Intimacy and Immensity

A Practice-led Exploration of the Infra-ordinary of People and Place

Volume 1

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ABSTRACT

The core research question is: Can an auto-ethnographic approach to inquiry inform a creative process leading to an addition to knowledge?

My five case studies examine my work as an artist, auto-ethnographer and storyteller who, through a range of research processes and creative installations in non-art sites, makes visible cultural landscapes that are ordinarily hidden. These case studies reflect on practitioners such as Georges Perec, Walter Benjamin, the Arte Povera movement, The Artists Placement Group (APG) Cornelia Parker, Jannis Kounellis and Richard Wilson.

The aims of my research practice are to:

- produce art that brings apparently uneventful and overlooked aspects of lived experience into visibility.
- record ordinary lives in their everyday places for people to see now and in the future.
- excavate a site-specific place through its physical, historical, psychological, social, and political contexts taking into consideration the aspects of time within the minutiae of everyday life.
- interrogate, examine and create ideas for artworks in places where art is not normally practiced or seen.

Whilst my methodology of working within a site is often slow and undramatic, a meticulous approach is essential, in that it allows me as an artist to develop a respect for both people and place and to illuminate the realities of everyday experience.

I use the word ‘palimpsest’ to describe my process of excavating and investigating multiple layers of a place over a significant period of time. The element of time in my work is crucial regarding the autobiographical; from the historical to the contemporary; researching a place; embedding myself within a place; making the work and writing about the work after it is completed. All these different elements, which I have a strong connection to are important to my work.

Time and loss are key concepts in analysing and understanding the subtext of my research and outcomes. The thinking within this text draws upon theoretical sources including Lucy Lippard’s

idea of ‘weaving lived experiences’ within the ‘subject of place’ Lippard (1997), Paul Virilio's study of the ‘infra-ordinary’ and Warwick’s reflections on artists engaged with communities and Goffman's ethnographic study of asylums.

Certain aspects of my methodology are borrowed from the practice of auto-ethnographers who use personal experience to examine and critique life experiences that confront pressures that exist from both inside and outside standpoints. I also use the term ‘auto-ethnography’ throughout this essay because it is appropriate to how I am either pulled towards a specific place or the way in which I research within a place.

My practice involves an on-going process of questioning: the **social**, how and in what way is a space used? the **political,** what are the ramifications and political complexities of a place? **psychological**, how does it makes me feel? the **historical,** what are the historical traces and their significance? the **physical**, what can be seen, found and accessed?

The conclusion supports the idea that art can illuminate and make visible aspects of lived experience and histories that have been buried or lie hidden. The Case Studies evidence the value and significance of an artist’s examination of the infra-ordinary within complex layers of non-art places.

From my research, I am confident that the case studies contained in this essay are not only original but have no real equivalent precedent. Evidence is provided in volume 2 from arts organisations, journals, conferences, and case studies on heritage and public art that clearly demonstrate that my published works have made an original contribution to knowledge. The supporting material also substantiates how various agencies think differently about artists engagement within the public realm and in the field of heritage conservation as a consequence of my work. I believe this is an important legacy of my work above and beyond their value as art projects.

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Contents

ABSTRACT 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 4

INTRODUCTION 7

LITERATURE REVIEW 9

METHODOLOGY 13

CASE STUDY ONE: All IN THE MIND (1996 -1997) 29

CASE STUDY TWO: SOJOURN (2000 – 2004) 57

CASE STUDY THREE: MARKING TIME (2003-2005) 83

CASE STUDY FOUR: PRIVATE VIEWS MADE PUBLIC (2010 -2017) 106

CASE STUDY FIVE: RURAL VOICES (2011-2018) 129

CONCLUSION 142

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: ORANGE LODGE PARADE, 1970 17
FIGURE 2: SCOTTISH CUP FINAL, 1980 18
FIGURE 3: MY MOTHER AND I – PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN BY STREET PHOTOGRAPHER, 1963 19
FIGURE 4: PLANTATION STREET (WHERE I GREW UP),1965 20
FIGURE 5: PLANTATION STREET (SOUTH ROTUNDA, AND FINNIESTON CRANE), 2017 20
FIGURE 6: THE DEVA, CHESTER, 1996 29
FIGURE 7: THE DEVA ARIEL VIEW, CHESTER, 1980 29
FIGURE 8: THE DEVA IRBY WARDS, 1997 33
FIGURE 9: THE DEVA CORRIDORS, 1997 34
FIGURE 10: THE DEVA, STUDIO,1996 -1997 34
FIGURE 11: MEMBRANE, 1997 35
FIGURE 12: BED ROW (STEEL WOOL, BEDFRAMES),1997 36
FIGURE 13: JUMPER (STEEL WOOL, COAT HANGER),1997 36
FIGURE 14: SHUT UP (PATIENTS RECORD BOOKS),1997 37
FIGURE 15: SHUT UP DETAIL (PATIENTS' RECORD BOOKS),1997 38
FIGURE 16: ELONGATED, 1997 39
FIGURE 17: ASPERGES (BATHROOM PAINTED WITH CARBOLIC SOAP),1997 40
FIGURE 18: SCREAM, 1997 41
FIGURE 19: SCREAM DETAIL, 1997 41
FIGURE 20: COLOUR CLASSIFIED, 1997 42
FIGURE 21: COLOUR CLASSIFIED DETAIL, 1997 42
FIGURE 22: SOVEREIGN GIFT (ETCHED GLASS, CAST LEAD), 2001 43
FIGURE 23: SOVEREIGN GIFT (ETCHED GLASS, CAST LEAD), 2001 43
FIGURE 24: RESEARCH IMAGE, 2001 44
FIGURE 25: RESEARCH, 2001 44
FIGURE 26: RESEARCH, 2001 45
FIGURE 27: MURAL, HARLEM PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, FEDERAL ART PROJECT, 1935 48
FIGURE 28: BELLEVUE HOSPITAL ART PROJECT APPLICATION FEDERAL ART PROJECT, 1935 48
FIGURE 29: MURAL, PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, NORMAN PURSITS. FEDERAL ART PROJECT, 1935 49
FIGURE 30: P.S.1 CONTEMPORARY ART CENTRE, 1976 49
FIGURE 31: ONE FLEW OVER THE CUCKOO'S NEST,1975 50
FIGURE 32: BLOOM: 28000 POTTED FLOWERS, USA ANNA SCHULEIT, 2000 50
FIGURE 33: UNFRAMED JR ELLIS ISLAND HOSPITAL USA, 2014 51
FIGURE 34: HUMAN CONDITION LOS ANGELES MEDICAL CENTRE,2016 51
FIGURE 35: SHOT ROOF, CAMMELL LAIRD, 2001 57
FIGURE 36: COSTA CLASSIC, MID-SECTION, 2001 64
FIGURE 37: INTIMATE COLLECTION, THE WHITWORTH, 2002 64
FIGURE 38: BESPOKE OVERALL WITH EMBROIDERED NAME TAG, 2001 65
FIGURE 39: PHOSPHORESCENT LEVELS, 2001 66
FIGURE 40: INSTALLATION OF PHOSPHORESCENT LEVELS, 2001 66
FIGURE 41: PHOSPHORESCENT LEVELS DETAIL, 2001 67
FIGURE 42: SACRIFICIAL ANODES, DETAIL (SALT), 2001 68
FIGURE 43: SACRIFICIAL ANODES, DETAIL (SALT), 2001 69
FIGURE 44 YELLOW LINE, PLANTED RAGWORT, 2001 70
FIGURE 45: YELLOW LINE, INSTALLATION, 2001 71
FIGURE 46: CYCLE, 2001 71
FIGURE 47: CYCLE, DETAIL, 2001 72
FIGURE 48: ENSEMBLE, SPEAKERS, DETAIL, 2001 73
FIGURE 49: SCRIBERS DETAIL, 2001 74
FIGURE 50: SCRIBERS, DETAIL,2001 74
FIGURE 51: WATERGLASS, IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, 2004 75
FIGURE 52: OIL RAG, IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, 2004 75
FIGURE 53: STANLEY SPENCER PORT GLASGOW,1939-1945 77
FIGURE 54: ELVIS COSTELLO, SHIPBUILDING SONG, 1983 78
FIGURE 55: THE MEN WHO BUILT THE LINERS BBC FOUR, 2017 78
FIGURE 56:A SLICE OF REALITY, RICHARD WILSON, 2000 79
FIGURE 57: MARKING TIME, 2005 83
FIGURE 58:106 PLANTATION STREET, GOVAN, 1960. 90
FIGURE 59: ST CATHERINE'S ALMSHOUSE ROOM LAYOUT, 1810 90
FIGURE 60: MARKING TIME, LAUNCH EVENT, 2005 91
FIGURE 61: MARKING TIME, CHAPEL SPACE LEDS, 2005 92
FIGURE 62: MARKING TIME DOORS ILLUMINATED USING FIBRE OPTICS, 2005 92
FIGURE 63: MARKING TIME, DAY TIME VIEW, 2005 93
FIGURE 64: MARKING TIME, DETAIL 94
FIGURE 65: MARKING TIME, ETCHED TEXT, PORPHYRY STONE 94
FIGURE 66:TEXT TAKEN FROM CHAPTER ACTS BOOKS 95
FIGURE 67: MODEL CONSTRUCTION FOR CHAPEL LIGHTING, 2004 95
FIGURE 68: DRAWING 1OF 9 'FINDS' LAYOUT DRAWINGS 96
FIGURE 69: HOUR GLASS FABRICATORS MEETING TO 'SIGN OFF' DOORS 96
FIGURE 70: JEWISH MUSEUM EXTENSION, LIBESKIND. BERLIN,1992 100
FIGURE 71: CORONA VAUDEVILLE THEATRE, 1982 -1987 100
FIGURE 72: TRACE NECKINGER MILLS, ALISON MARCHANT, 2005 101
FIGURE 73:THE PEEPS, DAN DUBOWITZ, 2003 101
FIGURE 74: THE PITS JANET HODGSON. CANTERBURY, 2005 102
FIGURE 75: ALL SOULS CHURCH MARTIN RICHMAN AND TONY COOPER, 2003-2006 102

FIGURE 76: STONEHENGE 103
FIGURE 77: BATHS OF CARACALLA 103
FIGURE 78: ANGEL OF THE NORTH ANTONY GORMLEY,1998 104
FIGURE 79 CHESHIRE HILLFORTS 106
FIGURE 80: HILLFORT VIEW LAND OWNERS 110
FIGURE 81: TIME-LAPSE SET UP 111
FIGURE 82: TIME-LAPSE SET UP 2 112
FIGURE 83: TIME-LAPSE SET UP 3 113
FIGURE 84: TIME-LAPSE SET UP 4 114
FIGURE 85: TIME-LAPSE SET UP 5 115
FIGURE 86: PRIVATE VIEWS MADE PUBLIC THE SCREEN DEVA FILM FESTIVAL, 2011 117
FIGURE 87: PRIVATE VIEWS MADE PUBLIC, 2011 118
FIGURE 88: PRIVATE VIEWS MADE PUBLIC FLYER. BIENNIAL, 2011 119
FIGURE 89: PRIVATE VIEWS MADE PUBLIC DVD AND PUBLICATION, 2013 120
FIGURE 90: PRIVATE VIEWS MADE PUBLIC, 2017 121
FIGURE 91: MAIDEN CASTLE HILLFORT, DORSET 1940 123
FIGURE 92: NIDDRIE WOMAN 1975 -76 123
FIGURE 93: CROSS LAND, DEIRDRE O'MAHONY, 2007 124
FIGURE 94: EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES, 2010 124
FIGURE 95: RURAL VOICES PORTRAITS, 2011 129
FIGURE 96: RURAL VOICES: 2011 133
FIGURE 97: RURAL VOICES: THE MILKING SHED, ... 134
FIGURE 98: RURAL VOICES: FROM DEPMORE TO SHOCKLACH, 2012 135
FIGURE 99: RURAL VOICES: 136
FIGURE 100: RURAL WOMEN OF CUMBRIA, 2017 137
FIGURE 101: FOCUS ON FARMERS T HILL, K. WATERWORTH, G. WAGSTAFF. T. BUNNEY, 2003-2005 138
FIGURE 102: WOMEN IN FARMING TOT FOSTER, ANTHEA NICHOLSON, JENNIE HAYES, 2008 139
FIGURE 103: MAKING A MEAL OF THINGS DANE SUTHERLAND, 2010 139

INTRODUCTION

This research represents an original contribution to knowledge through the examination of particular methods of enquiry in five case studies. The Case Studies examine different questions around marginalised communities, gender and discrimination. Please note that supporting material contained in volume 2 will be referenced throughout this essay.

1. **All in the Mind (1996-1997)** was an investigation into the internal and external conflicts and structures within mental institutions and their impact on individual patients' lives.
2. **Sojourn (2001)** followed by **Inland Waters (2002)** and ending with **Shipbuilding - Past and Present (2004)** was to give voice to the social demographics of the working environment of this world-famous shipyard, Cammell Laird.
3. **Marking Time (2003-2005)** questions society's approach to often invisible or marginalised members of our communities which depersonalises the individuals involved. The intention of the work was to give a voice to the forgotten and transient communities who, from the 1600s, had lived within this urban, historical space and to draw attention to the inequalities of the period which reflect our own.
4. **Private Views Made Public (2011-2017)** offered an opportunity to reflect on ideas of privilege and ownership in relation to the ethereal nature of the landscape and the passing of time.
5. **Rural Voices (2012-2018)** compares and contrasts different rural backgrounds in order to highlight disadvantaged lifestyles and throw light on the everyday lives of a marginalised group within rural communities: i.e. farmwomen.

I think of myself as a *flâneur* or rather a *flâneuse* to use Elkins' term. (Elkin 2016) I spend a great deal of time analysing, investigating and excavating a place: collecting non-art materials, understanding non-art processes; developing relationships, listening and talking. Sparks describes this as 'highly personalised accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher for the purposes of extending sociological understanding.' (Sparks 2000). This is then followed by an intuitive placing; playing, contemplating, reflecting and exploring appropriate arrangements and deciding on the significance of objects within a space. Paul Virilio coined the term 'infra-ordinary' to describe 'what we do when we do nothing, what we hear

when we hear nothing, what happens when nothing happens… (the artist working with) those things which are the opposite of the extraordinary – yet which are not ordinary either – things which are "infra" (Virilio, Johnstone 2008) I have taken pre-existing materials so-called 'poor materials' and non-art processes and in their connectivity with place brought new meanings and significance so that they can speak of ideas beyond the materials themselves. This juxtaposition of the materials or processes within the site helps me build a narrative about people and place. The work becomes an exploration of the infra-ordinary within complex social, psychological, political, historical and physical non-art contexts.

My work reflects and is influenced by autobiographical experiences. The case study **All in the Mind (1996-1997)** presented in this essay reveals a personal desire to understand the fragility and material traces of these institutions. 'The memories we acquire of the places we inhabit assume a value that is both immeasurable and vital' (Trigg 2012).

I instinctively search for, and usually find, a resonance with a particular site or context, for example, **Sojourn** (Mackinnon-Day 2002) where I worked for a year in a shipyard as artist in residence had an instant connection due to my childhood years observing shipyards along the River Clyde in Glasgow. "One reason to know our own histories is so that we are not defined by others, so that we can resist other people's images of our past, and consequently, our futures…It is not a matter of saving old things but of selecting those that mean something and cultivating responses to them" (Lippard 1995).

I am fortunate that my formative experiences have allowed me to form empathetic connections to vulnerable, marginalized and deprived communities. I feel a need to explore and define the sometimes overwhelming sense of loss and lost histories that permeate every aspect of my artworks. Ellis describes auto ethnography as a simple integration of 'self and other' and believes that you cannot create good auto-ethnography 'without creating the role of the others and bring them into the story' (Research 2014).

I have used the following terms: **Auto:** reference to self; **Ethno:** cultural connection and sociological link; **Graphy:** application of a research process; terms borrowed from the language of ethnographers. These helps explain my methodology in relation to working on site which 'lets you use yourself to get to the culture' (Pelias 2003)

Each term is given a different emphasis or focus depending on the context (Reed-Danahay 1997)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Significant early influences which form part of my history with regards to place intervention are located in the works of David Harding when he was Glenrothes' Town Artist (1968-78) and John Latham's **Niddrie Woman** (1975-76)**.** "To progress our understanding of the magnitude and the limitations of making art in places where art is not normally practised and the encounters that this kind of intervention brings…Context is half the work." (Crickmay 2003). This statement by Christopher Crickmay about the Artists Placement Group (APG), which was set up in 1966, is central to my understanding of what site-specific art should be. My practice has its roots in the APG's focus on the 'open brief', the recognition that an artwork changes fundamentally depending not only on how it is made but also where and with whom it is made. It is not restricted to the space but can extend its relevance and significance far beyond its immediate site. Too often attention can be focused too much on the former – the site – rather than on the latter – the art.

I share Latham's (1966) ambition to draw in an audience and have the environment inform the artwork. I want to locate the artwork out in the world so that it escapes its limitations of space and develops a life of its own beyond the site. Like the APG, my starting point is outside the studio and conventional gallery system, but my interests extend further than the realities of industry, commerce and government, into the intuitive, emotional and the personal. My work nevertheless contributes to this field in that the work strives to establish relationships with those on site, giving acknowledgement through the artwork to the incidental aspects of ordinary individual lives. Unlike many of APG's site interventions, mine have never to date experienced conflict on site. All my projects have eventually gained the support of the local community.
I feel the APG model sometimes fails to connect with people and place. The artists were placed in a range of diverse situations but they did not seem to take into account the lives of the ordinary people who worked there. The 'least-event' (Walker and Latham 1995) was more about a philosophical engagement rather than seeking to make a real connection with people and place.' (Eleey 2007) My work is based on the experience of looking, noticing and using all my senses and perhaps has more in common with the work of artists as varied as Cornelia Parker, (Blazwick, 2013) Walker Evans,(Agee et al. 1960) Anya Gallaccio, (Tramway 1999) Tacita

Dean, (Dean and Millar 2005) (Skivington 2012) Jannis Kounellis (Kounellis et al. 2008) and Richard Wentworth. (Hawkins 2006)

In his 1973 text 'Species of Spaces and Other Pieces', (commissioned by Paul Virillo) French writer Georges Perec noted how the news reports only talk about the exceptional, but never the everyday. He juxtaposes the exceptional and the exotic (the usual subjects of news according to Perec) to the infra-ordinary and endotic:

"What speaks to us, seemingly, is always the big event, the untoward, the extra-ordinary: the front-page splash, the banner headlines. Railway trains only begin to exist when they are derailed, and the more passengers that are killed, the more the trains exist… How should we take account of, question, describe, what happens every day and recurs everyday: the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual?" (Perec and Sturrock 2008)

This seems to have ideas in common with the poetry of William Carlos Williams where there is a concentration on everyday incidents from ordinary life. 'Discovering the extraordinary in the ordinary, the transcendental in the mundane. In this sense, many of his poems are built around the revaluation of the common and therefore neglected things, a revaluation that at times takes the form of an almost mystical revelation found in the commonplace.' (Copestake 2007)

Rhona Warwick, a curator and commissioner of artists working in public spaces, examines the attributes required for artists out in the field. She believes that artists require a particular sensibility of insight, and an interest in connecting with non-artists to communicate their ideas. 'It is this commitment to taking a personal journey through a place and the ability to draw from that experience that make a work that ultimately adds to the story of that place' (Warwick 2006). This connecting with people offers an 'exchange of experience, the quintessential property of storytelling' (Hanssen 2006). An example of this can be seen in a work entitled **'Home Ornaments**' completed by Daphne Wright, another artist who embeds herself within communities. The project took place within the community living in the Queen Elizabeth Square development, Glasgow. Warwick explains: '…her extensive research brought her into contact with the physical and social reality of a traditional, close-knit community bound by a common history, shared experiences, intertwined families, a particular material culture, and a rich and self–renewing trove of stories.' (Warwick 2006).

It could be assumed that my practice has a lot in common with artists who have worked on

‘relational aesthetics’ projects such as Marjetica Potrc (Potrc 2015), Superflex (Myers 2007) Thomas Hirschhorn (Child 2012) or France Morin (Morin 2012). Although all these residencies are inspirational for what they represent. these interventions are nevertheless unlike my own practice in that it is not driven by the same philosophic aims or structure to change the mind-set or unleash the creative energies of communities. However, it should not be concluded from such comparisons of methodology that I am not ‘engagée’ – it is simply that my work emphasises the less obvious, the small details in whatever I am presented with: the infra-ordinary. An example of this oblique focus is a project working with a historic monument where the statements of the past have been overlooked and I try to celebrate human traces and seemingly insignificant details.

During the 1990s I produced a series of artworks in response to psychiatric hospitals which had been closed down. The research was informed by the work of Goffman (Goffman 1968) who produced an ethnographic study between 1955-56 describing ‘mental hospitals as prison-like institutions’. In essence, Goffman perceived psychiatric hospitals as establishments that shared the same characteristics as prisons, concentration camps and monasteries and argued that patients were subjected to restriction of freedom, suffered from the stigma of being a psychiatric patient and had their normal social roles and responsibilities taken away.

Sally Sheard, a Professor of History of Medicine, explains in a report that between 1961 and 1981 there were eight official inquiries into conditions and abuses in special hospitals such as Broadmoor and yet no ex-patient was asked to contribute or give evidence. She gives the reason that few hospital patients ever complained – ‘we were as a society unquestioning and subservient about our medical care. This was even more so in mental health institutions’ (Sheard 1993).This was also supported by the work produced by sociologists Goffman, Wing and Brown (Goffman 1968) who had compiled extensive research in the 1960s illuminating issues around poor standards of care and the quality of life of patients incarcerated in psychiatric institutions.

The psychiatric hospitals’ internal structures had viewing towers above a series of small courtyards reminiscent of the architectural structure devised by the 18th- century philosopher Jeremy Bentham, initially used in prisons. Prisoners would have to believe that they were being watched constantly, which resulted in patient obedience and passiveness.(Sheard 1993) The 20th-century French philosopher Michel Foucault realized that that model could be used not just for prisons but for every institution that seeks to control human behaviour: schools, hospitals,

factories, workplaces. “Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. . Unverifiable: the in-mate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so...The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheral ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen.” (Foucault 2001)

METHODOLOGY

The Auto (reference to self):

The research starts from auto-biographical critical reflection in relation to a research strategy into culture, discourse, history and ideology. My early exposure to my own culture did not come from artists or galleries but from the spectacles of colour, light and materials displayed by the various components of Glasgow city life: the rituals of a sung Latin mass; the flamboyant sounds and performances of Orange Lodge street parades and the weekly displays of aggressive rivalry between hordes of Celtic and Rangers supporters as they were herded by the police towards the football ground at Ibrox Park. I feel that the strong sense of time, loss and empathy that permeates my art work has evolved, at least in part, from my formative experiences. My upbringing also left me with a sense of inner strength and resourcefulness.

'if we have seen a place through many years, each view, no matter how banal is a palimpsest… the terrain of late childhood seems to penetrate our lives and memories most intensely… its textures and sensations, its smells and sounds, are recalled as they felt to a child's, adolescent, adult's body' (Lippard 1997)

Growing up in Glasgow I developed an awareness of unemployment, industrial decline and the disappearance of my father; domestic violence; cramped and poor living conditions, and sectarianism within the midst of a powerful matriarchal household. My mother is best summed up by the Scots word *Smeddum* (Gibbon and Bold 2001*)* to describe a woman who has spirit, energy and courage. My mother, like many other Scots working class women, had all these qualities in abundance.

My father disappeared when I was four years of age and myself, my mother and brother moved to live with my grandmother in a one-bedroom tenement in Plantation, a district of Govan. After this exodus, my father was never again mentioned. In 1997, I found out he had died in 1991 and subsequently discovered he had been incarcerated for 16 years in Woodilee Hospital, one of the old 'mental asylums'. I was able to access his medical records which became a catalyst for the work **All in the Mind** (1996-1997)

My mother was an avid reader, a practising Catholic and probably the only Tory voter in Govan, Glasgow. She believed the only escape from socio-economic hardship was by gaining a good education: 'If I had the money I would send you both to private schools.' This idea made both

myself and my brother feel uncomfortable. Her highest ambition was for her son to teach English and her daughter to teach Art.

In Govan in the 1960s and '1970s being an artist, musician, poet or writer were unrealistic professions, whereas teaching was considered respectable and achievable. My mother was, however, warned that allowing her daughter an extensive education would be a 'waste of time, as she would only stay at home when she gets married and have children.' Bringing up a family on her own made it clear to my mother that if her daughter had a career she would never need to depend on a man for financial support. This feminist view was not typical within a neighbourhood dominated by male chauvinism and arrogance and offered me from an early age a strong perspective on life.

"Gender affects our experience of the four walls we return to as well as our experiences of the 'outside world' defined by mobility or lack thereof, as well as by boundaries…" (Lippard 1995)

The housing in the area of Plantation where I lived was a subject of major political debate. Most families during the '60s and '70s lived in cramped and unsanitary living conditions. The Corporation of Glasgow had an acute housing problem but with no immediate solution; too many people and too few houses. The Scottish tenements were built as an answer to the housing problem in the eighteenth century, just as high-rise flats were the solution for the twentieth century. A shortage of suitable land for building resulted in the developer building as many houses to the acre as possible which gave him a higher return for his outlay though in return the tenant would pay less rent. (MacDonald 1978) The houses in Plantation were in urgent need of repair and very overcrowded. A housing report written in the sixties about the area read:

'The housing conditions in this area (Plantation) are very bad and prevailing residential densities are amongst the highest of any parts of the city. Thus, the overspill resulting from clearance and redevelopment will likely be above average. Some considerable clearance of the worst houses has followed recent representation against the fitness of the housing accommodation, by the Medical Officer of Health' (Glasgow 1960)

Glasgow at this time was a city of urban villages; few people visited, or knew much about other neighbourhoods. Families who lived in Plantation Road found a full social life available on their doorstep. It was a busy and colourful place and at its end there was a main road called Paisley Road West, which was always full of people. The activities of the docks could be seen and heard at the top end of Plantation. The street traders were at work day and night selling coal

bricks, fruit and fish and sounds of heavy industry from the docks echoed all over Plantation. The clang of hammers, the rattle of drills, the crunching of metals and the shouting of working men were constant day and night and these sounds from the docks could be heard for miles. The smells that came from the docks at this time were as strong and varied as the sounds. Most men who lived in the area usually worked at the docks. Jean Faley described it as a "highly localised form of industrial development which produced a distinctive working class and a distinctive type of working class culture." (Faley 1990)

I watched the demolition of the surrounding tenements from the 1960's until we were eventually rehoused in the late 1970's. Our new home was on the twentieth floor of a high-rise block of flats in Tarfside Oval, in the district of Cardonald. It was the first house my mother was offered so it was not refused. The rooms seemed huge. The flat had a bathroom, a red telephone, stairs, two balconies and a 'proper' sitting room. When the flats were being built we didn't foresee the problems that would later become apparent. The housing problem was so bad that these flats seemed the ideal solution. However, many problems later emerged due to shoddy materials or building methods., 'they just stuck the flats up and got people in' (Faley 1990)

The children growing up in the high rise 'community' lived a more restricted existence. The children from the tenements could play in the street under the supervision of a watchful community and growing up in the tenements had allowed for creative activities. In contrast, the people who lived in concrete blocks of high flats and overspill schemes felt restricted. The women from Springburn felt that "the sense of imprisonment in the new estates soon became intense." (Faley 1990)

"In Glasgow, the policy during the 1960s and the 1970s was one of systematic destruction. The hearts of many of the old communities were torn out, followed by insensitive and soulless rebuilding leaving huge areas of dereliction. What Hitler failed to achieve in the 1940s, Glasgow Corporation cheerfully carried out in the following decades in the name of progress" (Worsdall 1989)

During the late 80s the advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi (Black and Black 2003)were commissioned to change the image of Glasgow. The first major step was the coining of the slogan 'Glasgow's Miles Better' which was then followed by the hard-sell campaign by the city's Lord Provost Michael Kelly to coincide with Glasgow's designation as European City of Culture. (Walker 1990) It has to be said that in terms of Glasgow's external image, the efforts of the image-makers were outstandingly successful. The problem with the rosy image was that it

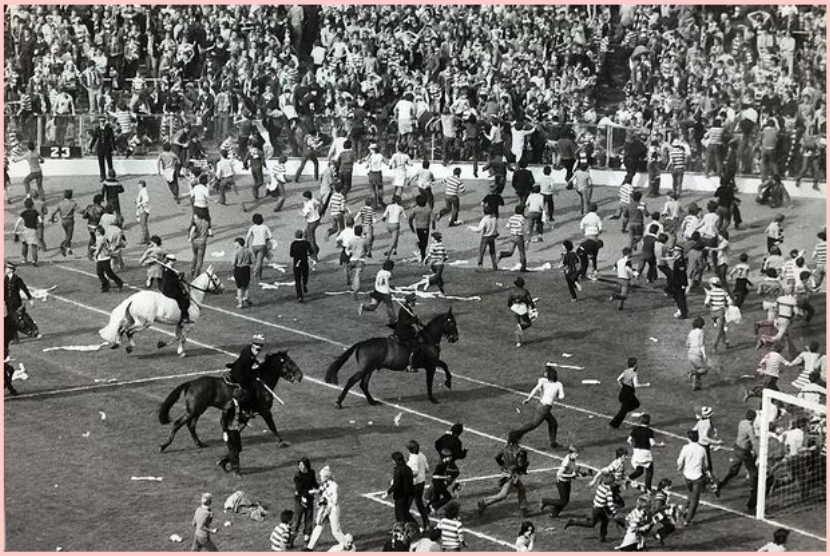
constituted a façade which concealed a complex and harsh reality. Glasgow in the late ‘80s wasn’t miles better for many of its people. (Council 1989) Many people felt that Glasgow, at that time, seemed to have lost its edge and become a city of bars, restaurants and designer shops. Today, the vibrant communities of the inner city remembered from my childhood no longer exist. Areas of poor housing still exist in the peripheral areas of Glasgow without any of the benefits of the old communities at the heart of Glasgow. This year, I stood as near as possible to my old tenement flat in 106 Plantation Street; (now renamed Plantation Quadrant) but to position myself in the exact spot would have meant standing in someone’s garden. In the 60’s and 70’s flowers in Plantation Street were something of a curiosity. There are a few remaining street landmarks: Plantation church; Finnieston Crane and the South Rotunda, built in 1896 and used as an entrance to tunnels under the Clyde until 1980. It was used for the Glasgow Garden festival in 1988, and as a pop up theatre in 2014; now it has been restored as offices for marine engineers. The North Rotunda, on the other side of the Clyde operates as an upmarket Italian restaurant.

The developers have created a new community; a new environment. The tenements have been replaced with two and four-story box housing. The backcourts have been replaced by carefully ornamented gardens. The property and the housing in the area now called Kinning Park is all privately owned. I spoke during this visit with Keith Miller, local community Education Officer who said that the sound of children playing in the street has gone. Now the area houses only the elderly and young couples. The catholic school has closed with only 60 children registered compared to 1,456 in the early 1960s. The demolition of the tenements meant that families who were rehoused out of the area never returned.

Lippard describes a similar situation in America during the 1960s and 1980s which created a ‘landscape … strewn with detritus of unconsidered change and short-sightedness as ‘lower income working people were pushed further and further out of Manhattan, commuting at more and more cost to themselves… Life histories as well as economic histories can be traced in these dour landscapes.’ (Lippard 1997)

Figure 1*:* Orange Lodge parade, 1970, Glasgow (Mitchell Library archives)

Hampden Park riot



Therefore, sectarian chanting and trouble was common at most Old Firm games, although during the 70's and 80's the same could be said for violence at games across the UK. However, in 1980 we saw arguably the highest profile incident at a British ground.

It was the Scottish Cup final and after Celtic had won 1-0 their fans ran on the pitch to celebrate, or taunt their rivals, whichever side you are from. Rangers fans then entered the pitch and a **full-scale riot took place**.

The next decade saw the rivalry sizzle, and it once again drew national headlines when Rangers signed their first ever Catholic player in 1989, highlighting how deep-rooted the issues were at the club. The Catholic player happened to be ex-Celtic hero Mo Johnston, which **inevitably caused uproar**.

Figure 2*:* Scottish Cup Final, 1980, Glasgow (Mitchell Library archives)

Figure 3*:* My mother and I – photograph taken by street photographer, 1963

Figure 4: Plantation Street (where I grew up),1965

Figure 5: Plantation Street (South Rotunda, and Finnieston Crane), 2017

The Ethno (cultural connection and sociological link):

My formative experiences have been the wellspring for my case studies; their impact has influenced my work and the contexts I have found resonance with. I feel I respond to a sense of loss because of those autobiographical experiences. My art work since moving to England has reflected on the social, physical, personal, psychological and political complexities of the life situations of others. The work has also reflected on the wider meanings of space in relation to loss; personal histories, the polarisation and marginalisation of communities and the people who inhabit those margins. The work could be described as, 'installations where entropic possibilities (take) place through various forms of evolutionary relationships" (Rugg 2010).

The Graphy (the application of a research process):

All of the projects presented for this thesis bring to the fore the challenges at the access point i.e. gaining access to a place or information to make an artwork. How do you explain to a host who has no interest in art that you don't know what the outcomes will be at the end of a project? The concept behind them all was to excavate specific places through time and to focus on the ordinary and the minutiae of everyday human life and experiences.

My methodology is slow and often undramatic, but this meticulous approach is essential, in that it allows me to develop a respect for both people and place and to 'recover a sense of human purpose in art making, engaging with the realities of life as it is actually lived' (Kuspit 1993) Working around the same theme, Kaprow (Meyer-Hermann 2008) talks of 'doing life consciously', being able to recognise moments of encounter as being 'art in the everyday'.

This synthesis suggests a model for engaging with non-art contexts to make art that illuminates people in a certain place and at a certain time. When I start to work on a site I do not necessarily set out to reveal contentious issues. The site may offer notable or even heroic connections, yet I am instinctively drawn towards the incidental, the margins, or forgotten traces. William Blake (Makdisi 2002) used to describe this as the 'Minute Particulars' and Wordsworth (Wordsworth 1992) as the 'small, nameless and unremembered'.

I have always created site-sensitive, site-related or site-specific installations, both in the gallery and in non-conventional spaces. Wherever this takes place, the work often draws attention to marginalised working class cultures and the ordinary aspects of their everyday life that continue to fascinate me.

During my time working on sites I try to dispel any idea of the artist as a" prima donna".

“Opportunities are tremendous for artists who have no problems in abandoning notions of being the sole ‘giver’ or of paramount importance, in work involving other professionals but rather regard themselves as learners, possessed of specialist skills and approaches”

(Fitzpatrick 2000)

During a yearlong residency at a shipyard in Liverpool I earned the trust and respect of the workforce by working the same shifts as the men, both day and night, and refusing the white management overalls in place of the blue overalls worn by the majority of the work force. This enabled me to try to blend in with the environment. The men would eventually comment: “Have you met our artist?” This sense of belonging, if only temporarily, is crucial to the integrity of my practice. At all times, acknowledging the privilege of access to enter their world - the world of work, of everyday human activity. Communicating with the host and keeping open all lines of communication about my ideas and working processes is essential at all times.

I feel personally part of the specific context I am working in as well as the work. My method of collecting and being inspired by ordinary ‘non-art’ materials and processes has roots in the work of the Italian movement, Arte Povera, dominant between 1967-1972. Arte Povera means ‘poor art’ referring to the abandonment of traditional oil paint, canvas and marble in favour of throwaway ‘insignificant’ materials as an attempt to challenge the values of the commercial gallery system. (Christov-Bakargiev 2001) This fits well with my interests and the ways in which art and life interconnect. Similarly, I have over the years used a range of materials that can evoke all the senses and have physical and emotional connotations which were a part of the Arte Povera philosophy; unlike this movement however my work always references a specific place or site. The creative part evolves from what I have observed and experienced from the site. I feel the issues and problems explored and materials collected to produce artworks are a valuable contribution to knowledge in contemporary life today.

Arte Povera artwork evolves from a diverse range of references and starting points: often the reworking of traditional classifications or systems and is mostly installed within a gallery space. My contribution to this field is different in that my starting point is always people and a particular sense of place. My methodology involves an instinctive gathering together, through my physical presence in a place and by collecting materials chosen for how they look, sound or feel. This might be an object, a conversation, a material, a technical process or even a skill used by someone on site. I then play and experiment with these often-disparate elements making links and connections that allow significant layers of meaning to develop. Walter Benjamin during his

'Arcades' project focused on the 'refuse' and detritus' of history rather than the heroic aspects of place. (Benjamin and Tiedemann 1999) As an example, I am more likely to be inspired by a worker mending a boiler at home and the techniques he uses than by the work of other artists.

Gatekeeper is an ethnographic term that I have adopted. It is a metaphor for the person who stands at the gate and lets you into a place. I have formed relationships with many different Gatekeepers who have allowed me not only access to the site but information, access to individuals and places to explore. "In qualitative research, particularly ethnographic research, a gatekeeper (also called key informant) helps facilitate access to a group of people or a locale." (Shoemaker and Vos 2009). This is key to a successful intervention. Finding the right gatekeeper is vital, someone who is able to support the understanding of the context, which enables the development of ideas.

The Gatekeeper for **All in the Mind** at a disused psychiatric hospital, was the Estates Manager who provided me with a set of keys for all the main doors in the hospital and access to the archive collection. The 'archive' was simply a massive pile of equipment, documents and records piled up on the floor of the empty offices.

The Palimpsest

"Artists can be very good at exposing the layers of emotional and aesthetic resonance in our relationships to place…a place-specific art offers tantalizing glimpses of new ways to enter everyday life" (Lippard 1995)

When on site, I investigate and document the everyday, ordinary routines of people's lives in specific non-art contexts. I arrive without any pre-conceived ideas about the artwork I am going to make, spending hours, days or even months on site simply trying to understand the place and all the routine events that are going on around me.

Time is a crucial element in my art work: my process involves periods of reflection, delving into personal stories and acquiring layers of understanding. There is also the sense of time embedded in the site, whether it is a sixteenth century building or a seventies high rise block of flats. There is also the time-lapse recording of a landscape; time researching the site; time making the work; time writing about the work. Time is significant also in relation to context; the longer I can stay on or within the site the stronger my connection with people and place will be. Making empathetic connections to people and place is central to my practice and helps develop an intimate knowledge of place. Being able to communicate ideas about what you are doing and

why. Making a case to non-art audiences is another important element of my practice. I endeavour to make clear that the people and the place I have focussed on have something special to offer, embedded as they are in the real world, something that will inspire the evolutionary process of making art works.

Long-term engagements in sites avoids the 'hit and run' experience for artists and participants alike (Fitzpatrick 2000). The artist is always accountable, whether the placement is publicly or privately funded and I have realised that forming strong working relationships with the host and community has been the key to a successful residency. This unique relationship deserves careful attention especially when it moves out into the non-art world where the artist is seen as the interloper – the outsider. The advantage here is that the community or audience are in control and don't feel intimidated by either the artist or the art world.

At first, I am the alien, the outsider, the guest. Eventually I start to understand the people and place and come to empathise with them. Empathy is key to my research, as learning how it feels to be part of that community and becoming completely embedded as an artist on site is crucial to the success of the artwork. The ethnographer, Graham Gibbs describes it as ''The Martian coming in who hasn't the foggiest idea of what is going on, he is a pure observer of what is happening but doesn't really understand things properly." (Gibbs 2016)

This process of developing understanding over time helps me to access complex meanings within the context, identify special codes, rules and the symbolic meanings of things: semiotic clues as to what is going on. As an artist, I am fascinated by the group dynamics and relationships; the rules that govern how individuals behave. As well as spending time observing, I also ask lots of questions, avoiding analysis until I have collected sufficient material. I know when I have collected enough material when ideas begin to form and I sense it is time to start making the new artwork.

My practice is trying to make authentic work that responds to a site in a way that is complex and can do justice to the multiple meanings of a place. I have avoided the "parachute style" engagement with communities, described by Patricia Phillips as a "gunslinger … a gratuitously site–specific approach" (Fitzpatrick 2000) Also described by Wolfe as the 'Turd in the Plaza' (Wolfe 1984). I experienced this sense of unreality during the closure of the famous Cammell - Laird shipyard – the whole situation became the focus of a media spectacle. Being on site during this period made me realise the disparity of what was being conveyed by the media compared to the actual events of the time. The media focused solely on the mistakes of

management and ignored the real sense of despair felt by the community due to massive job losses. From being part of a vibrant shipyard community, I witnessed within a few days a dark cloud of depression sweeping over the yard. The shipyard became deserted as 5000 workers lost their jobs. Of course, this event affected many more people than the shipyard workers themselves.

Auto-ethnographic

As I have stated, auto-ethnographic methodologies are used within my practice to excavate human places through time, focusing on the infra-ordinary and the minutiae of every-day life. My stance is as an artist, an auto-ethnographer and storyteller, casting light onto a cultural landscape that is sometimes so ordinary as to be often not noticed at all. My practice shares some concerns with the processes of artists such as Daphne Wright (Frith Street Gallery 2015) and Neville Gabie (Gabie' 2016) who similarly embrace the language and tools of the anthropologist and ethnographer as they respond to the everyday to inform their practice:

"the anthropologist is concerned with trying to obtain fluency in another culture. But the artist attempts to obtain fluency in his own culture. For the artist, obtaining cultural fluency is a dialectical process …" (Kosuth,1992)

Auto-ethnography is also fundamental to my research as it enables me to embrace the ideas that have come out of my own life experiences. My formative experiences influence my response to a particular situation creating an awareness, empathic reaction or sensitivity to specific aspects of that situation or place. This moving back and forth in time is described by Jean Paul Sartre as a 'progressive-regressive' method. "Interpretation works forward to the conclusion of a set of acts taken up by the subject while working back in time, interrogating the historical, cultural, and biographical conditions that moved the person to experience the events being studied" (Denzin 2014). I share Sartre's view that there is a political component to interpretive Auto-ethnography,

"A commitment to a social justice agenda – to inquiry that explicitly addresses issues of inequity and injustice in particular social moments and places." (Denzin 2014)

However, my work differs in some respects in that it does not focus solely on the political context. Auto-ethnography is also a research method which describes and analyses personal experiences to grasp the meaning of wider cultural experiences. The method tests general principles of doing research and identifies how personal experience have an effect on the

research process. ‘Auto-ethnography acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher’s influence on research.’ (Adams et al. 2015)

Ethnography usually involves spending significant periods of time in locations, becoming embedded and learning the routines, practices and codes in a particular place. Working on the inside enables me to understand how things work from the perspective of the people who occupy or have occupied those places. I have to date spent weeks, months and even years working as an artist on building sites/housing developments, high-rise flats, traveller communities, farms, arboretums, shipyards, hostels, psychiatric hospitals, and other contexts and all have involved embedding myself within that context to carry out first–hand research.

For some time, I have consciously worked on my powers of observation and the material I have subsequently gathered is to help me gain insight and understand how things work and what is happening within that context. As well as observing and collecting a wide variety of information, I also gather physical objects and documents. The process involves an in-depth examination of the physical site by making sketches and notes, producing photographs, making audio and film clips and symbolic representations of things that are meaningful within this social context. I also search out more official documents such as: records, policies, government files and archive material relating to my research and sometimes collect oral histories of the people on the site.

There is very little that is creative about this research stage; it is more a series of collections and recollections to describe what is around. I use a note- book, and divide the pages into two columns: one half describes the location / situation and the other is for ideas, analysis and interpretation: personal observations, reflections, intuitions and emotional reactions. Where possible, I ask people on site lots of questions, usually simple questions; asking them to explain what they do, how things work, what is their routine or what certain tools or materials are used for. Objects, systems and tools, working processes that are often ordinary to them are to me sometimes alien, mysterious even magical.

In summary, I recognise that all my projects are about a slow process of observation and accumulation; identifying the ordinary aspects that interest me over a long period of time.

This long-term intervention and presence has enabled me to learn the codes, conventions and practices of the people who inhabit specific spaces.

Through a process of re-arranging, assembling and experimenting with objects, materials, film clips, photographs and audio I begin to critically analyse and understand these contexts; to re-define and reshape them. The sites are like self-contained bubbles containing information that

take time to unpack and explore. The concept behind all these projects was to excavate specific places through time and to focus on the ordinary and minutiae of everyday human life in order to produce artworks that reflect the complexity and richness of that context.

Case study 1

ALL IN THE MIND
(1997-1998)

Please reference SUPPORTING MATERIALS
(Appendix 1) Pages: 8-43

ALL IN THE MIND (1997-1998)

CASE STUDY ONE: All IN THE MIND (1996 -1997)

Figure 6: The Deva, Chester, 1996

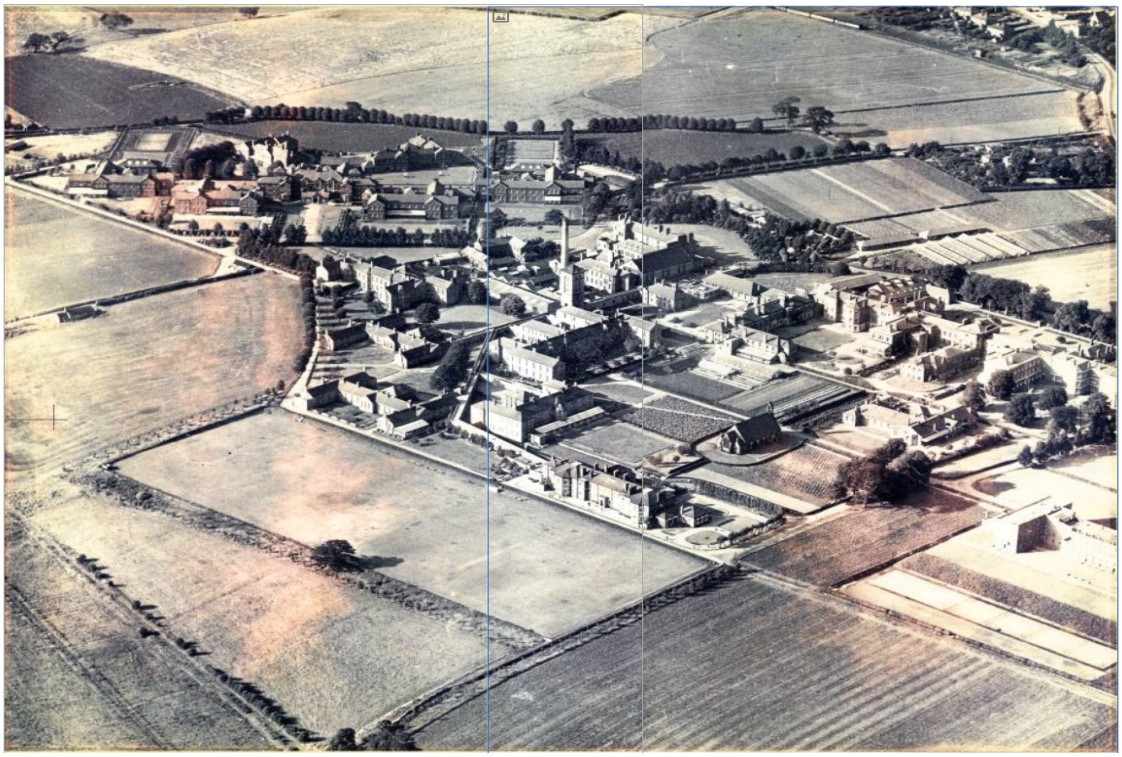


Figure 7: The Deva Ariel view, Chester, 1980

All in the Mind aimed to explore both the immense potential but also the limits when working in a particular place. This was an Arts Council funded project involving two other artists: Leo Fitsmaurice and Simon Robertshaw making artwork in response to a disused psychiatric hospital called the 'Deva' in Chester. My role was as lead artist and the project was initiated through an artist's collective called CORE – which I co-founded a few years previously. CORE was set up to install contemporary art exhibitions in unconventional new contexts.
The final outcomes of the project included: **All in the Mind**, **(**1996 – 1997) an exhibition, workshops and publication at the Countess of Chester general hospital and Turnpike Gallery. (Fitzmaurice et al. 1998). Numerous opportunities and commissions evolved directly from this project from health charities, academics, funders, curators, journalists and arts organisations who visited the space. Some made contact following a review in a national newspaper by the art critic, Ian Windsor, others because they were stakeholders or had previously shown an interest in our work. For myself these opportunities included: **Artist Travel research award** (LJMU); **Greater North-West Arts Touring Development award** (1998, ACE); an invitation from artist Brian Jenkins (1990 British Art show) to work as **Artist in Residence** (1998) at Ettlebruck Psychiatric hospital Luxembourg. Exhibitions: **Recorded Matter**, (1998, solo) Plymouth Arts Centre; **The Mag Collection. History, Image-Based Art in Britain in the Late 20th Century** (1998, permanent collection, touring group show and publication) Ferens Art Gallery, Hull; Orleans House Gallery, Twickenham; Fruit Market Gallery, Edinburgh. (Larner 1997); **Between Two Worlds** – **Raw Material**, **World Symposium on Culture, Health and the Arts**, Manchester; (1999, group show, international conference); **Superstructure**, (1999, group show and publication), Cardiff (Authors 1999); **Synergy,** (2000, group show and publication), Konstkolarta, Orebro Castle, Sweden; **Changing Spaces** – collection (2000) Tate Art Loan Scheme; **Mind Odyssey** (11th October 2001, lecture), Royal College of Psychiatrists. **Naked Spaces** (2000 – 2002, solo shows created from a series of site interventions) Angel Row Gallery, Oriel 31, Newtown, The Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow. (Marchant 2001)

Background

All in the Mind as a project presented the possibility of further development for me, in making visible to the public the past experience of individuals who had once been incarcerated within this Victorian psychiatric institution. The Deva was a Victorian asylum in Chester and was built in 1829. It closed down in 1984 due to the implementation of Margaret Thatcher's *Care in the*

Community policy. “The new policy was promoted by Government as a more humanitarian and moral option than institutional provision but regarded by many professionals in the field as predominately a cost-saving exercise.” (Bornat 1997)

In 1997 at the start of the **All in the Mind** project, Community care provision had already been implemented and most of the old Victorian asylums were lying empty, in the process of being demolished or transformed into housing. The Deva had been empty since 1985 and I had never before visited a previously occupied psychiatric hospital and found myself trying to make sense of my findings within these empty buildings. I was overwhelmed by the smells, some that I couldn’t identify, that permeated the cells, corridors and wards. Clinical psychologists Richard S. Hallam and Michael P. Bender recall the ‘lunatic asylums’ in the 60s by ‘the characteristic smells of the back ward, with its hints of the farmyard stable and carbolic soap.’ (Hallam and Bender 2011) Again, I was aware of using all my senses, not just the visual.

In disused psychiatric hospitals, the only traces of the previous community lay in the detritus left behind; patients’ personal reports, belongings and medical records. Although in 1997 the data protection laws were in place, it was as though the authorities did not regard the patients’ privacy as something worth protecting.

It bears out an entry in Lord Shaftesbury’s diary: ‘Madness constitutes a right as it were, to treat people as vermin.’ (Scull 1993)

I was surrounded by physical evidence of all the sociological and psychological reports: high windows, mirrors used for surveillance, structural walls above courtyards wide enough to be walked along and used for surveillance. Handles and locks on the outside of doors, rows of open baths and cells with high up windows, scratched messages on window-panes.

The Trust begin to Panic

The directors of the Health Trust originally agreed for us to access the site but when they discovered we were working in the old Victorian unit and not creating decorative artwork for the new psychiatric unit, they seemed to panic. There followed a series of meetings and a continued uphill struggle to stay on the site. During one of the meetings the Director admitted that opening up the building to our artwork would be like “opening a can of worms”; he would rather the public were directed towards what was happening in the new psychiatric unit and to move away from the mistakes of the past.

In terms of funding, the project had already achieved a total of £20,000, including £8,000 from

the Arts Council. As lead artist responsible for achieving the principal aims of the project - public engagement through an exhibition - I was faced with the prospect that the investment of time and money was to come to nothing. The director finally agreed that we could continue to create work on the premises but declared that there would be no public exhibition.

Artists Leave the Project

At the start five other artists had been invited to take part in the project and all had received production and materials fees. However, when the Trust finally refused a public exhibition, three artists withdrew from the project, taking with them a large part of the budget. Simon Robertshaw, Leo Fitzmaurice and I were the artists who went on to complete artworks for the site.

The Art Choices

The research aim was to uncover internal and external conflicts, structures and strictures within psychiatric institutions and their effect on the lives of individual patients. I was also overwhelmed at times with a deep personal resonance: the materials were a metaphor for loss and were telling of patients incarcerated for long periods of time; forgotten and never spoken about. I did not know what I would discover but wanted to explore and dig deeper into how these invisible communities had once lived.

All in the Mind fitted with my own artistic objective: to progress our understanding of the enormous possibilities and the limitations of making art in places where art is not normally practised and the experiences that this kind of intervention brings for new ideas and the development of the artist. I also learned ways to respond to the physical nature of the building by allowing it to influence the structure of the project and to work with the materials that I collected. I felt that meaning would then evolve from this juxtaposition. All the materials used to make the art work were sourced from the site or informed by what was found on the site. This was my first real engagement with a methodology that involved the process of “excavating”. The project “produced cryptic emblems which condense into a succinct image of the internal and external conflicts structured into the nature of the mental institution” (Fitzmaurice et al. 1998)
It enabled an investigation into personal and institutional displacement, an examination of internal and external conflicts through the collection of the minutiae of the lives of individual patients: the discarded artefacts of discarded people. As the French philosopher, Michel

Foucault earlier highlighted, psychiatric hospitals are like prisons: they are secret - hidden from public gaze. When examined, they have a certain inhumanity that poses as humanitarianism. The discarding of all the patient records, which were then strewn carelessly on the floor, became a metaphor for me of this situation. This early residency helped me generate artwork using materials collected on site that exposed issues and ideas related to how mental patients were treated or not treated in the past. This has become a motif in all my work – that the materials collected on site became so significant to the outcome. The materials used to create the artwork for **All in the Mind** formed a complex narrative about vulnerable and marginalised individuals. **All in the Mind** interrogated how research into people materials and site, in relation to human interaction, language and historical impact could lead to outcomes that became models for other opportunities in artist led projects.

Figure 8: The Deva Irby wards, 1997

Figure 9: The Deva corridors, 1997

Figure 10: The Deva, studio,1996 -1997

Figure 11: Membrane, 1997

Shards of paint were collected from areas around the site where it had peeled off the walls. I found that using tracing paper and a hot iron I could adhere the paint back onto the surface of the walls. I built up the area in layers which created a fragile composition of layered paint. This piece of work was commissioned for the inaugural exhibition of The Gallery of Contemporary Art, Wales.

Figure 12: Bed Row (steel wool, bedframes),1997

Figure 13: Jumper (steel wool, coat hanger),1997

Jumper and **Bed Row** (steel wool, steel bedframes, coat hanger) I found on site a roll of steel wool obviously used for cleaning purposes. I began experimenting with the material and found it to be flexible: I could use it to weave, coil, even knit with it and managed to weave a jumper / strait jacket form. ‘it resembles the heights of post-modernist fashion, but its form and fabric would render the wearer completely immobile and agonised.’ (Fitzmaurice et al. 1998)

The blankets were constructed around the mattress without any opening or access preventing them from being used as a blanket in the normal way.

Figure 14*:* Shut Up (patients record books),1997

Figure 15: Shut Up detail (patients' record books),1997

Probably the most distressing aspect of this intervention was finding not only personal belongings strewn over the floor but access to medical records and patient notes. I managed to create a pattern within the doorway which not only blocked the entrance to the cell but also prevented access to the patient's personal details logged within the record books.

Figure 16: Elongated, 1997, (bath stools wood, emulsion, discarded patient's items)

All the objects on the stools were collected from around the rooms of the hospital. The stools are elongated bath stools with trolley wheels attached which were then uniformly painted white. They are completely dysfunctional as useable objects.

Figure 17: Asperges (bathroom painted with carbolic soap),1997

Figure 18: Scream, 1997, *(soap tiles, text)*

Figure 19: Scream, detail, 1997

Text collected from words and phrases scratched onto glass windows. A series of aggressive, angry words and phrases ‘cut throat’ prison, prick, empty gallows.
The words were only visible in certain light conditions. The words were then cast to produce soap floor tiles in the same dimensions as the window panes

Figure 20: Colour Classified, 1997, (Saline drip bags, IV Giving sets, emulsion paint).

Figure 21: Colour Classified detail, 1997

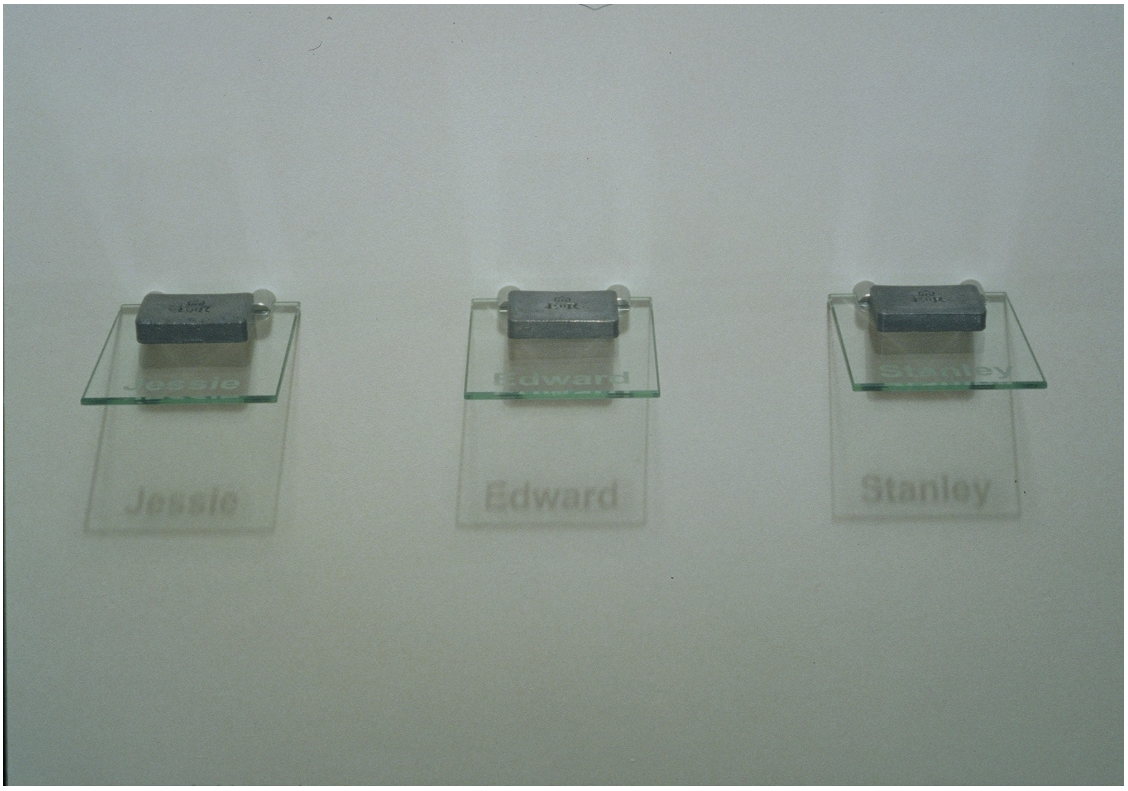


Figure 22: Sovereign Gift (etched glass, cast lead), 2001

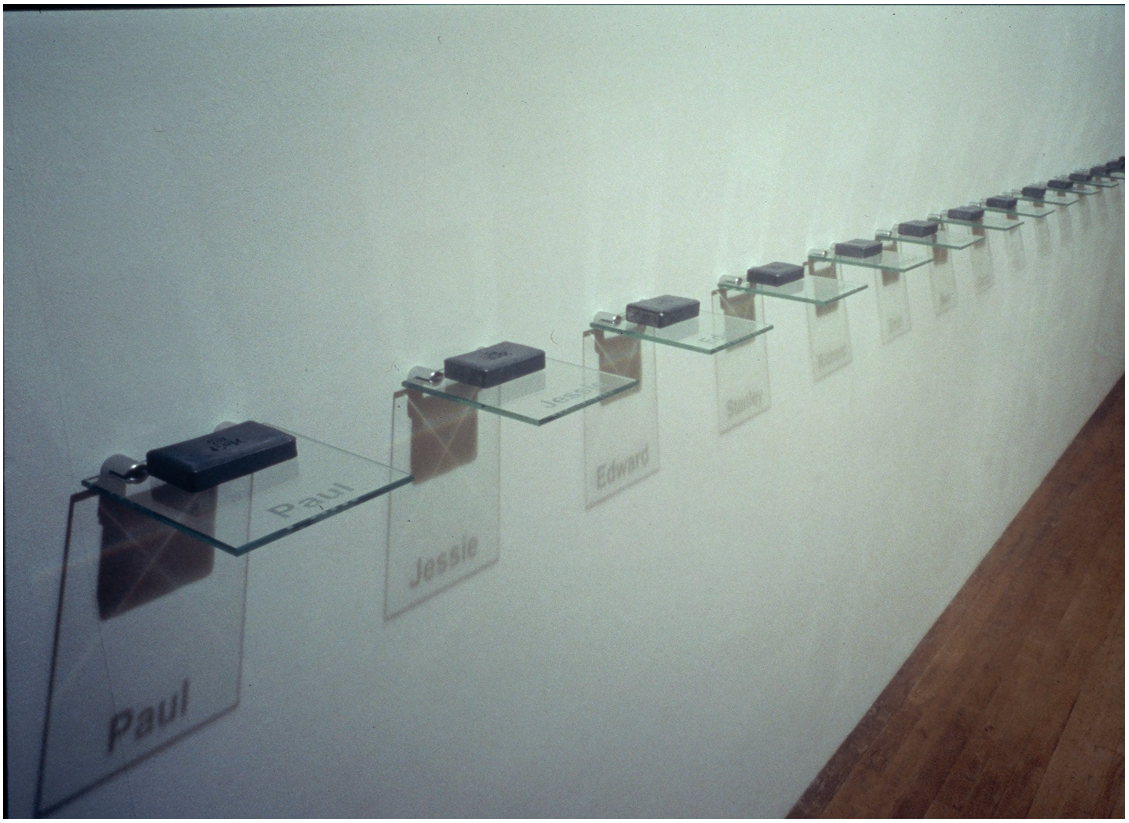


Figure 23: Sovereign Gift (etched glass, cast lead), 2001

I discovered from the estates department that there was a Government central ordering scheme only used by prisons and psychiatric hospitals for items such as soap, cleaning materials and paint. After further research, I used what were a uniform set of RAL 'colour standards' used for all UK psychiatric hospitals until their closure

Figure 24: Research image, 2001

Figure 25: Research, 2001

Patients individual soap dishes with name tags which informed the work **Sovereign Gift** Soap bars are stamped with an ‘E II R’ insignia.

Figure 26: Research, 2001

(right): **Sovereign Gift (**detail) soap bar cast in lead should be placed on shelf with patient's name etched Into the glass.

Contextualisation

I asked myself many questions at the time I was working on **All in the Mind**; what had happened prior to 1996, in those closed Victorian psychiatric sites? I wondered what they had become and asked myself if art exhibitions had ever taken place within this context? Was what I did innovative within such a building? Was I making visible the lives of the people who had once lived there, often for years? I researched other examples of creative responses to psychiatric hospitals and ways of making them more visible but examples were very few. I have listed below some examples such as the work of artist Norman Pursits who produced a series of murals for a psychiatric hospital during the 1930s as part of the USA Federal Art program and a book by Charlotte Perkins Gilmore entitled **The Yellow Wallpaper** (Gilman 2009) about a woman's descent into madness. I believe that my artwork and the exhibitions that resulted should be seen in that context. If my project was the first to take place in a disused psychiatric hospital in the UK (as I think it was); then this perhaps explains the level of interest and the recognition of its significance. In **the Yellow Wallpaper** the female character had been told not to write, think or work; just rest. Lying in bed, she became obsessed by the pattern and detail of the wall paper. "I never saw a worse paper in my life. One of those sprawling flamboyant patterns committing every artistic sin". she eventually pulls it off the wall… "The colour is repellent, almost revolting, a smouldering unclean yellow, strangely faded by the slow-turning sunlight. It is a dull yet lurid orange in some places, a sickly sulphur tint in others" (Gilman 2009) This at the time indicated a form of mental illness.

In 1963, Sylvia Plath published **The Bell Jar** (Plath 1971) in the same year that she took her own life. Investigating her experiences at McLean's psychiatric hospital, Boston, Massachusetts I discovered that the link between creativity and mental illness has been referred to as the "Sylvia Plath Effect" and refers to the inhumane practices of the psychiatric profession at the time. In her autobiography, Plath disclosed she had endured treatments such as electroconvulsive shock therapy and insulin shock therapy (a practice where patients are pumped full of insulin until they experience a brief coma) and which render patients into vacuous robots.

In the 1930s and early '1940s The **Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (Stanford 1944)** in the U.S. began. It dispatched artists to hospitals (among other venues) to

create murals in the late 30s and early 40s and were a partial response to the great depression. These murals were mainly abstract and decorative. (the WPA murals at Harlem Hospital Centre were in the spotlight in 2012 after a major restoration project). The idea to use abandoned hospitals as exhibition venues seems to have seen something of a revival in recent years. In 1976. Alanna Heiss founded P.S.1 **Contemporary Art Centre**, now MoMA PS1, in an abandoned school in Queens. Its mission was to look at different ways to present art rather than responding directly to the history of people or places. It opened its doors in 1976 with the show "Rooms," for which it extended an invitation to 78 artists to work in the space to produce artworks. Richard Serra created a work in the attic, Walter De Maria plastered one wall with pornographic imagery, and Vito Acconci created an installation in the boiler room with a sound piece, stools and a light bulb. In 1992 Core Arts (different from the North-West arts organisation CORE established in 1997) was set up using a vacant space in Hackney. This was a mental health charity whose aim was to "promote mental health and well-being through creative learning' https://www.corearts.co.uk/history/ Artists had begun to use abandoned or alternative spaces not just as studios but as contexts to respond to.

In 2000, the American artist, Anna Schuleit filled a corridor in a disused psychiatric hospital with daisies in container pots, based on her research which began in the 1990s. Initially she was inspired by abandoned institutional spaces such as an old mental hospital, or sometimes by public spaces that allowed for solitude and daydreaming. Schuleit diagrammed her steps along the way, and drew thumb-size pictures of the angular architecture and the overgrown trees that framed the work. She counted rooms (Northampton State Hospital, built starting in 1856, has 414,000 square feet of interiors), and, in an old document, she counted the number of haircuts given there in 1958: 9,900. This resulted in the installation of 28000 potted flowers.

There have been a few art projects completed in hospital buildings in recent years. In 2016 the exhibition **Human Condition** was held and invited 80 artists including Jenny Holzer, Chantal Joffe and Sarah Petersen to 're-contextualize the hospital's functional history'. (Womack 2016) In 2014 the French street artist JR installed a series of photographic works documenting Ellis Island hospital, long abandoned since 1901.

Figure 27: Mural, Harlem Psychiatric Hospital, Federal Art Project, 1935

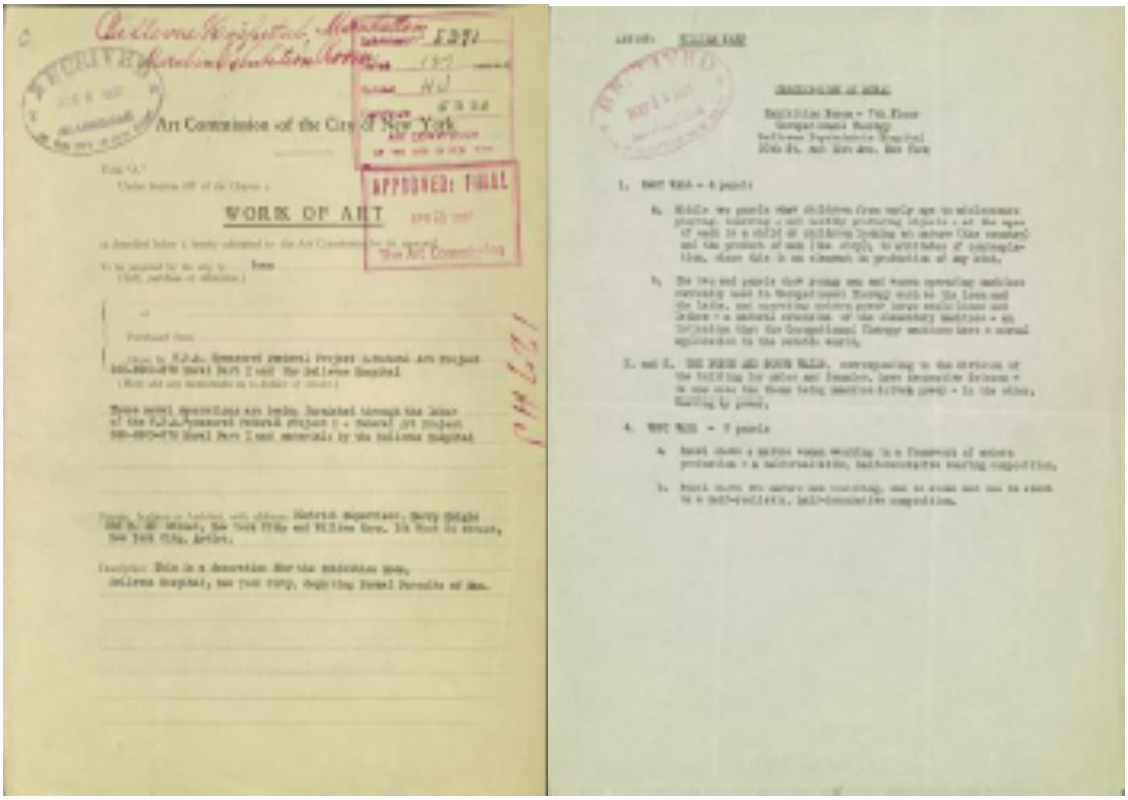


Figure 28: Bellevue hospital art project application Federal Art Project, 1935

Figure 29: Mural, psychiatric hospital, Norman Pursits. Federal Art Project, 1935

Figure 30: P.S.1 Contemporary Art Centre, 1976

Figure 31: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest,1975

Based on a novel by Ken Kesey (Kesey 1962)

Figure 32: Bloom: 28000 potted flowers, Anna Schuleit, USA, 2000

Figure 33: Unframed, JR, Ellis Island Hospital, USA, 2014

Figure 34: Human Condition, Los Angeles Medical Centre, 2016

Significance and Impact

I wanted to find a way to present evidence of the significance and impact of the **All in the Mind** project. With the Trust refusing public access to our work on-site, we artists were forced to think creatively and work hard to find ways to show the work that had been produced; whilst at the same time opening up the debate to the public. Had the Health Trust not prevented the public exhibition we might possibly not have been as driven to find audiences elsewhere – a process which led to a series of unpredicted opportunities.

Although the Deva hospital was in a remote location, many curators, journalists, and representatives of arts' organisations made an effort to see the 'non-public' exhibition at the end of the residency. In retrospect, this project opened up a series of unforeseen new opportunities for me. As a result of this project, I received an Arts Council curatorial travel award to attend the opening shows at the 1998 Venice Biennale; there I met Andrea Hawkins, Director of Turnpike Gallery, who offered to show **All in the Mind** later that year at her gallery; the **All in the Mind** publication had been circulated and also attracted the attention of practising psychiatrists. In 2001, I was invited to talk about the project at a conference of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in Chester; I was also invited to spend a month working with artists making art in response to Ettlebruck psychiatric hospital in Luxembourg. Curators Alex Farquharson, Bruce Haines and Catherine Baum commissioned me to make a piece of work in response to the new Centre for Visual Arts in Cardiff during its construction period. This installation was then included as part of the centre's inaugural exhibition, Superstructure, alongside artists such as Jessica Stockholder, Peter Finniemore and Cerith Wyn Evans. (Farquharson,1999)

At the end of the residency, Emma Anderson, Arts Officer, and Aileen McEvoy, Regional Executive Director of the Arts Council, asked me to take them around the artworks in both hospital spaces. At the end of the tour they offered me a three-year funded franchise to initiate shows for myself and other artists in non–art spaces. I eventually declined the offer in order to pursue my own artistic aims. Nevertheless, this was a unique opportunity, and I believe, an example of enlightened good practice by the Arts Council. It is a great pity that this idea has not become more general practice and has not yet been followed up by other organisations.

There were several responses to the work in the local press showing support and this comment was from Chairman, Harry Bush: "the arts play a special role within a caring organisation, helping people to feel more at ease and contributing to their recovery. The exhibition is also

very much part of the hospital's close links with the community to which it belongs." (Chester Chronicle, 1998)

Harry Bush also offered us a space in the main foyer of the hospital to exhibit **All in the Mind**. Although the exhibition space was a difficult space to show work in - at one point, we were competing with pop-up market stalls - it nevertheless provided us with a daily audience of over 2,000 visitors. This led to opportunities to talk about the residency; our findings and responses to the disused psychiatric site. We also agreed to deliver a series of workshops around the hospital. I had some funds for community engagement and commissioned a local artist, Kate Wise, to organise these events. All the artists responded in different ways to the idea of a workshop. Because the NHS was celebrating its 50-year anniversary, for my engagement I collected images of fifty patients and staff aged from one to fifty years. The panel I then produced intended as a temporary piece, was displayed for ten years.

In 1999, I was invited to install my artworks from the **All in the Mind** project as part of an international conference at the Righton Gallery, Manchester, for the **World Symposium on Culture, Health and the Arts**. This gave me a platform to present my work ideas to health experts worldwide. Dr Langley Brown wrote in the exhibition catalogue that 1500 million people worldwide are suffering from some kind of mental distress. In the essay, he suggested that my work. "symbolically resurrects the spirit of those who had become lost and unremembered in an institutionalised system … [and is] a restorative step in redressing those casual indignities suffered as a result of any form of institutionalisation". (Brown, L., 1999)

In the introduction, Peter Senior, Director of Arts for Health, affirms that the value of an artist's work is that it can help society to confront: "the indignities of the past rather than ignoring or turning away. [and that] **All in the Mind…** played an important part in addressing the issues, raising some difficult questions and…offering a creative and positive response". (Brown, L., 1999)

In 2001, I was invited by Dr Roger Banks to give a lecture about **All in the Mind** at the **Mind Odyssey** conference to the members of the Royal College of Psychiatrists on the 11th October 2001. The Director of Mencap attended the lecture and was, according to Dr Banks' statement in his email, impressed by the lecture and had "opened his address the following morning by referring in glowing terms of admiration to your talk the night before". At the time of this lecture I was working at Cammell Laird shipyard and one of the delegates wanted to know why my research into psychiatric institutions hadn't continued. I explained that I wanted to explore new

contexts of people and places. I also felt that **All in the Mind** had gathered its own momentum and continued to reach new audiences producing further opportunities for debate around the ideas and the artwork. The work was reviewed in The Independent newspaper by John Windsor entitled '**Artworks in a straitjacket'** Out of site out of Mind? John Windsor was sent the **All in the Mind** publication and made contact asking if we could show him around the space. In this article, he writes 'the abundance of paradox that the hospital context creates is surely beyond the artist's expectation. …' (Windsor 1998) The paradox was bittersweet in not having a large scale public opening on site, yet following on from this article we received many invitations to present, exhibit and share both the work and our experiences of the project. Since then some of the physical artworks have been archived and some are now held within a permanent collection. All the art work has now been documented and has been experienced by a large and wide-ranging audience.

Through the **All in the Mind** project I realised the importance and value of sponsorship and that Companies were interested in their product being used creatively. Michael Harris, Director of Trollull, supplied me with 1500 kg steel wool, valued at £14 for 1Kg roll a total of £21,000. He and his staff attended the exhibition at Plymouth Arts Centre and also invited me to his factory in Norway.

In the same way Unilever at Port Sunlight sponsored the materials and cast soap tiles at their factory. By developing a relationship with this community, I involved the workforce in the development of ideas and many of them also attended the exhibition.

The Tate Liverpool has an Art Loan Scheme, **Changing Spaces.** Through this scheme the work created from **All in the Mind** was then disseminated and packaged as an educational Project by Tate Liverpool to schools around the North West. This then led to further artists residencies within selected schools to produce work in response to the site.

Reflection and Discussion

All in the Mind was a significant milestone in the development of my work as an artist and clarified my thinking about both the possibilities and the limitations of making site-specific interventions, through this project I realised the following:

- working and generating ideas at a specific place was the way forward;
- collaborating alongside other artists within these sites was energising and supportive;

- taking a proactive role in promoting awareness of what I was doing was both satisfying and productive;
- managing or curating other artists was not part of my role;
- generating opportunities for myself attracted the interest of curators and arts organisations and led to further projects.
- creating my own opportunities was more empowering for me as an artist, rather than waiting for offers/commissions to come along;
- obtaining funding support from the Arts Council was a catalyst for being awarded other place led initiatives.

I believe that this sort of cross-fertilisation would not have been possible in the same way if the work had been generated from my studio or in an art gallery setting. Neither was this just a short-lived phenomenon but it carried on into my next major project, **Naked Spaces**, a three-year undertaking which involved making artwork in response to both disused and active sites; a textile warehouse in Nottingham, a poor house in Brynhyfred, and Sighthill, some high-rise flats in Glasgow. Amanda Farr, Director of Oriel 31 in Wales, who had come to see the work at the Deva, undertook to organise these sites in conjunction with other galleries - Angel Row Gallery in Nottingham, The Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow and Middleborough Art Gallery - between 2001 and 2003. Each gallery commissioned me to produce artwork in non-art locations to be shown in those contexts as well as in their galleries. The whole process was fully documented in a publication. (Marchant 2001)

This project had established within my practise a clear line of direction based on in depth research and the use of materials derived from specific places. Directly after the **All in the Mind** project Leo Fitzmaurice and I applied independently, and successfully, for the Arts Council's 'Year of the Artist' funding. Fitzmaurice joined up with Neville Gabie on the very successful **Up in the Air** project, which involved curating and commissioning artists from around the UK to live and work in a high-rise block in Liverpool. I went on to undertake probably my most ambitious venture yet, **Sojourn** – a residency at Cammell Laird shipyard.

Case study 2

SOJOURN
(2000-2004)

Please reference SUPPORTING MATERIALS
(Appendix 2) Pages: 45-86

SOJOURN (2000 -2004)

CASE STUDY TWO: SOJOURN (2000 – 2004)

Figure 35: Shot Roof, Cammell Laird, 2001

This project involved three stages of development within Cammell Laird shipyard that began with **Sojourn (2001)** followed by **Inland Waters (2002)** and ending with **Shipbuilding - Past and Present (2004)** All three attempted to give voice to the social demographics of the working environment of this world-famous shipyard, Cammell Laird, through the creative use of shipwrights' everyday materials and processes. I felt a strong resonance with this site having grown up a short distance from the Clyde shipyards, where many iconic ships were built. Jimmy Reid described the ships built on the River Clyde as some of the most 'magnificent artefacts that Britain had every created... which eclipsed all in tonnage and fame.' (Bristow 2017).
Mine was the first artist's residency in the 176-years of the shipyard's history. This was an Arts Council 'Year of the Artist' funded award of £7000 which was the highest award offered to an individual artist in the North-West region and subsequently increased to £100000 by private investors and arts organisation throughout the project. The aim of the 'Year of the Artist' scheme was to bring 1000 artists into contact with millions of people nationwide. "the lottery funded scheme took artists out of seemingly elitist venues such as museums and concert halls, and into football grounds, onto public transport, into supermarkets, banks and the workplace." (Allen 2001)

Sojourn (2000- 2001) was an exhibition which took place within Cammell Laird's shipyard and was one of the few selected from the 1000 residencies as an impact study in the report produced in the publication Breaking *the Barriers*. Peter Dunn, the shipyard Director gave the following report on the impact of the artist residency scheme in the shipyard as a: "valuable and invigorating insight. A worthwhile educational experience for all…Workers at all levels and from all age groups showed an interest in Patricia 's work and many contributed in a tangible way to the exhibits. The proof of this interest is the large number who came to visit the end of project exhibition in their own time and with their families. This must surely be regarded as a high commendation for the artist and her work from those it was meant to influence" Peter Dunn (Silver 2001). The project generated significant interest and was cited in several publications and academic journals. Judy Merry, from **Women's' Hour** interviewed me at the ship yard for a mid-week slot on the programme {BBC Radio 4 2002} a full colour double page spread with a five-star rating was published in the **Big Issue** by arts editor Zaria Shreef (Shreef 2001) . A journalist and photographer from **The Independent** also visited the site to photograph the installation of the piece of work entitled ***Sacrificial Anodes.*** (Appendix 2, pp.50-69)
Many opportunities, commissions and exhibition invitations evolved during and after the

residency, these included **Inland Waters (2002)** a solo exhibition and publication, The Whitworth Art Gallery and Museum, Manchester; **Shipbuilding - Past and Present (2004)** and new works (***Water Glass*** and ***Oil Rag*** **2004)** commissioned for a joint exhibition with the work of the late Stanley Spencer at the Imperial War Museum Manchester. This brought about a surge of national press interest in this new work: Oliva McGill in **The Independent** described the video installation **Water Glass** 'as bringing the world of shipbuilders and their threatened craft back to life' (Hubbard 2004). Robert Clark wrote in the Guardian: 'Mackinnon-Day certainly had her work cut out attempting to match Libeskind's bravura décor and Spencer's devotional narratives, she has kept it simple and presented video projections of today's often deserted shipyards with a sense of aesthetic enchantment and social loss. A triptych of rippling reflections spreads like a psychiatrist's ink blot. A curl of old polythene flaps endlessly in the wind like a post-industrial ghost" (Robert 2004)

Background

Sojourn (2000) was a major milestone in the development of my work as an artist and clarified my thinking about the magnitude and the limitations of making site-specific interventions within working communities. Cammell Laird shipyard was an unknown landscape and its concealed world resonated with my experience as a child growing up around the Govan shipyards in the 1960's and 1970's. The dry docks, cranes, large steel structures and metal forms could be glimpsed from the top of a double decker bus. Hundreds of Dockers would block the main road as they changed shifts leaving the gates of Fairfield's shipyards in Govan.

Gaining access to Cammell Laird as artist in residence was both exciting and overwhelming. It was a shipyard of epic proportions covering approximately 200 acres comprising a wet basin, seven dry docks, a construction hall big enough to build sections of ships and presented issues relating to scale, grandeur and accessibility.

The Cammell Laird shipyard in Birkenhead had been a major source of employment and had built 1,350 boats and ships. These were world famous ships, which included the first steel ship, the *Ma Robert*, built for Dr David Livingstone in 1858 and launched into the River Mersey from the Cammell Laird slipways. It was estimated that the shipyard had employed more than 350,000 men over the years. During the period 1950-1973 Cammell Laird, as with other significant shipbuilders in the UK, had gone from being world leaders in the shipbuilding market

to a much smaller specialist industry. There are several speculations about this decline, one being that British shipyards failed to modernise and increase productivity when compared to competing yards in Japan, West Germany and Sweden (Connors 1987). Another hindrance to the development of shipyards was the fractious relationship between trade unionism and management which did not exist with competitors in Japan who followed a consensus management style and West Germany's *Mitbestimmung* union system. (Lorenz 1991) A deep seated resistance to change was rife in shipyards with demarcation and restricted practises bringing production to a standstill. 'high wage costs and a strong pound (as opposed to low wage costs and an undervalued Yen) further compounded attempts by shipyards to run profitably" (Chida and Davies 1990). Cammell Laird closed down in 1993 as a shipbuilding yard after running up huge losses in the 1980s in the face of competition from Far Eastern competitors and re-opened as a ship repair company in 1997. It is well documented that a major contributory factor in the decline of the shipbuilding industry was due to the lack of investment by shipyard owners during the post war boom years and again in the 1960s.

In 2000 at the start of my residency the company had started work on the Costa Classica liner and in particular on the giant mid-section which was to be inserted in the middle of the ship designed to lengthen the liner by 45m. Unfortunately, the Costa Classica mid-section project was never completed. At 3pm on the afternoon of November 23, 2001, the captain of the Costa Classica was in the Bay of Biscay, heading for Merseyside when he received an order out of the blue to head back to Genoa. The shipping company, Costa Crociere, after inspection, decided that the mid-section was not ready to be inserted. I had observed the mid-section in the shipyard alongside the world's media, workforce and managers at the test launch just days before this happened. I watched the mid-section sway over to the side and listened to the distressed voices on board communicating to managers on walkie talkies informing them that water was flooding in to the vessel. The mid-section was quickly hauled back to shore. I discovered later that the managers had agreed with Costa Crociere that no money would change hands unless they delivered on time and within budget. This was a first-time venture for the shipyard with the ambition to move out of ship repair and back to shipbuilding. The loss of the Italian business left Cammell Laird in a precarious financial situation. It was a blow from which it never recovered. I was in the yard in 2001 when the news arrived about the termination of the contract followed by redundancy notices and the closure of the yard.

People and Place

During the residency, I installed seven site-specific temporary artworks. The managing of time was significant to the success of this project: as I was making, installing and experimenting with work in dry-dock areas before they were filled with gallons of water in preparation for the arrival of a ship scheduled for repair.

Before I started the residency, I had approached one of the shipyard directors, Peter Dunn. I showed him my publications, which he threw back across the desk at me, saying he didn't understand this kind of work. He asked me to send him an outline of what I wanted to do so that he could put this to his co–directors. Nevertheless, my proposal was eventually accepted and the residency began a few months later.

Working in a non-art environment is in part about changing mind-sets. It involves developing the ability to convince non-art people about the validity of the artwork. It is using educational techniques and persuasive tactics that are not taught in art colleges. It is a skill that I have developed autonomously through a process of engagement and learning what works.

I decided to form a steering group at the start of the residency; probably one of the most valuable initiatives as it offered me support throughout the residency, especially when the yard hit a crisis point. It was evident that I was also embracing an organisational structure that the shipyard directors could relate to and respected. I invited arts officers, gallery curators, shipyard union and health and safety representatives, site managers and shipyard directors as steering group members.

I was a guest within a strongly patriarchal environment which became evident early on during the health and safety induction where I was presented with a white overall – worn by senior management – to keep me visible and safe whilst walking around the yard. I managed to persuade the manager to swap this for a blue overall. I was concerned that wearing a white overall would alienate me from the 5000 workforce who wore predominately blue overalls. A few weeks after this meeting I was presented with my own bespoke blue overall - – tapered waist and hood with '*Patricia, Cammell Laird resident artist* 'embroidered with white thread.

The Art Choices

Over time I built up a knowledge which helped to inform my work that referred to the channels and methods of communication between the workforce hierarchy. This included the different forms of spoken, written and visual language that is used between management, skilled trades and office staff. The signs used within this matrix of communication is described by Voloshinov as being 'conditioned above all by the social organisation of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction' (Voloshinov et al. 1973).

I discovered that the shipyards had a power dynamic: a visible hierarchy - coloured overalls were used for different positions and trades: white for manager/ director, red for foreman, grey for engineer and blue for the general workforce. The directors' rationale for the colour coding – 'it's for safety reasons" i.e. if there is a problem in the yard you can quickly identify the right worker for the job by the colour of their overalls. For the workforce, on the other hand, I was told: "It's great – you can see a white overall from a mile off and run."

Unlike previous projects, where I had explored empty, silent spaces, the Birkenhead shipyard was full of people, busy and noisy with a permanent workforce of 5,000, although during the course of the residency about 14,000 engineers, shipwrights and tradesmen came and went as specific tasks were completed. Throughout the year-long process of observing, conceiving ideas, formulating responses, experimenting with materials (and initially failing because of various technical problems), talking to workers and, finally, producing and showing outcomes – at all times I was in full public view of the community.

'most public artists must learn from their mistakes with an audience watching every step of the way. '(Cartiere and Willis 2008)

I was given a porta-cabin studio in the centre of the shipyard, between the dry or graving docks. This is where I would position and gather all the material I collected. My door was open and the men would drop off bits of tools or machinery from around the yard.

Most of the yard's interiors were full of fascinating traces of Victorian equipment and architecture. My intention during this time was to gain an understanding of the geography of the shipyard, to observe the ways in which the general workforce functioned and to learn about their working environment. It was this growing appreciation of the daily practice of Cammell Laird and the interactions between workers that formed the basis of the artwork which expressed ideas of scale, language and time. I wanted to make artwork that made sense of the vastness of

steel constructions and processes juxtaposed with the intimate presence and contribution of the shipwright. To elucidate 'the space of intimacy and the world space- blend which is described by Bachelard as 'intimate immensity'' (Bachelard 1994)

I wandered about the shipyard for the first three months – asking questions, making notes, collecting information about specific materials and processes and making connections with the general workforce. I believed that I earned their respect by being around all the time and working the same shifts day and night - dispelling the idea of an artist as a *prima donna*. The shipyard at night is grim – especially during the winter – every space is open to the elements; every cold metal is covered in oil. All the areas are exposed to a northerly, gale force wind. There are only a few cosy spots. I often had my tea break in the small radio shed where the shipwrights communicated with ships coming into dock and noted the weather report. The men became used to me dropping in to their tea areas and observing and asking them questions. The men began to introduce me to others saying. 'have you met our artist?'

The work commission for The Whitworth exhibition: **Inland Waters (2002)** was a remake of some of the installations created in the shipyard, including ***Phosphorescent Levels*** and ***Cycle*****,** as well as a collection of finds from around the shipyard. Alistair Smith, Director of the Whitworth in his introduction to the publication described the work installed in the exhibition as a response to the shipyards closure as an investment 'with a sense of a past, and with memory's power to evoke regret."

Shipbuilding - Past and Present (2004) was a new work commissioned for a joint exhibition with the work of the late Stanley Spencer by The Imperial War Museum, Manchester. The new work commissioned by the Imperial War Museum, Manchester meant a return visit to the shipyard. The shipyard was then under new management with a reduced work force from 5000 to three hundred. My research took on the investigation and mapping out of feelings of loss within this industry and I produced two films in response to this sense of loss and at the physically desolate shipyard.

Figure 36: Costa Classic, mid-section, 2001

Figure 37: Intimate Collection, The Whitworth, 2002

Figure 38: Bespoke overall with embroidered name tag, 2001

Figure 39: Phosphorescent Levels, 2001

Figure 40: installation of Phosphorescent Levels, 2001

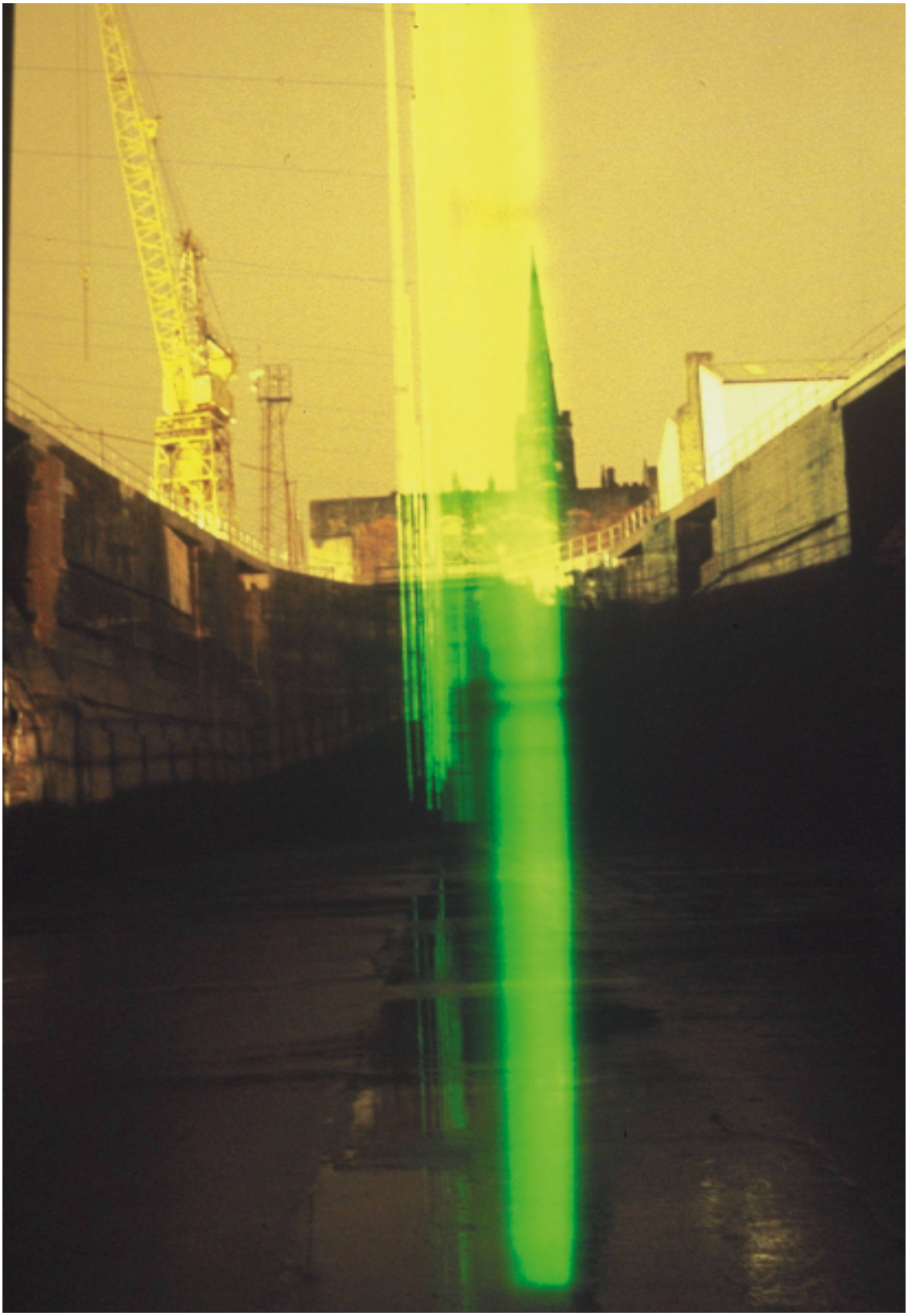


Figure 41: Phosphorescent Levels detail, 2001

Phosphorescent levels used forty lengths of plastic tubing filled with water stained with a phosphorescent dye, and lighting. The use of water filled tubing as a giant spirit level is an ancient method that continues to be used in shipyards

Figure 42: Sacrificial Anodes, detail (salt), 2001

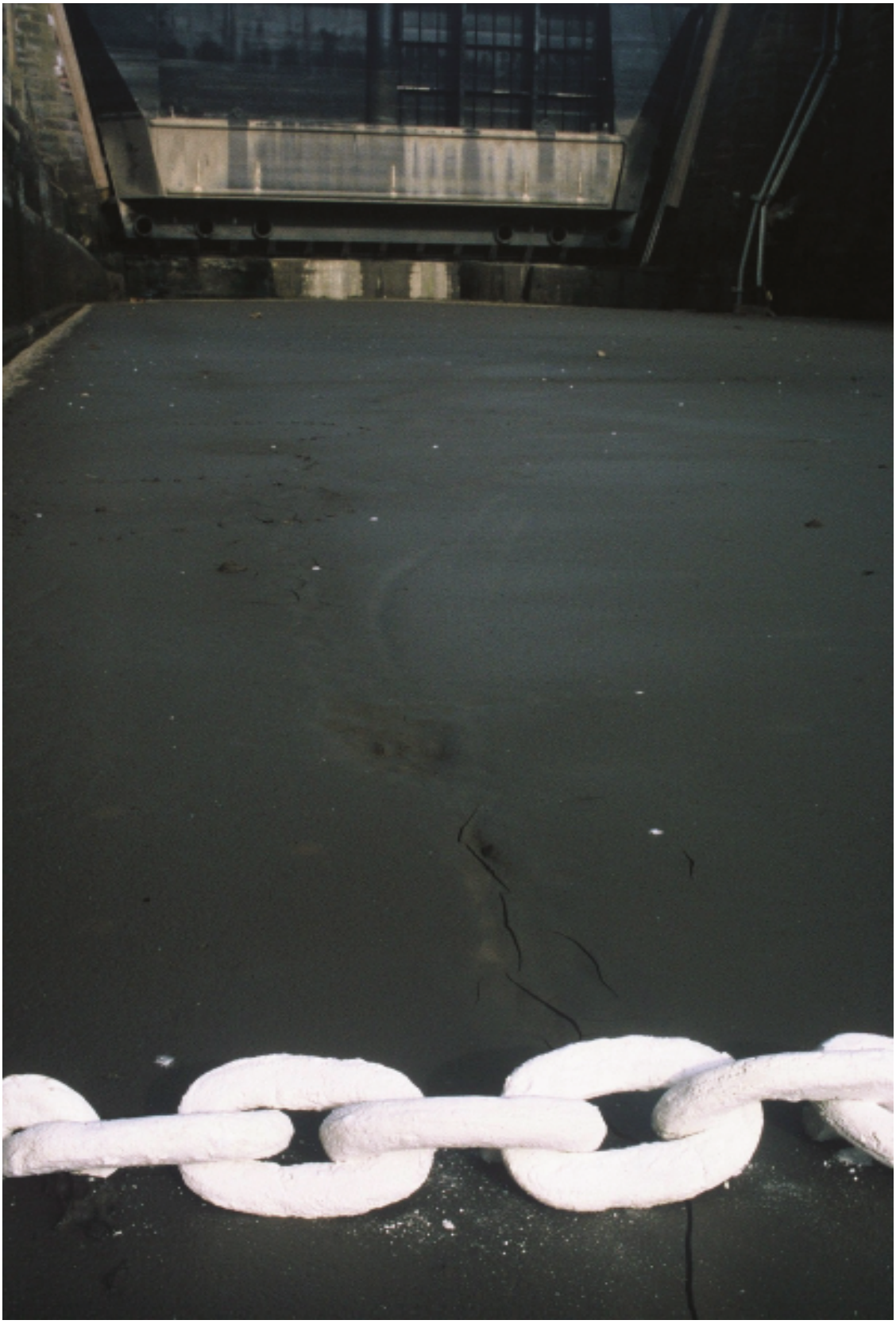


Figure 43: Sacrificial Anodes, detail (salt), 2001

Chains are ubiquitous in a shipyard and emblematic of ships and shipbuilding generally, while salt also has manifold links with shipping and trade. In **Sacrificial Anodes**, I cast chains from salt and laid them along the floor of the dry dock, which then slowly dissolved by the action of rain, wet mud and intruding seawater.

Figure 44 Yellow Line, planted ragwort, 2001

Like many industrial sites, Cammell Laird has a network of disused railway tracks tracing across its surface throughout the shipyard. For **Yellow line,** I amassed thousands of flower heads of ragwort and planted into several hundred metres of disused tracks. This brought to the attention tracks that for decades were invisible by disuse. It was also a contrast to the hard-edged industrial architecture.

Figure 45: Yellow Line, installation, 2001

Figure 46: Cycle, 2001

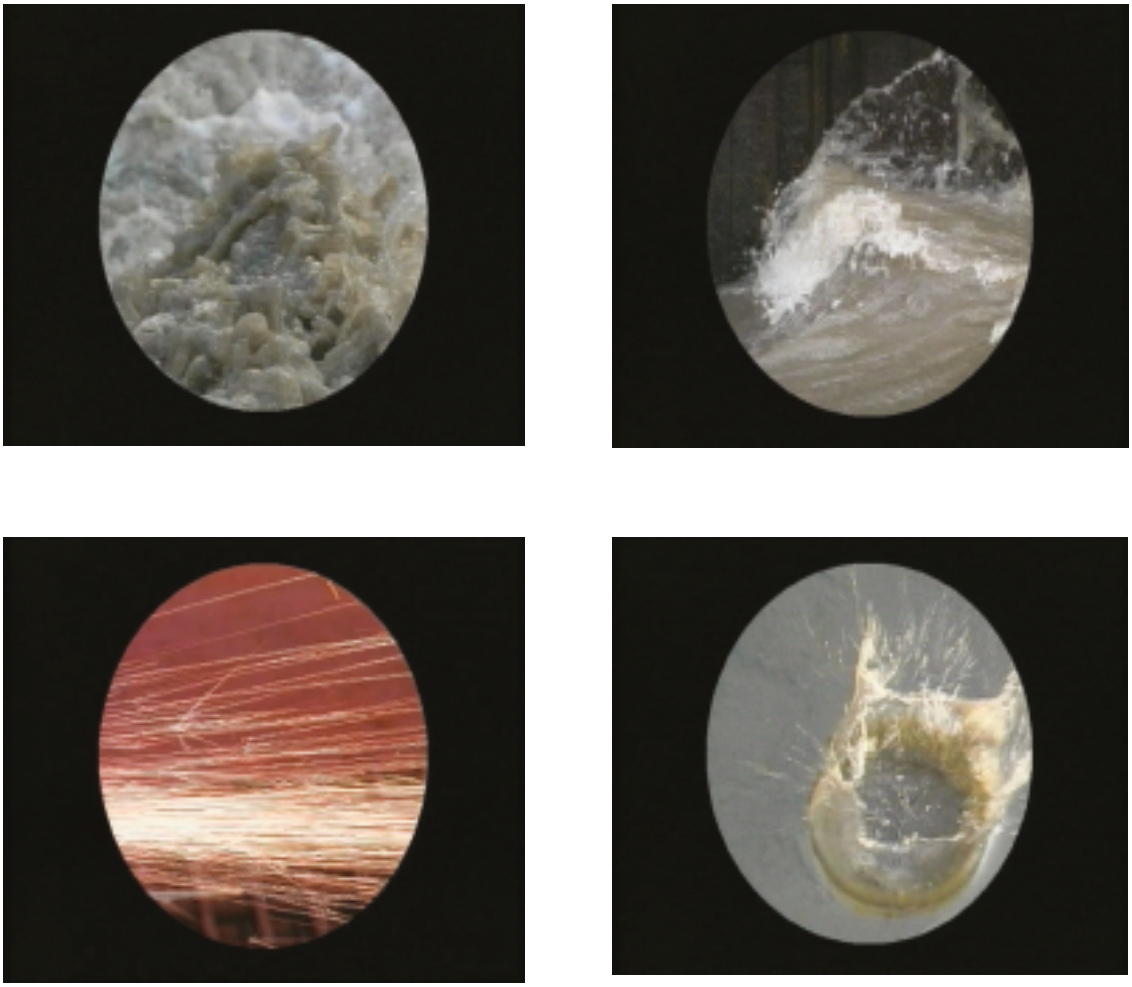


Figure 47: Cycle, detail, 2001

Cycle was projected onto a circular ten metre diameter screen secured to the lock gates of Graving Dock No4. It featured images gathered from exploration of the shipyard: welding sparks, river water surging though sluice-gates: tap water emptying down plug holes, the circular shape of the projection, its size and the fact that it was projected at night-fall with the Liverpool skyline in the background encouraged viewers to read the projection as a metaphor for the moon. The viewer was again confronted with vastness; the dock, the projection, the landscape and its river, the sea that it runs into, but also the night sky with its real moon governing the tidal estuary and the stars guiding mariners. The use of everyday (within the context of the shipyard) images that are grounded in human-made materiality link, once more, the intimate immensities of the interior and exterior. (Mackinnon-Day 2002)

Figure 48: Ensemble, speakers, detail, 2001

Ensemble, usually a title which refers to a grouping of musicians here I gathered overalls together and secreted within them small speakers though which recordings of everyday conversations between workers of different levels of status were played. This work explored and merged ideas about the organisational hierarchy implemented using coloured overalls.

Figure 49: Scribers detail, 2001

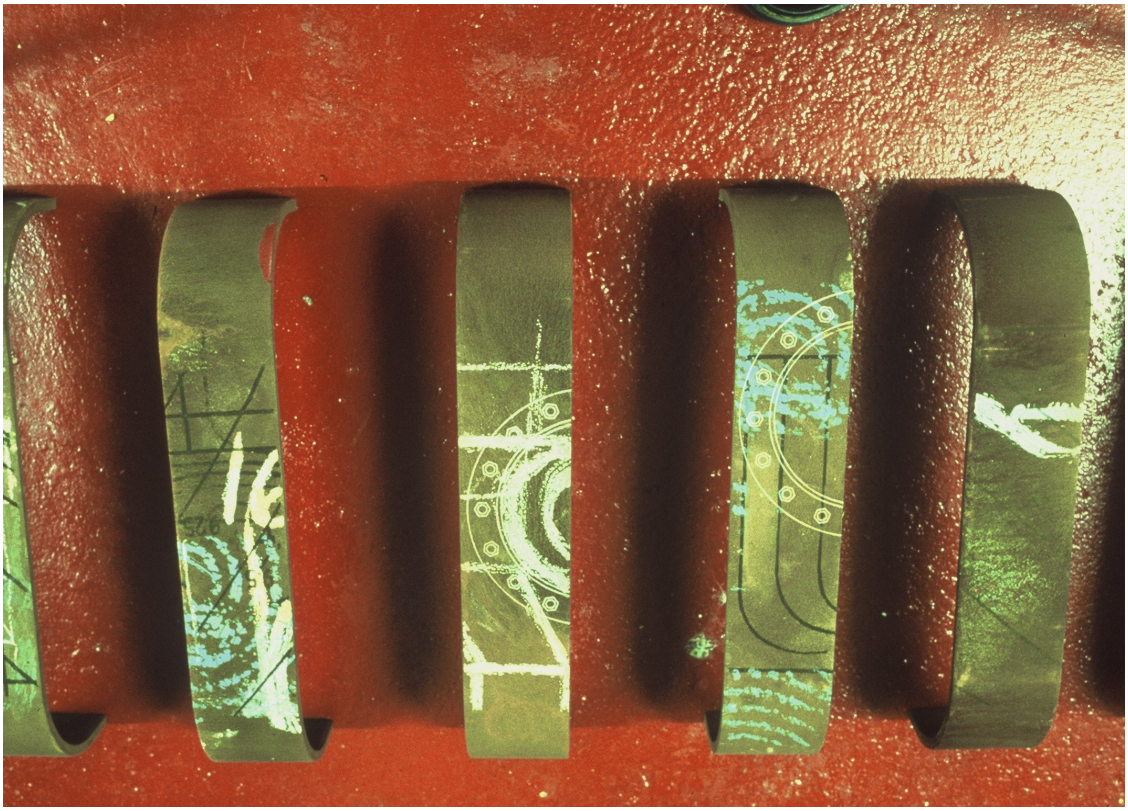


Figure 50: Scribers, detail, 2001

Scribers highlights the marks that workers make on metal that they are preparing for working. The shipwrights were often presented with computer aided designs produced within the Drawing Office by engineers and draughtsmen. Once drawings arrived on the dockside they were re-interpreted and translated into a meta-language of marks made with a scriber, (a tool that can mark metal using chalk) that act as notes and guides for cutting and welding. The comment from the workers on the ground would be something along the lines of “engineers don’t have a clue – this is how it works” and re-create a series of flowing marks on the surface of the ship.

Figure 51: Waterglass, Imperial War Museum, 2004

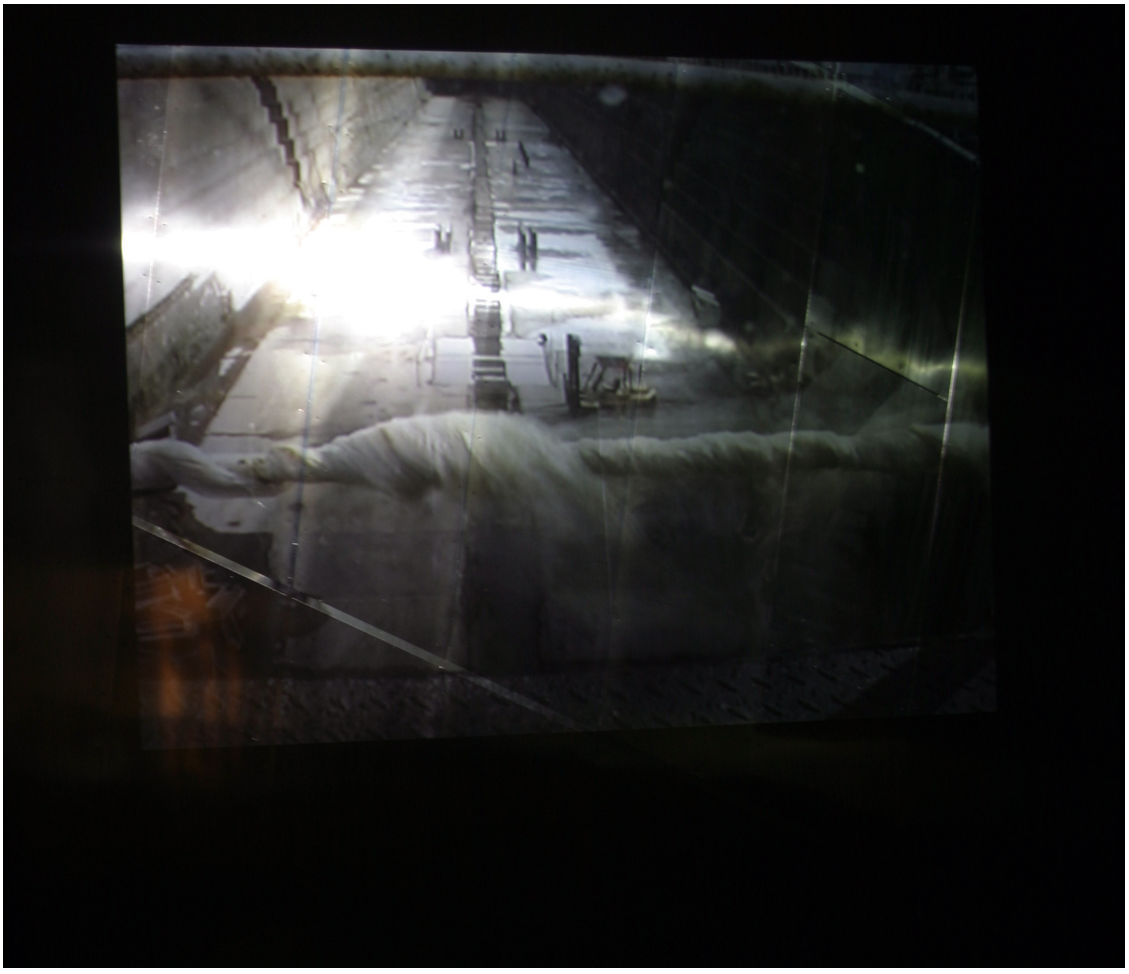


Figure 52: Oil Rag, Imperial War Museum, 2004

I produced a series of films based on a return visit to a desolate shipyard in 2000 with a reduced workforce. My research took on the investigation and mapping out of ideas of loss within the shipyard industry.

CONTEXTUALISATION

During my residency at Cammell Laird it felt important that I research and acknowledge the history of the industrial world in which I was immersed.

Although I didn't find examples of other women who had worked as artists in shipyards there were a few artists who were making creative responses to these industrial sites. I found the work of the following artists significant and a major source of influence during my time working at the yard. The soundtrack of ***Shipbuilding*** by Elvis Costello; the paintings of Stanley Spencer and the site interventions by Richard Wilson.

Elvis Costello's soundtrack, **Shipbuilding** was written at a time when unemployment in the United Kingdom had risen to more than three million for the first time in recorded history. (BBC 1982).

The song highlighted the huge decline of traditional industries like shipbuilding and describes the plight of the British working class as 'sacrificial lambs' on and off the battle field. Young men had been sent to the Falklands War in 1982 from areas across the UK, such as Merseyside and Govan. Although these young lives were being lost because of the war, ironically, work was being generated to replace the ships that had been sunk. The pathos is in the line ""Within weeks they'll be re-opening the shipyard, and notifying the next of kin" Underneath the powerful beauty of the shipyards structure lies an angry socialist edge.

I was inspired early on by the shipyard studies and paintings completed by the artist Stanley Spencer during the 1940s. when he was official war artist. The first time I saw his work was in 1975 whilst visiting the Third Eye Centre. I was still at school and preparing for my higher exams which comprised of life drawing, still life and figure composition. Seeing this collection of figurative compositions at the time was memorable and useful to my early research and development.

I was spellbound by the craftsmanship and skill of Spencer's work and never imagined that I would one day be commissioned to show alongside this notable 'master' some decades later.

It is Interesting to note that although he produced several studies of female workers in shipyards he never exhibited this work.

Most people when they think of Richard Wilson's work probably think of **20:50** (1987), the sump oil installation or **Turning the Place Over** (2008), the revolving structure in the façade of a

Liverpool building commissioned as part of the European Capital of Culture. I was more stimulated by two of his less notable works: **A Slice of Reality** (2000) which was a 9-metre (30ft) vertical section sliced through a sand dredger. The work was commissioned by the Millennium Dome around the time of my shipyard residency. I wondered at the time if he had been inspired by what was happening at Cammell Lairds – i.e. cutting through the middle of a cruise liner. Secondly, his much earlier work as part of the **Bow Gamelan Ensemble** *(*1983-91) which was a long-term performative collaboration which travelled around abandoned riverside and dockland areas in the UK using found industrial materials to make sound works.

I put myself in the same camp as Wilson's in that my work is often informed by the techniques and materials of engineering and construction. This was clearly the case with the work 'Sojourn' that resulted from my shipyard residency.

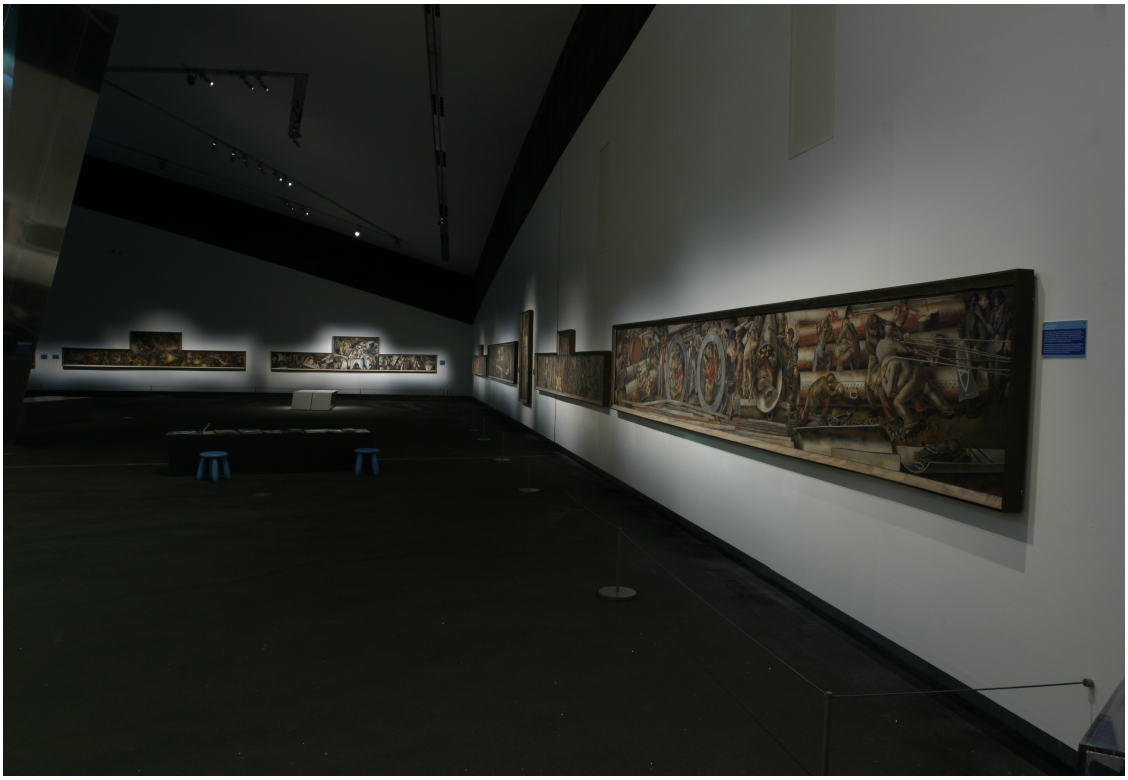


Figure 53: Stanley Spencer Port Glasgow,1939-1945

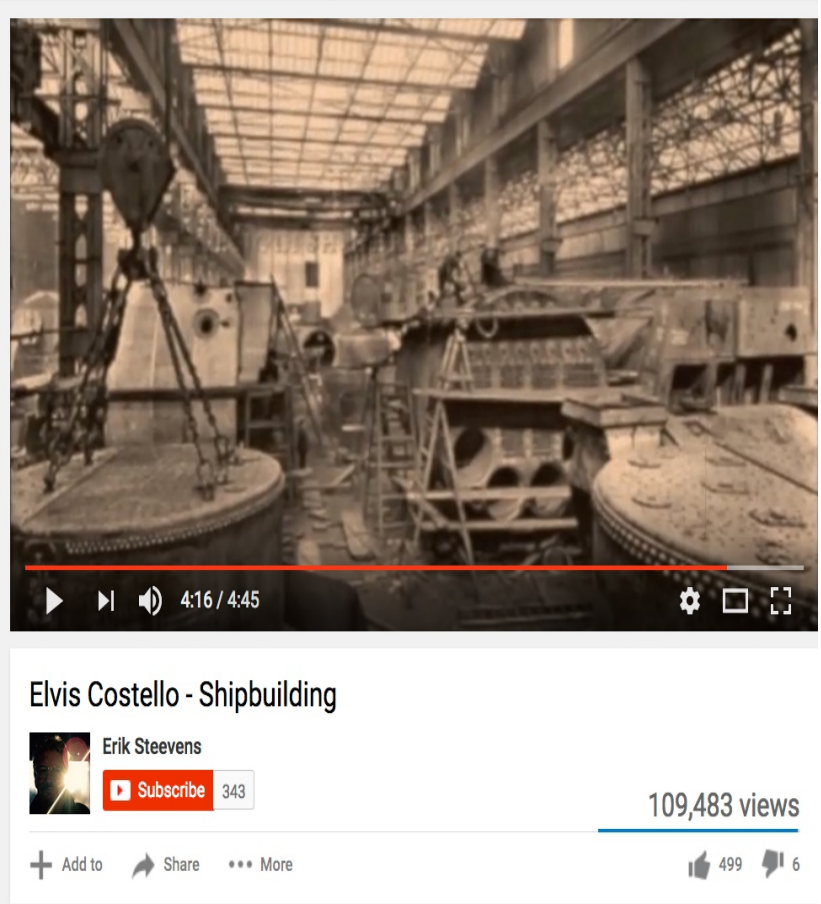


Figure 54: Elvis Costello, Shipbuilding song, 1983

Figure 55: The Men who built the Liners BBC FOUR, 2017

Figure 56: A Slice of Reality, Richard Wilson, 2000

A vertical cross-section through a former sand dredger that exposes portions of the former living quarters of the vessel.

Significance and Impact

I was exposed to constant scrutiny, not only from within the site, but also from the art world outside as I had received the support of the Arts Council - having been selected as part of their 'Year of the Artist' scheme. I gained an insight into the power of marketing with the production of publications and media interviews which were aimed at a national audience. This brought the work to the attention of curators who visited the final show, **Sojourn**, at the shipyard.
Friday 18th May, was the first dusk showing of **Cycle**. … 'Completely stunned by the fabulous sight and sound of the dry dock projection. Mackinnon-Day not only holds her own, but also makes a profound connection between the workers' experiences and her own artistic rationale'. (Manby, 2002).
As with **All in the Mind**, the Cammell Laird project took on a life of its own – only this time as a result of the setting in motion of the Arts Council's publicity machine, rather than the vigorous self-promotion required at Deva. Mary Griffiths, curator at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester, took a keen interest in the development of my work which was subsequently shown at the Whitworth's exhibition 'Inland Waters'. This was a remake of some of the installations created in the shipyard, including Phosphorescent Levels and Cycle, as well as a collection of finds from around the shipyard. Initially, I had some misgivings about the transfer of this work to the gallery space but was reassured by critical reaction.
Two years after the success of Sojourn, I was commissioned by the Imperial War Museum, Manchester to return to the shipyard to produce a piece of work in response to the site. The exhibition Shipbuilding - Past and Present was a joint show with the work of the late Stanley Spencer. For this I went back to the shipyard then under new management and with a reduced work force of three hundred, as a result of Cammell Laird having gone into receivership after the cancellation of a major order. My research took on the investigation and mapping out of a sense of loss within the gigantic, desolate shipyard.

Reflection and Discussion

Sojourn extended my range of methodologies and made me aware of certain challenges as I developed my expertise in site-specific interventions. it was during this residency that I learnt the significance and skills needed in the formation of positive communication, negotiation, trust, establishing relationships and building teamwork amongst the shipyard community. Fine-tuning these skills helped realise my research aims. Through this project I realised the value of the

following:

- time-management – creating work, testing out ideas between working schedules/deadlines, ensuring that I didn't interfere with the work of the shipyard;
- formation of a steering group to meet three times during the year – made up of local curators, an Arts Council adviser, managers, directors, trade union representatives, etc.; to keep the project on track and supported throughout especially during crisis points.
- access to a wide range of technical skills and expertise that I could tap into;
- making work in view of the public;
- being an artist as outsider, bringing contemporary art to their workplace and being asked to explain/justify the place/role of contemporary art;
- meeting the challenge of massive scale.

Case study 3

MARKING TIME
(2003-2005)

Please reference SUPPORTING MATERIALS
(Appendix 3) Pages: 89-115

MARKING TIME (2003-2005)

CASE STUDY THREE: MARKING TIME (2003-2005)

Figure 57: Marking Time, 2005

Marking Time (2003 - 2005), was a series of permanent installations on the site of an Almshouse, a listed Ancient Scheduled Monument built in 1450 in Catherine Street, Exeter. The site was bombed during the war. My project was part of a £350,000 public art programme and a £235 million regeneration scheme commissioned by Land Securities, Exeter city council and English heritage to create an improved setting for one of Exeter's most historic landmarks.

Marking Time has been defined by English Partnerships as an example of 'high quality site specific artworks" which "creates a unique development, adds to a sense of place and gives an extra level of quality and detail to the built environments" … "commissioning of the artwork, lighting scheme and landscape architecture by Land Securities has created a hugely popular destination within Exeter attracting many visitors" (Partnerships 2007). This is also acknowledged in other publications "the result has provided a new and popular destination for the city… Many visitors now enjoy taking time to read these and reflect upon their meaning. The regeneration of this area has been so successful that a new café was later commissioned to overlook the Almshouse and the artwork" (Securities 2008).

Marking Time has been promoted in a number of Council Public Art Strategies as a highly successful example of engagement–where an artist's input has been a part of the design team from the start of a project. See forwarded reports completed by Chester (Council 2015) and Warrington (Council 2010) councils. **Marking Time** has been described by the Association for Heritage Interpretation as a 'high quality site-specific art work." and as "Pushing Boundaries through the use of technology, interpretation, public intervention and drawing attention to the facts" (Interpretation 2017). The work has been cited in several publications and academic journals. David Littlefield in his book Architectural Voices: listening to old buildings, describes architects as "performing surgery' …restoring … elderly buildings." **Marking Time** is the only example he uses where the intervention has been a creative response rather than simply preserving a historic structure. (Littlefield and Lewis 2007)

The Winston Churchill Fellowship report describes **Marking Time** as playing "a significant role in the restoration or interpretation of heritage building" and "conveying to the public an understanding of culture, history and a sense of place" (Jardem 2010) **Marking Time** won an **IALD international lighting Award** of Merit in Las Vegas, USA in 2008 for the lighting in collaboration with Martin Lupton and Mark Ridler. 160 projects were submitted and 23 were recognized with awards. (BDP 2008)

Due to many contributory factors the budget for this project had to be increased from the original estimate of £42,000 to £150,000. The ideas that I presented cost considerably more than the original budget allocation but because Land Securities liked the concepts they underwrote the cost of the whole project. I understood that, at that time, this was very rare within public art.

Background

The initial brief was to simply create a decorative barrier around the space in order to safe guard the site. “The role of the artist will be to develop a means of restricting physical access to the Almshouses, protecting them from vandalism and anti-social activities, whilst allowing visual access and interpretation to the site. This may take the form of a series of screens or other elements around the Almshouse Ruins.” Exeter council report, 2003. (Appendix 3, p85)

Marking Time represented my first experience of producing a permanent piece of work for a public site. It also thrust me into the complex and protracted process of competing for a public art commission for the first time. This was a new professional experience where I had to translate my vision and methodology into terms that would convince non-artist professionals that I had something to offer, and that it was worth their while to invest time and money in the project. During the interview, I talked about my approach as a research based practice. I explained that my work begins by researching sites and that I have a fascination for delving into archives and searching for historical clues. I suggested an open-ended response to the site was required and stated that I had no pre-conceived ideas about what I would produce and needed time to spend on the site – just being there watching, listening and collecting. I managed to convince both the Council, English Heritage and Land Securities that opening up and illuminating the space would make it a more user-friendly place to visit and would also deter vandalism.

I worked closely with the design team architects: Chapman Taylor and Panter Hudspith ; the lighting designers, BDP Lighting; the archaeologists; Richard Parker; the Phoenix Art Centre; Archivists, Mrs Doughty of Exeter Cathedral; the Landscape architects, Wilkinson Eyre and the Project manager; Sarah Collicott of Artscape Management. There were so many ‘stake-holders’ in this ambitious project and I had to “carry them all with me” on this long and complex project.

Marking Time evolved over a period of three years. The research took me on a historical journey through archives, uncovering information and scrutinising physical clues to find out details about individuals who had once lived in the almshouse and the neighbouring Canon's house. My intention was to excavate the Almshouse through time, focusing on the ordinary and the minutiae of everyday life on this historic site, uncovering layers of history and opening up the space to the people of Exeter.

I wanted the positioning of the artwork to offer visitors a historical and social overview of the site. My initial research revolved around issues of homelessness; I was invited to make artwork in response to a site that had housed the needy from 1457 until it was bombed during the Second World War. Alms-houses have existed throughout England providing institutional poor relief to homeless men and women for well over a thousand years. Today houses which were founded during the sixteenth and seventeenth century continue to operate in much the same way as they did four centuries ago, often in the same buildings. My research led me to consider today's social and economic situation for the homeless and allowed the artwork installed within the alms-house to speak about some of the mechanisms of control and poor relief offered to those who once occupied the space.

The layout was extremely simple; the floor markings identified the layout of small cubicles that would have offered basic accommodation for residents. There was also a chapel that still stands to its full height without roof or windows. The site is dominated by the Canon's house that was of course three to four times larger than the living quarters for the alms-folk.

I discovered that at the time of making the artwork 77,940 households in England were living in temporary accommodation, including over 12,000 in bed and breakfast hotels. Families accounted for more than half of these. A report by Crisis gave a figure of 400,000 people living in hostels, staying with friends or living in other temporary places. (Diaz, R. 2006) Housing and social services departments were instructed by a Government Commission to address the support needs of vulnerable people within their communities. Ironically, at the time of this commission the Exeter Alms-house was being used unofficially as a place of shelter for homeless individuals. The council saw this as a major issue as the Alms-house was located within a main tourist area.

The council initially wanted to commission an artist to create a purely decorative barrier around the Alms-house to 'keep drug users and vagrants from entering the historic monument'. My proposal was to illuminate the space and make it a much more appealing space for visitors that

was more ambitious than simply pushing the homeless out of the Alms-house.

My initial research began with a visit to St Petroc's, a homeless charity about a hundred yards down from the Alms-house, to find out more about the issues of the homeless in Exeter. The charity does amazing work for the homeless and this is nationally recognized.

What I noticed on entering the site was a very large notice listing rules for all users that clients have to agree to. This contemporary notice was similar to the conditions that had to be agreed to in order to live in the alms-house hundreds of years ago.

Unlike for the fifteenth century alms-folk, praying wasn't on the list of conditions but still the benefits came with conditions. It seems that, through the centuries, the homeless have been supported only when they conform to strict behavioural standards.

The art choices

The different strands of the artwork combined to give a sense of continuity to this historic site so that the story of long-forgotten residents was brought to life in language, archaeological finds and the light and texture of the glass doors. The development of the artwork for the Alms-house involved long periods asking questions, delving into historical documents and talking to many people with specialist knowledge of the historic monument. This collaboration involved learning from experts in many other disciplines – archivists, archaeologists, librarians, architects and landscape architects as well as local historians. The history of the site meant that there was a rich and subtle atmosphere to the space. The research took me on a historical journey through archives, uncovering information and scrutinising physical clues to discover details about individuals who had once lived in the Alms-house and the neighbouring Canon's house.

Again, an auto-ethnographic element pervaded my research where I discovered that people had survived in cramped, dark rooms and this resonated with my own experience growing up in Glasgow amidst overcrowded tenements during the 1960s and 70s. Viewed from above the site, I could see the layout of the rooms – I noted a definite inequality between the living space of the Canon's house and that of the alms-folk. I wanted the glass doors to illuminate this difference in occupancy.

The glass doors were reconstructions of the original medieval doors and positioned in the exact place of the original medieval doors. Within the doors were archaeological finds from an on-site dig that took place in the 70s. Each find was then cut into an inner glass section of the door, at

the location and strata level where they were discovered under the ground.

My aims with this project were to:

- make art that would bring to life the history of the buildings; to explore the space and reflect current and historic human interaction;
- make the Alms-house more accessible and welcoming to Exeter residents and visitors and to bring a new vision to this historic site that had greatly degenerated;
- to give a voice to the forgotten and transient communities who, from the 1600s, had lived within this urban, historical space and to draw attention to the inequalities of the period – for example, the restricted space offered to the alms folk in comparison to the size of the Canon's residence.

The work and ideas were generated by spending months getting to know and collaborating with archaeologist Richard Parker in his work space at the Phoenix Art Centre. I observed his detailed and concentrated work process working with finds and the production of detailed drawings – that he explained as simply 'mapping time'. The formal term used by archaeologists is 'stratigraphic sequences' or better known as the *Harris Matrix* developed by Harris, an archaeologist who in 1979 described this as 'seeing time' within a site. This idea resonated with me and acted as a catalyst for what I wanted to achieve on site with glass, text, lighting and archaeological finds.

By encapsulating the archaeological discoveries in their original locations, I would hopefully offer visitors an experience of journeying through time and place. I was aided in accessing this information by the fact that I had already formed a strong working relationship with Richard who not only had an abundant knowledge of the history of the Almshouse but was passionate about bringing the significance of this listed ancient monument to public attention. Richard was, for me, a major gatekeeper in allowing me access to vital information, historic documents, permission from English Heritage to use the finds in the art work, and ensuring I knew exactly where the medieval doors were originally situated.

I wanted to transfer text onto stone and spent hours searching through archival documents (e.g. chapter act books, records of monetary transactions for repairs) as well as locating and photographing specific texts. I believed that by using personal handwriting, individual's names and specific events, that these would offer a human connection with those who once lived or

worked in the Almshouse.

Katie Melville Livingston Ayres, a landscape architect worked with me to identify the paving stones as a surface for sandblasting text and I worked with Hour Glass fabricators to produce the glass door structures.

The handwriting was transferred into a vector file and the text was then sandblasted directly onto the porphyry stone slabs. The porphyry slabs were positioned on site and mapped out the floor areas of individual spaces for alms-folk. The text would have a specific association with a particular room, activity or person.

At night, I wanted to create the illusion of the finds floating within the glass doors and BDP lighting designer, Mark Ridler, suggested the use of fibre optics at the base of each glass doors which would work as long as each find didn't overlap and block out the single ray of light.

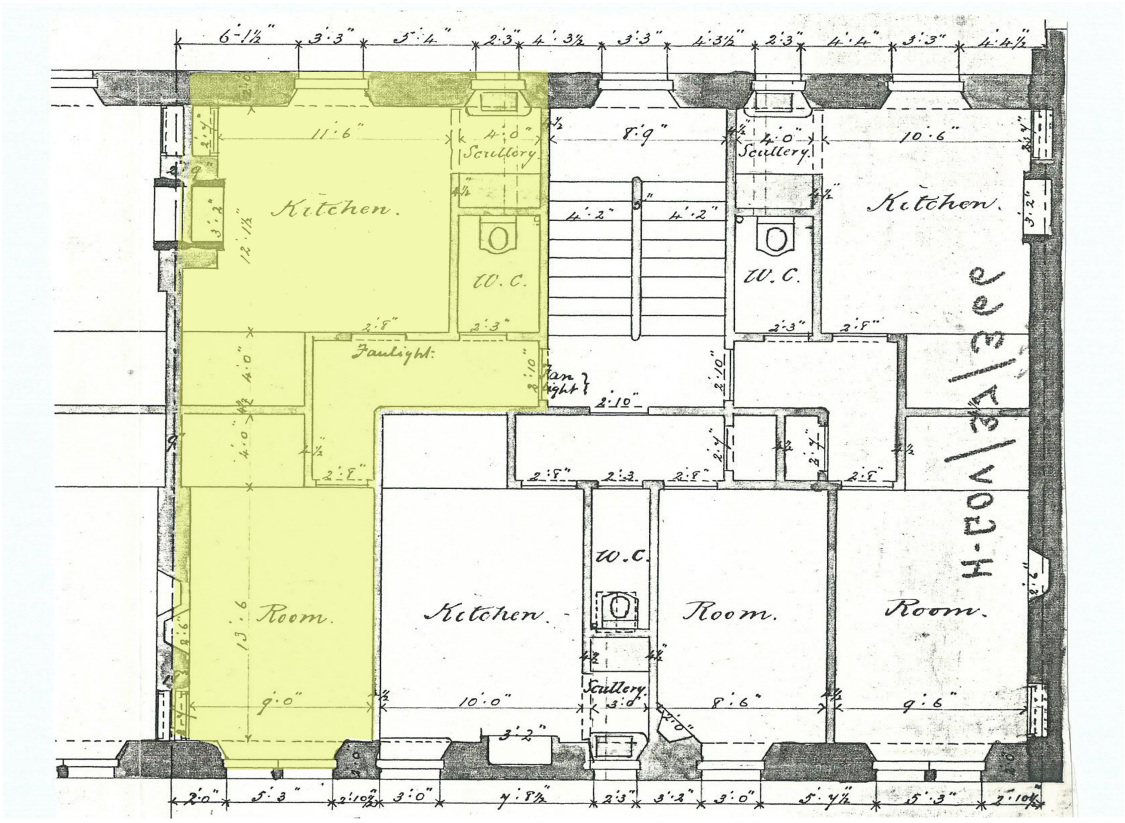


Figure 58:106 Plantation Street, Govan, 1960.

Childhood tenement flat 1960s / 70s

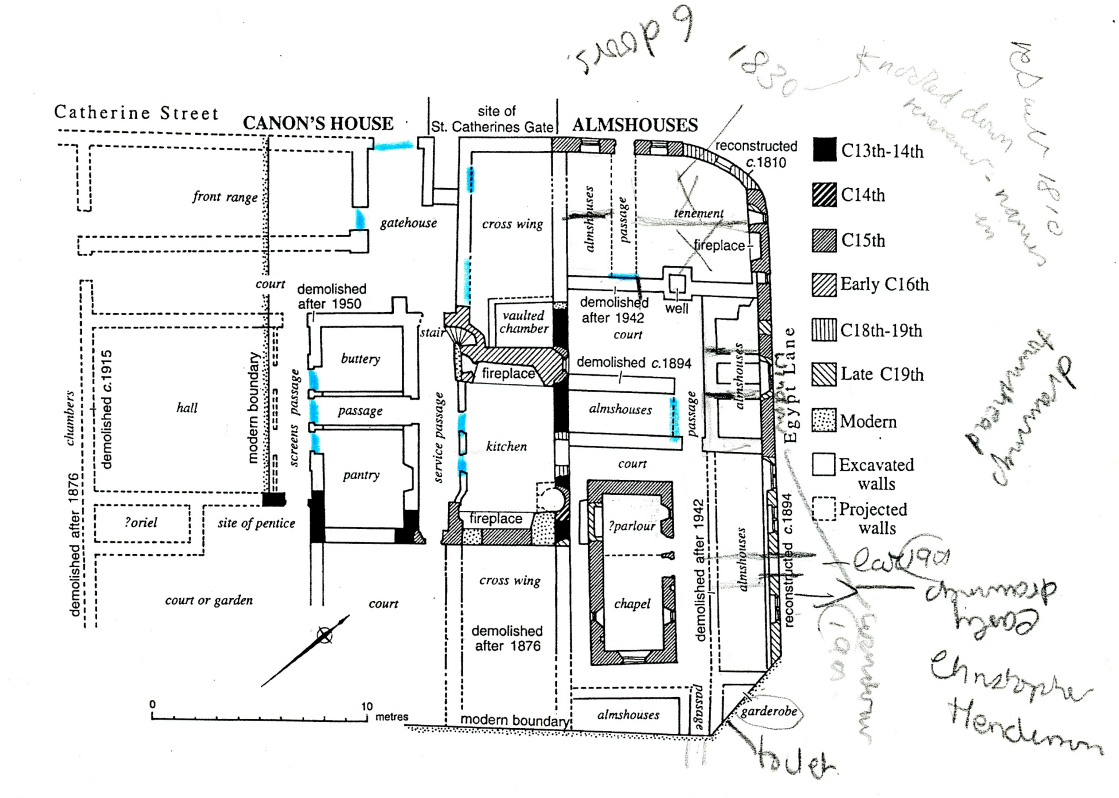


Figure 59: St Catherine's Almshouse room layout, 1810

Figure 60: Marking Time, Launch event, 2005

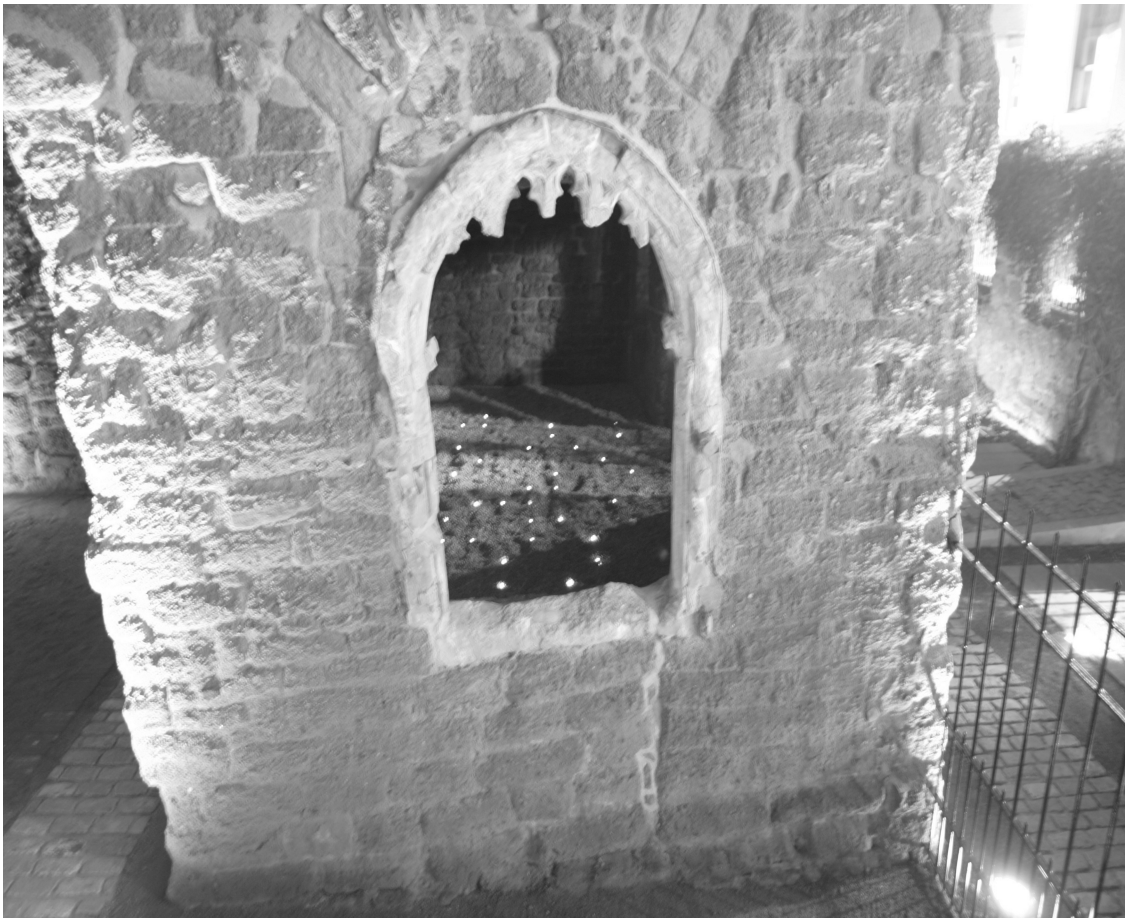


Figure 61: Marking Time, Chapel space LEDs, 2005

Figure 62: Marking Time doors illuminated using fibre optics, 2005

Figure 63: Marking Time, day time view, 2005

Figure 64: Marking Time, detail

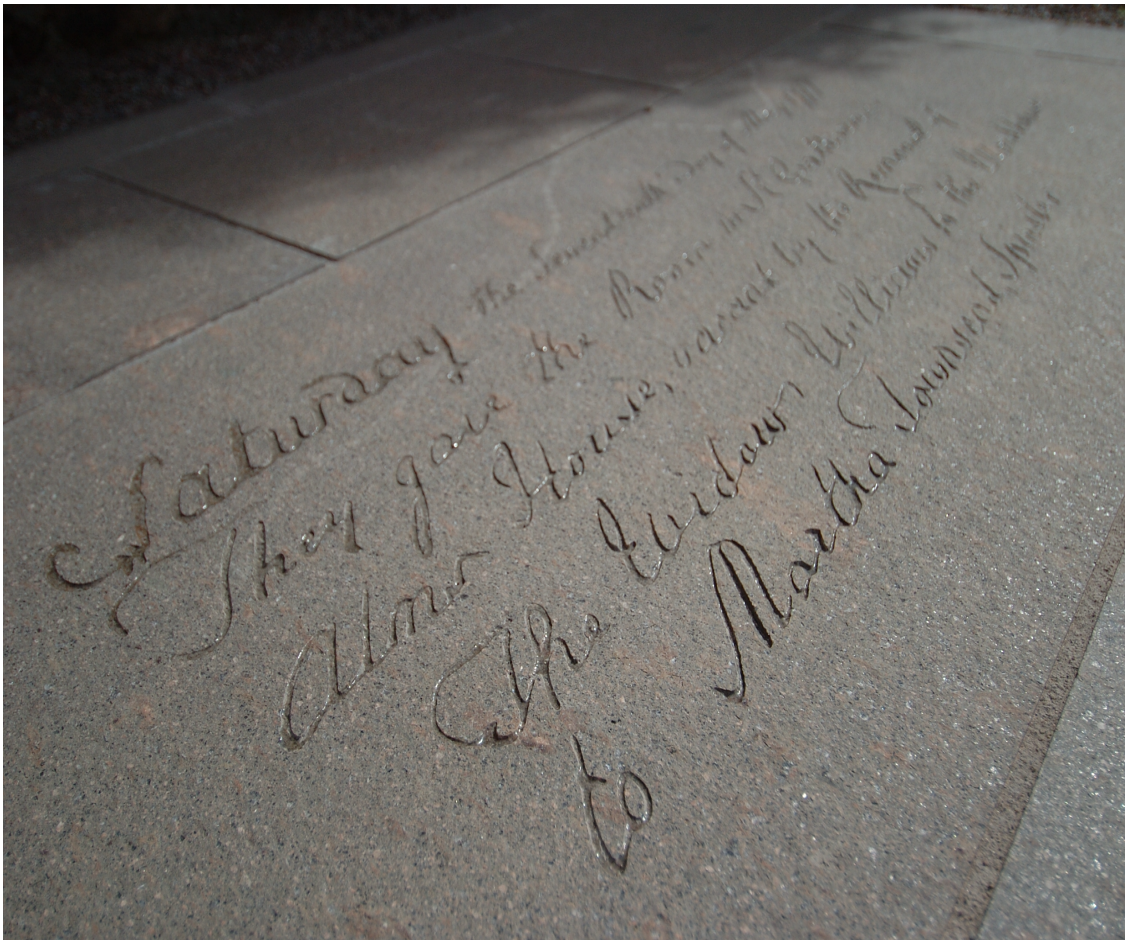


Figure 65: Marking Time, etched text, Porphyry stone

Friday and Saturday 22.nd and 23.d December 1809

They ordered the Chapter Clerk to give notice
m.rs Holmes to quit the house, and
when she has quitted they ordered the
Surveyor to pull down the house and to
lay the Scite of it into the Street

Figure 66:Text taken from Chapter Acts Books

Figure 67: Model construction for chapel lighting, 2004

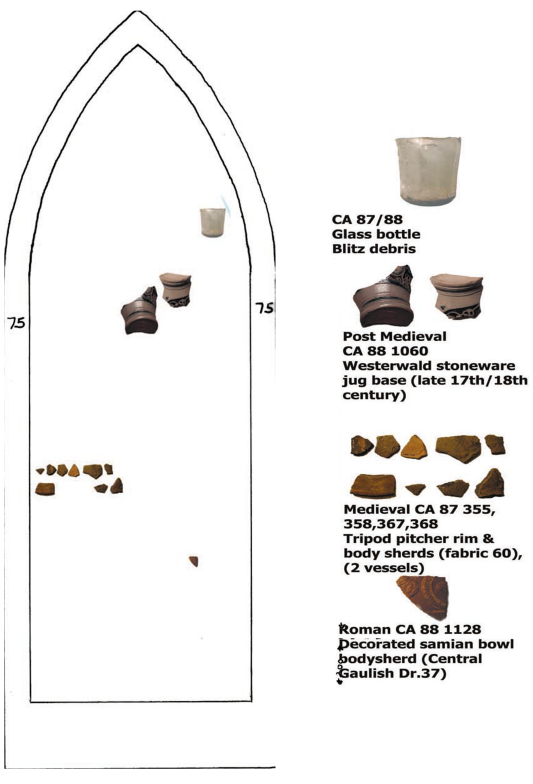


Figure 68: Drawing 1of 9 ‘finds’ layout drawings

Figure 69: Hour Glass fabricators meeting to ‘sign off’ doors

Contextualisation

During my time working on **Marking Time** I found that most work on ancient listed historic monuments had been carried out solely by architects, mainly preserving and preventing further decay. From a study of 30 listed buildings, my work was the only example of an artist responding to the socio-historical context. (Littlefield and Lewis 2007). Architects outside UK were more ambitious, for instance Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum extension in Berlin where he was employed to describe the social, political and cultural experience of the Jewish people. The following are some of the few examples where artists were commissioned to create both permanent and temporary interventions within historic sites up until 2005.

Martha Fleming and **Lynn Lapointe** worked collaboratively between 1982 -1987 in Montreal and New York making temporary works in response to abandoned buildings. The abandoned Corona Vaudeville theatre was the perfect focus for exploring meeting points between 'social marginalisation and the society of the spectacle'. (Fleming 1997) **Alison Marchant's** Trace (2005) was a photographic installation in Neckinger Mills London, which once processed leather for production where the images were viewed from the street. Intrinsic to **Marchant's** practice as an artist are the historical and social contexts of urban change and in particular how these affect women.

Dan Dubowitz's installation of **The Peeps** (2003) which the public happened upon when passing through the streets of Ancoats, Manchester. The 'peep holes' looked into spaces such as old tunnels, a disused toilet, a spinning governor and a bellow tower. **Janet Hodgson** who created **The Pits** (2005) for Canterbury, sandblasted archaeological drawings into York stone pavement which mapped the archaeological finds of ancient rubbish beneath the site.

Martin Richman and **Tony Cooper** (2003-2006) produced a lighting scheme to create a relationship between two important listed buildings in London; All Souls Church, a Grade I listed building, and for the Grade II* listed Broadcasting House. Their scheme focused on the architectural structure and motifs of the neoclassical Church, as well as elements of Eric Gill's sculpture of Prospero and Ariel which stands above the entrance to Broadcasting House.

The protection of historic sites is the ultimate goal of both local Councils and English Heritage and fencing off these sites seems to be the easiest and cheapest solution to safeguard ancient monuments. Examples where this has been done include Stonehenge and the Baths of Caracalla (where Shelley wrote Prometheus Unbound).

Conservation is a lengthy process and very costly – 'In the case of listed works and public art it may be the case that a proposal requires both listed building consent and planning permission, so early engagement with the local authority and Historic England is advisable.' (Government 1990)

Marking Time had to achieve both listed building consent and planning permission involving both the local council and English Heritage. This was a long drawn out process which usually developers want to avoid – as delays cost them more money. Land Securities, the commissioners of the work, were also developers who nevertheless recognised the value of an "all embracing public art strategy", with the artists giving their input as part of the design team so that the programme of artworks evolved in tandem … resulting in a cohesive and integrated approach'' (Securities 2008)

This was a very different approach to most local councils who don't necessary have the funds, so the easiest option for them is to fence off sites and simply protect them.

"The heritage values of places were seen as often both multiple and mutable. Heritage practitioners therefore needed to become advocates and enablers as well as conservators, particularly in relation to the values attached to places by the communities that identify with them". The European Framework Convention on *The Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* now places heritage in this wider political and social context. This approach has yet to be endorsed by the UK (Antiquities 2005)

Most of post war commissioned public art was celebratory, memorial, often figurative stand-alone sculptures. The planning system changed at the end of 2008 which had an impact on the provision of public art 'if we follow the history of public art – it is clear the Britain has not seen the value of commissioning art in public places… whilst it is acceptable to commission an architect to perform a purely utilitarian task, it is not acceptable to commission an artist without giving freedom for critical thinking and creativity.' (Banks 2009)

Timescales:

1982: The creation of publicly funded public art commissioning organisations came about after an Art and Architecture conference which promoted the ***Percent for Art scheme***

1985 Broadgate London, Major private sector funding commissioned stand-alone sculptures

1988 The Arts Council of Great Britain had failed to establish Percent for Art as a requirement within regeneration, health and education projects. This was unlike the situation in other countries where Percent for Art was part of public policy legislation. Robert Carnwath QC: "Planners and developers could only be encouraged to fund public art". (Ixia, 2011)

Stalemate Until 2006:

2006: change begins to happen for public art, Percent for Art and the planning system Ixia's research identifies that approximately 61% of local planning authorities in England now promote public art. Local authorities had come to believe that public art could enhance the built environment to support social, economic and environmental objectives. **Good design = good communities** became the mantra. The government reported that public art was the most common 'planning obligation' within major urban centres. Public art policies and strategies were developed and implemented by specific members of staff or consultants within local planning authorities.

2009: "Developers could be required to pay for public art in future projects, and failure to act could be a good enough reason to refuse planning permission". This replaces the advice given in 1988. (Ixia, 2011)

2011: Regeneration and the Planning System and Processes are beginning to change:

- •Simplification of procedures.
- •Greater community involvement.
- • 'Pooling' of funding from development sites to be spent on 'community infrastructure' projects, including cultural initiatives.

Antony Gormley was commissioned by Gateshead Council and this project was funded, in the main, by the National Lottery. Gateshead Council now claim that the 'Angel of the North' was the first step in the creation of 6,000 jobs and £1bn of investment. Culture, including public art, was and is seen as key to the successful regeneration of places.

Marking Time was responding specifically to a heritage site as part of a conservation project. This was a unique situation. If one looks at what was happening at the time it is easy to recognise why little public art work within heritage sites was being commissioned.

The project was initiated towards the end of a long public art battle between the Arts Council and Government. It would be useful to understand some key milestones which led to the

making of **Marking Time**.

Figure 70: Jewish Museum extension, Libeskind. Berlin,1992

Figure 71: Corona Vaudeville theatre, 1982 -1987, Martha Fleming and Lynn Lapointe

Figure 72: Trace Neckinger Mills, Alison Marchant, 2005

Figure 73:The Peeps, Dan Dubowitz, 2003

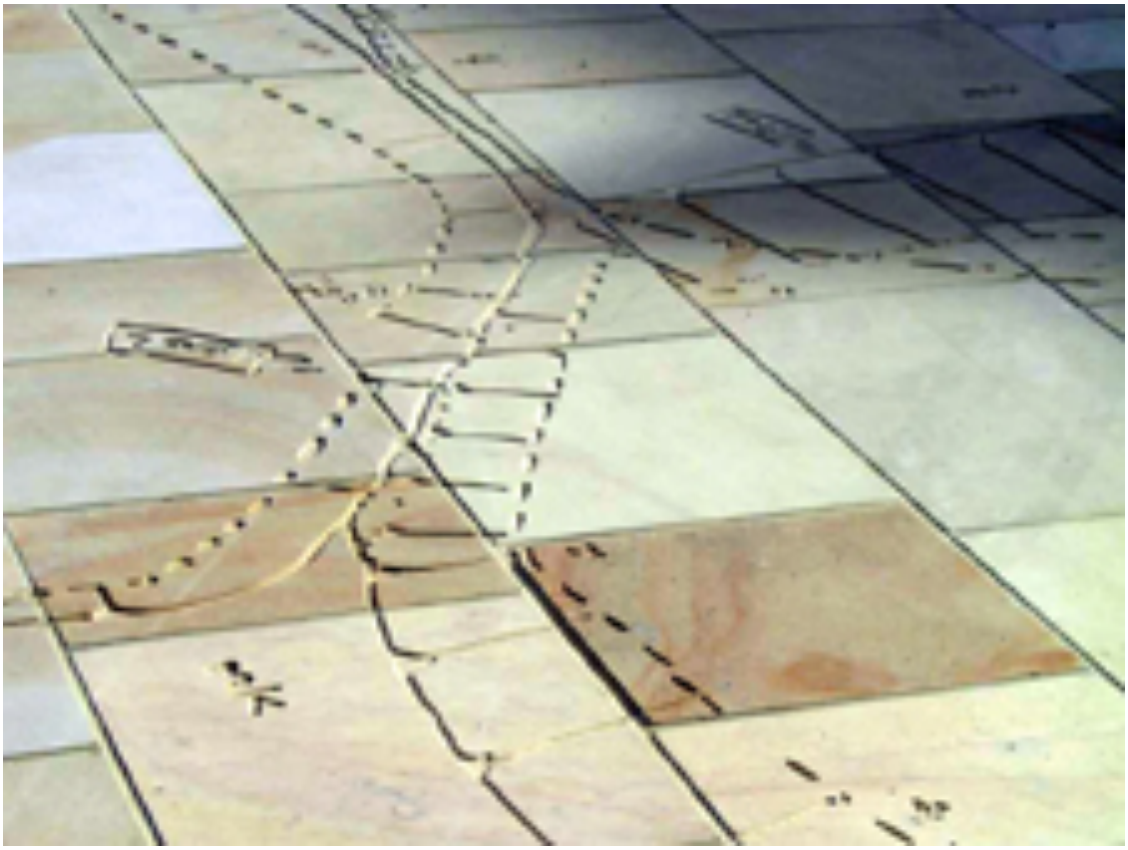


Figure 74: The Pits Janet Hodgson. Canterbury, 2005

Figure 75: All Souls Church Martin Richman and Tony Cooper, 2003-2006

Figure 76: Stonehenge

Figure 77: Baths of Caracalla

Figure 78: Angel of the North, Antony Gormley,1998

Reflection and Discussion

When I first applied for this commission, **Marking Time** I had no idea how complicated the process would be and knew little of the many hurdles ahead. The development of my research meant frequent engagement in a different kind of negotiation which involved endless presentations of ideas to councillors, English Heritage, fabricators, planners, developers, designers, architects and engineers. I learned a great deal about what is involved in installing a permanent work in a public space in particular with regard to thinking creatively in relation to technical detailing and installation

I believe I was fortunate to be supported by a developer who had vision and could see the benefit of public art, especially at a time when councils had no power to activate funding for art within private developments.

Case study 4

PRIVATE VIEWS MADE PUBLIC
(2010-2017)

Please reference SUPPORTING MATERIALS
(Appendix 4) Pages: 117-133

CASE STUDY FOUR: PRIVATE VIEWS MADE PUBLIC (2010 -2017)

Figure 79 Cheshire hillforts

This residency was commissioned by Ian Banks, Director of Atoll Ltd., and Ellie Soper, Project Manager of Cheshire West and Chester's Habitats and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme. Ellie Soper believed that bringing on board an artist would introduce art as a means to give voice to and strengthen communities. **Private Views Made Public** was a three-year Heritage Lottery Funded project focusing on the chain of six historically important hilltop Iron Age forts that lines Cheshire's Sandstone Ridge. This part of the project was also supported by Cheshire West and Chester's Rural Arts Officers. **Private Views Made Public** (6 time-lapse Cinema HD projections) was shown at Screen Deva (2011 - a programme of film events and digital media projects) in partnership with FACT and Habitats and Hillforts; Liverpool Biennial (September 2011), Lutyen's Crypt at Metropolitan Cathedral; and a DVD with publication was produced by Habitats and Hillforts Partnership and English Heritage. It is currently being shown in Chester as part of Grosvenor Museum Digital Open with artists David Cotterell and Nayan Kulkarni (April –September 2017)

Background

"An opportunity for an artist to work in residence alongside archaeologists, ecologists and local people on the habitats and hillforts scheme would be a key output of the project". (Habitat and Hillfort project brief. Appendix 3, p.111) Using an Artist's Residency is another means of interacting with and encouraging the local communities within their local area and specifically with a connection to the iron age hillforts and their surrounding habitats.
Rural arts officer, Emma Knight, described the aims of the commission within the project brief: 'With 'understanding Hillforts' the artist would have access to primary documents with a view to providing an alternative method and manner of interpretation. Working with archaeologists would allow in-depth interpretation of both process and subject matter. There are a number of possible ways in which we could show the results for the residency. For instance, there could be an exhibition of the artist's findings; a commission, inspired by the process, the finding and the locality; a publication profiling the residency and the resulting commission. All of these would serve to provide a creative interpretation of understanding hillforts, restoring hillfort heritage and how they relate to the local, and wider community".

Development of the Project

There was something about the invisibility of the hillforts and their depth of history which I found enchanting. The hillforts have been there since the Iron Age, but no one can say with any certainty what they were used for. All that remain of the hillforts today are a series of bumps and hollows in the grass. Yet the eroded ramparts have overlooked communities below for well over 2000 years. Clues to the history of these ancient monuments remain hidden beneath the ground. I walked and travelled the distance of the sandstone ridge for several weeks getting to know the landscape and understanding the communities around the hillforts. I worked with both the archaeologist and ecologist who had already made links with people along the ridge to help me gain contact with private landowners who lived adjacent to the hillforts. It was also intriguing to discover that these historic areas could only be accessed via a public path and certain 'premier' views were on land exclusively owned by private landowners. I decided that I wanted to film the hillforts from a vantage point that was inaccessible to the general public so that this could be shared with the general public. This meant gaining access to private land along the ridge. There were six *Private views* looking up onto hills at Helsby, Woodhouse (Frodsham), Eddisbury, Kelsborrow, Beeston and Maiden Castle (Bickerton) that I wanted to access in order to produce a series of time-lapse films throughout the year.

Aims of Project:

- To negotiate with people whose land has a spectacular view to encourage them to share it with others - panoramic hill-fort views that people from 'outside' could not access or didn't know existed.
- Views up onto Helsby, Woodhouse, Eddisbury, Kelsborrow, Beeston, Maiden Castle filmed from specific dwellings (pubs, private homes, farms.). The views to be filmed using time-lapse recording, on one day four times during the year from sunrise to sunset.
- Filmed during: Spring, Autumn, Winter and Summer showing dramatic changes within the landscape at different times of the year from a private perspective, then making these changes public.

In order for the time-lapse to work I needed electricity to run my equipment so developing

relationships with locals was crucial to the success of the work. I was fortunate in that each landowner was interested in supporting the project and gave me not only access to their land but electricity to power my equipment during each set-up. I needed to use or bring some form of shelter for the kit and that would also be accessible during each season and offer a good view of each hillfort.

Below are some diary entries made during my early visits. The owners of the view of each of the six hillforts were a diverse and interesting mix of people:

Sandy, at Beeston, has erected 10 small huts, installed with light and heating, for ten nervous feral cats. I needed to be careful not to disturb her cats and pitch my tent a good distance from her cat sheds.

Bob, who works on the farm where the film is taking place at Helsby, looked through the viewfinder and commented (whilst the camera was being set up for the summer shot,) 'But there's nothing there'

Rob, a farmer, brought me hot chocolate on my arrival to set up the tent.

Chris, Lesley and their son Tom, who are dedicated dairy farmers at Woodhouse, work in an isolated but beautiful location. Here I pitched a tent to film throughout the year. Lesley was the first woman farmer who shared with me many stories about her feelings of isolation and the hardships of dairy farming.

Mike and Clare are based at Kelsborrow farm; their family had lived in the area for generations. Their view looks across the Cheshire Plain, Liverpool and the Welsh mountains. Mike kindly cut a window in his chicken shed for the camera.

The view over Eddisbury hill fort is owned by Sue who works as a dietician and Richard who owns a hairdresser's salon in Chester. They have put off moving their shed until the end of the project.

Finally, Darrel and Richard, at Maiden Castle. Richard builds vintage cars and offered me access to their caravan to install my camera.

Figure 80: Hillfort View land owners

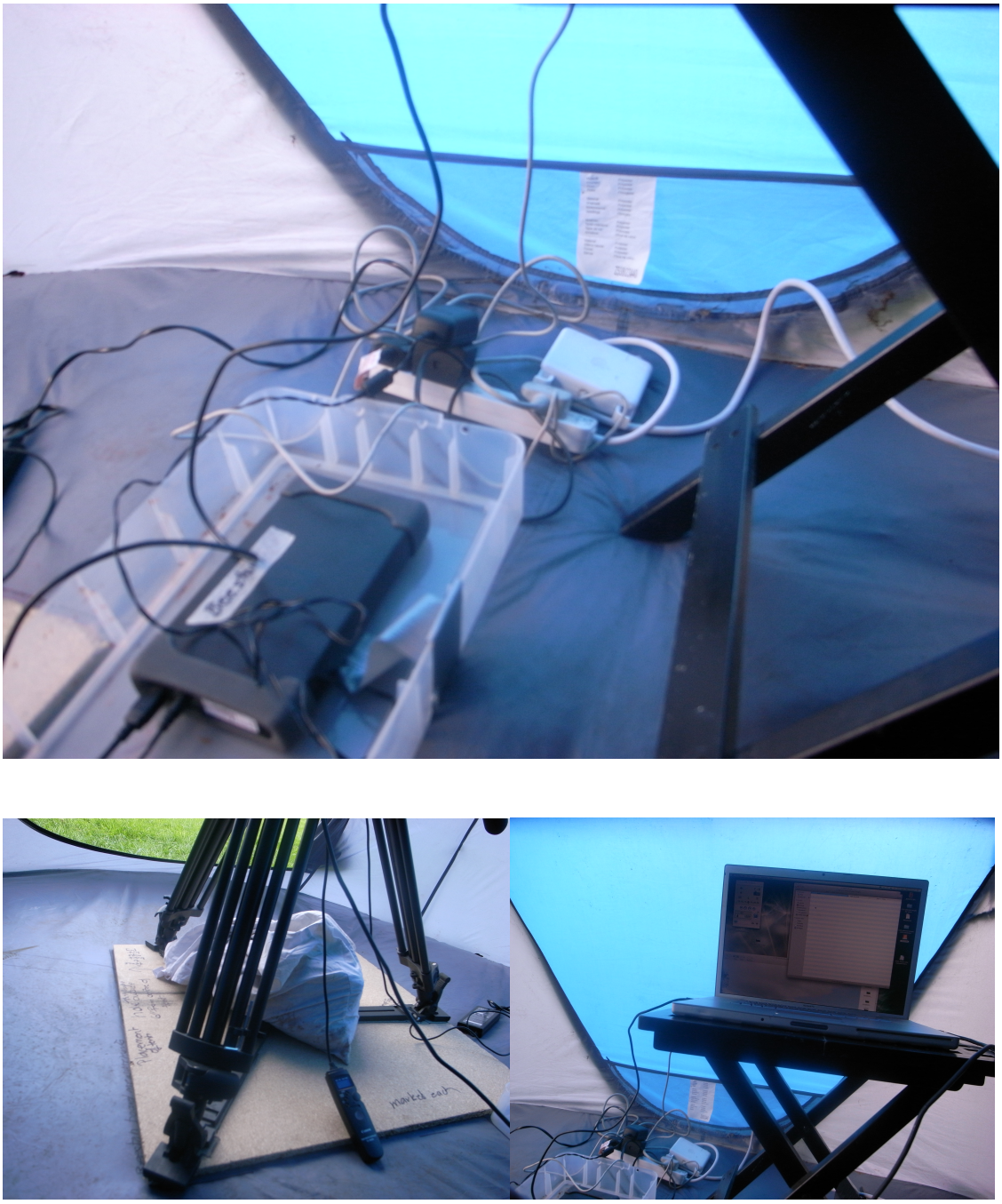


Figure 81: Time-lapse set up

Figure 82: Time-lapse set up 2

Figure 83: Time-lapse set up 3

Figure 84: Time-lapse set up 4

Figure 85: Time-lapse set up 5

Time in every sense plays a significant part in my work. I became mesmerized by these landscapes – not just looking at them but imagining what could once have existed there. I was transfixed by these particular landscapes and recalled a piece of text from Virginia Woolf's diary which inspired me:

"Now is life solid or shifting? I am haunted by the two contradictions. This has gone on for ever; will last forever; goes down to the bottom of the world — this moment I stand on. Also, it is transitory, flying, diaphanous. I shall pass like a cloud on the waves. Perhaps it may be that though we change, one flying after another, so quick, so quick, yet we are somehow successive and continuous, we human beings, and show the light through." (Woolf and Woolf 1978)

The slow yet arduous process of time-lapse cinematography seemed the perfect media to enable me to capture the dramatic changes in light and colour across the seasons. I set up a camera within the grounds of the 6 locations to capture views of each hillfort from sunrise to sunset over a whole day. The process seemed a perfect metaphor for the enduring nature of these mysterious ancient monuments across the centuries. Using devices similar to George Perec, the French writer and philosopher, I used the idea of a frame (a window in a shed, the

opening of a tent flap, a doorway in a caravan) to capture images from each particular position at four different times during the year. What was documented was the slowly changing landscape within the frame. The main difference between my process and Perec's was the media employed, I was using technologies and processes that were not available in the 1970s to capture the infra-ordinary in the same way that he did through his writing. "My intention … was to describe what remains; that which we generally don't notice, which doesn't call attention to itself, which is of no importance: what happens when nothing happens, what passes when nothing passes, except time …and thereby get to the essence of the subject." (Perec and Sturrock 2008).

The camera captured one frame every two seconds so that, by the end of the day, the camera had saved to the hard-drive somewhere between 15,000-17,000 still images at 3504x2336 pixels. Using software, the images were then transferred in real time from the camera to my laptop on site. This process was repeated at six sites during autumn, winter, summer and spring allowing me to capture dramatic changes within the landscape at different times of the year. Setting up and connecting the laptop, camera and hard-drive was both time-consuming and complicated. I had a checklist to ensure that the camera's exposure and positioning was correct and that the software connected to the laptop properly. I used a marked board to ensure that the camera tripod was always set up in exactly the same position in the tent, shed or caravan. It sometimes would take about two hours to install the equipment and ensure that everything was in order before filming even began.

At the end of the year, in post-production, I worked with a total of 384,000 images to produce 6 HD films as final outputs. Each film lasted 40mins.

Figure 86: Private Views Made Public, the Screen Deva Film Festival, 2011

Figure 87: Private Views Made Public, 2011

Lutyens, Metropolitan Cathedral. Liverpool Biennial

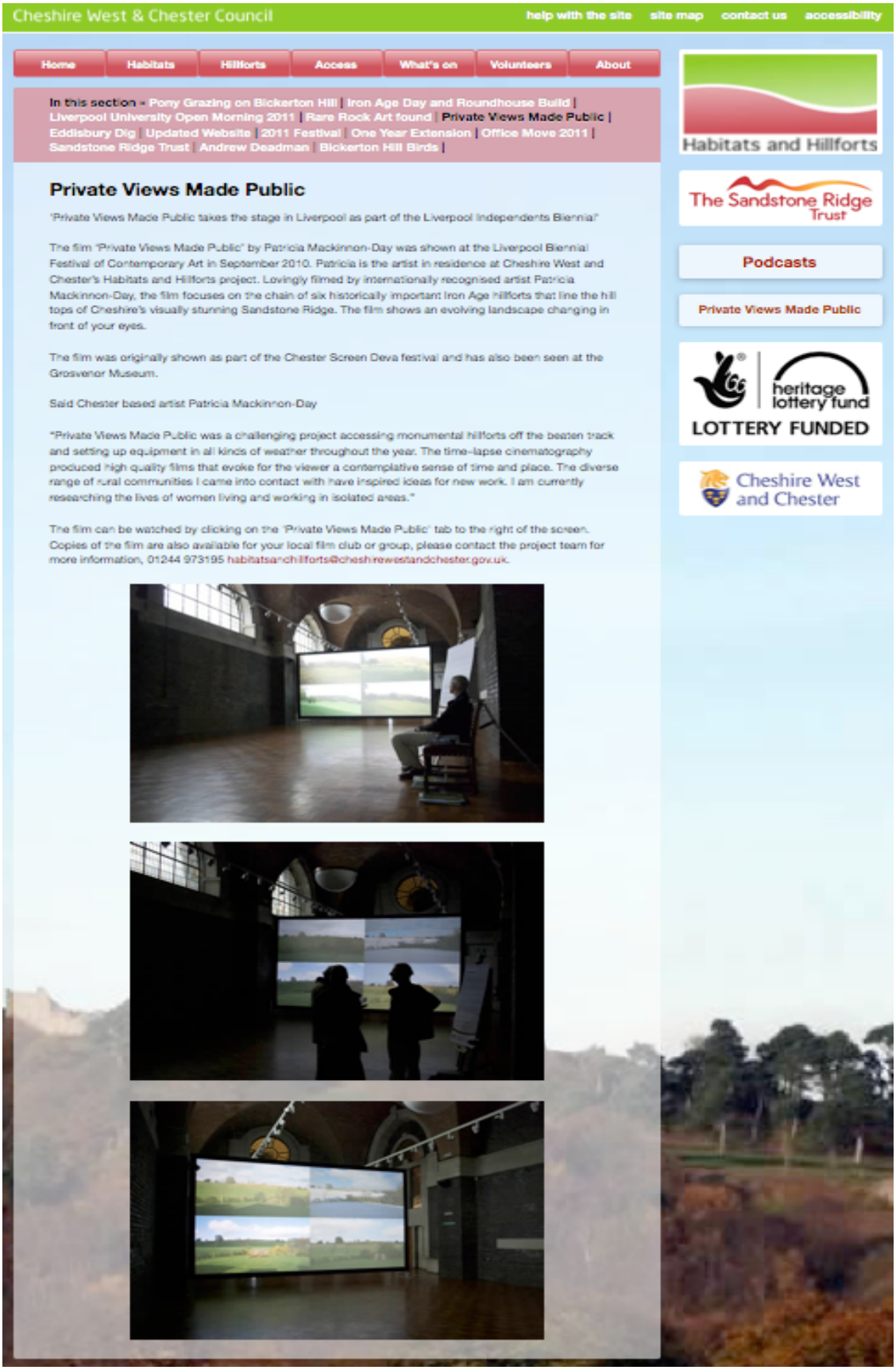


Figure 88: Private Views Made Public flyer. Biennial, 2011

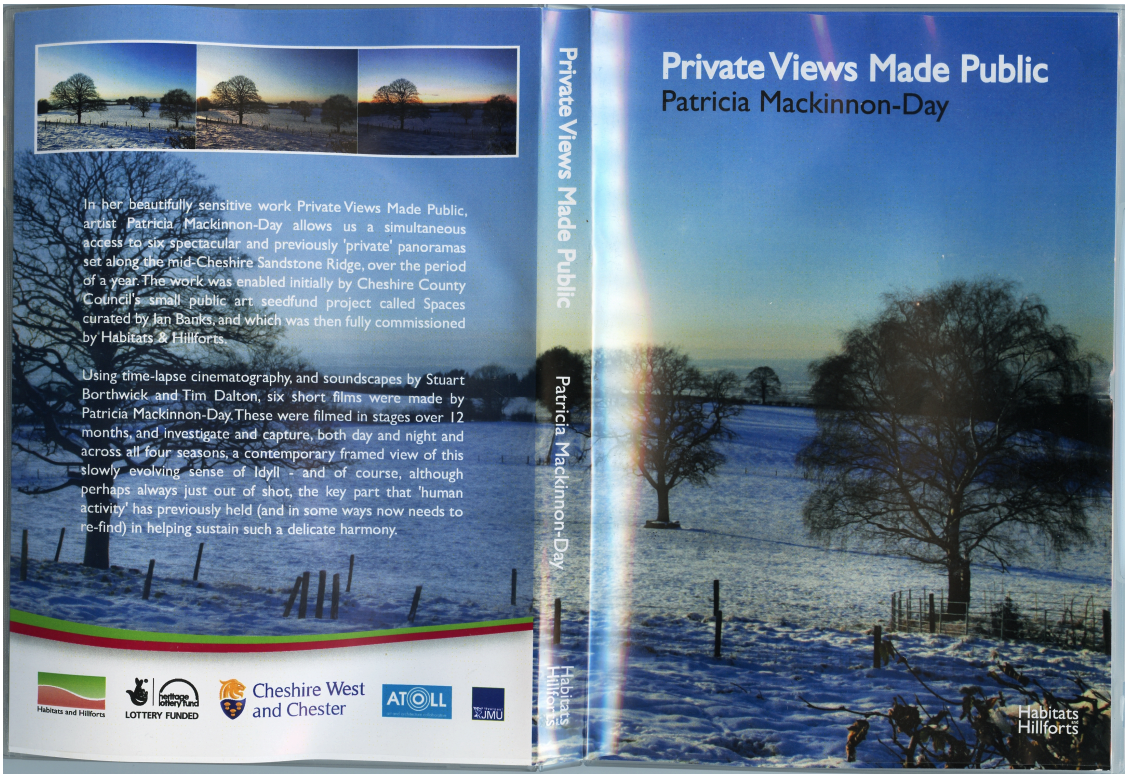


Figure 89: Private Views Made Public DVD and Publication, 2013

Figure 90: Private Views Made Public, 2017, Digital Open, Grosvenor Museum

Contextualization

At the time of producing **Private Views Made Public** I researched other artists from both before and during this period of time who were inspired by landscape. Paul Nash had produced a series of photographic works documenting the hillfort at **Maiden Castle** in the 1940's.
John Latham described his **Niddrie Woman** (1975-76) as 'process sculpture'
This was an **Artist Placement Group** commission by the Scottish Development agency - huge derelict heaps of red shale waste known as 'bings', are found in West and Midlothian near Edinburgh. Over the past four decades their quasi-Martian landscape has become environmentally valuable, offering research opportunities to conservation agencies that may help to permanently preserve them all from the threat of extraction. Latham designated two of the 'bings' as artworks and they have now been officially classed as monuments and are therefore no longer under threat,
Deirdre O'Mahony: 2007; **Cross Land** was a temporary public art work in the Burren, Ireland that examined the ecological and physical effects of changes in regulations in farming practices as evidenced by the growth of hazel scrub in the Burren. **Cross Land** takes the form of a coppiced X or cross. Each arm, 60 metres long and 1.5m wide, was cut through an area of dense scrub near Carron in North Clare. The intervention was intended to generate a dialogue concerning some of the complex issues affecting land use in the area made evident in the spread of the scrub.
Mariele Neudecker's exhibition **Extraordinary Measures** (2010) responds to site through ideas of scale, to create seamless interventions into historic landscapes and buildings. The work was installed at Belsay Hall Castle, Northumberland, owned and managed by English Heritage. **Tank Works**, produced by Neudecker started with source materials that included romantic paintings and photographs, creating environments that attempted to interpret the 2D imagery in three-dimensional space. The representational pieces were contained entirely within glass tanks filled to the brim with water that also contained fibreglass mountains, model ships, and other sculptural objects. She also added chemicals that provided an element of atmosphere while also forming a sort of contained climate that changed gradually over the course of days, weeks, and months.

Figure 91: Maiden Castle hillfort, Dorset 1940

photograph 1940 Paul Nash

Figure 92: Niddrie Woman 1975 -76, John Latham, Scotland

Figure 93: Cross Land, Deirdre O'Mahony, 2007

Figure 94: Extraordinary Measures, Mariele Neudecker, 2010

Significance and Impact

Private Views Made Public was described in the Heritage Lottery Fund evaluation report as having "really caught people's imagination" in comparison to the traditional habitats leaflets which told a 'story which had been told many times before' about historic sites.

'Interpreting the landscape of the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge through different artistic media has enabled the project to engage new audiences with their landscape heritage and broadened the perspective of this landscape for those used to approaching it from a more traditional historical or ecological stance … **Private Views Made Public** (was) a great success and … I will recommend that HLF encourages other projects to introduce artistic elements as a means of audience engagement and increasing understanding of heritage. The project was successful in its integration as one element of the main programme and as such exceeded expectations.' (Habitats and Hillforts Evaluation, 2012)

There was also positive feedback from the commissioner, Chair of Habitats and Hillforts, Dr Andrew Deadman: "This is the first major arts project funded by the Habitats and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme and we are delighted with the outcome. We have also funded major archaeological investigations of four of the Iron Age hillforts on the Sandstone Ridge to learn more about these 2,500-year-old structures. There is still much to learn. Patricia's evocative film brilliantly captures the essence of the hillforts where their surrounding landscape, changing with the seasons, has changed since their construction. With the landscape, the hillforts themselves remain a static, almost timeless element providing a glimpse into a distant part of our history" (Deadman, A, Dr, 2012)

This 'artist in residence' project led on to a new body of work entitled **Rural Voices** and a successful ACE funding bid of £10,000. This was also acknowledged in the HLF evaluation as a significant spin-off activity. **Private Views Made Public,** when exhibited as part of the Liverpool Biennial, was described as a highlight of the Biennial by art critic Ian Jackson on the Art in Liverpool website with a direct link to the video. (Art in Liverpool, 2010). The work was also advertised on the Cheshire West and Chester council, Sandstone Ridge Trust and Habitats and Hillforts websites and podcasts.

It was also included as an Impact case study (*Arts Projects in the Public Realm)* for LJMU Art 2014 REF describing the impact of my work which: "has fostered networks and connections for participating audiences. It also offers social networks that inform users about other people's

cultures. …created opportunities for local audiences to talk about art which is key to improving the reception of public art in the social and cultural life of the city. The research has sought to deepen audiences' engagement … enhance their image and perceptions of contemporary art. This has been enabled, in practical terms, by improving access to and participation in cultural events." (LJMU, 2014)

Reflection and Discussion

This was also my first ever experience of working within an agricultural context. It was through this project that I met the women (farmer's wives) which in turn led me on to a new project entitled **Rural Voices**. My idea of the countryside as an idyllic escape was quickly shattered as I gained knowledge of the various economic, psychological and physical hardships experienced by those working on the land, especially the isolation felt by the women.

It was also the first time I had worked with time-lapse photography on this scale. In my studio, I had successfully produced a series of short time-lapse films and naively thought the process of making **Private Views Made Public** would be quite straightforward. I quickly discovered the complications of working outside compared to indoors using a controlled lighting set up. Also, I discovered that I would require specialist knowledge, kit and software to produce a series of 24 x 12 hour time-lapse sequences. Therefore, when my proposed idea was accepted by the commissioners I had a little understanding of the magnitude of the task ahead. Nevertheless, I managed to deliver the project by the deadline and within budget but instead of the contracted 46 paid days the project took me 184 unpaid days of my own time to complete. I have no regrets about this as this additional time allowed me to acquire new skills and a fuller understanding of time-lapse processes and software. I also soon discovered that photographers working with time-lapse professionally were not that keen to 'share the knowledge.' My knowledge was partly acquired from watching You Tube videos (which offered fragments of the process) and visits to photography forums. I also learned a great deal through trial and error both on-site and during post-production. Unexpected problems or delays would occur, for example, when the farmer would accidently unplug the power source which meant starting again from scratch. I learned how to organise and present an enormous quantity of digital material and I invested in a 1 TB hard drive for each location. Converting thousands of

still images to QuickTime videos could take several days and an image in the wrong number sequence could halt the whole process. I would then have to search through the entire 16,000 images to locate the missing or mis-placed image and begin the rendering again from the beginning. My tenacity and focus pulled me through and although it felt at times like a technical nightmare I learned a great deal from the process and the quality of the final outcomes was very well received. One of the most challenging and difficult aspects of this project was taking the films to non-art locations. There was a mixed reaction to the quietly meditative quality of the films – they didn't work for everyone. As a result of this feedback I decided that I needed to introduce audio into the work. Having made a connection with the communities, there seemed to be a lot more to say and explore with this work. I felt that another layer of narrative could be added about the women I had met during my visits to the hillforts. I therefore decided to apply for Arts Council funding to produce **Rural Women,** my next project.

Case study 5

RURAL VOICES

(2011-2018)

Please reference SUPPORTING MATERIALS
(Appendix 5) Pages: 135-150

RURAL VOICES (2011-2018)

CASE STUDY FIVE: RURAL VOICES (2011-2018)

– from Depmore to Shocklach

Figure 95: Rural Voices portraits, 2011

Rural Voices – from Depmore to Shocklach (2011 – 2018) was funded by The Arts Council of England, Cheshire Rural Touring Arts network, Cheshire Community Action and Habitats and Hillforts. This project presented a unique collaboration with nine women farm workers living around and on the Cheshire ridge. The project grew out of **Private Views Made Public** where I identified that women were a largely unrepresented community.

Although the previous project is now complete, I have chosen to continue this research embracing a new and ongoing journey of discovery and investigation as I believe there is much more to be uncovered and made visible within this subject matter. It is still at an early stage of development and therefore doesn't yet offer the same depth of reflection as with the other case studies. My desire to unpack the mysteries and complexity of rural life, particularly from the perspective and relative ignorance of a city dweller, will take a longer period of time. My research will continue with five Cumbrian women farmers embracing the richness of their life and work. Women farmers and farmers' wives seem to be some of the most elusive figures in agrarian history. I have both admiration and respect for the work ethic of the women, their labour on the farm (and in the farmhouse) that has been largely unpaid, unrecognised and therefore unrecorded. Some historians have acknowledged the contribution made by farmers' wives, but no attempt has yet been made by an artist to examine in detail the whole life experience of these women from their own perspective and to make that experience visible to a wider audience.

I believe that my project will attempt to redress this balance through an in-depth exploration that will involve the collaboration of these five women and will provide a unique insight into a little known aspect of the rural experience.

Rural Voices – from Depmore to Shocklach, together with **Private Views made Public** was shown as part of a Rural Touring Network programme. Screenings were seen by almost 35,000 people during its tours to seven non-art venues. The work was experienced by a very mixed audience of art-goers and non-art-goers alike with some very positive feedback in the visitors' book. Venues included: Frodsham Arts Centre and Peckforton Castle, as well as in barns, village halls and schools, on a rural touring library bus, even in public houses and farm sheds across Cheshire. The installations consisted of two large–scale projections with a soundtrack of the farming women talking about a range of social, economic and political issues relating to their

lives at home, on the farm and in the local community. The project culminated in a bringing together of the nine women for a celebratory meal and cookery master class (using their produce) with Cheshire chef Gary Usher.

The outcomes and research gathered during this project contributed to the forming of the **Sandstone Ridge Trust** and was disseminated at the **Desired Futures3 –People and Society** conference at MIMA, Middlesborough Institute of Modern Art (2012) and at a screening at the **New Rural - research seminar for artists,** Merz Barn, Cumbria 25th July 2014. I have also recently been invited by Lakeland Arts to show **Rural Voices** and develop the project further with the situation of women farmers in Cumbria.

Background

Through the work involved with **Private Views Made Public** I had already been introduced to women who worked on the farms along the ridge. I wanted to understand what is involved for a woman working on a farm, which meant spending long periods of time working alongside them. As a city dweller, I envied them the tranquil pace of rural life but I soon discovered that the reality for most of the women was one of isolation, poor resources and economic hardship.

Development of the Project

I decided to produce film portraits of the women – they were all very clear how they wanted to be represented- as strong, even formidable farm workers. They were angered by the images conveyed on many agricultural websites, where in any case, women are virtually non-existent. The websites showed images of men working, negotiating or discussing rural issues; women were seen as objects of desire, farmers' wives, (even on websites for 'women farmers') felt they were portrayed as 'glamour girls' who had not done any manual work. To give the women control over the material filmed I decided to use the method of Photo Novella, (a process of empowerment) by giving each woman a camera to document their activities independently during the day so that we could discuss this together at a later date. This enabled them to

explore, during their working day, thoughts around the social, political, cultural, historical and economic issues related to farming and their own lives. All the women, at the end of this process, were keen to articulate their views and frustrations as 'invisible' members within the world of agriculture. It was evident to me that farm work and their lives in general were full of pressures. They felt burdened with paperwork and administration as well as domestic duties. A recent report in the 'Farmers' Weekly' stated that: "61% of women thought they were rarely or never treated equally compared to their male counterparts", (King 2014) At the end of the year all the women came together at a Cheshire restaurant for a celebratory meal. The chef, Gary Usher – who had spent time with them all on their farms learning about their produce– delivered a master-class using their produce – beef, cheese and fruits. I felt this was an appropriate end to the project; a celebration and a way of saying 'thank you' to the women involved.

Figure 96: Rural Voices: 2012, Victoria Mill, Congleton

Figure 97: Rural Voices: The Milking Shed, 2012, Saighton Lane Farm, Cheshire

Figure 98: Rural Voices: from Depmore to Shocklach, 2012 Farm Shed, Mollington. Cheshire

Figure 99: Rural Voices: Master Class, 2012, Sticky Walnut restaurant

Figure 100: Rural Women of Cumbria, 2017

Digital mock-up, exhibition installation at Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Cumbria 2018

Contextualisation

Prior to 2011 – 2013 there were many rural art projects but they were mostly concerned with male farmers. Artists Tony Hill, Kirsty Waterworth, Gregg Wagstaff and Tessa Bunney spent nine months as artists in residence making artwork in response to the agricultural practices of hill farmers, **(**all male) in **Focus on Farmers**, (2003-2005). This was through an organisation called AHA (Auneheadarts) who commissioned projects for rural communities in Dartmoor between 1997 – 2010. http://www.auneheadarts.org.uk/archive/site/projects/wif/index.html

In 2008 Tot Foster, Anthea Nicholson, Jennie Hayes produced a work entitled **Women in Farming**. There are many similarities between this intervention and my own –especially in relation to the time spent with the women. Each artist focused on the life and work of one farmer whereas I explored and developed relationships with nine. The final outcomes were shown in a gallery context which brought with it lots of promotional opportunities for the artists which is evidenced on their website. Their final outcomes were diaries, blogs and photographic images of the lives of the women working on the farms. In contrast, my work was shown in rural non-art contexts rather than galleries.

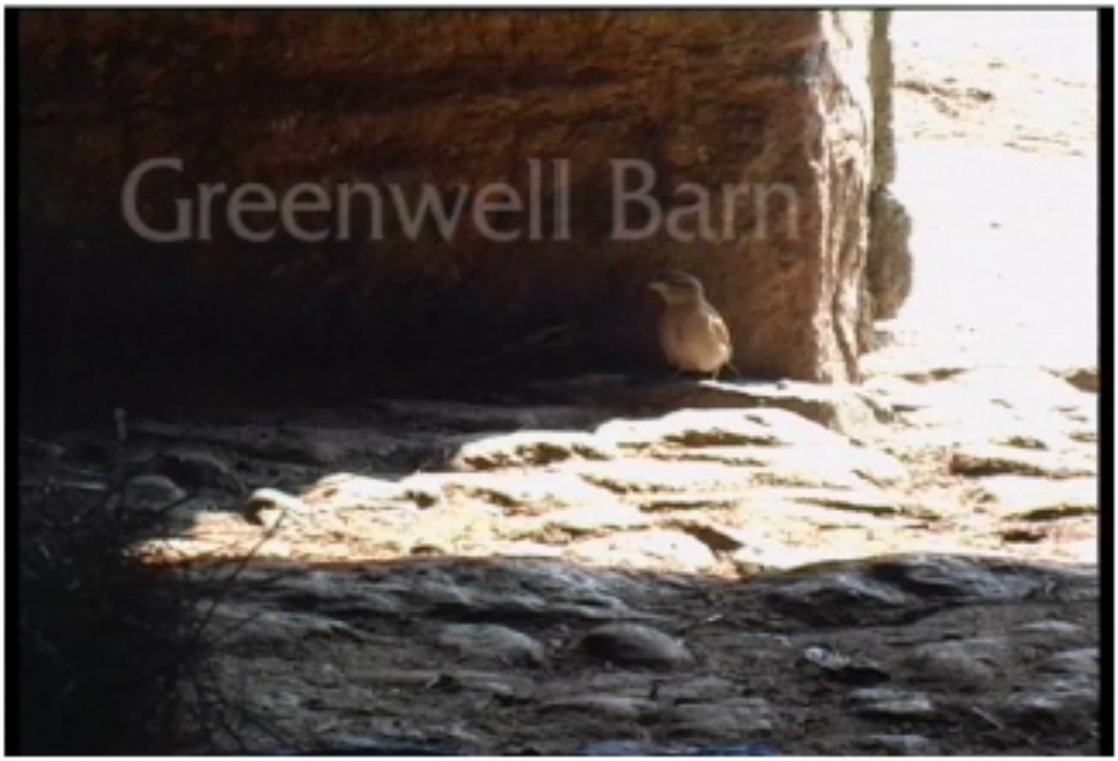


Figure 101: Focus on Farmers T Hill, K. Waterworth, G. Wagstaff. T. Bunney, 2003-2005.

Figure 102: Women in Farming, Tot Foster, Anthea Nicholson, Jennie Hayes, 2008

Figure 103: Making a Meal of Things, Dane Sutherland, 2010

‘Politics has the function of bringing people out of isolation into community’ according to one stirring manifesto from a relatively distant time and place, and although the local issues of one situation may seem equally distant, they also reveal a common desire to generate and practice in the ‘means of finding meaning in social life’.

– Dane Sutherland, The Makers’ Meal Newspaper

Significance and Impact

Rural Voices was installed in numerous non-art venues and each time received lots of positive written feedback from both art and non-art visitors. Barbara Jeff, who visited the exhibition installed at the Old Mill in Congleton wrote:

“This was interesting because it was about women, and their perspective on their farming life – we’re used to the male farmer and his role, but the women’s contribution which goes on into old age, as does the man’s – is often overlooked. What struck me particularly was the women farmer who saw herself as an ‘enabler – as always’. Patrick Pover, head teacher, The Fallibroome Academy, who had the work installed in his school said; “a totally fascinating insight into the women’s world of farming. Amazing. Thank you”. I found this a moving and very beautiful testimony to life in rural Cheshire, and to the voice of women in the countryside, which gives it an even broader perspective. I loved the focus on hands at work, the warmth of the colours in different seasons, the glow in faces and the sense of the wind ruffling the surface of things. As someone who settled in Cheshire 40 years ago by chance, it also seemed to confirm my feeling about this county. Particularly the rural parts of it and the folk who live and work here – it is a very solid, beautiful rooted place and I echo the sentiments expressed in the film of how lucky we are to live here. Some lovely close ups and long takes with time for us to really look at the picture – what we find difficult to do in the cinema – a new kind of portraiture’ (Appendix 5, p.144)

Rural Voices was also included as an impact case study for the LJMU Art Ref 2014 therefore was judged internationally excellent. Current arts organisations have also shown an interest in the work in terms of extending the research.

Reflection and Discussion

- Whilst it was very hard work, this project was an amazing opportunity to work with the

women who were both good fun and supportive. I was given insight and experience into a way of life that was completely alien to me as a city dweller.

- I was impressed and humbled by the openness, warmth and trust of the women who allowed me into their lives for long stretches of time.
- This was an artist-led initiated project with ACE funding but also partly funded by Rural Touring network. However, their remit was to support 'performance events' in rural locations and this was the first time they had funded and toured a contemporary artwork. The curators were enthusiastic but clearly had more experience of promoting travelling plays and performances. They were also under pressure to please committee members from the rural communities where I had to attend meetings and experience an unexpected 'grilling' before my work could be included in the programme and I was often questioned why I wasn't charging an entrance fee, whereas most visual art events are free to the general public.
- As a direct result of audience feedback from **Private Views Made Public** I replaced the audio component of birdsong and traffic noise with the recorded stories of the farm women.
- The audio stories allowed me to better evaluate the project – and establish central issues and connections pertinent to the women farm workers.
- As a result of this project I felt I had only scratched the surface of what could be achieved within this context and felt the need to return to explore the life and work of more women farmers in different locations both in the UK and abroad.

CONCLUSION

I am confident that what I did with all these projects was not only original but had no real comparable precedent. I also feel that the five case studies of published works demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge. This has been evidenced by many arts organisations, journals, conferences, and case studies on heritage and public art (see forward Vol 2 supporting materials). My projects have clearly had an effect on thinking within the sector; councils, development agencies, heritage agencies who all believed they were empowered by the example of my projects to think differently about what Public Art projects might be.

Instead of simply fencing off heritage sites (as was indicated in the original brief for **Marking Time**) much more ambitious, creative and sensitive to site works could now be imagined and I believe that the field of heritage conservation is now thought of differently as a direct result of the work I have carried out. (Appendix 5, pp.84-89)

In my work, I have always had clear artistic and philosophical lines that I wanted to pursue but I have also taken advantage of chance encounters that have offered unexpected inspiration. Indeed, coincidences, serendipity and chance have brought about opportunities from one project to another so that it has been possible to trace a path through my career, following a clear line of development which I have presented here.

Although I work as an observer, I also involve myself in searching, collecting, discussing and asking questions. I am driven to understand what is happening around me, a process which could be described in terms of 'a listening model of art practice' (Crickmay 2003), or as Alison Marchant described my practice, a 'highly ambiguous form of paying attention and tinkering' "…wondering, reflecting, collecting, re-arranging, placing, inscribing–musing what is there or implied by the space and the artist's relationship to it. Presence and absence of those before and here now/ then, charge the space. The scenario between the artist, the site – its atmosphere, its history, its objects, materials and its viewers, are all inextricably linked." (Marchant 2001)

This thesis began with the core research question: Can an auto-ethnographic approach to inquiry inform a creative process leading to an addition to knowledge? which I have tried to answer. In fact, it is only with hindsight that I have become aware of the threads which give a unity to my art and which have come together as a direct result of the auto-ethnographic basis of my approach. Autobiographical and formative links can be evidenced within my research-

based practice between ideas of exile, matriarchy, loss, equality and the desire to focus on marginalised members of society.

My research uses a mixture of ethnographic methods including the anthropological and the archaeological – whether this is with women farmers, shipwrights, exiled Chinese communities, asylum seekers, travellers living on the fringe of a new urban development, the former patients of a psychiatric ward or the long dead inhabitants of an alms house. My research has examined their culture and societies, extracting and revealing, as does Perec, (Perec and Lowenthal 2010) by looking at the very ordinariness of a given situation or context.

Reflecting on all my published works to date I can identify four significant learning milestones that offered me specific opportunities and which have formed and informed what my practice has become today.

The first milestone was **All in the Mind** (1997-1998), where I made the move from creating studio work to generating ideas from real-life contexts and positioning the art evolved from them in that space. In the mid 1990s this was not common practice and it drew a considerable amount of attention to my work, and a range of opportunities in response to the uniqueness of the work created, although in quite an indirect way. For example, invitations for new projects followed after visits by curators to the unofficial exhibition at the disused psychiatric hospital. As lead artist, I was responsible for the funding, contracting the artists and meeting the deadlines. The artists, in addition to myself, were Leo Fitzmaurice and Simon Robertshaw. Arts Council funding specified that the project had to end with a public exhibition and some form of community engagement. When I met with the Director of the General Hospital that was adjacent to the Deva, he welcomed the prospect of a public exhibition that was to be installed in the public areas of the main hospital. Kate Wise, a Liverpool artist, was commissioned to produce an education programme in order to fulfil the community engagement aspect of the project.

The second significant milestone was **Sojourn** (2000 -2004) being immersed within a ‘closed’ working community of a workforce of 5000 in a shipyard. Here I developed specific skills relating to my research that involved negotiation and the development of ideas within a physically immense setting. This evolved over time by simply fitting in as just another member of the workforce and becoming part of the day-to-day events of an industrial community. This insider / outsider perspective helped me understand how to make possible the production of artworks that encompassed the celebration of ordinary human experiences through my artworks and

creative endeavours. I was in charge of my own future as an artist, responsible for making things happen.

Thirdly the **Marking Time** (2003-2005) project was my first introduction to producing permanent art for a public space. This was my first experience of working in collaboration with architects, planners, developers, engineers and understanding different kinds of systems and processes. But fundamentally my research was uncovering and making visible the ordinary within the monumental, in this case a historic community of homeless people. The knowledge was accumulated through meetings with experts, spending time looking through archival manuscripts and historical documents, researching and photographing everything that I encountered both on and off the site.

Fourth and finally **Private Views Made Public** (2011 -2017), was my first experience of working within an agricultural context. It was through this project that I met the farmer's wives which in turn led me on to the creation of **Rural Voices (**2013 – 2018). I have gained knowledge of the various economic, psychological and physical hardships experienced by those working on the land, especially the isolation felt by the women. I have been offered the opportunity to continue with this research working with Cumbrian women farmers, commissioned by Abbots Hall Gallery to develop another layer of narrative to this work which will further examine the life and work of women farmers.

The focus and strand of all the published works presented here is a celebration of human striving within communities and their unique contribution to life – our world would be the poorer if the marginalised, almost invisible groups that I am drawn towards and produce artwork about were overlooked or forgotten. I would like to continue to work with these ethical considerations in mind and I will end with the words of Lucy Lippard that 'the ideal public art is accessible work of any kind that cares about, challenges, involves, and consults the audience for or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment.' (Lippard 1997)

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