

The catalogue of touch

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Abstract

The Catalogue of Touch offers a provocative and playful commentary on the commodification and commercialisation of touch and digital touch through a series of artistic responses. It imagines a menu of purchasable touch experiences facilitated by touch professionals – these respond to themes from my research on how people frame touch and digital touch in narratives of loneliness.

Keywords

Touch, digital touch, loneliness, commodification, professional cuddlers

Author Biography

Lili Golmohammadi is a collaborative researcher, designer, and facilitator working across design, technology and social science. Her interdisciplinary practice draws on a wide variety of media, methods and processes, including a close engagement with materials and design-led approaches. She is a UCL Research Fellow for the Textiles Circularity Centre (CX Research Strand), and a doctoral researcher attached to the IN-TOUCH project at UCL, her research exploring the relationships between loneliness, touch and emerging touch technologies.

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Summer

The Catalogue of **TOUCH**



EVERYDAY TOUCH AT EVERYDAY PRICES

11 brand
new
designs

Prices
for all
pockets

Latest in
touch-
tech

All Ages!

From 99p!

Exclusives!

The Catalogue of Touch

Lili Golmohammadi

Through a series of artistic responses, The Catalogue of Touch offers a provocative and playful commentary on the commodification and commercialisation of touch and digital touch.

Touch scholars of recent decades have observed a growing trend in touch commodification (Field, 2014; Paterson, 2007), and the Covid-19 pandemic, whilst not initiating this trend, has amplified and hastened it. This commodification has been partly fed by the increasing spatial demarcation of social touch between private and public spheres (Paterson, 2007), and a bombardment of tactile imagery that can leave people feeling alienated when physical actualisation is not possible (Classen, 2005).

Commercialisation of Touch..

The Catalogue of Touch speaks to the commercialisation, re-packaging and copyrighting of touch experiences and products. The expanding marketisation of touch includes the proliferation of 'touch toys' (Field, 2014: 138) and types of therapeutic massage which 'restore tactility and the somatic senses into prominence' (Paterson, 2007: 13). More recently, social touch is being further packaged and commodified as an end in itself – for example in the form of intimacy or cuddle workshops, where a facilitator guides participants through a series of platonic tactile interactions with one another (Golmohammadi, 2019). Professional cuddlers (e.g., Cuddlist.com, 2020) can be hired by the hour for one-to-one platonic touch, with clients often able to pick from a 'menu' of curated options, or buy their own 'how-to' guides (e.g., Hess, 2015).

A Menu of Touch Experiences..

This commodification and categorisation of touch is also echoed by emerging markets of digital touch; technologies which mediate touch. Companies copyright digital sensations and tactile capabilities, while digital touch technologies designed for long-distance separation feed a market of longing and loneliness (Jewitt et al., 2020), with a promise to fulfil the tactile needs that audio or audio-visual technologies cannot provide. Whilst commercialised touch and digital touch products and experiences may offer some benefits for wellbeing, the commodification of such personal and private aspects of human experience also generates tensions.

The Catalogue of Touch imagines a menu of purchasable touch experiences facilitated by touch professionals – these respond to themes from my research on how people frame touch and digital touch in narratives of loneliness (Golmohammadi, 2021).



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The Protector Tug



Touch experience & illustration by Jing Miao

£9.99 Comforting Human Touch

STEP 1 Sit cross-legged across from your partner and firmly grasp their forearms. **STEP 2)** Next, find equal resistance between you both and pull your shoulders back and with your heads down. **STEP 3)** Inhale, slowly lift both heads while keeping your chest out. Hold this position for a moment, then exhale together. **STEP 4)** As you exhale, pull your chin down to your chest to keep your back rounded. Feel the stretch in your shoulder blades.

cat no 550/0566

More information on our 'Human Touch' workshop experience:

This is part of our mix & match 'Human Touch' workshop. You can select 'The Protector Tug' option alongside up to 4 other human-based touch experiences. Please see our extended catalogue for our complete range. The 'Human Touch' series is our longest-running and most successful to date. We run these workshops UKwide. See our website for more details.

£9.99

New!



Lifetime Money Back Guarantee

We offer a lifetime money back guarantee with this product, because we are certain that you will not be disappointed! This does not affect your statutory rights. Want to know more? Please visit our website for full details, where you will also be able to learn about the inspiration and development processes behind the products we are passionate about bringing you.

Who / What	You & a friend or partner	Skill	Moderate
Where	At home / in the park	Ease	7/10
Time	5 minutes	Comfort	7/10

The Hand in Hand

~~£9.99~~

£4.99

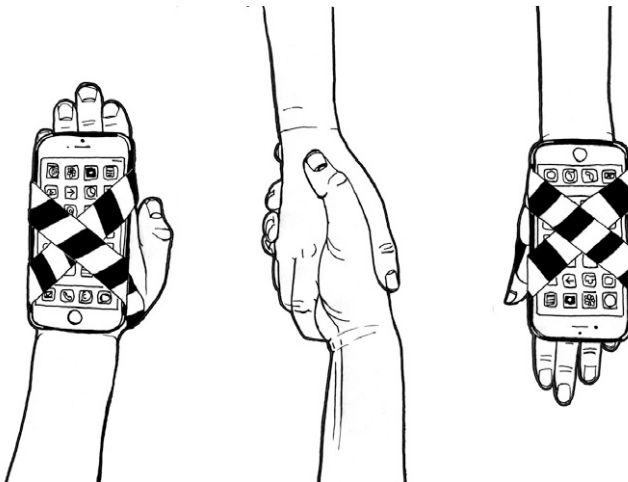
Reduced



Best Buy

What?

Touch experience & illustration by Matt Bannister



Ages 8 +

Half Price

£4.99 Keep Touch Analogue

Part of our guided 'Break away from touching your tech' series.
STEP 1) You will need a friend, two smartphones and some sticky tape. **STEP 2)** Take turns carefully taping your friend's phone to the back of one of their hands. **STEP 3)** Hold the free hand of your friend. **STEP 4)** Keep holding hands for as long as you can stand not being able to check your phone for tweets/likes/updates, etc.

cat no 550/0349

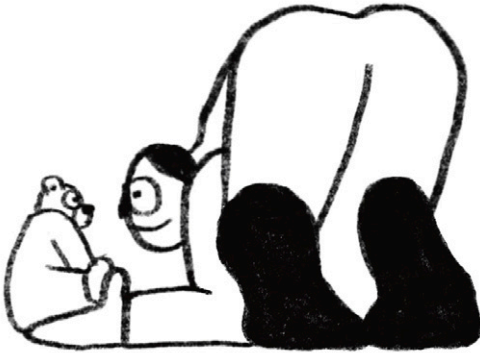
Who / What	You & friend / partner / family member	Skill	Moderate
Where	Anywhere	Ease	5/10
Time	10 minutes	Comfort	4/10

Remember me? Touch me.

£9.99



High Demand



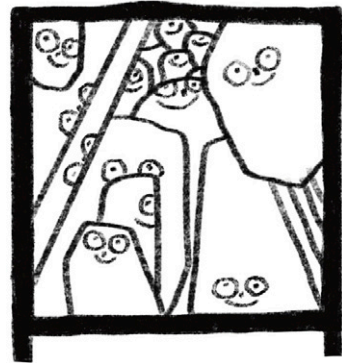
Remember



me?



Touch



me.

Touch experience & illustration by Lily Kong

Ages 15 +

Great Value

£9.99 Memories from the Feel of Objects

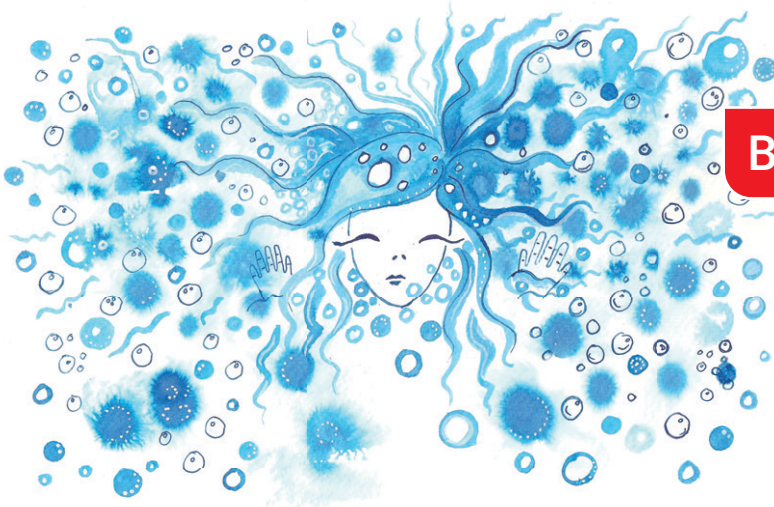
STEP 1) Find an object that gives you a strong sense of connection to the past. STEP 2) Spend 3 minutes feeling it, reflecting on its textures, shape, weight... Hold the object in your hands, arms, roll it over different parts. Do you notice any wear in your object? STEP 3) What life has the object had? What memories does feeling it bring? Who, or what does it connect you to? STEP 4) If you can, do the same thing to a few different objects. They will serve as an archive of your life, just like photos in your photo album.

Explore your home objects supported by an expert online facilitator.

Who / What	You & a cherished object you haven't connected with for a while	Skill	Basic
Where	At home	Ease	7/10
Time	60 minutes	Comfort	9/10

cat no 550/0218

The Blissful Bubble



£9.99

Best Buy



Touch experience & illustration by Helen Ridley

£9.99 Receding into Cocooning Materials

Feel cocooned by warm water and blissful bubbles. STEP 1) Fill a bath with hot water, adjusting this to a temperature that you are comfortable with. STEP 2) Whilst the water is running, add your favourite bubble bath mixture and mix in some essential lavender, patchouli or sage oils to enhance the multi sensory experience. STEP 3) When the bath is full and there are lots of bubbles, lower your body into the comforting cocoon of foamy, warm water. STEP 4) Float in your cocoon and feel safe and supported.

cat no 050/0221

Price includes bath bubbles and essential oils kit, plus a step by step audio-guide to help you cocoon in.

Who / What	You, a bath, bath bubbles & essential oils	Skill	Basic
Where	The bath	Ease	8/10
Time	30 minutes	Comfort	10/10

Touch experience & illustration by Zsófia Jakab



£9.99

For just £9.99 you will be guided through an exclusive tree hugging session in our tranquil forest touch spa.

Tree-Hugger

Ages 15 +

£9.99 Anchoring Touch of the Natural World

STEP 1) Find a tree that's big enough for you to wrap your arms around it. STEP 2) Wrap your arms around the tree and press your body and face against it. STEP 3) Slowly start moving around the tree whilst squeezing yourself against it. STEP 4) Pay attention to the different sensations on your skin - is it soft? Hard? Scratchy? Apply different amounts of pressure, and observe the textures you come in contact with.

cat no 480/0151

Who / What	You & a tree trunk	Skill	Basic
Where	A garden, park or woods	Ease	9/10
Time	15 minutes	Comfort	9/10

Touch experience & illustration by Lili Golmohammadi



£7.99

The Touch Repeller

£7.99 Please Do Not Touch!

Part of our 'Stop touching me!' workshop, where we guide you through a series of exercises to ensure people respect your boundaries.

STEP 1) Stretch out your arms to your sides, with the palms of your hands facing away from you. STEP 2) Spin your arms around, crossing them in front of and around your body to create a bubble. STEP 3) Rotate slowly on the spot as you do this to ensure no one gets near!

cat no 320/0524

Who / What	You	Skill	Basic
Where	Any space where there are other people around.	Ease	4/10
Time	10 minutes	Comfort	6/10

Astral Kiss



£29.99

Best Seller



Recommended
What?

Touch experience & illustration by Ellie Doney

£29.99 Digital Touch on the Go

RECEIVER: Gently apply the Astral Kiss nano-crystal seeding balm, and scan the applied area to activate receiving. **SENDER:** Kiss the touchscreen on the Astral Kiss portal with your desired intensity and choose who to send it to. Trigger your kiss transmission. **RECEIVER:** Feel the balm tingle and crystallise as you receive the stimulating digital touch of your Astral Kiss through the airwaves, wherever in the cosmos you are.

cat no 550/0216

Terms and Conditions:

The Astral Kiss nano-crystal seeding balm is a new technology that has been tried and tested. Please note however that this technology is reliant on you and your partner having a reliable Bluetooth connection to your smartphones. We cannot be held accountable for your smartphone devices – please contact your phone providers if you experience any issues.

Lifetime Money Back Guarantee

We offer a lifetime money back guarantee with this product, because we are certain that you will not be disappointed! This does not affect your statutory rights. Want to know more? Please visit our website for full details, where you will also be able to learn about the inspiration and development processes behind the products we are passionate about bringing you.

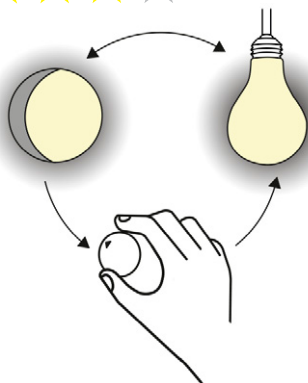
Who / What	Romantic partners	Skill	High
Where	Anywhere	Ease	7/10
Time	30 seconds	Comfort	8/10

The Moon-Sync



£6.99

Touch experience & illustration by Ted Hunt



£6.99 Techno-Nature Digital Touch

Part of our guided 'Getting back in touch with nature' workshop series.

This is a touch exercise in interoception – the tactile sensing of what is going on inside our bodies. Through this exercise, you will focus on moonlight; tuning your body (and the biological clocks of your tissues and organs) into your natural circadian rhythms. **STEP 1)** Pick a night when the moon is clearly visible outside your window. **STEP 2)** Go to a room with a lighting dimmer switch. **STEP 3)** Very slowly adjust the dimmer switch until the luminosity of the light bulb it controls closely matches the luminosity of the moon. **STEP 4)** Congratulations, you have just synchronised yourself with the eternal nature of moonlight! Pause there for 10 minutes, breathing deeply as you re-sync your tissues and organs.

cat no 480/0017

Who / What	You, a light dimmer, the moon	Skill	High
Where	At home	Ease	6/10
Time	12 minutes	Comfort	7/10

Re-Rhythming Ritual with Ink & Water

£9.99

Touch experience & illustration by Becky Lyon



£9.99 Touch to Calm Wild Bodily Rhythms

Price includes ink and audio guide to help you tune into your inner sensing.

STEP 1) Wash away internal pulses of anxiety, and ripples of doubt, by tuning into the rhythms of water. Prepare a flat bowl of warm water, ink or pigment, and a towel. **STEP 2)** Tap the surface of the water with your toes, then fully immerse your feet. **STEP 3)** Lifting them out one at a time, make shapes, take three deep breaths, and let your molecules mingle. **STEP 4)** After 10 minutes, take your feet out. Add a few drops of ink or pigment to the water and mindfully marvel at its flow.

cat no 320/3217

Who / What	You, a flat bowl of water & ink	Skill	Basic
Where	The bathroom or kitchen	Ease	7/10
Time	15 minutes	Comfort	7/10

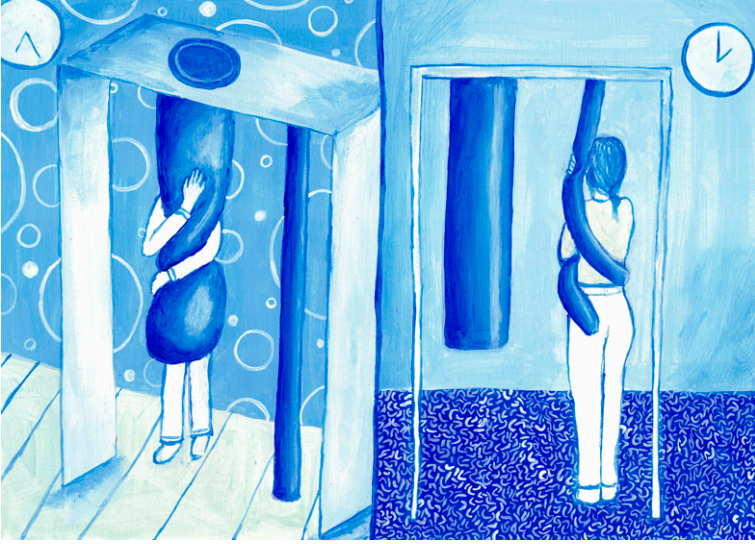
Haptic Asynchronous Remote Rod Gadget (HARRG)

£39.99

New!



Brand New Tech!



Touch experience & illustration by Sandy Di Yu

£39.99 Touch Around the World

Who / What	You & a loved one & a HARRG each	Skill	Moderate
Where	Both of you at home with your HARRG	Ease	7/10
Time	10 minutes	Comfort	10/10

Use the HARRG to hug to your loved ones, strangers, or even your future self, at any time, from anywhere. STEP 1) Switch on the HARRG, set it to "Give" mode, then hug the Giver rod. STEP 2) Using the app, generate a one-time code for the receiver of the hug to input into their HARRG machine. Step 3) Send the code to a lucky somebody. When they enter your code, they'll receive your hug via the Receiver rod, exactly as you intended the hug to be.

cat no 550/0217

£9.99

Low Price



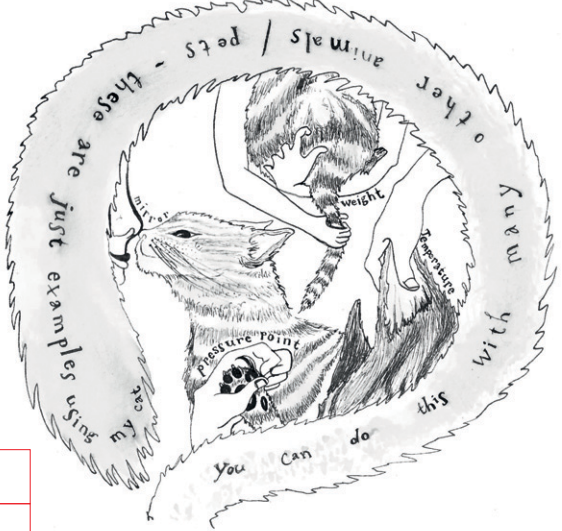
£9.99 Soothing Animal Touch

Part of our guided 'Anchoring with Animals' workshop series. STEP 1) Hold your animal in a way that's comfortable for you both. STEP 2) Mirror their actions, feel in sync with their rhythms. STEP 3) Feel their weight - if they have a tail, stroke and gently squeeze it. STEP 4) With finger and thumb, caress their ears from base to tip - feel the temperature change. STEP 5) Apply gentle pressure with your thumb to the base of their feet - if they have paws, apply enough pressure for their claws to extend (if they let you!).

cat no 050/0496

Who / What	You & a soft, cuddly animal	Skill	Basic
Where	Home or petting zoo	Ease	7/10
Time	15 minutes	Comfort	9/10

Mimic for Meows Reciprocate to Sooth



Touch experience & illustration by Jhinuk Sarkar