

Haptic dichotomies & hand movements

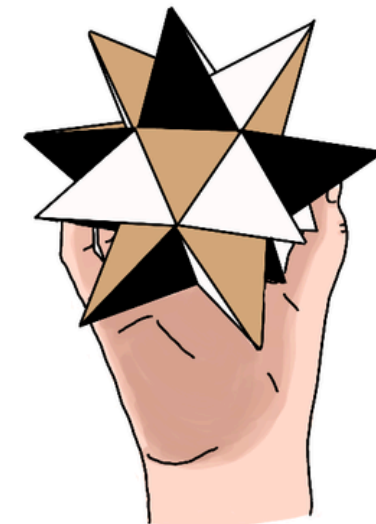
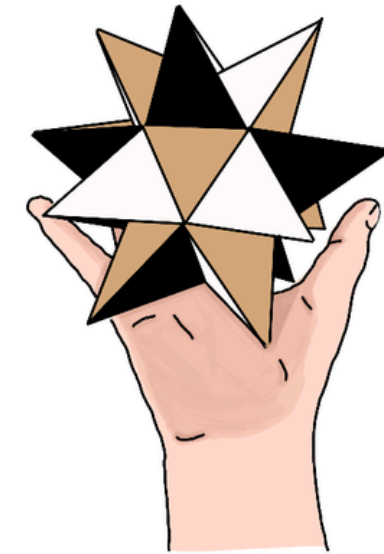
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interaction: gently squeezing with one hand

Some people interacted with the material in a different way than explained.

Which made us think about the affordances of the pieces.

Calming
Dynamic

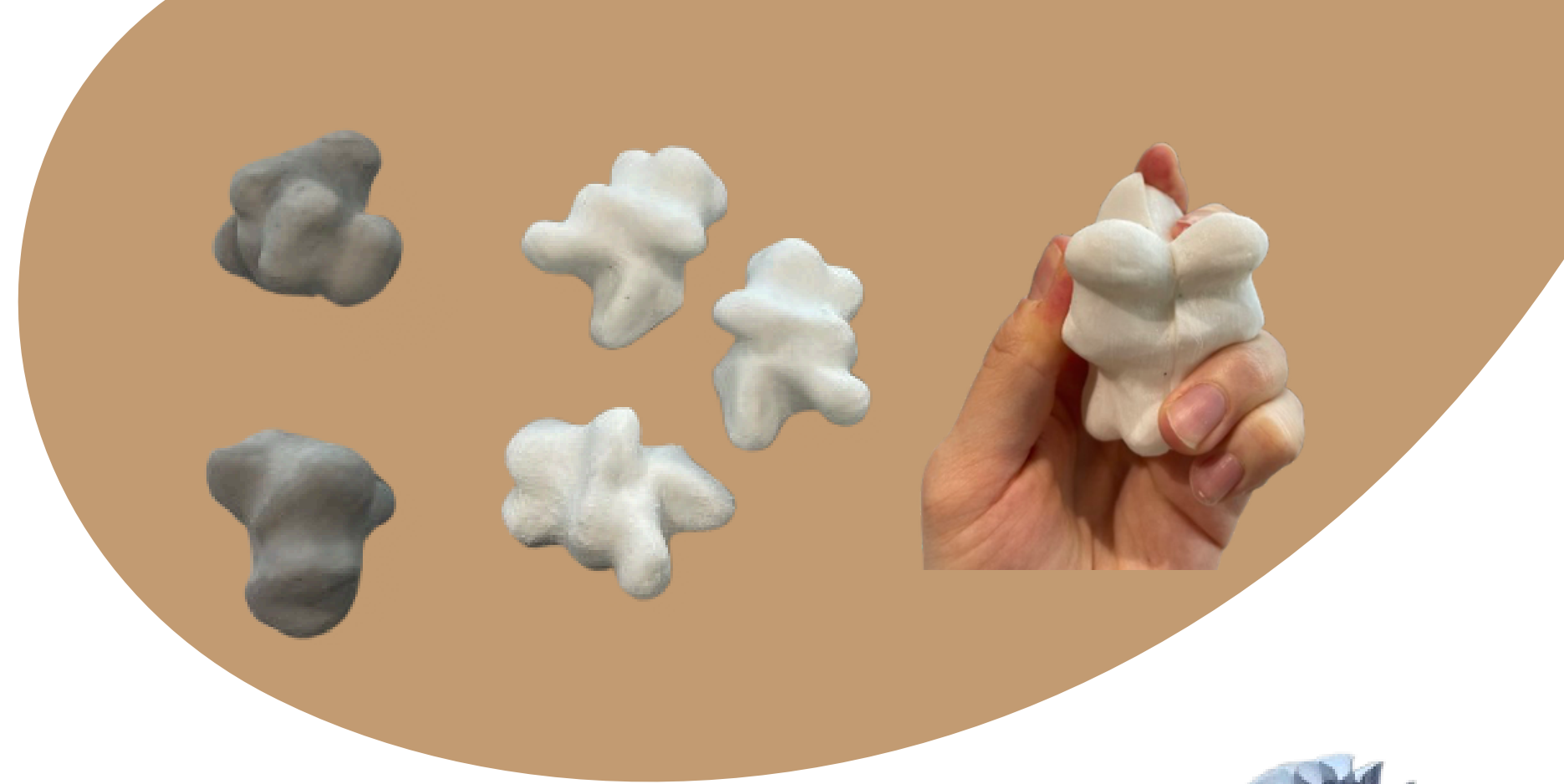


Disturbing
Static

Process

We began by analysing how material qualities influence calming experiences. Smooth, soft and dynamic materials were consistently perceived as calming, while sharp or rigid forms were seen as more disturbing. To avoid the obvious association with furry calming materials, we chose to explore TPU because it is smooth and dynamic yet offers a surprising tactile effect. Our material mapping showed that this surprise fades once the material becomes familiar, and we attempted to integrate this insight into our experiments.

During prototyping it became clear that TPU's practical constraints prevented us from using it within our intended dynamic versus stiff dichotomy. Because it did not behave in a calming and smooth way, we decided to shift direction. We moved toward origami combined with fabric, a material that is smooth, soft and dynamic but more adaptable. This allowed us to continue exploring calming interactions while working with materials that aligned better with our dynamic/stiff dichotomy.



Dynamic

“Continuously changing or developing”
(*Dynamic*, 2026)

We interpreted dynamic as something that can change shape and form, usually out of more flexible and soft materials.



Static

“Staying in one place without moving, or not changing for a long time”
(*Static*, 2026)

We interpreted static as something that does not bend or change shape, usually out of more sturdy materials.



References

dynamic. (2026). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/dynamic>
static. (2026). <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/static>

Reflection & Feedback

The contrast between the rounded artefacts and the sharp one turned out much larger than planned, which disrupted the gradient. We realised this could be solved by adding intermediate artefacts or by softening the sharp piece with subtle material elements such as fabric.

Participants reported that the fabric artefact became the most calming after extended interaction. Several pieces were experienced as surprising at first because the sensations were unfamiliar, but the surprise faded and a calming feeling emerged over time.

Some participants found the spiky paper artefact more organic than the fabric ones because they saw paper as a more natural material. This highlighted that organic qualities come from both shape and material, and that different sensory modalities strongly influence interpretation.

A final remark was that all artefacts should have been calming, which revealed that we had misinterpreted the assignment. This explains why our gradient contained a break between calming and disturbing elements instead of a smooth progression. Some extra artefacts could be added between the second and third artefact to make this gradient smoother.



Demo setup



Demo peer feedback