

I.H.D
Mere Cui

Bibliography

1. Mauger, Léna, and Stéphane Remail. 2016. *The Vanished: The Evaporated People of Japan in Stories and Photographs*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing.

This book documents the lives of people in Japan who choose to disappear from their social and institutional environments. It provides firsthand information and journalistic investigation that help explain disappearance as a structural rather than individual phenomenon. The work shaped my understanding of how complex it is to withdraw from systems that monitor and archive identity.

2. Riles, Annelise. 2006. *Documents: Artifacts of Modern Knowledge*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Riles analyzes documents as active agents in institutional life rather than passive containers of information. Her argument that documents shape social relations and organizational behavior influenced my decision to see forms and manuals as core design elements in IHD. This text provided a theoretical foundation for understanding how paperwork can create emotional and procedural meaning.

3. Scott, James C. 1998. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Scott explores how modern states classify, simplify, and monitor populations through administrative systems. His analysis helped me think about institutional visibility and how identity becomes legible or illegible within bureaucratic frameworks. This book provided a broader political understanding of why disappearance is difficult in contemporary systems.

4. Goffman, Erving. 1961. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*. New York: Anchor Books.

Goffman examines institutional settings where identity is reorganized through routines, spatial arrangements, and administrative controls. His work on total institutions gave me language for thinking about how environments and procedures shape a person's sense of self. This was important for developing the spatial and emotional tone of IHD.

5. Foucault, Michel. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. New York: Vintage Books.

Foucault's study of surveillance, discipline, and institutional power offered concepts that relate directly to how systems regulate visibility. His ideas about how bodies are controlled through routines and documentation shaped the conceptual framing of IHD. The text helped me understand the relationship between recognition and authority.

6. Wilkinson, Jess. 2015. "Art Documents: The Politics of Visibility in Contemporary Art." *Invisible Culture* 22.

Wilkinson explores how artists use documentation to reveal hidden systems of power and to question institutional authority. This article influenced my exploration to using administrative objects as expressive design materials. It also helped me think about visibility as both an artistic and political concern.

7. Bauman, Zygmunt. 2000. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman's theory of liquid modernity discusses how identities and social roles become unstable in contemporary life. His work provided a conceptual lens for understanding why individuals may feel pressure to withdraw or escape visibility. It also helped shape disappearance as a response to overwhelming institutional and social demands.

8. Sloterdijk, Peter. 2009. *Terror from the Air*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Although not about disappearance directly, Sloterdijk's analysis of atmospheric and environmental control helped me think of how institutions influence people through organizational systems. His work contributed to my interest in administrative and spatial atmospheres, which are central to the emotional tone of IHD.

9. Lyon, David. 2018. *The Culture of Surveillance: Watching as a Way of Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Lyon explains how surveillance has become integrated into everyday life through technology, policy, and social norms. His work clarified the structural reasons that voluntary disappearance is so difficult today. It also helped me think about how digital visibility functions as an institutional expectation.

10. Dunne, Anthony, and Fiona Raby. 2013. *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Dunne and Raby define speculative design as a practice that imagines alternative systems to reveal assumptions about the present. Their work shaped my goal of creating IHD as an institutional fiction that critiques norms around identity, recognition, and bureaucracy. This book helped me articulate the value of designing speculative institutions.

Research Interview

Interviewer: Mere Cui

Interviewee 1: Lucy (Mom)

Interviewee 2: N.Z. (a close friend)

Q&A Interview

Q1: Why do you think some people feel the desire to disappear, even if only temporarily?

Mom:

I think many people want to disappear because life feels too loud. Everything needs attention. Work, family, society, technology. You are always expected to show up and respond. Sometimes people just reach a point where being present all the time becomes exhausting. Disappearing sounds like a way to breathe again, to stay away from pressure and responsibility without having to explain anything to anyone. It is not about running away. It is about wanting a moment of silence in a world that feels constantly watching.

N.Z.:

For me, the desire to disappear comes from being overwhelmed. Life feels very structured and very monitored now. Your phone tracks you, your school tracks you, even friendships sometimes feel like... When people say they want to disappear, they usually mean they want freedom from expectations. Not forever, just long enough to remember who they are when no one is defining them.

Q2: Do you think modern life makes disappearance harder or easier? Why?

Mom:

Much harder. Technology makes everything visible. Even if you do nothing, your data moves. Your location, your purchases, your messages. It all leaves traces. When I was young, disappearing could mean changing your routine or going somewhere unfamiliar. Now even that does not work because the systems around you record everything. People say they want privacy, but privacy is almost impossible.

N.Z.:

Harder, definitely. The world is built around constant availability. If you do not respond to a message, people worry. If you stop posting online, people ask what happened. There is a social expectation that you should always be reachable. And on top of that, there are government systems, financial accounts, medical data. You cannot simply disconnect from all of it. So disappearing becomes more of an emotional fantasy than something people can realistically do.

Q3: If there were an institution that teaches people how to disappear, what would your first reaction be?

Mom:

I would be surprised, of course. But I would also understand why such a place might exist. People often do not know how to leave their lives. They feel guilty or confused. An institution that offers a structured way to manage that feeling may actually help people understand their own limits. It sounds strange, but also very honest. Everyone wants to disappear sometimes, but no one knows how to do it.

N.Z.:

I think my first reaction would be curiosity. I would want to see what kind of procedures or services it offers. It is not a normal institution, but it reflects something real. People need guidance to leave systems just as much as they need guidance to enter them. If a place existed that allowed you to retreat safely, without chaos or drama, I think many people would want to know more about it. Right?

Q4: What kind of emotions do you relate with the idea of disappearing?

Mom:

There is fear, because disappearing means letting go of the familiar. But there is also a sense of peace. The idea of not having to explain yourself or answer to anyone feels calming. For many people, disappearance is a wish for quietness, not destruction.

N.Z.:

I think of relief and confusion together. Relief because you can escape expectations, and confusion because you are stepping outside the structure that usually tells you who you are. That tension is interesting. It shows that disappearance is not only a physical act but also an emotional transformation.

Q5: If you walked into a real Institute for How to Disappear, what would you expect to see or feel?

Mom:

I imagine it would feel very calm. Maybe an office that is simple, organized, and quiet. I would

expect clear instructions. I do not think it would feel dramatic. More like a place that gives you permission to rest.

N.Z.:

I would expect a strange mix of official and intimate. Like an institution that looks normal but offers something personal. Things that make it feel real. But also a kind of emotional distance, like you are entering a space that is slightly outside everyday life. I think I would feel observed but also understood.

Q6: After learning about my project, what do you think this institute reveals about modern identity?

Mom:

It shows that identity is shaped by rules more than we realize. Being visible is something institutions require. They want your information, your participation, your records.

N.Z.:

Your project made me realize that identity is not just who we are. It is also the paperwork, routines, expectations, and systems that surround us. Disappearance challenges those systems. It asks what happens when someone stops agreeing to be part of the structure. I think that is why the idea feels powerful.