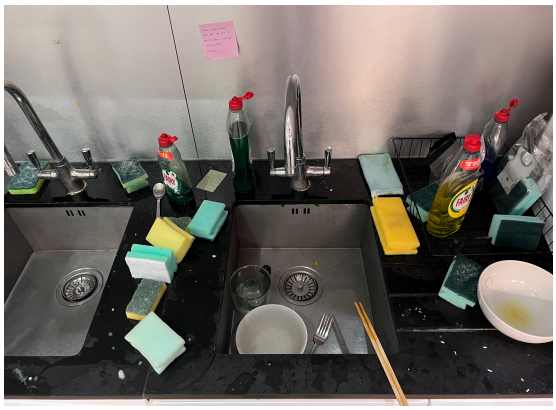
Twelve in One

Written Response - Methods of Investigating

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Perhaps you might think that a kitchen is a perfectly ordinary place, but what if I told you that I have to share my kitchen with 11 other people? A kitchen shared by 12 people was entirely new to me, so I started my investigations there, seeking to explore the relationship between objects, people, and space.



The first thing that caught my attention in this space was a sight you would never see in a regular family kitchen - 12 sponges, each belonging to a different person, all laid out side by side next to the sink. This somewhat absurd scene made me laugh and reminded me of Foucault's reflections on multiple orders and disorder things, as stated in the preface to *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Citing Borges's introduction to an absurd and seemingly meaningless categorization of animals, he raises the possibility of the breakdown of common structures between things that are vastly different. Faced with twelve sponges, twelve pots, twelve bottles of dish soap, etc. in the kitchen, I resonate with Foucault's idea about the loss of the comprehensive knowledge of things in this state of disorder, where seemingly chaotic and unorganized objects challenge this common space. It's an interesting and intriguing kind of chaos, so I tried various methods (collecting, 3D scanning, photographing, collaging) to document the different kinds of playful objects in the kitchen and to search for relationships among them through different arrangements. However, I do not see this as a breakdown of the system of this space. On the contrary, I think the delicate balance within this looseness is exactly the unique grammar of this particular kitchen itself. At the same time, the relationship between the objects and the space reflects the relationship between people, and it is in this loose structure that roommates who are not very familiar with each other get along harmoniously.

While loose, the kitchen is also crowded. The limited physical space of the fridge, stove, and sink dictates the stacking and squeezing of our relationships. We have to think about how to guard our ownership of items in the fridge shared by twelve people, and also needed to find a spot in this public space during peak cooking times. In my final presentation, I showed a video with 12 audio tracks playing simultaneously. “Where a visual space is an organized continuum of a uniformed connected kind, the ear world is a world of simultaneous relationships” (McLuhan, 2001, p. 111). In a way that breaks down the boundaries of time and space, I hoped to convey to the audience, who had never entered this space, the visible and invisible relationships within it.

Twelve in one, both loose and crowded, this is how I see the items, the people and the kitchen. I don't know how these relationships will develop, but I believe that there are more subtle connections to be investigated in this shared space.

Reference

McLuhan, M. (2001) *The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*. Berkeley: Gingko Press.

Foucault, M. (1989) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge.