

Suitcases and travelling are always two difficult things to balance.

The privacy of a person is subject to many handlers, especially if you are to travel by airplane. The suitcase temporarily is taken from the owner and they have a trust, a reliance on the caretaker of their possessions. Welcoming the goods into their care, baggage handlers are responsible for all sorts of goods, gifts, guilty pleasures, items of great sentiment, items that require tender care and even items that are living organisms. I consider the materials in my orange Jansport carrier bag to be of great value. Every item serves a purpose, everything in my bag is justified. From the hand soap I took at the hotel catering for my sister's wedding in 2006, the mini comic for amusement, the earplugs from my interrailing travels in 2010 and to the wilder at heart ideas - the keys to a home in another country with my passport should a sudden trip be required. Also encased is the original guarantee from Jansport guaranteeing that their product will have at least a 10 year lifespan. Wherever I travel I have the trust that my bag can both conceal my possessions and my mischief. I trust that the pieces of material, wadding and straps all sewn together holding my tools, valuables, perishables or protective items will act as my confidant.

The items that I believe I can't leave behind have built up after many years now. Most of the 'ultimate' necessities I keep are in the front part of my rucksack. Either for short or long journeys, all these things stay with me in my bag, they have little weight to them so I see no reason to remove them. There are approximately 30 small items in here. A feeling of great comfort and protection comes from having these items with me all the time. If a friend is in trouble and has cut their finger I can patch them them up. Should my niece or nephew need a toy to play around with I can provide them with one. Delving deeper into my rucksack I unearth a personal history from receipts – declarations from shops saying what transactions have occurred, documents of time reminding me of my last feast or my last adventure. Bus and train tickets as well as concert stubs reminding me of how I try to expand my tastes. Together my rucksack and I have passed through security many times in the UK, Ibiza, Scotland, Belgium, Amsterdam, Paris, Santiago, Barcelona, Bilbao, Ghent, Calais,, Dublin, Derry, Boston, New York and Germany...

Boston and the security breach.

Years ago on a flight back from Boston via Shannon airport my baggage handler broke my trust. The baggage checked in consisted of my camera, gifts for family, and used clothes/shoes. My bag was one of the first pieces rolling out on the conveyor belt. After hours of travel my temper was already foul. To my great annoyance my bag was slouched over, open. Such items listed above had spilled out onto the conveyor belt... I was mortified and couldn't believe what was occurring. The bag itself had not had any locks put onto it, I really didn't see the point because no matter what way you protect your luggage there is always someone with he means to open it. If it's material they can easily slit the stitching and wadding open at the area they feel an object of value is located. If it's a member of staff they probably have the inside knowledge as given to them by x-ray machines. Camera... gone. Memories of New York captured on my Sony

Cybershot would never be mine again. I had to let it rest bar one strongly worded letter to Aer Lingus and my insurance provider. Trust...breached. It took a while to get over how my privacy had been penetrated. It was my bag of history, my collection, my detritus that was vulnerable. It's not been forgotten. However, my care has increased in these situations. After that occasion I've always kept my orange Jansport with me. I rarely need to check in baggage. I am a firm believer in being able to live in one bag, to use the items within over again. Travelling to me should mean you fill your bag along the way, you should be ever so find new necessities along the way. Necessities that enrich your mind, necessities that to me, an artist will be a new material to work with or a symbol of thinking/perceiving.

Suitcase – protection – privacy – stillness – containment – secrets – concealment
- possessions – home – trust – preservation – ownership – value – gift –
emergency – belonging

Process:

As mentioned previously in my Lost and Found document, I would like to use the space between us as a material. I would like to try and capture it as we see how it forms a property of its own. We can access and share the materials of the written documents and artworks we make along the way. As a physical form we could create a range of images, videos short lived performances about our materials and broadcast these ideas into a public space or have them in the form of a shared journal.

1. I would like to know more history of Asrul's four items and the imitation of a Western product. If Asrul would like to know more about the items I travel everywhere with then I am happy to share. I am keen to see the video Asrul has suggested detailing possessions.
2. I suggest a new formation to the bag/suitcase – I think that by using see through kinds of material for encasing objects that we already stop the need for our privacy to be broken by either the authorities or by the curious eyes and minds of the public. (In my last job in retail we had to use see through bags for our personal items to be checked by security in and out of the building.) See below for example of matchstick encased in an ice cube – in the video still the ice cube is put up against the heat of the blowtorch that slowly makes bare the matchstick within. I am interested in seeing the physical effects on the outer casing of suitcases, bags or envelopes.
3. Using the postal system I propose to send a small transparent journal of items I treasure the explain my background, culture and life in the UK.



This still is from a video shot in 2012 called 'We Destroy The Things We Love'.

It was a piece about enjoying the things that we have at hand and how we can overlook simple pleasures in life. Passion can be unwound so easy and forgotten about – hence the use of a matchstick and the extreme and similar device used to make fire – the blowtorch. I still see this same passion with the items I carry around with me. I took security for granted on that flight from Boston and let my bag be out of reach – I did not truly lose very much, a camera, a precious tool to me but I also learned a valuable lesson on comfort verses privacy.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/42481273>

I really enjoyed the image of the xray suitcase – I would love to see how this progresses. I enclose