THE STUDY
19 participants
12 three week stints
> tube-phobic
> object shadowing
> semi-structured interviews
> woman with two homes
> mother with adult children
> staff of Transport Museum
> designers from 6 countries
> artists inspired by the tube
> commuter with 2.5h journey

ECOLOGY OF OBJECTS

"I was at Old Street station and there was, I don’t know why that station is so cool, but it’s quite lovely, and there was a girl sitting next to me on the seat reading a leaflet called ‘Fun Things to do in Hartfordshire’... I don’t know if you’ve ever been to Hartfordshire, but there are no fun things to do in Hartfordshire. I mean I don’t know why she had this. I mean I’m guessing she was Chinese, but she might not have been, that’s a guess, and you just think why do you come all the way from China, Singapore on a proverbial song... I mean the train goes out to Hartfordshire... and she’s obviously picked up this leaflet of fun things to do. There really isn’t anything fun to do in Hartfordshire... You just want to tap her on the shoulder and say how many fun things have you done? And how many are there? Are there 23 fun things? I’d be surprised. Five possibly."

EMERGENT SOCIALITY

"I only imagine things about someone if it’s someone I fancy. Like, ‘I hope you’re off to the Kings Arms.’ [I’ve seen someone again] a couple of times. Like I’ve been on the train, you’ve sort of seen him in one train and you get off and you think the doors have closed and they are not there and the next thing you know you change trains and you look around and it’s like ‘oh, you again.’ Or you will go and come back and you’ll sort of randomly notice him down at the other end of the platform. But it’s not often you get that."

"Have you ever gone out of your way or changed your route or followed someone? <nods sheepishly> Probably only one stop extra or something like that, or I will just walk a bit slower. Mmm. This makes me sound incredibly shallow. Ohh. You sit there and think ‘you’re cute’ I’ll sort of walk behind you until the entrance and we will go our separate ways and I will fall in love again when I get back on the tube. <sighs> God, traveling into town I must fall in love in about 20 times."

"But people often say people who are car commuters they particularly like being on their own, in their own space, despite the fact that it may take them twice as long to drive, they actually seem to enjoy just being in their own space and not being bothered by anybody else, but I can see some of the advantages of that, but at the same time I don’t particularly want to go through life kind of casting off those around me and the fact that it doesn’t matter that you don’t talk to all those people on the Underground, it’s just other people being around you and it’s quite life enhancing really. You don’t have to make a particular meal of it. So all these expressions people used to use about it being the rat race and the pressures of London, I mean, sure, there’s some of that, but at the same time you also get quite a buzz for being part of that."

WHAT I DO WITH MY BODY, MY HANDS & MY EYES

AESTHETIC EDGE CASES