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# **SHARED SENSORY EXPERIENCE**

A DESIGN STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATION



A thesis presented in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Master in Design at  
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## Abstract

This study explores the theory of *emotional contagion* and then offers insights as to how communication designers could practically apply aspects of this theory to a communication campaign. Schoenewolf (1990) describes emotional contagion as “a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behavior of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioral attitudes” (p. 50). A significant aspect of this theory involves joint consumption. This suggests that an experience of an event differs when more than one person is involved. Ramanathan and McGill’s (2007) recent study suggests that a stronger positive or negative evaluation of a shared experience is achieved through the creation of emotional contagion. When considering this, an opportunity exists to establish recommendations for the design industry to employ in order to enhance an audience’s response. In order to be successful in constructing a pertinent strategy it is critical to consider the way in which people perceive experiences; central to this theme are the five senses.

Research into the five senses which include sight, sound, smell, touch and taste, indicates the significant impact over an individuals’ emotions and decision making process. To date the human senses have been largely neglected within the design industry due to conventional use of mainstream media. Through using non-traditional media, participants could be connected on a more sensory level through means of interactive involvement.

From a holistic perspective the overarching methodology will be that of research for design (Frayling, 1993, as cited in Downtown, 2003). The emphasis will therefore be on providing insights and ideas as to how the design industry could, through non-traditional media, embrace emotional contagion.

Supporting methods will be a combination of the following:

1. Case studies. These will include an analysis of precedents
2. A self generated design campaign. The focus will be tourism. This has been chosen because of its experiential and shared nature.



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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION



## 1.1 Inspiration



<sup>^</sup>  
Figure 1. Sparnaay, L. *Cupcake Doll*, (2009). Photograph.

Just one whiff of vanilla essence was what triggered the beginnings of this project. Upon smelling this small bottle of essential oil, I was immediately transported to my childhood playing with my favourite toy, a cupcake doll (see Figure 1). I was at an age where I had not a care in the world; I was happy and content to be playing with my doll. One simple scent had evoked such vivid and fond recollections. Intrigued, I embarked on a journey that explored the realms of the senses. From then on, I became acutely aware of the recurring use of visuals in communication design and the lack of other sensory stimulus.

On a daily basis images shout from billboards, bus stops, brochures, magazines and so forth informing us of what we need, want, desire, among other things. In such a visually overstimulated environment it is becoming increasingly important for communication design to stand out among the clutter. By and large this visual platform for communication tends to develop and direct a passive statement towards an audience. Dissatisfied with communication design that regularly creates a one-way message, I was motivated to look for an alternative direction that could enable communication designers to better engage their audience. In effect I was looking to evoke responses rather than mere spectatorship.

Subsequently, an exploration was developed within this study to understand the influences and effects of sharing a consumption experience in comparison to consuming independently. The central principle to this exploration is the theory of *emotional contagion* (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1994). Emotional contagion can be described as “a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behavior of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioral attitudes” (Schoenewolf, 1990, as cited in Barsade, 2002).

In order to fully understand the potential of shared experience in design it was essential to investigate the nature of the human senses; touch, taste, sight, sound and smell. Given that the senses are the means in which we experience the world, understanding their power and persuasion in enhancing an experience is of particular significance.

## **1.2 Central Proposition**

Examining numerous case studies within a wide variety of different disciplines has informed and directed this study toward the following central proposition.

An experience shared with others can affect peoples responses and their independent evaluation.

The aim of this study is to offer communication designers a strategy that essentially facilitates the application of emotional contagion. Tourism was selected as the vehicle to convey how this framework could then be implemented.

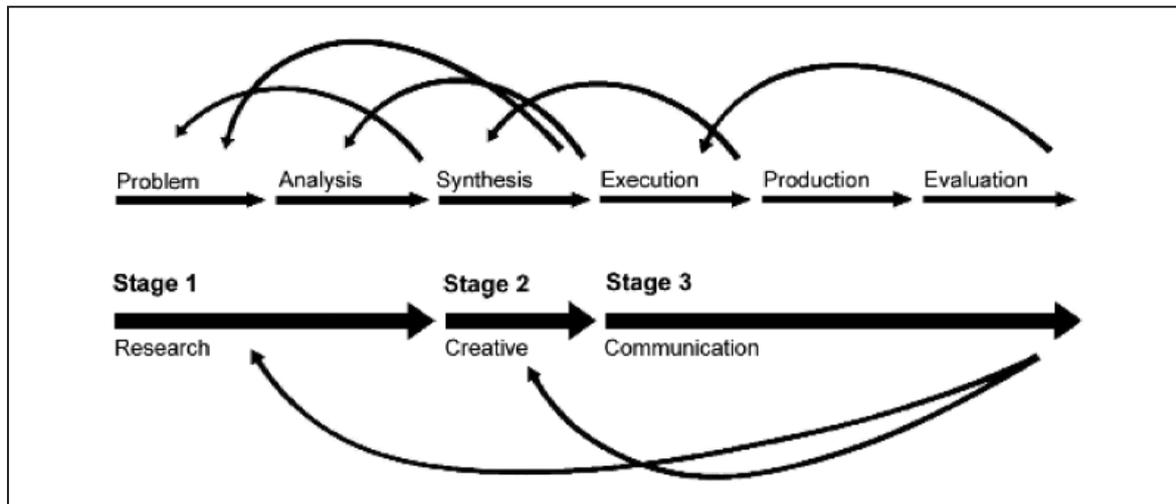
## **1.3 The Design Process**

The unrestricted nature of design makes for a complex process. Edelson (2002) refers to design as “a sequence of decisions made to balance goals and constraints” (p. 108).

Going more in depth, Edelson (2002) refers to three sets of decisions made during the course of creating a design outcome. These decisions are about *design procedure*, “how the design process will proceed”, *problem analysis*, “what needs and opportunities the design will address”, and *design solution* “what form the resulting design will take” (Edelson, 2002, p. 108). While Edelson talks of three stages in the design process, many other researchers (Cross, 2001; Wilson, 2002; Swann, 2002) suggest a variety of numeric stages. In particular Swann’s six stage process is a worthy model as it illustrates the reflective and repetitive nature of design.

Stemming from Jones (1992) work, Swann (2002) builds upon the stages of the design process. Agreeing to a broad set of key components, Swann’s (2002) design process includes: “Problem/research – analysis – synthesis – execution – production – evaluation” (p.53). Swann (2002) explores various research methods and points to Schon’s (1983) “action research” as being appropriate for the “interpretive nature of design” (p. 50). Looking to Schon’s central ideas, Swann (2002) states, “reflection ‘in action’ and reflection ‘on action’ lead to ‘action research’” (p. 50). This iterative process of action research is consistent with the design process where the designer is constantly revisiting their work. The repetitive nature of the design process is emphasized in Swann’s (2002) diagram (see Figure 2). As illustrated in the figure through the use of arrows, the “constant process of revisiting the problem, reanalysing it and synthesizing revised solutions” is necessary in order for it to be effective (Swann, 2002 p. 53).

Swann (2002), in reference to Cross, (1984) suggests that the key moment in the design process is “synthesis” (p. 53). Making comparisons to scientists, it was found that designers use “solution-focused” strategies as opposed to “problem-focused” strategies (Swann, 2002, p. 53). Designers had a tendency to come up with several solutions until they found one that was suitable. This synthesis process is characterized as combining all the large fragmented problem parts in order to form a coherent solution.



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Figure 2. Swann, C. *Design Process Model*, (2002). Diagram.

Identifying this study within the above design process, the main areas of focus lie within the analysis and synthesis phases. This study then gives ideas and suggestions towards a series of executions. The final work however has not been produced and subsequently evaluated as the cost and technological limitations hindered this progress.

#### 1.4 Methodology

The modes of design research that are included within this study are Frayling's (1993, as cited in Downtown, 2003) concepts of conducting *research for design*, *research into design*, and *research about design*. For my strategy the most pertinent however is research for design. This can be described as being:

Research that is carried out during the overall design process to support designing in whatever way the designer(s) regard as useful and this includes research intended to provide information and data that is necessary to successfully conclude the undertaking in question.

(Downtown, 2003, p. 17)

Through using this methodology, the information collected will support and inform the design project, eventually assisting in the decision making process. This research will also aim to improve the process and outcome of designing. The particular method I will use to collect and analyse this data is qualitative and will focus on the investigation of case studies.

A case study, according to Yin (2002) is considered as a very detailed study to a specific context or individual. The multiple case studies in this research will gather comprehensive information from a wide range of sources. This will then bring a clear understanding of an issue but also add strength to what is already known through previous research. In qualitative studies however, the findings could be subject to other interpretations and as such this creates a limitation.

## **1.5 Chapter Outline**

Chapter two “Background Research” investigates and outlines in detail a series of select literature reviews on five intertwined topics. Topic (1) This particular study explores what emotion is, how it is generated and subsequently what power the emotions then have over the decision making process. Topic (2) delves into the theory of emotional contagion and establishes an understanding of what it is, how it is developed and spread, along with what affects this can then result in. Topic (3) is on herd behaviour. This research will further add awareness of how interacting with others can influence our emotions and behaviour. This is then followed by the importance that others also have upon our decision making process through sharing and word of mouth. Topic (4) discusses experience design and looks to examples of existing work that are designed intentionally around creating experiences. Topic (5) then considers sensory stimulus. Here it is acknowledged what the senses are, how they work and consequently the influence they have upon individuals.

Chapter three looks at the tourism industry as this was the chosen vehicle for illustrating how a contagion based strategy could be successfully directed. Here the idea of

the tourist experience is explored as well as reference to the current issues present in tourism communication design. Because the vehicle of tourism is vast, a New Zealand perspective is researched and an analysis of Tourism New Zealand's current advertising is reviewed.

Chapter four details the research process, summarising and drawing conclusions from case studies examined in chapter two. From this I was able to establish a framework that might then be applied within the design industry. How this strategy could then be harnessed through using Tourism New Zealand as the exemplar is then discussed.

Chapter five presents three final concepts. These are examined in depth and insight is given as to how well the designed strategy has been employed.

Chapter six, the "Conclusion", summarises the previous chapters and in doing so creates a well-supported case towards the potential benefits of employing the established communication design strategy.

# CHAPTER TWO

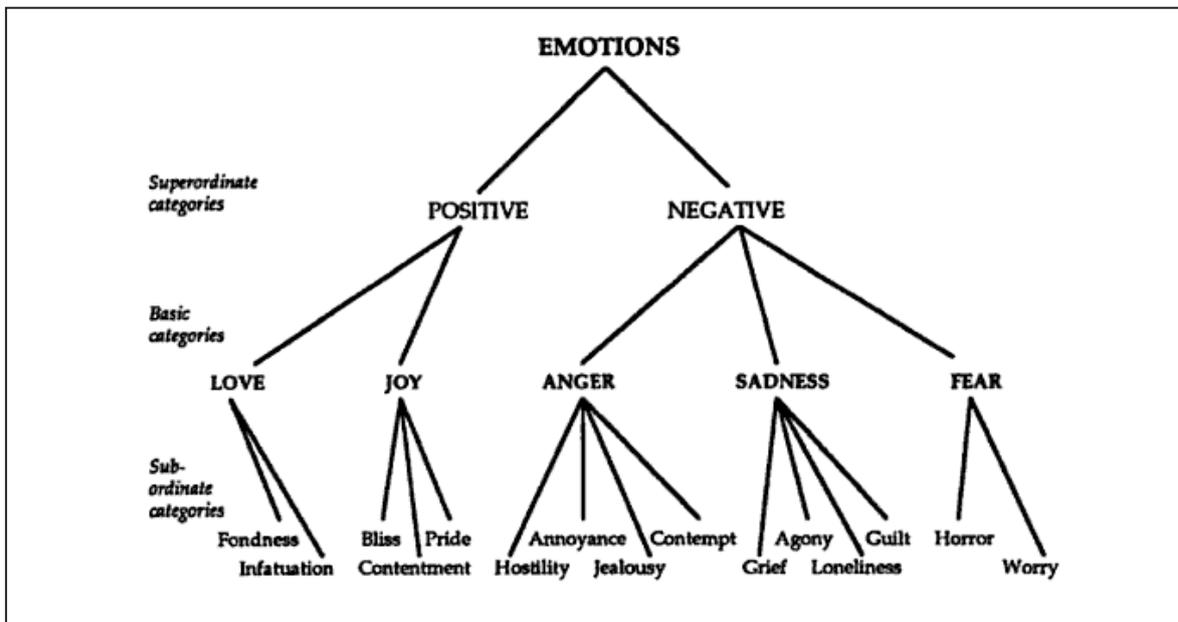
## BACKGROUND RESEARCH



## 2.1 Emotion

### 2.1.1 What is Emotion?

According to O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2003) emotion arises from positive or negative appraisals from emotive stimuli such as an event or action. This then gives way to emotional mental states, which can be pleasurable such as joy. The effect of the emotional experience is then usually correlated with bodily changes such as feelings and expressions.



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Figure 3. Fischer et al. *An emotion hierarchy*, (1990). Diagram.

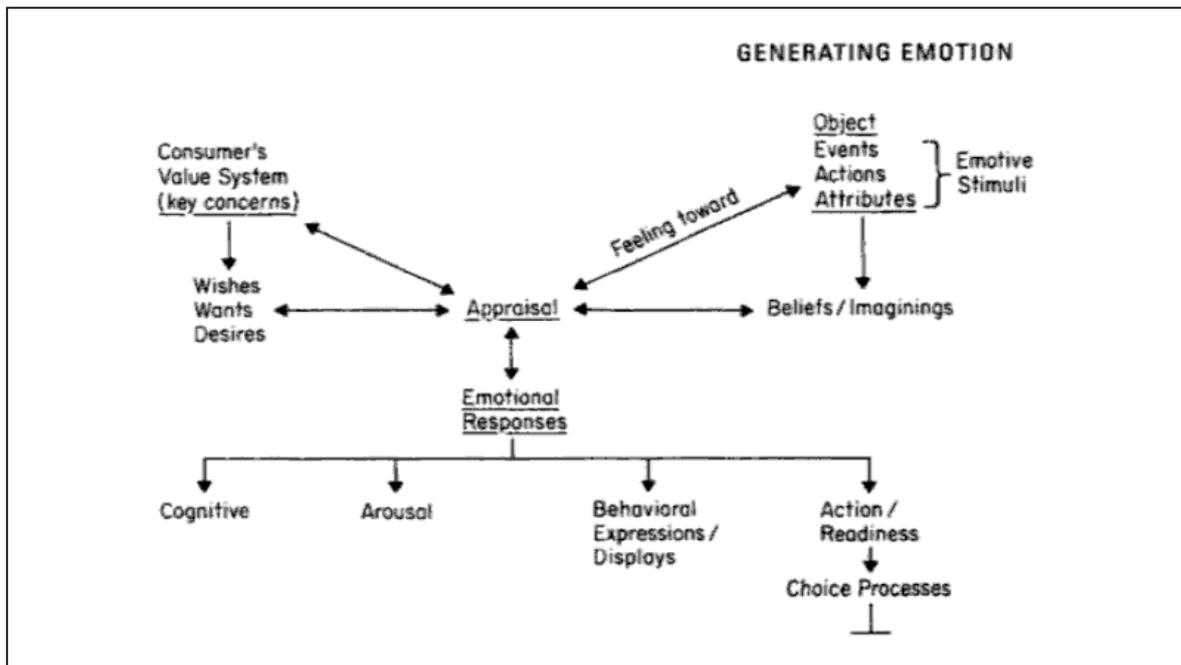
Fischer, Shaver and Carnochan (1990), propose an emotion hierarchy where “emotions fit into families, within which all members share a family resemblance but no universal set of features” (as cited in Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1994, p. 3) (see Figure 3). Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson (1994) specify a dispute among theorists over what constitutes an emotion family, yet what seems to be of a general consensus is that these emotional packages envelope many components. These components include conscious awareness; facial, vocal, and postural expression; neurophysiological and autonomic nervous system activity; and instrumental behaviours” (Hatfield Cacioppo & Rapson, 1994, p. 4).

Emotions and moods are often found in literature used interchangeably and although their concepts overlap, they are not the same. The core feature underlying the differentiation between moods and emotions is relative to the extent of specificity to an object. Moods can be looked upon as "emotional experiences whose object remains unspecified"; they are more diffuse and unfocused (Frijda, 2009, p. 276). Emotions on the other hand, are more directed toward a particular object, for example, you are angry with your sibling for taking your favourite t-shirt without permission. Although Goldie (2000) corroborates this general interpretation, he also stresses that emotions and moods are closely related and it is possible for a mood to "focus into emotion and emotion can blur out of focus into mood" (p. 8).

In this study, emphasis will be placed more on emotions than moods. An intricate part of primal behaviour, emotions serve to communicate our human states and feelings to one another. How emotions are initially evoked is explored further in the next section.

### **2.1.2 Generating Emotion**

O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2003) illustrate the process of generating emotion (see Figure 4). In this model, the appraisal of an individual's value system and their feelings toward emotive stimuli is significant in producing emotional responses. Values are central to which an individual can arrange or place weighting upon their preferences. The feelings generated toward the stimuli (the object or attribution of that object) such as an event is due to the evaluation against an individual's existing values; their beliefs/imaginings as well as wishes/wants and desires. Hence, the appraisals made between these values are also responsible for an emotive response. What is encompassed within these responses is "cognitive effects, arousal of feelings, behavioural expressions/displays, affect-driven consumer action, and the choice processes themselves" (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2003, p. 36).



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Figure 4. O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy. *Production of emotion*, (2003). Diagram.

What's more, O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2003) discuss how our emotional responses can inform us of what we value and therefore strengthen that value more so. It is understandable why people get emotional over things that can then threaten or uphold these values. When a consumer finds a product emotionally desirable, it is not surprising that their conflicting beliefs may succumb to the allure of the desired. Subsequently, trying to get people into the right emotional state when they are making choices and decisions is a desired objective for most designers. The advantage of this simply leads to more spending and a greater tolerance of things such as "waiting in line" (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2003, p. 25).

### 2.1.3 Effects of Emotion

The positive effects from emotional appeals have been well known and used by designers extensively. "Emotions intensify wants and desires and intensify motivation" (O'Shaughnessy & O'Shaughnessy, 2003, p. 3). Bocoock (1993) states, "modern consumption depends upon advertising and the display of commodities in shopping centers, shopping

malls, in a way which creates and elicits desires" (p. 93). Belk, Ger, and Askegaard (2003) similarly assert that contemporary consumption is primarily influenced by the generation of desire. The authors suggest that the notion of desire shapes the social disposition of motivation. Making reference to Wilk (1997), Belk, Ger and Askegaard (2003) acknowledge that when it comes to the concept of belonging, the defining of group affiliation is "not only based on what we desire and like but also based on what we dislike" (p. 329). In contrast, Illouz (2009) points out how emotions can account for both the positive and negative motive to consume. Whilst recognising desire as being apart of the influence for consumption, Illouz (2009) argues that emotion is a much more suited concept than desire because "it is analytically clearer and offers a better empirical grasp on consumption, but also because it accounts much better for the nature and structure of the experience of consumption itself." (p. 386).

*Somatic marker hypothesis*, a theory identified by Damasio (2005) insinuates that emotions can "provide the bridge between rational and non-rational processes" (p. 128). What this hypothesis involves is the "marking" of emotions however momentarily, from a response to a situation or experience (Damasio, 2005, p. 173). It seems that our emotions have "achieved this marking quite overtly as in a 'gut feeling' or covertly, via signals occurring below the radar of our awareness" (Damasio, 2005, p. xii). Essentially what Damasio (2005) concludes is that for the decision making process to occur, it is necessary to involve emotion. Damasio (2005) argues that it is our emotions that guide us into constructing a more accurate decision making process.

An example of how emotions influence our choices is depicted below. This is just one of the initiatives sponsored by Volkswagen and is founded on a concept referred to as "the fun theory" ("<http://www.thefuntheory.com>", 2009, para. 1) (see Figure 5). The focus of this theory attempts to influence people's behaviour by making the task fun. In this example, Volkswagen aimed to encourage exercise by getting more people choosing to walk up the stairs, as opposed to taking the escalator. In order to make the steps more appealing the

designers constructed steps to act as piano keys. Each step plays a sound that corresponds to that particular note. The public enjoyed this playful design and as a result opted to take the stairs “66% more” of the time (“<http://www.thefuntheory.com>”, 2009, para. 3).



^  
*Figure 5. Volkswagen. Piano Staircase, (2009). Video Still. Stockholm*

For a design that simply adds sound and imagery to the previously mundane, a significant outcome has resulted. It purposely evokes a more emotive response that then encourages and influences a change in behaviour. Furthermore, what is interesting about this design is how it develops an experience that can be shared with others. Having more people on the stairs creates more sounds causing the playing of music with surrounding strangers. I will now expand on this notion of evoking emotions and sharing experience within the relative theory of emotional contagion.

## **2.2 Emotional Contagion**

### **2.2.1 What is Emotional Contagion?**

Many consumption experiences such as travelling, watching a film, or going grocery shopping involves the company of other people, whether they are your friends, family or complete strangers. How we then experience these events because of other people is relevant to the theory of emotional contagion. The Dictionary of Psychology (1999) defines emotional contagion as: "The process whereby emotional reactions are experienced in one person because the person is observing the experience of the same emotion in others" (p. 325). Emotional Contagion is considered to be relatively automatic and occurs via a less conscious level. An important factor for emotional contagion to be able to spread is through "direct interpersonal contact between people" (Barsade, 2002, p. 645).

### **2.2.2 Joint Consumption**

Joint consumption is a necessary feature for emotional contagion to occur. Identified by Ramanathan and McGill (2007), differences can occur when consuming with others in contrast to consuming individually. Reflecting upon Ramanathan and McGill's (2007) experiments it is demonstrated how consuming with others can change an individual's evaluation of an experience to correspond more with the evaluations of surrounding people.

In an investigation regarding emotional contagion Barsade, (2002) focused on the effects of work-group dynamics. The findings indicate that "people are 'walking mood inductors' continuously influencing the moods and then the judgements and behaviours of others" (p. 667). According to Kelly (2004), research has also pointed to how certain people such as an expressive group leader can have a particularly influence over the emotional disposition of others. When considering "affective team compositions", Barsade and Gibson (1998) also suggest that having an awareness of what emotional states these influential

individuals have may be crucial (p. 97).

From a performing arts perspective Wilson (2002) recognizes that emotions have a tendency to be amplified within larger crowds. Wilson (2002) also describes how these larger crowds make it easier for individuals to connect and become more involved with the performance. “When many people are assembled for a common purpose, for example to enjoy a particular musical or drama, a quasi-religious atmosphere is generated” (Wilson, 2002, p. 55).



^  
Figure 6. UVA. *Volume just after rain*, (2006). Photograph. London.

Displayed above is the design piece *Volume* situated outside the V&A museum (see Figure 6). It illustrates an example of a joint consumption, created by the British company UVA - United Visual Artists. UVA are a creative practice whose work incorporates “permanent architectural installation, live performance and responsive installation” (“United Visual Artists”, n.d., para. 6). This interactive sculpture of light and sound, responds

specifically to the surrounding environments. Whether this would be one person, a crowd or just after it had rained, each produced a different lighting and sound arrangement. This environment is designed in such a way that it encourages complete strangers to come together. Because the design differs when experienced singly compared to multiples of people, an assortment of experiences are able to then take place.

Another design that demonstrates joint consumption is pictured below (see Figure 7). The *Anonymous Hugging Wall* was designed by Dixon (n.d.) for social facilitation and mood elevation. It illustrates a good example of how a positive emotion can be evoked.



^  
Figure 7. Dixon. *Anonymous Hugging Wall*, (n.d.). Photograph collage.

“Touch is considered essential for our physical and emotional well-being” (Salts, 1993, p. 43). Hug therapists suggest that hugs should be incorporated within your everyday as they help to create a sense of fulfillment and comfort. Interestingly, a study undertaken by Light, Grewen and Amico (2004) went as far as indicating a reduced baseline blood pressure in women who had a greater frequency of hugs with their partners. In reference to this design, the act of giving or receiving a hug is likely to result in a more positive emotion due to this shared experience. In theory, due to emotional contagion, this positive emotion could be spread and caught by nearby onlookers who witness this recently hugged persons emotional reaction.

Fundamentally, it is only by sharing an experience with others that emotions can be spread to one another. Many researchers (Barsade, 2002; Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994; Hatfield and Rapson, 1998; Ramanathan & McGill, 2007) have suggested that the grounds for emotional contagion to spread, is through an instinctive process of mimicry and feedback. I will now focus on this core idea within the next section.

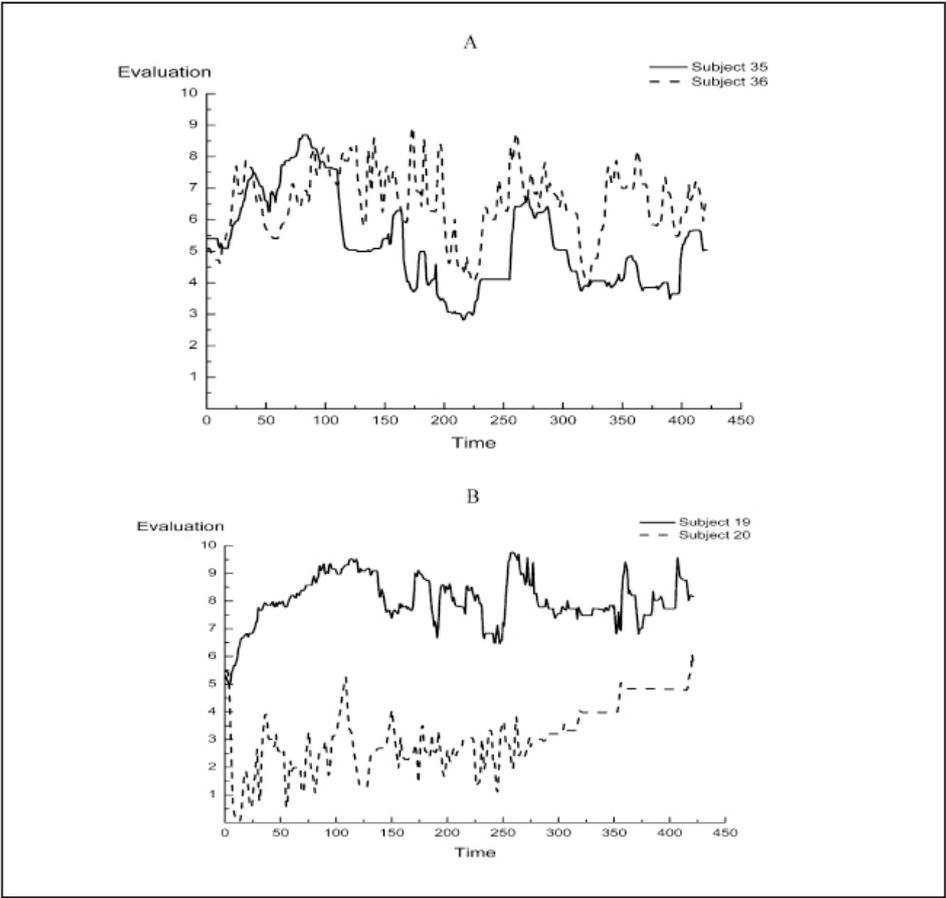
### **2.2.3 Mimicry/Feedback Process**

According to Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1994) there are a variety of studies that have suggested mechanisms as to how emotions could theoretically be received from others. Emphasis however, is placed on the mechanism of “mimicry/feedback” by pointing to an abundance of sources which all support that this is generally how emotional contagion is spread (Hatfield et al., 1994, p. 10). What this entails is a tendency to automatically and continuously mimic facial expressions, posture, voice, movements and instrumental behaviour from others, and then synchronize these expressions thus causing it to affect our emotional experience.

Because facial expressions can change almost instantaneously, research has suggested that people can track the slightest “moment-to-moment” changes (Hatfield et al., p. 19).

Extensive studies into the likes of facial, vocal, and postural feedback indicate that once people mimic such behaviour they subsequently begin to experience the emotion (Barsade, 2002; Hatfield & Rapson, 1998).

Several experiments described in more recent studies add additional weight to the theory of mimicry/feedback. One example of such findings can be seen in Ramanathan and McGill's (2007) study of participants watching film. In one of the experiments, participants watched the film individually or in pairs either with social presence or full social presence. In social presence the pairs were seated next to each other but separated by a partition so each could not see the other person's facial expressions or body posture (Ramanathan & McGill, 2007). In full social presence the pairs could see each other.



^  
Figure 8. Ramanathan & McGill. *Experiment 1: Sample Online Evaluations*, (2007). Graph.

In the previous diagram, graph A shows the evaluation throughout the film of two subjects in full social presence and graph B, shows the same but the two subjects are in social presence (see Figure 8). The charts clearly illustrate how emotional contagion is being spread through a mimicry process. Furthermore, the charts reveal that emotions can synchronize with others. Ramanathan and McGill (2007) suggest that this synchrony can then lead to a stronger positive or negative evaluation of the experience.

Conversely Raghunathan and Corfman (2006) propose “social influence can operate in one direction on judgments of shared stimuli and in the opposite direction on the enjoyment of sharing them” (p. 387). Hypothetically, looking at the previous example of watching a film, this implies that although a person can change their opinion about a film in order to be more congruent with another person, if there is an initial incongruence of opinions between two people it may lead to liking the experience of sharing it with that particular person less. Underlying features in this study were looking at the function of two factors – “the need to belong and the need for accuracy” (Raghunathan & Corfman, 2006, p. 387). The need to belong is referred to as “a strong and innate desire to form and maintain relationships with others” whereas the need for accuracy is described as “a strong desire to hold veridical views of themselves and of their environments” (Raghunathan & Corfman, 2006, p. 387). The investigation went further to explore how these two factors could therefore influence enjoyment when sharing an experience.

The findings from Raghunathan and Corfman’s (2006) two experiments revealed that through both “engendering a feeling of belonging and by increasing confidence in the accuracy” of a persons view, a greater enjoyment of the shared experience would be had (p. 392). In general, the implication of this study suggests that for an audience to experience this greater enjoyment and to therefore be more likely to repeat the experience, a congruency in reactions is preferable.

We are perpetually interacting with and observing other people’s behaviour and

actions. Whether these are the likes of linguistic nuances, limb movements, facial expressions and so forth; they all convey important messages; cues that are the basis for continual inferences we make with varying degrees of awareness. How we are then able to understand these messages is related to the theory of mirror neurons.

#### **2.2.4 Mirror Neurons**

Accidentally discovered in 1992 by scientist Rizzolatti and his team, mirror neurons were found after conducting brain research on macaque monkeys. The initial test involved observing the “F5” sector of the monkeys “premotor cortex” and how these premotor neurons respond to the action of their own motor plans (Rizzolatti, Craighero & Fadiga, 2002, p. 37). When the monkey made the action of grabbing, in this case for food, the neurons would fire a response. Interestingly, it was noted that the neurons of a macaque would also respond when another monkey or scientist also reached for the food. In summary, these ‘mirror’ neurons couldn’t differentiate between doing something and seeing something. After various similar tests, the results also indicated that the firing of these pre-motor neurons were in response to goal-directed actions such as grasping food.

Although the above study was initially conducted on macaque monkeys Rizzolatti and Craighero (2004) suggest that there is a large body of data that implies indirectly that the mirror neuron system also exists in humans. Indeed, the purpose of undertaking such damaging studies on monkeys is that physiology tends to be conserved between related species that share a relatively close common ancestor. Subsequently, there have been several non-invasive experiments using the likes of positron-emission tomography (PET), and transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) on humans to confirm if otherwise. Results gathered were consistent with Rizzolatti and Craighero’s experiments and strongly indicate that the mirror neuron system is present and active in humans. More recently, functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) scans performed at the University of California, Los Angeles, put forward that mirror neurons in humans aren’t just activated through observing

someone physically doing something, but are also triggered through the reading about someone performing this.

A recurrent example that illustrates mirror neurons in action is a person smiling in response to someone else who is happy and also smiling. It is also an explanation for why many of us when around foreigners with accents, begin to emulate their pronunciations. Mirror neurons also appear to be related to our ability to empathise with others (Barsade, 2002; Gorman, 2006; Lindstrom, 2008). When you carefully read the words, “nails scratching on a chalkboard’ or ‘sucking a lemon’ or ‘giant hairy black widow spider,’ chances are good that you’ll recoil, and otherwise squirm” (Lindstrom, 2008, p. 58).

In effect, what these mirror neurons are said to perform, is an understanding in the behaviours and emotions of others through mimicking their actions in our own minds, which thus assists us in social behaviour. Several researchers have suggested the premise that mirror neurons construct the underlying mechanism of imitation (Borenstein and Ruppin, 2004; Iacoboni, 2008; Rizzolatti and Craighero, 2004). According to Blackmore (2000), it is our ability to imitate that distinguishes humans from all other animals. This phenomenon of imitation is strongly linked to what Dawkins (1989) first termed as a *meme*.

### **2.2.5 Memes**

A meme can be described as an element of culture that is transmitted from one person to another. Dawkins (1989) compares memes to viruses; incapable of reproducing on their own thus reliant on host’s for their propagation. Memes relationship with their host’s varies from extreme parasitism to mutualism.

Just as genes propagate themselves in the gene pool by leaping from body to body via sperms or eggs, so memes propagate themselves in the meme pool by leaping from brain to brain via a process which, in the broad sense, can be called imitation (Dawkins, 1989, p. 192).

Dawkins (1989) draws an extended comparison between memes and genes; and suggests that the spreading of memes was a crucial process within our social development. It is evident that through the transmission of customs passed down over time, memes are responsible for producing a variety of cultures, languages and accents. We copy or replicate information and behaviour from person to person with variation and selection by doing things like telling stories and wearing clothes. According to a study initiated by Meltzoff and Moore (1983), imitative behaviour can be seen from newly born infants. In the examination, two rudimentary facial gestures being tongue protrusion and mouth opening were both imitated and documented among forty babies, the youngest being just forty-two minutes old.

Iacoboni (2008) believes that infants learn to imitate these facial gestures from others, which thus initially forms the mirror neuron system. This form of interaction between the individual and the other can only be understood in their unification. "How can we even think of 'self' except in terms of the 'other' that the self is not?" (Iacoboni, 2008, p. 133) An important characteristic of human beings that Earls (2007) asserts is that we should not be considering ourselves as individual but of a herd.

## 2.3 Herd Behaviour

### 2.3.1 Interaction

In his book *Herd: how to change mass behaviour by harnessing our true nature*, Earls (2007) suggests that what we do as individuals is mostly due to the influence of others. “We are a community species: we want to be together; we are made to be together; we are made by being together and we are made happier by being together” (Earls, 2007, p. 26). Through several principles, Earls (2007) discusses how to harness what he defines “herd marketing” (p. 99). The foremost principle is that of interaction. On a daily basis we interact with others on a range of different levels aligning our thoughts and behaviours within the masses. “In a sense, emotional contagion is the basic building block of human interaction” as people must recognize the intentions and feelings of other people through a mimicry feedback process (Hatfield & Rapson, 1998, n.p.).

Looking toward the interactions of other animal behaviours Earls (2007) acknowledges that herd behaviour can illustrate various pattern models. For example Reynolds (1987) developed a computer model named *boids*, which simulated the flocking behaviour of birds. Essentially the aim was to create a realistic model of group behaviour from the interaction of individual agents. The rules of this simulation had three simple steering behaviours: separation, cohesion and alignment. The behaviour of separation is maintaining a certain distance from others nearby. Cohesion is the ability to come together with others and move toward an average position. Alignment is being able to align with others by steering at the same speed and/or toward the average bearing.

Similarly these steering behaviours can be seen in the way fish swim in schools, insects in swarms, and animals in herds. Its not surprising then that human crowds follow such rules creating comparable patterns. Earls (2007) describes an experience where he found himself “at an open-air market and watched how these shoppers just interact, intuitively and instinctively and in doing so create the beautiful patterns that are at heart complex” (p. 111). Earls (2007) makes reference to the Mexican wave where people in an

organised fashion stand up and raise their hands in the air before sitting down again. By imitating others nearby, this wave ripples around the entire stadium time and time again.

An example of how design can incorporate interaction can be seen in the “Great Street Games”, pictured in Figure 9 (“www.greatstreetgames.org.uk/”, n.d., para. 1). Media artists Monkman and Wexler (2009) also known as KMA endeavoured to use projected light and sound within a public space to encourage interaction between people. The “Great Street Games” was a tournament played at night and consisted of several games being simultaneously played over four days among three UK cities: Gateshead, Middlesbrough and Sunderland. Using “projected light and thermal-imaging technology... the physical movements of players determine the outcome of the games” (“www.greatstreetgames.org.uk”, 2009, para. 7). Wexler (2009) describes the aim of the game as having to direct pucks of light into the goals that were located at both ends of the playing field. By scoring a goal, it then caused the puck to be placed into one of the other participating cities turf. This design brings people together to work as a team in order to compete against another city.

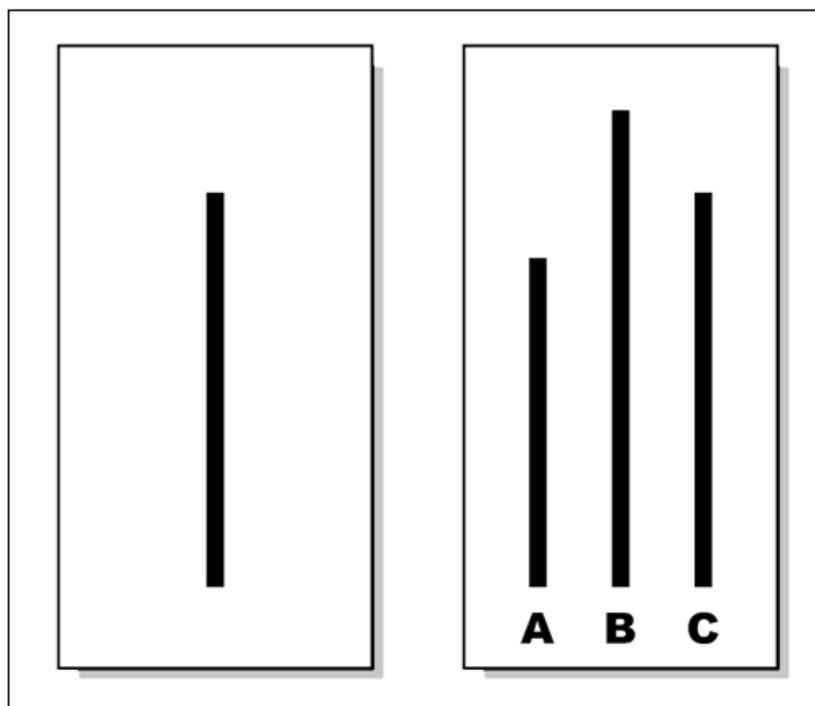


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Figure 9. KMA. *Great Street Games*, (2009). Photograph.

Without instructions, the people participating soon came to understand how to interact within the piece by observing and responding to the use of simple imagery and sounds. Further still, by watching fellow players, people could pick up alternative techniques, that could better their game. This is related to influence, another key principle in Earls (2007) herd marketing. The influence of others can have a significant affect on our own behaviour and will be further discussed in the following section.

### 2.3.2 Influence

Cialdini (1984) refers to the principal of “social proof” which explores the influence of others (p. 115). Social proof is “one means we use to determine what is correct is to find out what other people think is correct” (Cialdini, 1984, p. 116). In essence, we are influenced by the actions made from surrounding people and behave in accordance with them in order to integrate well within the environment or situation. Whether the question is what dining etiquette should be used when eating at a Japanese restaurant, the surrounding people and their actions will guide us into doing what we perceive to be the correct response.



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Figure 10. Asch, S. *Conformity study*, (1955). Graphic.

A classic example of just how influential other people can be toward our decision making process is Asch's (1955) study on conformity (as cited in Earls, 2007). In his study he directed a group of eight people with all, but one informed prior to the test to make wrong and unanimous answers. As shown below the test was very simple and involved matching a given line with one of three options A, B and C (see Figure 10). The differences between the lines were quite large and the task of matching the two is considerably obvious. The group said aloud their responses, leaving this one individual in the situation of being contradicted by everyone else in the group. What Asch (1955) discovered was that one third of the singled out individuals made errors to be identical with or toward the direction of the group majority.

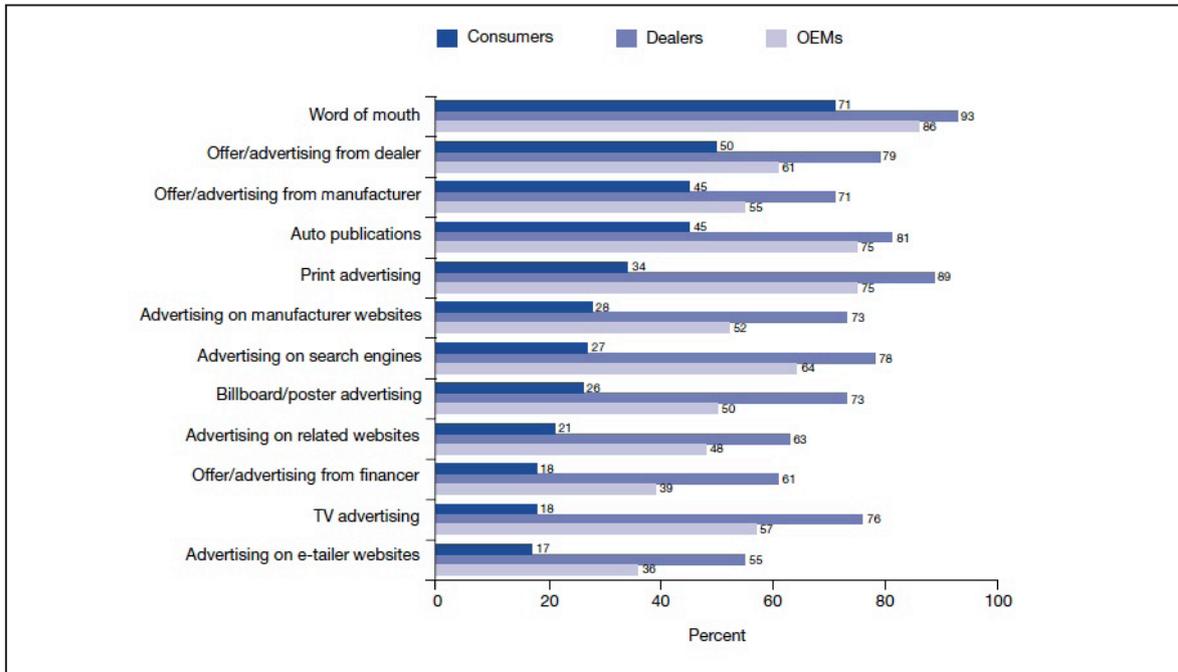
Another intriguing example of influence is the simulation of others' laughter inserted during television shows. This placed device of "canned laughter" is despised by many people according to Cialdini (1984) and is often referred to as being "phony, and obvious" (p. 114). Yet experiments have demonstrated that the use of canned laughter gives rise to people laughing for longer, more often and rate the material as funnier. "Somehow, one disembodied feature of humor – a sound – works like the essence of humor" (Cialdini, 1984, p. 116).

It clear that other people have significant influence upon our behaviour and choices, which can become persuasive when making a purchasing decision. This consumer-to-consumer (C2C) effect is often referred to as word of mouth.

### **2.3.3 Word of Mouth**

Word of Mouth or WoM has increasingly become an important factor behind many purchasing decisions. Word-of-mouth can be described as "an oral, person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial, regarding a brand, product, or service" (Arndt, 1967, as cited in Lam, Lee & Mirzerski, 2009, p. 56). Several studies have suggested that individuals are more influenced

in their purchasing behaviour because of what other people say as opposed to more common means taken by firms such as advertising. For example, a study on automotive purchasing by Cap Gemini proposes that 71% of consumers are likely to be influenced by word of mouth compared to 18% affected by TV advertising (see Figure 11).



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 Figure 11. Cap Gemini Ernst & Young. *Promotional Media Likely to be Influential when Choosing Vehicle (% saying)*, (2003). Graph.

Keller and Fay (2009) describe today’s current setting as people who enjoy being self-appointed critics, freely giving out their opinions to family and friends, as well as blogging online for all to see. A significant finding from Keller and Fay’s (2009) research indicates, “22 percent of all WoM about brands involve some participant in the conversation referring to something that they saw or heard in paid-media advertising” (p. 158). Also signified in this research was how advertising can then have a significant affect in triggering more positive recommendations when word of mouth does occur.

The annual MP3 experiments created by Improv Everywhere are good examples of how word of mouth can spread and produce powerful responses. A simple idea which began

in 2004 when Walker, an improv representative, placed an MP3 file online for anyone to download and add to their audio players. Alongside the download was a set of instructions, one always being not to listen to the MP3 until the precise time at the specified location. Another common request was to select a coloured t-shirt to wear from a specified list.

This year's MP3 experiment was held on Roosevelt Island in New York City. When it came to exactly 4pm, everyone pressed play on his or her audio player and proceeded to listen to Steve, "the omnipotent voice from above" ("The MP3 Experiments", 2009, para. 1). Steve then makes the crowd carry out ridiculous and hilarious tasks, such as finding a non-participant and forming single lines behind them or having a giant battle with inflatable bats and hammers (see Figure 12). The earliest MP3 experiments had participation of around 200 people; whereas the latest experiment had grown to "over 2000" people involved ("The MP3 Experiments", 2009, para. 8). Initially only placed on their website or in their newsletter to which the current followers use word of mouth to spread the information to establish a greater contribution.



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*Figure 12. Improv everywhere. MP3 Experiment 6, (2009). Video-still. New York.*

It has been suggested that word of mouth affects some industry categories more than others. Keller and Fay (2009) specify that word of mouth affect areas like “entertainment/movies” and “sports/hobbies” significantly more opposed to sectors such as “travel” and “personal care/beauty” (p. 157). However, what comes into question is whether advertising can be used purposely to encourage word of mouth, even in the less affected sections such as travel or personal care/beauty, to produce even more positive responses.

Mintel, a market research company recently produced a study asserting that word of mouth is significant within the travel industry. The study involved surveying 1,400 people who had taken a holiday within the last five years. The results showed that “34% chose their destination on the basis of a face-to-face recommendation” (“Word of mouth ‘important part of travel industry’”, 2008, para. 2). Based on this statistic, Mintel imply that word of mouth is the “most commonly used form of holiday advice” (“Word of mouth ‘important part of travel industry’”, 2008, para. 3). Also revealed in the study was the popularity of using the internet to search blogs for the purpose of reading reviews about their potential destinations. Respectively, Hedges and Chung (2009) argue that word of mouth is responsible for a large majority of people choosing personal care/beauty products. Brands such as Avon and Mary Kay are good examples of products that are sold by neighbourly representatives travelling door to door. This “over the fence, backyard selling” is emulating this consumer-to-consumer notion (Hedges & Chung, 2009, p. 48). The representative is able to approach people not as a professional but as a neighbour, making it easier to form friendship and share personal recommendations.

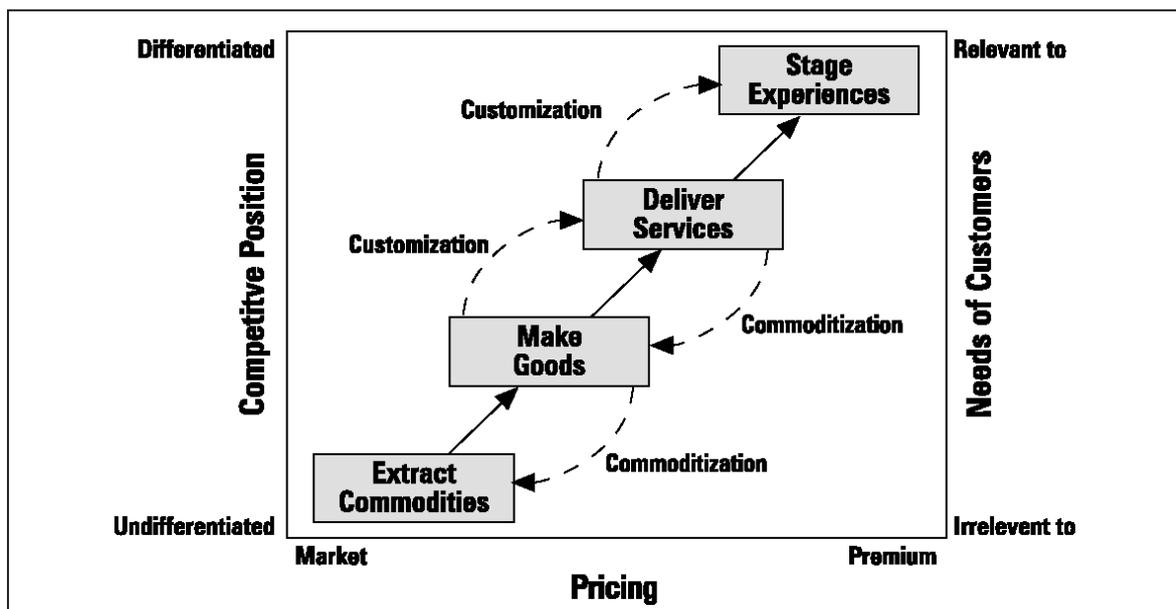
As a herd species, interacting with others and sharing our experiences has a significant influence over our behavioural responses but also our attitudes, opinions, and consequently our decision making process. As it has been learnt from the previous sections, emotions and emotional contagion also play an important role in creating influence. In order to then create a shared experience where people interact and thus engender emotions, the establishment of a space is crucial. The following section will then discuss and refer to examples that have incorporated experience design.

## 2.4 Experience Design

### 2.4.1 Staging Experiences

“Experiences are the foundation for all life events and form the core of what interactive media have to offer.” (Shedroff, 2009, p. 4) In the book *The Experience Economy*, Pine and Gilmore (1999) discuss how the staging of experiences is becoming an emerging economic offering. Identifying the earlier shifts from commodities to goods and from goods to services, it is proposed that the next progression will be from services to experiences (see Figure 13).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) build a strong argument around the importance of staging experiences and predict that it will become a necessity in the future. Through utilising goods as props and services as a stage, an immersive environment can be developed. This immersive setting is crucial, as creating experiences is not centred on entertainment, but allowing “guests” to become involved through the act of engagement (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 30). It is then highlighted that this experiential environment will make for a more memorable event.



<sup>^</sup>  
Figure 13. Pine & Gilmore. *Shifting Up the Progression of Economic Value*, (1999). Graph.

Looking at a contemporary example, the Rainforest Café, Pine and Gilmore (1999) describe how this restaurant incorporated an experiential offering. Further to providing a service where specific ethnic meals are made for customers, the Rainforest Café creates an entire atmosphere. Not wanting to simulate an actual rain forest, the intention was to build a more authentic experience, embodying what the Rainforest Café expresses as “A Wild Place to Shop and Eat” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 36).

Guests at the Rainforest Café find themselves surrounded by: “vegetation, rising mist, cascading waterfalls, and even startling lightning and thunder. They encounter live tropical birds and fish as well as artificial butterflies, spiders, gorillas, and if you look closely, a snapping baby crocodile” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, pp. 35-36). Naturally the café then has a retail area in which you can buy memorabilia such as a T-shirt with the Rainforest Café logo printed upon it. Memorabilia not only creates large revenue, it extends the experience had. These disconnected objects often become as cherished as the actual event; they become a representation for that moment in time.

A more classic example that demonstrates experience design is Disneyland. The world’s very first theme park, Disneyland is “a living, immersive cartoon world” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 3). Rides take guests on a journey, placing them within a narrative of a story or film whilst often being educated along the way. Walt Disney considered everything, right down to the type of trees placed around each themed location, ensuring that “no *thing* was out of character” (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 151).

Since this book was written other designers have also commented on a call for experiential design. Press and Cooper (2003) express the need for facilitating experiential design by using the idea of experience as “the starting point and focus of design” (p. 69). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) point out that the “new competitive space” for firms is in the inclusion of “experience space” (p. 147). Gobe (2007) emphasizes the need for humanizing brands and points to design as playing a significant role by creating experiences and become

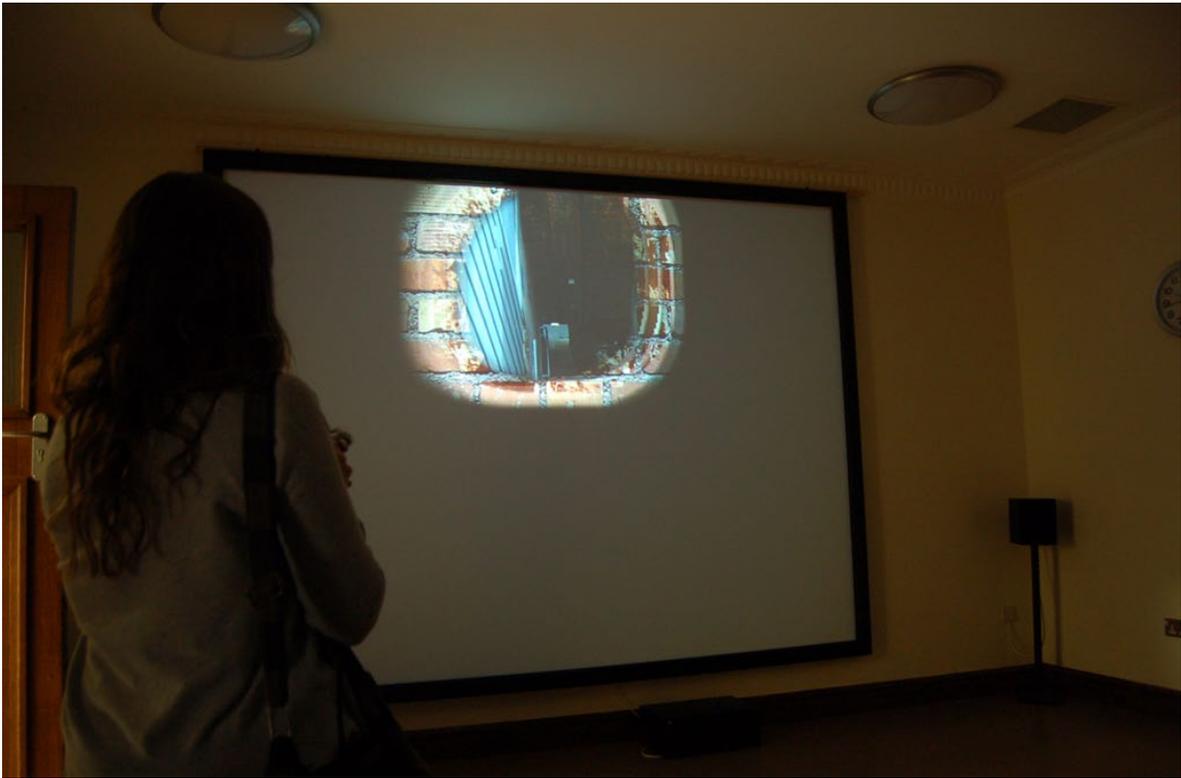
more emotional. Many companies have now taken this opportunity and have progressed into the experiential offering arena.

Consider the “Apple Store Experience” (Tsai, 2005, p. 432). Visitors immerse themselves within a space where products are flaunted like an exhibition. Only this is an exhibition where you can touch, play and learn. The products are not placed into categories, but grouped in terms of how they may be incorporated in everyday life. “The themed stores allow customers to interact, learn and experience the values of the brand through in-store design features and staff service” (Healy, Beverland, Oppewal & Sands, 2007, p.752). One of the most noteworthy features is the “Apple Genius Bars” where a professional can answer any queries on technical issues you may have (Tsai, 2005, p. 32). A one to one service is also offered when a purchase is made; staff help you set up and offer personal guided sessions to educate you about your product. It is apparent that Apple stores have successfully managed to incorporate an experiential environment for their guests. Yet nothing shows this more clearly than when Apple literally stages experiences. Notable figures within the creative industry such as musicians or filmmakers are frequently invited to perform or discuss their passion with Apple store visitors.

Identified within this section is the growing interest and significance that staging experiences can have upon people. Immersive and engaging spaces create a platform for a more emotive and memorable experience to take place. The subsequent section explores how various artists and designers have considered a range of platforms to stage an experience.

#### **2.4.2 Experience Design Examples**

With significant advances in technology there are many examples of how artists and designers have recently looked to create experiences for the public. In 2007, O’Shea created an interactive art installation titled *Out of Bounds* (see Figures 14 &15). Placed at the Design Museum in London, the core idea of this project was to let the general public



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Figure 14. O'Shea. *Out of Bounds*, (2007). Photograph.



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Figure 15. O'Shea. *Out of Bounds*, (2007). Photograph.

explore the inaccessible parts of the museum. This work enabled users to see through walls like the fictional character superman via handheld torches. "Shine the torch at the wall to reveal the secrets hidden beneath" ("Out of Bounds", 2007, para 3).

Invisible to the human eye, the torch shines infra-red light. This type of light can however be picked up from a camera functioning in low light. The camera then pointed at the wall uses a "lens filter to block out the projection. Where there is light, it pushes through a depth map to reveal the room." (Polaine, 2007, para. 15). Through using a common object such as the torch, people already instinctively know what to do with this tool and it makes the process of getting people to interact with the space more easily.

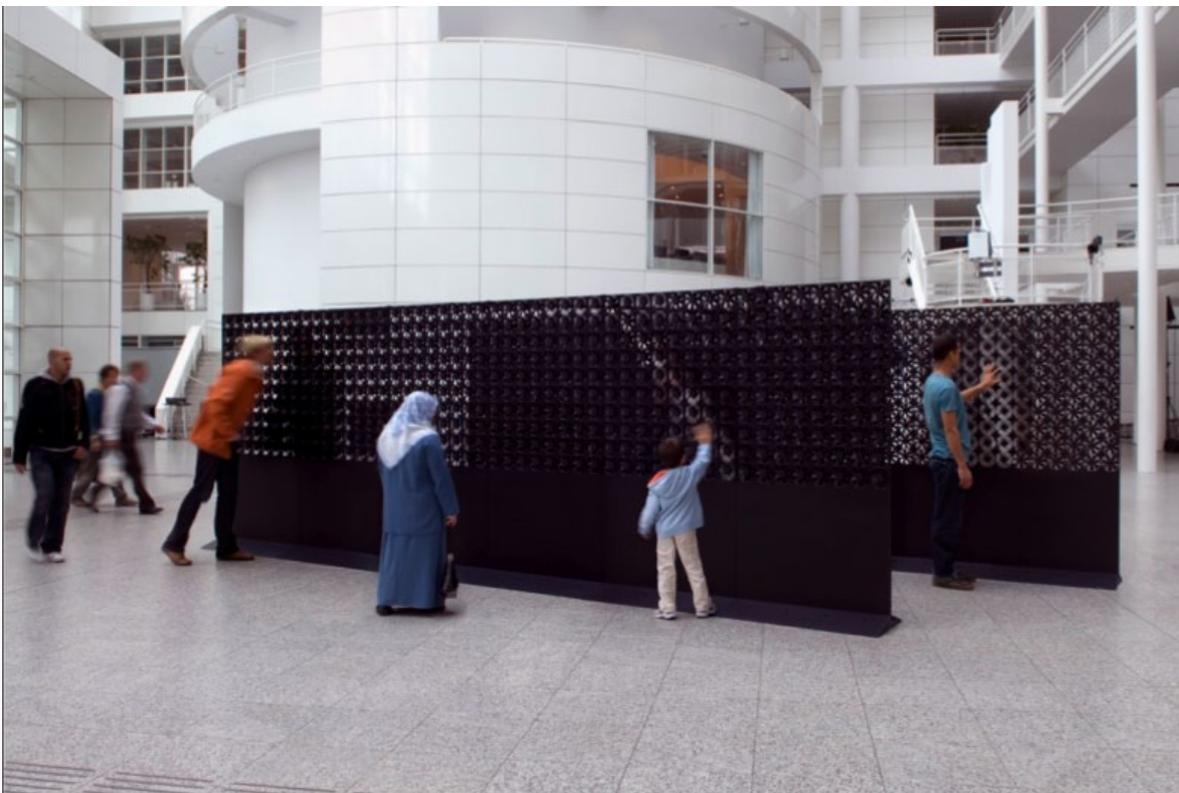
In the following design, Udagawa and Moeslinger collectively known as Antenna also look to human behaviour within their design, incorporating the familiar within the unfamiliar (see Figure 16). This particular experiential design, referred to as *Blowing Gently...* is reminiscent of a childhood knick-knack, the soap bubble. Before this design piece can work,



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Figure 16. Antenna. *Blowing Gently...*, (2002). Photograph.

it requires interaction from visitors. The metal rings placed at either end of a long white table surface are the central feature, hinting at people to blow through them. This act of blowing then fabricates “male and female creatures, which subsequently seem to float off into space” (“Blowing Gently...”, n.d., para 1). In this case the variation with the length and or strength of exhale, is what alters each individual creature. Once created, the creatures seem to jostle and collide against each other until slowly fading away as participants stop blowing. Like many projects this design incorporated new technology that is unfamiliar to a large majority. The consideration of human behaviour is then crucial as the design intended the users to take the first step and interact.

Winner for best autonomous spatial design in the Design Dutch Awards, *Flow 5.0* was designed by artist Daan Roosegaarde (see Figure 17). With all his projects, Roosegaarde desires to make connections with the human senses and their surrounding environment. *Flow 5.0* is a 10 metre landscape designed to respond to human interaction. It consists of “hundreds of ventilators, aluminium, sensors, microphones, electronics, software and other

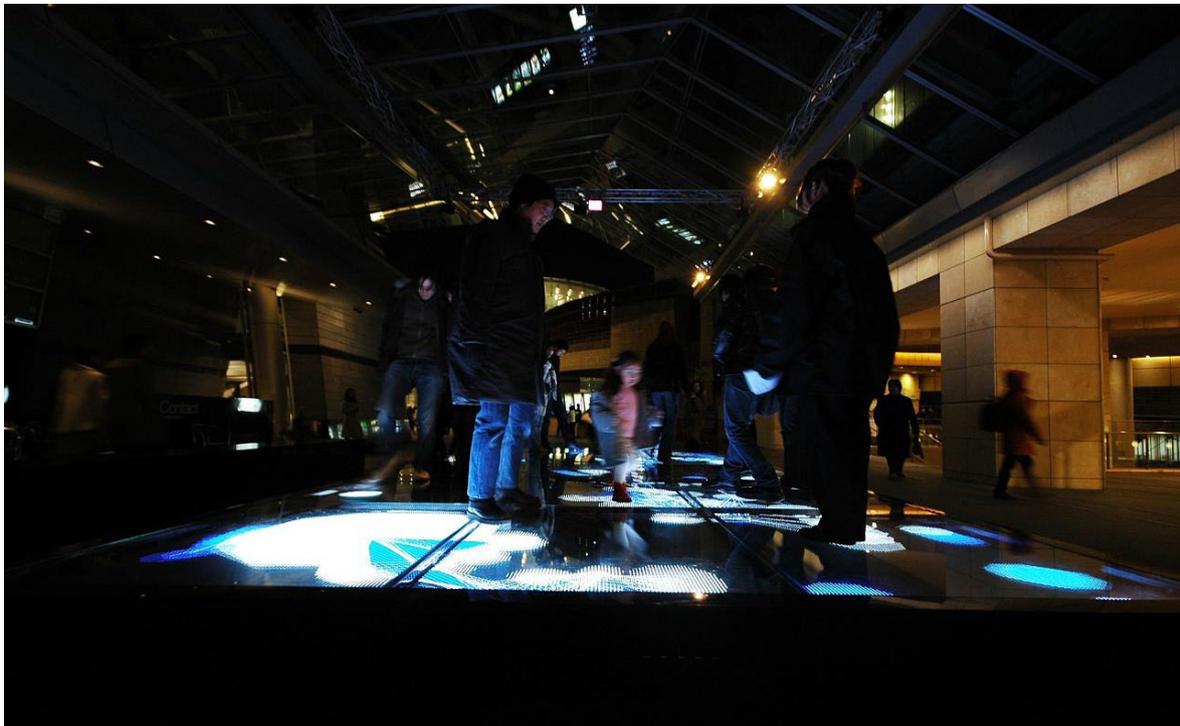


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Figure 17. Roosegaarde, D. *Flow 5.0*, (2007). Photograph.

media"("Specs", 2007, para. 1). When triggered, "artificial wind" is created ("Flow 5.0", 2007, the space. The website "www.interactivearchitecture.org" dialogues an interview they had with Roosegaarde and interestingly he discussed how "he is continually developing his existing installations adapting the software and materials to new contexts and strategies of interaction", thus making it unique for the placement in various exhibitions ("Flow 5.0 – Dan Roosegaarde", 2007, para. 2).

A different design that explores human behaviour within an interactive experience is another work by United Visual Artists titled *Contact* (see Figure 18). As previously mentioned, United Visual Artists are a group of artists who design live installations that involve and respond to people. *Contact*, is a responsive floor that "allows visitors to use their kinetic energy to generate audiovisual forms that will interact with the user, and communicate with each other" (Scully, 2009, para. 1). Much like their work *Volume*, the intention of *Contact* is to intrigue and encourage visitors to play and interact with the experience. It was a very successful piece and within just over "17 days, more than 21,000 visitors enjoyed the installation" (Scully, 2009, para. 1).



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Figure 18. United Visual Artists. *Contact*, (2008). Photograph.

A common thread between the examples above is this experiential realm. Through using simple existing knowledge of human behaviour it is possible to get people to interact and involve themselves, to become more engaged with their environment. Considering this success of such examples, its not surprising companies such as Monster Media also use similar concepts and interactive technology with respect to promoting various businesses and products.

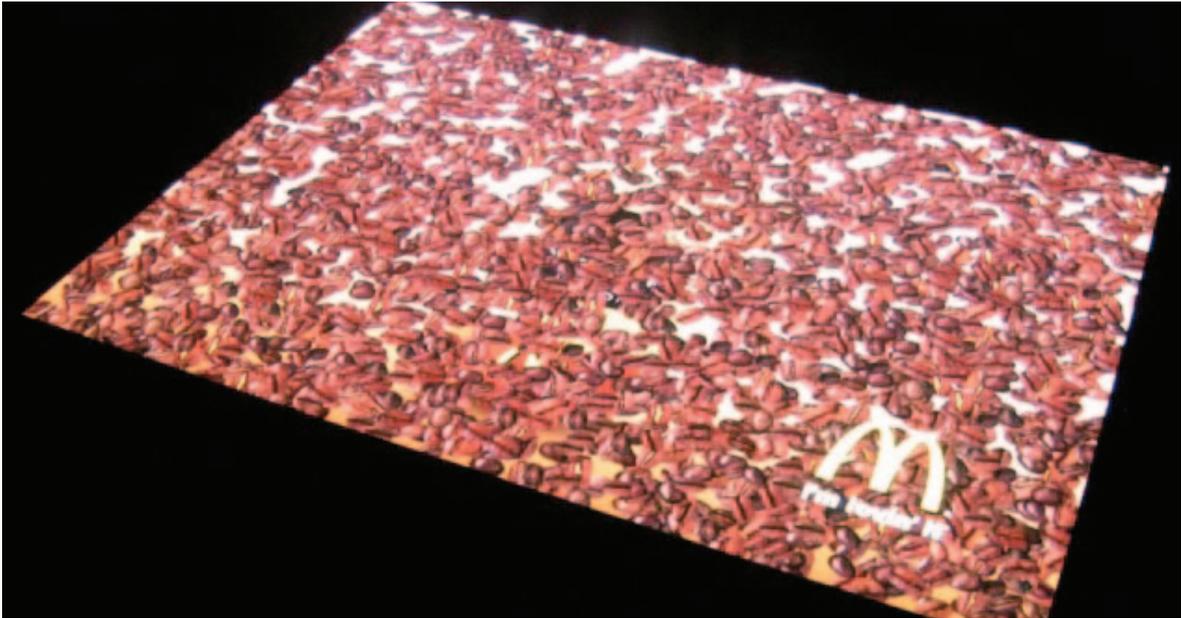


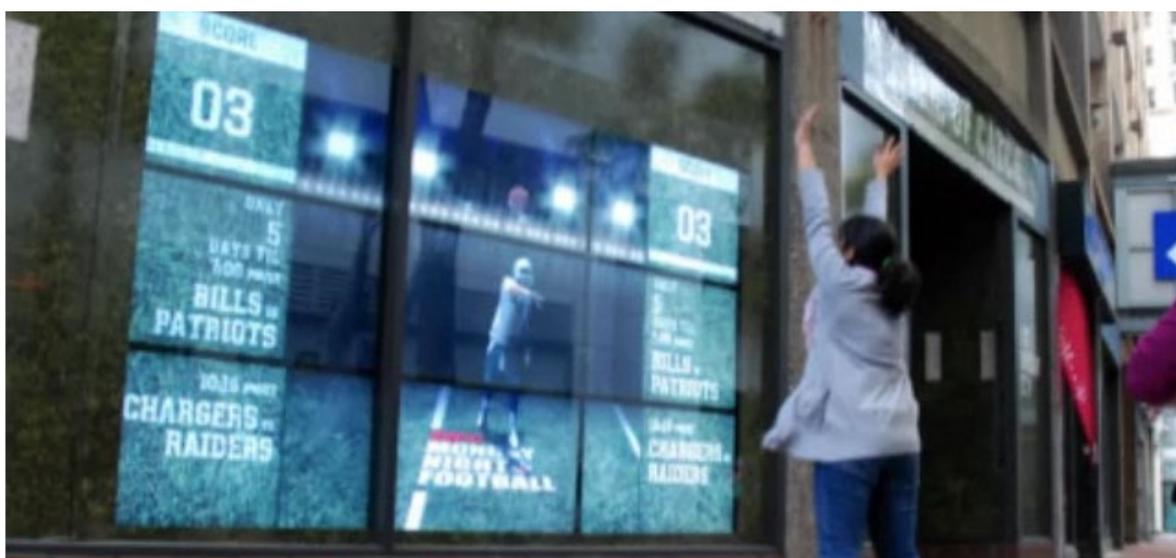
Figure 19. Monster Media. *McDonalds – Coffee*, (n.d.). Video Still.



Figure 20. Monster Media. *McDonalds – Coffee*, (n.d.). Video Still.

Monster Media is an interactive advertising company that uses multi media platforms, appealing to the public to become active participants of a promotion. Above is one example of Monster Media's interactive floors for McDonalds. Initially it starts off by projecting coffee beans onto a floor surface (see Figure 19). When a person moves over this projection the coffee beans scatter away to reveal a message regarding the price of McDonalds premium roast coffee (see Figure 20). The design is based on infrared cameras that detect the movements of people passing over the projected surface, causing the display to alter.

Monster Media have also applied this same concept with more enhanced technology to walls, storefronts and kiosks. Recently Monster Media, Wieden + Kennedy an advertising agency, and MacDonalD Media a marketing and advertising company, teamed up together to create a storefront application for ESPN's Monday Night Football (see figures 21 & 22). In this scenario, people passing the store can opt into touching the window to activate a game. Once touched a "digital football player" then plays "catch" with the participant (Cooper, 2009, para. 5). If they get the catch, the virtual crowd cheers but if they miss, the virtual ball smashes into the window along with the sound of the crowd's disappointment (see figure). Placed in NYC, Boston and Chicago where foot traffic was high, these displays made users "get 'in the zone' ...and see how their high scores match up against players from other cities" ("Monday Night Football", n.d., para 1).



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Figure 21. Monster Media. *Monday Night Football*, (2009). Video Still.



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Figure 22. Monster Media. *Monday Night Football*, (2009). Video Still.

The designed examples showcased in this section suggest how various platforms can encourage people to interact within a staged experience. The Monster Media examples then illustrate how these could then be applied to a communication message. Although these examples have a common thread of experience design, what is not mutual is the component of joint consumption necessary for emotional contagion to occur. In particular, the work *Out of Bounds* as well as the examples by *Monster Media*, do not directly involve joint consumption. These cases have a focus on individuals interacting with their design and as such they do not require other people. If more than one person becomes involved within these designs, the same outcome is produced.

## **2.5 Sensory Stimulus**

### **2.5.1 The Senses**

“There is no way in which to understand the world without first detecting it through the radar-net of our senses” (Ackerman, 1990, p. xv). Traditionally, our senses are placed into the five categories of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell (Wasserman, 2008). Research into the biology of the senses details how each of our senses fundamentally operates. Simply put, sensation occurs when the sensory organs detect the presence of environmental stimuli, which is then transmitted to our brain through sensory nerves.

The subject of perception is an interesting focus within the body of scientific research that explains how the senses work. Wasserman (2008) describes how our brain processes information; how it identifies and distinguishes various stimuli depending on the specific route the “action potentials” arrive via the sensory nerves to the brain (p. 1089). Subsequently, it is then able to translate and produce the outcome of what the specific stimulus is. Hence the production of “colours, smells, sounds and tastes – are constructions formed in the brain and do not exist outside it” (Ibid, p. 1089).

Fundamentally, our five senses are what enable us to feel, taste, smell, see and hear. We all have the potential as individuals to be stimulated in multiples from everything that we do. From a design perspective, it seems logical to next query, why we are constantly inundated with visual stimuli and not much else.

### **2.5.2 A Lack of Sensory Stimuli**

Gobe (2001) expresses the importance and effectiveness of engaging our senses; their ability to attach us intimately with the past and tap right into our emotion. Ackerman (1995) also highlights the importance of the senses, but notes how we often tend to disregard the

“textures of life” (p. xviii). In his book *Brand sense*, Lindstrom (2005) creates awareness into the lack of sensory engagements from a design perspective. As human beings, we’re at our most effective and receptive when operating on all five tracks, yet not many advertising campaigns, communication plans, or brand-building exercises utilise much more than sight and sound to put their message across (Lindstrom, 2005, p. 11)

Much the same as Lindstrom (2008), Du Plessis (2005) acknowledges that there is a huge volume of advertising being produced within our environment making it impossible to take everything in. Du Plessis (2005) points out that creating attention in this clutter is the very first thing that an advertiser needs to be able to do (p.1). He then refers to how our emotions are the defining means to this. “Advertising does not first get attention, and then create an emotion. Advertising creates an emotion, which results in attention” (Du Plessis, 2005, p. 84). As it has been pointed out, engaging with more sensory elements could then be what triggers more emotive responses. Although this may be a reality, further research indicates that multi-sensory marketing is not new and many large companies have previously made use of it worldwide. Even so, while this multi-sensory marketing may have been formerly used, what is still absent “is the strategic approach required for the full benefits of multisensory marketing to be harnessed, and the broad utilisation of more than two senses concurrently” (Giordmaina, 2008, p. 2).

Lindstrom (2005) points to some existing brands that have successfully included sensory elements as part of their advertising strategy. In the “BRAND sense study” conducted by Lindstrom (2005) he aimed to discover how consumer loyalties of numerous brands were affected by recognizing what sensory impressions were recalled and what emotions this evoked (p. 6). A key finding from these results suggested that the inclusion of a number of sensory elements in advertising is genuinely essential in order to give brands a competitive edge.

In a more recent book written by Lindstrom named *Buy-ology: truth and lies about why we buy*; a global neuromarketing study was carried out on two thousand people with the

aim to reveal more about consumers buying decisions. Neuromarketing can be described as a new field that combines neurology and marketing. Essentially it is utilizing neuroimaging techniques towards the purpose of marketing research. Understanding and testing how the brain will respond to marketing, enables companies to choose the best output in order to sell their products.

In a specific chapter "A Sense of Wonder: selling to our senses" Lindstrom (2008) yet again highlights how we are being "visually overstimulated" and although vision is powerful, he puts forward that the other senses are equally, if not more powerful (p. 142). With this in mind, the following section will further explore the strengths of the senses within design examples.

### **2.5.3 The Power of the Senses**

In the book *A Natural History of the Senses*, Ackerman (1995) refers to many examples throughout the entirety of the book that reflect and reinforce just how effective each of the five senses are. Some of the examples demonstrate the use of the senses in such a way that as a consumer, I would not consider them to be intentional. For instance, companies "design potato chips to be too large to fit into the mouth, because in order to hear the high-frequency crackling you need to keep you mouth open" (Ackerman, 1995, p. 142).

Ackerman (1995) creates a strong argument for illustrating how sensory elements can be added in order to enhance a consumers' perception and without these additions it is likely to create a negative response. Regarding the previous potato chip example, if the manufactures made the potato chips smaller and the consumer didn't get to experience that same sounding crunch, it is likely they wouldn't find them to be as "crispy"; a desired property of the potato chip (Ackerman, 1995, p. 142). Similar, Lindstrom (2008) found that if a remote control didn't have a chunk of aluminium placed in it to create a certain weight, the common response made by people was that "it's broken" (p. 152).

Some brands mentioned in Lindstrom's (2005) *BrandSense* that have successfully integrated the sense of smell within their marketing strategy include Singapore Airlines and Rolls Royce. Singapore Airlines specifically designed a fragrance as part of the "Singapore Airlines experience" (Lindstrom, 2005, p. 15). This light scent is placed in the planes interior, the hot towels and is also worn by airhostesses. Rolls-Royce used scent for constructing an artificial "new-car smell" (Lindstrom, 2005, p. 11). It is suggested that many people cite the new-car smell as being one of the "most gratifying aspects of purchasing a new car" (Lindstrom, 2005, p. 11).

Smell is not the only sense that can have a strong impact on our decisions. A test conducted by Lindstrom (2008) indicated how music can affect our decision making process. Within a supermarket, certain music was intentionally placed over the wine section on alternate days for two weeks. Through the speakers, either a "German Bierkeller brass band" or "accordion-heavy, recognizably French music" was played (Lindstrom, 2008, p. 158). Consequently, when German music was playing, the purchasing of German Reisling was significantly higher. Respectively, when French music was playing, "77 percent of consumers bought French wine" (Lindstrom, 2008, p. 158). The results from Lindstrom's (2008) experiment reinforce the potential power of the senses in advertising; something as subtle as music can produce such blatant effects, resulting in a change of people's mood and behaviour.

An experiment conducted by Dr. Hirsch reveals the power that scent can also have upon our buying decisions (as cited in Lindstrom, 2008). The test involved two identical but separate rooms where a pair of identical Nike shoes was placed. The only difference was one room had a light floral fragrance compared to the other room, which had no added fragrance. A group of volunteers were then asked to inspect the shoes in each of the rooms and fill out a questionnaire. The results were astounding. "By 84 percent, subjects preferred the running shoes they'd looked at in the scented room. Moreover, they assessed the scented Nikes as costing roughly \$10 more than the pairs in the unscented room" (Lindstrom, 2008, p. 150).

Another example that highlights the power of sensory inclusion is that of the ambient advertisement for Canderel sugar pictured below (see Figure 23). This involved creating a large strawberry field in the middle of a plaza in Paris. Anyone passing by could then freely pick fresh strawberries and have Canderel sugar sprinkled on top. “The event attracted 24,000 people in 4 days” making for a very successful campaign (Himpe, 2006, p.172). When compared to free sampler sachets, a more typical approach for this type of product, the contrast is phenomenal. By adding more sensory elements and creating an entire environment it made for a much more powerful and memorable experience.

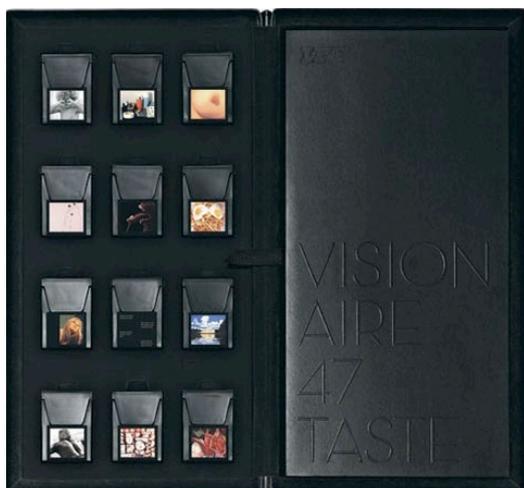


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Figure 23. Mediaedge:CIA. *Canderel Strawberry field*, (2003). Photograph. France.

In an event that occurred during one of Lindstrom’s lectures he conveys how memorable a scent can be. After asking a gentleman in the audience to sniff a red Crayola crayon, the man immediately succumbed to tears. The man from the audience then proceeded to talk about getting punished as a child by his teacher with a ruler across his knuckles after every time he was caught drawing his dream car with Crayolas (Lindstrom, 2008, p. 146). This example, points to how emotions can give rise to both positive and negative responses. Consequently, this is something that will need to be considered when applying sensory elements within this project.

International Flavors and Fragrances (IFF) are an innovative company who develop tastes and scents for many global industries. They have large resources on understanding what specific smells are likely to evoke specific emotions or moods in different people. For example citrus scents are known universally for their ability to create refreshing and invigorating environments. Jutte (2005) refers to an example where the motorcar corporation Toyota have claimed “the scenting of the assembly areas with the smell of lemon has reduced conveyor-belt errors by as much as 30 per cent” (p. 276). In Manhattan IFF worked with Samsung, an electronics company where they adopted a honeydew melon fragrance within their store. This in combination with the “soft, constantly morphing light scheme” has helped to create a “blissfully relaxed, tropical feel” (Trivedi, 2006, p. 1).

IFF also collaborated with artists on the *Taste* issue for the magazine *Visionaire* (see Figure 24). In this collection, a series of tastes were applied to “taste-film technology” and accompanied with an artist’s interpretation of various topics (“Taste”, n.d., para. 2). For example, the topic of youth has a visual of a young male rubbing his eyes and is complemented with the taste of cherry liquorice (see Figure 25). Another example is on the topic power. The image is a close-up shot of surfer’s back and the taste is then of sea spray and sweat. The choice of tastes used in this design is most intriguing as it is “used as a pure art medium, without concern for convention or application and detached from its connection to food” (“Taste”, n.d., para. 2).

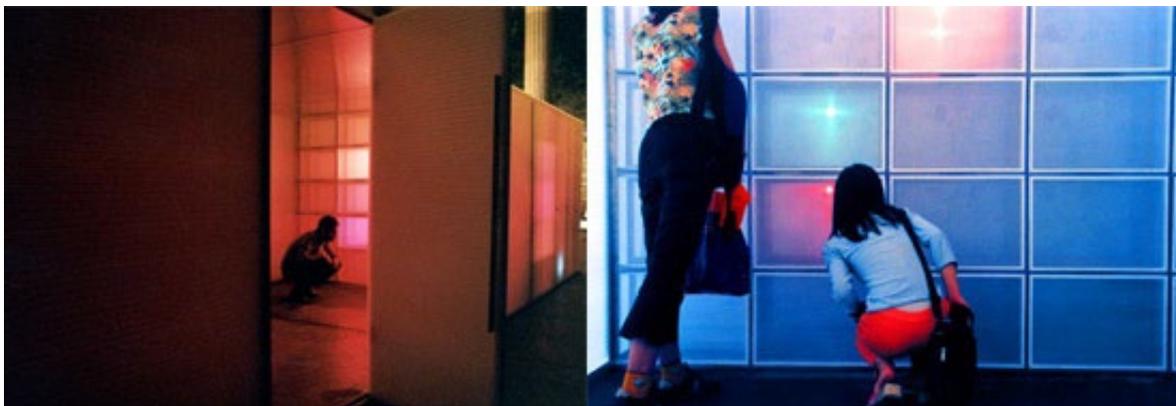


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Figure 24. *Visionaire. Taste*, (2005). Photograph.

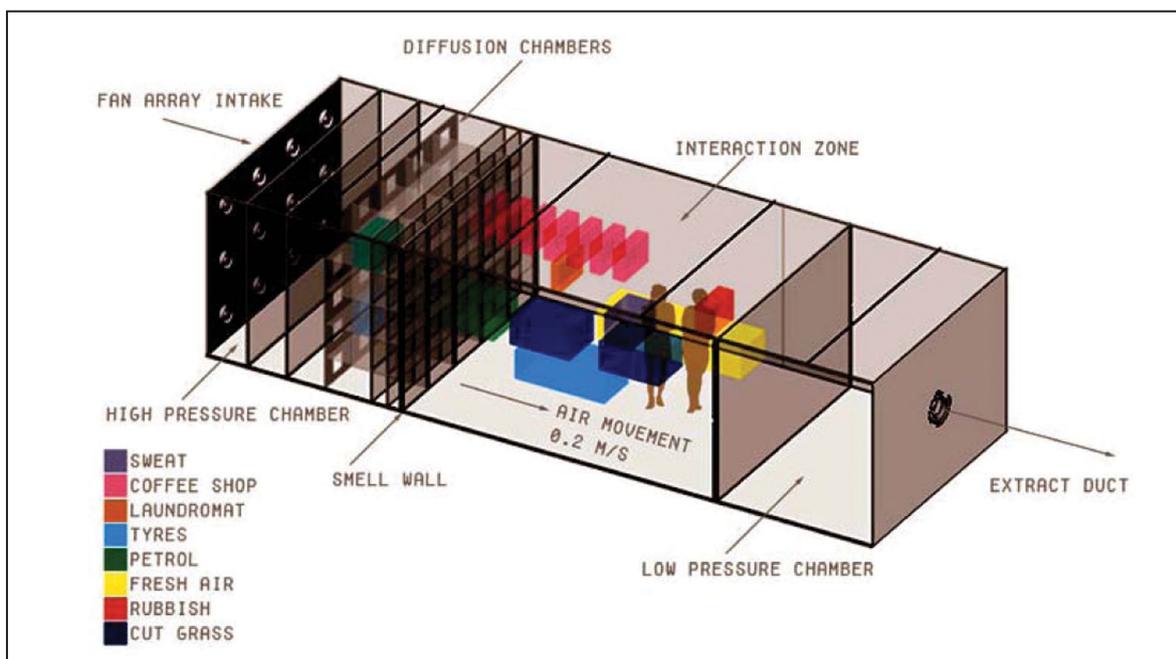


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Figure 25. Weber, B. *Youth*, (2005). Photograph.

An interesting installation that focuses on creating an interactive environment using fragrance is *Scents of Space* (see Figures 26 and 27). “Visitors enter the enclosure and experience digitally controlled zones of fragrance that define and demark areas of space without physical boundaries, encouraging them to encounter an invisible yet tangible smell environment” (Haque, 2006, p.1). The smells are then emitted due to peoples’ movements within the space. Using a variety of scents such as rubbish and cut grass, an imagined journey through a city takes place, or what could be referred to as a *smellscape*. Porteous (2006) refers to a smellscape as being a “landscape of smell” and similar to visual stimuli, “smells may be spatially ordered or place-related” (pp. 89-91).



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Figure 26. Haque, Pletts & Turin. *Scents of Space*, (2002). Photograph. London.



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Figure 27. Haque, Pletts & Turin. *Smell positioning in the enclosure*, (2002). Graphic. London.

When making comparisons with the above example and the previous advertisement for Canderel sugar, the contrast in technology is prominent. Although one experience is a more realistic and natural as opposed to abstract, the use of technology in this case has not limited the senses and does not diminish the effects to be had. It is within the next section that I further explore conflicting viewpoints regarding the act of stimulating the senses within technology.

#### **2.5.4 Technology and the Senses**

Roberts (2005) is the CEO Worldwide of Saatchi and Saatchi, and author of, *sisomo: the future on screen*. The new word *sisomo* is to refer to sight, sound, and motion. Roberts (2005) postulates that we are now living in “The Screen Age” where screens essentially provide for all our needs (p. 7). It is suggested that this will increase over time and then claimed that using *sisomo* will then become a more powerful form of communication.

Roberts’ (2005) proposal of *sisomo* then challenges the views of added sensory stimuli as he refers to sight, sound, and motion as being immensely powerful and points to television and touch screens as examples. Whilst Roberts’ (2005) can create a sound argument for the effectiveness of *sisomo*, I also find it important to consider how the book consists regularly of his personal opinion and not founded on scholarly research. Roberts’ argument does however have similarities within the book, *A History of the Senses: from antiquity to cyberspace* written by Jutte (2005), a professor of Modern History at Stuttgart University.

In the introduction where Jutte reflects upon various insights, he refers to “social critics” such as Kukulhause and Lippe who were in distress a decade ago in reference to the “de-sensualization’ of the world” (Jutte, 2005, p. 1). Jutte (2005) refines this criticism saying that the “five senses are back in fashion” and that the “rediscovery” of the senses has become a “profitable business” (p. 1). Challenging Lindstrom (2008), Jutte (2005) suggests that advertising has dominated sensory perceptions and has thus lead to the senses being

trivialised. "For who can have any interest in purportedly unique visual, aural, gustatory, tactile and olfactory experiences that dissolve into crude advertising copy the moment they are examined more closely?" (Jutte, 2005, p. 1)

In one instance Jutte (2005) refers to Baudrillard's theory which suggests that with the adaptation of technology we as humans are increasingly numbing what was once physical and instinctive "the hand is 'no longer the prehensile organ that focuses effort; rather, nothing more than the abstract sign of manipulability to which buttons, handles and so on are all the better suited'" (p. 239). Echoing Roberts (2005), Jutte (2005) argues that the creation of "touch screens" opposes Baudrillard's theory implying that the media age has produced an "enrichment of sensory perception" as it does away with the keyboard and mouse (p. 239). However I question, how tactile is a screen? Although the outcome is much easier and is making use of the hand, I suggest that the touch screen does not enrich the sense of touch.

The Japanese graphic designer and curator Hara is considered " a teacher of texture, a leader in the field of tactile experiences" (Edelkoort, 2007, p. 8). Hara (2007) believes that "Technology has no point unless it subtly awakens and activates the senses of its recipients. Looking around, I notice that on the contrary, people today have been gradually developing thick skins because of technology" (p. 144).

For the exhibition *Haptic*, Hara (2007) asked various creators to design an object with tactile, olfactory and other sensations as the primary focus. The solutions were beautiful. One example is of the traditional Japanese wooden footwear, getas (see Figure 28). What is different from the traditional in this case, are the various textures placed on the surface of them. From the texture of moss, to the floor of a pine forest, they help remind us of what it is like to go barefoot (Hara, 2007). This footwear collection is a great example of enriching the sense of touch. It also generates many connotations associated with travel, the notion of taking a journey and experiencing new landscapes.



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Figure 28. Shuhei, H. Haptic Exhibition. *Geta, wooden footwear*, (2004). Photograph. Tokyo.

The research gathered thus far has directed this study towards constructing a strategy for communication designers to employ the theory of emotional contagion. To illustrate to communication designers how this strategy could work, a vehicle is needed. Because this project is essentially exploring the realms of sharing sensory experiences it seems logical to then apply this strategy to something that also communicates these properties. Tourism was decided upon as the means to convey this strategy and has subsequently been investigated.



# CHAPTER THREE

TOURISM



### 3.1 The Tourist Experience

Experience is defined by Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) as "(the process of getting) knowledge or skill from doing, seeing or feeling things" and "something that happens to you that affects how you feel" (para. 1). Moscardo (2009) recognises recurring themes in the definition of experience in everyday terms as well as a tourists' experience. These themes "include the importance of experience being subjective, based on sensations, involving participation in activities, and resulting in learning or knowledge acquisition" (Moscardo, 2009, p. 99). These fundamental premises put forward are useful to consider when communicating a tourist experience.

Sharing experiences and interacting with others is a large part of the tourism experience. When we travel, the experience of sites, events, and the different culture, are for the most part performed in relation with other people, whether they are friends, family or complete strangers. Govers and Go (2009) recognise that although this connection and influence of shared experience is necessary during the visit, it "is also instrumental to the process of creating multisensory, emotional, historic, or fantastic nostalgia prior to and after the visit" (p. 43).

### 3.2 The Problem With Current Tourism

As stated above, people enjoy interacting with others and sharing their experiences. This concept seems to be largely unappreciated in the industry as a way to communicate and motivate people prior to a potential destination,

Landscape' is . . . 'the world out there' as understood, experienced, and engaged with through human consciousness and active involvement. Thus it is a subjective notion, and being subjective and open to many understandings it is volatile. The same place at the same moment will be experienced differently by different people; the same place, at different moments, will be experienced differently by the same person; the same person may even, at a given moment, hold conflicting feelings about a place. (Bender, 2006, p. 303)

Reflecting on the above statement, one wonders why the predominant use of landscape imagery is used as a focal point within tourism advertising. Images of landscapes cannot suggest this idea of variability to consumers. Gretzel and Fesenmaier (2003) highlight how the current communication of tourism has been continually simplified and frequently uses only text and image for the basis of representing a potential destination. The realities of destinations however, "are complex experience structures that involve sensory stimulations as well as affective responses to certain events" (Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003, p. 50). As Crouch (2004) describes, "tourism is a process rather than merely a product" it's something that we do (p. 86).

Another concern associated with the current tourism communication strategy as raised by Prentice (2004), is that there a need for diversity within tourism marketing. Prentice (2004) acknowledges a mix of previous and alternative models or paradigms on how motivation has been represented. The conclusion that Prentice (2004) makes however, is that no "single paradigm or model is likely to explain all tourism behaviour (sic). No single typology is likely to have more than specific relevance" (p. 276). At present, it is common to

market a similar motivation, which then gives rise to the issue of placing people as one type of tourist. People are unique individuals and thus it needs to be acknowledged that everyone has unique motivations.

The above considerations highlight the need for shared sensory experiences in the design of tourism motivations. These are crucial elements involved within my intended strategy.

### 3.3 A New Zealand Perspective

New Zealand sits perched along the meeting point of the Indo-Australian plate and the Pacific plate, located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean. Of comparative size to United Kingdom, New Zealand was one of the last major landmasses to be marked by the traces of human tracks. The Lonely Planet guide states: "Small, remote and thinly populated, yes, but NZ punches well above its weight with its outlandish scenery, fabulous festivals, superb food and wine, and magical outdoor experience" (2009, para. 1).

New Zealand has a varied topography, from vast mountain chains to volcanoes, coastline, fiords, rainforests, and endless plains. "Almost one third" of New Zealand is protected in parks and reserves making outdoor activities such as tramping, fishing, snorkelling and skiing a pleasure ("Conservation Board Information", n.d., para. 1). Referred to by Tourism New Zealand as the youngest country on earth, the wildlife could legitimately be titled the oldest. The long isolation from the rest of the world is what allowed for extensive and beautiful flora and fauna to flourish.

However, as O'Reilly (2009) states, "the stunning natural environment is only part of the mosaic that is New Zealand" (para. 1). New Zealand also has a vibrant and diverse culture. The Maori people are indigenous to New Zealand - first settling here from the Polynesian islands around 1000 years ago (Irwin, 2009). In 2006, Maori citizens comprised of approximately "14.6 percent" of the population, an unusually high rate amongst first world colonized nations (Statistics New Zealand, 2006, para. 3).

Much of contemporary New Zealand, are descendants from Britain but there are also many other cultural influences from America, Australia, Europe, Polynesia and Asia. Being a young nation, New Zealand is still struggling in the grips of an internal debate over the national identity. Perhaps most reflective of this unrest is in the ongoing debate as to whether the existing flag should be changed to a more contemporary version.

In the main, New Zealanders or *kiwis* are typified as a modest bunch, self censored by a strong sense of fair play and mate ship with a culture based around the production and acquisition of fresh food. A small, but proud nation, New Zealanders have a great can-do attitude, which has resonance to the common perspective that New Zealanders are “friendly, open, down to earth, direct, hospitable and welcoming” (O’Reilly, 2009, para. 6).

New Zealand’s perceived image for the last ten years has promoted itself as 100% pure to the rest of the world. I will now elaborate on this advertising campaign within the next section.

### 3.4 100% Pure New Zealand Campaign

The 100% Pure New Zealand campaign has been running now, for a decade. The success of the campaign has been very significant, yet recently, it has come under threat by media as being misleading for representing New Zealand's images as clean and green.

The predominant mediums for this campaign are usually through print, television and internet. As highlighted earlier in this chapter, using these mediums is problematic as it creates limitations, principally, the use of only two of the five senses, sight and sound.

A print advertisement example of the 100% Pure New Zealand campaign is displayed in Figure 29. In order to identify and interpret the message being conveyed in this advertisement a semiotic analysis was implemented. This was guided by McAuley's (2008) work pertaining to how he analysed student work through using Kress and Van Leeuwen's semiotic structure.

Semiotics is often referred to as the study of signs, where the interpretation of texts is encoded and decoded respectively. In Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) book *Reading Images: The grammar of visual design*, an in-depth exploration is made into understanding how images communicate meanings and thus consequently provides the process to decode those meanings.

Referring to Kres and Van Leeuween (2006), the following key terms were identified within the next advertisement: *actor, goal, participant, circumstances, salience, signified/signifier, vector*.



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 Figure 29. Tourism New Zealand. *100% Pure New Zealand*, (2005). Print Advertisement. New Zealand

Pictured at the fore of the image are native Mount Cook Lily's. Overlapping the lilies is the phrase "100% Pure New Zealand". Surrounding the lilies is a rocky terrain, with a stream flowing down to the immediate right. Vegetation is then depicted growing beyond the stream at the base of lofty mountain peaks. A blue sky is seen above as well as some gusty cloud movements. This landscape is *signified* as a clean, lush and fresh environment. An active happy couple are seen leaping over the rocks crossing the stream. At the very bottom of the print advertisement is a wide black strip that has text written on the far right side. This text reads: "Flowering in late spring, the Mount Cook Lily is one of 415 mountain plants that are unique to the South Island's magnificent Mount Cook region. Start your awe-inspiring adventure at [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com)."

One narrative of this image is evident by the *vector* running from the lilies to the far right mountain peak. A vector is an oblique line connecting participants that are "doing something to or for each other" (Kres and Van Leeuwan, 2006, p. 59). The text compliments the image as it describes the narrative making reference to the Mount Cook lily as being unique to this region.

A second narrative is present where a vector begins from the stream at the foreground and runs back to the same mountain peak as the previous vector. The two participants crossing the stream then play the role of actors in the process of trekking. The *goal* is then the mountain peak to which the action is aimed. These two participants are *signifiers* of freedom and escapism within the narrative; as they are the only solitary couple within the entire setting. Additionally the participants have *possessive attributes*, such as their attire i.e. shorts and hiking boots, which represent the whole, or the carrier. These elements signify the participants as being fit and active.

The hiking boots and backpacks placed on the rocks are also participants but are referred to as *circumstances*. These are considered minor participants, which could be left out of the image and the narrative would still be understood. Additionally these elements are still important as it gives additional context. In this case, the circumstances further signify the notion of trekking.

The term *salience* is generally used to describe the hierarchy of elements. Such elements can include factors as placement, size, contrast etc. The salience in this image is achieved by the placement, tonal contrast and colour. The lilies are the most dominant due to their placement in the foreground and also because of their brightness and tonal contrast against the vegetation and lower black strip. The mountain peak to the far right is then next dominant because of its brightness. The stream is then also quite dominant due to the intense turquoise colour.

A second print advertisement for Tourism New Zealand is situated at Cathedral Cove (see Figure 30). The following key terms were identified within this advertisement:

*participant, reactor, phenomenon, signified/signifier.*

In the foreground a woman is seen relaxing on a deck in a New Zealand designed chair. Directly to the left of the woman is a pristine white sandy beach with a rocky arch



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 Figure 30. Tourism New Zealand. *100% Pure New Zealand*, (2003). Print Advertisement. New Zealand.

through which the next bay can be seen. To the right of the woman is cool blue water with more coastlines in the distance. Above is a clear blue sky with a few wisps of cloud. Framing the edges of the image and also seen growing over the rocky cliffs is a New Zealand native tree, the Pohutukawa. Like the previous advertisement, the image signified in this landscape is of a clean, lush and fresh environment. The phrase “100% Pure New Zealand” is seen in opacity at the front left and the website details [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com) at the far right respectively.

The narrative can be identified by the vector running from the woman pictured at the fore and the cave down at the beach. In this instance, the female participant is the *reactor* creating the eyeline looking out over the beach, that is, the *phenomenon*. The circumstances in this image are the deck, chair, rug, magazines and jandals, (an open sandal). These are all

aiding to signify comfort and relaxation. The baggy thin white clothing attire and the flowing of long dark hair from the female participant are possessive attributes signifying comfort and relaxation.

From these analyses I have been able to determine the central message signified in these advertisements as being on New Zealand's unique, pristine landscapes. Interestingly, the legitimacy of Tourism New Zealand's images are debatable. Like many tourism images, photographic manipulation via Photoshop - a high-end image editor, is used to convey clearer signs and meanings that did not originally exist. When looking at the following print advertisement of Cathedral cove, the placement of the deck where the woman is relaxing is not reality. Having been there myself and after surveying satellite images from the program Google Earth, it is evident that this fictitious deck has been purposely placed to create a narrative.

According to Govers, Go and Kumar (2007), consumers have set ideas and images in their mind as to what a tourist destination is like. If this is not met with their expectations or it differs in some way, it is likely to cause a negative response. Digitally altered images such as the one described in Figure 30 could therefore create a disconnect in a tourists mind and have negative consequences.

Hickton, the former Chief Executive of Tourism New Zealand describes the idea behind "100% Pure New Zealand" as being a "synthesis of everything we are – as people, as a country and as an experience" (Tourism New Zealand, 2009, p. 4). However, as I discovered in the semiotic analysis the advertising campaign does not reflect this idea. It predominantly focuses on the purity of our nature and little else. This has sparked a lot of controversy within the media, as New Zealand is not considered 100% pure in that particular aspect.

An article in the Guardian, a quality U.K. newspaper, described current New Zealand advertising images as the most "shameless" in its greenwashing approach (Pearce, 2009,

para. 4). In 1998 New Zealand aimed to not increase emissions between 1990 and 2010 when signing the Kyoto protocol to help climate change. "But the latest UN statistics show its emissions of greenhouse gases up by 22%" (Pearce, 2009, para. 5). The Management School of Restorative Business, or MSRB (2006) have also critiqued the 100% pure statement saying it is "falsely portraying that country as 'pure,' 'unspoiled' and 'clean'" (para. 4). MSRB further point to the dangers associated with what is not advertised such as serious health hazards that could affect visitors' wellbeing such as UV radiation. 100% Pure is a very bold statement to live up to, however, at this stage, "90 per cent" of tourists are satisfied and enjoy visiting New Zealand ("Overall Visitor Satisfaction", n.d., para. 1). This indicates that for now, the use of clean green imagery is still working. But I question, for how long?



# CHAPTER FOUR

## RESEARCH PROCESS



## 4.1 Case Studies

The extensive body of research gathered from multiple case studies described in chapter two has helped ground this study. The case studies have enabled me to develop a personal position essential to my central proposition; to develop a strategy that involves the sharing of sensory experiences. The following discussion describes the process that was undertaken, which led to the development of a sound strategy.

The importance of accommodating an immersive environment in which people can be engaged was indicated to be a vital component in order to create a more memorable experience. As an environment can only be perceived via the senses, the investigation into sensory stimuli demonstrated that it could enhance an experience. Research from Lindstrom (2005) pointed to the lack of stimuli within current communication design as being problematic. It was recognized that the senses have a significant influence over our emotional and behavioural responses. These responses then too have ramifications towards the effect of emotional contagion.

To first understand the theory behind emotional contagion, it was important to realize the basic fundamentals behind emotions. Comprehending how emotions are generated and their subsequent power in influencing our choices and decisions has significant consequences for communication design. When regarding Damasio's (2005) theory it becomes apparent that communication design needs to create an emotive response in order to have sway upon an individual's decision making process. It is also then, these emotional responses that can play a crucial role in generating emotional contagion. In order to utilise emotional contagion, it is crucial to recognize what the necessary conditions are in order for this to occur.

The case study on emotional contagion directed by Ramanathan and McGill (2007), indicated that emotional and behavioural attitudes from a person or group can spread and

affect another person or group's emotion and behaviour. Furthermore, the study indicated that as part of a group, emotional contagion can result in having a stronger appraisal towards an experience compared to being alone, where emotional contagion cannot take place. A more in depth exploration by Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson (1994) demonstrated that emotional contagion is spread via a mimicry feedback process. For this mimicry feedback process to occur and spread, a close proximity of other people is essential. Insight from Earls (2007) and Cialdini (1984), indicate how the interaction and influence of others can affect people's our own thoughts and behaviour. This interaction and sharing of experiences creates the potential for word of mouth to spread; another element that assists the successful transpiration of emotional contagion.

The aim of this study is to then create a strategy for designers that could facilitate the application of emotional contagion.

## 4.2 Communications Strategy

The strategy needed for designers to utilise emotional contagion involves:

- (1) To create joint consumption. In order for emotional contagion to spread more than one person needs to be present.
- (2) To create an environment where people can then interact and consequently influence their emotions and behaviour.
- (3) To engage with more sensory stimuli. The senses are essential to help influence this interaction and also to affect how people then respond to the surrounding environment. Understanding what affects certain sensory elements is also necessary for a more accurate outcome.

What this strategy then entails is the generation of a shared sensory experience with the intention to generate a greater persuasive response from the audience.

## **4.3 Tourism Strategy**

### **4.3.1 Vehicle**

In this study a vehicle was needed in order to communicate how this strategy could be implemented. Tourism was decided upon, as this industry employs experiences to define the unique difference between destinations. Research from chapter three indicated that the only way to experience the surroundings of a destination is through the senses (Govers & Go, 2009; Gretzel & Fesenmaier 2003; Moscado, 2009). Govers and Go (2009) also indicated the advertising value associated with regularly sharing an experience with others whilst travelling. What has been neglected when communicating tourism as a destination is the importance of framing a shared sensory experience. The vastness of tourism was identified early on and as such Tourism New Zealand was chosen to illustrate how this strategy could theoretically be employed within a new campaign.

### **4.3.2 Medium**

Within the communication design industry there are various types of mediums that can be used to impart a message. Traditional mediums such as television, print, radio and internet are commonly used and largely neglect sensory application. Alternatively, non-traditional mediums have the ability to involve more sensory interactions which can “integrate with the consumers’ lifestyles rather than simply talking at the consumer” (Torrance, 1998, p.36). In some cases advertisement using these criterion can be considered not even “ads per se” as they have the ability to become experiential like a staged event (Sullivan, 1998, p. 67). For this reason, non-traditional media is considered the most ideal for this strategy and will be used as part of the Tourism New Zealand strategy.

### **4.4.3 Target Audience**

The final designs of this project specifically target potential tourists from the United Kingdom, aiming to provoke them into considering a holiday in New Zealand. I am reluctant to target individuals as though they exist in isolation from each other, but instead look at human behaviour in what Earls' (2008) describes as tribes "of Us" (p. 322). The audience for this project is therefore not based on demographics but instead common mindsets.

The common mindset of my target audience is then defined as The Wanderer. They are adventurous and immersion travellers who want to explore in depth new experiences within new environments. They enjoy personal challenges, getting off the beaten track, mixing with the locals and engaging with the local flavour.

#### **4.3.4 Placement**

The final designed concepts are to be placed within a London Underground Station. The 'Tube' is well known by Londoners as the quickest and simplest way to travel around within the city. Transport for London (2009), report that in the period from 2008 to 2009 the London Underground carried almost 1.1 billion passengers. By exploiting this huge platform it can catch the attention of many commuters but is also an ideal environment for the proposed communication designs to be shared with others.

For over a century the London Underground have used this setting to introduce the public to many art and design works. More recently established is the art programme Art on the Underground, which produces world-class art that engages and responds to the unique London Underground surroundings. "Since 2000, Art on the Underground has been working with artists to produce and present new artworks to enhance and enrich the journeys of millions on the Tube every day" ("Art on the Underground", 2010, para. 3). This existing programme has been an effective initiative with a growing success.

With a similar intention, the prospective campaign for Tourism New Zealand will

create a vibrant contrast to what can still be a dreary and monotonous space. It could help transform the everyday journey into an adventure. Incorporating the location of New Zealand's campaign as a destination via the London Underground signage system, it is hoped to intrigue the explorative nature within the wanderer audience.

Although there is a common link of travel, I do feel that the implementation of these communication design pieces is not limited to an iconic domain and could be easily placed in other populated environments. As these pieces are designed to create an emotive response, regardless of the location, the interactive wanderer will relay what is hopefully a positive experience to fellow wanderers making distance redundant.

## 4.4 Experiment

In order to test the theory of emotional contagion the following experiment was conducted. Using a qualitative research approach, the experiment aims to examine and compare how an individual and a group of individuals experience the act of drinking New Zealand water.

### 4.4.1 Phenomenology

Qualitative research is a method of inquiry aimed to gain insight into behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyles. Phenomenology is one of many types of qualitative research and is essentially the study of essences; grasping the being of entities – what lets things be what they are. A more literal definition of phenomenology is the study of phenomena: “the object of a person’s perception; what the senses or the mind notice” (Oxford American dictionaries). The German philosopher Husserl is considered the original founder of phenomenology and focused on the structures of consciousness and how we interpret a phenomenon from a viewpoint. “All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge is gained from my own particular point of view or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless” (Smith, 2003, p. ix) translated by Smith.

Phenomenologists believe that human truths are only made apparent due to inner subjectivity. “Meanings are constructed by people as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Flood, 2010, p. 8). Although this is a belief shared by phenomenologists, many have developed more than one approach that differs in how the understanding of human knowledge is generated.

A phenomenological approach was then the qualitative method chosen for this

experiment. The study consisted of 12 New Zealand participants, half of whom took part in the experiment as a group and the other half individually. The participants selected were young transient adults that share a common mindset with the targeted wanderer audience. The participants were willing volunteers with a similar age group, ranging between 22 and 30. Of the 12 participants there were seven females and five males. Whilst the individual's experiment had three females and three males, the group test had four females and 2 males.

Located at Fergerson Park, Tauranga, each participant was given a glass of Waiwera water to drink, followed by a series of questions. Water was chosen for this study because of its simplicity as a unique New Zealand experience. It is an act that New Zealanders generally experience on a daily basis. The questions aimed at the participants were then primarily focused on describing their experience.

#### **4.4.2 Analysis**

Colaizzi's seven-step process was the method used for analysing the written transcripts. This involves reading each transcript to get an understanding of the overall response. The relevant descriptions are then extracted. Meanings are then made from the significant statements identified. Next they are then refined and organised into themes. The results are then used to develop a rich description of the participant experience. The essence of the phenomenon is then identified. Lastly, validation from the participants are then sought to compare the researchers descriptive results with their lived experience. The following are the results categorized into themes (see Figures 31 & 32).

## NEW ZEALAND WATER EXPERIENCE

SHARED THEMES/ COMMON FORMS	GROUP THEME STATEMENT	INDIVIDUAL THEME STATEMENT	VARIATION
Clean	<p>(G1) It tasted clean, lacking in chemical taste, pure.</p> <p>(G4) It was cleansing - invigorating.</p> <p>(G6) It seemed pure, clean and uncontaminated unlike tap water.</p>		(G4) I imagined bubbling out of the ground.
Refreshing	<p>(G1) I felt refreshed, abit more alert or awake.</p> <p>(G1) Nice cooling sensation in my mouth.</p> <p>(G2) It was refreshing. Nice and cold.</p> <p>(G3 )I found it refreshing.</p> <p>(G5) It was refreshing as i was so thirsty.</p>	<p>(I1) Fresh cool liquid, cooling.</p> <p>(I2) Cool, refreshing.</p> <p>(I3) It was refreshing, replenishing.</p> <p>(I5) Cool and refreshing. I had just been exercising so it quenched thirst.</p> <p>(I6) It was nice after a hard days work- it was a refreshing experience.</p>	
Healthy	<p>(G4) I feel good, uplifted, like I'm taking care of myself.</p> <p>(G4) It made me feel healthy.</p> <p>(G6) Cleansed, safe.</p>	<p>(I1) I feel cleansed, soft. It feels good for me, like I've done my body a favour.</p> <p>(I2) Always makes me feel good.</p> <p>(I4) I feel healthy, hydrated and happy that I'm taking good care of my body and what I put into it.</p>	

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Figure 31. Bourke, K. *New Zealand Water Experiment*, (2010). Table. New Zealand.

## NEW ZEALAND WATER EXPERIENCE

SHARED THEMES/ COMMON FORMS	GROUP THEME STATEMENT	INDIVIDUAL THEME STATEMENT	VARIATION
Surroundings	<p>(G2) Beautiful surroundings.</p> <p>(G2) A great experience, enjoyed the park.</p> <p>(G2) The sunset was fabulous.</p> <p>(G5) Like the scenery.</p>	(I1) Sitting alone.	
Ordinary	(G5) It was nice cold water, but then again its only water.	<p>(I1) Pretty neutral, not a big water drinker personally. It didn't blow my mind, i expected the taste of water, i.e. nothing, and got it.</p> <p>(I3) Its just water, it was hard to get excited about it.</p> <p>(I4) Pleasant but nothing out of the ordinary.</p>	
Valued	<p>(G3) I feel privileged, to have specific, high quality of water to taste.</p> <p>(G3) Because of the description and history of the water, I had a more enjoyable experience and gave it rather careful consideration as normally would not have.</p> <p>(G4) I felt myself appreciating the quality/high standard of water more.</p>		<p>(I4) In New Zealand we simply expect all the water we drink, even straight from the tap to be clean and high quality and take it for granted. We don't really appreciate what we have.</p> <p>(G3) I took more time to consider the waters properties.</p>

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Figure 32. Bourke, K. *New Zealand Water Experiment*, (2010). Table. New Zealand.

### 4.4.3 Discussion

The participants seemed to have mutual statements referring to feeling refreshed and healthy. "It was nice after a hard days work, it was a refreshing experience", "I felt refreshed, a bit more alert or awake" and "I feel healthy, hydrated and happy that I'm taking good care of my body and what I put into it". However there were differences identified between the individual and group participants. One difference was how the group experience had remarked on the surrounding environment such as "Beautiful surroundings" or "the sunset was fabulous", while the individuals had not typically mentioned their surroundings. Making comparisons the group had also specified that the given water tasted clean. "It was cleansing - invigorating. I imagined it bubbling out of the ground" and "It seemed pure, clean and uncontaminated unlike tap water".

The overall evaluation of the experience also differed between the group of individuals and individuals. On a scale from very unpleasant to very pleasant, the group on average evaluated their experience nearest to the very pleasant end. However, the individuals on average considered their experience to be closer to neutral, neither unpleasant nor pleasant. The descriptions made from the group also reflected how they valued their experience more in comparison to the individuals who described their experience as more ordinary. As one group member described, "I had a more enjoyable experience and gave it rather careful consideration as I normally would not have". In comparison, an individual's statement was "It's just water, it was hard to get excited about it". These results then reflect how sharing an experience can create emotional contagion and result in a greater evaluation. From the results gathered it points toward how the sharing of an experience such as drinking New Zealand water can create emotional contagion and result in a greater evaluation. "I feel privileged, to have specific, high quality of water to taste".



# CHAPTER FIVE

DESIGN PROCESS



## 5.1 Final Concepts

Presented in this chapter are two final communication design concepts for Tourism New Zealand. Using the considered strategy as stated in chapter four, these designed ideas are to serve as exemplars to highlight how the strategy of employing emotional contagion could be implemented. The following designs shift away from the predominant use of imagery toward a shared sensory experience. Evolving from the current tourism campaign 100% Pure New Zealand, the concepts presented aim to better communicate a New Zealand experience and produce a heightened positive evaluation.

As indicated in chapter three, there is some concern with the current Tourism New Zealand advertising due to the growing debate regarding the words '100% Pure'. These potential concepts point to the creation of a new campaign for Tourism New Zealand, therefore the new phrase "New Zealand. It's what you make of it" was chosen to replace the current version. The wording is to imply New Zealand as simply being here, waiting to be experienced. Yet the type of experiences to be had is relative to the individual. An important aspect of travel is to explore and engage within the environment and its people. This notion is echoed within the following concepts. The experiences are there to be had, but it is left to each individual to choose whether or not they make an effort to actively get involved.

Should individuals choose to join in, these concepts mimic the occurrence of sharing an experience along the journey. To reiterate, it is common when travelling to share experiences with people whether they be friends, family, or complete strangers. Regardless of whom they may be, how one person emotionally responds can consequently have a significant influence over other peoples emotions and behaviours. This is then a crucial component needed for creating emotional contagion within these final concepts.

It should also be known that these final concepts would not suit all areas within the London Underground and would therefore be situated within one of the main stations such

as Canary Wharf . Main stations such as this do have areas with open spaces before heading through the gates toward the platforms. The communication designs presented do not essentially require a large area for placement and it should be possible to integrate them into an open area. It may not however be suitable during rush hour periods, in particular on the way to work as it could potentially disgruntle people if their routine is disrupted and they are made late. In this case, it could be closed off during particular periods of the day. Yet, it is hoped the designs could be built within the space, with minimal disruption and is not compulsory for people to partake if they do not wish to do so.

## 5.2 A Taste of New Zealand

### 5.2.1 Concept

*A Taste of New Zealand* is a refreshing and invigorating experience where the wanderer audience can sample a mouthful of New Zealand's artesian water. Gathered into small groups, the wanderer audience are invited to collect and sip water from lustrous paua shells. As a shared sensory experience these groups of people are immersed within a space incorporating all five senses of sound, smell, taste, touch, and visual.

Drinking water is commonly taken for granted considering it is necessary to do on a regular and daily basis. New Zealand is fortunate enough to have rich resource of fresh water making it one of the "top 10 water rich counties" (Gibb, 2008, p. 3). Referring to the experiment presented in the previous chapter, on pages 87-91, the responses made from the participants suggested that the experience made them feel refreshed and healthy. As an example, an individual said "It was refreshing, replenishing" and a group member referred to it as making them feel "good, and uplifted, like I'm taking care of myself" .

The sense of taste is then a predominant element within this concept. It is incorporated with other New Zealand features that as a whole, aim to communicate a New Zealand experience. It is hoped that the feedback made from the earlier experiment is a good indication of what could occur within this concept should it be actualized. A desired outcome of this concept would be to have the wanderer audience depart from *A Taste of New Zealand* feeling refreshed, healthy, relaxed and evaluating the experience as highly positive.

### 5.2.2 Structure

This concept is kept within a small area and closed off from sight of onlookers. Covering the outside of this structure is a photographed image of a valley located in the

Nelson Lakes National Park of New Zealand. It depicts large areas of tussock grassland surrounding a winding stream that runs between high alpine passes. However, in place of this stream is a large black door creating the entrance into this experience, hinting at what lies behind. Words written upon the door read "A Taste of New Zealand", hoping to create intrigue for the wanderer audience. In a similar fashion, the nearby London Underground signage has been altered to suggest the current location as briefly being New Zealand (see Figure 33).



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Figure 33. Bourke, K. *New Zealand Underground Logo*, (2010). Graphic. New Zealand.

Two New Zealanders are situated at the entrance of this experience to entice and welcome people in. Greeting and conversing with the nearby people, the New Zealanders would use colloquial sayings such as *Kia ora* and *Haere mai* (Maori for hello and welcome), as well as *g'day mate*, *how's it going?*, *good as gold*, *cheers* and *sweet as*. Another role required from the New Zealanders is to assemble small groups of around five people. Before giving access to the experience, the New Zealanders hand out polished and sealed paua shells with the website address [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com) engraved on the underside (see Figure 34). To touch, it fits well within the shape of the palm. The inside is smooth in comparison to the bumpy exterior that has several sealed holes protruding out. The New Zealanders then instruct the wanderer audience to use this as a vessel to scoop a mouthful of Waiwera water imported from New Zealand. While the groups each wait their

turn, the New Zealanders keep the people entertained by describing the properties of the artesian water they are about to taste.



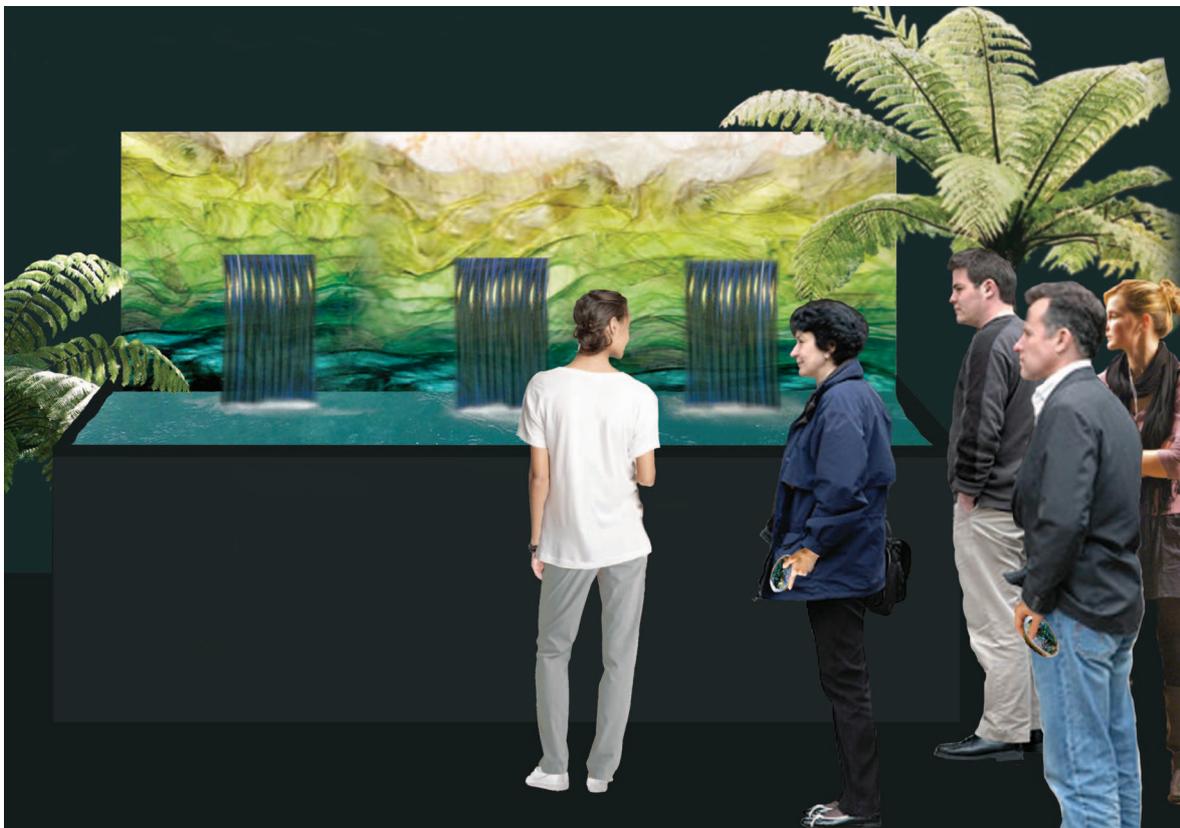
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*Figure 34. Bourke, K. A Taste of New Zealand, (2010). Graphic. New Zealand.*

A blind taste test conducted by the UK magazine *Decanter* (2008) awarded Waiwera Artesian Water as the “World’s Best Bottled Water”(p. 58). The water itself comes from a vast aquifer about 1500 meters below the small town located in the north island. It’s taste has been described as very clean, pure and refreshing. Interestingly the Maori had originally named it *Te Rata*, meaning the doctor, as they regarded the water to possess therapeutic and curative properties. There is much to be said about this water and there are several stories and testimonials like the following example:

In 1848 a gentleman by the name of Samuel Clare had been a patient of Auckland hospital for nine months. Upon being pronounced incurable, he declared ‘I wish to go to Waiwera to die’. And so he was promptly landed on the beach with two weeks provisions, and could only crawl on his hands and knees a few yards at a time. He managed to scrape a hole in the sand, and there bathed and drank the waters. At the

expiration of two weeks he was able to walk around the beach, and for sixteen years afterwards lived by hard work in the bush. He always declared that the springs could effect greater cures than all the doctors put together. ("Testimonials", n.d., para. 2)

An additional topic the New Zealander's could discuss, is on the gifted paua shell. With rainbow like qualities, this shell has a cultural significance to New Zealand. As a shellfish it was an important part of a traditional Maori diet. As a shell it is often used for decoration in Maori carvings, fine jewelry and is incorporated within souvenirs.



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*Figure 35. Bourke, K. A Taste of New Zealand, (2010). Graphic. New Zealand.*

When invited into the enclosed area the focal point is on the water feature (see Figure 35). The backdrop to this feature is a solid glass pane containing a swirling pattern of blues and greens resembling the form of mountain ranges. There are tranquil sounds made from the waterfalls cascading down this backdrop into a large basin. The feature is

surrounded by New Zealand's native ponga, or more commonly known as the silver fern. This in combination with the water help to make the space smell clean and fresh but with an earthy undertone. With a limited time frame, each of the individuals are to collectively submerge their paua shells into the water basin and taste. This then leaves the floor open for reactions or comments to be made from individuals to other fellow wanderers. When the time is up, the door is opened and the group files out of the room, passing the phrase "New Zealand. It's what you make of it" followed by the website address "www.newzealand.com" as they exit.

### 5.2.3 Discussion

Based on the conducted experiment presented in the previous chapter, I believe that this experience of drinking New Zealand water could create emotional contagion and also the desired positive response. The experiment findings pointed to how a group tasting of New Zealand water was considered more pleasant and valued greater in comparison to tasting it individually. It is envisaged that this concept should produce a similar outcome. In addition, combining all five sensory elements within this concept is intended to also enhance and evoke positive emotional responses within the wanderer audience

However, upon looking back at this final concept one issue that could be debatable, is the possibility of leading people into thinking it is a promotion for water and not Tourism New Zealand. However, i believe it would be unlikely due to the many other elements incorporated within the design. These include the New Zealand representatives, the paua shell souvenir, the surrounding environment with native ponga trees as well as having the additional concept discussed in the next section situated nearby.

One other concern that would need to be addressed if this was to be made into reality is regarding hygiene issues. The potential of many hands being dipped into this basin to scoop out water for drinking may be considered as a health hazard. Yet i am confident

that a fairly simple solution to this issue can be made. As an example, one possible solution could be to take a similar approach as drinking fountains. The shell could be placed onto a surface and with a push of a button, water could pour into it. Regardless of these concerns, the focus of this concept lies in the adoption of the shared sensory experience strategy so as to create emotional contagion.

## 5.3 Trails of New Zealand

### 5.3.1 Concept

*Trails of New Zealand* is a journey through a series of visuals, sounds, and scents. It offers to the wanderer audience, a shared sensory experience through multiple pathways of New Zealand's varied terrain, nature sounds as well as unique aromas. Rather than merely observing a pictorial setting, people are immersed within the environment, connecting on a more sensory and emotional level. The concept is designed for group participation, whereby the company of others can transform the design revealing more trails and sounds but also enhance the overall experience.

### 5.3.2 Structure



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Figure 36. Bourke, K. *Trails of New Zealand*, (2010). Graphic. New Zealand.

Two more New Zealanders are used in this concept to entice people into venturing in and giving the experience a go (see Figure 36). They again create order and control by

assembling small groups of approximately five people before welcoming them in to explore the space for a set time. To keep the design consistent with the previous concept the entrance to the *Trails of New Zealand* is covered by an image depicting one of Rotorura's thermal parks. A black door then covers the wooden boardwalk pathway and has the words "Trails of New Zealand" placed in the center.

Within the enclosed design, the piece encompasses a multi-touch audio-visual floor surface. The design is divided into four distinct sections where each segment embodies the following terrains: forest/rural, alpine, volcanic/geothermal, and coastal. Within each of the four sections, the multi-touch floor surface can project up to five different trails of terrain found at the specified environments along with correlating sounds. Furthermore, the use of O! Caps - coloured and scented light caps are placed over light bulbs hung in the centre of each section at approximately nose level. The heat produced from the light then helps to emit the fragrance lightly and is kept within close vicinity.

Displayed within the forest/rural floor segment are trails of vast grass plains, a stream, the vines of kiwifruit and two types of New Zealand forest floors - a conifer broadleaf forest and beech forest. The alpine paths are of snow-capped rocky mountains, glaciers, New Zealand woolly moss, an emerald lake and the native tussock. The volcanic/geothermal section has the possible tracks of scoria, mud pools, volcanic layers of earth, and the distinctive coloured mineral pools – devil's bath and champagne pool (See Figure 37). Incorporated into the coastal area are trails of unique shells, the native pohutukawa, fine golden sand, the distinctive spherical Moreiki boulders and a glistening rock pool embracing a variety of life.

Making comparisons with central London's surroundings to those found in New Zealand, an apparent difference and at times contrast is made creating a potential to interest the wanderer audience. However, the trails chosen for this concept, though focused on New Zealand's diverse topography, may not necessarily be found only in New Zealand. It

is for this reason that some of the trails will then have visible, native wildlife such as a kiwi, kakapo, kea, weka, blue duck, yellow eyed penguin, tuatara, and so on. Some may be harder to spot than others, but this is intended to enthrall the explorative nature of the wanderer audience. The sighting of such wildlife will then not only aid in portraying the concept as distinctly New Zealand, it will also enrich the journey to be had.



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Figure 37. Bourke, K. *Trails of New Zealand; Volcanic/Geothermal*, (2010). Graphic. New Zealand.

The music heard within the designed environment is relative to each of the four sections. Each trail within a section has a designated sound which is responsive to movement. When more trails are made, more sounds are heard. Each of the sounds are then sympathetic to each other, helping to create a harmony. The types of sounds heard, are from the album *Aotearoa – Nature Sounds of New Zealand*, by Symbiosis. Complementary to the visual trails, the sounds of “peaceful bush atmospheres, entrancing bird song, geothermal activity and the gentle sounds of the Pacific Ocean” are all found on this album (“Beautiful nature sounds from The Land of the Long White Cloud”, n.d., para. 2).

The scents are similarly chosen to be associated with each of four environments making the wanderer audience feel more encompassed within the space. The forest/rural aroma is of the native ponga producing a fresh and earthy atmosphere. Incorporated within

the alpine environment is the scent of snow. Demeter, an existing fragrance library have developed this scent and describe it as "chilling, cool, clean and fresh, with a touch of dust (necessary to form flakes) and earth (upon which to rest)". The aroma selected for the volcanic/geothermal section would emulate the odour of thermal pools with a hint of Tarata leaves. Tarata is traditionally used by Maori to help perfume the sulphuric smell of the mineral pools with a sweet lemon fragrance. Lastly the coastal area has the scent of New Zealand's well-known pohutukawa flowers (see Figure 38). When the pohutukawa blooms its crimson red flowers heralds the arrival of summer and leaves a light sweet floral aroma.



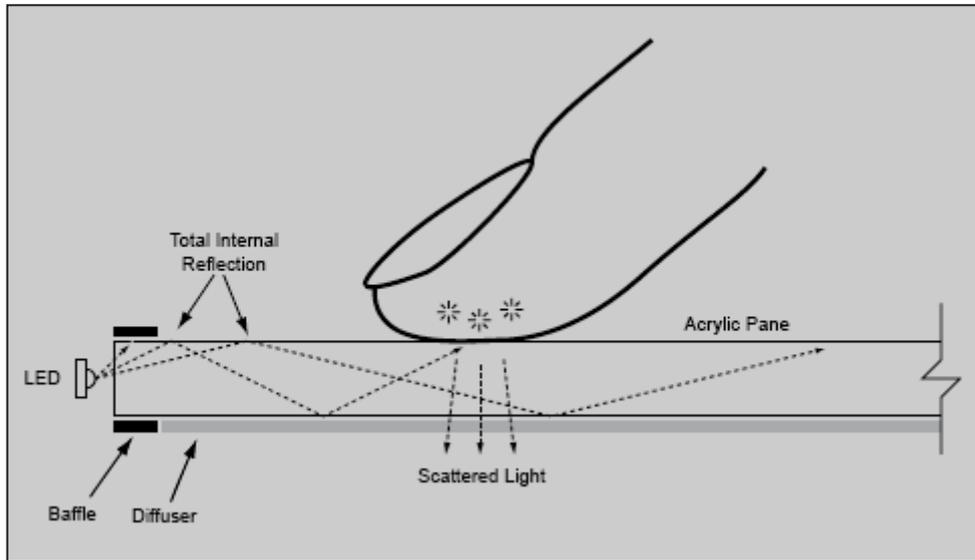
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*Figure 38. Bourke, K. Trails of New Zealand; Pohutukawa scent, (2010). Graphic. New Zealand.*

After exploring this space for several minutes the New Zealanders then cue the participating group to exit, letting the next group to enter. Again on their departure they are to read the phrase "New Zealand. Its what you make of it" with the corresponding website address "[www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com)" on the back of the door as they exit.

### 5.3.3 Technology

Once stepped upon, the reactive floor surface uses people's kinetic energy to create a visual trail. This is made possible through the means of Frustrated Total Internal Reflection (FTIR) sensing technique. (see Figure 39) In this concept, the placement of feet onto the floor surface causes the electrical field in the panel to disrupt. The software then detects this

disruption and subsequently creates a visual response. It is common for multi-touch systems to enable interaction with more than one finger. However for large interactive scenarios such as this concept, it is also possible to have a sensing device to accommodate multiple users simultaneously.



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Figure 39. Han, J. Y. *Frustrated Total Internal Reflection*, (2005). Graphic.

In the same way that FTIR technology can be used with software to create visual responses, it is also possible to apply software such as Audio Touch to enable audio responses. In order to produce corresponding sounds with the selected imagery, this audio software will be necessary and incorporated within this concept.

#### 5.3.4 Discussion

Focusing on the strategy developed in chapter four, the given design is constructed with the objective of successfully creating emotional contagion through a shared sensory experience. The concept has been constructed to create and reflect emotional contagion. The interactive environment allows for joint consumption to occur and thus aims to spread people's emotions and behaviours onto others, creating emotional contagion. The transformation of the visual-audio responses point to how people met on the journey can affect and enhance the overall experience, reflecting emotional contagion. The combination

of the sensory elements sight, sound, and smell in this concept are used to heighten the ambience and stimulate an initial positive emotional response that would subsequently be disseminated.

It is possible that this concept could be custom designed to suit the interior of the London Underground Station. This design could in theory be reasonably narrow and does not have to be one long and straight structure. It could work around existing structures and bend around corners if this assisted in creating a better flow of people in and around the concept.

Should this concept be made into reality, it is unclear how people will respond to the concept as it remains untested. It is possible that the wanderer audience may not have knowledge on what each of the trails and wildlife presented are. For example they may have never seen New Zealand woolly moss before, but it is hoped that the sighting of potentially new and different surroundings will help provide a platform for the wanderer audience to talk and show to others. As a further possibility, the website address could have a link to a web page educating people on the different sensory elements such as, the sounds or visuals made within the designed concept.

An aspect that could be considered misleading, is how some of the trails made are not necessarily authentic. Having said that, I believe that the type of the medium used in this concept makes it more acceptable than a photographed image, such as the existing advertisement presented on page 77. It should be indicated that this is not reality, but an abstracted and conceptual notion where people can experience many types of landscapes found within New Zealand.

# CHAPTER SIX

## CONCLUSION



## 6.1 What I Have Learnt

In the split second I was transported into my childhood I realised, in that moment, the potential power of using the senses within communication design. It was only through research surrounding this topic that I discovered the theory of emotional contagion. An understanding of this theory led to a more extensive perspective that incorporated the senses and as such, created a greater potential for an effective response from an audience.

One of the most fascinating things I came across during this project was the research on mirror neurons. It has shed light on many of my everyday experiences, whereby the observation of others has affected my own actions and behavioural response. Whether this has been able to empathise with a friend's situation or becoming acutely aware of how involved I become when simply watching a rugby game. This finding for me, opened my eyes as to how influential other people are, even when they are complete strangers.

It is hoped that the ideas and insights produced in this thesis will have captivated an interest in adopting the defined strategy within communication design. The ideas presented in this thesis have only scratched the surface of the potential that this research could have upon communication design. It is unfortunate the production of these ideas were unable to take place. The availability and knowledge of using various technology behind the ideas would be an enormous and costly task, one of which I could not complete within the time frame undertaken.

## 6.2 Summary

The aim of this study was to offer communication designers a strategy that essentially facilitated the application of emotional contagion. The significance of this theory of emotional contagion, is its ability to lead an audience to have a greater positive emotional response toward a designed experience. The background research in this project was the main area of focus and explored subjects of emotion, emotional contagion, behaviour, experience design and the senses. Within these topics, various key elements were indicated to assist in the creating of emotional contagion.

The historical and more recent investigations around the theory of emotional contagion highlighted the influential effects it can have upon an individual or group of people. By sharing an experience with another person or group, it has the potential to affect one's emotional and behavioural response to be more congruent with those around them. Joint consumption was then indicated as a necessary feature in order for emotional contagion to spread.

The investigation into herd behaviour indicated that human interaction with others is a natural instinct. On a daily basis these interactions can have a significant influence upon our own choices and decisions. We constantly align ourselves with certain groups of people in relation to similarities in behaviours and attitudes. Thus when interacting and sharing an experience with others, a congruency in opinions and responses helps to produce a more positive outcome.

The exploration into existing experience designs illustrated the importance of creating a space for people to interact and subsequently influence each other. Emphasis was placed on understanding the senses and their effects on the way we experience. Their role in generating an emotional response was understood as crucial as its repercussions could have an imperative effect upon the spreading of emotional contagion.

It was from this understanding within the research stage that i was able to achieve in offering communication designers a strategy that facilitated the application of emotional contagion. By connecting all the key requirements evident from the background research, I was able to create a succinct strategy incorporating the sharing of sensory experiences.

Next, it was important to exhibit how this strategy could be executed into communication design. It was then proposed that Tourism New Zealand be used as a vehicle to give insight as to how the strategy could be employed.

Beginning the practical component of this thesis an experiment was conducted to examine and compare how an individual and a group of individuals experience the act of drinking New Zealand water. The results indicated that sharing an experience such as drinking New Zealand water can create emotional contagion and result in a greater evaluation. This experiment then had a significant influence within the final concepts developed.

Two final concepts *A Taste of New Zealand* and *Trails of New Zealand* were designed for Tourism New Zealand. Both of these concepts have demonstrated how the developed strategy of shared sensory experiences could be executed. As a concept, *A Taste of New Zealand* has a similar focus to that of the water experiment. Based on the results gathered from the experiment I believe that this final concept could be successfully produced to create the desired enhanced positive response. The second concept *Trails of New Zealand* has not been tested however and if produced the outcome is unknown. Yet, by following the grounded strategy of creating a shared sensory experience, it is plausible that this concept could also create emotional contagion and subsequently the heightened positive evaluation.

### **6.3 Future Prospects**

Further stages of enquiry within this project could be to produce one of the final

concepts guided by the communication strategy presented in this thesis. This could then be tested to validate that the occurrence of emotional contagion and subsequently the effects on the evaluations made.

The purpose of employing tourism was to illustrate how this strategy could be implemented within communication design. It is not proposed as the only possible application. The future of creating shared sensory experiences holds an exciting opportunity within everyday communication design for services and products. For example, Disneyland is a service that provides an experience of a fantasy world. A communication message for that experiential offering could also potentially be an experience. By designing a shared sensory experience it could create a greater appeal to visit after having an initial positive response from just their communication message.

Similarly, products that provide experiences could also benefit from the shared sensory experience strategy. As an example, Playstation could be said to sell the experience of fun. Through employing the shared sensory strategy, a fun experience could be created in many different ways. It could perhaps incorporate a fun taste or a fun texture where people can play together and have fun but still make the association with the fun of the Playstation.

Lastly, another aspect that could be interesting to investigate, is the incorporation of a staged person or group of people. As indicated, certain people can have the ability to influence others more easily. By getting people with this special quality to act positively within the designed environment, it could then result in more people having a greater appraisal of the overall experience.

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# APPENDIX

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MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
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