

When does a loan
become your own?

Olivia Alice Clemence



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become your own?

By Olivia Alice Clemence

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Introduction

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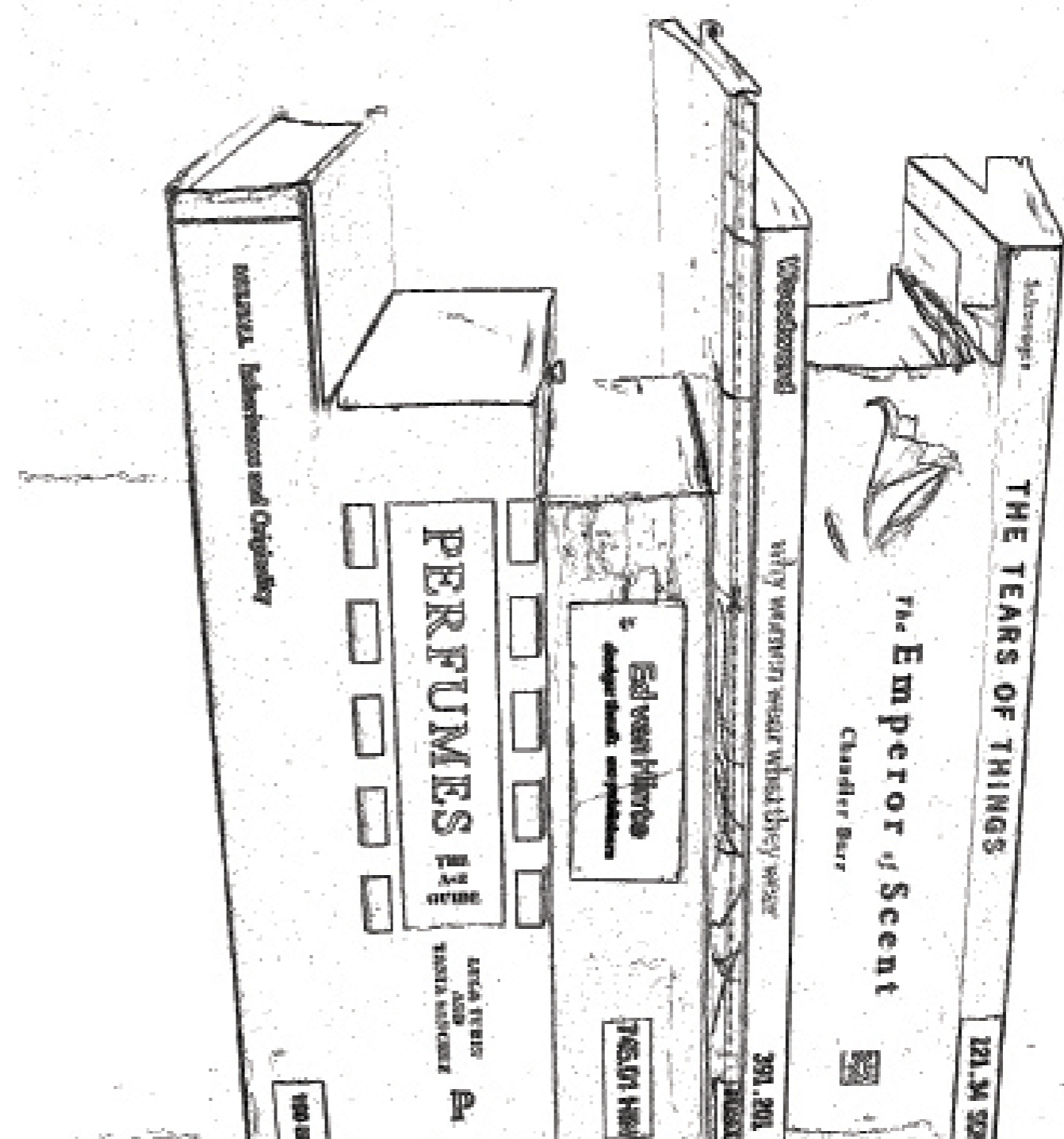
'Of course, a loan from someone dead is temporary. It can't be renewed and, eventually, the physical objects begins to wear down.' [1]

If someone passes away and one takes an item as a reminder of that person, whom does the item belong to? Does it still belong to the person who has died? A loan is an object that is borrowed and is then returned: is borrowing a possession from someone who has passed away a loan? A loan is temporary and must be returned, but can a loan from someone who is dead be returned? Loans can often be renewed, is it possible for this loan to be renewed? Who would renew it, or does the loan last for one's whole lifetime?

"Clothing is imbued with meaning not only through how it appears, but also through how it feels, smells and sounds..." [2]

Can clothing be a representation of the self? By keeping an item of clothing from someone who has died, are you keeping an element of him or her?

This research has led to an investigation into death, but predominantly the grieving process that surrounds death, subsequently moving away from religious practices, and embracing the material culture in which we now live in. How can the tangible notion of materials be used to explore and design new ways to remember the deceased? By exploring the obligations we feel to inherited objects that we may not like, through deconstructing it into its composite elements.



Endnotes:

- [1] (Jennifer Egan, Dressed to Remember, The Sunday Times, 09/10/11)
- [2] (Sophie Woodward, why women wear what they wear (Berg, 2007) 55)
See Appendix 1 for full article

Images:

- [45] http://fashionedbylyndell.blogspot.com/2011_04_01_archive.html, Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
All other images are taken by myself.

Our relationship to
inherited objects



This handbag my mum inherited when a family friend passed away. My mum has kept it hidden away, in a safe place so that it wouldn't get damaged. It wasn't left to my mum in the Will but she felt the need to take it as a reminder.

“ ‘What we inherit from the past is now a cultural obsession...’ Adam Phillips, Darwin’s Worms.” [3]

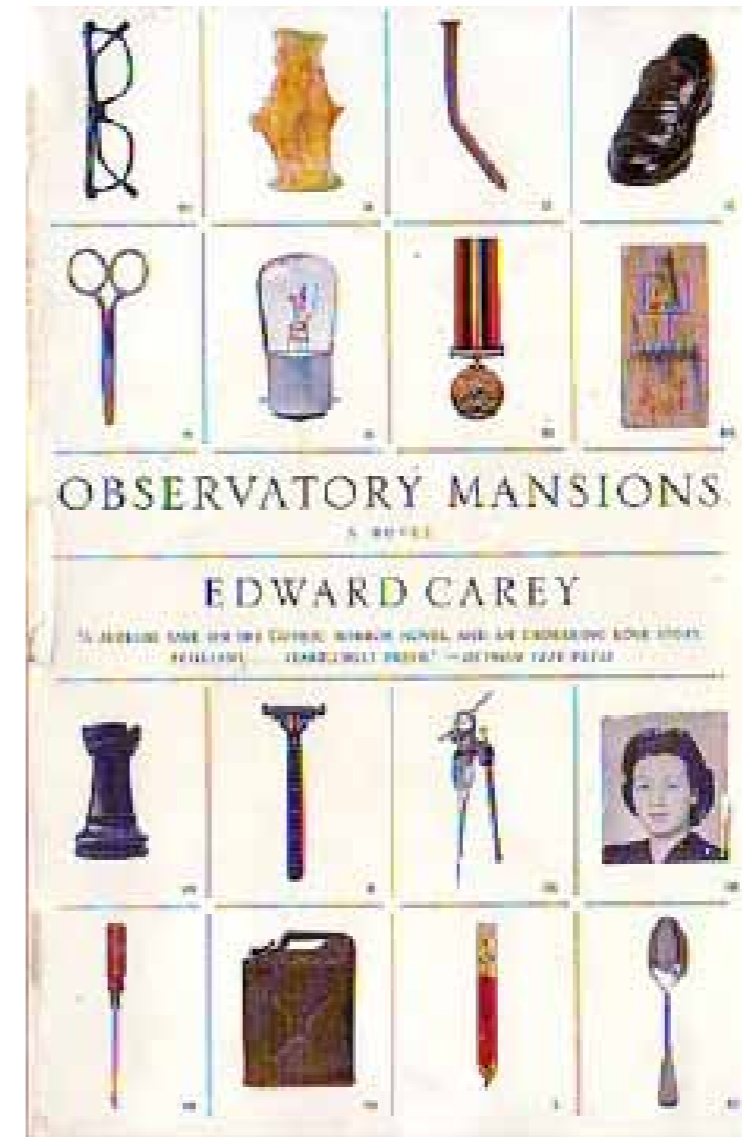
When a loved one passes away, you may want to keep an object that is a reminder of that person; an object that could possibly become a replacement, an object that may best represent the deceased.

Items that are bequeathed are left to ones self in a will by the deceased. Inherited items are received as an heir, and sometimes objects are taken, without the deceased’s permission. They are often highly treasured and hidden away to be kept safe and out of harms way. Why are these items so special?

These items hold life stories; memories, and good feelings, that help to remember that person. “We don’t necessarily feel a bond with things that are used a lot, like household equipment, wardrobes and computers, but we do fell ill-equipped and frustrated when something is wrong with them, or when they’re gone. This is also true of objects we feel attached to for sentimental reasons.” [4] A sentimental object may have a value; this could be a monetary or an emotional, but either way it has been kept for a reason and holds a ‘bond’ with the new owner.

Objects acquired through a Will, may possibly be something that will be loved and cherished because the deceased felt it would be either of use or would have liked you to have it, but the item itself may be disliked. The only reason why it may be carried from house to house is because it has been given and it holds memories of the deceased. There is a subconscious obligation that may be felt to keep the item, the obligation to retain the item even though it may be regarded with distaste.

Liked but yet unwanted; inherited or bequeathed objects that have been kept solely for the purpose that it was what the deceased requested; but what matters more is for the memory to live, we just can’t let them go.



In the book *The Tears of Things* [5] a book called *Observatory Mansions* is discussed. It refers to the man's character's (Francis) passion for collecting objects, which he started when he was fourteen, later he came up with one rule:

“It is required of all exhibits, from now on, that they are to be exhibited solely for the reason that they are loved; that their former owner prized them above his or her other possessions, that they are originals, that they are irreplaceable”. [6]

This rule is similar to what could be said about objects that have been inherited or bequeathed. They are irreplaceable, they are loved and most importantly were once someone's prize possession. “All memories are to some degree buried, lost sometimes through the very attempt to preserve them.” [7] The preservation of memories can be a very hard thing to do, but memories live in our minds, triggered by the ‘stuff’ we have and retain from the dead.

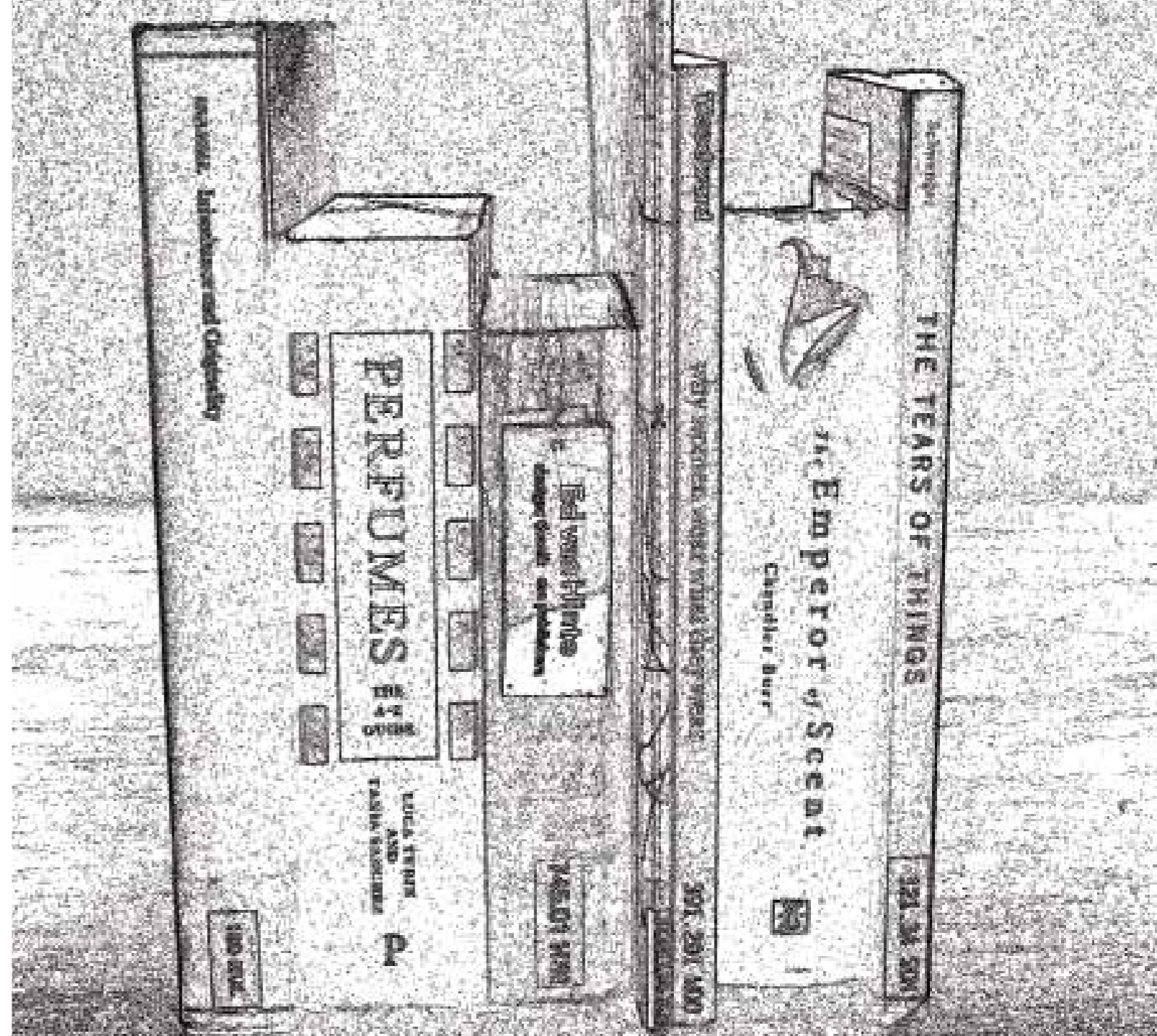
Sentimental items help in the process of mourning because they are the closest objects that you have to that person. “Mourning is undertaken in order to come to terms with a loss...” [8]

The mourning process can vary from person to person and is incredibly varied. This healing can occur gradually, it certainly cannot be forced. It can take many years to come to terms with a death but in some cases it can take a few weeks or months. “...mourning concludes after a reasonable amount of time, whereas melancholia, through it may conclude, does so only after an extraordinary prolongation.” [9] Melancholia can last for far longer than what mourning can, as it is a way of refusing to understand that a dear friend has been lost.



Contemporary society is obsessed with consumption; we now live in a throwaway culture. The present society is consuming as much as possible and, “We produce and consume at an increasing speed.” [10] At this acceleration speed of consumption we feel the need to use “stuff to deal with death”. [11] If one has no bequeathed, or inherited objects, we then feel the need to take an item to help overcome the loss. “It appears that who we are has been defined more and more through what we have as individuals: materials possessions have become symbols of personal and social identity.” [12] The possessions that we own are a realistic representation of the self, “...knowingly or unknowingly, people regard possessions as an integral part of the self...” [13]

This transition of objects that have been handed down from generation to generation, become a slight insight into that period of time. This handing down of heirloom’s, has been occurring for many years but can it still happen in this throw away society where we buy, use and then discard once it has come to the end of it life, to only go and purchase another. In this culture of obsolescence means that there may be no heirlooms.



Endnotes:

- [3] Stephen Mulhall, *Inheritance and Originality*, (Oxford University Press, 2001) opening page.
- [4] Ed van Hinte, *Eternally Yours* (Rotterdam, 2004) 71.
- [5] Peter Schwenger, *The Tears of Things, Melancholy and Physical Objects* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006).
- [6] *ibid*, 86.
- [7] *ibid*, 91.
- [8] *ibid*, 09.
- [9] *ibid*, 10.
- [10] Ed van Hinte, *Eternally Yours* (Rotterdam, 2004) 46.
- [11] Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Polity Press, 2010) 146.
- [12] Helga Dittmar, *The Social Psychology of Material Possessions: to have is to be*, (St Martins Press, 1992) 13.
- [13] *ibid*, 43.

Images:

- [46] <http://eye-candy-for-bibliophiles.blogspot.com/2010/09/general-fiction-carey-carson-carter.html>, Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.

All other images are taken by myself.

Can clothing be
a representation
of the self?



On many occasions I have opened my wardrobe and thought to myself, 'I have nothing to wear!' when in-fact it is exploding with a huge variety of clothing. This daily ritual of opening the wardrobe and then standing in front of the mirror occurs predominantly when a person is alone. Clothing hangs on rails, is neatly folded in piles or lies lifeless in heaps on the floor; but once it has been taken from this state it can transform the body and make oneself feel different each time.

The decision of what to wear is based highly on how one believes that others may judge their appearance. Getting dressed is a transformation which is a part of our daily ritual that allows us to perform an act; which is a fundamental part of our everyday lives. "Combinations of clothing involve a moment of totalization: of incorporating the diverse threads of her life within her clothing." [14]

Clothing is often regarded as a "second skin" [15], due to it resembling numerous 'threads' of life and is an essential part of who we are. To achieve an aesthetic that fully represents the self occurs "...as the clothing softens though wearing, so too the clothing becomes integral to being a part of her." [16] This suggests that only after wearing the same item of clothing many times, may it then become an item of best representation.

Why do we wear clothing?

"Many of the material objects we own are used as practical tools to make everyday survival easier, more comfortable and pleasurable." [17] Clothing that we wear allows the body to hide underneath; they encase the body in warm and help to protect it from all external factors. "Clothes are among our most personal possessions. They are the main medium between our senses of our bodies and our senses of the external world." [18] Clothing can represent various different aspects such as gender, but it may resemble class differences, cultural background and possibly occupational roles. How do your current clothes that you are wearing feel?



Perhaps you are wearing a uniform, protective clothing, or comforting clothing. Clothing is often considered to be comfortable, if it isn't then why would we like to wrap the body in something that may harm or be just not be comfortable for the body. The clothing that wraps the body should allow for full movement, to enable the body to feel comfortable, "The relationship clothing has to the body is pivotal in how women decide what to wear both in terms of a material, embodied relationship of how clothing feels on the skin and allows the body to move, and also in terms of the ways in which clothing affects the appearance of the body." [19] For clothing to become an integral part of the self, it must allow the body to move, feel good and the aesthetics must be representation of your characteristics.

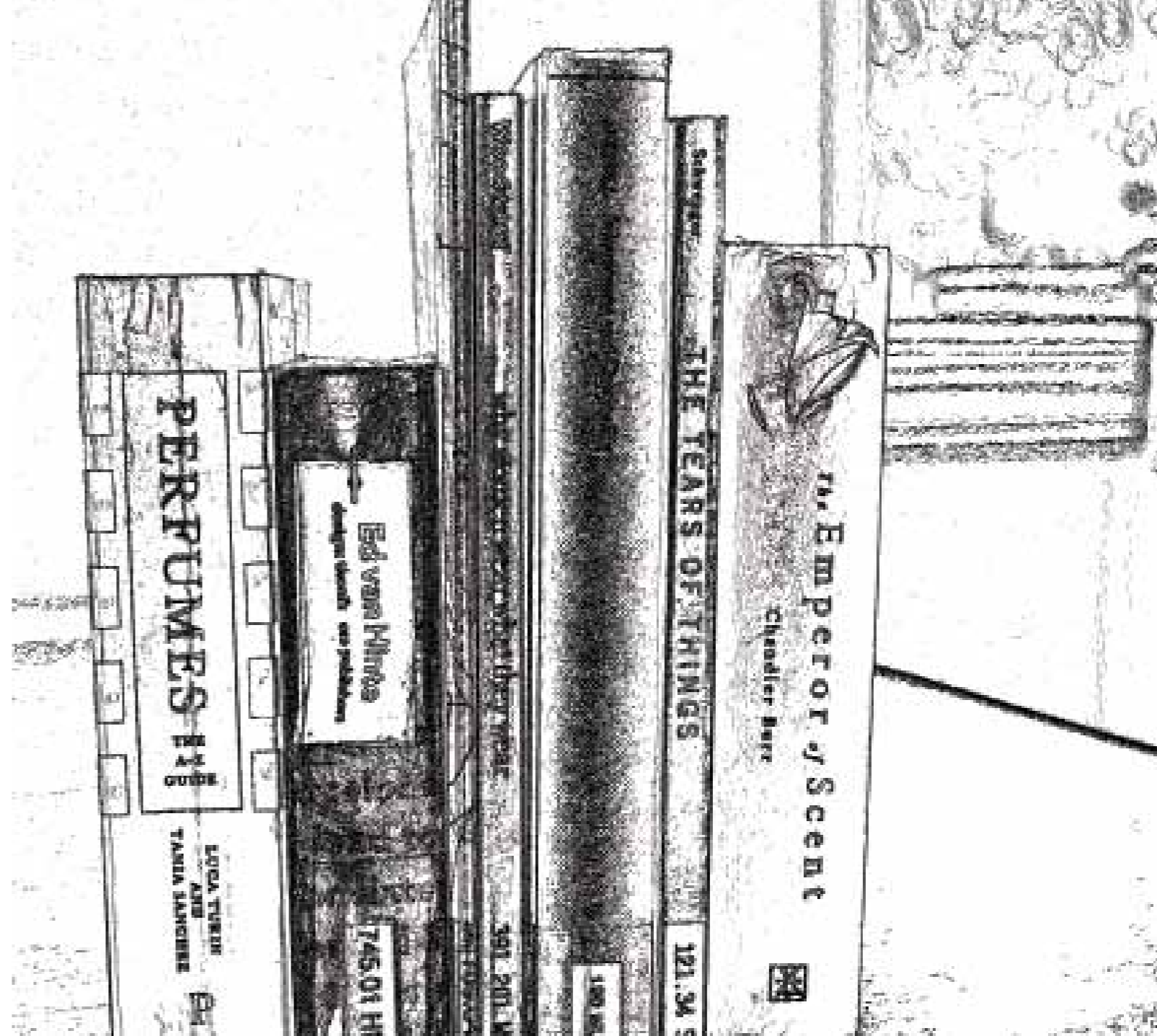
How are memories imbued in clothing?

Clothing is worn everyday and can become a "second skin" [20] but what else can clothing hold? As previously discussed clothing can be a representation of the self, but if you take a glance into my wardrobe one will find that there are numerous items that I don't wear but keep for sentimental reasons. Every wardrobe has an inactive part "...on average 12.2 per cent...which in certain instances rises to a remarkable 40 per cent." [21]. (In the photograph the facing page has been edited to show the active parts of my wardrobe.) This inactive part of the wardrobe is made up of relics of the past, memories that are held through clothing; it may be part of your younger life, an office job or a period in time when you were pregnant. "Memories through clothing acquire a particular poignancy as they are evoked through the physical sensuality and tactility of clothing." [22] Using the sense of touch and smell, allows the memory of that item of clothing to come streaming back. If you was to wear an item that evoked memories it would reactivate the past; having the feeling of the fabric on the skin and the sense of smell allows the mind to time travel back to that exact moment.



“Ordinarily the clothing that hangs in the wardrobe is characterized by its disembodiment, as it hangs lifeless on rails.” [23] For the clothing to become reborn it must either be worn again but possibly the memory alone would be enough to allow the clothing to become alive again. “Memories exist in a tangible form, and so women can remind themselves that they used to be that person as they feel the fabric on their skin; in particularly vivid and sensual ways, they are able to reimagine themselves.” [24] The way that we may remember the past, is similar to how we could remember a loved one.

“Clothing is imbued with meaning not only through how it appears, but also through how it feels, smells and sounds...” [25] It is not just our own personal clothing that holds our identities but clothing can help us to remember the deceased. If you were to have a clean out and throwaway many items of clothing, it would feel as if you have thrown-away apart of yourself. By keeping items of clothing, it's retaining, not only a memory but also a physical part of ones past; this is similar to when someone would keep an item of clothing to remember a loved one who has passed away. It would be a true representation of the deceased's identity and therefore is a relic that would be kept and cherished. Through 'feels, smells and sounds' [26] one is trying to keep them alive in their memories and their senses by involving their clothing in life's daily routines.



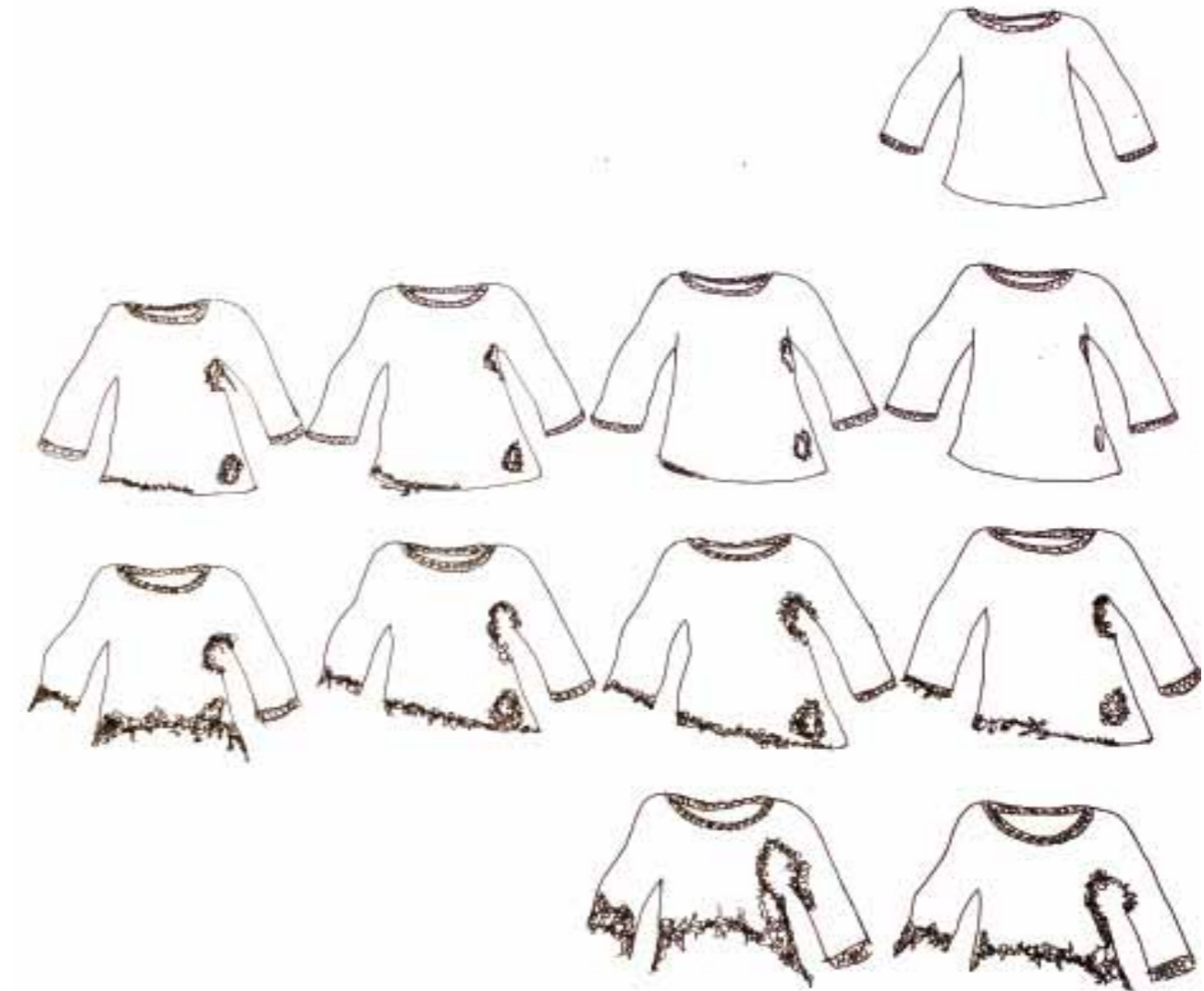
Endnotes

- [14] Susanne Kuchler and Daniel Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture* (Berg, 2005) 32.
- [15] *ibid*, 35.
- [16] *ibid*, 33.
- [17] Helga Dittmar, *The Social Psychology of Material Possessions: to have is to be*, (St Martins Press, 1992) 01.
- [18] Daniel Miller, *Stuff* (Polity Press, 2010) 23.
- [19] Sophie Woodward, *why women wear what they wear* (Berg, 2007) 03.
- [20] Susanne Kuchler and Daniel Miller, *Clothing as Material Culture* (Berg, 2005) 35.
- [21] Sophie Woodward, *why women wear what they wear* (Berg, 2007) 51.
- [22] *ibid*, 52.
- [23] *ibid*, 54.
- [24] *ibid*, 65.
- [25] *ibid*, 55.
- [26] *ibid*.

Images:

All images are taken by myself.

Can you loan from
someone who has died?



'Borrowing from the dead is a way of keeping them engaged in life's daily transactions - in other words, alive.' [27] A loan from the dead may be a way of keeping them alive but nothing lasts forever. Initially the object will be new, as time passes it will decay and begin to wear down. Jennifer Egan 'borrowed a navy wool V-neck' [28] jumper, it smelt of her father and felt very comforting. When Jennifer wore the jumper it felt like her father was hugging and protecting her. Once she had worn it over and over again, her father's smell had gone; it had now been engulfed in her smells. "...the garment smelt so much like him - coffee, pepper, burning wood - that when I held it under my children's noses and asked "who does this smell like?", they both cried, "Grandpa." [29] The jumper initially smelt like her father but after a while it began to smell like her, until she had it dry-cleaned, at which point it could then become hers. But who owns the jumper, Jennifer or her father? Her father did not tell her she was allowed to take the jumper but she has possession of it, and it smells of her. Jennifer is borrowing or loaning the jumper from her father that is dead.

'Of course, a loan from someone dead is temporary. It can't be renewed and, eventually, the physical objects begins to wear down.' [30] A loan from someone who has passed away can't be renewed but can it expire? When the object is no longer usable does its existence expire? In Jennifer's case the jumper became 'threadbare, despite multiple repairs' it is still just about wearable and she said "I plan to wear them until they unravel into shreds." [31] An item that has been loaned from someone who has passed away will begin to come to the end of its life. Most objects have a life span, of which will depend on how much it has been used and the conditions. Keeping an item of clothing that one wears and wears, helps to overcome a loss and can help to deal with the mourning process. Jennifer keeps the jumper because "This reminds me of how long it's been since I saw their owners." [32] The jumper that Jennifer has will begin to wear and come to the end of its life just the same as what her father once did. Loaning an item of clothing from someone who has passed away becomes the closest thing to that person; the item will also become nostalgic and an epoch of the deceased.

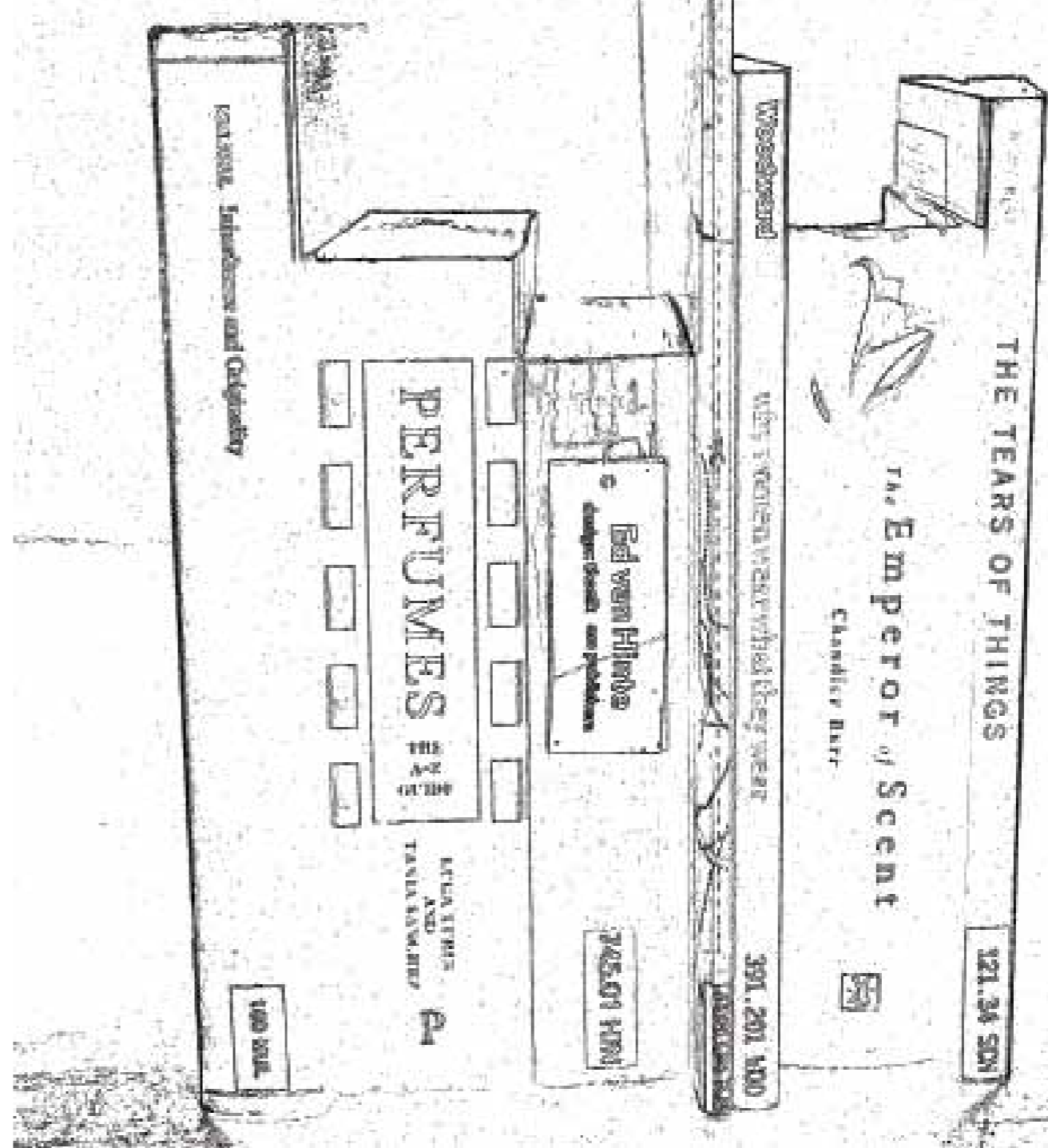


"My friend passed away very suddenly 4 years ago. We were very good friends, and not long before he died I had borrowed a pair of his boxer shorts. I used to wear them but somehow they started to fall apart really quickly after he died. Every time I look at them or used them, I think about the good times I had with him. Well they are colourful and the pattern is marijuana leaves and he sure liked to smoke; but actually I think about one time where we went out to skate in the countryside." Laurits Bruckner Jensen

When does a loan become your own or does it never become apart of ones self?
 Is it when ones personal smells and perfume engulfed the jumper?
 Is it when one alters and changes the garment to fit ones requirements?
 Is it when one first washes the garment?
 Is it when the item looks nothing like it originally did?
 Is it when the garment has come to the end of its life?
 A loan is temporary and is given back, but if the person has passed away, how can it then be given back? A jumper that no longer exists in its original state may not be what they loaned, but it has decayed and come to the end of its life, just as they once did.
 Keeping an item of clothing and watching it decay and come to the end of it's life is a way of dealing with the loss of someone close; it is a way of mourning but also a way of keeping that person alive for as long as possible.

I asked a few family and friends to see if they had inherited or taken any clothing from someone who has passed away. I wanted to know if people did keep clothing as a memento of the deceased and to find out what they feel as they wear that item and what are their memories when they see the item? It can be a hard subject to approach as it can be very upsetting and bring back memories of the deceased; this is why I kept to people that I knew. (See Appendix 2 for Interviews.)

When these people wear the clothing that they have inherited, they feel comforted and they have a unique, special connection to the deceased. Whilst talking, I often found them reminiscing about the good times and stories that went with the garment. The clothing can become incredibly nostalgic as it reminds them of the person's characteristics, and what they were like. After a while they began to remember specific events and occasions. To feel this 'special connection' between an object and a person is something that really interests me. It is not an ephemeral connection; it lasts much longer and helps us to remember the deceased. By keeping an item of clothing it is a way of bridging the gap between the person's true existence and the memories that are left.



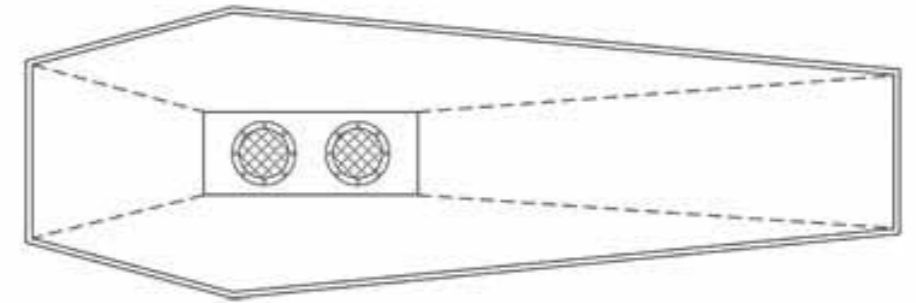
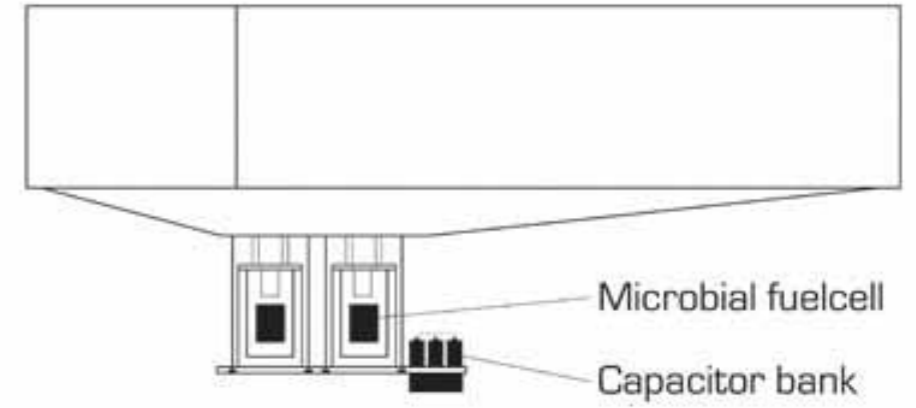
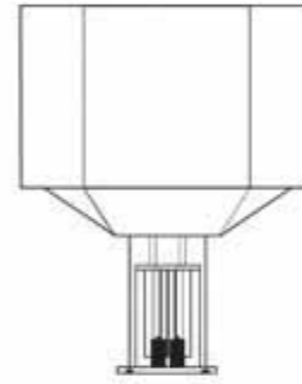
Endnotes

- [27] Jennifer Egan, Dressed to Remember, The Sunday Times, 09/10/11.
[28] ibid.
[29] ibid.
[30] ibid.
[31] ibid.
[32] ibid.
See Appendix 1 for full article

Images:

All images are taken by myself.

Art and Design surrounding Death



James Auger and Jimmy Loizeau: AfterLife

“Under normal circumstances after death, the human body would be assimilated back into this natural system. The Afterlife device intervenes during this process to harness the chemical potential and convert it into usable electrical energy via a microbial fuel cell - a device that uses an electrochemical reaction to generate electricity from organic matter.” [33]

By harnessing the chemical potential of the body it can be made into a dry cell battery. The Afterlife battery can help grief by providing security and comfort that the deceased is still alive in another form.

The deceased may have a plan for the battery that may be stated in their will, but if not it is up to you, some people said they would use it for an electric toothbrush, a euthanasia machine, a pair of speakers to play bird sounds at breakfast and a camera attached to a balloon that would fly into the sky recording the family waving goodbye. The Afterlife project by James Auger and Jimmy Loizeau uses the physical body as a chemical entity and by harnessing this power using it as an electrical output. This project looks at the relationship between object and the grieving process. Objects continually surrounding us; when a loved one passes away there are many objects that could be a memento of them. For a period of time, that object would have power, it would eventually run out and become dead again, but the object itself would live on for longer.



[46]

WHAT WILL YOU
LEAVE BEHIND?

NATURAL FIBRES / NATURAL BURIAL
GARMENTS FOR THE GRAVE



[48]

WHAT WILL
YOU WEAR?

NATURAL FIBRES / NATURAL BURIAL
GARMENTS FOR THE GRAVE

Pia Interlandi: Garments for the Grave

Pia Interlandi is based in Melbourne, Australia where she teaches, is a fashion designer and artist. Her research involves dressing the dead in preparation for burial, “To leave one naked for burial... is often seen as a sign of neglect or disrespect.” [34] The process often takes place with the whole family or just a few very close members of the family, where they will choose what the deceased will wear.

Often people who choose a specific garment or ask for a new garment to be made for the intention of being buried; which is a way of recognizing that life is coming to an end. “They also carry an awareness that this will be the last garment ever worn, and will in fact carry their body through its physical afterlife, symbolically and literally merging with their body. As my garments are designed to break down and encourage decomposition (rather than preservation), the message that people who choose to wear them is one of surrendering or the giving back of their body to the environment, an acceptance and embrace of biological inevitability.” [35]

Pia Interlandi research investigates the relationships we have to clothing when we die, what would one like to wear when buried? She is interested in the rate of fabric decomposition, when encasing a human body in a natural burial. She designs clothing that will begin to dissolve with the human body, that explores concepts of fragility through the study of clothing, and biological tissue decomposition.



Nadine Jarvis: RIP - Rest In Peace

“My motivation for this project was my interest in the death and decomposition of materials and how the degradation of materials could be used to aid the grieving process.”

-Nadine Jarvis [36] Nadine Jarvis made a variety of different products ranging from a ceramic urn to a bird feeder and a box of pencils. The Ceramic urn and the Bird Feeder investigate the notion of commemorating and the act of scattering the ashes. It removes the responsibility of the act of scattering, and gives it to nature to make the decision of when it should occur.

The final and I think the most poetic is a box of pencil made from the carbon of the human. “Don’t worry about mistakes and shopping lists, there are enough pencils for a lifetime!” [37] From one body 240 pencils can be made; the box is cleverly designed that only one can be used at a time, once a pencil is removed it can be sharpened back into the box where the sharpening’s will then sit in replacement of the pencil. Once all the pencils have been used the box will then be full of a new ash.

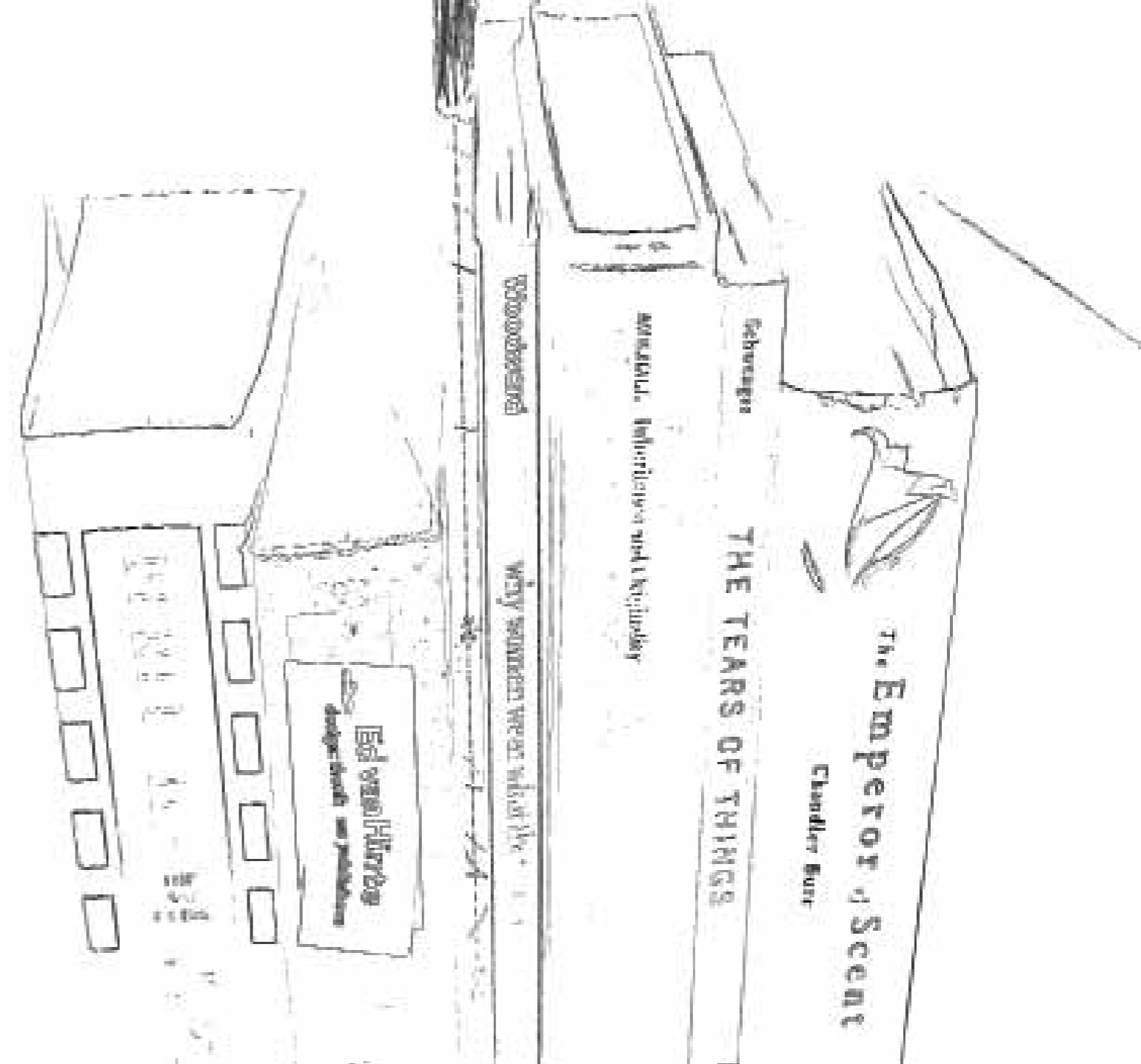
Nadine Jarvis’ collection of projects investigate the how long the grieving process can last, a lifetime of pencils, an urn that will smash to the floor between 1-3 years or the bird feeder where it is left to nature to decide. Her projects explore the relationship between death and grieving through materials and their own lifespan.



Margareta Kern: Clothes for dying

Margareta Kern is an enthusiastic photographer who began photographing girls in their prom dresses that were styled on celebrities. In passing a mother mentioned how someone had travelled to Zagreb to purchase an outfit to be buried in, this began her research into 'Clothes for Dying'. Margareta now an enthusiastic ethnographer, set about travelling to "...rural areas of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, recording interviews and photographing the women who prepare their clothes for death. [38] It is a touchy subject and a tradition that is usually done alone and never photographed, it is an intriguing subject to address but yet, it could prove to be a problematic relationship. This preparation is "...a custom still practised predominantly among the regions Orthodox Christian and Roman Catholic communities." [39]

Margareta suggests that by taking the photographs it is not a reminder of the ritual or of life and are not a memento mori's. When photographing the ritual is it not capturing the moment, whereby the image will become the only evidence of the custom. In Margareta's book about the project Susan Sontag said that "All photographs are memento mori. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or things) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt." [40] Margareta Kern travels capturing this unusual ritual of preparing clothes for burial. By photographing the custom it questions the ritual, by photographing this unseen ritual a memento mori remains to expose this unusual culture.



Endnotes

- [33] Auger, J and Loizeau, J. (2009). Afterlife. Available: <http://www.auger-loizeau.com/index.php?id=9>. Last accessed 12th Jan, 2012.
- [34] McNally, P. (2011). Dressing the Dead: An interview with Designer Pia Interlandi. Available: <http://www.dailyundertaker.com/2011/08/dressing-dead-interview-with-designer.html>. Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
- [35] ibid
- [36] McNally, P. (2009). Nadine Jarvis: Challenging Post Mortem Traditions. Available: <http://www.dailyundertaker.com/2009/02/nadine-jarvis-post-mortem.html>. Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
- [37] ibid.
- [38] Margareta Kern, Clothes for living & dying (The University of Hertfordshire Galleries, 2008) 08.
- [39] ibid, 30.
- [40] ibid, 31.

Images:

- [47] <http://www.auger-loizeau.com/index.php?id=9>, Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
 - [48] <http://www.piainterlandi.com/garments-for-the-grave/>, Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
 - [49] <http://www.whokilledbambi.co.uk/public/2008/05/carbon-copies-box.jpg>, Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
 - [50] [http://www.margaretakern.com/assets/images/PROJECTS%20IMAGES/CLOTHES FORDEATH/Jelka_MKern07.gif](http://www.margaretakern.com/assets/images/PROJECTS%20IMAGES/CLOTHES%20FORDEATH/Jelka_MKern07.gif), Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
- All other images are taken by myself.

Stories of inheritance



“This is the only item that I have inherited so far. When my mum was young her parents bought it as a Christmas present for all 3 children, but it cost a whole months wages. It was to be handed to the first born child of the 3 children, that was me! It is one of the original and last remaining companies that make rocking horses. It has a value of around £1500 but I would never sell it. I have some fond memories playing on it when I was little, and I am hoping that my children will have too.”



“This is a camera that belonged to my Great-Great-Uncle Jack. All of the photos of my dad as a child were taken on this camera. He gave it to my dad, who used it for a short period until it broke. For my 21st birthday, my parents decided to get it fixed (the camera needed some general maintenance, and the stitching on the case was falling to pieces). The camera was sent away to a specialist (based in Liverpool, I think), and my parents took the case all the way to a leather craftsman in Ludlow (quite a long drive from Nottingham), who fixed it perfectly, and gave me a tub of Skidmores Leather Cream, to moisturize and prolong its life. At present I have a film in it, which is still undeveloped.”



“I got my nans first wedding ring which is a small gold band. My grandad was too poor to afford the one she wanted for their wedding day she got the small band (which I’ve got) and then she was buried with the big one they bought later in their marriage. The diamond ring is also inherited. It was my aunties engagement ring from the same side of the family.”



“Rivkah is my uncle’s mother and she is a very successful jewellery designer who has created a unique process of ceramic jewellery making. Her husband was an Israeli artist who has become more famous since his death. I think she gave me this to keep as a family heirloom. She had a lot of emotional attachment to each piece, and helped me choose one to keep. This one is smaller than most of her pieces, but the flowers were quite difficult to make, and it is unique. We aren’t related by blood, but she could see how much I appreciate the craft, being a designer myself. She wants her work to live on, as her husband’s is.”



“My brother passed away very suddenly about a year ago now. We very close and we use to joke around loads. He always wore this scarf, so when did passed away I took it so I could remember him. I did wash it straight away as it seemed strange to not. It is now sitting on the back of this chair in my office at home, it travels with me where ever I go and it will always remind me of him.”



“This belonged to Mrs Banks who lived next door to me when I was little. Mrs Banks and I were very close, I suppose she became my grandma as I didn’t see much of my actual grandma. When she passed away I collected various paperwork from around her house. They varied from her rent book, savings account, birth certificate, and some hand written letters. The most important part for me is when I found her shopping lists, they are so personal and at the end she always wrote, ‘something nice’ this always makes me smile.”



“I have recently inherited this from my mum. She is still alive and she wanted to ensure that I received it. She believes that everyone should have the items that they want when she is alive. This allows her to see the person appreciating the item, if it money then she can see what you have spent it on, she says it far better and makes her much happier to see all her children and grandchildren appreciating her belongings whilst she is alive.”



“My first child was called Ruth and this belonged to her. When she was born with a hole in her heart and at the age of 2 she had surgery. This operation had never been done before, there was no guarantee that she would come through the operation. Unfortunately she didn’t make it through and this is the only thing I walked out the hospital with. I made it myself for Ruth, it was her dressing gown! It was during the 60’s so this fabric was so fashionable and modern. It is quilted to keep her warm but it has began to disintegrate, this could be due to the wadding being a new material. I remember Ruth wearing it around the hospital and all the nurses and doctors loved it.”

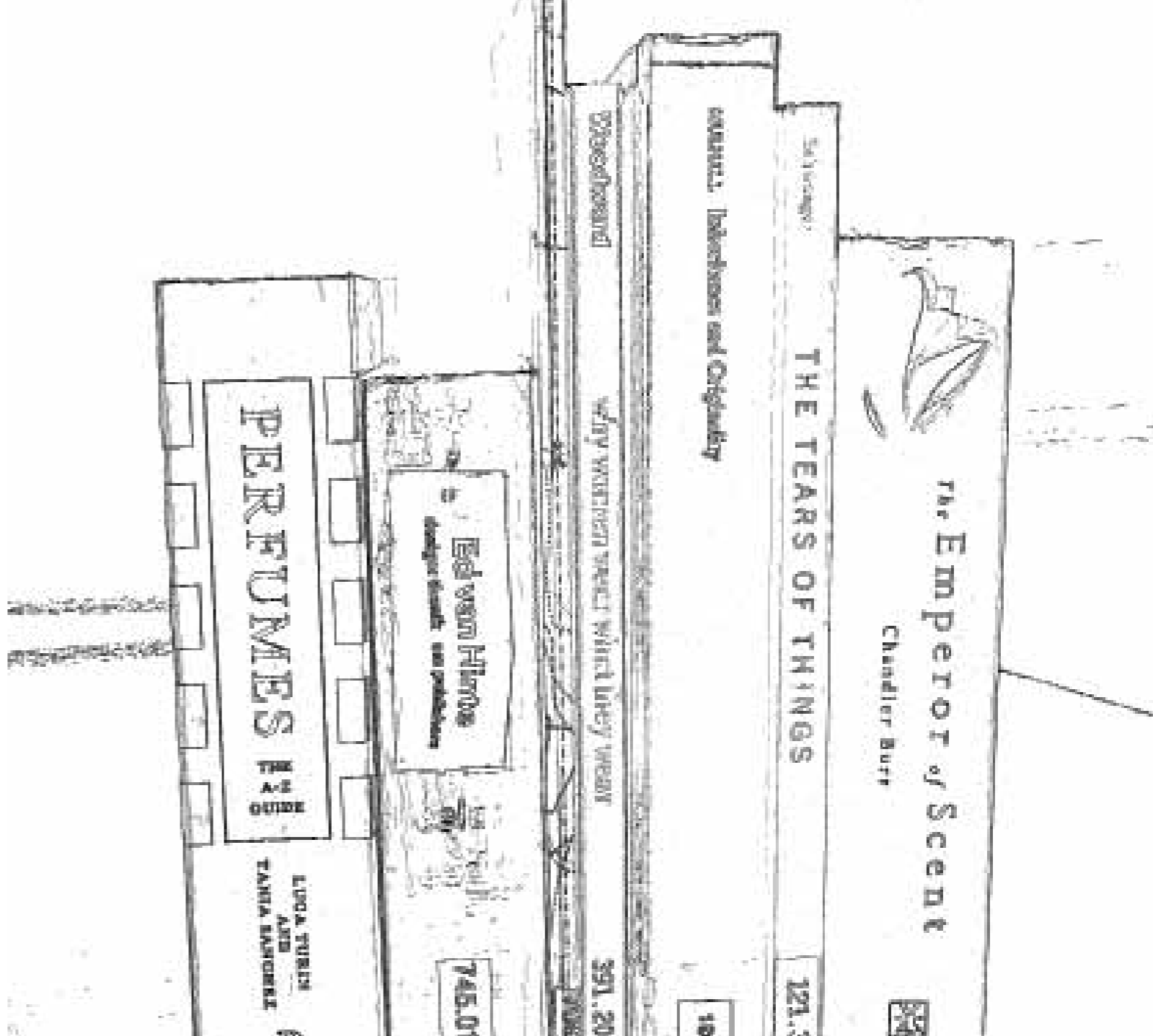


“This is the house where I used to visit my grandmother, the house is based on a road called Heliopolis, in Egypt. You can see the house looks very old school but there’s so much memory in this house, if I can remember correctly this is where I learned how to ride bike for the first time just by the pavement. My Granny died a couple of years ago now, but I have only recently found that she left her house for me in her will.”



“My Grandad gave me this recently, when he was younger he was a horse guard based at Windsor. This came from a fellow horse guard friend, that needed more money; he used to spend all his money on drink. The chain is not original to the watch, it was from Birmingham silver works shop. My Grandad is still alive at the moment and I see him regularly, I can see that when he does pass away it will always remind me of him. I would also like to give it to my children, so that they can enjoy it.”

See Appendix 3 for more stories.



Endnotes:

Words came from interviews I undertook and all participants wanted to stay anonymous.

Images:

All images either taken by myself or the owner of the object.

Materiality and Potential outcomes



1. Water boils in a conical flask causing steam to rise.
2. The steam enters the second flask at the base.
3. As the steam rises through the item of clothing it carries smell molecules with it.
4. The steam then flows through to the condenser.
5. Cold water follows around the outside, allowing the steam to condense.
6. The flask at the bottom collects the liquid.

To give an item of clothing, that is on loan, back to the person who has passed away, one needs to deconstruct it into its composite elements in order for it to go back into the soil and into life cycles.

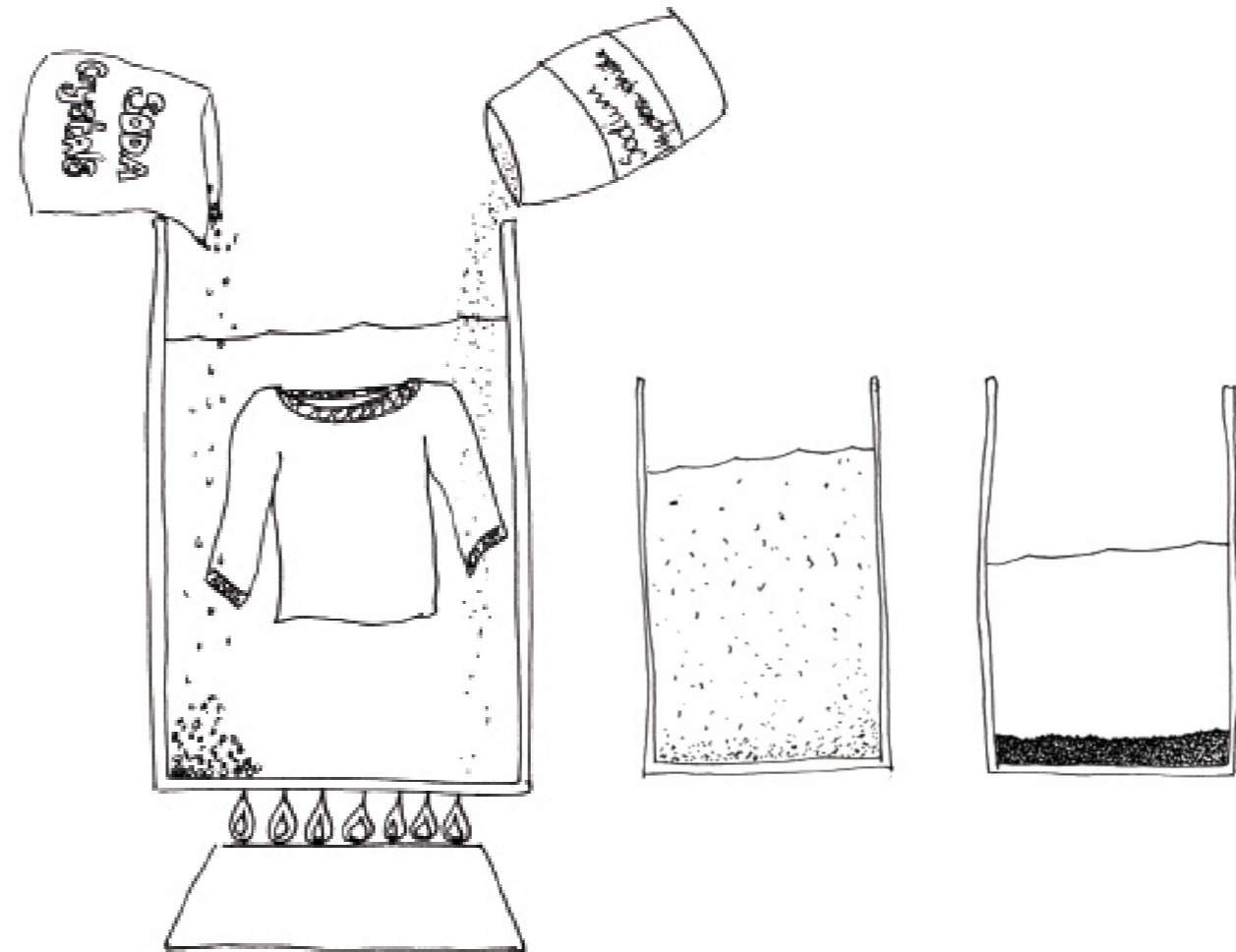
An item of clothing can be broken down into many elements; the physical smell, colour, style, fibres, sound and the intangibles such as the memories and stories. If one were to extract all of these elements from a garment what would be the most important? This may vary from person to person, some feel that the colour is not as important as the scent but other may feel different.

Scent

Scent is one of the most important senses we have and is linked closely to taste, scent 'gives us some 90 percent of what we taste' [41] Smell is something you just 'can't turn off' [42], imagine going to a food market and not being able to smell, it would be an entirely different experience. Smell is not only linked to taste, 'Our senses are our link to memory and can tap right into emotion.' [43]

Scents can evoke a walk down memory lane, and encapsulate your emotions for that moment. Scent evokes memories and enhances our taste but it cannot last forever. The memory of that person can live on but the scent, that is reminding you of that specific moment in history, will not. Each time one smells the essence, a droplet will evaporate, each time the lid is removed another droplet has evaporated back into life's cycles.

The scent could be used as a perfume for everyday use, sprinkled over popurri to engulf a room or it could be kept to only be sniffed on special occasions. (Image opposite demonstrates how to extract scent from an item of clothing.)



1. Using 4 parts Soda Crystals and 1 part Sodium Hydrosulphate, with water. Boil the garment until it has fully disintegrated, ensuring it doesn't boil dry.

2. During the cooling process the colour pigments will sink as they are heavier particles.

3. Slowly take out the water from the top. At the bottom should be a sludgy substance, this is the colour pigment.

Colour

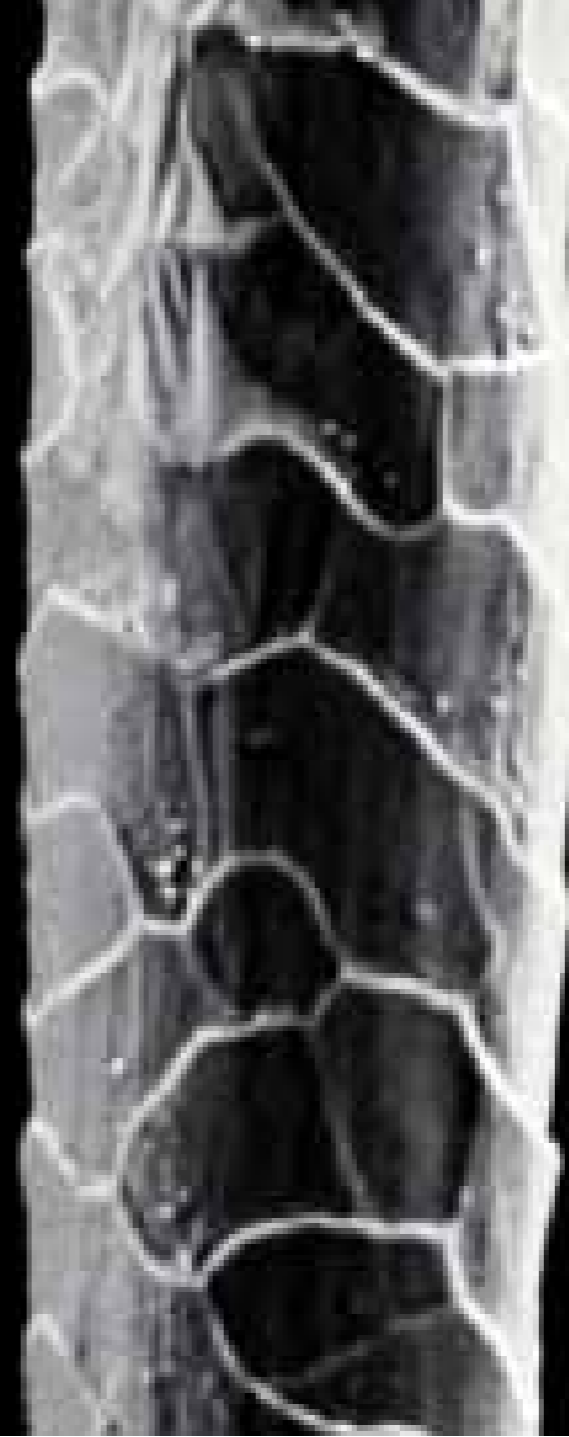
Colour can often become a representation of one's mood, possibly bright and cheerful, dull and gloomy. Colour can not only resemble one's mood but also characteristics such as bright and cheerful colours may suggest the person is bubbly and outgoing, someone who often wears dark colours may be more reserved and may want to blend in more with the crowds.

A window display by a group of students at the Royal College of Art, for Fendi, set about giving Fendi's discarded scraps of leather a new lease of life and new meanings. A collection named The Anatomy of Fendi was several studies of the new handbag that was going to be launched. Nicholas Wallenberg and Helena Karelson created a chemistry lab where they highlighted the colours that are used throughout the Fendi collections. Using the scraps of leather hides, they boiled and then distilled the resulting liquid to produce a water-based pigment. The pigment was then injected into white flowers to create a spectacular display across the store.

This experiment is an example of extracting the colour to then use the resulting pigment for another use. Once the colour has been extracted from an item of clothing, which has been loaned from the deceased, could re-dye another item of clothing, dye flowers, dye paper to write love letters to the deceased, there are endless possibilities.

Fibres/DNA

Clothing is made from various materials whether it's a natural fibre (cotton, wool, leather) or man-made fibre (nylon, polyester, viscose). Encapsulated between the fibres might possibly be a small amount of DNA. This DNA could be made up of skin cells, hair cells, and various other particles that lie on the body. DNA is very personal and is unique to everyone, once extracted the amount will be minimal, but it might possibly be the



closest item to the deceased person. The small amount of DNA powder that is extracted will last longer than the scent but is equally as unique and personal.

The DNA may be given straight back to the deceased and returned into life cycles, as it may be too personal to keep.

The Intangibles

Once the item of clothing has had all of its elements extracted, the garment will no longer exist in its original state; it now consists of scent, colour and DNA. The intangible element of memories and stories are still to be extracted. Seeing the item of clothing in its new form of three composite elements, may not be a reminder of the deceased. To capture the memory and story that is held in the original garment may possibly be through reminders of the garment, possibly through photographs, texture, and all the three other elements. The memory can be captured in various different ways and each individual will have an appropriate form. The memories that need to be captured may be some of the deceased characteristics and memorable moments, others may be new of someone wearing the garment. Both memories are equal to each other and together, with the composite elements of the garment, make up the new forms of the garment.

To capture the intangibles could be through a book that has the memories written inside, which would sit alongside the texture and the various other elements. If this wasn't an appropriate outcome, a film of people discussing the deceased with a selection of images may become a better reminder.

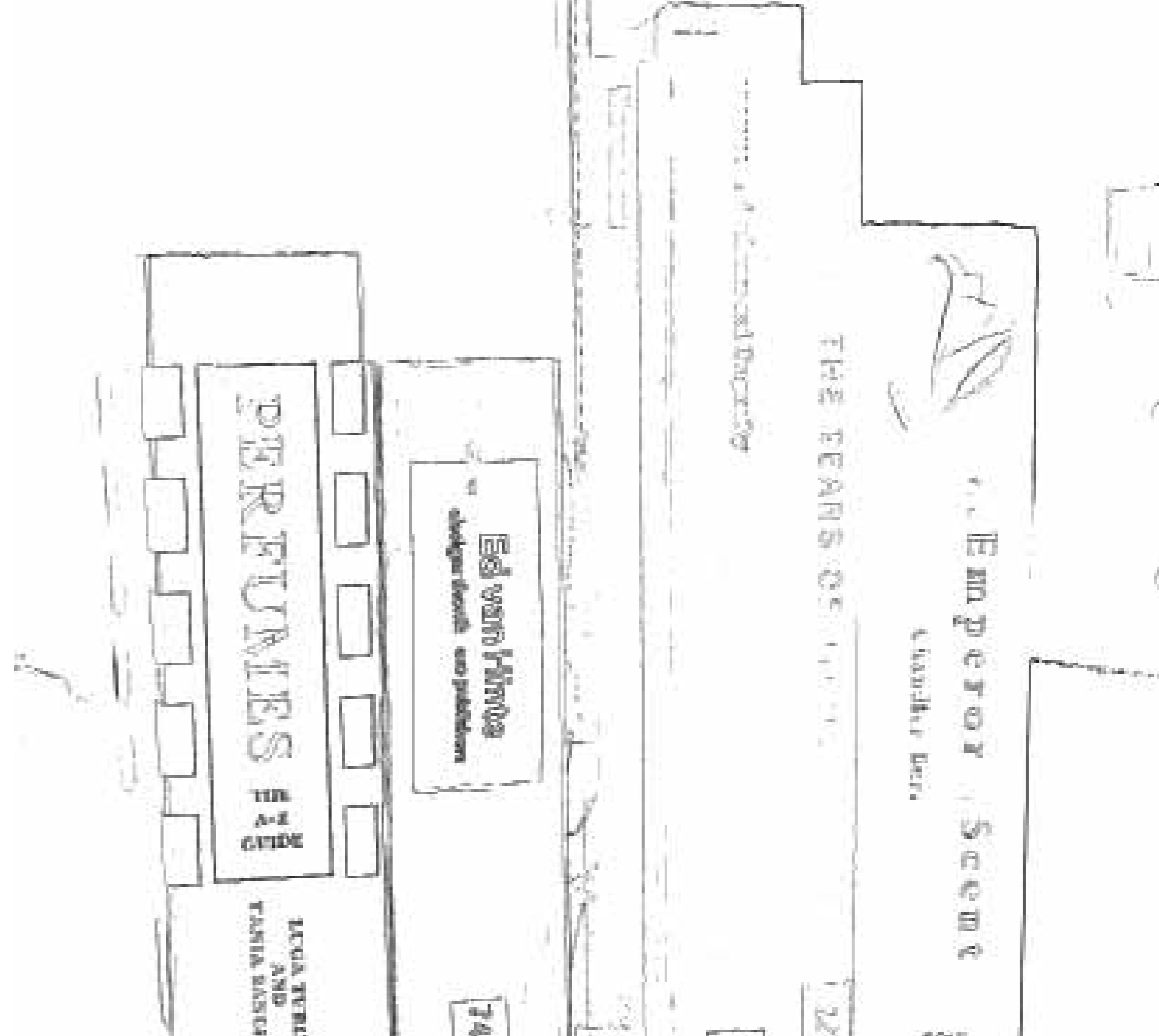


What order can this happen in?

This process may not be completed all at once, the scent may be extracted soon after the person has passed away as this is when the scent will be most prominent. The scent could then be dropped back onto the garment in small doses, this will allow the scent to last longer and still allow it to come through.

Extracting the DNA could be done at a later stage, but once it has been worn your own personal DNA will be encased in the garment as well. Extract the DNA at this point may be a combination of the deceased and of your own. A joint DNA would allow you to be closer together and by placing the DNA back on the grave of the deceased would allow you to sit together in harmony.

The colour would be the final element to be extracted due to the process it goes through. During which the garment would be destroyed and a coloured pigment would remain. I envisage this process to happen after various stages of ones grief. One could wear the garment over and over again until the item has “unravelled into shreds” [44] and then complete the whole process.



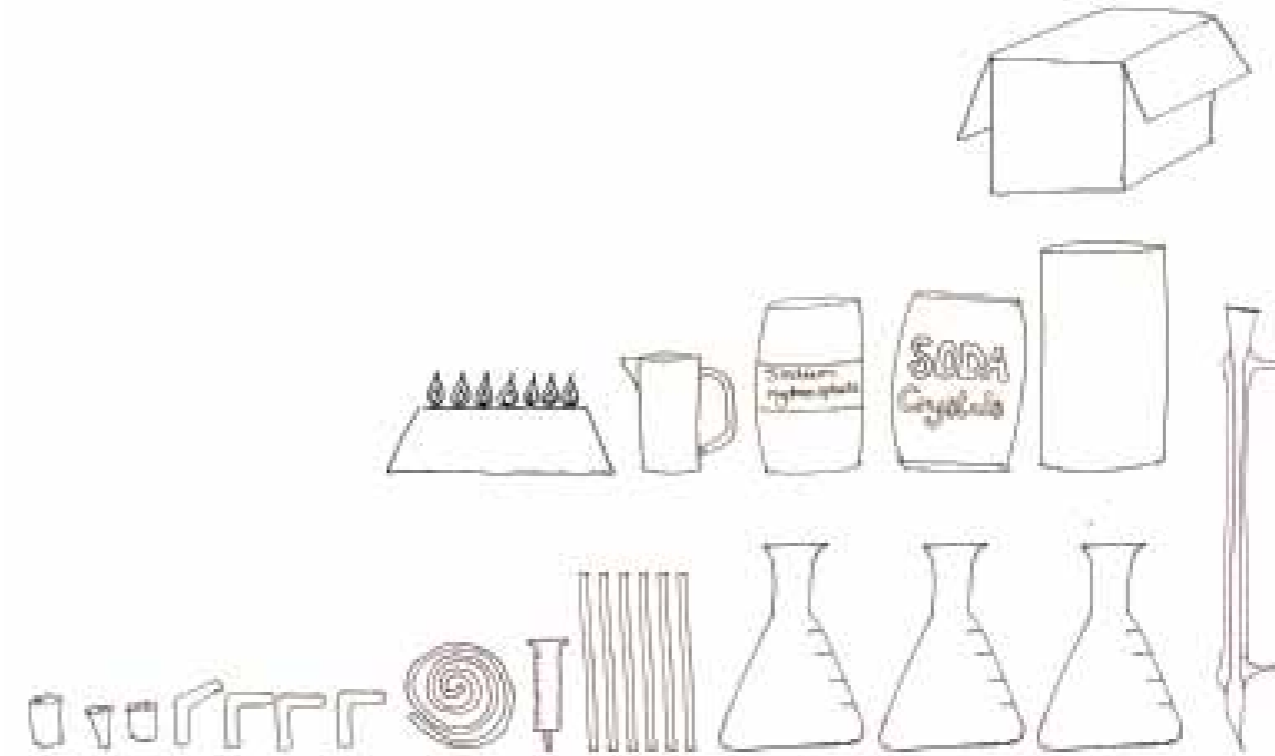
Endnotes

- [41] Chandler Burr, *The Emperor of scent* (William Heinemann, 2003) 57.
- [42] Martin Lindstorm, *Brand sense* (Free Press, 2005) 24.
- [43] *ibid*, 10.
- [44] Jennifer Egan, *Dressed to Remember*, *The Sunday Times*, 09/10/11.

Images:

- [51] http://filecache.drivetheweb.com/mr4enh_icebreaker/184/wool+fibres.JPG, Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
All other images are taken by myself.

Conclusion



After time the inherited garment will come to the end of its life, just the same as the person came to the end of his or her life. The inherited garment can then be deconstructed into its composite elements in order to find a way for those elements to go back into the soil and back into life cycle, in other words giving the 'loan' back to the dead. The process of deconstructing an item is linked to grieving, it is a way of keeping a persons alive and involved in life's daily actions. The system is conceived as a means to help overcome the loss of someone who has passed away.

A separate Service

This service could be executed in various different ways; it could be a separate service, that is undertaken in a commercial manner. It may begin to become uncontrolled and a service that is un-unique to the people involved, dead and alive. The service as a separate entity may become a part of mass production, an aspect that is socially accepted within society and therefore more people would undergo the process. In doing this it might become indistinctive and too common place thus making it un-unique. I believe that this process should become more individual as the topic is incredibly personal and can be unsettling. If executed in this manner it wouldn't allow for personal grief and you could become just another person among others.

A DIY kit

The process may become a set of instructions, a DIY kit to complete at home with close family and friends which would allow it to become more unique and individual. The set of given instructions would come accompanied with the equipment needed to continue all the processes of extraction. Physically participating in the process and performing the specific aspects, at varying stages of grief, could help to overcome a loss. A DIY kit allows full responsibility of the deconstruction of the garment, but it maybe too much



responsibility and emotional to see the physical garment being destroyed. The process may also become too dangerous as some of the chemicals involved are highly dangerous and come with warnings. It might be costly due to the equipment needed to extract the scent, I bought mine for around £80, and this is for just one of the processes.

An additional service

If the service was design as an addition to what is already provided by the undertakers it would be easier for the families involved. It would become acknowledged at an early stage, which would allow the family to choose a specific garment to take through this process. The undertaker already take care of most of the proceedings such as registering the death, to the ceremony but they don't have much dealings with possessions. This is predominantly down to the family/friends and a solicitor, who will usually read the Will if there is one. When going to the undertakers there are already a lot of add-ons that you can have, this process of extraction is another, of which might be missed. It will be another among lots of others, the customers will become bamboozled with lots of different things which will then allow the process to become too rushed and impersonal.

My personal job

I feel that the most appropriate and sensitive direction for this system and process is for it to become my own personal job: Olivia's Job. It will allow the process to become personal and individual to the people involved. I would be able to build a relationship with the family and friends involved and at the various stages of their grief extract the required elements from the garment. The service would be far more special and personal which lends its self to this sensitive subject. For me to take the garments and deconstruct



them my self, would allow more control thus allowing a better quality service to the customer. The customer could request, if they would like to help participate in the process allowing the process to become tailor made to each individual. The service will become highly unique and personal, catering for the individual needs of every family.

The ceremonies and rituals

This process of extracting the different elements is a ceremony in itself, an addition to what already occurs after a death. A funeral predominately happens a week or two after the person has died and this is often a religious ceremony. This new ceremony can happen at various different stages after someone has passed away, the elements could be extracted individually and therefore you could have several mini ceremonies. It could also become one larger ceremony where all elements are extracted. This ceremony would be a move away from religious rituals and become a new ritual. It could involve participating in the act of extraction if the participants felt the need. If this wasn't appropriate, the ceremony would become sending the garment, and then receiving it back with an element extracted. This could then be done again and again until the garment would not return and only the physical elements would exist. Once all aspects have been extracted, the loan would need to be given back to the deceased. This can be done by wearing the scent but the DNA may be given straight back to the deceased. This is similar to scattering ashes, either back to the deceased's grave or possibly somewhere they never got to go. The final and possibly the most important element would involve all friends and family meeting up to add the intangible memories and compiling them into a coherent document. This meeting and the process, of either sending or participating would become the new ceremony and ritual, that can be designed and altered to individual needs of each family.



What and when can the elements be extracted?

I envisage this process to occur at varying stages of grieving. The customer may approach me with a garment that they have in mind to undertake the process. The scent would be the first to be extracted, to capture the strongest scent it would have to be completed soon after the person has passed away. Next to be extracted would be fibres of hair and skin cells, DNA. This can be too sensitive for some families to do but others may find it incredibly comforting to know that they still have a small part of the deceased. After, the colour could be extracted, but during this process the garment would be destroyed and therefore may not be something that the customer would want to do immediately. The final intangible element is the memories and stories that are encased in the garment. Memories and stories are incredibly personal and individual, with all three composite elements together, will help to build the memories stronger and make them more realistic. It will also allow the customer to envisage the memory in a more physical world instead of it being an intangible memory.

The user and the possibilities of design

The user for this service and process would be bereaved people who have inherited a garment that they don't want, but cannot discard it. I will design the process of which the elements are extracted through, the equipment needed to extract the scent, DNA and colour. The form in which the intangibles are held in can be designed. Once all elements are combined together they could make a new object, but what? The final aspect to be designed will be the ceremonies and rituals involved. This process will help the bereaved to overcome a loss by keeping them involved in life's daily actions.



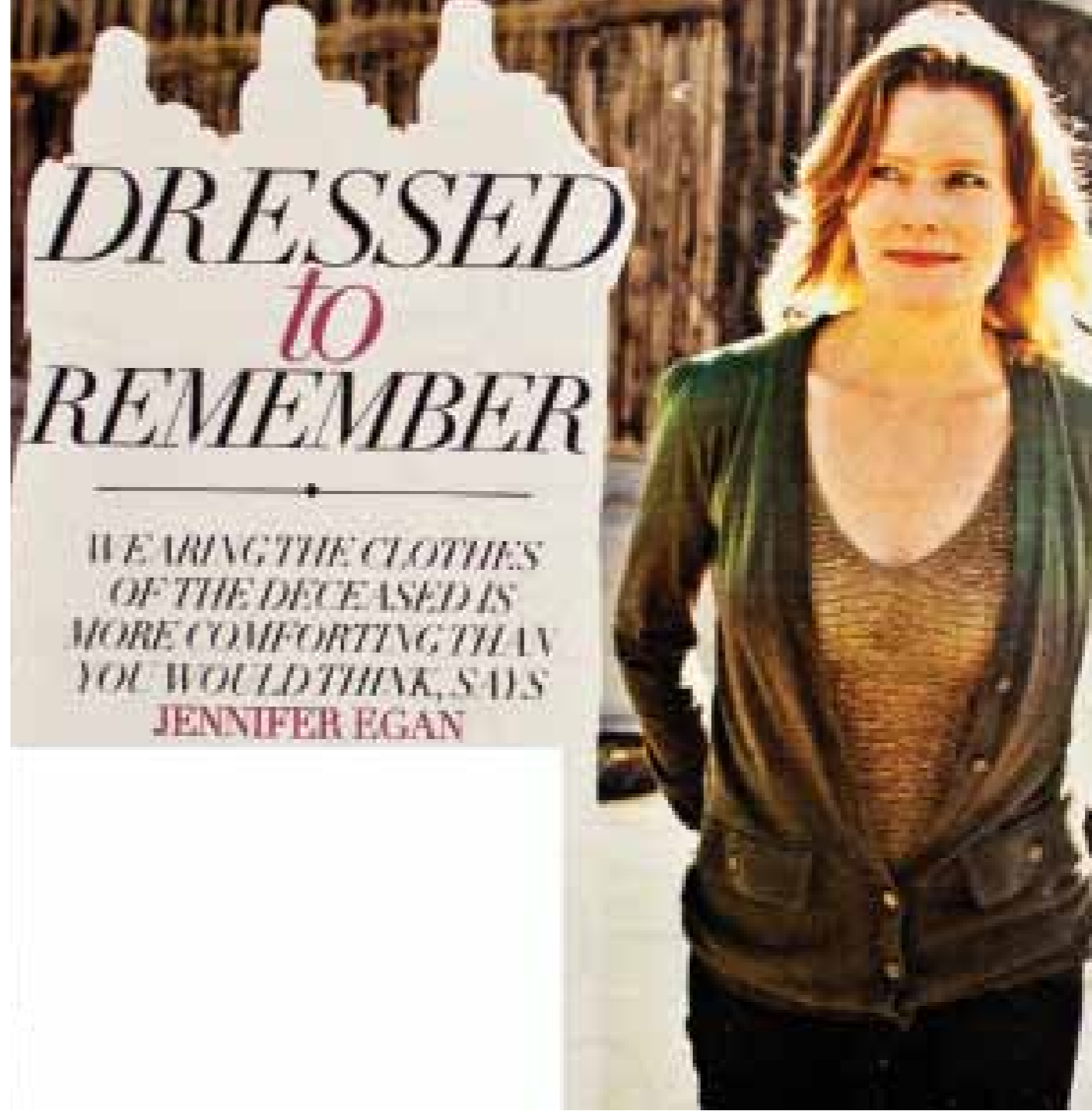
Endnotes:

None

Images:

- [52] <http://v4.lscache8.c.bigcache.googleapis.com/static.panoramio.com/photos/original/57485925.jpg>, Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
All other images are taken by myself.

Appendix



Appendix 1: Article from paper

In 1980, when my mother co-owned an art gallery in San Francisco, she and her assistant were robbed at gunpoint by two jittery escaped convicts who mistook the gallery for a cash business and openly discussed shooting them when the cash failed to materialize. The ordeal ended without serious harm, but my mother never again wanted to wear the skirt she'd had on that day: a long black wraparound with a geometric pattern of magenta flowers and thick green stems. I appropriated it (it fit short, took it with me to college and wore it through my twenties. I never forgot its awful history; on the contrary, that history sharpened my pleasure in wearing it. The very act of tying the skirt around my waist felt restorative — as if, by paying over my mother's horrific experience with ordinary life, I was repairing an imbalance.

I was near the end of my twenties before I lost someone I was close to: my mother's mother, whose three-tiered necklace of lake pearls I inherited. I wore that necklace constantly, even after it became clear I would destroy it unless I put it aside. I had the same impulse when my father died, six years later, and, five years after that, my stepfather. From my father's closet, I borrowed a navy wool V-neck, from my stepfather's an argyle sweater. On winter days, I wore one of those two sweaters, partly for the obvious reason — wearing the garment of a person I loved was like being wrapped in a protective force field, but what drew me was also delicate. When the clock seems on a life, all things surrounding from it become precious, fragile and outlived off for preservation. Each aspect of the dead person is removed from the flux of the everyday, which, of course, is where we miss them most. The quarantine around death makes it feel arduous and wrong — a fumbling incursion — and the dead, thus quarantined, come to seem more dead than they are. Those sweaters did more than remind me of their owners; the sheer ordinariness of working in them, spilling on them, taking them off and tossing them on the floor, helped to diffuse that dear heaviness. Borrowing from the dead is a way of keeping them engaged in life's daily transactions — in other words, alive.

When my father-in-law, whom I adored, died, I began with almost unceremonious speed to lobby my mother-in-law for one of his sweaters. I kept two: a scratchy green sweater that's too warm for everyday wear and a vest, plaid and wonderfully warm, but as my stepfather's argyle sweater was for years, until I accidentally put it in the dryer and it shrank to fit me exactly, I'd forgotten, in the years since my

father and stepfather died, what it was like first to wear their clothing. Starting fresh, the vest brought it back: the garment small as much like him — coffee, puppet, beating word — that when I held it under my children's noses and asked, "Who does this smell like?", they both cried, "Grandpa."

After a few weeks, the vest went from smelling like Grandpa to smelling like me, until the later that was so pronounced that I had it dry-cleaned, at which point it became, in some sense, mine. But always on loan, in such a extent that I think "Joe's vest" each time I pull it from my closet, and I find the notion so heartening that I marvelled to my husband at his reluctance to avoid himself of this obvious way to feel connected with his father: "There are more sweaters," I exhorted him. "I only took two." My husband paused a moment before replying, disconcerted. "What can I see? I don't have the impulse to wear them. I think about him constantly, but it's not bound up in physical things."

Of course, a loan from someone dead is temporary. It can't be removed and, eventually, the physical object begins to wear down. My grandmother's necklace broke on an East Village corner; the plastic pearls were flying inside the street. I gathered up as many as I could and sealed them in an envelope, which I've since lost track of. My father's and stepfather's sweaters are beginning to look threadbare, despite multiple repairs. This reminds me of how long it's been since I saw their owners. I find it even harder to remember how it felt to be in a room with either of those men, but I know how their sweaters felt against my skin. I plan to wear them until they unravel into shreds. ●

A Vest from the Green Sweater by Jennifer Eggen (Cannoodle & Robinson 2012) is not mine.



Appendix 2:

“My mum passed away a couple of years ago now, but when she did die I took a black shawl. I do sometimes wear it over something to go out if it is chilly and sometimes to funerals. When I am wearing it I feel comforted. It just reminds me of my mum.”

Maria Nicholas

“When my grandma died I took her fur coat. I rarely wear it because it has bracelet sleeves (ie $\frac{3}{4}$ length) and also because of the animal lib idiots who would rather see a perfectly good coat go to waste than someone get some use out of it. I don't remember it being worn, but my grandma is wearing it whilst holding me in my christening photo.”

Kate McGreevy.

“Yes I have a fox fur stole (similar to the image opposite) - my father gave it to my mother as a present when I was born. I used to wear it loads before fur became seriously naughty. I thought I was the bees knees at 18 when I wore it with a floppy black hat, black velvet frock coat, skinny trousers and over the thigh boots! When I used to wear it I felt very connected my mum, I felt as if she was there protecting me. I don't have a specific memory of a specific event but when I see the fur stole it just reminds me of my mum in general.” Mandy Griffiths

“I can't think of any clothes that I've inherited. My father and I were very different and I don't think any of his clothes would have fitted me. I do still have a suit that he measured me for and had especially made. I haven't worn it for a couple of years. I may also have a black tie of his that I borrowed for a funeral and never returned. I haven't worn the suit and tie for years; they are both a bit dated. The black tie has an extra significance as I wore it to funerals. I suppose I associate the tie with my father, not his funeral but the funeral he attended wearing the tie.” Eifion Griffiths



“I had a few things given to me when my Grandma passed away, I had a gold ring, a silk scarves and a painting of Paris. I wear the ring often and used to wear the scarves a lot until I got a hole in one of them and now I keep them in an old box. I feel a special connection; it is nice to wear the ring because she wore it everyday for her whole life. The first thing I think of when I see the ring is how she was always wearing it, I never saw her without it. I always wanted it and she said when I was 18 it would be mine. One time I thought I had lost it and it was the worst day ever.” Roisin Ellen Brophy.

Image:

[53] <http://www.trendhunter.com/trends/fox-fur-stole#!/photos/58339/1>, Last accessed 9th Jan, 2012.
All other images are taken by myself.

Appendix 3:

“When my grandma passed away the only thing that I had was two Belfast sinks. They now sit in my back garden as mini gardens, they were going to be a herb garden but it didn't really go all that well!”

“This is the handbag that belonged to Mrs Banks. It has begun to wear down and crumble. Inside I keep all her documents that I took. When Mrs Banks used to go out shopping she would always take a large shopping bag and put this inside of it. I have some great memories with Mrs Banks and this bag and its contents remind me of her and the good times.”



“I’m not entirely sure who this came from but my sister gave it to me. She did take it from someone but I’m not sure who. At the time I was doing some fashion work so it seemed appropriate that I should have it. It is one of the original singer manual sewing machines. To power the needle you use the pedal on the floor.”

“This is another item that I took from Mrs Banks. They are only tiny, the long plate is about 5cm and the others are about 3cm so very small. They are from the 20’s, and I remember them on Mrs Banks mantel piece. There were more of these miniature pates but I am not sure where they went. There were larger circular ones but who knows where they are now. When I see them they always remind me of Mrs Banks living room.”

“This dresser came from an old lady who lived next to me when I was younger. We were very close and I use to her house all the time and I was always allowed a sweet from the tin and a can of coke. I have no specific memories of this dresser but she always polish it. I haven’t polished it much but maybe this is for a reason.”

“Necklace that belonged to a friend of mine who passed away a year ago. Her sister gave out her jewellery to her friends. I wear it a lot and makes me think of her, although we weren’t as close anymore.” (See image opposite)

“This is a wrist watch from my grandfather. It was given to my father and now its mine. I can’t really talk about it too much as he passed away not that long ago. We were very close and I visit his grave often to lay flowers and I will always wear the watch.”

“This chest of drawers came from a family friend, called Aunty Wyn. She used to store all of her bed linen in it. Aunty Wyn lived with her mum who was quite old. One day she set fire to something in the kitchen, the fire burned most of the house. This chest of drawers was one of the only pieces of furniture that survived.”



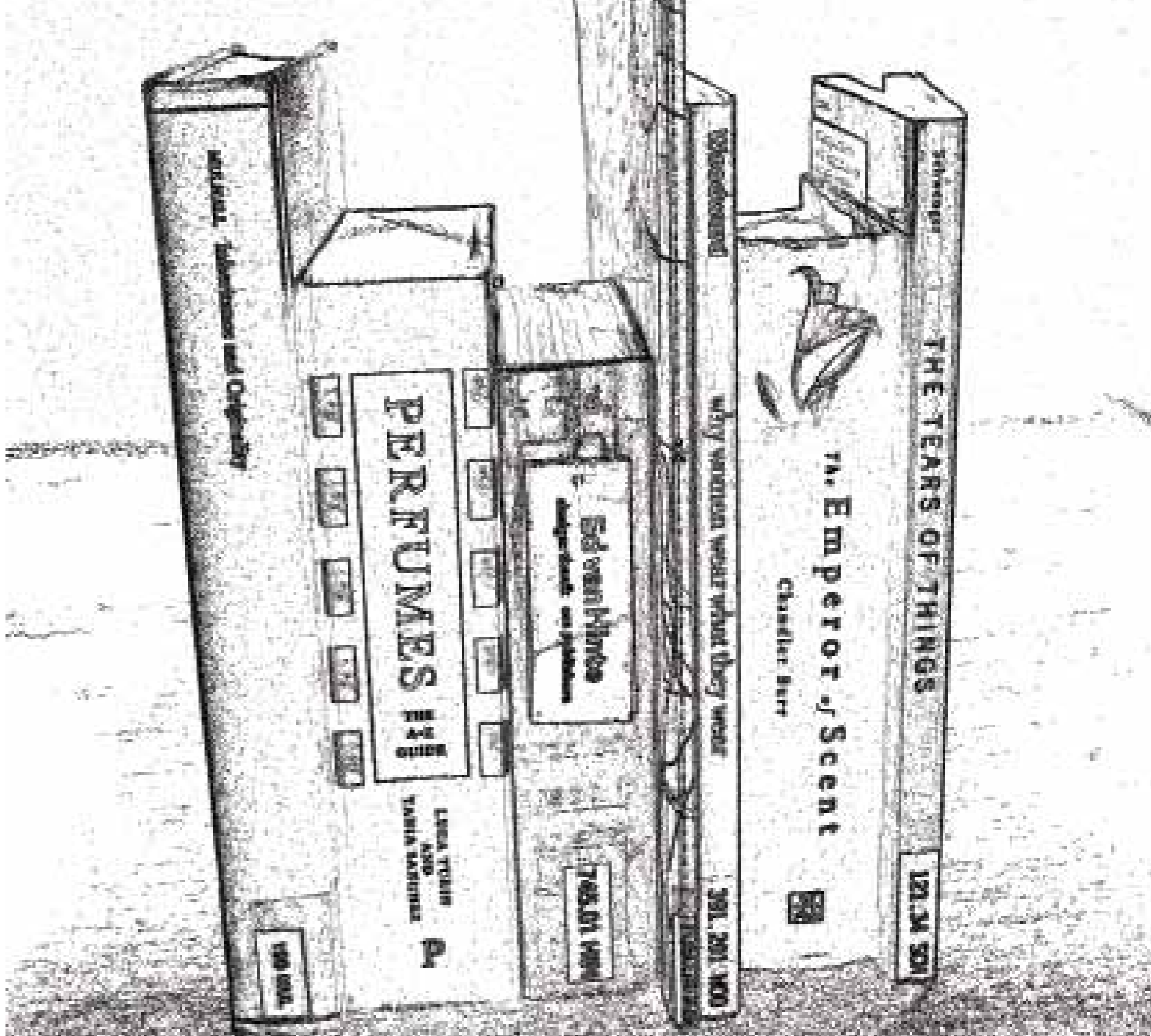
“I received these from a gentleman called Mr Tulloch, when my dad took his vet job in Wales he was replacing Mr Tulloch’s position. He lived next door to the surgery with his wife, and we used to go around there for cups of tea. One day when we were there having a cup of tea dad got called out, me and my sister had to stay there whilst he went. To entertain us Mr Tulloch brought out this small black box full of playing cards. Inside of the match boxes are different sets and there are about two sets loose. We sat there playing with these cards for ages and ages. A while after he gave me the set of cards and I have since always played cards with them.”

“My Grandad has 3 children and at the time coin collections were becoming big. So he collected 3 of each coin one for each of his children. He gave the coin collection straight to me. There is two shoe boxes full of coins and each one is in its own little pouch and most of them have a date. This collection reminds me so much of my Grandad. When he gave me the collection we spent a whole day going through where he got them from and the stories that went with some. I have found memories of that day and the coin collection will remain with me until the time comes for me to pass it on.”

“There is quite a story behind this object, it came into our family from Mrs Banks but she got it from her older sister. Mrs Banks sister was a house keeper for a wealthy business family at Castle House in Stafford. The Downing family were very wealthy and had originally come from Germany. When the family bought new china the old set would be divided between their servants, so this bowl and plate was an item that she had. I am not exactly sure how old this item is, but Mrs Banks was born in 1896 and her sister was the older, so it must be from early 1900.”

Images:

All images are taken by myself.



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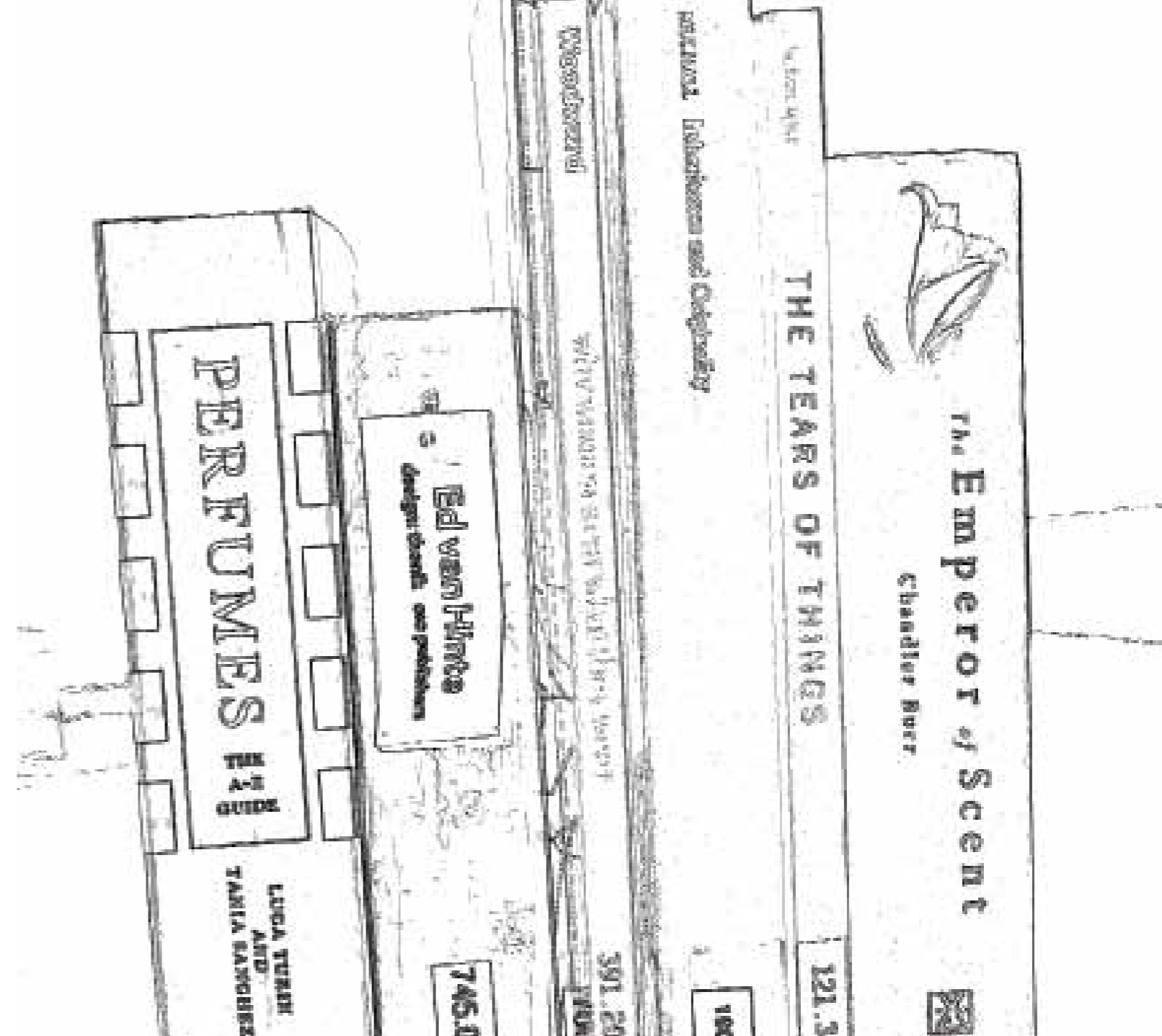
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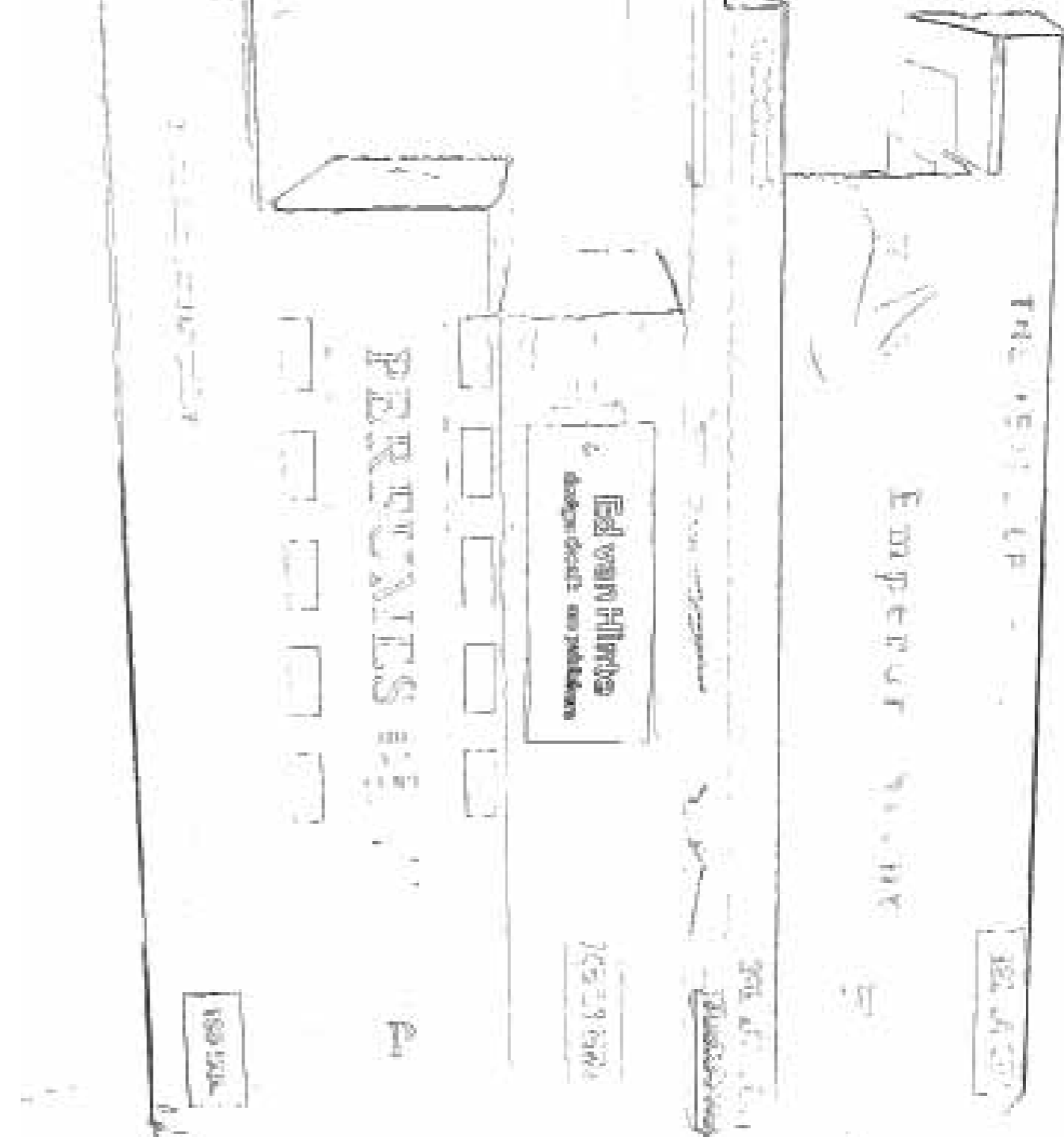
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Interviews:

Nigel from A.J.Cope & sons (nigelcope@thelabwarehouse.com)

Professor Flanagan Robert, Forensic Scientist. Kings Collage Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. (robert.flanagan@nhs.net)

Films:

Dorian Gray. DVD. Oliver Parker. 2008; United Kingdom: Ealing Studios, 2009.

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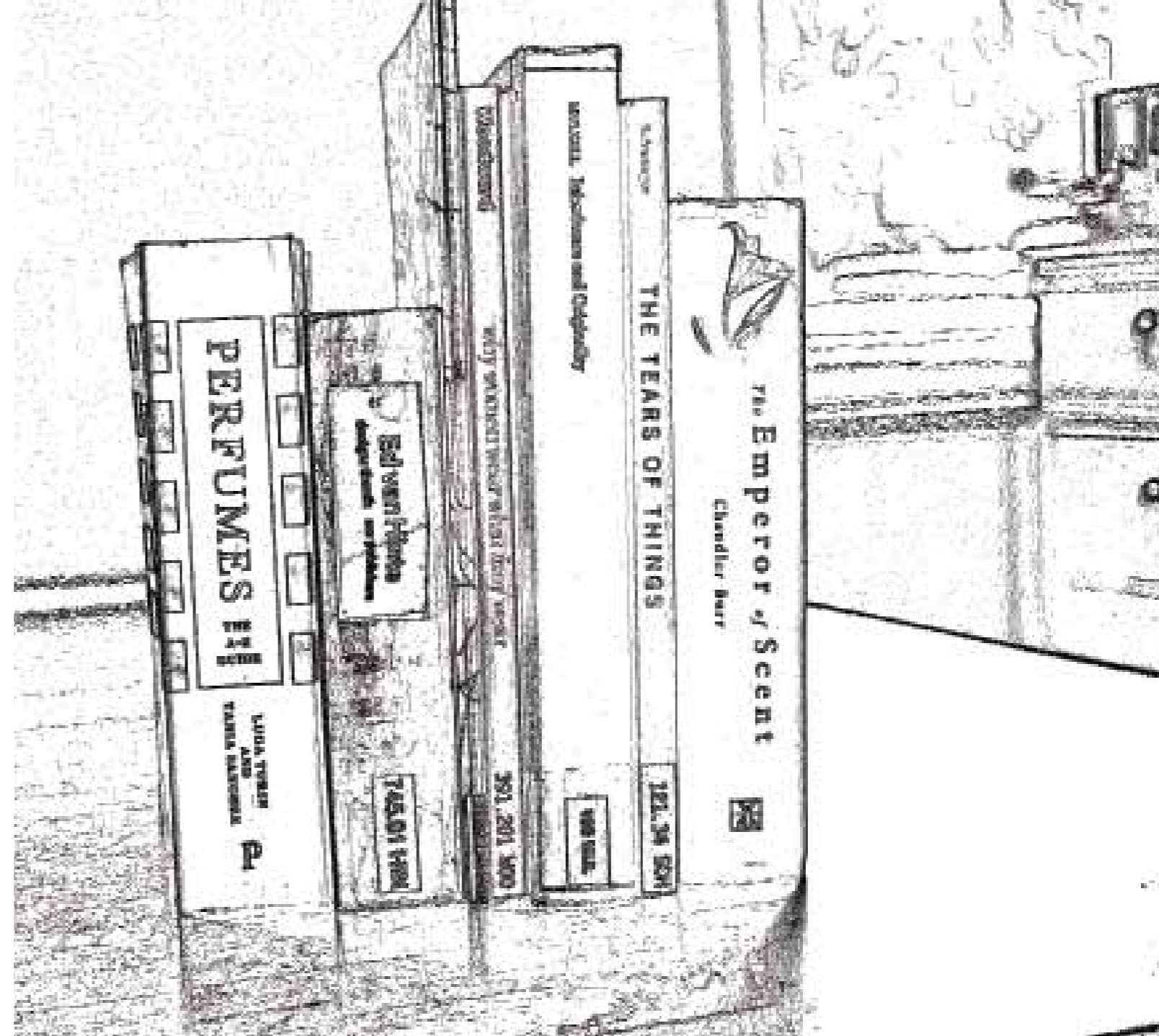
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Visits and Museums:

Horniman Museum, Forest Hill, London, SE23 3PQ.

Nunhead Cemetery, Linden Grove, London, SE15 3LP.

Victorian and Albert Museum, Cromwell road, London, SW7 2RL.

West Norwood Cemetery, Norwood Road, London, SE27 9JU.

The End



Goldsmiths, BA Design
By Olivia Alice Clemence