

RE-HUMANIZING PROSTHESIS



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THE ISSUE

Current options for cosmetic prosthesis are quite limited. NHS users can either opt for 'life-like' silicone sleeves which are designed to mask prosthesis, or heavy looking, bare, construction type material. Both choices rather impersonal.

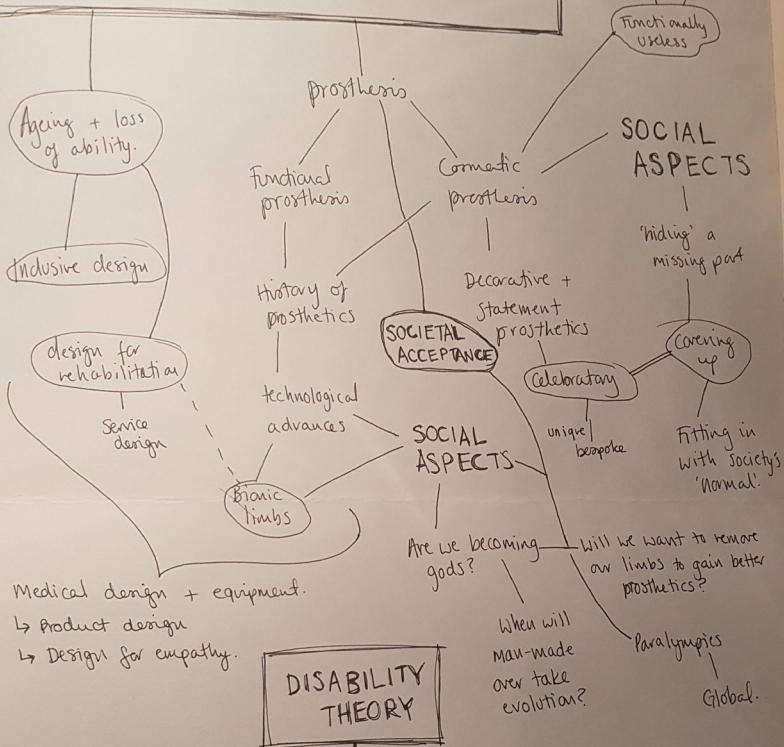
Neither prosthesis looks particularly enticing, nor do they serve any functional purpose for upper limb users, other than covering up the missing limb.



THE SOLUTION

I believe that limb loss should not be covered up or hidden, it should be viewed as an opportunity. Users have a unique chance to add something exceptional to their body. Rather than wearing something beautiful such as a piece of jewellery or clothing, personalised, re-humanized prosthetics become a part of the users bodies.

PHYSICAL DISABILITY + PROSTHESIS



DISABILITY THEORY

"Disability studies defines disability not as an individual defect but as the product of social injustices, one that requires not the cure or elimination of the defective person but significant changes in the social + built environment."

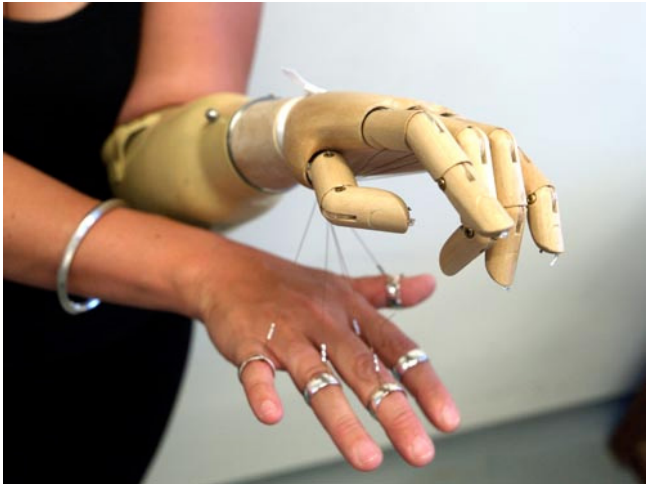
DESIGN INPIRATION

I was inspired by the work of Martin Smith, maker of curious automata.

Becky Pilditch, an artist working directly with a user of upper limb prosthesis to create conversation starting prosthesis.

And Sophie De Olivera Barata, founder of 'The Alternative Limb Project', set up to work with users to create bespoke prosthesis.

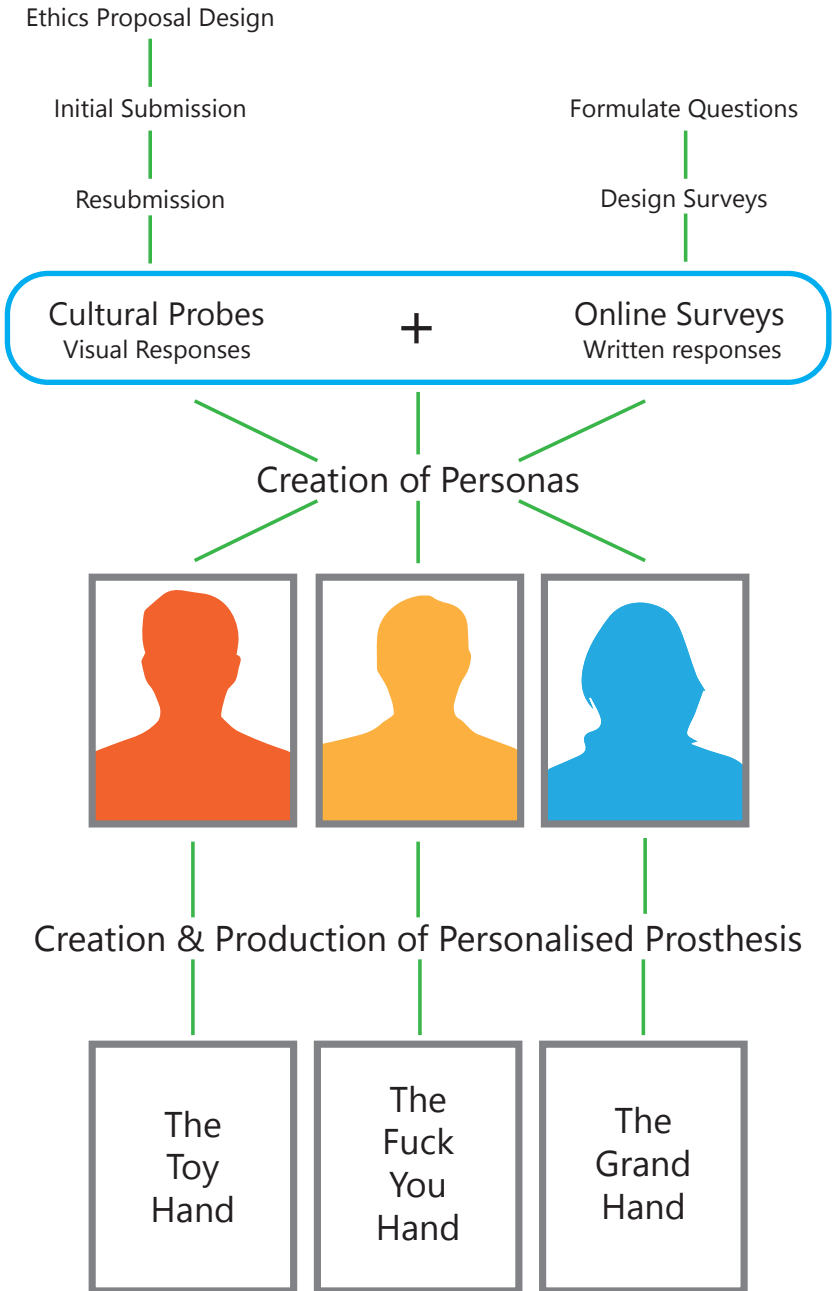
I have been inspired by these artists' use of materials and creative ways of approaching the subject matter.



CULTURAL PROBES

I felt that it was important to base my designs on the lived experiences of those with upper limb loss. In order to gather these lived experiences, I designed a cultural probe study. This study consisted of asking participants to photograph things in their lives in relation to predetermined statements.

Using this information, along with quotes from written accounts online, I built up three fictional personas upon which to base my designs on.



THE GRAND HAND

The Grand Hand is based on persona number 2:

- She is a 31 year old female,
- She has a congenitally defective lower left arm,
- As she has never had a full limb, she doesn't feel like she's missing anything,
- She has never felt disabled,
- She wears a body-powered hook at work for function, but tends not to wear anything at home or out and about,
- She would like a special hand for occasional wear. Suited for evenings out, when she would like to feel elegant and special.

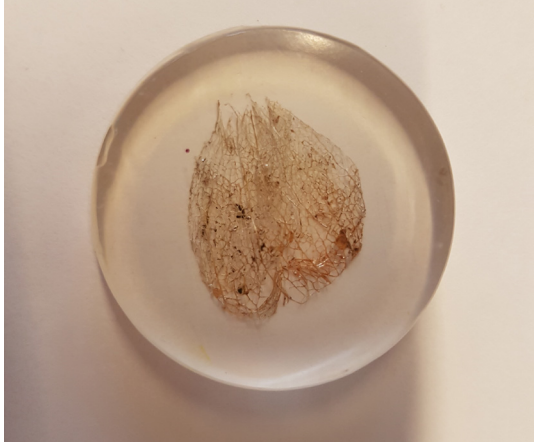


Ted Noten - Lady K Bag Number 4, 2007

I chose to use resin as a medium for its intriguing properties. Setting objects into resin makes people take a closer look, it catches the eye.

When considering the work of Ted Noten, it is even more captivating as the pieces often feature harsh objects such as guns. Stopped in their tracks, the resin contains the objects, it controls the danger.

The reverse is equally as interesting. Encapsulating plants or flowers inside of the resin halts their lives at that moment. They never rot or fade away. they remain beautifully frozen forever.



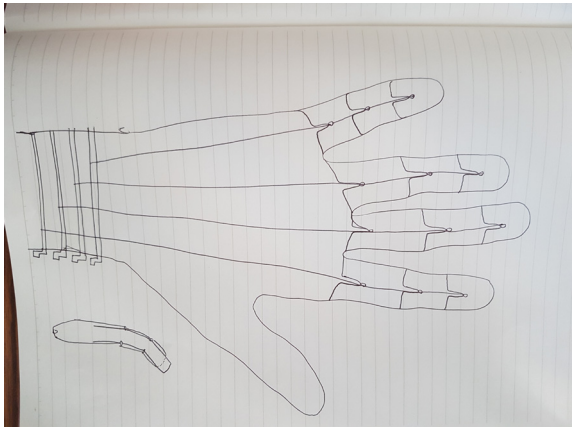
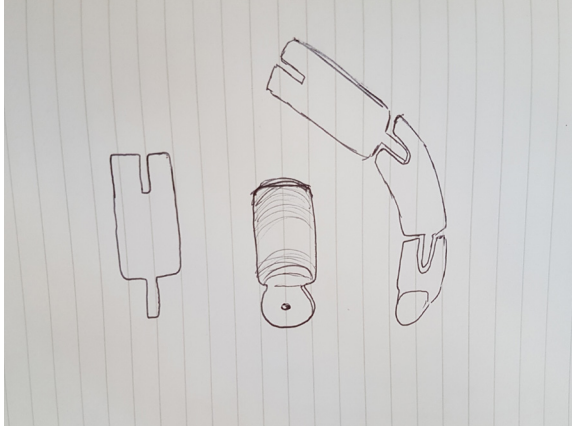
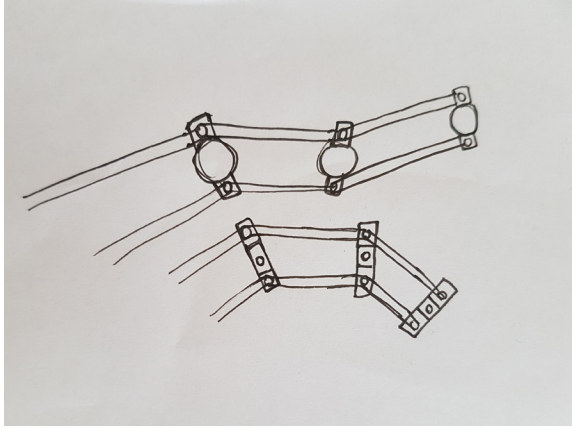


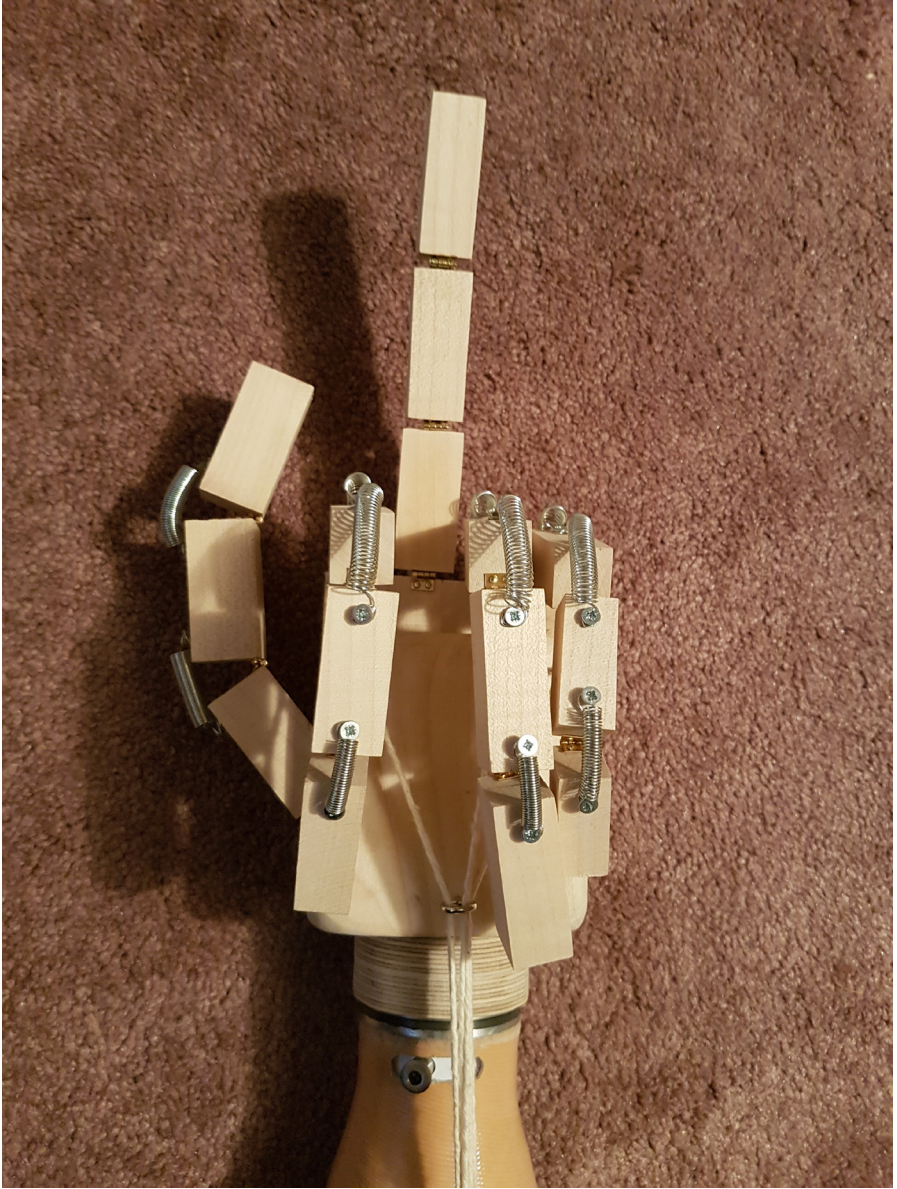


THE FUCK YOU HAND

The Fuck You Hand is based on persona number 1:

- She is a 22 year old female,
- She lost her left hand very recently due to illness,
- She has had to alter her education, work and social life due to the illness and limb loss,
- She feels very bitter,
- She wears a cosmetic prosthesis, but hates how it is doesn't feel like her own, and how it's made to look 'normal',
- She wants to show the world that she is still strong, and that her limb loss doesn't define her.





I am using rough materials for this prosthetic. The young woman who will receive this piece is angry, she's bitter. The materials are raw and exposed to reflect those feelings. Each screw, spring, hook and string is on show for the world to see.

The prosthetic is also oversized so that it cannot be hidden. The wood is chunky, the corners still sharp. This piece could never be mistaken for a 'normal' looking hand.

With a hard tug on the strings, an immediate 'fuck you' is released from the hand.

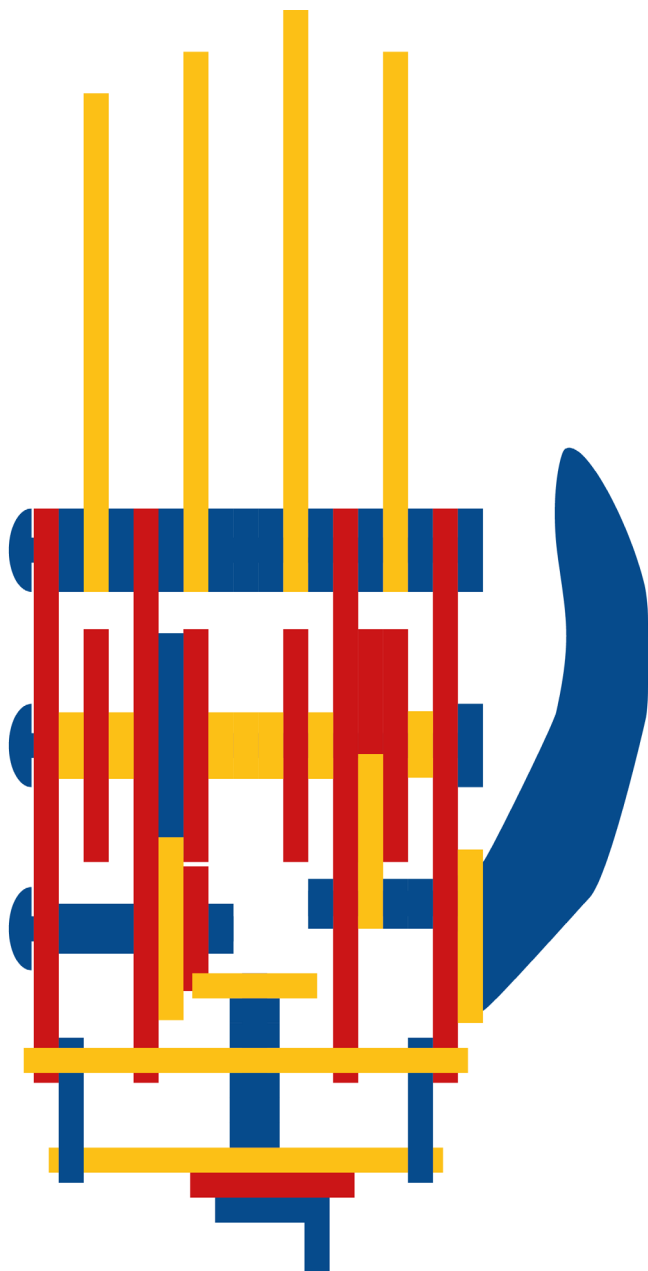


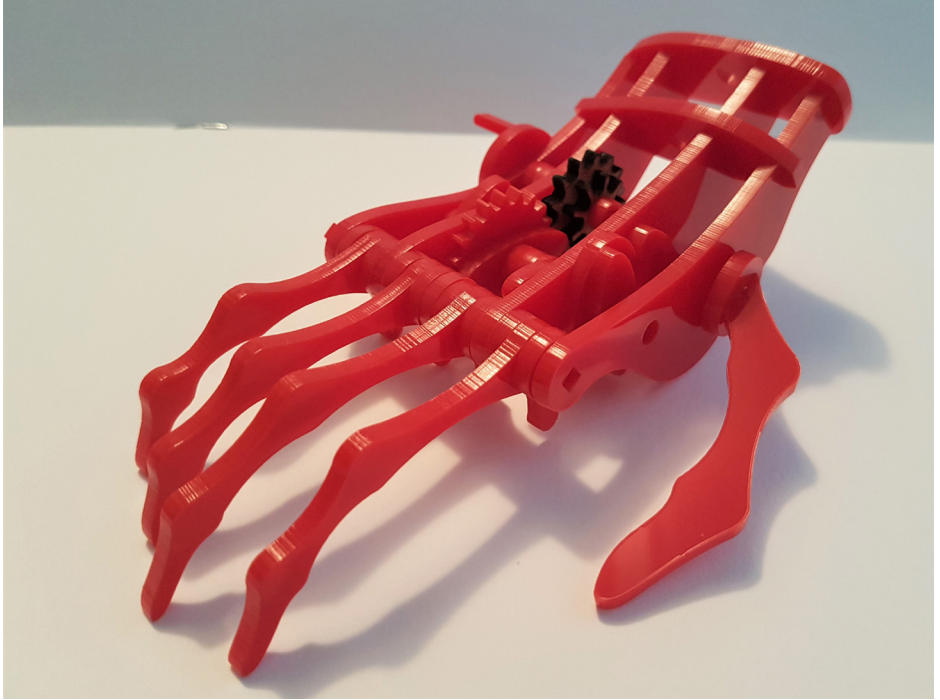


THE TOY HAND

The Toy Hand is based on persona number 3:

- He is a 42 year old male,
- He is a married father of two boys, aged 9 and 12,
- He lost his left arm in a traffic accident in his early twenties,
- He did feel extremely resentful when he first lost his limb, but he has slowly come to terms with it,
- He usually wears a body powered hook,
- He prefers his prosthetics not to look realistic,
- He wants a fun hand. Something which will involve his children.



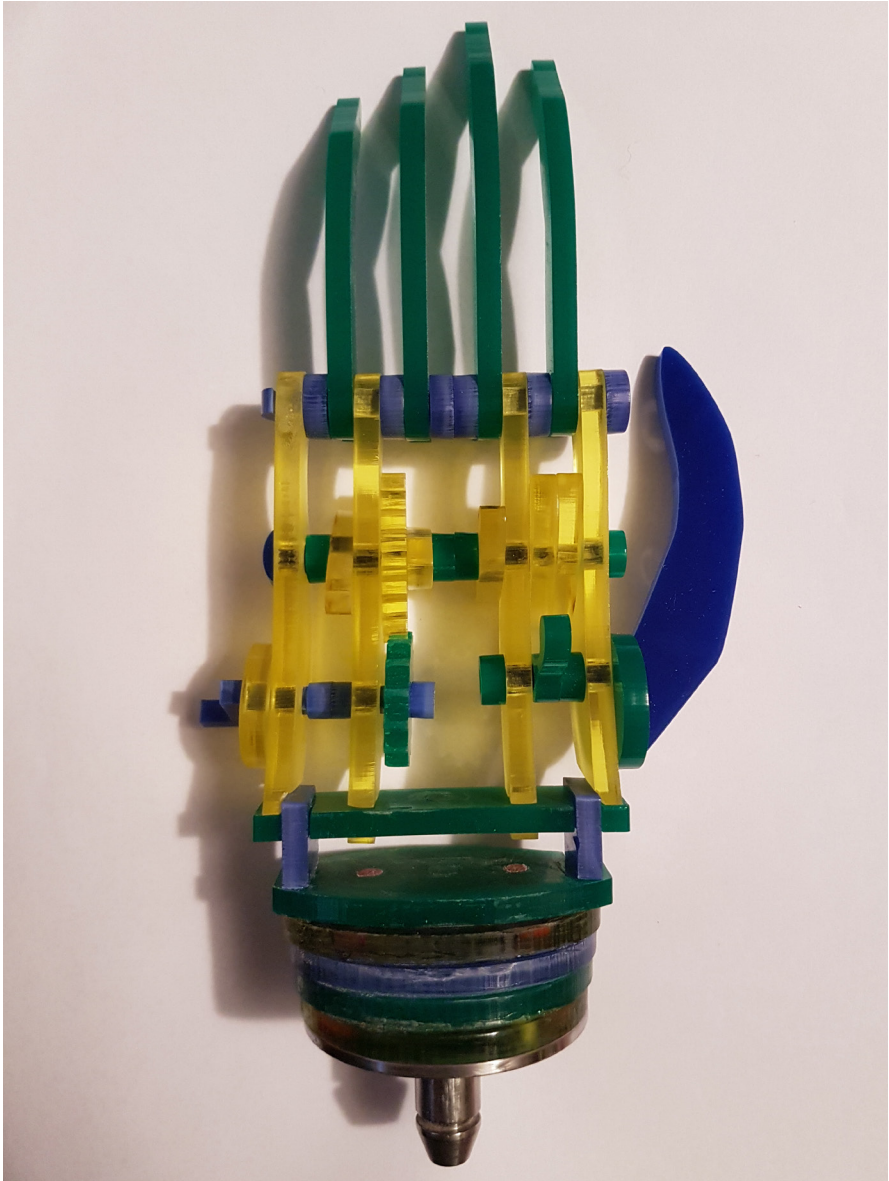


The Fun Hand is bright, tactile and playful. It is very visually appealing - its' colours reminiscent of Lego.

Arriving flatpacked, and even able to be downloaded, The Fun Hand can be assembled by the user with his family.

I have chosen to use thick perspex for this prosthetic for its durability and weight. When used, thinner perspex felt too delicate.





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