

### Thing 1: Cat Collar



Size: ~15cm by 1cm.

Material: Nylon strap, Plastic, Metal bell. Strap is strong but the plastic fixture seems fairly weak. Smooth woven surface texture.

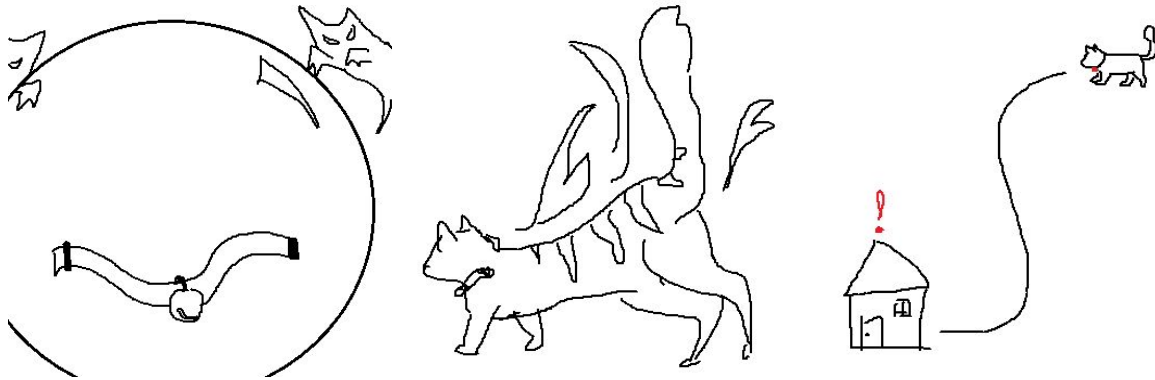
Conductive potential: None

This cat collar is, physically, nothing special. It's a generic dollar-store cat collar bought to replace my cat's previous collar which had fallen off during one of her outdoor forays. I chose this one for the cute flower pattern and bright red colour which stood out from the other collars on the rack. It's got a cheap pronged plastic clasp and adjustable in length. It had to be adjusted to the shortest possible setting but it's still slightly too large. I wanted a collar with a bell so I could monitor her more easily, and, living in a suburban area, prevent her from coming home with small birds and rodents. It's factory made, one of probably tens of thousands that look the exact same but it is the collar for *my* cat. A strange juxtaposition between mass production and individuality.

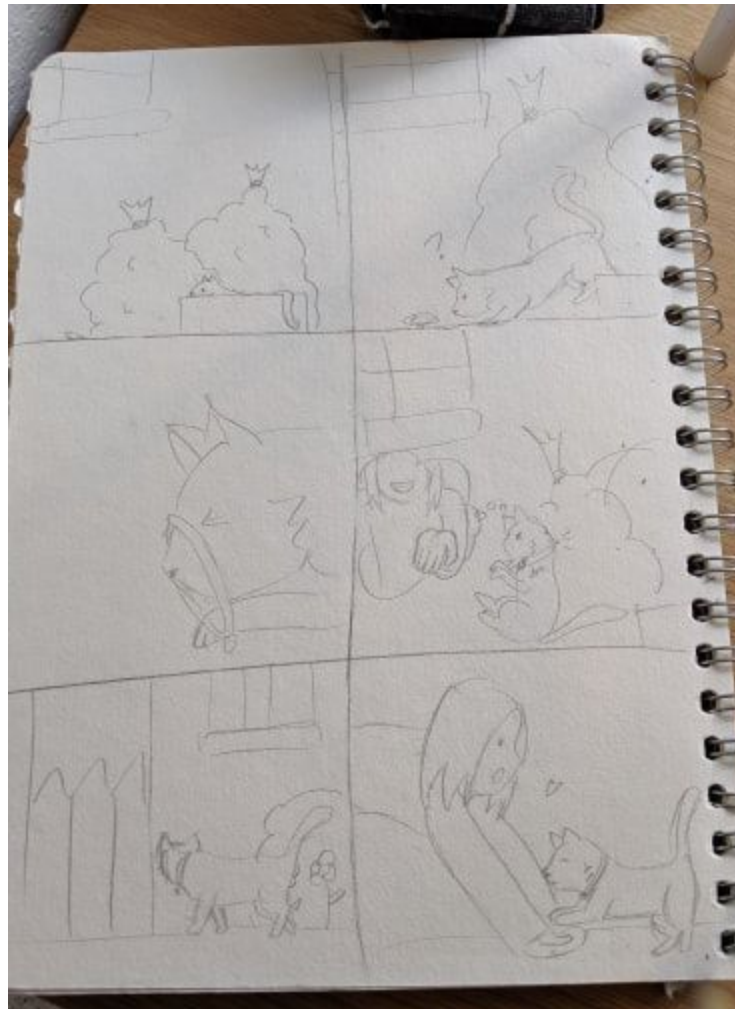
Hearing the small tinkling coming from outside is a small comfort when she cries to go out at all hours of the day, but never strays far. When I call for her, the sound lets me know that she's heard, even if she doesn't quite feel like responding. It's easy to know when she's getting into all sorts of trouble even as I write this, wiggling her way into stacks of pots and pans. The frequency of the sound and what the bell is knocking against is very telling once you get used to it. It's a small pop of colour against her mottled grey fur. Collars are the only thing she's willing to wear without a struggle. The wear and tear acts like an indicator of time passing. I adopted her as a mature cat so she's looked the exact same throughout the years. It's easy to forget just how long I've had her for. This collar is probably just one in a long line of many but the collar in itself is a reminder of my connection with her. To others, the bright color and floral pattern are a touch of femininity, as she's often mistaken for a male. To strangers, it's a symbol of ownership. An indicator that she has a home, in an area where many cats are free to roam as they wish.

3 potential Interactions:

- 1- Protective Charm (Japanese Suzu)
- 2- Magic seal
- 3- Homing Device



**Storyboard: Magic collar that guides stray cats to a home**



## Thing 2: Bike Path Lights



Size: ~3ft tall, ~15cm diameter.

Material: Smooth, glossy, black outer surface. Poles themselves are made of metal, embedded into small squares of concrete. 3 ridges near the top to let light through. Presumably placed along the entire length of the several kilometers long bike path.

Conductive potential: Very good

This bike path has existed the whole time I have lived in my current house, a period of over a decade now. It's gone through many upgrades, remodels, and changes but the path itself has stayed constant. These lights are a fairly recent addition to the path, a feature added approximately a year or two ago. The effect of the light in the dark is a very pleasing one, the equally spaced rods providing each one its own small pool of light, bright but not overwhelming. It's a small improvement that serves the community as a whole. Previously, the only light came from the street lights at the rare intersection and the stars in the sky. This made night walks somewhat distressing as the foliage was also much denser back then. Many critters inhabit the greenery lining the path and I'm not the biggest fan of the darkness and the mysterious rustling it hides.

Of course, I'm not personally attached to each light on its own but as a whole and an addition to a path I walk several times daily, I do enjoy their existence. Seeing the way the lights play off the seasonally changing landscape, they are particularly beautiful during winter nights. I remember specifically walking home with friends one day, we all stopped to admire the new

lights reflecting off the fresh snow piles. Each flake shone like soft mounds of glitter, gathered up against the poles by the wind. I feel they provide a nice ambience to the neighbourhood I live in. They're not especially stunning or majestic or anything, it's just one of those little things you come to appreciate when you see it in place. Like the collar, it represents more than just itself. It's a memory of the place I've lived the entirety of my life that I can remember. It holds all the memories of my childhood running and biking down the path to go from park to park, playing with my friends back when people still went outside.

### Thing 3: Cellphone



Size: 14cm by 7cm by 8mm.

Material: Alternating glossy and matte black backing made of plastic.

Conductive potential: Individual components good, as a whole, none.

While the prompt for this etude was to break away from the idea of “home” and fixed identity, I think my phone is an item too important to me to ignore. A phone is about as consumerist as one can get, but it's also a very personal item. This may sound like a very materialistic, millennial, negative, etc. view but it is a valued tool, a convenient device, a means of communication, and many more. It is a standard Google Pixel 3, about a year old, 64GB storage capacity. The screen is covered by a glass screen protector with some hairline cracks and small dents in it from careless dropping. Presumably the protector has done its job and the actual screen has no damage. It is held inside a metallic pink flip phone case with card holder slots and a magnetic closer. The phone has seen its share of wear and tear, the surface is dirty and the edges are becoming ragged but it is still functional. Even now it is a fairly high end model and can run just about anything with ease.

I believe I engage with my phone more than the average person. I don't believe it to necessarily be a negative thing, either. My social circle is all in a similar position where we either live far away or are busy and mainly use messaging apps to communicate. These days you can do anything online- banking, shopping, socializing, and the mobile phone is a key point in making these things accessible. It is the culmination of the world's technological advancements in your



hands. I have made many friends through mobile phone games which some might not view as “real” friendships but I believe them to be closer than many of my real life acquaintances. A phone is a portal of sorts. Even if you’re not physically traveling, the internet and the many communities based in it have their own cultures with their own quirks and rules. It connects people just as much, if not more, than it isolates them. If something bad comes of it, it’s just like any other tool. It can be used and misused and shouldn’t be viewed in a bad light for the actions of a few.