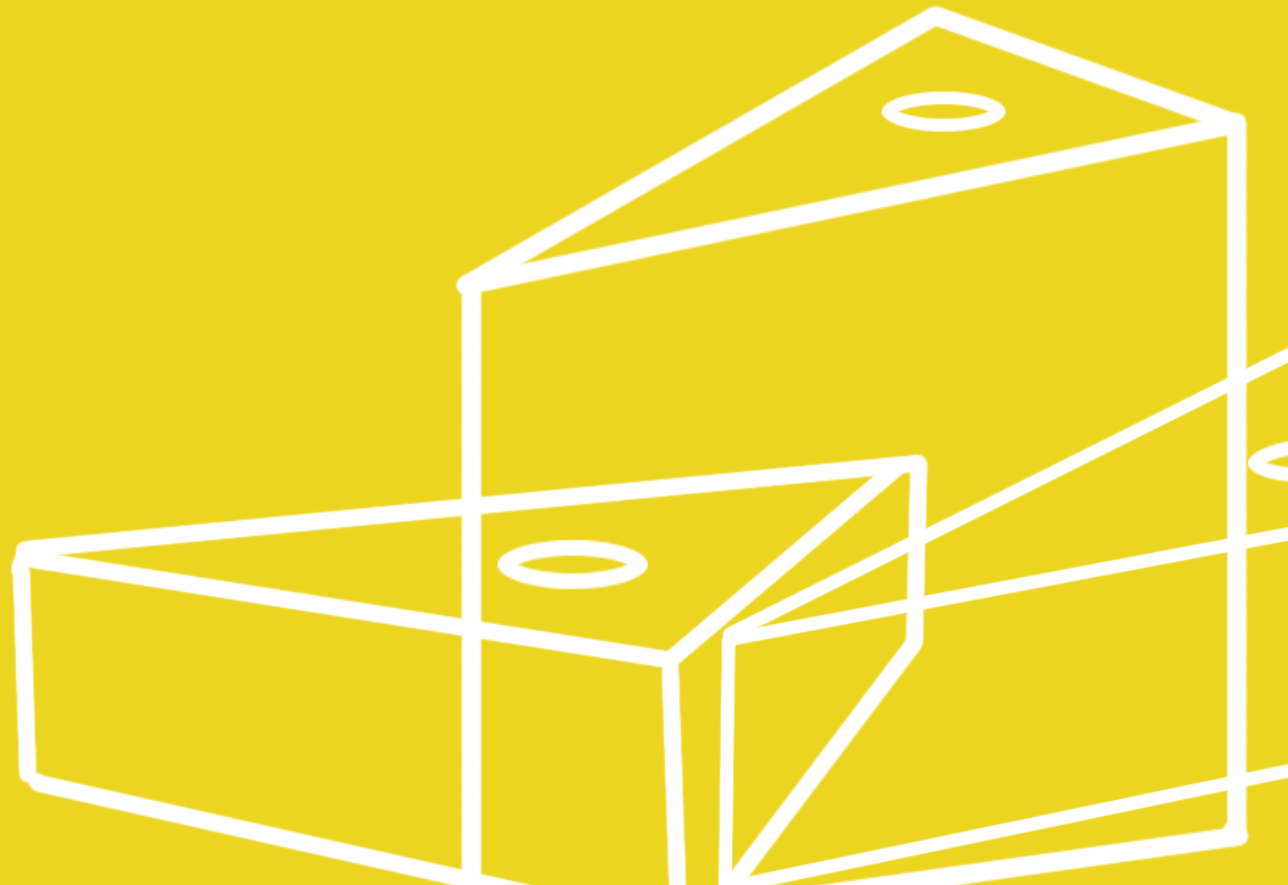# DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR GENERATING CONCEPTS BASED ON REFLECTIVE DESIGN ASPECTS

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PREFACE

This paper is a graduation project for the bachelor Industrial design Engineering at University Twente, in Enschede. Since I send in an open application to D'Andrea & Evers for a bachelor assignment, I did not expect it to be an assignment which would match my interests as much as it did. Developing a framework for designers of a Chinese brand, helping them to produce product ideas fitting the Dutch consumer market. And eventually, using the framework to generate concepts and developing one for one particular Chinese brand. Bridging foreign cultures, receiving an insight in cognitive sciences and marketing, indulging in styling trends, being inspired by Chinese culture and being given the possibility to freely create new product ideas was more than I could have asked for.

I want to thank Carsten for the enthusiastic support and guidance during the project, answering my endless stream of questions and uncertainties. Secondly, I want to thank Tim for guiding me in the right direction when I was suffocating under piles of literature and information. I also want to thank Tom Evers as well, for regularly giving feedback on my project and almost serving as another supervisor. And the rest of D'Andrea & Evers for making me feel welcome and look back at my internship fondly.

Lastly, I want to thank my parents and David for helping me stay down-to-earth when I couldn't see the forest for the trees.

Mahana Tuimaka
Januari 2016

SUMMARY

This bachelor assignment is commissioned by D'Andrea & Evers in Enter. D'Andrea & Evers has been approached by Chinese company Sofine with the request to help with the development of a new brand. Sofine produces decorative interior products for low-end retailers in the Netherlands. Now, they wish to develop a new brand aiming at the high-end market. Guidelines need to be developed for designers for a Chinese company, which can help them generate concepts fitting the Dutch consumer market.

In Chapter 1 an introduction is given in the importance of branding for a brand, and the different factors that make a strong brand and how to accomplish this.

It was noted that the opinion of Dutch consumers on Chinese brands can have an impact on the evaluation of the product. In Chapter 2 different theories, from a marketing perspective and from cognitive sciences, are analyzed to discover how people create associations with products. Important information relates to the mental processes which play a role during product evaluation and attributes of products which are looked at during the evaluation. Also, an insight will be given in the effect the Country of Origin can have on the consumer.

In Chapter 3, information gathered in chapter 2 is combined into a theoretic model. This model is based on theory about visceral, behavioral and reflective processing, and supplemented with knowledge about the forming of brand associations and the country of origin effect. After the base for the model is formed, an online survey is held to discover which parts of the mental processes and which attributes are considered most important to the Dutch consumer. The survey results are analyzed and combined with additional literature about consumer searching and browsing behavior. It is decided that the reflective process is the most interesting to incorporate into the guidelines.

In Chapter 4 the conclusions and information from the previous chapters are used to develop the *Framework for generating concepts based on reflective design aspects*. The method is based on reflective design aspects which are explained prior to presenting the tool. The method is a process of 7 steps and are illustrated with examples of the implementation of the tool on a vase.

In Chapter 5 the framework or tool, is implemented for Sofine. It is used on an existing Chinese legend called Fu Lu Shou. This story is used as inspiration and going through the steps of the tool, leads to the design of a specific type of oil lamps based on the underlying meaning of the legend Fu Lu Shou.

Chapter 6 is meant for conclusions, discussing limitations and future recommendations. The findings of this assignment resulted in a tool that combines all the necessary information and theory on the subject into a step-by-step framework to use as a guiding tool during the concept generating process. This way, the designer does not need to have a high knowledge of all the available information out there on the subject of brand associations, mental processes and country of origin effects. Instead, the tool is enough for the designer to know and to lead him or her to possible product concepts.

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PROJECT OBJECTIVE

This report is the result of a Bachelor Assignment for the University of Twente, commissioned by D'Andrea & Evers in Enter. D'Andrea & Evers is a design bureau for product development and is specialized in product design. Commissioned by other companies they work on, for example: very technical products, giving advice about branding and focusing on influencing the emotions and perception of consumers through specific ways of using styling. This assignment took place from September to December 2015 at D'Andrea in Evers in Enters and was completed in januari 2016.

For this case they were hired by Chinese company *Sofine*. D'Andrea & Evers is going to advice and help *Sofine* with the development of a new brand. Sofine sells decorative interior products which they mass produce and sell in not only China but in the Netherlands as well. At the moment they sell their products at retailers such as Xenos in the Netherlands. The owner of Sofine wants to create a new brand, and break free from the low-end products and bring products of a higher price-range to the market. They have come to D'Andrea & Evers for advice in developing a product line and help with the branding and product design of a new brand.

The central focus of this project is the development of guidelines or a framework for generating product ideas that communicate the brand promise. These guidelines will lead to the design of concepts for a product line. These guidelines can range from visual, to verbal, to contextual, etc. They will be based on research on branding and marketing theories, the effect the country of origin has on the consumers opinion and mental processes that play a role during the evaluation of products. It also incorporates Chinese culture and Dutch trends. Since a product is the

physical representation of a brand the brand promise has to be defined. What the brand promises to deliver. Some important questions are: *How does the process of product associating work? How do you ensure that consumers associate products of a new Chinese company on the Dutch market with positive elements? How to create original ideas bridging Chinese and Dutch heritage?*

When the guidelines are developed they will be used in this project to design a product that serves as an example for a possible product line of Sofine. In the Netherlands there are different trends than in Asia, and these need to be taken into account when coming to the Dutch market. *So an important question here is, how do you correspond with Dutch Design and trends, without mimicking but combining it with authentic Chinese elements and history into the design of a product?*

INTRODUCTION

People come in contact with products from foreign countries daily. Though not everyone may always be aware of the quantity of products that come from abroad. In 1603, when the Dutchmen, through business with China, came in contact with their blue and white coloured porcelain, there was an outbreak of porcelain fever. Chinese porcelain was being praised as an unique new and valuable type of ceramics. High ranking people ordered craftsmen remake (or imitate) that specific porcelain. This eventually led to the populair Dutch ceramics: *Delfts Blauw*.

Nowadays, China's reputation in the Netherlands has changed. Where we once imitated them, they now have a reputation, for imitating everyone else. I do not wish to generalize, but due to different regulations towards patenting, Chinese companies have been able to create replica's of famous brands and product. This is a pity for Chinese brands which wish to establish a name in the Western world, as a high-end brand, designing original quality products.

This thesis gives an insight in the prejudices Chinese companies may face when bringing their products to the Dutch consumer market. Due to many Dutchmen having prejudices, due to mass-production, counterfeiting and low-quality products. This thesis is about breaking the stigma around *Made in China*. Instead of trying to avoid the negative associations people may have with Chinese products, this research will be about focussing on all the positive associations people may have with Chinese culture and products.

The figure to the right gives an overview of the different steps of this assignment's process. They will lead you through the different chapters.

CHAPTER 1: BRANDING

The report will start of with a research into branding and which factors make up a strong brand.

BRANDING

A brand is a strong means of communicating what the company, the brand, promises the consumer. The marketers of a company have to ensure that consumers know the brand, they give it a name, surround it with elements which it identifies itself with. Because brands reflect the experience a consumer will have with the product. For example, the slogan '*just do it*' and the '*whoosh*' immediately guide you to Nike. Its mantra is autentic athletic performance and their mission, according to Nike (Nike, 2016), is:

"To bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete* in the world."

" *If you have a body, you are an athlete."

Therefor it identifies itself with inspirational sport athletes such as Michael Jordan and other famous athlete.

The counterpart of strong brands are mass-produced products which are being brought onto the market in huge quantaties. Often products which consumers do not have a strong connection with. These can also be products developed by companies which fall under different regulations and focus on imitating (strong) familiar brands. A huge problem nowadays is that many consumers from the Netherlands have negative associations with products produced in China. China has made a name for itself that, due to different regulations concerning patents and design rights, a lot of companies from China were able to imitate Western designs and brands. According to the Country-of-Origin effect (Insch & McBride, 2004), consumers take the origin of the product into account during the evaluation or purchase of a product. The challenge for Chinese companies is to connect the product possibilities in China with products which evoke positive reactions and associations in Europe. So that Chinese companies can come loose from the stigmas surrounding the phrase *Made in China*.

The central focus of this project is the development of guidelines for the styling and the ideas and views for a new product line. In the case of existing brands, one has a framework, design guidelines or fundamental ideas which ensure that newly designed products match the brand. In the case of a starting company or a starting brand, those design guidelines aren't always fixed or still non-existent.

JUST DO IT.
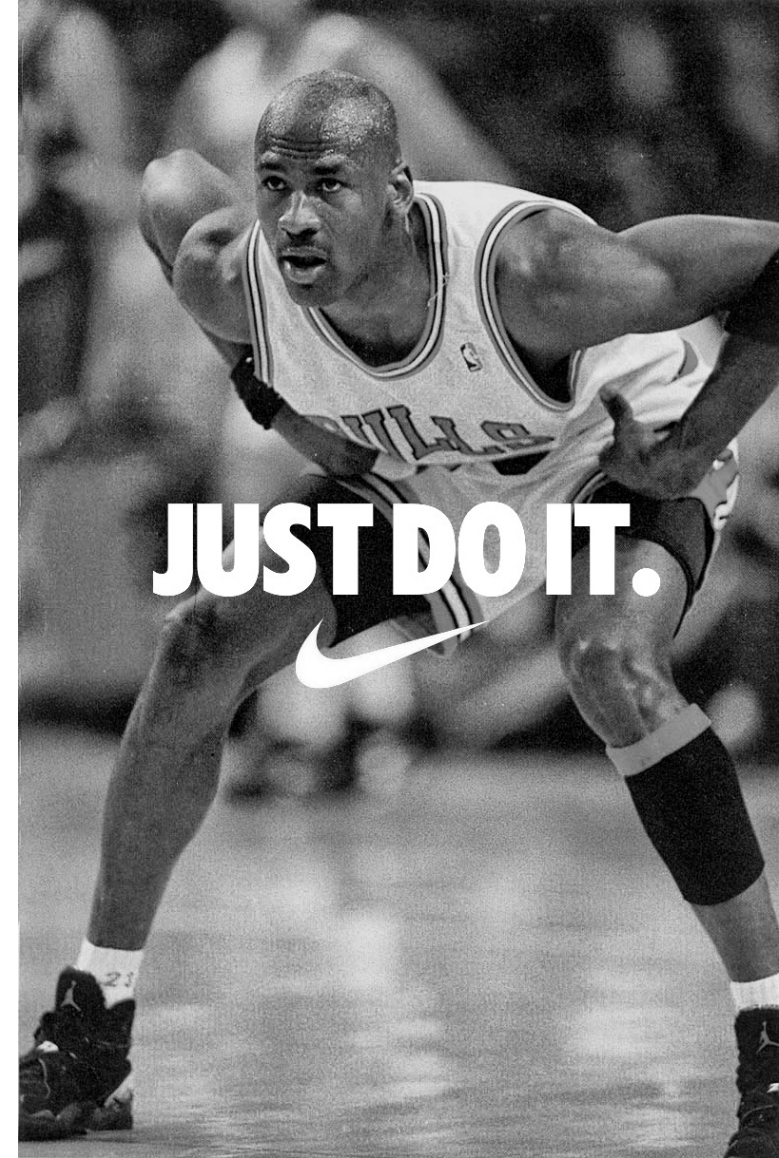
This does not mean the designer can start designing a product however suits him. First it needs to be decided what the brand should represent, the brand promise, and from there, decide what kind of influence that has on your design. Then, a product can be designed which fits the desired brand promise and make the brand and its products a unity.

Brands are a way for consumers to distinguish a product of one producer from another. Brands don't only consist of the products it produces, but also of the brands marketing plan and the experiences of the consumer with the product and the way consumers use their products. In a time where the shelves in a supermarket harbor 20 different types of peanut butter, a brand helps consumers in the process of decision making, especially when the consumer is familiar with the brand. The fact that the product is from a certain brand, gives the consumer a certain degree of security and knowledge about what can be expected from that product. This has come to be through earlier experiences or stories heard about that brand.

The brand imprints the consumer with a certain feeling, an experience and an opinion. This shows that a brand does not exist solely from physical aspects such as a logo and name. Important aspects of a brand are not physical. According to Schmitt (1999; 2013) who developed the concept consumer experience management, mentioned five different kinds of experiences: sensing, feeling, thinking, acting and relating.

A brand may grant the company special rights and patents for specific aspects or features of their products, but still you can't counterfeit the mental impact a brand has on a consumer. Even if the counterfeited product looks identical, it cannot create the mental connection which the consumer has with the original brand.

Brand promise
Earlier the term *brand promise* was mentioned. The product is the physical representation of a brand and that's why the brand promise has to be defined.

Figure 1: Brand promise pyramid

Brand promise
The essence of the brand, the story the brand has to tell

Emotional benefits
Feeling of how the experience satisfies needs

Consumer benefits
A summary of what the consumer emotionally needs from the product

Functional benefits
Tangible experience achieved through the tangible assets. What does the product give the consumer?

Product attributes
Tangible assets/aspects of the product or service

The *brand promise* is the story that the product has to tell, the essence of the brand. It is the value that the brand has to offer and what the consumer will associate the brand with. This means that before any guidelines can be developed for Sofine, it has to be defined what it is what Sofine is going to represent. What is their promise? What should the brand represent? Two possible brand promises have been chosen by D'Andrea & Evers and are given:
- *Bridging cultures*
- *Heritage Chinese quality*

When the guidelines are developed they will be used in this project to design a product that serves as an example for a Chinese brand and its promise.

In Figure 1 the layers that make up the brand promise are being presented. The base to building a product consists of basic attributes such as product attributes and functional benefits.

Example. When buying a mug, basic physical features such as a shape which can hold liquid is essential for the product to work. To ensure that the user can't burn himself a handle could be placed on the mug.

These have to be satisfied to satisfy the needs of the consumer. After this, mental needs and satisfaction should be satisfied in order to come to an emotional connection between the consumer and the product. This could be through making it fit your tastes or your ideology.

Example. When the product is made from recycled material and your ideology relates to being more conscious of the environment. This is when your product fulfills the brand promise, when the consumer understands and resonates with the brand.

Brand resonance
In the Customer based Brand Equity model

(Keller, 2002) in Figure 2, four questions which are (sometimes subconsciously) asked by the consumer during the evaluation of a product or brand are noted. Answering these question and following certain steps are necessary for building a strong brand. The model focusses on brand-added-value. Which Keller defined as:

> *the differential effect that consumer brand knowledge has on their response to the marketing of the brand.'*

The desired level is brand resonance, when a
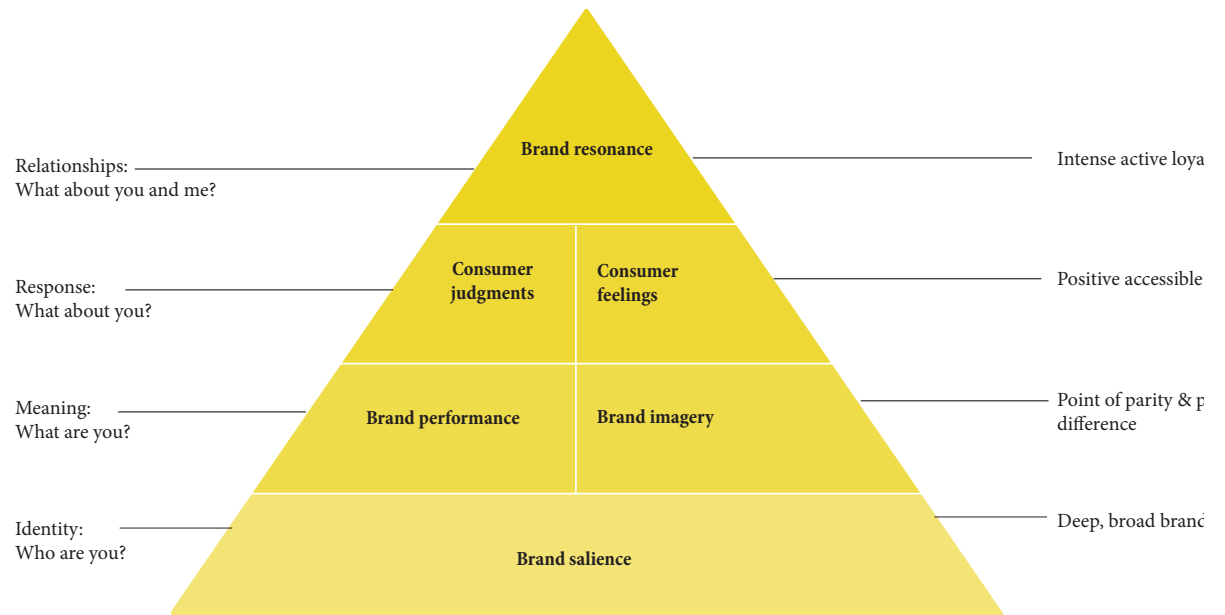
Figure 2: Brand resonance pyramid

brand has reached this level, the consumer is highly aware and familiar with the brand and the brand is associated with strong, positive and unique thoughts.

Brand salience focusses on if there is an awareness of the brand. Does the brand come to mind when a purchase needs to be made.
Brand performance defines if the product fulfills the customers' functional needs
Brand imagery tells about the non-product related properties of the product. Those are, for example needs related to psychological or social aspects.
Brand judgments focus on the opinions of the consumer about the product.
Brand feelings relate to the emotional opinions and reactions to the brand.
In the end there is *brand resonance.* When the consumer resonates with the product and with the brand, then there is a big chance he will continue to buy product from that brand, speak positively about it and is willing to pay a larger price compared to other similar products.

Example. In the case of Sofine there is no Brand salience because the brand wants to start a new and thus unknown brand. And the mother-brand Sofine sells their product to retailers which are not visited by consumers for their brands. Even if the product fulfills the functional needs of the consumer and relates to the social needs of a consumer, the consumer firstly needs to be aware of the brands existince. This is why a good marketing plan, with a clear brand promise is needed. Then, can Sofine acheive salience and resonance in the future.

Conclusion
It is clear that there is more to the succes of a brand than a good product. The term Brand Promise shows that a strong brand relies on a functional product, that fulfills physical, mental and emotional needs. The Brand resonance model shows the consumers reaction to the brand marketing, depending on in which layer the consumer is of the Consumer based Brand Equity model. In this assignment the Brand is still working on Brand Salience, therefor nothing can yet be said about possible Brand Resonance.

It is possible however to work on creating guidelines that will communicate the chosen brand promises:
- Bridging cultures
- Heritage Chinese quality

CHAPTER 2: ASSOCIATIONS

By looking into marketing related theories, psychology related theories and research mental processing, we get a better view of how these associations are being formed. When it is clear how these associations are being formed, it is time to discover how these associated can be guided to the desired associations. At the end of this chapter we hope to have found methods to make it possible to create the associations the consumer gets. And to maximize the positive associations and reduce the negative associations.

In this Chapter you will read:
- A perspective on brand associations from a marketing standpoint
- A perspective on developing associations through mental processes from cognitive sciences

THE MARKETING PERSPECTIVE

Brand associations consist of all brand-related thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, nodes, beliefs, attitudes connected to a brand node. A node is stored information connected by links. These links can be anything varying from visual elements, verbal, contextual, etc. In Marketing Management (Kotler, Keller, 2012) it is described that a way to build brand equity one must create links between the brand and other information that is available in the consumers mind. These are called secondary associations, these can link the brand to the company, geographical locations, other brands, people such as famous athletes or spokespeople or even sporting events and other (cultural) events.

As seen in the Figure 3, a brand can be linked to other brands, people, things or places. And through that link to a secondary node. The place could be linked to the country of origin. Depending on if the brand is familiar for the consumer or not, it can link to many or few nodes. There is a bigger chance that for brand that is already known, and thus in the mind of the consumer, it is easier to create links with people, other brands, places and things. But in the case of a new brand, these links are scarcer, in that case an existing link can seem very important.

This is important to know, for in this case, where an unknown brand enters the Dutch market people have no knowledge of the brand. Which means, the information consumers do have about that brand are key aspects to judge the brand on. When it happens that they only know the country of origin, it plays a big role in the evaluation of new products. So the challenge is to lead their attention to positive aspects of the country of origin or other positive nodes.

Branding and product design
In short, the relation between branding and design is:
The brand, or more specifically, the brand promise is the story that the brand wants to tell. It is what it stands for. To communicate this brand promise, great design is needed to make sure the right message is communicated. The design, in the shape of physical or non-physical attributes, tells the consumer what the brand is about, and what qualities can be expected. It also happens the other way around, the visual design is interpreted when the
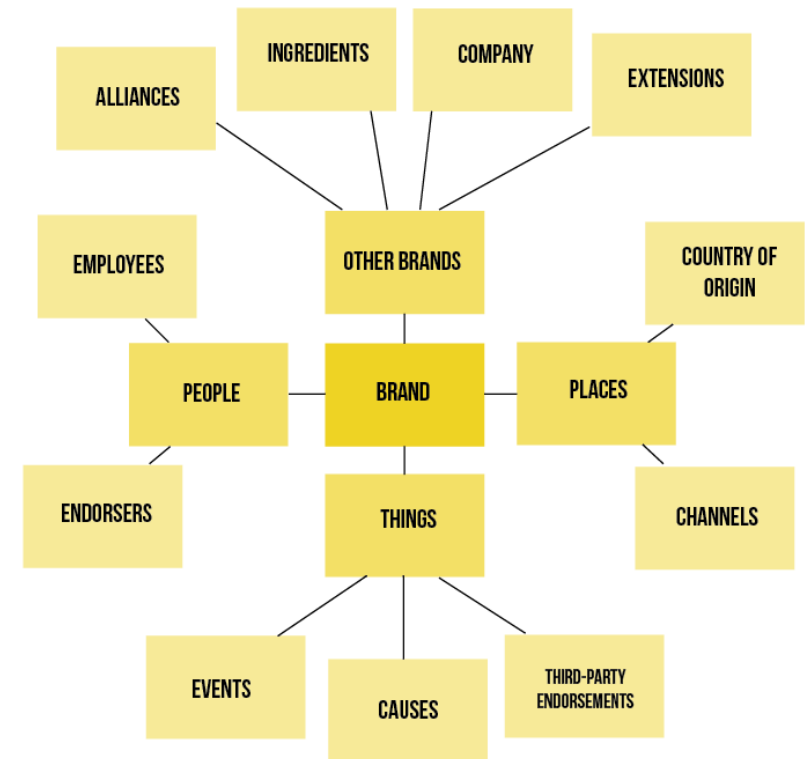
Figure 3: Brand nodes

brand promise is not known, and this interpretation leads to an assumption of the brand promise.

Branding is important, but design has to be understood to create great branding. Since in branding there are almost always strong graphic, physical or non-physical features that are needed to make it work. When building the brand,

the product design is one of the key points to communicating to the consumer what the brand is about. The product is a physical representation of the brand. The product is telling the story about the brand, by delivering the brand promise.

But an effective brand does not only depend on the visual appearance of the graphic of physical features that it identifies itself with. But it depends on the complex meaning of the design underneath. This means, that the focus should not lie on just developing a distinctive image in any arbitrary way, but an image that has meaning reflected in a sense of the real quality it represents. A brand and its products should not just try and reflect a meaning or try to represent a certain quality, if they don't really have that quality to them.

It happens in two directions:
- *The brand promise is known and matching elements or features are searched for in the design that communicate the brand promise.*
- T*he design is visible and the brand promise still unknown. Features or aspects of the design are given meaning to form a possible brand promise.*

The first starts with the brand (promise). The designer can look at filling in how that brand promise can be translated in physical or non-physical features. This helps communicating the brand promise through elements which have a certain quality to them. In this assignment, the brand promise of Sofine, is going to be Bridging cultures and Heritage Chinese quality. To communicate this message, the designer could look at the combination of the two cultures. What do they have in common? What is known in the mind of the consumer about both cultures? What do they do differently? And to communicate Chinese quality: What is typical Chinese craftsmanship? What are Chinese companies or people good at? What are popular products produced in China?

But it can also happen the other way around, when the brand and its promise is not known. When a consumer does not know the brand, but sees the product for the first time, one will look at the design and its features (physical and non-physical) and will give meaning to those features. Automatically, the qualities of these features are being given to the brand as well. In this case, look at other products, or Chinese elements and find what

those things have that communicates their quality. Most often, the designer starts with the brand promise and searches for a matching design. The consumer however, first sees the design, and searches for a matching brand promise.

Foreign company
If the non-Dutch brand is already familiar, or when a new brand is a sub-brand of a familiar mother-brand it would be possible to link the new brand to the existing brand. If that isn't the case, other ways for gaining positive associations have to be created. As said before, other nodes to link a brand to are people, other things and places. It is an option to sell the products of the new brand to successful retailers and department stores, hoping that their reputation will rub off. However in this case, the targets are department stores and gift shops. These don't receive such a level of loyalty that when product lies in the shop, it is guaranteed that it will be bought.

For a Chinese company pursuing the high end Dutch decorative market the best option is to link their brand to the positive aspects of the country of origin. There is not yet anything known about

Brand promise

Expected quality related to associations

Associations related to features

Physical features

This is the brand promise, the way you want consumers to see your brand

These are the qualities related to those associations, which help with communicating the brand promise

These are the things associated with the products' attributes. The consumer needs to be guided to the desired associations.

This is the physical design of the product. Features need to lead to the desired associations. The design is the physical representation of the brand promise.

Figure 4: Layers of the brand promise

the brand and their products, but an aspect such as the country of origin can be used during the design of the product. In this case, China, has a lot of inspiration to offer. A possible problem is the image that many Dutch consumers have of China. For some consumers China brings about the images of cultural activities and monuments such as the Chinese New Year, Chinese craftsmanship or Chinese wall. However, for other individuals it brings about an image of counterfeited products, political issues and poor work environments in factories. The various images that one can have are extremes. It is desired to get the positive extreme.

How to achieve the brand promise
In Figure 4 you can see how the brand promise and physical features are related, the features make up the brand promise. The most obvious aspects are tangible aspects such as physical features, the use and function of those physical features. Later on one

contemplates the deeper meaning the associations have which come with those features. And at the end, one has to combine the qualities of those associations with the product. This is how one can steer the consumer in the direction of the desired brand promise, with the use of associations.

According to Keller in Conceptualizing, Measuring & Managing Customer-Based Brand Equity (1993), brand associations can be categorized into 3 groups.

Attributes
These are characteristics, which the consumer thinks the product possesses:
Product related attributes. Features which makes the product fulfill its function. These consist of the physical attributions to make it possible for the product to work.
Non-product related attributes. External features not directly related to the physical product. These attributes do not have an influence on the performance of the product. Such as, the price, the packaging, and the image that comes to mind when you try to imagine who uses that type of product, when you would use it and where.

Benefits
These are what the consumer thinks the product could mean to them.

Functional benefits. Benefits related to the product, these usually relate to the product related attributes. These benefits are linked to some sort of motivation, such as the solving of a problem or protection against it.
Experiential benefits. The way it feels to use the product, these usually also relate to the product related attributes and satisfy certain sensory needs.
Symbolic benefits. These benefits usually relate to non-product related attributes. This attribute could be relate to the image of the type of people who use it, for example trendy people. Another symbolic benefit is that it fulfills the need for social approval by other trendy people.

Example.
Functional: A scarf that keeps you warm.
Experiential: A scarf with a smooth silk-like texture.
Symbolic: A scarf from the fashion brand Burberry or a scarf hand knitted by Peruvian women.

Attitudes
Brand attitudes are the beliefs of the consumer about a partical brand. It is how strongly they feel negative or positive towards a brand, and how strong their conviction is that image of the brand is accurate. It is difficult to specify all the relevant

attributes and benefits which influence the overall brand attitude for every consumer. Due to the fact that it differs per person which attributes or benefits are valued stronger.

Conclusion
The three brand association categories bring forth accessible aspects which are tangible. These aspects will be used to define which factors have an influence on the different associations one has with a product. Now it is necessary to know which aspects are most important for the consumer, which are being evaluated first during the evaluation of a decorative product, and which ones are interesting to focus on.

Figure 5: brand node Country of Origin

Country of Origin Effect
Because this study focussses on Chinese companies developing products for the Dutch consumer market, it is necessary to know what effect the country of origin (COO) has on the consumers opinion of the product. Earlier was noted that consumers base their opinions on the secondary nodes, other brands, people, things and places, things they already know about the brand or product. In the case of a new brand where little to nothing is known about the product or brand, a secondary node can be the Country of origin. That is, because in the shop it is often shown on the packaging where it originates from. When only the COO is known, it is essential to know how this impacts the consumer's decision making process, since this will have a larger impact on the evaluation of the product than in a case where a consumer has more information about the product or brand.

Researchers in general agree that novice consumers, consumers that have low knowledge about

certain products, tend to base their evaluation of a product on stereotypical information. This can be a retrieved from a cue such as the country of origin, but also brand names, models, colors and background music. Even though these aspects don't have a direct influence on the performance of the product, they are often used to evaluate the performance. A consumer with a high product knowledge is more likely to base their opinion on attribute-based information rather than stereotypical information.

In various researches on this same topic, they concluded that COO cues are not always used the same way (Chiou, 2003; Liu and Johnson, 2005; Maheswaran,1994). These cues are used as a shortcut when they have insufficient information. The country of origin cues are extrinsic cues. Unlike intrinsic cues which affect product performance, extrinsic cues have no influence on the performance of the product. Some studies suggest that his has led to multiple problems for companies originating from developing countries, many products from these countries are evaluated unfairly due to stereotypical judging. And many companies, from for example developing

countries, are being evaluated poorly due to these psychological barriers (Brodowsky, Tan, and Meilich, 2004; Liu and Johnson, 2005).
There have been studies to provide other explanations regarding the psychological processes which is related to the COO cues (Devine, 1989; Liu and Johnson, 2005). A possible explanation, from this perspective, is that consumers with a higher product knowledge can consciously control information processing. Consumers with low product knowledge are more susceptible to COO cues, even though the consumer might not be aware of it. Schreider and Shiffrin published a theory in 1977 on how human processing has two different modes: automatic and controlled. Automatic processing is fast, uncontrolled, unconsciously and not limited to short-term memory. This part of processing is related to unconscious associations and reactions by the activation of a memory. The controlled process on the other hand is a slow, cognitively active and conscious process. The information gathered from this process is based on your active memory seeking. This theory might explain how COO cues can have an involuntary effect on consumers, how it can even affect their opinion without their consent.

Conclusion
It is clear that if the consumer has a high knowledge of the product it is easier for the consumer to actively think about attributes of the product. This can also happen through the simplicity or familiarity of products. In the case of decorative products, a products are likely to be familiar to the consumer and not many knowledge is needed to have a high knowledge about it. So in this case, the consumer is highly likely to be able to look at both extrinsic as intrinsic cues.
It is still important to take the COO-effect into consideration, due to unintentional automatic processing one creates associations which have a relation with the COO. Because Dutch consumers knowledge about China vary, it is wise to focus on the positive aspects of China. When there are no other cues to focus on, these positive aspects are will receive more attention. At this point it is important to know what consumers already know about China.

THE COGNITIVE PERSPECTIVE

But how do these associations come about according to cognitive science? To answer this, one must know a little about how information enters the humans mind. We need to know more about perception. For example, when we see a new vase for the first time, how are we able to label it as a vase? How do we know what to do with it? How do we know what it is commonly used for?

Perception
It might feel easy, as if immediately you're able to distinguish forms, products and other visuals. But perception is constantly active and interpreting all the stimuli which enter the human's sensory system. A great portion of stimuli and information we receive is incomplete or dubious, your perception fills the gap. The process itself is rather complicated, but it just happens that the brain is extremely good and experienced at it.

Form perception
We have the ability to recognize objects visually, color and size also have a part in this but it is mainly led by our perception of their form. Feature detectors are cells on a person's retina that react to the presence of specific stimuli. This could be a reaction to, for example, a certain angle or line.

Example. when seeing four straight lines combined on a blank space we will recognize that as a square. There is no chance that we will perceive it as a circle or as a view of the sun rising at the beach. This is because those visual images have completely different features. The human mind has the capability to receive those stimuli, organize it and makes an interpretation of what is seen.

Top-down and bottom-up processing
When looking at designing a product, it is wise to have knowledge about what leads the consumer to choose for a certain product and how he or she perceives and interprets the product. Therefore it is necessary to know if your perception is led stronger by your previously stored knowledge and your expectations, or if it is influenced stronger by sensory information. This is how the two processes are distinguished in the field of Psychology:

'Bottom-up processing is processing which depends directly on external stimuli, whereas top-down processing is processing which is influenced by expectations, stored knowledge, context and so on.' (Eysenck, 1998, p. 152)

'In bottom-up processing (also called data-driven or stimulus-driven processing), the process starts with the features – the bits and pieces – of the stimulus, beginning with the image that falls on the retina. This information is processed hierarchically by successively higher levels of the visual system until the highest levels (the "top" of the system) are reached, and the object is perceived. Top-down processing (also called 3 | Page knowledge-driven processing) involves the use of contextual information supplied from memory – the "big picture".' (Carlson et al., 2010, p. 202)

During the designing of a product these processes have to be taken into account. Top-down processing plays a role in associating objects with other objects, knowledge, experiences and context, and so on. As was said before, it looks at 'the big picture' not just external stimuli.

Figure 6: Universally perceived stimuli

Positive	Negative
warm, comfortably lit places	heights harsh
temperate climate	sudden, unexpected loud sounds or bright lights
sweet tastes and smells	"looming" objects (objects that appear to be about to hit the observer)
bright, highly saturated hues	extreme hot or cold
"soothing" sounds and simple melodies and rhythms	darkness
harmonious music and sounds	extremely bright lights or loud sounds
caresses	empty, flat terrain (deserts)
smiling faces	crowded dense terrain (jungles or forests)
rhythmic beats	crowds of people
"attractive" people	rotting smells
symmetrical objects	decaying foods
rounded	bitter tastes
smooth objects	sharp objects
"sensuous" feelings, sounds, and shapes	harsh, abrupt sounds, grating and discordant sounds
	misshapen human bodies
	snakes and spiders
	human feces (and its smell)
	other people's body fluids
	vomit

Visceral, behavioral and reflective processing
In 2004 Don Norman focused in his research on human emotion and the processes which relates to these human characteristics. He defines these three processes as the visceral, the behavioral and the reflective process.

Visceral
The visceral process is the role that nature plays. Human beings have evolved to adapt to other humans and animals and our surroundings. We are programmed to like or dislike certain kind of things or stimuli. This process happens automatically. The visceral process is the base of protective mechanism that helped humans in the beginning of times that were necessary to quickly judge situations and be able to immediately respond. Danger, safety, good, bad. This process judges the situation which leads to relaxation during a safe situation, or a fight or flight response when the situation is stressful or dangerous.

Our biological system has granted us with an universal repertoire of stimuli which are automatically judged as let's say, positive and negative. This means some of these stimuli are interpreted the same independent of your heritage and environment, such as sweet tastes, bright colours and symmetry. These are universally found desirable. These link back to when our ancestors judged possible mating partners based on bodily appearance and also symmetry, since a symmetric, healthy looking body will likely bring healthy offspring. And a disfigured body will probably mean that they have genes which lead to a 'less healthy' body. This also works with searching for edible food and sweeter tastes. Still, nowadays people also like bitter tastes and have different views on what they find beautiful when looking for a partner. But these things are also influenced

by culture and are acquired tastes, which can be learned.

Even though the visceral process is the most primitive part of the brain, it has a grip on a large part of human preferences and dislikes. A list of universally conditions perceived as positive or negative have been listed in Figure 6 by Don Norman, these are considered so due to the effect they have on people's reaction. Such as warmth, safety or positive feelings. But it has to be mentioned that not everyone will feel a fear for all the negative conditions listed or positive feelings with the positive conditions, some have to arise due to an experience with those conditions.

Visceral design
During the design process, at the visceral level the psychical features, such as look, sound, taste, feel, are the most important factors. Since there are universal conditions of what humans experience as attractive, it is possible for the designer to implement those conditions into his or her design. But as mentioned before, stimuli have an impact on the visceral level, but our experience and the environment we live in merges with those universal

likes and dislikes.

Example. On a biological level we have the means to learn a language, the brain has the structures to learn and to listen and this is universally the same for every human. But the experience you have with languages determines the language you learn to speak and the accent you carry. And it determines the way you'll be able to adapt to other languages.

What does this mean for the design? When a designer incorporates all the universally preferred features and stimuli, the design that emerges will highly likely be considered pretty or attractive. It is considered attractive because it matches what we are biologically programmed to find attractive. By focusing on the visceral level during the

design, products emerge that call forth emotions.

Example. A beautiful example of a product which led to this emotion, is for example the Panton chair by Verner Panton. The sleek and curvaceous styles by Panton were a contributor to the style trend Space Age of the 1960s. When it was presented in 1967 it caused a sensation, and led to many features in sexy portraits on the cover of Danish magazines, British fashion magazines and eventually on the cover of the British Vogue.

Image 1: Panton chair

(And then there's the teenager. The teenager dislikes everything.)

Another example is the Juicy Salif lemon squeezer by Philip Starck first produced in 1990. Many people commented that it works poorly, it makes a mess with juice running along the legs. But at the same time it is also considered a magnificent example of form over function. Even though it is known that it is not functional, due to the controversial and attractive design the squeezer is still being produced today.

The Citroën DS by Flaminio Bertoni was presented at a car show in Paris in 1955. It immediately received so many orders (12.000) and that same week it got up to 80.0000 orders, which led to problems with production. The design was so unconventional for that time, with such an attractive design it got the nickname Goddess of the road and was named the Most beautiful car of all time by car experts.

Behavioral

Behavioral processing relates to the use and the functions. This level is not conscious, which is why people are able to drive cars without constantly having to focus on driving, they are able to have different conscious reflective thoughts while driving. But where the visceral level is purely biological and is imprinted on us universally, the behavioral level responses are learned. They are still unconscious, but the skills and actions needed to perform with different products have been learned. During the action the person is aware of the action, but depending on how skilled he is in performing that task it varies if he has to actively think about it or proceeds to do the action sub-consciously.

Behavioral design

Behavioral design is about knowing how the user will use a product. During design, it is function above form. The four important components of behavioral design are: function, understandability, usability and physical feel. The product should fulfill the target, when it doesn't even accomplish that during behavioral design, the design is a failure.

When designing a product, two common methods are enhancing and innovating. Enhancement means, seeing a problem in the use of the current product and then solving them with an adjusted design. Innovating new product is more complex, you can't predict if it will be a success, if users will use it the way in was intended to and it is harder to imagine if the user will need or want the product if they have to experience with it.

Image 3: Citroen DS

Typical examples of behavioral design are products where the use or the physical experience of the product is the most important.

Example. An office chair is designed for optimal functionality, a perfect combination between comfort and stimulating the user of maintaining a good posture during work. In this product category functionality and usability comes first.

Example. The same can be said for running shoes. Even if nowadays brands bring more and more trendy designs of running shoes. When buying new running shoes, the first thing the consumer looks at is how it feels and how it functions. It needs to catch the blows during every step, protecting the runner's knees. The front of the shoe has to fluently unroll your foot. It should protect the runner from injury. Overall, the most important factors are factors related to the use. After that, other aspects such as attractiveness and price will become important.

Reflective

The last process is that of reflective thought. We, humans, have the ability to consciously think about our actions, learn new concepts and have an own view of the world and situations. In this stadium of looking at products, people think about the underlying message, the culture, the meaning or alternative ways to use it. People consider the signal it sends to others when buying certain products, or consider their own self-image and how the product relates to that. This part of processing plays a part in long time consumer experiences. This part of your thought process considers past experiences and emotions with certain products.

Attractiveness is part of the visceral process, stimuli attract your attention which are biologically imprinted into your mind. But beauty, and appreciating certain conditions or stimuli, is reflective. It is derived from culture, experiences, contemplation, knowledge and learning. On the reflective level multiple factors play a role which combine into a total image of your opinion about the product and the use.

Example. An example of reflective design are products made of recycled or upcycled materials. These products do not necessarily have a better functionality or are aesthetically more pleasing. There are many different reasons why people resonate with these product. With people becoming more and more conscious of the environment, they try to find products that match their ideology. Through buying products made of recycled materials they communicate to the outer world that they have certain opinions on the matter of waste and environmental issues. But also for themselves they can achieve a certain satisfaction from buying these type of products.

Example. It has been proven by engineers that the headphones by Beats are being sold for $199 while the parts cost $20. Ratings even say that the audio-quality is not better than headphones that are around $50. Still, people buy headphones by Beats because they resonate with the brand and like the status and image it gives them.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETIC MODEL

Information from the previous chapter is gathered, analysed and ordered in Chapter 3 and formed into a tangible theoretic model. The theory about visceral, behavioral and reflective processing is used as a base and is completed with theories on product attributes and COO. This model has been used as a base for a survey. The results from this survey have been analysed and supplemented with extra literary data about consumer search and browse behavior. At the end of the chapter we will know which attributes, benefits and mental processes are most interesting to focus on to develop guidelines.

In this Chapter you will read:
- A combination of previous literature into a step by step model of product attributes and benefits being evaluated
- Results from a survey conducted on Dutch consumers on how they evaluate decorative products
- An insight in differences in consumer search and browsing behavior
- A conclusion on which part of the mental process will be focused on for the final framework/guidelines

MODEL

In the field of design it is useful to know which attributes of your design will be looked at first, longest and which is weighed the most important by the consumers. Do I need to grab the consumers' attention with bombastic visual design, should I focus on function, or should I make use of the consumers need for social acceptation?
These questions have been asked by designers, how to use certain elements in your design to communicate the brands story. In the theory about brand attributes (Keller, 1993) these aspects which consumer look at are summarized in 3 groups. Attributes, benefits and brand attitudes.

These have been explained before in Chapter 2. The question which arised was, in which order do these aspects come to mind when a consumer is evaluating a product? This can be solved with the theory of visceral, behavioral and reflective processing (hier bron). We discussed the theory by Norman, who mentions that some part of mental processing happens unconsciously, a part subconsciously and the last part in conscious.

Dividing the attributes
The unconscious part, the visceral level, contains body imbedded responses and feelings toward certain stimuli. These are features which can be seen at first glance and are the *product related attributes*.

The second part is partially subconscious and partially conscious, the behavioral level. This level is related to the functions and the use of the product. There are three aspects which relate to this level. The *functional benefits, product related attributes* and *experiential benefits*. These all have to do with experience, with knowing subconsciously how products work.

The conscious part, is the reflective level. Here, the consumer contemplates *non-product related attributes* and *symbolic benefits*. These are closely related to the users need for social 'fitting in', the message behind the product, the cultural meaning, the image that comes to mind when thinking of what type of people use it, where and when. These are added values, these don't have an impact on the performance of the product, but are needed for the consumer to buy this product and not the one of the competitor.
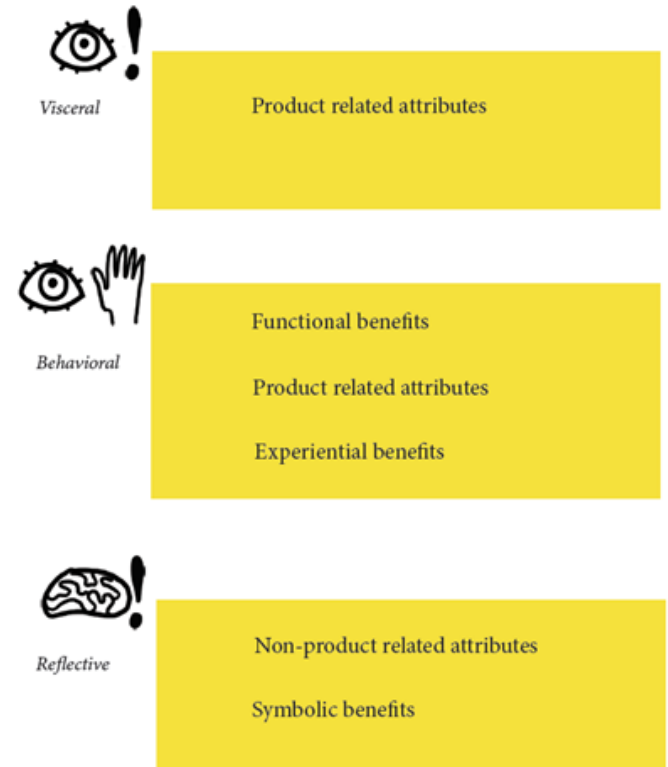
Figure 7: Combination of attributes and benefits with their matching mental process

Combined basis of the model

The theory about visceral, behavioral and reflective processing is combined with the information about brand associations and the COO-effect. This leads to the model in Figure 8. It was mentioned in earlier chapters that consumers can automatically retrieve certain associations related to the COO. This does not mean it belongs under visceral, which is also an automated process. It is part of the reflective process due to thoughts about the COO arising from previous experiences and own or others opinions. It has no effect on the performance of the product, but it has an effect on the consumer's expectations of the performance.

Product

Visceral

Product related attributes

After the first fase comes a response to the product. Here the attention needs to be caught and the consumer needs to think WOW!

Behavioral

Functional benefits

Product related attributes

Experiential benefits

Noticing Country of Origin

knowledge

opinions

experiences

The product has to fulfill the basic functions for the consumer to be able to fulfill their needs.

Reflective

Non-product related attributes

Symbolic benefits

The product needs to resonate with the consumer.

associations & thoughts related to the product

associations & thoughts related to the country + product

The outcome of associations and thoughts can influence the knowledge, opinions and experiences with the Country of Origin

A huge pile of (positive and negative) associations and thoughts

Figure 8: Combined model steps for product evaluating

STEP BY STEP

Visceral

1.　　The consumer sees the product. The only attributes which are taken into consideration here are the physical attributes.

2.　　Visual stimuli are being assessed.

3.　　The consumer reacts to the product after the product has been judged as a potential threat or a potentially positive object.

4.　　It can lead to a physical reaction: consumer's attention is captured, product is evaluated as not interesting or product drives away the consumer.

Behavioral

5.　　Potential questions: What is it? What does it do? How do I use it? How did it feel when I used that type of product?

6.　　Experience and culture has a big influence in this process. If it is a familiar or easy product, the behavioral level will go quickly. If it is an complex or unknown product, the consumer might take longer to fully understand the product.

7.　　After this the consumer has an image of the functions of the product. The person will assess if it fulfills the consumers functional needs.

Reflective

8.　　Potential questions: How much does it cost (is it worth the price)? What does the packaging look like (is it appealing, is it useful/funny/ appropriate)? When would I use it? Where would I use it? Who uses it? Do I identify myself with the people that would use it? Is it socially acceptable? What will other people think when I have/use it?What does the product stand for? Do I identify myself with it? (For example. Fairtrade, recycled, typically a male/female product, bought by a certain ethnic or social group etc.)What is the meaning of the product? Is it more than its function?

9.　　After the last process, the consumer does or does not resonate with the product. It feels positive and/or negative about it.

10.　　At the end it results in a collection of all of the associations, thoughts and opinions. These are positive and negative associations and thoughts.

11.　　The newly formed opinions and associations will have an influence on the opinions, experiences and knowledge about the country. These might change a little (or a lot) depending on the associations gathered at the end of the process.

Conclusion

The model presented is the basic mental process of the evaluation of products in general. But it is interesting to know if some attributes or benef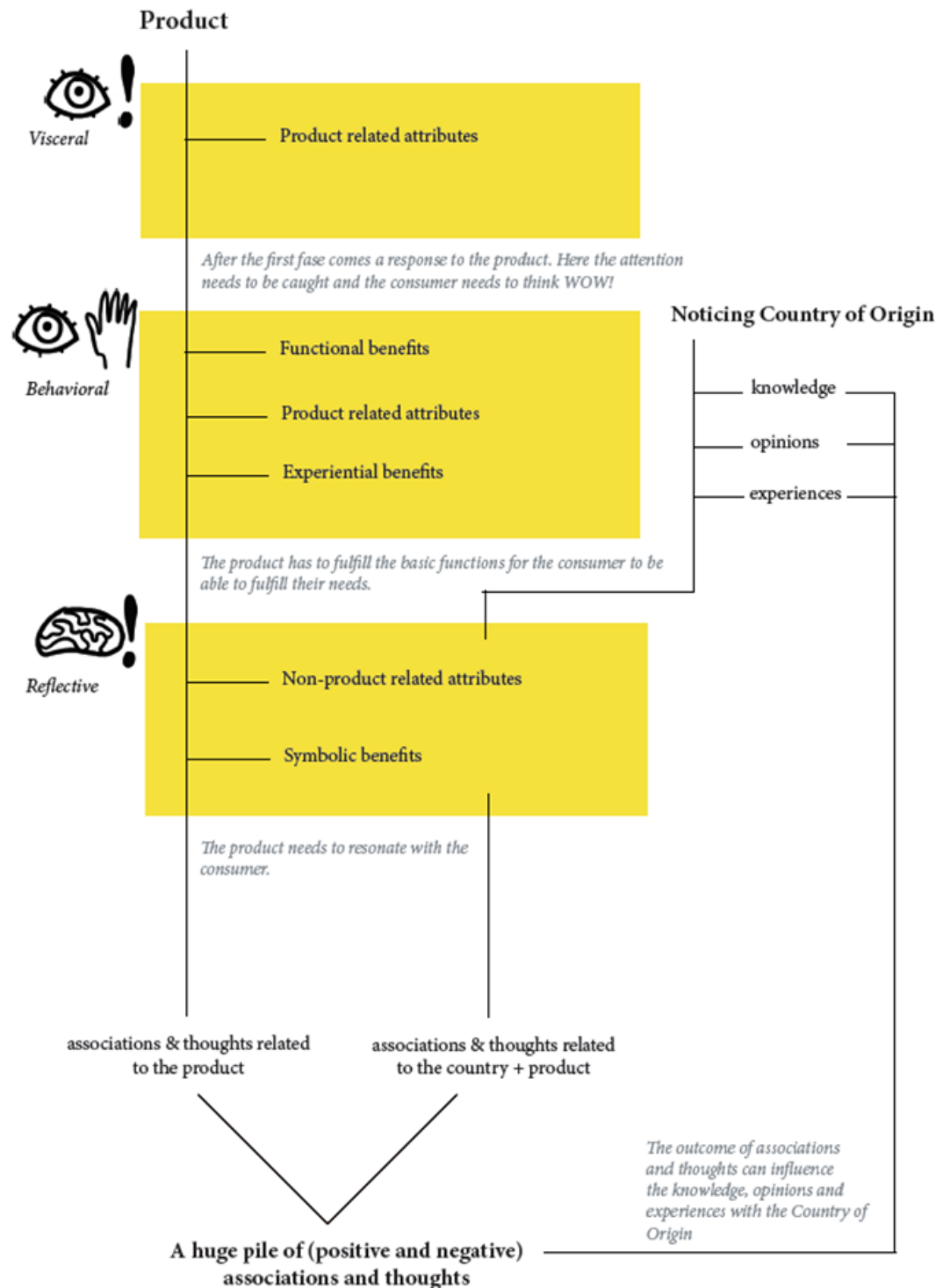its weigh heavier than others. As said before, aspects from the behavioral level are known to be more important for running shoes, but that does not have to count for decorative products. This model will still need input per product category to know which attributes are weighed stronger than others. It is believed that it is product dependent, because you do not judge a car on the same attributes as you judge a picture frame. This model could be used for any product. But the blanks, for which aspects are important and which are not, should be filled in.

With step 10, it is impossible to prevent people to get an unintential association. It is possible to focus on acheiving as many as possible positive associations, but negative associations cannot be fully excluded. Therefor in this assignment, the focus will lie on, putting the positive aspects of China in the spotlight.

SURVEY

A list of questions were formulated which needed to be answered. These give insight in the different attributes which have an influence on the evaluation of a decorative product by the Dutch consumer. The answers are retrieved through an online survey. 39 contestants were given written examples of possible products which they should take in mind, such as vases, photo frames and candle holders. It was necessary to know which aspects of the visceral, behavioral and reflective level were used during the evaluation of a decorative product. The different attributes and benefits were translated into understandable aspects of a product to make it easier for the test person to understand.

The test person was asked to determine how important these different aspects are for the evaluation of the product. With a seven level Likert scale, the test persons could answer from 1 to 7, with 1 being '*not important at all*' and 7 being '*very important*'. After determining how important every attribute was singularly, the test persons were asked to compare the different aspects and decide which one they looked at first, and which one they used as a deciding factor. For this part the product related attributes and non-product related attributes where

	Attributes or benefits	Translation into product
Visceral	Product related attributes	The product looks appealing (This is partially visceral, but also for a large part reflective. Important.)
Behavioral	Functional benefits	The fulfills its function
	Product related attributes	It is immediately clear how the product is to be used
	Experiential benefits	The product looks enjoyable to use
Reflective	Non-product related attributes	Price
	Non-product related attributes	Packaging
	Non-product related attributes	It matches your personality
	Symbolic benefits	The product symbolizes something
	Non-product related attributes	It is produced in a specific country

Figure 9: Translated attributes into understandable aspects for survey

evaluated separately due to there being too many factors to choose from.

This was asked for real life situations in a store and with situations where one looks up products in web shops. This was to see if there was a difference when one could not physically feel and check out the product. This was done because it is still uncertain

if the company will be selling their products online or offline.
After judging the different product aspects, the test persons were asked questions about their opinion on China and Chinese products. Not just to discover the positive things they associate China with. It is also necessary to know the negative things and if the COO has a noticeable effect on

their evaluation of decorative products.

The full survey can be found in appendix X. After the results were retrieved, the data was analyzed.

Results

The statistical analysis and an analysis of the open question can be found in appendix X and X respectively. Below, a summarization of the most important results are given.

The following data was found through the consumer survey. Consumers found the following the most important aspects of a product in general. In order of most important to less:
- *The decorative product fulfills its function*
- *The decorative product looks appealing*
- *The price*
- *The expectation of pleasure through the product*
- *The product is in tune with your personality*
Attributes which were considered hardly important:
- *The country where it was produced*
- *The packaging*

Depending on at which part of the decision making process the consumer is, he or she weighs certain

attributes more important than others. There is also a small difference between the real life store and the web shop.

Real-life store

At the first glance (the visceral level/behavioral level) the important physical attributes are, starting with the most important:
- *The decorative product looks appealing*
- *The decorative product fulfills its function*
Starting with the most important non-physical attribute:
- *Fits the consumers personality*
- *Price*

The deciding factors (behavioral/reflective) change, starting with the most important physical attribute:
- *The decorative product fulfills its function*
- *The decorative product looks appealing*
- *(Also. The expected experience will become more important.)*
Starting with the most important non-physical feature:
- *Price*
- *Fits the consumer personality*

Web shop

At the first glance (the visceral level/behavioral level) the important physical attributes are, starting with the most important:
- *The decorative product looks appealing*
- *The decorative product fulfills its function*
Starting with the most important non-physical attribute:
- *Price*
- *Fits the consumers personality*

The deciding factors (behavioral/reflective) change, starting with the most important physical attribute:
- *The decorative product fulfills its function*
- *The decorative product looks appealing*
- *(Also, the expected experience will become more important.)*
Starting with the most important non-physical feature:
- *Price*
- *Fits the consumer personality*

It is noticeable that throughout different situations, the symbolization is almost always equally important and so is the country of origin. In the open section of the consumer survey, there were a

lot of people who did not find the country of origin to have an influence on their opinion on products, but that it depended on other factors such as price and product category.

Conclusion 1.
The lead physical attribute, which plays a great role in the visceral level, is the outer appearance of the decorative product. This means that designers should make use of this to capture the attention of the consumer.

The outer appearance also has an influence on 'fits the consumers personality'. Through the styling of the product the designer can make sure it fits the social group that the consumer wants to be part of, or feels he belongs to. When thinking of the average consumer in the Netherlands, the designer could apply existing Dutch trends to make it fit to their image of fashionable products.

Conclusion 2.
Price is a leading factor, in the open question respondents spoke of a good trade-off between price and quality. For this examples could be sought of similar products in the same price category to

find out what the consumer expects for that price category.

Conclusion 3.
After the visceral and behavioral level, the importance of the function does not decline. It would be expected that with simple functions such as those of a decorative product, the function would not play a big role as deciding factor. Still, it is equally important as the outer appearance. This part happens during the reflective process, which means the consumer is more focused on 'what does it do for me and what benefits does it deliver?' and less of 'how does it work?' Since that is part of the behavioral level, it is subconscious.

Conclusion 4.
The symbolization of a certain idea and the country of origin don't play a big role in the decision making process. It is a constant factor in the situations web shop/ real life store and first glance/ deciding moment.

Conclusion 5.
There are strong correlations between price, function and symbolism. And a correlation between price

and country. This means that when increasing one attribute, for example function, the correlated price will increase as well. This means when making the function more important, the importance of the price and symbolism will rise as well. When you heighten the symbolism, also the country of origin becomes more important as you can see in the figure above. The same can be said for the relation between the resonance with the personality, the packaging and the appealing appearance.

Conclusion 6.
From the 5 attributes which were considered as important/very important, 3 of them were part of the reflective level. With the price and aesthetics also rated as two of the most important attributes. This shows that the reflective level plays a very large role, probably the largest role with this product category.

Since the sample group was relatively small, these conclusions based on the survey are taken into account, but my own experience and judgment skills will be taken into consideration as well.

Difference in searching and browsing
It is believed that depending on if one searches actively for a specific product or if one lets himself be surprised makes people look differently at products. Makes them notice different things.
In a research about consumer's browsing or searching behavior (Moe, 2003), consumers' behavior was analyzed by keeping track of what type of pages they looked at in web shops.

The consumers could be divided into 5 groups:
- *Knowledge building*: mainly looking at information pages. Very much time spent on these pages. And very little time spent looking at product related pages.
- *Hedonic browsers*: Spend much time browsing through product related pages. Spend a similar time on looking at product categories as looking at specific products. 72.9% of the category pages and 62.7% of product pages where unique. These shoppers are attracted to new stimuli.
- *Direct buying*: Focused behavior within product-level information and little variety in product category. Repeated looking at the same product page, which means a long deliberation time was spent on specific items. It is probably related to

motivation for the purchase of a particular product purchase.
- *Search sessions*: Goal driven, very little variety in the product categories. But views the most pages, all within a smaller amount of categories. Probably that it is not known yet which product is going to be purchased, they are building their consideration set by viewing many products all in the product categories of interest.
- *Shallow sessions*. People who only look at 2 pages. Not a serious buyer.

Interesting are the search sessions and the hedonic browsers. The consumer of the search sessions is a consumer that looks for a specific type of product, for example a product to present photographs with in the category decorative products. The purpose of looking in the shop is to gain more information about to help make an optimal choice. The consumer already knows what type of product to buy, only unsure of which product in that product category. Where the search session consumer is very goal driven, the hedonic browser is dominated by exploratory search behavior. They look at many different products and don't necessarily stick to one product category. This is the consumer which is led

by new stimuli, they tend to be more sensitive for impulse buying.
Search session consumers search for many products in that product category, they need to be convinced of what would be the best buy. The hedonic browser's attention needs to be caught with new stimuli, with products that stand out from the rest.

CHAPTER CONCLUSION

Through holding an online survey, insight was gained in which attributes were important for the consumer. And therefor, which attributes could be focused on during the design process, to better match the consumer's wants. The answers where consumer's judged on individual attributes were less important than the answers of which attribute weighed heavier when looking at multiple attributes, because in real life, there will always be a mixture of different attributes in a product to be looked at.

The answers about what consumers looked at in web shops and in real life store were combined with data from Buying, Searching Browsing by Wendy W. Moe and knowledge about visceral, behavioral and reflective processing. The two groups mentioned previously were formed into two groups. Search sessions became 'Deliberate searching' and hedonic browsers became 'Browsing'. This was to discover if there was a clear leader between the different mental processes which could be used as a focus point during the design of a product from China for the Netherlands. This resulted in Figure 10.
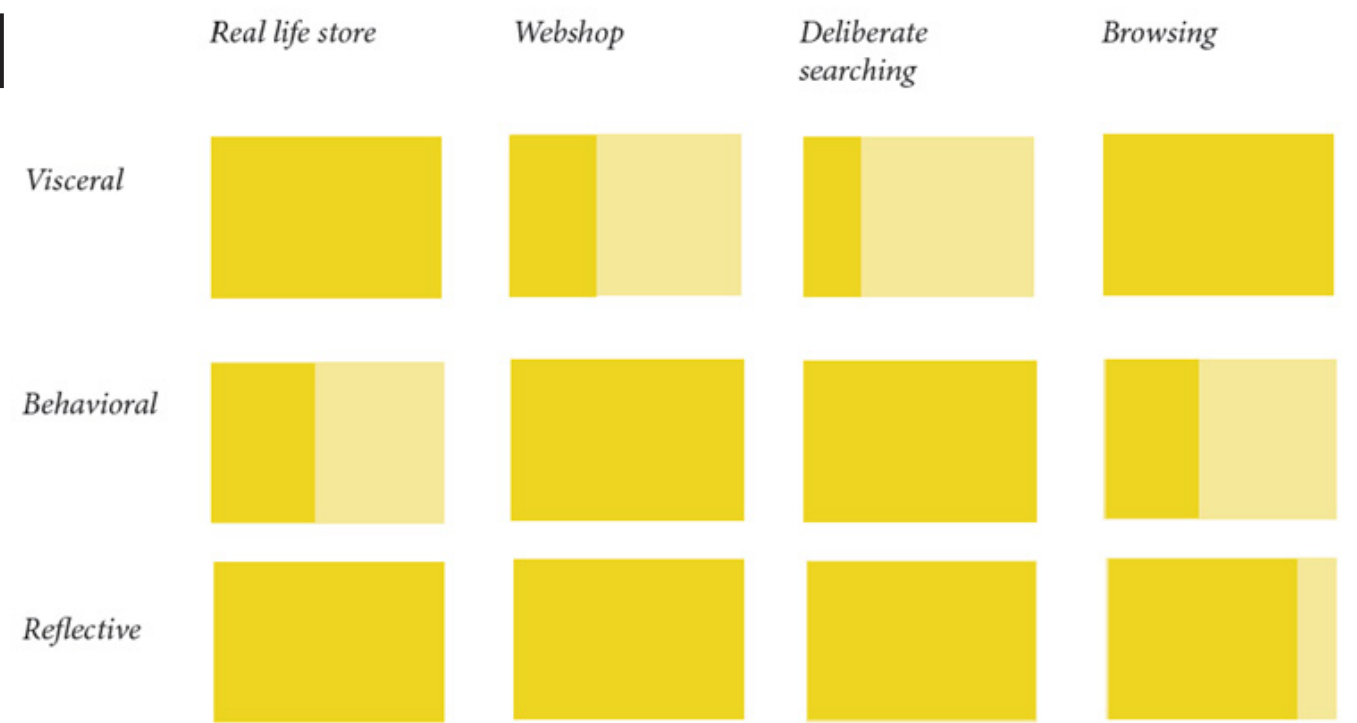
Figure 10: Importance of overall mental processes in different situations

The figure shows that the visceral process is less present in the web shop. This is because only visual stimuli are at work, and other stimuli (sound, smell, feel, taste) have no influence. During deliberate searching one has a specific image in their mind of what they are looking for. This means the consumer is sensitive for stimuli which match that image, they are less swayed by stimuli which don't match the description of the searched for product. When they are looking for something to hang photographs with, they will be focused on looking at products which can present photos.

In a real life store the behavioral process is less important due to the physical presence of the product. It is easier for the consumer to understand the product, either by being able to easily look at different angles, at parts which they do not fully

understand or ask employees about the function. In the case of a web shop the consumer does not have these luxuries and that is why the function needs to be as clear as water in a web shop. Consumers who are browsing without exactly knowing what they are looking for, are being led by visceral stimuli, they tend to look at many products. They are letting themselves be surprised and guided by products that grab their attention.

Eventually it could be seen that the reflective process is important in every situation. For simpler products, in this case decorative products, consumers are led by aspects such as is they find it aesthetically pleasing. This is not just attractiveness from the visceral layer, but it is mostly through the environment, culture and experiences that form what the consumer finds beautiful. Also if the consumer relates to it becomes important. This is different for everyone, but a few examples are: some people find it important to know how it's made, if the employees have a good work environment, if it is sustainable and eco-friendly. And others find it important what it stands for, from which brand it is, what others would think of it. All things which are thought about consciously. Which are part of the

reflective level. In the case of the deliberate searcher the reflective level is especially important because there has already a decision been made on a type of product, but all the products in that product category are consciously compared. This reflects the reflective level. In the case of the browser, it is highly likely that due to being led by new stimuli, there will be less time taken to stand still for a long time with a product. Which leads to the reflective level being a little less present.

Conclusion
The reflective level is the most interesting mental process as a whole. To encompass most important attributes for decorative interior products, the focus will lie on the reflective level and all its aspects and attributes. All the attributes which fall under this mental level will be used for the development of a framework or guidelines for this assignment.

CHAPTER 4: FRAMEWORK BASED ON REFLECTIVE DESIGN ASPECTS

The purpose of this assignment was the development of guidelines for designers of Chinese companies designing for the Netherlands. The tool that is developed, is based on the theories from marketing and cognitive sciences mentioned in previous chapters. This tool combines all the necessary information and theory on the subject into a step-by-step framework to use as a guiding tool during the concept generating process. This way, the designer does not need to have a high knowledge of all the available information out there on the subject of brand associations, mental processes and country of origin effects. Instead, the tool is enough for the designer to know and to lead him or her to possible product concepts. This framework consists of the different reflective aspects which consumers think about while evaluating a product. This framework should help to structure the concept generating process.

In this chapter you will read:
- An elaborate explanation on different reflective design aspects supported with visual collages, these are based on the original reflective aspects mentioned in chapter 2 and 3
- A method with a step by step explanation to generate a wide range of concepts based on those reflective design aspects. In appendix X necessary questions for the method can be found.
- An brief example of possible implementations of the method on a vase

REFLECTIVE DESIGN ASPECTS

As told before, the reflective level is all about contemplation. For design, product characteristics fitting to this level can be mapped to self-image, personal satisfaction and memories.

The reflective level is less about what the consumer needs, but more about what the consumer wants. The traditional way that needs and wants are described in design are: *needs* describe what is necessary for the consumer to fulfill a task, *wants* are what the consumer asks for.

> **Example. When the task is, to carry papers from your home to a meeting, the needs can be met with a bag or carrying case. Any way to carry stuff from A to B. But wants are defined by culture, self-image and how the consumer views themselves and how he or she is influenced by advertising. So, even if a plastic bag is an easy way to carry papers from A to B, a businessman will not want to use this type of product because he might find that it will not suit the situation or his image. It would be embarrassing to bring your official documents in a plastic shopping bag to an important meeting. This embarrassment which would be felt if one had used such a bag, is an emotion. That emotion reflects one's sense of what is appropriate, and is all in the mind. It is important to know, that sometimes the wants can be more powerful than the needs in determining the success of a product.**

To have a better understanding of which factors play a role in reflective design, we look back at the attributes we assigned to this level earlier. These were non-product related attributes and symbolic benefits. These two attributes are made of various factors such as, *price, packaging, self-image, personal satisfaction, social needs, brainteasers & contemplation* and *memories*.

Price

The price is a necessary step for consumers in the process of purchasing a product, but the price itself does not have an influence on the performance of the product. That statement will probably be countered with: the price of a cheap mass-produced product is low for a reason. Since the reason that it could be sold so cheap is possibly because of the use of lower-quality materials, a shady production process, a one-of-a-million product and many more factors. But it does not per definition mean that when a product is sold at a low price, that those assumptions about low price products are true. The same can be said

Beats By Dre
Beats Mixr DJ-
€ 199,00

hoofdtelefoon
Met rubber finish. 1,5 meter
snoer met 3,5 mm stekker.
In dezelfde kleuren zijn ook
oortelefoons verkrijgbaar.

17.50

PRICE

Price does not have an influence on the performance of the product. But it does have an influence on the expected performance or expected quality of the product.

Price   Quality

%

€ 79.95
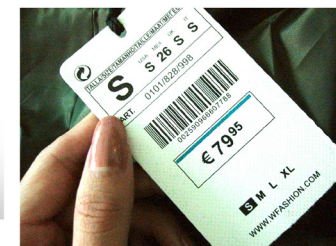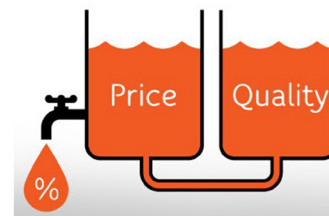
for a high-end expensive product. Just because the product wears an expensive price tag, does not mean that the product itself is worth that price. It is because of other factors such as the brand and the prestige which rises the product to the next price level.

Example. A clear example is that of the Beats headphones. Beats headphones are mostly known for their style and not their sound quality. According to Bolt engineer Avery Louie, the retail price of the beats headphones are $199 but the actual material for the headphones cost no more than $20. Even when you consider that on top of the material costs come the manufacturing costs, the costs of the research beforehand, etcetera. It is a large difference from the retail price.

Consumers usually have strong beliefs about the price and value of brands. But even with brands which the consumer is not yet familiar with, the price tag insinuates a certain quality and prestige to be expected from a product of that price category.

Packaging
Just like the price, packaging does not have a direct influence on the performance of the product. But still, a nice, fitting packaging can have a positive influence on the opinion of the user compared to
packaging which does not fit the product, or which is associated with cheap.

For example, when thinking of cheap wine, there is a big chance that boxed

PACKAGING

Packaging does not have a direct influence on the performance of the product. But it does have an influence on the expected perfomance or quality of a product.
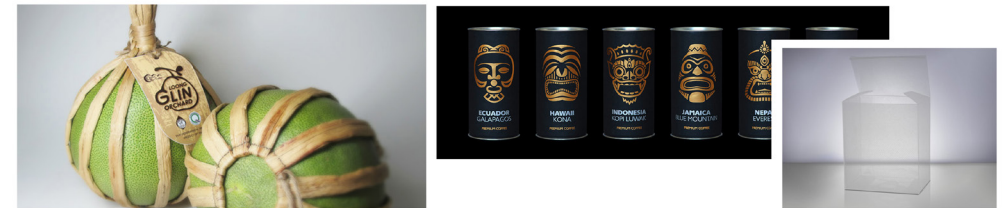
wine comes to mind. A good wine usually comes in a nice bottle. And when trying to make it look even more prestigious, the bottle comes in a fancy box. But packaging like the box, can be shaped into fun and more quality looking packaging through a few transformations.

User imagery
User imagery comes forth from direct experiences such as meeting users of that particular brand or product. Or indirectly from brand advertising, through the communicated target groups displayed in ads and commercials. But also through other information channels, such as hearing about users through others. The associations that form a typical user

of the product can be based on demographic factors, psychographic factors and others as well. Demographic factors are, among other things, sex, race, income, age. Psychographic factors focus on interests, attitudes and opinions, personality and lifestyle.

USER IMAGERY

The image that comes to mind when thinking of who would use the product. These come from direct experiences with users, through adverstising and other communication channels.

Usage imagery

Usage imagery has to do with the associations which make up a stereotypical image of where and when a particular product would be used. This can relate to days, weeks, months, years or seasons. But also to the location, such as inside, outside, at home, on vacation, at work, and many more places. It can also relate to types of occasions, formal or informal, free time, and many others.

Some products are very bound to a certain time of the year, or to certain places or occasions. For example, snow boots are only used during cold periods in the year when the temperature drops below a certain point or when there is snow outside. Products like Christmas ornaments only come out of their box during the Christmas holidays. Expensive china which you got at your wedding might only see the daylight during special occasions every few years. And on the other hand you have products which are used throughout the whole year, which could be vases or photo frames. Here you can see that depending on the product it can vary if the product is used throughout the year or only a few days.

The same counts for where the product is imagined to be used. When you look at a mobile phone and a landline, it is known that a mobile phone is flexible and can be used anyplace where there is a connection. The landline however only works at home within a certain radius of the house.

Decorative products are mainly meant for home decoration, and are not thought to be products which are regularly brought to other places outside the house. But even though home decoration is thought to be for your home, a lot of people still bring photo frames, vases and decoration to their office or work.
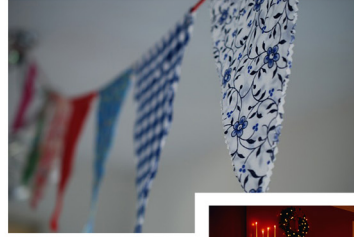
USAGE IMAGERY

Thoughts related to where and when a product would be used. This can relate to seasons, days, moments of a day, special occasions, but also the environment where the product could be used.
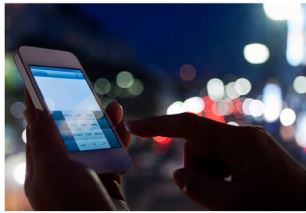
Self-image

Even if people are not willing to admit it, everyone worries about what others think in one way or another. Or if it is not for others, then it is for ourselves. A small example, when a person claims he does not care about what other people think, about the way he or she dresses, he might just buy and wear anything that feels comfortable and won't buy new clothes but wear the old ones till they are completely worn. But in doing so, that person makes a statement about themselves and what they find important. Perhaps this person isn't worrying about what others think, but he himself wants to correspond to what he thinks he should be or wants to be. People have an emotional need to establish a self-image and a position in the world. Products can help, not by performing its function, but by suggesting an image of a person that fits the product.
A simple definition of self-image could be the answers that people give when they are asked: What do other people think of you?

Self-image may consist of three types:
- Self-image resulting from how the individual sees himself or herself.
- Self-image resulting from how others see the individual.
- Self-image resulting from how the individual perceives others see him or her.
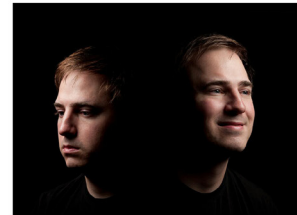
SELF-IMAGE

Consumers have a need for individuality. Self-image consists of how individuals sees themself, how others see them and how they percieve how others see them.

PERSONAL SATISFACTION

The individual's experience of a sense of fulfillment of a need or want. This can be achieved through something with meaning for yourself or for someone else.

Personal satisfaction

The definition for personal satisfaction is: 'The individual's experience of a sense of fulfillment of a need or want and the quality or state of being satisfied. It is different from being content. Being content reflects the way people can be satisfied with the way things are. Satisfaction is after a moment of growth, a success, a particular nice or good moment. Satisfaction is not just for the sake of pleasure, but is also through meaning. Meaning for someone else or for yourself. Meaning for someone else can mean that you use your strengths, means or perhaps funds to give something to other or help others. It can be satisfying to know that you've helped another person. Meaning for yourself can be accomplished by getting the best out of yourself, minor accomplishments, pushing yourself past your comfort zone. It are things that lead to personal growth, and this is personal satisfaction.

For example, many products exist on the market which donate a part of the earnings to a good cause. Or some brands help employees or try to improve the work environment. And customer feel, that by buying their product, they're helping those employees or that cause as well. For example, in the Netherlands the Fairtrade stamp is a clear mark that the makers of that product try to improve the situation for the employees or local community where the products is produced. Another example is Tony Chocolonely which goal is to avoid and repress chocolate made through slavery.

Social approval

Everyone has a certain need to fit in. Even people who try to differentiate themselves from others, still have a need to be socially approved by a specific group. Social approval is de positive evaluation of a person or a group in a social context.

Depending on which social group one identifies themselves with, the opinion of specific social groups are important or not important. For example, teenagers find it important what other teens think of them (especially the cool kids). When Suzy buys new shoes she feel happy and socially accepted when one of the other teens compliments her on her new shoes. But the entire positive effect can find place when a teacher or adult would complement her on her shoes. It might still feel like a complement, but depending on the relation

between those two social groups, teenagers and teachers, it could result in a negative reaction to their own shoes. Thinking that, if the teacher thinks her shoes are cool, then it can't be the case, so they must be uncool. This is an extreme example, but one should consider the possibilities that some social groups don't want to be compared to other social groups.

SOCIAL APPROVAL

Everyone has a certain need to fit in. Social approval is de positive evaluation of a person or a group in a social context.

Brainteasers & Contemplation

The pleasure that is derived from this type of products can be achieved with brainteasing products and products which entice contemplation. The light, challenging or perhaps funny products can be products such as puzzles or products that have a complex or specific way for how it should be used. These mentally challenge you in a somewhat lighthearted manner. What is typical for Dutch products and design is that they harbor a joke, a second layer. When looking closer or thinking deeper, a hidden meaning is unveiled.

When the product conveys a heavier, or a message with a more serious tone it can lead to deeper contemplation. These match the deeper reflective needs humans can have (Maslow, 1943).

BRAINTEASERS & CONTEMPLATION

Pleasure can be derived with products which have more than the eye can see. May it be a hidden joke, function or meaning, making the consumer think deeper can lead to pleasure.
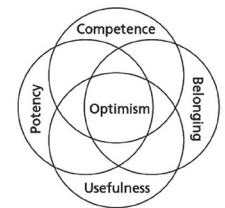
Example. Brigitte Coremans designed a decorative product which lets women recapture a sense of their own fertility. The string of beads works as a biological clock, every 28 days a bead representing one fertile egg, is dropped from the string. Towards the end of the string the beads become darker, representing the woman's fertility weakening. This is a good example of a decorative product that stimulates the user in contemplating the deeper meaning of those beads. Their fertility, but also, how they feel and think about having children in the future and the time they still have left to have children.

Memories

The relation between a product and memories can be described in 3 ways:
- *The product shows you a memory directly.*
- *The product stimulates the making of memories.*
- *The product reminds you of something, which evokes memories.*

Products that show the memory directly
The first way can best be described with the following example. A photo frame contains a picture of your holiday when you were younger. In that case, the picture is a representation of the memory, of a person, a moment, a holiday or time with your children. The memory is directly clear. The photo frame should consider the way it presents the memory. How is it presented, does it honour the memory? What happens with the picture when the photo is going to be switched for a different one?

Products that stimulate making new memories
The second way is a product that stimulates the making of memories. This can happen in a few ways, a simple one is a product that leads to social interaction. This could mean that the product can or has to be used together with others. The challenge is, how can you create a decorative product that enforces this social interaction?

Example. A nice example is Coca Cola's 'Friendly twist' bottle. This bottle cap can only be opened when combining it with another bottle cap. This led to first day college students having to interact and converse with other students. It was an initiative to create a possibility for new students to bond with their fellow students.

The other way to stimulate memories is that the product is so out of the ordinary, that it results in other people starting a conversation about it, or it is interesting enough for the owner to start a conversation about.

Example. An example, a friend of mine has a 3D printed lampshade which for some people resembles the shape of a chalice of a flower, but to others it resembles a skirt draped over a woman's hips. Since it looks so peculiar, lot of guests and friends inquired about the lamp, which often leads to conversations about your view on beautiful and interesting shapes and about home interior.

Another way is by making the product one that people mostly use or give during happy and positive moments, such as a wedding, birthdays, and other gifts during a celebration.

Products that remind you of something
The third way is that a memory could be retrieved because the product hints to something, someone, a moment or an event from someone's past. If someone hints at the view or landscape one saw every day as a child, it can call forth the memory of their childhood. So when making use of this aspect, one should look at things consumers have in common, which everyone has seen in their life. This could mean typical Dutch products, landscapes, or even words or sayings.Sometimes the specific product harbors a memory because it has a meaning to one specific person. This is person-specific.

Example.When I see or feel the texture of woven products made of plants such as palm tree leaves, it reminds me of my childhood in the Solomon Islands. There, woven mats are used to sit on outside the veranda, living room and bed room to sleep on. Even though I did not actively thought about using the products, it left an imprint on how I experience certain products which simulate that woven texture or effect. This is an example which works for me, but not everyone has that same memory.

Example. I have a thermos bottle, it is cheap, with an image of a peacock and a lot of contrasting colors. It does not have any special features, produced in China and bought in a Chinese supermarket.

MEMORIES

Products can show an image of a memory, incite thinking about a memory, or can stimulate making new memories

No one who sees it thinks it to be a valuable product or even beautiful. But it has great value to me, I received it as a birthday present during a few stressful weeks in a country and situation where we did not have many luxuries. Being able to make a pot of tea and have more than one cup, which was still hot, for a longer time, without having to keep a fire going, was comforting. It might not be beautiful or worth much, but it is very valuable to me because of that memory and the way it soothed me during a busy time.

This, is the relation you want to create between the consumer and the product. The difficulty is, one does not always have an influence on the memory that the consumer creates. But a possible way is, to make products, related to positive moments. So that when one thinks of the product, they will probably think of positive things.

METHOD STEPS

This method is derived from the different reflective aspects which can be focused on during the idea generating process. When the designer wants to better match the consumer's reflective wants, he or she can generate new product ideas by designing based on those aspects. This should help to structure the concept generating process and help the designer generate ideas from a different perspective. It is a diverging process, with the purpose to generate a wide range of different concepts. This is useful for products where the reflective aspects weigh heavier than the function, as with decorative products.

Steps:

1.   **Pick a starting product idea**. Either the designer already has a product idea, inspired by the country of origin, he wants to further develop. Or has an existing product from the country of origin or the Netherlands which could or should better match the tastes of the Dutch public. Either one is good to use.

2.   **Define characteristics.** List down what special characteristics are, this could relate to the appearance, but also to the use, function, deeper meaning or belief behind it. With an existing product it is to give insight in what that product stands for. With a new idea, it is to have a clearer understanding of what important features are. Or what the product should communicate.

3.   **Choose a reflective aspect.** Choose an aspect to work from. The designer should base this on what the purpose of these new product iterations are. Is it to see how the product can better match the aesthetics that the Dutch consumer longs for? Perhaps choose Social Approval or Self-image. Or is the product idea from an interesting Chinese legend or typical Chinese product? Try Psychological needs or memories. The designer can try different reflective aspects to help and generate an idea which best communicates the brand or product promise.

4.   **Answer questions (on that aspect) about how the product or idea performs now.** A list of questions is generated to give the designer new insights about the product idea or existing product. It can help deepen what they know about the product and what the product does. These questions are found in appendix X.

5.   **Answer questions (on that aspect) about how the product could perform better.** A list of question is generated to give the designer new insights about the desired product. It can help give new inspiration for better communicating the brand promise, or how to better match the tastes of the target group. There are no good or bad answers, but it is handier to have a more detailed answer to derive insights and inspiration from. These questions are found in appendix X.

6.   **Translate the findings into design.** This is the moment where the designer needs to contemplate his answers on the previous questions. What could this mean for the design?

7.   **Start visualizing product ideas.**

It is almost impossible to generate iterations which only reflects one aspect. One will notice that once iterating from one aspect, afterwards it turns out that another aspect also plays a role in the design. This means it is also possible to even further iterate a concept by creating another layer in the design by continuing with an iteration and redoing the steps from point 3 and on.

Additional step:

8.   **Repeat steps 3-7**. When an interesting product iteration is created, the designer can choose to further develop it on other reflective aspects as well. This might help to better fit the target group.

STEP 1. PICK A STARTING PRODUCT IDEA

An existing Chinese product, a typical Chinese vase.

STEP 2. DEFINE CHARACTERISTICS

- Combination of contrasting colors in one piece.
- 3 primair colours used, including gradiants of those colors
- Gold accents

- Combination geometric patterns with organic forms
- Duotone patterns
- Gold accents

- Figurative detailed images of animals
- Animals given a background
- Depth through bulging patterns

- Organic/figurative images of plants
- Organic images shaped into a symmetric composition

- Sections divided by thin line
- Sections non-fluent transition. A carved pattern, against a straight line and against a rounded line
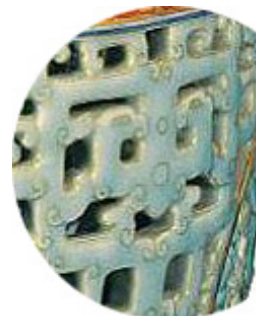
- Carved pattern, depth
- Pattern hints at figurative forms. (Pattern is almost an abstract form of waves)

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STEP 3. CHOOSE A REFLECTIVE ASPECT

How can you use the reflective aspects to perform better on the reflective level?

Aspects of the reflective level:
- Price
- Packaging
- User imagery
- Usage imagery
- Self-image
- Social approval
- Personal satisfaction
- Brainteasers & contemplation
- Memories

The aspect used, in the elaboration of the examples, is given first in **bold letters**. The other aspects given are aspects which followed automatically. This is because a product will almost never feature only one aspect, other reflective aspects can always be found.

The designer can also choose to sequantially apply multiple aspects to the concept creating new concepts featuring multiple aspects.

EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE OUTCOMES FOR ALL REFLECTIVE ASPECTS

Price

Packaging

User imagery

Usage imagery

Self image

Social approval



Personal satisfaction

Brainteasers & contemplation

Memories

STEP 3. Aspects:
- **Price**
(- Self image)
(- Social approval)

STEP 4 & 5. Important questions:
- Which elements could be added to heighten the perceived value?

STEP 6. Translating into design:
- Gold is seen as an expensive material, when seeing a gold vase, the consumer expects that it is expensive. What does that mean to the opinion, would one like it even better, if it is too high for their budget, thus unonbtainable? Or does the high price have no influence on their evaluation of the product? Sometimes people still buy it, but not because they find it so beautiful, but for the message it communicates. (I have enough money for this.)
- What if it is still rather expensive, but in a price category which they can afford. A vase made of glass. Glass is often perceived as a good material and not perceived as a cheap one, although it can often be made very cheap.

STEP 7.
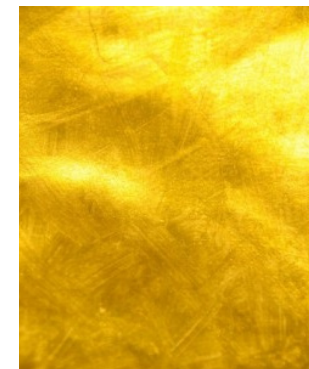
STEP 3. Aspects:
- **Packaging**
(- memories)

STEP 4 & 5. Important questions:
- Can the meaning and/or function be communicated through the packaging?
- What is (probably) in the memory of your target group?

STEP 6. Translating into design:
- Recognizable shape of a typical vase
- Newspapers are often used to pack fragile material in a bow. A packaging competely made from newspapers hints at the fragility of a product
- It makes it easy to write information about the model.

STEP 7.

STEP 3.

Aspects:
-**User imagery**
(- Brainteasers & contemplation)
(- Memories)
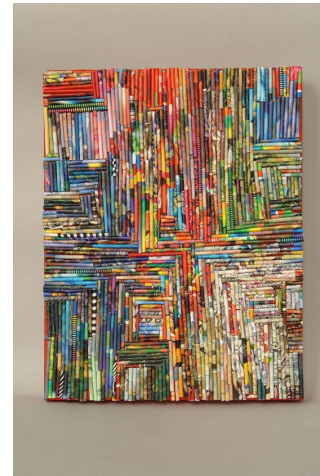
STEP 4 & 5.

Important questions:
- Does the desired target group have an ideological view on a matter?
Translate into design:

STEP 6.

- There is a growing popularity for 'conscious' products. There are many Dutch consumers which buy products which are made of recycled or upcycled materials. This vase is bought by people who have certain opinions on issues such as waste, plastic soup, consumerism and/or environmental issues.
- The vase is made or leftover scraps of packaging, due to some images still being visible it reminds a person of plastic packaging, be it Chinese or not.
- When one realizes it is made from scraps of packaging, one might contemplate issues around wast and environmental issues.

STEP 7.

STEP 3.   Aspects:
- **Usage imagery**

STEP 4 & 5. Important questions:
- How can physical features communicate where it should be used?

STEP 6.   Translating into design:
- Hint at when it could be used.
(When recieving flowers)
- Minimalistic design combined with figurative design of Chinese vase
- No longer clear that it was a Chinese vase, except for the shape that hints at it

STEP 7.

STEP 3.   Aspects:
-**Self-image**

STEP 4 & 5.   Important questions:
- Is the product to be 'made' or constructed by the consumer?
- In what way does the product give opportunity for personal expression?

STEP 6.   Translating into design:
- The vase comes with a (coloured) glue, the consumer needs to break the vase first and then has to glue it back together
- This way, every vase has its own unique breaking pattern led to actions by the consumer. Depending on how they wanted it to break it might show different types of breaking patterns
- The use has the choice to break and rebuild it the way he/she wants

STEP 7.

STEP 3.   Aspects:
- **Social approval**
(- Brainteasers & contemplation)
(- Memories)

STEP 7.

STEP 4 & 5.   Important questions:
- Can the product be more in line with the styling trends popular in this target group?
- What are interesting Dutch customs or elements?

STEP 6.   Translating into design:
- Hint at Dutch elements (abstract shapes)
- Underlying Chinese pattern of a dragon, a mythical creature that brought about hurricanes and storms
- Windy areas belong to the Chinese element Wood, de colour green is the colour fitting that element.
- Simplefied colour scheme

STEP 3.   Aspects:
- **Social approval**
(- Brainteasers & contemplation)
(- Memories)

STEP 4 & 5.   Important questions:
- What are interesting Dutch customs or elements?
- How can the product fit the desired social group?

STEP 6.   Translating into design:
- Same colour scheme
- Dutch themes
- Dutch themes and tastes poorly match the Chinese colour scheme

STEP 7.

STEP 3.   Aspects:
- **Social approval**
(- Memories)

STEP 4 & 5.   Important questions:
- Can the product be more in line with styling trends popular within the target group?

STEP 6.   Translating into design:
- Typical chinese patterns fitting tastes Dutch public
- Usage of the trend of patterns
- Clear divisions patterned/not patterned
- Might raise thoughts about the sea

STEP 7.

STEP 3.

Aspects:
-**Personal satisfaction**
(-Self image)
(- Memories)

STEP 4 & 5.

Important questions:
- In what way could the product present the skills or achievements?

STEP 6.

Translate into design:
- The surface of the vase makes it possible to use whiteboard markers on it. This way personal messages can be written on it. This is a nice gift where one can write their congratulations on the vase, and the receiver can choose to later rub it off so it is aesthetically more pleasing.
- The bottom part has a light pattern which represents the Chinese symbols for happiness.

STEP 7.

STEP 3. Aspects:
- **Brainteasers & contemplation**
(- Memories)

STEP 4 & 5. Important questions:
- What are interesting sayings from the Netherlands?
- What is known about the country of origin?

Translating into design:
STEP 6.
- Dutch saying: " Iets verbloemen"
- Hint at traditional Chinese vase (underlying layer)
- Modern looking vase trying to hide it's true colours
- Chinese vase tries to match modern ceramic vases

STEP 7.

STEP 3.   Aspects:
- **Memories**
(- Brainteasers & contemplation)

STEP 4 & 5.   Important questions:
- What are interesting Dutch customs or elements?
- In what way does the product remind the consumer of a memory?
- What are typical elements which characterizes those memories?

STEP 6.   Translating into design:
- Typical Dutch style Boerenbont
- Exactly the same theme as Chinese vase
- Recognizable

STEP 7.

STEP 3.

STEP 7.

STEP 4 & 5.
Important questions:
- What are interesting Dutch customs or elements?
- In what way does the product remind the consumer of a memory?
- What are typical elements which characterizes those memories?

STEP 6.
Translating into design:
- Typical Dutch style Hindeloopen
- Exactly the same theme as Chinese vase
- Recognizable

CHAPTER 5: IMPLEMENTING THE FRAMEWORK

The framework for generating concepts based on reflective design aspects has been implemented for the case of Sofine. The concept which the process for will be shown is the concept based on the story of Fu Lu Shou. The inspirational boards of Chinese elements can be found in appendix E. Other generated concept ideas can be found in appendix F.

In this chapter you will read:
- An elaborate implementation of the method based on the reflective aspect 'brainteasers & contemplation. Including:
    - The background story of Fu Lu Shou
    - Answers to method question related to reflective aspects
    - A first look at a translation into a visual design
- An elaborate implementation of the method based on a secondary reflective aspect 'social approval'. Including:
    - A brief target group analysis
    - Research into the trend Mindfulness
    - A trend report for styling trends active in the Netherlands
    - The relation between Fu Lu Shou, Mindfulness, Christian customs (candle burning), branding and design

CONCEPT FU LU SHOU

1.   Pick a starting product idea.
The figurines of Fu Lu Shou were chosen as a starting product idea. Fu Lu Shou, also called Fuk Luk Sau, Sanxing, Star gods or the Gods of Blessings, are the personifications of attributes that make up a good life. These are wealth, prosperity and a long life. Fu Lu Shou is used in most Chinese homes and stores, they can be found in livings rooms, dining rooms, receptions areas, lobbies and placed on top of shelves. Owners sometimes give offerings and hope that having it in their home will bring good fortune.

The original image of Fu Xing depicted a man with a tiger head sitting on a boar. Later in the Tang Dynasty, Fu Xing was depicted after the image of a governor from Dazhou in Western Han (206 BC - 24 AD). During the time of this governor the ruling emperor had a habit of taking midgets from their families in Dazhou for entertainment. When the governor heard of it, and learned that the midgets were unhappy when being taken away from their families, he stood up to the emperor and abolished the practice. After the governor's death the people build a temple for him and over time he became the personification of good fortune or wealth.

Fu Xing refers to the planet Jupiter, a prosperous planet. Fu is often shown as a court official, holding a child in his hand and a scepter. Fu depicts happiness or wealth, it may be viewed differently by people from different social statuses. For peasants, Fu would refer to land, good weather, a good harvest, enough food and clothing for the family. But to a businessman or merchant Fu would mean wealth in the form of gold and a growing wealth in the form of money. People in ancient cities might even see Fu as being able to survive wars, cruel rulers and famine. For elderly people, happiness would come in the form of many grandchildren around them, and a long and healthy life. Over time, Fu has gained a different meaning. Fu turned out to be the dreams and expectations of people, those things that people wish for in life.

Before the Sui Dynasty (581-618AD), common people hardly had the opportunity to become court officials, Lu Xing is said to be blessing intellectuals with a position in the civil service. Lu refers to a star in the Great bear constellation. The word Lu specifically refers to a government official's salary. This leads to Lu being a symbol for rank, influence and social status. The main theme of the Lu culture

was to gain Lu and thus gain a high position in the royal rank and pass the Imperial Examinations. This would lead to a high position and a high Lu (pay), and everything else that comes with a job of such rank, pretty women, money and a luxurious life.

According to legends, Shou Xing was carried in his mother's womb for nine years before being born. And when he was born he was already an old man, with a large forehead, and is often holding a gourd (which contains the Elixer of life) and a peach, which is a symbol of immortality. When he was young he often went to the hills nearby his village to meditate and practice Taoism. One day he dared to travel deep into the hills, telling the people he would come back when he was ready. 1000 years later he came back as an old man, holding the peach of immortality and a walking stick. Shou is the personification of longevity, of a long life. Shou refers to the second brightest star that shines in the sky, the star of the South Pole in Chinese astronomy. This star is believed to control the life span of mortals. Shou and Fu go hand in hand, to life long (to have Shou) is to have Fu. In Taoism

life is everything, so the current life is valued far stronger than the afterlife. During the Zhou Dynasty people began to make sacrificial offerings to Shou Xing.

The character for shou can be written in many different ways, a long character stand for long shou, a round character stands for a round Shou, thus a healthy and perfect life. During birthdays people various forms of Shou are written on birthday cards, presents and cake, to beg for a long life.

2. Define characteristics.

Fu Lu Shou is almost always presented as three figurines clearly showing three men. The figurines are made of different materials and with different appearances. They are often made of ceramics and materials such as bone, ivory, jade and natural stones.

Fu refers to the planet Jupiter, a prosperous planet. Fu is often depicted with a child in his hand, holding a scroll and wearing a scholar's outfit. Fu is the personification of wealth and good fortune.

Lu refers to a star in the Great bear constellation.

The word lu specifically refers to a government official's salary. This leads to Lu being a symbol for rank, influence and social status.

Shou refers to the second brightest star that shines in the sky, the star of the South Pole in Chinese astronomy. This star is believed to control the life span of mortals. According to legends, Shou was carried in his mother's womb for ten years before being born. And when he was born he was already an old man. He can be recognized as an old man with often holding a gourd (which contains the Elixer of life) and a peach, which is a symbol of immortality. Shou is the personification of longevity, of a long life.

3. Choose a reflective aspect.

With this product, it is more about the meaning behind the product (behind the three figurines). Since Fu Lu Shou is used as a means to define what it is people wish for in life, the primary reflective aspect that is chosen for this concept is Brainteasers & Contemplation. It is a product that asks the user thoughts on these subjects. Contemplating your stance on happiness, social status and health. Even though the most important reflective aspect

is Brainteasers & Contemplation, it is already clear that Social approval will play a big role as well. Figurines of gods will not be accepted and have to take such a shape where it still portrays it's meaning, but where it matches the tastes and preference of the Dutch public.

4.   Answer questions (on Brainteasers & Contemplation) about how the product or idea performs now.

- What are interesting Chinese customs or elements?
The chinese customs are that people in China use Fu Lu Shou as a way to express their desires in their life. There it is not strange to make offerings to gods and to come to them to ask for help.

- Does the product have a second layer (a deeper meaning) to it?
The second layer is that one does not just ask the gods I want happiness, social status and a long life. The product let's one contemplate what it is they really want, in want form, in what way. It is a form of reflecting on your life.

- What is the deeper meaning of the product?
The deeper meaning of the product is striving for

happiness, social status and a long life.

- How is the deeper meaning portrayed? How is it communicated?
It is portrayed as three men, which all have certain characteristics which are mentioned before, but the meaning of these are unknown to the regular Dutch consumer. Such as Shou (long life) holding a peach, which is a symbol in China for immortality. They are not universally understandable but have to be known through having heard the stories and myths.

- What are interesting Dutch customs or elements?
A similar custom which is universally popular, including in the Netherlands, is burning a candle in church. In Christianity people pray and burn a candle when they seek for guidance or help from a saint. It is not even unknown to non-religious people who burn a candle for loved ones or friends who need help.

5.   Answer questions (on Brainteasers & Contemplation) about how the product could perform better.

- Are there stories that could be added to the existing product?

The existing product is already a story.

- What deeper meaning do you want the product portray?
I want it to stand for what you desire for in life. Not necessarily a fixed meaning. It should be a product that stimulates the user to think for themselves about what it is what he or she finds important in life. Or what it is that he or she wants to focus on at the moment.

- What are characteristics of what you want to portray?
Rather than using those three men to portray their meaning, rather should be looked at the meaning of those three gods. Happiness and wealth could be portrayed through materials which are perceived as expensive. Social status could be expressed through colours which stand for respect, perhaps colours associated with businessmen. Long and healthy life could be expressed through materials, colours, patterns which hint at old age or vitality. For example the colour grey stands for eldery, and year rings of a tree also hint at life. And by burning a candle one combines the function and meaning of burning a candle.

- In what way can aspects of the underlying meaning be portrayed?
The underlying meaning of Fu Lu Shou is that there are a few things that everyone strives for in life. Depending on the person, one wishes for one thing more than another. In the Netherlands there is a rising interest in personal development (for example, through methods such as Mindfulness, meditation and other training). These three characteristics which make up a perfect life according to Chinese standards, are also characteristics of a good life in the Netherlands.

Only it's possible that in the Netherland, Fu Lu and Shou can be viewed differently. Fu stands for wealth, but every person has a different view on wealth. To some, wealth is expressed in riches, in money. But to other wealth is expressed is being able to do what you love to do, or having a loving family. Therefor, in the Netherlands, it is better to describe wealth as happiness. Since wealth refers too much towards riches.

In research it was found that Lu translates into prosperity. It stands for having the desired social status and prestige. Only with the target group that will probably be targeted, it is expected that prosperity might lean more toward fulfillment. Because not everyone finds prestige equally important. But it may better be described as fulfillment because some people receive a sense of fulfillment through prestige due to their job, others find a sense of fulfillment through enjoying a job which might not be one that give the employee a lot of prestige, but does give pleasure to the employee.

The last one, Shou, is longevity. Shou is clear enough as it is. It is presumed that everybody understands the wish for a long and healthy life.

Rather than using those three men to portray their meaning, rather should be looked at the meaning of those three gods.

Happiness and wealth could be portrayed through materials which are perceived as expensive or worth a lot.

Social status could be expressed through colours which stand for respect, perhaps colours associated with businessmen.
Long and a healthy life could be expressed through materials, colours or patterns which hint at old age or vitality. For example the colour grey stands for eldery, and year rings of a tree also hint at age.

6.   Translate the findings into design

One of the ideas derived from the questions were three triangular candleholders to tell the story of Fu Lu Shou. A set of three candleholders, each depicting one of the three. Inspiration was retrieved from existing products, to give more detail to the first product idea.
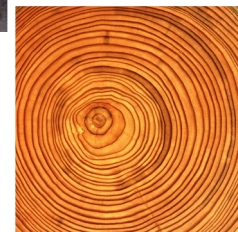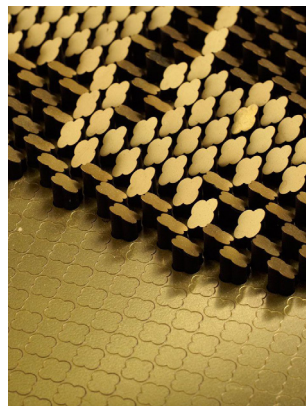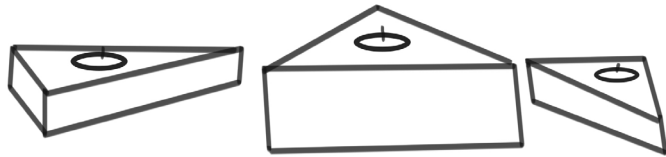
7.   Start visualizing product ideas.

In the previous step a quick look was taken at trends playing in the Netherlands in 2015 and predictabily in 2016.

The first matches the trend of geometric shapes and simple design, with the colours gold, black and grey portraying happiness, social status and long life respectively. The second iteration matches the trend for materials such as concrete in interior design and through simple adjustments such as a gold band, a taller posture and year rings, portray happiness, social status and long life respectively.

8.   Repeat step 3-7.
In the previous steps the focus lied on communicating the meaning of Fu Lu Shou. But research has to be done into styling popular in the Netherlands, because it can give an insight in in what way the outer appearance could even better communicate the message.

Apart from that, it is also important to look into what is generally accepted and wished for in design in the Netherlands. This is to make sure the product fits the Dutch consumers taste. Therefor the steps will be repeated for the reflective aspect social approval.

3.   Choose a reflective aspect.
The reflective aspect social approval was used to create a visual design matching trends and fashion popular in the Netherlands at this moment. This is important because, even if people understand the story of the product, it still has to match the tastes of the Dutch public.

4.   Answer questions (on social approval) about how the product or idea performs now.

- What characterizes the target group?
To answer these questions, a small target group analysis was done.

When looking at consumers which are interested in products with this brand promise, it is important to look at psychographic factors. What drives the consumer, what their key beliefs and values are, what their opinion is on certain matters and how do they view foreign products of other cultures? These are needed to know how to approach them. This is because these are products where the story behind the product is the key piece to these products. Through the Mentality-model, a segmentation-tool of Motivaction, a better definition of the target group is given. This model is a representation of the Dutch population, and divides the population in 8 different social environments based on personal beliefs and values. The most fitting groups are the post materialist and the postmodern hedonist. A description of these two segments have been retrieved from Motivaction.

The post materialist
The post materialist is someone who has an idealistic standpoint and has critical views on social and political matters. Solidarity, harmony and attention for immaterial things characterize the segment post materialist. They look critically at the society of today. Things that play an important role in their life are: strive for reciprocal connections, taking responsibilities and working on social improvements or progress. Post materials feel that it is important that they can live by their own principles and is moved by for instance, social issues, social work and other social matters. It is important to live responsibly: without waste, without the pursuit of profit and without harming the environment. They preferably work at organizations or institutions which contribute to the social welfare. People in this group are interested in art and culture (film, museums, theater, cabaret, classical concerts) and in a more homey form of recreation. The bonds in the domestic life are often close, there is a strong reciprocal connection, but it is not per se by the traditional patterns. In this segment people originate from every income level, but consists of mostly high educated people.

The postmodern hedonist
The postmodern hedonist is the explorer of the

experience culture, where experimenting and breaking with moral and social conventions have become goals on itself. Freedom, living in the here and now, new experiences and independence characterize this group. In contrast to the post materialist, the postmodern hedonist is less occupied with social and political matters. People who belong to this group are individualistic and have a great self-determination. They also value self-development and personal growth. These people have an independent lifestyle and need to be able to have decide about things which they find important. What stands out is that a relative big portion of this group has an independent or a flexible job. Work is important, but is often inferior to personal life. Free time activities can also give intrinsic satisfaction. They are interested in art and culture, but their main focus is 'experiences'. In their social life, friends seem to play a larger role than family. Traditional family patterns occur less. Just as with the post materialist, the people in this segment are from all income levels, but mostly people which are highly educated.

Interesting aspects of two target segments
The two social segments have a few things in common which are useful to know for the branding of Sofine. Both of them are tolerant, which may mean something for this case and the country of origin effect. Both groups consists of mostly highly educated people. This is a good sign, since research about the country of origin effect showed that especially people with a lower education were more susceptible to the country of origin effect.

Another useful thing is that both groups feel that work is not the most important part in life, it seems that both segments think about what it is, if it's not work, that they find more important. Which leads to the next useful fact, which is that people from these groups are interested in self-development. This might mean they are open to products which lets them contemplate what it is that they find important, and why. Here, the two groups show differences in what drives them. The post materialist is socially and/or politically engaged, and thinks about things like environmental issues, social problems and the society. The postmodern hedonist however tends to be less occupied with social and political issues, but still feels the need for self-actualization and need to decide what they find important. So, for both segments, the overlapping theme would be self-actualization or development.

- *What are common trends within this target group?*
Self-actualization might be a too vague word to describe what it is that interests these people. But it can be better described by trends which are popular (or becoming popular) in the Netherlands within these segments. A trend which is in the line with this form of self-actualization is **Mindfulness**. The easiest way to understand what Mindfulness is, is by showing its opposite: the automatic pilot. In a world where people are constantly active and striving for success, thoughts flood our brain. About the past, about the future, people are constantly occupied in thought. But everyday actions such as driving, eating and walking are being handled automatically, these are being performed unconsciously. As humans we are often not 'present' in our daily lives, often failing to notice the good things in our life, failing to listen to what our bodies are telling us, or poisoning our self with self-criticism.

Mindfulness is being conscious, of the moment and experience without judging those experiences as good or bad. It is about making contact with the

now and here, with the life that is happening right now.

When continuously analyzing past events and trying to foresee how the future will turn out, people can become stressed by worrying too much about things that they have to control over. Mindfulness does not solve our problems, but it can help us to respond to them calmer. To step away for a moment, and look at it in a calmer way, which benefits our heart, body and mind. It provides us with methods to gain clarity, insight and understanding. Mindfulness can be a way to be conscious and aware of our work and life, and eventually improve the quality of our life. With the world living in a fast-tempo pace, mindfulness can help bring balance to this stressful and fast life.

Mindfulness is often given as mindfulness-training or can be read about in magazines about well-being, psychology and lifestyle. It is not uncommon for companies or individuals to receive mindfulness training to cope with daily stresses. Something that applies to both Mindfulness and the concept, is that it's a form of meditation but in a non-religious manner, less floaty. This is in line with the average down-to-earth Dutchmen. Also the interest in

unmaterialistic values is in line with the interest of the post materialist and postmodern hedonists, which are more interested in experiences and other unmaterialistic things.

- Is there a social group which the target group feel familiar with or aspires to be part of? What characterizes this social group?
There is no specific social group defined which is targeted, instead, a large segment of Dutch consumers have been taken into account.

The next questions relate to styling trends and are being answered in the form of a trend report:
*- What are common styling trend within this target group?*
*- What are products bought by this target group?*

RESULTS STEP 4: TREND REPORT

"At last we are ready to embrace the 21st century with another vision for a new age. we will enter a new state that is still evolving; the dawn of hard to discern directions that are incubating within, waiting to emerge and see the light, born to a new generation of impatient people. the social mood is shifting to a climate of care and togetherness, of compassion driven by a creative mentality, of softer, gentler manners and an alternative, appeasing period in politics. this climate of expectation is exciting and promises a new epoque with different and more wholesome options. leading to an assured lifestyle that will go on quest for silent luxury, embellished with occasional artistic and opulent accents. the embryonic aspect of these new trends will reflect upon fashion with a fabulous roster of reassuring style principles ready to embrace and cuddle the consumer. the womb of the world awaiting a renaissance."

- Lidewij Edelkoort

STYLETREND: LIVING THROUGH LAYERS

- Inspired by the digital world
- Mirror effects
- Kaleidoscopic patterns
- Subtle interference
- Innocent light colour palette tending to white
- Soberness and geometry
- Smooth surfaces
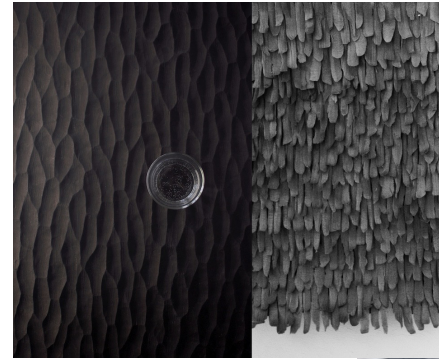- Layering and depth
- Optical effects
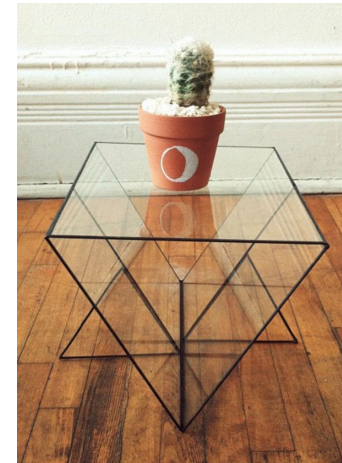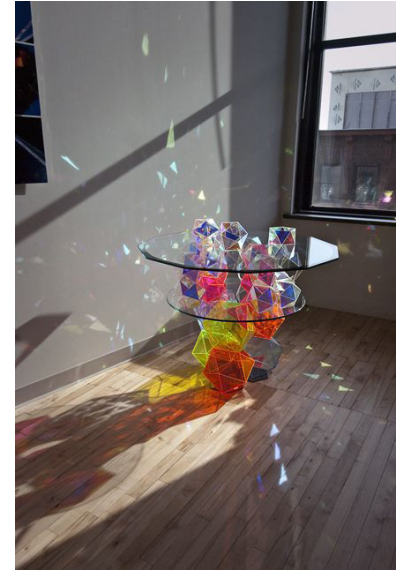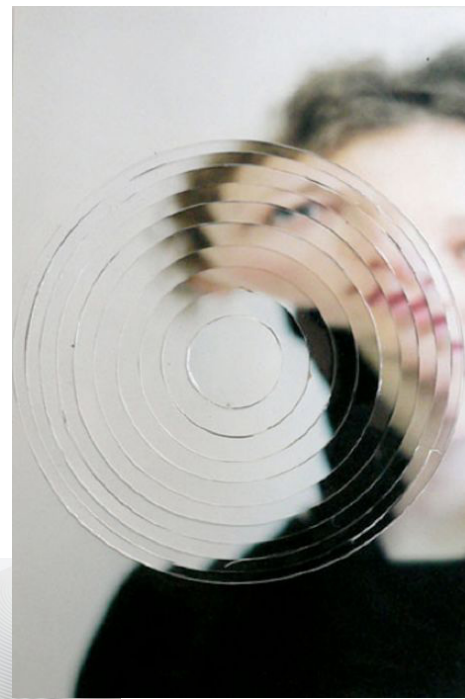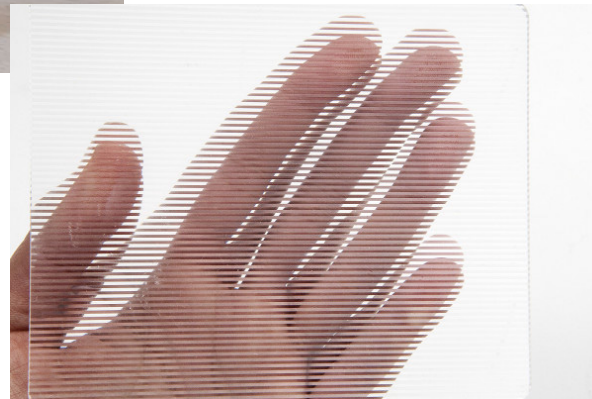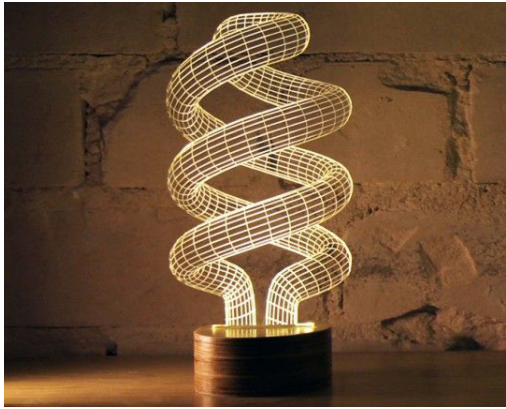
STYLETREND: BIG NATURE, SMALL ME

- Exploring deep natural colours
- Rough and sanded textures
- Need for soft, tactile and rich fabrics
- Materials should be comfortable
- Sturdy natural leather, untreated wood and rope
- Product are symbol of care and nurturing embrace

ALL YOU NEED IS WHITE
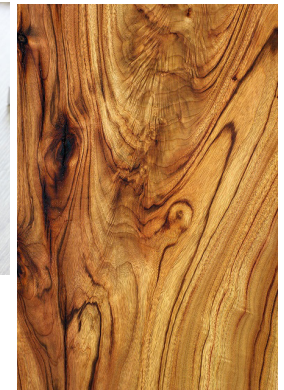
STYLETREND: LUXURIOUS MATERIALS

- Opulent, rich and lavish
- A reinterpretation of luxury
- Combining warm tone metallics with natural stone effects
- Gold and luster remain important, as copper and other metallic shades
- Paneling and ornaments
- Handpainted decorations
- Rich materials such as marble, metals and gems
- Fabrics and other materials are often hammered or have matte finishes
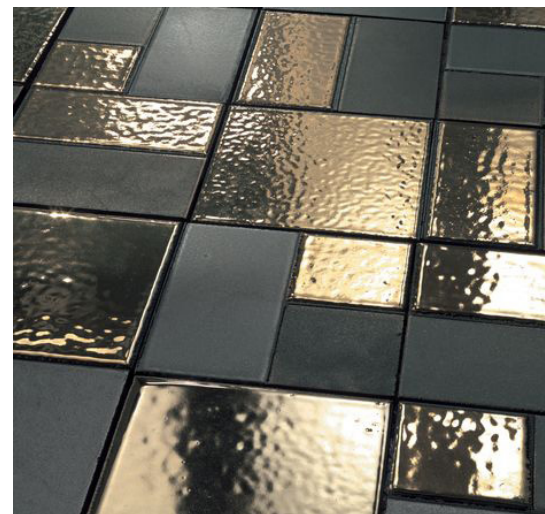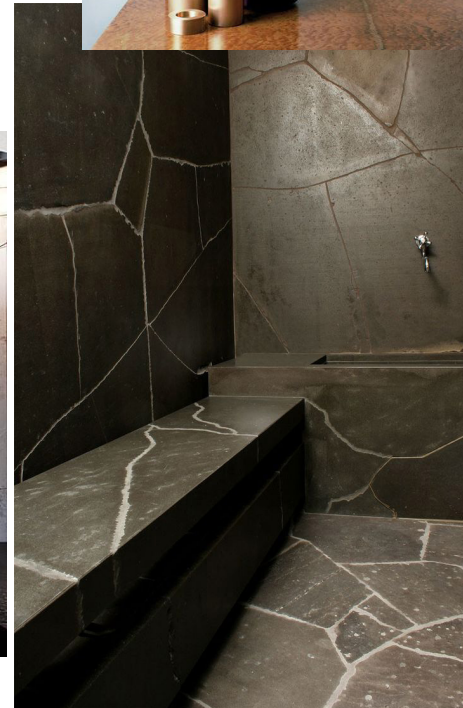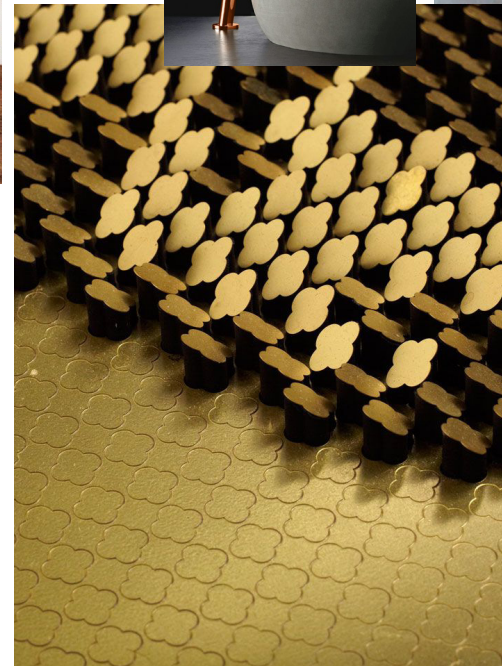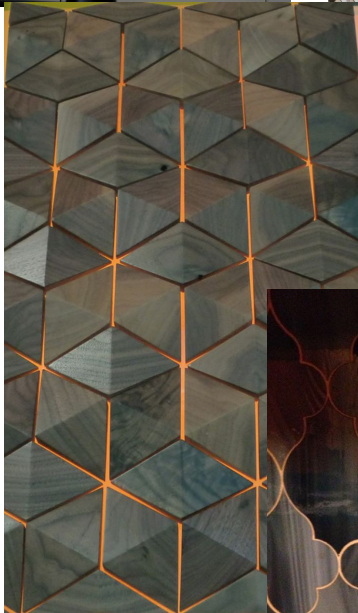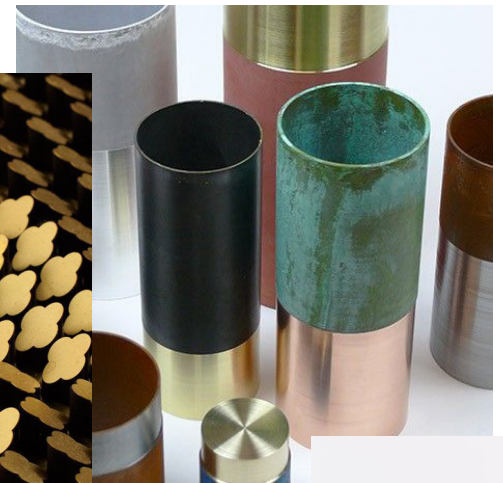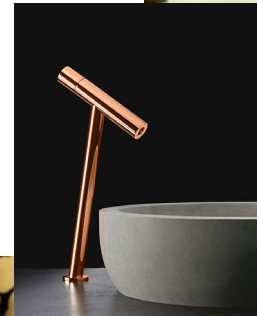
COLOURTREND: MARSALA AND GOLD
2015 and 2016

Colour of the year by Pantone is Marsala:
- Naturally robust and earthy
- Enriches our minds, bodies and souls. Draws us in to its embracing warmth
- Impactful, brings elegance to any room, statement colour
- Tasteful hue embodies the satisfying richness of a fulfilling meal while it emanates a sophisticated, natural earthiness

Expected colour of the year by trendwatchers of Colour Futures is Ochre Gold:
- A colour bright enough to attract attention, and good enough to combine with others
- Possible to combine ton sur ton, with natural colours, or unexpected colours

KLEURONTWIKKELING DOOR DE JAREN HEEN

Deze kleurvoorspellingen geven een voorproefje van wat ons het komende jaar te wachten staat. Fascinerend om te zien hoe smaken veranderen en zich van jaar tot jaar ontwikkelen.
> geeft de kleur van het jaar aan.

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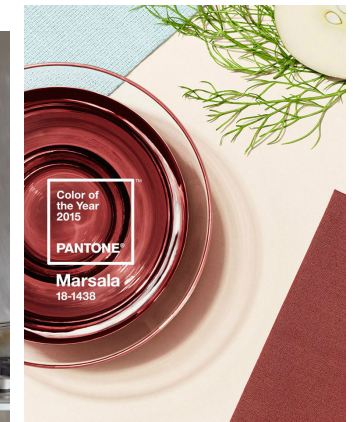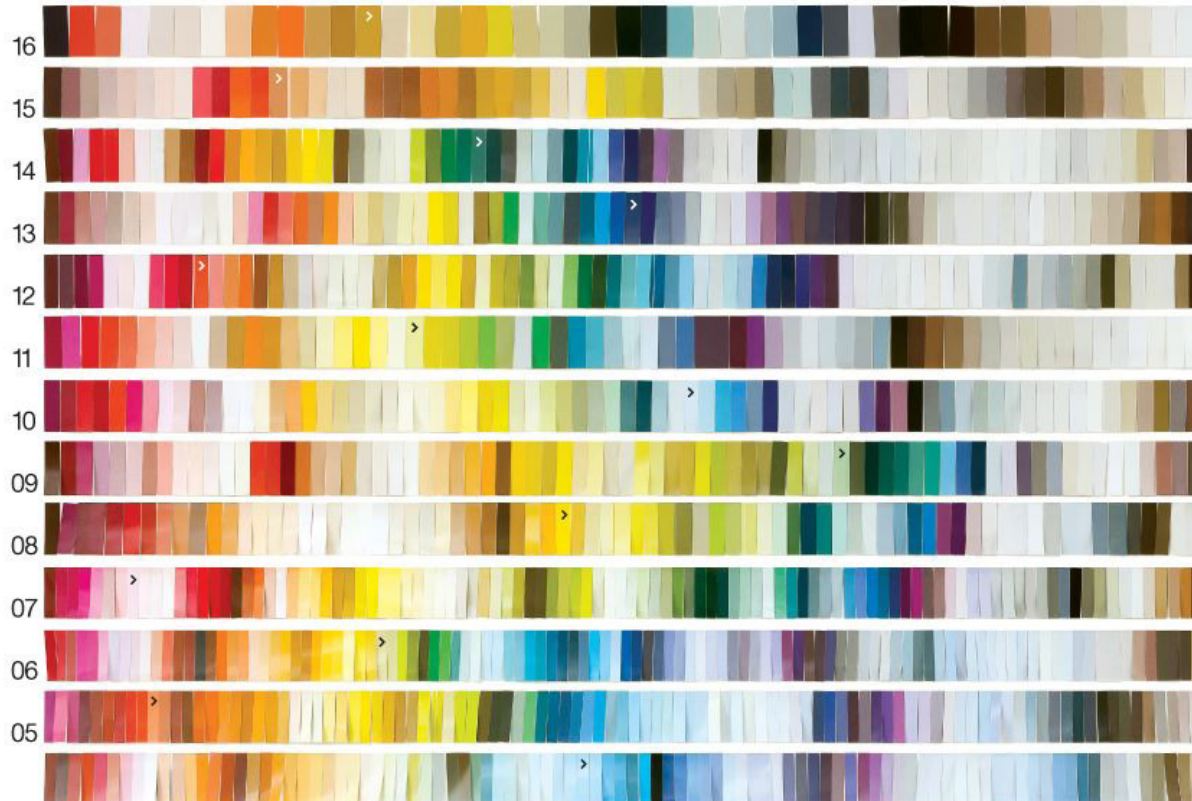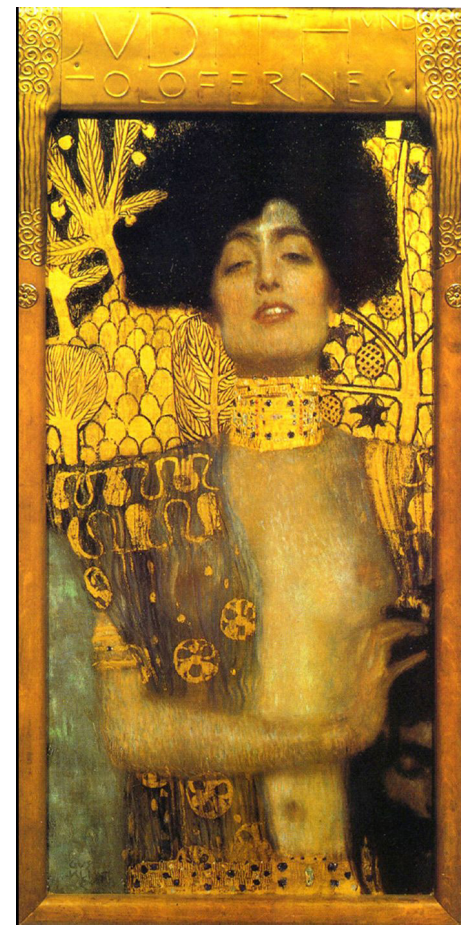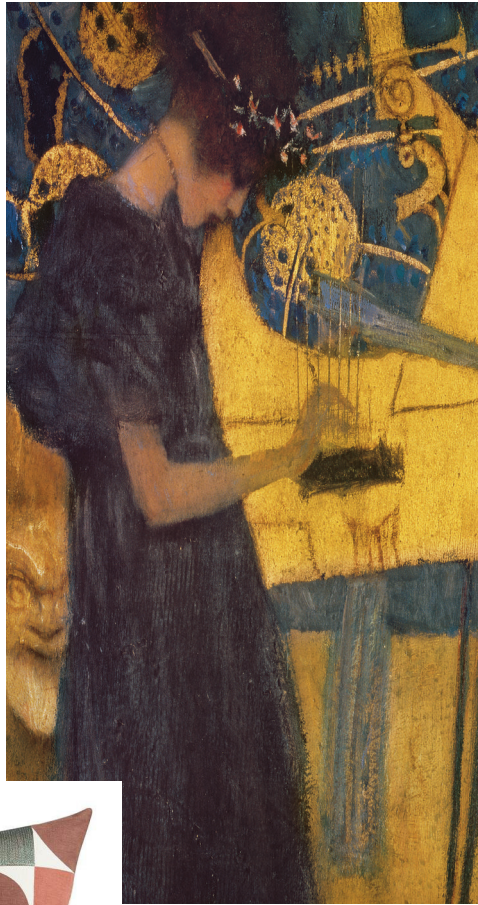
5. Answer questions (on Social approval) about how the product could perform better.

- Can the product be more in line with the common trends within this target group?

Fu Lu Shou really applies to the trend Mindfulness. Mindfulness is not that easy for everyone. To step back and overlook what your life is like, what you feel when looking at the choices you've made. It is not always easy, because it is not always tangible. Fu Lu Shou does exactly that. Mindfulness can help one look at their life, look at their feelings and help give insight in what it is what actually makes them happy. And what they desire in their life. And this is when Fu Lu Shou comes in. Fu Lu Shou gives a physical and tangible moment which can help this thought-process. It makes it easier to start the thought-process about which areas are most important in life, by dividing it in three areas. Happiness, social status and longevity. This makes it easier for the user to distinguish different areas which one can think about and give more structure. And it differentiates for everyone what they deem as happiness, or what kind of image they want to have, what type of status, or what they deem as a perfect life. Fu Lu Shou does not force a certain view upon the user, the user gets to decide all for themselves what they believe what Fu, Lu and Shou is.

Another aspect of Fu Lu Shou which is in line with this Mindfulness trend, is the interaction between the product and your thought process. Fu Lu Shou calls for the user to mentally interact with the product. A moment to be conscious of what it is you desire most in life, and then physically interact with the product. The user has to fill the cavity with oil, place a small fuse and light it. The fact that this action is a physical action helps the user to be more present in the moment. To consciously think about it.

- Can the product be more in line with the styling trends popular within this target group?

The trend report is used as inspiration to match the concept idea better to the target group. Other studies related to the physical design can be found in the appendix G, H, I, J, K,L.

- How can the product fit the desired social group?

There is no specific social group defined which is targeted, instead, a large segment of Dutch consumers has been taken into account. Namely, post materialists and postmodern hedonists. There has been chosen to not further specify the target group due to the lack of time and information on Sofine's preference for selling points.

It is possible however to make use of customs which are already known (by most people) in the Netherlands.

Namely, burning a candle.

In the Christian community lighting a candle is regular business. The flame and candle symbolize the Light which repels the Dark. The Good repelling Evil. In the Roman Catholic Church the candle also has another function, the candle is used during prayers. Candles are lit and placed in front of icons or images of saints. It is believed that the candle guides the prayer when it raises into the sky, towards heaven. The candle is an offering people bring to saints in the hopes of guidance, fulfillment of a favor, or lit for a deceased person or for the help with someone else's troubles, for example the illness of a friend. In fact it is not very different from the Fu Lu Shou, which people bring offerings to. With Fu Lu Shou the help of the Three Gods is asked, with Christianity the help of Saints is asked.

But also for people who are not part of any religion or those who don't feel a need for spiritual guidance, might still feel the need to contemplate what they have and want in life. There is a rising interest in Mindfulness, for mental well-being and for self-actualization. In the Netherlands it has become normal to be actively interested in self-actualization and to be more conscious of your wants and feelings. The action of burning a candle is in line with those that want to be more conscious of what they feel and want. The simple action of burning a candle, a moment that would lead to the user thinking about their wishes, their feelings, about what they want in life. Instead of linking the action to a religion or culture, can't it be linked to ordinary people contemplating their life?

This action, the lighting a candle, firstly relates to the reflective aspect 'Psychological needs'. It gives the user an active opportunity to think about what they want. Are their wants related to health, to longevity? Are their wants related to social aspects, to work, to stature? Or are they related to vaguer aspects in life, related to anything that would bring them happiness? When the user decides for themselves what they want most at that moment

the product relates to the reflective aspect 'Self-image'. Through the product they can express what they want or strive for through lighting the lamp/candle which matches their wants.

6.   Translate the findings into design

Seeing what the possible target group is, the triangles have been modified into 'oil lamps' instead of candle holders. Since Mindfulness works with being conscious of the moment, and burning a candle is only conscious at first but after the action the candle can burn for hours. To make the action more special a small indent has been created in the surface to pour oil into and place a small fuse. This fuse will only burn for a short moment, so to make the interaction extra special.
Tea-warmer candles can be bought very cheap from other retailers and degrades the use of the Fu Lu Shou oil lamps. With a special designed fuse made by Sofine, customers need to buy new fuses from Sofine to keep using the triangles.

The findings related to form, colour, weight, texture, hardness and warmth can be found in the appendix G, H, I, J, K,L.

7.   Start visualizing product ideas.

The product idea has been further developed. Together with D'Andrea & Evers, the design of the triangles was chosen as most interesting concept to further develop.

Only the study for the colour and form have been presented in the final concept. The final concept can be seen on the next page. The results of the other studies were deemed as interesting but need more time looking into. Only for the warmth will a possible recommendation be done which cannot be seen in the visual concept.
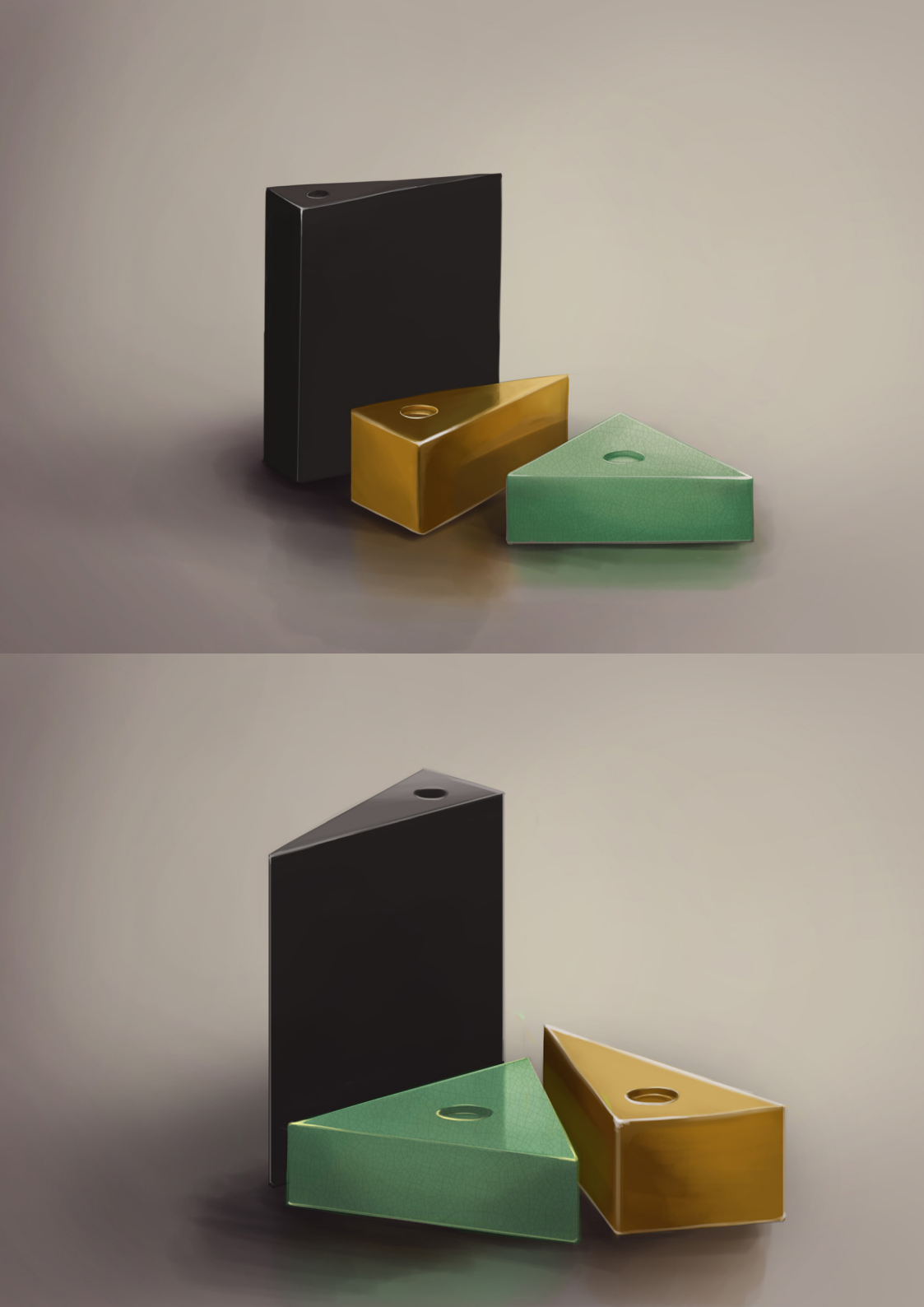
Colours:
- The colour gold to communicate happiness and wealth, since gold is seen as the most obvious material that communicates wealth and luxury. Gold is bright, shining, and radiates wealth. Gold is also a colour popular in interior design at the moment and possibly next year.
- The colour green to communicate vitality, hinting at a long and healthy life. Similar with the evergreen colour of bamboo. A pastal shade was chosen to better match the colour trends and the other two triangles. It also hints at Chinese celadon and jade.
- The colour black to communicate social status, hinting at the black business suites of businesspeople.

Form:
- The triangle for longevity has equal sides which lie perfectly symmetrical on a circle. The circle is a universal symbol which stands for perfection, wholeness, unity, but also the cycles of time and timelessness. It also symbolizes the sun, the bringer of all life on earth.
- The triangle for longevity is an esoteric triangle. The esoteric triangle can symbolize different things. For example, manhood or womanhood,

depending on from which angle it is viewed. The same goes for fire and water. But in many religions the triangle also symbolizes some sort of Divinity. The three sides of a triangle often stand for two sides of a matter, where the third side is a product of the other two. This is found in math, but also in symbolic meanings.

- The triangle for social status is the tallest of the three, presenting the proudness of the user. Having others look up at you. But also the feeling the person itself has, puffing out his or her chest, making themselves as tall as possible. Not only through prestige, but also the feeling of fulfillment may make one proud of him- or herself.

- The triangle for happiness is a combination of the two other triangles. This is because happiness covers social status and longevity as well. Wealth is whatever brings happiness to the user and that changes per user. It could be materialistic things, having fun in your life, a healthy life, becoming old and being able to see your grandchildren, being successful at your work or having a prominent position at your job. This means that wealth could also encompass longevity or prosperity.

Warmth:
- The triangle for happiness is made of heat-conducting material. Happiness is associated with warm and fuzzy feeling. Making the triangle adjusts to the room temperature, but also to your touch. When this triangle is lit, the upper side will heat up and stay warm for a short while. Also hinting at happiness not being a constant thing, but a feeling that fluctuates.

- The triangle for social status has a heat-conducting material on the front rectangular side and topside. Studies have shown that pride is felt as a warmth mainly in people's head and chest areas. Therefor when this triangle is lit, these two sides will heat up.

- The triangle for longevity has a constant temperature of 37 celsius degrees. This is the temperature of a healthy human body. When people use this triangle during a period of illness, the triangle will feel cold or warm to touch due to their own body temperature having risen or dropped. The triangle is in a state which the person wishes to return to. When a person is completely healthy, the triangle will feel neutral to touch.

Use and meaning:
- It is not common for Dutch users to give an offerings to gods, although a portion of the Dutch user is Christian or familiar with Christianity, and is familiar with burning a candle in the church. In this case the candle is an offering to a saint.

- The use of burning something links to lighting a candle in church. And the use of three shapes is the way the Chinese present the three aspects which make up a perfect life. The combination of these two practices gives an opportunity to stop and consciously think about what it is what you want in life. The practice of burning something takes a little time and effort, and is also a way to be busy with your hands. And the separation of three basic core values which make up a good life make it accessible. It is similar to the concept of mindfulness, of self-reflection, but in a way that makes it less fuzzy.

Relation between branding and design
Earlier in Chapter 2 the relation between branding and design was discussed. In short, the relation between branding and design was given as:

> The brand, or more specifically, the brand promise is the story that the brand wants to tell. It is what it stands for. To communicate this brand promise, great design is needed to make sure the right message is communicated. The design, in the shape of physical or non-physical attributes, tells the consumer what the brand is about, and what qualities can be expected. It also happens the other way around, the visual design is interpreted when the brand promise is not known, and this interpretation leads to an assumption of the brand promise.

Fu Lu Shou inspired product for Dutch market
In this case the brand promise for the new brand of Sofine was going to be *Bridging cultures* and *Heritage Chinese quality*. There are two ways to look at the relation between branding and design, through the eyes of the designer, and through the eyes of the consumer. During the design of a possible product for Sofine both ways were taken into consideration. From the designers view, how can this brand promise be communicated through the design?

The product that was chosen to develop was the set of 'oil lamps' inspired by Fu Lu Shou. Fu Lu Shou is a spiritual means for its user, it presents the three gods or three wise men Fu Lu Shou as figurines, from Chinese history and folklore. But what more important is, is what these three gods represent. Namely, wealth, prosperity and longevity. They reflect that what the user wishes for in life and the user can give offerings to these figurines. In China people believe that these three values make up a perfect life.

These tales are not known by the average Dutch consumer. But they are interesting for the Dutch consumer to know, because they are values that are also desired for in the Western world. A long and healthy life, happiness, a feeling of significance. But they cannot be presented to the Dutch consumer as they were. Three figurines of old men of a legend that is unknown to most people cannot be presented in this shape. So instead, the story of Fu Lu Shou is used as a source of inspiration. The underlying meaning of Fu Lu Shou is portrayed with the use of appearance and materials, with physical shapes, and with the use of the product. Inspiration was also taken from a custom in the Christian church, lighting a candle to ask saints for blessings or guidance. These two things were combined inspiration for the oil lamps. When looking into Dutch styling trends, it was noticeable that there is a preference for simplistic looking design, soberness, geometric shapes and certain colors. This led to the following features given to the design and interpretations of how it could be easier to make clear to the Dutch consumer what the underlying meaning of the product is. And in this way, make it clear what the brand promise is.

Comprehension by the user
Even when the designer can support or ground his decisions on logic information, it does not have to mean that the consumer understands it the same way. It is almost certain that the developed concept will not immediately be understood. This means that the consumer should first be given information about the story, which is also what makes the product interesting. A marketing strategy has to be devised with a plan which media could be used to

reach the target group. Examples are, magazines, television/internet commercials, billboards, etc. But to know which media should be used, and which tone should be used it is necessary to first have a better image of what the target group is.

Media

It is defined what the target group is, and a question is: how do you reach them?

There are different channels which can be used to communicate the message or product to the consumer, these channels are: *television, written press, internet, displays and interpersonal communication*. The three channels which are the most likely to reach the target group and fitting to this product are written press, internet and interpersonal communication. Television and displays are less interesting to focus on. Selling products through television will quickly be associated with products sold on shows such as Teleshopping. Which are often viewed as low-quality or scams. Displays such as billboards and posters don't fit this type of product because a billboard and posters are for looking at briefly. These cry for attention, but people don't stay and go and read a long story on a billboard. The oil lamps

Channels	Media
Written press	- Manual or a product explanation with the product. - Articles in popular Dutch magazines which present articles about subjects such as design, philosophy, mindfulness or meditation (For example, *Flow, Happiness, Yoga magazine, Women's health, Linda*).
Internet	- Blogs about subjects such as design, philosophy, mindfulness or meditation. - Website of Sofine - Web shops that sell the product - Websites of companies that give mindfulness, meditation or similar types of training.
Interpersonal communication	- Expert about mindfulness on a fair - Coaches at trainings related to mindfulness, acceptance, philosophy or meditation. - Coaches at companies (some companies have these to help people with work or life related stress, but also help as a mentor during daily life. - Psychologists (experts) at therapy sessions (For example, some psychologists recommend patients to do meditation or read mindfulness books or follow training.)

Figure 11: Channels and media for communicating Fu Lu Shou to the Dutch consumer

need to tell their whole story to be understood, which means these quick type of media is not a good idea. In Figure 11, an overview is given with possible media in the Netherlands suited for presenting the designed product.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter you will read:
- Conclusions on the tool that is developed, and the impletation of the tool on the case of Sofine
- In the discussion, limitations of the tool and thesis will be presented
- Recommendations for future users of the tool and D'Andrea & Evers and their continuing project

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this assignment was the development of guidelines, for designers of Chinese companies wanting to design for the Dutch consumer. In this thesis a tool is developed, based on theories from marketing and cognitive sciences. This tool combines all the necessary information and theory on the subject into a step-by-step framework to use as a guiding tool during the concept generating process. This way, the designer does not need to have a high knowledge of all the available information out there on the subject of brand associations, mental processes and country of origin effects. But instead, the tool is enough for the designer to know, and to lead him or her to possible product concepts.

In this assignment, the developed framework was implemented on decorative interior products for the brand Sofine, and led to various product iterations. Firstly, one product with all its iterations was presented in this paper, as a brief example for how the tool were to be used and the wide range of product iterations it could lead to. Secondly, one of the concepts generated with this tool, chosen by D'Andrea & Evers as one of the most interesting, was used as an elaborate presentation of how the tool was to be used, step by step.

All the different steps in de tool led to: an analysis of Chinese culture and heritage, Dutch culture, a brief target group analysis, trend report and an insight in possible channels and media to reach this target group.

The developed concept is based on a Chinese legend of three gods, *Fu Lu* and *Shou*. These represent happiness, prosperity or social status, and a long and healthy life. The meaning of this legend is used as inspiration for the product designed for Sofine. These are visualized as three triangle oil lamps, stimulating people to consider what they find most important in life.

DISCUSSION

Limitations

During this assignment a consumer survey has been held to get insight in what it is that consumers in the Netherlands find important when evaluating decorative interior products. This survey has been answered by a sample group of 39 respondents. Due to a strict schedule there was not enough time to wait for more respondents. This means that the reliability of these results are relatively low, due to the sample group being significantly small compared to the Dutch population. In the Dutch population many different social groups exist, of different ages, cultures, etc. The sample group is not a good representation of the Dutch population. However, the results were not being handled as the one and only truth, but were taken into consideration during the forming of the tool. Part of the decision to use the reflective process was based on my own knowledge and judgments.

It is hard to predict if the consumer will understand the reflective aspect the way the designer meant. This is due to people having different memories, different views and opinions on things. In this assignment it was decided that the story of Fu Lu Shou needs to be explained with the help of a marketing strategy, a possibility is that the story is presented on the packaging. This needs to be kept in mind for future references. One cannot say for sure, that when designing a concept, that the consumer will completely understand it. A more thorough research should be done for the specific consumer group that is being targeted, as to have a better insight in what is highly likely to be in the consumer's mind. And when unsure, give the consumer other means of guidance to the true meaning. (For example through packaging, advertising, and other media.)

The tool can be used as guidance for designers to come up with products fitting the reflective needs of consumers. However, it does not necessarily guarantee good concepts. This is dependent of the designer, this is because the method still requires inspiration and creativity from the designer and leaves him or her free in generating ideas. I deliberately did not choose to develop 'strict' guidelines. With such guidelines there was a risk that generated ideas would all turn out alike, due to the restricting nature of such guidelines. The goal is to come up with original and new ideas, and therefor you need creativity and the ability to be inspired. This tool guides and structures the creative thinking process and does not serve to limit it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Certain recommendations can be made for future users of this tool and for D'Andrea & Evers and their project with Sofine.

Future users of this tool
When designing a product with the focus on the meaning behind the product, this framework is good to use during the concept generating and iterating phase. But note, that in the case of many other product categories, the visceral or behavioral level can still be valued as equally important. In that case one can still use this tool to gain inspiration or create product ideas, but the designer still needs to consider the needs of the user on, for example, the behavioral level. The designer cannot leave the other attributes of a product totally out of account.

Also, in future cases with a longer timespan for a running project, it is recommended to hold an survey, where Dutch consumers are asked what they think the product is inspired by, after implementing the tool. As to verify if the meaning of the product imposed by the designer, is also understood by the consumer.

When a designer is planning on using this tool for generating concepts, it is best to already have done some research into Chinese culture and interesting products or stories, and the same goes for Dutch culture. Even though steps 4 and 5 relate to doing research into elements of the COO and the Netherlands, the first step of the tool is picking a product idea, story or existing product. One will need at least some input from Chinese or Dutch elements which can be used to start the tool. One cannot start completely blank.

Sofine
This project for Sofine continues after the completion of this bachelor assignment. An important aspect of the developing products is the manufacturability of a product. Although manufacturability was kept in mind during the concept design, more time should be put into thoroughly analyzing the feasability and possibilities for manufacturing. Considering that the product needs to be heat resistant, non-flammable and still needs the radiate the image that was established in this assignment. Can the product be mass-produced? Can the product be produced through manufacturing processes Sofine is familiar with? What will be the costs? These are questions which need to be answered.

Apart from the design of the product, the new brand will still need other aspects which will make up the brand: a name, a logo, a fixed brand promise, etc. A possible brand name could be MADE IN CHINA. Instead of trying to avoid the stigmas surrounding 'Made in China', one can also embrace it or try to break through it.

A marketing strategy has to be formed for how Sofine is going to bring these product to the consumer. A brief insight in possible media and channels were given. Now, it should be set down where Sofine should sell their products. In store, webshops, through other retailers? A marketing strategy has to be formed

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APPENDIX

In the appendix you will find:

INTRODUCTION
- WHAT IS BRANDING?
- WHAT FACTORS PLAY A ROLE?
- WHAT IS A BRAND PROMISE?

ANALYSIS
- BRAND NODES
- PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS: ATTRIBUTES & BENEFITS
- THE ROLE MENTAL PROCESSES PLAY

COMBINING THEORIES
- COMBINING DATA ANALYSIS INTO THEORETIC MODEL
- USER SURVEY RESULTS
- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPING TOOL

PRESENTING TOOL
- INFORMATION REFLECTIVE DESIGN ASPECTS
- STEP-BY-STEP METHOD EXPLAINED
- EXAMPLES

CONCEPT GENERATING
- CHINESE STORY: FU LU SHOU
- ANSWERING QUESTIONS OF TOOL
- VISUALIZATION OF CONCEPT

CONCLUSIONS
- CONCLUSIONS
- DISCUSSION
- RECOMMENDATIONS

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF SURVEY

To discover how people take certain attributes and benefits into consideration, a survey needs to be held. 39 people where interviewed, 38 from the Netherlands and 1 from Germany.

Questions which need to be answered:
- What do consumers judge home accessories on?
- Which attributes and benefits weigh heavier during your evaluation of a home accessories?
- Do their weighing of attributes and benefits differ per product category?
- Which attribute is looked at first and which attribute is the deciding factor?
- Which attributes and benefits are more important when seeing the product in real life?
- Which attributes and benefits are more important when seeing the product in a web shop?
- What do Dutch people generally think of when they have to think of China?
- What do Dutch consumer think about products designed and produced in Chinese products?
- What are the expectations for products from China by Dutch consumers?
- Is the country of origin important for decorative products?
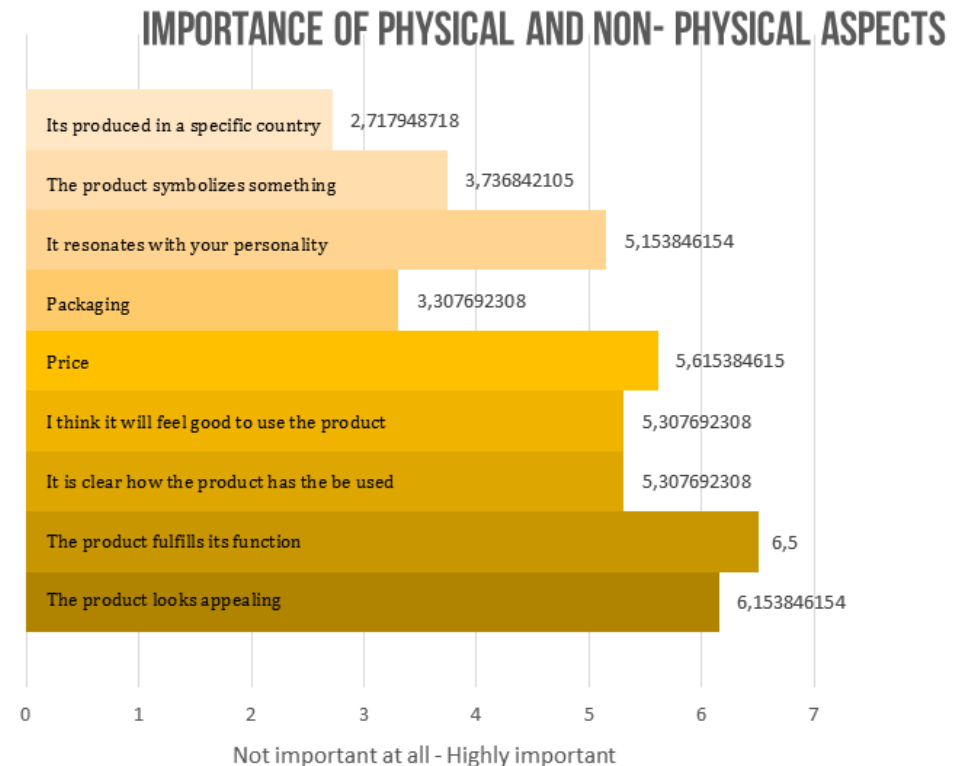
These questions were translated into phrases understandable for the regular Dutch consumer. The survey has been held to discover the consumers' opinion on the different attributes and benefits noted before in the theory about brand associations. These product related attributes, non-product related attributes and benefits have been phrased in a way that it was easier for the consumer to relate to. The survey was focused on interior decoration, such as photo frames, candleholders and vases. In figure X at the right, the average weighing of the different attributes and benefits have been evaluated and scored from 1 to 7. With 1 being, not important at all, and 7 being highly important for decoration.

Important attributes are:
- The decorative product fulfills its function
- The decorative product looks appealing
- The price
- The expectation of pleasure through the product
- The product is in tune with your personality

Attributes which are considered less important:
- The country where it was produced
- The packaging

IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL AND NON- PHYSICAL ASPECTS

Aspect	Score
Its produced in a specific country	2,717948718
The product symbolizes something	3,736842105
It resonates with your personality	5,153846154
Packaging	3,307692308
Price	5,615384615
I think it will feel good to use the product	5,307692308
It is clear how the product has the be used	5,307692308
The product fulfills its function	6,5
The product looks appealing	6,153846154

Not important at all - Highly important

The most important attributes are what the consumer should at least have. The less important factors are added values, when they are there, they are seen as added values to the decorative product. Surprisingly, against expectations, the function of a decorative product was still considered as highly important. This was not expected with a decorative item since the main purpose of a decorative item is its appealing appearance. But it seems that even with a relatively simple function, such as holding a picture of holder a candle, it was still important that it would be able to do it properly.

It is also surprising to see that the consumer, overall, considered the country of origin as not an important factor with decorative products.

Correlations

		appearance	function	understandable	feelsgood	price	packaging	resonatepersonality	symbol	country
appearance	Pearson Correlation	1	-,133	-,022	-,105	-,203	-,348*	,074	,005	,014
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,427	,896	,525	,214	,030	,652	,974	,934
	N		39	38	39	39	39	39	38	39
function	Pearson Correlation	-,133	1	,153	,220	,486**	,268	-,250	-,452**	-,206
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,427		,359	,184	,002	,104	,130	,005	,214
	N	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	37	38
understandable	Pearson Correlation	-,022	,153	1	,168	,126	,221	,137	-,118	-,190
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,896	,359		,307	,443	,176	,404	,479	,247
	N	39	38	39	39	39	39	39	38	39
feelsgood	Pearson Correlation	-,105	,220	,168	1	,159	-,088	,190	,023	-,292
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,525	,184	,307		,333	,594	,246	,893	,071
	N	39	38	39	39	39	39	39	38	39
price	Pearson Correlation	-,203	,486**	,126	,159	1	-,110	,166	-,463**	-,563**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,214	,002	,443	,333		,505	,311	,003	,000
	N	39	38	39	39	39	39	39	38	39
packaging	Pearson Correlation	-,348*	,268	,221	-,088	-,110	1	-,340*	-,222	,083
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,030	,104	,176	,594	,505		,034	,181	,616
	N	39	38	39	39	39	39	39	38	39
resonatepersonality	Pearson Correlation	,074	-,250	,137	,190	,166	-,340*	1	,220	-,192
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,652	,130	,404	,246	,311	,034		,184	,241
	N	39	38	39	39	39	39	39	38	39
symbol	Pearson Correlation	,005	-,452**	-,118	,023	-,463**	-,222	,220	1	,401*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,974	,005	,479	,893	,003	,181	,184		,012
	N	38	37	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
country	Pearson Correlation	,014	-,206	-,190	-,292	-,563**	,083	-,192	,401*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,934	,214	,247	,071	,000	,616	,241	,012	
	N	39	38	39	39	39	39	39	38	39

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

After noting the average importance of every attribute, an analysis is done to uncover correlations between different attributes. Strong correlations are assigned with ** and relative strong correlations are assigned *. In table X above, different strong correlations can be seen. A strong positive correlation is achieved when the Pearson correlation gets closer to 1, or a strong negative correlation when the Pearson correlation get closer to -1. The significance (2-tailed) refers to the probability that the correlation was by chance. The closer to the 0, the smaller the probability that the correlation was achieved by chance. When the significance is 1, then it is most probable that the correlation has been achieved by chance.
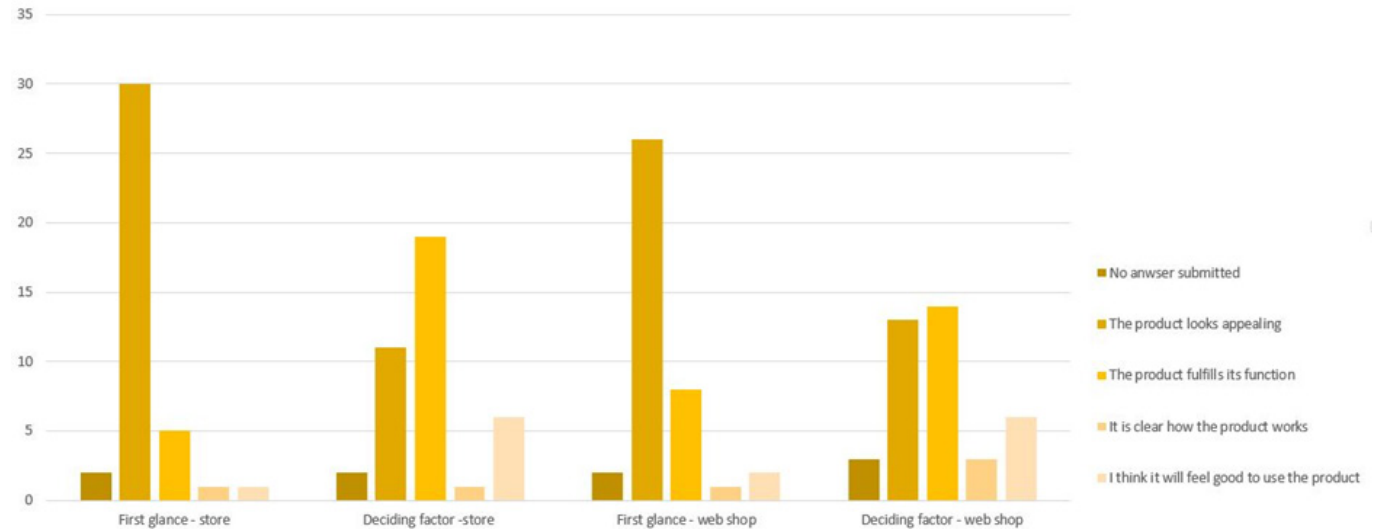
These are strong correlations:
- Price & Function
- Symbolism & Function
- Symbolism & Price
- Country & Price

Relatively strong correlations are:
- Packaging & Appealing appearance
- Resonate with personality & Packaging
- Country & Symbolism

## FREQUENCY OF FIRST GLANCE AND DECIDING PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES IN STORE AND IN WEBSHOPS

Difference between real-life store and web shop

As can be seen in graph X, the physical features of the decorative product are evaluated. The appearance of the decorative product is the lead at first glance, in stores and web shops alike. This means that this attribute will be looked at first, in most cases. The second factor which is looked at is the function of the product, but not as dominantly. During the decision-making process, the functionality player a far larger role, at this moment the functionality is as important as the aesthetics, or even more important. It also needs to be noted that the expectation of how the product will feel, also becomes more important during the decision-making process.

As seen in graph X, the non-physical attributes that are first looked at in a store and in a web shop. In a store the most important aspect is how well it matches the consumer's personality. In a web shop the first thing that is looked at is the price, and the way it resonates with the consumer's personality is less important than in a real life store. During the decision-making process, the price becomes the most important factor, and the importance of the way it reflects the consumers personality and the symbolization decreases. What is also noticeable is that the packaging is of almost no importance in a web shop, and that the country of origin is almost equally important in every situation

FREQUENCY OF FIRST GLANCE AND DECIDING NON- PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES IN STORE AND IN WEBSHOPS
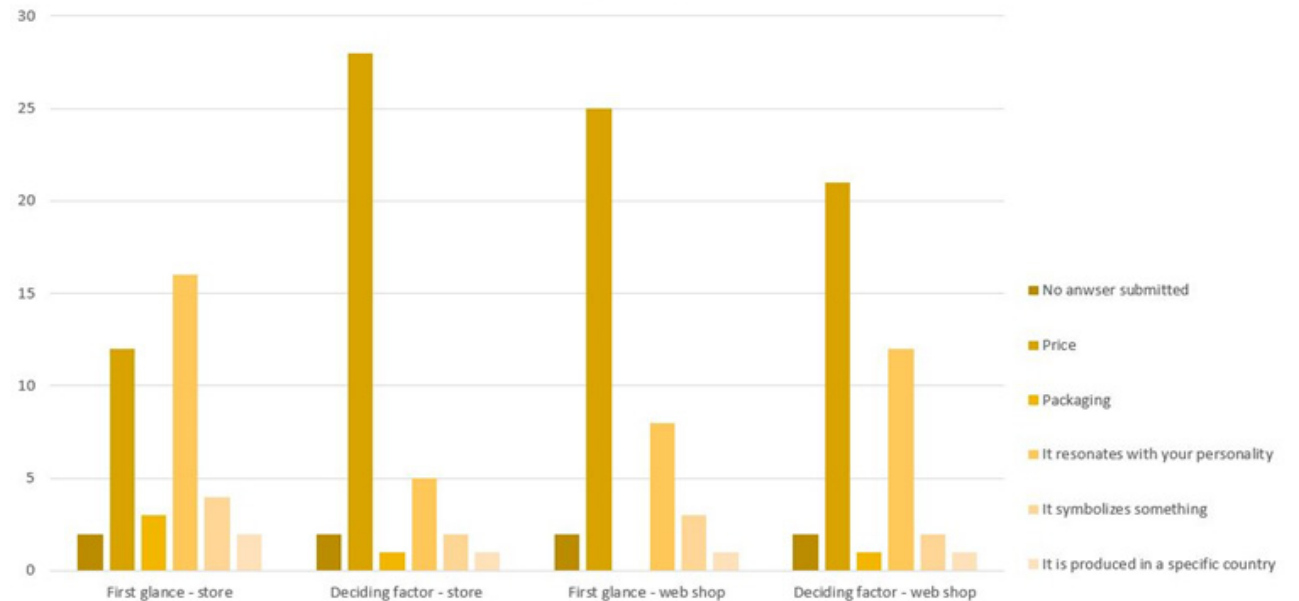
Correlations real life & web shops

There is a very strong correlation between the attributes looked at first in a real life store and in a web shop. The same can be said for the deciding attributes of the web shop and real life store.

This is the same for product related attributes and non-product related attributes, this can be seen in the tables X & Y.

Correlations

		first.store.non	deciding. store.non	first.webshop. non	deciding. webshop.non
first.store.non	Pearson Correlation	1	,288	,567**	,096
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,084	,000	,570
	N	37	37	37	37
deciding.store.non	Pearson Correlation	,288	1	,096	,585**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,084		,573	,000
	N	37	37	37	37
first.webshop.non	Pearson Correlation	,567**	,096	1	-,302
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,573		,069
	N	37	37	37	37
deciding.webshop.non	Pearson Correlation	,096	,585**	-,302	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,570	,000	,069	
	N	37	37	37	37

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

		first.store	deciding. store	first.webshop	deciding. webshop
first.store	Pearson Correlation	1	-,108	,675**	-,154
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,523	,000	,362
	N	37	37	37	37
deciding.store	Pearson Correlation	-,108	1	,213	,554**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,523		,205	,000
	N	37	37	37	37
first.webshop	Pearson Correlation	,675**	,213	1	-,188
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,205		,264
	N	37	37	37	37
deciding.webshop	Pearson Correlation	-,154	,554**	-,188	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,362	,000	,264	
	N	37	37	37	37

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

APPENDIX B: ANALYSIS OPEN QUESTIONS SURVEY

The answers for the open questions have been summarized and combined into the overall answer for each question. For the specific reactions to these questions.

What is the influence of the country of origin on the evaluation of the product?
Depending on if the product is purely functional, or purely decorative, the country of origin matters more or doesn't matter at all. When a high functionality is needed, certain countries such as China aren't easily trusted. With a low functionality, the consumer feels able to judge the decorative product on its appearance and its smooth finish.

Even here, when not even naming the country China, a lot of respondents used China as an example for a country which they associate with bad quality product. And more than once, Sweden was named as a country which was trustworthy with its interior design and decorative items.

Does the influence depend on the product category?
The opinions were divided, on one side consumers said that it didn't depend on product category. Their opinion of the country is the same for every product alike.

On the other side, most consumers said that they had different expectations of a product in different product categories. Especially products such as electronics are critical subjects, this is a product category that people prefer to buy from familiar brands. But some of them noted, that even though they preferred such products from countries they trusted, Europese or American, some of them knew that the products or parts of it of their familiar brands were produced in China. And the quality of the product was still good, even though it was from countries they didn't trust.
But a vase is a vase, and some consumer thought that a decorative product (which actually hints towards the country it's made in) feels more authentic than when it would have been made somewhere else. When the product is a souvenir, or a gift, at that moment it was preferred that it originated from the country which it linked to.

With brands or product categories, where it is known that it is often made by childrens' hands, people look critically at the products.
What do you think of when you think of China?

Overall, most answers were in the direction of: mass-production, cheap products, poor work environment, counterfeiting and crowded. But also answers like: The Chinese wall, colorful, great food, Feng Shui and martial arts were mentioned. And people who thought the country itself was beautiful. In the end, a lot of people thought of negative things, which were linked with products. Less people thought of Chinese things which were not related to products. But when naming non-product related things, they were mostly positive. After this it was necessary to ask specifically for positive and negative associations, to let them think outside of their box.

What are positive things you associate with China?
Cheap products are also considered a positive thing, the same counts for being able to imitate products really well. But most things are related to the culture and norms, a lot of them mentioned the interesting culture, the focus on family bonds and values, interesting history, tea rituals and respect for the elderly. But also typical products such as: lantern, dragon boats, fireworks, bamboo and porcelain. A nice comment was: 'working on a balanced mind, body and life in a non-religious

way.'

What are negative things you associate with China?
Most of the negative associations were related to product and fabrication. A few examples were, bad work environment, mass production and counterfeiting. But a few others which repeatedly returned were, overpopulation, smog and not taking the environment into consideration, strict political regime, censuring and communism.

Does the fact that a product originates from China have any influence on your opinion about it?
At least 17 respondent out of 39 said it didn't matter to them that the product was designed and produced in China. Only 8 people said they would think the product was or of low quality, or produced under poor circumstances or a copy of another product. The remaining 14 respondent said that it didn't have a direct influence on their opinion, but that it depended on different factors. They would look at the product a bit more carefully or wanted to know under which circumstances it was made. Most of them noted that it depended on the type of product. Most of them knew a lot of products were produced in China, so they knew

not everything what was produced there was of low quality.

What are the expectations of the product when it originates from China?
Almost all respondents expect that the quality is lower than when it would be produced/designed elsewhere, but they do expect a good price-quality ratio. But even though most respondents expected a lower quality most of the time, it was noted multiple times that this doesn't apply to every product. Of some products the quality is high, and with product categories such as decorative products there was a smaller chance that it'd break since it was a product which isn't constantly used by the consumer.

Even though, not all respondents thought it was bad that the quality was lower than that of Western products, since you would pay a far cheaper price, and so it was to be expected.

Do these expectations differ per product category?
Consumers expect a lower quality for mechanical products or electronics, but these are based on the fact that there is a bigger chance that it breaks

when it is repeatedly used. For static product which are for show the expectations was a lower quality through a not so smooth finish. Also the price was a leading factor in the expectations of the quality, a low price must mean that the quality is lower as well. Most of the respondent thought it varied per product, but some still thought it was the same for every product.

APPENDIX C: INFLUENCE PROCESSING ON ATTRIBUTES

From the survey two attributes were gathered that were weighed as most important attributes when evaluating a decorative product. After the analysis of the survey, the following attributes were chosen to get more insight in:
- *Price*
- *Appealing appearance*

The price seems to be an important factor independent of if it's sold in a store or an online shop. The appearance is a leading character as well, especially in the first stage of seeing the product. The questions which will be tried to answer here are, what is the influence of the three mental processes on the attributes price and appealing appearance? This means, what happens to the design of the decorative product, when I want to focus on a certain price category? Or when I want the appearance to match the tastes of the Dutch consumer? And in each mental stage, how is it noticeable?

Together with three Dutch interviewees these questions were discusses to get more insight in what these mental processes may mean for the physical design. The examples given hereafter are acheived through those interviews.

Price is a non-product related attribute, thus reflective, but it has an effect on the visceral and behavioral processes as well. This is because form and function are both dependent on the price category that the product is going to be sold in. The appearance has to match the tastes of the target group which effects the reflective attributes but also the physical product, which is part of the visceral and behavioral level. It also says something about the type of products that group uses, which relates to the function those consumers expect from that specific type of product.

Influence of the visceral processes on the price
The principles which make up visceral reactions are universal, and attention from consumers all over the world can be caught with these principles. These principles will not be listed here, but a few examples will be explained. During this level physical features dominate. Form, look, sound, smell, feel. Price tells the consumer something about the quality to be expected.

Examples:
- Material, it communicates a level of quality and an expected price. Humans have a natural instinct to find certain materials to be of a better quality, for example, certain types of wood or metal. And have a feeling of lower quality with materials such as plastics. (Even though plastics can be of high quality, depending on the way it's used.)

- Heft. The previous point leads to the weight of the product. The judgment of the material might have to do with the weight as well. When judging two identical product but with different weights, how does one judge them? The heavier pen will be judged as more expensive, since quality materials for this product are likely to be heavier. Plastic pens, cheaper pens, are lighter. But this varies per product and have to be taken into consideration. Because aluminum is a very light metal, but more expensive than a lot of other metals being used in consumer products.

- Shape. Designers have to look at similar products in the same price category in that particular price range or at the target groups preferences. It was noted before that there are universal principles which humans find 'pretty'. But there are also trends in the Netherlands in that price category which are popular and more

searched for. By applying these universal principles and combining it with the trends, the shape and appearance will be formed so it will fit that target group and price category.

-        Sound. Humans like and dislike specific sounds. For example, expensive cars have a certain exhaust sound, low, rumbling, that consumers judge as a nice sound of an expensive car. The same can be said for sounds that decorative products can make. The crackling noise thin sheets of plastic can make are experienced as cheap, but the low or soft sounds which are correlated with expensive materials, are also an indicator that the product is more expensive.

-        Finish. What separates a cheap product from an expensive product is the finish. Price and finish have a strong correlation, creating a smooth finish is more expensive, but a smooth finish also leads to the product being worth more. With a good finish one might think of no (visible) glue remains. Concealed screws but also no screws sticking out which may do harm. When the screws are visible, make sure they look of quality. Present your material scratch-free, when there are already

scratches on the product it is a foreboding for more scratches. Images should not be applied as stickers, which can curl around.

-        Ambiguity in quality of material or fake material. Wood is often found as a qualitative material, it would be misleading to replace the wood with a woodprint sticker. This leads to a sudden lowering of the expected quality. The same goes when it looks when something is made of metal, which is expected to be relatively heavy, and it is suddenly very light. You want the quality you expected when you looked at it.

Influence of the behavioral processes on the price
During the behavioral process we combine what we sense with past experiences with products and their functions. Our opinions of a lot of products are based on previous experiences, when we have had positive experiences with a specific function or feature, than we're likely to positively judge a new product with the same feature (before even using it). The same goes for negative experiences, these make it harder to accept a new product with the same features. Some of these features are produced starting from a certain price, such as electronics,

you have an expectation of what that particular function will cost at the least.

This also means, a product which does not fulfills its function, isn't worth the buy. The most important part of the behavioral process is the function and use. An intuitively product or one that is easy to use, will likely be considered of higher quality and thus of a higher price range. Here are a few examples of aspects that you can use that have an influence on the use and expected price.

Examples:
-        Make it easy to understand what the product does. In the case of decorative products, when buying a photo frame or a device to hang your photos on, it usually comes with a preview picture. And make used of design cues/visual cues, which give a hint on how it can be used. For example, a non-conventional coat hanger can show that you hang things on it with the hook like shapes it has. A good product might have a complex design, but is still intuitive, these are products which deserve a higher price.

-        Make it easy to learn. Learn once, remember

forever. When the way of use is different from other products in this product category, make it transparent. Make it easy to understand how it works. This can be achieved by design cues/visual cues. For example, a handle on a cup shows where to hold it. But with complex products it can also be explained on the packaging or in a manual.

- Make it simple. It could be as simple as possible, making the consumer say: 'I should've thought of that!' But it should work at least as good as other products. (Example, cup with indent for thumb)

- Feel (texture). A smooth finish is a predictor of a quality product, make sure that the product has got a good finish, or seems to be seamlessly smooth, and make the consumer feel it is a quality product which may lead to a higher price.
Also, a good product has a nice feel, give a sensation when touching. Reliefs, textures, smooth, soft or warm materials.

- Feel (use). Smooth mechanics, such as the smooth turning of a knob are experienced as more pleasurable than a faltering knob. The mechanics might be identical, but with the use of oils, the smoothness of the mechanics can be enhanced and thus experienced as a higher quality knob.

- Sound. This one has been explained in the visceral level and is quite similar. Here one has to look at, what sounds do products of the desired product/price category make, which gives it that sign of quality. For example, sounds of hollow plastic are a possible sign that it might be easier to bend or it will easily be fatigued, in contrast to a compact product.

- The same goes for the weight. Depending on the use of a product, a lower or higher weight is preferred. Some products which are usually made of heavy metals, but which are preferred to be light enough to carry, become more expensive when you want to buy a lightweight version that still has the same functionality. But it works the other way around as well. A vase can be very light, but to be sure that the vase will not easily tip and fall, it is recommended to buy a heavier version which cannot tip easily. This will probably mean a more expensive material, or a more difficult design to fabricate due to different location for material.

Consumers can anticipate the price through the weight of a product.

- Use visual cues. There are universal icons and symbols used to explain certain functions, or behaviors. For example, the unfinished circle with a stripe which means on/off.

- Make it different. It should be understandable how it works, but it doesn't have to be standard. Make it interesting by realizing the function in a fun or different way.

- It is possible to personize the product? Can I distinguish myself from other with the same product?

- Replacing parts. If there are parts which have to be replaced or fixed, it should be easy for the user to reach the concerning parts. On the other hand, for the consumers ease, it is desirable that the consumer does not have to replace or fix parts. This comes with extra financial costs, since the replacement of a light bulb cost extra money on top of the purchase price. Depending on which part, it is seen as an important financial factor.

Ink cartridges are very expensive compared to the printer, with 4 cartridges one might even be able to buy a new printer. Conclusion, avoid having to replace parts periodically. But it might be desirable to be able to properly clean parts, which still means parts should be reachable.

-        Material. What type of material is it, is it easy to clean, is it easy to maintain? These are factors which weigh when deciding if it is worth the price.

Influence of the reflective processes on the price
During the reflective process we consciously think about the benefits and values of the product. One of the important attributes that play a role here, is the image that comes to mind when one thinks of who uses the product. That person, that social group, would pay a certain amount of money for that type of product. This has to resonate with the consumer.

One thinks about the price consciously, if the consumer thinks the product is worth that amount, what is to be expected of a product of that price. But it isn't static, it is an interaction between quality, price and self-image. People place themselves in

a certain social group. That social says something about style preferences, an expected minimal functionality and quality, social needs and ideology. The designer needs to know these. Here are some aspects named that can be used.

Examples:
-        Be aware of what consumers in your target group find attractive design. Make note of trends in their price category of decorative products.

-        Be aware of the ideology of your target group. The product should reflect the consumers personality. Some target groups are more specific than others. They have a preference for products that resemble their opinions on specific matters. For example, people that find it important that a product is fair, may want to be sure that their products have not been made by exploited labourers, that the products are recycled, or that it is made from sustainable material. Fairtrade products are in general, more expensive than the non-Fairtrade version. But with the Fairtrade version the consumer gets the feeling he is contributing to a higher purpose, and that it's worth to pay a higher price for it. Ideologies like this one

can be taken into consideration, because consumers are willing to pay a higher price for products that fits their ideology.

-        Be aware what is 'socially normal' in that target group. This can relate to a style, but also, what type of product that social group relates to. A social group that identifies itself with the latest trends might look for new innovative products or products that are not mainstream. In contrast to a social group that prefers products which he or she is familiar with. This can be the difference between a screen with fading photo display and a traditional photo frame. And in this way a target group of a higher price range, might look for a different type of interior decoration than those of a low price range. So, find out what social groups you are targeting, and what type of products fit in their group and which trends and styles.
-        Service. The service you have received combined with the product, think of the shop where you bought it, the warranty, the help you receive when the product is broken, it all adds to the price the consumer is willing to pay.

-        Insight in the person who produced the

product and the production process, when it is known that the product was made by a specific person from a specific country or town it feels more worth than a product produced on an assembly belt.

- People feel the need to feel good about themselves, some products give a part of the earnings to charity, research or laborers.

Influence of the visceral processes on the appearance
During the visceral process the first picture of the product is important. The appearance is almost always the first thing to be evaluated. There are specific features which are biologically inherited which humans find interesting, appealing or what they fear or dislike. The principles which make up visceral reactions are universal, and attention from consumers all over the world can be caught with these principles. These principles will not be listed here, but a few examples will be explained. During this level physical features dominate and have a one-on-one relationship with the appearance.

These universal principles will not all be listed.

Examples:
- Bright colours attract attention.

- Symmetric shapes are found attractive.

- Soothing or pleasant sounds, can have an effect on the type of material to be used, which changes things for the appearance of the product. Or on the shape which produces a certain acoustic sound (for example, the shape of a guitar changes its sound).

- Interesting, soft, warm, smooth textures are universally pleasing. This might have an influence on the types of materials used, or the relief or texture that the product shows.

- Uniqueness. Catch the attention with something unexpected compared to other product in that product category. Give the customer the feeling there aren't thousands made of it. This may mean, that there can be slight changes between one model and the other, slight colour variation, slightly different pattern. This way, no two of the same products on the shelf, will be completely the same.

Influence of the behavioral processes on the appearance
During the behavioral process we combine what we sense with past experiences. We can experience a sensation through physical touch, smells, sounds, visual stimuli and taste. We compare these stimuli with previous experiences and opinions.

The visual design has an influence on the functionality. We compare the outer appearance with other products of other brands in the same category, especially for software and electronic products, there is a universal way of presenting different aspects of the product. This makes it easier to understand.

The function or use of the product can have an influence on the appearance is different ways.
Examples:
- Make it easy to understand what the product does. Make use of design cues/visual cues, which give a hint about how it can be used. For example, a non-conventional coat hanger can show that you hang things on it with the hook like shapes it has. Or make it apparent in the use of textures (rough side is down, smooth side is up).

- Make it easy to learn. Learn once, remember forever. When the way of use is different from other products in this product category, make it transparent. Make it easy to understand how it works. This can be achieved by design cues/visual cues. For example, a handle on a cup shows where to hold it. This leads to the cup changing shape to make it easier to hold. With complex products it can also be explained on the packaging or in a manual.

- Perceived strength. Certain product are expected to be able to endure certain amounts of stress. A table with thick legs, or a certain (triangle) construction will often be perceived as stronger than a table with 4 narrow legs.

- Sound. Before the following example was given: sounds of hollow plastic are a possible sign that it might be easier to bend or it will easily be fatigued, in contrast to a compact product. It is will show through the construction or the material.

- The same goes for the weight. Depending on the use of a product, a lower or higher weight is preferred. This will have an impact on the material used, the construction, or the shape.

- Use visual cues. There are universal icons and symbols used to explain certain functions, or behaviors. For example, the unfinished circle with a stripe which means on/off.

- Interesting, soft, warm, smooth textures are universally pleasing. This might have an influence on the types of materials used, or the relief or texture. This will be seen in the outer appearance.

- Weight (relocating), a certain heavy material might look more appealing aesthetically, but if this means that it a vase is too heavy to relocate, it is better to use different (lighter) materials, a smaller size or a different construction (such as handles for lifting).

- Protection. Practical issues such as the protection of the product and the environment. For example, a glass vase is handled more carefully than a plastic vase when put upon a table. To raise the ease of the consumer, the only thing needed would be a slip-resistant layer (of felt for example). Or the protection of the user could be protecting their hand against the heath of a coffee cup. This could be achieved through placing a handle, a rubber band around the cup, a non-heat-conducting material or double-walled glas.

Influence of the refelctive processes on the appearance

During the reflective process we consciously think about the benefits and values of the product. One of the attributes that play a role here is, the image that comes to mind when one thinks of who uses the product. When you think of that, you think of a certain target group, there is a certain style which comes to mind that fits that social group. The appearance also has a large influence in communicating the ideology the product needs to tell. For example, to communicate that the brand is fair trade, natural materials are used. Recycled products have a typical style.

- Attractiveness is universal, but beautiful products are based on reflection. Depending on the culture and environment and product that he or she is or isn't familiar with, the definition of a beautiful product is defined. This means, in the case of the Netherlands, the designer needs to research the Dutch culture. What are typical products, authentic,

modern, standard norm, stereotypical? What are trends playing today? What is generally seen as beautiful in this country?

- Self-image. Depending on the social group ones resonates with, the outer appearance changes. Does that group define itself as conscious of the environment, than this may play a role in how the product should be presented. A lot of people link environmentally conscious products to physical aspects such as natural or recycled materials. For a group that identifies itself with trend setting, one should research upcoming trends and technologies and try to incorporate those into the design.

- When you find out what the target group finds important, communicate it or make it visible, when the target group prefers environmentally conscious products, you can choose show the materials used, such as upcycled car glass or tires. Or when it's not possible to show, tell consumers through the packaging. For example, recycled plastic posts for in the garden are being sold. Originally they were made of wood, and wood is considered better looking, and your feeling says wood is better for the environment. But

when hearing that the plastic pole was made of recycled materials, it can override your opinion of the better looking pole because you find being environmentally conscious more important.

- Make it stand out from other products in the same product category and price range. People want something to think about, so try incorporating a little joke, hint or inspiration (for example from the country of origin). This might be visible, like the Domoor cup by Richard Hutten. It is a hint to the Dutch word for fool, which literally means silly ears. Examples for jokes could be:
Dutch sayings: the monkey comes out of the sleeve, own fireplace is worth gold, butter with the fish, for honey a bear dances.
Hints to typical Dutch products: Delfts blauw, wooden shoes, tulips (even though they are originally from Turkey), salt licorice, bicycles, windmills, Mens Erger Je Niet, tompoezen and oliebollen.
Hints to traditions: the word 'gezelligheid', punctuality, three kisses, Sinterklaas, the never-ending battle against water and the sea, the layout of the countryside witch rectangular patches, the organization of the infrastructure.

- Look at where it will be used. One needs to have an image of the conventional interior of the target group. For example, when designing for a spacious living space or a compact living arrangement, it can have an influence on the shape and form of the product.

- Symbolism. Before, Dutch elements were named which could be used. But Chinese elements are a good source of inspiration as well. Think of traditional architecture, products, spiritual beliefs, craftsmanship and inspiration by their folklore and culture. These can be found in the appearance through for example: textures, constructions, different form and way of use, materials, colours and patterns.

- It doesn't have to be visible that it is from China, but it is nice to know the story behind the inspiration attained from China.

APPENDIX D: METHOD QUESTIONS

The designer needs to use the questions below for the developed framework. The purpose of these questions is to give insight in the performance of the product on the different reflective aspects. And to give inspiration to find solutions or ideas to enhance the product on those aspects.

Price
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- What are similar products of the competitor of the targeted price category? (If it is an existing product.)
- What are characteristics of products in the targeted price category?
o   Look at the popular trends
o   Look at the styles used
o   Look at the use of materials
- Does it have the minimal expected functionality of products in that category?
- What are you willing to pay for it?

Questions related to the desired product:
- How can the product fit the image one has of a product for that price category?
o   Can it match the expected style trends, materials and or popular trends?
- How does it differentiate itself from similar products? Which elements could be added to heighten the perceived value?
- What would you pay for that product? What makes it worth that price?

Packaging
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- Is the function and/or meaning of the product clear on its own?
- What is necessary for the consumer to know about the product to understand it?

- What is the common way to package this type of product?

Questions related to the desired product:
- Can the meaning and/or function be communicated through the packaging?
o   Think of reinventing the shape of the packaging, what are alternative or authentic ways of packaging?
o   Think of using scenario images.
o   Think of using images/textures/materials that hint at the inspiration behind the product.
o   If necessary, use text to explain the message.

User imagery
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- Give a description of the demographic factors of the consumer that people think that uses this product at the moment, that is, if it is an existing product. Otherwise think of products with similar functions. (Demographic factors such as, race, age, sex, income.)
- Give a description of the psychographic factors of the consumer that people think use this product, that is, if it is an existing product. Otherwise think of products with similar functions. (Psychographic factors such as interests, attitudes and opinions, personality and lifestyle.)

Questions related to the desired product:
- What is your desired user? Give a demographic and psychographic description of the consumer that you want to target.
- Are there specific styling trends which define the taste of the desired user?
- Are there specific trends (in general) which defines the desired user?
- Are there specific design features which typifies the desired user?
- Does the desired target group have an ideological view on a matter? (For example, if their ideology is to be more conscious of the environment, you

could look into ways which would make a product communicate that it is sustainable, or made of recycled/upcycled materials)
- How can you make your product more in line with their ideology?

Usage imagery
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- When would the consumer use this product? (Day, month, year, season, time of the day, work time, free time, holidays, situations, formal or informal occasions etc.)
- How does it (right now) communicate when it should or could be used?
- Where would the consumer use this product? (Location such as, at work, at home, inside, outside, the gym, etc)
- How does it (right now) communicate where it should or could be used?

Questions related to the desired product:
- How can physical features communicate where it should be used?
- How can physical features communicate when it should be used?
- Look into adjusting shape, colour, material, textures, images, patterns, and/or features which can be adjusted.

Self-image
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- Does the product give opportunity for personal expression?
- In what way does the product give opportunity for personal expression?
- Does everyone in the target group have something in common?

Questions related to the desired product:
- How can the consumer use the product to express themselves?
- Is the product customizable?
- Is the product to be 'made' or constructed by the consumer?

- How can the product be altered by the consumer?
- Can the consumer make something with the product?

Personal satisfaction
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- Does the product enable the consumer to work on their skills?
- In what way does the product enable working on their skills?
- Does the product show off personal achievements or skills?
- In what way does the product show off the consumer's achievements or skills?
- Does the product stimulate working on skills/achievements?

Questions related to the desired product:
- Does the product relate to any sort of skill?
- In what way could the product stimulate the consumer working on skills?
- In what way could the product help the consumer with working on skills?
- In what way could the product present the skills or achievements?

Social approval
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- What characterizes the target group?
o   Make a target group analysis
o   Make scenarios
o   Research common trends within this target group
o   Research styling trends within this target group
o   What are products bought by this target group?
- Is there a social group which the target group feel familiar with or aspires to be part of?
o   What characterizes this social group?

Questions related to the desired product:

- Can the product be more in line with the common trends within this target group?
- Can the product be more in line with the styling trends popular within this target group?
- How can the product fit the desired social group?

Brainteasers & Contemplation
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- Does the product have a second layer (a deeper meaning) to it?
- What is the deeper meaning of the product?
- How is the deeper meaning portrayed? How is it communicated?
- What are interesting Dutch customs or elements?
- What are interesting sayings from the Netherlands or the country of origin?

Questions related to the desired product:
- Are there stories that could be added to the existing product?
o   What are interesting stories/traditions from the country of origin?
o   What are interesting stories/traditions from the Netherlands?
- What deeper meaning do you want the product portray?
- What are characteristics of what you want to portray?
o   Think of physical shapes, forms, patterns and other visible characteristics.
o   Think of the meaning
o   Can the meaning be made visible through styling or function?
- In what way can aspects of the underlying meaning be portrayed?

Memories
Questions related to the existing product/product idea:
- In what way can the product present memories (ex. Photographs)?
- Is the product in line with the type of memories that are most often presented? (happy or loving memories of happy moments, loved ones, friends)
- In what way can the product stimulate making memories or can it lead to social interaction?
- How do features or aspects of the product stimulate the making of the memories?
- How do features or aspects of the product stimulate social interaction?
- In what way does the product remind the consumer of a memory?
- What are the characteristics of the features that remind the consumer of those memories?

Questions related to the desired product:
- What type of memories should be presented? (Which emotional value do those memories have?)
- What are typical elements which characterizes those memories?
- Can those elements from those memories be used in the design of the product?

- Can the product be use by more people? How does it make clear that it can be used by more than one person? Are there features that could help making it obvious that it's meant for multiple people?
- Is there a way to force having to use the product with two or more people? (A product that can only be used with two or more for example.)
- How can the product be made so interesting that it incites social interaction through the other asking about the product?

- What is (probably) in the memory of your target group? What is familiar, what is known?
- What is known about the country of origin? What is known about the Netherlands?
-       How can these memories find expression in the design of the product?
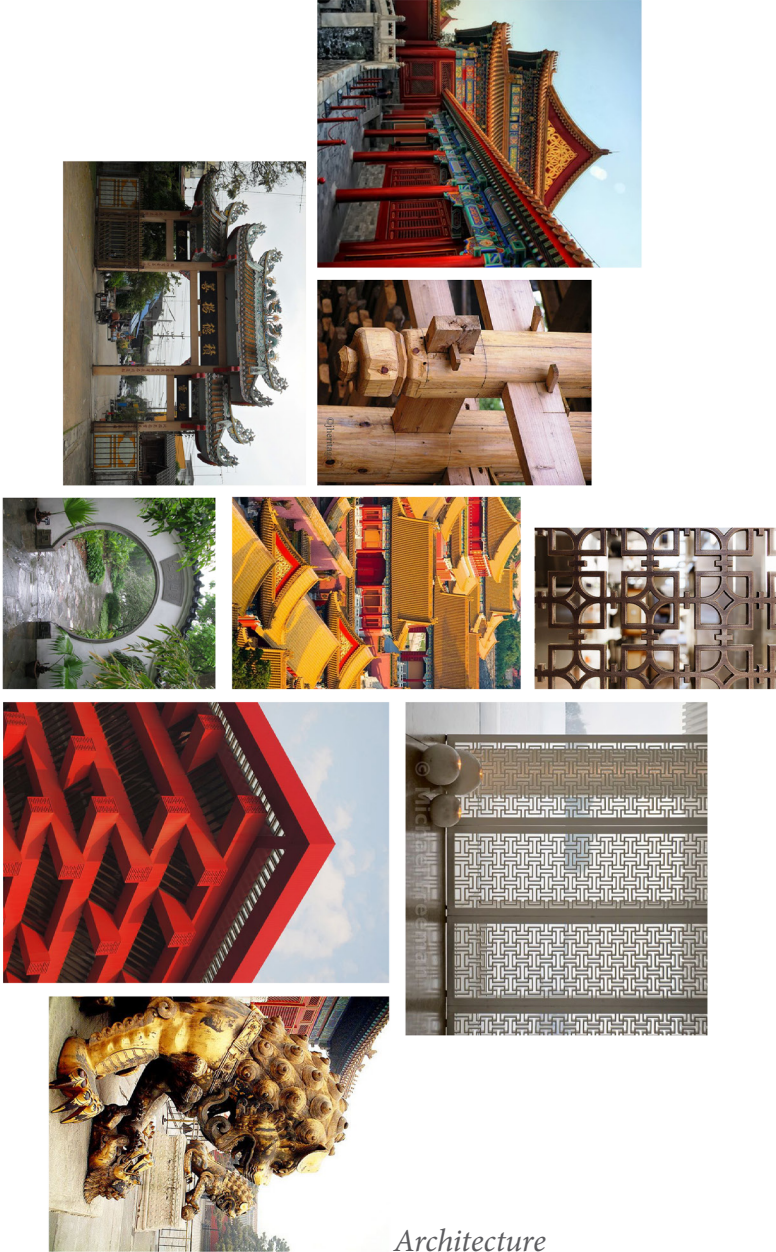
Architecture

Craftmanship

Saying inspired by nature

Spirituality
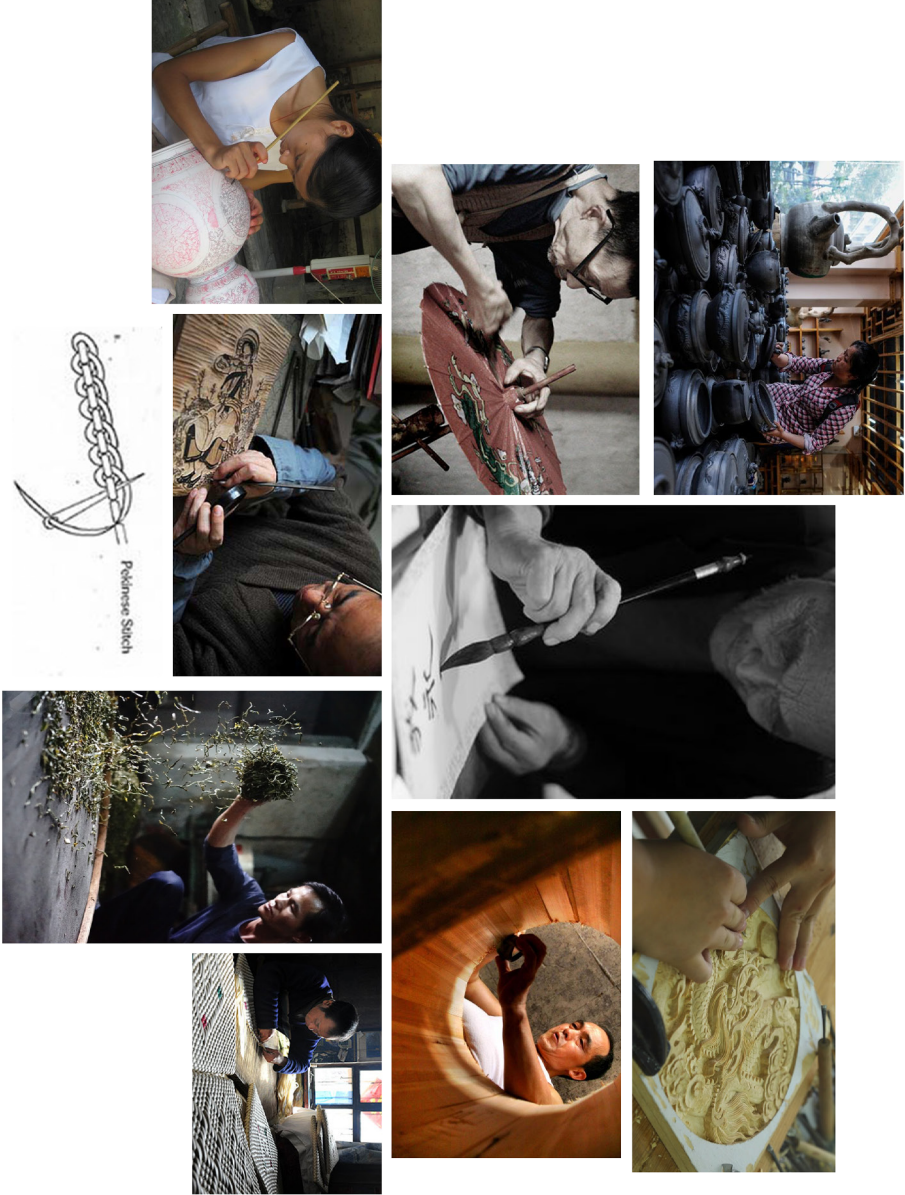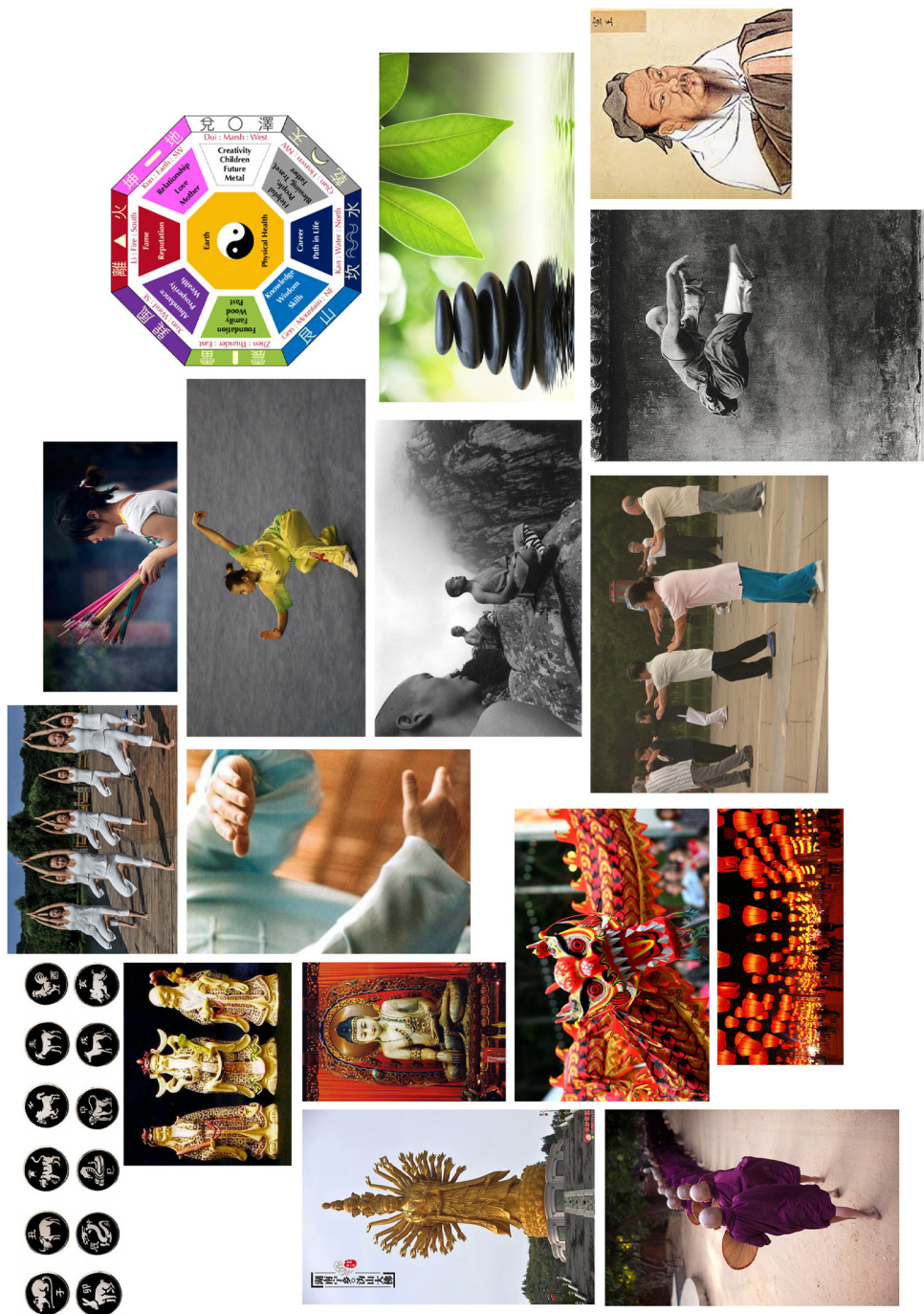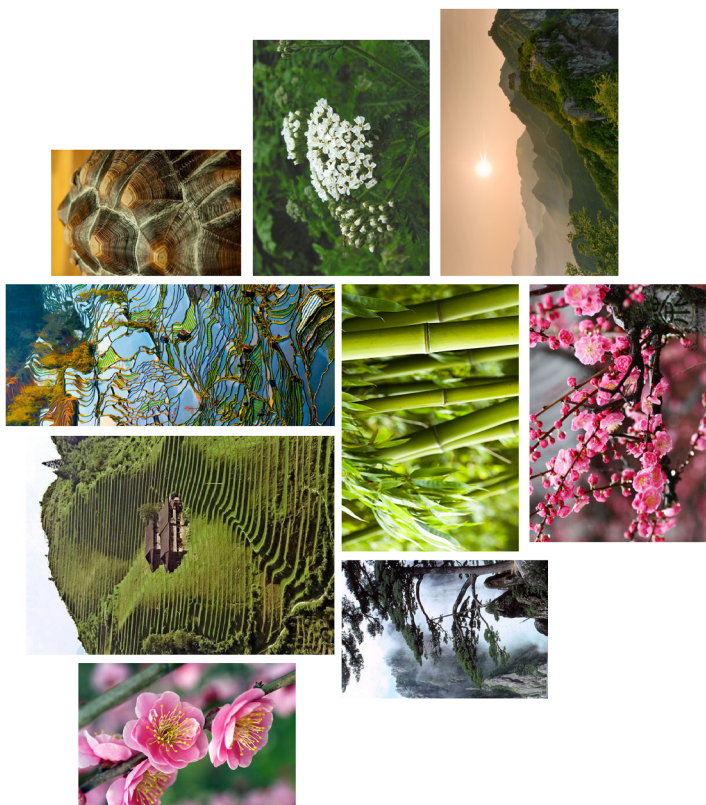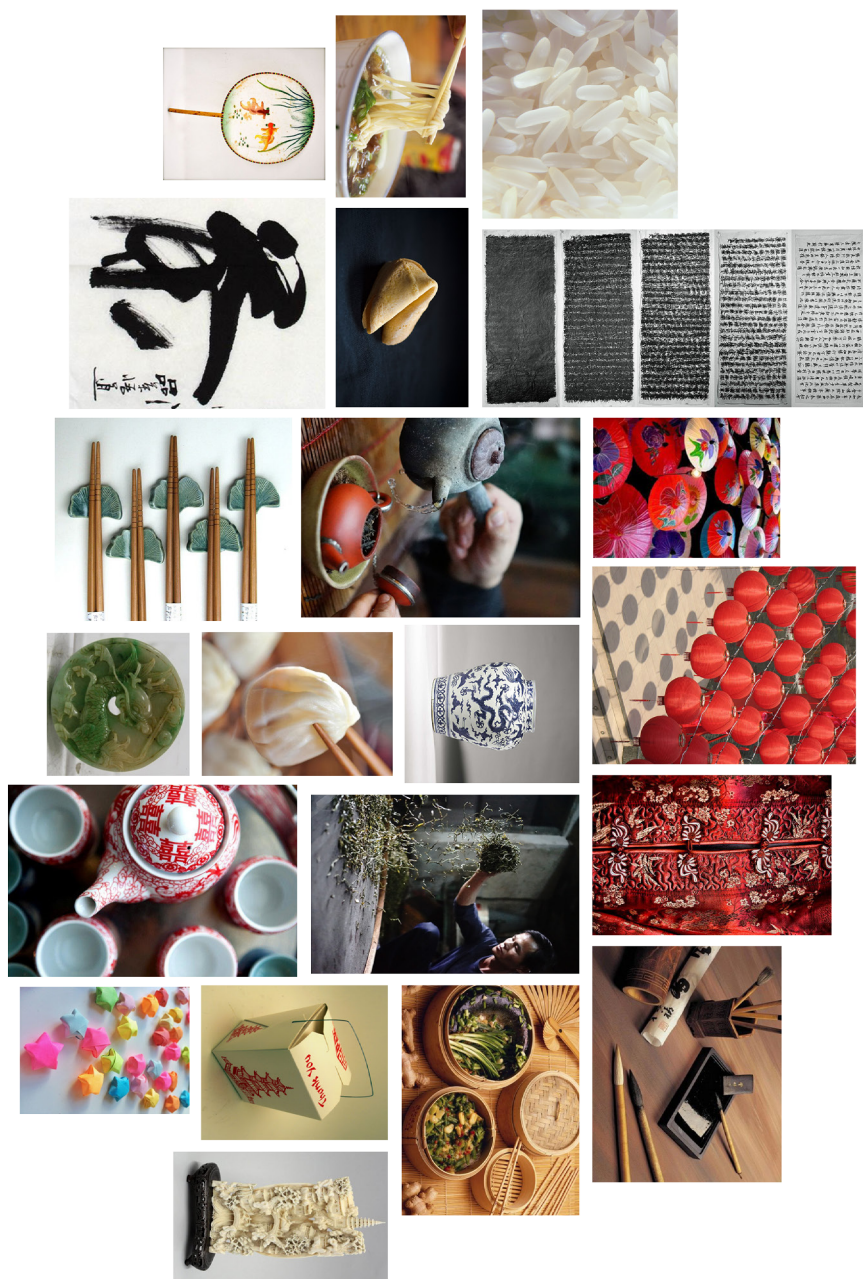
Products

Modern China

APPENDIX F: CONCEPT IDEAS SOFINE
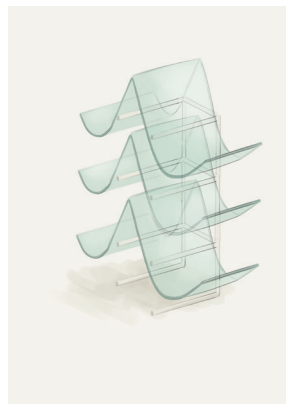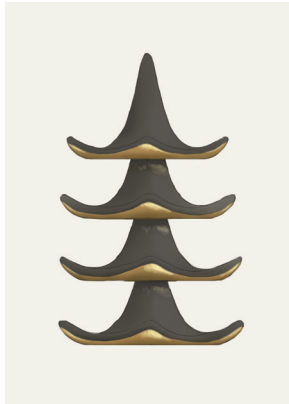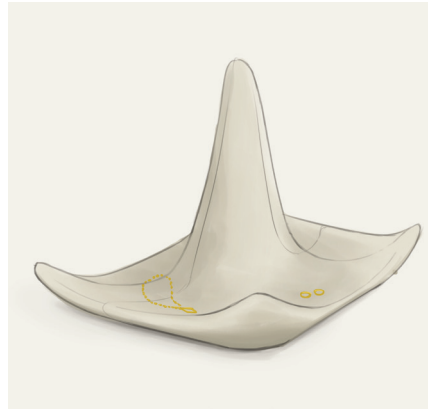
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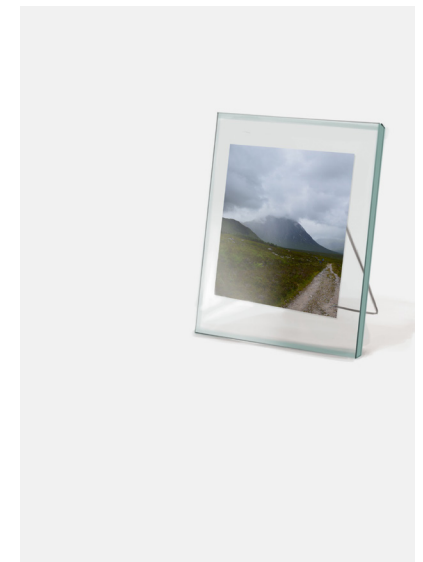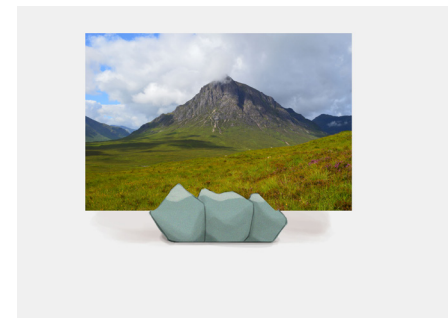
Photo frame

Chopsticks photo holder
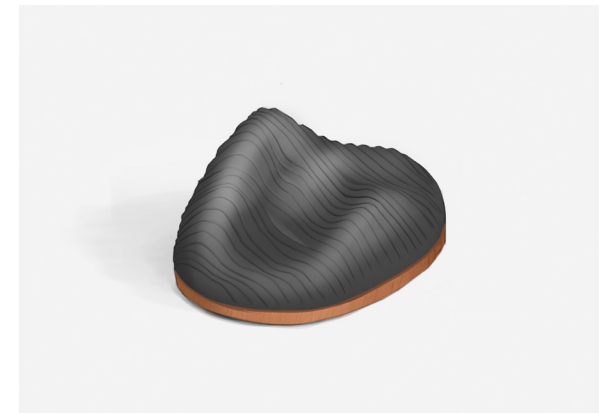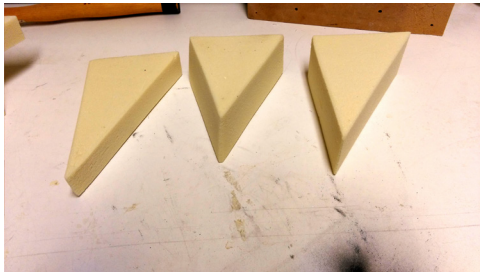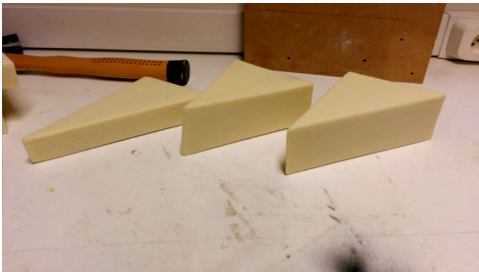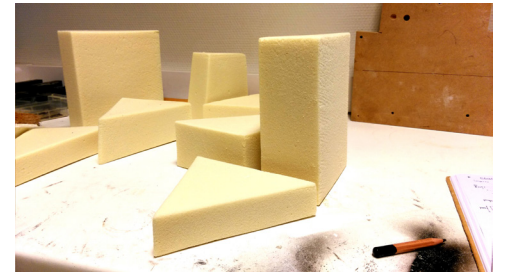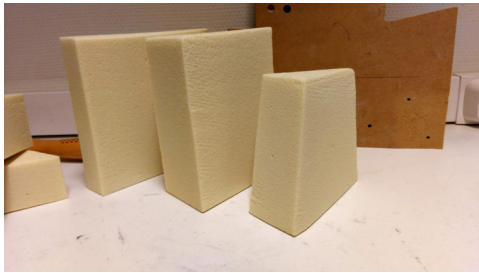

Ricefield photo holder
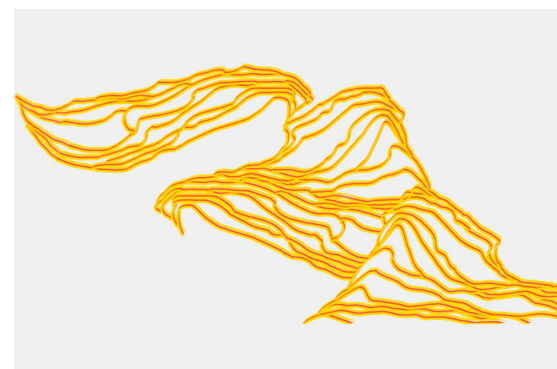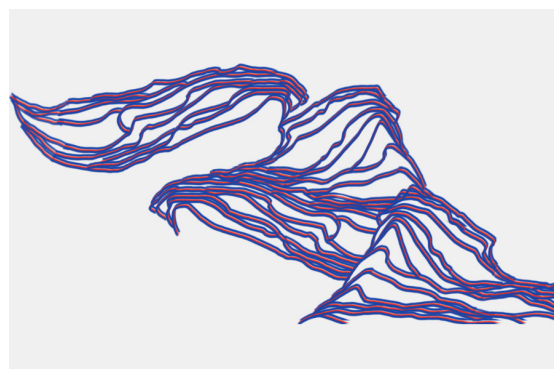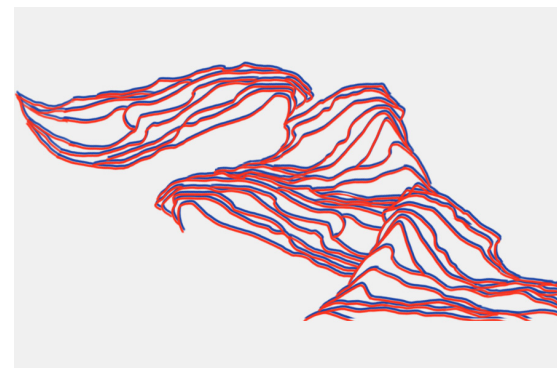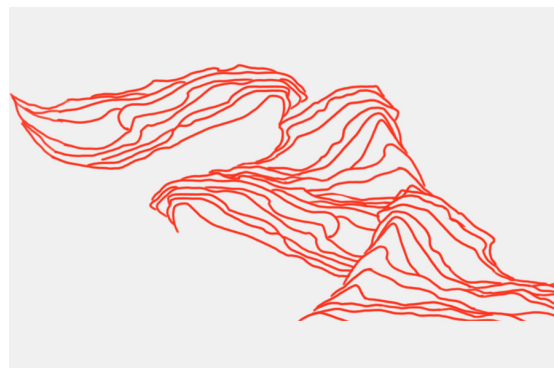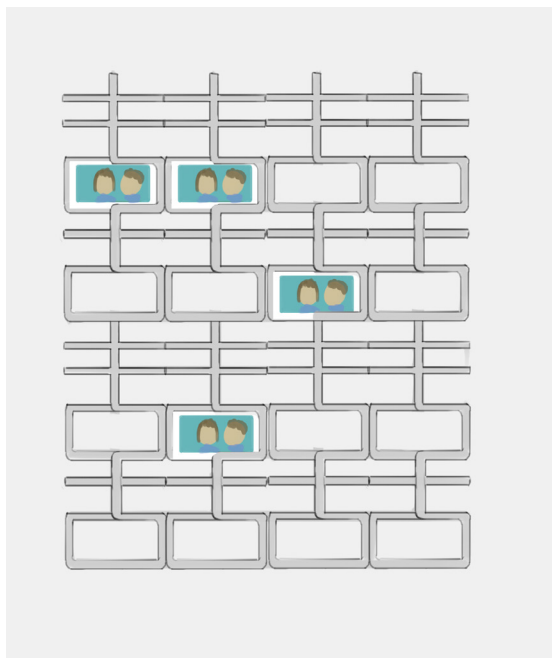
Ricefield decorative print
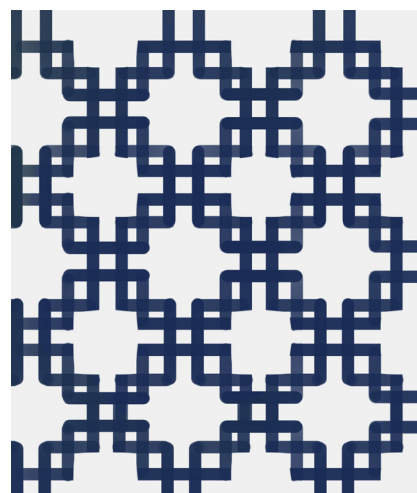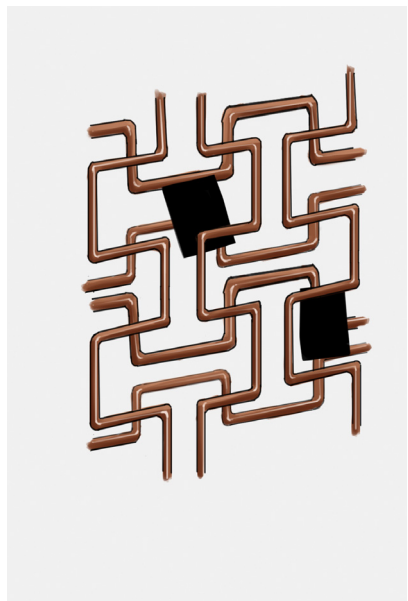
Chinese wall pattern photo holder

APPENDIX G: FORM STUDY FOAM
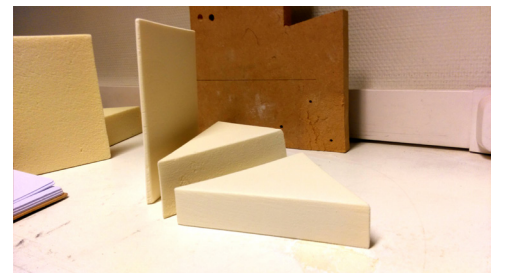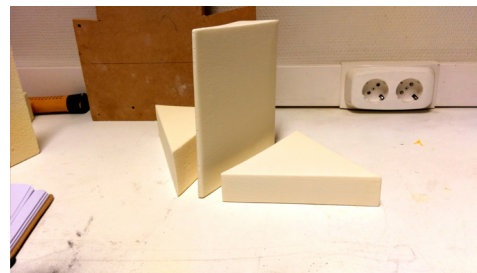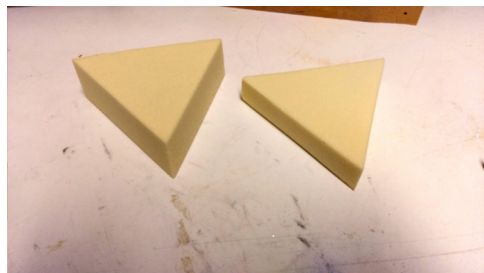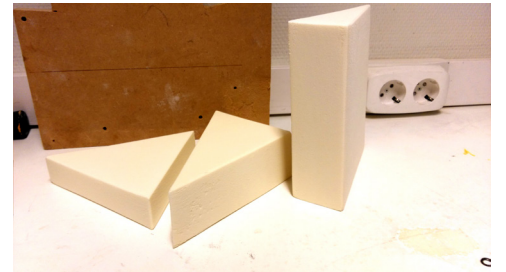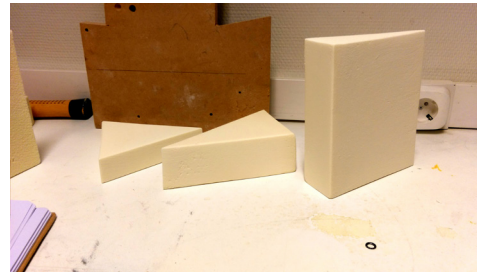
Different shapes for every aspect, from top to bottom: prosperity, wealth, longevity.
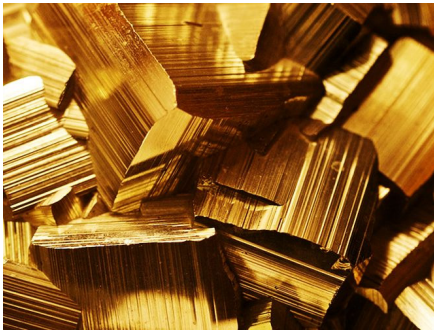
Different angles and compositions of the three chosen shapes

APPENDIX H: WEIGHT STUDY PRODUCT

Happiness

How do you convey ´happiness or wealth´ in weight?
- Happiness can also come from a long and healthy life and the feeling of people looking at to you and you doing what feels useful. This means it weighs just as much as de longevity and prosperity combiend.
- Happiness or wealth can also be read as, materialistic wealth. Which refers to being rich. The triangle could be the same weight as a block of gold of the exact same measurements.

Longevity

How do you convey ´a long and healthy life´ in weight?
- Life is light, because it is temporary and gone in a breath
- Possibilty to have an empty one or full one
- Made of a fragile or breakable material, but not that light. For example ceramics, its weighs something but is still fragile and easily broken.

Social status

How do you convey ´prosperity, status and fulfillment´ in weight?
- Especially because people worry too much about what others think of them (tillen er te zwaar aan), perhaps it should be made very light
- Make it as heavy as it looks because satisfaction is a large part of peoples happiness.
- Heavy, because when the user itself is proud of itself it will not bend under what other people think or say. It is like a mountain, not bending under the will of others

APPENDIX I: TEXTURE STUDY- LONGEVITY
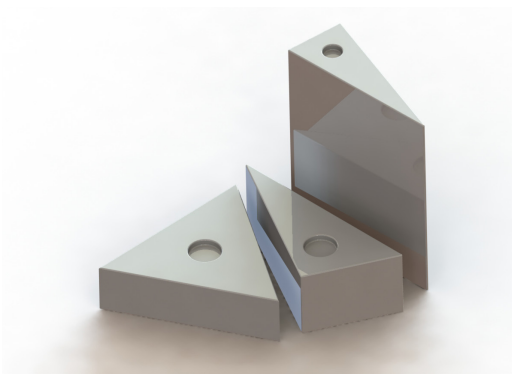
When none of the three have a texture, it is hard to convey a meaning when there are no other aspects to base it on.
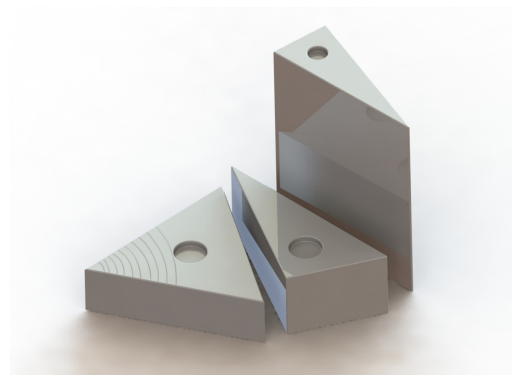
Growth rings, like with trees, communicate the meaning of 'age'. In this case a simplistic form of the yearrings are carved lightly on the upper side.
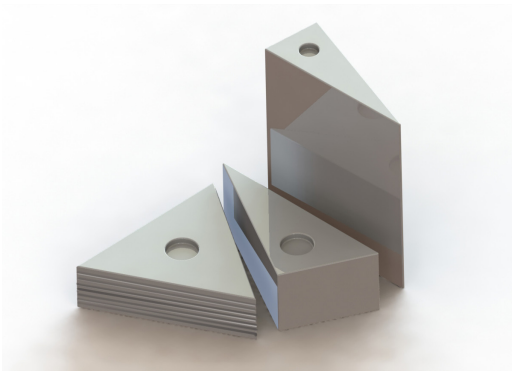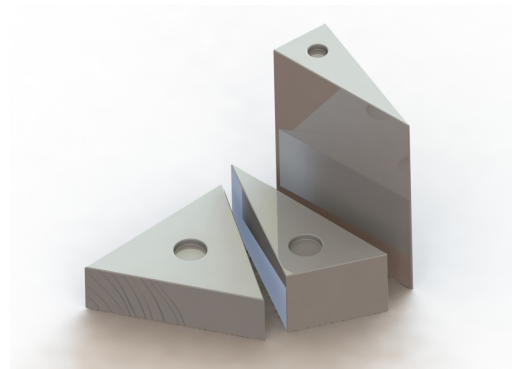

Growth rings, like with trees, communicate the meaning of 'age'. In this case the rings lightly carved around the sides of the triangle.
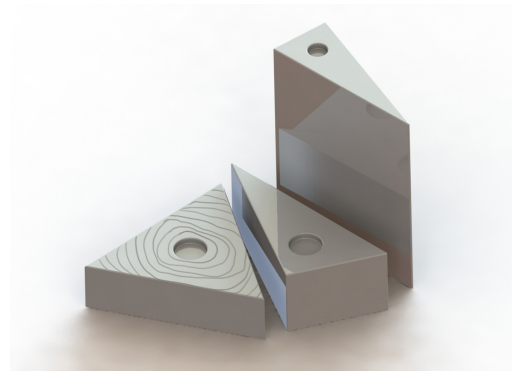
Growth rings, like with trees, communicate the meaning of 'age'. In this case a simplistic form of the yearrings are carved lightly on the upper side with the indent for oil as center.
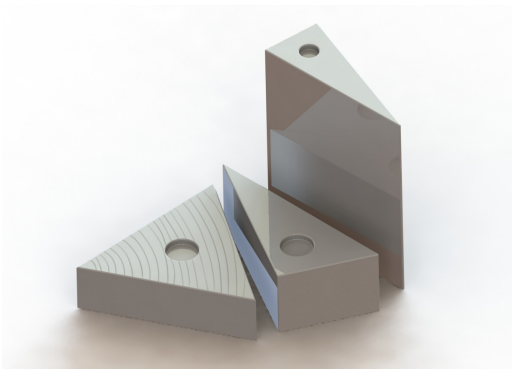
Growth rings, like with trees, communicate the meaning of 'age'. In this case a simplistic form of the yearrings are carved lightly on the upper side.

Growth rings, like with trees, communicate the meaning of 'age'. In this case a simplistic form of the yearrings are carved lightly on two sides.
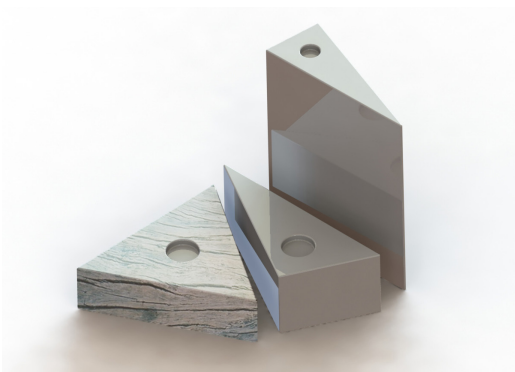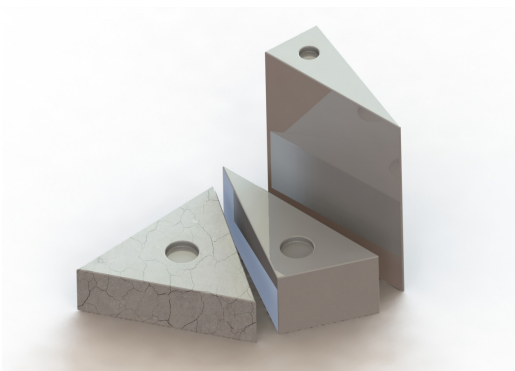
The old wood texture refers to the long life a tree has had and the long life that you wish for.
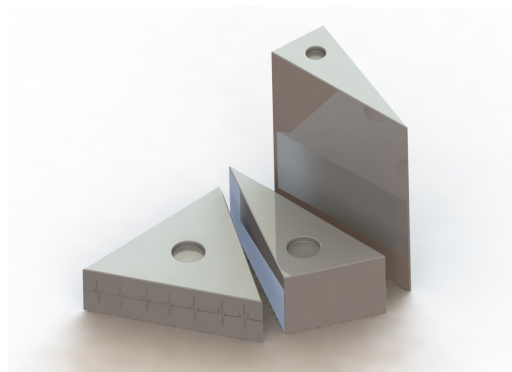
A healthy pulse is symbol for life. The pulse refers to the health (and thus life) that one wishes for. It is lightly etched into the sides of the triangle.
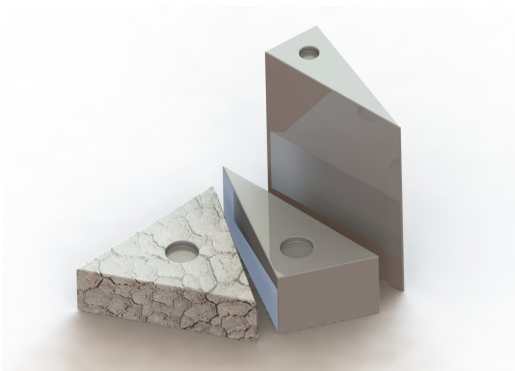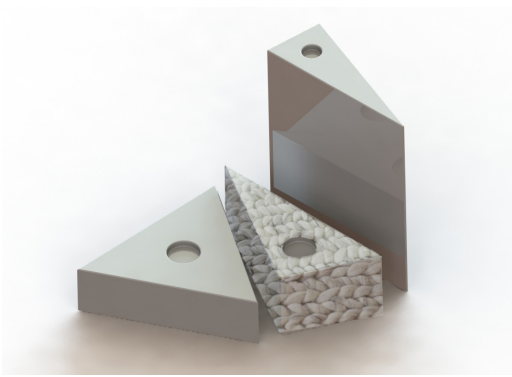
The old wood texture refers to the long life a tree has had and the long life that you wish for.
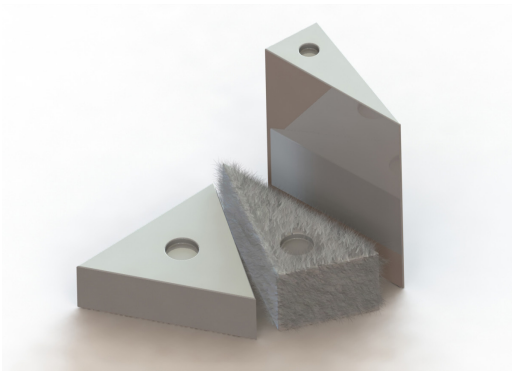
The crackled texture refers to material being weathered through the course of time, but still being strong.

# TEXTURE STUDY - WEALTH/HAPPINESS

Happiness is often associated will feelings of comfort and warm bodily feelings. This is referred to with textures of cozy fabrics and knitting patterns.

Happiness is often associated will feelings of comfort and warm bodily feelings. This is referred to with fuzzy/fluffy/soft textures
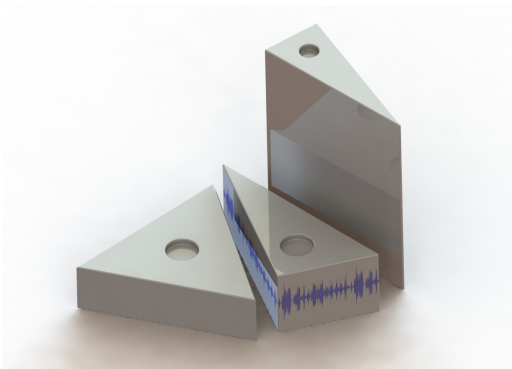

Laughter communicates joy (which is part of happiness), the frequency of a laughter is presented visually and is felt as a light texture on the sides of the triangle.
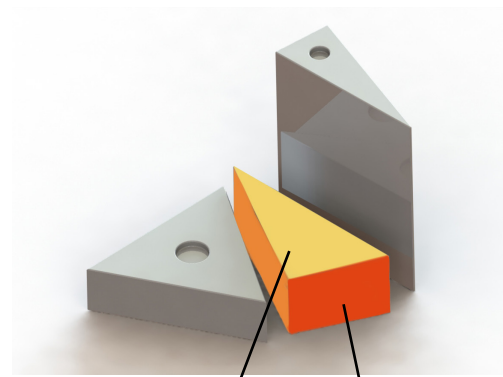

The surface is not coloured yellow, but the colours represent the degree of smooth- or roughness. Yellow is smooth, and the darker the colour, the rougher the surface. This is symbol for that happiness is not a constant thing, it fluctuates. To be able to feel happiness, one has to have felt the opposite. It has highs and lows, sometimes everything works for you, and other times everything seems to work against you.
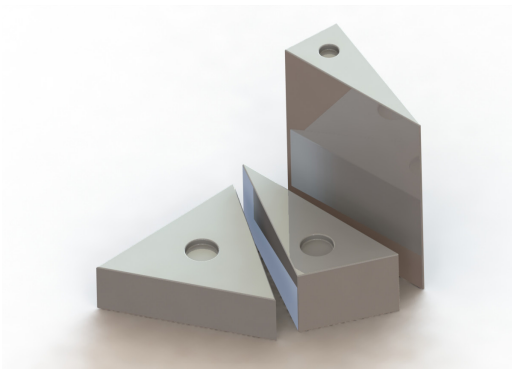
TEXTURE STUDY - STATUS
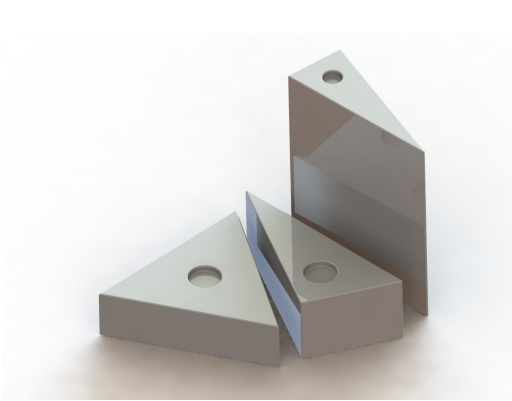
A smooth shiny surface refers to prosperity as status. Linked to modern slick materials such as the fancy cars and expensive products bought by important or rich people.
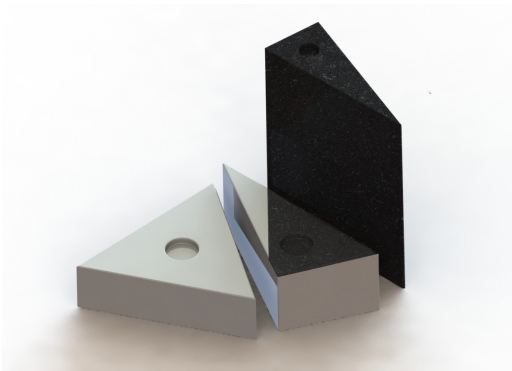
Light texture which hints at luxury materials such as granite

Polished reflective material. Not only hints at the expensive products bought by the elite. It´s deeper meaning is that the reflection reflect the user. It means to serve as a mirror which helps the user look at himself and urges him-her to decide what it is that gives them satisfaction. What it is that makes the user proud of himself. What makes them feel useful.

APPENDIX J: WARMTH STUDY

Longevity
How do you convey ´a long and healthy life´ in temperature?
- 37 celsius degrees, a healthy body temperature
- Warm but not feverish warm
- The feeling of the sun on your skin
- When it is body temperature it will feel neutral when the user is healthy, but when he/she is sick it can feel cold or warm. The temperature of the product it what is strived for, a healthy temperature.

Social status
How do you convey ´prosperity, status and fulfillment´ in temperature?
- As could be seen in the emotion mapping in the body, different emotions can be felt in different body parts. Emotions which fit prosperity and the sense of fulfillment might match pride the best. An emotion which expresses itself the most in the head and chest. In this case, it would be interesting to make the top part (and perhaps the front side) heat conducting. When the user uses the prosperity triangle, that one will stay warm for a while on the upper side.

Happiness
How do you convey ´happiness or wealth´ in temperature?
- Happiness is associated with warm and fuzzy feelings
- Happiness is often present due to other external things such as friends, love, family, succes, satisfaction, a sense of fulfill-ment
- Let the triangle adjust to its surroundings, of a heatconduct-ing material. That it adjusts to the room temperature, but also to your touch. When this triangle is lit, the upper side will heat up and stay warm for a short while. (Just like what humans feel in their body when happy)
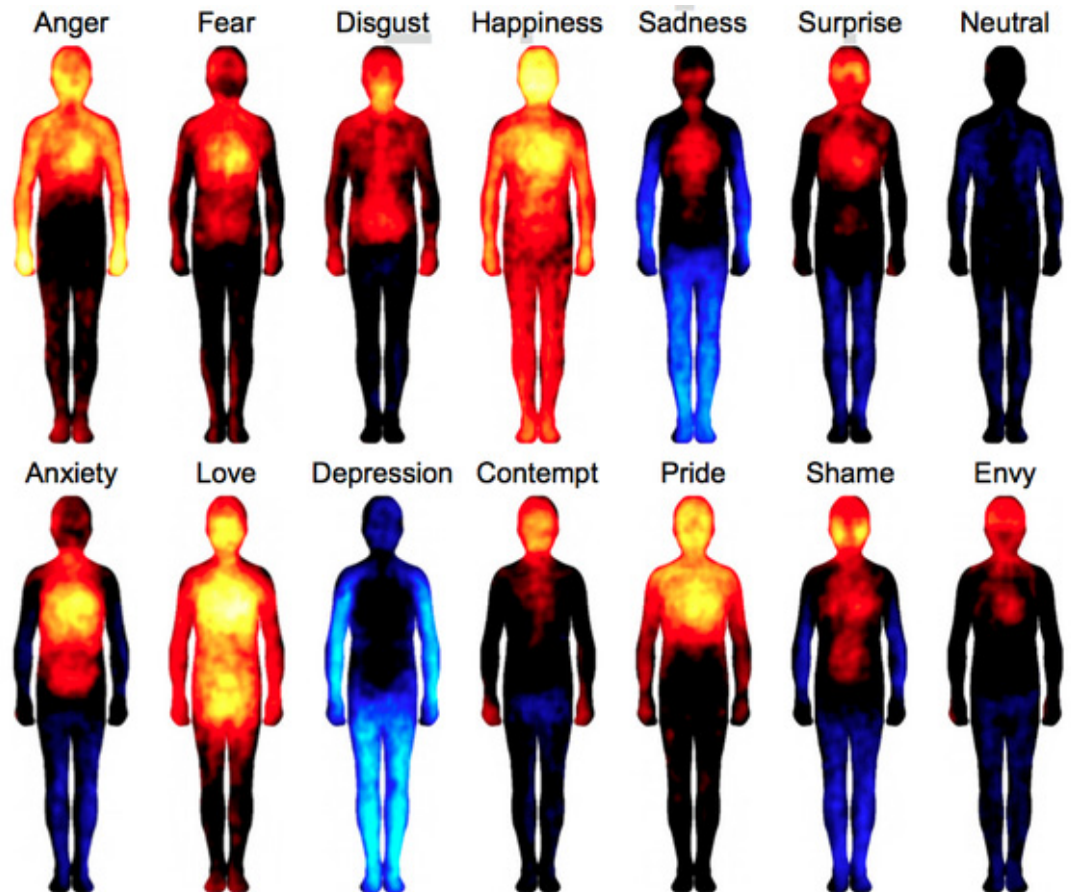
APPENDIX K: HARDNESS STUDY

Longevity
How do you convey ´a long and healthy life´ in hardness?
- Soft, making it possible to press it and it bounces back. Sensitive but flexible like the human body
- Flexibel or rubbery like the human body
- Brittle stone, which can bit by bit crumble a little after using it through the years. Or pieces could break of if it is not handled gently. For the awareness that life isn't for ever.

Happiness
How do you convey ´happiness or wealth´ in hardness?
- Very ductile, after being pressed it slowly moves back to its originla shape.
- It becomes hard when the candle is being lit through the heat. When a peson is happier, he/she is stronger.
- Or the opposite, it becomes rubbery and flexible after being heated through the flame. Because a person could adjust to situations easier.

Social status
How do you convey ´prosperity, status and fulfillment´ in hardness?
- Sturdy, steady. (Stevig in je schoenen) Being to stay with what you believe when other have opinions of you. Very hard. Thick skinned.