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Claiming Anonymous Spaces
Through The Act Of Covering

Lust, Or Simply A Must

I've moved 29 times in my life, and throughout some of the places that I have lived I have been able to experience and practice joy, patience and care. A home does require joy, patience and care. To perform the acts of moving, packing, covering, wrapping is something that I've repeatedly done throughout my whole life, even multiple times within the same year. Just by selecting the moves I have done during the past six months, I've already moved five times. I packed, moved to and lived in Stockholm (fully furnished apartment), then I packed, moved to and lived in the south of Sweden (fully furnished room), then I packed, moved to and lived at a friends house in The Hague (fully furnished apartment), and then I packed, moved to and lived in a hotel in The Hague (fully furnished) and finally I moved to the place where I live at the moment, a studio in The Hague. Throughout my moves, there has been a constant change and difference in the interior. The only thing that has been consistent throughout these moves, has been the way I store and pack my belongings, as well as what I chose to bring which becomes determined and in relation to how I transport myself from and to locations. I went by train from Stockholm to the south of Sweden, which enabled me to bring two suitcases, one Ikea bag and a backpack because of the sort of unlimited amount of space on the train. The only limitation was my physical capability of what I myself could manage to transport to and off the train. Moving from the south of Sweden to The Hague, I faced limitations due to restrictions on the airplane. I could take one suitcase, one hand luggage and one backpack. What I can bring is limited by the way I travel. For the most part, the three vessel components that were consistent were one suitcase, one bag and one backpack. The problem has been and still is, I didn't move because I wanted to, I moved because I had to.

I am laying in someone else's bed, hearing a sound from my phone. It is another Tuesday morning around eight o'clock. I discover the light from the window while slowly opening my eyes. The blanket that covers me from my shoulders, down to my toes, rolls off of my body as I move from the laying position in the bed, to a standing position on the floor. I then grab the blanket on the bed and cover the mattress with it, tightly, making it look as if the bed was made by a professional bed-maker.

I have been living in this hotel room, located in The Hague, for 24 days during the month of January 2021. There is not much to do here. I was given the 'Hampton Suite', a concept room with some of the characteristics to set the tone of its identity and make the visitor feel as if you would spend your days and nights in a beach house in the Hamptons. The floor, around the size of 25m² is covered with a plastic carpet with a print of sand dunes. The walls are close to an off-white color, and on one part of the wall the choice to place wooden blinders as a headboard was made, again, referring to the lifestyle of the Hamptons. Other than that, the room includes two lounge chairs - one painted in a vibrant green - the other in a vibrant turquoise nuance, a low squared table with a glass tabletop, a strangely small desk with a black chair and a double bed with two round side tables next to it. None of these items and elements belongs to me once I leave this room. Although for the time, being the occupant of this room, it is all mine. I wonder, if it is mine, for this temporary amount of time, why I don't feel at home in this room. What does belong to me though, is one

suitcase, two backpacks, two bags and one skateboard. These vessels I brought with me from my home country. I was limited in the content of what I could bring with me in terms of size since I was traveling by airplane. The content of my vessels are shoes, clothes, notebooks, pens, cameras, hygiene products. I also brought a tea that my mother gave me as a gift. The tea given by my mother has become a ritual for every time I leave her house. She insists on me having this specific tea to be reminded of her and to feel a bit close to home while enjoying a cup of it. I am intending, on this Tuesday morning, to leave the room for a few hours to take a walk to the school I am studying at. In order to do so, I have to follow my morning routine. I start by discovering my face by cleaning it with my own hands and cold water. Untie my hair knots using a rounded brush. Covering my body with the clothes laying on the shelf. Packing my backpack with the necessities of the day, putting my papers into the folder that covers them from getting wrinkly, wrap the cable for my computer charger around the charger. Adding the final layer of the jacket on my body, applying the backpack, and then the final step, applying the face mask that protects and covers me. I step out of the Hamptons room, into the corridor, walk down the stairs and open the door to step out to from the hotel to the outside.

Eight hours later, the reversed act begins. I enter the hotel building, walk up the stairs, pass through the corridor, use my hands to remove the face mask as soon as I step into the Hamptons room. Releasing my back from the weight of the backpack and its necessary content, releasing my papers from the folder that covered them, unwrapping the cable for my computer charger. Uncovering my body with the clothes I am wearing, laying them one by one on the self. Untying my hair knots using my rounded brush. Rediscovering my face by cleaning it with my hands and the cold water.

This is my daily routine that includes fragments of my constant encounters of covering and uncovering.

Introduction

In this thesis and in my graduation project, my interest has been the act of covering objects, as a tool to unravel the essence of identifying and claiming anonymous spaces, to generate and locate its possible new design potentials. The investigation method is based on the process and act of covering, as a tool to highlight the importance of what's being covered, as most objects and elements in our daily life are part of the process of being covered. Examples of these objects and elements are food, furniture, packages, walls, architecture and gifts. Covered objects are going through five different acts without each separate act getting enough attention. These acts are; *act of selecting an item, act of covering an item, act of an item being covered, act of uncovering an item and act of discovering an item*. Other than the covering of personal items and myself within spaces, I am interested in the routines of feeling at home and covering:

How can I establish an identity through covering?

There is a general sense of care taking place momentarily in each separate act throughout the process of covering, although the attention of care is brought more towards the final act, *an object being discovered*. The object itself is seen as the end destination in the process of the acts, and therefore the state and situation where the aspect of care is the most present. As my framework I am aiming to include the aspect of care to covering and to give attention to all the five separate acts by using and adapting the objects covered in relation to my location and circumstance at that time. Depending on the technique being used while covering of the objects, it adds layers and sublayers to covering that becomes translated into descriptive words, expressing each act and movement more precisely. I began to notice it through the physical research I made, and I quickly wanted to map these through lists. The word cover itself has different associations to every individual, and therefore I felt the need to start a cover-dictionary, linking nouns, adjectives and actions to help me to be more precise with my actions and to work as a linguistic to explain my view on the subject. Since I observe the word cover and the act of covering, as the main word and the main representation of the act. Although, by performing an act of covering, sub-words appear. These subwords, I highlighted by collecting them into a dictionary or archive of possible variations and characteristics, while performing the act of covering to be more specific and define exactly what is taking place. According to Cambridge Dictionary, the word cover is defined by as; *a layer of something that covers something else¹; or; 'the act of concealing the existence of something by obstructing the view of it'²*. The definitions and synonyms I relate to the word are: *Act of doing, action, aesthetic value, arrange, attached, bend, care, cloak, colorful, combine, connection, cover, crumble, derange, disguise, drape, encase, enclose, enfold, envelop, fold, form, gift, glued, grasp, hide, join, knot, layer, lazy, loose, mask, material, method, modulate, necessity, nice, pack, pattern, preserve, protect, relating to time, remove, repetition, reshape, roll, save, scale, shape, skills, store, support, surround, techniques, time consuming, tighten, tie, traditional, translucent, transparent, tricky, twist, weight, wrap*. One that appears more often is the word wrap and the act of wrapping. The definition of wrapping is; *to cover or enclose in paper or soft material, or to cover especially by winding or folding, to enclose as if with a protective covering³*.

The necessities to initiate the process to cover objects are many and often related to its original function, such as prevention, protection, preservation, transportation and many more, and they all

¹ Cover, Cambridge Dictionary

² Cover, The Free Dictionary

³ Wrap, Cambridge Dictionary

come down to capture the state the item is in. I went through and observe my previous projects made since I started studying within the field of interior architecture and art, which is about seven years. During these years, I have lived in five different cities for different amount of time spans. The consistent factor has been me living, packing and moving, covering, uncovering, discovering, wrap, wrapping, and unwrapping again. Because of this act being present in my daily life, I have had the need of being well aware of my items and to select which to take along on my journeys, to care for them, and carefully cover them in order for them to remain in the same state throughout all of the transportations I have made. The objects I usually bring with me are clothes, shoes, earrings, hygiene products, red notebooks, pencils, a frame with a photo of my mother and sister, my fathers camera, my own cameras, my computer, my charger, tea from my mother, warm socks, my hats, my sunglasses, my passport and my wallet. Amongst these personal belongings, some of them I treasure more than others in terms of being more careful in the way I treat them once I have to move again. The care for my socks, does not get the same attention as the frame with the photo of my mother and sister. The photo of my mother and sister, I carefully cover and wrap in layers of textile or plastic, and I usually place it close to me, in my handbag.

I made the decision to zooming into the topic of objects and their relation to covering, using historical, traditional/ ritualistic, practical perspectives and physical experiments. With the approach of caring, I am observing, investigating and practicing the method and act of covering, in order to find the answers I am seeking for with the following questions as guidelines:

Can I identify myself within an anonymous space I inhabit?

What happens when the function of an object no longer dominates, rather the emotional value becomes primary? How can the domestic space become the context for me covering myself within?

Map:

I decided to make a detailed overview and to map my behavior and relationship to moving, specifically all the moves I have made during the past 25 years. Depending on these aspects (address, city, accommodation, interior, inhabitant, time, transportation, reason and vessels) it has regulated my ability to cover myself within the domestic space. It has indeed as well regulated my relation to my personal items, in the way I have been needing to be selective and caring with my belongings, in order to experience joy throughout the process of always being in constant movement.

Throughout my physical research and experiments, I used multiple tools and methods to come closer in understanding what a cover is, how it can be aesthetically beneficial to what it covers and the actual physical acts of covering. It began with me for one week covering details, objects and furniture within the home where I was living in Stockholm, for example a sketching book, chairs, a bench, tables etc. This I documented through photography and video, and then analyzed from an aesthetic point of view to navigate and map the qualities it brought out. From the documentation, I was able to map the techniques I used, and realizing I was not only covering, rather wrapping, rolling, whirling, hiding. The word cover and act of covering became clear in its meaning when the scale of the object being used was consistent with the scale of the material being used. Once the scale difference between the object and the material was differing, it needed to be described differently and became something else. The tools to execute the covering were materials like paper, textile and plastic. I then evaluated the images looking for qualities within the images. The images did not add my wish of showing the process, since they only showed the outcome. The videos I made were filmed from two angles, one focused on the movement of my hands in relation to the object and the wrapping material, and the other one focused on a larger view showing the space

where the wrapping took place. Within the videos there was a more logical step by step presented. By getting physical early in the process, I gained the knowledge of hands-on understanding of materials, combinations, shapes, and through experiments defined and put to words what I am observing and making. I got to refine my eye for details and fragments in space, and more specifically for materials and compositions, shapes, and put words together to define what I am observing and making.

I continued to experiment and I developed a system of acts I made into experiments. The previous physical experiments I had made once I was living in Stockholm, I reflected upon afterwards and I concluded that the experiments were too figurative, mainly within a domestic area, focused on furniture and not fully pushing me out of my comfort zone. For the new experiments, I focused on different aspects such as: materiality, aesthetics, location, time, action, tool, circumstances, together, alone. These experiments allowed me to move out of the domestic area into a larger public scale. Not only that, but to experiment with playing with the definition and meaning behind covering, which allowed for memories, freedom and interpretation to take a place within the research.

Case Study

I'l Hotel

As previously mentioned, covers are present in our daily life. They are often thought of as objects, elements, separately placed within our perception of covers. Sitting in my hotel room, which was my home for a temporary period of time, I began to think about larger contexts where covers are present within the private space, realizing that the hotel context is filled with covers and is representing the momentary joy fairly. As I was making my way through my thoughts, I stumbled upon a project by the French artist Sophie Calle (1953), I'l Hotel ⁴, which was made in the 80s. She was temporarily hired as a chambermaid for three weeks in a hotel in Venice, whereas twelve of the rooms were assigned to her. While executing her duties, she noticed and observed the hotel guests belongings and how they lived in their rooms. During her temporary work as a chambermaid, she came close to multiple guests, through the way they kept their rooms. Some stayed for three days, giving room for new observations within the same space, and others stayed longer, giving room for deeper observations and smaller changes. Her writings of each room starts with the first entry and a note of which bed or beds that had been slept in, as well as a description of the nightwear left visible in the rooms.

*'A list of objects usually follows, as the artist transcribes her activities in the room. Calle is unashamedly voyeuristic, reading diaries, letters, postcards and notes written or kept by the unknown guests, rummaging in suitcases, and looking into wardrobes and drawers. She sprays herself with their perfume and cologne, makes herself up using the contents of a vanity case, eats food left behind and salvages a pair of women's shoes left in the bin. Outside the room, she listens at doors, recording the occupants' conversations or any other sounds she may overhear, and even peers into a room when the floor-waiter opens the door to catch a glimpse of the unknown guests.'*⁵

I observe Sophie Calle's project, as a way of behaving and taking the roll off an observer that treats a private space and its additional personal belongings as her tools. She uses herself to interact through slowly uncovering and discovering unknown personalized objects, such as looking into wallets, unpacking suitcases, flipping through and taking pictures of diaries, she even went to the

⁴ The Hotel, Room 47, Elizabeth Manchester, Tate Modern

⁵ The Hotel, Room 47, Elizabeth Manchester, Tate Modern

extent to go through the trash bin. All this, to uncover the layers of intimacy to unfold the inhabitants staying in the rooms. Her way of working, contributes to me wanting to challenge my own experience, living in a hotel for 24 days. The hotel where I was staying at that time, shed light on one of the contexts where the specific space deals with the fact of objects and situations being covered and uncovered. These objects and situations are seen as gifts, bodies slowly uncovering themselves while trying to adapt into a new space that is their own for a designated amount of time, and the actual space being discovered and uncovered by the act. This led me to make a small inventory of my observations regarding the objects in the hotel room I was staying and to map the objects being covered:

the blanket

*tightly folded, making the bed look clean and pleasant to be in
the bed linen*

*tightly wrapped, almost folded along and around the mattress,
in such a way you could play dice on it as if it was a table*

the slippers

placed in a slightly pink, soft plastic cover

the soap

wrapped in a paper cover

the curtains

swept to the furthest left and the furthest right

the towels

neatly folded, almost as if there were no longer any signs of it being a fabric towel

the menu

placed and slid into a pocket within a hardcover of leather

The state and appearance the hotel objects were in once I was presented and encountered them was one (prepared and indicating a way for me to interact with them) while the actual interaction with them were another which made them change state and appearance. The presentation of these objects, within the context of a hotel room is certainly different from how they are presented in other contexts. The ritual of uncovering the given objects from the hotel stayed momentary and within its context. Once the soap was unpacked from its plastic container, it was just a hotel soap that stayed in the bathroom and that I only used during my stay. Even though it was an object of mine during the 24 days, I didn't relate to it personally, as I did with my personal belonging. My personal belonging I unpacked and applied on the given circumstance, I used the wardrobe as the container for my clothes, the shelf in the shower for my shampoo bottles to be displayed, the nightstand for my water bottle and the book I was currently reading. By applying my belongings into an already furnished decorated space, I could claim my identity within the space.

Temporary Spaces

Renting a student room or hotel, the standard inventory⁶ is usually consisting of seven components: a bed, a mattress, a desk, a desk chair, a drawer unit, a wardrobe and curtains. The temporary spaces I have encountered the past six months, have indeed obtained the standard inventory of items, but as well other additions. A bed, a mattress, bedlinen, two pillows, blankets, nightstand(s), table(s), chair(s), a sofa, a sofa table, carpets, lights, a mirror, kitchen utensils and towels.

⁶ Student Living, Heyday

If I would have the opportunity to choose the interior myself, I would have preferred to be able to have and use my own personal belongings. The cup from my grandmother, my mothers bedsheets, the carpet of my grandmother, the sofa I had growing up, the pillows I dream most with, my black cutlery I bought for myself, my self build stool, my self build desk/ dining table, my self build chair, my blanket, my own mattress and bed. These components of mine, generate a circle of representation of who I am, they provide care, safety, peace of mind.

Claiming Identity

To express my identity within an already furnished and decorated space, I felt the need to take ownership of the space I was in at the time. The need to obtain the feeling of being home, at least for a little while, had grown strong and I did not feel at home where I was living at that time. Everything within the space was someone else's. All of the items filled a practical and useful function, per se there was nothing wrong with the black wooden chair from IKEA, or the 'shabby chic' inspired sideboard. Yet, the urge for the qualities of personal input and identity took over. I used my linen table cloth, and a blue plastic I once used a few years back for protecting the floor while I was painting the walls at my friends house, as the tool and material to gain the qualities I desired. The objects I selected were the ones I used the most, for their practical features. The chairs, a side table, an easel, a stool, a table, a tv, a bench, a piano. The approaches and acts I used to achieve the result presents themselves in the images, were indeed covering was the method, but specifically ended up in draping, twisting, tucking, knotting, wiring, placing, hanging. The objects kept their practical functions, but they gained the value of identity by me adding a layer that generated characteristics and care.

Furushiki

Furushiki, the phenomenon of gift wrapping, started from an early Japanese traditional covering of important items using cloth to transport clothes, gifts and food. Its origin is stated as far back as the Eighth Century ⁷, used in Japanese public baths. The men and women visiting the baths used decorative furushiki made from linen and cotton to wrap their garments. The furushiki then evolved into being used in other contexts, such as in markets and other industries that also adjusted the scale and evolved the ways and techniques to cover ⁸. I think this way of covering opened up the idea of covering multiple objects within the same cover, seeing it as a bag or storage possibility, as well as a reusable object itself once receiving it covering a gift. The aspects I observe touch upon practicality, formality - spirituality and materiality. I see the practical aspect embracing, displaying, framing, highlighting its object in relation, as if there was no other choice than to practically support the object through a covering. Through the observations I made this aspect category relates to food, transportation, preservation and storage practicalities, where the covering or wrapping supports this aspect. When it comes to the formal and spiritual aspect, it applies for gifts and gift giving in relation to the celebratory, ceremonial, behavioral, festivities and traditional/ religious holidays. The method used to cover is dependent on the content of the object, in this case most lightly a gift. It is a continuous approach that states back to aristocratic and samurai societies of long ago (1600-1850), that continues as a tradition in our daily life. Examples of these are, as mentioned, defined by what needs to be covered, and its detailing, for example using mizuhiki laces (the laces represents the ropes that mark the boundary between our world and the gods). The origata covering that is

⁷ Japanese Furoshiki (Cloth Wrapping) Osaka, Miho Okamoto

⁸ Furoshiki and Wrapping Culture in Japan, Sachiko Hamano

behaving/ being treated completely depends on its content, and the noshi as the finalizing layer, a decoration made from a thin strip of dried abalone, with a connotation to a prayer for longevity.⁹ The final aspect is the materiality, where it touches upon aesthetics, where from the eye the material follows the form and shape of the gift, as it was its only purpose. It defines the techniques in relation to the material, in such a way that the material becomes an object itself.

Egyptian Mummies

Relating the covering to the human scale brings my mind to the ancient technique of wrapping the body, mummifying, embalming and shrouding¹⁰. It was a cultural practice seen as a representation of how the Egyptians related to the human body. The beliefs of the Egyptians were the resurrection of the body and everlasting, which was an approach they observed daily. The sun went down into the horizon in the evening, and came back up in the morning. Their theory was based on as long as order was maintained, everything was dependable and life after death could be accomplished if specific conditions were met. One of the conditions were: the body has to be preserved through mummification (preservation of the body) and given a properly furnished tomb with everything needed for life in the afterworld. The mummification started in Egypt in 2400 B.C, and came from the text about the death of Osiris (Egyptian God of Death), that once he died there was a turbulent spirit amongst the gods. The tears from the gods turned into three materials that was used to mummify the body of Osiris, honey, resins and incense. Prior to the mummification took off, the corpse was placed in a position as if they were sleeping, laid into a pit together with their personal objects (often clay pots and jewelry). The next step would be to cover the pit with sand, which started the process of preservation due to the absorption of the water from the corps. To ensure the integrity of the corps and to obtain a safe transition of the deceased to the the underworld, the corps were decorated with amulets. The amulets were made from different materials, such as metal, stone, glass, bone, wood and shell¹¹. They were though of as expressing beliefs, attract well-being, ward off evil and to convey other hopes and wishes.

Later on, the process of mummification was developed. The corpse started to be wrapped in linen, around 35 layers, to then become soaked in resins and oils. This chemical mixture made the skin change its appearance into a black nuance. The materials used during the process of mummification were linen, sawdust, lichen, beeswax, resin, natron, onion, Nile mud, linen pads, frankincense, and the tools used to execute the mummification were brain hooks, oil jar, funnel and an embalmers knife. Often once the embalmer were finished with his work, they left their tools close to or inside of the tomb. The act of covering shared other layers and fragments of the Egyptian society, such as the physical space inside temples which often were planned to restrict access. Once a person, object or statue was placed in the tombs within the temple, it was wrapped up in linen. The statues of gods were even wrapped up in fresh linen at sunrise and sunset.¹² Within the space of the temple, the interior surfaces of the building were covered by decorative images and texts. The technique of covering and its material, the linen, had such a present meaning even the medical treatments and magic spells could take place over the linen and knotted up to help them work. The European cultural interest in the covering was more focused on the uncovering of the body/ object/ space. Once archaeologists approached the findings of the mummies, they took notes of the covering method, but later on uncovered the findings and in the end neglecting the covering.

⁹ Wrapping. A Prayer. Language, Japan House London

¹⁰ Mummification, Canadian Museum Of History

¹¹ The Mummy Chamber, Brooklyn Museum

¹² The Wrapped Body: Linen, Concealment, and Mummification in Ancient Egypt

*'In this context, it is also important to evaluate why and how the 19th and 20th century unwrapping of ancient remains relates to Europe's colonization of Egypt. Such destructive practices, and the display of unwrapped mummies in museums, are an ongoing legacy of this historical period, because owning and having power over the ancient remains helped justify owning and having power over Egypt itself in colonial times.'*¹³

Plastic Phenomenon

Seeing wrapping more as a state, wrapped or covered furniture was heavily trendy for many people during the 60s¹⁴. These covers were usually made from textile or plastic. People purchasing new furniture that were selected specifically in relation to size, style, shape and color, to be a part of their life and home, would proceed into being covered with plastic sheets. Examples of objects that traditionally were covered were sofas, armchairs, chairs, ottomans, tables. The reason for it, was to preserve the state of the object(s) as if they were brand new. The often clear transparent plastic, allows the visual experience of the covered objects, as well as a layer of protection which contributes to lengthening the life of the object. The plastic layer takes away the physical meeting between body and material but add the layer of sound once interacting with the material. Even though the community of people applying these covers isn't as visible nowadays, there is still traces of the act in our present society.

Another example from 2013 (*a reconfiguration of Bagged Place in 1966*) is an installation by the artist Iain Baxter¹⁵. He wrapped and framed the apartment and belongings of Rebecca Levy, a woman who donated her belongings once she passed away, to the Raven Row gallery in London. Since her apartment was located above the gallery. Her belongings were intimate items and furniture, and through these Iain Baxter narrated her adventures and experiences. Baxter was covering and wrapping all of her items and surfaces within the home, from the wallpaper and floors, to the smallest magnets on the refrigerator in transparent plastic sheets. This way of approaching personal space and items, dealt with identity, memory, preservation and cycle of life. Somehow, it appears as if there is no emotional connection for the observer of the image, while indeed, its all about caring and being able to feel joy for how the space and items are actually being cared for. This way of approaching objects through a preserving act, creates the empowering control over the space through cover and layering of objects. It creates as well the layer of joy once the time for the uncovering takes place.

Sigmund Freud

In the year of 1938, Sigmund Freud fled Vienna¹⁶, due to the Nazis occupying the city. He had an enormous collection of objects that he cherished, but there was only one object that he simply couldn't leave behind: a Roman copy of a 2nd-century bronze statue of the goddess Athena (female deity of reason, war, and handicraft). This object had for years had the honor of being placed on his desk, the same desk where he wrote his theories on the unconscious. He wanted to be surrounded with visual and inspirational objects, that heavily decorated and dominated his workspace. He had put together, what was to him, a visual illustration of an ancient past unconsciously interred in our collective modern psyche. But the work did not end in bringing his trinkets home—it was there that they sprouted new meanings to help explain our present-day existence. A former patient of Freud,

¹³ The Wrapped Body: Linen, Concealment, and Mummification in Ancient Egypt

¹⁴ The Psychology of Plastic Couch Covers, David DiSalvo

¹⁵ Rebecca Levys Bagged Place', Iain Baxter, Design Boom in / A Shrink-Wrapped House, Daisy Woodward, Another Magazine

¹⁶ How Sigmund Freud's Massive Art Collection Influenced His Theories, Karen Chernick, Artsy

described his office as “a doctor’s office but rather of an archaeologist’s study.” The impact that the objects had on his studies and theories, was how the archeological terms influenced his way of explaining the process of the unconscious. The collection started in 1896, in the same period of time as his father passed away. At the time, he didn’t have the financial ability to entertain or purchase all of his wished objects, therefore he purchased reproductions of Italian sculptures. Once he became more established, he limited himself to only collect original objects from the commercial antiques market in Vienna. Before his death, he managed to obtain around 2,000 physical objects from ancient kingdoms in Egypt, Greece, Rome, India, China, and Etruria.

*“Psychical objects are incomparably more complicated than the excavator’s material ones,” he notes in *Constructions in Analysis* (1937). “The main difference between them lies in the fact that for the archaeologist the reconstruction is the aim and end of his endeavors, while for analysis the construction is only a preliminary labor.”¹⁷*

A Conversation Covering The Relation To Objects

J: The last time I was at your place, you showed me a fabric cloth that was hanging on your wall from the ceiling to the floor. You had used black thread to embroider on it, to tell a story. I'm just thinking if you could create the same symbolism using another base, so instead of the fabric cloth you would use your table as the base and apply a suiting technique to use to tell a story on the table. Would it still have the same meaning?

E: The fabric is related to time, it took me all summer to embroider the symbols I wanted to make. It was a moment for me to sit there by myself before and after work and take the time I needed and wanted to create. It was a bit nostalgic of my home and my family, and it worked as a way for me to think about signs of my family, how I felt being here while they were geographically speaking, somewhere else. I also saw it as a self reflection of who I am as a person, and a way to represent myself within one object using symbols. I really just like it as an object. I think if I would carve symbols in the table, the meaning would change because of its function. It would still be a place where we can have dinner collectively. What I did with the fabric me, giving and telling a bit of myself in that moment to the house. I would definitely leave the table if I would have carved in it once I’d move out because the table would then be, and is, connected to the house while the fabric was personal and about me. It is also much more practical to take with me, storage wise, size wise and weight wise. I have to say extremely practical when I move, and I really like to have a fresh start in places. Therefore I do not bring too much stuff with me but only what's necessary. Even though my room was empty when I moved in, well except for a bed, I didn’t bring any other furniture with me.

J: So you only add the components that you need based on their functions?

E: Yes. A shelf, a desk and a chair. I don’t have a couch. The previous guy had a couch. But I didn’t want to buy it from him. I just don’t like too many objects in my room. If I do have a lot I want it to be extremely organized. Once I moved in I had this bed with a bed frame, and I was in my opinion too big and imposing, so I sold it to Yannick. And now I have a mattress on the floor. Well maybe the first bed wasn’t too big, but it was strangely designed, it stuck out on the end, it was a bit broken and you could see the chipboard coming through. Honestly I just didn’t like it. And the mattress was kind of uncomfortable, so I ordered a new one from IKEA. But once it arrived I realized it was

¹⁷ How Sigmund Freud’s Massive Art Collection Influenced His Theories, Karen Chernick, Artsy

exactly the same that I had, I didn't check properly before ordering. So for a while I had two mattresses on the floor, one next to each other. But then I realized that it was stupid to let them take up so much space. And why should I have a big bed? I also have a cup with the face of Zach Efron that I really like.

J: It feels like the most important to you is not so much the object itself, rather what you can do with them that is.

E: I think so yes, except from very few specific objects like the cup of Zach Efron. The cup was given to me by a friend of mine, and represents a bond and a memory of that time and of her. Of course it has a function as well, but this specific cup is necessary for me to keep the memory.

Conclusion

During this period of six months, it has been a fragile time, not to have a stable place to call home. Especially because of the circumstances I am in, to graduate, see the end of a chapter and a beginning of a new chapter. The possibility and option for me to cover myself within the homes I have sort of passed through, has not been the reality and part of my life.

I am now living in a studio, which is completely furnished. It even gives the feeling of being overly furnished. I have one bed, one sofa, three chairs, two closets, three shelves, two tables, one carpet, fully equipped household utensils. Still I do not feel joy, or obtain the feeling of being at home, because of the fact that I haven't been part of the covering and uncovering process within this space. What I contribute to the space, is again, my vessels of items and belongings. It has been inevitable to ask myself, sitting in this studio:

What is the ideal temporary interior, in relation to the needs one has and to create a feeling of home? How would it be if there was a system to borrow or rent personally chosen interiors temporarily, to create the caring atmosphere, the perfect living situation?

The covering is clear to its definition, being a layer of something that covers something else. The covering has stayed my method - a tool for how I can claim temporary spaces and make me feel at home. It needs to become larger than that. The layer of identity has surfaced and become present, while the starting point of covering as an act has become the method of how to claim and represent the individuality and identity. The care shows itself in different layers of the text, the description of my relation to objects, the Furushiki's slow process of unraveling, showing care and value of objects in the way its being covered, as well as in the layer of transporting the item being wrapped, and in the end it becomes as a tool for care and joy. The mummies express a palpable aura of care through the wrapping and how the corps are treated once being mummified, as well as the idea of adding personal belongings to bring to the life after death. The plastic covered interiors express care and joy through the conservation of memories and the concentrated capturing of the personal belongings state.

Because the different locations I have lived in have been between (shortest) 2 weeks and (longest) 6,5 years, the layer of identity becomes extremely present: having the possibility to uncover oneself within a space, choosing it because you have to - rather than because you want to, moving to spaces where you have to adapt to an already existing interior, having to regulate the amount of elements to bring with each move according to transportation, size and the existing conditions within the space. I want to give people, almost nomads, who travel with one bag of their chosen items, the possibility to have the opportunity to be surrounded by the ideal interior.

How could this become reality?

I want to proceed with the idea of creating the guidelines for the ideal interior and turn it into a system, focus on how it would actually work and to start practicing it myself. It would be a system and a way of approaching living spaces and behaviors, where we would live with less belongings and actually rent or borrow interiors and necessities temporarily, in relation to the time that we are supposed to live in a place. These interiors that we choose specifically would contribute to the momentary joy and care that we need and want within our home sphere. By renting or borrowing interiors or items, there would be a shared temporary ownership by the one receiving, and a permanent ownership by the one sending. For example, I drink coffee every morning. But what makes the coffee joyful and extra pleasing, is through the way I consume it. This feeling, I only get from 'the cup of love', a cup which was my grandmother's that is now at my parents house. I would love to have this cup. How would it be, if I would ask my parents to borrow it, and they would then in exchange cover it for me and then send it to me. I would treat it like my own for this period of time, care for it and make use of it. Once its time for me to leave this studio, I would send it all back. All the layers of covering, caring, transporting, receiving and uncovering would be filled with the system. If my mother is sending me this cup, that we all (in our family) truly care for, it becomes an extremely caring and joyous act. She needs to cover it very well, for it to be safely kept during its move. This borrowing act works well with the example of my own mother, since her and I have an unconditional agreement of trust. She knows I will take great care of whatever she would send me, and she knows I would send it back, without us having to have an official agreement as a contract. This trust and how you can find common ground between strangers in order for me to be able to have them lend out their belongings, is something I want to start looking into more. Not only that, but the relation to objects and the constant covering and uncovering that comes with the movement of individuals who are in constant movement. I am hoping that it can create a new relationship and value to ones belongings, since its not about taking away all of your belongings, but to value and be conscious with the objects that bring you joy. In the way they are appreciated, the less we need.

Another layer that I want to proceed further with the system, is to gain a larger understanding of the origins of items and their transportation path, from beginning to end. I would like to refer to it as their life cycles. It is about sending objects, the traveling of goods, as a paradox of moving. I want to develop a manual of the life of an object, in relation to the aspect of transportation. Using the example of 'the cup of love' in relation to myself, the cup and I have been produced at one point. The cup started from being sand, turned into dust, turned into clay with the addition of water, turned into a mass that is shapeable, that turned into it having the shape of a cup, then resting and drying to be able to be baked, then being baked, then being painted with different layers and colors of glaze, then being baked a second time, then being transported to a market in Italy, then being sold and purchased by my grandmother, then being transported to the south of Sweden, then being used twice a week by my grandmother for 19 years, then being taken and transported by my parents to their home, then being used there for 6 years. This cup, is as old as me. My life cycle is similar to the cup, even though I am not an object. I was at one point made, through a reproduction act a sperm infiltrated an egg, my mother became pregnant, I grew in phases of nine months, I was transported out from my mother into a hospital bed, I grew up and I moved 29 times. Me and the cup have had different life cycles, but we have both been transported numerous times, not only as a finished product but as parts, fragments and ideas.

It is indeed important, if not only so during a year of Covid-19, when the collective of the world is spending most of their days in their domestic area, to feel cared for and joy within that space. The way we travel, the way we work, the way we value objects and relations and our lives, will and are changing, and the interior architecture will have to adapt to these changes. This way of working, considering objects, is as well an indication and position I take in how I see myself proceeding within my professional life as an interior architect.

Footnotes:

1 Cover, Cambridge Dictionary; <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/cover>

2 Cover, The Free Dictionary; <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/cover>

3 Wrap, Cambridge Dictionary; <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/wrap>

4 The Hotel, Room 47, Elizabeth Manchester; <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/calle-the-hotel-room-47-p78300>

5 The Hotel, Room 47, Elizabeth Manchester; <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/calle-the-hotel-room-47-p78300>

6 Student Living, Heyday; <http://www.studentlivingwageningen.nl/general-information-2/room-inventory/>

7 Japanese Furoshiki (Cloth Wrapping) Osaka, Miho Okomato; <https://mai-ko.com/travel/japan/osaka/osaka-travel-tips/japanese-furoshiki-cloth-wrapping-osaka/>

8 Furoshiki and Wrapping Culture in Japan, Sachiko Hamano; <https://nicjapanese.com/column/furoshiki/>

9 Wrapping. A Prayer. A Language, Japan House London Stories; <https://www.japanhouselondon.uk/discover/stories/wrapping/>

10 Mummification, Canadian Museum Of History; <https://www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/civil/egypt/egcr06e.html>

11 The Mummy Chamber, Brooklyn Museum; <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/exhibitions/3215>

12 The Wrapped Body: Linen, Concealment, and Mummification in Ancient Egypt; <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH/H039902/1#/tabOverview>

13 The Wrapped Body: Linen, Concealment, and Mummification in Ancient Egypt; <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH/H039902/1#/tabOverview>

14 The Psychology of Plastic Couch Covers, David DiSalvo; <https://neuronarrative.wordpress.com/2009/01/19/the-psychology-of-plastic-couch-covers/>

15 Rebeccas Bagged Place, Iain Baxter; <https://www.designboom.com/art/rebeccas-bagged-place-is-a-plastic-wrapped-apartment-by-iain-baxter/> / A Shrink-Wrapped House, Daisy Woodward, Another Magazine; <https://www.anothermag.com/art-photography/3248/a-shrink-wrapped-house>

16 How Sigmund Freud's Massive Art Collection Influenced His Theories, Karen Chernick, Artsy; <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-sigmund-freuds-massive-art-collection-influenced-theories>

17 Sigmund Freud, How Sigmund Freud's Massive Art Collection Influenced His Theories, Karen Chernick, Artsy; <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-sigmund-freuds-massive-art-collection-influenced-theories>