

**Decoration: Disrupting the Workplace and Challenging the Work of Art  
(Volume Two)**

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of the Arts London  
Norwich University of the Arts  
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### **An Explanatory Note Regarding Negotiations with Aviva, Berendsen, EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> and Anonymity**

Throughout this research there were lengthy email and telephone communications with personnel from the three venues I worked with. An edited version of these has been included in each of the three sections of this volume. These negotiations took place with a wide range of representatives within the three organisations including those from corporate and social responsibility teams, estates and facilities, general managers, archivists, engineers, research teams, print managers, legal operations, human resources and a culture and values team. In order to ensure anonymity, specific details about roles and job titles have been withheld.





## Section One: Aviva



## Negotiations with Aviva



**March 2012****Introductory email from SH to Aviva**

I am an artist and senior lecturer at Norwich University College of the Arts (NUCA) currently undertaking a PhD [...] looking at the potential of decoration, pattern and ornament to present the home and work place in surprising and unexpected ways. I am especially interested in Aviva as a commercial enterprise that is founded on the protection of the individual's home, life and belongings. Its location in London's square mile adds to the richness of it as a venue for making new artwork. I would be very excited to make art work that would be site-specific in its reference to Aviva's HQ in London. If it was possible I'd like to access your archives to gather research material to inform the making of these artworks.

**Internal email at Aviva cc SH**

I quite like this - xxxxx, what do you think? Is this something that you would support in terms of giving this lady access to our archives?

**Email from Aviva to SH**

I am pleased to say that we would happily welcome you into our Norwich archives to gather research material to inform the making of your artwork. With regards to presenting your artwork at Aviva HQ, understandably this would need to be agreed once the artwork is complete for suitability and H&S reasons. Please let me know if you would like me to move this forward and arrange access for you.

**April 2012****Email from SH to Aviva**

I have been giving my visit some thought and wonder if it would be possible to photograph the meeting room/s in the top floor and whether you would be able to arrange for me to photograph a sample of offices, including senior management.

**Reply:** XXX is more than happy to show you around. I have explained that you would like to go up to level 23 to take some photos of the office, landscape and the artwork. Our office environment in London is predominately open plan. Some senior management have their own office. I will have to say no to taking photos inside of these offices for confidentiality reasons.

**Email from SH to Aviva**

Many, many thanks for showing me around yesterday. It was absolutely fascinating and gave me lots to think about. Thanks especially for showing me the fire marks, despite having to go all the way back to the top floor again! I will shortly be in touch with XXXX and will keep in touch to let you know how the work progresses.

**Email from Aviva to SH**

Aviva's purpose is to provide prosperity and peace of mind to our customers – to this end, we have recently been looking at their archives with regards to unearthing evidence of this. In particular, evidence of the company working within the community. I am not sure if you have looked at our Corporate Responsibility report - it may give you some inspiration too.



**July 2012****Email from SH to Aviva**

I'm writing to thank you for a really enjoyable and informative visit. The abiding images in my head are the double hand-in-hand policy header and the marble hall crowded with workers in the 1960s! Thank you for your complete expertise in showing me how to access images on your database and your knowledge pertaining to them. Please could you also pass on my thanks to your colleague, who showed me round the Norwich building? Again, it was absolutely fascinating and a wonderful contrast to my tour of Aviva, St Helen's.

**January 2013****Email from SH to Aviva**

It has been quite a while since I've been in touch about making artwork for a temporary exhibition at Aviva's St Helen's building. Since I was first in touch I have been in liaison with XXXX, photographed the Aviva Head Office and have accessed the archives in the Surrey Street building in Norwich. During this time I've been working extensively on my PhD and now feel in a position to present a clearer idea of work that could be exhibited in London. I understand that XXXX no longer works for Aviva and I wonder if you would be able to put me in touch with someone else who would be able to help.

**Internal email at Aviva cc SH**

I remember this and if the work is suitable think it is something we should facilitate. Would it be possible for XXXX and XXXX to see the [work] and then they can judge where best we might display?

**February 2013****Email from Aviva to SH**

Apologies for the slow response – the responsibility for artwork has now been passed to the Legal Operations Team which includes the group archive and we thought it might be a good idea if you initially came in to have a meeting with me and the Head of XXXX.

**April 2013****Email from Aviva to SH**

Sorry not to have been in touch on this. I am waiting for our Facilities team to see what's possible as Aviva doesn't own the building so we have to go through various "hoops" on this sort of thing.

**May 2013****Internal email at Aviva cc SH**

I wonder if we can get an answer for Sarah one way or another? If the facilities team are OK then I can check with the Chairman but we need to be sure that this is possible under our lease arrangements.

**October 2013****Email from SH to Aviva**

Many, many thanks for your help yesterday. I really appreciated the opportunity to spend a few hours photographing my work. I took over 200 photographs, many of which I think I'll be able to use for my PhD. I will forward a selection of them for info when I've had an opportunity to sift through them.





Preliminary Investigation

*Curtains for Aviva's foyer feel very playful. They're pinks and oranges – the colours furthest from Aviva's logo of blue, green and yellow.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 31.5.2012)



*Swag*, an Intervention proposal for Aviva's main reception area, London (2012). Paint on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.





Untitled Intervention proposal for Aviva's main reception area, London (2012). Paint on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.

*Collages made of images from contemporary magazines and catalogues draw attention to faux materials, simulacra, historical motifs, craft vs design, the hand-painted vs mechanical reproduction, implausible scale and stripes and chevrons in industrial colours.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 16.7.2012)





These collages presage the Aviva pieces by introducing the first combinations of different elements of pattern, colour and a range of materials. Through these visual references attention is drawn to class and taste.  
Untitled (2012). Collage and paint on paper. 41cm x 50cm.

*Collages made of images from contemporary magazines and catalogues demonstrate a juxtaposition of the cheap and expensive (IKEA vs Versace); representations of taste (is leopard skin ok if Versace uses it rather than on a B&Q printed wallpaper?); class (what can people afford? what do people know to be tasteful?); fashions changing over time (Versace references 1980s Laura Ashley) and cross-overs between fashion (clothes) and fashion (décor).*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 16.7.2012)





Untitled (2012). Collage and paint on paper. 41cm x 50cm.

*A series of collages using found images of furniture from catalogues, plus wallpaper motifs such as William Morris' acanthus where I'm trying to alter the scale and colours in some way. I have to catalogue their different elements as these to some extent act as indices of class.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 3.7.2012)



Untitled (2012). Collage and paint on paper. 41cm x 50cm.

*More reading around interiors, décor, decoration and class help to solidify and confirm for me the complexity of the decorative – the need for the decorative in some sense for our interiors, but for the decorative to signify the complexities of class and belonging. Simulacra, faux materials, irony, kitsch, aspiration, education – all of these combine with wealth and availability to influence a person's choice of décor and decoration to indicate something of their self-identity in relation to others.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.7.2012)



Untitled (2012). Collage and paint on paper. 41cm x 50cm.



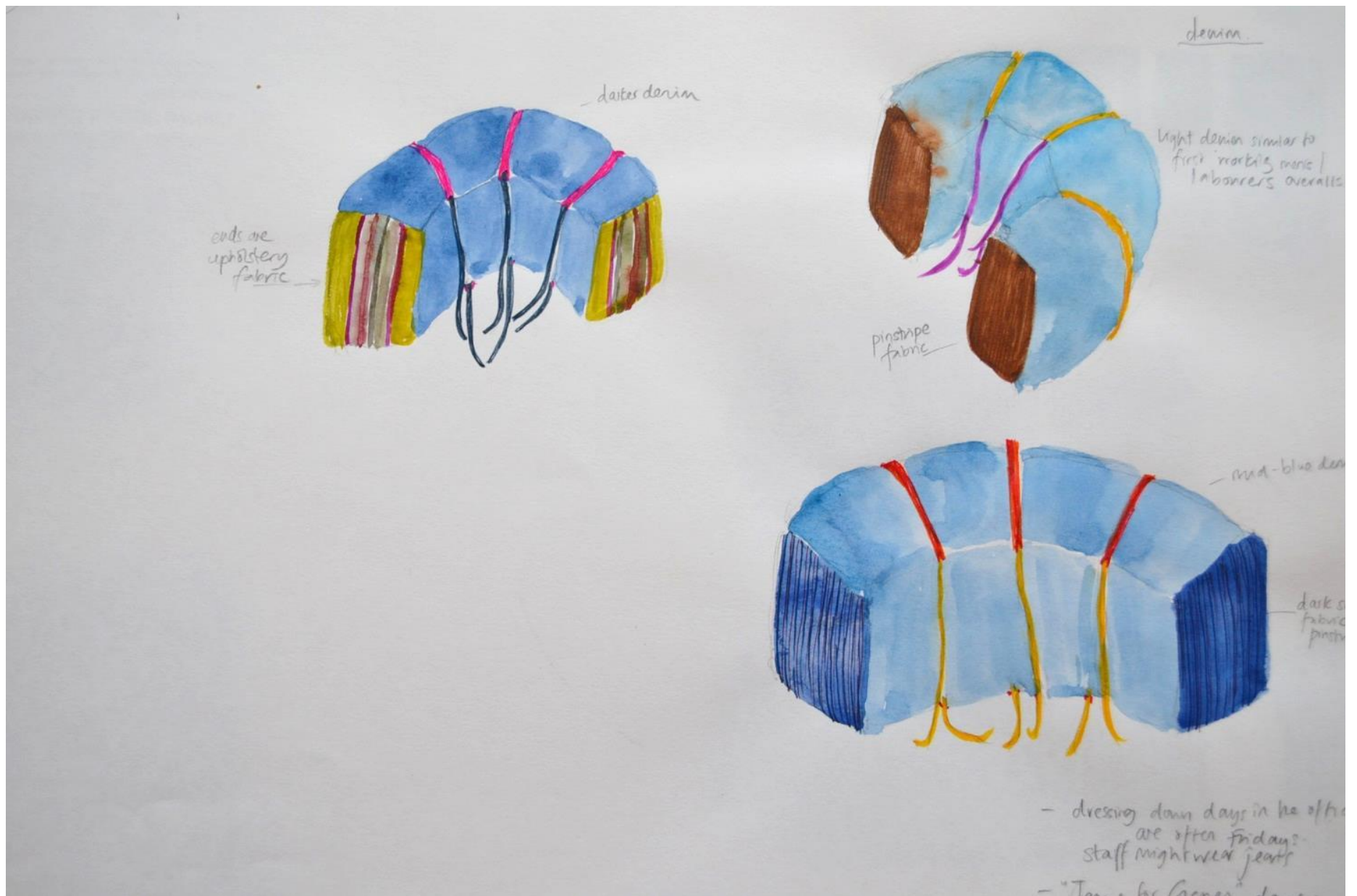




Untitled (2012). Collage and paint on paper. 41cm x 50cm.

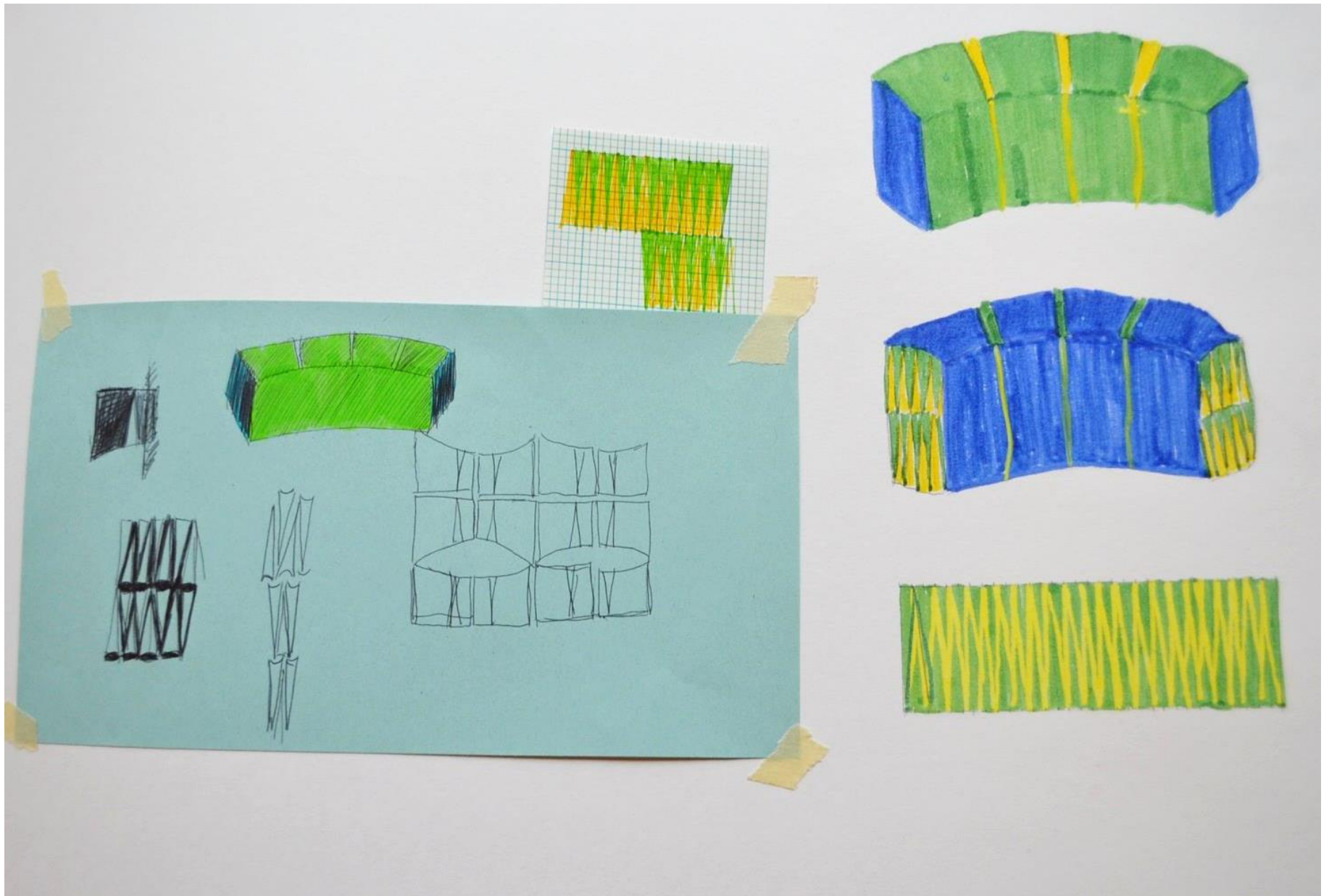






Page from sketchbook of designs for a piece made primarily of denim (2012). Inks and watercolour on paper. 29.7cm x 42cm.





A page from a sketchbook considering designs for a piece using references to Aviva's logo (2012). This idea was rejected but created a link to the piece using the colours of stationery. Pen, inks and watercolour on paper. 29.7cm x 42cm.







An early set of sketches exploring the use of domestic and furnishing fabric (2012). Inks, watercolour, tape and fabric swatch on paper. 29.7cm x 42cm.

*Stripes might be a design that links the domestic with the office. Stripes could be woven, printed or bands sewn together; they could be made up of lines but could also be made from other motifs.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.3.2012)



Drawings and fabric swatches using the suit as a starting point (2012). Pencil, inks, watercolour, tape, fabric swatches and ribbon on paper. 29.7cm x 42cm.

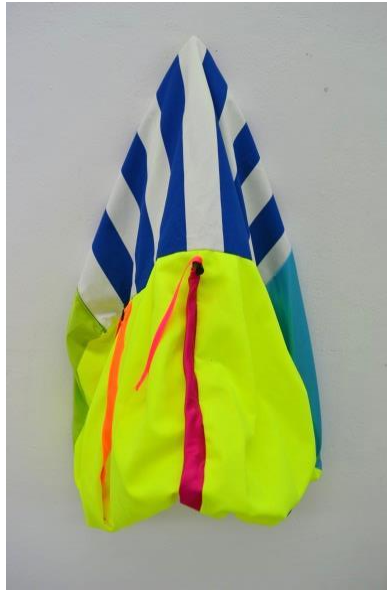




Process

*Based on the colours of post-it notes, biros and highlighter pens.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.3.2012)



Studio shots of outer case and inner padding of *"Let's get comfortable" #1* in various positions (2012).  
 Ribbon, cord stoppers, cotton, wadding, polyester, cotton. Maximum size approx. 140cm long x 23cm depth x 23cm height.





Studio shots of outer cases of *"Let's get comfortable" #1* (2012).  
Ribbon, cord stoppers, cotton, wadding, polyester, cotton. 140cm x 120cm.



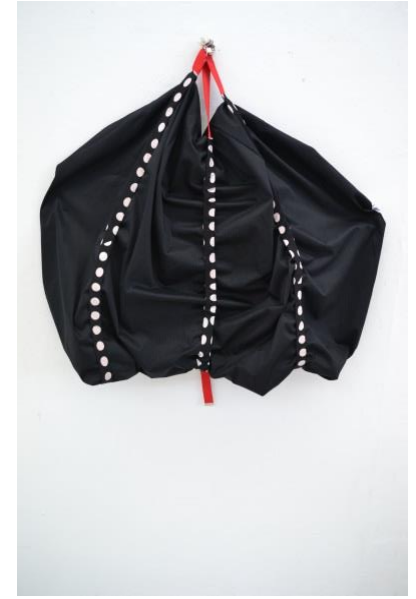


Completed piece *"Let's get comfortable" #1* (2012). Ribbon, cord stoppers, cotton, wadding, polyester. 140cm x 23cm x 23cm approx.

*These designs combine elements associated with traditional suits: striped cotton (shirts); woollen pinstripes (jacket/trousers/waistcoat) and patterned silk (tie). The tie is often the element of the suit that can be more adventurous, patterned, etc.*

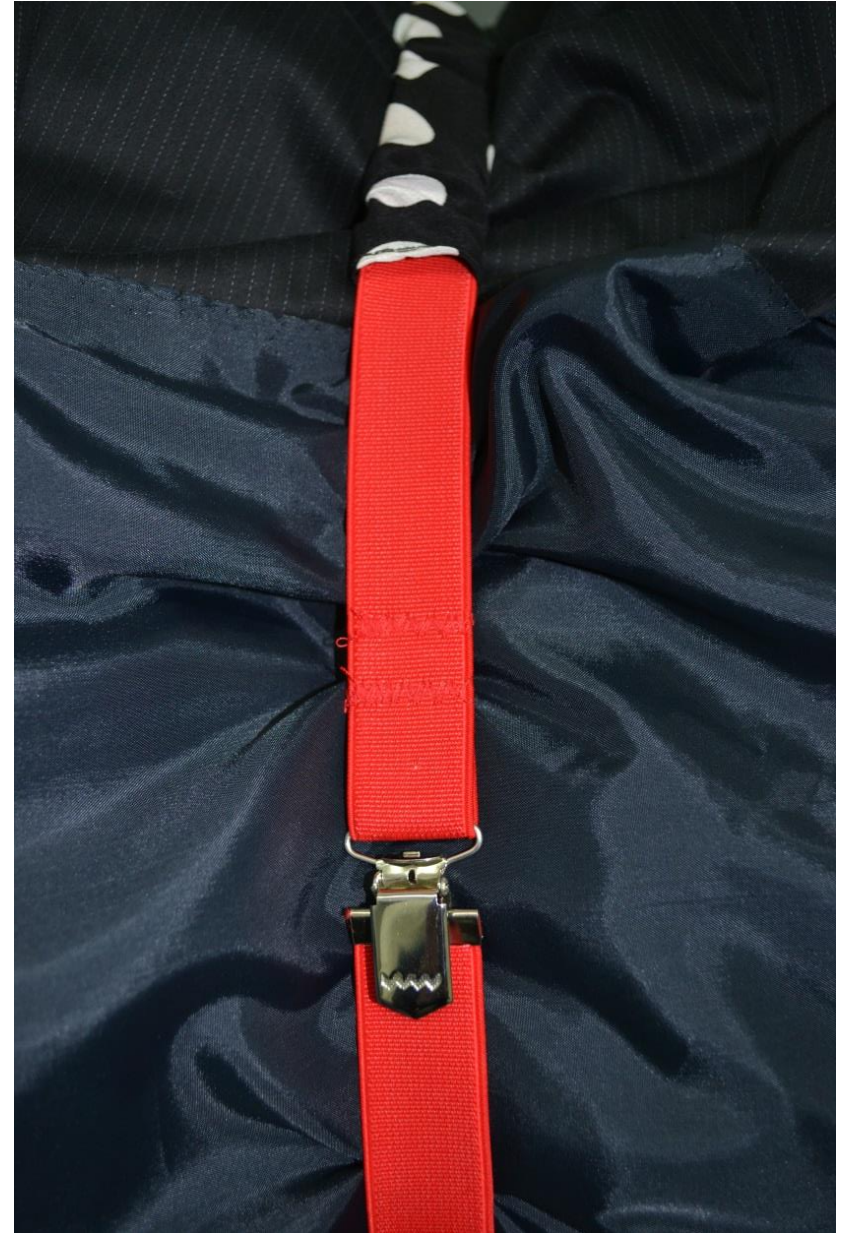
(Reflective Journal excerpt 24.1.2013)





Studio shots of outer case of *"Let's get comfortable" #2* in various positions (2012). Cotton, polyester, silk, elastic, braces. Maximum size approx. 140cm long x 23cm depth x 23cm height.





Detail of 'braces' on "*Let's get comfortable*" #2 (2012). Cotton, polyester, silk, elastic, braces.





Completed piece *"Let's get comfortable" #2* (2012). Cotton, polyester, silk, elastic, braces. 140cm x 23cm x 23cm approx.







Studio shots of outer case of *"Let's get comfortable" #3* in various positions (2012).  
Cotton, polyester, silk, ruched elastic, cord, cord stoppers. Maximum size approx. 60cm x 80cm.







Studio shot of outer case of "*Let's get comfortable*" #3 (2012).  
Cotton, polyester, silk, ruched elastic, cord, cord stoppers. Maximum size approx. 140cm x 80cm.





Detail of *"Let's get comfortable" #3* (2012). Cotton, polyester, silk, ruched elastic, cord, cord stoppers.







Completed piece *"Let's get comfortable" #3* (2012). Cotton, polyester, silk, ruched elastic, cord, cord stoppers. 140cm x 23cm x 23cm approx.

*Historically denim was worn as workwear, but in large populations of office/commerce workers now denim would only be worn on 'dressing down' days. Denim is associated with leisure rather than work.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 24.1.2013)



Studio shots of outer case of *"Let's get comfortable" #4* in various positions (2012). Denim, leatherette, cotton, cord, cord stoppers. Maximum size approx. 140cm long x 23cm depth x 23cm height.







Detail of *"Let's get comfortable"* #4 (2012). Denim, cotton, cord.





Completed piece *"Let's get comfortable"* #4 (2012). Denim, leatherette, cotton, cord, cord stoppers. 140cm x 23cm x 23cm approx.







Studio shots of outer case of "*Let's get comfortable*" #5 in various positions (2012). Cotton, linen, cord, cord stoppers, tassels.





Studio shot of outer case of *"Let's get comfortable"* #5 (2012).  
Cotton, linen, cord, cord stoppers, tassels. Approx. 140cm x 120cm.







Completed piece *"Let's get comfortable" #5* (2012). Cotton, linen, cord, cord stoppers, tassels. Approx. 140cm x 23cm x 23cm.

*I've decided to make a new set of innards for the pieces that can be easily removed when needed. I've been reading Mark Wigley's 'White Walls Designer Dresses' and his ideas about white walls being akin to underwear have made me think of these inner pieces as underwear for the sculptures.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 16.8.2013)



Studio shots of inners from *"Let's get comfortable"* (2012).  
Cotton, zippers, wadding. Each approx. 140cm long x 23cm depth x 23cm height.

*The sculptures need to be playful, possibly with an ambiguity regarding their functionality.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 24.1.2013)





Testing the outer cases of *"Let's get comfortable"* in a real office. Here they are photographed in the BA Fine Art office at Norwich University of the Arts (2012).

*Sculptures that look like cushions for the reception area of Aviva.  
How will these work? They are not objects that would normally be  
seen here. They are not for sale, so they have no value in terms of  
commodity or exchange. Any 'exchange' is in terms of an  
experience; they may give more or additional comfort; they may  
give cause for thought. They are transitory, like the people who sit  
with them. And unfixed.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.1.2013)

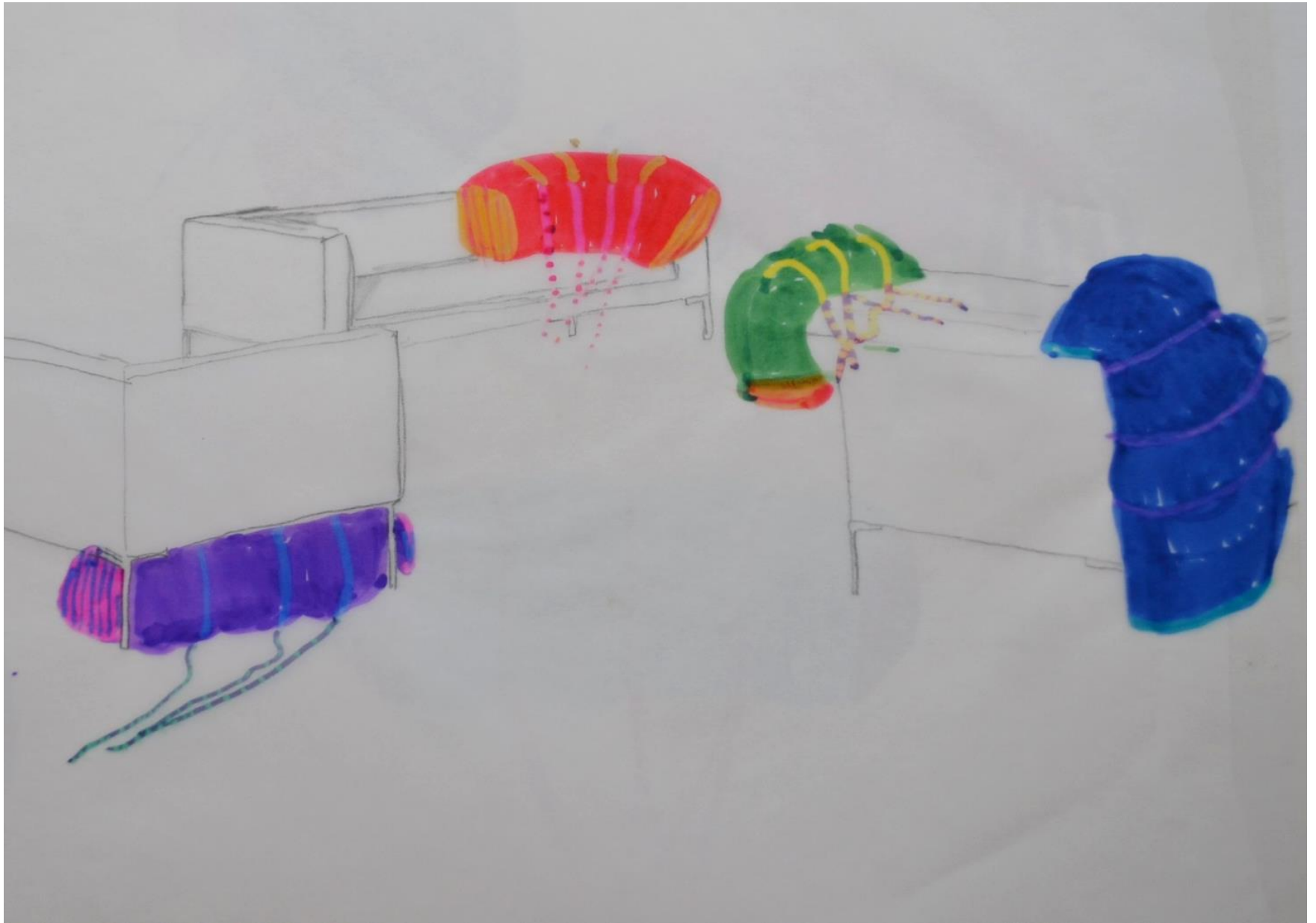


Spatial configuration drawing of "*Let's get comfortable*" (2012). Felt pens on drafting paper. 29.7cm x 42cm.

*Guerrilla ergonomics or guerrilla practices.... I keep thinking about this word guerrilla (rebel, revolutionary or irregular). Guerrilla ergonomics could be an interesting phrase in relation to the Aviva pieces.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 10.9.2013)





Spatial configuration drawing of "*Let's get comfortable*" (2012). Felt pens on drafting paper. 29.7cm x 42cm.





Proposal drawing of "*Let's get comfortable*" used for pitch to Aviva staff (2012). Gouache and watercolour on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.







Proposal drawing of *"Let's get comfortable"* used for pitch to Aviva staff (2012). Gouache and watercolour on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.





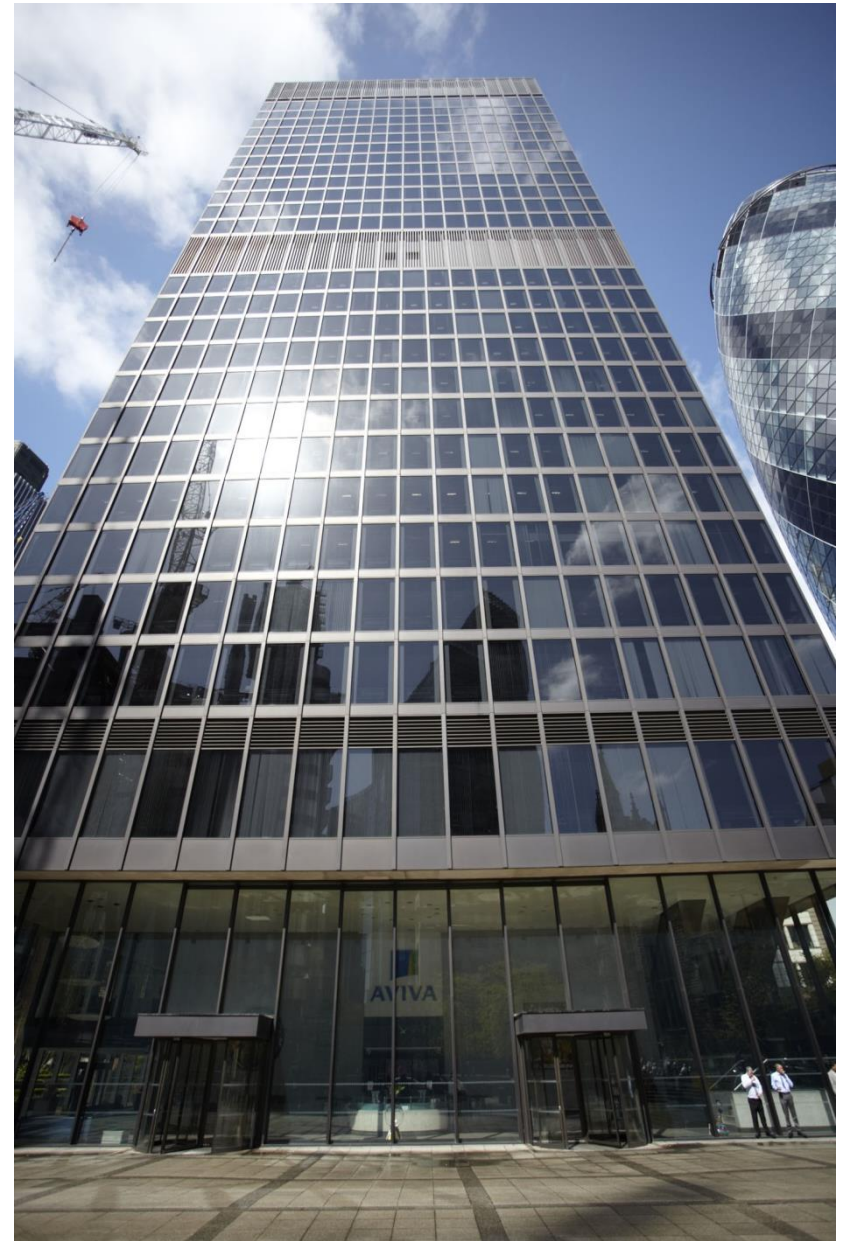
Proposal drawing of *"Let's get comfortable"* used for pitch to Aviva staff (2012). Gouache and watercolour on photocopy. 29.7 x 42cm.





## Installation and Documentation





External shot of the Head Office of Aviva, St. Helen's, London (2011). Digital photograph.





Documentary photographs of *"Let's get comfortable"* installed in the main reception area of Aviva, London (2013).







Documentary photograph of "*Let's get comfortable*" installed in the main reception area of Aviva, London (2013).







Documentary photograph of *"Let's get comfortable"* installed in the main reception area of Aviva, London (2013).





Documentary photograph of "*Let's get comfortable*" installed in the main reception area of Aviva, London (2013).







Documentary photograph of *"Let's get comfortable"* installed in the main reception area of Aviva, London (2013).



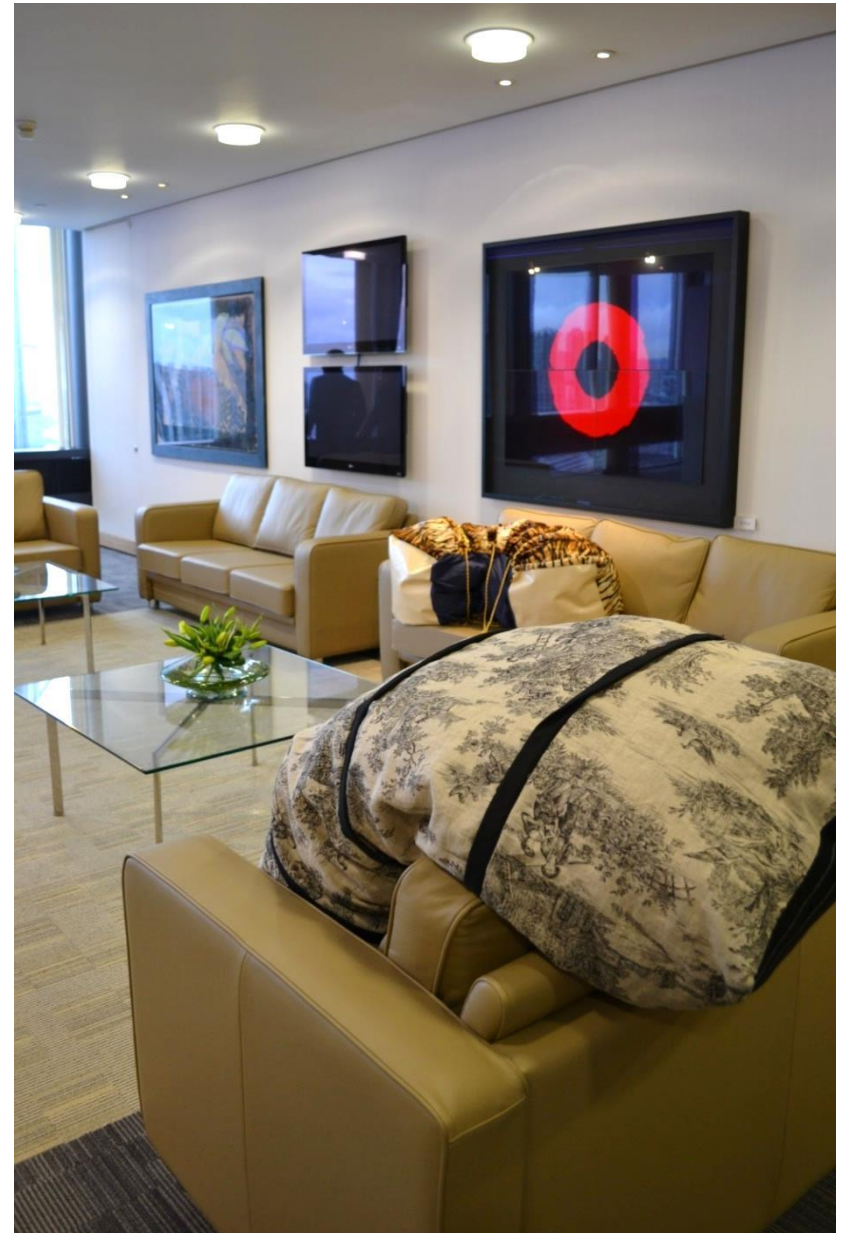




Documentary photograph of "*Let's get comfortable*" installed in the main reception area of Aviva, London (2013).

*The modernist aesthetics are disturbed and so is the décor.  
Decorum disrupted.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 12.12.2013)



Documentary photograph of *"Let's get comfortable"* installed in the Chief Executive Officer's reception area of Aviva, London (2013).







Documentary photograph of *"Let's get comfortable"* installed in the Chief Executive Officer's reception area of Aviva, London (2013).



## Section Two: Berendsen





## Negotiations with Berendsen



## **May 2014**

### **Introductory email from SH to [info@Berendsen.co.uk](mailto:info@Berendsen.co.uk) after an initial conversation with the switchboard operator at Berendsen Head Office**

I am an artist and senior lecturer at Norwich University of the Arts (NUA). As well as being a lecturer I am also studying for a PhD looking at the way decoration, ornamentation and pattern is used in the workplace. I have recently used Aviva's Head Office in London as a case study and am keen to look at contrasting types of work spaces. I would be extremely grateful for the opportunity to visit one of Berendsen's laundries to photograph it. (As an artist I make sculptures using fabric which is one of many reasons why Berendsen is so interesting to me).

### **Email from Berendsen to SH**

I have passed your enquiry to my Director and he would like to ascertain what it is you wish to photograph; is it the laundry, products, the process we use or something else?

### **Email from SH to Berendsen**

Many thanks for your email. It is the laundry process itself and the environment in which it takes place rather than the products.

### **Email from Berendsen to SH**

Thank you for your update via my P.A. We have a laundry in Fakenham, fairly close to Norwich, which is now predominantly a garment processing unit – would this work for your project?

## **June 2014**

### **Email from SH to Berendsen following my first visit**

Many, many thanks for the time you spent with me on Friday and for letting me photograph the site. I was wondering how you would feel about me making a bespoke artwork for the site? It would be at no cost to you and would only be temporary (unless you wanted to keep it!) so could be easily removed. There was so much visual material I saw that I feel confident I could make something that reflects the organisation. I'm happy to talk through ideas and even bring some initial visuals to you if you felt it was something you might be interested in.

### **Email reply from Berendsen to SH**

It was a delight to have you on site and I am very keen to see how the inspiration you gained translates to art. We would be delighted for you to make a bespoke piece of art influenced by our laundry...can't wait to see it!!!



**September 2014****Email from SH to Berendsen**

I'm writing to let you know my latest ideas for bespoke artwork for the laundry. They all centre on the theme of the sky and clouds, based on your old name 'Sunlight', the cloud as a metaphor for transformation, dreaming and also the connection to the big skies of the Norfolk landscape. At the moment these are just drawings of ideas but none of them have been developed more fully. That is the next stage for me - testing materials. I wanted to reassure you that the pieces can be installed very easily and fast, so that they can be installed and removed with minimal disruption, working completely within H&S guidelines and with your advice.

**November 2014****Notes following site visit to Berendsen**

*A lot of work has been done to the site since my last visit and a new area including new production lines are visible. Apparently there are four operations within this area and each member of staff works on each section for an hour at a time before rotating around. This improves efficiency, XXXX said, as staff maintain concentration and make fewer mistakes. XXXX also says that the benches they work on are height adjustable so that each worker can work at a height that is comfortable to them. Looking at the new space there is a lot more wall space that is visible and could be used for display. I also mentioned a metal cabinet as an example and XXXX didn't balk at the idea. I talked through the materials that I plan to use (vinyl and sheet acrylic or MDF) and the fixings for these. The plan is that they leave no trace once they've been removed.*

**January 2015****Email from SH to Berendsen**

I am on target to install my artworks on Monday 16th February as agreed!

I wonder if you know the approximate height of the main factory/laundry ceiling? Not that I want to attach anything to it, but I have made a long wall-piece and it would be useful to know the maximum height I'll be able to hang it.

**Email reply from Berendsen to SH**

*Diagram included regarding ceiling height in different parts of the laundry.*

**February 2015****Email from SH to Berendsen**

Many, many thanks for letting me install my artworks today. I can't tell you how pleased I was with how it went and just how helpful everyone was. Special thanks to XXXX, but also to XXXX (my model!) and to XXXX. You really were all brilliant. I left some posters with XXXX about coming in on the morning of Monday 16th March to give free hot drinks and cake for staff and to get feedback from staff about the work, and also to remove the work at that point.





## Preliminary Investigation

*The fabric appears to be pressed up against the window as if straining at the 'seams' of the building. It reminds me of 'The Yellow Wallpaper' novel because of the choking, imprisoning effects of the décor. So this is where the contradictions and complexity (the richness) of decoration comes to the fore; that it is not completely straightforward or singular.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 10.7.2014)



A very early collage idea for window decals in the staff canteen and visible from the exterior. Note the insectocutor which became a point of reference for the neon piece *Dream Cloud* (2014). Collage on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.

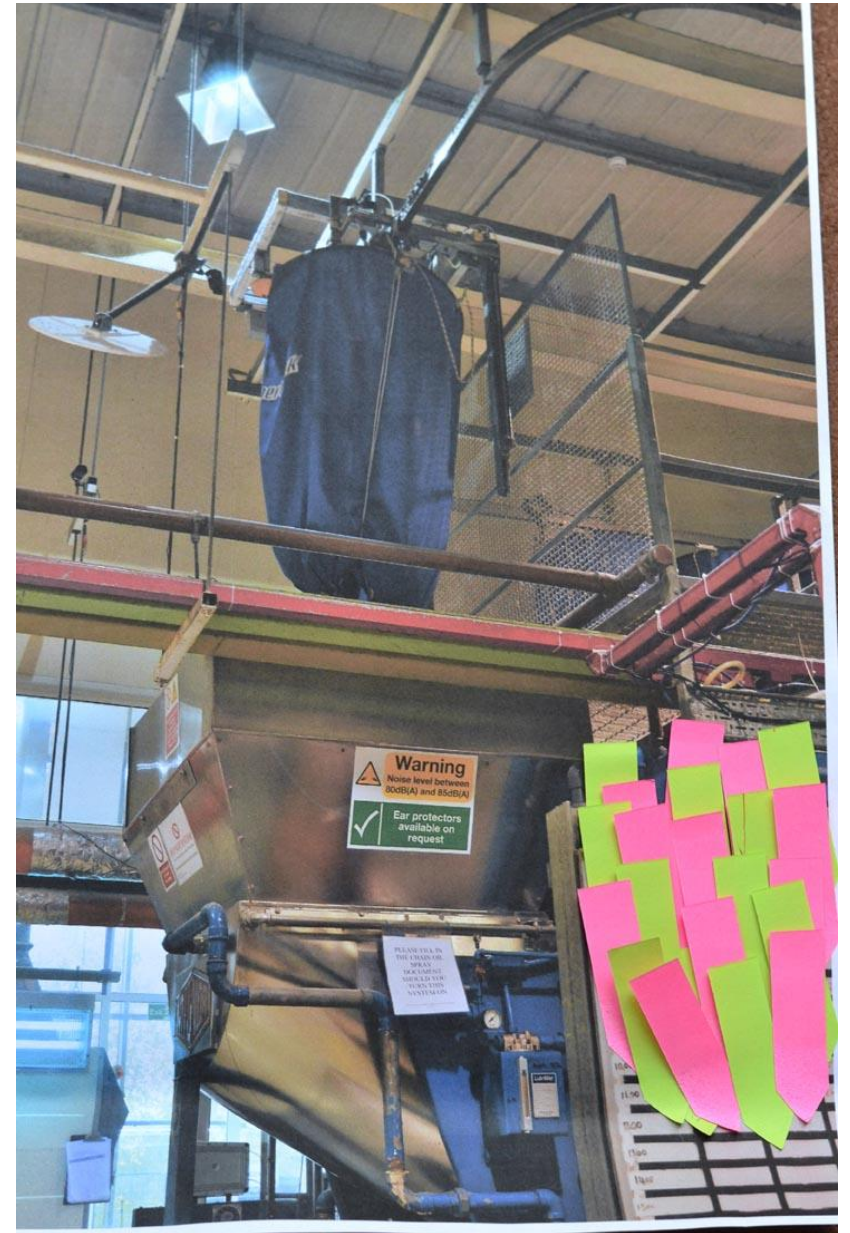




Combining the domestic with the workplace by incorporating personal ornaments with machine controls. Intervention proposal (2014).  
Collage on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.







Disrupting the display systems at Berendsen through aberrant over-sized post-it notes.  
Intervention proposal (2014). Collage on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.





Intervention proposal to paint or wrap individual bars of the trolleys (2014). Paint on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.







Intervention proposal (2014). Collage on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.



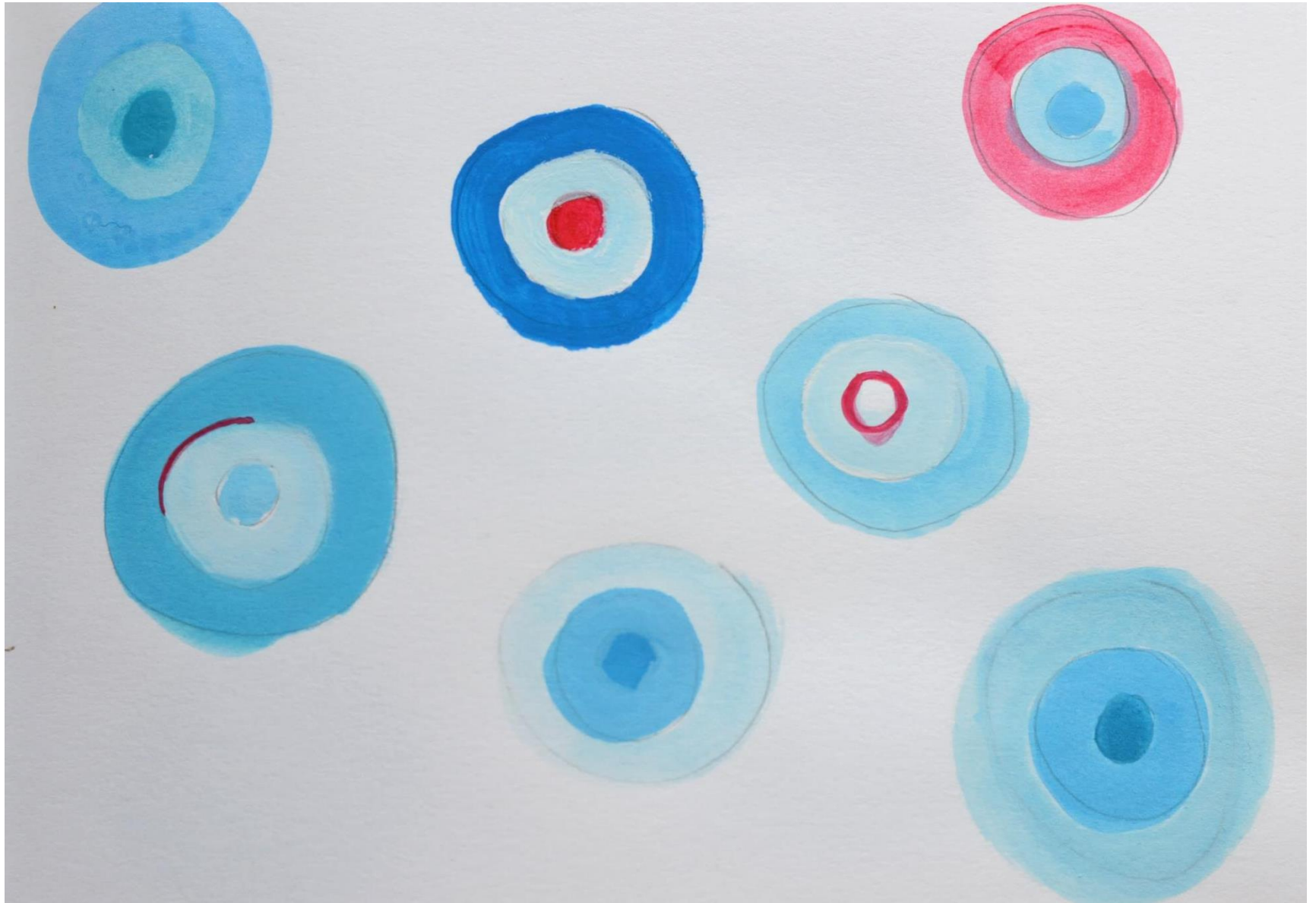




The first suggestion of clouds 'puncturing' the space of the laundry. Intervention proposal (2014). Collage on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.

*Today I've made a set of drawings where I began with targets based on the RAF target motif at Fakenham but drifted into more abstracted shapes. I photocopied the outlines of these shapes and have been painting into them using sky-blue, teal (because there was a lot of this colour at the laundry), the red, white and blue of the RAF target and the red strip that underlines the Berendsen logo.*

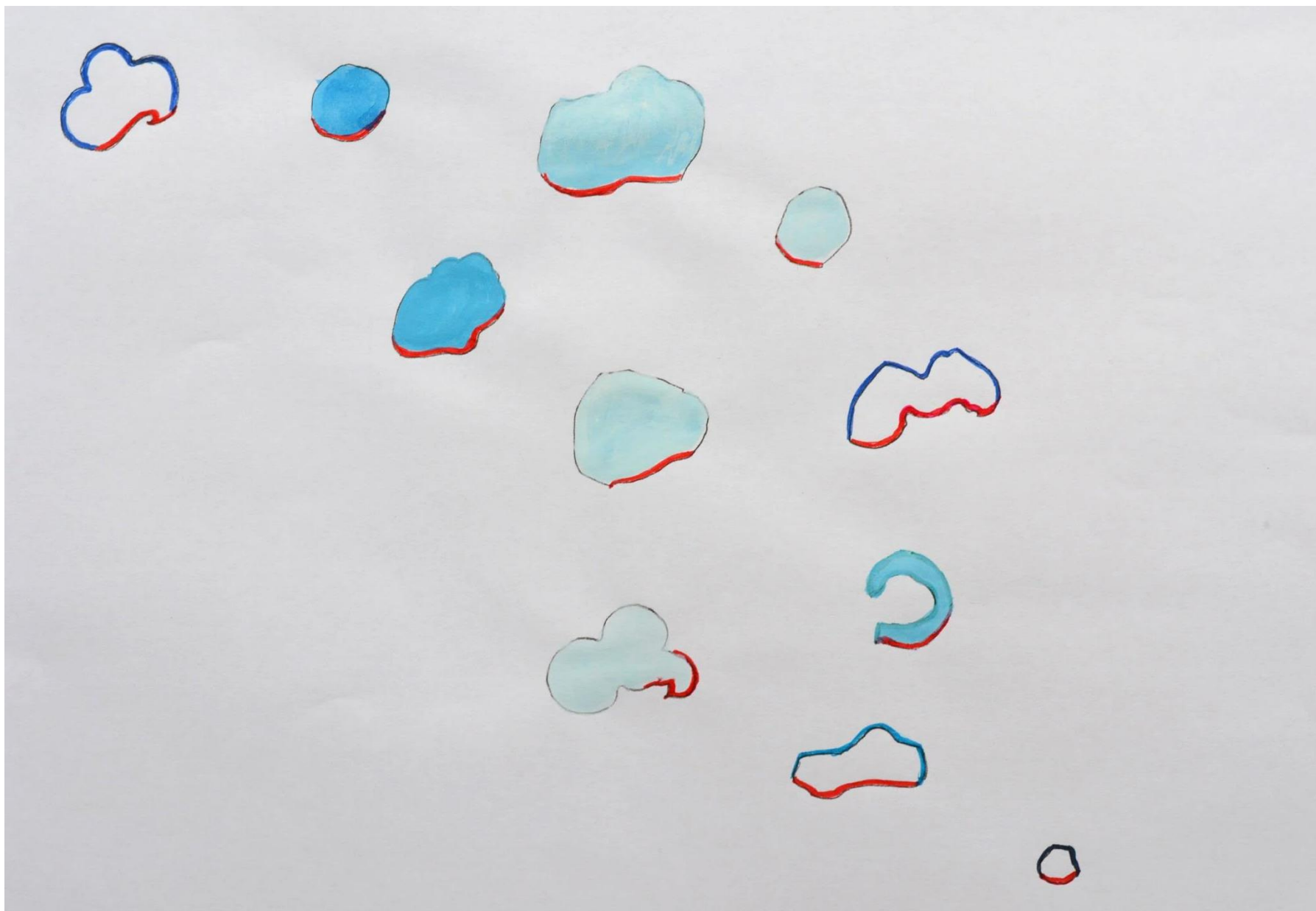
(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.9.2014)



The laundry at Fakenham once served the local RAF. These drawings are based on the idea of a military target in combination with the red and blue of the Berendsen logo and the colours of clouds. The partial red line is a reference to the partial underlining used in the Berendsen logo. Sketchbook page (2014). Paint and pencil on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.

*The red strip of the Berendsen logo at times can be read as a lining (an alternative to the silver lining) as well as a reminder of the false aperture; a warning; something to trouble the blue skies.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.9.2014)

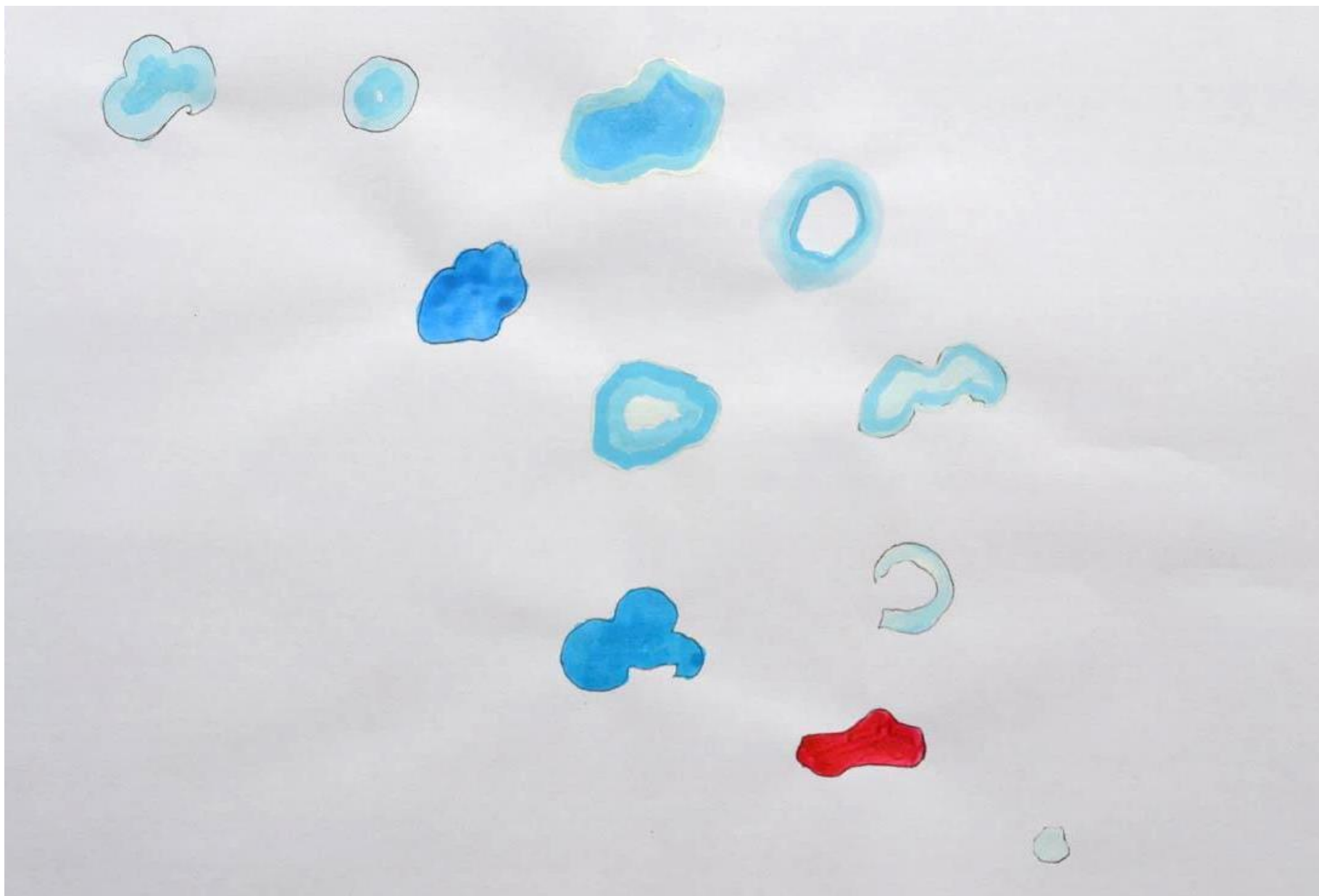


The colours of the Berendsen logo with the shapeshifters and the cloud references (2014). Pen and paint on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.



*Aberrations are akin to the glitch in the machine, the mistake in the batch of otherwise perfectly laundered uniforms or hand towels. The aberration can also be a sign of human error, the one-off that emphasizes the regularity and uniformity of all the others.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.9.2014)



Shapeshifter drawings (2014). Pen and paint on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.

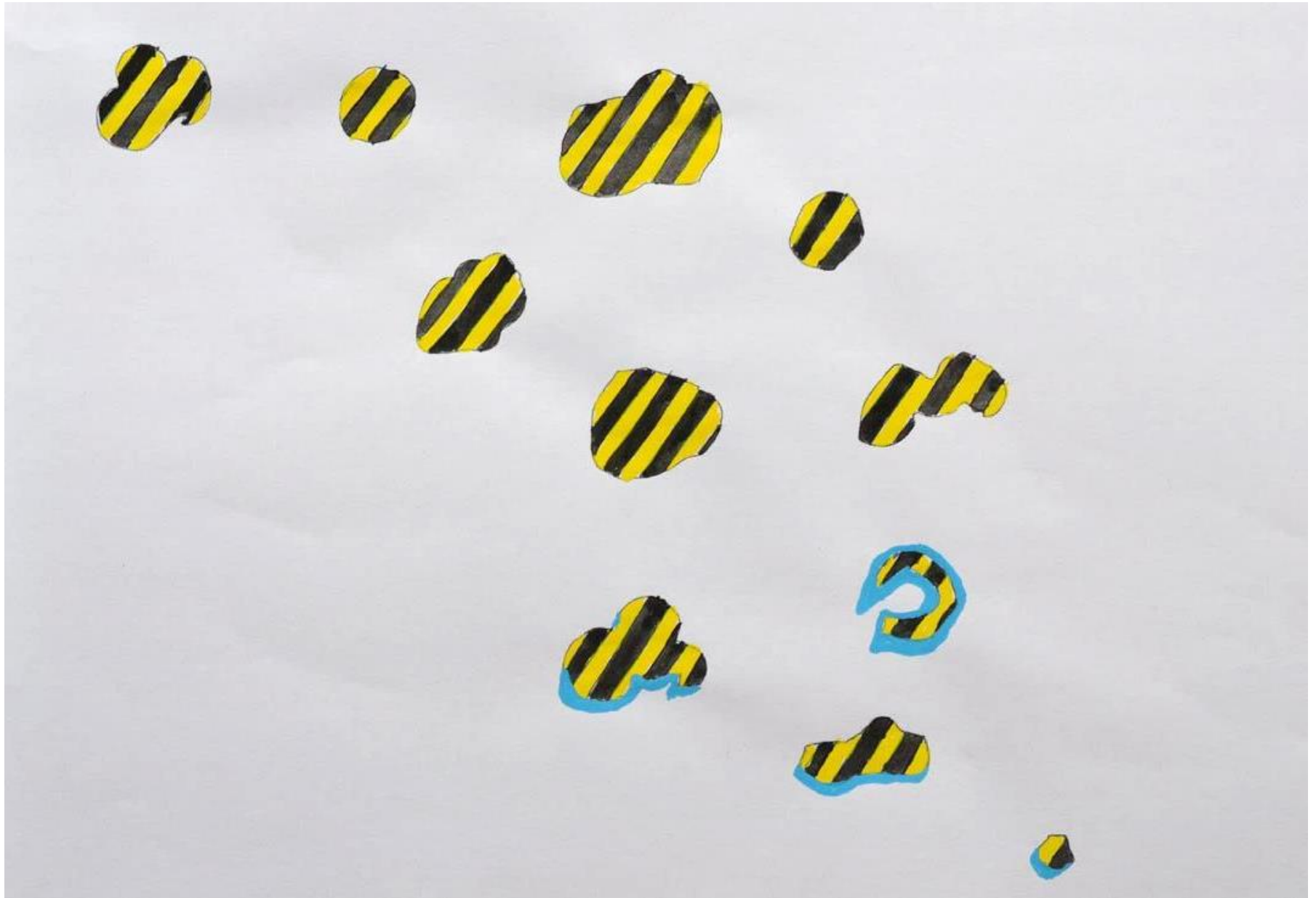
*I was reminded today of my white collar/blue collar interest and wondered if the bottom stripy parts of my cloud pieces could be 'tailored' to look like collars in order to reference different levels of status within the organisation, along with the reference to clothing and the body.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 18.9.2014)



Shapeshifters combined with stripes and the collar and cuffs of previous drawings (2014). Pen and paint on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.

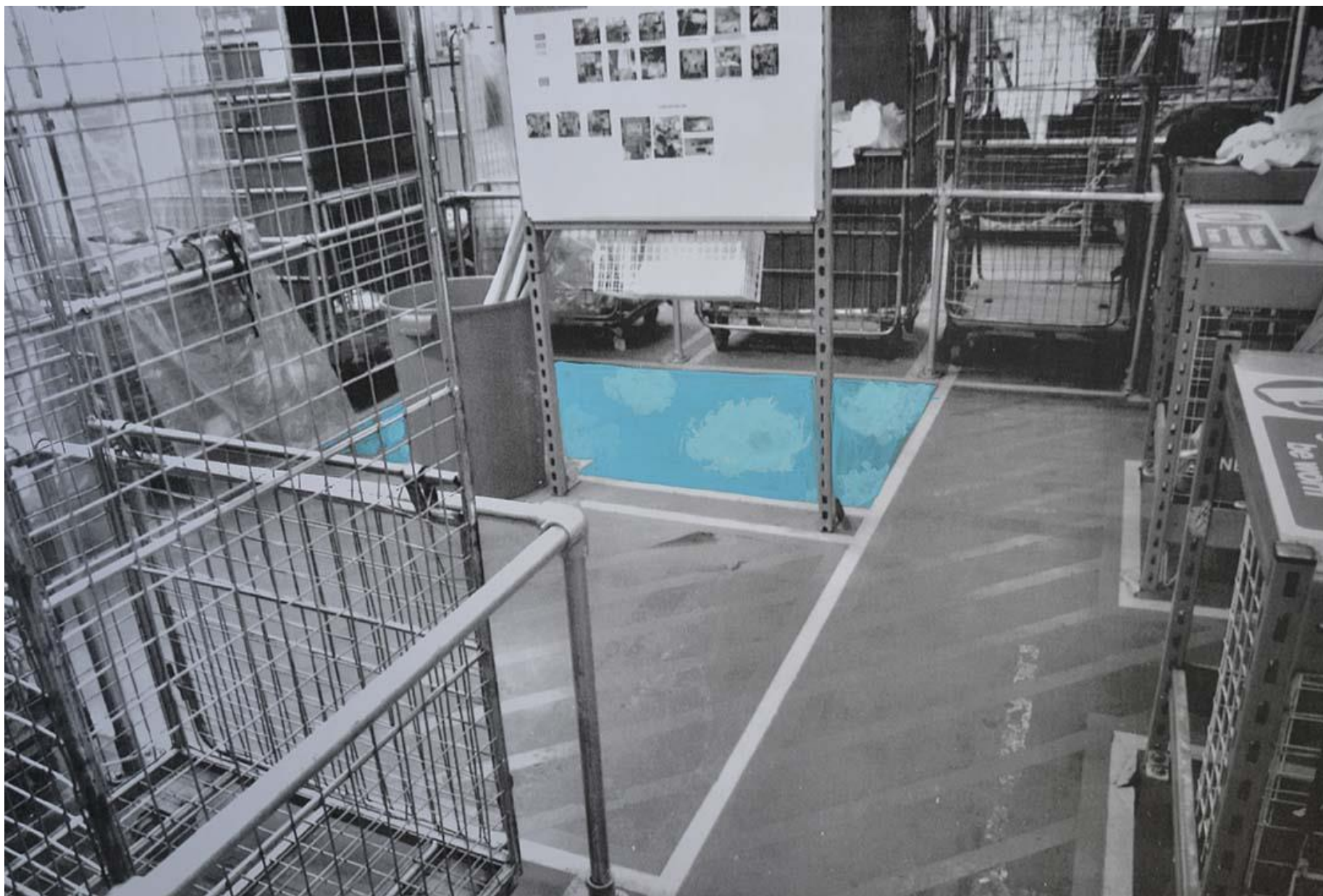




Drawings that play with the idea of clouds as shapeshifters and the shifting shapes of the laundry as it makes its way through the processes at Berendsen (2014). Paint on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.







Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.





Of the proposals for Berendsen this summarises many concerns to do with cloth, the symbolism of the cloud and the uniform of the laundry worker – a complete work in its own right (2014). This piece was exhibited at the Oxo Tower, London, as part of the UAL *We all Draw* exhibition in 2015. Paint on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.





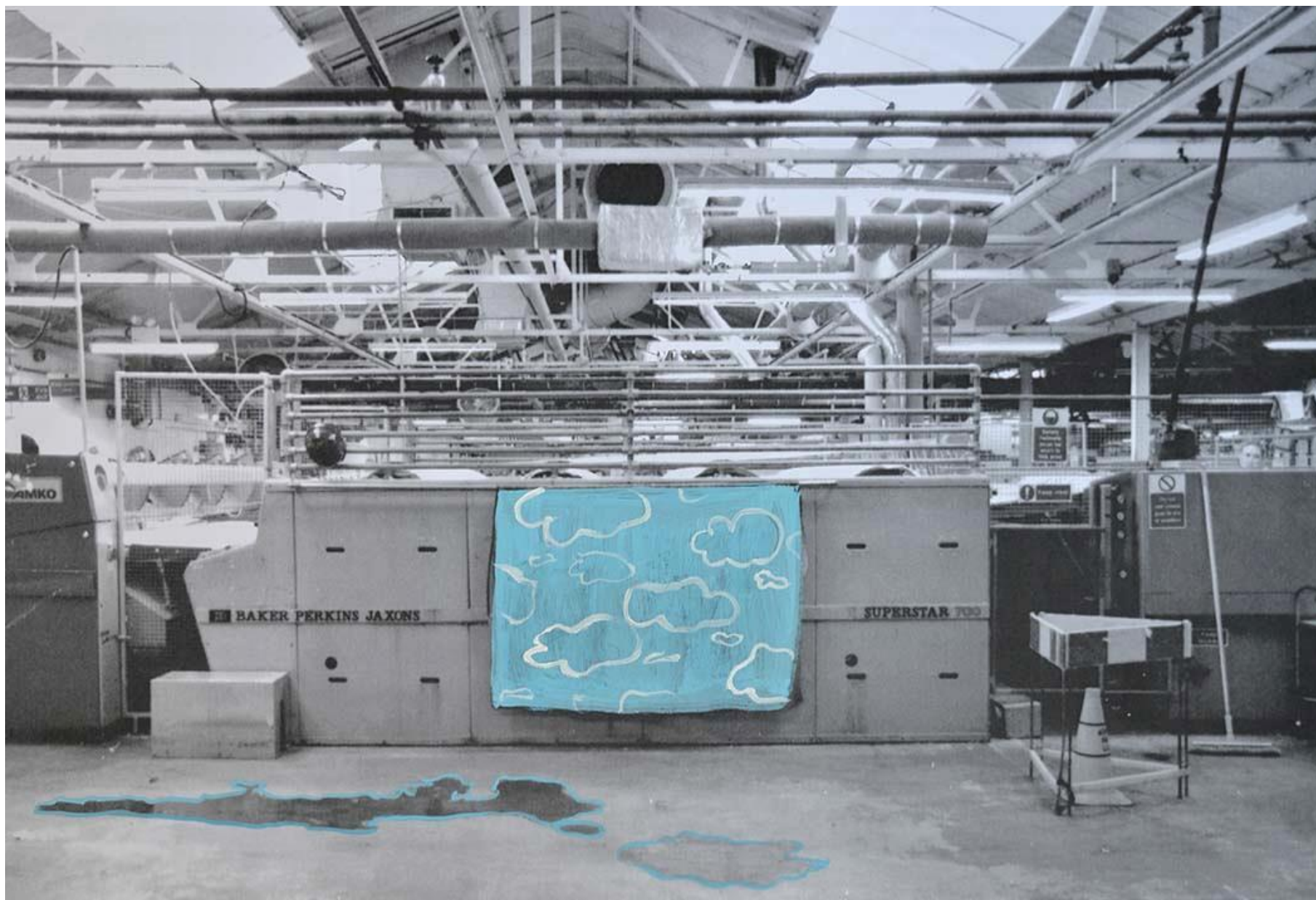


Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. Each 21cm x 29.7cm.



*Clouds painted into a puddle on the floor where mess becomes  
dream-like and beautiful, not something to be swept away.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.2.2014)



Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.

*These clouds are dreamy and fantastical, probably not  
feasible as actual interventions.*

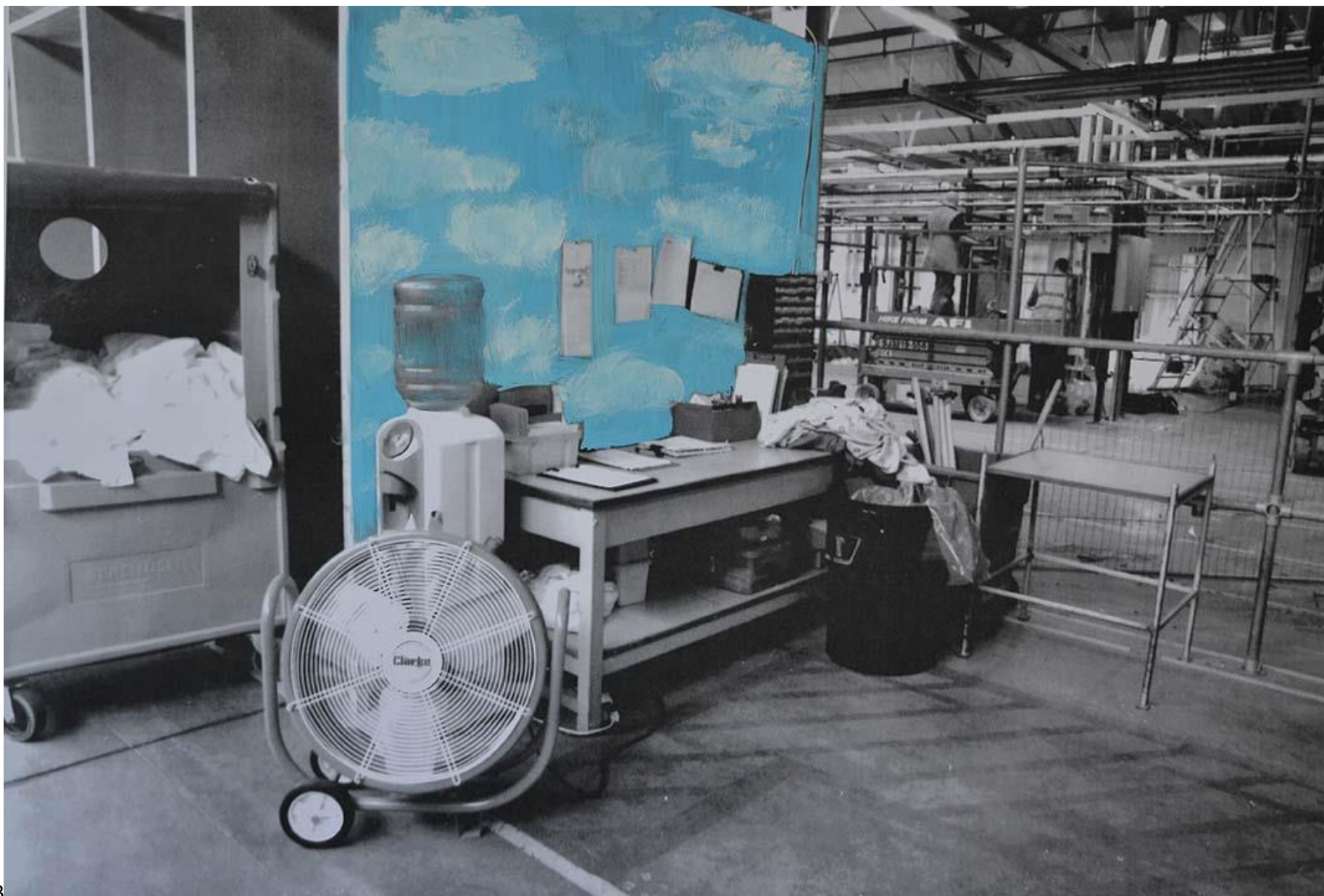
(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.9.2014)



Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.







3

Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.



*An aperture is created through the idea of a projection onto something else or a sense of space that the clouds/sky create. The aperture is also a puncture – the artwork somehow puncturing the space in an unexpected way (ref. Barthes' 'punctum' too).*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.9.2014)



This piece informed the making of the jacket piece *Hi-vis Clouds*. Intervention proposal: composite of two pieces (2014). Paint on photocopies. 21cm x 45cm.







Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.

*Is the cloud a lazy metaphor in the context of Berendsen? It will be easy to access, is recognisable and as a symbol for dreams and change (as well as threat) makes it complex enough in the context of a factory.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.2.2014)



Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. 42cm x 29.7cm.







This proposal influenced both the jacket piece *Hi-Vis Clouds* and the neon piece *Dream Cloud*. Intervention proposal (2014).  
Paint on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.

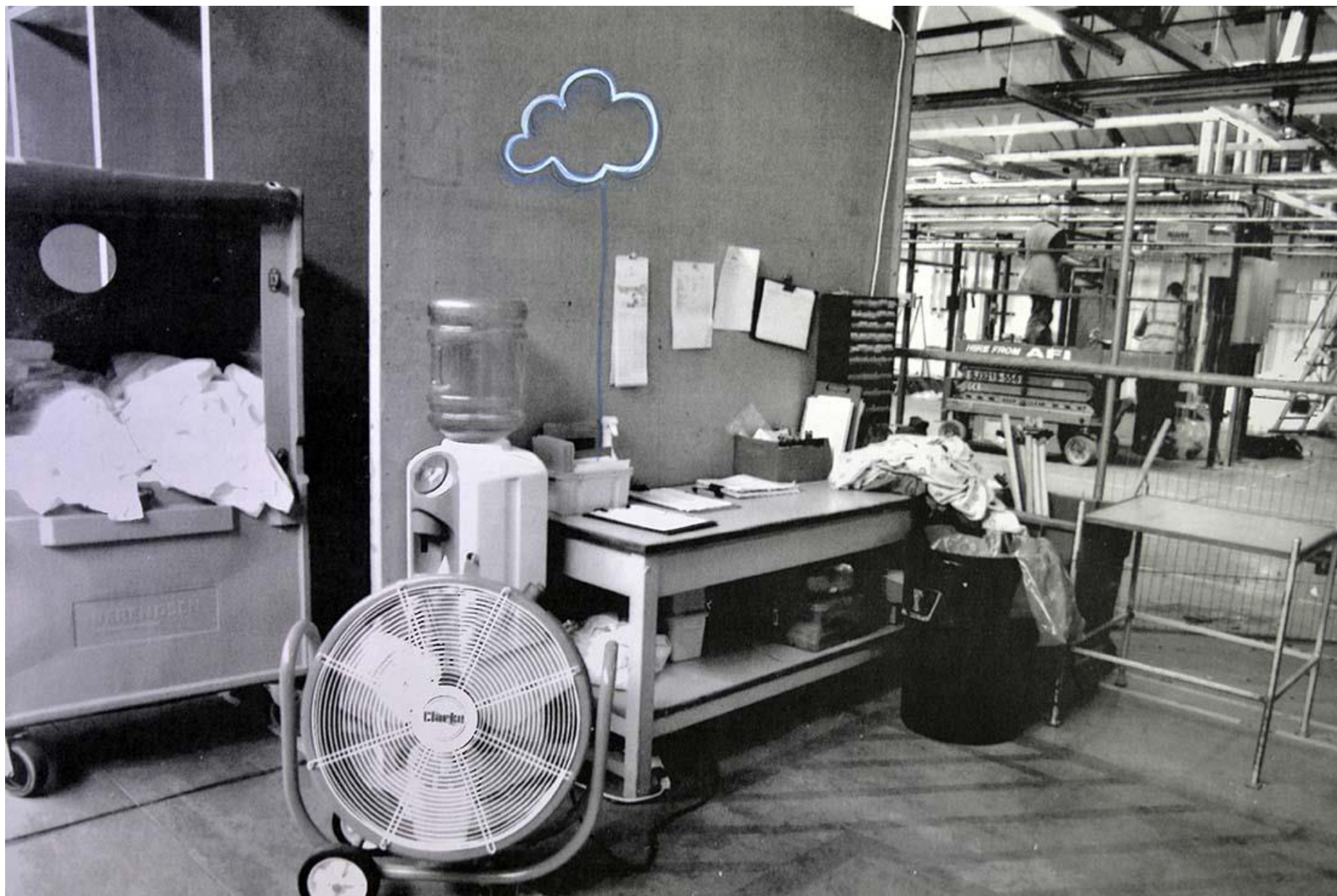




Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.







Intervention proposal (2014). Paint on photocopy. 29.7cm x 42cm.





Process

*Despite my lack of inclination to read shapes into abstract forms I've already noted the terms 'berry-like' and 'breast/nipple' in relation to these cloud shapes. The cloud is a shapeshifter and something onto which we project the familiar: an innate tendency to form recognisable shapes, ref. Gestalt theory.*

*Observations about process: the repetition becomes tedious quite quickly even though this is something I'm doing by choice and is something 'creative'. Perhaps it's not so creative if I'm imposing limitations such that all have to be outlines only, all have to be on the same paper and the same size.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 3.11.2014)



A series of clouds painted in preparation for the *Dream Cloud* neon design (2014). In all 33 clouds were painted. Part of the point of this exercise was to attempt to make art under 'factory' conditions, with strict time limits and using the same paint, size of paper and brushes. Each piece was numbered and observations about the process recorded in my reflective journal. Gouache on paper. Each 42cm x 59.4cm.





Skyscape painting used for *Cloud Busting*, *Hi-Vis Clouds*, *Could*, *Head in the Clouds* and *Break in the Clouds* (2014). Watercolour and gouache on paper. 59.4cm x 84.1cm.

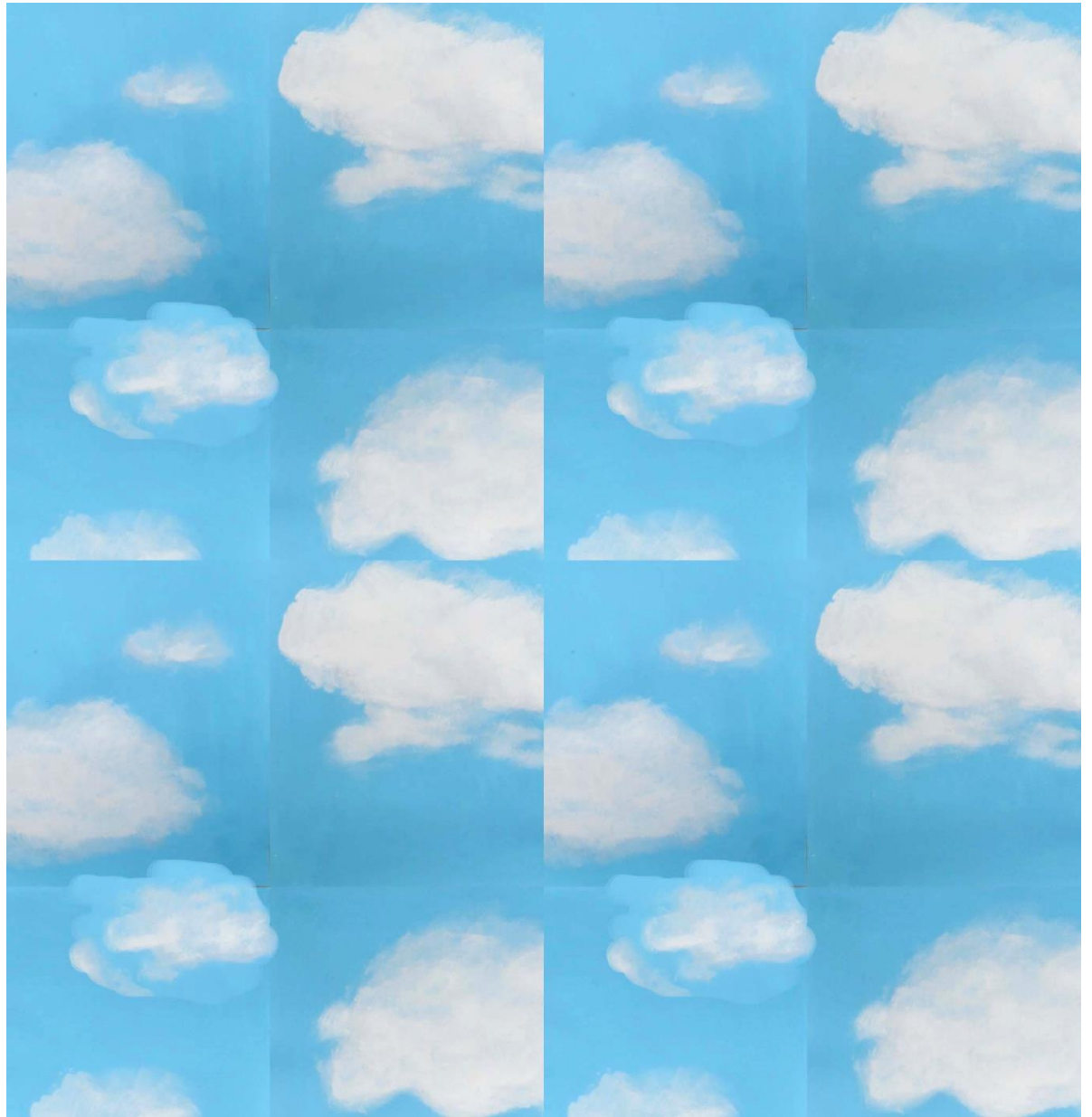






Detail of skyscape painting used for *Cloud Busting*, *Hi-Vis Clouds*, *Could*, *Head in the Clouds* and *Break in the Clouds* (2014).  
Watercolour and gouache on paper. 59.4cm x 84.1cm.





Digitally manipulated sky painting to create repeat pattern (rejected in favour of straight repeat pattern) (2014). Computer generated design.





Drawings of cuffs and collars, a bridge between the clothing references at Aviva and those at Berendsen. Stripes and clouds also used in combination for the first time, later informing the acrylic piece *Cloud Busting* (2014). Pencil and paint on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.







Design used for *Cloud Busting* piece (2014). Pencil, acrylic and gouache paper. 60cm x 50cm.





*Could* (2014) digital print on acrylic. 43cm X 24cm.

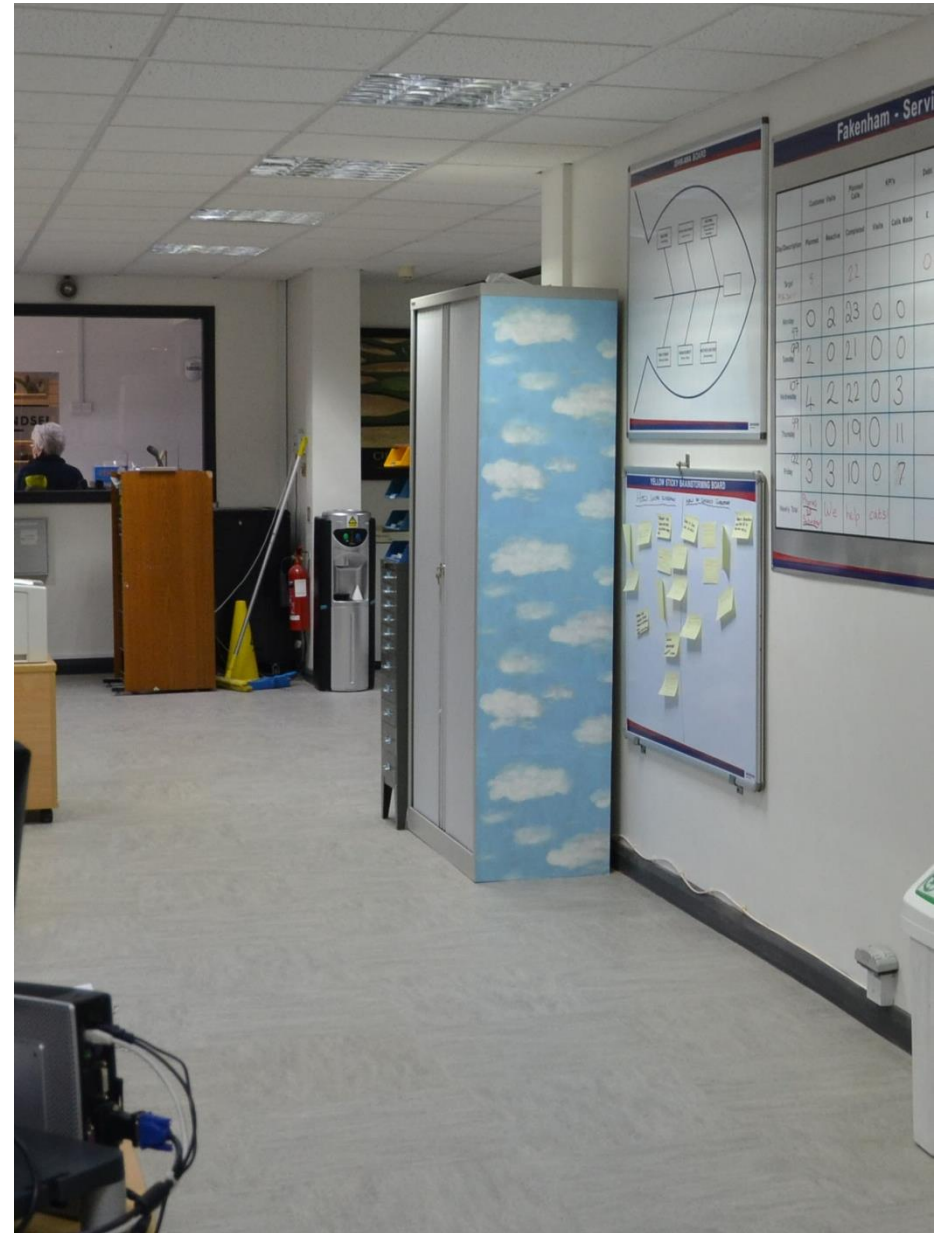


## Installation and Documentation



*The cloud as a form of data storage is an idealistic and ethereal-sounding invention that in reality refers to something far more mechanistic - a huge server housed in a warehouse.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.2.2014)



*Head in the Clouds* (2014) installed on the side of a cabinet in the sales office at Berendsen. Digital print on vinyl. 160cm x 40cm.

*Fluffy white clouds and blue skies are associated with day-dreaming, leisure, space and freedom; freedom is also implied in the phrase 'blue-sky thinking'.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.9.2014)







*Hi-Vis Clouds* (2014) installed in the showroom at Berendsen. Digital print on cotton. 60cm x 50cm.







*Hi-Vis Clouds* (2014) installed at the far end of the main laundry floor at Berendsen. Digital print on cotton. 60cm x 50cm.





*Hi-Vis Clouds* (2014) installed at the far end of the main laundry floor at Berendsen. Digital print on cotton. 60cm x 50cm.

*The artwork in the laundry loses its identity as an object for monetary consumption.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 19.10.2014)





*Cloud Busting* (2014) installed on the main laundry floor. Digital print on acrylic. 47cm x 43cm.







*Cloud Busting* (2014) installed on the main laundry floor. Digital print on acrylic. 47cm x 43cm.





*Dream Cloud* (2014) installed on the main staircase at Berendsen. Neon. 40cm x 60cm.



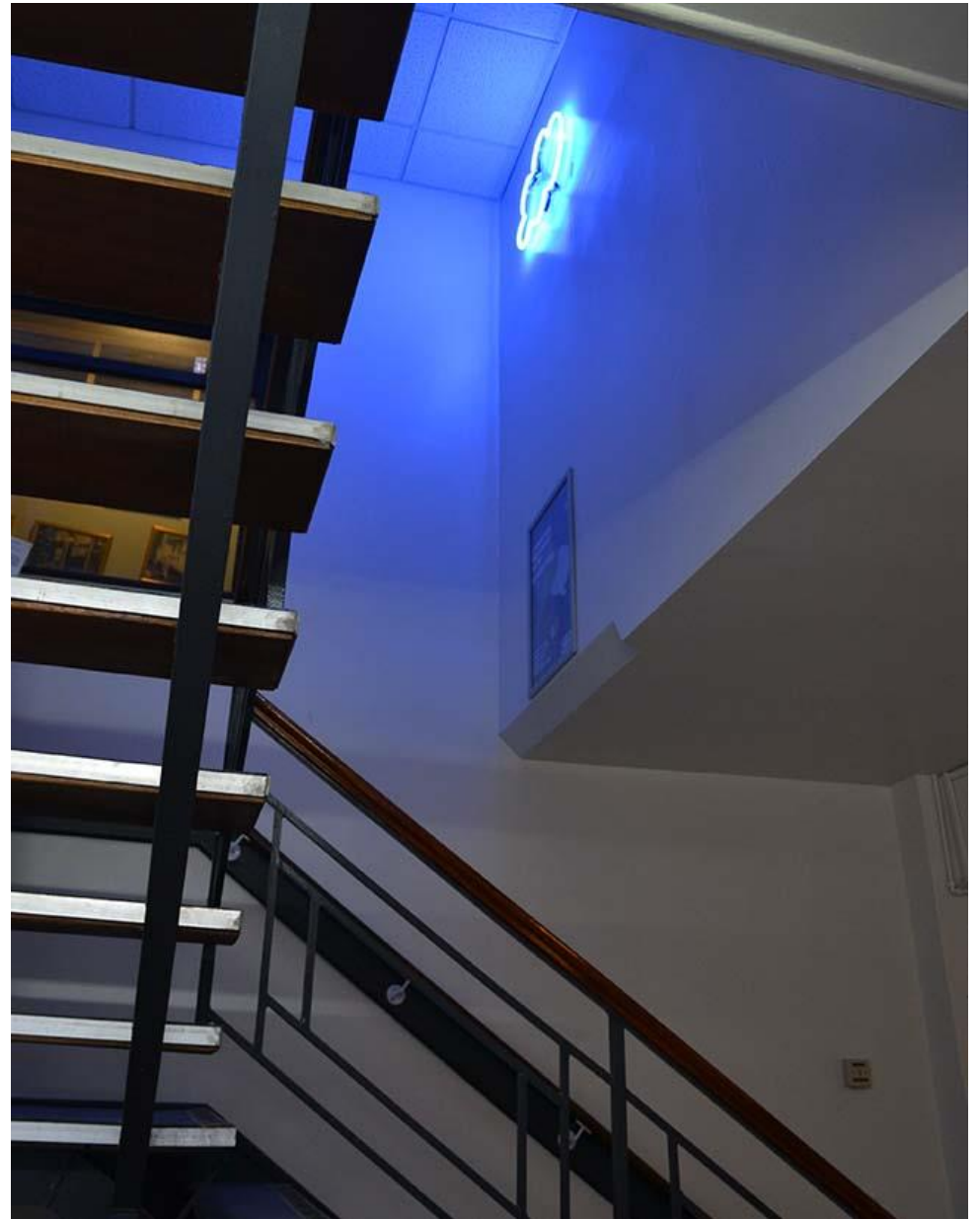


*Dream Cloud* (2014) installed on the main staircase at Berendsen. Neon. 40cm x 60cm.



*I am disappointed that this wasn't placed amongst the paraphernalia of the main laundry where it might be mistaken as something more functional. These compromises occur when being beholden to a manager of a workplace: the ownership (metaphorical not literal) of the piece shifts.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 23.1.2014)



*Dream Cloud* (2014) installed on the main staircase at Berendsen, viewed here from the ground floor.  
Neon. 40cm x 60cm.

*As a single outline a cloud motif might also appear to be like  
a thought or speech bubble.*

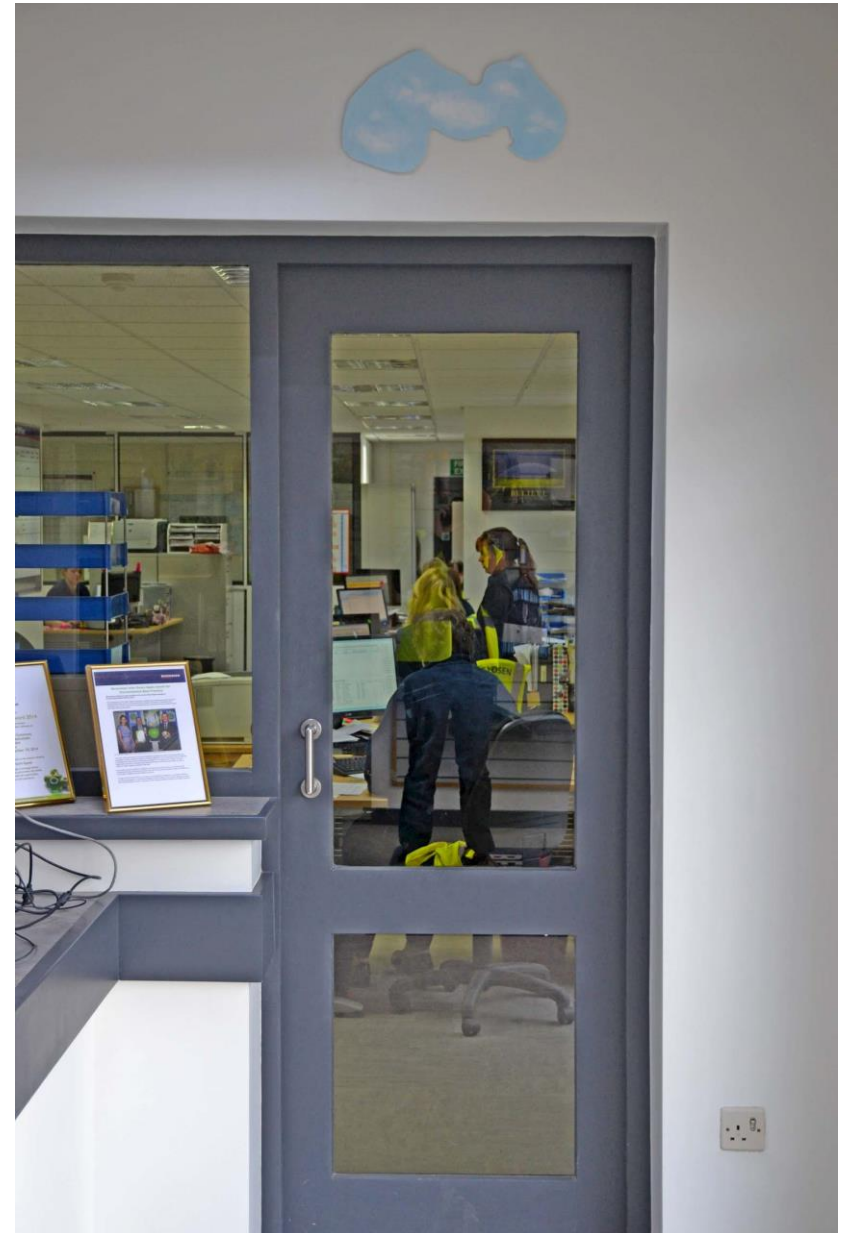
(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.9.2014)



*Dream Cloud* (2014) installed on the main staircase at Berendsen, reflected in the first floor office window. Neon. 40cm x 60cm.

*Titled 'Could' because in dreams anything is possible.*

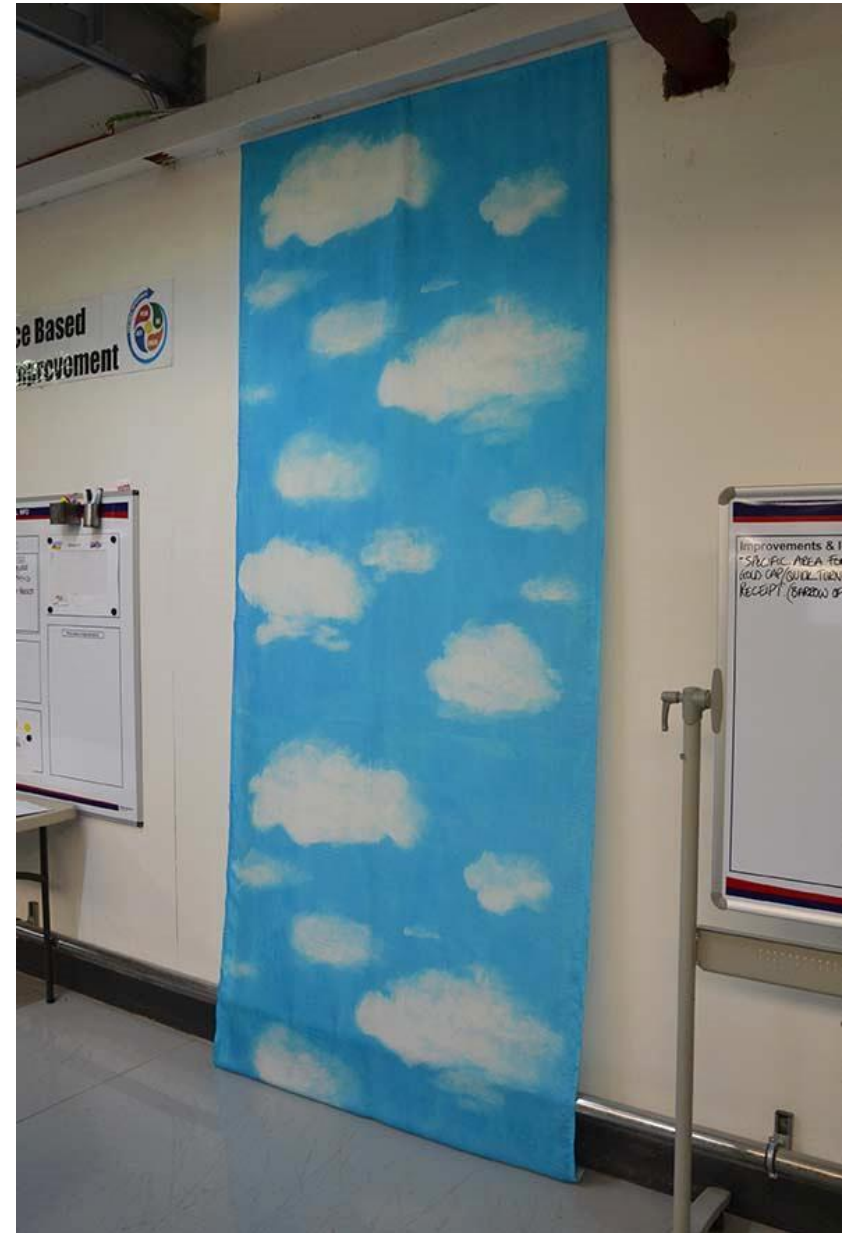
(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.2.2014)



*Could* (2014) installed in the reception area at Berendsen. Digital print on acrylic. 23cm x 44cm.







*A Break in the Clouds* (2014) installed in the main laundry at Berendsen. Digital print on silk. 350cm x 160cm.

*Would a gallery neutralise the semiotics of these pieces and make impotent their original meanings? The semiotics are chosen specifically for this space, although a cloud has 'universal' properties as a sign and multifarious connections.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 19.10.2014)



*A Break in the Clouds* (2014) installed in the main laundry at Berendsen. Digital print on silk. 350cm x 160cm.



Post-Installation Ideas



As a consequence of the installation of the artworks at Berendsen I made new propositions expanding the ideas that had been realized.



Untitled (2014). Manipulated photograph.







Untitled (2014). Manipulated photograph.







Untitled (2014). Manipulated photograph.







Untitled (2014). Manipulated photograph.





Untitled (2014). Manipulated photograph.

*A white fluffy cloud against a blue sky evokes optimism and joy,  
but introduce a greyness to it or increase the quantity of  
them and they become a threat.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.9.2014)





Untitled (2014). Manipulated photograph.







Untitled (2014). Manipulated photograph.



## Section Three: Chairs and EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup>



Negotiations with EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup>





## **September 2015**

### **Initial Proposal for the use of the EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup>**

I would like to use the gallery for an exhibition of new art works made for my PhD. A gallery environment will allow me to test some ideas that were not feasible or appropriate within the context of the workplaces in which I have installed work. I anticipate the majority of the work to be a series of free-standing sculpture, specifically a series of modified chairs – a process I call chair-jacking - which seeks to play with, and disrupt, the way that chairs can indicate the status and occupation of the user.

I would also like to 'open-up' some of the hidden processes and negotiation that have been necessary to realising the site-related installations at Aviva and Berendsen as well as additional photographs, tests, texts and 'blind alleys'/failures that were also part of the PhD 'journey'.

### **Additional information requested from the Gallery Working Party: What will visitors be able to view?**

To make the chairs more visible from the street I am considering presenting them on a slightly raised platform. This would provide a form of plinth to isolate the chairs from their surroundings, thus forming a self-contained 'tableau' of sorts. It would form a visual separation from the other elements of the show that are being used to inform the audience about aspects of the PhD and would also discourage visitors from trying to sit on the chairs!

### **Additional information requested from the Gallery Working Party: Accessibility for non-specialist audiences**

For non-specialist audiences the chair-sculptures/interventions would present inventive, decorative objects that undermine the function of the chairs and offer something that is visually more playful. Visitors would be able to witness the craft skills evident in the work, particularly sewing construction skills, so it is hoped that some visitors would find the work engaging on a technical if not conceptual level.

## **October 2015**

### **Email from NUA to SH**

XXXX forwarded me the proposal and asked me to circulate it at the Gallery Working Group.

The response was unanimously positive.

## **January 2016**

### **Email from NUA to SH**

I am just getting in touch about your exhibition at the gallery which is in the programme for April 2016. It looks like your PhD has been a really interesting project- I'm looking forward to working with you on the exhibition. Perhaps we should pencil in another meeting in a couple of weeks' time with our new technician, to discuss the installation? In the meantime I'll find out about clearance distances around the platform and let you know.



**January 2016****Email from SH to NUA**

I'm so pleased that you like the sound of the show: I'm also really excited about it, though I have a lot to do between now and then!

Re the exhibition title I'm still happy with 'Disruptive Decoration'.

Many thanks for finding out about clearance distances. I've begun making a model box so I can visualise the arrangement of the space more clearly.

**Email from SH to NUA**

Just to confirm that since this [first exhibition proposal] was written I have decided that rather than a screen with table and shelves I would like to display what I would describe as the more hidden parts of the PhD proposal as a timeline that would be designed bespoke to fit the far wall of the gallery. As this develops I will be happy to send you images of it.

**Email from NUA to SH**

I wonder if you would be happy for some of [the gallery proposal] to be used to create text for the exhibition? Or would you like to provide some text that marketing and I can use to promote the exhibition? Just a couple of paragraphs would be great.

**March 2016****Email from SH to NUA**

My timeline artwork for the gallery has become more elaborate than I'd first anticipated so I was hoping I could talk to you about it tomorrow morning to see if it is still feasible? I am collaborating with a designer who has changed it into a PDF so we can look at it easily. I've attached the PDF for your information and will bring a paper version of it with me tomorrow.

**April 2016****Evaluation Report for NUA Research Committee**

The exhibition included a looped 11-minute PowerPoint presentation on an iPad set into the timeline that documented key theoretical references, significant quotes from my own Reflective Journal and approximately 50 images of my own work - preparatory sketches, studio production photographs and more detailed installation shots of the two site interventions - that would otherwise be unavailable for public viewing.

I am hugely grateful for the opportunities afforded to me through the award of this Research Fellowship.

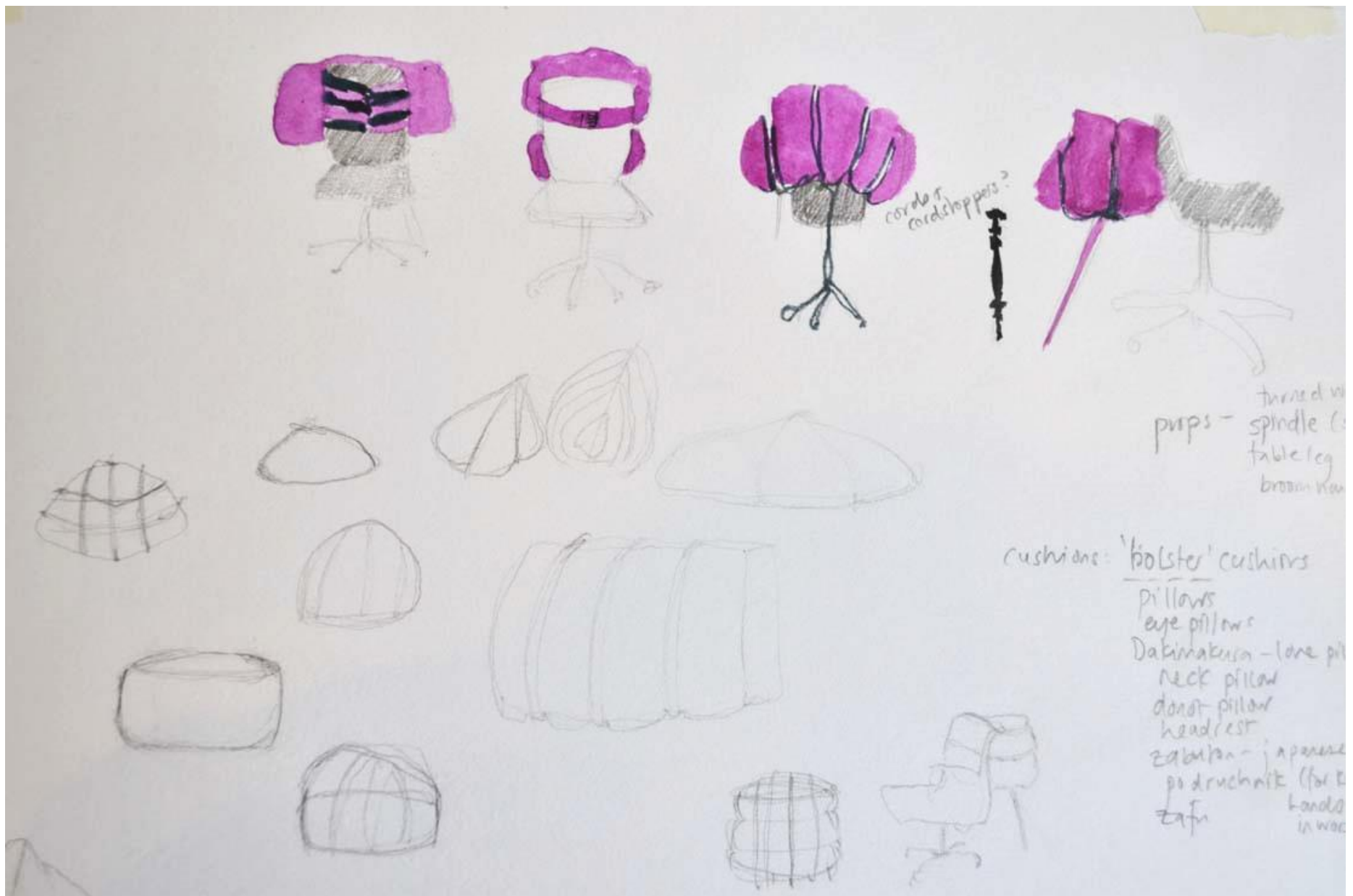


Preliminary Investigation



*PROP: I've been using the Eames soft pad chair, a high-end, luxurious example to contrast with beanbag designs as an 'everyday' product. It is interesting that one of the Eames' aims was to get the best designs to the greatest number of people for the least amount of money, but the Eames soft pad chair still costs around £3400.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.3.2012)



Page of drawings from sketchbook exploring modifications of an office chair (2012). Pencil and paint on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.





Studio shot of test for modification of an office chair (2016). Polyester, cords, cord stoppers, zipper.

*My workplace: here is where this office chair is relevant.  
There is a large administrative component to my job. So, my  
admin, but also my status – an ordinary chair, one of the many,  
not one of the elite.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.11.2015)



Studio shot of test for modification of an office chair (2016). Polyester, cords, cord stoppers, zipper and fringed trim.



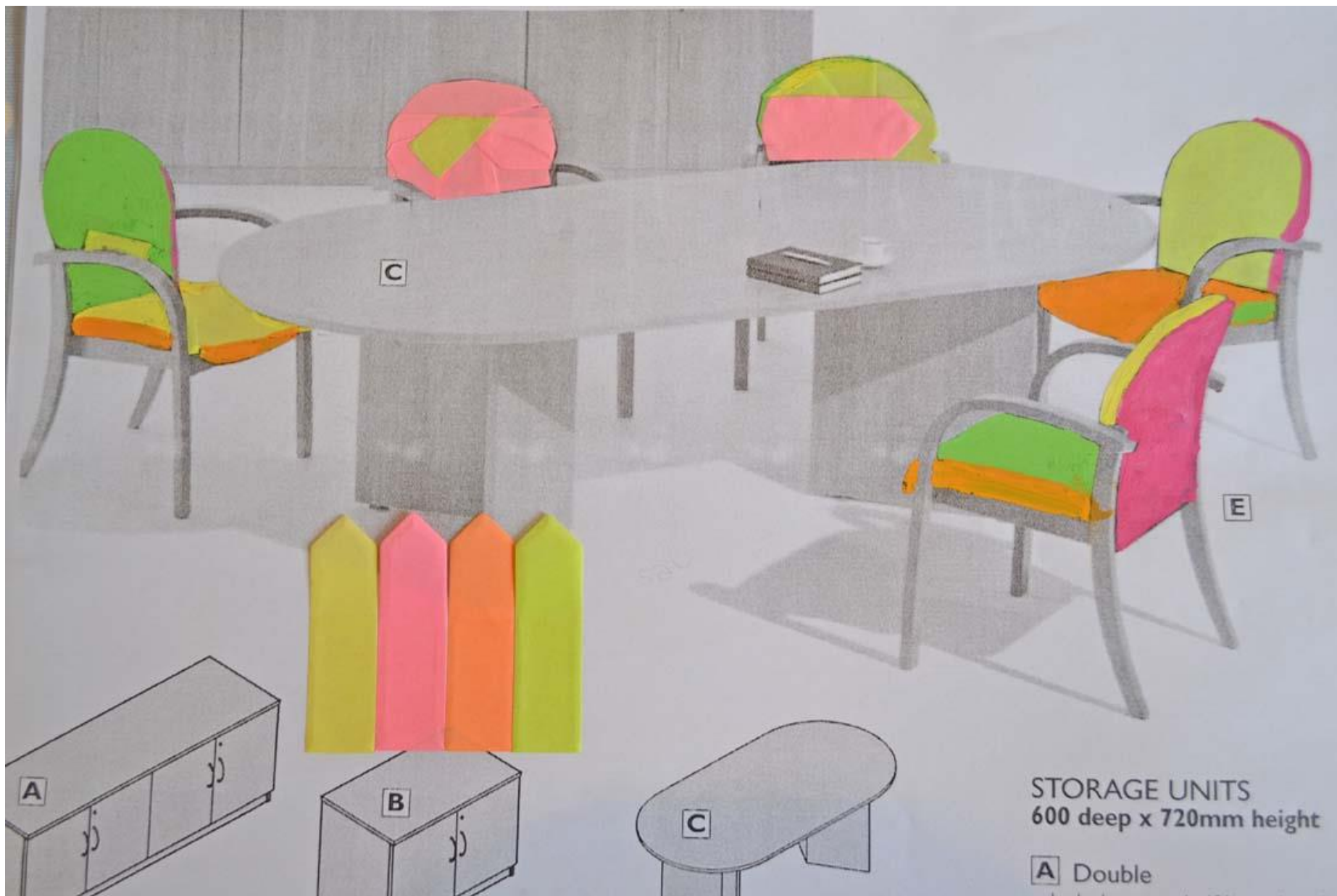
*The purple piece now has a pink/purple fur on the 'headrest'.  
It's very playful but would need to be placed away from the  
more subtle pieces otherwise it will overwhelm them.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 28.1.2016)



*KISREFTEF*, shot in EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> but subsequently not used (2016).  
Office chair, polyester, cords, cord stoppers, zipper, wadding and faux fur.

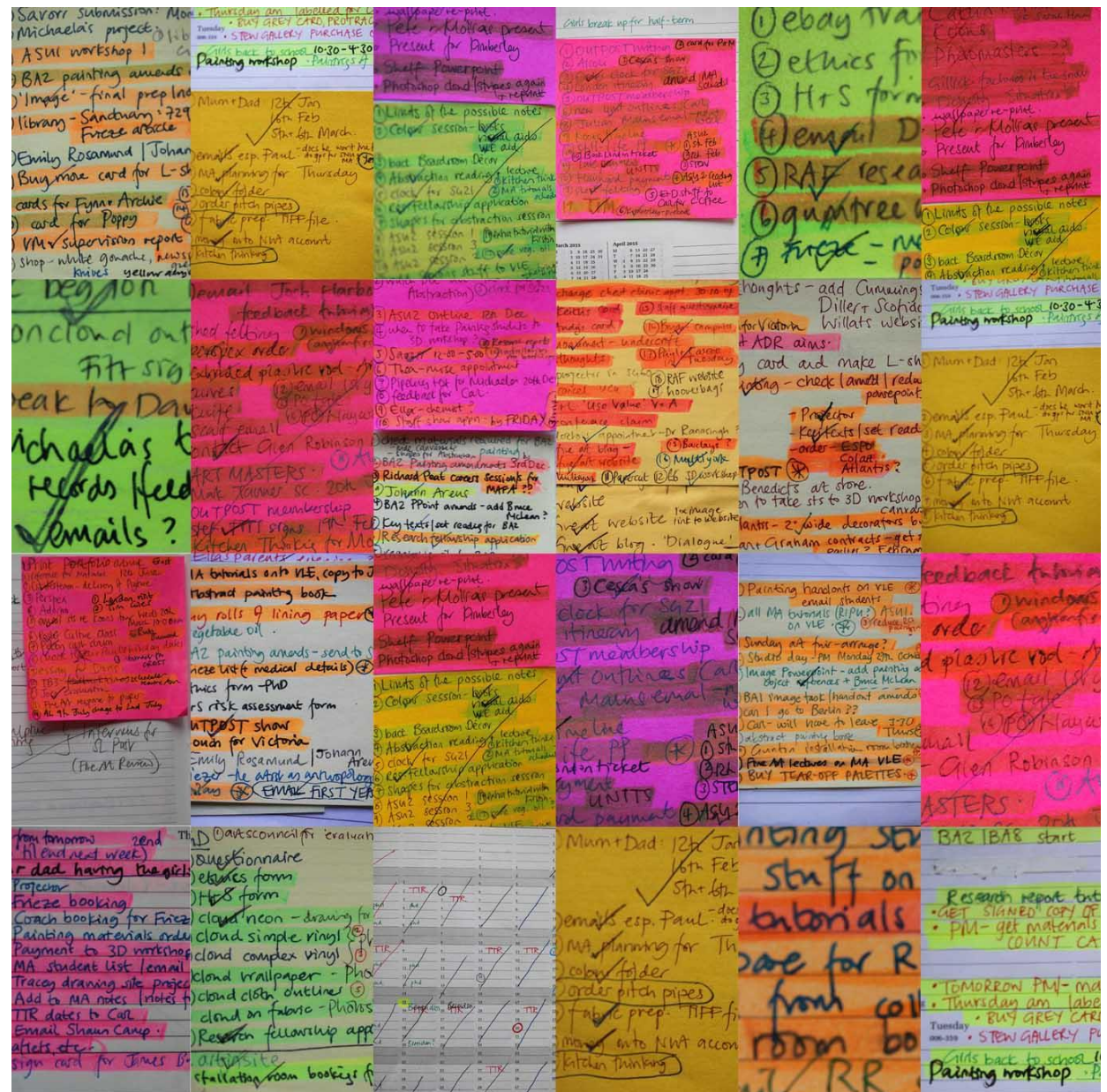




Drawing of modified office chairs (2012). Paint and collage on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm. The use of post-it notes was a recurring theme in both the Aviva work and for the chair pieces.







Design used for repeat pattern, digitally printed on cotton for A Year of Post-it Notes.



*I threaded wire through the 'arms' across the 'shoulders' which pushes the arms away from the chair and circles it, a little like a hat, but is not helping the sense of restriction to come across.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 5.4.2016)



Early studio tests for *A Year of Post-it Notes* (2016). Office chair, cotton, wire, fringe trim.







Early studio tests for *A Year of Post-it Notes* (2016). Office chair, cotton, wire, fringe trim.

*I've been working on the post-note piece for around two weeks now. Using the ribbons at the end of the sleeves the 'arms' can now be tied together or wrap around like a straitjacket.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 5.4.2016)



Studio tests for *A Year of Post-it Notes* (2016). Office chair, cotton, ribbon.



*Photocopies from the 2010-11 ESPO catalogue (cheap office furniture). Pink and green floral printed arms plus pink pom-pom embellishments. The pattern is taken from our toilet roll.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 2.2.2012)



Drawing of modified office chairs (2012). Paint on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.

*I'm intrigued by antimacassars in the context of cheap office furniture... I don't know if these would have a particular shape or be amorphous like a Franz West adaptive. I'm very reluctant to make anything too representational because of wanting the work to remain open to multiple meanings.*

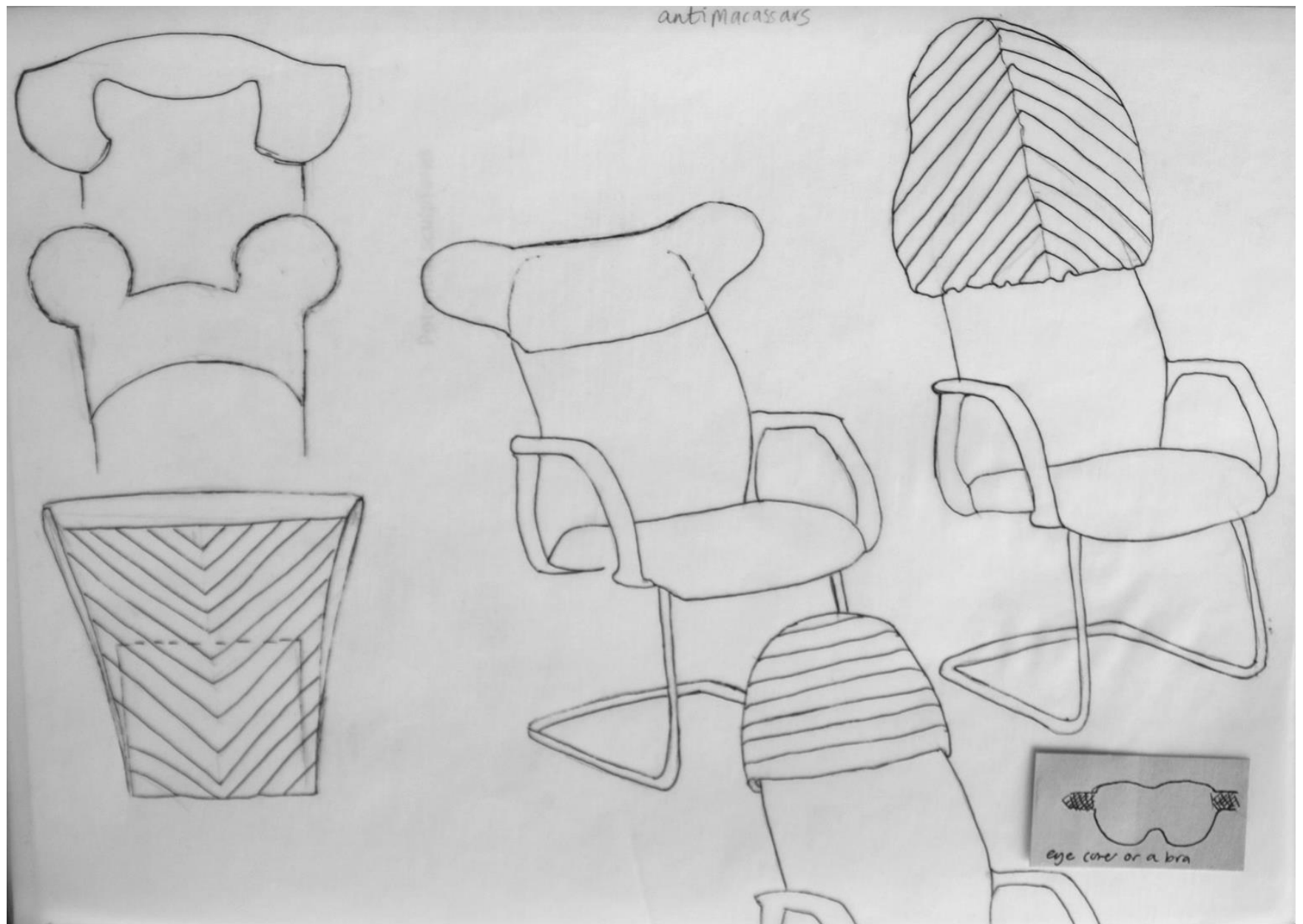
(Reflective Journal excerpt 2.2.2012)



Drawing of modified office chairs (2012). Paint and collage on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.

*Shoulder pads and antimacassars: they're quite comical.  
One is like Mickey Mouse, another like the headpiece worn  
by the old lady in Quentin Massy's painting 'An Old Woman' (c.1513).*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.3.2012)



Drawings of modified office chairs (2012). Pencil on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.







This intervention proposal has been shown in 'Hidden in Plain Sight', a staff exhibition at Norwich University of the Arts in 2015. *Boardroom Décor* (2013).  
Gouache on photocopy. 21cm x 29.7cm.

*Blue-collar: working class, manual labour.*

*White collar: office/administrative labour.*

*Pink collar: coined in the 1970s to refer to posts largely held by women that were related to service/customer interaction.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.3.2012)



untitled, studio tests of idea for chair intervention (2016).Office chair, suedette, wadding and ruffle trim. Height approx. 100cm.

*What does it mean to be using these Disney-like ear shapes?  
In the Aviva context there was the suggestion that it might  
undermine a sense of seriousness, seniority or even competence.  
If I make this piece for NUA am I undermining my own position  
as well as others at NUA? I need to consider carefully what I  
want to critique in this body of work.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 18.1.2016)





Untitled, detail of idea for chair intervention (2016). Office chair, suedette, wadding and ruffle trim.



*I like the wrinkles at the bottom of this. It looks like  
it's being pulled on like a jumper.*

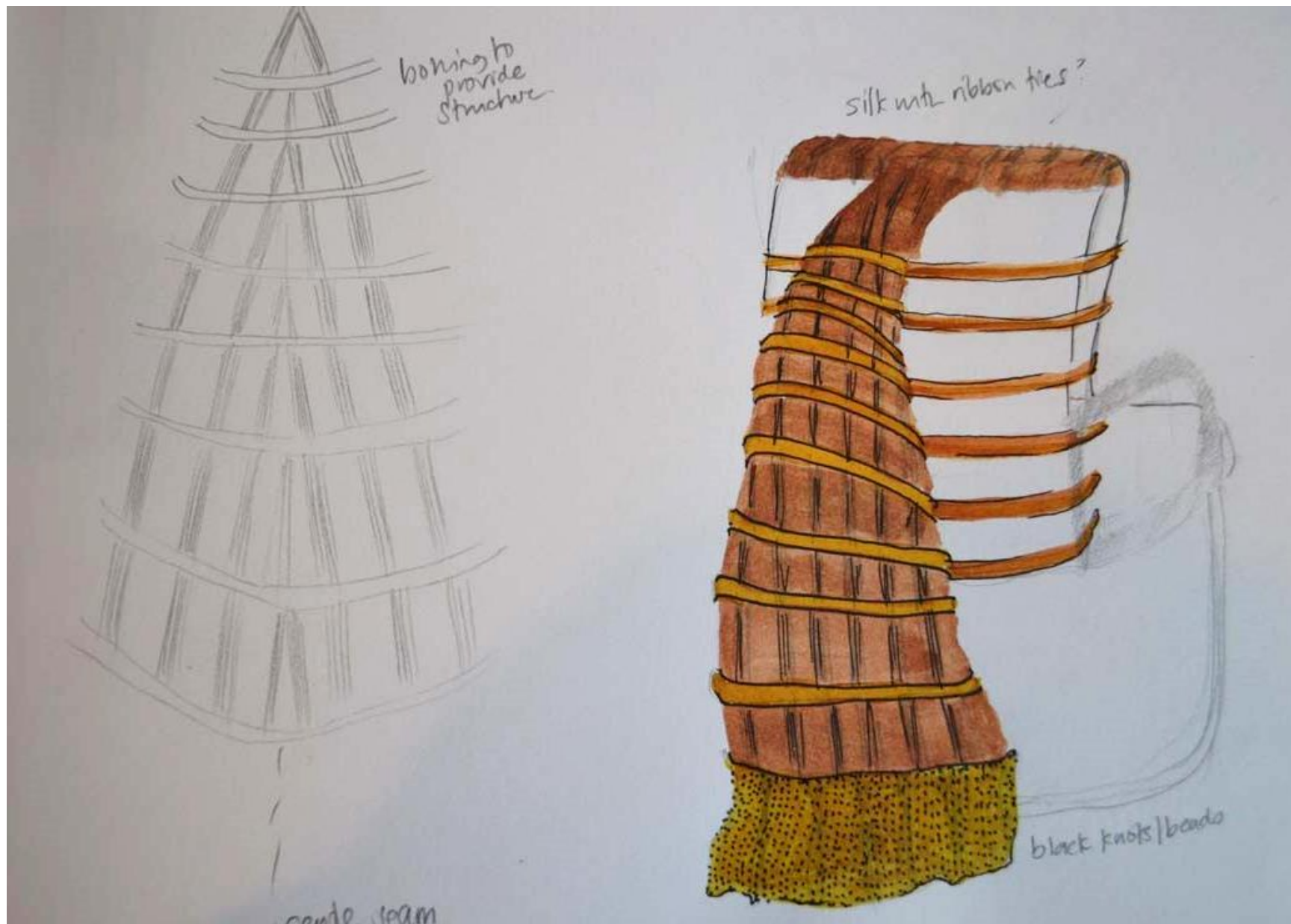
(Reflective Journal excerpt 9.2.2016)



Untitled, detail of idea for chair intervention (2016). Office chair, suedette, wadding.

*This shape is taken from a 1870s bustle. It's like a huge growth on the back of a woman's dress or, in this case, I like the idea of it being grafted onto the chair. ... "married to the job"?...*

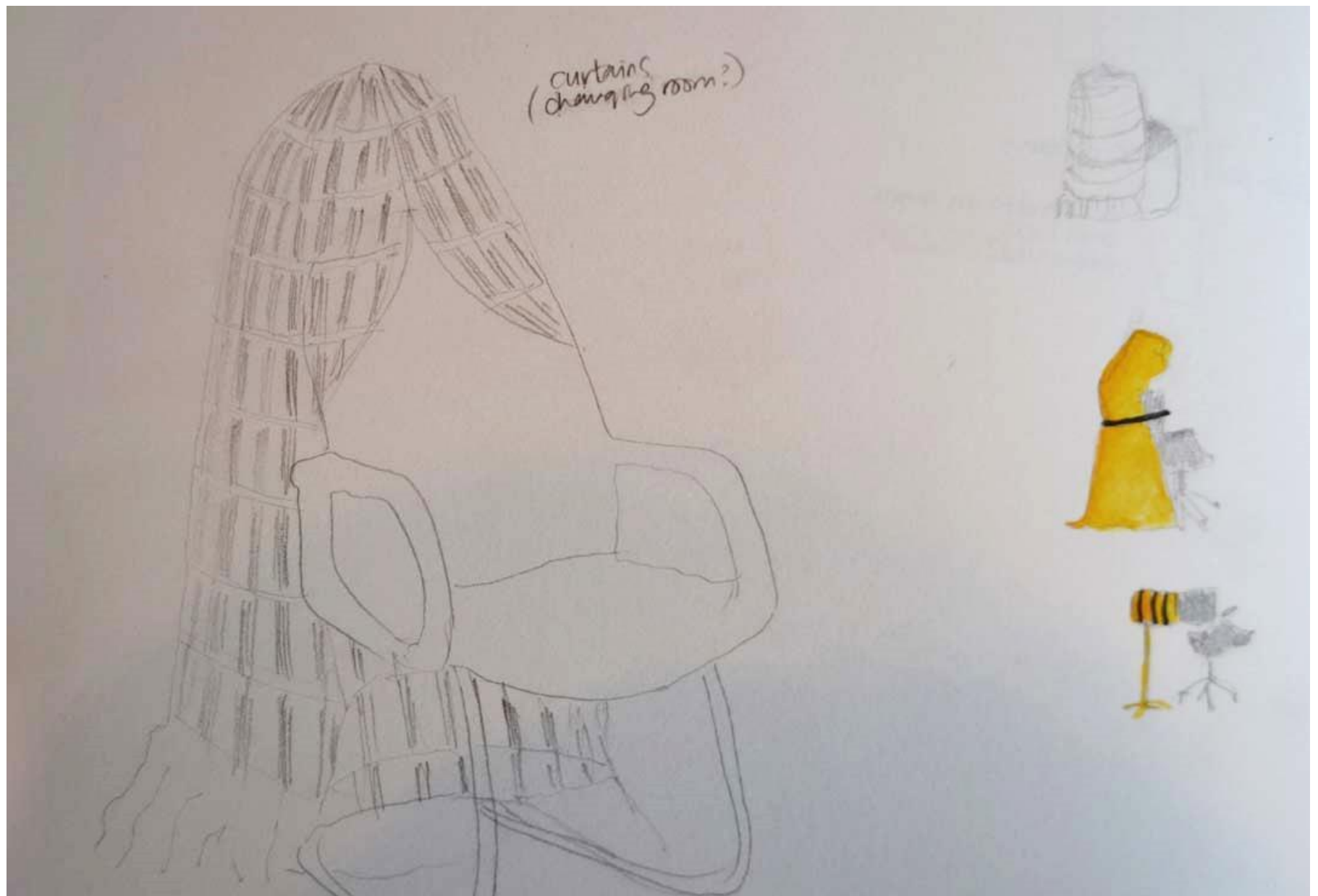
(Reflective Journal excerpt 8.3.2012)



Drawings of modified office chair (2012). Pencil and paint on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm  
These and the sketches on the next page were very early indications of a cage-like structure that would appear in *Dreaming of Versailles*.







Drawings of modified office chairs (2012). Pencil and paint on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.

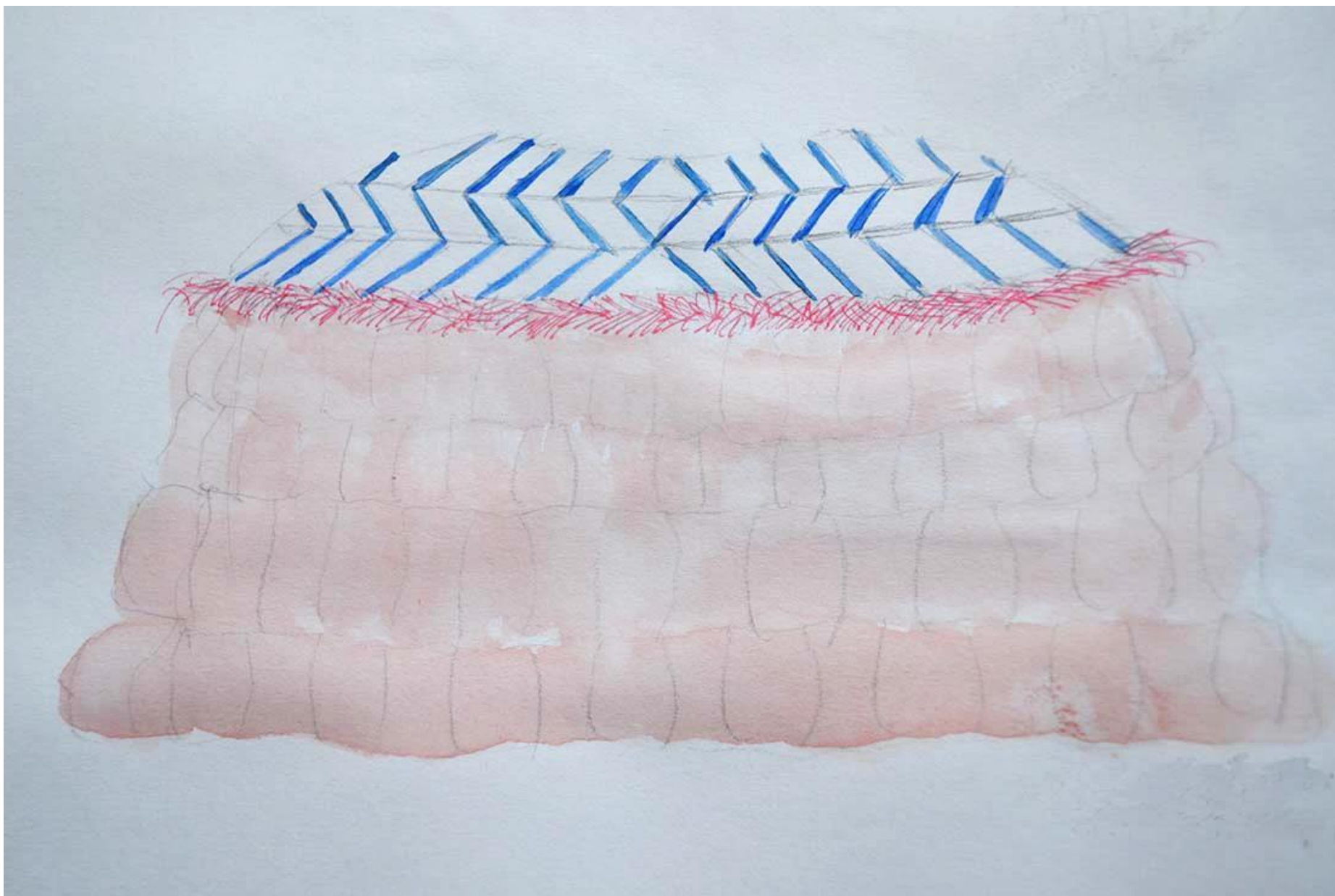






This drawing and the sketches on the following three pages were to inform the piece *Dreaming of Versailles* with its folds of layered fabric. Untitled sketch for sculpture (detail) (2013). Pencil and paint on paper. 21cm x 29cm





untitled sketch for pouf sculpture (2013). Pencil, pen and paint on paper. 21cm x 29cm





untitled sketches for sculptures (2013). Pen, pencil and paint on paper. 21cm x 29cm



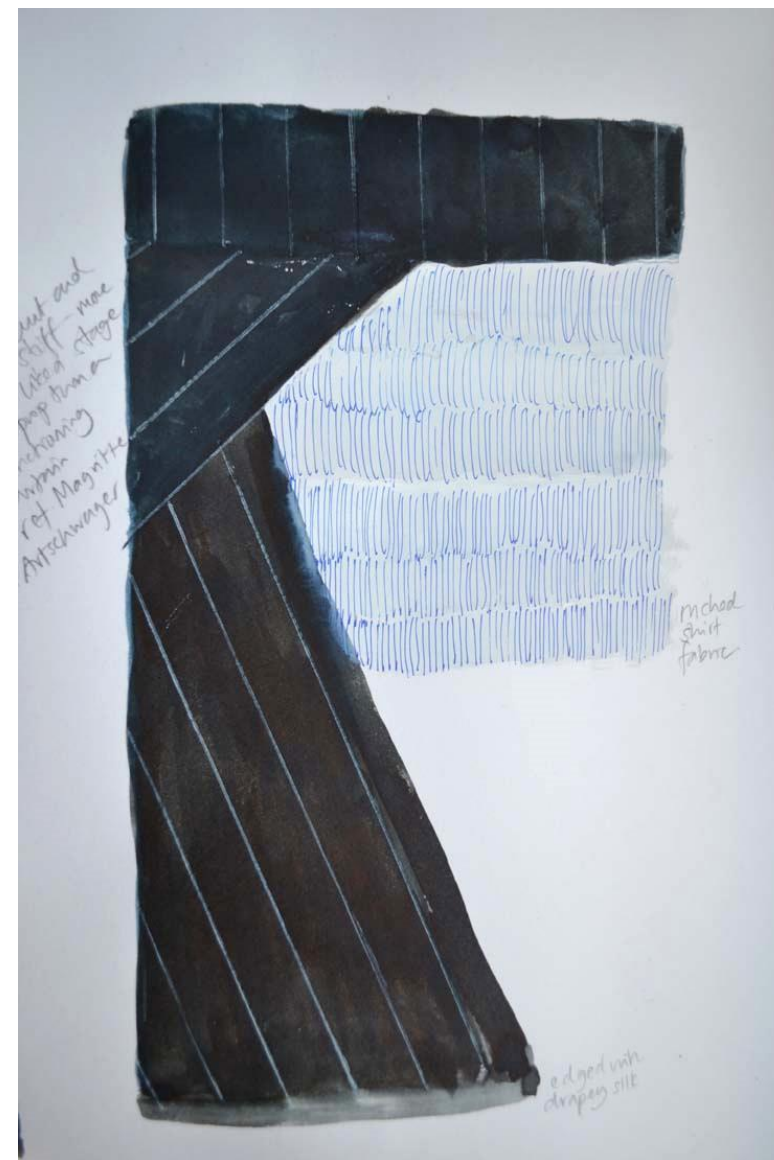




untitled sketches for sculptures (2013). Pen and paint on paper. 42cm x 29cm

*I've been painting curtain ruffles and drapes, using pinks and blues, and also using more 'masculine' fabrics, such as Harris tweed and pinstriped suit fabric. Using the shapes from a suit collar I designed a window surround. It's not quite a curtain as it is too stiff for that: it looks more like a stage prop than a functioning curtain.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.7.2014)



Comparing the large expanse of windows in the gallery to that of a shop window, but also referring back to ideas about theatre curtains when making *Swag*, these and the sketches on the next page were potential ideas for the EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> exhibition. untitled sketches for window displays (2013). Pen and paint on paper. Each approx. 30cm x 40cm







untitled sketches for window displays (2013). Pen and paint on paper. Each approx. 10cm x 40cm







This and the next two drawings extend the idea of the 'tableau' that was described in Chapter Four, as well as developing further the layered frills that were a feature in *Dreaming of Versailles*.  
untitled sketch for window display (2013). Pen and paint on photocopy. 21cm x 29cm

*I've been drawing objects that are part pouf. I like the idea of a pouf as it's so frivolous, though what's the difference between the pouf and the footrest of an Eames recliner?*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 12.12.2013)



untitled sketch for window display (2013). Pen and paint on paper. 21cm x 29cm

*The objects combine different fabrics and are able to indicate work or leisure/home (pinstripes vs frivolity, excess). Some of the lampshade pieces contrast 'sharp' design or tailoring with frills and flounces, possible clashes of taste.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 12.12.2013)





untitled sketch for window display (2013). Pen and paint on paper. 21cm x 29cm



*I've been looking at the piece I made back in 2014.  
It has a very large 'skirt' and padded elements at the top.  
I like it as a form and want to use it, possibly with a wider  
skirt. (I like the idea of it being black or dark blue like an  
ink blot or spill.)*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.11.2015)



Testing potential form and surface for an earlier version of 24/7 (2014). Cotton, wadding, polyester, velvet, linen, office chair. Dimensions variable.



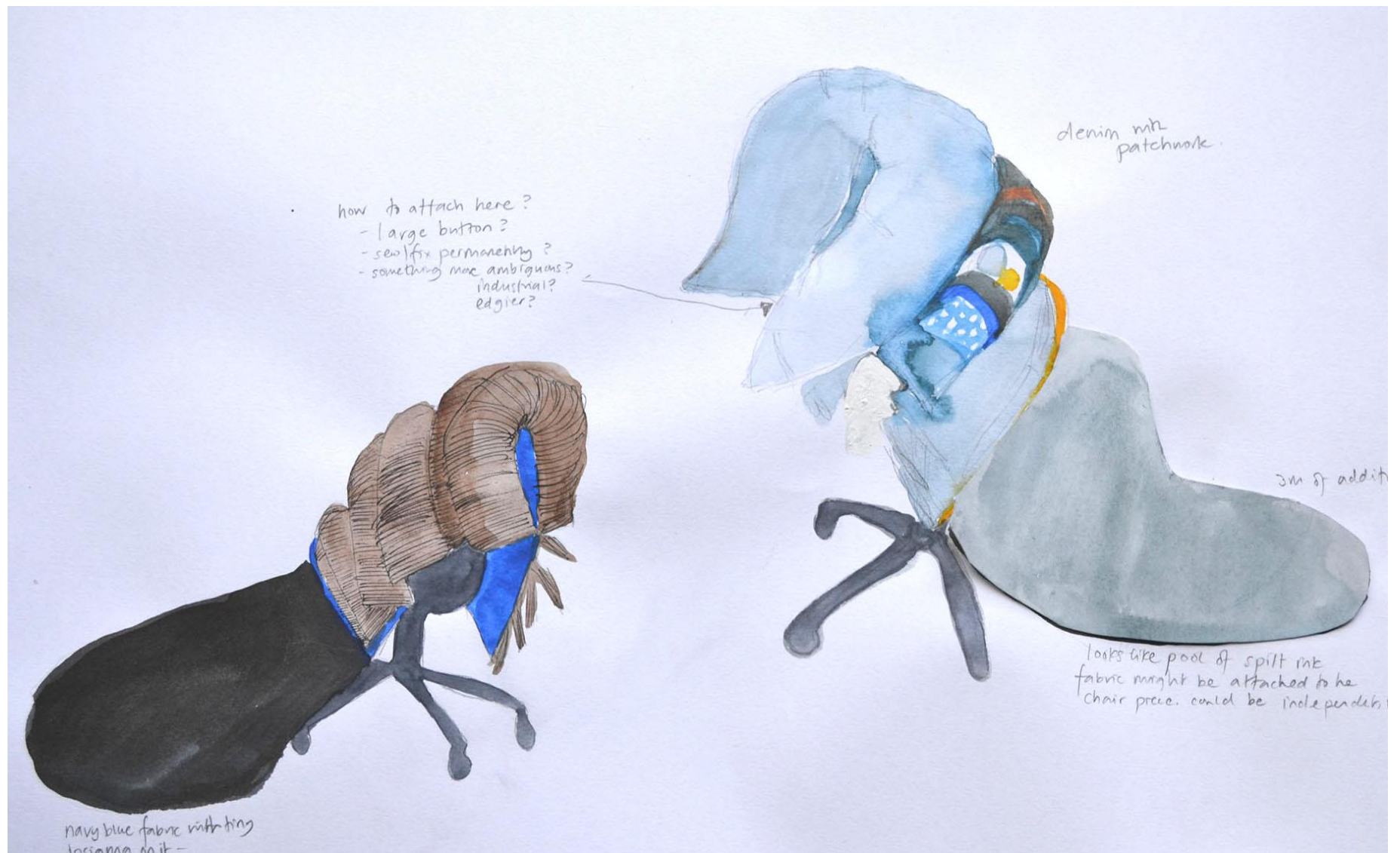


Testing potential form and surface for an earlier version of 24/7 (2014). Cotton, wadding, polyester, velvet, linen, office chair.  
Dimensions variable.

*Strategies I've been exploring: reorientation of objects,  
juxtapositions, anthropomorphism, absurdity, use of props,  
use of the everyday and dysfunction.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.3.2012)





Drawings of modified office chairs that led to the final version of 24/7 (2015). Pencil, pen, ink and collage on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.



*I have been working in the 'maker's space' at Norwich Castle Museum talking to visitors about my work. Making is something that connects with nearly every visitor. Sewing and using fabric is an activity that many visitors can relate to – the ubiquity of fabric and the fact that we inhabit it every day.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.11.2015)



Studio shot of 24/7 as it was being made (2016). Office chair, cotton, wadding.





Testing an idea for *Almost Every Cushion in the House* (2016). Office chair, various fabrics, wadding, polyester cushion filling.

*NUA Gallery planning: This consists of two sections, one which documents the process of my PhD and another that is the chairs. At the moment I'm thinking that the chairs could be raised on a platform of patterned 1970s-style breeze blocks or on glass bricks.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.11.2015)



Proposal drawing for arrangement of work at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup>. (2015). Pencil and watercolour on paper. 21cm x 29.7cm.







*KISREFTEF* and *A Year of Post-it Notes* shot in EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> but subsequently not used (2016).





Testing the arrangement of sculptures in EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). From left: *Dreaming of Versailles*, *A Year of Post-it Notes*, *KISREFTEF*, *Almost Every Cushion in the House*, *untitled* and *24/7*. This arrangement was subsequently not used (2016).



## Installation and Documentation







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016) external shot. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.

*This gallery shares some of the characteristics of Aviva's reception – large glass walls making the interior very visible from the outside; the white [interior] walls: the classic 'neutral' space of the Modernist gallery.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 20.11.2015)



*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016) installation shot. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016) installation shot. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016) installation shot. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.

*I'm considering using a slightly raised platform for the chairs to give them a bit of height/raise their visibility and provide a separation from the rest of the space.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 11.11.2015)



*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016) installation shot. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016) installation shot. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.



*'Almost every cushion in the house' is really precarious and also very direct. It's a simple representation of domesticity, of home – my home. The stacking/balancing is a metaphor for the balancing of home responsibilities (as opposed to work this time, although work is ever-present as represented by the office chair).*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 19.1.2016)



*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). *Almost Every Cushion in the House* seen from rear and front. Office chair, various fabrics, wadding, cushion pads, zippers, piping. Height approx. 200cm. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). *Almost Every Cushion in the House* detail.  
Office chair, various fabrics, wadding, cushion pads, zippers, piping. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). *Almost Every Cushion in the House* detail.  
Office chair, various fabrics, wadding, cushion pads, zippers, piping. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). 24/7. Office chair, various fabrics, wadding, zipper.  
Approx. 100cm high x 200cm across. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.

*The patchwork section has strips of fabric from the Aviva pieces and from the Berendsen silk piece. But it also uses fabrics I've made clothes from, so there are many references here to my home life, as well as the reference to an artist-maker and to my own appearance. The denim references home and industry.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 19.1.2016)



*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). 24/7 detail. Office chair, various fabrics, wadding, zipper. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). 24/7 detail. Office chair, various fabrics, wadding, zipper. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.







*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). 24/7 detail. Office chair, various fabrics, wadding, zipper. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.





L: *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). *Dreaming of Versailles* seen from front. Office chair, hand-painted cotton, steel, ribbon. Height approx.. 200cm. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie. R: Studio photograph of *Dreaming of Versailles* seen from rear, c. Pete Huggins.

*It strikes me that as well as the chairs acting as hosts for these parasitical works, the relationship between my work and NUA is also parasitical. We feed off each other.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 25.1.2016)





*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). *Dreaming of Versailles* detail from rear.  
Office chair, hand-painted cotton, steel, ribbon. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.



*I've been stitching [Dreaming of Versailles] for hours and hours today – mostly hand-stitching and it has been really tedious. I sympathise with those who are stitching to order, with no design or other creative input.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 28.1.2016)



*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). *Dreaming of Versailles* detail.  
Office chair, hand-painted cotton, steel, ribbon. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.

*One of Le Corbusier's criticisms of pattern and decoration was that it disguised the integral shape of the architecture. So decoration can disguise/camouflage.*

(Reflective Journal excerpt 5.4.2016)



*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). *Dreaming of Versailles* detail.  
Office chair, hand-painted cotton, steel, ribbon. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.

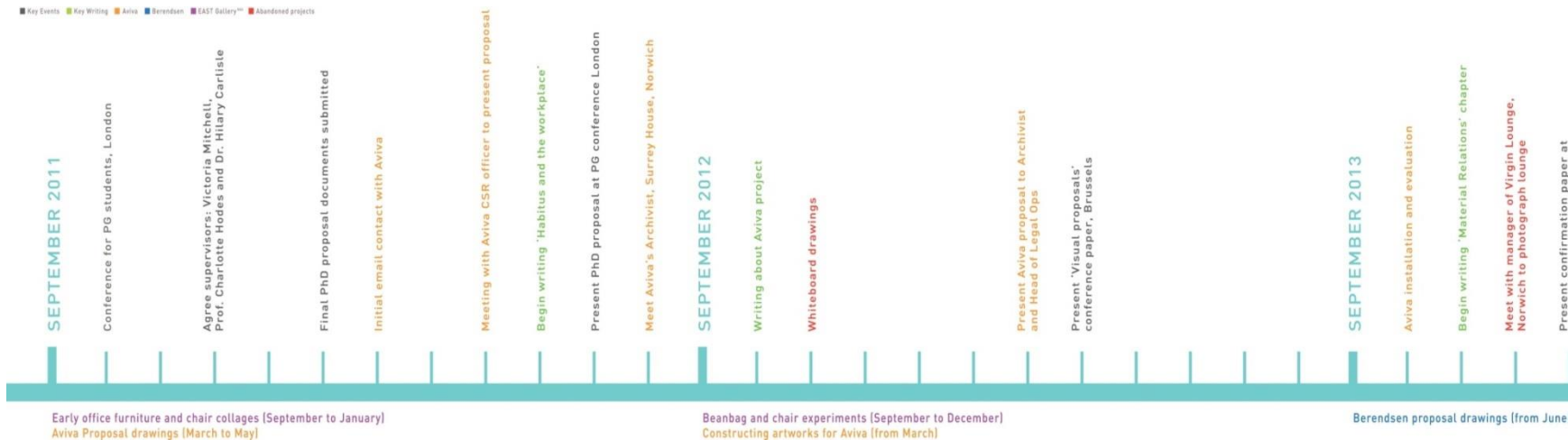


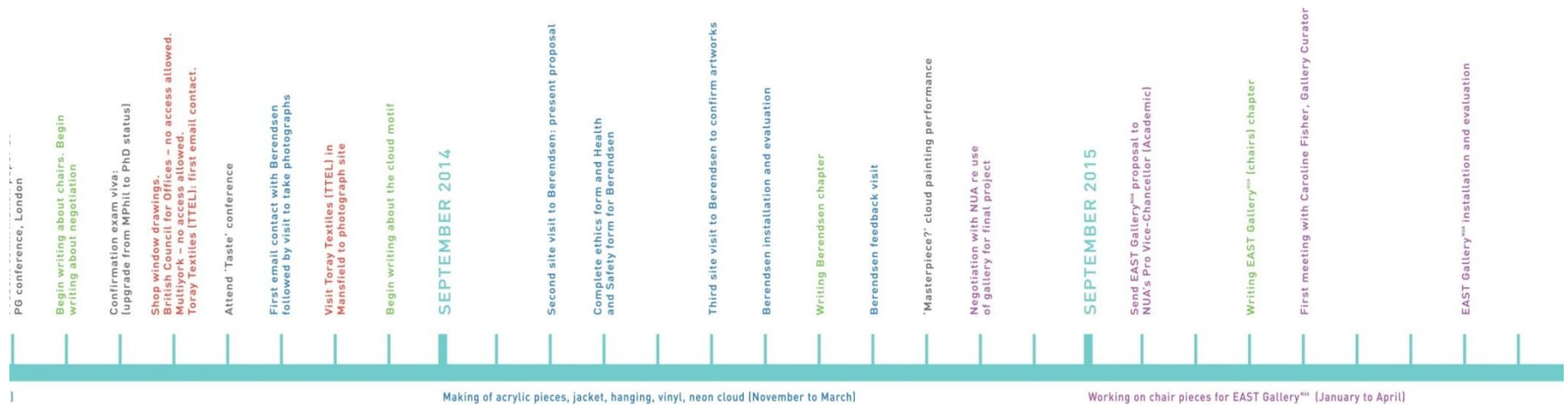
Timeline and Powerpoint Slides





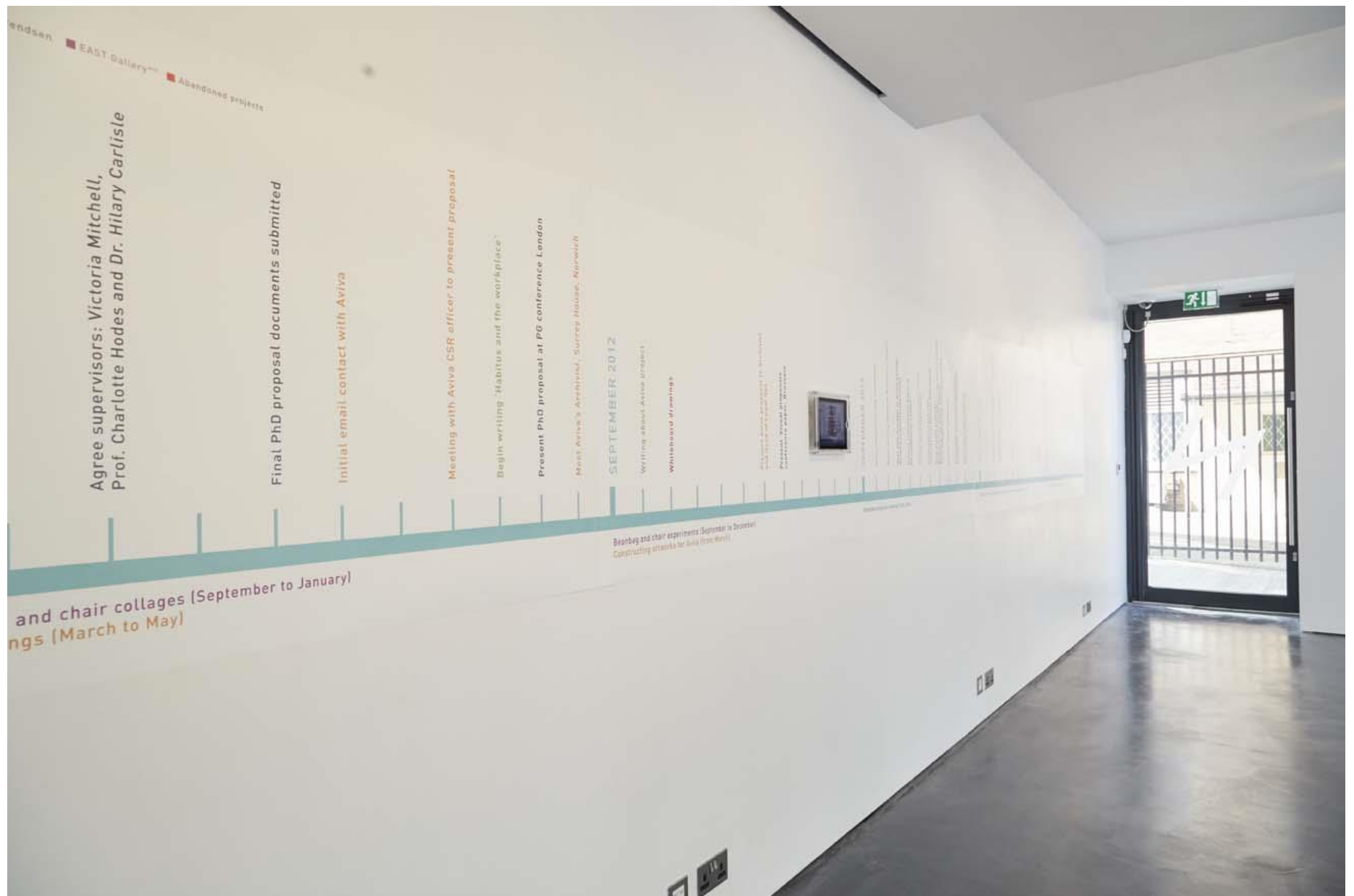
A significant part of the exhibition was a wall-length timeline outlining the process of the research to that date. This was to reveal some of the hidden aspects, including negotiation, that are undertaken when an artist exhibits their work. As this PhD has been about the work of the artist as well as the artefacts produced by the artist this was seen as particularly important.





The wall-length timeline at the exhibition in EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016) designed by Sarah Horton and Paul Kuzemczak.





*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016) installation shot. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.



Embedded in the timeline was an iPad showing Powerpoint slides on a continuous loop. These slides represented the PhD process up to the point of the exhibition and included images of preliminary work, quotes from theoretical sources, documentation of the works that were installed at Aviva and Berendsen, and quotes from the Reflective Journal.



*Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Detail of timeline including time-lapse Powerpoint presentation. Photograph c. Denisa Ilie.



## Sarah Horton

Practice-based PhD, working title:  
*Decoration: disrupting the workplace  
and challenging the work of art*

Pierre Bourdieu argues that it is the everyday choices of cooking, clothing, decoration, and so on that reveal the most deep-seated 'dispositions' that 'forge the unconscious unity of class'.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1979) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* trans. by Nice, R. (1984) UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. p77



Sarah Horton: untitled (2012) collage and paint on paper



Sarah Horton: untitled (2012) collage and paint on paper



Sarah Horton: untitled (2012) collage and paint on paper



Sarah Horton: untitled (2012) collage and paint on paper

These collages presage the Aviva pieces by introducing the first combinations of different elements of pattern, colour and a range of materials. Through these visual references attention is drawn to class and taste.

Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.





Sarah Horton: untitled (2012) collage and paint on paper



Sarah Horton: untitled (2012) collage and paint on paper

Reading around interiors, décor, decoration and class help to confirm for me the complexity of the decorative. Simulacra, faux materials, irony, kitsch, aspiration, education; all of these combine with wealth and availability to influence a person's choice of décor and decoration to indicate something of their self-identity and their identity in relation to others.

Sarah Horton: Reflective Journal entry (July 2013)



Aviva Head Office, St. Helen's, City of London



The entrance hall at Aviva's Surrey House, Norwich



The boardroom at Aviva Head Office, London

Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.







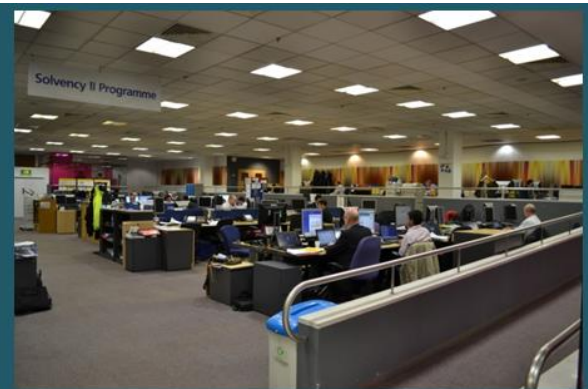
The boardroom at Aviva's Surrey House building, Norwich

'If a group's whole life-style can be read off from the style it adopts in furnishing or clothing this is not only because these properties are the objectification of the economic and cultural necessity which determined their selection, but also because the social relations objectified in familiar objects, in their luxury or poverty, their 'distinction' or 'vulgarity', their 'beauty' or their 'ugliness', impress themselves through bodily experiences which may be as profoundly unconscious as the quiet caress of beige carpets or the thin clamminess of tattered, garish linoleum, the harsh smell of bleach or perfumes as imperceptible as a negative scent'

Bourdieu, Pierre (1979) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* trans. by Nice, R. (1984) UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd. p. 77



View from a conference room in the Chief Executive Officer's suite at Aviva's Head Office, London



Basement office in Aviva's Head Office, London



Sarah Horton *Swag*: a proposal for the ground-floor reception area of Aviva's Head Office, London (2012) gouache on photocopy



Sarah Horton: *Boardroom décor* (2013) gouache on photocopy

Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.

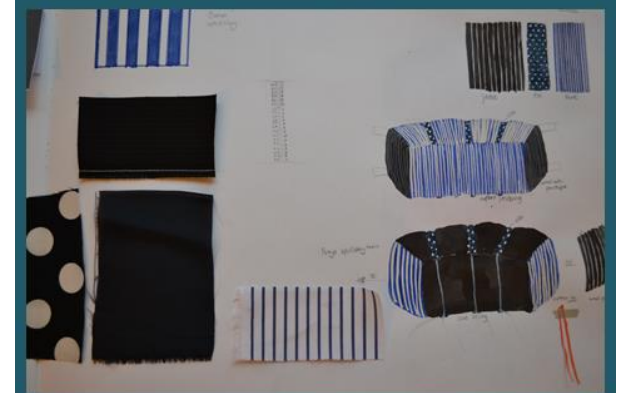


'And position (or location) with respect to production (or to work) *comprehends* the positions and functions of the world of production (the division of labour) as well as the hierarchy of function and jobs. The *same* abstract space may serve profit, assign special status to particular places by arranging them in the hierarchy, and stipulate exclusion (for some) and integration (for others).... The *space of work* has two complementary aspects: productive activity and position in the mode of production.'

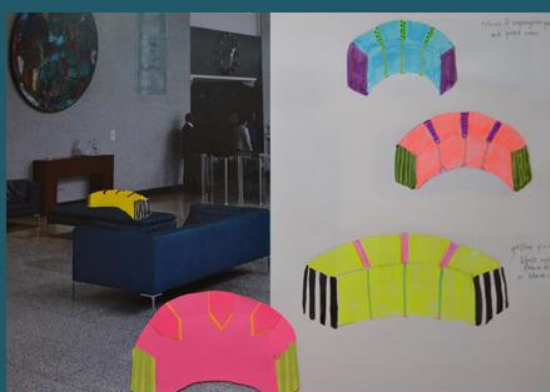
Lefebvre, Henri [1974] (1991) *The Production of Space* Oxford: Blackwell p. 288



Sarah Horton: preparatory work for Aviva proposal (2013)



Sarah Horton: preparatory work for Aviva proposal (2013)



Sarah Horton: preparatory work for Aviva proposal (2013)



Sarah Horton: "Let's get comfortable" proposal for Aviva, London (2013) gouache on photocopy

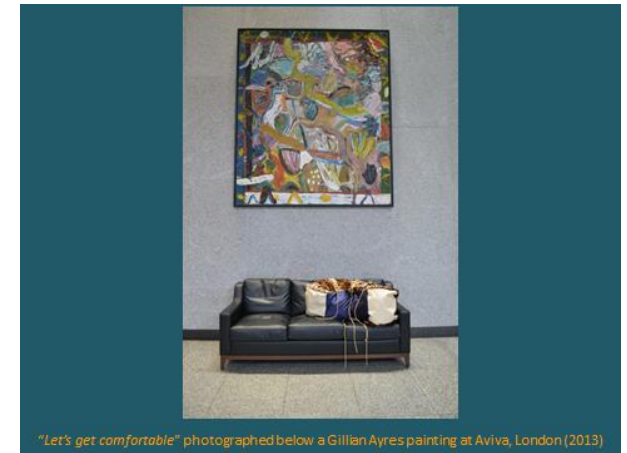
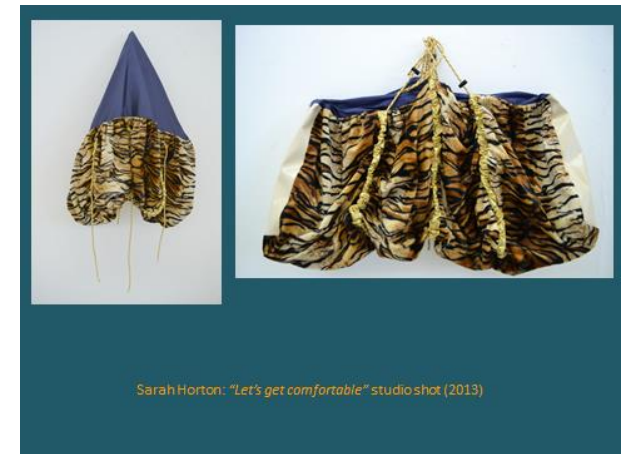


Sarah Horton: "Let's get comfortable" studio shot (2013) elastic, clips, silk, cotton, polyester

Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.



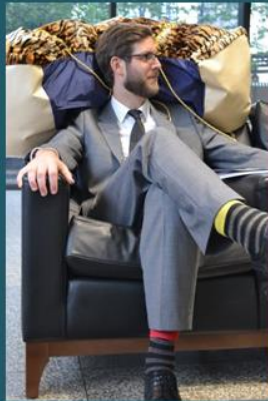




Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016).  
Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.







"Let's get comfortable" being used by a visitor to Aviva, London (2013)



Sarah Horton: "Let's get comfortable" inner components and outer covers (2013)



Photograph of Toray Textiles Europe Ltd. (2013) (unused)



Photograph of Toray Textiles Europe Ltd. (2013) (unused)



Photograph of Toray Textiles Europe Ltd. (2013) (unused)



Sarah Horton: whiteboard drawing of William Morris fabric (2013) (unused)

Before embarking on the project at Berendsen I visited a number of other workspaces including Toray Textiles Europe Ltd., a fabric manufacturer in Mansfield, Notts. This was rejected as a place to install artworks, but the large swathes of fabric influenced the silk piece *Head in the Clouds* at Berendsen. The sixth slide here is a whiteboard drawing of a William Morris pattern. Although this drawing was never used for this research the whiteboard drawings show a continued interest in the communication tools of the office.

Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.





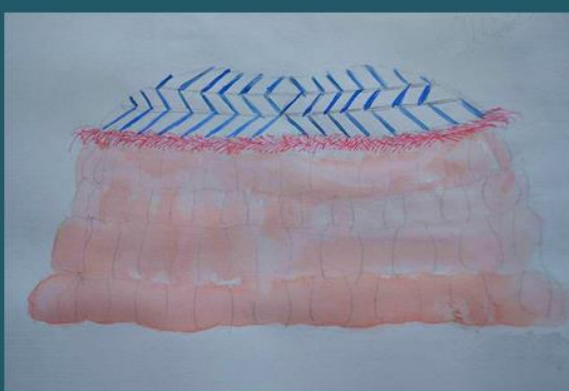
Photograph of Virgin Lounge, Norwich (2013) (unused)



Photograph of Virgin Lounge, Norwich (2013) (unused)



Sarah Horton: proposal for John Lewis shop window (2013) (unused)



Sarah Horton: proposal for John Lewis shop window (2013) (unused)



Sarah Horton: proposal for John Lewis shop window (2013) (unused)



Sarah Horton: proposal for John Lewis shop window (2013) (unused)

As well as Toray I visited Virgin Money Lounge, Norwich, but rejected this as a place to install work as the 'lounge' already used decorative references. Virgin's window decals and the staging of the living room within the bank led to these drawings of shop windows and tableaux displays. These continue the curtain concept seen in *Swag* and also informed some of the chair designs, for example the use of layered frills in *Dreaming of Versailles*.

Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.

The curtain holds a suggestion of theatre as well as its ability to mark a threshold between interior and exterior. Allusions to the curtain were used occasionally for both Aviva (*Swag*), for Berendsen (*A Break in the Clouds*) and even, to some extent, in the chair piece *Dreaming of Versailles* in its suggestion of a changing room or tent. Other window dressing ideas are presented here that extend the idea of the 'tableau' in Chapter Four and may provide ideas for artworks post-PhD.



Cloth is something that the Aviva pieces and Berendsen laundry have in common. At Berendsen most of the cloth is related to the body in some way, especially the body at work: chef whites, high vis jackets, orange overalls, etc.

Sarah Horton: Reflective Journal entry (July 2014)



Preliminary visit to Berendsen Plc. (2014)



Preliminary visit to Berendsen Plc. (2014)



Preliminary visit to Berendsen Plc. (2014)



Sarah Horton: Proposal drawing for Berendsen Plc. (2014) gouache on photocopy

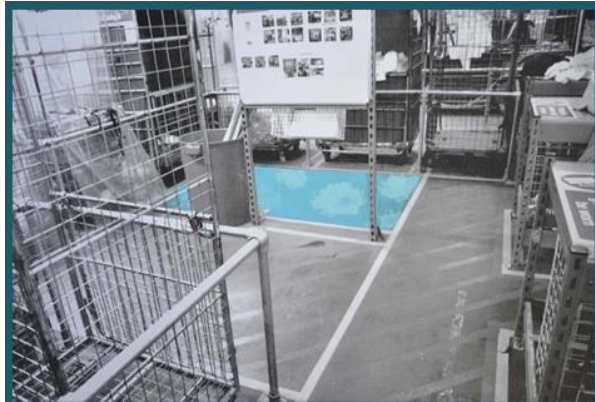


Sarah Horton: Proposal drawing for Berendsen Plc. (2014) gouache on photocopy

Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.







Sarah Horton: Proposal drawing for Berendsen Plc. (2014) gouache on photocopy



Sarah Horton: Proposal drawing for Berendsen Plc. (2014) photoshop



Sarah Horton: Proposal drawing for Berendsen Plc. (2014) photoshop



Sarah Horton: Proposal drawing for Berendsen Plc. (2014) photoshop

How is the work of the artist measured alongside that of the laundry operative or office executive? What I'm doing at Berendsen is unpaid so the usual financial exchange is replaced by other forms of exchange i.e. a trade of ideas, knowledge and visual pleasure. The laundry offers me a space and inspiration and an alternative audience.

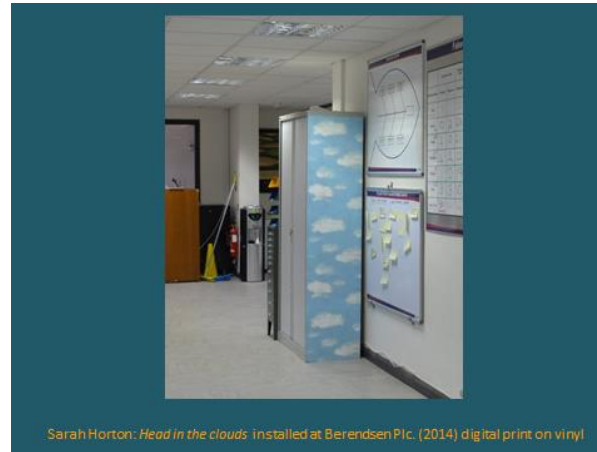
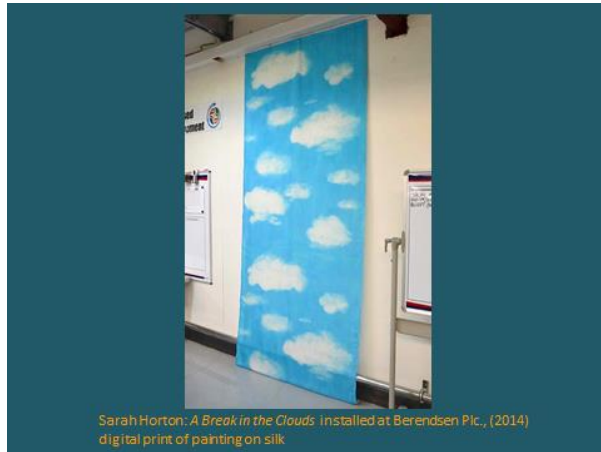
Sarah Horton: Reflective Journal quote (Oct. 2014)



Installing *Head in the clouds* at Berendsen Plc. (2014)

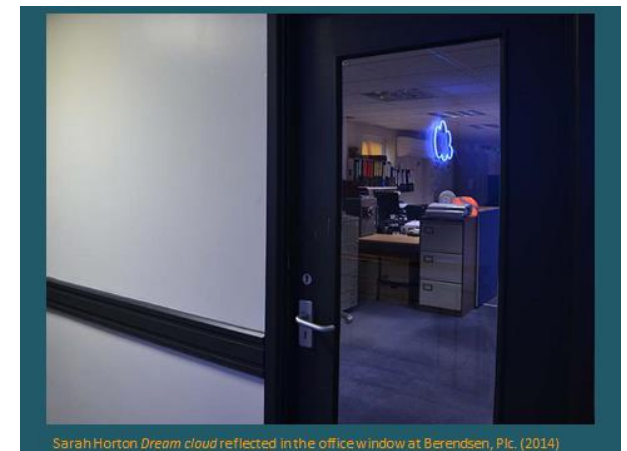
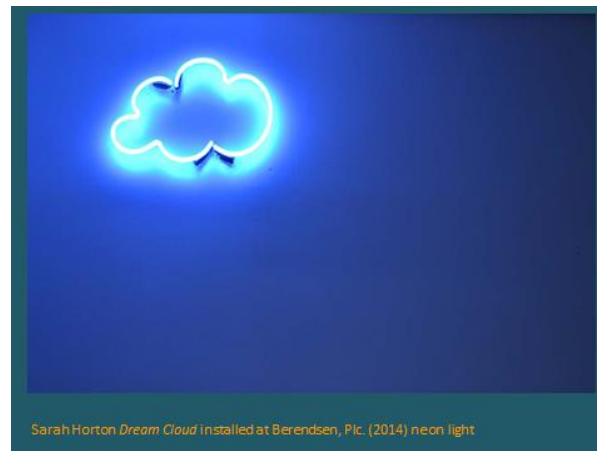
Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.





Decoration is a way of making 'narratives visible ... to open a space for conversation where such possibilities are generally closed'.

Miles, Malcolm (2000) *The Uses of Decoration: Essays in the Architectural Everyday* UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. p199



Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.



The works might reconcile oppositional aspects of the work environments they occupy e.g. offering softness to balance the hardness of furniture, the playful with the severe or austere, the bespoke with the mass-produced.

Sarah Horton: Reflective Journal quote (Feb. 2016)

'Decoration is not a process of purification but of accretion and deconstruction ..... a kind of pollution or dirt. Endlessly diverse and always contingent, decoration undermines the Ideal.'  
(Miles 2000:5)

Miles, Malcolm (2000) *The Uses of Decoration: Essays in the Architectural Everyday* UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd. p5



Sarah Horton: drawing for *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition (2015) ink and gouache on paper



Sarah Horton: drawing for *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition (2015) ink and gouache on paper



Sarah Horton: drawing for *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition (2015) ink and gouache on paper

'The spatial ... can be seen as constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales, from the global reach of finance and telecommunications, through the geography of the tentacles of national political power, to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household and the workplace.'

Massey, Doreen (1994) *Space, Place and Gender* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p4

Slides from the time-lapse Powerpoint presentation embedded in the timeline at *Disruptive Decoration* exhibition at EAST Gallery<sup>NUA</sup> (2016). Each slide was shown for 7 seconds except for those showing a lengthy quote where the longest time lapse was 21 seconds.