BASED ON AN INCOMPLETE COLLECTION OF FRAGMENTS

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This is a project about the method of collecting, exploring properties and finding out when an object changes to another. It takes its starting point from the analysis of my collection of intuitively chosen objects, or fragments as I call them, and my interests of how space and object relates to each other and us as human beings. The outcome of my project is a collection of pieces of furniture that wants to interact with you, letting you decide how you want to use them depending on how you perceive them.
INSPIRATION: RELATION

For me these images show a space filled with spatial objects/equipments that support the human beings actions. I love the simplicity of the objects contra the advanced movement of the acrobats.

In the photos of Jonathan Frantini you find objects that for people who aren’t gymnast or acrobats have functions that you have no clue about. You can see traces of usage or maybe a material tells you something. Your mind starts to question the object. What is it? What’s the function? How do I use it? Who does this belong to? Can I use it?

The picture taken from above shows the different spaces these objects creates and how they melt together in some cases. I also get a feeling of a possibility to rearrange, create other combinations connected to a situation.
INSPIRATION: COLLECTING

The reasons for collecting are as infinite as it is personal. The common reason is that it enriches our lives in some way. The scale of it can vary from a hobby level to the manic gathering of a hoarder and from objects to experiences.

I have always found inspiration in objects that surrounds me, objects that speak to me in different ways.

I like how you can choose a number of objects and connect them to each other, for example by material, expressions or by the format they are given.

Photographer Luke Stephenson has documented show birds and collected them in a book called *An incomplete dictionary of show birds*. These birds are photographed sitting on the same branch, with colourful backgrounds and printed in the same format. They are all having the same conditions but it is the characteristics of the bird that makes the difference. Their body language tells us that they seem to be curious, smart, nonchalant, and noisy. Some of them look to have a great set of wings to fly long distance, the other one a strong beak to open tricky seedpods. But what can I tell by just looking at a picture? I can tell as much as my imagination lets me.
A MOMENTARY OBJECT

My master degree project developed from one object made under a workshop in the beginning of November 2012. The workshop was held by Matti Klenell and Lars Pettersson and the task was to make scale less models of the word comfort and relation. The object came from parts of materials in my shelf located in my studio. It came from an idea of extruding a rectangular form to see what relation it created to me. I transformed it to a rectangular object with different angled sides. I had more of these objects in this colourful foam material. When arranging them on the desk I saw opportunities of creating labyrinths and other formations.

A few days earlier I experienced people waiting for their train at T-Centralen late at night. I had hanged out at a friend’s place and had to change from the green line to the red one in order to get home. I made my switch at T-Centralen but had to wait for 23 minutes. I had my earphones on to block out the noise people made. I leaned against a pillar, just the thought of waiting for almost an half an hour made me tired.

I saw that I wasn’t the only one with this need. Some of them did what I did, others leaned on a wall or a friend. Some sat down in the staircase and some on a thin fence, looking a bit uptight. I tried to do the same thing once, sitting on a fence. It only worked for some minutes before my legs were out of blood and my back was tired of trying to keep my balance. Our need to relate our body to something under the time spent waiting led us to transform things around us. Their need to sit down was so strong that they could easily spend time on this 2cm wide fence for 20min, comfortable or not.

When creating these labyrinths my thoughts led me to a traffic barrier in concrete (betongsugga) that’s being used for closing of areas and roads for vehicles. They are heavy and robust. You are not supposed to move them; they stay where they are put. It is also an object that at least I have turned in to a seat while waiting for friends, the bus or a phone call. Could this kind of object be domesticated?

I glued on a pair of flat wooden sticks and saw it transform to something else. It became something more than just this block that stood stable on my desk. The character changed from a piece of material to something closer for us to recognize. The scale of it kept it in a world where your imagination can change it.
I was eager to see how my body would interact with it in a 1:1 scale. So I built the object in a seating height, with wooden legs and dressed the base structure in a coloured fabric with padding under it.

It looked like some kind of furniture, mostly a bench but a very thin and narrow one. Under the presentation of the workshop, people wanted me to tell them what it was before making their minds up. If I called it a bench then it would be a bench. If I called it a space divider then they saw it as one before interacting with it.

I found this discussion interesting, how we prefer to know the use before using it and how I can change it by interacting with it. I also found the way I worked intriguing; to take inspiration from a small library of things found in my shelf when creating pieces of furniture. In this quick process I discovered that to see it as an object, instead of a specific piece of furniture, helped me to be freer in my way of creating.
THE METHOD

I discovered this way of working under the project *A momentary object*. I developed it into a method that can be applied in projects in other fields than furniture design. The method is used as a framework and relies on what you fill it with and how you analyze your material.

I want to share this method and my way of working. I want to explain how I use my inspiration to create an object. It’s not only the framework of the method that I want to share. Even if the material comes from my way of perceiving, my analysis and the fragments themselves can be used by others. My fragments can be described in countless ways, and my analysis of them can be used as a manual to recreate the fragment or translate it into another, like I have. It’s a library and a toolbox that is free to be used by people who want to explore them.

Some would see this as a revealing of a secret of mine. I think it is more about to open up and share to create an understanding of how I and maybe other designers work from inspirational material. It is a way to invite people in to my project to see it from within, the same way that I do.
PART ONE: WORKING WITH FRAGMENTS

I have collected objects or fragments as I call them in a scale that is intended to grow. The reason for why I have chosen to call them fragments is because I see them as pieces that together with each other and with other aspects can create a whole.

This is the first time that I gather and document fragments to create a collection. It is mainly for my thesis project but also for future work in the field of design. It is an incomplete collection that will expand while I'm working as a designer. It's a library of fragments that holds countless of properties depending on how you perceive them. I see it as a reference bank.

SEARCH, FIND AND GATHER
The first step in the method was to create the collection. When I look at my fragments I see a collection of random things that I gathered from different places. I bought, borrowed and found fragments on the streets. I have chosen these things for some reason. First it was my intuition but then after handling them I noticed a lot of things about them that I got inspired by. I see a super-size coffee filter, a spool of white tread, a union shell, a package of popsicle sticks, bubble wrap, packaging for bottles and insulation material among other things.

EXPLORE, INTERACT AND ANALYZE

In order to find these properties I had to look beyond the coffee filter, to zoom in and see it from a perspective that I have never seen it before in my life. It is just an object with form and properties. So the coffee filter for me is then ... (see fragment 1:33) spool of white tread (1:8), a union shell (1:32), a package of popsicle sticks (1:12), bubble wrap (1:19) and a packaging for bottles (1:18). Then I had to get to know the fragments in my collection with all my senses, and thereafter put it down in words without saying what the fragment actually is.
PART TWO:
CREATING OBJECTS

SELECT, APPLY AND CONVERT

Each fragment and its properties has been described in text and put in a filing system for me to use and flicker amongst when creating my final objects. This filing system lets me handle the information in a physical way, like I handle my fragments. This text is a second perspective on the fragment and having it as a physical thing has been a great way of keeping and sorting information, it makes it more manageable.

I have a bad habit of letting my notions get in the way when creating something. I immediately think of a finished product. In this project I have tried to take control over my thoughts and tricked myself to keep my consciousness in a good pace with the process. Therefore I talk about my objects in the same way I talk about my fragments.

I had two ideas of what kind of objects I wanted to apply fragments on. In the beginning I called them “a gathering object” and “a dividing object” as a help to block my notions. Under the process of zooming in and out their names has changed. Today I call them The Circle and The Window to connect them with my thoughts about how they could be perceived.

The Window and The Circle has been created from the same thoughts that I had about The Bench; how the object can change depending on how you perceive it.

I see my final pieces of furniture as a collection. They are supposed to function separately, with their own relation to space and beings. They have their own properties. One thing that ties them together is that they are based on my incomplete collection of fragments.
BASED ON THE INCOMPLETE COLLECTION OF FRAGMENTS
A DIVIDING OBJECT

An object that divides one space into two. For me it’s has been an interesting object to work with since it’s such a clear function. It creates a new space and separates you from the space on the other side. These “new” spaces has been more and more important for us today. We tend to create these open landscapes everywhere even though we still have the need to shut off and have some privacy.

I have investigated how this object can build up a curiosity within the one that interacts with it and how this object can become something more than a symbol of a wall.

The starting point for this research comes from fragment 1:22, 1:18 and 1:24. “You decide what to see” is a quote from my description of fragment 1:22 and is my red thread in this project.

One thing that I knew in the beginning of this process was that I didn’t want to work with a physically solid surface. Instead I started exploring the possibilities how we can use our peripheral vision to create a surface that we would perceive as a solid one. I used 1:24 for its ability of creating three dimensional patterns. It became a play between 2D and 3D, depending how you interacted with the surface.

But the object got lost in its surface, it wasn’t the object that changed into another, it was the surface. I zoomed out and started focusing on the form and found inspiration in the models I made from the fragments 1:24; 1:22 and 1:18 and found another interesting fragment, nr 1:27.

Instead of seeing it as a wall I decided to work with negative contra positive forms and perceive it as an opening. I wanted to create a room divider that had the possibility to change the way we experience the room. The roomdivider could be seen as a portal that lets the new spaces merge together.
Sketches and scale models of dividing objects.
THROUGH THE GAP

Light shines through an opening and hits the floor where I’m standing. One of the sheets reflects the light on to the other sheet. If it wasn’t for the slightly angled sheet it wouldn’t shine in. It shines through the opening and in to my space. It’s like if someone opened up a surface to let it in. To leave it ajar and to welcome something or someone from the opposite side in. The boundary between my space and what’s behind blurs out. The object hides the view but the small opening triggers my imagination of wanting to know what’s behind. When standing in the right position I get a glimpse of it and by turning the sheets the view opens up and lets me through without my body.
Through the gap is a room divider that gives you a hint of what’s on the other side. Almost like a window or a door is ajar. The screens can be open or closed again depending on how you want to change the room. It keeps the space divided but the light and our mind has the ability to cross that line.
A GATHERING OBJECT

The circle exists in our life in many ways. It appears in our language as metaphors and expressions that connect to the symbolism of the circle. To “be a part of a circle” is to belong to a whole.

I wanted to use the circle as a symbol for a gathering point. The investigation started with fragments 1:1, 1:2 and 1:26. 1:1 and 1:26 led me to the idea of letting the surface become a place where you can sit.

The shape of an object tells us how we can relate to it. If I get a flat square shaped surface to sit on I behave in another way than if I would sit on a round surface. The outline creates an edge that I relate to when interacting with the surface. The behavior became clearer when I got company on the surface. We arranged ourselves along the edge. The round surface gathers us in a circle and creates a feeling of belonging to a whole.

To sit together on the ground in a circle is an interesting way to take away the hierarchy amongst a group of people. In this way everyone becomes equal. I also think that by taking a break from standing and sitting on chairs our body relaxes both physically and mentally. It gives us a new perspective, seeing things from another position.

Fragment 1:1 brought my thoughts to that the surface could have different textures to separate the sections of the surface. Not only for the eye but for the body as well. Fragment 1:26 led me to thoughts about how to transform a flat surface by manipulating the object. The boundary between the surface and ground was something that I found interesting to work further with. When does a surface on a floor change to something else?
Scale models 1:1 and fabric tests.
CIRCLE

I’m standing next to a big round surface on the floor. My friends are sitting in a circle on it. I doubt, but I kneel down and let the surface catch my weight. My knees sink slowly into the surface. This flat object has a hole in the middle. I sit down and place my feet there, together with some of my friends’ feet. We sit together, sharing the same surface. It isn’t a closed circle; it has a narrow gap between the two ends. I squeeze the object between my thumb and index finger, slowly but firm. It is thin but it keeps me on a pleasant distance from the floor. I grab the edge of the surface and let it lift from the floor. I break the flat appearance of the object by rolling it towards me and let it stay there as a support for my body.
Circle is a thin mattress that with its form, gather people for a conversation. Like the situation with a campfire, we form a space, our space with our bodies. You can break the circle by rolling up the edges to create a cushion to lean or to rest your head against.
CONCLUSION

Today I see my project as four parts, the collection, Circle, Obstacle and Through the gap. Each part had its opportunities to communicate with the visitors at the exhibition.

The “smörgåsbord” with fragments, models and the filing system worked as a starting point when explaining the whole project. I met people who worked in similar ways. We had a discussion about the importance of showing this kind of method as a way of shrinking the distance between designers and users/viewers. But also the importance of taking a step back and dig where you stand. To take something and try to use all of its capacity and that takes a lot from the one using the method. It could be seen as a way of limiting myself but for me it’s a matter of how you transform the information you have got from the fragment.

Now, in the end of the project I wish that I have taken the time to translate the fragment into another type of text. For instance, a memory that it brings up, what bird it would be and other associations to make the information less concrete. Then I think I would have used these different texts together to balance each other out. This is something that I will try in other projects when using the method with the growing collection.

When explaining the project I realize that some of the connections between the fragments and the furniture can be seen as clear, but there is a few of them that is vague for the audience that I have to explain further. The reason for that is that it is based on my thoughts and my experiences. When I’m taking the step further with my texts, would the gap grow bigger between the viewer and the project because of the level of personal associations? Would it be more interesting? For my process, yes. Even if the content of the method is one of the main parts of the project it’s still the method as a frame work that is supposed to be free to be used by others. But I experienced a lot of people that was looking at my fragments with new eyes when observing them in a plexi box away from their contexts.

The mattress was appreciated, especially amongst the children. They were running on it, turning them into a tortilla by rolling in it. But the best experience was when a family of three had a gathering on it. With its colours and the tactility of the textile it became a pedagogical exercise for kids that I haven’t thought about. “I like to run on the white part because its tickles my feet.” “Mum, you can sit on the white part. Wait, no! On the dark part and I can sit on the purple part.”

Presentation of the project at the exhibition.
For my oral presentation I gave my room divider the name *Window* since I have worked with the properties of a window. I got a question if it was a suitable name for it, and a comment that we maybe would try to compare it to a window instead of looking for the properties of a window. Under the exhibition I talked about it as a room divider without a name, as a test. A lot of the visitors saw it as a screen with the properties of a window since they thought that the light blue sheets were glass. They also saw it as screen to be used in front of windows as a substitute for curtains which was an interesting comment. After the exhibition I named it *Through the gap* since I felt it was the essential thought about the divider.

The exhibition has been a good way to try the pieces in a context and I think the bench has been the closest to be in its real context. Under the exhibition it became even clearer how it actually influenced us and change how we walked into the exhibition space.

Now, I want to take this project further by digging into someone else’s collection, preferably only the text parts to be totally free and create my own images of the fragments and a new collection.
THE INCOMPLETE COLLECTION
OF FRAGMENTS
1:1-1-33
1.1 A protecting, soft, shape able, adaptable, supporting object. On one side it consists out of one detail that has been multiplied, almost like a dozens of identical waves frozen in time. It’s a very tactile surface. Just by letting my hand sweep over it I can feel its appearance. The other side of the object is the total opposite.

1.2 A compact and light weight object. Small pieces in irregular shapes forced together to make a whole. It’s firm but when squeezing it hard I can feel it rebound. This compressed cone shaped object rolls, when but on the side, in a big circle.

1.4 A combination of 1.1 and 1.2.

1.6 Like a DNA spring the object twists around itself. Two separate objects make a new one when being twinned together. The only thing that keeps them in place is the fixed ends.

1.7 By letting it run through my fingers I can easily hear its appearance. It reminds me of the sound when holding a stick on to a wooden fence while walking. A clear and linear sound. Instead of hard as a fence it’s adaptable and gaining from it. It is stiff but very flexible. By manipulating the sheet with my hands a 3D surface occurs, showing a changing pattern.

1.10 A hard and compressed object. The light reflects in three different ways on the object, creating three properties of the surfaces: shiny, matt and rugged. The different surfaces create clear boundaries together with the edges of the form.

1.21 A flat object filled with air bubbles which are being trapped by two thin sheets. By squeezing the object I can feel each bubble like if the air was a liquid. It feels smooth and nice to hold in my hand, powerful in one way.

1.30 Solid, heavy and compressed. In one way it looks like it have been shaped out of small pieces that have been rolled together, like a snowball. It’s powerful in one way.

1.31 The piece is fragile but I can tweak it a bit, carefully. The construction resembles a net with strong lines connected to each other. On one side the colours are heavier and on the other side the colour changes when the sun hits the surface. On the other side this scale-like object the colours are heavier and deeper.

1.33 An object that seems to be the positive form from another object. It is thin and fragile, but holds its shape to some extent when manipulating it. If I give it a poke, the movement travels through the object, creating a wave. It

1.34 A two dimensional check pattern on a translucent surface. It feels like holding a net but without touching its actual structure. By folding it a new graphic pattern appears. I can find the old pattern through it, a structure that has been modified just by layering it.