# THE LOUD SILENCE

DESIGN RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

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## Design Research Portfolio

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In this research paper, the theme of male stereotypes will be explored. Seeking to play a part in the diminishing of the 'manly man' stereotype, this project will put the male gender at the forefront. Raising society's awareness and understanding of the struggles that men face, bringing the topic of men opening up and expressing themselves to the table. Questioning why the expectations and perceptions of a man exist, throwing the outdated stereotypes on the fire. The need to normalise men opening up is stronger than ever with suicide being the second highest cause of death in men globally (Alexandra Pitman, 2012). Within recent decades, 'Generation Z' and the 'millennials' have helped create a shift in 'the normal', pushing boundaries and breaking down these walls of judgement (Smith, 2018). Not forgetting key figures such as David Bowie and Elton John, in years previous, a man had to act and resemble 'a man'. Hiding behind a fake persona of keeping thoughts, emotions and feelings to themselves, yet the new age has been ladled with the term 'generation snowflake' (Smith, 2018). Thus having degrading connotations of a soft, fragile and weak representation of modern day society (Smith, 2018).

With an emphasis on the male gender, this project does not brush off or intend to downplay the problems that face all genders, instead a personal passion for the male stereotypes is at the focal point. Moreover, through design, both existing and conceptual, the aim is to create an all-encompassing diminishing of stereotypes, perceptions and expectations.

Leading the way with architecture and design, this project will explore how the creative industries can be utilised in a way that forces humanity to question their perceptions and deconstruct their expectations of what was once considered normal. A piece of design that acts as a symbol for the diminishing of stereotypes, just as one questions why there are these preconceived expectations and perceptions about gender. Deconstructing architecture, creating a non-binary and spatially fluid design, bringing together a 'building' and its users to be as one. Just as the skin of a person can act as an identity and make human kind recognisable, one only has to dig a little deeper for the uniqueness and individuality to be uncovered. Echoing this into architecture, a structure can be much more than just external appearance.

# How can spatial design act as a proxy for the debate of masculinity?

## CHAPTER 1

Changing the Dichotomy Between
Space and Gender

In this first section of the 'Design Research Portfolio', this literature review will explore and aim to answer the question of how spatial design can act as a proxy for the debate of masculinity. Although the deconstruction and change in language of architecture has been an ongoing movement, the opportunity to link it to the bigger message of deconstructing gender stereotypes has remained under explored. Spatial and gender fluidity can work simultaneously together to create a non-binary space that celebrates the abstract and unexpected. Through a number of academic sources and exemplary precedents, the review will look at and give analysis where the creative industry is showing signs that suggest the diminishing of the outdated perceptions and expectations society have. Using the work of designers to support the researched academic literature, illustrating the views of the critical theory academics with existing design works.

Within 'The New Male', Goldberg explores an example of a film that portrayed males as animal like individuals in an illustration form of the male genital. Stereotypical male behaviours ''…. such as loud farting, belching, snorting….'' (Goldberg, 2001) saw the viewers doubled in two laughing. The idea of this suggests that it's a social norm not to stereotype subgroups excluding the male. Implying that men somehow should not have feelings or be offended by such negativity, told to man up if emotion is shown (Goldberg, 2001). Moreover, the points raised expressed in the documentary 'The Mask We Live In' are similar (Newsom, 2015). The film depicts the struggles of growing up and being male. 'Don't be a pussy', objectifying women, suggesting they are weak, symbolising a 'soft man' with female genitalia. 'Grow some balls', because having 'big balls' brings strength and courage. 'What a fag', because a gay male is less of a man compared to the straight man. 'Be a man', suggesting there is a checklist that forms a man (Newsom, 2015). These are just some of the strenuous throw away comments that face boys and men on the daily. Often the struggles of a boy growing up are not spoken about or almost not cared about. Staying silent, something men have become experts at, with lifetimes of training and practice (Newsom, 2015). The idea of a man showing emotion, opening up or talking about feelings was once taboo.

In today's society this is starting to become normalised but there is a long way to go (Newsom, 2015).

To be a man, it means constant obstruction with downgrading stereotypes, hindering men from expressing who they really want to be. Considered queer if strayed from the path of the perception of 'normal' (Goldberg, 2001). The stereotypes that surround the male sex are often unspoken about, not tackled or questioned. Goldberg believes that in this era, a man should be able to reject the social normal, be unchained from the social constraints and expectations and live how they want to live (Goldberg, 2001). Reclaiming ones right to freedom of choice. The author goes on to compare men to a robotic form, with connotations of a lifeless individual who has little or no control over thoughts, emotions or feelings. (Goldberg, 2001, page 142). The three words, 'be a man' are difficult to hear, with insulting and downgrading connotations. Society force the idea that young boys have to grow up be this muscular, heroic, hardworking, ambitious and tough individuals. Similarly, the term 'man of the house' force these unnecessary and damaging titles, expectations and responsibilities onto men (Goldberg, 2001). An example of toxic masculinity in todays society is 'Love island' (n.d., 2020). The show that floods our televisions

and media during the summer sees the perceived 'masculine men' pipped against one another to win over the 'slender women'. The 'adonis males' are confident, sporty and 'attractive'. The portrayed male and female figures give a false, unrealistic and damaging image to the watching younger generation. Resulting in our young people to grow up with the pressures of body image and behaviour (n.d., 2020)

In connection to this, a journal studying what is known about the male gender puts emphasis on the importance of men opening up and talking about their mental health (John McMahon, 2020). Reiterating that the need to not only accept 'femininity' in men but instead encourage and celebrate it, dispelling the stereotype that one must be gay and/or 'women like' if they are in touch with their emotions (John McMahon, 2020). The current journal realises that the normalisation of men expressing emotion is still not apparent and similarly to the theme of this project, strives to achieve this (John McMahon, 2020). Furthermore, the journal goes on to explore the males 'fear of femininity', blocking out emotion as coping method to evade the idea of being categorised as being feminine (John McMahon, 2020).

The central study in this article evaluates the heterosexual and homosexual male. A gay man is considered to be more in touch with their emotions, threatening the idea a straight male has of masculinity, creating this fear between the two. Leading to 'the rejection of homosexuality' traits in the straight male, pushing aside their emotions because of the risk of being labelled as gay or feminine (John McMahon, 2020). Similarly, in the book titled 'Masculinities', Connell explores 'true masculinities' (Connell, 2005). The masculine male traits are believed to be born at birth along with the individual, naturally rooted in the male body form, something that occurs in 'real men' (Connell, 2005). Giving the example that the male anatomy leads them to be this unpredictable, impulsive and aggressive person, incapable of affection and care, restricting them from these 'feminine' traits unless 'unnaturally' gay (Connell, 2005). Why should there be this unnatural distinct perceived 'difference' between heterosexual and homosexual males.

Why stop there, normalise men expressing themselves anyway they like, celebrate uniqueness, and break down the walls of judgement. Why should society expect a man to appear in such a way, labelling a male as queer if not meeting these outdated standards. Designer Harris Reed is a prime example of where the male sex are going against these perceived norms and setting the path for other men to follow (Reed, n.d.). Reed identifies as non-binary, designing outfits for big names like Harry Styles, designed to be a talking point. The clothing on a man's back has more than the fundamental purpose of just keeping warm, Reed understands it is someone's identity. Embracing the looks one receives when wearing something out of the 'ordinary', to break down the ''preconceived fault-lines'' (Reed, n.d.), such as gender and sexuality. Reed strives for the world to be an open and accepting place, striving for a ''vision of gender fluidity and inclusivity.'' (Reed, n.d.). Similarly, big name fashion brand 'Gucci' have launched a new clothing range titled 'Gucci Mx' (White, 2020). The designs are specially catered to a gender-fluid, non-binary and all-inclusive clientele (White, 2020). Through careful design, and the adaption of society, can both these big name brands and others alike striving for an all-accepting world result in this becoming 'the new normal'?
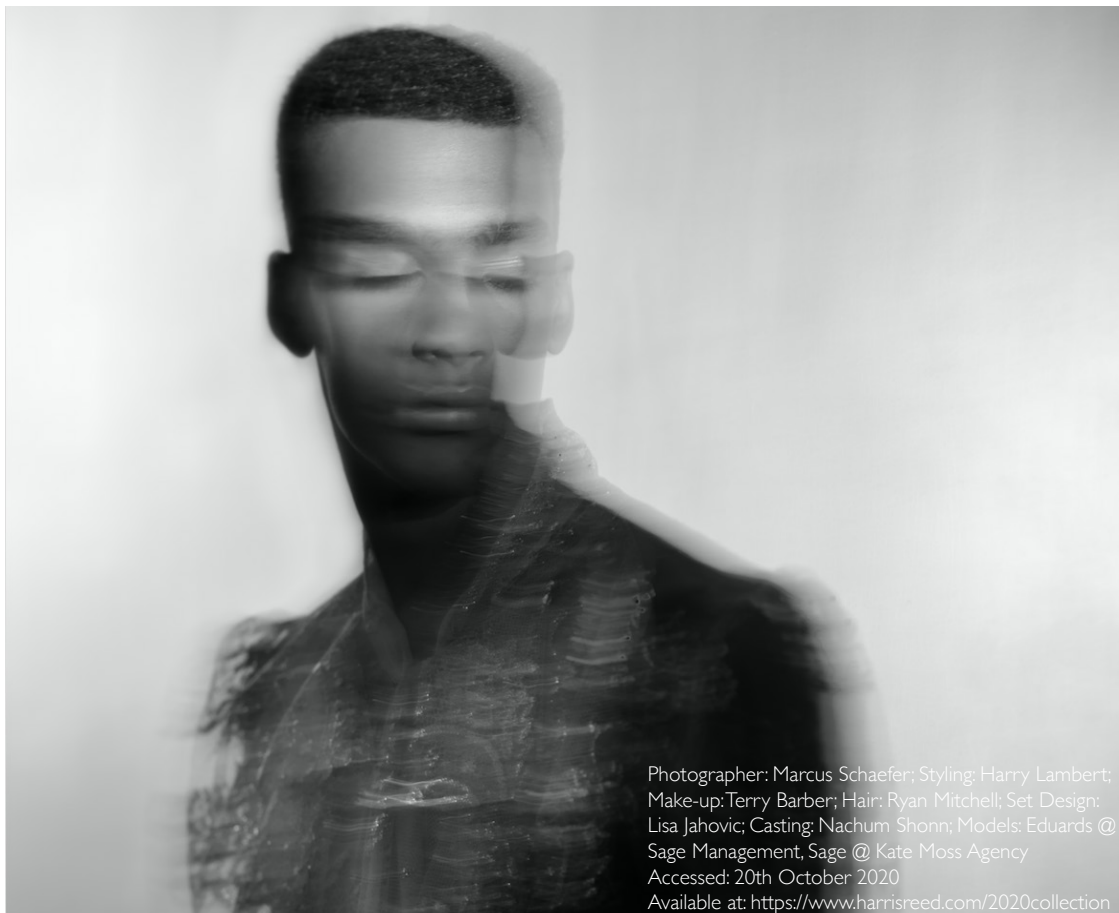


Photographer: Marcus Schaefer; Styling: Harry Lambert; Make-up: Terry Barber; Hair: Ryan Mitchell; Set Design: Lisa Jahovic; Casting: Nachum Shonn; Models: Eduards @ Sage Management, Sage @ Kate Moss Agency
Accessed: 20th October 2020
Available at: https://www.harrisreed.com/2020collection

What are the opportunities and gaps in knowledge in the creative industry? Interior and exterior architecture dichotomy can become a proxy for the debate of masculinity and the stereotypical perceptions and expectations that surround it. Allowing the 'building' and its users to be as one. Creating a non-binary and spatially fluid design. Furthermore, In an architectural sense, the breakdown of perception occurs in the Deconstructvist movement.

Deconstructivism is a movement originating from postmodern architecture during the 1980's. Abstaining from the perceived norms that buildings had pervious. Going against the rules of symmetry, continuity and harmony, instead designing with a fragmented approach and more than just function in mind (Hoteit, 2015) (Figure 1.1)

The deconstruction of architecture prompts questions. Are there distinct differences between interior and exterior spaces? Does the entrance resemble 'a door'? Encouraging thought in these everyday experiences is what allows this breakdown of stereotypes to occur. Forcing society to reimagine and rethink the expected 'door entrance'. Similarly, these questions can be asked in the debate of masculinity. Must a man appear in a certain way to be considered male? Should there be labelled differences in perceptions between women and men, homosexuals and heterosexuals? There is not a single answer to questions like these, however, each individual should be able to express themselves any way they favour without being questioned or viewed as an object. Going against the social norms just as deconstructivist architecture does.
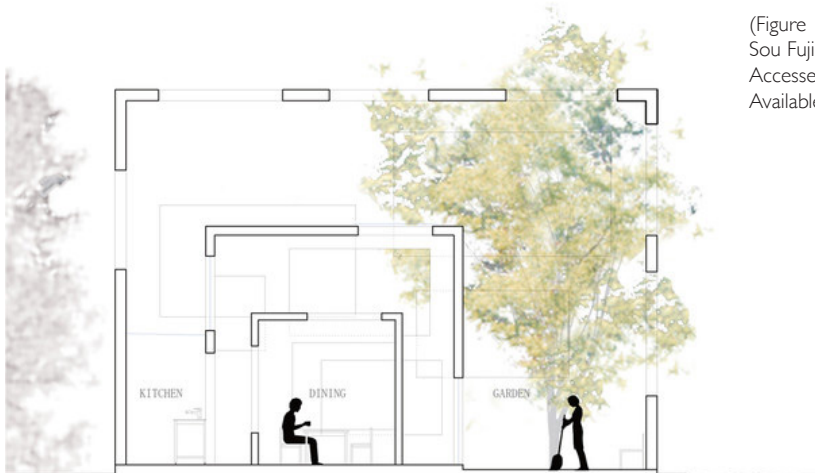


Figure 1.1
Photographer: Josh Bustos.
Frank Gehry. Walt Disney Concert Hall, Los Angeles, United Satees
Accessed: 11th December 2020
Available at: http://www.joshbustosphoto.com

Architecture has been at the forefront of humanity since the beginning of <span style="color:red">man</span>, whether it was mud huts or the Walt Disney Concert Hall by Frank Gehry, architecture will always evolve even after humans cease to exist (Hoteit, 2015). Through history, social and political influences have shaped the development of design and architecture (Hoteit, 2015). In connection to this, an example of a successful design that leads the way and helped break down preconceived perceptions in practice is 'House N' by 'Sou Fujimoto' (figure 1.2). The design of this 'house' revolutionises architecture. Comprised of structural layers, labelled as 'shells' that live within each other. An outer wall marks the site boundary, with a semi inner wall that partially consists of indoor and outdoor spaces, with a third cube that creates the 'home interior'. The essay goes onto list ten "founding Intuitions" (Worrall, 2009) of architecture (figure 1.3). The designers that follow or use the checklist, become more than just the average architect, they flourish, creating miscellaneous masterpieces. Similarly, Fujimoto encapsulates the fundamental qualities of an architect as, "relationality, ambiguity, recursion, complexity and contingency." (Worrall, 2009).

Similarly, Fujimoto encapsulates the fundamental qualities of an architect as, "relationality, ambiguity, recursion, complexity and contingency." (Worrall, 2009). This common architectural language is comprised of elements one would not traditionally associate with architectural design. Once again touching on 'House N', the blend of interior and exterior spaces under a single 'roof', allows a family home to become a dichotomy of ambiguity, windows without glass, interior streets and no distinct boundaries between spaces (n.d., 2011).

Referring back to the question of 'how can spatial design act as a proxy for the debate of <span style="color:red">masculinity</span>?' One answer might be taking inspiration form the Fujimoto's version of architecture. Looking at the social issues of perceived <span style="color:red">masculinity</span> and by bringing designs like this to the capitals of the world, filling the suburban environments without clarity, and asserting ambiguity, consequently broadening society's view of the world. Allowing the world to become more accepting to the different elements it encapsulates, whether that is a non-binary structure or a gender neutral individual.

(Figure 1.2).
Sou Fujimoto Architects, 2008. Oita, Japan
Accessed: 20th October 2020
Available at: https://www.archdaily.com

1.     Nest or cave
2.     Notes without staves – the new geometry
3.     Separation and connection
4.     City as house – house as city
5.     In a tree-like place
1.     Nebulous
2.     Guru-guru (spiritual)
3.     Garden
4.     Before the house, city and forest
5.     Before matter and space

(Figure 1.3). (Worrall, 2009)
Accessed: 20th October 2020

Moreover the journal about the deconstruction of architecture further suggests that the relationship between one or more notions conflict one another (Hoteit, 2015). As mentioned previously, the heterosexual man can feel threatened by their homosexual counterparts and result in the rejection of gay men as they dispel the idea of the masculine man (John McMahon, 2020). This is similar the views expressed in paper by Hoteit that goes on to say there are these embedded fault line conflicts between "presence/absence… the self/the other, inside/outside, signifier/ signified and man/women" (Hoteit, 2015). The idea that an element is favoured over another in a conflict is what deconstructive architecture attempts to break down and dispel (Hoteit, 2015).

This is similar to the paper in question that looks at the connection between architecture and philosophy. The author uses the works of 'Peter Eisenman', a deconstructivist architect and 'Jacques Lacan', a psychoanalysis and psychiatrist, exploring the relationship between the two. The paper labels dreams as "structures of the unconscious". A dream is more than just an expression of memory and perception. The language between purposeful rationality and elements of the constructed dream, creates the 'unconscious'. Eisenman attempts to echo this unconscious state in architectural design (Hendrix, 2006).

Comparing architectural drawings to be seen as "displacements from an architecture of origin, hierarchy, unity, sequence, progression and continuity to one of fragmentation, disjunction…and slippage." (Hendrix, 2006). Deconstructing the architectural form, changing what was thought to be its fundamental language, instead designing a non-programmatic space that has little or no real function at all. (Hendrix, 2006). Following this, the 'House II' precedent by Eisenman helps to illustrate thus concept (Figure 1.4) (Eisenman, 1969-1970). The unconscious dream suggest that humans have this underlying connection to meaning and abstract thinking. The idea that when someone is exposed to a physical structure with a deeper level of meaning and expression can result in an undefined ability to connect human emotions to a space. Furthermore helping to illustrate how architecture can not only act but become a proxy for the debate of masculinity. Allowing the physical appearance of architecture to be that of abstraction and ambiguity, echoing this into day to day life of gender stereotypes.
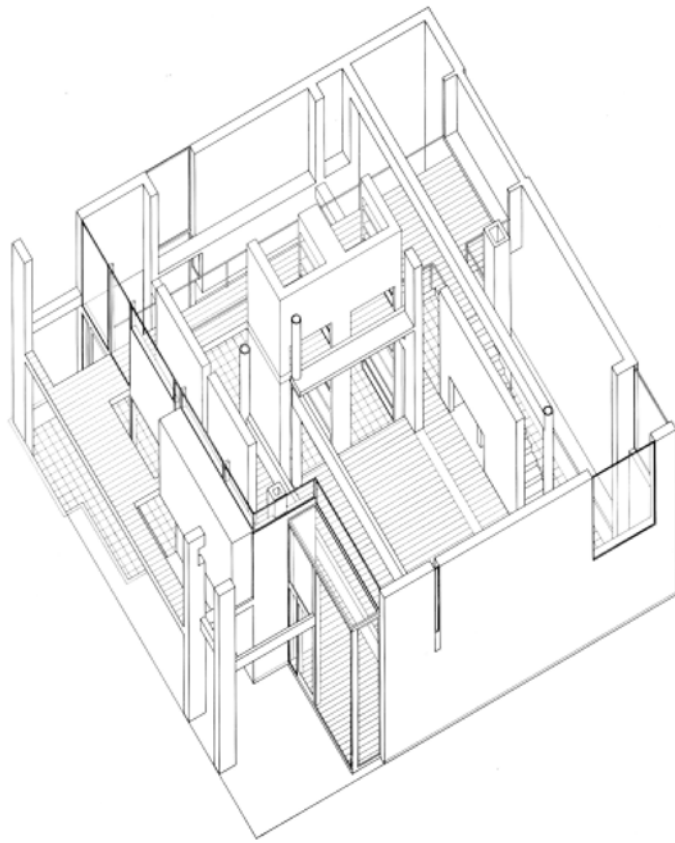
(Figure 1.4). (Eisenman, 1969-1970)
Accessed: 20th October 2020

The aim is to design for a gender neutral society. A fluid environment where acceptance is in full attendance, in particular the theme of this project being the normalisation of femininity in men and the death of the masculine man stereotype. With a recent survey carried out on the older and younger generations of Britons, only 2% of young men labelled themselves as 'completely masculine', in comparison to 56% of 'complete masculinity' in over 65's (Dahlgreen, 2016). Through this, it can be concluded that the masculine man is going out of fashion. It is very much a generational issue with the younger generations adapting to the new outlook on gender and other discriminations. From this, one would conclude that the breakdown of masculinity was a new movement, but you would be wrong. The 70's and 80's being the era of David Bowie, Elton John, Boy George and many others alike, the idea of a man expressing femininity should be the norm in 2020. On the contrary, this is still as pressing an issue as ever, some 45+ years later. It would seem that these pop stars sat on an 'untouchable pedestal' with no or little acceptance to the 'lesser man' out with the public eye (Gregory, 2002).

This section will give further insights into what the future of design could look like and refer back to how architecture and design can become a proxy for gender.

Changing expectations and perceptions is crucial to the acceptance of this topic. An advertisement campaign carried out by 'Daizi Zheng' saw a collaboration between ''junk food and drugs'' (Lyons, 2010) (Figure 1.5). The campaign aimed to encourage healthy eating through ''everyday habits'', tackling the issue of obesity and other related health concerns. Seeing food in unlikely packaging made the user take a step back and rethink the ordinary experience of buying food. Asserting a physiological and physical association with an everyday object (Lyons, 2010). From this, one can see the impact of changing the expectation and perception in someone. An everyday activity that would usually demand little or no thought or reflection has been transformed to have an emotional connection and deeper meaning. Bringing this back to architectural design, reiterates the idea that adapting the dichotomy can change ones outlook. A carefully designed non-binary structure that forces the unanswerable question of identity, becoming the proxy for masculinity.

Brian Duffy, 1973. David Bowie, 'Aladin Sane', London, England
Accessed: 20th October 2020
Available at: https://www.snapgalleries.com

(Figure 1.5). (Lyons, 2010)
Accessed: 21st October 2020

The views of 'Bernard Tschumi', a deconstructivist architect, echo the idea that architecture has emotional and psychological influences, based on human senses, an "experience of a space…. a silent reality that cannot be put on paper" (Tschumi, 2010). Furthermore, the paper goes on to explore these parallels within architectural language. Referring to the 'experience of space' as something ungraspable, comparing the outside pavement to one's front sitting room, and a person's ability to know the difference between "….left and right….up and down…." It follows that the concept of the experience of space is in connection to ones 'unconsciousness' (Tschumi, 2010) (Figure 1.6). In the same way that the earlier paper cited in this review associated spatial architecture to ones 'dream/unconscious', suggests that architecture is so much more than just function (Hendrix, 2006).

This helps to illustrate the theme/topic centred within this review and project, the idea that a physical designed space can reflect bigger meaning. Creating an architectural version of gender stereotypes. A design that deconstructs preconceived expectations and perceptions and encourages the mind to open and be in acceptance of the new. A design that becomes a symbolic proxy for men, just as the structure has little clarity, harmony and symmetry, neither does the modern day man. Celebrating abstract and the unexpected in everyday civilisation. This needed shift from the traditional views of 'masculinity' is what this project seeks to do its bit in diminishing, achieving full degradation of gender stereotypes that surround the male sex. Aiding the fruition of this through the innovative new way of designing for the future as explored throughout this project.
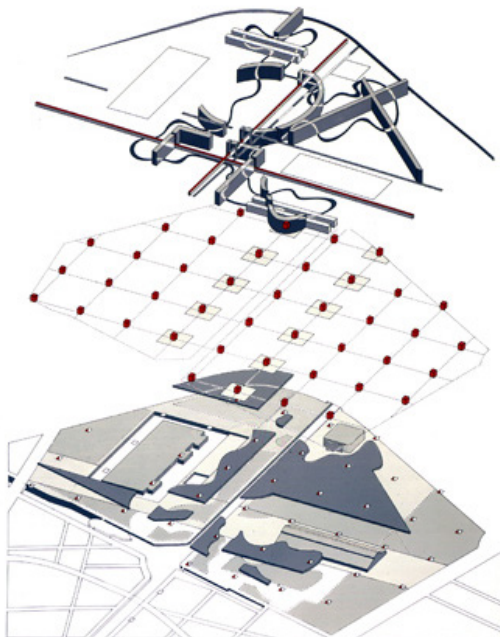




(Figure 1.6). Bernard Tschumi, parc de la villette, 1982-1998. Paris, France
Accessed: 21st October 2020
Available at: http://www.tschumi.com/projects/3/

# CHAPTER 5

## The end of the beginning

To conclude, this review has started an ongoing analysis of how architecture, both interior and exterior can become a proxy for the debate of masculinity. Through several academic papers, books and motion pictures as well extensive precedent research on where the creative industry shows signs of the deconstruction in perception and expectations through design. Analysing existing works and how they can be adapted in a way to have a deeper rooted message and become this gender/ spatially fluid non-binary vision for the future. Allowing for the change in dynamic, meaning and language of design. Diminishing the outdated perceptions and expectations on gender and space.

Fast forward to 2020, a year saw you and rest of the world stop. The global pandemic gave us time to reflect, bringing 'Black lives matter' and 'climate change' to the forefront. This time for change is perfect for the insertion of the issues surrounding masculinity for society to adapt to. Could there be a silver lining as a result to this year? Can society change their outlook on the world they live in? Or will everyone forget the importance of change and go back to living their day to day lives the way one did pre 2020? Through further extensive secondary and primary research, as well as conceptual design, the theme of this project will not rest. Raising awareness of the pressing issue of the 'manly man' stereotypes, this review and further work aims to aid the ongoing movement and inspire readers and viewers to change and adapt for the better.

End of
Design Contextualisation
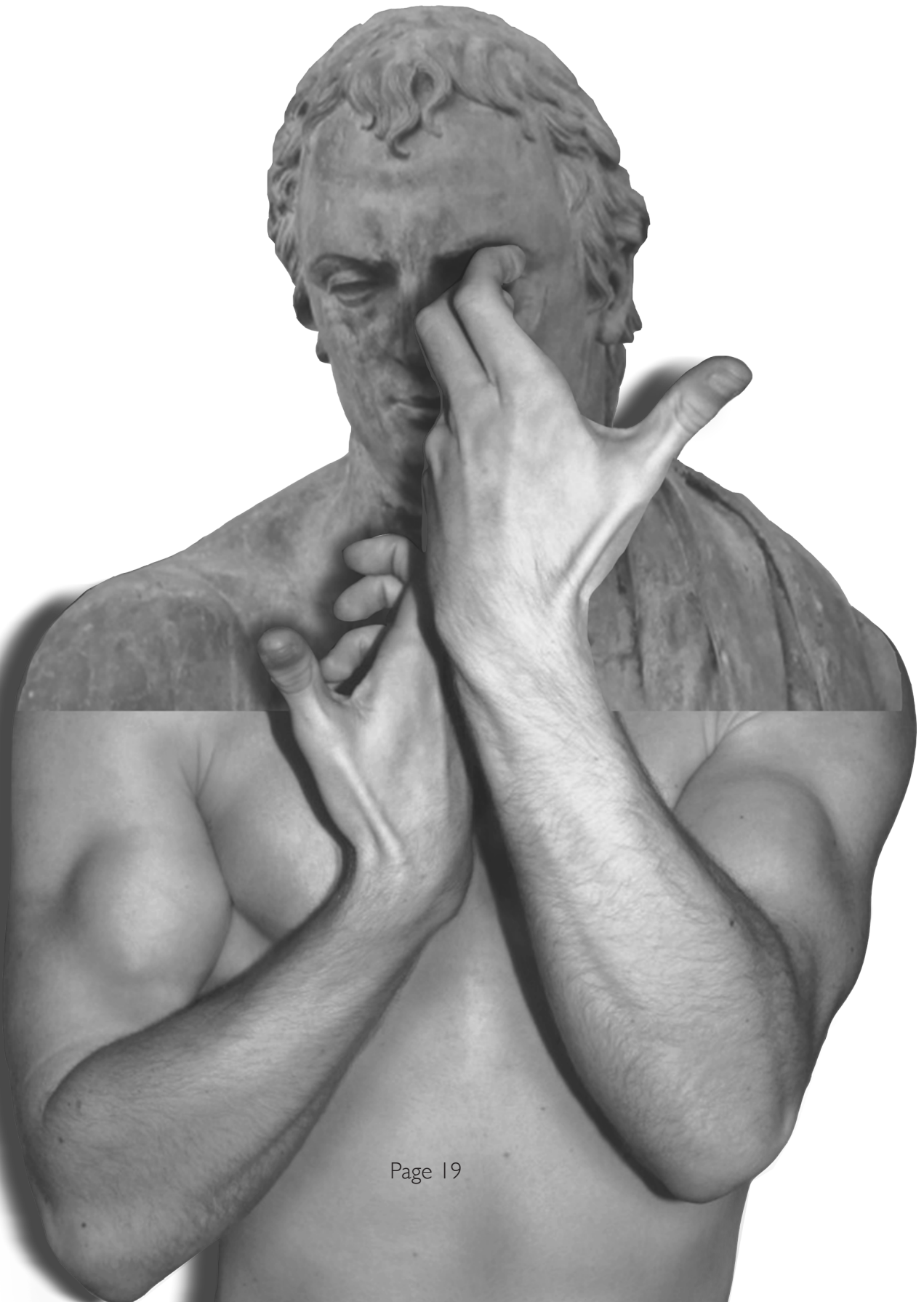
Gender Bin
Intervention

The Gender
Debate

Frozen in time
Interventions

# CHAPTER 6

## The Gender Debate….

## Guerrilla Research Tactics (GRT)

To gain an initial insight into masculinity in men, the guerrilla research methodology was used. The method is a great way of gaining fast responses and is well suited to the early stages of research (Tawak, 2019). In connection to this, this precedent example of a successful GRT by Mark Bilandzic, discussed by Caldwell and others, shows an interactive board in the urban setting (2016). With thought given to its aesthetic, location, and overall understanding, the experiment was very useful in gaining an insight of public reactions to the issue in question (Figure 2.1) (Caldwell, et al. 2016).
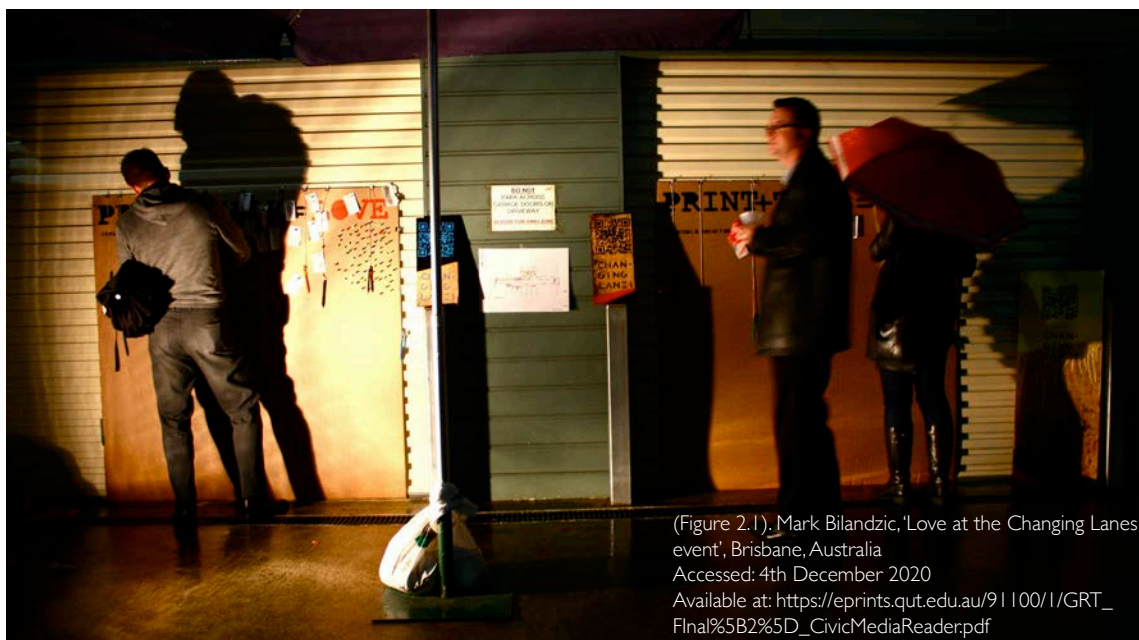


(Figure 2.1). Mark Bilandzic, 'Love at the Changing Lanes event', Brisbane, Australia
Accessed: 4th December 2020
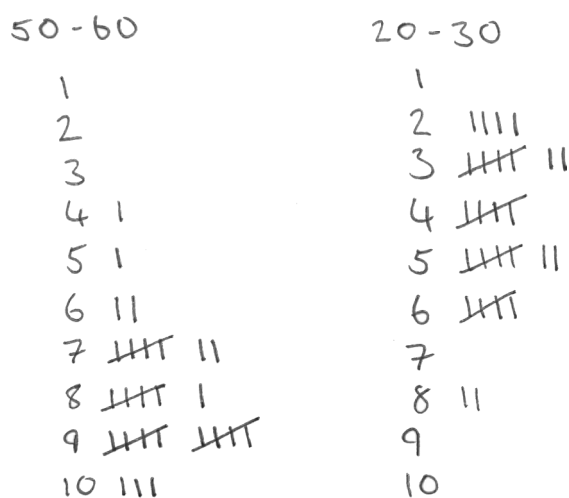Available at: https://eprints.qut.edu.au/91100/1/GRT_FInal%5B2%5D_CivicMediaReader.pdf

From spending time at The Meadows in central Edinburgh, it is clear just how diverse this area is. The open urban space attracts people form all walks of life and is good location to gain insight into the Edinburgh man. With an aim of diminishing the 'manly man' stereotype, the survey asked:

"On a scale of 1-10, 1 being 'completely feminine' and 10 being 'completely masculine', where do you place yourself?"

During a global pandemic, it felt unethical to design a hands on method. This limitation Instead saw the thought out survey style question asked, with findings later turned into a graphic format. Keeping a simple and open question with a one word answer allowed an insight into the participant without it being too revealing. During these times of social distancing, the quick one question survey felt appropriate. To develop an understanding of the masculine issues, it felt important to gain an insight into different generations without discriminating. Surveying a total of twenty males, ten from the age group of around 50-70 and ten from the 20-30 age group. Ensuring no bias in the selection of participants, the first men to pass that fitted these groups, were asked. The open urban environment made it easy to maintain a safe distance from participants. From the outset while introducing myself, the purpose of this research and the confidentiality of their identity was made clear. Wearing a mask was important in making each participant feel comfortable in my approach.
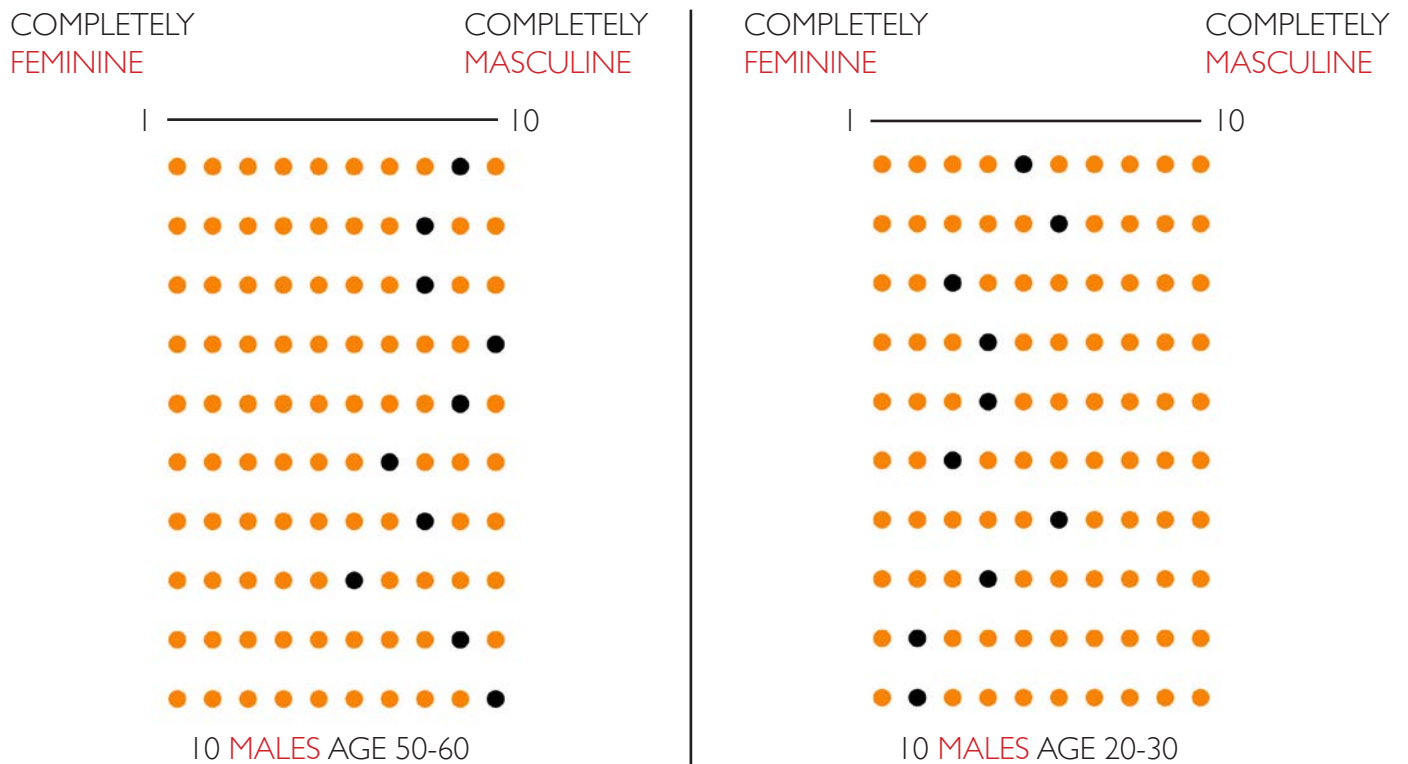
Collating the data simply by having a 1-10 scale with a tally mark beneath each depending on the response from each asked participant (Figure 2.2). The recorded findings were then collated and put in this graphic format (Figure 2.3).



(Figure 2.2)

COMPLETELY
FEMININE

COMPLETELY
MASCULINE

COMPLETELY
FEMININE

COMPLETELY
MASCULINE



10 MALES AGE 50-60

10 MALES AGE 20-30

(Figure 2.3)

After deliberation of the results it became clear it is unrealistic to make assumptions and generalisations on twenty participants. As a result of this, a further 40 males have been asked the same question. Twenty younger and twenty older.

COMPLETELY
FEMININE

COMPLETELY
MASCULINE

1 ——————————— 10

COMPLETELY
FEMININE

COMPLETELY
MASCULINE

1 ——————————— 10

20 MALES AGE 50-60

20 MALES AGE 20-30

With the overarching project theme of diminishing stereotypes and normalising 'femininity' on the male gender in a physical space, this initial research helps to gain knowledge on the modern day man in society with an understanding of how men view and identify themselves.

Taking this forward into the development of the non-binary and spatially fluid design, The results of both versions noticeably differed between age groups. Although one must avoid grouping society based on generation and gender, the survey clearly shows that masculinity in younger generations is going out of style. The idea of this shift in young people was echoed in earlier academia. In the survey similar to this one, discussed by Dahlgreen, only 2% of young men labelled themselves as 'completely masculine', in comparison to 56% of 'complete masculinity' in over 65's (2016). From the primary and secondary research, each provide evidence that the shift to an all-inclusive society is underway. Are these degrading views and perceptions of gender being left behind? Thus provides an insight into what the future and the future of design could look like. Can the creation of a deconstructed gender neutral space become the new normal? Can these non-binary spaces stand for and act as the proxy for diminishing of all stereotypes, just as one can adapt to a deconstructed and unexpected space, so too can they adapt to the deconstructed notion of gender.

As previously stated, 'Generation Z' and the 'millennials' branded as the 'snowflake generation', are the majority of society pushing for the breakdown of stereotypes and striving for equality (Smith, 2018). This has come in fruition through this GRT methodology. To push against the perceived perception and expectation of the male sex and embrace the 'feminine' traits that was once something to be ashamed of, really shows this new generation who are not prepared to accept these outdated notions of gender (Newsom, 2015). Similarly, the views of John McMahon reiterates the need to accept femininity in men, raising the issue of labelling men as gay or women like if they show signs of emotion (2020). The journal proceeds to explore the idea that men have developed a fear of femininity, blocking out any traits which might correspond with the female gender (John McMahon, 2020). The burden of responsibility and expectation that society has given to men is evident in this GRT. The findings would suggest that this conflict is prominent in the older generations of participants. The journal goes onto state that the straight male feels threatened by gay men who stereotypically are more in touch with their 'feminine side', such as emotions (John McMahon, 2020). Men have grown up rejecting homosexuality, consequently leading to men being unable to open up or show emotion in the fear of being called 'gay' or 'women like' (John McMahon, 2020).

This is strengthened by another academic. Hoteit further reiterates humans deep rooted conflicts that surround space and gender (2015). Conflicts including, "presence/absence… the self/the other, inside/outside, signifier/signified and man/women" (Hoteit, 2015). The idea of this fear and conflict within society can be seen through this GRT, with the results showing a conflict through the differentiating responses between the older and younger generations. The difference in findings suggests the older generation still feel the responsibility to portray the heroic, strong, 'masculine male', whereas the younger generations seem to have a different outlook where they are not ashamed to show their 'feminine side'.

To allow the breakdown of gender stereotypes and the creation and acceptance of a non-binary and spatially fluid design, society must work together to create an all-inclusive living environment where the walls of judgement, expectation and perception are dropped. A place where everyone can feel the confidence to express themselves any way they like. As a follow up to this research method, the next chapter looks at a designed survey that sees societies perception of space and gender come into fruition.

The Gender Debate….

Survey

A survey is way of collating data, involving recording the reactions of the participants in connection (Fink, 2003). The system can be carried out in a range of ways, whether that is via mail, email, telephone, Internet or in person. More often than not, a survey is used to gain peoples thoughts on a certain topic (Fink, 2003).

This face-to-face (socially distanced) survey approach to primary research, saw and encouraged the preconceived perceptions and expectations society have to come to the forefront and go under the spotlight. With a focus on architecture, the playful experiment's aim was to determine whether or not the participants could carry out the impossible task of associating a physical architectural structure to be either masculine or feminine. Each surveyed person was asked to give feedback on whether they thought each shown picture of existing architecture around the world resembled a masculine or feminine aesthetic. Judging something made from concrete, glass, wood and other materials, the public were able to assert gender to these completely genderless objects. Determining a buildings sex based only off physical appearance.

From this experiment, the aim was to show the damaging impact of society's expectations. The perceived architecture echos societies perception and expectation of gender. The responsibilities of looking or behaving in a certain way based on sex. Wether that is physical appearance, mental, emotional or social behaviour.

Since there is more of a lead time surrounding this primary research method, the survey saw ten people, five males and five females participating. Each were shown the nine different buildings and asked to associate a gender. Most of the architecture selected have key characteristics, for example the 'falling water house' by Frank Lloyd wright has a fast flowing waterfall on which the house sits. The reason for this was to determine whether these unique features would differentiate them between masculine or feminine.

Similar to the previous carried out research, this survey was also carried out in The Meadows, however it was on a different day with different participants. To avoid bias participant selection, the same as before, the first five males and females to pass were safely approached to participate with this survey. Each new participant was approached after time to reset the image slides. Clearly explaining the purpose and confidentiality, majority were happy to help with only two individuals who never had time to participate.

Equipped with an iPad for larger image display, each image had a timer set for 30 seconds to allow each participant to have time to determine the gender and for the note taking to be done (Figure 2.4). The iPad was positioned on the park bench to ensure a safe distance was in place and to ensure the ability to note take. After each survey, the participant was verbally asked if they were comfortable with the results and comments to be used as data. Emphasising confidentiality, each participant encouraged the use of the findings (Figure 2.5)
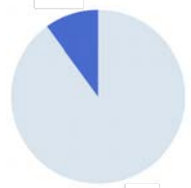


30 Second timer between slides

(Figure 2.4)

### Frank Gehry - Walt Disney Concert Hall
"Definitely masculine.... sharp edges"
"It looks dangerous"
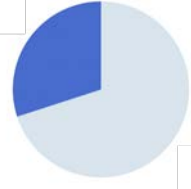"Rugged masculine shapes"

Masculine 9/10

### Le Corbusier - Villa Savoye
"Although its clean and white, I would say the structure is more masculine"
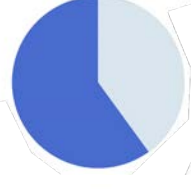"Feminine looking at the surrounding nature"

Masculine 7/10

### Sou Fujimoto - House N
"It is not really anything"
"The nature inside makes me think feminine"
"Subtle structure makes it feminine for me"
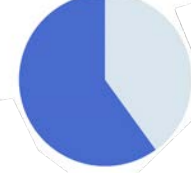
Feminine 6/10

### Le Corbusier - Notre Dame Du Haut
"A place of worship? Feminine"
"The materials are quite manly but the curves are quite women like"
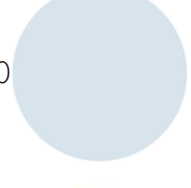
Feminine 6/10

### Peter Eisenman - Holocaust Memorial
"Concrete blocks, yeah that is masculine"
"The Monochrome tones make it look more masculine"
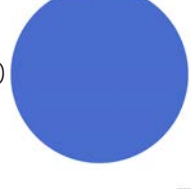
Masculine 10/10

### Bernard Tschumi - Parc De La Villette
"Definitely woman like. Its bright red"
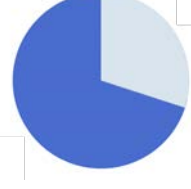"It looks quite elegant"

Feminine 10/10

### Piano & Rogers - Centre Pompidou
"That's a man"
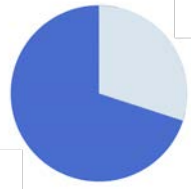"looks manly but the red makes it confusing"

Feminine 7/10

### Frank Lloyd Wright - Falling Water House
"Elegant the way the water flows through the house"
"Ambiguous, maybe more feminine due to the warm lighting and water"

Feminine 7/10

### Zaha Hadid - Heydar Alivev Centre
"The flowing curves make it feminine"
"It looks like a skirt, 100% feminine"

Feminine 10/10

(Figure 2.4)

The results gathered from this survey show that majority of participants share similar preconceived fault lines. With some of the images receiving all ten people with the same view. Without generalising society as a whole, this smaller group of individuals suggests that majority of society share these damaging expectations and perceptions of their environments and the underlying symbolism of gender stereotyping. In connection to this, Goldberg expresses the stereotypical views society have of gender (2001). With a focus on the male sex, the paper states the importance of the rejection of the social normal, breaking free from these outdated and damaging preconceived perceptions and expectations of humanity (Goldberg, 2001). The carried out research methodology allowed the views of Goldberg to come into fruition in the urban environment. The idea that each participant was able to assert gender to something completely genderless shows how one can associate something to be masculine or feminine, just as one sees gender as either masculine or feminine. The paper goes onto to give examples of the struggles that face the growing boy (Goldberg, 2001). Terms such as 'be a man' and 'man of the house' are forced onto boys by society from a young age, resulting in them carrying these responsibilities through life (Goldberg, 2001). Feeling like a failure if strayed from the heroic, hardworking and ambitious path (Goldberg, 2001). It is these responsibilities that are associated with being male or female that this paper seeks to breakdown and diminish.

The perceived views of gender that society force onto young people caries through into adulthood, resulting in the participants of this survey to have adopted these preconceived perception of what a male or female resembles.

With a focus on House N by Sou Fujimoto in this paper, it felt necessary to include it as one of the nine 'masculine' or 'feminine' buildings. Linking this to design, the research experiment saw the deconstructed piece of design causing ambiguity among the participants. With split results, it appeared difficult to determine whether the 'house' fitted the masculine or feminine category. As stated in earlier academia by Worrall that looked at 'House N' as the subject, the deconstructive house revolutionises architecture (2009). The 'layered' house design with an outer boundary wall and semi inner walls creating 'internal streets' and living spaces, allows the family home to become a dichotomy of ambiguity (Worrall, 2009). Yet, the asked participants were still able to unrealistically distort the design in some way to suit the masculine or feminine category. With one participant stating that ''….the nature inside makes me think feminine….'', shows how one can associate a gender to just about anything. Thus shows that living with generations of people with perceived expectations and perceptions of gender can unconsciously have major impact on ones outlook on life and everything within it.

This vision of humanity has helped to create the difficult environment for the members of society who do not fit within or feel connected to the male or female gender. This is also echoed in earlier academia. Connell states that society think masculinity is born at birth along with the individual (2005).The book further suggests that to be considered a real man in society, one must be unpredictable, impulsive, aggressive, and incapable of affection, considered to be 'unnaturally' gay or women like if strayed from the path that the male anatomy leads one down (Connell, 2005).

The question centred in this paper: 'how can spatial design act as a proxy for the debate of masculinity?'. This research methodology seeks to help answer this question and link it to design by taking these preconceived fault-lines of society and turning them into something positive. Could the answer be to assert the idea of ambiguity and uncertainty within our environments, forcing the break-down of these outdated expectations and perceptions of space and gender? Through the creation of a non-binary and spatially fluid design, would this allow the world to become a more accepting and all-inclusive place to live?

Urban Social Stradegy

Design Interventions

According to author David Pinder in the journal 'Urban Interventions', the urban social strategy centres around ordinary experiences in public (Pinder, 2008). Looking at the day to day perceptions of the urban environment and attempt to use design to change this or raise questions. Going against and deconstructing the social normal of the expected urban experiences (Pinder, 2008). The strategy begins with Observing phenomena with an analytic point of view. From the study, these everyday experiences can be questioned using design interventions. Once the problem is identified, and a solution/ intervention is designed and put in place, further observation of the publics reaction follows. Gaining an insight into how one reacts to the unexpected. The paper goes on to look at how these creative urban spaces, can create an encouraging city development (Pinder, 2008).



(Figure 2.6). Peter Macdiarmid, 'Statue of Lord Napier',
West London, England
Accessed: 16th November 2020
Available at: http://www.petermacdiarmid.com/features

In the work by 'Eleonora Aguiari', the London statue of 'Lord Napier' was transformed (Figure 2.6). The intervention, discussed by Oliver, had a deeper meaning than just covering metal in red tape. The existing monument stands for the "military past" of Britain, and the intervention aimed to emphasise this and make it stand out and be noticed (Oliver, 2011). In addition to the two previous references, this book about urban interventions, displays a number of precedents where design has intervened with the urban space (Klanten, 2010). Each of these designed interventions encouraged society to think more about social norms, aiming to break down and change ones perception of their expected surrounding environment, provoking questions to arise in ordinary experiences (Klanten, 2010).

From this theory and precedent interventions, it can be seen that the urban social strategy of creating a design intervention can be highly successful. Linking this to the theme of this project, the aim is to gain a deeper understanding of how the public react to the deconstructing of preconceived expectations and perceptions, toxic masculinity and the creation of non-binary spatially fluid architecture.

The Gender Bin

As a result of these surveys, the aim was to develop societies notion of gender. Creating something that would disturb the everyday experiences in the urban environment.

Observation

During a global pandemic, Edinburgh is not as bustling as it usually is. This lead to the observation site to be Princes Street, Edinburghs busy shopping street. After time spent observing how people use this urban environment, an experience that everyone has on a daily basis is the discarding of waste. It has become a habit, the experience of putting something in a bin is ordinary, with an expectation that nothing deeper or more meaningful occurs.

Raising this as an issue, resulted in a concentrated study on one double bin (Figure 2.7). The bin is in a prime location on Princes Street with views of Edinburgh Castle. The bin remains signless, with no recycling prompts or any other advertisements. Observing this site for some time during lunch time when it should be at its busiest, it was clear that the public gave no additional thought to binning an item. Their perception is that it is a bin and nothing else, it gets emptied and a new bag is inserted (Figure 2.8).
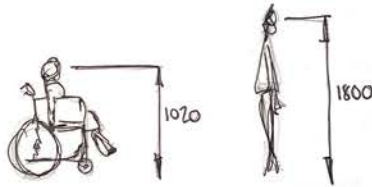


(Figure 2.7)

TIMES USED :
||||  ||||  ||||  ||||

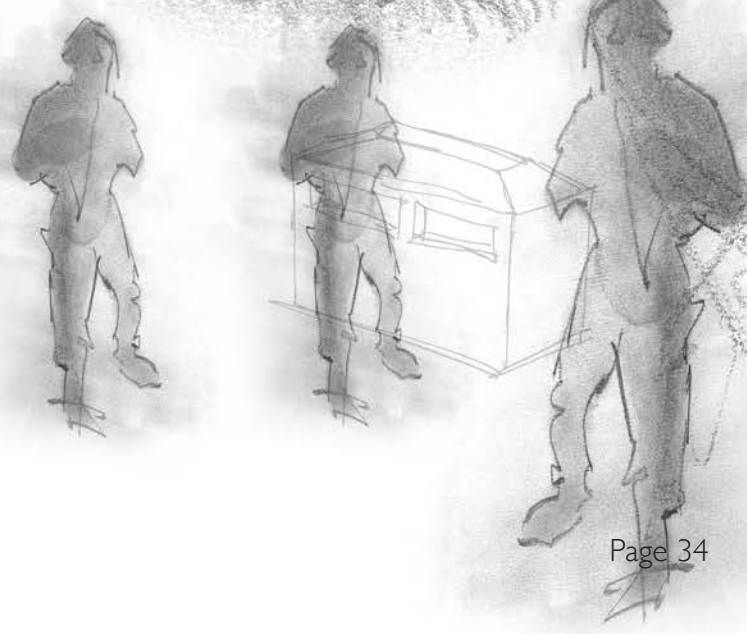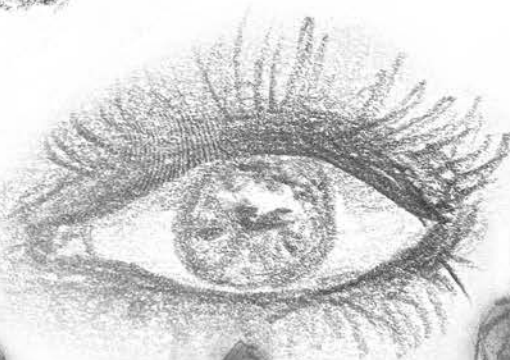FEMALES : 12

MALES :   8

1020

1800
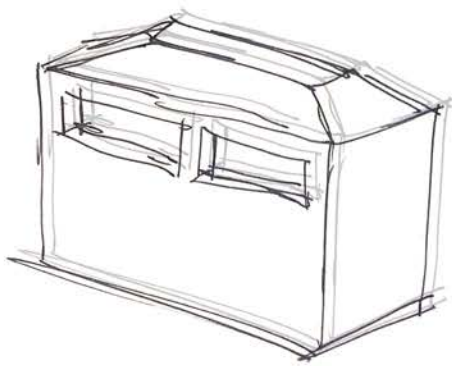
WHAT ELSE IS IT USED FOR ?
- MEETING PLACE
- STOPPING POINT
- PEOPLE TAKING PHOTOS OF CASTLE NEXT TO BIN.
- SMOKING AREA

ITEMS BINNED :
- PLASTIC BOTTLES  - 6
- FOOD PACKAGING  - 7
- COFFEE CUPS  -  6
- OTHER  - 1

Design

Form this, the aim of the designed intervention was to deconstruct this. Breakdown the preconceived fault-lines associated with this everyday experience. Encouraging society to think more about their actions, contemplate their decisions and trigger a sense of emotion in this ordinary experience.

The intervention saw two signs, 'Masculine Rubbish' and 'Feminine Rubbish'. A 'recycled gender' logo was designed, playing with the universally understood 'recycling' icon (Figure 2.9)
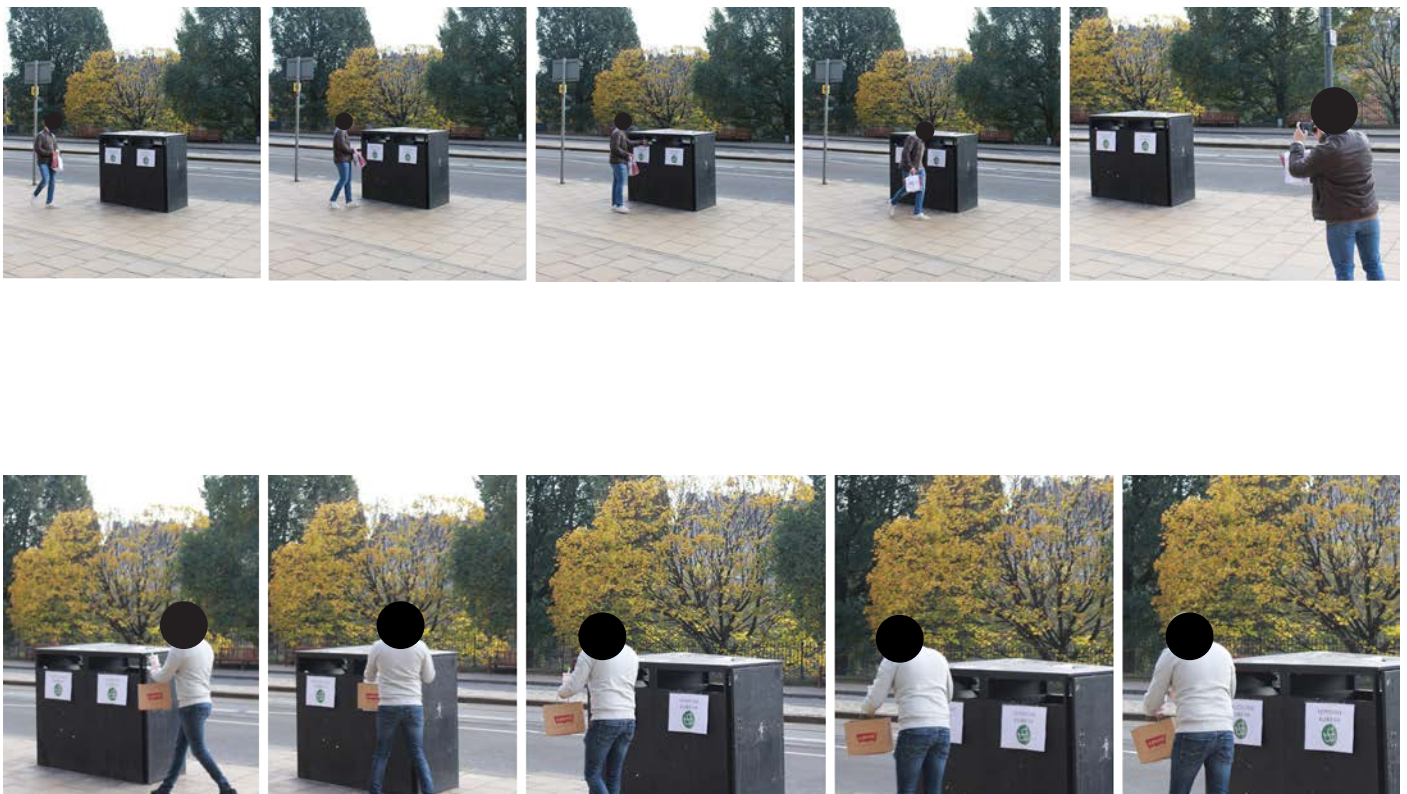




(Figure 2.9)

## Observation

Sitting away from the intervention on steps at the other side of the pavement, reactions could occur naturally and findings were able to be recorded without the public knowing. Using non descriptive language and keeping the confidentiality of the individuals under cover, the need for permission did not feel necessary as it would be too difficult to patrol. As part of the recording process, photographs of interaction with the bin were taken, all the while keeping the identity of each person secure by covering their faces.

From the hours of observation, the bin labels worked. The playful signs received some attention, with some stopping to read, some pointing it out to their friends and some even taking photographs. During the time of observation, the bin was not used as much as Intended, primarily due to the global pandemic. Moreover, the 'gender bin' caused intended confusion. It deconstructed the expectation of this ordinary experience. Some were left puzzled and perplexed, unsure which category they wanted to label their food and in a way themselves (Figure 3.1). When one was putting an item in the bin, perhaps they were contemplating their own identity rather than just the waste item (Figure 3.2).

## User Storyboard





(Figure 3.1)

- Male
- Female

(Figure 3.2)



"AHH I DONT KNOW WHICH ONE TO PUT IT IN"

"IS A PLASTIC BOTTLE MASCULINE OR FEMININE?"

"WHICH SIDE SHOULD I PUT IT IN?"

"I THINK I AM IN BETWEEN"

Overall, the intervention was a success. The public had a personal connection to something, previously unexplored. Questions arose within and expectations and perceptions in the urban environment were deconstructed with the breakdown of the everyday experience. Linking this to spatial design, the deconstructivist architecture movement saw the break down of harmony and symmetry in the architectural language previous (Hoteit, 2015). Deconstructivist architects designed with fragmentation and more that just practicality in mind. Architects such as Peter Eisenman, designed to create conversation and discussion, asserting a sense ambiguity within their designs (Hoteit, 2015). Just as the architecture forces one to question the function of 'a door' or within this research method a bin, so too can these questions be asked within the gender debate. What really differentiates a man from a women, homosexuals from heterosexuals?

From looking at the results of the 'gender bin' intervention where majority of users deposited their waste in the bin that matched their gender, it suggests that the users and the bigger picture, society, are influenced emotionally and psychologically by the environment that surround them. Deconstructivist architect Bernard Tschumi echoes the idea of this, through his opinion that architecture is based on human senses (2010). Tschumi refers to spatial design as being an individuals unconsciousness, comparing the "outside pavement to ones front sitting room" (Tschumi, 2010). This academia from the first section of this paper and the findings from the designed intervention supports the concept that spatial design can act as a proxy for the breakdown of masculine stereotypes. Architecture being compared to ones unconsciousness allows a developed understanding of how a user can have this emotional and psychological connection to a physical structure.

Furthermore, this breakdown of perception and insertion of emotion in everyday experiences can be seen through the design of food packaging by Daizi Zheng (Lyons, 2010). With the aim of targeting obesity, the packaging was redesigned to look like drugs, encouraging the buyer to rethink their purchase (Lyons, 2010) (Figure 3.3). Carrots in a packet of cigarettes, saw the ordinary experience of buying lunch deconstructed and a personal connection to the food was asserted (Lyons, 2010). This is echoed within the results gathered in this urban intervention. During the observation, some users went as far as having their hand and trash in one side of the bin to then removing it, taking a step back to read the sign and changing the bin in which they placed their rubbish. The idea that one sex does not want to be associated or connected to the other shows just how damaging societies notion of gender is. Similar to the survey previous, the users of the bin were able to carry out the impossible task of asserting gender to a food packet. It is this perception of what society consider gender to be that reiterates the importance of changing this expectation and perception. Through this design research, the 'gender bin' reinforces this. The idea that a sense of self was brought out in connection to a bin, gives encouragement that the design of the non-binary space can be done. A space that welcomes the unexpected and breaks down ones perception of design, creating a spatially-fluid and non-binary interior that forces one to question where they are within the space.

If this way of designing were to be a success and physically carried out, the results would see the early stages in the development of an all-inclusive and all-accepting world to come into fruition.



(Figure 3.3)

Frozen in Time

Observation
Similarly, this second urban social intervention occurred whilst observing people in the urban environment. Walking around Edinburgh for inspiration and observation, it became clear just how many statues of men there are around the old and new town of Edinburgh.
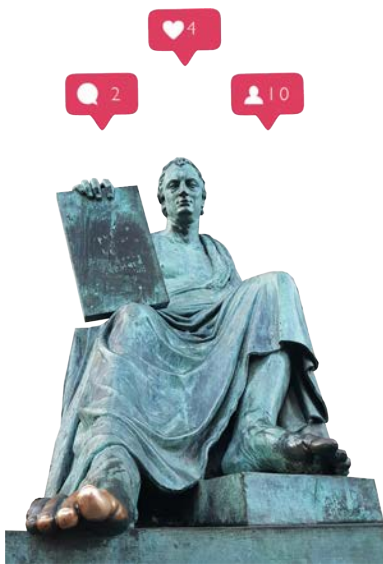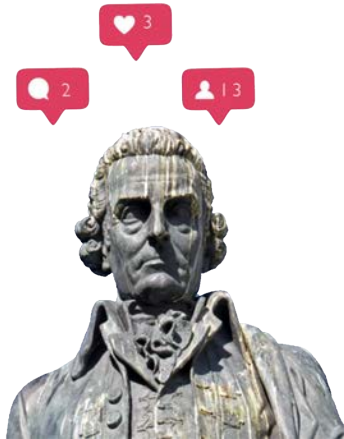


David Hume        Adam Smith        Duke of Wellington

- Comments made

- Interaction

- People around        Statue observation - 30 minutes each

Based on the prime location and position, this intervention placed focus on the 'David Hume' statue on the Royal Mile. With sight-lines from 'Bank Street', 'George the IV Bridge' and 'Lawnmarket'', the position of the statue is perfect for being noticed.

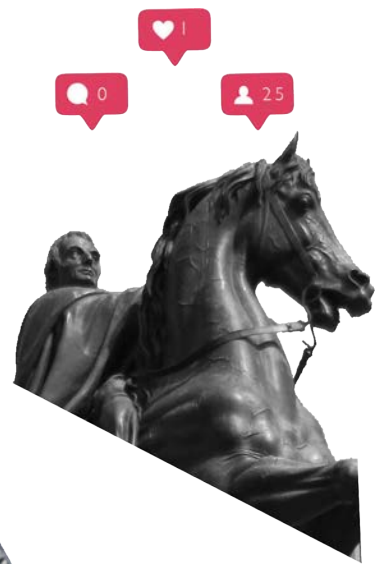Further research on 'Hume' uncovered his importance in connection to the city. The statue has become a popular feature with a tradition of touching the toe for luck. The figure played a major role in the 'Scottish enlightenment' but in 2020, the historian has come under attack in connection to the 'Black Lives Matter' campaign, shining a light on his racists views (Hutchison, 2020). The now controversial statue has been revived in 2020 and is a good suit for this design intervention.

The Problem
Some of these statues have stood for hundreds of years, with majority of society paying little or no attention to what they actually represent. These statues have become frozen in time. The aim is to bring these states into the modern time, raising current issues and 'standing' for something new. Linking these statues to the issue of masculine stereotypes and gender equality. The intervention is designed to spark a reaction in the viewer, it acts as 'a voice' and allows the viewer to reflect on the issue. This urban social strategy will not only focus on the male gender, instead the aim is to raise awareness of all gender issues, pushing for an all-inclusive and accepting society. Wether young or old, homosexual or heterosexual, male or female, this intervention should 'stand' for everyone and anyone.

DAVID HUME
PRIME LOCATION ON ROYAL MILE
MANY VIEW POINTS

"A LIFETIME OF SILENCE...."

"A SON OF EDINBURGH"

PERSON TOUCHES THE STATUE ? - CLOSER LOOK SHOWS THAT THE TOES ARE WORN....

....THE TOE OF 'DAVID HUME' IS SUPPOSED TO BRING LUCK WHEN TOUCHED

SIMILAR TO THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON STATUE IN GLASGOW, SOMEONE PLACED A TRAFFIC CONE ON THE HEAD OF HUME. THE CONE WAS STILL ON LOCATION.

BANK STREET
LOCATION OF STATUE
HIGH ST
LAWNMARKET
GEORGE IV BRIDGE

THIS STATUE SITS PROUD BUT RESEARCHING THE STATUE HAS SHOWN THERE IS CONTROVESY SURROUNDING THIS. RACIST AND HOMOPHOBIC VIEWS OF HUMES HAVE BEEN RISEN

Design

The intention of hand painting the text on cardboard was to create a more personal and strong felt intervention. Signs like these are recognised as conveying something of urgency, with less focus on the physical aesthetic and more on the importance of the message itself (Wood, 2017). The words aimed to diminish peoples expectations of the 'manly man', making society realise how they place gender into boxes, clouded with preconceived perceptions, stereotypes and expectations.

''A lifetime of silence'', these playful yet meaningful words were composed to represent men and Hume. Hume without a voice and men without expression and emotion. The idea that men must be seen as 'manly', resulting in pushing away any sense of emotion, considered queer if shown.

Dividing the observation, the first two hours saw a similar approach to the 'gender bin' observation. Positioned across the street, the ability to take notes and photograph the process without interfering with natural reactions could occur. In the final hour of observation, a more personal approach was adopted. Standing closer to the intervention, the idea was to be able to get insights into what peoples reactions were. Safely asking people who stopped, maintaining a safe distance, clearly stating my intent and confidentiality of the individual what they thought about the designed intervention. With each verbally granting permission to use their reactions as data, (Figure 3.4) proves the success of the intervention. The comments within in this short time were very encouraging and enthusiastic. Majority of passers by stopped to read or take photographs, with around 30-40 people taking photos within the three hour time frame (Figure 3.5).

" MUST BE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH "

" THAT IS BRILLIANT, I LOVE THE MESSAGE "

" IT IS SUCH A POWERFUL MESSAGE

" IT SPOKE ALOT TO ME "

" A LIFETIME OF SILENCE, DOES IT MEAN MEN BEING SILENT? "

" I WORK WITH STATUES.... I WILL BE USING THIS AS A CASE STUDY FOR
MY WORK. DO YOU HAVE TWITTER? I WOULD HAPPILY TAG YOU "

" I AM A PHOTOGRAPHER.... SUBMIT ALOT OF MY WORK IN THE NATIONAL
LIBRARY ARCHIVES.... WOULD YOU MIND IF I GOT A PHOTO OF YOU AND
YOUR SIGNS? "

" IT DEFINITELY SOMETHING THAT IS IMPORTANT NOW "

" IT IS VERY CURRENT AND NEEDED "

" I AM A FIRM BELEIVER THAT EVERYTHING IS INTER CONNECTED ....
PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS PUSH BACK, THEY ARE NOT QUITE READY. FOR
A DIFFERENT WORLD "

(Figure 3.4)
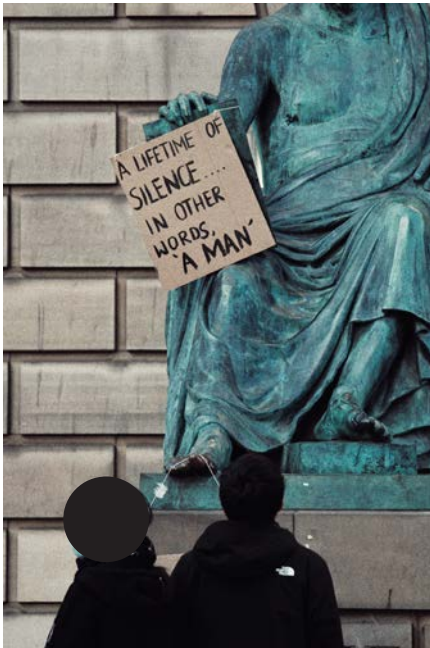


(Figure 3.5)

From the reactions, it was greatly accepted but reflecting on the results, a modified second version that connects more to the issues centred in this paper would be beneficial. Moving away from the struggles of being male to a focus on the creation of the non-binary space.

This second intervention placed more emphasis on the theme of creating the non-binary space. The design saw a plastic bag placed on the head of Hume, with a plaque reading "Am I gender neutral now?" (Figure 3.6). Partially removing Humes identity, masked with a semi-transparent plastic bag, allowing the identity of Hume to be seen but not fully distinguishable, leading one to question the notion of gender issues. The designed intervention is asking society if they accept the neutral gender of Hume since the perceived 'identifiable' male face is clouded? As another method of recording the publics reaction, the hashtag 'NONBINARYSPACE' was added on a separate plaque, used as a way for people to share opinions and start discussions.

The short time that this intervention stood, the observed reactions seemed very much in support. The intervention caused intended discussion and allowed an insight into the publics reactions (Figure 3.7). In addition to this, the second intervention was clearly more controversial. One individual, who perhaps misunderstood or did not agree with the message, ripped down and binned the intervention. This meant the '#' unfortunately went unused. The reaction of this individual has given a key insight into how the public and in particular men react to things out of the perceived 'normal'. In connection to this, the journal by John McMahon previously referenced in this paper, makes apparent the conflict between gender and sexual orientation (2020). The conflict explored, looks at how some men reject anything considered women like or 'gay' that might threaten or tarnish their masculine reputation (McMahon, 2020). The idea of this can be seen within the reactions towards the designed intervention. An intervention raising awareness of gender issues could be potentially be seen as this 'threat' explored by McMahon (2020).

(Figure 3.6)

AM I
GENDER
NEUTRAL
NOW ?

" WHAT IS YOUR NAME ? IF I USE THESE PHOTOGRAPHS, I WILL
REFERENCE YOU "

" IS HUME REPRESENTING ALL OF SOCIETY THEN ? "

" I WAS A PHILOSOPHY STUDENT, SO I KNOW ALOT ABOUT HUME.
MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT IT IS NOT AN ATTACK ON HIM,
INSTEAD A PLATFORM FOR THIS DEBATE.... THE TIMING COULDNT BE
BETTER "

" PERSONALLY I THINK THE WORLD HAS GONE MAD, BUT YOUR
POINT IS VERY CLEAR AND COMES ACROSS WELL. I DO AGREE
WITH WHAT IT REPRESENTS, HOWEVER I AM NOT SURE THE WORLD IS
READY. "

" I AM CURRENTLY DOING A UNI PROJECT ON THE ROYAL MILE....
COULD YOU GIVE ME BACKGROUND ON YOUR PROJECT BECAUSE
I WILL BE WRITING ABOUT THIS AS PART OF MY FINDINGS....
I THINK ITS GREAT, I WILL PROBABLY POST IT ON SOCIAL MEDIA
SO I WILL USE YOUR '#' "

(Figure 3.7)

The recorded reactions suggest this fear of femininity and homosexuality within the male gender. The vandalisation of the intervention was not the only impulsive reaction to the intervention, one also made a direct comment, saying, "Get a real f*****g job". The conflict and responsibility to sustain the manly man image explored by McMahon (2020) is apparent in the reactions to this designed intervention. This rejection of anything non masculine in connection to the male gender are pushed away in an attempt to retain the masculine male image that is threatened by the weak and fragile 'snowflake generation', previously referenced in this paper (Smith, 2018). Degrading millennials, by associating 'soft' terminology with the generation, allows societies rejection of the breakdown of gender stereotypes to be shown (Smith, 2018). In reality this 'weak' and 'fragile' generation are standing up and fighting for their acceptance, something previous generations lacked.

Maybe the world is not ready for this shift to an all-inclusive and all accepting environment for people to live. This research started off with giving hope that society was in acceptance of change with an understanding of gender issues. The research showed that majority of the public do recognise and are in support of the issues that surround gender, whether that is expressing femininity in men, identifying as non-binary or a woman who feels inferior to the male sex. However, the final intervention showed just how far society is from an all-inclusive and all accepting environment.

# CHAPTER 9

## The Loud Silence

Through this paper and design project, the aim is to be a part of this shift, standing as one in the fight for the diminishing of gender stereotypes. The monumental shift will not happen over night and might not be seen within this generation, however pushing for this now will improve the living environments for the young people of the future. The theme of the paper and design project of creating a non-binary space is just part of the efforts in smashing through the glass ceiling that acts as a barrier in the acceptance of minority demographics. The secondary and primary research carried out within this paper has provided the knowledge and understanding of how spatial design can help in the break down and diminishing of gender stereotypes. Through the deconstruction of perceived interior and exterior architecture and the insertion of unclarity and ambiguity, the deeper rooted symbolism of complete gender acceptance, in any form and identity can come to light and flourish. The acceptance of the deconstructed and unexpected non-binary, spatially fluid design, will see a broadened outlook from society. Thus developing ones understanding of the issues surrounding the perception and responsibilities that cloud all genders.

Throughout this paper, the use of gender labels have slowly began to disappear, leading to a conclusion that dispels the notion of gendered words entirely, instead adopting a non-binary way of communicating. From the outset, these gender labels were highlighted red to create a focus. As the words began to vanish, so too did the sea of red text seen throughout the paper. The reason for this is to give evidence that by taking the breakdown of gender stereotypes step by step, the easier it becomes to reformulate the outdated outlook and language of times previous. Consequently, an all-accepting future living environment can start to develop. With the final ambition that young people might one day look back at the idea of stereotyping someone based on gender expectations and perceptions in a perplexed and saddened Manor. Maybe the 'roaring 20's' can be revamped, with future generations linking this decade to the development of an all-accepting society where its members are appreciated and understood for who they are. This loud silence of gender issues can maybe one day become a distant memory, kept alive only in history books.

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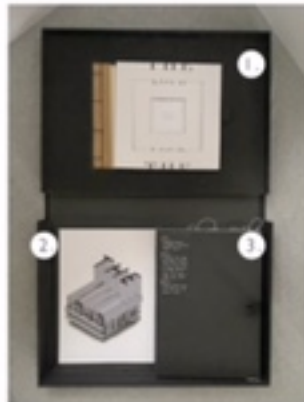
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Thank you

Michael Nicholson

# DESIGN RESEARCH PORTFOLIO BOX DESIGN

## MICHAEL NICHOLSON

1. MANIFESTO DOCUMENT

2. DESIGN RESEARCH PORTFOLIO

3. DESIGN RESEARCH POP UP BOOKLET