

NOMADIC OBJECTS

TEMPORAL PLACEMAKING & MINDFULNESS
IN THE NON-PLACE

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ABSTRACT

Nomadic Objects: Temporal Placemaking & Mindfulness in the Non-place

How can temporary place-making practice reveal a nomadological condition at work within a contemporary spatial landscape?

How can this temporary place-making practice create a space of mindfulness within the low-affect condition of the *non-places* that spatialise our contemporary condition of super-modernity as proposed by Marc Auge?

This practice based research project is articulated through a series of nomadic objects that communicate transitional movement throughout our contemporary spatial landscape. The project uses material exploration and object making as a design methodology to construct temporal place in the non-place. Using this methodology, the research suggests a creative practice that expresses the concept of mindfulness through a heightened sense of touch. The creative methodology evolves nomadically through a process of *Thinking Through Making* making. This methodology is one of mobility, fluidity and reiteration. The project occupies the non-place, a place of low affect and transitional movement, and highlights it within a phenomenological inquiry; it looks at the current experience of non-place and how it is interpreted and how to change this current perception.

The creation and implementation of the Nomadic Objects has caused a break in the non-place. This development of modular, crafted and touch based artifacts has generated a nomadological process to contrast the previous perception of non-place and instead, generate mindfulness.

Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
List of images	5 - 6
Attestation of authorship	7
PGR15 Form	8 - 9
Acknowledgements	10
Intellectual property rights	11
 Introduction	 12
Nomads & Non-Places	13
The Nomad	14 - 15
Wayfaring	16
Non-place	17 - 18
Thinking Through Making	19
The Sense of Touch	20
 Nomadic Methodology	 21 - 22
Part One: Materials exploration	
Concrete	23 - 30
Plywood	31 - 36
Felt	37 - 40
Part Two: Transitional Objects	41 - 45
Part Three: Nomadic Objects	46 - 48
 Objects	 49 - 55
 Conclusion	 56
 References	 57
 Appendix 1: Design Development	 58 - 61
 Appendix 2: Exhibition	 62 - 76

List of Images

	Page
Fig 1. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Matter Exploration	22
Fig 2. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Matter Exploration	22
Fig 3. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Shown in 'Material Stack'	22
Fig 4. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Pots	24
Fig 5. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Pots	24
Fig 6. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Pots	24
Fig 7. Armstrong, H. (2016) Casted Concrete Computer Mouse	26
Fig 8. Armstrong, H. (2016) Plaster & Leaf Computer Mouse	26
Fig 9. Armstrong, H. (2016) Plaster & Sand Computer Mouse	26
Fig 10. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete & Dowel Lamp	28
Fig 11. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete & Dowel Lamp	28
Fig 12. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete & Dowel Lamp	28
Fig 13. Armstrong, H. (2016) Plywood improvisation	30
Fig 14. Armstrong, H. (2016) Handheld Router	30
Fig 15. Armstrong, H. (2016) Plywood Sawdust	30
Fig 16. Armstrong, H. (2016) Hexagonal Slotted Plywood Table	32
Fig 17. Armstrong, H. (2016) Hexagonal Slotted Plywood Table	32
Fig 18. Armstrong, H. (2016) Hexagonal Slotted Plywood Table	32
Fig 19. Armstrong, H. (2016) Flat Pack Light Table and Stool	34
Fig 20. Armstrong, H. (2016) Flat Pack Table Light Detail	35
Fig 21. Armstrong, H. (2016) Flat Pack Stool	36
Fig 22. Krakoff, R. (2014). 'Felt Series'	36

Fig 23. Morris, R. (1976) 'Untitled'	36
Fig 24. Armstrong, H. (2016) Felt Sheet	36
Fig 25. Armstrong, H. (2015) Previous Felt Work for NZPQ15. Image retrieved from http://pqmassey.tumblr.com/	36
Fig 26. Armstrong, H. (2016) Felt on Bottom of Concrete & Dowel Lamp	38
Fig 27. Armstrong, H. (2016) Experimental Felt Foot	38
Fig 28. Armstrong, H. (2016) Nomadic object Exhibition at St Paul Street Gallery	40
Fig 29. Armstrong, H. (2016) Nomadic object Exhibition at St Paul Street Gallery	40
Fig 30 - 33. Armstrong, H. (2016) Nomadic object Exhibition at St Paul Street Gallery	41
Fig 34 - 42. Armstrong, H. (2016) Nomadic object Exhibition at St Paul Street Gallery	42
Fig 43. Armstrong, H. (2016) Computer generated Nomadic objects Apart	43
Fig 44. Armstrong, H. (2016) Computer generated Nomadic objects Apart	43
Fig 45. Armstrong, H. (2016) Diagram unpacking fluid & nomadological making process	44
Fig 46. Armstrong, H. (2016) Iterations of Object 1 - 4	46
Fig 47. Armstrong, H. (2016) Current Plan for Object 1	49
Fig 48. Armstrong, H. (2016) Current Plan for Object 2	50
Fig 49. Armstrong, H. (2016) Current Plan for Object 3	51
Fig 50. Armstrong, H. (2016) Current Plan for Object 4	52
Fig 51. Armstrong, H. (2016) Trial object four	52
Fig 54. Armstrong, H. (2016) Trial object four in the home	53
Fig 55. Armstrong, H. (2016) Trial object four backrest	53
Fig 56. Armstrong, H. (2016) Object Join	53
Fig 56. Armstrong, H. (2016) Join Detail	53

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INTRODUCTION

This research and making project explores how a *temporary place-making* practice can reveal a nomadological condition at work within a contemporary spatial landscape. Furthermore, it explores how this temporary place-making practice creates a space of *mindfulness* within the low-affect condition of the *non-places* that spatialise our contemporary condition of super-modernity as proposed by Marc Auge.

The aim of this research is to uncover how the design of objects can reveal nomadic movement and how this movement is fundamental to how we, as human beings, inhabit the modern workscape. Through a process of phenomenological research and making with an immersiveness into the *non-place*, this project generates a collection of modular and customizable objects. These objects reflect nomadic movement and stimulate the sense of touch to generate *mindfulness*. Mindfulness is used here to investigate our sensory awareness as we move through the non-places of our world. It explores the idea that it is our interaction with objects surrounding us, that cause us to be in the moment and mindful.

The first chapter of this research project communicates a deeper understanding of nomads and the non-place, as well as an explanation of thinking through making and the sense of touch as a way to cultivate mindfulness. The second chapter offers the nomadic making methodology of the nomadic objects, looking at how the thinking through making process stimulates ideas. The third chapter is used to describe the appearance and form of the final objects to be exhibited in December. This will be updated once this exhibition and examination has taken place.

NOMADS & NON-PLACES

The following research is an investigation into non-place and explores how temporary placemaking can highlight nomadic movement currently at work in our modern spatial landscape. The research is grounded within a theoretical framework involving Augé's argument surrounding non-place as a contemporary spatial condition of transition and supermodernity as a stage in society that reflects an inversion of modernity, creating the non-place. Non-place becomes the term used in this study to define the in-between places of the world that nomadic movement occurs in. To contrast the low-affect non-place, Juhani Pallasmaa strongly suggests that more thought needs to be given regarding the senses when designing place, so as not to create more non-place's. I use this regard for the senses, particularly touch, when crafting the objects of this study alongside Tim Ingold's notion of thinking through making. This project aims to show how temporary place making objects can transform the non-place.

The Nomad

At the center of this project is the concept of the nomad as a spatialised condition of flux, mobility and differentiated reiterations. Traditionally, nomadic people are those who move from one place to another. They are a member of people who have no permanent settlement. Their residing at various places is dependant on the resources available to them in that location. The traditional nomads have various key actants such as the yurt, their livestock, means of protection and tools to grow and carry food. In this project, the term nomad has been adapted to describe the modern nomad.

Since the introduction of the first fully mobile laptop in the late 80's, technology has been shaping the way people live and work. "Work has been freed. From offices. From preconceptions about where it has to happen." (Bertrand, 2014). With this new transformation in the world, an innovative type of worker has evolved, The 'Nomadic Worker'. A Nomadic worker is a wanderer of the globe. They carry their belongings on their back and settle at the borders of the modern workplace. Their location often selected on the availability of a power point and a solid Wi-Fi signal.

The analogy of the traditional nomad portrayed in the modern nomad results in identifying key similarities; the shifting of locations in search of better resources, the move to distinctive places depending on different climates and needs and the transportation of all necessary possessions. Though there are many differences between pastoralist nomads and the modern Nomad, there are some elements central to both their strategies: using principal actants for survival, seeking resources, and integrating with others (Norman Makoto Su, 2008). Nomadism does not suggest pointless wandering; it instead suggests a methodical rotation of settlements to ensure maximum use of obtainable resources. Nomads do not live to migrate; they migrate to live. People who pursue a nomadic strategy do so for quite good reasons (Salzman, 2014, p. 40).

However, the way in which the modern nomads and nomadic workers move throughout our contemporary world is ever changing. Rapid transformations in our technological world, architectural landscapes, and spatial realms on top of health and wellbeing issues are key factors in the push and pulls of nomadic work. Nomadic work, an extreme form of mobile work, is becoming increasingly prevalent in organizations however, there has not been enough research attention on the particular challenges that nomadic workers face in order to design support for their work practices (Norman Makoto Su, 2008).

Our spatial landscape inadvertently tells us how spaces are to be used. Consciously or not, we feel and internalise what the space tells us about how to work and common working environments subtly command ways of working (D Kelley, 2013). Marc Auge talks about the world being filled with 'non-places', this research asks if the non-place still exists when nomadic workers are transforming it into a working landscape. "The distinction between places and non-places derives from the opposition between place and space" (Auge, 1995, p. 75). This research argues that through placemaking practice the non-place that is being used by nomadic workers is now a place. It contrasts the low affect environment of non-place and transforms it into temporary place through the design of modular objects.

Wayfaring

Tim Ingold translates nomadism through the term wayfaring. He suggests that wayfaring is the fundamental mode by which living beings inhabit the earth. Every such being can be imagined as the line of its own movement or more realistically as a bundle of lines. (Ingold, 2011, p.13) It is this concept of the line that was subconsciously carried throughout the project. Thinking of each object as not a finished artifact, but as a material bundle of lines that can be picked up and carried on. The object is a line itself and this line is knotted with the lines of the people that come into contact with it.

The nomad or the wayfarer is his own line and when he uses different objects he becomes knotted and joined to their lines. Everybody is in some situation a nomad or wayfarer, our lives are made by a series of paths and we are always moving. Spaces become places when our paths cross with other paths and create knots of overlapping lines. Wayfaring, or nomadic movement, is how humans inhabit the earth. Ingold expresses that the wayfarer, somebody who is continually on the move is “in an ongoing process of growth and development” (Ingold, 2011, p.150). The wayfarers have to sustain themselves both perceptually and materially through engagement with their environment.

Tim Ingold believes our contemporary world is not a network, but a meshwork. A meshwork is an interlaced structure. Each person has their own line in the meshwork, they form a trail. The meshwork is created by the intertwining of their trail with the trails of others, twisting as knots and loops. “Proceeding along a path, every inhabitant lays a trail. Where inhabitants meet, trails are entwined, as the life of each becomes bound up with the other. Every entwining is a knot, and the more that lifelines are entwined, the greater the density of the knot” (Ingold, 2013)

Non-place

Supermodernity produces non-places. Meaning spaces which are not themselves anthropological places (Auge, 1995, p.78).

Marc Auge has labeled the in-between spaces of the world, such as transit lounges, thresholds, alleyways, the gaps between one building and another and so on as 'Non-places'. *Non-place* refers to anthropological spaces of transience that do not hold enough significance to be regarded as real places. They are spaces of movement without affect or experience. Auge draws to our attention to airport lounges and transitional places alike that have a dismal, senseless impression. He goes on to comment that 'the non-place is the opposite of utopia; it exists and it does not contain any organic society'. (Auge, 1995, p.111-112) The non-place is a simulation of a real place; a fabricated feeling of reality. He asks, In such transitional space where people are moving from one place to another or one city to the next, why must this ideology of the non-place exist?

Non-places are the places in the world that serve no particular purpose but people and things gather there. This research explores this dimension of non-place, a place commonly used by the wandering nomad and sets out to repurpose these areas. The project explores how the design of objects can highlight how this transitional movement is fundamental to human life and turn the non-place into place through a placemaking practice. "In the concrete reality of today's world, places and spaces, places and non-places intertwine and tangle Together" (Auge, 1995, p.107). In contrast to Marc Auge's description of the non-place, the project explores how temporary place-making practice can reveal a nomadological condition already at work within contemporary space.

By offering placemaking tools in the non-places, the nomad's are given a temporary landing which can relieve them from searching for a place to settle. As Shujan Bertrand (2014) of furniture company Steelcase explains, "The slightest gesture in hosting goes a long way for a nomad". They are provided with a place to sit with surfaces to hold the tools they need to complete their daily tasks. As Marc Auge states, "A person entering the space of non-place is relieved of his usual determinants. He becomes no more than what he does or experiences in the role of passenger, customer or driver" (Auge, 1995, p.103).

Supermodernity, as described by Auge, is a stage in society that reflects an inversion of modernity in which the function of an object has its reference point in the form of an object rather than function being the reference point for form. Supermodernity allows the attributes of an object to provide even more individuality than modernism. It is in this world of supermodernity, that does not exactly match the one in which we believe we live, for we live in a world that we have not yet learned to look at. We have to relearn to think about space (Auge, 1995, p.35).

An integral part of this research project is the concept of thinking through making. Adopted from Tim Ingold, this concept has aided an organic development to the making side of this research. Ingold suggests that in order to think through making, we must think of creativity forwards not backwards, instead of starting with an object we should let the making happen, we should join with the movements of materials and be aware as they feel their way ahead. Ingold expresses that “Thinking through making lies in improvisation rather than innovation” (Ingold, 2013). Creativity lies in the processes.

We can no longer regard making as a projection of a ready made thought into a material. Making is an ongoing, binding together of material flows and sensory awareness. The creator joins his or her life into the materials of the artifact. The craftsman needs to understand the properties of the materials and how they work. “Materials are what they do, and what happens when you work with them” (Ingold, 2013). A craftsman does not impose form on matter, but finds the grain of things, enters it and bends it to his or her evolving purpose.

Thinking through making generates knowledge and mindfulness. Thinking has a habit of moving ahead of making. Our imagination runs ahead of what we do. When we are working with materials there is a limit to how fast we can move. You have to work slowly but imagination pulls you ahead. The skilled craftsman is one who can hold the momentum in check with the slow movement of working, looking in the distance but being in the present. There is a tension between the reach of the imagination and the drag of the material. The trained maker who thinks through making can keep their eyes trained on the material but still think of the horizon. It is this process that I have used throughout the making of this project, cultivating mindfulness for myself as I make and to generate objects that employ interaction encouraging the user to be mindful.

The Sense of Touch

Juhani Pallasmaa argues that sight has been regarded the most favourable of the five senses and the other four have been suppressed when it comes to the design of our built environment. He believes that such suppression has diminished the spatial experience of our lived environments and architecture is losing its ability to inspire and engage. Pallasmaa believes that architecture and archi-objects should express the world around them, not the ideals of the maker. He communicates how the sense of touch via creativity and craft needs to play a significant role in the evolution of design. He explores the idea that it is our interaction with the world surrounding us, that can assist us to be in the moment and mindful.

In his book, *The Eyes of The Skin*, Pallasmaa talks about how our sight is only there to reveal what our sense of touch already knows and that “the sense of touch is the unconscious of vision” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.42). Through this idea, we can prove that materials and how they are shaped lead to our spatial awareness and how we perceive and read environments. Pallasmaa expresses how natural and raw materials such as wood and stone, allow penetration of sight. We can see through their surfaces and this “enables us to become convinced of the veracity of matter” (Pallasmaa, 2005, p.31). Natural materials hold certain values as they express age and history as well as tell a story of their origins.

Pallasmaa believes that touch should be a more favourable sense as it holds importance in our modern and ‘flat’ world. Touch helps to ignite the senses and bring awareness. The implementation of touch via craft in physical space affects our mind space. This answers the Augé themed question of how do we interrupt the non-place? Pallasmaa comments that “Spaces are not just lifeless frames for our activities. They guide and choreograph and stimulate actions” So in order to turn the non-place into place, we can implement crafted archi-objects that stimulate touch in nomadic and transitory non-places. Through an exaggerated sense of touch we can begin to relearn how we look at the world around us.

NOMADIC METHODOLOGY

Translating the theoretical framework of the non-place, the nomadic, thinking through making and the senses into a design process, I explored the coming into being of artifacts and objects formed in this research. The research and making project investigates the spatial movement of nomadic workers through the development of a range of recombinant furniture-objects. The project is explored through a phenomenological nomadic methodology as a way to bring mindfulness and presence to the non-place. This is highlighted, constructed and humanised by the crafting of objects as a means of bringing to presence and contrasting the non-place. This is explored through a series of making methods that explore materials and the importance of their matter. This is analyzed through hand craft with a range of processes including stitching, weaving, moulding, casting, cutting, routing, drawing, sleeving and covering.

This nomadic making methodology is influenced by Pallasmaa's request to design with the sense of touch and Ingold's concept of thinking through making. Ingold questions "what distinguishes a natural object for example a stone or piece of wood from a artifact/object like a carved wooden cup?" (2011). In the artifact, in his example the cup, a form that never existed in a natural piece of wood, it has been imposed on the originally shapeless material: "The artifact is the materialisation of a thought" (Ingold, 2013). Instead of starting with the object and thinking what was the idea that gave rise to this object we should join with the movements of materials as they "feel their way ahead" and "join with the movement of making", improvising or thinking through making (Ingold, 2013). This means that nothing is ever finished and that every artifact is a 'waystation', on its way to something else. If we think of making as the art of weaving, everything is being knotted and continuously moved, all the materials are bound into each other. We should think of the artifact as a 'knot' of materials bound together. It is not a bounded structure, it is made of strands that trace off to something else. We need to think of the surfaces of objects as places where there is a continual interchange between materials and its surroundings.

Translating Juhani Pallasmaa's theory into a making practice answers the research question of 'How can the design of these objects evoke a philosophy of mindfulness in a nomadological existence?.' By making in regards to the sense of touch and with careful consideration to matter, I can strengthen the experience of one's sense of being in the world and therefore successfully evoke mindfulness in such a temporal existence, that of nomadically wandering the non-place. Pallasmaa suggests that "Every touching experience of architecture is multi-sensory; qualities of space, matter and scale are measured equally by the eye, ear, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton and muscle. Architecture strengthens the existential experience, one's sense of being in the world, and this is essentially a strengthened experience of self" (Pallasmaa, 2005, p. 41).

By adapting Ingold's concept of Thinking Through Making with Juhani Pallasmaa's emphasis on designing with the sense of touch, the following making methodology was used to develop the design of my final objects for the wayfarers and nomad's of the non-place. I propose that this same methodology can be used for the design of any kind and opens up a new field of making to explore. This research does not aim to solve the issues of nomadic work as the field is much too large and constantly shifting with the advance of new technologies, but rather, it aims to open up a unique way of altering the non-place.

Part One: Material Exploration

Concrete

Reading creativity forwards instead of backwards, I started this methodology with an exploration into raw materials and matter. Concrete comes as a mix of different ingredients; Sand, gravel, cement, and when mixed with water it enters a state in between making and made. "Concrete is momentarily unformed matter seeking its natural completion, filling in the last corners of its allowed space, finding a form. It is possibility rendered material, hope in an industrial strength mixer" (Kingwell, 2008).

Instead of starting with an object in mind and aiming to create that objects, I just started. I mixed the concrete with rain water collected in a nearby container, until it reached a desired consistency. From here I looked around me to see what I could then use to mould the rapidly setting concrete mix. I gathered a collection of wooden off cuts from previous works and screwed them together to form a box. I simply poured the concrete into the box and waited for it to set. There was no desired object in mind when creating this cube of concrete, I simply wanted to feel the matter that made up the concrete, examining its consistency, observing how it poured and watching as it dried. "Making takes place in the interval between a starting point and a finishing point." (Ingold, 2011). The start is the main material and the thought or end is the finished object. By "joining with the movement of making" (Ingold, 2011), improvising and by *thinking through making* this means that nothing is ever finished and that every artifact is a waystation on its way to something else. This following with the materials and their matter caused a change in focus from aiming to make an object to rather investigating the processes and generations of ideas which go on to become objects. The main objective here being to attend to the matter of material, with that material then becoming an artifact with the ideas generated



Fig 1. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Matter Exploration

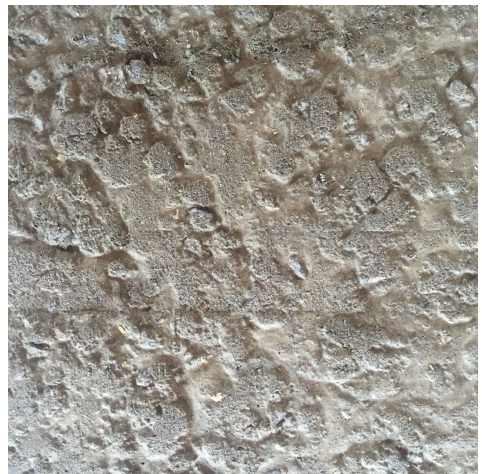


Fig 2. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Matter Exploration



Fig 3. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Shown in 'Material Stack'

Concrete Pots

From casting the concrete into a simple wooden box, I began to think what other objects I could collect and use as a mould. I looked for shapes that could use the same process and used the thinking from the previous making to generate a new idea and to generate an artifact. These concrete pots are created from a shape that already exists, a juice container. The container is used to hold and shape the concrete material that is poured inside to create a new object. By using the readymade object to create something new this strengthens the idea that every artifact is itself a wayfarer. The artifact of the juice carton was the intended objects, but its making is not finished as I have adapted it to further create something new.



Fig 4. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Pots



Fig 4. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Pots



Fig 6. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete Pots

The third form that I created with the poured concrete was the shape of the computer mouse. All though this shape has no intended purpose, it is this continued exploration into casting that helped with the development of future objects and the *thinking through making* to generate new ideas. By using the readymade object of the computer mouse; a key symbol of our technological world, I have created these new objects from concrete and also plaster by using a mould of the object to create the new object.

Similar to that of casting the concrete pots into an existing shape, but this time I created a plastic vac formed mould from the mouse, rather than using the mouse itself. The raw material of concrete and plaster, sand and leaves contrasts with the material that a mouse is generally made from. Holding this moulded mouse is different to holding a computer mouse, the texture is soft and smooth and it feels cool in your hand. It is obvious that it has been crafted and it captures your attention and makes you examine the shape of the object, something you would regularly disregard in the mundane task of using a computer mouse. As the objects are weathering they are changing in colour, texture and temperature. Little pieces chip off and the leaves are growing old.



Fig 7. Armstrong, H. (2016) Casted Concrete Computer Mouse



Fig 8. Armstrong, H. (2016) Plaster & Leaf Computer Mouse



Fig 9. Armstrong, H. (2016) Plaster & Sand Computer Mouse

Lamp

Following this exploration into casting from the readymade, I used the thinking generated from that making to explore how I could build out from the casted object. I used a cylindrical form to create the base of this lamp. I then used this concrete foot to hold a length of dowel and another piece of dowel attached to this with a bolt. This created a stand for which to organically wrap a pendant light from, one which would typically hang from a ceiling. The result was an on trend lamp that would be sold in a lighting store with a recommended retail price of at least \$150.00, but made here for only the price of the light, \$25.



Fig 10. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete & Dowel Lamp



Fig 11. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete & Dowel Lamp



Fig 12. Armstrong, H. (2016) Concrete & Dowel Lamp

Plywood

The second of my chosen materials to explore is that of plywood. Plywood is a sheet material manufactured from thin layers of wood veneer that are then glued together. Plywood was chosen as it easily accessible, cheap and has a very gentle aesthetically pleasing appearance. Having worked with plywood previously I also felt very comfortable exploring with it further.

Tim Ingold believes that “Creativity lies in improvisation”, something I also agree with. To completely improvise, I started exploring the matter of this material by routing into it. Using a hand router, nothing about this impact on the material was planned. As I maneuvered the router across the sheet of material, I imagined the floorplan of my own home and thought about the paths that I take throughout and around it and this subconsciously lead me to create paths of travel across the section of plywood. I then began to carefully examine each groove and movement with my fingers, tracing every outline I had created. I sanded the plywood so that it was smooth and the edges of each groove were soft and gentle to trace. The sawdust left over on the floor was soft and warm from baking in the sun.



Fig 13. Armstrong, H. (2016) Plywood improvisation



Fig 14. Armstrong, H. (2016) Handheld Router



Fig 15. Armstrong, H. (2016) Plywood Sawdust

Slotted Plywood Table

After experimenting with the router and improvising its movements, I began to think about how this same tool could be used to turn the plywood into something more structural. I used two separate offcuts of plywood from previous projects and routed out two lines for which the two pieces could slot together. For this new join I added a top and a base so that the join could stand alone. This new joining method was extremely solid, and by experimenting with this routing method further, I used the thinking through making concept to create a joining method that is latter used in my final objects.



Fig 16. Armstrong, H. (2016) Hexagonal Slotted Plywood Table



Fig 17. Armstrong, H. (2016) Hexagonal Slotted Plywood Table



Fig 18. Armstrong, H. (2016) Hexagonal Slotted Plywood Table

Flat Pack Light Table

The next plywood artifact I made was a table accompanied by a matching stool. To make this table and stool, I drew two circles which I then cut by hand with a band saw. This process could have been made more precise and each circle would have been perfect if done via a CNC router or laser cutter, but the act of improvisation and crafting by hand adds to the thinking through making concept. The imperfect details of the circles add to the overall createdness. A length of dowel was needed to create stability in the design so by pulling this leg up through the table I was able to implement the same light design used previously in the lamp. This recycling of ideas proves the importance of the range of material tests and shows the journey of where things lead and where they can go.

The purpose of this table is to act as a temporary structure for use by people passing by, the table can be completely flat packed as all elements can come apart in less than a minute. The horizontal bars simply slip out as they are only attached via recessed magnets. The legs unscrew from the base plates underneath the seat and table, and the main long leg with the light attached can be pulled out of the table top with ease. It is this experiment into temporality that lead to the further development of modular and customizable designs.



Fig 19. Armstrong, H. (2016) Flat Pack Light Table and Stool



Fig 20. Armstrong, H. (2016) Flat Pack Table Light Detail



Fig 21. Armstrong, H. (2016) Flat Pack Stool

Felt

To contrast the previous, my next chosen material was felt. I knew that I wanted to add some type of softness to the previously existing hard surfaces. Through my research into historical nomadic people, I found that felt is the oldest used textile in the world. The mongolian nomads have used felt for centuries as it is made from naturally occurring matter; wool. Working in the nomadic paradigm the use of this material appeared obvious. Having previously worked with industrial felt before in my creative practice, I knew that I could use the textile to create both strong geometric lines but also translate it into arching curves and seamless transitions.

Reed Krakoff is an American fashion designer that created a felt series for design house Established & Sons to translate a perceived trend for felt in the fashion industry, into furniture designed objects. "These archetypical furniture forms reinvented in soft felt, have beautifully considered stitch detailing and will follow fashion trends through the seasonal evolution of colour pairings" explains Krakoff (2014), "Designing a chair isn't that much different from designing a fashion collection. It's still just about telling a story through shape, colour, and form".

Robert Morris is at the vanguard in reducing the bold and strong angled geometry of Minimalism with an aesthetic softness. His felt works use sheets of the textile with the basic crafting technique of single cuts, followed simply by hanging the felt. Morris does not push any further crafting onto the raw material and let's the felt decide how it would like to hang. He leaves it up to gravity to have the final say on how the work stands. By leaving the felt to speak with its own characteristics it shows human like qualities. "Felt has anatomical associations," Morris states, "it relates to the body, it's skin like."

Felt and other textiles can be simply used in geometric forms and patterns to create sensory awareness: "Cloth and memory share so many words and allusions; folds, threads, stains, patching and layering" (Julius, 2014, p.113). By interacting with materials, memories are aroused in the individual. The memories and the senses being so closely intertwined means that perhaps the touch of the felt bids to the feel of the cushion on your grandmother's sofa, and the feelings you have for her. 'Cloth, through a glimpse of a pattern or the touch of a wisp of textile, summons up many memories (Julius, 2014, p.114).



Fig 22. Krakoff, R. (2014). 'Felt Series'



Fig 23. Morris, R. (1976) 'Untitled'

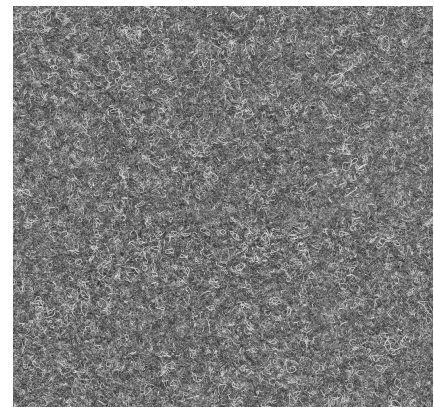


Fig 24. Armstrong, H. (2016) Felt Sheet



Fig 25. Armstrong, H. (2015) Previous Felt Work for NZPQ15

Felt as a softener

My first exploration with felt was looking at how I could use the woolen textile to soften the joins of the harder materials both within themselves and how they meet other surfaces. I attached a sheet of felt to the bottom of the concrete lamp with homemade corn syrup glue. Once the glue had adhered, I carefully traced around the edge of the concrete base with a scalpel to remove the excess felt, leaving a perfectly concealed base to the rough appearance of the concrete.

Next I explored felt in a way for it to be seen. Instead of using a sheet of felt, I used felting wool which comes in delicate tufts. This is the finest form that felt can come in, so by bringing the material down to a finer matter it enabled me to improvise and move with the material. I used the felting wool to wrap around the foot of my previously created flatpack stool. The purpose of this was to soften the way that the stool meets the ground. By carefully wrapping the wool around an object and covering it in the same corn syrup glue used previously, layer by layer, the footing gets stronger. When the glue is dried, the footing can be removed and remains strong. Taking something soft and natural and turning into a hard material is a contrasting process of change and uses the ready made object to create the new nested object, similar to that of casting the concrete.



Fig 26. Armstrong, H. (2016) Felt on Bottom of Concrete & Dowel Lamp



Fig 27. Armstrong, H. (2016) Experimental Felt Foot

Corn syrup glue

1. In a small pot, mix $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water with 2 tablespoons of corn syrup and 1 tablespoon white vinegar
2. Bring the mixture to the boil
3. In a bowl mix 2 tablespoons of cornstarch with $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of cold water
4. Slowly add the cold mixture into the hot mixture. Stir constantly for one minute then remove from heat
5. Once cooled pour the mixture into a container, let it stand overnight at room temperature

Part Two: Transitional Objects

Following the material explorations, I developed a group of objects. Made from plywood and crafted as two dimensional sketches of an idea rather than final objects. The material outputs created have not been given any specific labels. If I was to give an object a name, such as *'The Shelf Chair'* that would give instruction of how the object is to be used. The naming of things limits the range of the object's shape or function. I did not want the stereotypical name of things to limit my imagination of what they could become. Different nicknames were used to converse about them with my peers but none of these suggested names stuck.

The following stage of the methodology used the previous material explorations to develop a series of archi-objects; my first collection of objects. I created 3D models (See appendix 1) of the images I held in my head from the previous making experiments. I did not agonise for too long over this design as I wanted the forms to be created freely as I worked with the materials. I set myself parameters such as seat height and leg widths so that the structures had a uniformed front. I started hand making the computer modeled objects, but new forms were improvised as the design process continued.

The result was a collection of 10 objects that were exhibited in St Paul Street Gallery, Auckland. I experimented with Reed Krakoff's use of felt and covered some of the lower structures to give them a softness but also to exaggerate the objects lines through the use of raw seems. Through discussion with visitors, each individual had a different view of what each object could be used for. When setting out the exhibition it was interesting to see how the objects interacted with each other when placed together and apart, as scattered sculptures for use by many people, or one larger structure to become a temporary home for one person.



Fig 28. Armstrong, H. (2016) Nomadic object Exhibition at St Paul Street Gallery



Fig 29. Armstrong, H. (2016) Nomadic object Exhibition at St Paul Street Gallery



Fig 30 - 33. Armstrong, H. (2016) Nomadic object Exhibition at St Paul Street Gallery

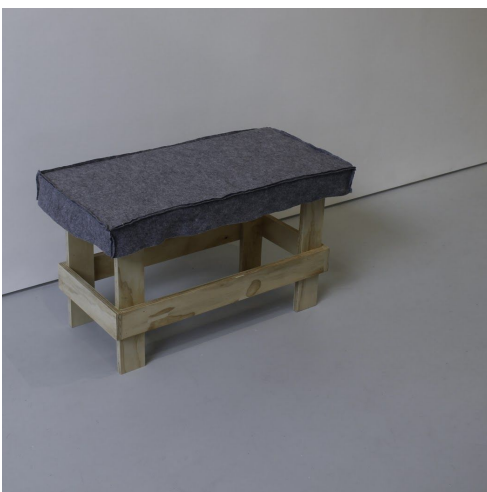


Fig 34 - 42. Armstrong, H. (2016) Nomadic object Exhibition at St Paul Street Gallery



Fig 43. Armstrong, H. (2016) Computer generated Nomadic objects Apart



Fig 44. Armstrong, H. (2016) Computer generated Nomadic objects together

Part Three: Nomadic Objects

Throughout this making methodology I have developed a collection of objects by exploring the concepts of the nomad, non-place, the sense of touch and mindfulness. This has been a methodology of mobility, fluidity and reiteration. In order to frame the thinking through making as a condition of the nomadological methodology, I have created the following diagram which unpacks this process of testing, shifting and iterating.

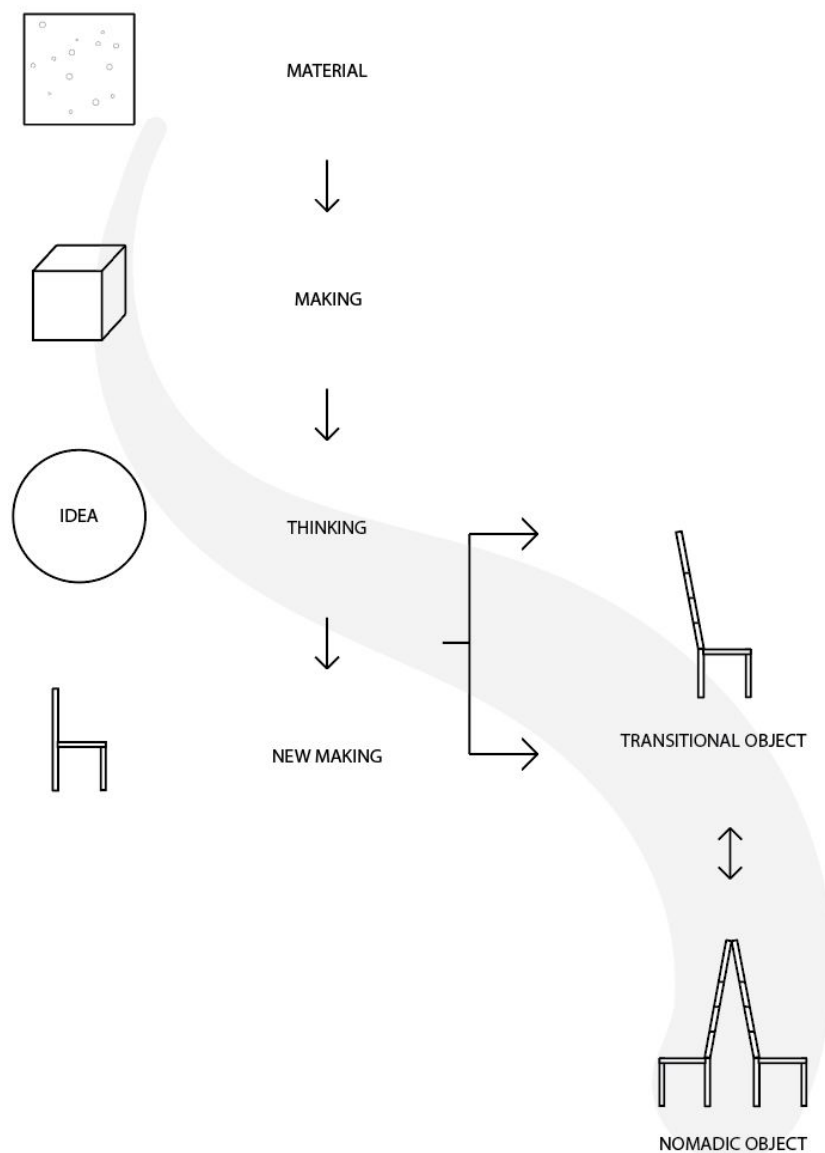


Fig 45. Armstrong, H. (2016) Diagram unpacking fluid & nomadological making process

The third part of this making methodology sits in the *nomadic object* stage. A place where the development of the object is never finished, the thinking it creates is ongoing and its making is never complete. The *nomadic object* becomes the *transitional object* continuously as new iterations are created. The objects are wayfarers, always on their way to being something else. This project uses this nomadic process of moving to create many iterations of what the different objects can become. This same fluid change has instructed the modular aspects of the objects design, to celebrate this ever changing way of being.

In this project, currently sitting in between transitional and nomadic object, I have created many different iterations that the nomadic objects could take. These variations help to understand the forms of the objects and generate thinking of where they can go next. I have shown ten of each object in different variations (fig, 47). Each variation produces new ideas, particularly surrounding the aim to create modular, performative and changeable objects. This idea generation has lead the development of the final objects.

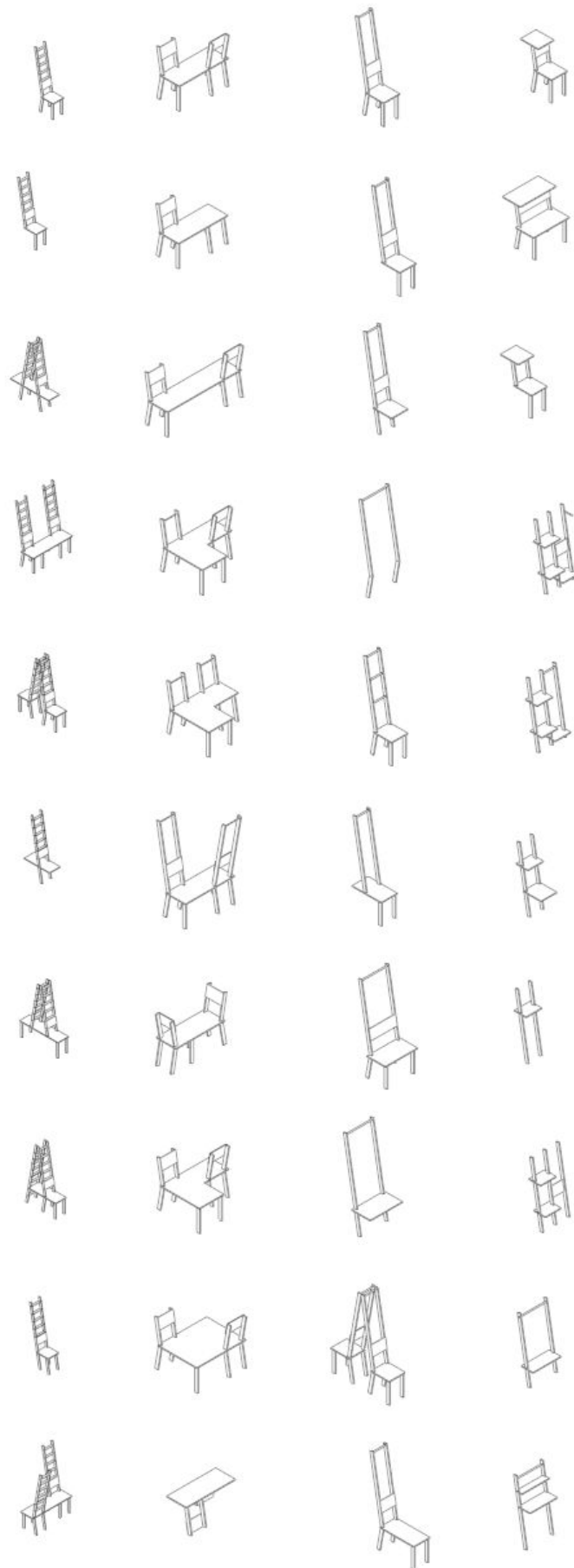


Fig 46. Armstrong, H. (2016) Iterations of Object 1 - 4

OBJECTS

The final (final in terms of this project) objects occupy the non-place. We as human beings inhabit the non-place and coexist with the objects, our existing with the objects and their material qualities embodies nomadism and mindfulness. It is this coexisting that reveals our current nomadological condition.

The making of the objects has engaged thoughts in relation to form and function. Some of the objects appear not fully functional as, for example a seat or a shelf, and their interpretation from others may suggest different ideas of function. The objects could then instead speak solely to form, as sculptural archi-objects and instead of being designed for function, be used as the tools to reveal a nomadological condition through thoughts of their creation. They therefore also act as temporary thought provoking artifacts which through this act still bring the desired mindfulness to the non-place.

The objects designed for the non-place will sit within their intended outcome, but their ideas will also expand via their installation into St Paul Street gallery for the final exhibition. They will spread throughout the room as knotted together materials. They will sit as sculptures, ready for individual interpretation. The objects were built from theoretical references and material explorations therefore they encompass the research as a whole. Their placement throughout the gallery will be ever changing as they move through the non-place of the gallery as nomads themselves. Their placement will also rely on the interaction from others as they perform as modular and iterative material forms.

It is my intention to continue the creation of these objects, and let their development continue to wander and change as our contemporary spatial landscape continues to ebb and flow. Tim Ingold states that an object's craft is never finished, it continues to develop long after the craftsman has finished his manipulations with the materials. There is no knowing where these objects will end up, it is an unscripted and truly nomadic movement and making process.

At this stage in the project, I have developed four objects. Each object stands alone for its own interpretation of use. Furthermore, different aspects of the four objects can be used with one another. The shelf of Object 1 can be used as the tabletop of Object 2. The elongated area from Object 4 can be removed and used as a bench to join Object 1 with Object 3. There is no limit to what form the objects can take.

All of the objects are cut on a CNC machine from Birch plywood. Birch is one of the highest grade plywoods available in New Zealand. This sustainably made and sourced plywood is also known for its strength, aesthetically pleasing grain texture and its ease of finishing. The objects are all designed to be interlocking so that no screws, nails, glue or tools are necessary. These modular and temporary objects have assisted with the translation of nomadism, non-place and mindfulness. Further, the objects have guided my own understanding of nomadism through their creation.

Object One is made from a main chair base which is used to form the main structure of all four objects. Object 1 has a stretching back that resembles a ladder. This ladder can be used as a shelving system for any type of storage depending on the user's needs. This extension from the base makes the structure top heavy, requiring it to be leaning against a wall or another object with the same extended back.

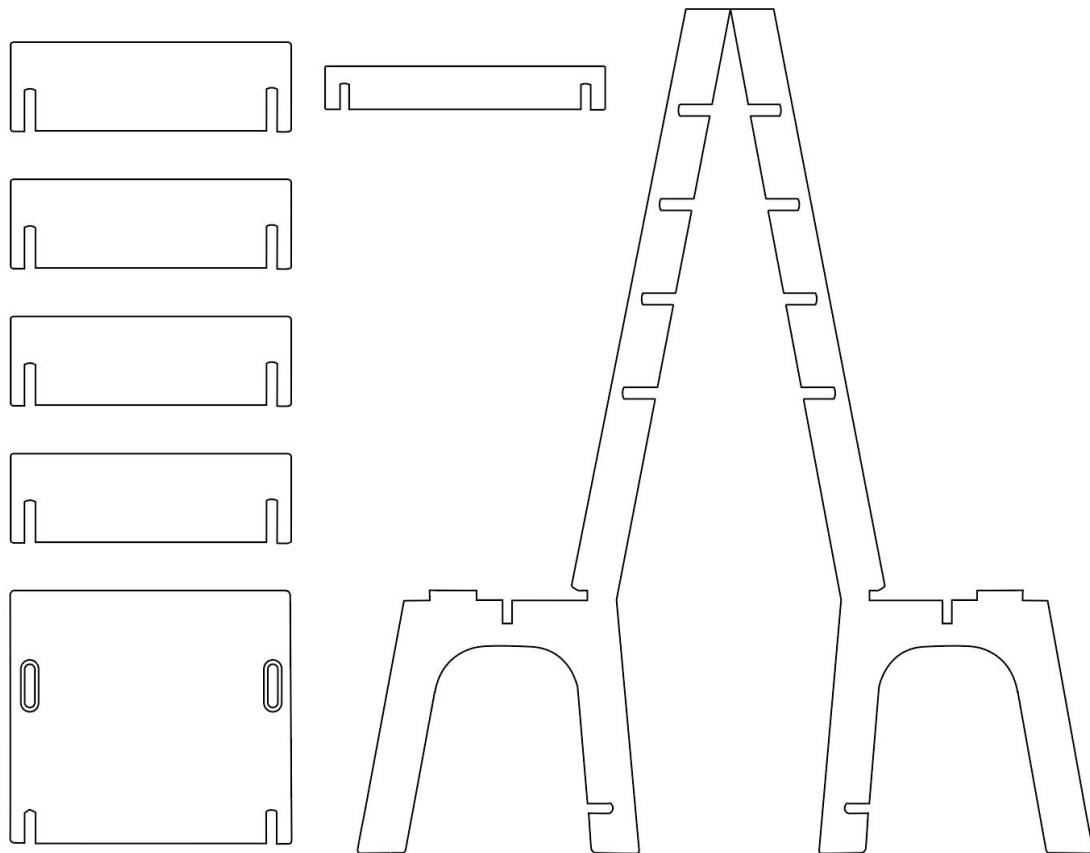


Fig 47. Armstrong, H. (2016) Current Plan for Object 1

Object 2 is a double ended seated structure that faces two ways, to either be used for intimate conversation or the opposite when the gap in between the two seats is expanded. The gap is created by a bench area that comes in two sizes and is easily slotted in between the two seats. This same panel can be used to join any of the chair bases with each other, as all the chair frames have been cut for this purpose. This means that a Object 1 can be joined to Object 3 or that one half of Object 2 can be joined to another object.

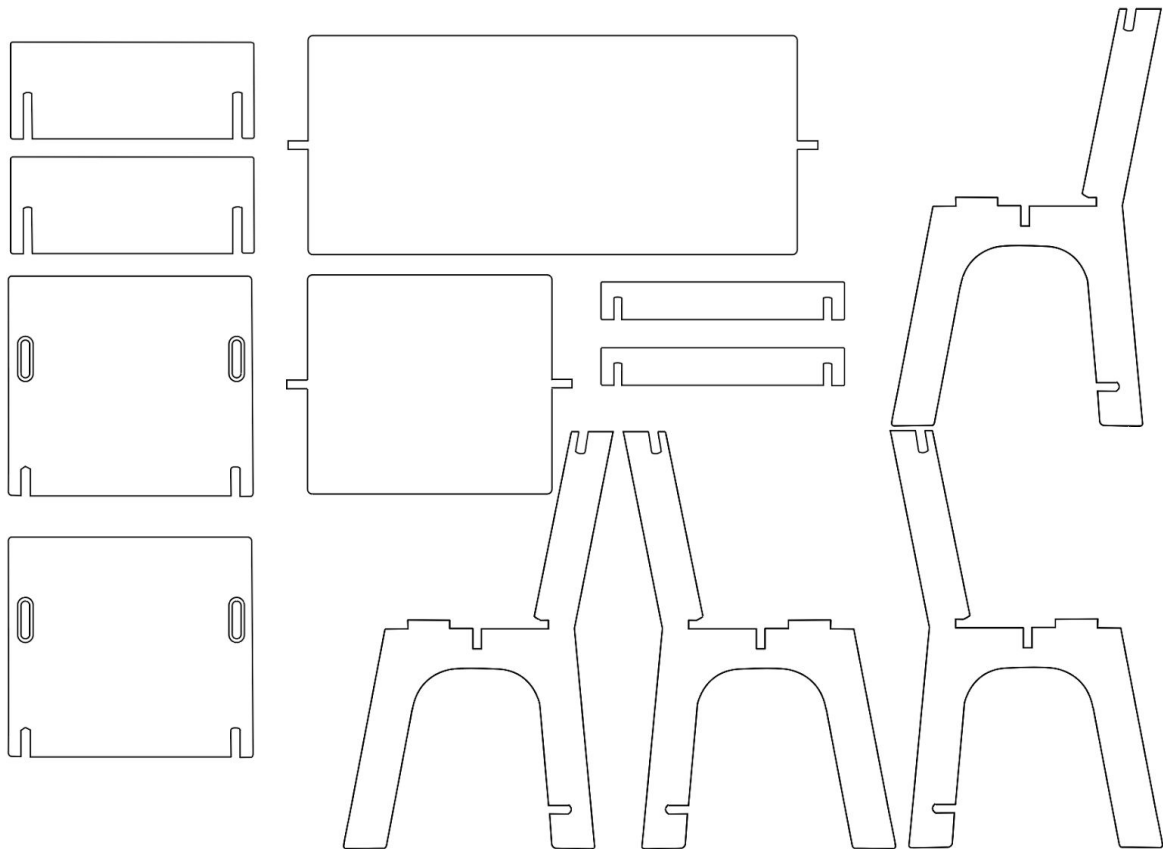


Fig 48. Armstrong, H. (2016) Current Plan for Object 2

Object 3 uses the same climbing back as Object 1 but instead it is used to create a hanger. This back also leans against a wall, another object that is the same or paired with Object 1. To accompany this Object, three hangers have been cut out and I intend to cover them with the grey felt used in my previous makings.

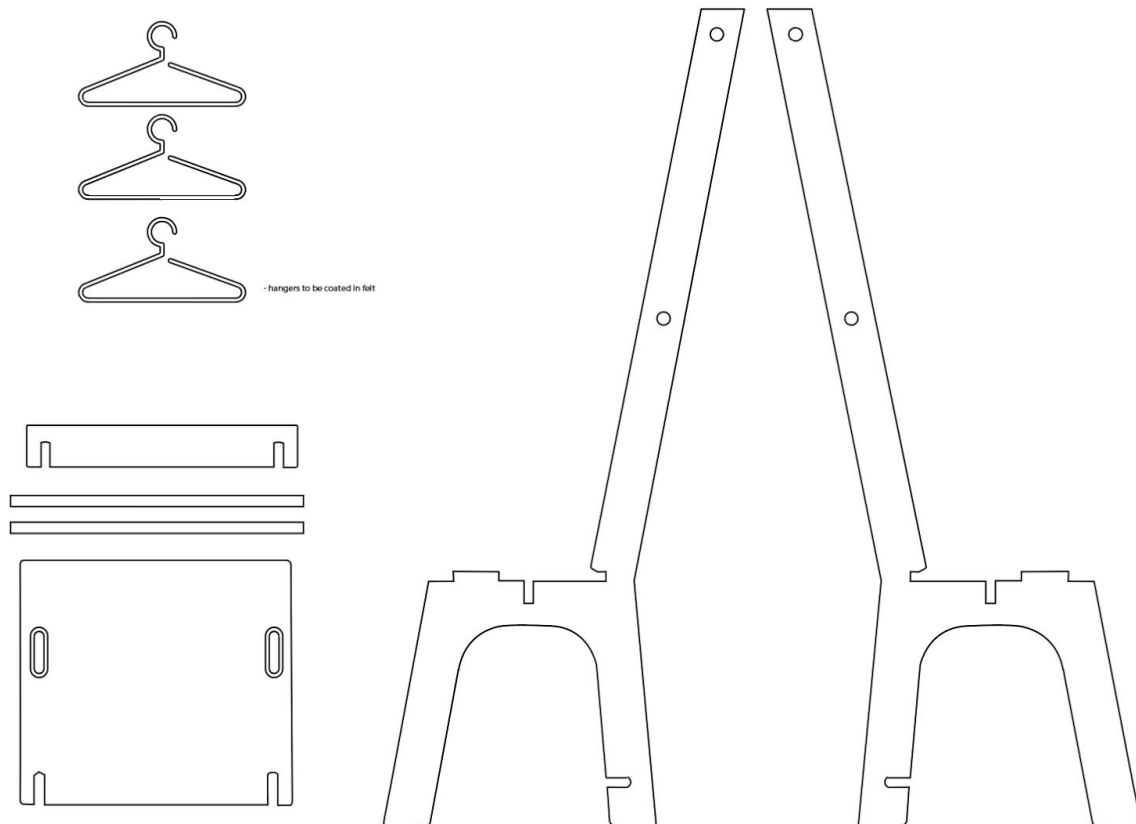


Fig 49. Armstrong, H. (2016) Current Plan for Object 3

Object 4 takes the form of a chair but its backrest arches away from the seat to create a table top area. This area can be used as a place to sit things. If the user turns around on the chair, and uses it in not the conventional way, this surface area can become a tabletop surface for use as a desk, somewhere to eat, rest coffee or work.

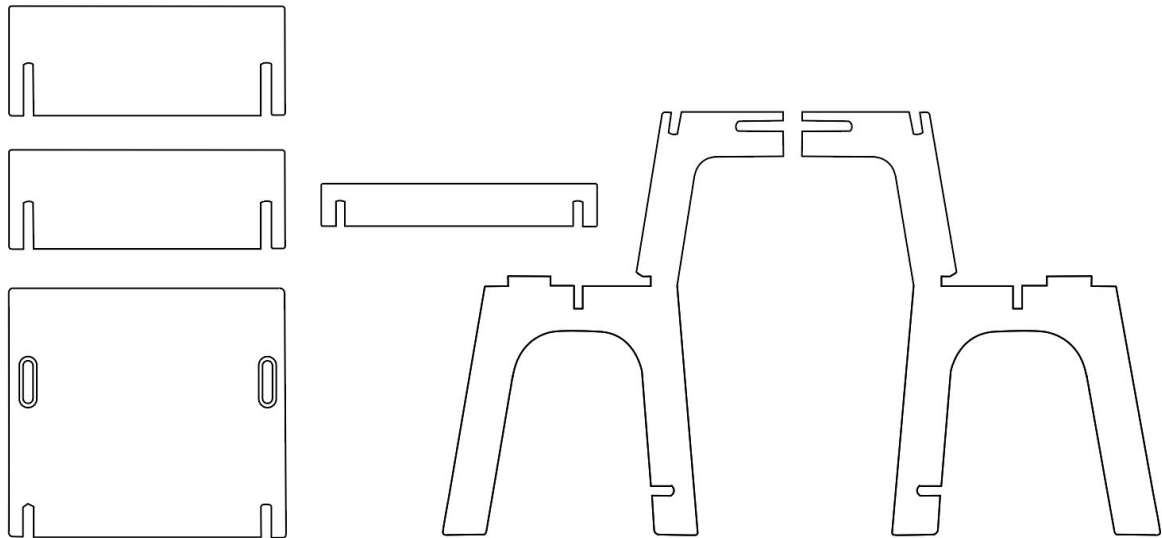


Fig 50. Armstrong, H. (2016) Current Plan for Object 4



Fig 51. Armstrong, H. (2016) Trial object four



Fig 52. Armstrong, H. (2016) Trial object four in the home



Fig 53. Armstrong, H. (2016) Trial object four backrest



Fig 54. Armstrong, H. (2016) Object Join



Fig 55. Armstrong, H. (2016) Join Detail

CONCLUSION

This research explores a contemporary condition of the nomadic through a collection of nomadic objects. These objects which act as temporary place makers aim to create a space of mindfulness in response to a contemporary condition of the non-place. The objects use their making methods as a way to express a condition of fluidity and impermanence at work within our contemporary spatial landscape. The project engages the non-place as a concept and acknowledges how certain nomadic movement throughout the world is lacking mindfulness. The project looks at how the sense of touch, when designing and using, can stimulate mindfulness. The objects, with which we coexist with in the non-place, are used as tools to reveal nomadic movement as a temporary place-making practice and guide a particular experience for nomads that occupy the non-place.

The research began by immersing myself into the non-place. Practicing as a nomadic worker gave key insight into the difficulty of navigating the non-place. I then began an investigation into materials, studying their matter and how they could inform design decisions. A series of artifacts were created and their strongest aspects mobilised for the next iterations. My first collection of objects saw the creation of temporary home in the non-place. The objects acting as sketches of an idea, that of creating movable and temporary places to inhabit. This collection of objects was then developed further. The result, a new collection of objects that are customizable by the nomadic user to create desired place for a discrete moment in time.

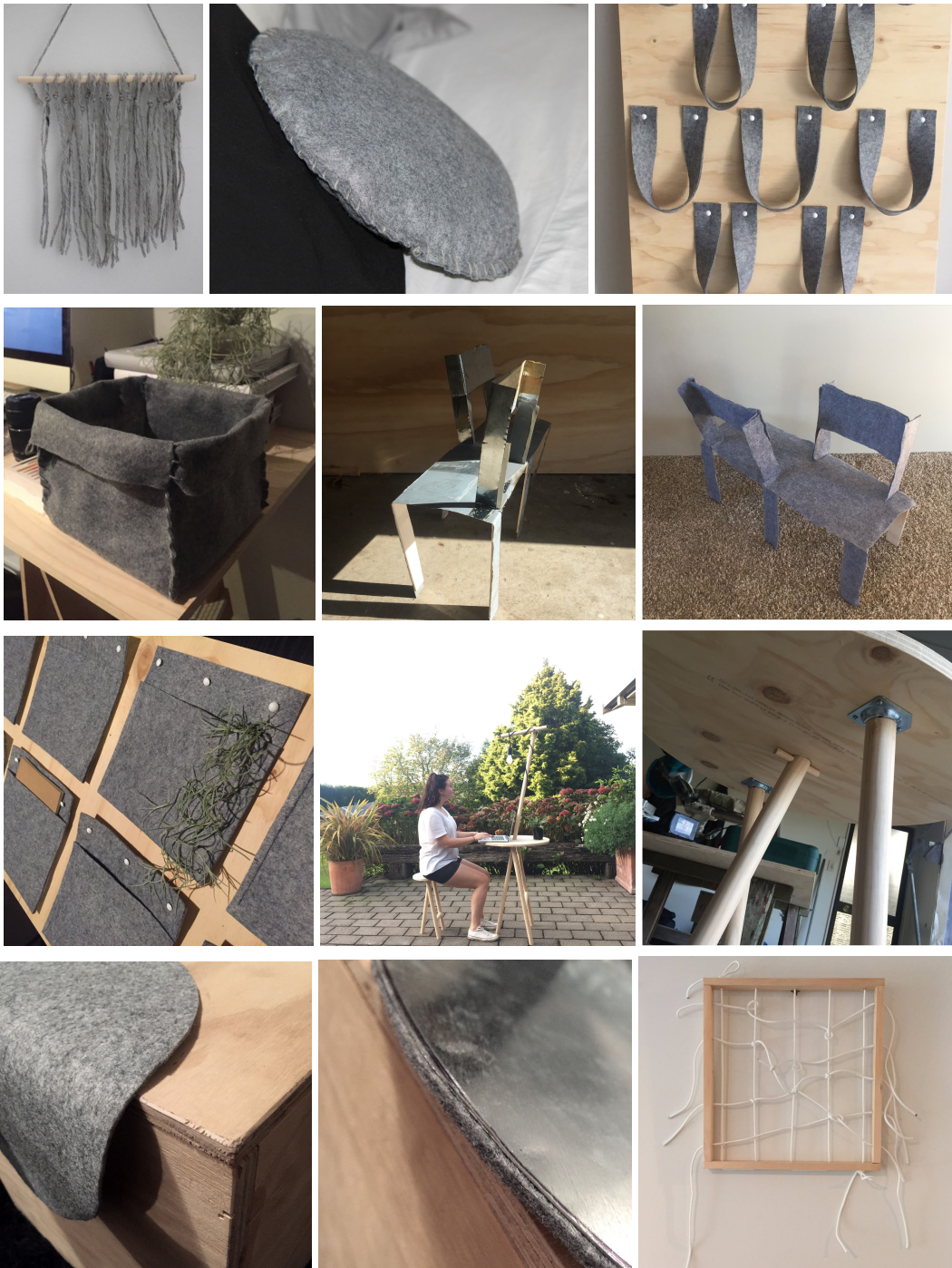
In terms of the trajectory of this research I hope to further develop the objects. For the final iteration of objects I have worked with a furniture manufacturer who is interested in developing the range. This further iteration of development would extend the temporal duration of placemaking with imagined settings being in the home for renters or apartment dwellers and further into retail and office scenarios for temporary or pop-up use.

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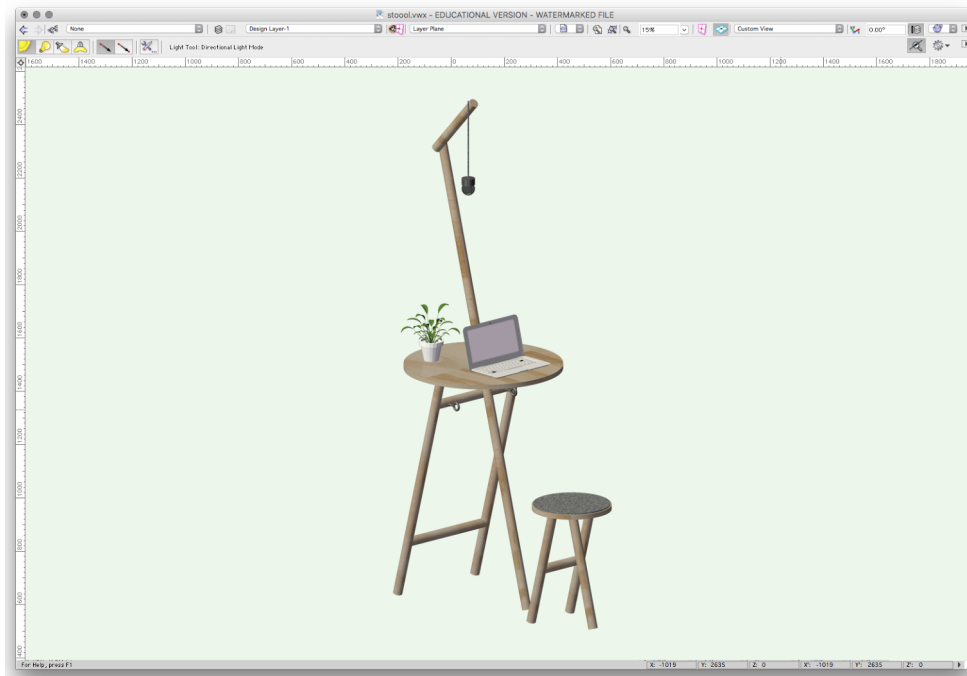
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Appendix 1: Design Development

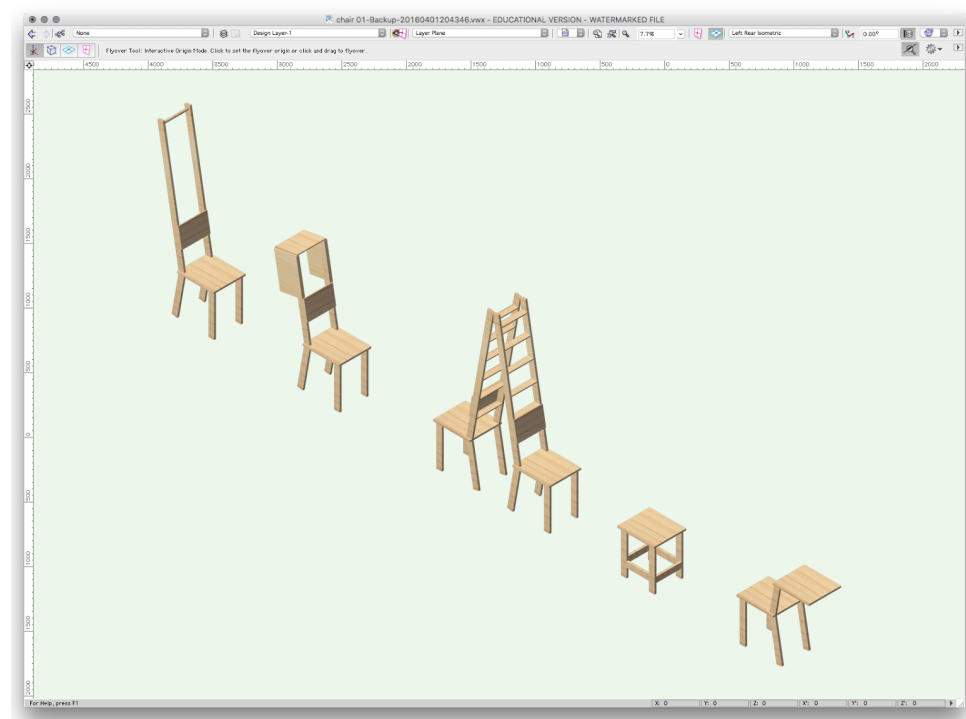
The following images make up the extended making side of this project that have been excluded from the main methodology. Each material experiment played a role in the development of the final objects, but these explorations and images were secondary to the main body of work.



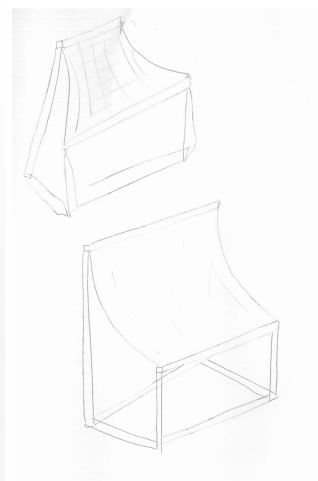
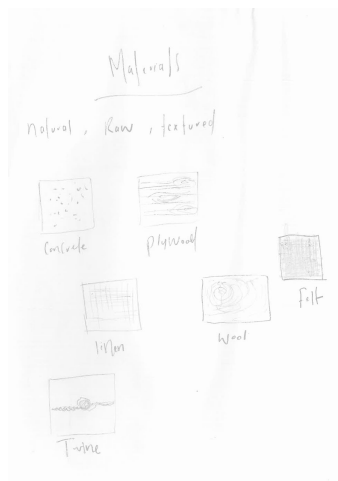
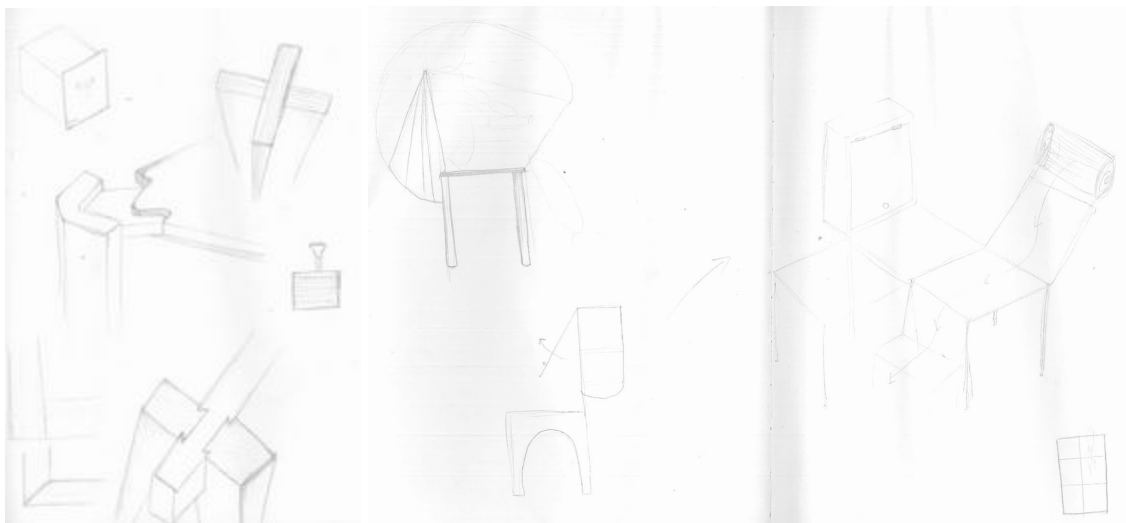
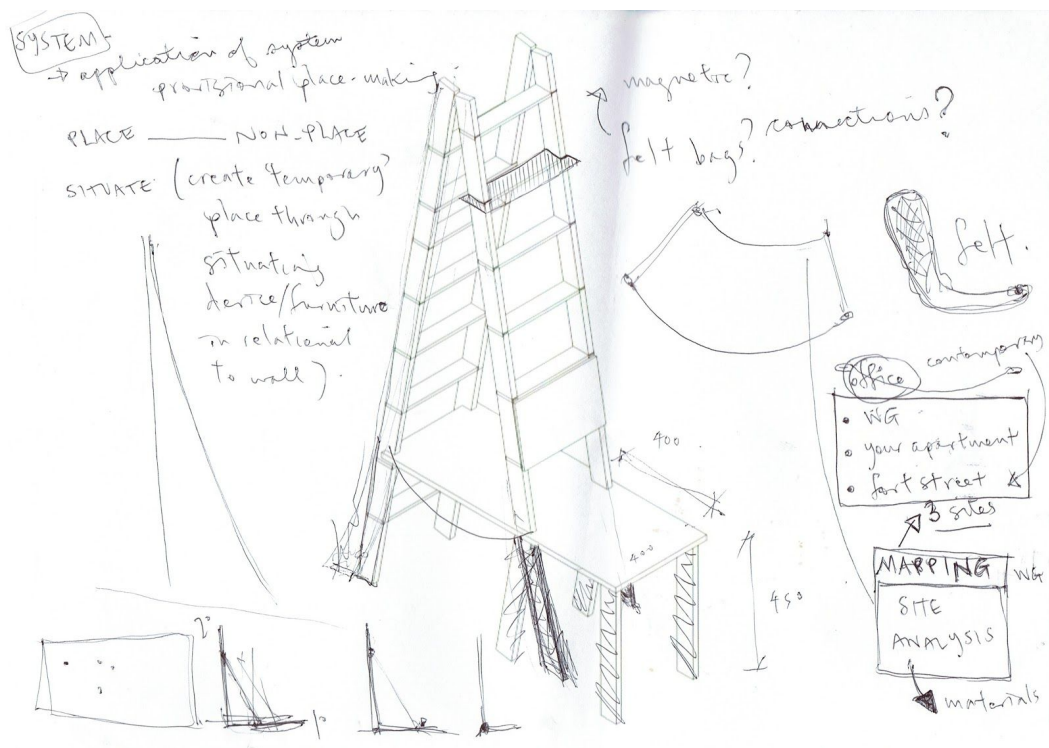
More progress work at: www.nomadichannah.tumblr.com

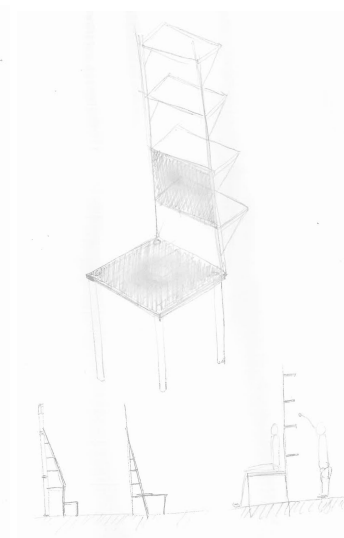
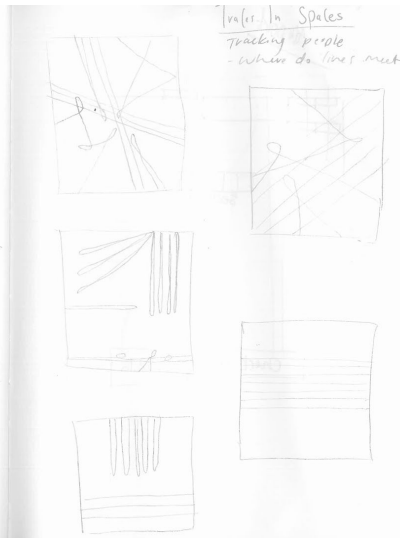
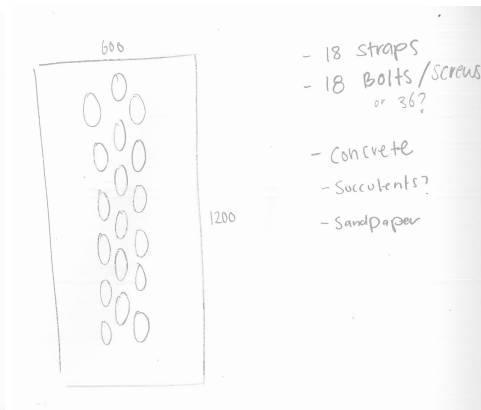


Computer generated model of the flat pack light table



Computer generated models of first object collection



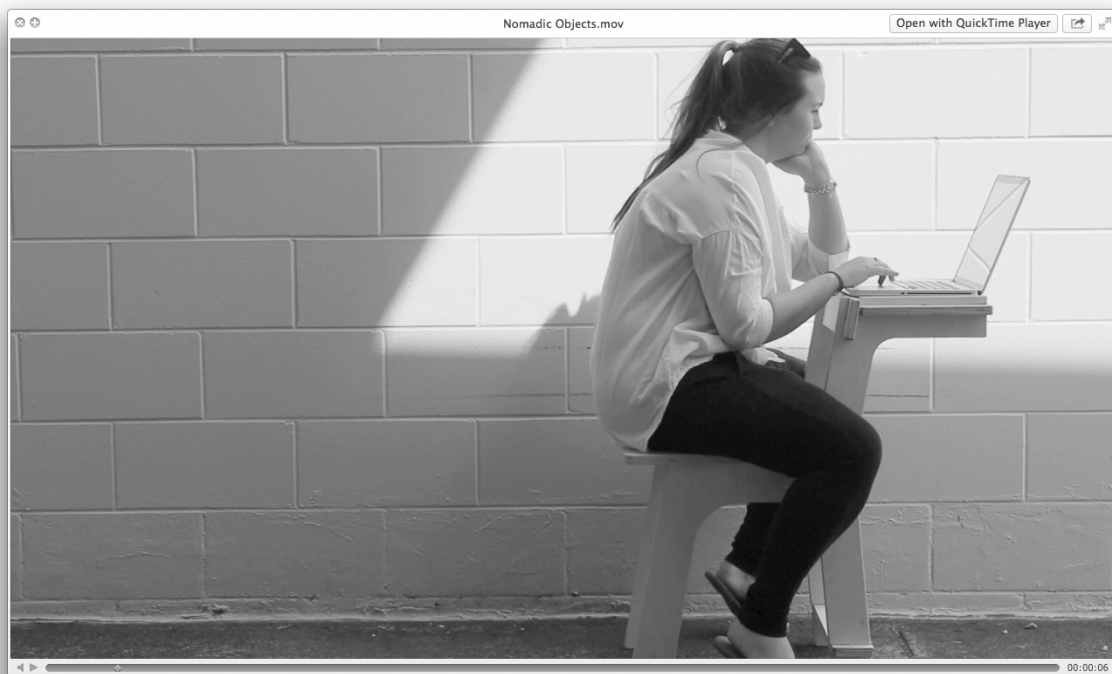


Appendix 2: Exhibition

This Nomadic Objects Exhibition was presented for examination and viewing in the WE building at Auckland University of Technology. The objects were exhibited in a sectioned off area of a long studio room with natural light streaming through the windows and a gentle breeze. With a grey floor and white walls the objects stood strongly against the flat backdrop. Plants were positioned throughout the room bringing natural splashes of colour and contrasting the commercial feel of the room.

The sectioned off area measured 3m x 6m and the objects were composed throughout to create a natural walkway through the room, from one end to the other and back. The objects were left in a way that encouraged interaction with them. The examiners and visitors were welcomed to explore with the objects and try different configurations, resulting in some attractive ideas for future developments.

A two minute long video was left playing on a laptop that perched on the desk type object. The video showed the different objects being used in real life situations, in various locations. This video can be found at: https://youtu.be/_RONqFc7c7Q





The following images show the different objects how they were displayed for examination, with small objects and artifacts displayed on them suggesting different ways of use.











