

Exploring the expression of everyday aesthetic preferences in dementia through design

WALKER, Marney

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# Do you know what you like?

Exploring the expression of everyday aesthetic preferences in dementia through design

Marney Walker

February 2025

This portfolio presents a visual record of doctoral research:

#### Exploring the expression of everyday aesthetics in dementia through design

It documents a reflexive process of visual research and sources that have informed the rationale for developing a framework of engagement entitled **Shared Looking**. It presents data generated from testing this framework with people with and without dementia, how it was interpreted and shared with the participants, and with wider audiences, through exhibitions and workshops.

The recruitment flier (right) explains what was involved in taking part. It is informed by guidance on creating accessible information for people living with dementia.

#### I know what I like

#### Dementia might affect the way our minds work, but we will always know what we like

- Most of us like to choose the colour and style of our clothes and how our homes are decorated
- Having the things that we like around us, reflects our identity.
- It can bring us pleasure.

#### How much does the way things look matter to you?

- Do you have favourite mugs or cups?
- Do you have favourite colours?
- Do you have a favourite place in your home?

**About my research**: I am exploring the use of visual ways to express our everyday likes and dislikes, rather than just describing things using words

What will it involve? I would you to show me your likes and dislikes for things like:

- Everyday objects like mugs or cups that you have in your home
- Your colour choices
- · Your favourite places in your home

#### Where will the research take place?

I will contact you using video zoom calls so that you can speak to me from your own home. Each meeting will be at time that suits you. It will take about 30-45 minutes.

As an interdisciplinary research through design study this project has taken a reflexive approach. It draws on learning from design practice, the lived experience of people with dementia, research and practice in dementia care and design for dementia. As a revolving process of inquiry, exemplified by the diagram on the right, these are represented by the coloured threads below that run through the portfolio.

Design practice - refers to visual research, sources of inspiration, empathic design approaches to visualising the issues

Lived experience - refers to personal accounts and responses to testing and development of probes and stimuli

Research & practice - refers to evidence based design for dementia research and practice

Reflexive practice - refers to how my subjectivity through professional and personal experience informed design development

#### Discover

Review research & practice on visuo-sensory, sensibilities in dementia

### Define

the importance of expression of everyday aesthetic preferences to personalise the environment and support a sense of self

### **Explore**

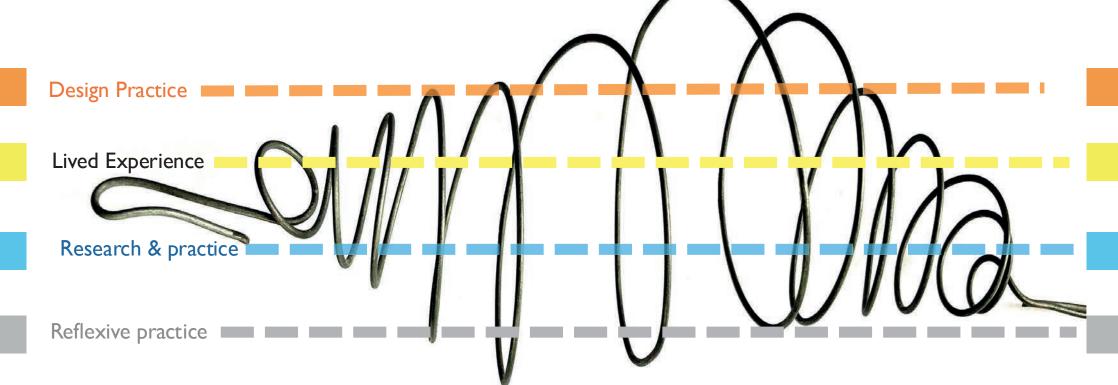
everyday aesthetic experience and expression through design

### Develop

practice-led design methodologies to support expression of everyday aesthetic preferences in the home

### Deliver & Test

a framework for engagement to support expression of everyday aesthetic preferences with people with and without dementia



### Environmental design for dementia: Visual access

Visual Access principles in environmental design for dementia using sightlines, visual contrast, and lighting can support orientation and independence in everyday activities



### **Sightlines**

Incorporating sightlines into layouts within the home can support intuitive orientation.

Processing signals from the bladder that mean you need to use the toilet can be difficult in dementia. If you can't find the toilet, it might be assumed you are incontinent.

A sightline from the head end of the bed to the toilet will provide a visual cue to use the toilet.

Dementia friendly two bedroom apartment (Grey et al, 2015, p. 14)

#### **Visual Contrast**

Enhancing colour and tone can support orientation and legibility of the environment. A minimum contrast of 30 points Light Reflectance Value (LRV) between key features is recommended.



Colour coded interiors to help orientation (Feddersen & Lüdtke, 2014, p. 197)



Designing Homes for Healthy Cognitive Ageing -interactive tool https://www.deshca.co.uk/explore-deshcas-designs/(accessed 19-02-25) (clip)

Colour concept for Competence Centre for people with Dementia, Nuremberg, Germany (Tebbe, 2006 in Feddersen& Lüdtke, 2014, p.30)

# Lighting

Attention to lighting, can support both orientation and continued engagement in everyday activities. Task lighting can reduced risks in the kitchen, and bathroom and make it easier to find things in cupboards and drawers.



Lighting in drawers (Bowes et al, 2014, p.17)



Lighting in cupboards (Mcnair et al, 2019, p.12)

### Keeping things in view

The combination of sightlines to support orientation, and see through cupboards so that contents can be seen, can address disorientation and impaired object permanence.



Tebbe, F. (2012) in Feddersen & Lüdtke (2014, p.30)



Feddersen Architekten, 2004 in Feddersen & Lüdtke (2014, p. 197)



See through cupboards (https://symphony-group.co.uk/kitchens/)

# Environmental Design for Dementia: Personalising the environment





Cultural living style

Homely living style

(Feddersen & Lüdtke, 2014, p.181)

A model of how environments can represent cultural differences in lifestyles has been created at De Hogeweyk. The design criteria was informed by research that accounts for different typologies in housing (Ouwehand & Doff, 2011).

### Environmental Design for Dementia: Personalising the environment : Memory boxes



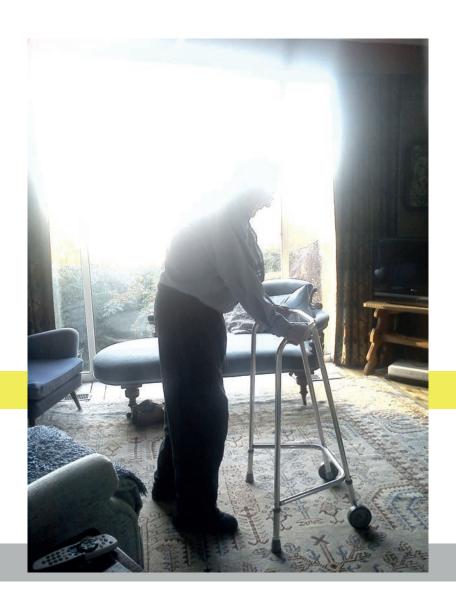
Hammerson House, UK

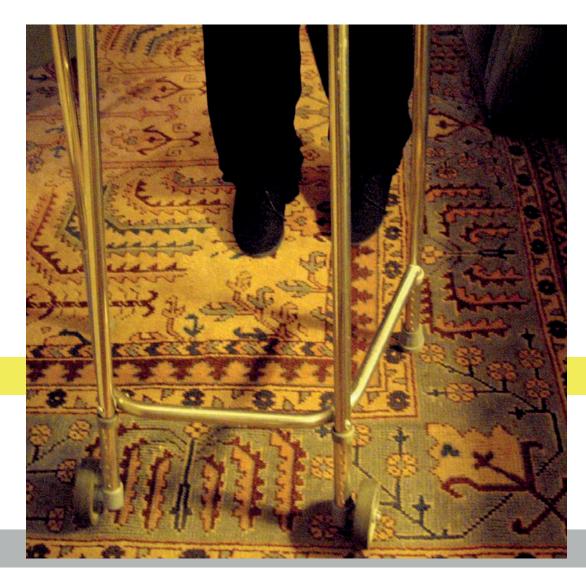
https://www.pandhs.co.uk/projects/hammerson-house-older-age-care



Dunsborough, Australia https://www.downsizing.com.au/news/1092/ from-memory-boxes-to-main-streets-seehow-aged-care-operators-are-innovating-tohelp-people-with-dementia

Cabinets containing images and personal possessions at the entrance to a residents room is common practice in dementia care facilities. These have been found to support orientation, a sense of identity and personalised care (Gulwadi, 2013, Feliciano & Jay, 2013).





### Visuo-sensory perception

Dementia can impact on visuo-sensory perception in a number of ways. It can affect depth perception, peripheral vision, object recognitions and object permanence.

Impaired depth perception can create the impression that strongly contrasting patterns are three dimensional or moving. This can mean that patterned carpets can create barriers to mobility

My father, who had dementia found it very difficult to navigate this carpet. He would progress cautiously attempting to place the legs of the zimmer frame between the patterns, as if they were obstacles.

Design to address these issues focuses on creating a coherent, clutter free environment, that uses lighting, visual contrast to highlight key areas and improve legibility of spaces and objects

The following pages present examples of empathic design approaches that explore how altered visual perception might manifest itself.



# Impaired Object Permanence

The perception that objects hidden from view (behind closed doors, for instance) do not exist

This might look like a beautiful minimal kitchen, but for some people with dementia its an empty room.

"I could probably tell you where something is, but then I get up when I go, and I don't go to the right cupboard. But that's happening quite often" SH2-2)



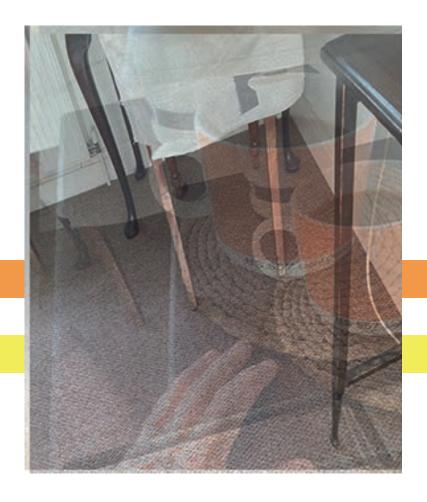
Elemento's work interprets and re-presents everyday interior fixtures and fittings,

"I develop the concept of "sculpture of use", ...where the history of the gaze is that of memory.....Beyond everyday life, it is our capacity for "inner" adaptation ...that interests me by questioning our way of approaching certain functions of objects"

(Elemento n.d. https://www.elemento.fr/curriculum.php accessed 29-02-24)

# Hand-eye co-ordination

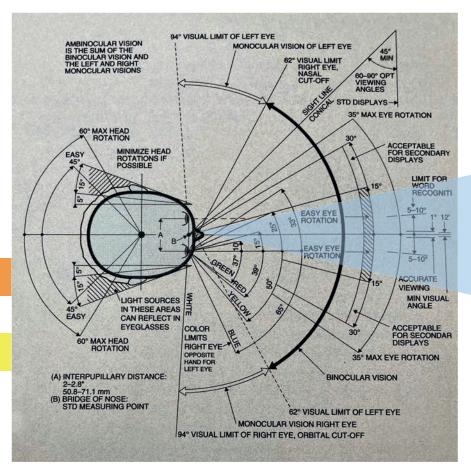
" I've put me hand out, say to grab a cup, and then I'm so I kind of grabbing it before I get to the cup. I've just been wrong." (SH2-2)

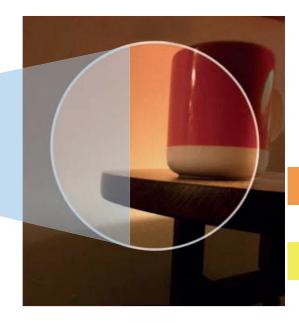




# Peripheral vision

loss of peripheral vision can be more common in dementia.





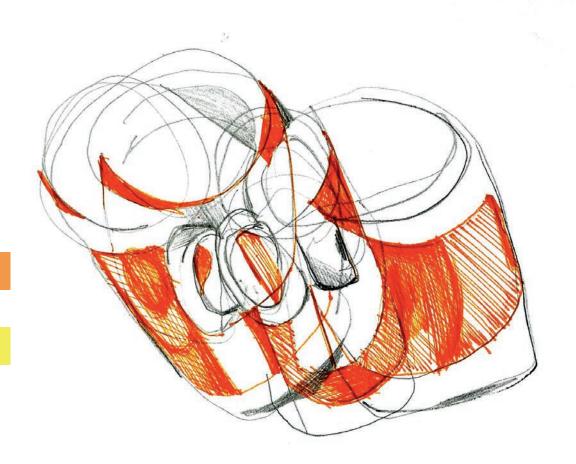
Visual limits within normal range from Tilley (2001) (detail)

How can designers who do not have issues with visual perception know what it might be like to have difficulties with object recognition?



Initial experiments using empathic design techniques as an attempt to visualise altered visual perception. How light and shadow might impact on object recognition.

# **Object recognition**



There are some aspects of altered visuo-sensory perception in demenita that overlap with nerodiverse experience,

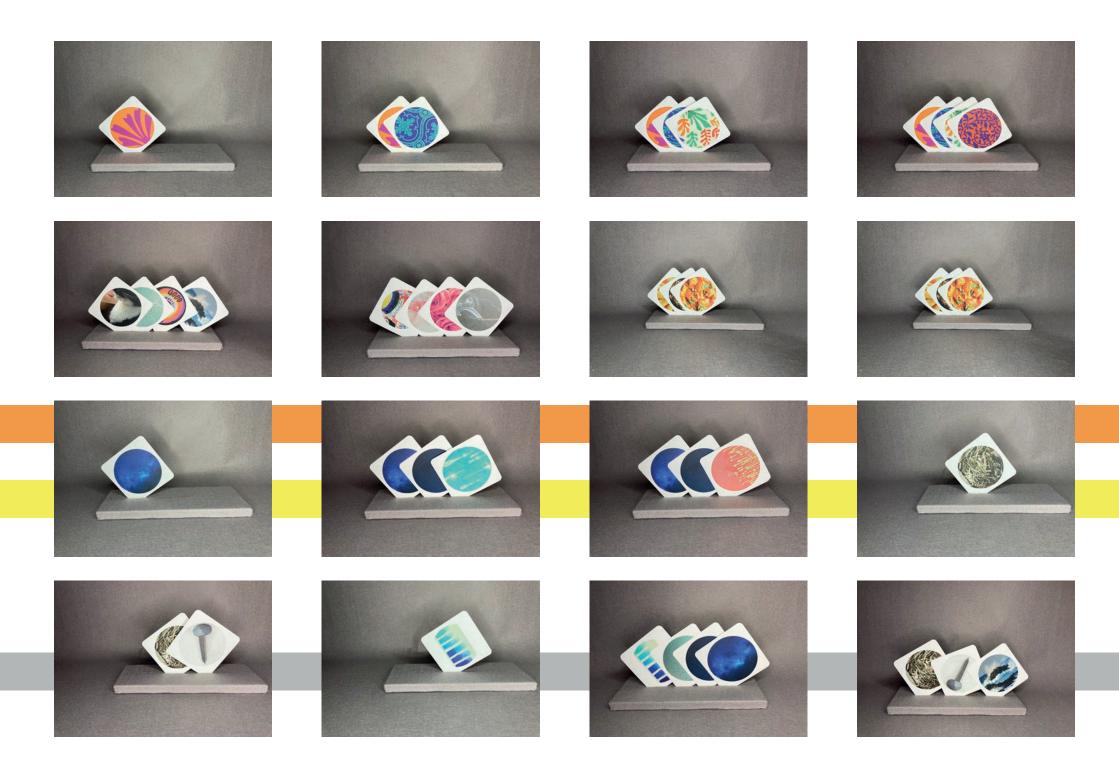
"When a colour is vivid or a shape is eye catching, then that's the detail that claims our attention, and then our hearts kind of drown in it, and we can't concentrate on anything else"

(Higishada in Manning, 2016)

**Sensory Identity Kit** Initial experiments explored how a spectrum of sensory preferences (taste, smell, sound, vision, texture) could be captured visually. A prototype sensory identity kit was created from images selected by Seainin Passi, Colour Artist and Designer (2020) as a result of lengthy discussions. www.seaninpassi.com and www.colourapothecary.com



The cards and the holder (right) provide an interactive visual reminder, a way to think about what you like today.



























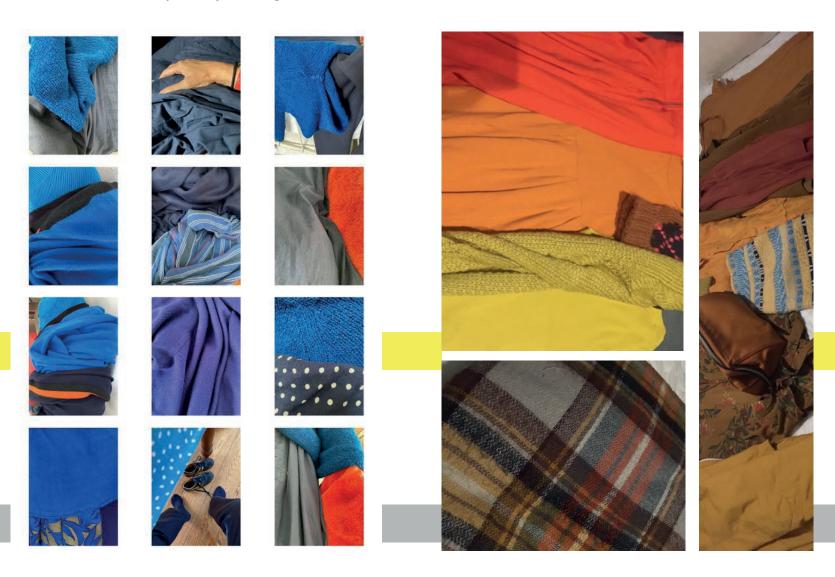






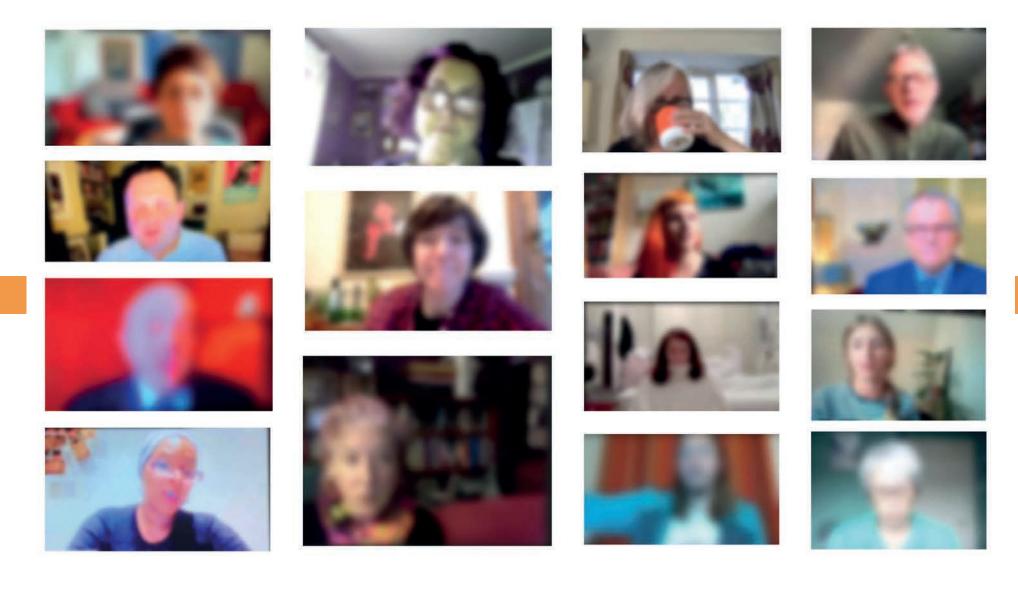
# Exploring expression of everyday aesthetic preferences through clothes

Comparing and sharing my own preferences for the predominance of blue in my clothing (left and above) to a selection compiled by colleague Maria Mullane.

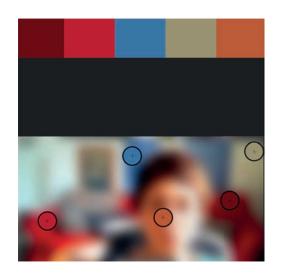


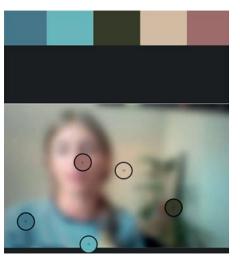
# How are everyday aesthetic preferences expressed?

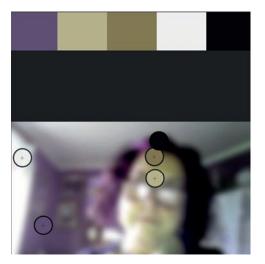
The use off videoconferencing due to social distancing restriction imposted during the COVID 19 pandemic provided a window into individuals home environments.

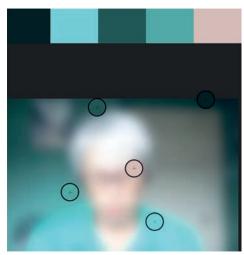


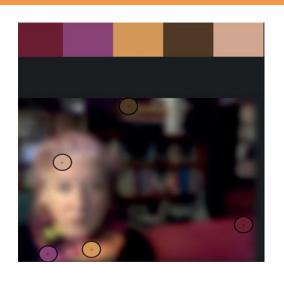
# Experimenting with colour analysis of zoom images

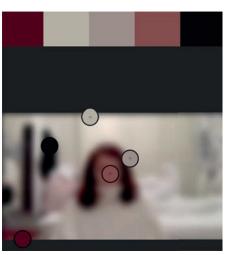


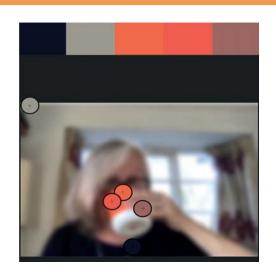


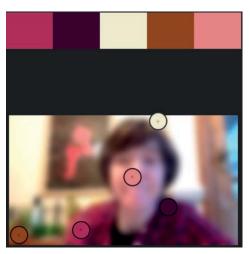






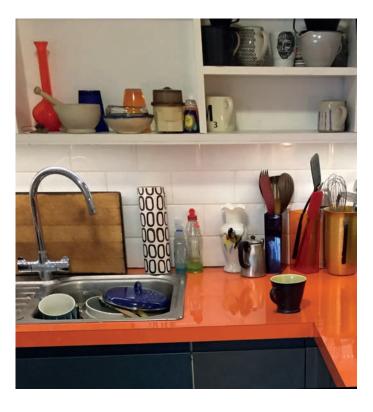








Home Away





Moving out of my long term home was an opportunity to document and compare my own everyday aesthetic preferences to a temporary house sitting arrangement. When I moved the predominance of orange in my home was encapsulated in a mug given to me by a friend who really knows what I like.



























As Venn's (2018, p.) colour psychology study observes:" "If our clothing is often described as our "second skin" then our home and garden can be viewed as our "third skin" .. Living in and shaping one's personal space is top of our wish list for many people."

Exploring ways to visually document, and compare everyday aesthetic preferences through colour.

















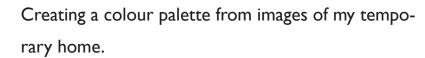
























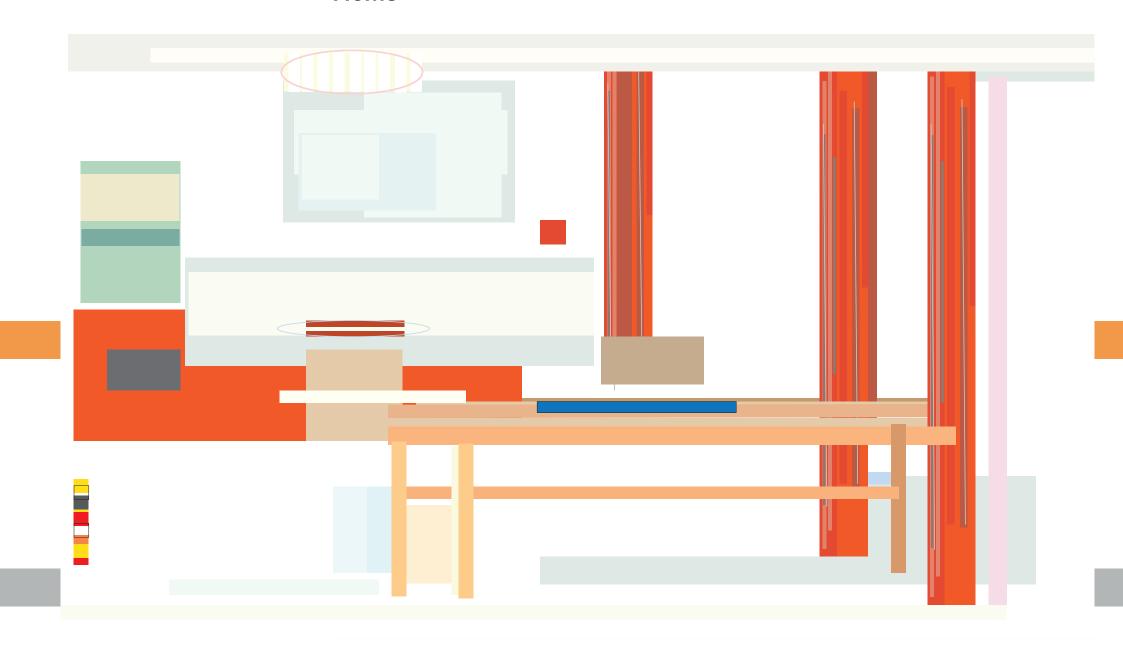




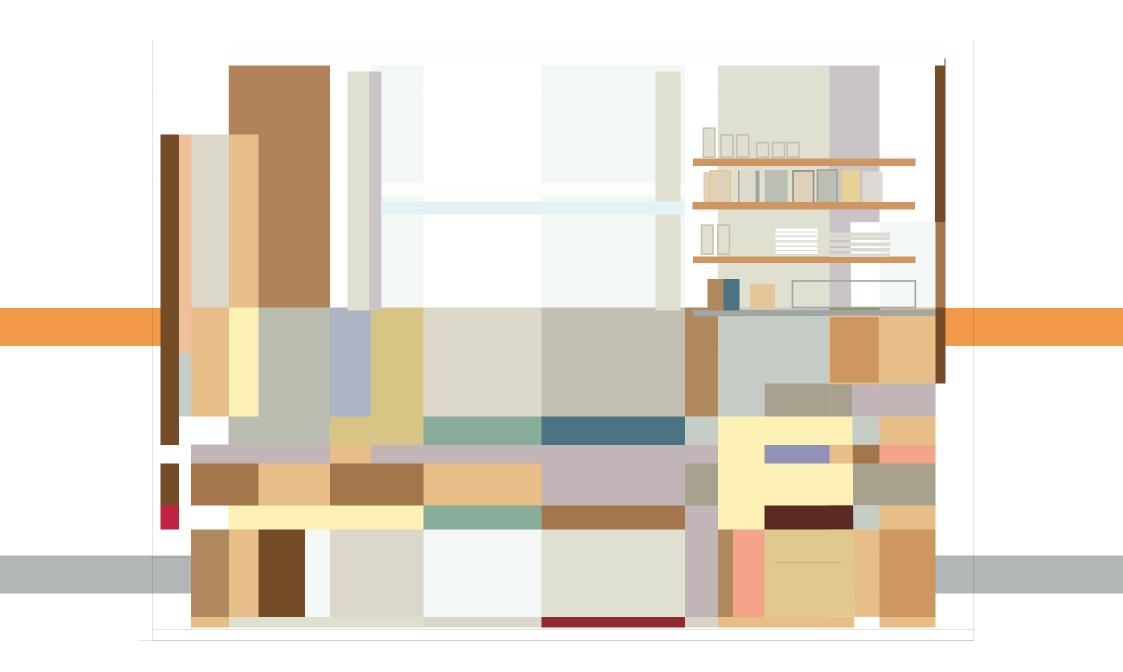


Visual analysis of how my mug stood out against the neutral palette of my temporary home

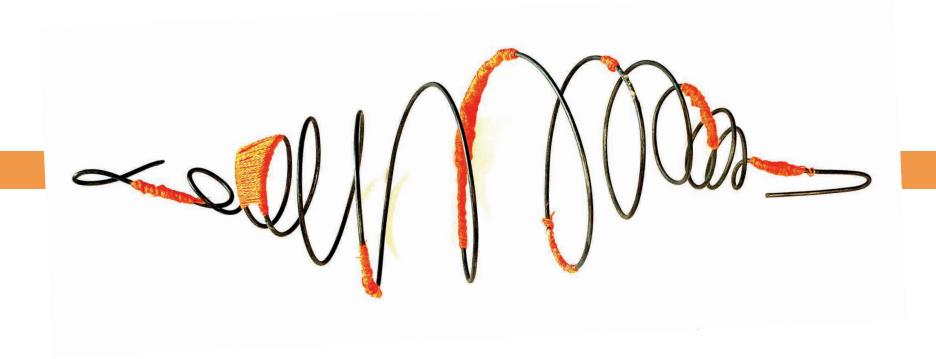
# Home

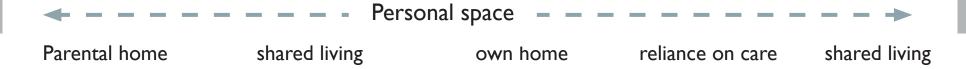


# Away



## Do preferences change or become reinforced?



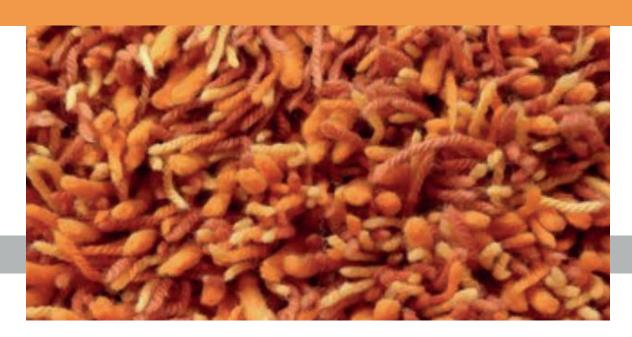


### A prototype design probe

Depending on our circumstances the amount of choice and control we have over personal space in the home changes.

This prototype emerged from reflecting on how preferences are influenced, changed or reinforced throughout life.

The process of documenting my preferences in the present caused me to reflect on how these choices might relate to my life story. Whether they originated from early life experiences and how they had evolved. Does this preference for orange come from a rug I played on as a child?



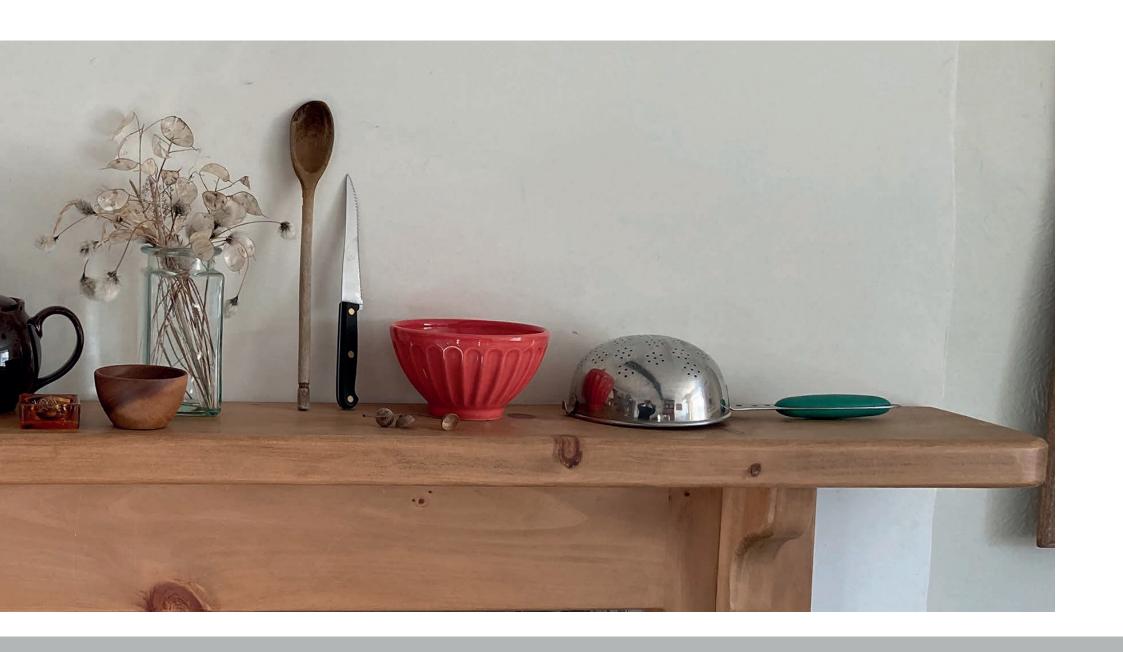
### **Everyday aesthetics**

In an essay on the meaning off aesthetic experience Tanizaki (1933, p.18) concludes that, "The quality that we call beauty ... must always grow from the realities of life".

If, as dementia progresses, choice and control over personal space shrinks, what few possessions would we wish to have around us? Might a worn wooden spoon and a chopping knife, a familiar reminder of memories of everyday habits and routines be more or less important than my grandmothers necklace?

Might a shelf or a mantelpiece act as container for preferred objects? As Hurdley (2020) observed, a means of, "Projecting an image of oneself through a carefully constructed collection of possessions"?

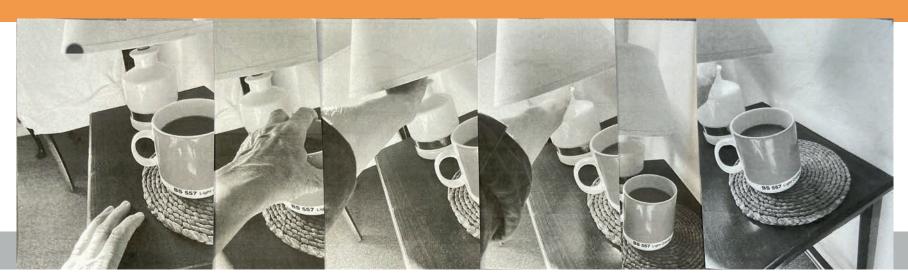




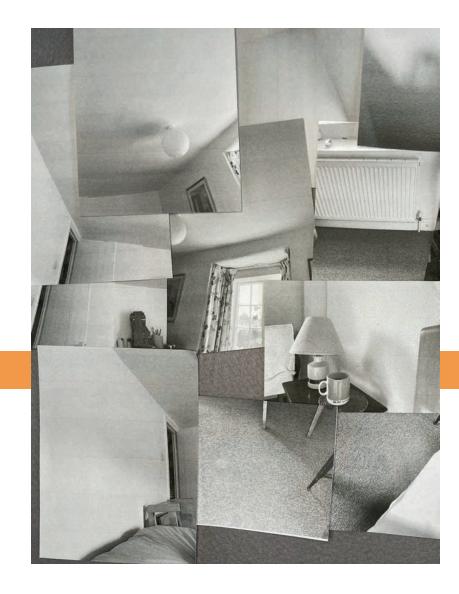
### Experiencing personal space

Using body-mapping techniques to explore the experience of reduced choice and control over physical and existential personal space in dementia described as: ,"the walls closing in,.. reduced from large and wide to small and restricted" (Forsund et al, 2018, p.22)









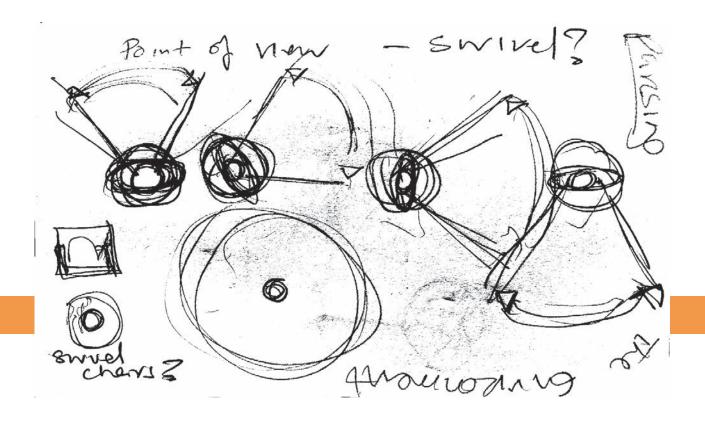
### Object relationships



Csikementmihaliyi (1981, p.15) describes the power his armchair has to convey an embodied sense of self, "because myself is inseparable from the sign process that constitutes consciousness, that chair is as much a part of myself as anything can possibly be

This implies that this relationship is reinforced by the role the chair plays in everyday routines. Whilst the physical impression of chair on the body, provides comfort and familiarity, how important is the view from the chair?

What can be seen, what else is within reach?



If mobility and disorientation increases, what it important to keep within view?

Would a swivel chair provide more choice and control over what can be seen?

Could it offer a way to change one's view?

## Retaining aesthetic preferences

People with dementia who chose their favourite pictures made the same choices 2 weeks later despite not recalling being asked before.

(Halpern et al., 2008; 2013)





(Figure 4. Assemblage, 2011 p. 86)
In art therapy, Byers (2011, p.81) suggests that people with dementia being pre-occupied with re-arranging colour and materials implied that they were, "searching for something aesthetically satisfying".



Alzheimer Scotland, Tartan Design Concepts

#### **Betty**

This is Betty's design for the Alzheimer Scotland signature tartan. Betty designed this tartan on 6 March, 2015 in East Renfrewshire.



Alzheimer Scotland, Tartan Design Concepts

#### Pearl

This is Pearl's design for the Alzheimer Scotland signature tartan. Pearl designed this tartan on 6 March, 2015 in East Renfrewshire.



Alzheimer Scotland, Tartan Design Concepts

#### Joyce

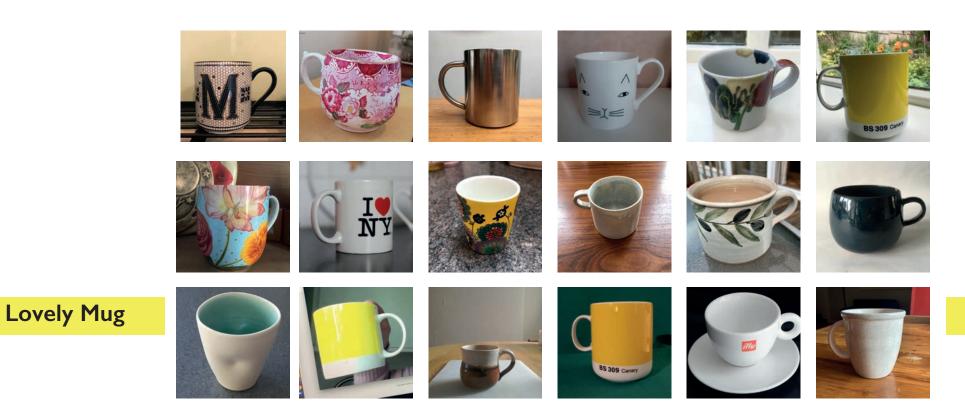
This is Joyce's design for the Alzheimer Scotland signature tartan. Joyce designed this tartan on 6 March, 2015 in East Renfrewshire.

A co-design project that supported people with dementia to create their own tartan found that "participants have remembered their own tartan design and were able to identify it" (Rodgers, 2018, p.198). That ability of participants to discriminate between these designs, that are similar in colour and tone is significant. It suggests that a visuo-sensory sensibility is retained. Is this because the participants had been involved in a concentrated process of design?

Findings from research (Halpern, 2008, 2013, Byers 2011, Rodgers, 2018, left and above) imply that people with dementia retain aesthetic preferences, despite impairments in cognitive function. This has supported the rationale for exploring how these preferences are expressed through everyday aesthetics.



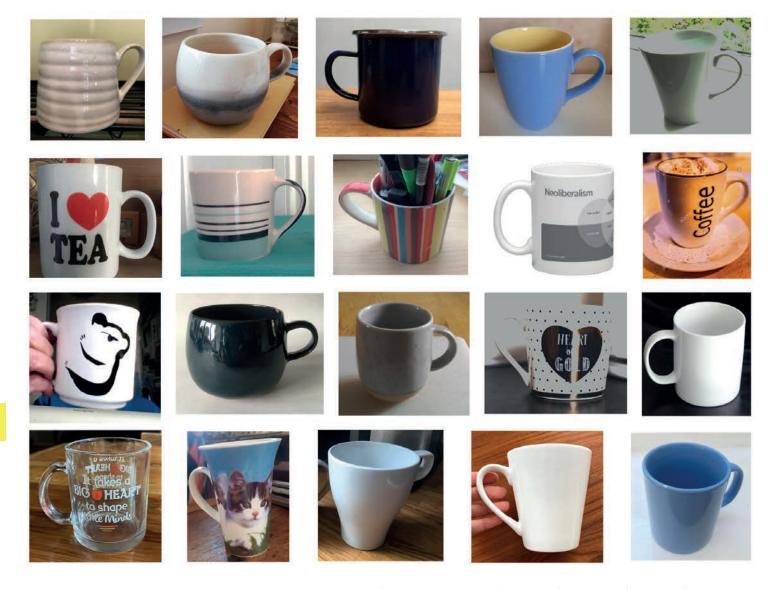
### Exploring ways to express everyday aesthetic preferences: object elicitation



Responses to email survey: Favourite mugs "smooth/comfortable/elegant/honest /strong clear colour/pretty/beautiful/ celestial /nocturnal /deep colour /satisfying/organic /slim"

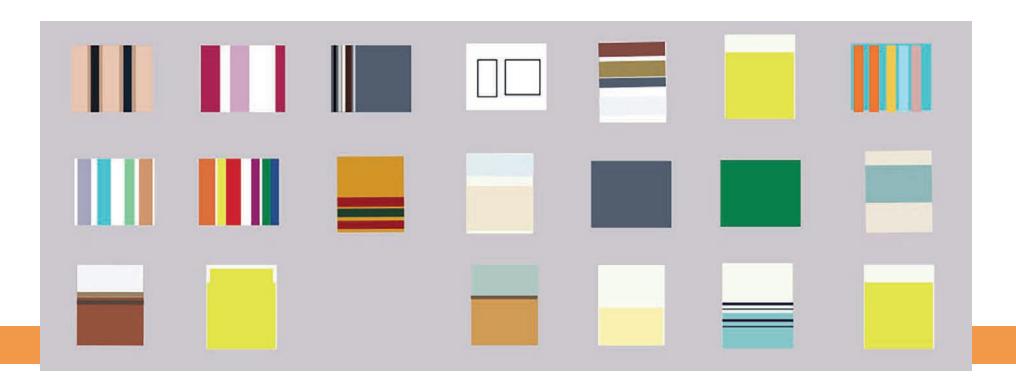


Ugly Mug



Responses to email survey: Describing lease favourite mugs: "clunky /hideous /boring / I despise it / pointless /too slim /too big /thick /kitsch /trite/too heavy /aggressive/clumsy/unpleasant / flimsy"

Phase I: Lovely Mug Ugly Mug survey responses



### What do you like about your mug? Colour

5 participants' favourite mugs were yellow, a colours that is claimed to more universally preferred and associated with positive emotions













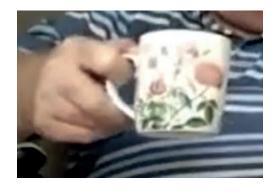
Phase 2 : Video conferencing : Lovely Mug Ugly Mug responses



# What do you like about your mug? Shape

Participants drew attention to how the shape and size influences their preferences

### Mug stories



This is the cup that I use all the time with all the flowers and everything round it. I like the flowers and the blooms of the flowers. Very nice.

They all know that it's my cup





What do I feel today? How do I feel?

Do I feel sombre?

I'll go for black.



Or do I want something really bright?

Because I feel bright?

Yes I do. I actually do.

It reflects my mood

### Mug stories

Something I dislike is an overdecorated mug that's got a crack in it.

So its destined for the bin!

It's heavyweight, a decorative style.

I really don't like this sort of thing at all.



They are big .They are too heavy.

When it's full I can barely lift it.

And they're thick.



I hate this mug. It's thick, it's chunky, it's far too big.

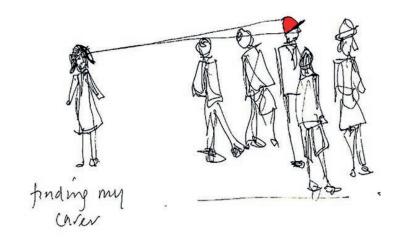
I hate the colour. I hate the weight. I hate the size. I never drink out of this cup. It bothers me that I have to negotiate my way around it and it's fellow compatriots in the cupboard taking up space.

But that colour! Is it salmon pink? I really dislike.





### Colour to support orientation and surveillance



During the development of the study design I consulted the South Yorkshire Dementia Research Advisory Group (SYDemRAG), whose members are living with dementia.

One of the members described a strategy she uses to cope with feeling disorientated when she goes out.

Her favourite colour is red, so when she goes out she asks her care partner to wear a red cap so that she can spot him in a crowd.









Magid's (2004) Art of Surveillance project explored a similar idea using CCTV.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eh0XjoIgPQk

### Do you know what you like? Colour



#### **Meeting 2: Your colour choices**

For this meeting I would like to ask you about your choice of colours.

You can use the colour cards that I have sent to you to tell me about this.

When we meet I would like you to:

- · Sort the colours into your likes and dislikes
- · Create colour combinations that you like
- Think about any associations you might have with the colours that you have chosen.

The colour cards are just a small selection. So they might not include the ones you really like. You might want to tell me about other colours you like more.





Asking about favourite and least favourite colours using a set of Pantone postcards provoked more intuitive and immediate responses.

A way to initiate conversations about everyday aesthetic preferences.





# Colour preferences: the sorting process





































## Why do you like those colours?

They remind me of this ring which is special to me

They remind me of a special suit for an important trip

I used that green colour to decorate our lounge

I like the sea and landscape paintings like that









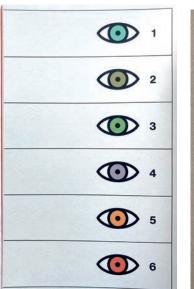


The colours I like



Vitra colour wheel for Hella Jongerius

"For me, there is no favourite colour or preferred pallette. It all depends on the context. "(Jongerius, 2016, p.112-113)



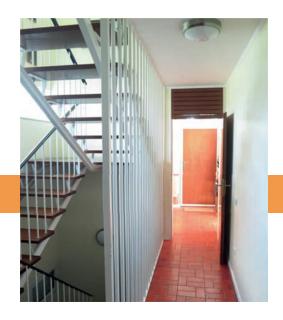


Klein Personal Colour Guide (Schoesser & Harley, 2022, p.83) and toolkits

Klein's practice in textile design used vibrant combinations of colour inspired by natural environments. His interest in the impact of colour inspired development of a Personal Colour Guide (1965), creating colour palettes he recommended would suit indviduals according to their eye colour.

"Colors should set each other off refreshingly, not only in space, side by side, but also in time, one stimulation following another. Any unchanging combination becomes unbearable for an extended period, even if the initial selection of colors seemed perfect.

Color perception, like form perception takes place in the space-time continuum To treat it in relation to space alone is in itself a defective approach" Neutra (1954,p.185)







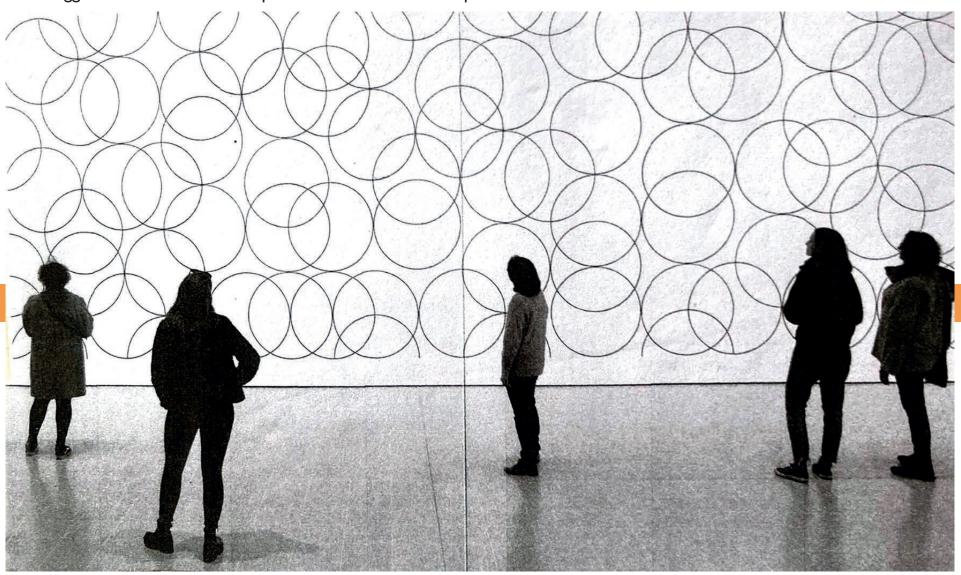
Bewobau Housing Project
(Neutra, 1960) https://neutra.org/
project/bewobau-housing-project-quickborn/

Van der Leeuw research house (Neutra, )home. com/blogs/livedin/inside-neutra-s-living-laboratory

Mariners Medical Arts Centre (Neutra, 1963)
https://neutra.org/project/mariners-medical-arts-center/

### Design criteria for colour cards: curvature and symmetry

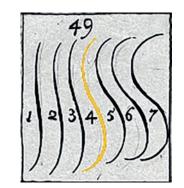
A starting poiint for the design of the colour cards (p.62) that uses a round spot and a block, draws on findings from the literature that suggest there are universal preferences for curved shapes.

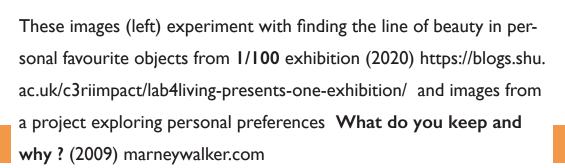


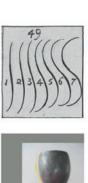
© Bridget Riley https://stantonwilliams.com/en/works/bridget-riley-exhibitions (accessed 15-10-24)

### Universal preferences: shape

Artists and designers have demonstrated the beauty of particular shapes and forms in terms of coherence and harmony. Hogarth (1753) explored the notion that a line of beauty could be defined (number 4 right) compared to other more or less exaggerated curves.





























This resonates with research that there is a universal preference for the curvilinear (Silvia & Barona, 2009)



Dieter Rams (1963) designs of household products have become iconic

### Design criteria for colour cards

The criteria for the colour palette drew on studies and devices used by designers to explore how colour evokes emotions and memories.



Obrien's study invited 250 participants to select colours associated with 5 different emotions (left) and the colours that 'Joy' evoked (right) https://orlaghobrien.com/emotions-colour-research (accessed 29-04-24). This dominance of the colour yellow correlates with studies in universal colour preferences, where yellow has postive associations.

#### Colour associations

HOME	
MOTHER	
SCHOOL	
FATHER	_
FRIENDSHIP	
GRANDPARENT	
SECURITY	
ANGST	evening attire designer jewellery angora gloves eyes leather jacket blouse underwear wallet handbag sweater hair apron
AFFECTION	knitted sweater pillow case

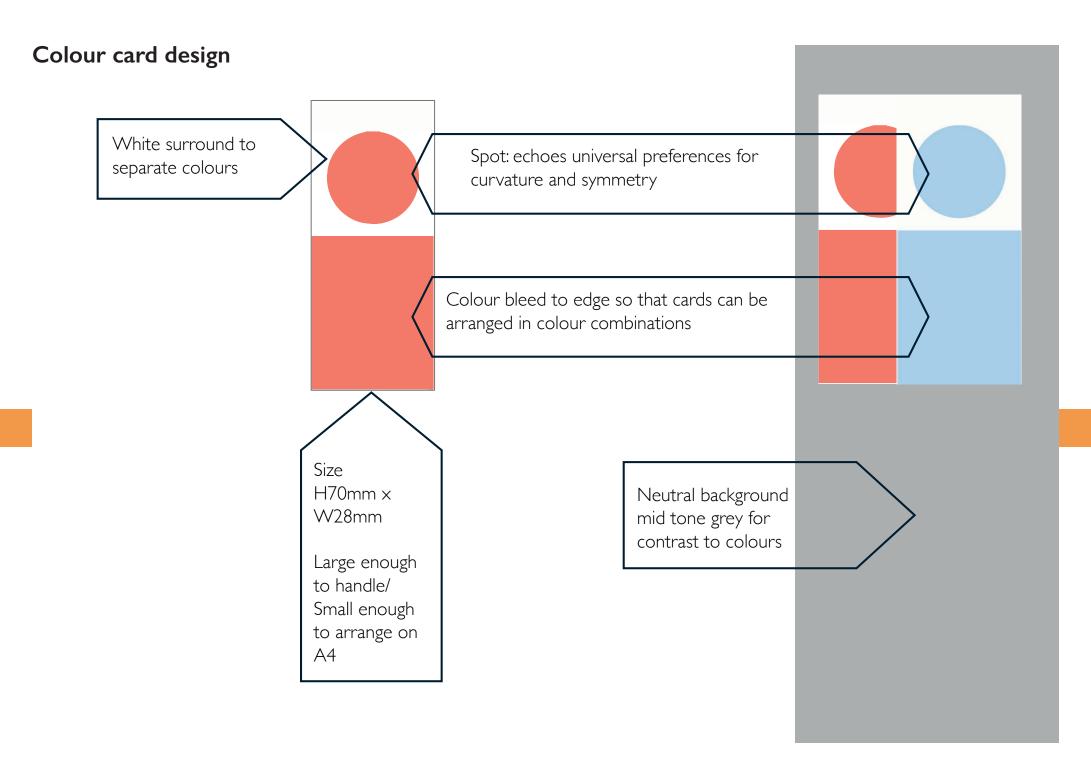
Tebbe (2017, p.79) created a tool that uses these words as a prompt to invite participants to create a colour palette associated with places, feelings and relationships



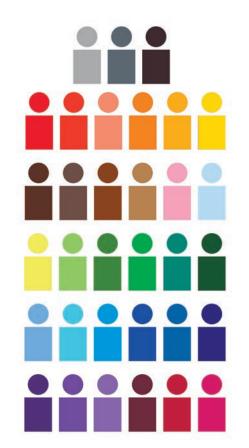
### Michael Ecklan in Aesthetics of Joy

Lee's (2018) practice is concerned with understanding what she terms 'The Aesthetics of Joy' creating toolkits, and sourcing images that evoke those postive emotions.

https://aestheticsofjoy.com/beautiful-public-hous-ing-developments/ (accessed 01-03-25)

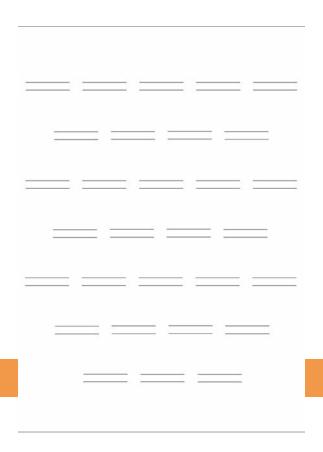


### Colour range



Colour range hue, saturation and intensity chosen in accordance with guidance, to use "more vivid colours to compensate for the dullness of the ageing lens."

(Hallsall, 2023, p. 209)



### Card holder design



Card holder designed with slots to hold cards in place in a flat display using A4 neutral grey felt covered card. The slots make the holder flexible so that its easy to bend and extract the cards.



#### **Meeting 2: Your colour choices**



#### **Meeting 2: Your colour choices**

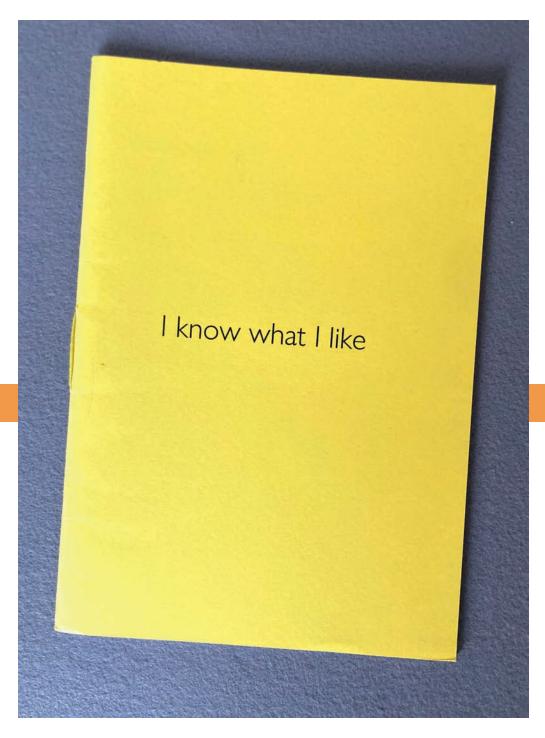
For this meeting I would like to ask you about your choice of colours.

You can use the colour cards that I have sent to you to tell me about this.

When we meet I would like you to:

- · Sort the colours into your likes and dislikes
- · Create colour combinations that you like
- Think about any associations you might have with the colours that you have chosen.

The colour cards are just a small selection. So they might not include the ones you really like. You might want to tell me about other colours you like more.

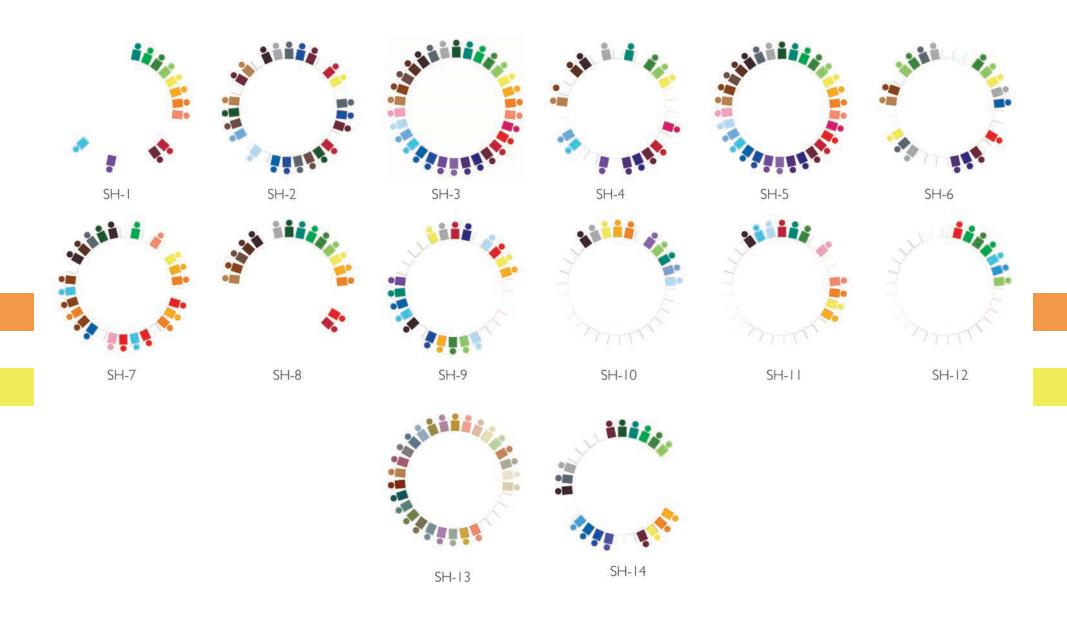


The topic guide for the video conferencing meetings was designed to be as accessible as possible.

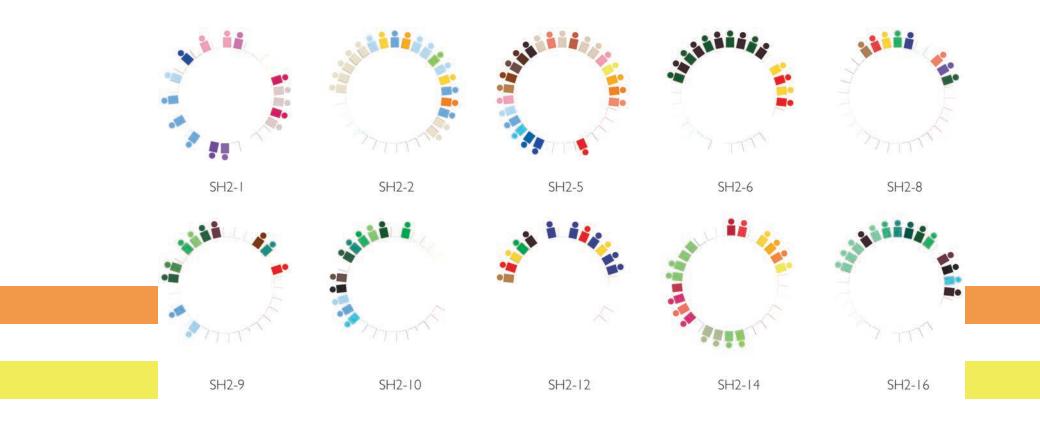
The layout, wording and the use of colour on the edge of the pagess was selected to make it easy to find the instructions for each meeting.

The cover with a yellow background and black text was chosen deliberately as a good standard for legibility.

# Interpreting the data: Personal colour preferences: Phase 3

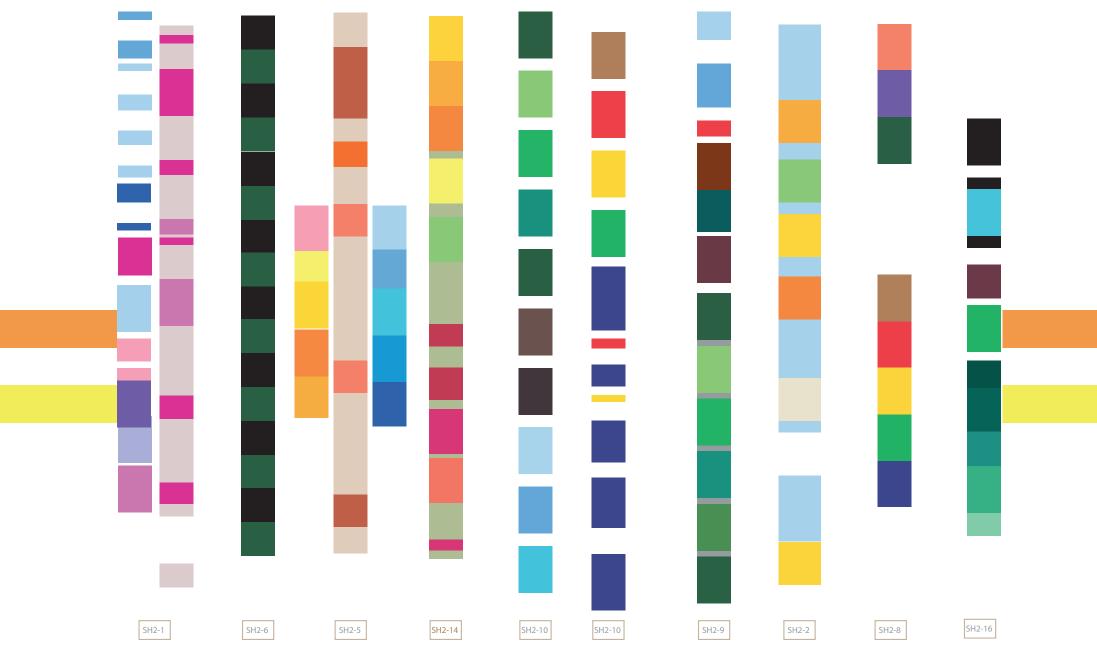


# Interpreting the data: Personal colour preferences: Phase 3



# Interpreting visual data

Colour swatches created from participants' colour choices, and how they arranged them into different combinations



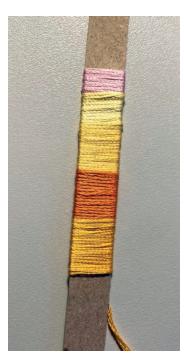


Yarn wrapping, a technique used by Paul Smith fashion designer (left) as design process.

Another way to provide a tangible record of colour and colour combination preferences. Initial experiments (right) could be used as bookmarks for the personalised booklets.



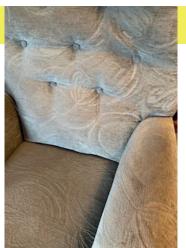




Could a personalise swatch be a visual reminder of personal preferences ?





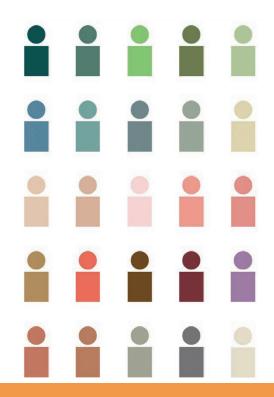






## **A Muted Palette**

SH13- disliked all the cards in the colour pack. She said that she found them too 'blatant'. A follow up, using the wider choice Pantone cards, and images from her home (below) informed the creation of a muted colour palette (right).

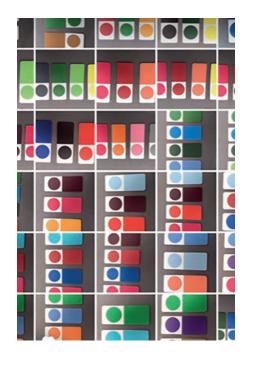






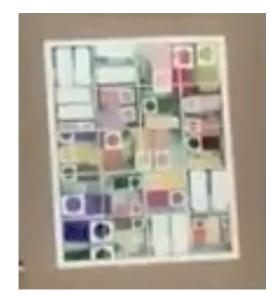


## I like all the colours









SH3 and SH5 said they liked all the colours, and it would just depend on the combinations. SH3, a textile artist and colourist continued to re-arrange the cards into multiple combinations following the meeting. These combinations then inspired her own practice (above)

## Metamerism

Jongerius explored how light on different facets of objects changes the colour, described as metamerism that, "Occurs when two different colours appear to be the same because of lighting conditions; or when a change in illumination causes two otherwise matched colours to deviate." (Hunt, 2018 p.244)



Breathing Colour by Hella Jongerius, Design Museum, London 2017. Installation view. Photograph: Luke Hayes.



Some participants whose practice is concerned with colour, also shared insights into how colour behaves according to materiality and shape:

"The 'smalti' that they use in the Byzantine mosaics. The reason why they are so glorious and the gold works so well, is that they are usually attached to slightly curved walls. They stick up like little teeth. So you end up with five sides reacting to light." (SH2)

These experiments interpret SH2's colour preference in miniature three dimensional shapes to replicate this effect.

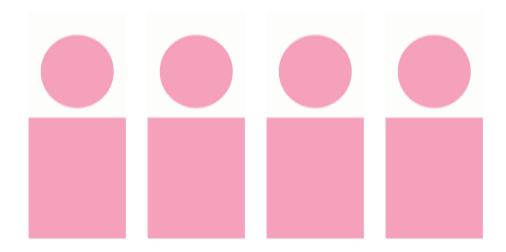






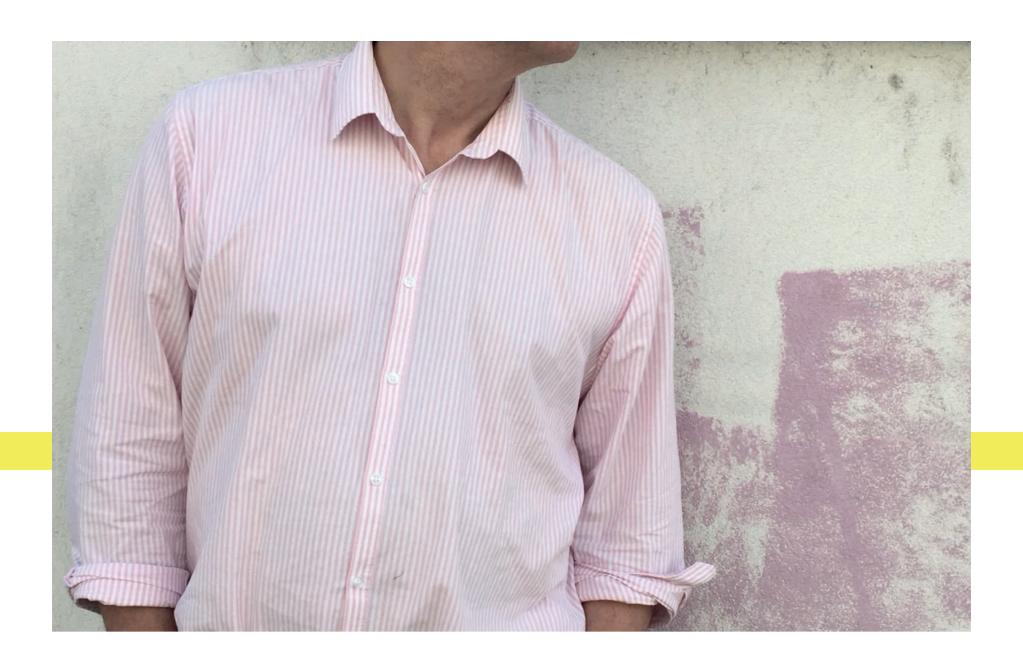
## Colour and gender

For some, the colour pink has become heavily gendered, and participants remark on how this influenced their preferences.



"I got a present - a pink velvet coat from an aunt or an uncle. They made me wear it to school one day, and I got called "pinky" and I hated it. So I just never attempted to wear pink again because I wanted to be one of the kids playing tag at recess." (SH5)

"This 'we should dress every little girl in pink', I find extremely irritating. It's very, very, uninspiring and tedious. I think little girls will be talking about not liking pink for the rest of their lives." (SHI3)



## Dementia Lab Conference 2022 Workshop

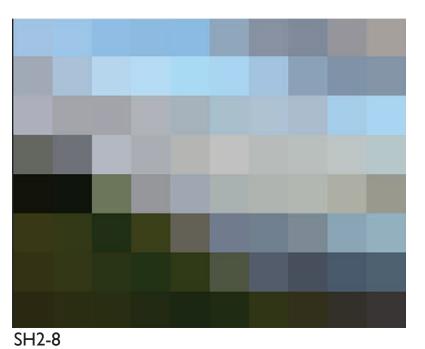
Hosting a workshop at this conference was an opportunity to share the method, initial findings and invite participants to take turns in facilitating and taking part in the Shared Looking process using mugs and colour cards.



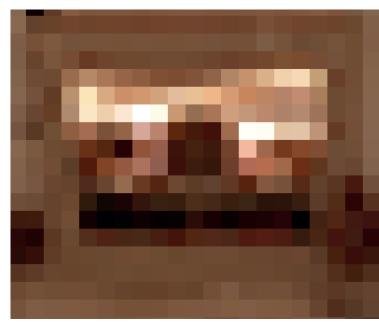








Feedback from the workshops generated suggestions on alternative ways to interpret and re-present preferences



SH2-5



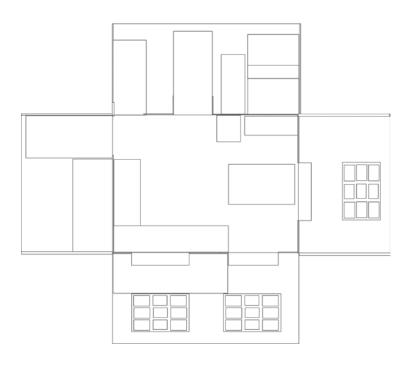
These images use reduced DPI to distill the colours from participants favourite spaces. Would they be recognisable?

SH2-16

SH2-2

# Fold up homes: a visual analysis of my temporary home







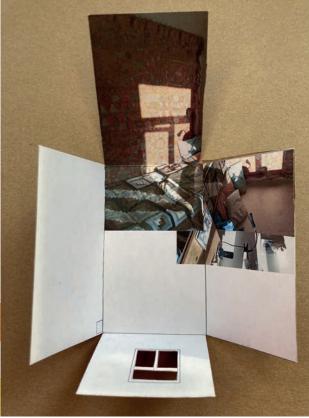
Applying technical architectural drawings skills for design of home adaptations to a visual analysis of my temporary home

Layering photographs of the space onto the plans. An interactive device to represent personal space



# Fold up homes - favourite spaces in the home - interpreting data







"I like it because it's calm. Where I like to sit on the sofa I'm facing a blank wall which I like." (SH12)

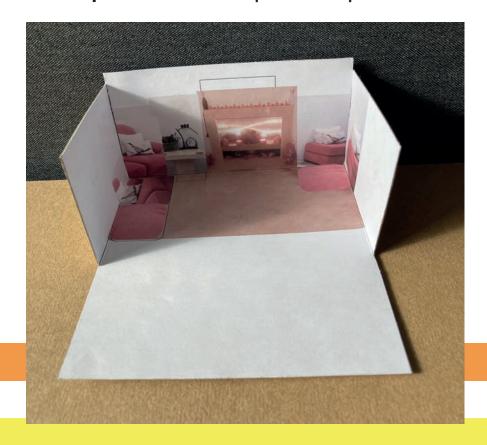
"I like to sit in the afternoon and read.

I make a sort of nest with cushions. Its
like a nest." (SH6)

"The favourite place in the flat is the lounge because its got the biggest window and I can look at the garden."

(SH2-6)

## Fold up homes: Participants' responses





"Thank you for sending me the pop up lounge cardboard copy, it's great. I will be like a miniature doll's house.

It's a great idea. "(SH2-5).

"A brilliant idea. I think they're quite sweet and I like them but I don't see a lot of value in them over and above the photographs. They could be confusing to someone with advanced dementia. I knew what I was looking at, but I had work on what I was looking at and process what it was and that could be difficult for some." (SH2-I).

## **About Home**





Do you know what you like?

Marney Walker marneywalker.com @marneywalker





Funded by: Research England

Supervisory team: Paul Chamberlain, Claire Craig, Mel Levick-Parkin

# Sharing methods and initial findings





## **About Home Exhibition**

Using exhibitions to share the methods and initial findings from the Shared Looking process

As an interactive installation the installation provided visitors with an opportunity to share their preferences for mugs and colours and think about the reasons for their choices.

#### The colours I like



I tell you what I did like was the racing green. The green, to me, that was a racing colour.

The cars that race, they are normally painted green.



I used to make model aircraft when I was younger.

So I painted my models green and black.

You fill the plane with fuel and then you flip the propellor over to get it going. It starts and then you hold onto the control until its going fast.

Then my wife - she launched it.



I really like blue and white.

I do like - it's probably a blue in between



Yes, I do like that combination It's sort of very clean looking.

It's good in spots. It always looks clean?

Some blue gingham always looks nice..



I used to hate red. But now I like a little bit of red in my life.

Being in mental health, I associated red with anger, and that kind of fiery person. I think at that particular time in my life, with personal things as well, there was too much red in my life. Not the colour, but the fieriness and the hostility.



But now I'm introducing little bits of red into my life, because I don't have those added pressures anymore. Not real deep down concerns and pressures and anxiety.

So yeah, red is the colour that I've started to introduce to my life. I wear red.



I look at that and it's all right I think if that was on the walls, I'd be all right with that.

Because definitely, there's a difference between sitting in a room with a colour that's a bit troubling, distressing?



Actually, I've got this on - it is a bit pale isn't it? It is blue, it might not look like it through (the screen) but it is.

#### Lovely Mugs



When I see all this array of mugs - it's how do I feel?

What do I feel? How do I feel today?

Do I feel quite sombre? I'll go for black.



Or do I want something really bright? Because I feel bright.

Yes I do actually, I do.

It reflects my mood.



I am in the habit of spotting anything that's remotely militaria and I have to buy it and bring it home.

Someone had obviously had enough of it and outed it to my advantage.



I like really lightweight, delicate. I like things that are

It's the small things. Like this is flared at the edges.

I was married to a ceramicist until she passed away. So I had a lot to do with making some pottery and what have you. You learn about the basics of ceramics.

This, it's translucent. Which means it's really thin porcelain. Being translucent, its basically thin.

It should ring (when you tap it).

When you put a hot drink into it, because it's thinner, it doesn't cool the liquid so fast.



I have got three of them. They're all slightly diffferent. They are unusual, sort of Clarice Cliff themes.

I didn't open them until I moved in here. Then for the first few days, every day I was getting a different mug and it was really exciting because each one is slightly different and I like them all.

I am sort of an arty person, and because we're supposed to drink a lot, it's important to have a

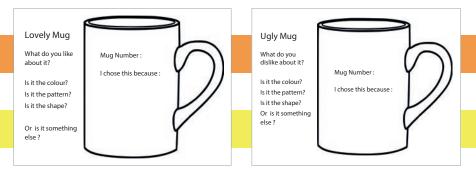
It's much more fine. It's lighter. You can get more in it. because it's thinner material.

It's not this little flower inside. A little nonny that's really sweet as well.



# About Home Exhibition: Do you know what you like?



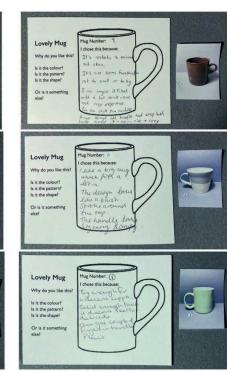


## I chose this because

Visitors were invited to share their preferences for mugs and colours and record the reason for their choices, using these cards (above and right)

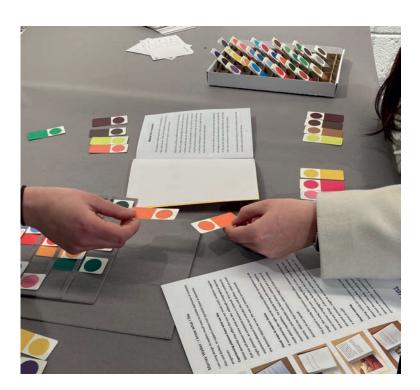






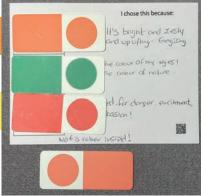












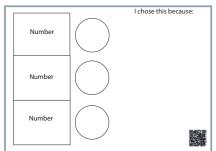


inen token

solding from

This was an opportunity to widen the choice to include the muted palette.









## Specialist practitioner workshop at the About Home exhibition



Specialist practitioners from a range of dementia care settings were invited to the About Home exhibition to take part in an interactive workshop.

This included a doctoral researcher, voluntary sector support group co-ordinators, and occupational therapists from health and social care.

They were invited to participate in the elements of the Shared Looking process related to choice of mugs and colour.



Sally Byers, Dementia Practitioner at Sheffield Hospital Teaching Trust has applied this to training on maintaining hydration:

"You quickly find out what people like to drink, when and in what circumstances. You often get an insight into how the mug connects people to a loved one or reminds them of an important event and their routines and how they like to do things. Very quickly you find out about their individual preferences and how these connect into their identity. It's a good way to get them thinking and reflecting on the value of knowing these little bits of personal information and how helpful that can be in personalising care "



Katie Zwerger, doctoral researcher in dementia care

"What is so vital about both exercises ..is the fact that you are engaging with the preferences of the here and now. Instead of asking people to reflect on what their preferences were, you are respecting who they are now. Other creative approaches in dementia research, like life story work, are important and useful, but are focused on the past. .. these approaches allow current preferences to be informed by life history (i.e. from the stories that are told using them) while capturing who they are now."

\_ .

# conversations in practic<sub>s</sub>e



Persistence Works Yorkshire Artspace, Sheffield S1 2BS

14th-19th June 10-4pm

https://blogs.shu.ac.uk/c3riimpact/conversations-in-practice/ (accessed 25-02-25)

## Conversations in practic/se

This exhibition was an opportunity to collaborate with peers in the Art and Design doctoral research community at Sheffield Hallam University. A chance to share outcomes from our research in progress with a wider audience.

My interactive installation Behind Closed Doors: Conceal and Reveal plays with ways to represent the data from conversations with participants about their colour preferences.



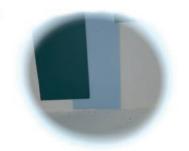


## **Behind Closed Doors: Conceal and Reveal**

Most participants remarked that their colour preferences were contingent on context. They might for instance like to have a red lamp, or a red mug, but they would not choose red to paint the walls. How can these colour preferences be represented in terms of relative scale and position?

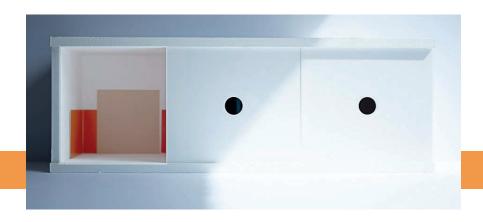
**Behind closed doors** experiments with re-purposing a conventional storage system using interactive sliding doors that can conceal and reveal colour preferences in terms of scale and combinations. As an experiential prototype device it explores loss of object permanence in dementia where it can be difficult to believe that objects concealed behind closed doors exist, if they are out of sight. It comprises four components of three compartments that can be positioned in different arrangements.

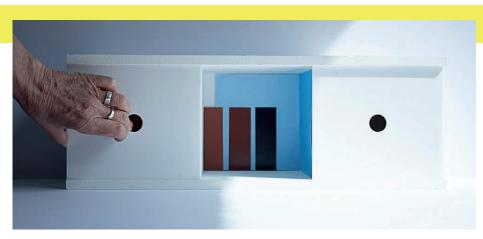
The holes in the sliding doors, provide visual cue to view the contents, and a way to open and close the doors (pages 90-91)



















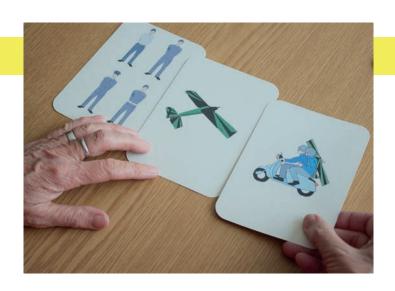
## Personalised cards

The format of the personalised booklets was deliberately designed, so that in a double page spread the images and text are on facing pages. This enabled a further iteration, presenting preferences as cards with images on one side and text on the other.

This offers options to support interaction where the images act as :" a portal to reliving the experience. It's not that he was going through the words, he was responding to the pictures." (Eaton's observations of SH2-6 use of the personalised booklets)









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