A multifaceted anti-crime research initiative at Central Saint Martins demonstrates that creative thinking can outsmart criminals. By Fay Sweet

It’s a design dilemma, how do you make things attractive and appealing to the consumer and at the same time, undesirable to the thief? The concern has long fascinated Dr Lorna Cameron, senior research fellow in the Department of Graphics and Industrial Design at Central Saint Martins, and it has seen her involved in a vast array of anti-crime design projects, exhibitions and pieces of research.

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Having already developed an interest in design and crime with a PhD on shoplifting, I came to Central Saint Martins for a lectureship in April 2000. In this role, I saw my job as helping to persuade designers that crime issues were relevant to them and their work and that crime prevention could be an integral part of the design process, she explains.

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But has also received an enthusiastic response from the Police Force which is involved in the material in some of its seminars.

The first of the bend-Crim DMC’s is the “designer’s tool kit” which is an exhibition of crime prevention ideas and tips on how to secure your home, car and workplace.

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ant-stahil materials and produced designs which were both beautiful and secure. The bus manufacturer and DMC hope to make up exhibition prototypes.

By the end of 2000 the project had developed enough material to form an exhibition and in the Bay and Off the Wall at the Design Museum in London during December 2000 and January 2001. The opening was placed in six TV programmes that coverage of the show was featured extensively in the national media. This event was swiftly fol-

The first Design Against Crime manufactured product is also within sight. Dr Cameron and CAM designers are currently working with the departmental industry to develop an anti-theft bag to make the crime of theft less likely to become profitable.

The results of the first year of this initiative or DDMC design research, funded by the Home Office, was produced called In the Bag: This was designed to appeal to genuine and perverts.

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Design on Crime

A number of DCM departments including Product Design, Industrial Design and Textiles are collaborating in the Design Against Crime initiative. For example, senior designer Jackie Price, is working on a project to redesign and design furniture in ways to reduce bag thefts. The first year’s work has been incorporating making a bag that can be secured securely in place. It is a series of innovative new adaptations that have already been created and formed their own small travelling exhibition first shown at Dr Cameron’s WBE in September 2000 and at the end of the year at the Royal Institute of British Architects. From Textiles, staff including Carole Coombs and Sharon Beales became fascinated with the idea of anti-theft and anti-theft features and reduced opportunities for criminals.

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