

Xufei Zhu (Julia)
AD313 Creative Enquiry: Research Practieces

Cuppa tea?



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As a tea lover, it did not take long for me to spot the difference in the understanding of 'tea' between the British and Chinese cultures. The tea experience in the UK is so different from my experience in China, therefore, I decided to undertake a research project on the subject tea in both cultural contexts. Sharing 'tea time' with individuals allows me to see the connection between experiencing tea sharing and people who live under the stress of contemporary life. My project explores a deeper and more personal relationship between individuals associated with tea and their stories by bring their memories to life through my tea drinking utensils.



1

茶是早期修禪的人，為了避免靜坐修行時睡著了，而開發的飲料。提神，醒腦，安定，放下。—— 茶日子

Tea was drunk during meditation to prevent sleepiness. It helps people to stay calm, awake and relief.—— *Tea Days*

瓷器燒結溫度達到一千三百度，土胎中毛細孔完全密閉，最能保留茶葉的香韻
陶器的毛細孔可吸附重度發酵茶的澀味，使得喉韻更加厚實—— 茶日子

All the pores close up as porcelain fires upto 1300C, which will only enhance the aroma of the light fermented tea but not losing any flavour.
Earthenware is more suitable for heavy fermented tea because the pores in the clay body will absorb the bitterness in the tea—— *Tea Days*

Through war, the British East Indian company imported tea from China as exotic luxury. (17th) Once it was considered as medicine(antidote) to fever, headache, stomach-ache and other pains.—— *Tea east and west*

Milk was added to counteract tea's bitter taste, like coffee and chocolate after 1720 (when black overtakes green). Sugar was also stirred in as tea was unpalatable bitter on its own..—— *Tea east and west*

First research

In order to get a deeper understanding on Chinese tea ceremony in real life, I decided to visit Mr Xiaolong Du who owns an independent smell tea company in Guangzhou. I contacted him through social media and he greatly allowed me and my dad to meet him in his private tea room for a unofficial tea ceremony. Mr Du worked as a journalist before establishing his own tea business 5 years ago since he could not resist the eager to produce his own good quality loose tea. Mr Du goes to Yunnan province every 5 months , where he lives and harvests fresh tea leaves with the local tea farmers. During our conversations, he taught me the essential processes of carrying out a standard chinese tea ceremony and also the usage of each tea drinking utensils within the process. He also taught me methods to use my senses while enjoying the tea.

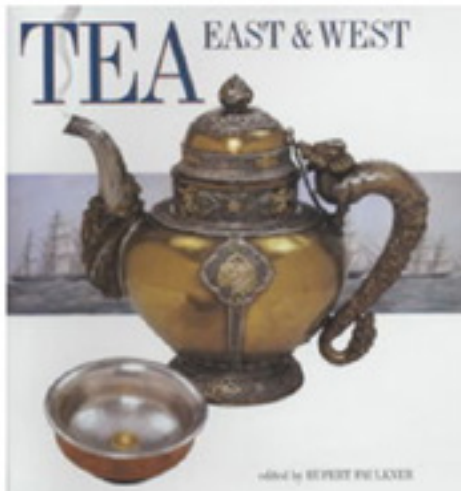




In order to undertake this project, I felt that I need to improve my throwing skill. Therefore, I went to visit the porcelain capital Jingdezhen and undertook a short throwing lesson in one of the small studios.



Secondary research



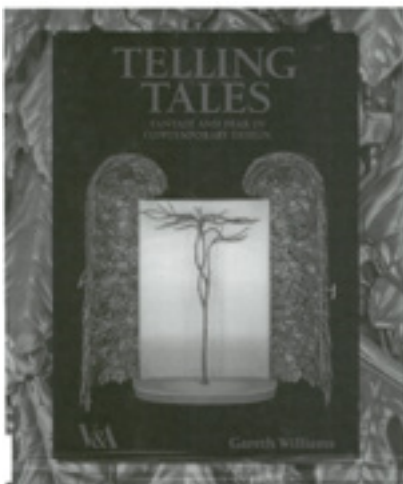
Tea east and west

A brief history of tea culture around the world focusing on the difference between eastern culture and western culture.



Tea Days

An introduction to eastern (Chinese, Japanese) tea drinking history and culture, also includes information on how to choose loose leaf tea, tea brewing methods and tea tasting methods.



Telling tales

Knowledge on how to create narrative through 3D works and also methods of communication through objects.

Design Museum design residency 2016

The tea set by Rain Wu

A series of narrative objects designed and created to be used in a Eastern-style tea ceremony to illustrate the cultural history around the British 'cuppa'. She took visual inspiration through British tea history and gave each piece of ceramic a story. I was inspired by the way she told stories through the objects and combined two different cultures together harmoniously.



Ceramic Art London 2017

Jenny Southam

During the CCA, I was looking for display methods to link my pieces together as a body of work and I came across Jenny Southam's sculpture work. She collects stories and myths and embeds them into her landscape setting sculptures. She inspired me to build platforms in different forms for my pieces to sit on and also serve as part of the narrative.



Case studies

In order to find out how people associate with tea differently in each cultural packground (Chinese, British) I decided to carry out a blind tea tasting test to encourage people to taste tea without any perception. I have chosen 7 common tea and infusion from both culture: Jasmine, Earl grey, Lemon and ginger, Souchong, British breakfast, Green tea, Rooibos tea. Participants' eyes were covered and they've been asked to smell, sip and swallow the tea with intention. After that, they were asked to describe what they feel within each process. The responds were the starting points of the visual research of this project.

5. AROMA - LET'S TAKE A LITTLE SNIFF...



Because we mainly taste through our sense of smell, it's important to deeply consider the aroma. There are two techniques for sniffing, these are:

Deep inhalations - this is when you hold the brew as close to your nose as possible and take a deep breath.

Dog action - this is when you take rapid, shallow inhalations through the nose, rather like a panting dog.

Use your taste wheel to help you consider some of the aromas.

AT THIS POINT YOU WILL START TO GET THE FIRST PERCEPTION OF THE FLAVOUR.

6. HOW TO TASTE AND SLURP...

Here's the fun bit, it's when we actually get to taste the tea. So throwing all table manners out of the window - here's what you do:

Scoop up some of the liquor with your spoon.

Take deep breath (first).

Pucker up like you're about to give someone a kiss, then slurp the liquid up into your mouth from the surface of the spoon. **The louder the slurp, the better.** You do this to mix oxygen with the liquor as it helps to bring the flavours to life.

Now you need to breath out through your nose (while keeping your mouth closed) - this is called retro-olfaction perception. **Then swallow the liquor.**

Pay special attention to any sensations created on the tongue for example sweetness or savoury. And remember that bitterness is present in the majority of teas because of varying degrees of tannins.

Now that you've mastered the art of slurping, let's move on to inspecting the taste.



Experiment Design.

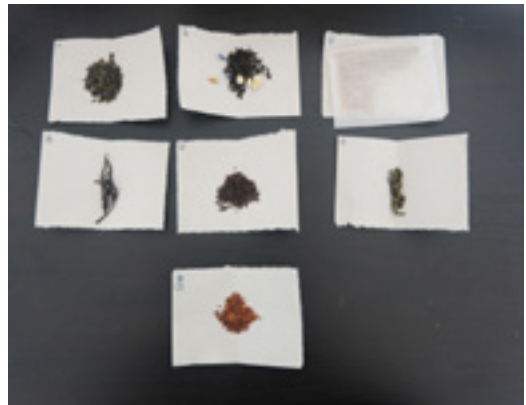


Blind test

- Select tea types to brew.
- Prepare tea serving equipment.
- Invite British people and Chinese.
- Serve the tea in random order.
- Participant should describe the feeling without knowing what type of tea their choice having

• Hide the tea.
• Break tea eggs.

→ I shall serve 2 jars the experiment
but I shall not see the tea as well.



Karen Gager (Born in African lived in the UK)



Type of tea	Smell	Taste	Colour interpretation	Texture interpretation	
Jasmine	Oriental, pure	Cleans	White	Cashmere, soft, blanket	
Earl Grey	Relax, seductive	Formal, aromatic, fancy, spice	Water puddle, grey dust		Posh
Lemon and ginger	Safari, warm, sunset	Sharp, strong, warm	Orange yellow with green stripes	Grass, soft then dry when rubbing	
Souchong	Chocolate/coco complex	Apprehensive, Lychee,	Black	Lychee hard and spiky outside, soft inside and hard core	
British breakfast	Vegetable, Aubergine	Harsh, strong, not much flavour, bitter	Rich dark purple	Aubergine, not good memory	
Green tea		Medicinal, yaky	Green/ mustard yellow	Soil, sunk in garden soil	
Rooibos	zobo	Fruity, village	Orange red, with purple dots and pink stripes	Delicate, sand	Childhood, small village

Rooibos infusion reminds me of zobo plant and my childhood in small village in Kenya. Zobo plant was everywhere in the village, which could be made into a vibrant red juice, very sweet and tasty. The taste of it brought me back to the time when I was running on sandy ground bare footed, laughing and playing with my friends. People were selling piled of it on the street. Children loved it! It brought me a lot of happy memories.



5



6





↑ Kenya



This infusion reminds me of zobo plant and my childhood in small village in Kenya. Zobo plant was everywhere in the village, which could be made into a vibrant red juice, very sweet and tasty. The taste of it brought me back to the time when I was running on sandy ground bare footed, laughing and playing with my friends. People were selling piled of it on the street. Children loved it! It brought me a lot of happy memories.
Karen (Born in African lived in the UK)



Karen

24袋 + 120袋
此



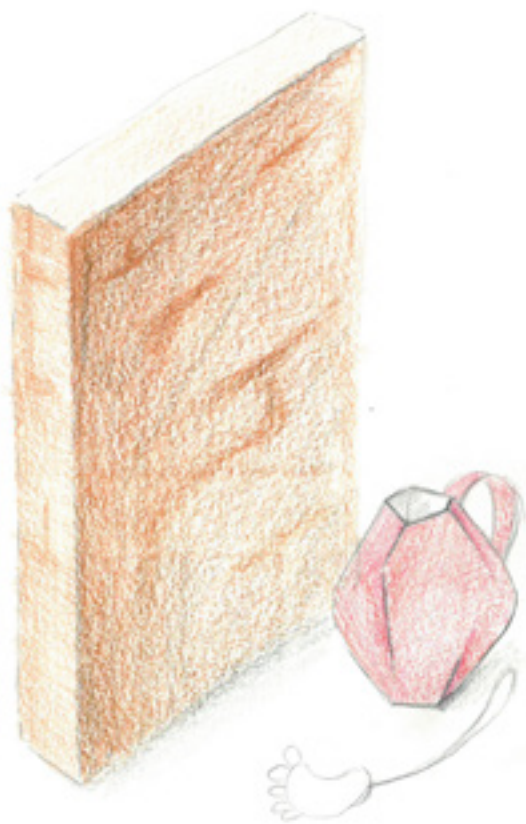
Draw More

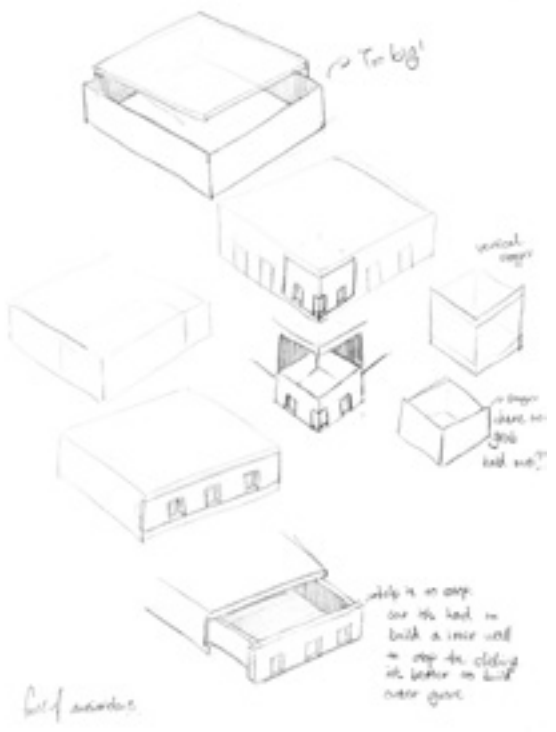
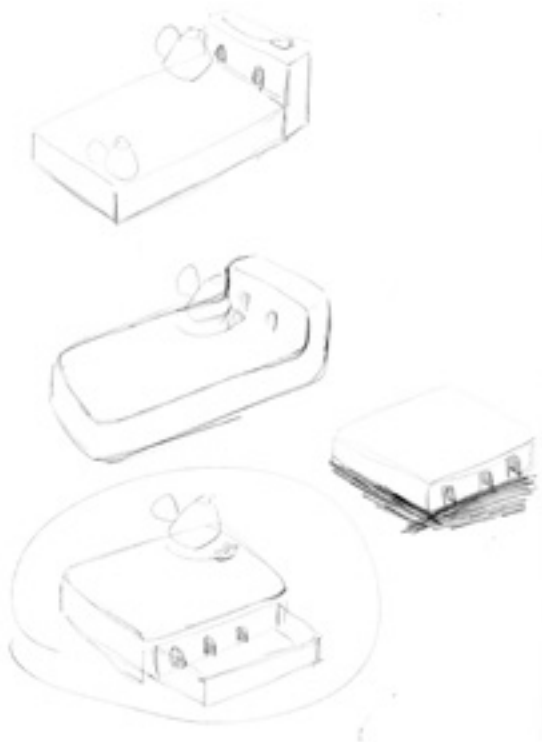
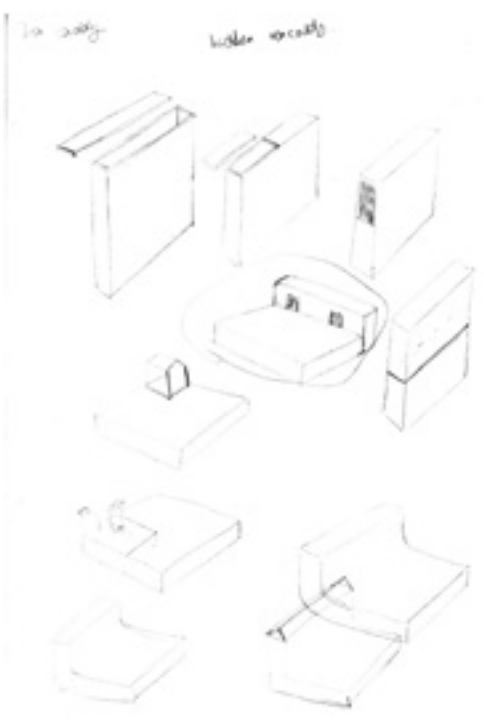
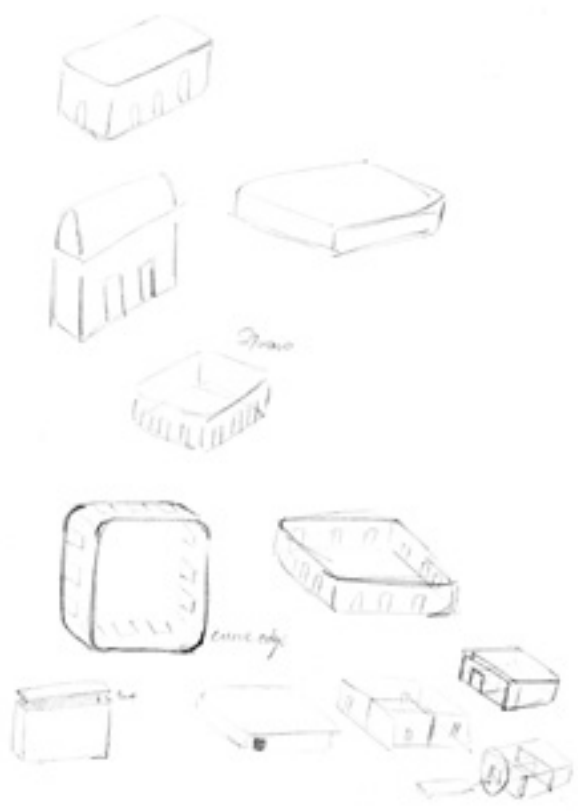


cup, red
carve
black
-frican
origins

irregular
shape







Self assembly

step in on top...
 one the last in
 build a inner wall
 - step in, closing
 it better on last
 outer part









Marcus Cartwright
(Born and raised in
the UK)



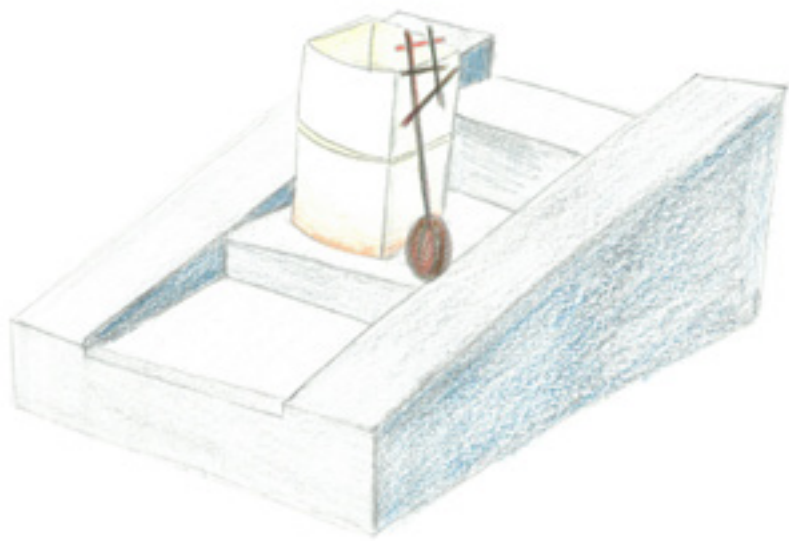
Type of tea	Smell	Taste	Colour inter-pretation	Texture interpreta-tion	
Jasmine	Floral, flower, insects	Sweet, Fluffy	White	Thin, plasticky	
Earl Grey	Medicinal (children medicine), sharp as pierce	Minty, lemony, artificial sweet		Square, Corner, Sharp, flat	Grand parents
Lemon and ginger	Lemony, gingery	Clogging, gingery	Bright yellow	Fast, rapid	
Souchong	Chocolate, authentic	Earthy, Soil like, nuty	Black brown	Coco nib, bark, deep	jungle
British break-fast	Tree branch	Dry after tone, bitter	Grey brown	Lumps, dry at the end,	Work
Green tea	Fresh, creamy	Fruity,	Creamy yellow, grassy	Soft, warm	River-bank, field, childhood
Rooibos	Lavender, apple and black current	Syrup, sweet	Soft purple, feminine	Dough, round thick, damask, velvet	

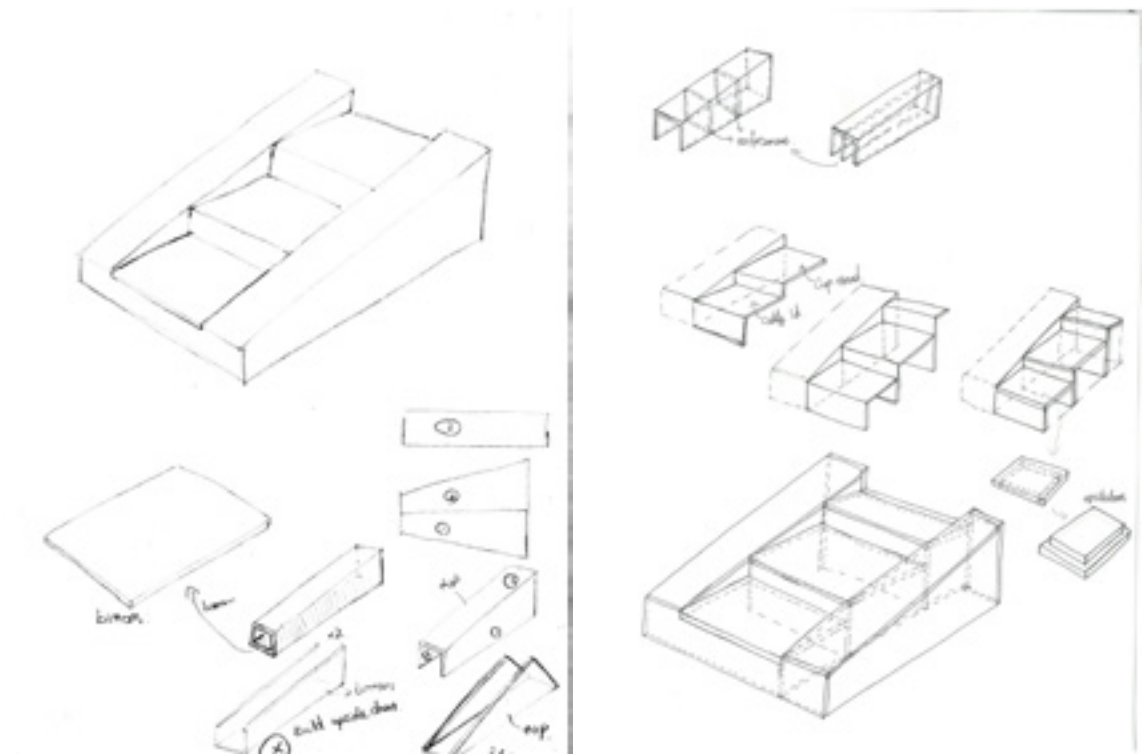
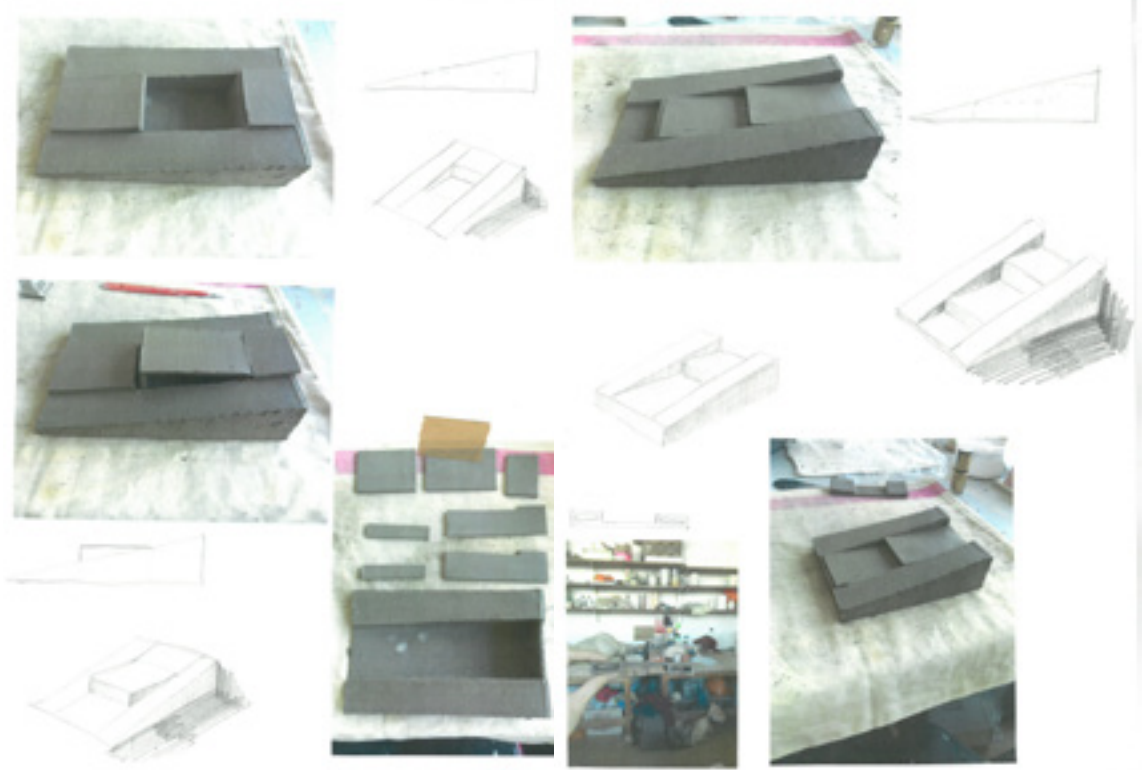
British breakfast tea for me is a savoury moment in the cold weather. It was a dull afternoon in February when I was scraping roof top moss on a typical 90s Brighton and Hove house and the temperature was freezing cold. At that time, a cup of British breakfast tea offered by the house owner indicated that I could have a break from the boring work. So I came down from the roof top and sat down inside the house, letting the warmth of the tea heated up my hands and feet. I did not mind the taste of the tea nor the percentage of the milk. That was just a moment of joy.



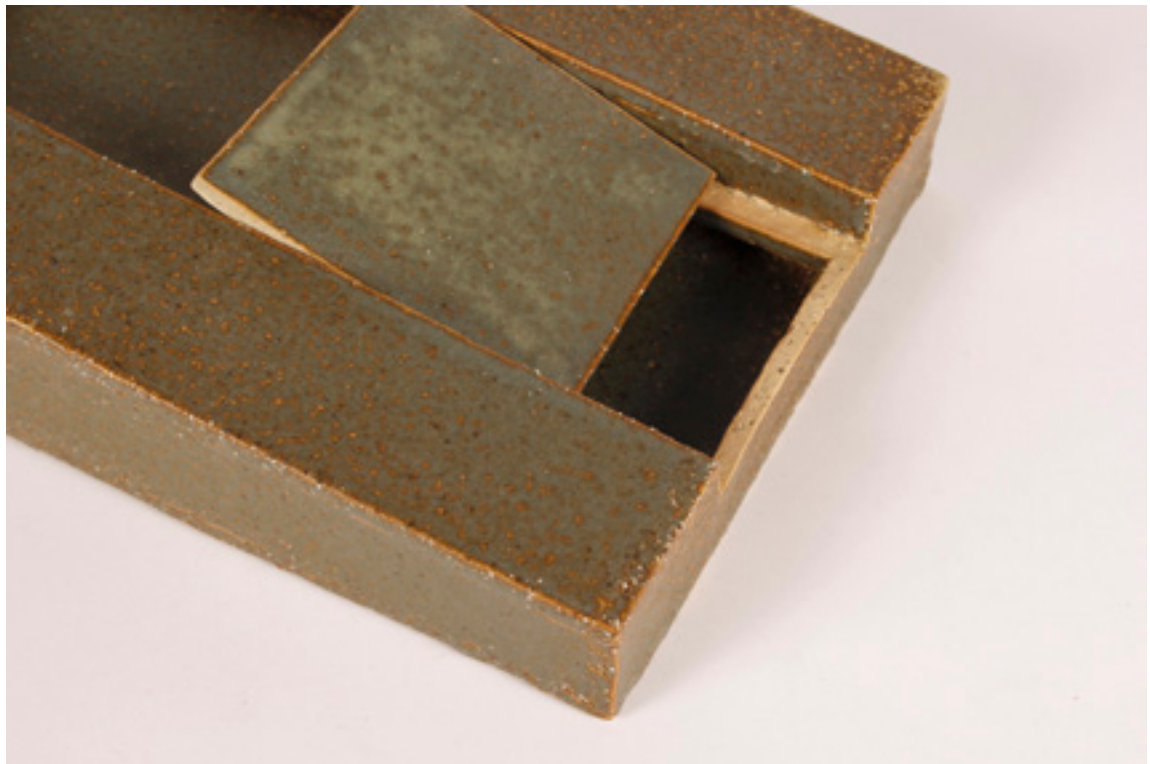


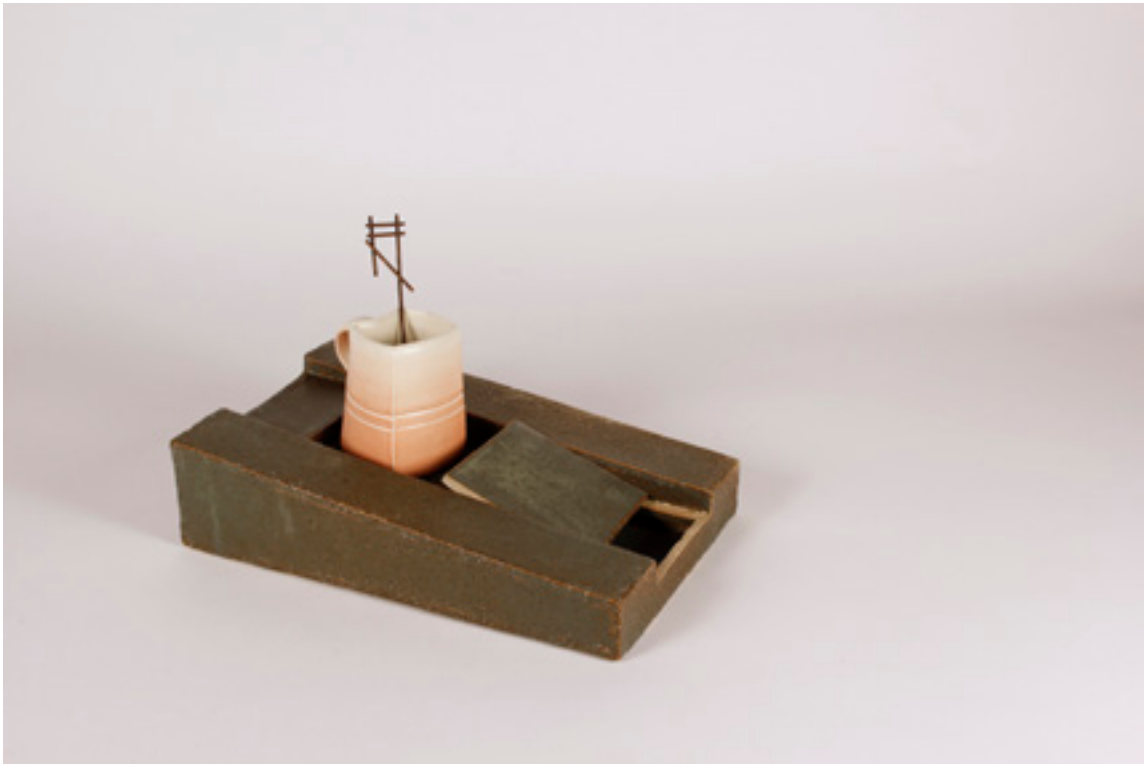










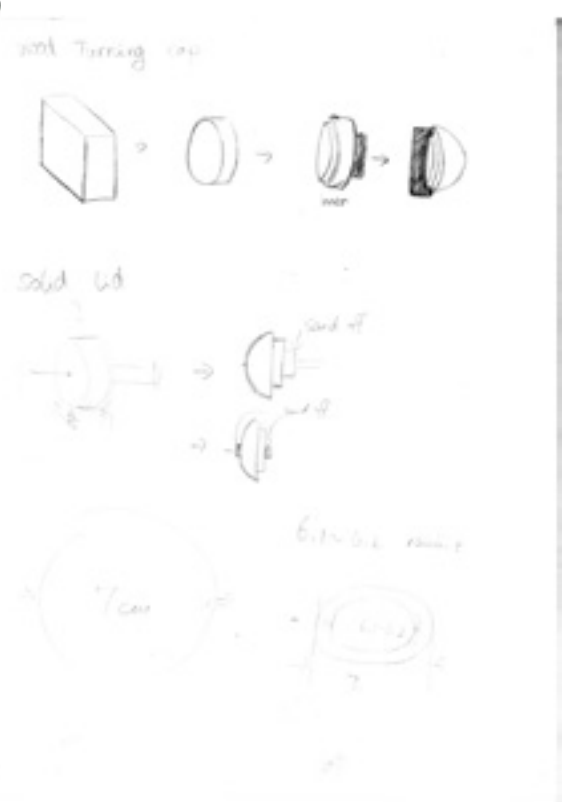
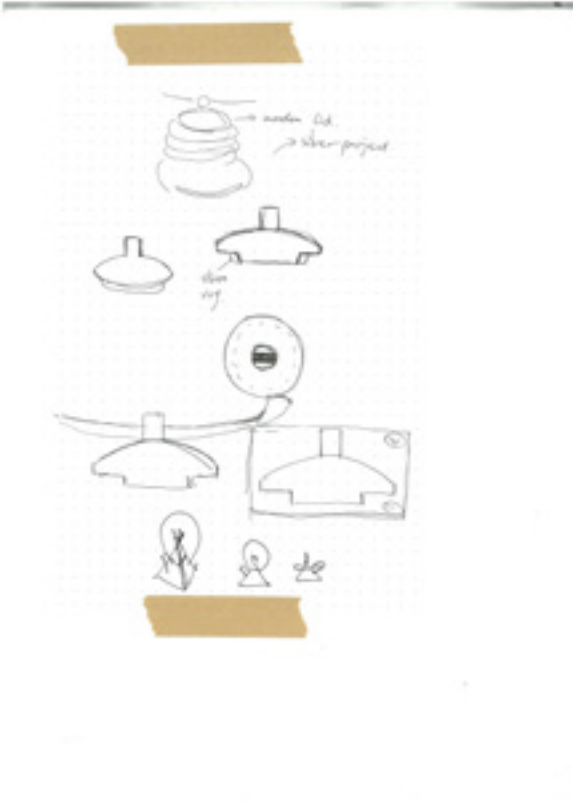
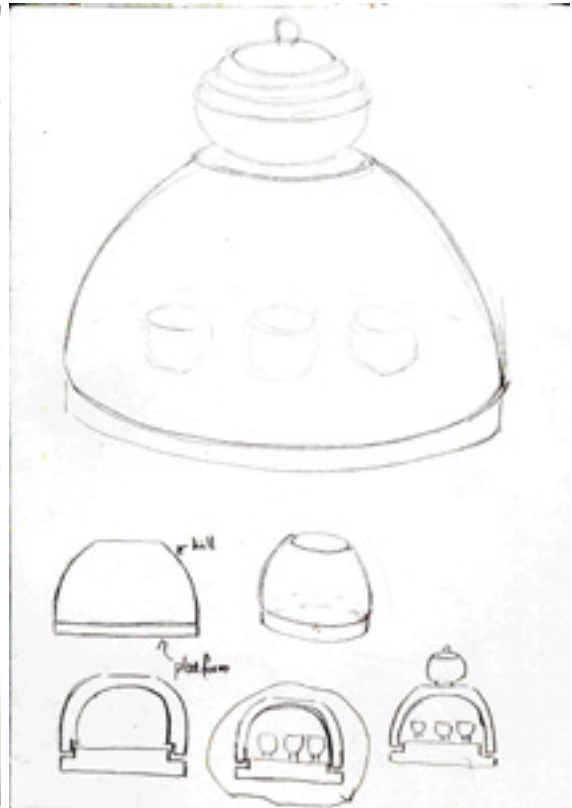


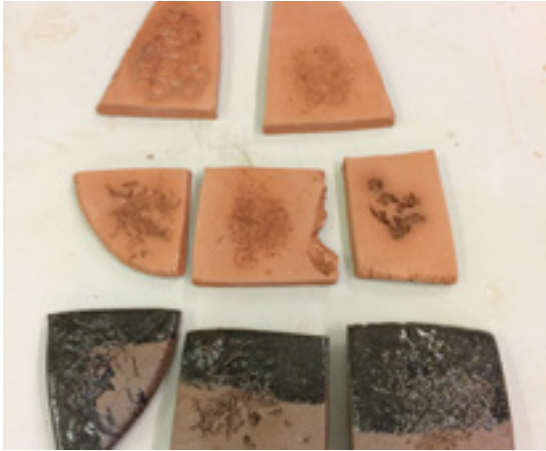
Mr Xiaolong Du (Independent Chinese tea producer)



I love tea, especially good quality loose leaf Chinese black tea. However, I used to have horrible mouldy tea and not noticing it until I came across a Japanese tea shop that only provide good quality tea. For me tea is about health and life. I take my time with it while it cleans my body and brings me calm. So I gave up my job as a journalist and started this private tea business because I wanted to promote and educate people about good quality tea. I travelled to Yunnan province every 6 months to search for organic tea trees (some of them lived for hundreds of years) and good tea farmers. I lived and worked with them, participating with the processes of producing tea. I enjoy making friends with them while having great tea.















Peiyong Sun (Born and raised in China)



Type of tea	Smell	Taste	Colour interpretation	Texture interpretation
Jasmine tea	Sweet, Flower	A little bitter, taste of branch, big tea leaves not the tip.	Cream white	Smooth
Earl grey	Spice	Cool, a hint of lemon	Purple	
Lemon and ginger	Sour	Lemon surrounded by Ginger, warm	Orange yellow	Not tea
Souchong	Baked	Rooty, a hint of metal cool	Yellow brown	Thick
British breakfast	Cool, baked wheat	Smooth, bitter	Red brown	Bits, dusty
Green tea	Living wheat,	Cool, fruity, fresh	Sunlight white	Sun, smooth
Rooibos	Fresh	Herbal, sweet	Yellow	

Jasmine reminds me of having conversations with my friend who taught me how to seriously taste tea. We were discussing the process of producing tea from the very beginning, plucking tea leaves, drying them, fermentation till the very end like vacuum packaging. This taste brought me back to his little oriental tea room located above an antiquarian book store. The room was full of antiques and objects that he collected over the years such as jade, porcelain vessels, bookshelves full of antiquarian books, willow stools, calligraphies, traditional Chinese painting...

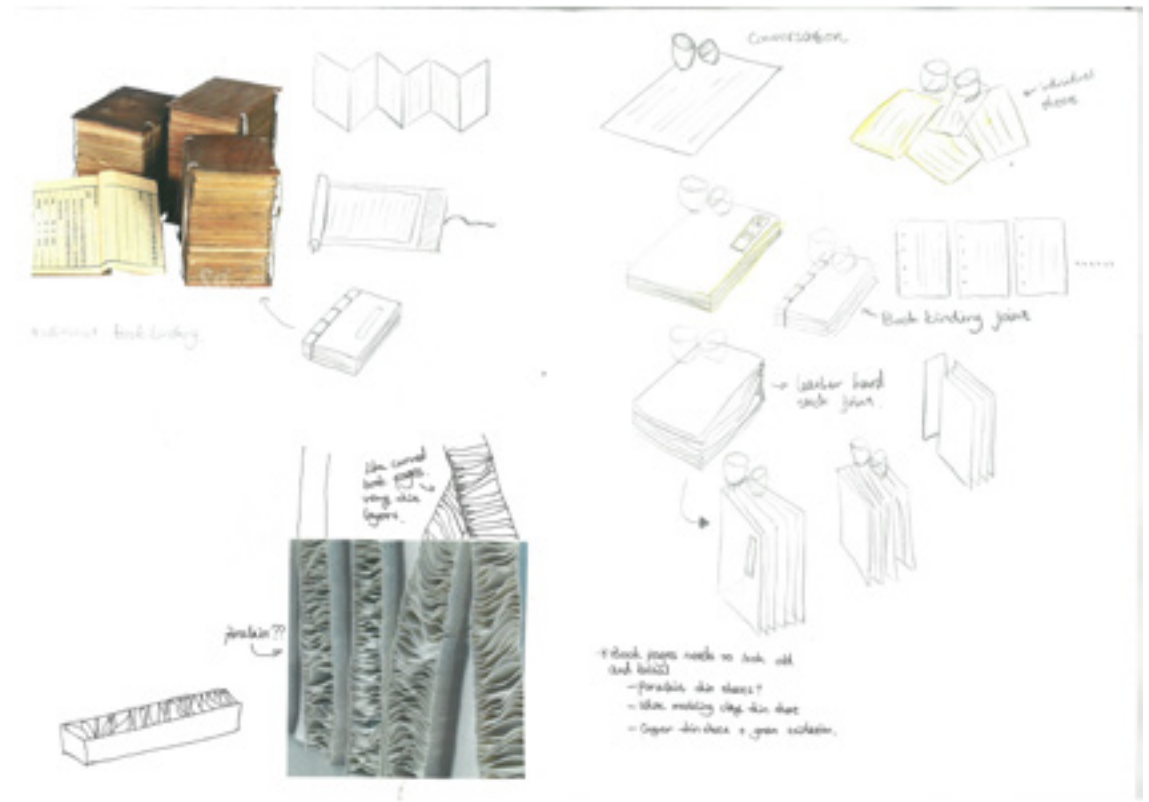
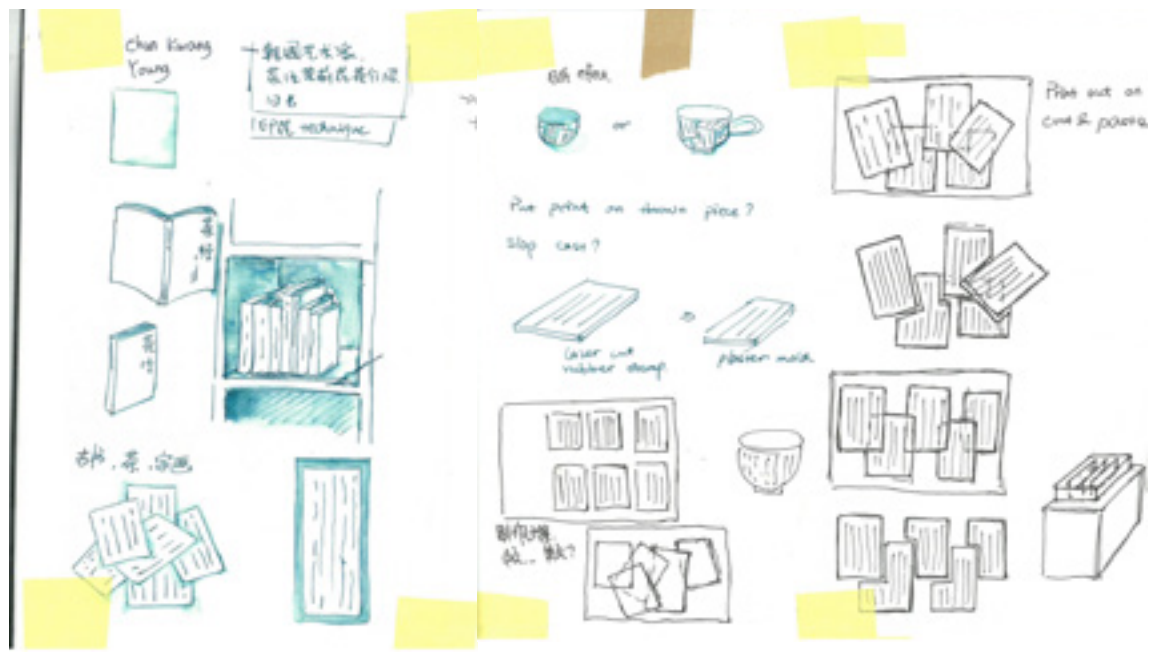
Still I remember having tea with him was a very pleasant moment, simple and peaceful.

antiquarian book store. The room was full of antiques and objects that he collected

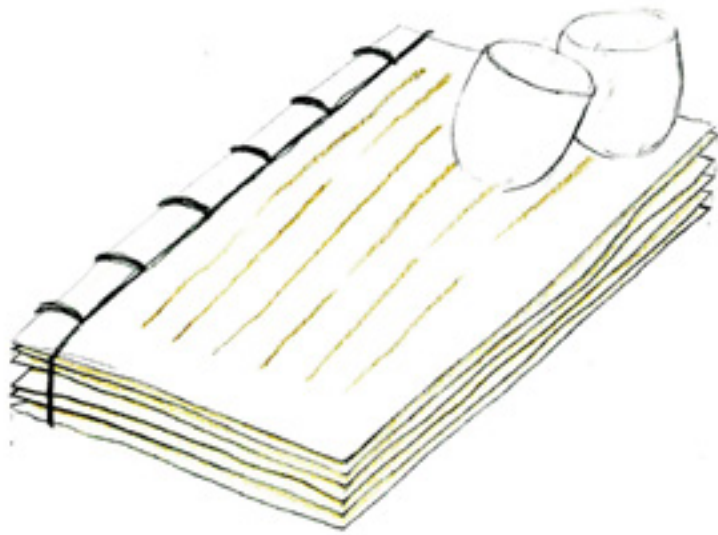


Very old traditional Chinese books.
 Antiquarian books
 - Brital, old, dusty.
 Knowledge, subtil, thick

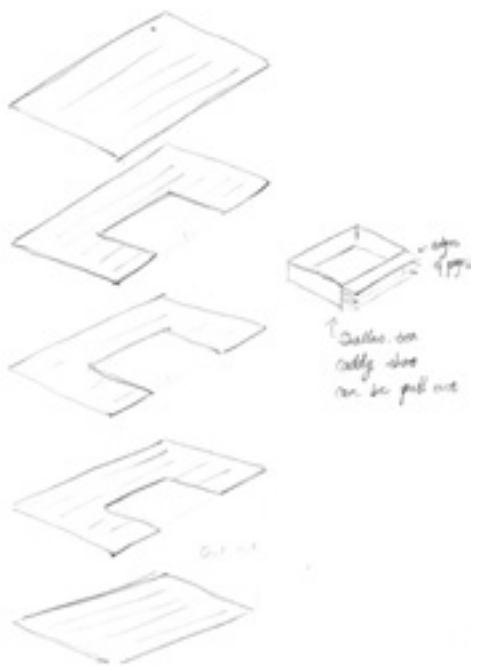
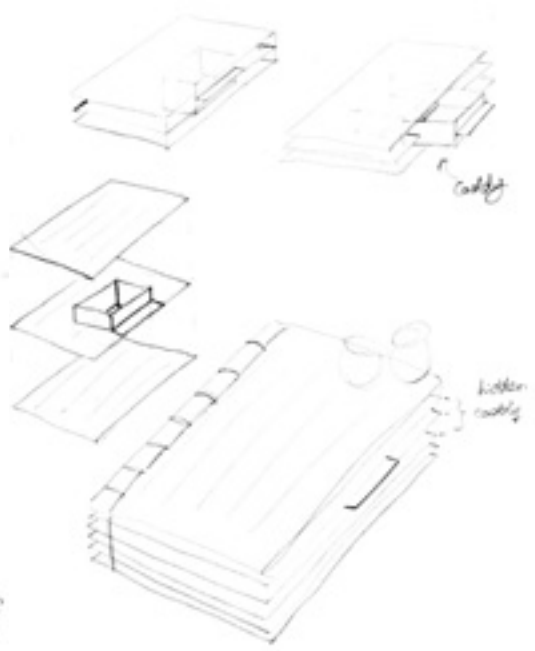
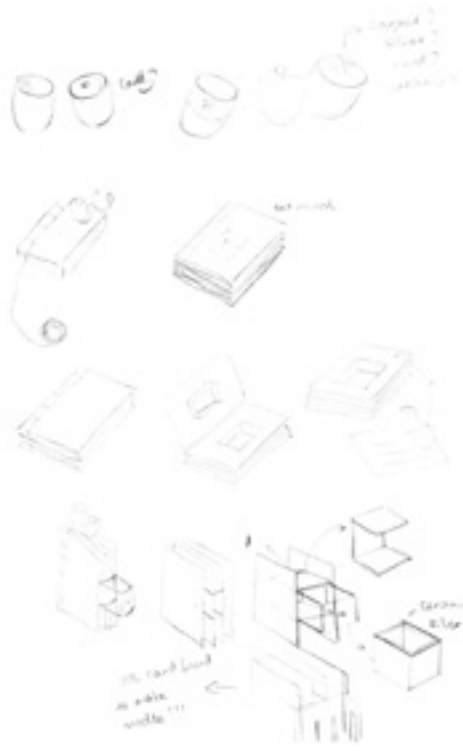








hidden in caddy











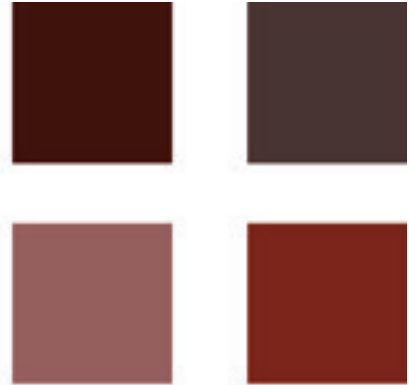
Yeru Shang (Born and raised in China)



Type of tea	Smell	Taste	Colour interpretation	Texture interpretation
Jasmin tea	Very light	Light taste, sweet after tone	Light yellow	Silky at first then bitter
Earl grey	Comes through	Minty comes through first then Bitter	Blue purple	3D, with multiple layers, spreads out, wet mint
Lemon ginger	Citric and a bit spicy	Sour at first then ginger burn	Bright yellow/fluorescent yellow, golden edge	Matt with a flash of spice/gold
Souchong	Coffee	Mild, smooth, like hit by a wood block	Rust	Polished red wood trunk on the ground, A block of something
British breakfast	Light	Heavy in the mouth, powerful, bitter	Yellow brown	Rough sand, thin
Green tea	Fresh	Long, aged, fresh, sweet after tone	Green with white	Long---
Rooibos	Leafy, fresh	Sweet, smooth, cinnamon	Coffee brown	Matt, curvy

It gives me a feeling of solid. It reminds me of a cherry wood stool I came across when I was young. My parents took me to a furniture shop to buy a new bed, there were all sorts of furniture in different styles such as minimal pale wooden bed, laminate bed structure, intricate carved bed frame. However, none of those resonated with me but a simple square rosewood stool. It was very heavy, hard, but smooth and sleek like a piece of jade. For me rose wood itself has imbedded a long history.

Deep and elegant were the best words to describe my feeling with this tea.



9

YERU SHANG

红木家具

- Burnish lacquer
- wood cup



Heavy, polished olive oil, heavy, thick.



椅, 椅椅.
找椅椅图.
红木家具图片



wood cup.
- turn.

③



12水, 转光油.



↑ Traditional red-wood chair. (Gangle).
Rose wood



ceramic cup.

Carve
- slip, sand, oxide...

④

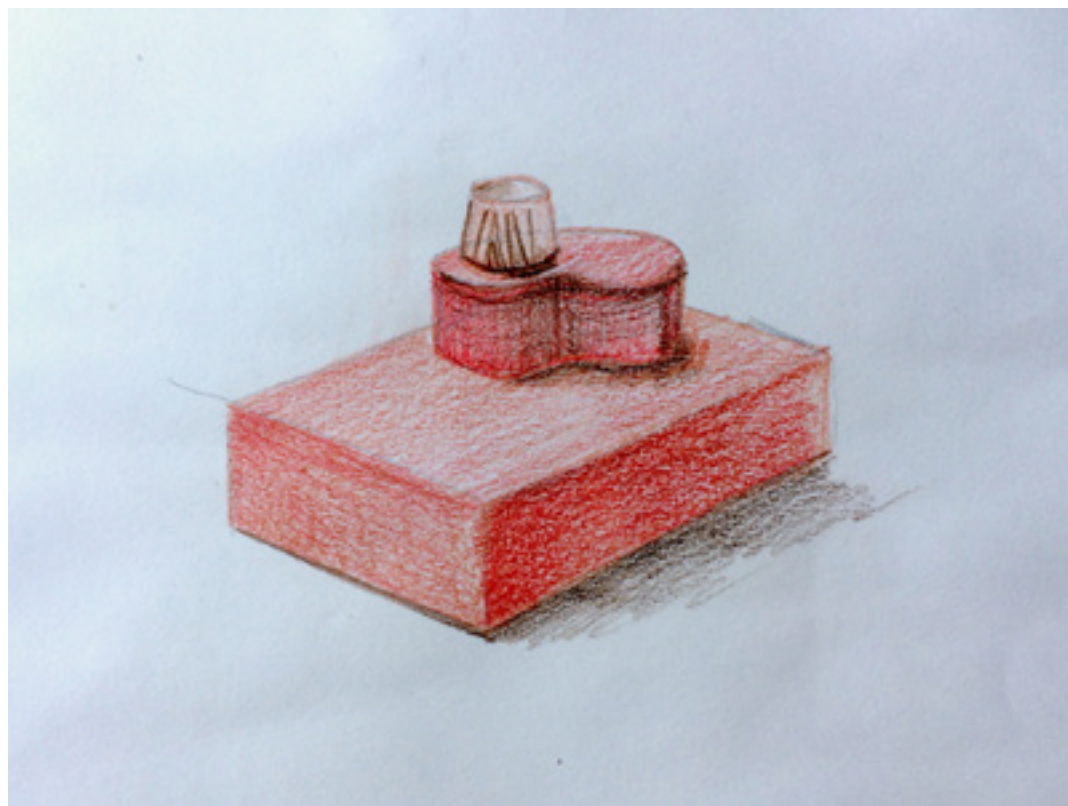
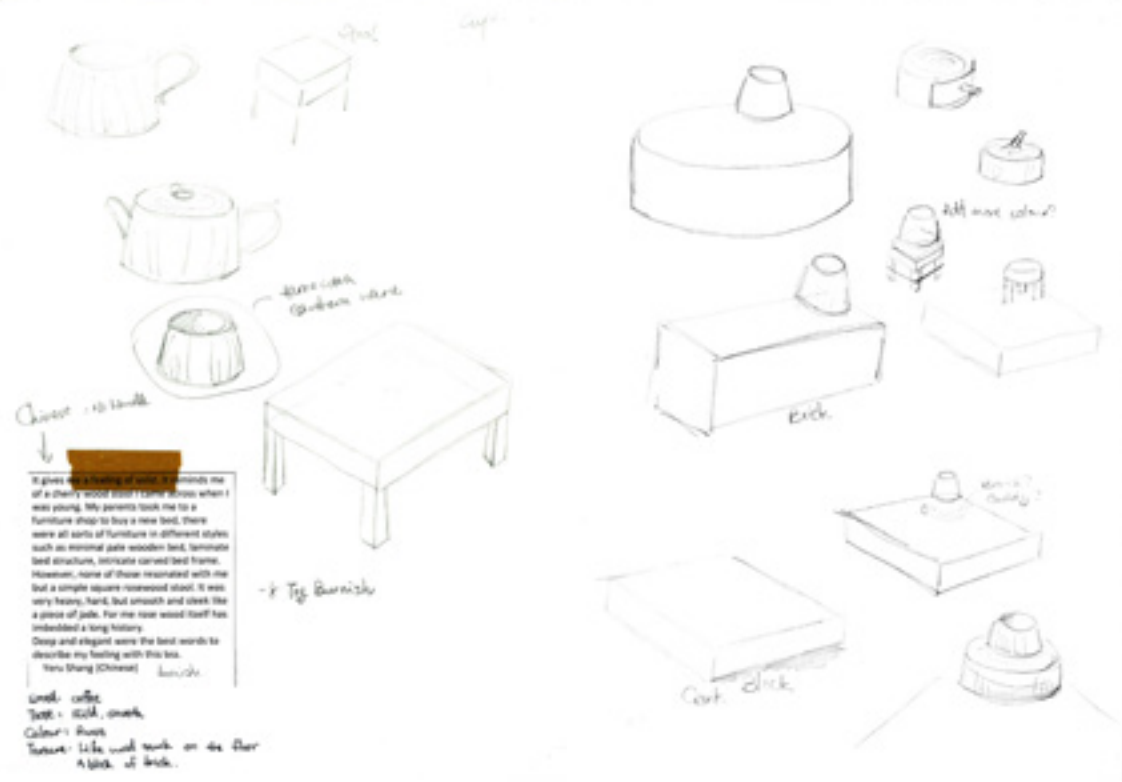


→ plaster.

→ Hand build cup

Tik



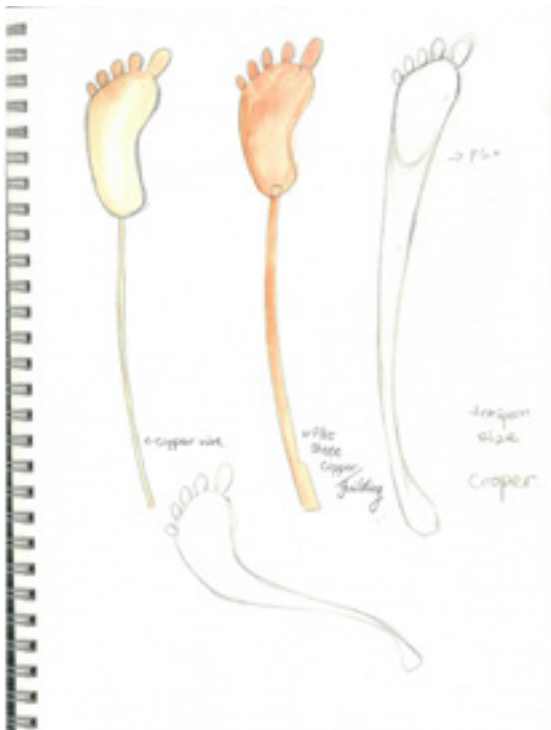
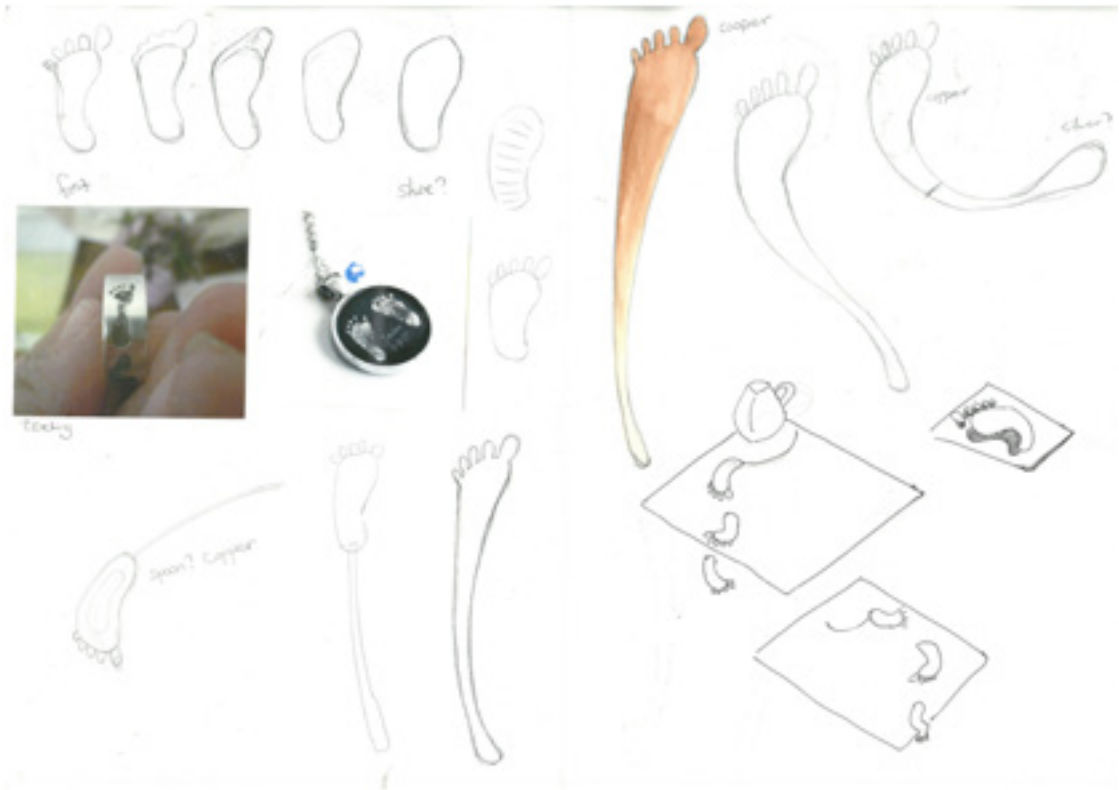




Tea Spoons



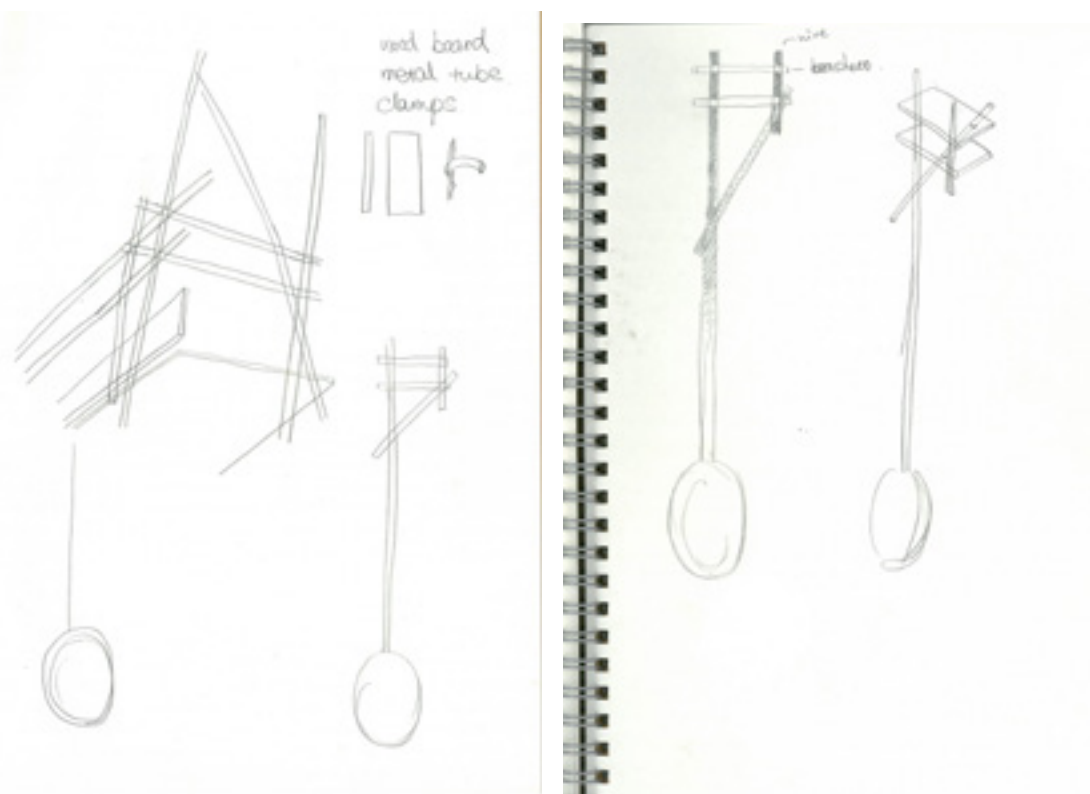
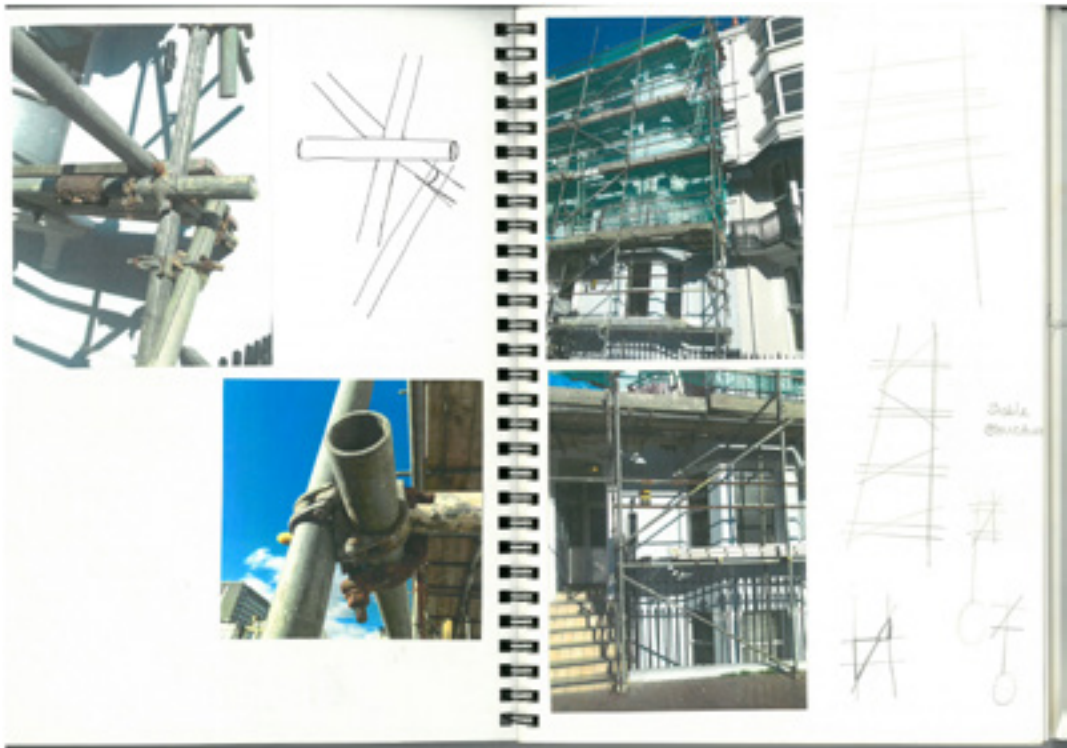
Tea spoon for Karen

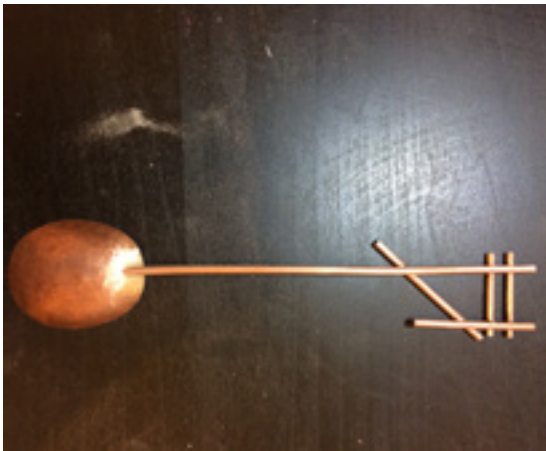
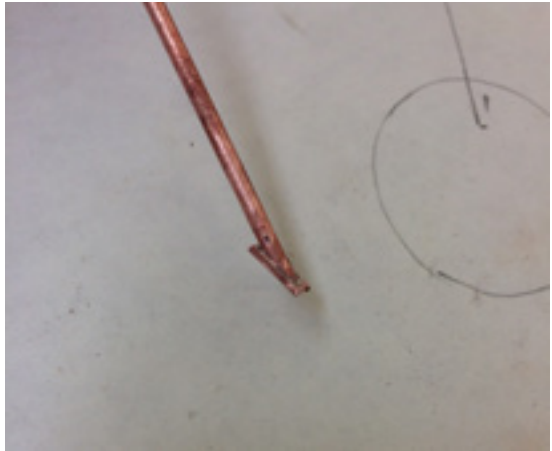
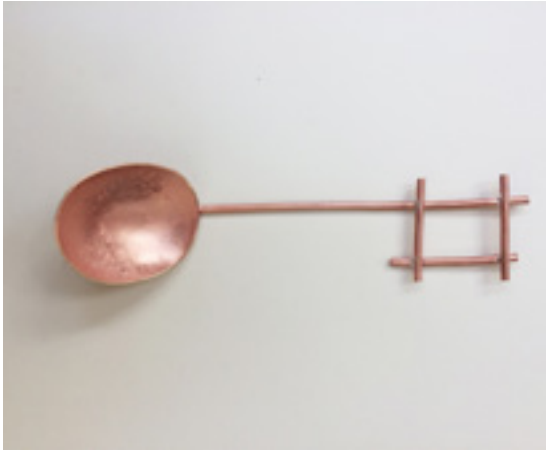






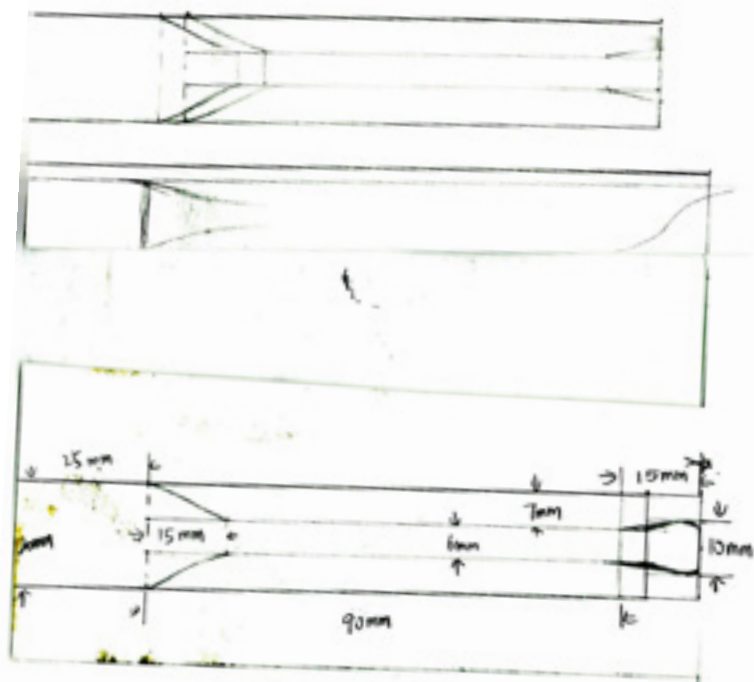
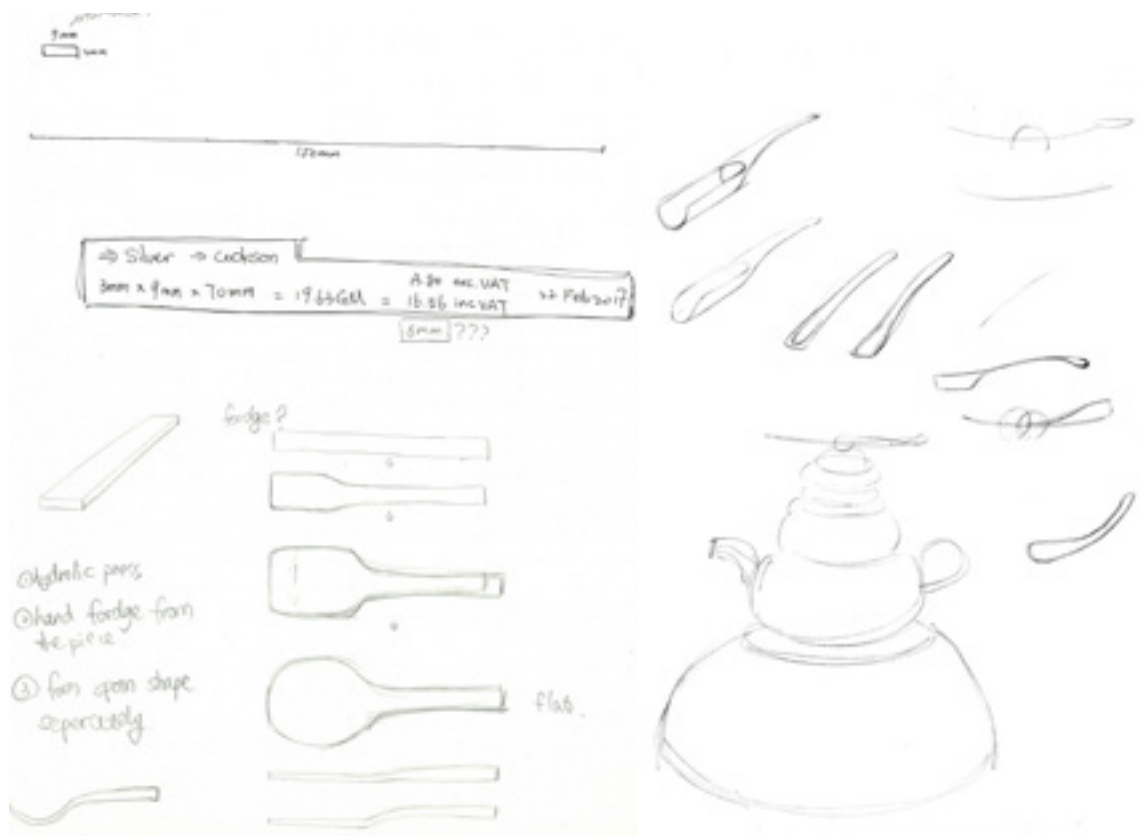
Tea spoon for Marcus







Tea scoop for Mr Du







The Teapot


Initial idea: teabag teapot



Study of western teapots



Royal Winton Teapots

→ Tall top



→ Traditional Western teapots are tall and round which creates a sense of coziness

→ Richard Supermarket's least of work


BRIGHTON MUG



→ Peter Skye's coffee table in Denmark



→ Tea tables coffee small Berlin Germany



→ Myer Pilsen Germany




→ Tea table coffee table






leaf shape teapot substance



→ Ball form teapot My-rice room come Jonathan Kaplan

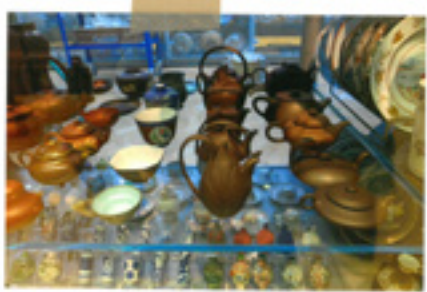


→ Jumping teapot Kato-Lake HANNA 2006-2008

Study of eastern teapots

Various Oriental Teapots
 class
 Japan?

Traditional oriental teapots
 are very small and
 single in flavor.

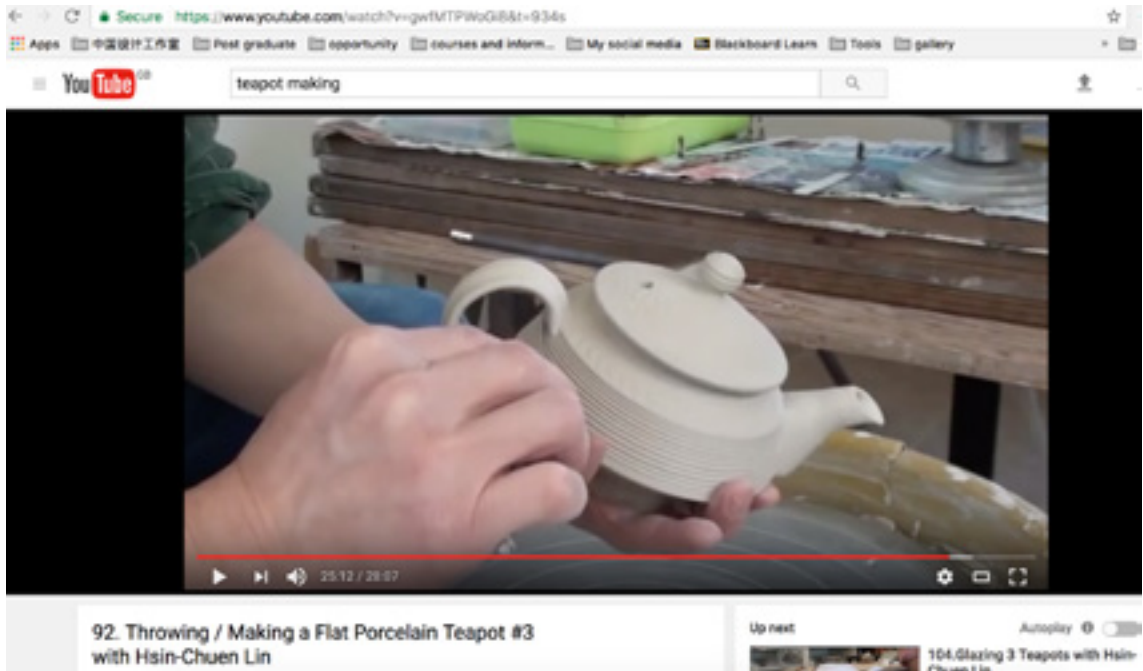


In between Teapots

also various designs of
 or 2-3 PC
 by colors.



Technical notes of making a tea pot



10







Appendix

1. Fresh tea leaves. Photo taken by Mr Du
2. <http://rainwu.net/>
3. <http://www.jennysoutham.co.uk/>
4. <https://www.twinings.co.uk/about-tea/how-to-taste-tea>
5. <http://www.communitydevelopmentprograms.org/projects-in-kenya/>
6. <http://mamalette.com/blog/featured/can-pregnant-women-drink-zobo/>
7. Tea garden and drying the tea leave, Photo taken by Mr Du
8. <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/702533.shtml>
9. <http://www.rosewoodfurniture.co.uk/world-sales-rosewood-furniture.asp/Product/ff7304-oval-dining-table-dragon-design-tiger-legs-with-2-and-6-chairs>
10. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gwfMTPWoGi8&t=934s>