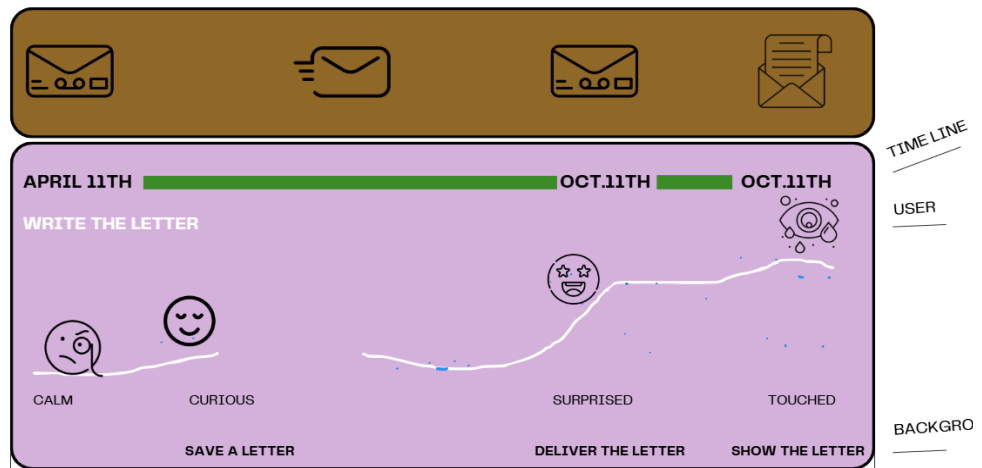
Write. Pick a receiving date. Send. Verify. That's it 😊

Your letter is **safe** with us - we've sent over **20 million letters** in 20 years!

Dear FutureMe, Full screen

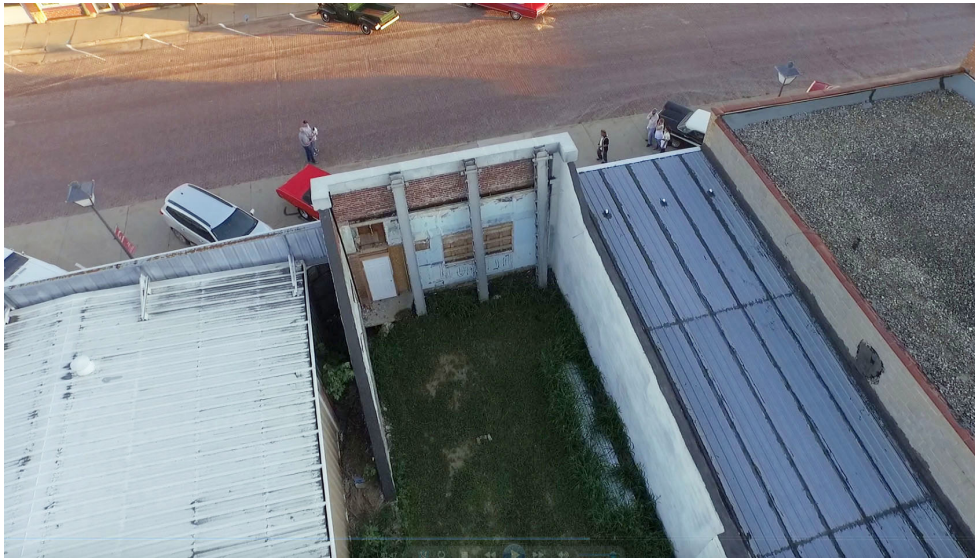
[Inspire me!](#)

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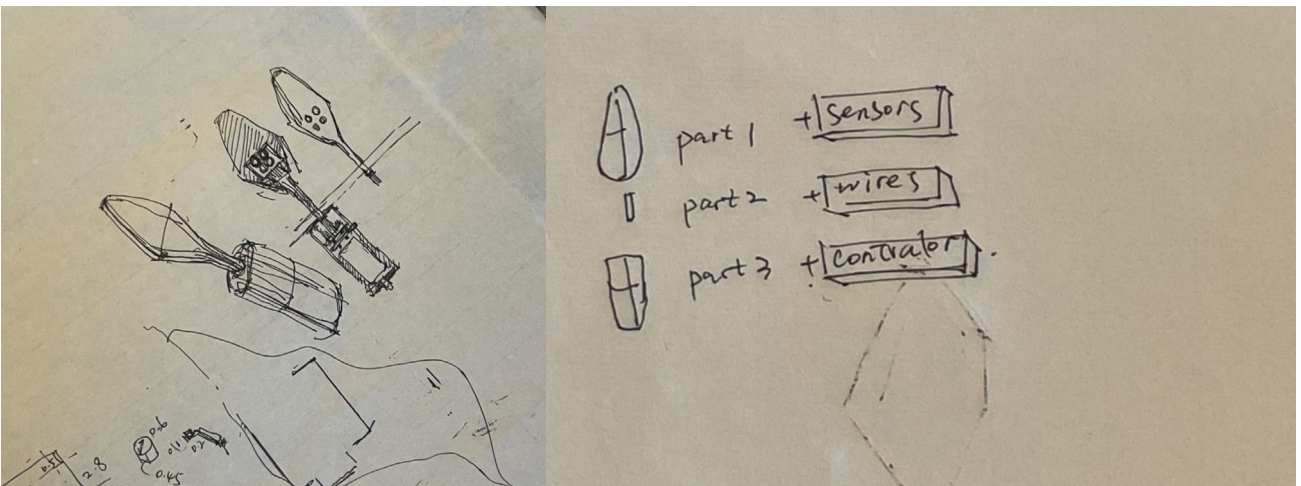
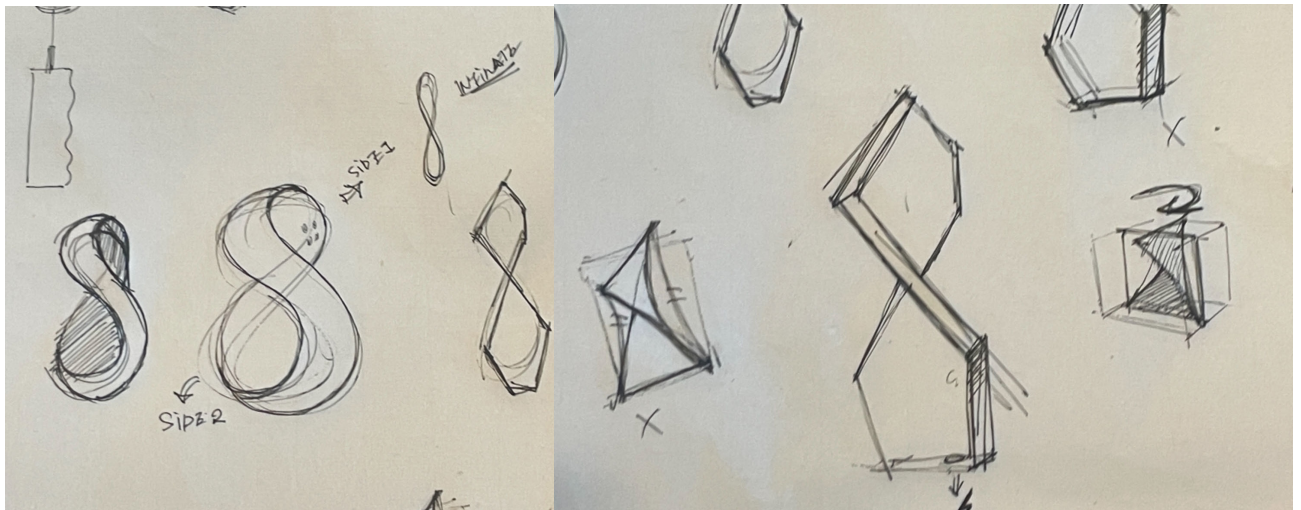


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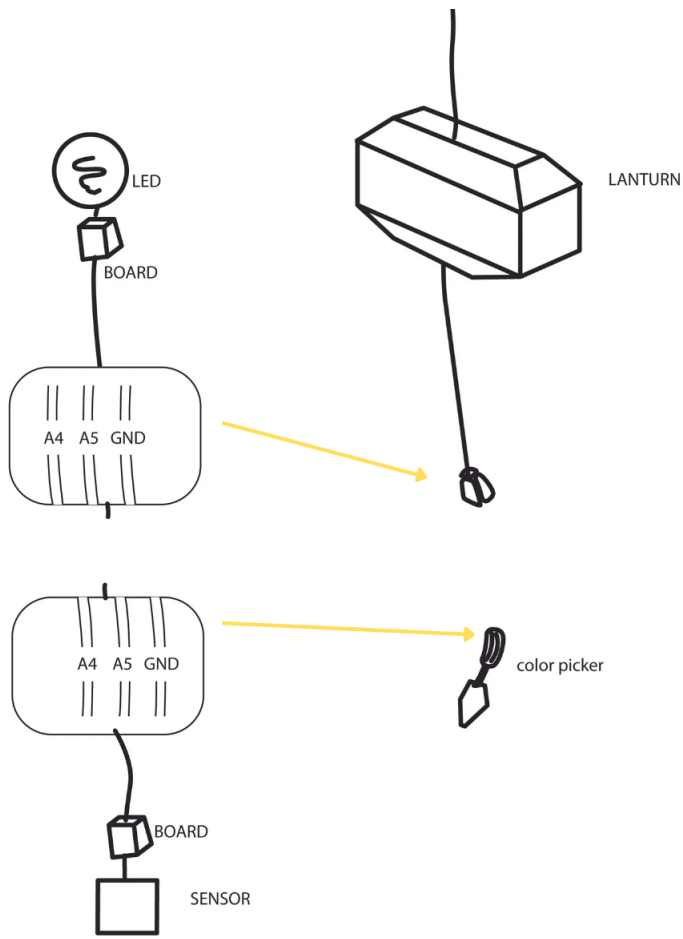
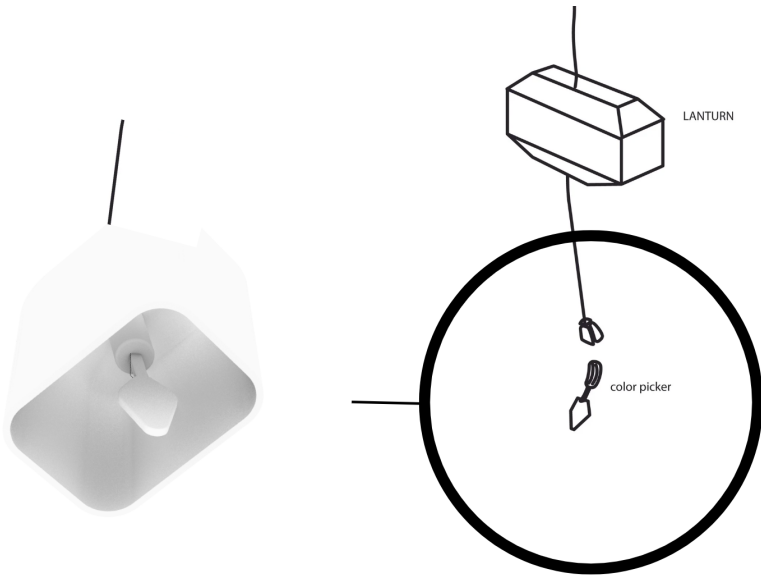
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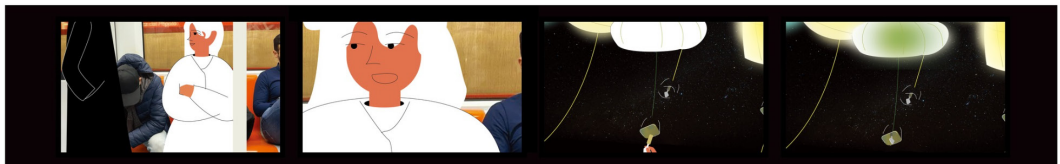
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## 05.01 SUSPENDISSE CONGUE 2000-2014

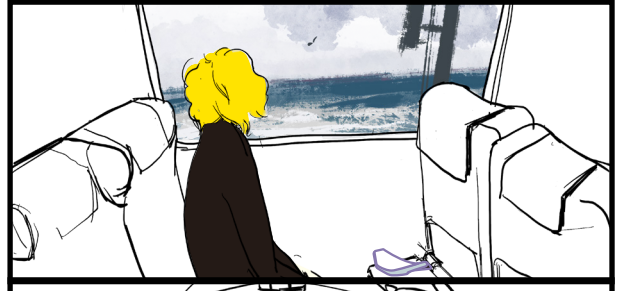
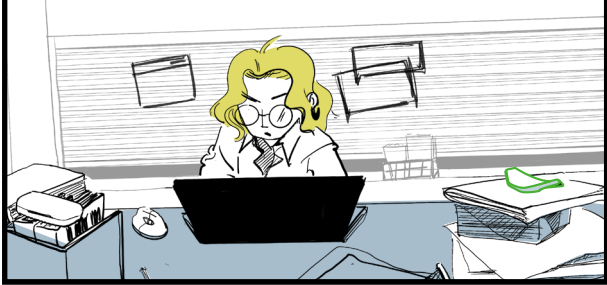
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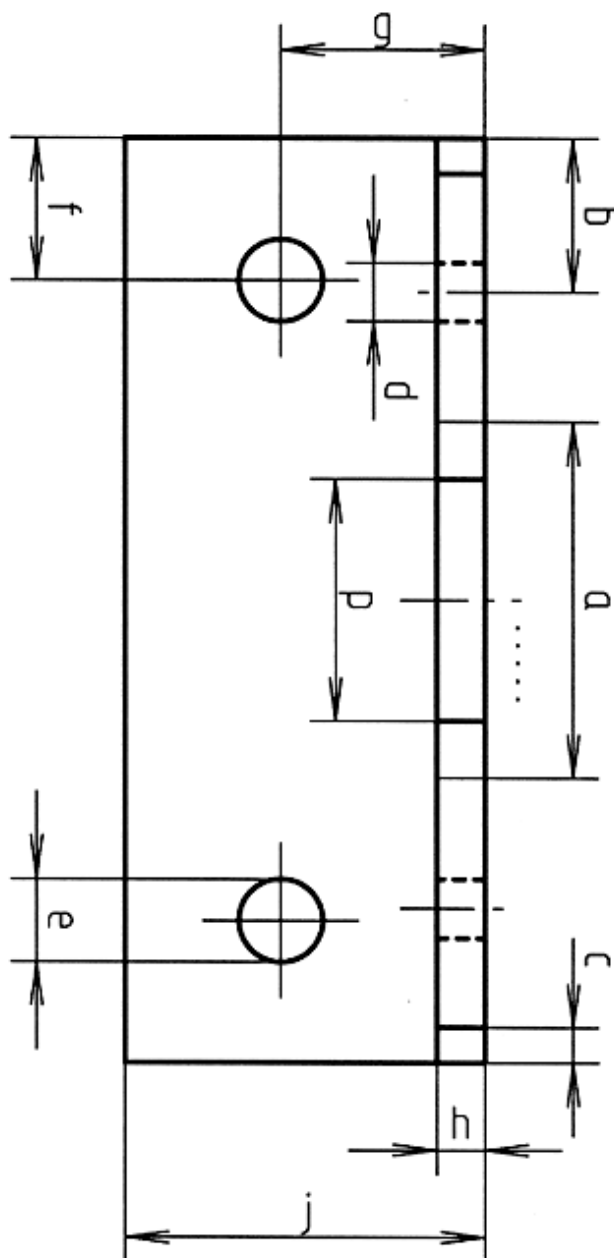
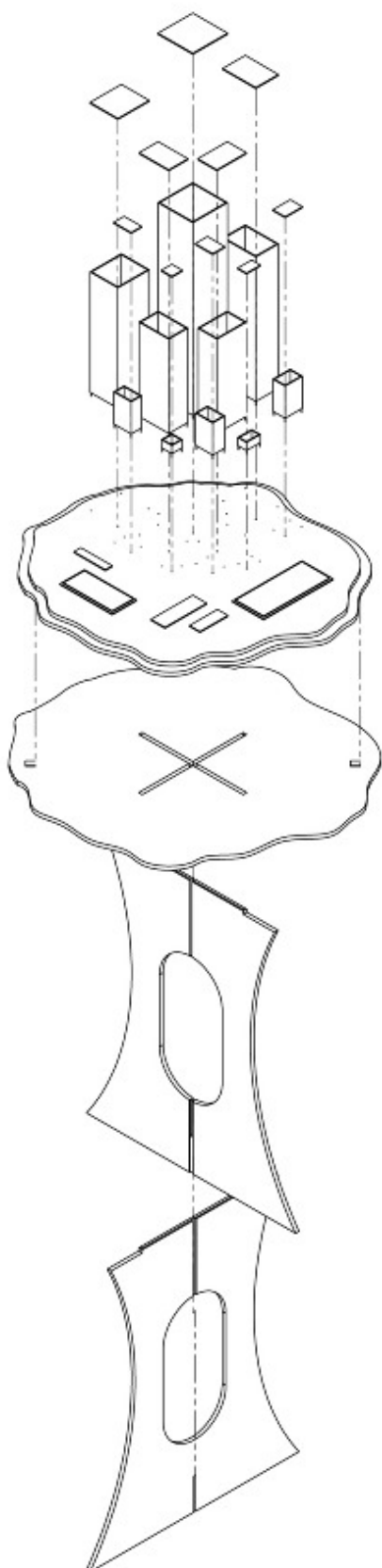
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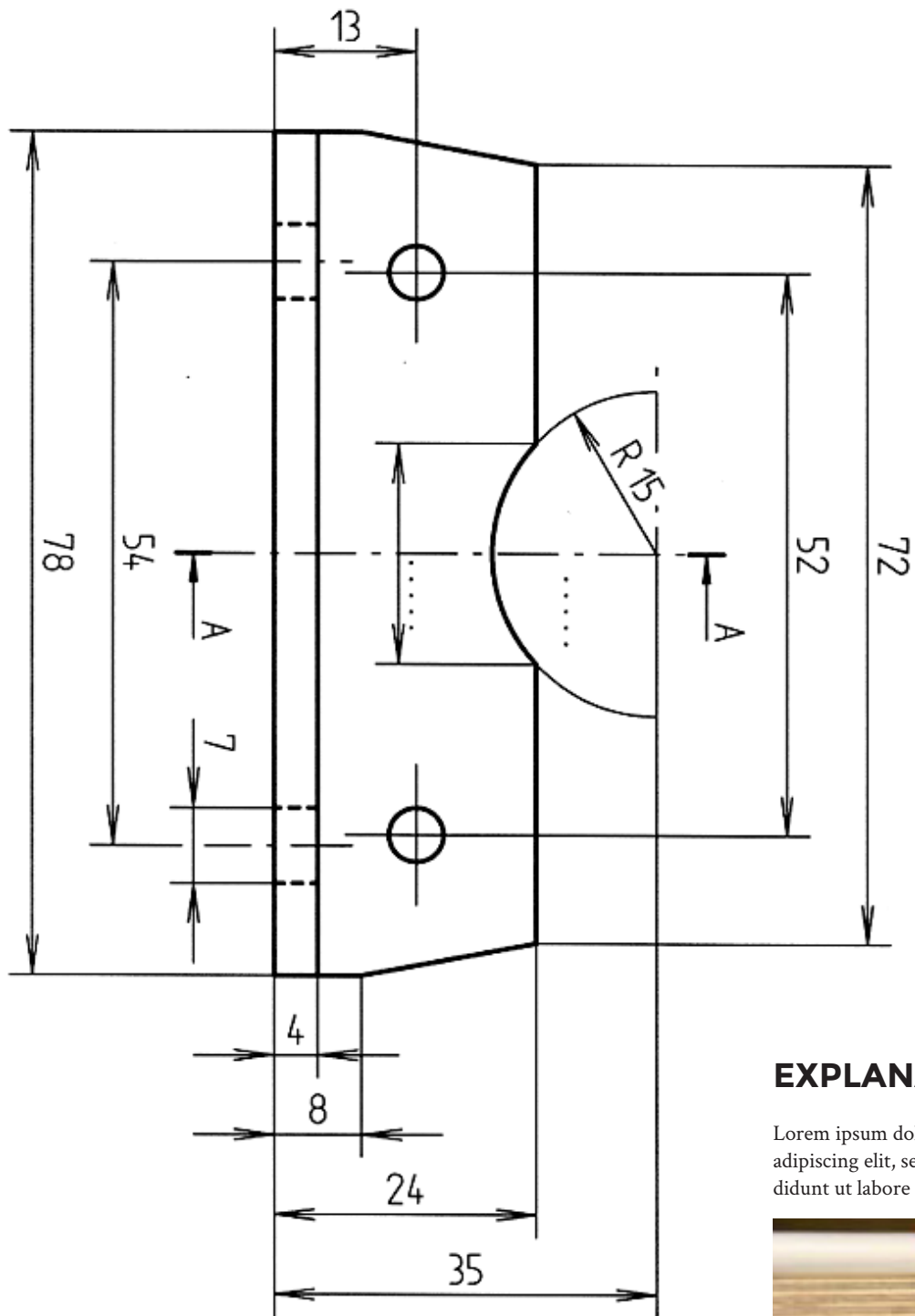


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graphical explanations  
e.g. exploded views





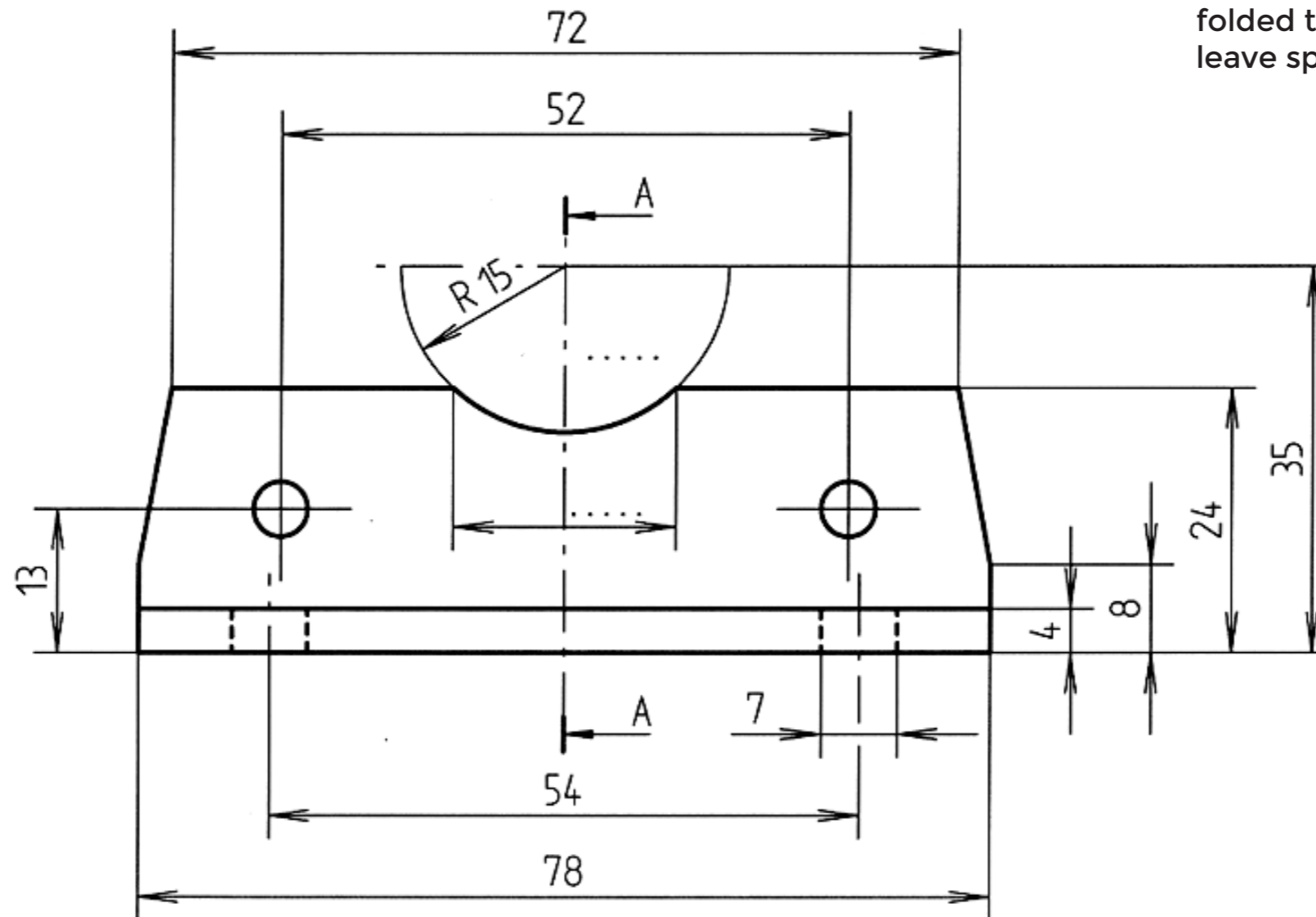
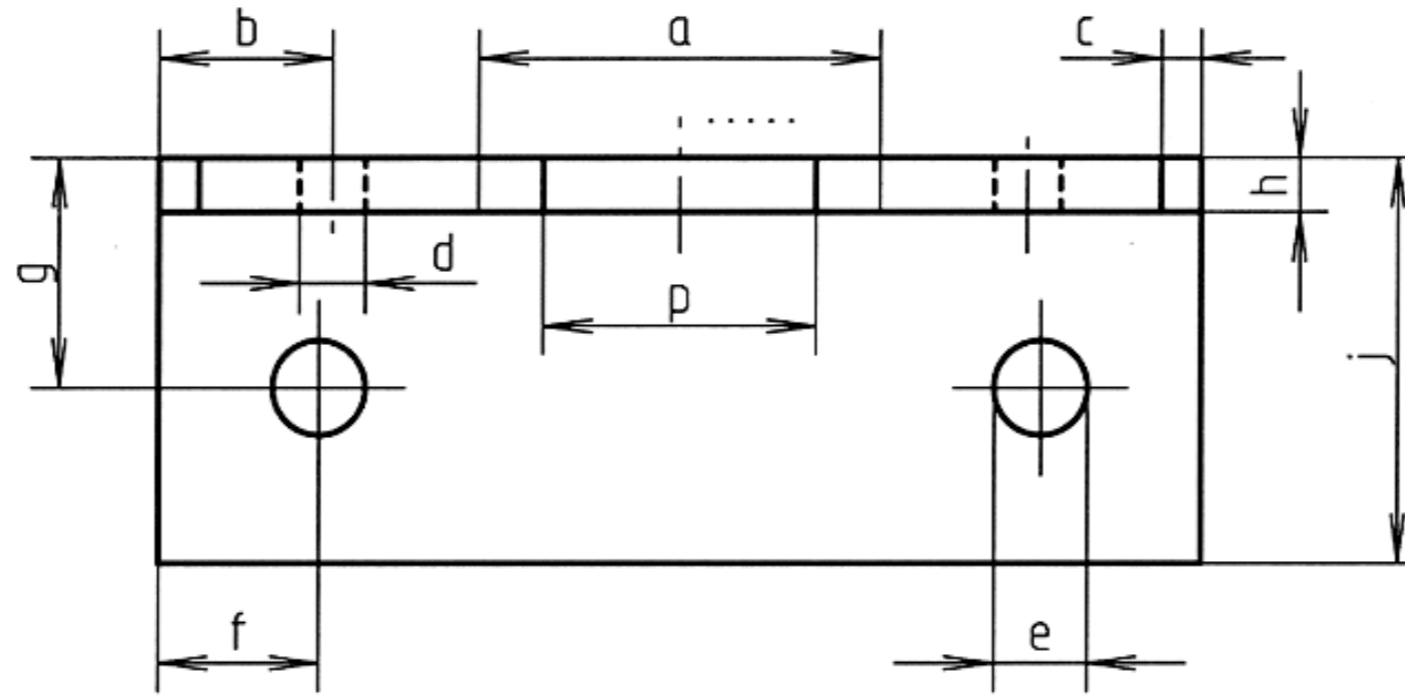
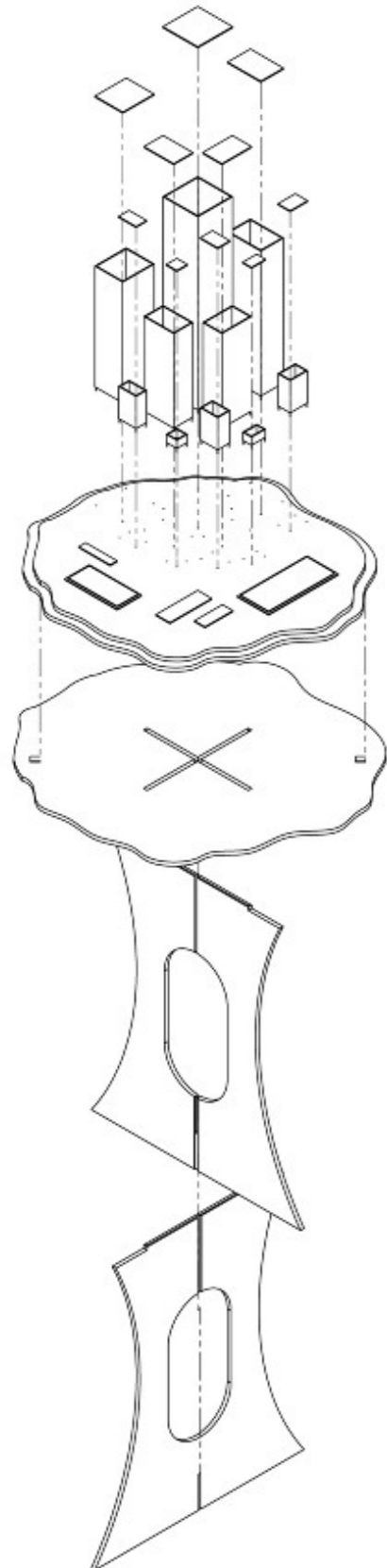
## EXPLANATIONS

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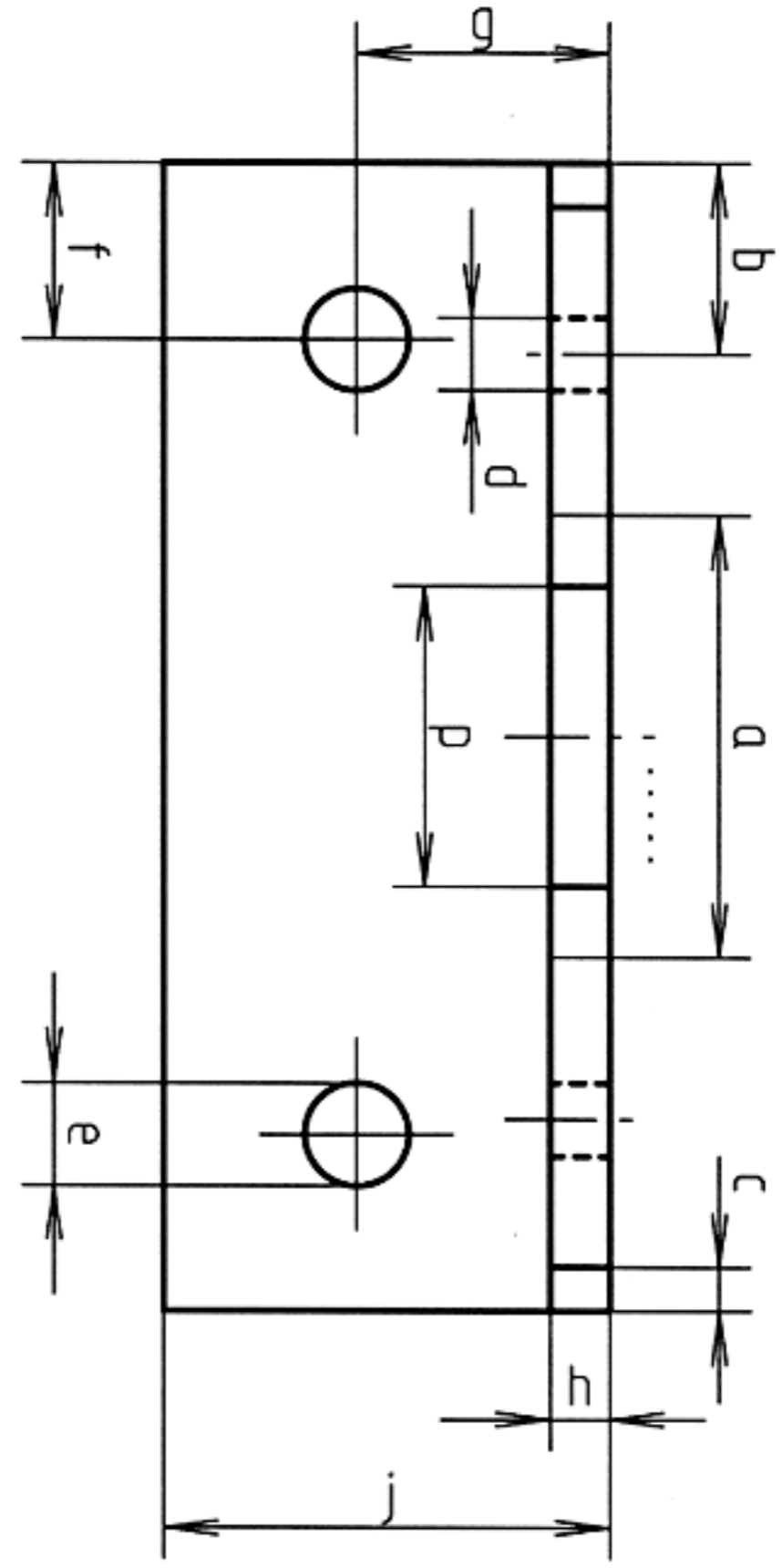
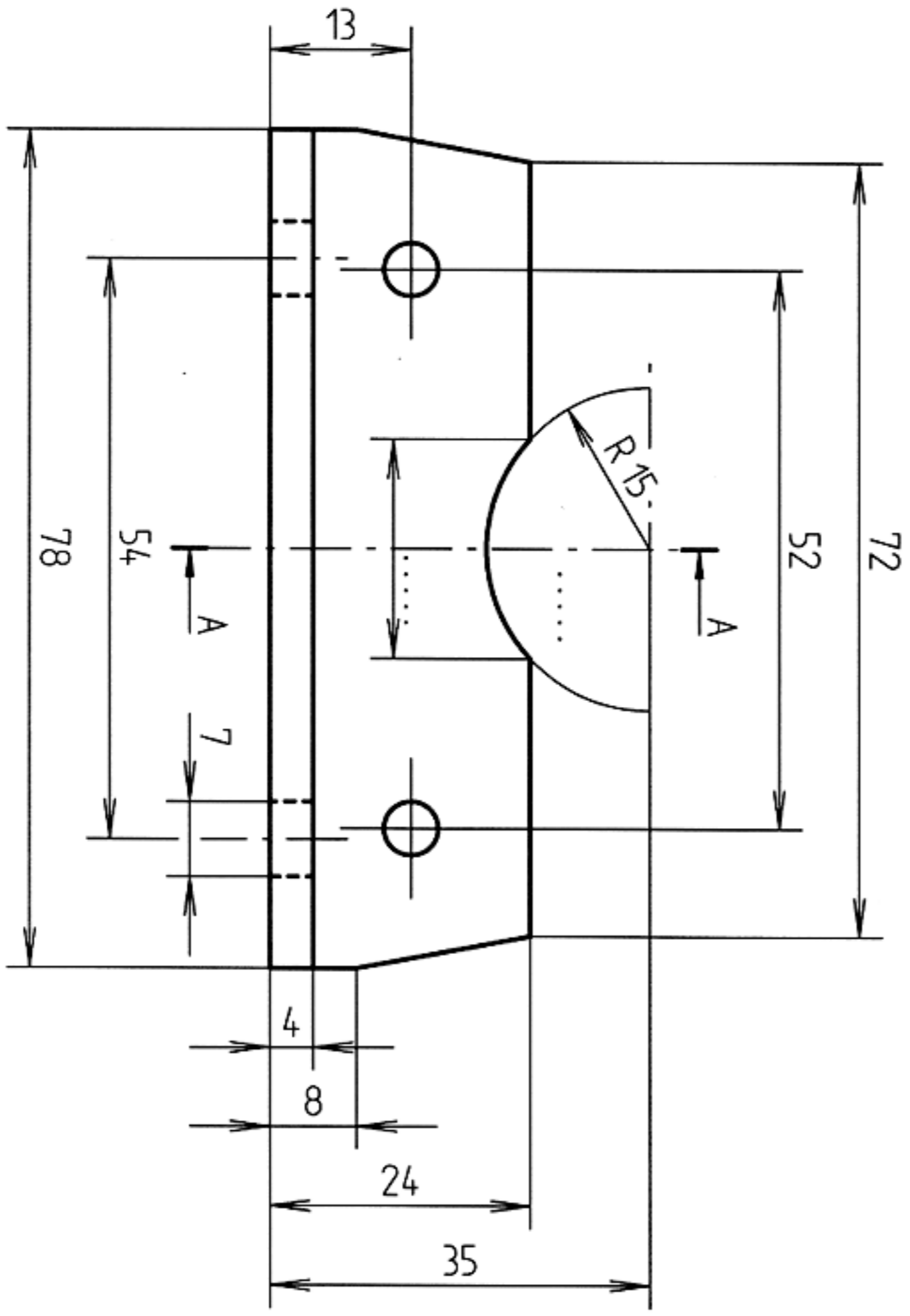
**EXPLANATIONS**

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# SAPIENZA

## UNIVERSITÀ DI ROMA

Master of Science in  
PRODUCT AND SERVICE DESIGN  
a.y. 2019-2020

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