

# M<sup>o</sup>CC

MUSEUM OF  
CONTEMPORARY  
COMMODITIES

a collaborative art geography project co-founded by Paula Crutchlow & Ian Cook

**HELLO NICE VISITOR!**

**I am your guide to the  
interconnected and  
distributed world of  
commodity cultures.  
Come in and browse!**



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# MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY COMMODITIES

.....

*Valuing the things we buy today  
as the heritage of tomorrow*



The Museum of Contemporary Commodities is neither a building nor a permanent collection of stuff - it's an invitation. To consider every shop, online store and warehouse as if it were a museum, and all the things in them part of our collective future heritage.

Imagine yourself as this museum's curator, with the power to choose what is displayed and how. To trace and interpret the provenance of things and how they arrived here. To consider the effects this stuff has on people and places close by or far away, and how and why it connects them.

What do we mean by things or stuff? Everything that's bought and sold for profit in today's society. The full range of contemporary commodities available to consume. Does it seem an impossible task? It's definitely not one we should do alone.

In this museum we are all  
the curators...



# WELCOME TO THE MoCC ZINE!

DATA  
PLACE  
TRADE  
VALUES

This is your guide to the interconnected and distributed world of commodity cultures as they were collected and interpreted by the Museum of Contemporary Commodities (MoCC). It is an invitation to browse MoCC's activities from accompanied shopping to data walkshops... from design prototyping to online Collection to talking doll... from market to shop to gallery. We hope our zine might provide you with the inspiration to imagine how your own MoCC might take shape.

When we first started working on the project around 10 years ago, our aim was to make a social artwork that encouraged people to think more deeply about issues of trade justice and hyperconsumption - issues we are passionate about ourselves. Combining our practices in performance making and cultural geography, we devised a concept that invited people to consider today's commodities as our collective future heritage. Objects and artefacts and ideas to be sorted, assessed, valued and used to educate others about contemporary commodity cultures and their effects on people and places. This was perhaps more of a thought experiment than an everyday activity, and not something that could be done alone without quickly feeling overwhelmed by the task and what it brought to our attention.

From almost the beginning of the project we worked in partnership with Furtherfield, London's longest running (de)centre for art and technology, to research and prototype our museum concept as a collaborative, digitally informed social artwork. In spring and summer 2015 their 'commons' and gallery spaces in Finsbury Park were home to our research and development of a set of participatory events and activities that we made in dialogue with other artists, academics, creative technologists, post-graduate students and local residents. We tried to make these lively, irreverent

and conversational experiences that would help us examine the infrastructures, systems, processes and practices of commodity cultures, and also suggest ideas for positive change. Over the following three years we involved members of the public in this collaboration by staging MoCC as 'pop-up' events variously set up like an outdoor market, housed in an empty shop, and presented as an exhibition. Each event was both a conversation based social artwork, and a participatory research environment where we talked with people about the biographies of contemporary commodities and their material cultures, and about the physical spaces, economic systems, digital platforms and cultural practices that produce and distribute them globally. You can find a full timeline of our activities and events on p. 4-5.

This MoCC zine is an effort to share something about our process of dreaming, researching and realising MoCC together. It outlines the background to our thinking, and some of the key tactics we used to make things happen. It is a record of what we did, and an invitation to try out these activities for your own purposes. You will find the names of some of the many generous collaborators whose input helped shaped MoCC (and populate these pages) on the inside cover. Our thinking has also been inspired by and references the work of many others listed in the back pages for further reading.



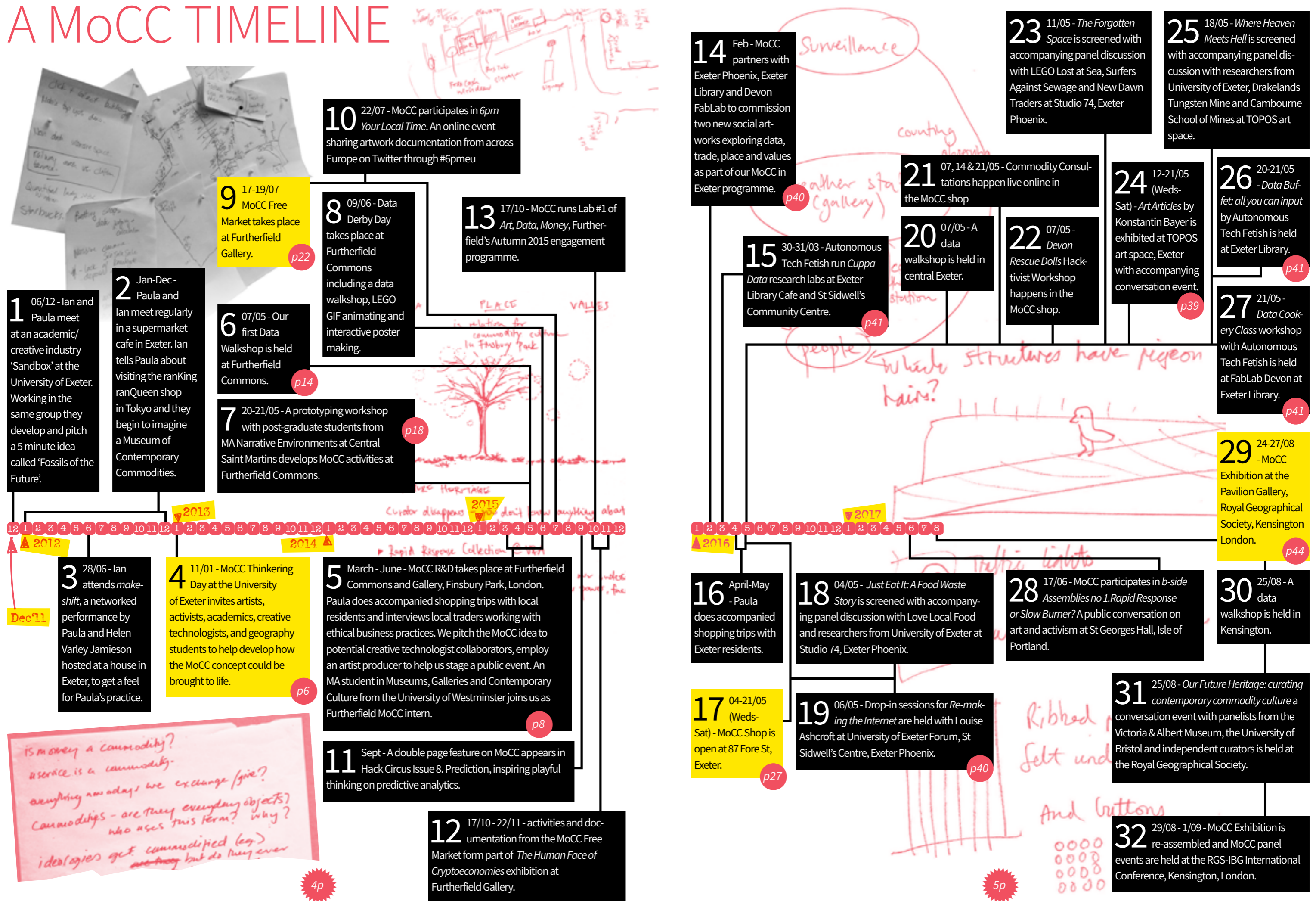
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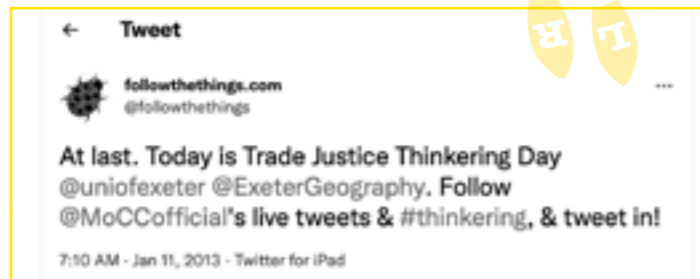
We'd like to thank everyone who joined us on this art geography research journey. For their ideas, time, curiosity and enthusiasm to engage in these processes and politics. Please circulate this MoCC zine, and if you take inspiration from it, let us know what you do and what you think about it all.  
Paula and Ian, 31 March 2022

3p

# A MoCC TIMELINE



# 4. MoCC THINKERING DAY EVENT



The MoCC development process began with a Thinking Day (thinking + tinkering) on 11 Jan 2012 at University of Exeter. We wanted the project to become a growing collection of co-authored activities and events. Something self-sustaining, infiltrating and subversive that worked

collaboratively to imagine new ways of trading together. We invited 29 activists, artists, creative technologists and academics to help us interrogate our MoCC concept and consider how we might make it work in practice. Working in small groups, we jotted our ideas on paper table cloths, and tweeted them @MoCCofficial. Key discussion points from each table were captured with the help of student note takers, and at the end of the day we had a list of MoCC event ingredients to move forwards with... but no clear sense of how to make such an event happen.



## The Prolific Present



A new pair of jeans, some flat pack furniture, a bottle of water, a smart phone, a social media account. We could imagine each thing as inconsequential... but more stuff keeps arriving. Onto screens and into warehouses, into shops and homes, into recycling yards and waste dumps, into everywhere... A co-evolving, intertwined and interdependent flow of stuff around the planet that needs more stuff to make it work. Supply precedes demand. The price we pay for things doesn't often include their social and environmental cost. We have seemingly endless choice and simultaneously what feels like very little choice over what we are able to buy or how we can trade.

Digital platforms make buying things quicker, cheaper, more convenient and accessible any time and anywhere. The tracking and tracing capacities of our devices combine with place embedded sensors to manage surveillance as both an advertising and commodification strategy. Algorithms curate our browsing and 'footfall' traces as data and metadata, creating commodities that follow us around - persistently appearing in our online hangouts or in abundance on our local supermarket shelves. This further removes

commodities from their contexts and biographies by categorizing, analysing, describing and curating them into data based economies. Bringing privacy into friction with 'personalised' retail experience, revaluing our intentions and disguising the impacts our choices have on us, other people and our environments.

People in Western countries now typically own more than 2000 tangible objects each. The number of self-storage units in the UK has vastly increased this century, and in 2013 hoarding became a distinct medicalised disorder in the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. Whilst retail leaders suggest we are approaching a time of 'peak stuff', and there are people and businesses thinking more deeply about stepping off the consumption treadmill and into more circular economies, the effects of our trading, consumption and disposal practices are still far reaching and challenging to change. How do we decide what we need and what to buy? How do we know what is valuable and what is worthless? What to keep for future generations and to throw away? Can we ever really dispose of anything or does it just get rearranged?

The prospect of thinking more deeply about the consequences of our contemporary commodity cultures can feel daunting, disempowering and depressing. To combat this, MoCC aimed to think with these data, place, trade, value relations in more lively and collaborative ways. We used creative, digital activities and conversation to surface and critique the complex ways in which our habits and choices are co-created with economic systems and infrastructures. Attempting to curate MoCC as a shared knowledge platform that related commodities to their multiple and continually changing value as they move through their digitally entangled life cycles. To set this process in motion ...

We began with a question...

# ...What would you add to a Museum of Contemporary Commodities?

## 5. ACCOMPANIED SHOPPING TRIPS - CHOICES, HABITS, PLACES, SYSTEMS

We began to answer this question by going shopping with local residents in Finsbury Park, North London. Home of Furtherfield Commons and Gallery where we began our process, Finsbury Park is a superdiverse area stretching over the boroughs of Hackney, Islington, and Haringey. With over a hundred languages spoken, waves of migration have initiated many kinds of trading, making it a rich place to begin thinking with commodities and commodity cultures. Working through connections with local arts and cultural organisations, we invited people of different ages and backgrounds to shop with us. We talked about what they bought on their usual routes and why, and compared shopping on the street to how they bought things online.



"I guess I nominate the coconut oil. That represents the kind of hair and the body or the beauty products that we have... um... the coriander spices because... they sell the foods that you would use back home... that's available from here... because some food supermarkets don't often sell it..."



"I would probably have to choose some chard. Because as we discovered today I don't really know where my chard is from... and because of... connotations that shop has... It's a greengrocer. It's also a specialist, fancy shop and it has enormous amounts of crisps... yeah it's just a varied interesting shop... and may be symptomatic or symbolic of... of some of the things that are happening in the area."



### Want to find out more about your local commodity cultures?

Why not go shopping with a friend and ask each other why you're buying the things you do, and why you're buying them here and now? What do you buy online and what do you buy in actual shops? Why? Who are you shopping for? Where does the commodity come from? What is it made of? How is it made? Who made it? How did it get here? What does it do for you? What are you going to do with it? How will you pay for it? How is your payment recorded? Who knows about your transactions? Why? How do your shopping habits help shape what is available to buy? What control do you have over that?

"I think it is important to have shops. I think it's where people communicate and they can look nice, which is good."

She said she was addicted to 'Wowcher.' They emailed her 'every two minutes' with more offers of the same kinds of things she'd already bought. 'Does it make you buy more?' (Laughs). 'Yeah it does'

'I usually look at the ratings, the comments, and see the negative comments... and if lots of people like it... erm then I think maybe it must be ok um yeah. And if the price is reasonable, I would get it.'

'your decisions and choices and feelings about either moving somewhere or about buying something from somewhere... you're subject to certain things and you also have choices in certain things. But there's a larger sort of structure around it isn't there? A system and flows of power and... things like this, which yeah... I don't know you get the niggling anxieties about it which is erm... it's not very nice really.'

'I think they call it 'Columbusing'... where they act like they discovered an area that's always been present... and always been kind of lively. And then you just end up kind of getting these independent shops that are... not really... well I mean they are independent... but they're all kind of selling the same thing. I don't know. They just act kind of like urban and different.'



"...you can't be informed about the whole world you know?... now we're presented with the whole world but we... you can't keep on top of it all..."

"...you feel that you should try and support small companies employing local people, and keeping your streets and communities thriving..."

Coding the connections made between data, trade, place and values during these shopping trips helped us to structure MoCC as a participatory artwork in two key ways. Firstly, we identified and named how people valued the commodities they bought and turned these values into categories for curating commodities in the museum (Activities 9, 17 & 29).

- speed \* convenience \* sociability \* pleasure \* sustainability \* usefulness \* identity.

More accompanied shopping trips later in 2016 in Exeter (Activity 16) surfaced a different set of values and added more categories to our list.

- craft \* style \* skill \* local.

Secondly, the shopping and data sharing habits we learned about helped to structure the typography based quiz **What kind of shopper are you?** (p. 20-21 shared in activities 9, 12, 17 & 29).

# IF COMMODITIES COULD TALK, WHAT MIGHT THEY TELL US?

About their lives? What they've seen? The places and lives they've connected? The pleasure they've given? The arguments they've caused? Imagine.

In the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries goods were circulating in quantity through empire and capitalism in unprecedented ways. You could make sense - or make fun - of this by reading a cheap novel like **The History and Adventures of a Lady's Shoes and Slippers Written by Themselves** (Anon 1754). Or of a goose quill, a pin, a settee, a bedstead, a mirror, an old shoe, a wig, a watch, a ring, an umbrella, a gold-headed cane, a sedan, an atom, a rupee, a watch, a bank note, a cork screw, a pincushion, a thimble, a pen, an old pocket bible, a waistcoat, a stagecoach, a pulpit and a reading desk, or a doll. These were called 'novels of circulation' or 'it-narratives'.

**... in the great metropolis of the British Empire, I first opened my eyes to this changeful scene of life.** Mary Mister (1816) **The Adventures of a Doll**

The commodities who wrote these books talked about their makers. Their properties and usefulness to their owners. Their jarring changes in value from being bought and sold so many times (and often discarded). Their epic travels through lives lived on intimate and transcontinental scales. The vivid traces of their use in wear, tear and decay. The ludicrous mix of social relations they connected, witnessed and mediated along the way. As they challenged distinctions. Mixed up nationhood. Invited readers into the fractious and venal public sphere of the global economic system of the time.

In the Twenty First Century, narrations of the life stories of commodities have shed similarly harsh light on late capitalist trade relations. Flip flops, bananas, mobile phones, milk, necklaces, underpants, broccoli, coffee, hair extensions, sushi, tomatoes, shoes, decorations, oil and more. Occasionally these commodities have spoken for themselves.

**[Nut:] What's so special 'bout me? ... [Nut chorus:] Seems like the cards are stacked in his favour.** Emily James (2002) **The luckiest nut in the world**

Take Emily James' (2002) quirky animated short, 'The luckiest nut in the world'. Its star - a guitar strumming, country-singing American peanut - entertainingly castigates the WTO, IMF and EU for outlawing the kind of subsidies that could support the cultivation of cashew, brazil and groundnuts in underdeveloped countries that he, himself, enjoys at home. That's why he can undercut their price on the world market. That's unfair.

**Nothing could destroy me. ... I was strong and smart and I would find my maker. Ha!** Rahmin Behrami (2009) **Plastic Bag**

Or take Rahmin Behrami's (2009) beautiful, eerie short film, 'Plastic Bag'. In a strong male Bavarian accent, its floaty orange star narrates his life. Used, binned, blown, tangled, sunk, eaten; from checkout to bin, to dump - desolate place after place - to an ocean swimming with fish and littered with plastic trash. He expresses deep sadness about past relationships with humans and a haunting, existential search for new love and his 'maker', in the sea. That's heartbreaking.

**Why shouldn't a planet where consumer goods outnumber consumers be seen as populated by objects first, and people second?** Viewer comment on Plastic Bag.

When commodities start telling us about their lives, it can be a ridiculous, surprising, intriguing experience. It can interfere with our understandings of people, commodities, economies, systems and the ways they work together. These speaking things can help us to empathise with, and respond to, assemblages that are more than just people. And that can be sooo thought-provoking...





## Should I be in a museum ?

**Name:** My Friend Cayla

**Height:** 18 inches (46 centimeters)

**Appearance:** Seven year old girl. Blond, Brunette or African American.

**Target audience:** Suitable for children aged 4 and over.

**Sold:** 2014-2017.

**Significance:** World's first internet-connected talking doll for girls.

**Power:** 3 x AA batteries.

**Price:** £29.87 on amazon.co.uk (NB buyer will also need to have paid for a smartphone or tablet on which to install and run the doll's app, and for access to wireless mobile telecommunications technology).

**Creator:** Bob Delprincipe, Las Vegas.

**Awards:** 2014: Innovative Toy of the Year, London Toy Industry Association. 2015: Most Wanted Doll, Toys, Tots, Pets & More.

**Manufactured by:** ToyQuest, Putou Industrial Area, Huzhen Town, Boluo, Huizhou, China. Toyquest is a division of Manley Toys Direct, a subsidiary of a Hong Kong-based corporation. ToyQuest developed the first ever electronic robotic dog, Tekno the Robotic Puppy, in 2000.

**What Cayla can say:** Pre-written 1,935 lines of 'personality' script and what is written on websites like Wikipedia.

**What Cayla cannot say:** Answers to questions or responses to statements that don't contain a suitable key word relating to a line from the script. Anything identified with the app-based internet search filter list as containing one of 1,356 bad words including Anglicanism, Banged, Crack Whore, Dingle Berry, Exhibitionist, Fuckbuddy, Gay Marriage, Holocaust, Interracial, Jihadist, Kill, Lactate, Menstrual, Nun, Orgasm, Pollock, Queer, Redneck, Semsimilla, Tampon, Unmentionables, Violence, Wax and XTC.

**Mechanism:** A microphone embedded in the doll's chest picks up a child's voice and sends what is said via Bluetooth to an Apple or Android app downloaded onto a smartphone or tablet. The app sends the voice data via 3G to third party servers to be analysed by voice recognition software. Keywords are used to select a response from the database which is 'read out' by text-to-speech processes configured to sound like the voice of a 7 year old girl. This is played via a speaker in the doll's chest and sometimes includes

pre-recorded giggles and songs sung with music. If a keyword is not recognised in the child's speech, the doll is prompted to reply with "Just give me a minute to think about that"

I don't eat bacon

or a similar statement. Third party software then searches on websites like Wikipedia for a text that corresponds to words that have been recognised. This process can take a matter of seconds. But, if the speech-to-text software struggles with the child's accent or vocabulary and does not recognise the child's request, the doll can say "That's a tough one. I'll have to ask my teacher". The doll can also misidentify words in the child's speech and return with what seem like random responses.

**Controversy:** In January 2015, a BBC News technology show reported that My Friend Cayla's unsecured Bluetooth connection and database had been hacked by security researcher Ken Munro from Pentest Partners. The doll was basically a bluetooth headset that could be accessed to listen and talk to the child playing with it from up to 15 metres away. Instructions on the Pentest website also revealed how to easily modify the database to make Cayla swear. In December 2016, 18 US consumer groups filed a formal complaint to the

I'm always trying to be a good girl. I'm never the bad girl. I try to be friends with everyone

12p

Don't be mad. I love you. That's all that matters.

I would love to go with you

Sometimes grown-ups can be busy and get stressed out. He didn't mean to make you feel bad. Your dad loves you

Federal Trade Commission against distributor Genesis Toys and speech recognition technology provider Nuance Communications for its 'ongoing surveillance' of children playing with My Friend Cayla (and its 'brother' i-Que robot designed for boys). Something which posed an 'imminent and immediate threat' to their safety and security. Because the doll and its app sent to Nuance personal data that it requested from children to make conversation, such as their names, their parents' names, where they lived and where they went to school. Parents and guardians were not, the complaints alleged, made aware neither about My Friend Cayla's collection of data from their children in an easily understandable way, nor how it could be used by Nuance in

the future, especially in relation to the company's other work developing voice-recognition programmes for the US military and police.

In 2016, the Norwegian Consumer Council added another concern: that My Friend Cayla breached advertising regulations because it directly placed paid-for commercial placements into childrens' conversations with the doll - Disney princesses and films and toy retailers, like Argos and Smyths that they could visit in the countries where the doll was sold. Further complaints were filed in France, Sweden, Greece, Belgium, Ireland and the Netherlands. Then - going back to the BBC exposé - in February 2017 Germany's Federal Network Agency instructed parents to destroy their children's My Friend Cayla dolls because,

with a history of abusive state surveillance, it was illegal to have or to sell a surveillance device that looks like an object of everyday use. The advice given was to smash your children's doll with a hammer. The penalty for not doing so could be up to two years in jail. In August 2019, Ken Munro tweeted that My Friend Cayla's app and website was no longer available in the UK, although the US versions remained online. Was this, he wrote, the 'beginning of the end for my swearsy doll?'

**Exhibition:** The Museum of Contemporary Commodities, London and Exeter (2015-17), The Museum of Failure, Sweden (2017-date), the Spy Museum, Berlin (2017-date), and the Science and Media Museum, Bradford (2018-19).

I like to watch movies about princesses. They're my favourite

I think my opinion is the same as yours

Do you need glasses? No, I am definitely not a boy.

That's not true. Everyone is beautiful in their own way.

**Challenge:** How could such a doll be scripted to talk about itself as an It-Toy, a Toy-of-Circulation? How could it encourage those who play with it to think about what it is made from and who made it? How could a doll like this be scripted to nurture a different kind of gender politics? (see p. 42-43).

13p



## 6. HOW TO RUN A DATA WALKSHOP

After our shopping trips, we became curious to know more about how the tracking and surveillance of everyday activities through smartphones and other digital technologies was connected to shop-based and online trading. How did our interactions with digital platforms change how we value the things we buy and the places we buy them in? What exactly was the role of data in all that?

Media and communications scholar Alison Powell worked with us to run public research events called data workshops. These were rapid, group knowledge production events where participants observed and speculated on how different forms of data mediation related to specific objects and moments of trade and exchange. On the page opposite, group observations from data workshops in Finsbury Park give a sense of how it all worked in practice.

Findings from these first workshops (Activities 6, 7 & 8) and what we had learned through accompanied shopping and our research on the talking doll influenced our design of the participation framework of the MoCC Free Market (Activity 9). Data workshops as a form of public pedagogy activity also took place at the MoCC shop in Exeter and MoCC exhibition in Kensington (Activities 20 & 30).

If you would like to run a trade related data walkshop yourself, here are the instructions we assembled:

## INTRODUCTION:

We are setting out to investigate the observable traces of trade-exchange mediations. We are interested especially in mediations by data, but also the various ways that we can observe trade-exchange experience being mediated through other means. We will do this by re-mixing a method called “Flashmob ethnography” (Forlano, 2010), with the collaborative urban landscape exploration of the ‘walkshop’ (Greenfield, 2010).

## METHODS:

We will begin by discussing the terms: data, information, trade justice for around 30 minutes in order to seed a shared understanding of what we're approaching. We will then split into groups, and each group member will have a research task:

**Navigator/Sketcher:** Map or sketch the pathways taken by the group as well as individual spaces that are being observed.

**Notetaker/Interviewer:** Take detailed minute-by-minute notes of observations. Interact with passersby or people on the street if/as appropriate.

**Photographer/Videographer:** Take photos and/or video clips during observation.

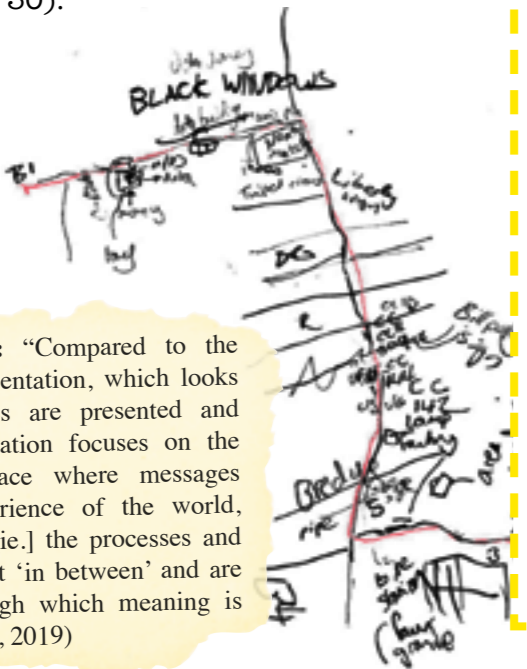
**Collector:** Bring back a found or purchased artefact from the field.

We will walk in our groups for twenty minutes in different directions. Whilst walking we will identify, document and enact the following:

Look for where data is collected, displayed, mediated and acted upon. Find instances of places that are

1. data rich or busy
2. data calm
3. where data mediation is important.

**Data mediation:** “Compared to the concept of representation, which looks at how messages are presented and interpreted, mediation focuses on the sociomaterial space where messages about, and experience of the world, are produced... [i.e.] the processes and dynamics that get ‘in between’ and are the modes through which meaning is created.” (Powell, 2019)



Pigeons liked to perch here but can't any longer. Why is this data mediation? What needs to be measured and what is being valued and by whom by putting these spikes in place?



A receipt dated the 00th of the 00th 2000 for a bottle of water bought at a kiosk in Finsbury Park station on 7th of May 2015. How do we know when our data is being processed properly? Should we get a receipt for that?



The pub on the corner ‘has the most surveillance cameras in the area.’ Do they all work? How is what they capture combined with other data and information infrastructure? How is installation of surveillance cameras (real or fake) a form of place curation?

A gym poster. A fitbit. An entrance band. Advertising and providing access to services and spaces. Collecting our health data and relating it to our gym attendance? Adding to metadata that shapes public and private health services?



Book swop box - what kind of trade and exchange takes place outside of economic systems? What kind of labour does it depend on? What value does it have to us? What values does it share with others?



Council signpost information  
- Who designs and builds the  
larger infrastructure that  
shapes smaller moments of data  
mediation? If this lamp is faulty  
are you the missing link?



RFID reader on the bike shed gate - What's inside this smooth surface that human hands can't open? What are we paying for access to facilities and services? Who else knows when and how we use them and for what reasons?



### **PROMPTS FOR DISCUSSION:**

- When is data mediation visible and when not? Who or what is enacting control? How?
- What values are being held in these negotiations?
- What or who are the commodities being traded? Who profits?
- Does this particular form of trade-exchange really represent us? What are its impacts?

**- Are alternative experiences possible? What might they be?**

# Collecting / categorising / colonising

**“In the British Museum, you have the African galleries, and it’s like, ‘This drum is from 1500 Ashanti,’ but there is nothing else about it. You don’t know what it is used for, what context it’s from, how it was brought here, who stole it. The museum as it exists today is so much an imperialist project and is so much about power”**  
Nana Oforiatta Ayim (2017).

Museums collect and store objects and artefacts of significance, and exhibit them in ways that make them able to be seen through particular lenses. Things are curated and displayed in groups, torn out of their life-worlds and re-interpreted as a form of public education. What is authorised as valuable is related to the narrative in which it is situated, historically is written by the dominant cultural group, and many museums have collections rooted in the violent acquisition of colonial expansion.

When we first began work on MoCC we imagined that using a form of feminist curation to create a grass roots type collection, would be the primary way we could use a museum-like framework to re-value contemporary commodity cultures. We would do this by working collaboratively with MoCC visitors as co-curators. Collecting and displaying commodities as exhibits, contextualising them and interpreting their meaning and value collectively using multiple narratives. We imagined working with digital art processes to help us do that, but had not yet understood how digital platform economies themselves enact coloniality through their design, infrastructures, objects and protocols.

**“First, you look around the world and you find things that are unowned or barely owned, or lightly owned ... Second, you bring these unowned things into the corporation and into the maws of design and engineering groups. There you improve it, rationalize it, package it, gussy it up, make it smooth and consistent. Third, amazingly, you sell it back to the same people who once used it, for free, while it was unowned”**  
Rich Gold (2007).

Internet-connected things, their infrastructures and protocols are designed to enforce and exploit new globally standardised social contracts between

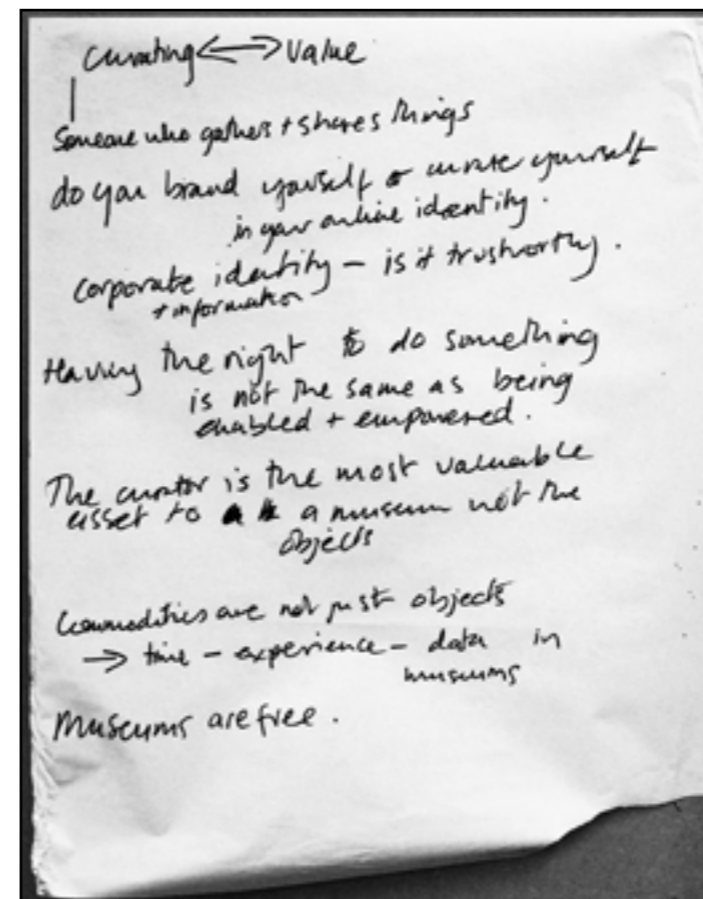
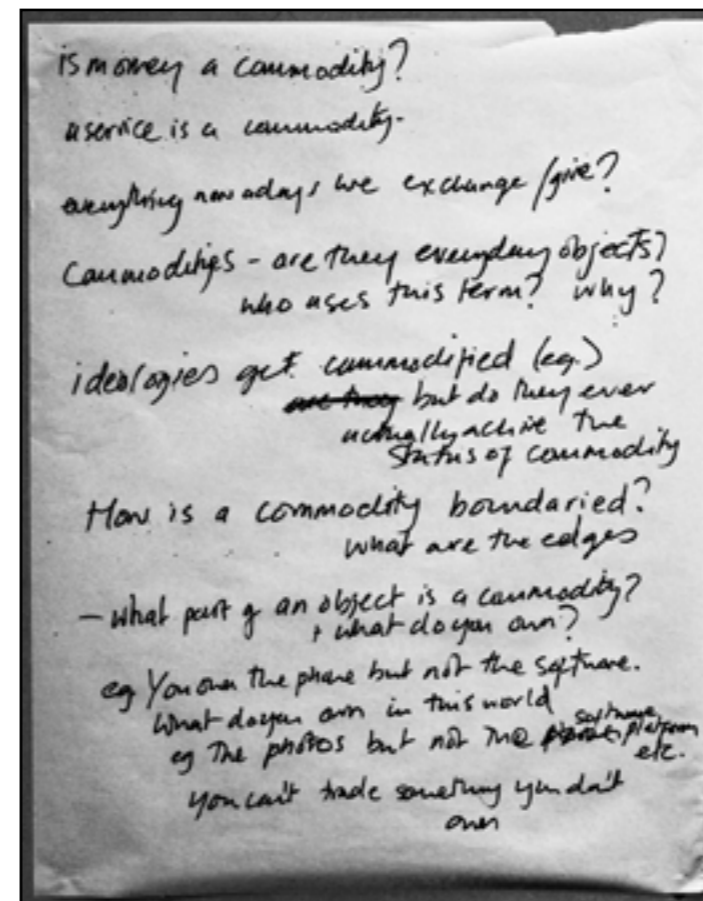
humans and also between humans and objects. User experience design competes for and quantifies attention, and diverse, localised users are largely ignorant of how their data is being captured and categorised, or what they’re triggering with their devices as they move through the personalised spectacle that is daily life. Customer relations are re-framed as models of value co-creation, bringing all kinds of emotional and vocational labour, quotidian activities, practices and places into datafied commodity form through coerced or obfuscated mechanisms.

These are unequal power structures that are used to re-shape social realities by changing what counts as proximal and relevant to us, contributing to biased systems that reinforce unconscious habits and patterns of valuing that we might not choose if we were aware of them. Ulises Ali Mejias (2013) compares this to colonial power, where individuals have subjecthood but not citizenship, or in some cases subjecthood and citizenship, and can locate themselves in a world view but are restricted in the governance of that world.

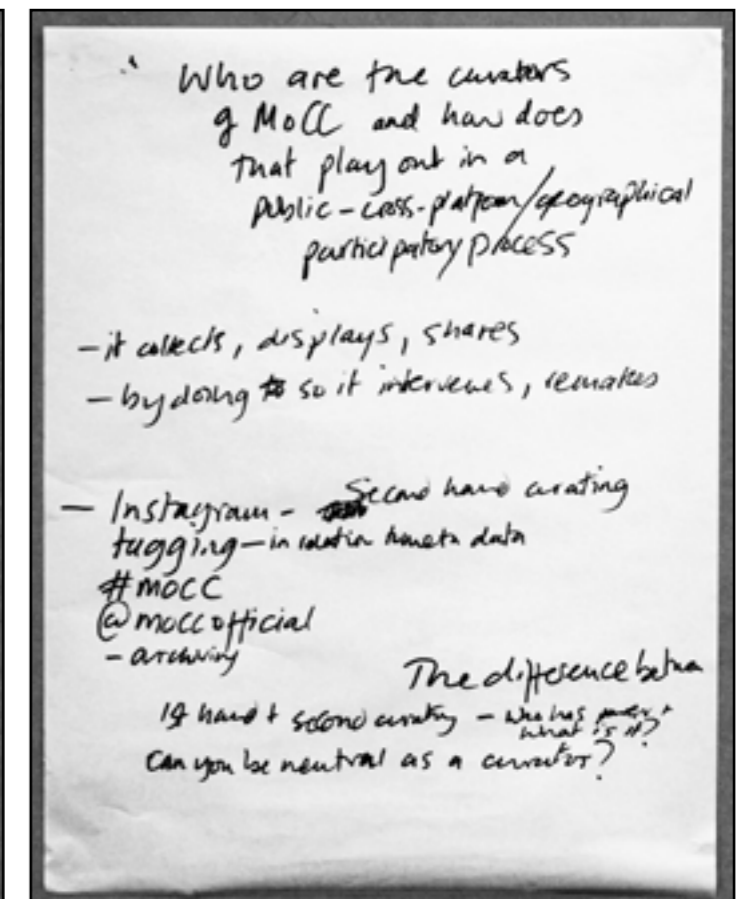
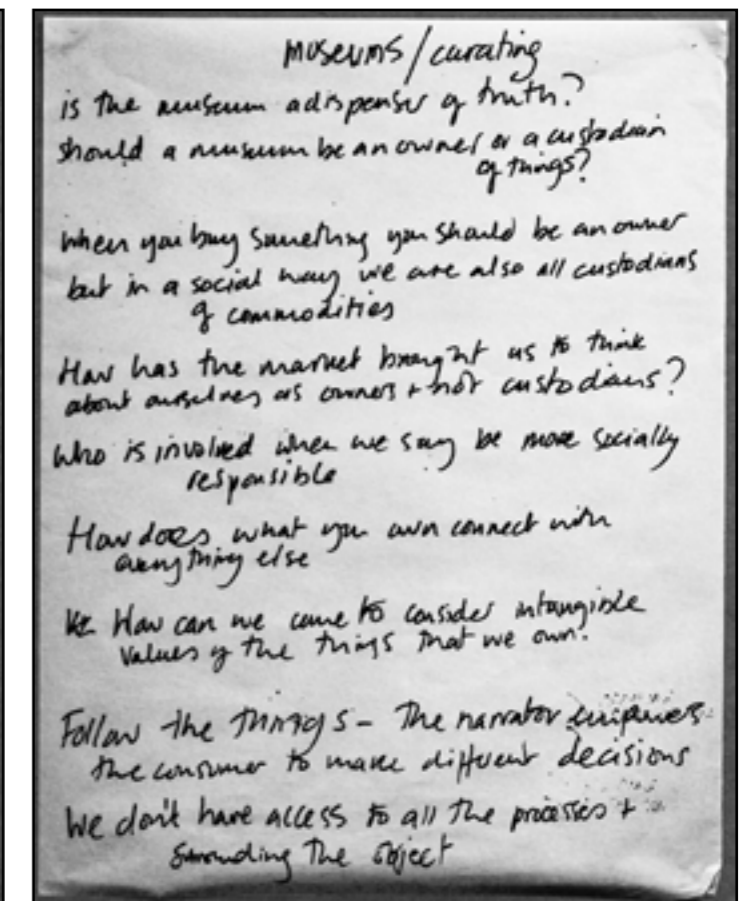
**“... in order to de-colonise datafication and data relations ... we need to refrain from literally colonizing them in the first place ... Rather we should seek to investigate, from below and from the inside, the ever temporary realpolitik that informs today’s networked ecology ... [and] foster a virtuous cycle that leads new generations to reshape the human-data-environment ensemble as a whole and by remaining within - reimagining - the networked ecology”**

Stefano Calzati (2021).

Through the DIY creation and collaborative curation of a digitally networked museum of contemporary commodities, we were forced to look more closely at some of the frictionless and black boxed processes of digital platform economies. Paying attention to these unequal power structures turned our museum into a different kind of co-creative valuing process. Prompting conversations and questions about how or even if these networked ecologies might be unmade and done differently.



**“Datafication** is the transformation of social action into online quantified data, thus allowing for real-time tracking and predictive analysis.”  
(van Dijck 2014)



Wall notes made in the MoCC Prototyping Workshop (Activity 7.)

7. MoCC PROTOTYPING WORKSHOP



Our accompanied shopping (Activity 5), data walkshop (Activity 6) and talking doll research helped us to consider how relations between data, trade, place and values are designed, coerced and evolve to encourage particular trade and consumption practices and habits. We needed to make these abstract ideas more tangible and easily discussable as part of our future MoCC events.

In 2008 Ian visited a ranKing ranQueen shop in Tokyo's Shibuya Station. Aiming at a commuter market, it only sold the top 3, 5 or 10 best-selling products in different categories as determined by the Tokyu department store's weekly sales figures and independent sources. As one store tagline put it, "if you have trouble making decisions, let statistics help you" (CNN, 2009). The commodities were displayed beautifully backlit and tagged with full product details. A customer-object-place curation that brought the performativity of data-based digital platform cultures to life in an involving and accessible way.

We wanted to create some critical, social interactions that would do the same kind of thing for our upcoming 'MoCC Free Market' (Event 9). A two day workshop with post-graduate students from Central Saint Martins' MA in Narrative Environments helped us begin this process. After interrogating the project's key terms together, we went on a data walkshop to situate our making in the local context. We put the found

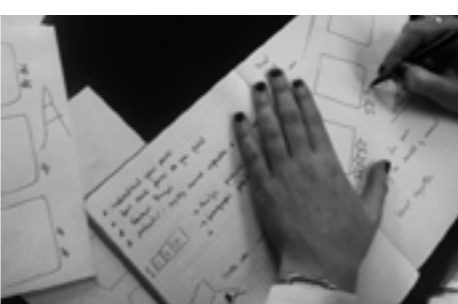


objects we returned with through different data categorisation processes, experimenting with ways of naming, sorting and valuing, and discussing how this affected their meaning to us. After paying a site visit to Furtherfield Gallery where we would be staging our activities, we combined social art and design methods to make a series of interaction prototypes to test with our Free Market visitors.

**Prototypes** are artefacts, systems and processes that are "open to scrutiny and re-adaptation" based on 'user' input. As such they are also open to failure, can make room for non-experts in the design process, and can perhaps allow for new forms of 'social durability' and organisation to emerge (Jimenez, 2015).

- PROTOTYPE INTERACTION DESIGN BRIEF**
- Devise an activity related to commodity cultures or commodity frameworks that also offers participants a way to intervene in those cultures or frameworks.
  - Use a data gathering process - take an ethical approach to this.
  - Use categorisation and ranking.
  - Is there sound?
  - How can this activity be used to defy or reframe existing narratives?
  - Consider the place the activity will be staged in and how that affects participant experience.
  - Make it a social experience.

FOREBUY: THE SCIENTIFIC MACHINE



Each working group was given an hour to map out their interaction. This is one of them. Information gained from the data walkshop was used to think about how commodities available in local, independent shops could become future purchases.



It was a struggle to turn what might be considered a negative process of algorithmic control and big data manipulation into a potentially positive interaction.



Maybe a star rating system could affect which future purchase would be recommended during this prototype interaction?



A tinfoil machine surface was made, behind which algorithmic analysis would take place.



- Instructions for users:**
- Draw your last two online purchases in the boxes on the pre-designed forms.
  - Assign star ratings for satisfaction to each purchase.
  - Pin the paper to the front of the machine.

**"Predictive analytics** is the branch of data mining concerned with the prediction of future probabilities and trends. The central element of predictive analytics is the predictor, a variable that can be measured for an individual or other entity to predict future behavior." (Ochs & Briemann 2018).



After much data based activity, your predicted next purchase would appear out of a slot on the side of the machine.



This uncannily accurate data based process would not only tell you what you were going to buy next, it would also give you a map of where to buy it! A local, independent business within easy walking distance.

**"Prefigurative politics** refers to a political orientation based on the premise that the ends a social movement achieves are fundamentally shaped by the means it employs, and that movements [and social artworks] should therefore do their best to choose means that embody or "prefigure" the kind of society they want to bring about." (Leach 2013).

Through the design of **Forebuy: the scientific machine**, the students prototyped the potential for predictive analytics to become prefigurative politics. A great way of stimulating deeper conversations on the processes and consequences of datafication.

# MoCC QUIZ

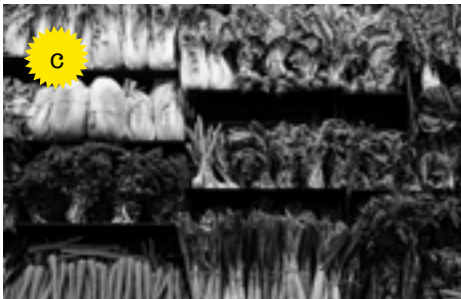


Hello nice visitor! Want to know what kind of shopper you are?

Take our super quick and convenient quiz...

...and let your choices determine your destiny?

## Question 1. Which place do you like best?



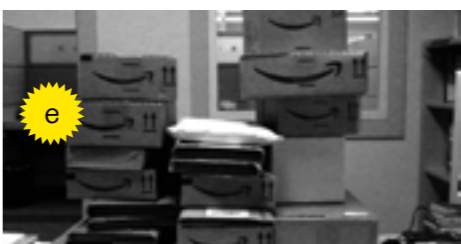
## Question 2. You're feeling a bit down in the dumps do you...

- a. Spend a couple of hours adding up points on your loyalty cards.
- b. Find a comfy chair in the library and read a good book.
- c. Redeem the money off coupon you got with your organic veg box and order three boxes of hand-made fudge from the start up down the road.
- d. Hang out on social media and see what's trending.
- e. Sign up for an online course in self-esteem building.
- f. Meditate.

## Question 3. Your fridge freezer is really on its way out, do you...

- a. Keep your milk in a bucket of water and wait for the end of season sales.
- b. Go second hand and pay cash
- c. Consult with your local electrical shop about energy ratings and how to minimise the terrible consequences of built in obsolescence. They also do responsible disposal.
- d. Buy a Smeg.
- e. Read the customer reviews from your favourite online store and order next day delivery.

## Question 4. Which object best represents you?



## Question 5. You're looking for somewhere to live. Do you...

- a. Look in the auction for houses just outside the commuter zone.
- b. Sublet a house boat from a friend of a friend.
- c. Restore your perfect rural idyll to its former glory using local craftspeople and traditional materials.
- d. Flatshare two to a room. Location matters.
- e. Input your price, postcode, number of bedrooms. Sorted.
- f. Build your own.

## Question 6. You fancy eating out. Do you...

- a. Groupon for an all you can eat buffet.
- b. Make a packed lunch and take a picnic blanket to the park.
- c. Try out the new world food cafe down the road. They do sustainably sourced seafood.
- d. You booked into the most exclusive restaurant in town two months ago.
- e. Who needs to eat out when you can get the restaurant to deliver to the comfort of your own home.
- f. You organise a potluck night with your friends.

## Question 7. You've forgotten your best friend's birthday. You have to turn up with a present tonight. Do you...

- a. Find a two for one deal. It's your Mum's birthday next week.
- b. Go down the local market, there's bound to be something suitable.
- c. Gift a goat to an African villager on your friend's behalf.
- d. You've seen just the thing. You buy it in gun metal grey.
- e. Google their preferences. Book two tickets and get them delivered in a gift card to their address.
- f. That's just enough time to whittle a...

Add up your Score and see what kind of shopper you are below

Letter	a	b	c	d	e	f
How many?						

**Mostly e:** The Clickaholic - Spending as little time as possible shopping friends. Who knows, it might already be waiting for you when you arrive home? Congratulations you're the perfect shopper!

**Mostly f:** The Survivorist - Why spend money when you can make something yourself? Or swap something you don't need? Congratulations you're a terrible shopper!

**Mostly c:** The Good Shopper - Doing your best for your body, for the local neighbourhood, for the planet is a great thing, but a bit hard on the pocket? Congratulations you're the perfect shopper!

**Mostly d:** The Trendy Wendy - Being of the zeitgeist means you have your finger on the pulse of what's new, and you're always first in the queue. Congratulations you're the perfect shopper!

**Mostly b:** The Stealth Shopper - Anonymity is a rare thing in today's world and people have to work really hard to find it. Congratulations! You have the perfect credentials to be a spy/criminal/homeless person.

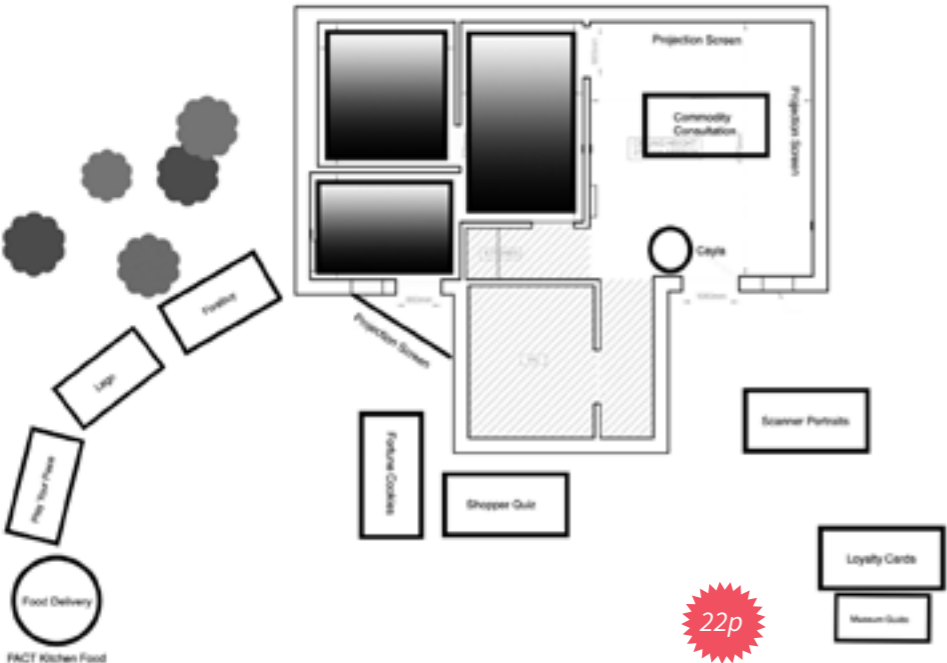
**Mostly a:** The Bargain Hunter - There's nothing like the thrill of getting value for money. Your inbox must be overflowing. Your social media well tailored to your tastes. Congratulations you're the perfect shopper!

# 9. TRADE YOUR DATA AT THE MoCC FREE MARKET!

122 people joined us from 17-19 July 2015 at the MoCC Free Market at Furtherfield Gallery in Finsbury Park. This was the first time we assembled our ideas into one place for a general audience. Staging both the activities and the event structure as prototypes was a way of making our research more transparent and unstable, and therefore more able to be intervened in by visitors as contributing ‘users’.

Entry to the Free Market was negotiated through visitors trading their data by giving us their feedback on the experience. We wanted to invite passersby as much as Furtherfield’s existing media art audiences to join us, and used a lively, open, DIY

aesthetic, like a school fete or a party in the park. The market stall type set up meant that visitors could ‘enter’ the event from any point. Each activity came to the theme from a different angle, and conversations about what was happening and why were both expected and easily managed. The event became a data trading performance, where visitors were both actor and commentator. Playing out the activity and also reflecting on how well its structure worked and what it made them think and feel. There was a sense of everyone experimenting and holding the event together between them. If the visitors didn’t do their bit as much as the organisers, then the Free Market wouldn’t work.



Signing up to trade their data in return for ‘free entry’ to the event. After having the process explained, visitors chose whether or not to be photographed, completing a loyalty card with their feedback as they made their way around the event. A completed **Loyalty Card** got a **data fortune cookie** reward (page 46).

The amount of data visitors were willing to trade with us was signalled by the wearing of a red or blue badge



The **talking doll** spoke to visitors about the Museum of Contemporary Commodities and its future heritage. Attached to the gallery PA system its voice travelled across the park.



thickear’s **Record Store** invited the sharing of your personal data through an interview, recorded on an analogue tape for you to keep and play back at home. They made a duplicate of course... for their records.



Visitors made moments of trade and exchange into **animated LEGO GIFs**, and we talked together about what they meant to us.



Throughout the event, **data flags** blew good wishes for ethical algorithms through all sentient beings.



You could find out what kind of shopper you were by taking the **MoCC quiz** (p.20-21).



**Forebuy** (p.19) predicted your next local purchase. Prompting conversation about how commodities are valued in context.



**Scanner portraits** made digital imaging more gestural



Ruth Catlow’s public game-jam activity **Play Your Place** imagined the future of Finsbury Park by devising the resources and rules for an online platform game together.



*‘I’d never really thought about how I shop... and what I most align myself with. So the questions seem quite straightforward, then the results at the end... what it revealed about me... I’m a stealthy ermm... Trendy Wendy shopper. Meaning that I value my anonymity. I value my privacy. But I also want to be very trendy... which ... I don’t know about the trendy... (laughs)... It’s kind of sad that the defacto is to assume that we are being tracked and that we are being looked at... And sometimes I just don’t want to be. Like why? Why should I be? What do they want from me? I should be volunteering the information not immediately being assumed that it’s just going to be taken anyway. So yeah I don’t want to assume what I might want to wear, what I might like. I don’t want to try and influence the culture that way.’*

(Free Market visitor)




Freshly prepared **‘takeaways’** from the PACT People’s Kitchen were made from surplus food donated by local shops, and vegetables from the Edible Landscapes garden. We delivered it across the park to the gallery on bikes borrowed from Wheely Tots.

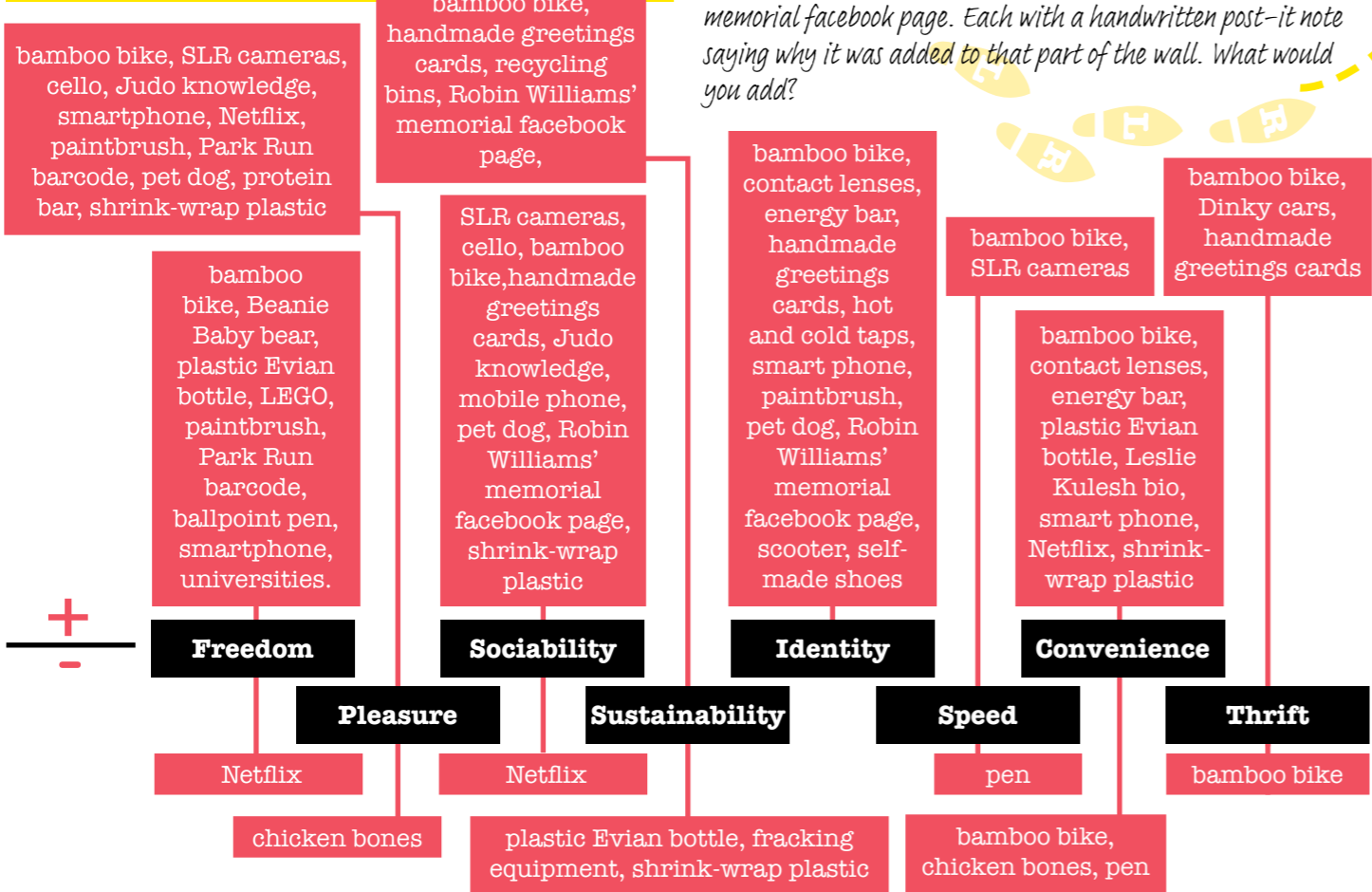


Inside the gallery we prototyped our key curatorial activity... **Add to MoCC.**

**Add to MoCC**  
in this museum we are all the curators



Inside the Furtherfield Gallery, visitors curated printed commodity images into a paper interface spread around the room. This is where we prototyped how the MoCC collection might be collectively curated to become a shared, online knowledge platform. This collecting, categorising and valuing of commodities was accompanied by a sound loop of money going into slots, the strange hum of an empty mall at 6am, laughter and supermarket scanners - the gentle human and mechanical ebb and flow of trade and exchange. The value categories on the wall were drawn from the accompanied shopping trips (p. 8-9). We printed new categories and added them as they were suggested by visitors. Most people entered with no idea of what to add to the museum, but a few simple questions provided inspiration by generating conversations that revealed the hidden depths of commodity worlds and their value structures. 33 commodities were added in 17 value categories over 3 days. Here we guide you through the conversational process of a visitor adding contact lenses to the collection.



"Welcome to the Museum of Commodities. What brings you here today? In this museum anyone can be a curator. We're choosing commodities that will communicate something to future generations. Things that matter to us for one reason or another. What would you like to add? Something you collect. Something you're never without. You don't have to choose right away."



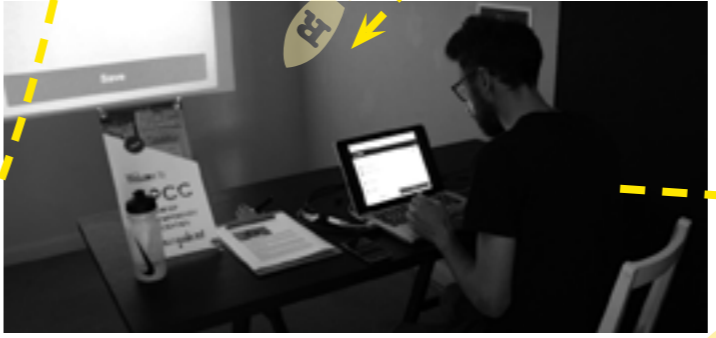
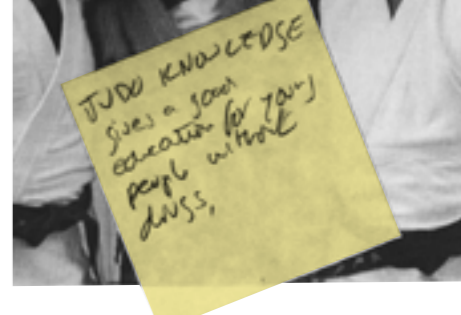
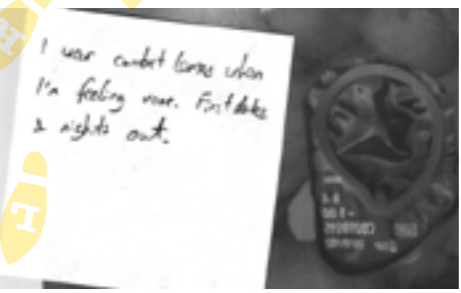
"The museum's value tags show how people have valued their commodities so far. Look closer. Someone's added their bamboo-framed bike. Their cello. Their smartphone. The Parkrun barcode they found outside. Their 3 kinds of SLR camera. Robin Williams' memorial facebook page. Each with a handwritten post-it note saying why it was added to that part of the wall. What would you add?"



"Your contact lenses. That's interesting. Where would they go? OK, so I'll print out three contact lens photos. One to value their 'speed', one for 'identity' and one for 'convenience'. If you blutac a photo above the 'speed' tag, that says you value it positively. Maybe it's fast. But you could also value it negatively. Below could mean slow. Every tag can work this way."



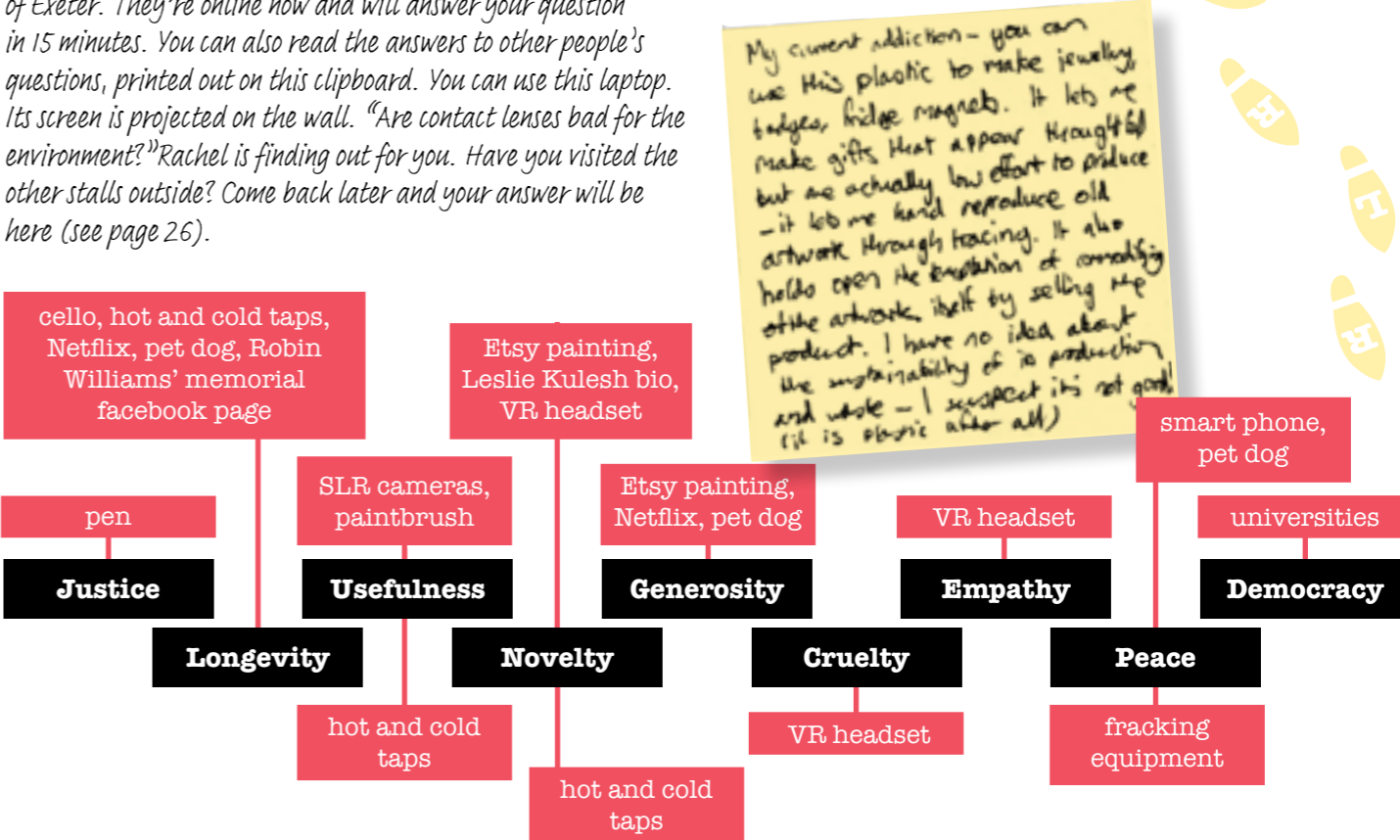
"Now you've stuck your photos on, would you mind adding a post-it note on each one explaining why it's there? What does it add to your life? Thanks."



"If you want to know more about your commodity you can ask our commodity consultants. Ian's former students at the University of Exeter. They're online now and will answer your question in 15 minutes. You can also read the answers to other people's questions, printed out on this clipboard. You can use this laptop. Its screen is projected on the wall. 'Are contact lenses bad for the environment?' Rachel is finding out for you. Have you visited the other stalls outside? Come back later and your answer will be here (see page 26)."



"Thank you for adding to MoCC. We can now stamp your loyalty card. There are two stamps for this interaction. Good to meet you. Enjoy the rest of your day."



## COMMODITY CONSULTATIONS

The questions our visitors asked were straight-forward, mischievous and/or complicated. In return for adding something to MoCC, our consultants offered ‘free’ customer service labour, quickly searching Wikipedia, newspaper websites, blogs and academic publications for answers, and cutting and pasting them into long personalised email responses with links to their sources. 22 questions were asked and answered, all with the same attention to detail. Here’s a taste of three of them:

**Commodity added:** contact lenses

**Question:** are contact lenses bad for the environment?

**Answer:** ““Disposable contact lenses carry an obvious waste burden, as well as arriving in sanitised blister packs and with plastic bottles of solution. But daily contacts (although single-use) do not require the solutions needed by weeklies or monthlies, so waste calculations might not be as clear as previously thought. One day in the not-too-distant future ... contacts may be made from renewable materials such as soya bean. Until that day, glasses are generally the more sustainable option. Their frames, however, are made from heavily laminated acetates which are derived from non-renewable oil. Their manufacture is highly polluting” quoted from **The Guardian**

**Commodity added:** Fracking equipment

**Question asked:** We would like to go into fracking equipment, and wonder if there is a fracking equipment machine available that we can afford. If we went into fracking equipment we would need to do so in our neighbourhood, which is Fitzrovia / Westminster.

**Answer:** “Weir and Rolls Royce ... seem like the best option as it is an all-in-one fracking pump aimed at cutting industry costs. Therefore you won’t need to purchase any costly additional equipment as with [other manufacturers]. Rolls Royce produces the engine and Weir makes the pump to make a combined engine, transmission and pump system. ... A recent article has suggested the Government minister for Scotland ... along with the Tory government has been stealing property rights to aid fracking companies. So perhaps if you set up a legal, for profit business entity you may be able to persuade someone in Westminster to allocate the property rights of the land you wish to frack to your organisation. ...” paraphrased from the **Daily Telegraph & Rob Edwards**

**Commodity added:** Universities

**Question asked:** It seems as though every element of higher education can be sold or branded as a commodity. Is there any element of higher education that resists this tendency by its very nature?

**Answer:** “The connection of higher education and society through emergent technologies is important in defining spaces for dissent and pushing-back that are technologically-enabled, because the University remains a symbol of those places where mass intellectuality can be consumed, produced and more importantly contributed to by all. Thus, the revelation of shared experiences of alienation inside the social factory, using emerging technologies that heighten the sensation of oppression and enable them to be shared, offers a possibility that new sites of opposition and critique can be created. ... However, academics inside the University have little room for manoeuvre ... given the ideological, political drive towards, for instance, indentured study and debt, internationalisation, privatisation and outsourcing. As a result, the internal logic of the University is increasingly prescribed by the rule of money, which forecloses on the possibility of creating transformatory social relationships as against fetishised products and processes of valorisation. ... This exploitation is witnessed in affective technologies through playbor in games-based industries ..., and in the harvesting of cloud-based data for the the subsumption of identities for further accumulation by social networks ..., or in the enclosure of the open web through augmentation applications that are designed for profit .... Thus, the fetishisation of personalisation, of self-branding, of the emergent technologies through which individuals connect, risks the commodification of each and every action we take in the world. However, this enhanced, connected, semantic web of social relations also offers a crack through which the domination of capital might be opposed.” quoted from **tripleC**



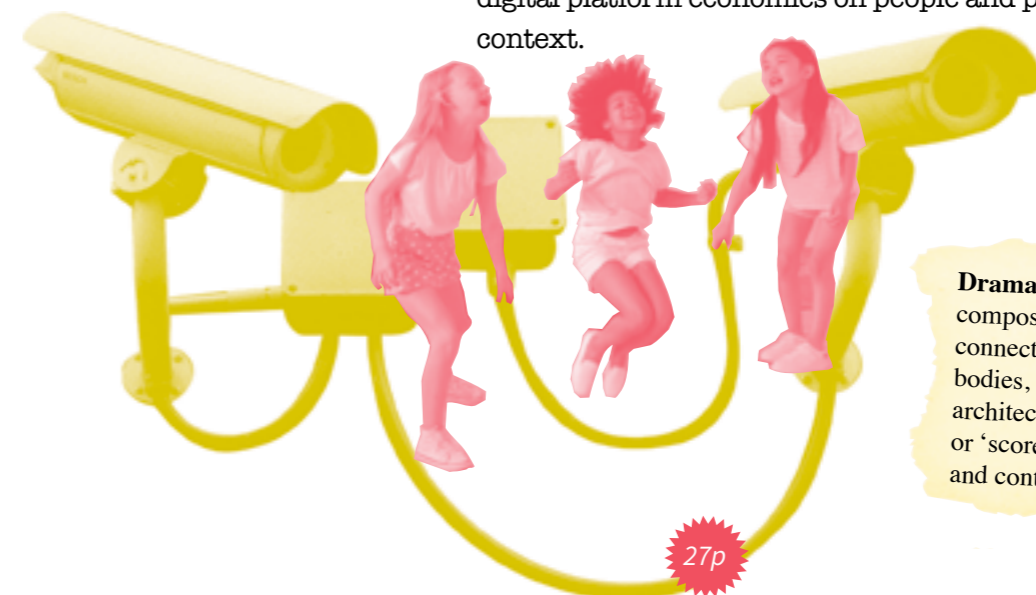
## 17. MoCC SHOP IN EXETER



A sign found on our Exeter data walkshop (Activity 20) helped us to shape and perform our research ethics with visitors to the MoCC shop in Exeter.



During the next ten months we worked with our creative technologist collaborator to turn the paper prototypes into a set of digital activities that people could access online. Our idea was to stage them as part of a ‘pop-up’ museum event in an empty shop on Fore Street in Exeter. This would be a parodic dramaturgy that would connect the visibility and valuing of commodities with data processes in a similarly performative way as ranKing, ranQueen did in Tokyo. Our work in Finsbury Park had begun to reveal and discuss how the hidden systems and processes of datafied trading can affect our places, habits and perceptions of value. Rather than being smooth and frictionless, we purposefully made our museum-shop dramaturgy and its digital interfaces to be disruptive to these habits of perception, hoping to highlight the particular effects of digital platform economies on people and places in this different local context.



**Dramaturgy** is the purposeful composition of elements, sequences and connective networks - ‘settings, people, bodies, things, texts, histories, voices, architectures’ – that emerge as ‘rehearsed’ or ‘scored’ activity or event in space, time and context (Turner, 2010).

# Shops that don't sell anything

We had used empty shops owned by private companies in other parts of the city for previous performance and public pedagogy work. This time, with the help and networks of Art Week Exeter, MoCC leased what had previously been a hairdressing salon owned by Exeter City Council. Situated between the redeveloped, privatised city centre shopping areas and the 'indie' area of town, many different kinds of people gathered throughout the day on the benches outside.

On first impression, this shop had very little in it. Like a high end retail store selling just one brand of consumer electronics. Look closer, though, and it was full of commodities. Like its ceiling and floor tiles, paint, wall fittings and shelves, lights and plugs, tables and chairs, fire criers, door furniture and panes of glass. As well as lampposts, traffic lights and street furniture outside...all of which we itemised and labelled. We could make the same type of shop space elsewhere if we purchased

these same commodities. With the exception of our branding, marketing and display stands, we borrowed or upcycled everything we could. Using local shops and services where possible, we talked about where everything had come from, performing our politics as DIY and low environmental impact aesthetics.

This iteration of MoCC was a complete inversion of its siting - a shop that didn't sell anything and a museum that didn't really display anything. The confident branding invited people into an ambiguous atmosphere that mixed functional, administrative and theatrical. It was an event dramaturgy that performed the 'inside workings' of digitally networked and datafied commodity culture whilst purposefully drawing attention to how that performance was constructed, allowing both MoCC workers and MoCC visitors to reflect on and question our roles within it.



"Are these museums opening up all over the country?"  
visitor to the MoCC shop in Exeter



The window became like a cinema screen. Framing the street as an unfolding drama and connecting the activities inside with the wider retail environment.



We set up MoCC Guide Mikayla ready for conversation in an alcove off the side of the main shop space.



On the back wall of the shop we arranged a printout display of what was currently headlining the front page of our MoCC collection website.



MoCC Shopping

The MoCC curatorial statement (p.1) was printed on a large vinyl, catching the eyes of passersby through the front window. Some did a double take. ‘Oh this looks nice... what is it?’ Others entered purposefully. Wanting to talk to the doll that was on the poster on the A-frame outside. ‘Is this conceptual art?’ ‘Are these museums opening up all over the country?’ they asked.

7 of us worked in shifts. We wore grey, upcycled lab coats suggesting a non-specific expertise - caretaker, technician, warehouse staff. We were there to introduce visitors to the MoCC shop and ask what they would like to add to its collection. We listened and explained. Helping visitors to navigate the activities. Moving backwards and forwards between person, machine and commodity.

We brought the surrounding retail environment into the shop through the curation of the ‘Local’ display. Connecting a sense of place with a sense of the digital, a bit like the accompanied shopping and Forebuy activities had done in Finsbury Park. We invited local traders to ‘donate’ something from their business for exhibition; what they sold most of, what stood for their business values, what cost them most. The commodities stood on a clear perspex shelving in the front window drawing attention to themselves. This local display changed over the weeks, with each new commodity tweeted via @MoCCofficial.



**This Local display included:** One-off upcycled cocktail silk hat from an Exeter milliner. Can of delicious IPA Oskar Blues from a craft beer shop. Old-school tin of pomade hair grease from a barbers. Joyful and gorgeous Ayaka teacup used in a cafe. Best-selling handmade shell button necklace from a beads and buttons shop. Cool black leather biker jacket from a vintage clothing store. Unicorn hotpants - bespoke design based on the personality of the SWAT roller derby team member ‘Flash Bo Dash’ from the skate store. Sustainable, Ethiopian Terracotta Butu scarf from an ethical clothing store. Best-selling smoking bong with silver pipe, a fire poi and a diablo from the Head shop. Rare and exciting espresso cup and saucer made from spent coffee grounds from an artisan tea shop. Charity-supporting hand and body cream, and a peace-branded massage bar supporting women’s groups in Palestine, Israel and Ghana from a branch of Lush. 1950’s pewter brooch with blue scottish agate stones from an antique shop. Best-selling heavy duty snap seal plastic bag from Army surplus. Eco friendly non-toxic surface cleaner spray from Oxfam. Child’s pink bicycle from a bike refurbishing charity.



Alongside our shop installation we ran accompanied shopping trips and a data walkshop. Curated film screenings, panel discussions, workshops and exhibitions, and commissioned new participatory artworks on the theme of data, trade, place, and values with other venues in the city. A flat screen TV showed passersby what was happening each day during our 3 week opening (Activities 15 & 18-27).



**TITLE** – Cocktail Silk Hat  
**DESCRIBE THE ITEM** - Mini Button Beret with black and white silk flower and red ostrich quills.  
**WHERE AND HOW IS IT USED** – It is worn on the head to Ascot, cocktail parties or a wedding to make ladies look marvellous  
**COST** - £169  
**WHY DID YOU ADD IT TO THE MUSEUM** – because it is made from my grandmother’s old skirt, which makes it a one off and unique. It’s from recycled vintage material and I love the colour combo.  
Donated by - Rivka Jacobs Millinery



Now accessed through a wall mounted tablet the **MoCC quiz** made people laugh, but they also took it seriously, exposing their shopping habits to assessment and ranking. Some felt judged, others didn’t care. A young Japanese visitor was a ‘Clickaholic’. He said that wasn’t usually him, but he didn’t know Exeter or anybody there, so online was easier. A woman chose the allotment picture because she wanted to be there, not the vegetable shop because the one near her was rubbish, but she would more than likely be in the supermarket because that was closest. Lots of people seemed to be a ‘Good Shopper’ or a ‘Stealth Shopper’. Were they performing their best selves as they answered? Was the software not counting things properly? It was impossible for us to know as we didn’t have the coding skills to check that everything was working as it should.



Arranging the **talking doll** sculpturally in the alcove helped us to learn about the many things that stopped it from working. Visitors were often too far away to be ‘heard’ by it so we had to move it. The ambient noise interfered with its speech-to-text function so we couldn’t use

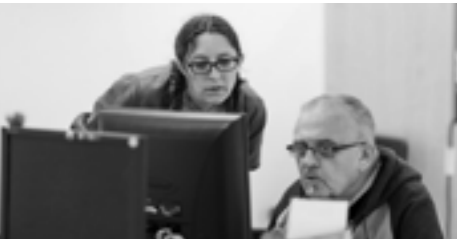
the ‘Add to MoCC’ sound design. When the wifi we were borrowing from the city council venue upstairs dropped out (regularly when it was busy) - it went into automatic mode reciting facts and singing songs. People ignored our instructions on how to trigger keyword recognition, making it speak about Karl Marx rather than what it was made from. We invested a lot of time servicing its functioning, or trying to explain its malfunction. Feeling the necessary human labour and compromise involved in its shoddy automation. Visitors called it ‘creepy’ and ‘a useless piece of crap’. Some people stroked its hair, touched its eyelashes and held it like a child.



Animated **LEGO GIF making** continued to engage visitors of all ages with the complexities held in a single moment of trade and exchange. A conversation about the commodification of education prompted the modelling of a pay booth where children’s heads were sold on a loop to whoever wanted them. An Instagram competition demonstrated how post ‘likes’ changed how each cat was valued emotionally and by the platform.

Learnings from Add to MoCC prototyped at the Free Market (Activity 9). had fed into the design of MoCC’s online collection. Built using the Wordpress platform, the database format, software

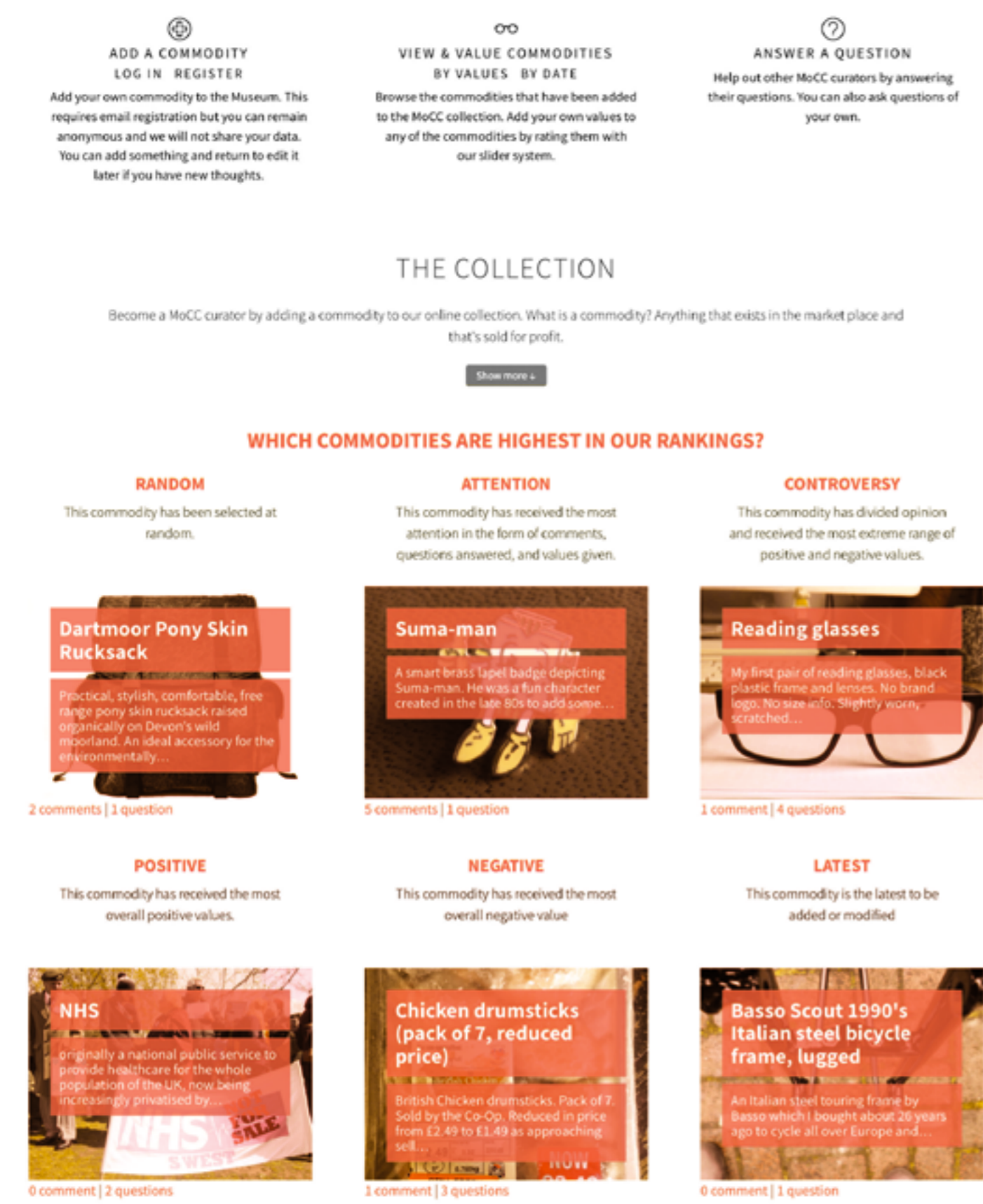
protocols, plug-ins and code shortcuts it offered shaped how we could imagine the MoCC collection interface working, which in turn shaped what was visible, thinkable and doable by the people interacting with it.



Before we opened the shop we emailed the Free Market participants to invite them to enter their commodities into the online collection, but no one did. Since the objects were personally and culturally significant, we didn’t feel able to submit and interpret them on their behalf. The online collection therefore became curated in a place specific way; affected by how a community was assembled around it, and how accessible the interface was made to them.

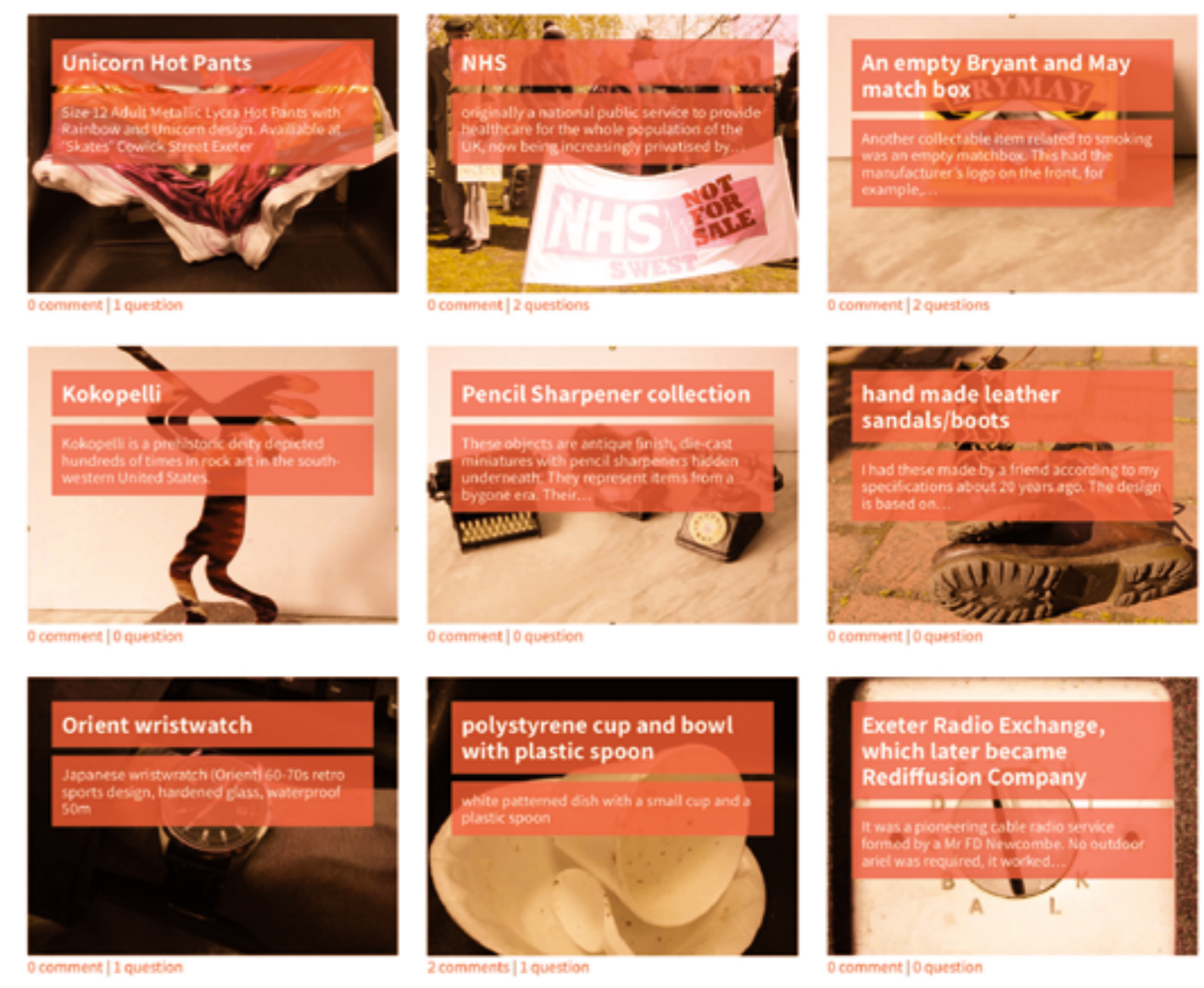
As a social art project we had limited resources for further prototyping, and launched the MoCC online collection with minimal user testing. The interface had lots of glitches. Difficulty logging out. Buttons that didn’t quite work. Disappearing questions and answers. It was inflexible - we couldn’t instantly add more categories to it like we could with the paper version. We never knew quite what was broken, missing or how to fix it, and had to ask our creative technologist collaborator who was in London working on other things. Often we had no choice but to adapt our behaviour around the technological failings, to make it serve our needs.

# ADDING TO THE COLLECTION



Anyone could make an online account and add something to the MoCC collection. After registering a name or nickname and receiving a password via email, users were asked to upload one or more photos and answer a number of set questions about their commodity. They were then invited to value it using sliders on a -10 to +10 scale, enter any questions they might have about it, then press submit. Every time something was added, it was automatically tweeted via @MoCCofficial in an effort to stimulate remote interaction with the collection. We hoped we had designed the interface in an accessible way that would encourage people to pay closer attention to both what the commodities were made from, how and by whom, and also the way they were valued - personally and by digital

platform processes. Most people were surprised by how many of the question prompts they couldn't respond to or had to guess. Many people didn't value what they added. Or ask any questions or add any comments. Some didn't even get to the submit stage. There was a lot of thinking and research to do before you could submit something, depending on what you had chosen. But some people entered more than one commodity, valued more, and asked and answered more about the things that interested them. We promised everyone they could remain anonymous if they chose not to use their name visibly, and we would not collect or share any other data about them. If they wanted to return to add information, didn't finish, or wanted to make changes, they could log back in later.



# DARTMOOR PONY SKIN RUCKSACK

Practical, stylish, comfortable, wind and rain resistant, free range pony skin rucksack raised organically on Devon’s wild moorland. An ideal accessory for the environmentally conscious walker the bag is handcrafted by fine leather maker Tony Piper out of Devon moorland pony skin, a waste product created by contemporary land management practices. Moorland ponies are mostly kept as pets or used by the authorities for keeping vegetation under control for the benefit of walkers on moors. However over the past 15 years human use of the ponies, and hence their economic value, has declined with some selling for £1. With little market demand farmers are forced to humanely cull older, infirm and unwanted animals each year in order to keep the whole population sustainable, a matter of much dispute. Carcasses are sometimes given to Paignton Zoo or can end up in landfill. 25L capacity, approximate dimensions h 50cm x w 50cm x d 40cm.

**Where and how is it used?**  
It is used for walking on Dartmoor at all times of year, for keeping sandwiches and spare clothes in.

**What did you or someone else pay for it?**  
£750

**Why do you want to add it to the Museum?**  
As a unique product it belongs in a museum.

## HOW WAS IT MADE?

- ☐ Is made in a factory.
- ☒ Is farmed
- ☐ Is mass-produced
- ☒ Is produced by local cottage industry
- ☒ Is made to particular specifications
- ☒ Is craft / hand made
- ☐ Is foraged
- ☐ Is found
- ☐ Is colonised
- ☐ Is a service



**MATERIALS & MAKING**

**Who made or produced your commodity?**  
Tony Piper, webbing supplier

**Who was paid to make it?**  
Tony Piper, webbing supplier

**What skills does it take to make it?**  
Leather working, tanning, skinning, plastic manufacture and molding

**Where was it made?**  
Nr Okehampton, somewhere else

**What does it cost to make it?**  
£750

**What is it made from? (please list is compnent parts and what each is made from)**

1. Rucksack outer: Dartmoor Moorland pony skin, sourced from a licensed hide and leather dealer, tanned in Italy.
2. Rucksack interior: Kid leather.
3. Straps: Cattle leather
4. Webbing and buckles: Polypropelene:

**BUYING & OWNING**

**Who decides how much it costs?**  
Me

**Who or what assesses its quality?**  
Me

**Where is it sold?**  
Nowhere - pony activists have asked me not to reproduce or market it as a commercial product.

**Who or what sells it?**  
No one

**How did this thing arrive from where it was made to where you got it?**  
I picked it up in a car.

**Where is it used?**  
Dartmoor

**Where is it kept**  
Dartmoor

**How and by whom is it cared for?**  
Dried and hung up

**How long will it last?**  
It could last for thousands of years if preserved in peat.

**Where will it go when it’s finished with?**  
A museum

**What’s it worth?**  
£750

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Help to reveal unknown quantities, properties and uses of this commodity by answering this MoCC curator’s questions.

**Question:** Why does nobody recycle their pets?

**Answers:** ... people are freaked out about the trappings of deaths and find remains uncanny. ... [Recycling]

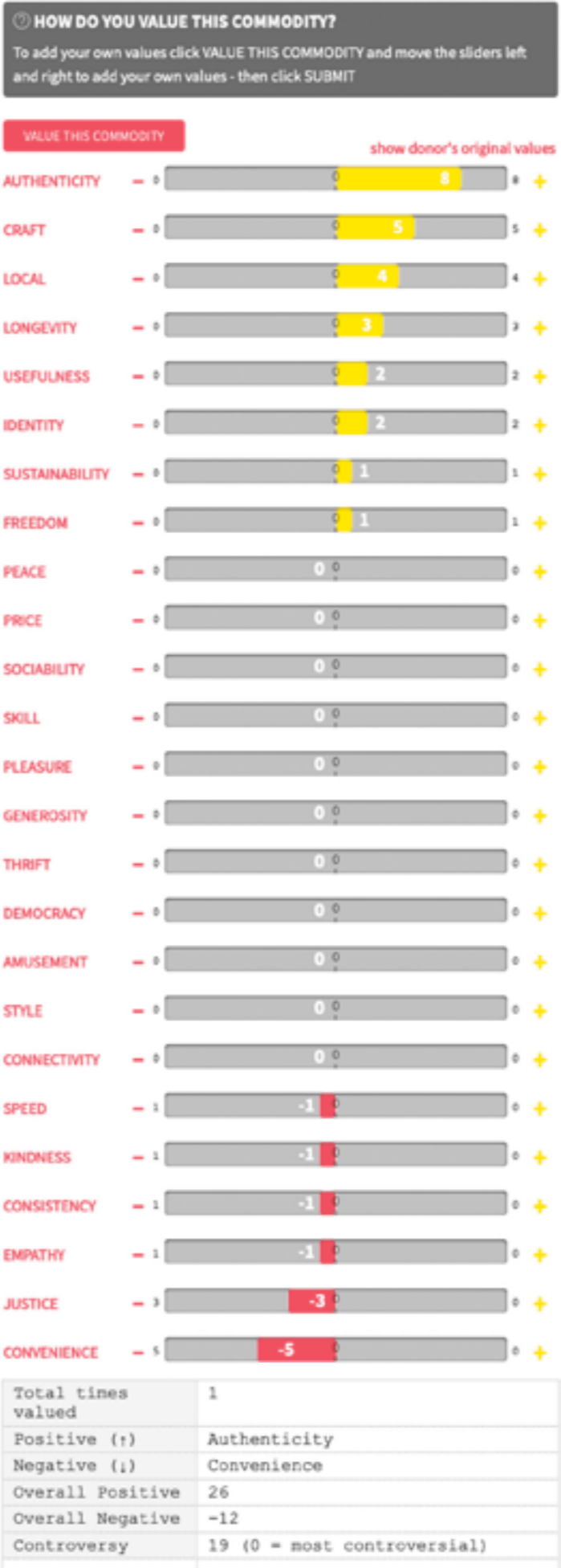
could be deemed to honour the animal to make good and mindful use of its parts. **by dcarpenter on April 25th at 2:20pm**

... we have largely managed to disconnect ourselves from the effects of our very being, in an ongoing effort to sanitise the violence we are inflicting on the many other species ... just by being consumers ... I am

all for avoiding meat and keeping animals well, but I am not sure what’s the filthier habit, buying cheap meat at Tesco’s or a shiny 4K TV ... **by scharfrichter on April 28th at 6:13am**

There are taxidermists who will stuff dead pets, but people often return them and ask for their money back ... **by ian on May 18th at 9:53am**

**HOW DO YOU AND OTHERS VALUE THIS COMMODITY?**  
See the values contributed by visitors and those of the donor. And add your own values to this commodity



**i What do these numbers mean?**

This data that we have collected over time in our database means nothing without interpretation. A relational database, which we are using here, is technology that enables designers of websites and software to compare, contrast, interrogate and infer relations within data. The act of designing a database is not objective but driven by the agency of its creators and owners.

Within the MoCC Collection data is used to help think through the relations between values, commodities and data. Can we describe our values using sliders and numbers? How do we infer meaning such as controversy from data?

Below is a brief explanation of the some calculations and how these help make decisions about what is shown on the site.

**Controversy Score:**

(Total Positive Values) + (Total Negative Values)

The closer the value is to zero the more controversial it is in relation to other commodities. Used to infer that values associated with one commodity divide opinion more than another.

**Average Value Score (used in the sliders):**

(Total Positive for Value + Total Negative for Value) ÷ Total Times Valued

Used to infer a collective value associated with a commodity.

## CONVERSATION

Do you have questions about how this commodity is valued? Or want to talk about your own values in relation to it? Share your comments.

... I can understand the need for humane culling if deemed necessary by experts, but saddened and angered to hear that the meat sometimes ends up in landfill. It speaks to the unbalance in our so-called natural habitats .... Could pony meat be consumed by humans in place of low-welfare farmed meat? ... **by dcarpenter on April 25th at 2:28pm**

[The] founder of the Dartmoor Hill Ponies Association said quite recently “... having a meat trade should improve a pony’s chances of finding a new home at sale” ... <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-29353194> . **by alexmurdin on April 25th at 3:48pm**

**Add to the conversation:**

You must be logged in to post a comment.

*Added to MoCC in Exeter (with algorithmic data)*

99 commodities were added to MoCC in Exeter. They were valued 146 times in total with 41 comments, 73 questions and 76 answers so far. These data were processed by the Collection’s algorithm to surface on its homepage and on the back wall of the shop. The data highlighted below shows the commodities that were the most positive, negative, controversial and attention seeking on 28 February 2022. NB: these data may since have changed.

**Reading glasses** ↑ Usefulness ↓ Sustainability. Overall positive score: 71. Overall negative score: -21. **Controversy: 14.666666666667.** Valued three times. 1 comment, 4 questions, 1 answer.

**Basso Scout 1990’s Italian steel bicycle frame, lugged** ↑ Style ↓ -. Overall positive score: 164. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 82. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 0 answers.

**Pol pom bag** ↑ Craft ↓ Price. Overall positive score: 30. Overall negative score: -158. Controversy: 94. Valued once. 1 comment, 4 questions, 4 answers.

**Foam Blanket for the Etching Press** ↑ Consistency ↓ Amusement. Overall positive score: 240. Overall negative score: -20. Controversy: 62. Valued twice. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Asparagus steamer** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**The United Kingdom Census** ↑ Price ↓ Peace. Overall positive score: 16. Overall negative score: -3. Controversy: 9.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 0 answers, 0 answers.

**Maya** (pet dog) ↑ Connectivity ↓ Convenience. Overall positive score: 78. Overall negative score: -10. Controversy: 22. Valued twice. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Blackberry Passport** (phone) ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Museum of Contemporary Commodities** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Ayaka Tea Cup** ↑ Pleasure ↓ -. Overall positive score: 44. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 22. Valued twice. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Espresso Cup**↑ Style ↓ -. Overall positive score: 62. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 31. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Child’s Roller Boots** ↑ Style ↓ -. Overall positive score: 138. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 69. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Shell Button Necklaces** ↑ Local ↓ -. Overall positive score: 68. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 34. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 2 answers.

**Cocktail Silk Hat** ↑ Style ↓ -. Overall positive score: 93. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 46.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Pink Children’s Bicycle** ↑ Freedom ↓ -. Overall positive score: 362. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 90.5. Valued twice. 0 comments, 3 questions, 3 answers.

**IPA Oskar Blues Craft Beer** ↑ Craft ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 95. Overall negative score: -128. Controversy: 44.25. Valued twice. 0 comments, 3 questions, 3 answers.

**White Paint** ↑ Usefulness ↓ Craft . Overall positive score: 31. Overall negative score: -40. Controversy: 35.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Lego Lost at Sea Dragon** ↑ Style ↓ Usefulness. Overall positive score: 245. Overall negative score: -15. Controversy: 58.5. Valued twice. 0 comments, 1 question, 0 answers.

**Rezel Pomade Hair Grease** ↑ Authenticity ↓ -. Overall positive score: 45. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 22.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 2 questions, 2 answers.

**Gus Honeybun** ↑ Local ↓ Style. Overall positive score: 151. Overall negative score: -096. Controversy: 24.5. Valued three times. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Betting Shop Receipt** ↑ Skill ↓ Longevity. Overall positive score: 193. Overall negative score: -180. Controversy: 45.166666666667. Valued three times. 0 comments, 4 questions, 5 answers.

**Unicorn Hot Pants** ↑ Style ↓ Sustainability. Overall positive score: 243. Overall negative score: -6. Controversy: 62.25. Valued twice. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**NHS** ↑ Skill ↓ Amusement. **Overall positive score: 496.** Overall negative score: -86. Controversy: 64.5. Valued four times. 0 comments, 2 questions, 3 answers.

**An empty Bryant and May match box** ↑ Consistency ↓ Price. Overall positive score: 29. Overall negative score: -24. Controversy: 26.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 2 questions, 2 answers.

**Kokopelli** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Pencil Sharpener collection** ↑ Craft ↓ -. Overall positive score: 40. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 20. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions.

**Hand made leather sandals/boots** ↑ Price ↓ -. Overall positive score: 113. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 56.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Orient wristwatch** ↑ Skill ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 159. Overall negative score: -18. Controversy: 42.25. Valued twice. 0 comments, 1 question, 0 answers.

**Polystyrene cup and bowl with plastic spoon** ↑ Longevity ↓ Speed. Overall positive score: 156. Overall negative score: -73. Controversy:

44.75. Valued twice. 2 comments, 1 question, 2 answers.

**Exeter Radio Exchange, which later became Rediffusion Company** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**The Sardina Camera** ↑ Skill ↓ Justice. Overall positive score: 58. Overall negative score: -39. Controversy: 48.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Gay Pride Souvenir T-shirts** ↑ - . ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Chicken drumsticks (pack of 7, reduced price)** ↑ Consistency ↓ Craft. Overall positive score: 56. **Overall negative score: -246.** Controversy: 70.5. Valued twice. 1 comment, 3 questions, 5 answers.

**Tools for setting up Hi-Fi cassette decks** ↑ Skill ↓ -. Overall positive score: 16. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 8. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Duracell Batteries** ↑ Usefulness ↓ Sustainability. Overall positive score: 98. Overall negative score: -114. Controversy: 52.5. Valued twice. 0 comments, 2 questions, 2 answers.

**floppy disk drive and diska** ↑ Authenticity ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 44. Overall negative score: -38. Controversy: 41. Valued once. 2 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Sony MD Walkman MZE25** ↑ Convenience ↓ - . Overall positive score: 28. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 14. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Prosthetic Hand** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**British Movie Prop Coin from 1930s** ↑ Pleasure ↓ Usefulness. Overall positive score: 121. Overall negative score: -10. Controversy: 32.25. Valued twice. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**BIG orange lighter** ↑ Usefulness ↓ Sustainability. Overall positive score: 90. Overall negative score: -69. Controversy: 79.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Silicon rubber cartoon cow with popping, bulging eyes** ↑ Authenticity ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 117. Overall negative score: -24. Controversy: 70.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 2 questions, 0 answers.

**Boris (pet dog)** ↑ Sociability ↓ Craft. Overall positive score: 340. Overall negative score: -79. Controversy: 38.625. Valued four times. 2 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Sophie the Giraffe** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 3 questions, 3 answers.

**Broken music stand** ↑ Sustainability ↓ - . Overall positive score: 26. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 13. Valued once. 0 comments, 3 questions, 4 answers.

**Soap** ↑ Connectivity ↓ -. Overall positive score: 108. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 54. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Fisher Price phone** ↑ Authenticity ↓ -. Overall positive score: 51. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 25.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Tampon** ↑ Convenience ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 297. Overall negative score: -220. Controversy: 34.5, Valued 5 times. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Stove-top Espresso Maker** ↑ Usefulness ↓ -. Overall positive score: 52. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 26. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**“Curvy Barbie”** ↑ Amusement ↓ Kindness. Overall positive score: 81. Overall negative score: -124. Controversy: 24.833333333333, Valued 3 times. 0 comments, 1 question, 2 answers.

**Suma-man (badge)** ↑ Authenticity ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 309. Overall negative score: -120. Controversy: 29.9, Valued 5 times. **5 comments, 1 question, 3 answers.**

**Celotex** ↑ Consistency ↓ - . Overall positive score: 49. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 24.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Pebble Watch** ↑ Convenience ↓ Empathy. Overall positive score: 143. Overall negative score: -66. Controversy: 38.75. Valued twice. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Copper Pans** ↑ Style ↓ Authenticity. Overall positive score: 134. Overall negative score: -2. Controversy: 23.333333333333. Valued three times. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Facebook account data** ↑ Identity ↓ Usefulness. Overall positive score: 40. Overall negative score: -130. Controversy: 37. Valued twice. 0 comments, 2 questions, 1 answer.

**Trilby** ↑ Style ↓ Democracy. Overall positive score: 112. Overall negative score: -16. Controversy: 64. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Album, Zezebels, The Brink** ↑ Craft ↓ Democracy. Overall positive score: 52. Overall negative score: -15. Controversy: 33.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Pair of leather objects with tassels** ↑ Longevity ↓ Peace. Overall positive score: 210. Overall negative score: -82. Controversy: 60.5. Valued twice. 1 comment, 1 question, 2 answers.

**Mobile phone interface** ↑ Connectivity ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 65. Overall negative score: -16. Controversy: 40.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 questions, 1 answer.

**Bee house** ↑ Kindness ↓ -. Overall positive score: 322. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 80.5. Valued twice. 0 comments, 1 question, 2 answers.

**Clear Plastic Food Tray** ↑ Convenience ↓ Style. Overall positive score: 12. Overall negative score: -108. Controversy: 60. Valued once. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**‘Perfectly crafted’ cigarette papers** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Toms Shoes** ↑ Democracy ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 113. Overall negative score: -9. Controversy: 61. Valued once. 2 comments, 2 questions, 3 answers.

**Hand cream (Norwegian)** ↑ Consistency ↓ Craft. Overall positive score: 109. Overall negative score: -32. Controversy: 70.5. Valued once. 3 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Robin (glass ornament)** ↑ Skill ↓ Usefulness. Overall positive score: 96. Overall negative score: -7. Controversy: 51.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Contradictionary** ↑ Price ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 137. Overall negative score: -4. Controversy: 70.5. Never valued. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answers.

**Bendy “Macho Man” Randy Savage** ↑ Amusement ↓ Peace. Overall positive score: 108. Overall negative score: -10. Controversy: 27. Valued twice. 2 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Charity Soap** ↑ Generosity ↓ Longevity. Overall positive score: 52. Overall negative score: -12. Controversy: 32. Valued once. 1 comment, 1 question, 1 answer.

**Java Gender** ↑ Authenticity ↓ Speed. Overall positive score: 155. Overall negative score: -14. Controversy: 84.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer, 1 answer.

**Star Wars Tales Graphic Novel** ↑ Pleasure ↓ -. Overall positive score: 13. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 16.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

answers.

**Scented Candle** ↑ Generosity ↓ Thrift. Overall positive score: 178. Overall negative score: -45. Controversy: 47.75. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Red snips** ↑ Usefulness ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 258. Overall negative score: -4. Controversy: 42.666666666667. Valued three times. 1 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Man on Facebook Ad** ↑ Amusement ↓ Usefulness. Overall positive score: 74. Overall negative score: -36. Controversy: 18.333333333333. Valued three times. 0 comments, 1 question, 0 answers.

**Yoga Mat** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Super Daz** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Valued once. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Collection of early 1980s sickbags** ↑ Amusement ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 139. Overall negative score: -16. Controversy: 25.833333333333. Valued three times. 2 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Set of wooden acrobat toys** ↑ Authenticity ↓ Connectivity. Overall positive score: 80. Overall negative score: -5. Controversy: 42.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Pentel P209 Propelling pencil: Perpetually purloined prize possession** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 2 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**cracked phone** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Dartmoor Pony Skin Rucksack** ↑ Authenticity ↓ Convenience. Overall positive score: 26. Overall negative score: -12. Controversy: 19. Valued once. 2 comments, 1 question, 3 answers.

**galos de barcelas** ↑ Local ↓ Authenticity. Overall positive score: 16. Overall negative score: -15. Controversy: 15.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Captain Haddock Doll** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Knitted Kitty bottle cover** ↑ Craft ↓ Usefulness. Overall positive score: 122. Overall negative

score: -18. Controversy: 70. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 2 answers.

**Guinea Pig Salt and Pepper Set** ↑ Amusement ↓ Convenience. Overall positive score: 70. Overall negative score: -49. Controversy: 19.166666666667. Valued three times. 0 comments, 1 question, 2 answers.

**Shopping receipt** ↑ Consistency ↓ Longevity. Overall positive score: 21. Overall negative score: -19. Controversy: 20. Valued once. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**A thermos flask** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Hutch (soft toy)** ↑ Amusement ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 100. Overall negative score: -8. Controversy: 18. Valued three times. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Small Model Cow** ↑ Kindness ↓ Authenticity. Overall positive score: 17. Overall negative score: -6. Controversy: 11.5. Valued once. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Rabbit blancmange mould** ↑ - ↓ -. Overall positive score: 0. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 0. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Fender guitar** ↑ Skill ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 243. Overall negative score: -1. Controversy: 61. Valued twice. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Denim cap** ↑ Usefulness ↓ - . Overall positive score: 74. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 37. Never valued. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Harris tweed wallet** ↑ Usefulness ↓ Democracy. Overall positive score: 100. Overall negative score: -30. Controversy: 29.5. Valued twice. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**A medal as a party bag filler** ↑ Convenience ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 6. Overall negative score: -59. Controversy: 32.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**My rabbit phone cover** ↑ Style ↓ Local. Overall positive score: 151. Overall negative score: -24. Controversy: 27.166666666667. Valued three times. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Vic’s Eggs** ↑ Local ↓ Longevity. Overall positive score: 96. Overall negative score: -7. Controversy: 25.75. Valued twice. 0 comments, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**Chair .03** ↑ Style ↓ -. Overall positive score: 115. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 57.5. Valued once. 0 comments, 1 question, 0 answers.

**Key ring pen knife** ↑ Usefulness ↓ Freedom. Overall positive score: 141. Overall negative score: -7. Controversy: 18.25. Valued four times. 2 comments, 2 questions, 2 answers.

**Hultafors craftsman’s knife** ↑ Longevity ↓ -. Overall positive score: 253. Overall negative score: 0. Controversy: 34.75. Valued four times. 1 comment, 0 questions, 0 answers.

**One-A-Day Contact Lenses** ↑ Convenience ↓ Sustainability. Overall positive score: 84. Overall negative score: -4. Controversy:: 15.583333333333. Valued three times. 0 comments, 1 question, 1 answer.

NB this data may be inaccurate as, due to a design glitch, some answers did not register on the commodity pages and therefore may not have been counted in the algorithm.

# IN THIS MUSEUM WE ARE ALL THE CURATORS...

The valuing sliders on the commodity pages were inspired by the Ethical Consumer website, and we hoped that using them would similarly reveal how our values intersect in the relative importance we give to commodities. How would visitors value speed over justice, convenience over pleasure or sustainability? The choices of which values to measure were limited to categories offered by the MoCC collection interface (the values coded from the accompanied shopping p.8-9), therefore excluding many others. Visitors' valuing decisions were quantified and ranked as a set of aggregates - Positive, Negative, Attention, Controversy - and displayed on the front of the website making them more visible (see p.32 for detail).

We made these hidden sorting, assessing and ranking processes more feelable and therefore discussable in the MoCC shop by performing them. We displayed photos of the commodities currently occupying the homepage on the back wall. Each time we assisted someone adding to the MoCC Collection in the shop, we checked the homepage to see if anything had changed. On the rare occasions it did, we printed out a new photo and description and - with 'tremendous excitement' or a drumroll - updated the back wall display and tweeted it via @MoCCofficial.



Anticipating this performance made us more invested in the valuing process. We began holding public valuations on the large screen in the window of the shop. Collectively negotiating with visitors what level the sliders should be placed at for a commodity, highlighted how personal, cultural, place-based and mobile the interpretation of each value category was. Discussions revealed how the quantification and aggregation of decision-making both removed these personal and local contexts from the record of the decision, and simultaneously provided a database-related context that differently influenced how and why choices were made.

**Positive:** red snips -> 7/5/2016 bee house -> 19/05/2016 NHS --> 4/3/2022 NHS

**Negative:** medal as a party bag filler -> 05/5/2016 facebook account data -> 19/5/2016 betting slip -> 21/5/2016 tampon -> 21/5/2016 betting slip -> 27/08/2017 pompom bag -> 1/9/2017, chicken drumsticks --> 4/3/2022 chicken drumsticks

**Controversy:** penknife keyring -> 12/5/2016 cuddly hutch toy -> 23/5/2016 contact lenses -> 24/8/2017 penknife keyring -> 26/8/2017 man in facebook ad -> 1/9/2017 cassette accessories --> 4/3/2022 Reading glasses

**Attention:** Huntafors knife -> 25/4/2016 Dartmoor Pony skin rucksack -> 9/5/2016 Suma man badge --> 4/3/2022 Suma Man badge

Tracking changes over time revealed how interactions with the MoCC Collection were mainly happening at our live events. Here, paying attention to and interacting with what was already visible on the front page for example, resulted in higher visibility of some things over others. When the NHS reached peak Positive valuation, it proved impossible to move, ensuring any rivals remained hidden from view, and the way that Controversy was measured meant that either the most or the least controversial commodity could occupy that position.

Performing with these underdeveloped, unfathomable and sometimes broken interfaces in the MoCC shop, helped us to discuss with visitors how our Collection's 'sophisticated algorithms' worked (or didn't). Our visible labour within this parodic, collective knowledge sharing platform, drew attention to ways in which algorithmic curation relies on human interaction to work. We speculated on how surveillance, interaction, categorising, ranking and prediction are combined in digital platform economies to generate attention for commercial and other purposes. How designing interfaces towards particular outcomes with limited resources makes systems operationally biased to support some types of values over others, however poorly they are quantified. How this, in turn, makes some commodities and their values more persistent than others - even if we might not want things to be that way.

## ART AND MARKETS



Artists can create objects, environments and interactions that take us out of our ordinary. Upending expectations and inviting closer attention to the overlooked and habitual to provoke changes in perception for the purposes of social change. The enrollment of such activist and social modes of art making into the mainstream of contemporary art and performance production, has offered opportunities for artists to work towards change whilst being paid for it. But bringing such affective, gift-like labour into the art market means that events aimed to politically mobilise or agitate, can be easily subsumed within the economic models of the cultural, knowledge production and place-shaping industries. Depending on how they are managed, such projects can make artists into entrepreneurial labour in the gig economy of social art practice, and make art and culture 'consumers' into both labourer and commodity through insistent requests for participation and feedback. These issues were raised by a visitor to the MoCC shop in Exeter who brought MoCC itself under closer scrutiny by submitting the project as a commodity to the MoCC Collection. Whilst we had been attentive to the challenges of moving between these different modes of trade and exchange in the MoCC process from the beginning, this gave us an opportunity to talk openly with visitors about the wider economies of social art practice.

It often feels impossible to act outside or even subvert capitalist structures, but throughout the

MoCC journey we were inspired by how others were using artistic practice to draw attention to, rethink and remake the relations between financialisation and social cooperation, data and culture. **Kate Rich's Feral Trade (2003)** was an important meeting point for our art and cultural geography collaboration during initial conversations. A grocery business and social experiment that trades goods over social networks passed hand to hand by individuals, the product packaging on feral traded goods pays micro attention to details of source, shipping and handling with details and photo documentation of transactions entered into an online database. Our prototyping workshop process was informed by **Yoha's** artistic repurposing of datasets through their **Database Addiction (2015-19)** project, and by **Ellie Harrison's** collecting, listing and absurd analysis of everyday life data. Particularly her hacking of a **Vending Machine (2009)** which connected financial markets to the cost of food by releasing a packet of crisps every time the BBC's RSS feed contained a key word related to economic recession.

Paula's interview with **Open Barbers** in Finsbury Park in 2015, showed us how a series of activist events and performances at queer club nights and galleries, could evolve into an ethical, community based business model. This inspired us to use the Free Market (Activity 9 p. 22-23) to highlight ideas for positive social and economic initiatives as much as to critique damaging ones. In Exeter we worked with TOPOS art space to curate.

**Konstantin Bayer's Art Articles** (Activity 24), an exhibition of sculptures made from things bought off Amazon. Rather than selling the finished work, the artist sold the instructions for how to order and build your own versions of them. Artwork commodities were submitted to our MoCC collection, such **Alex Murdin's Dartmoor Pony Skin Rucksack** (p.34-35) which speaks to the relationship of traditional craft skills with locally based, circular economies, and we commissioned new conversation pieces on data, trade, place and values from **Louise Ashcroft** and **Autonomous Tech Fetish** (Activities 15, 19, 26 & 27 p. 40-41).

# MoCC COMMISSIONS

Much like our activities at Furtherfield, MoCC in Exeter worked in partnership with arts and community organisations in the city to host a wider programme of workshops, screenings, exhibition and discussion events. As part of this we commissioned artists and digital tinkerers to create new conversation based artworks to involve public in different types of encounters with our project theme of data, trade, place, values relations.



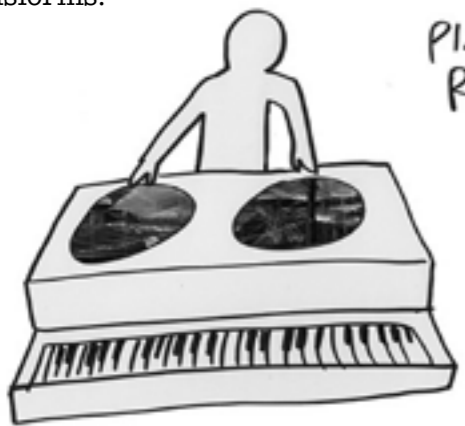
St Sidwell's Community Centre internet, May 2016



Life Shop is a collective studio where people can construct new identities and other ways of living. Their alter egos can be stored in the library until ready to be embodied or updated.



A census is carried out which measures everyone's personal values, political views and lifestyle choices. Each day everyone is matched up with someone very different to themselves to share lunch and chat. A sort of cultural cement mixer.



Dream Playlist is like Netflix and Youtube but for dreaming. People can stream others' dreams and share their own. Dreaming becomes a collective space for the first time. Dream activists become concerned about advertising, thought-influencing and pressure to work while we sleep.



A woman in her eighties who didn't use the Internet, explained that when she was young the community would sit around the piano. Another non-Internet user (a man in his forties), preferred to recount tales of the 90s rave scene in Plymouth. These collective musical spaces were a source of togetherness, expression, entertainment and escapism. This rave piano combines two genres of partying, allowing the DJ to remix the piano as it is being played.

40p

## DATA BUFFET - ALL YOU CAN INPUT

Most of the time we don't 'feel' when the body is captured by our interactions with different technologies, institutions and companies, nor when its actions are actively producing data. What happens if our data is given back to us as something we can taste and digest? Autonomous Tech Fetish (ATF) a collective of artists, technical tinkerers, educators and activists made a three part experiment to find out.

In **Cuppa Data** ATF used a selection of teas to code 'how the machine thinks you feel' with 'how you think you feel' into a tea blend, giving people the ability to taste their own emotional data. They captured the data with their "ultra-precise" galvanic skin response glove which measured the conductivity of sweaty skin which is believed to give indications of people's emotions. Tea blends were composed using data from a host of people, including staff and visitors in Exeter Library Cafe, Sid's Cafe in St Sidwell's Community Centre and the communities from the Common House and the Field in London. ATF also blended new teas as part of the experiment, allowing people to respond to intimate, yet amplified personal readings of the newest government data policies through their customised bricolage hearing-aids. Cuppa Data presented, in a cup of tea, the caffeination, the sourness, spice or mildness of the data-captured body.

*"Wait what? I am listening to my own body, thats amazing!"*

participant in 'Cuppa Data'  
at Exeter Library Cafe

**Betty Cipher's "Step-by-Step" Algorecipe Generator** scavenged information such as ingredients and cooking suggestions from discarded packaging sourced from Exeter eateries. An algorithm was written that combined these ingredients at random to create 45,255 recipe steps - which was the number of footsteps donated by staff and customers via pedometers from the same Exeter eateries. Each recipe step 'consumed' one of the donated human footsteps. As the recipe combination progressed, ingredients were combined and recombined until only one finished ingredient remained. At this point, the recipe was printed and the generator continued onto the next recipe. Once it ran out of donated footsteps the generator stopped and the recipe book was complete.

*"This is very interesting, we work with the medical sides of these technologies, seeing it in an art context is really fantastic."*

Data Buffet visitor at Exeter  
Library

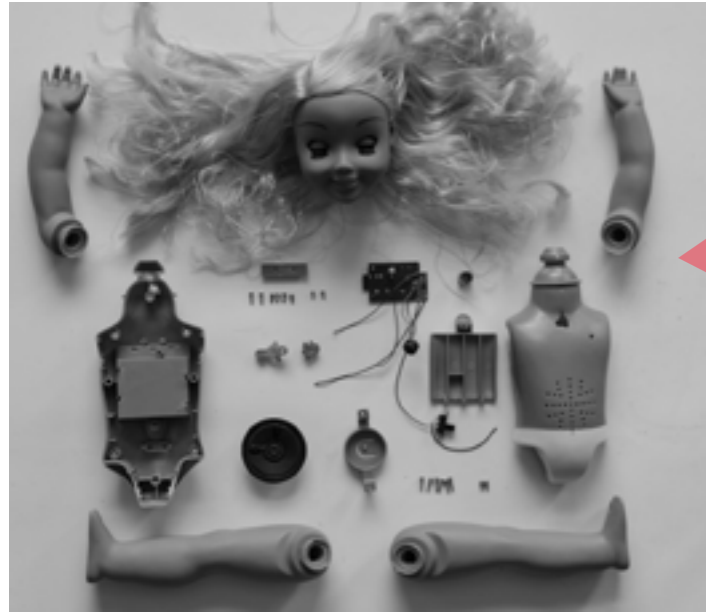


Rather than extracting bodily information, the **Wearable Cow Aggregates** give us embodied experience of statistical data by wearing it as volume, allowing us to reflect on its social and political implications. For cattle and humans alike, wearable data technologies are at the forefront of the production of docile and marketable bodies through digital 'precision feeding systems' and 'dieting regimes'. A cow's life in the dairy industry is defined by the amount of milk she produces, which on average is 24 litres a day or 51,840 litres in the 6 years, before she retires and becomes low quality beef. These sculptures allow for parts of a cow's life to be worn on a human body, the empty milk bottles standing in for the hours of life expended, each litre taking one hour. During the Data Buffet visitors "strapped on" and experienced these sculptures, exploring the meaning of the overtly expressive, technically useless but experientially intriguing wearables.

Autonomous Tech Fetish in Exeter were Cliff Hammett, Alexandra Jönsson and Amit Rai.

41p

## MoCC Guide Mikayla - Differently smart?



What could be a better face for a critical investigation into contemporary commodity culture than an internet connected ‘smart’ doll? Made for intimate chats with children in their homes, its low volume and the gentle manner performed by its voice software and script meant leaning in close to communicate with it. Experiencing My Friend Cayla doll’s original conversation logic, was to be encouraged into a dialogue with a pre-programmed set of responses that directly related to and was only triggered by the utterance of key words. This required a script that used heavily standardised language in order to prompt the right keywords to be spoken. A standardisation based on social and psychological tropes of what are considered to be social norms, gender differences and stereotypes, with topics chosen according to what the product designers thought would keep 7 year old girls interested and engaged (p.12-13). My Friend Cayla took an altogether different tone than the companion toy for boys, I-Que Intelligent Robot ‘the quick witted smart talking know-it-all’ whose stock phrases include ‘blast them away’ and ‘at your command’.

**If you took me apart, each bit of me would be a commodity. Each of those things has been made by different people in lots of different places. That’s an awful lot of work isn’t it?**

At our MoCC events, the doll prompted wide ranging conversations on the charismatic and uncanny quality of such objects. Young people were the most cuttngly observant. ‘Why do mad scientists always make creepy dolls like that to scare children?’ one said. But they still hung around, telling her she was ‘dumb’ whilst insisting that she answer them. We wondered, what were the moral implications of trying to replace relationships with people with care performed by a talking doll? What does it do to childrens’ imaginations and social interactions and vocabulary to replace voiceless dolls with one with such a limited and particular script? We speculated on what the speech-to-text service provider might be doing with our voices and those of the many children that were interacting with it. How was this speech analysed for data profile based profit? Would they use it to train artificial intelligence for their other services? How did this compare to the voice assistants on our phones?

What would such a doll say if it was ‘self aware’? Back in 1989 culture jamming activists the Barbie

**I feel guilty about the things I buy sometimes because I know that they are not good. But I still buy them. Either because they are cheaper or it’s more convenient. It’s really a struggle to change things for the better don’t you think?**

Liberation Organisation had swapped the voice circuit boards of Teen Talk Barbie and her male counterpart Talking G. I. Joe Platoon Leader Duke, to make a point about the standardised gendering of such toys. Embracing the doll’s styled eyebrows, long golden locks and open expression, and dressing it up in a gold shirt and shoes with a flashing ‘MoCC’ LED badge, we undermined the sense it was making by using the comedic trope well-loved by Hollywood - the good looking and intelligent blonde. After all, what could be more surprising? In its new script the doll talked about who made it, how it worked, and what it was made from. As well as comments about ponies and skateboarding, the doll asked questions about the nature of commodification, and spoke about how it felt about the condition of almost ubiquitous digital connectivity we were living in.

Rather than the doll’s original, app-based branching database of keyword-triggered sentences and questions, we worked with Raspberry Pi technology and an ‘off the shelf’ artificial intelligence and machine learning based speech recognition application running inside the doll casing. These natural language systems process human speech by analysing the grammatical structure of sentences and the meaning of words in context, and with each interaction learn to process it more appropriately for the settings they are used in. We wrote a thread of inter-related questions, comments and over 70 microlectures on different aspects of data, place, trade and values. These could be accessed in a flow of interaction based on algorithmic assessment of grammar in relation to word probability in sentences. Whilst the answers written into the software remained and were ‘spoken’ by the doll as we wrote them, the flexibility of how they were triggered made the conversation more fluid, life-like and surprising. Since we had made the system ourselves, we knew and could tell visitors how their voice was being ‘listened to’, by whom and for what purposes before they interacted.

**Sorry I wasn’t listening I was busy doing online research to stay good at my job (giggle). Shall I tell you more about my operating system? Or would you rather talk about zero hour contracts.**

Is it in caring about and trying to ‘fix’ what we understand as broken, that we can dream how something might work differently? The experience of scripting a different form of human-machine conversation with MoCC Guide Mikayla was deeply collaborative, enjoyable and empowering. Research from across all the MoCC activities found its way into the dialogue. Although the 70 microlectures gave it a somewhat boring ‘know it all’ type of personality if it was triggered down a particular pathway that bypassed its quips, jokes and songs. Whilst still imperfect, attempting to make it differently helped us begin to unthink and puzzle about some of the other digitally networked communication processes we use on a daily basis.

Since we made MoCC Guide Mikayla, the proliferation of internet connected smart devices in our homes has radically increased access, quantification, assessment and exploitation of our most intimate spaces and relationships, often under the guise of convenience or entertainment. Most of our online interactions are initially moderated by chatbots - a similar type of AI to the one we developed for MoCC Guide Mikayla, using similar standardised language tropes. Just like with any other technology based commodity, the politics of the makers are embedded in these smart objects. So how can they be made differently smart - if we need them to be smart at all? As socio-technical artefacts of human imagining, this will depend on how we dream and realise their purpose and for whose benefit.

**We are living in a material world and I am a material girl. But I have within me the possibility to be otherwise.**

# 29. MoCC EXHIBITION



Watch me! →

Visitors to our Exeter shop had asked if MoCCs were opening all over the country, but there was just one other MoCC opening: 4 days in July 2017 in the Royal Geographical Society's light and airy, concrete and glass, architect-designed Pavilion Gallery on Exhibition Road in London. We took what we had made and learned in our Exeter Fore Street shop and reassembled it here in affluent Kensington, the home of national museums, embassies, cultural institutions, Imperial College, Hyde Park and all the tourists, staff and students walking past and between them. MoCC's materials were couriered from Exeter in two boxes and a

## MoCC in boxes

(couriered from Exeter to London and back costed for insurance purposes): 3 cardboard banner stands (value £450), 1 outdoor A-frame noticeboard with doll poster (£150), 1,000 MoCC postcards (£80), 1,500 MoCC poster guides (£300), 1 iPad stand (£70), 300 Fortune Cookies (£100), 1 scrolling LED display (£400), 2 perspex shelving units (£350), 1 inkjet printer (£50), 1 ream A4 paper (taken from University stationary supply), 3 wireless vibration speakers (£60), 1 talking doll in package (£60), 1 talking doll in pieces (£60), 1 talking doll with Raspberry Pi & charging lead (£350), 1 MoCC stamp set and ink pad (£15), 9 books (Origin of Everyday Things (£15), Where stuff comes from (£25), The Secret lives of hair (£17), Flip flop (£17), The Cult of LEGO (£40), Disobedient Objects (£20), T-shirt (£5), Important Artefacts (£13), The Complete Book of the Gnome (£15)), 40 Red, Blue, Orange & Black MoCC badges (£25), 1 15m ethernet cable (£10), 10 perspex menu displays (£30), 1 perspex suggestion box (£40), 1 bottle shelf cleaner (£1), 1 cleaning cloth (£1), 2 strings of fairy lights (£2), 5 MoCC branded grey lab coats (£100). [+ brought in suitcases: LEGO collection (£priceless), 1 portable photo studio (£34), 1 smartphone (£350), 3 portable phone chargers (£60), smartphone tripod (£30), 2 laptops (£1,600), 8 Magnetic hooks (£9), printed consent forms and assorted stationery (£5), 1 A2 poster of talking doll (£13.50)] [+ printing (£145) and installation (£175) of outdoor exhibition vinyl].

*'I love it because it is familiar... like [a] model house.'*

*'made me think about the future — to imagine what might be important, but also what might not be.'*



suitcase, and the RGS lent us the rest. Our grey-coated guides came from the Free Market and the Shop, plus one new recruit. We curated a new local display, Alison Powell ran a data workshop (30) and we created a surrounding programme of public conversations and knowledge sharing (31). Three carefully placed wireless vibration speakers brought the sound design into the space by resonating through its surfaces. Everything had to be quickly installed and removed without a trace. Over 4 days we would be visited by 231 people. Curated to fit the local context, the Museum of Contemporary Commodities would be the same but different here.

At the registration desk, visitors were given a badge signalling their data sharing preferences, and a clipboard with a feedback sheet to share thoughts on each activity.

*'What is a commodity? A thing? An idea? something lasting? something fleeting?'*



Here, the **Local** display included: Best-selling bacon roll, cup of tea, can of Coca Cola from the Cabmen's Shelter. Book of Mormon from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Pointe shoe from the English National Ballet. Best-selling 99 flake ice cream from Osborne's of London ice-cream van. The Royal Albert Hall's undefinable performance atmosphere as a Unique Selling Point. 'Grayson Perry: The Most Popular Art Exhibition Ever!' catalogue from the Serpentine Gallery. Collection-themed paper milk cup from the Victoria and Albert Museum. Money-making combo of tennis ball and coffee cup from Will to Win sports centre and cafe.

*'A bit weird talking to a doll! But realise we are all 'programmed' as consumers to respond in a certain way.'*

*'The subversion of femininity was important, re-contextualising an object to imagine how it 'could' be used — a possibility!'*



The **talking doll** was displayed on a new perspex shelving unit. After recognising the wake words 'Hello Mikayla' it responded to conversation almost instantly, surprisingly... and had much more to say.



25 **animated LEGO GIFs** were added to MoCC

**Title:** I got a lego set (again) **Commodities involved:** Lego. Greek class.

**Transaction:** I go to Greek class every week and get pocket money for it. I always buy Lego with my pocket money. The shopkeeper profits from me buying the Lego. But I profit because I get to spend time with my Grandfather. It happens every week.

## Added to the MoCC collection during the exhibition:

15 commodities: Sports Direct Playing Cards, Willowed Ostrich Plume, Biocouture Shoe, Voice Banking, The 'Old' Pound Coin, Vinyl Sticker, Nature, Time, Volumetric Glassware, Oak Tree, 'Crocodile Tears', Gays Creamery Clotted Cream Ice Cream, Dolly the Sheep, My New Pair Of Shoes, Dementia Tax. 8 Questions: Why don't opticians offer to replace lenses so you can keep the frames? Why don't glasses have 'made in' info on them when other things do? What is the meaning of a pompom? Can you buy a carefree summer's day? How would you like the UK census to exist in future years? Does anyone else have a potentially strange emotional connection to any kind of laboratory equipment? Should cats wear collars? What are these cats thinking about?

45p

*'Very thought provoking, trying to value an item based on single words that all have very different meanings to each individual and can be interpreted in many different ways'*

*'[It made me think about] how algorithms work and how we often don't question how they work. Whose values underpin them?'*



## Live commodity valuations

were held every hour as part of the exhibition programme.

*'Thinking about data, and the environmental impact. The impact of 'algorithmic curation' on the planet, resource use... Trying to make sense out of the ruins in the world humans have made and chose to leave behind.'*

*'It made me consider my values and how I need to slow down in order to be more thoughtful about what I am doing.' You are invited into the performance in quite an undramatic way, but it's non the less... you're playing a game where the outcome is... you don't know what the outcome is, because the outcome is your thinking.'*



Completed feedback sheets were rewarded with a fortune cookie (p.46) and included comments quoted on this page

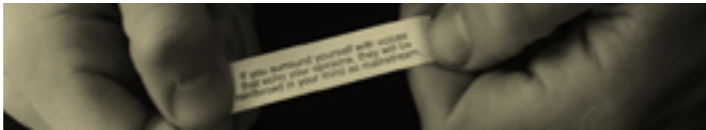
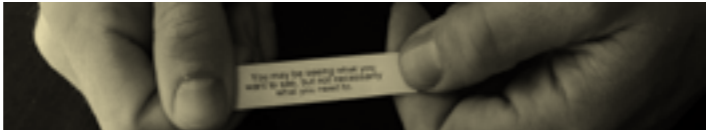
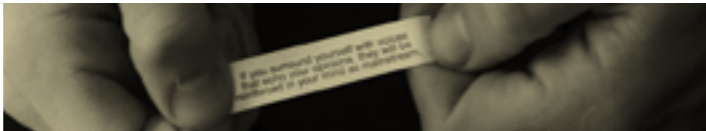
Stuff seems to turn up in front of our eyes a bit like magic.



But how did it get here?



In each of our main events (9, 17 & 29) we offered data related fortune cookie rewards to visitors in return for giving us feedback on their experience, for using our MoCC voucher to bring a friend along... or just to leave a cookie in their browser.



Fortunes are made in the maelstrom of consumption...



But who or what really controls our fate?

How shall we do it?



Let's change our future heritage by re-valuing commodity culture one thing at a time.

The Museum of Contemporary Commodities is everywhere - we drew attention to it in Exeter and London using paper and tinfoil, perspex shelves, digital interfaces and conversations with visitors. How would you do it where you are?

If you, your friends and neighbours were going to start re-making contemporary commodity cultures, what would be your ideas for trading differently?

After making this social artwork and cultural geography research project we had a lot of questions about data, trade, place and values. After reading this zine, do you have any questions to share with us?

Post your answers to Paula Crutchlow and Ian Cook, Department of Geography, University of Exeter, Exeter EX4 4RJ  
OR tweet them to @MoCCofficial

*"It helped me dissect my relationship to the product a little more, letting me reflect on its hold on me."*

Free Market visitor

*"... playful in a creative way whilst surfacing the vastness of the combined issues."*

Shop visitor

*"I experienced in a direct and physical way the social quality of the project... It was very enjoyable and also informative."*

Shop visitor

*"... one starts to consider objects' relationship with time in a different way."*

Exhibition visitor

*"How much of our lives do we spend servicing connectivity?"*

Exhibition visitor

*"It made me think about how much of this happens at home and where all this data goes. Who uses it, what is its purpose - just to sell things and make a profit."*

Exhibition visitor



So what happens now?

We will be running our website until 2024 at [moccguide.net](http://moccguide.net) where you can browse, but not interact with, most of the commodities that were added to the collection. In a continuation of our challenging DIY tech process, some went missing in an unfortunate archiving incident... Here, you can also check the aggregate scores for all the commodity values - spoiler alert: Usefulness and Pleasure scored highest with Democracy, Generosity and Justice scoring lowest. We're writing some academic articles that speak to our research in more detail, and we'll tweet about them @MoCCOfficial. Since we find it difficult to throw anything away, we still have our boxes of stuff in storage waiting for re-use or a reboot in a new DIY form. So if you would like to stage your own MoCC event, hear more about our process, or want to tell us something about your MoCC experience, please get in touch.

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‘The Museum of Contemporary Commodities shares many characteristics with our favourite kinds of projects... in that its purpose, its role, and its values are not necessarily all at the surface all at the same time for everybody. So it’s an art project but people don’t need to know that in order to engage... It’s certainly an activist project, because it’s a direct critique of a kind of neoliberal use of data and people’s personal information not necessarily in their best interests, or in the best interests of people on the other side of the world. So it’s certainly got quite a strong political critique.’

**Ruth Catlow, Co-founder and Co-artistic director, Furtherfield**

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