In the late eighteenth century, the Plymouth Porcelain Factory produced sets of figures designed to represent what were then known as the four Continents: Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. As objects of middle-class consumption, they were designed not only to represent current ideas about the qualities of these continents, but also to allow consumers to have a relationship with places of which they had no first-hand knowledge, creating a geographical experience. Taking the historical nature of these figurines into consideration, this research considers whether it is possible to co-opt such artefacts into a twenty-first century geographical experience. Using a multi-modal, experiential approach to design research that includes not only looking at the original context of objects, but also displaying the artefacts through the lens of twenty-first century mapping technologies and asking individuals to respond creatively to the figurines, this paper explores how an interaction with past experiences of geography/city making might help us to understand our current perceptions of the world. The historical context is critical to these figures, and they cannot be separated from it, but as Susan Pearce (1994), amongst others, has argued, treating an object as
an active constituent of the consumer's experience implies that its importance is not limited to its moment of conception, but that their function can be re-framed as they continue to act upon consumers in the context of a collection and a city. In *Vibrant Matter*, Bennett (2010) takes this a step further, arguing that objects, by acting upon consumers, and in concert with one another, gain a social and psychological power that transcends their physical forms. This means that these figures, and the geographical metaphors they represent, are constantly being re-experienced in a global context that is very different to their original setting, and that they can affect a change in the mind of the contemporary consumer.

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