

# **In Search of Lost Times**

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## **Project description**

**Abstract** What is left of a remembered sensation, a past experience? These once overwhelming and precious images in our brain, on our shelves. These once enduring and unexplained feelings about a place, a toy, even a magnet. In *Search of Lost Times* explores immersive objects as material extensions of memories. Swinging between narration and materiality, between sensorial interactions and emotional experience, this investigation delves into the features of remembrance, of nostalgia, as well as the development of ourselves within our relationships to belongings. This work elaborates an experimental approach in the metaphors and the representations of senses, of recollection in a series of domestic objects.

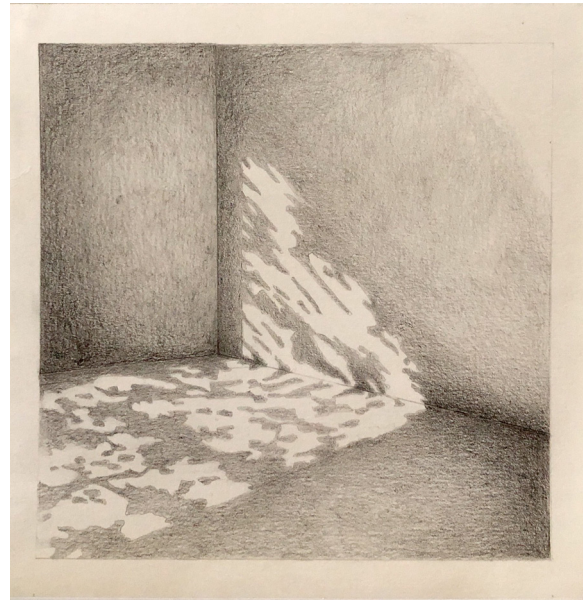
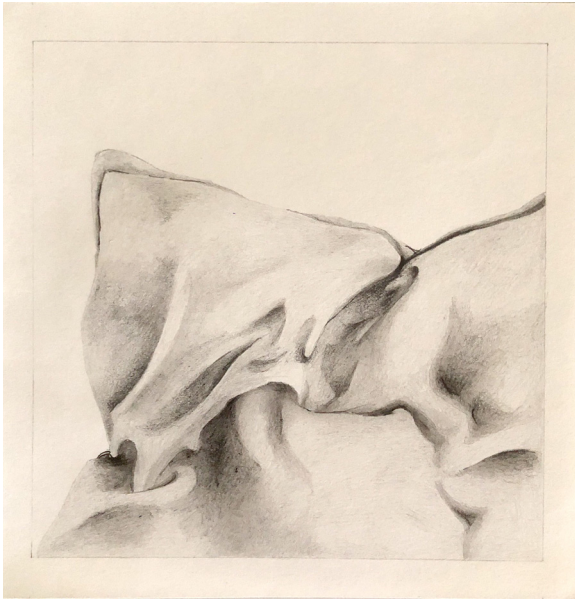
**Intentions and aims** The project aims at sensing the intimacy of a memory, an experience. I intended to generate an interaction between the spaces and the senses, where the objects propose the possibilities of a reminiscence. The sudden feeling of a nameless smell. A picture suggesting a sound. A form initiating a thought. The production addresses a layer of interpretation, a pattern of recognition in a three-dimensional interaction: neither personal, nor common, but relatable in order to create a dialogue. I wanted to grasp this abstract contact, to translate this unexpected moment when immateriality merges reality. It is not dwelling on the past, nor incessantly reliving it, but wandering it in sensorial fractions and that, in the intimacy of our living spaces.



**Objectives** The objective is to generate an experience and a discussion without a conclusion. Therefore, this area of design investigation touches on the perception of objects and their significance, as well as their symbolic content, both narrative and emotional. The similarities between object and souvenir (also remembrance in French) already reveal a connection involving objects and memory. From the war memorials to the photographic albums or the snow globes, this ability to expand the mind into the tangible articulates another reflection upon the form, the function and the value, where a trinket becomes a relic, a space becomes a place. And, these engraved narratives, these intimate expansions not only transform the status of any goods, but also weaken the influences of trend, any principle of consumption. The reflection opposes the current phenomenon of digitalization, as phone screens or artificial intelligence draw the lines of new experiences and other representations within our interconnections to ourselves and our objects.

François Bon once wrote: “No need for an object to be ours to determine its autobiographical place.” The project reveals the idea of a ‘sentimental materialism’, where an object pushes the boundaries of its forms or its function and becomes a container of emotions and experiences. Metaphorical totems for recollection. We, as human beings, share experiences that we cannot describe with words but that we can represent with objects. And, the use of senses not only enhances the contemplative approach, but also gives the necessary keys for an immersion that involves both the space and the mind.



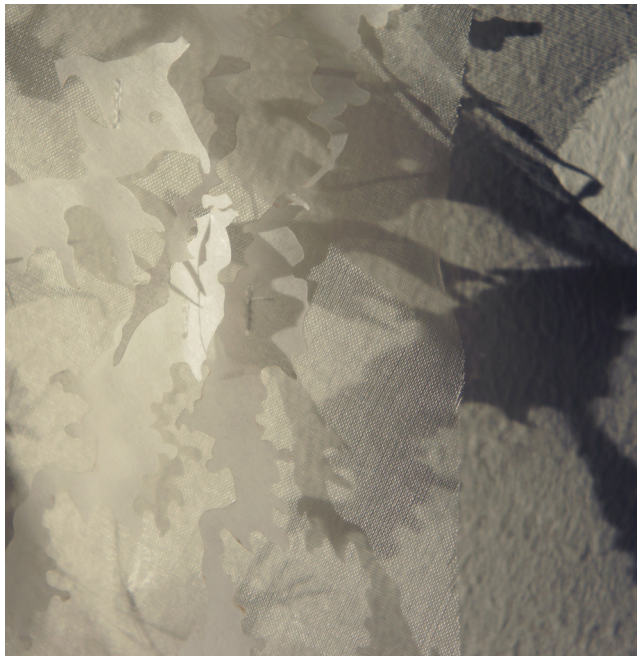
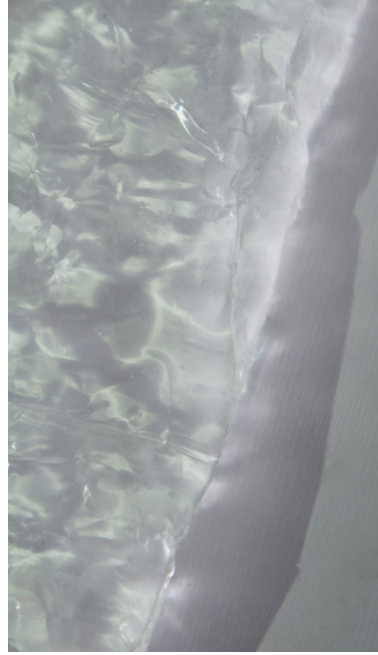
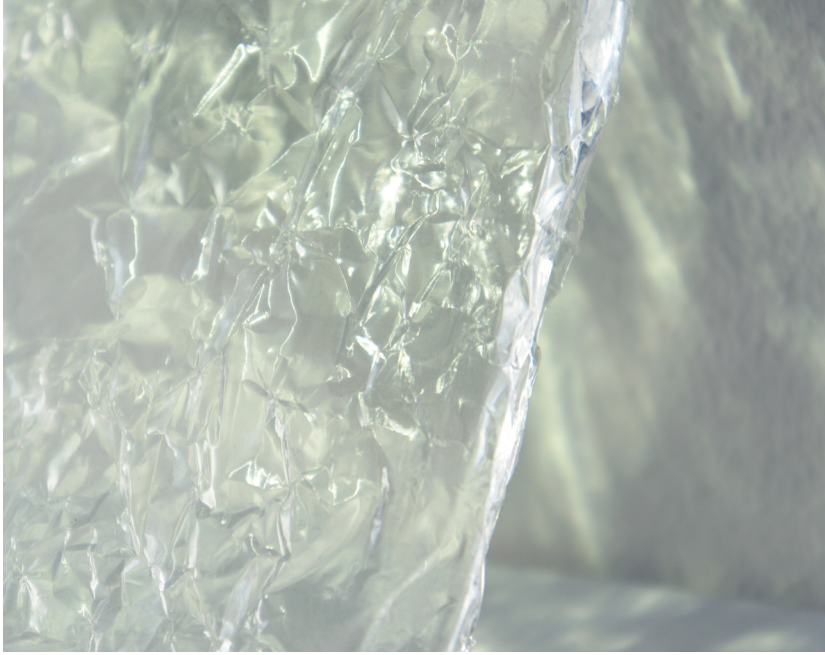


## **Synopsis**

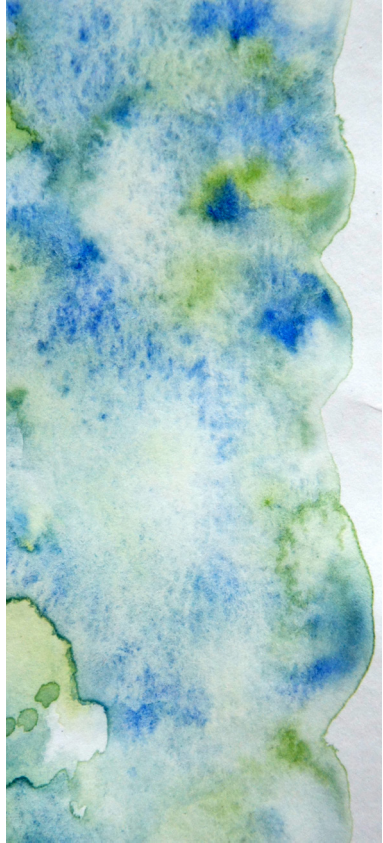
The initial development started with a range of experimentations. I was striving to gather a variety of material experiments in parallel with my progressive reflection on the role of senses in my process. The workshops being fully accessible at that time, I was able to produce the roots of my ideas based on my early discoveries: the qualities of certain materials, their visual and tactile impacts, as well as their interactions with light or shadow. Nature for instance, omnipresent theme in my work, inspired a series of samples that encouraged the use of new materials in my practice such as silicone and epoxy, but also textile and paper.

Alongside, I collected and archived a range of memories involving a connection to objects (defined here as an animated or unanimated subject affecting our senses). Through various mediums such as drawings, texts or pictures, I contemplated an introspection that provided a clearer framework and a better understanding of my investigation. Furthermore, I found a certain resourcefulness in this work of recollection. The emotional settings and the sensory qualities allowed a sharper apprehension of sensitivity in my project. From the Kodachrome that shaped the spectrum of an era to the magnets composing stories on fridges, some elements draw the lines of a collective memory, ordinary but precious, personal but relatable, where elements form the picture of a cultural aesthetic of remembrance.





Everything suddenly became very speculative and uncertain. I was concerned that a lack of material expressions would impoverish my research and my reflection, ironically focused on the interconnected qualities of senses and materials. However, as I redirected my choices and my expectations, I slowly discovered that speculation actually nourishes my work in a different way. The narrative angle indeed offered a different kind of immersion proposing an atmosphere, involving emotion and interpretation. I finally conducted a work that could both merge illustration and the available sources around. A work that I wanted infused with storytelling and nostalgia, between reality and the wanderings of mind.





## Learning outcomes

The project embodies the development of my thesis and my fascination for the symbolic power of our objects, so random and common: objects as storytellers, objects as identities, objects as witnesses... and how they affect us. How they, even mute, somehow, speak to us. From belongings on balconies to essentials in suitcases, my earlier education coincided with several approaches of items giving our life its tempo and our identity its markers. What could there be? This study carried questions on the role beyond the function, and the use beyond the form.

If it is admitted that design enables a better understanding of ourselves, as a group or a society; a better comprehension of what could be easier, fairer, or even more accessible, more human. Here, I chose to reflect, to investigate on the object as a representation of something more than a tool, a service; something other than an answer. Such an approach unlocked the possibilities of another debate around what design could be, and what objects could offer as an interaction: between the sensory apprehension of reality and the narrative wanders of mind. See by other means. Use some other way.

Somehow, the current situation proves that, although very digitalized and over connected, we still attach importance to the contact with our reality: how we experience the details of everyday life, even the elements of randomness. The picnic under a chosen tree. The feeling of a sunburnt skin after a day at the beach. Therefore, this context inspired a broader reflection on the importance of senses and sensitivity within my design process. What could they be? What could they add? And, the work underlines the research on how to translate them, how to address them, and how to make them relevant for my design investigation. This line of thought enhanced the dynamism of the body, as a sensory stimulus and a memory container, within its connections between the object and the space, and its place in my design thinking.

The work of introspection, where archived narratives and collected memories were a resource, reshaped the vision of my own practice. It consequently opened the horizons of a more sensitive core, more focused on how the mind can influence the interpretation of its surroundings. The challenge of aiming for the shared and the personal broadened my definition of the 'user' as well as my intuition about the object as a cultural storyteller and a human attribute. Moreover, this attempt of extracting a feeling or a sensation from situations and images was an opportunity to start an appreciation of the material and its qualities, tactile and visual.

Again, the present situation undoubtedly brought new issues in terms of availability of the resources and challenged my original expectations. Anyhow, it enlarged the prospect of new choices concerning the structures of my design process and the other mediums that I had to integrate in order to communicate my thoughts as best as possible. Despite the weakening of a concrete material practice, the storytelling and the speculation actually completed the layer of sensitivity which remained essential in creating an energy and an intended discussion.