

# Culture probes

Design research skills and methods  
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## Culture probes

“Provocative instruments given to participants to inspire new forms of self-understanding and communication about their lives, environments, thoughts and interactions...”

Bella Martin, Bruce Hannington, *Universal Methods of Design*, p. 54.

## **Culture probes**

- Qualitative
- Innovative
- Exploratory
- Self-reporting

## Culture probes

- Identify key patterns and themes that might emerge from a participant group or culture.
- Help to begin a conversation.
- Designed to elicit responses that are relevant to the design inquiry.



1. They are a kit for tracking the experience of customers, from consumers to co-designers.
2. They support empathic understanding through a prolonged period where researchers cannot be present.
3. Can collect reflections on experiences through their own stories using digital voice recorders, cameras, postcards, diaries
4. Collections of evocative tasks meant to elicit inspirational responses from people.”

From Bella Martin and Bruce Hannington, *Universal Methods of Design*, p. 55.

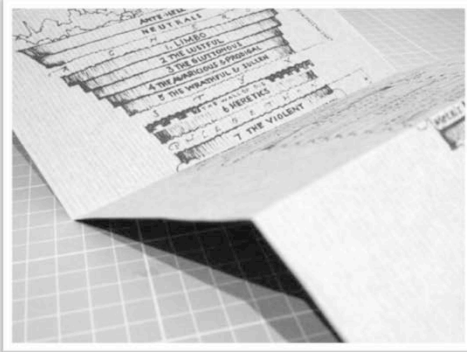
## Cultural probes



From Gaver et al., "Cultural probes and the value of uncertainty"

Camera with instructions on the back as to what to record and when

## Culture probes



From Gaver et al., "Cultural probes and the value of uncertainty"

Relationship map according to the Divine Comedy.

## Culture probes

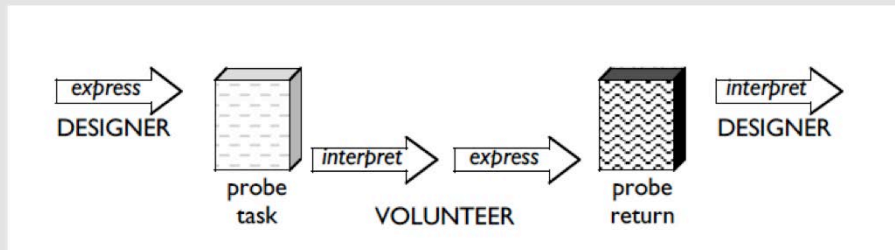


From Gaver et al., "Cultural probes and the value of uncertainty"

Container to gather notes from dream recording.

# Culture probes

## Interpretive process



From Gaver et al., "Cultural probes and the value of uncertainty"

Explanation of the process according to Gaver et al.



## Culture probes & media art

- Venue, <http://v-e-n-u-e.com>
- Interstate, <http://laurbanrangers.org/site/interstate>
- Urban Probes, <http://www.urban-atmospheres.net/UrbanProbes/index.htm>