





8th - 30th September 2012

Angus-Hughes Gallery
26 Lower Clapton Road
London
E5 0PD

www.angus-hughes.com
www.productandplacement.com

Product placement is by no means a recent phenomenon. The continual appearance of Red Crown gasoline in the 1920 Keaton / Arbuckle short *The Garage* is often cited as one of the first examples. While perhaps now more complex in technique it is even more prevalent. Products can be placed via a range of methods, from the comically blatant in the *Back To The Future* films, to situations where the product is almost intrinsic to the narrative, see the use of Fed-Ex in *Castaway*. 'Embedded Marketing', as the professionals term it, is a dark art. Its aim is to subtly re-condition a viewers' perception of a brand or product.

The exhibition brings together a range of artists and product designers who share an interest in how objects are made, displayed / marketed and sold in contemporary culture. The exhibition questions issues surrounding the production, technology and marketing of commodities, but on a wider scale, how (and by whom) participation in consumer activity is structured or framed.

Each artist and product designer has been 'paired' in order to produce a new object, multiple or edition for exhibition. Via this cross-disciplinary collaboration, new working processes are to be found

and explored, as well as allowing a re-appraisal of the conceptual elements of their practices. The resulting polymorphic objects (perhaps neither product or artwork) are placed in an installation I have developed for the exhibition. Through an architectural re-working of the gallery, the space becomes a parody of 'catalogue' stores - mimicking their structure of experience with catalogue kiosks, service point (with uniformed assistant) and market hall/storage space. Merging this structure into the space intends to amplify the functional similarities and behavioral prompts of gallery, retail and warehouse spaces.

Alex Chinneck
+
Kim Thome

Max Frommeld
+
Harry Meadows

Richard Cramp
+
Luke Smith-Wightman

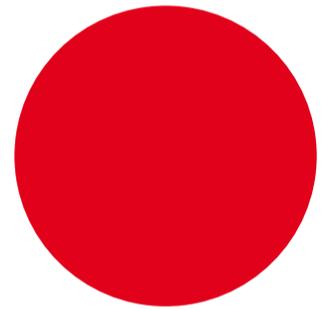
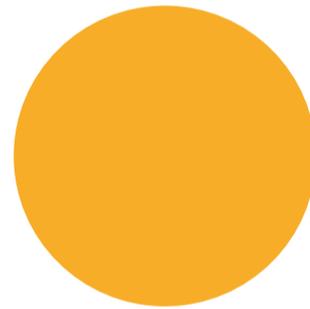
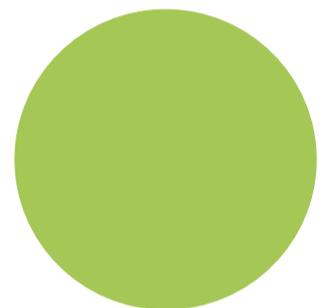
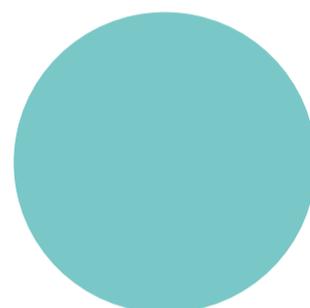
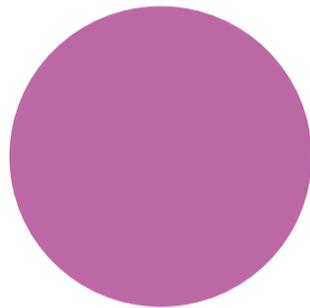
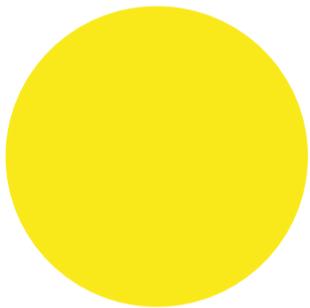
James Cadogan
+
Gordon Cheung

www.alexchinneck.com
www.kimthome.com

www.ma-fro.com
www.harrymeadows.co.uk

www.richardcramp.com
www.lukesmith-wightman.com

www.jamescadogan.co.uk
www.gordoncheung.com



Mark Selby

William Smith

Corinne Felgate
Ludovica Gioscia
(Factice)

Irene Alvarez
+
Rafel Oliva

[Curator]
www.manifesto-art.co.uk

[Curator + Kiosk Design]
www.ateliersmith.com

+
Oscar Wanless
Attua Aparicio
(Silo Studio)

[Collaborative Website]
productandplacement.tumblr.com



www.corinnefelgate.com
www.ludovicagioscia.com
www.silostudio.net

www.irene-alvarez.com
www.rafeloliva.com

Laura Campbell

Rachael Davies

[Curatorial Assistant]

[Uniform]

Elective Insanity

Moments of manipulation

It was one of my first teaching sessions. A timid student asked to be blindfolded and then invited her peers to prod her with a variety of everyday objects; part of a performance video she was working on. Initially, the group were gentle with her, slowly edging the physical boundaries. But the wolves were circling and bit-by-bit their confidence grew. Quite suddenly, a hammer made an elegant, slow motion pirouette past my ear heading directly for the girl. My job (and a court case) flashed before my eyes. Luckily, it missed her – by an inch.

I never found the student to ask them why they did it. Had I found them, I would have wanted them to become a prisoner in a re-enactment of Phil Zimbardo's infamous 1971 Stanford prison experiment; an attempt to understand how context or (hierarchical) position alters the role of human behaviour. With students allocated either the role of prisoner or guard, the experiment was halted after 6 days due to the potential for harm; the role-play becoming unnervingly real as participants evidenced initial symptoms of mental breakdown. Similar unethical research makes for popular stories. Stanley Milgram, (one of Zimbardo's former tutors), and his 'Obedience to Authority' experiment is a similarly populist example - Milgram taking people to the point of administering dangerous levels of electricity to subjects because they are told to by a perceived power. Rod Dickinson re-enacted the experiment at the CCA Gallery, Glasgow in 2002 ('The Milgram Re-Enactment'), placing further artifice upon an experiment laden with falsity.

'...people will suspend belief and reason, and act extremely in a controlled authoritarian environment. At the root of all this, of course, is a philosophical

question about what constitutes a human being. Milgram's conclusion goes against all the enlightenment ideas of innate goodness, and seems to suggest that the individual is constructed through institutions and social structures.' Rod Dickinson

And what better institution to affect changes in behaviour than those of education. A young teacher named Ron Jones undertook an experiment with his sophomore history students at Cubberley High School in Palo Alto, California (1967). A student also from Stanford University (with a masters in education), he used simulation as a teaching technique to discuss how individuals could become co-opted into a fascist state. Initially, he taught his students perfect posture and marching routines but by the third day they were wearing matching white shirts, a secret salute had been invented and his class had become overcrowded. This story later became the inspiration for the film 'Die Welle' (The Wave, 2008), though with a more dramatic conclusion. Jones ended the simulation by screening images of Hitler indoctrinating the youth and suddenly the realization of the students actions were placed back into context.

The relationship between learning, psychology and consumer behaviour is a fascinating one. The development of consumer behaviours is a learnt action - a series of constructed interactions via stimuli and response. Each of us also responds to the group, making reference to others - "keeping up with the Jones's". The control and manipulation of behaviour, Pavlov's classical conditioning, operant conditioning, vicarious learning, positioning (re-positioning) and priming, all play a part in creating a relationship with the act of purchasing or desire to purchase. Product placement is just one of many communication methods and structures of cognitive transformation that we are under

pressure from, though it seems consumerism is a role-play game we inhabit quite easily.

'Consumerism rules, but people are bored. They're out on the edge, waiting for something big and strange to come along. ... They want to be frightened. They want to know fear. And maybe they want to go a little mad.' J.G. Ballard, Kingdom Come

Ballard wrote Kingdom Come (his final novel) at the age of 75. It is arguably not one of the finest examples of his fiction but it does suggest the potential for consumerism to be seen as a form of 'soft fascism'. The fictional M25 suburb of Brooklands, with its Metro-Centre at the heart of much of the narrative, becomes the scene of a developing nationalist movement. Inspired by the concept of 'elective insanity', a new psychopathology, we see the inhabitants return to a primitive, violent state in order to escape overwhelming rationalism. These, mainly downward, spirals of psychological behaviour are a common theme in dystopian-themed fiction and what perhaps Ballard is most recognised for. Madness, or being pushed to the edge of behavioural activity, liberates us beyond the safe structures we envelop ourselves in. Zimbardo and co certainly found that to be true.

Moments of realisation

Taking a trip round the supermarket was never the same after my brother worked at Sainsburys. He told me of how every Sunday night they would re-order the shelves, move products from one end of the store to the other – place certain items near 'key products' (basics such as milk, bread etc), particularly those that were high in stock and could be sold at discount. Once I had this understanding the game became clear, ridiculously obvious even. Like suddenly noticing product placement in a film, you

then can't stop seeing it. It was like getting a pair of the X-ray specs from John Carpenter's classic 'They Live' (1988) – I could see the manipulation uncovered.

So, even in going to get 'basic' food provisions we are manoeuvred and provided with suggestion. This is not to say I suddenly then resisted and started my own version of 'The Good Life', I could (and still can) be suckered into a two for one offer on biscuits (who wouldn't). Whichever way we look we, or rather I, can't escape. In conversation with one of the artists in Product Placement, Ludovica Gioscia, we talked about how it could be to escape, or in fact whether it is even possible. (I was thinking about this while on residency in Norway in an isolated wood cabin). It would seem we both felt everything gets pulled back in eventually, like an elastic band or perhaps there is even some cyclical pattern occurring. Researching films, its noticeable how even intended critique, such as that in Wayne's World and its lampooning of product placement, ends up being nothing more than an advertisement in itself. I mean I could reel off the brands I remember from that scene now – I won't, but I'm sure you are doing it while reading this. One way or another, it worked.

This all seems very pessimistic. David Lynch, when asked on his thoughts about product placement, gave the emphatic if ineloquent response, 'total fucking bullshit' (AFI Dallas Film Festival 2007). Commercials are OK for him though, just not product placement. Despite such reactions, advertising and marketing will continue to saturate. The BBC's gentle lifting of restrictions on product placement in February 2011 is just another small example of commercial money entering the publicly funded domain.

So, can there be any positives? Perhaps all we can do is try to see

things for what they are, look for clarity in this psychological chess battle - perhaps if we are lucky, we can attempt to manoeuvre three or four steps in front. Stay ahead of the game. In the IKEA market hall, one can try and consciously choose to be swept along the yellow highway for a ride through fictional living or try and find some devilishly difficult snakes-and-ladders style shortcut to the warehouse, bobbing between lighting and houseplants. Either way, you'll end up trapped at the till.

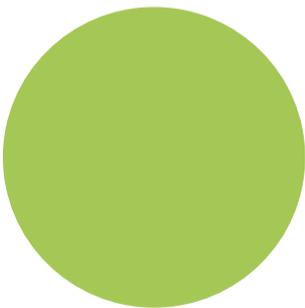
I'd like to try and be a glass half full kind of guy. The purpose of the exhibition is to create a shared sense of understanding in how contexts operate - gallery, shop, warehouse, art, design - and through their interplay of structures find some common ground; a form of meta-philosophy. Certainly, discussions in identifying 'differences' between art and design have been lower on the agenda for me, especially considering the open nature of disciplinary working in contemporary practice. It is clear in fact that there have been many common trains of thought, even within the texts of this publication - Laura Campbell showing how the consumerism elastic pings and brings a 93 year old artist to sell his work and James Cadogan, through another anecdote on learning, posits a relationship between writing to that of developing knowledge in a collaboration.

What has been interesting is that while much of the resulting work can be seen as critique (in some form or other), there is also a common sense of playfulness that allows for a glimmer of positivism. Playing requires leaps beyond pre-defined rules, turning manipulation into something less submissive. It is this kind of thinking that resists Ballardian consumer boredom. Just please don't call it 'Blue Sky Thinking'.

Mark Selby

Right - Ludovica Gioscia, *Image from the Paninaro archive*, 2012





An armillary sphere is a device that measures time through the position of the sun. That this collaborative model for a functional sundial is cut from the intense heat of laser light was derived from our fascination for the sun.

Many cultures worship it as a God, for good reasons, as a necessity for life. An armillary sphere is structurally a basic mimicry of Earth but this sundial is made entirely from the everyday, throwaway material of the Financial Times newspaper; rendering an additional meaning to the device.

Perhaps it is a metaphor for our contemporary landscape where the sphere of Earth is entirely consumed by financial data - measuring time by the cliché, 'time is money'. If in the metaphorical world of this sphere there is a bright and powerful sun that casts deep shadows then

what shape might this 'sun' take is one of the questions raised.

The collaboration has developed out of two distinct practices that have found common ground through not only the conceptual context of the exhibition (and their work) but in their approach to process.

"In the work that we create, some of the most satisfying moments come in those of self reflection, the time for finding consolation, clarification and resolution in the work itself. Collaboration in a project such as this puts one object in the front of two reflectors, a hall of mirrors of

discussion that can be both playful and disorientating, in the search for a vantage point at which the object reaches on to infinity."

James Cadogan + Gordon Cheung

Sundial, Laser cut glued newspaper (Financial Times) and yacht varnish, 2012.

How I Wrote; from the diary of Robert Chester

Today is the twenty seventh of June, nineteen-eighty-seven.

Three hundred and seven diary days have passed since I last wrote in a numerical manner. A sneaky trick I felt necessary to adopt to give glancing eyes over the first fortnight's pages the illusion of meaningful content, and make the most sedentary of days appear as provocative for contemplation as those with perceivable action. Needless to say it's now found a way into my habit, giving form to pure wind, but like the stretching of an athlete it also presents an index for the actions to follow. Warmed up, royal blood pumping and placed between the lanes of the page a pen sits poised for the day's first reflection from whence to leap.

Despite knowing the accumulative

formula of diaries does not permit this sort of nostalgia, today I maintain a compelling desire to write about an event of the past. From a time that likely pre-dates the pages I write on, yet remembered with utmost vivacity, it became and remains a landmark of my personal progress on the process I undertake with every entry in this journal. And so allowing myself to cast a self-reputable chronological vigilance aside, these pages shall show their first anomaly.

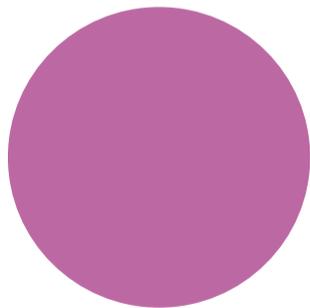
There came a day at school when my handwriting took a notable aesthetic turn; at the age of eleven I was awarded - through first performing consistently and accurately with a pencil - the permission for the transition into ink. An oily lubricant liberated my fingertips, freed from

the graphite resistance previously imposed they would from this point forward ride a vehicle with revolution.

Applying the hand choreography of my graphite years led me soon to discover new significance in the porosity of the page; unforgiving and irreversible, the words bled as though lined before a firing squad until the paradoxes of delicacy and pressure were mastered. I recollect my progression as being one of the slowest in the class, learning more from hesitancy than conviction - but given time like the others before me I could build the momentum, seeing the marks on the page transform over the coming year into torrents of cursive text. From here my handwriting was the subject of aesthetic considerations, beginning

not so considerably but as forceful instruction to remove the italic persuasion my ink had adopted. A subject of heated debate between my parents and the teacher, who on earth claims typography before legibility!? I claimed it wasn't italic and then claimed it art, I was facetious. I would have called it the result of optical aberrations, or astigmatism if I had known the words, the kind which affected Modigliani, Holbein and El Greco.

James Cadogan



The Pop-Pop boats, made by Year 9 pupils from Bow School, are handcrafted from recycled tin cans. Today's manufacturing processes involve multiple entities, not just the isolated maker. In an echo of this collaborative method of production, the Pop-Pop Boats

are part of a project called 'Seed to Speed', created by artist Brendan Walker with George Tomlinson for SPACE's People Power arts and technology programme, sponsored by Bloomberg ON, and involving several organisations and individuals: Action for Bow, Bow School, and Victoria Model Steamboat Club.

In his critique of toys (1957), Roland Barthes describes microcosms of the adult world that are copies of human objects. According to Barthes, these objects are often embedded with the investments, expectations, and instructions of our

society. Interested in the hierarchies and systems of production inherent in an object, Max Frommeld and Harry Meadows have packaged a collection of handmade toys, Pop-Pop Boats.

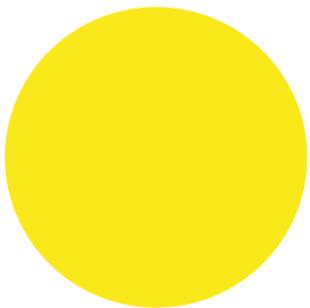
By packaging Pop-Pop Boats, Frommeld and Meadows have edged the toy into the realm of commodity. Initially made by the student, for the student, the packaging shifts the object from personal project to consumer product, complicating the role of designer, craftsman, and consumer. Void of logos, colour and text the recognisable toy packaging lets the unique,

handcrafted product speak for itself. The packaging not only frames these uniquely crafted objects in a familiar yet disconcerting way, the modest wrapping also critiques the overbearing marketing ploys of manufacturers and the zealous yet often misdirected appetite of our material culture.

Harry Meadows + Max Frommeld

Pop-Pop Boats, 2012

Text by Mariah Nielson
Images by Lucy Levene



Each wax tile is made from 168 melted colouring crayons. The crayons are initially arranged by tone and then heat is applied to melt each group of pigments into the next. The process begins with order but becomes interesting through accident as the journey of the

fluid wax creates unique patterns, colours and shapes through chance. The material moves from graphic formalism to gestural, painterly abstraction.

By using a child's product as the material starting point, the colour palette begins broad but basic. Each crayon represents an archetypal member of the colour spectrum, providing an ideal base for the mixing process from which new colours can emerge.

Once set, the wax tiles are digitally scanned and printed onto the surface of ceramic tiles. This change

of material and introduction of modern printing transfers the aesthetic onto a durable and functional surface. This translation also shifts the the intention of the process from childhood play to commercial aspirations, a depiction of the evolving nature of 'products'.

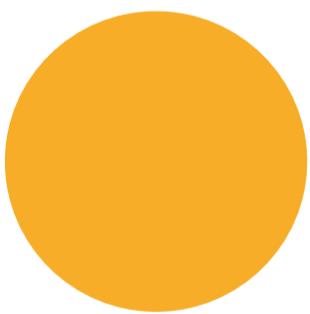
Both collaborators, Kim Thome and Alex Chinneck, have come from different angles to reach their shared interest in visual trickery and playful results. Thome's interest in pattern and tessellation meets Chinneck's interest in peculiar processes, and collectively they channel the visual seductiveness of a material in its

transient state into modern flooring.

Each tile measures 40x40cm and can be positioned in a variety of formats, allowing the consumer to continue the elements of chance in through composition.

Kim Thome + Alex Chinneck

Wax Tiles, Melted wax crayons, digitally printed ceramic tiles, 40cm x 40cm [Square] each, 2012.



Through ongoing conversation, it became clear that the Velcro that held together the collaboration was Brancusi, Studio Alchimia and Memphis; how they used the repetition of object types, surfaces and substance, and interfered with the boundary of objects.

Following an exchange of drawings and images that accompanied the discussions, each collaborator returned to make work from the dialogue. Silo (Oscar Wanless and Attua Aparicio), inspired by an element in Felgate and Gioscia's work that explored printed images,

saw the collaboration as a moment to develop their process of moulding polystyrene into an experimental textile surface. Fabric was painted with heat transfer dye (in stripes), then used to sew moulds together. As heat is applied, the polystyrene expands, transferring and distorting the printed image. "The result is a bit of what we know and a bit of something we didn't know."

The shape and form of the 'totem' influenced Silo's project and also the work of Felgate and Gioscia. For Felgate, the ceramic and glass totems produced by Memphis became the symbol of the exchange; hugely iconic, but unlike the other items produced by the collective, totally functionless. This question of function became the departure point for the creation of her three objects - Tenskwatawa, Osceola, Wovoka. These sculptures pay homage to the totems of the 18th century, when the British weighted

down their dinner tables with ornate silver skyscrapers, which had no use except to demonstrate wealth. And in the Americas, native chiefs went to war to defend their land and craft exquisite totems; their sole function was to provide fortune and protect their uncertain future.

Gioscia's contribution to Product Placement, similarly totem like yet more explicitly architectural, has evolved into a light-weight flat-pack intervention. Pan-Stäck nods to Warhol's iconic stacks of brillo boxes and interprets the latter as the first example of mass-produced product placement in art. Stacked cardboard boxes are screenprinted with motifs ranging from previous archives and are piled up vertically to form a roman column. The title, 'Pan-Stäck' is a faux IKEA product, suggestive of the imperialistic pre-packaged experience that companies such as the Swedish furniture giant offer to consumers.

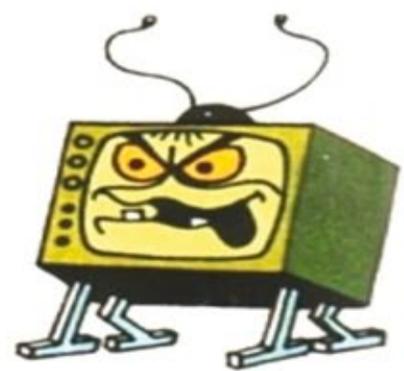
Corinne Felgate &
Ludovica Gioscia (Factice) +
Oscar Wanless &
Attua Aparicio (Silo Studio)

Top - Silo Studio, *Mary and Eliza*,
NSPES polystyrene and polyethylene
with dispers heat transfer dye, 2012.

Right - Corinne Felgate, *Osceola*,
Flocked Ceramics and Human Hair,
2012.

Left - Ludovica Gioscia, *Pan-Stäck*,
Screenprinted cardboard, custom and
found wallpaper, 2012.

Opposite - *A shotgun wedding between
Bauhaus and Fischer-Price*, 2012.
Digital assemblage created by Ludovica
Gioscia using images provided by Silo
Studio and Corinne Felgate.



93 Year Old Sell-Out

As exciting and intriguing as it was to witness a 93 year old artist part with a lifetimes worth of work, it was upsetting too; like watching him and his wife say goodbye to their children.

The sentimental and nostalgic value of the work was emphatic, going above and beyond the monetary and exchange value placed on his collection. Painting was not a way of making a living for this particular artist; he could just as well have been a 'hobbyist'. The paintings were in no way created or produced as a commodity to satisfy the needs of a consumer or even to make money for himself.

It was refreshing and inspiring to know that the artist placed no monetary worth on his production. He massively undervalued his paintings and repeatedly wondered why people would ever want to buy them. It was wonderful to see the total surprise on his face when he was told that the works exhibited in his first public show sold within

48 hours of opening (many of which sold at the private view). It is this modesty and commitment to his chosen practice that is incredibly endearing and humbling.

The act of purchasing these original paintings from a somewhat unknown and understated artist, in my eyes, was a perfect example of the society we live in. The romanticised consumption of an artwork as a way of exploring and expressing ones thoughts, ideals and feelings, superseded by the apparent need and desire to buy into the latest commercial product.

As with many purchases we choose to make, one may feel as though they have just provided themselves with a 'treat', something potentially life-enhancing. Everybody has the ability to justify a new purchase, convincing themselves in most circumstances that they have worked hard and to own it will most certainly make your life just that little bit better.

The constant growth and development of marketable products in our society, whether it is art, technology or food has created a constant state of flux when it comes to consumerism. A short time after one thing makes you feel particularly important and content another thing then comes along replacing that feeling almost instantaneously, meaning you are never fully satisfied. It is frustrating in many ways that you then find yourself unable to escape a consistently variable market whereby something or everything will never quite be enough.

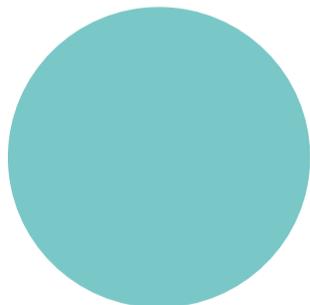
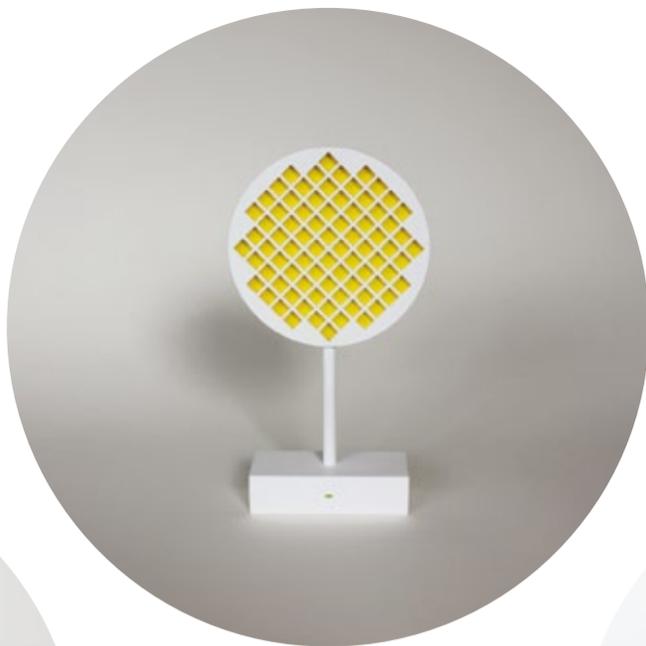
It is unusual to experience the way in which the considered 'usefulness' of art differs between the creator and the consumer. In this particular circumstance the 'usefulness' of the artwork to the artist himself could not be more different than to that of the purchaser. It is uncommon today for an artist to retain a lifetimes worth of work purely for personal appreciation without having somewhere along the way

made some financial gain.

Moving between jobs within several galleries, I see and hear of new works that are available to buy. The urge to part with some of my own hard-earned cash is extremely tempting; it is first hand experience of the art market. When you are aware that others are considering an investment you cannot help but consider if it is a possibility for you to get involved.

In a circle of monetary worth and self-satisfaction, the question is, where does the compulsion to own the latest commodity end and the long-term relationship with a product begin, if it is even possible?

Laura Campbell



We are all constantly bombarded with advertising, brand building and other tactics devised to sell us new products. This has influenced many people to see shopping for new possessions as a way of solving their problems and improving their lives.

We question this behaviour by presenting a series of objects with mysterious therapeutic properties. Developed to appeal as ‘designer’ objects, they use familiar signs to present themselves as actively conditioning the air, neutralising impurities or transforming energy fields.

Their vague function questions their purpose and contradicts their visual appeal. This tension is symbolic of the cluttered landscape in many homes (and minds), where the urge to consume brings in objects of little worth and temporary appeal.

“The LEM is a powered module that is specifically designed and developed to give the buyer a better life, both in health and style.

We offer a range of products designed to improve your surroundings, this can be either in the home and/or work place. The range offers various designs of module that cannot fail to enhance any interior. The sleek minimal appearance of each LEM utilises a breathing LED system that provides you with the secure and constant knowledge of a fully functioning module.

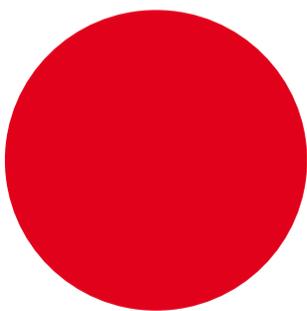
When you buy one of our LEM you

can be sure of the latest innovative design combined with a high quality of manufacture and materials.

Peace of mind and satisfaction are guaranteed.”

Richard Cramp +
Luke Smith-Wightman

Full product list available separately.



Collaboration is a kind of a match where the ball goes from one side to the other - transforming and evolving an idea. What each party knows or wants to share with the other is just mere data without relevance, because, there will always be misunderstandings or

the possible hiding of knowledge between the parties.

By using the 'exquisite corpse' as structure for the collaboration, the blindness pushes intuition into a dialogue; each action being posted on a blog to generate a reaction. The exquisite corpse could be a definition of collaboration. This system sometimes has given sharp reactions, other times disproportionate or incoherent ones.

The industrial era is full of examples of failed systems or some that have changed many times to finally work.

We live in a society that is created thanks to these mistakes. It was easy to think that maybe what our system was generating was a collection of readymade pieces, digital or analog. The case is that maybe it is a system through which we create micro instructions, showing realities in a certain way. The internet offers a super big selection of voyeurism processes, there are so many instructions, recipes, DIY, etc, that creates a rich and valuable main knowledge, A PRODUCT.

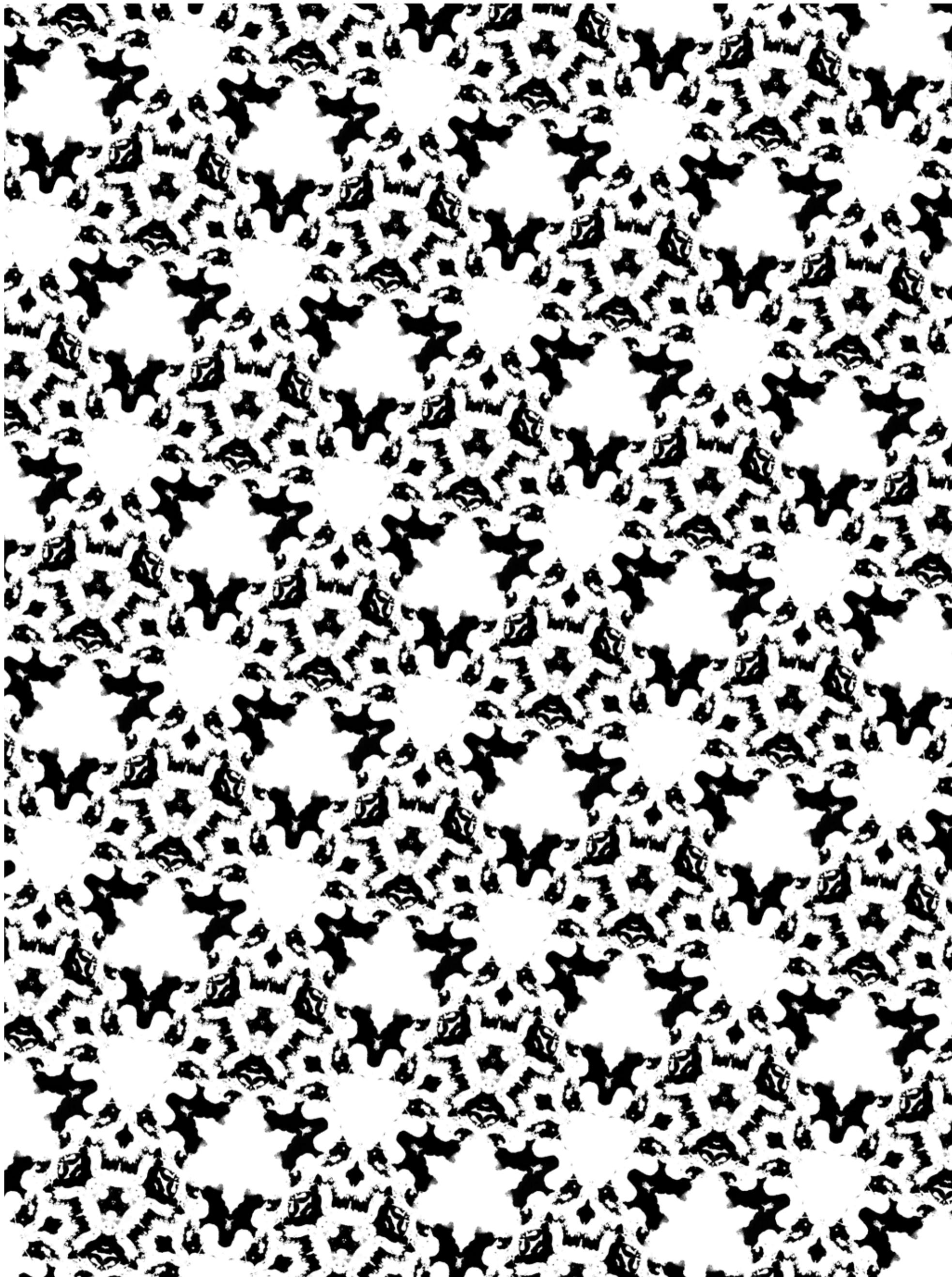
So far, the system has created a method of distorting and filtering the surrounding environment;

disrupting the commodified gaze of tourism. Alongside this, exists the practical "Instructions on how to sculpt an A4 in 67 pages", turned into an animated GIF available for download. As the animation repeats, it destroys itself again and again A product that consumes itself.

Rafel Oliva + Irene Alvarez

Sculpting Recipes, 2012.

Right - Irene Alvarez, *Ink Skull #5*, B&W Print, 2012. (Cut out and paste)



Thanks

William Angus-Hughes
Iavor Lubomirov
Laura Campbell
Will Smith

