Experiments in investigation methods

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A supermarket

I want to force myself to think about issues that can be easily avoided by choosing certain types of sites. So I excluded these that made me full of inspiration while hearing their names, including but not limited to:

Finally, I carefully picked out the most boring place in my opinion: the supermarket, especially the one next to my college.

a museum
a cemetery
a lawn
a street
a garage
a construction site
a shelf selling mirrors
Muji/Ikea
an unnamed place ...

a waitrose
(kings cross)

Method 1

In this direction, I investigate and understand the supermarket by visually-driven shopping in it. This idea came from a story told to me by a friend majored in data analytics, which went something like this:

Men between 30- 40 years in age, shopping between 5pm and 7pm on Fridays, who purchased diapers were most likely to also have beer in their carts. This motivated the store to move the beer aisle closer to the diaper aisle.

Visually-driven shopping

It involves to us a possibility to understand the supermarket: to use experience and intuition to discover previously unknown relationships between two or more items.

They created a lie about beer and diapers to convince people that the goods should be placed that way. So I thought, can I find just the reasonable visual connection to convince people to buy a certain combination? Could I find a group of visual believers?
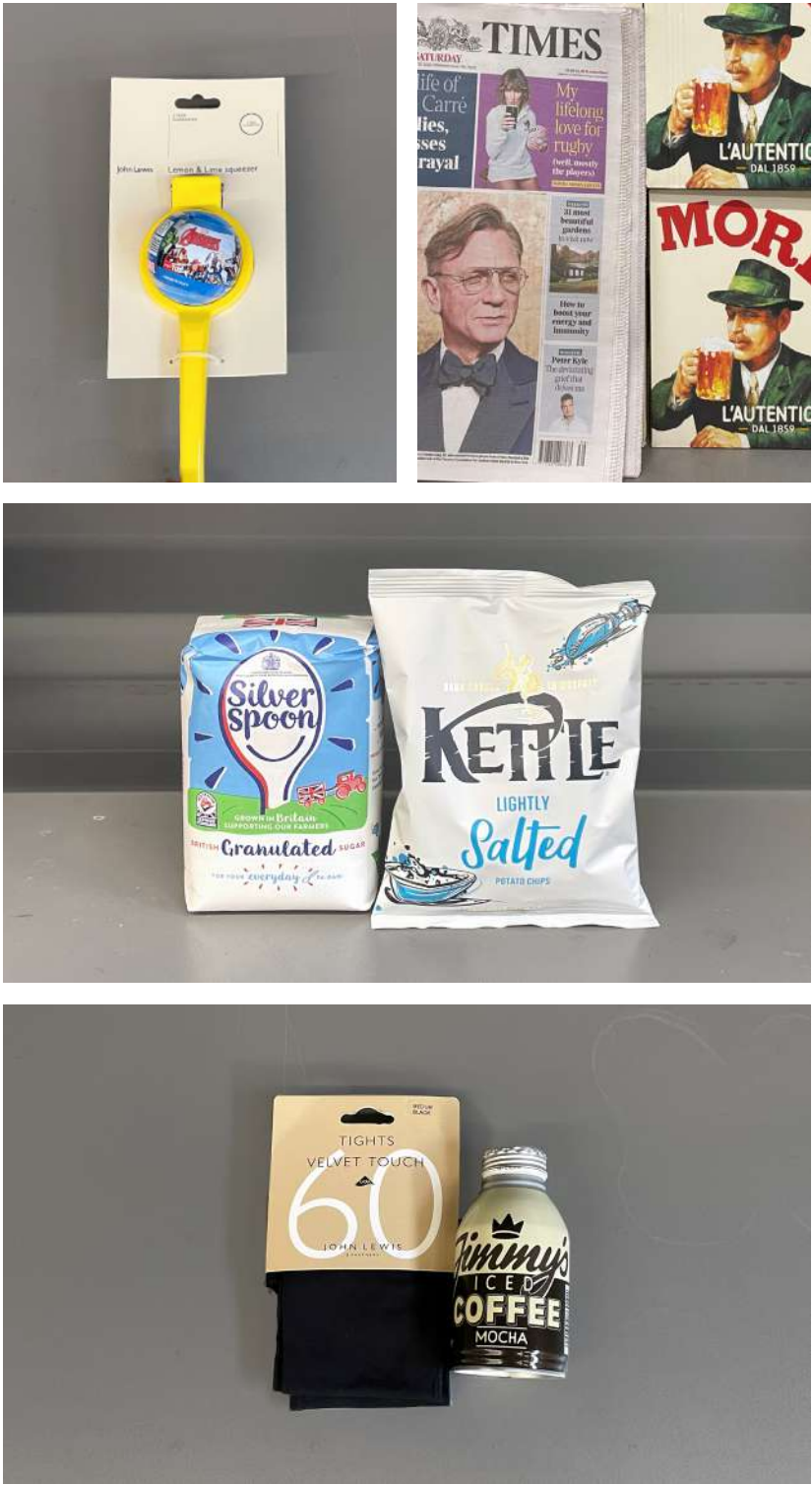

sort them functionally! me: visually

Experiment

I try to be visually driven walking in the supermarket, sometimes I look for the other half for a man on a beer package, sometimes I look for one package for another similar one.

This is my shopping basket (below). It contains products that I selected based on some sort of visual relationship.

Method 2

In this direction, the verb I use to observe is "read". When we "read" the space of the supermarket, the shelves become a sort of collection of displayed texts, and people's behavior becomes selecting textual information, with the goods becoming notes of the text.

Conventionally, we can describe it by saying "There is cutlery on that shelf". But when we turn this verb into reading, the description becomes a selection, reintegration and generalisation of textual information about all the items on the shelf, which comes into a kind of textual result.

Through such a method, will we have a new way of being able to describe the space? For example, "There is a poem about white on that shelf."

Waitnotes

I'm looking forward to a new possibility by reading the shelves:

Perhaps I would pick up a murder from the cutlery section because of the vocabulary: knife, iron, ketchup, and find a sketch comedy from the snack one? What if I linked the items in this supermarket with a book, an article or a poem?

Experiment 1

This experiment takes a candy shelf in the supermarket as an example.

I photographed the labels on all the packages on the shelf in the left picture to refer to this shelf.
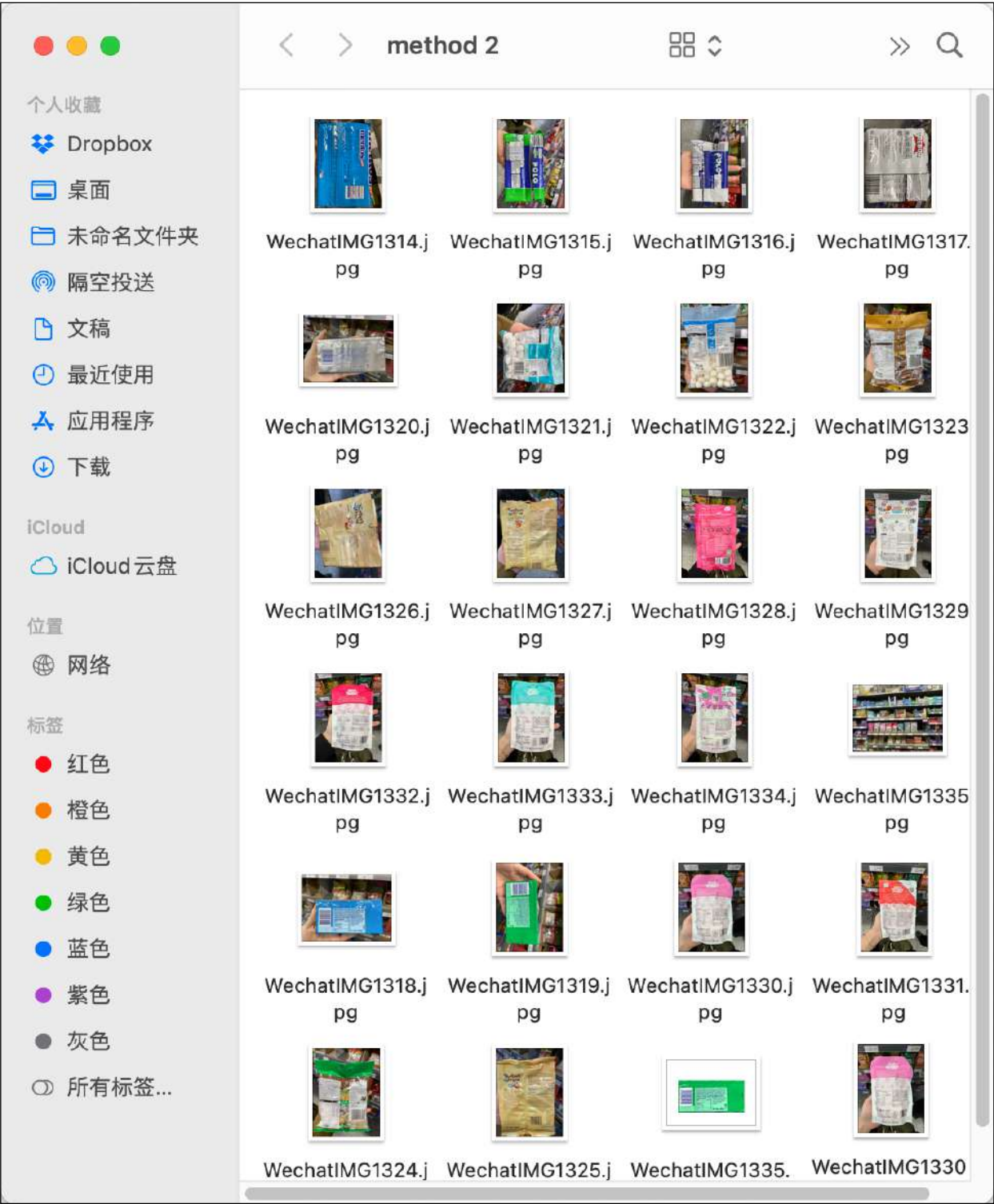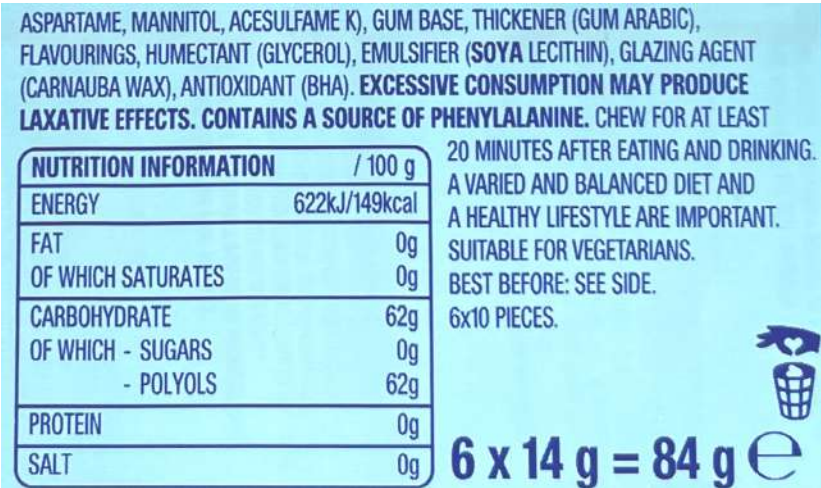
Experiment 1

I picked the words on each product package in order and tried to form a poem out of them:

Sorry, there should have been a short poem here, but you know, poetry isn't something that can be written on demand :(

 before end

may
for
balanced diet
are important
best
see
side
salt

contact
us
free
box
lake
drive
24

0
0
0
0
0

 with the hole

not completely
satisfied?
please
us
:

Experiment 2

I chose an essay (Ange Mlinko, *A Few Leaves of Salted Rocket*) about food and life, used the text as a cue to observe products in the supermarket and annotate the location, name, brand, or place of origin of those items, like this:

Shelf location, (year). Product Name. Brand/Origin.

It was years before I understood that salads[1] have nothing to do with lettuce[2], necessarily. When I was in Morocco, one of the less fortunate legacies of French rule was its mayonnaisey *salades variees*[3]. In the middle of winter in the Atlas Mountains, there isn't much fresh produce in the *marche*—a few potatoes[4], cabbages[5], carrots[6], and beets[7]. Some fine crypto-French establishment in Ifrane or Meknes introduced me to a *salade* I succumbed to with guilty pleasure. It really is awful, but it's interesting to the mouth. To wit:

Raw shredded cabbage
A can of corn[8]
Chopped canned hearts-of-palm[9]
Sultanas[10]

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1   Prepared Salads, (2023). Essential Side Salad. Waitrose own label.
2   Lettuce & Chicory, (2023). Essential Little Gem Lettuce. Waitrose own label.
3   Prepared Salads, (2023). Essential Coleslaw. Waitrose own label.
4   Potatoes & Sweet Potatoes, (2023). Albert Bartlett Potatoes. Rooster.
5   Cabbage, Spinach & Greens, (2023). Essential Pointed Spring Cabbage. Waitrose own label.
6   Carrots & Parsnips, (2023). Duchy Organic Carrots. Waitrose own label.
7   Beetroot & Radish, (2023). Waitrose Bunched Beetroot. Waitrose own label.
8   Vegetables, (2023). Green Giant original sweetcorn. France.
9   Vegetables, (2023). Green Giant hearts of palm whole. Ecuador - CR = Costa Rica.
10   Sugar & Home Baking, (2023). Essential Sultanas. Waitrose own label.

Method 3

In this direction, I gave up any recording method other than myself for an immersive, complete experience. This is an approach that is not usually used to observe spaces like supermarkets, but it is not new to us, as it is often used in exhibitions, libraries or cinemas.

During this process, I will be strict with myself: mute my phone, don't talk to others, don't look around, don't think randomly, just concentrate on "shopping in the supermarket".

Describable

I will attempt to maximise my understanding and remembering about the space and describe it to others by answering their questions.

In this dialogue, the audience will keep asking me questions. We use language to gradually carve out the original appearance of this space until a clear, concrete image is shaped.

This kind of communication is essentially no different from any other communication in the world: to get the full picture of the thing through a gradually approaching description, but never really arriving.

Experiment

An example, this is a Q&A with me from a friend who has never been to this supermarket:

- Q: What kind of flooring does this supermarket have?
- A: It's terrazzo.

- Q: How big is this supermarket? Is it open 24h?
- A: I guess it's two-thirds the size of a football field.

- Q: Where are the snacks and drinks, closer to the entrance or the exit?
- A: The snack aisle is visible as soon as you enter the entrance, but drinks are a little further in, closer to the centre of the supermarket.

- Q: Do they have shelves for fresh fruit and vegetables? Will they have the kind of decorations made of wooden boards that look like orchard style?
- A: The former question, yes they do, it's closer to the exit. The latter question, there is no such thing! Just use a regular frame.

That's all   Thanks to everyone for listening :)