

Scented signs

A research into seeing the world
through smell



Heera Shin

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Introduction

For us humans, when we perceive the world, "vision" is such a strong element. All the city signs, road marks, and the general urban design rely on visual elements such as shapes or colors. But come to think of it, we are not the only residents of the city. How clear are these "signs" to other nonhuman companions?

Let's look through the eyes of dogs to answer this question. Most will be shocked how different we "see" the world.



Understanding the difference

Dog vision



Human vision



The main reason for why our urban surroundings and the visual language of humans are ineffective for dogs is because of the difference in the visual ability itself. Humans can see a wide variety of colors compared to dogs, as they only are able to differentiate between blue and yellow color scale.

For dogs, the red and green in traffic lights are just the same greyish color. In the same sense, the red stop signs and barricades are also just a part of the grey background of the world.

Then How does the everyday world look like to dogs?

The world through canine eyes





Photo series by Heera Shin

The world through canine eyes





Photo series by Heera Shin

The world through canine eyes





Photo series by Heera Shin

The world through canine eyes

Quite a different world we live on right?

All these signs and indicators in the city are close to being useless for dogs. We humans are guided by so many signs around the city. They are the markers of the direction, space and information that provides us the knowledge needed to find paths and act "right". But due to differences in the "language" we share, that stems from physical structures, all is lost and very unclear.

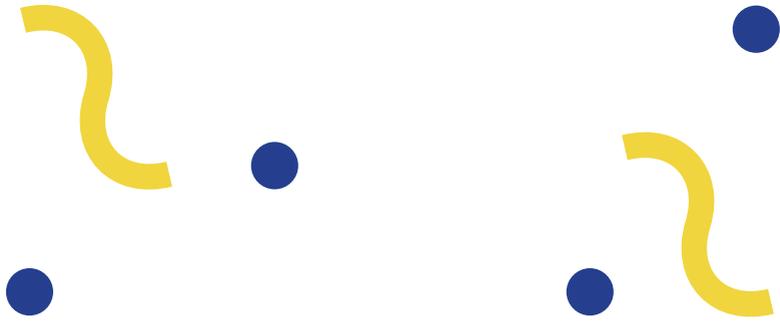
Then how do dogs perceive and decode the world? Unlike us, who actively use our eyes to see the world, dogs smell the world.

They have a unique split structure of the nose that allows them to smell in stereo. This allows them to process the smell in detail to find the general direction and the source of where the smell comes from.

No wonder they are often used in searches and finding illegal substances. Dogs are also known to have superior scent memories, thus, scents are the main source of their identification process.

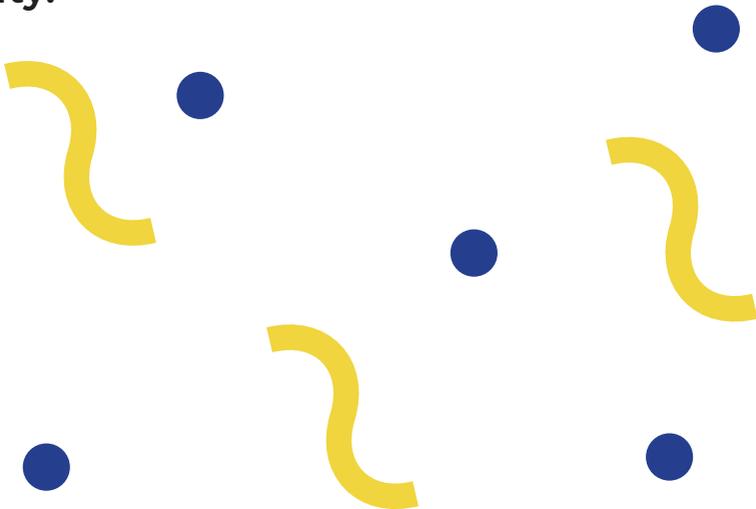
They are even known to smell your hormones and emotions, which is quite hard to grasp for most of us.

Scented signs



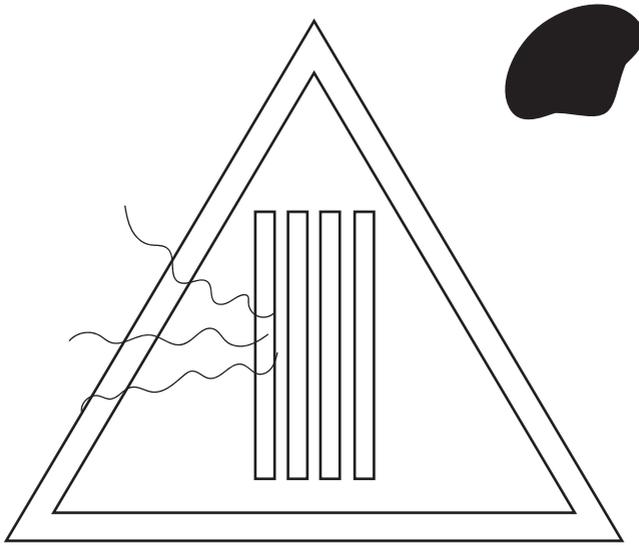
Using the sense of smell, we might be able to communicate more clearly with dogs.

Maybe there is the possibility of using scents to provide them the markers and indicators of the city so they can also have a gentle guidance around the city.



Scented signs

How can we smell stop?

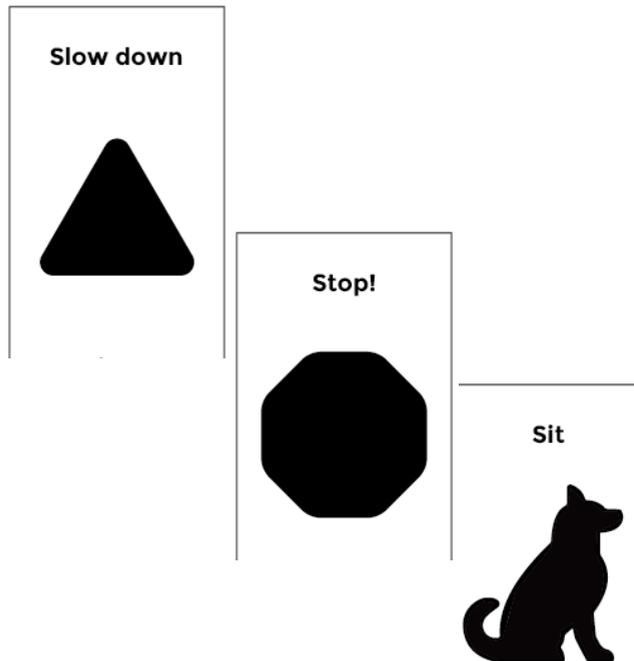


STOP

A Scent sign?

How can we translate the visual language to scents? Like street signs that show us the direction, there might be a way to make scented trails that can guide the dogs to do a certain behavior.

What will be the scents to use when communicating stop? How about slow down? Or to sit? If we can link this behavior to scent, there might be a way to incorporate scents to the scene of the city.



Citrus essence extraction



Scented signs

The use of association and symbol

We use certain colors and symbols to indicate things like red as danger, yellow as a warning and green as safe or pass. These colors have strong associations with such notions and bring almost a smash of information. Like how people write in bold DANGER to a red sign to stop entrance.

Then in sense of smell, How will we make this instant notion of back off?

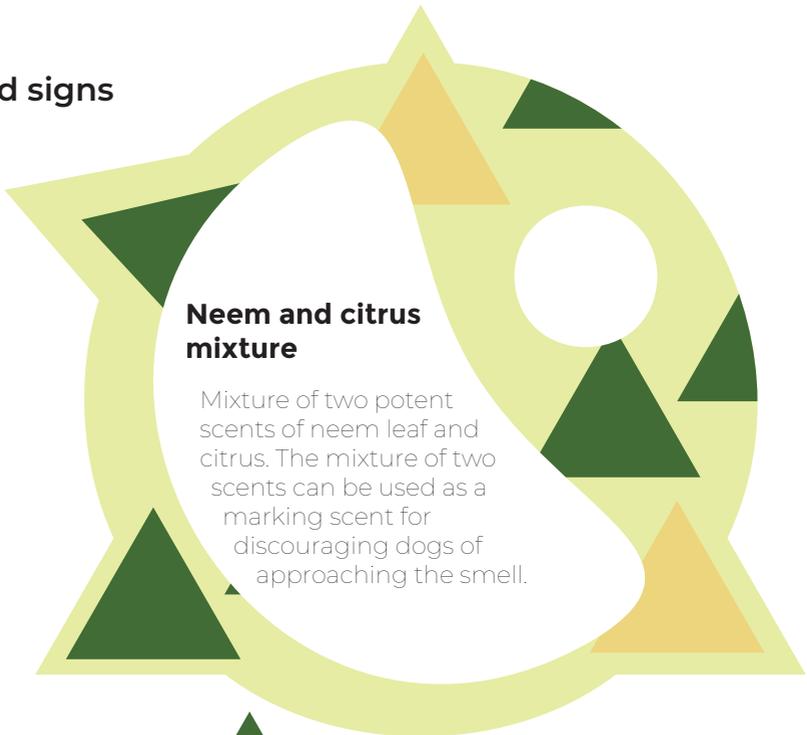
To solve this, I looked in to scents that dogs hate and like to come up with three scents fit for strong suggestion.



Citrus mixture extract (Orange, lemon)

Commonly used for various products humans use but one of the best known scent that dogs dislike. Despite the general hatred towards the smell the scent is non toxic for dogs. Due to this, citrus extracts are already used in some behavioral trainings to discourage dogs from destroying/approaching certain objects.

Scented signs



Neem and citrus mixture

Mixture of two potent scents of neem leaf and citrus. The mixture of two scents can be used as a marking scent for discouraging dogs of approaching the smell.



Neem leaf extract

Commonly used as a pesticide and insect repellent for dogs due to its non toxic compounds and strong nutty smell that is unattractive for dogs

Scent blending citrus and neem

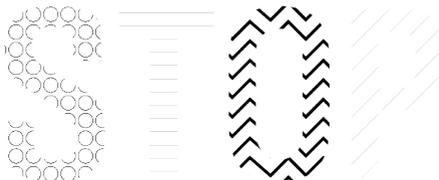
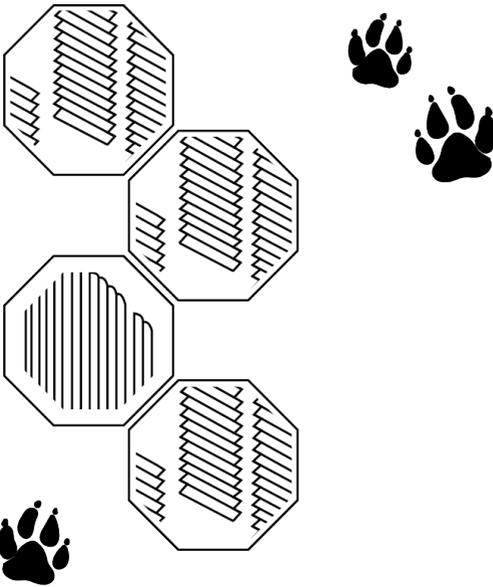
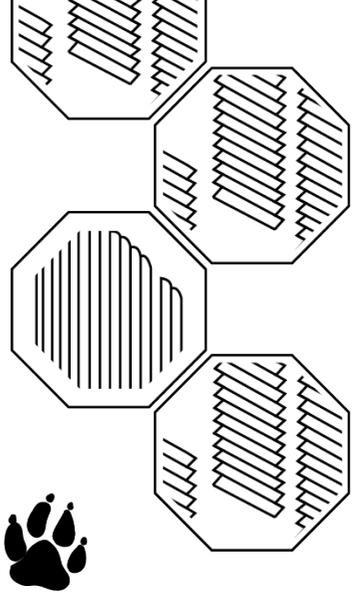


Textured signs

How about other senses like texture?

Experience is a sum of many different elements and sense.

Maybe the addition of texture can also enhance the effectiveness of the scents.

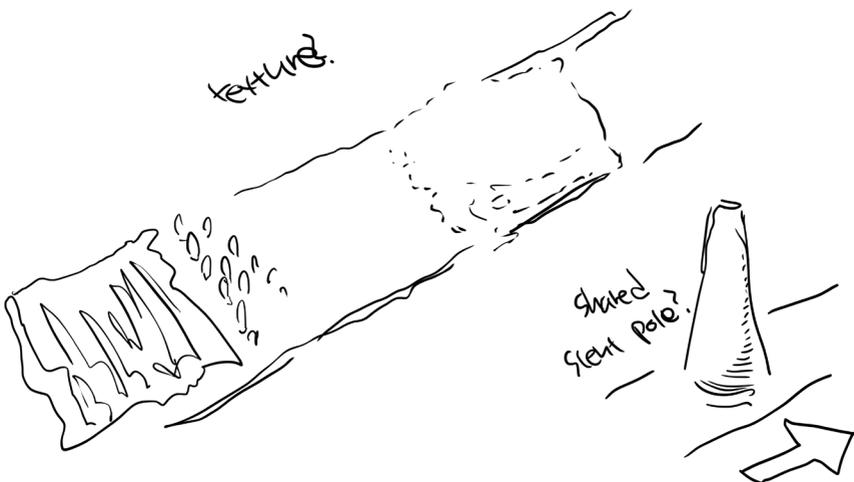


Textured signs

While researching, I found out interesting behavioral training for dogs with a disability. To make up for missing senses, they used different sense together like the using textured mats and pads to make a tactile map for the dog.

In a way, this differs from many trainings that rely on the owner's reaction and body gestures. It lets the dog to connect the perceived sense to understand the linked behavior.

Maybe this less dependent on the owner method can maybe provide soft guidances that dogs can decide to follow on their own?



Textured signs



Textured signs



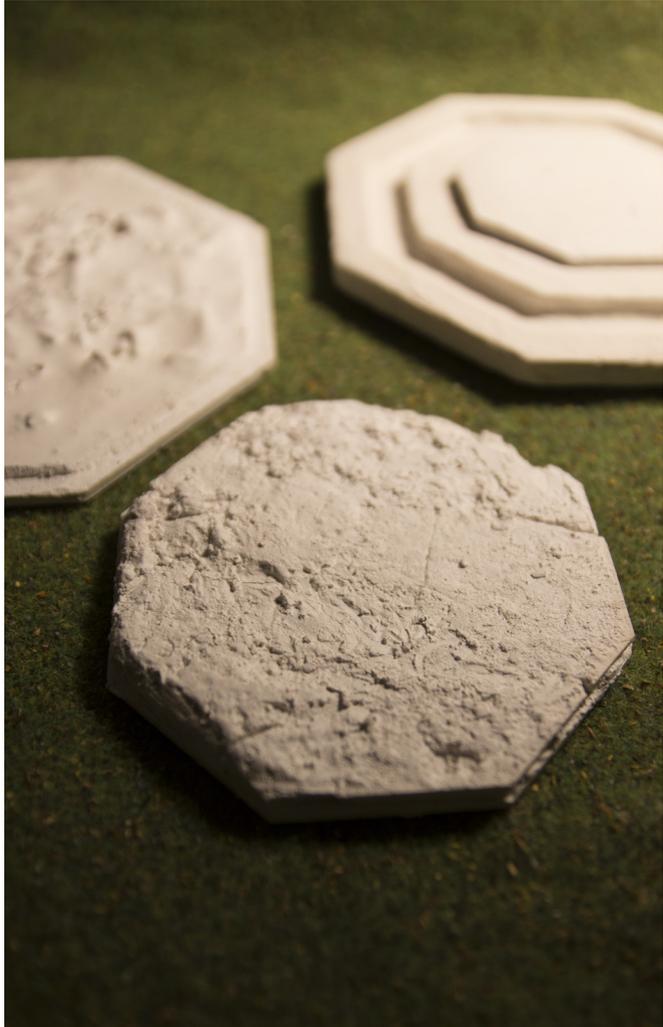
Hexagonal shape
inspired by stop
signs and plaster for
the use as diffusers
for holding scents





Textured signs

Textured signs



Interview and community

Throughout the project, there were difficulties and questions regarding dog behavior to design from their perspective and test out how the theories of my researches will work out in real life. To overcome this, I contacted experts and dog owners for their own experiences and knowledge.



A big help from Veronica, an animal behaviorist and dog trainer



Together discussing the different dog behaviors and the possibility of scent training program.



Expats with dogs in Eindhoven

비공개 그룹 · 멤버 722명



Joining private facebook groups really helped in setting surveys and finding interviews, as many were enthusiastic and caring for their canine partners.

 **Heera Shin**님이 링크를 공유했습니다.
5월 20일 · 🌐

Hello everyone I'm happy to join 😊
To introduce a bit, I'm currently doing a design research about dogs in urban environment. I'm not a dog owner myself so I came here for advice! Any input will be appreciated.
Today I came with a small survey!
Can you spare some time for me? 🌹
The survey is for both dog owners and non-dog owners so feel free to spread the news.
If you are up for giving more help (interview, user testing) or just interested in the project itself, leave a mail to 180213@student.designacademy.nl or a message via whatsapp to the number in the survey description!
Have a nice day everyone!

In the perspective of dogs

Hello! this survey is for the research of a project related to urban environment and dogs :)
Thank you so much for holding out! If you are willing to reach out a further hand, I am looking for volunteers for user testing and interview.
Leave a mail to 180213@student.designacademy.nl or a message to +31620514954 via whatsapp!

1. Are you a dog owner?

Yes
 No
 Planning to

1-2. If you chose "planning to" what are the reasons?

DOCS.GOOGLE.COM

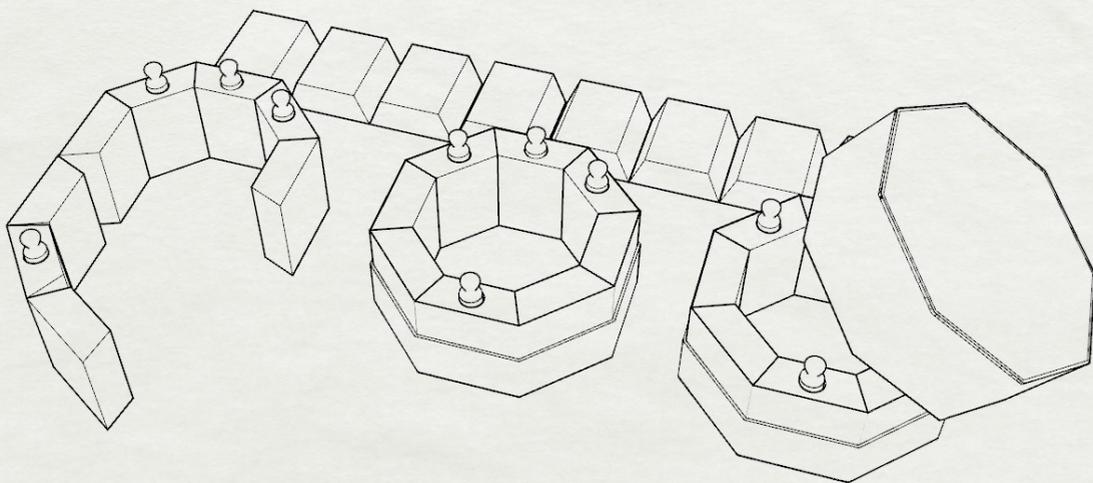
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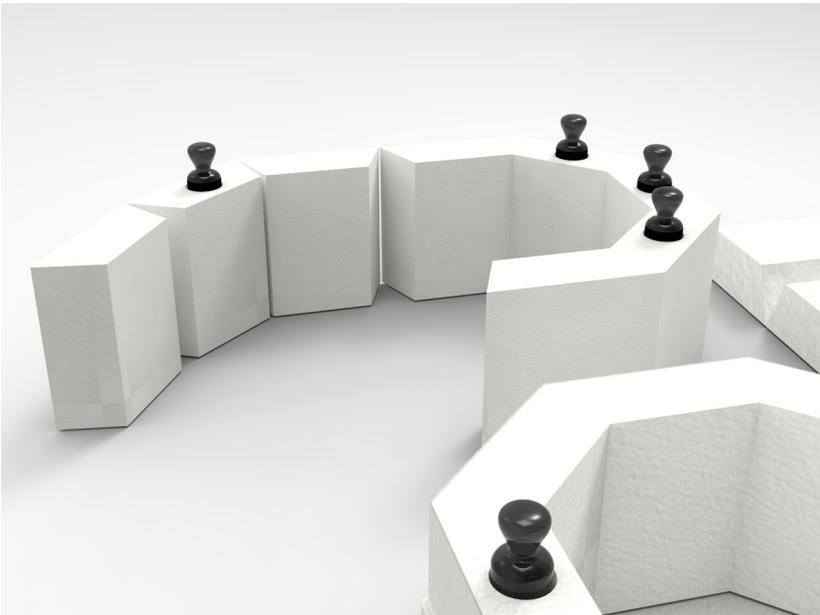
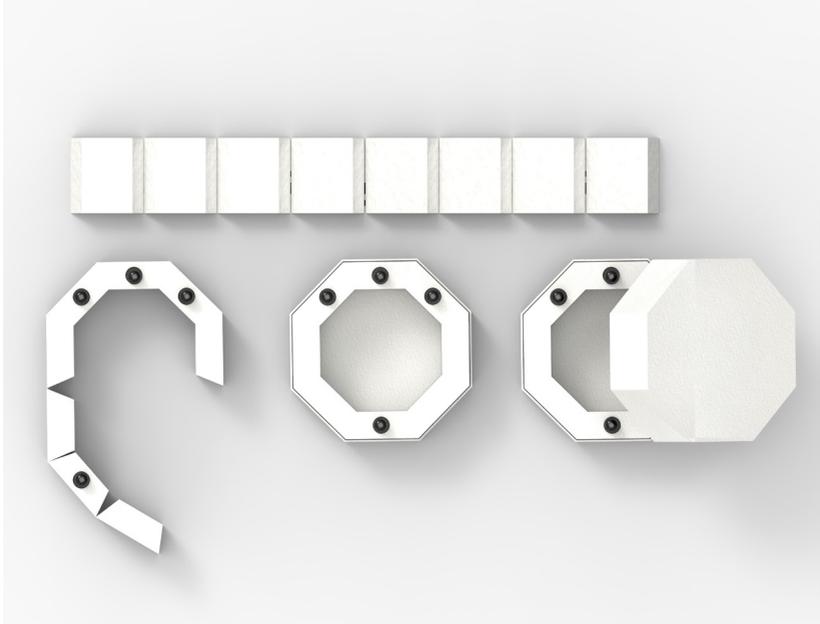
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Scented signs

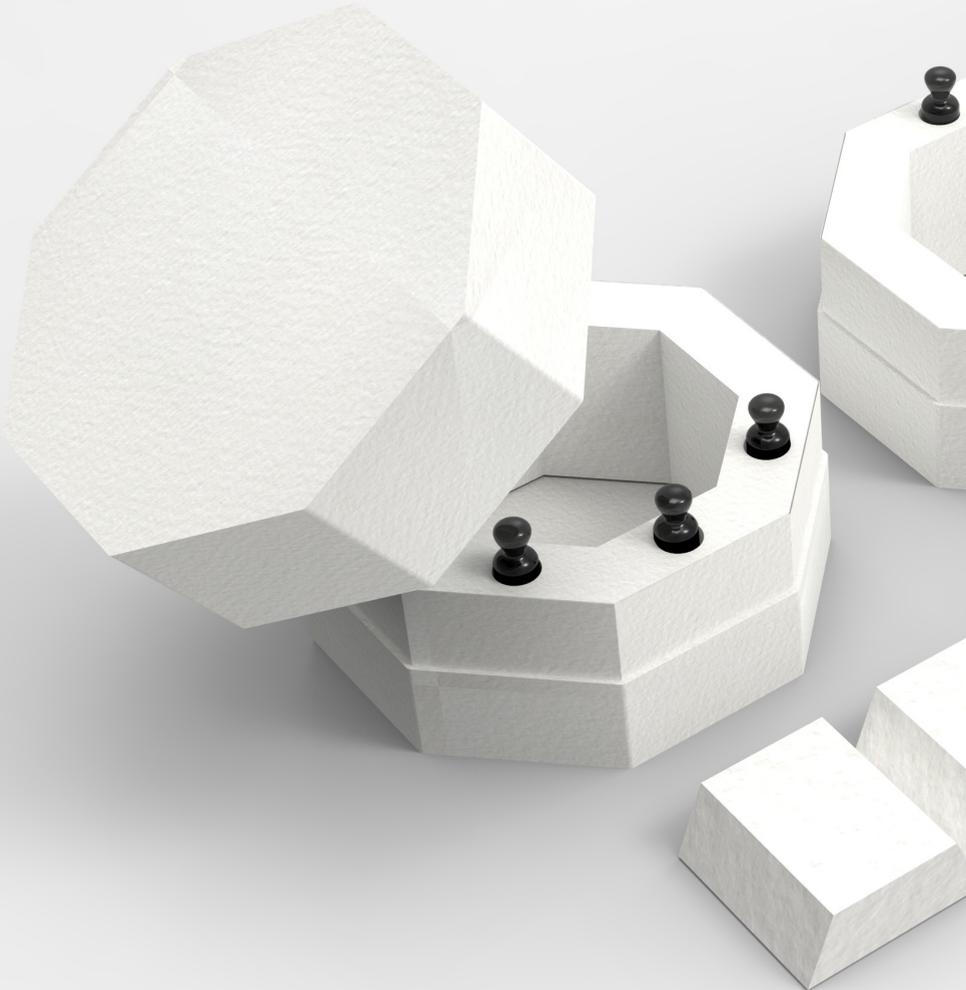
: A scent training kit for dogs

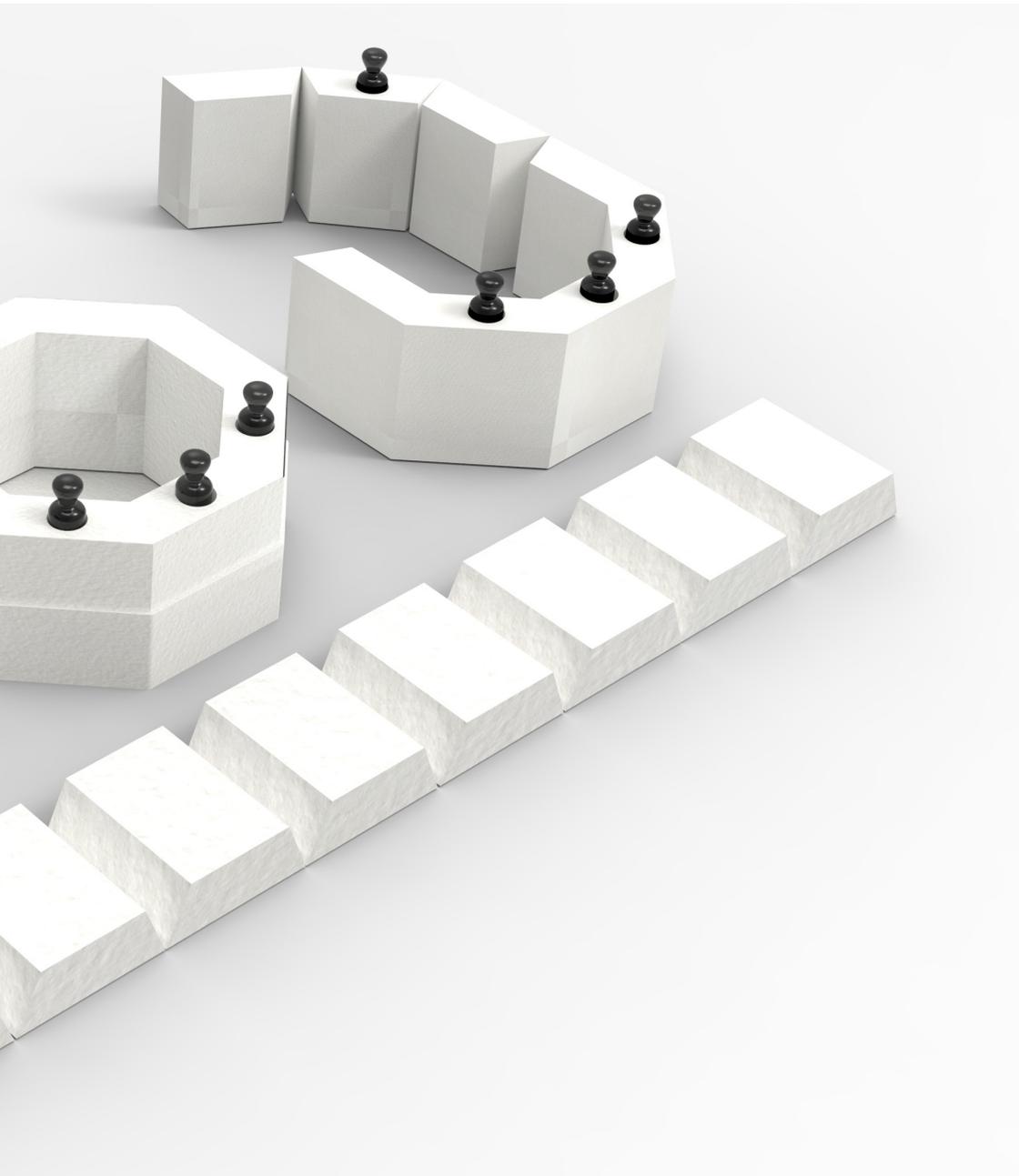


Scented signs : A Scent Training kit for dogs



Scented signs : A Scent Training kit for dogs





Scented signs : A Scent Training kit for dogs





Outroduction

Throughout the project, I got to see another world from the perspective of dogs. It led me to figure out how different we sense the world, even with close beings that we share this city with.

Although, I also had my fair share of critics, It was surprising how many sent support and was interested in the idea of trying to understand and create for the non human residents of the city.

I remember even being thanked in a survey for running this project as one dog owners viewed this interest as an act of showing great care.

Every being senses the world in a different way, due to physical, mental, or even cultural differences. I hope this research triggers you to think of this different view and this information have helped you understand more of these man's best friends.



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