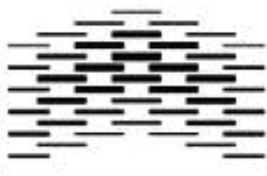# MASKED WORDS

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HØGSKOLEN I OSLO
OG AKERSHUS

Abstract

This project sought to create an interesting form of communication, using writing on surfaces as the main medium to communicate between people and enhancing interaction with designed objects in the environment.

Using the culture inspired by African art and simplicity of Scandinavian design, a mask is designed to stir up more interest in communication in the public domain.
Functionality of the mask is designed to enhance public communication, interaction with the designed object in the environment turning on more curious minds with a critical design.

CNC wood cutting and process is one main tool I used in the project in production a the model. New design approaches such as Gigga mapping and Context of Experience were used extensively to achieve the desired results in the project.

From my research, observation and concept development, a mask with a surfaces for people to write is designed.

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Preface

Sitting at the city centre enjoying some sunshine since summer is it not here to last, I cast my eyes across the city taking note of the activities around me. People bloomed with fashion, colourful clothing and accessories, beautiful classic open top old cars driving by, I see how people connect with each other and how others interact with objects in the environment.

I would wish to say hi to everyone, but in a special way. In a way I would not be identified, in a funny way and a way which would not breach the law of the community. I very much like to be in a conversation with someone, someone anonymous who would reply my message or be in dialogue with me.

I pick a marker to write on a surface. I write an open message, or pose a question just to draw the attention of someone who would reply. Checking up on my message secretly and pretending not to have any connection to the written message, I waiting anxiously for a reply.

I finally get a reply. I am amazed and happy to read the message but anxious to know who is in dialogue with me. Who could this be, male or female, young or old? It is a mystery but one I like.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the background information about the project (context & perspective), rationale, research question, propositions, theoretical or policy relevance of the study and the arrangement of the rest of the text in the write-up.

Social background to the study.

An entire culture can be recognised on the basis of the design of its product environment, because that environment embodies human conceptions and values(Vihma, 2010, p. 11).

Figure 1   Kids playing, writing on the pavement.

We may be surrounded with so many untouchable design objects around us, which seems far but are so close to us. It is like visiting a museum, you see nice and interesting things but cannot touch. Childhood comes with a world of less restriction and more freedom. Children are not held responsible for most of their actions. Their actions are easily defended by society to being the lack or need for something by the child. In extreme case others are held responsible for a child's action. Unlike Childhood, adulthood comes with a lot of limitation clothed in a word 'maturity'. It is often said that adults even forget to play

which could be a good source of health to them both physically and mentally. It was fun to write on desks we used in school as kids. To mark them as a form of identification and design them too with some drawings traced from comic books. It was a way to keep awake during a boring lecture in school, when the mind is lingering around thinking of other interesting things that had no connecting to what was been thought, the hand picks a pen and one scribbles something on the desk. The most passionate thing was to identify your desk, after all these years with all the inscription on it when you visit your childhood school. During such a moment, forgotten thoughts and moments are revisited which would most often leave you with a deep breath and a smile. Society and age brings a lot of restriction to adults since some instincts are expected to change as we grow. But how free can design make the world, reducing limitation and enhancing more acceptability in a good way?

Figure 2   A tunnel showing writing on the wall

The urban environment provides us with so much space and the use of space can provide comfort, protection and security. Spaces maybe seen as tunnels, elevators, toilets, cafe shops and other public spaces. Everyone may in a point in time, want some space, space to have some peace, space for a time to think and to reflect over decisions. Sometimes the space is to restore hurt, pain, guilt or to just have a chat with ourselves. Space brings some form of privacy which intends makes us feel comfortable and we may act as we really wish to, being our real selves. People may sing to themselves, dance or even write on a wall when they get a private space.

As we use spaces like the tunnels each day, we may also spare a short time in our travel to reflect over something. Sometimes our minds wander around without our awareness. We suddenly recognize the space, privacy and even become more sensitive to the environment, taking a good notice of our surroundings. We may read something written on the wall by people, have an urge to express our thoughts. In doing so, some people may write on a surface, make a scratch or a mark on a wall.

It can be fun making marks or writing on surfaces but it also important to ensure we protect the environment and keep to the laws of the society. How do we then satisfy our egos and at the same time keep to the law and protection of the environment? It maybe hard to get an answer, can this be an opportunity to design a product? Maybe.

Design to bridge between different cultures
Professional relevance ,background to study

Design language defers from cultures and people in different parts of the world. Design may be influenced by culture, climates and even the history of people. Conception of design demonstrates a holistic view, which cannot leave out symbolic and historical issues of forms(Vihma, 2010, p. 12).

Some design items on the other hand have been globally accepted losing its core identity, finding a place in every culture. This makes it hard to tell origination of some design objects. Also production lines located in different part of the world offering cheaper labour cost may influence the originality of some design and the use of material. Nevertheless, design can be a good tool to bridge between different cultures and foster unity. A product longevity, can be extended by introducing a product in a different location. It is interesting finding the meaning or significance of products in the society. Surprisingly, a product may be interpreted differently or associated with different uses.

Many Europeans maybe interested in carvings and symbolic designs from Africa, Asia and other parts of the world. These art pieces may have their own meaning or symbolism but as it changes hands a new meaning may be given to it.

Using design to solve problems is a paramount challenge for every designer now. Design has moved from being more about beauty to more practicality these recent times. Associating product design with other disciplines has given more importance to the need of product designers and in a way educating the public. Fields like psychology is being extensively exploited in product design, leading to the production of more desirable product finding attachments between consumers and products. A practical example is designing products with emotional attachments, which may be a good way in promoting sustainability, thus reducing the rate at which products are replaced.

Sustainability is being preached more in this era, focusing on sustainable materials, sustainable processes and sustainable products.

The use of new production methods and processes makes possible for the designers to explore with forms and materials. Transferring 3 dimensional models, electronically generated designs into actual objects.

Rationale
A surface to write on in a public space

This project was intended to attend to the present behaviour in the society. It is to study reasons why people may write on a surface in a public place and also to use design as a tool to present something un-acceptable in a different way to have a place in the society. I intend to research and propose solutions to writhing on walls, making use of symbolic and cultural influence in design, using computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacturing in the production of a model, identify product possibilities based on the meanings and socio-cultural contexts. At the end, designing a surface to write on in a public or private space; and writing a report documenting the process.

Research question

How can writing on public surfaces be designed, in accordance to culture, functionality and enhancing a good communication between people and the environment?.

Propositions

The study has the following propositions:
• Using cultural identity as a source of inspiration to the design and bridging between different cultures.
• Writing on surfaces can be designed to be accepted in the society, to harmonise with environment and protect it.

Theory or policy relevance of the study

First, this study has value to bring some interaction between people and design objects in the environment. Using design to represent an activity in a good and accepted way, satisfying the needs of people and protecting the environment.
This study explores the used of

Chapter 2

Public writing in the Urban society

Background

Usage of the urban space is of relevance to my research since it forms part of the domain where my product can play a role. It give as insight to what creative forms are already being exploited in the environment and how they are presented. Also giving knowledge why people may write on surfaces, it forms part of the inspiration for my project.

Graffiti is writing or drawings that have been scribbled, scratched, or sprayed illicitly on a wall or other surface in a public place.

Figure 3   Graffiti on the wall, Oslo

Writing, is a form of communication, which maybe dated back to the prehistoric man, where marks were made on cave walls and stones. Writings came in form of symbols, drawn pictures and these have been of great help to study and knowing the thoughts of the people who lived during that time. 'Cave art' is a term used to describe any kind of human made figures on walls, ceiling or floor of a cave or rock shelter (Bahn 2007). Cave art were made in a private way like writing in a dairy as we would do today. A great deal of it is undeniably private, in small niches or chambers accessible only through a journey or after negotiating difficult physical obstacles necessitating climbs, crawls or tight squeezes (Bahn 2007). This gives a picture of the environment within which these artworks were made. It was something special and made in a private way as compared today, writings are made on walls publicly but in secrecy. We neither see when they are written or who writes them. It feels like people wait to catch that private moment when no one is around or looking, to leave a comment on a surface. This may explain why toilets and urinals seem to have a lot on inscriptions on the walls. Those are private places and look like a perfect

environment to catch a moment with one's self away from the world. Corners, under bridges, quiet spots around are serene and thoughts easily flow through the mind. So many people may have information they want to share, some may be questions that needs answers and most likely maybe emotional problems. In some societies where there are voices but no one can speak due to dictatorial rule and fear, walls and surfaces do the talking. People leave comments and statements they cannot voice out publicly on walls.

Urban street art is often a comment on something happening in society. It can refer to something mentioned in the media, current events, or it could be the artist personal note on this(Aamundsen, 2012, p. 12).

Figure 4   Writing on the plant
http://www.edborg.com/Scenes/still-life/Thai-Writing-On-Plant-Leave.jpg

It is interesting how writings made on the plants have grown to be part of it. The writings grow as the plants do, making it part of nature. The words may die with the plants but it being permanent on the plant and enlarging as the plant grows big bring a sense to life to the word inscribed. People may write on beach sand, frozen glasses, dirty car windscreens to create fun. This is an easy way to play with our creative instincts. Writing on walls in the urban environment may be seen as a nuisance or a creative piece of art in form of graffiti and other pictorial painting. This has a direct effect on the environment since a relationship is generated between walls, social relationships and the public domain. It is a direct contact with the materials in the environment and people.

In our environment we can see people continue to express their thoughts through different mediums. With more connectivity through the internet, through sites like facebook and twitter, a lot of people share their thoughts and leave comments for others to read. Facebook network practically uses the term wall as a page where people leave comments. With the large amount of users, it shows that people want to stay connected and keep communicating as the saying goes 'no one is an island'.

People write on surfaces in different environment and places. Toilet graffiti is a unique window into relationship between gender, language and social context (Green 2003). As seen in many pub toilets, people write on the walls, some leaving their phone numbers soliciting for lovers and people to get connected to. It is always interesting to read what people write in such places, it sets the mood for communication both verbal and written.

Preserving the environment, the ecology and keeping its aesthetic beauty is our responsibility. This promotes and preserves our culture even more. People want to be famous, some people want to be remembered even though the world does not know them, other people want their voices to be heard and their thoughts be read. Most people want to leave a mark, to indicate they were at place or they also exist.

In the Ghanaian society it is fun to read posters and some sign posts around. Most people look out for misspelled words, hilarious comment, take pictures and share with friends. Interestingly, public transports such as mini buses and some taxis paste stickers (figure 5) on the vehicles with inscriptions, quotations, wise says and these can be fun reading.

Figure 5   Words written on a taxi, Ghana
http://www.neatephotos.com/assets/Uploads/best-of-Ghana-2010-Greg-Neate-20.jpg

Figure 6.   Table designed by Jason Miller called 'I Was Here Table'

The table shows signs of usage.
It references everyday objects that are given new meaning and visual context by their surroundings. Jason Miller was inspired by Inscribed and embellished parked benches, bars and table tops from New York City and the graffiti for the design (Slack 2006).

Figure 7.   Seating object by Arild Berg

This object shows how the designer has incorporated words or writing into the seating object. Forming part of the aesthetic quality of the object, it also communicates to the users and public in general.

Objects with meaning

Objects can be appreciated more when users can connect to the objects, identifying a meaning behind the design. Interest maybe drawn more into design object when users are aware and find some meaning to the object. For this reason, I explore the use of objects and shapes that carry meaning to create some form of attachment to the users. The interest here is how different societies perceive an object, identifying different elements to associate with.

Semiotics is the study of meaning formation, significance and communication(Vihma, 2010, p. 11) Every designed object carries a meaning, the meaning maybe related to it's form, that is the appearance and the meaning maybe in its usage. Appreciating, the colour, form and all the aesthetics of a product leaves a question about why? It can be why the choice of colour, form or the cultural influence of the design. This maybe due to ergonomics, which is the scientific discipline concerned with the understanding of interactions among humans and other elements of a system.

Objects maybe designed to look like something else but have the purpose or use of another thing. As described in Susann Vihma's book "Design Semiotics in Use", where different writers describe the lemon squeezer "Juicy Salif" designed by Starck and produced by Alessi (figure 8).

Figure 8   Juicy Salif

 "[it] clearly does squeeze lemons, however badly some people may think it achieves this. It does also start conversations [...]" Lloyd-Snelders 2003, 246.

"[it] presents itself as a kitchen utensil that is convenient to use. The form of its main body possesses a downward directionality opposed in its spidery legs, which spell out its method of use." Kim-Boradkar

2002.

"I think this is ugly, it looks like an extraterrestial spaceship" a usability-test user Russo-DeMoraes 2003, 147.

It is interesting to read the different opinions of writes. I may seem unclear if they are even writing about the same object but yes, they are. It is like looking at an object from different perspective. Everyone see something slightly different, they may find there own interpretation of the design or form. This may be influenced by culture, tradition and even occupations. A designed object having a meaning and positive influence in different societies should be one of the primary aim of every designer. Describing the meaning of an object and what it signifies can help evaluate the importance or role the design object plays in the society.

Functionality and aesthetics comes hand in hand. An object needs to function properly but also appeal to the user. Beauty may be one factor that draws people to an object and it's functionality can also influence the desire of the consumer to want that object.

An object exists, as any other actor, only as long as it takes part in action: it does something and it is made to do something(Vihma, 2010, p. 48).We live in societies with limited space. Apartment are designed to make the very best use of space, to be creative with space is to have functional object that do not only serve aesthetic purposes but have a function or use. Additionally, Groys (1992) highlights the benefits of artistic and cultural innovation. According to him, a token of artistic innovation is the ''cultural relevance'', the ''valuable difference'' that differentiates the new from the merely different(Vihma, 2010, p. 86). Some craft works are learnt through apprenticeship or handed over from older generations.

Figure 9   An Ashante stool from Ghana

As people continue to practise the craft, there is a need for its improvement to meet the need of the current societies. Meanings attached to the product may change. An example, can be seen through stools (figure 9) produced in Ghana, West Africa.

Stool were produced for different uses. Some designs on stool classified some as made purposely for males and others for females. A chief's stool has a different and unique design to make it different from other stools and this still holds till today. In modern times, stool designs may emphasis some symbolic meanings and more aesthetic and its functionality qualities.

The Symbolism of the Mask

Figure 10   Costume mask

The mask is used as a symbol in this project, bring attention to the design and making it more critical. Masks often make strong visual impression.
People of many cultures have made masks for different purposes which blends with their culture. Masks were made in gold, stone, wood, copper, bronze, tin, clay, feathers and ivory.

Masks are decorated with colours, patterns and textures. This adds the aesthetic qualities to the mask and embracing the beauty of culture. You can appreciate the appearance of a mask even if you know nothing about its meaning. But if you can learn how and why the mask was used, you can increase your appreciation of it and understand the cultural traditions of the people that made it (Finley 1999).

Behind the mask could be anybody. A hidden identity, a hidden face. Some form of secrecy, a world of mystery and a knowledge of existence. Who could this be? The only thing or clue reviled is a character. This is shown by form design, art and form.

The mask, sometimes used in hiding people's identity and also in literature to unmask is the make know or revile. Masks may come in many forms but which ever form it takes adds some significance to the design as well as the purpose of the mask. In some African tribes like the Masia and Mbetu tribe where beautification and symbolism is use strongly as part of their traditions, it seen as that they express their beliefs and strong culture through body arts and other artifacts.Tribe-Mursi.jpg
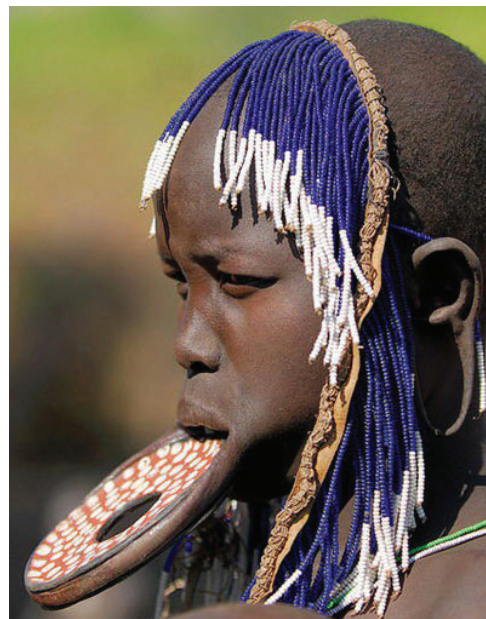
Figure 11   An African mask

Figure 12   Body art

The meaning behind African mask in relation to culture and design

Many mask-making African societies did not have a written language. Masks and performances were one way for them to pass on their heritage(Finley 1999). The mask was also used as an essential form of communication, alone side dancing, drumming and verbal communication.

Beauty lies in the hands of the beholder. The human head and shape are altered in some tribes to express beauty. As seen in fg. the lips and ear of the young girl are altere, fitting a plate in her lips. Also the use of colour and other materials in beautification even makes the expressions more stronger (figure 12).

You can appreciate the appearance of a mask even if you know nothing about its meaning. But if you can learn how and why the mask was used, you can increase your appreciation of it and understand the cultural traditions of the people that made it (Finley 1999).

The use of the mask have evolved over the years in most traditional societies in the Ghanaian culture and other African societies. Primarily, used for traditional and cultural purpose, the mask now is admired for it's aesthetics, the beauty enhanced with the use of different materials, textures and colours. A boom in

The sales of masks due to a good market and good income generated form sales in non-African countries, has influenced it use making it primarily for decoration.

Since symbols are based on cultural and social conventions, knowledge of cultural norms and context is crucial for understanding the message and meaning of a product in a way it was intended (Vihma, 2010, p. 88).

Figure 13 Ceremonial mask dance

http://images.nationalgeographic.com/wpf/media-live/photos/000/255/cache/png-karim-tribe-intiation-dance2_25525_600x450.jpg

The mask was traditionally used in Africa in the majority of ceremonies: fertility or initiation rites, religious or funeral celebrations, crop harvesting, and also in theatrical or comic performances that were often linked to the deepest ethnic myths. These complex ceremonial events expressed important social, religious, and moral values for the whole community(Glasgow and Rice 2007). (Figure 13)

Most viewers can understand only a fraction of the meaning a mask has within the culture of a particular society.   Given the mask additional enhancement and putting it in particular environment gives the mask it's true meaning

2.3.1 Function of the mask.

The purpose of a mask is not only to conceal the identity of the wearer. The mask actually creates a new identity - one from the spirit world. Many Africans use masks in private initiations, in the rituals of secret societies, and in coming-of-age ceremonies(Finley 1999).

It is about the identity created, who is behind the mask? Not showing your face. With the mask is also the ability to take the look of something totally different in character and looks.

People use mask in ceremonies such as funerals, harvest celebrations, acts of thanksgiving, and in other rituals. And some societies also use masks to ensure fertility and abundance of crops and animals(Finley 1999).

The power in mask. A lion may be dead but if you find a lion's skin or teeth, it still remind's you of it's

character. Masks are perceived to have power, taken the characteristics and resemblance of creature, object or image they assume.

Masks are considered vessels of spiritual power, but they can also be used to teach values. In the masked dance, for example, lessons and morals might be taught. Many mask making African societies did not have a written language. Masks and performances were one way for them to pass on their heritage(Finley 1999).

2.3.2 Production of the mask.

Figure 14   An adze

Carving and making of stools was learnt through apprenticeship. Wood is the most material used in making African mask. Now, for more aesthetics other materials such beads, metal and leather have also been integrated with the mask.

The wood for making the mask come from the local forest and is carved with an adze (figure 14), a cutting tool that has a thin, arched blade set at a right angle to the handle. The adze used mainly for shaping wood is the carver's chief tool. Fine detail is put in later with a knife.

Besides wood, mask makers also use Ivory , metals, and beads(Finley 1999).

According to Petter Sarpong in his book titled 'The Sacred Stools Of The Akan' he wrote that there is a traditional choice in the species of wood for carving. Only few trees are considered proper for it. It can also be said that the choice of wood is made on practical grounds since whatever is carved is expected to last for a long time and should also be light enough to be carried about. But more important in the choice is the religious reason. Wood is chosen because it is believed to carry or possess a supernatural character (spirit) of its own(Sarpong 1971).

Designs and material usage are influenced by the environment, availability and abundance of material. However most African masks are made of wood because trees are plentiful, and carvers believe the tree has a spiritual soul and its wood is the most natural home for the spirit in the mask (Artfactory.com, 2005)
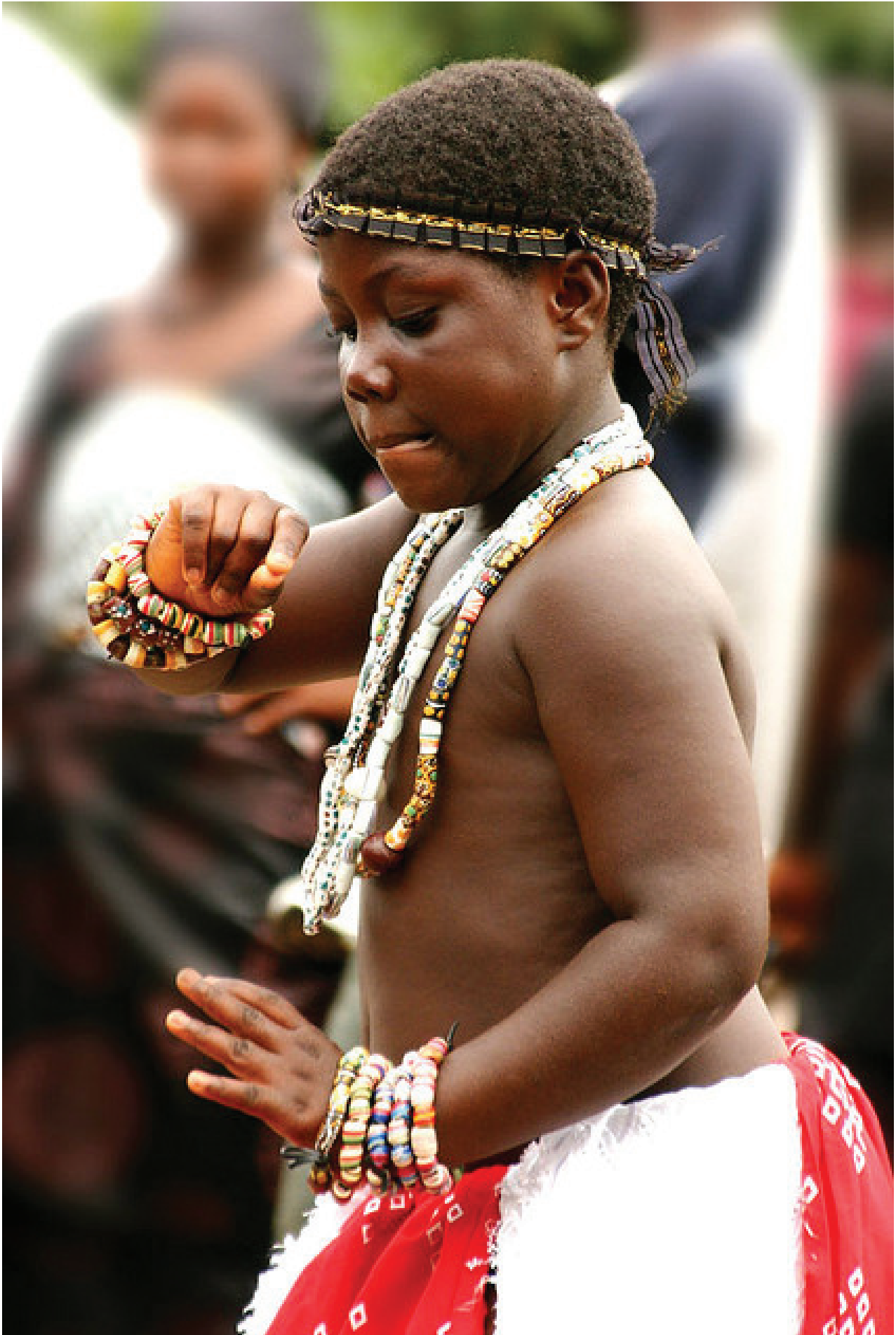
Figure 15   Cultural dance

Modern Production.

Introducing CNC machining in the craft industry is a step in a right direction. Enhancing my knowledge in this production process is one of the main aim in my studies. Converting 3 dimensional design into a physical object through computer programs and machining to me is an advance production process. CNC stands for "Computer Numerated Control." A CNC machine directs a cutting tool, which may range from a small scalpel to a woodcutting blade or router, based on directions that the operator has entered into a computer that controls the movement of the head holding the cutter. This leads to results that are far faster and more accurate than cutting by hand or on manually controlled power tool CNC machining encompasses a range of processes and operations including milling, routing, lathe turning, drilling(boring), bevelling, reaming, engraving and cutting out. It is used in many industries for shaping metal, plastic, wood, stone composite and other materials (Thompson, 2007, p. 182).

Figure 16   CNC machine

A CNC wood router can be used to manufacture large numbers of furniture parts in a very short period of time. Producing detailed carve piece can be easily done with the CNC machining, making it very less time consuming process. Advisably, this process must be used cost effectively and materials taken very considerable though to get the best out of the process economic wise and in a sustainable way.

Figure 17   Cutters for the CNC

Figure 17, shows different ypes of cutters for the CNC machine. They come in different sizes and different shapes for the teeths to achieve desired effects.

Some Cnc machines automatically change the tools whiles working, picking the right tool to accomplish the job at each stage, while others have to be manually change. This structured in the programming of how the machine it to exicuit any job.
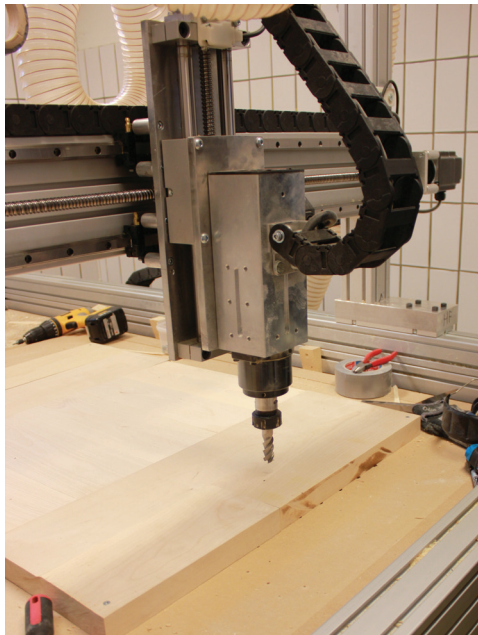

Figure 18 CNC router

Figure 18, shows the CNC router at work, as it spinnes and cut of unwanted part. The CNC machine can be programmed on how fast or slow ti should work and also how fine the finish show be. As suggested earlier, for sustainable processes and economic factors, complicated part of designs can be produced with this process while others done manually. Finishing can be done with other processes too.

Figure 19, is a picture showing the settings used to program the CNC machine. The CNC machine uses programs like "master cam" to program the cutting path for the machine. The program is design to convert the 3d model into a coding system called "G-code" which programs the machine. The G-code provides the co-ordinates for the machining path, using x,y and z co-ordinates.
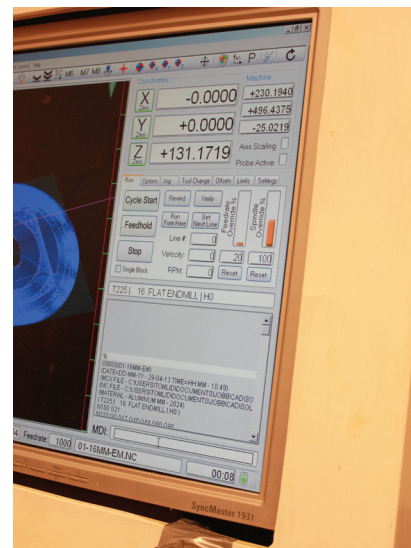

Figure 19   Program for CNC

Critical Design making writing a surface fun and sensual

Critical Design uses speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions, preconceptions and givens about the role products play in everyday life. It is more of an attitude than anything else, a position rather than a method (DunneandRaby).

Writing on a face may sound radical but information written on a face may possess a stronger language and more emphasizes. Words like facewall, facebook are been use literally in our daily language. Most of us may not visualize the words in reality as in a "face on a wall" or "a book made of faces". I believe thinking of it in this way carries more emphases. Naming it Critical Design is simply a useful way of making this activity more visible and subject to discussion and debate (DunneandRaby2005).

Drawing attention to situations in the society, by presenting things or design in a different way also enhances the creative process in design. It is like asking a question, "why can't this be done in this way or look in this way" This may breach some custom practices, cultures or way of thinking but maybe it also opens a new way to presenting an idea or an approach to solve a problem or bring a school of thought into the life lime.

Figure 19   EVIDENCE DOLLS, 2005

Sustainability with the environment and culture

My project focuses on connecting people together which enhances sustainabity in the environment attending to the needs of people such as a sense of belonging, bringing people together. ''To connect'' means to link, unite, or establish communication between (Thorpe, 2007). Engaging and interacting with others does not only makes us happy but also make us feel secure and accepted.

Sustainability maybe defined as, theories and practices for design that cultivates environment and social conditions that will support human well-being indefinitely(Thorpe, 2007).
Cultural sustainability, given function, aesthetic and symbolic roles, to object. History can be well told with evidence of artifact and object used in the past, so does culture can be protect when the heritage keeps on. Usage of local materials and symbolic designs keeps the society alive. Societies can be identified by their clothing (textile designs), craftworks and other different cultures. In Norway, ceremonial clothings with symbolic meaning worn by people on the constitution day is a good example of such. The symbolic dimension of human systems allows us to detach from local environments because we can think and communicate with abstract ideas(Thorpe, 2007).

Designing to keep the society lively and creating fun in interaction is another aim forthis project.
In emotional terms, designers seek to provide pleasure both in sensual form such as visual beauty and in intellectual form such as wit or charm(Thorpe, 2007).

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This project had foundation in three research methods or approaches namely, the case study research method, observation, interview and participatory design approaches.

The investigator used the representative or typical single case study (Robert K. Yin, 2009).

Strengths of research approaches used.

Interviewing people and having them participate by using the prototype gave a vivid usage and experience with users.

Data collection procedures

I interviewed people who were into public writing, graffiti and public art.

Pictures were taken of tested mock-up and what users wrote on the surface.

Research tasks.

I visited Hausmania in Olso to take pictures and talk to people who maybe into graffiti.

Other pictures were taken both in Oslo and Lillestrøm city on pubic writing and art.

Interviews were made with people who had different cultural backgrounds to assess the way public writing was present in different communities. The aim was to find why people write and its effect on the society.

Mock-up was made and tested in the elevator at the product design department of the University of Oslo and Akershus, lillestrøm.

A prototype was sent to the New Life Lillestrøm church and tested with the kids.

Chapter 4

Public Writing, Research

Figure 21   Pictures taken around the city showing how people write on surfaces

Figure 22, show pictures taken from Hausmania. It show how people have expressed themselves on the surfaces, by way of writing or drawing.

Figure 22 Hausmania

Figure 23   Behind Hausmania, Oslo

Thoughts and reflections about writing on walls

Interview with Mr. X

To gain much information about public art and writing on walls, an interview was made with Mr X, who gave enough information and that helped greatly with the research. This interview was made to help in the understanding and reasons why people may write on public walls focusing the lifestyle of Mr. X.

Mr. X is about 20 years old or so, and has been actively writing on walls for some years. Mr. X doesn't do big pieces of graffiti a lot, but he writes his signature mostly with big markers and sometimes with spray paint. His pockets are always filled with markers, so he can write anytime he wants. This is his thoughts and reflections about doing so.

-It started a few years ago with great anger. I was angry all the time, I wanted to vandalize and destroy, and started throwing paint on trains, setting things on fire and writing my signature everywhere I could. I thought the world was bad and I wanted to get back at it. It's all about being seen and heard, and people still don't know who you are. And of course, it's a cruel thing if you want it to be. You decide. I'm mostly on my own, that's the way I like it.

The young man in front of me has sparkling eyes talking about it, and shows me that he has a great passion; it lies in his blood this creative outlaw way of doing things. He also loves my challenge; putting words on why he does it.

-I like the fact that everyone can see your signature, your name is out there and you are someone you're not, you are your pseudonym, your signature, your tag. But for me is not really about living out someone I am not in real life, my tag and doing this is really me, I put my soul in it without any filter. What I do is who I am.

I think if you met him on the street, you would probably wonder if he is into something like graffiti, but he doesn't look scary or act outrageous in any way. He seems very well reflected and likes to talk about the feeling in the art.

-When I write on surfaces, I feel a certain ownership of the world around me, I sort of claim a piece of it, I take back some of the city, if you know what I mean. I look at any wall or surface as a clean canvas, it's an urge, it's a basic instinct, and it's there for me to write on it.

I can see his mind work; I can see how he tries to put words on this. As he says to me; "I often reach out for a word, and get a feeling. Then I try to use even more words to describe the feeling I got."

-When it comes to writing on walls, I like the fact that you can see history on those walls. You can see development in the society, how it was back in time. Just like me, I have in a way been growing up in public, people who are into writing, can see my development out there, and when I sometimes see my older work, I laugh and think that I've come far since then. It's fun. I can backtrack myself.

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I ask him what he means by development and wonder if he could talk a little bit about "the feeling".

-I look at it this way; we do exactly as the cavemen did. When a caveman painted on a rock wall, he would lay his soul in it. He would personally express just how scary he thought the animal he killed was, he would probably lay more details in the horns, maybe draw them much bigger than they were just to describe what he felt during the hunt. All cave paintings would be different, because the hunters felt different about the animals. That's the way I write. I can, by bigger motions write bigger and smoother lines, or with smaller markers write smaller letters that aren't that expressive. My development is that I've learned more ways to express myself; I've learned that different types of letters can express different types of moods. I mean that, this is also a development you can see in the society, because the writers have been growing up in public like me, they have expressed themselves in different ways during time because of personal experiences. The society affects them in good and bad ways, they write and put their feelings out there, and therefore you can see how the society has developed.

We talk a little bit about the phenomenon that a wall can be "untouched" for weeks, and suddenly, with the first signature, a world of graffiti explodes and blooms.

-If I "start" a wall it would be so cool! If I see a big wall with just one signature or tag on it, it's like "He's done it, then I have to". It's just a giddy joy of creation. Something is left after me.

We talk about different types of street art and graffiti. Mr. X is into writing with markers mostly, but also does graffiti with spray and sometimes stickers. We talk about signature tags, and what he thinks is the difference between all these ways of writing; tags, stickers, stencils, doodling on toilet walls and other public walls etc.

-Tags on walls with markers are for me not so much about what I write except my signature and some-times other words or sentences. I mostly write the same thing; my signature, but I have developed it through the years and now I'm quite satisfied with it. When I do my tag, it's all about the placement of it. I want people to see it. When I do stickers once in a while, it's more about getting my message out to the public, the placement is not so important, I can have like 100 stickers in my pocket and just go crazy and put them up wherever I walk when no one sees me. Stickers are also a bit more thought through, I do a lot of work in front, I either draw them myself and cut them out or make them on my computer and print them out.

And then we discuss the interesting phenomenon "toilet wall doodling".

-This is a thing on its own. Of course I write my tag on a wall, but in this case I really like to challenge both myself in coming up with great quotes, and others to see if they understand and can relate to it. Toilet wall doodling is all about your mood in the moment and the message. I have an archive with quotes I can write on walls, but I also come up with my own. I can also twist and turn song lyrics, just because I heard a song and was in a certain mood and later on, wanted to share that with others. A lot of the things written on toilet walls might not mean anything at all to you, but suddenly you see a quote that you can relate to, because you have experienced just that. Toilet wall doodling has a lot of feelings in it, in fact it's mostly about feelings. I write something and reach out to you, you read it and if you can relate, we share the same mood and feeling. It's the reader's life experience that decides everything, because the message can be ambiguous or vague. I want to reach out and touch as many as I can when I write in this way, and if someone writes back, it would be awesome. I really hope that what I write can affect someone, and if someone writes back, I get the confirmation it did. Twice I've seen my own quotes on other walls, and I was proud, because I didn't put them there!

He gives a big smile. I can't do anything but admire this urge to create. I've experienced on my own how doodling on a toilet wall can affect your life and make you decide something that will make your life better. It's just fantastic, I think it shows and reflects that people in the city, people in general, do have feelings, do have big hearts and are deep down inside very conscious about feelings and relations to other people.

-I think writing on walls, in any form, is an art. I don't look at it as art, but an art. It's not art in general, but it's a part of it. It's like when you write and are good at it, you master a trade. Writing on walls is a profession.

As an end to this interview, I want him to reflect on the future of graffiti and writing.
-Graffiti and writing can never be legal; I really hope the government doesn't make it legal, because they would kill its spirit. Graffiti is born outlaw and always will be. However, it can be regulated with more legal walls. A lot of writers and artists would use legal walls, but you could never control those who likes to bomb trains with paints and other stuff. I would do legal walls, but I also like the adrenalin and the illegal part, so I won't stop doing it. It's just how it is. Toilet wall doodling is kind of regulated already, since it mostly appears on toilet walls anyway. An idea I have is that you could have big public boards out in the open, like a park or in a street, where people can write what they want. Then you would see everyday creativity that reflects human beings not only inside a toilet booth, but where people actually are. I would love it.

Interview with Mr X, was really informative an interesting giving me more ideas and showing me the real life of a graffiti artist.

Figure 24   Entrance of Color Rebels shop in Lillestrøm

As the stool and other artefacts portray the culture and design of some African countries, so does the art, designs made during the Viking times, which may also show some culture and root of Norwegian design.

It is evident the good craftsmanship in wood work and designs inspired by dragons and floral designs too. These carries some part of the cultural identification.

The use of wood such as pine, birch and oak is evident of the local material found in the geographic location as material like wood may be of a different type in another location.

Figure 25   figures taken from the Viking Muesum

Figure 26   Høsgskolen i Oslo og Akershus

Designed on the walls of "Høsgskolen i Oslo og Akershus" (figure 26) are inscriptions, showing scenes or sketches of different activities. They may be on the wall for aesthetic qualities but importantly they are conveying messages and ideas. They may speak to the society about the activities that go on in the school or the courses undertaken in the school.

Figure 27   Written on the street in Oslo

Presented in a very simple way, are inscriptions seen in the main street of Oslo. The inscription (figure 27) looks natural and interesting. This demonstrates how public writing can be presented in a community or environment, The presentation of the writing that is, the inscription on the ground is that which even turns on the curious mind. The mind thinks of when the writing was made, who made it and why it was made. But presented in a creative and critical way, it is hard to pass by the first time seeing it without trying to read the message it is conveying.

Writing and communication are presenting in many forms in the society but most often in one way when done digitally, people read but cannot add to the what they read physical on like electronically, where comments can be left.

Presenting communication in a from of physically writing on a surface and engaging in dialogue brings more reality to this form of communication. Visually reading a handwriting, can stir up curiosity, anxiety and this can be fun.

Some halls ways may look a quiet as this in apartments, communication maybe difficult with neighbours, putting something interacting and fun making the setting more lively might stir people up, putting away loneliness and boredom. This may lead to people connecting more and knowing each other better, for both security and companionship purposes.

Figure 28   Hall way in a student house

Identification of problem

Even thought there might be some few legal walls to exhibit graffiti art, is no legal surface in the public domain to write on. Thus, people literally turn to write on walls and other surface.

Some people are creative and are looking out for avenues to show their creativity, in doing so they might express their skills in an unaccepted way.

It was realised through the research that, their are people in the community who may want to be in dialogue with others, they may want to be know or show their existence and in doing show leave comments on walls and surfaces.

There is a group of people who would want to vandalise and keep a notorious life, taking a bit of the community with them and exerting their anger on thing around. It may be difficult to handle this group but I believe through communication and a sense of belonging there can be a change.

Identification of product possibilities

To identify some product possibilities, a Giga map was made to help in the thinking and idea creation.

Interestingly, I found people writing on bins, traffic light poles, lonely corners in the streets, walls, at bus stops, in the toilets and in the tunnels.

To make the product interesting and fit in the environment, I am interested in combining aesthetic and culture to obtain a desired look for the product.

Writing on Surface

Material
- Wood
- Plastic
- Metal
- Ceramics
- Silicon

Culture
- Rose painting
- Clothing
- Carvings
- Paintings
- Life style
- Language

3d cnc
- Carvings (relief)
- Inscriptions
- Mold making

Politics
- Law
- Society systems
- acceptance
- Environmental protection
- Police
- Influence
- Tourism
- Control
- Restriction
- Fear to speak

Aesthetics
- Beauty
- Form
- Attraction
- Colour
- Figure
- Presentation
- Meaning
- Repersentation

Objects
- Waste bins
- Poles
- Containers (large)
- Electric transformers
- Trains
- Buildings (walls, doors..)
- Cars
- Clothing
- Boats
- Telephone booths
- Furniture
- Stickers
- Mirrors

Surfaces
- Cement walls
- Wooden walls
- Black boards
- Floors (Street)
- Boards for contruction
- Plants (trees)
- Paper
- Caves
- Tree barks
- Plastic
- Metal
- Ceramics
- Glass

Why people write on surfaces
- Fun
- Communicate
- Show their existance
- Dominance
- Reminder
- Creativity

Purpose
- Communication
- Identification
- Notority
- Fun
- Art and creativity
- Existance
- Mark territory
- Caution
- Simplicity
- Save money
- Realism

Tools
- Pen
- Markers
- Spary cans
- Chalk
- Brushes
- Sharp objects
- Stencil
- Stamps
- Phones
- Computers

Expressions
- Love
- Hate
- Indifference
- Expressing deep emotions
- Secret conversations
- Happiness
- Anxiety
- Social
- Pictorial images
- Feelings

Places
- Public spaces
- Tunnels
- Pubs
- Wash rooms
- Train, Tram, Buses
- Under bridges
- Schools
- Homes
- Festivals
- Lonely places
- Privat place

Forms
- Graffiti
- Education
- Inscription
- Markings
- Art (creativity)
- Visual expressions
- Stamping
- Stenciling
- Stickers
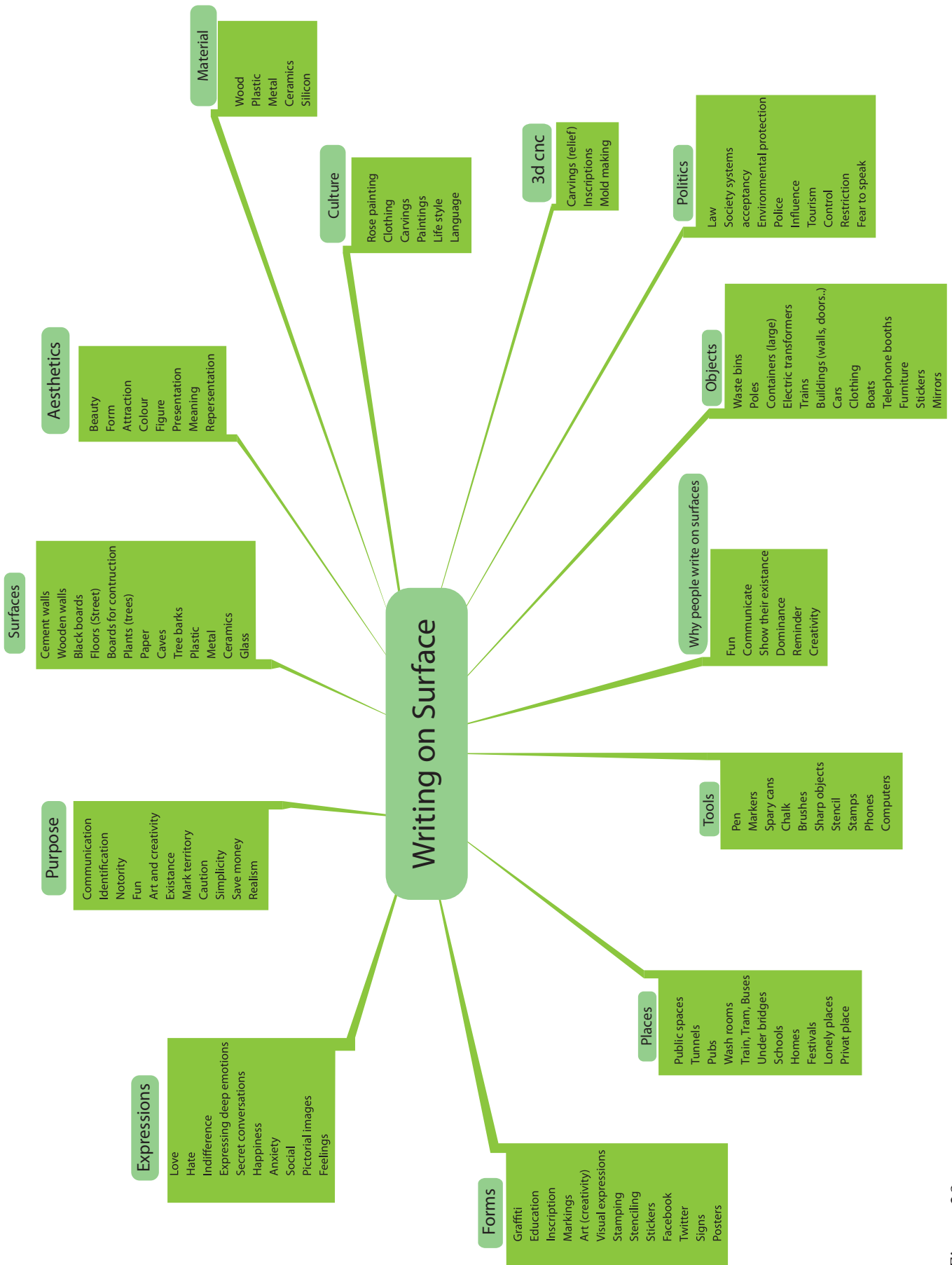- Facebook
- Twitter
- Signs
- Posters

Figure 29

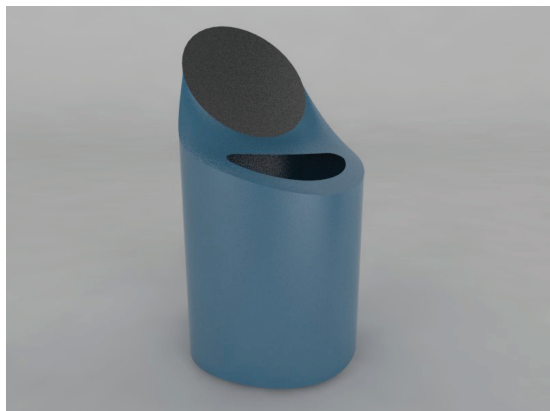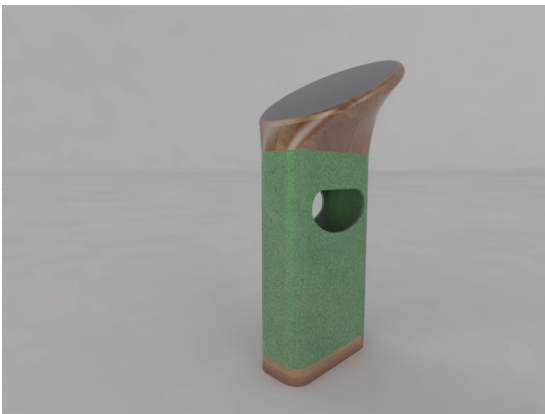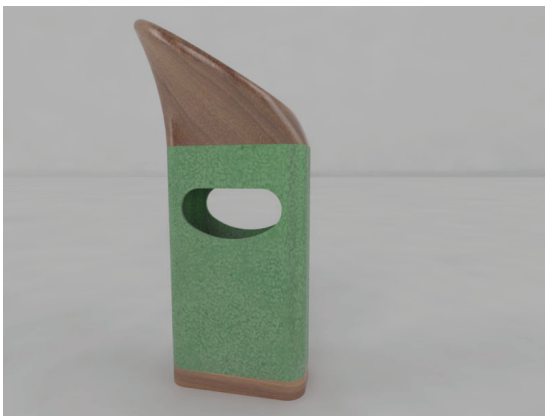First sketches, Idea creaton

Figure 30

Sketches, Idea creation

Figure 31   Rendering of sketches

The tunnel being my primary source of inspiration, I made a sketch to visualise how a surface for communication may look and can be presented. Using the shape of the human head, my aim was to bring emphasis to the object in the tunnel, which may be a surprise to users. Also the thought of using light to light up the face, making it more emphasised and giving it a character. In a way to light it up.

Figure 31   concept

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Designing for a public space

Designing for a public space may come with lost of challenges, since a designer may have to deal with many different range of users, who may treat the product differently.
Material selection is also important here as it may determine the life span of the product. It is difficult to satify everyone but it is with the hope that the product design would bring people together for one purpose.

For this reason I focus on public places which are enclosed, such as the elevator, maybe a coffee shop, a library, areas in appartment building. This limits the number of people using the product. The people who come into contact with the product may share something in common and maybe leaving in the same building. This enhances some sense togetherness and may give the product a long life spand.
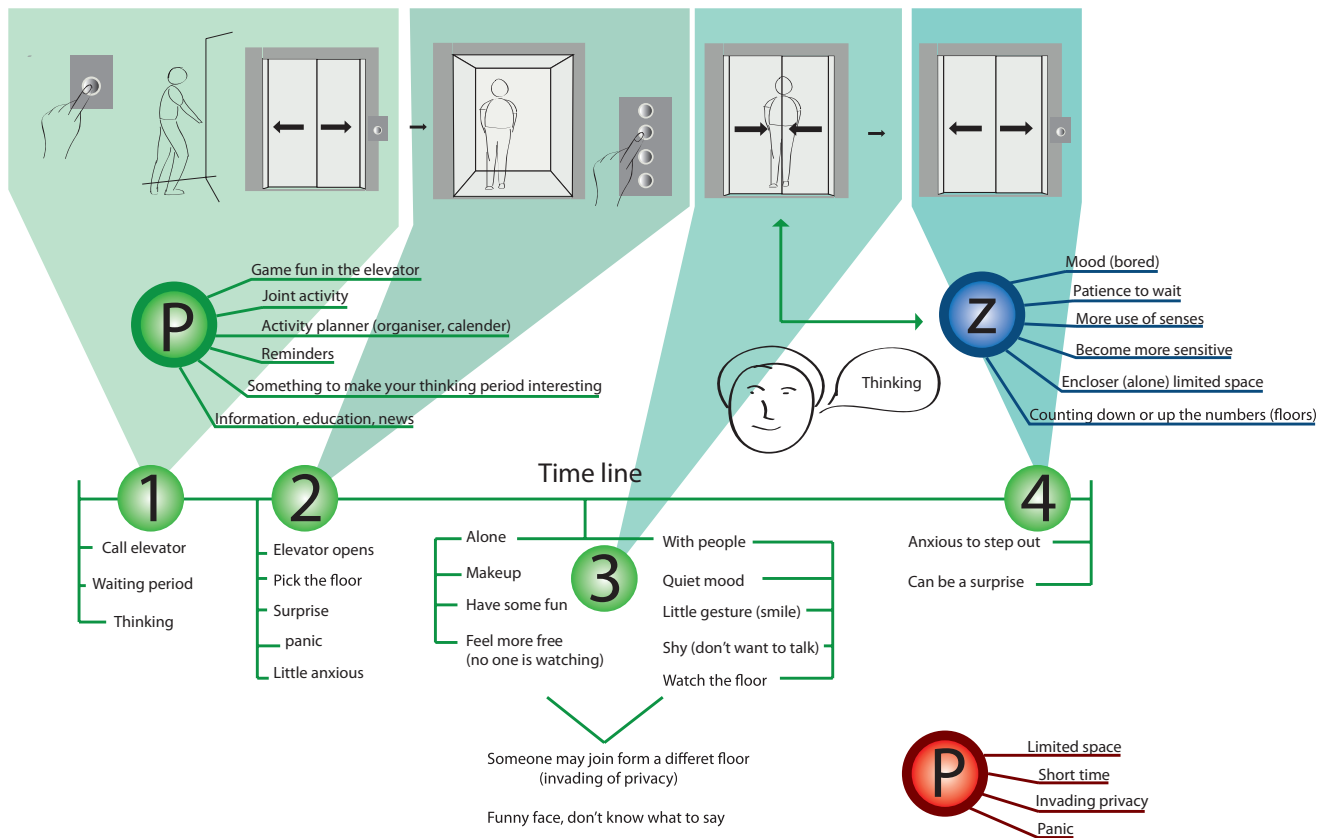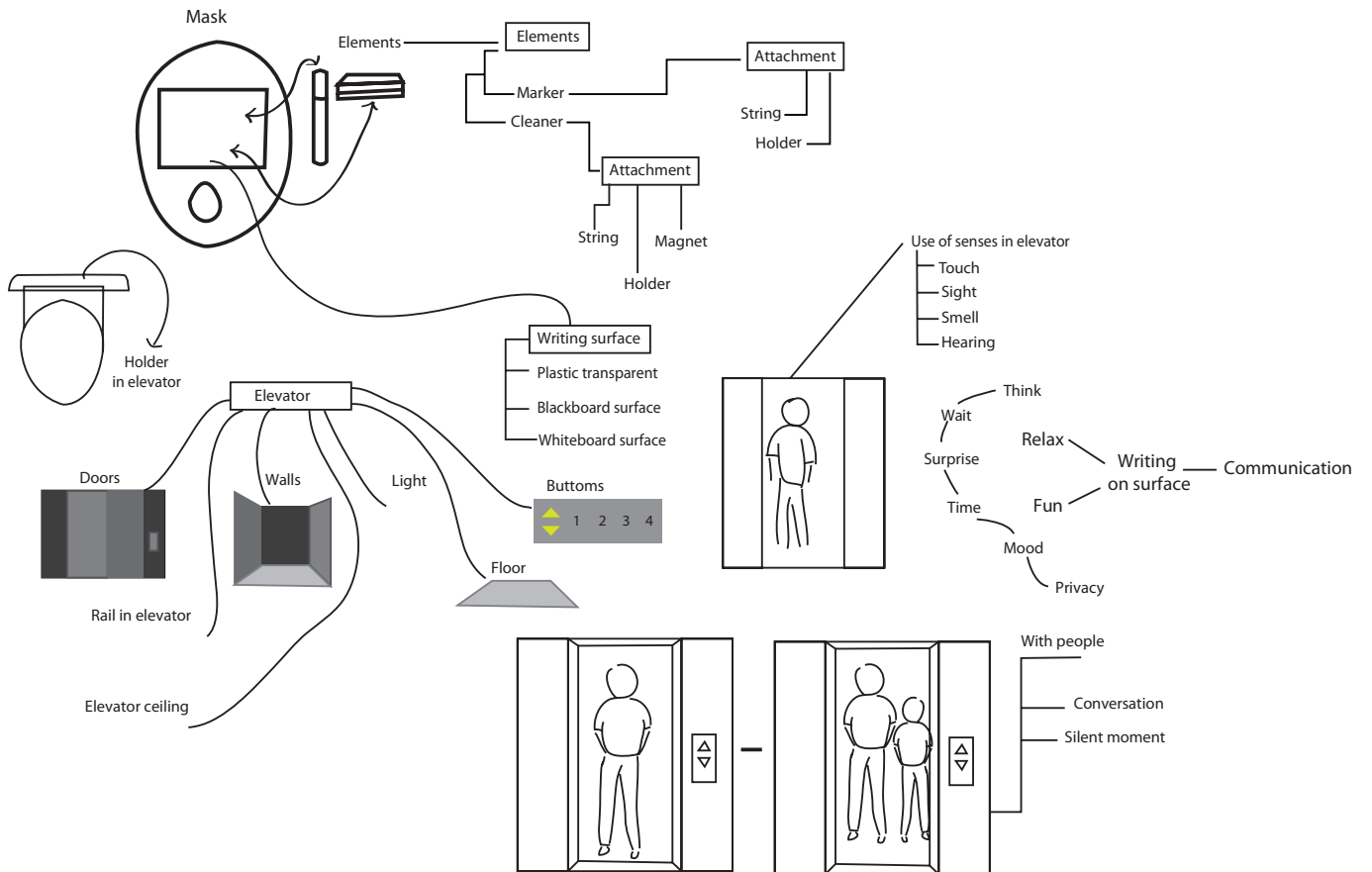
Concept visualisation

I choose to use the elevator, to map and visualise my product. This is due to the fact that the elevator is used everyday by different people who may have the same goal or have something in common be it, living in the same appartment, working or studying in the same building.
The elevator present an environmet where peolpe are made to spend some seconds or minute with others in a limited space.
The elevator is a good place to leave messages since people use it everyday and the their is a limited time to write on the surface.
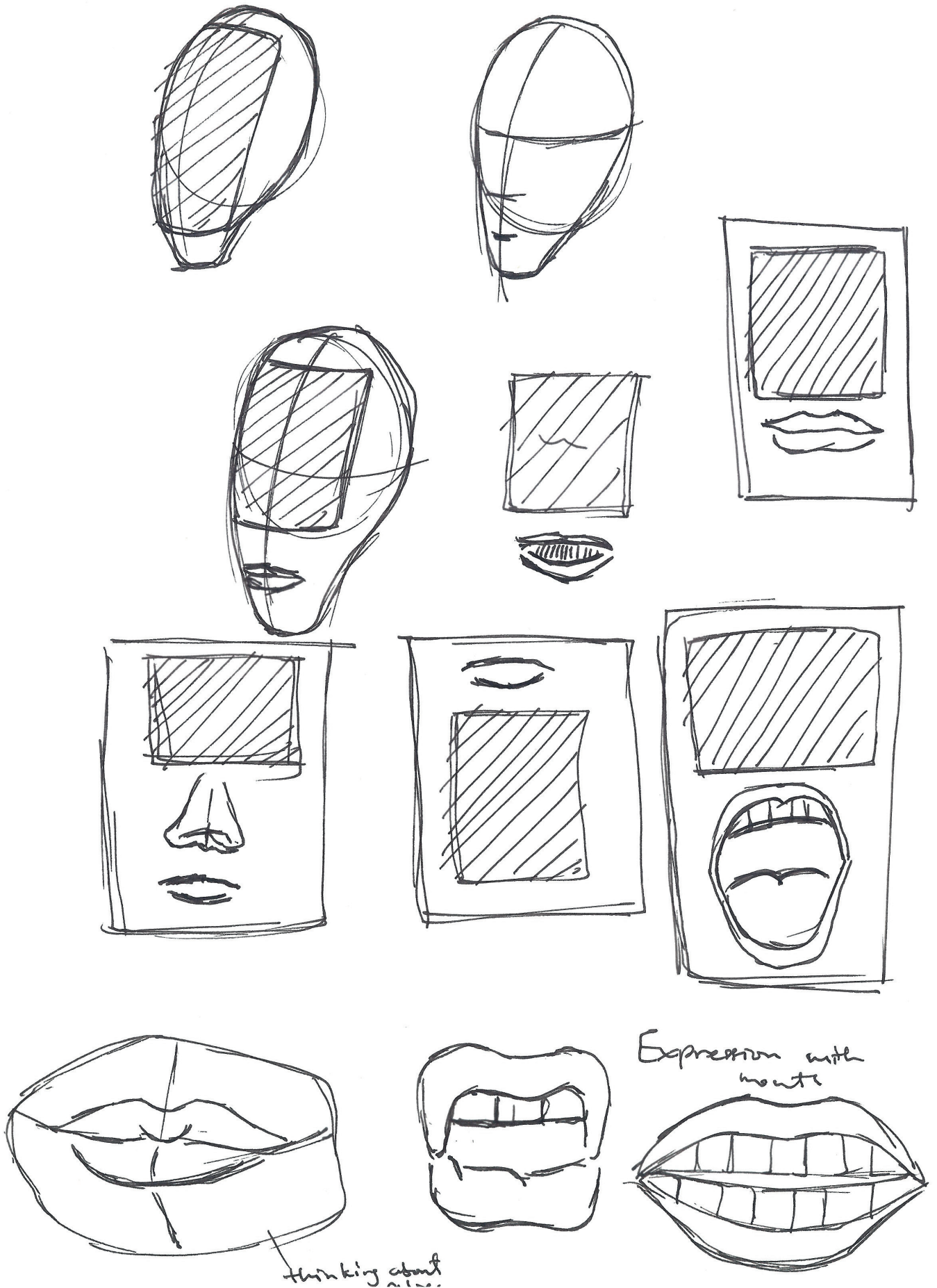
Timeline to visualise concept in the elevator

P
- Game fun in the elevator
- Joint activity
- Activity planner (organiser, calender)
- Reminders
- Something to make your thinking period interesting
- Information, education, news

Z
- Mood (bored)
- Patience to wait
- More use of senses
- Become more sensitive
- Encloser (alone) limited space
- Counting down or up the numbers (floors)

Thinking

Time line

1
- Call elevator
- Waiting period
- Thinking

2
- Elevator opens
- Pick the floor
- Surprise
- panic
- Little anxious

3
- Alone
- Makeup
- Have some fun
- Feel more free (no one is watching)
- With people
- Quiet mood
- Little gesture (smile)
- Shy (don't want to talk)
- Watch the floor

Someone may join form a differet floor (invading of privacy)

Funny face, don't know what to say

4
- Anxious to step out
- Can be a surprise

P
- Limited space
- Short time
- Invading privacy
- Panic

Elevator

A lift for transportation between floor

Time

Space

Dissemination of messages / announcement

Posters for communication (one way communication)

Surface to write

Mirrors (make up) build cofidence

Elements
- Buttoms (control)
- Lights
- Supports
- Walls (floor, ciellings, side walls)

Limited time and space can control what people write

Interior design

Mask

- Communication
- Beauty
- Culture
- Strong language
- Personification
  - Anonymous
  - Secret
- Elements
  - Material
  - Colours
  - Parts
  - Symbols

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Mask

Elements ——— Elements

Attachment

Marker
Cleaner

String
Holder

Attachment

String   Magnet

Holder

Use of senses in elevator
— Touch
— Sight
— Smell
— Hearing

Holder
in elevator

Elevator

Writing surface
— Plastic transparent
— Blackboard surface
— Whiteboard surface

Doors   Walls   Light

Buttoms
1 2 3 4

Think
Wait
Relax
Surprise   Writing ——— Communication
on surface
Time   Fun
Mood
Privacy

Rail in elevator

Floor

Elevator ceiling

With people

Conversation

Silent moment

Sketches and idea creation

Figure 32   Sketches

Figure 33   Sketches

Figure 34   concept sketches

Figure 34, shows ideas created using the face and mouth expressions, creating fun and giving a character to the design.

Figure 35   Concept

A design (figure 35) is made inspired by the African mask, adding aesthics to the design and enhancing its meaning.

Giving it a look like a face may make more interesting and affect what people write on it,

A symbol was also used to add more meaning and customise the object.

To hange or hold the mask on the surface

To hold the chalk

A symbol to add more tradition and meaning to the mask
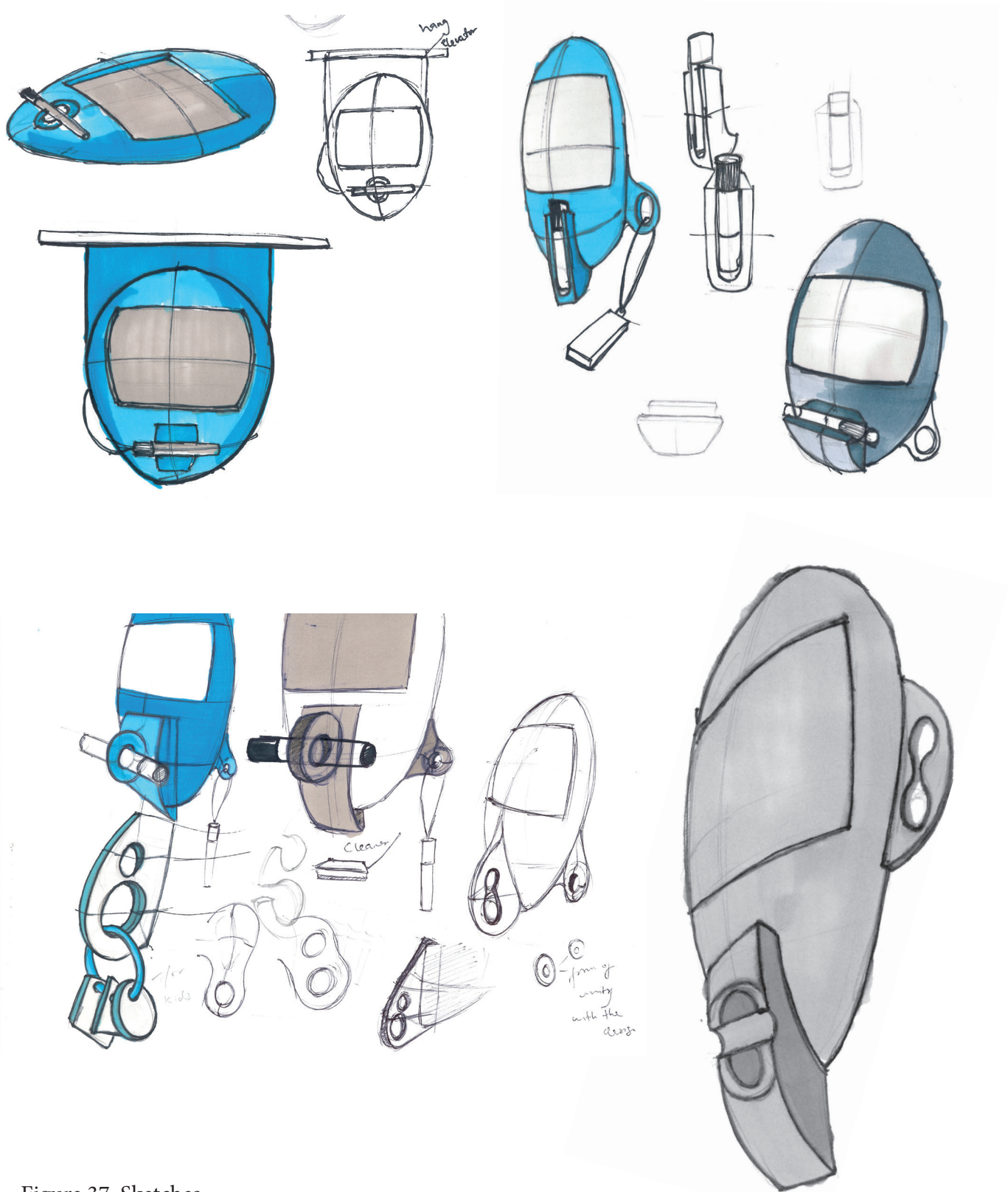
Figure 36 Concept

Figure 37 Sketches

Figure 38 Concept

After a group discussion, I was drawn to that fact that people may need more space to write on. Also adding a symbol which was not know by users may change the meaning of the design. For this reason, the surface area was increased for writing and changes were made to the design.

Visualization of Concept

Porcelain material, soft and malleable was used to sketch out different designs.

Figure 39 Idea creation with porcelain

Figure 40 Carving in wood

Since I planned to make the proto-
type in wood, I made a test out of
wood, to see how my design could
look like.

Figure 41 Mockup in card.

A mockup was made to be tested in the elevator in school.
figure 41 and 42.
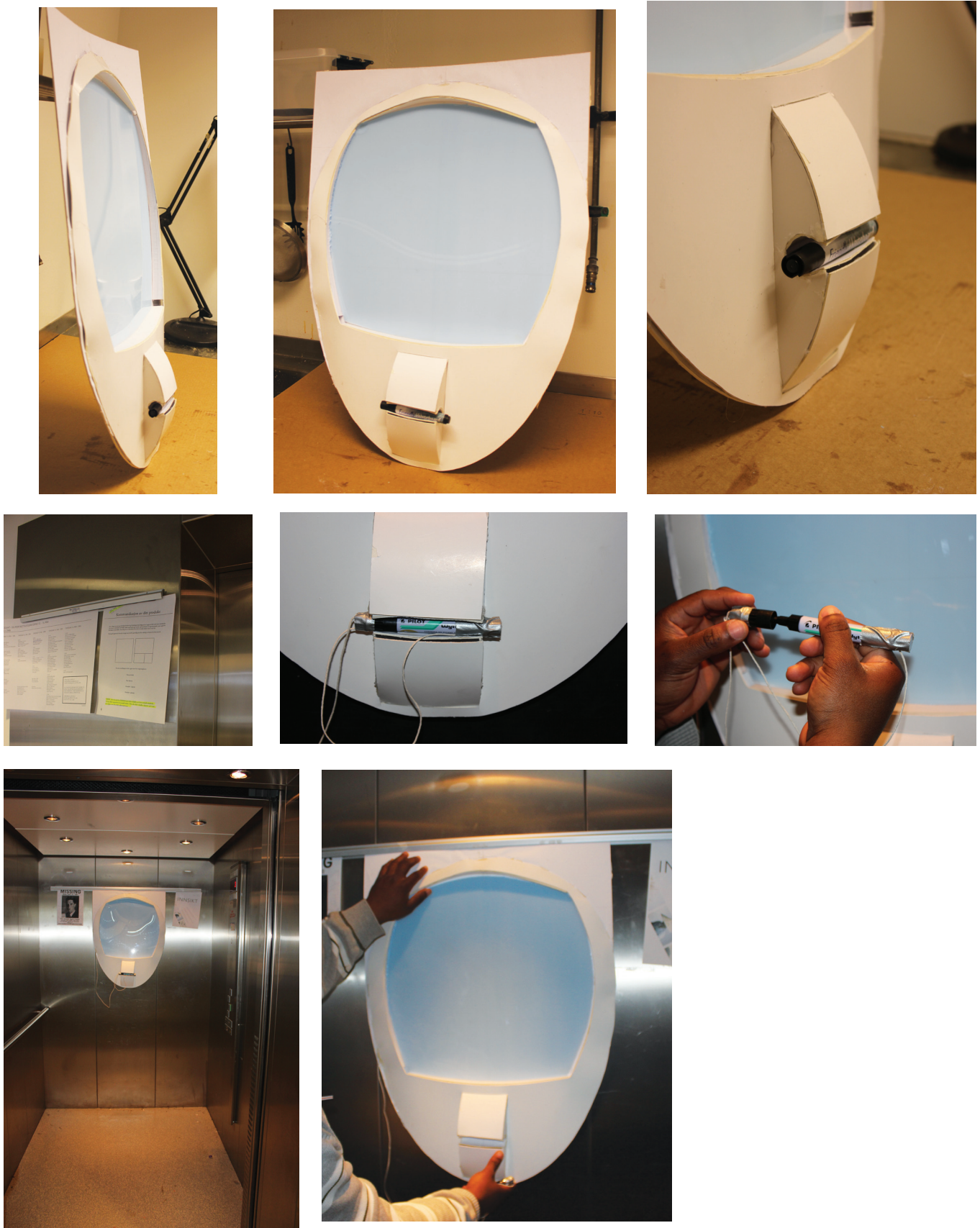
Figure 42   Mockup

Figure 43   Writings made on the surface

Observations and comments

The mood in the elevator was change. Finding something interesting written by people and replying or commenting made it fun and interesting. Also important information and messages were left on the surface for students.

Drawings and sketches were made too on the surface, making it fun and interesting. People have the opportunity to show their creativity.

Chapter 4

Production Process

```
┌─────────────────────────┐
│    Production Process    │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│  3d model with Rhinoceros │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Saved as a master cam object file │
└─────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌───────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Converted to G-code to make tool path for CNC machining │
└───────────────────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌───────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Preparing material (wood) for CNC machining │
└───────────────────────────────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌─────────────┐
│ CNC cutting │
└─────────────┘
             │
             ▼
┌───────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Addition of other components to the object │
└───────────────────────────────────────┘
```
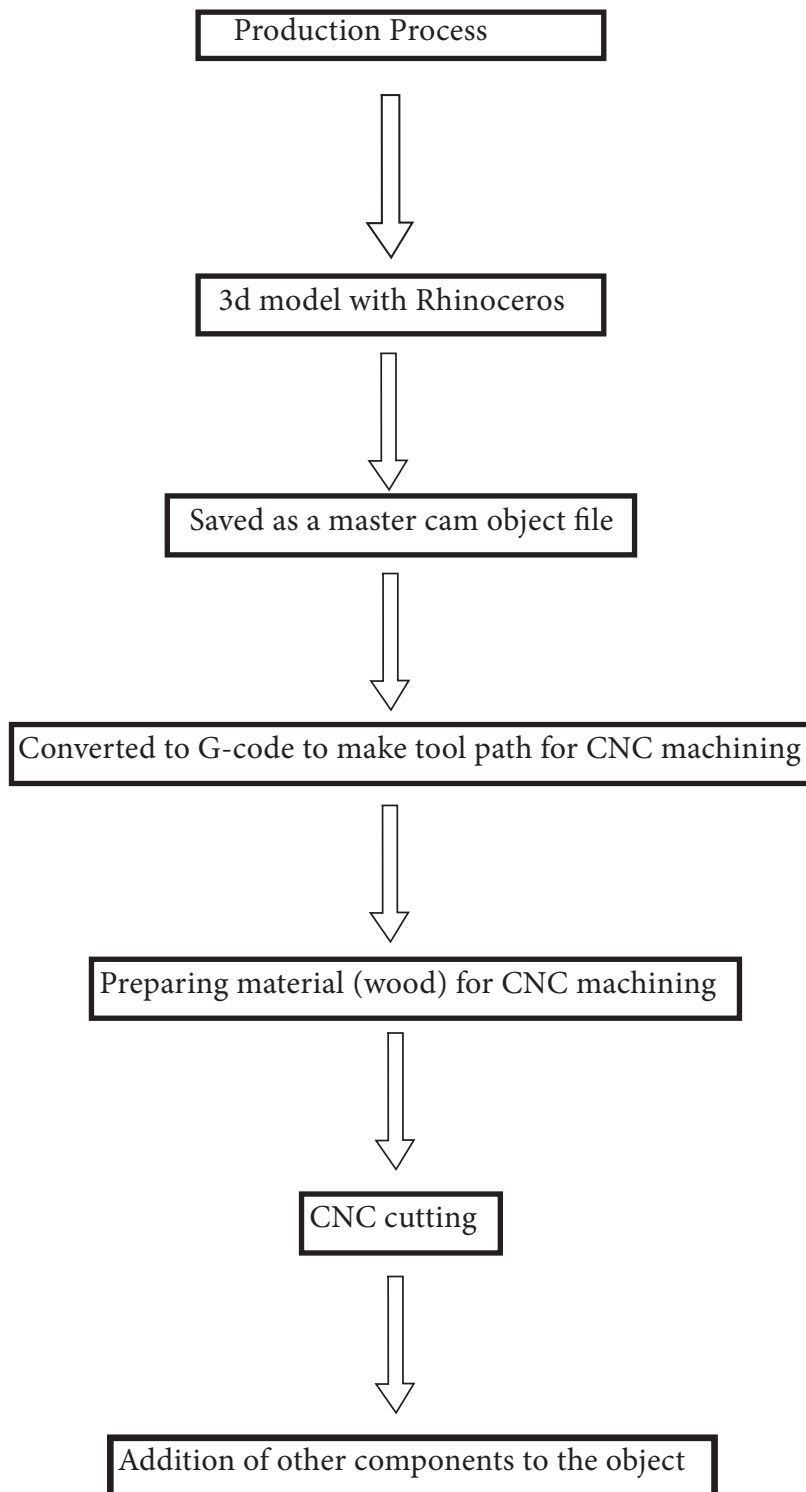
3d modeling with Rhinoceros 3d
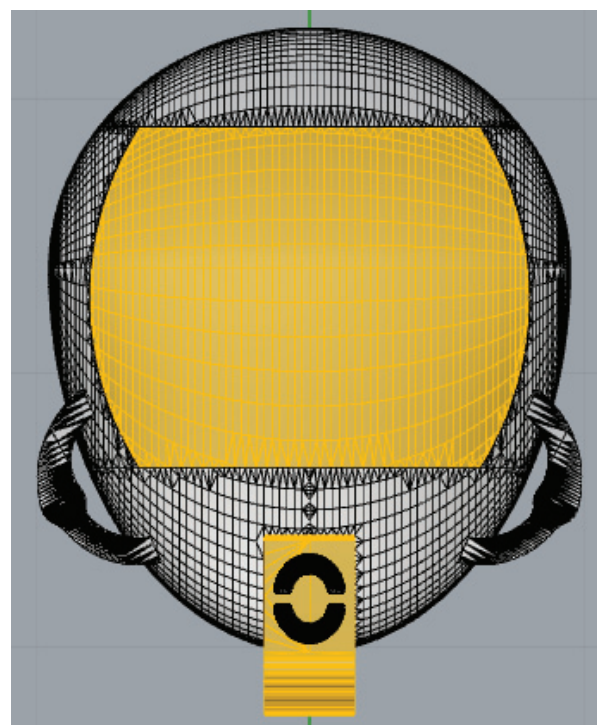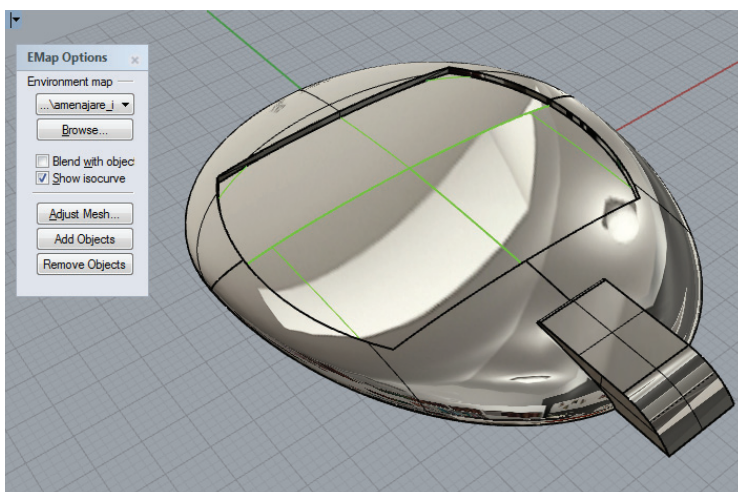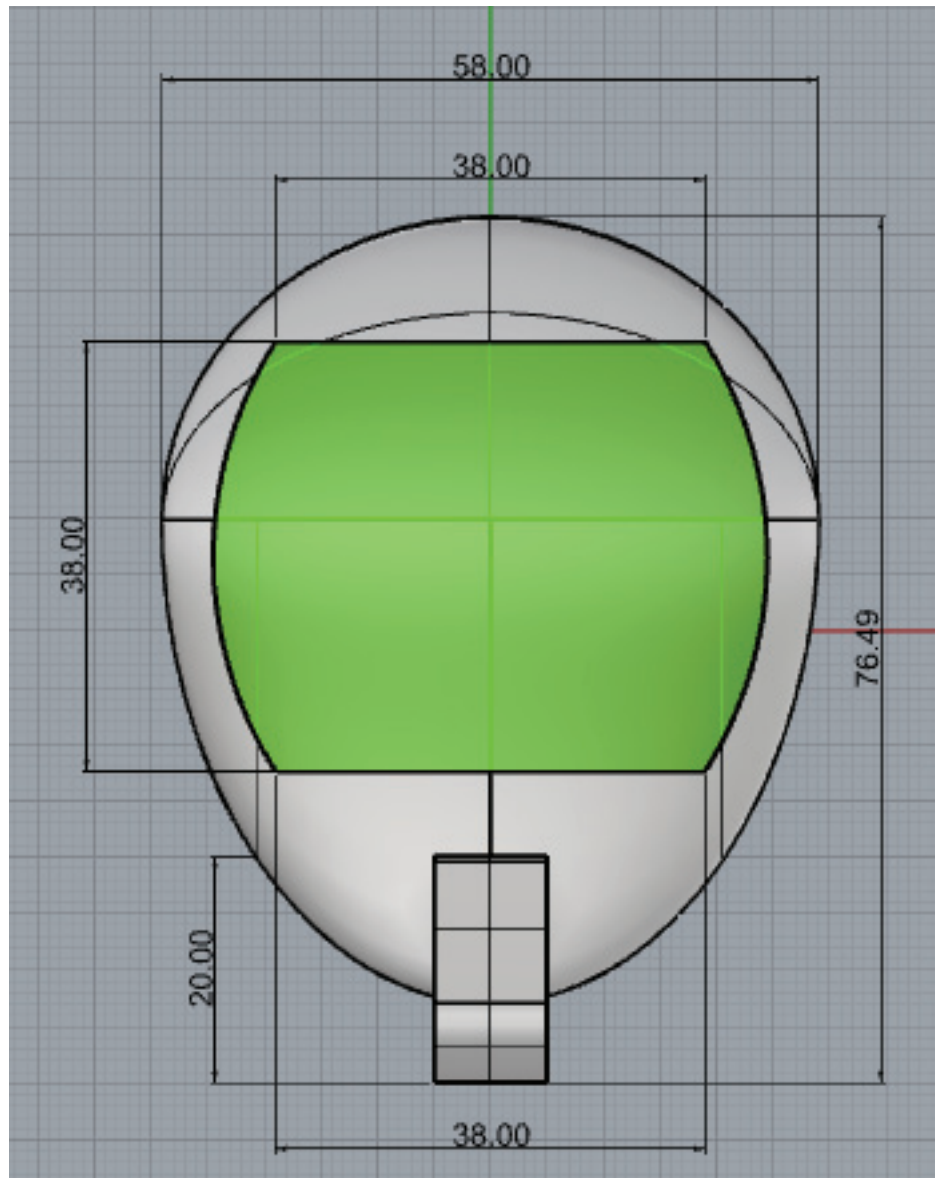
Figure 44 Rhino sketches

CNC Machining
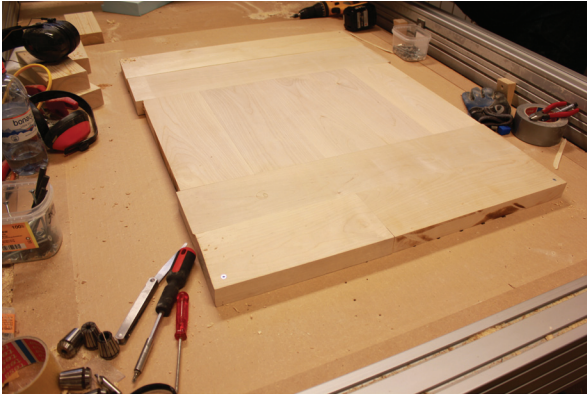
Shows the stock of material to be cut
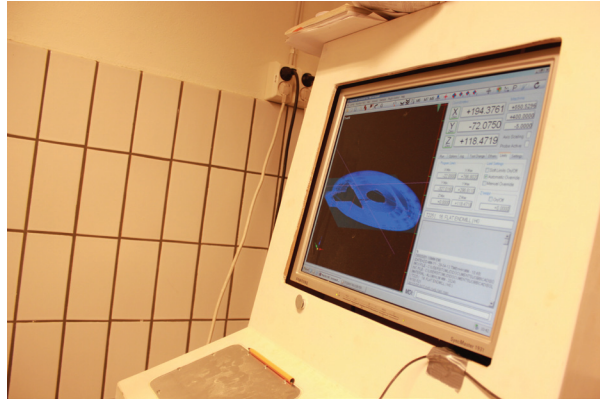
This computer controls the CNC cutter, the speed positioning of the cutter can be set here.
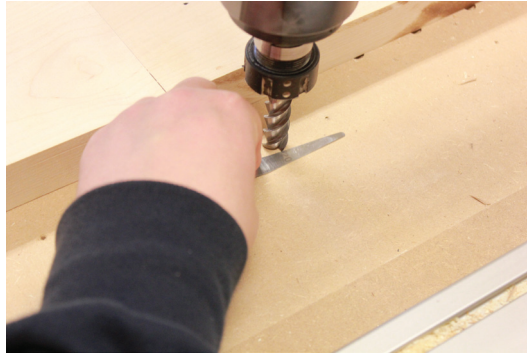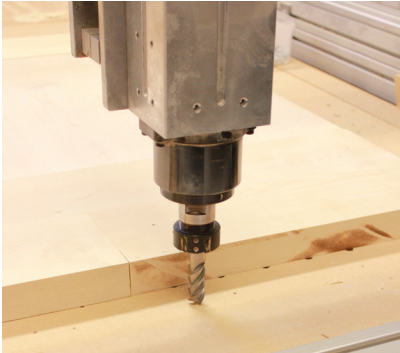
Here the cutter was positoned in the middle of the object and a height was set to start machining.
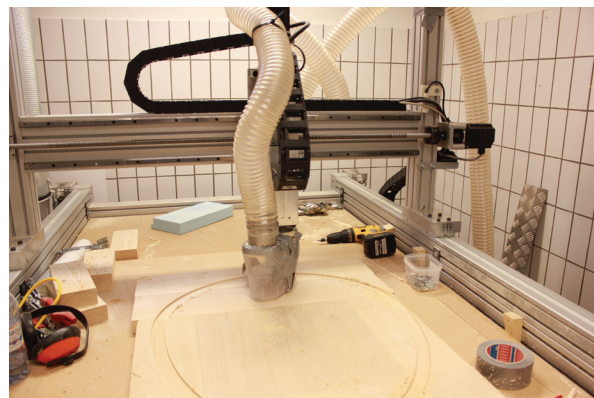
Here the cutter was positoned in the middle of the object and a height was set to start machining.
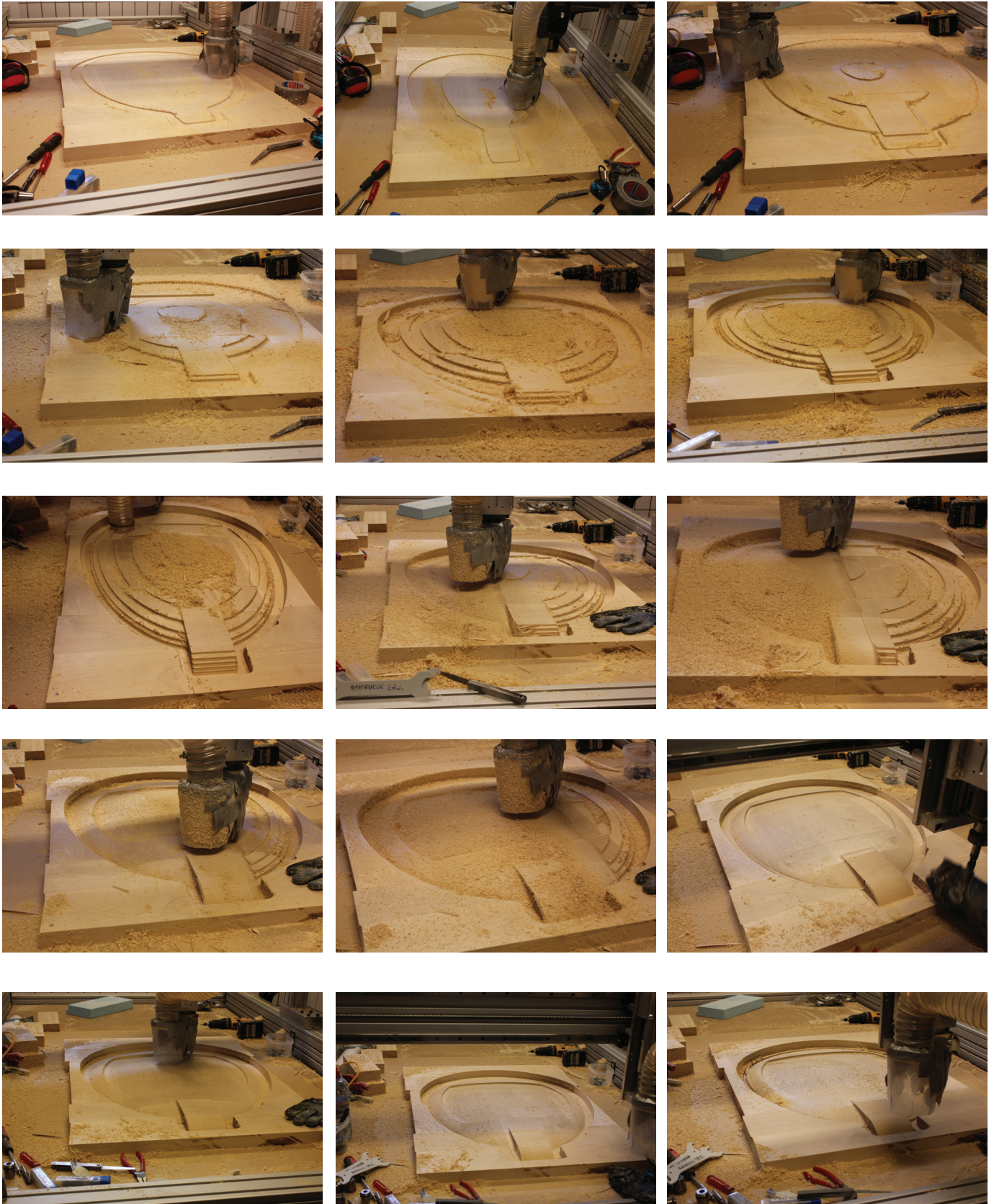
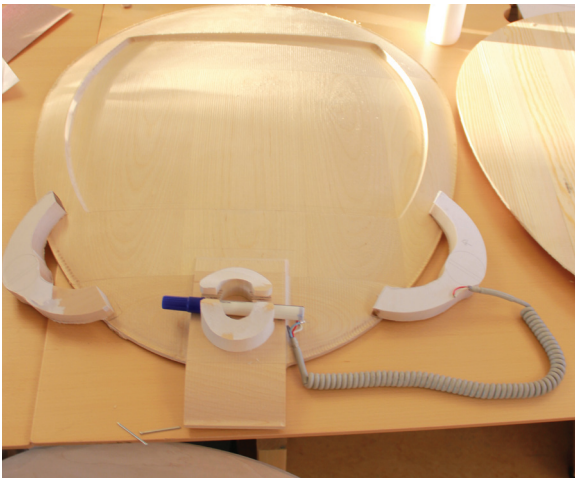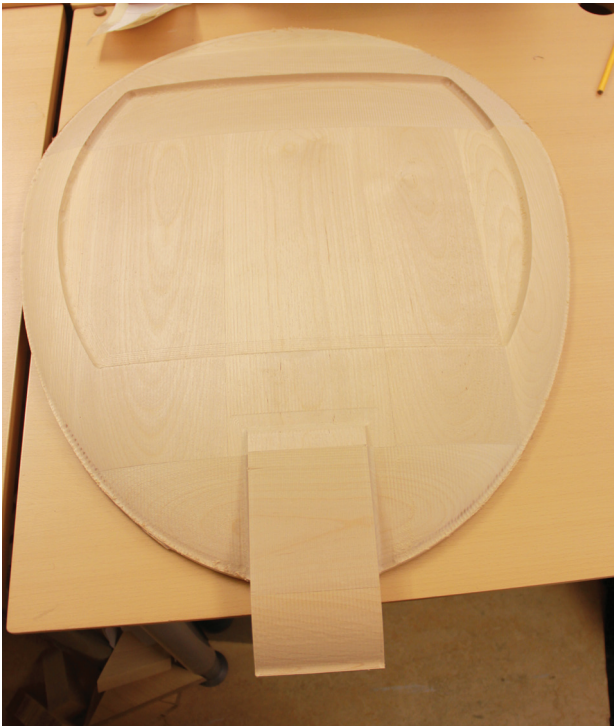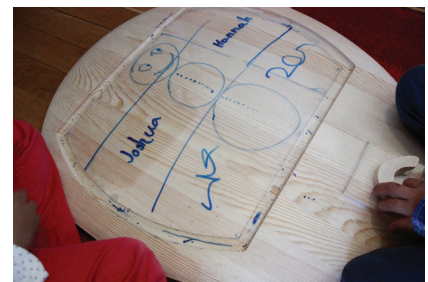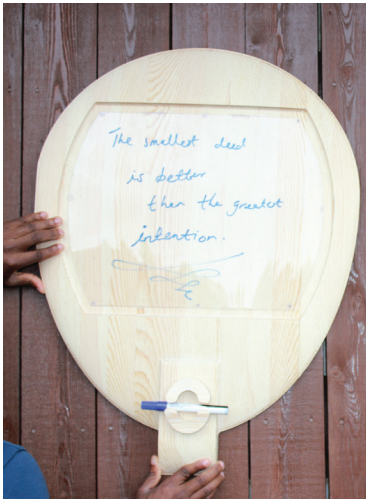# Pictures of the cutting process
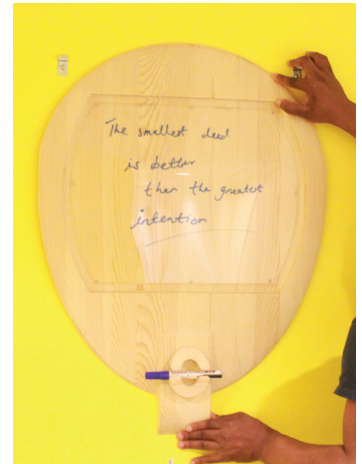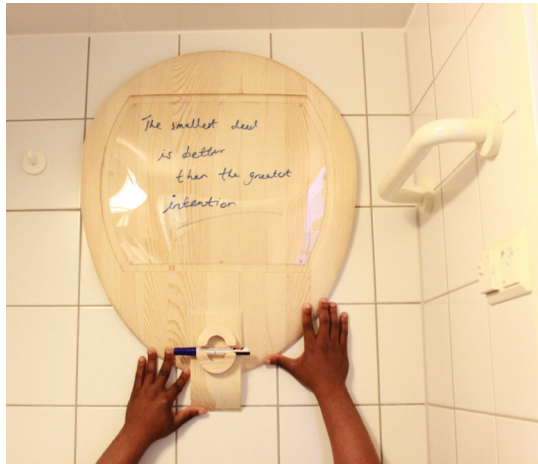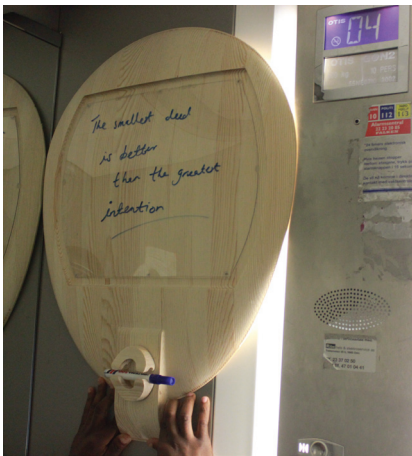
Figure 45   CNC cutting process

Figure 46 Making of prototype

This shows th finish object after the CNC cutting. Other components of the design are at-tached to the object.

Test of product prototype
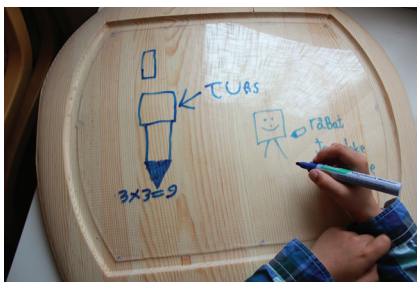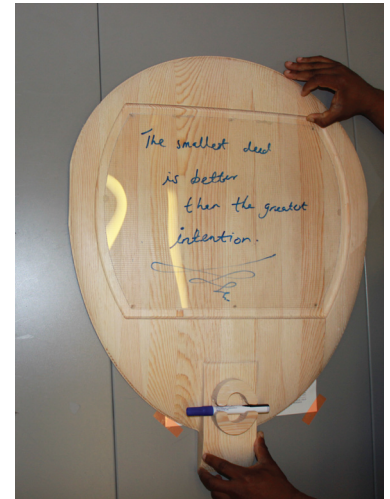
The designed object is visualized on different surfaces.

A test was also made with some childern.

Figure 47

Observations and comments

Wood as a material gave the product beauty and putting it in different environment showed the blend of colour and material.

The kids who tested the product had fun with it. Stating that they may use it in calculating math when doing there home work. Another said he would use it as a reminder.

The kids seemed happy writing on the surface without any limitation.

The product may likely be made in other material depending on the environment and usage.

The product could be used in other location and presented in different ways for different purposes such as in shops given new price list information.

At home the product would blend more with the interior design, with its form and colour.

Components of the design

These are the component used in the product.

The telephone wire was used in holding the marker which also serves as a sign for commmunication.

The magnets were design to hold the cleaner.

Figure 48   Components

Prototype

Figure 49 Proto

Chapter 6

Discusson

I was able you use relevant practise-based-and scientific methods in designing the product by organising interviews, observation and using participatory design approaches.

Using Rhinoceros 3d modeling software, I was able to design a water tight model to be cut with the CNC. CNC users most likely prefer models made with solidworks since it was easy to have all surfaces joined as unit. Using Rhinoceros 3d, changing the direction of the surfaces and reuilding of sufaces using a surface own isocurve can give a more simpler surface and adjusting tolerances can help build water tight models.

Fusing African culture and the simplicity of scadanavian design, it was possible to use knowledge of both societies to develop a product with an identity that can fit in different societies.

Using local materials such as birch and pine in making my product, may have given the product some identity with the local society. The beauty of the wood, it's density and softness made it possible to cut with the CNC machine without much stress. Using wood for my product, changes the out look of the product making it a little bit delicate and something to last for a longtime.

Using Gigga mapping, situation analysis, making time frames helped in finding solution to or creating interesting ideas to solve problems. Also being about to visualise concepts both digitally and 3 dimensionally helps in finding solutions.

Through research and the production process it was possible to analyse and critically evaluate different sources of information to structure and formulate arguements for sustainable product design processes. Using different form languages influnced by culture and qualities of the wood helped in the making of the product.

Fusing different cultures into a single product, and using knowlegde about different societies it was able to generate a specific concept for the product.

By engaging with people in the society paid off through have good information through interviews. Visiting shops, different organisations and buildings helped developing ideas and new products. Also collabration with the workshop techinicians made the production with the CNC machine a success. With knowledge gain from workshop trainings, sketches and the use of computer aided design softwares, I able to independantly carry advance tasks and project in designing the product.

Chapter 7

Conclusion and recommendation

I know that writing on public surfaces can be designed through observations of environment, interview with a youth, use of cnc machine and use of culture as an inspiration for creating concepts.

Gaining knowedge about design process helped in creating concepts. Analysing situations, idenitfying the potentials , problems and innovative ideas through sequence analysis makes idea creation easy and interesting.

Training in the workshop, enhance my confidence in designing with different materials and production processes. Knowledge of material properties and behaviour helped in making good material choices.

I gained new knowledge about public art and public writng and skills in organising interviews for research and observation.

Knowledge about the CNC cutting, how the machine works and the whole process was learned too.

I gained more knowledge studying in different society, transfering knowledge into new areas, to relate to industrial production in Norway to Ghana and importantly considering the semantic values of design in a cutural context.

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Virtual / 3-D model