

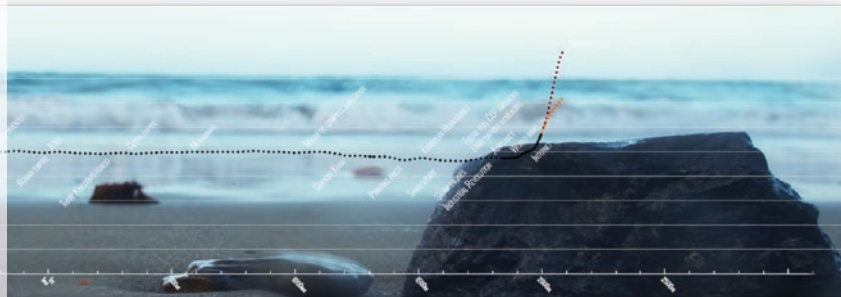
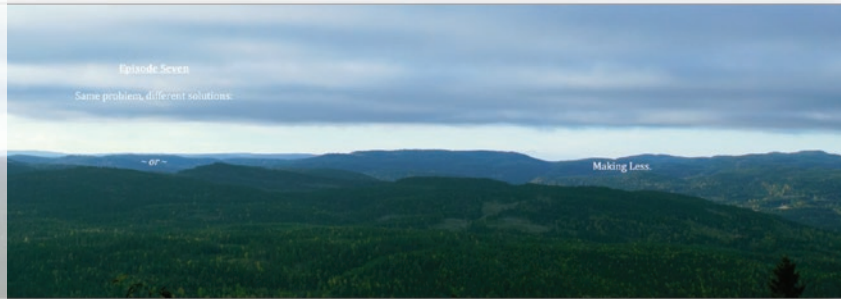
Thomas Thwaites

Examples of Work

More information, video and commentary about these and additional works can be seen online.

Nine Episodes
Video Triptych
The Design Museum London
(2016, Commission)

I was commissioned to make a film on the subject of design and sustainability for installation in the permanent collection gallery of the new Design Museum in South Kensington, London. I created nine episodes, a twenty minute long film across a triptych of projections. This involved shooting interviews with key figures in the sustainability field, such as Steve Howard, Chief Sustainability Officer at IKEA group in an IKEA living room store display, travelling to the largest open cast mine in the United States, and presenting a timeline of the earth's atmosphere and human history from the year 20,000BCE to the present day.



Chromobytes
Metal Salts, Video
Abandon Normal Devices Biennale
(2017, Commission)

I was commissioned to respond to the theme of the biennale; the materiality of digital technology. The festival was held in and around a cave system that contained traces of waste from early industry within its geology. I worked with a chemist at the University of Manchester to dissolve hard disk drives in acids, and then precipitate them out of solution as metal-salt columns, with the various transition metals used in the electronics forming coloured layers in the salt. The idea was to reorder the drives by element, and create a kind of accelerated geology, a 'post-post-industrial' waste.



Voodoo Economics
Performance/Installation
Saint Etienne Design Biennale, France
(2017, Commission)

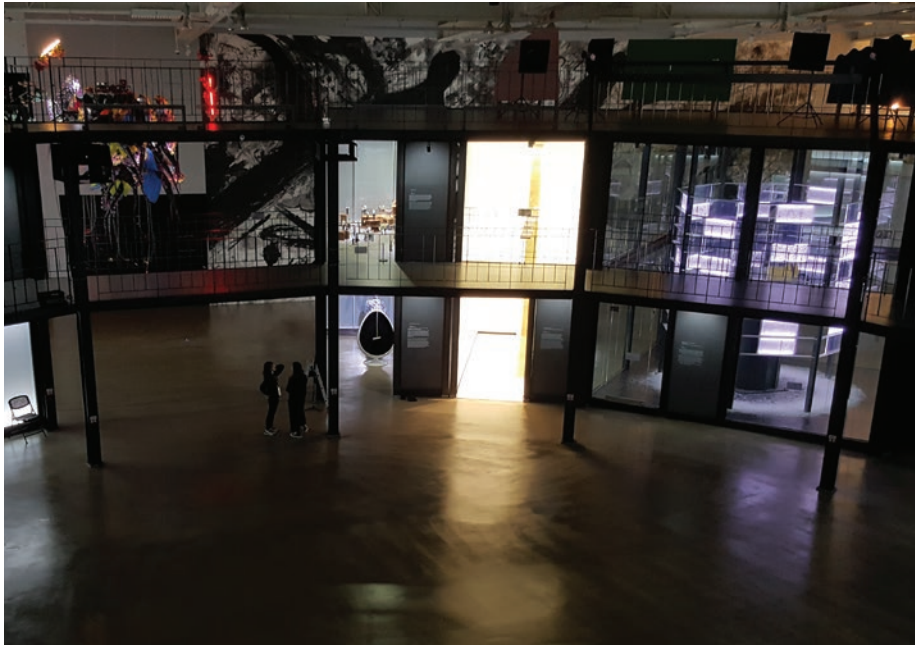
Voodoo Economics is a rotational moulding machine which is used in gallery performances to produce little hollow plastic figurines on pedestals. Each pedestal has a phrase embossed on it: the rich are “led as if by an invisible hand” to provide goods for society, “a rising tide lifts all boats” including the homeless, we (including our city traders) are rational animals, “Homo Economicus”.

These phrases are associated with some fundamental concepts from economics, foundational beliefs of the discipline. But it seems that these orthodox beliefs are threatened: a paradigm shift is upon us as the beliefs of the old guard are questioned: Why did economists not predict the economic crash of 2008? Why do we see the rise of populism despite growth in ‘Gross Domestic Product’? Human beings are not rational decision makers, utility maximisers.

The pedestals on the statues become muddled. The homeless man becomes “Homo Economicus”. The city trader is led somewhere unintended by the invisible hand. The invisible hand is drowned by the rising tide. The figurines are relics of a faith that is passing, sold at a discount from a street trader’s stall in ‘The City’, to those who need such articles of faith.







Living History
360° video, VR Headset, Eero Aarnio
Eyeball Chair (fake)
Asia Culture Center, South Korea
(2016, Residency/Commission)

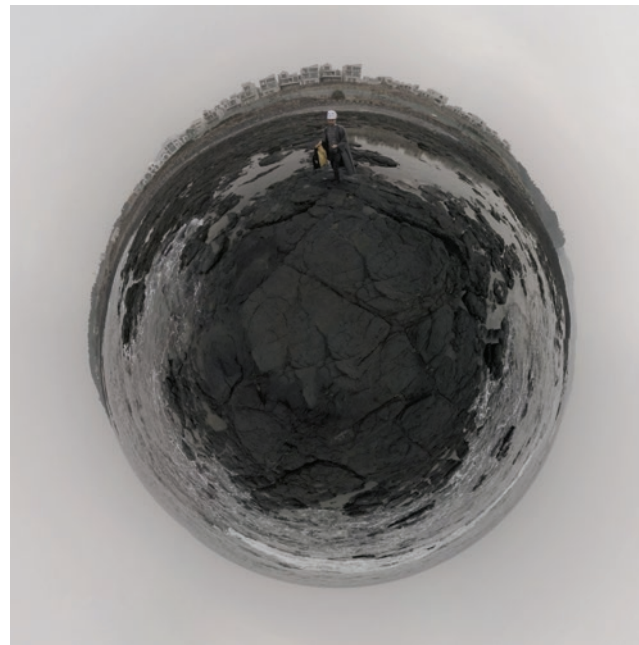
Living History is a 360° virtual reality 'documentary' film from the future, about the present.

Film from the earliest days of cinema is magical: grainy moving images of people working in fields, or men in ornate hats walking along streets crowded with animals. These scenes were mundane everyday sights at the time, yet just over a century later they're full of pathos; the 'earliest surviving images of a bygone era'.

Living History tries to take a perspective on our present, from some distant future. What will the people of two centuries hence think when viewing the images we're creating in these early days of virtual reality?

I made Living History while doing a residency at the Asia Culture Center, Gwangju, South Korea.

It is available to watch on the MilkVR Platform.





I, Goat
Sculpture, video, photography
(2015-16, Funded: Wellcome Trust UK)

Supported by a £30,000 arts award from the Wellcome Trust, 'I, Goat' is a project about trying to take a holiday from being human, by becoming a goat.

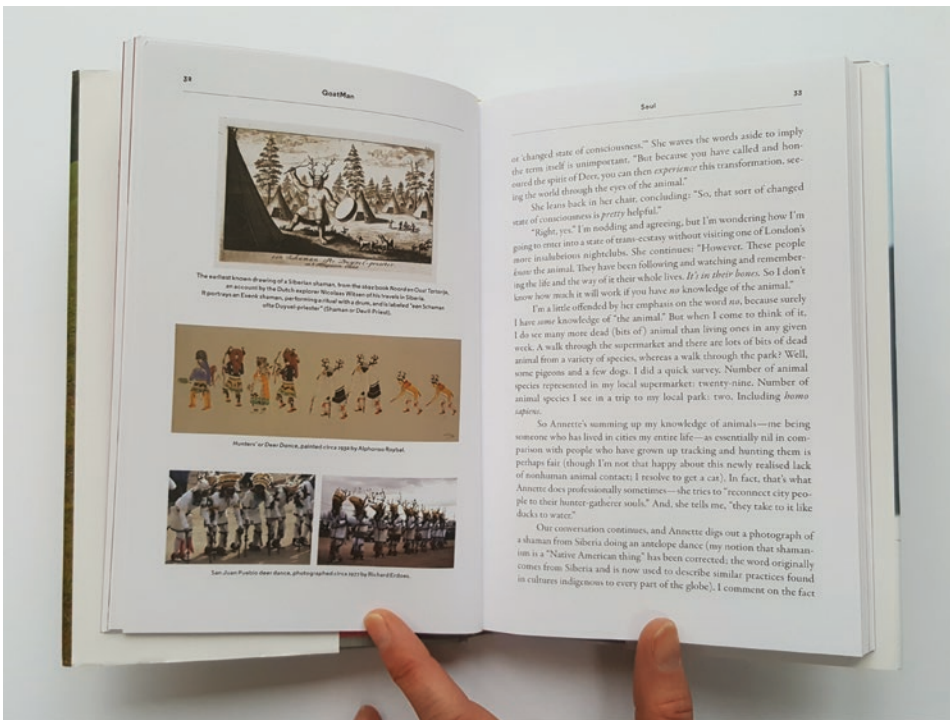
The intention is to explore how close we are technologically, to being able to fulfil a dream that is found in the mythology of cultures across the globe: to change in to a nonhuman animal.

The process of working towards this impossible goal, entails a discussion about the impossibility of adopting a perspective other than our own.

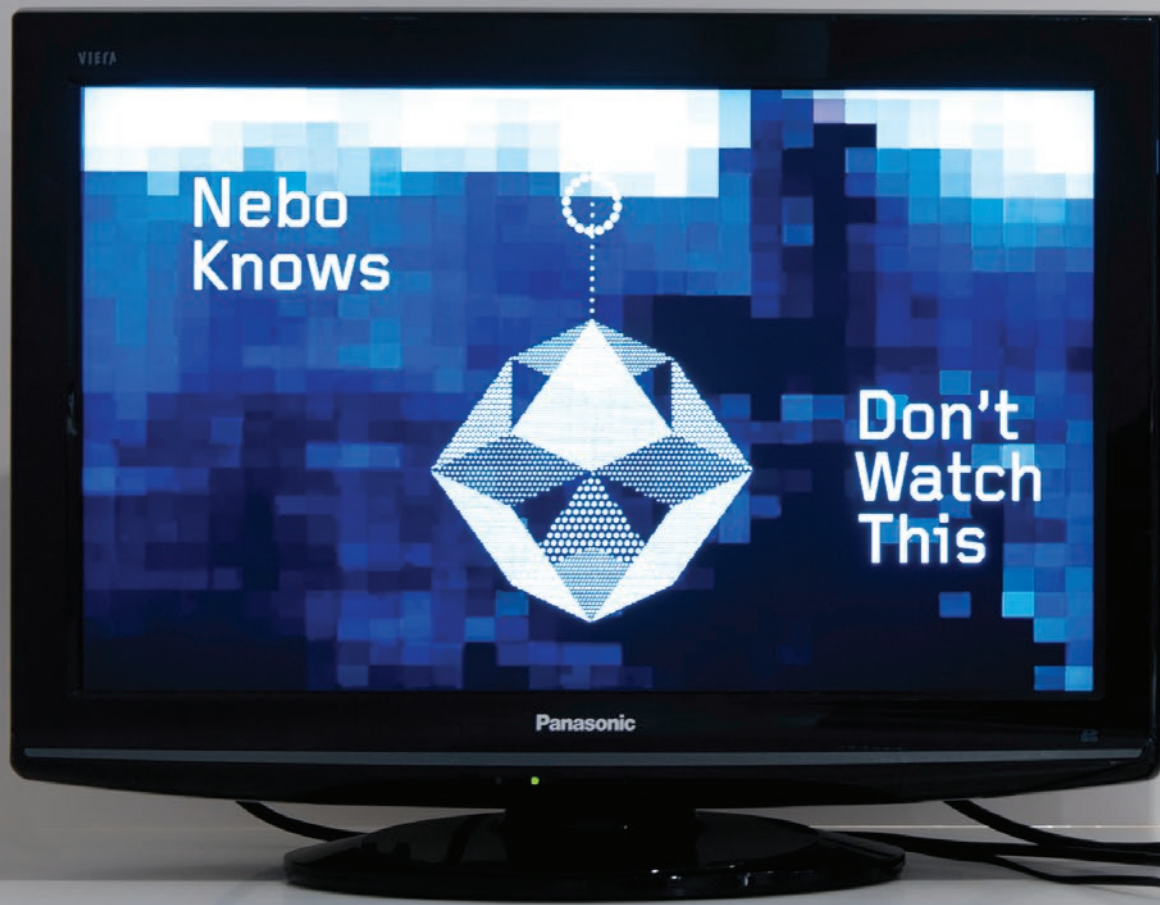
Over the nine month course of the project (amongst other things), I've visited shamans, undergone trans-cranial magnetic stimulation to interrupt the speech pathways of my brain, dissected a goat at the Royal Veterinary College, and finally 'lived' as a goat at a goat farm in the Swiss Alps.

The book of the project was published by Princeton Architectural Press in Spring 2016, and has since received Norwegian, Korean and Japanese translations.









Nebo
Objects, video
(2013, Residency: Design Museum
London)

Nebo is a speculative 'tech start up from the near future'. It was created while I was one of the Design Museum's Designers In Residence 2013.

It takes the form of an online service and range of objects that employ some of the techniques of marketers and advertisers not to make you buy things, but to make you lead a more fulfilling and happier life. Nebo is advertising that influences you to act in your own best interests.

Nebo will come to know you better than you know yourself.





Object # 3, (above)

Purse Strings

'You are what you buy', so you and Nebo will change what you can buy, when, and where by taking control of your cash and cards. This wallet will influence your purchase decisions, and even won't let you spend money on certain things, at certain times at certain places.



Object # 1, (right)

Gateway Router

A computer and wireless router, that tracks your patterns and habits, observing what you read, buy, and watch online, as well as gathering login details for the various online services you use. After around four weeks you will start to notice changes in the websites you browse, intended to alter the subconscious influences you're exposing yourself to.



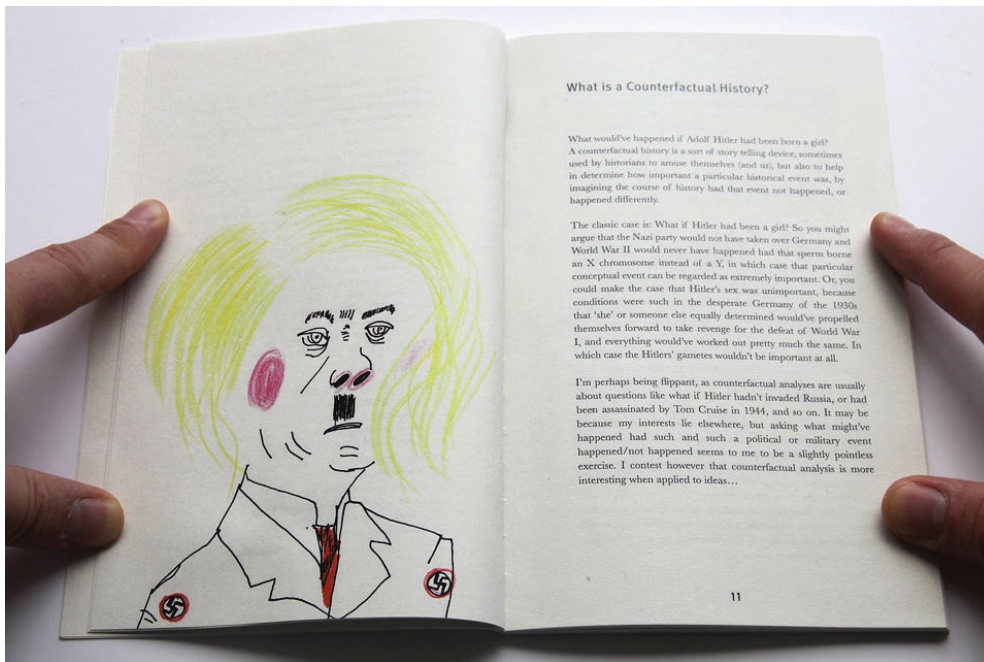
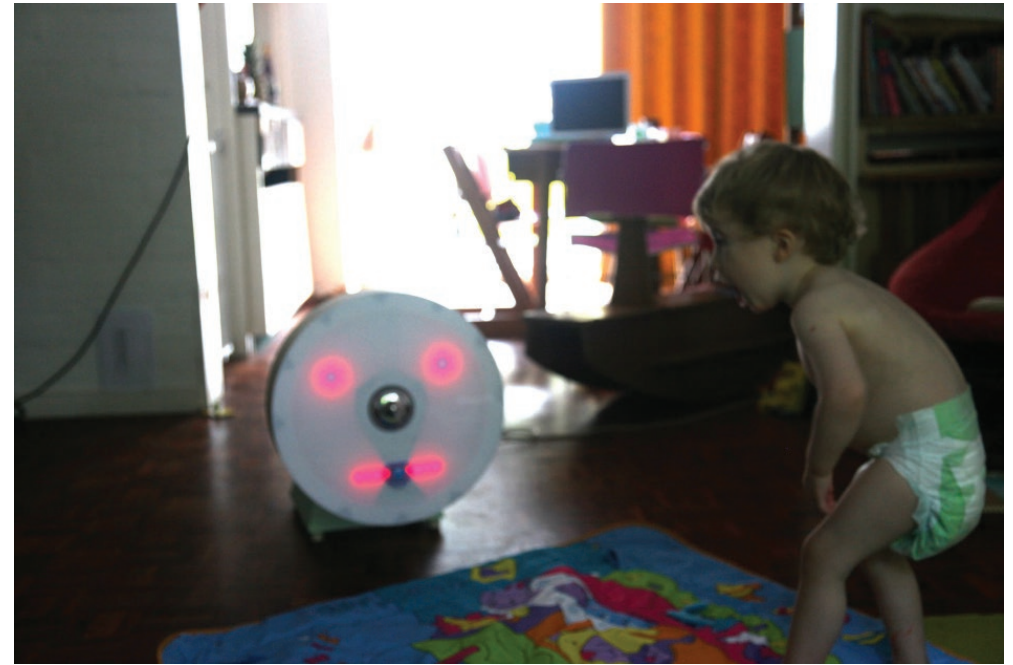


Unlikely Objects: Products of a
Counterfactual History of Science
Objects, photography, book
(2012, Funded: Wellcome Trust)

Scientific knowledge has played a key
role in shaping our material world, and
especially with regard to genetics, our
social, political and spiritual lives also.

But how dependant is scientific
knowledge on historical accident and
chance? Could we have a different, and
not necessarily less valid, version of
scientific truth if history had played out
slightly differently – if certain observa-
tions had been made or missed, if
individual scientists had been more or
less successful, if different accidents
had occurred? Or, does the scientific
method act to eliminate the effects of
historical chance, and our present state
of knowledge is somehow necessarily
true?

Unlikely Objects explores these
questions through a 'Choose Your
Own' history of genetics, and the
presentation of some more, or less,
likely objects from imagined alternative
histories of genetics.

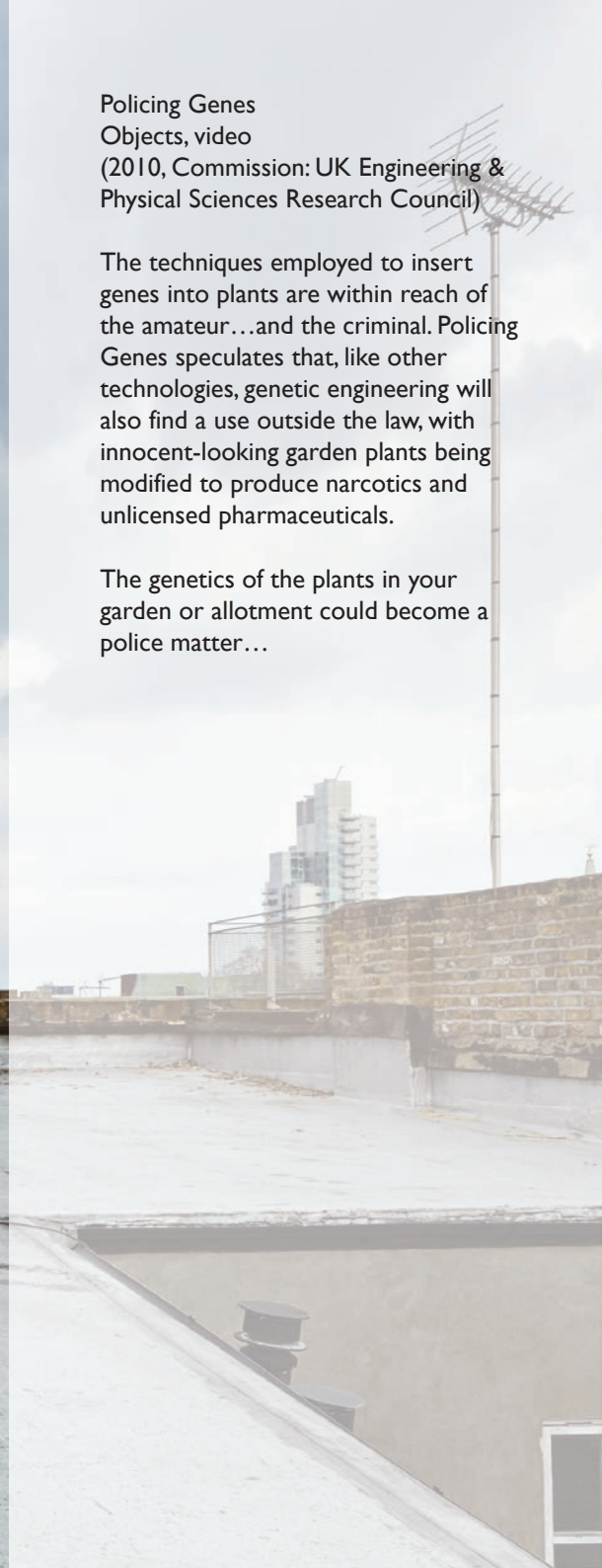




Policing Genes
Objects, video
(2010, Commission: UK Engineering &
Physical Sciences Research Council)

The techniques employed to insert genes into plants are within reach of the amateur...and the criminal. Policing Genes speculates that, like other technologies, genetic engineering will also find a use outside the law, with innocent-looking garden plants being modified to produce narcotics and unlicensed pharmaceuticals.

The genetics of the plants in your garden or allotment could become a police matter...

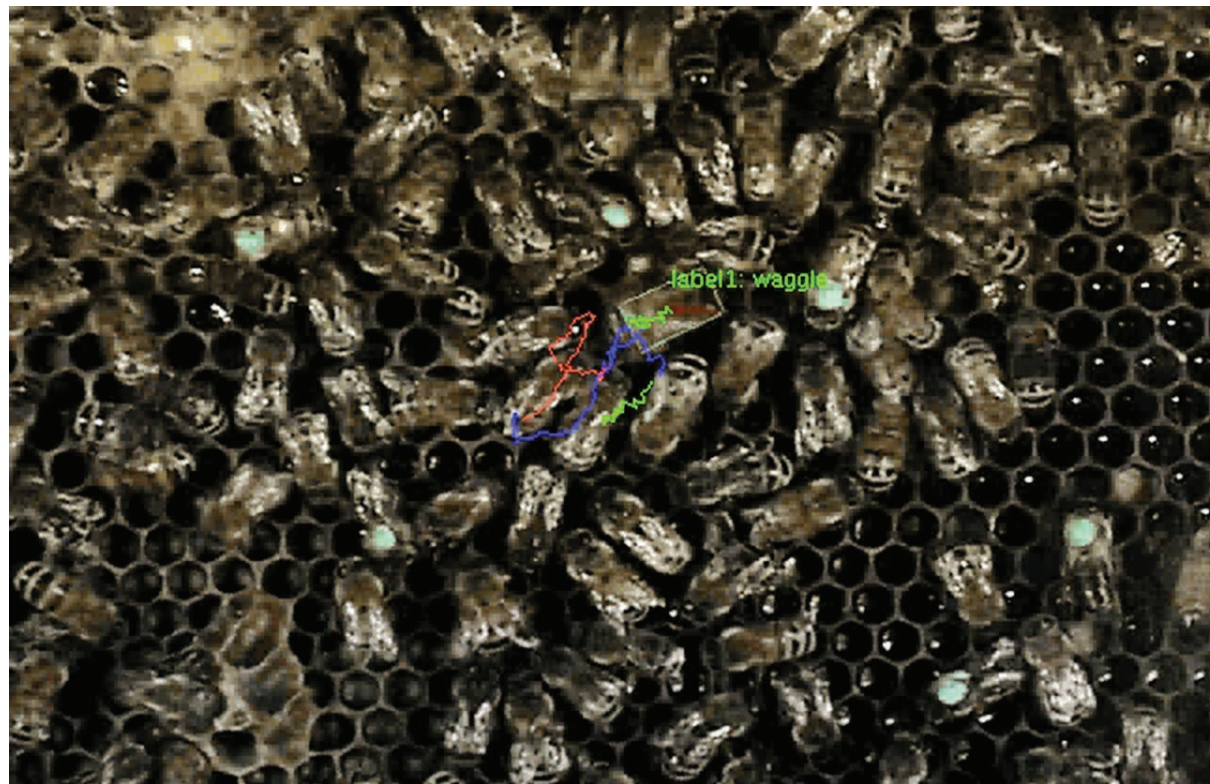


**Horticulture in this area
is subject to
genetic surveillance**



The cultivation of unlicensed
genetically engineered plants
is a serious offence.

DO NOT TAKE THE RISK



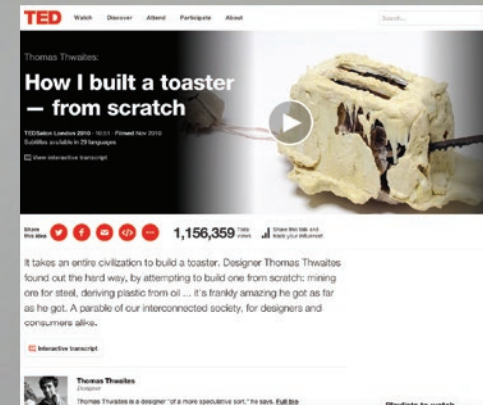
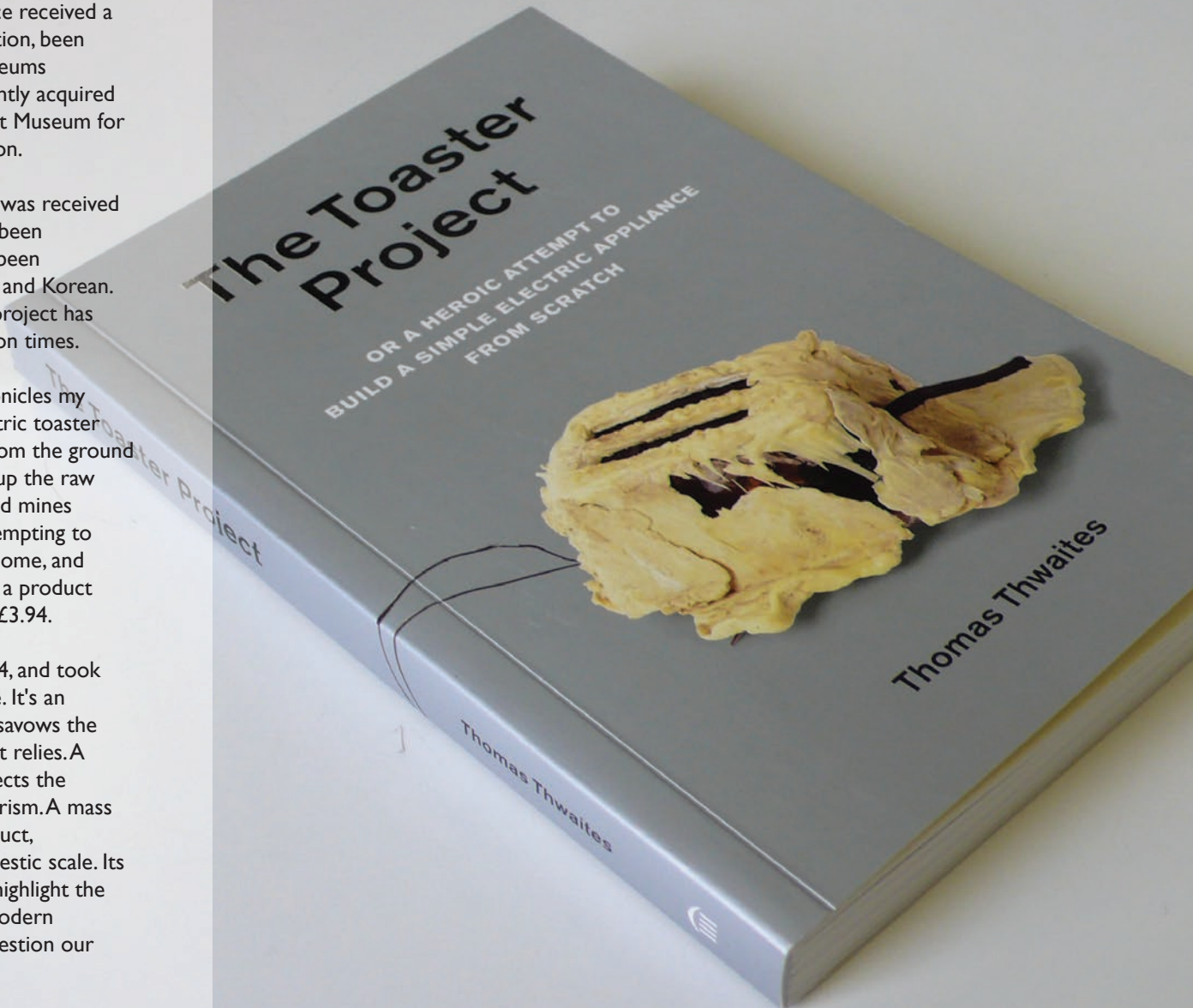
The Toaster Project (2009)

My graduation project at the Royal College of Art, it has since received a great deal of press attention, been exhibited at national museums worldwide and was recently acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum for their permanent collection.

The book of the project was received with critical acclaim, has been reprinted twice and has been translated in to Japanese and Korean. A TED talk I did on the project has been viewed over a million times.

The Toaster Project chronicles my attempt to make an electric toaster from scratch - literally from the ground up. Starting with digging up the raw materials from abandoned mines around the UK, then attempting to process them myself at home, and finally forming them into a product that Argos sells for only £3.94.

My toaster cost £1187.54, and took me nine months to make. It's an electric appliance that disavows the infrastructure on which it relies. A convenient item that rejects the convenience of consumerism. A mass produced domestic product, 'manufactured' on a domestic scale. Its contradictions serve to highlight the amazing efficiencies of modern capitalism, but also to question our current trajectory.





The Toaster Project, Exhibition view: ARS Electronica, Linz, Austria

Toasters



Kenwood
Toaster
£19.95

£24.95

£21.95

£15

Kenwood TTP102
2 slice toaster
£1187.54
No hot surface, non-stick wiring
Cordless base

Kenwood TTP102
2 slice toaster
£16.45
No hot surface, non-stick wiring
Cordless base

£29.95

£45

Kenwood TTP103
4 slice toaster
£22.95
No hot surface, non-stick wiring
Cordless base

Bosch TAT501GB
2 slice toaster
£24.45
No hot surface, non-stick wiring
Cordless base

High speed 1500W
2 slice toaster
£39.95
No hot surface, non-stick wiring
Cordless base

£17.45

Let us lighten
your load
Please ask for details

magimix

magimix

magimix

Breville
2 slice brushed stainless steel toaster

Breville

Breville