

# Explorations Book

: Expanding Boundaries Through the Senses of Two Objects, 02 Wooden Table

## Theoretical background

Scholars in consumer research argue that when individuals assign personal meaning to specific objects—such as places, gifts, collectibles, or souvenirs—they often develop emotional attachments to them, cultivating distinctive and affective bonds over time. These objects formed an attachment with me as well, and over time they accumulated a unique emotional resonance grounded in memory. This understanding provides a basis for examining how the altered forms of objects, and the processes through which they are divided, reassembled, and consequently transformed, become central to my research.

Rachel Whiteread is an artist who articulates memory, movement, experience, and an intimate affection for place. She materialises intangible elements—such as movement, emotion, and memory—that cannot be seen yet can be experienced, offering new perspectives on the everyday. Her work resonates deeply with viewers by illuminating what lies beneath the surface of human experience. In this context, I aim to reveal the memories embedded in objects—memories that are invisible yet lived—so that I may access and articulate the thoughts and emotions that reside within me.

*Grayson, K. and Shulman, D. (2000) 'Indexicality and the verification function of irreplaceable possessions: A semiotic analysis', Journal of Consumer Research, 27(1), pp. 17–30.*

*Whiteread, R. (1993)*



## This WOODEN TABLE

is a piece of furniture I have used for a long time with my family in Korea. Over time, certain objects become irreplaceable through acts of ownership such as use, display, cleaning, storage, discussion, comparison (McCracken 1988). These ordinary yet repetitive actions reinforce a “sense of ownership”. The wooden table is the space and piece of furniture where I performed my most everyday rituals. By sharing these routine yet significant actions, this table became an irreplaceable, cherished presence. These actions are repeated even when I use other tables, overlapping with and remembered.

*McCracken, G. (1988) Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.*

## Scent and Texture Drawing – Food Smell

Wood absorbs scent. Aromas permeate between the wood grain and into the layers beneath the surface, accumulating in varying intensities over time. Food odors mix, settle, and become embedded, demonstrating how olfactory memory becomes materially deposited.





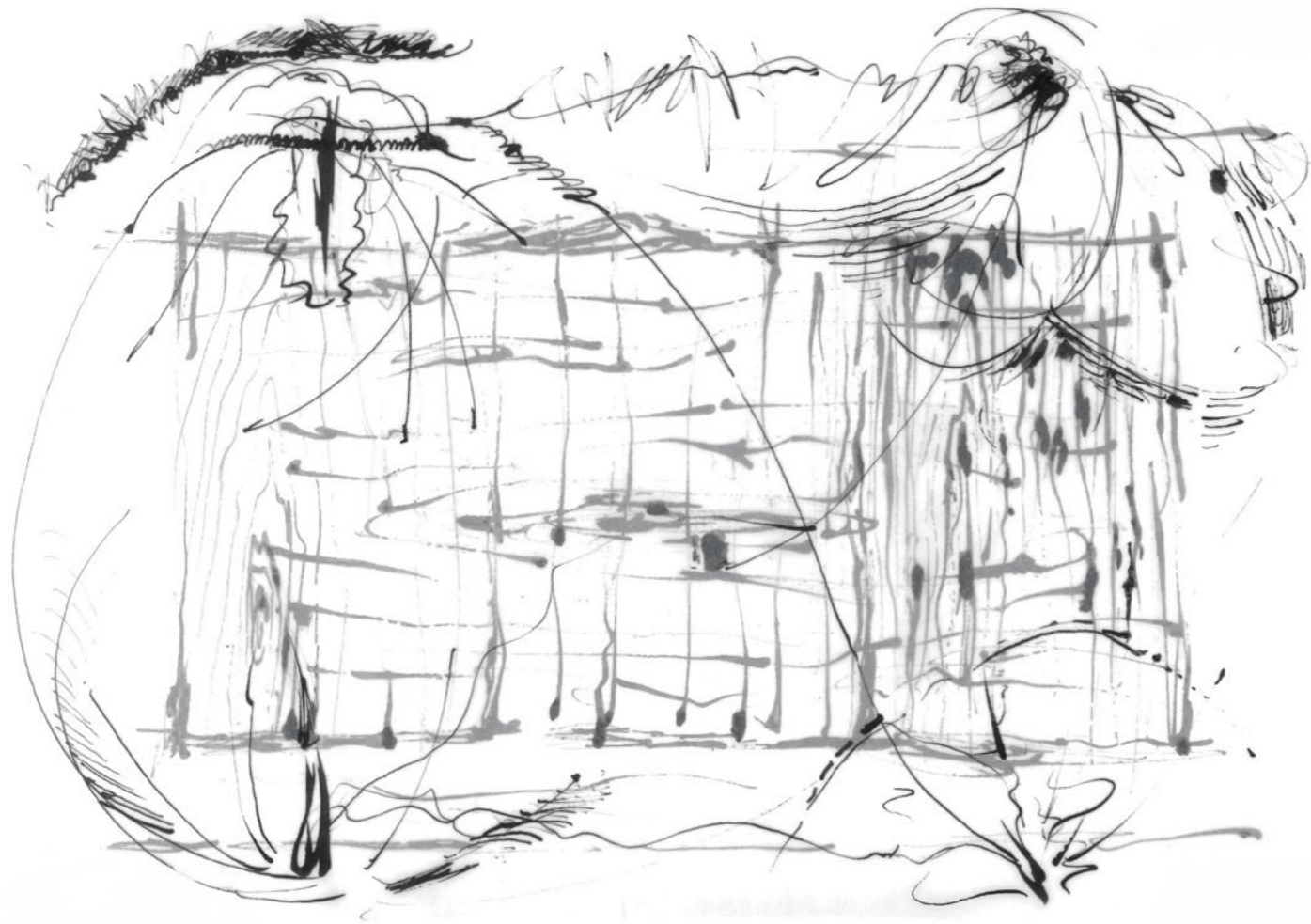
Drawing based on memories of a wooden table, expressing the scent of the food from that time

Smell and memory have been extensively explored in phenomenology and sensory studies. I agree with Pallasmaa's observation that "the most enduring memory of a space is often its smell". As Bachelard pointed out, 'Memory and imagination are always closely linked — a single scent in the environment can evoke past experiences and make the unseen visible.' This is a drawing based on imagination, drawing upon the memories evoked by Korean food at that time. It was recalled based on the most potent olfactory memory of the table.

This drawing served as a catalyst for developing ideas for the final project and holds personal significance as it contains an intimate narrative. A detailed explanation of the drawing is documented in the CRP and portfolio, and it was later integrated into the final design process.

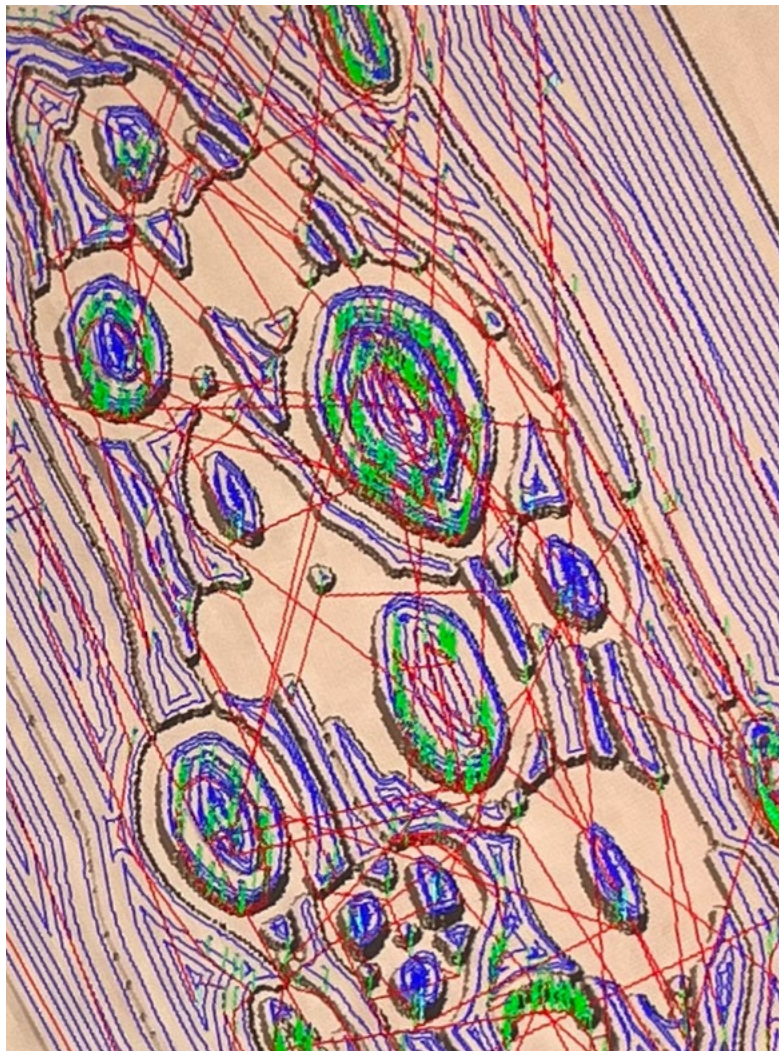
*Pallasmaa, J. (1996). The Eyes of the Skin. Chichester: Wiley, pp.41–56.*

*Bachelard, G. (2014). The Poetics of Space. Translated by M. Jolas. New York: Penguin Books, pp.31–58.*



Drawing based on memories of a wooden table, expressing interaction and behavior

This drawing is based on shared meals with four family members, each with distinct personalities, preferences, and relational dynamics. A brother holding his emotions while trying to communicate, a father attentive to everyone's state, a mother maintaining strong emotional resonance with him, and myself—sometimes anxious yet ultimately grounded within this familial structure. The drawing visualizes how emotional gestures and interpersonal movements create subtle, relational boundaries across the table.



### 3D Transformation of Wooden Table Memory Drawing

#### – First Materialization of Memory

The process of transforming scent-based drawings into three dimensions began with converting plate marks, food traces, and wood grain into illustrations. CNC carving was used to sculpt the wood in five depths. The surface was finished with wood stain to match the remembered tone of the table, followed by a Polyx oil coating. Worn areas—where hands frequently touched—were drawn using candle wax. Wax has thermal properties — warm at touch — it embodies the warmth and intimacy of memory, and its surface is marked smooth or irregularly, recording tactile marks of the interaction. Korean seasoning was then sprinkled to symbolically locate the presence of food.

The materiality, form, and surface articulate the Material and Structural Layer (Physical Boundary).

Plate traces visualize physical boundaries, while the diffused scent exhibited in the gallery creates an Emotional and Sensory Layer (Psychological Boundary). This immaterial boundary enters the memories of others and expands into new spatial contexts.

According to Pierre Nora's concept of lieux de mémoire, memory is embedded in material forms that preserve lived traces. The reconstruction of the wooden table becomes an act of translating memory into material, aligning with Nora's argument. To maintain the integrity of memory reconstruction, the process was carried out without referring to photographs of the original table.



## Shape of Memory

This work [Shape of Memory] represents the results of the previous exploratory processes. Social boundaries are manifested through spatial arrangements and shared sensory experience. During the Working In Progress exhibition, I invited others to encounter the same scent, thereby forming an intangible sensory network. This moment signifies how an individual's sensory perception can extend into the social realm, transforming personal experience into a collectively inhabited boundary-space.

The model significantly informed the development of my final design, carrying conceptual value as my first attempt at materialising memory. Following this experiment, I began to consider the future directions of material and formal development in a more structured way.

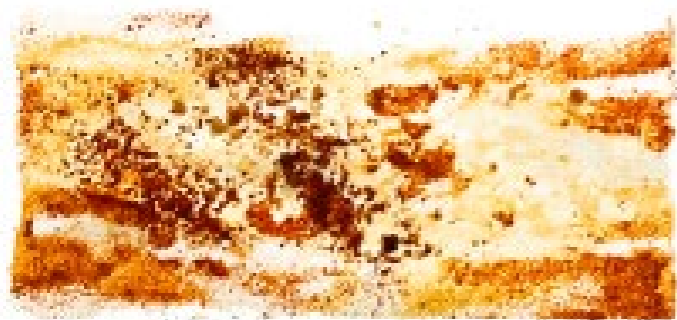


### Shape of Memory — Experiments in Surface & Material (Sponge + Seasonings)

This experiment revisits the same theme—the blurring and reconstruction of memory over time—through an alternative representational method using sponge and seasonings. Patterns derived from the same drawing of wood grain and food traces were stitched onto the sponge, infused with the same seasonings, and then printed.

Kitchen sponges absorb food residues and sauces; we repeatedly wash and re-stain them in daily routines. This cyclical process is inseparable from dining experiences. Based on this everyday object, I aimed to explore another method of visualising memory's transformation and accumulation.

Although this printing technique was not continued, the experiment prompted a deeper reflection on which material could best embody the persistence and alteration of memory, while retaining scent.





## Shape of Memory — Material Reinterpretation

To expand the material representation of the wooden table, I experimented with resin as a means of reinterpretation. The intention was to test how meaning shifts when the same subject is expressed through different materials. However, the irreversible nature of resin—once hardened, it cannot return to its previous state—proved incompatible with my intention to capture memory’s preservation, changeability, and transient qualities.

This book focuses on sensation, materiality, and the qualities of materials. It highlights the contrasting contexts of two objects—one existing in the present and the other rooted in the past—and the differing methods of expressing them. The candle represents a tangible object that the artist possessed at the time, and through related drawings and material casting, the conceptual idea was gradually developed. In contrast, the wooden table is an absent object—once used in Korea and filled with memories—yet no longer physically accessible. Thus, it was reconstructed visually through drawings based on memory and imagination.

The work emphasizes olfactory and tactile senses as primary modes of perception, regarding objects as vessels that contain memories. Through objects, personal boundaries are expanded, and sensory experiences play a crucial role in this expansion. Ultimately, these extended boundaries can be shared and connected with others through sensory engagement.

The subsequent work leads to a final outcome that brings together personal memories associated with a wooden table and the sensory and material explorations developed through the candle experiments.