

EXECUTIVE TOYS IN CERAMICS

special project

by

✓ nachiket
Thakur
96613804

guide

ms. vanmala jain

Industrial design center
indian institute of technology, bombay

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APPROVAL SHEET

The special project entitled " EXECUTIVE TOYS IN CERAMICS " by Nachiket K Thakur is approved in partial fulfillment of the Masters Degree Industrial Design at Industrial Design Centre of IIT Bombay.

Internal Examiner

Guide Vannala Jain.

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nachiket

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INTRODUCTION

The mad scramble for power, authority, one upmanship has taken a toll of the entire mankind. Every other person is seen clamoring for more. He can do anything to get hold of the "magic" that will help him reach the top. The path to reach the top is however not at all simple. He has to surpass, cross many physical and mental agonies for achieving the impossible. To fulfill his never ending needs he taxes himself in many ways. this race to remain on top destroys his psychological / mental stability. Every now and then he takes help of something or the other to overcome the anguish, disturbance of his mind and body. Physical ailments can be taken care by surgery and similar attributes. What is difficult to achieve is the mental stability. He requires to have some companion which he can talk to, relate himself with in the times of distress.

Secondly, the situation in which you are not in any kind of tension or stress. For example at the leisure activities done in solitude. It can be talking endlessly on your phone to your girlfriend, two housewives talking on phone, people watching television, reading or lost in sweet memories. People often tend to fiddle with the things they lay their hands on. To give such people some interesting alternative.



At times just to stimulate the gray cells

My concept of a toy as a healer comes into picture in such situations.

The situations discussed above are the end results. The things which lead to such difficulties is the simple problem of overcoming tensions in your day to day life. Small things such as thinking too much under stress or otherwise can lead to mental disorders in the future. This is an attempt to strike at the root cause. This is supposed to give the wandering mind a companion with whom he can be with and be his own self. This is to relieve of his emotional stresses. You need to overcome the frustration anxieties you face every day at your work place , at home. Here I will be dealing with the worries and stress encountered at your workplace.



TOYS

Toys are synonymous with children. They get lot of pleasure while interacting with their beloved companion. A child's creative instincts are stimulated when he plays with his toy. He learns more nicely with the help of toys. His involvement with the toy separates him from the rest of the world.

Similarly the same logic applies for the grownups. We seldom wish we were a kid to enjoy the pleasures which come with it. We can be naughty, carefree, innocent, troublesome and still get away with it. To make possible this wish it was decided to develop a toy for the grown ups.



WHY CLAY ?

Using inherent properties of clay to make toys

Aesthetic, decorative, functional

Advantages of toys in clay

innovative, first time

generates interest - interesting textures, colours, interfaces possible

complex bionic forms very easily possible

can portray a certain image

boldly state ones identity - different from others

not run of the mill

keeps us bound to our grass roots, our mother earth

helps keep the cottage industry running and the ancient art alive.

helps maintain an helpful - encouraging bond between the old and the new way of life

a useful link between the ancient art with modern technology

opens a new chapter in the "clay" technology



can successfully convey, how a simple material like clay when judiciously and intelligently used give such wonderful results in the highly stressed area of human mind and psychology

Disadvantage of toys in clay

brittle , susceptible to breakage

crude

requires skilled labor

cannot be carelessly used



SCOPE

Identifying different situations wherein the user is under mental stress, wondering aimlessly in the word of his thoughts, pondering over matters of extreme importance and situations where he taxes his brain. Identifying different gestures, actions in such situations. A place or an environment where you have to remain in constant tension, pressure for delivering successfully against all odds. Such places can be of the doctor, thinkers, executives, designers etc. Here I will be discussing about the typical workplace environments situations they have to work in, of some of the identified users in relation of the problem stated.

Doctors : gesticulating, thinking, Analysing any critical case in his solitude. waiting to take a discussion on some crucial diagnosis

Thinkers, writers, poets : who think more than they write / what they write is an outcome of a lot of thinking

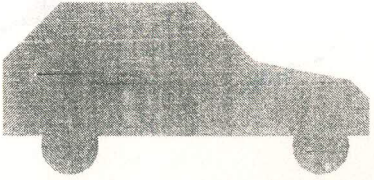
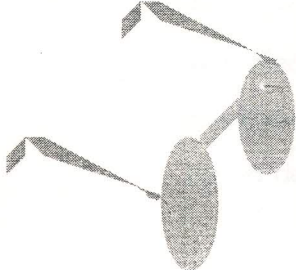


Business Executives : take crucial decisions, contemplate on serious issues like agenda for the AGM, formulating strategies to win over your competitor, answer a lot of people at the same time. People who have to stay cool in most of the adverse situations.

The examples of the professionals suggest the mental instability or activity at the actual time when they are working. I will be talking mainly about The executives as an example to explain my concept. Their wondering mind needs something to divert the mind so that they can get a soothing rest to think afresh. An interesting object which will stimulate their thinking. Something they could fiddle around so as to bring out the child in them. A child by virtue of his basic nature is inquisitive and as a very different approach, view of the world around him. All his instincts are stimulated the moment he fiddles with an interesting magical object . He looks for something which unknowingly helps him build his thinking power. The same philosophy can be applied to a executive in distress, who goes blank in his thoughts due to over crowding of issues in his brain at the same time. This will help him overcome all his mental blacks.



User Profile : Executives



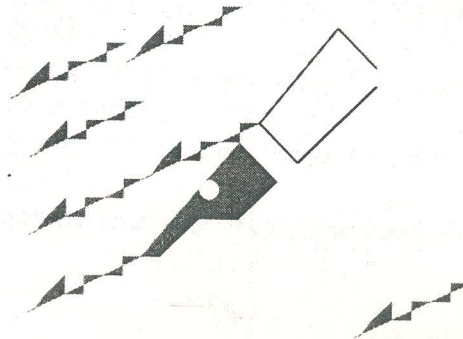
smart
witty
professional
temperamental
cool
cunning
meticulous
hardworking
has to think a lot
under tremendous pressure
always on there toes
mad for competition
caught in a vicious cycle of one upmanship
mental fatigue
overloaded with work
less time for leisure
sense of uneasiness
caught in a dilemma
difficulty in taking a decision
longs for relaxation



INITIAL SURVEY

Survey of the user behavior, there needs and situational analysis of the identified problem was carried out with cross section of users. They included housewives, teenagers, kids, professors, journalists, students, scientist, players, shopkeepers, businessman's, executives etc.

A questionnaire was prepared to know how a particular person acted in the identified situation. Peculiar observations were noted down in this respect. The questionnaire. The questions were put to the end users and there feedback was noted down.



The questionnaire :

Name :

Age :

Sex:

For Professionals :

Occupation:

Type of job : Field / desk

Hours of work :

Amount of time you spent alone while at work :

Modes of communication in the office : Phone / e-mail / fax / intercom

Things you do while thinking / talking on phone :

For Students :

School / college :

Branch :

Amount of time spent alone :

Things you do while talking on phone / watching TV :

Do you consider yourself impatient ? : Yes / No

Do you feel any requirement of a gadget / object to fiddle with? explain :

How would you like to portray your identity on the workplace:

Comment on the concept :



The conclusions and observations made therewith are as follows :

1. The amount and type of activity during such situations decreases with age and maturity.
2. Types of activities the user indulges in while talking on phone / thinking
 - ear pricking
 - scribbling
 - tossing, rotating small things in the hand
 - tapping the table with hand, pen, pencil
 - arranging things around
 - cleaning the surroundings
 - adjusting himself in his chair
 - setting the clock
 - checking the make up
 - playing with the table lamp
 - operating the pager buttons
 - putting the matchstick in the glass



playing with two coins

3. Many people welcomed the idea of an object to play with in your time of thinking or solitude.
4. Lot of apprehension about the feasibility of the concept to made in clay.
5. Liked the idea of the identity to be linked with the grassroots. An innovative approach
6. There is no problem of breakage on an executives table since he seldom is prone to throwing (though accidentally) his things down on the floor
7. First and foremost, the object should be available off hand. There should not be a mad scramble for it on the workplace to just find it out
8. Many users discarded the idea saying that it is very foolish to grapple for some object from your vicinity to play / fiddle fiddle around. Such things come by instinct and the reflexes at that particular movement. It cannot be



dictated to use certain object to fulfill your psychological need when you are not in a stable set of mind. Any object lying around is a good preposition

9. Users feel that they will get bored to play with the same toy for long, again and again in the same environment. The purpose of the toy will not be served since it will not be interesting as it becomes old. The purpose should be of creating interest or refreshing mood in the time of distress, tension. It should bring out some magic.

The toy should be :

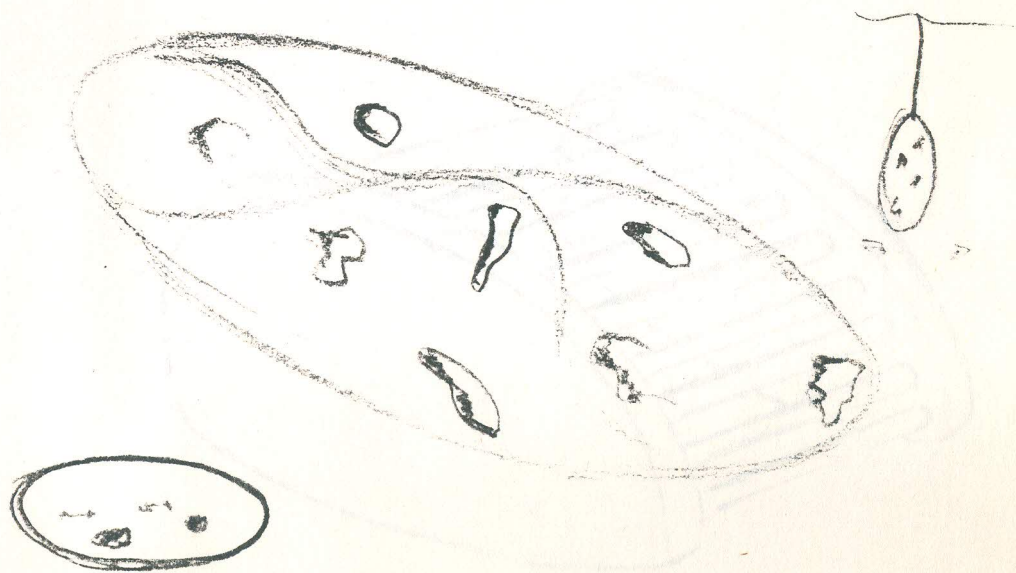
- having its own identity
- big enough for not hiding in the mess that is on the desk top
- of interesting colour, texture, interface
- having some moving parts
- able to generate interest in you
- should give you a feedback

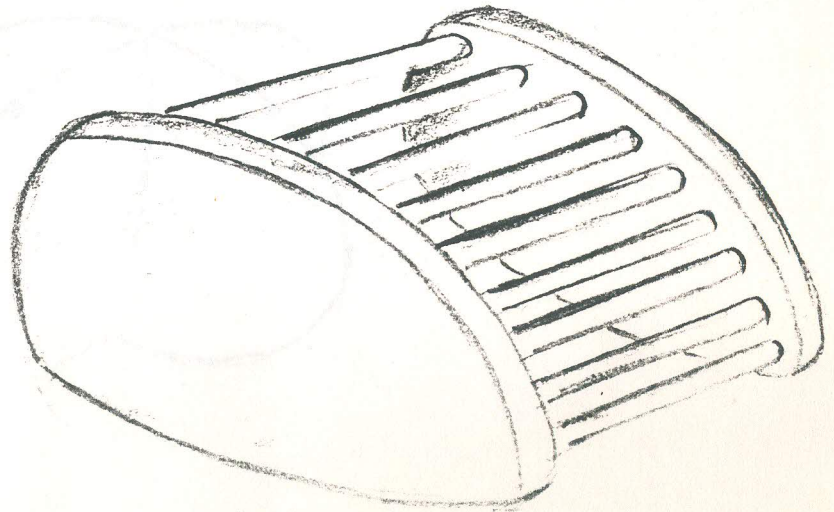
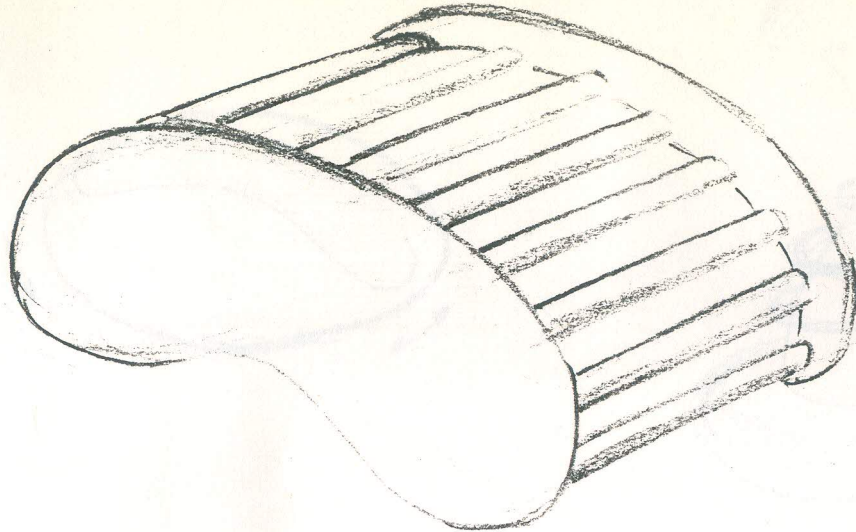


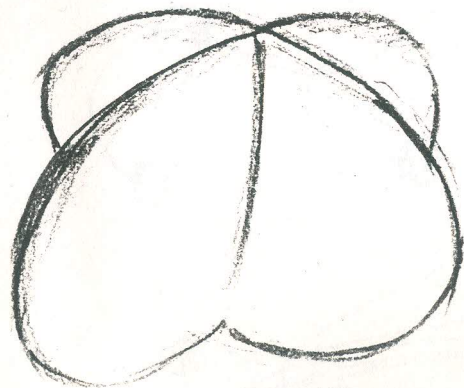
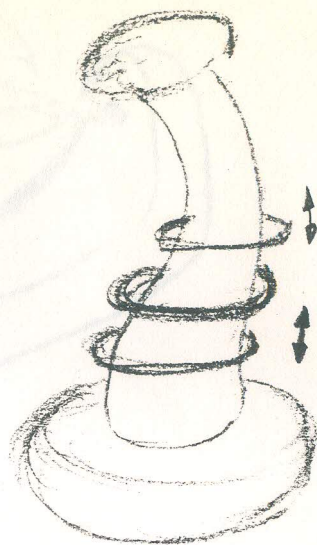
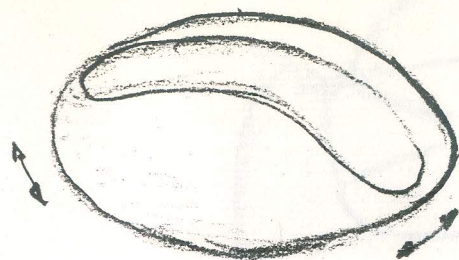
EXPLORATIONS

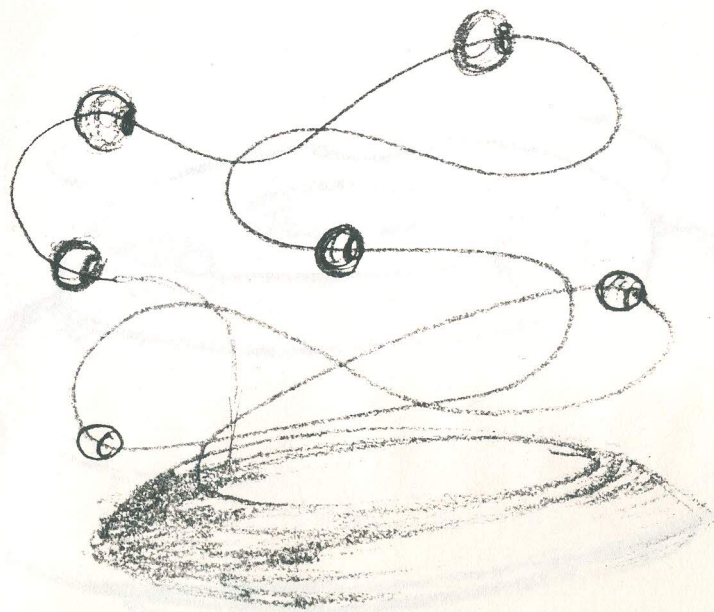
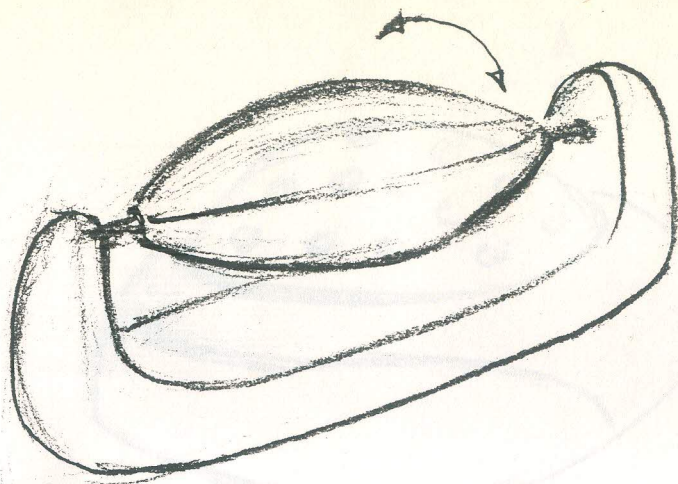
Taking clue from the survey conducted various form and mechanisms were explored. Basic constraint was not going away from using CLAY as a material. The initial explorative sketches wherein the formal, tactile aspects and mobility of the toy were considered are illustrated below,

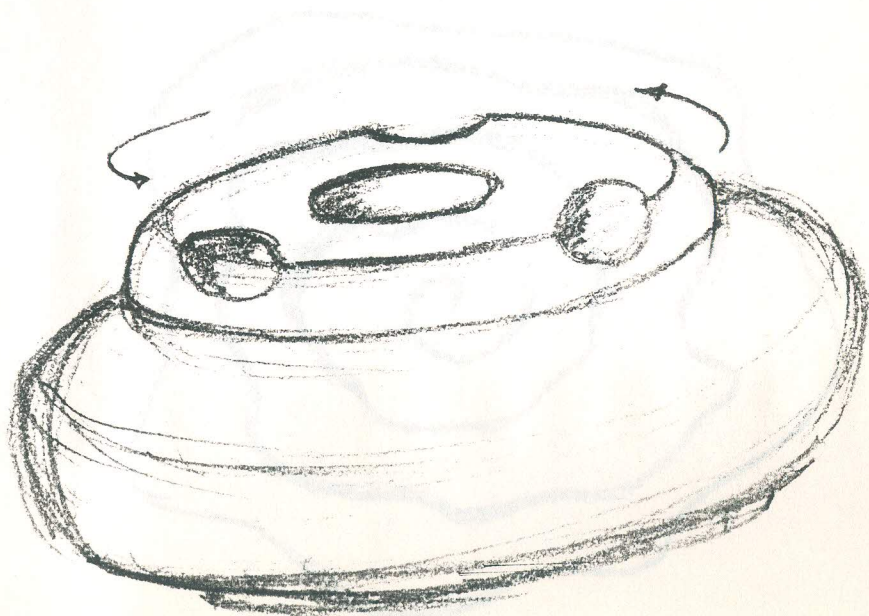
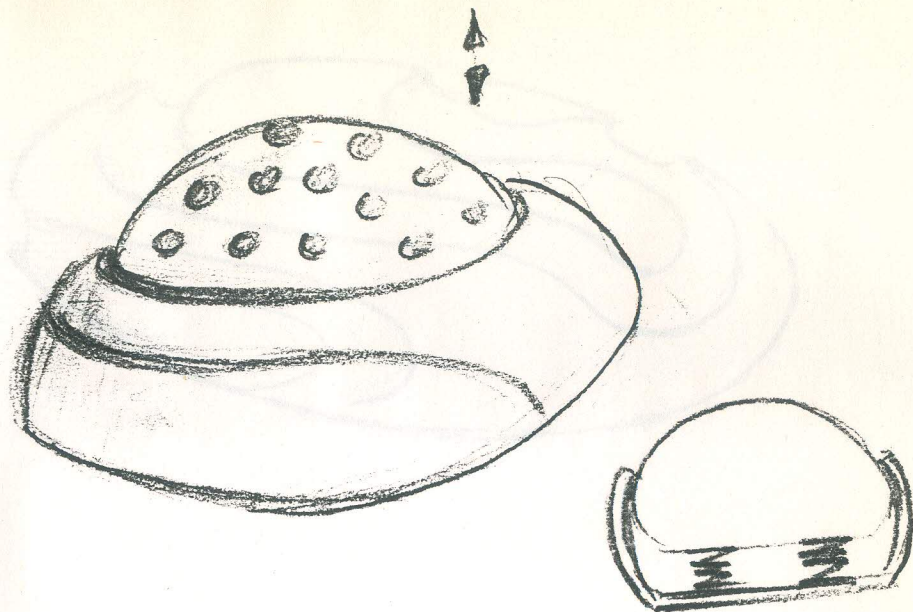


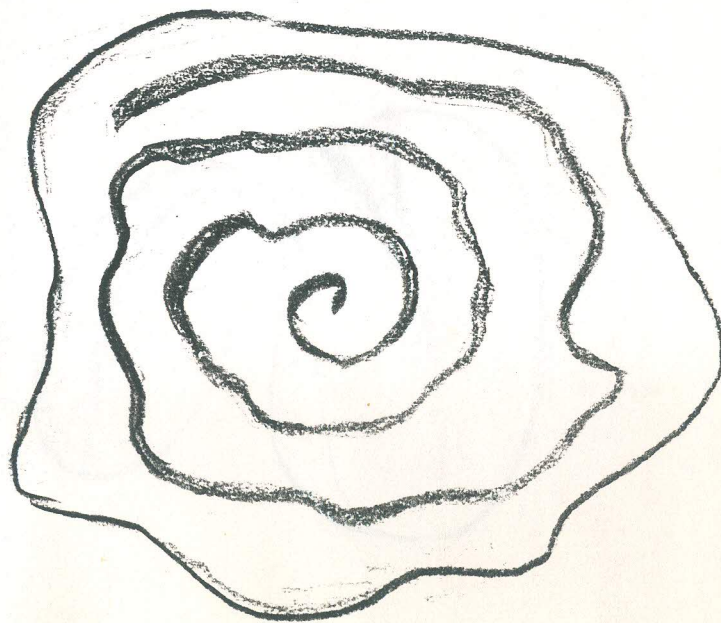


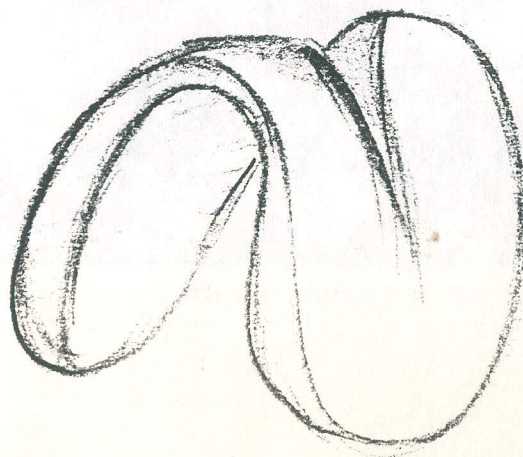
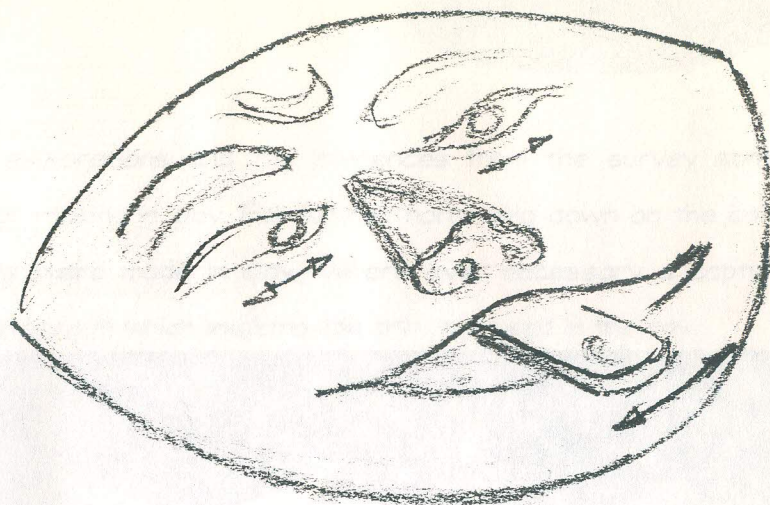






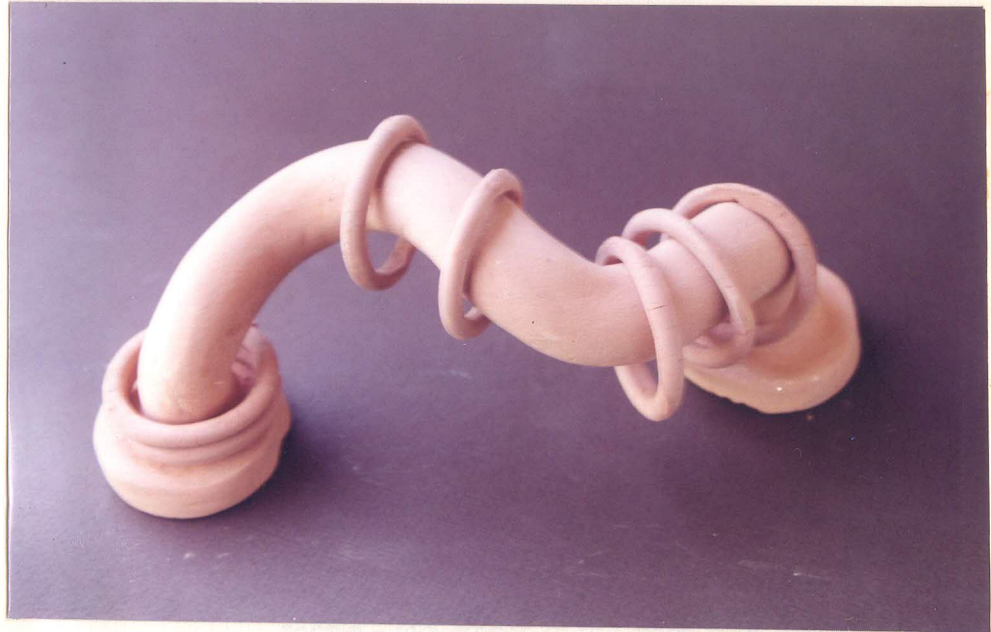






CONCEPTS

Analysing the explorations and the inferences from the survey some designs were chosen for making in clay. For further narrowing down on the concepts the following models were made in clay. Where ever necessary a caption is given below each photograph which explains the principle used in the toy .



tactile - movement of the rings over the curvature





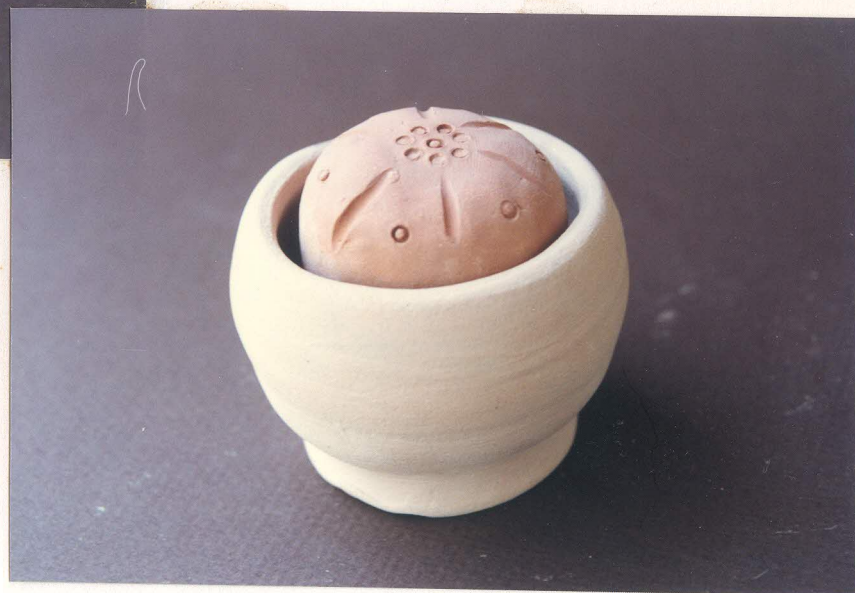
tactile - movement of the rings over the curvature





rotation - using single finger





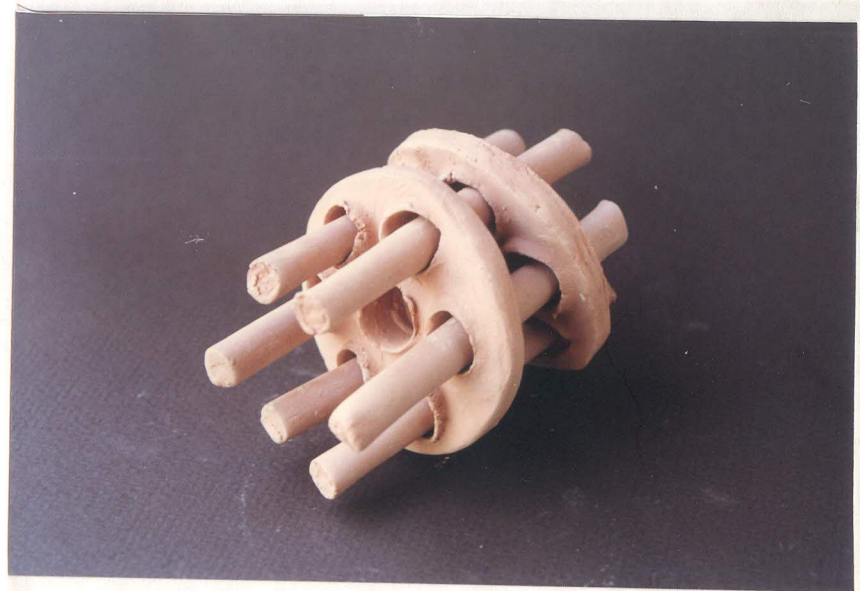
pressing with palm or fingers





tactile - movement of fingers through the guideways





rolling of the rolls in the slots provided plus the rotation of the entire toy





use as a palm massager



FEEDBACK

The toy is made of the material

a toy is made of the material

to use the toy for considerable amount of time



rolling with emission of sound



FEEDBACK

The procedure for taking the feedback

- Giving the toys to the end users
- Asking them to use the toys for considerable amount of time.
- Each toy will remain for a said time of say one week with the user.
- A questionnaire will be given to him to record his/her observations
- The things to note according to the questionnaire
 - is the toy accessible when ever required
 - does it require a separate place for keeping
 - special care to be taken while handling
 - does it provide the necessary mental relief
 - which among the given toys is more suitable in order of preference
 - overall impact after using the toy



A full proof method of getting the feedback could not be implemented due to lack of time. It is required to let the particular toy be with the user for quite a lot of time. This could not be achieved. So the user was shown the toy and asked the above questions about the validity of the toy. The toy was given to cross section of users. It was not restricted to executives alone. Feedback was sought from designers, doctors, students, journalists, professors, shopkeepers.

The response form the users :

The toy with rings moving along the curvature was liked by many in terms of the concept. Many were of the opinion that it can be made in different material for its better use.

In terms of the suitability of the material as clay, the toy with slots for moving fingers was adjudged the best.

The massager also was liked by a lot of users.



WHAT NEXT ?

An extensive study of the toys still need to be done. A more detailed study of the feedback pattern should be formulated.

More explorations in different materials for building the toy should be tried out. Combination of materials is also a good option in this study.

The use or the acceptability of the toy being subjective it is very difficult to arrive at a conclusion on which will be the best TOY

..... now lets get to work

