



MAKE IT BETTER PROJECT

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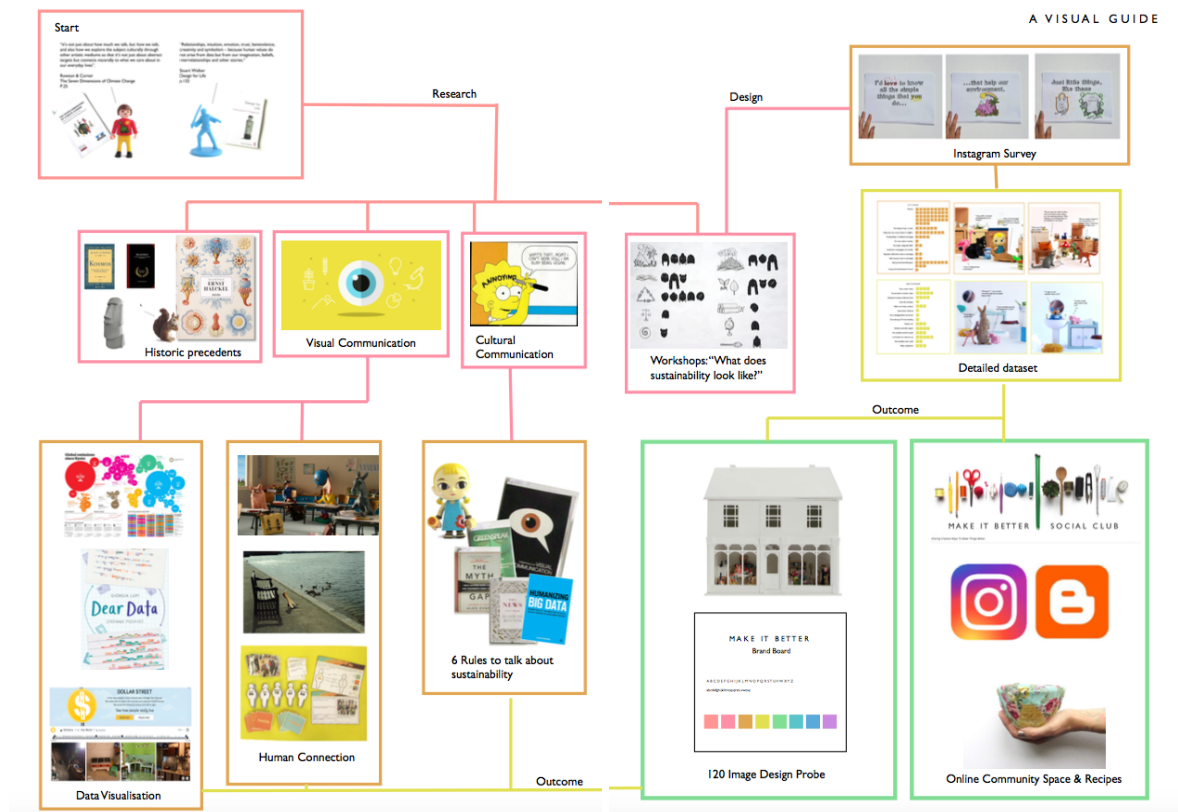
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A visual guide to the development of this project:



Acknowledgements

This project would be nothing without the 100 people that got involved on Instagram, they can all be seen in their avatar glory in 'Little Things'.

I'd like to thank Mark Wells, course leader in Fashion & Marketing at University of Brighton and Katie Friedlander-Boss, course leader in Fashion & Visual Promotion at Bath Spa University for some excellent research advice.

I'd also like to thank Paul Micklethwaite and the MA SD class of 2018 for putting up with my overbearing manner, getting involved with all my questions and activities, and making me think properly.

How can we create a more ‘visceral connection’ with the sustainability agenda, and help overcome ‘climate fatigue, social silence and stealth denial’?

Starting point

The starting point of this piece of research/design, focussed around three quotes that resonated with me from two different academic sources. The first is in a paper called ‘The Seven Dimensions of Climate Change’, part of this paper by Rowson and Corner argues the case for creating a different way of talking about sustainability:

“it’s not just about how much we talk, but *how* we talk, and also how we explore the subject culturally through other artistic mediums so that it’s not just about abstract target but connects viscerally to what we care about in our everyday lives”. P.25 [1]

And

“[W]ithout new vocabulary and cultural currency that allows us to overcome climate fatigue, a social silence, and stealth denial - enduring solutions more substantive than conceptual reframing simply won’t be forthcoming”. P.7 [2]


As a designer with a utilitarian approach, this felt like a tangible problem to tackle, which may actually be useful.

The other text is Stuart Walker’s ‘Design for Life’. In discussing how we communicate and the role that design can play in how we live, he says:

“Relationships, intuition, emotion, trust, benevolence, creativity and symbolism – because human values do not arise from data but from our imagination, beliefs, interrelationships and other stories.” p.132 [3]

This is a slightly different question from the original project proposal, and the way I have explored it is also slightly different from that which I envisaged, however, the same themes have been explored, and similar projected outcomes have been reached.

visceral

/ˈvɪs(ə)r(ə)l/ 

adjective

1. relating to the viscera.
"the visceral nervous system"
2. relating to deep inward feelings rather than to the intellect.
"the voters' visceral fear of change"

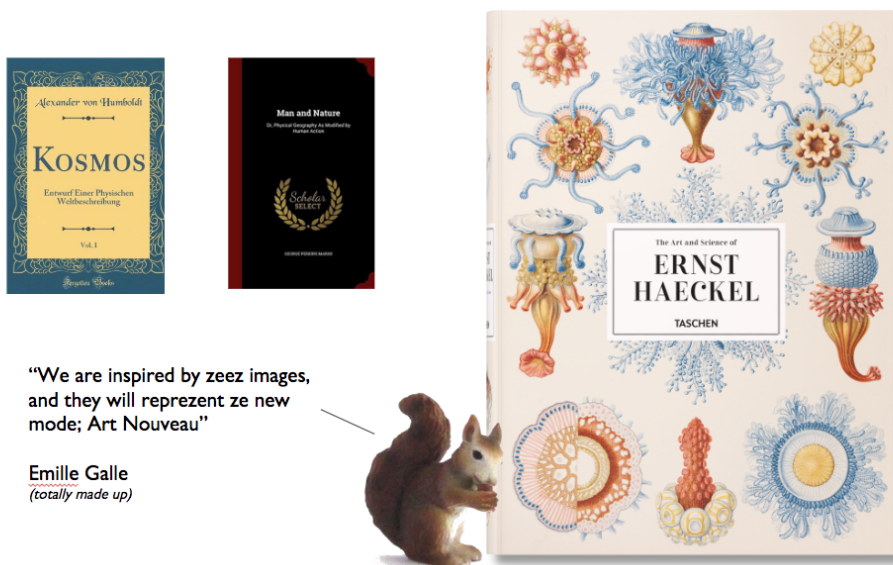
This project set out to explore ‘visceral’ (and in this context it’s the second of these two definitions, so I’ll be trying to create positive, emotional responses) and Walker’s ‘human’ ways of engaging with an existing community of makers that I’m connected with through my work on instagram, who are mostly women, and tend to be in the 25+ demographic. Some

already engage with the sustainability agenda a little but want to find out more, others have no obvious interest, so it will be interesting to see how they react.

Contemporary discourses on design subjects and critically apply knowledge to design process

If we look at examples like Easter Island, we can see the perils of not engaging with the issues surrounding sustainability [4]. The David Attenborough of his day, naturalist and academic Alexander Von Humboldt, was raising concerns over the impact of man on the environment in the 1840's [5]. His protege, George Perkins Marsh introduced the idea (among many other things) that being vegetarian would have less impact on the environment than eating meat. Meat Free Monday and Veganuary might seem a modern phenomenon, but the concept and concern has been around since 1864 [6].

Another protege of Humboldt's was the zoologist Ernst Haeckel. An academic who coined the term 'ecology' [7] and an artist. His detailed images of different creatures directly influenced the Art Nouveau and Arts & Crafts movements, whose very ethos was to celebrate the natural, in defiance of the dominating machine age [8]. His love of painting and aesthetic values [9] had an unintentional, direct cultural impact, inspiring everything from fonts to spoons. What this suggests is that visual communication has a special way of inspiring and capturing people's imaginations.



"We are inspired by zeez images, and they will reprezent ze new mode; Art Nouveau"

Emille Galle
(totally made up)

None of this is to say that other modes of communicating are not successful, Perkin's treaties were used to inform policies in the White House [10], and Darwin's 'Origin of Species' had an impact all around the world [11]. But it is worth exploring whether art and visual communication can create a different, more emotional response.

A question that also presents itself when considering that these environmental concerns were being raised nearly 200 years ago, is what was happening culturally for them not to be heeded? Or at least not to have had enough of an impact for us, in our current

environmental crisis, to need to investigate alternative ways of still trying to engage people with the subject?



In contemporary society, it seems that , ‘environmentalist’, ‘alternative lifestyles’ or ‘activist’ have been maligned and positioned as counter-cultural. We only need to look at The Simpsons or South Park and the way “hippy” is used as a derogatory word [12], or the popularity of Jeremy Clarkson and his many negative, but often applauded comments [13], to see how they are viewed. Yes, South Park is poking fun at those people who have extreme views, but the fact that there are those people to be poked, and that ‘hippy’ is now so loaded with negative connotations it can be used in this way, illustrates the point. [14]

There are those mainstream, ‘alternative’ champions such as the actor Leonardo DiCaprio, that have the power or authority to position themselves outside this counter-cultural view, but after doing some research, it’s clear that there are some that find it difficult to publicly engage with the sustainability agenda, for fear of appearing like:

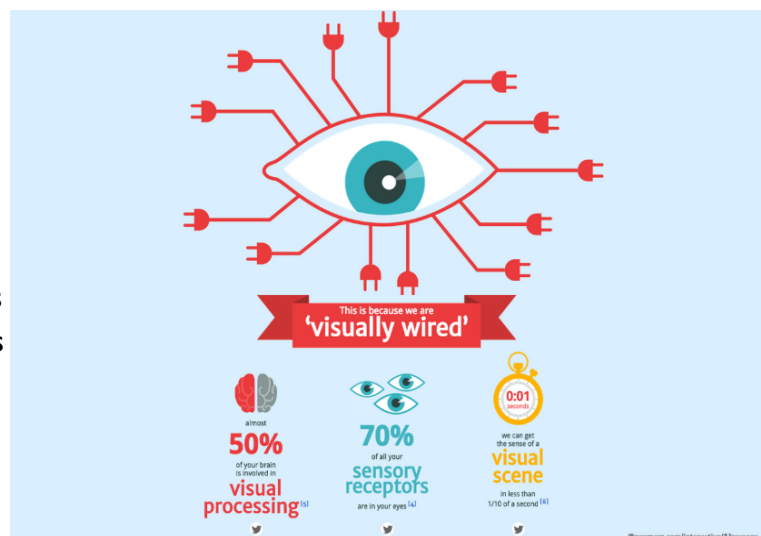
“[T]hose people who sit outside public buildings with banners. Have you smelt their armpits? It’s as though they’ve been using them as the final resting place for every dead rodent in Christendom. And their breath and their hair? Utterly, utterly disgusting.”
Clarkson, J,
15.8.2010 [15]

These existing discourses defined two threads to explore: visual communication and how to position sustainability in a way that is not countercultural, and creates the ‘visceral’ connection.

Visual Communication

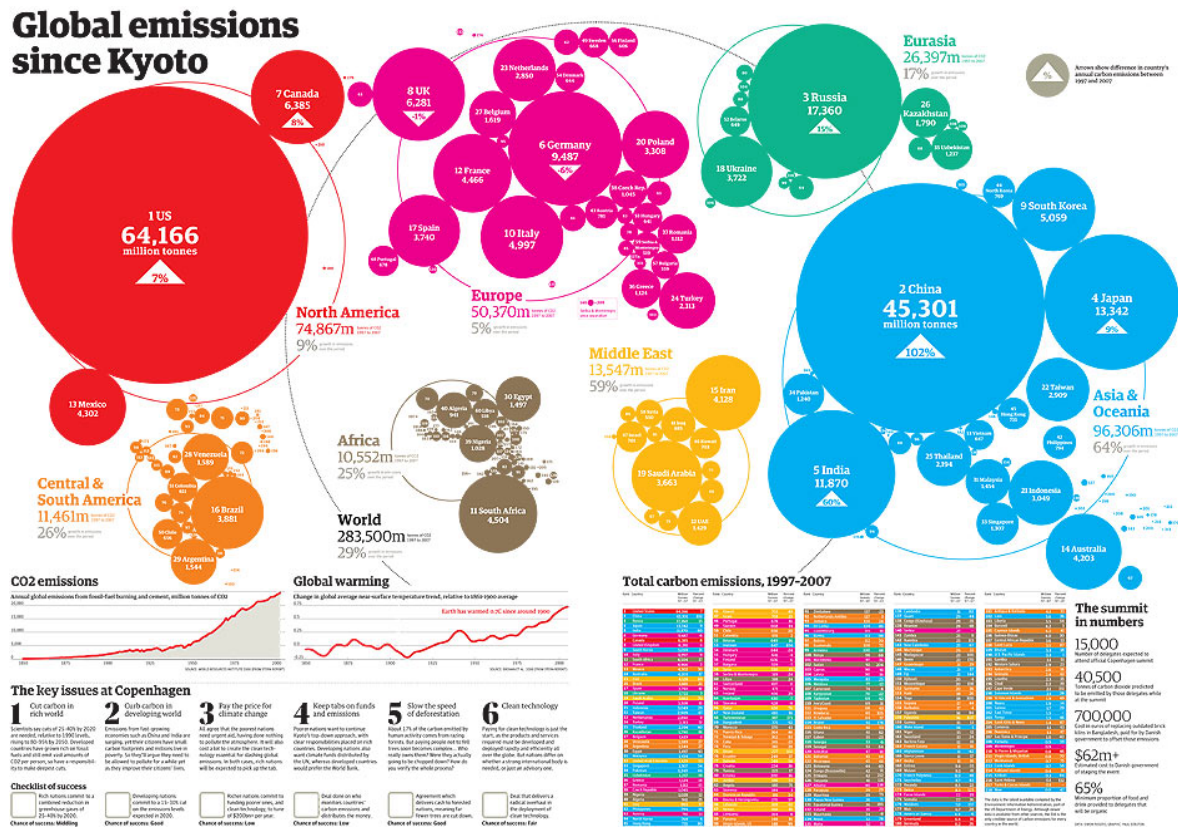
We are visual creatures, scour the internet and you can find any number of sources showing you pretty pictures of why images help us understand information better than text alone [16].

Communicating stories with images is also something that’s been with us since cave paintings and church windows were all the rage [17]. In 1975 Edward Tufte recognised, and staked his whole career promoting the need for ‘The Visual Display of



Quantitative Information' [18], and Data Visualisation and infographic design is now an established discipline.

The below infographic is if from The Guardian newspaper [19], and at a glance it allows us to see just who the biggest polluters are, and how much their emissions have increased since the Kyoto conference.

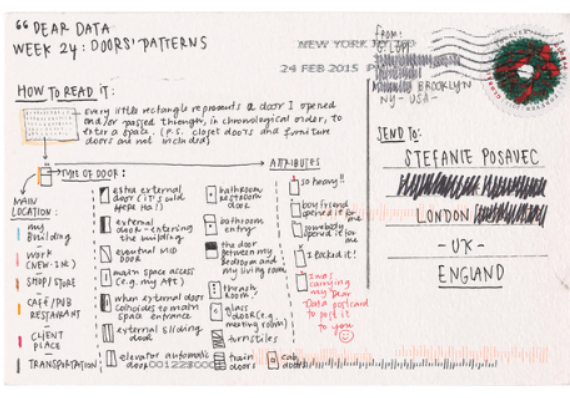
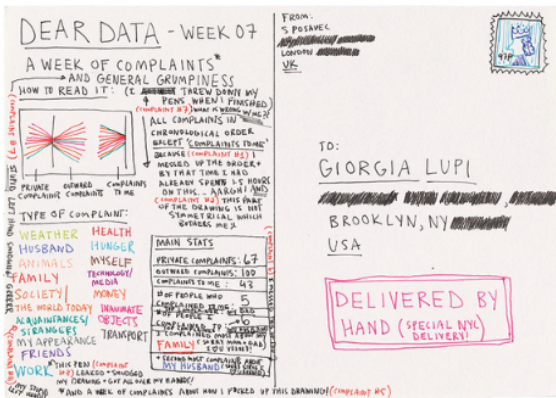
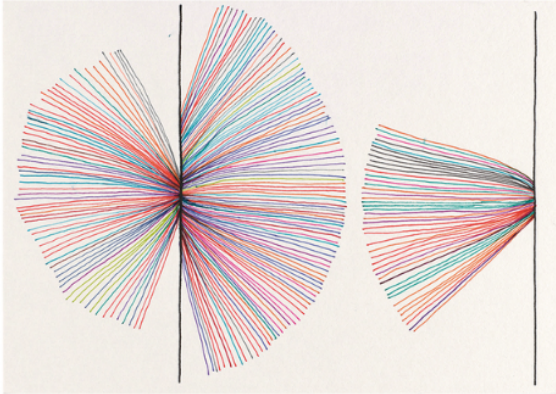


The data is communicated efficiently and easily, it is an engaging way to present it. But is it 'visceral'? I don't imagine The Guardian set out to create an emotional connection with this infographic, but it does illustrate that making something that is visual is not the same as making something that is emotional. Although I do have an emotional response to this particular infographic, which is: helplessness, hopelessness, insignificance and depression. The benefits of creating a positive, emotional response is something we'll look at in a moment.

An alternative approach to data visualisation that does elicit an emotional response from the viewer can be found in Dear Data [20]. The depth of detail, medium of presentation and the human perspective displayed through this project takes the viewer on a journey that is much more complex, curious and ultimately human. It would be a cumbersome and unwieldy approach to try and share this much information about each of the countries that signed up to the Kyoto Protocol, but as a way of exploring the minutiae of someone's day, it's inspiring.

A Week of Complaints

Stefanie



Note the hand-drawn stamps: these postcards were delivered in person in New York!

After spending more than six hours drawing this hyper-detailed card, Georgia tested Stefanie as she posted it: "You need to know that if this one doesn't get to you I won't redraw it. You'll see what I mean."

Story Telling

With all this talk of visual communication, something that needs a little more attention is the importance of narrative and storytelling. We use stories to help us make sense of the world, creating narratives helps us to create meaning [21]. So alongside having an understanding about the power of communicating visually, this project also needs to tell a story, and more importantly, allow people to identify and share their own stories.

Design Rules

If we consider that information and data may be more engaging by communicating about it from a human perspective or medium, there are also some guidelines I've compiled, that are useful to consider when attempting to communicate in an more engaging way about sustainability. They come from a variety of disciplines, from data visualisation, visual communication, sustainability, design, emotional analytics and philosophy.

1. "It is rarely effective to take an authoritative and expert tone" p.27 [22]

This is considered 'vertical' communication, so the alternative would



be a horizontal mode of communication, like a conversation between friends.

2. “Humans are likely to reject dry, fact packed reports” p.14 [23]

We can refer to the introductory quote by Stuart Walker here, and think about relationships, intuition, emotion, trust, benevolence, creativity and symbolism. Essentially making reports more human.

3. We have developed a ‘filter defence’. [24]

From a young age we are trained to understand the world through stories, but are now so bombarded with messages from so many different places that we not only self-curate the messages we receive, but switch off and often find them ‘boring’. [25] “Humour and irony are our achilles heels” in our filter defence [26], as well as finding a way to infiltrate our self-curated mediums.



4. ‘Global’ is too big for us to deal with. [27]

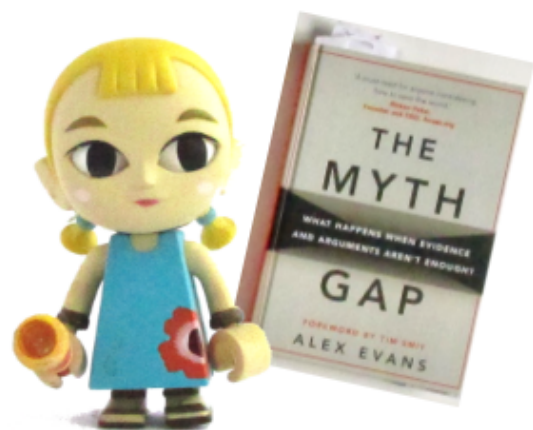
Thinking of sustainability as a global problem is overwhelming and can often make us inert. Making it a domestic problem is much easier for us to engage with.

5. We use stories to make sense of the world [28].

There are too many people to reference with regard to this, but all of the academics quoted in this essay discuss the need for narratives and stories in how we communicate.

6. Oppositional and negative stories don’t often work.

We are all culpable of contributing to the environmental crisis in the West, there is no ‘us and ‘them’ [29], creating a narrative of working together and ‘restoration’ could be more useful. [30]



Most of this list is self-explanatory, but I do want to elaborate on number 3 for a moment. When thinking about our ‘filter defence’, this isn’t just about what we pay attention to or

not, but how we filter and choose the information that comes to us, and the ways in which we now consume media and information. There are a little cluster of quotes I'd like to share:

“During recent years, there has been a move away from interpersonal relationships toward a contemporary mode of individuality, fragmented over countless relationships with designed experiences.”

Jonathan Chapman, *Emotionally Durable Design* p.18 [31]

Chapman was referring to objects, but this also applies to the experiences we now have with social media and our many devices.

Alain De Botton directly refers to Twitter and the need to:

“push so called serious [news] outlets into learning to present important information in ways that can properly engage audiences”

Alain De Botton *The News* p.52 [32]

That's not to say that people don't or won't take interest in something if it's not presented on a tiny screen, in 280 characters or less. We only need to look at the current political climate and public outcry over the treatment of immigrants at the US border to see that people are moved by The News [33]; however, it's also fair (and anecdotal) to say that I first heard of this piece of news on my Facebook feed. But:

“Environmental discourse cannot be understood detached... from their semiotic systems.”
Harre, Brockmeier, Muhlhuasler *Greenspeak* p.20 [34]

If algorithms now curate what we see through our individual 'news feeds', then a design outcome needs to be considered that can penetrate not only our emotional filter defences, but our electronic ones as well.

This list of guidelines became an intrinsic part of the final design brief, coupled with data and discoveries of working with the maker community.

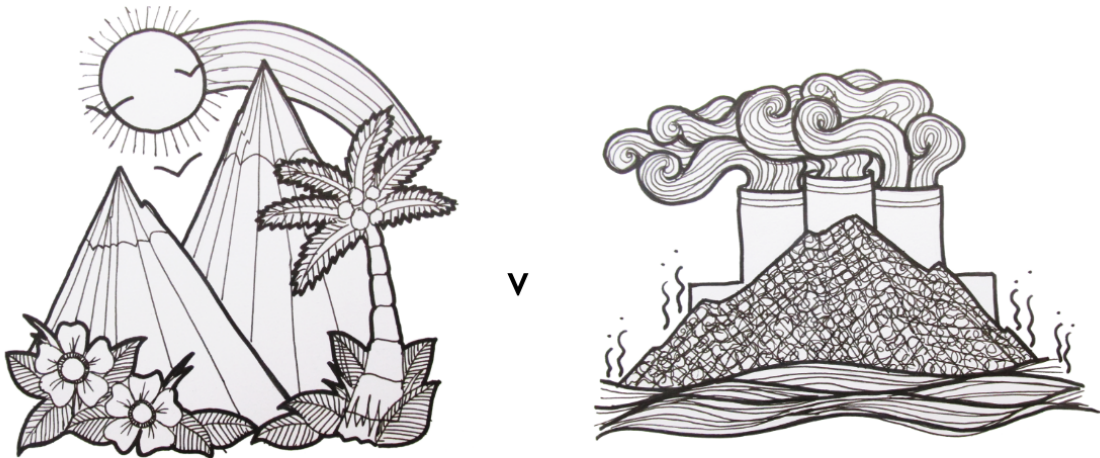
Demonstrate application of research in formulating concepts

The Workshops

With visual communication holding the core of this together, I started by thinking about 'what does sustainability look like?' When we hear the word 'sustainability, what pictures form in our heads, what do we see?' I ran three little workshops, each with three ladies of a certain age (my kitchen table is only so big), chosen because of my knowledge of their engagement (or lack of) with the sustainability agenda, and whizzed off a few emails too, and asked everyone to draw what Sustainability looks like to them - with the definition of

sustainability as ‘living with the least impact on the planet’. In my proposal I had hoped to interview ten people, but managed to get twelve participants in total.

Most people fell into two camps: The Natural World or The Polluted World, and the majority also went for the recycling symbol. While interesting, this clearly wasn’t going to be the way to find a ‘visceral connection’. For full survey results see appendix.



What it does suggest is that the symbols we associate with words, are more like a detailed way of looking at the explicit meaning of a word, rather than what they mean in a more personal context. So when I think of the word ‘happy’ I think of a smiling face as the symbol, but the *meaning* is much more complex and evokes images of sitting on the beach under a blanket watching my children splash about. It seems to be the same with ‘sustainability’.

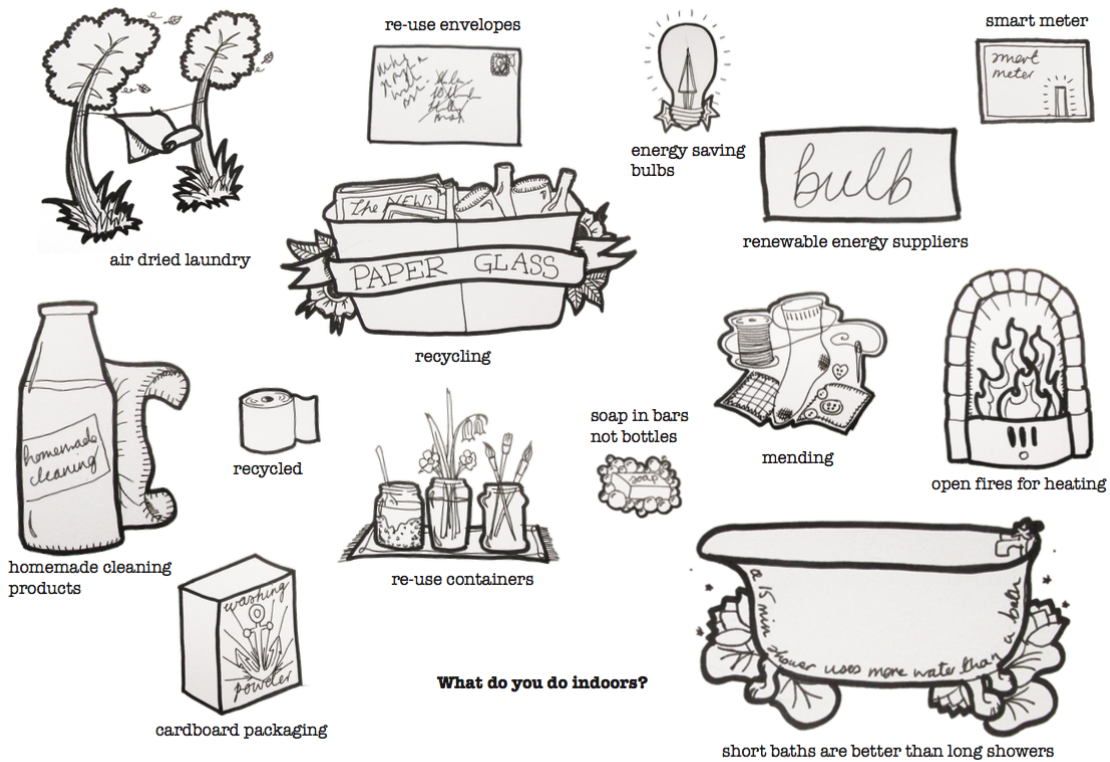
I began to wonder if the shorthand symbols that people are using as a way of describing what sustainability means, was actually shaping how they related to it – so if the symbols were abstract, did that mean that they were less engaged with living in a sustainable way? And if prompted to start thinking in a less abstract way, so thinking about the little things that they do in their daily lives that are environmentally beneficial, would that be different?

So we did some more drawings, this time answering the question ‘what does sustainability look like in your life?’ and that was The Moment. The moment when we all started sharing stories about buying washing powder in cardboard boxes instead of plastic bottles, or taking our own bags shopping, using dishcloths instead of kitchen towel, reusing jars and ice cream tubs to store stuff in.

Some people only did a couple of things, others did lots. This not only provided a useful data set, but highlighted the power of a group of people, having a ‘horizontal’ conversation, in a domestic,



informal setting. Nearly all of the attendees have subsequently been in touch to share new, little changes they have made, from installing washing lines to upcycling sheets. Things they hadn't done before, but felt inspired to do from the workshops.



Initially, the design outcome was going to be illustrating the data set created from the information of the twelve respondents. The idea was to create an interactive book, that shared the information but also invited the reader to choose the things that they also do, and develop their own sustainability narratives.



Design progression trying to find an 'adult' style to represent the things people drew. However, a quote from the Rowson & Corner paper kept haunting me:

“Taking the ‘science of science communication’ seriously is as important as heeding the warnings of scientists themselves”.p12 [35]

So I chose to pursue some further research, to try and build and explore a design outcome based on a weightier data set, that might be useful in trying to understand how to communicate Big Data in a visceral way.

The InstaSurvey

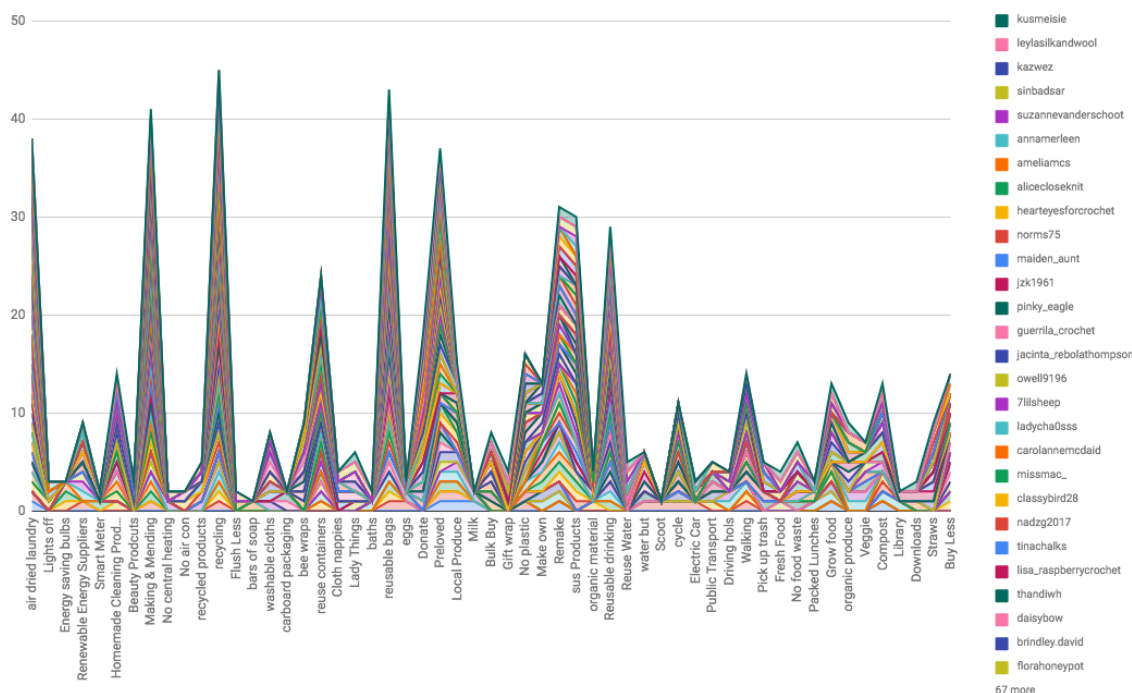
I realise I'm fortunate to have an existing instagram audience to engage with. As they were the intended audience that I ultimately wanted to find ways of talking about sustainability with, it made sense to find a way to ask them for information. Having gained an insight into helpful ways of communicating already, I designed a 60 second video survey, asking people to share the little things that they do to help the environment. [36] It was an open-ended survey, so people contributed as much or as little information as they chose.



Three things happened:

1. 100 people, from all over the world, shared 120 different daily activities that they do, from recycling to installing solar panels.
2. The conversations on the message thread that resulted were exciting, delightful, passionate, engaged and enthusiastic. (To see this thread see [36])
3. There were lots of suggestions of things that people were making themselves, that other people wanted to know how to do.

My initial response when confronted with this much data was to organise it, homogenise it, head straight for Excel and do this:

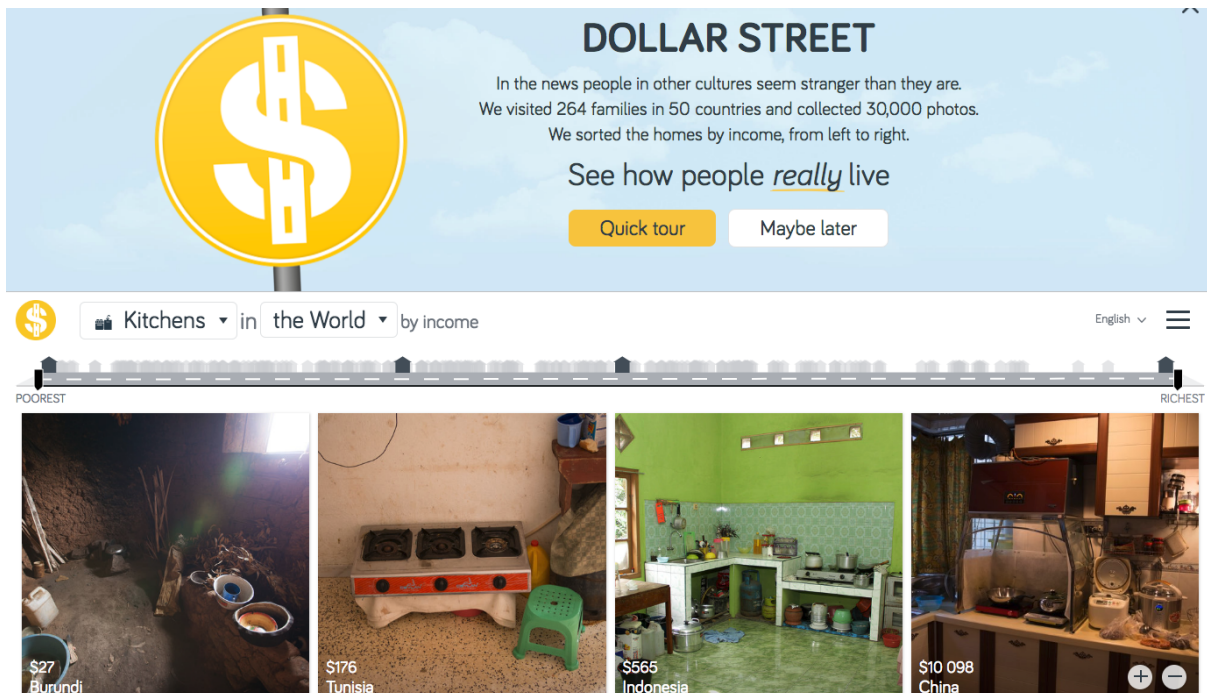


At a glance you can see trends, such as in the wake of the Blue Planet II effect [37], plastic straws now have a category all to themselves, or that things that have been put in place by government like recycling, or making people pay for plastic bags has had a significant effect. But by homogenising the individual comments in to more manageable categories, it lost the real zest and life that came from the original ‘data’.

Dear Data is a lovely example of how to share detailed, human information, but I also wanted to find a way to animate it. In a previous project, ‘30 People & Me’, I explored ways of trying to organise 30 survey responses around perceptions of aging. I made 30 figures to move around so I could ‘see’ the information (the perils of being a visual thinker) which ended up being developed into an interactive ‘game’. Really it was an IDEO inspired way of prototyping [38], but one that made my data human [39].



Another example of an incredibly large and detailed data set that I’d like to share is Dollar Street [40]. It’s an interactive website that visited 264 families, in 50 different countries and has 30,000 photos of daily, domestic things, from kitchen utensils to loo paper, and shares them from the poorest through to the richest. It’s also an inspiring example of the power that a domestic setting can have to connect us with each other.



Originate outcomes through application of ideologies/research principles & methods/materials & tech/interventions

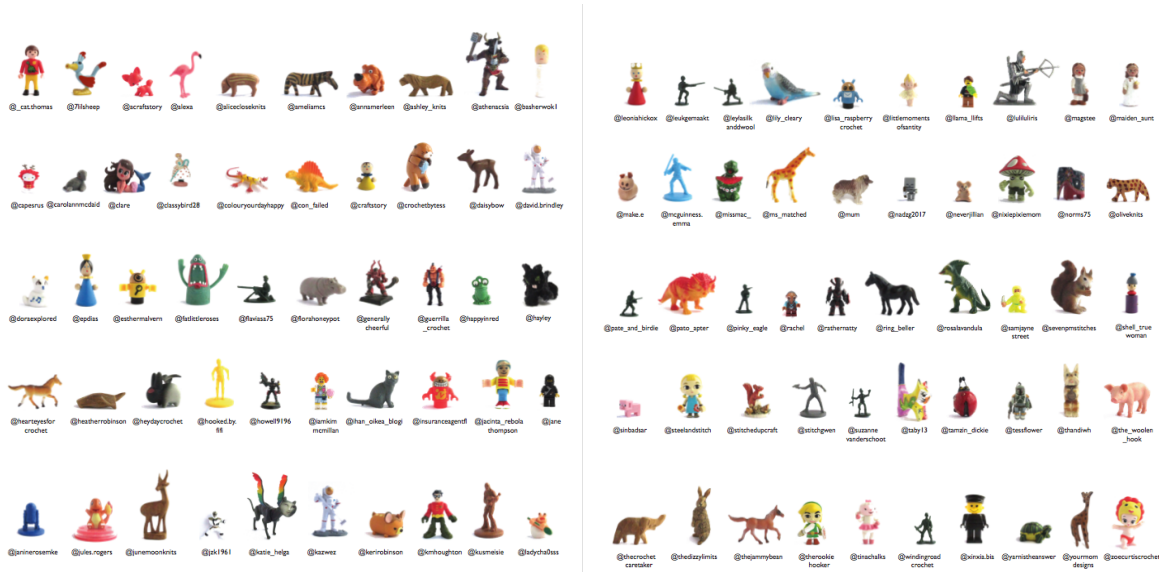
The Data

Step 1

Having started out on a hand-drawn, illustrative approach, I spent a lot of time trying to find a way to draw this data. Nothing was really bringing it to life, so that's when I went more 3D. Cutting out 30 people had been wrist breaking enough, so as a prototype, each of the 100 respondents was allocated a figure from the depths of the toy box (and if this doesn't illustrate the pervasive problem we have with plastic, then I don't know what does). Having these people to 'play' with made it much easier for this visual thinker to start working with them.



Each figure was given a tag with their comments written on, and a coloured string to denote the country they were from. This was very fiddly to move around, so I got hold of a proper camera, learned to use it, and photographed each one alone.



The plastic figures were originally just something that were to hand, but they put me in mind of *A Town Called Panic* [41]. It's a Belgian, stop motion short film, using familiar toys and figures to tell stories, often about mundane things, in a very silly and enjoyable way. So the plastic figures stayed.



Step 2

Being able to interact with the 100 really brought them to life, but how to illustrate the little things that they do? As a maker, with an audience of makers, I decided to make things that I could photograph all the figures with, and create a detailed Dear Data level data set, from reusable bags, to taking packed lunches. The photographs of creating these miniature-makes has also become a way of interacting and engaging with the intended audience.



Step 3

The 100 were talking about domestic things, things they do in their daily lives, so it made sense to categorise them in that way - things people do in the kitchen, the bathroom, the garden, out & about, travelling. Domestic stuff, in spaces that we all connect with, no matter where we are in the world. It was also the way that I began to organise the data from the workshops, but this took it to a more detailed level.

“It is apparent that empowerment involves more than providing data - individuals need to have the tools to engage and make sense of that data.”

'Humanizing Big Data'
Colin Strong
p.178



[42]

The 'tool' in this instance, to help people engage with and make sense of the data, would become the domestic setting.



Using dolls house furniture to create a space in which to position the figures was a way of animating and positioning them in a familiar environment. An eclectic mix of borrowed and second hand furniture (let's challenge that linear economic model where poss) helped make the mini-spaces feel more realistic, filled with all the little makes and accoutrements of daily life and 'people'. There is also something familiar and universal about dolls house furniture that has an international appeal (this is anecdotal, from the instagram 100, but that's good enough for me).

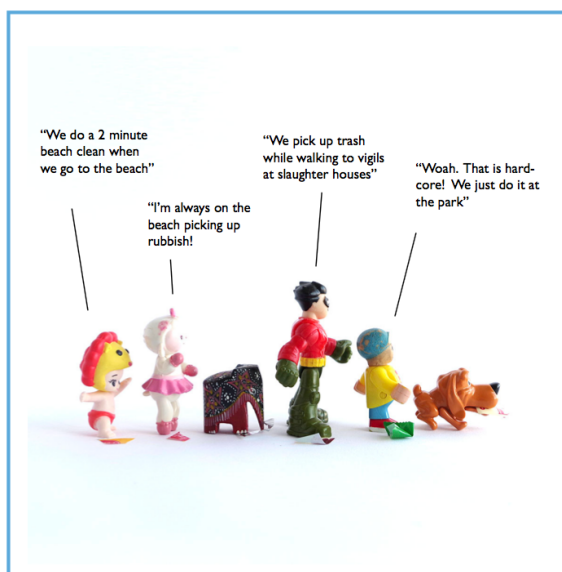
This is similar to Guy Bourdin's work *Britain by Cadillac* [43], which, by the addition of a pair of legs into a landscape, suddenly there's a human connection. Adding just part of a familiar, human form gets my brain to start building a story, and that is what gives us a connection to the scene.



Just as it was with the workshops, the conversations within the instagram feed were a hugely important part of the engagement and responses. There was an opportunity to use the respondents' actual words, coming out of their avatar's mouth, in a domestic setting, and in conversation with each other.



Prototype using coloured backgrounds to represent different categories - pink for Living Room - and paraphrased comments.



Final shots using direct quotes to maintain authenticity, with a few amendments to keep it light hearted, and a white background to make the image easier to 'read'. The category is denoted by the coloured border.

This seems an appropriate juncture to say that at certain points I have taken utter liberties with some people's 'words'. I really wanted to keep it as authentic as possible, but when someone talks about "holding vigils at slaughterhouses", I worried that it started to push us into that dangerous, counter-cultural territory. So rather than censoring them, I put some rather more lighthearted words in the mouth of someone else, just to bring it back to being easy going.

The task then, became to create a holistic set of 120 photographs, a complete, detailed data set, broken down into eight domestic categories and subcategories, that was energetic, animated and democratic.

This 'brand board' shows font, style, layout and colours used to border the photographs, denoting the different domestic categories. The font is Gill Sans, because Eric Gill created a community championing hand-making. The colour palette is developed from the first photograph in the series. The layout is square so that it can be shared easily on Instagram. The overall design is clean and bright so that it will stand out in a busy 'feed'.

(For the full data set see appendix, the below is a small example of some of the categories and final images).



Make it Better Social Club

We have already looked at the role social media can play and has played in this project, but it seems helpful to just explore in a little more detail.

The nub of it is that with the now commonplace use of social media, often people choose what advertising/news/information they consume. In the Olden Days there were Above Line modes of marketing like TV, newspapers, films, where people got what they were given. Now there are also Below Line modes, where people are choosing what they see depending on their interests [44].



Creating a dedicated, below line marketing channel with instagram and blogspot, Make It Better Social Club, seemed a sensible route to take. Instagram is great for chatting and the community element, (it's *social* media remember), and has the advantage of easily engaging with the existing audience. It's also an effective way of engaging with a new audience through hashtagging. Blogspot can provide an online space, which is invaluable for communicating who you are, what you do, providing a sense of permanence and offering the space to go into more depth on certain subjects.

“[S]mall groups have such a crucial role to play as the building blocks of long-lasting movements which have the power to incubate and diffuse new values. Where can we look to kindle more of the deeper conversations we need?”

p.113



“As with any technology, we will be free to use this power for good or for ill. The importance of choosing wisely in the stories we tell each other will never have mattered more - especially at the moments when it appears as though everything is falling apart.”

p.129

In 'The Myth Gap' Alex Evans might be talking about how religious groups are places to grow values from, and that our real-world social groups are getting smaller all the time [45]. But, he could also be talking about that little group, right there on Instagram, the 100 that wanted to share what they do with each other, to try and make things better.

"Art may be most usefully defined as the discipline devoted to trying to get concepts powerfully into people's heads."

p.82



I wouldn't be bold enough to claim that a lot of what is on Instagram is 'art' [46], but we could argue that making an image to post on your feed can do the same job.

A dedicated Instagram account would serve as a medium through which to share the 120 images, act as 'safe' space for people to carry on their conversations, become a democratic space that can ultimately be managed by the group itself, and share the practical, creative

things they do with a #makeitbetter_sc.

Instagram and blogspot are also incredibly useful in monitoring how engaged people actually are with what you are doing. The number of followers you lose or gain depending on what you have posted is indicative of the success or failure of the content.

While comments, questions and ❤️ allow you to measure the emotional connection the audience is having with you, each other and different sorts of posts.



Why Make It Better Social Club? A year ago I was asked to create a pennant with a slogan on for a craft magazine. Being of a sustainable bent, I wanted something meaningful but not preachy. "Make It Better" seemed just right, and 'Social Club' is a fitting name for the community of makers that share these same values.

For Make It Better Social Club, what a blog provides is a space for longer, more in depth conversations, the opportunity to share different sorts of information like links to other sites and interesting people (this report is laid out in a portrait format so that it can later be uploaded to and shared on the blog), and to share the third outcome of this project: The Makes.



MAKE IT BETTER SOCIAL CLUB

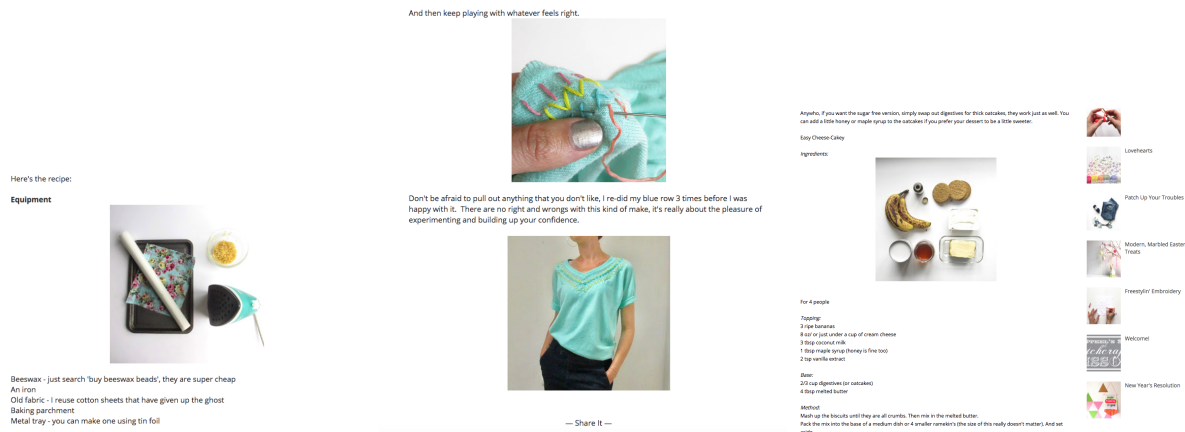
Sharing Creative Ways To Make Things Better.

Blog header using photography to denote different hand-making activities, in spectrum order. This ties in with colour palette from the brand board, and keeps the project cohesive.

Hand-making is an invaluable tool in our kit to restore balance [47], how to's, recipes and patterns are a really important part of encouraging and empowering people to make things themselves, and can have all sorts of wider, environmental benefits [48]. There was a real interest in the survey responses to learn and share different hand-making activities. The blog can provide a space to share full instructions of how to make the things, suggested by the 100. This provides a tangible and practical outcome for people to engage with, which can provide a counterpoint to the sense of inertia that the 'global' representation of the sustainability problem is often presented with. It also encourages a sense of ownership; when you can manifest a solution that you can then share with others, and creates a visceral response of its own.

This is also why I chose to use hand-making as the illustrative technique for this project. Using the resources I had to hand, rather than custom building or machine making objects felt an important part of this story.

Each recipe is photographed in a similar, clean and bright style, and where possible, using similar materials to those used in the mini-images so that the overall aesthetic is cohesive. So far, based on suggestions and requests from the 100, there are full photographic tutorials for beeswax wraps, sashiko mended jeans, upcycled tops, leftover banana cheesecake, loo-roll pea pots, and more. The plan is to keep making and sharing the clubs suggestions, patterns and inspiration.



To illustrate how the three design outcomes all work together I'd like to share the story of the Beeswax Wraps with you:

Once upon a time eight people from all four corners of the globe, shared their excitement on instagram, about discovering and using beeswax wraps instead of plastic wrap.



One of them had said that she knew how to make her own, so she shared the recipe with her friend who had a knack for taking fancy pictures.

"I know how to make beeswax wraps"



"Cool! I'll make a how to for people to follow"



The friend took some pictures and a video of how to make them, and then shared them with the rest of their friends on instagram and online.



darling_raindrop I was looking in to buying some today and, after watching this, I remembered I have beeswax pellets already so I can make some myself!!!

ring_beller This is great! Was wondering if I could make them myself as they're not sold here. Will definitely give it a try xx

ofblithespirit Genius!! Am going to get on that!!



They then started making and sharing THEIR own...



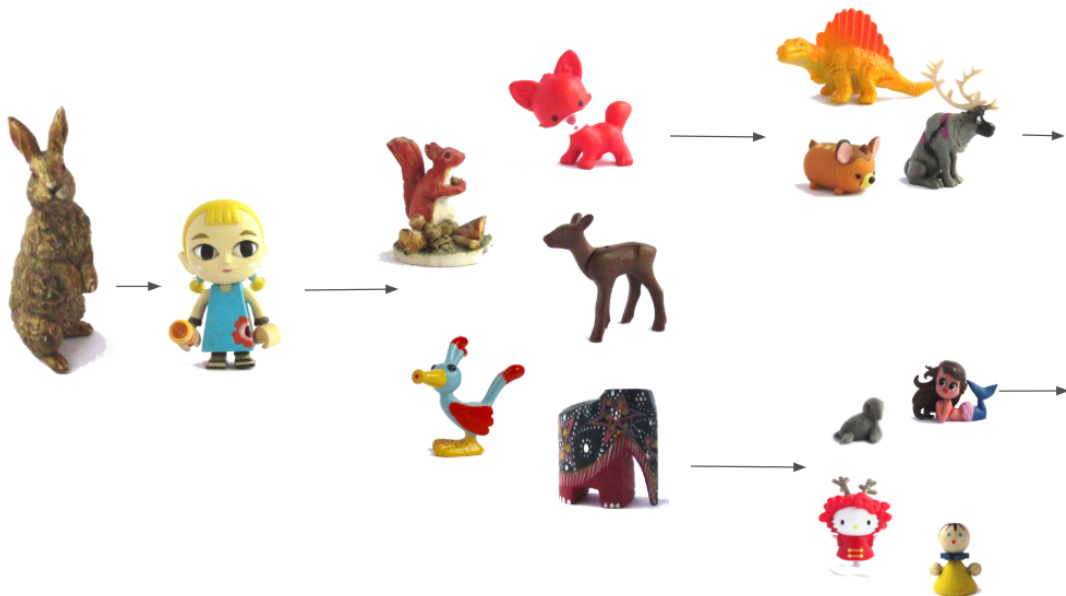
“Can I share this on my blog?”

“Course!”



...and one of them shared the picture with HER friends.

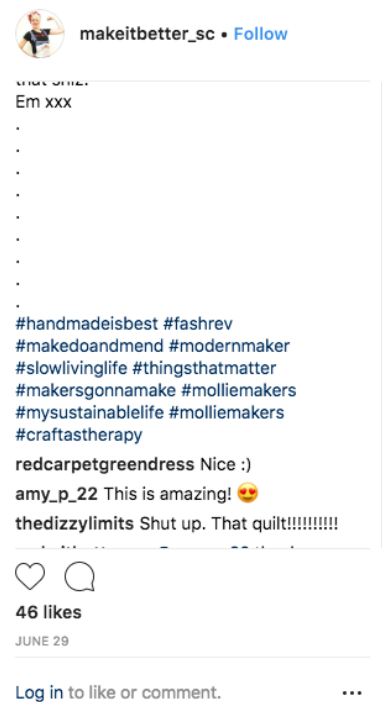
Her friends started making their own too, and although it's only a little thing, it all helps to make it better, and who knows where it might end?



Critical reflection & Conclusion

What began as a response to a question has become something that will continue for as long as it is useful. All the time that Make It Better Social Club can positively engage with an audience, and encourage conversations around sustainability in a non-challenging, positive, emotional and human way, then it will be doing what it set out to do.

The comments and responses to posts on the instagram feed show that these images are having a 'visceral' connection. The screenshots below show some of the 'emotional' responses people have to the images. I couldn't say exactly how much of an visceral response an emoji with loveheart eyes is, and different people are clearly having different responses to different things in each image, but overall I would be comfortable saying these images create a positive, emotional response.





makeitbetter_sc • Follow

makeitbetter_sc @samjaynestreet for £3.50 and an hour I'm super chuffed! xxx mnrnardiello Love it! Looks really cute on you

emmamaystitching Oh my days, this is awesome!!!!

sewveehoo Ooh love this!! 😍😍

makeitbetter_sc @mnrnardiello Thanks loveheart xxx

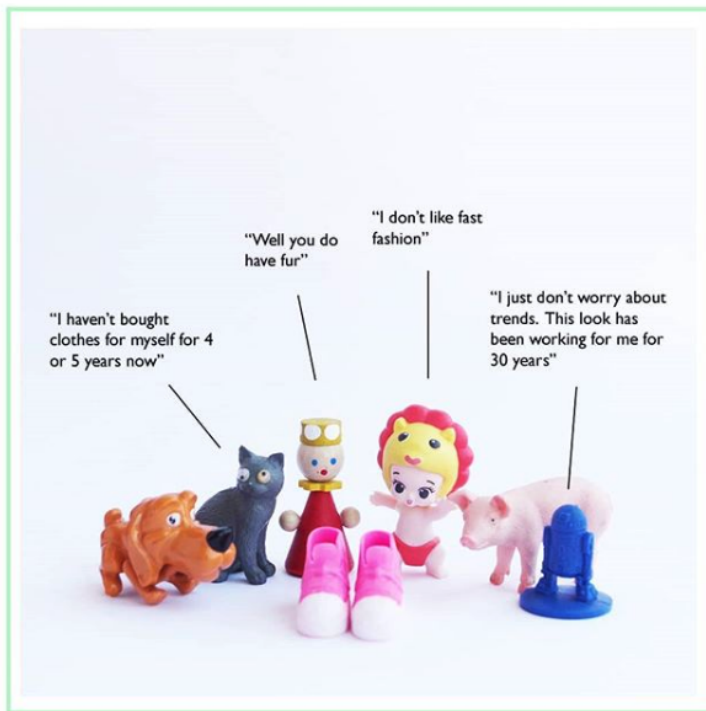
makeitbetter_sc @emmamaystitching you could do this with your eyes closed! 😂

makeitbetter_sc @sewveehoo Thanks sweetpea, SO easy! xxx

sewveehoo @makeitbetter_sc I totes wanna make one..now to find a suitable dress. The one you found works perfectly!! 💕 xx

131 likes
7 DAYS AGO

Log in to like or comment.



makeitbetter_sc • Follow

#handmadeisbest #slowfashion #slowlivinglife #thingsthatmatter #makersgonnamake #molliemakers #mysustainablelife #craftastherapy #fashrev #savetheworld #makedoandmend #upcycling #sustainableliving #plasticfreejuly #fashionrevolution

emmelineskelton So funny made me smile

stitchedupcraft This is so cute and clever 😊

makeitbetter_sc @emmelineskelton are you coming to our last session loveheart?! Totes would love to see you xxx

makeitbetter_sc @stitchedupcraft I can't remember if one of these is you! 😊😂

sams_playinghooky I love these mini convos 💕😂💕

59 likes
6 DAYS AGO

Log in to like or comment.

At only 7 weeks old the Instagram account now has 680 followers, with each post getting an engagement rate between 8 - 15%. In marketing terms this already sets the account in the 'influencer' category, which in such a short time is humbling and amazing.

Average Engagement Rate on Instagram and Twitter in 2017

We analysed 1,000,000+ influencer profiles
across leading Influencer Marketing Platforms

	<1,000 followers	<5,000 followers	<10,000 followers	<100,000 followers	100,000+ followers
Instagram	8%	5.7%	4%	2.4%	1.7%
Twitter	1.5%	1.45%	0.55%	0.45%	0.3%

Brought to you by

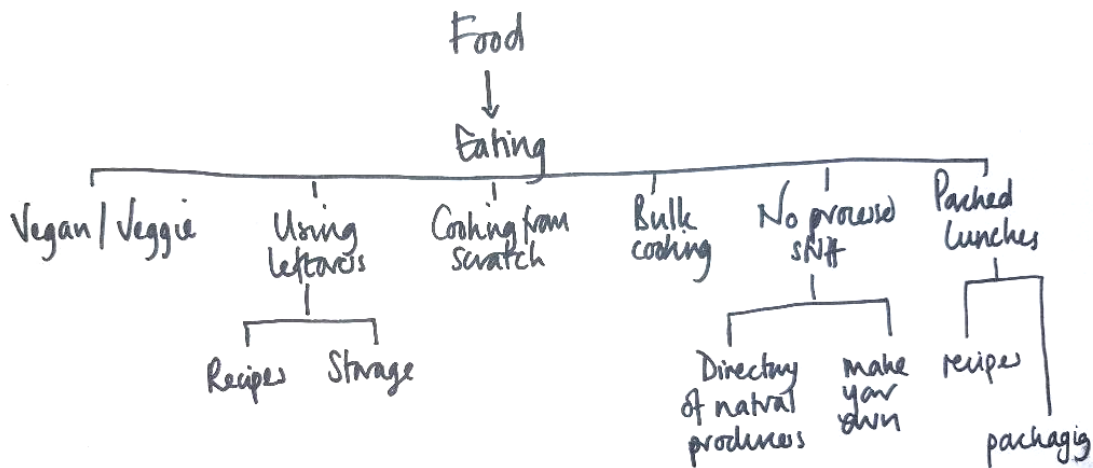


What needs further consideration however, is that it is the photographs of the datasets that receive the least engagement (approx 8%), and the photographs of the how to's and designs for people to make that get the most. It is also worth noting that while the account was created as a space for the 100 makers, many of the new followers are sustainability companies and people with an interest in environmental change. This is likely to be because the hashtags I've been choosing to use are aligned with the sustainability agenda, so I need to give further thought as to who exactly I want to engage with. If it's encouraging other, less engaged makers, then I need to research and experiment with an alternative/complementary set of tags.

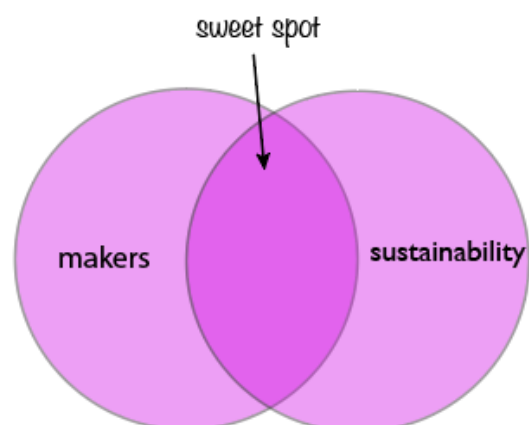
My concern about it is that it is still quite sustainability heavy. I was hoping to create something that wasn't aligned with those generic, Clarksonsque views, and that the making element would have an appeal beyond the environmental. I was very fortunate to have this project nominated for a Handmade Champion Award, and presenting it in a handmade context really highlighted how even mentioning sustainability, rather than speaking exclusively about making, influenced the comments of the judges and the final outcome - A Disaster. As the intended audience for these outcomes was the 100 who already had an interest in sustainability, that's ok, but going forward, again, I need to consider who exactly I want to engage with and if I would do it differently. Maybe the audience is exclusively makers with an environmental conscience, and this just stays as a safe space for those people to normalize their conversations around sustainability?

I over-ambitiously embarked on creating three outcomes as opposed to just one, so have not completed the dataset to a standard I would have liked. If I did it again I would use a proper studio to get consistent lighting, get a professional to do the post-production and take more time and care over it. There is a question over the use and value of the illustrated dataset. Each photograph was shot with the intention of being viewed in a square, instagram format, but if they receive the least engagement in that medium, it might be worth considering them as a stand alone outcome, so I have also presented them in this way. I also didn't photograph the complete set, as some of them were just too fiddly, or those with too many people in were too busy to make good images.

As a dataset however it is incredibly rich, and it seems a shame to lose that. From a design perspective there are any number of paths you could choose to follow from it. You could focus just on the things people were saying about food, and then explore or encourage people toward just one little bit of that.



I set out to find a way to get people to connect viscerally with the sustainability agenda, through a visual medium, that they would want to engage with. I think I've achieved that, but for me the three outcomes show the continual conflict I've experienced in wanting to create a rigorous piece of academic research, explore the possibilities of data visualisation AND connect with an audience of makers. Going forward I would like to explore ways of working that bring these three things together in a more robust way, and position myself in a space that connects them.



To the MIBSC instagram account: https://www.instagram.com/makeitbetter_sc/

To the MIBSC blog: <http://makeitbettersc.blogspot.com/>

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