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Contemporary Ceramic Design for Meaningful Interaction and Emotional Durability: A Case Study

Emma Lacey

Abstract

The paper presents a case study of the design of emotionally durable ceramics, which is then applied in real commercial contexts. It illustrates how designers can be inspired by hand crafted unique objects, and how designers in turn can translate some of their qualities for use in mass-produced objects. Examples of existing commercial products are given, which the author feels stimulate an emotional connection to ceramics. Her own, personal experience of these objects is related, giving insight into how these products have inspired her work. The author explores, for example, what factors determine why a mug is someone's favorite, and what determines a meaningful experience with cups. Interviews and questionnaires are used to gather information about peoples' relationships with ceramic cups and mugs, and Donald Norman's (2005) levels of cognitive processing are then used to categorize and analyze the results. Suggestions are made as to whether one's response to products can stem from design, or happen regardless of it. The title of this paper was inspired by Jonathan Chapman's book, *Emotionally Durable Design*. This book provided a useful language to describe the contemporary relevance of this project, which was initiated by the ambition to design responsible, well made, tactile products which the user can get to know and assign value to in the long-term.

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