I chose to speak with Laura Knight for my dialogue as her expertise lies in understanding the nature of complex systems - the central context of my enquiry at the time - and wanted her view on the conversations around 'invisible and overlapping' systems I sought to explore in my visual archive, *same-same but different*. My practice so far forefronts studio experiments to understand and represent the convoluted (and often dualistic) languages of large-scale hierarchies and systems.

Laura elaborated on the presence of assemblages in complex systems - and I was inclined to make a deep dive on assemblages as moving parts of a system, and in gestalt (which also deals in perception of a whole greater than the sum of its parts). Assemblages (in one of its many working definitions) can be understood as a collection of dynamic and heterogeneous elements that are brought together to create a new relationship with each other, and in turn, build a new meaning together. What interests me about assemblages is that their effectivity is measured through what they are, but instead of what they can do - in fact, that is what makes it an assemblage. (Wise, 2011, p.92)

So the conversation of 'looking' at systems in its parts opened up the enquiry: my project *same-same but different* had explorations that had two images of similar themes juxtaposed against each other, a 'potentiality' of culture in both images, which caused a tension between them. (See Fig. 01). What I were to work with a set of these images?

1. Through the eyes of gestalt: what perceptions and biases do these compositions invoke within the viewer?

2. Through the eyes of theory of assemblages: how would the bias created 'mobilise' this assemblage?



Fig. 1. Images of similar but somehow opposing objects allow the viewer to discern a relationship between the two objects. First image are two crayons, one named 'Flesh' and another 'Brown'. The second are the £600 Prada slippers with its (initially uncredited) Kolhapuri designs versus the original local Kolhapuris.

This connected well with what I wanted to do next for my own project - and it led me into my first experiment for Positions through Triangulating. In the studio experiments, I began by exploring the tensions created by a set of 'heterogeneous' objects that together created connections within themselves, with implications that they prescribe a virtual territory of thought.

I introduced a set of objects from the visual archive, which had similar face value but different cultural capital underlying its interpretation.



Fig. 2 A set of objects that all have a cultural capital underlying their image ; see matrix at the end of the document for full set

Then I created more sets of the objects, using only one from each category –at random (See fig.

2), but together they formed new understandings of cultural capital through its assemblage. Some of the objects in these assemblages were turned upside down – so it had the silhouette of the object it could potentially denote but did not give away the full information. The omissions created new contexts for each assemblage, some resembling power, other resembling bootlegging and / or 'camp' choices – and played with the tension of bias within interpretations of the assemblages.

Aided through the dialogue with Laura, I found the nuances of context enmeshed in my experiments and I proceeded to move my enquiry towards the translations of these contexts through image.



Fig. 3. New sets of visual compositions that show and tell different objects from the set at random and create implied meanings of the potentiality and perception of the images.

*Matrix of meaning-laden cultural objects of the original set

A British Passport	An Afghan Passport
A ‘Flesh’ Crayon	A Brown Crayon
An Amex	A Twilight credit card
Creative Cloud	A ‘cracked’ Photoshop license
Prada’s ‘stolen’ Kolhapuri slippers	Original Kolhapuri slippers from Maharashtra, India

References:

Wise, J.M. (2011) ‘Assemblage’, in C.J. Stivale (ed.) *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts*. Acumen Publishing (Key Concepts), pp. 91–102.