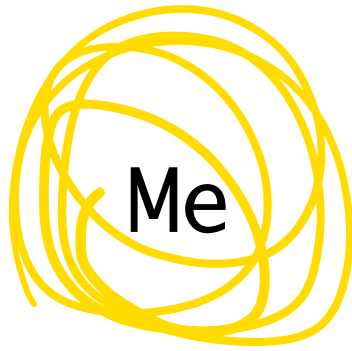




Making the Message; how
objects can be used to
tell campaign narratives

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I love making things. Things can be a powerful way of telling stories and explaining ideas.

My experience in the world of regulation and lobbying drew me to make objects for two campaigns as part of my 3D Design and Craft BA:

1. To lift restrictions on growing Hemp; and
2. To legalise Assisted Dying



Campaign 1: Hemp



The background



The government tightly restricts the growing of hemp because it belongs to the same family as marijuana: *Cannabis Sativa*.

Hemp does not have the same levels of psycho-active ingredients as marijuana. It's an amazing crop; an ecological gem and really useful to make things with (like biodegradable plastics and zero carbon houses).

In this age of Climate Crisis, we should allow it to be grown again.

The arguments

YES

Industrial hemp is an amazingly versatile and quick growing crop which suits UK climate.

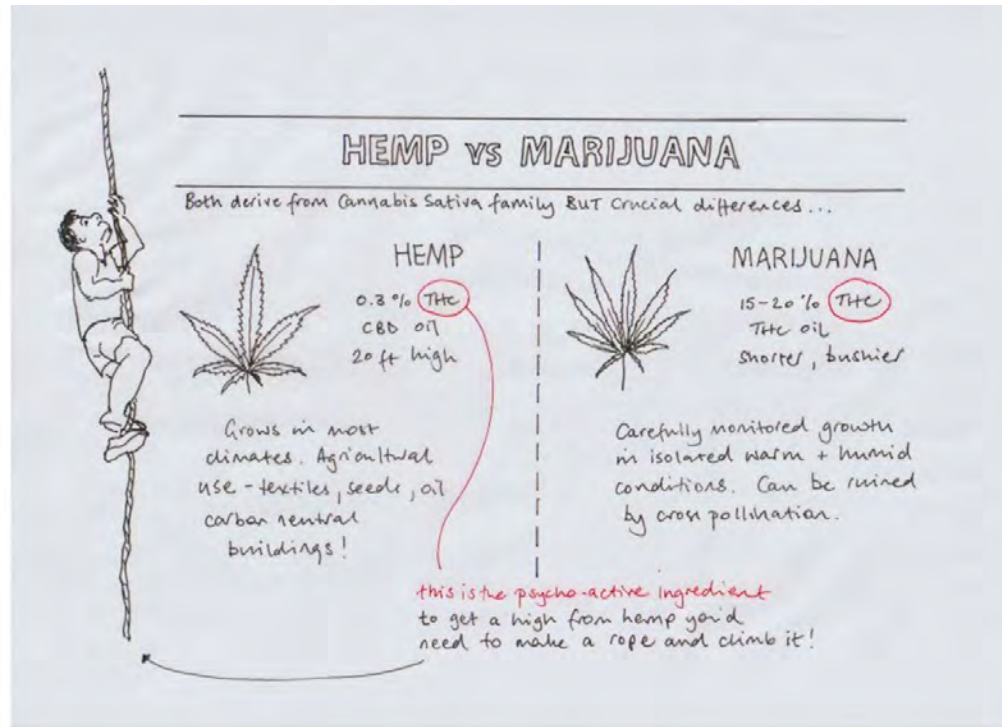
- Can be used for bio-plastics
- Major soil improver
- Sequesters more carbon than trees
- Makes rope, paper, material, insulation
- Can be used for medical purposes
- Used as a healthy foodstuff
- Hempcrete used for sustainable building
- Used for compost, animal bedding and feed

NO

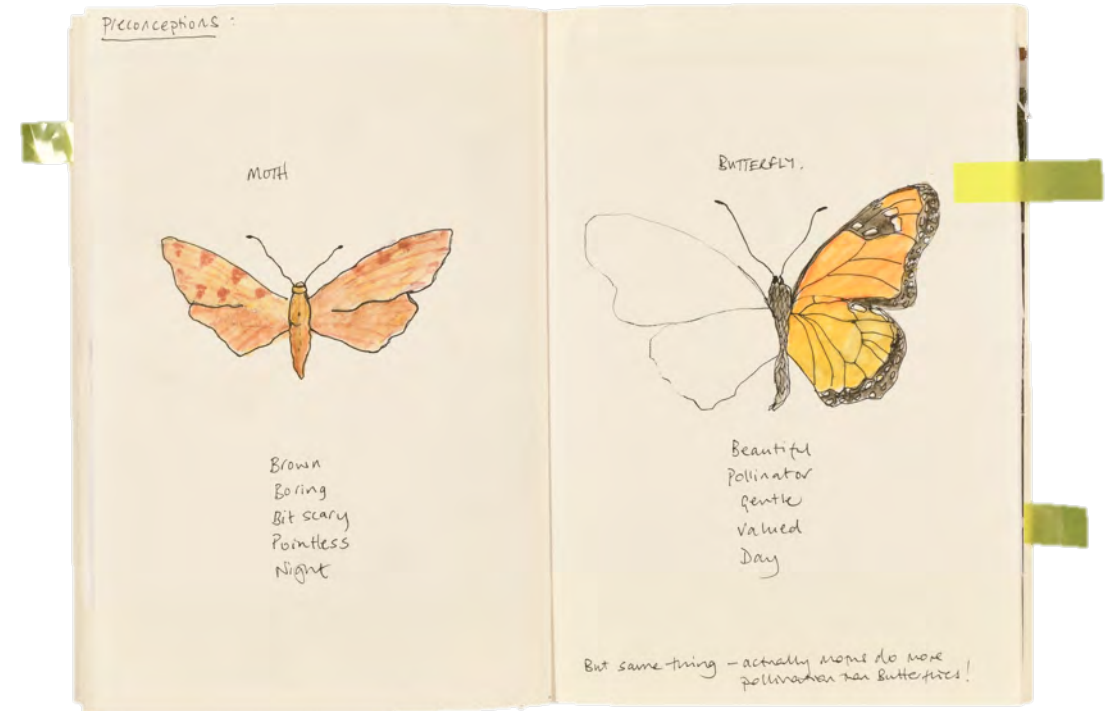
Currently regulated by the Home Office and you need a license from the Firearms Dept to grow it.

- Part of the cannabis family and looks like cannabis when growing. Fears this could cause issues.

The problem is the leaves look the same

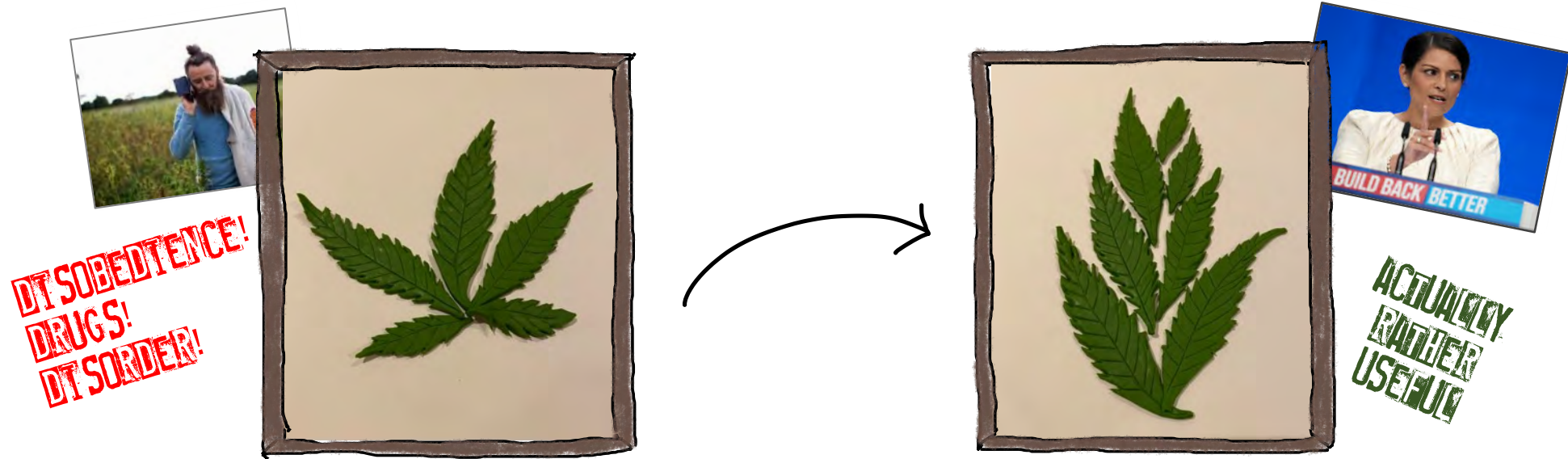


They look the same,
but they're different



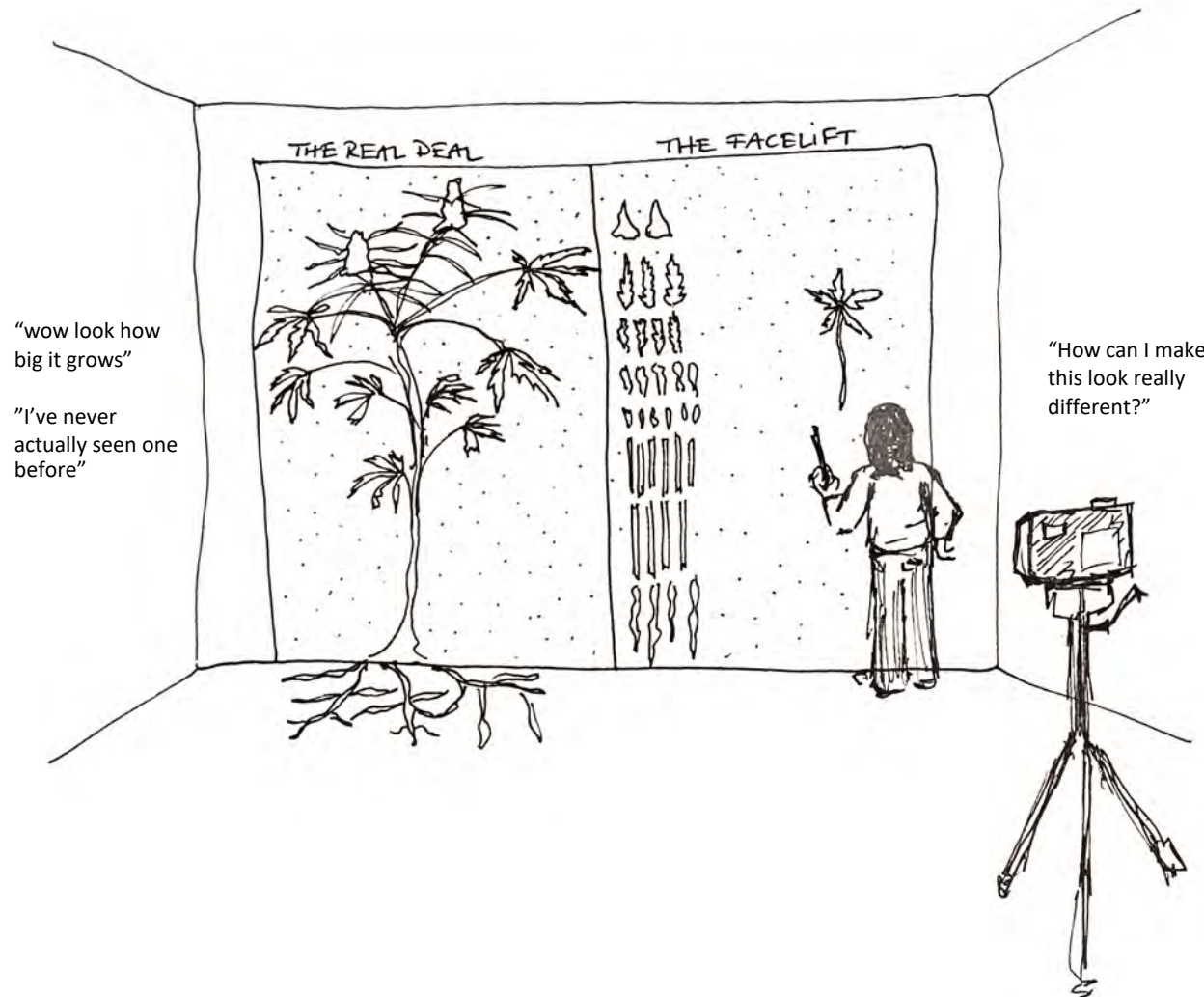
Like the moth and the butterfly... the butterfly gets all
the attention, but the moth does most of the work!

And there's prejudice against that iconic leaf shape



I wanted to challenge this perception by playing with its form and structure, and remove hemp from the 'Cannabis Culture' stereotype.

IDEA 1: Imagine a genetically re-engineered plant



Could we re-design the plant and make it look 'safe' and 'good'?

I created a life-sized hemp plant from felt and displayed it on a Velcro wall (think Fuzzy Felt gone wild!).

I gave viewers 1 minute to create their new hemp plants and filmed the process.

Hemp 2.0

Hemp with
all its cultural
cues

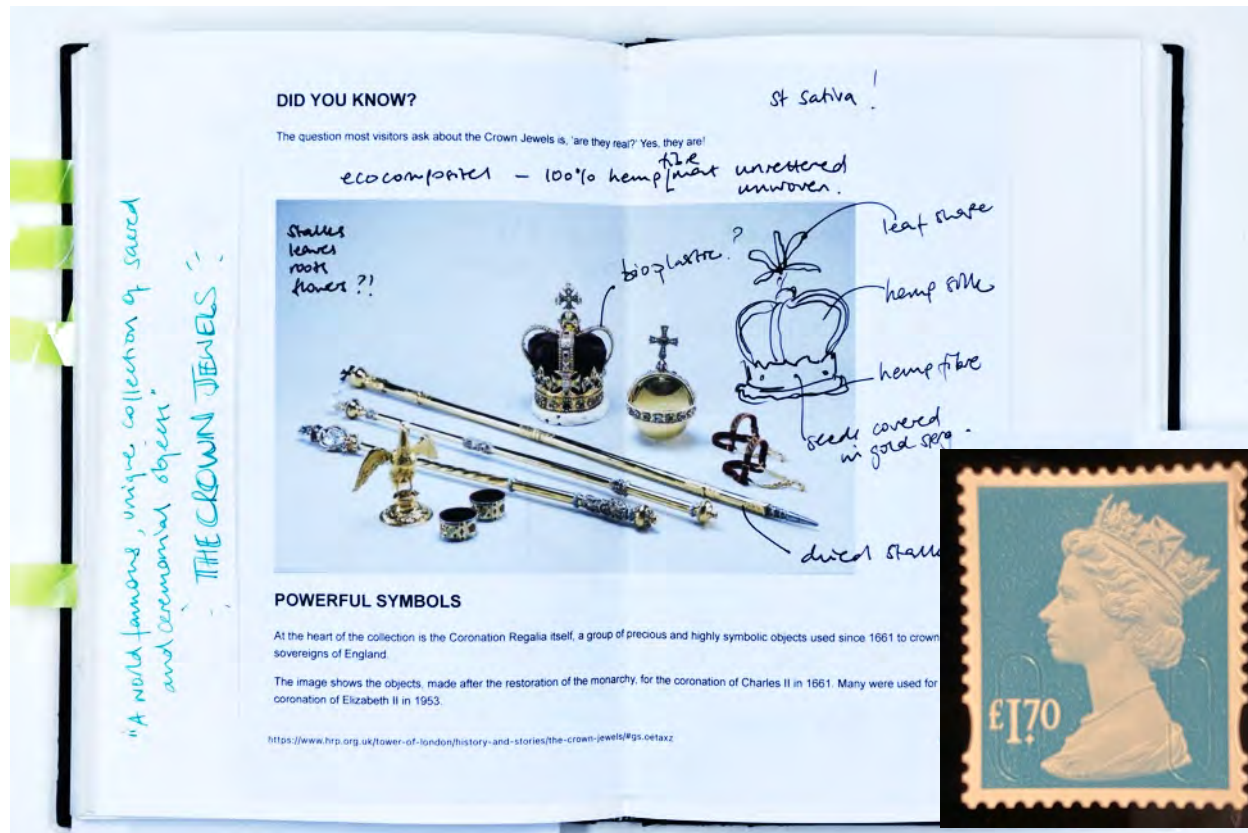


Felt on velcro wall



Hemp made
safe – same
leaves, different
layout!

IDEA 2: Re-evaluating Value



The precious metals and stones which once defined wealth no longer make sense in this time of Climate Crisis.

Hemp sequesters more carbon than trees and rejuvenates our soils. It makes carbon neutral housing and bio-plastics.

This is Value.

I decided to make the crown jewels using just hemp and to truly test its versatility as a material.

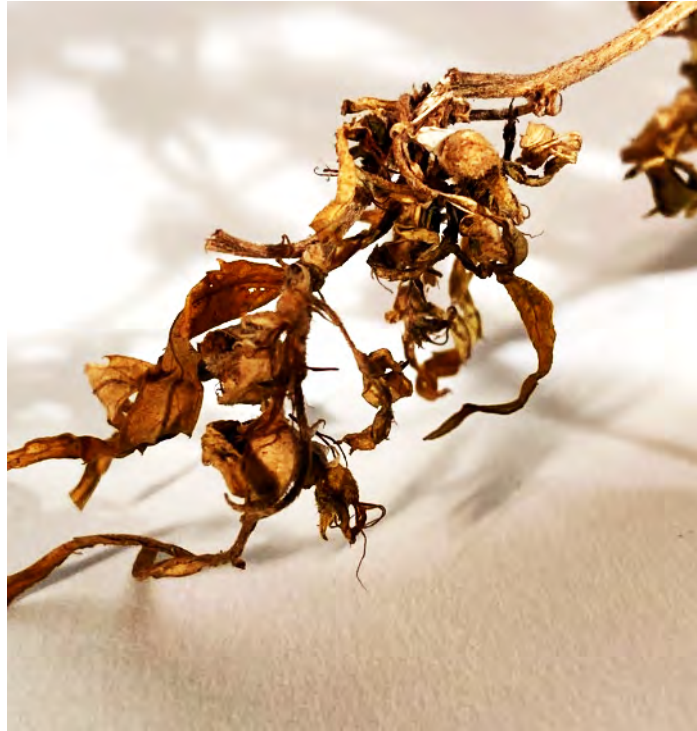
The Ingredients



Seeds, leaves and roots



Crushed seeds - magnified



Dried leaves



Rhizomes

Sheet material from hemp fibre



Dyed and heat pressed



Laser cut and layered

Modelling the Crown



100% Hemp



Served on a hemp cushion



Climate Queen

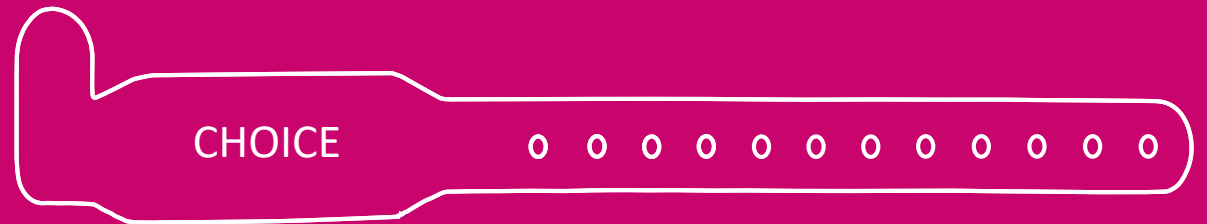
Contextualisation: Recognise hemp's value and put the Crown on the fourth plinth

It would probably be the last object to be displayed in Trafalgar Square as the Fourth Plinth is reserved for a statue of the Queen on horseback*. It would be a gentle reminder of what we really need to be focusing on in 2022: climate change.

*(no offence Your Majesty: you've done a great job)



Campaign 2: Legalise Assisted Dying



The background

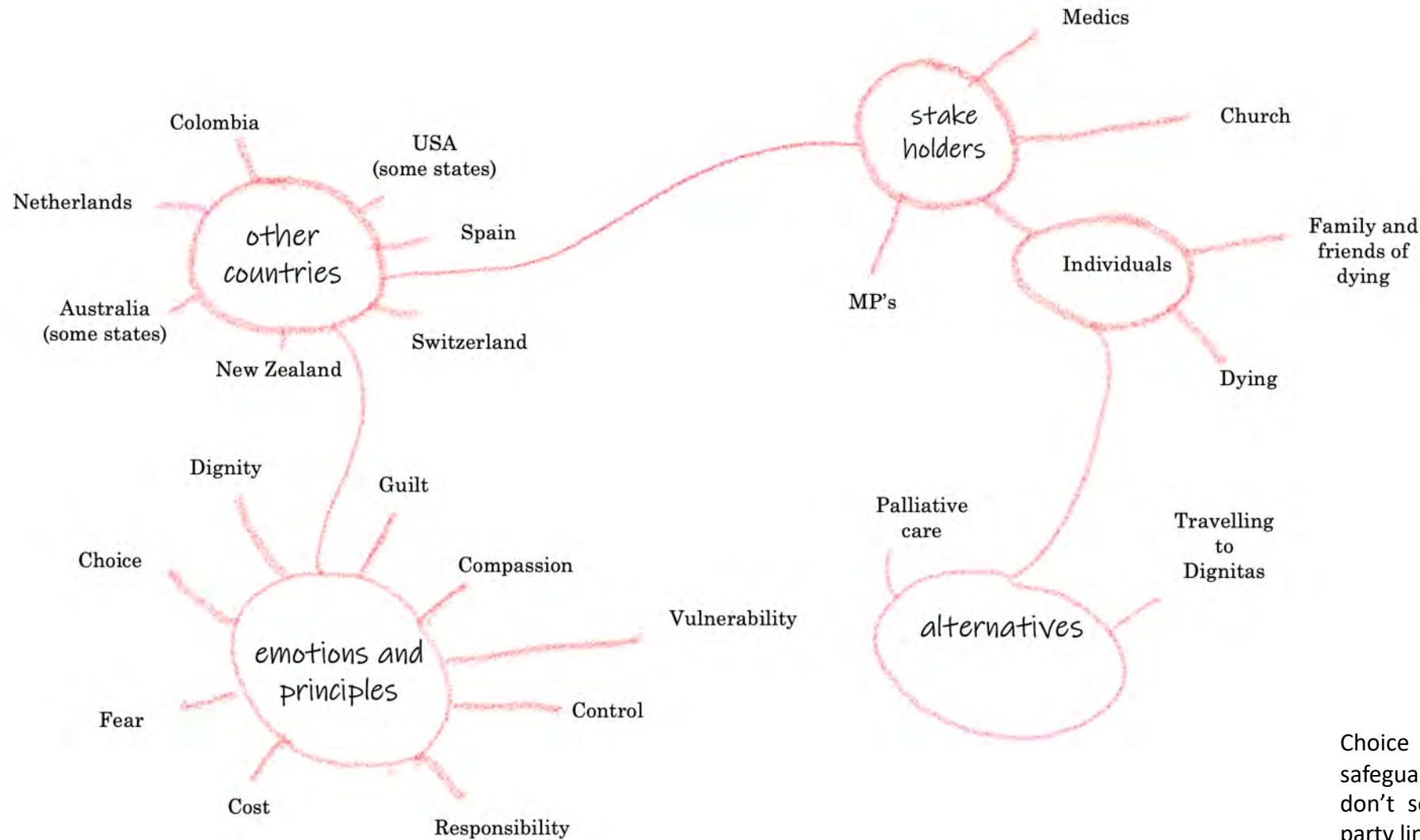


This campaign is all about reconsidering what should happen at end of life. Should Assisted Dying (where terminally ill people are allowed to take life ending medication to avoid suffering) be legalised?

Currently illegal in the UK there is strong public pressure to change this, yet Parliament has not reflected this despite many discussions.

How can we give voice to the issues and express thoughts on a subject difficult to discuss?

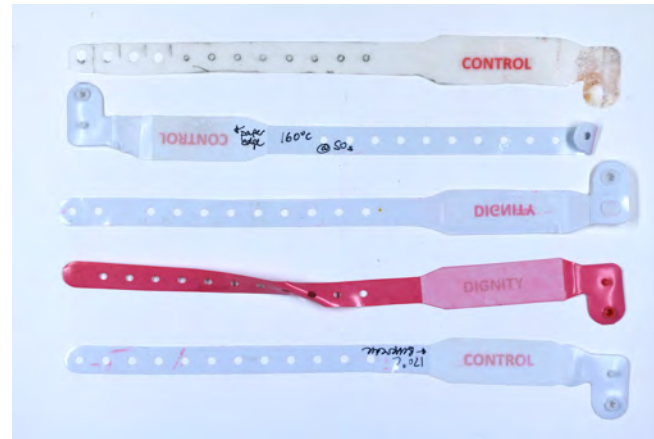
Mapping the area



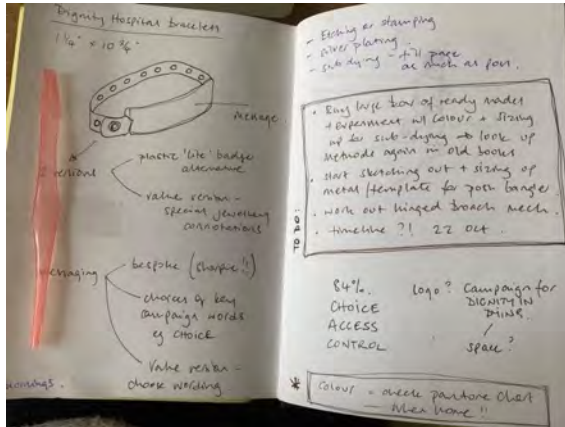
Choice and personal freedoms **vs** safeguarding and sanctity of life. The issues don't seem to segment along traditional party lines, or even religious ones.

Idea 1: Hospital wristbands

Re-appropriating this anonymous labelling system as a vehicle for the patient's voice



The band as jewellery



"Grant me choice and dignity". Engraved copper core with silver plating.

Idea 2: Embroidering a hospital blanket



Giving a voice to the campaign using a hospital blanket as a canvas, and thread to tell the story.



Making as therapy. A way of encouraging conversation and documenting insights.

Inspired by Craftivism

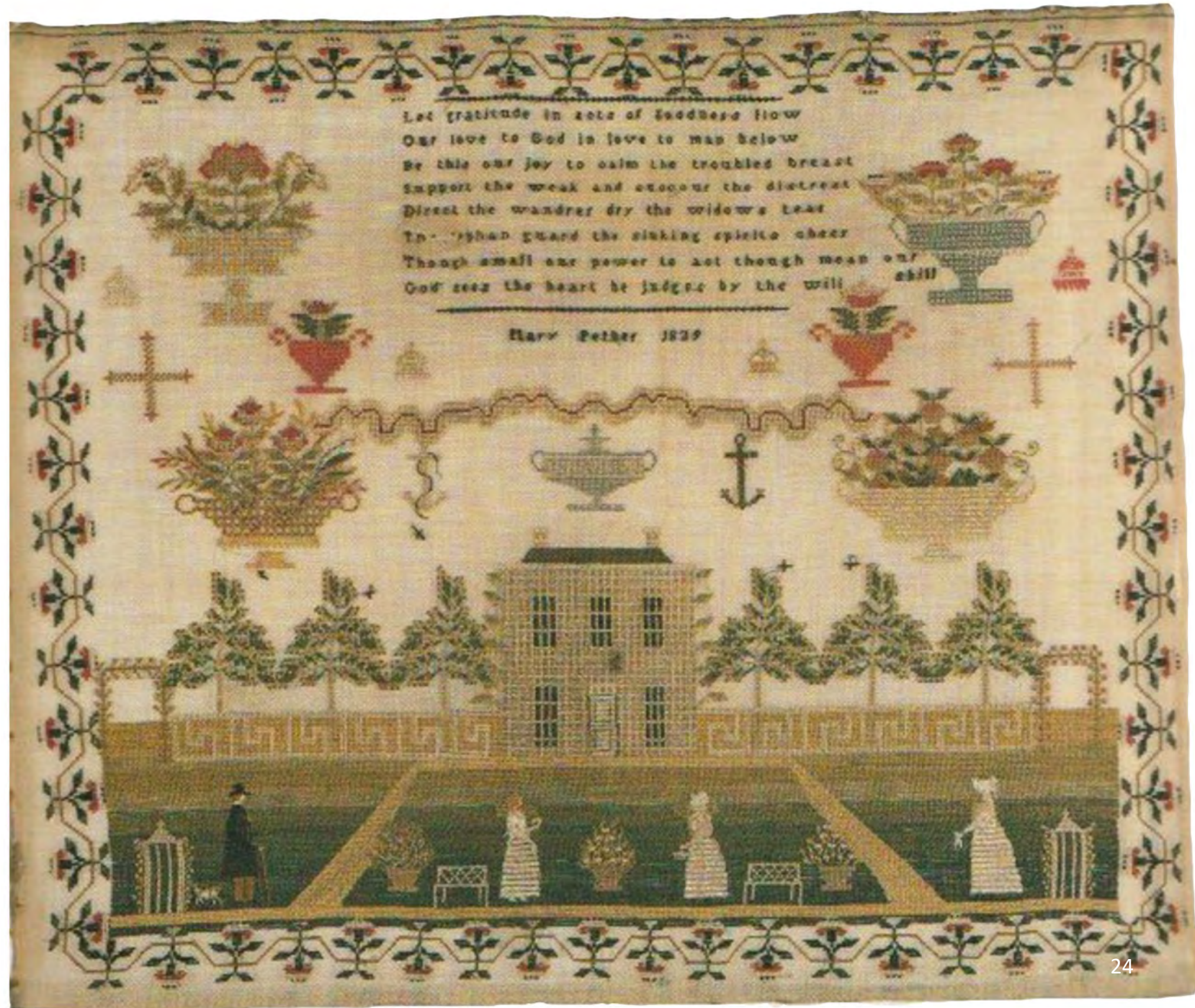
How craft can be used to communicate in a direct and non-intimidating manner.



Yarn bombing

And by Samplers...

How Victorian samplers would use text, pattern and objects to tell a story.



Group sewing



Talking and sewing. Sharing experience on end-of-life clinics, nursing terminally ill patients, and about coping with not having the option of Assisted Dying at the end.

Centre-piece poem

Assisted dying

A trip to Switzerland in search of a good death: 'All this instead of just doing it in Brighton'

My aunt Ann didn't want a painful decline from Parkinson's, so I agreed to accompany her to a Swiss assisted dying clinic. Would she find peace in her final moments?

Charlotte Naughton

Sat 20 Nov 2021 07:00 GMT



Ann Bruce at her home in Ditchling, East Sussex, in June 2021. She died in Switzerland on 26 June. Photograph: Lydia Goldblatt/The Guardian

Ann is sitting in a windowless and sparsely furnished white room with high ceilings and a red concrete floor. There is a bed in the corner, next to shelves full of medical equipment. She seems small against the large black sofa, her hands clasped together to minimise the involuntary swaying caused by her **Parkinson's disease**. She is in pain, she is tired and, for the first time that day, she is getting a little anxious. She is waiting for someone to arrive with the drug that will kill her. Her fear is not of dying; she passed that point a long time ago. She is worried about the pharmacy's supplies, suddenly scared that

She had come to see death not as a departure, but as an arrival, a concept embodied in a poem called **The River Cannot Go Back** by Kahlil Gibran, about a river that ends in the vastness of the sea. "It acknowledges the fear but also the release," she said. I told her that she gave the impression she was looking back having reached her end point, like the river in the poem, rather than feeling her journey had been cut short.

It is said that before entering the sea
a river trembles with fear.

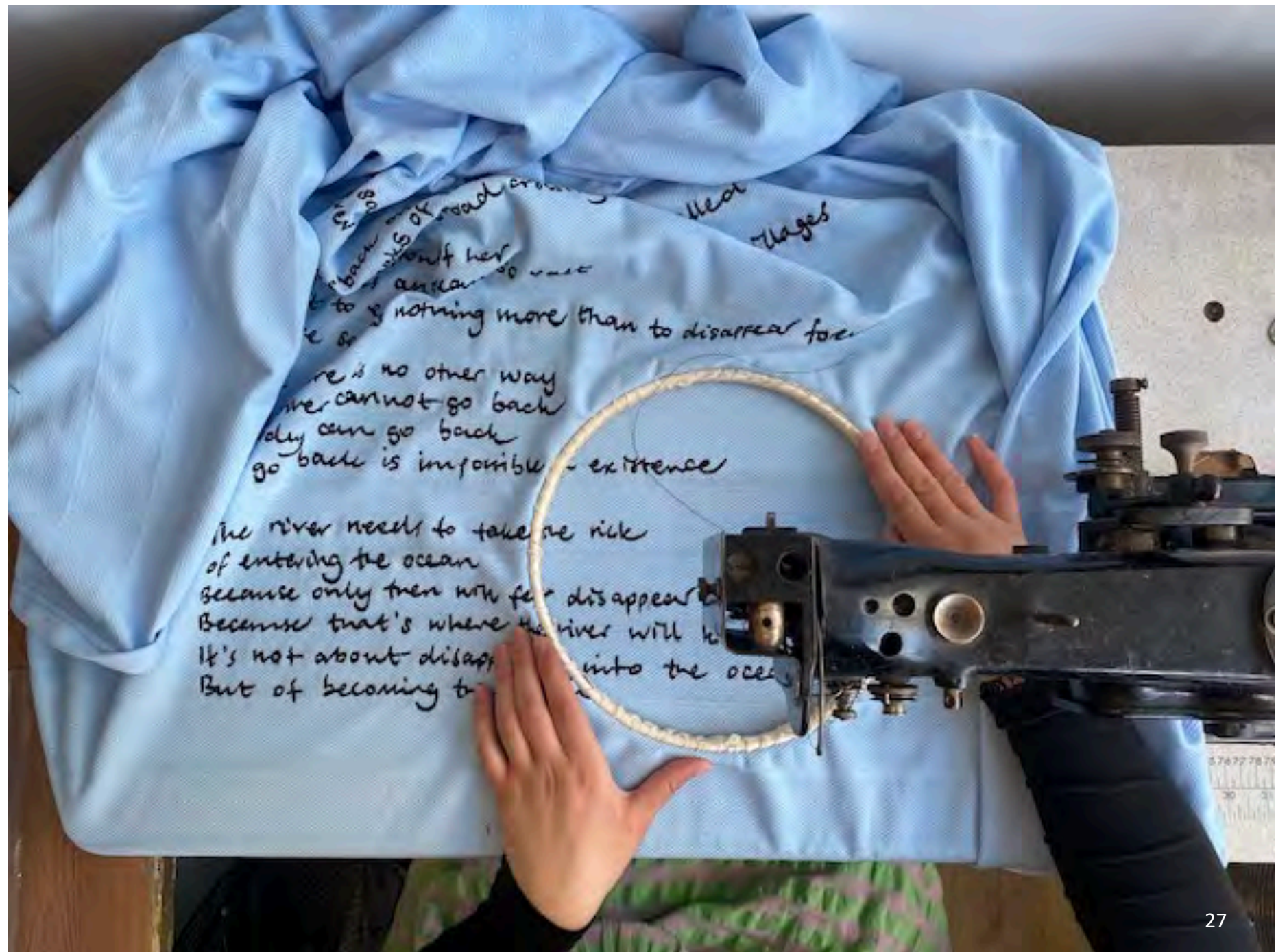
She looks back at the path she has traveled.
from the peaks of the mountains,
the long winding road crossing forests and villages.

And in front of her,
she sees an ocean so vast,
that to enter
there seems nothing more than to disappear forever.

But there is no other way.
The river can not go back.
Nobody can go back.
To go back is impossible in existence.

The river needs to take the risk
of entering the ocean
because only then will fear disappear,
because that's where the river will know
it's not about disappearing into the ocean,
but of becoming the ocean.

Transcribing text

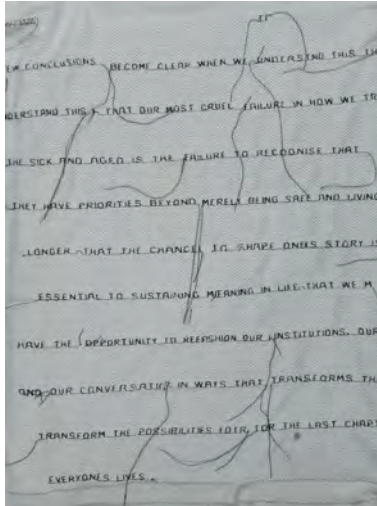


Group work

Hospital
wristbands again:
this time in felt



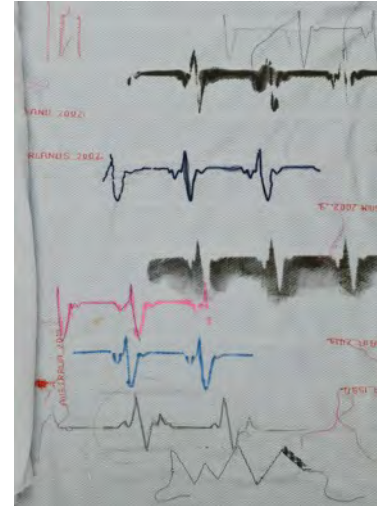
Samplers and real stories



Atul Gwande quotes



Hand-cuffs and shrouds



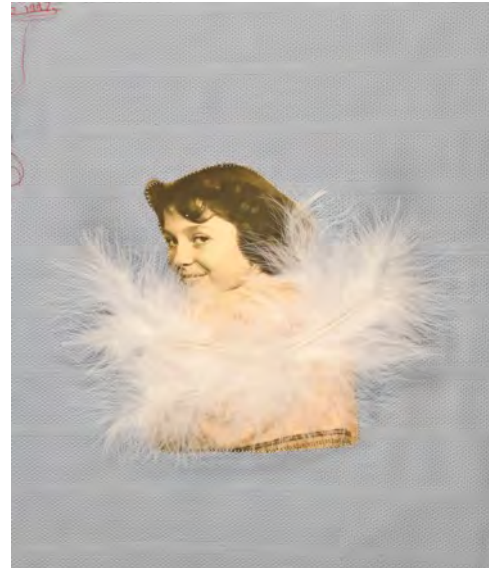
Heart beats



Cost of AD and 'snowing' euphemism



Nan



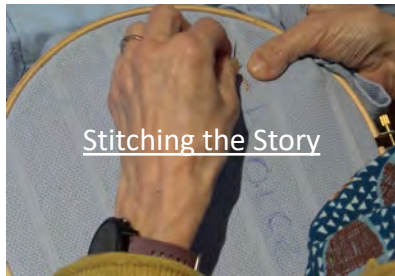
Mum



Pegasus

Unfinished business...

The blanket is an ongoing project and needs the time and care to reflect the sensitivities of all involved. I made a film of the story:

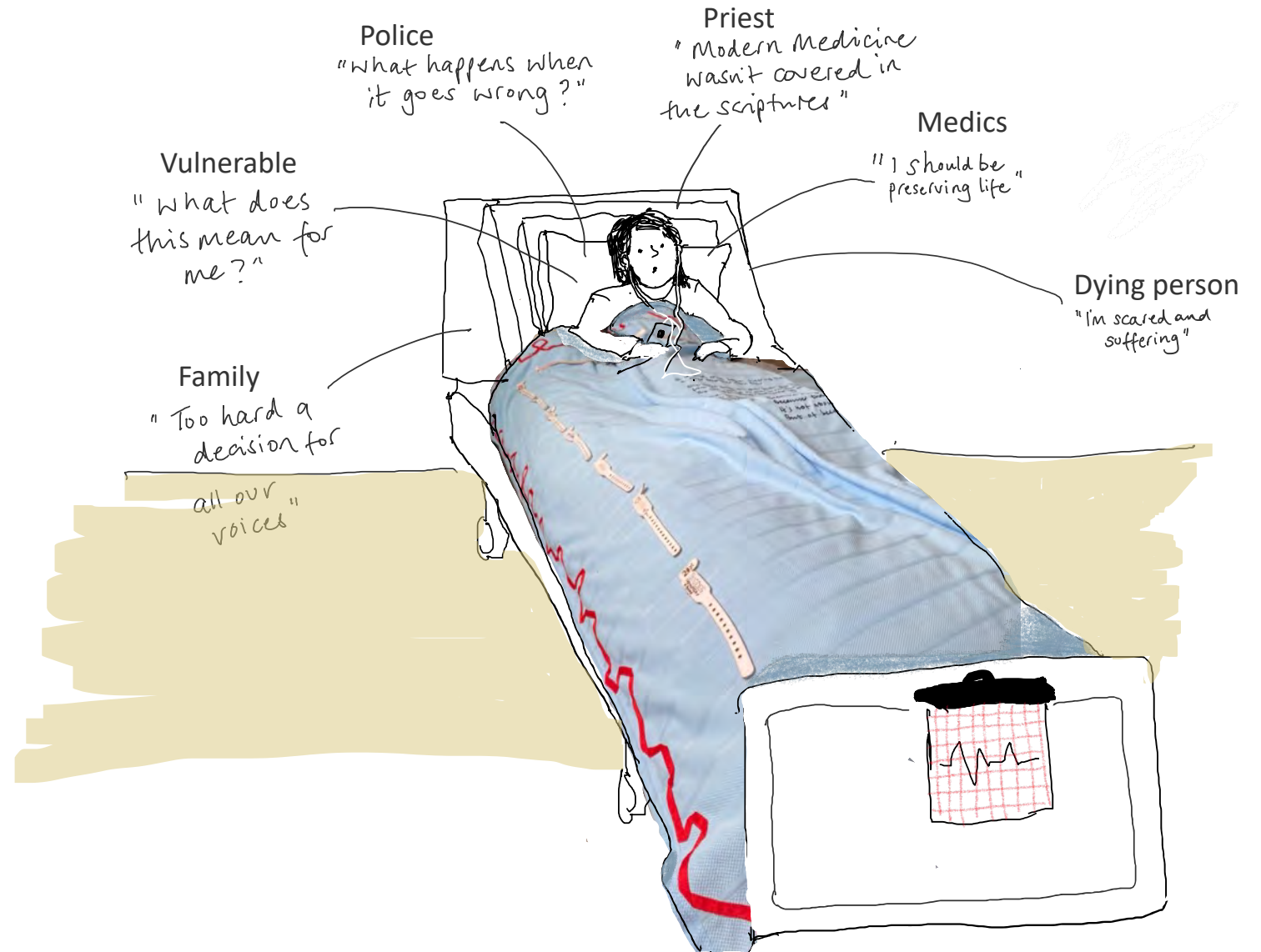


Blanket detail: The Red Tape which surrounds Assisted Dying, and some wise words on the issue

Contextualisation: The End Game

I would like to see the finished blanket used as a thought-provoking tool. Perhaps part of an exhibition which explores the issues around end-of-life care.

I imagine the blanket laid on a hospital bed in a quiet room. People could sit under it and listen to audio from across the wide spectrum of people who have a view or stake in the issues.



Bibliography and thanks

Craftivists as my inspiration for ‘gentle’ campaigning. People like Sarah Corbett and Isaac Cordal and Spidertag.

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- Living and Dying, Permanent collection, Wellcome Gallery British Museum, London
- Death, the Human Experience, 24 October 2015 – 13 March 2016, Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, Bristol
- Being Human, Permanent collection, Wellcome Collection, London

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- Tender Crafts: Panel Discussion. Jerwood Arts, 9 October 2021, London

Image Credits

- Browne, Clare and Wearden, Jennifer. Samplers From the Victoria and Albert Museum. V&A publications, 1999. Plate 84
- Magda Syeg, Bali 2010. Photo: Mike Piscitelli
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