

**B E I N G A
G E N T L E
C O M P L A I N E R**

**How to be a
gentle complainer
in your messy surroundings**

**Master Thesis in Design
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Visual Communication

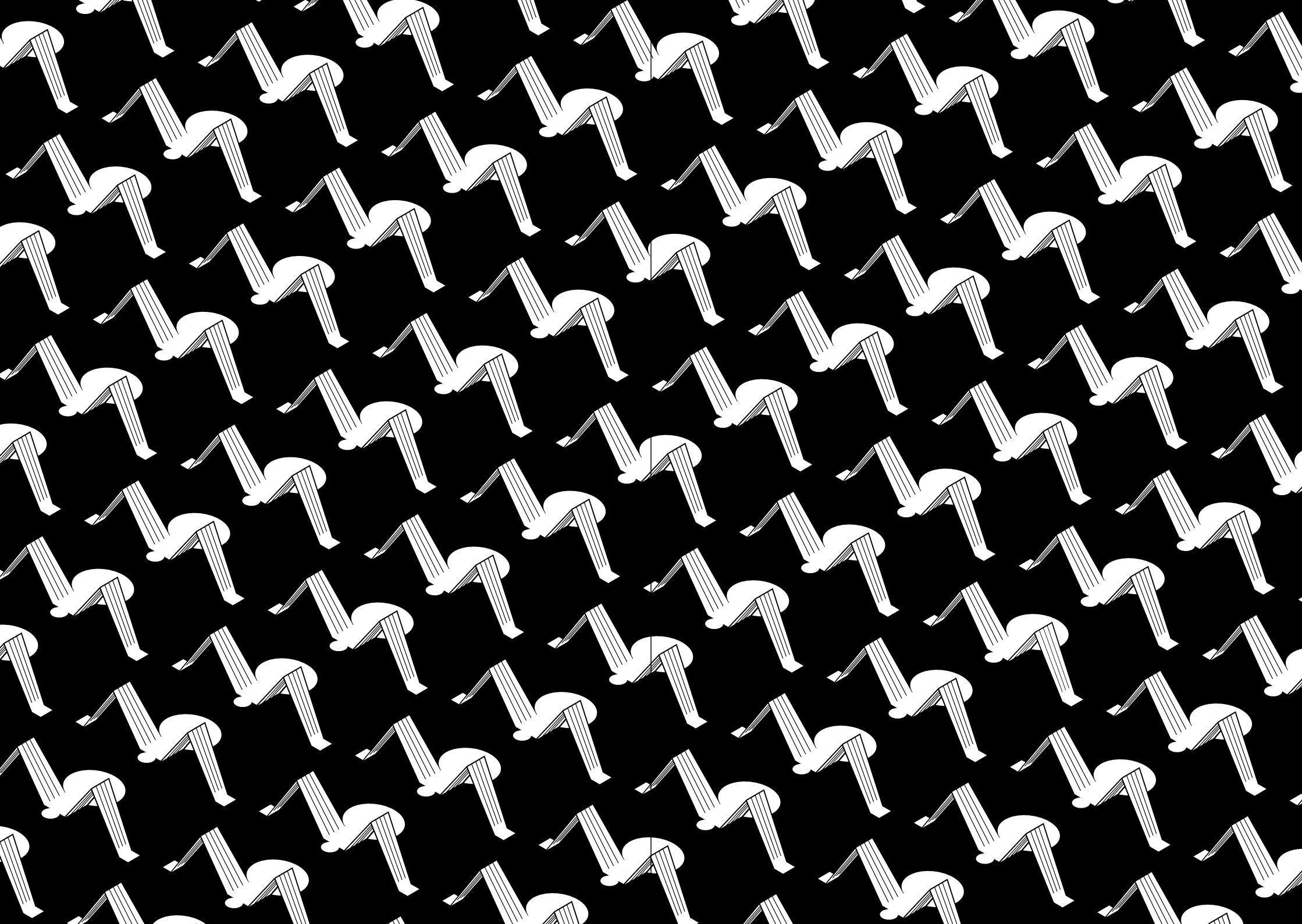
Autumn 2014 - Spring 2016

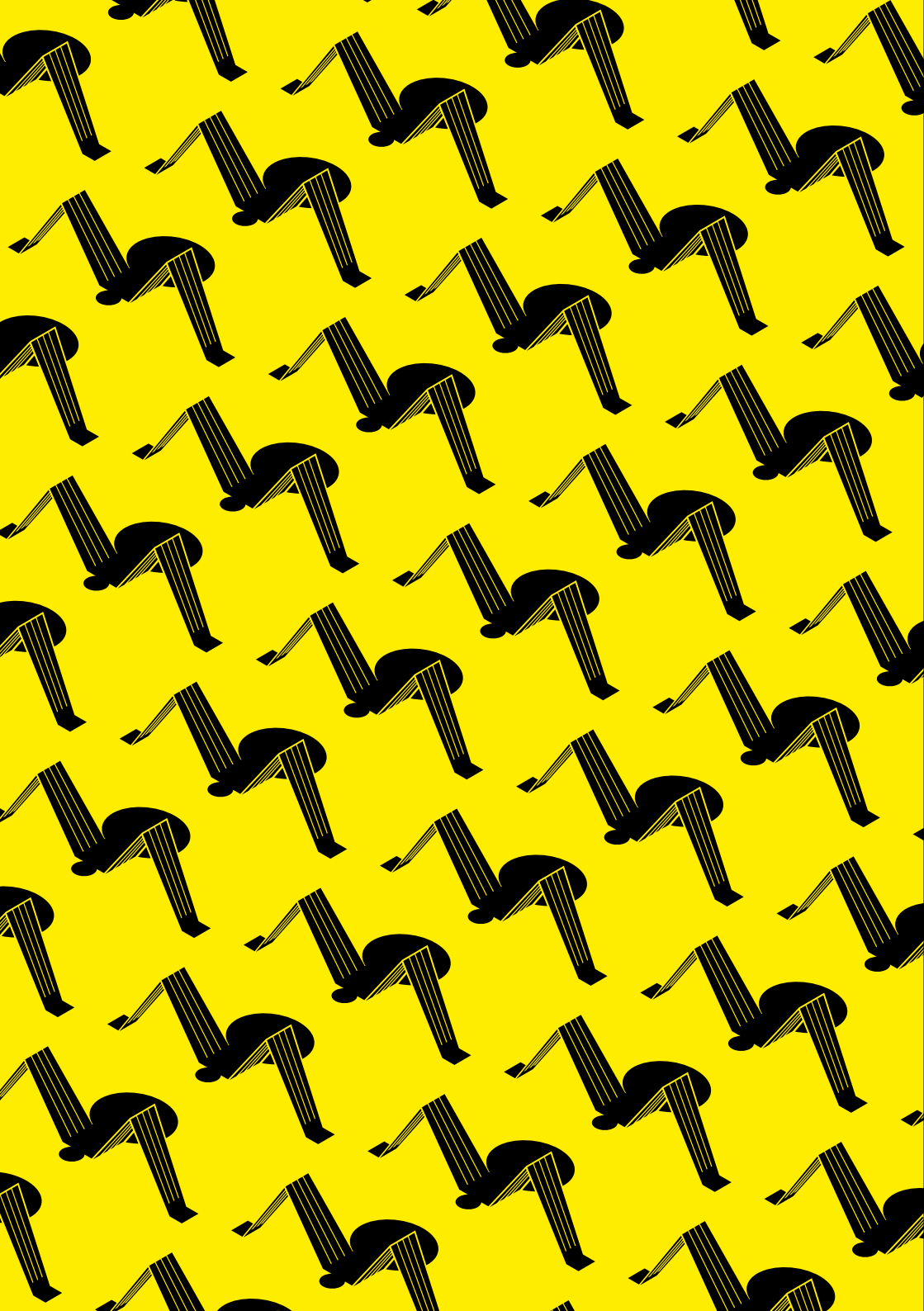
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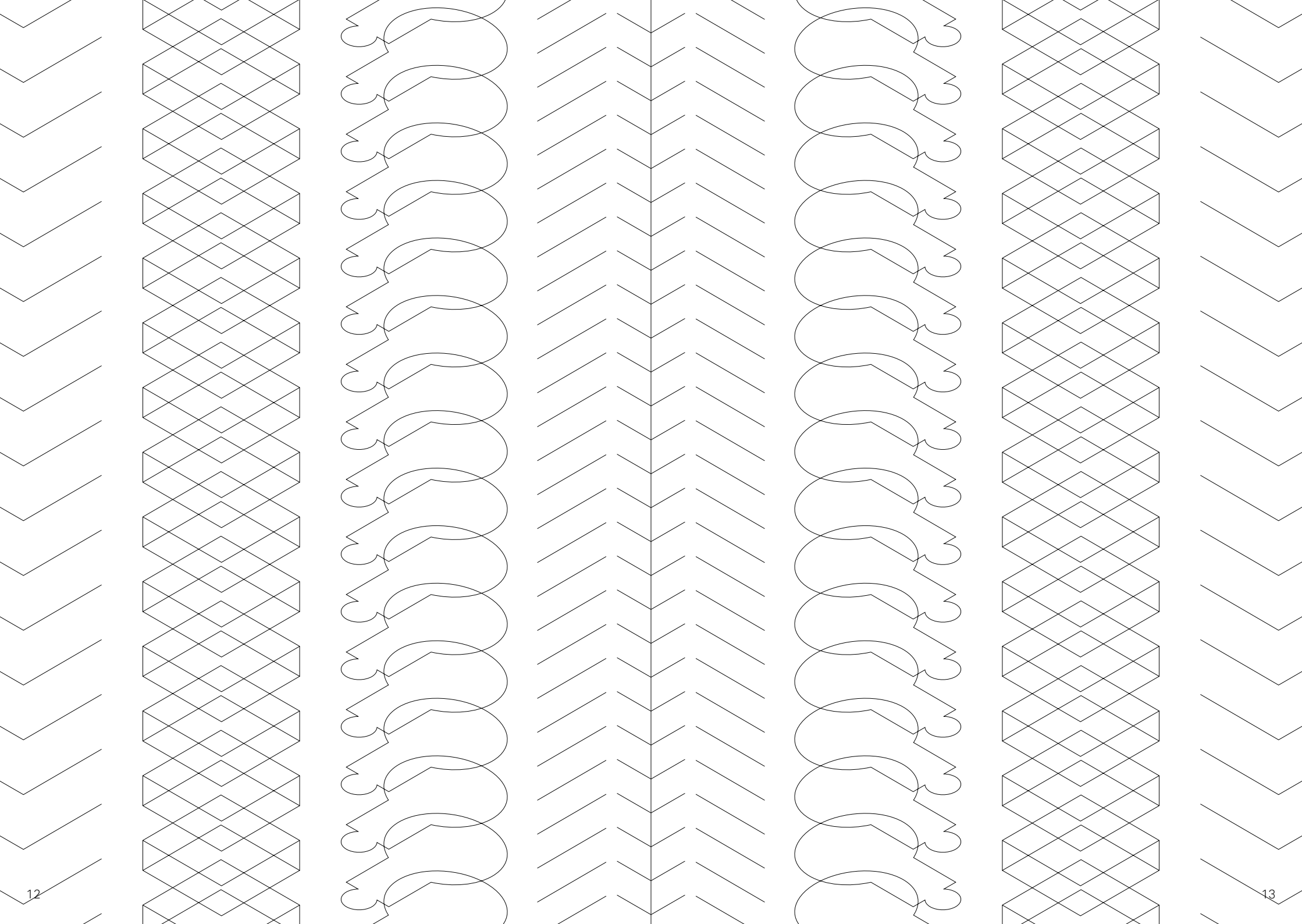
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Section 1

Introduction





1.1 Background

Made by City

In a way, we all are products of our background. We have been influenced by our backgrounds, hence I am also a sort of product that my background has made. And I know which experience has made me inspired on one subject, a city. I could say my experience from city life has shaped my mind. I could also say it has a strong correlation with my personality. I was brought up in a tough neighbourhood of the 80's in Seoul, South Korea. There were small houses on the hills and most of them were self-built. And the house where I lived was built by my father. One day my family had to move to another place. We did not want to do that but we had to do so. And then my hometown vanished from my memory. Now there is a sophisticated new town there.

*Opposite page :
A photo from Seoul
(above) and
a photo from Bergen
(under)*

One day, I climbed the mountain behind my hometown. I overlooked the town to find the traces of old alleys, streets and the position where my former home had been located. And I could not. It was an entirely new place. The new streets were strictly organised.

In a way, it was not my hometown anymore. I felt as if it was a conveyor belt of huge factory. Since then, I have lived as a designer and designers design. And across the continent, now I live in another factory, the city of Bergen. So, what can I do here as a designer having this background?

MY KEY QUESTION :

**HOW CAN VISUAL
COMMUNICATION HELP
GENERATE A DIALOGUE
BETWEEN THE CITY
AND IT'S INHABITANTS?**

1.2

Key Question

**Generating a Dialogue
in Between**

My project began with looking at the city as a visual communication designer with a background in architecture and industrial design, observing what happens on the city street and our urban surroundings. The things that are happening there are a mixture of the entire scope of design. But, in a way, our city is still a sort of old factory itself not only with a giant yellow crane, heavy machinery on a messy construction site, demolished houses and buildings but also overflowed visual elements such as an advertisements promoting the latest Hollywood movies, sexy but useless products, and a number of signs always telling us not to do something. All these things are on the street. There is an omnipresence of physical and visual fragments caused by our industrial activities and this is the exactly same story here in Bergen.

However I strongly believe that there is no mutual communication between people and their surroundings but only a one-way visual communication.

From the inhabitant's position, making personal opinions on their streets and surroundings seems almost impossible if they are not interested in graffiti or street art. In this case, can we maintain that we have good connections with our streets or our surroundings in our everyday life? Have we got along better with them? If there is a long-standing gap in between,

How can visual communication help generate a dialogue between the city and its inhabitants?

1.3 Objectives

Building Awareness & Making Things Visible

My goal is to create a possibility for a direct dialogue between inhabitants and their streets and surroundings from a pedestrian's perspective by small-scale interventions as a graphic designer. I would like to give the people a chance to say something about their streets and surroundings and make the streets more familiar with the people who use them. And, in terms of these primary goals, I want to view my project from two different angles.

To begin with, the project will be focused on building awareness of what is going on the place they live in. In order to do so, the project will explore possibilities of a communication tool as a tangible graphic design product experimenting with which tool can encourage dialogue. In some way, this is for generating a social form as well as a physical form. Because design can also generate the social awareness by encouraging a user's certain participation.

I believe that it can reframe our perception of city life.

Secondly, the project will also explore how to make the things visible that people are annoyed with or are sad for more visible. This is linked to the building of awareness for them. Because, once a certain place becomes more visible on the street, that can lead to getting more attention from the public and, of course, that will be a first step towards achieving the goal of the project. However it does not mean that the project is going to be like street art as a genre or a defiance against the field of architecture or urban planning. The project will rather delve into how visual communication deals with the city's problem from a different point of view. But above all, I hope that it could give the inhabitants a positive feeling. I hope that it could bring smiles to their faces.

1.4

Target Audience

For the City Dweller

The city has extremely varied details of personal memories, historical context or stories. It is like a huge square where a variety of people gather, having individual diversity of interests and opinions. In this context establishing a specific target group, such as a certain age group is not my main consideration. The project is simply for everyone who lives in the city and can walk alone. More specifically, it is for the people who are not pleased with, disagree and want to say something about the place they live in.

1.5

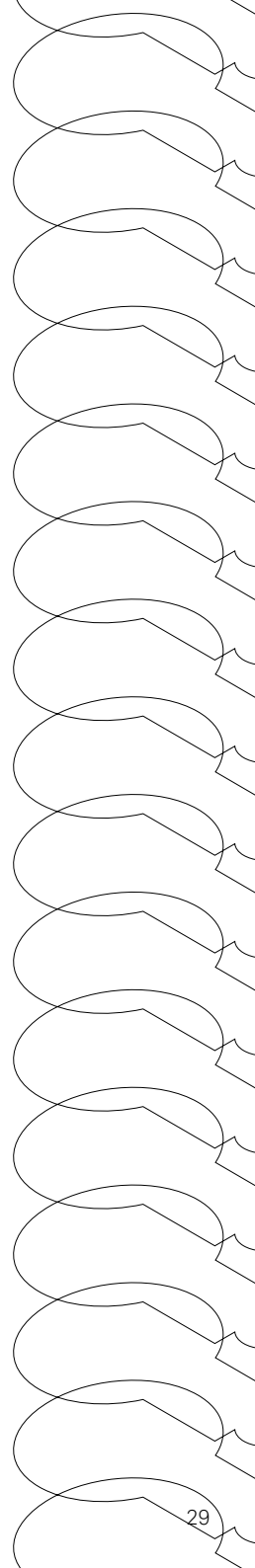
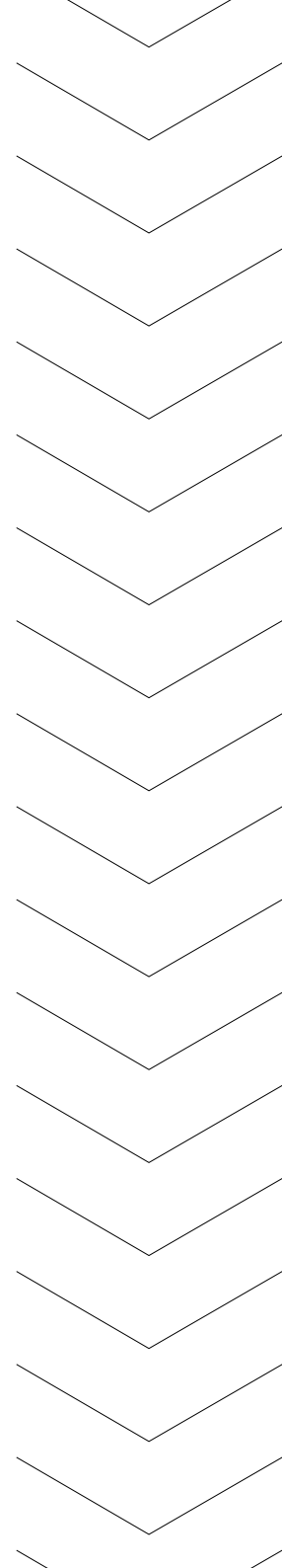
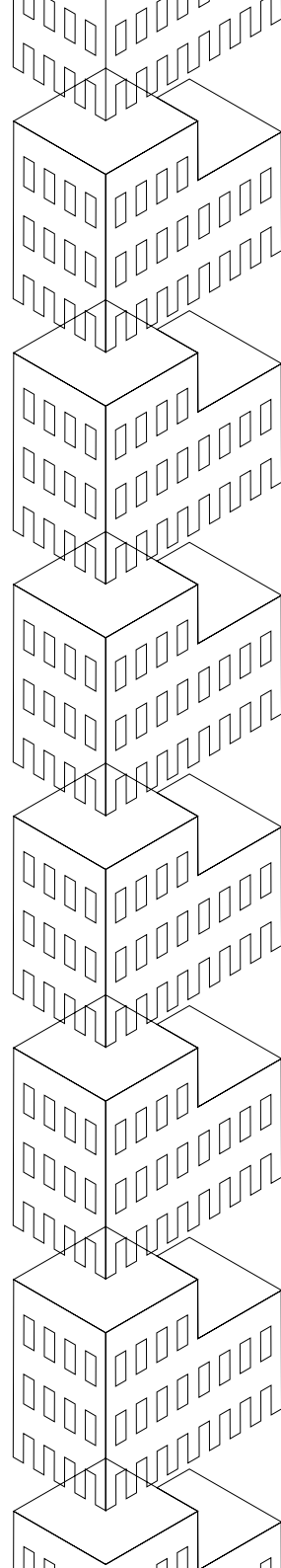
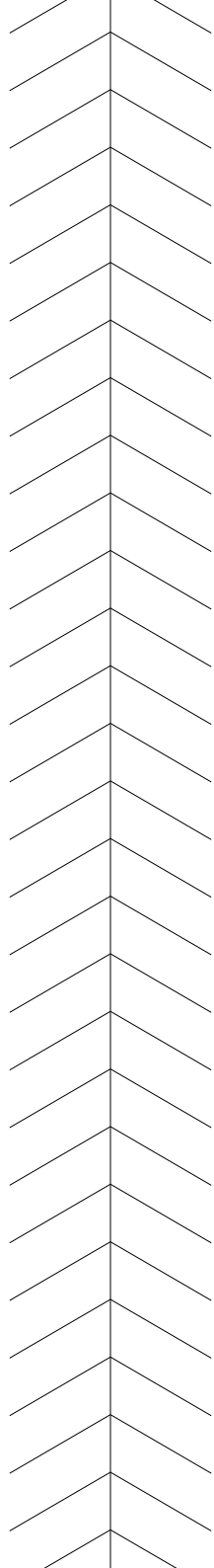
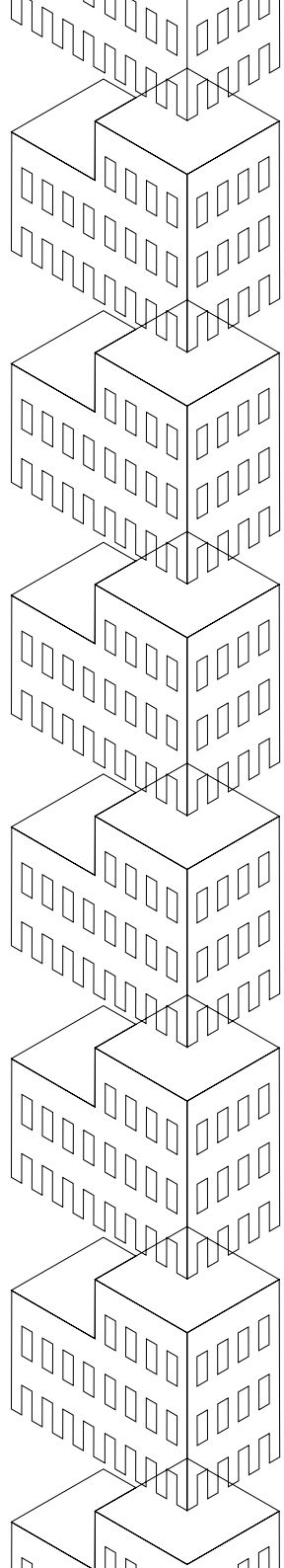
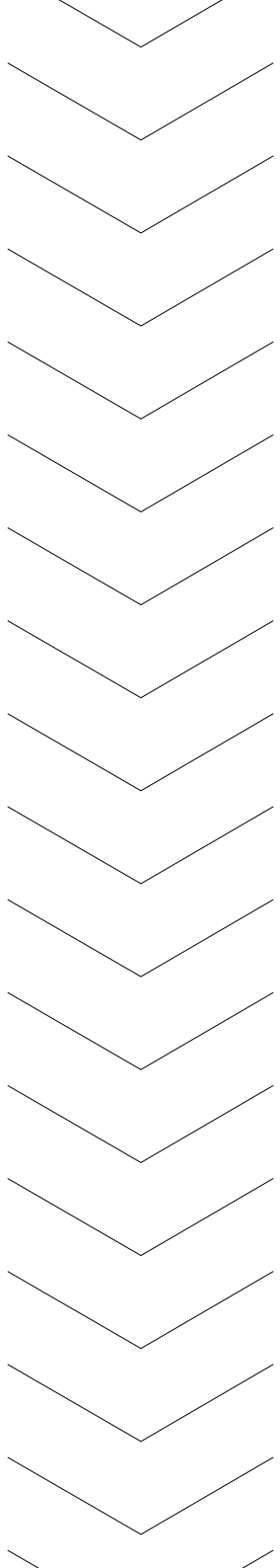
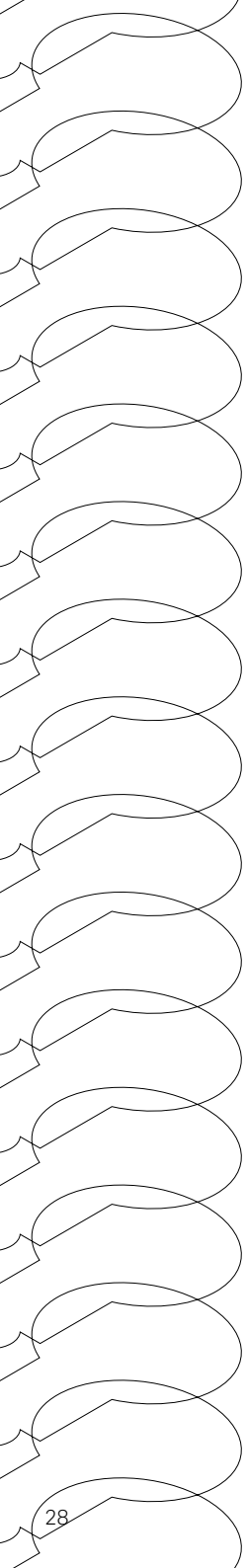
Limitation

Being Apart from Problem Solving

Since many of design fields have been involved in the urban development plan, there are a lot of solutions that exist and

we can easily see in the street around us from the big scale of collective housing complex to small public facilities.

Although I would like to create something tangible to deal with a certain problem in the city, my main consideration has not been to providing a solution. This is because I have intended to see the city from a different point of view as a visual communication designer contributing a suggestion or solution for the users, to enable them to recognise and highlight the problem themselves, rather than providing the clear design solution. My role as a designer will be to empower inhabitants, the users. In this sense, it is also paramount to mention that regular commercial factors with considering client's buying behaviour in visual communication and marketing are not my main concern in this project. The project will be rather a description of the process and the results from a series of experiments in chronological order as a case study to show how this kind of project can deal with the problem in the city. In the following chapter, on the basis of research and analysis, I will illustrate what is happening in our urban life and what is a problem which I want to deal with in this project.



Section 2

Methodology Research and Cultural Analysis



2.1

Methodology

Qualitative Research

The purpose of this research is to understand our environment in connection with the global culture and to define a problem from my own interpretation. In this regard, the entire scope of the research will be consisted of table desk research which is text-based with valid and reliable data, an interview with a focus group and a case study on relevant projects to get in-depth information for my project. In addition to this, the desk research will cover not only the field of art and design but also the different academic fields to see the topic from varying angles. Also the interview will be more focused on in-depth responses with a small number of people than a statistical test. This is because this research has focused on a qualitative point of view rather than a quantitative one. This will allow to have a personal artistic interpretation of the topic based on analysing results of the research with a subjective point of view to embark the project. Over the entire chapter, I will describe how could I delve into the

problem concerning the city and the identity of the project with understanding of the cultural and social context.

2.2

Overview

Theoretical Parts of the Project

For the sake of this chapter, as I mentioned in the previous section, I will explain theoretical parts and an analysis with three of relevant projects into seven sections. In the first section, *The Global Culture - The Shadow of Urbanisation*, I will account for my project in connection with one of global trends, urbanisation and through this, I will also describe how this trend has an effect on us and our urban environment. For the next section, *The Role Definition - Being a Gentle Complainer*, I will be immersed myself into a theory of behavioural economics to find relevance with my topic and understand how a designer can intervene between the public and the urban environment. The goal of this section is for giving an explanation of where key concepts and a working title of the project come from.

For the third section, **Public Indifference - Exformed Site**, I will be imbued with finding a meaning of anonymous objects existing in a shadow of urbanism from a concept called exformation by Japanese designer Kenya Hara. To keep on continue, in the fourth section, **Characteristics of a Genre - Site Specificity**, I will describe where I can place my project in contemporary art and design with an understanding of how is the project able to be successful. In the subsequent section, **Research Conclusions - A Hypothesis**, I will illustrate the results of the research with a hypothesis as a possible answer to the key question. Finally, in the last part of this chapter, **Key Concepts - The Wordbook**, I will provide a summing up of the key concepts as the significant results of the research to help the reader's understanding.

2.3

The Global Culture

The Shadow of Urbanisation

“Cities today have been doing the same thing that they have done for three, four, five thousand years. They have been the place where the flows of people, the flows of money, the flows of goods have coalesced. Cities are always the physical manifestation of the big forces at play. Economic forces, social forces, environmental forces.”¹

¹ *Urbanised, 2011*

The documentary film ‘Urbanised’ directed by an independent film maker Gary Hustwit starts in the contemplation of contemporary city. In city life, there are varied activities regardless of field. However why we live and do something in the city? Probably it is because of natural consequences of the industrialised world. In a way, the city is a mixture of the entire scope of design. In the city, we try to improve the place where we work in, where we pass in and where we live and sleep. And design has been used as a tool for this activism for better tomorrow.

² CBS News, 2008

But there is a clear difference in this futuristic dream compared with the past. A far-reaching influence caused by rapid urbanisation is still ongoing at a remarkable rate. According the United Nations evaluations, 70 percent of the world population will be living in urban areas by the middle of this century.² This statistic illustrates global reality that we have encountered and why the city is confronted by a war of urban development. And, as a result of this rapid trend, we have demanded more physical changes in the urban development which has produced a number of tangible fragments falling from behind this process. The derelict buildings, useless street furniture and disgusting but unavoidable things have become a part of our everyday life. In other words, our city has partly consisted of these anonymous objects. But we often see that it can cause a man-made disaster. For example, at least 110 abandoned, vacant or open buildings have burned in Camden County, New Jersey, United States since 2010 in accordance with records from the city Fire Marshal's Office.

“This is just completely neglected from the city... These buildings become death traps.”³

³ C. Shelly, 2014

The words from one resident shows how these fragments have been reckoned from inhabitants. And it is not difficult to anticipate the future of these things becoming unfit for new urbanism. Being left apart with public indifference or vanished as if they did not exist. And, needless to say, this trend has surged up with many things that are devoid of signs of life in the place we live in. The research alongside these facts has thrown a fundamental question myself. For people who have a sense of detachment from what is going on in their city, can visual communication be used as a tool of encouragement? Can visual communication contribute to city life by planting an idea?

In the following section I will describe how can a visual communication designer bring unresponsive public's attention on this problem in connection with the theory from behavioural economics.

2.4

A Gentle Nudge

Being a Gentle Complainer

In some way, design is a means of inducement. With the design, someone tries to induce people to do a certain behaviour. According to the behavioural economic's theory published by some of American economists and psychologists, "nudging" for affecting the behaviour of some other people is the best tool in order that the people can make a right choice. And this concept also has been applied to the field of design as it has begun with not only economics but also a cross disciplinary way. According to behavioural economics, we live in the world where a choice architect planned and our life itself is a number of choice alternatives that a number of choice architects designed. They emphasise the necessity of nudging through two different types of men, in other words, an ultimate distinction between "Econ" and "Human". Econ is human as extremely rational men for seeking a profit. Econ is short for homo economicus and many economic theories have set up frame of logic based upon this Econ. However Human who

lives in the real world is full of holes. They often say: "I will fight the fat" but gorge themselves and then regret it, because of fat on a stomach, "I will work out" but put off exercise day by day, and then it lasts about a year or "I will save money" but allow to run out of a cash balance with being tempted by fine clothes. Who does behavioural economics look at is this kind of human being fallible. Due to this characteristic, our behaviours are affected by the choice architects everywhere. And, in this context, the behavioural economists have developed their logic for libertarian paternalism that a small intervention as much as poking in the ribs gently, in other words, nudging is necessary to entice the people for a better life.

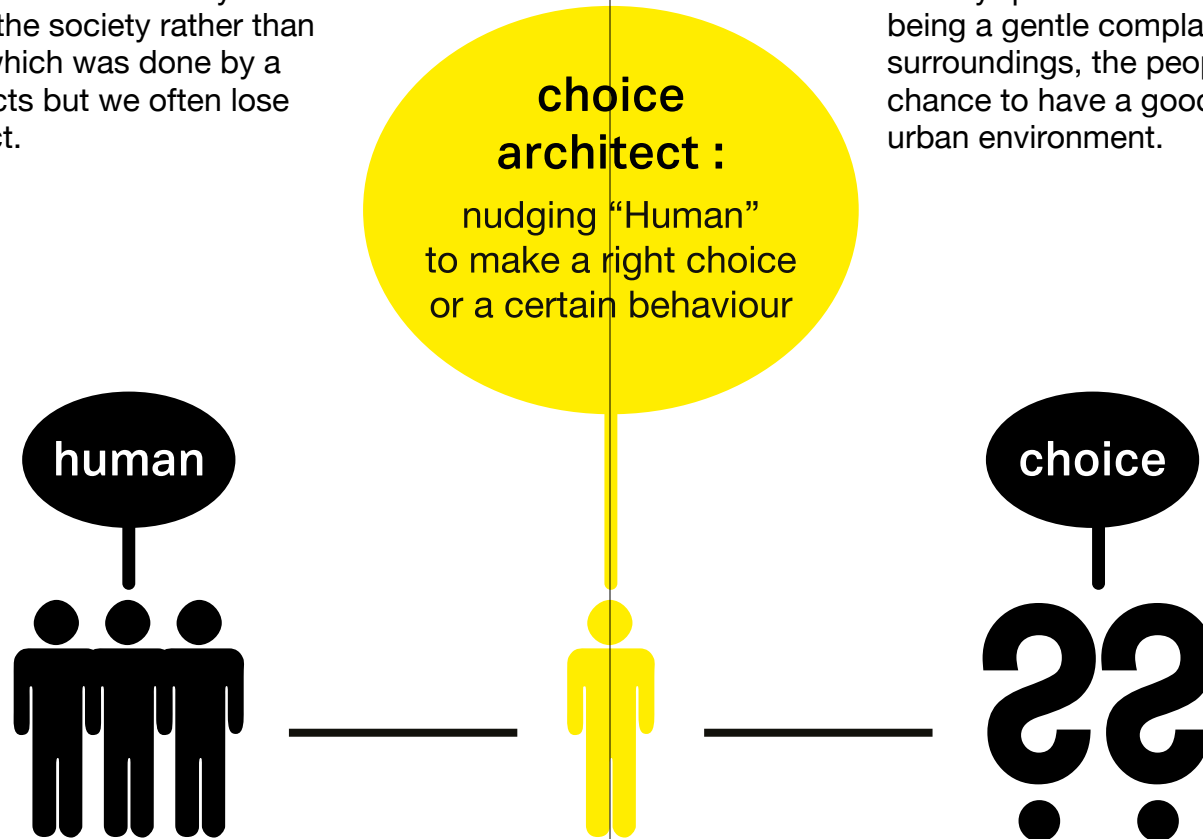
"By properly deploying both incentives and nudges, we can improve our ability to improve people's lives, and help solve many of society's major problems. And we can do so while still insisting on everyone's freedom to choose."⁴

Above :
A urinal in a men's
bathroom in Schiphol
Airport.

⁴ Thaler and Sunstein,
2008, p.8



I wondered if the same principle can be applied to my design project, along with a case of urinal in a men's bathroom in Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport in Nederland. Because a designer is able to perform a role of choice architect so that the designer can encourage, in other words, motivate the people to be aware of their urban surroundings. It is like generally we think local democracy is a dominant value of the society rather than the development which was done by a few choice architects but we often lose this sight of the fact.

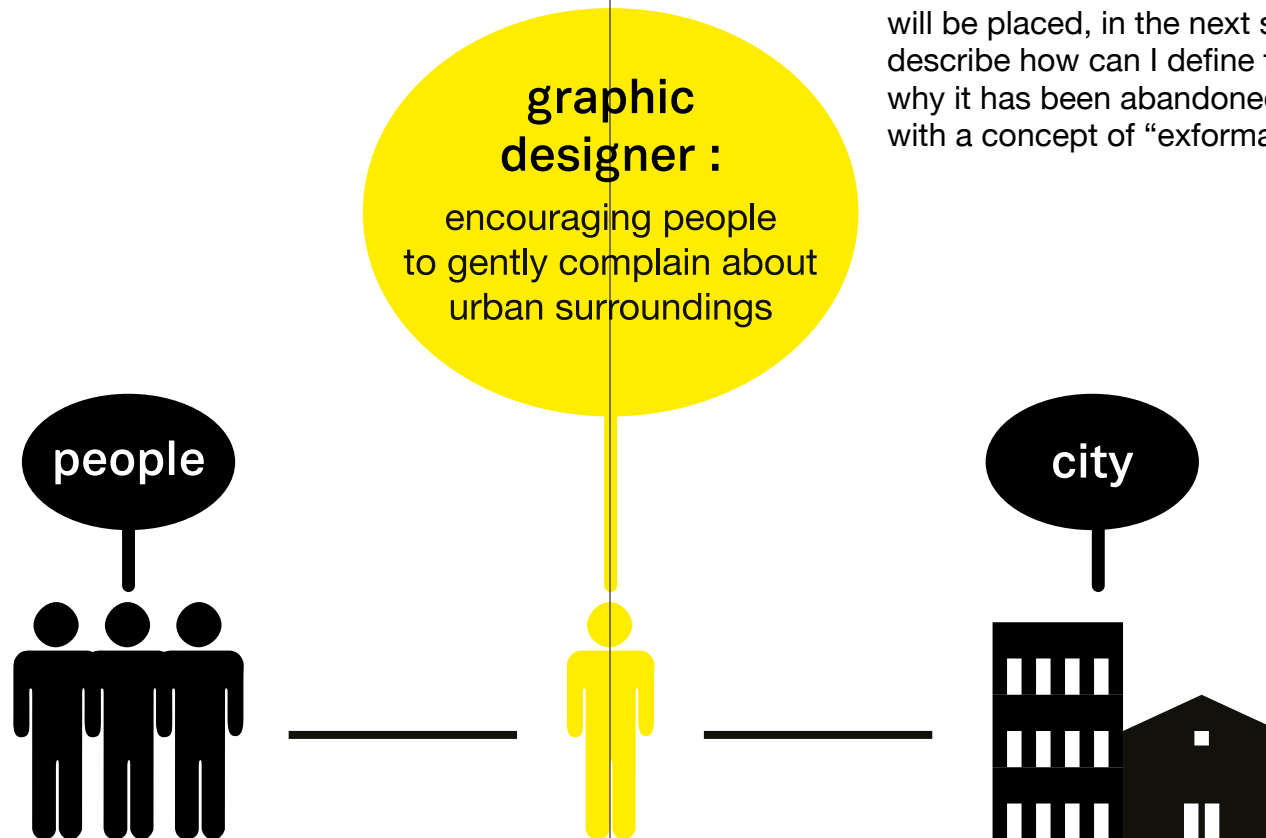


Through this process of thinking, I have analysed an idea of gentle complaint which is a keyword of my project. In terms of gentle complaint, it is not an aggressive idea yelling at something. This is a gentle way to spew out all of mornings about every physical problem in the city. And, at the same time, it can be a means of "dialogue" I described in the key question of the project. Through being a gentle complainer in the messy surroundings, the people can have a chance to have a good moan about their urban environment.

A gentle complaint is a tool of communication enabling them to express their mind when they do not agree with something in the streets. Also complaining is basically a way for potential improvements by presenting opinions.

We can complain on the urban environment surrounding us like we do the same thing when it comes to disgusting coffee, unpleasant service or inferior products.

I have formulated a hypothesis that a gentle complaint as a mode of communication can lead to the positive development in city life. As shown in the following diagram, the designer will perform a role of motivator to encourage the inhabitants to complain about the place they live in.



This hypothetical proposition has also led to following two questions to go further. At first, where the users can use this project for? And secondly, how can I design this complaining tool? An answer for the first question will be a definition of site and an answer for the the second one will be developed into a design strategy later on. In regard of the definition of the site where the project will be placed, in the next section, I will describe how can I define the site and why it has been abandoned in relation with a concept of “exformation”.

2.5

Public Indifference

Exformatted Site

To know something, we have to understand what we do not know first. In other words, we should understand what is a problem before we find a solution. However our contemporaries seem that they already have a knowledge of many things. In a way, it seems we know almost everything. We often say that we know well about our neighbourhood, streets on the way to work and the city centre where we work as well. This is chronic and it often disturbs us to think more carefully.

“Modern people frequently remark, “I know, I know.” I don’t know why, but it’s always said twice. When the topic is the architect Le Corbusier (1887-1965), they’ll say, “I know. I know,” When the white tiger at the Delhi Zoo comes up in conversation, they’ll say, “I know, I know.”...

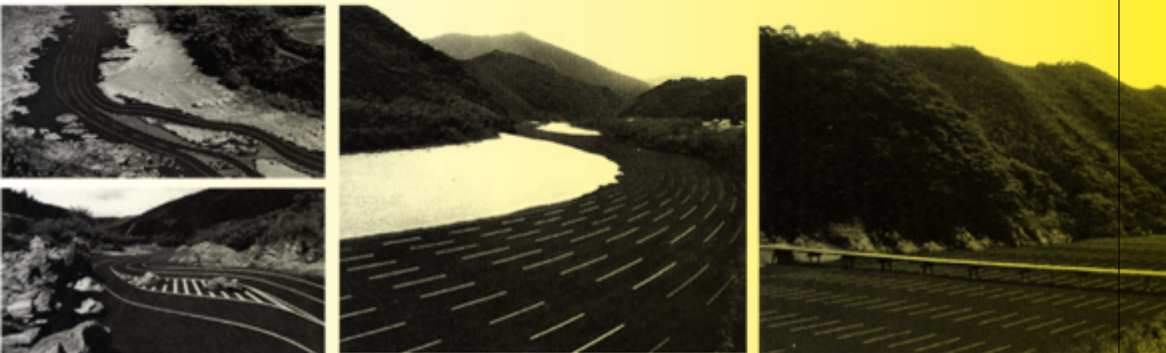
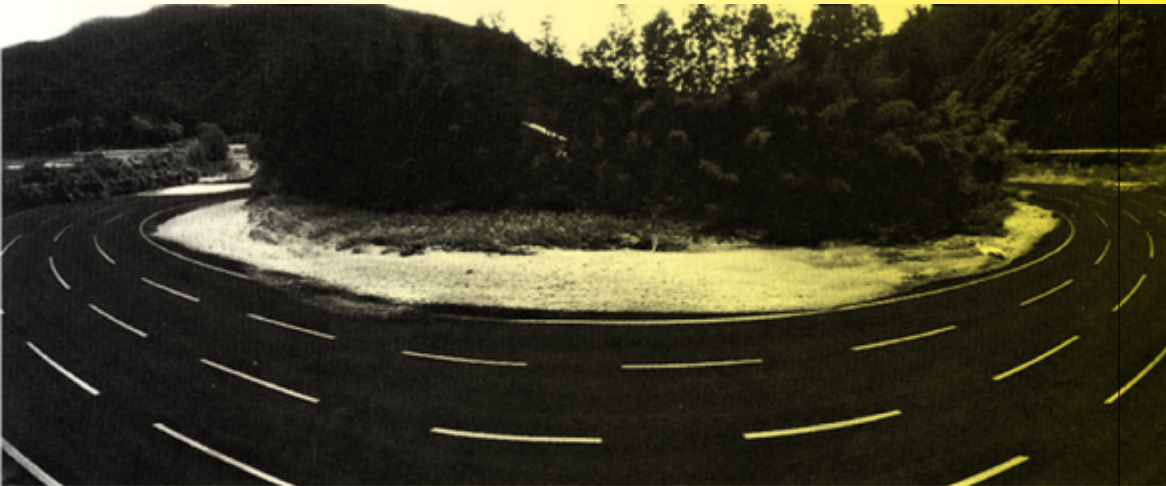
The remark “I know, I know” puts and end to our conversation like ringing down the final curtain on thought.”⁵

⁵ Hara, 2007, p.372

Japanese graphic designer Kenya Hara suggests a concept called “exformation” which he describes as a part of conceptual pair along with information. According to him, exformation dose not mean “making known” but understanding “how we little know”. And the idea of this concept led to a series of experiments with students in Musashino Art University in Tokyo. Every experiment was focused on understanding how little we know about a certain figure. For example, a site for one of the experiments was the Shimanto River, the clearest river in Japan. According to him, this river is well known as one of the clean rivers with beautiful waterways, and it is acknowledged throughout the country. However, in some way, they do not know about that river.

“I had been to the Amazon, the Sahara, and even to the Iguazu Falls on the Argentina-Brazil border, but had never visited our own Shimanto River. Nor had any of my students been there, although they could all conjure up a preconceived image of it; so we had our theme.”⁶

⁶ Hara, 2007, p.378



In this context, what they eventually did is a visual simulation converting a surface of the river into a full-scale asphalt road with traffic lines so that people could see a scale of the river as well as streamflow in a very different way. From this point of view, I was able to find an idea of how to define the neglected, ruined or abandoned anonymous objects on the streets. Exformatted objects, that is what I would like to deal with in my project and the project will be aimed at building awareness of those objects in the city.

In relation with this, I thought we tend to impose a negative connotation on a certain street object, architecture or a certain neighbourhood. And this connotation can be a trigger to generate the exformatted objects in the city. For example, I took a survey asked Bergen citizens about anywhere they do not like in the city. The interview had an age limitation of 20 years or above. the number of total participants was 40.

*Opposite page :
Shimanto River in Japan
(above) and
a visual simulation from
the students in Musashino
Art University (under)*

The question was: Let me know anywhere you don't like in Bergen. So every respondent wrote down where they do not like with a reason why they do so on the questionnaire. The most remarkable aspect from results of this survey is reasons they said. This is because over half of respondents described the reason by using only one or two words such as dirty, boring, dark and so forth in contrast with the rest of them who mentioned a clearer reason and circumstance with their personal associations as below.

"That place is always crowded because it is a sort of meeting point. It disturbs me."

"It's because of a disgusting smell from several piss walls in that street."



2.6 Characteristics of a Genre

Site Specificity

As I mentioned earlier, a starting point of my project is in characteristics of the place, the city. And, of course, it is obviously a sort of site-specific project. In a massive stream of contemporary art, a term of “site-specific”, “site-related” or “site-based” has developed with a series of installation art works, but essentially an idea that is inherent in those works comes from a locational context of a site where the work is going to be set on. Whether the work is a sculpture that will exist permanently on the site or an instant performance which will be ephemeral, there is a correlation between the work and the site. South Korean art critic Miwon Kwon have defined the characteristics of a chain of these art works in her 2002 book *One Place After Another*.

“Site-specific work in its earliest formation, then, focused on establishing an inextricable, indivisible relationship between the work and its site, and demanded the physical presence of the

viewer for the work’s completion. The (neo-avant-gardist) aesthetic aspiration to exceed the limitations of traditional media, like painting and sculpture, as well as their institutional setting...”⁷

⁷ Kwon, 2002, p.11-12

As she says, the works based on this concept are produced by a close association existing between the locational context and author’s idea, and it also shows there is no limitation on which kind of media could be used in this kind of project. But, above all, what is paramount is that the idea should start from shared cultural codes in a certain society to specific stories in the site no matter what an end product looks like. In a way, it has similarities with rebellious graffiti from a street artist, a signage system from a graphic designer or an enormous size of sculpture from a prominent artist. However, these kinds of projects are not only focusing on the locational context but also understanding how people tend to behave. When I have brought the keyword, a gentle complaint in advance, it means that it is necessary to understand the people’s tendency of the people to encourage them to complain in urban life.

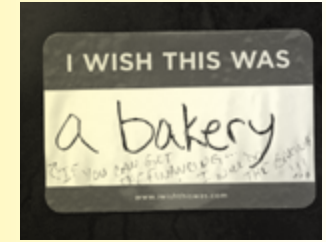
In relation to this, according to one American performance consulting company, there are 5 reasons why customers do not complain as below.

1. *It is too difficult*
2. *No confidence*
3. *Afraid of the outcome*
4. *Fear of retribution*
5. *Nothing to gain*⁸

⁸ Toister, 2013

This is, of course, a case of commercial customer service, but I can find hints of which factors should be considered to design the complaining tool. In order to give the reader an example in this part, I would like to provide one site-based project in connection with my topic.

In the project on the right-hand page, Taiwanese-American artist Candy Chang has tried to change a conventional perception on everyday object in city life. And the typical objects that were dealt with in this project are something apart from people's interest, or based on my idea, these things can be called as the exformed objects. The following paragraph is a description of the project introduced in her website.



Above :
Candy Chang's project, *I Wish This Was*

“Interactive public art project that invites residents to share their hopes for vacant buildings. Chang placed boxes of free stickers in businesses around the city and posted thousands of stickers on vacant buildings across New Orleans, so anyone walking by could fill one out. The stickers are vinyl and can be easily removed without damaging property. Responses ranged from the functional to the poetic: I wish this was... a butcher shop, a community garden, a bike rack, a place to sit and talk, an affordable farmer’s market, a taco stand, a donut/flower shop, full of nymphomaniacs with PhDs, a source of tasty healthy food I could afford, my art gallery, your dream, Heaven.”⁹

⁹ Chang, 2010

This description is very interesting because it reveals that her role as a supplier who generates a visible communication between the vacant buildings and the inhabitants reverted into a collector of poetic hopes and dreams for the future. The description has given how she effectively drew a dialogue between the urban surroundings and the people by a small intervention from a simple question and stickers as a medium. Reactions from the audience are also close to more positive hopes rather than negative complaints and this is what needs to be taken into account in my project. It means that the complaining tool for a gentle complaint is not going to be like an aggressive and skeptical expression of discontent. Additionally, what I have been impressed by this project is a fact that the people can participate easily through filling out a blank on the sticker. As seen in the 5 reasons why people do not complain, in the more complex procedure, the less amount of complaint will happen. This result can be put to use in site-based projects requiring public's participation. One of causes that led her project to be successful is the simplicity of procedures as well as the understanding the context of the vacant buildings.

2.7

Research Conclusions

A Hypothesis

In the summary of my research, I could define an identity and value of the project in the cultural and social context as well as the role as a graphic designer. During this stage, I used three different types of methodologies which has led to find the reliable truth in relation with the theme of the project. Throughout the whole process of the research, it has consisted of desk research, case studies and the interview with the people who belong to the target group.

Firstly, the desk research was initially focused on exploring the global trend of urbanisation with relevant statistics showing how this worldwide phenomenon has been rapidly accelerated. And then I also delved into what sort of problems has come up in relation to this and provided the figures underpinning my approach. After that, the research was extended to the concept of exformation explaining how neglected city objects caused by the public indifference can be interpreted in a hermeneutical point of

view on the social and cultural context. And eventually it led to shape a main idea of how to visualise the project in connection with a semiotic analysis.

Secondly, the research provided a couple of relevant projects showing how design stimulates action. Especially from a project in a case of Amsterdam's Schiphol airport that has reduced spillage by 80 percent, I explained how the idea of behavioural economics can be applied into the field of design and how design shapes a certain behaviour as a cause and effect link. This has been crucial to define my role in the project, a complaint architect, to nudge people to be aware of their urban surroundings.

Lastly, the interview with a small number of the focus group (40 interviewees answered) were also included as a part of the research. In the interview, the only question was: Let me know anywhere you don't like in Bergen. And my intention behind this was to get in-depth responses rather than a sort of statistical test.

However when it comes to the results from the interview, there were a lot of similar responses caused by priming effect that I did not intend.

I have found that this was because every respondent was exposed to previous answers in the upper part of answer sheet when they got interviewed. In a way, some of them tended to get influenced from the other answers and assimilated to them. Consequently, the results were put on hold though some of responses showed how they little know about their everyday place in connection with the concept of exformation. But somehow, over the research process, I have been to every place mentioned in the answer sheet, which was helpful to get to know a new city better.

The results, as a whole, show that we need to pay attention on what is going on in our urban surroundings in connection with rapid urbanisation and also give a delicate hint for how a graphic designer can contribute to the society in this context.

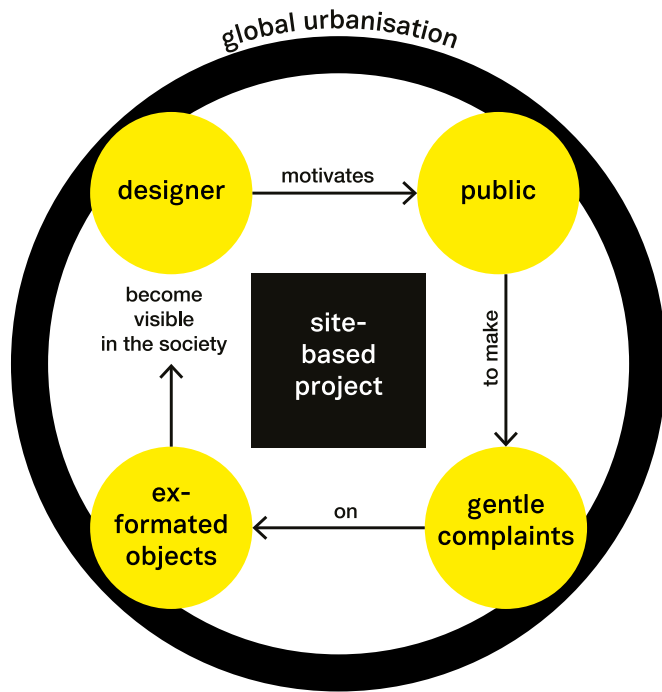
In the following pages, for helping reader's more clear understanding, I have included my specific conclusions on the analysis section in bullet points.

- A rapid trend of urbanisation causes the neglected objects which are left apart from public concern in a exterior of the city.
- One of negative aspects of this rapid urbanism is that these kinds of objects can be a death trap by imposing a negative connotation.
- Japanese graphic designer Kenya Hara provides a possible way to deal with these kinds of problems from the concept called “exformation” which can be applied to understand where and how we impose the negative connotation in the urban environment.
- A theory from behavioural economics explains how a choice architect can intervene between people and a choice that they are facing. From being a complaint architect, as a kind of intervention, a designer can gently motivate, in other word, nudge the target group to make a complaint in the project. A complaint against urban surroundings can be a way of communication, which is ultimately for the future improvement.

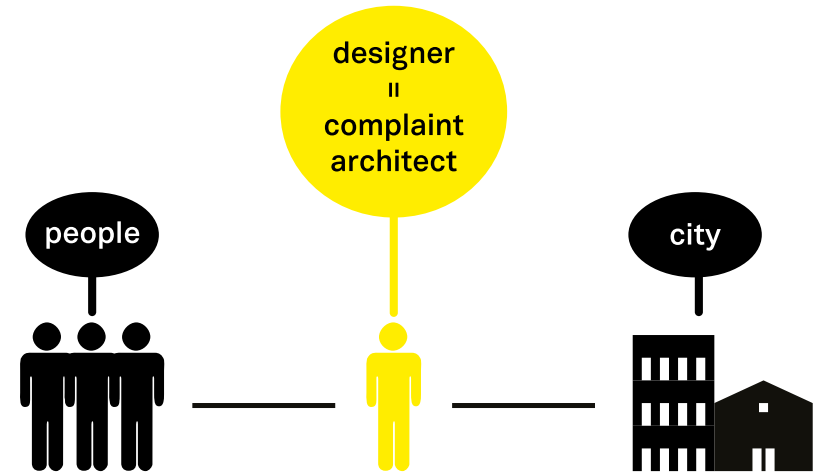
- In terms of a genre of the project, in contemporary art works, site-specific projects have established a relationship between the work and its site. And this characteristic is also connected to the theme of my project which is going to provide a tool of communication between the people and its site.
- I have chosen the word, a gentle complaint as a key concept for setting up a following design strategy.
- I am curious about a possibility of complaining to become a mode of dialogue between the urbanites and the place they live in.

Based on these conclusions I have put forward a hypothesis that a gentle complaint is a way of communication between people and grounds of complaint and it can be a mode of dialogue in between.

This hypothesis will be explored over the whole design process to answer the key question.



To show how I have built the structure and objective of the project from various points of research conclusions I have also included a couple of diagrams as above. The left one is a diagram representing the structure and objective of the project. On a basis of the research, I have set up my goal is to design a communication tool for gentle complaining that provides opportunities for the people to say something about the exformated objects in their urban surroundings.



Above, in relation with the theory from behavioural economics, a diagram also illustrates a role of designer in my project. As if a policy maker performs a role of choice architect, a designer could be a complaint architect who designs the complaining tool and nudge the users to use it.

2.8 Key Concepts

The Wordbook

In this section, in terms of the key concepts coming from the research, I will serve a brief explanation to help the readers understand the certain terms that I have used in this thesis and emphasise those concepts once more.

Exformatted site (or exformatted objects) :

I am using this term to call various objects which are totally vaporised by public indifference in the city. These are physically existing but, in a way, vaporised from people's cognition. For example, in my project, this word especially refers to a neglected building, useless street furniture, public facility, a hoarding, etc. though the word originally has a more wider range of meaning about how we little know.

A complaint architect :

This word means a designer, in other words, it is my role in the project. A complaint architect tries to gently nudge people who are not pleased with exformatted objects to complain, in other words, to communicate with the place

they live in rather than push or put pressure on them.

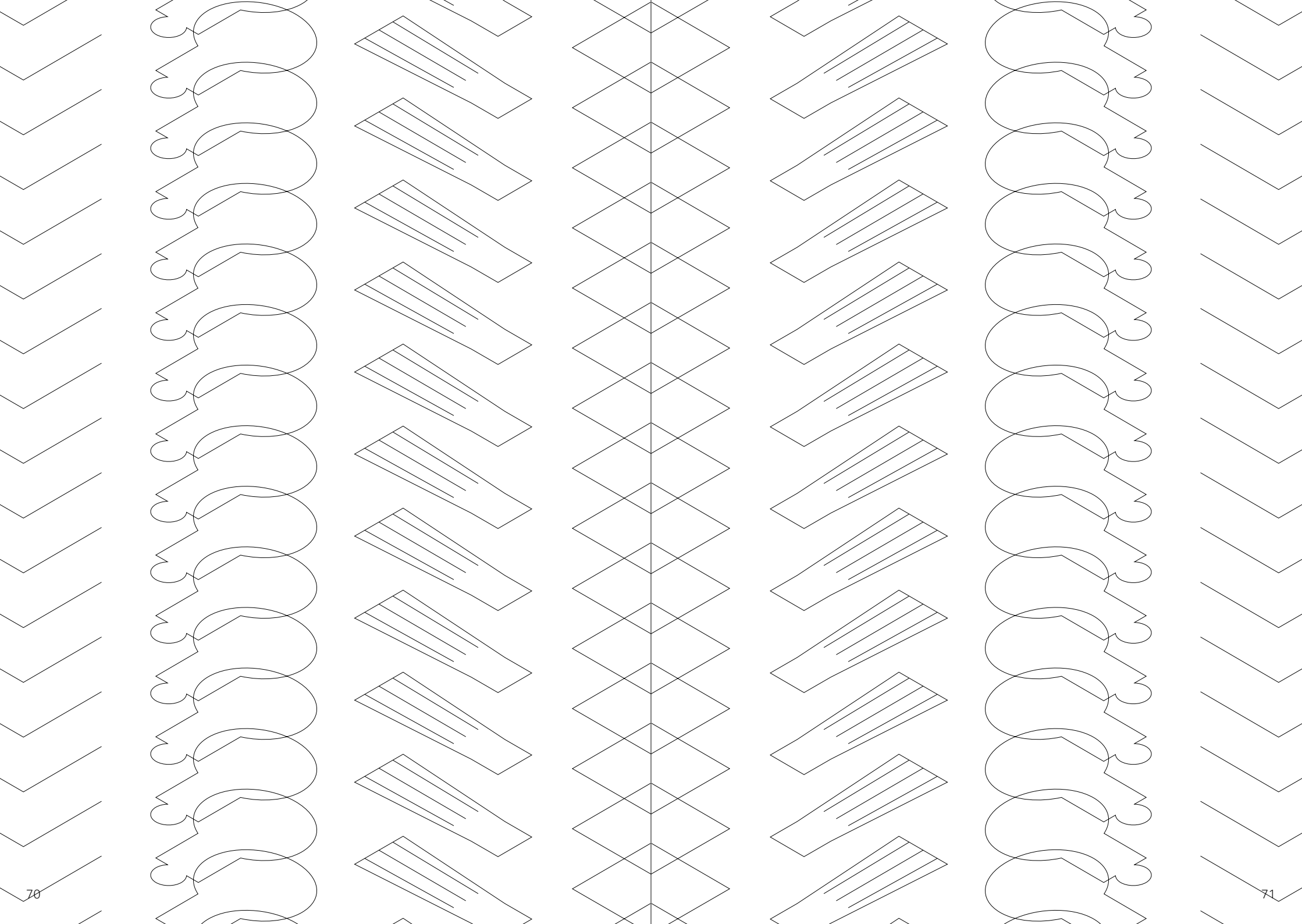
A gentle complainer :

This is how I want the users to be. The people who use a complaining tool can be a gentle complainer. However a way of complaining is far from cries of outrage, yelling or swearing. Being a gentle complainer, in this project, means saying something with a quiet but humorous tone for producing a positive result.

A complaining tool :

This will be a product being able to use for complaining on their surroundings. Over the design process, I will try to experiment and improve how it can be used.

In the next chapter, to prove the hypothesis, I will describe how the outcomes from the research with the key concepts have been shaped into the design strategy.



Section 3

Design Strategy



3.1

Black Symbol

Inverting Negative Connotations

Since I have done my research on the rapid trend of urbanisation, I have realised that there is a sort of a stigma about the exformed objects such as a deserted building or abandoned stuff around us. And this negative connotation has become a trigger of making them totally vaporised from public attention. This grim story passes down from generation to generation. When it comes to a complaint as one of my key words, it also has a negative connotation for people who do not want to make a fuss. And that is why I have put the adjective 'gentle' in front. I have particularly got my interest on how can this complaint become gentle and how can the users have a good moan about their urban surroundings. To do so, a design process needs to aim to bring the public attention to these negative symbols in a positive way. And this basic idea from the research and analysis will be also integrated into the design process to invent a complaining tool.

3.2

Growing Mechanism

Making Things Visible

The complaining tool should be able to ensure the user's free rein about where and how they can use it. And, at the same time, it also requires capability to visualise an increasing number of complaints. In so doing, it will make exformed objects, in other words, gentle complaints more visible in the society. In this sense, a designer has to pay attention for how to visualise stacked complaints and how can it be done by every user's hand. The complaining tool should be capable of this growing mechanism as per an amount of complaints.

3.3

Pilot Project

A Small Scale of Preliminary Experiment

An approach as a pilot project will provide a way of how to test out the complaining

tool as a mode of communication. In this sense, a small scale of preliminary experiments will be conducted in order to evaluate feasibility and effects rather than one big perfect project. It will be done as much as possible to see the different possibilities. And, the experiment method will be improved and revised between each version of experimentation based on a reflection on results with a observation of the user response to the project.

3.4

Ephemeral Presence

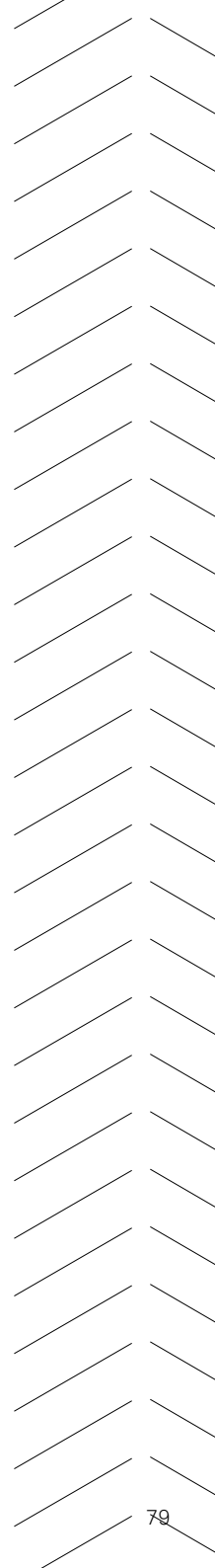
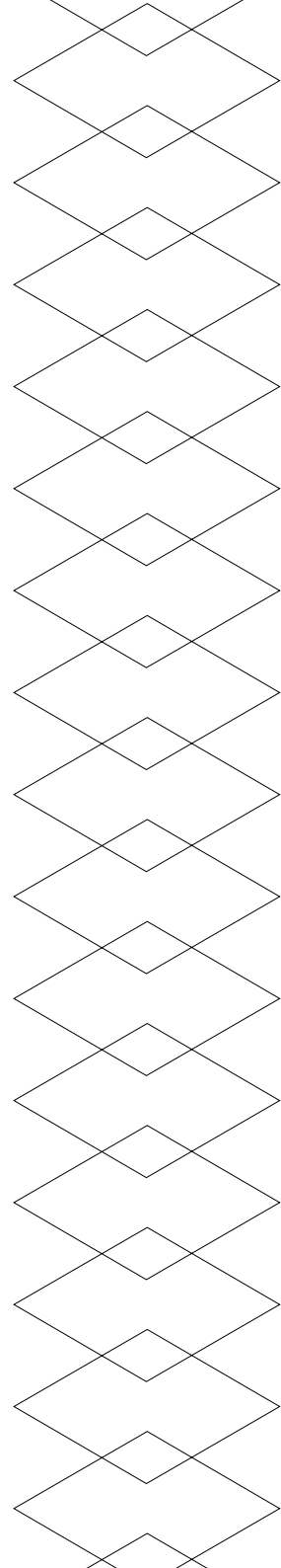
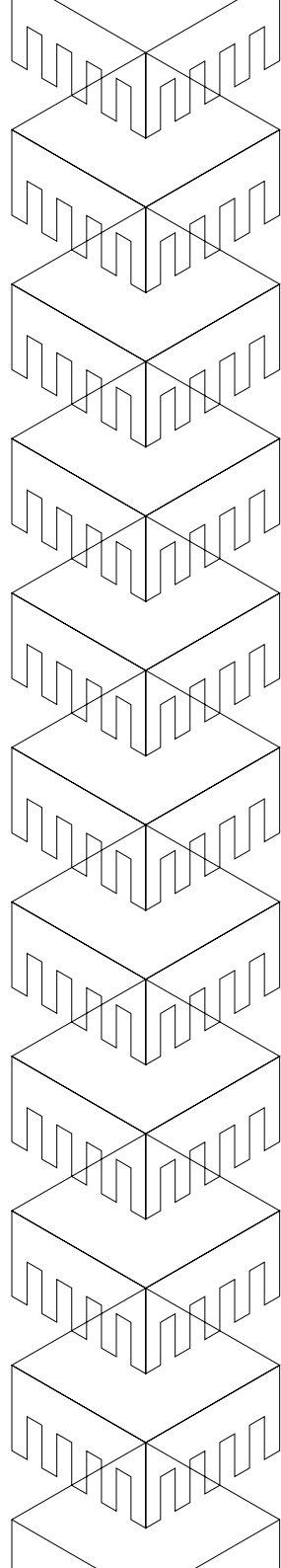
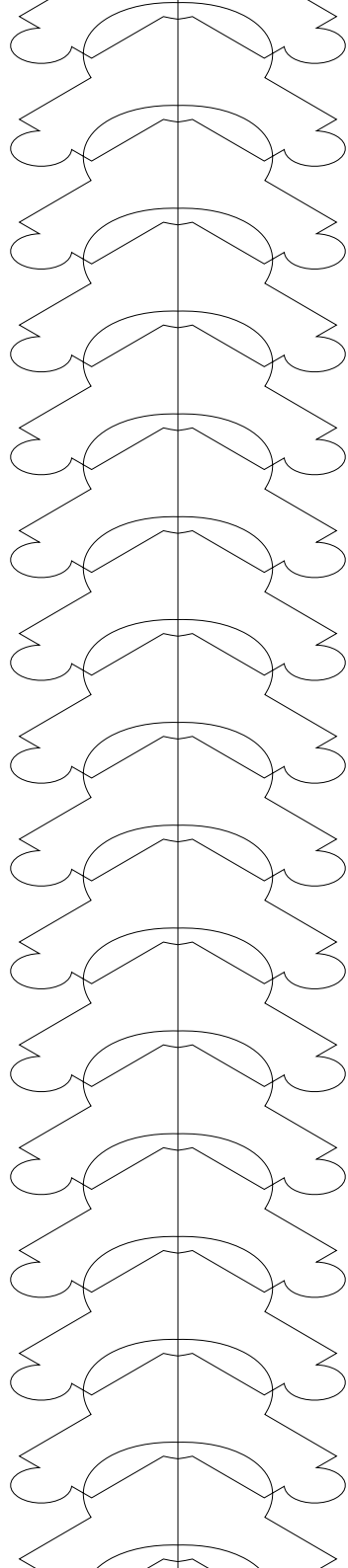
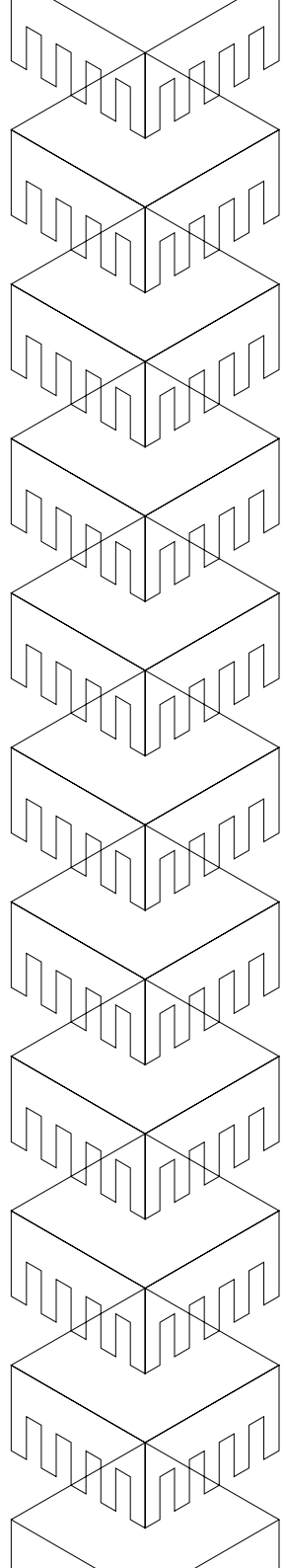
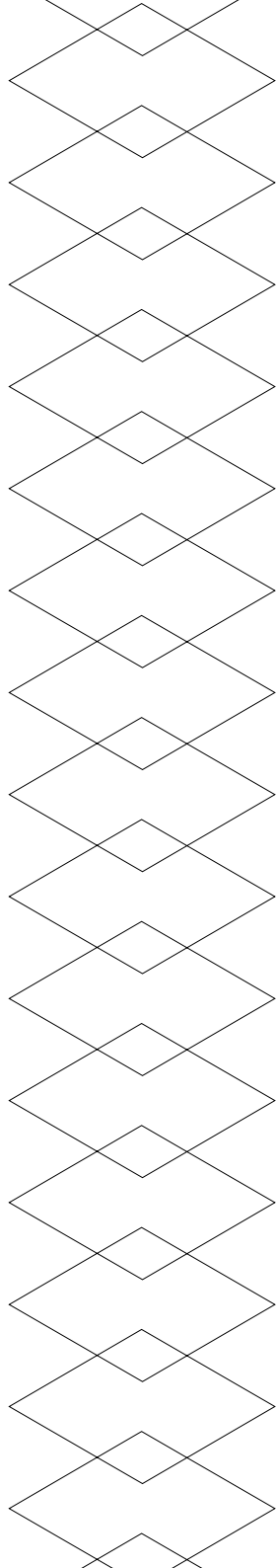
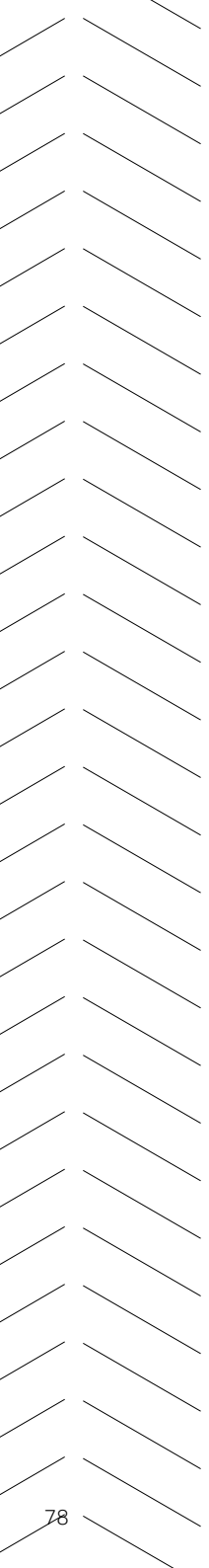
Standing Apart from Vandalism

“Site Specificity used to imply something grounded, bound to the laws of physics. Often playing with gravity, site-specific works used to be obstinate about presence, even if they were materially ephemeral, and adamant about immobility, even in the face of disappearance or destruction.”¹¹

¹¹ Kwon, 2002, p.11

When it comes to materiality of the project, I totally agree with South Korean art critic Miwon Kwon's view. As a site-

based project in the open air, inevitably, the project would be present in an outdoor condition for a certain period of time. However, I do not believe my project should be present permanently by using high-quality materials because, in a way, an ultimate goal of the project is for planting an idea rather than a physical presence. In this connection, an approach of anti-vandalism should be considered for people who do not like to rub out their property for removing unexpected graphic works. In this project, a designer will works as a complaint architect, but it does not mean I can anticipate where the users are going to complain. It can be possibly done on private properties as well, which can cause another problem. In this regard, a complaining tool needs to be easy to remove as well as easy to use.



Section 4

Pro- cess



4.1

Introduction

A Series of Experiments

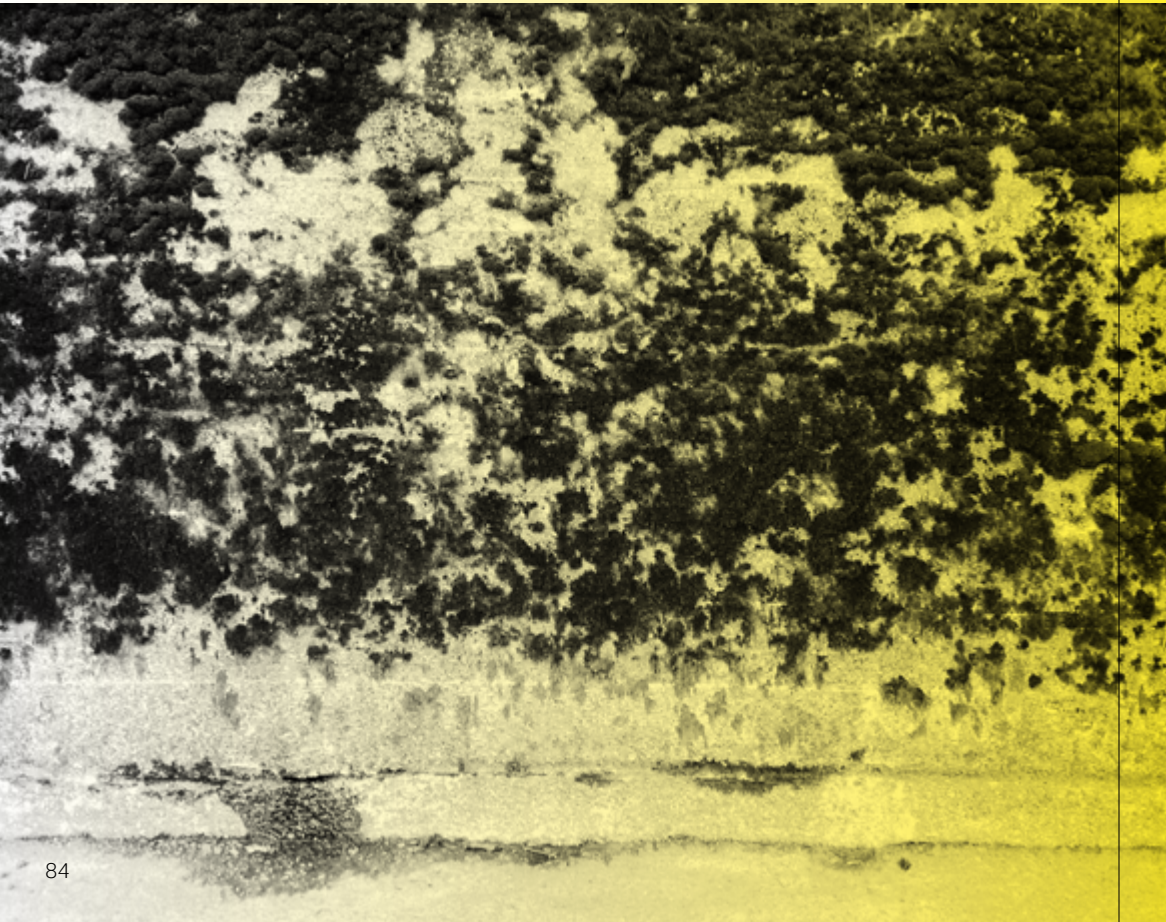
In the last chapter I proposed the strategy for how to connect my research outcomes into a practical design process. In this chapter, I will provide how the initial idea in the text has taken form and shape. For delivering greater understanding and enjoyment of the project, this chapter will be full of sketches and pictures from the process of trial and error.

Firstly, for the subsequent section, *Idea Development - Visualising Actions*, I will illustrate how I have explored varied possibilities to visualise the idea, how I have reached to one black symbol having a certain connotation, and how I have added a value as an icon of the project. And then in following four consecutive sections, from *Experiment Version.1* to *Experiment Version.4*, I will exhibit how a complaining tool has been formulated and improved from results of each experiment, and what was my intention behind that. Finally, for the last section, *Pilot Conclusion - An Unofficial But Humorous Dialogue*, I will describe what I have developed and achieved from this process as a whole.

4.2 Idea Development

Visualising Actions

In terms of how to visualise people's action, in other words, how to visualise gentle complaints in this project, I was imbued myself to explore a few different possibilities.



The first idea came from a negative symbol imposed on abandoned and unmanaged objects in the city such as damp moss. For example, we can easily see moss-covered walls or street furniture because it has been growing up almost everywhere. This plant communities tend to be expanded especially in ruined and deserted objects. In this regard, I thought this negative symbol could be a starting point. Also I was thrilled myself at this way of approach because this growing process could be used to visualise an increasing amount of complaints in a more spontaneous way. So, from having a glance at how to generate fractal geometry to sketches and models, I explored the world of this growing mechanism to see how can it work and how it looks like.

*Left side :
A Photo from the moss-
covered wall in Bergen*



After several inspirational drawings, I focused on visualising fake moss which can artificially grow up to practically use this idea.





And then, to carry on this idea with simulation models, I used several types of thread and paper on a surface of a few different objects.





The idea was also expanded to use a form of mushroom in a similar way.





However, through this process, I could find practical problems of developing the initial idea.

In a way, I still had a doubt about how can it be applied on different kinds of surfaces with a positive-looking form. Instead of going further with this first idea, the process shifted to another possibility for inventing the complaining tool.

Since I have set up the design strategy from the research outcomes, turning a black symbol into more positive one has been one of valuable purposes of the project. And, in this connection, another negative symbol, a spider eventually stimulated my interest. Because it also has a meaning of haunted and deserted house with its web, along with moss. Moreover, from the user's point of view, a spider shape is instantly recognisable in relation with a cultural code.

Opposite page :
A Photo from
Håsteinsgate

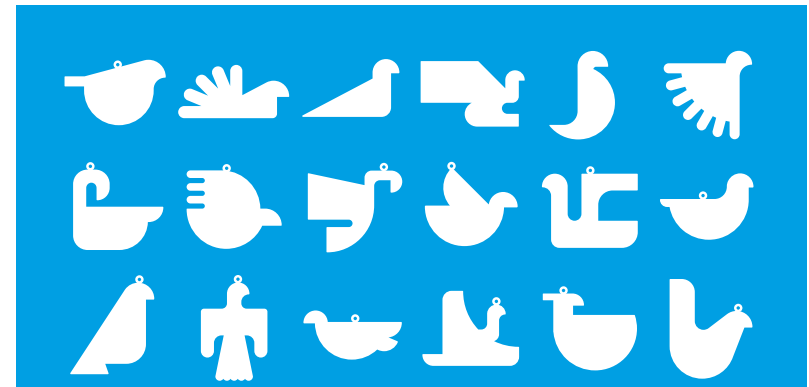
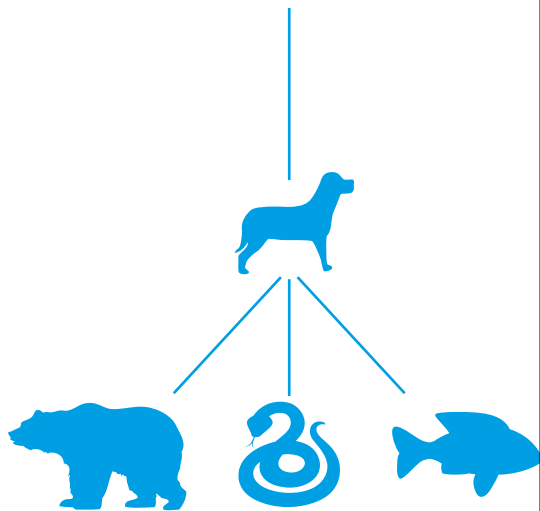


This transition point of using the recognisable symbol has partly come from the idea of fake gardening day which was done in a mini project for Håsteinsgate, Laksevåg in Bergen.



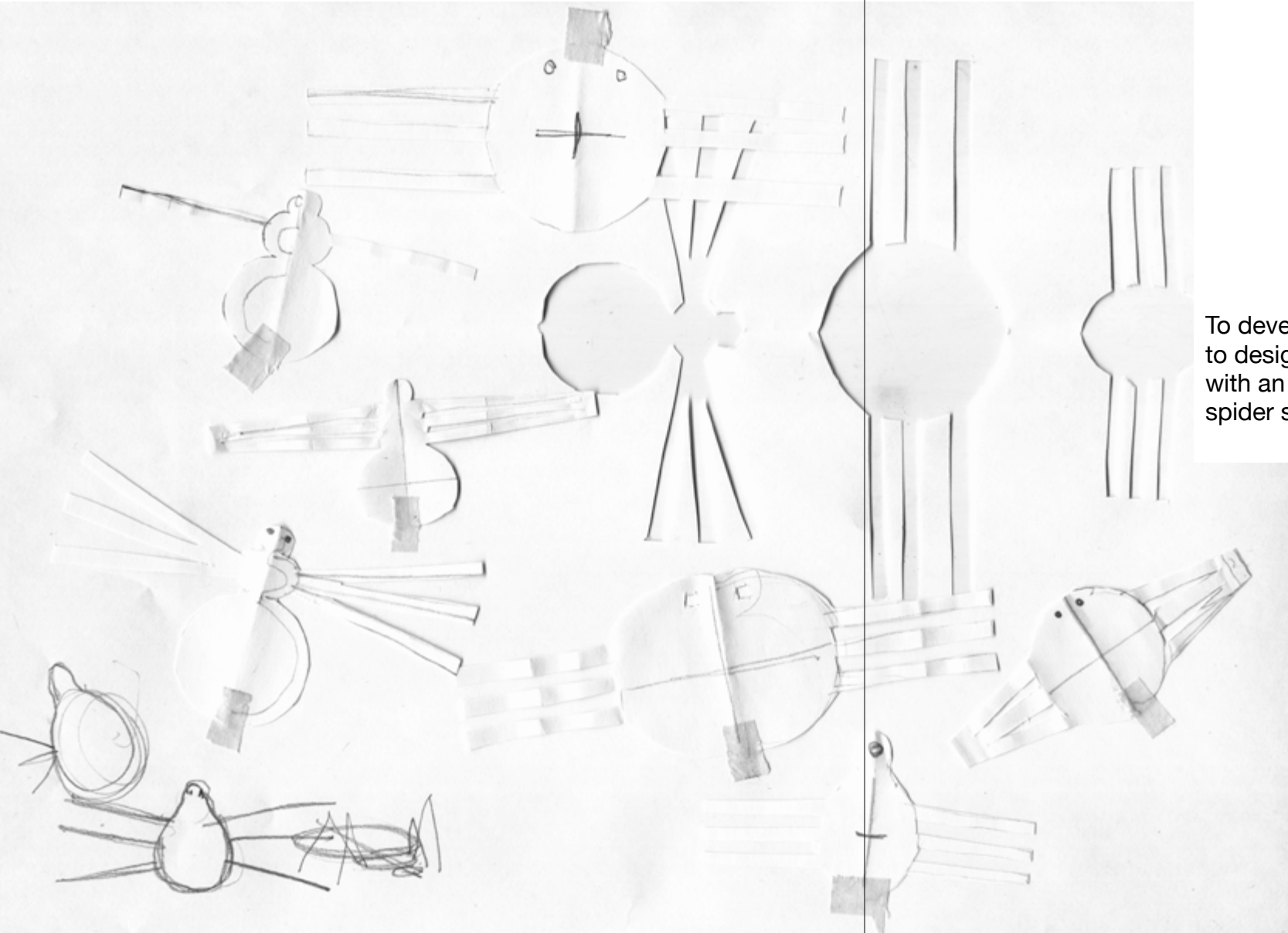
In this two-week project I focused on making an invisible link with community friendship between inhabitants having a different background. What came up as a suggestion was a sort of fake gardening day that the people are supposed to choose a certain figure from a range of options by answering a question such as “What kind of bird do you like to present to your neighbour?”. And then, by user’s hand, those chosen figures will be placed on ugly objects in this street later, so that these objects can be transfigured into an artificial public garden. For example of a hypothetical first event, I designed varied shapes of bird which are detachable from a poster and made a simulation of how it will look like on a long-distance ugly fence in that street.

ex.
 What kind of pets
 would you like to present to your
 neighbour?

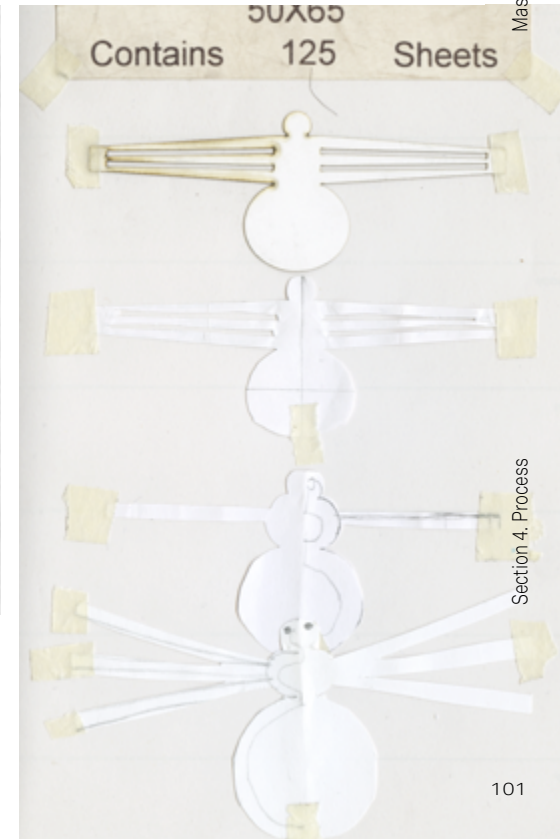




The outcome has brought a significant change to design a complaining tool. Because it can be one possible answer for how to connect the people with a sort of exformed objects on the streets.



To develop this idea I embarked to design the complaining tool with an inspiration from varied spider shapes.



Starting from the sketch and a cut-out, several models were produced by laser cutting with trial and error.



In the process, I contemplated how can it look positive, humorous and attractive, which can easily invite and stimulate the users to the world of the project.





In this sense, as an enjoyment of the process being a gentle complainer, I also added origami that can be done by user's hand.



From a few of simulations on different street objects, I have got satisfactory results.

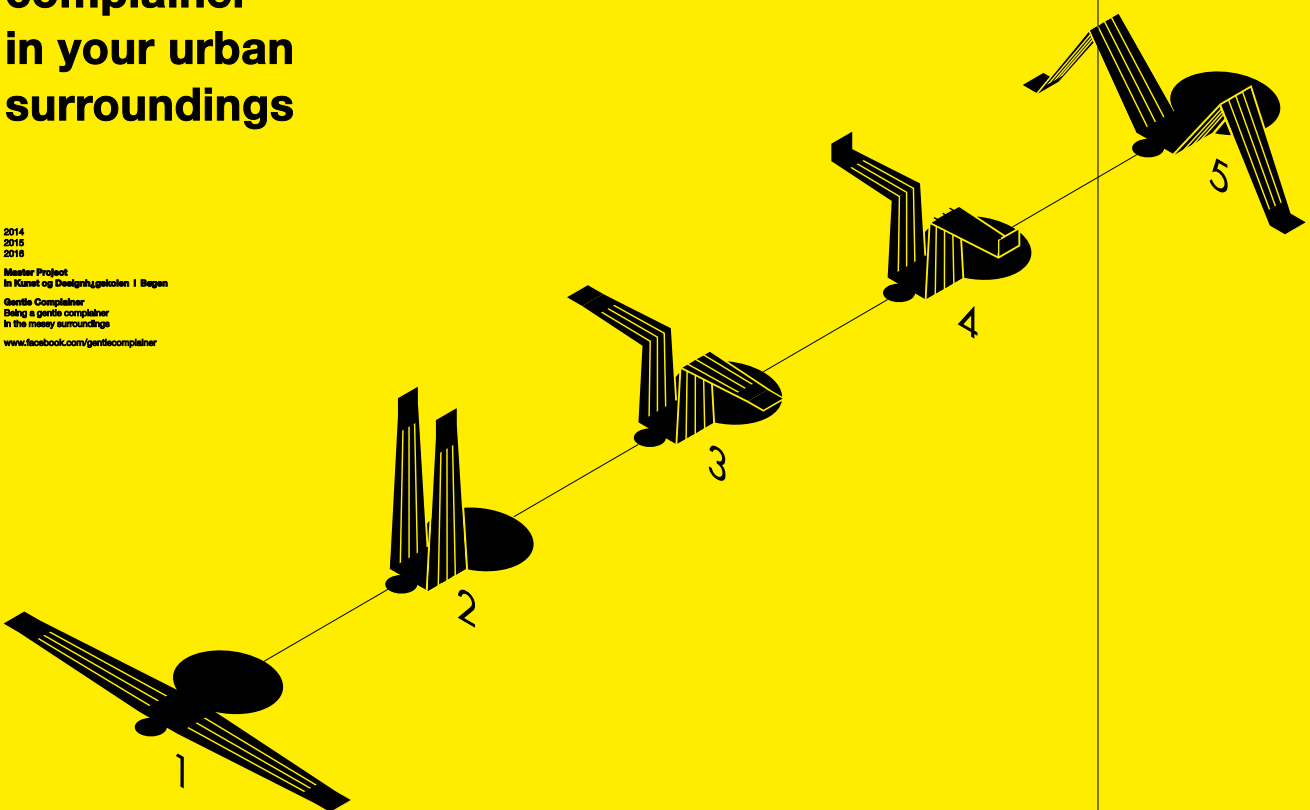


And I could have self-conviction of how it works from a developed shape that has been simply applicable on the varied surfaces by using a double-sided tape.



00
how
to be
a gentle
complainer
in your urban
surroundings

2014
 2015
 2016
 Master Project
 In Kinet og Design/arkitekton I Bergen
 Gentle Complainer
 Being a gentle complainer
 in the messy surroundings
 www.facebook.com/gentlecomplainer



01
pick
one spider

02
fold
the leg over

03
fold
the leg
in the middle

04
fold
the tip of
the leg

05
put it
where
you don't like

For the first experimentation in the away of my desk, I also designed a first information graphic providing the users a origami process. And I have opened project's Facebook page to communicate with the users and to provide brief information of the project in a consistent channel. For the first time, colour of spider was white with a bright yellow card containing the information of the project. However, to deliver a consistent visual identity of the project in connection with the information graphic, it has been changed to vivid yellow and black colouring which are widely used in a warning and safety sign in the city.

For the following four consecutive sections, I will illustrate what has been positive and negative from each experimentation based on analysis of results from both observation and statistics.

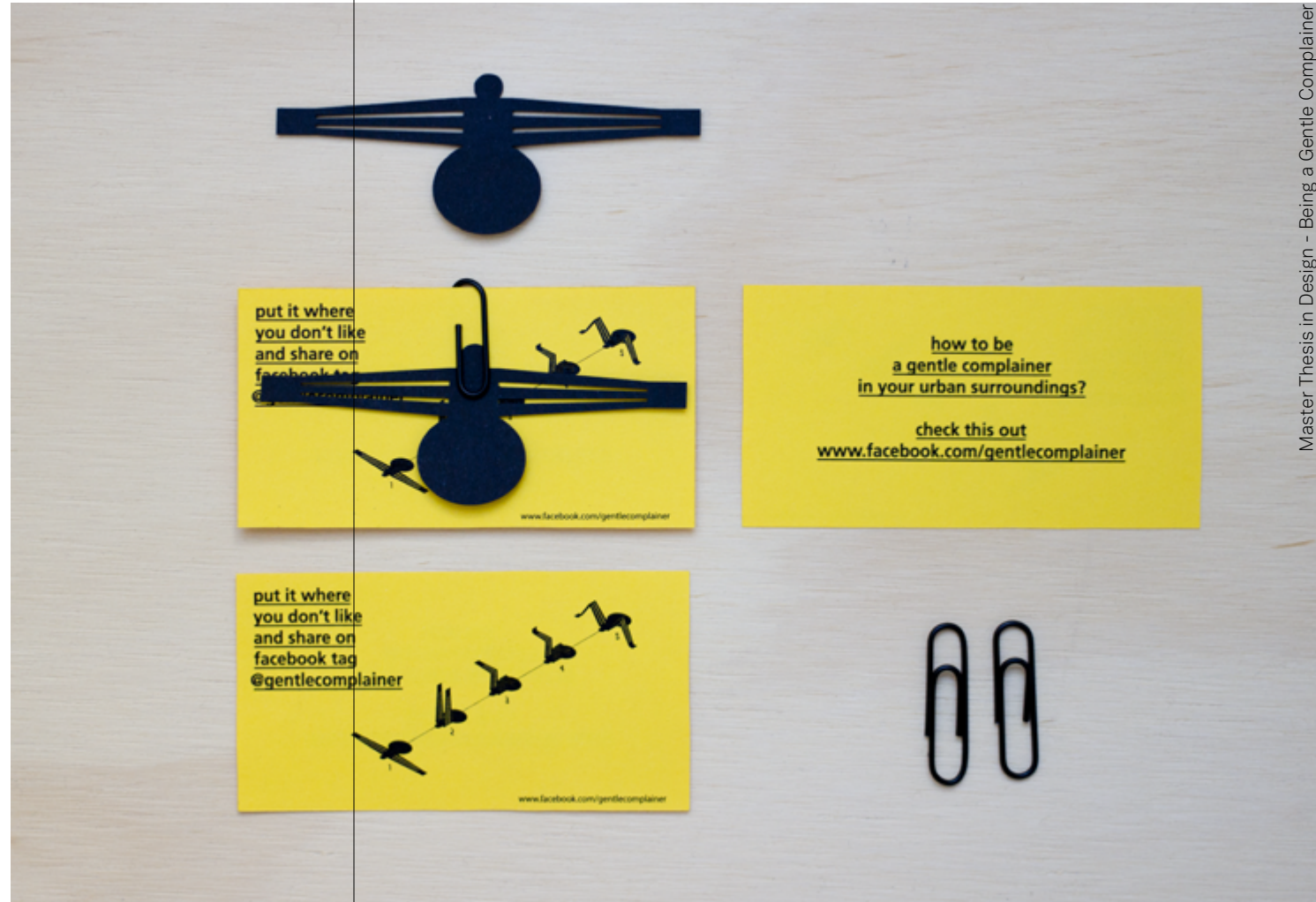
4.3

Experiment Version. 1

The Kick-Off

To start working on a series of experimentations in earnest and see how the people react and what happens, I produced a set of the first version of experimental materials. This first small event was conducted in three different places in Oslo during the summer in 2015.

Firstly, from the experiment in a public library, I wanted to see how the anonymous public reacts to the project. And, in the second and third places, I aimed for students studying architecture, design and art which are partly relevant with the theme of the project. In each place, I did put the set of cards containing a origami instruction and the brief information about the project beside a small sign and visited there again after a few days to check out what happened and tidy up. The next page will give details of statistical results from each place.





DEICHMANSKE BIBLIOTEK MAJOURSTUEN BRANCH

Place 1 :
Deichmanske Bibliotek
Majourstuen Branch,
Oslo, Norway

Result :
24 sets of 40 sets taken
(67.5%)

Period :
From 06-08-2015 (11:45)
To: 10-08-2015 (13:15)

67.5%



ARKITEKTUR - OG DESIGNHØGSKOLEN I OSLO

Place 2 :
Arkitektur - og
designhøgskolen i Oslo,
Oslo, Norway

Result :
27 sets of 27 sets taken

Period :
From 07-08-2015 (13:10)
To 12-08-2015 (14:30)

100%



KUNSTHØGSKOLEN I OSLO

Place 3 :
Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo,
Oslo, Norway

Result :
30 sets of 30 sets taken

Period :
From 27-08-2015 (09:50)
To 28-08-2015 (09:30)


100%



Generally I was satisfied from the results especially in the statistics about the number of participants who have taken the complaining tool. Because, in total, the experiment has led to invite 96 people to the project and 86.5 percent of the materials that I prepared have been taken over the experiment period. This figure shows that the people tend to get interested in the project easily from the delicate set of spider. The first impression about the project has been very positive from a warm cooperater as well. For example, a librarian of Deichmanske Bibliotek gave me very positive feedback when I was back there to tidy up.

Deichmanske bibliotek, Majorstuen filial shared Gentle Complainer's photo.
7 August · 🌐

Biblioteket kan brukes til både det ene og det andre: kunststudent Sun fra Kunst- og designhøgskolen i Bergen, har for eksempel valgt å benytte lokalene våre til sitt lille kunststunt #GentleComplainer.




Gentle Complainer
6 August · 🌐

free spider in Deichmanske bibliotek, Majorstuen filial from today to next Monday (10th of AUG) 😊 hope you can pick it up and show me that you're a good complainer!

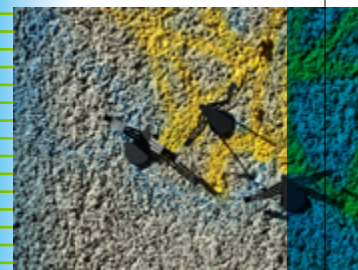
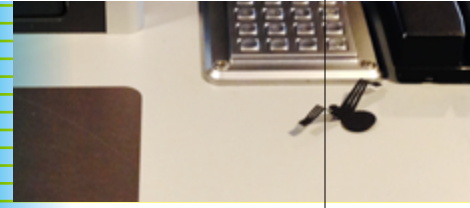
👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Monica Blegvad, Stine Elise Solberg, Liv Bergersen and 9 others like this. Most Recent ▾

1 share

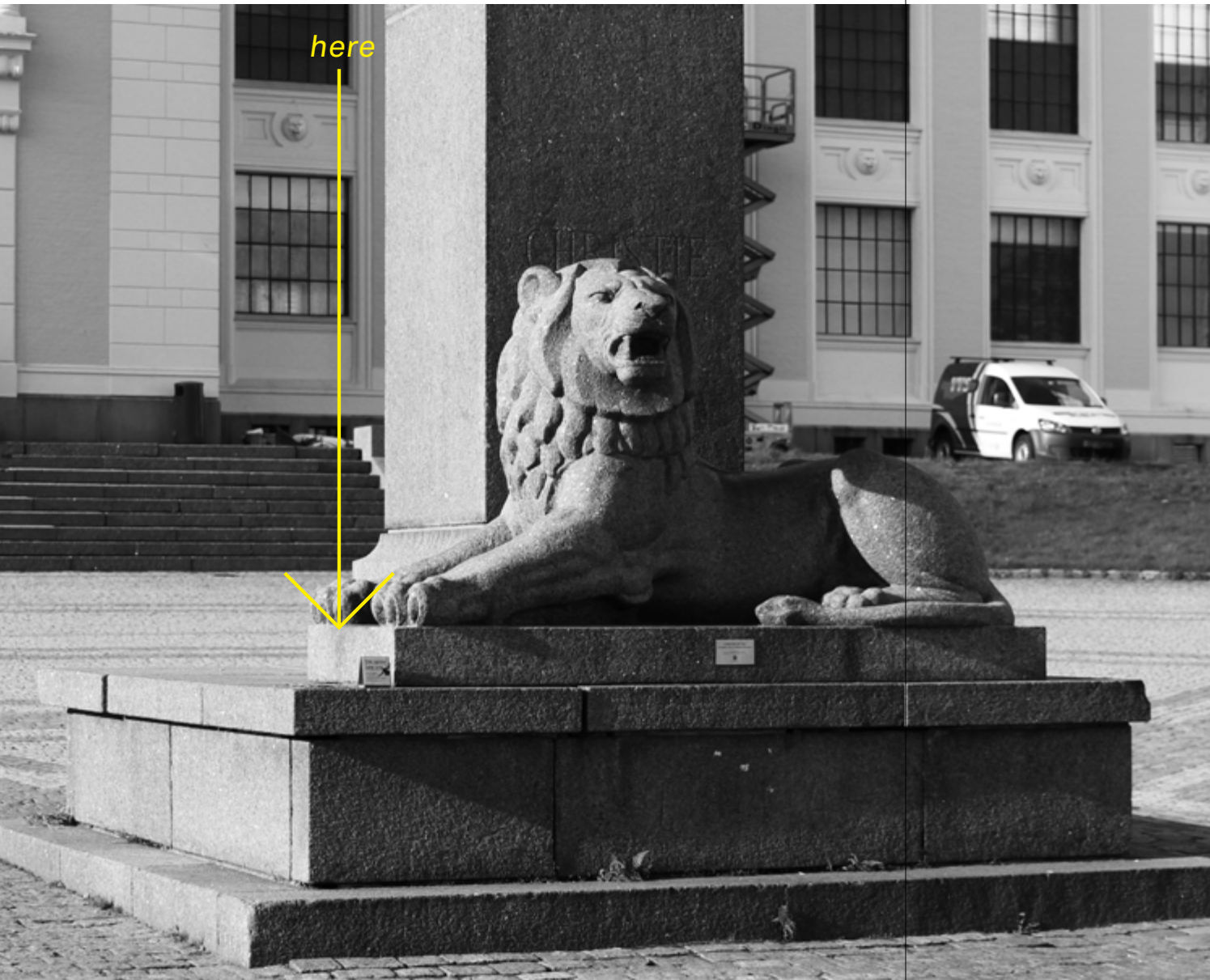
 Lone Wanderås Fossum Vilde Mei Lillemor Aina Synnøve Stine Elise
👍 3 · 7 August at 04:26

According to her the visitors seemed highly interested in the project and said it is truly funny and easy to see what it is. And thankfully, she put the project in their official Facebook page to promote the project as a library event.



However, in fact, it did not lead the people to use it for a purpose that I intended behind a delicate spider shape. Most of them used it in the inside of library and school buildings for fun. Also there was no action in the project's Facebook page. Based on these results from the first free distribution, I decided to change a place of spider distribution from indoor space to the open-air place, the street where the users can naturally imagine how and where to use it. The way of experiment needed to be improved for the purpose which is basically for an exterior of the city.





here

4.4

Experiment Version. 2

The Subsequent Challenge

The second round of experiment was carried in Bergen where the project has been born in. A first little failure in Museplassen where there was no traffic led to put the project in more busy streets. And, unlike last time, I stayed around the place where I put my project to observe how the people actually respond and, if needed, to introduce the project.



TORGALLMENNINGEN (BLUE STONE)

Place 1 :
Torgallmenningen,
Bergen, Norway

Result :
42 sets of 50 sets taken

Period :
From 10:30
To 11:30 (09-09-2015)

84%



here



KAIGATEN (NONNESETER)

Place 2 :
Kaigaten,
Bergen, Norway

Result :
32 sets of 50 sets taken

Period :
From 13:50
To 14:50 (09-09-2015)

64%



MARKEN

Place 3 :
Marken,
Bergen, Norway

Period :
From 11:00
To 12:00 (11-09-2015)

Result :
39 sets of 50 sets taken

78%



During the observation I could actually catch sight of passers-by getting interested easily. Also the first impression of the project has been still positive as shown in the statistical results. (113 people invited, 75.3 percent taken in total)

Some of the participants checked the Facebook page to see what is actually about by using their mobile phone and some followed the origami instruction right there. The idea combined with origami naturally drove the users to enjoy the process of the project even in the older generation.



Among the participants of all ages, children showed higher interests on this surprise invitation to the world of the project. They tended to be thrilled to get it, even though it seemed they did not grasp a meaning behind the delicate and cute spider. All of a sudden, I had to join a spontaneous discussion with a group of children who stayed glued to this small pilot project. Due to my poor Norwegian, their kind teacher should translate in between. The questions from them were simple but substantial.



Here is a summary of the conversation on 9 September 2015.



What's this?



This is a communication tool between you and Bergen. You can put it where you don't like in Bergen.



Why you're doing this?



I'm a design school student and this is for encouraging people being aware of their surroundings in the city.



Did you make this spider by yourself?



Of course.



Can I have one more?



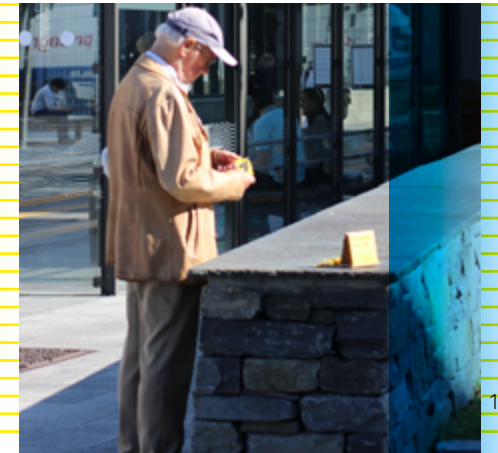
Sure.



Can I have one?



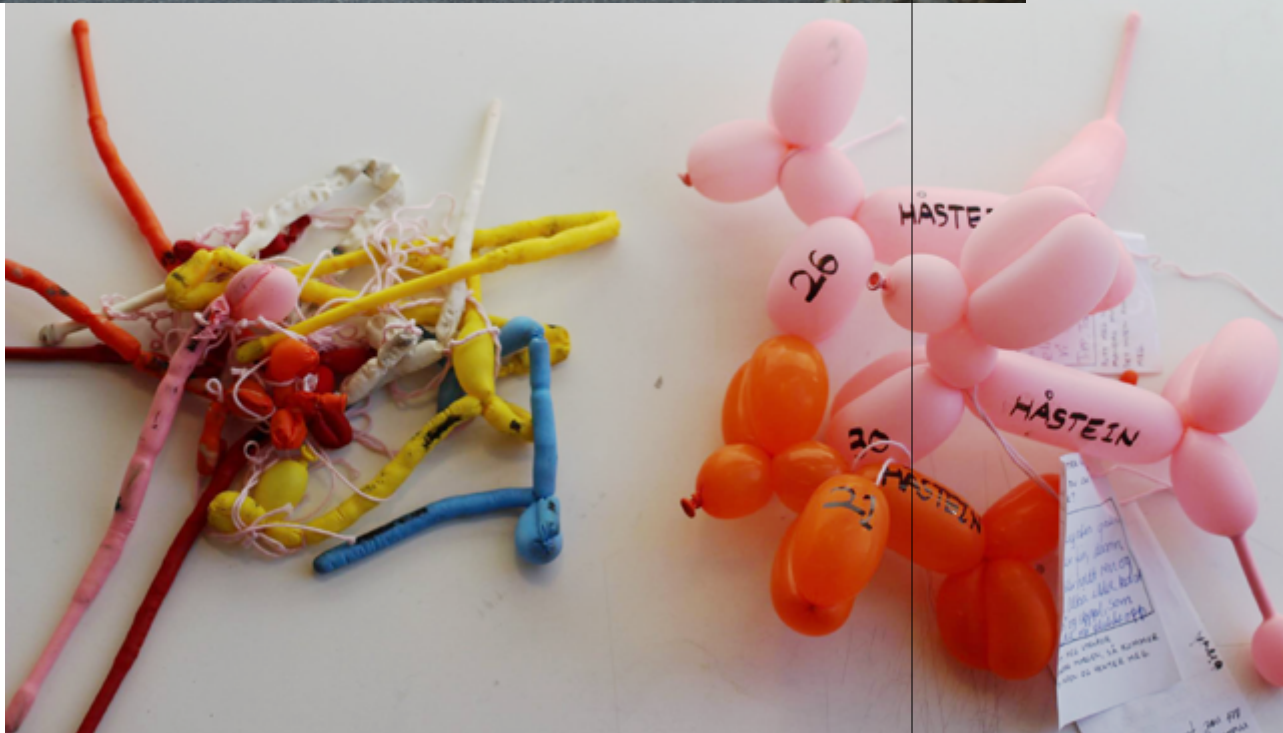
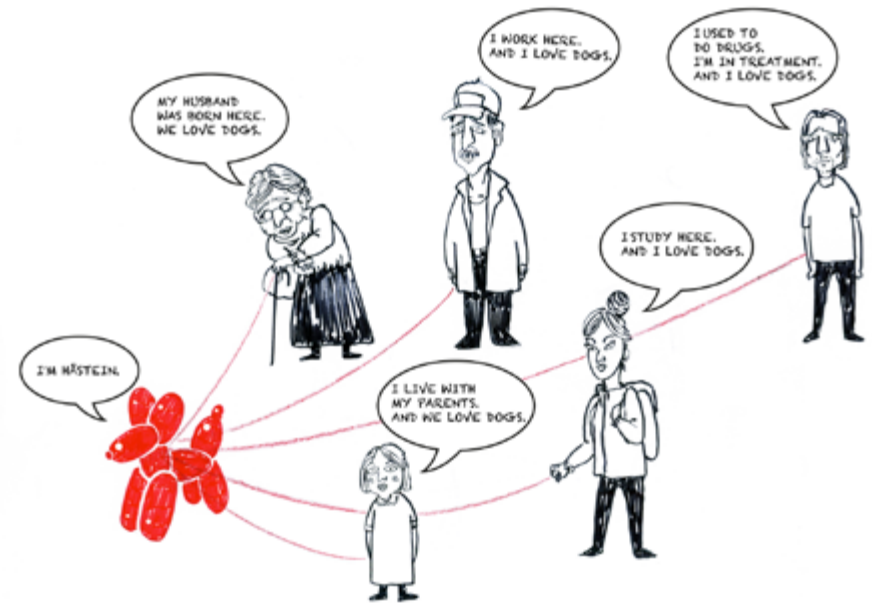
Sure, it's for everyone.





During this unexpected conversation I should think about the substance of the project again. But not everyone was positive like this group of children and many people who I met. Some of them threw the cards away so that the place was becoming messy as time goes by. And it was still unsure that this first positive enjoyment can plant an idea in the user's mind. And also, there were not big changes in the Facebook page as well. From a series of experimentations aiming at the anonymous public, I began to learn that the way of execution needs to be improved. Because, in a way, there is a wide range of target group in the big city and, from user's point of view, it is hard to come across as if the project is about their problems.

Regarding this, a hint came from one cross disciplinary work in the beginning of this two-year-long project.



In that short project, I collaborated with 5 students to get people's response in a certain street. And, in the end, we asked the question of how they think about their street by using 30 balloon dogs which were named and numbered respectively. Although we got only three answers among 30 households, but those were very specific and cooperative.

In this point, I became to realise each experiment needs a more limited area such as a certain neighbourhood or street with a limited target group living there.

4.5

Experiment Version. 3

On the Improve

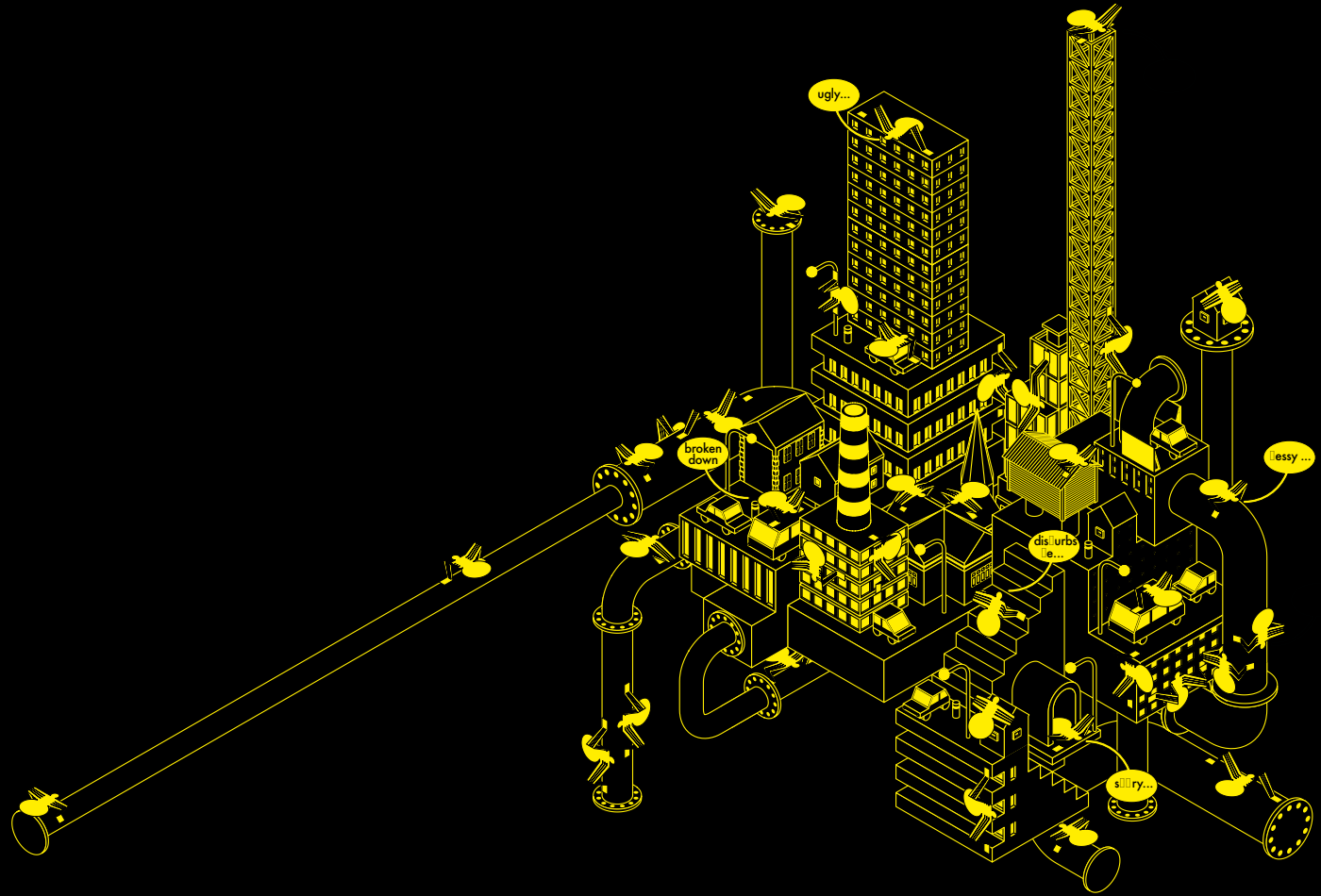
To encourage the limited amount of target group with giving a clearer motivation to be a gentle complainer, I designed one more information graphic. Considering most of them who have not thought about

their urban surroundings before they encounter such project, a designer as a complaint architect should provide visual inspiration to gently nudge them. Hence, a necessity for the second information graphic was directly connected to how to help the users imagine where they can complain.



06
ugly buildings
boring street furniture
messy construction site
a dark and obscure alley
a haunted house
broken-down stuff
whatever distrubs you

where
to use a spider
in your urban
surroundings?



2014
2016
2016
Master Project
in Kunst og Design, atelier2016gen
Gentle Complainer
Being a gentle complainer
in the messy surroundings
www.facebook.com/gentlecomplainer





When it comes to the experiment materials, contemplating a fair amount of rain in Bergen, I also secured durability by using recyclable synthetic paper and the bathroom-type double sided tape which can make a spider surviving for about a month. And, to check how long the spider can survive, I put some of spiders in the city street and checked a month later.



7-10-2015



11-9-2015



Also the number of legs was correctly fixed from 6 to 8 just like a spider. It has made the spider into an iconic image of the project though I did not pay attention about those details initially. In addition to this, the instruction on the card became more specific and friendly by giving the spider a voice. And, to enable users to write a short note, three lines of blank were also added on the surface of spider. This whole process was not easy as I thought although I am not going to describe every trial and error here.



Hello Gentle Complainer

Put me in a place you don't like
in Kong Oscars gate 62.
And please share it with a picture to:
[facebook.com/gentlecomplainer](https://www.facebook.com/gentlecomplainer)
or gentlecomplainer@gmail.com.



Hello Gentle Complainer

Put me in a place you don't like
in C. Sundts gate 53.
And please share it with a picture to:
[facebook.com/gentlecomplainer](https://www.facebook.com/gentlecomplainer)
or gentlecomplainer@gmail.com.



After several attempts to make a product, I conducted subsequent experimentations in two different buildings of Kunst - og designhøgskolen i Bergen and Damsgårdveien. This is because I wanted to see two different possibilities of the project. Firstly, two school buildings are everyday places for the students and staff regardless of its inside or outside. In terms of the goal of experimentation, I intended the complaining tool to make them more aware of their everyday workplace as well as make some part of the place where the users do not like more visible and that is why I tried to carry on the third version of the experiment in this kind of place.

In the second place, Damsgårdveien was mentioned several times in the answer sheet of my questionnaire from the research stage. Over the process, I found why this old industrial looking area was popular on the answer sheet. Simply, it is one of congested construction site here in Bergen by the fact that Hordaland Kommune has the master plan for land management and property development by 2017.¹² In so doing, many places are being transfigured on this main street of Damsgård area and this immaculately maintained new built area contrasts with the western part where is not part of the developing plan. In this context, I thought that part has ideal conditions to work on the experiment.

For the next page, I will give details of statistical results and consequences from these two experiments.

¹² Hordaland Kommune, 2012



KUNST - OG DESIGNHØGSKOLEN I BERGEN

Place 1 :
Kunst - og designhøgskolen
i Bergen (Kong Oscars gate 62,
C. Sundts gate 53),
Bergen, Norway

Limited target group :
Visual communication students
and staff of design department
(Kong Oscars gate 62)
+
Art students and staff of art
department (C. Sundts gate 53)



Period - Kong Oscars gate 62 : Result - Kong Oscars gate 62 :
 From 27-10-2015 (18:40) 47 sets of 50 sets taken
 To 29-10-2015 (09:50) (98.5%)



Period - C. Sundts gate 53 : Result - C. Sundts gate 53 :
 From 27-10-2015 (18:10) 29 sets of 50 sets taken
 To 29-10-2015 (10:10)

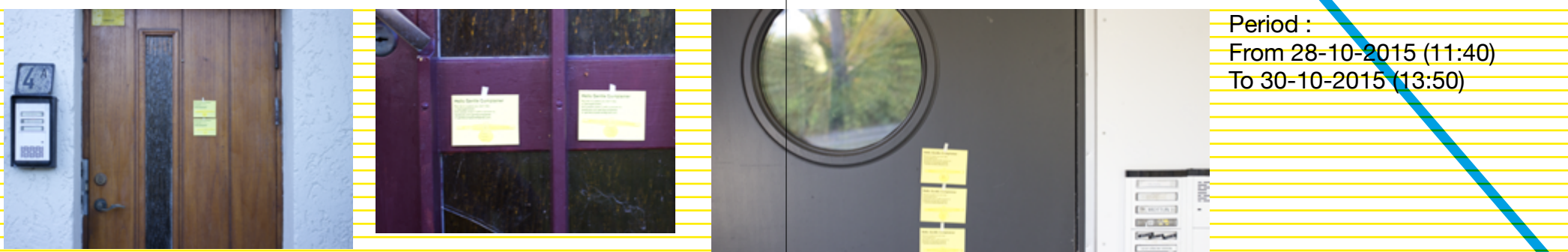
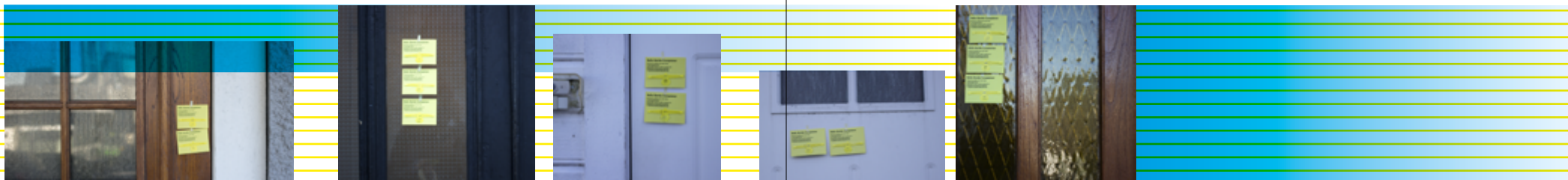
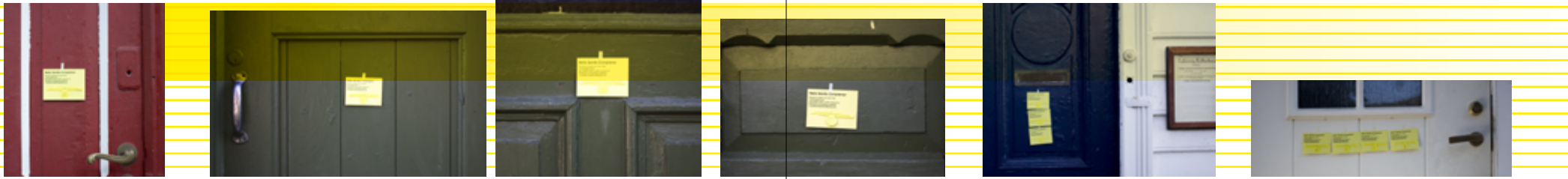
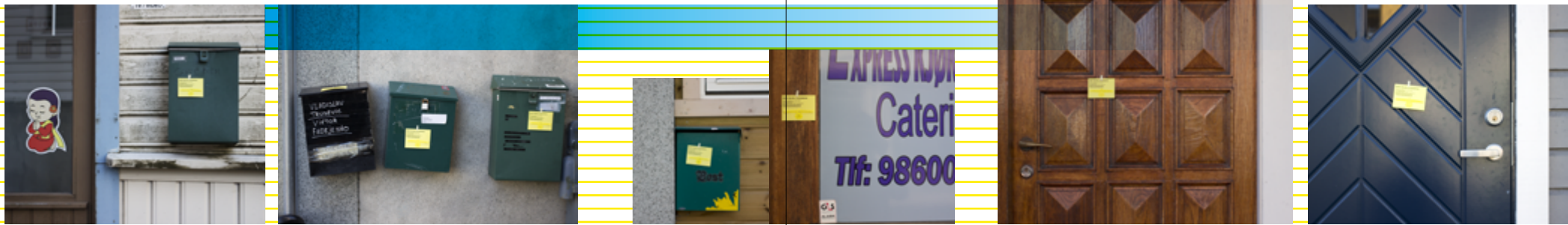
58%



DAMSGÅRDVEIEN

Place 2 :
Damsgårdveien,
Bergen, Norway

Limited target group :
Inhabitants living in the outside
of planned operation
(the western side)



Period :
 From 28-10-2015 (11:40)
 To 30-10-2015 (13:50)

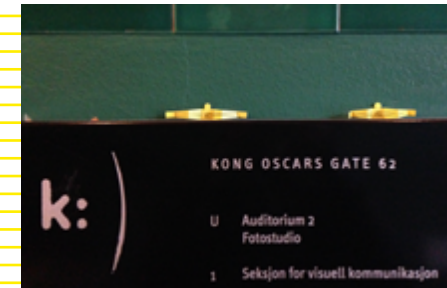
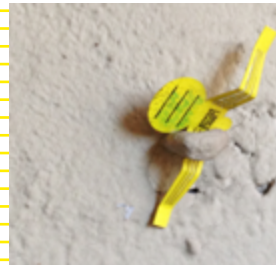
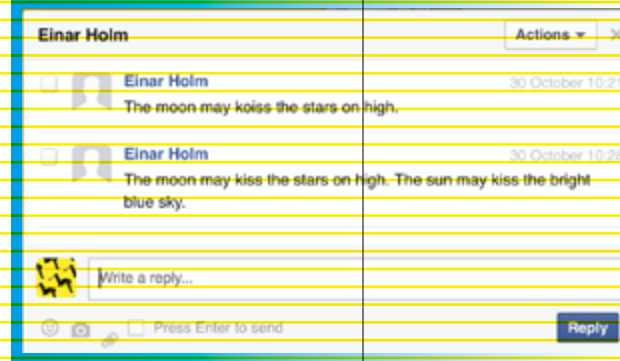


Result :
39 sets of 50 sets taken

78%

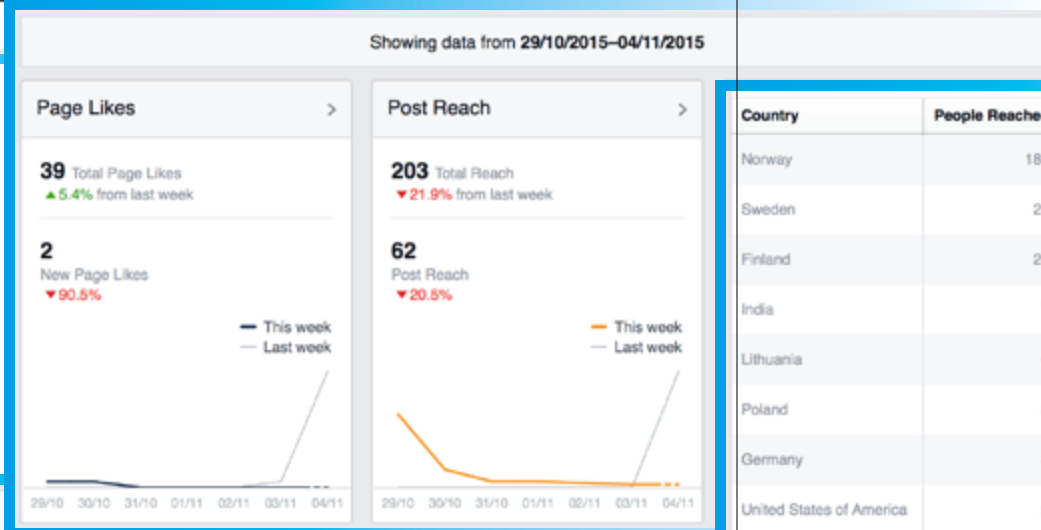


Statistically, I could get only 13 responses from 115 participants by email and Facebook including some mysterious poem though, in total, 76.7% of the spiders have been taken. In this point of view, the results show that the project is still unsuccessful or unsure to build awareness of the place they live in. However, from the viewpoint of how many people have got potentially effected on the subject of the project, there are remarkable changes.



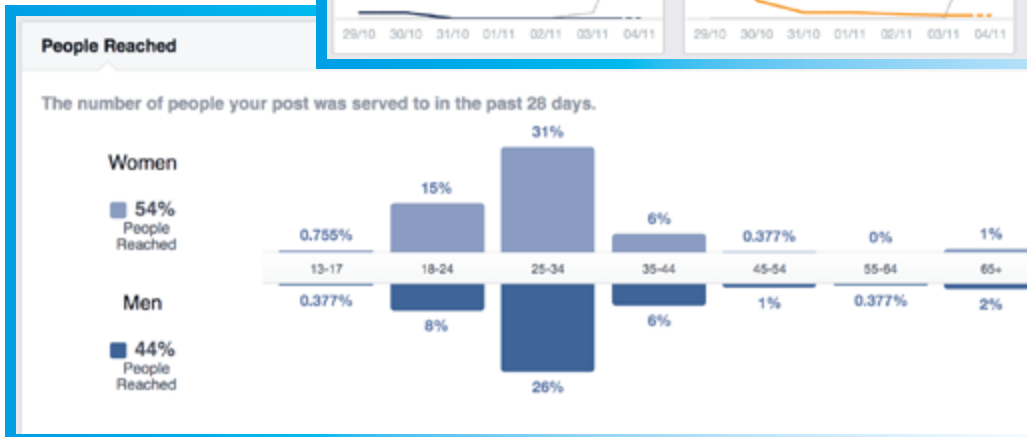


As shown in the tables from Facebook, in the meantime, there was remarkable upward trend of the number of visitors, Facebook like and post reach since the third version of experiment has begun. Clearly the extended method that was used in this section has caused the some of positive results with the figures showing how much the project has reached to different groups of people. Also, in some of off line spaces, I could come across the spider like a hide-and-seek-game.



Country	People Reached	City	People Reached	Language	People Reached
Norway	184	Bergen, Hordaland	75	Norwegian (bokmal)	95
Sweden	24	Oslo, Oslo	29	English (US)	57
Finland	20	Helsinki, Southwest Fin...	9	Norwegian (nynorsk)	27
India	7	Trondheim, Sør-Trønd...	9	English (UK)	24
Lithuania	6	Stockholm, Stockholm ...	7	Swedish	20
Poland	3	Ålesund, Møre og Rom...	6	Finnish	18
Germany	3	Askey, Hordaland	6	French (France)	5
United States of America	2	Vilnius, Vilnius County	5	Lithuanian	4
Thailand	2	Växjö, Kronoberg County	5	German	4
United Kingdom	2	Fredrikstad, Østfold	3	Polish	3

[See More](#)



From these consequences I got motivated once again. Because, there was a little chance that the project can succeed to plant an idea in the target group's mind. It seemed it is still not very optimistic. Nevertheless, it is important that I try.



4.6 Experiment Version. 4 Looking at Another Way

For the last experimentation of the chapter, I determined to be left apart from the idea of distributing the cards earlier. Because there has been the positive results having potentials but also the clear limits to step forward. So, I explored another possibility of this complaining tool. The idea came from finding a more specific and legible way with one deserted factory building which was owned by Bergen Blikktrykkeri AS¹³ in Damsgårdveien. I got to know this building when I wandered every place mentioned in my questionnaire in the beginning of the project. At first, I just had a sort of curiosity about this building but, after all, that curiosity got the better of me. This crumbling building where produced packages for canning was built in the early 1900s and it had become a centre of fishing industry here in Bergen before that industry has been declining. The building is about 120 metres long with a dismal look so, it is too huge to be neglected. In some way, this is venerable one standing over the industrial transition in Bergen.

*Opposite page :
Photos from
Damsgårdveien*

¹³ *Bergenbyarkiv.no,
2011*



For my project, I came to wonder how the people think about this exformated relic. In this connection, to solve curiosity with finding another possibility of this complaining tool, I made a sort of box for carrying out an open vote, of course, through trail and error. The box has been consisted of two different coloured spiders revealing different opinions respectively about the future of the building with one flag beside the box. So it allows the pedestrians to show their mind by choosing yellow or black.

"It's a 100-year-old building.
It should be renovated with
maintaining its origin."



"This building makes our
street depressing. We need
to tear down and start
again."



After days of preparation, I did put the box around a prominent corner of that building. And then, I put four spiders (two yellows and two black) on a wall to gently nudge the people to follow. And I was back and forth to observe what was happening.



Period :
From 10:40 To 16:10
(02-11-2015)



10:40

13:50



16:10



The reactions from the people has made me thrilled because, obviously, I could see the increasing number of spiders on the wall as time passes. This experimentation has shown how the first positive impression with the tiny spider can successfully effect the results in a limited object with a specific question. It also shows that once a few complaints are gathered around then it becomes more visible enough to invite more people. It has contributed to achieve the ultimate goal of the project by building awareness of the old building.





However, to my dismay, one embarrassing situation was waiting for me. When I was back in that place at around 16:00, I could find that someone already took every single materials of the experiment. And one more strange thing from this incident is a Ikea stool that was still there.

It is obvious that I got my project stolen except for the stool that I put the box on. In a way, it does make sense to believe that it is because of the too much delicate-looking complaining tool. On the basis of tendency shown in the former experiments, almost every spider was taken but it is still unsure they all were actually used. In a way, the people rather keep it just as I came across one set of this complaining tool on someone's desk in the school. As a result, it is also obvious that the revised approach has been more effective to get user's attention to the world of the project as well as to make the things visible. The following is how the respondents think about this exformed object.

80% of respondents do not want to demolish the building. (picked yellow)

20% of respondents want to start it again. (picked black)



4.7

Pilot Conclusion

An Unofficial But Humorous Dialogue

Over the whole process of this pilot project I have learned how difficult it is to appeal to the public mind with planting an idea, in other words, how hard to make the people to communicate with the city as an only one-man operation. One of my initial ideas in the project was designing a sort of urban graphic design scheme or to place posters with a beautiful manifesto somewhere in Bergen. I could not conceive I was going to play with the spider shapes and distribute a number of them to the anonymous public in the streets. I can honestly say it was also a bit shy as a person from overseas. Looking backward, the design process and results from the experiments are something beyond the scope of a few initial thoughts, but I remained steadfast in the goal of the project. And, in so doing, I could see to what extent can one man project work. In terms of the conclusion from this unexpected but enjoyable pilot project, I would like to explain it with a couple of points.

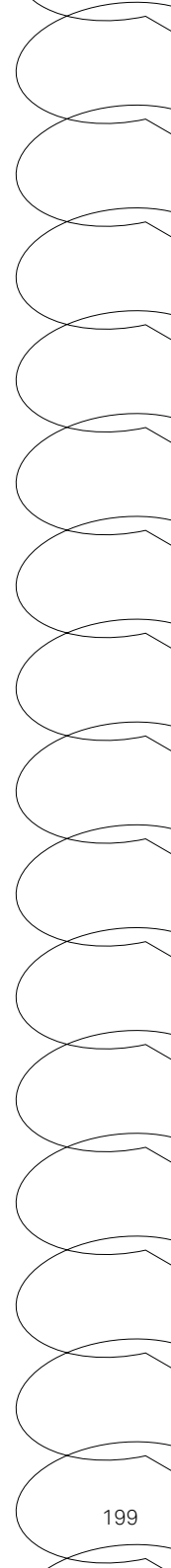
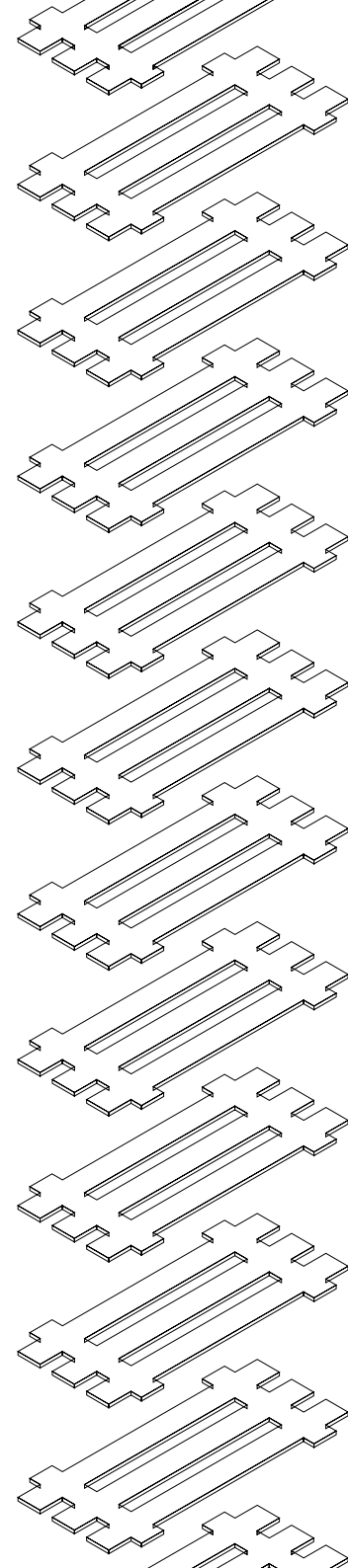
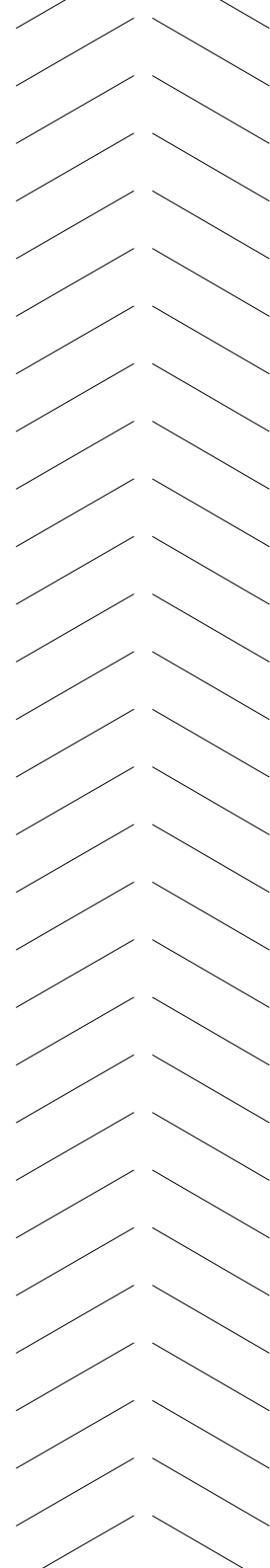
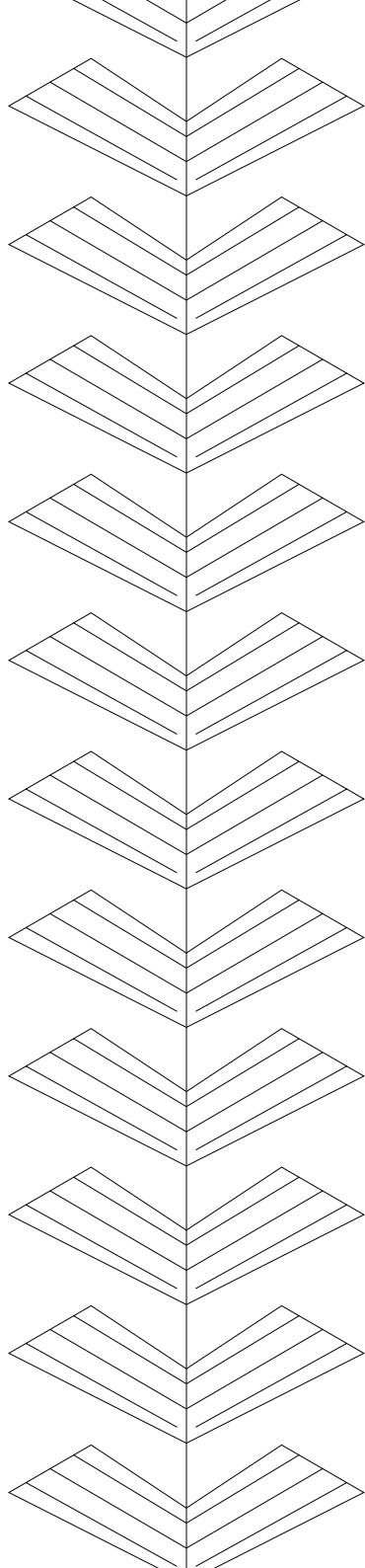
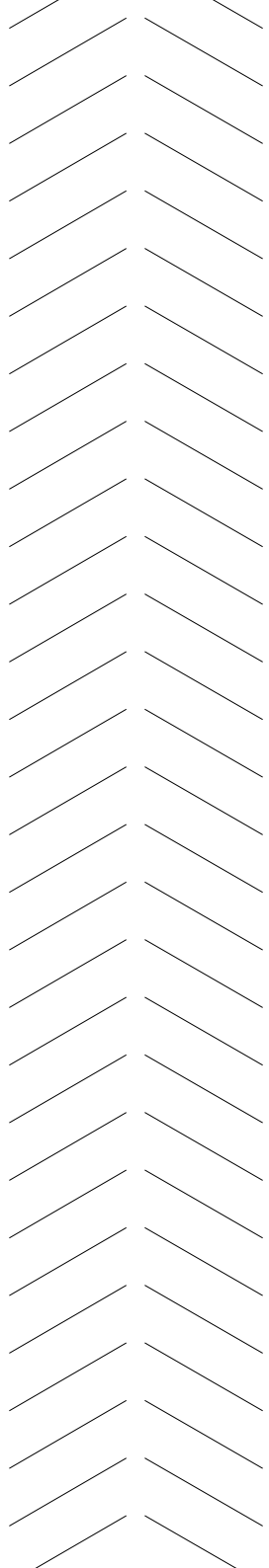
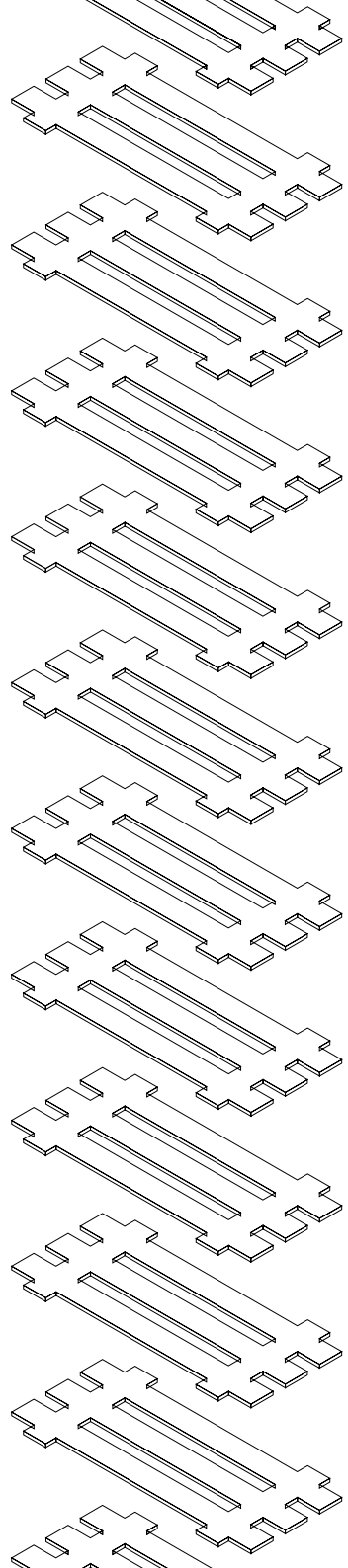
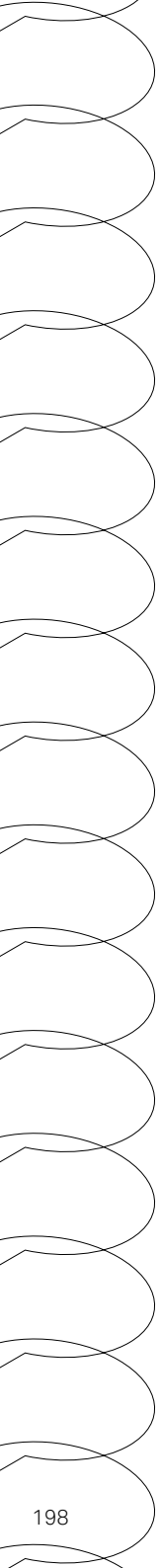
The first being that point is that this project is to make people aware of their urban environment which has been rapidly changing. In this regard the key question was focused on helping to generate a dialogue between the city and its inhabitants. When it comes to what a dialogue means in the project, the dimmed initial idea has become clearer throughout the research and design process. These processes have answered the key question and explored the way of how the users communicate with the nonliving things in the city streets. The idea has been developed in line with not only existing knowledge but also my voice of what I want to tell in this project. And, to see things my way, I could push ahead with asking for myself 'Can a complaint be used as a means of dialogue?' after the research and analysis. Since then, I have been demonstrating how it can work over the series of small experiments. Therefore, I believe that the objectives of the project have been achieved with finding the hints to the further development.

Secondly, I think that, from being a stranger here in Bergen, I could deal with the theme of the project in a different angle. Coming from Seoul where is one of busy and complex cities in Far East Asia, I was full of curiosity about why it looks like this and why did it become like this. In some way, I could see something that the people from Bergen could not discover. In this point, I could make a digression from our everyday life. And this exotic point of view has made this project more unique and humorous. Throughout the several observations during the experimentations, I could witness the people who showed a lot of the smiles and giggles when they were faced with the project. It is because the subject of the project looks serious and official but the way to put into action is, in a way, daring, unofficial, a little reckless and even silly. However, it is also obvious that I could get positive feedback from the public because of this friendly approach.

I believe these series of experiments as the pilot project have brought a significant change for the success of the project. To discuss how successful the project is and what are the effects on the results, I have also documented both statistical data and

visual results showing the consequences of every experimentation. However, beyond this documented data, I have also got several sightings of the yellow spider in the city as days go by. According to some of fellows who came across the spider by accident, it has been still present all over the place in the city centre though it is not possible to track down every spider taken. There is no doubt that this pilot project has helped me not only test out my hypothesis with to see the feasibility, but also enable me to broaden my skills from working with information graphics and products in finding a more efficient and effective way.





Section 5

Re- flection



5.1

Ethical Principles

Consequences from Acceptable Means

In the beginning of the project, I was more like wanting to do something in the city as a designer or to make a mark like a street artist. But this blurry idea was shaped into a more clear intention since I realised that we have been confronted by the problematics in the city life. There is a rapid trend of urbanisation accompanying a huge scale of physical changes in the place we live in. But, sooner or later, I was in a dilemma of which means I have to use in this project for right things to do. The irony is that I deal with the problems related with rapid physical changes in the city by adding another physical stuff that may not be welcomed from the public.

Street art, Post Graf, Urban Art - call it what you like, in it is raw essence it is all about leaving your mark. A trace of existence, to taunt or humour the public as well as a liberating F You to the powers that deem our work vandalism***¹⁴

¹⁴ Hundertmark,
2003, p.6

In some way, there was a coincidence between what I initially wanted to do in the project and what street artists has been doing in the city as described above.

However I did not want my project to be viewed as vandalism and this concern has led to keep the right process which is ethically acceptable. Over the design process and every experimentation I have tried to use less materials which are environmentally friendly and also tried to invigorate the people to complain with a positive idea. That is a reason why I laid down the principle, ephemeral presence into the design strategy and set up the key concept, a gentle complaint. When it comes to the goal of the project, it has been also focused to construct invisible relationship between the people and the place they live in by using an acceptable means. I believe it could be done by having a clear responsibility for the users and society.

5.2

Conclusion

A Pilot Project in the Open-Air Laboratory

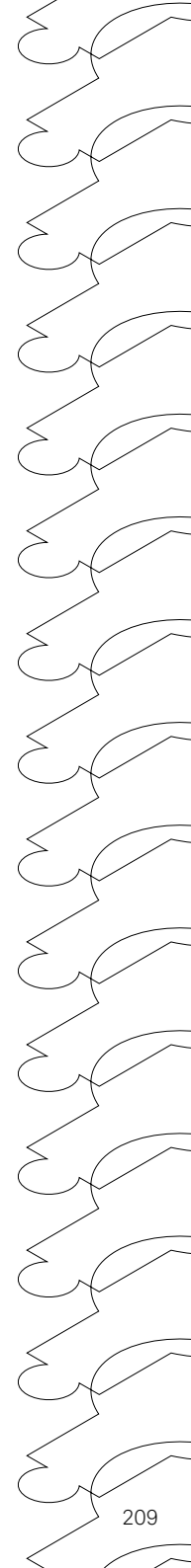
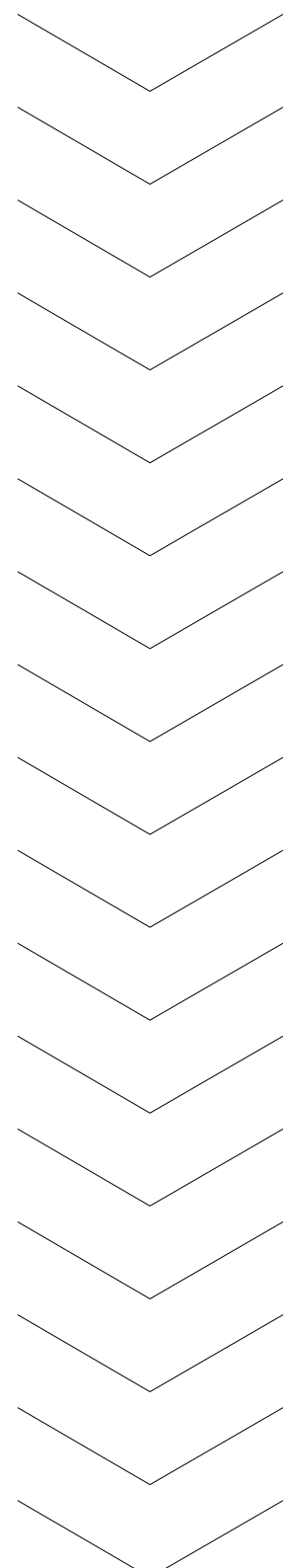
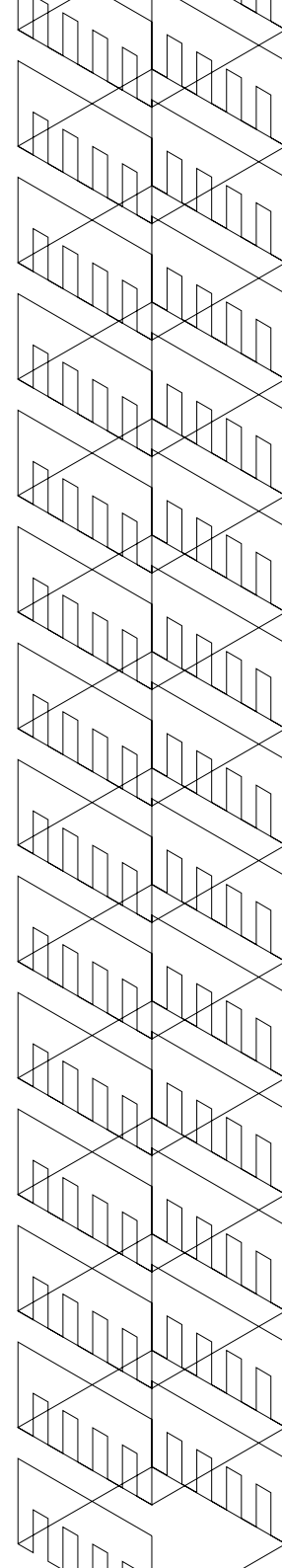
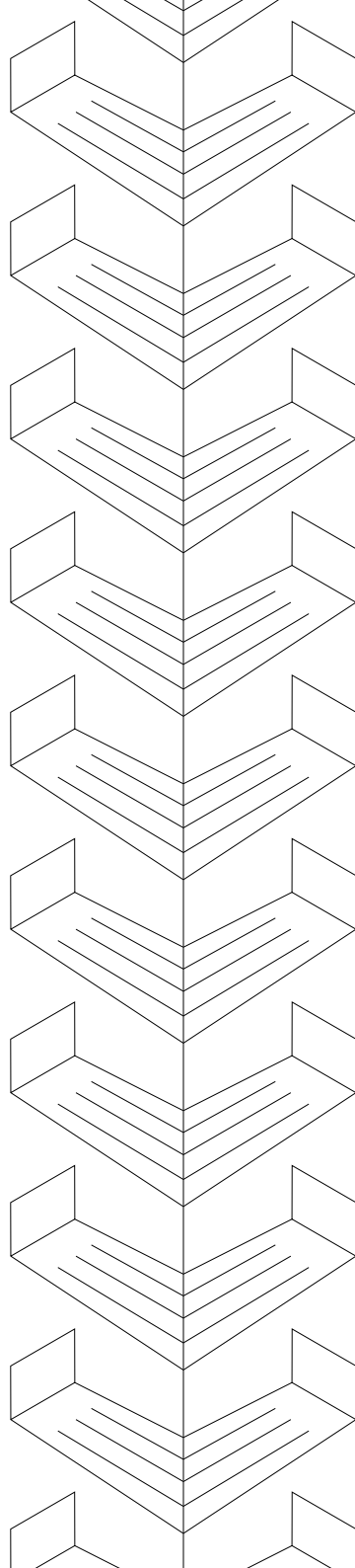
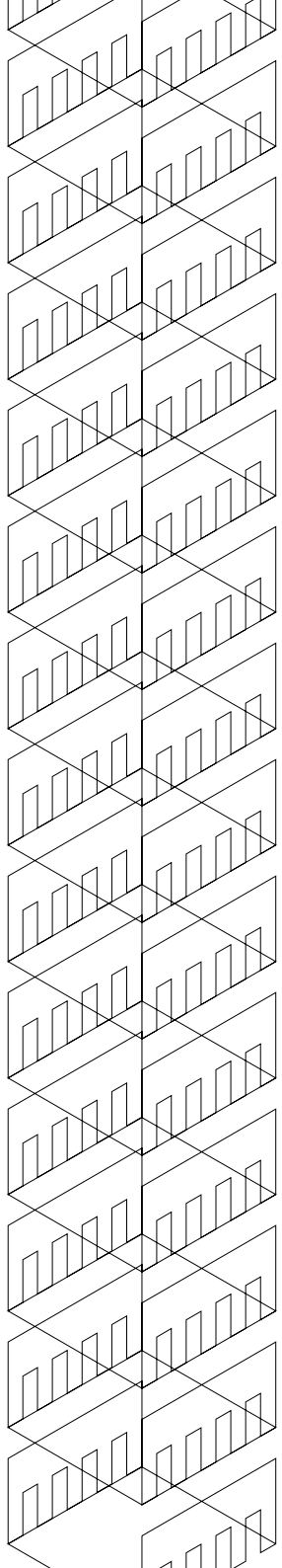
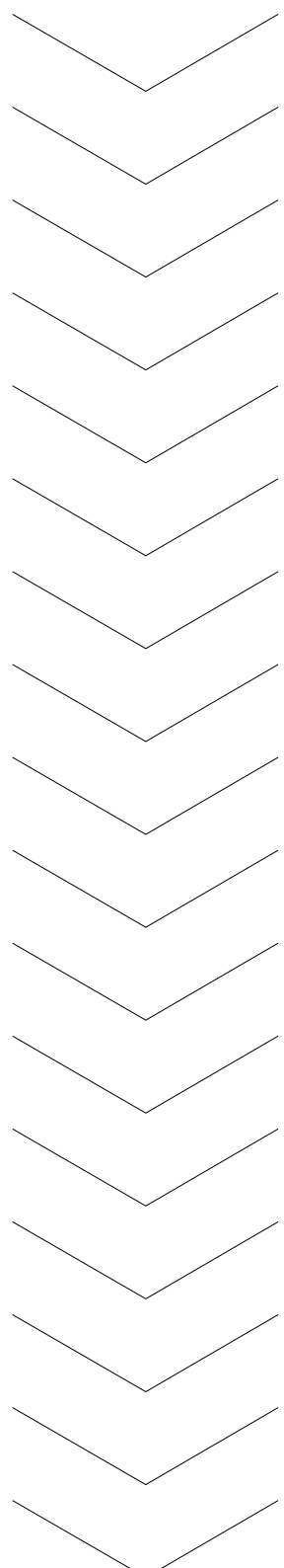
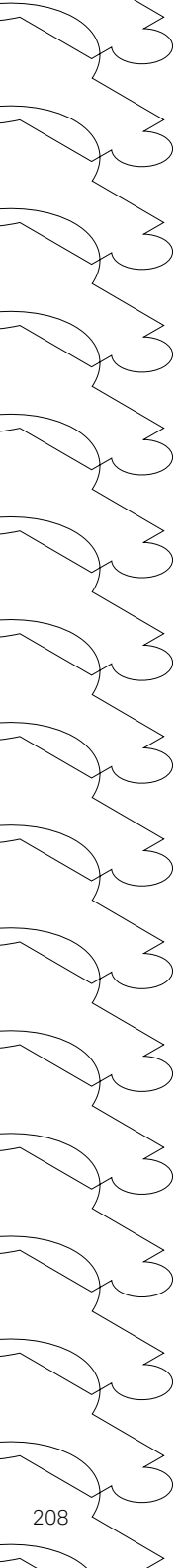
Looking backward, the project was begun with one broad question how a graphic designer can deal with a rapidly growing trend of urbanisation from a different angle with an architect or urban planner. This is, as I mentioned in the first section, not a defiance against the scope of architecture and urban planning. This blurry idea has been shaped through the research on the global trend of urbanisation, the theories from behavioural economics, site specific art and a newly coined term, exformation. I connected the dots from these varied subjects to draw a research conclusion with project's working title, "Being a Gentle Complainer". After that, knowledge gained from this research and analysis process was applied to set up the design strategy to carry on the experimentation. And then, as I mentioned in the section 4.7, Pilot Conclusion, the way of how to make this project effective has been developed from reflections between every experimentation.

In this process, I dared myself to design a couple of information graphics, a visual identity of the project and experiment materials, which have helped me professionally developed in the field of graphic design. But sometimes these independent works were also partly combined with cooperative experiences during the two-year-long master course, such as a cross disciplinary collaboration work that I used a balloon dog as a communication tool. The project has been developed both independently and collaboratively, which is academically valuable. Because the project has fulfilled the academic criteria consisted of research, analysis, subject knowledge and experimentation from the independent and cooperative works with achievement of goal.

However, some readers who has expected the full realisation with the completion of the project, probably would not be satisfied from these consequences. Because the project has been consisted of a series of small pilot projects to see how can a similar project be used later on as well as the potential of further development. My main consideration for this project is to exist as a case study of exploring the possibilities to deal with similar problems.

Consequences may not be visible in the very short term though there were many of positive reactions from the participants. However I also believe the project can last for a long period with giving positive effects to the city dwellers by building awareness and a relationship based on an idea of complaint. When it comes to the possibilities of potential future development, I expect the methodology used in the design process and experimentation can be applied and improved into various ways of how to collect opinions from not only city dwellers but also the anonymous public. For instance, I particularly believe the project can be applied in any research stage of architecture and urban planning to find more democratic solutions. Because the project has demonstrated how to build public awareness and how to stimulate people to produce actions in an effective and humorous way.

Simply, the project has shown an interesting approach to how to motivate irresponsive public to say something. And as a result, it has proven why we need to pay attention to our urban environment and how to do so over the entire process.



Section 6

Moving Forward



6.1

Introduction

A Digression

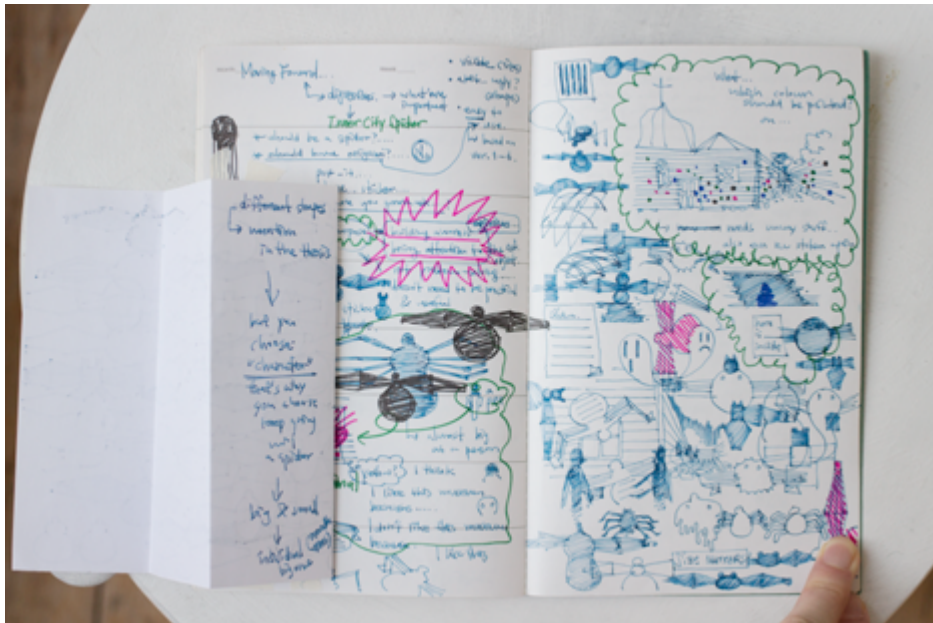
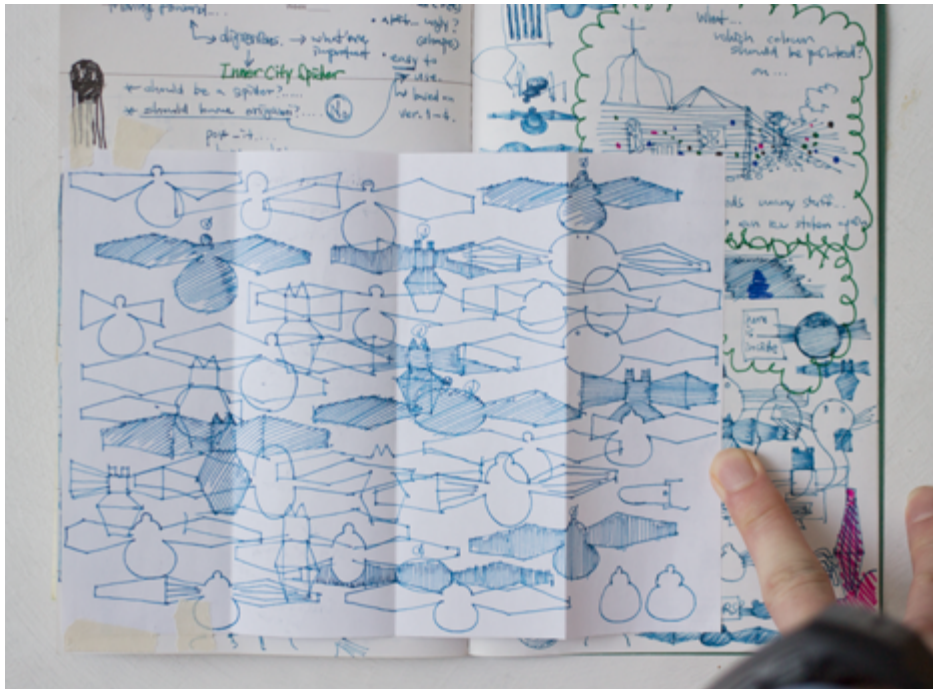
Before finishing the thesis, I would like to introduce one more experimentation showing a glimpse of the future of the project. Escaping from the pressure of going in the right direction, I have determined to turn my steps towards a sort of subversive idea that might be wrong but able to shift a viewpoint. In this short final chapter, I will explain a process of how to digress from the main idea of former experimentations to see what can be possible for the further development.

6.2

Process

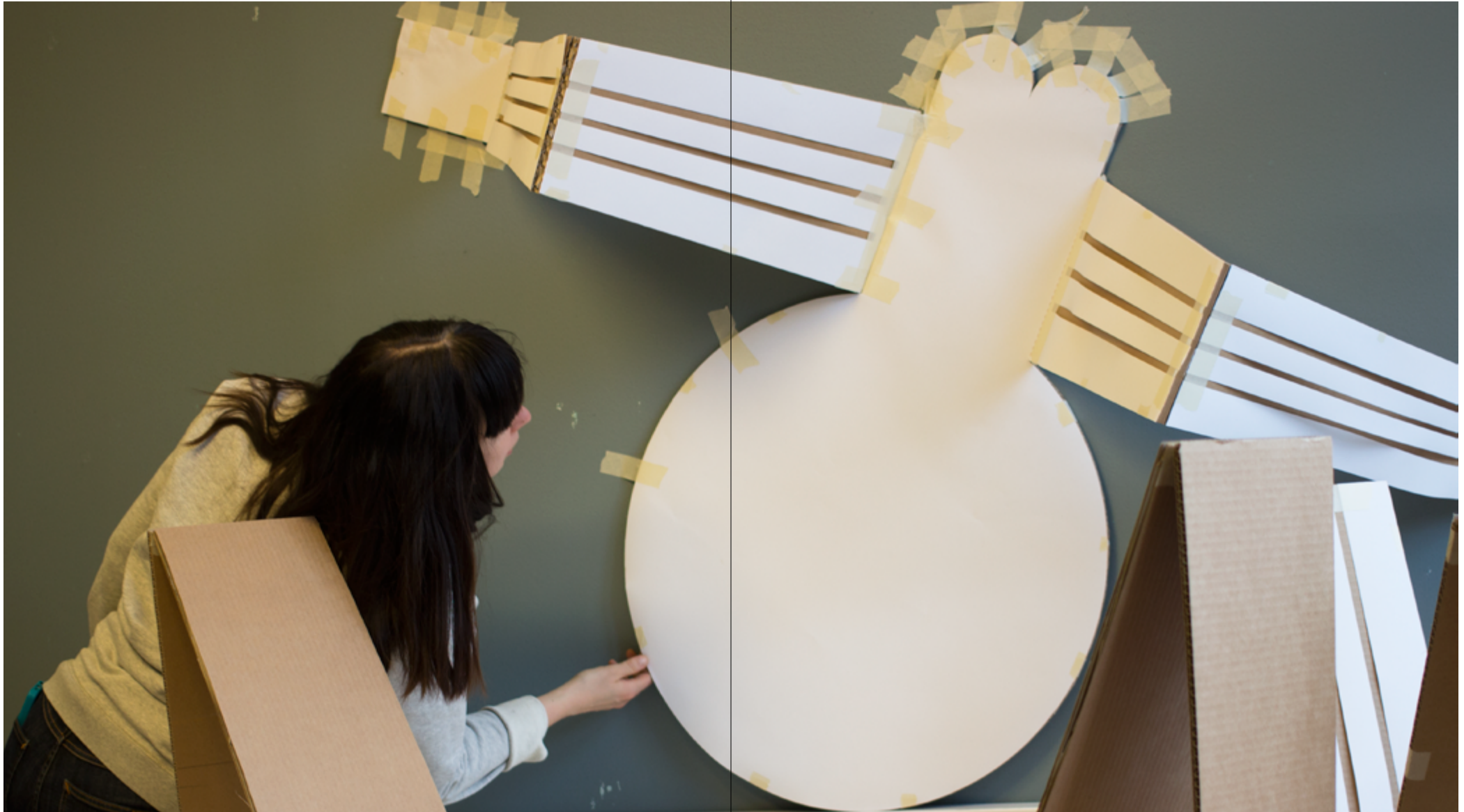
Moving Forward

Throughout the whole design process, I focused on the idea of how to motivate the users to gently complain about the urban environment and how to make these things visible in a gentle way. But, in a way, doing it gently was not always effective to achieve the goal. For example, the small-sized spider was delicate but not enough to bring attention to the relatively much larger object. In this sense, I have started thinking about how can be less gentle, but more visible. However, at the same time, I have also wanted to keep the character of the project with the consistent visual identity, such as a spider shape, yellow, black and so forth. And after all, for this small digression, the way of escaping from the gentle spider was simple.



Firstly, I made sketches to change the shape of the spider to be more conspicuous in a weird way.

And, to see how it looks like, I made full-size cardboard models from three different sketches that I have chosen.

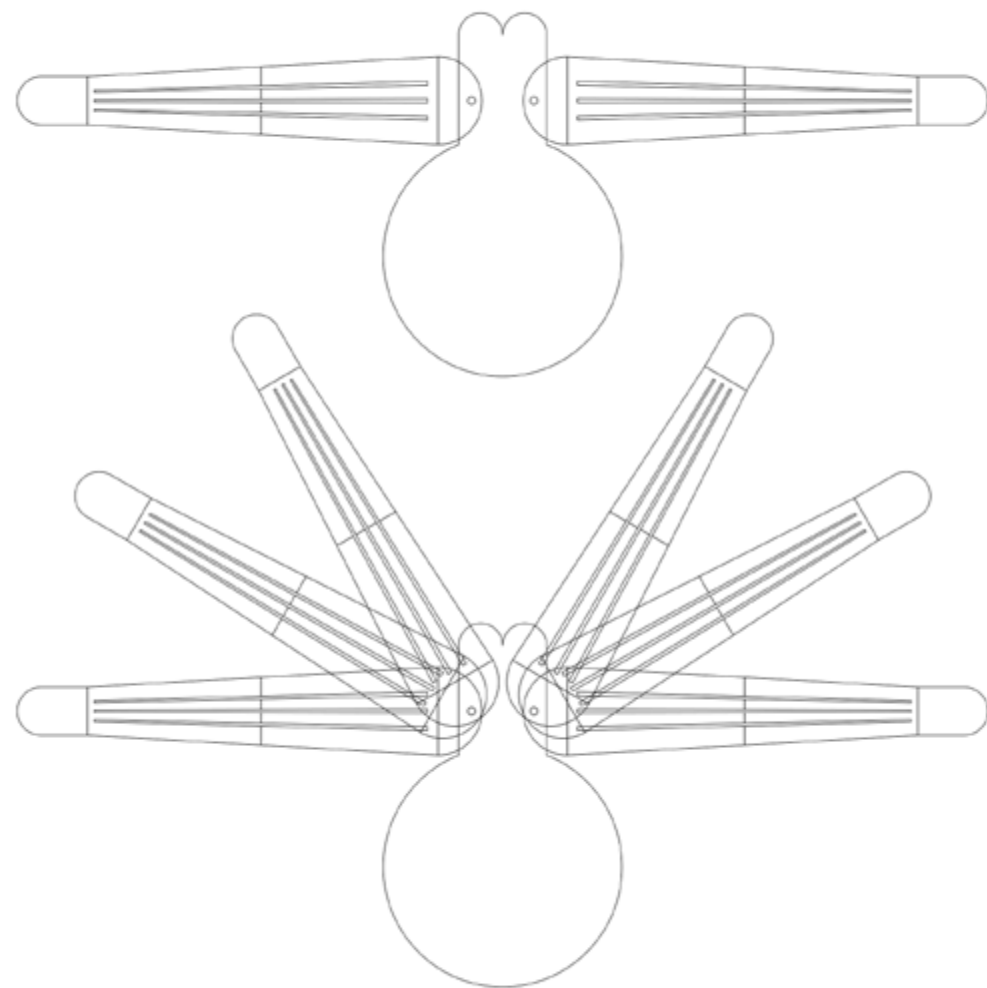


The result showed how can this initial idea be expanded in a variety of formats. And, in this mock-up stage, I was also personally able to enjoy a sense of freedom being able to express anything.

Because, in this digression, I do not need to be compliant with several principles outlined in the earlier design strategy.



I have been convinced by one in three models and decided to make it more long-lasting, which is against one of my design principles, *Ephemeral Presence in Section 3*. In some way, this communication tool can stay outside for a long time to collect people's voice.



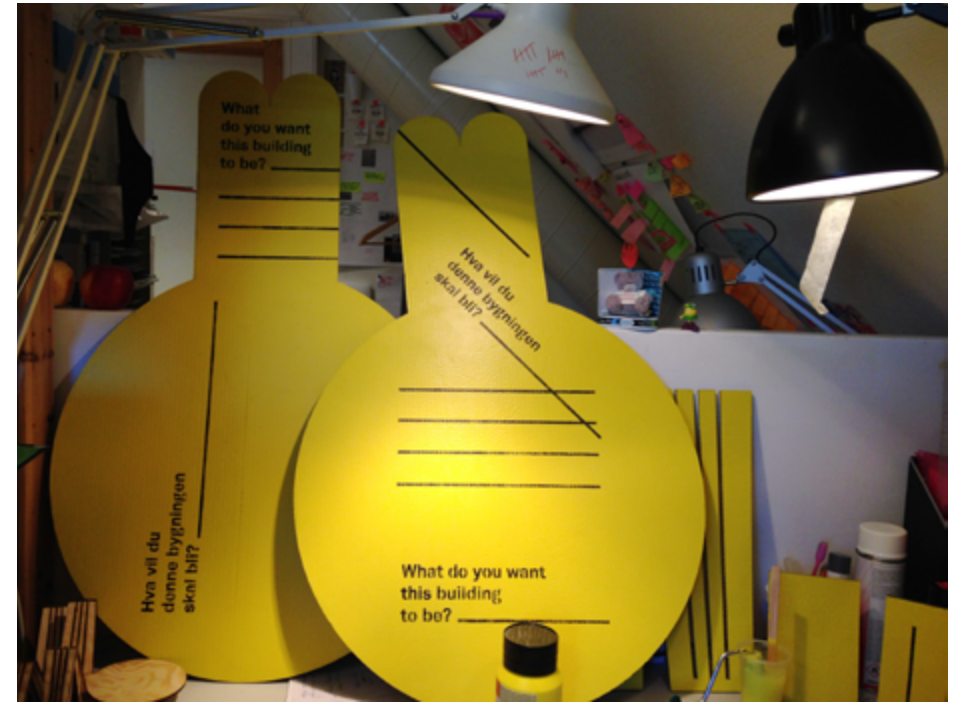
Assuming this complaining tool will be installed as a large-scale environmental sculpture, I have made a solid structure that can be assembled with the modular parts which are applicable for any material.



From this exciting progression, I have been determined to actually use one of these ideas in connection with the public exhibition which is going to be in Bergen County Jail (Bergen kretsfengsel). Because, in a way, this old prison building is also a sort of exformed place, but has hope of change in the future.

Hence, for the coming exhibition, I have designed three big spiders having lines and space that people can note down wishful thinking about the future of the building.

*Below :
A Photo from
Bergen kretsfengsel*



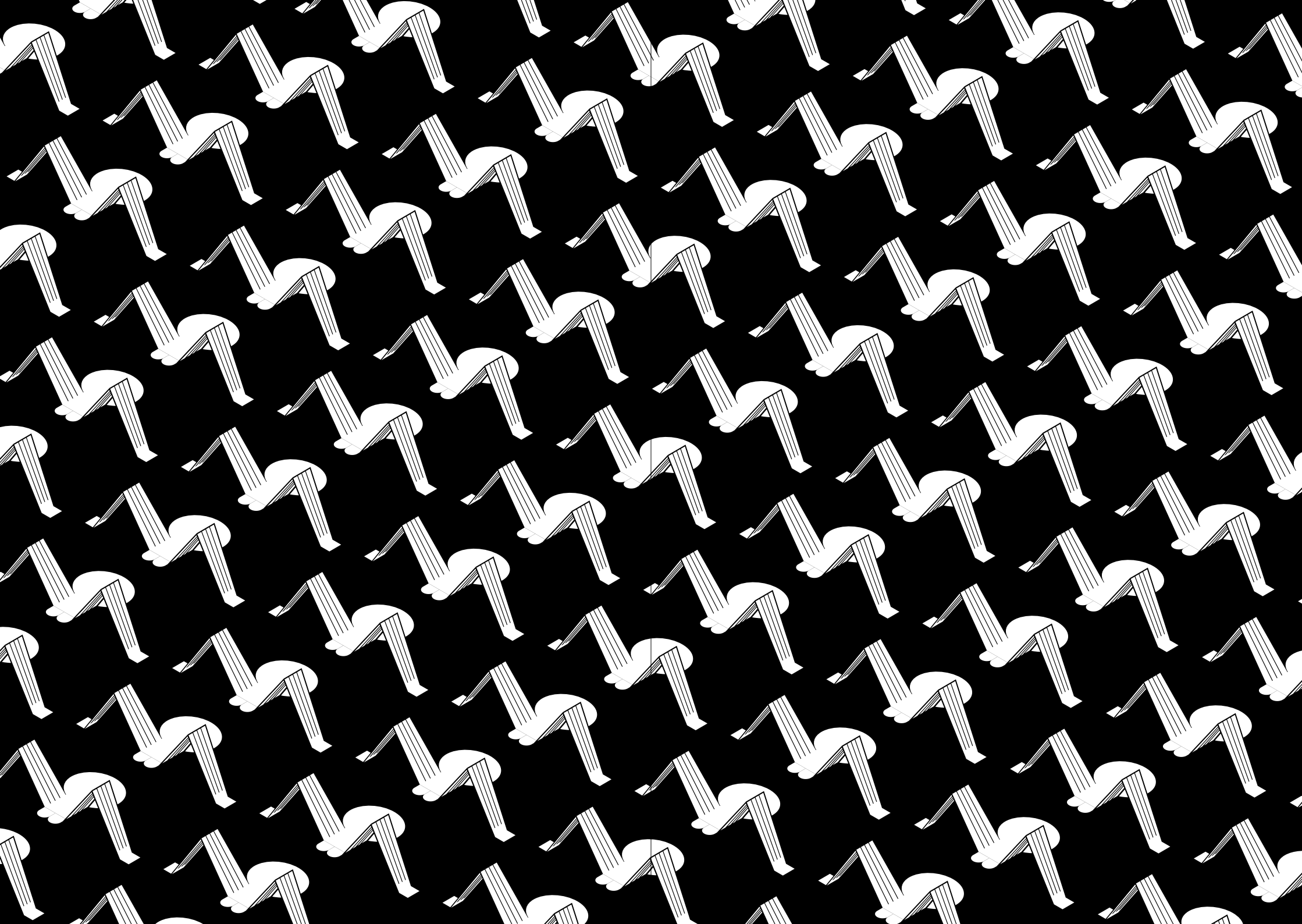




In the last analysis, these intense few days have been beneficial to shift a viewpoint visualising the main idea and see a patch of the further development.

Although this small project is still obscure, I hope the readers can get a hint of how to stimulate interest in the urban environment and induce participation of users in varied ways.





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