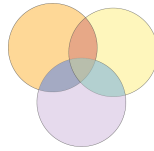


The personalisation of the visitor experience in the public
interior and its contribution to emotional attachment to place:
Towards a sensory-emotional framework for experiential design.



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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of
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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of the Arts London or any other institution.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the personalisation of experience in the public interior to uncover principles that can contribute to a design understanding of the visitor emotional attachment to place. It posits that catering for a diversity of sensory and emotional needs can foster a greater sense of belonging and wellbeing in the public realm. Insights are brought together into a framework for designers interested in enhancing the relationship between people and environment.

This research is rooted in the paradigm of embodiment; it explores the visitor situated experience of personalisation. This is analysed in two dimensions: personalisation for visitors, the way the interior is designed and managed, and personalisation by visitors, the way they engage with the environment to enact their preferred activities. Personalisation for and personalisation by are treated as complementary and interdependent. Their relationship is examined through three pairs of associated terms that connect environmental qualities with human behaviour and feelings: looseness and appropriation; enticement and exploration; and porosity and privateness.

The Royal Festival Hall, London, is used as a case study in exploring the relation between the personalisation of experience, sensory phenomena and the way visitors perceive its interior environment emotionally. The methodology is grounded in a phenomenologically inspired conception of experience that foregrounds the primacy of enacted situations in the collective environment of the public interior. In addition to an observational study, interviews with staff and visitors provide first-person perspectives on personalisation for visitors and personalisation by visitors. The usability, transferability and value of insights are then tested through design experiments with students before being articulated as a framework for design to contribute to the creation of multisensory public environments that can cultivate positive emotional connections.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis investigates the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior and its contribution to visitors' ability to connect sensorially and emotionally to their environment. It focusses on the quality of experience in the public realm by examining the relation between sensory phenomena and emotional responses. This is to acknowledge that, as argued by Mallgrave (2013), we make sense of the places we inhabit through our senses and in the process, we also perceive their emotional tone, the way their qualities appear to us. Here, embodied perception brings space and people together to situate this thesis in experiential design, defined by MacLane and Pable (2020) as a practice that transcends the physicality of designing spaces to re-think relations between people, objects and environments.

This research is practice-led because it aims to develop new knowledge for the disciplinary field of experiential design, to be a positive step towards a better understanding of how design impacts the way people experience and feel about their surroundings. Furthermore, inspired by Candy's (2006, p. 1) definition of practice-led research as leading "to new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice", this study also contributes to experiential design by synthesising the knowledge developed into a framework, for those interested in designing for emotional attachment to place, belonging and wellbeing to draw on. This includes design professionals, academics, students and professionals managing public spaces.

1.1. Motivation

In my work as an educator, working with design students and simultaneously discovering the writings of architects and designers who challenged spatial practices that did not consider sensory and emotional needs (Malnar and Vodvarka 2004, Pallasmaa 2005, Caan 2011, Bica 2016, Mallgrave 2013, 2018), I noticed a paucity of methods dedicated to the creation of multisensory environments for people to flourish emotionally. This then led me to an area of research and discourses exploring how spaces designed for the sensing body can create emotional connections that are conducive to wellbeing (Maslow and Mintz 1972, Alexander 1979, Hiss 1990, Stenberg 2009, Bermudez 2011, Pallasmaa 2015b, Pink 2017, Robinson 2015, Bica 2016, Clements-Croome 2021). I became aware of a correspondence between the experience of the sensing body and the way people connect emotionally to their environment. Together with my observations, these perspectives opened up a research space for bringing sensing and emotionality together in design practice. As I shifted my disciplinary focus towards

the experiential in design, my worldview became grounded in a way of designing that acknowledges the impact of design (and designers) on the quality of sensory and emotive relations between people and their environment. I then discovered the existence of an ontological design philosophy, which proposes that “in designing tools (objects, structures, systems, spaces, narratives and discourses), we are creating ways of being” (Escobar 2018, p. 4). This philosophy reinforced my emerging understanding that we are bound to our environment and more precisely here, to the way it is designed. Thus, my interest lies in promoting sensory-emotional processes for experiential design to create a better quality (or better qualities) of being, not simply being in a space as an individual but also being with others within it.

Prior to this thesis, I initiated a research project called ‘Sensing the Urban Interior’, in which I explored emotional disconnections between people and the public spaces of More London, a mixed-used business development located in London Bridge on the south bank of the River Thames. Although I could identify the phenomena that contributed to emotional disconnection, I also realised that focusing on negative experiences did not provide me with the transferable insights I needed to be able to address this issue through design. Nonetheless, from this research, I developed a tool I called the Sensory Flow and phenomenological mapping techniques to help document multisensory phenomena. These proved successful with students and academics (Mace 2013) and gained recognition through publications (Mace 2014, Erwine 2017), but their contribution to design practice was still limited. I concluded that in order to identify the phenomena that can generate a sense of connectedness and wellbeing, I needed to refocus my research on the study of public environments people could connect to in a positive and even deeply felt way. Accordingly, this thesis sets out to produce a body of research that helps determine conditions for positive long-term relations between the sensing body and its environment. It is motivated by the view that if I could identify ways in which people can become emotionally attached to their environment through sensing, I may then be able to use this knowledge to address the deficiency of methods highlighted above.

1.2. Overview of the public interior

Public spaces are an essential part of the collective environments that constitute our experience of the city. They are a meaningful component of public life, contributing to the health, wellbeing and vitality of the city and its inhabitants (Hopkins 2020). Theorists assert that the quality of the public realm shapes the experience of place, influences social cohesion

and consequently has bearing on the quality of life in cities (Alexander et al. 1977, Whyte 1980, Madanipour 2003, Worpole and Knox 2008, Nikitin 2009, Jones 2016, Gardner et al. 2018). Whyte (1980), Gardner et al. (2018), and Masbouni and Petitjean (2021) also argue that the success of public spaces depends, amongst other things, on people being able to experience emotional connectedness and a sense of belonging.

The public realm includes certain spaces called public interiors. Yet, a review of relevant literature showed that the public interior has not received as much attention as public exterior spaces in academic research, with notable exceptions such as Harteveld and Scott Brown (2007), Poot et al. (2015) and Pimlott (2016, 2020). They point to a wide range of environments qualifying as public interiors, including spaces that are open to the public but are in fact privately owned. Poot et al. (2015, p. 46) identify accessibility, which they define as the ability to enter a space without hesitation and effort, and the mental ownership visitors may project onto a space, as two fundamental principles defining the publicness of public interiors. Bringing order to a plethora of public interiors, Pimlott (2016) organises them across six themes: the garden, the palace, the ruin, the shed, the machine and the network. Within these, he includes enclosed gardens, large scale conservatories, shopping arcades, department stores, libraries, museums, cultural centres, railway stations, covered markets, leisure centres, shopping centres, and even networks of passages within cities. Despite their divergence, Pimlott emphasises that these are spatially contained environments belonging to the public realm. The writings of Poot et al. and Pimlott highlight the significance of the public interior within the public realm, and the scarcity of existing studies presents an opportunity for my research to contribute knowledge about this typology of environment whilst maintaining a coherence with my previous research located in outdoor public spaces. The public interior selected for this study will be discussed in-depth in Chapter Four.

1.3. Definition of terminology

The personalisation of experience, emotional attachment to place and the sensory-emotional process, are the three elements anchoring this thesis. They are first defined here to provide a foundation for more precise working definitions and insights that will surface as the study develops. They are presented in the order they feature in the thesis title. This is followed by a discussion on the use of the terminology 'experiential design' in this study to expand on the definition provided in the introduction to this thesis.

1.3.1. The personalisation of the visitor experience

The personalisation of experience, often simply referred to as personalisation in the literature, emerged as an important topic in design-led innovations in recent years across a range of practices and industries including but not exclusive to product design, service design, fashion design, design for health and social care and design for smart learning environments (Mugge et al. 2009, Needham 2011, Beresford 2014, Branco et al. 2016, Fossdal and Berg 2016, Gros 2016, Kuksa and Fisher 2017). In their comprehensive taxonomy of personalisation through design, Kuksa and Fisher (2017) describe the personalisation of experience as the tailoring of services and products to suit needs and preferences but emphasise that due to a breadth of scenarios, definitions vary across disciplines, from choice and control in health and social care to mass-customisation in fashion. They explain that there is no general agreement on what personalisation means but argue that personalisation can be broadly defined as a person-centred approach that caters for a diversity of needs and preferences, reflecting a desire to counter standardisation and create individualised connections between people and products or services.

Whilst all experiences are personal, the personalisation of experience provides an opportunity for designers to introduce features that can enhance the user experience. This thesis however is not about the experience of users of products and services but about the visitor experience in the public interior. This has not been widely discussed in academic discourses although Whyte (1980) identified the provision of choice and the presence of a diversity of activities as key attributes making small urban public spaces successful. He also advocates a human-centred approach to designing. Thus, although Whyte's study does not specifically reference the concept of personalisation, his perspective aligns with Kuksa and Fisher's notions of 'choice', 'person-centred approach', and 'catering for a diversity of needs and preferences'. These characteristics provide the foundation for a definition of the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior for this thesis. It is understood as a visitor-centred approach that caters for a diversity of needs and preferences to enhance the visitor experience, such as, for instance, enhancing the experience of accessibility and mental ownership. The personalisation of the visitor experience will be discussed in-depth in Chapter Two.

1.3.2. Emotional attachment to place

A review of relevant literature on emotional connectedness in the built environment brought to the fore the concept of intimacy by drawing on Bica (2016) who advocates intimacy as a way to reconsider architecture as a platform for emotions and human sensibilities. Intimacy is broadly defined as a deep emotional connection linked to attachment (OED 2018) and although intimacy is typically construed as a form of attachment between people, it is also a form of attachment to place. Madgin (2021) explains that the concept of place attachment developed from phenomenological enquiry in urban studies, architecture and geography into the study of the interplay between people and their environment in environmental psychology. From Bachelard (1957) and Relph's (1976) seminal discourses to the more recent resurgence of interest on placemaking (Masbouni and Petitjean 2021, Meroni et al. 2024), place attachment has been explored, theorised about and discussed across a broad range of disciplinary contexts and environments (Low and Altman 1992, Patterson and Williams 2005, Seamon and Sowers 2008, Manzo and Devine-Wright 2013, Seamon 2015, Donohoe 2017, Freestone and Liu 2017). Low and Altman (1992) use terminology such as security, stimulation, link, bond, values, beliefs, and self-esteem to emphasise that place attachment is contingent on experiences whose qualities connect people to place because they generate positive and deeply felt emotional responses. Thus, despite the lack of a single definition for place attachment, it is generally agreed that it is especially concerned with the way people form emotional connections to place. Indeed, Tuan (1974, p. 4) uses the term *topophilia*, from the Greek *tópos* (place) and *philia* (fraternal love), to refer specifically to "the affective bond between people and place or setting". Thus, the intimacy of place attachment is referred to in this thesis as emotional attachment to place and defined as a positive and deeply felt emotional connection between visitors and the environment of the public interior.

1.3.3. The sensory-emotional process

The terminology 'sensory-emotional' expresses a correspondence between sensing and the way we respond emotionally to our environment widely acknowledged in the literature, notably for this thesis in architecture (Zumthor 2006, Pallasmaa 2011, Mallgrave 2013, 2015), philosophy (Bachelard 1958, Böhme 1993, 2005), anthropology (Abram 1997, Le Breton 2017) and in ethnography (Thibault 2014, Pink 2015). However, the notion of bringing 'sensory' and 'emotional' together into one compound terminology originates with Malnar and Vodvarka (2004, p. xi) whose spelling 'sensori-emotional' is influenced by Piaget and Inhelder's (1956)

theory of the sensorimotor stage of cognitive development within the fields of psychology and education. Cherry (2019, p. 1) broadly defines this theory as children's ability "to experience the world and gain knowledge through their senses and motor movements". Although Malnar and Vodvarka were writing about design and not about cognition or psychology, Malnar (2020) disclosed that they transposed principles of cause-and-effect between sensory inputs and actions deemed critical by Piaget and Inhelder to the context of sensory phenomena and emotional responses in the built environment. However, cognition and psychology are not the focus of this research, and the 'cause-and-effect' terminology suggests a Cognitivist worldview embracing a sequential process with clearly defined stages, from perception through to understanding and action (Van Dijk 2018, p. 6). Nevertheless, Malnar and Vodvarka's compound terminology is used throughout this thesis, albeit with the original spelling of 'sensory' with a 'y' retained in this study to avoid ambiguity and confusion with the lineage that influenced them. Here, the terminology 'sensory-emotional' reflects the relation between sensory phenomena in the environment of the public interior and the way visitors perceive its emotional tone. It also defines the role of the design framework developed through this research in the creation of environments people can connect to emotionally through sensing.

1.3.4. Experiential design

Experiential design is sometimes used interchangeably with experience design or spatial experience design. As previously noted, it is a broad field promoting design practices that aim to enhance relations between people, objects and environments. There is no clear consensus on the use of terminologies and therefore, following on from the definition of experiential design provided in the introduction to this thesis, it is useful to rationalise why it is the preferred terminology in this study. Experience design may be used in the context of brand experience design or to refer to the design of immersive experiences although it is often associated with user experience design, a discipline focusing primarily on the design of products with digital interfaces. Consequently, using experience design in this study could lead to confusion. Spatial experience design on the other hand is firmly positioned in the built environment and in its broadest sense, it is concerned with the interaction between people and spaces (SPX 2020). Yet, despite the obvious alignment of this definition to the context of this thesis, the use of the term 'spatial' is deemed reductive because it could suggest that it is the relation between people and the physical space alone that defines the experience. This study takes a more holistic view. Drawing on Chertoff et al. (2008, p. 408), it considers how the relational dimension is also composed of the social aspect of an experience. People interact not only with spaces but also with each other in spaces. In their work, Lobenstine et al. (2020)

uncovered a deep connection between spatial arrangements, how a space is designed and managed, and the way people behave and relate to each other in public spaces. Accordingly, the terminology 'spatial experience design' is avoided here because it does not accurately reflect the experiential interdependence between spatial arrangements and social interactions. Furthermore, this research is not limited to a description of the experience in itself but extends to understanding how the personalisation of experience can impact the relation between people and their environment, physical and social. Drawing on contemporary dictionary definitions, the word 'experiential' is thus interpreted here as 'being based on or derived from experience'. This meaning aligns with the notion that visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections with their environment is derived from their experience. Therefore 'experiential design' is the terminology used in this thesis to designate its disciplinary positioning.

1.4. Personalisation and emotional attachment to place

This thesis argues that a relevant lineage concerning the relationship between the personalisation of experience and emotional attachment to place exists between the private and the public interior. People physically alter, furnish and decorate their home as a representation of their personality (Omar et al. 2012, Barnes 2019) but, according to Madanipour (2003, p. 71), these acts have deeper meanings and transcend objective properties. He explains that the home is a place personalised by its inhabitants to reflect their identity, a place where territories are formed, a place that provides physical and psychological shelter and comfort, a place for self-expression and autonomy. Tuan (1977) also foregrounds the significance of the sensory and evocative qualities of objects in the home, the way they can be seen, touched or smelled, the way they can conjure pleasant memories. The home can be a refuge and an extension of the individual, associated with positive and even deeply felt emotional connections which, Bachelard (1958) noted, contribute to wellbeing.

Blunt and Dowling (2006) explain that these attributes have also in more recent times become associated with places outside private dwellings, places that may be considered to be public. The notion of 'home' today stretches its boundaries beyond "a single dwelling in a single location" (Barnes 2019, pp. 113-114). A home could be "a place or site; a set of feelings, emotions and meanings" (Blunt and Dowling 2006, p. 22). Bernheimer (2017, p. 104) observes that when people talk about home, they do not always refer to their house but "could also be talking about their neighbourhood, town or city, or even their country." In short, it can be any

place people feel emotionally connected to, experience a strong sense of belonging and feel 'at home' (Brand 2023, p. 39). Indeed, Pimlott (2018, p. 18) depicts of the public interior as "a shelter and a home, a place of the city and within the city." He (2020, p. 1) foregrounds choice, comfort, convenience, pleasure, recognition and curiosity as essential qualities of public interiors and explains that these may not just fulfil visitors' needs but also relate to "their views of themselves, their identities or lifestyles". These characteristics bear similarities to those of the domestic dwelling discussed above and intimate to possibilities for connectedness. Even though visitors to the public interior cannot typically alter the space physically as they would do in their home, it can still provide physical and psychological shelter and comfort, it can be a place that fulfils their sensory and emotional needs. Pimlott's ideas of recognition and curiosity also resonate with Madanipour's notions of autonomy and self-expression because it goes back to the idea of mental ownership.

Hence, the public interior is a place where people can define personal or group territories and Bernheimer (2017, p. 46) foregrounds personalisation as one of the principal ways people can do this. She explains that the home is a primary territory because inhabitants can exercise a high level of ownership and control. A local pub or a classroom are secondary territories because people can feel a moderate sense of ownership and control. Parks and streets are public territories because people have little control over these although she highlights that they can still claim temporary territories. Setting out a picnic blanket in a park for instance creates an instant territory. Drawing on this taxonomy, the public interior could thus be construed as somewhere between a secondary and public territory where, going back to the working definition of personalisation provided in 1.3.1, a visitor-centred approach that caters for a diversity of needs and preferences enables visitors to rearrange and adapt the environment (personalise) and in doing so, experience mental ownership.

Therefore, this thesis posits that personalisation, transposed to the environment of the public interior, can help visitors shape their experience and that this could contribute to their ability to feel sensorially and emotionally connected to their environment. Bernheimer (2017, p. 289) remarks that we are shaped by the spaces we inhabit but we have lost the agency we once had in shaping these spaces. The personalisation of experience in the public interior, a concept contingent on both design and management practices, could alleviate this issue.

In its broadest sense, this study explores how the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior can contribute to emotional attachment to place and the specific questions addressed in this thesis are as follow:

Research question one:

- How can the design and management of an inviting and sensorially engaging public interior contribute to visitors' emotional attachment to place through modes of personalisation?

Research question two:

- How can this research contribute to the development of a design framework for the personalisation of experience in public interiors to cultivate sensory and emotional connections?

These will be detailed in Chapter Four.

1.5. Chapter summaries

Chapter Two formulates a working definition of the processes pertaining to the personalisation of the visitor experience for this study, to determine its boundaries and composition. The personalisation of experience is structured across two associated dimensions, 'personalisation for visitors' and 'personalisation by visitors', highlighting a correspondence between design or management practices and enactment by visitors. Three pairs of principles are identified: looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, porosity and privateness, each with corresponding characteristics bringing precision to their definitions. Taken together, they provide the foundation for the study of the personalisation of experience in the public interior.

Chapter Three establishes three dimensions, experiential, embodied, and sensory-emotional, to define the theoretical context for this thesis. These dimensions articulate the processes through which experience, sensory phenomena and emotionality relate in environmental perception. First, the experiential dimension grounds the research in phenomenology and defines the typology of experience explored in this study. Next, the embodied dimension articulates the centrality of the sensing body and lays the foundation for an embodied epistemology in this research. Then, the sensory-emotional dimension reviews the sense-making process through which visitors can connect emotionally to their environment.

Chapter Four details the research design, introducing the methodology, the research site, and the research plan. The methodology is grounded in a phenomenological conception of experience, bringing coherence between the practice-led research and the theoretical dimensions discussed in Chapter Three. Methodological issues are analysed, and a review of the research questions is also provided. This is followed by a justification of the selection of the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall as the research site for this study, and by a description of its cultural, physical and social environments. Next, the environmental selection identifies suitable locations within the interior of the Royal Festival Hall for the fieldwork. Finally, this chapter outlines a flexible and scaffolded structure for a research plan bringing together a case study and interviews to triangulate insights from the literature review in Chapter Two. The research plan also outlines design experiments to test the usefulness of insights from this research to design practice.

Chapter Five reviews the design and analysis of the case study, a non-participant observation and reflexive investigation into the visitor experience of looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, porosity and privateness, in the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall. The design of the case study introduces the methods supporting the investigation, including the definition of a sensory model, an emotionality model, and the outline of an analytical structure. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the fieldwork to understand how the personalisation of experience can contribute to visitors' ability to connect emotionally to the environment of the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall through sensing. Then, insights from the case study are summarised to lay the foundation for the interviews discussed in Chapter Six and design experiments outlined in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Six discusses the design and analysis of interviews with the Head of the Visitor Experience and Ticketing at the Royal Festival Hall and a sample of visitors. The staff member contributes expert knowledge on the management of the visitor experience and on the way historical, political, geographical and economic contexts defining the cultural environment impact management practices. A sample of nine visitors provide first-person perspectives on their experience of personalisation in the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall and its contribution to emotional attachment to place.

Chapter Seven examines the usability, transferability and value of insights developed through the literature review and case study before synthesising this research into a framework for experiential design. Then, a sensory-emotional framework is developed by bringing together all

insights from this research. The framework provides a reference for designers and managers to draw on to create environments where the personalisation of experience can contribute to sensory-emotional connectedness. The framework is organised across five complementary and interrelated sections. The first outlines the experiential process and the corresponding sensory-emotional design process developed through this research; the second details principles and characteristics pertaining to the personalisation of experience; the third articulates a model for the modulation of grounding and stimulating emotional qualities; the fourth presents a sensory model with a detailed library of sensory phenomena; the fifth consolidates information into lines of enquiry for designers and managers to envision scenarios exploring what it would be like for visitors to enact appropriation, exploration and privateness.

Chapter Eight concludes this research by reviewing the aims of the thesis, synthesising insights, expanding on the contribution of this thesis, discussing limitations, and identifying opportunities for future research.

In sum, Chapter Two develops a working definition of the processes pertaining to the personalisation of the visitor experience. Chapter Three establishes the theoretical context. Chapter Four details the research design. Chapter Five discusses the case study conducted in the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall. Chapter Six examines the staff and visitor interviews. Chapter Seven reviews the design experiments and presents a sensory-emotional framework for experiential design. Chapter Eight concludes this research.

1.6. Contribution of this thesis

This thesis contributes a perceptual study of environmental conditions with direct relevance to design. It generates new understandings on existing themes across three main areas. Firstly, it develops a new definition on the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior framed by three pairs of principles, looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, porosity and privateness, and identifies corresponding characteristics.

Secondly, this thesis defines an experiential process to provide the foundation for the cultivation of conditions required for successful relations between the sensing body and its environment. It uncovers how the personalisation of experience can generate rewarding sensory phenomena conducive to positive emotional connections between visitors and their environment, and how in turn these connections can contribute to emotional attachment to place (Figure 1).

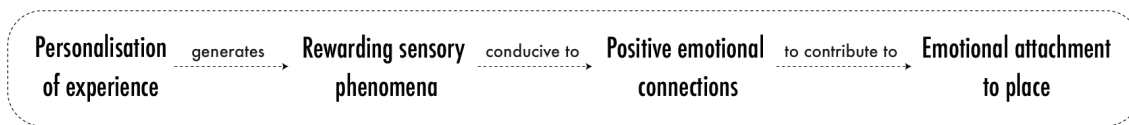


Figure 1: The experiential process identified through this research.

Thirdly, this study contributes to and expands the experiential design disciplinary field by developing a sensory-emotional framework to attend to a paucity of available processes to design for sensory and emotive dimensions. Here, these dimensions are bounded by the context of the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior.

Chapter 2: The personalisation of the visitor experience

This chapter articulates the processes and principles pertaining to the personalisation of the visitor experience for this thesis. It introduces two dimensions of the personalisation of experience, ‘the personalisation of experience for visitors’ and ‘the personalisation of experience by visitors’. Next, the role of the cultural environment is examined, and an outline of visitors’ personal characteristics is provided. Then, the principles pertaining to the personalisation of experience for visitors in this study are identified and defined. This is followed by a definition of the principles pertaining to the personalisation of experience by visitors. Finally, insights from the literature review are brought together into a working model for the study of the personalisation of experience in this research.

Here, this thesis also acknowledges that visits to public interiors were taking place in parallel to this literature review since these were required to identify which public interior was best suited to this study (this investigation will be discussed in Chapter Four) prior to commencing the fieldwork. The site visits provided real-life contexts to reflect on the selection of principles in the literature.

2.1. The two dimensions of personalisation

Kuksa and Fisher (2017) identify two sides to personalisation, ‘personalisation for a person’ and ‘personalisation by a person’. These do not exist in a dualistic mode; they are complementary and interdependent and ‘personalisation for’ usually precedes ‘personalisation by’. For example, designers may program opportunities for personalisation into the features of products or services. This is personalisation for a person. Through these features, consumers can customise their experience. This is personalisation by a person. Thus, Kuksa and Fisher (2017, p. 1, single quotation marks in the original text) characterise personalisation as a principle emerging from “the relative agency of ‘persons’ in different scenarios”. The agency is relative because there may be design constraints, through budget, technologies or materials, and consumers are limited to the features that are programmed into the products or services.

Transposed to the context of this thesis, the way a space is designed or managed will impact the visitor experience and in turn, the way visitors enact their experience is bounded by the intentions of designers and of those managing the visitor experience thereafter. In this study,

design and management practices correspond to the personalisation of experience for visitors, and enactment is consistent with the personalisation of experience by visitors. These two dimensions provide the foundation of a structure for the study of the personalisation of experience in this thesis. Drawing on the definition of the personalisation of experience outlined in Chapter One as the development of a visitor-centred approach that caters for a diversity of needs and preferences to enhance the visitor experience, a working definition for each dimension is provided below and these are expanded upon in the following text.

- **The personalisation of experience for visitors:** the way experiential design and management practices in the environment of the public interior cultivate visitors' ability to enact a diversity of needs and preferences.
- **The personalisation of experience by visitors:** the way visitors engage with the environment of the public interior to enact a diversity of needs and preferred activities.

Design and management practices are brought together in this study because focusing on design practices alone is deemed too reductive since the visitor experience is typically enacted after a design has been completed. Design practices refer to the architectural and interior design of the physical environment. Management practices refer to the management of the visitor experience such as managing access to the interior and its spaces, the provision of furniture, or managing the different needs of visitors. These practices can also relate to the way explicit and implicit rules of behaviour are monitored and enforced. Design and management practices impact visitors' perception of what they can or cannot do and therefore, their ability to personalise their experience. Hence, this thesis takes the view that design and management practices should cultivate rather than impose to be able to embrace a visitor-centred approach. As Herzog (2023, p. 35) points out, it is not about controlling people's behaviour but about inviting them to enact. Visitors' ability to engage with their environment as they enact diverse and preferred activities lies in experiential design and management practices cultivating opportunities for this to happen. Furthermore, cultivation may also include managers altering their practice in response to the way visitors enact their experience. For example, they may add additional furniture in response to visitors gathering in one area in particular. Hence, whilst 'personalisation for' typically precedes 'personalisation by', it is also possible for 'personalisation by' to cultivate 'personalisation for' in certain situations. In the context of 'personalisation for', this study explores the relationship between design and management practices and sensory phenomena in the physical environment of the public interior. For example, materials can be selected for their tactile and olfactive properties, or the choice and

organisation of furniture can impact visual composition. The phenomena generated through design or managerial interventions in the physical environment are referred to throughout this thesis as spatio-sensory phenomena. ‘Personalisation by’, the way visitors enact their experience also contributes sensory phenomena. For example, conversations generate auditory phenomena, or visitors re-organising furniture can alter the visual composition of a space. These become part of the visitor experience, not only for those enacting but also for others around them. These phenomena are generated through visitors’ actions and interactions and are therefore referred to throughout this thesis as socio-sensory phenomena.

2.2. The role of the cultural environment

The physical and social environments in which design and management practices can cultivate visitors’ ability to enact their experience of the public interior are also situated within its cultural environment. Geographical, historical, political and economic contexts define the culture of the public interior, its ideologies and social norms, which means that designers and managers need to consider location, historical legacies, political strategies, as well as economic circumstances. For example, a location may anchor the public interior in local culture. It can also impact the way safety is managed. Historical legacies may be visible through cultural references such as objects on display that communicate “a shared system of rituals and symbols” (Malnar and Vodvarka 1992, p. 282). Political strategies may influence the management position on inclusion and economic circumstances can determine the financial health of the public interior. As they converge with the visitor experience, these contexts can then determine accessibility and mental ownership, the foundational principles of publicness identified in Chapter One (Poot et al. 2015). Furthermore, visitors may experience a degree of enculturation defined by Bell (2020) as “the gradual process of an individual or group learning and adapting to the norms and values of a culture (or subculture) in which they are immersed”. Research shows that people’s behaviour tends to reflect the setting they are immersed in (Bernheimer 2017, p. 146) and as such, conforming to cultural norms and values can impact the way visitors feel about accessing certain spaces, the type of activities they feel they can enact, or the way they interact with each other. Depending on what these norms and values are, they can engage and connect people to the physical and social environments or restrict and disconnect. This is important because according to Thompson (2007, p. 403) who argues for socio-cultural intersubjectivity over individual subjectivity, enculturation always occurs because culture “is woven into the fabric of each human mind from the beginning.” Thus, this thesis considers the role of the cultural environment alongside phenomena in the physical and

social environments in the study of the personalisation of experience. These three environments give rise to processes, which, according to Low and Altman (1992), are associated with the formation and maintenance of place attachment (defined as emotional attachment to place in this thesis). Their convergence shapes the visitor experience of the public interior, and they will be revisited in Chapter Four in the specific context of the site selected for this study.

2.3. Overview of visitors' personal characteristics

This thesis recognises that characteristics external to the environment of the public interior but intrinsic to visitors can also shape their experience. Here, this study draws on Dazkir and Read (2012, p. 723) who identify personality, experiences and culture as the three principles derived from a person and independent of the environment. Personality refers to personality traits such as introversion and extraversion. Although these can predispose people to prefer certain types of environments (Gifford 1997), research on personality traits belongs to the field of psychology, which is beyond the scope of this research. Hence, personality is not included in this study but is nonetheless acknowledged. Experiences and culture however are within the scope of this research although here, experiences relate specifically to visitors' previous experiences of the public interior and not to their prior experiences and life events external to the public interior. Whilst these filters are acknowledged, they are also outside the specific boundaries of this research. On the other hand, prior experiences of the public interior are important because they underpin visitors' level of familiarity with their environment. For example, visitors with a higher degree of familiarity may feel more 'at home' and as such, may also be more likely to personalise their experience. Finally, culture relates to the personal culture of visitors, including but not exclusive to education, profession, age and gender. Personal culture can also predispose people to prefer certain types of environments. For example, spatial designers may relate to a space differently to non-designers because spatial designers and non-designers do not have the same educational and professional culture. People from diverse age groups with differing personal culture and preferred activities can also experience the same environment differently. Thus, even though it would be impossible to identify all variations between visitors, it is helpful for designers and managers to understand who the visitors are to be able to cultivate their ability to enact a diversity of needs and preferences. In this study, these characteristics come to the fore in the interviews in Chapter Six.

2.4. The personalisation of experience for visitors

Looseness, enticement and porosity are the three principles delineating the boundaries of the study of the personalisation of experience for visitors in this study. They were identified through a review of relevant literature and an iterative analytical process exploring the design and management practices that could align with the notion of a visitor-centred approach that caters for a diversity of needs and preferences. A working definition for each of the three principles is provided here and these will be reviewed as new insights emerge from this research.

2.4.1. Defining looseness

Drawing on Franck and Stevens (2006) to transpose the concept of looseness in urban public spaces to the context of the public interior, looseness is characterised in this study by the provision of a greater accessibility and a relative freedom of choice to enable visitors to pursue a variety of activities. Franck and Stevens (2006, p. 2) explain that in loose spaces “definitions and expectations are less exclusive and more fluid” and accordingly less control and less regulations are essential for looseness to thrive. The looser design and management practices, the easier it is for visitors to enact a diversity of needs and preferences. Franck and Stevens also stress that looseness is conducive to certain types of activities, those that “are neither productive, like traveling to work, nor reproductive, like buying necessities”. They list leisure activities, entertainment, self-expression, political expression, reflection and social interactions as the “non-productive and non-reproductive” activities situated “outside the daily routine and the world of fixed functions and fixed schedules”. These activities become expressions of looseness and in doing so also contribute ‘loose’ qualities to the public interior. This indicates that whilst looseness in the public interior is contingent on design and management practices, it also becomes visible through visitor’s actions and interactions. Thus, looseness requires a cultural environment conducive to designers and managers being able to relinquish some control over the physical and social environments. Although he does not explicitly use the term ‘looseness’, Premthada (2023, p. 143) explains how he favours a similar approach in his practice as an architect, highlighting that his input only represents fifty percent of a space, and that the remaining fifty percent is defined by people enacting their experience. In this context, looseness enables them to actively participate in the formation of place. Thus, looseness reflects design and management practices that are flexible and open to visitors enacting a

relative agency by cultivating mental ownership. As a result, loose spaces can present a degree of unpredictability and some designers or managers may consider looseness a risk, but as Premthada argues, this is when a space becomes a place.

2.4.2. Defining enticement

Enticement is characterised in this study by the design and management of sensory phenomena that arouse curiosity. Architect Peter Zumthor for instance manipulated scents, colours, light and temperature to entice visitors through the interior of the thermal baths he designed in Vals, Switzerland (Arbib 2013). Hildebrand (1999, p. 56) observes that interiors with enticing qualities can enrich environmental experience when they are designed as a succession of partly hidden and partly revealed phenomena with the promise of new information ahead. It is the partial withholding of information that characterises enticing settings. Kaplan (1987, p. 8) concurs, using the term mystery to indicate that it is through the promise of new information rather than through its presence that people become curious and begin looking at, listening to and moving towards the phenomena to satisfy their curiosity. Although Zumthor demonstrates with his buildings that a multisensory approach can contribute sophisticated layers of enticement, this principle is especially effective with visual phenomena. Research suggests that visual phenomena engage our brain and make us move and that viewing and ambulating evolved interdependently (Sussman and Hollander 2015, p. 99). Designers may thus rely on the composition and organisation of physical three-dimensional elements such as walls, partitions, windows, columns, and so on, to hide and reveal visual phenomena. They may also select forms and materials with attractive visual properties. Architect Hiroshi Nakamura for example uses enticing forms. In one of his projects called 'House SH', he designed a wall with a bulging pocket for people to lie in (Nakamura 2010). Whilst the pocket presents a nested concave form on the inside, enticing people with the promise of comfort, it also appears on the outside wall of the building as a reversed extruded volume forming an unusual yet enticing bulge that may also arouse the curiosity of passers-by. Although initially perceived visually, attractive forms and materials can invite touch.

2.4.3. Defining porosity

Drawing on Sennett (2019) to transpose the concept of porous space in urban design to the context of the public interior, porosity is characterised in this study by the design and management of boundaries, borders and liminal edges to regulate sensory flows. Sennett

explains that porosity is governed by relationships between solid and void in urban settings, to open up possibilities for different groups to interact. In the public interior, this relationship allows sensory phenomena to flow between different areas within the interior and between interior and exterior. A window for example is porous because it is possible to see through it, and opening the window increases its porosity because it allows sounds and smells to flow more freely. Porosity can enrich the perceptual field through visual, auditory or olfactive flows allowing vistas to emerge, or sounds and smells to permeate. It is an important aspect of the public interior experience because sensory flows can create synergies between the micro-scale of the individual and the macro-scale of the collective environment. In this context, Sennett identifies three types of edges, boundaries, borders and liminal edges, designers and managers can use to regulate porosity in spaces. Boundaries are solid elements such as walls. Borders are porous edges, partial boundaries defined by three-dimensional elements in the design such as windows, columns and railings. Liminal edges are not tangible but perceived edges defined by the composition and organisation of boundaries and borders. Sennett (2019, p. 224) explains that we experience liminal edges when we perceive a transition from one perceptual state into another even though there are no tangible barriers between the two states. These sensory thresholds may include light to dark or noisy to quiet. Together boundaries, borders and liminal edges regulate sensory flows.

2.5. The personalisation of experience by visitors

Appropriation, exploration and privateness are the three principles delineating the boundaries of the investigation into the personalisation of experience by visitors in this study. They were identified by building on the literature review on the personalisation of experience to ascertain how visitors could enact diverse activities complementing looseness, enticement and porosity. A working definition for each of these three principles is provided here and these definitions will be reviewed as new insights emerge from this research.

2.5.1. Defining appropriation

Appropriation was identified as a complement to looseness. Appropriation is characterised in this thesis by visitors enacting a relative autonomy and self-expression as they identify or exploit possibilities in the environment. The term appropriation draws on a proposition established by Franck and Stevens (2006, p. 3) to express the notion that people can participate in public spaces according to their needs and preferences whilst recognising the

needs and preferences of others. In this sense, appropriation is a positive construct expressed by Lefebvre (1991, p. 166) as appropriation without domination. Franck and Stevens observe that appropriation occurs more readily in loose spaces as they are open to individualisation (or personalisation in the context of this thesis), making people feel they have the mental freedom to act in a way that meets their needs and preferences. They also explain that appropriation develops in two ways. People either identify or exploit possibilities in the environment. To identify suggests that the possibilities are readily available, explicit and therefore designed or managed. To exploit suggests a degree of subversion on the environment by visitors. Although the former can be expected, the latter allows for the unexpected to emerge.

In the public interior, visitors identify possibilities in the environment when they enact appropriation in a way that aligns to design and management practices. For example, the loose practice of providing moveable furniture enables visitors to identify possibilities for appropriation by rearranging the furniture in a way that best suit their preferences. Whyte (1980) considers moveable furniture a desirable quality in public spaces because visitors can experience a relative autonomy (it is relative to the provision of furniture). Visitors can also exploit possibilities when they carry out activities the public interior was not originally intended for. Examples may include visitors playing games, using the space for group activities such as drawing, or children sliding down railings. In this sense, personalisation by visitors becomes a form of self-expression. Thus, the study of appropriation in this thesis is characterised by two principles, relative autonomy and self-expression. These attributes were also identified by Madanipour (2003) as those of personalisation in the home where the lineage for the personalisation of experience was established in this thesis, which suggests that they are fundamental to visitors' ability to personalise their experience. It is also possible to deduce that the more visitors enact a relative autonomy and self-expression, the looser the environment can become. For these reasons and following on from the discussion on looseness, this thesis posits that looseness can cultivate appropriation and that appropriation can also cultivate looseness. This will be explored in the case study in Chapter Five.

2.5.2. Defining exploration

Exploration was identified as a complement to enticement. Exploration is characterised by movement towards and body-environment interactions as visitors enact modes of approach behaviour. Visitors move towards and engage sensorially with the phenomena they are attracted to. The terminology approach behaviour is used in environmental psychology by

Mehrabian (1976) who identified two types of behaviour in the way people engage with their environment, approach and avoidance. Approach means that people actively interact with their environment whilst conversely, avoidance means that they minimise interactions. When they are enticed, visitors enact approach behaviour by moving towards phenomena to satisfy their curiosity. In this context, movement towards is exploratory because, Mehrabian explains, enacting approach behaviour means performing complex and deliberate body-environment interactions such as looking around eagerly, strolling about, listening, inhaling, or touching surfaces. Visitors explore the environment of the public interior by moving through it with their senses actively engaged.

This form of movement differs fundamentally from what Blundell Jones and Meagher (2015, p. 2) call “the mechanical discipline of circulation”, the mode of moving through space in the most efficient manner. Exploration has a slower rhythm, with pauses and emphasis, which coincides with the concept of *flânerie* defined by Tester (1994, p. 18) as an activity intrinsic to successful public spaces. According to Sennett (2019, p. 185), this way of moving through space can contribute to a deeper “lateral consciousness” because we are able to perceive more through our peripheral vision. Lateral consciousness gives us richer information about our environment than focused vision and, according to Pallasmaa (2005, p. 15), “enfolds the subject in the space”. In the context of this thesis however, lateral consciousness is not simply visual. It is a whole bodily experience through which all our senses, sight, hearing, smell, touch, and the movement of the body and body parts, are engaged. Thus, public interiors that invite people to explore, slow down and pause can enrich their ability to perceive the environment through all their senses for its environment “to become the centre of felt values” (Tuan 1977, p. 138). For these reasons and following on from the discussion on enticement, this thesis posits that enticement can cultivate exploration. This will be explored in-depth in the case study in Chapter Five.

2.5.3. Defining privateness

Privateness was identified as a complement to porosity. It is characterised by visitors’ ability to enact positive territoriality from vantage points where they can maintain sensory connections with the macro-scale of the environment. The term privateness is used by Alexander (1977, p. 610) when referring to intimacy gradients. He explains that the way “spaces in a building are arranged in a sequence [...] corresponds to their degree of privateness.” In this study, privateness is understood as positive territoriality. This is expressed in two ways. Firstly, drawing on Bachelard’s (1958, p. 91) metaphor of the nest, visitors fulfil their need for nested

comfort when they define personal or group territories. Secondly, in alignment with Madanipour's (2003) description of the attributes of the home, through privateness, the public interior becomes a place where territories are formed, a place that provides physical and psychological shelter and comfort. Privateness occurs in the micro-scale of the body, which, according to Covatta (2017, p. 1), holds a "comparatively private position of isolation and protection, a feeling of being away from prying eyes, similar to a nest shaped by the weight of the body." Privateness, however, is not privacy. When they enact privateness, visitors are not withdrawing from the collective environment of the public interior. On the contrary, Whyte's (1980) research on public spaces show that people prefer public environments where they can define territories that have special qualities to them but still retain a degree of perceptual connection to the space and others around them. Hence, Covatta's use of the term 'comparatively'. Here, porosity provides a way for territories to become vantage points from which visitors can maintain sensory connections, such as visual, auditory or olfactive connections, with the macro-scale of the more dynamic and entangled collective environment. Thus, Covatta determines that micro and macro-scales are not in opposition but can exist in synthesis when environmental conditions that recognise the need for personal space are provided. For these reasons and following on from the discussion on porosity, this thesis posits that porosity can cultivate privateness. This will be explored in-depth in the case study in Chapter Five.

2.6. A working model for the study of personalisation

The principles and characteristics discussed in previous sections are brought together into a model that provides a concise overview of insights delineating the boundaries of this research. This model draws on the working definitions of the personalisation of the visitor experience outlined in Chapter One, as well as those of 'personalisation for' and 'personalisation by' developed in this chapter. It organises the six principles identified through the literature review into three pairs. Looseness is presented as a precursor to appropriation, enticement as a precursor to exploration, and porosity as a precursor to privateness.

The personalisation of the visitor experience.

- A visitor-centred approach that caters for a diversity of needs and preferences to enhance the visitor experience, including accessibility (the permeability of the public interior) and mental ownership.

The personalisation of experience for visitors.

- The way experiential design and management practices pertaining to looseness, enticement and porosity cultivate visitors' ability to enact a diversity of needs and preferences.
- Design and management practices in the physical environment generate spatio-sensory phenomena.

The personalisation of experience by visitors.

- The way visitors engage with the environment of the public interior through appropriation, exploration and privateness to enact a diversity of needs and preferred activities.
- Visitors' engagement and activities in the social environment generate socio-sensory phenomena.

Looseness cultivates appropriation - Appropriation cultivates looseness.

- **Looseness:** designers and managers provide enhanced accessibility (permeability) and freedom of choice.
- **Appropriation:** visitors identify or exploit possibilities in the environment to enact a relative autonomy or self-expression.

Enticement cultivates exploration.

- **Enticement:** designers and managers partly hide or partly reveal sensory phenomena to arouse curiosity. They also introduce forms and materials that invite touch.
- **Exploration:** visitors enact modes of approach behaviour characterised by movement towards, flânerie and body-environment sensory interactions.

Porosity cultivates privateness

- **Porosity:** designers and managers manipulate boundaries (no or little porosity), borders (partially porous edges) and liminal edges (sensory thresholds) to regulate sensory flows.
- **Privateness:** visitors enact positive territoriality in the micro-scale of the body from vantage points where they can maintain sensory connections with the macro-scale of the environment.

2.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the review of the literature through which the principles and characteristics pertaining to the personalisation of the visitor experience for this study were defined. I have identified two complementary and interdependent dimensions. The personalisation of experience for visitors relates to design and management practices in the physical environment. The personalisation of experience by visitors relates to the way visitors enact a diversity of needs and preferred activities; it reflects their active contribution to the social environment. 'Personalisation for' cultivates 'personalisation by' by following a visitor-centred approach. The use of the term 'cultivate' foregrounds the centrality of the visitor experience and the role of designers and managers as facilitators nurturing positive experiences. I also identified a link between the personalisation of experience and sensory phenomena in the environment and highlighted that design and management practices generate spatio-sensory phenomena, whilst visitors' actions and interactions generate socio-sensory phenomena. Furthermore, the personalisation of experience is contingent on the cultural environment, the geographical, historical, political and economic contexts that can impact design and management practices and consequently, the visitor experience. I acknowledged that the way visitors enact their experience may vary depending on their degree of familiarity with the public interior and on their personal culture. I then identified three pairs of principles to delimit the study of the personalisation of the visitor experience: looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, porosity and privateness. Looseness, enticement and porosity define the personalisation of experience for visitors. Appropriation, exploration and privateness define the personalisation of experience by visitors. Finally, I brought together definitions of principles and corresponding characteristics into a working model to lay the foundation for the site-specific research in this thesis. The following chapter delineated the structure of the theoretical context for this thesis.

Chapter 3: The theoretical dimensions of experience

This chapter defines the theoretical context for this thesis, bringing together three interconnected dimensions grounded in phenomenology to guide the development and analysis of this research. The experiential, embodied and sensory-emotional dimensions structure the theories that underpin this study into the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior and its contribution to emotional attachment to place. First, the experiential dimension introduces the phenomenological worldview underpinning this thesis, defines the categories of experience explored in this study, and outlines the fundamental phenomenological principles characterising the cultivation and enactment of personalisation in the collective environment of the public interior. This leads to the embodied dimension placing the sensing body as the primary means of perception, emphasising the significance of mental images and illuminating how enactment occurs through embodied perception. Next, the sensory-emotional dimension articulates the sense-making process through which visitors can assign qualities to their experience of the public interior. This is followed by a discussion outlining the relation between rewarding experiences and emotional attachment to place.

3.1. The experiential dimension

The need to enquire into visitors' experiences grounds the theoretical context in phenomenology, a philosophy that developed in the early part of the twentieth century with Edmund Husserl as its modern founder. Sokolowski (2000, p. 2) defines phenomenology as "the study of human experience and of the ways things present themselves to us in and through such experiences." Phenomenology engages with the nature of embodied knowledge and with the study of conscious experience from a first-person perspective (Gallagher 2012, Seamon 2015). Cerbone (2006, p. 108) also explains that whilst we tend to focus our attention on the things we experience (for instance, what is the chair like), phenomenology centres on the experience of things, on what it is like to have an experience (what it is like to experience the chair). Accordingly, this research moves away from a description of what the phenomena pertaining to the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior are like to instead establish a theoretical perspective that engages with the study of what it is like for visitors to experience spatio and socio-sensory phenomena generated through the cultivation and enactment of personalisation in the public interior. Phenomenology allows for the

unearthing of the way visitors perceive their experience of the environment of the public interior.

3.1.1. A phenomenological definition of experience

This thesis draws on Husserl's classification of experience to define the categories of experience investigated in this research. Husserl identified three types of experiences, *Erlebnis*, *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnisse* (Coxon 2015, p. 14). The original German names are retained here because, Coxon explains, the English language does not provide a suitable direct translation although he contributes a definition. *Erlebnis* are deeply and personally felt lived through experiences we are conscious of. *Erfahrung* are every day, mundane experiences we are less conscious of and that are not very memorable. *Erlebnisse* are our cumulative prior experiences that contribute to our phenomenal worldview. The experiences investigated in this research are those corresponding to Husserl's definition of *Erlebnis* and *Erlebnisse*, *Erlebnis* being a precursor to *Erlebnisse*. *Erlebnis* because these are the experiences that are deeply and personally felt, a prerequisite for emotional attachment to place to occur. *Erlebnisse* because this represents the cumulative effect of deeply and personally felt experiences. Furthermore, Husserl tells us that *Erlebnis and Erlebnisse* are lived through experiences and Frechette et al. (2020, p. 3) explain that this is because the way they are experienced "makes a special impression that gives it lasting importance." Thus, within the context of looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, porosity and privateness and their contribution to emotional attachment to place, this understanding confirms the need to explore deeply and personally felt lived experiences visitors are conscious of and their cumulative effect. *Erlebnis* and *Erlebnisse* colour our phenomenal worldview and in the context of this thesis, this worldview is expressed through what it is like, or feel like since this is about emotional attachment, for visitors to experience phenomena pertaining to the cultivation and enactment of personalisation.

3.1.2. The lifeworld of personalisation

According to Gallagher (2012), the lifeworld, *Lebenswelt* in German, is one of phenomenology's basic concepts because the lifeworld is where lived experiences are situated. This study explores the lifeworld of personalisation, where lived experiences pertaining to the cultivation and enactment of looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, porosity and privateness, are situated. Gallagher (2012, p. 2) explains that:

[The lifeworld] is connected to the fact that we are already situated in the world. It is the collection of situations in which we find ourselves involved - it is the world as we live it, not just the world as it opens up in front of us as perceiving subjects, but the world which is at the same time something *already there* operating as a meaningful background for all of our actions and interactions.

Gallagher's insights incorporate foundational principles for this thesis. Firstly, echoing Husserl's definition of *Erlebnis*, Gallagher tells us that we are situated in the lifeworld because it is the world as we live it. Drawing on Reynolds (2017), this means that visitors are not mere spectators abstracted from a situation. They are situated in the lifeworld of personalisation because they live through it. The notion of being situated is expressed in phenomenology by Heidegger through the concept of being-in-the-world, *Dasein* in German, literally translated as 'being there' (Cerbone 2006, p. 42). According to Harnett (2021), this concept influenced the development of the ontological design theory this research associates itself with because being is always relational. Design is thus ontological because it defines "the condition of what is" that characterises "the relation between humans and lifeworlds" (Willis 2006, p. 70). This reflects "a fundamental intertwining of person and place" (Brand 2023, p. 41) and Pallasmaa (2023, p. 57) talks about situatedness being an exchange between body and space. As we enter a space, the space also becomes part of us. Visitors cannot exist independently from the environment of the public interior because, drawing on Merleau-Ponty latest work (1968), Apostolopoulos (2016, p. 682) underlines that there is "a relation of reversibility between seer and seen [...] to see is also to be seen, to touch is to be touched." On this view, perception is not a unidirectional mental activity, it is not simply the active seeing or judging of an object; "to perceive is to be open to the object's solicitation, to allow one's vision to be guided and directed by the object's properties." For Merleau-Ponty, we are open to and respond to the solicitations of the world around us (Apostolopoulos 2016, Hale 2017). Hence, as visitors engage with the interior, they become enmeshed with it, and this goes back to Heidegger's non-dualistic model of being-in-the-world. Here, visitors are beings-in-the-environment-of-the-public-interior. Secondly, Gallagher highlights that the world operates as a meaningful background for our actions and interactions. Here, visitors' ability to enact appropriation, exploration and privateness is cultivated through design and management practices pertaining to looseness, enticement and porosity. These constitute a meaningful background for visitors to engage with the environment of the public interior. Hence, the designed and managed public interior may come into being through the way visitors become conscious of what it is like to experience its environment as they enact appropriation, exploration and privateness. This discernment strengthens the argument for cultivation.

Thirdly, Gallagher's view that the lifeworld constitutes a collection of situations is of particular significance for this thesis. To bring precision to the notion that situations can come together into a collection, this study draws on Dewey (1987) who tells us that experience is a flow lived through a process governed by the actions and interactions of people in the world. In this sense visitors experience the lifeworld of personalisation as a flow governed by the way they engage with the environment of the public interior as they enact appropriation, exploration and privateness. This is not the same flow as the sensory flow discussed in Chapter Two. Here, the word flow is used by Dewey to express the notion that experience occurs continuously. It has a rhythm, with pauses and emphasis, but it is without gaps. As a continuous process, experience always flows from one thing to another. It has a completeness where, Seamon (2016b) tells us, patterns of perception, feeling and thinking interrelate. This concept was defined by Alexander (2004) as wholeness, which is also the preferred term for this thesis. Experience has a wholeness because it has unifying qualities even though it is not perceived as one homogeneous flow but as a collection of situations. For example, a day is a continuous flow of experience but within that day, we can distinguish between situations because of the perceived qualities that differentiate them from one another. The experience of a meal, the taste of the food, sitting down at a table with friends, is perceived as a different situation than walking in a forest, listening to the birds, looking at the dappled sunlight through the trees. We know this because these situations have distinct qualities, each has a discreet flow and a discreet wholeness. Yet, at the same time, they may be part of the flow of experience and wholeness of the entire day and together with other discreet situations, they constitute a collection. This means that the lifeworld of the personalisation of experience in the public interior can be examined as a collection of situations bringing together lived experiences of looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, or porosity and privateness, each with distinct qualities and wholeness. They constitute the wholeness of the lifeworld of the personalisation of the visitor experience for this thesis.

3.1.3. The collective experience of the lifeworld

Phenomenology has sometimes been criticised for its focus on individual phenomenal worldview lacking a social dimension, but for Heidegger, being-in-the-world is also being-with-others (Frechette et al. 2020, pp. 2-3). This means that visitors cannot exist independently from the social environment of the public interior, their experience is both individual and collective, converging across micro and macro-scales. Thus, the collective experience of the lifeworld of personalisation is also intrinsic to the first-person perspective of the individual visitor; as visitors enact appropriation, exploration and privateness simultaneously, lived experiences

intertwine. Although not writing specifically from a phenomenological standpoint, Escobar (2018, p. 38) also points out that some architects consider place to be “a crossroads of flows and events and an inevitable space of transformation on an always-shifting ground”. Accordingly, the lifeworld cannot be conceived as a stable and ordered system with clearly defined boundaries such as a network.

To illustrate the dynamic condition of the collective experience of the lifeworld, this thesis draws on Ingold’s (2011) theory of the Meshwork in ecological anthropology. Ingold (p. 63) describes the Meshwork as “entangled lines of life, growth and movement [...] the world we inhabit. [It is] not a network of connected points, but a meshwork of interwoven lines.” The lifeworld in which situations pertaining to the personalisation of experience unfold has a complex and fluid structure, and even though experience has a wholeness, the flow of lived experiences is always in flux and unbounded. Here, the tangled texture of lines of interaction characterise the cultivation and enactment of lived experiences of looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness, and discreet situations may come together into a collection as the lines temporarily intersect. Thus, Ingold’s theory of the Meshwork expresses the convergence of individual experiences into collective ones and the changeability of the lifeworld. It acknowledges that although a phenomenological study of what it is or feels like to experience personalisation in the public interior calls for a first-person perspective, this nonetheless takes place within a collective context, bringing together a multiplicity of first-person perspectives into collections of situations.

3.2. The embodied dimension

Building on the concept of situatedness discussed above, this study takes the view that the sensing body and its environment are intimately connected. Here, an embodied epistemological worldview influenced by Merleau-Ponty (2004, 2012) places the body as the primary means of perception because it is through the materiality of the body that we can perceive the materiality of our environment. Merleau-Ponty (2012, p. 140) tells us that the body is not in space but inhabits space; perception is shaped by the body physically inhabiting its environment. The phenomenological theory of embodiment originated with Husserl who rejected the Cartesian mind-body dualism, and it was revisited by Merleau-Ponty for whom knowledge “begins in the realm of embodied experience and only later does it become available to intellectual classification” (Hale 2017, p. 11). Merleau-Ponty (2004, p. 43) stated that it is through the body that we perceive and develop our understanding of the world,

declaring that rather than having a mind and a body, we have a mind with a body, and that we are beings “who can only get to the truth of things” because our bodies are embedded in those things. Thus, perception is an event of the whole body and there is no distinction between body and mind or between body and environment (Mallgrave 2018, p. 45). In the context of this study, this means that visitors perceive the environment of the public interior, its sounds, smells, colours, textures, movement, and so forth, because they inhabit its spaces and interact with these, their objects and people, through the materiality of their body. The theory of embodiment illuminates the dependence of the body on its environment, and this non-dualistic epistemological perspective brings body, mind and environment together in the study of the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior.

3.2.1. The primacy of sensing in embodied perception

The embodied nature of lived experiences places sensing as a primal dimension of perception. Echoing phenomenology’s rejection of the Cartesian mind-body dualism, Borch (2014, p. 12) explains that “our pre-intellectual encounter with architecture is a multisensory experience. A space is seen, felt and heard, etc. before it is consciously and intellectually reflected upon.” Here, the body is the organ of perception through which visitors experience the environment of the public interior. Mallgrave (2018, p. 44) points out that perception as a whole body event cannot be the faculty of a single sensory modality. It is always multisensory. Hara (2017, p. 100) illustrates the multisensory character of perception by referring to the way infants learn about the world through interrelated sensory phenomena. He explains that although at first, they are not able to grasp the significance of sensations, these progressively acquire personal values when “experiences in hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling acquire meaning altogether.” Taking a more existentialist view, Premthada (2023, p. 139) argues that to learn how to be human means living through all our senses. We make sense of the world and of ourselves through our senses. In the context of this thesis, visitors perceive qualities in the environment of the public interior and develop an impression of their experience, whether a positive or a negative one, through sensing. Le Breton (2017, p. 10) corroborates this perspective by explaining that:

Sensation is immediately submerged in perception, and knowledge arises between the two, reminding us that human beings are not just biological mechanisms but meaning-making creatures too. Seeing, hearing, tasting, touching or smelling are ways of thinking about the world [...].

Thus, the senses collaborate. Writing about the unity of the senses, Merleau-Ponty (2012, p. 243) explains that “the senses communicate in perception just as the two eyes collaborate in vision.” Bachelard (1971, p. 6) poetically calls it “the polyphony of the senses”. For example, in the intentional act of eating an apple, I may first see the apple. I recognise that it is an apple, but I need to touch it to feel its surface and assess its firmness, and perhaps even smell it before I decide to eat it. Then the taste, the sound of its flesh breaking as I bite, the juice and texture, provide additional layers of information. Although each sensory modality, sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste, fulfils a specific role in providing information about the apple, it is only because they collaborate that I am able to grasp what the experience of eating the apple is like, and whether it is enjoyable (or not). Howes (2005) highlights that different patterns of perception can also emerge depending on the order in which the sensory phenomena occur. My perception of the apple could, for instance, be different if I was to taste it before seeing it.

Although the example of the apple illustrates how the senses collaborate, it is an extreme simplification. Perception is highly complex because the lifeworld of personalisation is a collective world in which the flow of lived experiences with its infinitude of phenomena is always in flux and its boundaries are diffused. Nonetheless, and crucially for this research, experience has a wholeness, and we first perceive situations as unified wholes because of their pervading qualities. Referencing Husserl, Gendlin (2018, p. xx) illustrates this point with a simple example. We don’t hear sounds as distinct sensations; we hear the meaningful wholes of motorcycles or doors slamming. Merleau-Ponty (2012, p. 4) also illustrates the pervading qualities of situations with another example. He explains that the experience of seeing a red patch of woolly carpet cannot be construed as the combination of the sensation of red plus the sensation of woolliness because the red that is perceived cannot be this red were it not also woolly (and conversely the woolliness would not be the same woolliness if it wasn’t this red). Merleau-Ponty (2012, p. 4) concludes that “the features of perception inform and infuse one another, and so cannot be treated as autonomous elements, standing only in external relation to one another”. The red is perceived through vision and the wool through vision and touch. The former contributes information about the colour of the carpet. The latter about its texture, thickness, softness, etc. Together, these sensory phenomena contribute to the wholeness of the experience of the carpet, and the carpet is perceived as a meaningful whole and not as a series of visual and tactile sensations. In embodied perception, the senses are not passive receptors recording distinct sensations but bodily organs that enable us to grasp situations as meaningful wholes (Johnson 2007, p. xii, Hara 2017, p. 69); “[w]e receive a total impression of the thing we are looking at and give no thought to the various senses that have contributed to that impression” (Rasmussen 1959, p. 224). This means that although perception occurs

through sensing, the study of the visitor experience cannot be reduced to the study of sensations because visitors do not perceive individual phenomena but the wholeness of situations pertaining to looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness.

3.2.2. Definition of embodied perception and mental images

This thesis investigates deeply and personally felt lived experiences visitors are conscious of (*Erlebnis*) and their cumulative effect (*Erlebnisse*). Thus, whilst lived experiences are understood through embodied perception in the present, information must also be retained in memory and then recalled for these experiences to have a cumulative effect. Drawing on Damasio (2000) and Cope (2019), information recollected from the past is referred to throughout this thesis as mental images although the word ‘image’ is not used to reference visual phenomena specifically but to reflect our ability to recall prior experiences. Mental images derive from multisensory phenomena perceived in the present through bodily engagements with our environment and as such, they are “an active, vital repository of information gathered through sensual experience – through sight, sound, smell, touch and taste” (Downing 1994, p. 235). Together embodied perception and mental images define the way we develop our knowledge of the world and of ourselves through our senses. In this thesis, *Erlebnis* corresponds to embodied perception in the present and *Erlebnisse* to mental images accumulated over time.

In embodied perception, we are not consciously aware of all sensory phenomena; the perceptual process is selective. Cope (2019) explains that sensing, direct sensation in the present, includes an abundance of information. It is inexhaustible, which suggests that being conscious of all stimuli would be overwhelming. Thus, people are “highly selective in their act of seeking information” (Mallgrave 2018, p. 46) and only the information that resonates with the individual is consciously recognised. Cope calls it “finding meaning” and “recognition”. This is also defined by Goldstein (2010, p. 6) as “attended stimulus”. This occurs because, Johnson (2007, p. 89) explains, we attend “to some aspects of a continuous situation in such a way that a quality or pattern stands out as distinguished from other patterns or aspects of a situation”. The mental images that derive from embodied perception seem even more selective. According to Downing (1994, p. 235, italics in the original text),

[A mental image] does not include all the environmental information contained in a particular place or event experience. Instead, the mental image presents a *version* of experience that is most important to the individual or situation at a particular moment in time.

The information in mental images is less detailed than in embodied perception, but they can be more powerful in connecting people to places or events because the features that are retained and recalled are those that were the most significant to the individual, those that were deeply and personally felt. It follows that mental images can represent an important source of information for this study since it is interested in emotional attachment to place.

Although embodied perception and mental images are described as two distinct processes, they are concomitant. The following example illustrates this principle. I see a flower, an embodied perception in the present. I become aware of the beauty of the petals and of the colour of the flower. I have seen flowers before, and I also have a mental image which tells me they can sometimes smell nice. I wonder about the smell of this particular flower, and I know from the cumulative effect of prior experiences, that smelling the flower could be pleasurable. I smell the flower, and it smells wonderful. This particular experience confirms my expectation and compounds previous mental images of similar experiences I associate with flowers. Together, embodied perception and mental images connect me to flowers in a positive way. Objectively, the flower has a shape, a colour and a smell, but it is the pleasurable visual and olfactory qualities I derive from flowers enhanced by the mental images that I retain from previous experiences that are conducive to my ability to develop a positive emotional connection with flowers. Furthermore, if the flower is located in a specific place, then it is possible to infer that the recurring experience of beauty and pleasure is not only associated with the flower but also with the place where the flower is located. This example illustrates how the processes that underpin the correspondence between embodied perception and mental images can contribute to the development of emotional connections and illustrates the value of mental images for this study.

3.2.3. The relation between embodied perception and enactment

To describe the ties between embodied perception and enactment, this thesis follows in the footsteps of Merleau-Ponty who borrowed from the theory of Umwelt (Hale 2017, p. 27), a model of perception put forward by ethologist (a branch of biology) Jakob von Uexküll. The term 'Umwelt' refers to the subjective world of an organism (Kull 2001, p. 7), which in the context of this study becomes the meaningful environment of visitors. The theory of Umwelt

aligns with the embodied epistemology in this thesis because it also brings body, mind and world together by placing the sensing body-as-lived as the primary means of perception, albeit in a biological rather than philosophical context. Mallgrave (2018, p. 44, quotation marks in the original text) provides a concise description of the way organisms enact their own world according to von Uexküll's theory of Umwelt:

An organism's perception is always bounded in its own "surrounding environment", whose limits are defined by sensory "carriers" of meaning particular to that organism. Humans, for instance, may perceive a flower as an ornament, but an insect may perceive it as an impediment or a meal. Each organism in effect enacts its own world.

Von Uexküll (2001, p. 108) explains that organisms enact their own world because of the differences in the physiology of their sensory organs. He uses the simple example of the tick to illustrate his theory. When hunting for warm blooded animals, the tick being blind and deaf relies entirely on smell and temperature. The smell of butyric acid that emanates from the skin glands of mammals acts as a signal for the tick to jump on a potential prey and the contact with a warm-blooded organism signals that a prey has been reached. This is the extent of the tick's Umwelt when hunting. Likewise, diverse organisms, humans included, enact their Umwelt differently because they are bounded to the sensory organs they are equipped with. Merleau-Ponty holds that the lived body is "a set of possibilities for actions" (Hale 2017, p. 9); embodied perception defines enactment. In the context of this thesis, this means that the way visitors perceive the environment of the public interior through their senses, and more specifically phenomena pertaining to looseness, enticement and porosity, impacts the way they enact appropriation, exploration and privateness. This perspective further strengthens the argument for design and management practices to cultivate visitors' ability to assign positive qualities to their experience as they enact diverse and preferred activities rather than impede this process.

Similarly, in his theory of Affordances, Gibson (1986) defines the affordances of the environment as what it offers the animal but points out that it is neither an objective or subjective property, that it is both contingent on the environment and on behaviour. Gibson (1986, pp. 139-140) explains that:

"The observer may or may not perceive or attend to the affordance, according to his need, but the affordance, being invariant, is always there to be perceived [...] The perceiving of an affordance is not a process of perceiving a value-free physical object to which meaning is somehow added in a way that no one has been able to agree upon; it is a process of perceiving a value-rich ecological object."

In the public interior, invariant affordances are defined by design and management practices, recalling Gallagher's (2012, p. 2) notion that the environment operates as a meaningful background for our actions and interactions. Although they bear similarities, the theory of Affordances and the theory of Umwelt also differ. The theory of Affordances foregrounds the role of 'personalisation for' (design and management practices), anchoring the complementarity and interrelation between 'personalisation for' and 'personalisation by'. The theory of Umwelt illuminates a qualitative dimension in the relation between embodied perception and enactment and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenal view that "to perceive is to be open to the object's solicitation" (Apostolopoulos 2016). In the theory of Umwelt, organisms enact their own world through the way they assign meanings and transform sensory stimuli into properties, such as, going back to Mallgrave's examples above, the property of being an ornament or the property of being a meal. In this study, this indicates that visitors can associate qualities with the environment of the public interior, such as the quality of being comfortable or pleasurable. Ingold (2011, p. 79) explains that "von Uexküll maintained that what he called the 'quality' (*Ton*) of a thing, by virtue of which it has significance for a particular creature, is not intrinsic to the thing itself but is *acquired* by virtue of its having been drawn into that creature's activity." In this sense, Ingold's description resonates with Sokolowski's (2000, p. 2) definition of phenomenology previously referenced in the discussion on the experiential dimension, notably the emphasis on "the ways things present themselves to us". The qualities visitors assign to the environment of the public interior are not objectively intrinsic to this environment but relative to their perception of phenomena within it.

Thus, "the body is neither object nor instrument, it is rather the *subject* of perception" (Ingold 2000, p. 169). The use of the term 'subject' echoes the reference to first-person perspectives in this study. Perception is relative to the individual visitor, because, whilst first-person perspectives are bound to the collective environment, embodied perception cannot be shared (Coxon 2015). Humans are far more complex and nuanced than the tick and visitors enact a multiplicity of Umwelten (the plural of Umwelt) in the lifeworld of personalisation. This relativist ontology is acknowledged, variations in perception and enactment between individuals are to be expected. However, this study is not an in-depth exploration into how all visitors perceive or enact the environment of the public interior, but an in-depth investigation into specific situations related to the enactment of appropriation, exploration and privateness in this environment. Consequently, variations between individual Umwelten will be brought together in this research into a collection of situations constitutive of the collective enactment of the personalisation of experience.

3.3. The sensory-emotional dimension

Emotionality is not simply an internal bodily state, it is an essential element of embodied perception and permeates environmental experience (Dewey 1987, Gendlin 1992, Damasio 2000, Zumthor 2006, Johnson 2007, Colombetti 2014, Mallgrave 2015, Pallasmaa 2015b, Brand 2023). Design elements and organising principles such as colour, texture, scale or rhythm, for instance, can engage the senses and in doing so, contribute to our perception of the emotional tone of a space (Mallgrave 2018, p. 116). The way people interact with a space and with each other also generates socio-sensory phenomena that can affect us in a similar way. Thus, Tuan (1977, p. 8) firmly declares that “emotion tints all human experience”; experience is embodied and emotional. The phenomena generated through the design and management of the public interior and those generated through enactment are not only sensed but also experienced by visitors emotionally. This close relation between sensing and emotionality underpins the sensory-emotional dimension of the lifeworld of personalisation for this thesis.

3.3.1. The emotionality of experience

Emotionality is an immediate response to the wholeness of experience. According to Johnson (2007, p. 66), this view of experience originates with Dewey who claimed that “emotions are not internal subjective states of feeling and that the entire situation itself has emotional character”. Johnson (2007, p. 67) holds that it is situations, not the mind, that are the locus of emotions. Dewey (1987, p. 150) illustrates the emotional character of experience with the following examples:

The total overwhelming impression comes first, perhaps in a seizure by a sudden glory of the landscape, or by the effect upon us of entrance into a cathedral when dim light, incense, stained glass and majestic proportions fuse in one indistinguishable whole. We say with truth that a painting strikes us. There is an impact that precedes all definite recognition of what it is about.

Dewey’s allusion to the visual impact of the dim light and stained glass, to the smell of the incense, and to the correspondence between body and space, illustrates the primacy of embodiment in emotional responses. The sensory-emotional dimension of experience is often referred to as atmosphere in architectural and philosophical discourses (Böhme 1993, 2005, 2017, Zumthor 2006, Griffero 2010, 2014, Pallasmaa 2015a). Zumthor (2006, p. 13), who according to Weston (2011, p. 180) defines himself as an “architectural phenomenologist”,

explains that the first thing he experiences when he enters a space is how its atmosphere resonates with his emotional sensibility. It is the way a building moves him that determines his ability to perceive qualities in architecture. The perception of qualities however is not restricted to the physical environment. Brand (2023, p. 145) explains that “the mood of a room” emerges through its design (and in this study subsequent management), and that “the mood in a room” emanates from the actions of its inhabitants. Together, the spatio and socio sensory phenomena that originate in the design, management and enactment of the personalisation of experience can thus contribute to the emotional tone of the public interior.

Küller (1980, p. 87) however noted that the emotional responses derived from our engagement with the built environment are not always easy to identify because they may be too subtle to be acknowledged. Here, this thesis draws on Damasio (2000) to differentiate between emotions and feelings. Emotions occur at the preconscious level and precede the conscious awareness of feelings. Johnson (2007, p. 56) also describes emotions as one of the higher-level processes that make meaningful experiences possible, describing the next level, feelings, as the “qualitative awareness of our sensations and emotional responses.” This study is concerned with deeply and personally felt lived through experiences visitors are conscious of, which refers to feelings rather than emotions. However, it is important to note that this research is not a study of emotions/feelings. It is not about finding out how visitors feel but about exploring their emotional responses to the way an environment is designed, managed and enacted. Going back to the phenomenological enquiry that underpins this thesis, it is a study of what it is or feels like for visitors to experience the environment of the public interior. For instance, it is not about finding out whether visitors feel relaxed and happy but whether they find their experience of the environment of the public interior relaxing and enjoyable. It seeks to uncover emotional responses to embodied perception and mental images, the qualities that visitors assign to their experience of the environment. As the conscious awareness of these qualities emerge through the emotionality of the sensing body, they are referred to throughout this thesis as emotional qualities. They define the emotional tone of the environment for visitors.

3.3.2. The sense-making process

The sense-making process brings together the sensing body and the perception of emotional qualities. To illustrate this process, this thesis draws on Thomson, Crocker and Marketo (2010, p. 1117) who provide a model they call conceptual associations. They structure the model across two categories: functionality and emotionality. They define functionality as “[c]onceptualisations that have immediate or eventual functional connotations” and

emotionality as “[c]onceptualisations that have immediate or eventual emotional connotations”. This study focuses on emotionality, which Thomson, Crocker and Marketo further divide into “emotional conceptualisation” and “abstract conceptualisation”. For example, ‘the chair is comfortable’ illustrates emotional conceptualisation. Sitting on the chair generates kinaesthetic and tactile phenomena, which the sitter may associate with the quality of comfort. This experience may be comfortable and comforting. The process of conceptualisation is consequential because the kinaesthetic and tactile phenomena are the consequence of an action, the action of sitting on the chair. ‘The chair is beautiful’ illustrates abstract conceptualisation. Looking at the chair, the onlooker may associate its features with the quality of beauty. This experience may be pleasurable and enjoyable. The process of conceptualisation is communicated because visual phenomena are perceived when looking at the chair. In the context of this study, it is understood that the sitter and onlooker may develop a positive connection with the chair because of its perceived comfort and beauty. However, these examples underline that it is not so much the object ‘chair’ that is conducive to positive emotional connections but rather the experience of comfort/comforting and pleasure/enjoyment. In accordance with the notion that the qualities visitors perceive in their Umwelt are not intrinsic to the environment but to their perception of phenomena within it, the qualities of comfort/comforting and pleasure/enjoyment are not intrinsic to the chair, they are acquired by the chair by virtue of the way sitter and onlooker conceptualise their experience.

Whilst Thomson, Crocker and Marketo’s model articulates a process for visitors to be able to develop positive emotional connections with the environment of the public interior through sensing, its structure is examined and simplified for this study because the phenomenological focus of this thesis centres on ‘what it is/feels like to experience’ and therefore on emotionality. First, the terminology sense-making is preferred to conceptualisation because it aligns more closely with the embodied dimension in this thesis. Then, the use of ‘emotional conceptualisation’ and ‘abstract conceptualisation’ to define the sub-categories of emotionality is not retained because it adds a non-essential layer of complexity to the sense-making process for this study. Instead, the focus on emotionality is maintained and within this, the distinction between consequential and communicated sensory phenomena is preserved. Here, phenomena generated through design and management practices (personalisation for) are typically communicated (to visitors). Phenomena generated through enactment (personalisation by) are typically consequential since visitors enact their own experience, but they could also be communicated when visitors see or hear others enact their experience. Communicated phenomena can thus constitute a meaningful background for visitors’ actions

and interactions, whilst consequential phenomena can enrich the potential for intimacy between body and environment.

3.3.3. Towards emotional attachment to place

According to Damasio (2000, p. 55), “emotions are inseparable from the idea of reward and punishment”, reward being typically conducive to positive emotions, and punishment being typically conducive to negative emotions. This thesis centres on the perception of positive emotional qualities. Therefore, the study of the sense-making process through which the personalisation of the visitor experience can contribute to emotional attachment to place focuses on rewarding sensory phenomena in the environment of the public interior. Whilst the way we perceive our environment is coloured by personal and cultural filters, experiencing its sensory phenomena as rewards (or punishment) is unavoidable because it originates in human physiology. Gad El Rab (2021) explains that there are dopamine pathways in the brain. One of these, the mesolimbic pathway, allows us to detect rewarding stimuli. Another, the mesocortical pathway, relates to emotions and motivation. Dopamine is increased when we do something pleasurable, something that makes us happy. This contributes to the encoding of memory, which in turn allows us to attribute significance to the stimuli associated with the reward and motivates us to come back for more. Whilst neuroscientists are still exploring the way dopamine regulates learning and motivation (Willhun 2023), transposed to the context of this study, this process indicates that visitors could develop positive emotional connections with the environment of the public interior if their experience rewarding phenomena. It also highlights that rewarding phenomena are more likely to be perceived as significant and thus retained as mental images, which, in turn, can motivate visitors to come back to re-live the experience. From this and going back to the definitions of *Erlebnis* and *Erlebnisse*, it is possible to infer that, in time, the cumulative effect of these personally felt lived through experiences may deepen visitors’ bond with the public interior and contribute to emotional attachment. This will be examined in the specific context of looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness.

3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I defined three interconnected theoretical dimensions: experiential, embodied and sensory-emotional. They are grounded in phenomenology, bringing attention to the primacy of embodied perception and to the emotionality of the sensing body. The experiential

dimension brings forth a phenomenological question for this thesis: what is it like or what does it feel like for visitors to personalise their experience of the public interior? I defined the type of experiences examined in this study as the deeply and personally felt lived experiences visitors are conscious of and the cumulative effect of prior experiences. I then discussed how visitors are situated in the lifeworld of personalisation and how it can be structured into a collection of situations, each with its own wholeness. Furthermore, I argued that whilst phenomenology is concerned with first-person perspectives, the experience of the public interior is collective and individual lived experiences intertwine with those of others.

The embodied dimension articulates how visitors engage with and perceive the environment of the public interior through their senses. This non-dualistic epistemological perspective brings mind, body and environment together. The embodied dimension also substantiates the notion that we do not perceive sensations but situations as meaningful wholes because of their pervading qualities. I then established that together, embodied perception in the present and the recollection of significant mental images from the past colour the way we perceive our environment. This is however relative to the subject of perception because the qualities visitors associate with their environment are not objectively intrinsic to this environment, they emerge as visitors engage with their environment through their senses. Variations will be brought together in this research into collections of situations.

Following on from this, the sensory-emotional dimension foregrounds the emotionality of the sensing body. It articulates how visitors can conceptualise sensory phenomena that are either communicated in the environment or the consequence of an action into emotional qualities. This understanding structures the sense-making process through which visitors can develop positive emotional connections with the environment of the public interior. I then outlined how the cumulative effect of rewarding phenomena can develop into deeply felt emotional connections to, over time, contribute to emotional attachment to place. The experiential, embodied and sensory-emotional dimensions lay the foundation for the methodology introduced in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Research design

This chapter presents the research design for this study. Drawing on insights from Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior and its contribution to emotional attachment to place is investigated through an in-depth site-specific study in the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall, a major cultural venue in London (the Royal Festival Hall is referred to from this point onwards by its initialism RFH except in 4.2.1 when it is referenced by its full name because it features alongside other public interiors). First, a methodology grounded in phenomenology is presented. Next, methodological limitations are addressed, and the research questions introduced in Chapter One are developed and discussed. This is followed by a comprehensive analysis of the research site to evidence its relevance to the study, outline the position of the RFH as a public interior, and define the environmental selection for this research by identifying the specific areas within the interior that are investigated in this study. Then, to respond to the research questions, a research plan is constructed following a scaffolded approach in two stages. The first stage brings together a case study and interviews with staff and visitors in the public interior of the RFH. The second stage involves design experiments conducted with students to test insights from the first stage.

4.1. Methodology

The phenomenological theoretical context structuring this thesis defined how this research investigates embodied experiences in the public interior to uncover what it feels like for visitors to enact appropriation, exploration and privateness and how their experience is cultivated through design and management practices pertaining to looseness, enticement and porosity. It highlighted that this will be achieved by examining the relation between sensing and the perception of emotional qualities to understand how rewarding sensory phenomena can contribute to visitors' ability to develop positive and deeply felt emotional connections with the environment of the public interior. Accordingly, the methodology is grounded in a phenomenologically inspired conception of experience. It is interpretative rather than descriptive because it seeks to understand what it is/feels like to experience. Drawing on Frechette et al. (2020, p. 4, italics in the original text), it is oriented toward understanding and uncovering lived experiences of "one's *horizon of significance of being-in-the-world*" and those of "individuals in constant *being-with-others*" because individual experiences of the public interior unfold within the collective meshwork of lived experiences.

Thus, the experiential, embodied and sensory-emotional dimensions defined in Chapter Three lay the foundation for the structure of a methodology structured by the wholeness of situations, the primacy of the sensing body in perception and the interpretation of rewarding sensory phenomena into positive emotional qualities. The wholeness of situations is the starting point for this research because even though the flow of experience is continuous, experience always flows from one thing to another, it is not homogeneous, and situations pertaining to looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, porosity and privateness can therefore be identified because of their perceived wholeness. The situations can then be grouped into three collections, one for each of the three pairs of principles identified for this thesis, to collate a multiplicity of experiences into discreet typologies. As situations reflect the phenomenal experiences of individuals, they also represent the collective environment of the public interior where lived experiences intertwine. Here, individual and collective experiences coalesce into one type of situation and together, the collections and situations within them represent the lifeworld of the personalisation of experience investigated in this study.

4.1.1. Methodological limitations

This thesis acknowledges limitations related to working with a single site. In the early stages of the site selection process, two options presented themselves for one researcher working alone to realistically complete this research. The first was to carry out a study across different sites. The second was to select a single site as an exemplar for an in-depth study. The second option was selected because the ability to study a single environment provided an opportunity to carry out a more thorough investigation into the lifeworld of personalisation and corresponding lived experiences. Haverkamp (2013) argues that since qualitative attributes are non-measurable and difficult to describe, there is value in working with a single in-depth case study that focuses on the particular. This research is about understanding the contribution of the personalisation of the visitor experience to emotional attachment to place, and from this, develop a framework for design. Thus, it requires a site that can support a comprehensive examination of this topic to generate the breadth and depth of knowledge required to achieve these aims. The site selection process will be discussed in-depth in 4.2.1.

Nonetheless, working with a single site still raises issues of transferability and adaptability. It is essential to ensure that the sensory-emotional framework developed in this study is not tied to the specific physical, social and cultural contexts intrinsic to the site, or to the specific

timescale of this research, in such a way that it cannot be used in any other settings. Thus, opportunities for change will be built into the framework, change being defined here as a change of context or conditions. The design framework developed in this research should not be exclusively dependent on a specific cultural context and should be adaptable to changing conditions such as the recent impact of COVID 19 on the design and management of public interiors. To achieve this, looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, porosity and privateness, were identified through a review of relevant literature rather than relying solely on the fieldwork. They represent established and robust principles that are not tied to the specific contexts and conditions of the site selected for this research. They define the boundaries of this study and those of the sensory-emotional framework, but they do not represent a finite and single model for the cultivation and enactment of the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior. They ground the framework in a stable structure, but it remains open to the possibility of revisiting these principles or adding new ones in future to reflect changing conditions. This also applies to the characteristics identified for each principle. Looseness, for instance, is characterised by accessibility and freedom of choice. These characteristics are not inherently context dependent. They are context independent until they are applied to a specific context, thus making them transferable and adaptable. Therefore, the sensory-emotional framework developed through this research will be an open framework that can be interpreted or re-interpreted to adapt to variable contexts and conditions. This will ensure its long-term viability.

4.1.2. Research questions

This section revisits the research questions introduced in Chapter One.

Research question one:

- How can the design and management of an inviting and sensorially engaging public interior contribute to visitors' emotional attachment to place through modes of personalisation?

This question emerged from an initial aspiration to develop a design understanding of emotional connectedness between the sensing body and its environment, whilst this research also recognises the need to consider management practices. It highlights the intention to identify the conditions for successful relations between visitors and the environment of the public interior. Emotional connectedness was discussed in Chapter One in the context of

intimacy and became emotional attachment to place. This understanding then raised the following question: where and how do we develop intimate connections (emotional attachment to place) with our environment? From this, personalisation was identified as the experiential context for this study and this thesis posits that its lineage in the home can be transposed to the public interior. Accordingly, this question reflects the motivation to investigate the principles and processes that define sensory relations between the personalisation of experience in the public interior and emotional attachment to place. Three pairs of principles were identified in Chapter Two to frame the personalisation of experience for this study and the theories underpinning the structure of this research were discussed in-depth in Chapter Three. Together, these elements provide a rationale and foundation for the investigation into this research question.

Research question two:

- How can this research contribute to the development of a design framework for the personalisation of experience in public interiors to cultivate sensory and emotional connections?

This question underpins the motivation to contribute a practice-oriented outcome by developing a sensory-emotional framework for experiential design. The intention is to draw on insights from this research to structure and construct the framework. The question underlines that the framework aims to provide designers with the means to nurture positive sensorial and emotional connections between body and environment. Unlike the first question, which considers emotional attachment to place, this question recognises that although it is possible to design the sensory-emotional conditions that can contribute to emotional attachment to place, it would not be possible to guarantee that this would occur. Emotional attachment to place is complex. It may, for instance, depend on the cumulative effect of experiences as well as socio-cultural and personal filters. Thus, the purpose of this framework is to enhance sensory-emotional connectedness through design, with the understanding that this can also support the creation of environments conducive to emotional attachment to place.

4.2. The research site

It was seen in Chapter One that the typology of public interiors varies greatly and for this reason, it was necessary to identify a set of criteria to narrow down and guide the site selection process for this thesis. Following a comparative study of five public interiors located

in London for parity, the public interior of the RFH was selected as the research site for this study. Details of the comparative study are followed by an analysis of the cultural, physical and social environments of the public interior of the RFH at the time of the study and by a precise definition of the environmental selection.

4.2.1. The site selection process

In Chapter Two looseness was characterised by accessibility (permeability) and freedom of choice. Appropriation was characterised by visitors' enacting a relative autonomy or self-expression, and it was suggested that this is fundamental to their ability to personalise their experience. It follows that this research requires a public interior where the visitor experience best aligns with these characteristics, and this is explored by examining qualities of publicness across a selection of public interiors in London for parity. Public interiors such as shopping centres are excluded because the visitor experience is driven by commercial interests. Public interiors such as railway stations are also excluded because the visitor experience is primarily defined by functional and safety requirements. This is not to say that there is no scope for personalisation in these locations, only that they are not useful sites for this study because they would not yield sufficient breadth of qualitative representation. Eight possible locations were identified for this research: The Barbican Centre in the city of London, the Royal Festival Hall and the National Theatre on the South Bank, King's Place in King's Cross, Crossrail Roof Garden in Canary Wharf, Borough market in London Bridge, Mercato Metropolitano in Elephant and Castle and the Design Museum in Kensington High Street. These are public interiors of similar size ranging from cultural venue, garden, market and museum, and they are all freely accessible. The comparative study consisted of on-site observations that took place over a period of six months, from July to December 2017, and the analysis was structured across two stages. Following the first stage of the analysis, Crossrail Roof Garden, Borough Market and Mercato Metropolitano were considered unsuitable for this study. Crossrail Roof Garden was excluded because it is dominated by corporate culture and the visitor profile lacks diversity. The majority of visitors were people working in offices nearby using the garden during their breaks. Borough Market and Mercato Metropolitano were also considered unsuitable because they were both dominated by the monetary exchange of goods. Again, this is not to say that there is no scope for personalisation in these locations.

Next, the criteria defining the concept of publicness for this thesis were identified and used to compare the five locations that remained from the initial selection: King's Place, the National Theatre, the Design Museum, the Barbican Centre and the Royal Festival Hall. The objective

was to establish which of these five public interiors rated the highest in qualities of publicness. First, the fieldwork documented the physical and social environments in each location using photographs, annotations, diagrams, sound and film recordings. This was followed by an analysis of the documentation to compare the public interiors. Drawing on Whyte (1980), Tester (1994), Poot et al. (2015), Pimlott (2016), and White et.al. (also known as Eclective) (2017) the criteria selected for the comparative study include accessibility, diversity of people, choice, comfort, diversity of activities, triangulation, *flânerie*, spectacle and governance. In his seminal study of small urban public spaces, Whyte identified comfort, diversity of activities, choice of spaces and seating opportunities, as essential qualities in public spaces. He also identified two characteristics pertaining to social relations. Triangulation, the characteristic that can bring strangers together, and spectacle, the characteristic that enable people to connect to the performance of the environment and activities around them. As previously discussed, Pimlott also identified choice and comfort as qualities required for the fulfilment of visitors' needs in public interior. A diversity of people, activities and governance originate in a study by the research group Eclective, who, in December 2017, explored civic buildings in the London Southbank to rate their level of publicness. Similarly to Poot et al. they also foreground the importance of accessibility. Finally, *flânerie*, a concept introduced in Chapter Two as the way people leisurely stroll and meander through a space, is also included because it is intrinsic to successful public spaces. Therefore, this comparative study includes nine criteria, each with a corresponding question to guide the enquiry. Insights are visualised (Figure 2) using a tool adapted from previous qualitative research (Mace 2014). This tool uses a qualitative rating system, from low to high, to document the researcher's impressions in each location. It is based on direct perception, not data. In all instances aside governance, high corresponds to a high level of publicness and low to a low level of publicness. This is reversed in the context of governance. Low governance reflects a high level of publicness and high governance, meaning a public interior that is highly regulated and controlled, reflects a low level of publicness. Once completed, the diagram shows which public interior had the highest level of publicness at the time the comparative study took place.

Qualitative criteria and questions guiding the comparative study:

- Accessibility: how permeable is the space, both physically and psychologically?
- Diversity of people: is there a variety of visitors, ages, gender, ethnicities?
- Choice: are there different places and seating opportunities available for visitors?
- Comfort: what is the level of comfort afforded to visitors?
- Diversity of activities: are there different activities happening simultaneously?

- Triangulation: does the interior bring people together?
- Flânerie: do visitors leisurely stroll through the interior?
- Spectacle: are visitors connected to the performance of the environment and activities around them?
- Governance: how is the level of regulation, surveillance and order?

The comparative study revealed that the Barbican Centre and the Royal Festival Hall rated the highest in qualities of publicness. Although the Barbican rated slightly higher in the diversity of people, it rated slightly lower on choice and comfort, lower on a diversity of activities and triangulation and considerably lower on spectacle. The Royal Festival Hall on the other hand rated high to very high in qualities of publicness across all criteria. In addition, in a report on Inclusion by Design, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) (2008, pp. 19-20) referenced the Royal Festival Hall as an exemplar for inclusion, listing criteria such as affordability, dignity, ability to linger, comfort, safety and participation. Even though this study is not about inclusion, the characteristics identified in the report help substantiate the understanding that the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall is an exemplar of accessibility and the most likely environment for visitors to experience mental ownership.

4.2.2. Overview of the cultural environment

The RFH serves a dual function. It is both a cultural venue and a public interior. Access to the concert hall is restricted to ticket holders but a programme of free events in the public spaces ensures that all visitors can enjoy the spectacle of the arts. As such, at times when free events are scheduled, usually in the main areas on Level 2, visual and acoustic phenomena associated with music, dance, singing or talks, permeate the experience of the public interior. Conversely, there are times when no events are taking place, and visitors can inhabit the public interior without directly experiencing its artistic culture. Thus, the function of the RFH as a cultural venue is not always part of the visitor experience, and this interior can also be defined by its qualities of being public. This culture of publicness is shaped by historical and political contexts rooted in the post-war welfare state. In 1948, the London County Council (LCC) began to plan a new concert hall for Londoners on the South bank of the river Thames, between Waterloo bridge and Hungerford Bridge. McKean (1992, p. 3) explains that the intention was to create a building that was not just a concert hall but “a new sort of democratic cultural centre”, for people to be happy to spend time there, socialise, take time out and enjoy it fully.

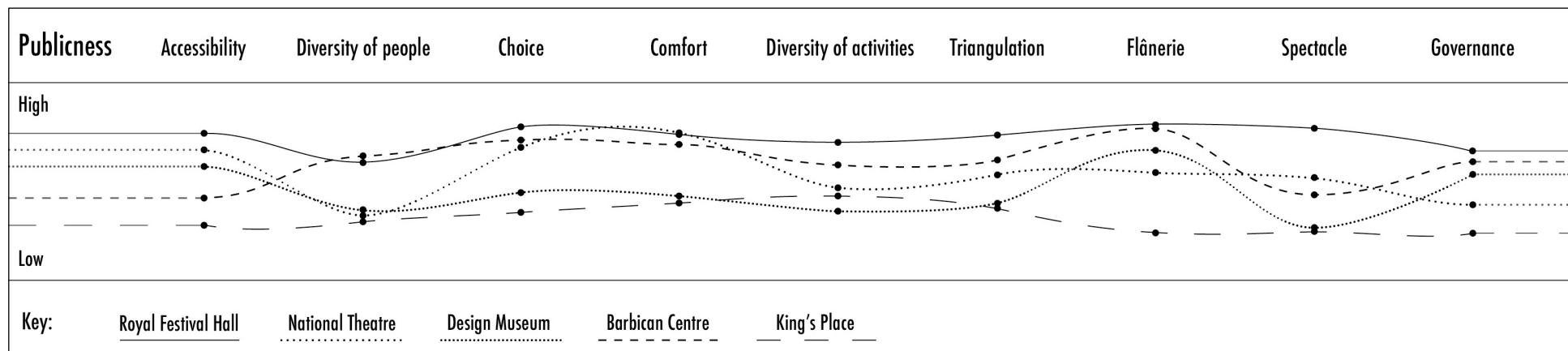


Figure 2: Qualitative comparative study of publicness across five cultural organisations.

Glendinning (2003, p. 2) writes that the rise in status of public offices such as the LCC in post-war Britain and the collective authorship of the design of the RFH made this project and its architecture a social act. The collective authorship centred around a team of four architects. Robert Matthew from the LCC, Leslie Martin as design lead, Peter Moro who was responsible for the interior detail design developments and Edwin Williams who was in charge of contract coordination (McKean 1992, p. 2). The RFH opened on the 3rd of May 1951 to coincide with the opening of the 1951 Festival of Britain, conceived as an attempt to bring back cheerfulness amongst people in the aftermath of World War II and the austerity of the post-war period (McKean 1992, Mullins 2007). Although the RFH was not built specifically for the festival, which only lasted a few months, from May to September 1951, the building was located on the site of the festival, on a stretch of land on the south bank of the river Thames in central London. This legacy still permeates its culture today, with a permanent exhibition and artefacts from the festival on display throughout the interior (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Artefacts from and about the 1951 Festival of Britain (left and below).

The RFH was post-war Britain's first public building (McKean 1992). The building was originally owned by the LCC as the authority responsible for London, which in the early 1960s became the Greater London Council (GLC) but was abolished by Margaret Thatcher in 1981 (Bianchini 1987). Since the appointment of the Southbank Centre board in 1987 the RFH has been part of the Southbank Centre, an independent and privately managed complex, but it was noted in a 2017 conversation with Shân MacLennan, then Deputy Creative Director of the Southbank, that

the RFH still receives public funds and is run on behalf of the public. Contemporary mission and values include equity, diversity, inclusion and wellbeing (SouthbankCentre 2024).

Despite its democratic intentions, the RFH did not truly become a popular destination until 1983 when the GLC initiated an Open Foyers Policy to revitalise the RFH into a thriving cultural destination for Londoners (Mullins 2007, p. 18). Instead of being open for evening concerts only, the RFH opened at 10 am every day, seven days a week, and aside from free access to its public spaces, generously offered a range of free cultural activities such as music, dance and exhibitions (HANSARD 1984). In 1984, Tony Banks MP (HANSARD 1984, p. 1) spoke about the resounding success of the policy in the House of Commons, how the public responded “magnificently”, how the venue was “teeming with life throughout the day” and how it attracted a “younger and wider cross-section of society”. Bank explained that the policy helped improve concert audiences and income for the RFH and that it also contributed to a 64% increase in concessionary ticket sales for pensioners and the unemployed, indicating that the RFH became more inclusive as an outcome of the policy. He also stated that, in its first year, one million people visited the foyers in addition to the one million concert attendances. The RFH embraced its social heritage and opened its doors to the public, becoming a precursor to publicness in cultural venues in London (Mullins 2007, Forty 2001b, Forty 2001a). The achievement of the policy was seen as liberating the arts “from the domination of the selfish and the unimaginative and to give the maximum number of Londoners opportunities to enjoy the finest available art forms” (HANSARD 1984, p. 1). As the policy transformed what was originally a concert hall into a public destination the RFH became known as “a people’s palace” (Pimlott 2016, p. 88). Thus, even though the design of public spaces today has become rooted in a culture of individualism and privatisation (Minton 2006, Bica 2016), the culture of the RFH is rooted in the legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain and of the 1983 Open Foyers Policy. Then, between 2005 and 2007, the entire South Bank area was regenerated to coincide with the opening of the new Festival Stairs and Golden Jubilee pedestrian bridge across the River Thames (Mullins 2007, p. 19). The RFH is now part of a rich, vibrant and thriving cultural destination, The Southbank Centre, which includes the concert hall, art galleries, performance spaces, libraries, a theatre, cinemas, museums, restaurants and bars. This brief overview of the cultural environment of the RFH foregrounds the geographical, historical, political and to a degree economic contexts that define its contemporary publicness and impact the visitor experience today. These contexts have been identified as distinctive features for this research because they denote a visitor-centred approach to design and management practices.

4.2.3. Overview of the physical environment

In 1951, the architectural style of the RFH symbolised the optimism of post-war Modernism and even though it was planned as a concert hall it incorporated restaurants, meeting rooms and an exhibition gallery from the outset, with generous seating provided in the foyers (McKean 1992). The term ‘foyer’ originates from its use in the theatre to designate the lobby area, the spaces where concert goers could relax before and after a show or during intervals. This terminology is still in use in the RFH today, notably to designate the main foyer on Level 2 located underneath the auditorium. Working with a tightly defined site footprint, architect Leslie Martin devised an original solution, giving the RFH its distinctive interior. He suspended the auditorium above the main foyer, creating deep sightlines and a great sense of space and fluidity that became a defining feature of the interior. The design allowed for cantilevered galleries and promenades running through the entire building, and an extensive use of glass provided transparency to the outside with panoramic vistas of London and the River Thames through the building’s gently curving north face (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Contemporary view of the curving north face.

McKean (1992), who published a detailed account of the conception and design of the RFH, explains that as head of the detail design development Peter Moro aimed to bring definition to Martin’s architectural concept whilst Robin Day, who later became a prominent furniture designer, was also appointed furniture consultant for the project. Striving for richness whilst

maintaining the modernist vision, Moro offset a sophisticated palette of materials, wood, brass, glass, grey limestone and carpeting with white surfaces. However, post-war austerity measures meant that quality fittings were unavailable for specification. In response to these constraints, Moro and his team designed most fittings themselves, including light-fittings, door handles and the iconic 'Net & Ball carpet' (Figure 5) inspired by the pattern of soundwaves (RFH 2024) and now ingrained in the identity of the RFH. In doing so they also aligned themselves to the Modernist paradigm of the architecture by "exploiting the functional requirements for their decorative potential" (McKean 1992, p. 5). Choosing Peter Moro as head of the detail design development is significant because his practice was defined by a sensitivity to human sensibilities. An article in the Architects' Journal (AJ 1998) states that:

Whatever the subject, his architecture was deeply rooted in the bedrock of the programme, where he sought to organise the plan three-dimensionally with space and volume for convenience and delight, aiming to create humane environments. He was deeply involved with the niceties of use, the pleasures of movement, the delight of material to sight and touch. He pursued building design with a rare honesty of approach. He was rational, with a clear understanding of how to put things together and, perhaps, faith that in designing well, resonances would emerge from unconscious springs.



Figure 5: The iconic 'Net & Ball' carpet.

According to McKean, the RFH endured ill-conceived transformations in the 1960s and the interior lost some of its original characteristics over the years, although it was listed Grade 1 in

1988 (RFH 2024). This means that the building is deemed to be of highest significance and national importance (Historic England 2024). In the 1990s, architects Allies & Morrisson began the restoration of the values and authenticity of its original interior to bring back its architectural clarity and quality. The design of the interior examined in this study was finalised between 2005 and 2007 (Mullins 2007, p. 19) and the contemporary interior, the spatial composition and “internal landscape of transparency and light” (RFH 2024), the three-dimensional elements, materials and colours, remain true to the architects’ original intentions.

The interior of the RFH is symmetrical on its vertical axis and Sussman and Hollander (2015) explain that this device is known as bilateral symmetry. It can be used in architecture and interior design to add presence and prestige to a space, and it can also contribute to a perception of calmness. There are six levels in total, five of which are freely accessible to the public. Level 1 includes the original main entrance to the east and the cloakroom. In this area, the palette of materials is predominantly white with a grey limestone floor and accents of wood and brass. Level 2 is the most imposing space. It consists of a spacious open plan foyer and a sunken area commonly known as the ballroom located underneath the auditorium raised up and supported by pilotis (a modernist term for columns). Dubbed the egg-in-the-box (the auditorium is effectively nested into a container volume), this concept was devised by Leslie Martins to free the foyer from physical structures. The underside of the auditorium creates a sloping ceiling, which reconciles the vast volume with the scale of the body. Moro (Brodie 1996, p. 72) explains that the lighting and acoustic devices sculpt and model the ceiling in a way that make it appear much lighter than if it had been plain. The imposing mass of the underside of the auditorium seems to be floating, creating a feeling of spaciousness and lightness whilst open stairways connecting the foyer with promenades and cantilevered platforms on Level 3 further enhance this feeling. The effect is that of a layered interior with three-dimensional elements presenting various degrees of proximity and distance to the body rather than one large volume. The combination of open stairways, promenades and platforms on Level 3 also suggests movement. Zumthor (2006, p. 41) defines this architectural device in his work as being “between composure and seduction [...] inducing a sense of freedom of movement, a milieu for strolling, a mood that has less to do with directing people than seducing them.” The Level 2 foyer becomes gradually darker towards its centre, despite extensive glazed walls on the East and West sides. This is partly due to the scale of the interior and to the choice of materials, notably the darker wood surfaces that absorb light. However, the space does not feel gloomy because the indirect lighting in the sloping ceiling has an uplifting effect. Occasionally, spotlights also wash the ceiling and the sunken ballroom with vivid colours and patterns, whilst a cluster of bright red chairs inspired by modernist design

brings colourful accents to the centre of the foyer in front of the bar. The Level 2 interior also includes an area called the Riverside Terrace Cafe with a large adjacent terrace on the Thames side. The foyer and cafe are separated by an enclosed volume only accessible to staff but remain connected on either side of the volume through the open plan design. The Riverside Terrace Cafe contrasts sharply with the foyer. It is bright with an off-white palette of materials punctuated with the subdued shades of blue, natural wood, yellow, green, and grey of the furniture. The cafe is a contemporary development in the original interior and also the loudest space since it is entirely clad in hard surfaces and sounds reverberate. Yet the visual coherence and subdued palette of materials and colours have a calming effect that can offset the acoustic discomfort.

Ascending to Level 3 the floor changes from hard surfaces to the softer 'Net & Ball' carpet. Its subtle grey-green shade is offset by a warm palette of wood and gleaming brass, bringing an understated luxury to the interior. The open plan design and use of glass railings afford Level 3 quasi uninterrupted panoramic vistas onto the Level 2 foyer from the promenades and this level includes a mezzanine above the Level 2 bar. Level 4 is experienced as a series of open stairways with vistas onto a restaurant at its centre (called The Skylon in homage to the 1951 Festival of Britain) and monumental cuboid spaces on either side of the restaurant present visitors with dramatic views towards the Thames and onto the terrace below. Level 4 also includes two foyers, smaller enclosed rooms on the south-east and south-west corners of the building. The stairways become smaller and darker in the final approach to the Level 5 foyer. This device enhances the visual drama of the double height glazed wall with its spectacular view to the outside as visitors emerge into the foyer. Here, the gentle curve of the wall and the rhythm of columns lead the eyes across the space, further contributing to the principles of composure and seduction that permeate the design of the interior. Located on the north side of the building, this foyer also includes a terrace with panoramic views of the Thames and city. Although not especially wide compared to Level 2, the Level 5 foyer follows the entire length of the building, and its horizontal aspect is again dominated by the 'Net & Ball' carpet. It is comfortable and bright, it feels spacious, and sunlight streams through its large windows on sunny days. The tones and colours are softer, predominantly white with accents of grey polished limestone. The furniture consists of armchairs in light grey, light green and blue with sofas in dark brown leather. The use of soft furnishing, carpeting and lighter colours is conducive to a quieter and more relaxing experience than on Levels 2 and 3. Level 6 incorporates a mezzanine area above Level 5 and although the two areas are visually and acoustically connected, the Level 6 mezzanine is now a private members area and is not accessible to non-members. This description of the physical environment of the RFH highlights

that although it is referred to as one interior, it is designed to provide visitors with a diversity of spaces and experiences. This has been identified as a distinctive feature of the RFH for this research because it confirms that even though this study focuses on a single site, the interior can present a multiplicity of experiences.

4.2.4. Overview of the social environment

Echoing Whyte's (1980) notion of spectacle, McKean (1992, p. 58) described the RFH as "a place to see and be seen", yet he also emphasises that it is "not a building for social exclusivity. Here, in the open foyer, reached from different Levels and directions and inviting casual entry, there is no escape from the democratic gaze, the mutual exchange of seeing". The use of the term 'democratic' underlines the non-elitist approach of the design and highlights that a lack of obvious commanding authority creates a social environment where, according to Forty (2001b, p. 208) everyone experiences "an equal right to the possession of the building". Forty explains that the design of the RFH eschews the stratified hierarchy often found in concert halls, with their grand entrance, imposing staircase and predefined social order as one progresses through the different levels of the interior. Contemporary visitors can choose from four different entrances into the building. Once inside, four staircases are available for visitors to ascend the interior from the main foyer even though out of the four, only two are open to the public at all times. The other two staircases are only open during events. Nonetheless, there is no prescribed hierarchy. Furthermore, Forty (p. 202, italics in original text) also remarks that this is one of the very few large public interiors where the visitor experience is not subjugated to other purpose such as consumption and to the interests of the owner of the building. He writes that "there is no requirement to become a consumer, no obligation to follow a predetermined route through the building to some ultimate goal. You can simply *be* in it" (Figure 6). Forty defines the visitor as the owner of the building, a sentiment echoed by Shân MacLennan who, as Deputy Creative Director of the Southbank Centre in 2017, talked about visitors experiencing a sense of ownership even if it is perceived ownership rather than actual ownership, and alluded to the visceral feeling of belonging she experienced when she first visited the RFH as a teenager.

Staff and security are visible, but they do not dominate or intimidate. Their behaviour is informal and friendly, they merge into the social environment. It is a much loved and popular destination in London. Moro (Brodie 1996, p. 78) remarked that "on the whole it's gained in popularity with time. It's a most popular building, I've got piles of cuttings from newspapers and magazines saying it's their favourite building and so on". Indeed, in 2001, an *Evening*

Standard newspaper poll voted the RFH London's most popular building (Forty 2001b, p. 201). Yet, the characterisation of the RFH as a 'people's palace' does not mean that it has a universal appeal. Arguably, no place does. Pravnov (2017) highlights that people are attracted to certain public interiors both from need based and cultural perspectives. Considering the variety of typologies of public interiors, it is possible to infer that different typologies will attract different people for different reasons. For example, in an informal conversation that took place in March 2020, Matthew Hale, the Head of Visitor Experience and Ticketing at the RFH, explained that the management defines this public interior as family oriented and that it is very popular with parents with young children. Yet, the provision of festivals such as WOW - Women of the World, the Festival of Love or events covering topics as diverse as mental health, the World Wide Web and LGBTQ+ also reflects a desire towards diversity, to bring a broader spectrum of visitors together, irrespective of their age, ethnic background, gender, etc.



Figure 6: Visitors in the Riverside Terrace Cafe on Level 2.

In this context, the social environment of the RFH brings together groups of people who share a set of values they choose to belong to, which is consistent with Alexander, Ishikawa and Silverstein's (1977) definition of sub-culture. This overview of the social environment of the RFH indicates that the design of the interior and a lack of explicit managerial control can contribute to visitors' ability to develop a sense of mental ownership. Visitors can choose to attend events and if not, they can still access interior spaces without the need to buy anything and stay for as long as they wish to. This has been identified as a distinctive feature of the RFH

for this research because it suggests from the outset that the social environment can be conducive to visitors being able to enact their preferred activities.

4.2.5. The environmental selection

The environmental selection refers to the areas within the public interior of the RFH where the research takes place. Kaplan and Kaplan (1981) highlight the importance of appropriate environmental selection, emphasising that it contributes to the validity and reliability of the research. The environmental selection for this study was determined by a rigorous process, a pilot study carried out across seven visits in July and August 2018, to define which areas are included in this study and which are excluded. Each visit lasted two to three hours and the timings were staggered across different times of day and days of the week to gain a comprehensive grasp of the RFH as a public interior. This study focuses on the spaces that are freely accessible to all visitors and areas such as the auditorium, those that are only accessible to staff, reserved for private functions or requiring a membership are excluded from this research. This research centres on the experience of non-ticket holders whilst recognising that the same visitor can be both a ticket holder and a non-ticket holder at different times. At the time of the study, publicly accessible areas in the RFH were located on Levels 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 and public access also extended outside onto the Level 2 and Level 5 terraces (Figure 7).

The environmental selection for this study follows two main criteria. The first is consistency of availability. Are these areas always or almost always accessible to visitors? The second is popularity with visitors. This was documented by observing which areas visitors used the most. Accordingly, Level 1 was excluded from this study because it is primarily a transition space with a cloakroom. There are however occasional activities taking place and when this occurs, it is possible to see and hear these from certain places on Level 2. Consequently, although Level 1 is not part of this study, the sensory phenomena that permeate from Level 1 into Level 2 are included because they are part of the Level 2 experience. Level 4 is excluded from this study because it is also primarily used as a transition space whilst its two smaller foyers on each side of the auditorium are not always open to non-ticket holders and were not extensively used by visitors at the time of the pilot study. The management of the RFH needs to balance the specific needs of ticket holders with the public needs of non-ticket holders and the Level 4 foyers are usually reserved for ticket holders when there are shows taking place in the auditorium. Thus, Level 1 and Level 4 did not meet the criteria for environmental selection but the Level 2 foyer and Riverside Terrace Cafe, the Level 3 promenades and mezzanine and the

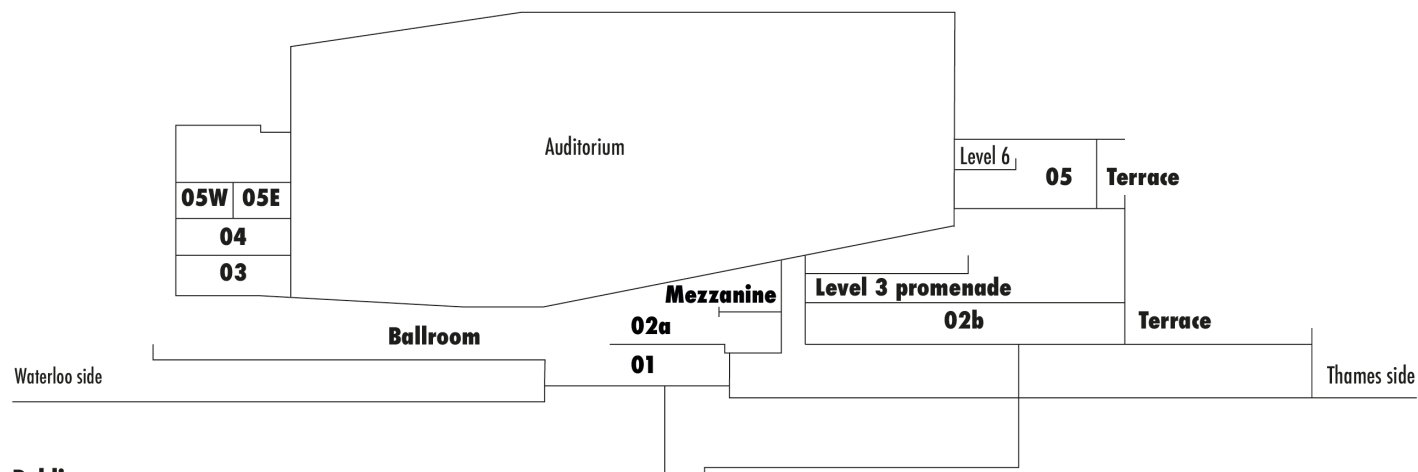
level 5 foyer did. The Level 2 cafe and the Level 5 foyer also extend to outdoor terraces. These are visible from inside through large windows and sounds can also permeate into the interior, especially in Summer when doors and windows to the terraces remain open. They contribute visual and acoustic phenomena to the study.

Further investigation into similarities and differences in the spatial and social environments across the levels selected for this research identified three distinct types of experiential environments across Levels 2, 3 and 5. These present diverse physical and social characteristics. Drawing on Thomas (Thomas 2013), they are referred to throughout this thesis as nested elements. This terminology originates in case study design and is therefore consistent with this research. Thomas explains that when a study involves only one case, the site can be divided into specific study areas called nested elements. Dividing the public areas of the RFH into nested elements minimises methodological limitations associated with working with a single site. The environmental selection is structured across three nested elements (Figure 8):

- Nested element one: the Riverside Terrace Cafe on Level 2.
- Nested element two: the main foyer and ballroom area on Level 2 together with the promenades and mezzanine on level 3.
- Nested element three: the Level 5 foyer.

They are investigated in parallel, whilst together, they constitute what Cranz (2016) refers to as a sited micro-culture to contribute to the understanding of the personalisation of experience across the public interior as a whole.

The final stage of the environmental selection process identified the boundaries of precise areas of study within each of the three nested elements, making a clear distinction between the areas that are part of the study and those that are not. This was achieved by mapping the physical boundaries that separate the public spaces from those with other functions such as commercial ones (bar, cafe, shop), toilets, spaces only staff have access to and the auditorium since it is only accessible to ticket holders. The Level 2 Riverside Terrace Cafe is an exception because even though visitors can buy and consume food and drinks, they do not have to make a purchase to use the space and they can stay for as long as they want. The drawings delineating the spatial boundaries of this study across each of the three nested elements are available in Appendix 1.



Public access

01 - Level 1: permanently open although used mostly as a transition space with an area bookable by visitors for dance practice.

02a - Level 2 foyer, ballroom, level 3 promenade and mezzanine: permanently open regardless of any events taking place.

02b - Level 2 cafe and terrace: permanently open regardless of any events taking place.

03 - Level 3 foyers: closed except during large free events such as festivals.

04 - Level 4 foyers: closed when events in the auditorium are taking place.

05 - Level 5 foyer and terrace: only very occasionally closed.

05W - West side foyer: permanently open but mostly used as a transition space.

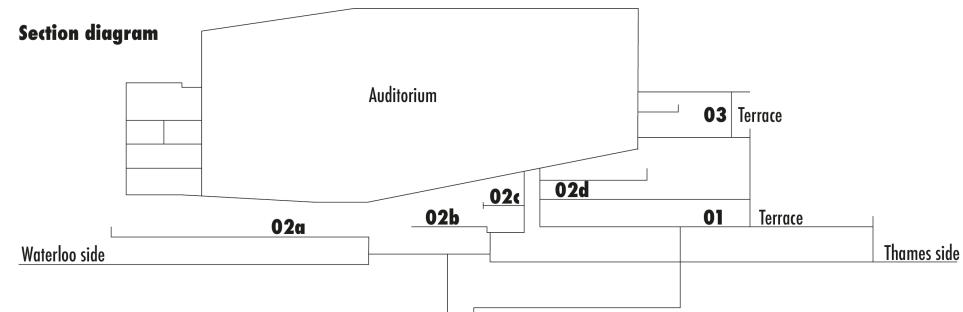
05E - East side foyer: usually closed and used for private functions.

Figure 7: Section diagram illustrating the location and accessibility of public areas.

Keys

- 01** - Level 2 Riverside Terrace Cafe
- 02a** - Ballroom area
- 02b** - Level 2 foyer
- 02c** - Level 3 mezzanine
- 02d** - Level 3 promenades
- 03** - Level 5 foyer

Section diagram



Top view diagrams



Figure 8: Section and top view diagrams of nested elements 1, 2 and 3.

4.3. Overview of the research plan

The research plan for this investigation is structured across two stages. Stage one brings together a case study on the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior of the RFH, an interview with the Head of Visitor Experience and Ticketing at the RFH, and interviews with a sample of nine visitors. Together, these three methods triangulate the research. The design of the case study draws on the literature review in Chapter Two and Chapter Three and will be discussed in-depth in Chapter Five. The design of the interviews draws on insights from the case study and will be detailed in Chapter Six. Stage two consists of design experiments created to test the validity and usefulness of insights from the literature review and case study. These will be presented in Chapter Seven. Stage one responds to research question one. Stage two addresses research question two although the full response to this question will be presented in Chapter Eight where this research is synthesised into a framework. The flexible and scaffolded approach taken in this investigation means that whilst the broad structure of the research plan is outlined here, the design of the case study, interviews and design experiments will be discussed in-depth in the following chapters.

The case study is conducted from the perspective of the researcher who observes and enacts appropriation, exploration and privateness to then reflect on the experience phenomenologically and on the relation with and contribution of looseness, enticement and porosity. This case study investigates the sensory-emotional attributes of the personalisation of experience in nested elements one, two and three. With a background in spatial design and with existing research on multisensory experiences, I have the expertise required to investigate spatio and socio-sensory phenomena. As a visitor to the public interior of the RFH, I have the opportunity to explore what it is/feels like to experience design and management practices pertaining to looseness, enticement and porosity when enacting appropriation, exploration and privateness. The case study makes a substantial contribution to this thesis as an in-depth investigation into design practices and enactment. However, there are also limitations to a case study conducted from the perspective of the researcher. It is difficult to fully grasp how 'personalisation for' is managed or to fully acknowledge how the personalisation of experience can contribute to emotional attachment to place for visitors. Therefore, it is essential to triangulate the research to minimise bias and to prevent "the selection of data that fits the researcher's existing theory, goals, or preconceptions" (Maxwell 2013, p. 124). In this case study, I, the researcher, reflect on the nature of sensory and emotional experiences and, as Maxwell explains, it is impossible to fully eliminate subjectivity. Hence, this research plan triangulates insights from the case study with expert knowledge from staff and visitors. The

staff interview contributes expert insights into the cultural environment of the RFH and on the management of the visitor experience. The interviews with visitors contribute first-person perspectives on what it is/feels like for them to engage with the environment of the public interior to enact a diversity of needs and preferred activities.

Drawing on Creswell (2009), this research is designed to be flexible. The process adapts as the research progresses, and knowledge develops and evolves throughout the research in response to new insights. Robson and McCartan (2016, p. 146) identify four fundamental characteristics to flexible research design. First, it is a process. This is reflected in this study by the scaffolded relationship between the different elements and stages of this research. Second, the research presents multiple environmental perceptions (or *Umwelten* in this study). This is reflected in this thesis through the generation of insights from different perspectives, those of the researcher, staff and visitors. Third, the researcher is an instrument of data collection. This is reflected in the case study documenting the researcher's observations and embodied experiences. Fourth, the research integrates participants' views. This is reflected in this study in the staff and visitor interviews. The research process could thus be described as empirical although in this instance, in agreement with Thomas (2013) and Seamon (2015), the term interpretative is preferred since this research is qualitative and phenomenological. Similarly, whilst the terms 'data' and 'findings' are commonly used by researchers, in this qualitative research the terms 'information' and 'insights' are preferred. Here, this thesis draws on White (2011, p. 2) who explains that the use of the term 'data' reflects a measurable reality. White (2011, p. 304) also suggests that the term 'findings' intimates specifics better suited to quantitative research. This study is about the quality of experience, sensory phenomena and emotional responses. It is not about precision and measurements.

4.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, I identified a methodology grounded in phenomenology, bringing forth the primacy of the wholeness of situations in this research. Each of the three pairs of principles pertaining to the personalisation of the visitor experience identified for this study will be explored as a collection of situations to investigate the relation between phenomena sensed by the body and the perception of emotional qualities in the environment. I then considered methodological limitations associated with the research being tied to a single site and explained how they are addressed, emphasising the need for the development of an open design framework transferable and adaptable to a variety of environmental contexts. I also

indicated how the first research question in this study reflects its overall aim and how the second question references a practice-oriented outcome for this research. Following on from this, I provided a detailed rationale for the selection of the public interior of the RFH as the research site for this study. Next, a discussion on its cultural, physical and social environments explored the contexts that influence contemporary design and management practices and impact the visitor experience. Then insights from a pilot study helped define the environmental selection with precision. Four publicly accessible areas were selected for this research, the Level 2 Riverside Terrace Cafe, the Level 2 foyer and ballroom, the Level 3 promenades and mezzanine, and the Level 5 foyer. These are organised across three nested elements to structure the site-specific investigation. Finally, I introduced the research plan. It outlines the flexible structure of the research, scaffolded across two stages, and lays the foundation for a more detailed discussion on the design of the case study, interviews and design experiments and their subsequent analysis in the following chapters.

Chapter 5: The case study

This chapter presents an in-depth case study of the personalisation of experience for and by visitors in the public interior of the RFH. It is structured in two parts. The first part outlines the case study design. It clarifies how the fieldwork was conducted and discusses the construction of a sensory model and of an emotionality model created to support the investigation. It then explains how a thematic analysis method was used in a first iteration of the analytical process. This is followed by an overview of the structure underpinning the full analysis. The second part examines insights from the case study, focusing on each of the three pairs of principles pertaining to the personalisation of experience for this thesis and corresponding sensory-emotional processes. Insights are then synthesised in preparation for the interviews with staff and visitors.

5.1. Case study design

Hammersley (1992) and Thomas (2013) define the case study as a valid method in qualitative research because it allows the researcher to work with a restricted sample to carry out an in-depth inquiry on a case, and in doing so, gain a rich and detailed understanding. Wieviorka (1992) proposes that a case study is composed of two essential elements, the subject and the object. Here, the subject is the phenomenological enquiry into what it feels like for visitors to experience sensory phenomena pertaining to looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness. The object is the public interior of the RFH. This case study is a collective instrumental case study (Thomas 2013, Hyett et al. 2014). It is collective because although the study involves only one case, it investigates embodied experiences of personalisation across three nested elements. These were defined as nested element 1 (the Riverside Terrace Cafe), nested element 2 (the Level 2 foyer, ballroom area, Level 3 promenades and mezzanine), and nested element 3 (the Level 5 foyer). They are explored individually in the fieldwork and brought back together collectively in the analysis to illuminate the lifeworld of the personalisation of the visitor experience. This case study is also instrumental because the researcher is an instrument in the study. Drawing on previous projects (Mace 2014, Mace 2016a, 2016b) where I initiated an approach to reflexive research linking my knowledge of spatial practices to phenomenological and ethnographic style studies, two methods were used in the fieldwork. The first included non-participant observations of visitors enacting their experience of the public interior with particular attention to the way they engaged with the physical and social environments to enact diverse activities

(personalisation by). At the same time, I also documented corresponding design and management practices (personalisation for). Then, I took on the role of a visitor re-enacting observed instances of appropriation, exploration and privateness. Reflexive research was deemed essential because it is not possible to gain sufficient understanding from non-participant observations alone. Brand (2023, p. 133) explains that “[s]imply recognising a gesture or action as the expressive act of a particular emotive state is insufficient in and of itself to elicit the same feeling within us [...] in order to share the perceived feeling, we first need to have some comprehension of the circumstances in which the expression is taking place.” Thus, whilst observation is a useful documentation method, the re-enactment contributes towards a deeper understanding of the sensory-emotional dimension of experience through first-person insights, those of the researcher.

5.1.1. Definition of a sensory model

This thesis foregrounds the primacy of sensing in environmental experience and the case study aims to identify rewarding sensory phenomena visitors associate with their experience of personalisation in the public interior of the RFH. It is therefore necessary to define a sensory model for this case study. Although the senses are commonly referred to in terms of the five senses model of vision, touch, hearing, smell and taste inherited from Aristotle (Classen 1993, Biggs et al. 2015, Young 2021), the human body incorporates more than five sensory modalities (Henshaw 2012, Matthen 2012, Haverkamp 2013, Biggs et al. 2015, Stokes et al. 2015). According to Howes (2009, p. 24) the number of senses may vary from ten to thirty-three, regrouped under broad categories including vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, pain, mechanoreception (balance, proprioception, kinaesthesia, muscle stretch, etc.), temperature and interoceptors (blood pressure, arterial blood, lung inflation, etc.). Young (2021) proposes thirty-two, including Aristotle’s five senses, kinaesthesia and proprioception, gravity, temperature, pain, and gut feeling. Sensory models thus vary. Gibson (1966) for instance restructured the senses into perceptual systems to differentiate between sensation and perception, to emphasise that perception is based on the detection of information rather than on having a sensation. Gibson’s model includes the basic orienting system, the auditory system, the haptic system, the taste-smell system and the visual system. Malnar and Vodvarka (2004, p. 151) devised a sensory model correlating vision, hearing, haptic (active touch), kinaesthesia, skin (passive touch) and smell. Henshaw (2012) on the other hand offers an alternative model structured across stimuli, sensation and perception, including vision, the chemical senses smell and taste, and mechanical senses, hearing, touch, balance, temperature, and proprioception. Howes is an anthropologist, Young is a science and health journalist, Gibson was an ecological

psychologist, Malnar is an architect, Vodvarka is an artist, and Henshaw is an engineer. Hence, the review of the literature highlighted that the number of sensory modalities and their selection or application to a particular model typically depends on disciplinary contexts and the intended purpose of the model. It is not therefore the aim of this thesis to argue the number of senses but to draw on relevant literature to define a working model for the analysis of the case study. The model presented in Table 1 was used during the fieldwork and in its analysis, and it is discussed in the text that follows.

Sensory model	Sight	Visual phenomena in the composition of the space (focal point, sight lines, shape and form, balance, rhythm and repetition, sequence, scale and proportion), value, light, colour.
	Haptic sight	Tactile phenomena perceived through sight (surface hardness or softness, surface roughness or smoothness, chromatic temperature).
	Touch	Tactile phenomena perceived through skin and body contact. • Passive touch (air movement, temperature, humidity, radiation). • Active touch (surface hardness or softness, surface roughness or smoothness, surface temperature, contour identity, vibration).
	Kinaesthesia	Position and movement of body parts (movement through space, postures, gestures).
	Hearing	Auditory phenomena (loudness, pitch, localisation, signature sound).
	Smell	Olfactory phenomena (inhaled odours and their correspondence with flavours). Primary odorants (fruity, citrusy, floral, spicy, minty, sweet, toasted and nutty, woody and resinous, musky).

Table 1: Sensory model developed for the case study analysis.

This sensory model draws primarily on Malnar and Vodvarka's (1992, 2004) model because it was created for sensory designers and is therefore deemed most pertinent to this research. The purpose of the model presented here is to provide reference for the case study and a foundation for the sensory model developed for the framework in Chapter Eight. This model brings together six modalities: sight, haptic sight, touch, kinaesthesia, hearing and smell. Two other factors also influenced this selection. Firstly, these modalities have hedonic value, a term used by Smith (2012, p. 316) to highlight that some sensory modalities typically enable us to perceive the qualitative tones of phenomena. For instance, a smell can be pleasant or unpleasant. Its hedonic value lies within the value scale between pleasant and unpleasant. This is highly relevant to this research since it investigates the relation between sensory phenomena and the perception of emotional qualities in the environment. Smith only discusses taste, smell and touch but, in the context of environmental experience, it is easy to

comprehend that sight and haptic sight also have hedonic values. A vista for instance, can have a value scale that lies between pleasant and unpleasant.

Secondly, these modalities are exteroceptive. According to Brand (2023, p. 59), “exteroceptive” modalities are those that are outwardly oriented towards the experience of the environment, and consequently best suited to a sensory model concerned with environmental experience. Brand, however, also notes that bodily senses include “deeper and less defined interoceptive sensations that are always engaged”, specifically referencing kinaesthesia as a modality of the proprioceptive system. Proprioception provides information from the muscles, tendons and joints, allowing us for instance to know where our hand is located in space without the need to look at it. Kinaesthesia, “from the Greek *kinein*, to move, and *aisthesis*, sensation” (Young 2021, pp. 139, Italics in the original text), relates to the movement of the body and as such depends on interoceptive information from the muscles. Movement is widely discussed in architectural and phenomenological discourses as an environmental experience with hedonic value (Hildebrand 1999, Malnar and Vodvarka 2004, Zumthor 2006, Rice 2009, Nakamura 2010, Blundell Jones 2015a, 2015b, Samuel 2015, Seamon 2016a). For example, when enacting *flânerie*, a characteristic of exploration, visitors slowly meander through space. This “journey, a composition in time, a rhythm such as fast or slow, regular or irregular” (Moore et al. 1993, p. 50) can be a pleasurable experience. Shifting the posture of the body from standing up to sitting down also relaxes the muscle tension keeping us upright. Thus, whilst the entire proprioceptive system is beyond the scope of this study, kinaesthesia is included in the model because it is deemed essential to environmental experience.

5.1.1.1. Sight

When articulating a language for visual perception, Malnar and Vodvarka (1992) discuss fundamental design elements such as point, line and plane, and their contribution to the composition of a space. The definition of sight in this model draws on their analysis. Composition is thus characterised by focal point, sight line, shape and form, balance, arrangement, sequence, scale and proportion. Focal point represents the centre of interest in a space and sight lines are imaginary lines connecting elements and objects in space. Shape and form relate to the linearity or curvature of elements, shape being typically associated with two-dimensional planes and form with three-dimensional volumes. Balance refers to a symmetrical or asymmetrical equilibrium either side of an imaginary axis. Arrangement refers to the use of devices such as rhythm, repetition and variation to plan the various elements that unify the interior. Sequence refers to the way an interior comprises discreet spaces or objects

experienced as a progression. Scale is the comparative relationship between three-dimensional elements in the space and between body and space. Proportion represents mathematical relationships. Systems of harmonious proportion include the Golden Section and the Fibonacci Sequence.

5.1.1.2. Haptic sight

Malnar and Vodvarka emphasise the correlation between light and the powerful emotive influence of colour and discuss how value impacts the perception of texture. This notion denotes a cross-modality between sight and touch in the perception of surface characteristics. Perception is cross-modal when phenomena associated with one sensory modality can be perceived through another. Indeed, Hall (1990, p.60) explains that “[t]ouch and visual spatial experiences are so interwoven that the two cannot be separated”. This cross-modality is called haptic sight and it is characterised by the perception of surface firmness, texture and chromatic temperature phenomena through sight. For instance, a surface can be perceived as soft or hard, warm or cool, smooth or rough through vision alone. Referring to chromatic temperature, Alexander, Ishikawa and Silverstein (1977, p.1153) also recognise the influence of haptic sight on perception, explaining that “the warmth of the colours of a room makes a great deal of difference between comfort and discomfort.” This cross-modal “haptic way of seeing” (Le Breton 2017, p. 34) is mostly overlooked in sensory models, including Malnar and Vodvarka’s despite their depiction of the relationship between light and colour. Yet it is an important principle for designers to consider.

5.1.1.3. Touch

Malnar and Vodvarka (2004, p. 151) differentiate between active and passive touch. Active touch means that the body is actively performing an action to touch a surface. Tactile phenomena perceived through active touch include roughness or smoothness, hardness or softness, surface temperature, contour identity and vibration. Passive touch means that the skin is being touched, in the sense that the body does not need to perform an action for a sensation to occur. Tactile phenomena perceived through passive touch include air movement, temperature, humidity, radiation. The terminology ‘skin and body contact’ is used here to highlight that the perception of tactile phenomena occurs through the entire body, the surface of the skin but also the muscles. Even though this study focuses on exteroceptive modalities, it recognises a degree of intermodal perception between tactile sensations on the skin and interoceptive muscle sensations. Sitting on a chair for instance brings together both types of

sensations into one perceptual act as the muscles relax into the posture whilst the skin touches the surface of the chair. Touch relies on movement for its full expression (Classen 2005, p. 3). The sense of touch is thus physiologically complex because the knowledge we derive from our environment through exteroceptive tactual phenomena merges seamlessly with the knowledge derived from the interoceptive proprioceptive system (Brand 2023, p. 59). The interaction between touch and muscle sensation is discussed further in the following paragraph.

5.1.1.4. Kinaesthesia

As the sense of movement, Kinaesthesia is typically perceived by the self (Sahyouni 2013). Malnar and Vodvarka (2004, p. 151) define kinaesthesia as the position and movement of body parts. In spatial discourses, this is primarily characterised by the body moving through space, either as a cognitive or phenomenal experience (Lynch 1960, Malnar and Vodvarka 2004, Blundell Jones and Meagher 2015, Seamon 2016a). Expanding the discussion on intermodal perception, the interaction between kinaesthesia and touch can also enrich the phenomenal experience of movement. Malnar and Vodvarka (2004, p. 146) explain that when “coupled with active touch, the information is increased, allowing us to become aware of the surface qualities of the path we are on.” This is therefore not the same coupling as the cross-modality between sight and touch discussed in the context of haptic sight when highlighting that certain phenomena associated with touch are also perceived directly through sight. Then, Malnar and Vodvarka’s model also brings attention to the position of the body and body parts and alongside movement through space, this thesis considers postures and gestures, defined here as movement in space. Postures, a terminology specifically used by Ingold (2000, p. 169), relates to the way the body adjusts its position to, for example, sit down, stand up, lean back or lean forward. Gestures, expressive forms of interactions between body and space and of non-verbal communication between people, are also performed by shifting the position of body parts. Whilst gestures are not typically referenced in sensory models, they can constitute an additional layer of information complementing the study of postures. Thus, here, kinaesthesia is explored by investigating movement through space, postures and gestures.

5.1.1.5. Hearing

According to Nudds (2012, pp. 274-275), loudness, pitch and timbre determine the way sounds are perceived. Loudness corresponds to the intensity of a sound, how quiet or loud it is. Pitch corresponds to the key of a sound, how high or low the sound is. When discussing timbre

Nudds explains that “notes of the same pitch played at the same loudness on a clarinet and on a trumpet appear different; this difference is due to having a different timbre”. Timbre may be described as the appearance of a sound and although useful to musicians, it is perhaps less so to experiential designers and accordingly, timbre is not included in this model. Instead, this study turns to Malnar and Vodvarka’s spatial terminology ‘localisation’, defined here as the origin of a sound and its distance from the listener. Furthermore, drawing on Cox (2009) and on the work of acousticians Barry Blesser and Lynda-Ruth Salter (2006) this model introduces the concept of signature sound, defined as the specific sound that characterises an environment, the way it appears to us, and contributes to our sense of place. A signature sound is perceived qualitatively.

5.1.1.6. Smell

Olfaction occurs in the human body via two different pathways, via the nose (orthonasal olfaction) through inhalation, and via the mouth (retronasal olfaction) when we eat or drink (Smith 2012, p. 324). Smith explains that smell contributes to flavour and fuses with taste (alongside touch through the tongue and other organs although this is beyond the scope of this thesis). The sense of taste, the gustative experience proper, only enables us to differentiate between sweet, salty, sour, bitter and Umami (savory) (Henshaw 2012, p. 45), whilst we rely on the sense of smell to perceive flavours through retronasal olfaction. Accordingly, it can be difficult to differentiate between a gustative experience proper and the tasting of flavours, and taste and smell being physiologically related, they are often categorised together as chemical senses (Gibson 1966, Dzaman et al. 2005, Smith 2012, Spence et al. 2015). We do not, however, typically experience the built environment as either sweet, salty, sour, bitter or savoury, and consequently, the sense of taste is not included in this model. Instead, it focuses on inhalation, emphasising the primacy of odours in environmental experience but also recognising that flavours can be perceived through the sense of smell, depending on the stimulus. For example, a fragrant wood in the materiality of the interior would typically be perceived as an odour, but the aroma of coffee permeating a space could also stimulate the perception of flavour. Smell is thus defined here as the perception of odours and flavours through inhalation. Furthermore, still drawing on Malnar and Vodvarka’s (2004, p. 151) model, primary odorants are also included in this model to help define types of smells. Here, however, terminologies used by Kumar and Uttekar’s (2023) are preferred for their simplicity, whilst a focus on positive, and therefore potentially rewarding primary odorants is maintained.

5.1.2. Definition of an emotionality model

This case study aims to uncover what it feels like for visitors to experience the public interior of the RFH. It is therefore necessary to define an emotionality model for this research, focusing here on positive emotional qualities to be able to understand which phenomena constitute rewards and why. This is not however simply about assigning positive labels to experiences but to foreground their qualitative character. The model presented in Table 2 was used during the fieldwork and in its analysis and is discussed in the text that follows.

What does it feel like to experience...			
Grounding qualities		Stimulating qualities	
Comfortable	Relaxing	Energising	Entertaining
Comforting	Peaceful	Convivial	Attractive
Satisfying	Restful	Lively	Pleasurable
Welcoming	Calming	Fun	Diverting
Fulfilling	Tranquil	Uplifting	Enjoyable
Gratifying	Pleasant	Exciting	Delightful
Pleasing	Serene	Joyful	Idiosyncratic
Inviting	Soothing	Playful	Amusing

Table 2: Emotionality model developed for the case study analysis.

Whilst the emotionality keywords included in this model draw on “Feeling Wheels” developed by Wilcox (1982) and Rogers (2021) to avoid limiting the description of emotional qualities to the vocabulary of the researcher, the structure of this model is inspired by Russell’s (1980) Circumplex Model of Affect in psychology. Russell organises emotional keywords around a circle to emphasise their interrelation and his model is structured across four main categories, from arousal to pleasure to sleepiness through to misery. These illustrate a gamut of positive to negative emotions. This study is concerned with positive emotional qualities and therefore focuses on two of these categories. The first expresses Russell’s gamut of emotions between pleasure and sleepiness and includes pleasing, serene, relaxing and calm with contentment as their median. The second references a gamut of emotions between arousal and pleasure such as astonishment, delight and happiness with excitement as their median. The median contentment and excitement characterise the two categories of positive emotions pertinent to

this study. Although contentment and excitement are useful headings for the two categories of positive emotions identified by Russell, they do not reflect an emotional response to the environment but the emotional state of a person. This is logical since Russell is a psychologist. However, this thesis considers emotionality in the context of embodiment to explore visitors' perception of the emotional tone of the public interior. Thus, whilst the model developed for this study follows a structure established by Russell, it requires a different terminology. For example, instead of 'relaxed', which refers to the way a person feels, the term 'relaxing' is preferred because it better reflects what the experience feels like. The experience is/feels relaxing. This does not preclude that visitors would not feel relaxed, only that this is not the focus of this research. Therefore, this model also seeks an alternative to the terms 'contentment' and excitement'. Here, this study draws on Rice (2007, pp. 11-12) who, referencing Walter Benjamin's discourse on experience, defines two categories of experience, long and momentary. Long experiences develop over time to become linked to familiarity and continuity and contribute to stability. They have grounding qualities. Momentary experiences on the other hand are dynamic and often impermanent. They have stimulating qualities. In this model, the term 'grounding' replaces 'contentment' and the term 'stimulating' replaces 'excitement'. The experience is/feels grounding, the experience is/feels stimulating. Rice intimates that long and momentary experiences correlate and that we need both. This suggests that visitors should be able to experience grounding and stimulating qualities in the environment the public interior at the same time to develop positive emotional connections, although perhaps not in equal measure. In some situations, grounding qualities may dominate, in others, stimulating qualities may dominate.

5.2. Fieldwork documentation method

The documentation and gathering of information took place across twenty separate visits between September 2018 and January 2020. Each visit lasted between two and three hours and they were staggered across different times of day and different days of the week to achieve saturation. I also experienced the public interior informally as a non-ticket holder visitor, and occasionally as a ticket holder, during this period. In addition, the site documentation from the comparative study (July to December 2017) and from the pilot study (July and August 2018) was also included in the fieldwork for this case study since it captured design and management practices, as well as visitors enacting their experience. The fieldwork was completed before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was fortunate since restrictions imposed by the pandemic, notably the temporary closure of public interiors, would

have undermined my ability to carry out this research. Instead, I was able to study lived experiences of personalisation in the public interior of the RFH when the site yielded a high level of permeability, diversity of people and activities. This thesis posits that the quality and usefulness of the research depends on the researcher's ability to draw on typical rather than diminished conditions. This does not mean that this research is restricted to an idealised view of the personalisation of the visitor experience, it also considers barriers. A multi-media diary format (using an iPad) was employed to facilitate the documentation of multisensory phenomena. The fieldwork includes phenomenological information, the mapping, description and visualisation of phenomena, and the depiction of emotional qualities. For this notes, photographs, annotated sketches, films and sound recordings were used. The objective was to document all phenomena and emotional qualities as they presented themselves to gather a rich representation of experience. Nonetheless, this thesis acknowledges that since direct perception is selective, this fieldwork is relative to the perception of the researcher. Even though my expertise in spatial design and sensory studies is an advantage, this understanding further justifies the need for interviews with staff and visitors to triangulate insights from the case study.

5.3. Case study analysis design

The fieldwork was first examined off-site using iterative visualisation techniques as a thematic analysis method to facilitate understanding and identify situations before commencing the more in-depth process of the full analysis. Thus, in the first instance, information gathered on site was visualised into annotated photographic compositions and diagrams to organise the fieldwork and iteratively make sense of it. Samples are available in Appendix 2. Organising and visualising the documentation is akin to a collage bringing together mental images from different study visits to foreground situations pertaining to looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration and porosity and privateness, uncover significant phenomena, discrepant information and barriers. Twenty distinctive types of situations across nested elements 1, 2 and 3 emerged through this process. Seven types of situations illustrate the enactment of appropriation and its cultivation through looseness. Six types of situations illustrate the enactment of exploration and its cultivation through enticement. Seven types of situations illustrate the enactment of privateness and its cultivation through porosity. In keeping with the methodology, these were organised into three collections, and they are the starting point for the final stage of the analysis. Then, an analytical model specific to this study was constructed to ensure parity of analysis across all twenty situations. It is organised across

five categories: personalisation by, emotional sense-making, sensory rewards, personalisation for, barriers. It draws on the working model developed in Chapter Two to articulate a set of questions to guide the analysis. An overview of this analytical model is provided below, and it is discussed in the text that follows.

Personalisation by (enactment).

- **Appropriation:** how do visitors identify or exploit possibilities to enact a relative autonomy or self-expression?
- **Exploration:** how do visitors enact modes of approach behaviour characterised by movement towards and body-environment sensory interactions?
- **Privateness:** how do visitors enact positive territoriality from vantage points where they can maintain sensory connections with the macro-scale of the environment?

Emotional sense-making

- What does it feel like to experience appropriation, exploration or privateness?
- How are these qualities grounding or stimulating?
- How are these qualities consequential or communicated?

Sensory rewards

- How do spatio and socio-sensory phenomena generated through design and management practices contribute to the perceived emotional qualities?
- How are these phenomena rewarding?

Personalisation for (design and management practices).

- **Looseness:** how are accessibility (permeability) and freedom of choice designed and managed?
- **Enticement:** how are partly hidden/partly revealed phenomena designed and managed to arouse curiosity? How do forms and materials invite touch?
- **Porosity:** how are boundaries, borders and liminal edges designed and managed to regulate sensory flows?

Barriers

- How could 'personalisation for' impair visitors' ability to enact 'personalisation by' and experience rewarding phenomena?

The analysis begins with a description of lived experiences in each of the twenty situations pertaining to appropriation, exploration and privateness in order to foreground the significant phenomena that have been retained as mental images. The descriptions articulate how visitors personalise their experience in the public interior of the RFH through embodied enactments, seeing, touching, moving, hearing, talking, inhaling, etc., and provide the foundation for an enquiry into 'personalisation by'. From this, drawing on the emotionality model developed for this study, the analysis outlines the grounding and stimulating emotional qualities associated with these experiences, whether these are perceived as the consequence of an action or whether they are communicated in the environment through design and management practices, or by other visitors enacting their experience. Then, drawing on the sensory model developed for this study, the analysis locates and describes corresponding rewarding spatio and socio-sensory phenomena and the primary sensory modalities at play. Next, the analysis articulates the role of 'personalisation for' to illuminate how design and management practices complement and interrelate with 'personalisation by'. Finally, it identifies the barriers that could impair visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections with their environment. To facilitate interpretation, insights from individual situations were synthesised into tables, twenty tables in total. They were then collated into another set of tables, one for each of the three collections, using the categories of the analytical model as headings to synthesise the knowledge developed in this case study into a coherent format, facilitate comprehension of insights and allow for conclusions to be drawn. Samples illustrating these later stages of the analytical process are available in Appendix 3.

5.4. Insights from the case study analysis

The case study analysis examines the principles and processes detailed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three through tangible evidence from real life situations. First, insights specific to looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness are discussed. Then, insights are synthesised to update the working definitions developed for this thesis and to draw conclusions from the sensory-emotional processes at play in the public interior of the RFH.

5.4.1. Insights on looseness and appropriation

Seven types of situations illustrating the principles of looseness and appropriation were identified and significant insights from their analysis are examined here.

5.4.1.1. Characteristics of looseness and appropriation

This analysis uncovered three key characteristics of looseness: accessibility, generosity and flexibility. Accessibility corresponds to the permeability previously discussed in the literature review and this study draws on a definition by the Gehl's institute (Gardner et al. 2018, p. 68) to illustrate the permeability of the public interior of the RFH. Visitors can freely access a variety of shared physical spaces to socialise, play, relax, watch people, make connections, or simply enjoy being there, appreciating the physical environment and its culture. This study showed that the higher the permeability, the more spaces visitors are free to access and appropriate, and the higher the perception of looseness.

The provision of choice is also generous. Visitors can choose between different types of environmental conditions, from lively to peaceful, from bright to shaded, from spacious to intimate. Moreover, the large interior is managed to allow sufficient space between individuals or groups of visitors for everyone to feel comfortable. Corroborating Whyte's (1980) analysis of small urban spaces, this study found that the provision of furniture, seating especially, has a significant impact on the visitor experience. Here, generosity combines with flexibility as design and management practices cultivate visitors' ability to feel welcome and at ease by providing a generous amount of furniture. These practices recognise that visitors will have different preferences and requirements for comfort by including variations in colour, forms, scale and proportions, levels of hardness and softness. They also consider a diversity of individual and collective needs by including moveable furniture. On Level 2 (nested elements 1 and 2) for instance the furniture is neatly arranged every morning for the interior to welcome visitors (Figure 9). The cheerful colours and the curved shapes of the chairs invite visitors to sit down. The furniture is light and therefore easy to move, visitors can reorganise tables and chairs to suit their needs (Figure 10). By lunch time, the original layout is disrupted, and the level of disruption increases exponentially throughout the day as visitors leave and others, with different needs, arrive to replace them. This increases the visibility and perception of looseness. The reciprocity between looseness and appropriation is designated in this thesis by the terminology 'experiential loop' and in the example illustrated by Figure 10, this notion is also closely linked to the concept of social contagion. According to Brennan (2004) who refers to social contagion in her discussion on the transmission of affect, the mood of a place is contagious. Here, the sight of visitors leaning, reclining in informal postures may have a relaxing effect on the mood of the observer. The sound of animated conversations can have an uplifting effect on the mood of the listener. Social contagion could thus amplify appropriation by inciting visitors to emulate the way other visitors enact appropriation.



Figure 9: The furniture is arranged to welcome visitors in the Level 2 foyer.



Figure 10: Visitors reorganise the furniture to suit their needs in the Level 2 foyer.

Furthermore, the analysis placed choice as a precursor to diversity because visitors' ability to enact a diversity of activities depends on them being able to exercise a relative freedom of choice. This understanding emerged when examining the enactment of a relative autonomy and self-expression. When enacting a relative autonomy, visitors identify possibilities in the

physical environment to carry out activities of personal significance aligned to an established activity model determined by design and management practices. These activities are autonomous but managed, hence the use of the term 'relative'. For example, when visitors select the public interior of the RFH to meet friends or to read a book, they are motivated by the need to socially interact with others (meeting) or to enact a reflective activity (reading). The choice of spaces and furniture enables them to fulfil this motivation. In their discussion on loose urban spaces, Frank and Stevens (2006) associate non-productive and non-reproductive activities generally understood as leisure activities with looseness. However, observations in the public interior of the RFH highlighted that a number of visitors also carry out activities that may be considered productive. Visitors working on their laptop and work-oriented group meetings are a common sight. By using the public interior of the RFH as an alternative to more conventional workspaces, visitors still enact a relative autonomy, and they are still part of its public life, contributing to the diversity of activities. This conception differentiates looseness in the public interior from looseness in urban public spaces. In the context of the public interior, visitors may enact a relative autonomy through non-productive activities, but certain forms of productive activities have also become common place. Looseness allows this variation to coexist alongside non-productive and non-reproductive activities.

Although the most common activities observed in this case study were those aligned to management planning, a number of visitors were also seen to enact self-expression, subverting managed expectations to carry out activities outside the established model (Figure 11). Self-expression typically refers to the enactment of more playful and entertaining activities, activities the public interior was not originally intended for. There seems to be a high level of tolerance for self-expression in the public interior of the RFH and observations highlighted that such activities are predominantly group activities. Examples observed included drawing, knitting, painting, board games, dancers practicing, actors rehearsing, and children using the interior as a playground. Here, visitors exploit rather than identify possibilities in the physical environment. Self-expression brings an idiosyncratic dimension to the public interior that can stimulate and enrich the visitor experience, both for the actors and the spectators. Whilst the enactment of a relative autonomy may confer a degree of informality and sometimes even disorder to the public interior, the enactment of self-expression can generate unpredictability and randomness.



Figure 11: A group of visitors appropriates a corner of the Level 2 foyer.

5.4.1.2. The influence of cultural contexts on the management of safety

Chapter Two outlined the role of the cultural environment whilst historical, political, geographical and economic contexts specific to the public interior of the RFH were detailed in Chapter Four. Following on from this, the case study analysis illuminates how cultural contexts aligned to the historical legacy of the 1951 Festival of Britain and to the political legacy of the 1983 Open Foyer Policy influence the management of looseness and appropriation. This is examined against the need to maintain safety and respect for others. At the time of this study, a list of house rules was available on the Southbank Centre website and occasionally appeared on screens located in different parts of the interior (these are primarily used to announce current and future events). This information has recently been replaced by a page about security and safety following a redesign of the Southbank website but at the time of the study, the rules were presented as behavioural requests for the comfort of all visitors. A copy of the rules is contrasted in Appendix 4 with the current approach to illustrate the influence of cultural contexts. Here, the analysis centres on the conditions observed at the time of the study. The security team was visible, although not overtly so and their behaviour was unobtrusive. They quietly watched, slowly meandering through the interior, conveying a sense of security and safety without projecting authority. The approach taken to implement house rules appeared light. Observations showed that visitors regularly contravened some of the rules through transgressions that may or may not have been intentional since visitors may not

have been aware of the rules. Security staff did not always intervene, which highlights a degree of tolerance. These transgressions were minor but the response from staff was nonetheless telling. For example, house rules stipulated that sitting on the floor was not permitted. Yet, visitors, especially those with children, were regularly seen sitting on the floor with their belongings loosely scattered around them (Figure 12). This kind of behaviour may be common in outdoor public spaces but less so in public interiors.



Figure 12: Sitting on the floor in the Level 2 foyer Ballroom area.

Similarly, the house rules specified that shoes should always be worn, yet this case study uncovered instances when visitors took off their shoes for added comfort to sit crossed legged on sofas. No one approached them to tell them they should not do this. Another house rule indicated that sleeping was not permitted, and in this instance, observations revealed that security usually intervened when visitors appeared to be sleeping. This suggests that tolerance has a threshold although monitoring was infrequent, and other visitors did not seem to mind. This is perhaps because visitors appeared to self-regulate, maintaining discretion and respect for others in their activities. Here, a degree of enculturation is also at play and corroborates the discussion Chapter Two that highlighted that we learn and adapt to the norms and values of the culture in which we are immersed (Bell 2020).

5.4.1.3. Barriers to appropriation

Three distinct barriers to appropriation were identified. The first concerns restrictions applied through the management of choice. Although the choice of spaces accessible to visitors is generous, it also fluctuates. For example, in 2019, all furniture were removed from the Level 3 mezzanine (nested element 2). This was a significant shift in management practices since this area provided the most intimate setting in the interior and had been accessed and used by visitors for several years. At the same time, sofas and armchairs providing a small but luxurious lounge area on Level 3 near the Skylon restaurant also disappeared. They were replaced by uninviting low stools. Then, all furniture adjacent to the windows on the west and east side of the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2) was also removed. Visitors could still access these areas, but the lack of furniture meant that they could not appropriate them anymore. They were denied that choice and management practices seemed less generous. The decision to remove the furniture from the Level 3 mezzanine (nested element 2) will be discussed in the staff interview in Chapter 6. The rationale for other changes listed above remains unclear however, since, here, the focus is on the perception of these changes from the perspective of the visitors, the actual reason in the context of this discussion is immaterial. Visitors do not need to know why a decision was made by management to experience that decision.

The second barrier to appropriation relates to the tolerance threshold for self-expression governed by security and safety requirements and the need to maintain a positive and comfortable experience for all visitors. Regulations may be put in place to enforce restrictions on certain types of behaviour and activities. Furthermore, this case study highlighted that some visitors may feel excluded when one type of activity or one group of visitors dominate the environment. For example, the discussion on the social environment of the RFH in Chapter 4 highlighted that the RFH has a family friendly culture attracting a high number of visitors with young children. At times, the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2) is filled with their loud and high pitch sounds. This can be stimulating for some but also uncomfortable for others. In this instance, visitors without children and with different needs may not feel that they can enjoy the foyer. This was noted in informal conversations with visitors who nonetheless recognised that they still had access to a generous provision of alternative spaces in the interior. Groups of visitors were also sometimes observed taking over an area and in doing so, alter the qualities of the space. For example, a group of a dozen visitors were observed appropriating a large portion of the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3) to play a card game. They were organised into teams across two tables and their belongings, carrier bags, rucksacks, coats, jackets, and drinks were scattered around them, thrown on the windowsill and on the floor. This gave the

normally welcoming and relatively peaceful foyer, usually enjoyed by many visitors for its relaxing qualities, a very different emotional tone. Here, appropriation shifted towards the dominant group who made themselves at home and most likely had a positive experience although perhaps without considering the impact their activity could have on other visitors. These examples highlight the entanglements of managing how much looseness and appropriation is fitting. Recognising and managing the diversity of needs across the different groups of visitors is a complex undertaking.

5.4.2. Insights on enticement and exploration

Six types of situations illustrating the principles of enticement and exploration were identified and significant insights from their analysis are examined here.

5.4.2.1. Characteristics of enticement and exploration

Level 2 (nested element 2) is initially perceived as a large open plan space, but the composition and organisation of the interior architecture and its relationship with cantilevered structures on Level 3 (nested element 2) is complex. Three-dimensional elements overlap or frame vistas to reveal and hide at the same time, and the repetition of architectural devices such as columns create sight lines that guide the eyes into the distance for visitors to catch glimpses of spaces, colours, light, openings, objects and movement (Figure 13). Although visual phenomena dominate, auditory, olfactive and tactile phenomena sensed through passive touch can also arouse interest and curiosity. Visitors can hear the sound of activities or perceive a smell in the distance, or they may feel heat radiation or air movement on their skin but not see the source. If enticed, visitors move towards phenomena to satisfy their curiosity and when this occurs they may feel rewarded. Visitors' curiosity may weaken over time as they become familiar with their environment, although this does not mean that they have lost interest because they may still be motivated by the need to re-experience rewarding phenomena. Drawing on mental images from previous experiences, curiosity is then replaced by anticipation. For example, the Level 5 foyer is accessed by staircases where the light is dimmer and the ceiling lower. This device entices visitors to move upwards towards the light. Then, as they arrive at the top of the stairs and enter the foyer, a large double-height space with a magnificent panoramic view overlooking the city is revealed. The large foyer space and the view are not fully visible to visitors until the last possible moment to maintain the element of surprise, whilst the immediacy of the experience and the contrast between the dimmer staircase and the large bright foyer heightens the recognition of curiosity being satisfied. The

experience feels inspiring and uplifting, it invites a long pause to fully enjoy the rewards of the visual phenomena, and an emotional connection between visitor and environment is established. This can then be retained as a positive mental image and visitors may be motivated to re-live the experience, ascending the stairs again, in anticipation.



Figure 13: Overlapping three-dimensional elements and framed vistas on Level 3.

The case study also evidenced how forms and surface materials can be conducive to body-environment interactions. Haptic qualities such as the warmth of a colour, the smooth contours of a railing, or the softness of a seat, are first perceived through sight before direct contact with the body and skin occurs. It is this visual perception of haptic qualities that entices and invites touch. Here, light is especially important because it has a transformative power over materials (Mallgrave 2013, p. 157). On Levels 2 and 3 (nested element 2), the indirect lighting and the warmth of its colour temperature create a welcoming environment, encouraging body-environment interactions. On Level 5, the softness of muted colours, the bright natural light and gentle curve of the space have a similar effect (Figure 14). Both locations are conducive to exploration but their respective phenomena stem from very different design practices.

Furthermore, this study found that olfactory phenomena in materials can also contribute. At the RFH, visitors are greeted by a subtle but distinctive scent permeating the Level 2 foyer as they enter. This slightly sweet and soft signature smell seems to emanate from materials. It welcomes visitors like the familiar smell of a home. Every home has a smell, and smells can

conjure the most powerful memories (Pallasmaa 2023, p. 65). Thus, this study highlighted that visual and olfactive phenomena may constitute a first layer of information for materiality to entice visitors.



Figure 14: Bright light and muted tones in the Level 5 foyer.

Then, touch constitutes a second layer. Touch is not always a primary concern in the design of spaces, even though touching surfaces brings body and environment together in a more intimate way. When feeling the pressure of the soft carpet underfoot or gliding a hand effortlessly on the smooth surface of a railing for instance, visitors are directly connected to the physical environment. In addition, tactile qualities in materials also have a collective dimension. Brand (2023, pp. 138-140) explains that we can reconstruct past actions from traces left by previous occupants (Figure 15). Material patina, marks and scratches can arouse interest and even curiosity. They are not scars but traces left by previous visitors, and Brand correlates such traces with inhabitation, personalisation and belonging. Thus, partly hidden or partly revealed phenomena and the materiality of the environment entice visitors on an exploratory journey through the interior of the RFH as they enact modes of approach behaviour and observations foreground the primacy of *flânerie*. Visitors were regularly seen walking slowly without an explicit goal or destination. They followed an irregular path and sometimes paused to enjoy a view or watch and listen to the activities around them. The slow movement can contribute to a more grounding kinaesthetic experience and, more broadly, to an enhanced environmental

experience as visitors actively explore through their senses, looking up, down, sideways, inhaling, listening, touching, etc. Visitors can thus perceive a richer palette of phenomena.



Figure 15: Traces from previous visitors.

5.4.2.2. Barriers to exploration

Three distinct barriers to exploration were identified. The main barrier is accessibility. Visitors cannot explore the environment of the public interior if their ability to access its spaces becomes restricted. This places accessibility and therefore looseness as a precursor to exploration. In addition, this study found that the design of the Level 2 Riverside Terrace Cafe (nested element 1) is not as conducive to exploration as other areas on Levels 2, 3 and 5 (nested elements 2 and 3) although it is still integral to exploratory journeys across the entire interior. The cafe presents a friendly and informal aspect, but it is designed as a single rectangular volume defined by a linear axis punctuated by columns. This space is not conducive to exploration because everything is revealed at once, so there is nothing to be curious about. In this location, the emphasis is instead on drawing attention to the exterior vista. Finally, exploration may also be impaired when materials generate modes of avoidance behaviour, the opposite of approach behaviour. Going back to the Level 2 Riverside Terrace Cafe, the combination of hard surfaces and loud reverberating sounds is not always conducive to body-environment interactions. This is not to say that this space is not enjoyed by visitors, but that

its physical environment is not conducive to the same richness of enticing phenomena as other spaces in the interior.

5.4.3. Insights on porosity and privateness

Seven types of situations illustrating the principles of porosity and privateness were identified and significant insights from their analysis are examined here.

5.4.3.1. Characteristics of privateness and porosity

This study showed that the ability to define personal or group territories in the public interior of the RFH is intrinsic to the visitor experience and that visitors do not create territories to isolate themselves from others but were observed seeking areas where they could maintain sensory connections, primarily visual and auditory, with the collective environment. From these vantage points, visitors could enact their preferred activity, whilst still being part of the public life of the interior. The RFH lends itself to the enactment of privateness because overlapping and raised three-dimensional elements combined with large columns punctuating the interior come together for the physical environment to be perceived and experienced as a series of smaller interconnected areas rather than one large expanse. Within these, the provision of furniture also supports visitor's ability to enact privateness. Visitors want to sit, lean, rest. They seek surfaces and contours to hold and envelop the body and the softer the contours and material, the higher the level of comfort. Furniture also helps define the edges of a territory, not only for the visitors in the territory but also for those outside it. Occasionally visitors were observed moving furniture to appropriate a different location to suit their needs (Figure16). These occurrences substantiate the notion that even though the three pairs of principles developed in this study are discussed separately to foreground their distinctiveness, they are also complementary and interdependent. Here, the ability to move furniture to a preferred location depended on loose practices enabling visitors to feel free to do so and thus, enact appropriation before enacting privateness.

This study also showed how boundaries and porous edges are essential to the creation and maintenance of connections between micro and macro-scales because their partiality facilitates the flow of sensory phenomena through the environment. Alongside wall and windows, columns can also become key devices in defining porosity. In the RFH, some of these are very large and visitors sitting close to them may experience them as boundaries first and porous edges second. The large expanse of solid material close to the body presents a

sheltering boundary but beyond this, visitors can still perceive visual, auditory and olfactive phenomena. They may also sense air flows or heat radiation on their skin. Sitting further away from the columns increases the visitors' field of perception and as a result, the columns appear more porous. Thus, the proximity or distance of three-dimensional elements from the body impacts the visitor experience of porosity and privateness. The profusion of porous edges creates sustaining synergies between the micro and macro-scale of experience and the large windows on the north face extend this experience to the city beyond the boundaries of the building. This in turn may deepen the sense of connection between individuals and collective environments.



Figure 16: Visitors relocate furniture to suit their needs.

The case study also authenticated the role of liminal edges. Liminal edges were defined in Chapter Two as sensory thresholds, the transition from one sensorial experience to another, such as from warm to cold or light to dark. They are less tangible than boundaries and borders but are nonetheless defined by the composition, organisation and scale of three-dimensional elements. In the Level 2 cafe (nested element 1) for instance, the way the architecture overhangs above the terrace creates a border that offers overhead protection to people sitting outside and stops direct sunlight from entering the interior space. This means that in sunny weather, the dimness of the light in the shaded interior contrasts sharply with the brightness of the light on the terrace outside, which may be busy and noisy since observations showed that visitors enjoy sitting in the sun (Figure 17). The sparsely inhabited interior seems comparatively

quieter. When this occurs, visual and auditory liminal edges can enhance the perception of enclosure and positive territoriality in the interior space. The micro-scale of the body is transformed into a vantage point from which visitors can overlook or eavesdrop on life. This example illustrates how liminal edges can create contrasting phenomena that can be utilised by designers to deepen the visitors' perception of privateness.



Figure 17: Liminal edges in the Level 2 cafe.

There is a strong resonance between privateness and the prospect-refuge theory originally put forward by Appleton (1975) and further developed by Hildebrand (1999). Dosen and Ostwald (2013) explain that this theory describes a human need for “places that allow a person to see, but without being seen”, acknowledging the role of the ‘refuge’ as a vantage point. Sussman and Hollander (2015, p. 36) state that this is about people being “drawn to edges to protect their back [seeking] safe spots to take in broad landscape vistas.” Drawing on the work of Kaplan (1981), Dosen and Ostwald (2013, p. 10) also highlight that qualities associated with the characteristics of the prospect-refuge theory in the design of spaces can induce emotional responses such as “a feeling of safety or relaxation while a view from that space can add levels of stimulation and excitement.” Privateness evokes similar notions whilst the organisation of boundaries, borders and liminal edges define the relations between the micro-scale of the body nested in its territory (the refuge) and the macro-scale of the environment (the prospect). However, Dosen and Ostwald note that the prospect-refuge theory lacks a clear definition. It also appears to prioritise visual perception. Porosity and privateness, whilst bearing similarities

to the prospect-refuge theory, provide an alternative for the specific the context of personalisation for this thesis. Porosity presents clear and distinct characteristics for designers and managers to work with (personalisation for). Privateness is enacted and reflects the visitor agency (personalisation by). Most significantly, porosity and privateness centre on cultivating multisensory synergies between micro and macro-scales for visitors to be immerse in the physical environment and social life of the public interior. Conversely, the notion of refuge suggests a degree of withdrawal. Thus, whilst recognising some correspondence with the prospect-refuge theory, the principles of porosity and privateness are better aligned to this study.

5.4.3.2. Barriers to privateness

Three distinct barriers to privateness were identified in this study. Firstly, it recognises that visitors would not be able to enact privateness without management practices opening up access. Then, although there were situations in which visitors were observed sitting on the floor, it is understood that they would not typically be able to define a territory without furniture, especially moveable furniture. Thus, when furniture is removed from certain areas, visitors are also denied the possibility to define a personal or group territory. This means that the enactment of privateness is contingent on accessibility, generosity and flexibility, and this understanding anchors looseness as a precursor to privateness.

Secondly, the way a space is designed will impact its porosity and therefore, an inappropriate selection, composition or scale in three-dimensional elements may undermine synergies between micro and macro-scales and in doing so, impair or impoverish the visitor experience of sensory flows. This barrier was not identified in the design of the public interior of the RFH, but it is a logical conclusion to insights developed through this research. It was observed as an outcome of management practices, substantiating their role in the creation and maintenance of positive sensory flows. For example, the Level 2 Riverside Terrace Cafe (nested element 1) was designed to afford a pleasant view towards the river Thames. Yet, in one of the situations explored in this study, unsightly metal railings had been left on the terrace in the foreground of the vista. The top of the railings aligned to an average eye level position when sitting down, making it uncomfortable for visitors to look beyond the barriers despite its porosity. It presented an unwelcome border, partially obstructing the view and undermining the positive impact of visual phenomena afforded by the vantage point.

Thirdly, the selection of materials may contribute to unpleasant sensory flows. For instance, this study noted that environments with high levels of stimuli are not typically conducive to privateness. This was observed in the Level 2 Riverside Terrace Cafe (nested element 1), which can be very busy and noisy at certain times. The loudness of conversations and the high pitch sound of the metal legs of the chairs scrapping the floor surface each time they are moved by visitors reverberate against the hard surfaces of the interior. This can contribute to the environment being perceived as uncomfortable, even unwelcoming, by some. Visitors wishing for a degree of privateness in this location were seen to employ strategies. One was to wear noise cancelling headphones. However, this also meant losing auditory connections with the macro-scale of the environment. Another was to time the arrival to coincide with less busy periods, which denotes a strategic use of familiarity.

5.4.4. Synthesis of insights from the case study

Insights pertaining to looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness are synthesised to articulate a review of the working definitions established in Chapter Two. This is followed by a discussion bringing precision to the sensory-emotional processes identified in this study.

5.4.4.1. Looseness and appropriation

In Chapter Two, looseness was presented as a precursor to appropriation, enticement as a precursor to exploration, and porosity as a precursor to privateness. It was also suggested that visitors' ability to enact a relative autonomy and self-expression was fundamental to their ability to personalise their experience, but the primacy of looseness and appropriation was only fully revealed in this case study. Visitors enact a relative autonomy or even self-expression before they can explore the public interior, enact body-environment interactions or define territories. Therefore, the roles of looseness and appropriation and their relationship to other principles is altered. Following on from the case study, looseness and appropriation are presented as fundamental principles underpinning all other principles, whilst enticement remains a precursor to exploration and porosity a precursor to privateness (with the understanding that visitors need to be able to enact appropriation before they can enact exploration or privateness). Furthermore, the case study highlighted that a reciprocity between looseness and appropriation created an experiential loop.

Looseness

- Design and management practices characterised by accessibility (permeability), generosity and flexibility cultivate visitors' ability to exercise a relative freedom of choice and enact a diversity of activities.

Appropriation

- Appropriation correlates with freedom of choice and a diversity of activities. Visitors identify possibilities in the environment to enact a relative autonomy. Visitors exploit possibilities in the environment to enact self-expression.

Experiential loop

- Looseness cultivates appropriation and appropriation cultivates looseness.

The influence of the cultural environment

- The design and management of looseness and appropriation is bound to cultural contexts (historical, political, geographical and economic).

Known barriers

- Restrictions to visitors' ability to enact appropriation can be imposed through the management of choice.
- Restrictions to visitors' ability to enact self-expression can be imposed through regulations.
- Some visitors may feel unable to enact their preferred activities when one type of activity or one group of visitors dominate the environment.

5.4.4.2. Enticement and exploration

The case study highlighted that partly revealed, and partly hidden phenomena communicated in the environment are typically visual, auditory and olfactive but may also include phenomena associated with passive touch. It also identified sight, kinaesthesia, hearing, smell and active touch as the primary sensory modalities at play in body-environment interactions.

Enticement

- Design and management practices characterised by the composition of partly hidden and partly revealed sensory phenomena, and by forms and materials that invite touch.

These devices arouse visitors' curiosity (or anticipation) and cultivate their ability to enact modes of approach behaviour.

Exploration

- Exploration correlates with approach behaviour. Visitors enact modes of approach behaviour characterised by movement towards, flânerie and body-environment sensory interactions.

Known barriers

- Restrictions to visitors' ability to explore the physical environment can be imposed through the management of accessibility (permeability).
- Opportunities for exploration are impoverished if the design of the space reveals everything at once.
- Certain forms and materials may generate avoidance behaviour.

5.4.4.3. Porosity and privateness

The case study highlighted that boundaries, borders and liminal edges typically regulate visual, auditory, olfactive flows and those associated with passive touch. These are communicated in the environment and enable visitors to maintain perceptual connections with its macro-scale. The case study also highlighted the importance of kinaesthesia and active touch in the micro-scale of the body.

Porosity

- Design and management practices characterised by the composition of boundaries (no or little porosity), borders (partially porous edges) and liminal edges (sensory thresholds) to regulate sensory flows and cultivate visitors' ability to enact positive territoriality.

Privateness

- Privateness correlates with positive territoriality. Visitors define personal or group territories in the micro-scale of the body, from vantage points where they can maintain sensory connections with the macro-scale of the environment.

Known barriers

- Restrictions in visitors' ability to enact positive territoriality can be imposed through the management of accessibility and through the removal of furniture.
- An unsuitable placement of three-dimensional elements, objects and furniture may impair or impoverish sensory flows.
- The selection of materials may contribute to unpleasant sensory flows.

5.4.4.4. Sensory-emotional processes

Drawing on the sensory and emotionality models developed for this research, this study identifies positive grounding and stimulating emotional qualities associated with rewarding spatio and socio-sensory phenomena in the environment of the public interior of the RFH. It also shows how visitors may be motivated to re-live rewarding phenomena and substantiates the role of mental images in enhancing their ability to connect to their environment. This was for instance expressed in the context of exploration as enticement arouses not only curiosity but also anticipation when visitors are motivated to re-enact significant experiences.

Rewarding phenomena contributing to grounding qualities were perceived as comfortable, pleasing, pleasant, welcoming, inviting, restful, fulfilling, satisfying, gratifying, relaxing, tranquil, soothing, peaceful or calming. Rewarding phenomena contributing to stimulating qualities were perceived as convivial, joyful, attractive, entertaining, diverting, amusing, enjoyable, pleasurable, fun, lively, energising, uplifting or playful. The perception of phenomena as grounding or stimulating depends on their characteristics. For example, the characteristics smooth and textured, simple and complex, or subtle and strong, constitute different sense-making processes. Whilst qualities of smoothness, simplicity and subtlety may be perceived as grounding, energetic textures, complexity and strength in phenomena may be perceived as stimulating.

Furthermore, this study foregrounds the role and impact of cross-modality in the sense-making process. Although qualities perceived through sight and hearing dominate the environment of the RFH, their perception is not limited to visual or auditory phenomena. Certain phenomena associated with touch and kinaesthesia are also perceived through sight and hearing. In addition, the case study authenticates the complexity of touch established in Chapter Four, differentiating between passive and active touch. It also brings precision to kinaesthetic motion, distinguishing between phenomena generated through the movement of the body through space and those generated through postures and gestures, the movement of the body in space. Olfactive phenomena on the other hand seldom featured in the visitor experience,

with only two notable instances in the twenty situations examined, a subtle smell welcoming visitors as they enter the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2) and a stronger but sophisticated smell of food emanating from the restaurant on Level 3 (nested element 2). Nonetheless, these two instances alone were indicators of the relevance of olfactive phenomena to the perception of grounding and stimulating emotional qualities. The subtle smell was grounding; the stronger smell was stimulating.

Insights also illuminate how the ratio of grounding to stimulating qualities may vary across space and time. Space, because each of the three nested elements investigated in this study presents different qualities due to significant variations in environmental conditions (spatial composition, scale, materiality, lighting, people, etc.) and emotional tone across the different spaces of the public interior of the RFH. Furthermore, although each nested element has a dominant type of qualities, these can nonetheless vary across time due to phenomenal changes in the physical or social environments. A space with large windows such as the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3) for instance will be experienced differently on a sunny day compared to an overcast one. The Level 2 foyer (nested elements 2) can be sparsely occupied and quiet but when managed events are scheduled it becomes busy and noisy. This means that the same environment can be perceived as grounding at certain times and stimulating at other times, and as designers and managers define the ratio of grounding to stimulating qualities across space, they can also account for unavoidable variations across time. This study shows that a combination of grounding and stimulating qualities in the physical and social environments with variations over time is needed for more fulfilling and sustaining experiences.

5.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I first detailed the design of the case study and of its iterative analytical process. I defined a sensory model and emotionality model to use in the site-specific documentation and subsequent analysis. The sensory model integrates five sensory modalities, sight, touch, kinaesthesia, hearing and smell. The emotionality model identifies grounding and stimulating qualities in response to the phenomenological question 'what is it like/does it feel like to experience...?'. I then delineated a structure and a line of enquiry for the analysis to maintain parity between the twenty situations examined. First, the analysis interrogated how visitors enact appropriation, exploration and privateness. It then explored corresponding emotional sense-making processes and identified spatio and socio-sensory phenomena conducive to the perception of grounding and stimulating emotional qualities. From this, it became possible to articulate ties with design and management practices.

The second part of this chapter presented an in-depth review of insights from the case study, revealing the primacy of looseness and appropriation and bringing precision to the characteristics pertaining to the design, management and enactment of the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior. I examined and provided tangible evidence showing how looseness can enable visitors to feel welcome and exercise a degree of ownership and agency on their experience, how enticement can take visitors on an experiential journey through the environment, how porosity can define sensory flows that connect the micro-scale of the body with the macro-scale of the environment. This led to a review of the working definitions developed in Chapter Two, also acknowledging known barriers to visitors' ability to enact appropriation, exploration and privateness. These definitions reflect the distinctiveness and complementarity of the three pairs of principles identified in this study, whilst their interdependence was also recognised in the analysis. I then synthesised the sensory-emotional processes at play in the public interior of the RFH to bring coherence to the contribution of spatio and socio-sensory phenomena to the perception of grounding and stimulating emotional qualities. I highlighted the importance of cross-modality and emphasised the need for designers and managers to consider variations in sensory phenomena across space and time. The following chapter presents the staff and visitor interviews designed to triangulate insights from this case study.

Chapter 6: The staff and visitor interviews

This chapter presents the staff and visitor interviews developed to triangulate insights from the literature review on the personalisation of experience and those from the case study.

Contrasting prior insights with those from the interviews helps verify their validity whilst also filtering assumptions to enhance the viability and reliability of the research (White 2011). First, a justification for the design of the staff and visitor interviews is provided, including methods used. Next, the sample selection is explained. Then, the analysis of the staff interview outlines the visitor profile and expands from previous discussions on the cultural contexts that define the management of the visitor experience. The three pairs of principles pertaining to the personalisation of experience are also examined from the management perspective. This is followed by the analysis of the visitor interviews, which revisits the influence of personal characteristics outlined in Chapter Two and continues with a detailed account of what it is like for visitors to enact appropriation, exploration and privateness. Finally, the contribution of the personalisation of experience to emotional attachment to place for the visitors interviewed is discussed.

6.1. Interview design

The staff and visitor interviews follow a similar process for parity, with the situations identified and analysed in the case study as their starting point to maintain methodological coherence. A semi-structured interview process ensures that the discussion remains within the boundaries of the study, whilst facilitating a conversational tone for visitors to share their experience and tell their story. This format provides flexibility allowing the interviewer to adjust the questions and wording to gain detailed insights from each interviewee and respond to unexpected topics (Thomas 2013, Robson and McCartan 2016). Furthermore, an elicitation interview method is used, drawing on a selection of images illustrating each of the twenty situations identified in the case study. The elicitation interview typically relies on the use of objects or images. Writing about photo-elicitation Pink (2015, p. 88) explains that:

[p]hoto-elicitation relies on the idea of the photograph becoming a visual text through which the subjectivities of researcher and research participant intersect. It can evoke memories, knowledge and more in the research participant, which might otherwise have been inaccessible, while simultaneously allowing the researcher to compare his or her subjective interpretation of the image with that of the research participant.

Hogan, Hinrichs and Hornecker (2016, p. 2581) explain that the elicitation interview is grounded in phenomenology and can help trigger insights into the nature and quality of everyday experiences, and that the technique works best when exploring a singular lived experience rather than carrying out a general exploration. Here, images from the situations pertaining to the personalisation of experience examined in the case study represent singular lived experiences and act as a conduit to elicit mental images in interviewees. The same three collections of situations and related images illustrating the analysis of the case study are thus also used in the interviews although they are not presented to interviewees in the same order as they were discussed in the case study. Instead, the collection on porosity and privateness is shown first, followed by enticement and exploration, whilst the collection on looseness and appropriation is submitted last. They are labelled collection A, B and C respectively. There are two reasons for organising the collections in this way. First, starting with porosity and privateness helps ease respondents into the interview. The principles of porosity and privateness were deemed the easiest to explore first because they relate to positive territoriality, and observations during the case study highlighted that positive territoriality is enacted by most visitors. It is therefore a topic visitors were more likely to be familiar with. By leaving looseness and appropriation until the end, it is also possible to evaluate whether these principles permeate into the discussions pertaining to porosity and privateness or enticement and exploration without prompts, and in doing so, triangulate the understanding that looseness and appropriation underpin all other principles. The design of the interviews also acknowledges that respondents may accentuate their experience towards the positive because they are being interviewed. Thus, even though this research aims to produce a body of knowledge that delineates the conditions required for successful relationships between visitors and environment, the questions posed avoid language suggesting a positive response is required. Then, visitors were provided with a full spectrum of positive and negative emotional qualities to choose from to synthesise their perception of the public interior of the RFH. It was important to include negative emotional keywords alongside positive ones to avoid bias towards positive qualities. Finally, interviewees were invited to conclude by commenting on what they valued the most, what they may also dislike about the public interior of the RFH and what they believed could be done to improve their experience. The questions, prompts and elicitation images used in the interviews are available in Appendix 5.

Aside from its ability to spur mental images, the elicitation interview technique addresses two methodological issues. First, it helps maintain the focus of the interview on experiences pertaining to porosity and privateness, enticement and exploration, looseness and appropriation. This minimises bias whilst remaining within the boundaries of this study and

thus contributes to the coherence and validity of this research. Second, the case study site documentation took place between 2017 and 2019, but the interviews took place in 2022. The staff interview was conducted in April 2022 and visitors were interviewed between March and July 2022. Although the design of the physical environment had not changed between 2017 and 2022, the way the space is managed had evolved. Changes in the management of the visitor experience are to be expected as standard practice, but the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which will be discussed in greater depth in the staff interview analysis, led to restrictions in accessibility not encountered during the case study but still in place at the time of the interviews. As the elicitation interview technique relies on mental images rather than direct embodied experiences and images from the case study were used to elicit responses, this temporary measure did not impact directly on this research.

6.2. Interview sample selection

The staff interview aims to contribute expert knowledge on the management of the visitor experience with specific focus on the historical, political, economic and geographical contexts that impact management practices, and on the way looseness, enticement and porosity cultivate appropriation, exploration and privateness. The visitor interviews amplify the phenomenological enquiry initiated in the case study by contributing first-person perspectives on what it is like and feels like to enact appropriation, exploration and privateness. The purpose of the interviews is also to gain insights into visitors' ability to experience emotional attachment to place. Consequently, the respondent selection process draws on theories of purposeful sampling for qualitative insights collection and analysis because this allows for representativeness, for the selection of participants that are the most knowledgeable about the topic being investigated (Patton 2002, Creswell and Plano-Clark 2011, Maxwell 2013, Palinkas et al. 2015). Maxwell (p. 97) explains that '[i]n this strategy, particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately to provide information that is particularly relevant to [the research] questions and goals'.

6.2.1. Staff interviewee sampling

Whilst the researcher could observe and enact the visitor experience and develop a sense of the influence of management practices on that experience, only staff could realistically provide a full and accurate account of the management of 'personalisation for'. A staff interview was therefore conducted with Matthew Hale, Head of Visitor Experience and Ticketing at the RFH.

Matthew Hale will be referenced throughout this thesis by his initials MH. The decision to interview the Head of Visitor Experience and Ticketing emerged through a conversation in 2017 with Shân MacLennan, then Deputy Creative Director of the Southbank Centre, as well as informal conversations with Visitor Assistants and a Duty Manager in 2018. Visitor Assistants interact directly with visitors to support the implementation of the management of the visitor experience at the RFH in its dual function as a cultural venue and as a public interior. At the time of this study, some were permanent staff, others were volunteers. The Duty Manager manages teams of Visitor Assistants. Although Visitor Assistants and Duty Managers have direct contact with visitors, they do not typically have a holistic understanding of management practices. Informal conversations with staff prior to the interview indicated that the most effective way to fulfil the objectives of this research was to interview someone with an in-depth knowledge of the cultural environment of the RFH, someone who not only manages the visitor experience but also manages the decision-making process. Hence, the interview with the Head of Visitor Experience and Ticketing. It took place at the RFH, in an office rather than in the public interior. This was not an issue since, as previously stated, images were used to structure the interview and elicit responses. The staff interview transcript is available in Appendix 6.

6.2.2. Visitor interviewees sampling

Interviewing visitors was an essential part of the research process because it is not possible to ascertain from the case study alone how the personalisation of experience could contribute to emotional attachment to place. Therefore, insights from the case study are reviewed and expanded upon with personal stories from a sample of visitors. Frechette et al. (2020) highlight that an average of ten respondents can yield sufficient results for interpretation in phenomenological research. Whilst this research did not rely on this information alone to select interviewees, the number of respondents in this study aligns with this recommendation. Nine visitors were interviewed to complement the researcher's reflexive study. This sample was deemed appropriate for three reasons. First, because the case study already contributed substantial insights against those of the literature review, drawing on the expertise and investment of the researcher. In the case study "the researcher is open to greater breadth and depth of information, is able to triangulate different impressions and observations, and is able to follow emergent discrepancies in the course of the fieldwork" (Bauer and Gaskell 2000, p. 43). Second, because this research does not aim to generalise insights from the sample of respondents to all visitors, nor does it aim to define all possible realities or variations to find out how all visitors may feel about their experience of the public interior of the RFH. The

intention is for the interviews to contribute to the triangulation of the research with additional first-person perspectives beyond that of the researcher. Third, because interviews were conducted until saturation was reached and the sample generated sufficient information to contribute to the study in a meaningful way.

Three criteria also structure the respondent selection process for visitors to be able to contribute to this study effectively. The first is familiarity. Interviewees needed to be regular visitors with fair to extensive experience of the public interior of the RFH because, alongside embodied perception in the present (*Erlebnis*), this study investigates mental images accumulated over time (*Erlebnisse*). Furthermore, “it is through repeated use and practice that entities develop an embodied familiarity” (Brand 2023, p. 40). It follows that people who did not visit the public interior of the RFH or seldom did would not be able to contribute to this study. Conversely, it is logical to expect that those who were regular visitors were more likely to express a positive emotional connection and could therefore be in a better position to illuminate the relation between rewarding experiences and emotional attachment.

The second requirement was for interviewees to reflect a spectrum of experiences, personality and personal culture. They were recruited through word of mouth and represented a range of professional backgrounds listed as recruitment, management, retail, HR, music, exhibition design, and design education (exhibition, graphic, interior and spatial). It was deemed important to include a number of respondents with a professional design or design education background to bring a degree of precision to insights on the visitor experience of the physical environment because informal conversations with visitors during the pilot study highlighted that although they could easily discuss their experience of the social environment, some struggled to express their perception of the physical environment. Respondents also included a mix of parents who had experience of taking their children to the public interior of the RFH and people visiting with friends or on their own. Whilst all interviewees lived or had lived in London, two moved to London in their early twenties from other parts of the UK and another two moved to London, also in their early twenties, from abroad (Holland and Lithuania). The nine respondents’ familiarity with the public interior of the RFH ranged from 6 to 60 years. There were thus significant variations in ages, from late twenties to early seventies. Respondents in younger age groups such as late teens to early twenties were not included because observations showed that this age group is not the primary audience for the public interior of the RFH and as previously noted, this study needed to consider the limitations of a lack of familiarity. This was put to the test in 2018 when taking a group of first year students at London College of Communication (University of the Arts London) to carry out a sensory study

in the public interior of the RFH. The students were between eighteen and twenty-two years old and none of them had previously visited the RFH. Towards the end of the activity, they were invited to complete a questionnaire about their experience of the RFH and the seventeen students who responded highlighted that whilst they liked its design they did not have sufficient experience to express an emotional response. When asked if they would visit the public interior of the RFH again they unanimously identified the large number of young children present that day as the main reason for not returning. This echoes the understanding from the case study that when one group dominates, another may feel excluded or experience discomfort.

Finally, it was required that interviewees would be available, able and willing to share their experience within a specific timescale. They were thus provided with the option to conduct the interview on the site of the RFH or online, depending on their location and availability. Five interviews took place on the site of the RFH, four online. The location was not an issue since the interviewees were presented with images from the case study to elicit responses. The visitor interviews transcripts are available in Appendix 7.

6.3. Staff interview analysis

A thematic analysis method was used to help identify characteristics pertaining to the personalisation of experience in the staff interview and highlight the tensions that may impact management practices. Here, the discussion examines insights from the interview and their relationship with those from the literature review and case study. Following an overview of the visitor profile and an account of the impact of the cultural environment on 'personalisation for', each of the three pairs of principles defining the personalisation of experience for this study is discussed in-depth, focussing on how the management, and to a degree design, of looseness, enticement and porosity can cultivate appropriation, exploration and privateness respectively. The analysis integrates citations from the interview to illuminate the origin of insights.

6.3.1. Overview of the visitor profile

MH identified three main groups of visitors. The first includes ticket holders who come to see a show in the auditorium. The second consists of non-ticket holders who go to the RFH for artistic reasons, for instance visitors who attend free events in the main public foyer. The third

brings together non-ticket holders who just use the interior as a public space. He described this third group as families with children, people who go there to work, those just relaxing, enjoying the views, reading, drinking coffee or meeting friends, and occasionally homeless people. Similarly, this study also differentiates between ticket and non-ticket holders, focusing on the experience of non-ticket holders because they are motivated by the desire to visit the public interior rather than the auditorium, whilst also acknowledging that the same visitors may belong to different groups. For example, a visitor may arrive with the intention to meet a friend, find out that there is a free event taking place and thus enjoy the event at the same time. Alternatively, a visitor may go to the RFH to relax with a book one afternoon and go back on a different day to attend an event in the auditorium. MH also highlighted that visitors' activities become more socially oriented in the evening and at weekends, intimating to variations in the emotional tone of the environment across time. As the number of visitors to the public interior increases the sensory stimulation in the collective environment becomes richer.

6.3.2. Managing cultural contexts

The interview evidences how management practices are enmeshed in cultural contexts. It confirms that the historical and political legacies of the 1951 Festival of Britain and 1983 Open Foyer Policy still underpin the culture of the RFH and the management of the visitor experience. According to MH, the 1950s notion that the RFH “was to be a place where people can come to find joy after a war” and the 1980s democratic intentions of “opening up” the building to all by making it public are still relevant today. Referencing the way these legacies underpin the position of the RFH as a public interior, MH stressed that “anyone [management] coming in would be really hard pushed to reverse any of that [...] it would be really difficult to undo that now and just to be a venue where people come to see a concert.” Today, the emphasis is on creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where “all visitors feel really included and safe” whilst “trying to reach out to everybody”. Management practices revolve around key values such as “dignity” and “respect”, making sure that the foyers are set up to welcome people physically, for people to feel that they are “welcomed in, allowed in, it’s a space for them, it’s not intimidating”. This is actively cultivated although MH used the term ‘facilitate’:

We do think a lot about that [...] we’re having those conversations, we’re thinking about what it feels like to walk in, we’re thinking about how we can make the expanse of light come in

through our doors, be one where people feel like okay, this is a building for me. We facilitate, we've sort of done things to facilitate that over the years.

MH pointed out that they are always thinking about “the different ways that [they] could use the building to better support the visitor experience”. Sometimes however, their re-evaluation of contexts and needs may conflict with the principles of looseness and appropriation. They have for instance considered steering people and catering for their needs in a more precise way because they felt the building may be too open and too flexible; “[t]he problem we have is helping new people navigate the building.” They have “toyed” with the idea of zoning, to allocate certain areas to certain groups of people or activities. MH suggested that parents with babies or students who want to study may have specific needs that have not been met although they “haven’t landed on the final answer yet”. Whilst insights from the case study indicate that introducing zones of activities could impact the openness of the environment and on the richness of the collective life of the public interior, this example highlights that the management of the visitor experience is a reflective process, one that requires a constant re-evaluating of cultural contexts and visitors’ needs. Here, looseness measures against visitors’ ability to find their way around the building.

Cultural contexts may sometimes impair management practices. Echoing the notion that the public interior can impart essential qualities to the public life of individuals, MH stressed that for this to happen they need to “strive” to be as open and welcoming as they can, even when encountering difficulties that can put pressure on the management of the visitor experience. For example, they would like to replace the doors of the building to make the entrance more open and welcoming, but its Grade 1 listed status means that although the doors could be replaced, the replacements would need to replicate the exact design and specifications of the original doors. The listed status protects the historical context of the building’s design but at the same time, it can also frustrate the intentions of the management team. Political contexts may also shift over time. For example, a few years prior to this interview, visitors would be stopped, and their bags searched before they could enter the building because of the threat of terrorist attacks in London. For a period of time after the end of lockdown and in line with government regulations, visitors would also be stopped and required to show proof of COVID vaccination before they could enter the building. The need to stop and check visitors before they enter the building conflicted with the desire to make the public interior as open and welcoming as possible. On the other hand, MH highlighted that this was an opportunity to support the public by providing “a sense of relief”, by making the environment “feel really good”, to offer a temporary respite from the pressures of life outside the public interior. The

COVID-19 pandemic also brought new economic challenges. Like other cultural organisations in the UK, the RFH experienced substantial financial difficulties because of the necessary closure during the pandemic. Once they could reopen, the lack of available funds forced them to reduce opening hours and limit access to public spaces as a necessary cost saving measure. MH explained that the more spaces are open in the daytime, the more expensive it is to run the building because more security and cleaning are required. For a few months, public access was thus limited to Levels 1 and 2, which in study corresponds to nested element 1 and only part of nested element 2. The Level 3 promenades and mezzanine (nested element 2) and the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3) were closed to non-ticket holders. MH highlighted that this had been the biggest change following the pandemic:

So, we're at that really tough moment where we'd love to open up more of the building, but we can't because we don't have the budget to operate those sections [...] Level one and level two are open to the public, and level six is open to members, but then the rest of it is really only open to people that have come to see concerts and we open those spaces later in the day. So that has been the biggest change, how we choreograph the building so that there are still spaces that people can come in and use but at the same time, it's not that kind of huge menu of different spaces right now that people would have had back in 2019.

Thus, although the political context linked to the threat of terrorism only affected the experience of entering the building, the visitor experience remained the same as before once inside, the economic constraints that followed the COVID-19 pandemic impacted more significantly on management practices and on the visitor experience. The temporary closure of public areas undermined the management's ability to maintain accessibility throughout the interior, which impacted permeability. Then, although these constraints were somewhat alleviated by including a more generous provision of flexible furniture on Level 2 (nested element 2), this also impacted choice and visitors' ability to enact the diversity of activities they were accustomed to. However, MH stressed that the measures taken as a result of recent economic constraints were meant to be temporary and that the intention was always to "open up more of the building". Thus, the approach to monitoring and enforcing restrictions remains loose. Observations showed that some visitors would still occupy the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3) despite the barriers clearly indicating that this area was closed to the public. MH explained that "it's not a perfect scenario, people still do go and use that space, it's just not officially open". His "preferred option would be to have everything open all the time".

Geographical contexts can also impact the management of the visitor experience. Although the South Bank location facing the river Thames is an asset, it is located next to Waterloo station, a

major railway station in London, and this location can generate issues of safety. MH pointed out that:

[F]or all the wonderful things we can talk about around [the management of the visitor experience], the Royal Festival Hall is in the middle of the capital city next to the busiest train station, and that does come with antisocial behaviour. And so again there's another little bit of this, which is about the tension between the art, the foyer users and then the sort of unwanted stuff that would happen in this building if it wasn't managed. [The management of the visitor experience is] always with one eye on the safety of the majority of visitors, making sure that people continue to come to the Festival Hall and feel like all aspects of it are welcoming and safe for all ages, and that there isn't anything that they would witness in this building, which would make them feel otherwise.

Here, welcoming intertwines with safety. Providing an environment where visitors can feel welcome but also safe is essential. Therefore, antisocial behaviour needs to be managed for the benefit of the majority of visitors. Generally, the preferred approach to managing safety is gentle. MH explained that they aim to be supportive, to show "empathy and sympathy". Homeless people for instance may be referred to local shelters or charities if found sleeping. In more extreme contexts, such as when drug taking occurs, the approach would not usually involve having people arrested although they would be asked to leave. In the case of non-inclusive behaviour such as racism, first, there would be an investigation, then people may be asked not to come back. MH emphasised that the policies apply to staff as well as visitors.

In addition, measures may be taken to review the management of the physical environment if they are not always sure that everything that is happening is safe. For example, the Level 3 mezzanine (nested element 2) was a popular public area with visitors, but all furniture were removed in 2019. This was introduced in 5.4.1.3. MH explained that this area was beginning to feel like an anti-social space, with people sleeping and hiding. Staff did not feel comfortable walking through it and removing the furniture was a way to quickly fix the problem. Here, management practices moderated appropriation because it was perceived by staff as anti-social; it seems that some visitors may have been enacting privacy instead of privateness. Thus, there are different levels or thresholds of safety management impacting looseness and appropriation but generally, the emphasis is on discouraging people rather than being "heavy handed". Whilst inclusive values anchor management practices, there are limitations to inclusivity that are intrinsic to the need to balance these values against the perceived and actual "safety of the majority of visitors, making sure that people continue to come to the Festival Hall and feel like all aspects of it are welcoming and safe for all ages".

Therefore, insights from this interview foreground the significance of cultural contexts and highlight how these can impact management practices or more specifically for this study, the way ‘personalisation for’ cultivates ‘personalisation by’. The culture of the RFH is rooted in historical and political legacies and a strong desire to provide a public interior that is open to all, welcoming and safe. The use of the terms “open”, “welcoming”, or expressions such as “we’d love to open up more of the building” evidence that the management favours a loose approach although the threshold of appropriation is regulated to ensure that visitors and staff remain safe and comfortable. Their preference is to cultivate choice by providing visitors with a “huge menu of different spaces” where possible. This however was noted as the first experiential dimension to be affected by constraints, especially economic constraints forcing the management of the public interior to reduce access. Nonetheless, the word ‘open’ features thirty-one times in the interview and the need for visitors to feel welcome is emphasised six times. Here, openness corresponds to the concept of accessibility/permeability, but it is less ambiguous and better aligned to the notion of welcoming since accessibility may also be used in the context of designing for neurodiversity and disability. Openness is thus revealed as a significant characteristic of looseness and presents an alternative terminology to accessibility.

6.3.3. On looseness to cultivate appropriation

Looseness and appropriation are discussed first because the staff interview substantiated the primacy of looseness for ‘personalisation for’ to cultivate ‘personalisation by’. MH stressed that it is important for visitors to be able to exercise a degree of appropriation on the environment of the public interior and that the flexibility of the interior spaces, their design, allows them to do this in a way that is managed but loose:

[T]his is a purposeful thing, but we don’t really tell people how they can use the space you know, it’s more that we just sort of provide the setting and then people are able to use it in the way that they want to [...] then in some ways people can then just move [the furniture] around, to make it into whatever they need it to be, you know, and we’re not too strict in terms of where that furniture goes. So, for example with this person on A05 [the reference on one of the images used in the interview, see Appendix 5], you know, we didn’t put that furniture there, but that person has kind of created a reading nook of their own by just moving a chair between two pillars [...] most people would come here because the building does have that flexibility to be whatever you need it to be. There’s no pressure on you to buy anything.

MH's comment illustrates a desire to cultivate appropriation through visitor agency, acknowledging loose management practices, and as they appropriate the environment to enact diverse activities, visitors may also contribute to its looseness. Going back to the experiential loop between looseness and appropriation and the concept of social contagion discussed in the case study, MH highlighted that appropriation is perceived as an asset in loose management practices because it "brings life" to the interior and contributes to the creation of a "welcoming and vibrant" environment:

[I]t brings life to a building [...] we can't always create that life. We can't always be doing something amazing with the building because we don't have the money to do something amazing with the building every day. And so, the fact that people come in and then create their own life in a building is beneficial to us, it keeps the building vibrant.

MH also noted how visitors can influence management practices through appropriation when he talks about the example of visitors "adopting" an area within the interior to practice dancing:

So organically, people just started, they saw an open bit of the building and went, well that would be great to rehearse dancing, it's not really used. And then it just grew and grew and grew. And then actually, what then happened was, we then sort of had to come in as an organisation and say, I really don't want you to leave, please continue to do this but we're now going to just set some parameters around how this can be done. So, we can just put a schedule against it so that you know when it's open and when it's not. And we're going to just say look, you can play music, but it needs to not include swearing and all that kind of thing, so we had to kind of do it back to front. So, we encouraged it but then we said we need to just put some guidelines around this.

Here, visitors exploited possibilities in the interior to enact self-expression and although the management of the RFH supported this initiative, they also felt that it should be moderated to account for the needs and comfort of all other visitors. This illustrates a duality in the cultivation of appropriation through looseness. On one hand, there is the need to facilitate, and the interview evidences a high level of support for a diversity of activities. MH explained that it is generally understood that "most people would come here because the building does have that flexibility to be whatever you need it to be". On the other hand, this is balanced against the need to moderate. The moderation identifies boundaries to ensure that one group does not dominate or impacts in a negative way on the experience of other visitors, a potential

issue that was also highlighted the case study. It is a complex endeavour. MH underlined the challenges of managing a multiplicity of visitor needs:

The main challenge for us is managing two sets of things going on at the same time. So, it's the artistic activity or commercial activity alongside that kind of free-flowing group of people that comes in and just wants to use a space for... however they want to use it [...] There's also kind of this tension around some of the ways in which it can be used. I think this feeling of I can come into the Festival Hall and pretty much do whatever I want can sometimes be difficult, because we've had things like people running cooking classes in the foyer, so we had somebody making dumplings. The flour was everywhere, messy, you know, there are certain things we just can't allow, those things can be damaging to the fabric of the building, it's overstepping the mark in terms of what you can do in a shared space.

The approach is loose, but boundaries are necessary, and it is sometimes difficult to please everyone. MH recounted staff overhearing conversations in which visitors wanting to use the interior as a public space were irritated by the artistic content because the space had become too busy and noisy for them. However, he emphasised that these are a minority and that management practices remain rooted in the historical and political legacies of the RFH, aiming to provide a public interior open to all, welcoming but also safe. For this reason and despite challenges and constraints, looseness is the preferred approach in managing the visitor experience.

6.3.4. On enticement to cultivate exploration

One of the ways in which management practices endeavour to make the environment of the public interior welcoming is by cultivating visitors' ability to move freely through the different spaces, "to provide the visitors with a journey that is as easy as possible, which means no barriers, and things that work and things that are kind of like intuitively in the right places." There are of course restrictions because of the need to moderate. For example, some areas may be closed to the public when events are taking place in the auditorium or more recently because of the economic constraints highlighted in the discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, management practices at the RFH entice visitors through the building by removing physical and psychological barriers where possible. This requires openness and places looseness as a precursor to enticement. Thus, in line with insights from the case study, the staff interview also foregrounds the primacy of looseness and appropriation. Here, loose management practices are needed to remove or minimise barriers and ensure that visitors' ability to explore the environment of the public interior is supported.

MH also underlined that the way the interior is designed entices visitors and encourages them to explore. “[I]t is a beautiful building [...] it is a building that people would need to explore because actually, you can get lost in it, you know, and there are nooks and crannies [...] I do see people exploring, and I particularly see children exploring.” He echoes ‘movement towards’, one of the characteristics of exploration identified in the case study, and the architect Peter Moro’s intent:

I think the way that it’s been designed, there are lots of things that encourage people to walk forward. So, I think there are lots of moments like this one at level five, where it’s helpful for us, actually in terms of crowd management, because people don’t stay stuck on staircases, because they walk towards the windows, and that is the direction we want them to go in because the door to the auditorium is there. So, it helps, all this sort of like magnets for people to walk towards are really helpful to us, to keep 2,500 people moving at night [...] the way they designed it was smart [...] like drawing people towards a view and then that will in turn, take them to their seat.

Although the interior was originally designed for concert goers, a fortuitous consequence of the architects’ original intentions is that today, non-ticket holders can also enjoy the experience of going on a journey through the building, to explore, wander, drift, see, touch, hear, smell. Thus, the interview evidences the significance of enticement and exploration in the contemporary experience of visitors in the public interior of the RFH. It foregrounds how management practices maintain openness and confirms the contribution of design practices.

6.3.5. On porosity to cultivate privateness

The case study uncovered how porosity, regulated through design and management practices, can connect visitors with the macro-scale of the physical and social environments. MH explained how this can create a sense of community:

[E]ven if you’re sitting there on a laptop, typing away doing emails or reading a book, or sitting alone having a drink, there’s something about this building that means that you’re not really alone, because there’s always a sense of community around you, there’s always a buzz around you. There’s always someone talking, there’s always a child crying, you know, there’s noise and I think particularly as they’re coming out of COVID people really crave that, you know, they’ve had a really long time being alone in their houses. So, it doesn’t necessarily mean that they want to always be talking to other people and be sort of socialising with other people, but they probably do want to feel other humans around them.

MH alluded to visual flows by using expressions such as “wide open spaces”, a “sense of scale”, and to auditory flows by referring to “someone talking”, “a child crying”. He intimated how porosity can transmute territories into vantage points to contribute positive qualities to the visitor experience by enhancing their perception of connectedness, the feeling of being part of something. He emphasised that individual and collective experiences are irremediably linked, highlighting the significance of the collective environment to individual visitors. They do not visit the public interior to sit alone, disconnected from others. On the contrary, they want “to feel other humans around them”. This understanding correlates with the definition of privateness and foregrounds the role of porosity in creating synergies between micro and macro-scales.

Although the foyers were originally designed for concert goers, they are now used as “communal spaces” where visitors can define personal or groups territories, by, for example, creating a “reading nook of their own by just moving a chair between two pillars” whilst remaining immersed in the collective life of the public interior. However, visitors’ ability to enact privateness also needs to be moderated. The removal of furniture in the mezzanine of Level 3 (nested element 2) previously discussed is an example of management decisions impacting visitors’ ability to enact privateness although in this situation, visitors had seemingly disconnected themselves from the collective life of the macro-scale. Whilst they could still hear the sounds of others permeating the environment, they were perceived to be “hiding” from sight. This was possible because the mezzanine is fronted by a very thick low wall about the height of a person sitting down, which means that people could ‘disappear’ behind it. This was perceived as anti-social. As a result, furniture was removed to discourage visitors to use the mezzanine. Unfortunately, this decision impacted all visitors, including those who were not being anti-social but were instead sitting in this area to enjoy the mezzanine for the way its elevated position provided a window overlooking or eavesdropping on life (the sides of the mezzanine are bordered by glass balustrades). From the management perspective, the public interior is a shared environment, and this seemingly desire towards privacy exhibited by some of the visitors contravened this notion. This example positions the management view of privateness as a positive experience contrasting with the undesirability of privacy.

6.4. Visitor interview analysis

Similarly to the staff interview analysis, a thematic analysis method was used to help identify characteristics pertaining to the personalisation of experience in the visitor interviews. The

discussion that follows examines insights from the interviews and their relationship with those from the literature review and case study. It outlines the influence of interviewees' personal characteristics and analyses how they enact appropriation, exploration and privateness, also highlighting the constraints that may impact their ability to do so. Then, it considers interviewees' emotional attachment to the environment of the public interior of the RFH. The nine visitors interviewed are referred to throughout this chapter by their first name: Cath, Jolita, Eva, Sophie, Kevin, Stuart, Peter, Julia and Robert. The analysis integrates citations from all of them to illuminate the origin of insights.

6.4.1. The influence of personal characteristics

Personal characteristics were defined in Chapter Two as prior experiences, personality and personal culture. Prior experiences relate specifically in this study to the respondents' level of familiarity with the public interior of the RFH, and the recollection of mental images from the past makes prior experiences the most impactful of the three personal characteristics explored in this study. The interviews highlighted a correlation between the length of time respondents had been visiting this public interior and the depth of emotional connectedness they expressed. For instance, at the time of the study, Jolita had been visiting for six years, Cath for over forty years, and Stuart for over sixty years. The variations between their responses was significant. Although Jolita expressed a positive connection, it was not as imbued with emotional attachment as Cath's who calls it "a home away from home". In turn, Cath's emotional connection was not as deep as Stuarts' who used terms like "magical", "wonderful" and "love" to describe his experience, expressing a deep sense of ownership when he added that "[...] the feeling is, you know, this is your space, you feel as if it belongs to you." This is not to say that time is the only factor contributing to a depth of feelings. Julia, who is too young to have been visiting for as long as Cath and Stuart, still articulates a deep emotional connection generated through an association between the environment and the making of meaningful relationships:

I've been there enough in my life for it to be a friend, it's like I'm going to see a friend when I go into the building. So, it's a space that contains the memories of lots of ambitions and friendships. So, in a way, the space represents that to me... your shoulders just drop you know, and you're kind of like okay, I'm in a space I understand and I know, and it's familiar and I've arrived [...] So yeah, there are quite a lot of key relationships that have had moments there so I suppose in a way, I've sorted this as a timeline of memories that I could attach to being in that

space. And I do mean being [strong emphasis] in a space [...] This is actively making me feel homesick for the Festival Hall.

Prior experiences also came to the fore when respondents talked about how they first discovered this public interior. Cath was introduced to it in 1983 for her graduation show, an exhibition of student work, and Jolita in 2016 for her graduation ceremony. They both expressed joy and elation as they recalled their respective experiences, and these emotions still influence their perception today. Even more significantly, five respondents talked about how the experience of the public interior of the RFH is handed down from one generation to the next. Eva, Sophie, Kevin, Stuart and Peter were all introduced to the RFH by their parents and in turn, also brought their children or those of friends. These legacies can generate powerful mental images because the location becomes associated with personal events and family connections. As such, this public interior holds a special emotional place in their memory, contributing to their ability to develop deep and enduring emotional attachment. The accumulation of personal memories elevates their experience which, again, foregrounds the significance of time, or more to the point, re-lived experiences across time, in visitors' ability to develop deep emotional connections.

The interviews also highlighted how personal culture can impact the way the design and more specifically the materiality of the physical environment are perceived as Jolita and Stuart contrasted their perception of the public interior of the RFH to other places. Jolita remembers her experience of Soviet architecture when she was younger and still living in Lithuania. She recalls the materials being used but unlike the neglected interiors in her memory, the well-maintained materiality of the RFH offers in contrast a comfortable and pleasant environment that contributes to a positive feeling. Similarly, Stuart who visited the RFH in the 1950s not long after it was built, had a joyful memory of the way the interior contrasted vividly with his experience of utilitarian post-war era design in the home. Stuart could contribute powerful references to historical and political contexts influencing the design of the RFH and this knowledge, his personal culture, shapes his perception of the public interior today:

And I think that's undoubtedly a product of the post war because after the war years and a very long period of Conservative government, it was an extraordinary Labour government, a totally amazing government, the best this country ever had. And this was part of that, and it was about celebrating, people were here to celebrate. This was in the 50s.

Personal culture and personality traits can also develop through the way people are brought up. For example, Stuart, Sophie and Robert talked about how their upbringing influenced what

they feel they can or cannot do more so than their understanding of rules and regulations. Sophie explained that because of its “lush and comfortable” interior, she felt that the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3) was for ticket holders only. She knew that it was open to everyone, but because of her upbringing she could not help feeling that she would be trespassing without a ticket. Robert made a similar comment whilst Stuart explained how his past defined the way he understands boundaries today:

Well, I think the boundaries are very clear. I myself would not put my feet on the chair. People have different ways to go about things, but I was well brought up. If I’d put my feet on a chair [as a child], I would have gotten [he makes a gesture and sound of being smacked].

Finally, personal culture was evidenced when respondents with professional backgrounds in design or design education articulated their experience of the physical environment. Whilst Kevin voiced a preference for the Pompidou Centre in Paris, both Robert and Peter discussed their affinity with Modernist architecture and how this contributed to a positive feeling for the interior of the RFH. Peter further described how he associates the historical context of the design of the RFH with optimism, and how this positive quality contributed to a deep emotional attachment for him:

[T]here’s a very deep sort of personal, historical personal connection to that building for me [...] it seemed to have captured the public imagination as a festival site [...] the Royal Festival Hall for me still captures some of that optimism. It’s an optimistic building. In the same way that modernism was [...] a design style that equates to hygiene and sort of inclusivity and a little slightly more democratic style. [It] had at least at its heart an intention to do a public good.

These examples illustrate how prior experiences, personality and personal culture can influence visitors’ perception, and even at times, merge with historical and political contexts. Although, personal characteristics are not the main focus of this study, it is nonetheless important to acknowledge that alongside design and management practices they will undeniably influence the way visitors perceive their experience of the environment of the public interior.

6.4.2. Enacting appropriation

Respondents highlighted how appropriation correlated for them with a feeling of belonging and even relative ownership. To reiterate from earlier discussions, Cath talked about “a home

away from home". Eva also likened it to "a second home" and Stuart exclaimed that "the feeling is, you know, this is your space, you feel as if it belongs to you". Appropriation defines their experience and whilst respondents talked about identifying and exploiting possibilities in the environment, their behaviour largely remains within the boundaries of management expectations, which also coincides with observations in the case study. Self-expression is less common than the enactment of a relative autonomy. Furthermore, Sophie, Robert, Stuart, Jolita and Julia cited how the convenience of the location for the public interior of the RFH helped ground their experience of the city. Echoing Pimlott's (2018, p. 18) depiction of the public interior as "a shelter and a home, a place of the city and within the city" discussed in Chapter One, Sophie underlined how easy it is for visitors to just walk in to enjoy a respite from the chaos of the city, to grab a coffee or meet people:

On days out in London, this is somewhere we would pass because we're coming into Waterloo. And you know, when you're having a day in London with a family, it can be overwhelming at the weekend. There's lots and lots of people, restaurants are busy, coffee shops are busy and even if we'd done those things in our day, it's about having a quiet space somewhere you can go to and rest, where you can do what this chap is doing [here Sophie points at one of the elicitation images showing a man reclining on a sofa, reading his newspaper, with his feet up on a stool]. I don't think I've actually done that, but I think my husband has.

6.4.2.1. Openness

Respondents associated the enactment of appropriation with loose design and management practices centred around concepts like open or openness, welcoming, inclusivity, feeling free and accepted. These were recurring themes across all interviews. The terms open and openness feature thirty-six times; altogether inclusivity, free access, feeling free and accepted feature twenty-five times; the term welcoming features thirteen times. Respondents expressed these characteristics in varied but complementary ways, underlining the uniqueness of the public interior of the RFH. Robert called it "an open free space". Eva reflected that unlike other public interiors who tend to make themselves as "uncomfortable" and as "unlikeable" as possible, the RFH strives to make visitors feel as welcome and as comfortable as possible:

It is an incredible space because it's inside and yes, it's public and you can go there and it's free. It's just you know, where else do you get it? I don't know, you can't do it in the British Library because, you know, everyone's very serious there [...] It's made itself very comfortable to be in rather than you know, what we see quite often in other public spaces, which is making it as uncomfortable and unlikeable as possible so that no one spends too much time in the space.

Sophie outlined this openness by explaining that the public interior of the RFH is “genuinely for everybody”:

It’s quite unique, it has a lovely environment but it’s also very inclusive, not just in the kind of creative activities that they have, which covers a spectrum of all sorts of different things, but also in the type of people that come here, the type of activities that you can do. It feels genuinely for everybody. So, that’s a big part of it, feeling welcome [...].

Stuart also related his experience of feeling welcome, free and accepted and although he was not able to articulate why with precision, he emphasised the role of design practices:

[T]his is about celebration and for everyone, this is supposed to be for everyone [...] that’s why I think people come here and whatever background they come from, wherever they come from, they just feel I can come into this place. They feel welcomed [...] I have no idea what the architects did which gives it that feeling, because it is quite extraordinary feeling and I think it’s unique in London, and completely unique in many places.

These insights are significant because they evidence the coherence between the visitors’ perspectives and insights from the case study which identified accessibility, generosity and flexibility as the characteristics defining looseness. They also correlate with MH who, in the staff interview, spoke emphatically about making the public interior as open and welcoming as possible. Thus, visitors also perceive openness as critical to their ability to feel welcome, enact appropriation, and connect to the environment of the public interior in a positive way.

6.4.2.2. Autonomous activities and self-expression

Respondents recognised and enjoyed the generous choice of places, and the flexibility offered to them to carry out autonomous activities. They talked about moving furniture together for a small gathering, sitting at a table to work as an alternative to the home or office, finding a quiet spot to read or just hang out. Peter described the public interior of the RFH as “a great place to meet”, Kevin explained that “it’s got lots of interesting spaces which you could sort of use, and I suppose abuse, in a creative sense. It feels like a creative place”. Sophie also reflected that “chairs and tables sort of dotted around in the space, it’s kind of quite rare”, whilst Cathy does not move chairs, she “grabs” them. Here, the use of language is highly suggestive. Terms like ‘abuse’ and ‘grab’ indicate that appropriation is intrinsic even though the activities described

are within the scope of expected behaviour. Respondents indicated that these attributes made a significant contribution to the quality of their experience. Julia, for instance, explained how something as simple as being able to enjoy a generous provision of seating can feel rewarding, contrasting her experience of the RFH, where she can always find somewhere to sit, with her experience of the British Library and the paucity of available seating in the public areas. Thus, insights from the interviews indicate that respondents typically perceived being presented with possibilities to enact autonomous activities in the public interior of the RFH as rewarding and emotionally grounding. This understanding resonates with those from the case study.

As previously noted, self-expression is less common, but interviewees nonetheless referenced entertaining and playful activities outside the scope of design and management practices. These, as MH pointed out, are tolerated because they bring life to the public interior. Cath referred to a friend meeting people once a week to teach Spanish lessons. Kevin and Stuart used to meet regularly with their respective students for one-to-one tutorials. Peter talked about his children using the glass lift in the Level 2 foyer and the ramp adjacent to the ballroom area (nested element 2) as playgrounds. Sophie also recalled how her children were able to “run free” and how they felt “comfortable to be themselves” as they would in an outdoor public space. Pointing to one of the elicitation images in the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3), Sophie acclaimed that she was “not surprised by somebody doing a dance routine”; she had witnessed impromptu rehearsals. As Robert observed, these are not activities often associated with an interior space, even a public one. Peter talked about “freedom” and explained that even though he had witnessed slightly extravagant behaviour he never felt threatened or uncomfortable. Instead, respondents defined the sight and sounds of these activities as stimulating, which also resonates with insights from the case study.

6.4.2.3. A diversity of people and activities

Respondents cited the diversity of people and activities as a key representation of looseness and appropriation in the public interior of the RFH and a principal motivation for them to visit. Robert called it “a non-elitist art space” and although prior to these interviews, the definition of looseness only referenced a diversity of activities, insights from respondents show that a diversity of people is a prerequisite to a diversity of activities. Kevin and Eva questioned how far the RFH reaches in terms of diversity, but Eva and Stuart also highlighted that diversity at the RFH is relative to user-groups, differentiating between the diversity of the non-ticket holders visiting the public interior or free events and that of ticket holders visiting to attend an

event in the auditorium. They both stated that those visiting the auditorium can represent a less diverse group of people. Eva explained that:

It's so accepting, you know, I sometimes worry with places like this that it's only for one very particular type of audience. But I have been there, and it actually has a very diverse user group. I wouldn't necessarily say audience, so I think that events that are happening, they're probably still very much geared to a particular type of audience but the user group of the Royal Festival Hall as a sort of semi public/private space I've always found quite diverse, and I appreciate that.

Stuart also contributed a specific example, a vivid account of his experience of a free festival:

We did come for something that was a festival which was about world music, and it was just a breath-taking experience. And what was amazing about it was the audience. I mean the music was incredible, I remember walking in and there just was this storyteller and his accompanying musicians and it was completely wonderful. I can't begin to tell you how wonderful it was. So that was incredible. But what was most incredible was the audience because it was just anybody, absolutely anybody [...] there was a very deliberate policy of getting people in, especially local people, and especially kids.

Similarly, Robert alludes to the impact of looseness on diversity and explains how this is instrumental to the success of the RFH as a public space:

It's kind of gauche [...] almost like, laid back luxury is sort of almost debauched in a way. It [the building] is used incorrectly, you know, or maybe it was designed to have little kids running around playing hide and seek. Maybe it was designed for me to use it as a cut through, you know, but probably I would imagine that they were thinking that people were going to stay and praise the creativity but in fact, people just want to run around and use it as a cut through. So, it allows for that and in that sense, it doesn't stop you in the door. It doesn't ask where you're going, it doesn't stop children from running around. And that sort of makes it gauche and idiosyncratic and clumsy and things are slightly... the furniture on the fifth floor are slightly wrong, you never know quite where everything is you know, that to me is a sign of a really interesting public space.

Thus, respondents felt that the management of the public interior of the RFH accepts diverse groups of people and activities alongside people who attend high cultural events. They accept that children will play, run, even crawl on the floor and that they will be noisy; they accept that visitors will carry out activities the interior was not intended for; they accept that furniture will

be moved, and that people will also sit on the floor and that it will be a little messy at times. A diversity of people generates a diversity of activities.

6.4.2.4. Perceived restrictions and self-regulation

Some of the restrictions identified in this research emerged through the staff interview. For example, certain activities may not be allowed because they could damage the interior or undermine the comfort of other visitors. The staff interview also highlighted that managing the needs of the different groups of visitors is complex and Stuart contributed an example illustrating how this can generate frustrations for visitors. The situation unfolded in one of the Level 4 foyers, and although these are not included in the environmental selection for this study, the narrative is comparable to situations that may occur in the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3) since this area could, at the time of the interviews, occasionally be closed to non-ticket holders when events were taking place in the auditorium. Here, Stuart talked about visitors being asked to show their tickets as they entered the foyer and non-ticket holders being refused entry. Although Stuart had a ticket to see the event in the auditorium and was therefore able to enter the foyer, he nonetheless found this restriction “offensive” because he strongly believed that anyone should be able to go anywhere. He felt that “they [the management of the RFH] were breaking their own rules” by which he meant the rules established in 1983 governing free access to the public interior spaces. He also emphasised that staff checking tickets felt uncomfortable doing this although it is worth considering that the decision to restrict entry to the foyer may have been put in place to support staff in managing the flow of visitors entering the auditorium. Regardless of the reason for the implementation of this practice, this example echoes prior insights in this study and further illustrates how easily choice and visitors’ (non-ticket holders) ability to enact appropriation can fluctuate if it conflicts with the perceived needs of another group of visitors and possibly staff.

Respondents however did not typically perceive restrictions or security as constraints. They knew that there was security in place, but they talked about it as an unseen presence. They felt that they were able to exercise a degree of agency, to personalise their experience without being challenged, even though they were also keenly aware that this agency is relative. Referring to her experience of the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2), Julia explained:

I can’t think of anything that I would do in a public space that I would not do there. In fact, I probably would feel more welcome to do anything there than I would in other public spaces. I have no recollection of feeling that people should be quiet or wanting people to be quiet. I have

no recollection of being annoyed by anybody and what they were doing, which is quite a big deal [...] It's not pretending to be anything other than a public space. It's not like I will let you sit there but you will have to move on. I think that the legacy of when it was built, how it was built and how it was designed, is implicit in my enjoyment of the space. I can feel that intent of a quality space for people to be allowed to enjoy themselves in a cultural context.

Respondents also alluded to varied degrees of self-regulation, a practice initially observed in the case study. Cath highlighted that she would not bring her own food, but she would bring a bottle of wine. She also organised an informal gathering with friends in the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2) to celebrate her partner's birthday. She specifically chose this location in preference to a bar or restaurant because she wanted friends to be able to arrive at any time and walk in and out of the event as they wished, thus transferring characteristics of looseness from the environment into her own activity. Reminiscing about memories from her graduation show, Cath also recalled lying on the floor underneath the table near the spot where she exhibited her work. She acclaimed that "obviously, yeah, you could probably do pretty much what you like really. Out on the floor didn't matter" or she talked about arriving more recently, "all sweaty" after running a marathon. Cath's tone of voice expressed her amazement on being able to do this. Sophie contributed a different perspective. She explained that she would have a business meeting, do something creative, or bring a picnic, but she would not have a party because she felt that this would be "disrespecting the space because it's a shared space, a collective space". Even though, as Eva remarked, "the Royal Festival Hall is very accepting", respondents remained conscious that it is a collective environment. Julia reflected that:

I would be quite mindful of taking over too much space. I think there's a fluidness to how people use that space...and I might be very focused on what I'm doing but I wouldn't mind that other people were seeing it and I would think it's okay that those guys put their chairs to sort of indicate that they were busy in that corner. I think there's a limit to how much space you could, you know, take over without having expressly kind of said is this okay to somebody. Because it is by definition, a space for everyone [...] I would worry that I would be offending or upsetting people if I took over too much space"

Sophie and Robert also highlighted how self-regulation can emerge through social contagion, a concept originally identified in the case study. Sophie explained that even though she was aware that there is no pressure for her to buy a coffee to sit in the Riverside Terrace Cafe, she would nonetheless feel awkward not to because it is for her a cafe not just a public space. However, she would feel comfortable meeting friends or just sit and read in the Level 2 foyer

(nested element 2) because the sight of others doing similar activities sanctions and validates her own activities.

6.4.3. Enacting exploration

Respondents conveyed forms of approach behaviour driven by curiosity or anticipation, the promise of new information ahead, as they described how they explore the environment of the RFH. However, unlike the case study, which focused on the enactment of exploration at the point where visitors enter the building, Cath, Stuart, and Julia, talked about the way they assimilated the journey preceding their arrival to the RFH into their experience of the public interior. For Cath, the approach is not always planned and almost visceral. A mix of curiosity and anticipation draws Cath inside the building when she “might just be walking along the Southbank and come in just like that”. This is not unlike Kevin who experiences “a slight feeling of excitement” when in the vicinity of the RFH. Stuart also expressed powerful mental images contributing to a heightened state of arousal generated by the anticipation of a familiar sensory journey across carefully planned stages:

You come over the bridge which is how I came today actually and most often used to come with my friends. We would come down to Embankment and then walk across because it was a nice walk, so that was part of it actually, for me as a child and as a young person as a teenager. It was the journey partly because of the feeling of expectation. The journey to this was part of it. It's kind of like you set off you know it's going to be some kind of wonderful experience. And then you have a scene where you, usually at night... crossing the river Thames is beautiful and the view from that bridge is fantastic, especially at night. And we're coming across the bridge and we're coming here [...] It was a journey with a series of stages, which first of all, brought you here and the last stage of bringing you to this place was this kind of crossing of the river which was very, very... well kind of a mystical experience. The whole thing about crossing the river, the ground, the water and all these associations that we have unconsciously and then coming into this [the RFH].

Similarly, Julia depicted stages defined by landmarks in her journey towards the RFH. She talked about the arrival over the bridge, passing by the London Eye before entering the building via “the stairs coming up from the river up into the main floor”. She described the arrival into the building, the upward movement of ascending the stairs for the space to open up in front of her as feeling “quite significant”. Thus, insights from the interviews underline that the public interior of the RFH can ground visitor's experience of the city when it represents an

enticing destination people are drawn to, emphasising once more the powerful contribution of mental images.

6.4.3.1. Movement towards

Respondent overwhelmingly described the public interior of the RFH as welcoming and as seen above, visitors who are familiar with the building may approach in anticipation of the rewards of its interior spaces. Inside loose design and management practices centring on removing barriers cultivate all visitors' ability to move freely through the interior. Stuart explained that:

[T]he doors are quite heavy, you have to push away the doors, but once you're through the doors, it [the space] just draws you in. And there's nothing saying no, nothing. I mean, of course, there are rules and regulations and constraints and certain interdicts and so forth, but the basic bottom line is yes.

Stuart highlights the heaviness of the doors as a minor constraint and in the staff interview, MH also talks about the doors as a potential barrier to openness but notes that these cannot be changed because the building is listed Grade 1. Once inside however, respondents agreed that they felt free to explore. Stuart even talked about the stimulation of "journeying and having an adventure" because "having so much to explore" he felt he could still find somewhere he hadn't explored even after sixty years. They also indicated that their desire to move towards different parts of the interior, to approach elements, objects and surfaces within it, stemmed initially from their perception of visual phenomena, more so than olfactive and acoustic phenomena even though these may contribute. This is perhaps not surprising since the case study also uncovered an abundance of visual phenomena. Reflecting the architects' original intention to provide visitors with an interior designed for movement, respondents substantiated insights from the case study by highlighting the role of the composition and organisation of three-dimensional elements. A juxtaposition of scales, partly hidden or partly revealed phenomena and deep sight lines are visual devices that arouse curiosity (or anticipation) enticing them to move forward, through, down and up. Stuart observed that:

You can go through really quite constrained spaces to get to these vast central areas. If you come in on the foyer level, in the front of the building, it has a very, very low ceiling, and similarly if you come in right down from street level... the basement I think... is also quite like this. It's quite constraining but the exit from it is a huge very wide staircase, I think it's three big sections. And so, you could go down in a tide or come up and there's loads of space, so the stairs beckon you, and it beckons you and then you go up.

Sophie referenced the way open riser staircases and glass banisters maintain a "feeling of open space" to contribute to gratifying deep sight lines and pleasing interior vistas guiding her through the interior. She explained that:

It's not one square box. It's different levels. I even like the stairs, the width of the steps when you walk on them, it's comfortable. I mean, I just like the way everything is, it feels different, and it feels like a luxury in London to have these wide-open spaces, the proportions of everything feels kind of special and different and the glass, yeah, I mean I like the glass on the stairs because you still have that feeling of open space.

Peter also described how the effect of interior and exterior vistas contributed to "the positive feeling" he associates with his experience of this public interior. As MH noted in the staff interviews, these vistas were not only designed for their aesthetic contribution, but also as an enticing device to encourage movement through the interior.

Although both the interviews and case study foreground the significant role of design practices in generating enticement to cultivate exploration, management practices can also contribute. A window, for example, may be left open. Enticing devices can also be inserted in the physical environment. Jolita and Sophie brought forth the enticing qualities of information and artefacts on display, which for them provided an incentive to explore as they moved from one to the other. Jolita explained how they made her feel comfortable, and Sophie emphasised how their presence sanctioned and validated her desire to explore the environment. These examples denote that whilst the design of the building may remain stable, especially since its listed status was awarded, its organisation and content can still be managed to provide new opportunities for enticement to cultivate exploration.

Visitors may also self-regulate exploration. Sophie for instance explained that she did not feel comfortable exploring the upper levels of the RFH, not because she thought that they were not open to the public but because of the way she perceived the design of the physical environment:

I think you kind of stop at that point and then it becomes more enclosed [...] I think that there is a difference. Here (pointing at Level 2) you feel like anybody can walk around but it's less clear that you can walk around upstairs [Level 3] [...] the interior kind of makes you feel that it's less of a public space than the ground floor with the table, even though there are tables, and the interior is more lush and more comfortable, but you kind of feel like well... that I should be paying to be here [...] it feels less public... well... it does feel like a public space, and I do feel comfortable to walk around but you do feel a little bit more precious and a bit more careful [...]

the carpet, the quality of the chairs is different, the wood panelling, all those sorts of things. It's not so big, you know, it feels more intimate and so it's still public space, but it feels less so than the ground floor [...] I think probably my main use of the space [pointing at Level 5] has been maybe in the evening, maybe after a concert or after an event maybe. You know, but not in the daytime. It's not somewhere I would come at all.

Robert took a similar position but for very different reasons. He explained that "the public area is definitely the ground floor, and I wouldn't dream of going up there [referring to the upper levels] otherwise. In case probably I opened the wrong door". Here, Robert's memory of trying to sneak in into a cinema to see films when as a child created a barrier to his ability to explore the physical environment of the public interior beyond the familiarity and reassurance of the publicness of the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2). These example illustrate the potency of personal culture although Sophie and Robert's inability to feel entirely at ease in the upper levels of the RFH does not reflect the way all visitors feel since the Level 5 foyer (nested element3) was, at the time of this study, used extensively as a public space by visitors.

6.4.3.2. Flânerie

Respondents used terminologies that explicitly related to the concept of flânerie and defined this way of exploring the public interior as a grounding experience. Sophie talked about moving slowly, feeling "comfortable to walk and stop and pause". Jolita recalls how she floated through the space until she knew where she wanted to go, intrigued and discovering more each time as she moved through the interior. Julia spoke of wandering through the interior, stopping to enjoy a view, a coffee and then moving again to a different location. These examples corroborate the significance of slow movement and ability to pause. Flânerie characterises movement towards with slowness and pauses; it is an exploratory experience that elevates the contribution of kinaesthetic phenomena to visitors' ability to connect with their environment. Jolita, Stuart and Julia also talked about the way the design of the staircases and open plan interior invited them to slowly ascend the building. Jolita explained that:

[T]he change of body movement when climbing somewhere so this was more about the stairs, how the space makes me feel lifted. And again, this is taking the time to feel how the space changes. When you walk straight, like on a pavement you probably have one movement, but then you climb here, it's more emotional, I feel you want to go up and see and as you go up you feel lifted.

Eva, Peter, and Robert, however, mitigated the positive experience of other respondents by differentiating between voluntary *flânerie* and their inability to find their way through the interior. In the staff interview, MH commented that visitors can find it difficult to navigate the building due to its unusual layout. Julia noted that when travelling through the interior, she was “very aware of the levels and there is a curious sort of depth and height to that building [...] you go in and up and around and come back for it”. Eva also commented that:

It's not always really clear which level you're at you know, sometimes the stairs go in this direction, sometimes the other, sometimes you're on one side of the building, sometimes on the other. Then there is a bridge which does connect the two level at the two sides, but you have to be at a particular level. So, it's a little bit like a computer game in that way.

Indeed, Eva emphasised how her children transformed this experience into an exciting game. Peter also explained that he often found himself going on “unexpected journeys” and although he recognised that the process of orienting himself within the building could be a little frustrating at times, he nevertheless described it as mostly enjoyable. Robert however expressed a different perspective. He found the interior layout extremely confusing, likening it to a “pandora’s box”, alluding to the notion that this interior is best left unexplored for fear of getting lost, even though conversely, he also identified never quite knowing where everything is as a sign of a really interesting public space. Here, Peter and Robert’s narratives open a window into what may constitute a barrier to exploration, but they also foreground an important distinction between navigation, visitors’ ability to find their way around the building, and exploration as approach behaviour. The former requires direction, the latter enticement and perhaps also a personality open to the idea of *flânerie*.

6.4.3.3. Body-materiality interactions

In the sensory model developed for the case study, tactile phenomena contribute to the perception of qualities in the environment through passive and active skin contact. Here, the focus is on enacted body-environment interactions and therefore on active skin contact with the materiality of the environment. Materiality however is typically first perceived through sight. This was previously referred to as haptic sight. Tactile body environment interactions often depend on visual body-environment interactions to generate approach behaviour, to entice visitors to touch surfaces. Respondents highlighted two key factors influencing their perception of the materiality of the physical environment. The contribution of light, especially natural light, was noted by Stuart, Peter and Robert. Peter emphasised how “the light in the

building felt really good” and Robert referenced the arrival into the Level 5 foyer as “liberating” because of the light. The majority of respondents also correlated their desire to touch surfaces with the beauty of materials. Stuart for instance provides a detailed account:

I think first of all, it's the visual quality in the materials. It's not just in the way that the space has been organised, but actually, take this bar of wood, the use of wood is beautiful in this building, and when you come down out of the auditorium, or go up into it, or you're going by the stairs, there are very broad bannisters, broad enough for people on either side to put their hand on the wood, and there's a groove. [Valérie: do you want to touch?] Oh, yes [...] I always did. I think from when I was a kid, and I could cram my whole hand [inside the groove]. Yeah, I remember doing that. So, I made my fingers like this [showing the movement of the fingers to fit into the groove] [...] there are a lot of things here with a materiality that is inviting. That it's either just the nature of the material and you want to touch it. That wood is so beautiful.

Thus, respondents emphasised how their ability to explore the interior through its materiality generated rewarding sensory phenomena conducive to intimate connections. They expressed their positive experience of surface materials by using strong emotional terms like “love”, “joy”, “harmonious”, “luxurious”, “beautiful” “satisfying” or “exquisite”. Peter and Julia, whose professions relate to design, also talked about “good design for the public good” and about the “integrity of materials”, the genuine authenticity of the steel, glass and veneered wood used in the design of the interior. Sophie, who is not a designer, loved the combination of different textures and the design of the carpet. Stuart celebrated the carefully selected and balanced use of metal, glass and wood in varied combinations around the building and loved (with a strong verbal emphasis on love) the carpet. Peter also commented that his children loved the softness of the carpet and the wooden bannisters and added that:

The attention to detail which seems to go beyond... to have a real concern for a public, a nice public design experience, the classic design carpet, the extent of wood... I mean it just feels like, while not over decorative and detailed in its design, it does have a kind of enthusiastic or positive experience it seems for the visitors at its heart [...]

Julia concurred, referencing the quality of materials specifications, citing the balustrades and the use of wood as examples. Robert also talked about the stairs being just the right size and feel and about the polished handrail. It is notable that the majority of respondents mentioned the balustrades and handrails because insights from the case study highlighted that these are features in the design of the RFH where tactile body-environment interactions are most significant and memorable. The hand not only touches but also exerts pressure to hold and, as

the skin glides against the polished surfaces, visitors can feel the warmth of the wood or the coolness of the metal.

Personal culture may also influence body-environment interactions. Jolita, Stuart and Robert for instance experienced rewarding visual and tactile phenomena because of mental images from their past. Jolita contrasted the cleanliness and quality of materials with her experience of broken and damaged surfaces in the public buildings of her childhood. She explained that as a result, the interior of the RFH gave her a positive feeling, she felt comfortable and not “afraid to sit down”. Stuart contrasted his first experiences of the RFH in the early 1950s with memories of the drabness of utilitarian post-war design. He especially acknowledged the “incredible” feeling he experienced because of the large, curved glass wall in the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3). He explained that large expanses of glass may seem ubiquitous today, but they were not in the early 1950s. Robert on the other hand correlated two positive past experiences, the utilitarian glamour of the modernist buildings and the interiors of his childhood, with his contemporary experience of the materiality of the RFH. Mental images contributed to Jolita, Stuart and Robert’s ability to develop positive emotional connections with the public interior of the RFH through its materiality.

6.4.4. Enacting privateness

Respondents emphasised the importance of being able to define individual or group territories for themselves whilst being sustained by the collective environment. Here, Kevin’s comment illustrates the convergence between the micro-scale of the body and the macro-scale of the environment:

For my own personal spirit, I’ve always found it quite exciting coming here in some ways because there’s always people doing stuff, and you see people [...] what is quite nice is that you can find a lot of nooks and crannies to sit and talk or look at your emails or whatever.

It is important for respondents to be able to define a personal or group territory in the public interior of the RFH, but it is equally important for them to be situated in the collective environment. As Julia pointed out, if this was not the case, then she would simply stay at home.

Similarly to Sophie, Jolita contrasted her experience of privateness with her experience of the busy environment of the city to present the public interior as a refuge. She reflected that

“London is quite busy but here [at the RFH] you can find your personal space; you can personalise it [...] whether I want to read a book or just to be outside home”. Sophie alluded to the porosity of the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2) when she remarked that having pillars instead of enclosed walls in the vast interior made her feel comfortable. Being able to see and hear other visitors around her generated a sense of community that made her, and her children feel safe. Cath also explained that children “can go off and you can see them around, it’s kind of a friendly atmosphere where everybody’s safe. The convergence between micro and macro-scales of experience is thus also about safety although Peter highlighted the importance of being amongst other people more broadly, especially post-COVID:

I think it’s a really good example of a public space and it is important for me to be around other people. I mean, it’s something that we’ve not had the luxury of in the last couple of years, and certainly it’s good to know that people are able to at least be out and about again, spend time together.

Julia talked about “spending quality time there” and being “fed by the space”, whilst Eva spoke about how the public interior of the RFH became an antidote to loneliness when she first arrived in London:

I think as a public space, it’s amazing. It was sort of almost a lifesaver when I first moved here because it’s a space where you can go and be with many people without having to be with anyone in a way [...] when you’re new to a city and you don’t want to feel lonely [...] it’s always been a significant location to go to initially because I was new to the city and it’s a wonderful place as I say not to feel lonely then you know, later with my dad it was a cultural institution and then with my kids again, because it’s a public space and because you can be there and yet it’s sort of really interesting. In a way it’s a comfortable environment, right, you have this... it almost feels like you can do something homely yet it’s also public.

Thus, insights from the visitor interviews validate the definition of privateness for this thesis. Respondents emphasised how they felt welcomed, comfortable and safe in their immediate territories because they were able to maintain sensory connections, visual and auditory in this instance, with the collective environment. They felt part of a community and place whilst also feeling sustained and stimulated.

6.4.4.1. Positive territoriality

Rewarding phenomena associated with emotional qualities such as calmness, tranquillity and relaxation were recurring themes in the interviews when respondents talked about enacting positive territoriality in the micro-scale of the body. This is consistent with insights from the case study. Jolita sought quietness, explaining that “the noise of the streets and everything in the distance, and inside is quieter, it’s more like a kind of daydreaming, it helps you relax”.

Alluding to intimacy gradients, a concept introduced in the discussion on privateness in Chapter Two, she explained that unless there is an event taking place in the auditorium, in which case the whole interior is busy, the higher the floor level, the quieter the environment. Thus, Level 5 (nested element 3) is quieter than Level 2 (nested element 2) and Jolita chooses the former when she intends to stay longer. Robert also reflects on intimacy gradients with reference to the Level 2 foyer becoming gradually darker, “cosy and intimate”, towards its centre. Cath presented the public interior of the RFH as a place to “watch people, think, reflect” and perceived the sight of people relaxing on sofas as warm. Like Stuart, she enjoys just being there and does not always need to be doing something.

Respondents underlined a degree of selectivity in the way they defined territories. Echoing MH’s comment in the staff interview, they sought the company of others but did not necessarily want to interact with them. Sophie, who explained that the presence of others validated her own, preferred the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2) to the Riverside Terrace Cafe (nested element 1) because the furniture in the large interior is generously spaced, which meant that she could more easily define a territory. She commented that “people are not on top of you even though they’re with you”. Jolita further explained that “sometimes you want to be with people but not have to interact with them too much”. Accordingly, respondents typically showed a preference for the main foyer on level 2 (nested element 2) over the Riverside Terrace Cafe (nested element 1). Sophie, Julia and Stuart considered the cafe to be for tourists or for transient encounters, to briefly meet people before moving to the main foyer. Jolita explained that she could not define a personal territory in a very busy environment.

Eva also alluded to the notion of choice, placing appropriation (and even exploration for those unfamiliar with the interior) as a precursor to privateness. She commented that “[y]ou accept that it will be loud and noisy and sort of slightly crazy and yet there are some nooks and crannies in the RFH itself in all the different levels where you could almost withdraw”. Similarly, seeking tranquillity and comfort, Cath, Kevin, Julia and Robert identified specific areas within the foyer. Kevin likes sitting on the west side in a sunny spot near the window, Cath and Julia on

the east side, also adjacent to the window. Julia and Robert were attracted to the sunken area in the ballroom. These spaces represent sections of the foyer set back from the busier areas but still connected to them through sensory flows. Cath explained that:

I tend to sit the on other side, past the shop, by the side of the glass lift [...] I guess it's more tranquil than the cafe part, which is busy, and people are eating food and it's more of a thoroughfare. [...] it's a more a tranquil space, thinking that there are no people around me, that I could be on my own, I could be reading.

In these areas, auditory phenomena can contribute to a relaxing and comfortable experience. Peter described the quality of his auditory experience of the public interior of the RFH as “genuinely positive even when [the RFH is] full or busy [...] a nice sort of hum”. Echoing insights from the case study, Peter also underlined his preference for the Level 3 mezzanine (nested element 2), describing it as “a lovely public space [...] a nice place to dwell and spend time because it was sort of a luxurious space to be, like a special place”. Unfortunately for Peter, this is the location all furniture was removed to discourage visitors from using this area.

Thus, insights from the interviews further substantiate the primacy of appropriation (and therefore looseness) noted in the case study analysis since visitors need to be able to appropriate spaces, furniture, “nooks and crannies”, to define a territory. Visitor interviewees also highlighted how visual and auditory intimacy gradients enabled them to enact positive territoriality, how they sought to define their own space. Whilst they expressed a preference for environments that are not overwhelmingly busy, they also emphasised that they feel sustained by the presence of others without the need for direct interactions. In doing so, they characterised territoriality as a positive experience.

6.4.4.2. Vantage points

Rewarding phenomena associated with emotional qualities such as inspiring, convivial, fun and exciting were recurring themes in the interviews when respondents talked about their connection to the macro-scale of the environment. Here, the territories became vantage points from which respondents could enjoy the stimulation of the physical, social and cultural environments of the public interior. Jolita, Sophie, Stuart and Julia talked at length about their enjoyment of people watching. Jolita explained that “[s]ometimes you just observe how people behave, people walking through, and it can make you happy to be part of it”. Sophie discusses her fascination for the variety of people and activities. Echoing MH’s comments in the staff

interview about visitors' activities bringing life into the interior, and once again, drawing attention to the primacy of appropriation and its contribution to diversity, Stuart commented that:

[W]e would come in and just have some respite and maybe get a coffee [...] I found it really, really interesting. The different people and the different activities; you could see some people were having a first date, there were groups of friends, young people, lots of people with laptops, working or studying, lots of people reading, it's really interesting, having that kind of life, everybody is different, you know, old couples, young people, children, students, you know, everybody able to use the space in a multitude of different ways and you do get the impression that people might be here for most of the day.

Julia also underlined how she gained inspiration from others around her:

[T]he people around you are important [...] just being out amongst people that enjoy that space is probably important [it is] inspiring [...] being in a space, seeing other people being productive, is really just... it's a very lovely kind of passive way of sucking a bit of energy from other people [...].

Not unlike Robert who assigned "ocean liner qualities" to the interior and the expectancy of being "taken somewhere through the story", Stuart emphasised how the life of the public interior of the RFH contributed to his experience in a positive way by stimulating imagination as he weaved the excitement of storytelling into direct experiences:

So, in that kind of place there's always something to see, there's always something going on. And even if you know nobody you can still narrativise it as you are inclined to do so, you wonder what's going on, you know you make up stories in your head about people, about what people are doing. It's a space which encourages you to do that. I don't know whether it deliberately encourages it, but it does [...] I do think it's something to do with the vastness of space and the sense that there are usually lots of people, people who come from all over. The sense that you know, people come from all over to this place, some are passing through some are... they're all there for different reasons. So, there's a very strong... shall we say... narrative framework of kind of... to encounter adventure or spotting something.

Here, Robert and Stuart explicitly reference a behaviour known as "decoupling" (Sussman and Hollander 2015, p. 135), which enables us to connect to our environment by imagining scenarios or stories without actually acting on them. In doing so, we can derive rich and diverse meanings from our surroundings. Whilst Stuart refers to the social environment, Robert's

allusion to the physical environment and the layered sequencing of spaces in the RFH also suggest an interior with narrative potential, which Sussman and Hollander define (2015, p. 136) as a type of interior that has been designed to “increase our ability to connect”. Cath, Stuart and Julia also talked with enthusiasm about the stimulating qualities of the interior architecture and exterior views. Cath reminisced about looking upwards to the large triple height space above her head, about the potency of interior vistas and deep sight lines. Julia celebrated the generosity of the design and expanding perception beyond the boundaries of the building, provided a highly detailed account of her experience of the physical environment and her connection to its macro-scale:

Design is everything for me about this building because you can kind of feed on what someone gave us through the building and I feel like it's such a huge gift that building, everything is. I can see out all over, I've got fantastic views, and every single moment you think, yeah, that [the design] was a good decision, that was a generous choice [...]

I know where the outside world is while I'm inside [...] I can see the magnificent Hayward and all its concrete glory. I can see down into the sunken area, I can see the levels, I can see the bar, and you know, that kind of stuff... I can see through to the river; I can see right across and out to Nelson Mandela. I mean, that's what I think is interesting. I might be here, but I've got everything [around], and my favourite loos in London, and a table where I can do what I want.

[...] I wouldn't even really say visual but spatial. That's how I feel about it. I'm not thinking I can see that. I'm thinking there's an articulated concrete block outside, and I am inside, and there's a down here and there's a behind there [...] I feel expansive, a sense of connecting between spaces wherever I am. I'm not just in that one space, I am in multiple spaces. And I think that that's a pretty phenomenal thing.

None of the respondents talked about olfactive phenomena, and this is perhaps due to their paucity in the public interior of the RFH. The case study only identified two situations in which smells contributed to the visitor experience. Sounds however featured more prominently in the context of the social environment. Eva, Jolita, Stuart and Robert indicated that the sounds of children playing, hearing fragments of conversations or music can also contribute stimulating qualities. Julia explained that visitors can feed on the public space as the qualities of the physical environment combine with the qualities of the life of the social environment, whilst Cath underlined that “that's what I've always kind of felt when I've come here, it's about the public space”. Sensory flows in the physical and social environments intertwine to form a dynamic meshwork.

6.4.5. Emotional attachment to place

The visitor interviews open a window into the contribution of the personalisation of experience to emotional attachment to place. This is expressed here by synthesising the terminology respondents used to describe their experience emotionally. They felt welcomed and sustained, saying that “there’s always a place for you there”, “it’s always that sort of we’re open, and we welcome you feeling”, “I would be taking some creative energy from other people”, “it’s part of the fabric of London”. They expressed personal feelings describing the public interior of the RFH as “a home away from home”, a “happy space”, “a space that stayed quite constant through my life”, “a break in a busy day”, “uplifting to the spirit”, “a great place to meet [or] just hang out”, “an upward building”, “interesting, quirky, idiosyncratic”, “every-person place”. As previously noted, those who had been visiting for the longest used powerful emotional terms such as “love”, “joy” and “excitement”. This indicates that their emotional attachment is stronger and further corroborates the importance of the cumulative effect of deeply and personally felt experiences, and thus the significance of mental images. Whilst the emotionality model used for the interviews incorporated both positive and negative emotional qualities, none of the respondents expressed negative emotions and those like Jolita and Robert who selected terminologies that could be construed as negative, emphasised that their meaning was nonetheless meant as a positive one. Jolita for instance used the terms lonely and empty to describe her experience, but explained that for her, these terms reflected rewarding phenomena:

When the space is empty, for me feeling lonely is a positive emotion exposed through the space, the structure and materials [...] London is busy and here sometimes you come in and it’s quiet, there isn’t a soul. It almost feels like the empty space has been abandoned, it’s like an empty world. So, the loneliness comes from the empty building, not me, I don’t feel lonely [...] it’s just endless, no one. It’s a beautiful space for me, and relaxing, but it doesn’t make me feel lonely as an individual [...] it’s like clothing if you like, that someone took off the building, but when you have people kind of coming in and going you get sounds and movement. If there are not too many people, then I think that’s the right balance for me. Then I look forward to coming in, having coffee, sitting down reading a book or making notes from it.

Emotional keywords identified in the interview transcripts and those that interviewees selected to synthesise their experience at the end of their interview are represented in Tables 3 and 4 respectively to outline the way visitors perceive the emotional tone of the public interior of the RFH. Table 3 highlights how many times each keyword was used, which indicates that certain qualities are most likely to be considered essential by visitors, hinting to a possible

hierarchy. For example, 'comfortable', 'welcoming' and 'relaxing' appear as key grounding qualities and 'Exciting', 'Energising' and 'lively' emerge as key stimulating qualities.

What does it feel like to experience the public interior of the RFH?			
Grounding qualities		Stimulating qualities	
Comfortable (25)	Relaxing (6)	Exciting (12)	Idiosyncratic (8)
Welcoming (13)	Calming (5)	Energising (11)	Entertaining (3)
Inviting (5)	Tranquil (2)	Lively (8)	Enjoyable (3)
Satisfying (4)	Restful (1)	Fun (6)	Inspiring (3)
Fulfilling (1)		Uplifting (6)	Pleasurable (1)
Comforting (1)		Happy (5)	
		Convivial (3)	
Key: The numbers indicate the amount of times the emotional keywords were used by interviewees.			

Table 3: Emotional keywords referenced by visitor interviewees.

	Grounding qualities	Stimulating qualities
Cath	Calming	Convivial, uplifting
Jolita	Relaxing, calming Lonely and empty in a positive way	
Sophie	Welcoming, comforting, restful	Entertaining, Inspiring, pleasurable
Kevin	Inviting	Energising, enjoyable, lively, uplifting
Stuart	Welcoming	Energising, convivial
Peter	Welcoming	Entertaining, fun, lively
Julia	Fulfilling, nurturing, familiar, generous	Uplifting, energising
Robert	Comfortable, welcoming Bleak in a positive way	Idiosyncratic, energising, exciting

Table 4: Emotional keywords visitor interviewees used to synthesise their experience.

This study acknowledges that some of the keywords shown in Table 3 were only referenced by a small number of interviewees, and although idiosyncratic appears eight times, it was only explicitly used by Robert. However, respondents also alluded to certain qualities in their

interviews without explicitly using any of these terms. Cath and Sophie for instance, refer to idiosyncratic behaviours in their interviews when discussing situations relating to self-expression, but they do not use that word. This means that the numbers in Table 3 are presented as a guide only. This study also acknowledges that the keywords in Table 4 reflect visitors' overall evaluation and since experience has a wholeness, it is likely that interviewees' responses were influenced by situations outside the enactment of appropriation, exploration and privateness. Conversely, these keywords were selected following a lengthy discussion recollecting experiences pertaining to these principles and it is therefore likely that they also influenced interviewees' choice. Thus, whilst the keywords in Table 4 may represent the experience of interviewees more broadly, they also relate to situations in which visitors enacted appropriation, exploration and privateness. Therefore, the information in Tables 3 and 4 provides a useful overview but conclusions were drawn from the analysis of the full transcripts.

Although the ratio between grounding and stimulating qualities in the interviews is comparatively equivalent, interviewees placed a significant emphasis on the need for the public interior to be welcoming and comfortable as well as relaxing and calming. These qualities were key to their ability to develop personal and deeply felt emotional connections and 'welcoming' and 'comfortable' especially appear to matter greatly. Similarly, MH emphasised in the staff interview that an essential aspect of managing the visitor experience includes ensuring that they feel welcome, comfortable and safe. It is possible to infer that visitors would not feel safe and 'at home' if they didn't feel that the environment of the public interior of the RFH was welcoming, comfortable, relaxing and calming. This indicates that to be successful, design and management practices must strive to cultivate these grounding qualities. As previously discussed, they are linked to familiarity, continuity and stability. In contrast, insights from the visitor interviews (as well as staff) also showed that the public interior needs life. Grounding qualities alone may not suffice and stimulating qualities linked to momentary and dynamic experiences are also needed. These were identified as a spectrum of qualities ranging from inspiring to energising. The notion of spectrum draws on the construction of the original emotionality model inspired by Russell's (1980) Circumplex Model of Affect in psychology introduced in Chapter Five and will be reflected in the emotionality model developed for the framework in Chapter Seven.

Thus, insights from the interviews build on the literature review and on those from the case study to provide tangible evidence that grounding and stimulating emotional qualities are two sides of the same coin, and that their accumulation over time strengthens the bond between

visitors and environment. Here, first person perspectives illustrate how experiences pertaining to looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness are perceived as rewarding and contribute to visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections with the environment of the public interior. For some, this was also expressed as deeper forms of emotional attachment. This is significant because aside from responding to the first research question in this thesis, it also helps validate the need for this research by showing that this is not simply about the motivation or perspective of the researcher. Sensory-emotional connectedness in the public interior also overwhelmingly mattered to interviewees.

6.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I presented the design and analysis of the staff and visitor interviews and evidenced a parallel between first-person perspectives and insights from the case study, notably the coherence and relevance of the principles and characteristics pertaining to the personalisation of experience central to this thesis. Staff and visitors could relate these principles to their experience. The analysis of the staff interview uncovered strong evidence of a visitor-centred approach that caters for a diversity of needs and preferences, emphasising the complexity yet critical requirement of managing varied groups of visitors and potential conflicting needs. Cultivating openness and mental ownership underpins design and management practices grounded in the historical and political contexts permeating the culture of the public interior of the RFH. The analysis also illuminated contemporary tensions brought by geographical and economic contexts impacting the management of the visitor experience. Management practices recognise the role of looseness in making visitors feel welcome, free and accepted and in doing so, bring life to the interior. In the visitor interviews, respondents overwhelmingly concurred with this perspective and associated their enactment of appropriation, exploration and privateness with rewards conducive to positive emotional connections although the influence of personal characteristics was also acknowledged. Contexts consistent with openness and mental ownership featured prominently and were linked to a diversity of people and activities. Thus, following on from these interviews, the definition of looseness is revisited to reflect new insights. Looseness is now defined as the design and management of choice characterised by openness, generosity and flexibility, to contribute to a diversity of people and activities. The definitions of all other principles remain unchanged from their previous iteration in the case study although insights also highlighted that social contagion is not only specific to appropriation but also occurs in the context of exploration and privateness. Through social contagion, appropriation can amplify appropriation, exploration can amplify exploration and privateness can amplify privateness.

Then, the interviews corroborated the understanding that the formation of emotional connections occurs when grounding qualities are complemented by a degree of stimulation. Visitors need both and by expressing not only positive but also deeply and personally felt emotional connections, interviewees substantiated the notion that the personalisation of experience can contribute to emotional attachment to place. These interviews conclude stage one of this research. The following chapter discusses insights from the design experiments developed to test the principles of personalisation and sensory-emotional processes identified through this study and presents the sensory-emotional framework developed from this research.

Chapter 7: The sensory-emotional framework

This chapter delineates a framework for experiential design in response to research question two in this thesis:

- How can this research contribute to the development of a design framework for the personalisation of experience in public interiors to cultivate sensory and emotional connections?

This framework is a practical representation of the outcome of this research, which uncovered how the personalisation of experience, when applied to the context of the public interior, can generate rewarding sensory phenomena conducive to visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections with their environment. From this, significant experiences retained as mental images and re-experienced over time by visitors can deepen connections and develop into more intimate forms of emotional attachment to place. This rationale describes the experiential process that emerged through this research (Table 15) and was originally introduced in Chapter One (Figure 1). First, insights from design experiments carried out to test the sensory-emotional processes developed through the literature review and case study prior to formulating the framework are outlined. Then, this chapter presents the complete framework, a synthesis of all insights from this research organised into five interrelated models. Next, the construction of the sensory model is discussed in-depth to justify its design, the selection of modalities and corresponding phenomena. Although this framework aims to contribute to the broad disciplinary field of experiential design with design professionals, academics, and students as its primary users, references to managers and management practices are included. This research evidenced the significant impact of management practices on the visitor experience, and it is envisaged that this framework can also be used by professionals managing public spaces.

7.1. Insights from the design experiments

The analysis of design experiments conducted with undergraduate students, one of the audiences for this research, evaluates the relevance of this study to experiential design practice and accordingly, the pertinence of developing a sensory-emotional framework centred on the personalisation of experience. Here, insights are outlined with specific attention to their usability, transferability and value. Usability was tested by introducing variability in the types of

experiments conducted. Transferability was tested by evidencing how this research could apply to a broad range of public environments and situations beyond that of the public interior of the RFH. Value was tested by assessing the impact of the principles introduced in the experiments on the students' design practice. The design of the experiments, their analysis and the transcripts of participants' responses are available in Appendix 8. Design outcomes and feedback from students showcased this study's motivation to integrate sensory-emotional processes in the design of spaces and confirmed the pertinence of the three pairs of principles defining the personalisation of experience for this study in achieving this goal. Participants from different courses, languages, disciplines and working across varied contexts quickly grasped concepts and definitions pertaining to porosity and privateness as well as enticement and exploration. Looseness and appropriation proved a little more challenging to design with because their relationship to physical elements in a space was perceived to be more elusive. Porosity can be achieved through the manipulation of physical boundaries and borders. Even liminal edges depend on physical elements. Similarly, three-dimensional elements, light or materials can be designed to entice. Looseness and appropriation took students into less familiar grounds and participants only overcame initial difficulties by shifting their approach from 'designing looseness to cultivate appropriation' to 'adopting loose practices to cultivate appropriation'. They learnt to recognise that a degree of disruption and unpredictability can be a positive attribute in environmental experience and thus relinquished some control over the design for visitors to complete their experience, develop mental ownership and a sense of belonging. Instead of designing looseness, they designed 'for' looseness to cultivate appropriation. The use of the preposition 'for' is significant because it shifts the focus away from the control of the designer towards the idea of the designer as facilitator for 'personalisation for' to cultivate 'personalisation by'. Accordingly, the preposition 'for' will feature in the sensory-emotional framework to emphasise that it is about designing *for* looseness, enticement and porosity *to* cultivate appropriation, exploration and privateness.

The experiments demonstrated that beyond the situations identified in the public interior of the RFH, the principles developed in this research are transferable to other locations and situations. Participants designed for a broad range of public environments, from small to large scale, enclosed or open, permanent or temporary. Critically for this study, they were able to adapt the principles pertaining to the personalisation of experience and corresponding sensory-emotional processes to design for a diverse typology of situations. The experiments also highlighted that this research can be used to transform the experience of an existing location. This matters because it extends its transferability to the renewal of environments that have already been designed but where people may struggle to connect to emotionally. Each

experiment focussed on a specific pair of principles, which helped substantiate their distinctiveness. They have discrete roles and cannot be confused. Nonetheless, the analysis revealed that there were instances when their complementarity and interdependence filtered through. A propensity towards natural compatibility extends the complementarity and interdependence of the three pairs of principles to contexts and situations beyond those of the public interior of the RFH. Whilst distinctive, they are intimately connected.

Participants responded enthusiastically when asked about value, emphasising the transformative impact of this new knowledge to their practice. Some explained that prior to these experiments they would not have contemplated how people could engage with a space sensorially and emotionally, others highlighted that they would not have considered qualitative experiences in their design but focus instead on structural properties and function. They also became more creative in their exploration of multisensory phenomena in materiality. This was especially noticeable in the way some integrated natural elements that were to be fully experienced through the senses and not simply decorative. Others also evidenced an ability to think beyond the physical space and consider its sensory relation, as well as that of its occupants, to the surrounding natural environment. Those working with porosity and privateness became more attuned to sensory flows and could imagine connections between the micro-scale of the body and the macro-scale of the environment. Those working with enticement and exploration discovered that a space could also be experienced as a sensory journey. Those working with looseness and appropriation understood the value being less prescriptive for visitors to exercise a degree of agency on how they experience an environment. Most agreed that this was for them a new way of designing, one that they were keen to revisit in future project. Working with principles of personalisation and sensory-emotional processes helped them discover alternative creative opportunities and expand their human-centred competencies.

7.2. Presentation of the framework

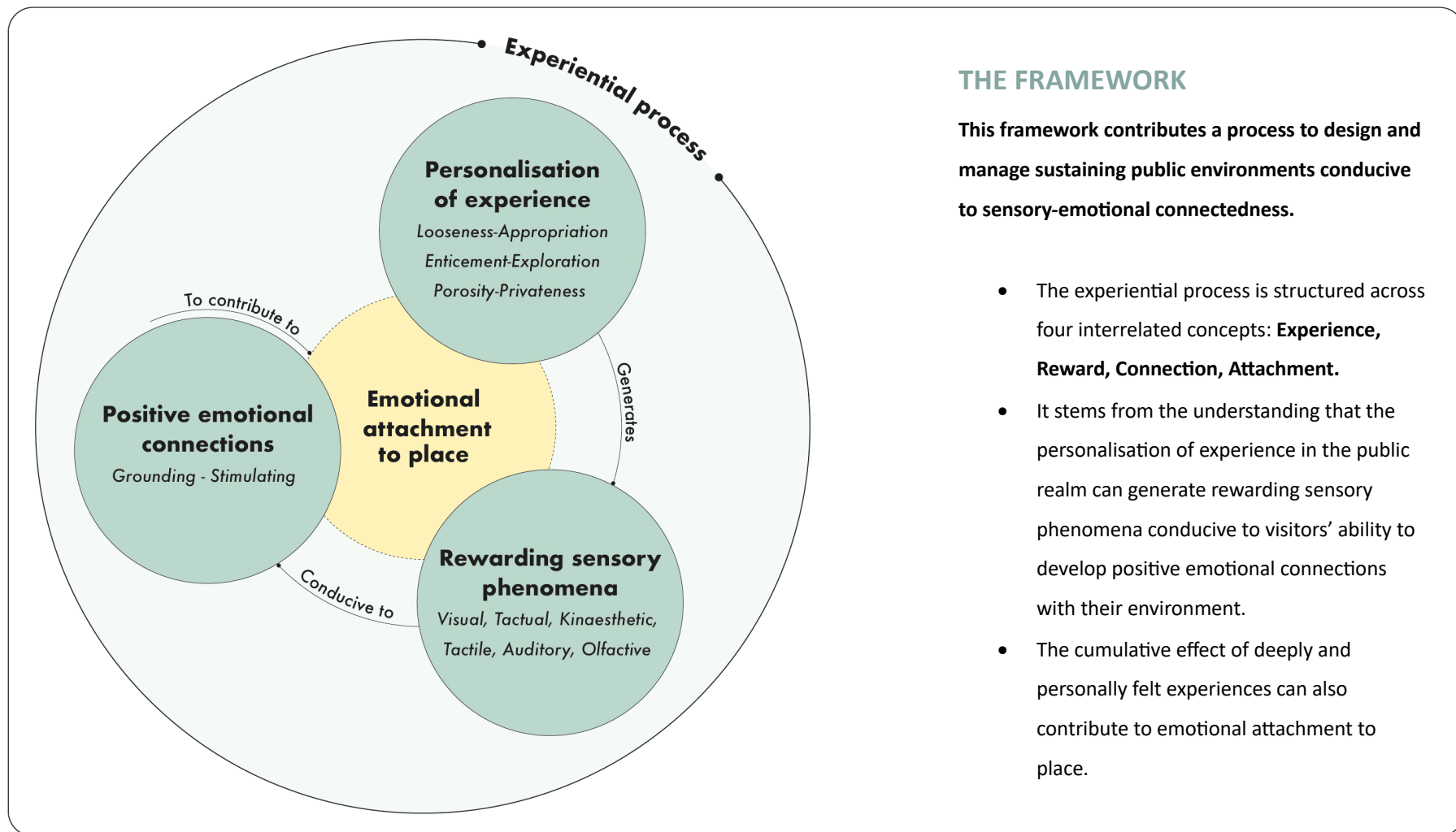
The design of the framework draws on data visualisation methods to bring the complexity of this research into a structured, coherent and usable format. Its components are presented in the order that it is conceived they would be used although the process is iterative. Designers and managers may revisit and reference any of the elements of the framework at any stage of the process. The framework is composed of five sections, each including diagrams adopting a circular design in reference to the discussion about experience in Chapter Three. Experience is

a flow, it is dynamic and fluid, always shifting (Dewey 1987, Ingold 2011, Escobar 2018). A vertical or horizontal design might suggest constancy and hierarchy, but a circular design evokes fluidity and synergies. Information is layered to manage complexity and emphasise relationships. Elements are organised into categories and colours are used to group them. Bold text on a light-coloured background is repeated across the framework to provide consistency of design and ensure clarity. It is also designed to be visually appealing to facilitate engagement. The content of each of the five sections is organised into a series of tables. The first section introduces the experiential process developed through this research (Table 15). It then articulates its transformation into a sensory-emotional design process (Table 16). It proposes that designers and managers first consider which principles and characteristics pertaining to the personalisation of experience are best suited to the public interior and its occupants, focusing their attention on the ways in which looseness, enticement and porosity could cultivate appropriation, exploration and privateness. Next, the process highlights the need to anticipate desired grounding and stimulating emotional qualities to examine what it could be/feel like for visitors to enact appropriation, exploration and privateness. From this, it is then possible to determine which sensory phenomena generated through design and management practices, and through visitors' actions and interactions, may be conducive to the formation of the desired emotional tone. In sum, the sensory-emotional design process is structured by three interrelated components: cultivate (visitor-centred experiences), modulate (desired emotional qualities), generate (rewarding sensory phenomena). The process requires designers and managers to contemplate emotional qualities before sensory phenomena because we perceive the wholeness of situations qualitatively before we understand their discreet phenomena. This became explicit in the way visitor interviewees discussed their emotional connection with the public interior of the RFH and in the design experiments when students selected desired emotional qualities before introducing sensory phenomena. It is thus proposed that designers and managers first evaluate the desired emotional tone of an environment and introduce rewarding phenomena accordingly.

The second section (Tables 17 to 26) defines the personalisation of experience, its principles and characteristics. Drawing on insights from this research, this definition shifts the emphasis on catering for a diversity of people and activities rather than on needs and preferences as originally stated in the working definition in Chapter Two. Diversity emerged in this research as an essential characteristic of successful public interiors. A Venn diagram is used to illustrate that these principles are distinctive yet complementary and interdependent. This section of the framework also foregrounds the notion that historical, political, geographical and economic contexts impact design and management practices; they may bring benefits but also tensions.

It then concludes with a matrix designed to help designers and managers define the visitors' profile and needs with an emphasis on promoting a diversity of people and activities. The third section (Tables 27 to 29) points to grounding and stimulating emotional qualities deemed pertinent to individual and collective experiences in the public interior. It also includes matrices to modulate these qualities. It is an invitation for designers and managers to reflect on the emotional tone of the public interior across space and across time. For example, qualities in natural light can alter the way a space is perceived, and these qualities can vary greatly depending on the time of year or even across a single day. The level of activity in a space can also impact on the way it is experienced qualitatively. The fourth section (Tables 30 to 38) articulates a sensory model that illuminates the cross-modality of the senses and includes a detailed library of sensory phenomena for designers and managers to draw on. The framework then concludes with a fifth section (Tables 39 to 41) created to help designers and managers envision sensory-emotional scenarios in which visitors enact appropriation, exploration and privateness.

It is an open framework, which will support its long-term viability. Its elements can be interpreted and re-interpreted to adjust to variable conditions. For example, although respondents in their late teens and early twenties were not included in this study (see 6.2.2), this does not mean that this framework could not be interpreted to adapt to their needs, especially since a matrix to evaluate the visitor profile, needs and diversity is included. Furthermore, although the design experiments discussed in Chapter Seven evidenced the adaptability and flexibility of insights developed through this study, and students were able to design for a wide range of environments and human-centred situations, these were specifically created to test the viability of this research. As such, they do not and could not reflect an exhaustive range of situations pertaining to the personalisation of experience today or in the future. Accordingly, this version of the framework is foundational, it is not meant to be prescriptive, and it does not intend to supersede other frameworks and established practices. Its construction reflects the intention to develop a stand-alone guide for designers and managers, one that could also be used as the starting point for site-specific research for those interested in investigating existing public interiors. It is important to note that this framework does not claim to enable designers or managers to determine how visitors will feel, nor does it assert that visitors will systematically experience emotional attachment to place. Its strength lies in its ability to enrich opportunities for sensorial and emotional connectedness in public interiors through the lens of the personalisation of the visitor experience. It provides a vision and direction to foster more intimate relations between visitors and their environment to contribute to their sense of belonging and wellbeing.



THE FRAMEWORK

This framework contributes a process to design and manage sustaining public environments conducive to sensory-emotional connectedness.

- The experiential process is structured across four interrelated concepts: **Experience, Reward, Connection, Attachment.**
- It stems from the understanding that the personalisation of experience in the public realm can generate rewarding sensory phenomena conducive to visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections with their environment.
- The cumulative effect of deeply and personally felt experiences can also contribute to emotional attachment to place.

Table 5: Expanding on Figure 1 to communicate the experiential process.

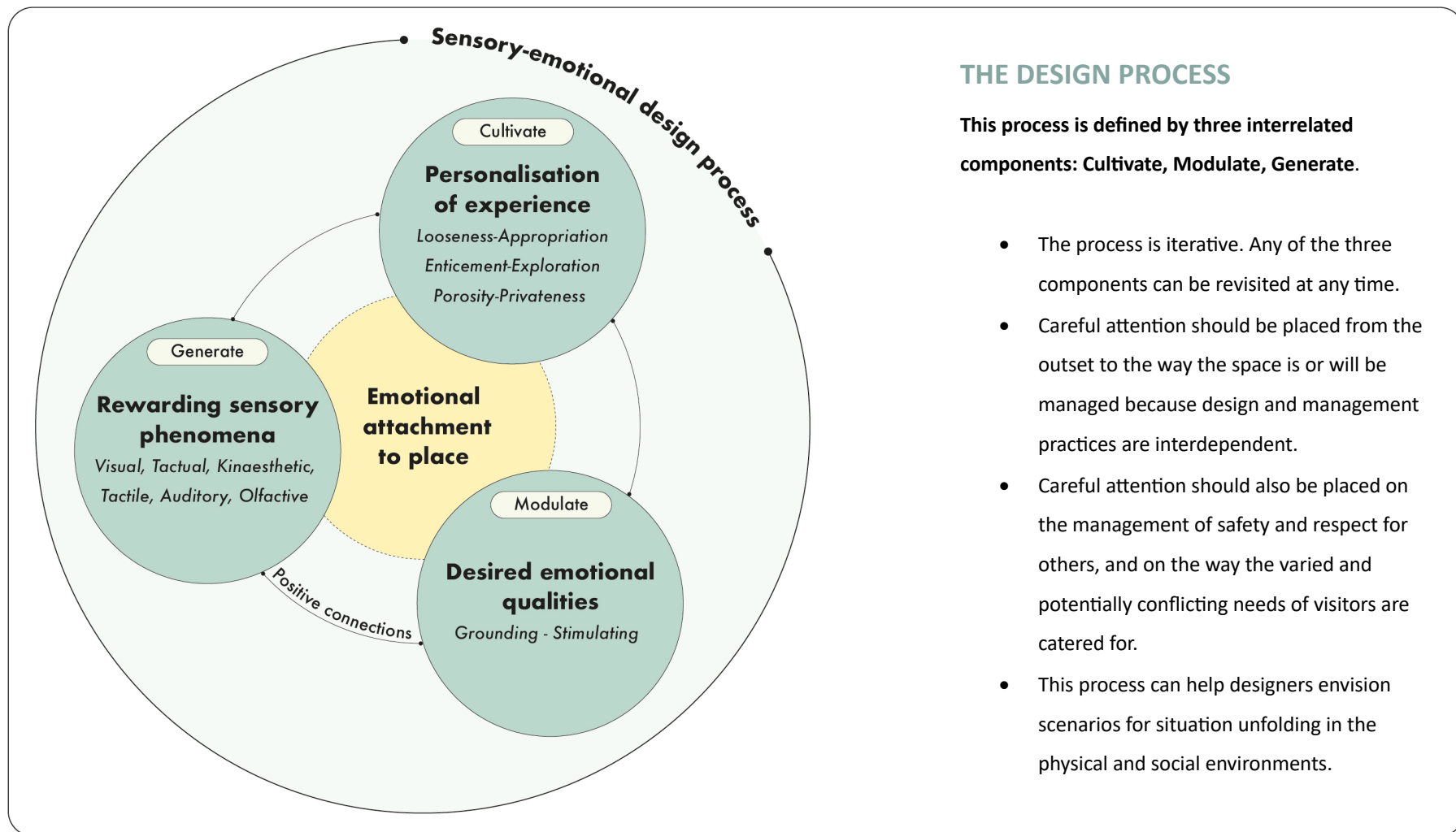


Table 6: Presentation of the sensory-emotional design process.

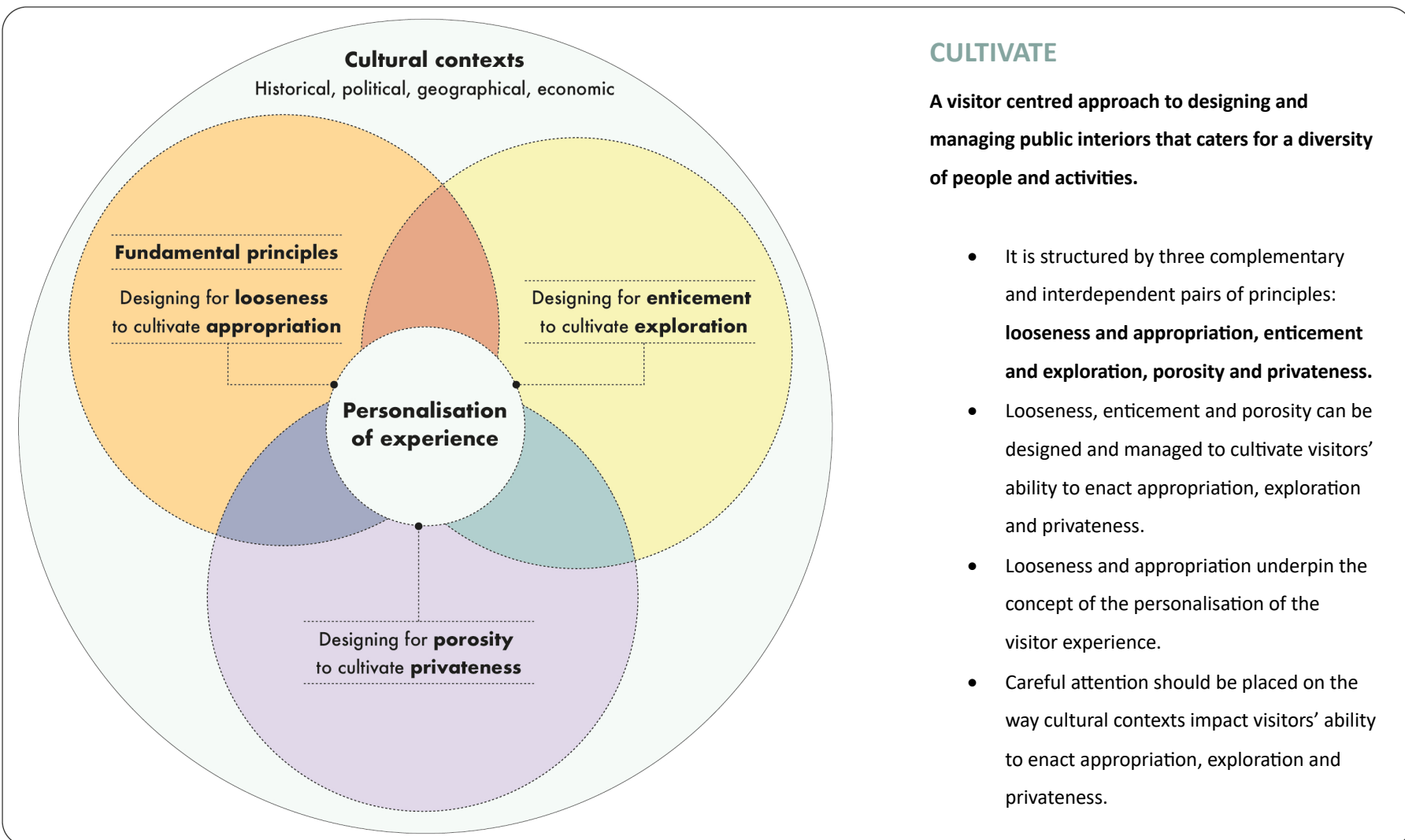


Table 7: Presentation of the personalisation of experience model.

Cultural contexts matrix

How could cultural contexts impact design and management practices?

Historical legacies

Benefits

Tensions

Political governance

Benefits

Tensions

Geographical location

Benefits

Tensions

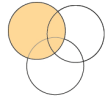
Economic and financial health

Benefits

Tensions

How could the environment feel welcoming for all without compromising safety?

Table 8: Matrix to define cultural contexts.



Designing for looseness to cultivate appropriation

Looseness

Design and management practices are characterised by openness, generosity and flexibility. Looseness brings life into the environment to contribute to a diversity of people and activities.

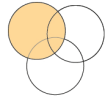
- **Openness:** the permeability of the environment. Physical and psychological barriers are minimised without compromising safety.
- **Generosity:** Practices that can support a variety of activities and cultivate mental ownership.
- **Flexibility:** the provision of moveable elements and objects enables visitors to reorganise the space to suit their needs.
- **Experiential loop:** a reciprocity between looseness and appropriation means that appropriation can also influence management practices and cultivate looseness.

Appropriation

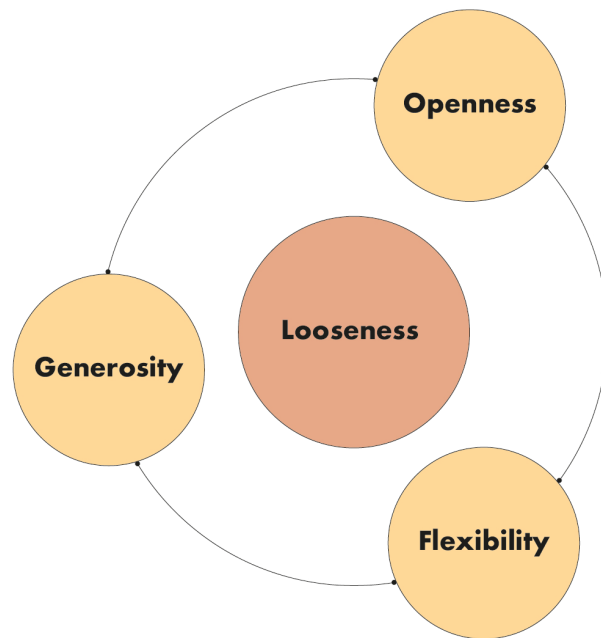
Visitors experience a degree of mental ownership and freedom of choice to enact a relative autonomy or self-expression.

- **Enacting a relative autonomy:** visitors identify possibilities in the environment. Their behaviour is within designed and managed expectations and can contribute to the informality of the environment.
- **Enacting self-expression:** visitors exploit possibilities in the environment. Their behaviour is outside designed and managed expectations and can contribute to the idiosyncrasy of the environment.
- **Social contagion:** seeing and hearing others enacting appropriation can cultivate appropriation.

Table 9: Presentation of the characteristics of looseness and appropriation.



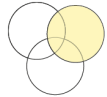
Designing for looseness to cultivate appropriation



Prompts

- How permeable and accessible are the different spaces in the interior?
- How are physical and psychological barriers minimised without compromising safety?
- How do the spaces and furniture support a variety of activities?
- How do moveable elements and objects enable visitors to reorganise the space to suit their needs?
- What possibilities are available for visitors to enact a relative autonomy?
- How do the design and management of the environment support self-expression?
- How do design and management practices cultivate visitors' ability to appropriate the environment rather than appropriating the environment from visitors?

Table 10: Prompts to support designing for looseness to cultivate appropriation.



Designing for enticement to cultivate exploration

Enticement

Design and management practices characterised by the composition of partly hidden/revealed sensory phenomena to arouse curiosity and by forms/materials that invite touch.

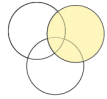
- **Partly revealed/hidden phenomena:** these are determined by the composition and organisation of three-dimensional elements.
- **Curiosity (or anticipation):** when curiosity is aroused, visitors enact modes of approach behaviour (curiosity may become anticipation when familiarity sets in).
- **Approach behaviour:** visitors actively engage and interact with their surroundings. This can foster intimate connections between body and environment.

Exploration

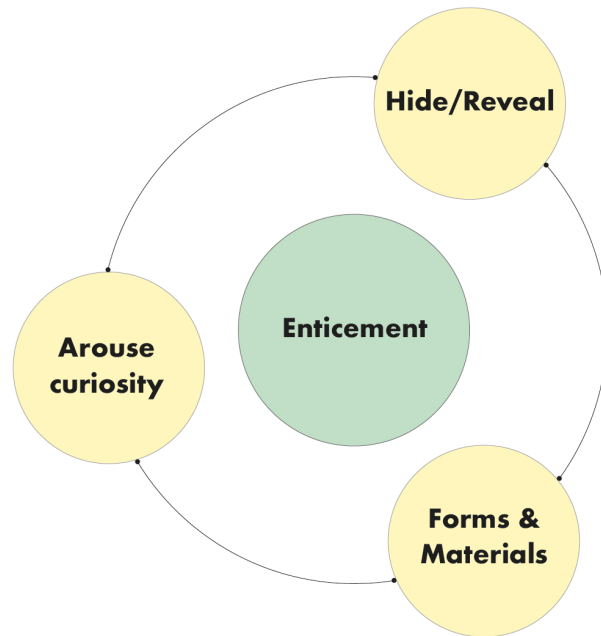
Visitors enact modes of approach behaviour characterised by movement towards, *flânerie* and body-environment interactions.

- **Enacting movement towards:** visitors move towards partly hidden/revealed phenomena to satisfy curiosity.
- **Enacting *flânerie*:** visitors meander slowly through the environment. They may sometimes pause for a short while.
- **Enacting body-environment interactions:** visitors look, listen, sit, lean, touch, grab, hold, inhale, etc.
- **Social contagion:** seeing others enacting exploration can cultivate exploration.
- **Appropriation:** is a precursor to exploration because exploration requires openness (permeability).

Table 11: Presentation of the characteristics of enticement and exploration.



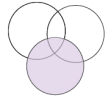
Designing for enticement to cultivate exploration



Prompts

- How does design and management practices partly reveal/hide phenomena?
- How can this arouse curiosity or anticipation and entice visitors to move towards the phenomena?
- How and why would visitors enact flânerie?
- Are there opportunities for visitors to pause?
- How do forms and materials invite touch?
- How do people interact with their surroundings through their senses?
- How does openness support visitors' ability to enact exploration?

Table 12: Prompts to support designing for enticement to cultivate exploration.



Designing for porosity to cultivate privateness

Porosity

The composition of boundaries, borders and liminal edges to regulate sensory flows.

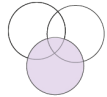
- **Boundaries:** three-dimensional elements and surfaces with little or no porosity.
- **Borders:** three-dimensional elements and surfaces that are partially or entirely porous.
- **Liminal edges:** sensory thresholds, perceived transitions from one sensory condition to another.
- **Sensory flows:** the phenomena perceived through sight, hearing, smell and passive touch that flow through a space.
- **Intimacy gradients:** the organisation across space of variations in nested comfort in the micro-scale of the body.

Privateness

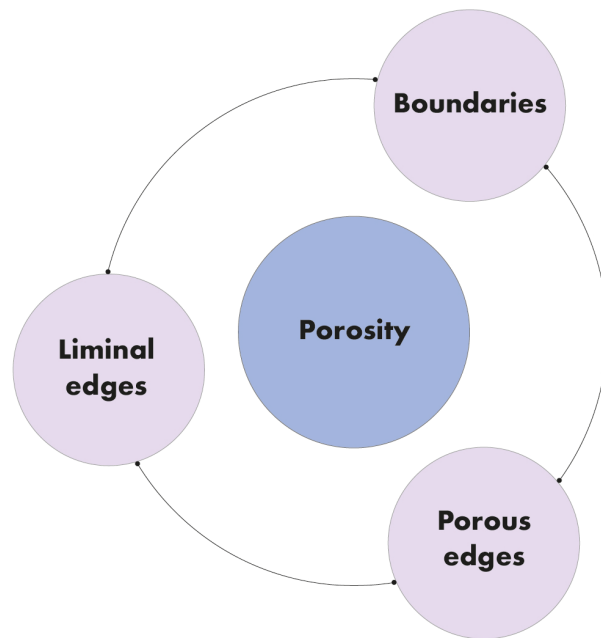
Visitors enact positive territoriality. They define personal or group territories in the micro-scale of the body from vantage points.

- **Vantage point:** a territory from which visitors can maintain sensory connections with the macro-scale of the physical environment and its social life. Visitors are still part of the life of the environment even though they may not actively participate in it. This can help them feel comfortable, safe and sustained.
- **Social contagion:** seeing and hearing others enacting privateness can cultivate privateness.
- **Appropriation:** is a precursor to privateness because privateness requires openness, generosity and flexibility.

Table 13: Presentation of the characteristics of porosity and privateness.



Designing for porosity to cultivate privateness



Prompts

- How do boundaries, borders and liminal edges contribute to visitors' ability to enact positive territoriality?
- How do they regulate visual, auditory and olfactive flows and those related to passive touch?
- How are territories also vantage points from which visitors can maintain sensory connections with the life of the environment?
- How do these flows create positive synergies between the micro-scale of the body and the macro-scale of the environment?
- How do openness, generosity and flexibility support visitors' ability to enact privateness?

Table 14: Prompts to support designing for porosity to cultivate privateness.



Known barriers to visitors' ability to personalise their experience

Appropriation

- **Choice:** limited choice can restrict visitors' ability to enact a relative autonomy.
- **Regulations:** restrictions to visitors' ability to enact self-expression can be imposed through regulations.
- **Activities:** some visitors may feel unable to enact their preferred activities when one type of activity or one group of visitors dominate the environment.

Exploration

- **Openness:** limiting access to certain areas can restrict visitors' ability to explore the physical environment.
- **Mystery:** opportunities for exploration are impoverished if the design of the space reveals everything at once.
- **Materiality:** certain forms and materials may generate avoidance behaviour.

Privateness

- **Openness, generosity, flexibility:** limiting access to certain areas and/or removing furniture can restrict visitors' ability to enact positive territoriality.
- **Composition:** the selection and location of three-dimensional elements and objects may impoverish sensory flows.
- **Materiality:** the selection of materials may contribute to unpleasant visual, auditory and olfactive flows.

Table 15: Known barriers to visitors' ability to personalise their experience.

Diversity matrix

Designing and managing for a diversity of people and activities

Visitor profile: who could visit?
(age, gender, socio-economic, ethnicity, etc.)

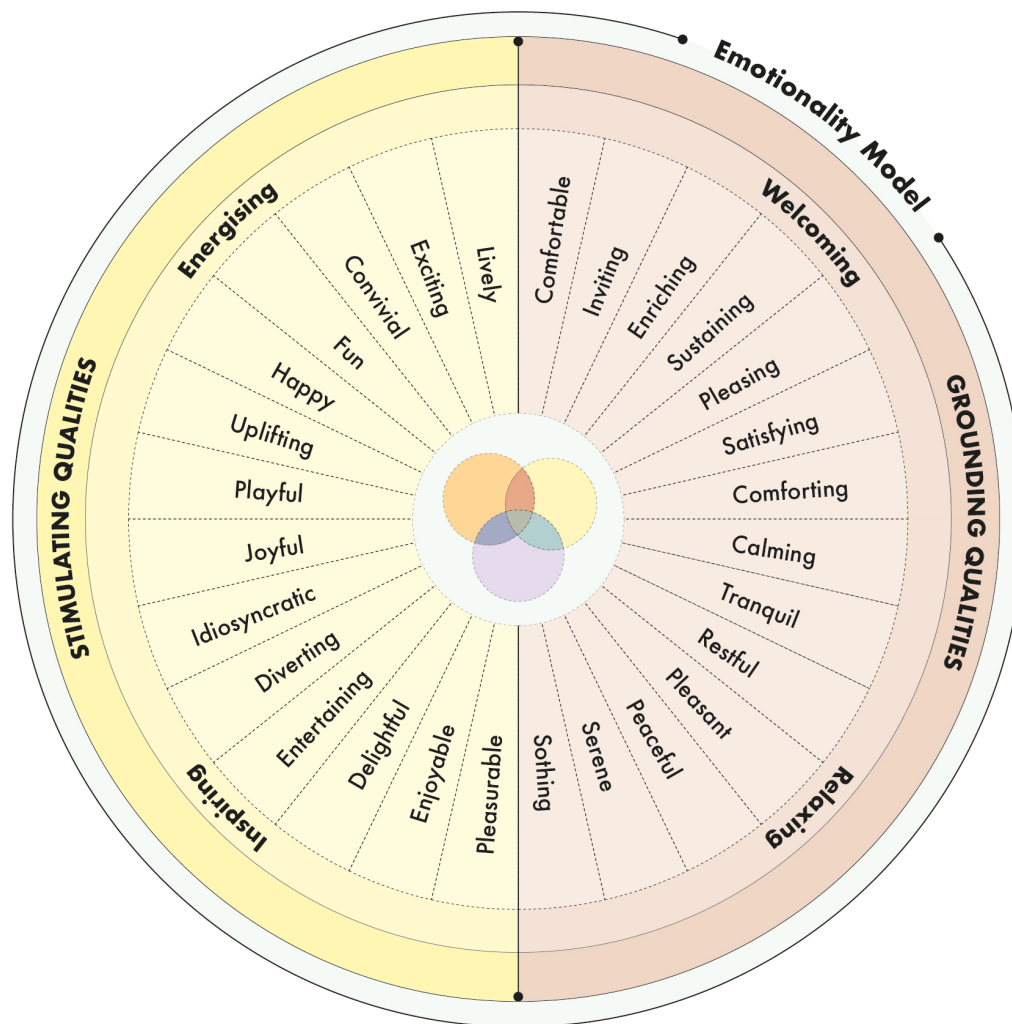
Why would visitors go there? What are their needs?
How could design/management practices help increase diversity?

How do designed/managed practices cultivate visitors' ability to enact a relative autonomy?
How do visitors' activities bring life to the environment?

How could visitors enact self-expression (unplanned activities) for the unexpected to emerge?
How could this enrich the life of the environment?

How could conflicting needs between the different groups of visitors be addressed while maintaining safety and respect for all?

Table 16: Matrix to help promote a diversity of people and activities.



MODULATE

Desired primary emotional qualities.

What would it feel like for visitors to experience:
looseness/appropriation, enticement/exploration,
porosity/privateness?

- **Emotionality permeates environmental experience.** Design elements and human activities engage the senses and define the emotional tone of a space. Qualities are perceived emotionally as either grounding or stimulating.
- **Grounding qualities:** they are linked to familiarity, continuity and stability.
- **Stimulating qualities:** they are linked to momentary and dynamic experiences.
- **Modulation:** the type and intensity of grounding and stimulating qualities can be adjusted across locations and across time.

Table 17: Presentation of the emotionality model.

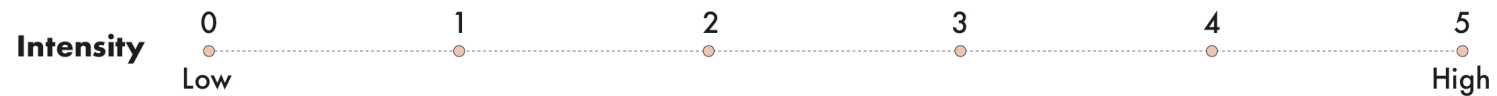
Emotional tone spatial variations modulation matrix

Description of desired primary grounding qualities

Location:

Physical environment

Social environment



Description of desired primary stimulating qualities

Location:

Physical environment

Social environment

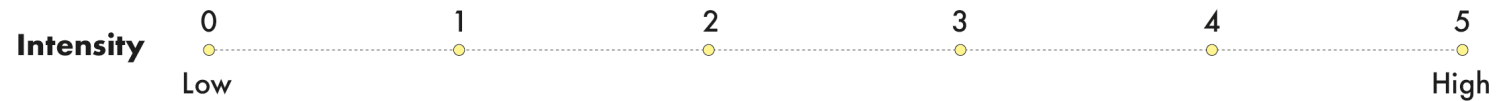


Table 18: Matrix to modulate desired emotional qualities across space.

Emotional tone time variations modulation matrix

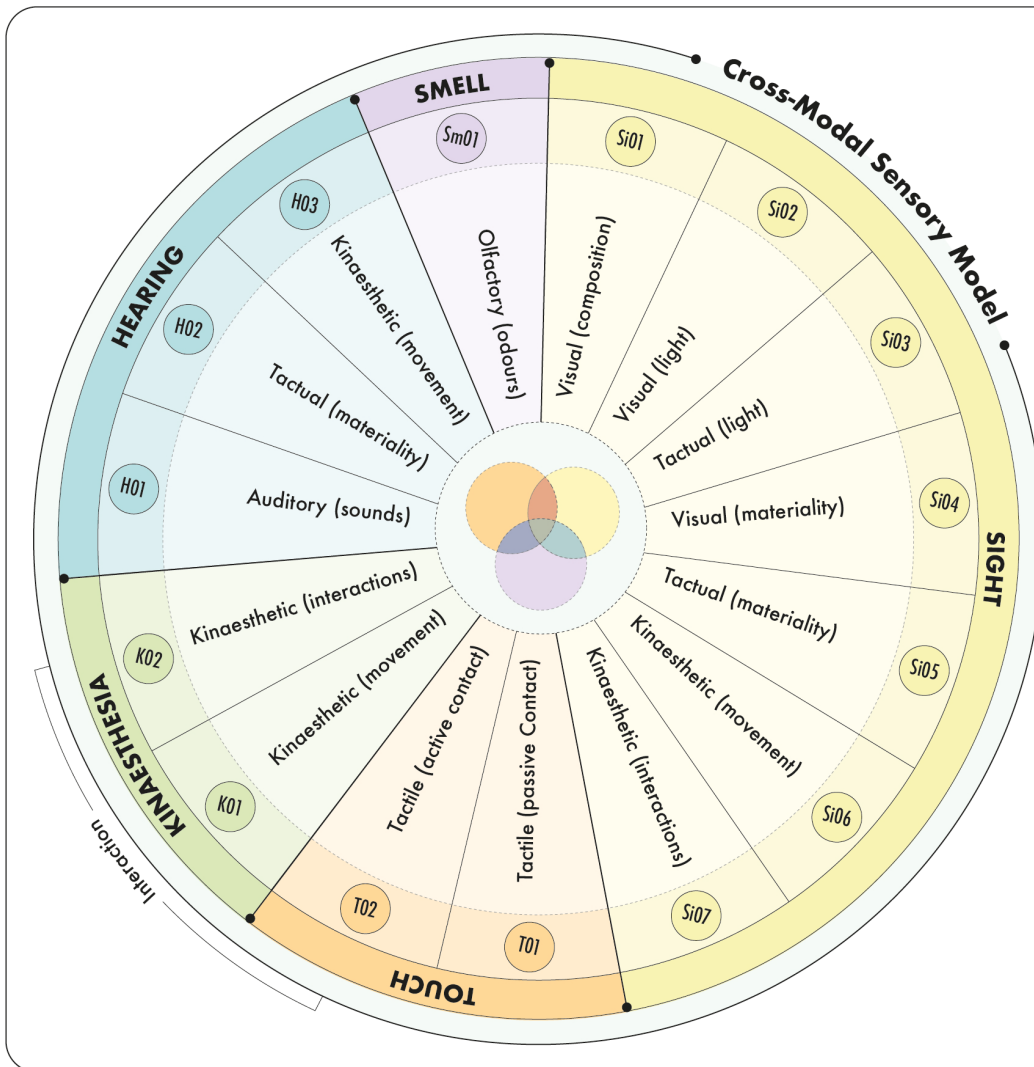
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12												
	Winter			Spring			Summer			Autumn / Winter														
Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7																	
	Weekday					Weekend																		
Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Night				Morning				Afternoon				Evening											

Description of variations in desired primary qualities across time

Physical environment

Social environment

Table 19: Matrix to modulate desired emotional qualities across time.



GENERATE

Rewarding multisensory phenomena conducive to desired grounding and stimulating qualities.

- This sensory model is cross-modal because it indicates when sensory phenomena associated with one modality can be perceived through another.
- The interaction between modalities such as touch and kinaesthesia can enrich the qualitative experience.
- Careful attention should be placed on the way looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness generate rewarding phenomena. These are communicated in the physical and social environments or the consequence of an action.

Table 20: Presentation of the sensory model.



Sensory phenomena perceived through sight

Si01: composition

Si01 - Visual qualities generated through the composition of elements and objects.

- Focal point: a feature that dominates a space.
- Sight line: an uninterrupted line of vision defining depth and a point of interest.
- Vista: a framed emphasis on an interior or exterior view.
- Scale and proportions: the distance and size of elements and objects in relation to the body.
- Balance: the ratio of symmetry to asymmetry.
- Rhythm and repetition: regular or irregular variations in elements and objects.
- Sequence: the progression from one area, element or object to another.
- Shape and form: the degree of straightness or curvature.

Table 21: Overview of sensory phenomena perceived through sight - Composition.



Sensory phenomena perceived through sight

Si02 and Si03: light

Si02 - Visual qualities generated by natural and artificial light.

- Visibility: a direct or indirect source.
- Intensity: the degree of brightness to dimness.
- Localisation: the origin and distance from the body.
- Rhythm and repetition: regular or irregular variations in arrangement.
- Sequence: the progression from one type of lighting condition to another.

Si03 - Tactual qualities generated by natural and artificial light.

- Colour temperature: the degree of warmth to coolness.

Tactual: qualities associated with touch, but the body is not actually touching or being touched.

Table 22: Overview of sensory phenomena perceived through sight – Light.



Sensory phenomena perceived through sight

Si04 and Si05: materiality

Si04 - Visual qualities generated by materials and surfaces.

- Colour: its identity (red, blue, yellow, etc).
- Intensity: the degree of brightness to dullness.
- Value: the degree of lightness to darkness.
- Opaqueness: the degree of opacity to transparency.
- Pattern: the ratio of surface simplicity to complexity.
- Rhythm and repetition: regular or irregular variations in patterns.
- Scale: the size of the patterns.

Si05 - Tactual qualities generated by materials and surfaces.

- Texture: the degree of roughness to smoothness.
- Contour identity: the degree of sharpness to smoothness.
- Firmness: the degree of hardness to softness.
- Weight: the degree of heaviness to lightness.
- Solidity: the degree of density to diffusion.
- Temperature: the degree of warmth to coolness.
- Moisture: the degree of wetness to dryness.

Tactual: qualities associated with touch, but the body is not actually touching or being touched.

Table 23: Overview of sensory phenomena perceived through sight - Materiality.



Sensory phenomena perceived through sight

Si06 and Si07: movement and interactions

Si06 – Kinaesthetic qualities generated by bodies and objects moving through space.

- Speed: the degree of fastness to slowness.
- Rhythm: the regularity or irregularity of movement.
- Path identity: the degree of linearity to sinuosity.

Si07 – Kinaesthetic qualities generated by body parts moving in space.

- Posture: the position of the body.
- Spatial gesture: body interactions with space, objects, materials and surfaces.
- Social gestures: human interactions.

Table 24: Overview of sensory phenomena perceived through sight – Movement.



Sensory phenomena perceived through touch

T01 and T02: passive and active skin and body contact

T01 – Tactile qualities generated through passive skin and body contact (to be touched).

- Air movement: the degree of strength to softness.
- Temperature: the degree of warmth to coolness.
- Humidity: moisture in the air.
- Heat radiation: origin and distance from the body.

T02 – Tactile qualities generated through active skin and body contact (to touch – interacts with muscle sensations).

- Texture: the degree of roughness to smoothness.
- Shape and form: the degree of linearity or curvature.

- Contour identity: the degree of sharpness to smoothness.
- Temperature: the degree of warmth to coolness.
- Moisture: the degree of wetness to dryness.
- Fluidity: the degree of liquefaction.
- Firmness: the degree of hardness to softness.
- Strength: the degree of permanence to flimsiness.
- Solidity: the degree of density to diffusion.
- Flexibility: the degree of rigidity to pliability.
- Vibration: its rhythm and intensity.
- Weight: the degree of heaviness to lightness.

Table 25: Overview of sensory phenomena perceived through touch.



Sensory phenomena perceived through kinaesthesia

K01 and K02: movement of the body and body-parts (muscle sensation interacts with touch)

K01 – Kinaesthetic qualities generated by moving through space.

- Path identity: the degree of linearity to sinuosity.
- Speed: the degree of fastness to slowness.
- Rhythm: the regularity or irregularity of movement.
- Path firmness: the degree of hardness to softness.

K02 – Kinaesthetic qualities generated by moving in space.

- Posture: the position of the body.
- Spatial gesture: the body interacts with the space, objects, materials and surfaces.
- Social gesture: human interaction.

Table 26: Overview of sensory phenomena perceived through kinaesthesia.



Sensory phenomena perceived through hearing

H01, H02 and H03: sounds, materiality and movement

H01 – Auditory qualities generated by the sound of space, objects and people.

- Intensity: the degree of loudness to quietness.
- Pitch: the degree of sharpness to softness
- Localisation: the origin and distance from the body.
- Duration: ambient or episodic.
- Identity: the signature sound that characterises a location.

H02 – Tactual qualities generated by elements and objects.

- Weight: the degree of heaviness to lightness.

- Materiality: the degree of hardness to softness.
- Fluidity: the degree of liquefaction.

Tactual: qualities associated with touch (and muscle sensation in the case of weight), but the body is not actually touching or being touched.

K03 – Kinaesthetic qualities generated by the movement of people and objects.

- Speed: the degree of fastness to slowness.
- Rhythm: the regularity or irregularity of movement.

Table27: Overview of sensory phenomena perceived through hearing.



Sensory phenomena perceived through smell

Sm01: inhalation of odours (and their correspondence with flavours)

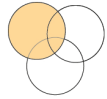
Sm01 – Olfactory qualities generated by the odour of space, elements, objects and people.

- Intensity: the degree of potency to subtlety.
- Localisation: the origin and distance from the body.
- Duration: pervading or episodic.
- Identity: the signature smell that characterises a location.
- Temperature: the degree of warmth to coolness.

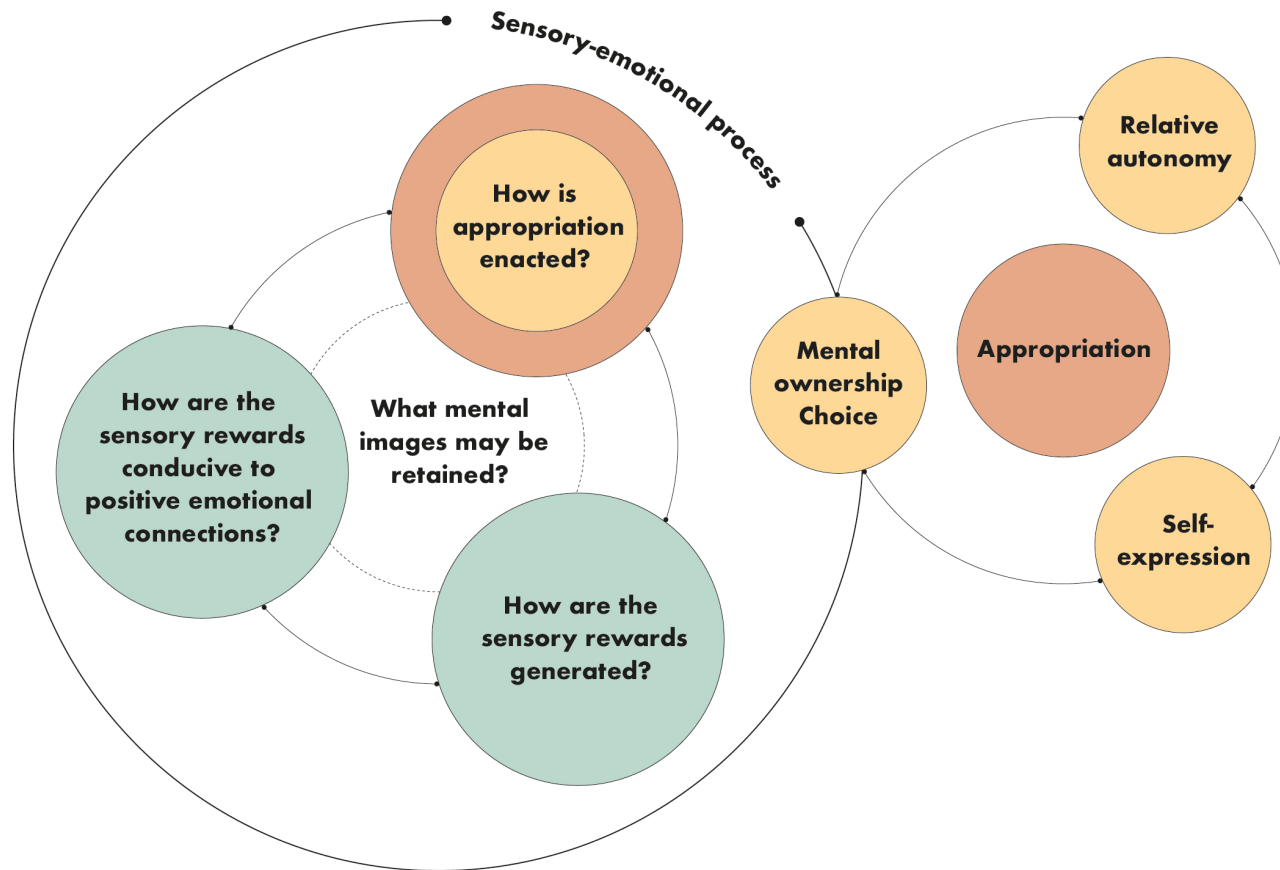
Primary odorants:

- Fruity.
- Citrusy
- Floral.
- Spicy.
- Minty.
- Sweet.
- Toasted and nutty.
- Woody and resinous.
- Musty.

Table 28: Overview of sensory phenomena perceived through smell.



What would it be like to enact appropriation?

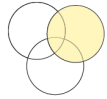


ENVISION

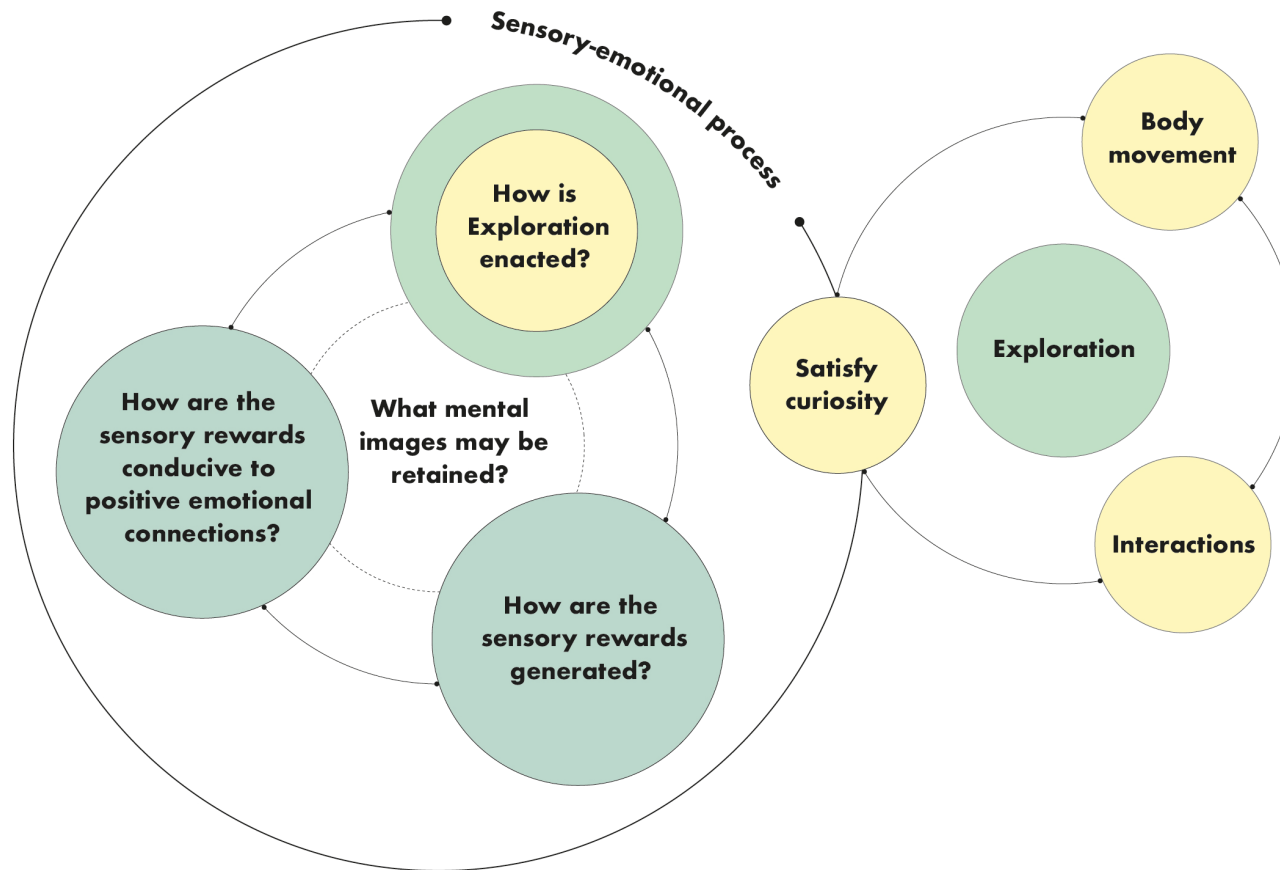
Scenarios to evaluate how situations may develop.

How do looseness and appropriation generate rewarding sensory phenomena conducive to visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections with their environments?

Table 29: Scenario development matrix for the enactment of appropriation.



What would it be like to enact exploration?

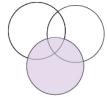


ENVISION

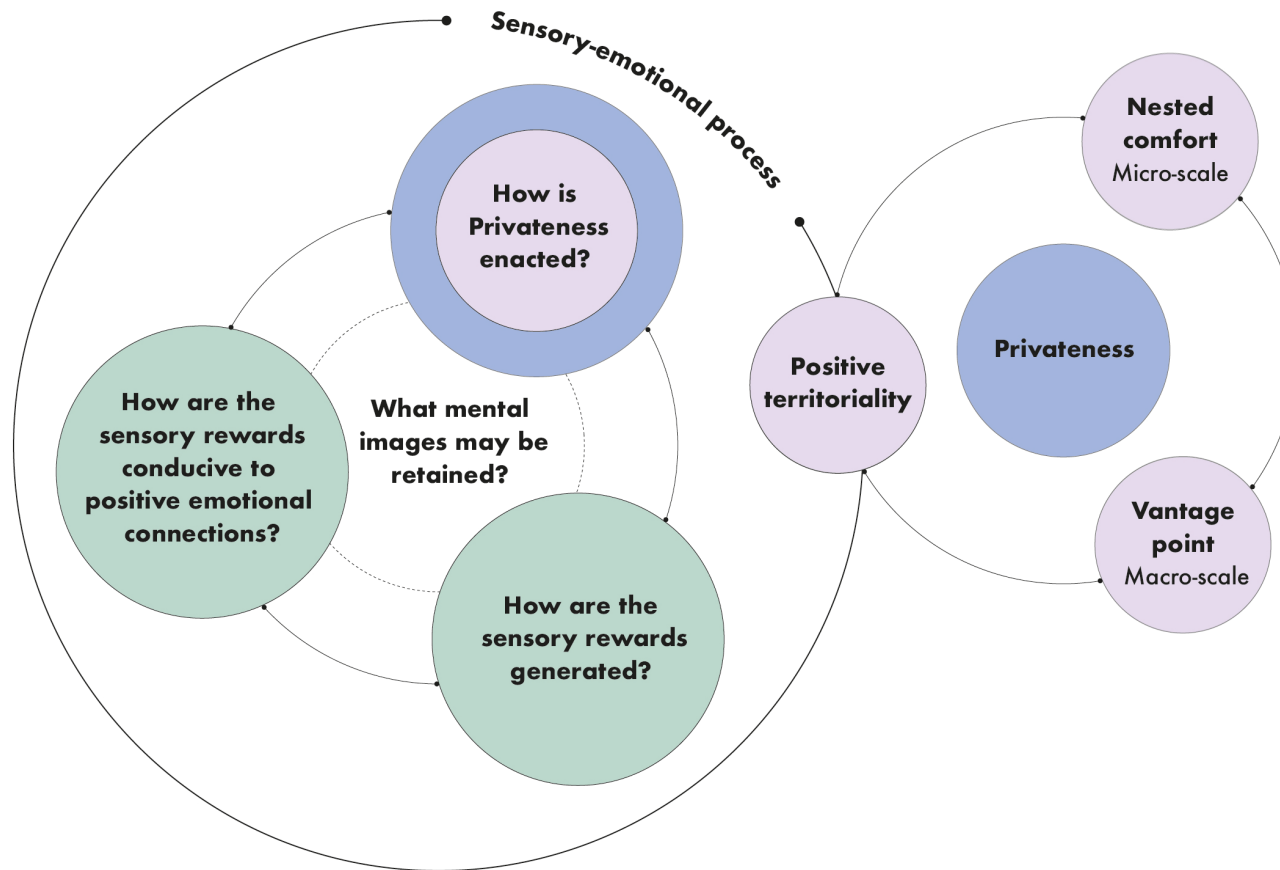
Scenarios to evaluate how situations may develop.

How do enticement and exploration generate rewarding sensory phenomena conducive to visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections with their environments?

Table 30: Scenario development matrix for the enactment of exploration.



What would it be like to enact privateness?



ENVISION

Scenarios to evaluate how situations may develop.

How do porosity and privateness generate rewarding sensory phenomena conducive to visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections with their environments?

Table 31: Scenario development matrix for the enactment of privateness.

7.3. On the construction of the sensory model

The sensory model developed in Chapter Five for the case study brought together six sensory modalities. Here, the number of modalities is consolidated into five, the sense of sight, the sense of touch, the sense of kinaesthesia, the sense of hearing and the sense of smell. To avoid repetition or ambiguity when detailing the construct of each of these five modalities, it is understood that the model developed for the framework expands on previous discussions about the sensory model used in the case study.

This sensory model triangulates insights from the case study, interviews and design experiments by re-examining relevant literature exploring sensory modalities and associated properties or qualities (Rasmussen 1959, Gibson 1966, Malnar and Vodvarka 1992, 2004, Pallasmaa 2005, 2017, Zumthor 2006, Henshaw 2012, DeVignemont and Massin 2012, Matthen 2012, Haverkamp 2013, Erwine 2017, Le Breton 2017, Bêka and Lemoine 2023, Brand 2023). Thus, insights from this research were brought together and reviewed against the literature to verify their validity and to help organise them into categories, whilst at the same time providing tangible evidence that untangled which aspects of the literature were relevant to this model. For example, according to De Vignemont and Massin (2012, p. 295), touch includes properties such as hardness, solidity, impenetrability, texture, weight, mass, pressure, tension, contact, temperature, humidity, vibration, painfulness and wetness. Whilst some of these properties, such as painfulness, are outside the boundaries of this study, this account nonetheless helped corroborate insights that emerged through this research. Solidity and impenetrability for instance were identified as properties of boundaries and could contribute grounding qualities to the visitor experience of privateness. Due to their similarity in the context of this study, they are consolidated into one type of phenomenon named solidity in the framework. The quality of wetness also emerged in one of the design experiments as a stimulating experience when enacting self-expression. However, Malnar and Vodvarka's reference to contour identity does not feature in De Vignemont and Massin's account but was nonetheless highlighted as a significant embodied experience in the case study. Hence, developing the sensory model for this framework became a thematic analytical process of insights from this research bounded by a systematic review of relevant literature. This model can be used as a reference library for designers and managers to draw on.

This sensory model is distinctive because it articulates the cross-modality of the senses, the way sensory phenomena associated with a modality can be perceived through another, and because it opens up a window into the way touch and muscle sensation interrelate. The

discussion on haptic sight in Chapter Five highlighted that phenomena associated with touch can also be perceived through sight. This model expands on this notion because the case study uncovered that it is possible to perceive kinaesthetic phenomena through sight when observing the movement, postures and gestures of others. For example, seeing people slowly meandering through a space or leaning back on a sofa can contribute to the perception of relaxation and comfort in the observer and through social contagion, even induce the observer to perform similar actions. Furthermore, phenomena associated with touch and kinaesthesia can also be perceived through hearing. For example, the sound of someone walking will be perceived differently kinaesthetically to the sound of someone running. It is also possible to perceive the weight of a door from the sound it makes as it closes, and this particular example calls to mind the intermodal perception between exteroceptive tactile sensations and interoceptive muscle sensations discussed in Chapter Five. Accordingly, this model integrates cross-modal dimensions across sight and hearing. It is not just what we see and what we hear, it is also about how we touch and how we sense movement through our eyes or ears. The term 'tactual' is used in the cross-modal context of sight and hearing because the body is not actively touching or being touched. The term 'tactile' is used for the modality touch because a direct sensation occurs through skin and body contact and the interaction with muscle sensations is noted in the sensory model where appropriate. The term 'tactual' is preferred to the term 'haptic' to maintain a more obvious connection with 'tactile' in the model.

Secondly, this model is also distinctive because it expands significantly on existing sensory models by providing an extensive library of phenomena and corresponding characteristics. The list is not exhaustive, but it is as comprehensive as it was possible to achieve through this research. It provides designers and managers with a detailed reference to explore the correspondence between spatio and socio-sensory phenomena and desired grounding to stimulating qualities in the physical and social environments. Each section of the sensory wheel is labelled with a symbol. The S in Si01, Si02, Si03, through to Si07 stands for sight, the T in T01 and T02 stands for touch, the K in K01 and K02 stands for kinaesthesia, and so forth. These codes provide an easy way to connect the wheel with corresponding tables where information about the phenomena pertaining to each of the five sensory modalities is provided. Definitions and value scales are also included depending on which is most appropriate. For example, a focal point does not have a value scale, it is defined as a dominant feature in a space, but elements of its design may do. The intensity of its colour for instance has a value scale between brightness and dullness. To add another example, the localisation of a smell is defined by its origin and distance from the body. This information in itself does not represent a value scale but can nonetheless spur designers to consider the distance between the source of a smell and

the position of visitors and in doing so, assess its qualitative impact on the visitor experience. Conversely, some phenomena are best defined using a value scale. For example, weight is defined as the degree of lightness to heaviness, temperature as the degree of warmth to coolness. Whilst useful to designers, value scales are not typically included in sensory models but may feature in the literature such as when Rasmussen (1959, p. 24) discusses impressions of hardness and softness, heaviness and lightness in the surface character of materials or when Malnar and Vodvarka (2004, pp. 247-248) discuss the Sensory Slider, a schematic they devised to document sensory information in buildings. Introducing value scales into the sensory model in this framework provides a foundation for designers to position their practice qualitatively and experientially.

As with other models, the separation of modalities into categories is necessary but artificial, only serving the purpose of organising information. Sight dominates the model, occupying almost half of the wheel. This is consistent with the understanding that vision is our most dominant sense. Research in neuroscience shows that half of the sensory information reaching the brain is visual (Sussman and Hollander 2015, p. 58) and in his study, cross-modality is indeed most prominent in sight. Smell was placed at the top of the model to help alleviate this ascendancy and the wheel design aims to minimise issues of hierarchy to convey the notion that in bodily experiences, the senses work in unison. For example, we may look at a carpeted floor and, at the same time, feel its softness underfoot as we walk across it. Here, the collaboration between sight, kinaesthesia and touch constitutes the perception of the carpeted floor. Thus, the organisation of the five modality in the sensory wheel does not imply that the model represents a hierarchy or sequence but simply that the senses interrelate, and that experience is always multisensory.

7.3.1. The sense of sight

In this model, the sense of sight is characterised by sensory rewards generated through the perception of visual qualities in the composition of three-dimensional elements and objects in space, visual and tactual qualities in natural and artificial light, visual and tactual qualities in materials and surfaces, and finally, kinaesthetic qualities in the movement of bodies and objects through space and body parts moving in space. The composition of three-dimensional elements is characterised experientially by visual phenomena generated through the design of focal points, sight lines, vistas, scale and proportions, balance, rhythm and repetition, sequence, shape and form. The visibility of natural and artificial light, its intensity, localisation,

rhythm, repetition and sequence also generate visual phenomena that contribute to the emotional tone of the physical environment. For example, direct lighting with its visible light source is less conducive to comfort than indirect lighting, when the light source is hidden. When referring to the intensity of light, the term 'dimness' is also preferred to 'darkness' because dimness creates harmony (Premthada 2023, p. 144), and thus better reflects the qualitative experience of low light levels in a space. Artificial light can include colour, which in this model, is distinct from the tactual quality of the colour temperature of light. Visual qualities in coloured light relate to its identity, whether it is red, green, yellow, blue, etc. Colour temperature in light however reflects a tactual value scale between warm and cool perceived through sight. Lighting conditions impact significantly on the perception of qualities in material and surfaces, and these generate visual and tactual phenomena. Their visual qualities emanate from colour identity, intensity, and value. The opaqueness, translucency or transparency of materials also came to the fore as a device to regulate sensory flows for porosity to cultivate privateness in the design experiments. Then, patterns on surfaces, the arrangement of lines and shapes, their rhythm and repetition, and their scale may bring distinctive visual qualities to a space, as seen with the 'Net & Ball' carpet at the RFH. Furthermore, as previously discussed, we can perceive what it would feel like to touch materials and surfaces, their textures or contours, through vision alone. We can also perceive how firm a material may be, the weight and solidity of an element or object, surface temperature and moisture through sight.

7.3.2. The sense of touch

Touch is defined for this model as tactile qualities perceived through passive and active skin and body contact. The coherence with Malnar and Vodvarka's (2004) use of the terms 'passive' and 'active' is retained since it reflects the reciprocity of touch, "to be touched and to touch" (Brand 2023, p. 68). In this model, tactile qualities in passive skin and body contact include air movement through a space with a value scale between strength and softness against the skin. The warmth or coolness of the temperature of a space, its humidity, and heat radiation from sunlight or an artificial heat source, can also be perceived through skin and body contact. In this context the body is passive, it is being touched. Tactile qualities perceived through active skin and body contact on the other hand require the body to actively touch materials and surfaces in the space. Active touch is intimate. By touching surfaces, we can feel textures, shapes and forms, contours, temperature and moisture; we can grasp the firmness of materials, their strength and flexibility. Furthermore, together with muscle sensation, touch also enables us to perceive vibrations, and the weight of elements and objects in a space as we move or lift them.

7.3.3. The sense of kinaesthesia

Kinaesthesia is characterised by body movement and interactions. Here, kinaesthetic qualities are experienced either when the body moves through space or when the body moves in space. When the body is moving through space, the quality of experience is distinguished by the manner in which the movement is enacted. Someone walking in a straight line, fast and without a pause will experience the environment differently to someone following a curved path, moving more slowly and perhaps pausing occasionally. It was seen in a previous discussion on exploration in Chapter Two that in the latter, sensory attunement to the environment will be stronger. Thus, spaces can be designed and managed to cultivate certain types of movement. In a discussion on the Japanese tea ceremony for instance, Block (2015, p. 181) explains how the way to the tea house includes a winding path and stepping stones to induce participants to slow down their movement and become more conscious of each step taken, elevating the everyday activity of walking. When the body moves in space, the quality of experience is characterised by the way postures and gestures are enacted. Postures correspond to shifts in the position of the body such as standing straight, leaning back on a sofa or leaning forward on a railing, whilst gestures express the movements of body parts when performing spatial and social interactions. Human to human gestures pertain to social interactions. Spatial gestures occur when the body interacts with the space, objects, materials and surfaces. Referencing the work of psychologists Susan Ledermann and Roberta Klatzky who studied spatial gestures, Brand (2023, p. 73) explains that these may include the lateral motion or pressure of the hand against a surface, the action of closing the hand around an object to pick it up, or using the fingers to follow the contour of an element in the space. Spatial gestures are especially significant to designers because they bring together body movement, muscle sensation and active touch to shape the experience of the physical environment in the most intimate way.

7.3.4. The sense of hearing

According to Pallasmaa (2017, p. 19), “hearing structures and articulates space as much as vision” and in this study the sense of hearing also incorporated a cross-modality with touch and kinaesthesia. The sense of hearing is characterised in this model by auditory qualities in the sound of space, objects and people. A value scale between loudness and quietness defines the intensity of a sound. Pitch pertains to its degree of sharpness to softness. The high pitch

sounds of children observed playing in the public interior of the RFH for instance had a noticeable sharpness. Localisation relates to the origin of a sound and its distance from the listener. In the study on porosity, localisation was key to visitors' ability to enact privateness because it was important for them to be able to eavesdrop on the life of the public interior even though the source of the sounds should not be so close as to pervade the micro-scale of their territory. Next, this model considers the duration of a sound, whether it is an ambient sound permeating the entire space or whether it is episodic, only occurring occasionally or at intervals. A sound may also be associated with a specific location, which could elevate the sense of familiarity and emotional connection.

The sound of elements and objects in a space can generate tactual qualities. We can perceive weight for instance, when hearing the sound of an object being moved. In the public interior of the RFH, staff would often move trolleys across the space and depending on the sound made by the wheels against the floor, it was possible to understand whether the trolley was heavy and possibly full, or light and perhaps empty. Tactual qualities of hardness and softness in the materiality of a space can also be perceived through sounds. In this case study, the sounds of chairs being dragged against the floor in the Level 2 cafe (nested element 1) echoed and reverberated loudly across the space, which indicated hard surfaces, both in the materiality of the floor and of the chairs. Conversely, soft surfaces are more likely to absorb sounds and contribute to a quieter experience. The fluidity of a material can also be heard when it is touched and moved. This came to the fore in one of the design experiments as students used water as a material to interact with. In addition, kinaesthetic phenomena pertaining to the speed and rhythm of people and objects can be perceived when hearing the sounds they make as they move or are being moved through a space. Going back to the example of children playing in the public interior of the RFH, the fast pace and quick rhythm of their small feet contributed qualities of fun and happiness to the emotional tone of the environment .

7.3.5. The sense of smell

This model focuses on inhalation, olfactive qualities in the odour of space, objects and people. Henshaw (2012) expresses a vital connection between smell and emotions, and this is exemplified by the work of Kate McLean (2012) who creates smell maps of cities across the world. Feuer-Cotter (2018) also expresses the notion that smells can connect people and places. Yet, insights from this case study highlighted only two instances when a smell contributed to the quality of experience in the public interior of the RFH, corroborating Henshaw's (2014) belief that the exploration of olfactory experiences in and through design is

too limited although a more recent publication bridging theory and practice (Henshaw et al. 2018) foregrounds the potency of smell in environmental experience. The section on smell is the smallest in this sensory model but nonetheless contains useful information, highlighting that smell has an intensity, a localisation, a duration and an identity. Drawing on the situations from the case study, the smell encountered when entering the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2) was subtle but pervaded the environment. It felt a little sweet. Conversely, the smell of the food emanating from the restaurant was potent and episodic, with a degree of spiciness and warmth and a perceptual correspondence with flavours. The former constituted a signature smell because it was only experienced in this specific location. It contributed to the perception of grounding emotional qualities. The latter did not specifically characterise this location (it seldom occurred) but nonetheless contributed to the perception of momentary stimulating emotional qualities. Lastly, the same list of primary odorants used in the model in Chapter Five provides a reference to help distinguish between different types of smells with positive connotations.

7.4. Conclusion

In this Chapter I presented a practice-oriented outcome for this research, a sensory-emotional framework for experiential design structured across five interrelated models. In the first model, I outlined an experiential process summarised by four concepts: experience, reward, connection, attachment. I also delineated an iterative design process structured by three components: cultivate, modulate, generate. 'Cultivate' relates to the principles of personalisation and these are detailed in the second model, articulating how looseness, enticement and exploration can cultivate appropriation, exploration and privateness respectively. This model also highlights the impact of cultural contexts and the need to manage potential barriers to visitors' ability to personalise their experience. It includes prompts to guide the process and a matrix to design and manage for a diversity of people and activities. 'Modulate' reflects the need to consider the primary desired emotional qualities that can determine the way the emotional tone of the environment is perceived. This is detailed in the third model by presenting a range of emotional keywords organised into two categories, grounding and stimulating qualities. Grounding qualities are positioned within a welcoming-relaxing spectrum and stimulating qualities within an inspiring-energising spectrum. This model also includes two matrices to account for variations in the ratio and intensity of grounding and stimulating qualities across space and time. 'Generate' expresses the intention to introduce rewarding sensory phenomena in the environment. This is illustrated by the fourth model, a sensory model bringing together five sensory modalities, sight, touch, kinaesthesia, hearing

and smell. It also identifies attributes of cross-modality in sight and hearing, foregrounds the interaction between touch and muscle sensation, and includes a detailed library of spatio and socio-sensory phenomena. Finally, a fifth model presents three matrices to envision what it would be like for visitors to enact appropriation, exploration and privateness, to help maintain a visitor-centred approach to designing and managing. Next, I expanded on the design of the sensory model because whilst models one, two and three drew directly on insights from this research, the development of the sensory model required further analysis and review of relevant literature. The framework was developed in response to research question two and the following chapter concludes this thesis.

Chapter 8: Conclusion.

This chapter concludes this thesis by synthesising insights, describing its main contribution, its limitations and directions for further research.

8.1. Reviewing the aims of the thesis

In the introduction, I raised the question of the need to design public interiors where sensory phenomena contribute to visitors' sense of belonging. I recognised a discrepancy between existing knowledge and practice, correlating this issue with my motivation to conduct research on and design for environments conducive to emotional attachment, and in doing so, contribute to individual and collective wellbeing. More specifically, I identified a lack of explicit methods for the creation of multisensory environments and expressed the intention to synthesise insights from this research into a sensory-emotional framework for design.

I also identified the personalisation of experience as a suitable experiential focus for this thesis because of its known influence on inhabitants' ability to develop deeply and personally felt emotional connections in the home. Drawing on similarities between qualities traditionally associated with the home and those associated with contemporary experiences in public interiors, I argued that the concept of the personalisation of experience could transfer to the environment of the public interior.

Thus, this thesis had two main objectives. First, to investigate how the personalisation of experience in the public interior can contribute to emotional attachment to place. Second, to develop a design framework for the personalisation of experience to enhance the quality of sensory-emotional relations between visitors and public interiors. These objectives were expressed in research question one and research question two.

8.2. Synthesis of insights

This investigation demonstrated, within the boundaries and limitations of the study, that the personalisation of experience in the public interior, the design and management of looseness, enticement and porosity and the enactment of appropriation, exploration and privateness, can generate rewarding sensory phenomena for visitors to develop positive emotional connections

with their environment. As visual, tactual, tactile, kinaesthetic, auditory and olfactive phenomena pertaining to the design, management and enactment of personalisation came to the fore in the study of the public interior of the RFH, their grounding and stimulating contribution to the visitor experience became explicit. First-person perspectives also showed that the cumulative effect of positive emotional connections, as rewarding phenomena motivate visitors to come back, can strengthen the bond between body and environment and contribute to visitors experiencing deeply and personally felt emotional attachment to place. Here, this investigation uncovered the critical role of looseness and appropriation. It revealed that a diversity of people and activities, approach behaviour and positive territoriality are highly dependent on design and management practices that are open, generous and flexible. It showed that visitors' ability to enact a relative autonomy and self-expression can lead to degrees of mental ownership that amplify opportunities for sensory rewards and emotional connections. It substantiated the positive impact of providing visitors with choice and enabling them to move freely.

It also evidenced the convergence of the physical and social environments in the visitor experience. The way the physical environment is designed and managed generate spatio-sensory phenomena. The way visitors engage and interact with the physical environment and with each-other generates socio-sensory phenomena. As spatio and socio-sensory phenomena come together in perception, they activate synergies between the micro-scale of the body and the macro-scale of the public interior highlighting the interdependence between individual and collective experiences. This was reflected specifically through the design and management of sensory flows. This research also showed that variations in spatio and socio-sensory phenomena are contingent on the historical, political, geographical, and economic contexts that define the cultural environment of the public interior. This points to factors impacting the visitor experience that may lie outside the direct control of designers or managers but nonetheless must be accounted for. Personal characteristics constitute another layer of filters impacting the relation between visitors and their environment, and whilst all variables cannot be accessible to designers or managers, this understanding foregrounds the necessity to define the visitor profile and understand their needs. Finally, design experiments substantiated the usability, transferability and value of this research to experiential design practice, and it was possible to bring insights together into a sensory-emotional framework for the design and management of public interiors.

8.3. Contribution of this thesis

The main contributions of this thesis are to the literature on the personalisation of experience in design in response to research question one, and to the disciplinary field of experiential design in response to research question two.

8.3.1. Contribution to the literature on the personalisation of experience in design

Prior to this research, the concept of personalisation was primarily discussed in relation to products or public services, or on occasion spatially such as in the specific context of the home where its contribution to emotional attachment to place influenced this thesis. Extending the concept of the personalisation of experience and its sensory-emotional dimension to the public realm, this study articulates a new perspective for a visitor-centred approach to designing and managing public interiors. It offers an alternative to the more conventional understanding of personalisation as the tailoring of needs of individuals by cultivating openness and mental ownership for visitors to the public interior to connect to their environment sensorially and emotionally. This approach acknowledges the interdependence between design and management practices and the way visitors enact their experience, and this research showed that it can foster a diversity of people and activities and contribute to individual and collective emotional attachment to place. Three pairs of principles, looseness and appropriation, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness, define the personalisation of experience. Each principle is distinguished by specific characteristics. Looseness is characterised by the design and management of openness, generosity and flexibility; appropriation by visitors' ability to enact a relative autonomy and self-expression. Enticement is characterised by the design and management of partly hidden and partly revealed phenomena and by the design and management of the materiality of the environment; exploration by the way in which visitors enact approach behaviour, moving towards phenomena and enacting body-environment interactions. Porosity is characterised by the design and management of solid boundaries, porous edges, and liminal edges; privateness by the way in which visitors enact positive territoriality in the micro-scale of the body from vantage points connecting them to the macro-scale of the environment. Although individually these principles and characteristics are not new, their application to the personalisation of the visitor experience in the public interior and the structure of their relationship is an original contribution to knowledge. The relevance of this contribution was recognised in the

publication of two double-blind peer-reviewed papers in conference proceedings. The first paper discussed the critical role of personalisation in imparting quality to public life (Mace 2020b). The second paper advocated the significance of sensory-emotional synergies between micro and macro scales of experience in public environments (Mace 2022). In sum, this research contributes to the literature on the personalisation of experience in design in two ways. First, by developing a new perspective for personalisation in the public interior to enrich the quality of visitors' individual and collective experiences and in doing so, establish its critical role in promoting emotional attachment to place. Second, by bringing together three pairs of principles and corresponding characteristics to define a practicable model, thus ensuring the applicability of this research to real world contexts.

8.3.2. Contribution to the disciplinary field of experiential design

This thesis bridges phenomenological theory and human-centred design and management practices by structuring the research across three theoretical dimensions: experiential, embodied and emotional. The significance of this approach was recognised in a double-blind peer-review article published in the journal *Société* (Mace 2023). Whilst this paper represents an early iteration of the way these three dimensions are expressed in this study, it nonetheless contributes to the literature on theories pertaining to the relations between the sensing body and its environment and thus aligns with the definition of experiential design outlined in Chapter One. Once established in this thesis, the experiential, embodied and emotional theoretical dimensions then became a catalyst for the development of a methodology for the study of the sensory-emotional conditions that represented the visitor experience of the lifeworld of personalisation in the public interior of the RFH. This then led to the construction of a sensory-emotional framework for the design and management of the visitor experience in public interiors. This framework is an original contribution. It was created to bridge a gap in sensory-emotional practices highlighted in the design literature (Malnar and Vodvarka 2004, Pallasmaa 2005, Caan 2011, Bica 2016, Mallgrave 2018) and its content was successfully tested through design experiments.

The framework contributes a new experiential process structured across four interrelated concepts: experience, reward, connection, attachment. It also contributes an innovative sensory-emotional design process defined by three mutually related components: cultivate, modulate, generate. Each component integrates models and matrices for designers and managers of public environments to draw on, including the model on the personalisation of experience noted above, an emotionality model and a sensory model. The emotionality model

supports the modulation of primary grounding and stimulating emotional qualities that constitute the emotional tone of an environment. The sensory model is designed to support the introduction of rewarding sensory phenomena in the environment. These are unique to this research. The sensory model is also more detailed than existing versions available in the design literature. Its distinctiveness lies in its ability to bring together spatio and socio sensory phenomena and in the way it integrates three important features of sensory perception. The first is that perception is always multisensory, and a circular design draws attention to the collaboration of the senses. The second is that perception is intermodal. The model highlights how the senses can interact by focusing on the specific context of touch and muscle sensation. The third is that perception is cross-modal. This is expressed by placing a decisive emphasis on the way phenomena associated with one sensory modality can be perceived through another. The sensory model also introduces qualitative value scales (such as the degree of roughness or smoothness of a surface) to support the evaluation of the rewarding potential of sensory phenomena. Therefore, this framework articulates for the first time an explicit path for designers and managers to follow, to imagine or re-imagine everyday experiences by amplifying the role of personalisation, sensing and emotionality in the creation of welcoming and sustaining public interiors. It contributes an approach to designing that cultivates sensory-emotional connectedness and it is envisaged that this contribution could extend beyond the context of the public interior into the public realm more broadly.

8.4. Limitations of this thesis

This research focused on positive experiences to be able to limit the investigation to the contribution of sensory rewards to visitors' ability to connect emotionally with the environment of the public interior. Following previous research focusing on emotional disconnection and the realisation that its contribution to design knowledge was insufficient, I understood that to develop a framework that can help designers connect people and environment sensorially and emotionally, I needed to frame this research as a study of the conditions for success. Nonetheless, barriers and tensions were explored, and bias were minimised by considering how these could also impact the visitor experience in the specific context of the principles examined in this study. Therefore, the focus on positive experiences is not an attempt to propose an unrealistic ideal state where all negative experiences have been banished. It is instead concerned with the need to identify the conditions that enable visitors to reach a state of sustained connectedness with the environment of the public interior.

To constrain the scope of investigation to the personalisation of experience in the public interior, the RFH as a cultural institution was not widely discussed, even though events regularly take place in the auditorium and in the main foyer. Yet, phenomena related to cultural events can intertwine with those of the public interior and maintaining focus exclusively on the experience of the public interior was not always possible. Two interviewees for instance reminisced on experiences in the auditorium. Another two also discussed their experience of free events in the foyer. Whilst these accounts were explicit and could easily be identified, this study acknowledges that they also contributed to interviewees' emotional attachment to the RFH. This means that throughout this research, there were situations in which the boundaries between the experience of cultural events, especially free events in the public space of the foyer, and that of the public interior of the RFH became blurred. Such occurrences influenced my experience as a researcher in the case study and that of recollected experiences from visitor interviewees. This exemplifies the complexity of the flow of experience and acts as a reminder that experience has an unavoidable wholeness and that it is a necessary and natural part of this qualitative research. Nonetheless, breaking down this wholeness into manageable situations helped maintain its focus.

A small sample of participants contributed to the interviews. This included one key staff member at the RFH and nine visitors. This was deemed sufficient because this is not a study about the public interior of the RFH but about the contribution of the personalisation of experience to emotional attachment to place. Accordingly, this research was not built from the ground up. Instead, my approach was to develop a definition of the personalisation of experience and corresponding principles specific to the public interior through the literature review to define the boundaries of this research. Insights from the literature provided a structure for the case study, which then substantiated and added new insights, whilst the role of the interviews was to triangulate these with first-person perspectives. The staff member selected for the interview was identified as the most knowledgeable and thus most suitable, and the outcome of the interview corroborated this understanding. The visitors interviewed represented a segment of population and I was careful to include participants with a range of personal characteristics within the requirements of purposeful sampling. However, even though visitors could articulate their experience of situations and emotional responses with relative ease, some struggled to describe specific sensory phenomena. These could be interpreted in the analysis of the interviews, but with additional time and resources, other methods such as conducting sensory journeys with visitors on the site of the public interior could yield more precise information into their perception of rewarding sensory phenomena.

To restrict interviews to the scope of investigation, elicitation images from the case study were used to prompt the recollection of mental images in interviewees and guide the discussions. This proved successful and addressed the issue of some visitors not being able to travel to the RFH for their interview since images could easily be shared online. Nonetheless, images are visual tools and although interviewees recalled experiences related to touch, kinaesthesia and hearing, when more time is available and all interviewees can meet in person, other methods intended to externalise stories of embodied perception and corresponding emotional qualities could be employed further. For example, a creative toolkit may be used to enable participants to delve deeper into their experience.

The COVID-19 pandemic happened during this research and the RFH was closed for two years. Fortunately, I had completed the site research for the case study when this occurred, and as a part-time candidate, I was able to use the time to refine the literature review, complete the case study analysis and prepare for the interviews. Whilst the RFH reopened as soon as it was safe to do so, opening hours on Mondays and Tuesdays were reduced and some of the spaces on the upper levels of the building were (and still are at the time of writing) closed to the public during the day. This is due to financial difficulties related to the closure of the RFH during the pandemic although the staff interview revealed that the intention is for the RFH to go back to pre-pandemic opening hours and accessibility. These changes did not directly impact this research since the visitor interviews that took place post-covid explored mental images, but nonetheless provided an acute reminder of how easily and how quickly economic constraints can impact the visitor experience.

The COVID-19 pandemic also raised questions about touch, specifically about the perceived safety of touching surfaces. This is a topic that I considered during the pandemic and contributed a talk titled 'Touch' to the online 24H Worldwide Design Conversation organised by the Polimi System Design community at Politecnico di Milano (Mace 2020a). In this talk, I emphasised the experiential significance of the tactile properties of materials. I also highlighted that the perception of phenomena related to touch does not simply occur through direct skin contact but also through vision. Post-pandemic anecdotal observations in the public interior of the RFH suggest that issues of safety linked to touching surfaces do not appear to be a great concern for visitors whose behaviour has not dramatically changed. Nonetheless, the effective management of safety is essential and providing anti-bacterial gel (as other places do) rather than diminishing opportunities for tactual and tactile phenomena to enrich the emergence of intimate connections between body and environment is considered here to be a better option for visitors.

8.5. Further research

This research highlights the centrality of looseness and appropriation in developing a visitor-centred culture. These principles were identified as critical to visitors' ability to develop positive emotional connections, noted for their capacity to bridge design and management practices, and for the way they can foster a diversity of people and activities. This opens up another research space, one that expands on Franck and Stevens' (2006) study and builds on this thesis by investigating the impact and benefits of looseness and appropriation across a broader spectrum of public interiors and situations.

The sensory-emotional framework provides the foundation for the development of new practice-oriented activities to test its design with more precision than the experiments synthesised in Chapter Seven could provide. Insights from these activities could then contribute to the creation of a toolkit for experiential design. Furthermore, whilst the role of the framework in supporting designers and managers is evidenced in this thesis, it could also develop into a guide for researchers or even for those conducting post-occupancy evaluations, expanding its outreach beyond the original boundaries of this study. For instance, it is possible for a research-centred version of this framework to contribute to the expansion of the field of anthropological sensory studies into spatial contexts initiated by Howes (2013), by providing an ethnographic-style methodology to document how different communities sensorially and emotionally experience their environment. In addition, I am a member of the Placemaking Research Group at Politecnico di Milano and during a meeting in June 2024, it was observed that those involved in the creation of public spaces either privilege the "hard" physical space or the "softer" space of social interactions as a starting point for design, potentially placing the physical and the social in a dualistic mode. This framework offers an alternative by contributing an approach to designing that brings space and people together into one integrated process and this could be explored further in the context of placemaking.

The framework developed in this study is an open framework and presents a starting point for adjustments to be made to reflect the needs of a more diverse population, considering for instance neurodiversity, disability, or different age groups. In the current framework, sight dominates the sensory model but additional research with specific groups could generate alternative models. For example, people who are blind or partially sighted would likely benefit from a model with less or a different emphasis on sight and more information on hearing and smell. This understanding came to the fore when, in February 2023, I worked with academic

colleagues at Politecnico di Milano and Piazza Grace, a day care centre for people with Alzheimer's in Milan, Italy, to develop and implement a week-long research project on the relation between sensing and emotional responses (Mace et al. 2023). The research question asked: how can young designers better understand the sensory world of elderly people with dementia? Although the project was not part of this thesis, it highlighted the potential of adapting this framework to the specific needs of specialist communities.

8.6. Final remarks

This research provides a distinct definition of the personalisation of experience for the public interior and succeeded in developing a sensory-emotional framework for experiential design. It reveals the primacy of looseness and that of the visitor agency in designing for emotional connectedness and wellbeing. This foregrounds the need for designers and managers to cultivate a non-linear, multidirectional approach exemplified here by the interdependence between 'personalisation for' and 'personalisation by', recognising that people (the public, visitors, etc) are also experts in their own experience. This study also evidences how visitors can experience positive connections from embodied experiences and related recollections of mental images, and tenders that emotional attachment to place may require the cumulative effect of experiences across a longer period of time to develop.

Recent academic discourses show that the concerns that motivated this research about the quality of experience in the public realm are still highly pertinent. Masbouni and Petitjean (2021) for instance argue for an alternative to generic public spaces people cannot emotionally engage with. They advocate a city that invites exploration, cultivates the unexpected and stimulates imagination alongside tranquillity and familiarity to contribute to collective wellbeing. A renewed interest in design for placemaking reflects this position with Meroni et al. (2024) highlighting the need for processes that can help us reshape the public realm to transform spaces into places people actually want to be in. These perspectives emphasise the important role of intangible dimensions such as those investigated in this research, but they are concerned with the macro-culture of the city whilst this study presents a related yet unique approach for the micro-culture of the public interior. Brand (2023, p. 21) also identifies a threat that further substantiates the possibly urgent need for a sensory-emotional framework for experiential design. He argues that a dependence of architecture on the production and reproduction of images prioritises style over embodied experiences. I take the view that this problem encroaches into spatial practices more broadly and could be further exacerbated by

the emergence of artificial intelligence making image production even easier. In this context, designers could miss out embodied processes entirely. This practice-led study constitutes an antidote to image-centred design by promoting body-experience-centred design. It foregrounds the value of the “nonquantifiable elements of a design that endow the human habitat with life, vitality, decorum, and pleasing atmospheric qualities” (Mallgrave 2018, p. 92) to the creation of public environments visitors can engage with sensorially and emotionally to inhabit and flourish individually and collectively. This matters greatly because it supports the notion that public spaces can, as Varna (2011) expounds, be the locus of a community. Design is not simply about problem solving, it is also about world building (Lobenstine et al. 2020) and this research deepens our understanding of qualitative practices at the intersection of physical space and lived experiences. It can contribute to the creation of public environments that are inclusive, welcoming and sustaining but also stimulating, enjoyable and fun, making daily life more rewarding and connected.

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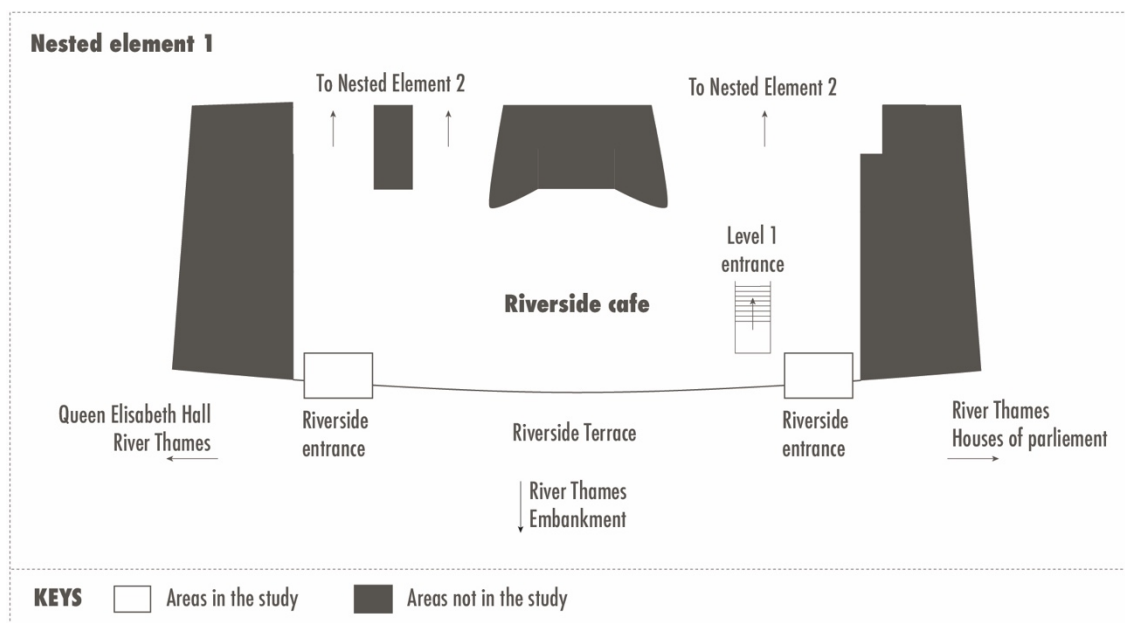
Appendices

Appendix 1: Environmental selection in Chapter Four.

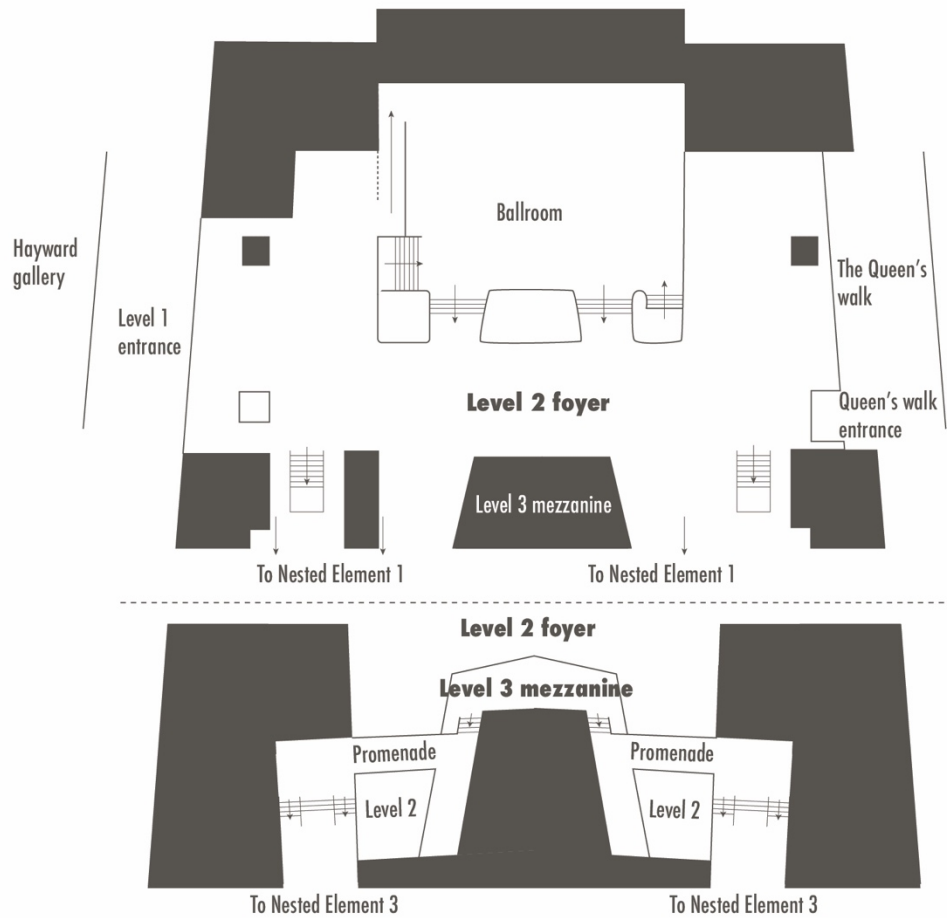
This is discussed specifically in 4.2.5.

To visualise the spatial boundaries of each of the three nested elements that constitute the environmental selection for this study, the process draws on iconographic mapping principles originally established in 1748 by Giovanni Battista Nolli and still current today. Nolli used contrasting black and white rendering to show the relationships between solid and void in cities, using black for solid buildings (private spaces) and white for empty space (public spaces).

Here, dark grey is used instead of black to delineate areas that are not part of the study and white is used for areas that are included in this study, thus defining the exact boundaries of each of the three nested elements. Grey is preferred to black because the scale of the interior is much smaller than that of the city in Nolli's original maps and thus, the plan view diagram in this study doesn't require as much contrast.

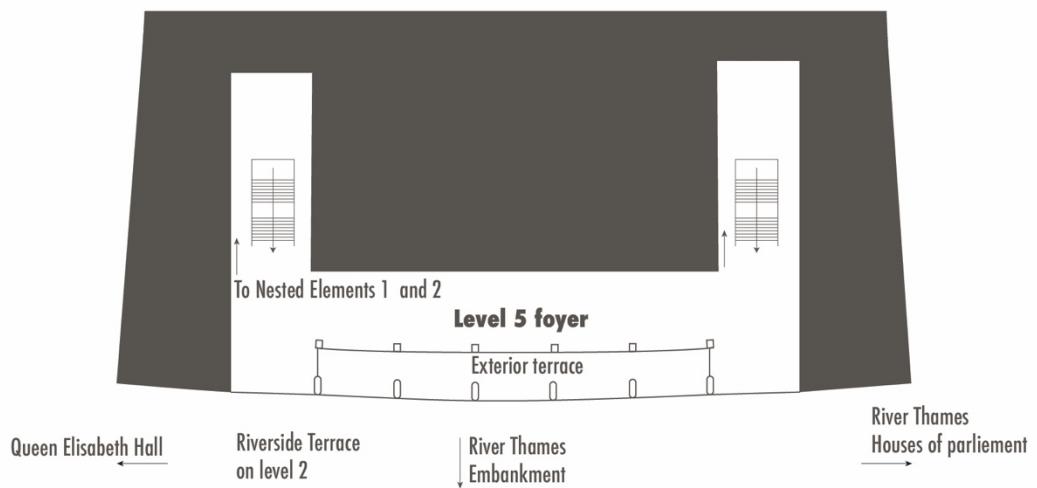


Nested element 2



KEYS □ Areas in the study ■ Areas not in the study

Nested element 3

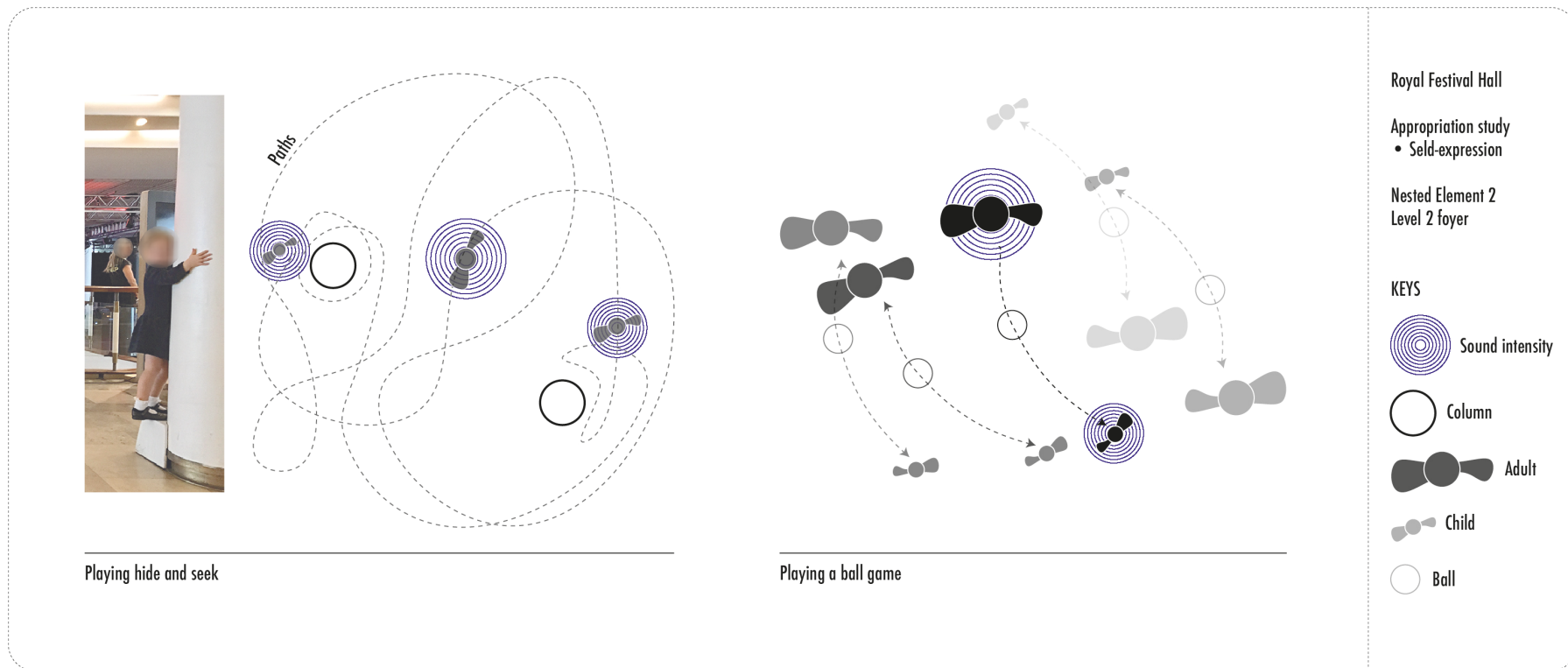


KEYS □ Areas in the study ■ Areas not in the study

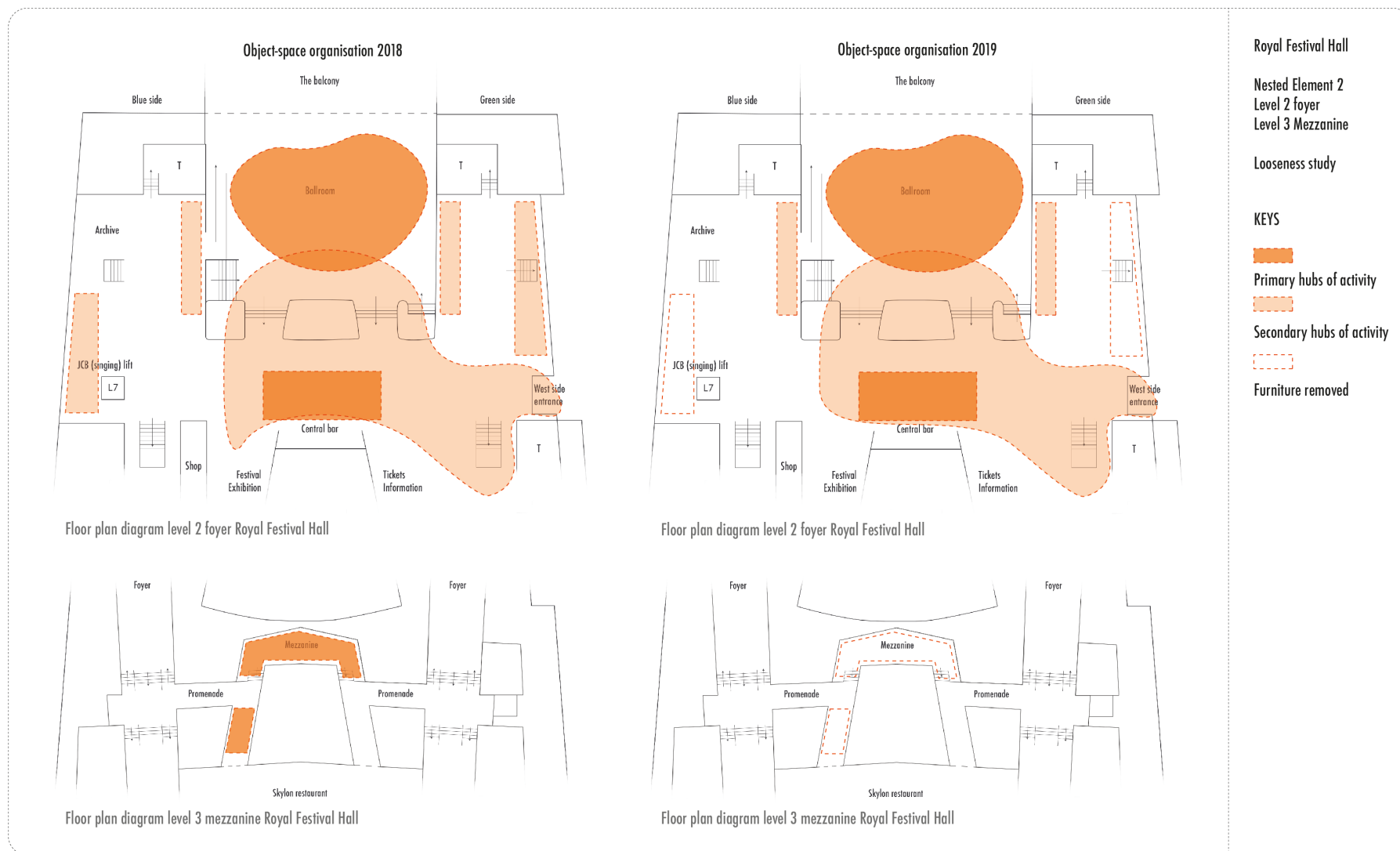
Appendix 2: Fieldwork thematic analysis samples for Chapter Five.

This appendix includes samples from the first iteration of the case study analysis.

It used visualisation techniques to organise the site documentation and identify situations pertaining to appropriation and looseness, enticement and exploration, and porosity and privateness. This is discussed specifically in 5.3.



Sample from the thematic visualisation of appropriation and looseness



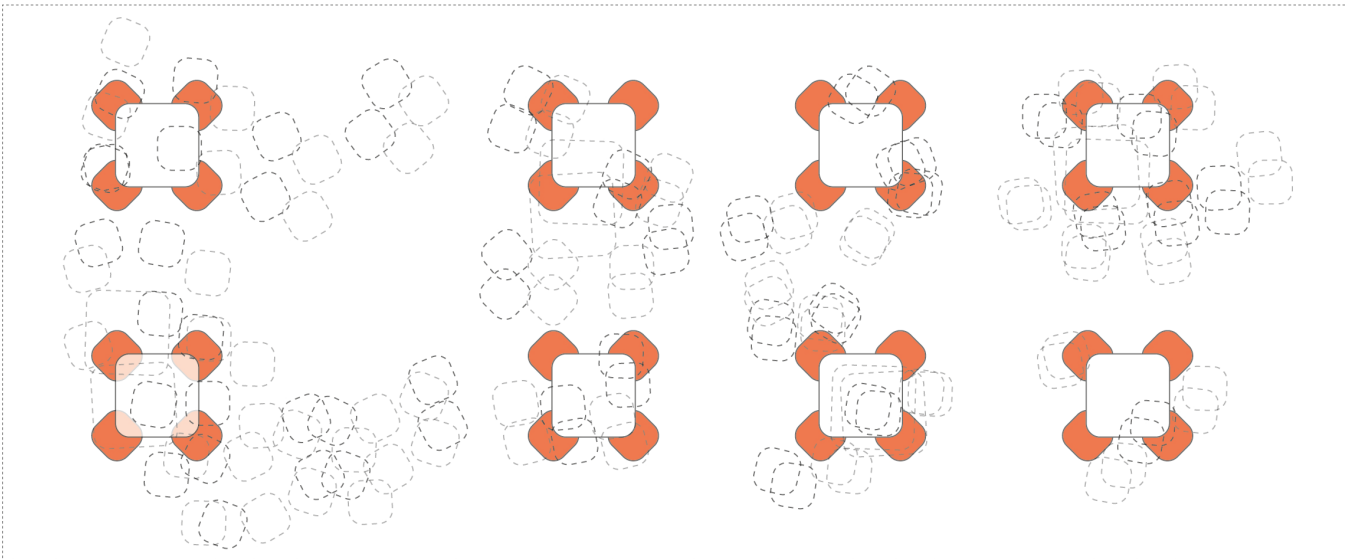
Sample from the thematic visualisation of appropriation and looseness



Royal Festival Hall

Nested Element 2
Level 3 gallery

Observations
Looseness study

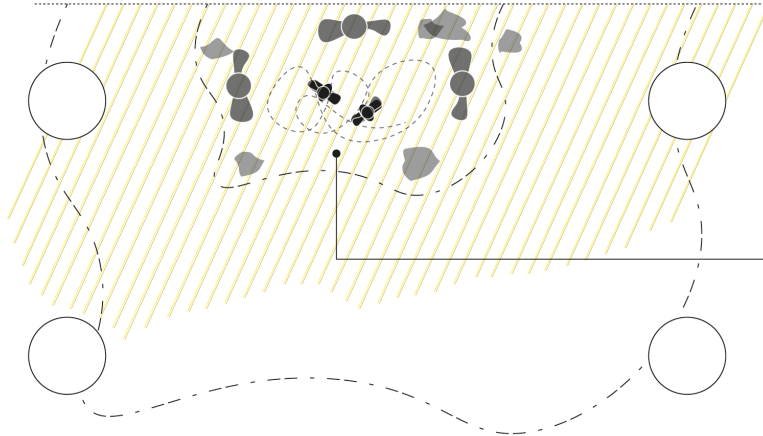


Sample from the thematic visualisation of appropriation and looseness



Loose belongings

Glass wall



Visitors sitting on the floor

Royal Festival Hall

Nested Element 3
Level 5 foyer

Nested element 2
Level 2 foyer

Appropriation study
• Relative autonomy

KEYS

Porous edges (borders)

Liminal edges (transitions)

○ Column

Light

Adult

Toddler

Belongings:
clothes, bags, shoes

Movement

Sample from the thematic visualisation of appropriation and looseness



Visitors drawing caricatures for other visitors in the cafe on Level 2 (nested element 1)



Visitors rehearsing a dance practice in the Level 5 foyer (nested element 3)



Visitors playing the board game they brought along in the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2)



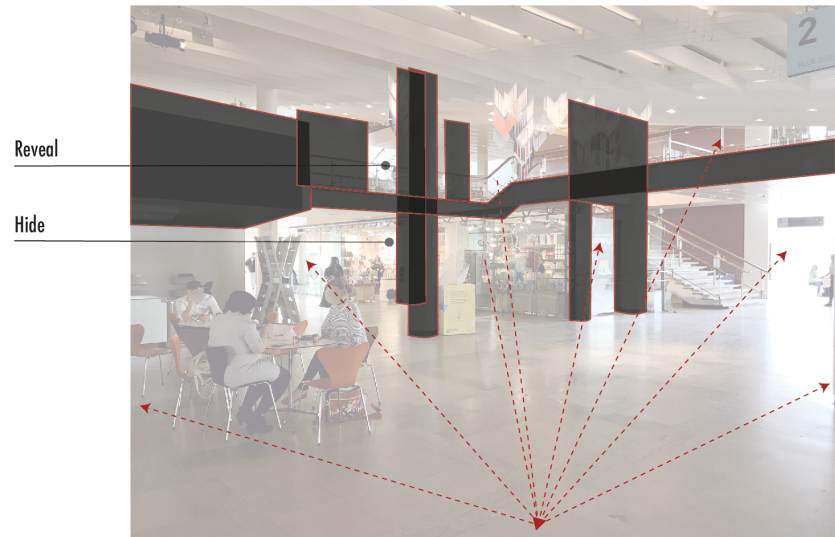
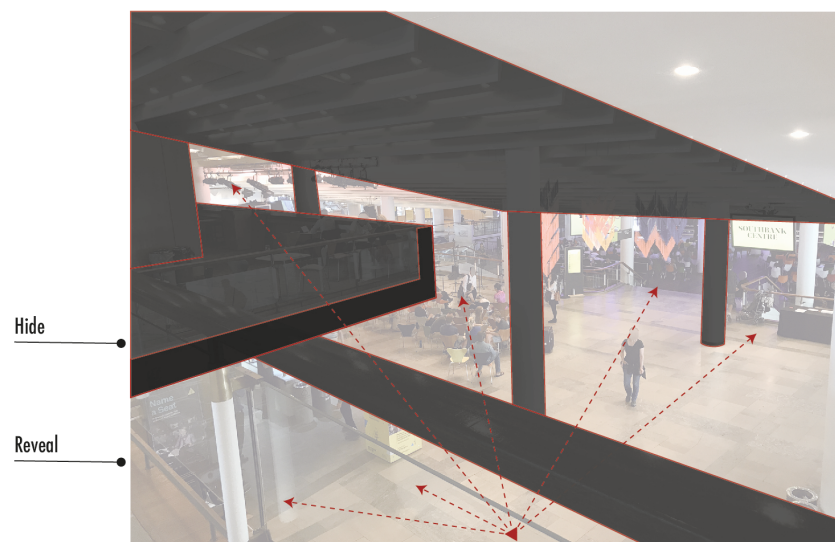
Visitors setting up an impromptu fashion shoot in the Level 2 foyer (nested element 2)

Royal Festival Hall

Appropriation study

- Self-expression

Sample from the thematic visualisation of appropriation and looseness



Royal Festival Hall

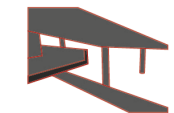
Nested Element 2
Level 2 foyer

Exploration study

Enticement

KEYS

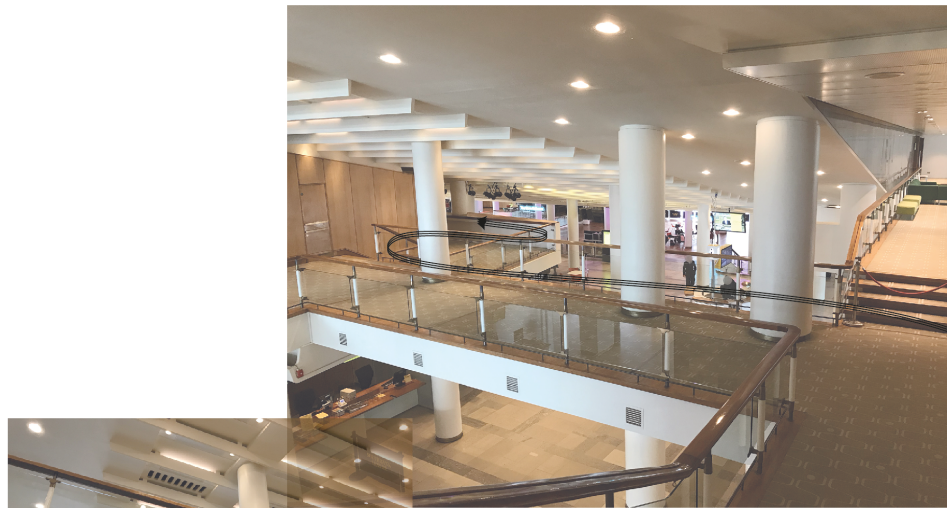
Three-dimensional
overlapping elements



Visual open flows



Sample from the thematic visualisation of enticement and exploration



Looking up from level 2



Promenade level 5 foyer (nested element 3)

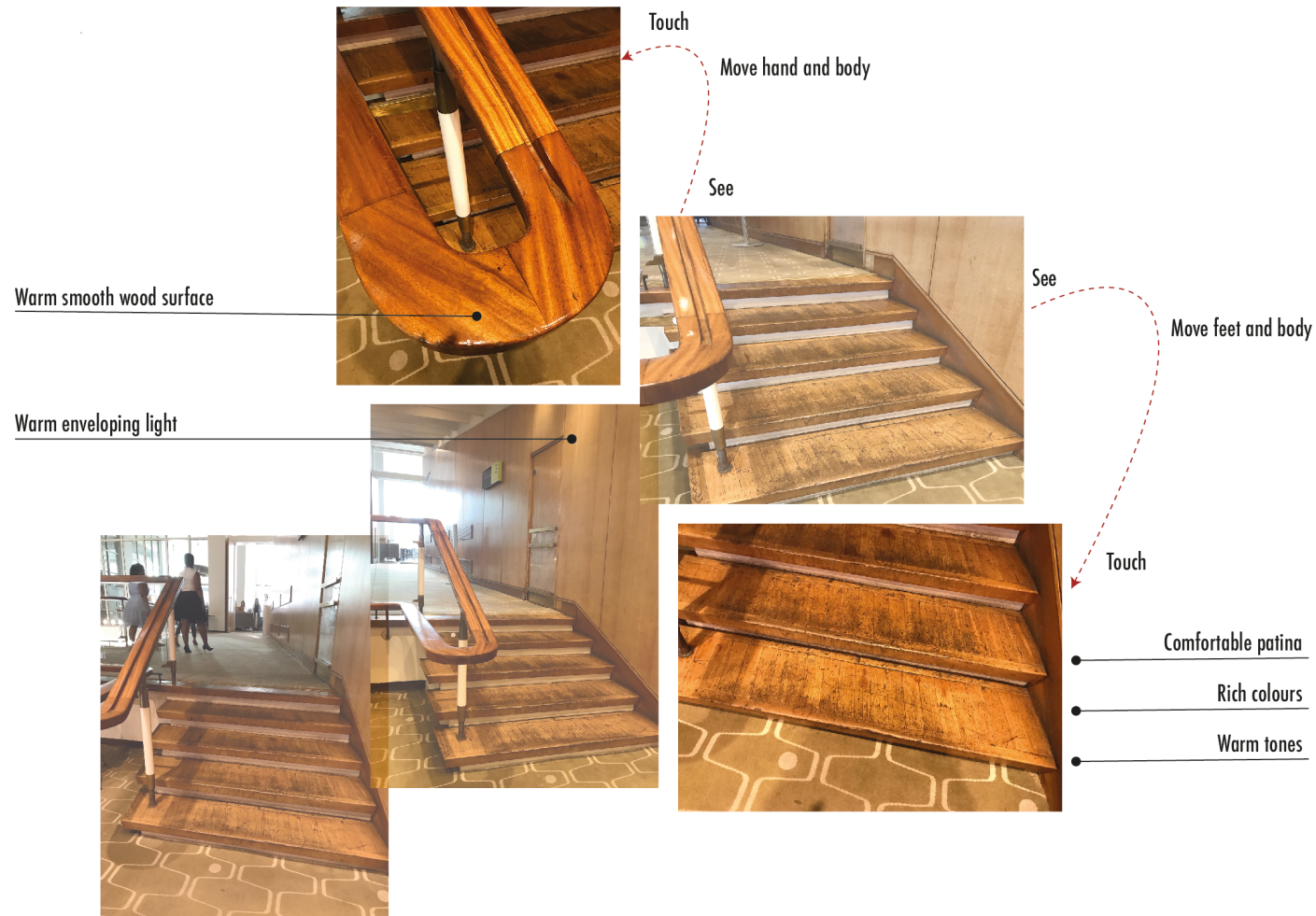


Royal Festival Hall

Nested Element 2
Enticement study
Level 3 promenades

Overlapping 3D elements
Vistas
Sight lines
Movement

Sample from the thematic visualisation of enticement and exploration

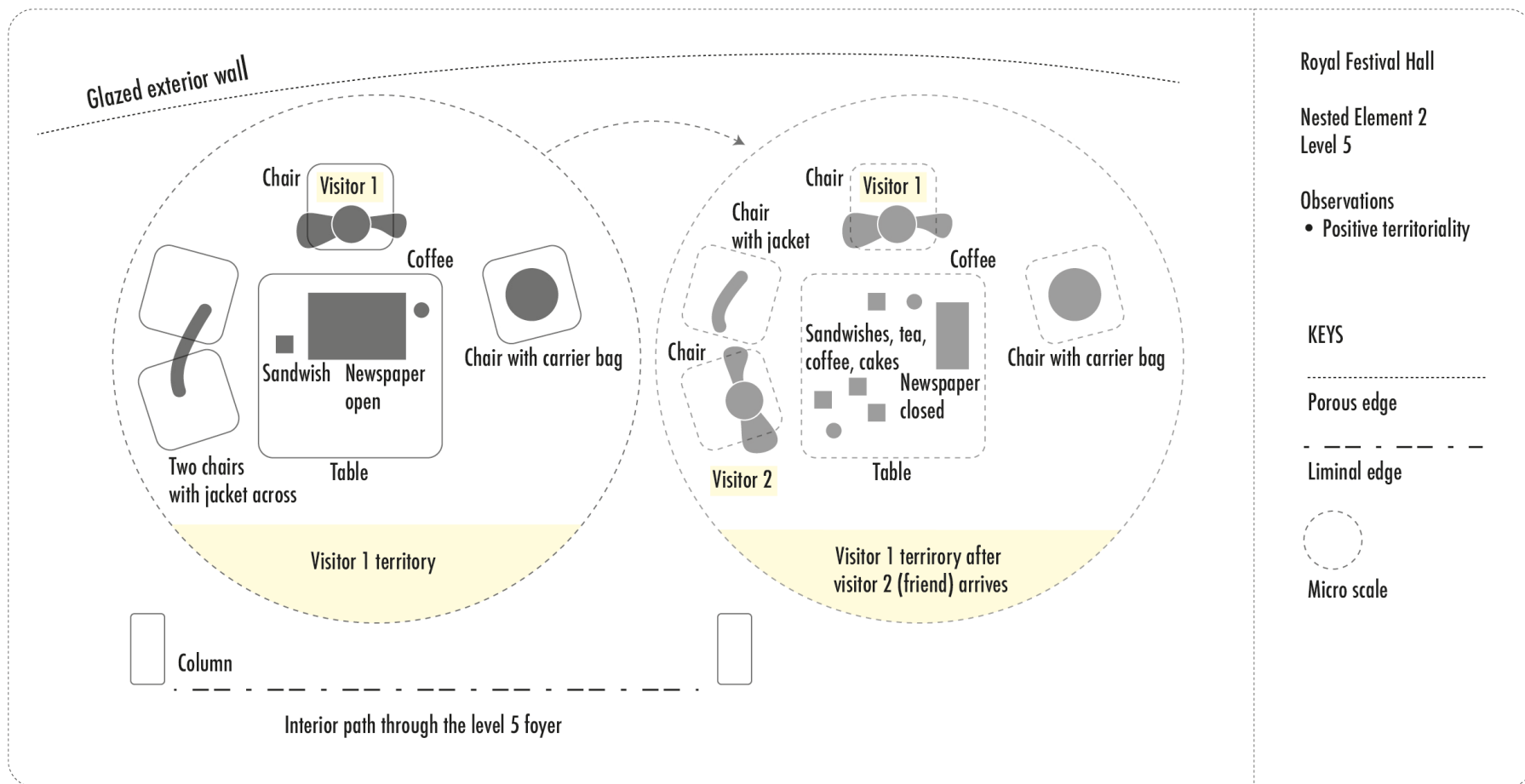


Royal Festival Hall

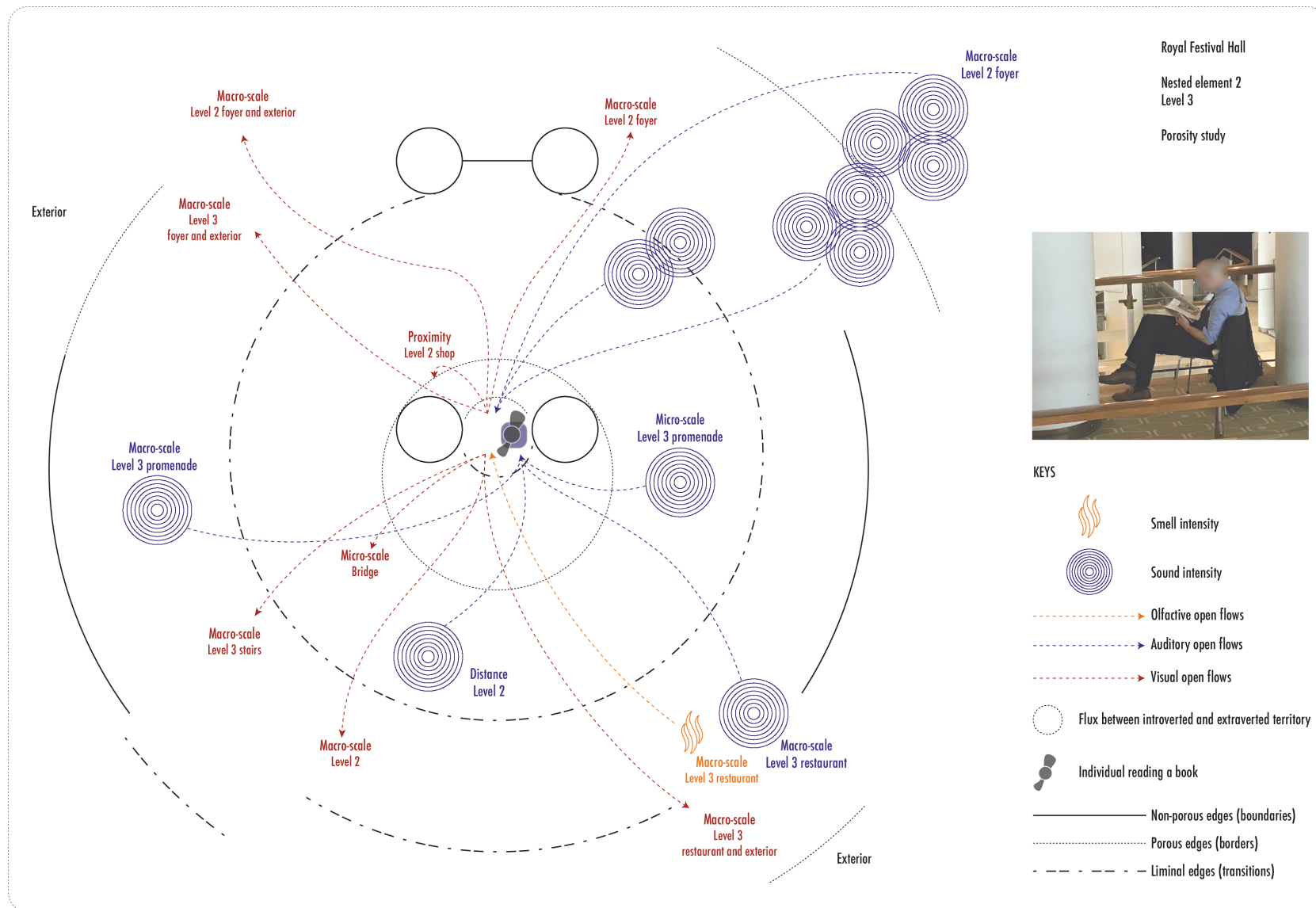
Nested Element 2
Level 3 promenade

Reflexive study
Exploration-Enticement
• Materiality

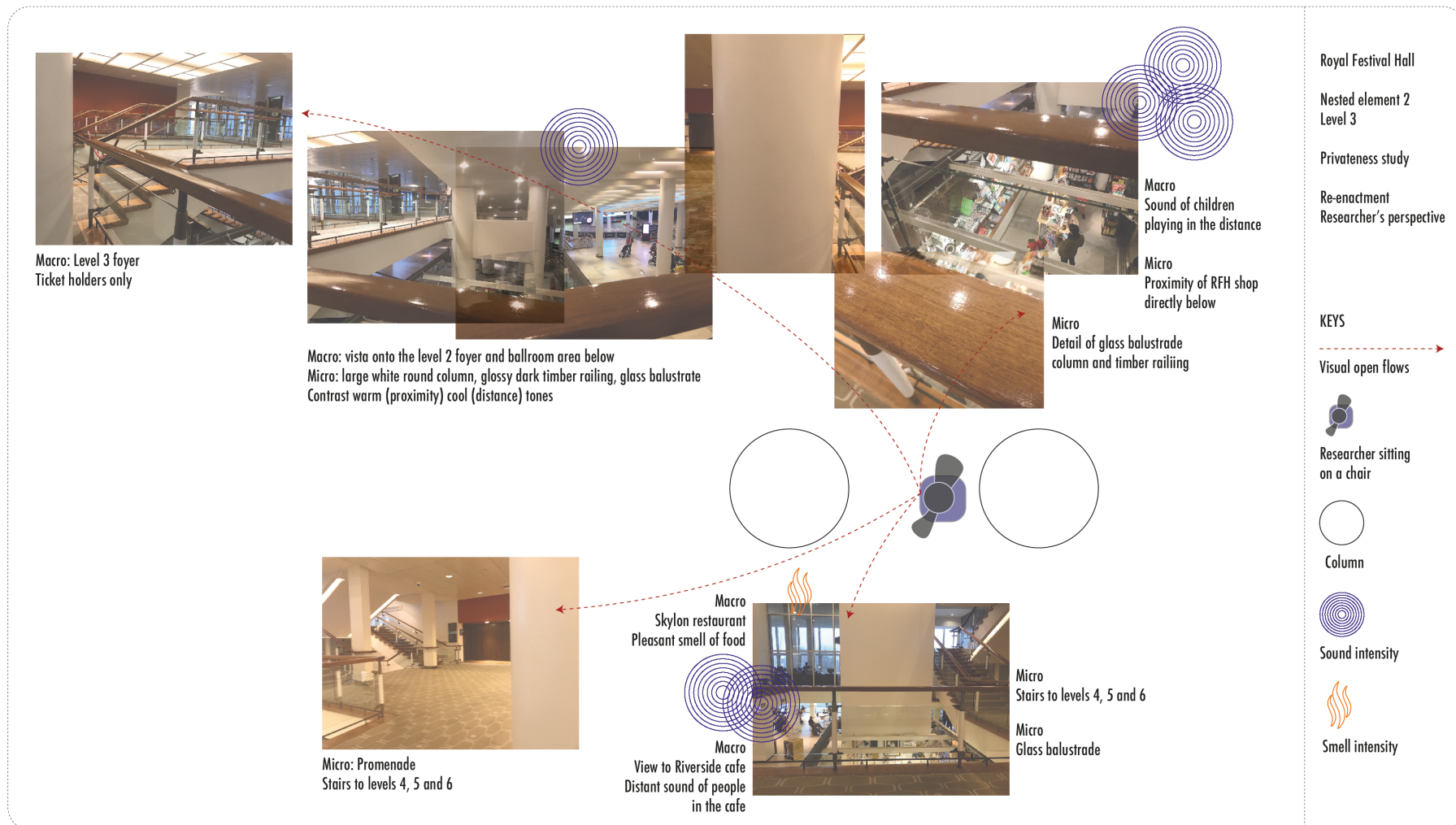
Sample from the thematic visualisation of enticement and exploration



Sample from the thematic visualisation of porosity and privateness



Sample from the thematic visualisation of porosity and privateness



Sample from the thematic visualisation of porosity and privateness



Exterior vista

Macro scale

Micro-scale



Macro scale

Micro scale



Royal Festival Hall

Nested Element 2
Level 2 foyer

Privateness study

Sample from the thematic visualisation of porosity and privateness

Appendix 3: Case study analysis samples for Chapter Five

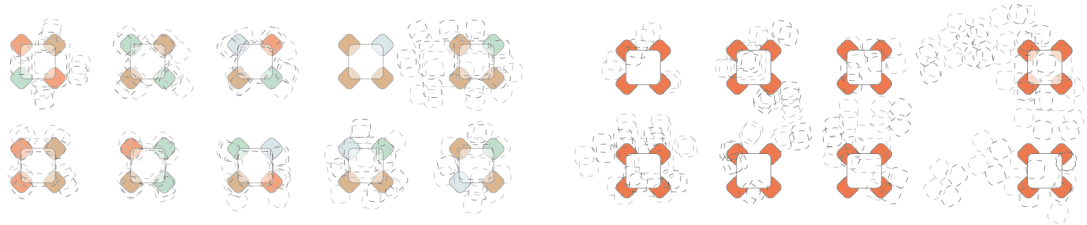
This Appendix showcases samples from the twenty situations pertaining to the personalisation of experience in the public interior of the RFH examined in this research. They are included here because they show what I mean by situation in this study. These samples are from a later stage of the case study analytical process although this is still a representation of the analysis at an interim position. Following on from this, insights were consolidated into a table structured by the analytical model discussed in 5.3. The full analysis is discussed in 5.4.

Appropriation and looseness

Situation type 1: Riverside Terrace Cafe (nested elements 1), Level 2 Foyer (nested element 2)

It is 10 o'clock in the morning, the building has just opened, the space is empty, and perfectly aligned and symmetrical rows of tables and chairs await visitors. The layout is ordered but the variety of coloured chairs suggests informality. I walk in and sit down. A few people arrive and sit in the café, meeting friends, drinking coffee, making use of the space and furniture. It is not very busy at first and throughout the morning the layout is barely disturbed. Then, at lunch time, the space becomes very busy, animated with the sound of conversations and people moving furniture, re-arranging the layout to suit their needs. Someone pushes a couple of chairs away from a table to make room for a pushchair. Two visitors move their chairs to sit side by side to face the window rather than facing each other across the table. A large group moves tables and chairs so they can sit together. Belongings, jackets, bags, scarves, hang loosely from furniture. By the afternoon, the space has become less ordered, more informal. A different morning in the main Foyer. Here, tables and chairs are neatly laid out in front of the bar. The red of the chairs provides a cheerful note. The space is still empty when I sit down at one of the tables, the shutters of the bar are closed. The foyer becomes progressively busier and by the end of the morning the furniture layout has lost its symmetry and order. Chairs are now facing in different directions. Bags and clothing hang loosely from chairs. Visitors' belongings are scattered across tables. Occasionally, staff comes in to tidy up a little, pushing back chairs closer to tables but without much conviction. By the afternoon, the space is very busy, and people are clustered around the tables in the area in front of the bar. Some are sitting while others are standing. Conversations are lively and animated. In the ballroom opposite, order has vanished. Furniture and belongings are arranged randomly, bags are scattered across the floor

and ignoring the furniture provided, some people with young children choose to sit on the floor to play.



Appropriation	Visitors enact a relative autonomy as they identify possibilities in the environment.	
Emotional qualities	Consequential sense-making	Communicated sense-making
The enactment of appropriation feels	Comfortable, satisfying	Convivial, lively, idiosyncratic
Emotional connection	Grounding	Stimulating
Sensory rewards	Active touch, kinaesthetic	Visual, kinaesthetic/auditory
Enactment: engagement and activities	- Moving furniture. - Sitting down (chairs or floor)/standing /leaning (froward or back).	- Seeing the irregular rhythm of objects and people. - Hearing animated conversations/laughter.
Looseness	The design and management of choice and tolerance for a diversity of activities.	
Design and management practices	- Provision of different spaces and moveable furniture (choice). - Tolerance for a variety of activities (diversity).	
Social contagion	Looseness cultivates appropriation and in turn appropriation cultivates looseness.	
Experiential (feedback) loop	Visitor engagement and the diversity of activities increase exponentially as more visitors enact appropriation.	
Barriers	Whilst visitors can exercise a relative autonomy, appropriation takes places within a specific cultural context bound by house rules. These may tolerate certain types of appropriation but not all. This appropriation is regulated and relative.	

Situation type 1 – appropriation and looseness

Situation type 2: Level 3 promenade (nested element 2)

		
2017-2018: loose space		→ 2019: tight space
Appropriation	Visitors enact a relative autonomy as they identify possibilities in the environment.	
Emotional qualities The enactment of appropriation feels <i>Emotional connection</i>	Consequential sense-making ● Comfortable, relaxing Grounding	Communicated sense-making ● Relaxing, calming Grounding
Sensory rewards	Active touch, kinaesthetic	Visual, haptic sight, kinaesthetic/auditory
Enactment: engagement and activities	• Relaxing the body on armchairs and sofas. • Touching the soft upholstery. • Leaning forward on furniture. • Touching the soft carpet underfoot.	• Seeing others lounging and relaxing. • Hearing the soft murmur of conversations.
Looseness Design and management practices	The design and management of choice and tolerance for a diversity of activities. • Provision of a comfortable space, materials, furniture and lighting (choice). • Moveable and eclectic furniture (choice). • Tolerance of visitors lounging and disrupting (diversity).	
Social contagion Experiential (feedback) loop	Looseness cultivates appropriation and in turn appropriation cultivates looseness. • The way visitors enact appropriation brings a degree of informality to the location and incites other visitors to appropriate the space.	
Barriers In 2019, the furniture was replaced with low stool, all identical and significantly less comfortable. The stools were placed close to the entrance of the Skylon restaurant indicating that this area is not for public use. Indeed, visitors stopped using this location.		

Situation type 2 – appropriation and looseness

Throughout 2017 and 2018, a section of the level 3 promenade adjacent to one of the entrances to the Skylon restaurant was generously furnished with an eclectic range of sofas, armchairs and low tables, transforming the space into an informal intimate lounge. The narrow space overlooked level 2 but was also secluded from the main foyer and therefore quieter. The provision of furniture created a new space for visitors and the selection of armchairs and sofas upholstered with fabric prioritised visitors' comfort. The perception of comfort was further enhanced by the low sloping ceiling, indirect lighting, wood panelling and carpet. Although small, this location was very popular and despite the richness of the sofas, the eclectic selection communicated a degree of informality reflected in the way visitors occupied the

space. They would recline on their seat, legs extended in front of them, or lean forward, or even lie back on the sofa, leaving their bags on the floor.

Situation type 3: Level 3 promenade (nested element 2) and Level 5 Foyer (nested element 3)



House rules: no sitting on the floor, no sleeping, no feet on furniture

Appropriation	Visitors enact a relative autonomy as they identify possibilities in the environment.	
Emotional qualities	Consequential sense-making	Communicated sense-making
The enactment of appropriation feels	Comfortable, relaxing	Relaxing, calming
<i>Emotional connection</i>	<i>Grounding</i>	<i>Grounding</i>
Sensory reward	Active touch, kinaesthetic	Sight: visual, haptic sight, kinaesthetic/auditory
Enactment: engagement and activities	- Relaxing the body on the floor and sofas. - Touching the soft upholstery or carpet. - Leaning cross-legged or back on furniture or against the wall.	- Seeing others lounging and relaxing. - Hearing the soft murmur of conversations. - Seeing the warmth of materials, light and soft surfaces.
Looseness	The design and management of choice and tolerance for a diversity of activities.	
Design and management practices	- Provision of a variety of comfortable spaces, materials, furniture and light conditions (choice). - Tolerance for informal behaviour and visitors disrupting house rules (diversity).	
Social contagion	Looseness cultivates appropriation and in turn appropriation cultivates looseness.	
Experiential (feedback) loop	The way visitors enact appropriation brings a degree of informality to the location and incites other visitors to appropriate the space. Visitors tolerate minor disruptions by other visitors.	
Barriers	Should security or staff implement the rules to the letter, it is possible that this type of informal behaviour would not occur.	

Situation type 3 – appropriation and looseness

Four situations are brought together to illustrate how visitors can carry out minor transgressions in house rules described on the Southbank website (house rules are detailed in Appendix 4). These situations centre on three of these rules because observations show that they are the rules that are most often contravened.

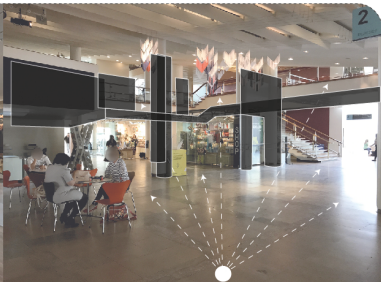
These rules are:

- “For the comfort of all visitors, sleeping is not permitted in our foyer spaces.”
- “All visitors are asked to sit on a seat. Sitting on the floor is not permitted. We have increased the amount of furniture in the building and there are plenty of seats for all.”
- “Shoes must also be worn at all times whilst inside our buildings, and please don’t put your feet on our new furniture, so that they can stay clean and undamaged for everyone.”

In situation A, a visitor sits on the steps of the staircase going up to Level 4, lower arms resting on his legs, leaning forward slightly reading or perhaps browsing on his phone. In situation B, two young women and three children sit on the floor near the entrance to the Level 5 Foyer. The women are chatting, their belongings, plastic bags, clothes and shoes, are scattered around them, and one of them is resting her back against the wall. Two of the children are playing quietly, one is reading. The scene is a little messy and perhaps unusual for an interior space. In situation C, a woman has removed her shoes and is sitting cross-legged on a sofa, looking at her phone. In situations A and B, visitors sit on the floor and in situations B and C, some of them have removed their shoes. Although the house rules clearly stipulate that sitting on the floor and removing shoes is not allowed these examples are not uncommon, which suggests that these minor transgressions are nonetheless tolerated. In situation D, a visitor is seen sleeping on the terrace. He is sitting on a chair, the back of his head resting on a column. Other visitors do not seem to mind although the house rule clearly states that for the comfort of all visitors, sleeping is not allowed. There are no security guards or staff in the Foyer, so he is not disturbed. On a different occasion however, another visitor was observed with his eyes closed while sitting on a sofa in the Level 5 Foyer and a security guard passing by did go to him to tell him that sleeping was not allowed. The approach was gentle but firm. Unlike situations A, B and C, situation D is uncommon. However, the example in situation D serves to highlight that even though it may not be tolerated by the management of the RFH, it appears to be tolerated by visitors. Observations suggest that visitors may be unaware of specific house rules and as such do not generally contravene house rules intentionally.

Exploration and enticement

Situation type 1: Level 2 Foyer (nested element 2)

		
Approach behaviour Pause Slow rhythm Pause		
Exploration	Visitors enact modes of approach behaviour characterised by movement towards and body-environment interactions.	
Emotional qualities	Consequential sense-making	Communicated sense-making
	The enactment of exploration feels Emotional connection	Enjoyable, pleasurable Stimulating
Sensory rewards	Kinaesthetic, olfactory	Visual, haptic sight, auditory
Enactment: engagement and activities	• Meandering slowly through the interior. • Pausing, looking around, listening. • Inhaling the familiar smell of the interior.	• Being guided by sight lines, light, sounds.
Enticement	The design and management of partly hidden/partly revealed phenomena and the materiality of the environment arouse curiosity and anticipation.	
Design and management practices	• The glass windows, open door, open plan layout, sight lines, the overlapping horizontal and vertical three-dimensional elements in the spatial composition (hide/reveal). • The lighting creates emphasis and rhythm (materiality). • The smell of the interior (materiality).	
Barriers	No barriers to exploration were identified although visitors ability to explore depends on accessibility.	

Situation type 1 – exploration and enticement

I arrive at the entrance on the west side of the building. I catch a glimpse of the familiar interior through the large glass windows, but I can't see through clearly due to reflections on the glass partly hiding the interior. The door is open, I approach with anticipation. As I walk in, the familiar smell of the interior greets me. It's a subtle but distinctive smell specific to the RFH. It is familiar and welcoming. A reception desk directly in front of me greets me in brightly lit letters, their yellow colour creating a cheerful reflection on the floor surface. My eyes follow the perspective of the interior punctuated by two identical rows of columns on either side. The sight lines created by the columns and the animated sound of people in the distance invite me to move forward. I walk slowly, taking the time to look around me and listen. Halfway through

the foyer, I pause again to decide whether to continue to the left or go up the stairs. I catch a glimpse of the spaces above in the distance and even though I am already familiar with the interior, my curiosity is still aroused. I move towards the stairs in anticipation.

Situation type 2: Level 2 Foyer (nested element 2)

   		
Slow rhythm Approach behaviour Emphasis Emphasis Pause		
Exploration	Visitors enact modes of approach behaviour characterised by movement towards and body-environment interactions.	
Emotional qualities	Consequential sense-making	Communicated sense-making
	Pleasant, satisfying Grounding	Pleasing, inviting Grounding
Sensory rewards	Active touch, kinaesthetic	Visual, haptic sight, auditory
Enactment: engagement and activities	• Slowly ascending the staircase. • Holding the railing. • Slowly gliding the hand against the smooth cool or warm surfaces. • Placing the fingers in the groove of the railing and wrapping the hand around it.	• Being guided by sight lines leading upward. • Hearing the muffled sound of footsteps. • Seeing the soft muted tones of surfaces, the gleaming yellow metal and the warmth of the wood.
Enticement	The design and management of partly hidden/partly revealed phenomena and the materiality of the environment arouse curiosity and anticipation.	
Design and management practices	• The open riser staircase and overlapping three-dimensional elements (hide/reveal). • The polished brass metal, the warm tones of the wood, the polished surfaces, the deep groove of the railing, the intricate details of the fittings, the soft carpet the muted tones, the warm indirect lighting (materiality).	
Barriers	No barriers to exploration were identified although visitors ability to explore depends on accessibility.	

Situation type 2 – exploration and enticement

As always, the sight of the elegant staircase fills me with anticipation for what lays ahead. I move towards the stairs and place my foot on the first step. Slowly, I ascend, I like to take my time to appreciate the materiality of the staircase. The beautiful, polished brass railing at the centre gleams like a jewel, reflecting the rows of artificial light on the ceiling. I place my hand on its familiar surface, feeling the coolness and smoothness of the metal against my skin. I let

my hand glide slowly as I walk up the stairs. The carpet softens the sounds of my footsteps and the feeling of the surface of the steps underneath my feet feels comforting. My eyes catch a glimpse of the timber railing on the outer edge of the staircase. The warm honey colour is attractive, and the deep groove cut through its length is inviting. I place my fingers in the groove, wrapping my hand around the handrail. I can see the many scars left on the surface of the wood through years of successive use. The surface is smooth, it has been varnished and my hand glides effortlessly. I pause admiring the simple elegance of the fittings before continuing on my journey.

Situation type 4: Level 3 mezzanine (nested element 2)

					
Approach behaviour			Emphasis		
Slow rhythm					
Exploration		Visitors enact modes of approach behaviour characterised by movement towards and body-environment interactions.			
Emotional qualities	Consequential sense-making		Communicated sense-making		
	Comforting, satisfying		Pleasing, inviting		
	Grounding		Grounding		
Sensory rewards		Active touch, kinaesthetic		Visual, haptic sight, auditory	
Enactment: engagement and activities		• Slowly ascending the staircase, feeling the worn steps and then thick carpet underfoot. • Slowly gliding the hand against the smooth railing, fitting fingers into its groove.		• Being guided by the rhythm of the pools of light. • Seeing the soft muted tones of surfaces, the diffused light, the warmth of the wood. • Hearing the muffled sounds. • Being aroused by the vista in the distance.	
Enticement		The design and management of partly hidden/partly revealed phenomena and the materiality of the environment arouse curiosity and anticipation.			
Design and management practices		• The material allowing for a patina to develop through use, the warm tones of the wood, the polished surfaces, the deep groove of the railing, the diffused light, the soft carpet, the muted tones, the soft materials and ceiling design absorbing sounds, the sloping ceiling (materiality). • The framed vista with a saturated colour in the distance, the thick half wall framing the view to the floor below (hide/reveal)			
Barriers		No barriers to exploration were identified in this situation type.			

Situation type 4 – exploration and enticement

As I descend the familiar steps marking the entrance to the mezzanine, I look at their worn surface and feel their misshapen form underneath my feet. Traces left by previous visitors. The space is cosy and warm. Because of the proximity of three-dimensional elements to the body, the slopping ceiling, diffused lighting and the warmth of materials and colours, the space wraps itself like a blanket around me. It envelops, sounds are muffled. The polished dark honey coloured wood of the railing invites touch. A deep groove cut through its length. My fingers fit perfectly and my hand glides effortlessly as I walk slowly down the steps. My body senses the comfort of the carpet underfoot when I step onto the mezzanine floor, a sensation enhanced by the contrast with the hard wood surface of the stairs. Looking ahead, I see that the mezzanine is empty but for one visitor nudged within the recess of the wall. It has been like this since the furniture were removed. Pools of light punctuate the floor, and their rhythm leads the eye forward to the framed vista on the far side of the mezzanine. I can only catch a glimpse of the space beyond, but I can hear the voices of people in the distance. My curiosity is aroused, and I move forward.

Privateness and porosity

Situation type 1: Level 2 Riverside Terrace Café (nested element 1)

Privateness <i>Visitors enact personal or group territories (micro-scale) from vantage points where they can maintain sensory connections with the macro-scale of the environment.</i>			
Sense-making	Micro-scale	Micro-scale	Macro-scale
	Consequential	Communicated	Communicated
Emotional qualities The enactment of privateness feels <i>Emotional connection</i>	Relaxing, satisfying Grounding	Relaxing, Satisfying Grounding	Convivial, joyful Stimulating
Sensory phenomena	Active touch, kinaesthetic	Visual, haptic sight, passive touch, auditory	Visual, auditory
Enactment: engagement and activities	Sitting, leaning on the table, touching the surface of the chair and floor.	- Seeing 3D elements, objects and surfaces close to the body. - Seeing the shaded interior. - Seeing the width and soft curves of the column. - Hearing the quiet space. - Hearing the muffled sounds of people outside. - Seeing the soft colours.	- Seeing the framed vistas to the outside. - Seeing the movement and gestures of people outside. - Hearing the animated sounds of people outside.
Porosity	<i>The design and management of boundaries, borders (porous edges) and liminal edges to regulate sensory flows.</i> - The large column, the glass window, the chair (boundary). - The glass windows, the furniture (borders). - Warm interior/cold exterior, amber light/blue light (liminal edges).		
Design and management practices			
Barriers <i>No barriers to privateness were identified in this situation type.</i>			

Situation type 1 – privateness and porosity

As I arrive, the café is full, and the sound of animated conversations reverberates noisily across the interior space. Soon afterwards however, people get up and leave. I timed my arrival to coincide with their departure, knowing that most would have been waiting for a show to start in the auditorium. The café is now almost empty. It is quiet. I pause as I walk in and scan the space before selecting a table near a column. I sit down facing the large windows overlooking the sunny and busy terrace. I select a table in the centre of the space, not too close from the

terrace, in the shade. A large column on my right creates a protective barrier. One of the windows is opened to allow people to walk in and out more easily between the terrace and the café and the sound of joyous conversations permeates into the café. It's not loud; the sound is in the background, diffused. It doesn't disrupt the peaceful environment of the café but the sight and sound of people enjoying themselves in the sun also brings a dynamic dimension to the stillness of the interior space. I retrieve a book from my bag, lean forward on the table and start reading, pausing occasionally to look out towards the terrace and city beyond before going back to reading. My attention fluctuates from the book to the exterior. Sitting at a table and reading a book and looking out into the distance onto the terrace outside, watching people, the sunny terrace and listening to the sound of animated conversations. I feel connected to the activities outside and to the city beyond.

Situation type 3: Level 2 Foyer (nested element 2)

Sitting at a table on the edge of the ballroom, in a slightly elevated position and protected by a railing in front of me and a large column to my left, I have a privileged view of the foyer. The space offers a secluded vantage point from which to enjoy the life unfolding across the foyer space. I am immersed in the interior, but my remote position also makes me a spectator. The area where I sit is not very busy but the space further ahead in front of the bar is bustling with people, sounds of conversations and laughter. A woman who works at the RFH has an especially powerful laugh that reverberates through the interior. Cheerful jazz music is playing, and although the ballroom is empty, coloured and patterned lights have been switched on, animating the space.

This joyful mood is contagious. Three children cross the ballroom, running and laughing, chasing each other up the stairs. They stop suddenly and all three of them lean against the railing to watch two young men practicing break dancing on level 1 below. I can catch a glimpse of the dance practice from where I sit. The light coming through the windows directly opposite at the far end of the foyer is so bright it is almost blinding. People in this area appear as silhouettes. The brightness of the light contrasts sharply with the shaded interior, enhancing the perceived warmth of surfaces. Despite its large scale, the shaded interior shelters and envelops.

			
Privateness	Visitors enact personal or group territories (micro-scale) from vantage points where they can maintain sensory connections with the macro-scale of the environment.		
Sense-making	Micro-scale	Micro-scale	Macro-scale
	Consequential	Communicated	Communicated
Emotional qualities			
The enactment of privateness feels	Comfortable, pleasing	Comfortable, pleasing	Diverting, entertaining
Emotional connection	Grounding	Grounding	Stimulating
Sensory rewards	Active touch, kinaesthetic	Visual, Haptic sight	Visual, auditory
Enactment: engagement and activities	• Sitting at a table in an elevated position, touching the table, chair and floor.	• Seeing 3D elements, objects and surfaces close to the body, the dark interior and warmth of materials.	• Seeing people and children interacting with the space and with each other, the bright light and people silhouetted in the distance, the patterns and the coloured light in the ballroom. • Hearing the animated sound of conversations, laughter, cheerful jazz music.
Porosity	The design and management of boundaries, borders (porous edges) and liminal edges to regulate sensory flows.		
Design and management practices	• The large column, the chair (boundary). • The furniture, the railing (borders). • Quiet/busy, dark/bright (liminal edges).		
Barriers	No barriers to privateness were identified in this situation type.		

Situation type 3 – privateness and porosity

Situation type 5: Level 3 Mezzanine (nested element 2)

			
Privateness	Visitors enact personal or group territories (micro-scale) from vantage points where they can maintain sensory connections with the macro-scale of the environment.		
Sense-making	Micro-scale	Micro-scale	Macro-scale
	Consequential	Communicated	Communicated
Emotional qualities			
The enactment of privateness feels	Pleasant, relaxing	Pleasant, relaxing	Diverting, enjoyable
<i>Emotional connection</i>	<i>Grounding</i>	<i>Grounding</i>	<i>Stimulating</i>
Sensory rewards	Active touch, kinaesthetic	Visual, haptic sight, auditory	Visual, auditory, olfactive
Enactment: engagement and activities	• Sitting on a chair between two columns and a railing. • Standing between two columns. • Leaning on the railing.	• Seeing 3D elements, objects and surfaces close to the body. • Seeing the softness of the carpet, the warmth and muted tones of materials. • Seeing the warm diffused light. • Hearing the muffled sounds.	• Seeing the deep views through the interior. • Hearing the sounds of people below. • Smelling the food from the restaurant nearby.
Porosity	The design and management of boundaries, borders (porous edges) and liminal edges to regulate sensory flows.		
Design and management practices	• The bridge, the sloped ceiling, the chair, the columns (boundary). • The glass railing, the columns, the furniture (borders). • Quiet/busy, neutral smell/food smell (liminal edges).		
Barriers			
No barriers to privateness were identified in this situation type.			

Situation type 5 – privateness and porosity

Although visually and acoustically connected to Level 2, the promenade and mezzanine on Level 3 offer very different sensory experiences. Each time I arrive on the promenade after ascending the stairs I sense the space wrapping itself around me. Despite its open plan aspect, the narrow space of the bridge envelops the body. This perception is due to the enclosure created by railings on either side of the bridge, a sloping ceiling, carpeted floor, warm tones and indirect lighting. Although the bridge is narrow compared to the vast expanse of the foyer below, it is still wide enough for visitors to move comfortably in both directions, and for them to stand or sit between columns. The columns are wide and located on either side of the

bridge, adjacent to the glass railing. The space between the columns and the railing creates a refuge from the main passage, a recessed shelter deep enough to accommodate one or two chairs, and the elevated position offers vistas through to Level 2 and Level 3, and even through to the outside in the far distance. Like many visitors, I sometimes stop in this location and, leaning against the railing, I observe the space and activities below for a while, letting my mind wander before moving on.

Appendix 4: RFH safety rules for Chapter Five.

House rules was a terminology used by staff at the RFH. This terms featured in informal conversations I held with two Visitor Assistants and one Duty Manager when conducting the fieldwork for the case study. These rules were available on the Southbank Centre website at the time of the study but have now been replaced by a page on safety and security. Although finding out the exact reasons for this shift is beyond the scope of this study, both approaches are shown here because their contrast illustrates the dependence of looseness and appropriation on cultural contexts. This is discussed specifically in 5.4.1.2.

House rules shown on the Southbank Centre website when the case study was conducted

These rules are presented as guidelines, the tone is friendly and informal. This was the only reference to security. They were somewhat difficult to locate on the website, indirectly found on the page about the RFH spaces:

While you are here

- Please help us to keep our foyers looking welcoming and presentable to everyone.
- Please keep your personal belongings with you at all times. Security will be called if you leave your items unattended.
- You are welcome to bring your own food and soft drinks to Royal Festival Hall foyers. Only alcoholic drinks purchased at Southbank Centre can be consumed here.
- For the comfort of all visitors, sleeping is not permitted in our foyer spaces.
- All visitors are asked to sit on a seat. Sitting on the floor is not permitted. We have increased the amount of furniture in the building and there are plenty of seats for all. We have configured this furniture so that chairs do not block lifts and doors.
- Shoes must also be worn at all times whilst inside our buildings.
- Please don't put your feet on our furniture, so that it stays clean and undamaged for everyone.
- Multiple bags or very large luggage items encroach on the space available to other visitors. Please be considerate to others and avoid taking up more space than you need.
- The use of extension leads and cables is not allowed as these can be a trip hazard.

Entry to our foyers is free, and you are welcome to come in and enjoy the atmosphere with or without a ticket. Each day we close some foyer spaces to visitors and only allow entry to people with tickets. This is to provide space for audiences as they arrive for performances. Please look out for signs and listen to announcements; these give you more information about closure times and where else you can sit.

Safety and security information currently shown on the Southbank Centre website in 2024

This information is easy to find and highly prominent on the current Southbank Centre website. The tone of voice has changed significantly.

We take the safety and security of all our visitors very seriously.

To ensure your visit is a safe one we work with a range of partners, including the Metropolitan Police, and our local Servator team.

We have a number of security measures in place, some of which are highly visible, and some which are less evident. And whether our buildings are open or closed, we have security and surveillance measures in place 24/7.

All of our staff, from our highly trained security team to the hosts you'll see around our buildings and at events and in exhibitions, play a vital role in keeping you safe. They keep an eye out for suspicious behaviour and attend regular security training and briefings to ensure they're up to date with the latest security practices and threat information.

To help keep us all safe and sound at the Southbank Centre please co-operate fully with our staff, and if you see anything suspicious, or anything which doesn't look right whilst you're here, then please inform one of our hosts, or a member of security staff, as soon as possible.

Enhanced safety & bag checks

To make your visit as safe, secure and enjoyable as possible, we've enhanced our security, which includes the introduction of random bag checks across our site.

Wherever possible, don't bring large bags with you, as these are likely to be searched. Bags that are larger than 40 x 25 x 25cm won't be allowed into our auditoriums or into the Hayward Gallery. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Appendix 5: Interview design for Chapter Six.

The staff and visitor interviews followed a similar format although the questions differed. Each line of enquiry included a key question, and pre-prepared prompts should they be required. Drawing on Pink's (2015) recommendations for doing sensory ethnography, the tone remains conversational, and the interviews differ depending on interviewees' responses. Interviewees were presented with a collection of images depicting situations pertaining to porosity and privateness, enticement and exploration, looseness and appropriation. The images were printed landscape on A4 and organised into three collections (A, B and C). This is discussed specifically in 6.1. *The text in italics in this appendix is for reference only and was not communicated to participants.*

Staff interview design

Duration: 1 hour

Interview part 1

First, I'd like to ask you a few general questions about the management of the visitor experience in the public interior of the RFH. Please respond to the questions thinking specifically about the experience of non-ticket holders on Levels 2, 3 and 5 when these areas are opened to the public.

1. Could you provide a brief overview of the structure of the team managing the visitor experience?
2. Who are the visitors, who visits the public interior of the RFH? Can anyone visit? What is the policy on inclusion? How is it implemented by the organisation? How do you use it?
3. What kind of culture underpins the management of the visitor experience at the RFH? Could you describe the historical and political contexts that define the management of the visitor experience?

Interview part 2

Elicitation images collection A Prompts.

(images depicting situations pertaining to porosity and privateness)

When looking at these images, could you please reflect on how visitors define personal spaces or group territories within the public spaces.

- From your perspective, is it important for visitors to be able to define a personal or group space or territory for themselves? Why is that? Could you give examples? How is it managed? What are the main challenges? While the notion of personal space or group territory may suggest a degree of separation from others, do you also manage the spaces for visitors to be able to maintain a connection with the collective environment of the public interior? Why is that? Could you give examples? How is managed? What are the main challenges?

Elicitation images collection B Prompts.

(images depicting situations pertaining to enticement and exploration)

When looking at these images, could you please reflect on the way visitors travel through and interact with the interior spaces. This is not about visitors finding their way through the interior but about the quality of their experience while they journey through the interior.

- From the perspective of the management of the visitor experience in the public interior of the RFH, is it important for visitors to be able to move freely through different spaces? Why is that? Could you give examples? How is it managed? What are the main challenges?
- From the perspective of the management of the visitor experience in the public interior of the RFH, is it important for visitors to be able to interact with their surroundings? Why is that? Could you give examples of visitors interacting with the physical environment? Could you give examples of visitors interacting with the social environment? How is the visitor interacting with the environment managed? What are the main challenges?

Elicitation images collection C Prompts.

(images depicting situations pertaining to looseness and appropriation)

When looking at these images, could you please reflect on the way the design and management of the public interior of the RFH enables visitors to carry out autonomous activities.

- From the perspective of the management of the visitor experience of the public interior of the RFH, is it important for visitors to be able to carry out independent activities? Why is that? Could you give examples of activities visitors carry out independently of planned events? How is this managed? What are the main challenges?

- Do visitors sometimes carry out activities the interior spaces are not intended for?
Could you give examples? How is this managed? What are the main challenges? Do visitors also sometimes transgress house rules? In what way? How is this managed? What are the main challenges?

Interview part 3

To conclude this interview, could you describe how the pandemic impacted on the management of the visitor experience for non-ticket holders? Could you outline key economic contexts that may govern the management of the visitor experience in the public interior of the RFH? What happens next?

Visitor interview design

Duration 30 minutes to 1 hour.

Interview part 1

In the first instance, could you describe your connection to the RFH? How long have you been visiting?

Interview part 2

Using these images for inspiration, take yourself back to your own experiences as a visitor in the public interior of the RFH.

Elicitation images collection A Prompts.

(images depicting situations pertaining to porosity and privateness)

- This is about how you define a personal space for yourself or with others if you are with other people. Where do you usually go in the public interior? Why is that? Do you have a favourite location when you come here on your own/with others? What characteristics or qualities do you look for in this location? How do you relate to the space and people around you?

Elicitation images collection B Prompts.

(images depicting situations pertaining to enticement and exploration)

- This is about how you move and travel through the interior spaces, across the different levels. Where do you enter the building? What is your journey? Why? Do you always have a specific destination in mind, or do you sometimes explore? How do you do this?

Do you stay on the same level or do your travel up and down the interior? Are there any places in the interior where you like to stop? Why is that? What do you think about the materials in the space?

Elicitation images collection C Prompts.

(images depicting situations pertaining to looseness and appropriation)

- This is about how what you, and others with you or around you, do in the public interior of the RFH What do you usually do when you visit the public interior of the RFH? Why do you come here to do this? Have you ever done, seen or heard anything unusual? Do you feel that you can do what you want or are there restrictions? Why is that?

Interview part 3

What does it feel like for you to experience the public interior of the RFH as a visitor? Select 3 to 5 keywords that best represent your experience.

Exciting	Contented	Depressing	Distressing
Energising	Fulfilling	Tiring	Frustrating
Entertaining	Relaxing	Joyless	Annoying
Pleasurable	Peaceful	Boring	Tense
Diverting	Restful	Gloomy	Angry
Enjoyable	Calming	Sad	Afraid
Delightful	Tranquil	Bleak	Alarming
Idiosyncratic	Pleasant	Vulnerable	Disrespecting
Inviting	Comforting	Lonely	Infuriating
Attractive	Satisfying	Powerless	Hostile

Convivial	Welcoming	Inferior	Dismissive
Animated	Comfortable	Isolated	Aggressive
Lively	Gratifying	Abandoned	Humiliating
Fun	Pleasing	Indifferent	Violating
Uplifting	Serene	Empty	Numbing

Discussion

Could you explain your choice of emotional keywords? Why does your experience of the public interior of the RFH feel.....?

Interview part 4

- What do you like the most about the RFH as a public interior? What do you value the most? What would you miss if this building wasn't open to the public?
- Is there anything that you don't like, or wish was different? Is there anything that could enhance your experience of the public interior of the RFH?

Elicitation images

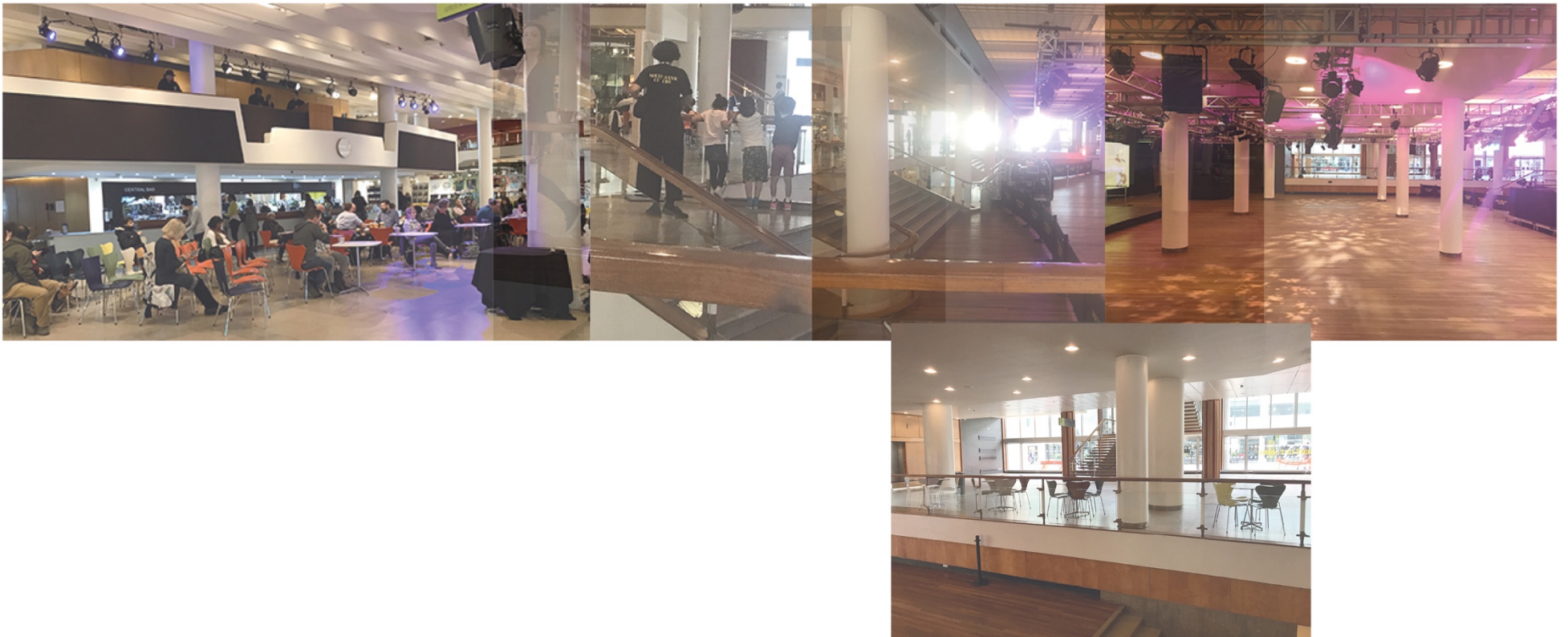
Sample images from each of the three collections are presented on the following pages. These relate to the analytical samples shown in Appendix 3 for coherence.

- Collection A (A01, A03, A05): porosity and privateness.
- Collection B (B01, B02, B04): enticement and exploration.
- Collection C (C01, C02, C03): looseness and appropriation.

A01



A03



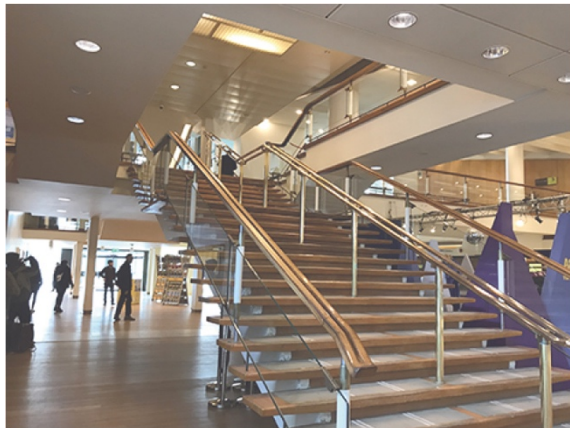
A05



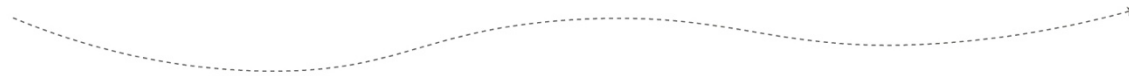
B01



B02



B04



C01



C02



C03



Appendix 6: Staff interview transcript for Chapter Six.

Interviewee

Matthew Hale, Head of Visitor experience and Ticketing. Wednesday 5th April 2022, RFH (in an office not in the public interior). This is discussed specifically in 6.3.

Valérie

In the first instance, I would like to ask you if you could provide a brief overview of the structure of the team managing the visitor experience.

MH

Yeah. Sure. So, whenever we're open to the public, we always have a duty manager. So, there are six or seven people that do that job, they take it in turns on a rotation. Generally, we're open from 10 in the morning, so there's always someone on duty, a single person who would look after... be the most responsible person on site I suppose... from 10 through to about five, and then there's somebody else that comes in and takes over that role at three in the afternoon and stays until 11 o'clock at night when we close. They work with a team of people around them. So, they're the kind of central bit of the wheel, but then they delegate to lots of other people. So, they work with the facilities team that is responsible for the actual running of the building itself, like the mechanics of the building, I guess, the lifts, all that kind of thing. Security, they have a manager, but the duty manager works closely with them, cleaning, the people that sell the tickets, people that look after the members lounge, there's all these other people around them, but the duty manager is the central person. They're one of the most trained people on site, they look after the safety of the public, customer service, also the licence holders as well for the venue. So, you know, they're ultimately responsible for everything that happens.

Valérie

I believe I have seen duty managers; I remember being here one day and seeing a duty manager with a few hosts. She seemed to direct where they were going to be and what their roles were during the day. Yes, I think I understand.

MH

Yeah. We call them visitor assistants now, we've changed the role but then they do a combination of meeting and greeting, customer service, they look after the welcome desk, the

ticket desks, the members lounge, and then at night generally when we have events on, we have more of those people in so for a Royal Festival Hall concert, the duty manager might have 35 or 40 people that they're working with, who were all briefed, with that main goal really to look after safety but welcome people into the building.

Valérie

And are you able to tell me more about the visitors themselves? Who visits the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall? I mean, there are the concerts in the auditorium, but do you differentiate between non ticket holders and ticket holders in terms of who the visitors are?

MH

Yeah, I think there are kind of quite broad, there's lots of groups and in a broader sense, I suppose there are three groups. There are the ticket holders, these are the people that have actually bought a ticket to come and see an event, whether that be in the concert hall or in another space. Then we've got the people that attend free events. So that might be people that come to ballroom dancing, or they come and see a family event, you know people that are coming for an artistic reason, but they don't have a physical ticket in their hand or on their phone. And then you've got this whole other big group of people who are using the building in lots of different ways, but they're not here necessarily for sort of an artistic reason. So, within that group, you've got a lot of families. You've got people that use it because it's a safe space for children. People that are using the poetry library... homeless people, but not as much now I would say, we used to be a place where lots of homeless people would come that's only a little bit now not so much, we don't quite know why. A lot of people that are working so again, that's dropped recently, but you know, there are still lots of people, particularly the members lounge that use that space with a laptop to do their day's work. And the people that are just relaxing, you know, they're here for the views, they're here to read, they're here to drink coffee, they're here to meet friends, and then that I think evolves in the evenings and weekends. I think that changes and I think it turns more into a social space. And I think it turns... it's more drink orientated, I guess you know, people are here for the bars and particularly as we go into the summer, people are using the building as a place to hang out and have a drink of friends and family and that kind of thing.

Valérie

You mentioned a broad range of visitors and I wanted to ask if you have a specific policy on inclusion and how it would be implemented by the organisation?

MH

Yeah, so I mean, we've got things like dignity and respect and policies that apply to staff and also visitors. So that is trying to reach out to everybody and that is talking about behaviours that are okay and not okay. I suppose that's like the sharp end of it in terms of when things go wrong, we've got an approach of how we then deal with that. So, at the most serious end of it, I suppose if something has happened that isn't inclusive, I'm going to use an example of something racist happening, then the outcome of that might be that we look into that and then ask that particular person not to come back. So that's all about kind of making sure that all visitors feel really included and safe here, that nothing inappropriate has happened, and that staff are also supported in that as well. I suppose at the softer end of that, it's about making sure that the way that we set our foyers up and the way that our building welcomes people physically, it feels... gives a feeling that people are welcomed in, allowed in, it's a space for them, it's not intimidating. We do think a lot about that, and I think there's a real tension, I think between... we're having those conversations, we're thinking about what it feels like to walk in, we're thinking about how we can make the expanse of light come in through our doors, be one where people feel like okay, this is a building for me. But then I think the tension is then with what physically we can or can't do. And I think because we're in a building that is listed there are particular things that we can't just take away. The doors aren't great, we can't just remove those we have to... that's quite a big project to replace them, that kind of thing. There are frustrations for us, I think, like we would want our entrances to look different and to be more open and welcoming, but there's physical constraints around it.

Valérie

It's a grade 1 listed building, isn't it?

MH

Yeah.

Valérie

Aside from the building being listed and the original architecture, do the historical and political contexts that have shaped the Royal Festival Hall still define the management of the visitor experience?

MH

I think they still really do underpin everything that we try out and talk about, particularly with the visitor experience. I think we still talk about... when we have new people arrive and also around that decision making when we are thinking about that visceral experience. We're thinking about why did we get here? How did we get here? And then we talk about what 1951 was like and why the festival of Britain was created and why this building was created. It was to be democratic, and it was to be a place where people can come to find joy after a war and that's really... really still relevant now. I mean, particularly coming out of a pandemic. And then everything else that's going on in the world, you know, I think that we still think about those things, this is a place where we want to provide a sense of relief, you know, we want it to feel really good and so we talk about that and then we also talk a lot about what happened in the 1980s when the foyers were open. So, we think about, we almost think of it in two bits you know, we think about that time where, okay, it was a great concert hall, but the doors really were locked before six o'clock and then they would open up for concerts, and you'd only really come in here if you had a ticket. And then we think about what happened in the 80s where that changed, and the foyers were opened up. And I think that in particular, it does underpin a lot of our decision making you know, we do strive to be as open as we can, albeit with some constraints and some new constraints. I think anyone coming in would be really hard pushed to reverse any of that, you know, because of the history that we've got, we've got a 40-year legacy of being open. So, it would be really difficult to undo that now and just to be a venue where people come to see a concert.

Valérie

I understand. So now I'm going to show you some images; they are themed. Each set represents a part of my project. So obviously, you're very familiar with the building and it really doesn't matter what order they're in, the numbering is more for me than anything else. They represent different sections of the building, so you can see here we are looking at the café, the terrace, and here at the mezzanine. Here, people are watching a free event, that was back in 2017. This is one of my favourite corner to read a book in London. This is level five and then here are people on the Promenade, and this visitor decided to sit between columns, there's a certain freedom, which is interesting. This is about visitors being able to define personal and group territories, which you also mentioned earlier when talking about the different types of visitors. Is it important, for you as the head of visitor experience and for the people who work with you, that visitors are able to come in and define personal and group territories? And if so, why is it important? Do you have any examples of visitors doing this?

MH

Yeah, I think it is important because I think that the space is really flexible so that it allows people to define those settings, you know, but we don't really stick... this is a purposeful thing, but we don't really tell people how they can use the space you know, it's more that we just sort of provide the setting and then people are able to use it in the way that they want to. So, the furniture... again, it's a bit of a tension, the furniture is quite bland, particularly in the café, but then in some ways people can then just move that around, to make it into whatever they need it to be, you know, and we're not too strict in terms of where that furniture goes. So, for example with this person on A05, you know, we didn't put that furniture there, but that person has kind of created a reading nook of their own by just moving a chair between two pillars.

Valérie

Okay, yeah. And what would you say are the main challenges?

MH

The main challenge for us is managing two sets of things going on at the same time. So, it's the artistic activity or commercial activity alongside that kind of free-flowing group of people that comes in and just wants to use a space for... however they want to use it. So, you know, an example of that would be... let's think of a good example... I suppose, if we've got a festival weekend on where we want to put an artistic activity in the ballroom and sort of around level two spaces, and that has to then work alongside people like this gentleman, who are not really interested in that festival, but still want to use the building in the way that they want to use it and there is tension there. You know, that is the most challenging. I think it's the most challenging thing about this building because we're trying to sort of serve two things, but it's also the most challenging thing about my job as well.

Valérie

Do you think that part of the appeal for this gentleman here and other people who do this may be to be able to define your own personal space but still be part of a wider collective environment where perhaps an event is happening and you might not be watching the event, but you're listening to it and you're still part of it? Is that something that comes up when you are discussing this tension?

MH

It doesn't come up consciously, but it's something that, now you've said it, I have thought from time to time over the years. I think there's a small group of people, I would say, who are

irritated by the artistic content, you know, and we've got evidence of that because we've heard them say oh, you know, isn't that annoying when that's happening on the ballroom and I'm trying to do X. But I think that's a minority of people. I think most people would come here because the building does have that flexibility to be whatever you need it to be. There's no pressure on you to buy anything, you know, so it's not like going into Starbucks, where you've got that pressure to buy three coffees if you're going to stay there all day. There, isn't that here. And I think it's probably about company as well. I think that even if you're sitting there on a laptop, typing away doing emails or reading a book, or sitting alone having a drink, there's something about this building that means that you're not really alone, because there's always a sense of community around you, there's always a buzz around you. There's always someone talking, there's always a child crying, you know, there's noise and I think particularly as they're coming out of COVID people really crave that, you know, they've had a really long time being alone in their houses. So, it doesn't necessarily mean that they want to always be talking to other people and be sort of socialising with other people, but they probably do want to feel other humans around them.

Valérie

And how do you think the design of the interior facilitates that? It's fairly open plan, isn't it?

MH

It's very open plan, yes, and I think that most of our foyer spaces have that. They're quite... you know they're sort of like wide open, there's like a sense of scale about them, I suppose. So yeah, I think... although weirdly, over the years, I think that's how we've adopted them, to be sort of communal spaces, but actually, if you go back to 1951, that wasn't the intended purpose of them, they were really foyers for concert goers, and so, the foyers are designed to accommodate almost 3000 people who are not in their auditorium seats. It's only in the last 30, 40 years that we've switched the use of them, but it's worked out well.

Valérie

So, moving on to the next set of images. Here, I'm interested in the way visitors travel through the interior and interact with the physical and also perhaps the social space. So, it's not so much about visitors finding their way through the interior but about the quality of their experience while they journey through the interior. This is something that I have included in my study. Does this resonate with you, with your experience of managing visitors? For example, would you say that it's important for visitors to be able to move freely through different spaces? Is it something that you consider at all?

MH

Yeah, we do. I mean, I think there's an access element to that, we want to provide the visitors with a journey that is as easy as possible, which means no barriers, and things that work and things that are kind of like intuitively in the right places, I suppose. So, there's that. But then we've sort of also toyed with and we haven't landed on the final answer yet. But we've also toyed with, is it too open? And do we need to do more things like zoning spaces so that people have got more of a steer in terms of how different parts of the building can be used? We're not quite sure if we haven't done enough, you know, it's sort of so open and so flexible, but is that at the detriment of people having the things that they need? Have we got the right furniture? Is it in the right places? Are we doing enough for parents and babies? Are we doing enough for students that need to study here? I think there's probably a new chapter ahead of us, I think it's probably around the 75th anniversary of the building and all the different ways that we could use the building to better support the visitor experience.

Valérie

The furniture changes quite regularly. I remember at one point in one of the promenades near the Skylon restaurant, you had sofas, soft furnishing, a kind of lounge. And then I think some of the constant remains the furniture next to the bar on level 2, you sometimes you have some in the ballroom, sometimes some on the sides, sometimes not. So, there seems to be a constant reappraisal of the needs of visitors.

MH

I think it's that and I think it's also the... sometimes actually what it boils down to, it's the getting ready for something that's about to happen the next day. So, it's like, if we've got a busy day, the next day, it's the kind of like the clearing of a space so that then that's prepared, ready for something to be put there. Is that kind of thing.

Valérie

Do you think there's an exploratory element to this building? Do you see people walking around?

MH

Yeah, definitely. I mean, I think it's like... it's difficult for me because I'm here so much, I've worked here for a really long time I sort of forget that it is a beautiful building and that it is a building that people would need to explore because actually, you can get lost in it, you know, and there are nooks and crannies, you know, and people really struggle to when they first

come to the building, they struggled to see where the auditorium could possibly be. You know, it's like, well, where is this concert hall, and then you sort of have to explain to people, it's above your head, but that's weird because people are so used to the experience of going into a theatre where you go in through the front door, and then you just keep going until you get to the stage. And that's not how it is here. So, yeah, I do see people exploring, and I particularly see children exploring. We facilitate, we've sort of done things to facilitate that over the years. So, we've done things like trails and that kind of thing, you know, mainly for kids.

Valérie

I saw that once, and on level one once there was this big blackboard on the floor and children were drawing.

MH

Yeah.

Valérie (pointing at images)

Adults also have those vistas. As you can see here, you're coming down the stairs after you've been up to the level four or five and then you get this view of the interior. And here again, this view of London.

MH

Yeah, I think the way that it's been designed, there are lots of things that encourage people to walk forwards. So, I think there are lots of moments like this one a level five, where it's helpful for us, actually in terms of crowd management, because people don't stay stuck on staircases, because they walk towards the windows, and that is the direction we want them to go in because the door to the auditorium is there. So, it helps, all this sort of like magnets for people to walk towards are really helpful to us, to keep 2,500 people moving at night.

Valérie

So, it's pleasurable and practical.

MH

Yeah, it was smart. The way they designed it was smart. You know, it's like draw people towards a view and then that will in turn, take them to their seat.

Valérie

I've read that, I don't know if it's true, but you may know, originally when the building opened, the staff had to link arms in the staircase to get everybody to leave because everybody wanted to stay after the concert. Is it true story or is it an urban myth?

MH

I don't know. I've never heard that before. But I mean, we don't have that problem now. The problem we have is helping new people navigate the building.

Valérie

Yes, a few years ago, you added a welcome desk. This wasn't there before?

MH

We added that and the reason we added that in is because we knew that we weren't answering questions that needed to be asked. And so, we picked the most walked spot on site, which was where that welcome desk is now and we have that open all the time.

Valérie

So, this is the final set. This is about the way the design and management of the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall enables visitors to carry out autonomous activities. We've touched on this previously, but these are examples of that I found during my study. Is it important, from your perspective, that visitors are able to carry out autonomous activities such as those represented here, and what does it bring to the public interior of the Royal Festival Hall? Does it bring a distinctiveness that you don't find anywhere else? Does it bring tension?

MH

Yeah, it brings life to a building which we can't always... we can't always create that life. We can't always be doing something amazing with the building because we don't have the money to do something amazing with the building every day. And so, the fact that people come in and then create their own life in a building is beneficial to us, it keeps the building vibrant. There is tension though I would say, I suppose the tension between the different groups. And there's also I suppose, tension between how us as a team staff managing this building and trying to do certain things with it, how that then sometimes clashes with how the users want to use the building, I suppose. So, unless... this kind of low-level stuff, it's things like... I think that might be a gaming group of some kind taking over and it's things like here it tips from being a shared thing to being a certain group have taken over an entire space and then that stops feeling like it's being shared; it feels like it's monopolising an area of the building. So, there's that. There's

also kind of this tension around some of the ways in which it can be used. I think this feeling of I can come into the Festival Hall and pretty much do whatever I want can sometimes be difficult, because we've had things like people running cooking classes in the foyer, so we had somebody making dumplings. The flour was everywhere, messy, you know, there are certain things we just can't allow, those things can be damaging to the fabric of the building, it's overstepping the mark in terms of what you can do in a shared space.

Valérie

So, there are boundaries for safety, for the comfort of others?

MH

Yeah, yeah, all of that. But on the whole, I think they are the rare things and I think on the whole, what people do in in terms of the different ways they use the building means that they bring life and I think one of the best examples of that is how the level one cloakroom area has been adopted by dancers, you know, because that really was a thing that we just didn't we didn't come up with that. So organically, people just started, they saw an open bit of the building and went, well that would be great to rehearse dancing, it's not really used. And then it just grew and grew and grew. And then actually, what then happened was, we then sort of had to come in as an organisation and say, I really don't want you to leave, please continue to do this but we're now going to just set some parameters around how this can be done. So, we can just put a schedule against it so that you know when it's open when and when it's not. And we're going to just say look, you can play music, but it needs to not include swearing and all that kind of thing, so we had to kind of do it back to front. So, we encouraged it but then we said we need to just put some guidelines around this.

Valérie

Was it because was it causing problems with people coming in at the wrong time when there was something else on?

MH

Yeah, exactly because it's in front of the cloakroom, when it got to 6:30, people coming in for a concert trying to put their coats in the cloakroom, and there were dancers there, that kind of thing. So, we had to set some scheduling around it.

Valérie

But sometimes you also get serendipity? I remember seeing an elderly couple dancing tango next to two teenagers doing breakdancing and I don't think I've ever seen that anywhere.

MH

That is brilliant. And again, as well because there is music being used by the dancers, that again is another way the building users are bringing life and sometimes the art into the space where we haven't put it there.

Valérie

Can I ask you; do you know why all the furniture were removed from level three? In early 2019 I believe?

MH

So, the furniture that was on the edges near the restaurant, near Skylon, belongs to Skylon. So, they were only taking it in and out when they needed to for operational reasons. So, they needed to clear sections, things like that. So, that's why that happened. The furniture that was on the actual main part of the promenade (the mezzanine)... I'll give you a very honest answer, which is that it started to feel like it was an antisocial space. There was a lot of sleeping going on in there, it's quite hidden, we weren't always sure that everything that was happening in there was safe. It just started to become... staff were saying it was a bit of a no-go zone, they didn't feel comfortable walking through it, that kind of thing. I think it's because it is quite tucked away, it's quite easy to hide in the alcoves and things like that. So yeah, we just we did a quick fix on it, basically, took the furniture out. What we wanted to do was sort of not have a hiding place. We wanted to, I suppose, encourage people to come into like the main parts of the foyer so that we could manage what's happening because for all of the wonderful things that we can talk about around this, we also have to be really realistic, which is that the Royal Festival Hall is in the middle of the capital city next to the busiest train station, and that does come with antisocial behaviour. And so again there's another little bit of this, which is about the tension between the art, the foyer users and then the sort of unwanted stuff that would happen in in this building if it wasn't managed.

Valérie

And how is it managed?

MH

Gently managed, I think by comparison, it's gently managed, you know, things like sleeping, we do have a rule that we don't allow sleeping, and that is generally managed with empathy and sympathy. We have ways that we can refer people to other resources, so it could be local shelters, that kind of thing, charities that are local in the Waterloo area. So that side of it is gentle. If we have anything like drug taking, then that is probably less gently managed, but at the same time, I don't think arrests have been made, it's more about security asking people to leave. I think anything that might happen in toilets is more of a discouragement rather than... we don't come in there really heavy handed. But we do do lots of things to discourage that sort of thing because again, it's always with one eye on the safety of the majority of visitors, making sure that people continue to come to the Festival Hall and feel like all aspects of it are welcoming and safe for all ages, and that there isn't anything that they would witness in this building, which would make them feel otherwise.

Valérie

Okay, so that brings us to the conclusion of our interview. Thank you so much. I have a very brief question to conclude. You mentioned at the beginning that the pandemic impacted on the management of the visitor experience and on the management of the Royal Festival Hall. Would you be able to briefly outline this shift and how that happened?

MH

The organisation was in massive financial trouble, as all art organisations were during the pandemic. So, a really close look was taken, you know, at exec level, in terms of the amount of money that we were spending on the running of the Royal Festival Hall. So, a difficult decision was made, which was to close certain sections to the public. The reason for that is because it's associated with cost. So, you know, it does cost, the more toilets and the more Foyer spaces you have opened in the daytime, the more cleaning that requires, the more security presence that requires, etc. So, we're at that really tough moment where we'd love to open up more of the building, but we can't because we don't have the budget to operate those sections. So, we're at this like, not a great point, really, I suppose in terms of that. Level one and level two are open to the public, and level six is open to members, but then the rest of it is really only open to people that have come to see concerts and we open those spaces later in the day. So that has been the biggest change, how we choreograph the building so that there are still spaces that people can come in and use but at the same time, it's not that kind of huge menu of different spaces right now that people would have had back in 2019.

Valérie

Level five, for example, is only accessible when it starts opening for concerts.

MH

Only for ticket holders.

Valérie

Is it difficult to monitor?

MH

Yeah, I mean, it's not a perfect scenario, people still do go and use that space, it's just not officially open, you know, so we're not able to clean the toilets all the way through the day, we're not able to do a security walkthrough of that space because we don't have enough people to do that. But I think we get to the point now, where we're sort of looking at that again, and going okay, as the organisation feels more confident financially, can we now start to open up some of those spaces again, can we put some more money towards the use of the foyers, and I've certainly asked the question, can we get level five open again.

Valérie

So that would be the preferred option?

MH

Oh, yes. Absolutely. My preferred option would be to have everything open all the time. And we'll get there again, it's just that the financial situation was so bad that it was just a bit of a no brainer, really, you know, this is where we can save money. And the same goes for the Queen Elizabeth Hall. Pre pandemic that was open to the public, and now it's only open for concerts, but again, I hope in the future that we can get that open in the daytime too.

Valérie

So, this is now the end of the interview. Thank you so much for your time. It was very helpful and great to hear your perspective.

Appendix 7: Visitor interviews transcripts for Chapter Six.

This is discussed specifically in 6.4.

Interviewees

- Cath, 15th March 2022, RFH
- Jolita, 14th April 2022, RFH.
- Eva, 9th May 2022, online.
- Sophie, 23rd May 2022, RFH.
- Kevin, 16th June 2022, RFH.
- Stuart, 23rd June 2022, RFH.
- Peter, 4th July 2022, online.
- Julia, 9th July 2022, online.
- Robert, 13th July 2022, online.

CATH

Valérie

First, could you describe your connection to the RFH? How long have you been going there?

Cath

My first memory of being here was 1983. That was the time that the RFH opened its public spaces. Yeah, I didn't know that at the time, but it seems that when, when I had my degree show in the ballroom in 1983, then that was the point at which they were doing that.

Valérie

Yes, of course, the open foyer policy. Yeah. So, what I'd like you to think about for this is the RFH as a public space. Not so much as a cultural institution but as a public space. There may be free events around you like the children we saw playing drums earlier, that's fine but you're not there because you have bought a ticket. This is about the non-ticket holder experience. So, if you could bear that in mind, please, how often do you come in as a non-ticket holder? How often do you visit the public interior of the RFH?

Cath

I would say probably if it's not once a week it would be every couple of weeks. I mean, maybe it would be different at different times of the year.

Valérie

Okay. What do you like the most about it?

Cath

Yeah, for me it just feels very welcoming to everybody. I feel like this, you know, that's why I've always liked it.

Valérie

Is there anything you dislike about it?

Cath

No, not really.

Description of images and process - Valérie

So now I'm going to present you with a series of images from my case study. They represent a range of situations that I have identified in the public interior of the RFH and which I will explain to you. There are seven of them. What we're looking at here is how people occupy the interior spaces and what they're doing. So, this is the cafe.

Cath

Yeah. Level two floor.

Valérie

Yeah. And this is the foyer. These pictures are taken first thing in the morning when they just open and they're showing the gradual change in the space as people start coming in. How they move the furniture and how the space changes.

Cath

Yes. Yeah. Because people grab chairs and you know, for gathering of more than two maybe, yeah.

Valérie

This one here is showing people doing things that are more unusual. Here for example, they're drawing caricatures.

Cath

Yeah. It's in the Riverside Café, isn't it? Yeah, that's the café.

Valérie

Yeah. This is people playing a game. This shows people preparing for a fashion photoshoot. And these two people rehearsing some kind of dance. They were doing this again and again and again and again. So, this captures some of the things that are happening there. Yeah. Other images show other things happening like meetings, workers on a break, a group of people also playing a game, they were quite serious, keeping scores and they occupied two tables.

Cath

Like home from home really, isn't it? I know that a friend of mine, well, before the pandemic, came here, and had her language lessons in probably the space down there, maybe on the third floor as well. Yeah, so she'd just meet with a group of five perhaps and they'd have their Spanish lesson.

Valérie

Yeah. I've seen a few people doing this as well.

Cath

Well, that's quite interesting, because when I've done workshop in public spaces, you know, it's like, no, no wet materials. So obviously here it doesn't matter. You know, if it's okay to go ahead, then they're not thinking about the carpet or precious artworks getting damaged.

Valérie

This shows children playing, playing hide and seek around the columns, you know, running around. So, this is a drawing, like a map, those are the columns, and this is the movement of people. It was a dad and these two kids chasing each other in the ballroom. That's on the side of the mezzanine, looking down to the shop, and there was a guy playing football with his toddler who could barely walk so it was quite funny to watch. Lots of children occupy the space. Yes. This one here. Where you were saying a home away from home, this shows people having breakfast, they brought their own breakfast. They're sitting around a table, he's reading his paper, the woman talks with the children.

Cath

Yeah, they probably walked along the Southbank, you know, and planned to stop.

Valérie

So, this is the context. The pictures are giving you the context of what this study is about, to help you think about is how you occupy this space. So, what I'd like you to do is to reflect on these images, so keep them in front of you and think about situations when you are visiting the public interior of the RFH to carry out independent activities. So, not attending events, but personal or group activities that you choose to carry out. What do you usually enjoy doing? Why do you go there?

Cath

It can be one or two things because sometimes I'll be here on my own because I might have gone somewhere, or I might just be walking along the Southbank and come in just like that. Maybe get glass of water, sit down, watch people, think, reflect, I don't necessarily do anything. Just sitting. And yeah, meeting people, we'll have a drink, and you know, it can be quite a lively space. I mean, there's often this free live stuff which you may know is on or you might not, you just come across it. I mean, I came across something once that was more like I had a ticket, but it was free. Some musicians from Romania were playing a classical gig, making a sort of relationship with folk music, down in the ballroom.

I've met my friend here too when her daughter was young. It's a great meeting place and I feel that it's a place you know where people don't worry about their kids. You know, they can go off and you can see them around, it's kind of a friendly atmosphere where everybody's safe. That's what I've always kind of felt when I've come here, it's about the public space, but when you think about coming here, you think about the exterior spaces as well. You know, especially in the summer when they have the fountain here. Yeah. I mean, the kids go crazy, and they've got a beach there now. I do see this that the ground floor, outside the second floor, as kind of part of the space, you know, very much. Yeah.

Valérie

So, where exactly do you go in either the cafe or in the level two foyer, level three or level five? Where do you go?

Cath

Level 5? Yes, I remember getting a load of drinks in this room [level 6] and then taking them downstairs because it couldn't bring everybody up here. So, I did that. So, there's quite a nice big space just at the bottom of this staircase here. And of course, you've got the balcony, which

is just brilliant. Yeah, you go outside, take your drinks outside. So, I've been quite a lot on that balcony with friends.

Valérie

And can you do what you want when you want? Do you feel that there are constraints, or you feel free to do what you want, do you feel comfortable?

Cath

Actually, yeah, I'm always quite amazed that it's so free. I think of late maybe because of COVID there's a higher awareness of people looking after the place. Whereas that wasn't there before. You didn't have people sitting on doors, it was very discreet. If there was security, it wasn't something that was seen.

Valérie

Are you aware of any rules? Things you can't do?

Cath

Really, I mean, I guess you can't bring your own food in here. But then you said people do. So you can Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. No, that's not a problem. I'm sure if I had a bottle of wine in a bag and I'm sitting in the downstairs bar or in the ballroom, I'm pretty convinced nobody would come and stop me from drinking that bottle of wine. I just don't think they would.

This is the this is the cafe area, isn't it? Yeah, you grab a sandwich, and you'd sit here, or you take it around the other side. I guess I tend to sit the on other side, past the shop, by the side of the glass lift. Or, if I'm sitting here, I'll probably be sitting outside, a bit closer to the river. Yeah.

Valérie

Why do you choose to go that side of the foyer? Is there some particular reason why you choose that particular side?

Cath

I guess it's the space. You've got the ballroom ahead, you're inside and you've got quite a lot of interior space, and I quite like the feeling of the space above your head. And I guess it's more tranquil than the cafe part, which is busy, and people are eating food and it's more of a thoroughfare. Because people come through [the café] and they go to the ticket booth. Yeah,

because from here I might also go directly to the lift. Or quite often I use the stairs, but yeah, but yeah, I think it's I think it's that it's a more a tranquil space, thinking that there are no people around me, that I could be on my own, I could be reading.

When meeting with friends, that's the bar in the ballroom. So, recently, my partner, it was his 60s. And we just said, shall we just meet at the Southbank? We didn't know what we were going to do. We didn't know who was going to come. It was still a bit pandemic you know? Yeah. And we didn't want to be trapped in a restaurant or anything. We wanted it to be in a big open space where people could kind of come and go quite freely. And not feel like they're coming to, you know, this 60th birthday, but to be a bit more relaxed about it. And then of course, the bar didn't open. So, we had to run across the QEH [Queen Elisabeth Hall] and go to their bar which was open. We were sitting there [pointing at the level 2 foyer area RFH], and that's when I saw Ellen. Quite often you see people you know, yes, you know, whether they're just passing through or because they're on their way to the QEH. I think of those nice memories when my partner met people here, you know, freelance creative people, they just come here because they don't want to sit in their rooms the whole time. Coming here to be with other people, like minded or not, you know?

Valérie

So, you're saying that you come in and you want to meet with friends and that the notion of the interior being a public space is quite important as well?

Cath

Yeah, relaxing and you can be invisible, I guess. You know, you can be anonymous, and you can be invisible, but you can be visible to the person who's come to meet you there. And you know, no one's gonna come up and ask you why you're here and what you're doing sitting on that chair. It doesn't occur to me that that's going to happen, and actually, it's a really nice place. You can sit down, and I read the book or whatever. It's so good.

So, I was remembering, my friend comes here when she's teaching Spanish, just her oral class. She gets here for 10/10:30 so that she can find a nice little private spot for her and for her students but also, a lot goes on around you. I just feel like it's a place where people can have fun and feel free you know, and that's nice. Yeah,

Valérie

Yeah. Have you ever seen people doing unexpected things?

Cath

Yeah, when I saw that photograph, this one yeah [level 5]. I remembered it was a performance and these two people dressed in green costumes. It was in that spot. They might have come from a previous performance you know, the RFH has all sorts of things going on. They were just more casual and more, you know, more interactive with the people who were there. And so, I remember that. Yeah, very clearly.

I can also remember coming here after I ran the marathon last year, and a friend met me and we were in Battersea, but then it was like, let's go and have a cup of tea in the Festival Hall. And that so, you know, that was like, yeah, a good place to have a cup of tea after a marathon even being like, all sweaty. Yes.

Valérie

Interesting. Yeah. What you're saying is that you can come in as you are, you feel free and comfortable coming in, even when you've been running a marathon. So, there doesn't seem to be any constraints about who you are as an individual and the moment that you're living, in your situation?

Cath

Yeah, nice. Definitely. But yeah, really nice. And obviously there's the memories from my graduation show in 1983. A friend who also graduated sent me a photograph. I didn't have a copy myself. My mum is in the picture and there's me lying on the floor underneath the table by my exhibition. So obviously, yeah, you could probably do pretty much what you like really. Out on the floor didn't matter.

Valérie

Thank you that's great. So now I'd like to present you with a list of words. Could you please select 3 to 5 keywords that best represent your experience and use the post it to annotate the images with your selected keywords.

[the interviewee is given time to complete the task]

Cath

Okay, so convivial... yeah, maybe calming. I think that even if it's there's a lot going on and it's busy, it's calming. Uplifting. Actually, I felt very sad during the pandemic and then when it opened, I have been coming here and it's been closing early and it's a bit of a skeleton staff, so

you know, I just hope it's all going to pick up properly again. Yes, yeah. Satisfying. Yeah. Coming here is satisfying. This is four. Okay.

What is interesting is that it's just an emotional thing. It is about having that space. I feel that in the ballroom you're quite protected, but you've got this big space around you. Things happen. I think things happen around you that are quite entertaining, but they're not laid on for your entertainment, but I think it's just humanity, just having a good time around you so very uplifting.

So, I mean, yeah, well, I could wax lyrical for a long time about everything, but I know what your intentions are very much about the, the public spaces and it's interesting how you see yourself travelling, you know, like what do you do, which ways do you go when you come through that door? You know that side door over there? Because you do you know, I think if you come here a lot you probably have a certain trail. Well, I always come off the bus on the bridge. So, I come down the steps, pass the Hayward and then down the steps by the QEH, turn left and enter through that first door [through the café].

Valérie

So okay, that's interesting, thank you. This is now the end of the interview. Thank you so much for your contribution, that was very useful.

JOLITA

Valérie

First, could you describe your connection to the RFH? How long have you been going there and how often do you visit? What do you like the most about it? Is there anything you dislike?

Jolita

I've been going for about 6 years; I think the first time I came here was for my graduation ceremony. After that, I remember coming back and passing through and discovering more. I feel I enjoy the actual exterior of the building the most, where the Terrace is, so I quite often pass through it. I come here quite often, when I am outside, I can come here to get a coffee or to use the loo, so kind of more that type of the use of space.

Valérie

That's great, thank you. So, we will start with situations in which you define a personal space for yourself, and the places where you go to in this building that have special qualities for you. Could you tell me about it? Where are you in these examples?

Jolita

So yeah, I'm here exploring the space before spending time talking with friends. So, I think about how you navigate yourself in the space, when you're waiting for friends or for an event to start. This is my favourite journey, I enter through this door [showing the door on the West side of the level 2 foyer, across from the Welcome desk] and this is a space to keep busy before meeting friends, it allows me to be there. There's a lot of information, it is busy, and the space is quite big. Sometimes with events halls you feel like you're not allowed to be somewhere but because the information is there, I feel I'm ok, the posters and information make me feel that I am allowed into the space, there is something to read before meeting friends.

Valérie

Are you saying that you find the space quite welcoming?

Jolita

Yeah, I think in general the space is quite welcoming. I feel that all the information around kind of intrigues me, and this information is there for a reason, it's for people, so I feel that I'm allowed to be in the space.

Valérie

What do you mean by information?

Jolita

There are posters for example, like those showing events happening. I think the walking journey, the way I go through the door, into the café, so you kind of walk straight but it's not a straight and sharp walk, it's a journey through the space and as you walk you see the information and you can learn something new. Even when you plan your journey, you can learn something new.

Valérie

Could you explain what you mean by learn?

Jolita

When there's something new, when something changed, new information in the space.

Valérie

Do you have any examples?

Jolita

Sometimes an event is happening or different things, an installations inside or you see people working; or even you can learn when you can define your own space, so next time you come you remember when it was quiet space and this gives you flexibility to come and work or do something else because London is quite busy but here you can find your personal space, you can personalise it because you learnt this when you walked through and saw all these people sitting here in a good spot. Ok, so I can come and use it next time because it's good for me, whether I want to read a book or just to be outside home, sometimes you want to be with people but not have to interact with them too much. So, there is that for me.

Valérie

I understand. Okay. And so, you mentioned reading a book, you mentioned some of the things you do so when you define this kind of personal space for yourself. These are activities that you may do at home, but as you said, you come here and it's because you want to be surrounded by people but not necessarily interact with them. So, what is attractive about being surrounded by people?

Jolita

I think it's just again about learning. Sometimes you just observe how people behave, people walking through, and it can make you happy to be part of it. Sometimes you can also hear people's conversations. Once I was waiting for my coffee and people were talking about the vaccine. So, it's that kind of interaction but you're not really part of it, you're more absorbing them.

Valérie (pointing at card B02)

Great, and what about here?

Jolita

So, the change of body movement when climbing somewhere so this was more about the stairs, how the space makes me feel lifted. And again, this is taking the time to feel how the

space changes. When you walk straight, like on a pavement you probably have one movement, but then you climb here, it's more emotional, I feel you want to go up and see and as you go up you feel lifted. And then, I was talking as well about the materials, of being surprised that it is so clean and sort of new. I think this is linked to a memory from Soviet Union architecture, because I think this hall reminds me a lot about that although they have been demolished now, but the concrete is quite exposed, you have soft materials, you have metal here, the shape of the building, but here, the materials surprise me because they are not broken, they're still in use. I think that's something that goes back to a personal thing.

Valérie

Yes, do you mean that although this building is not recent, but it still feels current?

Jolita

Yeah, and then when I think it brings memories from the past because I start associating the space with something...

Valérie

... and in your case, this is what you've experienced back home, in Vilnius?

Jolita

Yeah, it's like a hall we had, it just reminds me of this again, what the building was really like, the concrete exposed, and that sort of space opened up.

Valérie

Do you mean the open plan space? (Interviewee nods) but you talked about the carpets. Do you think it is softer?

Jolita

Yes, I think for us it was bad because it would show the damage in the concrete or in the tiles or something. Here, the space is used quite a lot by individuals but it's fairly clean and you don't see the damage. This is something that goes back to the maintenance of the building and everything, but I feel that still surprises me a bit.

Valérie

Do you like it? Why do you think this is a good thing?

Jolita

Yeah, it brings me a positive feeling. It doesn't make me feel like I can't be comfortable, it doesn't make me afraid to sit down. So, for instance, here, I'm not afraid to sit down on the stairs. Someone else might be afraid to sit down in the stairs, but I'm not.

Here I was just thinking about being alone or with friends. Sometimes I come with friends, and we may go to the bar, sometimes I am alone, waiting to meet someone to go somewhere, like an event or something.

Valérie

So, this is a kind of meeting point?

Jolita

Yes.

Valérie

But you may go somewhere afterwards, or you go to events? Do you go to free events?

Jolita

No, in the main auditorium, musical events mainly.

[Pointing at image B01] I think this is more about the journey, entering on level 2, finding the route, I think this was on the questions about how you walk, in a straight line or in a flow through the space. I float through the space until I know where I want to go, which route I want to take. As soon as I find the route, I can use the lift or the stairs, and it becomes quite straightforward.

Valérie

So, you're looking where to go, finding your way through the space, or are you moving around? Do you always have a destination in mind? You mentioned the word floating.

Jolita

Yeah, because it's a space that allows you to do this but no, there are two different things. If I'm waiting for someone, I'm floating, trying to learn something, everything. But if we say, hey, let's go to see a band, let's go to the bar or something, it's finding maybe different routes to learn about the buildings but then I have a destination.

Valérie

Okay, so is there anything else that we haven't discussed?

Jolita

I feel we discussed finding my personal space, to work or to read a book, finding the quiet space, and then there were pictures with more people, the mood changes and I want to kind of go in and out, I don't feel like I can find a personal space. Then thinking about the noise (pointing at C01, riverside café), I didn't think I paid too much attention to the noise, but then I started digging in and I felt it was mostly human made. I don't think too much about the noise, but the space is quite open, so it doesn't really absorb the noise created by people... when there are no people, the space is quiet. You can still have a bit of noise, like moving a chair or making coffee, but it doesn't annoy you. As soon as there are more people, then you kind of feel that the space is busy. It's not quiet. It's not relaxing.

Valérie

Yeah. So, you're saying that it's a space that changes quite a lot and that people are instrumental to this. Do you think it's a good or bad thing? Would you like it to always be quiet or do you think it's good to have these variations?

Jolita

It's a good question because I prefer when it's quiet, I think sometimes it's good that there are not too many people. I think that goes back again to the point where I can be in the space, people are using the space and I can learn how you can use the space, find something else. On this image here (C03 level 5), I think the noise comes from the balconies, the noise of the streets and everything in the distance, and inside is quieter, it's more like a kind of daydreaming, it helps you relax.

Valérie

Do you think there's a difference between level two and the other levels when you go up? You mentioned the difference in going up in terms of the way you feel? But in terms of the sensory stimulation, do you think there is a difference between the levels?

Jolita

I think it depends. If there's an event in the auditorium and everywhere is equal. If it's a quieter day, then the higher you go the quieter it is because there are no activities happening here (pointing at level 5).

Valérie

It's quieter at the top. Yeah. Okay. And do you have a favourite place to go? You know, of all the places you could go to inside the building, do you have a favourite one?

Jolita

I think my favourite place is the patio outside the café (referring to the terrace overlooking the Thames and Southbank on level 2) but inside the building it's more like level 2, the space where I come in (referring to the main foyer).

Valérie

Why is that?

Jolita

I guess it's how I use the building, it kind of allows me to go in and go out. Whenever you go up, you kind of feel you need to spend more time in the building, it's not quick in and out.

Valérie

It's interesting the way you use this place as a meeting point, to do something specific and then you go out and then you come back to it and then you go out again.

Jolita

Yes.

Valérie

Are there times when you do stay longer? For instance, you mentioned reading a book?

Jolita

If obviously there aren't many people, then I would, yeah.

Valérie

Okay. So, would you say that the location in central London for you is really important?

Jolita

Yes. I use the spaces more to go through or as a destination point if I'm going to an event or meeting someone.

Valérie

Have you ever used it as a way to cross from one part of the city to another, so coming in through one door and then walking out through another because it's quicker than going round?

Jolita

No, I don't think so.

Valérie

So going back to your journey through the building, you mentioned that sometimes you just kind of wander or float around. Do you have a favourite journey? Is there a journey you actually come back to?

Jolita

No, I don't think so. I'm the kind of person who likes to repeat the joys of being a positive thing, but no, this I don't.

Valérie

No Okay. And then in terms of activities, you mentioned, coffee, waiting for friends, reading a book. Are those generally your three main activities?

Jolita

Yes.

Valérie

Now, finally, I have a list of keywords, there represent emotional qualities, and I would like you to select between three and five words that best represent your experience, the way you feel about the environment of the RFH...[the interviewee is given time to complete the task]. So, you chose relaxing, lonely, calming and empty. To conclude, could you please explain to me why you have chosen these words? Could you explain for example what it is in this building that makes it relaxing? What are the qualities in the interior that make it relaxing for you?

Jolita

I think the space, the size of it. It is big, I can relax because I feel that there is enough space for me. I can find a corner just for me and I think that's relaxing. Also, there's nothing like a crazy edge, the colours are not really sharp... yes, I feel the colours is the most important part.

There's nothing really bright, it's not dark but it's calm, it makes me feel relax when I walk in, you don't feel everything straightaway in your face, you're like ok, I'm inside, I can see things around, I don't need to be stressed.

Valérie

So, this happens straight away when you walk in?

Jolita

Yes, straight away.

Valérie

Okay. And then, what did you write here?

Jolita

Lonely. I was thinking about emotion but not a negative emotion. When the space is empty, for me feeling lonely is a positive emotion exposed through the space, the structure and materials. I guess it depends on when you use the building. London is busy and here sometimes you come in and it's quiet, there isn't a soul. It almost feels like the empty space has been abandoned, it's like an empty world. So, the loneliness comes from the empty building, not me, I don't feel lonely. Especially when on the side of the river it's so busy, people are sitting outside having food, but you go here (level 2 foyer), it's just endless, no one. It's a beautiful space for me, and relaxing, but it doesn't make me feel lonely as an individual.

Valérie

So, you what you're saying is that the building is a very different place with and without people and that it needs people to come to life? Is that why you selected empty as one of the qualities?

Jolita

Yes, because the space I think is quite big. When level 2 is empty, it's like clothing if you like, that someone took off the building, but when you have people kind of coming in and going you get sounds and movement. If there are not too many people, then I think that's the right balance for me. Then I look forward to coming in, having coffee, sitting down reading a book or making notes from it.

Valérie

Okay. And then you said calming.

Jolita

I think that's kind of goes back to relaxing, to the colours; there's nothing sharp, it doesn't really trigger my mind when coming in, I don't get edgy like I would be outside, it has a calming effect. Even the lines of the building, even though they're straight, there are no sharp edges, and some of the pillars are round. It doesn't feel like there is anything that shouldn't belong there. All this for me is quite calming.

Valérie

Okay, and do you think the light may be contributing to the calmness as well, when you're coming in from the outside? You said that your favourite journey, the way the way you prefer to come in is through the west side entrance, which means that you arrive straightaway in front of the reception desk in the main foyer. And then obviously, that space is slightly darker, you've got the wood and then you've got , the big yellow sign saying welcome. Do you think this impact on the way you feel?

Jolita

I think yes, you're coming from the outside, I think the darkness, the mood, kind of relaxes me as it hits me. You mentioned the sign. It's there but I don't remember that it really catches my eye.

Valérie

Great. Well, thank you for your time and for helping me with this research.

EVA

Valérie

First, could you describe your connection to the RFH? How long have you been going there and how often do you visit?

Eva

I think as a public space, it's amazing. It was sort of almost a lifesaver when I first moved here because it's a space where you can go and be with many people without having to be with anyone in a way. So in terms of... when you're new to a city and you don't want to feel lonely... yet you can just be there and actually work or just be, and I guess that for me the other thing is

that it came with this kind of history, of my Dad, but I can't remember if it was in his first visit to London or on his second but it was certainly in the 1950s. Do you remember when it opened?

Valérie

1951.

Eva

Okay, so he came to London in 1954 and went to the RFH and obviously, in my youth, told me about the RFH as a sort of space he enjoyed, he was sort of architect/engineer, so he had an interest in these types of spaces. So yeah, when I came to London, the RFH was a space I felt I had to go to. And then it became a meeting place with my parents. The Eurostar used to finish in Waterloo so we could come off the Eurostar and go to the free concerts at the RFH, that's where we would meet. And then later on it became a space for me to go with my children, so (laugh) on maternity leave, I spent the majority of my time at the RFH.

Valérie

So, you've been going there for quite a long time?

Eva

Yeah, I moved to London in 1997 and throughout my time in London it's always been a significant location to go to initially because I was new to the city and it's a wonderful place as I say not to feel lonely then you know, later with my dad as a cultural institution and then with my kids again, because it's a public space and because you can be there and yet it's sort of really interesting. In a way it's a comfortable environment, right, you have this... it almost feels like you can do something homely yet it's also public. So yeah, as I said most of my two maternities were spend at the RFH running after children.

Valérie

So, what about your children? How do they... what did they do when they were there? They were very young, right?

Eva

I went when they were really young. So crawling, ah, and then also early, early walking ages. But the beautiful thing about it is that they can also just run there, and I guess the other thing that I always found absolutely fascinating is that everyone is accepted there. So, you're accepted there with screaming children, and they can run but you're also accepted there as a

as a homeless person and there is a fair amount, you know, who take some of their time and sit in an enclosed environment and then you know, all of this is then mixed with people who attend high cultural events and yeah, and that's sort of accepted. You accept that it will be loud and noisy and sort of slightly crazy and yet there are some nooks and crannies in the Royal Festival Hall itself in all the different levels where you could almost withdraw.

Valérie

So, where do you go normally? Does it depend on who you're with?

Eva

Yeah, who I'm with but also the reason for going there. So, you know with the public events, I guess it's usually the largest sort of space by the bar. And then with the children I think it must have been level two or three. Somewhere there's a book corner, where you can sort of withdraw a little bit which is always really nice. Because I guess in all of this, you can, as I say still find sort of semi quiet places. But I also spend time there working when I you know felt like your own four walls were getting too much. It's a really nice space to go to and concentrate on work actually. And then I guess for the kids as well, the lift, we spent an awful amount of time in the lift.

Valérie

The singing lift?

Eva

Yes, I don't know if you call this a location or a space within the RFH, but this certainly was for us. And then, you know, when I saw your email, I thought this place used to be my site like a second home. I haven't been back there since COVID. I mean it also has to do that I've moved since then. And the children are a bit older.

Valérie

You mentioned that you like being surrounded by other people's and activities and not feel lonely. When I was there, I noticed that there are people who just seem to walk around the building. Is something that you do as well?

Eva

I mean, we've certainly done this with the children because it is you can discover quite a lot. And also, because it's not always really clear which level you're at you know, sometimes the stairs go in this direction, sometimes the other, sometimes you're on one side of the building, sometimes on the other. Then there is a bridge which does connect the two level at the two

sides, but you have to be at a particular level. So, it's a little bit like a computer game in that way. Certainly, with the way the stairs go, and the kids were always really excited about it. So yes, we've been on an awful lot of sort of journeys rather than sitting in in one location. For sure.

Valérie

It seems like your children enjoy it as much as you do.

Eva

Yeah, it is an incredible space because it's inside and yes, it's public and you can go there and it's free. It's just you know, where else do you get it? I don't know, you can't do it in the British Library because, you know, everyone's very serious there. And as I said, find the Royal Festival Hall very accepting.

Valérie

Yes, and would you be able to tell me how your experience of the RFH makes you feel? What kind of words would you use to describe your experience?

Eva

I mean, certainly content. It's a happy place. And, interestingly, also safe. You probably know how they've managed it, but I haven't thought through it so much. But I find that the fascinating part is that I actually feel very safe in there, yet it is open, it's public, but I feel I can sit there without having to be continuously aware of what's going on around me. And be so yeah, happy, content and safe.

Valérie

So, what do you value or like the most about it?

Eva

It's so accepting, you know, I sometimes worry with places like this, that it's only for one very particular type of audience. But I have been there, and it actually has a very diverse user group. I wouldn't necessarily say audience, so I think that events that are happening, they're probably still very much geared to a particular type of audience but the user group of the Royal Festival Hall as a sort of semi public/private space I've always found quite diverse, and I appreciate that. And then just the sort of strange relationship between the public and what feels like a private space. You know, we think of public spaces as benches with I don't know, um, armrests and no one can lay down and I guess the Royal Festival Hall is almost doing the opposite. It's made itself very comfortable to be in rather than you know, what we see quite often in other

public spaces, which is making it as uncomfortable and unlikeable as possible so that no one spends too much time in the space.

Valérie

It's a good balance between the comfortable and the dynamic perhaps?

Eva

Yeah.

Valérie

To conclude, is there anything that you don't like, or you wish was different?

Eva

You know, thinking about it, and that only just came up when we were talking and I'm sure that they work on diversity of audiences to their events and things like this, but how diverse is it? I know that in terms of classes, I'd say, you know, I've seen everything there's some people without a permanent home to you know, people who attend highbrow cultural events. But beyond that, how far do they reach in terms of diversity? So perhaps there's something that can be looked at.

Valérie

Okay, thanks. I know you don't have much time, so thank you so much for meeting me today.

SOPHIE

Valérie

First, could you describe your connection to the Royal Festival Hall? How long have you been going here and how often do you visit?

Sophie

So, I grew up in London. I have memories of coming here when I was young. And I don't know, I come maybe three times a year, four times a year, something like that. So not very regularly but you know, for concerts and meeting friends and that sort of thing.

Valérie

Thank you. So, this is the first collection of images. This is the café, and this is the foyer area. This is next to the passage that goes from the river towards Waterloo. This is the ballroom area. This is in front of the main bar. This is also in front of the main bar. This is first thing in the

morning when it opens and then it shows people using the cafe at different times. So, this is about how you define a personal space for yourself and with others if you are with other people. First of all, please reflect on whether you use these locations. Did you or do you go there regularly? Where do you go and why? And what characteristics do you look for in this location?

Sophie

Pointing at A02. This is where we met, this is the café? It looks different with the things outside.

Valérie

You mean with the barriers? Yes, it's the café. I don't know why they had barriers there, often things are moved or changed to accommodate events. But although this is about the interior space, you can talk about the view of it's important to you. So, which locations do you or did you use the most?

Sophie

I think you know; I think it has changed a little bit over time, but I think mainly this, the area in front of the main bar. And I think that, you know, about the cafe as a meeting place, this is the area where I meet friends because everybody knows it. And it's an easy place to meet but I find that if I'm coming with people that I know well or my family I move through to the other side (pointing at the level 2 foyer) because this area is a bit more open. The café sort of feels like it is for transient people, you know, tourists and people coming to meet but then as somebody who uses it (the RFH) a bit more I go to the quieter more interesting area.

Valérie

And aside from quieter, what characteristics or qualities are you looking for in this location?

Sophie

The feeling of being sort of safe. Knowing there's usually a table there, whereas in the cafe there's not. I'm not necessarily coming to use the café, just to meet people and then when I find them, immediately move to a different area.

Valérie

Okay, so tell me about this area here. This is level two. This is the main foyer area and here you can see people sitting in the ballroom area. Have you ever done that? Do you go inside the ballroom area?

Sophie

Yes, I have done this with my kids. I can't remember why. Maybe it was busy, and we were looking for somewhere quieter.

Valérie

Okay, yeah. And so, what kind of characteristics or qualities do you look for in this location? Could you tell me about the characteristics or the qualities that attract you to this place?

Sophie

I think if it had... if it was completely empty like this, I'd feel a little bit like... am I supposed to be here? It's a bit too quiet. But you kind of feel... in my experience it's never that empty (here, Sophie refers to the first image on 01c)... so I think I look for... you know... somewhere slightly quieter...

Valérie

And is it important for you to have people around you as well?

Sophie

Yes.

Valérie

Why is that?

Sophie

The feeling of safety I suppose and knowing that you're not where you shouldn't be. That you're in company.

Valérie

And what about the visual stimulation that people bring to the space or maybe the sounds that they make. Is that important to you?

Sophie

Yeah... What is it? It's the sense of community, isn't it? It's like the feeling that they're getting on with their thing, you're doing your thing. I feel that you although you don't necessarily have to buy something from the cafe, I'd feel awkward sitting there without buying something whereas in the other areas, if I've arrived early for a concert or something, or I'm just meeting friends, or if I just want to sit and read, I'd feel very comfortable doing that. So, if there's somebody else doing a similar thing, it kind of helps with that feeling.

Valérie

And what about the physical space (level 2 foyer)? Because obviously it's a very different space. This (pointing at an image of the café) is bright and light and kind of noisy. This (pointing at an image of the foyer) is a different design. What do you like about this space?

Sophie

I like that it is vast. I mean, it's so rare in London to have that open space and you know, having pillars instead of enclosed walls. It makes you feel quite comfortable... and the kind of the chairs and tables sort of dotted around in the space, it's kind of quite rare. I can have my own space, you know, people are not on top of you even though they're with you.

Valérie

Okay, thank you. So, these images shows a different level, this is the mezzanine above the bar, this shows the bridges on either side of the mezzanine, this is next to the restaurant, the skyline restaurant. Do you use these areas?

Sophie

I have done for different reasons. So, where I would use the other floor, you know, to meet people or to come and sit and you know, as a place to go, I've been guided into this space for different reasons. So, for example, there was a sort of family weekend and there were activities for the children. So, we came up to this area and we were using the space. I can't remember what the kids were doing, but there was something, some kind of activity that we came up here for.

Valérie

When was it? How old were your children?

Sophie

They're 15 and 12 now and they were maybe nine and nine and six, something like that.

Valérie

Have you ever done things like coming to read or work in this area?

Sophie

I have not come to work... I don't think... No, I haven't sat and read. But I've sat... Why did I... I think what I've done is because I like this space, you can explore you know, you can walk around and look at the different levels, look at the architecture, look at the interior design. So, I've stopped and paused but not stopped and work or read.

Valérie

So, the qualities that you're looking for in that space or that attract you to that space have been, that you can explore, you can stop, it overlooks the space below, and you have this view onto the interior.

Sophie

Yes, when you walk, you feel comfortable like you're in a museum or an art gallery or something, you feel comfortable to walk and stop and pause.

Valérie

So, you like travelling through the environment.

Sophie

Yeah.

Valérie

So, while we're on the topic of travelling, do you have a specific journey that you like, or do you just decide where to go as your mood takes you? And is it just in this level or do you start below?

Sophie

I usually come in through the side because the station I come into is Waterloo, from where I live. I tend to go up the stairs and, you know, that's the kind of the path that I go. But it's purely down to where I come in the building, you know, more than where I'd like to go. I come

upstairs to use the toilets, or I've come up to, you know, just to walk around and have a look, and yeah, to come to events.

Valérie

Do you mean this level, level five, which is there (pointing at an image of the level 5 foyer). Do you go all the way up here?

Sophie

No.

Valérie

So, would you say that you usually stay within level two and level three?

Sophie

Yeah. I think any further... yeah, I think you kind of stop at that point and then it becomes more enclosed.

Valérie

So, would you say that the two levels (levels 2 and 3) are connected? The spaces, their design?

Sophie

I think that there is a difference. Here (pointing at level 2) you feel like anybody can walk around but it's less clear that you can walk around upstairs. I mean, today they had the barriers (in front of the main stairs on level 2 to discourage people from going up because the upper levels, notably level 5, are still closed outside events due to a lack of available funding to maintain them as a result of the pandemic), and they don't usually have that but the interior kind of makes you feel that it's less of a public space than the ground floor with the table, even though there are tables, and the interior is more lush and more comfortable, but that you kind of feel like well... that I should be paying to be here (laughter).

Valérie

When you say upstairs, do you mean level five?

Sophie

No, I mean everywhere in level three, it feels less public... well... it does feel like a public space, and I do feel comfortable to walk around but you do feel a little bit more precious and a bit more careful.

Valérie

Okay, so, why is that?

Sophie

The carpet, the quality of the chairs is different, the wood panelling, all those sorts of things. It's not so big, you know, it feels more intimate and so it's still public space, but it feels less so than the ground floor.

Valérie

There are several elements here. It's because the materials have changed, it's smaller, more intimate and maybe it's also less busy, quieter?

Sophie

Yes, exactly.

Valérie

So, what do you what do you think of the materials in that area? (Level 3)

Sophie

I love them. I love the combination of different textures, the design of the carpets, its iconic. It's not one square box. It's different levels. I even like the stairs, the width of the steps when you walk on them, it's comfortable. I mean, I just like the way everything is, it feels different, and it feels like a luxury in London to have these wide-open spaces, the proportions of everything feels kind of special and different and the glass, yeah, I mean I like the glass on the stairs because you still have that feeling of open space.

Valérie

So, moving on to level 5. Do you use this area?

Sophie

No, I think probably my main use of the space has been maybe in the evening, maybe after a concert or after an event maybe. You know, but I not in the daytime. It's not somewhere I would come at all.

Valérie

Okay but could you tell me what you think of this space? What kind of qualities resonate with you?

Sophie

The feeling of openness and space remains, it feels like a continuation of the third floor, but I feel that maybe I shouldn't be there during the day if it is for no other reason than walking around the space. I'd feel like... you know, it's like walking around a cinema or a theatre when there is nothing on, you kind of feel like... are security watching me? (laughter). But, you know, during an event it's fine.

Valérie

So, this is a space you associate with events? This is not really a public interior for you, this is associated with events, and the public spaces are on levels 2 and 3? You differentiate in this way between levels?

Sophie

Yeah.

Valérie

Okay, great. So, now I will ask a little bit more about what you do. These pictures show what other people have been doing. So, you can see here, this is a family on a Sunday in the level 2 foyer. They brought their own thermos, he's reading the paper, she's talking with the children. This is somebody who comes here on level 5 to meet with a group of friends. Here we have people meeting for work on level five, people working for London Underground on a break. Also, on level 5, people who organised a game, they were occupying two tables, jackets and bags everywhere stuff everywhere. Here, in the café the image shows a group of people drawing caricatures, and on level 2, someone teaching two people how to play a card game, a group of students occupying a corner setting up for what looks like a fashion photo shoot, and here, on level 5, people rehearsing a dance move. On level 5, these people are just relaxing, sitting on the floor, shoes off. This woman has taken her shoes off and is sitting crossed legged

on a sofa, and he has fallen asleep. Here, in the ballroom, two children and a man are using the columns to play hide and seek and here, in another part of level 2, a man is kicking a ball with his very young toddler.

So, these are examples of what other people have been doing and I'd like to ask you about what you do or did when visiting the public interior of the RFH. Please take some time to reflect on what you do or did. What were you doing? And where were you? Why did you choose a specific location for certain activities? Could you also think about what others would have been doing around you and how this affected you?

Sophie

Can it be any time?

Valérie

Yes, any time.

Sophie

Yes, I can relate to this one, with the children running when they were younger. (pause to reflect) For me, when the children were younger, you know, when you're in London with young children, you've got to hold on to them or you could lose them. Here was where really, they could be free, and you'd feel safe. They could run around a bit, and you'd feel unrestrained meaning you know, they didn't have to hold my hand the whole time.

Valérie

And what makes you feel safe?

Sophie

With the amount of space you know, you can keep an eye on them, you can see them... it's not too rowdy even though there's a lot of people and it's a public space and there is noise, you know, especially at the weekend, it's not fast... especially in you know in these areas (Waterloo and Southbank), it's not too busy (crowded).

Valérie

Would you say that it's managed?

Sophie

Yeah, I suppose. Yeah, the management is not visible, but it's kind of somewhere there. It's because you don't feel sort of overlooked by security, but you feel that there would be someone there if something happened.

Valérie

So, did your children enjoy playing here? Did they enjoy coming here?

Sophie

Yeah, well, we came to specific events here that were for children. So, in the school holidays there were things like you know, puppeteers and theatre groups and I think... it wasn't too formal, and it was free. So, you know, you don't have to book a seat, it's just everybody joining in together and it's that sort of festival kind of feel, you can join in for a bit but then don't worry, if you get distracted, you know, as children can. You can come and go, or join in halfway through, that sort of thing. So, I think they felt comfortable to be themselves. This could be my family. (Pointing at C06, the image of the family around a table on level 2) On days out in London, this is somewhere we would pass because we're coming into Waterloo. And you know, when you're having a day in London with a family, it can be overwhelming at the weekend. There's lots and lots of people, restaurants are busy, coffee shops are busy and even if we'd done those things in our day, it's about having a quiet space somewhere you can go to and rest, where you can do what this chap is doing (pointing at a man reclining on a sofa with his feet up reading his paper). I don't think I've actually done that, but I think my husband has. So, this is exactly what we would do, you know, we would come in and just have some respite and maybe get a coffee. But if we had a picnic, I'd feel comfortable that we could have our picnic in here. We've definitely done that.

Valérie

And what about the other people around you when you're there? Do you remember how this affected you?

Sophie

Yeah, I found it really, really interesting. The different people and the different activities; you could see some people were having a first date, there were groups of friends, young people, lots of people with laptops, working or studying, lots of people reading, it's really interesting, having that kind of life, everybody is different, you know, old couples, young people, children,

students, you know, everybody is able to use the space in a multitude of different ways and you do get the impression that people might be here for most of the day.

Valérie

And do you think that what people around you do actually impact on what you would be doing as well?

Sophie

Yeah. I think I'm not surprised by somebody doing a dance routine. In fact, I think I've seen that, and I've seen them out on the terrace as well. I think it must have been people rehearsing for something, some kind of performance. You know I think it's creative activities like dance and drawing and that sort of thing. I'm not surprised that they happen here.

Valérie

Have you done any yourself?

Sophie

I might have some time. Now this is probably a long time ago though. I went to art college, and I'd go to the Tate Modern and I would have come and use this space and read or make notes or studied.

Valérie

So, in your early 20s, you already knew about this building?

Sophie

Yes.

Valérie

And what made you choose to come here? Do you remember?

Sophie

I think I'd because it's somewhere that I came with my parents when I was young.

Valérie

So, you knew it before from your parents, you already had a connection. Were you parents regular visitors?

Sophie

Not regular, or at least not with us, but yeah, I think maybe they brought us here a couple of times. So, it was a familiar place before I was in my 20s and when I was studying, it was a place that I felt... you know, I kind of sought out creative spaces to go to. I saw this as a creative space, coming in for temporary exhibitions, or to see what's going on and what's happening and to pick up leaflets.

Valérie

Okay. Do you feel that you can do what you want here, or do you think there are restrictions?

Sophie

There are some restrictions.

Valérie

What kind of restriction?

Sophie

Okay, for example, I might have a business meeting here, I would do something creative, an activity, I would bring a picnic, but I wouldn't have a party. Bringing a picnic is one thing but catering for a party another.

Valérie

Do you think that the restrictions come from you thinking I won't do this because I feel I shouldn't or is it because you feel you can't because somebody here might say something about it?

Sophie

I feel that it comes from me. I think that, with that example, like say you organise to have your birthday party here and you have food that you put out for people, and you have balloons. I think if you were respectful, they might allow that. But it would be me feeling like I was sort of disrespecting the space because it's a shared space, a collective space.

Valérie

Okay, thank you very much. I have here a list of keywords. Could you select 3 to 5 keywords that best represent your experience of the RFH?

The interviewee spends some time selecting.

Valérie

You selected entertaining, pleasurable, welcoming, comforting, and restful. So, why does the experience of the public interior the Royal Festival feels entertaining for you?

Sophie

I feel inspired by the interiors, it feels like I'm getting something from the experiences, not just like going to a cafe or a normal space, I feel enriched by... you know, there isn't the word inspired [on the list of words provided] but I think entertaining kind of covers that feeling that I have and because I think I also associate it with entertainment, you know, going to concerts or cultural activities.

Valérie

Would you prefer to use the word inspired?

Sophie

Yes.

Valérie

So, we can add it to the list.

Sophie

Can I write it?

Valérie

Yes, write it down. How about pleasurable?

Sophie

It's about having a nice experience when you're here, being a happy space.

Valérie

So, you have happy memories? Would you say those happy memories are the part of the reason why you may come back?

Sophie

Yeah. Yeah.

Valérie

Okay. And then you have welcoming, comforting and restful. So welcoming. What makes you say that?

Sophie

I've never been here and felt that it wasn't the right time, I always feel that I can come in and that will be a seat for me there. There's always a place for you there, no matter what time of day, or what day of the week I've been here. It's always that sort of we're open and we welcome you feeling. There're always people around you but not so many that you feel there isn't a space or an empty chair for you.

Valérie

What about comforting?

Sophie

I think it's a space that stayed quite constant through my life, you know, from visiting as a child to me in my 40s and bringing my children here. And I don't know whether the interiors have changed, but in my head they haven't. In my head there's still a similar feeling when so much has changed around us.

Valérie

And then finally restful. Why do you find the public interior of the RFH restful?

Sophie

There's a sense of calm, the fact that I have come to rest, you know, I've kind of associated it with that, a break in a busy day, coming here to rest. It's the vibe of the place you know, even when there is something on and I've been here when there's something quite... there's a band playing or something downstairs, and it's really kind of busy with people, but then you walk up to the next level and there's this quiet space for you.

Valérie

Would you say that you come here to replenish yourself, to get yourself ready to go out again perhaps?

Sophie

Yeah, exactly that, yeah.

Valérie

Okay. So finally, what do you like the most about the public interior of the RFH?

Sophie

It's an inclusive space... I think that really sums it up for me. The main thing about this space is that it's quite unique, it has a lovely environment but it's also very inclusive, not just in the kind of creative activities that they have, which covers a spectrum of all sorts of different things, but also in the type of people that come here, the type of activities that you can do. It feels genuinely for everybody. So, that's a big part of it, feeling welcome and the other qualities I chose. All these feelings come from the fact that it feels like it's an inclusive space.

Valérie

Okay, that's great. And for balance, is there anything that you don't like or is there anything that could be different to enhance your experience?

Sophie

Yeah, I think there is a slight confusion. You know, for example, Southbank Centre or Royal Festival Hall? I think it is the wayfinding elements of like, where am I? What am I doing? Like where is where is everything? Where should I be?

Valérie

When you're inside the building?

Sophie

Yeah.

Valérie

Even though you know it fairly well?

Sophie

Yes, you still get that feeling.

Valérie

And do you think that it would be important for you if it was managed more? Would you prefer if there were designated areas for different activities or people for example, an area for families, for reading quietly, etc.

Sophie

I think there is something lacking but I don't know. I don't want to say this is the family area. This is the reading area. I don't want that. But I want more guidance that I am in the right place, and I know where I'm going. For example, when I meet friends here, they say, I meet you at the Cafe at the front of the Southbank Centre or when you said meet me at the Riverside Cafe. I kind of know where it is but I'm not sure, I didn't know it was called like that.

Valérie

So, you're talking about a better understanding of what the different areas are, about the relationships between the different elements?

Sophie

Yeah, yeah. It's a bit ambiguous but I wouldn't want to take too much away from that because I think that's nice so you don't want a designated area, but I think maybe it would add to the comfort of being here if you felt like you knew where you were.

Valérie

Okay, that's the end of the interview. Thank you very much, that was very helpful. I hope you enjoyed it.

KEVIN

Valérie

First, I would like to ask you if you could describe your connection to the Royal Festival. How long have you been coming here? And how often do you visit?

Kevin

I've lived in London since the 1970s, but I probably first came here with my mum, I probably came to a classical concert. You know, either with my parents or somebody when I was quite young. And then after that when I came to London, I would go occasionally to see something but not that often. But my fondest memories are just sort of hanging out downstairs occasionally when I'd come past and when I used to go to see performances, black and white

films, silent movies mostly with the orchestra playing to the silent movie. It was a nice thing to bring my kids to. We used to get to get a box for no more than the normal tickets for those shows. And I love, absolutely love that. So that's my fondest.

Valérie

So, you were introduced to it, and you've been coming here for quite a while, since the 70s.

Kevin

Yeah, probably. I can't actually remember but I know I came through one or two classical concerts; I can't remember when they were, but I have a feeling I must have come to London. My parents lived in Surrey, and they took us to cultural things so, I imagine they took us here. But then when I moved into London in 77, I would come occasional classical concerts, occasionally bands, mostly world music, I suppose more than anything else. I don't come in that often, but you know...

Valérie

I'm interested in the festival as a public interior, the space, and the people within it. So, I'd like you to think about your relationship to the environment but not the auditorium. I will now show you a collection of images and these are prompts to help you reflect on your experience. This is about how you define a personal space for yourself and with others if you are with other people. Which locations you use the most and why. What characteristics draw you to these locations.

The interviewer continues with a description of the images to help the interviewee situate the locations across levels 2, 3 and 5. Which of the areas shown on these images resonate with you the most and why?

Kevin

Okay for my own personal spirit, I've always found it quite exciting coming here in some ways because there's always people doing stuff, and you see people, and this is from... I know everyone does it now, but I remember at the beginning, you'd find people working who obviously just come in here to do this. I'm pretty sure we did tutorials here on some occasions because we had some sort of project which we would come up here for. I don't remember which university I was involved with at the time but we did some project where I met students in various places around here so it was quite clear that it felt that you could just hang out here. So, I'm more used to the big space downstairs. If I do come pass here, there is a sort of a slight

feeling of excitement, because there are people who you think you might have something in common with and they're doing this sort of like interesting stuff. So, it feels like it can be a very creative space. And what is quite nice is that you can find a lot of nook and crannies and sit and talk or look at your emails or whatever. So, it feels very open in that sense. When I've met people... I haven't used that [referring to the level 2 foyer] when I've met people formerly because you're normally in the cafe or something, and then you just stay in the café, but you know, I suppose you could wander around the building and find places to see.

Valérie

Do you wander around the building or do you go to specific locations? You mentioned that you go downstairs a lot?

Kevin

I haven't explored... I haven't been up here [level 5] so you know. I mean, I think I've explored other buildings more than this one. Yeah. But no, I haven't explored a lot but I'm aware of a whole complex, that it's got lots of interesting spaces which you could sort of use, and I suppose abuse, in a creative sense. It feels like a creative place.

Valérie

Do you know why you we haven't explored this place? Specifically, you said you explore some other spaces, but not this one?

Kevin

I'm always too busy. I usually come for something specific. I mean, I sort of see parallels between here and the Barbican Centre, and the Pompidou Centre. I found the Pompidou Centre one of the most exciting places I've ever been to, and that was long time ago when I went there and... it felt to me that that's what a public building could be. And this [the RFH]... I mean, I came here once when there was a tea dance with people doing ballroom dancing. It was quite nice to be able to come in to see an event... and sometimes there are band. I mean, if I lived closer, and I would pass it, I'd use it a lot more. I live in Hackney and I don't come this way for work so I mostly come here because I want to see something. What would probably encourage me to come more would be something I could just come in on an evening, you know, without having to book a ticket... sort of, nothing to do, let's go the Southbank Centre. You know, I might use it more.

Valérie

And do you think that's not possible?

Kevin

Well, I've seen bands playing in foyers and things, but I still find it difficult to... I don't ever manage to get hold of a schedule... you know what I mean? The Barbican is different because you have that huge pamphlet while here, I'm not aware that I can pick something up to tell me what's on.

Valérie

So, what you're saying is that you see this space more as a cultural venue than as a public space where you can go and relax?

Kevin

Yeah. But I do think it's got lots of exciting potential for that [to be a public space], and I have enjoyed it in the past.

Valérie

So now I will show you what other people have been doing. Let me know if it triggers any memories, not necessarily that you may have done, but also what you may have seen.

The interviewer continues with a description of the images to help the interviewee situate the locations across levels 2, 3 and 5. Which of these images resonate with you're the most and why?

Kevin

That really makes me feel... that kind of answers my question to myself, or you asked me that question. How could you get me here more often? It would be that sort of sense of being able to drop in, you know, come in and there would be something interesting to do. I don't get that. I get the impression that it's got lots of potential and I could come here and sit and read and type at my computer, and it'd be quite nice to have people around. When you're showing me things like people playing cards and people doing drawings together... writing poetry, reading poetry, playing music, it would be really nice to sort of feel like you could just drop in and participate in something without having to look to see something. You know, it's Friday night. I got nothing to do, and I haven't arranged anything with anybody. I'd love to be able to just

come along and sort of join a group. I'm very bad at organising my social life. So, it would be great to just be able to turn up and find something

Valérie

All the activities shown on the images here are independent from the RFH. So, people come here and just do it. This is not organised by the RFH, this is purely self-directed.

Kevin

Yeah, so that sounds great. It would be great to participate in that if you knew about what was going on. I mean, maybe it's a bit like Friday nights at the V&A. I mean I often pop it into the V&A because I used to work there so I know it quite well, but I still quite enjoy this because it's something to do. You can meet somebody who doesn't know and show him around and then you can go listen to a band. I don't get that impression that it's that sort of drop-in here.

Valérie

No, you're right, the people who are doing all these things come together as a small group. So here you have a family, here someone reading a newspaper, here you have a group who met every Wednesdays to draw caricatures. So, they're completely independent, using the space as a location to carry out their own activities. Do you feel that you could do what you like, or do you feel that there would be some restrictions?

Kevin

I suppose. I mean, I've got a writers group. We do it mostly online now but when we used to meet up, we used to meet up in a certain place, but I could imagine suggesting we meet here. But then you'd have that slight problem if you couldn't find enough a place. It's not that it wouldn't work but what if you can't find 10 chairs or it's too loud for reading out a piece you've written. Yeah, it'd be a bit hit and miss maybe.

Valérie

Yeah, I understand what you mean. I'm interested in the kind of qualities that you would associate with the environment. Could we go back to exploration? You told me that you don't really explore?

Kevin

No, I wouldn't say I've explored. I've seen bits and places in different areas, so, I've been more than just downstairs but I haven't set out to explore in an exploring way.

Valérie

So, thinking about the interior space, for example downstairs, or when you walk up the stairs, the materials and interior vistas, the views to the outside. What is your perspective on this?

Kevin

It seems all very open and bright, and lots of light coming in. I think it is accessible, friendly and comfortable. It doesn't look dirty or rundown. It feels quite welcoming. It makes you realise that Modernist architecture is much better than you think, it's much better than people think really because of its openness. And obviously, it's flexible because a lot of it has been painted, you know, I quite like concrete anyway. I mean, that's what's happened to it recently isn't it, it was painted, I'm sure that [pointing at the walls and columns around us] wouldn't have been painted.

Valérie

What about other people, the social space? Earlier, you talked about being there and being surrounded by other people. Is it something that is important to you?

Kevin

Yeah, yeah, I mean it just felt like there was a sort of a sense of purpose there, I don't know why but there's sort of a sense of potentially [emphasis on potentially] excitement. You know, people doing interesting things and being engaged with whatever it is they're doing. If I could be one of those people who could concentrate out of my home, I mean, I just think I'd probably wouldn't actually do very much work if I was actually here, but I can see it as a potential place to come and write. I just kind of prefer to be at home to do those sorts of things. If I was a cafe sort of person would definitely consider coming here.

Valérie

Okay, thank you. And then, I'm interested in the qualitative aspect of your experience. So, here is a list of keywords for you to choose from. Could you select three to five keywords that best represent your perception and experience of the RFH? Then I will ask you to discuss your choices.

Kevin

Just before, in the back of my mind, this might be entirely irrelevant, but one of the things I really loved about it was when we went to see those silent movies. We took our two young children along. We had a box. It was so good; they could sort of just lie on the floor and kick

their feet in the air. Oh my God! They could just sort of hang out there and enjoy it. And that would have never worked if they were in the seat. Yeah, so anyway, that's a different project.

So, I think it's energising, it's enjoyable... it's lively...probably uplifting... and it might be inviting.

Valérie

Okay. So, what made you think about these keywords? Why do you think is energising? What makes it energising?

Kevin

[Energising] It just makes me feel like you can get things done, you know, that you could be networking and that there are exciting things to be done. I don't know why it just makes me feel that the convergence of people with similar... well not necessarily similar things, but you know... people just really busy doing things that I'd quite like to know what they were doing. So that sort of feels energising.

Valérie

What about enjoyable?

Kevin

[Enjoyable] Well, I've never been here and not enjoyed myself, I've always enjoyed this. I mean, you know sometimes what I like best about London is that sometimes you can be somewhere, and you can think this is the best place to be tonight. Everyone else is really missed out by not being here tonight. At least several of those times have been here, and more here than anywhere else.

Valérie

Inviting?

Kevin

[Inviting] Because it does feel... it encourages you to come in.

Valérie

Okay.

Kevin

[Lively] It feels to me... there's always a sense of purpose about the place, that's why I think lively. I mean it just doesn't feel like people's snoozing or feel to me that people are relaxing in the sort of sense of sunbathing so it's more purposeful now. So, probably purposeful is another word I would use. [Uplifting] And because of that liveliness and enjoyability it feels uplifting to the spirit.

Valérie

Can I go back to inviting because you say it always invites you to come in. Is this about coming in from the outside?

Kevin

[Inviting] Yeah, it does feel that you can come in. So maybe because the cafe is half inside, half outside, the windows and doors are bright, but also because of my experience of coming in here. You don't feel like you need to give somebody a ticket [you're free to come in even without a ticket]. You don't feel like there's a barrier. You don't feel when you come in that someone's sort of saying what are you doing here. It feels like you can just stroll in that you're perfectly allowed to stroll in. I think that's very important because quite often it's not like that [in other places]. I think that's partly from the architecture, but mainly due to the experience of coming in. It feels like I could come in whenever I wanted if I wanted to.

Valérie

Yeah, you mean the way it's managed.

Kevin

Yes, the way it's managed. It doesn't feel like there's a typical gatekeeper.

Valérie

Okay. So finally, what do you like the most about the public interior of the Royal Festival? What do you value the most?

Kevin

Well, I really like that big space downstairs, I just think it's a really great space. Normally you can get a seat and there's often something interesting going on like an exhibition or the tea dance I saw. So, it just feels...yeah, I just really like that big open space.

Valérie

Would you miss it if it wasn't available?

Kevin

Oh, yeah, definitely.

Valérie

And is there anything that you don't like about the public interior of the RFH, something you think could be different?

Kevin

I suppose at times it is very white so it could more inclusive... more diverse. I think at other times, it probably is more diverse, so it depends on what's going on. Well at the moment [at the time of the interview] it's not very diverse.

Valérie

Why do you think that is? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Kevin

I suppose because I work in museums, it's very much a sort of middle-class thing to go to museums. I know people in museums who try to do a lot about it, and they're succeeding to some extent, but it's still very much... I just think it's people just don't have that... probably... that sense of entitlement. They don't feel it's their place.

Valérie

Okay, well, thank you very much for your time. That was very useful.

STUART

Valérie

Thank you so much for agreeing to contribute to this PhD research. The purpose of this interview is to discuss your experience of the public interior of the RFH, focusing on the spaces that are freely accessible in this building. I have a series of images from a case study I conducted over a period between 2017 and 2019. The role of the images is to help trigger memories and to guide the conversation. The Royal Festival Hall is both a cultural institution and the public interior and sometimes it can be difficult to differentiate between the two, but I'd like you to focus on your experience of the RFH as a public interior.

Stuart

Yes, sometimes it's difficult, not just difficult for the visitor, it's actually something the management are clearly conflicted about.

Valérie

They have a different needs to address, yes. And so, if you can try to focus primarily on your experience of the public interior, which may include free events, that's part of your experience, and that's fine, but not your experience in the auditorium. First, could you describe your connection to the RFH?

Stuart

Okay, well, well, my connection to the place is that it was like heaven. For me when I was a child. I didn't come here very often till I was a teenager, but I did come several times. I didn't come with my parents, although they quite liked classical music, but no, I came with older friends. I was raised a Catholic, I knew a couple of teenage boys who were into classical music as well, I was very into classical music at that age already. And we used to come here, I was allowed to go with them, and it was partly because of the, I have to say, because of the experience in the auditorium. I mean, the experience of the auditorium was what it was about me in those days. I didn't really think so much about the spaces I was traversing to get to the auditorium. But the place as a whole was for me the most wonderful place in London. I mean, it just was... I loved to come here, and just coming into the space was magical as a child.

Valérie

Why?

Stuart

Why? Well first of all, it was because it was so open, the main foyer is such a huge volume. And because all the way all the stairs are coming up, either coming up right down from the street level, upstairs and through the street level entrance, the one which faces the Queen Elizabeth Hall. You come over the bridge which is how I came today actually and most often used to come why my friends. We would come down to embankment and then walk across because it was a nice walk, so that was part of it actually, for me as a as a child and as a young person as a teenager. It was the journey partly because of the feeling of expectation. The journey to this was part of it. It's kind of like you set off you know it's going to be some kind of wonderful experience. And then you have a scene where you, usually at night... crossing the river Thames is beautiful and the view from that bridge is fantastic, especially at night. And we're coming

across the bridge and we're coming here. In those days the stairs from the bridge didn't go... there was just the main stair which goes down to the embankment level and the shorter stairs which reach the foyer level weren't there and so you went down and then you had to come up again inside. So that was part of it. So, it was... not I didn't think of it this way at all then, but I think I can speak about it this way now. It was a journey with a series of stages, which first of all, brought you here and the last stage of bringing you to this place was this kind of crossing of the river which was very, very... well kind of a mystical experience. The whole thing about crossing the river, the ground, the water and all these associations that we have unconsciously and then coming into this [the RFH]. The trees are comparatively recent. They certainly weren't there 60 years ago. They're lovely, I've got no problem with them but the thing about it is that this building seemed to float. It seemed to be on the water because it was virtually at a level that was so close to the edge it kind of, especially at night, it seemed to be floating which was again magical. And I think it was magical to me in a way beyond my childhood. Anyways, the thing is, you come in and then there's a series of... whichever way you enter except coming the way people are now encouraged to come in which is directly into the foyer on the Mandela side of the building. But you know, in the old days you used typically to enter... one way or another you would enter and then you would kind of rise up through the building. So, you've got the level and you can walk, walk up the broad stone stairs, the marble stairs, into the ballroom, which was one entrance, and the other was to come in through the front which wasn't sort of commercialised in those days. I think that's part of. You came into the building and the building seemed to just open up to you. It was kind of like... it was feeling very welcoming, extraordinarily welcoming. And it still is. I think one of the wonders of this building as a piece of architecture is that it is so welcoming. and it's just so... classless, there's no feeling of... only some people can go... well it seems a bit now because of the members area but the members area is fortunately tucked away. In general, the feeling is, you know, this is your space, you feel as if it belongs to you. And I think that's undoubtedly a product of the post war because after the war years and a very long period of Conservative government, it was an extraordinary Labour Government, a totally amazing government, the best this country ever had. And this was part of part of that, and it was about celebrating, people were here to celebrate. This was in the 50s.

Valérie

Okay, so you're talking about the time when the building was first built?

Stuart

Yes. I'm going right back to when it was built. Amazingly, this is something which is a product of a local government. It is an extraordinary building. I mean, usually they're terrible. But somehow, they got it right. And I think it was because of the brief was, this is about celebration and for everyone, this is supposed to be for everyone. So, they kind of said, okay, we'll do a building for you, which is about celebration. And they did and that's why I think people come here and whatever background they come from, wherever they come from, they just feel I can come into this place. They feel welcomed. Now how that that was technically achieved... apart from the vastness of volumes and the way the stairs work, beyond that, I have no idea what the architects did which gives it that feeling, because it is quite extraordinary feeling and I think it's unique in London, and completely unique in many places.

Valérie

There's a fluidity in the design the building that encourages movement. I don't know if something that you've experienced yourself, you know, this notion of travelling through this building. Is this something that you've ever done?

Stuart

Yes, very much. I think there is this feeling that first of all, it's a feeling that you can have an adventure here. I mean, you can go through really quite constrained spaces to get to this vast central areas. If you come in on the foyer level, in the front of the building, it's very, very low ceiling, and similarly if you come in right down from street level... the basement I think... is also quite like this. It's quite constraining but the exit from it is a huge very wide staircase, I think it's in three big sections. And so, you could go down in a tide or come up and there's loads of space, so the stairs beckon you, and it beckons you and then you go up. You're kind of like in this cabin, in this huge boat filled with light and that's the other thing which is important about this building is light. I think it's kind of extraordinary in that sense. Obviously, particularly in the daytime because it's like... I mean like now, this is 1950, this glass wall, it's not 1990. So, I think they were incredible and being in this interior, journeying and having an adventure then you can see there's lots of ways out this space, there's this huge space and which is a great place to sit and do things. It's a great place to sit and be with other people. Sit and work, or just be, it's a great place. Yes, downstairs in the main hall.

Valérie

Do you enjoy it? Is it something that you come and do, I mean just to sit there?

Stuart

The last time I was coming here a lot... well, I come here a lot to the concerts. That's a completely different experience, I have to be kind of straight about that. But Narrative Environments had a very close relationship with the Festival Hall for a while, fortunately in the past, when the woman who was in charge of participation was a very dynamic and very imaginative kind of person.

Valérie

Is it fairly recent?

Stuart

No, nothing in the immediate past, it's certainly more than 10 years. Things here have kind of followed this kind of path [Stuart makes a wave pattern with his hand]. There's been moments [under certain leadership] where it's been amazing. Totally amazing.

Valérie

So, it changes over time? Not only the way it is designed but also the way it is managed?

Stuart

Absolutely. I mean, there was the previous high points, and it was a very, very high point, was when Ken Livingstone was in charge of what was then the governing body for London. At that point, Margaret Thatcher... I'm talking about the 80s, it was in her time, and she was determined to get rid of it. And she passed a law which banned all metropolitan authorities, and they all shut down because she was absolutely determined to get rid of Ken Livingstone because he set up in opposition... and it was so centred here [RFH].

Valérie

Yes. In 1983 they created the open foyer policy, which changed the RFH, this is when it became a public interior proper.

Stuart

Yeah, that was definitely a change and there was this huge foyer, and it became a place where you could meet or see people, just by chance if you happen to be there yourself, then there's a fairly high chance you'd see somebody and it was very much about the possibility of encounter, which some authors in our culture have written about. One thing about this place in the 80s was that it was like that. I remember for example, I was there with my partner and

my little girl who was three or four, we were there with my daughter and a very good friend of hers. We just went there to hang out. We didn't go to any concert, we just went to hang out and lots of other people were there, hanging out. I was sitting there. My daughter and her friend zoomed off and I think my partner and mother the other child were having a 'tête à tête' you know. So, in that kind of place there's always something to see, there's always something going on. And even if you know nobody you can still narrativise it as you are inclined to do so, you wonder what's going on, you know you make up stories in your head about people, about what people are doing. It's a space which encourages you to do that. I don't know whether it deliberately encourages it, but it does.

Valérie

Do you know why?

Stuart

I do think it's something to do with the vastness of space and the sense that there are usually lots of people, people who come from all over. The sense that you know, people come from all over to this place, some are passing through some are... they're all there for different reasons. So, there's a very strong... shall we say... narrative framework of kind of... to encounter adventure or spotting something, you know, those kinds of stories that you get, I would say, in both adult and child literature.

Valérie

I'd like to show you some pictures of people in the public interior of the RFH. Here you can see people having a meeting, these are on a break from work, this group has taken over part of the level 5 foyer to play a card game. There are also lots of children playing in the main foyer and I documented their movement. They often like playing hide and seek, using the columns to hide in the ballroom. In this scene, a family is relaxing around a table as if they were at home. This man is very comfortable, lounging on the sofa, reading the paper with his feet propped on a low stool. This woman here comes in every Sunday to meet her friends, arranging a space for them when she arrives at 10am when the RFH opens, and they've been doing this for over 20 years. These people are offering caricature drawings, he seems to be teaching a game, they are preparing for a fashion shoot, they are rehearsing a dance. So, you're right, there's so much going on. Is there anything specific that you've noticed that you saw other people do of that you did yourself?

Stuart

What can I say for myself depends on what age I was, I think also on how well my memory is functioning. But first, just to finish this particular story I was telling you it did because it's somehow fits in what we are saying. So, I was kind of looking around and I saw this really beautiful woman. She was walking, no, she was striding, she looked very purposeful. She was definitely on a mission. And she looked great, irresistible, so I went up to her and I recognised her. I knew her very very well. I knew her as a girl, but I hadn't seen her for a while. And last time I'd seen her she was in her, I suppose, her mid-teens, maybe 17, and now she was a grown woman in her mid 20s. So, it was a surprise, but it also felt you know... of course, she would be here. Her father's an artist, she's an artist herself. And so, yeah, here we are, I think it feels like those sorts of things could happen. To just meet people because they just happen to be here.

Valérie

You said you came here with family or friends to hang out. Did you use to do did you come here on your own as well?

Stuart

I did when I was younger if I felt there was something happening. When I was in my teens, childhood and teens, my parents lived in Crouch End and getting down from Crouch End to here was a bit of a journey. It is a bit of a journey. Yes, it's kind of fiddly. And so that wasn't terribly enticing, especially when you're that young to be honest, and there were plenty of exciting things to do in Finsbury Park so anyway, I think this wasn't a place which I kind of sought out unless I felt there was something to go to.

Valérie

But you said you did come with your partner to hang out?

Stuart

Well, we came just to hang out, but we did come to hang out because we thought it would be lively because this was in the 80s when it was extraordinary here. I mean we did come for something that was a festival which was about world music, and it was just a breath-taking experience. And what was amazing about it was the audience. I mean the music was incredible, I remember walking in and there just was this storyteller and his accompanying musicians and it was completely wonderful. I can't begin to tell you how wonderful it was. So

that was incredible. But what was most incredible was the audience because it was just anybody, absolutely anybody.

Valérie

So, it was it was the diversity of the audience?

Stuart

Yeah.

Valérie

So, this is interesting because some may say that the Royal Festival Hall is not very diverse.

Stuart

That's because the audience that comes to classical music is typically white middle class. You know, it looks to me as in 20 years' time there will be nobody going to classical music concerts because most of the audience are shall we say of pension age, sort of in their 60s, 70s and older, white middle class. I think in some ways the orchestra is either not trying very hard or is not very successful at outreach, particularly to younger people, allowing them to create a situation where young people think hey, this is for me. I have a very particular relationship with classical music with music in general, I wanted to be a composer since I was four. Apparently. My mother said I used to go to her with one... hold up a drawing of mine and then I would sing it to her. Do I remember this? No, not at all, but my mother told me about it.

Valérie

So, you're more likely to come to the RFH if you think that there is something going on rather than coming on a day like today when there is nothing, but you could come here to read a book or whatever?

Stuart

I might. I mean we do. Tim and I do come occasionally, but I'm not quite such a hanger out as I used to be partly standing is more difficult for me. Since I had a stroke about 10 years ago, it sort of makes a big difference to what I can and can't do. But I mean I suppose old people do hang out, but I don't. I think I'm lazy and I expect people come to me.

Valérie

Apart from the festival. Do you remember anything else that you've seen people doing around you?

Stuart

Oh, yeah, yeah. And I think that in that perspective, it has been exemplary. I don't know what it's like now. I mean, as I said, I think the current management are very timid and I think their response to the pandemic was a disgrace actually. I pick up that they're kind of still timid now about sort of getting people in and it seems as if they don't really, maybe don't particularly, want to have that kind of crowded liveliness.

Valérie

Yes, the pandemic had a significant impact. If you take yourself back before the pandemic, any time before the pandemic, to the context of the public interior. What is your favourite place or favourite places to go to in this interior?

Stuart

During the concert times there is a bar on level four with a really nice space on both sides, it's very open. So, I think again, you come off the stairs and you get to a fairly broad corridor, which is leading to the doors kind of mid-level where we're the first bank of seats for the front stalls is and there's a pathway across and pathways going down [in the auditorium]. So, it's quite important entrance but if you go past that, then you come to the bar and it's actually a really nice fit. It's full of tables and chairs, there are sofas, and they've actually improved it. I think it must have been since the pandemic or during the pandemic because it is definitely quite recent. And I think when we started coming back once it was open for concerts again, we were surprised by some of the furnishing, and it was a big improvement.

Valérie

And if you don't come for a concert, where would you go?

Stuart

I could well come here for meetings, and it would typically happen in the main foyer because I like the space.

Valérie

Apart from the fact that it is big, could you try to describe what attracts you to this space?

Stuart

Again, it's not just big, but it is quite a complex space as well. And it's quite interesting. So, again, it's quite a nice if you like people watching which I do very much actually. It sometimes gets me into trouble. It's a very, very good space to be in because there are stairs coming in, stairs coming down. You can see up and you may just see somebody's head on whatever it is that balcony which runs across is [the mezzanine on level 3]. There's also a sunken area of the ballroom floor itself which is down and so on and so forth.

Valérie

And when you come to the main foyer, where do you go? You've got a choice of places within it, it's not just one huge space, there are different areas. Where would you go?

Stuart

Where do I go? I tend to prefer what I call the Mandela side. I like that side.

Valérie

Yes, I know which one you mean. Why do you like it?

Stuart

It's probably because of the light. I'm typically there I suppose in the afternoon, I'm not really sort of going out in the morning kind of person, and the light would be on that side of the building at that time of day. In the days of when we had this very close relationship [between the Narrative Environments course and the RFH] I was very much instrumental in what was going on between the course and the RFH, partly because I had such a strong relationship with the building. There was a period when it was completely closed and it did go through refurbishing and this was when we did a lot of projects, which I supervised, mainly because they were interactive projects of one form or another and that was my area of expertise, interaction design. And so that was very important, it was a big thing where you had a collaboration between some kind of business or enterprise and an academic thing where you had a student who typically would have graduated from an MA, they would graduate up into this kind of a fellowship position where they were doing something which was an academic component. And I would meet with this very clever student and would choose this space [in the Mandela side].

Valérie

Okay, can I ask you about the materiality of the RFH? You mentioned the light, which is quite an important thing for you and going back to the design of the interior, are materials important to you, how do they resonate with you, how would you define their sensory qualities?

Stuart

I think first of all, it's the visual quality in the materials. It's not just in the way that the space has been organised, but actually, take this bar of wood, the use of wood is beautiful in this building, and when you come down out of the auditorium, or go up into it, or you're going by the stairs, there are very broad bannisters, broad enough for people on either side to put their hand on the wood, and there's a groove.

Valérie

Do you put your hand in the groove? Do you want to touch?

Stuart

Oh, yes. Well, nowadays I more or less have to otherwise I would fall down the stairs. But I always did. I think from when I was a kid and I could cram my whole hand. Yeah, I remember doing that. So, I made my fingers like this [showing the movement of the fingers to fit into the groove].

Valérie

So, you want to touch it?

Stuart

I think yes, a lot. Okay, so there are a lot of things here with a materiality that is inviting. That it's either just the nature of the material and you want to touch it. That wood is so beautiful. You know, the use of metal and wood in close proximity to each other is very well managed, I think. And there are different ways it's done in different parts of the building. Like this detail here right in front of us, the steel or brass and then the wood and the glass in between. I think there's something nicely balanced about it. In other places, it's just brass and anyway, there's a lot of variety. It's interesting. It's a lot of variety in the design but it's very harmonious. And it's partly because I think the materials have been very carefully chosen to fit with one another and there aren't many of them, but they're just used in lots of different ways, they are put together in different combinations. And so that's where the kind of complexity comes from,

it's all these different ways, different shapes, different banister rails, and it's very particular and unusual because you know, it's wood steel glass in some spaces, it's wood glass in others, and in some it's just glass and... I don't know.... I mean, I love [verbal emphasis] the carpet. Maybe that's just familiarity because it's seen that carpet since I first came here... but I think there's something very nice about it... I don't know exactly. And it's carpet. You don't get carpets in buildings of this sort in this nation. I think one of the things was is that it was built in the immediate post war period when things were pretty drab. There was very little exuberance in design. It was all very utilitarian. Got to make things like prefabs and the prefab where we lived in was that kind of institutional green, sort of mushroomy colour, and some bits of furniture which would now be worth 1000s. Anyway, but then there was this. That was one of the things about the festival of Britain, it was about saying that we can just go bonkers. It had things like the Skylon, and you know all these kind of amazing sculptural objects clustered around this building, and this building was the focus of that. The building was about joy. I mean, I think it really works and they really pull it off.

Valérie

Do you think the RFH still has this impact? That it still has this ability to bring joy?

Stuart

I completely, utterly agree. I can't think of a specific moment where that's been the case for me, but I do think that it is that perfect magic, that it was about joy and it still is, and everybody feels it when they come in. Can you put your finger on it?

Valérie

Well, I will ask you to do just that. I have a list of words here, different types of emotional qualities. They are organised in columns because they represent four categories of classifications. I would like you to select 3 to 5 keywords, those that best represent your experience of the RFH. We'll discuss your selection afterwards. [Stuart takes a few minutes to complete the activity]

Okay, that's great. So, you've chosen energising, convivial and welcoming. Could you please start by explaining why you chose energising?

Stuart

It's energising because when I come here, I'm expecting to have a great experience inside the auditorium, but I think it is energising anyway, I mean, going back to what I was saying about

this fellowship for this student, Kelsey, and I was her supervisor for that fellowship. So, I had to meet her once a week. And we always met here, and we always met and sat on that side, the Mandela side in the seats that are on that side of the foyer. Why? I'm not entirely sure. I think it was definitely my choice, but I don't remember choosing it. So, I think it was an attraction to that particular spot that I have, and I think it's something that was probably something to do with the light will be my guess. In general, I think about... what was the case was that those experiences that I had with Kelsey were very energetic. And the discussion that we had were partly about... we're about the architecture of this place, and because she was running projects with staff and with incoming children and so forth. And she was a very lively and imaginative woman. And so, she had lots of energy. But we agreed that there was a lot of energy coming from the building itself. And we both felt that it was about two main things, one was purely the dimensions that you suddenly found that, you know, not everybody else but you [emphasis], as an individual, had been gifted this enormous space and you felt it belonged to you. Which is a very rare feeling in this country. It's not a rare of feeling in other countries. For political reasons basically, but in this country, because everything belongs to somebody, a lot of it belongs to the queen or the aristocracy and then everything belongs to somebody. So, there's no... very little of this country belongs to the people. If you go to France, it all belongs to the people, since the revolution, and the interesting thing there is if you go to a French park, they're much better cared for.

Valérie

But you can't sit on the grass. You are in restricted what you can do.

Stuart

Yes, it's true, but you don't see rubbish in French parks like you see in English parks, and it's not because loads and loads and loads of people are employed to go around picking them up. It's because people don't leave rubbish. Anyway, this is one of the places in this country that I know where you go into, and you feel this belongs to me. And it's a very special feeling. And as I say, because it's so rare in this country, it's very, very special. So, I think that's a hugely energising thing, a thing that makes me smile. All this belongs to me! And the other thing we thought was very energising about it was the fact that there was so much to explore, you could just explore. I could explore this building and find somewhere I'd never been before, even now after being coming here for 60 years.

Valérie

What about welcoming?

Stuart

Welcoming. Well, I think it's kind of related because you do feel this. I mean, having said that, the doors are quite heavy, you have to push away the doors, but once you're through the doors, it just draws you in. And there's nothing saying no, nothing. I mean, of course, there are rules and regulations and constraints and certain interdicts and so forth, but the basic bottom line is yes.

Valérie

Yes, there are there are house rules.

Stuart

Yeah, but they're not declared. They sometimes are, and I find that that makes me cross and that's recent.

Valérie

Can you give an example?

Stuart

Well, it is this particular space, which is bar on the level four, there's one on each side, and there was a period, I think actually it's changed in May and I may have helped that change, there was a period when if you came into that area, one of the doors staff of the auditorium would kind of hustle up to you and say, can I see your ticket? Where's your ticket? And I found that offensive because the whole point of the building, as far as I was concerned was that anyone could go anywhere. So essentially, they said what right do you have to be here? Of course, it was about... we tend to come about half an hour before [before a concert] and there used to be people sitting around tables, tables already taken by people who have their computers and so on and so forth. It was usually mostly people who weren't coming to the auditorium, and I think that they wanted to discourage that. Probably from some 'pandemicky' kind of reason and you know, I forgive them when I say they did for some kind of pandemic economies. That sort of kind of gets them a reason to be able to remove people and say, due to pandemic. So, I don't know, but they seem to have eased off on that. But I did want to say to them you shouldn't be doing this, that it's actually been on in your rules that anybody can go to any space in the building. And that's in their rulebook as far as I know, and it certainly was that I felt they were breaking their own rules, and so did Tim.

Valérie

So, you've experienced at times situations where some of the spaces are being managed in a way that reduces accessibility to some people [non-ticket holders]. Are there any other kind of constraints that you are aware of? For example, would you take your shoes off and put your feet on the chair like the woman behind you did earlier? Where do you feel your boundaries are?

Stuart

For me? Well, I think the boundaries are very clear. I myself would not put my feet on the chair. People have different ways to go about things, but I was well brought up. If I'd put my feet on a chair [as a child], I would have gotten [makes the sound of being smacked].

Valérie

As you've been coming here for so long, do you feel that there have been fluctuations over the years in the RFH being more or less welcoming at times?

Stuart

Not really that I remember. It was never really an issue of feeling welcome. As far as I know that rule has always been the case, I've never encountered that before where someone said where is your ticket? I don't know, maybe I was just lucky before, but I've never ever encountered it. The fluctuations were more to do with how proactive the management shall we say was, so how actively inviting. And I think that was extraordinary in the days that Ken Livingstone was making a political point. He used this quite deliberately in order to make a political point about inclusiveness. And, and so he told them, you make this space inclusive, or more than that, you get people in here and give them a really, really good time. And they responded, and they did get people to come, and they did give them a fantastic time, and so they came in and came again. So, you'd be coming down here there'd be people, and I think that has kind of never really gone away totally. I mean, I think it's still middle class dominated. You get quite easily that there is a quite diverse public when you're here and you're sort of watching and seeing who's coming in what's going on. I think that was always in a sense, and it was just accentuated in his era [Ken Livingstone] and also then again [later on] where there was a very deliberate policy of getting people in, especially local people, and especially kids, so there was loads of stuff for kids, and loads of stuff like the installations which our students did on when you couldn't come in [when the building was being refurbished]. Works that made people feel welcome, in spite of the fact they couldn't come into the building. And they

worked, they were incredible these installations. We just happen to have a particularly bright and creative intake in that period, they were extraordinary.

Valérie

Would you say that it's quite inclusive in its approach?

Stuart

I think it is, and I think that the people who work here, who face the public, feel that themselves. So, nobody's told these people you can't go in there because nobody feels like telling them. And I think there's this period where they were obliged to, where they were asking people for their ticket to see if they should or could be there, they obviously weren't comfortable with doing this. In my letter I said, these people [the public] are typically lots of older people, people I would say that are my age and you know, they're not comfortable having to do that kind of thing [show their ticket to be able to access some of the public spaces]. And anyway, they're not comfortable with it because they don't believe it's right, you know, at some level. I think in the end, the management sort of gave way and they just felt ok, this isn't working. So, it changed. So, I think that's the thing about ethos, very strong ethos. Okay, and convivial because it is a great place to meet. You've got loads of places to go. You can just hang out, it's a very nice place to be, we've discussed. And... that's that, a great meeting place.

Valérie

So, okay, well, thank you so much for your contribution. That was amazing and really insightful, not only your knowledge of the building but also of the historical and political contexts.

PETER

Valérie

First, could you describe your connection to the Royal Festival Hall? How long have you been going there?

Peter

I've lived in London pretty much continuously from about 1987 and I've probably been going to the Royal Festival Hall on and off since then for various things, including gigs and events. And yeah, maybe occasionally for social things. Maybe that's me as an individual interested in art and music and culture so I go there. I've been going there for events and maybe as part of

visiting something like the BFI or other places along the Southbank and that wider sort of cultural space as well.

Then there's my time there, I suppose, as a parent when we've been there with the children as you have shown in some of your photographs. It's an amazing space for... as a kind of civic or public space, a place for meeting and it felt like... with things like the library there, and there's a little play area for children on one of the sort of mezzanine floors between the main floors. It felt like a really good place for young kids to play so when our children were young, maybe around one and three, when we still lived in South London, we would go there to meet other parents and they could play on the famous carpet, and it felt like a safe place to play. So that was good. So, it's nice and the free access meant that felt like a good place to meet.

I'm interested in it as a designer as well because I work within interior and spatial design as a field as an academic and as a designer. Of course, it's a fascinating space for me historically as part of the Festival of Britain, but I think quite a successful public space and event space. I like the concept of it. The idea of a container for concerts that kind of sits within... I think they call it the egg in the carton or something.

Valérie

The egg in a box.

Peter

Yes, the egg in the box, that idea of that sort of central space contained within a larger public space works very well for me. It feels like... I'm a fan of modernism anyway, but it feels actually like quite a luxurious public space where there's been an investment in good design for the public good and I like that. You showed some photographs of some of the materials, and I feel like the wooden bannisters for example, the long bar, the extensive views... they will contribute to a really nice and somehow satisfying experience most of the time. Like actually when I've seen people who are homeless using the space in that way. You know, they could use security to turn these people out, but in a way, I feel like it's quite inclusive, and when it's raining, if those people can find some shelter there then even that works really well. So, it seems to cater for a wide public audience.

My parents actually, my mother, told me that she went there with my father for their honeymoon, she went to the Festival of Britain. So, there's a very deep sort of personal, historical personal connection to that building for me. I think I may have one photograph of

them in London during the honeymoon but not in the Festival Hall unfortunately or on that site. I think there's somewhere else in London, but she did mention going there. It seems to have been the thing to do at that time. You know, it seemed to have captured the public imagination as a festival site. Despite... it seemed like most of these things to be quite polarising. People didn't like the money being spent on that instead of housing, but I think it was very successful as a re-energising site, and I think the Royal Festival Hall for me still captures some of that optimism. It's an optimistic building. In the same way that modernism was.

Valérie

Can I ask you to expand on that, what makes you think it's an optimistic building?

Peter

Modernism, for me feels like a social... almost like a movement for social good following the war or leading up to the war and following the war. It seemed to be... there was a design style that equates to hygiene and sort of inclusivity and a little slightly more democratic style. Of course, it was you know... when I think of Corbusier the clean lines were derived from exciting ideas of transport, like liners, big ships, or fast airplanes or fast cars. So, there's a kind of energy, an idea of high technology, discovery, I suppose. You know, maybe some of those things don't sit quite as easily with us now in hindsight in terms of inclusivity. But I think, in general, you know, the modernist sort of movement towards tower blocks and housing, people altogether, had at least at its heart an intention to do a public good. I think the simple lines, I know it's been through a few updates over time, but the Royal Festival Hall with its sort of clean modernist lines, the white sort of plaster surfaces, as I said, the attention to detail which seems to go beyond... to have a real concern for a public, a nice public design experience, the classic design carpet, the extent of wood... I mean it just feels like, while not over decorative and detailed in its design, it does have a kind of enthusiastic or positive experience it seems with the visitors at its heart.

Valérie

Can I ask you, as you're a designer, there are the visual elements, but what about other sensory phenomena in the environment? Do you think there are some that relate to the Royal Festival Hall and that are part of your experience?

Peter

Yes, I like its situation near the water and the boats and being able to have views out through the large glass, I guess into the views outwards as well as the internal views. That really adds to the positive feeling I suppose about the building. Maybe there is something of the ship about it actually in that respect. So yes, in terms of sight. In terms of experience, it's nice to be able to go there for drinks and food and for meeting friends and for conversation. There is quite often of course audio events going on all around the building. So, in terms of both taste and sound, it seems to deal with those senses often. I don't remember it feeling uncomfortable there in terms of the kind of... I'm very sensitive to sound but my experience of the Royal Festival Hall in that respect is genuinely very positive even when it's full or busy. It's a nice sort of hum. In terms of touch, as I've mentioned, the kids loved the softness of the carpet, the wooden bannisters, the glass, and the light in the building felt really good.

Valérie

You've already mentioned the auditorium and the space next to the poetry library with the Children. Aside from that, do you have a favourite space or area and could describe the characteristics that bring you to that particular location?

Peter

I mean, there are quite a few actually, if I think about it. I like the fact that almost as soon as you walk in, there's the really long bar on the left. There's the stage on the right, steps down to the public stage, which always feels like a nice watching and performing space, whether it be formal events or whether it just be kids running around and playing. At the back of that I really like the... I think there's a lot of brass work and there's a ramp up from the stage. The ramp is good fun. The kids loved that. The singing lift was a particular favourite, which again, shows that kind of attention to detail and design and experience. I really liked the mezzanine space where you could sit down and have a quiet chat but have views down into the... again to the sort of public stage. The external balcony. I've taken a number of photographs from there, both during the daytime and the nighttime, and it's really nice again to be inside the building but to make those external connections to the river. And actually, the auditorium is really nice. And one thing I forgot to mention, I know you said to leave it to one side but of course as an academic we do our graduation ceremonies there. And for me, the excitement of being able to be on the stage looking out at the audience is a really nice turnaround from the traditional role of having been in the audience looking at the stage. So, to have that, that view back out again, I feel is a particular privilege, a privilege for me to be able to have that.

Valérie

It's quite a large building and you've mentioned quite a few spaces. Do you get to explore a little? Do you go on exploratory journeys, or do you just go straight where you need to go to? What is your experience?

Peter

So, for example, looking for toilets or looking for certain things, the signage is not always completely clear and because it has so many routes, I do find myself going on unexpected journeys even just trying to get to things I'm supposed to be trying to find. It can be a little maze like... I don't find that a problem necessarily. It's an enjoyable process trying to situate yourself within the building. It can be a bit frustrating, trying to find toilets that are available, but they're very good from what I remember once you do get there. And again, there's some really nice detailing going on in those spaces around the lifts and entrances to the toilets. But yes, now I quite often feel lost there but not in an uncomfortable way. So, moving on unexpected journeys. It took me ages to discover the lift on the outside, for example, where you can go from Waterloo to what I would consider the rear of the building. There's the glass lift, which can take you up and down, and it took me a long time to discover that, I suppose not until I had to navigate the building with a pram or buggy and that lift really came in handy.

Valérie

And have you ever been for a walk around the Royal Festival Hall just for the pleasure of it?

Peter

No, I can't think of having done that specifically. I mean, I'm sure on visits there I've probably taken the kids around on a meander but not so much [myself].

Valérie

And what about activities? You've mentioned meeting friends, you've talked about what you do with other people. Do you sometimes go there on your own just to hang out to, I don't know, read a book, that kind of thing? Does it happen to you?

Peter

Again, not... the things I tend to remember are the slightly more sort of purposeful visits, whether it be to meet with friends or to attend an event. I might have popped in for a sandwich or something like that, but I've not really found myself sort of killing time there, I

suppose. I mean, I'm sure it's a very enjoyable place to do that, but I guess I don't have a lot of time to kill.

Valérie

And then I wanted to ask you about other people around you. Do you find that it's important to have this kind of collective environment to see or hear other people doing things? Is that something that you seek when you go to there and is it important to your enjoyment of the of the Royal Festival Hall?

Peter

It is something I value, yes. I really do enjoy going to galleries and museums and other public spaces. And I really, as I said you know, I enjoy that... I'm pleased to see that there are these buildings that have an investment in a kind of general public experience, civic experience, and I think the Royal Festival Hall is a really successful example of a building that allows that. I suspect there's a lot of pressure these days with health and safety and security to monitor attendance and behaviour within the building, but I've never felt that at the Royal Festival Hall. There's a sense of... a kind of sense of respect and responsibility for the visitors, as I've said, even with people who could prompt some anxiety I suppose in terms of the homeless who use it to rest when they need to. I actually think it's quite nice that they are allowed in. Yeah, I think it's a really good example of a public space and it is important for me to be around other people. I mean, it's something that we've not had the luxury of in the last couple of years, and certainly it's good to know that people are able to at least be out and about again, spend time together.

Valérie

Have you ever seen people doing anything unusual or fun? Is there anything that you can remember?

Peter

I've never felt uncomfortable there in terms of people's behaviour, and I wonder if that's something to do with the design or the respect that the building gives people that they don't feel the need to kind of react. The freedom there does seem to allow something of the performative and slightly extravagant behaviour, but I've never felt threatened there or uncomfortable by certain behaviours. I've been to dances and things like that, taking the kids to dancing sessions, which has involved a lot of extravagant behaviour from everyone involved. Yeah, but in very much in a fun way.

Valérie

That sounds really good. Okay, we are nearing the end. Now, I'm going to show you keywords representing emotional qualities. I would like you to select three to five keywords that best represent your experience of the Royal Festival Hall and once you've selected them, I would like to discuss them with you. [The interviewee spends some time selecting]

Peter

Okay, well I think I would choose welcoming, entertaining, fun and lively.

Valérie

Could you expand on welcoming? Why did you choose welcoming?

Peter

As I've said, I think with these kinds of public buildings these days you get the feeling that certain concerns might impact on how welcome you feel in terms of how free you feel to do what you want in the space, or to be warned about not doing certain behaviours... being given the responsibility... maybe to take responsibility for your own actions. I don't ever remember being approached or feeling uncomfortable there or challenged about what I was doing even with young kids running around. So, I think that there's a maturity about that. I think the entrances, there are lots of different ways, I mean, very literally, there are lots of different ways into the building and each one feels fairly welcoming and pretty quickly you're into the action. You know, you're either straight into the cafe or you're into another cafe area from the other side, or near the stage or accessible to the stairs. So quite quickly you can get into the building and go where you need to go through the site. So yes, it felt like a welcoming building in that way. I mean, even its appointment next to the river, and if you're passing by, it's very easy to pop in.

Fun and lively. The liveliness is to do with that publicness and the people who are around and the interactions I suppose. It's not just a place where the audience or the visitor is passive, or just in a watching mode or role, but there are lots of things where you can get involved or participate. Fun because of that, I think. Entertaining I guess is because that's the nature of the building as a kind of cultural centre, it is about music and entertainment. Yes, and mostly fun.

Valérie

Right, then finally, the last couple of questions. What do you like the most about the Royal Festival Hall?

Peter

Yes, I think that's the welcoming element.

Valérie

And is there anything that you wish was different or you may not like?

Peter

Not really, I mean, the mezzanine was a lovely public space and the tables have gone and that's a shame because it was a nice place to dwell and spend time because it was sort of a luxurious space to be, like a special place. Maybe better signage but other than that... I mean, they're small things. Not really. I really like it.

Valérie

Well, thank you very much for your time, that's the end of the interview.

JULIA

Valérie

In the first instance, could you describe your connection to the Royal Festival Hall? How long have you been going there?

Julia

So, I moved in 1999 to a studio flat in London, a very small space and not particularly conducive to people coming around. I mean, literally one room. It's a studio flat. So, it's a long walk to the Royal Festival Hall from there but it is in Pimlico, and I will go on the river... I don't have any recollections of going there as anything other than an adult. I grew up on a farm in Northamptonshire, so nobody took me to the Royal Festival Hall. But I feel like I started going there as a place to meet other people to work. Probably more than anything else.

I've always been a mixture of having a part time job and doing interesting other things on the side with people that are also trying to do interesting other things. So... and I remember there being... this is probably early 2000s, I remember there being a sort of moment when people were getting more mobile maybe it was mid 2000s. It was completely normal by then to have your laptop and be moving around. And I remember there being a moment where there were maps being produced by people of places to work. You know, in London, and it [the RFH] was definitely on that. I don't know whether I could find it or not, but it was probably about 10 places across London. So little free maps that you could pick up. It probably was Crafts Council, V&A, Southbank... the British Library wasn't open and so you know... anything that the British

Library currently does. I guess my memories are of important people that I've worked with. Not necessarily having very long meetings, but it being a place where we'd say okay, let's meet at the Festival Hall. And so, there's that category, where we know there's an idea within a project that needs working out, and we want some space where there's no pressure for how long we're going to sit somewhere. It's a well-considered beautiful space to sit in. I don't mean it's beautiful, I mean it is conducive through the quality of its design to us coming up with some good design thinking. You're in such a high-quality environment so it's going to be a conducive place to work. So, there's that category. And then there's meeting people for the first time who you end up working with which is probably more recent. And then there's more kind of just purely social things like events I've been to. I've seen a couple of significant events [in the auditorium]. So, I think there's kind of going there to work with someone who you're already in a working relationship with, someone that you've met, and you get on with well, or a great place to start a new working relationship with someone and you must meet them because you want to work out how you could work together. And then events that I've been to. So, my love of that building is not divorced from the events that I've seen. Those experiences are there, yeah, they happen there. So, they are kind of part of the ether that I'm moving through when I'm there. And then probably the most frequent thing is that there are, on the level two at the back of the building, there are my favourite toilets in London.

Valérie

When you say the back, what do you consider to be the back?

Julia

So, it's near the bit that I call the sunken bit, I think you called it the ballroom. Yeah, I've got photos on my phone, I love them. They are exquisite. Beautiful panelling like... not panelling, not British panelling, but 1950s panelling. They have... the detail is you know... from its curved corners to the glazing that you look through, it has a powder room before you go into the actual loo. I mean, there's just... when you go in, you basically feel like you are putting on... you think where's my handbag and why am I not wearing a 1950s dress with slingbacks even though that's nothing to do with who I am. You are in touch with the original intent and the people that it was intended for in the most elegant way. Modern. It's not pretending that this is, you know, 1843 or 1628. It's not like this. This place was built for its time, I hope, that's my reading of it, and it feels optimistic and such high quality. It's still there and you can feel it.

Valérie

So, the design is very important to you?

Julia

Design is everything for me about this building because you can kind of feed of what someone gave us through the building and I feel like it's such a huge gift that building, everything is. I can see out all over, I've got fantastic views, and every single moment you think, yeah, that [the design] was a good decision, that was a generous choice.

Valérie

Can you think of examples in the interior, what are the key elements that attract your attention?

Julia

Well, it's as much about how I know where the outside world is while I'm inside as it is the balustrades, you know, the use of wood. This was done with clearly a significant budget. Much like the British Library. You know, they didn't decide to remove the leather straps from the balustrading in the British Library. They put them on regardless of the fact that that was a very high-quality specification that they could have lost. So, I feel like there's that sense of integrity in the materials. Not looking at something and going oh, I know, that's really stained MDF. It's solid. The materials are genuinely steel and glass and veneer, beautiful, veneered wood. It's not pretending to be anything other than a public space. It's not like I will let you sit there but you will have to move on. It's not like Granary Square [Kings Cross] where as long as you're doing what we want you can stay there. I think that the legacy of when it was built, how it was built and how it was designed, is implicit in my enjoyment of the space. I can feel that intent of a quality space for people to be allowed to enjoy themselves in a cultural context. I'm very aware of the levels and there is a curious sort of depth and height to that building. Because I suppose it goes in and comes out. And then you go in and up and around and come back for it. And that is the real kind of journey that you could take around it.

Valérie

Is it something you've experienced? Travelling around the building?

Julia

I'm very aware that in my mind I'm thinking outside and cafes and river and double height space. Then if I choose to come in, bookshopy sort of bit, then I know there's going to be a stairs up and a slight kind of where am I when I get up those stairs and go okay so I'm on the kind of London Eye side, and my favourite hanging out spot would be on the Haywood side at the back, with all the light and my favourite loos in the corner, with the view down to the

ballroom. I've got memories of a couple of pop-up fairs in I would say mid-2000s... kind of designer maker fairs. I used to be part of that scene in the 90s and so I was still visiting and catching up with people you know, jewellery and products, new designers' kind of products. And I remember when I was at St Martins, so I was in the first year of the MA 2003 to 5, and I'm sure that we would have met there [RFH] for one or two, if not more, collaboration projects, and I have a sense of always being quite aware of that sunken space, knowing that that's the bit that I know where I am in relation to.

Valérie

Like a landmark?

Julia

Yeah, I really love the fact that it goes down. I don't necessarily have a reason to go down there, but I know that if it's empty, somebody's thinking about colonising it for something, or someone's setting something up and you think, oh, am I gonna be down there or, you know, it's the space where something might happen.

Valérie

Earlier, you mentioned that you would have gone there often to meet people for work. Where would you have chosen to meet people? What would you have been your choice of location in the interior space and why?

Julia

Yeah, the most recent one was probably four years ago. Maybe someone that I've met through a friend who I found really interesting as a someone that I would want to work with. She was a brilliant, switched-on exhibition project manager. And I remember it was hot and we were outside on the terrace on what I guess you're calling level two. I mean, I don't call them any levels actually.

Valérie

That's interesting. Can you tell me more about this?

Julia

I guess I say up by the café, on the same level as the cafe and the shop... I call that the main floor. And I think you come in underneath if you're coming in at the level of the bottom row of externally facing cafes. Correct?

Valérie

Yes.

Julia

I suppose I still slightly think it's kind of new. There's a lift, an intervention, a kind of a glass box upon level two. I'm a bit like well, it still feels sort of new to me in a funny sort of way, but it's been there forever. I'm very familiar with Nelson Mandela [reference to the West side of the building]. So, when you showed that [the pictures used in the interview] I was like, why am I thinking Nelson Mandela? I can't quite see it, but this is definitely there somewhere. So, I guess I would say I might meet them there. But mostly, it's usually because we're gonna have a coffee so I just have a table and then I'm texting them. But it was interesting with Allison, who's this person I was talking about. We had met maybe 18 months before, once, and I suddenly realised I can't remember what she looks like at all! So, I remember sitting at a table outside thinking, okay, I'm actually going to have to ask her what she looks like and tell her what I look like because I really can't remember. I felt really funny because I literally was just sitting at a table, and I hadn't said let's meet by the thing.

Valérie

And did you find each other?

Julia

Yeah, I mean immediately!

Valérie

Have you been there on your own? So not to meet people or go to the auditorium but just to spend some time at the RFH?

Julia

Yes, but I struggle because it's me on my own. I don't have specific memories because in a way I'm kind of attaching them to those people and the conversations that I had. I have definitely walked to the Royal Festival Hall with a notebook and the intention that that's where I'm heading and I will spend some quality time in there, just looking around and be kind of fed by the space. That wouldn't be unusual.

Valérie

When you say fed by the space, do you mean the physical space or are the people around you important as well?

Julia

I think the people around you are important because otherwise I would find somewhere that hadn't got people in it. I think just being out amongst people that enjoy that space is probably important. The images that you showed of people working there is inspiring. It can pull you out of a space where you're thinking, oh no, I'm stuck, why am I not doing something, I haven't done what I was supposed to do today. And I think being in a space, seeing other people being productive, is really just... it's a very lovely kind of passive way of sucking a bit of energy from other people.

Valérie

And what about seeing other people having fun. Does that have an impact on you as well?

Julia

Yeah, I mean, it depends on what you're going there for. If you're going there with intention to work, obviously you will focus more on people being productive. I mean, sometimes you just need to go and... when I say feed myself, I genuinely mean that. I mean that it's like going to an art exhibition but it's not an exhibition. It's just a public space, a public space that I really respect. I can't imagine anything much more satisfying than having been involved in creating a space like that. So, to hang about in a space that is kind of the epitome of what I would have wanted to have created. I suppose seeing people enjoying themselves, that's going to be a bonus. Unless you're feeling particularly lonely, then it might make you feel more lonely?

Valérie

Have you ever seen anything unusual going on? Things that you remember other people doing and that came across as unusual, fun or interesting?

Julia

I feel like I have seen people rehearsing and I'm sure I've seen some quite serious meetings going on as well, like, professional meetings. I know of a lot of people sitting on their own, working, but I can't honestly say I can remember something specific.

Valérie

It doesn't matter that you don't remember specific examples but what is your perception? Do you see the public interior as a space where people can do a lot of different things or are there constraints that you are aware of?

Julia

From my perspective what would I not do there?

Valérie

Yes.

Julia

No, I can't think of anything that I would do in a public space that I would not do there. In fact, I probably would feel more welcome to do anything there than I would in other public spaces. I have no recollection of feeling that people should be quiet or wanting people to be quiet. I have no recollection of being annoyed by anybody and what they were doing, which is quite a big deal, actually, if you think about nowadays, we have, and maybe even more in the last couple of years, become quite used to being very much in control of a small environment around us. Maybe because my memories are more pre-pandemic, I haven't attached that to it, but no, I can't. I think I would, I would be quite mindful of taking over too much space. I think there's a fluidness to how people use that space...and I might be very focused on what I'm doing but I wouldn't mind that other people were seeing it and I would think it's okay that those guys put their chairs to sort of indicate that they were busy in that corner. I think there's a limit to how much space you could, you know, take over without having expressly kind of said is this okay to somebody. Because it is by definition, a space for everyone... I hope... and that's what it feels like.

Valérie

So, you think there's an element of self-regulation that comes from respect for others?

Julia

Yes. I mean, I'm probably quite self-regulating. Personally, I would worry that I would be offending or upsetting people if I took over too much space. That's all.

Valérie

Are you aware of any restrictions that are explicit, coming from the organisation, from its management?

Julia

No, not really and I think that's very lovely. As you were talking through, I thought, that's not what happens in a museum. No, it's not. And that made me think why does that not happen? What do we do in a museum that is not enabling that? I spend my life with people describing projects and they say, and the public... this will allow the public... and I scrub it out and write enable the public because I hate this concept of allowing in a public space.

Valérie

Does allowing imply a level of control?

Julia

Yeah. When I usually see that word, it's about allowing knowledge. So, in a museum, you say, and this will allow visitors to engage with this object and understand blah, blah, blah, and you're like, no, it won't, it will enable them to do that with no implied authority. So, I think, for me, the views through the space and the quality of the build of the space, both underpin this idea that it's public. It's a high-quality public thing for you. It's not we did it because we had to, we did it not because it was a 10% of something, or to allow us to do something else. It has generosity in its original intent, and you feel it when you're in there. And that's why maybe I'm calm [when there]. Its materiality, that also feels interesting, but your slides made me very aware of me knowing where I am in relation to other parts of that building.

Valérie

Do you have a good mental map of the building?

Julia

Well, I mean, we talked about this a bit already, that sense my central point and knowing where I am in the building. It's in that space that I've talked about, you know, behind the cafe and the shop, before you get to my favourite loos at the back.

Valérie

So, in the main foyer?

Julia

I can't really call it a foyer because it's too far back to be the foyer, I'm sitting above and I can look down to the sunken area, but I'm also sitting at the best space inside with the views to the Hayward.

Valérie

On the far side next to the big windows?

Julia

That's basically it.

Valérie

Is it where you usually go?

Julia

I would if it was winter, that's where I would go, yeah.

Valérie

And what made you choose that area? What qualities attract you to it?

Julia

I can see the magnificent Hayward and all its concrete glory. I can see down into the sunken area, I can see the levels, I can see the bar, and you know, that kind of stuff... I can see through to the river; I can see right across and out to Nelson Mandela. I mean, that's what I think is interesting. I might be here, but I've got everything [around], and my favourite loos in London, and a table where I can do what I want.

Valérie

Okay, so you're saying that you can see, but would you say that sounds are also part of this experience or does the visual aspect dominate?

Julia

Well, I wouldn't even really say visual but spatial. That's how I feel about it. I'm not thinking I can see that. I'm thinking there's an articulated concrete block outside, and I am inside, and there's a down here and there's a behind there.

Valérie

So, you're talking about the spatial relationships between your body and the rest of the space?

Julia

Yes, absolutely. The thing that I feel most is that I feel expansive, a sense of connecting between spaces wherever I am. I'm not just in that one space, I am in multiple spaces. And I think that that's a pretty phenomenal thing. You're not in a corner, and even if you're in a corner, how would you be in a corner in the Royal Festival Hall where there's barely such a thing really? Yeah, I mean, how much seating is there in that building? Amazing!!! And there are the stairs which can be seating too. That is pretty special. How much time did I spend sitting on the floor in the British Library? They don't really want me to be sitting here but I am sitting here [on the floor] because I'm not going back in the reading room for a bit. I don't think I've ever sat on the floor in the Royal Festival Hall. I mean, it's just such a quality experience.

Valérie

Okay. So, there's choice and flexibility?

Julia

As somebody who works in exhibitions, every so often in a project there will be oh! Where is the seating? We haven't put any seating in! Actually, that's why I'm staggered because it's not only yes, you can wander through this space, but you can be here for a completely indeterminate amount of time that you choose. There's great coffee, there's great views, you could be here for a bit and then if you need to change you can be there. And also, you're pretty close to lots of other things, you can be on the way to something or whatever. Yeah, for a great big building it is very open.

Valérie

As you've been there often and for quite a long time, could you describe the way you feel as you enter the building? Is there a noticeable difference in the way you feel between being outside and inside?

Julia

So, lots of things are going on in my mind. I'm not sure that they quite touch on what you're asking but I've met lots of friends there, I've had moments where... at least I've constructed in my memory things, people that I've worked with, there is this spirit of wanting to create a successful project and I've gone there to do that. So, there's always been a bit of a potential for

all the meetings that I've had there. And it feels... there are a couple of places in London where the space has just made me feel like I'm at home. It's like I've been there enough in my life for it to be a friend, it's like I'm going to see a friend when I go into the building. So, it's a space that contains the memories of lots of ambitions and friendships. So, in a way, the space represents that to me... your shoulders just drop you know, and you're kind of like okay, I'm in a space I understand and I know, and it's familiar and I've arrived. Part of that might be the stairs coming up from the river up into the main floor. That feels quite significant. But coming over, you've also got the arrival from the river over the bridge, or coming past the [London] Eye, I usually come past the Eye. So yeah, there are quite a lot of key relationships that have had moments there so I suppose in a way, I've sorted this as a timeline of memories that I could attach to being in that space. And I do mean being [strong emphasis] in a space. I can remember the coffee. I can remember that kind of things... This is actively making me feel homesick for the Festival Hall.

Valérie

Okay, to finish, I will show you a table with keywords representing emotional qualities. Please take some time to review them and select 3 to 5 keywords that best represent your experience of the Royal Festival Hall. You can also add your own words. [Julia takes a few minutes to complete the activity]

Julia

Okay, so I have fulfilling, uplifting and energising from your list and I have added nurturing, familiar and generous.

Fulfilling I think... there are lots of ways you could look at that word, but I think it does fill me up. Literally with quality, spatial, social, public, a sort of a space to aspire to create or hold a high standard. Because I work in creating public spaces, I think it literally fills me up almost professionally and because my work is pretty much all I am, that's very personal as well. Uplifting because it exists and it's always... I don't think you can go there and be depressed. It makes me do these kinds of gestures [upward gestures with the arms]. It's an upward building. I suppose actually thinking about it, mentally I've been going upstairs quite a bit in this conversation, in my head, like I've been coming up into the building or coming across into and up into the building. So, it's an upward kind of space, and I think I'm quite an energetic person, but I think it is... how people behave in there is probably quite energising. I think when you're sitting there, you're aware of other people, and I think I would be taking some creative energy from other people. And then nurturing is that kind of feeling like I've come home a bit, or it's

one of my London public space homes, it is familiar. And generous because as far as I'm aware it's always there. And I can't imagine being told off in it... I don't have the feeling that what I'm doing would clash with the experience of other visitors. So, I think I'm in kind of alignment with what it [RFH] wants to encourage. I mean, I think welcome is too flat, generous is what it is. Welcome. It's just easy. The doors open. Hello. Come in. Well, you're welcome in the shop, you know, and I don't think it [RFH] has any major commercial expectations on me. That's a pretty big deal in central London.

Valérie

Thank you, that's great. So, aside from the auditorium and your favourite loos, what do you like the most about the RFH?

Julia

What's my favourite thing? I think it's the way that I can locate myself in relation to other spaces, the permeability of it and the different shapes of the spaces, but that's because my PhD is in that kind of stuff. I mean, the thing that you showed me that made me most happy to see what people using the space to work and perform and create... so we need to do this work, let's all get together and do it here.

Valérie

Fantastic. And is there anything that you don't like about the Royal Festival Hall, or you wish as different?

Julia

No, except that it's not in Norwich! This is making me think what is the equivalent of this space here? Yeah, I don't know, but I'm gonna find one.

Valérie

Ok, that's great. Thank you so much for taking the time to contribute to this interview.

ROBERT

Valérie

First, could you describe your connection to the Royal Festival Hall? How long have you been going there?

Robert

Yeah, it's an interesting one. I think I really started going there in my mid 20s. And I used to meet girlfriends there when I was in town. It was a very open... I mean it's one of those spaces that is welcoming, and I've often used it as an access route through to get somewhere else and walking through it. It feels very open, and I think that the ground floor does have that magical quality to it like a kind of woodland or an urban forest in some way. Whenever I walk up through Waterloo and I want to go towards the Royal Festival Hall, quite often I would cut through the building. And you can use that foyer without really feeling like you're in a performance area. And I find the architecture very strange because actually before we met up today, I was having a look at the plans of the building thinking why do I feel lost when I'm in there? And I've got a very good sense of... well I'd like to think I've got a very good sense of navigation; you know, I can find my way through a city, or I can, you know, I very, very rarely get lost. I've got a good sense of direction but yet when I step into that building I often don't know where I am, and you mentioned the second floor like the ground floor is the second floor and that always confuses me.

And so... yeah, with the with the earliest memories, I would meet people in there, but it was like meeting in a forest, it was you know in the days before mobile phones, and you'd say I'll meet you by the bar or whatever. And it has, I think the reason why we met there partly without even really probably realising it, it's a very.... it's a leveller. You don't feel like... in some places in London, like the Barbican, for instance, which would maybe be a near kind of sister to Southbank Centre, but it always feels very dark, dingy and you don't feel particularly welcome when you go in there, but Southbank Centre is kind of the opposite. It's very light there's no class divide, it's an egalitarian place. You don't feel like if you walk into the Royal Albert Hall or whatever, you feel that you've got to go and do something or be somewhere, or have a ticket for something, but there it's rather like the outdoor space as well. Very open and it feels very public. So yeah, so I started going there then and now I've got lots of memories. I've got a very vivid memory. For a long time, I was going... I was working in music. One of my friends had a performance area of his music, and I just remember walking through the door with him and then obviously there were lots of his fans and people there to see his music, but we felt that we could kind of escape quite easily, there was a way through. We walk through this public space and kind of somehow get lost in amongst people. So that was a very sort of early memory. That was probably in my late 20s. But yeah, then there were other things and when you mentioned the space with the kind of foyer, the kind of the performance area on the ground floor, I've never seen it being used! Whenever I'm there it's just full of flight cases always looks like something's just finished or something's about to begin, but I don't think I've

ever seen it in use and in that sense, it becomes like a playground because it seems like a public play area. It kind of feels like there's something there to start up. And you know, it becomes like a kind of playground in that sense that there are things to jump in and hide on and move around because flight cases have this kind of magical magic box kind of feel to them.

So yeah, so I think there's that, but I do always... I mean I'm going there tomorrow, and I was there on Friday, and I do always say I never quite know where I am, especially when you go up the stairs. You forget the actual Auditorium is the reason why the exterior [the interior spaces around the auditorium] is like this kind of shell around the auditorium, but I never know which side I'm on. Once you're in there you kind of lose touch completely with the outside world. It becomes this kind of Pandora's box, you kind of you forget where the river is, you would think actually that the river was towards the Waterloo side. If you're thinking about the way it's levelled out inside, it goes back from the river and down from the river. Because you come in and then you've got this performance area to the south. And that's strange. And also, the other thing I guess that's odd geographically in that space is that you come in on the busy side, you come in on the west side and not the east side which is actually the area which has the most to see and the most to do outside the building. I would argue that the east of the river, from Southbank on gets interesting. If you go west, you're going towards Westminster and there's really nothing after the Southbank Centre on that side of the river. So weirdly activities [inside the RFH] are all on the west side, and as you go to the east side of the building, that's the quiet side. That's the exit towards the National Film Theatre. But actually, when you get out there, it's far busier. So, kind of geographically, that foyer area on the ground floor is the wrong way around. And it's also the wrong way around I think when you go upstairs but maybe I'm mistaken actually but it seems that when you go upstairs it flips around. I was there at Christmas with my daughter, and we went to the bar area [level 5] and actually their bar area is on the north side looking out over the river. But somehow in my head when I'm imagining it now, it is actually on the south side looking out over Waterloo so in a way the building... oh, that's why the building flips round because the auditorium is diagonal. So yeah, okay, that makes sense. So, then the area that can be developed is actually on the stage side, here above the stage. That's what makes it weird, that's what makes up that building flip.

Valérie

How do you feel about this ambiguous interior, the fact that you're kind of lost?

Robert

I think well, I'm quite pragmatic. I mean, it sounds romantic to talk about being lost, but sometimes when I'm in there I think argh! [expresses frustration] where is it? Sometimes, I actually don't spend that long in it because I tend to want to get out when I when I'm somewhere where I get confused. I don't necessarily like being lost although I like the challenge of being lost and I like it when I'm in there. My enduring memories are sort of going up and down the stairs and wondering which floor we're on. I think when I was younger, when I was meeting up girlfriends, we would you know, try and find someone nice to stay, and I've had meetings and in the cafe area and the ballroom area. And the shop... the shop reminds me of an airport a bit, that area around the bar which seems like a transitory place, it has that temporary feel to it. That always feels like we're in an airport, slightly out place. It's like an afterthought which I quite like actually because the rest of the building is so polished.

Valérie

Thank you. I'm interested in finding out how you define a personal space for yourself or with others. So, could you tell me like where would you usually go in the Festival Hall?

Robert

I would probably head up to the balcony where the bar is on whichever floor that is [level 5 foyer]. There's a bar at the top towards the outside deck.

Valérie

So that's level five?

Robert

Yeah.

Valérie

Okay, so, can you tell me more about this? Why do you choose to go there?

Robert

Well, I think partly the views. I like the... it feels... actually the whole building reminds me of being on a boat, and whenever I'm on a boat, I would probably stand outside if the weather was good, but yes, I think actually the whole experience and the more I think about it reminds me of being on a ferry. I get lost on a ferry as well, and the levels on a ferry are strange, there's always lots of staircases, and it feels quite exciting. You're going on a journey. I think that's the

thing emotionally there's a kind of connection to go on a journey that's there, you kind of have this expectancy that you're going to be taken somewhere through the story. And I think that the Festival Hall has that kind of similar feeling, you know, it feels a lot like... in fact a lot of buildings of that period probably emulate some kind of ocean liner quality. And I think that you know, the reason why it was built and all of that kind of history around it kind of echoes that majesty of sailing away on this kind of cultural vessel. But yeah, so I would go outside [on the terrace] and I think yeah, generally I find the entrance quite dim on the ground floor. I would want to get upstairs, and I would want to get somewhere where I can project out from and sort of see where we are because obviously the location is fantastic. And maybe the location being next to the river as well, it feels like we're about to set sail.

Valérie

You say it's quite dingy downstairs. Is it because it's quite dark and you're attracted towards the light?

Robert

Yeah, yeah. It takes a good, you know, 15 to 20 feet from the door on the ground floor until you get the other side of the bar on the ground floor. That's when the foyer area feels lighter again, and I think both sides... not as bad as the National Film Theatre, which of course can be dark as it likes because that's a cinema, but I think that either side of the steps coming up on the Royal Festival Hall feels like there's not a lot of natural light somehow in a lot of the building apart from in that ground floor foyer area where the light seems to come in from either side but then when you get upstairs and I think it's quite liberating to be in that fifth floor area.

Valérie

What do you do when you go there on your own or with friends? Can you describe your activities?

Robert

I think, to me, it feels part of the furniture somehow. So, I often as I say use it as a route through. I probably wouldn't say I've ever sat there on my own and I think you know, years ago I used to meet friends there sometimes. And then I've been to quite a lot of performances there.

Valérie

When you say route through, can you describe the journey, can you give me an example?

Robert

Yeah, I think when I began in Waterloo or coming from Waterloo, and I'd be trying to get to London Bridge or Oxo tower or Globe Theatre area, or Hayward gallery, I've cut through the west to east or east to west.

Valérie

So, you would go through the foyer and then you go down and come out again or you go cut through the cafe and come out on the main terrace?

Robert

Oh, this would be on the second floor. If I was cutting through, I'd just stay on the one floor. I don't quite know what I'd be cutting out, maybe the corner of the Royal Festival Hall. I think it was probably in the days before the Hungerford bridge was done up because I can't remember what was there before all of the shops, actually but there was something there. So yeah, so I would cut through, but I enjoyed it. I always felt... I've always quite liked the backstages or things that are going to happen or have just happened and I think that I quite enjoyed walking through that area because it felt like I said at the beginning about you know sort of feeling slightly lost or seeing what's going on. I think I've been to a few events actually, a few exhibitions now that I think of it. I think they used to be during design week or something. There used to be exhibitions in there. But yeah, generally, I think we used to use the bar as well, actually, yeah, I have met people there, I've met other people there.

Valérie

And when you go there on your own or meeting people, what is your relationship with other people around you? The people that you don't know.

Robert

I'm always slightly bemused that there are so many people there because I think with most places like that you don't get many people during the day, you know, unless there's... I always got the feeling that people were using it as a destination and that was quite curious to me because why would you use the foyer of a theatre as a destination? So, it has some kind of cultural impact or relevance beyond that [beyond its role as a concert hall]. I don't know what it was, actually thinking about it, whether it was intended to be a place where people would meet during the day or whether it just happened, but I'm always quite surprised that there are people there. It's like going to an airport lounge and not catching the plane. It's odd. So, I have that relationship.

Valérie

And is it important for you to be surrounded by people there? Would you go there if it was empty?

Robert

Yeah, well it's confirming that you're allowed to do something because I suppose I'm quite conservative in a small 'c'. I'm not the kind of person that would you know just plunk down and take ownership like you were saying about that woman who meets her friends and puts all our bags everywhere. So, I find that wrong. I don't claim personal space like that. I don't assume that the space is mine. Yeah, I need to feel enabled to use a space I guess in that sense.

Valérie

And what kind of enabler would help?

Robert

Other people, other people doing it and getting away with it. If they're doing it and not getting caught, you must be able to do it. I suppose with these kind of cultural institutions and how I was brought up, I always felt like a guest. You know in the 80s it was a very, you know, exclusive environment to go to, to be able to afford to go to a theatre, to have the education to go to an art gallery. It's not that I didn't have the money or the education, but it was certainly a kind of privilege and the Southbank... we certainly didn't go there when I was a kid. So about when I did discover it... well, I wasn't a skateboarder or anything like that, but I think the whole of the Southbank in the 90s when I was in my 20s had a slightly public-spirited sort of claim, and I think that the Royal Festival Hall... I still find the name odd because I don't associate it with royalty. It's the most unroyal building I can imagine. Actually, it's the least royal. It doesn't look royal. It doesn't feel royal. And I say that in a good way of course. But so, that's kind of how you feel about public spaces. I'm trying to think of other examples, I mean, like the Barbican tries to do that. I think the Barbican probably tried too hard to do that and then failed. I can't really think of any... the ICA but that's too small. There really probably isn't another building like it, geographically, or it is open perhaps to being this kind of halfway house for people and it's good... or maybe the Tate. The Tate has that membership bar and doesn't really have that space, it's actually the opposite.

Valérie

Could you go back to level five? You mentioned the light and view as characteristic that draw you to that area. Are there any other significant characteristics for you in that space?

Robert

Gin tonic? A bag of crisps and a cold drink? Yeah, I mean, although the bar does feel very temporary up there, we'd only go and have a drink there if I was going to see a performance. I wouldn't go there otherwise. Yeah, I've never even thought about going up there. I've always stayed on the ground floor.

Valérie

So, when you're not seeing a performance you stay on the ground floor, but when you see performance, you go to the fifth floor.

Robert

Absolutely. And I think that stems from... I always think that someone's going to check my ticket when I go up the stairs because it's that theatre thing. It dates back to me trying to get into the cinema to see films I was too young to see, you think you're gonna be caught if you sneak in. So, I think that yeah, once you start that journey up the stairs, you have to be going somewhere to see something. I think that's the thing for me. The public area is definitely the ground floor, and I wouldn't dream of going up there otherwise. In case probably I opened the wrong door. I've got this fear by doing the wrong door and just coming out onto the stage, you know, or something like that.

Valérie

So now, can I ask you about your perspective on the design of the space? You can focus on level two on the main floor and on level five. So, for example, what do you think about the materials, the materiality of the space, the sensory qualities?

Robert

I like it. I like it because I like that style. I think it's sort of gauche to me. I know it dates from the 50s or 60s but to me, it's got that 70s, early 70s feel to it. So, it's kind of polished wood and metal and I suppose it is 60s in its origin but to me it probably reminds me of my very young childhood, sort of late 70s, early 80s. I like it. I like the materiality, it's my style and I quite like modernist architecture, modernists buildings and interiors. So, it has that glamour, that utilitarian glamour.

Valérie

Are there any features that stand up?

Robert

The stairs are just about the right size and feel, the handrails are polished, the light... that's not materiality. I can't describe the carpets but I'm sure the carpets are okay. Probably like the 1970s airline lounge. I like the Pan Am feel sort of international jet setter.

Valérie

You mentioned light and I would consider that to be part of materiality. Could you expand on light?

Robert

Yeah, the only place where it feels natural is in that sort of stage area somehow. It always feels like it's about five o'clock in the afternoon on a November evening otherwise. It's got a slightly muted dimmer switch. Probably using up a lot of electricity. Artificial in the main foyer, it's always dark... although I don't know actually, when you come in through the Waterloo side there is this very sharp sunlight in the afternoon mainly because I suppose it faces west and that's why it's like that so okay, it probably has natural light coming in east and west doesn't it? But I don't tend to go there in the morning. So therefore, that would explain the light coming in. Right, yes, that explains it, the light comes in through those doors, it's dark when you come in because it's so light in the distance it throws everything else into shade, but then the stairwells and the everything else seems to be constantly on a dimmer switch. And the area where the shop is dark constantly. But the entrance like I said is light for about 15/20 feet until we get to the edge of the ground floor, the forest area [the ballroom area].

Valérie

What kind of feeling does this darkness bring to you? Is it positive and negative? Can you describe it?

Robert

Oh no, it's yeah, it's not a negative feeling. I think it's quite cosy and intimate. It also feels quite exciting. There's a bit of that going back to the ferry or the boat. Well, you know, I think some of these things are occurring you know on a boat, ferry, airport lounge, this idea that there's something... that you're going to go on a journey so is the atmosphere is quite exciting, and the light, the furniture and the materiality is all conducive to that journey. They're all things that I would associate with, like the TWA lounge in New York, or if Euston station had been better designed in the 60s, it could have been like the Southbank Centre and could have had that, that feeling of going on a journey.

Valérie

And how would you say level five compares in relation to what you've just said about level two in terms of the materiality.

Robert

It becomes a lot more functional. I think the further up the building you get. I think the level five balcony area is quite new and quite disappointing. Mainly because... it's maybe just because it's newer. I remember thinking that the furniture looked like it was something out of la garden centre. And it didn't have you know, the kind of rich plush feel that I would associate... maybe I'm wrong but I get the feeling that the furniture in that foyer is sort of standard and grey or made of, you know, sort of very functional wipe down materials, whereas I would imagine that when it opened in the 60s it would have been a much more plush velvet sort of vibe to it. When you get into the auditorium, it has that kind of modernist craft to it, and I think just generally modern interiors probably don't have that attention to detail so much.

Valérie

Are you saying that the furniture on level five for you doesn't align to the design of the interior space?

Robert

Yeah. I don't know why I'm saying that. It must be coming from somewhere. I mean, I can't quite put my finger on it. Yeah, it feels like a different era. I don't actually know the history of that building but I presume it must be must have been refurbished. That's my gut instinct, and because I've been talking about this for 40 minutes, I probably reached this sort of transcendental sort of state where I can I really come out with things that are locked inside my head. It's like a psychotherapy session. So, I don't know but it just feels... it feels very... and I think it's probably because actually I think that that space is used... it's very temporary you know, people use it for 15 to 20 minutes in between performance, and areas like that always have that stilted conversation because you're just in the middle of a performance, you're all on a personal journey. And so, when you meet up in those kind of spaces, you've arrived at that destination and perhaps that destination is disappointing.

Valérie

You mean the space in the foyer with the large windows and the view you mentioned earlier?

Robert

I think the interior and the view are fantastic, and its position is fantastic but the actual... I'm now thinking of the bar areas being very shoddy and temporary and plasticky, and I'm thinking of the furniture being maybe I'm not I almost kind of feel it's made of wicker or preform plastic, but it doesn't have that...to me, it's almost like a separate area.

Valérie

So, you're saying that there's a contrast, there's a difference between the objects that have been installed in the space and the space itself, the original interior?

Robert

That's it! And it's rather like the kiosk downstairs. I think the kiosk downstairs gets away with it because it adds to the airport feel whereas the space upstairs that seems just to have been shoehorned in and not as considered. I think that the architect probably would disapprove of that interior, of that fifth floor. The only thing saving it is the view. I think that they were able to skimp on that because they would probably say well, who's going to look at the furniture and you've got that view? But actually, I think it detracts.

Valérie

Okay. And about going back to something you said earlier about what you would do or wouldn't do. Do you perceive that there are any explicit constraints? Are there any rules that you are conscious of?

Robert

I think while the ground floor has got this free space, the fifth floor has a purpose and I feel that, like I was saying, I wouldn't have gone up those stairs, I wouldn't have gone into that space [unless it is for a performance in the auditorium]. So, I think there's an expectancy you know, you've got to be back in the auditorium in 15 minutes. There's a protocol to be observed. There's the small talk.

Valérie

Can you think of experiences not related to performances?

Robert

Other times? I don't think I have been... I would meet people on the ground floor. I think if I was... actually I found it to be quite an open and free space. And I think that's partly to do with

the curation of the actual performances [free events] that are there and the crowds that are drawn to them so it's not an elitist art space. And I think that's reflected in the staff who often don't know where anything is, like on Friday, we were directed to like another floor on the wrong side of the building.

Valérie

Okay, I'm going to show you a file with keywords. They are organised in four different columns, each of them representing a type of emotional quality. I'd like you to do is to select three to five key words that best represent your experience of the Royal Festival Hall, and then I'd like you to explain to me why you chose them what they mean to you. And if there are keywords that come to mind, but are not on that list, you can use that as well.

Robert

Well, idiosyncratic, I mean that in a good way. That's a positive trait in my book. I suppose comfortable. The word that I'm trying to think of is like... egalitarian, I suppose. In that sense, comfortable means that it's not just me that feels at home there. It's a free space.

Valérie

And is it also comfortable physically?

Robert

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I am comfortable when other people are comfortable. So, I think in that sense, it's not... I suppose welcoming in that in that sense, I guess.

Valérie

Okay. And so, so it's physical and psychological comfort?

Robert

Yeah. And if I can find a word for that kind of feeling of travel, that's the overarching... and I don't know what that would be. Transitory isn't really an emotional word but whatever the feeling that being in transition is, so I guess, in that sense, it's in between energising and exciting, isn't it? But I wouldn't say it's exciting... it's active. Yeah, almost inspiring. But that's not the word either. It's a cross between inspiring, exciting, but something far more prosaic and almost like bleak, and I actually, yeah, maybe bleak, but I mean, bleak in a positive way.

Valérie

Could you explain what you mean by bleak?

Robert

Because I do find those liminal spaces... places where, you know, I get excited by travelators, I get excited by waiting on a concourse. I think concourse are bleak because you don't know, you're waiting, but they're also exciting because something's going to happen. But they are bleak for they're not places where people are enjoying themselves. They're places where people are waiting to enjoy themselves. Maybe I'm getting the word bleak wrong, but bleak to me is this kind of numb, transitory place but it's not...it's not lonely. I don't mean bleak as lonely I mean, bleak as an outpost, you know, idiosyncratic. Bleak and idiosyncratic go I think quite well together.

Valérie

Okay, so what do you mean by idiosyncratic?

Robert

Well, it is because it does manage to be, you know, exciting and bleak at the same time, it does manage to be... in terms of other architecture or other interiors in London, I can't imagine cutting through the Barbican or maybe I've tried to cut through the Barbican couple of times and that's bleak, that's just bleak bleak. So, idiosyncratic in that, you know, its doors are open and the people... kids do feel like they can run around and that, you know, that there isn't someone standing at the door. You are free to go in. The way that the curation works is they have interesting, quirky, idiosyncratic people performing there, they're open to... you know, everything that I've probably ever been to see there has been idiosyncratic and ultimately the people that have been there you know, haven't particularly dressed up, they feel it's their space. That's rare in public interior. In fact, it's probably the only one in London. And I think that that feeling, I know we're not talking about the outside or the exterior, but it's the same for the exterior, and it's the same for that whole block. And I think it does do what it set out to do with the Festival of Britain. It's an every person place, it's a free space and in that sense it has got that idiosyncratic... and it's developed over time. And people do feel that they can meet their friends there, you know, that's an eccentric thing to do to meet every Sunday for 20 years [referring to one of the images used in the interview].

Valérie

Okay, and then finally, what do you like the most about the Festival Hall? Not as an event space in the auditorium but as a public space.

Robert

Probably it's kind of gauche. 60s vibe. Its feeling of hope. It's a very hopeful place.

Valérie

Can you define gauche for me?

Robert

I think it's kind of like very, almost like, laid back luxury is sort of almost debauched in a way. I think that it is that kind of space. It is used incorrectly, you know, or maybe it was designed to have little kids running around playing hide and seek. Maybe it was designed for me to use it as a cut through, you know, but probably I would imagine that they were thinking that people were going to stay and praise the creativity but in fact, people just want to run around and use it as a cut through. So, it allows for that and in that sense, it doesn't stop you in the door. It doesn't ask where you're going, it doesn't stop children from running around. And that sort of makes it gauche and idiosyncratic and clumsy and things are slightly... the furniture on the fifth floor are slightly wrong, you never know quite where everything is you know, that to me is a sign of a really interesting public space.

Valérie

Okay, thank you. And one last question. Yes, there is there anything that you don't like about it? Or anything that you wish was different?

Robert

No, no, I wouldn't. I don't like things changing but you know buildings like that are under threat or were under threat until recently because they were seen as extravagant, badly designed, you know, and it's only recently that we've had this kind of retro architectural and interiors sort of relicense and I wouldn't change anything about it. It's got sort of odd qualities and feelings of being lost or whatever. I think it's part of the fabric of London and it's certainly one of the most, if not the most iconic, interior public spaces that I can think of.

Valérie

Okay, well thank you very much for the interview.

Appendix 8: Experiments design, analysis and transcripts for Chapter Seven.

Key insights are synthesised in 7.1.

The experiments were conducted with undergraduate design students. As with the staff and visitor interviews, the selection of student participants draws on theories of purposeful sampling for qualitative information collection and analysis (Patton 2002, Creswell and Plano-Clark 2011, Maxwell 2013, Palinkas et al. 2015). Purposeful sampling was identified as best suited to the mixed methods used in this research because it allows for a more focused and in-depth enquiry with a specific audience. Design students were sought because they are one of the audiences for this research and one that I interact with professionally the most. Alongside academics, they are most likely to be the first people to benefit from this research.

Student participants were recruited by consulting with a key academic in their programme. First, to gain academic perspectives on the relevance of this research to design students in their respective disciplines and to validate the proposed activities. Then, for the academics to make an ethical decision before acting as gatekeepers to disseminate information to students. Following on from this, students were provided with information about this research and invited to complete a consent form should they wish to participate. The courses selected were from the University of the Arts London in the UK, Politecnico di Milano in Italy, and the University of Navarra in Spain, and the students who participated in the study were from mixed nationalities: British, Irish, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Thai, Chinese, Japanese and American. This provided an opportunity to assess whether students who do not have English as their first language could understand and engage with the principles developed in this study.

Three types of experiments were constructed, one for each of the three pairs of principles of personalisation identified in this study. One experiment focused on porosity and privateness, another on enticement and exploration, and a third on looseness and appropriation. To help maintain clarity and focus, address methodological issues associated with time constraints and participants' ability to commit to the studies, each pair of principles was explored independently by three different groups of students. Parity between the three types of experiments was maintained in three ways. First, the information used to brief the different groups of students on their activity was structured and presented in a similar format for all three experiments. Then, the sensory model developed for the case study was used each time although, due to the limited time available for most experiments, principles pertaining to

haptic sight were brought into the modality sight for simplicity. Finally, each group was asked to achieve the same goal: to cultivate positive sensory-emotional connections between people and their environment through design.

The principles developed through this research were tested across a range of educational contexts to reflect the variability of students' learning experiences. They may, for instance, participate in short activities lasting only a few hours, or in mini projects lasting two to three weeks, or they may work on much longer projects lasting a few months. This variability is reflected in the design of the experiments and is defined as testing usability. The design experiments also needed to evidence how this research could apply to a broad range of public environments and situations beyond that of the public interior of the RFH. This was achieved by selecting different typologies of sites and contexts, speculative and real-life scenarios, and by providing students with the agency to interpret the principles pertaining to the personalisation of experience and their associated sensory-emotional dimensions in their own way. This is defined as testing transferability. In addition, the transformative impact of the activities was also explored. This meant assessing whether they helped enhance students' ability to enrich the relationship between people and their environment through design, and whether students felt they had learnt something that they would want to apply again to future projects. This is defined as testing value. Following the initial briefing, interactions with me during the activities were kept to a minimum to avoid influencing students' responses. Then, upon completion of the activities, participants were invited to discuss their response to the brief, either as a presentation or as an unstructured interview.

A thematic analysis method was used to uncover and categorise key themes, examining each group or individual participants in the order in which the experiments were conducted. This means that porosity and privateness are discussed first, then enticement and exploration, and finally looseness and appropriation. Each student group is discussed in-depth sequentially starting with an overview of the design, outlining how students integrated the pair of principles they were working with and corresponding sensory-emotional processes. This is not about providing a critique of the designs, but about articulating how the students engaged with the principles they were presented with. Next, a summary of the students' experience of the activity is included, followed by the transcript of the presentation or interview.

Experiment 1: creating positive sensory-emotional connections through porosity and privateness.

The experiment testing the principles of porosity and privateness took place in October and November 2021. It was designed as a mini project: a three-week online collaboration (using Collaborate Ultra and Miro) between third year students from the BA Interior Design at Politecnico di Milano (Milan, Italy) and third year students from the BA (Hons) Design for Branded Spaces at London College of Communication (London, UK). The BA Interior Design taught a conventional interior design curriculum whilst the BA (Hons) Design for Branded Spaces represented an emerging interdisciplinary curriculum at the intersection of spatial design and storytelling. Participants from each course worked together in groups of four to five students and four groups, nineteen students in total, responded to the call to participate in this research.

The activity began with a four-hour online briefing session in week one. Porosity was presented as the design and management of boundaries, borders and liminal edges to regulate sensory flows. The notion of phenomena connecting the micro-scale of the individual with the macro-scale of the environment was introduced and precise definitions of boundaries, borders and liminal edges were also provided. Next, privateness was described as the ability to define personal or group territories whilst still being connected to sensory phenomena in the macro-scale of the collective environment. The role of porosity in cultivating privateness was then discussed. Prior to the start of the mini project each group took part in a short activity in which they explored characteristics of porosity and privateness across micro and macro-scales using images of the public interior of the RFH from the case study. They were tasked to identify territories, vantage points, boundaries, porous edges and liminal edges. Students were also asked to imagine how the porosity of the interior could regulate sensory flows other than visual flows. Aside from providing them with an opportunity to assimilate the principles presented to them, this exercise enabled students from both courses to meet. Following on from this, they were briefed on the mini project for which they were tasked to design a temporary public space or pavilion where people can define personal or group territories while still maintaining positive connections with the collective environment. A specific site was not provided in the brief. They were given three weeks to complete the project and met online independently from me during that time although I provided them with a process guide. It contained a set of questions, acting as prompts for the information provided in the briefing, for

them to consider when carrying out the activity. At the end of the three weeks, each group presented their design.

The transcripts from the activity on porosity and privateness include my feedback to students who were presenting their work. The transcripts also include reviews of the students’ responses to ensure I understood what they meant.

Group 1 porosity and privateness:

Giulia, Martina, Sabrina, Federica, Dharika



Perspective view of the pavilion.

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●		●	●
	Light	●		●		●	●
	Surfaces	●		●		●	
	Body motion/position		●	●		●	
TACTILE	Passive skin contact	●		●		●	
	Active skin contact	●			●	●	
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position		●		●	●	
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●	●		●	
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people	●		●	●	●	●

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

Group 1 brought together indoor and outdoor spaces for people to relax or study. The pavilion is located in Milan, Italy, although no specific area was selected. Three-dimensional elements define boundaries and borders to provide visitors with the choice between enclosed spaces if they want to work and concentrate, or semi-enclosed spaces conducive to relaxation. The enclosed spaces contain moveable furniture for visitors to define personal or group territories. The semi-enclosed spaces include a large garden at the centre of the pavilion and two smaller ones on either side. Here, natural elements, grass, sky, rain, sun, trees and flowers, become part of the visitor experience. The plants are also clustered for visitors to be able to enact positive territoriality. The structure consists of a metal frame and translucent polycarbonate panels (these show as transparent in Figure 18, but the students stated that they are translucent). This means that the panels are both boundaries and borders. Boundaries because they are a barrier to kinaesthetic flows, people cannot walk through them. They also diffuse visual connections to the outside, enhancing the perception of enclosure. There are nonetheless openings for people to enter and exit, and for air flow to circulate. The panels are also borders because auditory flows, such as the sounds of conversations in the garden and the sounds of the city, can permeate through but their intensity is reduced.

In the garden, the roof of the pavilion overhangs to provide a shaded area for visitors to shelter from the sun or rain. This device creates a liminal edge, a sensory threshold between shaded and exposed, or dry and wet. The composition and organisation of the pavilion presents varying degrees of privateness with possibilities for territories to become vantage points from which visitors can maintain connections with the macro-scale of the environment. The garden for instance acts as a focal point and offers multiple sightlines through the spaces although the translucency of materials diffuses vistas. The students initiated the experiential design process by defining the desired emotional tone of the pavilion, in this instance, relaxing and joyful. They privileged sensory rewards conducive to grounding emotional qualities to create a relaxing environment where visitors can focus on their preferred activities. The phenomena conducive to grounding emotional qualities are found in the visual composition and organisation of three-dimensional elements. Volumes and planes are regular and symmetrical, and their scale and proportions are consistent with those of the body. They are also experienced in the characteristics of light since the translucent panels filter natural light to contribute to the comfort of visitors. Gentle air flows and the warmth of the sun on the skin can contribute tactile rewards through passive skin contact whilst sitting on the furniture or grass can also generate kinaesthetic and tactile (active skin contact) rewards. Then, the relative quietness of the pavilion in comparison to the city beyond can further enhance the perception of grounding qualities. Nonetheless, a degree of stimulation was introduced through visual and

olfactive phenomena in the natural elements and by incorporating artificial lighting at night. Their purpose is to contribute to a sense of joy and wonder and transform the pavilion into a visual spectacle.

This group confirmed that they found the principles and processes introduced in this activity helpful and that they would use them again in future projects. Their approach showed that they considered sensory-emotional needs from the outset and appreciated the centrality of bodily experiences. Working with boundaries, borders and liminal edges to modulate sensory flows provided them with a method to design the pavilion, a way to define the ratio of enclosed to semi-enclosed spaces and the selection of materials, the relationship between the micro-scale of the body and the macro-scale of the environment, and synergies between grounding and stimulating qualities.

- Transcript

Federica

So, the purpose of the pavilion is to let people relax in nature and to separate them from the chaos of the city because we thought to put this pavilion in, in an outdoor place and in not in a specific city but in a in a city in which maybe there is there isn't nature or place when people where people can relax. And so, the purpose is to relax in the nature in the pavilion and to let people concentrate to work or study in the co working area of the pavilion. In fact, we thought that the target audience could be students and the work [professionals] so from 18 to maybe 50, 60 years old. And so, the layout of the pavilion as you can see here, is it is composed by an open spaces, so where people can totally relax, a private space only to work with the table chairs, and the combination of them both so, where people can both relax and work. So, we started from the emotions, the emotional rewards that people can feel in the pavilion so they can relax and focus for concentration or meditation. But in the evening, we thought also, as you can see here, during the evening, we also imagine that pavilion could be with lights, and so other emotional rewards could be wonder simulating and joyful.

As you can see here in the technical drawings, there are the three spaces that I was saying before so the private space, which is the co-working area, and the co working area is covered, the open space, which is not covered, then the semi open space, which is both, it is covered but it's closed so there isn't there is not a door. And here you can see the sections. The panels of the pavilion are made by polycarbonate, and the structure is in steel, so they're translucent, but here in the Render, as you see, they seem glass, but it isn't. it is it is polycarbonate so it's

white. Here you can see the pavilion in general. So, this part is the co-working area. The central part is the private space area and this one is the area where it's semi open. And we also think about the boundaries, the corridor, and the liminal edges. So, the liminal edges could be everywhere where there is lights and shadows due to the roof, the trees and the flowers, and those are the shadows of the panels. The borders are the panels, as I told you before that they are in polycarbonate, so they are semi-transparent, and also the plants and the flowers, and the only boundary that there is the roof because they're totally covered. The vantage point so our seats in in all the pavilion, the chairs and the places where people can sit because under the shoulders, they have the wall and they can see all the centre of the pavilion and also the microscale, nested comfort, are both of the seats near the nature and the seats inside the co working and the tables. The stimulation comes from the light from the sky and the colours from the panels during the evening, the smell of the flowers and plants at the centre of the pavilion. I think that I said all of the things.

Valérie

This is this is really good. You've actually covered every single point of the different principles clearly and really well, and you have done so much work, I'm really impressed. Okay, I think the idea of starting with emotional rewards is really good and enables you to expand and translate these qualities into experiences. You have identified three different types of spaces or environments, and you also connected the physical environment with the social environment, and you also thought about the differences between day and night. And so, you've got this notion of grounding and stimulating qualities that are dependent on each other. This is really nice, and that is that is distinctive about your proposal. You have also identified the rewards extremely well. Obviously, you've clearly understood the concept of porosity and privateness. So that's not just a question for you Federica, that's a question for the entire group. Would you say that having understood the principles so well, did you find them helpful in managing the different experiences within a spatial context?

Federica

Yes, I think that's the... the thing that we did, to identify boundaries, borders and liminal edges helped us a lot to think about a shape, the shape of the pavilion, because we identified really well... the privateness of the people, so the closed spaces and the open spaces. So we thought before [first] about the boundary, borders and liminal edges, and then started to think about shape.

Valérie

Yeah, and I think also materials would you say? I think it influenced your choice of materials perhaps.

Federica

Yes, yes. Because for example, the plants are like semi-transparent.

Valérie

Yeah, the plants. I mean, the way you've used plants and materials as borders in the design, bringing together the natural and the manmade environment and the plants also have the potential to provide a kind of olfactive phenomena that you would not get from manmade materials necessarily. So that's something that you can add as another layer of sensory stimulation into your project.

Thank you for your contribution and presentation. Did you find the principles introduced in this activity useful? Do you think you would use this again in future projects?

Federica

Yes, I think so.

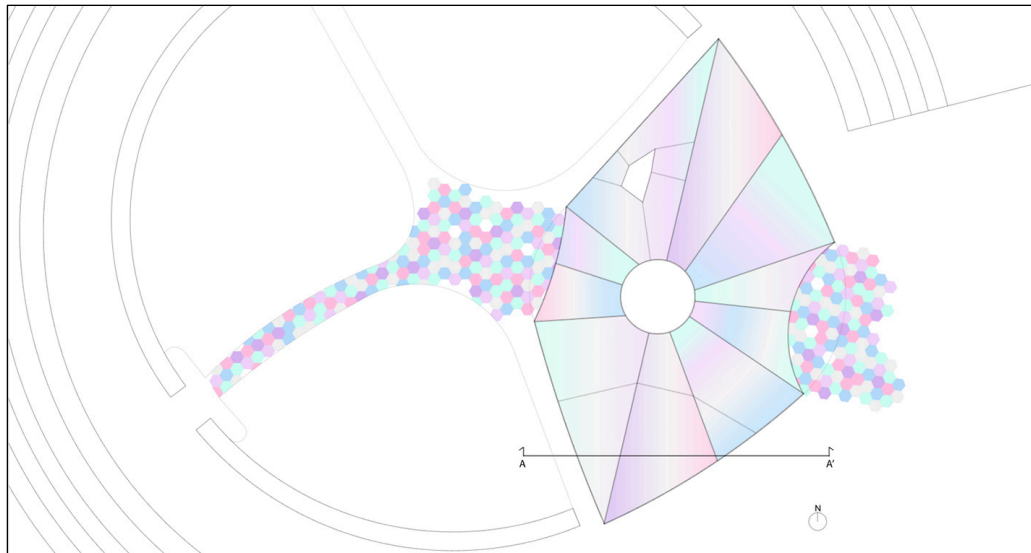
Valérie

Okay, thanks. Okay, fantastic. This is an excellent project, the quality of the work is very good, the visualisation is very clear. You've presented it well Federica, thank you very much.

Group 2 porosity and privateness:

Alessandro, Rebecca, Anna Maria, Tomoyasu

Group 2 designed a participatory installation based on the concept of fun installed above and around the basin of an existing fountain in a public square in Milan. The installation includes a tent like structure around the basin and tiled paths on both sides. These constitute extremely porous devices that nonetheless act as borders because visual and tactile phenomena distinguish the experience of the paths from the experience of the existing public square. They also help focus people's attention on the main structure. Its panels are both boundaries and borders. Boundaries because of their solidity. Movement in and out the installation is constrained. Borders because the material is translucent, and auditory flows also permeate in and out of the structure.



Top view of the pavilion

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●		●	●
	Light	●		●		●	●
	Surfaces	●		●			●
	Body motion/position		●	●			●
TACTILE	Passive skin contact	●		●			●
	Active skin contact	●			●		●
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position		●		●		●
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●	●	●		●
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people						

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

A circular opening in the roof generates visual and tactile flows. People can look to the sky and may feel the sunlight or rain on their skin depending on the time of day and weather conditions. This opening can also become a liminal edge. The light, for example, may be dimmer inside and brighter outside. At the same time, this device can also transform the interior into a vantage point defined by distinct edges. Although it is limited in scale, it can expand the macro-scale into infinity through visual flows into the sky above. In this design, privateness is experienced in the transition from the large scale of the urban environment into the intimate scale of the installation. The semi-enclosed structure and the shallow basin of the

fountain where people are able to move, jump, splash, chat and laugh become a collective territory. The students initiated the experiential design process by defining the desired emotional tone of the pavilion, in this instance, delightful, entertaining, exciting and surprising. This design privileges sensory rewards conducive to stimulating emotional qualities, a happy environment with a high level of stimulation. This is achieved in part through spatio-sensory phenomena such as visual rewards in the colours of surfaces and tactile rewards experienced through active skin contact, with the unusual integration of the fluidity of water into the materiality of the environment. Socio-sensory phenomena, seeing and hearing people play and having fun, further intensifies the levels of stimulation (with expected variations depending on the amount of people inside and perhaps even weather conditions). Stimulation may be balanced by grounding visual qualities in the composition and organisation of three-dimensional elements, including the focal point of the opening to the sky, the nested volume and intimate scale of the interior, and the visual phenomenon of the light filtered through the translucent stretched fabric during the day.

This group highlighted that without the principles introduced in the activity, their design would have been very different. For instance, when previously they would have considered water as an obstacle or constraint, taking a sensory-emotional approach to designing enabled them to identify an opportunity for water to contribute distinctive sensory rewards. Their approach showed that they considered sensory-emotional opportunities from the outset and appreciated the centrality of bodily experiences and the correspondence between spatio and socio-sensory phenomena. Whilst their design privileges experiences in the micro-scale of the body, they nonetheless recognised its relationship with the macro-scale of the environment. They explored a context in which porosity could cultivate privateness as a collective experience and working with boundaries, borders and liminal edges to modulate sensory flows provided them with a method to determine the three-dimensional elements of the pavilion and the selection of materials.

- Transcript

Alessandro

So okay... our words was fun, so we started our project from this word, and we chose as our target people from different ages, mainly kids, around seven years old and teenagers, but also parents with their kids. So, we started with a mood board, which shows which is the mood of our project and what we wanted to represent it through our pavilion, and we also chose some words to express the feelings that people could experience while being inside the pavilion,

which are protected, stimulated, happy, be welcomed, excited, inviting and surprised. Then we proceeded by choosing some colours, which are very bright and saturated. And let's say that we wanted to... to represent these words' true colours. So, then we started analysing a case study, which is a pavilion made by the Selgascano for the Centre for the serpentine galleries of London in 2015, which is a strange pavilion because it doesn't have a real function, but it's made the mostly for his aesthetic and to give people which enter into a nice suggestion of senses. So, then we chose to insert our pavilion in Gae Aulenti square in Milan because it is a place where often people go to shop, but also to take a break from daily routine. And this square has a pool of water, which is about two centimetres high, and fountains in which kids mostly, like to play very often. So, we started with some drawings and then we designed the structure of the pavilion, which is made in ETFE which is a material that can be coloured in different ways, and it's very resistant, even if put in open spaces, in outdoor spaces, and we chose to insert these hexagonal tiles on the platform to give people a hint to the way to the pavilion.

These are some other drawings, and this is the final render, the final result. It's a pretty basic structure, actually with a hole on the top to make light go through, but also to make people which are inside the pavilion look to the sky, which was to insert this pavilion only above the pool of water so that kids could be attracted to the structure, enter it and then be surprised to see water and start playing with water. Also, this pool has three little lights of three different columns which start lighting up in the evening. So, this pavilion is not accessible only during the daytime. The boundary is obviously the structure itself with this cover. The vantage points are the hole on the top and the openings which are 2. The bigger one opens up to the macro scale, which is the people and the structures [buildings] that are in the square. The liminal edge is the light coming from the opening on the top of the pavilion, and then comfort is in fact water which is the key elements of this project.

Valérie

Thank you. Thank you very much. That's wonderful. It's got so much in it, and it's very well presented. And so, you started with a keyword which was 'fun'. Was it from the activity before?

Alessandro

Yeah, yeah.

Valérie

So, let's go through this. So, first of all, the process is extremely clear, and very thorough. There's a lovely creativity to it, but it's also very logical, which is great, and you worked really well you know, you're quite precise. And you said ok, well these are the emotional rewards and we're going to look at colours. And that gave you a very clear objective, which was great. And then a pavilion with no function. Yes. That's kind of what the serpentine pavilion can be about. It's a pure sensorial experience. And you go there just to be there, to enjoy the environment. So that's exactly what you've done. And so, people can go into water. Okay, great. Water as nested comfort. That's great. I never thought about this, this is brilliant, a really innovative approach to thinking about nested comfort. It's a distinctive feature of your project. And also, you talked about the vantage point. When you're inside, the stimulation is outside. You know you've got the sky etc. And using the light gives you one experience during the day and another in the evening. The material you've used is translucent, is that correct?

Alessandro

Yeah, it is translucent. Yeah. So, the light actually is coming through the covers well... not that much, but a little bit of light comes to from the cover as well.

Valérie

In terms of the visual aspect and the tactual aspects, because obviously the water would be on your skin so you would feel a different kind of tactual quality. Did you talk about sounds?

Alessandro

The sounds are mostly those one coming from the city. This the square is in the centre of Milan, so it is a bit chaotic, maybe. But inside the pavilion, they are much softer and the sounds you hear the most are those coming from water.

Valérie

What makes you think that the sounds in the pavilion would be softer, that people would be quiet and not actually play and make lots of noise?

Alessandro

No people must have fun inside the pavilion because it is designed for them to have fun, but the cover makes it so that sounds coming from the outside there are softer and sounds coming from the inside bounce inside the pavilion so they can get stronger.

Valérie

Yeah, you've created a very playful environment, and you responded extremely well to the brief. You used octagonal panels on the floor, starting outside leading people towards the pavilion. So, the fun starts outside and then brings you in, doesn't it?

Alessandro

Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

Valérie

And then the porosity is also through the materiality because the colour and the fact that it is translucent have a very important role to play into the perception and the experience of that design.

Alessandro

Yeah.

Valérie

Okay, and so did you find that using the principles introduced in this activity was useful in developing this design? Would you have considered, for example, the notion of vantage point, working with a key word [emotion] and using water for nested comfort before you did this project?

Alessandro

Actually, I think that without using these principles, this project would have come out extremely different. Because I didn't think the water could be an asset comfort. Maybe I would have thought about the water as a limiter or an obstacle. While in this case, the water has become an essential point of this project.

Valérie

Nice. Okay. Thank you very much.

Group 3 porosity and privateness:

Elia, Leonardo, Ioana, Charlotte, Bam

Group 3 created a single enclosed space with one opening for visitors to enter and exit and a large window. The pavilion is located in London, it is designed as an extension to a bus stop and

presents a snug interior contrasting with the vast urban exterior. The interior wraps itself around the body, defining a territory where people enact a single activity, reading.



Interior perspective view of the pavilion.

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●		●	
	Light	●		●		●	
	Surfaces	●		●		●	●
	Body motion/position		●	●		●	
TACTILE	Passive skin contact					●	
	Active skin contact	●			●	●	
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position		●		●	●	
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●	●	●	●	
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people	●		●		●	

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

The design relies on solid boundaries, scale, curved contours and materials to contribute to a perception of intimacy. Privateness is cultivated by keeping porosity to a minimum, with only one opening for movement, sounds and air to flow through freely, and a green tinted glass window and roof filtering natural light. A curved bench for people to sit on to read and the

perceived homeliness of a bookshelf opposite can also contribute to the perception of nested comfort. The opening through which people can enter and exit defines a liminal edge contrasting interior and exterior, for visitors to feel an element of surprise when they cross the threshold for the first time. This device was used to present the interior as a space to enact positive territoriality. Once inside people can still maintain a degree of connection with the macro-scale of the urban environment. They can see through the large window, and they can hear the sounds of the city outside.

Group 3 created a single enclosed space with one opening for visitors to enter and exit and a large window. The pavilion is located in London, it is designed as an extension to a bus stop and presents a snug interior contrasting with the vast urban exterior. The interior wraps itself around the body, defining a territory where people enact a single activity, reading. The design relies on solid boundaries, scale, curved contours and materials to contribute to a perception of intimacy. Privateness is cultivated by keeping porosity to a minimum, with only one opening for movement, sounds and air to flow through freely, and a green tinted glass window and roof filtering natural light. A curved bench for people to sit on to read and the perceived homeliness of a bookshelf opposite can also contribute to the perception of nested comfort. The opening through which people can enter and exit defines a liminal edge contrasting interior and exterior, for visitors to feel an element of surprise when they cross the threshold for the first time. This device was used to present the interior as a space to enact positive territoriality. Once inside people can still maintain a degree of connection with the macro-scale of the urban environment. They can see through the large window, and they can hear the sounds of the city outside.

The students first identified a purpose and location for the pavilion. They then initiated the experiential design process by defining its desired emotional tone, in this instance, comfort, relaxation and serenity. Here, grounding emotional qualities dominate. They are introduced through visual, tactile, auditory, kinaesthetic and olfactory rewards. These include the curved volumes that hug the body, the smoothness of contours, the intimate scale and proportions, the use of wood and green tinted glass throughout. The wood also contributes to the relative quietness of the environment, to the perceived warmth of the interior, and visitors experience its subtle and comforting scent as they enter the pavilion. The green tinted glass filters natural light to, according to students, provide a more comfortable reading experience. The space is thus designed to shelter the body. Conversely, the rhythm of the pattern of the wooden bench and the colourful book spines introduce a degree of complexity and thus stimulation in juxtaposition to the dominant grounding qualities of the interior.

This group highlighted that prior to this activity, they would have focused their attention on the structural and functional properties of the pavilion. Instead, they were able to explore new possibilities for design to integrate multisensory phenomena to connect people emotionally to their surroundings. Their approach showed that they considered sensory-emotional needs from the outset and appreciated the centrality of bodily experiences. They chose to focus on grounding embodied experiences, exploring the sensory properties of volumes, contours, materials and light with precision and efficacy. Working with boundaries, borders and liminal edges to keep sensory flows to a minimum provided students with a method to design for intimacy, perhaps taking privateness to its limits. Anything beyond this threshold of intimacy could arguably be construed as privacy.

- Transcript

Elia

Good morning. So, for our pavilion what we focused on was to create a public book sharing space to be placed next to bus stops. So, our initial designs focused mainly on a kind of cottage structure and a kind of nest feeling with the use of wood. Our target audience is mainly teenagers and adults, so university students or office workers or passer-by's, anyone ranging from 19 to 40 years old. The Pavilion is meant to be a modular structure which could be placed in any city next to any bus stop. The only limitation being that the sidewalk has to be large enough to accommodate the pavilion.

While designing it we focused on some emotional and sensory qualities. From an emotional standpoint, we tried to give a feeling of comfort, relaxation and serenity, but also a feeling of amusement and of 'wow' when people walk into the pavilion. We kind of wanted to focus on our shock effect from the outside to the inside. From a sensory standpoint, we used wood to give a sense of warmth and of nested comfort, and also, we use wood because of the fragrance it gives off, which helps with the inclusivity of the space. From a material standpoint, we used green tinted glass, we'll see why in a minute, and plywood which is organic, very easy to build, and also, it's quite sustainable. Looking at technical drawings, as you can see here to the left this box right here is your average bus stop and the pavilion kind of hugs it and goes around it. People are able to access the pavilion from these two entrances.

And as you can see the roof is completely covered in glass. The glass is tinted green, and we decided to have this type of glass because we wanted to permeate the inside of the pavilion with this different kind of light to emphasise the difference between outside and inside.

Looking at the inside you can see all of the pavilion is made out of wood and we designed these two bookshelves and this bench which is very soft and kind of comes out of the wall to create a seating area. Our persona is Max, he's a 21-year-old student who suffers from social anxiety and is quite introverted. Our objective is to create a space where Max can walk to after the university, maybe grab a book, maybe chit chat with other people. And when his bus home comes you can just leave a book or take it with him for the ride and just go back home. Looking at senses again, we focused on the sense of warmth, which involves the entirety of the space, a very distinct sense of smell from the wood itself, and sound. As you can see, the structure is designed to block exterior sounds and emphasise the sound inside, again trying to emphasise the difference between outside and inside.

Getting a little more technical the roof is our porous edge which filters out the light and shifts all of the colours [inside] to a more green hue. Our external structure acts as a boundary for both sound and sight. We only include two large windows because we wanted to give a kind of a sneak peek effect for people outside, so people would walk next to the pavilion and not really understand what's going on inside, maybe be intrigued and decide to step inside to discover it. And of course, our interior. The bench is a nested comfort and it kind of hugs the user giving a sense of privateness, and last but not least, we tried to focus on a very hard liminal edge to divide the outside and the inside. Lastly here you can see a few Photoshops and views. As I said, this pavilion is thought to work in any city, in any location. And yeah, that concludes our presentation. Thank you.

Valérie

Thank you very much. That's very nice. The principles [the design principles introduced through this activity] are very well integrated into the design and starting with an emotional quality actually is a very good way to then expand into how this can materialise into your project. What is interesting here, what you've done really well, is that you've associated them [the design principles] quite quickly with sensory phenomena in the design and then translated them, the process of translation was very clear. Why did you choose green for the tinted glass and how does that relate to your sensori-emotional qualities?

Elia

I think the decision behind choosing green as the colour of the glass was both from a scientific study, it is said that green light helps with reading, but also green is quite vivid. The tone of green that we chose is quite light, it's not strong. So, it's not an acid green, it's a little lighter. And I think the reason behind this was to relax the user a little more, to give off a kind of

relaxed views, to offer a different ambience but not make it too strong to the point where it's stressing or exciting the user in a negative way.

Valérie

Exactly. That's a really good answer because it [the colour green] has the potential to go completely into different direction.

Elia

Completely, red that would have been tragic.

Valérie

Yes, the green you chose has a subdued and relaxing tone. You've done maps as well, for the design, to better understand sensory phenomena like the smell of the wood. This smell would be something that is distinctive or unique to that particular environment. Is that correct?

Elia

Absolutely. I think everybody can relate to the smell of wood. Personally speaking, I'm not used to smelling it in a city environment. I mean Milan is mostly concrete so you don't really get that kind of smell, and we think that that could be an interesting new thing that people are not used to.

Valérie

It's a feature?

Elia

Yep.

Valérie

So, when you walk in, all of a sudden, this smell, this scent of wood, would envelop you, envelop the body and all of a sudden that's it, you're immersed inside, your inside, you're in that space. You're not in the outside anymore. You're not in the city anymore. And so, it's kind of welcoming and it's what I would call a signature smell in a sense that it's a smell that is typical to that particular environment, it's part of its signature if you like, you have to go there and you can get that there. There were two more things I wanted to note. One is that using somebody with social anxiety as a persona brought a new dimension to the project. It became a bit more than just, oh, here's a place where you can read books. And also, you talked about

the bench hugging the user. That's lovely. Is it something that came through the presentation, or did you really mean to design it in that way?

Elia

I think we literally said that when we were designing, the actual term we used was that the structure should come down to create benches and hug the user. This was something that we explicitly said. So, it was it was meant to be that way.

Valérie

Nice. Very good. So, in your opinion, having gone through this project, how helpful did you find these principles in designing this pavilion?

Elia

I think the lecture that we had two weeks ago really introduced some concepts, which I didn't really think of before and it is very interesting to work from the more sense-oriented design and not just from a functional or structural point. So, it introduces a new environment, a new world of things that you can explore. So absolutely.

Group 4 porosity and privateness:

Lorenzo, Ilaria, Alessia, Viv, Bai

Group 4 inserted a translucent canopy on a beach for people to rest and socialise. The design reflects the intention to provide people with a comfortable space to shelter from the sun, define a personal or group territory whilst enjoying the sight, sounds and smells of the natural environment, the movement of the waves, the breeze of the sea air, and activities around them.

The entirety of this extremely porous space is thus a vantage point connecting micro and macro-scales. The only boundaries are a translucent panel to one side and a roof shaped like a wave supported by thin columns. The perception of positive territoriality may be enhanced by liminal edges separating the shaded interior from the exposed exterior, and by pillows provided for people to sit on. The students also considered social interactions and highlighted that visitors' ability to enact a variety of activities was central to their design.



Perspective view of the pavilion

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●		●	
	Light	●		●		●	●
	Surfaces	●		●		●	
	Body motion/position		●	●		●	●
TACTILE	Passive skin contact	●		●		●	
	Active skin contact	●			●	●	
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position		●		●	●	●
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●	●	●	●	●
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people	●	●	●	●	●	

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

The students first identified a purpose and location for the pavilion. They then initiated the experiential design process by defining its desired emotional tone, in this instance, comfort and relaxation. Thus, grounding emotional qualities dominate the physical environment, including the pleasurable and calming horizontality of the view with deep sight lines to the horizon and the soft movement of the waves. Spatio-sensory phenomena in the micro-scale of the body include the smoothness of the contours and surfaces of the three-dimensional structure, the softness of the pillows, the soothing light filtered through the translucent panels, and the shaded interior protecting people from the sun. The students indicated that soothing music

would also be playing in the background. Spatio-sensory rewards in the macro-scale derive from the existing natural environment. Socio-sensory phenomena, seeing people sitting down or lounging on the pillows may also intensify the perception of comfort and relaxation although, at the same time, the sounds of people's conversations and possibly laughter, the movement and sounds of those playing or running, may also contribute to the perception of stimulating qualities. The students stated that this activity enhanced their ability to integrate rewarding multisensory phenomena in their design. Working with boundaries, borders and liminal edges to maximise sensory flows provided them with an approach to designing defined by sensory-emotional relations with the natural environment and with people in the collective environment. They also showed that they understood the concept of privateness by cultivating positive territoriality in the micro-scale of the body.

- Transcript

Bai

This is our project, a shading installation on the beach. Our chosen location is on the beach by the sea or by the more open lake. This is because we wanted the design to be functional and at the same time environmentally friendly. We chose this topic because marine conservation was discussed. So, this is our preliminary research. This is the structure, materials and pillows. In terms of structure, we researched triangular shaped structure, corridor shape structure and bubble structures, and about materials we chose recyclable materials, and for the pillows so we chose the bubble texture as you can see here. Yeah, bubble texture, the pillows and the resting space are made with this form. So, we think this is very suitable to the temporary design. And this is our mood board. Yeah, you can see some of our inspirations such as the beach, the structure, and the gradation of colours. Yeah, like that. This is the persona story. Who are people using the space? What do they do? How do they interact with this line? Yeah, so you can see the story here. As it's like child and her mother. You can see they arrive in this place and can rest on the bubble chair enjoying their meal. Mom can chat with other people and the kids can play with other children. Okay. So, I will start to talk about our design, this is a draft of our design actually. At first, we had two options, but in the end, we choose the idea of the wave shape because we think this is closer to our design ideas, the shape of the waves and the colour transition from the beach, from the beach to the deep sea. You can see details of the shaded structure here. This is the model; people can rest under the design [the structure/pavilion]. They can lie on the structure and rest, and we have different heights to also provide different spaces for people of different age or postures because you know some people want to stand, some people want to see or lie down. Yeah. So, you also can see some

details for this design like, size and which material we will use, you can see the shade roof made from recycled PVC and the bubble texture for people to lay on, and the structure will be made of aluminium profiles. We've added sounds so that people can hear not only the waves in the distance but also relaxing music. Secondly, when the sunlight is too strong, the roof panels alter automatically to become darker to effectively block the sun. And here is our final visual, a simulation showing how people interact... a scenario. You can see people resting, playing or meditating, listening, relaxing, feeling the sea breeze or listening to the waves. So yeah, that's all I think.

Valérie

Thank you, Bai. A lovely concept. I think one of the strengths of this concept, it's the way it fits into its location. I would like to go back to the beginning if you don't mind because you went quite quickly through the first slide, and I didn't really understand the sensory phenomena. What was the starting point? Some groups started with the idea to design a pavilion that has certain types of qualities. What was your starting point?

Bai

Actually, we chose the space first, we chose a seaside beach... our idea was to design a resting space for people.

Valérie

Okay, so you started with a location. Can you zoom in on the ideas board, please? That's good. So, peaceful, relaxing, public square. Okay, so those are all the things that you considered that could go into that space.

Bai

We explored different ideas before we chose a location, we looked at everyone's ideas and chose one.

Valérie

And which one did you choose amongst all these ideas? Can you point to the one that you chose?

Bai

Actually, we chose this one [Bai is pointing at a post it highlighted with a purple circle on the screen].

Valérie

Consider the idea of sunbathing by the sea or lake? And combine marine protection? Okay, so that was the starting point. Right?

Bai

Yeah.

Valérie

So, okay you are saying that getting some kind of rewarding experience for people was the starting point. I think the experience timeline is really useful in this kind of design, when you're approaching it from an experiential perspective, and as I said, there's a connection between the location and the design. It was also nice to see that you considered flexibility and choice. The material has properties that would increase its opacity when the sun is very strong, so it protects you, it creates a kind of shelter; you've got sounds to create a different type of experience; it's soothing, relaxing, comfortable. The properties of the materials contribute to the experience of the pavilion. So, perhaps it would have been good to identify the different scales of experience, the micro scale and the macro scale, in your presentation. The notions of grounding and stimulating qualities are very well illustrated in your visuals. You can see the people sitting there, enjoying this wonderful place, and it would be nice to explore porosity, boundaries and liminal edges at a deeper level, time allowing. For example, the sun, you know, will be in different positions throughout the day. So, the shading will change. This could be something that you could add if you want to revisit in future. Do you think you would revisit this way of designing in future projects?

Bai

Yes, it was useful to think about the experience of people.

Valérie

Ok. That's great. Thank you very much.

Experiment 2: creating positive sensory-emotional connections through enticement and exploration.

The experiment testing principles of enticement and exploration took place in October 2021 with second year students from the BA Service Design at the University of Navarra in

Pamplona, Spain. Although a course titled Service Design may not seem an obvious choice for this study, this course sits within the architectural programme at the University of Navarra and students are encouraged to develop their understanding of spatial contexts. This was an opportunity to test insights from this research with students who were not trained spatial designers. The activity took place in Pamplona, on campus. Student participants worked together in groups of two to three, and four groups, eleven students in total, responded to the call to participate in this research. The site of the University of Navarra Museum, located within the university campus, was selected on the advice of the Course Leader who highlighted a lack of interest in the Museum and the low number of visitors. Working with a real site provided an authentic embodied experience and the possibility to test the principles of enticement and exploration in a 'live' context. However, access was limited, and the activity could only run over a short period of time. It was organised into two four-hour workshops over two days.

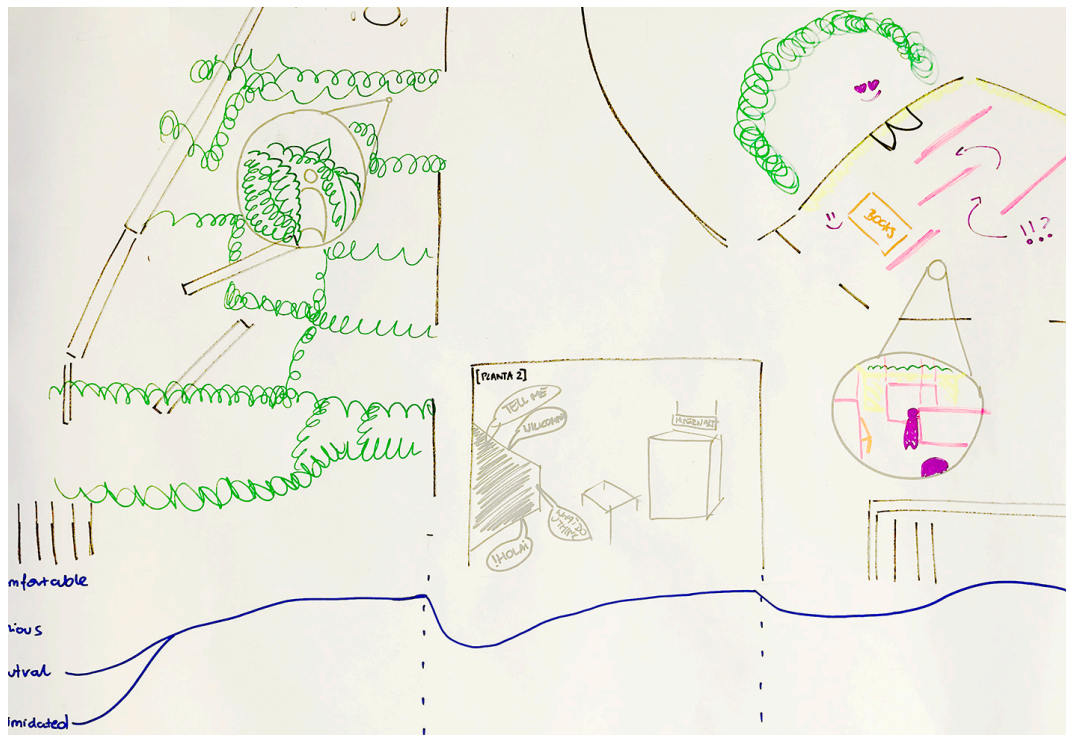
As students did not have previous experience of sensory or emotional dimensions in spatial design, the first workshop (day one) was designed to introduce these. Here, participants worked individually to engage with sensory-emotional documentation on the site of the museum, using methods I developed between 2013 and 2018 in academic and scholarly activities running prior or in parallel to this thesis. This workshop encouraged students to explore the interior of the museum through their senses and introduced them to site-specific documentation methods. They were already familiar with the site of the museum because they had used it in previous projects, and this initial workshop enabled them to explore the interior from a different perspective. Then, back in their teaching studio, students worked in their group to analyse their documentation and construct a three-dimensional map of their collective sensory-emotional experiences. The following day, they worked with the principles of enticement and exploration and their respective characteristics. Enticement was introduced as design practices that arouse curiosity or anticipation through partly hidden and partly revealed sensory phenomena in the environment. The briefing also explained the role of materiality in enticing people to interact with the environment. Exploration was introduced as the enactment of modes of approach behaviour characterised by movement towards, *flânerie* and body-environment interactions. The brief asked students to consider the museum as a public interior, a place that could become a destination for people to enjoy and not just a place people would only go to see an exhibition. The students were then prompted to introduce new sensory phenomena or enhance existing ones to entice visitors to explore. This came from an initial discussion with the Course Leader who explained that the few people who visited did not venture beyond the galleries. Furthermore, as one of the issues faced by the museum was a lack of visitors, students were asked to consider how their interventions would not only

enable visitors to connect to their environment in a more personal way, but also motivate them to come back.

In the second workshop, the students worked together again on the site of the museum to document its interior. As with the students working with porosity and privateness, interactions between students and myself were kept to a minimum to avoid influencing them, and they were also provided with a process guide. Then, they reconvened in their studio to analyse their documentation and develop a design vision realised as a three-dimensional sensory-emotional map. Due to the limited amount of time available to run this activity, participants were not expected to realise high quality outcomes. Instead, they worked with simple materials including different types and colours of paper, cards, thread and felt, to quickly realise physical representations of their responses to the brief. Finally, each group presented their design. However, as time in their teaching studio was limited, they also took part in an unstructured interview to contribute a more comprehensive account of their design and elaborate on their experience of the activity. The interviews were scheduled over a period of three weeks following the activity and took place online because I was back in the UK.

Group 1 enticement and exploration:

Helena, Jósef, Teresa.



Sketch top view of the intervention.

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●		●	
	Light	●		●		●	●
	Surfaces	●		●		●	●
	Body motion/position			●		●	●
TACTILE	Passive skin contact						
	Active skin contact	●			●		●
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position	●	●		●	●	
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●	●		●	●
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people						

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

Group 1 designed a maze-like journey with places to pause to contribute to a sense of mystery and arouse curiosity. Analysing issues pertaining to the body's ability to connect to its environment in the existing interior was the starting point for the design of the interventions. The students identified two main issues in their analysis of the existing interior. They found that because it is composed of very large volumes, its scale dominated the scale of the body. Furthermore, the ground level and the first floor were perceived by students as dark and uninviting spaces. They stated that this was not an interior that welcomed visitors. They described it as overwhelming and indicated that rather than experiencing an environment adapted to their needs, visitors were expected to adapt to it. When this did not occur, the body felt disconnected from the physical environment and, in turn, this impacted on the social environment which was non-existent. Thus, the students endeavoured to alleviate emotional disconnection and the resulting avoidance behaviour by reducing the overwhelming distance between the body and the three-dimensional elements in the space. This was achieved by inserting panels to define more intimate volumes and planes and organising them to hide and reveal phenomena to, in the students' words, "guide curiosity". The panels can also be moved by the management of the museum to create new configurations.

The visitor journey begins outside through to the ground floor, first and second floors of the building. It has a slow and intimate rhythm and integrates opportunities for pause. Although the path identity may be somewhat constrained by the maze-like structure, the students

indicated that a degree of discovery, and thus exploration, would occur. Curiosity may be further rewarded by surprise and delight as visitors move through the interior and discover more. The students inserted a large blackboard on one of the walls for visitors to interact with by writing or drawing on its surface. This device introduces an element of fun into the formality of the interior whilst opening up a space for visitors to leave traces of their passage, creating a connection between people not only in space but also across time.

Following the analysis of the interior and the definition of an objective for the design, students outlined corresponding desired emotional qualities, in this instance, relaxing, calming, comfortable and fulfilling. They explained that the existing interior could make visitors feel anxious, lost and alienated. Their design aims to provide an antidote to these negative emotions by privileging grounding qualities. Next, they identified the sensory rewards that could alter the visitor perception of the emotional tone of the environment. Here, visual and auditory rewards are introduced to generate movement towards. Enticement cultivates exploration by altering the composition, scale and proportions of three-dimensional elements, and by introducing brighter lights to indicate points of interest. Then, visitors experience kinaesthetic rewards as they slowly meander through the interior. Socio-sensory phenomena, notably the sounds of people in the distance, may also arouse interest. Aside from the blackboard, little emphasis was placed on tactile phenomena. Grounding qualities dominate in most of the interior, the blackboard interaction introduces visual, tactile and auditory stimulation at a specific point in the journey.

The students confirmed that they found the principles and processes introduced in the activity useful to their practice and would use them again in future projects (Jósef actually contacted me six months later to request an interview because he had selected to extend the knowledge developed from this activity into his third-year final project). They also confirmed that the activity enhanced their ability to appreciate and design for the sensory-emotional experience of others in a spatial context. They contrasted enticement with overwhelming to structure their approach to designing, reflecting on human-environment relations with greater efficacy. They felt that this enabled them to expand their previous approach to designing centred on functional and behavioural principles by considering actions, interactions (personalisation by), rewards and emotional responses (what it is like to experience...). They also considered how visitors would experience the environment over time, introducing flexibility to manage familiarisation, and the impact of socio-sensory phenomena.

- Transcript

Valérie

Okay, so, if you recall, this was about enticement and exploration, how you enticed people to move through space or to interact with the environment and we talked about how phenomena in the space could be partly hidden and partly revealed to get people to be curious. So, could you tell me, what in your proposal would make people curious about certain area or certain elements of the space? It could be physical elements, or it could be sounds or smells. So, could you please tell me a little bit more about this. What did you do to achieve that?

Helena

I think... well, we were working like we want to increase the sense of maze. So, the user like in the first person, the first approach when he or she arrives to the museum, he doesn't know what he's gonna find in this place. The sounds of other people or lights because as we put here in like in the right of the second photo, they're like, these panels are these spaces that they are covered, and they are like kind of high. So, we increase the sense of curiosity.

Jósef

I think that one of the things we learned with another guest lecture is that she said that buildings should adapt, that people shouldn't adapt to buildings, but building should adapt to people. So I think what we wanted to do with this proposal is that mazes can be either intimidating if they're too big, and if you don't know where to go, if nothing's really specific, and you just kind of left there, or you can arrange a maze in a way that it makes you want to explore it makes you want to be interested in discovering all the new parts it has around its corners. And I think actually, that was the project that the architect [of the Museum] had in mind, but probably it's not as visible for everyday user because this building is really cold when you go there for the first time.

Helena with Teresa agreeing in the background

Yet this space we're working with was very open, and so we found that to be quite an overwhelming experience. And so by hiding things it would seem like oh, then they wouldn't be able to see it, but in fact, it's more like let me find out what I can somehow find, and not all the information at once. You can like partially hide it. So, then there's a discovery often, and so it's more it's more enticing and less overwhelming. You feel more adapted to the space.

Valérie

Oh, that's interesting... the way you contrasted enticing with overwhelming. It's nice to hear. And so, would you say that the maze is in is in the first part as people come in? How far does it go into the space?

Helena

Well at first it was on the outside as kind of like getting prepared to go inside. But also, we did think maybe it could be spread into the inside. I think kind of like a continuum. It's kind of like the museum space also going outside and kind of having that... certainly it's separate, having like a flow again.

Jósef

Yeah, cause I think like right now what we noticed is that the building and the area surrounding it is kind of split into different mazes. So, there's this maze outside with plants and benches. And then the first floor the second floor, but they're kind of separated. So, I think what we started doing with this proposal - and we focused on that first plan, first floor - is to kind of unite so that there's a cohesion between all the floors and it's easier to navigate yourself around.

Valérie

Yeah. And what did you do upstairs? Where the books are? You used translucent panels, right?

All students

Yeah.

Valérie

So that means that you're reproducing the idea of the maze in different ways in different parts of the building and you're giving us some examples here? The plants outside and the translucent panels in the area where the books are.

All students

Yeah, yeah.

Valérie

And how do you think this would affect people? How would they move through it and how would they interact with the space? How would people move through these spaces? Do you think they would move quite fast or slowly? How do you envision this?

Helena

I think the user will be cautious because he or she doesn't know what it's gonna be like, where it's gonna take him. He's discovering as he's walking through these walls or these panels.

Valérie

You've emphasised the visual aspect, but did you think that people would also want to touch things? Is there anything in your design that could invite people to touch or to smell?

Teresa

I don't remember that we were thinking about specific activities or main themes or designs that they can interact with in this aspect, but we want to create a space to feel or to yes, where the user can feel more. Like he's more like in a privately and in a comfortable feeling... maybe yes, relative to sounds, the user can be invited with the sounds of other users behind or in another room, but he doesn't see the other people, but he can hear them, or he can feel them. So, it's kind of invited like there is somewhere else I can be... I don't know the word but...

Helena with Jósef and Teresa agreeing

I'm not alone. I can hear these other people.

Jósef with Teresa and Helena agreeing

I think that what we wanted to do is especially when we focus on this part, which is next to the terrace on the first floor, we wanted to kind of separate it but not exclude it entirely from the place but to kind of provide a space for people to take some rest, because I think it might be very overwhelming as far as I said, when you're in a huge building and it's fully open and you feel that you cannot be private in any of the parts whereas if you have translucent panels they would not only maybe silence the sounds from one of the rooms, from the video that's being played, but it could also provide you with like, I don't know, time to take a breath and think like, okay, so what's next, where am I going now? What am I doing?

Helena

Well, the sensory experience... in the big spaces in the actual museum I was feeling a kind of pressure like there's a lot of empty space around me, and I am not comfortable. So, it's like how we want to feel is also really physical.

Valérie

Okay, that's really nice. So, I get a sense that there is a kind of rhythm in the journey through the space. It's kind of slow and intimate, and then it opens up a bit. Visitors have places to rest as well. Is that correct?

All students

Yeah. Yeah.

Valérie

And then you talked about comfort. So, you're saying that this is about making the experience as comfortable as possible. Would you say that the kind of emotional rewards that are experienced by the visitors would be emotional rewards that are - and let me know if you don't know these words - fulfilling or relaxing?

Helena

Yeah, I think yeah, definitely. Again, because we wanted a space where... not where you were feeling negative emotions, but where you definitely felt a bit more alone, a bit more like small, while before it was like there was so much space around you. We're definitely looking for something that was more, yeah, more relaxing, more fulfilling also, just because you want to be more calm. I guess you could like take your time, you could relax in the space, explore.

Valérie

So, you made it more intimate... do you remember when we were talking about the micro-scale, which is the more immediate space around the body and the macro-scale which is the larger space of the environment? At the moment, the way this space [the existing interior] is designed is all to do with the macro-scale overtaking the micro-scale of the body, and then you changed this balance?

Teresa and Helena

Yes, exactly.

Valérie

Okay, and then by changing this balance, by placing elements that create a sense of territory and enclosure around the body, you created a sense of comfort. But about enticement, if I can go back to the curiosity element, do you know what kind of rewards people get? How is their curiosity satisfied? Would you be able to answer that?

Józef

So, I think, off the top of my head, I think that repeating a little bit of what Theresa said is that in order for an experience to be fulfilling, to gain a reward at the end of that, especially if it's museum, if it's a space that is built in order to be fulfilling, in order to fulfil your curiosity, and enhance it, we first would have to start with relaxing the user. So, I think if they start by being a little bit anxious or lost or feel alienated, they definitely aren't going to be able to take as much in as they could have. If they were provided spaces where they could be more intimate, be more comfortable, not be pressured in many sensorial ways, but could just focus on the on the microscale on what's surrounding them directly. So, I think that because of that, then they could get the main rewards, so to speak, that that's the museum experience overall, I think.

Helena

So, I think if you do the maze, you're hiding and revealing. There is a kind of like surprise factor, like a world where every single time you turn a corner you find something new. As I said, once there's like, yeah, like a surprise factor like you found this thing or oh, this is new, this is exciting, instead of having everything at once.

Valérie

So, you're saying that you would place sensory experiences either visual or tactual, to do with touch, or to do with smell, in specific places to give visitors a rewarding surprise when they go through the space. Is that what you're saying?

Helena

Yeah. This is how it would be.

Valérie

So, like a nice view or maybe something to touch. Did you consider that although this would work really well as a surprise the first-time people go there, the second time and the third time people go there, there wouldn't be any surprise anymore? That's not necessarily a problem. But would you say that you would want to design... to transform the space in a way that makes people want to come back because even though it's not a surprise anymore, they would want to experience it again? Is it something that you would consider?

Józef

I think so. I think that rather than building and coming up with architecture, like stable architecture, within the architecture of the building, we would do something like a temporary

architecture. So, the panel's first cycle. So, as you say, in order, maybe not to wear off our users, we could place them in different ways, arranging different mazes. And this way it could become more fun and actually we could adapt to the user and see if the places we designed like, for example, we could see if they were attended to or if they'd rather explore it differently. So yeah, I think we could kind of guide them in different ways and redesign it over and over again.

Helena with Teresa agreeing

Yes, it can be the same space but a different experience each.

Valérie

So, they might change things around on a regular basis... or there is another option as well, which is that it's always the same experience, and it's so good that you want to come back to it?

Helena

Yes, I think if it's the same experience, there's also a factor like maybe you would want to bring somebody else to experience something and you feel like the expert or not the expert, but like oh, look what this thing that discovered like let me take you here, because I felt this enticement and I felt discovery, I want you to experience the same thing.

Valérie

Yeah, if it's something nice, if it's a positive experience, there is something in the way we are, the human body, that makes us want more of it. So, we are motivated to do it again, or to come back somewhere or to experience it again. And so that's why this is a useful thing to know for design and this is what enticement is about, to create this kind of positive reward that would motivate people to come back. It may be something that changes regularly, as you said, or it could be something that is always there, it's something people want to experience again and again. So, yeah, I think I understood the principles [of your proposal] and considering that you had such a short time to do this, I think you came up with a really thorough response.

Could you tell me a little bit about your thought process, how you structured the information in the post-its? It starts at the top with 'alien'. Can you take me through this?

Helena, Teresa and József

We were thinking to put one person on each colour. The yellow represented our feeling, like our main feeling, in the micro-space, the orange one in the macro-space, and the green one was a feeling overall, of the whole experience. And so... oh yeah, so, from those feelings, we

did a selection that is the ones that are there in the photo and we and we sorted the main goals and main aims for the project. As we can see from the photo, we put what we want to avoid and what we want to enhance, to promote. Then we were thinking, and we were trying to have ideas, to draw them, to think how we can apply this in the museum, if we need any material, if we need any kind of physical object, and we divided the work. For example, Teresa was working on the nature space outside, József on the second floor with the desks and the walls and the blackboard, and I was more into the panel idea. And then were answering the questions you gave us the ability to build out argument.

Teresa

Yes, guiding curiosity, I think we got it from the questions [in the worksheet] while thinking how best to create the concept itself.

József

Because our methodology was rather simple, but I think the fact that there were seven questions that we wanted to go through and have at least one or two answers to them to enhance the previous stages, to describe our feelings.

Valérie

Did you find the questions useful in guiding you through this activity?

Helena

Yes, I think, I mean, you and I [Helena is referring to József], we were more into answering the questions and some questions resembled the fifth question or in the sixth question. We were saying like, okay, this is also the answer to the question before, and we were sometimes thinking like this is kind of the same all the time. At the end, we were thinking, no, it's like how we are validating and how we're enhancing the whole idea. So yes, I think that it's interesting to ask the same thing but in different ways, because even though you're kind of still asking the same question, then if it's done differently, it kind of stimulates you to answer differently as well because you don't want to repeat yourself. So, you go okay, I used the adjectives lost or alienated, but how else could I describe it? Maybe with a sentence and maybe with something else? So, I think that just goes deeper. Yeah.

Valérie

That's fantastic. I'm looking at the questions now actually. For 'what experiences in the journey contribute stimulating qualities?', which is the fifth question, you wrote 'suspension, green

corridors, and human traces'. Now take yourself back to that day. Green corridors, I get that, but suspension and human traces? Do you remember how that related to stimulation? So, what experiences in the journey contribute stimulating qualities?

Helena

Suspension was related with the idea of the user getting into the maze, the first time he is going obviously, not the second or the third, the first experience. He doesn't know what he's gonna find when he goes there, when he turns the corner, and he can have this invitation of other sounds or delight, or whatever, but there's this suspension of 'I don't know what I'm going to find now'. We want to represent this idea. And the human traces...?

Jósef with Helena and Teresa agreeing in the background

I think we referred to things that were done by other people and left in the museum. I think one of our main problems was that the museum is very clean in terms of it's very formal, but if there were, for example, like this blackboard that we wanted to design on the second floor, that there would be a wall covered in Blackboard so that children or people could write things or maybe what they remember from the experience it would kinda make it more cosy and more embracing rather than being provided just by the things that museum.

Helena

Yes, this idea that in museums you cannot touch anything, and maybe if we can we make people feel more comfortable and at least they can interact with something, with this blackboard.

Jósef

Yeah, I think is what people miss a lot, right? Also, that's what we discovered for our co-design session [participants had previously taken part in a co-design session with visitors to the museum as part of their course]. Like they want more interactions...

Teresa

... yes, more intimate experiences.

Valérie

So, that's really good because it's the other aspect of enticement and exploration. There are two sides to it in your project. One is movement, moving through the space and taking people from one area to another, guiding them, as you said, guiding curiosity. And the other one is to

enable people to fulfil their desire to interact physically with parts of the space, this is your blackboard idea does that and that would probably motivate people to come back, don't you think?

Teresa

Uh huh. Yes, I think so.

Helena

Yes, because also this human trace is one of the things that changed in the museum. One day is going to be different to the other, so this also memory, an invitation for the user to comeback.

Valérie

And it's nice to see what other people are leaving behind as well... this is a really lovely idea. Okay, it's great that you considered both aspects of enticement and exploration. To finish, I wanted to ask you... did you think this activity helped you understand the museum differently? Did it help you consider the museum in a different light? Did you find the activity helpful in any way?

Teresa

Yeah, I found it really helpful because I think like... I felt like without this activity, it was almost like this is a physical space, and I think with this activity you kind of get like the emotional, your emotions, and the real user experience in it. I think for me personally it helped me think about emotions, so it's really nice to kind of you know, put yourself first. I think, like, how do I feel in this space? How can the space be adapted to me instead of like, the other way around? I guess. I think that was really nice.

Helena with Teresa agreeing

Yes, and also, I'm thinking that after each of us experiencing the museum individually and after working in groups, I think that maybe it can improve us, or help us be empathic, like, this tool of being empathetic with people. Yes, because we're sharing our feelings or our opinions, and maybe I don't feel like Teresa feels in one space, but at the end you try to have understood what we were feeling independently. They were different feelings.

It was nice because in some places it was different, and in some places, it was the same. So, we kind of started asking why do we all feel this way? When talking our classmates, a lot of them

also felt like this may be something that's important or should be taken into consideration because a lot of people feel like this.

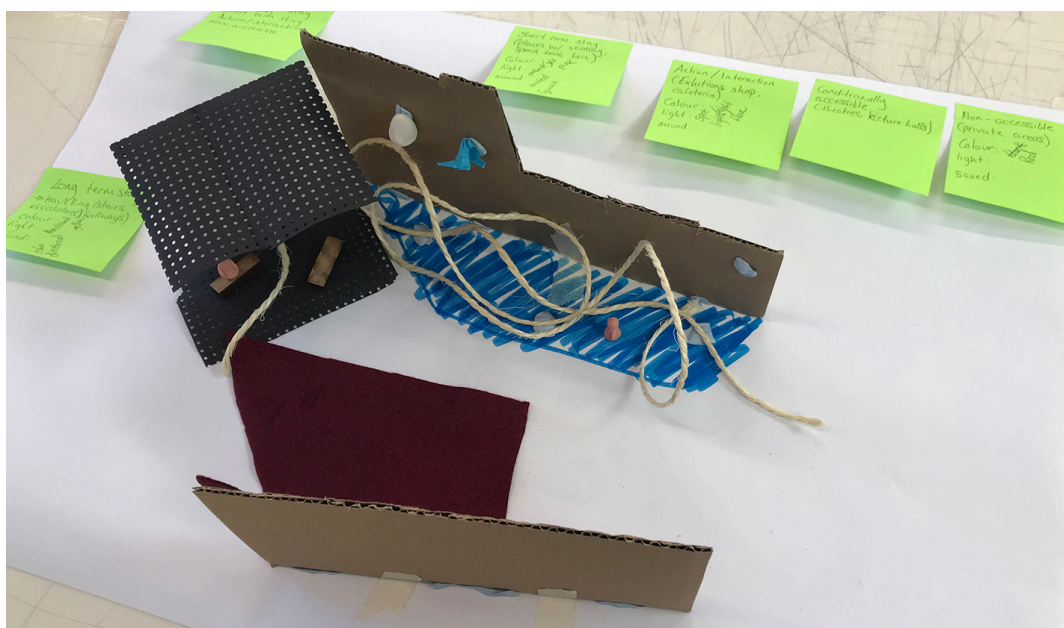
Valérie

Great. Thank you very much. That's the end of the meeting, thank you for very much for your time, I appreciate you coming back to meet me to expand on what we you presented in the studio.

Group 2 enticement and exploration:

Beatrice, Paula M, Ellie.

Group 2 explored the potential of light and sound to guide visitors through the building. The students adopted a minimalist approach to maintain coherence between their interventions and the design of the existing building. Partially hidden visual phenomena generated by inserting artificial lighting and auditory phenomena generated by the sounds of other visitors in the distance draw attention to points of interest, arouse curiosity, and entice visitors to move towards the phenomena. They guide visitors through the interior, but their journey is not constrained to a specific path. They can explore freely. A juxtaposition of contrasting stimulating and grounding qualities creates variations in the emotional tone of the interior. Bright lights in the corridors and focused lighting in the galleries stimulate. This can encourage alertness and movement. Then, diffused indirect lighting in some of the spaces rewards visitors with a more intimate and quieter environment to rest and find tranquillity.



Sketch model of the interventions.

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation						
	Light	●		●		●	●
	Surfaces						
	Body motion/position						
TACTILE	Passive skin contact						
	Active skin contact						
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position		●		●	●	●
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●	●		●	●
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people						

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

The students recognised the usefulness of the principles and processes introduced in the activity to their practice. They experienced new ways of thinking about space and when interviewed a few weeks after the activity took place, they noted that they had since used this new knowledge in another project to explore the impact of sensory phenomena on the way visitors may perceive the emotional tone of physical and social environments.

- Transcript

Valérie

If you take yourself back, this activity was about enticing people through the spaces of the museum, making them inviting, or using devices to make people move through the museum, to go on a journey and to explore. So, creating a different type of engagement for visitors, and there were two principles you could use to do this. One was to partly hide or partly reveal information, phenomena in the interior spaces, and the other one was to use different types of materials to arouse visitors' curiosity. So could you please tell me about your design. How did you approach this project?

Paula

Okay, yeah. So, first we made an analysis of what the sensorial aspect that we felt in the museum and then we kind of wanted to select those emotions and things that we have more

conflict with, such as sound and light. And because we found that the echo and the light were like, so important for us to feel different emotions in the museum, what we wanted to do was like took these aspects and reflect them into this model and create different sensations depending on different lights and sounds. So yeah, we try to do this in the work.

Valérie

What made you think light and sound were so important. When did you come to this conclusion?

Beatrice

Yes, because well, sound basically was something that kind of guided you when you were inside the museum. So, if you heard something you were curious about it, so you wanted to go in that direction. And also, light. The spaces we were going into [progressively] had more and more light. It kind of guided us, [showing us whether we could] go in there or not, so it kind of established the spaces that we could and could not go into.

Valérie

Okay, so can you describe this, you how did you do that? Could you describe what is being shown on the image? I think the image on the right is showing the interior and the image on the left... why did you have a piece of paper on top of it?

Paula

Yeah, we were just trying to create like different scenarios. So, in the first picture, we put the paper, which is kind of translucent, so light would affect the space differently, and the second one is for you to see what's in the interior. But yeah, we had like different scenarios for spaces in the museum and we wanted to recreate different aspects of lights. In parts of the Museum, we wanted to create an intimate space, where light is not that direct so we can create a more tranquil space and ambience. And then in the next one, on the contrary, bright lights like spotlights for the different artworks were more direct, and also in the spaces where you were passing by, like the hallway. So, yeah, we wanted to create different ambient lights and sound in different spaces.

Valérie

Okay, so this is about the way people move through the space, they would be guided by their perception of different lights and sounds throughout the space, and each of the areas they move to will provide them with a different experience. Yes?

Paula and Beatrice

Yeah.

Valérie

And in your design, in the model that you made, can you remind me what the thread going through the space represents?

Paula and Beatrice

Yeah, that was sound. Yeah.

Valérie

That's really interesting, you're representing the sound as fluid and at the same time you've got this perception of the sound enveloping things, taking over the whole space. What kind of sounds are we talking about here? Do you know?

Beatrice

Yeah, for example, where the thread is more concentrated, we were kind of trying to represent the exhibition rooms that were more loud, the exhibition itself had sound, you know, waves, people talking and different sounds included in the artworks. So and in other spaces, where the exhibitions didn't have sound, you could still hear sounds that were, for example, people walking, talking, echoes which were not as loud as other areas where the sounds were made on purpose. So yeah, that's why.

Valérie

Yeah, so far you've focused on the galleries, but the building has other publicly accessible spaces. Do you think this is a device that could be used to guide people through the entire building rather than just the galleries or do you think this is just for the galleries?

Paula

And no, we thought about the whole spaces in the museum not just the exhibitions because the hallways and the public spaces have light and also, people go through those spaces. So, the sound and lights can also be directing in some way. Yeah.

Valérie

Okay, yeah. I'm asking because I remember when we went there on the first day, I didn't know the building and I didn't realise that there was a whole side to the building that we didn't even

engage with. And it's only the following day that I realised there was much more to explore but the galleries seem located on one side...

[Ellie's arrival at this point interrupted the discussion because she had to be admitted into the room as presenter to be able to switch on her microphone. As she arrived late and missed the introduction, I felt that I needed to emphasise key points again before moving the discussion forward]

So, to remind us of the context of the activity, the point is to entice people into spaces, engage them, giving them a reason to explore, so that they can develop positive connections with the environment. And for that to happen, they need to experience what we call rewards. So, rewarding experiences, when they go, oh, that was nice, or that was great, I enjoyed that. These can be very small things. It doesn't have to be big experiences, but things that enable them to know when they have experienced something positive. When we've had a reward, we tend to want to experience it again, we want to revisit this experience. Like when you've had something nice to eat, you may have this again another time, because it was really nice. So, it's a little similar with spaces and with the way we engage with the physical space but also with the social space, with people. So, in your proposal, are there any rewards for the visitors to experience? Maybe through the lights and the sounds that you've described? Is there anything rewarding so they would say, okay, this was really positive?... Is it something that you considered? Whether for example when you go into the space, you see a light from a distance, and you go into that space, and is it an enjoyable experience when you get there? Is it something that you consider?

Ellie

Yeah, I don't know whether like, we proposed that many ideas, but I suppose the idea was similar to what you were discussing, like, how the light and sound guide visitors through the museum. I think we imagined that if we utilise light and sound as a way to guide people, as opposed to traditional signage, then the rewards of that would be that you attain like this open space that people found really tranquil and the way in which like, the way in which you'd be guided would be through your own curiosity rather than like direct instruction. It provides a unique experience. I think we're also trying to utilise light and sound to help define spaces, light and dark. The darker quieter room was supposed to be for a more specified use like to speak or to read.

Valérie

Okay, thank you. So, I wanted to ask you about the usefulness and transferability of this activity. First of all, did you find the activity useful in helping you consider the museum differently, a space people could experience in a different way and in perhaps more positive way? Did you find the activity helpful and how did you find it helpful if you did?

Beatrice

Yeah, I think definitely because now, we're also doing in parallel the project with the design in Design Studio. So, we're taking also into account the things that we experienced in this workshop because they were kind of interesting in the way that we perceive the museum as it's not like the normal way of doing it. So, I think it was very interesting in that sense.

Valérie

So, you mentioned that now you're doing a project. Do you think that these principles will help you further with that project?

All students

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Valérie

You integrated this notion of guided exploration in your project. Could you tell me more about why you chose to do this, what made you decide to do this, rather than just relying on traditional practices of signs, or even getting people to find their way around themselves? How did you come to that decision?

Ellie

I think that our experiences the museum, as it is currently, which is like very minimal in the way it's been like decorated, and the fact that that draws your attention to like more subtle details, like changes in light and shadow and things. We really enjoyed that aspect of the museum. So, I suppose our proposal we didn't want to detract from that in any way.

Valérie

Okay, that's great. And the posts-it in your model, are they your thoughts? Was it when you were writing down and organising your ideas? It says: long term, stop, travelling stairs, escalator, colour, types of spaces, long term. So, you were looking at long term and short-term stays?

Paula

Yeah. I think it was the way we thought of utilising those two elements light on sound on different kinds of environments, inside the museum. So yeah, they were like kind of what we're thinking.

Valérie

Okay, thank you very much. Well, that's the end of the meeting, thank you for very much for your time, I appreciate you coming back to meet me to expand on what we you presented in the studio.

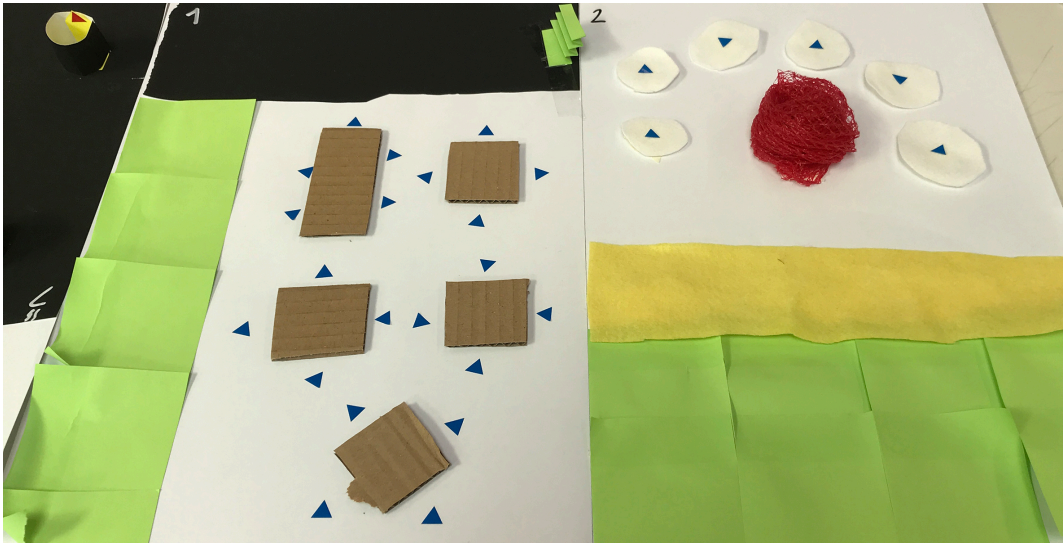
Group 3 enticement and exploration:

Paula G., Raquel.

Group 3 was inspired by existing lighting conditions in the building. They called their intervention "a journey from dark to light guided by curiosity". The interior of the museum includes dark windowless spaces on the ground floor and lower ground floor, whilst the upper levels become progressively brighter due to large windows allowing natural light to enter. The students highlighted that most of the building is not fully utilised by the management of the museum and that this was a missed opportunity to engage visitors. The design introduces new sensory phenomena throughout the building to entice and guide visitors on a journey from the lower levels through to the first and second floor, and roof terrace.

They responded to the minimalist interior by incorporating a multiplicity of visual, auditory and olfactive sensory phenomena. First, visitors are welcomed by a fresh smell as they enter the building. The students considered scent identity, strength and origin. Instead of hiding the location of the smell pods, they chose bright colours to enable visitors to easily locate them and generate approach behaviour. As visitors move closer, the olfactive experience intensifies. They also include light, fog and sounds on the lower ground floor to contribute to a sense of mystery, arouse curiosity, and draw visitors into this space. Tables and chairs are then added to the upper floors for visitors to rest, study or socialise, enjoy the natural light and generous vistas to the outside. The roof terrace incorporates a social space with an open fire. Warm colour temperature, saturated yellows and reds, and the diffused composition of the fog on the lower levels contrast sharply with the brightness of the natural light on the upper levels. The open fire of the roof, the sight of the dancing flames, the scent of the fire, the feeling of warmth on the skin, also contribute visual and tactile (passive touch) rewards. In this richness of phenomena, grounding qualities offset stimulating qualities. Visitors may feel welcome and

comfortable at times whilst also experiencing a sense of momentary delight and excitement. Socio-sensory practices, seeing people meandering through the interior, looking, listening, smelling, may also entice other visitors to enact exploration.



Sketch model of the interventions.

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●		●	●
	Light	●		●		●	●
	Surfaces	●		●		●	●
	Body motion/position			●		●	
TACTILE	Passive skin contact	●		●		●	
	Active skin contact	●	●		●	●	
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position		●		●	●	
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●	●	●	●	●
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people	●		●		●	●

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

The students emphasised that the activity altered their perception of the museum, which became a sensory environment rather than just a physical space. They explained that the activity opened up new possibilities for them to consider the way people respond emotionally to sensory phenomena, and how this impacts their perception of the environment. The students stated that they would revisit this mode of designing in future projects.

- Transcript

Valérie

Okay, great. So, I would like to go through what you've done so you can take me through it again. If you recall this activity was quite short, we had four hours for this exercise, and you were introduced to the concepts of enticement and exploration. So, how to get people to become a little more curious about their environment, for them to engage with it, to make them want to explore the space, and how this curiosity can be rewarded through the integration of different experiences, different sensory phenomena inside the space. So, could you please describe your design, how you transformed the space to create enticement and enable people to want to explore? Can you please talk through the design and explain it?

Paula

Yes. So, we first explored the space, like all the sensations that we experienced in the museum, and then we write down all of them, and then after saw we could divide the museum in four parts, from dark to light. And we thought that this could make emotions to people. On the first floor, in the floor zero there is a smell, they [visitors] can smell. In the floor minus one there's like fog and a scary sound. In the first floor there are study tables and in the last one, there is a fire with some seating for chilling out outside.

Valérie

Tell me about the smells. What kind of smells are we talking about and why did you choose smell?

Paula

We choose smells because we thought that the museum didn't have anything like that, there are no smells, so if people smell something nice, they like to stay in that place.

Valérie

So, when people arrive, there is a smell to welcome them, a welcoming smell. So, you're saying welcome, lovely smell, come in, you [the visitor] are invited to come in. Is it what it does?

Paula

Yes, exactly.

Valérie

And then after that they walk through, they continue, and then you see that there is some fog in the floor below. Can they see the fog from the floor zero?

Paula

Yes, because there are some holes in the first floor, you can see the floor minus one and they should be attracted by this mysterious fog.

Valérie

Okay, they look down, and what is the role of the fog?

Paula

To give mystery to that place because there are no windows and... to be more mysterious.

Valérie

So it's a fog that is quite close to the floor?

Paula

Yes, yes.

Valérie

If people decide to go down, they will be walking in the fog but it's not high. Their feet will be in the fog but not nothing else?

Paula

Yes, exactly.

Valérie

So, they become part of the mystery and it's inviting because it's unusual. Okay, that's great. And then they go up? What are the round things with the yellow and red inside them?

Paula

That's for the smell.

Valérie

So, the smell is not just a smell. You can actually see where the smells come from?

Paula

Yes, yes.

Valérie

Why did you decide to make it a feature in the space?

Paula

To be more... because people can go like more interactive, they can go there and actually smell it directly.

Valérie

Okay, so they can actually go to it and smell it. Did you have time to think about what kind of smell would be good to have?

Paula

No, we didn't but we thought something fresh.

Valérie

Something fresh. Okay, and why something fresh?

Paula

Because the museum is very big and... what's the word... it's like in the middle of the campus and the trees so something fresh would be great.

Valérie

When you said fresh, can you... I know it's not easy and thank you so much for doing this in English for me... can you think about one smell that you would represent fresh. So, what do you mean, what is a fresh smell to you?

Paula

Yeah, a fresh smell for example is like a tree smell.

Valérie

Okay. So, what you're doing is bringing the outside inside as people walk in?

Paula

Yes.

Valérie

And can I ask you now, why do you have the scary sounds as well as the fog?

Paula

Because the floor minus one doesn't have any window, like it's all dark, and we wanted to go with the sensation deeper to create an atmosphere of a mystery.

Valérie

Okay. So, people are guided through the floor zero and minus one because you have different types of sensory phenomena, but it's more like an installation, so it's very much like... more like the art. Your approach is more artistic, but when you go to the next level, you have a completely different approach. Can you tell me why you have tables and chairs?

Paula

Yes, because on the first floor, there's no work of art. There are like offices and spaces for the museum, for people. We thought that we could take advantage of the big windows they have and we put tables so that people can go to study and be comfortable in a nice place, without the views, in the museum.

Valérie

How do people know... is there a connection between floor zero and floor one? How do people know they have to go upstairs?

Paula

No, there isn't really a connection.

Valérie

Okay. So, you're just giving people two very different types of environments?

Paula

Yes. There is like a transition from floor minus one to floor two. Like there is a connection of light. In floor two there is plenty of light, in floor one half, in floor zero less than half, and in minus one zero light. Like this, that's the connection [the transition].

Valérie

Okay. So, what you're doing is changing your approach to the transformation of the space based on the levels of light, visitors follow the light, and that's why, when they get to the top level, you've got a more relaxing sitting area so that people can enjoy being more social?

Paula

Yes.

Valérie

Okay. And if I look on the image on the right, what's the red ball in the middle?

Paula

The red ball is fire. It's like a place where people can hang out with some fire because it's very cold outside in winter.

Valérie

Okay, it's also nice because it gives you a different type of light and it's warm, and it would be a nice experience. You can also smell the fire? It's not just the flame, the heat. It's also the smell?

Paula

Yes.

Valérie

Okay, so thank you for describing this again. Can I ask you what the green and the yellow post it represent?

Paula

The sun and the grass of the campus, like the green parts, because you can see everything on the campus [you can see the whole campus from the windows on the 2nd floor].

Valérie

Okay, so you're saying that that's the view when you're inside. So, would you say that you introduced sitting spaces because you have this fantastic view?

Paula

Yes.

Valérie

It's interesting the way you introduced rewards everywhere. When you're on floor zero, you've got the fresh smell welcoming you, and you can experience it even better if you go near it. So that's your reward. When you go downstairs in the fog, the reward would be the experience of having your feet in the fog because that can be quite fun. And then when you go to the first floor, the reward is that you can sit down, and you have this fantastic view. And then, if you go further up, you've got the fire as well, which could be really nice.

Paula

Yes, all rewards. Yeah.

Valérie

Okay, great. So, to finish up, did you find this activity helpful, did this activity help you consider the spaces of the museum differently?

Paula

Yes, absolutely, because before this activity, I never thought about all the sensations that a building can have on a person, and yes, analysing them was a very... was very good.

Valérie

And did you think it's helping you think about how people can enjoy spaces in a more positive way?

Paula

Yeah. I think that normally people don't think about this, but if there is someone that thinks of it and design things that could improve this experience, emotional experience and sensorial experience, they could have a great experience in these different places.

Valérie

Yeah, and would you say that this kind of approach to design is helpful in helping people like visitors, for example, to have a better connection with the museum? Do you think that's the kind of thing that would be useful to the museum and to the visitors?

Paula

Yes, because if you go to the Museum, then you remember how you have feel [how you felt], and all the emotions and sensations are very important to the remembering of the museum.

Valérie

Yeah, that's a really good point. Would you use principles like these in future projects? Do you think that will be something you'll be able to take with you?

Paula

Yes, yes, yes. I think it's pretty useful.

Valérie

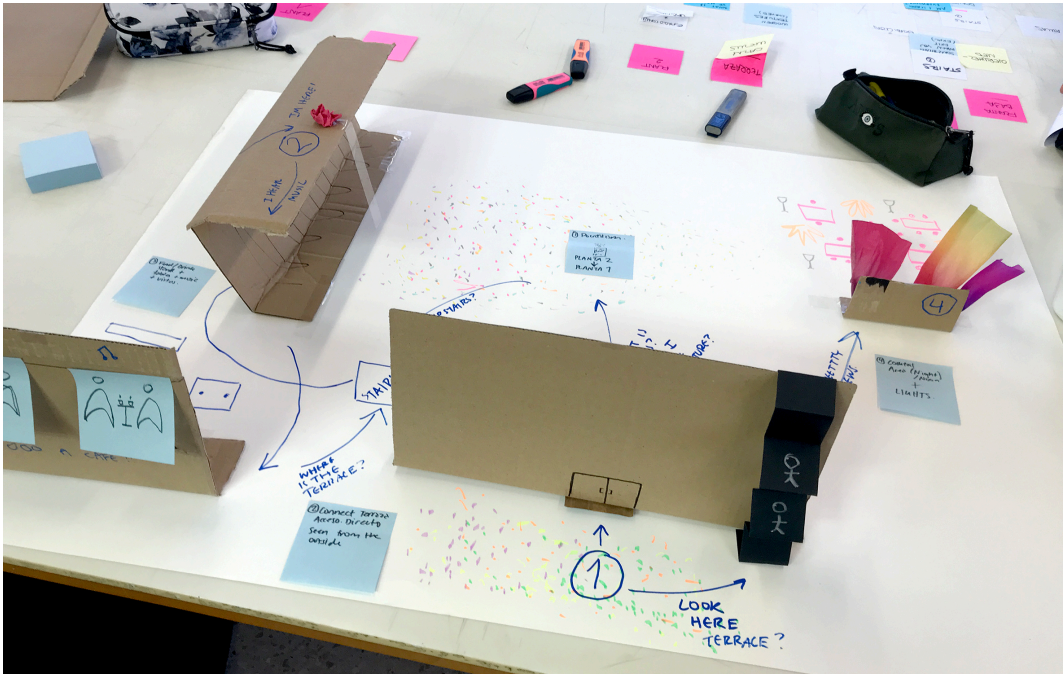
Okay, fantastic. Thank you very much for your contribution, both when I was in Pamplona, and today, I appreciate you coming back to meet me to expand on what we you presented in the studio.

Group 4 enticement and exploration:

Julia, Grace, Miriam.

The students highlighted that the upper levels of the building were neglected, and accordingly, installations were purposefully placed to exploit the existing layout and composition of the interior to entice visitors to explore beyond the ground floor. The installations introduced visual clues whilst partially hiding their meanings to create a sense of mystery and arouse curiosity. Their full meaning is not revealed until visitors move to specific locations in the building. Curiosity is first aroused by a design painted on the ground outside near the entrance of the museum. It uses a pointillist technique to partially hide information. Here, visitors need to go up to the roof terrace to be able to make sense of the visual clues as the information is revealed when they see the design from above. Once inside, visitors are enticed again by another pointillist design on the floor below the mezzanine and visitors can only experience its visual reward when they look down from the mezzanine level. Once they access this level, they can then see the stairs leading to the second floor and roof terrace. Associating the rewards of the mezzanine installation with the prospects of discovering the meaning of the first artwork (see outside), they may be driven by a feeling of anticipation and ascend the stairs. There is also a sense of mystery because at this stage, visitors are not fully aware of when in the building this will occur. However, before this, a panoramic view of the leafy campus, a pleasant aroma of coffee, soothing jazz music, the sight of people relaxing and socialising, and the soft murmur of conversations greet them and invite them to pause as they arrive on the second floor. Although students did not provide specific designs for the installations, they explained that visual qualities in surfaces, including colour category, intensity and contours, would be

conductive to stimulating emotional qualities. These are offset by the grounding qualities of the experience of the café.



Sketch model of the interventions.

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●		●	●
	Light	●		●			●
	Surfaces	●		●			●
	Body motion/position		●	●		●	
TACTILE	Passive skin contact						
	Active skin contact	●			●	●	
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position		●		●	●	
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people		●	●	●	●	●
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people	●		●		●	

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

This activity had a considerable impact on the students’ perception of the museum, and according to them, also on other groups. They had previously completed projects on the site of the museum and explained that they were “bored” with it and did not want to go there again. However, this activity gave them an entirely new way of thinking about the interior spaces, and

they became excited about the project. The ability to discover a new potential for the museum beyond its galleries, to introduce sensory and emotional perspectives into their design, renewed their interest. It transformed their negative mental image of the museum into a positive one. For them, the experience of working on the site of the museum shifted from chore to reward. They explained that:

“[W]hen we had this workshop, everybody was excited and wanted to do things with the space and to focus on this emotional feeling that you have in a museum, rather than like just focusing on the type of exhibition. And so, I feel like it’s not just for our group, but for a lot of groups. It opened up our minds to a new way to see the museum because we’d only seen it in one way. And to be very honest, we were quite bored with the museum. And so, this gave us a little bit more excitement, and, like made us feel connected in a different way to the museum and helped us to use this information for our projects and enrich the exhibit experience that we’re trying to implement within the [other] projects that we’re doing now.”

This is highly significant because this activity alone achieved for the students as designers what the principles pertaining to the personalisation of experience and corresponding sensory-emotional processes aim to achieve for visitors. Through this activity, the students experienced a positive emotional connection with the museum, which in turn enabled them to be more thoughtful and creative in their approach to designing for others. It enhanced their ability to bring together spatio and socio-sensory phenomena in their design to create a welcoming yet stimulating interior, connecting people with their environment and with each other. They embraced the multisensory character of experience and visitors’ emotional responses with enthusiasm and understood the need to satisfy and reward curiosity in the creation of positive experiences.

- Transcript

Valérie

So, if you recall this was about exploring space through the senses and using the principle of enticement as a mode of design, to help visitors explore the interior space a lot more than they are currently doing. And so, we were looking at partially hiding and partly revealing information, sensory information, in the environment to arouse visitors’ curiosity. So, what I’d like you to do is to talk to me about how you designed enticement. Could you please describe the phenomena in the space that entice visitors to move through the interior? Can you tell me what they see, what they hear, what they smell, describing what we’re looking at on the screen?

Grace

Okay. So, for our idea, it was a lot about...it was very visual. We were trying to give visual cues without saying very much, or like specifically pointing to something in saying you should go here, but rather give clues and hints visually to lead them to different places. So, on the picture, there's a one and it's like, there's two elements here. One of them we're talking about pointillism. That's something that went through at least two of the activities that we have on the experience, and the pointillist idea was that when you're up close to something you don't, at least within a pointillist painting, you don't see you only see small points, you don't see the entire painting itself. But when you stand back, you see the full image. And so, considering that the museum has different levels or different floors, we wanted to entice people to go up to the higher floors because mostly the exhibitions within the museum are on the first floor when you walk in, as well as below. But there are spaces above, like within the office area on the first floor as well as the terrace, that are extremely interesting and pleasing to the eye. And so within the first section we talked about like possibly doing a projection or a painting that was on the floor that you could only see the points of but if you looked up to the top, you could see the terrace and like a projection on the wall of the Museum of people walking up or something like that, so that you can see that there were people up on the terrace or there was something up on the terrace.

So, to see what was on the floor, you would have to go up to the terrace to see what was there. And then we went in, and the same principle was used, but inside the reception area of the museum and so the first floor has an outlook area that we wanted to focus on because you can see a lot from that area. And so, projecting onto the floor something that was related to the exhibition or the museum itself, and you would have to go up to this area to see what was on the floor. And then from that area what was like right next to it was a couple of windows that have a beautiful view of the campus and putting something like a cafe or a place to sit and relax. That had maybe some like, just like a coffee stand. So, the smell of coffee would attract you to that area as well as maybe music like some like jazz or even people talking, something that if you went up to the second floor with the previous exercise, you would hear and smell things that would make you go to this area to see what was going on. And then from there, whether you went to go and see the exhibitions or not, you would remember like oh, there was something that I needed to go and see up on the terrace and so you would continue going upwards and go to the terrace where there may be like tables where you can get cocktails and enjoy the sunset and some lights, and just a nice atmosphere outside, and also see what was down below, so in a way a cycle. And I think that's about it. I don't know if Miriam and Julia want to add something?

Valérie

That was very clear. Miriam, Julia, do you want to add something?

Julia

I don't know if it was mentioned but also, from the entrance of the museum where you see the projection or the things like people climbing up to the terrace, you also see the different lights that make a different ambient light system in that place. [You also see from the entrance below] that there is somebody outside [on the terrace at the top].

Valérie

So, I think you've understood the principles well, what we explored in this very short workshop. Would you say that you created these visual phenomena as a series of rewards? It feels like you're taking people on an exploratory journey through the space, through the building, starting outside, and at different stages, would you say that you're giving them rewards... here's something nice for you, something that you will enjoy. Would you agree with that?

Grace

Yes.

Miriam

The thing we explored a little bit in the workshop was that museums are quite exploratory spaces but sometimes [in this museum] the exploration of the user doesn't get them to anywhere, and that's a bit of a disappointment because the museum has actually very nice spaces, but they are difficult to find, or sometimes you end up in dead end and so... if we take advantage of visual cues or sound cues, we can lead people to end up exploring and getting a reward at the end of their way.

Valérie

I think this comes out very clearly. And even though you focused quite a lot on the visual sense, you do include sounds and smells in one area so there's a little bit of diversity in the sensory experiences, which is nice. Do you know and this is perhaps a difficult question... what kind of rewards do you think visitors would associate with these experiences? How do you think it would feel when they go into different parts of your design?

Julia

Well... I think they will feel like kind of part of the museum because they are like having to account [for] how they will go through the museum and how they feel through the smell, the sound, the projections, and I think they will feel like discovering something new, like feeling explorators [this is the term used by students to mean explorers] ... I think, more or less.

Valérie

And emotionally? What kind of emotions? I know it's really hard to describe emotions because you need to think about the right terminology, but if I give you some words, you can tell me which ones you think would perhaps apply to your project. So, do you think that they would have an experience that is stimulating, entertaining, energizing, or an experience that is grounding, fulfilling and relaxing? Or maybe both, in different places?

Grace

I would say stimulating and also exciting in a way because it goes hand in hand with exploration. So, I mean, it's a little bit of curiosity, with like you said little rewards and but stimulating based on the fact that in different areas, like for example, if we were to use a projector for this pointillism idea, it's stimulating to the eyes because it's moving, and it grabs your attention from the outside immediately. And the same when you go inside, it is stimulating to your ears and nose as well with the smells from the cafe if it were to be there and also sounds of just people, and so... kind of highlighting or playing off of people's... well, their responses to that kind of stimulus. And I think overall it would be a warm experience because it's something that it makes you feel like a kid again, in a way that I don't know how to explain it. But warm I think would be the word that I would use as well.

Valérie

There's a certain element of delight I think that you would associate with your proposal?

Grace

Yes.

Valérie

Would you say that the cafe area is different? It invites people to rest, to take a break, to pause a little bit, to stop?

Grace

Yes. Because I mean, if you have so much going on with the museum and you're having so much information I mean, for me, I always enjoy when I go to a museum someplace to sit down and a place to just talk about what's going on in the museum, or even just to be with friends and family like having a place where you feel comfortable with talking and resting and being... like communicating about what you saw and what you felt about the exhibition. I feel like that's something that is lacking, at least inside the museum, because when you look at the [existing] restaurant and the cafe, it can look very luxurious, and you don't necessarily feel like welcome to go in unless you have a reservation kind of thing. So, if you had this particular area that was just some tables like you don't even necessarily have to have coffee, but if you hear people talking and enjoying then you may feel a little bit less intimidated by all of the information that's happening in the museum.

Valérie

Okay, that's great. So, what you're talking about here is to create... to give people a space that makes them feel that it's more inclusive, isn't it, they feel included? And you mentioned the word comfort. So, I think what you're saying, from what I understand, is that even though from a distance the smell of coffee can be stimulating, when you get inside the cafe it's all to do with comfort, being comfortable. Would you agree with that? Is that what you meant?

All students

Yes, yes.

Valérie

Okay, that's great, you captured the potential of these principles well, and... you're talking about connecting people. So, you're not just looking at the physical space, but you're also creating a social environment, because that's what the cafe would do. And so that's really nice because you've identified that this is currently missing from this location. So, to finish I wanted to ask you about your experience of this activity. Did you find the activity useful in helping you consider the museum differently, as a space that people can experience in a positive way? Is it something that you think you would use in future projects?

Miriam

Okay, I start. I think that this workshop was very useful because it...I don't know how to explain...we looked through [at] the museum like [as] a public space, not only [just] a museum; taking into account all the senses, not only the five senses, [in the] physical [sense], but also...

like, how do we feel there? How do we perceive the space? How do we see things in determined [specific] places? So, I think that it opens our minds to see more of everything around the Museum and university, and in our current project it has been very important this workshop, we have very creative and different ideas, focusing more on these part of feeling a space than the exhibition or the artist or the building itself.

Valérie

Great, great. Anybody else wanted to add?

Grace

I wanted to add a few things. I feel that the tool really, we always kind of are... not always but I feel that when I was in the museum, I had some idea of what this was but you gave us a tool that helped us to express and organise the information that we had in our head and I found that quite useful. And I mean, it's quite funny because this particular exercise has really influenced a lot of groups for this project, because we've done projects on the museum before, but it was very concentrated in a room or in the like different areas of the museum. And so, when we had this workshop, everybody was excited and wanted to do things with the space and to focus on this emotional feeling that you have in a museum, rather than like just focusing on the type of exhibition. And so, I feel like it's not just for our group, but for a lot of groups. It opened up our minds to a new way to see the museum because we'd only seen it in one way. And to be very honest, we were quite bored with the museum. And so, this gave us a little bit more excitement, and, like made us feel connected in a different way to the museum and helped us to use this information for our projects and enrich the exhibitiv experience that we're trying to implement within the projects that we're doing now.

Valérie

That's great. In response to what you did, you said you were getting bored with the museum, but now you see new possibilities?

All students

I think so. Yes.

Miriam

In my case when we were presented with the workshop at the beginning... I was like rolling my eyes saying why again the museum, why I have to do this again, this is so boring, and nobody wants to go in there. Maybe because I feel I was feeling like I was not welcomed in the in the

space. And I think our proposal is trying to get rid of that feeling and that the students can be welcomed in the space, and it forms part of the university experience not just as a museum but as another building or a space of the university.

Valérie

Okay, great. Well, that's the end of the meeting, thank you so much for your time, I appreciate you coming back to meet me to expand on what we you presented in the studio.

Experiment 3: creating positive sensory-emotional connections through looseness and appropriation.

The experiment testing the principles of looseness and appropriation took place between November 2022 and May 2023 with two third-year students from the BA (Hons) Design for Branded Spaces at London College of Communication. These are different students to the third-year students who took part in the activity on porosity and privateness the previous year. It was noted earlier in this chapter that testing the usability of insights requires variations in the type and timescale of activities. The activity on porosity and privateness was designed as a three-week mini project. The activity on enticement and exploration was designed as two consecutive four-hour workshops. The unit or module project taking place over a period of a few months is a third type of activity design students would typically engage with and it was selected to test the principles of looseness and appropriation. Looseness was presented as the design and management of choice characterised by accessibility, generosity and flexibility to cultivate visitors' ability to exercise a relative freedom of choice and enact a diversity of activity. Appropriation was defined as visitors' ability to enact a relative autonomy when they identify possibilities in the environment or to enact self-expression when they exploit possibilities in the environment. The briefing explained the difference between autonomy and self-expression, introduced the experiential loop between looseness and appropriation, and the concept of social contagion.

Two students responded to my call, both recommended by their tutor. Here, the students were not presented with a design brief but worked on the self-initiated projects they were developing in their course unit because they were keen to be able to enhance the sensory-emotional relationship between people and environment in their project. The first participant started in October 2022 through to March 2023. The second participant started in February 2022 though to May 2023. Although the timescale of their contribution appears substantial,

the scale of each project meant that they were only working intermittently with principles of looseness and appropriation during this period. This reflects design processes in which designers are rarely working on one aspect of a project or even a single project at any one time. Both projects were speculative albeit working with real sites. One student designed a temporary sensory playground located in the courtyard of Somerset House, a cultural institution in London. The other designed an interactive installation within an existing public space located in a playing field on the site of an old Roman Fort in Malton, Yorkshire.

Each student was interviewed twice. One in December 2022 and again, in March 2023. The other in April and May 2023. The first interview provided a touch point to enquire on progress and the methods students were using to integrate principles of looseness and appropriation into their project. In the second interview, students were able to reflect on their experience. The timing of the interviews considered participants' availability and the way they engaged with the principles of looseness and appropriation in their design process. As with other activities, students worked independently between interviews and any discussion pertaining to looseness and appropriation was kept to a minimum to avoid influencing them although a process guide was also provided.

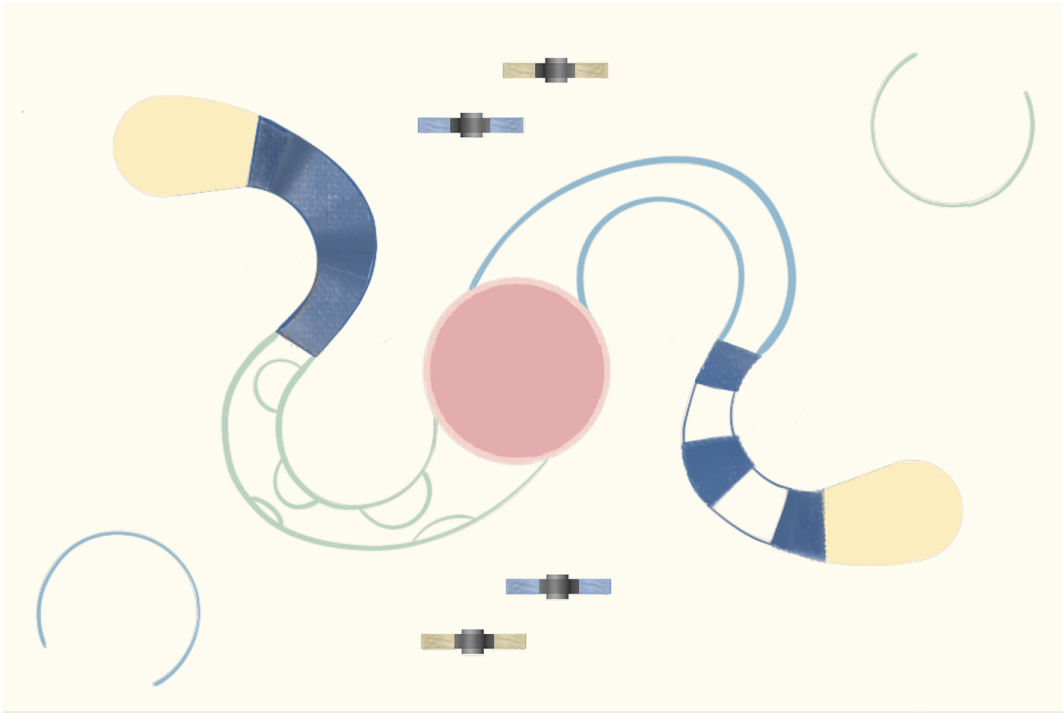
Looseness and appropriation:

Participant 1: Kate.

Sensory Play is a multisensory playground for adults located in the courtyard of Somerset House in London. Kate's design consists of a tunnel shaped installation with a pavilion at each end to include a space for visitors to relax once they have experienced the high-load sensory stimulation of the tunnel. Rotating hemisphere-shaped seating and seesaws located on both side of the pavilions add to the playfulness. Kate's aimed to make looseness and appropriation intrinsic to the design and explicit to visitors. For instance, Kate introduced multiple openings to enhance permeability. Three-dimensional elements and carefully selected materials also support a diversity of embodied interactions for visitors to enact a relative autonomy and self-expression. They are presented with a generous provision of opportunities to enjoy and connect with the physical environment and with each other. Variations in sensory rewards throughout the structure are introduced to generate playfulness, delight and excitement.

First, however, visual phenomena contribute to the desirability of the installation. This is embedded in the composition and organisation of the structure, its undulating volumes and colourful planes. Kate used a soft and welcoming colour identity, contrasting warmth and coolness to ground the exuberance of the forms and the loudness of visitors playing. A tranquil

blue evokes the calmness of water, and a pale warm yellow evokes the earthy tone of sand. The brightness of the natural light is also filtered through translucent materials.



Top view of Kate's installation

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●			●
	Light	●		●		●	
	Surfaces	●		●		●	●
	Body motion/position	●		●			●
TACTILE	Passive skin contact	●	●				●
	Active skin contact	●	●		●	●	●
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position	●	●		●	●	●
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●		●		●
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people						

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

Once inside the installation, the visitor experience becomes more intimate. This is expressed through tactile qualities in active and passive skin and body contact, to touch and to be touched, as tensile panels enable visitors to push, pull, press, or lean. Here, tactile and

kinaesthetic phenomena intertwine. The design also integrates skin contact with water, bringing fluidity into the tactile experience, whilst visitors encounter shifts in temperature, from warm to cool, and olfactory phenomena with varying degrees of intensity, as they move through the tunnel. The calmness of auditory phenomena in the sound of space contrasts with the liveliness of auditory phenomena in the sound of people. Thus, the installation only fulfils its ambitions as a sensory playground when visitors enact appropriation. The perception of playfulness and fun is then enhanced when seeing and hearing people enacting appropriation through play intensifies the perception of looseness.

Kate highlighted that working with the principles of looseness and appropriation enabled her to understand why some places that intended to be playful were not successful. They are not loose because they have too many rules and constraints. At first her approach was similar, creating experiences that were “very organised”. She initially struggled to understand how the principles of looseness and appropriation could help her in her design, and she wrestled with the meaning of appropriation in the context of play. To bring clarity to the information provided in the briefing of this activity, Kate organised it into a flow diagram. She then experimented with different designs and progressively realised that she needed to change her approach to designing. She thus relinquished some of the control she exercised over the design to provide visitors with a degree of agency, to enable them to be “the decision makers” and complete their experience. By introducing looseness to cultivate appropriation in the design, Kate’s approach became less controlling when designing body-environment interactions. Her practice gradually shifted from rigid and organised, which was not suited to the objective of this project, to loose. She amplified the playful and exploratory nature of sensory phenomena in the design of the installation by integrating characteristics of permeability, generosity and flexibility to contribute to a diversity of activities and ensure that the experience never became too constrained. The principles of looseness and appropriation enhanced her ability to consider informality, disorder, disruption and randomness as positive experiential attributes in this sensory playground. The visitor engagement became richer as design (personalisation for) and enactment (personalisation by) coalesced. The concept of appropriation also helped her consider the visitor experience as a holistic journey rather than as a series of fragmented moments, bringing experiential coherence to an installation made of multiple and distinct elements. Kate stated that she would revisit the principles of looseness and appropriation in future projects.

- Transcript 01/12/2022.

Valérie

Hi Kate, thank you for agreeing to this interview. You've been working with the principles of looseness and appropriation for a short while, looking at how you could integrate them into your project. How is this going?

Kate

To be fair, I found it challenging to actually understand straight away because they are so many new concepts for me and that's why I created a diagram to... actually I can show you... I was just breaking down the sentences and the concepts that you were introducing, and it really helped me position them in my in my mind and understand them. So yeah.

Valérie

Okay, thank you. And then in terms of the process, it's still quite early in the project and you haven't really designed anything yet but is it something that you feel is at the back of your mind when you're thinking about the design?

Kate

All the time because I feel like a lot of the ideas I had at the beginning were like... I was creating very organised experiences for people, and when I was looking at other case studies, I understood that a lot of the parts that make the playful spaces not successful is the lack of looseness. I was also looking at reviews of experiences like the play exhibition at the Wellcome collection, I think few years ago. I looked at the reviews and some people were saying that there were too many rules. They didn't know how to engage with the playful part of the installation or where the actual play was supposed to happen for adults. So then having those principles really gives me focus because I don't... I don't push. You know what I mean? I don't create a very strict structure for the whole experience and it kind of cancelled out a lot of the ideas I had at the beginning. Yeah.

Valérie

Okay, so it frames the project and your approach to designing early on. When you develop your design ideas do you think that this will be something that you will be able to use as a way to identify and help you maintain that kind of engagement from visitors

Kate

Yeah, definitely. The only thing I was struggling with that I found challenging was actually defining appropriation, like to what extent people can appropriate? As I was doing research for play, I came across different types of play like carnivalesque, creative autotelic, a disruptive appropriative, and a definition of appropriation that was to take over the context in which it exists. So that would be the play, the playground that wasn't designed but happened because people interacted with it in a disruptive way. So that kind of derailed me in a way. Because I was thinking about the ways I could create something thinking backwards, like trying to create scenarios in my mind of how people would interact with the elements of the installation, and then think, how could I design it so it could actually happen. But then it's not looseness.

Valérie

Thank you very much for your time.

- The following text references additional reflections voluntarily provided by the participant following the first interview

In the beginning, after being introduced to the principles, I found it challenging to understand all the terminology fully, so I created a diagram to help me break down into more manageable pieces of information. I got lost in researching play. I found that there are many types of play, including carnivalesque, appropriative, autotelic, disruptive, etc. The definition of appropriation is to take over the context in which it exists. That would be a playground that wasn't designed but happened because people interacted with the space in a disruptive way. That's why I started thinking about how to create an experience thinking backwards. I was trying to create scenarios of how people would interact with the installation elements and then consider how I could design it so the appropriation could happen. That would however mean that the experience wouldn't be loose. Many of the ideas I started with were creating a guided and controlled environment. Looking at the case studies and having principles of looseness and appropriation at the back of my mind helped me realise that the experiences were often more successful because of a small degree of looseness in them. Example: Play exhibition at the Wellcome Collection. In the reviews available on the internet, some people were saying that there were too many rules, and they didn't know how to engage in the playful part of the exhibition. – where the actual play was supposed to happen for adults.

Knowing these principles gives my work focus because I can quickly identify areas that won't work in a public space. For now, I need to focus on the playful elements and then come back to

the space, location and different levels of appropriation and start weaving it into the experience.

- Transcript 02/13/2023.

Valérie

Hi Kate, thank you for agreeing to this interview. I'd like to talk about how you integrated principles of looseness and appropriation in your design,. How did you do this? Did you find them useful in the context of your project? What were the challenges?

Kate

So, let me see. I feel like at the beginning, I found it more challenging than helpful because I couldn't quite understand how it would look like but, when I broke aspects of looseness and appropriation down through case studies, it really helped me to actually understand what it is about. So, looking back on my project, it just really adds so much I think because I'm looking at it more holistically. It kind of it gives me a fresher perspective, I feel like... because of the perspective of looseness and appropriation I can specifically look for the ways for people to appropriate the elements. So, I just think I can design better, because I'm not just thinking about the way the elements look but how people actually experience them.

Valérie

Ok, that's really good. So, you used case studies at the beginning to try to understand these principles and analyse them. The case studies enabled you to understand how these principles appeared in the design, how they related to the design of a space and that helped you understand how they could apply to your project. Then you structured your understanding into a diagram, looking at all the correlation between the different characteristics. In your design, the sensory playground is made of different individual objects or installations. Does your understanding of looseness and appropriation enable you to consider the sensory playground as a whole rather than as a series of individual elements?

Kate

Yeah, definitely. It allows you to think about it as a journey, it allows you to explore how you actually create different contexts for people to appropriate the elements. So yeah, I think that really helps. It adds a kind of richness to the design.

Valérie

Could you give me one example of appropriation in your design? In what way did you transfer principles of looseness and appropriation into the design, into the visitor experience?

Kate

So just thinking about different ways people could use the elements of the design and then changing and adjusting the design to create more opportunities for appropriation. For example, people can sit here, people can touch this pod, but that's really a fragmented experience, but when adding more possibilities, it becomes more cohesive, if that makes sense. And then as a whole experience, just thinking about it almost as a narrative, to create elements of play, but also elements of rest. That's really helpful because it's easier for me to think about those elements as element for rest, you can easily let people sit or slide or lean on, but now it allows me to also think about how people can actually appropriate them in a more playful way.

Valérie

So, do you think that bringing in the element of looseness or the idea of looseness, is influencing your ability to do this?

Kate

Yes, definitely. The ability [for visitors] to choose, to basically be a decision maker in the experience, so you're not forced to do things. You can decide to do them, but you don't have to.

Valérie

Okay, so, it influences your design by making it open.

Kate

Yeah, basically making the visitor a decision maker, because at the beginning, I was very much kind of forcing them by creating a very much guided experience that wouldn't necessarily work for a public space.

Valérie

And apart from not fully understanding how the principles could apply to design at the beginning and using case studies, did you experience any other challenges when using these principles in your design?

Kate

I think I find it actually more helpful right now. Now that I've understood it. It's just kind of given me this framework that I can go back to and relate to. It kind of gives me context. So, it's easier for me now to use this framework and not forget about how the public space can actually be used or should be used in a way that's actually helpful and useful for people.

Valérie

So, the main challenge, would you say was to understand the principles at the beginning, what the principles and their characteristics mean and how they can relate to design.

Kate

Yeah.

Valérie

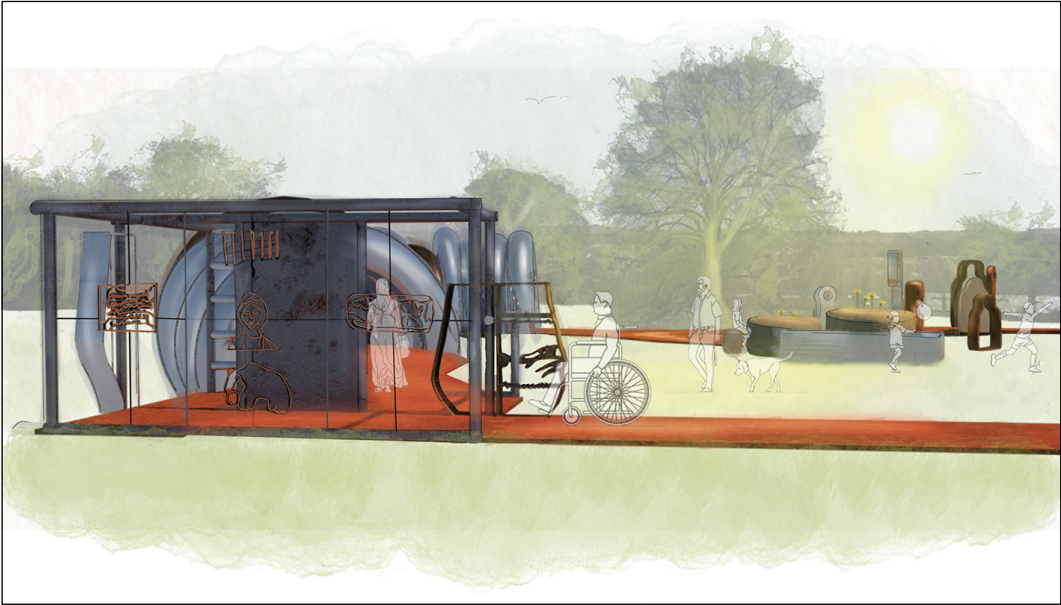
Okay. Thank you very much for your time.

Looseness and appropriation:

Participant 2: Rosie.

Rosie designed a permanent installation, a series of pavilions with a narrative centred around the craft heritage of a Roman fort buried underneath a playing field in Malton, North Yorkshire. The location is enclosed by trees and the field has been used by the local community for many years as a place to go to for walks, exercise dogs and play games. Rosie emphasised that it was essential for the new structures supporting the communication of the narrative not to undermine existing activities in the playing field. Working with the principles of looseness and appropriation helped her achieve this goal. First, she created the installation, focusing on the design of the physical spaces required to convey the historical narrative of the location. She then drew on the principle of looseness and appropriation to modify their design to support but also expand on the diversity of activities already enacted in the site. Initially, Rosie associated looseness and appropriation with play, especially in the experience of children, but realised that she also needed to consider these principles in the broader contexts of the experience of adults and of the communication of the narrative. This proved challenging at first, until she understood that she needed to relinquish some of the control over the way visitors could enact their experience to the visitors themselves. She modified the design of the installation, including its location and layout in the field, to maximise visitors' ability to enact even more diverse activities than previously and express themselves more freely within the

new layout. This shift aimed to promote self-expression alongside visitors’ ability to enact a relative autonomy.



Perspective view Rosie's installation.

Experiential design chart		Sensory-emotional processes					
		Design/Management (Personalisation for)	Enactment (Personalisation by)	Communicated sensory rewards	Consequential sensory rewards	Grounding emotional qualities	Stimulating emotional qualities
VISUAL	Compositon/Organisation	●		●		●	●
	Light	●		●		●	●
	Surfaces	●		●		●	●
	Body motion/position		●	●		●	●
TACTILE	Passive skin contact						
	Active skin contact	●			●	●	●
KINAESTHETIC	Body motion/position		●		●	●	●
AUDITORY	Sound of space/people	●	●	●	●	●	●
OLFACTIVE	Odour of space/people						

Synthesis of the design outlining sensory-emotional processes characterising the visitor experience.

The design introduces new visual phenomena in the environment, whilst at the same time, the selection of materials, colours and finishes in surfaces help maintain their coherence and harmony with the existing location. The narrative of the historical context grounds the visitor experience, and the design also integrates stimulating elements to enhance possibilities for fun and delight. The scale and proportions of the volumes and planes of the installation are

adapted to the body. A tunnel shaped structure consisting of a series of rings attached to each other introduces a new rhythm into the existing site. Its highly polished exterior surface merges with the existing surroundings, reflecting light, the green landscape, the rhythm of the tree branches swaying in the wind, and the movements of people, children and even dogs as they walk or run nearby. The contours are smooth but curved, creating distortions. The hardness of the man-made structures contrast with the softness of the natural elements. The sounds of people enacting a variety of activities can also increase the level of stimulation.

Rosie explained that prior to being introduced to the principles of looseness and appropriation, she would have designed a stand-alone structure disconnected from existing needs and contexts. These principles enabled her to adopt a different approach and create a design for the community to appropriate instead of a design that appropriated the field from its community. By introducing looseness in her creative practice, Rosie was able to consider the location and visitors' needs with greater care and empathy, adjusting the design to ensure that the installation would not create barriers or constraints and instead, cultivate appropriation. The intention was for visitors to perceive the installation as belonging to its location and for the installation to enhance their sense of belonging.

- Transcript 20/04/2023.

Valérie

I'd like to talk about your experience of working with the principles of looseness and appropriation in your project. Could you describe the process, the way you did this, how these principles could help you in your design and what challenges did you encounter?

Rosie

Yeah, so, I did the initial design first and then introduced the idea of looseness and appropriation to look at it differently. So, not necessarily changing the physical design, but I might have developed it differently to show how it could be appropriated, or I introduced changes, for example to encourage play or something like that. So, in my initial frame area I changed the levels of the bars. One of them now lower down. It's a public field. People use it for play, for running, jogging, playing football. So, integrating that in the elements of the design made me think about it being more integrated into the space, rather than a standalone design,

Valérie

Okay, that's interesting. So, you designed your series of elements, the physical interventions into the space and then you used the concepts of looseness and appropriation to integrate into it the kind of loose activities that were originally happening in that space so that the people can still carry on doing this and your design is integrated with it rather than stopping people from doing it.

Rosie

Yeah. So, I would say that if a family didn't really go there just to see the installation but using it as a long-term place to go for play in the park. It's not a playground park, but the kids would get an extra element of fun or memorable experience due to my installation having that element of looseness, because as they're running through the park, they might play on the bar, for example, on the bars of the frame even if they have no connection with the Roman heritage. There's that factor, there's a nice memorable experience for them in that place. You can personalise your experience a little bit more depending on what you're doing. Even if you're not looking at things at all, you can still enjoy the space.

Valérie

Do you have a drawing or maybe a floor plan, something that highlights how you introduce looseness into the design of the space, how people can experience appropriation, how you're drawing on principles of looseness and appropriation to integrate the design of your exhibition with the original purpose of the field as a public space and play area?

Rosie

I've started doing different play touch points in the audiences' journey. So, yeah, I've just started that now.

Valérie

So, you are using the concept of looseness and appropriation as a way to integrate the two dimensions of that field. One is the playful element and the kind of activities that people choose to do, and the other is this exhibition with a narrative. They can connect experientially but you can also do one without the other. You can even appropriate elements of the exhibition space to extend the concept of play.

Rosie

Yeah. For example, the reflectance of material of the tunnel with the reference to the bracelet. There's an element of play I didn't think of until we spoke you know, looking back at your reflection, having that kind of interaction is another element of looseness. So that was really interesting. I've designed it to reference the bracelet but it's also a tunnel and kinds could simply run through it, weaving in and out.

Valérie

Yeah, I understand. You talk about play and there's an element of looseness that relates to play. Does this mean that you have considered looseness and appropriation as a way to leave things slightly open for visitors? So, visitors complete the experience in a way that relates to what they want to do when they appropriate, but the designer created opportunities. People identify opportunities to carry out activities or even exploit opportunities by doing something the space is not designed for. For example, children may go to the field to play, to kick a ball maybe, and exploit the space of the tunnel to use in their play. Would this be a problem?

Rosie

No. I mean, everything in the material side is going to be solid, hard and permanent. So, it wouldn't really matter because it wouldn't affect it or damage it. And they can appropriate it in that way as much as they want. It's hard surfaces. There wouldn't be a sign saying don't play ball in here. I don't want it to because it's a field, it's a public field. I don't want to annoy people by taking something away, something that they use and love. I want to enhance it and integrate it, so I think looseness and appropriation really helps and actually make sense to help me justify the design.

Valérie

Yes, this integration is important in your design. You are using looseness and appropriation as a way to maintain and even enhance possibilities while introducing new experiences into the site. Thank you very much for your time, Rosie. We'll meet again once you've completed the realisation and communication of the design.

- Transcript 24/05/2023.

Valérie

Hi Rosie, thank you for agreeing to this interview. I'd like to talk about how you integrated principles of looseness and appropriation in your design. How did you do this? Did you find them useful in the context of your project? What were the challenges?

Rosie

So, in terms of how I implemented these thoughts into my project, I started off not doing it, so I made a whole project without considering looseness and appropriation. Then it was interesting to see how I could implement the principles into the project halfway through to introduce it in terms of how people use the site as a public social space. Considering that it's a field, I tried to have the alternative mindset of thinking people use this not just as an exhibition space or a space that tourists would come to, people would also go on dog walks and do other things here. Kids would go and play football and stuff. So how I can make a blending place for those two communities. I think that that's how I implemented it, with that perspective. And it means my design, it changed my design, physically, and also through the narrative. It changed it. So, both sides really.

Valérie

Could you give an example of how it changed it?

Rosie

For example, in Zone A, I've got this installation piece that replicates in the footprint below. And it has the wall lines and it's showing you the room size under the field. So, you're walking inside and then just looking at the different levels of the walls. There, I was able to think like, oh, I could make one of the walls shorter as such, so the frame would be shorter and then people or kids could use that to like, do loops over the top or spin things over the top of this pole, basically just appropriating it in that way to integrate the narrative interpretation with how it can be used to heighten the experience of the space by not just being a designed installation piece. And then I think another part was also I had this idea of using a reflective material for this like tonal structure. It brings brightness and bit more colour into the site, brightens the British weather, and also it adds that play of light. It also brings reflectiveness. I know kids and everything, you know, look at themselves in the mirror and that kind of plainness in a social space, you know, take a picture or you're there with your friends and it's just adding that kind of experience to it as well. So, you're very conscious of all these things that go on, things you can play with. It helped me think about that a lot more. And then what

was the other piece? The piece I've done in the middle of the eating area, there's an artefact that can be interpreted but it's also a middle structure surrounded by three tables. But I've done it so that it could be appropriated, kids could sit in it and be in the centre of the whole table structure, and then it's more sociable. So, I thought about all those different things and either implemented them as new ideas or just thought how my original ideas can be adapted to include appropriation and looseness.

Valérie

So yes, you have two sides to your projects. You have the narrative environment requiring one type of design approach and curation. And then once you had this in place you were able to think about the public space and bring the two together. From what you've said just now, I understand that the concepts of looseness and appropriation were useful in doing this, in enabling you to connect the experience of the narrative environment with the experience of the public space, so you would not undermine visitors' ability to use the site as a public space by bringing in a new design within it. Is that correct?

Rosie

Yeah, that's definitely correct. And it even made me think about how I positioned my design in the field because it's a very large field. But I know people play football there and things. It was like that the other month, and you see people that are constantly using it. So, it [thinking about looseness and appropriation] made me change the location of my design, where it's situated in the space. So, I've moved them [the different elements of the design] closer together. So, it's a nice strong unit together. But then there's another half of the park that's left open for habitat and left open for people to play football. My design doesn't limit how much people can use the whole space. It also helped me integrate the sensory, it helps you think about that as well. And also thinking about people, every person's involvement in this space. Most spaces are not just used for one thing so how do you connect different things, make them work together. So yeah, that was really interesting in that sense.

Valérie

Thank you. What were the challenges? Did you experience any when integrating looseness and appropriation into your design?

Rosie

I think maybe the idea of not making things kid like as much, because in my head I was thinking of play, and automatically think about kids using that space. And obviously, I've got this historical site, so just, yeah, not going straight to what kids can use it for but instead think

about how everyone can use it through appropriation and looseness. Yeah, I did start thinking imagine oh, then kids can play like this and do this, but then it's like, no, people take their kids, and the parents want to enjoy it as well. So, I think that was a struggle at the start. And then maybe just the idea of not going too far, to making it too much about appropriation because I need to blend it with the heritage and the narrative. So, I think that was the case of not going too far and make it with that mindset. So just like reining it in a little bit I think as well.

Valérie

Thank you Rosie. This is the end of the interview. Thank you very much for your time.