THINGS OF DYING

assemblages. goods. transmitters.

An applied design-anthropological exploration of the current death culture by Bitten Stetter

WHAT?

This practice-oriented dissertation investigates with design-ethnographical methods the material culture of end-of-life-spaces. At the border of palliative, social and spiritual care, consumption, design and trend forecasting.

Things of dying are being reflected under aspects of the visual, material and postmodern turn and with regard to individualization, value change, digitalization, demographical change and holistic health. The applied design-anthropological exploration of the new death culture is questioning the current lifestyle of dying:

How? do the spirit of the age and death consciousness materialize in things of dying?

Which? roles entail things of dying in end-of-life-settings?

Who? are the (un-)professional designer and con- and prosumer?

What? support can end-of-life-design provide to improve quality of life and care of dying people, relatives and nurses?



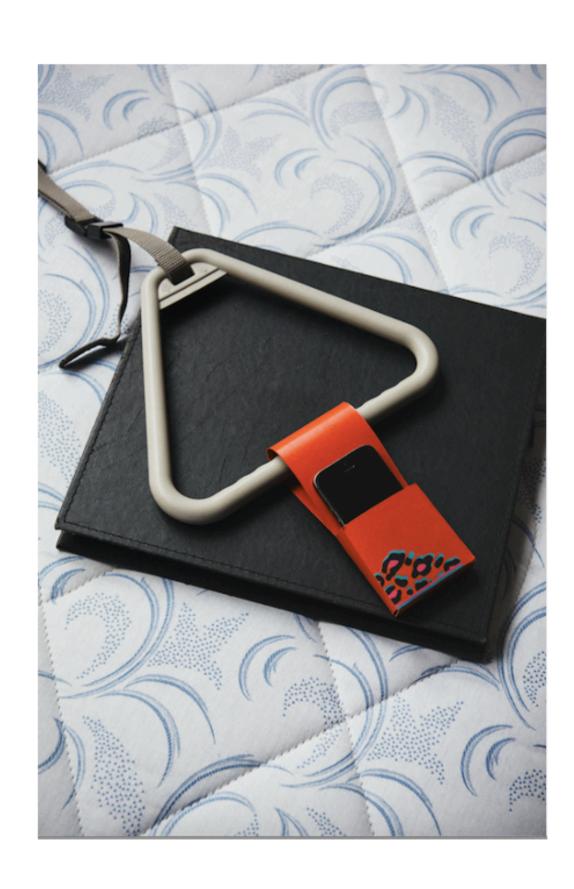
Bitten Stetter combines her design practice with cultural studies research. Lifeworld practices, communicative interactions, rituals, symbolic meanings and forms of sociality will be investigated using design anthropological and design ethnographic approaches.

The multisite and multiscape ethnography complemented by cultural probes and design interventions. The methodology situational analysis, based on grounded theory after the postmodern turn (A.-J. clarke), understands mappings of discourses and narratives and data visuali-zations as an analysis as well as an knowledge transfer tool.

The field research takes place at the Center for Palliative Care in the City Hospital Waid in Zurich, at Hospice Aargau and PalliaViva, a charit-able foundation for mobile palliative care. One part of the PhDresearch is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). This interdisciplinary project Sterbesettings (2020-2023) focus on four disciplines and perspectives: language, religion, care and design. (sterbesettings.ch)







Things of dying are irreplaceable in (un-)professional dying settings. They are non-verbal actors and aktants. (Latour 2007) They have functions and roles, construct identity and transport knowledge. They are involved in (self-)care, conversations and crisis (Bosch 2014, Bourdieu 1987, Goffman 2003.). Things can be (dys-)functional or (un-)comforting. The (non-)human-centered design creates (in)dependence, (non-)quality of life, dignity or unworthiness. The material culture of dying (Hahn 2015, Tietmeyer 2010,) represent values and moral standards of concepts of good dying.

All of of them are designed, produced, distributed and get consumed. They are present in dying settings, absent in our every-day life. Their sensually perceptible qualities have eceived less attention in cultural science and medical research. (Sandelowski 2003, Smith 2006, Artner et al. 2017).

The research through design approach allows to transfer the findings and knowledge into new products for care givers, patients and relatives. The products should act inside and outside medical and nursing worlds with the goal to improve awareness of dying, quality of life, communi-cation and autonomy and self-empowerment (finally.design).



