
Accessing Cultural
Ideas on
Transience,
Impermanence and
Death by Examining
Religion, Science
and Philosophy,
With the Purpose
of Creating a
Commodity Based on
the Found Truths.

Masters in Entrepreneurship
For Creative Practices

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Accessing Cultural Ideas on Transience, Impermanence and Death by Examining
Religion, Science and Philosophy, With the Purpose of Creating a Commodity
Based on the Found Truths.

Submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Masters in Entrepreneurship for Creative
Practice to the Plymouth College of Art

May 2013

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I certify that all material in this dissertation which is not my own work has been
identified.

Word count: Body of Text: 9,256 - Total document:14,233

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"There is no place on earth where death cannot find us - even if we constantly twist our heads about in all directions as in a dubious and suspect land ... If there were any way of sheltering from death's blows - I am not the man to recoil from it... But it is a madness to think you can succeed.

Men come and they go and they trot and they dance, and never a word about death. All is well and good. Yet when death does come - to them, their wives, their children, their friends - catching them unawares and unprepared, then what storms of passion overwhelm them, what cries, what fury, what despair!...

To begin depriving death of its greatest advantage over us, let us adopt a way clean contrary to that common one; let us deprive death of its strangeness, let us frequent it, let us get used to it; let us have nothing more often in mind than death... We do not know where death awaits us: so let us wait for it everywhere. To practice death is to practice freedom. A man who has learned how to die has unlearned how to be a slave." (Mantaigne in, Rinpoche, 2002)

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Acknowledgements

It would not have been possible to write this master's thesis without the help and support of the kind people around me, to only some of whom it is possible to give particular mention here.

Above all I would like to thank my partner Andrew for all of his support and great patience at all times. My parents, sister, Wendy and Richard have all given me their unequivocal support throughout, as always, for which my mere expression of thanks likewise does not suffice.

This thesis would not have been possible without the help, support and patience of my lecturer Karin Jordan, and all the staff that have helped and encouraged my progress through the five years that I have spent at Plymouth College of Art.

Glossary

Aware - applied to the aspects of nature (or life, or art) that move a susceptible individual to an awareness of ephemeral beauty of a world in which change is the only constant.

En - Heian word, meaning a rich, at once apparent, buoyant beauty.

Fuga - Elegance (Yubi), and Sublimity (Yudai)

Hade - Loud and showy, but not necessarily garish

Iki- an urbane, chic, bourgeois type of beauty with undertones of sensuality.

Jimi - Good taste in understated, plain style.

Karumi - The Beauty of simplicity, the unadorned expression of a profound truth, a haiku term.

Kurai - Dignity, even loftiness, quietly or even coldly beautiful.

Mono no aware - a slightly sweet and sad quality as appreciated by an observer sensitive to the ephemeral nature of existence; the pity of things.

Mujo - A Buddhist concept suggesting impermanence.

Reiyo - Suggesting a smooth and graceful beauty.

Ten-chi-jin - Tripartite pattern of 'heaven', 'earth', and 'human' as an embodiment of different styles, especially in flower arranging.

Yasashi - originally pleasingly shy; later indicating a soft (feminine) beauty.

Yugen - as a concept refers to 'mystery and depth.' Yu means 'dimness, shadow-filled,' and gen means 'darkness'

(Richie, 2007)

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to assess Western societies' diplomacy with the act of death, by comparing the views to those of other cultures and societies; with the attempt to accumulate and accommodate the found values and beliefs, to create a new commodity with vast contextual value through an enthusiastic approach to life, and acceptance of each of individual personal death.

By accessing each view point and its validity, to add influence to the current ongoing arguments surrounding death and transience, as a talking point in the West; in which this paper is aimed towards. Death is not necessarily a bad thing to happen, it is the most certain thing that will happen in each of our lives, it is in fact the only certainty in a world full of ever changing possibilities. To be prepared for death, is to live a full and worthwhile life. To deny death's existence, is futile.

To understand and fully comprehend that one day each and every person must in turn cease to exist; we each must die. A method needs to be chosen by each individual, that suits their personality needs, and fulfils their belief system. The different methods that can be employed in the attempt to understand mortality, include religious thought, scientific insight, and personal deliberation over the issue.

"Death is a vast mystery, but there are two things we can say about it: It is absolutely certain that we will die, and it is uncertain when or how we die."(Rinpoche, 2002)

Mortality is to be human, and to be human is to have sentient thoughts. Problems surrounding knowing when someone has died, and whether human personality can survive bodily death, are scientific attributes towards the study

of human mortality. The study of human personality itself is an interesting issue, alongside the study for the immortal soul that many religions claim to cater for. Religions over time have adapted their guides for the treatment of the dead and dying, and these vary greatly from East to West.

When people in the West fill their lives up with endless chores, tasks and responsibilities, do they really have a fulfilled life, or are they caught up in the act of living, to forget that they won't be living forever. Many people feel that their lives are already planned out for them by fate and may forget how to live. Everyday life is an issue that needs to be targeted, as considering the fact that death can strike at any time, people need to be fearlessly ready for whatever is in store for them each day.

"Most of us do live like that; we live according to a pre-ordained plan. We spend our youth being educated. Then we find a job, and meet someone, marry, and have children. We buy a house, try to make a success of our business, aim for dreams like a country house or a second car. We go away on holiday with our friends. We plan for retirement. The biggest dilemmas some of us ever have to face are where to take our next holiday or whom to invite at Christmas. Our lives are monotonous, petty, and repetitive, wasted in the pursuit of the trivial, because we seem to know of nothing better." (Rinpoche, 2002)

To create a commercial art lead product from these ideas, has driven an interesting path through the various elements that must be considered when looking at such a stark and large topic such as death. Creating a business that promotes its customers to accept their deaths and to live the best life they can, this could be done through many ways, but Birch has chosen the technical and philosophical form of origami as jewellery, and a branch line of other creative craft based products.

Approaches to Death

Firstly it seems necessary to commence with how individuals approach the subject of their death. There are two main branches in approach; Religious, or Scientific; Those with traditional faith and those without. This dichotomy influences how one lives and dies, there are of course those who fall out of the groups, and who hold their own independent views, but societies in general are spilt, especially since the Enlightenment, and now in the post-modern world.

"Ancient Egypt's obsession with eternal life was otherwise no different from that of every society, ancient or modern, Eastern or Western. The dream of some kind of life without end is a universal feature of human experience, common to all cultures across time and place - and still today driving us on towards new achievements that surpass even the pyramids."(Cave, 2012)

Each person has an awareness as adults of themselves and that they will age and that they will eventually die, there are those that refuse to accept this, but it is an austere fact of life. Religion, those with the faith in an afterlife, a salvation from death, whether it's Christianity, Buddhism, Muslim, or otherwise, there is a goal to aim for. To live a life that is bound by that religions rules in order to seek the ultimate rewards at the end of one's life, which varies from a utopian space, becoming a higher being, or becoming oneself again.

Scientific methods expand on the concept of death, and start to draw lines and confirm the exact moment death happens. But they each draw to the conclusion that after death has occurred there is "nothing". This is very hard for a person to imagine, it is impossible for a person to imagine their own personal death, of this expected "nothingness", without creating a spectator view, which proves that they are still imagining a world with them still there. If a person thinks about their own funeral, and the idea that the world will go on without them, instantly a spectator view is taken, they are there in their *non existence*, but

existing. Imagination of our own death is a paradox that many great minds have struggled with, including Freud, and Descartes. A person can plan for their death, buy life insurance and save to cover funeral expenses, but in the Western culture, they will never really accept that it is going to happen to them.

"Our awareness of ourselves, of the future and of alternate possibilities enables us to adapt and make sophisticated plans. But it also gives us perspective on ourselves that is at the same time terrifying and baffling. On one hand, our powerful intellects come inexorably close to the conclusion that we, like all other living things around us, must one day die. Yet on the other, the one thing that these minds cannot imagine is that very state of nonexistence; it is literally inconceivable. Death therefore presents itself as both inevitable and impossible." (Cave, 2012)

With the concept of death being very difficult for individuals to comprehend, but being irrefutable, it seems only sensible to come to terms with it. To remove the fear from death, should enable a more mindful life. For an individual to have a personal reminder and memento of their death, should serve them well in life by being a form of acceptance. Many people in the West fear death, for the reasons of being afraid of pain, and not knowing what comes after, this uncertainty is actually based around the only certainty that all living things have in their lives, the unmistakable fact that they will cease to be. The fear of death can be said to be not an appropriate fear, because it is the fear of nothingness.

"The main point here is there's nothing that being dead is like. It involves no kind of experience at all, so it is not intrinsically bad. Thus the first condition for appropriate fear isn't satisfied. (things might look different if you believe in an afterlife.)" (Kagan, New Scientist 2011)

Religions - monotheists

"Who does not remember the story of the Christian missionary in Britain, sitting one evening in the vast hall of a Saxon king, surrounded by his thanes, having come thither to preach the gospel of his Master; and as he spoke of life and death and immortality, a bird flew in through an unglazed window, circled the hall in its flight, and flew out once more into the darkness of the night. The Christian priest

bade the king see in the flight of the bird within the hall the transitory life of man, and claimed for his faith that it showed the soul, in passing from the hall of life, winging its way not into the darkness of night, but into the sunlit radiance of a more glorious world. Out of the darkness, through the open window of Birth, the life of a man comes to the earth; it dwells for a while before our eyes; into the darkness, through the open window of Death, it vanishes out of our sight." (Besant, 2012)

The three main monotheistic religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam all share the belief in a literal, physical resurrection. (App.1)The idea that their bodies will become alive again after they die. This can be suggested to be a key trend in the early religions success, as it promises a life again after death, that the majority of people could imagine and comprehend. These religions suggest an afterlife whereby the personality still exists in the same body. In the West, Christianity is the favoured religion and they have their commandments to live by. This includes ways of having a good life, and the promise of an afterlife in Heaven for those that deserve it. Christianity touches upon the fleeting nature of life, and philosophies have been created to deal with what is considered to be an uncomfortable subject.

In the book of Genesis, it is learnt that the price of knowledge is mortality. Adam and Eve only became aware of their impending deaths after they had sinned. This suggests to some theologians that before they sinned they could live in a permanent state of utopia, with the added knowledge of mortality, humans become cautious and more curious about our short lives, rather than living in a state of perpetual perfectness, where there is no decay or corruption to spoil the beauty of life. (App.2)

"[Mortality] It is represented in that most ancient and influential of stories the Book of Genesis: by eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Adam and Eve are told they will die - mortality is the price of knowledge." (Cave, 2012)

The seasons play a large part in the Christian ideas of resurrection, such as the celebrations at Easter, in the spring when all the dormant trees and flowers appear to come back to life. (App.3) It is interesting to note in the West, the spring is considered to be a cause for celebration, new life is beginning, It seems that this is not the fact in the East, where autumn is celebrated with the falling of the blossoms, reminding them that everything is as its supposed to be.

Mul ti pl e Dei ti es

Religions that believe in more than one God or deity, tend to be located in the East. Eastern religions and cultures have a different view point on the subject of Death than the West. They are generally more accepting and understanding of the pure nature of death, and its impact on life. Rather than fearing death, most Eastern religions try to embrace death and to become familiar with it. This is especially true with Buddhists, Taoists and Hindus, there is a similar trait that is accepting of death in these religions.

"As a Buddhist, I view death as a normal process, a reality that I accept will occur as long as I remain in this earthly existence. Knowing that I cannot escape it, I see no point in worrying about it. I tend to think of death as being like changing your clothes when they are old and worn out, rather than as some final end. Yet death is unpredictable: We do not know when or how it will take place. So it is only sensible to take certain precautions before it actually happens." (Dalai Lama in, Rinpoche, 2002)

The Dalai Lama speaks of death as a phase of renewal, death is not the end, it is just a way of exchanging an old body, for a new one. With this belief Buddhists feel comfortable confronting their own mortality and embracing the transience and impermanence of life, because they truly believe in reincarnation, that they will come back in some way. Note that this is not the same as resurrection, which believes a person comes back in their own body, in this world or another.

Reincarnation involves the rules of karma to be applied to decide the persons fate in the next life. (App.4)

Tibetan Buddhists, believe in the 'nature of the mind' and the power that people have inside them, this power can be channelled through meditations and used to create effect in everyday life. They see the world changing around them as a sign that all is well and good, things are moving as they should and that the mind is the tool to helping to understand death. The nature of mind, is what they all seek to discover inside themselves, the answer to all life and deaths questions. They believe that the moment in which they die, all of life's questions are answered and their mind opens up to all of the knowledge in the universe. They prepare themselves for death through meditations, and the more adept practitioners may practice the act of '*Phowa*' or '*the transference of the consciousness*'. This consists of highly practiced meditations and imaginings of death. The aim is for the dying person to exit the body through the crown of their head, and thus reach a higher spiritual level. The average Buddhist meditation for dying is known as the 'nine-round death meditation, in which they contemplate the three roots, the nine reasoning's and the tree convictions, this is a way of overcoming their fears of death.(App.5) Support is provided by friends and family but Buddhists do this in a calm and rational way, they believe that attachments to living or material things while dying is bad for the karma, so relatives are expected to accept the inevitable death and mourn for them in their mind. Death is not something to fear, and they actively support others around them that are dying. They provide support both physically and mentally for the dying person, by tending to their needs and talking to them without fear and with strength. They treat the dying with love and care, and people tend to die at home in the East. On the other side of the world, dying people are forced into

hospices, nursing homes and hospitals, this can be considered a lack of moral care by the families. The western tradition is to die in the care of an institution, this can be considered a very lonely death and could build on the fear of death that westerners have.

"Whenever I go in the West, I am struck by the great mental suffering that arises from the fear of dying, whether or not this fear is acknowledged. How reassuring it would be for people if they knew that when they lay dying they would be cared for with loving insight! As is, our culture is so heartless in its expediency and its denial of any real spiritual value that people, when faced with terminal illness, feel terrified that they are simply going to be thrown away like useless goods. In Tibet it was a natural response to pray for the dying and to give them spiritual care; in the West the only spiritual attention that the majority pay to the dying is to go to their funeral." (Rinpoche, 2002)

Science

Ever since the Enlightenment in the late 16th to 17th centuries, people started to turn away from traditional religions, and face science with their questions about life. Science has been able to prove facts, with visible evidence, such as the theory of Evolution by Charles Darwin. This is something that religion cannot show, evidence. Evolution is the creature that made man start to consider himself as a mammal, and start to question what differences he faced to any other animal. Intelligence and an awareness of self could be an answer, but there is no doubt that humans are just another type of animal, and like animals they are mortal. Being aware of the fleeting nature of life, and of the planet, and of the universe it brings us a sense of *mono no aware*, how much of a pity life seems. If a person can however believe in the survival of the human soul, or their own personality, the eventual destruction of the universe might not seem as dire. This is for those accepting scientific method, combined with any religious afterlife theory.

"Quote from Darwin's Autobiography:

With respect to immortality, nothing shows me so clearly how strong and almost instinctive a belief it is, as consideration of the view now held by most physicists, namely, that the sun with all planets will in time grow too cold for life, unless indeed some new great body dashes into the sun, and thus gives it fresh life, Believing as I do that man in the distant future will be a far more perfect creature than he now is, it is an intolerable thought that he and all other sentient beings are doomed to complete annihilation after such long-continued slow progress. To those who fully admit the immortality of the human soul, the destruction of the world will not appear so dreadful." (Gray, 2011)

Scientists have furthermore pondered over the morals and ethics of life, if there is no afterlife, no judgement, there will be no punishment for wrong doings. This can be considered to be an argument for religion as a sociological control system. For uncultured societies it is easier to understand death and punishment like this than on a grand metaphysical scale, people may have seen that as a true punishment, such as to burn in hell. If there is no such thing as an afterlife, people might begin to question rules, regulations. People may start living for the moment and indulging in their primal urges. This is a question of how to live, and social order. The fear of punishment or the joy of reward after death can be considered a very powerful tool for control of the masses. Indulging in passing desires might prove itself enjoyable at the time, but each act must be considered carefully as there will still be social stigma and guidelines attached to behaviour.

"Sidgwick's search for evidence of survival was intertwined with his work in ethics. Unless human personality survived bodily death, he believed, morality is pointless. Theism posits a universe that is friendly to human values: goodness may go unrewarded here on Earth, but the imbalance will be righted hereafter. Without this assurance, Sidgwick's believed, there was no reason why humans should not yield to self-interest or their passing desires." (Gray, 2011)

There are also many other scientific reasoning's around the subject of death, for instance transhumanists believe that a person in the future should be able to be kept alive indefinitely. This will be done in the similar way that a skilled

clockmaker can keep repairing a watch, so too can scientists can continually repair parts of the human body as they wear out. This can lead to all sorts of issues, such as over population, aging population and quality of life. Man being imagined as a machine that can be repaired, this is partially true now with the modern advances in medicine and science, people are living much longer than ever before. This is thanks to good hygiene practices, advancements in surgery, and the discovery of penicillin. (App.6)

Philosophy - Idea of the Self

"The majority of people on earth currently believe they have one [a soul], including two-thirds of people in the UK and even more in the USA. It has come to be the dominate belief in Christianity, and is central to Hinduism, Buddhism and many other religions." (Cave, 2012)

The idea that a person has a personality, a soul, or what the Egyptians would describe as *Ka* (App.7), is important to consider, if there is no such thing, such as what Taoists feel, then why are people concerned about their death. It is surprising the numbers of people in the current world who believe that they have a soul, something that separates them from everyone else. This draws onto the philosophical approach to understanding and acceptance, for an individual to choose what arguments they wish to side upon. In relation to the question of when does death occur? There can be two philosophical arguments, either personality death, or bodily death. These two deaths normally happen simultaneously, in which distinguishing death is not a problem. When these deaths are separated, then teams of thought need to be considered.

Science and philosophy has also helped humankind to know when a person has passed. This was a problem in the past and it has almost ended the seat of the soul debate. A person can be declared medically dead even though their heart is

still beating, this is 'brain death' and the concept that the person, personality or soul of the person is no longer inhabiting the brain, the body is an empty husk. Kagan, in his lectures discusses how personality death, is the death that matters to the person. If their personality is not there and the body is empty, even though the heart is still beating (using machines) the person is dead. Looking at (fig.1) it is clear to see a normal death, where personality and body functions both end at the same time. An abnormal death where these two types of death are separated, section D is under question if the person is dead or alive. The answer that Kagan has is that the person isn't functioning as a person anymore, so they are not a person. He also makes a distinguishing point on when is the time people begin functioning with personalities, and notes a part of early life where a person is not classed in his mind as truly living. This sort of thinking is what is enabling medical science to use more beating heart cadavers to save or at least lengthen the lives of people who are still functioning as people, and to consider the time in pre-birth as whether an unborn child is alive and the various morals and ethics that go alongside abortion, whether a person can die before they have been born and if they would have awareness of that.

"It reveals that when we become mindful of our inner state, for most of us, it seems like we exist inside our heads, somewhere behind the eyes. We believe that this is the place where we are listening to a running commentary of thought, experiencing the sensations that the world throws at us and somehow controlling the levers that work the action and motions of our bodies." (Hood, 2011)

"Body Theorists" believe that once a person's body had died, the important personality part that makes them, themselves, will in fact survive, to the believed afterlife. It is comprehensible that the Body theorists believe that existence after death is true, even as a corpse they are still in existence, however it needs to be distinguished that existing death, and surviving death are different beings. Existence is available to corpses, or cadavers, for a short period

of time, until decay sets in, or until the time in which their bodies are destroyed. It is however, an existence none the less. It is useful to note the concept of immortality, in an attempt at existing after death, methods such as through legacy, memory, and thought of those continuing to live.

Similarly the concept of human personality being able to survive this bodily death is closely connected with deciding when a person has passed. There are also different schools of thought based around this issue. Shelly Kagen, a philosopher from Yale University describes the different stances people take: "*Dualists*" believe that there is a body and a soul, and that they are interconnected, and believe in the possibility of the human personality surviving bodily death. "*Physicalists*" believe that a person has no soul, and that a person is just a body doing fancy tricks of its own mechanics, once the body has died, the person is no longer there.

Immortality/Legacy

It has been sought by many people, the never ending quest for immortality, from the scientists, transhumanists, religions with resurrection or reincarnation or heaven, even the notion of the paranormal such as vampires and zombies. Immortality is the thing that every individual secretly believes, unless they have had a near death experience, and the very concept of death being so absurd helps to make the quest to live forever stronger.

By studying the quest for eternal life, it has been made clear that there are four routes to try and find it: staying alive, resurrection, salvation through the soul, and legacy. Only the latter is a path that can be truly believed and witnessed. To leave a legacy, this can mean many things to many people. To be known in

culture for something great that they have done, such as being a hero or celebrity. This will allow their personality to survive bodily death as they are remembered through their actions by others. Similarly to this a person can become immortal through a great piece of work, literary, art, or architectural. Their thoughts and personality can live on through this work, as long as it is savoured and celebrated by others, such as William Shakespeare, he carved his way through human history and therefore has earned himself a type of immortality, of his reputation. A more tangible form of legacy is through bloodlines, to have children that may inherit the parents traits and adopt parts of their parents personality. This is probably the most well know form of immortality, the continuation of genes and DNA lines.

"Some of us also leave a more tangible legacy than our reputations alone: children. Our genes have been called immortal because they trace back millions of years in a traceable line to the very beginnings of life, and if we are lucky will also continue into the distant future." (Cave, 2012)

Death in Art

Looking at death in an artistic framework has been done many times before, most noticeably by contemporary artists like Jake and Dinos Chapman, Damien Hirst, and Francis Bacon. They manage to take the darker side of death into their works, something that Birch wishes to avoid. The gloomy darkness that is connected with the traditional ideals of death in art, the embedded levels of fear, anxiety and distress that is placed into contemporary or classic arts can be judged as being misplaced. As discussed previously death is not something to fear, but an element of one's life. The traditional symbols used in death based artworks or Vanitas further confirm the level of fear and repulsion, using skulls, hour glasses and Death as a figure as symbolic representations of traditional

death, rather than taking a fresh look at death in a positive manner, using other symbolic transients such as lotus flowers, cotton, paper, cherry blossoms starts to remove the fear element from the artworks, while still retaining its initial contextual value.

"In literature and in art, alike, this gloomy fashion of regarding Death has been characteristic of Christianity. Death has been painted as a skeleton grasping a scythe, a grinning skull, a threatening figure with terrible face and uplifted dart, a bony scarecrow shaking an hour-glass—all that could alarm and repel has been gathered round this rightly-named King of Terrors." (Besant, 2012)

There is this idea that death aesthetics and ethics needs to be dark and solemn for respect and mourning. Its riddled in western culture that death is an awful event, and it must be represented as such. If death could be portrayed in a more positive light, in art works and literature, then maybe cultural associations with death may change. People may become able to celebrate death and their ancestry, and own mortality, such as they do in Mexico with the tradition of the "Day of the Dead" with their brightly painted 'sugar skulls' and their respectful celebration of the circle of life.

"We carry death with us, a gift from others that is embedded in culture, history and politics. Above all, these terms allow us to write or illustrate, and live through a ethics and aesthetics of death." (Townsend, 2008)

Death as a consumer commodity

Transient products & Aesthetic Rationale

Wishing to combine the conceptual nature of transience with a wearable product has created a range of art based jewellery items, these take influence from origami practices, and by using impermanent materials, becomes a product that

has a lifespan, it gains a sense of morality, like us. By using these temporary materials such as, paper, and cotton the products will naturally degrade over their lifespan.

"Cherry Blossoms are to be preferred not when they are at their fullest but afterward, when the air is thick with their falling petals and with the unavoidable reminder that they too have had their day and must rightly perish." (Richie, 2007)

Impermanence is one of the main teachings from Buddha, and Buddhists believe in a transient life, every moment is fleeting, but as it is meant to be. Taking inspiration from Japanese culture, where cherry blossoms are considered to be most beautiful after they have started to shed their petals, and Shinto memorials are built from wood and not stone, reminding them that everything has the same fate, it will all cease to exist one day.

By making products from these degrading products, the maker Lisa Birch hopes to remind the wearers, or viewers of their transient status in the universe, that everything is in a state of constant change, and that they will not be around forever. She hopes to construct this in a positive way, with life affirming meaning, to encourage those to make the best of their lives and to live life by the moment. Contradicting typical Western behaviour about the discussion of death, she hopes to encourage and support those who want to show an interest in their own, or others mortality.

"There is only one law in the universe that never changes - that all things change, and all things are impermanent." (Rinpoche, 2002)

Using origami cranes is a traditional design in Japanese culture, cranes symbolise good luck, happiness and longevity because they are fabled to live 1000 years; they are a symbol of eternal youth and long life. Having worked previously with the symbolism on the crane in 2011 after the Japanese Tsunami,

Birch opted to build on her studies on this momentary symbol and create a wearable reminder. Creating these cranes as earrings she has allowed the wearer to have them near to where they feel their soul, or sense of self is: the brain. Ears are a great pathway to the brain and supply the best place to adorn fragile and light items. Hanging from the ears, it is unlikely that the origami earrings will get damaged as much as they would as if they were worn on the hands as rings. The pieces have an aware quality to them, they are simple but very beautiful in their humbleness. They were created with the concept of *mono no aware* in mind, the pity of all things in their impermanence. Even though these products are created with the intention of fragility it is their delicateness and vulnerability which exudes the *mono no aware* style of beauty, and what makes people drawn to their *mujo* transitory beauty.

Chevron style origami earrings are Birch's own fold design, using three pieces of paper to create the piece into a chevron or featherlike pattern. Chevron patterns are currently on trend, as seen on Etsy.com. These three layers of folding add to the power of three aesthetic that is embraced in both the East and West. Three is an uneven number, yet it is balanced. This is influenced by the western concept and need for symmetry for aesthetic beauty and by the opposing view of naturalism and the Eastern aesthetic for irregularity. "*Ten-chi-jin*" as an aesthetic ideal also comes into play here, with parts signifying *heaven, earth and human*. Being handmade and from paper each set of earrings will vary slightly, for instance if pattern paper is being used, the pattern will not have the same repeat for an exact pair, This is influenced by the concept of *Wabi-Sabi* and beauty through the imperfect, nothing that is handmade is ever perfect, and there is a vast amount of beauty to be found in life's little imperfections, this is

why the products have tiny flaws, indentations, creases, or differences, each piece has its own life.

The use of cotton in the form of bracelet making draws on the transient nature of life. On these bracelets Birch uses a mix of bright colours and softer hues. A range of symbols in the form of metal charms are also used, such as: Anchors, Swallows, Crosses, Oms, Hamsas, Peace signs, Buddahs, all symbols that directly relate to the concept of transience, impermanence and death. Crystals, glass beading, buttons, spacer bars and ribbons are also used in these bracelets, with the concept that things are only beautiful because they are fleeting. Being able to wear something that is fragile, the cotton will degrade over its lifespan, makes it more precious to treasure and to look after. Taking influence from a mix of cultures to create unique pieces of jewellery, these pieces are displayed on printed branded cards, in sets of three, with Zen teachings, such as "*The one moon shines in every pool, in every pool the one moon.*" Which is a reference from Buddha discussing the impact that every object has on every other object in the universe, that every action has a consequence, that nothing is meaningless, as described here:

"If everything is impermanent, then everything is what we call "empty," which means lacking in any lasting, stable, and inherent existence; and all things, when seen and understood in their true relation, are not independent but interdependent with all other things. The Buddha compares the universe to a vast net woven of a countless number of facets. Each jewel reflects in itself every other jewel in the net and is, in fact, one with every other jewel." (Rinpoche, 2002)

Rinpoche's statement speaks about the interdependence of things with all other things, this relates back to the law of Karma, in which many eastern religions believe. This is the reason why Birch started using Swarovski crystals in her

design work, with the underlying message that they will reflect light onto all parts of the wearers life.

Technical skills in the ability to make simplistic yet striking designs are enforced by the understanding of Japanese aesthetics (App.8), the beauty in the delicate nature of life, which underpins the contextualisation behind the works. The technical skills of origami folding is significant in the making process, this is a well practiced skill and maintains a level of tacit knowledge of how to fold, which papers to fold, and how to connect to wearable items. The practice of jewellery making has been an experimental route for Birch, who found salvation from the pressures of life through the act of repetitious folding, this in turn transformed into a found skill, combined with learned aesthetic skills and good taste have all contributed to a successful line of products, and the brand Birch Handmade.

Birch handmade

Birch Handmade is a small company founded by myself, Lisa Birch, in 2011. It has been through several branding changes, and name changes, from Lisa Birch Art, to just Birch, finally settling on Birch handmade. This seems to suit the current marketplace for which it is intended. This name works for a few reasons: It includes the artists surname, it explains the method, and it also has a eco friendly tree hugging ring to it. With this business name, and using branding in a minimal theme; white and grey and a modern font, it has been turned into a recognisable business identity.(Fig.2) The starting point for this enterprise was based around the learned skill of origami. Taking this skill and combining it with tacit knowledge of colour theory and aestheticism to create a brand, and a range of products that are entirely unique.

Every company, business or enterprise must have a sense of a brand. It gives them a sense of self, and allows them to display their sense of self to potential customers. It contains attributes that create an understanding as to what that brand's meaning is. In Birch Handmade, the branding has been through several stages, becoming simpler each time. By trial and error a sense of modern and fairly unique style has formed. Using a mix of pinks, turquoise, white and mid grey, a brand identity has been created. The key values are, Originality, Desirability, and Sustainability. Traits of the brand include a modern femininity, an attractive use of colour, and following fashion trends. Taking a modern approach using white and grey in the later designs. This reflects the products' modernity and helps to promote the brand in the most professional light. Packaging has been created to continue the ideology behind the products, such as the modern take on Zen minimalism in a consumer product. This was achieved by printing very eloquent Buddhist phrases and ideals onto the packaging itself, reinforcing the ideas conceptually placed in the minimalist jewellery.

Creating pieces of artwork/craft work has been a developing skill, where the practice has proved to be important. Creating and designing pieces of wearable art has been the target for this project, it has developed to a level of high quality pieces, with a customer base, with repeat buyers, and taking bespoke custom orders on request. By utilising the real world, and the online domain to sell products, has opened up the realms of possibility for this business. Taking benefit from the locality of which it is based in rural Cornwall, the thriving handmade craft scene, and the craft fairs associated with that. While taking full inspiration from online businesses, and taking advantage from technical skills to create a profitable online shop to reach worldwide customers. The main places of

retail for Birch handmade products are: Etsy.com, Truro.com and In store at numberten in Saint Austell Cornwall.

The range of products that are now being offered by Birch Handmade now include (fig.3): Origami crane earrings, Origami Chevron Earrings, Cotton Cord Zen Bracelet Sets, Fabric Accessories - Flowers and Hair Bows. Birch Handmade has recently started to use Swarovski crystals within its designs, to compliment the origami, or as standalone pieces made purely with these luxury crystals. With the intention to introduce, Origami Necklaces, Modular Necklaces, and a premium range of earrings in the near future. These designs are currently being tested and adapted. Issues based around the newness of the designs and durability have been tested by friends and family. They have given reports, indicating any faults, potential problems, or suggestions for improvement they may have for the products.

The new range is made from 14k matte gold, Swarovski crystals, and FSC vegetable pigment, recycled and pantone referenced origami papers. This is the luxury line that all the products have been building up to since the launch of the company in 2011. This line is intended to appeal to a high-end audience of art buyers, while still being affordable to those who may fall in love with the designs. Using 14k matte gold helps to distinguish the new line from the old gloss gold or silver plated works. Using matte gold has been a difficult choice, there were the options for numerous types of metals, platinum, silver, gold, rose gold, white gold, all in matte or gloss finish. Matt gold was chosen for its current trending status on Etsy, and in fashion stores such as "Topshop", "Accessorize" and American brand "Forever 21" which are brands that Birch handmade takes influence regarding trends from. This new range will embrace the most popular

colours from the past collections, while being on trend for Summer 2013. Summer trends will be pastels, turquoise, purples and pinks. It is important to note the Hallmarking Act (App.9), indicating that all metal parts need to be of equal values for labelling to not become misleading. All diffusion line works are labelled as 'gold tone or 'silver tone' and the 14k range as '14k Gold'.

This new range is intended to be the high-end bespoke collection the signature line, and will be priced around triple the amount of the basic diffusion range. The diffusion range will continue to be priced at around £7 or £8 for origami earrings, £13 and up for necklaces. The signature line will be £19-24 for a pair of origami earrings, and £25-35 per necklace. The price differences factor in quality of materials used, and time spent creating new designs. By having different lines, Birch handmade can appeal to a wider customer base. Currently Birch handmade products vary from £2 for a very basic pair of stud earrings, to £35 14k Gold necklaces. The cheaper items tend to sell more regularly and are designed to appeal to the masses. The more expensive signature lines are intended for specialist purchase, those seeking fine art items, and sell less often, but at a higher price. By having higher priced more luxury goods it also adds intrinsic value to the diffusion lines, as products appear to gain credibility.

The ways that Birch Handmade markets its brand is very far reaching, embracing social networks online and offline, in terms of using Facebook and local crafting circles. Using branding on business cards and other printed stationary. Embracing digital technologies such as Google Ads, Facebook Ads, Etsy Search Ads, and running promotional discount codes, sales and giveaway's.

Numberten (shop)

Numberten is a group enterprise founded in May 2013 and is a new development in the town of Saint Austell. It is based in the Old Market House, which is a historic listed building that many tourists flock to. The main feature of the building is that it has the largest wooden supported roof in Europe. The shop is in a key location around the complex which benefits from several other vintage and handmade based outlets. Empty units are intended to be filled before the tourist season hits. Numberten is being managed on a rota basis, split three ways and including Lisa Birch, Paula Craven and Andrew Willson. Each member of numberten has a different role to play; Lisa Birch, Marketing, Advertising and IT; Paula Craven, Stylist; Andrew Willson, Accounts and General Maintenance.

Numberten is run in a syndicate fashion, whereby members volunteer their time in the shop, selling and promoting the items in store. What products sell then determines who earns what, for example if Andrew is working in the shop, and sells £40 worth of Paula's personal work, then Paula has that money and vice versa. There are some teething problems with members being able to do their intended shifts, but this is sorted between members and occasionally a friend, or guest crafter may step in to do some hours. By not having traditionally paid staff numberten manages to keep its running costs low, while helping those makers earn a suitable wage directly from their products. This is intended as a supplementary income, as all members have other incomes.

"To work well with people, it's essential to have a good measure of emotional intelligence which I define as 'an ability to manage ourselves and our relationships with other people effectively, by understanding our own and other people's feelings, recognising that we human beings have an emotional as well as rational side to our make-up.'" (Parrish, 2005)

Numberten has the intention of promoting and selling works of other UK based artists or crafters. Starting with original water colours from Emma Joan Creative. These are priced by the artist and a commission cut is taken from the sale. The commission is currently 25% for items under £5 and 30% for over £5. For items priced at £40 or more, then a 40% commission is taken. These rates are agreed by those joining numberten. With the selling on commission basis, the monies are taken by the main owners and split three ways. This is an effective way of paying the rent without touching personal profits.

It has not been difficult finding crafters and artists who want to join numberten, however it has proved to be a question of aesthetic sensibilities. Being aware of what the intended shop aesthetic is; feminine, vintage, decorative, light, pretty- numberten has decided to refuse a selection of applicants for reasons such as, poor quality items, not in keeping with the shop, or just unsuitable. Refusal is done in a positive manner and suggestions are made to other local shops, or online retail establishments that may be able to help. For example next door to numberten there is a Victorian Steam Punk Tea Shop opening, so those crafters showing numberten leather or metal works are directed to next door. These items are not suitable and do not follow the chosen aesthetic or morals and ethics held, such as no animal products.

Numberten run promotion activities and marketing strategies as a team, Lisa being designated as the marketing manager has the responsibilities of ensuring a consistent brand message throughout the shop, and anywhere the shop is being exhibited externally - such as craft fairs, trade shows etc. They manage to create a consistent package by using a constant font scheme, which is an open source called "Raleway" this is a light, modern, tall font, that is easily read, and

by using a selected colour palette on marketing materials, such as business cards (fig.4) and flyers (fig.5).

Numberten uses Pantone ref: 3278 UP which is hex colour #00baa2 in a CMYK colour space it is formed of 100% cyan, 0% magenta, 12.9% yellow and 27.1% black. It has a hue angle of 172.3 degrees, a saturation of 100% and a lightness of 36.5%. This is a certain shade of green turquoise, that compliments whites, bright pinks and purples. These are the main colours used within the shop, and happen to be a variation on the main colours of the products, numberten produces furniture repainted with Anne Sloane chalk paint in "Provence" - a light green turquoise, "Old White" - an off white, "Henrietta" - a light pink and "Paris Grey" - a lilac grey. These colours are popular with the vintage and handmade theme, while not being overly feminine, they provides a clean, fresh and distinctive colours. This type of colour based branding is best demonstrated by Tiffany's & Co. (App.10)

There is an exception to this colour scheme, the signs on the shop front are Navy Blue, this was considered acceptable as the shop sign needs to be clear to see from a distance, and the outside of the shop is a very light cream, with a tint of green. Members felt like the 3278UP colour would not be prominent enough. The sign is on vinyl letter heat transfers, which are waterproof, and have also been applied to the windows in small white lettering, with the website address, each side of the main door. The main door also has the numberten shop name in transfers on the glass, this is intended to promote the website (fig.6,7), and to prove that we are a modern and contemporary vintage and handmade shop. Allowing customers access via the online would permits them to see new

products, read bio's about the crafters/artists, and to share the page with friends or family.

Numberten have a facebook page dedicated to promoting and maintaining a consistent flow of customers through the doors in the physical shop. Running facebook marketing adverts has proved itself to be a economical option for a successful marketing campaign. The 28th April, the day after the opening party, numberten reached 4,153 people on Facebook. This was achieved by using the goodwill of friends, and friends of friends with a opening flyer image with an ask for it to be shared. The importance of cheap yet effective marketing strategies are at the front of the mind for members, as a start-up business the budget is small, each member invested £40 for start up materials, equalling £120. This is a tiny amount in comparison to other start ups, but no stock needs to be purchased as it is supplied independently. The budget covered the expenses of: redecorating, purchase of a till and cash books, shop signage, and shop stationeries' - 500 business cards with spot uv coating and 500 A6 flyers. This creates a seamless and professional appearance for the shop, on a tight budget.

Numberten had its opening tea party on the afternoon of 27th April 2013, it had some popularity with local people and invited friends and family. There was tea, cake and juices for the children, served on tables covered in lace table cloths, and vintage teacups and saucers to promote the authenticity behind the numberten brand. It was a good photo opportunity and professional photographer Simon Gomery visited and took some images on behalf of the members. Numberten believes in the importance of a professional image, good quality photographs helps to build the professional branding in the online world, on its website and on its facebook page. Professional photographer Lisa Birch

took images after the first week, of most of the items within the shop to help build the online profile of the shop, and to use in any future advertising or signage. It will be necessary for her to take photographs on a regular basis, to ensure a current product range is displayed online.

Numberten is hosting an Etsy Craft Party on 20th June 2013 organised by Lisa Birch, this is a worldwide event where crafters come together to learn new skills and to experiment and have fun. Numberten's party is the only one being arranged in Cornwall, tickets are free and available through Eventbrite. Etsy send a gift box of crafting materials to each party alongside a craft party event plan - with tutorials, to ensure guests and hosts are able to fully enjoy their day, and promote the name of Etsy as it is still fairly unknown for such a large website. Having this party numberten will attract customers with interests in their products, and also people who may wish to sell their crafts on commission. Numberten currently has 64 confirmed guests for its crafting party, and 21 days to go.

Other marketing approaches that have been undertaken are, handing out flyers outside the shop and around the town area that it is located, and having business cards and flyers in several of the local independent cafes and restaurants. This has proved itself to have been a useful activity as customers enter the shop holding the flyer, and sometimes needing the map on the flyer to locate the store. Being different is the other approach that has been taken, instead of traditional signage outside in the street, numberten has a large set of vintage wooden ladders, painted pink with pyrographic text "numberten the home of the handmade". These ladders are eye catching outside the main building, and they directly appeal to the target audience, females who like

vintage or handmade items, quirky things and home decoration. The ladders act as a great symbol for the shop and are recognisable and create a talking point, a point of interest.

Creating interest is important in the early stages of a retail business, there is a need to attract customers as a client base and regulars have not yet been established. Word of mouth is proving itself to be an invaluable tool, so each potential customer is treated in a friendly and helpful manner, with the aim to please them so that they will tell their friends and families, and more customers will be generated. With it being a fairly small local community, it is critical to please locals, by providing good quality and fairly priced goods, this in theory will provide numberten with regular customers throughout the year. In the summer time, that is approaching now, there is the assumption that numberten will appeal to holiday makers in Mid-Cornwall, those who are looking for a memento of their trip, or as a gift from their travels for a loved one. The summer-time stock needs to appeal to this market, by having a range of goods of different styles and values, but all in the handmade and pretty style, to appeal to all types of passing customers.

Displays are imperative at numberten, they help to show the products off in the best light. The vintage reworked furniture that is for sale, is used to display the smaller goods. The smaller goods are also displayed on handmade notice boards, in vintage baskets or pastel painted trugs. These displays help to keep groups of products together, and provide space for signs and descriptions. Shop displays are always especially important for smaller shops as they need to show their products off well, and it needs to be organised so as not to confuse customers or look untidy. The decor inside the shop is fresh as it has been

painted white, and the cream carpets were cleaned before opening. There is a shop rota for cleaning, to keep it looking pristine and at its best. There is some feature wall paper around the shop, at the back and in one of the alcoves, this paper is pink, and turquoise almost floral damask, with a small amount of glitter, that reflects the light and creates a centre point to draw people into the shop. Bright colours have been used with caution, but appear to be suitable at this stage. The wallpaper and flooring will probably be changed in the near future, if and when numberten decides it is time to refresh its image.

Moral s and Ethi cs

Having a moral stand point is highly valued in today's society, Birch Handmade, and those working with numberten, feel that theirs helps improve how their business is considered by others. The basis of all of their products is based around the concept of the 'handmade'. This does not mean 'handmade in China' nor does it mean 'handmade in mass'. It stands for handmade, in small batches in Cornwall, in the United Kingdom by a skilled designer/maker. This is a brand value and promise it maintains a vital role in the morals of the company, promising quality and a sense of locality. Numberten also deals with "vintage" objects, this means "pre 1993" it must be 20 years old to be considered vintage, This helps to set rules over what can be dealt with, and what cannot, things that are simply old (post 1993 - 2000) are considered to be too new. These rules are very similar to those of the website Etsy, and helps to keep a consistent level of quality. Other ethical codes that are practiced include, purchasing materials from local shops, or from small online firms. This helps to promote the local and smaller economies, while helping to publicise the business to these communities, in the form of good word of mouth, and distributing business cards.

"Brand Values are a set of attributes that customers experience as the basis of the 'brand promise'. They give the brand personality and an emotional connection that drives trust and loyalty with the audience." (Davis, 2009)

Being an environmentally friendly company is a major target. Waste is kept to a minimum, left over papers from making products is reused or recycled and very importantly all of Birch Handmade products do not and will never contain any animal products. This includes any glues, varnish or resin, and cotton cord is always chosen over leather strapping. This is an important distinction to make, as it follows a lifestyle trend of compassion that reinforces brand values. Items being sold at numberten are preferred if they contain no animal derivatives, such as there will never be any leatherwork, or vintage fur in-store. (App.11)

Networki ng

Without the use of networking it would have been impossible for numberten as a shop to exist. The owners met each other while all being independent traders at a regular craft fair, an idea was had to save money on paying for three craft fair tables, if their products were combined. This happened well as each person had a different type of craft product, but all using similar colours and influences. A unit became available to rent in a nearby town, it was viewed and they signed the contract for it. Networking now happens on an automatic basis, people enter the shop with the hopes of joining the team, and people connect with us over Facebook. I have found that Facebook is an excellent tool for meeting people who have similar interests on a business level, generally talking to customers in the shop gives the members an idea about where they can meet more people, for example different craft fairs than the usual ones, or that a vintage rally is happening soon. These are all great ways of staying in the communication loop

and not missing out on any occasions for publicity, to make new friends or to gain new guest crafters.

"One of the largest societal shifts for brands has been the evolution of global technology communities or 'social media', such as Facebook, YouTube, MySpace and Twitter. Blogs, chat rooms and 'wiki' technology, where users participate in the creation process of products or information, have also changed the way we communicate." (Davis, 2009)

Being a member of Pennycomequick arts group has also helped with the development of both Birch handmade and shop numberten, this has proved itself to be a group of likeminded people who are willing to help promote, share and advise with a creative business. It also gives a great amount of inspiration and support to witness other artists and crafters working hard to meet their goals, and to share in their successes.

Using Etsy as a networking tool is also highly successful at creating new customer, or fans. Etsy is full of crafters and artistic people, new friends can be made via "Teams" and the use of forums can provide help and support when suffering from crafters block. Birch handmade is actively part of several teams the teams also help to promote each member by running team discounts, sharing games, and return favourites. Being active in these events helps to create new fans, and raises the popularity of the brand.

Concl usi on

The aim of this paper was to access the western societies diplomacy with death, this has been accomplished by comparisons with elements that are detrimental to personal views and understandings of the concept of death: Religion, Science, and Philosophy. By examining these viewpoints it is clear to see a cultural separation from East to West over this issue. The west is uncertain of death, it

shows fears and tries to solve the issue of mortality with science and medicine. This can be a good thing, or it can be a fate worse than death for those caught on life support machines waiting to die. The unwillingness of the vast majority of people in the West to let people go when they are dying causes immense emotional pain to those that are dying, alongside the denial of their own mortality and their un-acceptance of the world as a transient place. The West appears to have no real concept of what it means to die, and that in turn causes fear. A fear of the uncertain, and of the potential nothingness that they may encounter.

"When I first came to the West, I was shocked by the contrast between the attitudes to death I had been brought up with and those I now found. For all its technological achievements, modern Western society has no real understanding of death or what happens in death, or after death." (Rinpoche, 2002)

"I learned that people today are taught to deny death, and taught that it means nothing but annihilation and loss. That means that most of the world lives either in denial of death or in terror of it. Even talking about death is considered morbid, and many people believe by simply mentioning death is to risk wishing it upon ourselves." (Rinpoche, 2002)

People in the West are readily willing to deny the fact of their deaths, or that of their loved ones. They deny it till it happens and then a whole uncontrollable set of emotions comes to surface, and that in turn feeds the fear. It is even considered a taboo to discuss death in western society, its conceived as a sign of depression, mania or purely macabre. Opening people's eyes to the undeniable end that they each will face was the target of this project, and to do so in a non macabre but joyous, precious and fragile way. This traits are similar to that of life, not death, but what is death, without life.

Using Buddhist philosophy and Japanese aesthetics to inform and advise on the contextual issues to create works of wearable transience, that serve as a reminder to the wearer of their own fragile nature, and of their own personal

mortality, they are a contemporary version of the old *memento mori, remember you will die.*

Refl ecti ve Eval uati on

Looking back at this project, that stretches back almost seven months it is clear that research has heavily influenced the practical making part of the artworks, in its way of making ideas make sense, and reinforcing previous thoughts, new thoughts and ideas have also been created. The research has led itself through a winding forest of ideas and ended up somewhere else, new paths that would not have otherwise been explored in a shorter project, and further delving into previous research has proved itself invaluable.

The resources that were used within this project were primary sources, such as real life customer opinion, facebook marketing, online statistics gathered through facebook posts, making of new products, time spent in places of death thinking about death, talking to strangers about death on public transport, talking to friends and family about death and their wishes and fears, looking at epitaphs in the paper, all of these primary sources helped to understand the stark subject of death first hand. Most useful of these sources was the act of putting oneself in a place of death, and imagining what it is like to be there for eternity, or the frequent discussions with other people helping to learn others feelings and thoughts, and often hearing about others experiences with death. Over the two years that the masters degree has been studied, and the concept of transience, impermanence and death was being studied, I personally bared witness three deaths all in surprisingly different circumstances and attended these funerals, taking inspiration from the personal feelings and emotions brought up from these experiences I have tried to create a framework to deal

with death, to accept it for what it is, and that people can find different ways that fulfil their needs to find acceptance as well.

Secondary sources that were used include: websites, books, journals and magazines. Problems that were encountered around the traditional research methodology, to read, found that there were a lack of different authors discussing the subject, each name would re-appear in several journal chapters, and that chapter edited into a magazine article. Trusted sources have been used, these help to add validity to the research, and avoidance of unreliable internet sources that contain mainly personal opinions. Research in this way was in-depth with a great amount of philosophical learning.

Creating a product and business brand based around the concept of transient materials has become established over a two year time period, starting with selling at exhibitions, moving to an online marketplace, craft fairs and now it has come to be in a shop. The shop, numberten, is a group collaborative project which would not have happened without my business knowledge, computer skills and aesthetic taste. Working as a group has proven itself difficult at first but problems surrounding relational issues have now been resolved. It is hard working as a group of three, it's easy for a person to feel singled out on, using my personal skills I hope that I have been able to fix the faults.

Numberten as a collaboration will now and in the future act as an agent for change, being part of the redevelopment of Saint Austell, and making creator based independent retail establishments a space to bloom. Since numberten opened the other empty units have been occupied by various independent makers, a group of connected makers will in the future form a group, and help to promote each other as artists and makers in an effort to turn away from mass

produced goods to artesian products. Birch handmade products have found themselves a secure and profitable home, supported by other crafts people in a suitable development. (fig.8) Online popularity is growing and Birch handmade is continuing to create works that are thought provoking, graceful and represent the delicateness of existence.

Appendix x

Appendix 1- Approaches to death- Religion monotheistic

"Unbeknown to many of their followers, the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam all also believe in literal, physical resurrection as a central doctrine - a belief that was crucial to these religions early success."
(Cave, 2012)

"It is odd, in many ways, that misunderstandings between Islam and the West should persist. For that which binds our two worlds together is so much more powerful than that which divides us. Muslims, Christians - and Jews - are all 'peoples of the Book'. Islam and Christianity share a common monotheistic vision: a belief in one divine God, in the transience of our earthly life, in our accountability for our actions, and in the assurance of life to come."(HRH The Prince of Wales, 1993)

Appendix 2 - No decay or corruption

"Even when theism has promised a future life that life has been imagined in very different ways. The heterodox current in Judaism led by Jesus seems to have had no notion of an immortal soul, created by God and then infused into the body: immortality meant being raised from the dead in the body one had life in, then living forever in a world without decay or corruption. " (Gray, 2011)

Appendix 3 - Hope of resurrection

"The hope of resurrection is also rooted in nature: we are used to seeing the natural world die in winter, only to return with new vigour the following year. Billions of people around the world celebrate this triumph of life over death in spring festivals such as Easter, with its explicit association with the promise of human resurrection." (Cave, 2012)

Appendix 4 - Karma law

"Non-theistic religions are different again. Instead of a divine personality, Hindus and Buddhists believe in an impersonal moral law. Karma is moral cause and effect operating in every sphere of existence, there is no need to postulate any God passing judgement on human life. There is no unbridgeable difference between humans and other animals: souls - or in Buddhism, which rejects the idea of the soul, chains and mental events - migrate across species boundaries, in a potentially unending cycle of reincarnation. In these non-theistic faiths continued existence in another world is not seen as in any way desirable, but as something that should be avoided. The everlasting persistence of the person we have been in life could only be a type of hell. Immortality is found in dying and not being born again, in this world or any other." (Gray, 2011)

Appendix 5- Nine round death meditation

"A. DEATH IS CERTAIN

1. There is no possible way to escape death. No-one ever has, not even Jesus, Buddha, etc. Of the current world population of over 5 billion people, almost none will be alive in 100 years time.

2. Life has a definite, inflexible limit and each moment brings us closer to the finality of this life. We are dying from the moment we are born.

3. Death comes in a moment and its time is unexpected. All that separates us from the next life is one breath.

Conviction: To practise the spiritual path and ripen our inner potential by cultivating positive mental qualities and abandoning disturbing mental qualities.

B. THE TIME OF DEATH IS UNCERTAIN

4. The duration of our lifespan is uncertain. The young can die before the old, the healthy before the sick, etc.

5. There are many causes and circumstances that lead to death, but few that favour the sustenance of life.

Even things that sustain life can kill us, for example food, motor vehicles, property.

6. The weakness and fragility of one's physical body contribute to life's uncertainty.

The body can be easily destroyed by disease or accident, for example cancer, AIDS, vehicle accidents, other disasters.

Conviction: To ripen our inner potential now, without delay.

C. THE ONLY THING THAT CAN HELP US AT THE TIME OF DEATH IS OUR MENTAL/SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

(because all that goes on to the next life is our mind with its karmic (positive or negative) imprints.)

7. Worldly possessions such as wealth, position, money can't help

8. Relatives and friends can neither prevent death nor go with us.

9. Even our own precious body is of no help to us. We have to leave it behind like a shell, an empty husk, an overcoat.

Conviction: To ripen our inner potential purely, without staining our efforts with attachment to worldly concerns." (Buddha Dharma Education Association, 2012)

Appendix 6 - Science discoveries

"...With the discovery in 1928 of the antibiotic penicillin, this set infectious diseases into rapid retreat: whooping cough, measles, diphtheria and scarlet fever, for example, together accounted for 34,000 deaths in England in 1901, and exactly none in 2001." (Cave, 2012)

Appendix 7 - Self- What is Ka?

"The great majority of traditional belief systems and religions have believed that life requires some vital spark to ignite it. Usually this magic stuff is a gift from God or the gods; it might be equated with the soul or the spirit, like the Egyptian 'ka'; it separates absolutely the living from the non-living - men from mud, birds and rocks." (Cave, 2012)

Appendix 8 - Japanese Aesthetics

"All things are impermanent. The inclination towards nothingness is unrelenting and universal. Even things that have all the earmarks of substance - things that are hard, inert, solid - present nothing more than the illusion of permanence. We may wear blinders, use ruses to forget, ignore, or pretend otherwise - but all comes to nothing in the end. Everything wears down. The planets and stars, and even intangible things like reputation, family heritage, historical memory, scientific theorems, mathematical proofs, great art, and literature - all eventually fade into oblivion and non existence." (Koren, 1994)

"All things are imperfect. Nothing that exists is without imperfections. When we look really closely at things we see flaws. The sharp edge of a razorblade, when magnified, reveals microscopic pits, chips and variations. Every craftsman knows the limits of perfection: the imperfections glare back. And as things begin to break down and approach primordial state, they become even less perfect, more irregular." (Koren, 1994)

"All things are incomplete. All things, including the universe itself, are in a constant, never ending state of becoming or dissolving. Often we arbitrarily designate moments, points along the way, as finished, or complete. But when something's destiny finally come to fruition? Is the plant complete when it flowers? When it goes to seed? When the seeds sprout? When everything turns into compost? The notion of completion has no basis in wabi-sabi." (Koren, 1994)

"In writing about traditional Asian aesthetics, the conventions of a Western discourse - order, logical progression, symmetry - impose upon the subject an aspect that does not belong to it. Among other ideas Eastern aesthetics suggests that ordered structure contrives, that logical exposition falsifies, and that linear, consecutive argument eventually limits." (Richie, 2007)

"Japan makes much less of the body/mind, self/group formation, with often marked consequences. Here we would notice that what would call Japanese aesthetics (in contrast with Western aesthetics) is more concerned with process than with product, with the actual construction of a self than with self-expression." (Richie, 2007)

"Wabi-Sabi is a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. It is a beauty of things modest and humble. It is a beauty of things unconventional" (Koren, 1994)

"Immortality, in that it is considered at all, is to be found in nature's way. The form is kept though the contents evaporate. Permanence through materials

(granite, marble, the Pyramids, the Parthenon) is seldom attempted. Rather, the claims of immortality are honoured in another way. Here the paradigm would be the Shinto shrine of Ise, made of common wood, razed every twenty years and at the same time identically rebuilt on a neighbouring plot" (Richie, 2007)

"[Japan]There is little linearity in the philosophy. Without any afterlife, no second coming or end of the world, no purpose to life, no rebirth. There is no goal to history. We are in the perfect existential society. We just exist, in the moment is all. Yet it brings a particular sadness, for the present constantly vanishing, the perfect moment of the full blossom or the full moon or the waves on the shore is always transient." (Macfarlane, 2007)

Appendix 9 - Hallmarking Act

"The Hallmarking act is extremely rigorous in its legal protection for makers and purchasers of gold, silver and platinum objects. ... Problems arise for jewellers combining metals in an experimental way. If your design incorporates precious and base metals, any gold part must be described as 'yellow metal', silver or platinum as 'white metal'. This causes difficulties for jewellers making high quality pieces with gold or silver fittings which cannot be labelled or described as such. A customer with an allergic to all but gold ear ring posts will not understand when you say they are yellow metal. But large fines are a real deterrent to breaking hallmark legislation." (Staines, 1993)

Appendix 10 - Pantone Colours

"Tiffany Blue is a specific shade of light blue, very similar to robin's egg blue. It is a trademarked colour of Tiffany & Co., which bears the same number (1837) on the Pantone Matching System (PMS) as the year Tiffany & Co. was founded. The colour is so easily associated with Tiffany & Co. that their trademarked "little blue box" is instantly recognized and widely considered the premium presentation for fine jewellery." (Conjecture Corporation, 2013)

Appendix 11 - Morals and Ethics

"In the past decade, society - particularly the western world - has become increasingly concerned about ethics and sustainability. This new wave of social and environmental consciousness no longer resides solely with a niche audience of 'eco-warriors' or activists; it is fast becoming mainstream across society." (Davis, 2009)

Figures

Fig.1. Kagan's Moment of death timescale.

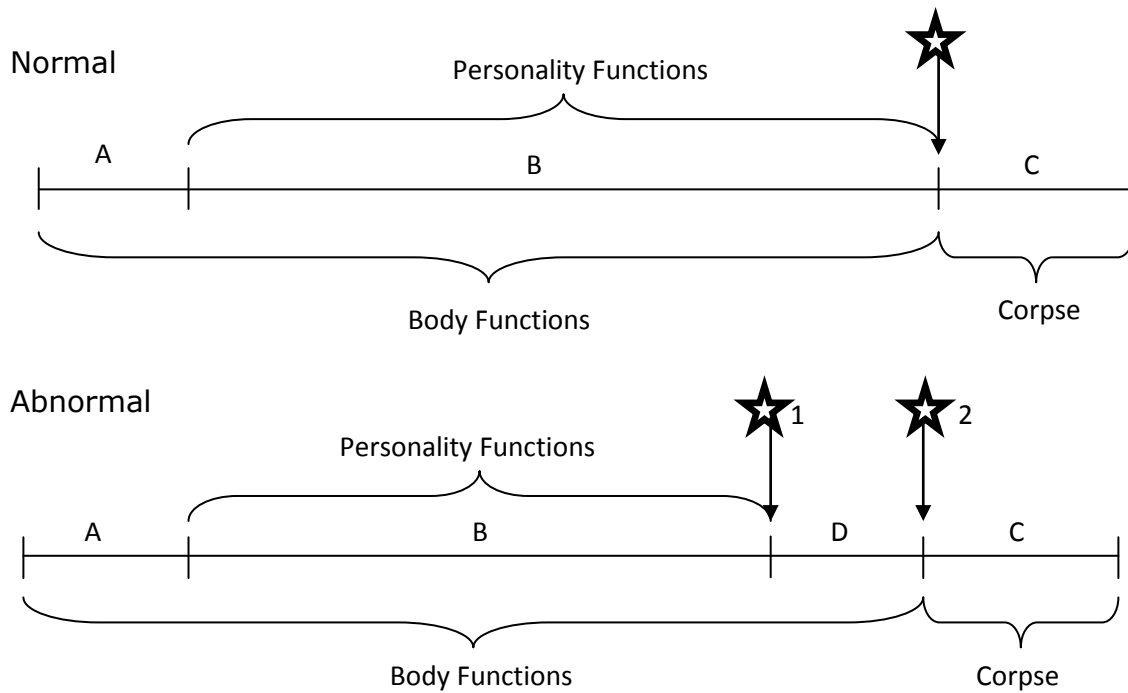


Fig.2. Birch handmade Etsy Shop Banner.



Fig.3. Examples of Birch handmade products





3.



Fig.4. Numberten business card



Fig.5. Numberten business flyer



Fig.6. Numberten website main 1

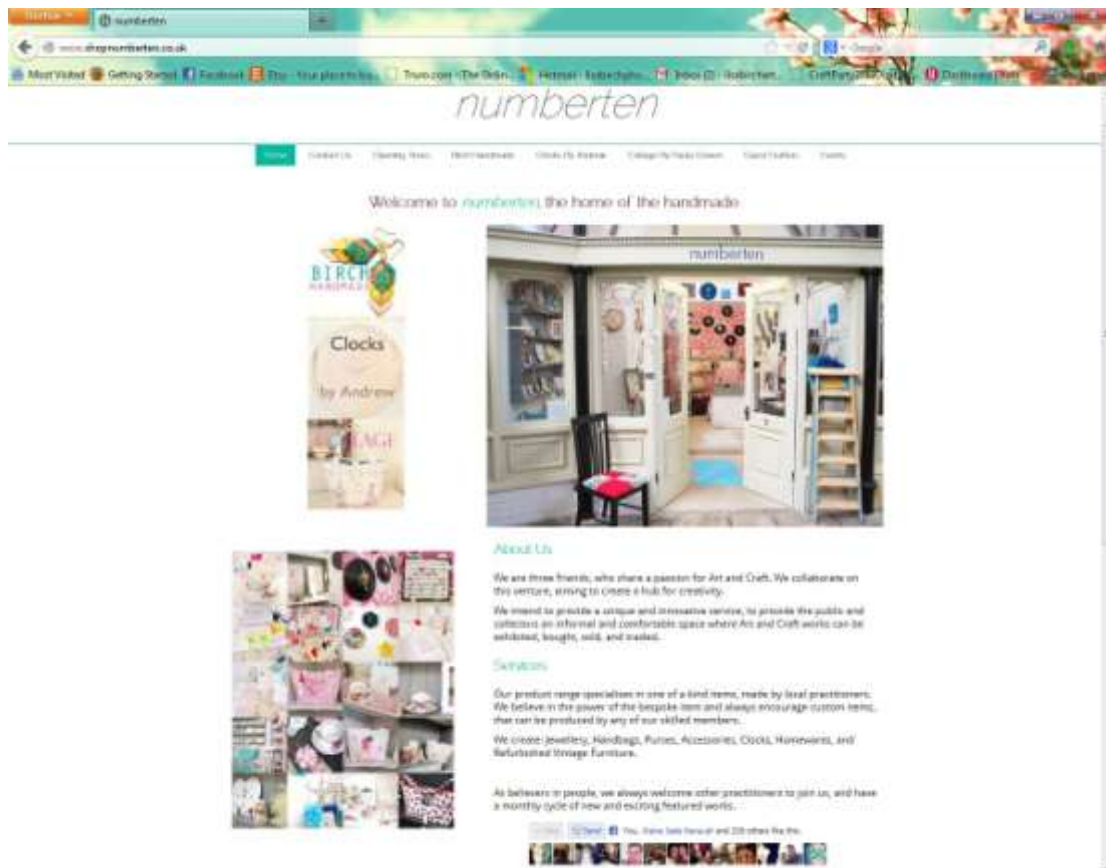
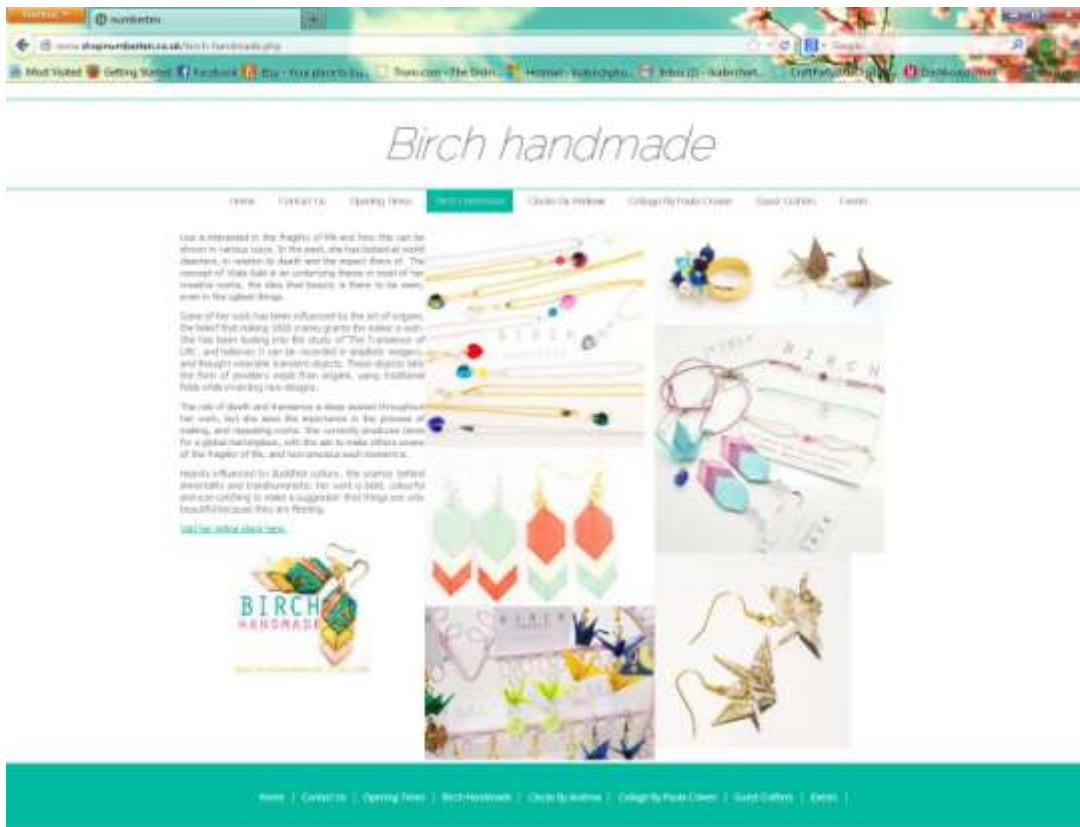


Fig.7. Numberten website main 2



Fig.8. Numberten Page Birch Handmade



Bi bl i ography

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