

'Position' project
MA Craft, University of Brighton

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Printed in the United Kingdom

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Introduction

Having been given the 'Position' project, the refugee crisis was the first thing I thought of in my mind. Starting from the well-known heartbreaking photos of dead children's bodies which are washing up onto beaches from the sea, at the beginning of this project I wanted to arouse people's awareness with iconic visuals such as the national boundaries of the top three countries which have the highest number of refugees. Besides, there were more symbolic items such as barbed wire, life buoys and so on.

In the meantime, a remarkable event in Denmark which happened in February 2016 made me narrow this project down to a specific subject 'Confiscation'. There is a law known as 'smykkeloven' in Denmark which can be translated into English as 'the jewelry law', the official name is 'law no. 102 of 3 February 2016'. The main feature is that refugees are not allowed to bring items or money which have more than £1,000 in value and the belongings will be seized by the police. They say this is to pay for their upkeep, however it is clearly against their human rights.

To highlight this issue, I decided to make a container which can symbolise the jewelry law, which can hold the items that are related to refugees.



One day trip

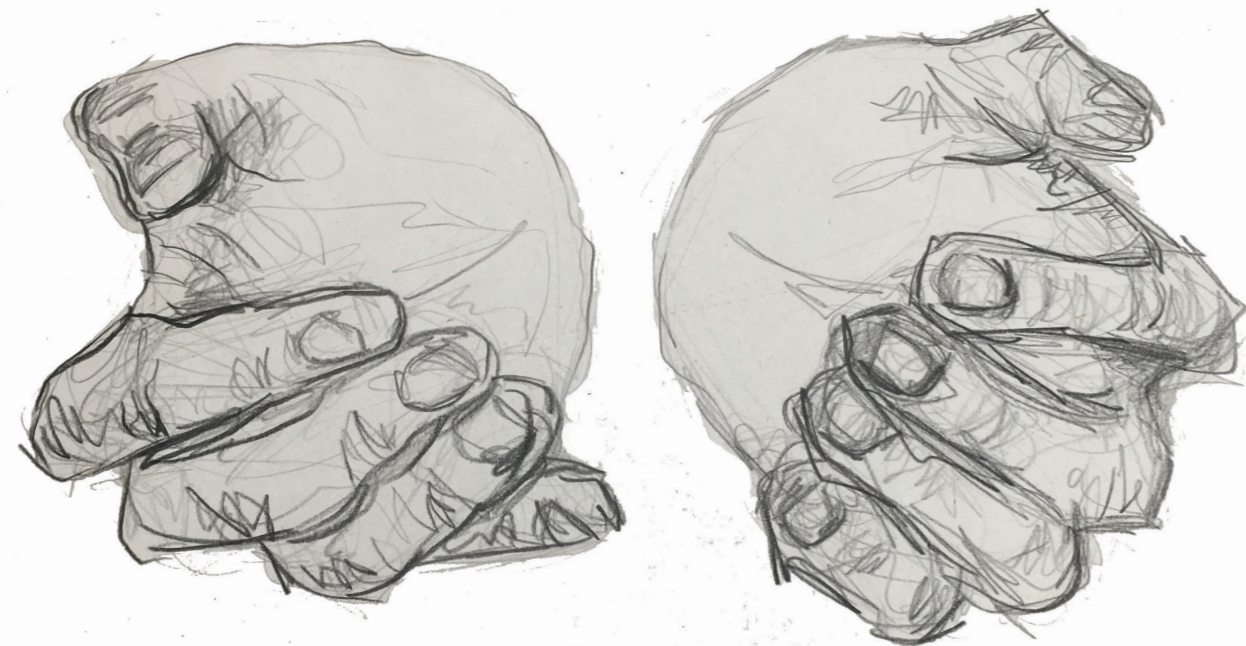
Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site

The vindictive law against refugees led me to associate the issue with the Holocaust committed by the Nazis. I had a trip to Dachau concentration camp in Germany to get myself surrounded by an actual site of discrimination and confiscation.

Triangles were the primary symbols attached to prisoners in Nazi camps in order to identify them. In Nazi controlled countries in the concentration camps, the colours and shapes indicated the reason for their internment. Especially a hexagram, which has a six-pointed geometric star shape, signified they were Jewish. I wanted to show that there is mass persecution currently against refugees and wanted to highlight this issue also using symbols to illustrate the seriousness of the situation. Through this logic, I thought I could create another discriminative symbol with my work, using an octagram, an eight-pointed star figure, as a symbol of refugees.

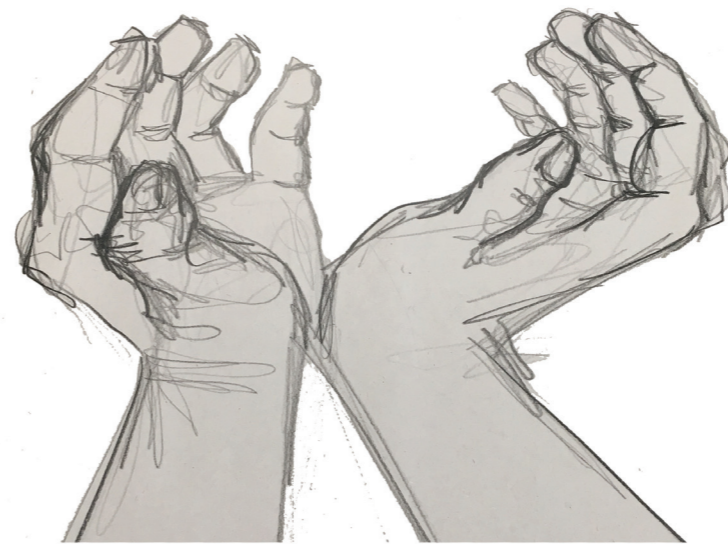
The impression of colour I got for the topic is black and white, as the meaning of the colour black is associated with fear, grief, death, strength and authority while the colour white is an inherently positive colour, representing innocence, safety, understanding, possibility, protection and successful new start. In addition, another colour I found intriguing was blue, as it indicates an emigrant on the system of identification in a Nazi camp. It can be representative of the sea refugees come across as well.

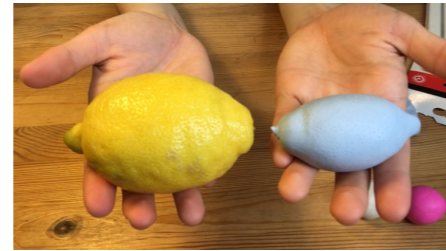
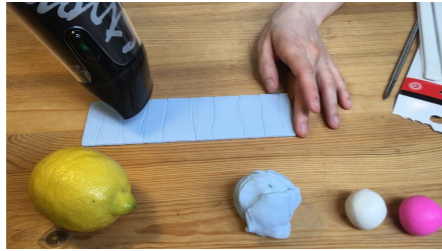
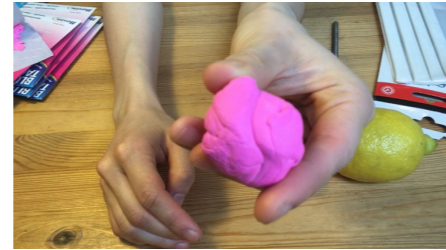




Position

There were a number of different candidates for the position such as seaside, law court and boat. Some place that refugees and the law might have been through. However, after the trip to the concentration camp, the sense of the issue came across quite personal, humanised and naked so I decided to create new images rather than use public places. Therefore, I wanted to place the final work on the drawn hands to flourish our sensitivity by making us visualise it.





One day project Performative research method

While doing research about items refugees take when they leave their countries, what caught my eye was a lemon. So I decided to sculpt a lemon using blu-tack which can be re-formulated in numerous different items how I intend.

However, the visual impact of the work was not strong enough to deliver the notion of the project. Therefore, I decided to use actual items to locate inside of the final work.



‘Confiscation’

Things change, especially when you try to start your life again in a different circumstance, things can be not very stable. However, the essence of the characteristics does not fade away.

It is very ironic that those are what we can find from refugees’ journeys when we are talking about confiscation. This is the reality. Refugees take lemons when they cross the border over the sea, to prevent the sea sickness and supply vitamins to survive. They struggle to arrive at their destination safely on a dilapidated wooden boat. Longing for the day they arrive to a new land, they seal their documents in a plastic bag with sellotape.



