

Project - Women's refuge

Location - Bishops Lodge, Sheffield



I was inspired by this collection of oil paintings which show women by a window, reflectively looking through a selection of apertures. The paintings of the women suggest a strong connectivity between themselves and the outside world. In most instances, their varying levels of privacy are obscured through the use of stained glass, shutters and curtains. This intrigued me to further explore how windows and glass can be used to maximise light and shadow whilst also creating a visual barrier.

This led me to design and incorporate bespoke glass to create calming, natural light refractions throughout the building, optimising light whilst providing privacy for women seeking refuge.

2.4 million

The number of people aged between 16 and 74 who were abused in the year ending March 2019 - 1.6 million women and 786,000 men

66%

The increase in the number of calls to the National Domestic Abuse helpline in March-May 2020 reported by Refuge

40%

The increase in the number of calls to the Women's Aid chat line service in first two weeks of lockdown in March 2020

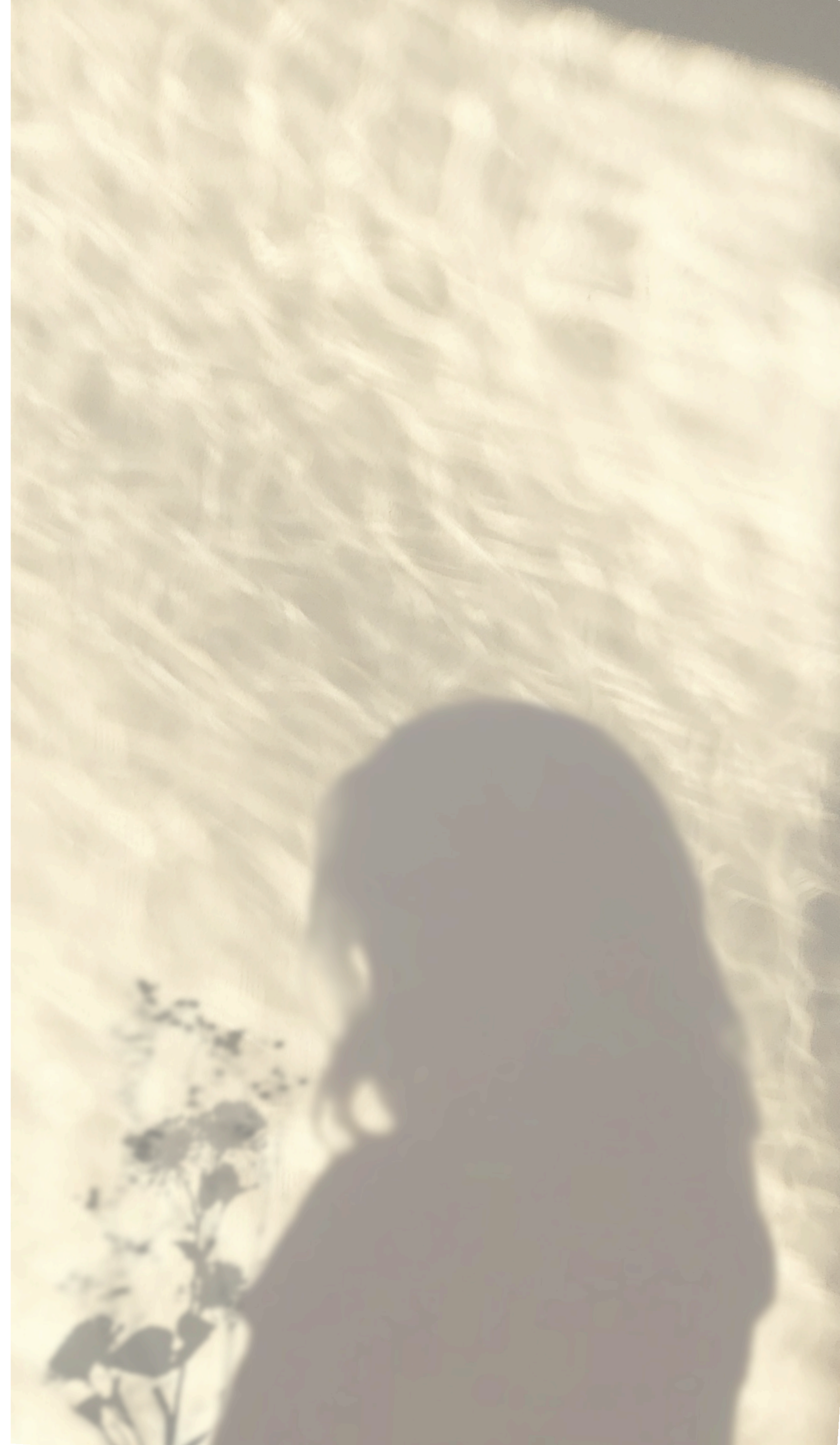
71%

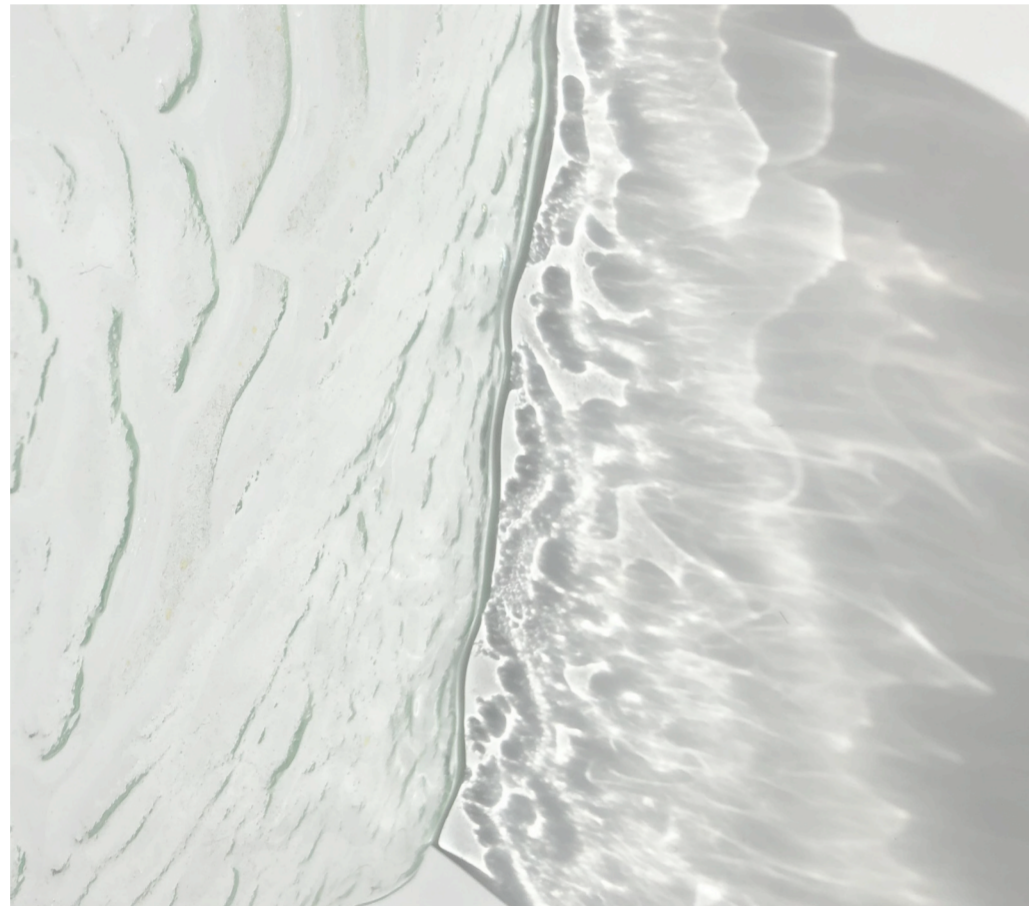
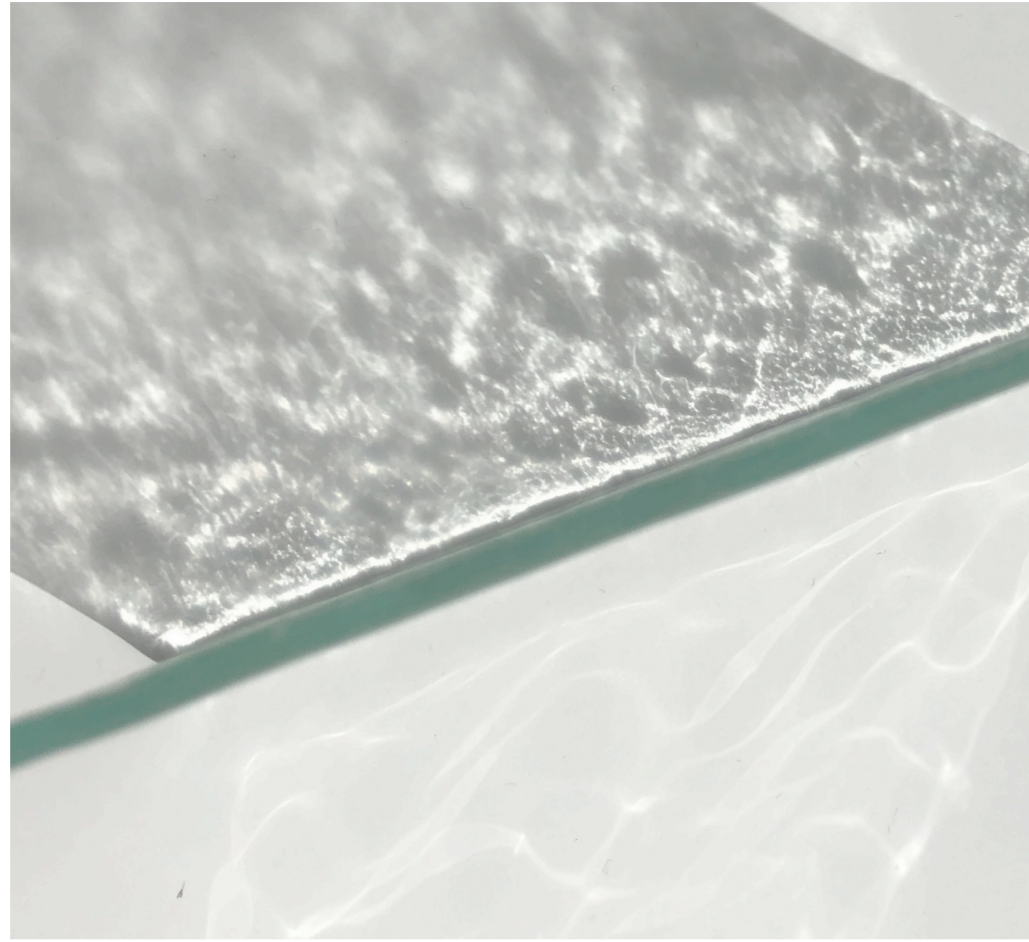
The increase from May 2019 to May 2020 in the number of people phoning the Respect phoneline who were concerned about their own behaviour

14

Number of women recorded by Counting Dead Women as killed by men in the first three weeks of lockdown from 23 March - the highest rate for 11 years

(Women's Aid, (2020))





Windows achieve a view of the natural world that could be associated with positive memories, encouraging an expectation of healing.

I incorporated oriel windows as a design feature as they create static spaces where people are meant to spend time; a space where people can enjoy and reflect; a space where people can transform and move forward. These static spaces allow the women to be in the moment and to contemplate. This is in stark contrast to dynamic spaces that people move through quickly.

I have added an extra layer of interest and privacy through the addition of the bespoke, opaque and textured glass on either side to create shadow and movement as well as to obstruct views from the adjacent oriel windows and nearby street.

Using different glass fusing techniques to create texture, pattern and various levels of opacity in the glass.



My overall design is predicated upon two underlying principles: the need for the design to take into account the multifarious needs of the women, creating a sense of 'home' and the importance of privacy, light and views.





I want to show how design features can help to create and contrast key concepts. For example, the need to create privacy, safety and homeliness but also to create a sense of openness and connectivity with other users, nature and the external environment.

