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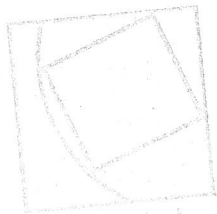
Where am I?

Communicating Confusion through Object

Andrew Warren

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Abstract

A project based on the idea of communication through object, and an investigation into how objects interact with the world around them. The aim of this project was not to create a functional piece of furniture, but to investigate how an object can create an experience for the user or viewer; how an object can inspire feelings or ideas in the people around it. Inspired by research into the way atmosphere is created in books, film and theatre two simple but unusual pieces of furniture grew into a room; a room into a house; and a house into the story of a life.

Introduction

It could be said that all objects communicate with their user or viewer on a variety of different levels. Sometimes this communication is intentional, for example the sole purpose of a book is to communicate to the reader the ideas contained within it. Sometimes the communication is unintentional; a by-product of the processes behind the object's creation or the history of its use. For example the surface of a rounded pebble communicates years of being washed by the sea, or shards of broken glass communicate some kind of accident. Sometimes the object communicates a practical possibility; for example a door, which communicates the possibility of entry into another room. Sometimes communication is on an emotional level, such as a wedding ring, which communicates love.

The possibility that an object can communicate on an emotional level is something which I have not really been aware of until the commencement of my studies here at HDK Steneby. I have, of course, known that certain objects have certain emotional effects on both me and other people, but I have never thought about why that is, and I have never actively tried to re-create this phenomenon in a design. I have, in the past, always approached design on a very practical level. The important questions have always been: 'What must this item do?' 'How can I make it?'

Design for film and theatre sets and props involves a very different approach to that of design for a real-world environment. The demands put upon the objects are very different, and another question becomes important: 'What does this object communicate?' Although there are always some practical demands, the area of greatest importance to the object is usually aesthetic. It is very often the case that the object does not actually have to fulfil the requirements usually asked of it, but instead just convince the audience that it does. For example, a scene set in a deserted dining hall would probably require many chairs, in order to communicate the idea of a dining hall. If, however, no actor was to actually sit down during the scene, then none of the chairs would have to be capable of supporting the weight of a human. To take this a step further; it is very common practice in theatre and films to use painted backdrops for outdoor scenes. It is impossible to re-create an entire street in a theatre, but if nobody actually has to walk down it, then it is perfectly acceptable to paint it onto a backdrop.

Background

During my time at HDK Steneby, the breadth of my interest in design has widened from a basic interest in the form, construction and aesthetics of fine furniture, to a general interest in all forms of design and how different objects interact with one another, each one affecting our experience of the others. One area in which I have developed a deep interest is that of stage and screen set design, where all the objects work together to create an image in the mind of the audience over and above that which they actually see. One piece which appealed to me at last year's exam exhibition was 'Från skiss till scen: en tolkning av Flaxa Mildväder ur Maria Gripes bok Glasblåsarns barn.' (From Sketch to Stage: An Interpretation of Flaxa

Mildweather from Maria Gripe's book 'The Glassblower's Child')¹ This piece, Sara Engström's final piece for her 'Textile and Clothing Design' Bachelor's exam, consisted of a costume for a stage production of the aforementioned book. It fascinated me how every aspect of the piece had been considered in terms of how it contributed to the viewer's experience of the character.

I was also struck by the work of Ida Sterner, who also took the bachelors exam in 'Textile and Clothes Design'. Her project, 'Utan titel' (Untitled)², consisted of an installation which represented a bathroom, and created an atmosphere of illusion and escapism. The installation was presented in a dark room and consisted of several objects of differing sizes and moody lighting. I thought that it was very interesting that Ida presented an exhibition which had focus not on the textiles themselves, but on the whole experience of the exhibition. This piece helped me to see that a well-developed exhibition can help to communicate the ideas behind a project, making the result more accessible to a wider audience.

These two projects inspired me to base my exam project on the idea of communication through object, and encouraged me to carry out a project which required me to push the limits of my communicative abilities. This project is based upon the idea, so often exploited in film and theatre, that an object can create atmosphere or arouse feelings which are not necessarily related to the object's perceived purpose.

Although I am not a great lover of films as a form of entertainment, I am interested in the visual aspects involved in films, how imagery, symbolism and representation are used to communicate invisible aspects of a character, and how atmosphere can be created through scenery and soundtrack. My favourite films are usually those with much exaggerated, other-worldly landscapes and ridiculous storylines, and my favourite art has long been surrealist. I began to consider what it was that attracted me to these genres. I came to the conclusion that it was a form of escapism from the real world. These scenes force us to detach ourselves from reality because they are too confusing to understand when viewed in relation to the real world. I realised that by creating this type of confusing situation in the real world, we can probably reproduce this feeling of disconnection in an everyday situation.

Aim

I intend to study how a feeling of confusion and disorientation is created through word, picture, film, and other media. Through this study I shall develop my skills in the area of artistic representation and develop both my 2D and 3D sketching abilities. I shall then develop one of the ideas which I have investigated and sketched upon into a full-scale prototype or presentation model of a piece, or pieces, of furniture which creates a feeling of confusion or disorientation in the viewer/user. The furniture shall be presented in the form of a scene or exhibition which helps to communicate this feeling.

¹ Engström, Sara. *Från skiss till scen: en tolkning av Flaxa Mildväder ur Maria Gripes bok Glasblåsarns barn*. Gothenburg: HDK Steneby, 2007.

² Sterner, Ida. *Utan Titel*. Gothenburg: HDK Steneby, 2007.

Goal

To produce a scene or exhibition that creates a feeling of confusion and disorientation in the minds of those viewing or entering it. The scene shall be in the form of a space or room containing at least one piece of furniture which I have developed. The furniture piece does not have to be practical in terms of function, ergonomics, etc.

Problem

How can a piece of furniture communicate a feeling of confusion and disorientation?

In order to structure my research into such a broad question, I set myself a series of sub-projects into which I was to carry out research and sketching. Each sub-project would involve its own distinct research and sketch phases lasting a few days each, and result in at least one concept for a piece of furniture or scene.

The following is a definition of each of these sub-projects, and a brief explanation of what each was to involve.

How can we communicate an abstract concept through a seemingly unrelated object?

This is in fact a very broad question for a sub-project, and one which could easily have formed the basis of an entire study. However the intention was not that this question should be an independent investigation; it was instead to act as a warm-up exercise, giving me experience of making a three-dimensional representation.

How can two-dimensional optical illusions, and the ideas behind the work of surrealist painters, be applied to a three-dimensional room?

Both optical illusions and surrealism have long been of interest to me, with Salvador Dalí³ and M.C. Escher⁴ being two of my favourite artists. Dalí himself has produced many of the objects from his paintings in three dimensions, including several pieces of furniture⁵. I wanted to investigate the possibilities further, but concentrate more on optical illusions instead of the humorous objects and visual puns which Dalí himself tended to work with.

How can coloured lighting effects be used to create different atmospheres within a given room or object?

When I first mentioned that I was thinking of creating a scene or exhibition involving lighting, Kristoffer Jeglinski⁶ suggested that I carried out a training exercise in lighting techniques in order to gain some experience into what can be a very powerful tool for the three-dimensional artist. This project was to begin with a simple exercise

³ Dalí, Slavador. Spain, 1904-1989. Surrealist painter.

⁴ Escher, Maurits Cornelis. Netherlands, 1898-1972. Graphic artist.

⁵ Dalí, Slavador. *Mae West Lips Sofa*. 1938, Gala-Salvador Dalí Foundation. Dalí, Slavador. *City of Drawers*. 1836, Varie

⁶ Jeglinski, Kristoffer. Poland. Lecturer at HDK Steneby.

involving experimenting with coloured lamps, and develop into attempting to create specific atmospheres through the lighting.

How can we create the feeling of being displaced in time?

Books such as 'Stig of the Dump'⁷ and 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe'⁸, involve incidents of confusion brought about by characters being displaced in time. Clocks and calendars can be valuable tools in film and theatre to communicate the passage of time to the audience, and thus avoid confusion. I wanted to reverse this idea, and investigate how these devices and others could be used in order to create confusion, and give the impression of altered passage of time, or of a world where time flows differently.

How can a person be made to feel that they have either grown to larger than their normal size or shrunk to smaller than it?

Inspired by stories such as 'Gulliver's Travels'⁹, 'Alice in Wonderland'¹⁰, 'Truckers'¹¹, and numerous other children's books, I considered what the effect of encountering objects of unexpected proportion would be, and how I could create the feeling of being either larger than normal or smaller than normal.

Investigation

How can we communicate an abstract concept through a seemingly unrelated object?

The first week of the project coincided with a project being run for the second years. The aim of this project was to develop skills in quick three-dimensional sketch and model work, and to train in techniques of three-dimensional artistic representation. After visiting Göteborg stadsteater, Gothenburg's main theatre, to see the prop and set workshops, we were instructed to buy a piece of second hand furniture and adjust and adorn it in order to communicate the theme 'Jungle'. Although it could be said that the theme was not wholly relevant to my project, the experience was a valuable one, helping to build my confidence in my ability to communicate atmosphere through object, and helping me to understand what level of exaggeration is required to communicate the desired effect in an abstract way.

The short length of the project, and very specific deadlines, gave me very valuable lessons in developing an idea from concept to two-dimensional sketch to three-dimensional product, in an effective and appropriate manner. I was reminded of the fact that, when building a model or other item which does not have to last a long time, it can be acceptable to cut corners by using quicker but less long-lasting construction methods than one would use when making fine furniture. One of the most significant things I learned was that interpretation of an abstract representation is a very personal experience. This can pose real problems to someone attempting to

⁷ King, Clive. *Stig of the Dump*. London: Puffin, 1963

⁸ Lewis, C.S. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 1950.

⁹ Swift, Jonathan. *Gulliver's Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World, in Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of several Ships*, London, 1726.

¹⁰ Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. London: Macmillan, 1865.

¹¹ Pratchett, Terry. *Truckers*. London: Corgi, 1989.

communicate something to a wide audience. A good example of this is in my project, where I used stuffed toys to represent jungle animals. Unbeknown to me, one of these toys looked like a cartoon used by a maker of kitchen paper, so some people thought of kitchen paper when they saw it. This sort of problem is difficult to avoid entirely, and can cause the effect of the piece to be totally destroyed. A description of the result of this project can be seen in appendix b.

How can two dimensional optical illusions, and the ideas behind the work of surrealist painters, be applied to a three dimensional room?

I experimented with producing 'soft' objects, inspired by the clocks from Salvador Dalí's painting 'The Persistence of Memory' (1931). I thought that a wooden chair which looked like it was in the process of melting would be interesting, however practicalities of construction caused me to lay down that idea. I also worked with ideas of objects which floated in the air, which are a recurring theme in the work of surrealist artists¹². This investigation led to the development of two of my favourite ideas; a bookshelf which is hung at an angle on the wall (fig. 1), so that it seems the books will fall off; and a writing table without legs which hangs on the wall, and has drawers which appear to hover underneath (fig. 2). I spent quite a long time developing this piece to the stage that I was fairly confident that it would work as expected. However, it was to be a piece of fine handcrafted furniture, and after much discussion I decided that it was not really appropriate to the brief for this project. This is an idea which I shall further develop in the future.

Whilst at a second hand shop on an unrelated errand, I found an unusual wall lamp which looked like a table lamp sliced in half (fig. 3). As well as thinking this was interesting (if, in my opinion, a little ugly) in its own right, I saw that it could be relevant to this project. The lamp directly led to the development of a table, also chopped in the middle, at an angle (fig. 4). The thought was that this, placed in a room with one wall out of square, could create the feeling of the wall closing in, and eating up the room.

The area I mostly focused on during this investigation was perspective and depth perception. Although I produced some interesting results, as a general rule these tricks relied upon the object being viewed from only one direction. This can work well, for example at Innovatum in Trollhättan, where there is a room built with a sloping ceiling and floor. Two people go into the room whilst one looks in through a window. It appears to the viewer that one of the people has become a giant, whilst the other has become a dwarf. However, I felt that the fact that one must look at the installation from only one point of view creates a distance between the viewer and the object, creating the feeling of theatre which one views, rather than an experience in which one partakes. At this point I was keen that the viewer could go into the room and even touch the objects.

I took from this investigation the idea that subtle use of optical trickery can introduce a feeling of unease in the viewer, even when the effect is not strong enough for them to understand why. I also learned that although it is impractical to use perspective in three dimensions to create a specific distortion, for example make a room look bigger

¹² Halsman, Philippe. *Dali Atomicus*. 1958. Magritte, Rene. *Golconde*. 1953.

than it is, one can create a feeling of disorientation by applying contrasting techniques.

How can coloured lighting effects be used to create different atmospheres within a given room or object?

I experimented with lighting a small, white, three sided pyramid with three lamps; one red, one blue and one green. The purpose was to investigate how the different coloured lights mix, creating coloured shadows. I documented my experiments as best I could using photographs, sketches and notes, but could not find a satisfactory way to communicate the results of my experiments. Photographs did not give a reliable representation of the colours, although they were useful for comparisons. A combination of notes and sketches were satisfactory for reminding me what I had achieved, but could not create vivid images in the minds of others. Despite this, the investigation was well worth the time, and I learned a great deal about how to handle light, and how easy it is to create quite startling effects.

I continued this investigation by creating installations of everyday objects and experimenting with different lighting techniques using between two and four coloured lamps. This required me to be a bit more direct in my approach than I was in the first part of the investigation. Instead of adjusting the lamps to see what happened, I planned what effect I wanted to achieve, and tried to re-create it. I was surprised by how difficult it was to anticipate the results of a small change in the lighting but found that, with a little experimentation, I could produce approximately the atmosphere I wanted (fig. 5).

The most significant discovery I made during this investigation was that our judgement of colour is relative, and so our experience of a certain colour is affected by the colour of its surroundings. I was very surprised by the effect achieved by lighting coloured objects with coloured light, finding that one nearly always sees the object as its original colour, irrespective of how it is lit. This discovery was later supported by a lecture I attended, and is caused by the aforementioned fact that our interpretation of colour is relative.

This exercise has proved important to the development of my project, and has helped to show me how combinations of strong and subtle lighting effects can almost alone create very strong atmospheres. Artists such as James Turrell¹³ and Dan Flavin¹⁴ have exploited the possibilities of lighting, creating numerous art installations based solely upon lighting.

How can we create the feeling of being displaced in time?

I considered the effect of changing the speed at which a clock runs, or making a clock which shows something other than 12 hours. I also investigated other ways to represent the passage of time, such as changing colour or position of light. I felt that alone these ideas were too removed from the aim of creating a piece of furniture.

¹³ Turrell, James. USA, 1943- . Artist.

¹⁴ Flavin, Dan. USA, 1933-1966. Artist.

How can a person be made to feel that they have either grown to larger than their normal size or shrunk to smaller than it?

These effects have been well investigated and carried out in the past both by artists¹⁵ and numerous set and prop builders for film etc. There are also numerous examples of this phenomenon in furniture design¹⁶. These ideas can be very interesting when combined with other approaches, such as perspective distortions, however I felt that as a stand-alone project the use of these ideas was riddled with problems. A scene consisting of more than one piece of oversized furniture very quickly takes up a lot of space in an exhibition, and exhibiting a single piece of oversized furniture as an artistic statement was not interesting to me. Making smaller than usual furniture did not have a strong effect, because with children's toys and architect's models we have become used to seeing miniatures.

Development

After my series of sketch projects I began thinking about how some of my different ideas could be displayed or arranged together into a scene. I thought about which concepts could work well together, which communicated complementary ideas, and which worked well as a stand-alone statement.

I proceeded to sketch ideas on scenes involving some of the pieces of furniture I had sketched. I produced two ideas which I felt worthy of further development. The first idea was based around the idea of an old man who has built his own house in the woods (fig. 6). He is the typical 'Jack of all trades, master of none', and he is far too proud -or poor- to get the help of a professional. The whole house is plagued by flawed design and shoddy construction. Everything is wrong; walls are not straight, staircases lead nowhere, doors do not open, etc. I felt that although I liked this idea as a concept, it was not really in keeping with the theme of my project. This idea communicated the idea that the character himself was confused, whereas I wanted to create a feeling of confusion in the spectator.

The second idea began life as a sort of surrealist art piece, with the thought that it would contain suspended items, optical illusions, and a lighting effect lifted directly from my previously described investigations (p 7). I felt that this idea was more exciting than the first, although it felt in some way dead in its current incarnation. I felt that the personal aspect of the first idea, that the guest was invited into this imaginary person's house, created a strong feeling of intimacy and a connection to the scene.

I decided to combine the two ideas, creating a scene set in a house, but with less focus on the physical aspects of the house. The scene would instead be a more symbolic picture focusing on the psyche of the man.

At the same time as thinking about the physical aspects of the room, I realised that if this scene was going to be convincing, it was important that it gave consistent messages about the character. I had to think carefully about who this character was, how he lived, and why he lived in the way he lived. Although I was not creating a scene from a story, I almost needed to write a story to be sure that the images I

¹⁵ Rist, Pipilotti. *Das Zimmer*. 1994/2007.

¹⁶ Arad, Ron. *Screw Stool*. Driade, 2006.

created were cohesive. Because I had a clear inside and outside to my room I wanted to enhance this difference, and involve an element of surprise; that which is on the inside is not entirely what you expect when you see it from the outside. I decided to incorporate the idea of prejudice. I wanted the outside to seem unpleasant and uncared for, almost dangerous. People fear the man who lives there because all they see of him is the outside of his house, which reminds them of a witch's cottage. If they got the chance to go inside his house, they would see that he is capable of caring- the interior is well loved and well cared for. The man does care- but only for the things in his world. Everything outside of the four walls of his house are outside his world and do not matter. He does not much like the outside world, but he has nothing against it, he just prefers things his way.

The process of describing the character with words helped bring a structure and purpose to my work. It helped to guide which ideas should be included in the scene, and even spawned new ideas.

The Jump to Full-Scale

My first big breakthrough with the creation of the room was when I began experimenting with the floor. I had found an optical illusion involving a white and black chequered pattern which I hoped would create a sense of unease if used for the floor of the room (fig. 7). Although the optical illusion did not work well in full scale, I found that the white and black tiles provided an interesting, but not distracting, dimension to the room. They gave a crisp, clean and slightly eccentric feel to the scene. Black and white chequered floors are often used by Tim Burton¹⁷ for example in his short film 'Vincent'¹⁸ where their stark contrast helps to communicate eccentricity of character. Chequered floors are also present in many Masonic halls, where they are said to represent that human life is made up of good and evil¹⁹. I also decided to retain the staggered pattern of the check because it helps to suggest that the man has an unusual interpretation of everyday things.

I was using a print of the pattern I was thinking of using for the floor, and I discovered that by placing a square of the pattern into a room that was not square, and folding the floor so that the pattern lay up the wall, I created a very interesting feeling that the room was folding in on itself.

Having a concrete idea in my mind now about the shape and size of the room, I began working on a full size mock-up consisting of a table, two shelves, the floor pattern and a front wall. I moved items around and experimented with lighting solutions. This led me to the discovery of my first major problem. For my photography and experimentation I had been using ordinary spotlight bulbs and coloured filters. These had worked very well for the photographs, producing very bold colours and intense, controllable beams of light. However I discovered that after a few hours of use the filters became too hot and began to fade or even melt. I investigated top quality filters but discovered that, due to the fact that the scene was to be shown over an extended period, the only realistic solution was to use coloured bulbs. These last longer than filters, but the colours produced are less intense. The bulbs are also less

¹⁷ Burton, Tim. USA, 1985. Film director (Beetlejuice, Batman, Edward Scissorhands).

¹⁸ Burton, Tim. *Vincent*. Touchstone Home Video, 1984.

¹⁹ <http://www.abovetopsecret.com/forum/thread236402/pg1>, accessed 21/04/08. *Please note that this website is a 'chat site' and, as such not reliable.

powerful than those I was using in my tests. This, along with other practical problems, caused me to re-evaluate the scale of my project, and also go back on what I had earlier considered to be an important aspect of the project. I greatly reduced the size of the room and closed it off entirely, so that the public could only look in through the window. This helped strengthen my coloured lights, shielding them from the interference of external lighting. It also simplified construction and protected the interior from the damaging effects of many pairs of hands and feet tramping through it. Instead of going into the room, the public were now to look in through a small window in the outer wall. Although this creates a distance between the viewer and the scene, I felt that it would strengthen the idea that the owner of the house lived shut away in his own world without contact with us, the nosey strangers, on the outside.

My full-scale models of the furniture I was to use had initially been painted white for two simple reasons; firstly I felt that for the purposes of what were essentially sketch models white was ideal because it did not distract from the essence of the furniture, and secondly because white paint was available. However, after seeing the finished mock-ups arranged in a scene, I decided that white fitted perfectly to the atmosphere I wanted to achieve, creating a stark, clean contrast to the worn, uncared-for exterior.

Construction

With all of the angles which had become important aspects of my design, the project became a nightmare to build. With the scale of the item I had decided that it was unnecessary to do a full working drawing, and worked instead from rough sketches with overall measurements. This method was ideal for the outside of the structure, where I wanted to create a rough, even badly made finish. On the inside, however, I wanted to create a crisp, clean finish, which required careful planning and measurement of angles to ensure that all the joints closed up tightly. Probably the detail which had the most significant effect on the construction methods was the fact that the whole room had to be collapsible, in order that it could be transported to the various different exhibition locations. This meant that the whole room was constructed from flat panels- the back wall being three panels in total, in order that it could fit through a normal door. I had to be careful to ensure that the joints between panels were positioned in such a way that they were as unnoticeable as possible.

Once the actual room was finished I was surprised to find that the pieces of furniture I had did not seem to fit as comfortably in the real room as they had done in the model. Whether this was because of small changes in size that the room had undergone during the transition from light frame and paper construction to solid wood, or because the time taken on the construction had allowed me to take a step back and re-evaluate the whole, I am not sure. Whatever the cause, the result was that I returned to making cardboard full- scale models of my pieces of furniture in order to experiment with the form and positioning of these items. I realised that the main problem with the shelves was that they were the only objects in the room which were rectangular. Giving them an exaggerated perspective form immediately helped them fit into the room, making the scene jump to life.

I also began to consider what other props I should include in order to help give the feeling of a lived-in house, whilst communicating a depth of character. It was clear from the beginning that the bookshelves would have to contain books, but the question remained; which books? Should they be old? New? Fact or fiction? It was suggested that instead of spending lots of time looking for 'the right' books, I could use whichever books I could get hold of, and make my own jackets for them- saving both time and money. This gave me the idea that the man who lives there could make new covers for the books himself- he has rejected the outside world, and does not want any trace of it in his house, so he covers up everything which comes into his house in a layer of white paper or paint. To help illustrate this idea, I decided to place a book and white paper on the table in order to illustrate this process.

I had considered the inclusion of a door- either physical, allowing me to access the interior (I settled with an easily removable panel for this purpose), or painted on to the inside. I decided, however, that it was in keeping with the theme that the inhabitant has shunned contact with the outside world that the room should have no door.

Result

The result of my project is a room which communicates the idea that appearances can be deceptive. From the outside the viewer sees a roughly constructed, poorly cared for house. The strong, single light source creates menacing shadows and creates a threatening, unpleasant appearance. As you approach the window you begin to see a very different interior; clean and crisp, without a trace of the unpleasant exterior. It illustrates the world of a hermit who has discarded the ways of the outside world. He does not like the rough edges of the outside world, and has done all in his power to cover over them, creating his own little oasis of safety. The false and shallow nature of this world is illustrated by the books- normal books covered with white paper so that they 'fit in' with the rest of the interior. They also illustrate an attention to detail which is not visible in the exterior. The unusual lighting and unexpected forms of the scene are intended to represent that the man has a different interpretation to the viewer of the world about him.

Conclusion

The goal of this project was to build a scene which created a feeling of confusion and disorientation, and I believe that I have succeeded. It is impossible for me to judge for myself how much the viewer is physically disorientated when looking into my scene, because I know the scene too well and so am not taken by surprise by it. Even now, however, some aspects still catch me off balance when I look in through the window for the first time in the day. I can also see from the faces of others that it takes a few seconds for them to interpret what they are seeing. The unusual angles in the walls and furniture confuse our judgement of perspective, making it harder to interpret what we see. I feel that they also give the room a feeling of motion and unease.

The sense of confusion is increased by the nature of the lighting. We are used to seeing light come from one direction – most often above (even in a room lit with many electric lights, they are usually all in the ceiling). This creates consistent shadows with a specific direction which is an important aid to our judgement of form.

That the shadows in this room are scattered in all directions and distorted by the use of colour makes it harder for us to judge how the shadows relate to the objects.

I feel that the pieces of furniture themselves are very interesting. I have used one of my mock-ups of the table at home, and it usually arouses the interest of people who have not seen it before. The shelves are not a particularly clever idea; everybody knows that the end book is fixed in place. However they always receive a second glance, and often raise a smile. I have had a great deal of interest in both the table and the shelves, and I have since seen items based on the same ideas at a furniture fair.

I have been surprised to notice how much this project has subconsciously come to illustrate another idea which has recently become of interest to me. This is the idea of fashion in design. Design seems to me to be becoming more and more fashion driven, with an excess of design magazines and TV programmes, and a wide variety of cheap furniture outlets, allowing people to conform affordably to the current trend. Even many of the more exclusive designer furniture companies are producing furniture which does not look much different to that of their competitors. I long for a world where everybody has the confidence and ability to design their own interiors to their own needs; both practical and aesthetic, and can communicate their own personality through their interiors.

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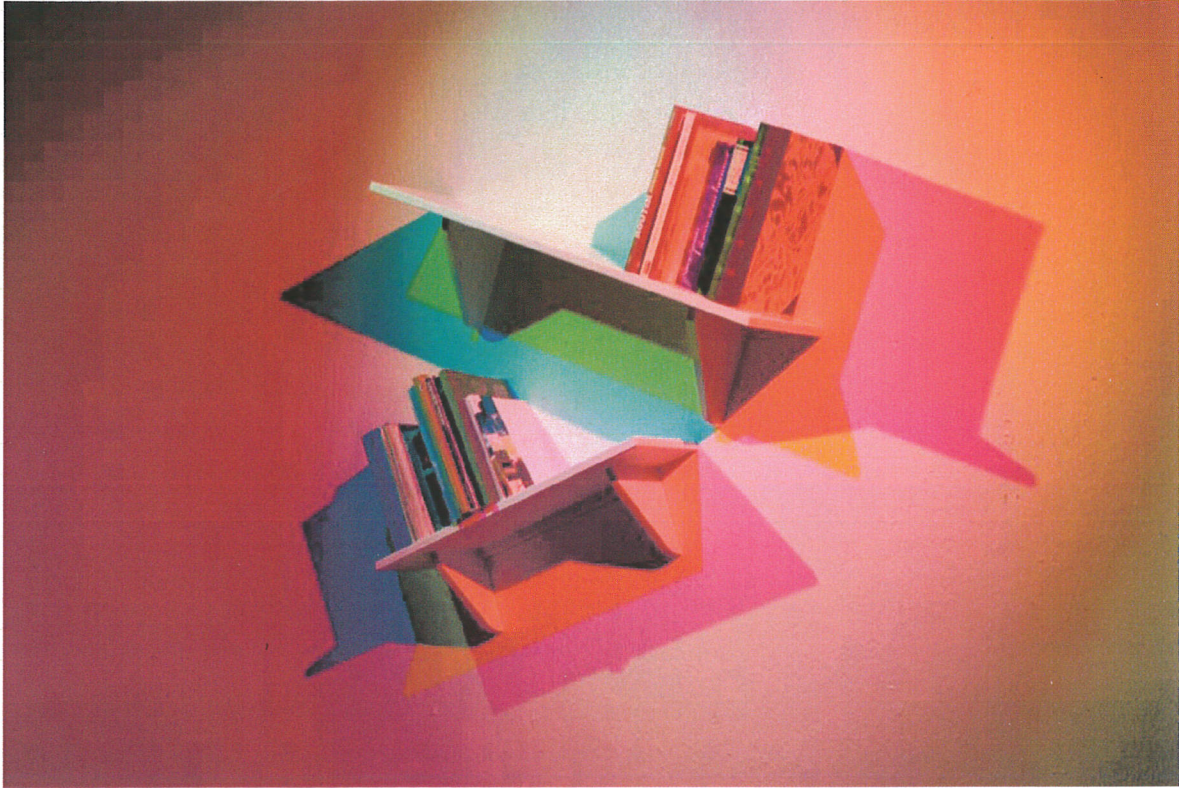
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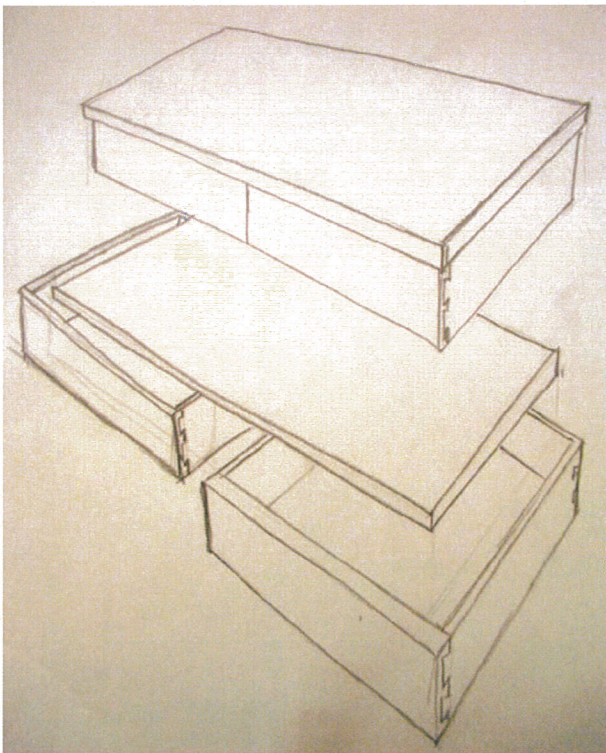
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Appendix A

Pictures



(fig.1) My 'hovering' shelves, photographed with three coloured lamps.



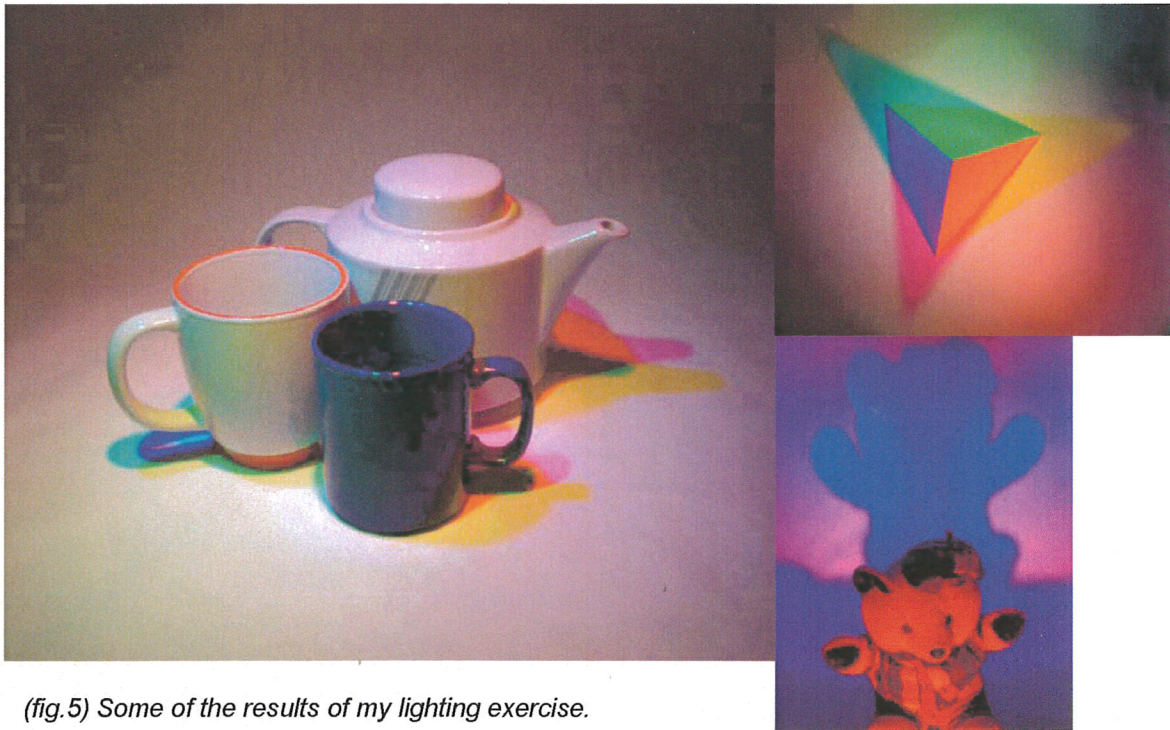
(fig.2) A sketch of my 'hover' chest of drawers, which never got made



(fig.3) The lamp which inspired the table.



(fig.4) My table.



(fig.5) Some of the results of my lighting exercise.



(fig.6) Sketch model of 'Jacks House'.



(fig.7) The exterior of the finished project.



(fig.8) The interior of the finished project.

Appendix B

A Description of the Result of the Investigation: How can we communicate an abstract concept through a seemingly unrelated object?

My aim with this project was to depict the destruction of the rainforests through furniture. My original plan was to use three chairs, each one representing a different stage of the destruction. The first would be green and fresh, with colour and life. The second would be the forest during the process of deforestation; muddy and half cut down. The final chair would represent the concrete jungle- grey and dead, the beauty of nature replaced by a concrete slab and litter. After producing the three chairs, I decided that the third chair was a weak link, being unnecessary for the message and even misleading.



The results of this mini-project; a pair of chairs entitled 'Progress', which represent the destruction of the rainforest.