

Objects for Loneliness

Using design as a tool to help tackle loneliness

•
amelia
rae perry

Part One: Research

Introduction

Statistics

Articles

Existing Products

Chindogu

Hanover Community Notice Board

Trips

Feedback

Smart Materials

Part Two: Ideas

Ideas

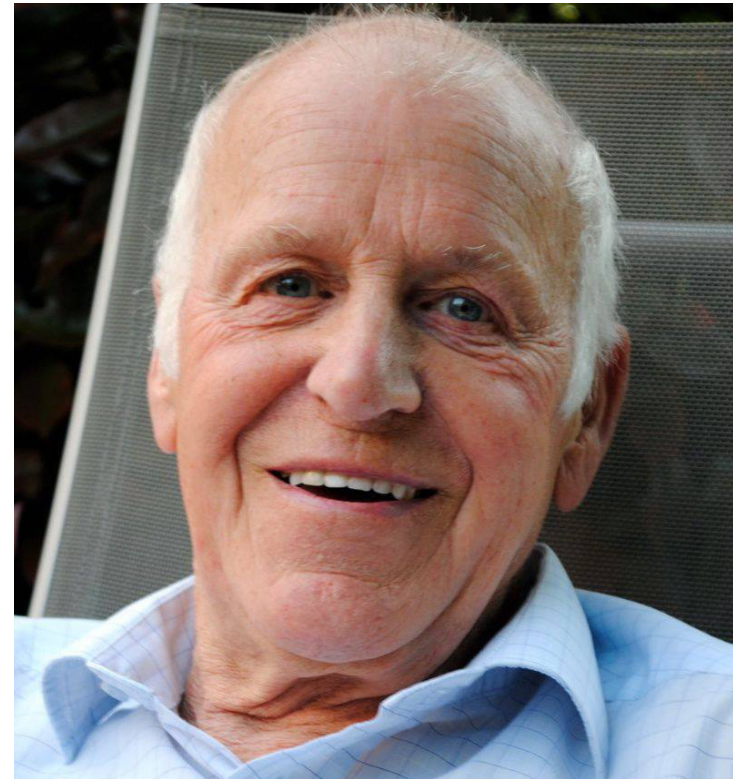
Framework

Part Three: Final Objects

Hello Neighbour

Money Box

Hand Aid



◀ Photographed on the right is a portrait of my grandfather, who I call Poppa. Born in 1931, he my inspiration at the start of this journey. In early 2017 I visited an exhibition at the Design Museum which presented work by designers tackling one of the most important issues of the 21st Century, an ageing population. Each of these projects tackled what I call a “real life issue” and helped improved individuals lives or made others lives easier. This lead me to write my disseration on “How Design responds to an ageing population”, using a number of case studies to examine this question. Through the research in this project I found that it was important as a design to facilitate the production of meaningful and socially responsible objects. In this research project I aim to propose solutions to real life issues.

Overview

UK Population

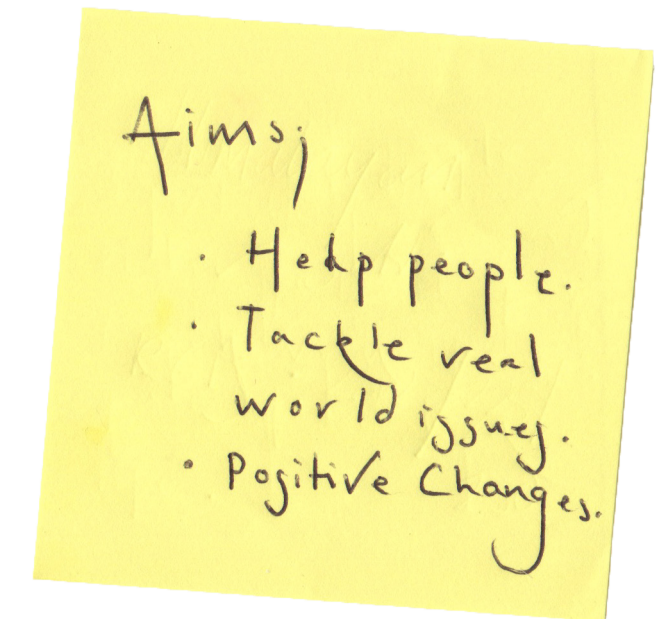
- There are now 11.8 million people aged 65 or over in the UK.¹
- There are now over 15.3 million people in the UK aged 60 and above.²
- 1.6 million people are aged 85 or over.³
- There are over half a million people aged 90 and over in the UK. 70% of these are women.⁴
- There are 14,570 centenarians in the UK, a 65% increase over the last decade. Of these, an estimated 800 are aged 105 and over, double that of 2005.⁵

Population projections

- The number of people aged 60 or over is expected to pass the 20 million mark by 2030⁶
- The number of people aged 65+ is projected to rise by over 40 per cent (40.77%) in the next 17 years to over 16 million.⁷
- By 2040, nearly one in four people in the UK (24.2%) will be aged 65 or over. ⁸
- The percentage of the total population who are over 60 is predicted to rise from 24.2% at present to over 29% in 2035. ⁹
- The number of people over 85 in the UK is predicted to more than double in the next 23 years to over 3.4 million.¹⁰
- The population over 75 is projected to double in the next 30 years.¹¹
- Nearly one in five people currently in the UK will live to see their 100th birthday (see section on life expectancy below). This includes 29% of people born in 2011.¹²
- However, according to the ONS the UK's population is ageing more slowly than other EU countries, predicted to be one of the least aged countries in the EU-27 by 2035.¹³

*“Later Life in the United Kingdom”, Age UK, April 2018

^ The **Research** behind this project has become the most important medium that has fuelled my ideas. I feel that using live data and statistics has helped influence the direct innovation behind each idea. Objects for Loneliness is a research project



Statistics have shown that Loneliness can be as harmful for our health as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day

* "Loneliness in Later Life, Evidence Review", Age UK, July 2017.

12% of people over the age of 65 years, say they feel cut off from society

3.5 million people over the age of 65 years live alone.

^ Why Loneliness? As the topic of an ageing population is so vast I found that rather than trying to solve all the problems that come with growing older, but to focus on one particular issue. From my own personal experience, in my first year of university I had found that I felt quite isolated and lonely, being in a new city and not know anyone. This propelled me to chose this as my main line of enquiry.

41% of people aged 65 years and older feel out of touch with the pace of modern life.

* "Loneliness in Later Life, Evidence Review", Age UK, July 2017.

► For me it is important to gather data from professional sources, such as the government, websites and magazines.

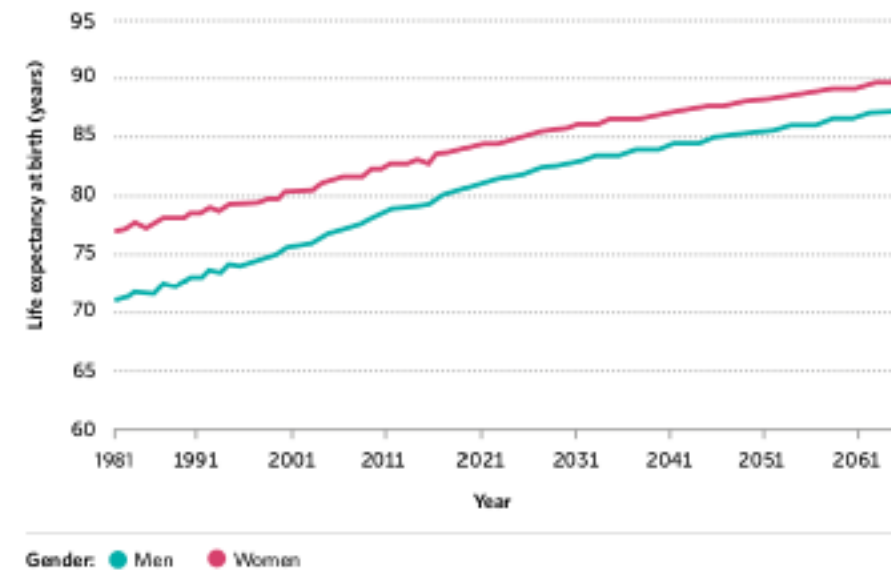


Figure 1.3: Historic and projected period life expectancy at birth in the UK 1981-2064⁷.

1.3 Implications for society: dependency and healthy life expectancy

Population ageing and increasing life expectancy have a number of implications. One of the most important is that there may be a lower proportion of individuals to pay taxes, work and provide care for those who need it. For this reason, growing old in a society which is itself growing old is fundamentally different to growing old in a population where most people are young⁸.

* Future of an Age Population, Government Department for Science.

Cities
Ageing cities

'Teach young people we are not going to move over': stories of ageing in cities

From tackling isolation in Leicester to better footpaths in Dhaka, you shared your experiences of how cities could be improved for older generations



¹ 'An age-friendly city makes it easy to walk about, without the fear of being run over by a car, or pushed over by a young person using a mobile.' Photograph: Alamy

► This article asks older adults directly, how cities can tackle loneliness and isolation, they talk about making things easier moving about the city.

'Neighbourhood schemes can tackle loneliness'

“ The challenges of city life as an older person include chronic health conditions exacerbated by poor air quality and poorly maintained public spaces. Also loneliness, if neighbours remain aloof because they view you to be old and not interested in the world. Cities need cross-generational activities and groupwork to break down barriers. People living alone of whatever age can become isolated, lonely and then mental health problems can develop. Good neighbourhood schemes would be an excellent start or re-inforcement of how communities can support and develop 'good neighbourliness' for everyone irrespective of age, background etc. (Leicester resident)

'The city is better than the country'

“ I'd like to see reduced senior prices at restaurants, movies, museums, etc. as well as more public benches and buses which lower their entries for those who can't manage higher steps. But overall, living in this city is soooooo much better than in the country or 'burbs. (82-year-old New York City resident)

'Teach young people we are not going to move over'

“ An age-friendly city makes it easy to move about by transit, or walking, without being hurried for fear of being run over by a car, or pushed over by a young person using a mobile. Reduce the number of cars. Slow them down. Give walking the first priority. Teach young people that we are not going to move over, nor do we have to. (77-year-old Toronto resident)

* Francesca Perry, "Teach young people we are not going to move over": stories of ageing in cities", The Guardian, April 2016.

Mindsosis by Sara Lopez is a set of tools and exercisers which help people communicate, navigate their problems and reach out for help. Designed specifically for those have experienced mental health issue to help others.



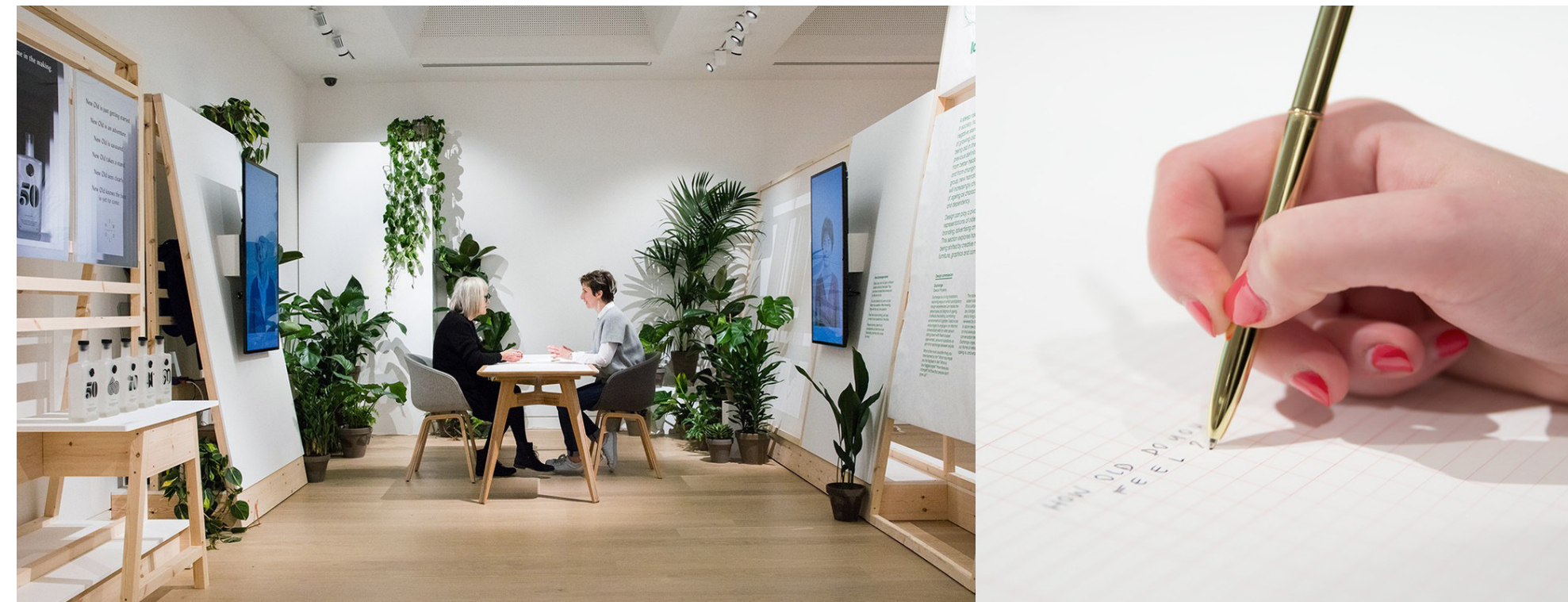
Part One

This is the work of RCA graduate, **Heeju Kim. Empathy Bridge for Autism** uses augmented reality and sweets to help users better understand people with autism.



Existing Projects

► Designed for The Design Museums, **NEW OLD** exhibition **Special Projects** has created **Exchange** designed to challenge the stereotypes that surround older adults. The installation gave visitors the opportunity to sit down with older adults and ask one question, for example "Is it true that people don't grow up?". The surface of the table was designed to record the questions and answers.



Part One

Existing Projects

> **Chindogu** is the “Japanese art of inventing ingenious everyday gadgets that seem like an ideal solution to a particular problem, but are in fact useless”. These are Chindogu inspired inventions.



Part One

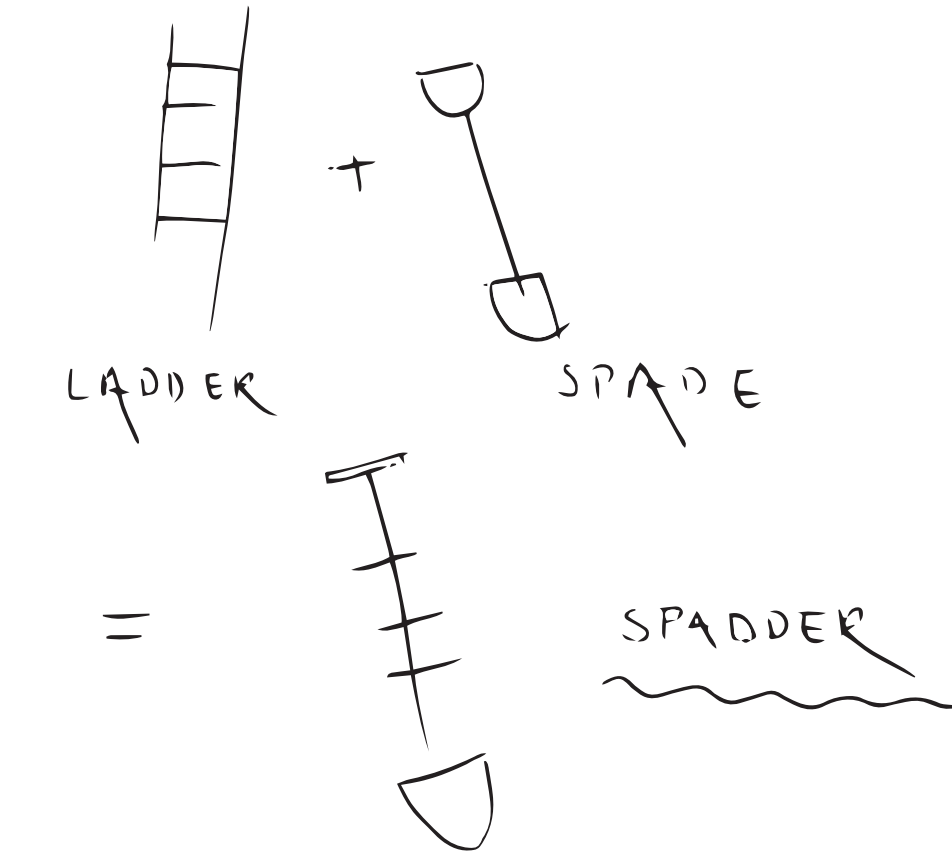


Zimmer Frame + Plough = An easier way to weed your garden.

Chindogu



Dance Matt = Keeping older adults fit.



Part One




Ladder + Spade = Spadder, making it easier to get up from a kneeling position when gardening.

Chindogu

Hanover Community Notice Board

🔒 Closed group

► I reached out to a Facebook group I am part of called the Hanover Community Notice Board, this group for people who live in the area of Hanover in Brighton. I had a surprising amount of responses, and not the type of feedback that I had expected. I thought that members of the group would reply with stories of their grandparents, or great aunt. However, I found that majority of people responded with normal day to day tales, (as screen shotted right). Loneliness and Isolation is not something that only older adults experience, but something anyone can face no matter your age.

 **Amelia Rae Perry**
31 January


Hello Hanover,

I was hoping that you could help me out... I am doing a project at uni which involves tackling loneliness and isolation - I wondered wether you could tell me the scenario or situation in which you feel the most lonely?


If you want to keep it private please feel free to direct message me!

Thank you in advance,


Amelia x

 It's such a great question, am mulling it over. I am super busy, juggling a million projects so being alone can be rare and fine. I think ☁ it's when I am ill and I feel out of things - like in bed with a virus and everyone else seems to be having fun or being useful and I am not

Like · Reply · 16w

 being from Devon but making my life in Brighton for 6 years I think it's the long journey when I've left one of my lives behind and I'm in between 'home's' can feel very lonely as you miss whoever it is you've just left. bittersweet.

Like · Reply · 16w

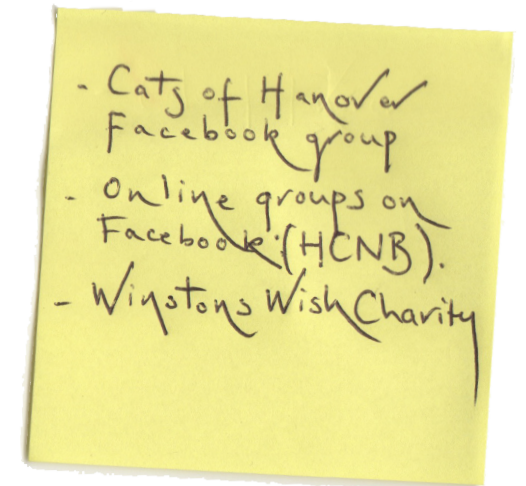
 Sometimes ,when I am at my busiest, but nobody seems to notice, that can feel lonely. Being in the midst of family drama, always on hand to tend to everyones needs but not getting time to yourself....

Like · Reply · 16w



◀ Following on from feedback from the Hanover Community Notice Board. I got in touch with a wonderful lady and her daughter who had experienced loss. I visited her home and we talked about how her and daughter had tackled loneliness, and how they had overcome it. What struck me was their resilience, they had found coping mechanisms to deal with their greif.

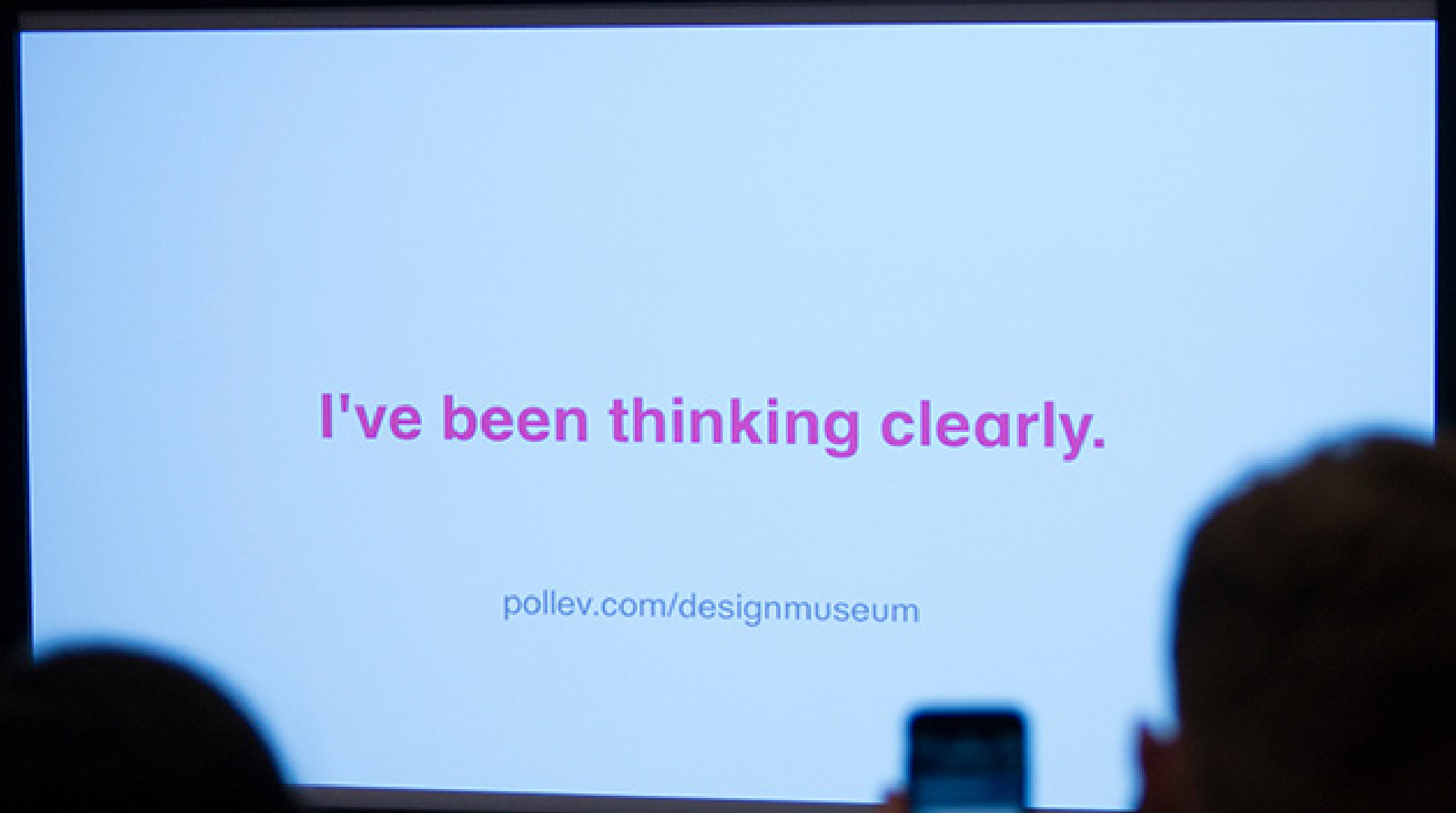
Being connected through networks:





^ A visit to a talk at the Design Museum in collaboration with Creative Conscience in February aimed at inspiring makers to create positive change in regards to Mental Health. Although not entirely related to an ageing population or loneliness the it was an exciting opportunity to meet recent graduates and people industry in design who have made impacts of people lives for example, Helena Jennison from Movember Foundation.

The talk directly engaged the audience in providing a link to a live survey asking anonymous questions regarding their mental well-being. At the end of the event, the same questions were posed to them again.



► **Meeting with Emily Kenward, found of charity Time to Talk Befriending.** Right is an extract from the interview.



“What are the goals for Time to Talk Befriending?”

“When I first had the vision, I was going to a church in Kemptown and every time I went I’d notice sheltered housing and all the tower blocks that they were there. Having volunteered for Age UK I knew there were thousands of older people in that area that would that would hardly see anyone and I had this sense that I wanted to connect with them, not to do anything more than ask them what is missing and what would be really important to you. So I developed a social action, kind of research project. I was at university at the time studying social work so I roped other social work students to be hosts on a table. I did a door to door outreach to a thousand homes where I mapped out where older people could be living, we had 94 people that were able to attend with transport. It was to honour their lives but also ask people what they want, it was unbelievable there were people there that literally lived a floor away that used to be friends but I haven’t seen each other in years and they were so pleased to swap numbers again. But because they were housebound they couldn’t get out and everybody there said that they felt that they have no one to speak to.”

“That is heartbreaking, I read that a lot of older adults feels as though they are a burden?”

“It’s not rocket science, all they want to see the friendly face, but being able to do that in a safe way and make friends when you are housebound is very difficult, because obviously your world is very small. It’s kind of this research plus national evidence about loneliness in older adults forms the basis of the charity. Your world is very small. It’s kind of this research plus national evidence about loneliness in older adults forms the basis of the charity.”

“What would you define as loneliness? It’s quite obvious question, but means different things to people.”

“Yes I think it is different for everybody, I think loneliness is a feeling that comes from loss, often a partner or a loved one or perhaps socially isolated due to their health has declined. And it that feeling of emptiness that fills you when you just don’t have any communication with anyone. There is a lot of evidence that proves that a lot of people don’t see or speak to anyone for weeks at a time, and is the people that we get referred to us. So I would define loneliness as a sense of loss, a sense of deep sadness. They just don’t want to be here anymore, so they say I was eating, I just don’t want to be in the world. It is heartbreaking, there are **7,000 people in our city alone who are chronically lonely.**”

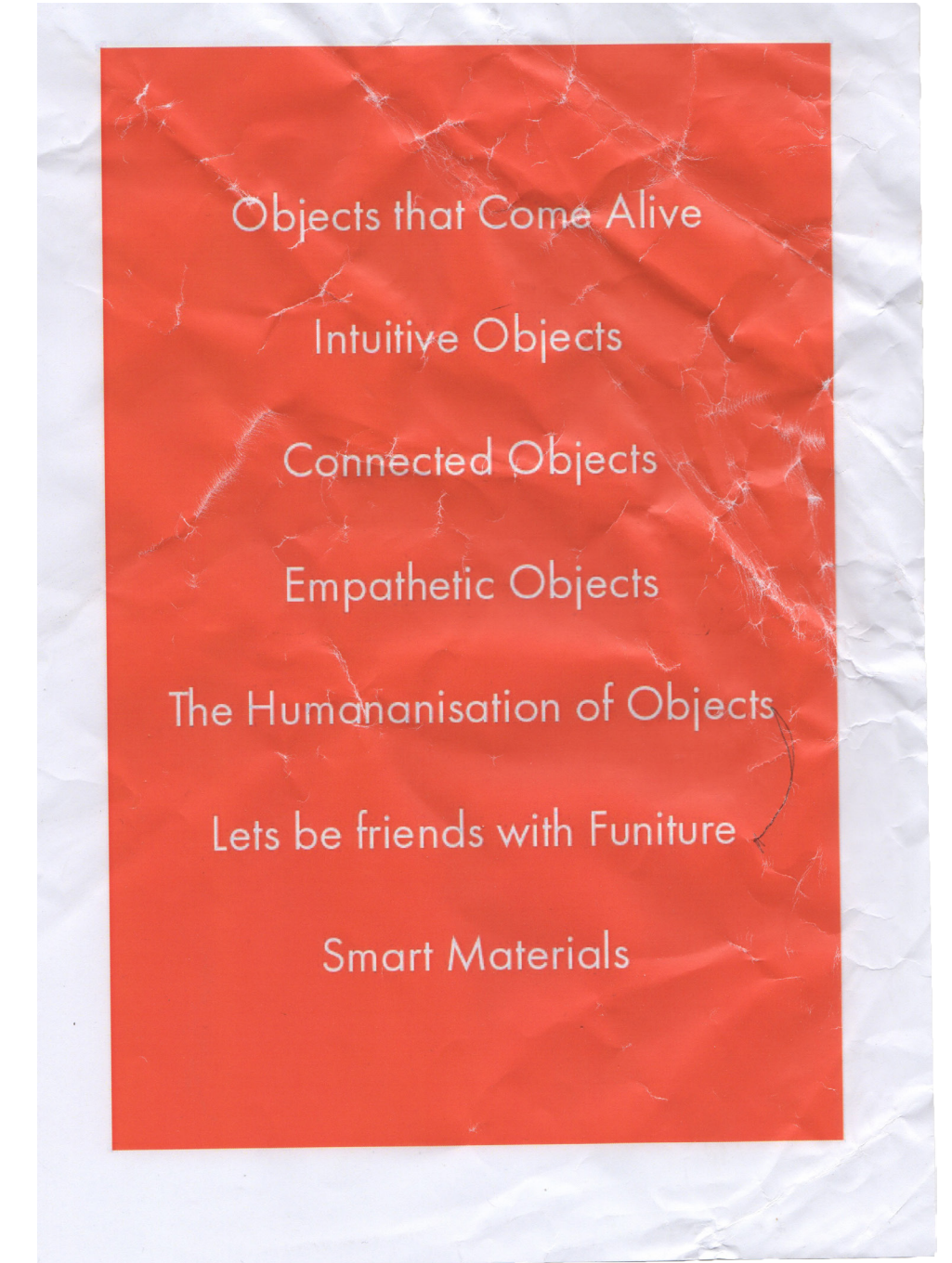
► During my visit to Time to Talk Befriending, Emily told me about this amazing community scheme, Tea and Company. Every Wednesday St Mary’s church in Kemp Town holds a friendship cafe in partnership with TTTB and local schools. It was a beautiful way to people meet and connect with each other that usually might not cross paths.



* Photograph from Kemp Town Insider.

HUMAN CENTERED DESIGN X DATA = INFORMED IDEAS

> Throughout my research a number of 'subtitles' have help recurring within books, articles, websites and from my own onservations. I felt it was import to design things which fitted within these headings as a sort of guideline.



► Ideas: HUMANISED / CONNECTED / EMPATHETIC / LETS BE FRIENDS WITH FURNITURE / SMART MATERIALS

* Heated arm warmer, proving the heat of a loved one.



Ideas

► Ideas: HUMANISED / CONNECTED / EMPATHETIC / LETS BE FRIENDS WITH FURNITURE / OBJECTS THAT COME ALIVE



Part Two

* Arm Chair Hugger, Wrap yourself in the arms of your chair.

Ideas

Epley et al. (2007) found that lonely people are more likely to anthropomorphise as they use it as a coping mechanism to handle social isolation. They wondered whether people who cannot connect to other people can instead connect to dogs, gadgets or gods. In order to investigate this they asked participants to rate descriptions of gadgets on human qualities such as "having a mind of its own." They found that those who gave them the most human-like traits displayed more signs of loneliness in the personality questionnaires.

Since lonely people are more likely to humanise inanimate objects, Waytz et al. (2010) set out to see if the opposite of this was also true, whether socially connected people fail to see humanity in real people. He found that participants who felt socially secure were more likely to endorse harsh interrogation, such as electric shocks, than others. This could mean that since uncertainty can trigger anthropomorphism, maybe feelings of power and security can lead us to see people as objects rather than human beings.

* "Psychology of Loneliness and Perceiving Life in Inanimate Objects", Social Psychology Online, November 2016.

Objects for Loneliness

Using design as a tool to help tackle loneliness

► I refined the subtitled down to the following on the right. These I will use as the framework for my final objects.

Connected

The bringing together or into contact so that a real or notional link is established.

Empathetic

Showing an ability to understand and share the feelings of another person.

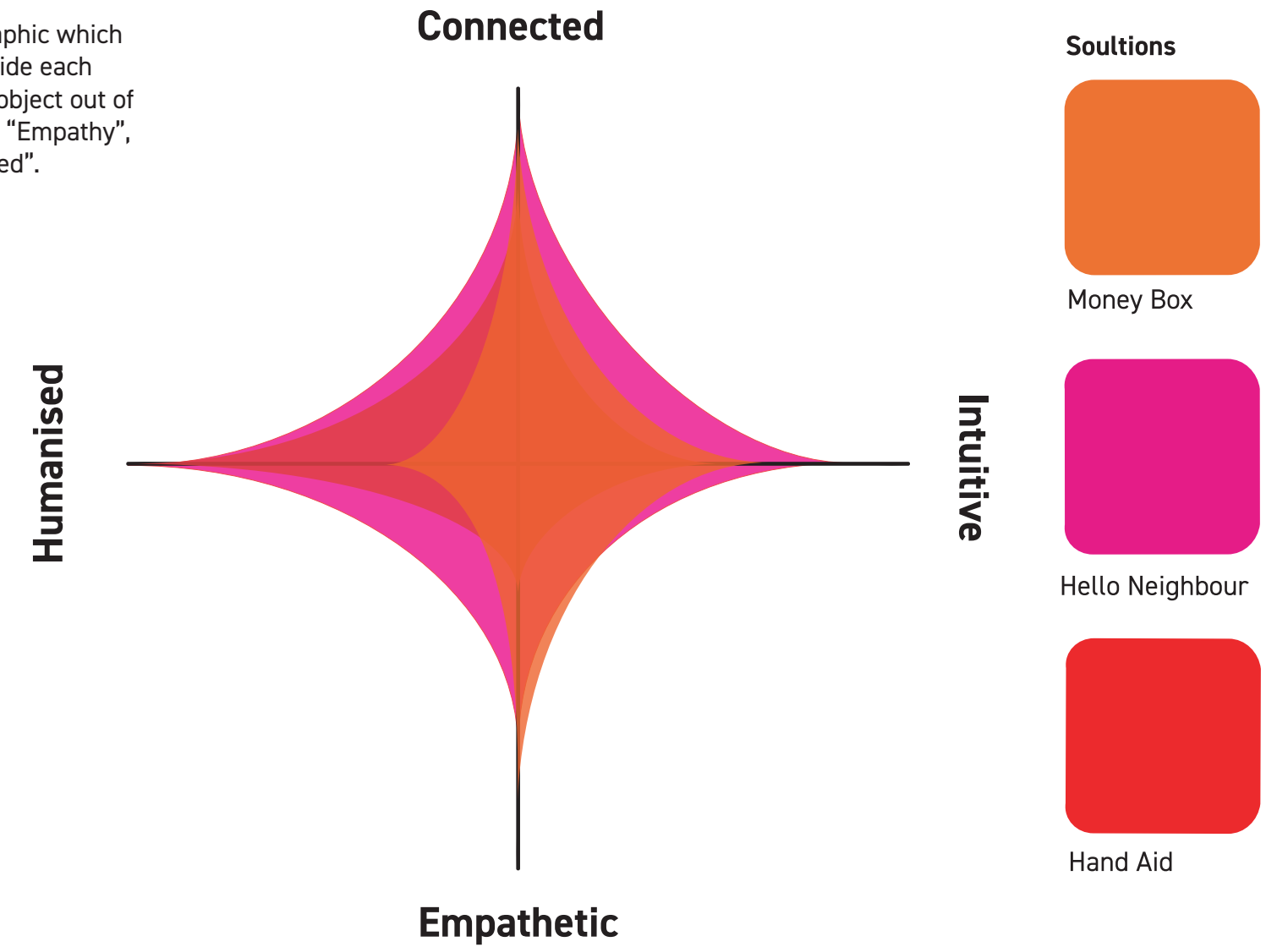
Intuitive

Based on what one feels to be true even without conscious reasoning; instinctive. An object or system with an instinct.

Humanised

The attribution of human characteristics to inanimate objects.

► I also design an infographic which uses colour coding to divide each object. I then rated each object out of five for "Connectedness", "Empathy", "Intuitive" and "Humanised".

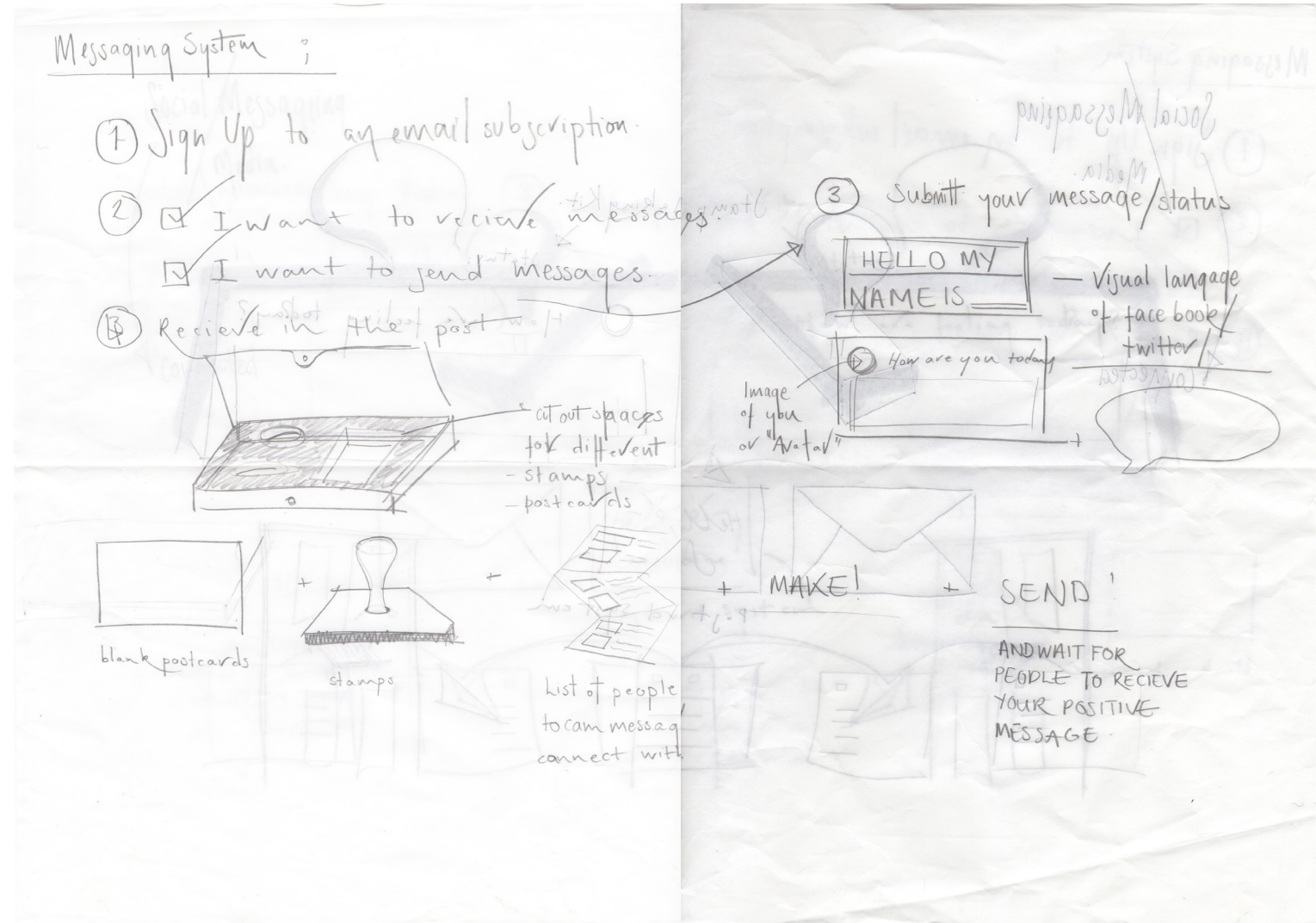


Hello Neighbour

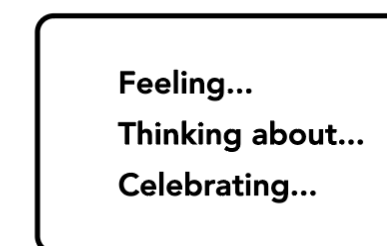
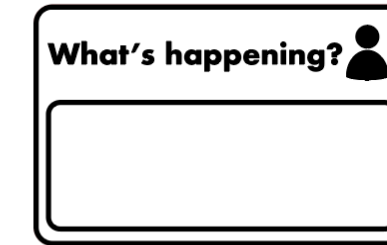
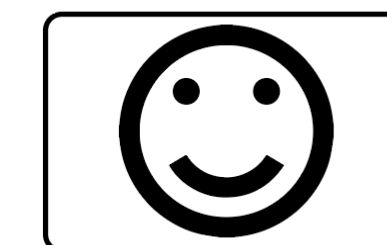
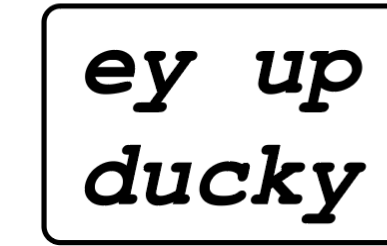
Hello Neighbour:
Connected: 5/5
Empathetic: 4/5
Intuitive: 4/5
Humanised: 5/5



► The idea behind Hello Neighbour came to me when using the community Facebook group "The Hanover Community Notice Board", this forum is used by local people in the community of Hanover, Brighton to talk and discuss issues and ideas. However, I thought that this platform is something that not everyone can be a part of. For example, so everyone uses social media – so how could I design something to help connect people, and in addition bring back the art of letter writing. This message kit, connects you with other people in your area to create new relationships with people you may not cross paths with



► Using stamps to help communicate between people who maybe not have met before. The written stamps have pre decided quotes and questions to help start a conversation.

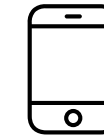


Hello Neighbour

*An interactive message kit
connecting the community*

► Logo designed to convey the message aspect of the system, with the use of the speech bubble. The slightly wonkyness of the bubble gives the impression that it is hand drawn giving a human touch.

How to say Hello to your Neighbour



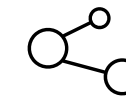
Sign yourself up to/sign up someone you know to Hello Neighbour.



Let us know if you would like to send and/or receive messages.



Receive in the post the Hello Neighbour Stamp Kit.



Stamp - Send - Receive to connected with people in your area.

► Screen shot from leaflet from Hello Neighbour explaining the system.



^ A kit which is designed to help you communicate. Comes with envelopes, postcards, ink pads and stamps.



Money Box

Piggy Bank:
Connected: 5/5
Empathetic: 3/5
Intuitive: 4/5
Humanised: 2/5

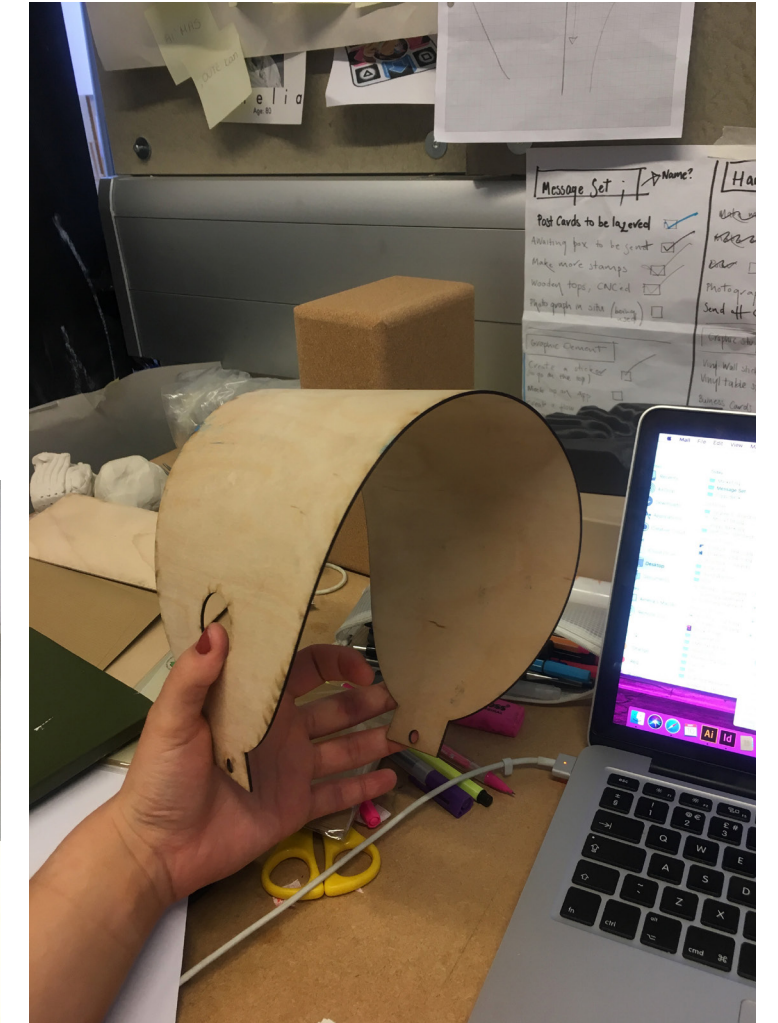
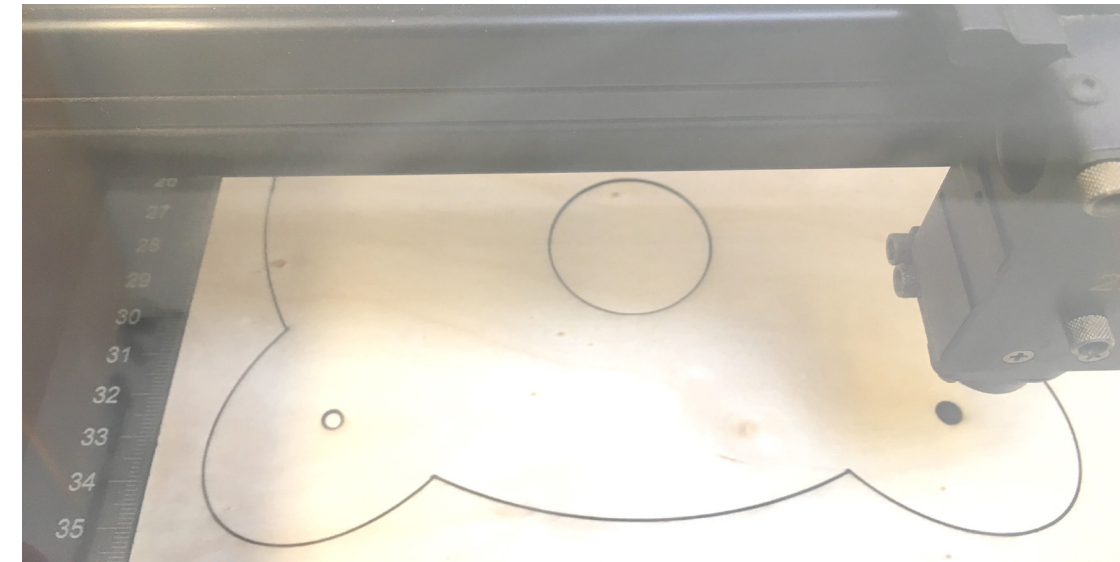
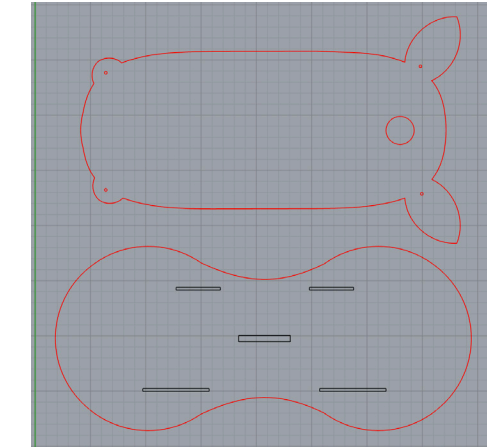


► Shaped like a Pig, this plywood, flat pack Money Box is created with the idea of shared experience. Imagine, you and a loved one who lived far away and you didn't get to see each other much, (this case, my inspiration was my Poppa who lives 189.4 miles in Nottingham).

This tool is about sharing, the idea is you send this to your loved one, and you keep one as well, and you both use the Piggy Bank to save up to see each other. So, next time you have a phone conversation with them you can talk about how far you have filled up the Money Box.

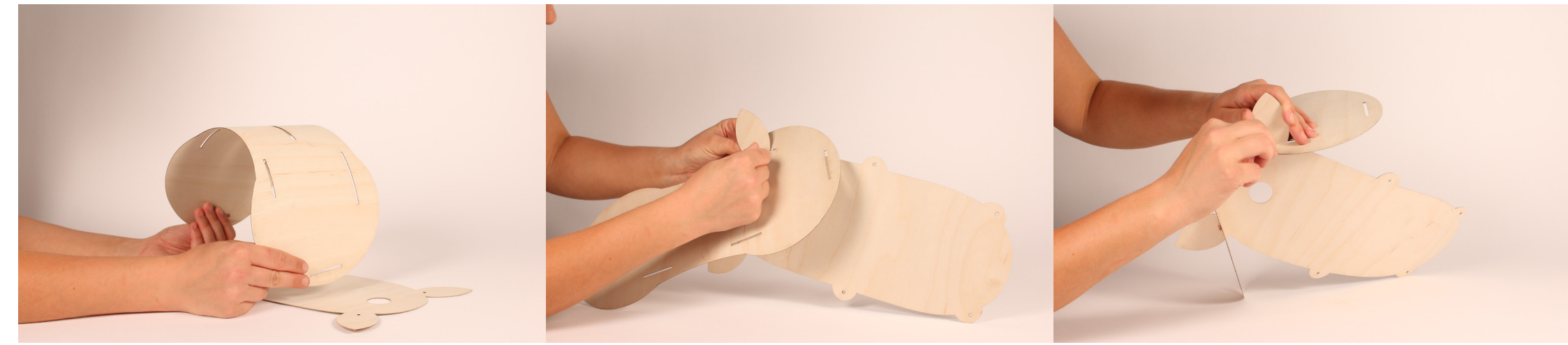


► The path was designed on 3D software, Rhino and then laser cut.





◀ The kit includes, pins to keep the piggy bank together, the shell of the pig and a cork a nose/bung. The Piggy Bank comes flat pack so that it can be delivered through a post box, and assembled as a 3D object.



Part Three

Money Box



Part Three

Money Box



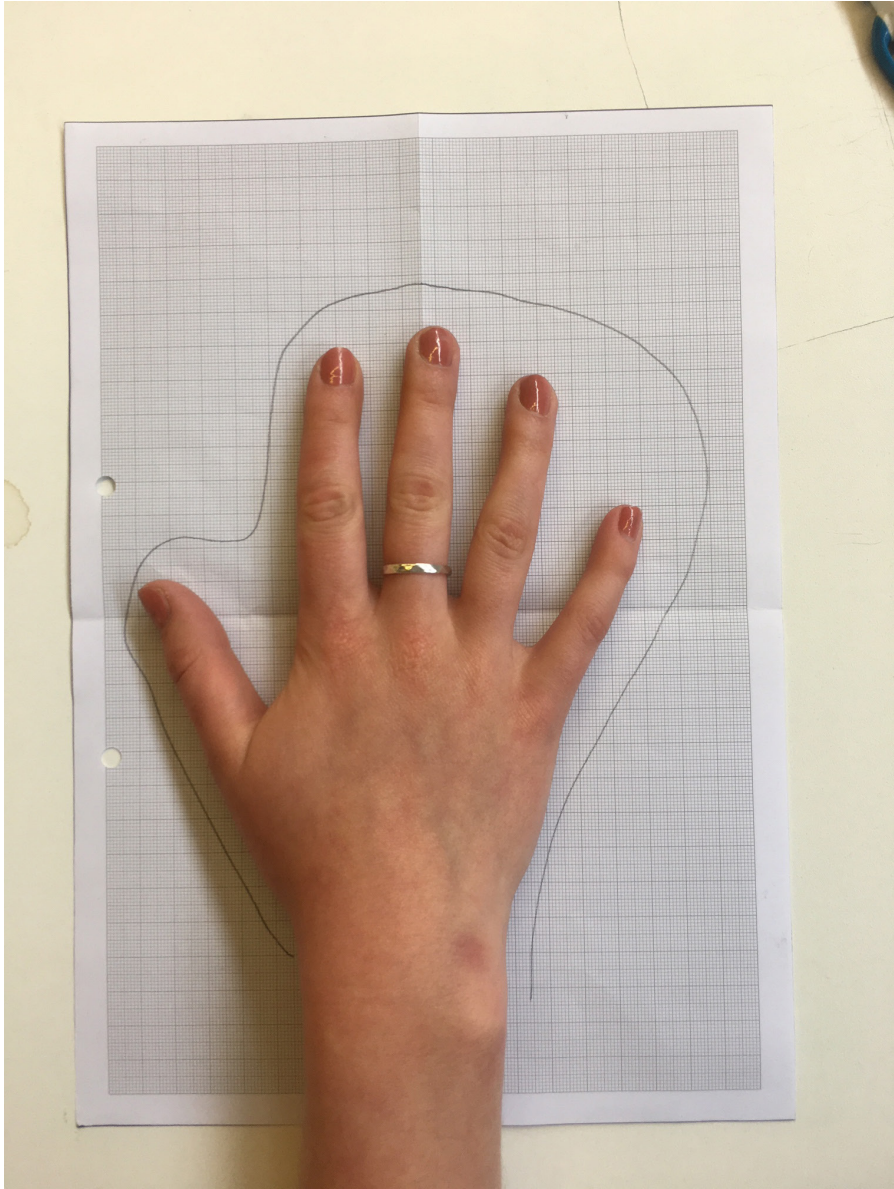
Part Three

Money Box

Hand Aid:
Connected: 5/5
Empathetic: 3/5
Intuitive: 4/5
Humanised: 5/5

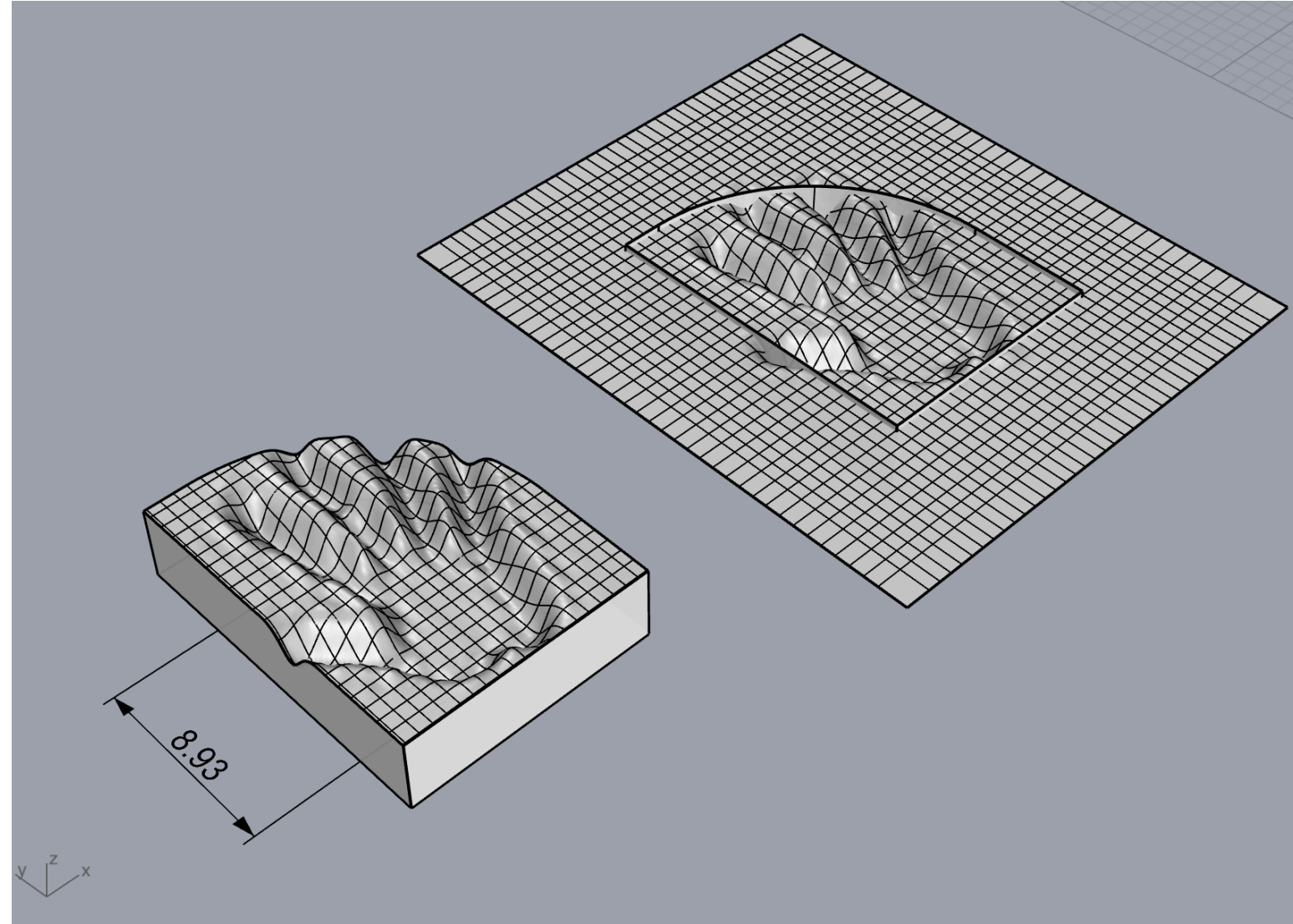
Hand Aid





◀ The sense of touch is one of the most powerful feelings, it is the first sense that we acquire. Touch causes the release of oxytocin, which in turn helps nurture feelings of trust and connection. It helps reduce cortisol (stress hormone), twenty seconds of affectionate touching (holding hands), is enough to trigger the release of oxytocin.

Hand Aid



◀ The concept of this idea is to turn your child's, friend's, grandparent's or loved one's handprint into a 3D object. The simple act of painting a hand and then pressing it into a piece of paper, is something that children have been doing for years in nurseries around the world. This system, is designed so that you can preserve the memory of someone you love through 3D printing.

Part Three

Hand Aid



Part Three



Hand Aid

< Paint your hand - print your hand - send away for transformation - receive a 3D Print.



Part Three

Hand Aid

•
amelia
rae perry

ameliaeperry.co.uk