CONTEMPORARY ART IN HERITAGE SPACES

Edited by
Nick Cass, Gill Park, and Anna Powell

Contemporary Art in Heritage Spaces

Contemporary Art in Heritage Spaces considers the challenges that accompany an assessment of the role of contemporary art in heritage contexts, whilst also examining ways to measure and articulate the impact and value of these intersections in the future.

Presenting a variety of perspectives from a broad range of creative and cultural industries, this book examines case studies from the past decade where contemporary art has been sited within heritage spaces. Exploring the impact of these instances of intersection, and the thinking behind such moments of confluence, it provides an insight into a breadth of experiences – from curator, producer, and practitioner to visitor – of exhibitions where this juncture between contemporary art and heritage plays a crucial and critical role. Themes covered in the book include interpretation, soliciting and measuring audience responses, tourism and the visitor economy, regeneration agendas, heritage research, marginalised histories, and the legacy of exhibitions.

Contemporary Art in Heritage Spaces will be essential reading for academics and students engaged in the study of museum and heritage studies and contemporary art around the globe. Museum practitioners and artists should also find much to interest them within the pages of this volume.

Nick Cass is an artist and lecturer at the University of Leeds. Having a background working in museum education, and from his experience as an artist working within museums and heritage sites, he has a long-standing interest in the ‘intersection’ between artists and heritage.

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Note: Please be aware that images from Herculaneum and Pompeii cannot be taken from Chapter 9, and reproduced or duplicated by any means and in any way without prior permission from the respective site: Parco Archeologico di Ercolano and Parco Archeologico di Pompei.

Contributors

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Gaynor Bagnall is a Senior Lecturer in Cultural Sociology at the University of Salford. She has a long-standing research interest in the area of heritage, museums, and audiences, and a more recent concern with the relationship between museum and heritage audiences, arts, and digital media. Her work has focused on understanding the audiences for and audience engagement with a range of cultural and heritage organisations, and she has led and co-led a number of funded (AHRC, ESRC, EPSRC) research projects in these and related areas. Using a range of innovative and co-creative sociological

methods, she has explored how emotion, meaning, and identity are produced in the consumption of such sites. Research with museums and heritage sites, often in areas of cultural regeneration, has enabled her to examine the interplay of emotion, heritage, and memory and the role they play in enabling forms of belonging, connections, and even disconnections to place.

Catherine Bertola is a visual artist, whose practice encompasses installation, drawing, photographic, and film works that respond to specific sites, collections, and historical contexts. Underpinning the work is a desire to look beyond the surface of everyday objects and buildings, to uncover forgotten and invisible histories, as a way of reframing the past and considering the present.

Her work explores the way the passing of time becomes inscribed and materialised in the things around us, as well as issues around authenticity in relation to contemporary perceptions and consumption of history. It often focuses on the historical role of women in society, the home, craft production, and labour.

Since graduating from Newcastle University in 1999, she has produced commissioned works for institutions such as the V&A, London; Bronte Parsonage Museum, Haworth; the Crafts Council; the Government Art Collection; and several National Trust properties across the UK. In 2017 she was awarded a Leverhulme Trust Artist in Residence award to carry out research with historian Dr Rachel Rich, in the Cultural Studies department at Leeds Beckett University.

Niki Black is a Research Associate in the School of Arts and Culture, Newcastle University. Niki's research interests include cultural festivals, contemporary arts in heritage, and the contribution of heritage to identity and social sustainability. Her research brings together approaches from different disciplines, addressing access to arts and culture, role of heritage in community social connectivity, and the impact of artworks and artists within a heritage environment. Her work on the AHRC-funded project, Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience, critically examines the creation and reception of contemporary artworks commissioned for heritage sites, including the impact on the artist, site management, and visitors to the heritage sites.

Prior to completing her PhD in 2015, Niki worked in the arts sector as a practising artist and arts development coordinator in the UK and overseas. Her academic interests are rooted in this practice, particularly her interest in cultural engagement and the social impact of the arts and heritage.

Brass Art is the collaborative practice of Chara Lewis, Kristin Mojsiewicz, and Anneké Pettican, UK. Working together since 1999, they explore notions of time, uncanny doubling, embodiment, and liminality, working

with sculpture, installation, drawing, sound, and digital technologies. They focus on the creative and performative potential of shadow-play, using non-invasive scanning technologies to capture an embodied response to site or emotion. Stereogrammetry, bodyscanning, and Xbox Kinect sensors, coupled with rapid prototyping and bespoke programming, have each played a role in the emergence of a vital uncanny in their practice.

Gestured (2017) was the first contemporary installation commissioned for Chetham's Library in Manchester. Working directly with the creative spaces of selected writers, Brass Art have produced a series of immersive artworks, including *Freud's House: The Double* (2015), installed at the *Festival of the Unconscious*, Freud Museum London, commissioned by the University of Salford; and *The Imagining of Things* (2013) made at the Brontë Parsonage and the ruins of Wycoller Hall, featured in the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival and on BBC Radio 3. Exhibitions include *Trick of the Light*, Grundy Art Gallery, Blackpool (2019); *that-which-is-not*, Bury Sculpture Centre, Manchester (2018); *Connecting Senses*, Cultural R>evolution ISEA, Hong Kong (2016); *xCOAx MNAC*, Lisbon (2017); *Flights of Fancy*, Tatton Park Biennial, Cheshire (2012); *Dark Matters: Shadow Technology Art*, The Whitworth, Manchester (2011); *Tell it to the Trees*, Croft Castle, Herefordshire (2009); *Skyscraping*, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (2008); and *The Jerwood Drawing Prize*, Jerwood Space, London (2008).

Laura Breen is Impact and Engagement Manager at Manchester Metropolitan University. She was part of the AHRC-funded Ceramics in the Expanded Field project at the University of Westminster from 2011 to 2016. Her PhD research formed the basis for her monograph, *Ceramics and the Museum*, which was published by Bloomsbury Academic in 2019. Her writing also features in *The Ceramics Reader* (2017) and *Contemporary Clay and Museum Culture* (2016). Prior to joining Westminster, Laura worked in the museum sector at a range of institutions including Imperial War Museum North, Bolton Museum and Art Gallery, and Tameside Museums Service.

Andrew Burton is an artist whose work situates sculpture and installation in relation to historic sites, landscape, and architecture. His practice is based in an experimental approach to material and process, often combining materials traditionally associated with sculpture such as clay with other materials of a more ephemeral nature. He has worked in Asia and Africa, where collaborative projects, working alongside artisans and traditional craft workers, have resulted in work that occupies a territory between art, craft, and the production of functional, quotidian objects: the common factor being the centrality of the human hand in the making process. He explores the use of scale – whether through miniaturising or magnifying

familiar forms as a means of changing the nature of audiences' engagement with sculpture.

Burton is Professor of Fine Art at Newcastle University and has been the lead researcher or lead artist on projects funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Arts Council England, and the British Council, as well as by museums and independent arts organisations. Alongside his work as a practising artist, his interest in the broader 'ecology' of the visual arts has focussed on a series of projects in Africa where artists are exploring new approaches to collaboration and writing.

He has been artist resident at the Bundanon Trust and Hill End (New South Wales), Korea Ceramic Foundation, Sanskriti Foundation (New Delhi), CEAC (China), Korea Digital University, Goa University, Makerere University, and the European Ceramic Work Centre (Netherlands).

Nick Cass is an artist and Lecturer in Heritage and Contemporary Art at the University of Leeds. His primary interest lies at the intersection of contemporary art practice, museums, and heritage. This stems from his experience as an artist working in, with, and for museums. He has extensive exhibiting and teaching experience in a wide range of contexts. He has worked for Leeds Museums and Galleries and the Royal Armouries as an Education Officer; he has also worked freelance for a variety of museums in the north of England, including Manchester Art Gallery, Manchester Museum of Science and Industry, and Tate Gallery Liverpool. Having once worked at Temple Newsam House, a Tudor/Jacobean house on the outskirts of Leeds with extensive restored interiors and fine and decorative art collections, he became fascinated by the relationship between his identity as an artist inspired by the site, its history, and collections, but also his role commissioning other artists to work with it. Reflecting on this experience led to the research trajectory he still follows.

Julie Crawshaw is Senior Lecturer in Material Culture at Northumbria University in the UK. She has published across planning, anthropology, and arts, including the *Journal of Rural Studies*, *Sociologia Ruralis*, and *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures*. She comes from a visual arts background, and with a focus on artist-led and community-oriented practice she has worked in a range of management roles in the arts sector. She has also co-edited a Special Section on 'Doing Art in the Country' in *Sociologia Ruralis* (also with Gkartzios) and has been a Fellow of Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, and Visiting Research Fellow at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Rebecca Farley is a Research Associate in the School of Arts and Cultures at Newcastle University. Her work focuses on the intersections between public art, contemporary art, and heritage practice and the processes of visual arts audiencing. She has worked closely with major UK art and

heritage organisations, including Arts&Heritage, the National Trust, English Heritage, and the Churches Conservation Trust as partners in the AHRC-funded Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience project (2017–19). Prior to joining Newcastle University, Rebecca worked professionally in the visual arts sector for many years, as a public art curator and project manager, as a Commissions Officer at Arts Council England North East. She is currently developing new research into the role of collections and archives in public and temporary arts practice, and on international perspectives on the contemporary art in heritage field.

Menelaos Gkartzios is Senior Lecturer at Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy in the UK. He has published extensively in development and planning studies, such as in the *Journal of Rural Studies*, *Sociologia Ruralis*, *Land Use Policy*, *World Development*, *Regional Studies*, and *Population, Space and Place*. He has co-edited the first *Routledge Companion to Rural Planning* (within which Crawshaw is contributing a chapter), a Special Section on 'Doing Art in the Country' in *Sociologia Ruralis* (also with Crawshaw) and serves on the editorial boards of *Sociologia Ruralis* and the *Journal of Rural Studies*. He has been Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo in Japan and Visiting Research Fellow at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Catrin Huber is an artist and Professor in Fine Art at Newcastle University and has initiated and led several large-scale UK and European research and exhibition projects. While Principal Investigator of the AHRC-funded *Expanded Interiors* project, she developed site-responsive fine-art installations for two Roman houses at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Her practice and research has explored (but is not limited to) site-entanglement of painting, architectural and fictional spaces, tensions between materiality and representation, and Roman wall painting. She was an Abbey Fellow at the British School at Rome and has produced site-responsive interventions at the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle; Pitzhangor Manor, London; Kiosk24, Herford, Germany; and at the British School at Rome.

Gill Park is Lecturer in Art Gallery, Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of Leeds and Lecturer in Curating at Newcastle University. Her research focuses on feminist art and exhibition histories and feminist strategies of curatorial practice. Prior to this, Gill was director of Pavilion, a contemporary arts organisation, which focuses on commissioning new artwork for contexts outside of the traditional museum and art gallery. Over nine years she worked on projects with artists sited across locations including post-industrial buildings, old cinemas, a hair salon, and a defunct television studio. In 2017 she achieved a Heritage Lottery Fund 'Our Heritage' grant to programme a series of art and heritage activities under the title 'Interwoven Histories', which aimed to make visible the

contributions migrant workers made to the textiles and clothing industries of Leeds during the twentieth century, while also opening up questions of migration and representation.

Anna Powell is Senior Lecturer in Art and Design Theory in the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield. Her background spans history of art and museum studies, with a research focus on the art of ‘the encounter’, which addresses the often complex relationships between art and its (intentional or unintentional) audiences. Prior to working at the University of Huddersfield, Anna taught across history of art/museum studies modules at the University of Leeds where she received her PhD. She has developed and supported exhibitions, projects, and engagement resources for a range of visual arts and heritage organisations and events. Relevant publications include ‘The Image is a Moment – the Art of the Visual Encounter’ (with Stephen Hibbert) (2018); and ‘Treasure-Hunting, Conversation and Chance: Game-Playing through Artistic Encounters’ (2015).

Jill Randall makes sculpture and installations and has exhibited her work nationally and internationally. She is a Senior Lecturer on the BA Fine Art Course at the University of Salford, and Member of the Art and Design Research and Engagement Group (AnDRE) in the School of Arts and Media. Jill recently completed a research residency at Tate Britain, studying the archive of the APG (Artists Placement Group), and instigated ‘The Open Brief’, a project at Flat Time House, London. She has recently won a Universities Santander Travel Award to travel to Australia and Mexico in 2017 to research an arts and industry project based around the Cornish metal-mining diaspora, both the physical ‘after-math’ of mining landscapes, and the transplantation of Cornish culture in these places. Recent solo exhibitions include ‘Aftermath’, Geevor Tin Mine World Heritage Museum, Cornwall, (2016); ‘Jill Randall at the Merzbarn’ (2014); ‘Place/Displace’, Touchstones, Rochdale (2013); ‘Golden Venture’, National Waterfront Museum, Swansea (2011); ‘Secrets and Lives’, Yard Gallery, Nottingham, (2006); and ‘Light Matter’, The Lowry, Salford (2003). Group exhibitions include ‘Personal Structures’, Venice Biennale, Artists Space, New York, Cornerhouse, Manchester, Castlefield Gallery, Manchester, Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, Galerie de Leones, Porto, Kunst Galerie, Bocholt, Germany, and Galerie de la Restaurao, Olhao, Portugal. Jill has been the recipient of many individual awards, including a Travel Scholarship to Barcelona from the McColl Arts Foundation, four Arts Council Awards to Artists, an award from Foundation for Sport and the Arts and the National Lottery, a Royal Society of Arts ‘Art for Architecture’ award, and an ‘Artists at Work’ award from Cywaith Cymru/ ArtworksWales. Residencies include Grizedale Forest (1999), a major commission for the Irwell Sculpture Trail (2001), along with international

residencies in Germany, Barcelona, Perth (Western Australia), and Portugal, and several artists' residencies in industrial and heritage sites. Jill's work is in public and private collections in the USA, Spain, France, Portugal, Australia, and the UK. Jill was a founder member and Chair of SIGMA (Sculptors in Greater Manchester Association) and is a member of the Royal British Society of Sculptors, and 'sculpture network', the European organisation for sculpture.

Rachel Rich is History Course Director at Leeds Beckett University. Rachel gained her PhD from the University of Essex in 2005, and taught at the Universities of Manchester and Aberystwyth before coming to Leeds Beckett, where she teaches modern European history. Her research interests are in food and eating, gender and domesticity, and the histories of timekeeping in nineteenth-century England and France. Rachel has published work on women's timekeeping practices; food and domestic design; and Victorian cookbooks, as well as a 2011 monograph, *Bourgeois Consumption: Food, Space, and Identity in London and Paris, 1850–1914*, published by Manchester University Press. Rachel collaborated with Catherine Bertola on a Leverhulme Trust Artist in Residence award in 2017, which was the basis for their chapter in this volume. Rachel's latest project, funded by the British Academy, is a study of intersecting British and European identities via the menu ledgers from Kew Palace in the reign of George III.

Joanne Williams is a researcher and arts professional based at the University of Leeds. Her research is focused on audience engagement with contemporary art, and she is interested in the relationship between art, heritage, and cultural policy. Her work considers contemporary art interventions in museum and heritage spaces as modes of heritage production, and the processes of meaning-making they facilitate in visitors. She has worked at Harewood House and Leeds University Library Galleries in collections and engagement roles, and in arts evaluation working with a range of regional and national organisations.

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Introduction

Nick Cass, Gill Park, and Anna Powell

Aims and rationale

This edited volume has its origin in ‘Intersecting Practices’, a series of events which occurred in 2014–2015 that were funded by the Creative and Cultural Industries Exchange at the University of Leeds. Organised by Nick Cass (University of Leeds), Gill Park (Pavilion), Anna Powell (University of Huddersfield), and Louisa Briggs (Brontë Parsonage Museum), the event series focused on the growing phenomena of commissioning artists to respond to historic sites, houses, and landscapes, with the resulting work to be experienced as a juxtaposition with that site or location. Given the relatively recent rise in popularity of this type of commissioning, the seminar series sought to explore the role and impact of contemporary art in heritage contexts; in particular, ways in which we might capture, measure, and articulate the value of these intersections. The seminars focused on themes including interpretation, soliciting and measuring audience responses, tourism and the visitor economy, regeneration agendas, heritage research, marginalised histories, and the legacy of exhibitions. Attended by representatives from across the academic and professional arts and heritage sectors, the events generated significant discussion which underlined the complexities of contemporary art and heritage co-existing in the same space and became the catalyst for further collaborations and research in this area by the editors of the present volume.

The decision to develop these events into a book is timely, as the heritage and contemporary art sectors in the UK have become increasingly collaborative. In recent decades there has been a notable increase in the number and scope of projects where heritage organisations have worked with artists. Major UK heritage organisations such as the National Trust, English Heritage, and the Canal & River Trust have invested significant resources in contemporary art commissions. English Heritage, a membership-based charity with its origin in the nineteenth century, is responsible for over 400 historic monuments; with Stonehenge as, perhaps, its most famous site. The National Trust is also a membership-based charity, similarly established in

the late nineteenth century, and looks after miles of coastline, thousands of square kilometres of land, and more than 500 heritage sites, including monuments, country houses, gardens, and parks. They also make significant claims to reach a diverse audience:

Through the Trust New Art programme, the National Trust has completed over 200 projects at more than 60 places with a combined audience of over three million. This strategic approach has established successful models for commissioning and exhibiting contemporary arts at National Trust places. The National Trust continues to make contemporary arts an integral part of its regular offer at selected places, building broader and more diverse audiences for great art as well as working in partnership to offer new opportunities to diverse groups of artists at key stages of their careers.¹

Within this context, the Arts Council England (ACE) plays a significant underpinning role. It is funded by the UK government in order to promote access to the arts, which it does principally through its responsibility to distribute money from the National Lottery. Taking over responsibility for museums, libraries, and archives in 2011, ACE is the principal driver of publicly funded contemporary arts activity in the UK, and has supported the programming at these, and many other key heritage organisations. It is in this landscape of heritage management and public funding for the arts, that this shift towards contemporary art commissioning in heritage sites has developed. As can be seen from a number of examples included here, there are a wide range of other, less centralised, collaborations happening, contributing to the scope and scale of this activity.

Despite some initial research projects such as the AHRC-funded Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience (MCAHE), which is referred to in this volume (Chapter 2, Chapter 8), there has, to date, been a lack of academic publishing on the relationship between these disciplines and, moreover, on the implications of their ‘cohabiting’. The MCAHE project was led by Newcastle University, with Nick Cass representing the University of Leeds as a partner in the research. It also involved a wide range of art and heritage partners and is one example of an interdisciplinary effort to understand better the nature of this juxtaposition. We deliberately use the term juxtaposition because it was central to the Memorandum of Understanding between the National Trust and Arts Council England, in 2008, renewed in 2014, where they argue that their policy is founded upon their belief that:

the art of the past has an inextricable synergistic relationship with that of the present and that a dialogue between them is essential. That dialogue – in the form of the juxtaposition of contemporary art and historic setting – stimulates artists and audiences and facilitates new perceptions and innovations.²

It is interesting to note that this phrase has disappeared from the most recent iteration of this agreement in 2018, which raises a question over how the motivations have changed over this period of development. Therefore, it is pertinent to ask what new perceptions and innovations arise out of this practice? How can we understand the way in which sites, artists, and audiences are affected? And, how might this practice have changed in recent decades?

A complex relationship

Contemporary Art in Heritage Spaces, then, is founded upon the conviction that to exhibit contemporary art within heritage spaces forms an ‘intersection’ of practices which is significantly complex. As researchers and practitioners, we believe this complexity arises because neither cultural phenomenon is straightforward in its own right. For example, much as museums’ central focus has shifted from being object-based to being audience-focused in recent decades, heritage today is understood to have moved away from a focus on material to be preserved, to a dialogical intertwining of ‘people, objects, places and practices’.³ It remains, however, difficult to define and, consequently, difficult to research.⁴ Much literature explores the role of heritage in ideas of national identity and individual identity politics. In this way, heritage is also profoundly problematic. As Stuart Hall so powerfully argued, one person’s heritage can represent another person’s oppression and, through a process which is ‘highly selective, it highlights and foregrounds, [...] it foreshortens, silences, disavows, forgets and elides many episodes which – from another perspective – could be the start of a different narrative’.⁵

Much like experiences in and with heritage, an experience of art is entirely entwined with ‘spatial, temporal and material conditions it shares with the viewer’.⁶ The ‘event of seeing’ is a complex embodied temporal experience.⁷ Furthermore, the use of the term ‘contemporary’ to delineate a particular periodisation of art is indicative of art’s relation to both time and history.⁸ To place an artwork that is articulated as ‘contemporary’ in a location which is defined as ‘heritage’, is to set up a temporal dialogue in which the ‘pastness’ of the one, and the ‘nowness’ of the other become emphasised, despite the fact that the experience is a contemporaneous unfolding of an artwork, heritage, and viewer relationship. As Peter Osborne notes, there has been a particular shift towards the idea of the contemporary, but only a ‘recent rush of writing trying to make some minimal theoretical sense of the concept’.⁹

These commissions are thus enmeshed within overlapping discourses, emphasising paradoxical temporalities, and seemingly refusing to accept that one practice can exist as part of the other. There are, however, examples beginning to emerge of practitioners, theorists, and professionals seeking to reconceptualise this art–heritage relationship. For example, the concept of ‘heritage-art’ has been used by Sallie Anna Steiner to describe the way in

which artefacts and artistic practices can take on an identity as heritage even in the contemporary moment. Steiner asks:

when does a cultural phenomenon or practice go from being a normal, everyday part of life to something a group of people re-appropriate to symbolise themselves, to encapsulate their identity?¹⁰

The significance of Steiner's words in relation to this book lies in the rendering of art and heritage not as separate entities, but as shifting and context-dependant phenomena, located within changing spatial and temporal social and cultural values. Thus, it has to be asked whether it is useful to position contemporary art as temporally distinct and separate from heritage. In whatever way these practices and temporalities are articulated, there is an anticipation – perhaps even an expectation – that their juxtaposition will generate productive outcomes. Many of the chapters in this volume explore the various ways in which this benefit might be manifested and evaluated.

Scope and approach

In 2005, the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention) stated there was a 'need to involve everyone in society in the on-going process of defining and managing cultural heritage'.¹¹ It is with this in mind that we have purposely sought to include a diversity of approaches in terms of context, content, and writing style. This has enabled us to incorporate input from across the academic and professional sectors in an effort to provide an insightful range of voices, each being a microcosm of the idea that heritage is a process constituted and performed through a diversity of actors. With a view to presenting a dialogic and fluid approach to the concepts around which the book is founded, we are conscious not to postulate singular or definitive interpretations of 'heritage', 'the contemporary', or 'practice'. Through our effort to bring a diverse range of voices and case studies together, we hope that the chapters in this volume demonstrate very clearly that there are many possible manifestations of meaning across all of these terms.

The concept of 'intersection', which underpinned the initial seminar series, also remains central within this book. 'Intersectionality' has a particular genealogy, being first deployed by Kimberlé Crenshaw to articulate ways in which institutional and social policy structures embody racial and gender discrimination, where discrimination occurs at the intersection of these prejudices in ways which are obscured when one is focused on at the expense of the other.¹² This resonates with a particular element of heritage site critique in the UK, whereby sites have been challenged as obscuring or eliding difficult narratives, or for erasing them completely in order to neatly present a history designed for easy consumption. It also echoes the ways in which the

use of the terms ‘heritage’ and ‘contemporary art’ presupposes that heritage is necessarily incapable of being contemporary, and that the responsibility for corrective narratives only resides in the intervening artworks. In this context artworks are framed as outside of, that is, not being a part of any kind of heritage. Despite this clear resonance with Crenshaw’s feminist genealogy, our use of the concept of ‘intersectionality’ was, however, first inspired by Jane Rendell, who suggests that the ‘meeting point’ of different disciplines is a productive space, as it is at these intersections that practices can work to undo hegemonic structures.¹³ It is precisely these hegemonic structures indicated by the uses of the term ‘heritage’ and ‘contemporary art’ that this book seeks to unpick.

Within the context of the discussions around contemporary art and heritage presented here, an understanding of site-specificity necessarily becomes complex, and the very term ‘site’ requires consideration. Ashton, in her chapter ‘A room of one’s own: strategies of feminist arts interventions’, refers to the writings of Laurajane Smith to remind us that ‘place’ and ‘site’ should not be confused or conflated with ‘heritage’, and that to assume ‘heritage’ as existing materially and spatially is to overlook what Smith recognises as its true nature; that is, as cultural and social meanings and values. When considering the complexities of the art–heritage relationships described in this book, existing definitions of site-specificity in which artwork and its surroundings become inextricably connected (the idea that ‘to remove the work is to destroy the work’) seem particularly relevant.¹⁴ The art–heritage relationships suggested in some of the chapters could be seen to simultaneously align themselves with and deny existing views on how we understand site-specificity, such as the definition posited by Miwon Kwon that site-specific art is that which ‘gives itself up to its environmental context’ and is ‘formally directed or determined by it’.¹⁵

We recognise the dangers of a narrow geographical focus for such a publication as this, in that it has the potential to exclude an international audience and to limit the breadth of examples we include within these discussions. Our decision to take the UK as the publication’s geographical focus was made primarily because of the ways in which the ‘heritage debate’, as summarised by Robert Lumley, has focused its critique specifically on the nature of nostalgia and the heritage boom in this country.¹⁶ More recently, the Arts and Humanities Research Council has identified that ‘the UK possesses an extremely diverse, broad-based and skilful heritage infrastructure, which encompasses tangible, intangible and digital heritage, in organisations large and small, professional and volunteer’.¹⁷ It is in this context that UK-based artists, curators, and academics are working together in productive ways in order to shift public understanding of, and engagement with, heritage as a key aspect of identity formation. Central to these discourses are issues of gender, race, faith, class, and power, which are fundamentally global in nature. Thus, it is important to examine how heritage sites in the UK are asking questions

of themselves in relation to these debates. The need for this level of regional analysis, but set in a global context, can be recognised in Jennifer Barrett and Jacqueline Millner's *Australian Artists in the Contemporary Museum*, a valuable examination of the ways in which artists have engaged with museums and post-colonial Australian identity.¹⁸ We envisage *Contemporary Art in Heritage Spaces* to be both a response and a contribution to this regional–global debate. Despite their UK location, then, many of the examples discussed in this book deliberately engage with global concerns. In Chapter 5, for example, Gill Park helps us consider how UK heritage sites and organisations are using contemporary art practice to work through the legacies of colonialism. Jenna Ashton, in Chapter 6, explores how artists and artworks are able to create new perspectives and knowledges which contribute to debates about gender identity and representation. Included here are also specific chapters with a focus on UK–international collaborations, for example Catrin Huber's discussion of her residency within the UNESCO World Heritage sites at Herculaneum and Pompeii, and Jo Williams' critical assessment of the Asia Triennial in Manchester. In this way, through a distinctly targeted geographical focus, we very much hope that the examples we include are evidence of our aim to engage in a global conversation.

One of the challenges of incorporating a diverse collection of contributions has been maintaining a coherent narrative that reflected the book's aims, while simultaneously articulating the opposite; that one of the real advantages of a multi-voice discussion is the diversity that is articulated through nuanced arguments and perspectives. To try to navigate this dichotomy in as coherent a manner as possible, the book is presented thematically. This means that, rather than collating together approaches similar in terms of style, subject matter, or narrative position, such as having a section for contributions from artists, each part is constructed around a central theme. While we believe these themes are indicative of key issues relating to this field of endeavour, it is also important to emphasise their intertwined, intersecting nature. We further wish to emphasise that the organisation of the parts in this volume works to highlight themes and concerns which exist across a broad spectrum of art–heritage practice, rather than suggesting that they belong discretely to the individual contributions.

Part I: Reimagining heritage

One central idea which underpins contemporary art commissioning in heritage sites is that the art will somehow offer a new way of thinking about the site and its contents. Beginning with a literature review, this part broadly sets out a context for examining ways in which art's interventions in heritage might in some ways reimagine heritage, both as space and as concept.

Rebecca Farley and Niki Black, for example, seek to identify the early development of contemporary art's cohabitation with heritage in the UK,

suggesting the North East as a particular centre of early experimentation. They suggest that this growth of contemporary art commissioning does indeed follow closely the increasingly audience-focused museological and heritage practices of recent decades. They also identify some particularly interesting challenges regarding the ways in which this practice has been adopted by the very institutions that might previously have been the focus of criticism.

Laura Breen, through her particular focus on ceramics, looks carefully at ways in which artists work through ideas of place and identity in relation to industrial heritage, and seeks to explore how heritage and place can be ‘regenerated through active forms of enquiry’, exploring this as a way of challenging hegemonic forms of knowledge production. She draws on two projects, one from the North and one from the Midlands. Notably, Breen addresses the (industrial) history of these places as having a ‘half-life’, whereby the past continues to ‘contaminate’ the present. Particularly significant is Breen’s reference to Grant Kester, whom she draws on to argue that artists, rather than simply being ‘provocateurs’, can be part of a community and its ongoing formation as well as being catalysts for dialogue.

In Chapter 4, Brass Art write about *Gestured*, their 2017 installation at Chetham’s Library in Manchester, the oldest public library in the world which, through this commission, hoped to bring in new audiences and bring new, or perhaps a different kind of life to this rich and multi-layered historical site. As with the chapters by Catherine Bertola and Rachel Rich, Gaynor Bagnall and Jill Randall, and Andrew Burton, what is important here is that the artists narrate their specific approach to the exhibition in question; providing an insightful and valuable contribution to the debate framed by this book. Brass Art demonstrate clearly how the artistic focus on one, potentially overlooked aspect of the archive – the hand gesture or ‘manicule’ – results in a rich and powerful engagement with place, history, and the present, with the artists’ own hands acting as a metaphor for a meaningful engagement with a site where, as they put it, the past, present, and future ‘coincide’.

The chapters in this part, while using very different examples and being diverse in terms of their conceptual approach to the book’s central themes, can all be seen to address an element of temporal critique when discussing heritage; that is, they all, in their own way, suggest the present moment as being one which is simultaneously ‘haunted’ by both the past and an imagined future. In so doing, the ideas they present resonate with the idea that heritage needs to be encountered as an ‘embodied heritage of the senses’.¹⁹ The argument being that to be effectively engaged, only an embodied experience will allow for the imagination, ‘the latch that must be unhooked to open the door to the past’.²⁰

Part II: Alternative histories

It is clear that one aim of contemporary art commissioning is to work as a form of corrective to heritage narratives that have been previously ignored,

hidden, marginalised, or overlooked as not being important. The terminology used in this part is telling: ‘reveal’, ‘provoke’, ‘confront’, and ‘complain’. Underpinning these chapters, however, is a more positive message: the idea of contemporary art as a ‘call to action’ for institutional change. Gill Park, through her analysis of the Follies of Youth programme, strongly argues for contemporary art’s ability to confront the difficult histories of heritage sites. Here, the sites in question include the country estates of Temple Newsam House and Harewood House, both near Leeds. Park looks critically at the ostensibly ‘natural’ landscapes of these types of estates as signifiers of not only of class and power, but also of wealth created through colonial expansion and the slave trade.

Jenna Ashton similarly deals with contested histories, focusing on a key programme for the National Trust, *Women and Power*, and examines feminist curatorial practices as a method by which institutionalised gender bias can be tackled. In setting artists’ commissions within a wider strategic framework, Ashton reflects upon the extent to which institutions are able to react to the critique that emerges from their own projects, in order to facilitate genuine institutional change. This discussion around the idea of institutional change is also picked up by Joanne Williams in her examination of the Asia Triennial Manchester 14 festival at the Imperial War Museum North. Examining the potential for artistic intervention to create a critical historical consciousness in visitors, Williams considers an important theme within all of this work; the question of whether, by devolving the idea of institutional change to a programme of artist commissions, the institution itself is simply failing to react to problematic issues to which this form of institutional critique draws attention.

The final chapter in this part, Andrew Burton’s ‘The Orangery Urns’, gives a further perspective on the commissioning process. As the Principal Investigator of Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience, a major research project examining the impact of contemporary art commissioning, also referred to in Chapter 2, Burton reflects on the requirements of the commission and how, as an artist, he was able to respond to a particularly challenging ‘hidden’ history of Gibside, a National Trust estate located just outside of Newcastle in the North of England.

Part III: Disciplinary dialogues

Discussions around heritage interventions are often predicated on the idea that art and heritage are distinct and independent disciplines that are somehow brought together in instances of intersection. Having already argued that this assumption inaccurately suggests these disciplines to be singular in character and not able to overlap, the chapters in this part explore ways in which dialogues between, across, and/or within art and heritage take place. Academic and artist Catrin Huber neatly illustrates this point. The dialogue

presented by Huber not only exists across her fine art practice and the archaeological sites of two UNESCO World Heritage sites, but also exists between her different ‘selves’ – as researcher and artist, and, further, between herself and the archaeologists working on her AHRC-funded project. The discussion she presents is manifested as work of art in itself – through a fictional conversation traversing temporal and spatial identities, between a selection of painters from different moments in history – a part of Huber’s practice which she also manifests as public performance.

Two further chapters by Catherine Bertola and Rachel Rich, and Gaynor Bagnall and Jill Randall, explore collaboration through an examination of cross-disciplinary practices, addressing what can be learned through working with others across different specialisms. Bertola and Rich’s chapter examines the new approaches that can be offered by collaborative practices and considers how the research roles and processes of historian and artist might cross over and even become indistinguishable, with focus on their work for a 2017 Leverhulme Trust-funded residency in the School of Cultural Studies at Leeds Beckett University. Bagnall and Randall’s chapter similarly addresses collaboration, examining the ways in which different methodologies of practice – between artist and sociologist here – can affect productive conversations which might allow fresh insights into what might be considered ‘meaningful’ audience engagement, as well as on how this might be captured and evaluated.

Part IV: Liminal spaces

Space as a discursive practice features as a significant focal point of this final part, which covers analyses of public space from a variety of perspectives, from examining the nature of museums as heterotopic spaces that can only be entered, across a threshold, through ritualised process in which the visitor’s experience becomes akin to a pilgrimage in which an imagined set of expectations is anticipated. A central discussion within this section is interpretation, namely the ways in which the visitor’s understanding of, and engagement with, a heritage site can be affected by the ways in which it uses contemporary art.

In his chapter on numinous experiences, Cass examines Su Blackwell’s 2010 installation at the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth, West Yorkshire, to address the motivations behind the heritage site’s (arguably somewhat contentious) decision to employ contemporary art as an interpretation and engagement device. The chapter utilises the concept of ‘numen seeking’ to explore the liminal relationship between site, artist, and visitor, in order to understand how art might function to enable a deeper engagement with heritage.

This part further addresses some of the previous chapters’ examinations of art and heritage as non-distinct by offering a slightly more philosophical – and to some extent linguistic – critique of these terms. Powell’s chapter, for

example, based around the ARTIST ROOMS 2013 Bruce Nauman exhibition at York St Mary's church, also takes a hermeneutic approach to exploring the role of contemporary art in heritage sites, and suggests that the interpretive possibilities enabled by this exhibition have resonances that go beyond what might be expressed within a clear-cut examination of the impact of the art upon the site, and vice-versa.

The chapter by Crawshaw and Gkartzios takes Berwick-upon-Tweed's International Berwick Gymnasium Artists Residency (1993–2011) as its focus to explore the ways in which this residency provided new perspectives on rural housing research, and mediated space for engagement between the local community, heritage professionals, and academics. Along with the other chapters in this section, and more broadly within the book as a whole (see Brass Art's Chapter 4, for example), it asks the reader to consider the idea of legacy, exploring the relationship between longer-term interests of the artists discussed, the nature of the site, and the requirements of the brief in question.

Notes

- 1 National Trust and Arts Council England, 'Memorandum of Understanding' (2018), <www.artscouncil.org.uk/news-and-announcements/building-ten-year-partnership-national-trust> [accessed 11 November 2019].
- 2 Arts Council England and National Trust, 'Memorandum of Understanding between Arts Council England and the National Trust' (2008), <www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/collaboration-and-partnerships> [accessed 20 December 2013].
- 3 Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 4.
- 4 John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (eds.), *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).
- 5 Stuart Hall, 'Whose Heritage: Un-Setting "the Heritage"', Re-imagining the Post-Nation', in *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 219–228 (p. 221).
- 6 Amanda Boetzkes, 'Phenomenology and Interpretation beyond the Flesh', *Art History*, 32 (2009), 690–711 (p. 690).
- 7 Olga Belova, 'The Event of Seeing', in *Museum Objects: Experiencing the Properties of Things*, ed. by Sandra Dudley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 117–133 (p. 125). See also Boetzkes, 'Phenomenology and Interpretation Beyond the Flesh', p. 690. Museums and galleries, as well as heritage sites, are highly charged and politicised spaces, where narratives are constructed by the interpretive 'frames' provided by the institution. See also Christopher Whitehead, *Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).
- 8 Peter Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All* (London: Verso, 2013).
- 9 Osborne, *Anywhere or Not at All*, p. 17.
- 10 Sallie Anna Steiner, 'Woven Identities: Socioeconomic Change, Women's Agency, and the Making of a Heritage Art in Jølster, Norway', *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*, 10.2 (2016), 81–101.

- 11 Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro: Council of Europe, 2005), < www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/0900001680083746 > [accessed 23 February 2020].
- 12 Kimberlé Crenshaw, 'Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics', *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989.1 (1989), 139–167.
- 13 Jane Rendell, 'Critical Spatial Practice: Curating, Editing, Writing', in *Issues in Contemporary Art and Performance*, ed. by Judith Rugg and Michèle Sedgwick (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2007), pp. 63–79.
- 14 Richard Serra, letter to Donald Thalacker dated 1 January 1985, as published in *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*, ed. by Clara Weyergraf-Serra and Martha Buskirk, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 38.
- 15 Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), p. 1.
- 16 Robert Lumley, 'The Debate on Heritage Reviewed', in *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, ed. by Gerard Corsane (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), pp. 15–27.
- 17 Arts and Humanities Research Council, 'AHRC's Heritage Strategic Priority Area: Future Directions' (2018), <<https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/strategy/heritage-strategy/>> [accessed 9 November 2019].
- 18 Jennifer Barrett and Jacqueline Millner, *Australian Artists in the Contemporary Museum* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).
- 19 Athinodoros Chronis, 'Heritage of the Senses: Collective Remembering as an Embodied Praxis', *Tourist Studies*, 6.3 (2006), 267–296 (p. 268).
- 20 Bruce Craig, 'Interpreting the Historic Scene: The Power of Imagination in Creating a Sense of Historic Place', in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. by David Uzzell (London: Belhaven, 1989), pp. 107–112 (p. 107).

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Part I

Reimagining heritage

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Mapping contemporary art in the heritage experience

Niki Black and Rebecca Farley

Introduction

Contemporary art projects are appearing in an increasing variety of heritage locations and contexts across the UK, from grand country houses, to industrial museums and historic waterways. In England, recent decades have seen the country's two leading national heritage organisations, the National Trust and English Heritage, vigorously engaging with contemporary art and artists, generating temporary commissions that aim to extend and deepen audience engagement with heritage sites and their histories. Arts Council England (ACE) has financially and strategically supported this work, endorsing it as a significant means of fulfilling their mission to promote artistic excellence and public benefit and to expand opportunities for artists, especially in the English regions. For many visual artists, curators, and arts organisations, undertaking temporary commissions and self-generated projects at heritage sites has become a central strand within their practice.

Despite strong support from major national institutions, the actual experience and impact of such projects on their producers, participating heritage properties, and their public audiences remain poorly understood. Additionally, there is little collective academic and professional understanding of the broader character and evolution of the contemporary arts in heritage field in terms of its antecedents and specific practices of production and presentation. To start to address this gap, this chapter draws on early research from the Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience (MCAHE) project which examines the developmental trajectory and scope of contemporary art in heritage practice in the UK.¹ Understanding this history is of vital importance in enabling a greater critical framework within which such practices and projects can be assessed and understood, whether as 'artworks', 'heritage processes', or 'audience development' initiatives or, indeed, as our chapter argues, all of these at one and the same time.

This chapter maps the trajectory of 'contemporary art in heritage' practice in a UK context, through reference to particular institutional developments, sites, and commissions. It reveals an intersection of interests and convergence

of practices that, arguably, contributes to a ‘reimagining of heritage’ and how it is produced and experienced. This trajectory corresponds with a paradigm shift in heritage understanding and museology alongside socio-cultural changes in the latter decades of the twentieth century. These led to a rapid growth in heritage tourism and through this a transformation in both heritage and contemporary art audiencing. We explore how such societal changes influenced the emergence of this practice, including motivations from a developing heritage industry, curatorial and artists’ practices, and incentives to expand and diversify heritage audiences.

We open our chapter by setting out a history of this field in the UK as it has developed from early artist and curatorial interventions in the 1980s to what is now a substantial commissioning industry. Drawing on both published and grey literature, we plot out a series of landmark projects and initiatives that have had special significance for the development of this practice, mapping out the liminal peripheries of what is a still-evolving field. In the second part of our chapter, we look deeper, to analyse the various motivations for institutionally driven contemporary art in heritage activity. We consider evolutions in audience engagement practices and how these have influenced reinterpretations of heritage and an expansion of the audience base. We conclude with some critical observations, intended to provoke future questions for our own and others’ research, some of which are picked up and carried forward by other authors in later chapters of this book.

Museological origins for contemporary art in heritage practice

The origins of contemporary art in heritage practice can be traced back to the 1980s, to a developing heritage industry, the setting up of academic courses in heritage studies, and the emergence of energetic heritage debates: the ‘legacy’ of which has defined and shaped our current perceptions of heritage.² This era marked the growing interrogation of heritage by a wider and more critical audience, helped by an airing of these heritage debates within national media and a challenge to the notion of institutional impartiality.³ This paradigm shift within heritage echoed the corresponding development of new museology, an increasing focus on the vernacular and ‘hidden’ heritage, and on the role of museum and heritage site visiting as ‘a form of social practice’.⁴ Our scoping of the contemporary art in heritage field shows that ‘museum’ and ‘heritage site’ are to a great extent interlocking categorisations. Many museum collections are housed in heritage buildings and many heritage sites hold important object collections, including of paintings, furniture, books, and living plants.

An interrogation of artists’ interventions in museums, and corresponding responses to changes in museological practice, reveals early developments within contemporary art in heritage practice. Kynaston McShine’s survey

exhibition 'Museum as Muse' at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1999) and curator James Putnam's 2001 book, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium*, offer parallel historical starting points for the international evolution of the field.⁵ Together, these sources provide an international overview of visual artists' fascination with museum collections and the variety of ways this has been expressed in artistic practice. These include political critique, such as in Joseph Kossuth's 'The Play of the Unmentionable' (Brooklyn Museum, 1990) and Fred Wilson's frequently cited 'Mining the Museum' (Maryland Historical Society, 1991); the intuitive re-curation of object collections, as in Eduardo Paolozzi's landmark 'Lost Magic Kingdoms' at The Museum of Mankind (1987); and the insertion of new commissioned artworks within existing museum displays, as in Putnam's own project 'Time Machine' at The British Museum.⁶ Putnam states that the aim of such juxtapositions or interferences was to generate 'an immediate dialogue' with established collections, and with the institutional and physical architectures of the museum. In presenting artists' commentaries, such projects served to 'address museological policies of acquisition, interpretation and display or other more provocative topical issues, thus challenging the traditional impartiality of the institutional context'.⁷ However, revisiting these practices in 2012 (for the 'Ceramics in the Expanded Field' research project), Putnam observes that in comparison with early projects in the USA where artists had sought to reveal the 'hidden agendas' and sometimes 'darker aspects' of collection acquisition histories, and thus to disrupt the supposed 'neutral façade' of the museum, artists' museum interventions in the UK have often been more 'aesthetic' and 'poetic' than critical.⁸ Claire Robins questions the critical impact of this more aesthetically orientated practice, especially where artistic interventions seem to privilege notions of creative continuity between past and present forms of cultural production.⁹

Before 1990, artists' interventionist practice was mainly focused on art museums but has since then extended to other sorts of collections, including science and natural history museums, 'privately-housed' museums, and 'house-museums' among others. This latter category, and in particular its sub-genre, the 'country house museum', is a core site for the field we are defining here as 'contemporary art in heritage' practice. However, in its range of chosen sites and settings, contemporary art in heritage sits in an expanded field that goes beyond the institutional confines and object-focus of earlier museum-based artists' interventions. While object collections may still be the inspiration and catalyst for some projects ('Curious Cabinets' at Fellbrigg Hall, Norfolk, being a notable example), artists may more often be responding to historic designed landscapes (as at National Trust's Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, North Yorkshire) or emptied-out architecture (as in English Heritage's programme of commissions and exhibitions at Belsay Hall, Northumberland).¹⁰ Increasingly it is with the more intangible heritage of these sites, the hidden narratives and suppressed biographies associated with

a given place, rather than its material artefacts or physical spaces, with which artists and visitors are being invited to engage. Arguably, artists' interventions with the subjectivity and polyvocality of historic artefacts or places invites a broader range of narratives and an overt recognition of the persistence of a dominant or authorised understanding that frames heritage.¹¹ An urge to engage with audiences in a more experiential manner, and to create artwork in a more fluid encounter with place or site, beyond the gallery, lends further impetus for artists, and art curators, to work with the heritage sector.¹²

A new 'commissioning' industry?

The North East of England has played an important role as an early incubator and test-bed for this field of practice. The Year of the Visual Arts, 1996, celebrated across the North of England, was a foundational event in this regard. It saw the initiation of three ground-breaking projects: the exhibition 'Private View' curated by Penelope Curtis at the Bowes Museum in Barnard Castle; the 'Berwick Ramparts Project', curated by Pippa Coles for the historic ramparts of Berwick-upon-Tweed; and 'Living at Belsay', the first in what would become a ground-breaking fourteen-year programme of English Heritage (EH) contemporary art commissioning at Belsay Hall, Castle, and Gardens in Northumberland.¹³ Post-1996 'Living at Belsay' was followed by five further projects which all sought to animate the empty architecture of the hall and its surrounding estate in different ways. The Belsay programme was, from the start, deliberately inclusive of a wide community of creative practitioners working across the visual arts, craft, design, and architecture. Curated by Judith King, 'Sitooteries' (2000), 'Sitting Pretty' (2002), 'Fashion at Belsay (FAB)' (2004), 'Picture House' (2007), and 'ExtraOrdinary Measures' (2010) were all intended as high-profile projects involving established and famous-name artists in their fields. 'Fashion at Belsay (FAB)' was especially successful in this regard, being popularly remembered in particular for Stella McCartney's spectacular installation *Lucky Spot*, commissioned for the Castle's Great Hall.¹⁴ Importantly, for the longer-term development of the field of practice, 'Living at Belsay' was also the first project of this kind for curatorial panel members Judith King and Timandra Nichols (Visual Arts Officer for Northumberland County Council at the time) who would later go on to co-found Arts&Heritage, which, since 2017, has operated as the ACE-funded Strategic Support Organisation for the development of contemporary art in heritage/museums practice.

As James Moore (another member of the curatorial panel for 'Living at Belsay') states in his introduction to the exhibition catalogue, the idea of the project was 'to make Belsay Hall the centre piece for an event that would encourage a more individual approach to interiors and present day commissioning of crafts, by recalling the patronage of the past'.¹⁵ An important part of the project rationale was to commission new contemporary

objects that could somehow ‘portray the domestic role’ each of the Hall’s public rooms formerly had, a feature very much lacking in Belsay Hall’s normally sparse architectural presentation. Despite the positive reception of the Belsay programme locally and nationally, there was no expansion of this programming to other English Heritage sites. From 2010, EH entered a period of institutional change, with investment and resources drawn away from Belsay to other priority sites (including major new visitor infrastructure development at Stonehenge). As a result, engagement with contemporary art commissioning at Belsay fell away, not to be reinstated until MCAHE’s own 2018 commission collaboration, ‘The Yellow Wallpaper’, by Turner-prizewinning sound artist Susan Philipsz.¹⁶

From 2010, the institutional leadership for this type of activity within the heritage sector shifted largely towards the National Trust and the establishment, in 2009, of its contemporary art programme Trust New Art (TNA). As the Trust states, the aim of the programme is to use contemporary art to better connect people to its places.¹⁷ Importantly, and in contrast to earlier forays into contemporary art commissioning by the Trust (the Foundation for Art), TNA is not about building a new art collection but about creating new experiences for audiences.¹⁸ In doing so the programme brings together the visitor-focused objectives of the National Trust with the strategic development agenda of Arts Council England. As the 2014–2018 ‘memorandum of understanding’ agreed between these two organisations states, there is a two-fold ‘vision’ for the TNA programme: first, to create new creative challenges and professional opportunities for artists; and second, to develop the audience for contemporary arts practice. At the heart of this TNA activity, which is focused primarily on temporary site-specific commissioning, is the shared belief that ‘high-quality and innovative art can change lives and affect communities for the better – by enabling people to see the world and experience heritage in new ways’.¹⁹ For the Trust and ACE, this is based on a joint understanding that

the art of the past and the present are interconnected and dialogue between them is essential. That dialogue – in the form of the juxtaposition of contemporary art and historic setting – stimulates artists and audiences and facilitates new perceptions and innovations.²⁰

Where English Heritage’s engagement with contemporary art has been concentrated at one property, Belsay Hall, TNA has been far more wide-ranging geographically.²¹ As reported by the Trust, since its initiation in 2009 Trust New Art has worked with at least 200 visual artists and other creative practitioners to deliver temporary projects at over 100 National Trust properties across England and Wales.²² As well as having a strong focus on the visual arts, TNA has evolved to engage with a broader range of art forms, including creative writing, performance, and small-scale ephemeral architecture, this

last most notably in the three iterations of ‘Folly’ at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal (in 2015, 2016, and 2018). At some properties TNA has also experimented with more open residency-based models, as at Acorn Bank in Cumbria which, since 2015, has hosted three artists’ residencies supported by the Trust’s Dorothy Una Ratcliffe Fellowship.²³ While these residency-based projects have aimed to create opportunities for emerging and mid-career artists, TNA has also worked with artists with more established art-world profiles. These include recent projects by Turner Prize winner, Mark Wallinger (creator, with Studio Octopi, of *Writ in Water*, an architectural-scale artwork celebrating the legacy of the signing of the Magna Carta at Runnymede) and Lubaina Himid (one of six female artists commissioned to make work for the project ‘A Woman’s Place’ at Knole).²⁴

In each case the shape and content of contemporary art activity at these sites is guided by each property’s unique ‘spirit of place’. As Tom Freshwater, former Contemporary Arts Programme Manager at the Trust and initiator of TNA, explains, contemporary art activity is not a ‘magic bullet’ that can be uniformly adopted across the NT portfolio. Some properties ‘are so spectacular, or so delicate, that interventions with art could be too much and interfere with “spirit of place” [...] For some large “show palace” type properties (such as Petworth House, Croome Court and Ham House) TNA commissioning continues an historic legacy of arts patronage, collecting and connoisseurship’. For other places, it is the stories of the former occupiers and owners that inspire creativity.²⁵ Guided by this ‘spirit of place’ ethos, the aim of TNA activity is ‘to integrate what is special about each National Trust property with the art itself’.²⁶

Our discussion so far has been firmly focused on projects generated within mainstream museums and heritage visitor sites. While Trust New Art has continued to expand its cohort of participating properties and represents by far the most substantial and sustained ‘contemporary art in heritage’ programme to date, our MCAHE mapping research shows that TNA sits within a much wider and more disparate field of activity. Within this it is important to point out that independent heritage properties beyond the purview of EH and NT, including those that continue in private ownership, have also been active in commissioning and presenting contemporary art projects. Of these, Compton Verney in Warwickshire (now established as an accredited art gallery) has the most long-standing programme, having initiated its own (continuing) series of temporary ‘Art in the Park’ commissions as far back as 1993.²⁷ Following on in the tradition of grand country house collecting, the owners of Chatsworth in Derbyshire and Houghton Hall in Norfolk have both acted as enthusiastic patrons of contemporary art. Both properties have sponsored and hosted artists in residence alongside ‘blue chip’ artists’ exhibitions. In 2018 Houghton Hall mounted a major exhibition of paintings and sculpture by Damien Hirst, which was displayed within the park and gardens and throughout the historic interior of the Hall (Hirst’s ‘spot paintings’ replacing the family portraits).²⁸ Chatsworth, meanwhile,

has regularly turned itself into a temporary sculpture park with its annual series of 'Beyond Limits' group exhibitions presented in collaboration with art auction house Sotheby's. Chatsworth's first solo artist exhibition, 'Caro at Chatsworth' (2012), was particularly well received by the broadsheet press.²⁹ This juxtapositional approach to the presentation of contemporary art within grand historic settings is also a strategy employed in recent years at the Palace of Versailles in a series of 'blockbuster' exhibitions by internationally famous artists such as Jeff Koons, Takeshi Murakami, Anish Kapoor, and Hiroshi Sugimoto. This is a scale of activity emulated here in the UK at Blenheim Palace, in its own staging of retrospective exhibitions and temporary commissions (2015–2018) by, for example, Ai Weiwei, Laurence Weiner, and Jenny Holzer.

While these 'grand palace' projects may attract the most attention publicly and critically, and the 'country house, gardens and estate' remains a primary site for commissioning, contemporary art in heritage practice is beginning to build a presence at some very different sites. The 'Arts on the Waterways' initiative, developed by the UK Canal & River Trust (launched in 2012), is the largest and most ambitious new programme to emerge recently within this field. Following the TNA model, 'Arts on the Waterways' is also supported through a partnership with Arts Council England and the Arts Council of Wales.

Figure 2.1 Damien Hirst's *Colour Spot Paintings* at Houghton Hall, 2018. Image courtesy of Rebecca Farley.

Focusing on the reanimation of the UK's national network of historic canals and navigable rivers, and often working in areas of social, economic, and cultural deprivation, 'Arts on the Waterways' has, from the start, consciously embraced socially engaged and culturally diverse forms of creative practice. Delivered through a network of cultural producers, arts organisations, and local communities, it is a geographically wide-ranging programme. At the time of writing, projects include 'Hinterlands' (launched in 2018 and encompassing five underused waterways in socially and economically deprived areas of Wales, London, the Midlands, and the North); 'Super Slow Way' (a major £2.5 million programme of temporary commissions and artists' residencies along the Leeds–Liverpool Canal); and 'The Ring', a series of temporary artworks celebrating 21 miles of historic waterways linking the Worcester, Birmingham, and Droitwich canals to the River Severn. Beyond 'Arts on the Waterways' and looking back over the last three years from 2015, we also see new temporary commissions and residency projects being delivered in a range of other industrial and social heritage settings. These include exhibition and residency activity curated by Meadow Arts at Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron (part of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site) and several commissioned projects generated through the Meeting Point museums development programme, including at Lion Salt Works in Cheshire, Darlington Railway Museum, and Ripon Workhouse. Meeting Point is an initiative of Arts&Heritage. In its first two rounds (2015–2018), the programme generated nineteen new artists' commissions at museums and 'unexpected places'. Meeting Point also offers an intensive CPD programme for museum and heritage site staff that includes visits to artists' studios, discussion with art gallery curators, and practical workshops on briefing and selecting artists, contracting, and project planning.

Reimagining audiences through contemporary art in heritage

Having traced the emergence of contemporary art in heritage as a new commissioning 'industry', we turn now to reflect further on the heritage sector's motivations behind this activity, in particular in relation to audience engagement. The exponential growth of this field since the 1990s can be placed within the context of a rising tourism industry and increasing competition for visitors between heritage sites. This environment, coupled with the push for a more democratic telling of heritage, has created an impetus to find new audiences and new ways to appeal to existing ones. As Harrison highlights, 'the development of the heritage "experience" as a marketable commodity; the growth of domestic and international leisure travel and the accompanying restructuring of the tourist gaze' were significant elements in the nascent heritage industry.³⁰ As signalled in the strategic conjoining of arts councils' and heritage organisations' agendas in 'Trust New Art' and 'Art on the Waterways', demands from the social and economic impetuses

Figure 2.2 Catherine Bertola's *All in a Day's Work* at Ripon Workhouse Museum, 2016. Image courtesy of Jonathan Turner.

of both the arts and heritage sectors have shaped the environment for artists' interventions in heritage sites. In this new space, motivations stem both externally from artists and contemporary art curators, and internally from the heritage institutions and the particular identities, with their marketing and interpretation agendas for the individual heritage sites.

Shifts in social and cultural means of engagement have led to the increasing recognition of both heritage and contemporary art as processes. In this context,

it can be argued that both demand the active participation of audiences. Development of the field of contemporary art in heritage is arguably contingent on this move towards the value of the process, from 'being' to 'doing', and the changing nature of audiences and audiencing. As Carroll La interrogates in 'Object to Project: Artists' Interventions in Museum Collections', the traditional notion of the visitor as 'passive' or 'uncritical' no longer automatically applies. Increasingly, emphasis is placed on the individual experience, on engaging with heritage as a process of acquiring or 'consuming' cultural and social capital, emphasising the subjective and 'active' experience of engaging with heritage.³¹ This can be summarised as a shift from 'passive observer' to 'active experiencer', where heritage visiting becomes a relational encounter.³² The nature of heritage and, historically, museum visitation has become, at least theoretically, a two-way activity, shifting from the more traditional 'top-down' pedagogy and 'authorised discourse' towards an understanding of the role of the visitor in challenging 'consensual heritage narratives'.³³

Such reconsiderations of the role of visitor and heritage organisation provide impetus for artists' interventions in heritage. Mapping the trajectory of contemporary art in heritage sites reveals an increase in artists' desires to bring new interpretations and challenges to the traditional narrative and unveil the hidden and sometimes difficult stories of these sites, alongside a desire within the heritage sector to reimagine these stories. This is clearly evidenced in the new direction taken by the National Trust in the development of its national 'Challenging Histories' programme. Launching with 'Prejudice and Pride' in 2017, followed by 'Women and Power' in 2018, this is an annual series of art commissions, exhibitions, publications, and events specifically designed to re-evaluate the normative stories told by the Trust and 'to reveal and counter the biases that can pervade heritage presentation'.³⁴ Challenging the nature of a site and its histories through artists' interventions is, in part, a progression and perhaps an appropriation of the artist as 'activist', in part the involvement of the audience in the production of the work.³⁵ Robins unpicks the role of artists within a heritage environment as allowing 'legitimated transgressive behaviour'.³⁶ In referring to Hooper-Greenhill's work on heritage and museum visitation (2000), she provides evidence that artists' interventions 'challenge museum values', citing Corrin that such 'contemporary artists [can] encourage visitors to become collaborators or partners in considering the questions raised by conjunctions that are formed'.³⁷ If the nature of audiencing both heritage and art changes from passive transfer to active production of knowledge, then the juncture of these two professional fields opens up new areas of engagement with both art and heritage. As Hein considers, art can potentially bring a vibrancy and timely response into environments restricted by public funding and charitable status, acting within and yet 'outside' the constraints of the institution. The predominantly temporary, liminal nature of such art interventions can jolt the visitor from perceptions of heritage as 'static' and unchanging, provoke a response to the new in the old, and

suggest urgency and timely responses to societal questions, situated within a site which represents to many a sense of permanence and 'safety'. If, as evidence shows, many visitors state their reasons for visiting heritage sites as leisure, relaxation, and social interaction, art interventions can allow the site to 'reinvent' itself as 'the new town square for informed exchange of ideas'.³⁸

From within the heritage sector, the desire to engage with new interpretations and narratives is in part driven by the urge to become more inclusive, to broaden the audience base, and to challenge perceptions that heritage only appeals to white, middle-class and older visitors.³⁹ There is increasing momentum to re-interrogate heritage and tell new versions of old stories 'to accommodate a changing social history that highlights women, people of colour, immigrants and working-class themes that traditional history overlooks'.⁴⁰ This challenge to traditional perceptions of heritage is not without its own obstacles. As Smith highlights, 'the AHD in Britain is the dominant public and policy discourse that frames not only professional practice, but also the ways in which some audiences may respond to or engage with heritage sites'.⁴¹ The heritage organisation may be faced with the dichotomy of interrogating and provoking these discourses, for example exposing stories of discord or slavery, whilst not wishing to alienate or provoke their traditional audiences and membership base. The introduction of such new interrogations and interpretations can provoke strong reactions and amplify negative opinions, both on-site and in the press, as evidenced in visitor responses to some of the National Trust's 'Prejudice and Pride' programme and more recently 'The Great Cragside Cover Up' (part of 'Women and Power', 2018).⁴²

While investment in these activities reveals the commitment of arts producers and heritage organisations to engage with and sometimes challenge their visitors, there remain many gaps in understanding the dynamics of these art encounters and how they impact on the audience in the longer term. The voluntary visitor to a heritage site may encounter an artist's intervention unexpectedly. Their response will be dependent on both their prior anticipation of the site visit, what Urry refers to as the 'tourist gaze', and, to adopt a Bourdieusian approach, the cultural framework, or 'habitus', from which they engage with the site and the art.⁴³ They may act with surprise, even resentment; the reaction may be positive, negative, or none at all. Increasingly, there is recognition of the importance of emotional or affective responses within heritage environments.⁴⁴ It may be that the process of engaging with art, as an emotional response, allows for new understandings and responds to a social urge to 'find a part in the whole' as Mulder discusses in *Narrative Space*; or to find 'Meaning in Chaos', as Robinson explores in his reimagining of the rise in cultural heritage tourism.⁴⁵ This interaction of visitor, art, and heritage has been described by Warren as the 'trinity of artwork, viewer and site', where the 'innocence of space' is challenged.⁴⁶ From this we might imagine the breaking down of traditional narratives, the 'authorised heritage discourse' (AHD),

Figure 2.3 Fiona Curran's *Your Sweetest Empire is to Please* at Gibside, Newcastle, 2018. Image courtesy of Colin Davison.

and the creation of an increasingly inclusive arena in which new audiences engage with 'art as a text' to reinterpret traditional discourses.⁴⁷ And yet, this supposes a rather idealised situation of dialogue between the three parties and must raise the question of whether the audience possess the language or, to borrow again from Bourdieu, the 'capital' to read that text.

As previously implied, the impetus to tell new stories, and old stories in new interpretations, is in part fuelled by the urge to engage with new audiences. The expansion of the heritage sector encouraged increasing diversity and segmentation to appeal to more varied audiences which in turn were developing into active and 'omnivorous consumers, characterised by complexity and diversity'.⁴⁸ Heritage institutions speak of the desire to broaden their audiences, proposing inclusivity and the inclination to widen access to both the heritage site and to art. Contemporary art programming can be employed as another marketing tool through which heritage organisations can potentially expand their audience and draw a 'new crowd', inviting the arts appreciators out of the gallery into the historic environment.⁴⁹ Aims to attract underrepresented visitor segments, in particular younger visitors (18–25), are highlighted within the sector.⁵⁰ The National Trust describe art as being a 'draw' and one that 'increases the audience'.⁵¹ In addition, we might speculate that 'Blue Chip' models of practice (such as employed at Chatsworth and Houghton Hall) also seek to draw a principally metropolitan art audience out to experience

heritage locations. And as heritage may be introduced to an ‘arts audience’ through the attraction of siting contemporary art, so existing heritage visitors, on encountering artworks during their visit, may become a ‘new audience’ for the arts. Both the heritage and arts sectors acknowledge this potential. Tom Freshwater highlighted an institutional motivation ‘to widen perceptions of art with our residencies’.⁵² Meadow Arts, a commissioning and curating organisation working predominantly with heritage organisations, cites as an aim to ‘bring new audiences to the contemporary visual arts’, stating ‘these properties don’t normally have contemporary art as part of their offer; by bringing the contemporary art into them we’re using their audience to look at the contemporary art they might never normally go and visit’.⁵³ In an increasingly competitive environment, both models demonstrate a desire to be ‘distinctive’, marking ‘unique selling points’, and as Kwon argues, emphasising the identity of a location in contrast to ‘the homogenising of place’.⁵⁴

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the emergence and growth of ‘contemporary art in heritage’ practice in the UK is closely aligned with the expansion of the heritage industry in general and with changing perspectives on the nature of audiences and of the heritage visitor experience. From its museological origins, we have charted the evolution of a practice whose nature is fluid and whose motivations, characteristics, and boundaries continue to expand across heritage environments. We have argued that, with our national arts and heritage institutions endorsing and supporting this practice and with an increasing volume of projects now being produced across the country, ‘contemporary art in heritage’ amounts to a substantial new commissioning industry.

Two important challenges arise from our discussion. First, how can the potential for critical practice, so central to the concept of artistic ‘intervention’, be preserved and encouraged within the context of an institutionally led commissioning ‘industry’? How far can heritage sites resist the perpetuation of authorised heritage discourses and singular narratives, despite claims to broaden diversity and statements of inclusivity? Second, how can artists, heritage sites, and audiences engaged at this specific intersection of contemporary art and heritage practices be best supported and enabled? Vitality, how might heritage organisations and sites make the most of the artworks and projects they commission and the often strong audience ‘affect’ such activities can generate? Within these organisations there is increasing recognition of the need for more comprehensive involvement of staff and volunteers throughout the generation and exhibition of contemporary artworks within their sites. This is reflected in a growing demand from both arts and heritage sectors to share the expertise, skills, and knowledge of the seemingly expanding network of commissioners and creative producers of contemporary art in heritage. The necessity of evaluating this practice, in terms of both the breadth of the

potential audience and the depth of their engagement, implies that in future, research focus is not placed solely on the heritage visitor but on site staff and volunteers too. This is central to engender better understanding of the nature of the field as it moves forward and to secure a stronger foundation on which to build future projects.

Notes

- 1 Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience: Creation, Consumption and Exchange (MCAHE) was a three-year Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)-funded, practice-led research project led by Newcastle and Leeds Universities (2017–2019), <<https://research.ncl.ac.uk/mcahe>> [accessed 24 February 2020].
- 2 Robert Lumley, 'The Debate on Heritage Reviewed', in *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, ed. by Gerard Corsane (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 15–27 (p. 15).
- 3 This is explored in some detail by Fiona Candlin, 'Independent Museums, Heritage, and the Shape of Museum Studies', *Museum & Society*, 10.1 (2012), 28–41; and Alice Duarte, 'The Contemporary Way to Protect Heritage, or the Only Way for Heritage to Serve the Development of Communities', in *Heritage 2010: Heritage and Sustainable Development*, ed. by Rogerio Amoeda, Sergio Lira, and Cristina Pinheiro (Evora, Portugal: Greenlines, 2010), pp. 855–864.
- 4 Bella Dicks, *Heritage, Place and Community* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000); Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 4.
- 5 'Museum as Muse', exhibition dates: 14 March–1 June 1999; James Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001).
- 6 Exhibition dates: 1 December 1994–26 February 1995.
- 7 Putnam, *Art and Artifact*, p. 154.
- 8 James Putnam, 'Museum, the Artist and "Intervention"' (2012), <www.ceramics-in-the-expanded-field.com/essays/james-putnam-gb> [accessed 28 October 2016].
- 9 Claire Robins, *Curious Lessons in the Museum: The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions* (London: Routledge, 2013).
- 10 'Curious Cabinets' ran from 6 January–30 October 2018.
- 11 Laurajane Smith, '"Man's Inhumanity to Man" and Other Platitudes of Avoidance and Misrecognition: An Analysis of Visitor Responses to Exhibitions Marking the 1807 Bicentenary', *Museum & Society*, 8.3 (2010), 193–214.
- 12 Geraldine Rudge, *Unravelling Nymans* (Hove: Unravelling Arts, 2012), p. 4.
- 13 'Private View' (3 May–28 July 1996) is cited as a 'seminal' project in re-energising 'critical debate about contemporary art in historic contexts' by Graham Devlin, *Arts Council England and The National Trust: Partnership Working* (London: Graham Devlin Associates, 2008), p. 22. Six international artists created and presented work for the 'Berwick Ramparts Project': Dan Graham, Siobhan Davies, Tacita Dean, Lucia Nogueira, Elisabeth Ballet, and Juan Munoz. 'Living at Belsay' ran from 4 May–25 October 1996.
- 14 'Fashion at Belsay' ran from 29 May–30 September 2004.
- 15 James Moore, 'Introduction', in *Living at Belsay: A Contemporary Approach to Furnishing an Historic House* (Morpeh: Northumberland County Council, 1996).

- 16 Exhibition dates: 20 July–16 September 2018.
- 17 Tom Freshwater, 'Trust New Art: Contemporary Art in Historic Settings', *Arts Professional*, 19 September 2011, <www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/242/feature/trust-new-art-contemporary-art-historic-settings> [accessed 5 September 2018].
- 18 The Foundation for Art (1986–2000) grew from the Trust's recognition that, across its properties and especially its country house portfolio, it was the holder of a major art collection. The Foundation aimed to continue this tradition of country house art collecting: the purpose being to collect and commission works by contemporary living artists but now with the specific remit 'to record the houses and gardens of the National Trust and the people associated with them' (Rebecca Farley, interview with Grace Davies, National Trust Contemporary Arts Programme Manager, 17 November 2017). The NT collection online database lists 189 artworks (predominantly paintings and drawings) acquired for the Trust under this scheme. These include works by well-known British artists, such as Gillian Ayres, Adrian Berg, Maggi Hambling, and John Piper.
- 19 National Trust and Arts Council England, 'Memorandum of Understanding 2014–18', p. 1.
- 20 National Trust and Arts Council England, 'Memorandum of Understanding 2014–18', pp. 1–2.
- 21 English Heritage was also an early supporter for the establishment of the Berwick Gymnasium Gallery and its associated programme of Artists Fellowships in Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- 22 National Trust, 'Trust New Art Exhibitions and Events' (2018), <www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/trust-new-art-exhibitions-and-events> [accessed 1 November 2018].
- 23 Fellowship artists to date include Chichi Parish, 2015; Freya Pocklington, 2016; and Karen Guthrie in 2017. The Fellowship is delivered by the National Trust through Trust New Art in partnership with Cumbria University and Eden Arts.
- 24 *Writ in Water* (2018) was commissioned by the National Trust in association with Situations; 'A Woman's Place' (17 May–4 November 2018) also included works by C.J. Mahony, Lindsay Seers, Emily Speed, Alice May Williams, and Melanie Wilson. The project was curated by Lucy Day and Eliza Gluckman.
- 25 Freshwater, 'Trust New Art'.
- 26 Tom Freshwater, 'New Art for Heritage Spaces' (2013), <https://ccskills.org.uk/careers/blog/new_art_for_heritage_spaces> [accessed 11 December 2017]
- 27 Artists commissioned for 'Art in the Park' include Alex Hartley and Tom James, Mary Ellen Bacon, Jem Finer, Kate Whiteford, Keith Wilson, Aleksandra Mir, Marcus Coates, and Anya Gallaccio.
- 28 Previous contemporary art commissions and exhibitions at Houghton Hall include Richard Long ('Earth Sky' in 2017) and James Turrell ('Lightscape' in 2015).
- 29 See reviews by Peter Conrad in *The Guardian* (15 April 2012) and by Robin Blake, *Financial Times* (4 April 2012).
- 30 Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 227.
- 31 Khadija Carroll La, 'Object to Project: Artists' Interventions in Museum Collections', in *Sculpture and the Museum*, ed. by Christopher R. Marshall (London: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 217–239.

- 32 See Hilde Hein, *Public Art: Thinking Museums Differently* (Oxford: Alta Mira Press, 2006), p. 8; and Rodney Harrison and Deborah Rose, 'Intangible Heritage', in *Understanding Heritage and Memory*, ed. by Tim Benton (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 238–276 (p. 268).
- 33 Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p. 5.
- 34 Rachael Lennon, 'For Ever, for Everyone?', in *Prejudice and Pride: LGBTQ Heritage and Its Contemporary Implications*, ed. by Richard Sandell, Rachael Lennon, and Matt Smith (Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester, 2018), pp. 10–17 (p. 11).
- 35 Hein, p. 145; see also Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), p. 105; and Saskia Warren, 'Audiencing James Tyrell's Skyspace: Encounters between Art and Audience at Yorkshire Sculpture Park', *Cultural Geographies*, 20.1 (2012), 83–102.
- 36 Robins, p. 86.
- 37 Lisa Corrin (ed.), *Give and Take* (London: Serpentine Gallery; Victoria and Albert Museum, 2001), p. 11.
- 38 Hein, p. 146. See for example research by Smith, *Uses of Heritage*; Linda Young, *Historic House Museums in the United States and the United Kingdom* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017); and Joanna Kempniak, 'The Heritage Tourist: An Understanding of the Visitor Experience at Heritage Attractions', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 23.4 (2017), 375–392.
- 39 Multiple studies highlight the predominance of this demographic in heritage visitors.
- 40 Hein, p. 18.
- 41 Smith, 'Man's Inhumanity to Man', p. 195.
- 42 Jocelyn Dodd, 'Whose Voice Do We Hear', in *Prejudice and Pride*, pp. 76–82. For media coverage of 'The Great Cragside Cover Up', see for example Josh Halliday, 'National Trust Branded "Ridiculous" for Covering up Paintings of Men', *The Guardian*, 6 November 2018; Eleanor Hayward, 'National Trust Admits It Was Wrong to Cover Up Artworks Featuring Men at Exhibition Promoting Women at Stately Home of Late Industrialist's Wife', *The Mail Online*, 7 November 2018.
- 43 John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990).
- 44 As for example in *Emotion, Affective Practices, and the Past in the Present*, ed. by Laurajane Smith, Margaret Wetherell, Gary Campbell (London: Routledge, 2018); and Gaynor Bagnall, 'Performance and Performativity at Heritage Sites', *Museum & Society*, 1.2 (2003), 87–103.
- 45 Suzanne Mulder, 'From Cathedral to Disneyland: Archetypes of Narrative Space', in *Narrative Spaces: On the Art of Exhibiting*, ed. by Herman Kossmann, Suzanne Mulder, and Frank den Ouden (Rotterdam: 010, 2012), pp. 128–191 (p. 137); Mike Robinson, 'Meaning in Chaos: Experiencing Cultural Heritage, Tourism and the Challenge of the Popular', in *The Heritage Theatre: Globalisation and Cultural Heritage*, ed. by Marlite Halbertsma (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), pp. 215–239.
- 46 Warren, p. 90.
- 47 Ian Sutherland and Sophia Krzys Acord, 'Thinking with Art: From Situated Knowledge to Experiential Knowing', *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 6.2 (2007), 125–140 (p. 127).

- 48 Bagnall, 'Performance and Performativity', p. 87.
- 49 See, for example, Kwon; Warren; Carroll La.
- 50 National Trust, *Annual Report 2013/14* (Swindon: Park Lane Press, 2014).
- 51 Emma Rapley, Visitor Experience Manager, National Trust, quoted in King's College London, 'The Art of Partnering: Case Study Hardwick Hall', (n.d.) p. 3, <www.kcl.ac.uk/cultural/resources/reports/full-report.pdf> [accessed 25 September 2018].
- 52 Freshwater, 'New Art for Heritage Spaces'.
- 53 Rebecca Farkas, Marketing and Engagement Manager, Meadow Arts, quoted in 'The Art of Partnering', p. 3.
- 54 Kwon, p. 54.

Making cities

Place, production, and (im)material heritage

Laura Breen

In the past decade, the notion of placemaking has risen to occupy a central position in official rhetoric about culture in the UK. Keen to replicate Liverpool's success as European Capital of Culture in 2008, the Department for Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) launched the UK City of Culture programme in 2013, to:

deliver a high-quality cultural programme that builds and expands on local strengths and reaches a wide variety of audiences, creating a demonstrable economic impact and a catalyst for regeneration as well as contributing to community cohesion and health and wellbeing.¹

Similarly, the Local Government Association's 2017 report on the subject spoke of artistic projects' capacity to 'create a sense of shared identity and purpose in their areas, and to tackle their big issues of the day'.²

Local authorities have also sought to leverage the brand power of local heritage as a means of distinguishing their cultural offer from those of their competitors. In many cases, these efforts to kick-start regeneration through artist-led projects have led to intervention fatigue as so-called 'hard to reach' communities tire of outsiders parachuting in to deliver short-term projects and then leaving.³ Moreover, in towns and cities that bear the scars of industrial decline, the official heritage discourse at the heart of these initiatives often bears little resemblance to the lived experience of those who are still suffering the consequences of the collapse of the associated labour market. However, whilst, as Marijke Steedman has observed, the 1990s and early 2000s were 'bountiful' times for art that centred on cohesion, as austerity measures have begun to take their toll in Britain over the past decade, asset transfer and the rhetoric of the 'big society' have dramatically altered the projects we see.⁴ Contending that the resultant ways of working, in which community members are often co-producers, have challenged our understandings of cultural expertise, Peter Matthews and Dave O'Brien have described this state as 'post-regeneration'.⁵

Matthews and O'Brien were part of Connected Communities – an extensive cross-research council programme, which brought academic and community expertise together through the arts and humanities. As their fellow researchers observed, heritage practices have often failed to reflect the imbrication of people, places, and things.⁶ Reifying objects and buildings as assets to be preserved, managed, and interpreted, they have reinforced hierarchical and exclusive models of cultural ownership and expertise with little regard for the more holistic ecologies of place. Keen to avoid this trap, the Connected Communities projects approached heritage as an ongoing negotiation between material and immaterial actors and past, present, and future.⁷ Within this purview, which provides the lens through which the projects in this chapter are viewed, heritage is a process and a relationally produced site – as is the local. Neither are fixed and both can be regenerated through active forms of enquiry, which value other ways of knowing, more fruitfully than by physical intervention alone. Contingent and specific, these projects speak to the wider societal issues at the forefront of government campaigns, yet operate on a scale at which change, achieved through collective action, feels achievable. The past becomes a stockpile of communally owned assets, rather than an insurmountable obstacle.

Grant Kester has noted that many traditional artist-led projects operated on the presumption that there is an undifferentiated public who can be 'activated' by the artist.⁸ Yet, a growing number of artists now work in the ways outlined above, challenging this top-down model of knowledge production through co-investigation.⁹ Analysing such work, Kester concluded that with local sensitivity and the capacity to develop sustained relationships, an artist could move beyond the role of provocateur within a community to one of solidarity: working as part of that community, which is always in formation, on an ongoing basis, rather than attempting to intervene and create revelatory rupture.¹⁰

Taking Kester's proposition as a starting point, this chapter examines the divergent ways in which artists Emily Hesse and Neil Brownsword have worked to foster change in the places where they were born and live. Closely allied with institutions linked to cultural regeneration – Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (MIMA) in Hesse's case and Stoke-on-Trent's British Ceramics Biennial in Brownsword's – both artists work with local communities to reimagine their collective heritage and are concerned with how making things together can generate and activate embodied knowledge. Viewing themselves as part of those communities as well as artists, they take radically different approaches to their materials, but share a belief that art should make a difference to our lives. Exploring their clay-based works and the contributions they have made to their respective communities, this chapter asks if it does.

Emily Hesse

Hesse has long used local materials in her work. She is drawn to their historical resonance, and South Gare, a site at the mouth of the River Tees that is dense with industrial detritus, has provided particularly rich pickings. Hesse discovered clay there in 2011, impressing her body into it for the centrepiece of her 2012 work *All That Remains*. However, 2014 marked the start of an ongoing engagement with the role that this most malleable of materials played within the life and identity of the town. The symbiotic relationship between clay and place chimed with Hesse's stance on the inextricable nature of life, work, self, and environment:

If we as human beings exist as all the thoughts and experiences of our parents and of our parents' parents then so do these natural materials. We are not of the landscape, we are the landscape, just as the stone is.¹¹

It is on this living heritage, embodied and intimate, personal, yet shared, that her work pivots. For Hesse, clay is a found object; a free (and decidedly vernacular) resource that can be repurposed according to contemporary need, whilst she is a part of a 'connected community', which is replete with other skills and resources which are less apparent. This agglomeration of materials, and its untapped potential, were the catalysts for a project she delivered with curator James Beighton and MIMA: *New Linthorpe*.

Whilst Teesside is perhaps best known for its steel industry, Hesse and Beighton had a history of working with clay and found inspiration in the Linthorpe Art Pottery; a social enterprise that was, literally, built from the area's rich soil. Opened in 1879, the pottery was established on the site of the Sun Brickworks during an economic depression. The Brickworks' owner, John Harrison, set the pottery up under the influence of the famed designer Christopher Dresser, who believed that making high-quality design more affordable would ameliorate people's lives as well as providing gainful employment. Marrying aesthetic and philanthropic interests, it attracted funding from Harrison's fellow Quakers, including local factory owners, assuaging some of their guilt over having to lay staff off. Although it was only in operation for ten years, Hesse and Beighton viewed the Linthorpe Pottery as a positive response to straitened times and it spurred them to consider how rethinking social enterprise could help to end 'declinist narratives' today.¹²

Born amidst a similarly bleak economic climate, when the last blast furnace on Teesside was about to close, the duo's clay-centred venture offered a distinctly twenty-first-century take on social and civic responsibility. Accordingly, it wasn't a local industrialist, but MIMA, that stepped in to commission the project. Under the directorship of Alistair Hudson, the institution had begun to adopt an exploratory approach to exhibition-making. It wanted to be useful:

So that the users of MIMA do so [use it] because they develop an understanding of art as a tool for living and doing things better; of use value in life, not merely as an object of contemplation for the few.¹³

The interests of Hesse and Beighton – who had just left his position as curator at MIMA to start a PhD, ‘questioning the value and role of the visual arts in an industrial town’ – were thus strongly aligned with the gallery’s: they were looking back to look forward and heritage provided the perfect route.¹⁴

When an initial bid for funding to support *New Linthorpe* was unsuccessful, Hesse registered for a master’s degree at Middlesbrough University to acquire the skills she needed to take it forward. Her research project ‘No More Declinist Narratives: How Can the Historic Clays of Middlesbrough Act as a Medium for Contemporary Social Empowerment?’ was embedded in ‘Localism’ (2015–16), a MIMA exhibition that served as both showcase and test site for the institution’s vision.¹⁵ The first part of her contribution, *Common Ground Part 1: From Linthorpe to New Linthorpe*, was inspired by speculation that George Ohr, the famed so-called ‘Mad Potter of Biloxi’, may have encountered Linthorpe pottery at the New Orleans Cotton Centenary Trade Fair and drawn influence from its forms. Arraying original Linthorpe pots belonging to the nearby Dorman Museum in shipping crates around one of the galleries, Hesse and Beighton referenced both Ohr’s irreverent approach to display and the transit of ideas. They used the exhibition and associated talks to argue that different makers and influences had always shaped works, challenging the notion of individual genius, which is central to the modernist art project.¹⁶ The presentation also highlighted the role that more traditional white cube gallery displays, which MIMA was known for, can play in privileging the idea of aesthetic autonomy at the expense of more nuanced understandings of art and its contingent meanings.

Extending this theme, Part 1 worked in dialogue with its counterpart, *Common Ground Part 2: No Two Alike*: a making-centred exercise, which led to the production of a series of New Linthorpe objects. Over the lifetime of the project, Hesse ran two to three workshops a week, helping over a thousand people to make objects from local clay.¹⁷ Attendees could sell their productions for profit through the honesty shop, with a small proportion ploughed back into the project, take them home, or add them to the display alongside the ‘old’ Linthorpe pots. However, although Hesse’s practice-based Master’s degree equipped her with an understanding of the properties of clay and how to handle it, the workshops she led were about creative exploration, not learning from an expert. Those objects that joined the display, therefore, lacked the finesse of their historic antecedents. Nonetheless, if the ecosystem was the artwork, the participants were co-producers and their contribution was as valid as anyone else’s. Accessioning the pots into its permanent art collection as a New Linthorpe collection, MIMA acknowledged this,

Figure 3.1 Emily Hesse digging clay in Middlesbrough, 2016. Image courtesy of the artist.

valorising this collaborative labour as worthy of record. Like the Dorman's pots, they will now endure as material survivals, through which future generations of museum-goers can refashion heritage.

The sessions also provided opportunities to involve local people in discussion about their future, with the hope of re-establishing a pottery in Middlesbrough, 'not just as a business, as a space for a community to reconnect with its lost cultural and local identity through a relationship with its own earth'.¹⁸ That earth played a critical bridge between past and present. Middlesbrough had over 100 different brick manufacturers between 1825 and 1973 and the buildings that had housed the ancestors of many contemporary residents were built from the very same brick clay as Linthorpe pottery new and old.¹⁹ It formed part of the area's affective and psychic landscape. Whilst Hesse and Beighton knew they couldn't revive the steel industry and were unlikely to rescue the local economy with a pottery, the physical making process served as a prompt for attendees to speculate on the type of social enterprise they would like to see: a New Linthorpe that met contemporary needs. As such, each workshop might be described as what Kathleen Stewart has described as a 'bloom space', where affective engagement brings us into a different, embodied and connected relationship with the world.²⁰ Allowing participants to reorient themselves, this 'worlding' offered a way to engage

Figure 3.2 New Linthorpe Tea Service, 2016. Image courtesy of the artist and Jason Hynes.

with the thinking that catalysed the launch of the Linthorpe Pottery: the ability to mobilise existing resources and model a different future.²¹

The direction of the project was partly determined by the interactions that took place during the exhibition. In some cases, attendees demanded practical outcomes; for instance, MIMA's overlapping work with refugees led to a request for a type of coffee set which was an important part of Eritrean ritual, but which could not be sourced in Middlesbrough. Seeking to resolve this issue, Hesse worked with a group of Eritreans who had recently moved to the area, and other volunteers, to create a coffee set using clay from the nearby River Tees. The group used the set to serve drinks in MIMA's garden for *The Coffee House* (2016), inviting conversation and the sharing of time and ideas. Aligned with an exhibition which aimed to offer alternatives to the negative views of immigration visible in the mainstream media, it remade local heritage as a living process – something that was enriched by diverse influences, rather than a bastion which must be defended from alien attack.²²

The Coffee House was swiftly followed by the opening of The Smeltery. This was the culmination of artist and local restaurateur Luke Harding's efforts to set up a community café which would be a place to eat, socialise, and explore ideas around useful art. The café was furnished with items made in response to related initiatives at MIMA, including *New Linthorpe* and Adam Clarke's *New Boosbeck*: another project inspired by a historical social enterprise that set out to reskill local people, which centred on furniture making. In this way, the line between the different spaces and activities in the museum were gradually eroded. The café became as much a place for art and heritage production as the galleries.

Although housed in MIMA, a ‘spaceship’ built in 2006, which might be seen to embody New Labour-era regeneration, these projects bore the hallmarks of the post-regeneration landscape.²³ Hesse and Beighton’s language, which spoke of empowerment and reclaiming land and heritage, echoed that of the UK government more than their Victorian forebears. The exhibition ‘Localism’ even took its title from the 2011 act of Parliament, which was designed to devolve power to the regions and empower local communities. However, rather than taking the tenets of the act as a given, it used the museum space to explore what localism could look like: an approach that tallied with the museum’s attempt to reposition itself in relation to its visitors. This was characteristic of recent efforts to reframe arts spaces as laboratories – places where process, trial, and experimentation are as valuable as the end result.

The energy around the concept of Arte Útil also played a critical role in the approaches MIMA took.²⁴ Hudson was already co-director of the Asociación de Arte Útil (the Association of Useful Art) with artist Tania Bruguera when he started work at the gallery. Swiftly registered in its database of projects, *New Linthorpe*’s approach and rhetoric reflected Arte Útil’s precepts as well as MIMA’s vision statement for 2015–18. According to the website, Arte Útil should:

- 1 Propose new uses for art within society
- 2 Use artistic thinking to challenge the field within which it operates
- 3 Respond to current urgencies
- 4 Operate on a 1:1 scale
- 5 Replace authors with initiators and spectators with users
- 6 Have practical, beneficial outcomes for its users
- 7 Pursue sustainability
- 8 Re-establish aesthetics as a system of transformation²⁵

Yet, as Esme Ward noted in her article ‘The Useful Museum’, even for the initiated, MIMA was an intimidating venue for ‘Localism’.²⁶ MIMA’s desire to redefine itself and its civic role, therefore, constrained the project as its white walls and imposing size created threshold anxiety about having to enter the ‘art’ space, posing a barrier to engagement. The success of the enterprise was also difficult to evidence due to its exploratory nature: the ‘practical beneficial outcomes for its users’ were not apparent in the way that they were for New Boosbeck, which provided employment and income. Nevertheless, the workshops provided the luxury of time and an opportunity to reflect on past, present, and future. In such instances, as design historian Juliet MacDonald has argued, craft (conceived as a process, rather than a genre) ‘is not just about the wealthy few commissioning or purchasing exquisite status pieces; it can be a power tool for the disenfranchised too’.²⁷ It became a means of reclaiming heritage. Indeed, those who took the plunge and came into the

museum fed into the initiatives that have begun to make MIMA a more inviting community space, whilst objects of their facture now dominate the museum's Middlesbrough collection.

In addition to MIMA's efforts, whilst the New Linthorpe Pottery never materialised as a fixed space, Hesse and Beighton have continued to explore the function of contemporary art in local life and the contributions it might make to social empowerment. Hesse still plays a key role in useful art explorations at MIMA, engaging in social activism there through events such as its Housing Study Day, where she used raw clay and old display panels from the Arte Útil archive to make posters campaigning for better housing. Urging people to 'reclaim the wilderness', she argued that they too could seize available materials to build their futures.²⁸ Beyond the museum, she has also used her artistic profile to argue for change, putting herself forward as the Labour Party candidate for Tees Valley Mayor in 2016 with the rallying cry:

It is time to take politics out of the council chamber and the meeting room and on to the streets to make it part of everyone's lives, to make a difference.²⁹

Just as her MA dissertation supported the growing move away from audience-focused models in museums to ones based on the idea of constituents, this rhetoric evidenced a concern with grassroots democratic engagement: her artistic practice and lived experience cannot be separated.

Hesse's former collaborator, Beighton, similarly sought to transform arts institutions from within, accepting the post of Executive Director of Tees Valley Arts, 'a participatory arts charity', which is grounded in the belief that 'creative participation can be a transformational tool for improving life and learning for individuals and communities' in 2017.³⁰ They thus remain deeply entangled in local culture, society, and its shifting communities of practice. Whilst this frustrates efforts to describe their work in terms of linear impact, it reflects the messy, emergent nature of socially engaged arts practice. And life.

Neil Brownsword

For Brownsword, working in Stoke-on-Trent, the use of clay was more complicated. Known as 'The Potteries', the surrounding area has long been defined by its reputation as a centre of ceramic production. Clay is everywhere: shards of factory waste are dispersed in the soil, which itself is riven with seams of Etruria marl (the red clay made famous by Wedgwood). Although, by the 1990s, outsourcing had taken its toll on the industry that once provided jobs for half of the city's workforce, its landscape is still pockmarked with the scars of factory closures and demolition.³¹ Moreover, the local population is still suffering the repercussions of the industry's demise. With unemployment still high in the area, the city's ceramic heritage is not, as in Middlesbrough,

an interesting detour from its core industrial narrative; it is its beating (and wounded) heart.³² Whilst recent years have seen something of a recovery as companies such as Emma Bridgewater and Burleigh have successfully harnessed that heritage to brand their handmade products and promote their 'authentic' Britishness, it remains a sensitive terrain to navigate.

When it comes to solidarity, Brownsword has a head start. His personal history is inextricably enmeshed with the heritage he grapples with. Generations of his family worked in the pottery industry and, following suit, he went to work at the Wedgwood factory in the 1980s. Initially an apprentice modeller, he later worked in the Design department and in other departments on day release, gaining a rounded experience of production processes.³³ He also continues to live and work in the area. However, Brownsword left Wedgwood because he felt creatively constrained, rather than through redundancy, following a different trajectory to many of his co-workers.³⁴ Stepping back to regard factory life from an alternative perspective, he made it the subject of his artistic explorations, and when he won the *Award* prize at the inaugural British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) in his home city in 2009, it was not for industrial production, but in the 'one off' category.

Whilst his experiences made him keenly aware of the psychological impact the mass redundancies of the 1990s had on the area, Brownsword was struck by the potency of the visual remnants of industrial decline. With an archaeological eye he began to document the empty factories, the marl holes from which clay was extracted, and the waster tips where damaged products were cast aside: the landscape he grew up in and which was fast disappearing. He collected material evidence of the processes and practices that took place in those locations. He also began to ask questions about the area's intangible heritage – the loss of tacit knowledge and skill that had been handed down from master to apprentice and parent to child across generations of pottery workers.

Like Hesse, Brownsword was interested in remaking heritage. However, the heritage that truly concerned him was not raw material that could be freely manipulated, but knowledge that had accumulated in the bodies of specific people. It could only be unlocked through the sustained co-exploration of the push and pull between material and maker and gradual perceptive attunement through repetitive action: the know-how required to pull a perfect handle time after time or place a print in just the right spot without fail. This intangible heritage was living knowledge that need not die along with traditional modes of transmission, yet it was becoming increasingly vulnerable as those who held it aged.

Brownsword took his experience as the subject of academic study, using a practice-based PhD, 'Action Reflection: A Creative Response to Transition and Change in British Ceramic Manufacture' (2006), to explore the local context through making as well as words.³⁵ Returning to the Wedgwood factory where he was once employed, he recorded over 80 hours of footage of the

factory staff at work. Asking them to talk about their making processes as they conducted them, he prodded at the distinction between thinking and making, which anthropologist Tim Ingold has argued is at odds with the lived experience of knowing as an active and embodied process.³⁶ In adopting this approach, Brownsword provided a space in which his subjects could articulate themselves in ways that were more closely aligned with modes of knowledge production within the factory and which valued that knowledge.

Brownsword gathered the pieces of raw clay that fell to the floor as the interviewees made and modelled forms, glazing and firing them. Preserving these ciphers of physical action and using them as material for his installation *Salvage Series* (2005/2008), he rendered them out of place. No longer industrial waste, the fragmentary remains of near history became curious artefacts that hinted at the practices of a lost civilisation but also spoke of metamorphosis and rebirth. He exhibited them alongside films of the factory workers, interspersed with recordings of factory demolitions, drawing parallels between material and immaterial loss. The latter was key, for Brownsword is adamant that he is not on a nostalgia trip, but that, like Hesse and Beighton, he is repurposing heritage to meet contemporary needs: looking for ways forward that respect our interrelationship with others and our environment. To him, this knowledge is as integral to the city's identity as its grandest structures and the treasured artefacts in its museums.³⁷

A call for Brownsword and colleague Anne-Helen Mydland to produce and commission artistic research projects in the former Spode factory in Stoke-on-Trent as part of the 2013 British Ceramics Biennial (BCB) provided an opportunity to take his ideas further. Moving on from showing film footage of workers against the ruins of industry, he invited china painters who had worked for famous local manufacturers into the site, which closed in 2008, to perform their processes as part of the 'Topographies of the Obsolete' exhibition. The focal point of the show, *National Treasure* (2013), saw Anthony Challiner sitting behind glass, painting scenes of industrial landmarks onto discarded blank plates in place of their traditional romanticised counterparts. On the foot of those plates, he substituted his own painter's mark with images of dereliction, foregrounding the loss of identity and purpose that accompanied the fall of the factories.

Pivoting on the dialogic relationship between audience and performer and attempting to highlight the human consequences of globalisation, *National Treasure* might be aligned with works such as Santiago Sierra's *A Person Paid for 360 Continuous Hours* (2000). Yet, whilst Sierra's work – for which he paid an anonymous worker ten dollars an hour to sit in seclusion in a gallery for two weeks – dwelled on financial exploitation and the dehumanising aspects of labour, Brownsword's spoke of job satisfaction and non-monetary value. Paid his standard rate and named in all publicity, Challiner set his own working hours and both employer and audience were at his mercy. Unlike compatriots employed on local factory tours – which often reduce artisanship to spectacle

Figure 3.3 Residue of performative installation *National Treasure*, painted by Anthony Challiner, 2013. Ceramic, looped film, performance. Image courtesy of the artist and Bjarte Bjørkum.

to attract tourist income – he was not required to perform a simplified set of rehearsed and seemingly timeless steps. Instead, his agency, unique skillset, and the gaping hole left by their loss took centre stage, challenging practices that consign heritage to an unspecified, but remote, past.

Confronting the disregard for the immaterial heritage of industry and its intersection with material culture, Brownsword took Challiner to the 2015 Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale in Korea: one of several countries that grant bearers of intangible cultural properties the status of National Living Treasures.³⁸ Indeed, the country's campaigning led UNESCO to issue *Guidelines for the Establishment of National "Living Human Treasures" Systems* (1993), addressing support for 'persons who possess to a very high degree the knowledge and skills required for performing or re-creating specific elements of the intangible cultural heritage'.³⁹ Where Challiner had an almost spectral presence in the Spode Factory, in this setting he became a prized cultural vessel – the foundation on which Stoke-on-Trent was built and someone who had more to contribute to its future.

The same year, Brownsword was *Re-apprenticed* (2015) to Challiner, copperplate engraver Paul Holdway, and china flower maker Rita Floyd as part of the BCB. Working alongside them for a year, he sought to learn from them and capture the knowledge transfer from master to apprentice. Filming them to document the nuances of each familiar action they undertook, he

gathered material evidence of the cumulative weight of their ‘human mass production’ from piles of china petals to printing plates. A live version in the Raphael Cartoons Gallery of London’s Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) focused visitors’ attention on the balletic sequences that each artisan follows in order to achieve their desired outcomes. Humanising factory processes, it begged comparison with (and questions about) the comparatively high status of the master–apprentice system in which the gallery’s eponymous Renaissance artist was embedded. It also challenged the way in which we privilege material heritage over intangible. In 2003, UNESCO had extended its work in this area, adopting the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, yet the UK is not amongst the 178 countries and states who have endorsed or ratified it to date.⁴⁰ If British museums commit to preserving objects for future generations in perpetuity, why not accord intangible assets, which are just as crucial to our orientation in time, the same degree of protection?

More recently, Brownsword has extended these explorations through multiple iterations of his installation *Factory*. First shown in 2016 at Britain’s oldest public museum, Oxford’s Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, he restaged the work at Gyeonggi and the V&A a year later. Again, he invited artisans into public spaces to perform their work, seeking to defamiliarise their industrial labour and spotlight their specialist skills. Amongst other things, this time, he asked Floyd and her final apprentice Stacey Wright to discard the fruits of their labour. After working through the sequence of movements required to model each exquisite china flower, they added another step to their repertoire, casting the blooms aside. The piles of delicate flowers that accumulated beside them served as both a memorial to lost expertise and a reminder of the wasteful nature of their redundancy.⁴¹

Live demonstrations recall enactments of endangered crafts in ethnographic displays and heritage events. They can objectify making and fix it in the past as something to be preserved rather than a living process. However, they also echo the demonstrations of skill and virtuosity that are central to studio pottery culture. As craft historian Tanya Harrod has observed, although studio craft was once defined in opposition to industry, it is no longer viewed as a significant threat to the handmade.⁴² Consequently, craft practitioners and theorists have begun to look back and revalue associated skills. Shifting practices honed in industrial settings into the same frame, or other loaded contexts such as the V&A’s Raphael Cartoons Gallery or a South Korean biennale, Brownsword compelled us to reconsider our preconceptions about them. By doing so, he reclaimed Stoke-on-Trent’s manual labour as a source of pride and challenged the logic of a Heritage Craft Association Red List of Endangered Crafts that included brick making and tile making but had no room for flower making.⁴³ The fact that the Association, which he lobbied and is now working with, added pottery (industrial) to that list in 2019 is testament to his perseverance.⁴⁴

Figure 3.4 *Factory*, Gyeonggi International Ceramic Biennale, Korea, with Rita Floyd, 2017. Ceramic, performative installation. Image courtesy of the artist and Korea Ceramic Foundation.

Although craft historian Glenn Adamson has suggested that Brownsword is a ‘self-conscious outsider’, he doesn’t assume the role of artist as ethnographer, claiming the right to speak authoritatively for a marginalised group because of their shared characteristics.⁴⁵ Instead, he uses his artistic profile to create space in which the workers’ actions can speak for themselves. Providing a visual corollary to theoretical accounts of knowledge production in crafts-based apprenticeships which anthropologist Trevor H.J. Marchand has described as an indissoluble relation between minds, bodies, and environment, Brownsword compels audiences to meditate on the complexity of ‘thinking through making’ and the false dichotomy of thought and hand.⁴⁶

Brownsword’s work has a tangential relationship to traditional approaches to regeneration. He strives to revivify immaterial heritage and change attitudes, rather than promoting tourism or making it more appealing to investors. Yet, in many ways, he is the heart of the BCB, which has excelled at both of the latter. As organisers Barney Hare Duke and Jeremy Theophilus expounded in the 2011 guide, the inaugural biennial attracted ‘£2 million economically, £750,000 value of media coverage, 35,000 visits and an increase in visitors’ positive perceptions of the city’.⁴⁷ Furthermore, now rechristened ‘Spode Works’, the BCB site is now home to the Spode Museum Trust Heritage Centre, fifty-five artists’ studio spaces, and the Potbank Café and Aparthotel.⁴⁸ The works by Brownsword addressed above and others,

including *Marl Hole* (2009) and the ‘Sunday Morning@EKWC’ exhibition (2011), have contributed to this new spirit of place. Highlighting the fact that embodied heritage defines a place as much as the material, they show that there are national treasures in people’s own homes and communities. They have also encouraged local people to engage with the wider possibilities of clay, reconsidering their tainted relationship with it. Speaking about *Marl Hole*, Brownsword thanked the Biennial for allowing him to, ‘give something back to the city’.⁴⁹ For him, the project offered an opportunity to ‘reactivate’ the landscape, which had once been the lifeblood of the area, as well as a chance to ‘re-evaluate the status of the material’.⁵⁰ Although using language that recalls Kester’s characterisation of artist-led projects, he is very much a participant and co-investigator in these situations.

Conclusion

Struggling to explain the ongoing ripples created by the loss of the ceramics industry, sociologist Tim Strangleman found inspiration in literary theorist Sherry Linkon’s work, particularly her suggestion that deindustrialisation has a half-life: it contaminates the landscape and eats into time as people regroup and adapt to the new status quo.⁵¹ Viewed from this perspective, towns and cities like Middlesbrough and Stoke-on-Trent are not post-industrial; they are still adjusting. Producing heritage through different modes of collaborative, active enquiry, Hesse and Brownsword work in ways that create space for people to negotiate their place in this difficult territory. For them, the past is neither distant legacy nor inescapable burden, but, instead, living material with which to build a future.

Reflecting on the complexity of regeneration efforts, Jill Sweeney, Kathy Mee, Pauline McGuirk, and Kristian Ruming have argued for an understanding of placemaking that acknowledges ‘the affective, contingent work which brings together the human and non-human, the material and social and the enduring and the ephemeral, to make place’.⁵² It is a characterisation that bears striking similarities with Stewart’s notion of ‘bloom spaces’, which create opportunities for relocating oneself in the world, and one that describes the projects in this chapter too. Working at the intersection of making, place, and heritage to reimagine communities, Hesse and Brownsword remake themselves in the process: they are placemakers extraordinaire.

Notes

- 1 DCMS, *UK City of Culture Consultation Document* (London: DCMS, 2014), p. 4.
- 2 Local Government Association and Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers’ Association, *People, Culture, Place: The Role of Culture in Placemaking* (London: Local Government Association, 2017), p. 3.
- 3 Jessica Symons, ‘“We’re not hard-to-reach, they are!” Integrating Local Priorities in Urban Research in Northern England’, *Sociological Review*, 66.1 (2018), 208–209.

- 4 *Gallery and Community: Art, Education, Politics*, ed. by Marijke Steedman (London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2012), p. 6; *After Urban Regeneration: Communities, Policy and Place*, ed. by Dave O' Brien and Peter Matthews (Bristol: Policy Press, 2016), p. 5.
- 5 O'Brien and Matthews, p. 27.
- 6 Jo Vergunst, Elizabeth Curtis, Oliver David, et al., 'Material Things: Shaping Things and Practices through Heritage', in *Valuing Interdisciplinary Collaborative Research: Beyond Impact*, ed. by Keri Facer and Kate Pahl (Bristol: Policy Press, 2017), pp. 153–171.
- 7 *Heritage as Community Research: Legacies of Co-production*, ed. by Jo Vergunst and Helen Graham (Bristol: Policy Press, 2019), p. 2.
- 8 Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), p. 175.
- 9 Francois Matarasso, *A Restless Art: How Participation Won, and Why It Matters* (Lisbon and London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2019); Facer and Pahl.
- 10 Kester, p. 175.
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Gestured by Brass Art

Gestures, ambiguity, and material transformation at Chetham's Library

Brass Art: Chara Lewis, Kristin Mojsiewicz, and Anneké Pettican

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Introduction

Located in the heart of Manchester, on a sandstone bluff next to Victoria Station, sits the Chetham's College complex, overlooking the river boundary between Manchester and Salford, two cities forever in redevelopment. To set foot in Chetham's Library, the oldest surviving public library in the English-speaking world, is to step into a fifteenth-century medieval building housing a collection begun in the seventeenth century via Sir Humphrey Chetham's philanthropic legacy.¹ It is famous for its association with John Dee (1527–1609), resident warden, alchemist, polymath, and advisor to Elizabeth I, and visiting readers such as Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who developed the habit of studying together at the table in the alcove of the Reading Room in the summer of 1845.² Chetham's remains open to readers and writers alike and often hosts events that reference the collection. The rich archive attracts thousands of visitors from across the world who climb the tilting stairs to peer through the gates to the book presses and touch the scorch mark reportedly left by the devil's hoof.³

Dr Rowan Bailey writes of Chetham's, 'It is a space full of material inscriptions. It is a space *of* and *for* reading and writing' (our emphasis).⁴ The collection spans first editions, original print series, historic photographs, glass lantern slides, manuscripts, diaries, maps, and letters through to local, civic oddities. It encompasses theology, history, philosophy, anatomy, languages, sciences, natural history, arts, social and economic history, and literature. It is also a site for what *can* be read (into), and what *may* be written (on).

Brass Art is the collaborative practice of Lewis, Mojsiewicz, and Pettican. Our installation *Gestured* was supported by Arts&Heritage – one of ten 'Meeting Point 2' commissions inviting contemporary artists to respond to museum collections and historical narratives, financed by the ACE Museum Resilience Fund.⁵ Judith King, Director at Arts&Heritage, states:

The potential benefits of placing new and exciting artworks in museum and heritage venues are huge, not only for the artists and the venues but

for the museum visitors, who will encounter a new way of experiencing history and their collections.⁶

The selection panel at Chetham's trusted us to bring our practice to their collection and occupy the public and hidden spaces in ways that were both visible and invisible. Sue McLoughlin, Heritage Manager at Chetham's Library, comments, '[Brass Art] understood how important the collections were, they understood the history of the building, and they have a real sensitivity to how people respond to old buildings, and to that sense of magic'.⁷

The medieval interior of original wood and flagstone at Chetham's contains the main library, a hidden scriptorium, adjoining baronial hall, audit room, courtyard, hidden passageways, heavy historic furniture, and paintings of patrons alongside the shelves and chained cases of leather-bound books. The atmosphere is palpable; it's history densely layered and present in the aroma and creak of time-worn surfaces. Although the Library occupies a central location, it remains hidden to many, nested in the cloisters of Chetham's School of Music with visits restricted to week-day tours and special events. *Gestured* was to be the first contemporary art intervention in the museum spaces.

McLoughlin notes the tension for curators between the need to bring energy and life to heritage sites, and their responsibility as custodians to protect the collection and 'spirit of place'.⁸ Mindful of this duality, we began to feel our way, aware of the challenge entailed in bringing our practice to, and making interventions into, such a resonant space. The open remit came with a weight of expectation that our artwork would be able to raise the cultural profile of the museum and draw in a new audience. *Gestured* presented the first application of sculptural thinking to John Dee's original hand-drawn manicules, and comprised a constellation of installed blown glass, cast and 3D printed sculptural pieces, single channel video works, a series of public events, and an accompanying publication.

An embodied approach to the archive

Our proposal included references to the alchemical transformation of materials, the interior architecture of the building itself, and the quiet symbolism of hand gestures evident in the paintings hanging in the reading room.⁹ We applied for the Chetham's commission because of our fascination with its history and atmospheric spaces, and our deep interest in reanimating collections with fresh perspective, revealing hidden aspects and proposing new narratives. Following visits to the site, we were particularly drawn to representations of gesture and saw the opportunity to replicate the expressive hands – noted in the reading room portraits and Hogarth prints – as 3D printed sculptural objects.¹⁰ The historical connection with alchemy and the detailed illustrations of apparatus offered the possibility of revisiting

approaches to material transformation and the bringing together of physical and digital making.

Notions of replication, substitution, and transformation underpin our creative practice and generate new ways of both losing and distinguishing our individual identities in the collaboration. Drawing on our existing knowledge, research, and specific interest in the mimetic and uncanny gesture, we wanted to introduce a series of sculptural hands to Chetham's. The hand gesture has been a feature of our practice from an early exploration of metamorphic shadow plays to effect magical transformations, to an interest in the reading of their implied or ambiguous meanings – their essential unfolding.¹¹ This informed our initial desire to both echo and challenge the posed, masculine hands in the paintings and to appropriate Hogarth's allegorical, stylised depiction of female hand gestures in print.

The research and development period enabled us to go through a process of situating our practice and presence at the library as we tested many possibilities in the different spaces. Each visit suggested other trajectories into and through the collection, and we explored the building as a space in which to insert ourselves, and eventually the artefacts as substitutes for our presence. In between our frequent visits, Chief Librarian Michael Powell would unearth more depictions of hand gestures in unexpected volumes. These collected hands formed a visual encyclopaedia of gestures that we would draw upon for the poses of our own hand casts – pointing, cupping, pinching, rubbing, grasping, and entreating. The presence of our own hands afforded us a place amongst the male patrons and writers, to point towards other narrative possibilities and trajectories. Bailey supports the idea, proposing, 'Perhaps gesture is the "leitmotif" that travels through time and provides us as readers in the present with new ways to narrate the past?'¹²

Throughout our collaborative practice we have been invited to explore or sought access to specific heritage sites: Croft Castle, Ludlow, the Freud Museum, (London), Monk's House (Rodmell), and the Brontë Parsonage (Haworth).¹³ Our approach is unobtrusive; capturing fleeting performances with Kinect scanners, or interposing ourselves as strangely familiar objects into collections. Joanne Morra writes:

In this way the artists propose that they are able to, 'engage with a sense of [a] possible reanimation of objects or sites; a revisitation of a power that may seem ostensibly "dead". The reanimation of site or object evokes a sense of the mnemonic and brings to the fore aspects of: memory, knowledge, translation and inscription'.¹⁴

We approach a site *anticipating* that we will find pertinent artefacts or material traces that resonate with our concerns as artists. This expectation is rooted in our long-term and entangled research interests in embodiment, performativity, the uncanny, and liminality. Individually we bring

idiosyncratic, niche interests and knowledges; as a collaborative endeavour, we bind and knot these. To borrow from Athanasius Kircher's writing on the phenomena of magnetism, 'the world is bound in secret knots'.¹⁵ These knotted lines of attraction and entanglement are difficult to pick apart, relying on sympathies and resonances, rapprochements and frictions.

Chetham's Library offered us the opportunity to bring our 'sensing bodies' to *gesture* or *reach towards* both a resonant space and extensive archive.¹⁶ Unlocking the book presses, we found and followed echoes of our previous artistic research: in Cowper's anatomical plates of flayed bodies, organs, and hands; between the pages of Kircher's seventeenth-century treatise on light and shadow and illusionistic devices; in tiny alchemical illustrations of symbols and alembics; fantastical landscapes; and in the symbolic gestures and hands depicted by Hogarth in his print series.¹⁷

We were thrilled to see notes and sketches in the margins of Dee's own books, and these marginalia, suggestive of alternative trajectories of thought or resolution, sitting alongside the body of text, became a core aspect of our research approach – that which *can* be read. The marginalia revealed an apposite method of emphasising key ideas within a text in the form of hand-drawn manicules – these pointing hands directly draw the eye to something of importance, indicating a subjective response at the very time of reading or rereading the text.¹⁸ Faced with an overwhelming collection of treasures, this personalisation of Dee's own modest collection was a critical point of entry for us, and taking up the directive of his manicules we substituted our own hands for his as potential routes through and alongside the collection.

Despite Dee's relatively short sojourn in Manchester as warden of Chetham's Library, the impact of his presence at Chetham's, and our interest in his legacy, extend beyond the books he left behind. In recent years Dee has been resurrected as a talismanic figure of alchemical practice and has been the focus of an exhibition; a short film by artist, writer, and curator Jeremy Millar; and an opera, *Doctor Dee*, by musician Damon Albarn.¹⁹ A contested and complex figure, Dee's broad scope of interest and research leaves much room for interpretation and recuperation by opposing fields of study. The alchemical stages of death, transformation and resurrection of metals and matter, were seen as definite physical transitions of a living material, evidencing the 'breath' or 'spirit' in all matter; the temporal rhythms of living substances in conjunction with cosmological symbolism. Scientific historian Francis Sherwood Taylor claims:

It would appear that all the aspects of alchemy can be explained, if it is taken to be a practical natural philosophy, as it were, a chemistry of the entity 'spirit' or 'breath' which was believed by the alchemists and hermetic philosophers to enter into both man and metals.²⁰

Figure 4.1 *Pepper's Ghost (after Chetham)*, 2017. 3D resin print, pink glass globe, light, map box. Image courtesy of Brass Art. Photo: Brass Art.

As we explored the tangible traces of Dee's own hand in the archive, his influence on many fields of enquiry, and the 'devil's hoof' mark in his study, we recognised the echo of his ideas that matter has the potential to quiver with life.

Molten and interior geologies | the erupting body

In Chetham's collection, we revisited ideas around material transformation and its connection to Carl Jung's theories as we considered what physical outcomes might emerge from our research. The highly complex alchemical reactions, which were believed to account for the transformation of base metal into pure gold, correspond with the maturation of the psyche described by Jung as 'the unconscious individuation process'.²¹ In order to understand this relative to the chemical experimentation that alchemy demanded, a parallel must be drawn between the voice of the unconscious mind and the unknown properties of matter. Jung's proposal that the procedures of alchemy can be seen as an expression of the unconscious mind projected into (chemical) matter, resulting in a confrontation with the psyche – the shadow of man – chimes with our long-term research into the transformative power of the shadow.

Following the thread of alchemical interest, we learned that early efforts to produce gold ore, through the perfection of material experimentation, produced surprising discoveries, including the creation of ruby glass, later refined by alchemist and glass maker Johannes Kunckel (1637–1703). The introduction of gold flakes to the glass dispersed the light and unexpectedly produced a deep red colour that ‘no doubt resembles fine rubies but perhaps resembles nothing so much as blood’.²² A serendipitous reading of Edmund de Waal’s history of porcelain referenced this accidental creation of red glass in the search for the perfection of matter and this directed our focus to the correlation of producing red glass.²³ The prowess of Venetian glass-makers is described by Biringuccio in *De la pirotechnia* (1540): ‘I shall speak to you of glass: a meltable material, almost turned mineral by art and by the power and effect of fire, which originates from the ventures of formidable alchemistic savants’.²⁴ Witnessing the transformation of solid matter to molten liquid and then cooling into a new form is spectacular – unexpected variations in colour density and hue occur at 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit and are not fully revealed until twenty-four hours have passed and the glass has slowly annealed in reconfigured form. A short, controlled breath through a blowpipe creates a bubble or bulb shape, but a large glass sphere requires sustained breath, additional help to shape the glass as it turns, and another to shield the arm of the shaper.²⁵ The vitality of breath brings together air, fire, motion, and energy, and constitutes the *pneuma* as conceptualised by the ancient Greeks. This breath made solid was fashioned for us in simple, coloured globes and visceral shapes referencing internal organs. Our use of vital materials – air, light, and shadow – to conjure and sculpt, creates ambiguous tensions between the living and the petrified and makes our processes pertinent to reimagining collections.

In an unusual application of hot glass working, and by a process of trial and error, we used our hand casts as moulds, pushing the molten, coloured glass into the arrested gestures. The resulting artwork entitled *Solaris* (2017), after Kircher’s detailed depiction of the sun’s surface, appears to contain red glass swirling in a state of flux; lively and still warm with vital breath, clasped in the palm of a hand – from speculative imagery to sculptural form.

Discovering Kircher’s geological masterwork *Mundus subterraneus* (1665) on the shelves refocused our attention on matter and opened up an undercurrent of instability and volatility at the heart of the collection. This encyclopaedic tome speculates on ‘magical’ forces and the causes of unknown phenomena through both divine and natural means. His own direct experience of a descent into a volcanic crater, and witnessing the catastrophic eruption of Vesuvius, spoke most forcefully to us, addressing the transformative powers of materials under external influence. His images unfold to expose a speculative subterranean world where fiery ribbons connect caverns of fire, deep in the earth’s core, that vent smoke and erupt at the earth’s crust. Meticulous portraits of the sun, complete with solar flares, and the delicate surface of the moon, book-end the extensive scope of Kircher’s quest for knowledge: from

microcosm to macrocosm; the formation of fossilized matter to planetary influences.²⁶ His theories are extrapolated in the words of Valentine Worth:

All of nature in its awful vastness and incomprehensible complexity is in the end interrelated – worlds within worlds within worlds: the seen and the unseen – the physical and the immaterial are all connected – each exerting influence on the next – bound, as it were, by chains of analogy magnetic chains. Every decision, every action, mirrors, ripples, reflects and echoes throughout the whole of creation. The world is indeed bound with secret knots.²⁷

In *Anatomy Acts* (2006) Andrew Patrizio observes that, in sensing the world, we discover ‘new-found lands from our own interior’.²⁸ As we moved from outsized anatomical plates to the terrain of *Mundus subterraneus*, the unfolding bodies of planets, land masses, and anatomical forms became all the more intriguing and entangled. Patrizio goes on to suggest, invoking philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, that we situate ourselves as ‘sites of uneven intensity, patterns and configurations of feeling, labyrinthine maps of voluptuous pleasures and fluxes’.²⁹ In *Gestured*, our sculptural constellations connect luminous and slippery glass objects, hands both dead and vital, golden threads, catoptrics, images of eruptions alongside videos of hands working molten red glass, hands caught in a refraction, and inverted figures arrested in alembics. Working with the sculptural possibilities of our materials, we considered these ways of knowing ourselves and our own interior landscapes – by means of imaging, cutting, sampling, sensing, and scanning. Lenses may magnify and scope our secret bodies to reveal soft labyrinthine maps and yet an interior monologue remains intact and intimate. These forms of bodily knowledge remind us that, as Henri Bergson states, ‘the living thing is above all a thoroughfare and ... the essence of life is in the movement by which life is transmitted’.³⁰

The temporal dimensions of alchemy – of arresting time and thereby operating outside of natural laws – are somehow visible in the highly detailed and magnified engravings that Kircher commissioned for his books. The viewer must take time – changing focus – to see the whole image, and the interconnectedness of spheres and confluences. Dee’s and Kircher’s magical or heavenly bodies are offset by Cowper’s fleshy eviscerations and Hogarth’s depictions of sordid cycles of mortality.

Absent women return

Our own cast and assembled hands – in black and white resin and pale Herculite – took up position in Chetham’s Library. We mimicked the posed hands of ‘men of consequence’, hands of criminal corpses from anatomical plates, Dee’s manicules, theatrical indexes of gesture, religious blessings, and

Figure 4.2 *Gestured detail*, 2017. 3D resin print, coloured glass. Image courtesy of Brass Art. Photo: Jonathan Turner.

classical orators. Their mute communication and presence point to the potential for new lines of thought or confluence between the writers, and to the spectral silence of the missing female voices in the canon.

The women we did find were Hogarth's – mainly fallen, dead, or variously dying of disease, poverty, and/or acts of violence. The damaged hand of a female corpse in *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (*Cruelty in Perfection*) finds a strange asymmetry in the anatomical plates of Cowper: there the male hands point to their own mortality, are clenched, seem vital, fight their fate, but for the female corpse the only possible position is passivity in death – the equivalent of an anatomical Wax Venus. Women here function as mythical illustrations, muses, victims of their own morality tales, and only occasionally as alchemical *soror mystica* – the feminine counterpart to the masculine soul.³¹

The one gesturing hand that stands apart is the click of female fingers in *The Harlot's Progress*, Plate II. Hogarth's Harlot is the embodiment of a specific trope of manipulation and shrewd 'feminine' persuasion. We returned to her gesture often during our research because of its defiant provocation – the noise indicated by her arch gesture (causing a diversion) is almost audible as she punctuates the scene.³² In many ways this 'silent', active command can be seen as the stimulus for the *Gestured* exhibition. Like Dickinson's fly that uncannily interposes itself at the moment of death, the click provocatively reawakened the vitality of the collection for us.³³

Spectral whispers

As our sculptural hands lead the visitor on unexpected journeys of the imagination, Bailey indicates, ‘It is our peripheral vision that senses what is being gestured. Outside of the range of any direct stereoscopic gaze, this way of seeing is like a spectral whispering’.³⁴ We employed a number of sculptural techniques to produce our hands in different scales, weights, materials, and luminosity that could be chanced upon within the library spaces. Some of our hands were cast to fit within small apertures in the building, to feel, caress, or intimately touch. Others were designed to hold fabric or cradle glass, to mimic images we had seen, or to draw relationships between the divergent fields we have described. Hands holding lenses brought exterior views from around Chetham’s into the interior, or held material taut, pinched objects, convulsed with rigor mortis, pointed accusations, bore molten red glass, poked delicate organs, clasped globes of pure colour, held out objects for contemplation, or were playfully juxtaposed with items held in the collection. Art historian and curator Catriona McAra reminds us that ‘Pinching, pointing and clasping are tactile, sensual responses, both to the feel of sculpture and to the interaction with books’.³⁵ This sense of the graspable is central to the exhibition. The hands stand in for our imagined touch and reveal the potential for a single gesture to be used in different ways. This method of substitution threads together the original gesture, the material process, the absent figure of the artist, and the illusory touch of the viewer.

Working with experts is an important aspect of our larger collaborative process, and we ensured that the highest level of detail was retained in the casting process so the finished artefacts would be as lifelike as possible and therefore exhibit the uncanny dimension central to our practice.³⁶ The combination of processes enabled us to create surprising shifts in scale. For *Gestured* this was made manifest in the process of first performing the gesture, then casting our hands and then 3D scanning the original casts at a high resolution before resizing the scan data to create the final 3D printed artefacts. This enabled a subtle or magnificent shift in scale and materiality and created the necessary gap in expectation between what one *thought* was seen and what was actually presented.

In *Marriage A-la-Mode (after Hogarth)* (2017), a giant hand – resting on a boxed set of original Hogarth prints – pinches a gold ring held aloft by a twelve-foot-long, delicate gold chain. The ring, strung across one of the presses, simultaneously evokes the social contract of marriage, the ambitions of alchemy, and the Midas touch.³⁷ The suspended ring, transfixed in a timeless moment, is an impossible proposition; it can neither be possessed nor released. *Pepper’s Ghost* (2017) harnesses a more expansive gesture. A felt-lined display case houses a blown glass globe, and theatrical illusion is employed to create a double – of this delicate pink glass – that hovers, magically held in place by two 3D-printed, white hands. The artefact evokes

Figure 4.3 *Marriage A-la-Mode (after Hogarth)*, 2017. Oversized 3D SLS print, gold ring and chain. Image courtesy of Brass Art. Photo: Jonathan Turner.

Kircher's fascinating diagrams of projected light, *Steganographic Mirror* (1645) and pre-cinematic spectacle, *Lucerna magica* (1671), references synonymous with our engagement with the double and 'familiar strangers'.³⁸ The sculptural still lives, sited in the library book presses, pose surprising juxtapositions, which McAra states, 'enables us to dwell on the unfixing of meaning-making, and to question what secret messages our own body language may be imparting'.³⁹

Re-presenting the space

As a communicative tool, a carrier of meaning and a marker of the practices of reading and thinking, these hands engage and ignite the library as an environment filled with many stories of political power, patronage and secrets of the universe.⁴⁰

In order to bring a different audience into the library outside the official tour hours, we created two special evening events. The first was a private view of the installation where visitors could wander freely through the library and discover sculptural artefacts placed in spaces normally inaccessible to the public. The audience could also view additional moving image works in the Baronial Hall in which projected vessels were held aloft as if scrying for past and future visions of the two cities, and contemporary gestures were refracted through

glass apparatus in *Mooch and Maitlis* (2017). A halo of diffracted light frames the interaction as Scaramucci (the Mooch) – mimicking President Trump’s expansive gestures – transgresses the neutral space of a BBC Newsnight interview to directly touch Maitlis. To further extend the repertoire of live gestures captured in the exhibition, the audience shadows were photographed as they performed and communicated with each other behind a specially constructed shadow-play screen.

The second evening occasion was planned to coincide with Manchester Contemporary Art Fair to draw upon the presence of international art visitors, curators, gallerists, and collectors in the city. It emboldened us to develop ambitious plans for our *Gestured* torch-lit tour with live music and performance. This intimate experience was designed to draw the audience into an affective act. The visitors joined choreographed and scripted tours, led by actors, who skilfully wove through the building illuminated by small hand-held torches. Starting amongst dark cloisters, with unexpected routes through hidden corridors, the encounter with the building was one of total disorientation. An enormous bell, printing presses, a casement of chained books – objects that seemed conceivable in the daylight took on impossible aspects and scale in the dark, as corridor distances extended into darkness. Surreal encounters with the building and artworks were drawn into sharper focus, and the view from the library windows of the conjoined cities of Manchester and Salford at night began a new and more insistent dialogue with the dark interior. The actors played their part – performing improvised instructions on gesture, gleaned from eighteenth-century playwright John Weaver, silently illuminating and guiding, reciting Keats’ poem *This Living Hand*, using mirrors to reflect a divine eye on the ceiling with one hand while uncovering the devil’s hoofprint on the table with the other.⁴¹

The constraints associated with working in any heritage site require a creative approach to balance issues of protection and access. We envisioned bringing together elements that seemed live and pertinent to us during our exploration of the site and engagement with the themes we followed through the collection. From experience we knew the value of bringing an audience into a space that was usually inaccessible, or defamiliarising a known space in a one-off, out-of-hours event. Turning the guided tour on its head, the actors led audiences on a performative experience echoing Curtis and Pajaczkowski’s description of ‘a form in which the “outer” journey of physical and spatial mobility can function as a metaphor for the “interior” journey of the soul, the mind or consciousness’.⁴²

In previous projects, using our own voices, field recordings, and the inherent sounds of objects being ‘activated’, we have tried to address how a soundscape can apprehend aspects of spatial awareness, and have worked repeatedly with electroacoustic composers to capture a sense of place, most recently in our *Shadow Worlds | Writers’ Rooms* projects (2011–).⁴³ We can attest that touring medieval and Tudor buildings in the darkness amplifies an awareness of the

space where irregular edges and thresholds meet their equivalence in sonic terms. From the outset we wanted to engage with sound that was disembodied, yet of the body. Eerie sound drifted into the scriptorium from the Baronial Hall through high, hidden windows as participants toured the building with their torches. The source was only revealed to the audience as they emerged from the thick darkness of Dee's room, having encountered 'hell's mouth' and 'the devil's footprint', to witness an electronic etherphone played in the cavernous, medieval fireplace of the Hall. Thereminist Lydia Kavina's performance emitted a concert of evocative and haunting sounds seemingly conjured from thin air by her expert and mesmerising hand movements. This transmission of site and emotion by Kavina brought together habitual, tacit gestures, disciplined knowledge, and improvisation – for us this echoed our collaborative interests not only in gesture and performance but also repetition and play. Disoriented guests, in thrall to the theremin's 'voice', were given a red glass marble to exchange for a smoking red cocktail created by *The Alchemist* – masters in the dark arts of molecular mixology.

Tour guests stayed on in the Baronial Hall for the rest of the evening, observing Kavina on the 'invisible instrument', and writing or drawing in an appropriated Chetham's ledger. One commented that the evening was 'very substantial for such an ephemeral experience', whilst another remarked, 'I think I will always see the beautiful hands and glass whenever I return. They seem as if they've always been here'. This dialectical tension of disrupting the familiar and expected, yet creating artefacts that seem *of* the place, is a live issue for artists and commissioners alike, and we were clear that it would result in a productive friction. Participants wanted to tell us which parts of the tour they had been most affected by, and comment on the strange temporality of stepping off the city centre streets and into this other-worldly dimension that focused on absence as much as presence.

A fantasy hovers

In the aforementioned *Shadow Worlds* | *Writers' Rooms* projects we have written through our collaborative and performative responses to both the Brontë Parsonage and the Freud Museum – addressing the temporal interplay at work between reverie, memory, and the present moment as a point when past, present, and future coincide. In an essay on daydreaming and creativity, Freud discusses these phenomena, through a lens of unconscious fantasy and desire:

a fantasy hovers [...] between the three periods involved in our ideation [...]. This is the daydream or the fantasy, which has its origin in present experience and the recollection of the past: so that past, present and future are strung together on the thread of one desire that unites all three.⁴⁴

Figure 4.4 *Gestured torchlit tour, detail*. Image courtesy of Brass Art. Photo: Jonathan Turner.

In these creative scenarios, it becomes possible for a hauntology to occur as we seek to communicate or ‘collaborate’ with former resident writers (the Brontës and Freud) – creating something new in response to their writing, their artefacts, their ideas at the intersection with our own collection of memories, images, and experiences.⁴⁵ This interruption of linear time proposes that the present is haunted by both the past and the imagined future simultaneously. Bailey notes:

For Brass Art, a ‘thought position’ is not fixed. It is a necessary process in a field of iterative possibilities. In this respect, they look for moments of convergence and redirection, and with this the formation of a constellation of relations and exchanges. With respect to the archival encounter, they suggest that it ‘forces a reappraisal or reconsideration of objects, time, knowledge and our own position in relation to them’.⁴⁶

As artists we are free to balance the speculative and the concrete by way of confluences, correspondences, and the physical transformation of materials. Our position at a juncture of contemporary art, heritage site, and archive allows us to reshape such constellations of possible relations and temporality. Gestures may extend beyond their reach and time – a harlot’s clicking fingers in print have since been transfigured into a silent animated neon command in

Click (after Hogarth) (2018). Responding to micro and macro influences, the silent, symbolic hands of *Gestured* point simultaneously towards past, present, and future action.

Notes

- 1 Sir Humphrey Chetham (1580–1653). Chetham's Library represents the philanthropic legacy of this seventeenth-century Lancastrian.
- 2 John Dee was warden at Chetham's from 1595–1605.
- 3 His reputation as an alchemist and student of the occult was well established, and his arcane endeavours are supposed to have resulted in the appearance of the devil, who materialised over the table and left behind the mark of his hoof, <<https://library.chethams.com/about/history/the-medieval-buildings/audit-room>> [accessed 16 September 2018].
- 4 Rowan Bailey, *Ways of Reading Gestured* (Manchester: Manchester Metropolitan University, 2017), exhibition catalogue, 16 October–8 December 2017, p. 1.
- 5 Meeting Point 2 was launched at the BALTIC, Newcastle, 2017.
- 6 Judith King, Director at Arts&Heritage, <www.artsandheritage.org.uk/programmes> [accessed 1 February 2019].
- 7 Arts&Heritage, 'Gestured by Brass Art, Chetham's Library', <www.artsandheritage.org.uk/projects/chethams-library/> [accessed 16 September 2018].
- 8 Sue McLoughlin, 'Chetham's Library Artistic Partnerships', *Cathedral News*, August 2018, <www.manchestercathedral.org/site/assets/files/8101/7382_manchester_news_august_2018_web.pdf> [accessed 16 September 2018].
- 9 Painting of Reverend John Clowes (1743–1831) by Joseph Allen (1769–1839). Of particular interest because of the intimate gestures of the hands is the painting of Joseph Addison (1672–1719) and Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729) by Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723). Steele and Addison were essayists, collaborators, and co-founders of several newspapers. The composition alludes to their close friendship which ended a year later, just before Addison's death.
- 10 *A Harlot's Progress* and *Marriage A-la-Mode* were introduced to us by Chief Librarian Michael Powell.
- 11 Brass Art, *Proteiform* (2006), watercolour series.
- 12 Bailey, *Ways of Reading Gestured*, p. 1.
- 13 'Tell It to the Trees', Croft Castle, 11 July 2009–15 September 2010; Brass Art, *Shadow Worlds | Writers' Rooms: Brontë Parsonage*, in 'The Imagining of Things', Huddersfield Art Gallery, 12 October 2013–12 January 2014; Brass Art, *Shadow Worlds | Writers' Rooms – Freud's House: The Double (Mirror)*, in 'The Unconscious Revisited', Freud Museum, London, 24 June–5 October 2015. Brass Art's engagement with other heritages sites includes *The Air which Held Them* at Christ Church, Macclesfield, 14–30 June 2013, Wycoller Hall, Lancashire (2012), and proposed future artistic collaboration with the former home of Virginia Woolf, Monk's House, Rodmell (2020).
- 14 Joanne Morra, 'Reflections | Iterations', exhibition essay for *Freud's House: The Double* (2015), International 3, Manchester; citing 'Brass Art: Submerged and Disrupted Identities' (unpublished paper).

- 15 Athanasius Kircher, *Magneticum naturae regnum* (Amsterdam: J. Jansson à Waesberge & Vae E. Weyerstraet, 1667), frontispiece.
- 16 We deliberately use the term 'sensing' to foreground movement and the body's encounter with the political. See Erin Manning, *Politics of Touch: Sense, Movement, Sovereignty* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), pp. xxii–83.
- 17 William Cowper, *The Anatomy of Humane Bodies* (Oxford: Royal Society, 1698); Athanasius Kircher, *Ars magna lucis et umbrae* (1646, repr. 1671), *Physiologia Kircheriana experimentalis* (1680), *Mundus subterraneus* (1678). William Hogarth, *A Harlot's Progress* (1732), *Marriage A-la-Mode* (1745), *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751).
- 18 Konrad Gesner, *De Remediis Secretis* (Lyon, 1555), p. 267.
- 19 'Scholar, Courtier, Magician: The Lost Library of John Dee', Royal College of Physicians, Regent's Park, London, 18 January–29 July 2016; Jeremy Millar, *A Constellation for John Dee* (2016); *Doctor Dee*, directed by Rufus Norris and composed by Damon Albarn, Manchester International Festival, 2011.
- 20 Francis Sherwood Taylor, *The Alchemist* (Hertfordshire: Flamingo, 1976), p. 176.
- 21 Carl Gustav Jung, 'Psychology and Alchemy', in *Collected works of C.G. Jung*, vol. 12, 2nd edn (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 67.
- 22 Peter Dear, 'Alchemical Reflection', *Distillations*, 7 December 2008, <www.chemheritage.org/distillations/magazine/alchemical-reflection> [accessed 16 September 2018].
- 23 Edmund de Waal, *The White Road* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2015), p. 137. We were intrigued that a small quantity of gold is still used to produce the 'bloody' pigment.
- 24 Dedo von Kerssenbrock-Krosigk, *Glass of the Alchemists: Lead Crystal – Gold Ruby, 1650–1750*, (Corning, NY: Corning Museum of Glass, 2008), p. 10.
- 25 Hot glass work by Ingrid Phillips and Vicky Higginson, Edinburgh College of Art, and Dan Nuttall, Manchester Metropolitan University.
- 26 Kircher's plates in *Mundus subterraneus* (1678): 'Pyrophylaciorum', 'Solaris', 'Typus corporis lunaris panselini una cum maculis, faculis, montibus'.
- 27 Valentine Worth is allegedly the pseudonym for a neuroscientist writing from the 1960s onwards and is widely quoted on Dee and magnetism. Museum of Jurassic Technology, <www.mjt.org/exhibits/magnes.html> [accessed 16 September 2018].
- 28 *Anatomy Acts: How We Come to Know Ourselves*, ed. by Dawn Kemp and Andrew Patrizio (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), pp. 167–186.
- 29 Kemp and Patrizio, p. 176.
- 30 Jemima Kemp, 'Absolute Art', *dB magazine* (Adelaide, Australia, 2009) <www.concatenate.net.au/nal/nal.html> [accessed 16 September 2018].
- 31 In Dee's own copy of Gesner's *De remediis secretis* (Lyon, 1555), p. 267, he drew the face of a girl, known to scholars as 'The Cinnamon Girl', next to a recipe for the distillation of an elixir for youthful complexion:

To make the face clear and youthful, so that it seems no more than fifteen years of age, take twelve fresh hens' eggs without the shells, an ounce of cinnamon and a pound of donkey's milk, and wash the face with water distilled from this by an alembic.

- 32 We have revisited this gesture in a two-part neon artwork titled *Click (after Hogarth)* (2018) which is featured in an essay by Sharon Kivland, *La Pagode* (2018).
- 33 Emily Dickinson, 'I heard a Fly buzz-when I died' (591), *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by R.W. Franklin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- 34 Bailey, *Ways of Reading Gestured*, p. 1.
- 35 Catriona McAra, 'Brass Art: *Gestured*', *Corridor 8*, <www.corridor8.co.uk/article/brass-art-gestured> [accessed 16 September 2018].
- 36 Maxiofacial casting by Keith Winwood and Kerry Jacobs, MMU, Fraser Walker, NHS GGC. Casting by Kenny MacKay and Virginia Hutchison, ECA. 3D scanning and 3D printing by Ed O'Keefe and Alastair Peat, MMU. 3D printing by Chris Charlesworth, University of Huddersfield, and Steve Willmott of Ogle Models and Prototypes.
- 37 McAra.
- 38 Athanasius Kircher, *Physiologia Kircheriana experimentalis*, ed. by Johann Stephan Kestler (Amsterdam: J. Jansson à Waesberge, 1680), pp. 124–127.
- 39 McAra.
- 40 Bailey, *Ways of Reading Gestured*, p. 1.
- 41 John Keats, 'This living hand, now warm and capable' in *Selected Poems*, ed. by John Barnard (London: Penguin, 2007), p. 237.
- 42 Jim Drobnick, 'Mock Excursions and Twisted Itineraries: Tour Guide Performances' (1995), in *Parachute the Anthology (1975–2000)*, ii: *Performance and Performativity*, ed. by Chantal Pontbriand (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2012), pp. 110–121.
- 43 Monty Adkins, Chara Lewis, Kristin Mojsiewicz, and Anneké Pettican, *Shadow Worlds | Writers' Rooms: Freud's House*, in xCoAx (2017), <<http://2017.xcoax.org/pdf/xCoAx2017-Adkins.pdf>> [accessed 16 September 2018].
- 44 Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, ed. by Adam Phillips (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 28.
- 45 Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, trans. by Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).
- 46 Rowan Bailey, *Thought Positions*, conference presentation, Huddersfield Art Gallery, 12 November 2015.

Part II

Alternative histories

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Making the invisible visible in Capability Brown's lost landscapes

Gill Park

Introduction

'The Follies of Youth' was a three-year project that ran from 2013 to 2015 as part of the artistic programme of Pavilion, a visual arts organisation based in Leeds, which commissions new artwork by contemporary artists. Founded in a disused park pavilion in the Woodhouse Moor area of the city, Pavilion's programme has, for the last forty years, been concerned with contemporary art's potential to connect critically with its local place. In recent years, this has manifested as a rolling programme of site-specific commissions taking place in abandoned buildings, post-industrial sites, and as interventions into spaces designed for a purpose other than art. Site-specificity is understood by Pavilion – as Miwon Kwon has argued – as being both physical and spatial, and as cultural framework defined by institutional critique, which 'insists on the matrix of the class, race, gender, and sexuality of the viewing subject'.¹ This expanded conception of 'site' was addressed by 'The Follies of Youth', which comprised a series of site-specific commissions. These commissions brought contemporary artists into dialogue with heritage landscapes across Yorkshire, all of which had been designed by, or were in the style of, the eighteenth-century landscape gardener, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. In a range of different ways, these commissions sought to denaturalise Brown's Yorkshire landscapes, drawing attention to the matrix of class, race, and gender relations that are often obscured in these heritage sites.

'The Follies of Youth' as a contemporary art and heritage initiative formed part of a national programme of heritage activity, branded under the banner of *CB300*, which sought to bring public attention to the influence of Brown's designs in the years leading up to 2016, the tercentenary of Brown's birth. During this time I was director of Pavilion. Thus, what follows is an account of 'The Follies of Youth' commissioning programme that seeks to engage critically with the commissioning process but which is also written 'from within'. Its aim is to illuminate one particular example of a project in which contemporary art has been used as a mode of intervention into, and contestation of, heritage landscapes, while also drawing attention to the landscape

as construction and, as itself, a work of art. In my reflections and analysis, I am drawing strongly on the work of landscape historian Dr Patrick Eyres who was a valued critical friend to Pavilion throughout the ‘Follies of Youth’ project and whose important intellectual work on the ‘new garden history’ applies an engagement with the politics of representation to an analysis of the landscape garden as construct of social, economic, and political gender identities as well as class interrelationships.² The intention of this chapter is to position contemporary art as a tool, which can serve to draw out ‘hidden’, previously invisible, and at times contentious narratives within ‘natural’ heritage sites while also arguing – in line with this book’s emphasis – for the productive convergence of contemporary art and heritage spaces.

‘The Follies of Youth’ was established as an arts and heritage commissioning strand of Pavilion’s programme but it is also significant that it formed part of Pavilion’s educational and engagement work. Pavilion established the project as a learning opportunity, through which it sought to use contemporary art as a means to engage young people with heritage sites, which may be otherwise unknown to them despite being part of their local communities. It also sought to engage young people in the process of *doing* heritage research, aiming to involve participants in discovering and producing narratives that are hidden from view. Over two years, approximately fifty young people, aged 16–25, were engaged with the programme in one way or another, with at least fifteen of those participants maintaining a sustained engagement over a two-year period. Thus, while the focus of this chapter is on the relationship between contemporary art commissioning and heritage sites, it also raises the potential of contemporary art and heritage projects for developing audiences as active *co-producers* rather than simply being passive receivers of an arts–heritage experience.

Developing the project

‘The Follies of Youth’ was catalysed in 2013, following a visit by the Pavilion team to Temple Newsam, a Tudor-Jacobean house, originally built between 1500 and 1520, with grounds landscaped by Capability Brown during the 1760s. The house is located just east of the city of Leeds, approximately 6 miles from the city centre, and is today managed as one of nine sites that comprise the Leeds Museums and Galleries service. While visiting the Temple Newsam estate as part of research for an altogether separate artistic project that was exploring architectural structures, we as Pavilion’s team became intrigued by one particular feature of the Temple Newsam landscape: the Temple Newsam folly. Known as ‘Little Temple’, this sandstone and brick structure, constructed in a hybrid gothic and classical style, is thought to have been designed by Capability Brown between 1763 and 1770. While exploring the estate we discovered that this folly, designated as a Grade II listed building, is now a somewhat unloved and dilapidated structure, which

is included on the Historic England 'Heritage at Risk' register. Embellished with graffiti, it is cordoned off by green metal fencing, apparently to protect it from further vandalism and anti-social behaviour by local young people for whom it has recently been a favoured evening gathering spot. While there is an ongoing campaign by the local authority to restore and conserve this heritage building and the surrounding landscape for future generations, we at Pavilion were more interested in its contemporary usage. Compelled by the idea of 'folly' as a building with no practical function as well as a descriptor for a lack of 'good sense', we were drawn to this recent example of the folly's reappropriation by young people for subversion and revelry rather than heritage tourism.

In her book *Uses of Heritage*, Laurajane Smith argues that 'the heritage discourse naturalises the practice of rounding up the usual suspects to conserve and "pass on" to future generations, and in so doing promotes a certain set of Western elite cultural values as being universally applicable'.³ I argue that the 'Follies of Youth' projects were linked by an implicit challenge to this hegemonic heritage discourse. Indeed, at Temple Newsam, it felt particularly significant that young people, who were assumed, by keepers of the estate, to live in the nearby Halton Moor and Osmondthorpe neighbourhoods, had reclaimed the eighteenth-century folly, the folly being a signifier of aristocratic excess. Built in the 1930s to accommodate a growing population in the wake of slum clearances in Leeds city centre, the Halton Moor neighbourhood is marked, today, by its higher than average levels of worklessness, low-income families, and benefit claimants. It is high on Leeds City Council's regeneration agenda. How does this relate to Brown's work at Temple Newsam? Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was given his now-famous nickname because of his commitment to assessing the 'capabilities' of his client's landscape.⁴ Indeed, garden historian Patrick Eyres argues that 'it is in the social and economic processes through which these estates were improved that the embourgeoisening commercial and entrepreneurial practices became apparent'.⁵ For Brown, his landscapes were never simply vistas to be admired, an escape from the daily realities of commerce. Instead, he drained land for grazing sheep and planted forests for timber, reflective of new agricultural markets and practices. Much later on, open-cast mines were built at Temple Newsam, continuing this legacy of productivity. Thus, might we not speculate that local young people – the contemporary 'rebel' users of the Little Temple folly – are likely descendants of the gardeners, farmworkers, and miners who would once have lived in proximity to the estate? Can the youthful reappropriation of Little Temple thus be considered a form of truth to power in the face of ongoing unequal class relations? Inspired by the questions and multiple significations raised by this one specific eighteenth-century folly, Little Temple became, for Pavilion, the departure point for a larger project that evolved into a series of contemporary art interventions that loosely addressed the politics of representation within local garden sites.

Figure 5.1 Little Temple Folly, Temple Newsam House. Photo credit: Pavilion.

Pinatopia and Mount Folly

In 2013, Pavilion formally launched ‘The Follies of Youth’ with a commission by artist Harold Offeh that animated the Temple Newsam estate through a new performance entitled *Pinatopia and Mount Folly*, funded by a small grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The central figure of this artwork was the pineapple, ‘king of fruit’, which was widely regarded as a symbol of wealth and power in the eighteenth century. Introduced to Britain following imperialist expeditions to South America as early as the fifteenth century, the pineapple was grown in hothouses in the Temple Newsam walled gardens, and in gardens like it across Britain. It was thus a signifier of both the capitalist accumulation of Britain’s landed gentry and of imperial power. Harold Offeh is a contemporary artist who was invited to work with Pavilion because of his interest in what it means to ‘embody’ history, using strategies of humour, performance, and participation to confront the viewer with histories that are difficult, unseen, or repressed. In this instance the pineapple became a device through which to make visible the estate’s link to the ‘Atlantic Triangle’ trade route, which transported enslaved people from Africa to the Caribbean or American colonies to produce the cash crops which were then exported to European powers. Indeed, one significant discovery from our research was that Capability Brown was commissioned to re-landscape the Temple Newsam estate by Charles Ingram, 9th Viscount of Irvine, and his wife Frances Shephard. Shephard was the daughter of Samuel Shephard

who was a Tory MP and director of the East India Company, which was synonymous with the Transatlantic slave trade.

Referencing this specific history, as well as the broader links between land-owners in Britain and their participation in empire-building, Offeh worked with a group of emerging artists to produce a series of pineapple-based choreographed routines, which took place in the Walled Gardens of the Temple Newsam estate. Dressed in green crowns and yellow ponchos, holding pineapples above their heads, the participants' actions loosely recalled Carmen Miranda's exuberant carnivalesque song and dance routines in *The Gang's All Here*.⁶ Drawing on Temple Newsam's history as a working estate, and drawing out the entanglements of race and class, the final act of Offeh's *Pinatopia and Mount Folly* escorted audiences to Little Temple for a 'rave' at the neglected folly, a mark of protest on behalf of all those who have toiled at, or for, Temple Newsam to profit its landed inhabitants. It was, it seemed, a performance for those who, to draw on Stuart Hall's argument, do not see themselves reflected in the mirror that is the 'imagined community' of the nation-state, to which the notion of a National Heritage belongs.⁷

Harewood House

Building on this first commission, how then could Pavilion uncover more of the intangible heritage of those workers whose toil ensured the productivity of Brown's landscapes? How else might we address those audiences whose experiences may not be reflected back to them through the institution of a National Heritage, and who therefore do not feel they 'belong' at heritage sites? In response to this question, Pavilion devised a second event in the 'Follies of Youth' series, this time in Yorkshire's best-known Brown site, Harewood House. Purchased in 1739, the Harewood estate was bought by Henry Lascelles from the profits of sugar and slave economies, and transformed by Capability Brown in 1775. The complicity of the Lascelles family in the enslavement of people, both as owners of plantations in Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, and Tobago, and through major cash investments in the slave trade, is well known. It was acknowledged explicitly by the family in 2007, when many of Henry Lascelles' business papers were donated to York University's Borthwick archives for digitisation and public access. That same year, a major performance of *Carnival Messiah* was commissioned by Harewood, which restaged Handel's *Messiah* through the theatre and music of Caribbean carnival. While much work has thus been done to move on from the dark aspects of Harewood's past, the profits from the slave economy are still witnessed through the estate's grandeur. Its serpentine lake, cascade, and encircling drives read as distinctive marks of Brown's hand, signalling the elevated status of the Lascelles family in Georgian Britain. But the design was not simply symbolic. In keeping with Brown's eye and mind for profit, the estate encompasses extensive pastures, fishing lakes, and clumps of woodland. Thus

the commissioning of Brown did not simply produce a space of leisure for the Lascelles family to enjoy but this representational economy had real effects, ushering in the transformation of the artistocratic Lascelles dynasty into embourgeoised entrepreneurs.⁸ Indeed, since its establishment in the eighteenth century, the estate has been a highly productive base for the family's participation in commercial life, signalled in the present day by its current status as one of Yorkshire's most prominent heritage tourist attractions.

Gustav Metzger

Pavilion's second 'Follies of Youth' event focused on this theme of production through the experience of one particular labourer who worked at Harewood House during the Second World War. Like many of Pavilion's events, this one came about through moments of incidental discovery that came to feed back into the wider project in interesting and surprising ways. In the course of our research, we discovered that Harewood House had a connection to the artist Gustav Metzger (1926–2017). During the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Metzger was one of Britain's foremost political artists, whose self-defined 'autodestructive art' explored destruction as both a creative act and an act of protest, in the context of an industrial society susceptible to catastrophic events. His first 'autodestructive' works were produced in 1959 in protest against nuclear warfare, created using acid on sheets of nylon, the acid forming changing shapes on the dissolving nylon and thus being an act of both destruction and creation. What is less well known is that Metzger spent part of his early life as a joiner at Harewood House. Born into an Orthodox Jewish family in Nuremberg in 1926, Metzger escaped Nazi Germany on the Kindertransport aged twelve, coming to Leeds where he studied carpentry at the ORT technical college on Roseville Road, before gaining employment on the Harewood estate from 1943–44. During this time, Metzger witnessed the frequent game beatings as part of shoots on the estate, which had a profound effect on his world-view and his 'autodestructive' artwork that followed. In her reflection on Metzger's years spent working at Harewood, Pavilion producer and art historian Linzi Stauvers surmises that, from the Brown landscape, Metzger gained 'an understanding of the theatricalised landscape, the mechanics of which are hidden from view'.⁹ Stauvers points out that Brown's signature was to efface his own authorship, 'for, once his parklands reached maturity, his designs were mistaken for works of nature. Spectators were so in awe of the natural effect, they failed to see who engineered them'.¹⁰ Brown's exploitation of the land was implicitly addressed in Metzger's own discomfort with the destruction of ecologies, witnessed through the game shootings at Harewood, which caused him to be a lifelong vegetarian.

Pavilion commissioned Metzger to produce a new film in collaboration with the artist Giles Bailey, in which Metzger discussed his formative

experiences as an artist in relation to his experiences as a labourer on the Harewood estate. Screened in the Servants' Hall at Harewood House, the film sought to expose the social inequalities that form part of our national heritage, through which, as Stuart Hall argues, 'the "greatness" in Great Britain is inextricably linked to the intersections of colonisation, slavery, and empire with the everyday daily life of all classes and conditions of English men and women'.¹¹ Gustav Metzger's experience did not explicitly speak of Harewood's imperial connections but it did bring forward one particular oral history that challenged the celebration of the great and the good that persists through the dominant heritage discourse. Metzger's focus on the destructive act of game beatings – part of the ritual of bourgeois life – in the context of a project exploring Brown's exploitation of the land, also seemed to point to the hidden violence of the social formation that constitutes British heritage, a theme that came to be the main focus of the wider 'Follies of Youth' project.

The garden and/as artwork

Following these two artistic interventions at Temple Newsam and Harewood House, as well as further research into Brown's influence in the Yorkshire area, Pavilion was awarded funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund's 'Young Roots' programme, to extend its commissioning programme and engagement with young people. The next stage of the project proposed to move away from an investigation into the hidden histories of public heritage gardens and instead aimed to produce new knowledge of three private sites in Yorkshire, which had not previously been publicly attributed to Brown.¹² Now overgrown, repurposed, or hidden from view, Pavilion sought to devise further collaborations between artists and young people in order to map the hidden politics of, and thus denaturalize, the local landscape.

As I wrote in my opening paragraph, 'The Follies of Youth' was not only about intervening in the landscape but it was also responding to the conceit that the garden *is* a work of art, a work of art that has political effects. This is an idea that has been explored by the artist Iain Hamilton Finlay, most famously through his fascinating garden work, *Little Sparta*, which has been studied extensively through the scholarship of Patrick Eyres and his *New Arcadian Journal*. The *New Arcadian Journal* is a limited edition fine press book, which explores the cultural politics of historic landscape, championing 'political gardening' and exploring the resonance of garden works by contemporary artists. *Little Sparta* was established by Ian Hamilton Finlay and his wife Sue Finlay at their family home at Dunsyre in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh and is open to the public for half of the week. The garden is, without doubt, a conceptual work of art, developed gradually over forty years as what Eyres has called 'an art-work in progress and a nursery of ideas', ideas which often became transposed as large-scale artworks in the public domain.¹³ It is difficult to evoke Finlay's unique practice of garden

design, which, as Eyres has pointed out, sees poetry, philosophy, and politics converge.

One feature of *Little Sparta* is a series of stones inscribed with Finlay's concrete poetry that draw on the neoclassical ideas of philosophical provocation, an idea to which 'Capability' Brown was deeply committed, and which was brought into his own gardens through ornaments, classical temples, and follies, which served as moments of contemplation in the eighteenth century. Indeed, Finlay has been described as the 'Capability Brown of conceptual art'. This comparison between Brown and the poet Finlay evokes the description of Hannah More, cited by Patrick Eyres in his text 'Championing Capabilities: From Wrest Park to Little Sparta', who compared Brown's garden design to a work of literary composition:

Now there [...] I make a comma, and there [...] where a more decided turn is proper, I make a colon; at another park, where an interruption is desirable to break the view, parenthesis; now a full stop.¹⁴

Inspired by Finlay, Pavilion wished to explore more fully how Brown's heritage gardens could become sites for new artworks but also the implications of addressing Brown's work *as* works of art.

Giles Bailey: *Out of a Morass*

One of the underlying concepts which is signalled throughout Finlay's garden, and indeed in Brown's own work, is the classical idea of 'Arcadia', a concept that refers to pastoralism and harmony with nature. The idea of 'Arcadia' was taken up by artist Giles Bailey, who, having worked with Pavilion previously on the Gustav Metzger film, collaborated with the 'Follies of Youth' collective of young researchers ('The Follies' for short) to make another new work of art. This formed the first of our three 'lost garden' commissions through which artists were invited to respond to three 'hidden' Brown landscapes in the wider Yorkshire region.

For Bailey's commission, 'The Follies' collective began by reading Tom Stoppard's play *Arcadia*, which concerns the invention of the English landscape and themes of past and present, order and disorder, certainty and uncertainty which are also recurring preoccupations in Finlay's conceptual garden-as-artwork. From there, the group engaged with various visual representations of Arcadia from history paintings such as Poussin's *Landscape with a Man Killed by Snakes*, to the graphics on a jar of pesto. This led to the concept of a new work, entitled *Out of a Morass*, which alludes to the desire to control and tame the landscape encapsulated by both the Arcadian concept and Brown's garden design. In a description of the commissioned artwork for a special edition of the *New Arcadian Journal* published in 2016, Giles Bailey states that *Out of a Morass* uses Brown as a means to examine the way

in which culture makes the so-called natural world coherent and constructs an 'understanding of landscape'.¹⁵ The title of Bailey's work derives from an inscription at Croome Park, by the 6th Earl of Coventry, which reads, 'To the memory of Capability Brown – who by the power of his inimitable and creative genius formed this garden scene out of a morass'.¹⁶

The encounter of Bailey and 'The Follies' with Brown, however, was a reversal of Lord Coventry's experience. Pavilion commissioned Bailey to respond to Stapleton Park, near Pontefract in West Yorkshire. Stapleton was once the estate of Edward Lascelles, cousin to Edwin Lascelles of Harewood, who then let the estate in 1782 to Lord Stourton. Stourton almost immediately brought Capability Brown in to remodel the landscapes, and Brown's plans for Stapleton are thus assumed to be one of his final projects before he died. While Brown passed away before he could realise the plans – with the eighteenth-century landscape designer Thomas White employed to take over the commission – the productive garden, with timber, shrubberies, water, and drives, bore all the signs of Brown's hand.¹⁷ When members of 'The Follies' collective visited the site, however, little evidence was left of the landscape's eighteenth-century past. As Ryan Thompson, one member of the group, describes, 'Little remains of the hall, except the foundations it stood on. The fish pond is surrounded by woodland, and its overgrown state provides a habitat for thousands of baby frogs'.¹⁸ Thus, the final commission, which took the form of a new film scripted through workshops, in which different

Figure 5.2 Giles Bailey and The Follies of Youth, *Out of a Morass* (2015). Video still. Photo credit: Giles Bailey/Pavilion.

characters evoke and embody varying experiences of the landscape from the perspective of the twenty-first century, is a speculative portrait of Brown's lost garden, a new landscape formed 'out of a morass'.

Through the use of speculation, *Out of a Morass* relates to Stuart Hall's notion of heritage, not as having an essentialised meaning, but rather as being 'an on-going project, under constant reconstruction'.¹⁹ Hall goes on to say that 'social memory is highly selective, it highlights and foregrounds, imposes beginnings, middles and ends on the random and contingent'.²⁰ By pointing to one particular heritage site as a 'morass', an uncertain site that does not have a fixed connection to a tradition or collective identity, Bailey's commission alludes to the potential of reconstructing different, less exclusive, less authoritative, canonised narratives of heritage.

Ruth Lyons: Pilot Light

Where *Out of the Morass* projected onto the lost landscape of Stapleton Park through the form of speculative fiction, a second commission by Irish artist Ruth Lyons literally projected light onto the landscape of Byram Park. Located in Knottingley, in the district of Wakefield, the hand of Brown is even less visible in this second 'lost landscape'. Much of the built estate at Byram Park was destroyed by a sinkhole in the 1950s and while there is some evidence that Brown visited the house, no documentation has been found of his design, although the eighteenth-century landscape was certainly remodelled in a Brownian style, embodying Brown's call to 'return to nature' through woodlands, water, and grazing cattle.²¹ Drawing on the thin trace of Brown's impact, as well her own artistic interests in the geology of the land, artist Ruth Lyons was inspired to reflect on the way in which Brown's design sought to exploit and control the land, while appearing natural and untouched. The commissioned work was also strongly inspired by the landscape's current proximity to Ferrybridge power station as well as historic maps, in which Lyons identified limestone quarries and kilns on the periphery of Byram Park. Indeed, Lyons became preoccupied by the way in which the presence of coal veins, water, hard and soft stone impacted upon Brown's design, enabling the 'full exploitation of the land'.²² In order to bring this foundational geological material into dialogue with the land's current use as the site of power production, Lyons began experimenting with producing quicklime, the base material for limelight, which was used by the Victorian engineer Thomas Drummond in order to facilitate the trigonometrical survey of Great Britain and Ireland. At Lyons' base in Co. Offalay, Ireland, Lyons and 'Follies' Doug Bowen, Lara Eggleton, and Miriam Thorpe built a rudimentary limekiln through which they transformed limestone into quicklime. Lyons then designed a large parabolic mirror, which was shipped from Ireland and brought to the Byram site at night. The quicklime was burnt with oxy acetylene and the mirror projected the limelight across the landscape, reminiscent of Drummond's early mapping

techniques. The artist writes, 'I was struck by the idea that the light used to describe the shape of the land was derived from the stone of that landscape'.²³ Our human dependence on light is further highlighted in a large photograph which formed part of the final artwork and which documents the projection event – a restaging of pre-electric light – while in the background of the image the chimneys of the Ferrybridge power station stand tall, serving to highlight, as Linzi Stauvers argues, the 'landscape's theatre of productivity', both in the eighteenth century and in the present day.²⁴ Once again, I argue that what is significant in Lyons' work is that heritage is not treated here as something *apolitical*, as a leisure space or as celebration of Britain's 'great' past. Rather, in focusing on Brown's landscape through the lens of a much longer geological history, the commission unsettled the authorised 'national heritage' which is produced by eighteenth-century heritage landscapes in the present day, and which obscures the way in which these heritage landscapes and the buildings that stood on them linked to the creation of certain British values and identities that underpinned the structuring of social relations, at a particular moment.

Amelia Crouch: *Nor Stamp Hard on the Ground, Neither*

A third commission added to the emerging focus of the 'Follies of Youth' project on heritage as construction. The final artist to be commissioned in the series of 'lost landscape' contemporary artworks was Amelia Crouch, who produced a new seven-minute video work entitled *Nor Stamp Hard on the Ground, Neither*, which addresses the construction and performance of eighteenth-century etiquette within Brown's landscapes. The work reflects on Brown's modernity and its relation to what Crouch describes as the shift from courtesy (a symbolic moral code) to a system of rules about social class status without moral impetus.²⁵ The film's leitmotif is a book by Adam Petrie, found by Crouch in the course of her research, which was published in 1720 and titled *Rules of Good Deportment or Good Breeding*. The script for Crouch's moving-image work quotes from different sections of the book that explain how a 'well-bred' person should behave when out in public. These instructions are acted out as lightly choreographed performances within the Whiteley Beaumont landscape in Lepton, near Huddersfield, which – now a campsite owned by the Scout Association – is the third of the 'lost' landscapes attributed to Brown and addressed by Pavilion. As with the other two sites, the marks of Brown are subtle and it is only the presence of a ruinous folly and the brickwork of a walled garden, both visible within the film, that ground Crouch's work in relation to the Brownian heritage. The instructions brought to life within Crouch's work focus on Petrie's guidance about the appropriate way for a gentleman to walk in the eighteenth century, adding gender to earlier exploitations of the hidden relations of race and class within the constructed landscape. 'When you walk with your superior let him have your right hand' reads one quotation

Figure 5.3 Amelia Crouch, *Nor Stamp Hard on the Ground, Neither* (2015). Video still. Photo credit: Amelia Crouch/Pavilion.

in the film, ‘but if near a wall, let him be next to it’. Reflecting on the relation between nature and culture, Crouch explains that the film ‘combines two things that appear natural (Brown’s landscapes and a particular manner of walking) but that are actually cultural affectations from a particular period in history’.²⁶ Once again, heritage can be read in relation to the structuring of social relations, in this case through Crouch’s focus on the codes of behaviour that acted in some way as representations of national identity, which bound together certain social groups, and ensured the cementing of a newly dominant embourgeoised class in the eighteenth century.

Lead, Threads, and Petals

There was one final commission that formed part of the ‘Follies of Youth’ commissioning series. In the course of our research, we had become interested in another eighteenth-century Yorkshire landscape – Wentworth Castle Gardens, near Barnsley – the rich history and symbolism of which was introduced to Pavilion by Patrick Eyres, who has been closely involved in researching and promoting the Wentworth site.²⁷ To those preoccupied with Wentworth Castle’s links to Brown, the estate represents something of a conundrum. While the sites previously mentioned are referenced in the account books of Brown, the evidence relating to Brown’s authorship of the Wentworth estate is anecdotal and, while the estate is clearly designed in a Brownian hand, the archival documentation of Wentworth has been deemed to be too insecure to warrant a formal attribution.²⁸ For Pavilion’s purpose,

however, in exploring the productive relationship between contemporary art and landscape heritage, the attribution was something of a moot point. The Brownian influence was enough to secure an additional grant from the 'CB300' festival commissioning body, who had been particularly impressed with Pavilion's work to reanimate Brown's landscapes through contemporary art, as outlined in the sections above.

In his article, 'The Patriotism and Politics of Lancelot Brown's Capabilities', Patrick Eyres states that

it is now well established that Thomas Wentworth, first Earl of Strafford (second creation) fully understood the role of art in promoting the status and taste of an aristocratic dynasty, and that he applied this knowledge to the architecture and landscape of his Yorkshire estate between purchase in 1708 and his death in 1739.²⁹

The role of representation, as that through which we subject ourselves to dominant meanings, was of interest to Pavilion throughout the 'Follies of Youth' project. To end I wish to discuss one particular object, addressed by Eyres, that is sited at Wentworth Castle, and that reveals the politics and problematics of interpreting eighteenth-century gardens for a public in the twenty-first century. This challenge of interpretation was taken up in *Lead, Threads and Petals*, the final commission of the 'Follies of Youth' programme.

The object in question is the *Blackamoor* statue, which depicts a kneeling African man supporting a sundial. Once a common feature in eighteenth-century gardens, the Blackamoor was also a ubiquitous representation within furniture, decorative art, and painting during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries although the kneeling slave was later reappropriated as a symbol of the abolitionist movement. The story of *The Blackamoor* at Wentworth is, as Eyres has pointed out, particularly illuminating. Having previously been moved from the gardens to the entrance of Wentworth's Victorian conservatory, the statue was, in c.1980, placed inside the conservatory where it was used as a plant stand. During the 1980s, however, a group of students who were studying at the Northern College of Residential Adult Education (which has resided in the Wentworth Castle mansion since 1978) painted the statue white, a signification of a role-reversal that stood as a sign of their revulsion at this symbol of black subservience. Following this intervention, the statue was moved into storage until 2013, when it was restored through Heritage Lottery Fund money and repositioned in the conservatory as a means of educating the public about the politics of this particular representation. What is most significant in this story is the fact that this statue can be read as symbolic of the direct connection between the Georgian estate and the Atlantic slave trade. In fact, Thomas Wentworth was not only a profiteer of enslavement, but he was one of Britain's two negotiators at the Peace of Utrecht (1713), which secured British control of the slave trade.³⁰

While an interpretation panel informs Wentworth's visiting public of the statue's historic signification, Pavilion saw the history of this statue, and the 'problem' of its interpretation, as an opportunity to engage Pavilion's audience in another public event that revealed the politics of representation within Brownian Yorkshire landscapes. The commission, *Lead, Threads and Petals*, was a two-part work, comprised of a performance piece and textile installation, by Leeds-based artists Carol Sorhaindo and Joe Williams. Sorhaindo's textile pieces used natural dyes, drawn from plant life found within the Wentworth garden, which, through text and image, drew out the entanglements between botanical specimens and the site's historic narratives. The work, draped from trees throughout the landscape, formed one encounter on a performative walking tour created by Joe Williams, which made visible hidden African narratives within the garden. Williams' long-standing initiative 'Heritage Corner' emerged out of the Diasporan Stories Research Group in Leeds, and seeks, through storytelling and performance, to introduce audiences to previously excluded African histories and perspectives that are left out of the national heritage narrative. Informed by Eyres' rich knowledge of garden architecture, Williams' choreographed walk, which took place during an early September evening, traced the hidden African narratives within the Wentworth garden site. This included a stop in front of the Wentworth garden obelisk, 'Sun Monument', which draws its design from Egyptian obelisks, built as representations of the benben, the mound upon which the sun god Atum stood at the centre of the world. Thus, while the garden was part of a representational economy which secured Thomas Wentworth's power relation in eighteenth-century Britain, its rereading in the twenty-first century drew attention to the way in which social memory disavows and forgets the contribution of African cultures and stories to the construction of an identity, asking, with Hall, 'Whose Heritage'?

Conclusion

In this short chapter, I have sought to show how a heritage festival commemorating Lancelot 'Capability' Brown became an opportunity for the contemporary arts organisation, Pavilion, to explore its local place in new and enriching ways. Through a discussion of the six artist commissions and events, which formed the 'Follies of Youth' programme between 2013 and 2015, I have shown how contemporary art and heritage can come together in order to reveal the politics of representation that are often naturalised in our everyday encounters. I do not wish to argue that contemporary art simply politicises the mute heritage landscape. Rather I am seeking to address how contemporary art became a tool to show that the heritage landscape is never mute but is always, as Hall argues, a discursive practice 'in which the nation slowly constructs for itself a sort of collective social memory'.³¹ The

rich convergence of art and heritage, made possible, in this example, by the Heritage Lottery Fund's support for a sustained focus on Capability Brown's political and artistic intervention into the British landscape, enabled the production of contemporary art that was place-specific, dynamic, and that reflected on larger issues relating to class relations, imperialism, gender, and the environment within Pavilion's local context, thus becoming part of the ongoing production of a critical heritage discourse.

Notes

- 1 Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), p. 13.
- 2 Patrick Eyres, 'Commercial Profit and Display in the Eighteenth-Century Landscape Gardens at Wentworth House and Harewood', in *Bourgeois and Aristocratic Cultural Encounters in Garden Art, 1550–1850*, ed. by Michel Conan (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), pp. 189–220 (p. 192).
- 3 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 11.
- 4 Patrick Eyres, 'Championing Brown: From West Park to Little Sparta', *New Arcadian Journal*, 75/76 (2016), 9–23 (p. 9).
- 5 Eyres, 'Commercial Profit and Display', p. 191.
- 6 Linzi Stauvers, 'The Follies of Youth: Reimagining Lost Landscapes', *New Arcadian Journal*, 75/76 (2016), 109–138.
- 7 Stuart Hall, 'Whose Heritage? Unsettling "the Heritage", Re-imagining the Post-nation', *Third Text*, 13 (2008), 3–13 (p. 4).
- 8 Patrick Eyres, 'Commercial Profit and Display', p. 194.
- 9 Stauvers, 'The Follies of Youth', p. 112.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 Hall, 'Whose Heritage'.
- 12 The Brown influence in Yorkshire has been deeply investigated through the painstaking work of Karen Lynch, who has identified 23 landscapes as attributable to Brown, 14 of which are evidenced to have definitively been his.
- 13 Patrick Eyres, 'A People's Arcadia: The Public Gardens of Iain Hamilton Finlay in relation to Little Sparta', *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 29 (2009), 115–132 (p. 115).
- 14 Hannah More, in a letter to her sisters about a meeting with Brown in the gardens of Hampton Court Palace, cited in Patrick Eyres, 'Championing Capabilities: From West Park to Little Sparta', *New Arcadian Journal*, 75/76 (2016), 9–22 (p. 16).
- 15 Giles Bailey, 'Stapleton Park: Out of a Morass', *New Arcadian Journal*, 75/76 (2016), 131–133 (p. 131).
- 16 Cited in Eyres, 'Championing Capabilities', p. 13.
- 17 For more on Stapleton's attribution to Brown, see Karen Lynch, 'Capability Brown in Yorkshire', *New Arcadian Journal*, 75/76 (2016), 37–108 (pp. 93–94).
- 18 Ryan Thompson, Reflection on a field trip, *The Follies of Youth* website, <http://thefolliesofyouth.co.uk/?page_id=167> [accessed 16 November 2018].
- 19 Hall, 'Whose Heritage', p. 5.
- 20 *Ibid.*
- 21 Lynch, 'Capability Brown in Yorkshire', pp. 89–93.

- 22 Email from Ruth Lyons to Linzi Stauvers, 20 March 2014, cited in Stauvers, 'The Follies of Youth', p. 122.
- 23 Ruth Lyons, 'Byram Park: Pilot Light', in *New Arcadian Journal*, 75/76 (2016), 124–125 (p. 125).
- 24 Stauvers, 'The Follies of Youth', p. 123.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- 26 Amelia Crouch, 'Nor Stamp Hard on the Ground, Neither', *Axisweb*, <www.axisweb.org/p/ameliacrouch/workset/213278-nor-stamp-hard-on-the-ground-neither> [accessed 20 November 2018].
- 27 In 2017, this important heritage site was closed due to a lack of funding, although, at the time of writing, there is speculation that the National Trust will reopen the site to the public.
- 28 For more on this, see John Phibbs, 'What Went Wrong for Brown and What Went Right', *New Arcadian Journal*, 75/76 (2016), 24–35 (pp. 24–26); and Patrick Eyres, 'The Patriotism and Politics of Lancelot Brown's Capabilities', *New Arcadian Journal*, 75/76 (2016), 139–189.
- 29 Eyres, 'Patriotism and Politics', p. 143.
- 30 Patrick Eyres, 'Introduction: The Challenge of Interpreting *The Blackamoor*', *New Arcadian Journal*, 69/70 (2011), 7–14 (p. 8).
- 31 Hall, 'Whose Heritage', p. 5.

A room of one's own

Strategies of feminist arts interventions

Jenna C. Ashton

Introduction

This chapter explores the presence of feminist arts and curatorial interventions within heritage spaces, and potential for advocating for the rights of women and girls. Drawing on methodologies from wider international feminism and museums practice, I offer a framework for feminist strategies, and early reflections on research undertaken on the National Trust's 2018 Women and Power programme. Women and Power is part of the Trust's Challenging Histories National Public Programme (NPP) – an initiative designed to contest established narratives and reveal marginalised histories. The chapter points to the social implications of a feminist arts and heritage practice that moves beyond programming interventions, to organisational change more broadly. The chapter is also a call to action for heritage practitioners to ensure their work is critically astute, socially engaged, and politically aware. My thanks to Rachael Lennon, the National Trust's Public Programmes Curator National and Specialist for Marginalised Histories, for her early edit suggestions, contributions, and inspiring conversations.

Since late 2017 I have been acting as an advisor to a cohort of National Trust properties participating in Women and Power and leading a piece of participatory action research, seeking to get under the skin of the outcomes and affect of feminist arts and curation in creative programming. As such, this chapter draws on a body of research that involves close engagement with the NPP and some of its property activities. Throughout 2018 I have also been involved with other artist curatorial activity, coinciding with the national celebrations around the centenary of the Representation of the People Act 1918. My own practice and research are concerned with the role of heritage and arts in supporting human rights, especially policy advocacy and social change for women and girls. As a scholar-activist, curator, and artist, my interest in the National Trust's Challenging Histories programme is twofold: as a researcher, looking from the outside in, exploring the social implications of the programme, and as an activist practitioner, caught up in and impacted by the processes of such cultural organisations with regard

to equality and diversity. I am excited and hopeful in the potential of such a huge and influential organisation as the National Trust embracing participation and collaboration and holding a concern for diversity and inclusion at its heart. It seems to be ‘the lot’ of the practising scholar-activist to continually to-and-fro between positions of frustration, hope, and reality, as we strive to embed creative and equitable solutions in the task of making change.

Context: the National Trust and the Challenging Histories programme

The National Trust is the largest voluntary conservation charity in Europe. It cares for hundreds of historic houses across England, Wales, and Northern Ireland; it manages 250,000 hectares of land and one in ten of all the nation’s museums. Founded in 1895 by a small, committed group of volunteers, the Trust now employs 7,000 members of staff and 60,000 volunteers and is formed of 5.3 million members. In 2017 the National Trust launched a new ambitious programme exploring the theme Challenging Histories. Designed to unpick and actively challenge the histories shared at its places, the programme launched with *Prejudice and Pride*, a year-long celebration of LGBTQ+ heritage, marking the 50-year anniversary of the partial decriminalisation of same-sex acts in England and Wales. Each year, the Challenging Histories programme encourages and creates innovative exhibitions, activities, and events across National Trust sites. It stimulates contemporary art commissions and residencies; new research; publications and podcasts; community events beyond the boundaries of National Trust locations; as well as new relationships and avenues for new voices into the Trust. The programme aims to enhance the relevance and resonance of the National Trust to people’s lives today – and this provides the focus for my research with the *Women and Power* programme; how best to understand this relevance and resonance and the implications for broader society and the National Trust as an organisation.

In 2018, the centenary of the Representation of the People Act provided the Trust with an opportunity to build on the legacy of *Prejudice and Pride* and to interrogate more closely gender representation across its places and collections. In January 2018, the Trust launched *Women and Power*. The programme responded to the anniversary with two strands of activity: by exploring the history of the struggle for suffrage, and by placing a spotlight on women’s histories more broadly. Over 100 National Trust property teams participated in this programme, embracing the opportunity to readdress the balance in the histories told at National Trust sites and to actively tackle inherited gender bias. *Women and Power* sought to consciously ask: whose voices are not being heard and whose life experiences are not visible?

Why feminism and heritage

The history of women's suffrage is an early chapter in the long and ongoing campaign for women's rights and equality internationally – namely the focus of feminist activism and politics. The women's suffrage movement is part of our feminist memory, and to deny the politics of this feminist memory is to risk appropriating an important anniversary. I don't use the term politics in the sense of 'party' politics, but politics that concerns power, participation, and representation in decision-making; the distribution of wealth; the values and positions on issues concerning how people are treated in their everyday lives.

In describing feminism, I frequently turn to bell hooks, whose writing has focused on the intersectionality of race, capitalism, and gender, and what she describes as their ability to produce and perpetuate systems of oppression and class domination.¹ Feminism is not a movement of man-hating, but oppression-hating. Notably, the term feminism or feminist is missing on the National Trust's own public pages and magazine literature describing the Women and Power programme. Laura Bates, initiator of the Everyday Feminism project, wrote the foreword for the programme guidebook, so I am exonerated in using the term in this chapter. Although the Women and Power programme is, inextricably, cut from a feminist cloth, it interests me how that word, even in the context of the 2018 national celebrations, was so readily omitted from the marketing. It may seem insignificant, but it is a point I will return to later in addressing the difficult conversations the Challenging Histories programme must learn to embrace, and not avoid or deny. Admittedly, staff and volunteers would not describe all interventions and activities undertaken during the Women and Power programme as informed by a feminist politics. However, as the campaign for suffrage *is* part of our feminist memory, interventions should still be understood as part of a trajectory of feminist practice – and this is how I propose to analyse them.

Developing a framework for evaluating feminist curatorial and arts practices in the context of the National Trust is itself a new challenge. Feminist curating is activist; it seeks change through art, museology, and heritage discourses; it challenges oppressive structures. Feminist curation serves that in-between space where heritage and human rights intersect. Importantly, a feminist curatorial practice makes space for a feminist arts practice. The importance of the former to enable the latter cannot be overemphasised, and the lack of a feminist and socially engaged curator in a team can leave a marked absence in creative programming.

Feminist curation has been most clearly embraced within the contemporary galleries sector. Reilly, Jones, Dimitrakaki, and Perry have outlined quite thoroughly the historical and current movements within the Western visual arts context,² and Sandell offers excellent work around museums and human rights in the context of sexualities.³ In editing the two-volume publication *Feminism and Museums: Intervention, Disruption and Change* it was

heartening and inspirational to learn of so many dedicated practitioners working internationally within and on the peripheries of the heritage sector, ensuring that museums, galleries, and heritage sites actively engage with issues of gender equality and women's rights.⁴ Most importantly, practitioners have developed methods of creative resistance to intervene, disrupt, and make change in spite of socio-political pressures. However, it is clear that the integration of an intersectional feminist practice, with a focus on marginalisation and inequalities, is still evolving within an 'authorised heritage discourse'⁵ and a traditional conservation context, such as the National Trust.

Women and Power also sits within a broader international context around gender, diversity, and heritage. UNESCO's World Heritage Centre increasingly views its role in line with international human rights law, prioritising opportunities for women's empowerment in the fields of heritage and creativity, while recognising that safeguarding women's and girls' cultural heritage is not distinct from other human rights:

The realisation of equal cultural rights demands that women and girls are able to access, participate in, and contribute to all aspects of cultural life on a basis of equality with men and boys. This includes the right to equally determine and interpret cultural heritage; decide which cultural traditions, values or practices are to be kept intact; which are to be retained but modified, and which are to be discarded altogether.⁶

In 2014 UNESCO published the report *Gender Equality, Heritage and Creativity*, followed by an issue of *World Heritage* on gender equality in February 2016, in response to accusations that gender is largely ignored in heritage discourse.⁷ There has been a lack of awareness around how gender perceptions and construction work within hierarchies of power and how that shapes the expression and documentation of cultural heritage. Of course, this is an area feminist curators and art historians have been addressing since the 1970s but UNESCO is starting to catch up in understanding the social impact of the marginalisation of certain lived experiences. Notably, the 2014 and 2016 reports expressed criticism on a global focus around material tangible heritage as evidence, which is problematic for girls and women, and for marginalised groups, including ethnic minorities, indigenous peoples, black histories, LGBTQ+, and disability groups, whose histories and voices have been (and continue to be) suppressed through certain forms of material culture. As acknowledged by the CEO of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 'The construction of World Heritage through its identification, evaluation, inscription and conservation processes is also related to power relations in society'.⁸

This poses a complex challenge for the National Trust, which places enormous emphasis on its existing material heritage assets, led by a traditional conservation agenda which has prioritised an understanding of cultural

heritage as typically 'old and fragile, inherently valuable but now threatened and in need to be taken care of and protected from destruction in order to be preserved for the future as a non-renewable resource'.⁹ It is worth revisiting Laurajane Smith's much-quoted interrogation around the perception of heritage as static materiality:

As the subject of international treaties, conventions and charters, and the subject of national laws and policy programmes, heritage is often defined as a thing of value – something to be cherished, managed, conserved or curated. There is, however, no such thing as heritage.¹⁰

Smith argues that heritage is a 'process or performance, in which certain cultural and social meanings and values are identified, reaffirmed or rejected, and should not be, though it often is, conflated with sites or place'; she contests the idea of 'the authentic heritage past as material culture'.¹¹

This critical heritage approach poses significant challenges for the National Trust in both trying to create new meanings and relevance through creative programming, yet also being tied to existing assets that must demonstrate their value in their current state. Feminism is a natural ally and method of critical heritage practice, embracing and encouraging change for inclusivity. Feminism also acknowledges the messiness and complexity of lived realities and creative expression, but it is at odds with conservation practices that divide tangible, natural, and intangible heritage and expressions. However, in that tension there is also an opportunity for feminist practice to genuinely respond to the challenge of relevance and resonance.

A framework of feminist strategies

I am using six subsections from *Feminism and Museums* as a starting point to develop a framework of practice for analysing the types of feminist methods employed during *Women and Power*. These methods have been identified from 55 exemplar case studies across 21 countries and five continents. The case studies captured varied contexts and responses to resource availability, engaging with wide-ranging issues concerning LGBTQ+, BAME, disability, technologies, sex work, refugees and migration, indigenous rights, land use, rape and domestic abuse, pornography, and labour and work. This framework requires further nuance but, in its present state, it offers six specific areas of practice by which to try and make sense of the output from *Women and Power* and its potential social implications. Importantly, artists and creative practitioners are continuous participants in each of these feminist methods, thus I am stating that art and processes of creativity are inherent modes of working and living within feminist spatial practice and for the imagining of feminist futures. How artists appear and creative practice evolves during *Women and Power* is something I will come to.

I argue that implementing a mixture of these practices within creative programming enables a depth to the work undertaken. To what extent these methods can be activated is determined by a series of interacting factors concerning evidencing and understanding local demographic needs; staff knowledge and skills and attitudes; availability of required resources; desired legacies; flexibility and support offered by senior staff. In my evaluation I am already identifying examples of practice that fall across this framework:

- **Theory into practice** offers the potential for varying positions on how intersectional feminist theory (from varied disciplines of art, heritage, geography, anthropology, and sociology) can be transformed into practice and effectively inform systemic change – from the hierarchies that exist within museums and heritage sector structures to conservation strategies, to collections content, to design, use, and making of spaces. Theory can enable heritage professionals to position and develop their own practice in relation to wider social, spatial, and historical contexts.
- **Founded on feminism** offers the potential for organisational development specifically founded on a feminist ethos of equality and human rights. This holds great potential at specific National Trust sites and properties where small teams learn from the blueprints of other feminist organisations to (re)develop their own critical heritage frameworks for collections, spaces, and community involvement. This demands the motivation to actively use arts and heritage to support women and girls to find their voice and use physical assets as an arena for their representation within society and politics. Historic sites can become spaces of resistance through contemporary collecting and sharing of cultural heritage.
- **Artist intervention** is a frequent method utilised already by the National Trust, but here it is reimagined where artists are brought in to purposefully disrupt and challenge existing curatorial and interpretation practices. This is a specific and defined act. This can enable and empower ‘outsiders’ to enter into the professional heritage space (physical and conceptual), and facilitate new dialogues with collections, spaces, and audiences – acting as a go-between. The aim is to unlock and raise awareness of marginalised voices, and offer forms of representation currently absent from spaces. The challenge is to allow artists their creative freedom, and to ensure they can leave behind traces of their practice once no longer in residence.
- **Curatorial disruption** can come from those who hold official curatorial or archival roles, with the opportunity for insider feminist practitioners to contest institutional approaches and lack of diversity within collections, exhibitions, and programming. This can be effective in informing sectorial attitudes or cultural wariness of feminist methods and language. Opportunities arise when curators are empowered to test new approaches, or collaborate through co-curation with external practitioners and individuals willing to offer new interventions.

- **Education and activism** embrace the often economically and hierarchically negated role of learning and education provision within the heritage sector, and its especially transformative possibilities with children or young people. Here, education and activism are aligned through their joint objective of knowledge-sharing and social change – and the exhibition, collection, or gallery space becomes a portal for this work. This also includes scoping activities with community groups and individuals to help shape the ambition and focus of programming – not to simply act as participants in an existing framework.
- **Herstories** is perhaps the broadest of all methods, encompassing a number of projects for addressing the marginalisation of women's histories. Women have not had the same access to equal education, working practices, cultural expression, financial freedom, property ownership, and enacted laws. Patriarchal attitudes devaluing women's lived experiences – also influenced by class, race, and sexuality – have impacted the way histories have been collected or represented. These issues still exist globally. Focusing on individual herstories is a method for reclaiming space and making change within historical narratives.

Feminist artist interventions

The outlined feminist practices are vulnerable as they are activated in response to the challenges of inequality within an organisation, but also rely on that same organisation to enable practices to be fully expressed or embedded. Often they are temporary interventions or disruptions, which may be easily forgotten or removed post-programming. The method of artist intervention at the National Trust is perhaps the most visible and established of those outlined. In 2009, the National Trust founded Trust New Art, a contemporary arts initiative designed to commission artists to respond to Trust collections and to put creative expression back at the heart of many of its places. Over the last ten years, the organisation has worked with hundreds of artists to challenge inherited heritage practice and to facilitate a wider paradigm shift in behaviours and attitudes. Throughout the Trust's Challenging Histories programme, contemporary artists have played an important role in stepping beyond the institutional voice, both to draw out the contemporary relevance of the histories being explored and to help make transparent the process of the reclamation of lost voices. Many of the Trust sites that participated in Women and Power opted to engage with (mostly) female artists, in one way or another. Responsibility for engagement around contentious socio-political issues within historical sites frequently fell to artists. They contributed new content and reflective practice, rethinking places as creative spaces, and reimagining storytelling of well-worn narratives. Artists were required to act as a bridge to new audiences exploring sites for the first time, or connecting to visitors through events or workshops.

The year 2018 also marked 90 years since Virginia Woolf's seminal lecture and essay 'A Room of One's Own'. Through the Women and Power programme, the Trust recognised the anniversary with a series of artist residencies, inviting female artists from across the fields of arts, poetry, science, design, and illustration to inhabit five National Trust sites, including Woolf's own home Monk's House, and to respond to Woolf's provocation and the theme of Women and Power. At Monk's House, a specially commissioned film explored the text of Woolf's essay and introduced visitors to a contemporary take on Woolf's voice and her ideas that speak of the barriers – then and now – to women's creativity and the ongoing struggle for equality in a patriarchal society. As part of this project, members of the public, staff, and volunteers also completed a five-hour continuous read of 'A Room of One's Own'.

Artists at four other National Trust properties participated in the project and explored the stories of women linked to the history of each place through a contemporary female lens. Cliveden, Berkshire, invited theatre company Paines Plough and four writers, Sabrina Mahfouz, Zodwa Nyoni, April De Angelis, and Alexandra Wood, to create sound works inspired by four influential women connected to Cliveden's past, evoking their words and deeds to question whether the labels applied to them historically stand up to modern-day scrutiny. At Cragside, Northumberland, Professor of Experimental Architecture, Rachel Armstrong, considered the property's history of innovation and invention, and invited a cohort of students of medicine, design, and information technology to creatively respond to the many women who have shaped Cragside and the surrounding area. The exhibition included design technology, engineering, medicine, and fine arts throughout the house and grounds. Kate Charlesworth, illustrator, cartoonist, and graphic novelist, took up residence at Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton, living in the Mander family's flat in May 2018. Having reread Woolf's text, Charlesworth developed an illustrative personal creative response to Wightwick's women and the suffragists who gathered there during the struggle for female suffrage and the Mander family who supported the cause. Tyntesfield, North Somerset, saw poet-in-residence Holly Corfield-Carr produce a book of poetry in response to the life of writer, philanthropist, and campaigner Hannah More. Corfield-Carr ran writing workshops and poetry readings at Tyntesfield throughout the summer of 2018. In addition to the 'A Room of One's Own' series across the five sites, at Knole in Kent six contemporary artists installed new works throughout the house and grounds. 'A Woman's Place', curated by feminist curators Day+Gluckman, highlighted the progression of equality through the stories of women who contributed to Knole's history.

Contemporary feminist arts practice and curation has seeped into all areas of the Women and Power programme, not only in the projects highlighted above. Additionally, other elements of the Women and Power programme

took place beyond the boundaries of National Trust sites. Some properties chose to use 2018 to get to know and understand the needs of their local female audiences. They scoped local demographics, using arts methods and practice in grassroots community engagement to explore the relevance of their sites to women and everyday struggles. This kind of arts practice is as important as involving artists to create on-site experiences. Starting from the 'outside-in', these properties will likely evolve a long-term participatory practice where the arts play an integral role. This process is more labour-intensive and people and issues focused, and requires staff to think beyond their own spaces.

The National Trust also worked with a number of partners on 'Suffragette City', an immersive artist-led suffrage project in the centre of London, created with the National Archives, and additional work with the Pankhurst Centre in Manchester. The Trust also manages Heritage Open Days, a volunteer-led festival that facilitates around 40,000 volunteers organising 5,000 events across England each September. Unlike more traditional heritage organisations, and the wider work of the National Trust, Heritage Open Days operates without site or collection, as an annual people-led celebration of heritage. Through the Women and Power programme, the Heritage Open Days team worked with artists and interactive theatre-makers non zero one to create 'Put Her Forward', a project inspired by the under-representation of women in the nation's public monuments.¹² The team of artists ran an open call for nominations for women to be recognised for the work they do in their communities. They ran workshops, attended events, and gathered nominations online before shortlisting hundreds of moving nominations down to 25 diverse women who demonstrated extraordinary work as local community leaders and activists and achievements across a range of fields. The women were each 3D-scanned to create state-of-the-art, foot tall, sandstone printed figures. The project revealed that it is not from a lack of extraordinary women that we have inherited such a dramatic imbalance in our public monuments today. The Public Monuments and Sculpture Association (PMSA) is a volunteer-run charity, which has been recording public sculpture across the UK for three decades, although its database is not an exhaustive list of every statue in the country. Of the 828 statues it recorded, 174 of them were female – around one in five. Of the nation's monuments, only 25 represented non-royal, non-mythical women. This project also demonstrated an effective, quick, and participatory form of enabling social activist arts practice to engage with heritage discourse.

The model for 'Put Her Forward' is community-led and not National Trust property specific; it acknowledges living heritage and values contemporary everyday actions. It is hoped that 'Put Her Forward' will have a long-lasting impact not only on those who participated and were selected, but on public discourse around the representation of women in wider society. Unfortunately, the statues will not be commissioned as full-size sculptures,

which raises questions around how the legacy of that project will be managed and effectively embedded. The likelihood is that the 25 women identified will fade into obscurity once again in terms of national heritage discourse, but 'Put Her Forward' will leave its mark locally.

Feedback from the Women and Power programme already shows a change in attitudes from Trust staff and volunteers towards working with contemporary artists, but what this signifies in terms of the valuing of artists within historic properties as long-term collaborators and critical friends, has yet to be unravelled. The ethics of responsibility falling to artists to carry a programme also requires some unpacking, and whether the infrastructure and support are in place to manage this effectively. Audience responses to works are complex, particularly in a programme such as Women and Power. An attitude towards the artwork itself is entirely entangled within an ideology-based response to the potential feminist politics underpinning the artwork. A critique of the quality of technique or craft of the creative output is frequently missing, in favour of visitors expressing either encouragement or disapproval of 'the act' of the artwork being in place. In this context, artist interventions can reveal some important visitor attitudes towards a programme's motivations, but this does little to support the inclusion of feminist arts practice within a broader history of art. Works can be perceived merely as agitprop for temporary disruption, but not analysed as contributing important practice to a broader knowledge base around contemporary arts in the UK (or elsewhere). The opposite case is also true, in that artworks may be deliberately inoffensive, trying to not cause too much disruption to business-as-usual. This is a challenge for managing feminist artworks in situ within heritage sites that are pitched as destinations, with certain expectations attached to them through a constructed 'spirit of place'.¹³

There is a broader issue to be addressed around process and desired outcomes for all arts interventions in heritage programmes. Artists can be invited to contribute much more than driving new audiences or larger footfall. Ideally, artists should be encouraged to shape the heritage values of spaces, rather than just providing temporary and removable interpretation for established value systems. Feminist artists and curators need to be encouraged to leave permanent traces, but this requires a significant shift in conservation practice for the Trust.

Complaint, risk, and loss

Given that feminist curatorial practice insistently seeks to expose or redress the structures of power and patriarchal oppression, there is an honest debate required as to how far the National Trust, and other cultural heritage organisations, are willing to go with the outlined methods. Feminism as a label has been used persistently throughout 2018, and a longitudinal study is required to really explore the lasting effect of this creative programming,

both on heritage sector practice and on visitors. There have been many interventions and disruptions, but embedding organisational change takes time and a resource commitment to this change. One of the fears I share with many other feminist practitioners is that creative programming around an anniversary is all well and good, but quickly and easily forgotten if no visible structural change emerges. The next challenge is how to best enable this diversity work to continue sustainably when the green, purple, and white suffrage banners have been packed away. Notably, female staff led most of the programming development and delivery in 2018. Encouragingly, however, most of the National Trust staff I engaged with, women and men, used the Women and Power programme to rethink their own curatorial processes through the lens of inequalities, with some overtly reclaiming a feminist practice for their sites and collections. This offers an exciting prospect for embedding change, if nurtured and encouraged, and if required support is forthcoming. Establishing the Challenging Histories programme – spearheaded by a few innovative and younger heritage practitioners – is a remarkable achievement in itself. The cumulative impact of the programme across its historic houses, collections, and landscapes is still evolving and will be fully understood through ongoing research and the evidence of legacy in years to come. Crucially, it initiated a series of questions primarily concerned with diversity.

‘Complaint’ is central to diversity and feminist work.¹⁴ Complaint places doubt on systems already embedded and in place. Complaint requires an acknowledgement that existing practices are not inclusive or representative or socially just. Feminist practices and diversity work therefore seemingly open up risk for institutions, because they invalidate the processes by which an organisation has been happily working, until complaint made itself audible and visible. I argue that the Challenging Histories programme is acting as the feminist complaint within the National Trust. The scene is set; the programme announces its position as ‘challenging’: it is a provocation, an opening up of what might be termed ‘difficult’ topics. There is no side-stepping the fact that Challenging Histories is a complaint pointing to a problem of equality and diversity, utilising programming methods to open up and understand the ways in which sites and collections frequently engage uncritically with patriarchal and colonial authorised heritage discourse. However, as Ahmed states, ‘to locate a problem is to become the location of a problem. Diversity work: becoming the location of a problem’.¹⁵ Nominal media, visitor, and volunteer backlash during Prejudice and Pride and Women and Power evidences this in action. The Trust – and specific properties and programming – became the location of the problem, not ongoing global injustices and oppression faced by women and LGBTQ+ individuals, which is what Challenging-Histories-as-complaint is pointing to. I would argue, however, that Challenging Histories work is *not* a dramatic change of direction for the Trust, but in fact a return to the activist motivations of the Trust’s founders in

responding to the key social issues of the day. Indeed, establishing the Trust was the materialisation of the original founders' complaint.

Affect¹⁶ and emotion are 'essential constitutive elements of heritage making',¹⁷ and can be understood as driving the comments and criticisms against the new socially aware programme. Over the years, the Trust has embraced and privileged a certain type of 'cultural performance of meaning making' around its historic sites, embracing a traditional preservationist approach of retaining what are considered the most significant remains of the past for the benefit of future generations.¹⁸ In turn, this has reinforced a certain representation and national transmission of British heritage for the public imagination.¹⁹ Diversity and complaint work seemingly pose a risk, a loss, to this notion of British heritage. The Trust, as many museums before it, has positioned traditional heritage values as a neutral starting point, not acknowledging the politics that sits behind conservation practices in the omission or the concealment of certain cultural expressions and experiences. As the Trust now attempts to catch up with a critical heritage framework, this inevitably requires it to engage with feminist and postcolonial discourse and, dispensing with notions of neutrality, it provokes a different kind of heritage-making. This includes an ecological model of creation, destruction, renewal, and growth where 'cultural heritage is the continuous manifestation of change over time not its victim'.²⁰ The Trust therefore needs to interrogate its conservation paradigm and understand that creative programming is *not* a parallel process to conservation, but an essential part of it.

Every visitor brings with them a multiplicity of personal, social, and cultural meanings and knowledge, and this messiness of peoples' experiences needs to be embraced in resourcing and reporting and in conservation planning.

Value judgments in cultural heritage are never straightforward due to the mutability of heritage values over time and a multitude of stakeholders who can have diametrically opposed opinions as to what is valuable.²¹

For research in this area, an evaluation model measuring false dichotomies of success and failure or negative and positive responses should not be a framework by which to critically understand the differing and evolving participation in contemporary heritage-making, for it validates notions of risk and loss. Instead, I propose the Trust explore a framework for understanding and fully embracing the plurality of heritage-making by various collaborators (let's move on from 'visitors'), and how this affective engagement in turn shapes the new storytelling, art, collecting, growing, living, and valuing taking place at these sites. My call is in line with Holtorf's position of demanding an intensified discussion in the heritage sector for 'how to identify, evaluate and compare the benefits and values of cultural heritage objects in constant transformation in society'.²²

Conclusion

They cannot mop up all the mess ... Feminist memory should create paths for others to follow.²³

The Challenging Histories programme is now halfway through the pilot phase. If its complaint has been heard, taken on board, and acted upon, it should leave a beautiful mess as its legacy that can be nurtured and can grow into complex plurality. The authorised heritage discourse of value so embraced by the National Trust requires cracking open; interventions that leave no trace and make no organisational change mean the complaint has not been taken seriously. There is the need for a period of reflection and time to effectively share practice to enable the positive disruption of Challenging Histories to embed itself more fully within internal staff practice and beyond the Trust.

The most important focus for Women and Power moving forward is that of legacy. The timing of programming to mark anniversaries can dramatically boost investment and energy but can lose momentum. The Women and Power programme has highlighted opportunities for further work and identified a number of key areas for consideration in legacy planning for the National Trust. Importantly, women's history is not a minority history – we all need to be cautious with time-bound approaches to the programming of women's narratives. Indeed, there is still an assumption from some staff not identifying as women that the topic is not relevant to them. Reni Eddo-Lodge states this issue of relevance is a consistent challenge in relation to black British histories, perceived by some as only relevant to BAME communities and individuals.²⁴ That leads me to intersectionality. The Trust, like much of the heritage sector, continues to struggle with including, representing, and being relevant for women of colour and black women, and engaging with issues of race and class. Rethinking the conservation paradigm beyond protection to one of creative and useful interactions with BAME women would enable properties to become safe and inclusive spaces for acknowledging the difficult narratives behind properties, and to be shaped by different cultural practices and values.

The contemporary arts programming at the Trust is well established. Now is the time to consider how best to embed arts programming within the broader archiving of contemporary art histories, connecting to communities, galleries, and collectors. This would be an important step in evidencing women's arts practice. The National Trust, like many other cultural heritage organisations, also has the opportunity to empower artists as critical friends, allowing them to shape and inform change to institutional practice. The impact of these interventions will reach further as the organisation develops methods for capturing, evidencing, and sharing this work into the future and as part of historical archiving within sites where artists have exhibited or worked. Importantly, there is an opportunity for the heritage sector to question its

perceptions of artists as temporary outsiders and embed a role for artists as active participants in the living heritage of spaces.

Finally, it is likely that the National Trust will continue to feel resistance to the Challenging Histories programme, and will need to stand firm against misogyny, homophobia, and racial prejudice. The Trust is well positioned to explore how best to embed socially engaged practices through its staff and volunteer training, and to integrate the learning from this programming across its sites and structures. This is where the Trust will truly participate in social change, in ensuring methods of equality and diversity thrive within all layers of enabling, creating, identifying, sharing, and representing the UK's evolving cultural heritage.

Notes

- 1 bell hooks, *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2000).
- 2 See Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry, *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014); Amelia Jones, 'Feminist Subjects versus Feminist Effects: The Curating of Feminist Art (or Is It the Feminist Curating of Art?)', *Curating in Feminist Thought*, 29 (2016), 5–20; Amelia Jones and Erin Silver (eds.), *Otherwise: Imagining Queer Feminist Art Histories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015); Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin, *Global Feminisms* (London and New York: Merrell, 2007); Maura Reilly, *Women Artists: The Linda Nochlin Reader* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2015); Maura Reilly, *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethics of Curating* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2018).
- 3 See Richard Sandell, *Museums, Moralities and Human Rights* (London: Routledge, 2016).
- 4 Jenna Ashton (ed.), *Feminism and Museums: Intervention, Disruption and Change*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh and Boston, MA: MuseumsEtc, 2017–2018).
- 5 Laura Jane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 4–5.
- 6 Farida Shaheen, 'Foreword: Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights', in Janet Blake et al., *Gender Equality, Heritage and Creativity* (Paris: UNESCO, 2014), p. 5.
- 7 Mechtilde Rossler (ed.), *World Heritage Review: Gender Equality*, special issue, No. 78 (Paris: UNESCO, 2016); Blake et al., p. 49.
- 8 Ibid., p. 8.
- 9 Cornelius Holtorf, 'Averting Loss Aversion in Cultural Heritage', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 21.4 (2015), 405–421 (p. 417).
- 10 Laura Jane Smith, 'The "Doing" of Heritage: Heritage as Performance', in *Performing Heritage*, ed. by Antony Jackson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), pp. 69–81 (p. 69).
- 11 Ibid., p. 69.
- 12 An international forerunner to this project is the ongoing work of the New York artist collective, Guerrilla Girls, whose public projects focus on gender and racial inequality within international art and museum collections.

- 13 Spirit of place is defined as the tangible (buildings, sites, landscapes, routes, objects) and the intangible elements (memories, narratives, written documents, rituals, festivals, traditional knowledge, values, textures, colours, odours, etc.), that is to say the physical and the spiritual elements that give meaning, value, emotion, and mystery to place. The National Trust adopted this approach from 2009 for shaping marketing, audience engagement, and conservation priorities at each of its properties, adopted from the ICOMOS Quebec Declaration on the Preservation of Spirit of Place, 2008. Inevitably, there are opportunities and challenges with this approach. The opportunity is to shape and manage a mode of audience engagement and marketing to ensure visitors can quickly grasp a sense of the uniqueness of a site or property, frequently resulting in a manageable potted history. However, we can see how this may become a set perception of place, excluding other modes of interpretation or meaning.
- 14 Sara Ahmed, 'Complaint as Diversity Work', *Feminist Killjoys* (blog), 10 November 2017, <<https://feministkilljoys.com/2017/11/10/complaint-as-diversity-work>> [accessed 24 April 2019].
- 15 Ibid. See also Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).
- 16 See Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), and Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004, rev. 2014).
- 17 Laurajane Smith and Garry Campbell, 'The Elephant in the Room: Heritage, Affect and Emotion', in *A Companion to Heritage Studies*, ed. by William Logan et al. (Oxford: Wiley, 2015), pp. 443–460.
- 18 Ibid., p. 2.
- 19 Stuart Hall, 'Whose Heritage? Unsettling "The Heritage"', *Re-imagining the Post-nation*, *Third Text*, 13.49 (2008), 3–13.
- 20 Holtorf, p. 417.
- 21 Ibid., p. 418.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Sara Ahmed, 'Complaint: Diversity Work, Feminism, and Institutions', UC Davis Forums – The Public University and the Social Good, lecture, 15 February 2018 <www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jf4sgw5NeQ> [accessed 24 April 2019].
- 24 Reni Eddo-Lodge, *Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People about Race* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017).

Contemporary interventions and conflict

The possibilities of ‘critical historical consciousness’ as a mode of heritage production

Joanne Williams

Contemporary art interventions occupy a complex space within museum and heritage praxis. As methods of engaging both existing and imagined audiences, contemporary programmes are strategically developed to provide new, unexpected, and challenging experiences for a broad range of visitors.¹ As objects and processes of artistic practice, interventions are rooted in complex discourses of institutional critique and site specificity. ‘Conflict and Compassion’, an exhibition of site-specific artistic responses curated for the ‘Asia Triennial Manchester 14’ festival (ATM14) at the Imperial War Museum North (IWMN), provided an opportunity to consider art interventions at a critical intersection of visitor engagement, curatorial and aesthetic practices, and heritage production. Situated in a national museum which collects, negotiates, and displays narratives of war, the ATM14 exhibition exemplified some of the complexities posed by documenting and responding to contested and challenging subject matter through processes of artistic production.

While it has become increasingly commonplace to see contemporary artworks in local and national museums, country houses, and landscapes, there is a lack of comprehensive critical research into visitor engagement with these works and the extent to which they achieve their complex and conjunctive aims of intervention and interpretation. Employed as an ‘affective alternative to a text-based, didactic explanation’, the interpretive role of contemporary art has been articulated within the broader aims of the Imperial War Museum to facilitate a ‘critical historical consciousness’ in visitors.² Engagement with heritage production as an active, embodied cultural process of remembering the past is presented as a way to understand and engage with the present and imagined futures, as well as allowing the possibilities of art functioning as a document or ‘socio-political form of accountable knowledge’ within heritage spaces.³ This framing of art interventions or site-specific responses as a mode of heritage production, wherein alternative perspectives are framed as an essential condition of dialogic processes which connect heritage with other

social, economic, political, and environment issues, begins to articulate the critical possibilities of contemporary art in heritage spaces.⁴

Heritage and critical historical consciousness

Situating this discussion in relation to the field of critical heritage studies brings this form of contemporary intervention practice into dialogue with the ways in which heritage is theorised both as a concept and as a practice.⁵ The specific case study of the ATM14 provides an opportunity to explore the potential of historical consciousness within an interdisciplinary field of study and consider the critical interventions into theory and practice that it engenders. Laurajane Smith's definition of heritage as 'a multilayered performance that embodies acts of remembrance and commemoration while negotiating and constructing a sense of place, belonging and understanding in the present', identifies heritage as a constitutive process.⁶ It brings to the fore a relationship between the past and present that is located in present understandings, finding resonance with Rodney Harrison's more recent ontological framing of heritage as a 'material-discursive process in which past and future arise out of dialogue and encounter between multiple embodied subjects in (and with) the present'.⁷ The relationship between contemporary understandings of historical interpretation as constitutive to processes of meaning-making is embedded in the intervention approach in 'Conflict and Compassion'. Here, material artworks facilitate the introduction of alternative perspectives in the form of the subjective and culturally specific experiences of the artists, into discursive processes of heritage production in a national museum. The framing of art in this way – one which centres on identity and remembrance through embodied, affective experiences – implicitly brings the past (as a narrative constructed through selective processes of collecting, preservation, and display) into dialogue with imagined futures facilitated through material encounters with contemporary artworks. However, yet to be discerned are the processes through which art can perform as a mechanism for this very specific shift in critical thinking.

In Sharon Macdonald's work on 'memorylands', a theorisation of the nation-state in eighteenth-century Western Europe wherein nations were 'conceptualised as possessive individuals with heritage as a materialised rendition of their memory as property', heritage production is revealed as both performative and self-referential.⁸ As such, the possession of a distinct material heritage by nations as 'living individuals' worked to reinforce heritage's own constitutive ideologies. Smith has offered a similarly useful account of 'authorised heritage discourse', drawing from David Harvey's concern with the nineteenth-century European construct of heritage which served to 'actively obscure the power relations that gave rise to it and make opaque the cultural and social work that heritage does' within an ideology of nationalism of a universalising modernity.⁹ Authorised heritage discourse is

reliant on the power and knowledge claims of technical and aesthetic experts operating within state cultural agencies.¹⁰ This discourse ‘privileges innate artifact and site significance, tied to time depth, scientific and aesthetic expert judgment, social consensus and nation building’, which Smith describes as an abstraction of ‘a past’ to be preserved for future generations. As such, authorised heritage discourse undermines the possibility for present actions to change the meaning or values attributed to heritage sites or places.¹¹

While hierarchical ‘top-down’ relationships are thus established by a discourse which privileges the role of the expert over the knowledges and experiences of the visitor in processes of meaning-making, artists’ interventions offer an alternative perspective, and the opportunity to introduce more nuanced and subjective experiences as a challenge to the materialised rendition of an authorised heritage. For instance, these works may occupy the spaces present in collections following violent and oppressive histories of which little (or no) material heritage remains, thus disrupting traditional hierarchies of ‘authorised’ discourses rooted in the ethos of preservation. Shezad Dawood’s display of Mesopotamian pottery exemplified this approach in drawing viewers’ attention to the twentieth-century tank it was displayed alongside as a symbolic act of warfare and male manifestations of power in the work *Babalon Rising*.¹² This work also centred on the destructive consequences of contemporary conflict in Iraq and the devastation caused to ancient civilisations of Babylonia; the rescued pieces of fractured ceramics placed in a glass vitrine parodied the Western aesthetic traditions of museum display in order to highlight a contradiction inherent in the notion of an ‘imperial’ war museum, in that the imperial agenda itself resulted in the destruction of material the museum claims to protect and preserve. Whilst clearly criticising the cultural destruction embedded in acts of war and conflict, this work also renders visible the political structures scaffolding the Museum, structures which are often masked by aesthetic forms of display. This layered critique may engender in visitors a questioning of the relationship between politics, culture, and the act of preservation, pointing to a wider consideration of how objects come to be in the Museum and framed as historical or cultural artefacts.

A consideration of ‘critical historical consciousness’ might also offer alternative, or subversive, modes of meaning-making in heritage sites, and a means through which our present configurations of the past may be reframed to broaden the narratives included in formal, or indeed national, definitions of ‘heritage’. An emphasis on interpretation and meaning-making as fundamental to the employment of contemporary artists’ interventions in museum and heritage spaces resonates with aspects of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s philosophical work on the theory of historical consciousness. Framing historical consciousness as a reflexive process and one that is aware of the historical position from which understandings of historical pasts are constructed, Gadamer proposed that having such a sense ‘signifies thinking explicitly

about the historical horizon which is coextensive with the life we live and have lived'.¹³ Here, a self-conscious reflexive, interpretive stance replaces the continuation of traditions with historical context in order to see the significance and relative value of a historical narrative, a value which is located in its singularity.¹⁴ As such, historical knowledge, or consciousness, is not an objectivist mode of knowledge, but rather a continuing process which itself has all of the characteristics of a historical event; thus, our understanding of history is always historically located and embedded as an 'existential act' of being in the world.¹⁵

Writing on the memory complex as a form similar to that of an ontological assemblage, Macdonald also considers the constituent practices, affects, and materialisations of heritage and the role of historical consciousness within collective memory.¹⁶ Relating historical consciousness to questions of *how* the past is both conceptualised and represented, with attention to questions around narrative structures and temporal orientations, Macdonald draws here on the work of Jörn Rüsen and the temporal orientations of how people perceive past, present, and future and, crucially, their interrelations with respect to moral values and social relations.¹⁷ The essence of Rüsen's theorising of historical consciousness, as a conceptualisation of the interpretive relationship between the past and present through which future perspectives are fashioned, is embedded in the transformative rhetoric of the IWM North aiming to foster in visitors 'an ability to reflect on the past, draw parallels to the present, and consider other peoples' stories in relation to one's own', also finding synergy with the ATM14 exhibition which intended to challenge perceptions of cultural identity through rendering visible past and present experiences of conflict in art produced by Asian artists.¹⁸

'Conflict and Compassion': Asia Triennial Manchester 14

Positioned as a 'leading authority on conflict and its impact', the IWM group defines its role as recording and illustrating 'all aspects of modern war and of the individual's experience of it, whether allied or enemy, service or civilian, military or political, social or cultural'.¹⁹ Opened in 2002 on the Salford Quays as the most recent addition to the group, the IWM North aims to facilitate multiple physical and narrative paths through a labyrinthine exhibition space, utilising a range of interpretation and display models in order to facilitate 'affective forms of experience and a more active generation of historical consciousness'.²⁰ As an initiative of MIRIAD (Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design), the Asia Triennial Manchester was launched in 2008 as a long-term arts programme of contemporary arts and crafts by artists from Asia, UK, and the Asian diaspora, with one of the stated aims of the ATM Festival being to 'challenge perceptions about Asia' and exhibit work by artists who live in, work in, or address issues surrounding

Asia.²¹ For the third iteration of the Festival in 2014, the first year that the IWM North had been a partner organisation, the curator of 'Conflict and Compassion' and festival Director, Alnoor Mitha, invited a group of Asian visual artists to respond to the Museum architecture and display narratives and create new or reimagined artworks exploring the title themes.²² While the exhibition focused on the development and display of contemporary artworks rather than a particular narrative pertaining explicitly to any form of 'heritage', the notion of heritage production being an embodied encounter between subjects in (and with) the present and its relationship to the past, resonated with the core concerns of the exhibition theme and the contemporary issues and experiences embedded in the intervention artworks.²³

The sculptural *Enter Ghost Exit Ghost, The Genie*, installed by Bashir Makhoul with Ray Yang in the Air Shard entrance to the Museum, was created as a site-specific iteration of a series of similar pieces addressing the proliferation and temporality of refugee camps. Taking the form of a cardboard city, this work occupied the expansive vertical space as a haunting comment on the status of refugees with respect to their constant movement and instability, simultaneously marking their presence and their absence as displaced people.

Aman Mojadidi's *Commodified* was developed in response to the Museum's shop as a parody and critique of the commodification of conflict. The array of brightly coloured souvenir-style items arranged as if for sale confronted viewers with the complexities of the processes of commodification and their own roles with respect to these transactions, prompting the question: why do we buy and sell 'souvenirs' of war and what messages do these objects carry? Alinah Azadeh invited visitors to write their own 'debt' in the *Book of Debts* which was ceremoniously burned and the debts forgiven as a moment of imaginary resolution, representing a moment of forgetting and simultaneously remembering. Azadeh's second work, *Child's Play*, displayed a hanging array of children's war toys wrapped as gifts in a green-coloured paper, juxtaposing the innocence and violence inherent in humans and drawing on the notion of gift-giving as a manifestation of the desire both to remember and to separate from the past. *In Search of Vanished Blood*, an installation first shown at Documenta 13, Kassel, was recreated by Nalini Malani in one of the main exhibition space silos as an exploration of violence, the regenerative power of myth, the feminine voice, the geopolitics of national identity, and a form of 'bearing contemporary witness to the traumatic events' of Partition.²⁴ Ancient Greek and Hindu symbolism projected and painted onto images and objects was juxtaposed with media material and war propaganda. The voice of Cassandra, a female artist and visionary whose own voice and visions were rejected, resonated around the small enclosed space. This installation centred the struggle for women's voices to be heard and, in a deft curatorial placement of the work, drew visitors' attention to the power structures underpinning the creation of fictional narratives.

Figure 7.1 Installation view of *Enter Ghost Exit Ghost, The Genie*, Bashir Makhoul with Ray Yang. Photo credit: courtesy of the artist.

Zarina Bhimji's photography piece on loan from the Arts Council Collection, *Here was Uganda, as if in the vastness of India*, is rooted in a violent displacement of people affected in some way by British colonial power in the mass traumatic event of the Asian population's expulsion from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972.²⁵ Imran Qureshi's work, *This Leprous Brightness*, a series of watercolour paintings displayed in the WaterWay corridor, is marked by a confrontation with global concerns, including the relationship between Western and Muslim cultures and connected issues of religion, gender roles, terrorism, and the politics of war. It was developed from Qureshi's own witnessing of the aftermath of a terrorist explosion in Lahore. Shezad Dawood's installation, *Babalon Rising* – comprised of an archaeological display of ceramics in a traditional museum vitrine alongside a contemporary fluorescent sign, and a large tank which loomed over the case in an aggressive juxtaposition of modern warfare – commented on the destruction of relics and the looting which occurred as a result of the American invasion of Iraq and the 'War on Terror'. Sophie Ernst's two works, *Victory* and *The Vanquished*, installed in the exhibition silo concerning war and the Commonwealth, were developed as comments on the Bush administration and issues of 'victory' in relation to the war in Iraq and themes of life, death, and the afterlife in the Qur'an, respectively. The selected copies of Shamsia Hassani's graffiti works, originally created on the streets of Kabul and displayed in photographic reproductions in the Air Shard of the Museum, stood as a female voice speaking out against the discrimination that women, including herself, experience, drawn directly onto the ruins of a war-torn city as acts of defiance.

The display of contemporary art in the IWM North is not unique to its involvement in the ATM14 festival; the commissioning and collecting of art is embedded in the history of the IWM as an institution, with this activity reaching back as early as 1916, making art a familiar sight across the Museum's branches. However, the dialogue between contemporary perspectives and historical narratives, wherein artworks are employed as a mechanism to perform and facilitate specific forms of critique, necessitates an interrogation of the intersections of the discursive fields of artistic practice and heritage production within which these critical processes operate.²⁶

Art as interpretation

While critical historical consciousness as a mode of meaning-making and heritage production finds synergies in art historical discourses around site-specific and intervention practices, those practices cannot be adopted without sufficient discrimination. Assigning to art and artists the role of 'catalysing' critical thinking and processes of remembrance outside of the more familiar historical images and narratives presented within the public realm has been

evident in the contextualisation of contemporary art exhibited in the IWM North, along with the authority assigned to the artists' subjectivity in their ability to navigate complex issues. For instance, 'Catalyst: Contemporary Art and War', on display from October 2013 to February 2014, included a selection of contemporary work collected since the First Gulf War and asked the question: 'What do artists contribute to our perceptions of war and conflict in a time when our general understanding of conflict is increasingly shaped by the media and the internet?' An interpretation panel proposed the following answer:

Working outside the pressures of journalism, artists can propose ideas, urging the viewer to think deeply about what war is, about its immediate impact, its long term repercussions and how we remember it. They invite us to consider our definition of conflict in a time when war no longer has easily defined geographical limits. Often taking their personal history as a starting point, many artists navigate this broad-ranging subject matter as observers, activists or philosophers.²⁷

With respect to the artist's position as one of alterity, recent work by Claire Robins draws on Michel Foucault's concept of '*parrhesia*', a technique and an ethics concerned with the process of speaking truthfully.²⁸ A consideration of the artist as *parrhesiate* introduces the notion that the viewer's trust is gained through the process of enacting free speech and risking discussion around difficult and controversial issues. This framing of the artist as authoritative outsider or 'Other' who is able to speak a particular truth was pertinent to the ATM14 display in the IWM North and their use of contemporary art in provoking a mode of critical thinking in visitors which made present their own subjectivity in an encounter with the subjective experience of the artist as 'Other'/outsider.²⁹ This conceptual framing is particularly useful in the context of a war museum and the complex narratives it must engage with, given that violence and contestation are at the very core of its subject matter. Furthermore, Robins' acknowledgment of the risk undertaken by the artist, and the notion that the person (artist) doing the speaking cannot be uncoupled from what is being 'spoken' by the artwork, also raise issues of institutional power and responsibility. The museum can, to some extent, create a distance between itself and the critical dialogue constructed by the artwork through explicitly assigning to it the voice of the artist, thus obscuring the wider institutional politics and decision-making which enabled it to be present in the space.³⁰ As a result of this, we might ask to what extent this curatorial and interpretive strategy is able to facilitate a mode of critical thinking which necessitates an appreciation (and therefore visibility) of processes of knowledge production. That is, a 'critical historical consciousness'.

Authorised transgressions

Art interventions have a traceable trajectory in art historical discourse associated with the institutional critiques of the 1960s, intervening in spaces and displays with the intention of exposing the institutional and ideological framing of museums and galleries.³¹ Often this activity extended to broader socio-political critiques that addressed systems of power and knowledge production, including now seminal works by artists such as Fred Wilson, Andrea Fraser, and Hans Haacke.³² More recent site-specific projects, such as the 'Uncomfortable Truths' exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2007 and Matt Smith's exhibition 'Flux: Parian unpacked' in the Fitzwilliam Museum in 2018, addressed the imperial and colonial histories embedded in those museums and their collections, and, in a similar vein to 'Conflict and Compassion', worked to render visible implicit and hidden heritages and tackle difficult or 'dark' histories.

Writing in the mid-nineties, Hal Foster raised issues around the notion of the 'artist as ethnographer' that are pertinent to contemporary art intervention programmes and their transformative intentions within museum displays, specifically in relation to the ATM14 and its aim to transform perceptions of Asia in the context of war and conflict.³³ Drawing on the writing of Walter Benjamin, Foster recalled Benjamin's urge to the 'advanced' artist to embody the concerns of the proletariat and to intervene in the means of artistic production as a transformative move, one which had the potential to transform the 'apparatus' of bourgeois culture.³⁴ Foster related this paradigm to that of the artist as ethnographer and the assumption that the site of artistic transformation equates to the site of political transformation.³⁵ I would argue that the impetus of the IWM North to facilitate critical historical consciousness in their visitors through the inclusion of contemporary artistic responses is imbued with a similar transformative intent.

It is worth taking a moment here to consider how Foster articulated the significance of the role played by this specific form of artistic practice and its potential to demarcate fields of inside and outside, conjunctive with a process of othering or constructing alterity as a technique of reproducing and reaffirming institutional politics. The role of the artist in this situation is central:

...there is the assumption that if the invoked artist is *not* perceived as socially and/or culturally other, he or she has but *limited* access to this transformative alterity, and more, that if he or she is perceived as other, he or she has *automatic* access to it.³⁶

This conceptualisation manifests the notion of the artist as having access to and therefore the ability to articulate a particular form of truth due to their position 'outside' of the institution. Robins' invocation of Foucault's

parrhesia is again brought to mind here, chiming with Foster's characterisation of the artist through the lens of the anthropologist as a 'paragon of formal reflexivity, sensitive to difference and open to chance, a self-aware reader of culture understood as text'.³⁷

The framing of the ATM14 festival is particularly relevant here, in that it is centred specifically on Asian contemporary art, and, at least with respect to this festival, on the notion that experiences of Asian contemporary culture in the form of the visual arts can challenge and change perceptions of Asia. The process of 'Othering' an Asian experience of war and conflict, and access to that other via culturally defined artists as gatekeepers, is pertinent when unpacking the exhibition of contemporary artworks along specific cultural, social, and geopolitical boundaries, and the notion that a 'critical historical consciousness' can be constructed by and through artists' authentic access to an alterity. This issue has been commented on by James Clifford, and the site-specificity of an ethnographic approach to making art, in that both ethnography and site-specificity are ways of 'de-centering established centres of art and cultural production and display'.³⁸ For Clifford, this form of specificity is always structured as relative to its representation. Taking an artwork by Susan Hiller at the Freud Museum in 1994 as an example, Clifford discussed the work as transforming the space from a shrine to that of a 'contact zone', wherein ensembles were 'sustained through processes of cultural borrowing, appropriation and translation', all taking place in a multidirectional fashion.³⁹ I suggest that this is also taking place with the ATM14 artworks, particularly those by Shezad Dawood, Alinah Azadeh, and Aman Mojadidi. The works borrow from Eurocentric traditions of display and acts of cultural appropriation, making visible the 'structural relations of dominance and resistance, by colonial, national, class and racial hierarchies' that Clifford refers to within the concept of a 'contact zone'.⁴⁰

Artist as Other

Foster complicates assumptions of alterity, however, through the introduction of two critiques which question the quasi-anthropological paradigm of the artist as ethnographer; first from a Marxist position which, according to Foster, critiques the tendency of this paradigm to displace the problematic of class and capitalist exploitation with race and colonial oppression, and secondly from a poststructuralist perspective concerned with the same problematic not being displaced enough so that political structures tend instead to be preserved.⁴¹ For the poststructuralist (again, in the context of Foster's discussion), the paradigm retains the notion of a *subject* of history and defines this position in terms of truth, thus locating this truth in terms of alterity. The concrete notion of the 'Other' is therefore structurally reinforced. For Foster, this results in the paradigm failing to reflect on its realist assumption, that 'the other is in the real not in the ideological, because he or she is socially

oppressed, politically transformative and/or materially productive'.⁴² I would interpret this as equating to the concept of the artist as Other being taken as a concrete truth based on their perceived oppression, their potential to be politically transformative, or their practice as materially productive. The latter two ideological fictions are embodied in the conceptualisation of the ATM14 artists and the assumptions embedded in the assumed transformative agency afforded to contemporary intervention artworks.

With respect to these two critiques, Foster draws attention to the precariousness of the paradigm of 'artist as ethnographer' in relation to the nature of contemporary geopolitical landscapes and cultural politics.⁴³ Foster disputes the 'automatic coding of apparent difference as manifest identity and of otherness as outsideness', which he perceives as enabling a cultural politics of marginality.⁴⁴ One of his concerns is that this coding 'may disable a cultural politics of immanence, and this politics may well be more pertinent to a postcolonial situation of multinational capitalism in which geopolitical models of centre and periphery no longer hold'.⁴⁵ The ATM14 may be read as an attempt to make visible and promote this sense of immanence in the wider public consciousness. The extent to which that can be achieved is questionable within Foster's framing of the problem. Presenting the artworks as a series of artistic comments about, and responses to, culturally specific experiences of

Figure 7.2 Installation view of *Commodified*, Aman Mojadidi. Photo credit: courtesy of the artist.

war and conflict may, instead, serve to reinforce the ontological distinctions between both the artists (and their narratives) and the institution, as well as the distinction between the visitor as 'inside' and artists as 'outside'.

This issue has been explicitly addressed by artist Aman Mojadidi in his essay contribution to the catalogue produced following the ATM14 festival, which included critical discussions around specific artists' responses in the context of the festival's broader thematic concerns.⁴⁶ As a cultural anthropologist, Mojadidi's work is explicitly engaged with ethnographic practices and narrative storytelling, and occupied with themes of belonging, identity politics, conflict, artefactual history, and migration through site-specific installations which 'intentionally blur the lines between fact and fiction, imagination and documentation'.⁴⁷ Commenting on how the war in Afghanistan has become 'cool, artsy and fashionable', Mojadidi constructs a critique of the process articulated by Foster of constructing the artist as the cultural 'Other'.⁴⁸ Locating his critique with respect to the 'Other' as an imposed system of differentiation, Mojadidi problematises the enduring Eurocentric models of power and hierarchy rooted in colonial structures that he continues to encounter in his movements through the world of global markets, exhibitions, institutions, and festivals.⁴⁹ He frames an interest in 'Othered' art demonstrated by the Eurocentric art market with respect to a desire to understand complexities 'from the inside', manifesting the humanitarian burden of 'giving a voice to the voiceless'.⁵⁰ This view is supported by the assumptions evident in an evaluation report with respect to the festival's engagement with underprivileged and marginalised communities, where it is concluded that 'providing a voice for the unheard' was likely to be particularly relevant in attracting these particular groups of people, and that they would be the people most likely to benefit from the opportunities to learn new skills and express themselves.⁵¹

Mojadidi conceptualises the 'Eurocentric curator/dealer/gallerist/institution' with respect to Kipling-era colonial mentalities, defining the 'noble artist' as 'the artist who can rise above the savagery of war and oppression of conflict that surrounds them'.⁵² He problematises this further, in proposing that an effect of this Othering and interest from within the global art market for contemporary art from 'conflicted countries', has resulted in artists fashioning themselves as the spokesperson this audience wants and needs them to be.⁵³ As a consequence, the identities of these artists become a homogenous 'local' identity that does not represent the complexities of that cultural, geographical, and political space. Othered art thus becomes subsumed within a specific institutional and institutionalised rhetoric. Here, the possibility of facilitating a critical historical consciousness becomes problematic; where there is potential for the artwork to be absorbed by a self-referential discourse, the space for 'unauthorised' and potentiality transformative critiques of processes and mechanisms of meaning-making and narrative construction is then significantly narrowed.

Art and heritage: intersecting dialogues

The case study of 'Conflict and Compassion' at the IWM North provided an opportunity to consider the possibilities of contemporary art facilitating in museum visitors a critical historical consciousness. While this form of critical thinking may lend itself to an engagement with historically located processes of knowledge production in the broadest sense, the current study has interrogated the concept at a specific intersection of artistic and heritage practices. The challenges of this form of artistic intervention into museum and heritage spaces are brought to the fore when the historiography of site-specific forms of artistic critique is considered in dialogue with concurrent concerns in critical heritage studies. These concerns highlight the enduring need to render visible processes of knowledge production in institutional contexts, and hold those institutions to account for the systems and politics of power which they structurally reinforce.

A core concern of the current discussion has been the potential for artists to take a critical position within the institutional discourse of the museum in order to engender a form of historical consciousness in visitors, whilst also being structurally defined as 'Other'. Commenting on the status of practices of institutional critique, Andrea Fraser has pointed to the (somewhat antithetical) recognised historical status of institutional critique and drawn attention to the complicity and necessity of the 'commodity status of art' for this position to have been achieved.⁵⁴ Fraser argues that there is no longer an 'outside' position from which to position a critique in relation to the global art market and includes herself as one of those unable to escape or move beyond the discourses which frame both her own artistic practice and her knowledge of art and its institutions; a position echoed by Mojadidi's commentary on his own artistic practices. Describing the process as an 'institutionalisation of institutional critique', Fraser conveyed her concerns regarding the consequences of this process and the resulting necessity to re-examine the history and aims of this form of art practice as a means by which the urgent stakes of the present can be restated.⁵⁵ Citing artists most commonly known for their work engaging with institutional rhetoric – Michael Asher, Marcel Broothaers, Daniel Buren, and Hans Haacke – Fraser located her own use of the term 'institutional critique' when referencing their works, a term not used by the artists themselves, as stemming from Benjamin Buchloh's 1982 essay 'Allegorical Procedures'.⁵⁶ In this essay Buchloh discussed the allegorical potential of what he referred to as the 'situational aesthetics' of the 1960s and 1970s. Fraser laments the reductive nature of the term as a shorthand for 'critique of institutions' wherein the terms 'institution' and 'critique' are rarely fully qualified.⁵⁷

For Fraser, the use of 'critique' to refer to processes of 'exposing', 'reflecting', or 'revealing' do not carry the weight or transformative impetus that her definition of a critic calls for: 'A guerrilla fighter engaging in acts of

subversion and sabotage, breaking through walls and floors and doors, provoking censorship, bringing down the powers that be'.⁵⁸ In her brief historical revisiting of those earlier works of critique, Fraser challenges the notion of art or the artist as antagonistic to the institution and the institutional framing within which they remained embedded:

Their rigorously site-specific interventions developed as a means not only to reflect on these and other institutional conditions but also to resist the very forms of appropriation on which they reflect. As transitory, these works further acknowledge the historical specificity of any critical intervention, whose effectiveness will always be limited to a particular time and place.⁵⁹

For Fraser, the nature of this site-specificity constrains the activity of this particular artistic practice to within the bounds of the institution; to imagine that it ever existed outside of the specific institutions and discourses of art is a fallacy. Like Foster's previous criticism, however, Fraser identifies a process of shifting dialogues away from the pertinent political issues, serving to reproduce and legitimise structures of power:

When these arguments are used to assign political value to substantive conditions, they often fail to account for the underlying distributions of power that are reproduced even as conditions change, and they thus end up serving to legitimate that reproduction.⁶⁰

This failure to account for the underlying distributions of power has been raised more recently by Anthony Downey in a questioning of the role of contemporary art in processes of cultural production replacing legal accountability, wherein the responsibility to represent supersedes the responsibility for effective action.⁶¹ Speaking to the concepts of justice and injustice, Downey has proposed that a politics of exceptionalism situated within the logic of late modernity, creates an urge for a political responsiveness to issues of justice and injustice that has thus far been excused by cultural means.⁶² Here, Downey is referring to the instrumentalised use of contemporary art to address issues such as human rights, freedom of movement, and freedom of speech by way of art doing the 'work' that should be undertaken by institutions in order to address issues of injustice on concrete social and legal levels.⁶³ Downey describes a neoliberal dictate through which contemporary arts are superseded by an aestheticized, and therefore depoliticised, debate – tantamount to 'art washing' – and questions both who actually benefits from this form of contemporary art practice, and what it might take to account for the present through the forms of contemporary art practices.⁶⁴ These suggestions and points of questioning speak to the positioning of contemporary art interventions within the IWM North as a form of transformative, affective interpretation

and the extent to which these temporary exhibitions should be expected to do the critical work of engaging with challenging provocations. Issues such as those raised by Mojadidi with respect to imperial rhetoric illuminate the ways in which deeply problematic structural forms of knowledge production may be both obscured and reinforced by the introduction of artists' intervention works into museum and heritage sites. That being said, this discussion does not intend to dismiss the potential of such intervention works to facilitate alternative modes of meaning-making and knowledge production in heritage spaces, but to draw attention to the complex intersections of heritage and artistic practices in order to encourage a deeper engagement with these critical issues and the futures which they might work to fashion.

Notes

- 1 Current high-profile examples of these interventions include the Trust New Art programme at a number of National Trust properties and heritage sites which 'explore the spirit of place through creative programming' to connect people to places, to reveal hidden stories, and to help 'see special places in different ways': Harewood House, Yorkshire, which has 'enjoyed a very special relationship with contemporary artists throughout its history'; the Freud Museum, London, who make the claim that 'art and analysis work with the same "stuff" and the Freud Museum is saturated with memories, myth and fantasy' and that 'the museum is also a challenge and provocation to the artist'; and arts organisations such as Mid Pennine Arts, who echo the National Trust's focus on connecting people with places in their aim to 'originate exciting creative work that has lasting impact for participants, audiences and [our] project partners'; Meadow Arts, who make clear their role in supporting work opportunities through their role in bringing 'unique contemporary art projects to places where art is not usually shown, supporting artists by commissioning new work and creating inspiring events and exhibitions'; and Arts&Heritage, whose approach is 'to address and challenge audience expectations and preconceptions by producing contemporary projects that are imaginative, engaging and encourage further investigation into context and history'.
- 2 Suzanne MacLeod, Jocelyn Dodd, and Tom Duncan, *Developing the IWM North* (Leicester: University of Leicester, 2014).
- 3 Anthony Downey, 'Performing Rights: The Subject of Injustice and the Cultural Logic of Late Modernity', Keynote Paper (unpublished), presented at Art, Justice and Terror, 17 June 2017, IWM London.
- 4 Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2013); Laura Jane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006).
- 5 For an expanded discussion of the development of the field of critical heritage studies, see Emma Waterton and Steve Watson, 'Framing Theory: Towards a Critical Imagination in Heritage Studies', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19 (2013), 546–561.
- 6 Smith, p. 3.
- 7 Ibid.; Rodney Harrison, 'Beyond "Natural" and "Cultural" Heritage: Toward an Ontological Politics of Heritage in the Age of Anthropocene', *Heritage & Society*, 8 (2015), 24–42 (p. 27).

- 8 Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013), p. 12.
- 9 Smith, p. 17.
- 10 *Ibid.*
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 12 Asia Triennial Manchester 14 exhibition panel text (2014).
- 13 Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'The Problem of Historical Consciousness', *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 5 (1975), 8–52 (pp. 8–9).
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- 16 Macdonald, *Memorylands*, p. 6. Macdonald remarks on Gadamer's concern with the development of a reflexive relationship to history and offers a critique of a particular mode of historical consciousness and the attention it pays to cognitive processes, neglecting more embodied modes of engaging with the past. There is an argument to be made here that an artist's interventions are a response to this neglect of embodied experience through the introduction of affective encounters as a means through which embodied dialogue can potentially take place. Andrea Witcomb's work explores the potential of affective encounters as a means to facilitate forms of particular dialogue using curatorial techniques intended to unsettle and problematise historical narratives and make visible power relations and positions of complicity, through which spaces of recognition, grief, and empathy are opened between visitors and material objects. I would argue that this approach is manifest in the IWM North's intention of creating affective experiences in order to bring to visitors' attention the subjective experiences of others through their own encounter with the displays. Andrea Witcomb, 'Understanding the Role of Affect in Producing a Critical Pedagogy for History Museums', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 28.3 (2013), 255–271.
- 17 Sharon Macdonald, 'Undesirable Heritage: Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 12 (2006), 9–28.
- 18 Jörn Rüsen, 'Historical Consciousness: Narrative, Structure, Moral Function, and Ontogenetic Development', in *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, ed. by Peter Seixas (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp. 63–85.
- 19 Imperial War Museums, <www.iwm.org.uk/corporate/IWM-history> [accessed 3 September 2018].
- 20 MacLeod, Todd, and Duncan, pp. 8–9.
- 21 Alnoor Mitha, *Asia Triennial Manchester 2014 Festival Guide* (Manchester: Imperial War Museums, 2014), p. 3.
- 22 In 2014 the Festival was funded by Arts Council England along with additional partners and supporters including Manchester Metropolitan University, the Imperial War Museum North, and the Centre for Chinese Contemporary Art.
- 23 Harrison, 'Beyond "Natural" and "Cultural" Heritage', p. 27.
- 24 Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, 'Introduction', in *Nalini Malani: In Search of Vanished Blood* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2013), pp. 1–11 (p. 8).
- 25 T.J. Demos, 'Zarina Bhimji: Cinemas of Affect', in *Zarina Bhimji* (exhibition catalogue), ed. by Achim Borchardt-Hume and Kathleen Bühler (London: Ridinghouse, 2012), pp. 11–29.
- 26 The Museum's art collection developed from much earlier commissioning and collecting practices initiated by the official War Artists' Scheme, set up by the

British Government in 1916. These 'war art' schemes were initially developed under the rubric of propaganda through the production of eyewitness images by the then Department of Information. Imperial War Museum North, *Catalyst: Contemporary Art and War*, exhibition catalogue (Manchester: Imperial War Museums, 2013), p. 2.

- 27 Imperial War Museums, *Catalyst: Contemporary Art and War*, p. 1.
- 28 Claire Robins, *Curious Lessons in the Museum: The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013).
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 208.
- 30 The ethical implications of this act of transposing responsibility of the speech act onto an individual artist are explored by Robins through the role of a public institution to diffuse hostility by providing an arena for antagonism to be transformed into agonism, and thus the implication of the museum in the right to dissent. For Robins, this translates into a form of agonistic pluralism which provides an alternative to the traditional concept of democracy that emphasises consensus as a desired outcome.
- 31 Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 'Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions', *October*, 55 (1990), 105–143; Miwon Kwon, 'One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity', *October*, 80 (1997), 85–110.
- 32 Fred Wilson, *Mining the Museum* (1992); Andrea Fraser, *Museum Highlights* (1989); Hans Haacke, *MoMA Poll* (1970).
- 33 Hal Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer?', in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology*, ed. by George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (London: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 302–309.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 302.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 304.
- 38 James Clifford, 'An Ethnographer in the Field', in *Site-Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*, ed. by Alex Coles (London: Black Dog, 2000), pp. 52–73 (p. 57).
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Foster, p. 303.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 *Ibid.*
- 45 *Ibid.*
- 46 Aman Mojadidi, 'The Art of Conflict Chic: Imagined Geographies and the Search for a Post-Orientalist Condition', in *Conflict and Compassion: A Paradox of Difference in Contemporary Asian Art*, ed. by Bashir Makhoul and Alnoor Mitha (Manchester: HOME, 2016), pp. 75–93.
- 47 Aman Mojadidi.
- 48 Mojadidi, 'Art of Conflict Chic', p. 75.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 78.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 82; The Audience Agency, *Asia Triennial Manchester 2014: An Evaluation of Audience Engagement and Economic Impact* (Manchester: Asia Triennial Manchester, 2015), p. 9.

- 51 The Audience Agency, *Asia Triennial Manchester 2014*, p. 9.
- 52 Mojadidi, 'Art of Conflict Chic', p. 82.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. 83.
- 54 Andrea Fraser, 'From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique', *Artforum*, 44.1 (2005), 100–106.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- 56 Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 'Allegorical Procedures: Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art', *Artforum*, 21.1 (1982), 43–56.
- 57 Fraser, p. 102.
- 58 *Ibid.*
- 59 *Ibid.*
- 60 *Ibid.*, p. 104.
- 61 Downey, 'Performing Rights'.
- 62 The politics of exceptionalism here refers to the political status of migrants and refugees whose positions are deemed to be 'exceptional' to regular rules of justice in a legal sense.
- 63 Downey, 'Performing Rights'.
- 64 *Ibid.*

Mapping contemporary art in the heritage experience

Mary Eleanor Bowes and *The Orangery Urns*

Andrew Burton

The Orangery Urns (2018) was one of a series of temporary visual art projects commissioned for four heritage properties in North East England as part of the research project Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience (2017–19).¹ Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the research was a collaboration between artists, academics at Newcastle and Leeds Universities, and three of the UK's leading heritage organisations.² The research explored how the practice of siting contemporary art within heritage properties can impact on three key groups of stakeholders: public visitors, the heritage organisations who own and manage the properties, and the artists who create the work.

The research was practice-led, foregrounding the experiences of the artists. This chapter gives an account of my role as Principle Investigator leading the research team, and as an artist in creating one of the project commissions.³ The work discussed, titled *The Orangery Urns* (2018), is a group of ceramic sculptures I was commissioned to make for Gibside, a National Trust property. This chapter charts the conceptualisation and development of the commission, and discusses the background and context for the project, my initial response to the site, the creative process undertaken in the studio, some of the issues involved in siting the work, and concludes with an appraisal by the National Trust team at Gibside of how the work impacted on their audiences, and their volunteers. I also provide an account of how I approached some of the challenges, tensions, and creative opportunities that developed into both my personal artistic journal and the collaborative, creative process that the work entailed.

Whilst written from my personal perspective, this chapter also draws upon the transcripts of interviews conducted between site staff, members of the public, and members of the research team during the research.

Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience

In 2017 the research project Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience (MCAHE) commissioned six new temporary visual artworks.

These were to be sited in heritage properties in North East England during the summers of 2018 and 2019. To select the project artists, we staged an invited competition for four of the commissions and directly invited one artist. The artists were Marcus Coates, Fiona Curran, Mark Fairnington, Susan Philipsz, and Matt Stokes. The artworks would include sound installations, sculpture, paintings, and an architectural installation.⁴ A further commission, *The Orangery Urns* was to be created by myself. The heritage properties selected for the commissions were Belsay Hall, an austere neoclassical mansion in Northumberland owned by English Heritage; Holy Trinity Church, a Georgian church in Sunderland owned by the Churches Conservation Trust; and two National Trust properties: Cherryburn, in Northumberland, birth-place of the engraver Thomas Bewick, and Gibside, originally a seat of the Bowes-Lyon family on the County Durham/Gateshead border.

Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience considered the experiences of creating, commissioning, and consuming contemporary visual art in heritage properties from a range of perspectives: the visitors who encountered the work, the heritage organisations who would commission and host the work – including their employees and volunteers – and the artists commissioned to create the artworks. The project purposely took a rounded view of its subject, with important strands of the research led by academics with expertise in theoretical research relating to the ways in which art commissioned for historic spaces is conceived, produced, and sited. Primarily, the research was practice-led with key members of the project team being professional artists or curators. Questions around whether this kind of artistic practice can be seen as distinct and different from other modes of production (such as making work for gallery exhibition) were in close focus. In animating and giving structure to an extended three-year programme of research which included numerous outputs (a conference, academic papers, a stakeholder report, and an exhibition), the commissioned artworks would play a ‘live’ role at the heart of the project both as research outputs and as objects of scrutiny.

The nature and quality of each commissioned work was critical. Would it be sufficiently accessible, immediate, and powerful to impact on audiences’ appreciation and understanding of the heritage property where it was sited? On what level, and in what ways would it engage them? At the proposal stage, each artist identified particular narratives or historical events associated with the property that most interested them. In some instances, these picked up on narratives identified in the commission briefs that had been devised in consultation with property staff. In others, the artist found their own point of entry. Within this creative context, the research team wanted to understand whether the longitudinal approach taken by the artist was different from that taken when creating a body of work such as a gallery exhibition where the artist might be able to set their own agenda. Was the requirement to respond to a brief seen as a constraint? A challenge? An opportunity? Or a combination of these? The research tracked each artist’s journey as they developed

their commission using a range of methods: through a series of interviews conducted by the research team, and through reflective methods such as artists' diaries or blogs. A short film also documented each project.

The geographical focus of the research was North East England. This was partly pragmatic – the properties selected had to be close to one another to allow for regular visits by the research team and focus groups who would be asked to respond to each commission – but was also grounded in a dynamic history of public art commissioning in the region. This meant that there was a high level of awareness of public art. Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* (1998), for example, has acquired an iconic status since its installation, but was initially greeted with some scepticism or hostility. The fact that a significant proportion of the regional audience has been won over seems in part due to the way the sculpture is perceived to speak to, and celebrate, the industrial heritage of Tyneside. In rural Northumberland, English Heritage's flagship art commissioning programme at Belsay Hall had produced a dazzling array of site-specific temporary artworks in the 1990s and early 2000s, but the programme was dropped early in the new millennium.⁵ The National Trust too had a record of commissioning works of art for its North East properties. Public art was seen to have agency within the regeneration agenda by local government and its agencies as demonstrated through ambitious commissioning programmes led by the Gateshead Garden Festival of 1990 and Tyne and Wear Development Corporation who in the 1990s were redeveloping the Quayside of the River Tyne in Newcastle. The remarkable history of public art in the region is thoroughly documented in *Public Sculpture of North-East England*.⁶ Until the arrival of the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in 2002, most contemporary art in the North East was to be found in public spaces outside art galleries. And there was a wide breadth of work: art agencies such as Locus+ engaged an art-interested audience and the Tyne International of 1993 commissioned new work from a number of high-profile international artists, all made for public sites.⁷

Gibside

In the initial selection of the heritage properties that would host our commissions, the research team was keenly aware that the receptiveness of local staff to the project aims would be vital. At Gibside there was vigorous buy-in from the start, and the enthusiasm of the local team to engage with the commissioning process in a sustained and hands-on way became a significant feature of the project. Gibside was not a 'Trust New Art' property – the National Trust programme that places contemporary art in their properties with the aim of 'connecting people to places'.⁸ This meant that it had not engaged in a sustained way with contemporary visual art. Nonetheless, there was a demonstrable appetite on the part of the property team to explore what the art might offer their audience.

Gibside's location, close enough to the Tyneside conurbation for easy access (at least by car) but with the feel of a rural park where people come to feel 'closer to nature' (as the brochure points out), means that it is popular with families. Compared to many pay-to-enter heritage attractions, it has a very high ratio of repeat visitors. There is also a large community of volunteers and a well-articulated policy emphasising the importance of public engagement. Theatrical, music, and sports events are all staged regularly: Gibside takes its role as a local amenity seriously and even has its own community pub and pizza take-away.

Gibside stands in a magnificent setting. Although the historic house that might have been the central attraction is now just a shell and out of bounds to the public, this absence is compensated for by spectacular landscaped grounds and architectural features. There is an overwhelming sense of scale. The estate, covering a hillside which slopes down to the River Derwent, is laterally bisected by the 'Grand Walk', a wide, near mile-long, avenue of mature trees which stretches from a stunning Palladian chapel (dating from 1760) to a coniferous bank that rises up to the Column of Liberty. The grounds are scattered with historic buildings, some now semi-ruinous: the Orangery, the remains of the seventeenth-century Hall, an icehouse, stables, a Gothic Revival banqueting hall. There is also a walled garden which forms an interesting public face for Gibside. This is looked after by National Trust volunteers and local gardeners who tend community allotments. J.M.W. Turner painted at Gibside: his watercolour of the River Derwent romantically portrays the hills rising to moorland to the West.⁹ The landscaping is historically significant, with plans recorded as being laid out in the 1730s by Stephen Switzer (1682–1745), a forerunner of Capability Brown.¹⁰ Weaving together many of these physical features is a famously dark narrative of Georgian England, a 'hidden history' drawing together tales of Gibside's illustrious aristocratic landowners and coal barons, scandal, chicanery, and kidnap. At the centre of this narrative is the figure of Mary Eleanor Bowes, Countess of Strathmore (1749–1800), the 'Unhappy Countess' as she was dubbed in contemporary chronicles. The commission brief for Gibside specified that 'Mary Eleanor Bowes' story needs to be more visible within the Gibside visitor experience and this commission for 2018 provides an opportunity to do so'.¹¹ In 2018 the National Trust's programming focus was to be Women and Suffrage, and Mary Eleanor Bowes' story would sit firmly within this context.

This story, summarised below, is relentlessly harrowing and in certain respects difficult for an artist to engage with. Mary Eleanor was the only child of George Bowes who had accumulated vast wealth from coal extraction and the lucrative rights to run coal over his land. Concerned to preserve the family name, but without a male heir, he stipulated that the successful suitor for his daughter's hand would be obliged to take the Bowes name. In 1777 Mary Eleanor, recently widowed from an unsuccessful first marriage, sole heir and immensely wealthy, was tricked through an elaborate ploy into

Figure 8.1 Gibside 'Grand Walk', Newcastle. Image credit: Andrew Burton.

marrying Andrew Robinson Stoney. A charmer, trickster, gold-digger, and tyrant, Stoney's ploy had been to seduce Mary Eleanor, who was already the object of scandal-mongering in the press for her 'licentious' lifestyle. Having won her confidence, Stoney concocted a scenario in which he would appear to be nobly defending her honour against those in Fleet Street who (with his connivance) had been printing scurrilous rumours. Stoney staged a fake duel in which he was 'mortally' wounded. Appealing to Mary Eleanor's vanity and compassion, he begged for a death-bed marriage. Mary Eleanor assented (even though pregnant with another suitor's child), but no sooner were they married than Stoney miraculously recovered. He then began a tyrannical campaign that entrapped Mary Eleanor into a decade of violent domestic abuse. A sequence of shocking events ensued, typically amplified in the press with the connivance of (the now) Stoney-Bowes. He continued to devise elaborate plots to ensnare Mary Eleanor's fortune, none of them entirely successful. Having been liberated through widowhood from a first unhappy marriage that had crushed her literary and scientific ambitions, and after a brief period of hedonistic freedom, Mary Eleanor was a prisoner at Gibside, her idyllic childhood home where she had learned Milton and been nurtured by her father in her love of plants, literature, and science. These resurgent passions were crushed afresh by Stoney-Bowes who railed against her 'damned weeds', the botanical specimens in her orangery. He seems to have coerced Mary Eleanor into writing her 'Confessions'; an agonisingly graphic account of her 'misdemeanours' which he then published, to a predictably outraged public.

After a decade of abuse, Mary Eleanor was rescued by a female servant who, resisting Stoney's usual ploys of bribery, bullying, and blackmail, assembled a small group of retainers (none of whom belonged to Mary Eleanor's own class) who helped her slip through his grasp, although a dramatic chase and kidnapping ensued. But Stoney-Bowes had been exposed and with dogged determination, Mary Eleanor eventually obtained a ground-breaking divorce. Stoney-Bowes was jailed, only to continue his transgressions from behind bars.

The Orangery Urns

I started work on my sculptures for Gibside in 2017. As I began to experiment with ideas that drew on Mary Eleanor's life story researched through contemporary texts held in Newcastle University's Robinson Library, I was also drawn back to my earlier memories of Gibside, a place I visited often in the 1980s. My most vivid memories were of the fine Palladian chapel and the long avenue of trees stretching out towards a distant column, at that time inaccessible, buried deep within a private estate. The surmounting figure of Liberty could be seen poking through the tops of trees and was a famous but mysterious local landmark, a somewhat surreal echo of Grey's Monument in the centre of Newcastle. I also remembered a potent but melancholic atmosphere. The ruins seemed more ruinous, the dilapidation more entropic. The carpark was a muddy enclosure beside the Walled Garden; Gibside was less visited at that time. Friends recounted stories of clambering around the precipitous walls in the collapsing Hall, risking a tumble into a mass of brambles and nettles below. For some reason, in my memory the site was always associated with a photograph of Garibaldi, blown up to a vast size, that I'd seen hanging in a stairwell. Revisiting Gibside thirty years later, I felt that my interpretation of this site should respond both to the brief for the project, which emphasised the darkly interweaving narrative of biographical, historical, and social threads, but also to the strong visual impact of the landscaped grounds and the way Gibside plays on memory, nostalgia, and association.

I approached the commission with experience of making art that had been both sited within, and inspired by, heritage places. I saw a distinction between making art that was informed by the heritage of a given historic site – its particular narratives and history – and making art that was more loosely 'inspired' by a site. The former suggests a series of triangulated artistic iterations between artist, artwork, and site where the specific heritage of a site is a constant reference point to be probed and explored. The latter suggests a different kind of artistic journey, where the work might be prompted by a single, but evocative, encounter with a place. Some examples of my projects illustrate these different approaches. *Lux* was a visual art project commissioned by the National Trust in 2014 for Cragside, the Northumberland home of the inventor and industrialist William Armstrong. A prominent feature of Cragside's heritage was the fact that it was the first domestic home to be lit using incandescent light

bulbs powered by hydroelectricity. My research into the forms of these light bulbs formed the basis for my work *Light Vessel* (2014). The play of light through glass and the relationship between form and function were central features of the work. If *Light Vessel* (2014) was informed by the heritage of its site, *Brown Field or Buddleia Vale* (2014), a sculptural installation made during an artist's residency in Stoke-on-Trent, literally used the substance of a historic site, an old ceramics works, now mostly flattened and derelict and overgrown with buddleia and sorrel, as its material for production.¹² Here, 'heritage' was revealed in a multitude of fragments of clay pipe and broken clay vessels buried just under the surface, remnants of the ceramic industries of the Potteries. Reconstructed into chimney-like forms inspired by Stoke's bottle kilns, I surrounded these with buddleia flowers, vivid purple at the beginning of the exhibition, turning to brown as they died. A final example is a project I undertook in India in 2006 where a different conception of heritage is foregrounded: my installation *Bricks and Bees* (2006) for the British Council Charbargh drew on the expertise of heritage workers in India.¹³ Bamboo breaking is a craft 'at risk' because of the increasing pressures of urbanisation in India. Bamboo scaffold was until recently a familiar sight on most construction sites but is being replaced with steel. Bamboo breakers have been relegated to the status of 'heritage' craftworkers, weaving baskets or constructing the ladders that bear the dead on their final ceremonial journey to the funeral pyre. My work aimed to point to the continuing relevance and vibrancy of these threatened skills. At Gibside, work 'informed by' site seemed to offer the most appropriate approach as the corollary for drawing on the site for information and inspiration was that the resulting work should, in some way, inform its public visitors about its heritage.

My initial challenge was to find a positive way of responding to Mary Eleanor's story, so infused as it seemed with misery and conflict. A possible answer lay in her (albeit often frustrated) passions for botany and for the theatrical and exotic extravagance of Georgian society. Interestingly, Fiona Curran, the other project artist working at Gibside, felt the same dilemma, and also decided to make work with a botanical theme, though her response focused on the relationship between horticulture and the position of women in Georgian society.

Having decided that my work should respond to Mary Eleanor's passions, I wanted the work also to speak to the immediate physical site it would occupy on the Gibside estate. I wanted the sculptures to belong, rather than achieve impact through being incongruous with their surroundings (in the sense that the emphasis is often on the 'contemporary' in contemporary art made for historic places. I saw potential in echoing in the work the special characteristics of Gibside's landscape: its scale and its strong sense of a particular historical period. Studying some period photographs of Gibside on display in the Stable block, I noticed that the balustrade of the Orangery had once been graced with a set of ornamental urns. Research revealed that these

were removed to Glamis Castle, another Bowes-Lyon family seat. Could a way into the commission involve in some way returning these lost urns to Gibside? By reconceiving the urns as huge, outsized objects, it might be possible both to capture a sense of the grand, even bombastic scale of the landscaped grounds and architectural features and, at the same time, create expansive surfaces on which Mary's story could be told in words.¹⁴

Balancing a new set of urns on the Orangery's balustrade was out of the question as the building is fragile and historic. The most striking location for siting a group of huge urns would be in the centre of the Grand Walk. Positioned on Gibside's most famous sight-line, the urns would look like a set of skittles, transforming the Grand Walk into a giant bowling alley. But if such a subversive artistic statement might resonate with Stoney-Bowes' wrecking mentality, both I and the site team seemed to feel a certain nervousness about placing a group of sculptures in the middle of Gibside's greatest vista. Here, trepidation about deliberately risking inciting public disapprobation led us to reject a possible location for the work that, in retrospect, might have worked spectacularly well. Had there perhaps been a longer history of siting artwork at Gibside, and deeper institutional knowledge of likely public response and thus greater confidence, we might have pursued the idea. But there were also practical issues. The danger of the weight of the vessels damaging the mature trees through pressure on their roots was a concern, as was the need to avoid disturbing the ground in other ways: the Grand Walk is culverted at regular intervals to allow passage for the numerous streams that run down the hillside it bisects, and there might have been a risk of damaging these invisible structures. Other possible sites on the estate were similarly problematic. After several inconclusive site meetings where the site team and I proposed to each other various possible sites, each of which was unsatisfactory for one reason or another, the project seemed at some risk of foundering. Ultimately, it was the least historically sensitive place on the estate, the Walled Garden, that emerged as the only location that did not present insurmountable obstacles. Even here, it looked as though we would require the presence of an archaeologist on a 'watching' brief, alert to anything significant turning up as we dug shallow foundations. The difficulty in agreeing on a location, and the tension between meeting the artist's vision and the priority of the heritage organisation to avoid any risk to the fabric of its site, was a valuable research finding.

Vessels in a landscape

Gibside's landscape and architecture are grounded in the classicising worldview of the eighteenth century. Whilst I did not want my vessels to be harmoniously *at one* with the landscape, I wanted them to be a part of it, displaying a sensitivity to the visible historical context as much as to the one revealed through its narratives. In artistic terms, I wanted to make wider reference to the idea of 'vessels' within a landscape (we expect to find vessels in a

domestic situation, but not necessarily in a landscape). I had been searching for examples of this concept that would help me decide what scale I needed to disrupt the sense of a confected Arcadian harmony that can be associated with artfully positioned ornamental pots. My work had to capture the underlying dissonance of its subject. In terms of scale, Minoan *pthos* and huge ceramic storage jars for wine and olive oil, up to 4 metres in length, that continued to be made in Catalonia well into the twentieth century were key reference points for the work. I had seen such vessels on a recent visit to Barcelona. In Laos the enigmatic 'Plain of Jars', huge stone vessels scattered across a landscape, still confounds archaeologists. Large ceramic vessels usually serve one of two purposes: they either store copious quantities of seasonal produce, or they inter the dead, serving as funerary caskets. I liked this tension, and the sense of a vibration between containing, preserving, and entrapping. In the film *Kaos*, a 'jar mender' famous for his secret glue is summoned to staple together a huge, but mysteriously broken jar. But, in the process, he entraps himself. The film ends with the owner refusing to break the vessel open to release him.¹⁵

The process of making large-scale clay vessels is complex. In their raw, unfired state they can be too fragile to move. The problem can be solved by building a kiln in-situ around the pot so that it can be baked on the spot. Such kilns, usually wood-fired, can only reach a low temperature, resulting in an object with a surface that is porous and absorbs water. In North East England this would be dangerous as in winter the absorbed water would freeze, making the clay friable. If my vessels were to be robust they would need to be fired to a sufficiently high temperature where the clay becomes vitrified and strong. This would require moving them into a modern kiln, and this in turn determined the kind of clay that was needed, a heavily grogged, rough-textured clay that is stronger in its unfired state and would allow the vessels to be moved to the kiln. Forming the vessel is complex too: on this scale they cannot be thrown on a wheel. Instead they have to be built up from clay slabs, constructed on a rotating base. As the walls are built up they must be allowed to partially dry so that the firmer, lower half of the vessel can support the weight of the clay above without bellying out. Because clay shrinks as it dries, and different parts of the vessels are drying at different rates, its form cannot be judged by eye, and has to be established using a series of templates which are calibrated against a full-scale drawing of the vessel's profile. In the firing, at very high temperature the clay softens, and to prevent collapse in the kiln the clay wall is made very thick, but this in turn means that the vessel has to be allowed to dry for several months. Having completed the structure of the vessels, I turned to treating their surfaces as expansive blank 'pages' on which text passages about Mary Eleanor could be inscribed. This was a lengthy process as each letter had to be drawn out on the surface of the leather-hard clay and then inscribed using a special tool. Finally, letters were emphasized using coloured slips and glazes. To compose my texts I worked with a number of eighteenth- and

nineteenth-century texts, including the journals of William Paterson, Mary Eleanor's protégé gardener whom she had sent to the Cape to gather plant specimens.¹⁶ As a relatively early European travelling for scientific purposes, he narrates his encounters with people and animals, as well as his excitement at the wealth of flora he found. The second text, *The Confessions of the Countess of Strathmore*, is a harrowing autobiographical account, probably written under the coercion of Stoney-Bowes as part of his campaign to demolish her reputation.¹⁷ Other texts recounted the lives of the couple and their divorce trial.¹⁸ Having extracted passages, I fragmented and then reassembled them, creating an impressionistic juxtaposition of words and sentences rather than a coherent narrative. Interspersed amongst this were extracts from *Paradise Lost* and other poetry – Mary Eleanor learned Milton by heart as a child – as well as from a play that she wrote aged nineteen.¹⁹ My intention was that the writing should be intriguing, evocative, disorientating even, so the reader would need to move around the vessel to follow each text, only to find sentences truncated, or merging into another passage. I also wanted to embody a sense of the trauma of Mary Eleanor's story in the physical construction of the vessels; the largest, a pitcher-like form, is over three metres high. At this scale it had to be made and fired in two separate parts. By turning this schismatic nature of the vessel to effect by forcing its two halves together with iron staples, the conjoined vessel became a metaphor for the marital relationship. Around the widest part of the vessel are inscribed Milton's lines from *Paradise Lost*, 'The mind is its own place, and in itself | Can make a heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n'.²⁰

Ravens, robins, and parakeets

As well as through the use of text, I wanted to find other ways of representing Mary Eleanor's story. I explored various ideas in the studio. I tried making clay ladders and inserting these into the pots, but this seemed too literal a metaphor for entrapment and escape. I sculpted models of the plants Paterson sent back to Britain and had them sprouting out of the top of the pots, but this was too obvious. I made clay busts of Mary Eleanor and Andrew Stoney-Bowes gesturing at one another from their containment in different pots – too comedic. And besides, none of this worked well in sculptural terms. The one success was a huge lump of sculpted coal, which, a graphic reference to the wealth upon which the Estate was based, looked appropriately precarious balanced on top of its urn. For inspiration, once again I revisited some of my earlier work. Working in India in 2011, I had visited brick factories in West Bengal where numerous 'chimney-kilns' dotted the landscape. Resembling factory chimneys in Northern England (and Gibside's Column of Liberty), these chimneys are temporary structures: as the clay reserves for one brickyard are exhausted, manufacture moves to another site, leaving the old chimney-kilns abandoned. On the point of collapse, they are colonised

Figure 8.2 *The Orangery Urns*, 2018, work in progress. Andrew Burton's studio at Newcastle University. Image credit: Andrew Burton.

Figure 8.3 *The Orangery Urns*, 2018. Image credit: Colin Davison.

by parakeets. The visual juxtaposition between the red of the brick and the vivid green feathers of the parakeets had startled me. Here, at Gibside, this image suddenly came into my head. The Walled Garden is a landscape of brick red and green foliage. I thought the gregarious and colourful parrots I planned to make would resonate in this environment and with the flamboyant episodes in Mary Eleanor's life and her love of the extravagant and exotic. In Georgian England exotic animals and extravagantly plumaged birds were a craze amongst the wealthy. My intention was that the parrots should be read as emblematic for Mary Eleanor herself; the black raven that inhabits another, darker vessel represents Stoney-Bowes, the sinister villain of the narrative (originally I had him represented as a robin red-breast: gregarious, but promiscuous and violent).

Working with volunteers and an endnote

An unexpectedly rich vein of the project was the opportunity to work with the National Trust volunteers. Our team had seen the volunteers as key stakeholders in the contemporary art programme and we had introduced them to the artworks through talks and briefings given by our curator. Each artist also met with volunteers to explain their work. We were interested in other pro-active engagements too. In the case of my project, a successful relationship emerged as a result of the decision to site vessels in the Walled Garden

Figure 8.4 *The Orangery Urns*, 2018. Image credit: Colin Davison.

where volunteers cultivate the vegetable and flower beds. The texts inscribed on my vessels in the Walled Garden spoke to Mary Eleanor Bowes' enthusiasm for horticulture and botany and the vicarious excitement she must have felt about William Paterson's travels to South Africa. To make this connection more explicit, we decided to plant three of the vessels with examples of plants mentioned in Paterson's journals. Working with the Head Gardener and her team, the volunteers sourced specimens of plants of South African origin: osteospermums, kniphofia, calla lilies, euphorbias, and different sorts of grasses. Seasonal replanting helped to keep the sculptures 'alive' over a longer period. This developed into a kind of extended artistic collaboration, more firmly embedding the works at Gibside. Over time, non-human actors accepted the arrival of the vessels too, and in unanticipated ways. On a day in June when the vessels were finally being removed from Gibside, I received a phone call from our agent on-site. There was a problem. Colonies of wasps had built their nests inside the vessels. Each one had been occupied but the wasps had been disturbed by the art moving team and were swarming. The vessels could not be moved, and the rangers had been summoned. Wondering how we would be able to move the vessels to Newcastle where they were to go on exhibition, we wondered whether the wasps were the angry ghosts of Mary Eleanor and Stoney-Bowes, once again stirring up havoc and mayhem. (In the event, a few drowsy wasps survived the journey to Newcastle, emerging from hidden clefts in the clay to lounge sleepily on the vessels' rims.)

In one final act to the *Orangery Urns* project, we invited the Northumberland-based poet Linda France to stage a series of poetry workshops at Gibside. Participants were to write poems that responded to the story of Mary Eleanor and to *The Orangery Urns*. On a drizzly and cold day in April, twelve poets could be found in the Walled Garden. The poems they wrote were extraordinary and transported the idea of a creative response to Gibside onto a different register. Mary Eleanor's original intensely emotional writing, transcribed – albeit in a garbled version – onto the clay surface of the vessels by a visual artist, was reshaped again into language to find its way back onto the printed page in a set of ekphrastic poems that spoke again to themes, perhaps embedded in the buildings and landscape of Gibside, of entrapment, deceit, and exploitation.

Postscript: the National Trust evaluation

The Orangery Urns were originally intended for display for a temporary period during the late spring and summer of 2018 but as they proved popular, the Gibside team requested that they should be kept on display until summer 2019. This request was justified by feedback they had received from visitors about the works. I reproduce here extracts from the email sent by the National Trust as it provides interesting evidence of the impact of the works on the organisation, their volunteers, and visitors.²¹

We [the Gibside National Trust team] found having art in the walled garden to be beneficial to our operation ... [providing a] ... unique interpretation which catches the attention of visitors – with less than a second to grab someone’s attention and make an impact, traditional forms of interpretation often fail to intrigue visitors in a dynamic and engaging way. The impressive visual impact of the urns creates a vivid impression ... [they] have provided a hook for telling our story. For our garden volunteers the urns have had a particular impact. Members of the team have had a real sense of pride in caring for the planting within the urns and talking to visitors about them and why they are here. Caring for the planting has created a sharp sense of stakeholdership among individuals and buy-in from the wider volunteer team.

The works had also impacted on the Gibside staff team, the email went on:

The process of commissioning, installing and talking about the artworks has challenged the Gibside team and our ways of thinking. The process was new to us all. It encourages us to welcome creatives to Gibside for future projects. We have more confidence in the process. The artwork has seen an increased engagement with Gibside’s story from our visitors.

Visitor data shows a change in visitor composition. For Gibside, one of the objectives of involvement with MCAHE was diversification of our visitor makeup. In particular we wanted to welcome more visitors we categorise as Young Independents through our doors. Between May and October 2018, we welcomed 10,007 Young Independent visitors (17.05% of our visitors) compared to 7081 visits in 2017 (10.19% of our visitors). Compare this also with a regional average of 9.16% of Young Independent visitors it is evident this summer Gibside saw an increase in this visitor segment. We used targeted marketing to support this drive. For example, adverts in printed publications such as *The Crack*, a more accessible publication appealing to a younger audience.

Notes

- 1 See <<https://research.ncl.ac.uk/mcahe/>> for further details of the research and for details of forthcoming publications.
- 2 The partner organisations were Art&Heritage, National Trust, English Heritage, the Churches Conservation Trust, Arts Council England, and the Contemporary Visual Art Network.
- 3 The full research team comprised Dr Niki Black; Prof. Andrew Burton (Newcastle); Dr Nick Cass (Leeds); Dr Rebecca Farley; Judith King; Prof. Andrew Newman; Prof. Venda Pollock (Newcastle).
- 4 For details of each work commissioned, see <<https://research.ncl.ac.uk/mcahe/>>.
- 5 The first was *Living at Belsay* in 1996; the second *Sitooteries* in 2000, both coordinated by arts organisation Art&Heritage.

- 6 Jeremy Beach, Catherine Morris, and Paul Usherwood, *Public Sculpture of North-East England*, Public Sculpture of Britain 3 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).
- 7 'Time and Tide: Tyne International Exhibition of Contemporary Art' (1993) included works by Acconci (USA), Borland (UK), Diaz (Chile), Drozdik (Hungary), Fretton (UK), Goldin (USA), Graham (Canada), Kirkup and Naldi (UK), Meirles (Brazil), Samore (USA).
- 8 In 2009, the National Trust and Arts Council England signed a Memorandum of Understanding, creating a partnership between the two organisations. The Trust New Art programme was subsequently established to create 'an environment where contemporary art and crafts have a dialogue with historic settings, with both elements enriching one another, challenging and strengthening the continuum of practice and using the present to illustrate the past'. Trust New Art has commissioned over two hundred artists to produce new work inspired by historic properties and landscapes managed by the National Trust.
- 9 J.M.W. Turner, *Gibside* (1817), Tate/Bowes Museum collection. Also various drawings made in the same year.
- 10 The plans have been lost, so it is not now known how closely the actuality of Gibside is based on these, nor is there any record of Capability Brown, who was born in Northumbria, having visited the estate.
- 11 Quoted from the commission brief for the Gibside commissions, collaboratively prepared by the National Trust and research team and issued to each artist shortlisted for the project.
- 12 Exhibited at the AirSpace Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, July 2014 as an outcome of the Brownfields artist residency organised by Airspace.
- 13 British Council Building, New Delhi (1992), designed by the architect Charles Correa. 'Charbargh' means courtyard.
- 14 At the time of its construction, the Column of Liberty was the tallest such structure outside London.
- 15 *Kaos*, dir. by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani (Distributori Audiovisivi Consorziati, 1984).
- 16 William Paterson, *Narrative of Four Journeys into the Country of the Hottentots, and Caffraria: In the Years One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Seven, Eight, and Nine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Library Collection – African Studies, St. Paul's Church-Yard, London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1789; repr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
- 17 Mary Eleanor Bowes Strathmore, *The Confessions of the Countess of Strathmore* (New York: Printed for W. Locke, New York Public Library, 1793).
- 18 Jesse Foot, *The Lives of Andrew Robinson Bowes, Esq. and the Countess of Strathmore: Written from Thirty-three Years Professional Attendance, from Letters, and Other Well Authenticated Documents* (London: Printed for Becket and Porter, and Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1810).
- 19 M.E. Lyon Bowes, Countess of Strathmore, *The Siege of Jerusalem* [A Dramatic Poem, in Five Acts] (privately printed, 1774).
- 20 John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Samuel Simmons, 1667; repr. London: Penguin, 2000), p. 9.
- 21 The text that follows is taken from an email sent on 2 November 2018 by the National Trust Events and Programming Officer at Gibside after discussion with the Gibside Team. Quoted with permission of Lauren Cripps.

Part III

Disciplinary dialogues

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Expanded Interiors

Bringing contemporary site-specific fine-art practice to Roman houses at Herculaneum and Pompeii

Catrin Huber

Introduction

This chapter gives an insight into the methods and dialogue-based nature of *Expanded Interiors*, an interdisciplinary, practice-led, AHRC-funded research project. *Expanded Interiors* created a unique dialogue between two historically distinct elements: contemporary fine-art practice and some carefully chosen ancient Roman wall paintings: architectural remains found within the UNESCO World Heritage sites at Herculaneum and Pompeii.

The dialogue-based nature of *Expanded Interiors* was a means through which to critically reflect upon historical and contemporary practice simultaneously. Dialogue was also an important element in the intersected research of the artists and archaeologists working on the project. For this reason, dialogue is the defining element of the following text, parts of which utilise fictional conversations between historical artists. These fictional discussions allow me to situate Roman wall painting within a discourse of critical spatial practice, highlighting three distinct historical positions (one from 50 bc, two from the twentieth century) that, I argue, are crucial for installation practice. Each position explores the intersections of art, architecture, and life, while highlighting a different aspect of Roman art practice. This fictional conversation with the Roman wall painter allows me to inhabit these various positions, enabling me to scrutinise historical and contemporary making from several perspectives. It facilitates an intersecting of practices, something which was at the core of my practice-led investigation of these Roman houses and their wall paintings.

My chapter has seven sections, each of which provides a different perspective on, and a different voice for the project. After some introductory insight into the study's origins, a critical discussion regarding the relevance of Roman wall painting for contemporary fine-art practice outlines a context for *Expanded Interiors*. Some general information about the *Expanded Interiors* project is then followed by examples of interdisciplinary artist/archaeologist dialogue. Finally, I discuss the specific installations at the House of the Beautiful Courtyard and the House of the Cryptoporticus, and their heritage

site context. The chapter concludes by rejoining the participants of the initial fictional forum, allowing them a final say.

What inspired *Expanded Interiors*?

In 2008, visiting Herculaneum, Oplontis, and Pompeii for the first time, I was struck by the extraordinary vibrancy and complexity of Roman wall paintings. Seeing them in situ, they seemed like works from the future, not the past. Their freshness seemed vital; wholly relevant to contemporary installation art, and to site-responsive and critical spatial practice in particular.

Roman wall paintings and heritage sites also had a particular relevance for my own wider artistic practice. As a (mostly) abstract painter and installation artist, I was interested in how to integrate (or make permeable) paintings within specific architectural settings, be it on a formal or conceptual level. I was interested, too, in how to make paintings define spaces, in how to 'activate' viewers, and in how perspectival systems might open up walls or spaces. I had previously explored combining different visual languages within painting installations, and Roman wall painting seemed to offer some fresh, radical, and unusual approaches to all of the above. The intersection of contemporary and Roman wall painting proved especially fruitful regarding the widening of critical and creative possibilities. It was this close dialogue between specific Roman wall paintings, Roman houses, and Roman practice that facilitated my exploration of historical practice's relevance for contemporary making. The dialogues that ensued facilitated a different, practice-led perspective on, and interpretation of, this historical practice.

Admittedly, I view these Roman works through a contemporary lens, but I believe re-evaluation of these specific historical practices through contemporary making can inspire fresh methodologies for current and future practice. Initially, my fascination with Roman wall painting resulted in a series of site-responsive exhibitions developed at a range of venues including the British School at Rome, the Hatton Gallery in Newcastle, and Kiosk24 in Herford, Germany.

A performance: dialogue with a woman Roman wall painter from antiquity

Since 2008, I have used an evolving fictional dialogue between an unnamed woman Roman wall painter and a revolving cast of what I consider relevant historical artists as a means through which to explore Roman wall painting's significance for contemporary practice. This dialogue has usually been performed in conjunction with a slide projection as I voice the different characters' thoughts. I function as the chair and, currently at least, the other guests are El Lissitzky, the Russian avantgarde artist who wanted to merge art and life, and Kurt Schwitters, the Merz artist who famously took

over his parents' Hanover apartment with his Merzbau. Both Lissitzky and Schwitters are key figures in the history of installation art, and each adopts a distinct position as the imagined discussion unfolds. Some of Lissitzky's exhibition designs (for example *Proun Room*, 1924; *Kabinett der Abstrakten*, 1926) emphasised activation of the walls, and aimed at redefining spaces for an activated visitor experience. Meanwhile Schwitters ultimately became more and more appreciated for his Merzbauten and Merzbarn, for his artistic interventions, transformations, and reinterpretations of architectural, mostly interior spaces.

Both artists, in their different ways, have helped expand and redefine interior space on both formal and conceptual levels, and crucially, this is what links them, in this work, to the work of the Roman wall painter. I argue that they offer enriching new perspectives on Roman wall painting. Incorporating an emphatic inhabiting, my fictional responses are derived from thorough research into each artist's respective practices. Here, by way of example, is a dialogue extract:

RW (WOMAN ROMAN WALL PAINTER) Our work impacts upon *you*, the viewer, physically. Imagine being immersed in these paintings. We realised them in such a way that the viewing inhabitants animated an imagined environment, they themselves constituting a missing link in the chain. Representation became a concrete physical experience, yet also enabled you to become part of the dream.

EL (EL LISSITZKY) Interesting! In my *Proun* and *Demonstration Rooms*, I, too, activated the viewer. However, it wasn't just the viewer – *the whole room* was activated; animated by the movement of the perceiver. [...]

My standardised system could activate any room, always accentuating the independence of the individual artworks within. I thought this economical and revolutionary with reference to exhibition design and concept, and rather elegant, too. It was not based on fantasy and illusion, but on the concrete reality of materials and the present. It wasn't meant to lure you into a world of dreams; it was meant to highlight the need for active participation in this world.

RW Well, ingeniously, we combined imagination *and* reality. The magical power of representation stimulated the imagination, but we also highlighted the act of viewing and created an awareness of the physical nature of painting. Further, our wall paintings aimed to nourish the viewer's intellect. These painted architectures were as much temples and palaces as they were mathematical riddles and challenges. Mr Lissitzky, please don't underestimate us Roman painters! We were highly ambitious and wanted to engage the perceptive viewer in a game of hide and seek.

KS (KURT SCHWITTERS) Activation of the viewer you say, Mr Lissitzky! The viewer is a missing link in the chain, you say, Roman wall paintress! What

about the rest of the world? What about the environment? What about our fellow living creatures who are not human beings? I invited a family of hamsters into my Merzbau. They loved the grottos and interlocking cubes, used the rib features to slide down, and nested and reproduced elsewhere. I studied what they liked, where they could nest and what they might miss, and temporarily adjusted my designs accordingly. Did they inhabit the environment as happily as I did? Perhaps. Or maybe not quite. But how could I really know? My point is this: whom should one think of when intervening or making architecture? Why focus only on humans? And to come back to what you said earlier Mr Lissitzky: this is the bigger picture!

- EL (*Laughing*) Ok, so Kurt builds for hamsters. But you, madam: weren't you just painting walls as if painting a wooden board? The scale was different, but what, exactly, constituted your intervention into architecture?
- RW The magic lay in the balance between imagined and physical architecture; the way in which wall paintings immersed the viewer in their surroundings. Nor should you think only in terms of an individual room. Our wall paintings reflected the different roles and functions of the various rooms in which they appeared. They formed a system that shaped and articulated the Roman House. Our wall paintings structured the house, making it navigable and understandable for visitors. They were much more than panel paintings.
- EL I must say that you have a point there, madam. But can anything of value for twenty-first-century painting be gleaned from your work? A fresh approach? Some revolutionary zest, perhaps?

Above, El Lissitzky raises some important questions on my behalf. Within the performance, the woman Roman wall painter responds to his queries by describing how buildings articulate power relationships, and how Roman wall painting as a 'site-defining' practice (my terminology) contributes to this. She also points out that Roman painting workshops were very well organised, and that this might be something for the contemporary practitioner to consider. I use the term 'site-defining' because some Roman wall paintings clearly determined the house with reference to 'public' and 'private' spaces, as well as the role and function of rooms. I am also exploring what 'site-defining' could mean in a contemporary practice context, and whether it facilitates a more radical rethinking of site-specific work.

While these imagined conversations and subsequent reading performances helped me to draw out the wider context of possible relations between Roman wall painting and contemporary fine-art practice, it became clear that, in order to understand these works and practices in more depth, I would need to be in situ, investigating specific wall paintings in specific Roman houses. Interdisciplinary exploration and discussion would also be key, and this eventually led to *Expanded Interiors*, the framework of which I will outline below.

Expanded Interiors: framework and some key information

For *Expanded Interiors*, I brought together an interdisciplinary research team of fellow staff members at Newcastle University. This comprised archaeologists Professor Ian Haynes (our Co-Investigator) and Dr Thea Ravasi (our Archaeology Research Assistant); our digital technology expert Alex Turner; and artist Rosie Morris (our Fine Art Research Assistant). I myself was the project's Principle Investigator. Together, we investigated the House of the Beautiful Courtyard at Herculaneum and the House of the Cryptoporticus at Pompeii. The project was a partnership between the Parco Archeologico di Ercolano, the Herculaneum Conservation Project, the Parco Archeologico di Pompeii, and Newcastle University.

The two Roman houses we chose were perfect for *Expanded Interior's* investigation for a number of reasons. Firstly, each house has a very distinctive layout. At the House of the Cryptoporticus, there is a rare (for town-houses) underground passageway and bath complex, while the House of the Beautiful Courtyard has an unusually large (for its time) reception room. Secondly, these two houses have strongly contrasting physical qualities and distinct private and public functions, and, consequently, they are each adorned with particular and mutually exclusive types of wall paintings. At the House of the Cryptoporticus, we worked with two different types of exquisite, recently restored, second-style Roman wall paintings: an unfolding frieze as part of a painted colonnade, and an illusionistic architectural work which transforms the room in which it is contained. At the House of the Beautiful Courtyard, meanwhile, we explored a less well-preserved room which was predominantly decorated in the late third style. It was important that all of these wall paintings used painted architectural structures to embed the works within their physical surroundings. However, the artistic strategies through which the Roman painters achieved this – and through which their paintings engage the viewer – are different in each instance. This allowed us to study a breadth of artistic strategies while facilitating different contemporary artistic responses.

Our investigation of these houses involved thorough research, both literature-based and archival. This was combined with direct archaeological and artistic site study, and with artistic practice. The archaeological research focused on archival, historical, and archaeological analysis of the houses, with an emphasis on analysis of the surviving wall paintings in relation to the buildings' architecture and design, and a focus on light, access, and movement. For the artistic exploration, I was particularly interested in analysing, through photography and drawing, the specifics of each respective Roman wall painting, and the way in which it was integrated into its actual space. I paid close attention to artistic decisions regarding two-dimensional and three-dimensional space (composition, perspective); open and closed walls; multiple ways of integrating imagery and/or encoding meaning (for

example propaganda images); the colour and light relationship with the surrounding room/building; and the movement of the viewer.

For the wall paintings at the House of the Cryptoporticus, a range of interpretations were already available for study (for example Blazeby's detailed visual and spatial analysis of one room at Casa del Criptoportico, House of the Cryptoporticus, for the *Skenographia Project*).¹ But looking at these paintings from a contemporary practice perspective offered a new approach and new insights into the paintings' sophisticated means (see discussion below).

These initial drawings and photographs formed part of the source material for the testing of the above-mentioned strategies of Roman wall paintings through and for contemporary practice. This was achieved through an experimental, creative approach incorporating drawing, photography, collage, painting, and the use of three-dimensional models. I also tested various potential interactions between replicas of artefacts, Roman wall painting, and contemporary wall paintings, again using photography, collage, painting, and three-dimensional models. Three-dimensional experimentation with replica (for example scale, material) was part of the process. This helped to highlight certain aspects of the original artefacts, while simultaneously dislodging them (via replicated versions) from their original context. This extensive, intensive research process culminated in the development of three new installations spread between the two Roman houses.

Artists and archaeologists

Some of the most interesting ensuing dialogue between artists and archaeologists happened during site visits. To be in the actual physical spaces exploring the entanglement of Roman wall paintings and the houses' architecture was hugely exciting, but it was also then that our observations and interpretations of the evidence around us sometimes tended to differ. I used one such discussion, albeit loosely, as a starting-point for further imagined dialogue with my fictional woman Roman wall painter:

RW But why, Catrin, are you, a twenty-first-century artist, referring back to the ancient creations of my workshop?

CH Because I am struck by the incredibly intricate nature of your work; its interplay of different visual languages and its encoded messages. And by the different ways your paintings were designed to respond to given architectural situations and the role and function of rooms. Studying your work, one discovers many surprising idiosyncrasies.

RW 'Surprising idiosyncrasies?'

CH Well, let's take the colonnade and Trojan frieze in the House of the Cryptoporticus, for example. One expects their composition to be symmetrically aligned, as art historians and archaeologists often point out that this characteristic is typical of second style Roman wall

painting. However, one soon realises that the distances between the Cryptoporticus's windows are irregular, hence your design had to be adjusted accordingly. And according to drawings by Spinazzola,² the archaeologist who excavated the house from 1911–1914, this happened in a regular and logical way. I was surprised, however, that looking at the wall paintings today, they don't really align to Spinazzola's drawings, at least not in the west wing of the house. Instead, they follow a much more illogical, irregular structure. This – together with the surprising chronology, and your apparent interpretations of scenes within the frieze itself – fascinates me.

As a practitioner it makes absolute sense! How else to deal with such a long corridor? A regular, symmetrical scheme would lack dynamism and movement and become boring and repetitive on such a large scale. But this subtle, underlying subversion of its own principles keeps these paintings fresh, capturing the viewer. Plus this approach arguably chimed with the role and function of the cryptoporticus, encouraging the viewer to stroll while also grabbing their attention via its 'surprising idiosyncrasies.'

RW Interesting! But might that overemphasise the notion of irregularities as a pre-planned concept? We worked in teams, remember, and quickly. On such a large-scale project, not everyone worked in perfect synchronisation or entirely according to plan. That said, we did of course aim to make the works as stimulating, multi-layered, and surprising as possible. If finances allowed, a tailor-made response to each different house was crucial to our endeavour and something we were very proud of.

The extent of the irregularity in this highly repetitive system was indeed surprising, and intrigued both artists and archaeologists. It was the question of how best to interpret one aspect of the painted colonnade in the Cryptoporticus, however, which drove a good-natured wedge between the archaeologists and the artists. The colonnade is organised as a sequence of painted herms – painted statues as part of narrow pillars often portraying Hermes. The wall between the herms is – according to the archaeologists – divided into a sequence of panels, with a meander motif at the bottom, painted in perspective, and a series of horizontal bands at the top. Between the heads of the herms runs the Trojan frieze depicting scenes from *The Iliad* and *The Aethiopis*.

Both artists, Rosie Morris and myself, were intrigued by the irregular spacing of the bands that frame the panels on the wall between the herms. When walking along the Cryptoporticus these irregular bands between the panels acted more like regular columns on a building seen in motion from different viewpoints. Consequently, we artists interpreted them as pillars set in front of another receding wall, rather than as panels framed by bands.

While this might sound like a somewhat moot disagreement over terms, I would argue that the interpretation provided by Rosie and me changes

perceptions of the colonnade quite substantially, since it facilitates a different understanding of how the painters used or hinted at perspective (*lived* perspective; not scientific), while activating the space and creating rhythm. I believe this use of a multi-layered structure within the colonnade scheme facilitates a dynamic interaction of fictional and real space, allowing for a changing interaction between the viewer and the painting/Cryptoporticus space. It can give the viewer or user of the space a heightened awareness of their own movement, and thus affect their perception. The painting seems mindful of a person moving through space.

From an artist's point of view, this is interesting when considering Roman wall painting as a practice that brings together and works with plural images rather effectively.³ Roman wall painting (second style onwards, at least) regularly juxtaposes different types of images and visual languages – hierarchies of images – which are usually organised within a painted architectural framework or several interconnecting ones. The gaps, formal and content-wise, in-between and within images, in terms of what is being told, not told, or told differently, become incredibly potent, these aspects structured and highlighted by the architectural framework.

For the contemporary artist, this Roman approach is powerful. It resonates when considering how images might be organised within a contemporary context, raising the following questions:

- 1 Might it facilitate different ways of working with plural images?
- 2 How can plural images be used in a variety of ways to dismantle their own 'meaning making'?
- 3 How can abstraction or painted structures be used to organise or disrupt spaces?
- 4 How might we merge different perspectival or a-perspectival systems to heighten awareness of space and the present-ness of the viewer?

These considerations were pertinent when developing my installations at the House of the Beautiful Courtyard in Herculaneum and at the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii (see discussion below).

Expanded Interiors at the House of the Beautiful Courtyard in Herculaneum, and the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii

Reflecting on the dialogical nature of the installations, and exploring their relationships with the heritage site, I returned to the fictional dialogue with the woman Roman painter. In order to do this, we reconvened in the grand reception room at the House of the Beautiful Courtyard, where my exhibition was still on display.

Figure 9.1 *Expanded Interiors* at Herculaneum. Image credit: Amedeo Benestante. Courtesy of Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo – Parco Archeologico di Ercolano and *Expanded Interiors*.

RW Had you not explained your rationale, I would have wondered why you chose the House of the Beautiful Courtyard, given it's so different from the Cryptoporticus. Especially as your work here is also so different to your work in Pompeii. You show a metal construction, with sheets of a modern-day material you say is called Perspex. These sheets have prints of objects on them and holes cut into them, and the construction displays physical replicas of Roman objects in different materials. Why jumble these elements together?

CH I am interested in how the painted, thin, linear architectural framework within the reception room projects forwards and backwards, bringing structure to this unusually large space.

RW Okay, your construction echoes the decoration of the room, but your choice of objects still seems random. Yes, you confront us with figures, but there are very few figures left depicted in these wall paintings. What did your archaeologist colleagues think about that? Weren't they concerned about context?

CH Well, first of all, let's consider the history of this house post-eruption. It was excavated between 1931 and 1938 by Amedeo Maiuri, an archaeologist – and at the time also the director of the sites here in the Bay of Naples from 1927 to 1961.⁴

In 1956, Maiuri opened a small museum in this very room, presumably because it was such an unusually large space. Intent upon showing objects from the daily lives of ancient Romans, he assembled archaeological finds from all over the site. He also rearranged and posed objects in other Roman houses in order to suggest specific narratives to visitors. This approach meddled with context, and was of course controversial.

- RW Wasn't it Maiuri who brought Herculaneum back to the surface of the world, who dug up our graves?
- CH In a way, yes. He and his team did amazing work in excavating Herculaneum from 1927 onwards. One shouldn't forget, however, that this happened under a fascist regime from which Maiuri received financial support, since it was keen to exploit the Roman past for its own political propaganda and political myth-making.
- RW That sounds familiar! Think of the Trojan cycle we painted at the Cryptoporticus, and how we had to highlight certain characters, certain scenes, so as to draw a connecting line between Aeneas and the mythical origins of the Roman people. We had to pay tribute to the supposed forefathers of Rome, but there was also quite a bit of subversion of these myths going on, especially in the provinces (*laughs*).
- CH I see! But let me get back to the objects we chose. There was another significant factor: When we came to Herculaneum (and Pompeii) in 2017 to scan objects, we had access to various storerooms. Consequently, we encountered these amazing wooden figures, marked by the fire, but still powerfully holding your gaze. In Herculaneum, due to the specifics of how the town was destroyed, there are still well preserved, 2000-year-old wooden statues and pieces of furniture.⁵ One wooden figure clearly depicted a woman with her hair in a bun, but had a raw, undefined outline. She had a strong impact upon me.
- RW Ah, I see.
- CH And then there was Livia, the wife of Augustus. Represented in silver foil, a totem of power with that laurel diadem in her hair, she demanded respect and adoration. Inadvertently, the disaster launched an iconoclastic attack on these figures. Think of what Livia has gone through, yet she is still here, bearing witness to the colossal human tragedy that unfolded here. She is even more powerful now, vulnerable, but with her integrity intact. And let's not forget Isis Lactans, an Egyptian goddess, breast-feeding her child. She is rendered in Greek style, and was probably living on a Roman house altar, together with other gods and goddesses of diverse origin. Isis Lactans is also, I would argue, a representation of empowered breast-feeding, and a very different depiction of motherhood to that of countless madonna statues which followed later.
- RW Though they are not the originals, yet these figures send a shiver down my spine! I can clearly picture them in both their before and after form. But why bring these diverse figures of people and gods together?

- CH Working as a contemporary artist, I wasn't interested in resetting the figures in their original context. Rather I wanted to dislodge them from their historical setting and function, to question and probe them. I also wanted to focus specifically on Roman women, traditionally so much less talked about than their male counterparts. I wanted to present these Roman women as women of today. I created a plurality of images in order to probe the effect and meaning of these juxtapositions. Admittedly, some of my methods are iconoclastic, too (for example use of collage) in their brutality and occasional disregard for images. Replicating these figures through two-dimensional and three-dimensional prints in different materials tested them, but it was also an attempt at erasing them, challenging their form and their context.
- RW That doesn't make sense to me. I am deeply saddened by seeing these empty, damaged houses. I feel the loss of what has been destroyed forever. There is a lot of speculation in your approach, Catrin. But it is interesting for me to look at what we had – or the meagre remains of it – through the eyes of a different century. I still don't understand why you are working at the site of a human disaster; a dug-up graveyard?
- CH This site feels like a time capsule. You sometimes wonder whether you are in the past or the future. Your Roman wall paintings offer a different approach, in relation to questions around how to deal with a flood of images. There are also many questions raised by these ruins. How do we frame these sites? Whom do these sites serve? How should we relate to these sites now? How can we work through their meaning and significance?
- RW What about that cryptic series of letters that is encoded in your installation? They seem to spell out the words 'Ciao Bella'. A joke?
- CH No, but you could read it as a nod to the installation's almost all-female cast. I'm not spelling 'Ciao Bella'; rather I am spelling out 'Bella Ciao', the name of a partisan Italian folk song used to protest against German and Italian fascists in the last century. Including the song's title resonates with the encoded messages of Roman wall painting, and the way in which they often 'framed' houses politically. The sites at Pompeii and Herculaneum have also been framed in many different ways since their rediscovery. My nod to Bella Ciao also hints at the use of Romanità as a means of fascist propaganda. And frankly, we still need anti-fascist songs today.
- RW Hmm, it's interesting that, after all these centuries, our works and remains still have political power. But how do today's Ercolano residents feel about having our graves excavated in the midst of their living-areas?
- CH Well, what you here in Italy call the *Scavi*, or archaeological site, cuts right through modern Ercolano, and has made nearby communities feel marginalised. Today, the Bay of Naples is one of Italy's poorest regions, and there is a stark contrast between the poor living areas around the site, and the streams of wealthy international tourists visiting the Scavi.

The organisations and authorities working with the Scavi are thus keen to involve local communities in the site, giving them a personal stake in it and promoting a sense of civic pride. I, too, together with my research team, have had workshops with different community groups, and in local schools.⁶

RW Did your exhibition at Pompeii involve the local community, too?

CH Well, Pompeii is very unlike Herculaneum, and is embedded in its contemporary context in a different way. Contemporary Pompeii developed more naturally around its ancient predecessor, Roman Pompeii, and is more in synch with the tourist economy. Still, Pompeii has gone through many changes recently. The Great Pompeii Project, an initiative of the Italian government funded by the European Union, has helped conserve, maintain and restore the site. And since 2014, the latest director of Pompeii has opened up the site culturally, connecting it to local and regional institutions. *Expanded Interiors* is part of the latter initiative. While we offered tours of the exhibition at the House of the Cryptoporticus, we didn't see the need to engage the community in the same way as at Herculaneum.⁷

With our conversation shifting to the Pompeian site, the Roman wall painter and I travelled back to the House of the Cryptoporticus, where the following conversation took place two hours later:

Figure 9.2 *Expanded Interiors* at Pompeii. Image credit: Amedeo Benestante. Courtesy of Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo – Parco Archeologico di Pompei and *Expanded Interiors*.

RW [Again looking around the beautiful house decorated by her own workshop in antiquity.] Catrin, we have already discussed these wall paintings of mine at length. What can you tell me about your artistic response; about your installations here?

CH I wanted to set up a dialogue with your paintings. I was intrigued by your use of rhythm and movement, by your use of tension between actual and imagined architecture, and by the play between two-dimensional and three-dimensional space within the Cryptoporticus. Despite their irregularities and idiosyncrasies, your paintings are still orderly. Mine are more disorderly, though, their compositions almost collapsing into themselves. It is contemporary practice, after all! The composition is based on an irregular rhythm of opened and closed spaces, together with a playful, changing pattern of colour relation and function. These are paintings which fold and unfold spaces.

RW Tell me about your colour choices.

CH Colours are as crucial to me as they are to you, both in their own right and in relation to the room's architecture and your work. I picked up on the caput mortuum pigment used in your colonnade's back-panels, responding with a colour that's equally difficult to pin down because it sits somewhere between violet, pink, and brown. This ambiguity results in an almost 'hovering' colour that's hard to locate physically and linguistically, it's temperature largely defined by its context. For this installation, I created a cool colour environment as a juxtaposition with the mostly warm colours used within your colonnade, only picking up on the blue colours within the frieze section [...].

RW Your second installation in the small room that's aligned with the bath complex is predominantly red, a colour *very much* associated with our ancient practice, hence 'Pompeiiian red'.

CH Red (like many other colours) is rich with connotation and possible interpretations. Fire. Blood. Hell. The erotic. Its political significance.⁸ As this installation creates its own room, I wanted it to be extremely intense with regard to both colour and composition. The composition combines sharply contrasting perspectival viewpoints: in some areas the painting seems to come out at you; in others it seems to fold around you. The perspective also shifts substantially with the movement of the viewer. I wanted this installation to make you aware of your own physicality.

Ultimately, I hoped that the remnants of your wonderful work, together with my two interventions, would create a succession of rooms, each of them impacting on the viewer very differently.

RW I can see the link to the way in which we structured houses through our decorations. However, I notice that, for all your responding to our work, you chose new materials and new techniques when executing your paintings. Were you not interested in our unique – and incredibly durable I now know – fresco techniques?

- CH Your techniques and processes are fascinating, but my interest in Roman wall painting doesn't lie with technique, as such. Rather it lies in the underlying principles, functions, and concepts of Roman wall painting. I am not interested in copying or illustrating your work or your techniques; rather I am trying to understand the underlying mechanisms of Roman wall painting. I am testing it, always on the lookout for new ways of utilising its principles and functions in contemporary making [...]
- RW I see! It's encouraging that certain aspects of our approach might live on.

Let's now leave our woman Roman wall painter again, since we have addressed the key element of the whole *Expanded Interiors* project: namely the relevance of Roman wall paintings for contemporary fine-art making.

Conclusion

Expanded Interiors used contemporary fine-art practice to explore two Roman houses and their wall paintings. This unearthed a different understanding and interpretation of historical practice, and brought new perspectives on the specific Roman wall paintings in the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii and the House of the Beautiful Courtyard in Herculaneum. More importantly, I would assert that this intersecting of practices reveals fresh strategies and methods for contemporary fine-art making. Those which I believe are particularly pertinent to contemporary practice are (1) the use of structural frameworks for multiple visual systems which juxtapose and build bridges between the real and the represented; (2) the use of interlocking, multiple perspectival systems that help create immersive environments, while at the same time – and paradoxically – laying bare the mechanisms to create immersive environments, hence destroying the aforementioned effects. The intersection of contemporary art and heritage sites allowed for an entanglement of practices and times. This also raised questions about making, and the resulting artworks in the past, present, and future.

My contemporary art exhibitions within the Roman houses also brought audiences a new way of experiencing the historical sites, as reflected in visitor feedback. In Herculaneum, particularly, *Expanded Interiors* the exhibition, together with its accompanying workshops and related events, drew in and engaged local communities. Further, we organised – together with our partners PaErco and HCP – what to our knowledge was the first workshop for local guides in the region (which resulted in PaErco and HCP setting up a focus group with the guides). We also forged new links between students from the Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli and PaErco; the students have since been invited to perform at PaErco and have also offered on-site art laboratories for children. Further, we organised a local teacher workshop to jointly develop learning and teaching material from the *Expanded Interiors* research. We have since tested out this material in schools in Ercolano, and hope it will

be used at an international level, too. These initiatives supported PaErco's and HCP's aim to give local communities more ownership of the heritage site, while also making it an integral, dynamic part of the contemporary town, and thus building closer links between Roman Herculaneum and contemporary Ercolano.

Dialogue across times, disciplines, and with local and international communities has been central to *Expanded Interiors*. Hence it is appropriate, in conclusion, to briefly return to our imagined panel discussion; the one in which our Roman wall painter debates practice with Lissitzky and Schwitters. At its conclusion, each artist outlines what they, personally, think is relevant for contemporary critical spatial practice. I will close this chapter with their words:

- EL I believed in the socialist movement in the USSR – at least in the beginning. I wanted to shape society and pioneer alternative ways for art to infiltrate life. The artists of the twenty-first century need to get together internationally to develop a bigger, alternative vision and visual language.
- KS An alternative approach, yes, but I don't see why bigger and louder is better than small and unpredicted. I believe that, today, it is more important to find ways of working that resist mainstream appropriation. It is about creating spaces that resist being repossessed by either good or bad causes – and perhaps these spaces should remain hidden and covert like those back chambers our Roman wall paintress mentioned earlier. I welcome ambiguity!
- RW What Roman practice brings to this discussion is complexity, since our art articulated a whole building in a layered, yet coherent way. It also brings trust and belief in the visual and intellectual capacities of the audience, and recognises that challenging them is good. I'll close with a motto of my own: 'Complexity, difficulty, and multi-layeredness is the key to the future!'

Notes

- 1 Martin Blazeby, *The Skenographia Project* (2007), www.skenographia.cch.kcl.ac.uk.
- 2 Vittorio Spinazzola (ed.), *Pompei alla luce degli scavi nuovi di Via dell'Abbondanza* (Rome: Libreria della Stato, 1953).
- 3 See David Ganz and Felix Thürlemann, *Das Bild im Plural: mehrteilige Bildformen zwischen Mittelalter und Gegenwart* (Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 2010).
- 4 For more information on Amedeo Maiuri, see Domenico Camardo and Mario Notomista (eds.), *Ercolano: 1927–1961. L'impresa archeologica di Amedeo Maiuri e l'esperimento della città museo* (Rome: Bretschneider, 2017).
- 5 During the eruption, Herculaneum was hit by a huge pyroclastic surge that reached temperatures of around 400 °C. This caused the immediate death of all those who had remained in the city and the carbonisation of many organic materials.

- 6 The Herculaneum Conservation Project (HCP), which has been working on-site since 2001, has done crucial conservation and protection work while also reaching out to the local community to try and give residents a renewed sense of ownership of the site. The new governing authority, the Parco Archeologico di Ercolano (PaErco), which was established in 2017, and is under the directorship of Francesco Sirano, strongly supports this agenda and has offered a range of initiatives aimed at local residents.
- 7 Pompeii's director Prof. Massimo Osanna has, for example, organized a joint Picasso exhibition (2017) with the Capodimonte in Naples, invited Pistoletto for an exhibition in the garden of the Palaestra (2017), and organised an exhibition in collaboration with the Madre (the contemporary art museum in Naples). The latter juxtaposed archaeological remains and contemporary artists: Pompeii@Madre. To my knowledge, *Expanded Interiors* was the first contemporary fine-art exhibition within an ancient Roman house at Pompeii that directly responds to the Roman remains and architecture. As such it has been used as a tester for Pompeii's plans to further integrate fine-art interventions within the site.
- 8 See Michel Pastoureau, *Red: The History of a Colour* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017).

Practising history

Art, archives, and footnotes

Catherine Bertola and Rachel Rich

In *Killing Time* (2010) Catherine Bertola inserts her own image into a photograph of a lavish domestic interior. At first glance, this appears to be a still image, but gradually the viewer notices that the reclining figure, the artist herself, is moving very slowly, repeatedly bringing a cup of tea to her mouth and back again. The piece's title reflects Bertola's intention here, to convey something of the juxtaposing of privilege and imprisonment experienced by leisured women at the turn of the last century. In "'If you desire to enjoy life, avoid unpunctual people': Women, Timetabling and Domestic Advice, 1850–1910", Rachel Rich analyses historical sources to produce an account of some of the ways women experienced the paradox of having to 'perform' efficient time management when they were excluded from the 'productive' economy in the name of respectability.¹ Taken together, these works of art and scholarship exemplify the possibility for a similar narrative about the past to be produced in disparate media, without either one being able to make an absolute claim to truth or authenticity. As Hayden White argues, 'One can produce an imaginary discourse about real events that may not be less "true" for being "imaginary"'.² For nearly two decades Rich has worked with historical archives to weigh up evidence about women's history, while Bertola's work has continually confronted viewers with truths about the past, in particular about women's hidden labour. Bertola works creatively, and outside of the trappings of academic conventions; working together, Bertola and Rich have found common ground, and asked themselves questions about the nature of truth, and the place of the archive in research, art, and heritage. As Hayden White asserts about the use of narrative to construct our understanding of the past, 'it all depends upon how one construes the function of the faculty of imagination in human nature'.³

This chapter seeks to consider some of the benefits of collaboration between artists and historians. More particularly, we situate this discussion around the collaboration between Bertola and Rich, during Bertola's 2017 Leverhulme Trust-funded residency in the School of Cultural Studies at Leeds Beckett University. We chose to work together in order to explore the boundaries of our shared interest in the history of women's domestic labour in Victorian

Figure 10.1 Catherine Bertola, *Killing Time*, 2010. Three-channel 16 mm looped film installation. Film still. Image credit: courtesy of the artist, Workplace Gallery, and Galerie M+R Fricke.

England. Parts of this chapter are adapted from a transcript of a conversation in which we explored the ways in which the collaboration has altered each of our practices, and where it has taken our ideas about the nature of both interdisciplinarity and collaboration. In writing this paper, we move from talking about ourselves in the first person to referring to each other in the third. In certain places we have deliberately avoided the use of ‘we’ in favour of using our names since, as we will demonstrate in this chapter, the benefits of our time together did not come from the co-production of work as a ‘we’, but rather from each of us being allowed the time to learn from the other and bring about new approaches to our individual practices as a historian and an artist. As this chapter will argue, the collaboration has changed how each of us thinks of our work. The benefits of the collaboration include specific outputs, but also a more intangible shift in the artist’s and the historian’s understanding of her own discipline. The chapter also considers what history is, and how the work of a historically minded artist like Bertola can force academic historians like Rich to reconsider the boundaries of the discipline. Finally, we consider how this kind of collaboration can speak to wider questions about the connection between contemporary art practice, history, and heritage.

Our residency allowed us time for the sharing of knowledge, and for an ongoing discussion about the practice of ‘doing history’. One of the ways we did this was by visiting archives together and sharing source material. We noticed, on those visits, that while we were together and looking at the same material, we were each doing something different. For Rich, research had to be systematic, with careful notation of phrases, dates, and page numbers in order to create confidence that her conclusions are properly drawn from a deep and extensive understanding of her sources. For Bertola, sources are sometimes quite simply the beginning of an idea. In a talk we gave in Manchester in 2016, Bertola described how reading domestic manuals from the nineteenth and early twentieth century made her feel like she was being slowly suffocated by the numerous detailed instructions and duties women seemingly laboured under. She produced a short film as a response to these sources, in which we see her hand setting and unsetting a round table, and which goes on for an infinite length of time.⁴ While for Bertola, it is the sense of overwhelming busywork that the books convey which is what she wants to make work about, for Rich, as an academic historian, it is essential to think beyond the words on the page in a different way. This is why a lot of Rich’s work is about the gap between the normative discourses in the domestic manuals, and the lived experience of women who could not conform to the norms set by domesticity experts.⁵ Writing this chapter has provided an opportunity for Bertola and Rich to look back on these differences in approach after a year of working side by side, to think about where history and art intersect, and how artists can use the freedom of their practice to convey their understanding of the past outside the confines of the academy.

Collaborative practice: being a historian

Speaking to audiences made up sometimes of artists, sometimes academics, and sometimes of the interested public, Bertola and Rich have had a unique opportunity to reflect on what it means to ‘do’ history, and to present the results of research in different media. Although still rare compared to collaborations between artists and heritage practitioners, the number of collaborations between historians and artists is increasing.⁶ Notable examples include Karen Harvey, who has worked as ‘academic-in-residence’ at Bank Street Arts in Sheffield, and Laura King, who has collaborated with artist Ellie Harrison on her Grief Series project.⁷ Both King and Harvey write about the benefits afforded by the opportunity to share historical knowledge with creative artists, but in what amounts to a one-way street where the historian provides evidence and information but does not receive a similar benefit from their collaborator. Harvey, in particular, points out that while she was able to meet and interact with several artists, and was pleased with how they drew on her research, she did not attempt to become part of the creative process. Annie Grey is a rare example of a historian who has attempted to use creative practice to disseminate her own research findings, which she

did by staging a costumed version of a dinner hosted at Harewood House in the nineteenth century.⁸ More often, a historian can choose to collaborate with an artist, without themselves engaging in creative practice. King's case study of working with Birmingham-based theatre company Babakas on *Our Fathers*, by sharing her research on twentieth-century fatherhood, is a good example of this.⁹ King's contribution to the production was in the form of her research, while the creative output remained in the hands of the playwright, director, and actors.¹⁰ The nature of our own collaboration has also been to view each of our 'outputs' separately, yet the length of the period of residency allowed for an extensive exchange of ideas, meaning that Bertola's work has altered Rich's approach, through dialogue about the nature of women's lived experience, and the importance of empathy and imagination in interpreting this experience. Thus, in contrast to other collaborations between academics and artists, we have found that a historian can do more than offer historical background or context for other people's projects.

In recent years there has been a huge growth in commissioning artists to make work that responds to heritage settings, as a way of providing new and different perspectives for audiences visiting these sites. Bertola's art practice has included a large number of site-specific installations in response to just such heritage commissions. In *After the fact* (2006), an installation in a derelict eighteenth-century farmhouse in Lincolnshire, Bertola used dust found on-site to reproduce the pattern of the carpet that might once have been on the now bare floor.¹¹ The act of collecting the dust and giving it shape, while knowing that this would not last, and that the dust would eventually be dispersed (and in a house-cleaning situation need to be swept up again and again), conveyed a deep truth about the repetitive nature of women's domestic work, and indeed its ultimate futility. *After the fact* draws out themes other artists have also focused on when making art about food and women's chores. Susannah Worth, for example, has written about Annette Messenger's use of copying and repetition in her work *My Cookbook*, which Worth suggests was a reference to the repetitive nature of women's work.¹² Rita Felski, a sociologist of women's temporality, argues that women's time is experienced as cyclical in opposition to the masculine experience of linear time, exactly because of such repetitive tasks, a topic which Rachel Rich has also picked up in her research.¹³ Bertola's art practice involves producing work in response to domestic environments, using historical evidence as a mechanism for considering the contemporary relationship between women and the home.

For the academic historian, the archive and the footnote are core to what we do. While public history continues to offer consumers a narrative understanding of history based on a dramatic series of events, historians become ever more concerned with method and the interpretation of evidence. The 'cultural turn' of the 1990s brought new ideas about what constitutes a source, which includes material objects, including works of art.¹⁴ This has not, however, led to historians accepting artists' depictions of the past as

Figure 10.2 Catherine Bertola, *After the Fact*, 2006. Dust and sound. Image credit: courtesy of the artist, Workplace Gallery, and Galerie M+R Fricke.

equally valid to their own. For Rich, one of the first challenges of working with Bertola was to learn to accept that a work of art can depict an authentic representation of the past without offering either a discussion of research methods, or footnotes to sources. Through discussions with Rich about the discipline of academic historical research and its limitations, Bertola became interested in what the gaps were, and what as an artist she could do to add to historical enquiry, free from the boundaries of the academy, creating more emotional, physical, and sensory responses that take history off the page.

Avenues for historians to move beyond the academy are growing. The lone scholar has been superseded by requirements from funding bodies for partnerships and collaborations. In the UK, the requirement that publicly funded research have a demonstrable impact outside the academy has led to more projects bringing historians together with heritage professionals and cultural industries. Laura King and Gary Rivett have identified three overlapping models of engagement, namely media expertise, policy advising, and co-production, the third of these being favoured by King and Rivett.¹⁵ Working together with an artist, a historian can see their work reaching a wider audience than working on their own. There are however challenges to be overcome in working in this way, especially since, as King and Rivett note, the process of collaboration is often more important than the outcome, but institutions need measurable outcomes for publicly funded projects.¹⁶ Opportunities to engage in collaboration in which the end product is difficult to define are rare, and

it was this that was, for us, one of the primary attractions of the Leverhulme Artist-in-Residency programme. Because we were not required to determine our outputs in advance, we have found that we were able to achieve more than we had anticipated, and that our collaboration brought us unanticipated opportunities. These include writing this chapter, as well as collaborations between Bertola and other Leeds Beckett scholars, both on research and in teaching. Both Rich and Bertola have continued to collaborate with the curator of Leeds-based heritage site Temple Newsam. Rich has also found that working with an artist has changed her understanding of the ways in which history can be interpreted and expressed.

Drawing on the past: exploring history through art practice

Evidence is always partial, facts are not truths though they are part of it. Information is not knowledge, and history is not the past. It's the method we've evolved of organising our ignorance of the past. It's the record of what's left on the record. It's the plan of the positions taken when we stop the dance to note them down. It's what's left in the sieve when the centuries have run through it, a few stones, scraps of writing, scraps of cloth. It's no more the past than a birth certificate is a birth, or a script is a performance, or a map is a journey.¹⁷

Bertola's work has always looked towards history, from her early works that took on forensic and archaeological approaches to materials and making as a way of looking beyond what is visible to consider the past occupancy of spaces. *Switched* (1999) is a series of graphite prints taken from the light switches in the house in which she lived, which capture traces of human activity through the incidental marks left behind within the environment. Her installations *Hearth* (1999) and *Scratching at the Surface* (2001) saw the recreation of wallpaper and carpet patterns on the surface of abandoned buildings using materials such as dust to suggest a sense of the previous inhabitation of these spaces. As historians have looked more closely at material culture for our understanding of past lives, Bertola's desire to uncover the past through its physical remains seems increasingly relevant in relation to the question of how historians look for truth.

In all her work Bertola selects materials, processes, and imagery that bring meaning to her art. One material to which she has returned more than once is dust, which is a part of the history of the spaces in which Bertola has created work, and an element against which women have often been forced to do battle. Dust, composed of fine particles of human, animal, textile, and organic matter that continually accumulate in the spaces we inhabit, holds within it a history of the place in which it formed. Carolyn Steedman argues that dust is the evidence that 'nothing can be destroyed'.¹⁸ Working with dust,

Figure 10.3 Catherine Bertola, *Switched #1*, 1999. Graphite powder, paper, and Fablon. Image credit: courtesy of the artist, Workplace Gallery, and Galerie M+R Fricke.

Bertola suggests that the nature of heritage is, itself, ephemeral, and that like historical narratives, the recreation of historical experience of public heritage is a vision of the past shaped by the present. Bertola's work plays on the way that dust is both ephemeral and permanent, when she uses it in work about the sense of time passing and the futility of domestic labour; it is a potent medium to make work that draws on the historical role of women within the home. Steedman has defined dust as being 'about circularity, the impossibility of things disappearing, or going away, or being gone'.¹⁹ This definition is also apparent in Bertola's work, in which dust, sometimes described as the 'matter of history', is given a shape, and used to create insight into women's labour, and the repetitive nature of time.

The mechanisms of research Bertola adopts in the development of her work are similar to those of Rich and other historians; looking at archives

and other source material including books, visual imagery, and material culture to help understand the history of a particular place and its occupants. While Rich uses records of clock ownership, alongside women's diaries and their cookbooks, to suggest that women were conscious of time and used it in ways that were slightly different to men, Bertola draws on similar evidence to produce a sound installation in which multiple clocks chime in a sequence which causes the listener to feel an increasing sense of the pressure of time's passage. This shared use of historical evidence is similar to how Bertola uses historical research in her site-specific works. This approach to research and practice has been developed through the numerous commissions Bertola has undertaken during the past decade. These commissions have come about largely as a result of the increasing number of programmes that have sought to place contemporary art within heritage settings, such as Trust New Art (National Trust), Contemporary Heritage (Mid Pennine Arts), and Meeting Point (Arts&Heritage). These opportunities have resulted in Bertola making work that has explored and responded to the history of specific places. Noticing how her methods and her use of archives in developing ideas mirrored those of historians led her to seek out a residency with a historian to consider the parallels between these two modes of understanding.

At the intersection of art and history, the past can become a lens through which to interpret the present. Historical sources underpin the majority of Bertola's works, but the aim is not to recreate the past. Rather than reconstruction, Bertola seeks to produce a creative interpretation that helps her audience to connect with contemporary truths. As Hilary Mantel has argued in favour of historical fiction, 'if we want added value, to imagine not just how the person was, but what it felt like from the inside we pick up a novel.'²⁰ Mantel sees the historian and the biographer as following 'a trail of evidence' which she also does. However, she sees the novelist as going further than the historian when she 'puts the past back into process, into action, frees the people from the archive and lets them run about ignorant of their fates with all their mistakes unmade'.²¹ This notion of freeing the people of the past resonates with Bertola, who has worked in heritage sites where a concept of 'authenticity' can lead to a static interpretation of the past.

Heritage sites are staged to appear lived-in; often illustrating a particular moment in time from a single perspective. Such sites exist as deactivated spaces where time stands still, devoid of the visual debris, sounds, and smells of habitation. Through her work in these contexts, Bertola has sought to reanimate and activate the spaces and to present overlooked narratives. In 2011 Bertola worked on a commission for the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth, that honours the lives and work of the three Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne. Housed within what was their family home from 1820 until their deaths, the museum 'contains the world's most comprehensive collection of Brontë manuscripts, letters, early editions of the novels and poetry, and secondary material on the famous family and their work'.²² Visitors flock to the

small town to experience the landscape that inspired the Brontës' writing, hoping to get a sense of who they were from entering the place where they lived and looking at the things that they touched. In reality what they see is not actually how the house was in the sisters' lifetime, but a contemporary interpretation of what the rooms may have looked like.

Bertola's response to the commission emerged from her reflection on the tension between the public's desire for authenticity, and the impossibility of fully recreating the past. Visiting the museum on numerous occasions to explore the archives and collections, Bertola's interest gradually turned away from the books to the place, and how the sisters physically inhabited the interior spaces of the Parsonage. One of the most important rooms in the house is the dining room, where the sisters gathered in the evening to write, draw, sew, and share their thoughts. Bertola began to imagine the energy that would have filled the air. What struck her was that while the appearance of the room was not original, the physical properties and proportions were the same. Out of this thinking, a sound installation, *To Be Forever Known*, emerged. The artist sat alone in the dining room after closing hours and read aloud extracts from a selection of Charlotte Brontë's personal letters that had been written there. These readings were recorded and re-recorded several times within the space, to reveal the characteristic resonances of the room, using a process pioneered by the American composer Alvin Lucier in his seminal work *I Am Sitting in a Room* composed in 1969. In the exhibition the results of this process were played back into space, filling the air with traces of Charlotte's own words, muffled by the sound of the architecture itself.

With the new perspective afforded her from her residency with Rich, Bertola can now reflect on what she was trying to achieve at the Brontë Parsonage. Bertola suggests that she was wrestling with a desire to challenge the many myths that exist around the lives of the sisters, perpetuated by the numerous posthumous biographies and dramatisations which have become an industry unto themselves. Most notable, for Bertola, was Elizabeth Gaskell's 1859 biography, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, in which Gaskell painted a portrait of Charlotte as a victim to distance her from accusations of 'coarseness', which set the tone for how Charlotte would be perceived by subsequent generations.²³ Bertola's reaction to this was to return to what she knew to be real, the architecture of the house and Charlotte's own written words. *To Be Forever Known* was Bertola's attempt to cut through the veneer of the museum's appearance and the received assumptions about the sisters' lives in order to get to some form of historical truth.

Bertola's work at the Brontë Parsonage Museum is typical of her use of historical traces and remnants to reimagine the past and bring it to life for her viewers. Contemporary art interventions in heritage spaces should not, according to Bertola, be simply seen as entertainment; they are important ways of researching and presenting history, by making it more visible and tangible for visitors. It is this more sensory and imaginative interpretation of

history that separates Bertola's work from Rich's publications, but at the same time creates an interesting interface where the two approaches meet. Our residency enabled us to consider more carefully the relationship between our two distinct disciplines and our approaches to interpreting historical evidence.

Artist in residence: the case study

During the 2017 Leverhulme residency, Catherine Bertola spent several days a week embedded in the School of Cultural Studies at Leeds Beckett University, engaging primarily in desk-based research and conversations about research. While Bertola's practice was always informed by historical research, it had not been possible in the past for her to spend so extensive a period researching and reflecting, without the pressing need to produce commissioned works of art. The intersecting practices of artists and the heritage industry provide a way for artists to support and display new work, and create immense benefits for the public interested in experiencing heritage in creative ways. Yet this way of working also can limit artistic freedom as artists negotiate the parameters of tightly written briefs, narrow production times, and financial confines. Given our increasing awareness of the complexity of heritage, and the growing appetite for heritage sites that engage with what is sometimes referred to as the 'darker' aspects of our shared past, the opportunity for artists to spend time in academic settings, gaining more up-to-date understanding of the current trends in research, is something to be lauded.²⁴

One of the themes that came increasingly into focus during the residency was the idea of authenticity. Rich and Bertola both work on history, and used the period of collaboration as a way of exchanging knowledge and understanding. While Rich had more understanding of how archives work, and how historical research should be carried out systematically, Bertola had access to a wider audience, and could use archival sources to inform work which did not need to be confined within the scholarly apparatus of published research. For Rich, discussions of authenticity and truth highlighted the question of who has a right to interpret the past and communicate their interpretation to the public. Having trained as an academic and worked exclusively within academia, Rich at first found it difficult to allow Bertola's work to speak for itself. At events where both collaborators presented their work to the public, Rich had to fight the urge to add verbal footnotes to the works of art Bertola displayed.

Historical films throw up some of the same debates around authenticity. In this context Robert Rosenstone has been an effective advocate for creative ways of telling the truth. Rosenstone has argued that 'poetic truth' can be as authentic a way to communicate history to the public as the more rigorous source-based method used in academia. He uses the term *compression* to describe the process whereby a single character in a film might encompass the deeds and qualities of several people who were present at the actual event.²⁵ This is a helpful way to consider how artistic interpretation of the past can

present what the past ‘felt’ like, without the need to unpack sources in all their complexity. The example of *Killing Time* is a prime example of this practice, in that Bertola made herself into a composite character within the piece, to show how slowly time passed for any number of anonymous women living within the gilded cages of suburban respectability. Indeed, although not using the concept of ‘compression’, historians do much the same thing when they extrapolate from the sources left by a small number of women, what the experience of the larger population is likely to have been. This is clearly the case, for example, when Rich uses seven individuals’ diaries to gain an understanding of some of the time-keeping strategies of the general population of bourgeois girls and women.²⁶

One concept we discussed in the conversation which underpins some of this chapter is interdisciplinarity. Within the academy, when people refer to interdisciplinarity they are generally thinking about work which draws on two different, but most often cognate, academic disciplines. When academics work with non-academic partners, this often leads to terms such as ‘partnership’ and ‘knowledge exchange’ rather than being seen as interdisciplinary, since academics do not always view those outside the academy as working within ‘disciplines’. With a historically minded artist like Bertola, this distinction between what counts as a discipline, and indeed what counts as history, is blurred. This softened line has allowed us to think about interdisciplinarity in new ways, and in particular to focus on processes of interdisciplinary work, rather than on the outcomes. Indeed, during the period of our residency, we collaborated primarily through reading and talking together, rather than through any attempt to co-author or co-make any sort of work. Other partnerships of artists working across disciplines have led to other forms of collaboration. Harriet Tarlo and Judith Tucker, an artist and a poet who undertook what they called ‘walking collaborations’, have reflected on the different ways artists might collaborate, including illustration (where an artist illustrates a poem which was written first) and ekphrasis (where the artist creates something which the poet then writes about). Eschewing both these modes, Tarlo and Tucker opted for ‘a more present-tense, interactive collaboration’, in which the act of walking together is a research tool and a part of their practice.²⁷ In our collaboration, we have used our discussions both in and out of the office, as part of the interdisciplinary practice we have developed together. Like Tarlo and Tucker, we have avoided any idea of, for example, Bertola creating a work of art to illustrate one of Rich’s pieces of research, or Rich writing an academic piece in response to Bertola’s work. Instead, we have worked together on research and ideas, allowing the collaboration to exist without clear boundaries or goals.

One of the works Bertola produced during the course of the residency was *It Soon Came to Pass...* (2017). The piece involved audio recordings of various domestic clocks, that were layered over one another, building up to a frenetic, almost deafening, crescendo, before abruptly stopping and starting all over

again. The work developed in response to Rich's "'Life will pass quickly for me": Women, Clocks and Timekeeping in Nineteenth-century France'; her collection of lists found in domestic manuals, instructing women on how to manage their time and meet expectations; as well as her own experience as a woman trying to organise conflicting workloads and commitments. The work in part followed on from an earlier work, *Call Down* (2015), made for Dudmaston Hall, a National Trust property near Bridgenorth, in which a composition was made using the old servant bells, filling what was now a silent corridor with the ringing of bells from rooms across the property, mapping the imagined daily rhythm of the house through these calls to work. Bertola and Rich's shared interest in time and in the rhythm of women's everyday existence is evident in *It Soon Came to Pass...* which can be seen as an example both of interdisciplinarity and of the benefits of artists' collaborations with historians.

One of the key differences which emerged in the process of talking about research methods and outcomes, and which was underlined at a talk by Bertola and Rich at the University of Hertfordshire in 2017, was the relationship each of them has with the present. The talk was primarily about work by Bertola about women, women's labour, women's time, and some of the conflicts and contradictions women have experienced through having to balance competing demands on their time. While the talk was informed by historical research, in the ensuing discussion, the audience was most interested in how these conflicts and contradictions continue to be present in women's lives in the twenty-first century. As an academic historian, Rich finds it uncomfortable to make easy links between history and the present, having been trained to look more for differences than similarities. For Bertola, this ability to talk about the present by drawing on knowledge of the past is very much part of her practice. Indeed, this is where Bertola makes a clear distinction between the work she does of interpreting the past, and the work of people who are interested in recreating or re-enacting past events. As Bertola has explained, 'That is why my work isn't just about re-enactment because I'm not just interested in the past, but in looking at it to think about the now.'²⁸

This distinction between re-enacting the past and using the past to engage better with contemporary concerns is also a question about empathy. Here Rich and Bertola find their ideas very clearly aligned. For Rich, her initial entry into the study of history came from a feeling of connectedness with women's suffering in the past. As a student, she was interested in the history of anorexia nervosa and what it could teach us about gender and eating habits. This early concern for women's suffering has led to wider research on women's experiences of domesticity in England and France, always with a feeling of needing to understand how women experienced their lives, as distinct from how they were written about by others. For Bertola, empathy is at the heart of a great number of her works. In *Everything and Nothing* (2007) Bertola responded to a commission at the V&A Museum in London in a

way that showed her sensitivity to history and to labour concerns in the present. Bertola asked museum cleaning staff to save the dust they collected from around the museum; this dust then became the material with which Bertola recreated a William Morris wallpaper pattern held within the museum's own collection, and that once decorated some of the nineteenth-century gallery spaces. Using the cleaners' dust, Bertola was highlighting the hierarchy of dirt and labour within the museum, within which the final artwork is seen as needing a different level of care and conservation than the 'menial' work that produced the very material from which it is made. Our collaboration has allowed our empathy with historical subjects to emerge in new ways. The awareness of the boundaries of academic history has given Bertola greater confidence in what artists can add to historical research through using more sensory materials to gain a deeper understanding of past lives lived, while Rich has embraced Bertola's interest in women's labour as a possible avenue for future research.

Where Rich and Bertola diverge is around the issue of how to convey their interpretation of the sources, and of how much weight needs to be placed on this. The question of building an argument, indeed, strikes at the very heart of the challenges of working across disciplinary boundaries and the boundaries of the academy. For Rich, the job of the historian has always implied the need to build an argument based on evidence from the archives. The historian must not only draw her own conclusions, but also build an argument in such a way that every reader can understand what this argument is, and how the evidence supports it, whether or not they then agree with it. For Bertola, this is not crucial. Like many artists, Bertola finds that it is not important that the viewer know what was in her mind when she made her work. She is, indeed, perfectly content to think that the viewer might go away with a different perspective on her work; might even miss the historical underpinning of that work entirely. And beyond this, the work itself, site-specific installations made of easily blown-away dust, for example, is often ephemeral. Rather than building an argument about the best way to interpret the past, the work of the contemporary artist, informed by history, is to create, either fleetingly or more permanently, some commentary on how the past informs the present. It is up to the viewer to draw their own conclusions and decide if this work is meaningful to them.

Some tentative conclusions

The gestation period of a work of art or of a piece of historical analysis can vary greatly. Artists working on site-specific heritage commissions are often under great pressure to quickly produce work intended to be meaningful to how the public interacts with heritage. While this work has benefits for both the artist and the site, as well as for the audience, the unavoidable time pressure means that an artist may find themselves moving away from

Figure 10.4 Catherine Bertola, *Everything and Nothing*, 2007. Collected dust, paper, glue, varnish. Image credit: Joe Clark. Courtesy of the artist, Workplace Gallery, and Galerie M+R Fricke.

the original aims of their practice in order to fulfil a brief. Historians, like all academics, face similar time pressures imposed by institutional demands for measurable outcomes, usually in the form of publications; this can lead many to shy away from undertaking projects where they are not confident of publishable outputs within an acceptable timeframe. Collaboration between artists and academics does not entirely escape these time pressures. Yet increasingly people are recognising that the value of culture to the British economy, as much as to our health and well-being, is far-reaching but also difficult to measure. Those who have given themselves the task of assessing the importance of cultural collaborations agree that such work may take longer to show its worth than either academic demands to ‘publish or perish’ or heritage briefs are designed to allow. Working outside of their normal routines, Bertola and Rich were able to carve out time to discuss the nature of research, their respective responses to women’s history, and how each wanted to use what she learned from the other to take her work in a new direction.

At the end of the Leverhulme-funded residency, Bertola and Rich appeared ‘in conversation’ for the School of Cultural Studies and Humanities at Leeds Beckett University. Here Bertola explained that she did not consider herself ‘a historian, but rather an artist whose practice is influenced by research’.²⁹ A historian in the audience suggested that, in fact, both speakers were historians, as ‘being a historian’ was not something academics could claim exclusively for themselves. This was, in many ways, a perfect note on which to conclude the residency, as both of us had, through the course of the previous year, spent many hours discussing shared conclusions about how Victorian women’s lives had been shaped by the kinds of expectations placed on them in domestic manuals. We had visited archives together, and discussed our findings as well as the challenges of archival research. In this way, Bertola was not just acting as someone who wanted to glean something about history to use in other ways; instead, like all good historians, she was concerning herself with what happened in the past, intertwined with reflections on the methods historians use to interpret the past. In recognising the complex possibilities encompassed in the idea of ‘being a historian’, we now feel we can claim to have taken our interdisciplinary collaboration to its logical conclusion, after which we will each approach our own work with a transformed perspective.

Notes

- 1 Rachel Rich, “‘If you desire to enjoy life, avoid unpunctual people’: Women, Timetabling and Domestic Advice, 1850–1910”, *Cultural and Social History*, 12.1 (2015), 95–112.
- 2 Hayden White, ‘The Question of Narrative in Contemporary Historical Theory’, *History and Theory*, 23.1 (1984), 1–33 (p. 33).
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

- 4 Stills from this short film are published online in Laura Mansfield (ed.), *FEAST: Setting the Table* (2017), <<http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/feastassets/issues/The-Home-Studies-Collection.pdf>> [accessed 18 September 2019].
- 5 This theme is explored in Rachel Rich, *Bourgeois Consumption: Food, Space and Identity in London and Paris, 1850–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Rachel Rich, “‘Life will pass quickly for me’: Women, Clocks and Timekeeping in Nineteenth-century France”, *Gender and History*, 31.1 (2018), 41–59; Rachel Rich, ‘Working with Cookbooks: Reflections on and after the “Rooms for Food, Spaces for Eating” Workshop’, in Mansfield (ed.), *FEAST*; Rich, ‘If you desire to enjoy life’; Rachel Rich, ‘Designing the Dinner Party: Advice on Dining and Décor in London and Paris, 1860–1914’, *Journal of Design History*, 16.1 (2003), 49–61.
- 6 Karen Harvey, ‘Envisioning the Past: Art, Historiography and Public History’, *Cultural and Social History*, 12.4 (2016), 527–543 (p. 529).
- 7 See the website for Ellie Harrison’s Grief Series: <www.griefseries.co.uk> [accessed 18 September 2019].
- 8 Annie Gray, ‘The Greatest Ordeal: Using Biography to Explore the Victorian Dinner’, *Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 44.2 (2010), 255–272.
- 9 Laura King, *Family Men: Fatherhood and Masculinity in Britain, c. 1914–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
- 10 Laura King and Gary Rivett, ‘Engaging People in Making History: Impact, Public Engagement and the World beyond the Campus’, *History Workshop Journal*, 80.1 (2015), 218–233 (p. 227).
- 11 A similar carpet of dust was also created by Bertola at Bilston Craft Gallery in 2015, entitled *Unfurling Splendour*. This can be seen on video at <<https://vimeo.com/120473595>> [accessed 18 September 2019].
- 12 Susannah Worth, *Digesting Recipes: The Art of Culinary Notation* (Alresford: Zero Books, 2015), p. 33.
- 13 Rita Felski, *Doing Time: Feminist Theory and Postmodern Culture* (London: New York University Press, 2000); Rich, ‘Life will pass quickly for me’.
- 14 For an overview of this ‘cultural turn’, see Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
- 15 King and Rivett, ‘Engaging People in Making History’, p. 225.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 227.
- 17 Hilary Mantel, ‘The Day Is for the Living’, BBC Reith Lecture, first broadcast on BBC Radio 4, 13 June 2017.
- 18 Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p. 164.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 Mantel, ‘The Day Is for the Living’.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 See <www.bronte.org.uk/museum-and-library> [accessed 18 September 2019].
- 23 There are many academic responses to Gaskell’s *Life of Charlotte Brontë*. See for example Emily Morris, “‘For Her Very Life’: Duty, Health and the Poisonous Atmosphere of Haworth in Elizabeth Gaskell’s *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*”, *Brontë Studies*, 38.3 (2013), 185–194; Patsy Stoneman, “‘Such a Life ...’: Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë”, *Brontë Studies*, 41.3 (2016), 193–204.
- 24 For more discussion of difficult heritage and how it is being researched, see for example William Logan and Keir Reeves (eds.), *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing*

- with *'Difficult Heritage'* (London: Routledge, 2008); J.E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1996); Philip R. Stone, Tony Seaton, Richard Sharpley, and Leanne White (eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of Dark Tourism Studies* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- 25 Robert Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History* (London: Routledge, 2018; first published 2006), p. 35.
  - 26 Rich, "Life will pass quickly for me".
  - 27 Harriet Tarlo and Judith Tucker, "'Off Path, Counter Path": Contemporary Walking Collaborations in Landscape, Art, and Poetry', *Critical Survey*, 30 (2008), 105–132 (p. 107).
  - 28 Bertola and Rich in Conversation, facilitated by Rachel Connor, Leeds Beckett University, June 2018.
  - 29 Bertola and Rich in Conversation, chaired by Professor Heather Shore, Leeds Beckett University, February 2018.

Understanding the audience experience of contemporary visual arts at Geevor Mine World Heritage Site

A dialogue between a contemporary artist and a sociologist

Gaynor Bagnall and Jill Randall

Introduction

This chapter examines the outcomes of a collaboration between an artist, Jill Randall, and a sociologist, Gaynor Bagnall, to explore how the use of contemporary visual art might engage audiences and generate new knowledge about, and understanding of, an industrial heritage site. It also considers how bringing together the different methodologies of practice of an artist and a sociologist might allow fresh insight into why, how, and for whom art is produced and displayed in this context. In doing so this chapter explores an ongoing conversation between practitioners from different fields about what constituted ‘meaningful’ audience engagement from their differing perspectives, and on the best methods for capturing and representing the audience response to, and experience of, contemporary art in heritage settings.

In 2016 the contemporary visual artist Jill Randall exhibited new work in a solo exhibition ‘Aftermath’, at Geevor Mine World Heritage Museum, Cornwall, as part of the artist’s wider strategy to employ contemporary visual art as means to explore and reinterpret the unique post-industrial landscapes of Cornish Mining World Heritage Sites. The art was exhibited in a white-cube-style room situated in the Hard Rock Museum at Geevor. The Museum opened in 2008 and tells the story of tin mining through interactive displays, artefacts, oral histories, and film. It employs a form of presentation, representation, and display that is in stark contrast to the cool bare white walls of the room where the ‘Aftermath’ exhibition was located and displayed. This juxtaposition of modes of presentation and the differing methodologies behind them offered a unique opportunity to explore how audiences respond to this intersection of a particular kind of heritage space and art.

The exhibition also provided the opportunity to examine how bringing together the different disciplinary perspectives of an artist and sociologist

might provide new insight into ways of analysing audience engagement within this art–heritage intersection. Randall and Bagnall are both academics at the University of Salford, Randall in the School of Arts and Media and Bagnall in the School of Health and Society. From their different disciplinary perspectives, both have an interest in the relationship between people and place, and the representation and valuing of working-class culture. They began to work together on research impact capture for the ‘Aftermath’ exhibition because the location of this type of exhibition in an industrial heritage museum was both original and innovative, and as such offered an exciting research opportunity.

The chance to collaborate on investigating how visitors responded to the ‘Aftermath’ exhibition offered the opportunity to explore how the methodological practices of a sociologist and the practices of a visual artist might usefully combine and intersect. The idea was to explore whether Bagnall’s knowledge of researching audience experience and engagement, alongside her expertise in using social science methodologies in heritage and museum contexts, could be used to examine the impact of Randall’s challenging, non-representational artwork at Geevor.

The museum, the artist, and the exhibition

Geevor Tin Mine is the largest preserved mine site in England, set in an area of outstanding natural beauty in Cornwall, a key location within the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site. One of the great industrial landscapes of the world, and designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Cornwall and West Devon mining landscape is valued alongside the Taj Mahal and Stonehenge for its world importance.¹ Cornwall was part of the first Industrial Revolution; it created vast industrial landscapes and developed cutting-edge technologies which were exported all over the world, to at least 175 places across six continents.² It is a unique natural environment as a direct result of the tin and copper mining industry and the derelict, post-industrial land that remains is testament to the contribution Cornwall made to the Industrial Revolution in the rest of Britain and beyond.³

Mining ceased at Geevor on 16 February 1990, but the site offers visitors the opportunity to go underground into the old working mine and see the preserved mine buildings and machinery. Poignant reminders of the closure of the mine can be found in the miners’ graffiti in ‘The Dry’, the miners’ changing rooms. The site, its buildings, and machinery are becoming ever more interesting as the years pass, a time capsule of 1990; the miners having downed tools and left at the end of the last working day. Certain areas of the site are ethereal and fascinating, visually resembling art installations, especially in ‘The Dry’, where mine-stained clothes and Wellington boots hang in lines, and open lockers contain pinned up news cuttings of the time. This part of the site is not constructed, or reconstructed, as many mining attractions

are, but simply left as it was. This gives it an extra level of reality, of vividness, of connection with now. It is immediately accessible and made more real by several of the ex-miners now working as volunteers at the site.

The site also houses the Hard Rock Museum, an interactive museum which opened in 2008 and tells the story of tin, and which is very typical of museums that emerged out of ideas around *The New Museology*.⁴ In this genre of museums there is the use of multimedia strategies of address and an emphasis on engagement and interaction.⁵ The development of this type of museum represented a shift towards providing a museum experience, drawing on emotions, sensations, and imagination.⁶ The Hard Rock Museum uses hands-on and interactive exhibits to make accessible the science aspects of the museum, and its selection and way of representing artefacts, from video to oral histories, reflect the tin mining industry through human and experiential dimensions.

Perhaps surprisingly, tucked away in a corner of the upper levels of the Hard Rock Museum, and entered via a glass and wood closed door, is a temporary art exhibition space. The Hard Rock Gallery is a clean white box-like space which is used to display original art exhibitions. Past exhibitions at the Hard Rock Gallery include the inaugural exhibition of Cornish artist Kurt Jackson, 'The Mining Paintings' (Oct 2008 – March 2009), expressive painterly figurative paintings recording mining in South Crofty Mine, Cornwall, and Aguas Tenidas Mine in Spain; many documentary photographic exhibitions such as 'Wildlife on the Edge', recording wildlife on the Geevor Mine site; 'Geevor Then and Now', historic photos of the site over the last 150 years; and Sally Booth, 'Edges and Extremes', art and poetry of Shetland and Cornwall: people, place, and industry. There has been an emphasis on the representation of Cornish artists or artists with a local connection, and most exhibitions are figurative, documentary, and make obvious and literal connections between the exhibited work and the Geevor site.

This space is very different from the 'busyness' of the rest of the museum with its presentation and production of the gallery as a white cube, and the suggestion that it contains special, perhaps even 'sacred' objects inside it.⁷ It is in this space that the 'Aftermath' exhibition was housed. Importantly, Randall's work provided a much more abstract, and a less literal and figurative approach to interpreting Geevor and its post-mining landscapes, than had previously been displayed in the Hard Rock Gallery. This proved to be an interesting, challenging, but perhaps rewarding juxtaposition for the museum visitor.

The artist

Jill Randall's work explores the relationship between contemporary fine art and the environment. She is particularly interested in the harnessing of post-industrial mining landscapes to create artworks, and to use contemporary

fine art as a means to an alternative perspective on 'heritage'. The art, and public engagement activities around it, seek to provoke memories, and reconnect communities with their industrial past. The outcomes are determined by Randall's response to the site and its specific cultural context. The outcomes are also open-ended, resulting in a broad collection of works, sculpture, prints, drawing, video, and found objects.

Randall has an enduring interest in working-class histories, informed by her childhood in the coalfields of the East Midlands, and later her time working in artists' studios in abandoned textile mills in central Manchester. She has huge respect for the arduousness and toil of mining, and the secret underground worlds revealed in the process. There is reverence for the expertise, skills, labour, and knowledge of the workforce that goes unsung, and Randall believes there is a need to celebrate and reinvest in forgotten working-class lives, technical skills, and lost environments. There is nostalgia, too, for the demise of Britain's manufacturing past, the making of things, the 'workshop of the world'. This has led to Randall having a fascination for the closed, invisible, mysterious world of the factory or mine, where people spend lifetimes. This sits alongside her desire to make this visible and accessible through artworks which explore and expose these contexts.

Metals are the material and conceptual thread throughout Randall's gallery and site-specific practice. Her interest in mining and mining landscapes stems from this preoccupation with materiality, and in industry the transformative and alchemic processes she sees at work. Her work frequently involves the recycling of materials invested with history and narrative through their past use, and reinventing and reinvesting lost or forgotten, discredited, and discarded objects, places, and periods in history. The art is also firmly rooted in contemporary sculpture practice, making and materiality; however, Randall enjoys playing with, and subverting, the conventions and values of modernist abstract sculpture. Her practice questions and subverts notions of material value, and reveals an interest in the unfinished and incomplete, the broken and damaged. It celebrates the aesthetic of ugly and abject, the improvised and the 'ad hoc'. Her work has been influenced and inspired by artists and art movements such as the Italian Arte Povera movement,⁸ with their celebration of 'poor', improvised, discarded objects and materials, and artists such as Jannis Kounellis who used humble materials and industrial materials such as coal.⁹ Also influential is the concept of 'Merz', material or materials re-appropriated and transformed into art, as seen in the works of the Dada artist Kurt Schwitters.¹⁰

Randall's process of working with a specific industrial site has become a defining characteristic of her practice, and her approach has many parallels with the Artist Placement Group (APG), founded in the UK in the 1960s by Barbara Steveni and John Latham, which pioneered the practice of engaging artists to work in industry. The APG marked the start of the artist emerging

from the studio and engaging with the wider world, and they were the first to coin the term ‘artist-in-residence’, creating innovative well-paid residencies for artists to spend time in factories, cargo vessels, government organisations, and hospitals.¹¹ The artist was often seen as a force for change within the organisation, but many artists also utilised the unique environment to create new ways of working, often involving interventions with the workforce. Their purpose was to create art in a social context for the first time, and their slogan ‘Context is Half the Work’, which has been one of the driving forces in the last 50 years in fine art practice, accurately describes Randall’s approach.¹² Context for Randall provides a starting-point and inspiration and her art always involves location in and a considered response to a specific site, such as Geevor.

The exhibition

In 2014, Jill Randall approached the Assistant Curator Nick Thomas at Geevor Tin Mine World Heritage Site in Pendeen, Cornwall, with a proposal to create an exhibition of work for the Hard Rock Gallery. This was to be the first of several proposed interventions by Randall in mining sites throughout Cornwall and is an ongoing project. Although the nature of Randall’s work was different from previous exhibitions, Nick Thomas was supportive of the proposal from the outset and keen to present a more challenging interpretation for the visitor. The exhibition’s connection with and relevance to the Geevor site was key to this. The resulting ‘Aftermath’ exhibition at Geevor in 2016 reflected and epitomised Randall’s approach, using contemporary visual art to attempt to promote knowledge, understanding, and a connection to place and industrial heritage.

Randall spent time on-site, working with archival maps from Geevor’s collection and studying rare botanical specimens which thrive on contaminated post-mining land. As she notes, ‘the exhibition draws strong connections between the environment of the working mine and its aftermath landscapes, offering a different way of interpreting these sites, their history, unique ecology, and alternative beauty’.¹³ To achieve this Randall brought together work created especially by and for Geevor Mine, alongside work from her acclaimed artist’s residency at Parys Mountain Copper Mine, Anglesey, and allowed for connections to be made between the two sites, through the metals of copper and tin. The art also represented the unique ecology of Geevor as a post-mining site, and the rare and peculiar plants and mosses such as bryophytes which thrive on contaminated soil. Access to unique hand-drawn maps of early drawings and cross-sections of the mine workings in the Geevor archives inspired several works in the exhibition. Many of the prints explored a dual idea – ‘making visible’ the tiny flora which colonise and thrive on contaminated post-mining soils, alongside the exotic new species of sub-tropical plants which were introduced into Cornwall by plant hunters sent

Figure 11.1 'Aftermath' exhibition, Jill Randall, 2016. Image credit: Jill Randall. Courtesy of the artist and Geevor Tin Mine.

on expeditions by wealthy mine-owners, thus changing the British landscape forever.

The art aimed to enable the revelation of an 'alternative nature' and an alternative subversive beauty, and is part of a broader project, 'Another Eden', which seeks to celebrate these overlooked and denigrated industrial sites. The exhibition comprised more than 40 different pieces of work and included sculpture and video as well as large drawings created in abandoned underground mine workings, prints created from steel plates etched in acidic pools, and a large floor-based mixed-media piece, 'Toxic Garden', as shown in Figure 11.2. The exhibition ran in the Hard Rock Gallery from 15 February to 23 October 2016, and its estimated visitor numbers were more than 30,000.¹⁴

The collaboration and conversation: intersecting practice and methodologies

As we saw earlier, Randall's artistic practice centres on the act of creating physical things and allowing others to share in the viewing and making experience. Somewhat different to Randall's artistic practice, Bagnall's sociological practice has involved developing what C. Wright Mills called a 'sociological

Figure 11.2 *Toxic Garden*, Jill Randall, 2016. Image credit: David Bennett. Courtesy of the artist.

imagination'.¹⁵ This entails having a sociological vision or a way of looking at the world that has a clear awareness of the relationship between personal experience and wider society, and which 'enables us to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society'.¹⁶ In other words, engaging in sociological practice that connects the social, personal, and historical dimensions of our lives.

Key to enacting this practice is the way in which different sociological methods are used to explore the relationship between the individual and society. Having a sociological imagination can provide an understanding of museum or gallery audiences that enables us to grasp the importance of the individual agency of the visitor, the embodied character of the visit, and the influence of the broader social, historical, and cultural context in which visitors are located. Museums and galleries are and have always been socio-cultural spaces. They are located in, emerge from, and are influenced by the social and cultural environment which frames them; they are also sites of social interaction and social encounter.

The focus for Bagnall, then, is how and whether audiences are affected by what they experience in galleries and museums, what biographical and social resources they draw upon in their interpretation of artefacts and exhibitions, what types of context enable or provoke a response, and what form these responses take.¹⁷ She is also concerned to try to understand the quality and

intensity of encounters with that experience, and the ways in which it is mediated by different modes of representation in museums and galleries. Generally, she has used methods derived from sociology to try to investigate these issues at a range of museums in the UK. This is because researching audiences where the experiential and human agency is key, requires thinking about methods that enable us to get closer to the social world of the visitor: approaches which allow access to visitor perspectives and experiences, and understandings and insights into the ways in which these may be influenced by their social location. In previous museum and heritage-site research undertaken by Bagnall, she employed both well-used and established qualitative and quantitative methods from sociology, and more innovative approaches to get closer to the visitor's perspective and social world. For example, 'traditional' methods used include ethnographic observations, in-situ in-depth interviews, and focus groups, while more innovative approaches have included accompanied museum 'walking interviews', textual analysis of digitally captured visitor interpretations of exhibitions, and the use of focus groups at the 'digital interface', where people can experiment with, reflect on, and talk about digital technology as part of the process of interaction within a focus group.¹⁸

In this instance, Bagnall and Randall spent two intensive five-day periods together at Geevor in 2016, to explore what visitors thought about the art, their experience of the exhibition, and its relation to industrial heritage. This involved collaboration and employing a combination of artist activities and sociological research methods, such as in-situ observation, walking interviews, face-to-face questionnaires, documentary analysis of the in-gallery visitor comments book, focus group creative engagement workshops, and 'meet the artist' events. They watched and discussed how visitors navigated the transition from the museum to the exhibition, how they moved around the gallery, and noted how long they spent in the exhibition. Observing in the gallery and listening in on conversations that were generated by the artworks or through visitor interactions with the artist, enabled insights into the ways in which the art promoted an understanding of the heritage of Geevor. Through their observations they were able to note which pieces of art attracted the most attention, or provoked social interaction. They were then able to explore this further in the interviews and focus groups, to explore why this was the case, and to ask whether this attention and social interaction might lead to a greater understanding of the heritage of the site. The interviews, questionnaires, creative focus groups, and documentary analysis provided data that enabled investigation into various audiences' response to, and experience of the exhibition, and to see how the use of art had enhanced visitors' understanding of Geevor's heritage. For both, this collaboration offered the potential for fresh insights, exciting new perspectives, and the chance to learn different methods of representation and of capturing empirical data.

Undertaking the research and spending time together in the museum and gallery also offered the chance for conversation and critical dialogue about

the exhibition, including questions around artistic aims and its intended audience. It also provided an opportunity to examine exhibitionary aspirations alongside the reality of what meaningful ideas an exhibition is able to communicate to its audience, and how. The question of what heritage is, how it can be represented and communicated, and the specifics of how this operates at Geevor also formed part of this dialogue. In sum, it provided a rare opportunity for both an artist and a sociologist to immerse themselves in the museum, gallery, and exhibition together, and to be able to exchange views and access each other's perspectives on how visitors consumed and experienced the exhibition, and how they engaged with the concept of heritage through the medium of visual art.

For Randall, it was interesting and insightful to spend long periods of time in the gallery. The norm for many practising artists is an intense working period leading up to an exhibition, often requiring the production of new works in a limited time, an installation period, and a de-install, with few visits to the exhibition space in between, unless undertaking workshops or artists talks. One outcome of the collaboration was Randall's realisation that as an artist one can make assumptions, for example that visitors will navigate the gallery in a particular way, such as beginning from an information board with the title of the show and an explanation of what they are seeing. For the sociologist, an immersion in the research setting, and the deployment of a range of research methods, are part of trying to access and understand the social world under investigation. However, what was unique for Bagnall was to be able to access first-hand from the artist the meanings behind the works presented, and to be able to use this information to provide a context and a better understanding of the audience experience.

During their discussions, it also became evident that there were some shared interests and recurring themes in Bagnall's and Randall's seemingly very different disciplinary practices, such as a focus on aspects of the visitor experience, the power of the imagination and emotions, the provocation of memory, and a connectedness to the past. They also both had an enduring interest in working-class culture, perhaps informed by a nostalgia for their own working-class roots, growing up in the coalfields of Nottinghamshire and the industrial heartland of Manchester, with their environments and smells. There was also a desire to mark, give voice to, and celebrate forgotten working-class lives, but also to challenge the ways in which working-class culture is often demeaned and devalued.¹⁹ Randall and Bagnall also both have an enduring interest in the relationship of people to place, and the ways in which this is transformed by social and economic processes such as post-industrialisation and globalisation. This has led both of them to use this as a prism through which to explore contemporary ideas of identity and belonging. For Randall, this materialised through the creation of artworks that reveal the secretive, closed world of the factory or mine, or the mystery and beauty of the post-industrial landscape, while for Bagnall this has manifested through written

texts and the development of concepts such as ‘elective belonging’, which tries to capture how belonging is influenced both by biography and by social processes such as globalisation.²⁰

Above all, they discovered that they are both interested in intangible dimensions – the personal and potentially collective transformative experience visitors have when encountering exhibits in a museum or gallery. However, their disciplinary practices have led them to address these in very different ways. Bagnall attempts to evidence these intangible aspects, such as emotional responses, by capturing the embodied talk and practices of visitors using sociological research methods, while Randall’s aim is to represent them through her art, and in so doing to create a deep connection at a personal and collective level with the viewer.

In the following sections, the thematic analysis of the qualitative data gathered at Geevor is discussed, along with the insights they offered into the presentation of visual art in museum settings, and the value of the intersecting practices and methodologies in these environments. It underlines the significance of the ways in which the site, artist’s aims, and visitor’s responses all work together in a complex relationship, facilitated by social and spatial context.

Impact of art and intersection with heritage

Firstly, it is useful to note that the overall visitor response to the exhibition was positive: data from the questionnaires indicated that 96 per cent of the visitors enjoyed the exhibition, and most (80 per cent) stated they would recommend it to family and friends. Significantly, data from the questionnaires and interviews revealed that most of the visitors did not visit art galleries on a regular basis, so this intersection of art and heritage space provided a unique opportunity for them to encounter this form of art practice. As demonstrated below, some of the visitors to the exhibition were able to articulate well the ways in which they valued this different perspective on the industrial mining heritage presented at Geevor.

Qualitative data from the interviews, questionnaires, and the visitor comments book revealed that visitors had enjoyed engaging with the artwork, with comments including ‘lovely to see different perspectives through art’, and ‘surprised how interesting it was’. Visitors identified how the textures, scale, colours, and the different forms of art all contributed to the impact it had on them, stimulating their interest, enhancing their experience of the exhibition, and providing a different view of the mines and mining landscape. As one participant put it, the work presented ‘sketches of and for the great abyss’.

Others more explicitly recognised the value of the intersection of art and heritage, noting how having art in an industrial museum is a good idea because it changes the visitor experience: it ‘breaks it up’. There was also an acknowledgement that the use of visual art had added to their understanding of the

heritage of mining and post-industrial landscapes by offering an alternative perspective to visiting an industrial museum like Geevor. Comments included, '[it] adds a different dimension to the subject', and, 'it gives another angle to it'. It was also suggested that the use of the 'visual', as it was described by visitors, to provide more understanding might be widened to industrial heritage more generally, as 'art can give additional insight into industrial heritage by bringing a visual element'. It was clear that the artist's intention to reveal the world of the mine, and the mystery and beauty of the landscape, had to some extent been achieved, as seen in the following comments: 'it shows how hectic and dispersed mines are', and 'the bland browns and greens reflect the mines'.

A key theme that emerged from this feedback was the importance of context, and for many of the visitors it was the spatial context, precisely the location of the art at Geevor, a mining museum set in a post-industrial landscape, that was the most enjoyable and unique aspect of the exhibition. As one participant stated, the most enjoyable thing about the exhibition was 'that it was related to the place itself'. Without that context, some of the meaning and message of the art would undoubtedly have been lost. Another participant articulated it by saying, the art needs to be 'relevant somehow', as this enables visitors to connect to the art and be able to grasp its meaning and significance. There was an awareness amongst the visitors that it was unusual to see art in this context, that it was 'not expected, different', even 'very unique', and 'enlightening'.

In these comments we can, perhaps, see an acknowledgement of the auratic quality of the work,²¹ which is further demonstrated in the feedback which stated:

Your work really spoke to me. I am a descendent of Richard White, the Captain of Levant Mine, but the often twee and realist representations of Levant and Geevor didn't really connect with me. Your representations are really powerful and thought-provoking. I loved them.

It is evident here that the artworks enabled this visitor to engage on an emotional level and had the power to provoke an emotional impact and response. This was clearly partly to do with the art itself, and the embodied reaction it had engendered, but it must also be related to the personal; that is, the specific social, historical, and cultural context from which the visitor was viewing the work. In a climate where the experiential is valued and prioritised in museums, the fact that this type of exhibition enables visitors to respond to and engage with heritage on an emotional level is clearly significant, not only to Geevor but also more broadly across the museums sector.

It is, however, important to identify and be aware of the importance of the role of biography in this process, as it is the family connection and social context that clearly add to the depth of engagement here and having the tools to identify this

is where the intersection of methodologies and practice can prove fruitful. It was identified earlier how the artist strives for a deep connection with the viewer, but that this is difficult to capture or quantify. Here, the use of sociological methods and analysis can reveal this connection and show how it comes about through the joining of biography, social and spatial context, and the art itself.

Audience experience

One of the benefits of being in-situ together over a sustained period was that it allowed us to observe the comings and goings at the gallery, and to notice whether museum visitors did or did not access the 'Aftermath' exhibition. We were also able to monitor how the gallery space was used and to see the extent to which visitors engaged with the exhibition. Doing this together allowed us to explore from our different perspectives various explanations for what we were seeing.

In conducting our observations we located ourselves both inside and outside the gallery, as it became apparent that having to negotiate an often-closed door to access the exhibition, and the lack of visible signage pointing to the gallery and the exhibition inside, were having a twofold effect. Firstly, people would see the closed door, and turn away. Others would peer through the glass in the door, sometimes enter or sometimes turn back into the main museum (Figure 11.3). Secondly, people who did enter, would briefly scan the room from the doorway and then exit. A minority of visitors entered the gallery and then spent some time looking at the exhibition.

It was evident that more signage was needed to more clearly communicate to visitors what was in the gallery, and that having a closed door acted as a physical barrier, but more than that, it perhaps signalled to some visitors that this was something different, maybe something not for them. The boundary was thus symbolic as well as physical, the exhibition and presentation style being very different to the rest of the museum, and the more literal, easier to interpret, and possibly easier to appreciate artworks that Geevor usually displayed in the gallery.²²

Our observations of the gallery, and of people's transition from the interactive, experiential, hands-on mode of representation in the Hard Rock Museum to the sparser white cube of the gallery, revealed that some visitors seemed more at ease than others in the gallery space. The 'Aftermath' exhibition and its mode of representation are in complete contrast to the rest of the Hard Rock Museum. Figure 11.3 provides an illustration of this shift, as visitors move from a video about tinning pilchards, to abstract visual art. The exhibition draws on a different history and philosophy of display: one with much less interpretation, white walls, only very brief pieces of explanatory text, and one which expects the visitor to do much more 'thinking' work. In line with white cube art galleries, visitors were expected to, indeed needed to, move into a much more contemplative register of consumption.

Figure 11.3 Entrance to the gallery, 2016. Image credit: Gaynor Bagnall. Courtesy of Geevor Tin Mine.

In observing the exhibition, we saw how some visitors spent only very brief moments scanning and glancing at the contents of the gallery before exiting, whilst others entered and seemed to immerse themselves in the experience for some time. Indeed, it appeared that some visitors were able to move into a different register of viewing from one space to the other. They seemed to have the skills to adopt a more contemplative, slower, less directed form of viewing. Of course, it is difficult to know for sure if this indicated that these viewers had higher levels of cultural understanding or appreciation of the exhibition. Writers such as Bourdieu have identified that being able to use and display the cultural capital needed in such contexts, in other words cultural knowledge and understanding accumulated through upbringing and educational experience or socialisation, is linked to people's social origins, particularly their social class.²³ This sociological explanation hints at the degree of privilege

and access to resources that are needed to be able to appreciate, or take ownership of, this type of art. For the artist, this presented an irony, or even a dilemma, as part of the rationale for the work was the desire to represent and value working-class effort and labour in the context of industrial heritage, and engender a deep connection with the viewer. And yet as indicated earlier, there is potential here for breaking down these barriers, as many of the visitors to the exhibition were not regular art-gallery-goers.

Connected to this, an important finding was how the presence of, and interaction, with the artist transformed the visitor experience and facilitated a more meaningful connection with the artwork. Data gathered from ‘meet the artist’ events, informal discussions with the artist in the gallery, and creative workshops illustrated how the presence of, and interaction with, the artist transformed the creative engagement process and could help to break down some of the cultural and social barriers identified above. Randall’s presence brought a sense of authenticity to the experience for the visitors who had an encounter with her in the gallery, either via the formal ‘meet the artist’ events, or more informally as they moved around the gallery. This was a surprise to the artist, who was unaware of her influence and impact on visitors. However, it does reflect findings from previous museum research, which has pointed to the importance and value that visitors give to hearing the voice of the specialist.²⁴

This suggests that changes to artistic practice, in terms of ‘being’ with the exhibition, and holding more engagement events might be a way forward in engaging a wider, more diverse audience, especially if, as is the case here, the exhibition is in a heritage space, where the audience is arguably more diverse than might be found in a traditional art gallery.

Conclusion

Our collaboration and conversations revealed that both of us were keen to explore and understand how to achieve meaningful engagement with heritage and to understand the intangible dimension – the personal and potentially collective transformative experience that visitors have when encountering exhibits or art in a museum or gallery. We questioned why this means something fundamentally important to the viewer, and how they might be reconnected with something lost or forgotten from their own cultural heritage through the encountering of artworks. We questioned whether encountering artworks in this context might enable visitors to tap into ideas around identity and belonging through their emotional and spiritual responses to the works. Seeing and analysing this in action at Geevor allowed us to bring, and to encounter, alternative perspectives on the presentation and consumption of art. It allowed us to see the influence of different modes of engagement with the art, as well as the influence the artist had on the visitor experience. The data we collected using a range of sociological methods enabled us to see the

complex relationship between the site, the audience, and the artist. We saw how this approach provided visitors with an unexpected but not unwanted encounter with challenging contemporary art in a heritage museum environment. This intersection and juxtaposition contributed to visitors' knowledge and understanding of art and heritage at Geevor. The data also revealed the significance of the social and spatial context in which the art was experienced, and how, for the visitors to Geevor, it was arguably this context where the real value of the art–heritage intersection could be found. Our approach showed that collaboration can allow for a more nuanced understanding of an experience. By drawing from our differing perspectives and practices, we have been able to highlight the complex processes and relationships at work at Geevor, from the artist's intention through to the audience's response. This experience has been developmental and insightful for both artist and sociologist.

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Part IV

Liminal spaces

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Numinous experiences in the home of the Brontës

Nick Cass

Contemporary art interventions in heritage sites constitute an intertwining of history, art making, curatorial practices, tourism, visitor expectations, meaning making, memory, and phenomenological encounters. This chapter takes as its case study the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth, West Yorkshire; it is a fascinating case study which intersects with this wide range of discourses. This museum is the former home of world famous but long dead writers Emily, Anne, and Charlotte Brontë. Since becoming a museum in 1928, it has been carefully transformed into a period interior representation of their home and is a renowned heritage site at which ‘literary pilgrims’ pay ‘homage’ to these authors. Since the early 2000s, however, the Parsonage has also become known for its Contemporary Arts Programme, featuring commissioned responses to the museum, its collections, and the Brontës’ literary output. This chapter focusses on one example from this programme, Su Blackwell’s installation in 2010; selected because it is seen by the museum as a particularly successful example of visitor engagement. Given the particular nature of the Parsonage as a site of pilgrimage, the chapter takes the concept of ‘numen-seeking’, that is, looking for a deeper engagement with heritage, to evaluate connections between the aims and intentions of the site, the artist, and the responses written by visitors. A central motivation for this work is to ask why a world-renowned heritage site such as the Parsonage has turned to contemporary art as a form of interpretation and visitor engagement.

Methodology

As an example of contemporary art programming, the Parsonage has been the focus of my research since 2010. My overall approach has been broadly ethnographic, based on staff, artist, and visitor interviews along with thematic analysis of policy documents, funding applications, and visitor comment books. The analysis which follows draws on this work, in particular, by extending the use of numen as a methodological tool of analysis which emerged during my PhD research.¹ I also take inspiration from Amanda Boetzkes’ phenomenological art history, that ‘presumes [...] the work of art and the viewer

are enmeshed in a contingent encounter'.² An art historical approach might only focus on the ways in which the artwork engages with meaning, whereas Boetzkes draws attention to the conditions within which an artwork is viewed and the effect this has upon how meaning is produced, arguing that these are mutually constitutive within complex structures of power, representation, and embodied experience.³ There are clear implications in this thinking that relate to contemporary art experienced within the logic of heritage interpretation. Thus, given the more general understanding that contemporary art in heritage seeks to affect visitors in particular ways, it seems disingenuous not to attempt to find ways to incorporate visitor responses within the broader analysis, especially as contemporary art in heritage sites forms a deeply 'enmeshed encounter' between visitor artwork and site.

The rationale for drawing on visitor comment books comes from the Parsonage itself where they have always been important. Staff at the museum have continually monitored comments to provide almost real-time feedback on the CAP which has, on at least two occasions, resulted in the alteration of an exhibition part way through. In 2006, for example, a sound installation by the artist Cornelia Parker had initially been presented through speakers but was altered to be listened to through headphones as the result of comment book responses which indicated visitors found the sound work significantly disturbed the atmosphere of the museum. Further, it has been argued that visitor comments are an important record of visitor encounters, through which they are often engaging in dialogue with the site and its interpretive processes, and thus would benefit from closer scrutiny.⁴ As such, though recognising that they are problematic, I argue they are worthy of attention and provide a broader perspective on the thoughts and motivations of visitors, which can inflect a deeper understanding of visitors' responses, to be followed up with further visitor research.

The approach taken was that comment books were photographed page by page, transcribed and then, using NVivo, deductively coded in relation to Kiersten Latham's four themes of numinous experience described below.⁵ It is clear that visitor comments can potentially be misleading, but that a systematic approach to coding them for 'meaning-units' can be productive, in that:

they can reveal some of the sensitive issues, outline the range of existing opinions on these topics, and suggest some of the ways that visitors conceptualize the museum.⁶

To be clear, however, the aim is not to attempt a full interpretive phenomenological analysis, but to use this approach to identify and explore thematic connections which relate to the aims of the site and the artists.

The Brontë Parsonage

To understand better the expectations of visitors to this site, it is necessary to understand the importance of the Brontës and the nature of the museum as a

'biographical' representation of their life story.⁷ Between 1820 and 1861, the Parsonage, set near the church at the top of the village of Haworth, was the Brontë family home. Patrick Brontë, the father, was appointed as Perpetual Curate of the parish and moved into the house with his family in April 1820. The area, at that time, was a characteristic mix of agricultural landscape and developing textile industry, with consequent poverty and poor living conditions linked to rapid social change.⁸ Drawing inspiration from their local villages and landscape, three of Patrick's children, Emily, Anne, and Charlotte, grew into powerfully creative writers. These three sisters wrote an extensive range of literature, and that they undertook to publish their first works under gender-neutral pseudonyms is a seminal act of proto-feminist resistance to a patriarchal publishing industry. Many of their works, including *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, are now world-renowned examples of nineteenth-century literature that remain powerfully resonant today.

However, illness and death are also well-known aspects of the family's history. Patrick Brontë's wife and two of his six children died at Haworth within a few years of arriving there. Later, Branwell Brontë, the son often eclipsed by his sisters but who was also thought to be a literary talent and first to be published, died in 1848 from complications due to alcoholism and tuberculosis. Emily and Anne died soon after, with Charlotte surviving them by a further six years, until she died while pregnant in 1855.⁹ Thus, tragically, Patrick survived all his family and remained at the Parsonage until his death in 1861. While this reality echoed the broader social conditions of the time, it has become central to the public narrative of the family, with Charlotte's experiences famously mythologised by Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*.¹⁰

Not least as a result of this mythologisation, and a growing number of visitors arriving in Haworth to experience the landscape which inspired the Brontës' work, a museum in Haworth was established in 1895, with the aim of preserving Brontë-related memorabilia. However, when the Parsonage itself became available, it was purchased by a member of the Brontë Society and established as a museum dedicated to maintaining the family's legacy in 1928. Now, the Parsonage has been carefully restored to present how it might have looked at the time of Charlotte's literary success in the mid 1850s and it houses the largest collection of Brontë-related material in the world. The biography of the family pervades the house and interpretive material, presenting to the public a scene both of extraordinary familial creativity, but also early and tragic death.

Each year, the Parsonage attracts around 85,000 visitors from all over the world and the biographical nature of this personality museum is central to visitors' experience. It is very clear, from both early accounts of visitors to Haworth during the time of the Brontës, and current visitor accounts, that people visit because they have been greatly influenced by reading some of the novels or poetry, and that idea of being on a pilgrimage to experience

where the books were written is important. Virginia Woolf, for example, on the occasion of her visit to Haworth in 1904, wrote:

At a certain point we entered the valley, up both sides of which the village climbs, and right on the hill-top, looking down over its parish, we saw the famous oblong tower of the church. This marked the shrine at which we were to do homage.¹¹

Many contemporary visitors write in the comments book that their visit to the museum has been a long-awaited pilgrimage to this Brontë 'shrine'. Their comments often express a deep sense of connection to the Brontës due to the influence works such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* had on their emerging identities as young adults.¹² Part of that connection also comes from the very personal nature of the house and its collections. While much of the interior is a careful reconstruction, there are many personal items which belonged to the family. Permanent displays in the museum, which include writing and drawing tools, the sisters' clothes, their letters and childhood writings, even their hair, are notable items which visitors comment upon.

Numen

Engagement with heritage sites is a complex phenomenological encounter, a 'commingling' of being, moving, thinking, and feeling.¹³ The meaning of these experiences is thus contingent on affective responses as visitors encounter the space of the Parsonage with their bodies, as much as it is on their scopic engagement with objects, auditory experience of the space, or cognitive engagement with interpretive 'facts' connected to the objects on display. This moves far beyond any idea that a heritage experience is pedagogic. In order to explore this potential for deeper engagement with sites, stories, and objects, a number of writers have used the concept of numen to describe the more profound connections that visitors make.

It was Rudolf Otto who first described numinous experiences in his book *The Idea of the Holy*.¹⁴ He argued that in trying to define experiences which can be thought of as holy, there is an 'overplus', or excess, which is beyond definition.¹⁵ In trying to articulate the nature of these indefinable feelings experienced during worship, Otto suggested recognisable feelings such as love, devotion, and humbleness are common. However, there is a further aspect which cannot be fully described or articulated, and Otto 'adopts' the latin word numen, creating the term 'numinous'.¹⁶ Using it to describe this quality of religious experience or deep connection which is beyond articulation, Otto proposes it is similar in quality to aesthetic experience. The connection between numen and experiences of museum objects has been made by Rachel Maines and James Glynn, who use the concept 'to describe a transcendental experience that people can have in contact with a historic site'.¹⁷ Further,

Catherine Cameron and John Gatewood examined whether this concept was a useful way to account for the ways in which people engaged with battlefield sites or memorials. Based on their research, Cameron and Gatewood identify 'numen-seekers' as people who are looking for a deeper connection to a particular heritage.¹⁸

Building on this work, Kiersten Latham has looked more closely at the idea of numinous experiences with museum objects.¹⁹ In a study from 2013, Latham carried out an interpretive phenomenological analysis of accounts of profound experiences in museums from which she identified four themes that characterise numinous experience in museums.²⁰ Key is the idea of 'unity of the moment', which holds that a numinous experience is a total and holistic one, in which other aspects of the experience are contained. Of the three further aspects, according to Latham, 'object link' refers to the idea that it is the encounter with objects that forms a key catalyst for the experience. This relates not only to an object's near physical presence, but also its ability to signify people, places, or historical events. 'Being transported' relates to participants experiencing shifts in their sense of time or space. A sense of going 'back in time' is particularly relevant to this case study. Lastly, 'connections bigger than self' relates to museum encounters which provoke strong feelings of connection to people from the past and stories of their lives, but that also provide a strong understanding of one's own place in the world.²¹

In previous analyses of the Parsonage, I have argued strongly that it is a numen-rich site.²² The intimate scale of this home provides an encompassing experience in which visitors have described powerful feelings of reverence through a feeling of being 'connected' to the Brontës and being transported into the past. Part of this connection is a deep empathy for the creative but tragic family history that was played out, and is narrated by, the very building that the visitor stands in. This is also due to the intimate nature of the Brontës' personal belongings, such as their clothing, which are encountered. A further aspect is that visitors recall their own reading of Brontë literature and the ways in which their lives had been affected by the sisters' proto-feminist writing. In this sense, visitors' lives have already been 'intervened' in by the Brontës' literature, an embodied intervention that visitors carry with them to its point of origin in the space and time of the house.

Contemporary art in the Parsonage

Despite this global popularity of both the literature and the museum, in the 2000s staff began to feel conscious of how the house might be becoming a 'clichéd' place of idolatry; a 'mausoleum' in which the period interiors and their focus on the domestic lives of the Brontës might actually be obscuring the creative and radical nature of the sisters and their writing.²³ It is interesting that this point had been made before, by Woolf visiting the first iteration of a

Brontë museum, a small display above a bank in the village which had opened in 1898:

But the most touching case [...] is that which contains the little personal relics, the dresses and shoes of the dead woman. The natural fate of such things is to die before the body that wore them, and because these, trifling and transient though they are, have survived, Charlotte Brontë the woman comes to life, and one forgets the chiefly memorable fact that she was a great writer.²⁴

Precisely one hundred years after this comment about the distracting effect of personal relics, the opportunity arose for a bold curatorial experiment, conceived to remind visitors of Charlotte Brontë's status as a writer. The artist Paula Rego, born in Portugal and resident in the UK, had made a series of lithographs based on her reading of *Jane Eyre*. In 2004 Andrew McCarthy, then Education Officer, took an opportunity to show these prints in the rooms where the book had been conceived of and written. McCarthy felt that these artworks might offer a way in which to renew visitors' appreciation of the Brontës, but particularly the legacy and contemporary influence of their writing.²⁵

While this exhibition received a mixed response, it prompted McCarthy to take a more planned approach to contemporary commissioning. This strategy included seeking funding for a series of projects, starting with a residency by the artist Cornelia Parker in 2006. The sense of exploring new curatorial approaches can be seen in the way Parker's work was expected to challenge the nature of the museum:

The Parsonage museum has been seeking to explore new forms of display and interpretation in a bid to occasionally challenge the period room presentation that has defined the museum since it opened in 1928. It is felt that this form of presentation has caricatured the museum as a literary 'shrine' and perhaps re-enforced some of the myths and clichés which have surrounded the Brontës for over a hundred and fifty years. In this respect, it was felt that Cornelia Parker's work demonstrates exactly the kinds of methods, use of materials and thematic preoccupations which make her ideally suited to collaborate with us. Parker has referred to an interest in what she calls 'the most popular spot, the most clichéd spot'.²⁶

Parker's residency and exhibition, 'Brontëan Abstracts', was seen as the official launch of the programme, and the following year funding was also secured to establish the post of an Arts Officer, responsible for developing a more sustained approach. Thus, this was the beginning of the 'Contemporary Arts Programme' which has seen regular exhibitions in the period interiors and the exhibition spaces of the museum ever since.

Andrew McCarthy's career at the museum, from Education Officer to Director, maps onto the first ten years of the programme. In my interview

with him in 2012, he was very clear about what he thought contemporary art brought to the museum. His substantial argument was that the domestic interiors are not able to communicate to visitors anything about the very significant influence the Brontës have had on artists and writers. In this sense, the exhibitions of contemporary art within the house were not originally seen as a strategy to bring in new audiences. While this was seen as an additional benefit, the initial impetus was more to do with the fact that the inclusion of contemporary art would demonstrate the continuing influence of the Brontës. A further concern, illustrated by the quote above, was with the 'stage-set' nature of the period interior. McCarthy felt that it was useful to make the theatrical element clearer to visitors, in order that they might question what it is they were looking at. Here, perhaps, the aim being to reorientate visitors towards the Brontës' works and their influence, rather than their domestic arrangements. Through this, 'visitors [might] experience the Parsonage in imaginative ways and [...] explore their own creativity'.²⁷ Lastly, underpinning my decision to take serious account of visitor comments, was that for McCarthy they 'have been very important in determining how we've changed our approach project by project so yes they do tend to be looked at very closely'.²⁸

While not necessarily unique, the Parsonage is, thus, a particular set of circumstances which makes it a rich and fascinating case study; a historic-house personality museum, a tragic yet compelling story, a sense of literary pilgrimage amongst the visitors, all 'intervened' in with an experimental curatorial approach to commissioning contemporary art. To explore this in further depth, it is useful to examine closely one of the exhibitions from the programme.

Remnants

Su Blackwell is a British artist who uses deceptively simple paper-cut techniques to fashion complex sculptures and installations. She works with books, both as material form and narrative content; her constructions usually allude to the books from which they have been cut and Blackwell has a particular fascination with fairy tales. Her exhibition at the Parsonage, *Remnants* (2010), came about because Jenna Holmes, the Arts Officer appointed in 2007, approached Blackwell directly, feeling that her work was appropriate, given the gothic nature of both Blackwell's interests and the Brontës' writing. Blackwell recalled her experiences of reading *Wuthering Heights* as a child, and suggested that in the installation she wanted to:

bring out the spiritual, but mostly 'creative' essence of the Brontës. My main focus was on the women.²⁹

This sense of wanting to bring out the 'spiritual' essence of the Brontës points very much towards numen as a way of thinking about profound

contact with objects, spaces, and stories. As Maines and Glynn point out, the nature of contact with the types of objects found at the Parsonage is significant because of the people with whom they are associated, and the importance of this association is that objects can ‘concretize abstract memories’.³⁰ For this exhibition Blackwell, perhaps, worked through her memories of reading *Wuthering Heights* and thus shared her own deep engagement with that experience within the home of the Brontës, a place ‘endowed with special sociocultural magic’.³¹

Her response to the house ended up being more than museum staff expected:

originally she was going to do book sculptures with maybe one or two other pieces but then I think she got quite inspired by the site and wanted to try new things in her practice. There was a sound piece which you wouldn’t normally associate with her type of work and another mechanical piece so she was really using it as an opportunity to try things.³²

Not only did the project inspire Blackwell to significantly extend her practice, the installation was described as the most ‘invasive’ the museum had ever attempted.³³ The opportunity to respond to the Parsonage allowed Blackwell to work in new ways. Her paper-cut works were placed, draped, and hung in many spaces within the museum which are profoundly important in the history of the Brontës’ lives, including the dining room, the kitchen, and children’s bedroom. She installed the sound of footsteps, which could be heard echoing around the downstairs rooms, and also worked with antique textiles; both were new developments in her practice as a result of the commission.

Whereas I have been critical of the relationship between previous installations and their location within the house, Blackwell’s work tied strongly to its location.³⁴ For example, the children’s bedroom has been described as a particularly key space in the museum as not only did the architecture of the house shape the thinking processes of the children, this room now is symbolic of a fundamental part of the Brontë ‘canon’: their juvenilia.³⁵ This writing, a vast outpouring of creativity while they were children, conjured a complex and detailed imaginary world which wove together both fictional and real events. Blackwell took inspiration from this writing, and recreated a battle scene in this room, complete with sailing ship crossing the floor, soldiers abseiling down the furniture from a garrison stationed near a castle on the cabinet top, and gun emplacements located next to a church, itself sitting on the bedroom chair. The description of the work on the label explained both the inspiration, and the material:

Installation set amongst a landscape featuring biblical buildings, castles, churches, mills, inspired by the Brontë children’s diaries describing the imaginary world of Gondal. The Brontë children’s stories feature a set of

Figure 12.1 Su Blackwell, *Remnants*, 2010. Book cut installation. Image credit: © The Brontë Society.

toy soldiers; here they escape from the pages and battle across the room. The books are copies of *Arabian Nights*, printed in the late 1800's, tales that the Brontës read as children.

Here, Blackwell delivered precisely what McCarthy had hoped; rather than the bedroom representing the place where the children slept, it was transformed, through the artwork, into a glimpse into the interiority of the developing writers' minds.

The dining room at the Parsonage is also a key location on the visitor circuit. It is one of the first rooms that visitors encounter, and important because it represents the very heart of the Brontë story. It is here that the sisters shared their writing together; it is well known they paced around the dining room table reading aloud to each other, Charlotte Brontë continuing this habit alone after all her siblings had passed away. It is also the room in which Emily, the most enigmatic Brontë, is thought to have died. Here, Blackwell installed a book with pages that turned, apparently, of their own accord. The label for this work drew attention to *Wuthering Heights*, and quoted a particular passage: 'a book lay spread on the sill before her, and the scarcely perceptible wind fluttered its leaves at intervals'.³⁶ Clearly hinting at a remaining ghostly presence, this work was a subtle, playful acknowledgement of the liminal nature of this space. It did this not only by conflating the experience of the viewer with the absence of the Brontës themselves, but by also invoking the ghostly aspect of the novel.

Figure 12.2 Su Blackwell, *Remnants*, 2010. Book cut installation, detail. Image credit: © The Brontë Society.

What indications are there of numinous experiences within the comments written by visitors in response to Blackwell's exhibition? In the same way that Latham argues 'unity of the moment' contains the other three aspects of numinous experience, 'object link', 'being transported', and 'connections bigger than self', the analysis of visitor comments written during the exhibition does indicate multiple and overlapping themes. Visitors wrote, for example, that the 'artwork really adds something to the experience without being intrusive' and that it 'adds a further dimension to the museum by providing an intimate and heartfelt expression of historical memory'. This shows visitors who were clear that Blackwell's work was a powerful addition to the museum and is important to note, given Holmes' observation that it was more invasive than any previous exhibition.

The 'felt' quality of these experiences was also commented upon. For one visitor, the encounter with the artwork and house aroused all their bodily senses in a way which 'took them back' through time:

Su Blackwell's work is amazing – wakens all our senses and takes us back to how it must have 'felt' living here. Especially the sound of footsteps (Charlottes) in the Servants room.

Very inspiring, delicate, beautiful, this is wonderful Su, you have captured a feeling of this house which I feel. Thank you.

The second comment here points out that the artwork has enabled an exchange of feeling between the house, Blackwell, and the visitor. These, and further comments significantly support Latham's view that the object is the primary catalyst for the experience, 'bring[ing] "it" to life. "It" may be history, people, or actions, but always something that can be real'.³⁷ While Latham's point here is founded upon visitors' engagement with historic objects, the underpinning principle of the contemporary art programme is that the artwork, as object, seen in the context of the collection objects, within the house as a 'biographical' object, brings about a unique and provocative encounter. That this holistic encounter was able to 'bring to life' is very evident in visitors' thoughts:

I found the Su Blackwell exhibition just fantastic. What an inspirational way to bring the Brontë house to life! Just Beautiful!

Wonderful! Gave life to the legend of the Brontës.

Here, both the house as the physical space in which they lived, and the Brontës' 'legend' are brought to life in a way which is significantly complementary to the narrative and biographical structure of the visitor experience of the Parsonage. Artists often describe that they hope their work 'animates' the space of the museum.³⁸ Being derived from the Latin for 'bringing to life',

this element of the impact of contemporary art experienced in a heritage site ought not to be underestimated.

Aspects of ‘being transported’, according to Latham, involve ‘the felt qualities’, including a sense of shifting time, and a narrowing of focus which might create a sense of being alone in the space.³⁹ That visitors were moved, emotionally, is clear from remarks that articulate how Blackwell had ‘captured a feeling, wakened all our senses’, which they ‘felt’, and for which they were grateful. That visitors felt the space bodily and emotionally as a result of the work is clear. Shifts in sense of time are also apparent, with comments such as ‘takes us back’, ‘it is like stepping back’, and ‘museum as a whole experience is “time out” well spent’. Here, these expressions of shifts in time relate both to the temporal dimension of the Brontës’ lives and the passing of time in visitors’ lives, indicative of a liminal intertwining connection.

Thus, the sense that Blackwell’s work brought the Brontës to life and provoked visitors to feel transported, is also demonstrative of what Latham calls ‘connections bigger than self’. In Latham’s research, ‘participants felt strong connections to people of the past and also connected very specific family stories and relationships to the experience’.⁴⁰ At the Parsonage, visitors described the connections they were making:

Some of the pieces are very moving + really connect their experiences + writing with the place – e.g. Emily’s thinking of her writing in the kitchen as shown by the linen

I really felt a connection in the dining room

Incredulously imaginative installation – to me it conveys the sense of the family lives perfectly

These connections are quite specific, such as Emily thinking about writing in the kitchen. They are also more general, such as a ‘sense’ of the family’s lives. However, visitors make personal comments about their own lives in relation to the literature of the Brontës:

I’m from Poland. I’m very exiting [sic] at this place. Now I’m 65 years old. When I was pregnant (at 1975) I read *Jane Eyre* When I was finishing read[ing] this book my older daughter was coming, now my youngest daughter lives at Blackpool with my son-in-law.

Visited as a 10 year old – now 48! – Love it, it’s just as I remember

Stories I loved / Come to life – lovely

The BookCut installations are exquisite. I have greatly enjoyed exploring the Brontës home after loving reading their books.

So impressed – Charlotte Brontë Henderson

Visitors to the house are, here, reflecting upon their own connections to the Brontës. These connections are that reading *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights* was a significant aspect of their youth, and visiting and revisiting the house enables what Latham calls 'the reflective self', that 'deeply meaningful personal connections' are provoked by the visit, enabling visitors to reflect upon how important the Brontës had been in their lives, that they are named after the sisters, or in some cases, how their lives had progressed since reading. Given the desire to make connections with the Brontës through visiting their home, that Blackwell's work was able to contribute an additional layer within this meaning-making process suggests it was inseparably entwined in the symbolic nature of the Parsonage, and the numinous quality of the house was enhanced by the installation.

Conclusion

The Contemporary Arts Programme at the Brontë Parsonage is one example of a heritage site juxtaposing contemporary artists' responses with the period interior, as a strategy to enable visitors to have 'more creative' responses, but at the same time recognise the constructed nature of the interiors. While the comments analysed here do indeed suggest visitors responded to Blackwell's work with imagination, that is, by 'forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses' (*OED*), visitors might have deeply imaginative experiences at the Parsonage during the times CAP exhibitions are not there. In fact, my previous evaluations of more general visitor comments indicates that this is the case.⁴¹ However, this is countered by a strong theme which emerged during the analysis that 'Remnants' added a significant layer to the house, visitors believing their experience was substantially different from how they might have experienced the Parsonage. Given one of the initial aims of the programme had been to 'puncture the illusion', as Andrew McCarthy had put it, no specific evidence, though, was found in the comments to indicate visitors were questioning the 'stage-set'. Instead, there was a clear sense that the installations were thought to be fundamentally 'in sympathy' with the tangible heritage of the house and the intangible sense of a socially shared Brontë memory. So, I suggest the converse is true, that Blackwell's installation worked to reinforce that this is the authentic home of the Brontës by conjuring a sense of the absent family. Emphasising the spiritual dimension of the house was precisely Blackwell's aim. It might also be concluded that the aims of the overall programme have developed, and moved away from a sense of critique, although later exhibitions have still proved controversial.⁴²

Based on the analysis of visitor comments here, I argue contemporary art at the Brontë Parsonage Museum is able to contribute towards experiences which have a profound meaning for not all, but many visitors and, thus, achieves the broader aims of the Contemporary Arts Programme. The

connections articulated in these comments indicate aspects of numinous experience, a holistic embodied encounter with place which is both heritage and art. Through contact with this unique configuration of house, collection, and artwork, visitors experienced shifts in their sense of time, and made creative and imaginative connections with the past experiences of the Brontës in a way that related powerfully to their own sense of identity. ‘Literary pilgrims’ who make their way to the Brontë Parsonage are numen-seekers. That is, they are seeking a special and profound experience which relates to their encounter with Brontë literature earlier in their lives in a way that resonates with their present being. Contemporary art was, in this particular installation, able to play a prominent role in this process, demonstrating a very productive intersection of heritage and contemporary art.

Notes

- 1 See Nick Cass, ‘Interventions in a Shrine: Contemporary Art at the Brontë Parsonage Museum’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2015); and Nick Cass, ‘Provoking Numinous Experience: Contemporary Art Interventions at the Brontë Parsonage Museum’, *International Journal of Heritage Studies* (2019), 1–18.
- 2 Amanda Boetzkes, ‘Phenomenology and Interpretation beyond the Flesh’, *Art History*, 32 (2009), 690–711 (p. 690).
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 690. See also, for example, Sarah E.K. Smith and Carla Taunton, ‘Unsettling Canadian Heritage: Decolonial Aesthetics in Canadian Video and Performance Art’, *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 52 (2018), 306–341. While this is a powerful and necessary analysis of the role of contemporary art in Canada, dealing with profoundly contested histories in the context of Settler and Indigenous population relations, they explicitly stop short of considering how viewers might interact with these artworks, acknowledging their work focusses on ‘representational messages’ rather than their reception.
- 4 Sharon Macdonald, ‘Accessing Audiences: Visiting Visitor Books’, *Museum & Society*, 3.3 (2005), <www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety/documents/volumes/macdonald.pdf> [accessed 21 April 2012]; Chaim Noy, ‘Writing in Museums: Toward a Rhetoric of Participation’, *Written Communication*, 32.2 (2015), 195–219; Kevin Coffee, ‘Visitor Comments as Dialogue’, *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 56 (2013), 163–167.
- 5 Kiersten F. Latham, ‘Numinous Experiences with Museum Objects’, *Visitor Studies*, 16 (2013), 3–20.
- 6 Andrew J. Pekarik, ‘Understanding Visitor Comments: The Case of Flight Time Barbie’, *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 40 (1997), 56–68 (p. 66).
- 7 Eleanor Quince, ‘This Scarlet Intruder: Biography Interrupted in the Dining Room at Tatton Park Mansion’, in *Biographies and Space: Placing the Subject in Art and Architecture*, ed. by Dana Arnold and Joanna Derevenski (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 55–72.
- 8 Stephen Whitehead, ‘The Haworth the Brontës Knew’, *Brontë Studies*, 32 (2007), 181–192.

- 9 For a useful chronology, see Ann Dinsdale, *The Brontës at Haworth* (London: Francis Lincoln, 2006).
- 10 Gaskell, Elizabeth, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857).
- 11 Virginia Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 17 (1979), 272–275 (p. 273).
- 12 For a detailed analysis of these comments, see Cass, 'Interventions in a Shrine'.
- 13 David Crouch, 'Affect, Heritage, Feeling', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 177–190 (p. 178).
- 14 Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, trans. by John W. Harvey, 2nd edn (London: Oxford University Press, 1950).
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 16 *Ibid.*, pp. 6–7.
- 17 Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, 'Excursions into the Un-Remembered Past: What People Want from Visits to Historical Sites', *Public Historian*, 22 (2000), 107–127 (p. 110).
- 18 Cameron and Gatewood, 'Excursions Into the Un-Remembered Past'; Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, 'Seeking Numinous Experiences in the Unremembered Past', *Ethnology*, 42 (2003), 55–71.
- 19 Kiersten F. Latham, 'The Poetry of the Museum: A Holistic Model of Numinous Museum Experiences', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 22 (2007), 247–263; Latham, 'Numinous Experiences'; Kiersten F. Latham, 'Experiencing Documents', *Journal of Documentation*, 70 (2014), 544–561; Kiersten F. Latham, 'Psychological Flow and the Numinous Museum Experience', *Working Papers in Museum Studies*, 11 (2016), n.p.
- 20 Latham, 'Numinous Experiences', p. 8.
- 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 9–11.
- 22 Cass, 'Interventions in a Shrine'.
- 23 Interview with Andrew McCarthy, Director of the Brontë Parsonage Museum, at the museum on 6 July 2012.
- 24 Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', p. 274.
- 25 Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.
- 26 Initial funding application for Cornelia Parker's 'Brontëan Abstracts', 2006.
- 27 Brontë Society, 'Contemporary Arts' (2019), <www.bronte.org.uk/contemporary-arts> [accessed 19 April 2019].
- 28 Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.
- 29 Interview with Su Blackwell by email, 21 April 2015.
- 30 Rachel P. Maines and James J. Glynn, 'Numinous Objects', *Public Historian*, 15.1 (1993), 8–25 (p. 10).
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 32 Interview with Jenna Holmes at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 5 November 2010.
- 33 *Ibid.*
- 34 Cass, 'Interventions in a Shrine', p. 182.
- 35 Christine Alexander, 'Myth and Memory: Reading the Brontë Parsonage', in *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, ed. by Harald Hendrix (London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 93–110 (p. 102).

- 36 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, rev. edn (London: Penguin, 2008), p. 158.
- 37 Latham, 'Numinous Experiences', p. 9.
- 38 Cass, 'Interventions in a Shrine', p. 48.
- 39 Latham, 'Numinous Experiences', p. 10.
- 40 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 41 Cass, 'Interventions in a Shrine'.
- 42 Cass, 'Provoking Numinous Experience'.

Transactions of an artist's placement

Planning Berwick-upon-Tweed with Sander Van Raemdonck

Julie Crawshaw and Menelaos Gkartzios

The context is half the work

At one time considered a contender for UK UNESCO World Heritage Site status, Berwick-upon-Tweed is a small regional town on the English–Scottish border.¹ One of the finest surviving fortified towns in Britain, it guards the main river-crossing to and from Edinburgh.² Particularly noted for its Elizabethan walls and bastions, the town is perhaps best known for its eighteenth-century barracks which houses the Berwick Gymnasium Gallery; itself renowned for its artist residency programme. Managed by English Heritage, the International Berwick Gymnasium Residency (1993–2011) supported international artists to live and work in Berwick. Similar initiatives are upheld today as part of Berwick Visual Arts' (BVA) programme, including an annual six-month residency co-hosted with Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy (CRE) – a University research centre committed to interdisciplinary rural social science research.³

Shaped by a myriad of heritage institutions and expert practices, heritage is 'identified' and 'assessed' against predefined 'criteria'.⁴ English Heritage for example designates Berwick's 'heritage' as particularly manifest in its walls, barracks, and bastions; had it been successful, the world heritage status of Berwick would have been bequeathed by the European authority of UNESCO. This is what Smith calls 'Authorised Heritage Discourse' (AHD) – where the authority of experts positions them as the legitimate spokespersons of the past, and where the past is something to be *preserved* without question.⁵ As decided by English Heritage and other professional experts, Berwick's walls and so on are to be preserved as material or 'tangible' heritage. As the town is located in the UK rural region of Northumberland, its authorised assessment is influenced by the dominant discourse of the 'rural idyll', where planners and conservationists are the experts positioned to maintain the 'green and pleasant land' – as home to the country cottage, with roses round the door.⁶

Established in 1947, planning policies that restrict development in the countryside remain largely in place, with the main pressure being focused

on housing development, which is the focus of this chapter.⁷ However, as previewed by bottom-up processes such as village design statements and parish plans, Parkinson and Pendlebury also remind us that Britain's more recent planning turn to localism (with the introduction of the Localism Act of 2011 and a new National Planning Policy Framework in 2012) supports *community-informed* planning and preservation processes, which have enjoyed higher take-up in rural as opposed to urban areas.⁸ We may then speculate that localism and subsequent practice might shift the dominant protectionist discourse. However, research suggests that these community plans do not in fact provide any radical departure from the traditional protectionist approach to the countryside.⁹ Thus, as planner-preservationism continues in the planning system, this chapter experiments with embodied ways of exploring housing development in Berwick-upon-Tweed.¹⁰ As developed with an artist-in-residence, the research focuses on the experience of heritage and as such contributes to our understanding of the interplay between tangible and more intangible notions of heritage as 'living cultures'.¹¹

The origination of artist-in-residency programmes is often attributed to the Artist Placement Group (APG). Conceived by Barbara Steveni in 1965 and established a year later with John Latham and others, APG promoted the 'placement' of artists in organisations. In artistic discourse, APG is particularly known for its memorable statement: 'context is half the work'.¹² This statement pronounces their ambition to reframe the traditional patronage relationship with artists, to rather 'integrate artists into a participatory role in business matters and decision-making at their host organizations'.¹³ Forming the Incidental Unity in 2016 (with funding from Arts Council England, Flat Time House, the University of Westminster, and the University of the Arts, London), Steveni and colleagues have recently returned to consider the ongoing relevance of APG's approach. Inspired by this return to APG, this chapter considers Belgian artist Sander Van Raemdonck's residency in Berwick as a 'placement'. We give particular attention to CRE as the placement 'organisation'. With the notion of 'half of the work' in mind, we also consider how Sander *participates in* CRE research, with a focus on instances of intersection between Sander's placement and rural planning practice in the 'context' of Berwick-upon-Tweed.¹⁴ In opposition to the canonised or authorised discourse, heritage is increasingly described as relational.¹⁵ This chapter suggests that the research placement supports a relational understanding of the heritage experience.

Artist in residence

Nowadays residencies are commonplace in urban contexts and also, increasingly, in rural areas. Additional examples of residency programmes in Northumberland include Allenheads Contemporary Arts and Visual Arts in Rural Communities; other UK examples include Deveron Projects (previously

Arts) in Huntly and Art Gene in Barrow-in-Furness.¹⁶ Although rural residencies are prevalent, placements with academic 'organisations' are still relatively rare, which makes the annual CRE collaboration with BVA fairly unique. Funded by Arts Council England, BVA/CRE artists are selected from an international call via an interview panel including art professionals and CRE academics. During their placement, artists are invited to develop work in response to a broad research theme. Previous artists include visual artist Stephanie Misa; photographer and film maker Piotr Piasta; filmmaker and animation director Gemma Burditt; and GÂST, the collaborative practice of visual artists Laura Mahony and Dale Fearnley. As shaped by Menelaos Gkartzios (rural sociologist and planner, CRE) and James Lowther (Head of Visual Art, Berwick Visual Arts), the year in which Sander was appointed the theme was 'Making Homes, Making Rural'. To explore the possibility of Sander's residency in relation to the research of CRE, additional funds were raised from the Newcastle Institute for Social Renewal (NISR). This award supported the expansion of the research team to include Julie Crawshaw (art anthropologist and planner, now Northumbria University) and funding for additional workshop-type activity. Drawing on the 2016 NISR fieldwork collaboration, this chapter was developed by the two authors with Sander Van Raemdonck and James Lowther.

The theme 'Making Homes, Making Rural' is informed by a long tradition of rural housing research in Britain, consisting of interrelated issues around prolonged counter-urbanisation and gentrification processes, and housing affordability and supply,¹⁷ resulting in characteristic inequalities in rural England well debated in rural sociological and planning research. As an artist, and as somebody who has never lived in Britain, Sander was not familiar with this scholarship. So how to start Sander's placement? To begin, Menelaos discussed some issues in rural housing with Sander (based on selective English case studies in academic papers and the British press), and Sander joined monthly research meetings at CRE and shared his work and ideas with rural social scientists. From here Sander's first thought was that the way the research would work would be that he would 'make material' and the researchers (Julie and Menelaos) would 'do the research'. After reflecting on this statement, however, Sander began to question the duality of his assumption, '[because] research of *this kind* doesn't work that way'. So, how did this placement work?

Whilst in Berwick, Sander developed two strands of work: firstly, through walking, and secondly through making sculpture, graphic design, and installation, with both strands of work included in an exhibition with Berwick Visual Arts (2015). There is much to explore around the full body of work produced but here, we focus on Sander's walking practice, which manifested in two iterations. Firstly, as what might be described as a '*dérive* inspired' artwork¹⁸ entitled *Guide the Guide*; secondly as a 'walkshop', a method developed by the interdisciplinary research team – inspired by *Guide the Guide* – for engaging

planning and heritage professionals in a sensory encounter with a proposed housing development area of Berwick.

As a way of getting to know Sander's practice, Julie and Sander met on three occasions for around four hours walking through and around Berwick. The material drawn on in this chapter includes Julie's ethnographic diary, photographs (taken by a hands-free camera worn around her neck), and audio recordings of the initial meetings with Sander; audio recordings and photographs of *Guide the Guide* and the emerging 'walkshop'; and public documents gathered by Sander in his fieldwork and his communication materials. Evolving from the initial focus on housing in particular, this chapter is structured to explore the points of intersection between Sander's placement and a relational understanding of heritage.

Walking

As a way of getting to know Berwick, Sander walks Berwick, and invites Julie to walk with him. In the words of the phenomenological anthropologists Ingold and Vergunst,

The first steps [they] take are tentative, even experimental, and time passes slowly as [they] attempt them [...]. It is only after quite a few steps, when the feet have found their rhythm and the body its momentum that [they] discover – without being aware of any moment of commencement – that [they] are already walking.¹⁹

As Figure 13.1 illustrates, following cobbles and tarmac, they find their feet together.

Here 'the movement of walking itself is a *way of knowing*'.²⁰ As such, walking has been utilised widely as a method and strategy across both artistic practice and the social sciences.²¹ 'ROAM' (2008) and 'Walk On' (2013) are examples of 'art walking' events focused on 'experiences of walking'.²² The events share historical antecedents with the European avant-garde movement of the Situationist International (1957–1972), who utilized *dérive* as a way to notice the relations of urban space.²³ Through *dérive*, walking (as 'drift') has a historical pathway as a strategy in art practice. Artists of the Situationist International argued that the *dérive* 'required individuals to *set aside* a period of time to walk with *intensified sensitivity* to place, to be more aware of how places attract and repel and how they educe particular types of movements and behaviours'.²⁴

Walking also holds traction across social science disciplines, including rural studies – most particularly amongst feminist scholars.²⁵ As sustained in feminist reworkings of classical pragmatism, and the work of John Dewey in particular, interest in bodies has been reawakened by the 'new' materialist and affect theorists, who continue to refute the linguistic by moving us away from 'culture, cognition and language, towards a focus on corporeality, ontological

Figure 13.1 Sander and Julie on the North bank of the River Tweed before walking over a bridge to Spittal Point. Image credit: Julie Crawshaw (2016).

immanence and affect'.²⁶ Rather than being linguistic, as a *lived* philosophy, pragmatism's core paradigm is *experience* and as such emphasises action and corporeal embeddedness.²⁷ In walking, feet find rhythm and the body has momentum. Where does walking take us?

As acting in and responding to the environment, for feminist pragmatists, bodies are regarded as transactional, where the epidermis is not a rigid border but a crossing between things *outside* the skin and *within* it.²⁸ As such we are taken to transactional space in the sense that objects and humans are '*within* each other in continuous construction'.²⁹ Meanwhile, planning processes are oriented around disembodied objects in the sense that plans-*in-use* are largely disconnected from our experience as bodies-*of-environment*.³⁰ As bodies-*of-movement*, Sander and Julie are not set apart from any 'context' but are *part of* the continuous construction of Berwick. As such, the way Sander's placement intersects with this space is epistemological – as a way of knowing transactional-heritage-experience.

Spittal Point

On one of the occasions when Sander met Julie at Berwick train station, he suggested they walk to Spittal Point, which is an area covering 3.7 hectares

Figure 13.2 Sander and Julie at Spittal Point. Image credit: Julie Crawshaw (2016).

across the Tweed from Berwick centre. When walking he became interested in the area which occupies a very prominent position on the southern bank of the River Tweed which has a long history of industrial and fishing-related activity. It currently incorporates a mix of land use, 'mostly low-grade industrial and storage uses such as car body workshops and residential, predominantly terraced housing'.³¹ As shown in Figure 13.2, amongst the terrain a prominent chimney remains, providing a distinctive landmark that can be viewed from many angles.

As reported in the *Berwick Advertiser* in support of retaining the chimney as a 'memorial to the men and women who worked there', Mr Henry G. McCreath recalls some of the industrial operations that made The Point so busy: the chemical plant that made acid for the factories; the manure works that used potash from Germany, phosphates from North Africa, and nitrogen; and the landed herring that produced ammonia sourced from bones and guts dissolved in sulphuric acid. Because the entrance to the Tweed Dock was tricky, Mr McCreath states that it was the advent of the big ships which started to 'sound the death knell' for the Spittal Point industry.³²

Impelled by his interest in the area, Sander writes to the land owner:

[Dear Landowner] As I managed to find my way around town, I walked along this peculiar cleared out industrial site at Spittal Point. Initially

I didn't have a clue of what former industry had taken place at the site, why the site was cleared out and why a tall brick chimney was still standing. Since I was determined to find out, I undertook a survey to learn more about it. And eventually I discovered that the area is awaiting a future development but only progresses slowly in the direction of a renewed quarter. After some further digging I found out that you are the owner of the site. [...]

Not that I'm looking for a position in the process of development and actual building. I am attracted to the formal aspects of the debate (if we could speak of a debate) that is taking place at a very slow pace, and in a vaguely public atmosphere. As an artist *I work with imagery to facilitate communication* [our emphasis]. I strongly believe that there could be a lively interaction among the many stakeholders of the site that would enable the constructive discussion, leading to a successful development.

The letter was unable to be delivered as the addressee had 'gone away', but it helpfully previews some issues surrounding the development plans for the area and, more critically, it also outlines the way Sander understands his role as 'facilitating communication'. In relation to the development plan the *Design and Access Statement* includes an Illustrative Masterplan that includes terrace housing, refurbishment of existing buildings, and a larger parking court, but these plans have not yet materialised.³³ In 2012 some indication was given for the impasse: opposition to the housing as 'not appropriate'; risk of flooding to the car park area; and disagreement about the chimney being kept.³⁴ How, then, might Sander's strategy of communication interface with this situation? To help our ongoing articulation, it is helpful to note that Dewey was particularly struck by the affinity between the words 'communication', 'community', and 'common' – as communication is the way in which community come to possess things *in common*, so having things in common is not the prerequisite, but the outcome of communication. As Ingold argues, 'to communicate with people is to common with them in the participatory process of living together'.³⁵ So how might Sander 'common with' to fashion things in common? And how might this mode of communication have import in this development process?

Guide the Guide

Sander's strategy to facilitate communication led to *Guide the Guide* – a walking art event for residents in and around Spittal Point. Sander distributed public invitations for people to assemble at a car park at 2pm on 12 March 2016 where he gave everyone a 'map' with 22 images on it and a list of image names, which he referred to as 'stops' on the tour. As shown in the image below (Figure 13.3), the map constituted a mosaic of significant (i.e. the chimney) and insignificant (i.e. a corner, a street mast, a bench) planned stops,

Figure 13.3 Julie holding the *Guide the Guide* 'map' made by Sander. Image credit: Julie Crawshaw (2016).

which as such mixed 'identified' and 'unidentified' authorised material heritage locations. At every 'stop' Sander raised questions for responses from the walkers. Around twenty people attended, comprising residents and visitors as well as Menelaos, Julie and James, and another academic from CRE. It lasted for more than two hours.

On the way (see Figure 13.4 below), people talked about a number of topics: how the chimney is a point of tension, equally loved and loathed, and whether it should be preserved, demolished, or transformed; the history of the site (i.e. landownership) and memories of an industry now gone; types of housing development and the style of housing they would like to see in the area; and that they were cold and that the clothes they were wearing were not warm enough (resulting in Julie sharing her spare layer with a woman in a blue felt coat).

The group comprised bodies that felt the cold and wet whilst breathing salty air. The maps we held struggled in the wind and coats were equally compromised – pushed around our backs and legs by the gusts that sometimes whipped sand round our faces. From here to suggest this *Guide the Guide* experience can be encompassed entirely in that which was said about the material heritage locations is not the full story. Rather, in line with Sander's scribed ambition, the way we 'communicate' is not simply verbal but also *takes*

Figure 13.4 Participants of *Guide the Guide*. Image credit: Julie Crawshaw (2016).

place through bodily transaction. When holding the tropes of classical pragmatism we are not standing *on* Spittal Point as spectators *of* a post-industrial scene. But how do we know in practice? We know through our bodily interface – through walking. Walking makes us aware of ourselves as *part of* the environment; this is how we ‘common with’. ‘The context’ is *not separate*; it is ‘half the work’, because it cannot be divorced from it. This is the point.

Placement

For most bodies, ‘going for a walk’ (in some variation) is familiar. If this is the case, we are reminded of our transactions daily, perhaps hourly, even every minute. So why in professional practice do we keep Cartesian distance? Or in other words adhere to dualisms that separate culture from nature as illustrated by the 2008 ‘Design and Access Statement’ that promotes narratives for developing, not *with*, but *on* Spittal as a surface for human endeavour. So how might *Guide the Guide* intersect here? As a noun, any English dictionary will tell us that placement is the action of placing something or someone somewhere. Its etymology is something like ‘that which’ places. Perhaps we can start to consider Sander’s placement as extending through *Guide the Guide* as an action towards considering *that which places* through the transactional body.

Awakened by the resurgence in relational ontology, there is a growing body of scholarship interested in art as a way of ‘mapping relations’.³⁶ In this vein, proposing art can act as a ‘relational diagnostic’,³⁷ our previous work has drawn on the transactional heritage of Dewey’s experiential aesthetics,³⁸ where Dewey regards the art experience as one of transacting the body’s border by suggesting that art alters ‘outer’ physical materials (such as paint, plaster, and plastic) as well as our ‘inner’ emotional selves.³⁹ It is obvious of course that making art makes changes in materials such as marble, plaster, and paint; following from here Dewey asks us to similarly attune with adjustments made to our memories and emotions. His work draws us to understand art *as transactional* – not simply in terms of the relations between objects, and objects and people – but being *within* each other as produced through an exchange of ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ materials. How can planning incorporate transactional *practice*? And what might this mean for heritage valorisation beyond the AHD of tangible material?

Walkshop

Reflecting on the *Guide the Guide* experience induced reflections on how planning might be re-embodied via walking art. Developing from *Guide the Guide*, to experiment with this possibility, the research team developed a second walking event for professionals involved in planning Berwick. As supported by the NISR funding workshop allowance, we called it a ‘walkshop’. The walkshop was attended by the research team, plus Peter, a planner; Annette, a heritage officer; Sally, a visiting artist (who had come to find out and write about Sander’s work); and, Gabriel, an architect and academic (who had developed a student project in Spittal Point a few years earlier). As replicating *Guide the Guide*, Sander handed us the ‘map’ in the Spittal Point car park. As before, we continued our walk from there.

During the ‘walkshop’ the stops acted as prompts for reflection. At the third ‘stop’ Sander introduced a concrete building as a ‘kind of warehouse’. He thought it would be interesting to stop, ‘because it shows what is left of the actual industry’, and told us that one of the participants of *Guide the Guide* had suggested that it should be preserved as architecture of the industrial heritage in the same way as some of the older brick buildings. In response Peter suggests that the warehouse could perhaps be seen as having utilitarian significance and that there are aerial photographs from the 1930s that show ‘a density to it’.⁴⁰ There is no sense of that density now because ‘it has become a kind of non place’.

Annette continues to develop from Peter’s reflection on ‘density’ by saying that whilst she and colleagues were undertaking an assessment of the conservation area (called a Character Appraisal) ‘people were saying they missed the sounds and the noise and the rhythm of life that industrial processes

bring; and they want to see the docks used again because of that'.⁴¹ With the 'comings and goings and sounds', it was 'a hive of activity' she says. 'But it must have been horribly smelly', prompts Peter. 'It is interesting' she replies, 'because when you do these types of character appraisal it is the *sensory things* [our emphasis] that people convey to you. And smells often come up. That is what they *describe* to you.'

As introduced in the 'Spittal Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy', character appraisals are undertaken to assess conservation areas, which can:

derive from many factors including individual buildings, building groups and their relationship with open spaces, architectural detailing, materials, views, colours, landscaping, street furniture and so on [...] and can also draw on more abstract notions such as sounds, local environmental conditions and historical changes.⁴²

At the time of this 2008 document there were twelve conservation areas in the Berwick-upon-Tweed borough; Spittal was the smallest of the conservation areas with its special character determined 'by its long life as a fishing village and then as a popular seaside resort'.⁴³

In a town planning context, designation as a conservation area is significant because the local council is given a duty to exercise its planning powers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. The Management Strategy for Spittal is expressed as focusing on living conservative issues. The 'working list' for the 'identification & protection' issues starts with '1A: The Importance of Environmental Wealth', which is included as part of its valuable 'human heritage'. It is also suggested that to include conservation areas in human heritage would help to strengthen the application of this policy 'in line with the passionate enthusiasm for built heritage that was evident in the consultation carried for this Management Strategy'.⁴⁴ In other words, the conservation management strategy for Spittal has an ambition to bring together 'human (or intangible "living") heritage' and 'built (tangible) heritage'.

Nearing the end of the 'walkshop' Annette turned to Sander and said:

It is interesting that your practice is all about walking. And now we are outside and walking we are having a *different* sort of conversation and it is good as a group doing that. Conversations are different when you have them in the environment. You cannot just parachute in to a place, you need to get *under the skin*.

So how might artistic practice get under the skin of a place?

Under the skin

Although there is scant mention of artistic research in planning studies, the notion of *art as research* has taken hold within and beyond artistic disciplines.⁴⁵ The visual, literary, and performing arts are increasingly framed as modes of inquiry and this turn to research in the arts has nurtured interest from across social science disciplines, including anthropology and human geography.⁴⁶ Following our previous work, Sander's 'placement' with CRE/BVA further establishes artistic research in rural planning specifically.⁴⁷ As developed in the placement, the major research component in this chapter is *Guide the Guide*.⁴⁸ So what is the intersection of Sander's placement with planning Berwick-upon-Tweed?

Whilst placed in the 'world heritage' of Berwick-upon-Tweed, Sander's departure from CRE's rural housing research initiated interest in the planning of Spittal Point, which in social science terms initiated 'primary research' undertaken by Sander. This included walking, surveying public documents, meeting with community members and planning officials, and writing a letter to the landowner. From this 'survey' (Sander's word) we find that Spittal has a long history with industrial and fishing-related activity and that a housing development within a larger Master Plan has faltered. So what next? Introducing his role as one of 'facilitating communication', Sander's letter to the landowner suggests that he is interested in contributing a 'lively interaction among the many stakeholders'. The stakeholders that participated in the 'lively *interaction*' of the artwork and ensuing walkshop comprised residents, visitors, artists, and academics.

In *Guide the Guide* and the walkshop, we might say that the 'lively interaction' took place through walking punctuated by predefined 'stops' where Sander talked briefly about the building or structure for others to reflect and develop from. In the example given, the third stop on the walkshop generated reflection on the prior 'density' of the warehouse 'comings and goings', including how smelly it must have been. This inspired Annette to share that when engaging people in character appraisals they often *describe* smells. She notes later that walking in the environment (during the walkshop) engenders a *different sort of conversation* – that gets under the skin of a place. As bodily, *Guide the Guide* offers a 'different sort of conversation', through the *experience* of being *in situ*. As following a Deweyan sensibility rather than 'lively *interaction*', we underscore this conversation as 'lively *transaction*' that takes place *within* the heritage space (as 'half the work'). Thus, what is produced is an experience of the heritage space that transacts between 'built' and 'lived' or more sensory and emotional notions of heritage.⁴⁹

Transactional end note

For many years Berwick-upon-Tweed has hosted artist in residency programmes. But what do they do? Inspired by the Artist Placement Group,

we have explored how an artwork produced by Sander Van Raemdonck during his 'placement' intersected with the rural research of CRE as the 'organisation'. Departing from housing research, we have traced how *Guide the Guide*, as an artwork, was utilised as a transactional mode of communication that enlivened a sensory 'description' of the heritage space of Spittal Point via a 'bodily conversation' – through walking. We suggest that the transactional mode of this walking practice couples with the word *placement*, in the way that *Guide the Guide* and the walkshop *place* participants *within* Spittal, challenging any notion of walking or developing *on* it.

Participating in *Guide the Guide* and the walkshop made space for transaction. As recognising the continuity of bodies *within* the environment it contributes a feminist pragmatist orientation to CRE's research in rural housing (and rural planning more widely) that makes connection with heritage studies. We acknowledge of course that Sander has not introduced walking to rural studies or heritage studies, but the stops and starts of *Guide the Guide* offered punctuation that reminded planners Peter and Annette (as the designated experts) and us that conversation and as such conservation are not simply verbal.⁵⁰ From here this bodily transaction can support the Conservation Area Management Strategy by paying attention to the way 'human heritage' is *part of* 'built heritage' and vice versa. Overall, strategies for being transactional bodies *of* transactional space (such as *Guide the Guide*) support a more sensory mode of conversation towards the intersection of human–built heritage in rural planning practice and in turn support a more a transactional valorisation process through engaging bodies within the environment.

Notes

- 1 Martin Wainwright, 'Forget Scotland and England; Berwick upon Tweed is Pondering Going Global', *The Guardian*, 1 February 2012 [accessed 9 October 2019].
- 2 Adam Menuge, *Berwick-upon-Tweed: Three Places, Two Nations, One Town*, (Swindon: English Heritage, 2014).
- 3 For information on the Centre for Rural Economy, visit <www.ncl.ac.uk/cre/>.
- 4 Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa, 'Introduction', in *Intangible Heritage*, ed. by Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (London: Routledge, 2009).
- 5 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006).
- 6 David Bell, 'Variations on the Rural Idyll', in *Handbook of Rural Studies*, ed. by Paul Cloke, Terry Marsden, and Patrick Mooney (London: Sage, 2006), pp. 149–160; Arthur Parkinson and John Pendlebury, 'Conserving Rural Heritage: The Cases of England and Ireland', in *The Routledge Companion to Rural Planning*, ed. by Mark Scott, Nick Gallent, and Menelaos Gkartzios (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 398–409.
- 7 Parkinson and Pendlebury, 'Conserving Rural Heritage'.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 Parker and Salter (2017), cited in Parkinson and Pendlebury, 'Conserving Rural Heritage'.

- 10 David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998).
- 11 See Denis Byrne, 'A Critique of Unfeeling Heritage', in *Intangible Heritage*, ed. Smith and Akagawa; Marilena Vecco, 'A Definition of Cultural Heritage: From the Tangible to Intangible', *Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 11.3 (2010), 321–324; Smith and Akagawa, 'Introduction'.
- 12 For information on the Artists Placement Group, visit <<https://en.contextis.halfthework.net/about-apg/artist-placement-group/>>.
- 13 Frieze, 'Context is Half the Work', 111 (1 November 2007), <<https://frieze.com/article/context-half-work>> [accessed 9 October 2019].
- 14 In recognition of the practical nature of our collaboration, we have chosen to use the first names of the research collaborators.
- 15 Vecco, 'Definition of Cultural Heritage'.
- 16 See <www.acart.org.uk/>, <<https://varc.org.uk/>>, <www.deveron-projects.com>, <www.art-gene.co.uk>.
- 17 E.g. Rural Housing Policy Review, 'Affordable Housing: A Fair Deal for Rural Communities' (2015), <www.acre.org.uk/cms/resources/afairdealforruralcommunitiesmainreport3-1.pdf> [accessed 25 April 2018]; Madhu Satstangi, Nick Gallent and Mark Bevan, *The Rural Housing Question: Communities and Planning in Britain's Countrysides* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2010); Peter Hetherington, 'Affordable Rural Housing Under Threat', *The Guardian*, 13 January 2015, www.theguardian.com/society/2015/jan/13/affordable-rural-housing-new-threat [accessed 25 April 2018].
- 18 As a walking-based practice utilised by the Situationists; see Simone Hancox, 'Contemporary Walking Practice and the Situationist International: The Politics of Perambulating the Boundaries between Art and Life', *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 22.2 (2012), 237–250.
- 19 Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 3.
- 20 *Ibid.* (our emphasis).
- 21 E.g. Julia Aoki and Ayaka Yoshimizu, 'Walking Histories, Un/Making Places: Walking Tours as Ethnography of Place', *Space and Culture*, 18.3 (2015), 273–284; Jonathan Anderson, 'Talking While Walking: A Geographical Archaeology of Knowledge', *Area*, 36.3 (2004), 254–261.
- 22 As discussed in Sarah Pink et al., 'Walking across Disciplines: From Ethnography to Arts Practice', *Visual Studies*, 25.1 (2010), 1–7.
- 23 Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture* (London: Routledge 2002).
- 24 Hancox, 'Contemporary Walking Practice and the Situationist International', p. 240 (our emphasis).
- 25 See an example and associated literature in Rodriguez Castro, 'The Embodied Countryside: Methodological reflections in Place', *Sociologia Ruralis*, 58.2 (2018), 293–311.
- 26 Clara Fischer, 'Revisiting Feminist Matters in the Post-Linguistic Turn: John Dewey, New Materialisms, and Contemporary Feminist Thought', in *New Feminist Perspectives on Embodiment*, ed. by Clara Fischer and Luna Dolezal (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 83.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- 28 Shannon Sullivan, *Living across and through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), p. 24.

- 29 Gary Bridge, 'A Transactional Perspective on Space', *International Planning Studies*, 18.3–4 (2013), 304–320.
- 30 Simone Abram, *Culture and Planning* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).
- 31 Royal Carlton Estates, 'Design and Access Statement: Spittal Point, Berwick upon Tweed' (2008).
- 32 'Leave Spittal Chimney as a Memory to Those Who Lived There', *Berwick Advertiser*, Wednesday 9 March 2005.
- 33 Royal Carlton Estates, 'Design and Access Statement'.
- 34 'Long Awaited Plans for Spittal Point Get All Clear', *Berwick Advertiser*, Saturday 10 March 2012.
- 35 Tim Ingold, 'On Human Correspondence', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 23.1 (2016), 9–27 (p. 15).
- 36 E.g. Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (eds.), *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a 'New Materialism' through the Arts* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2013).
- 37 Julie Crawshaw and Menelaos Gkartzios, 'Getting to Know the Island: Artistic Experiments in Rural Community Development', *Journal of Rural Studies*, 43 (2016), 134–144.
- 38 See also Julie Crawshaw, 'Art as Rural Planning Inquiry', in *Routledge Companion to Rural Planning*, eds. Scott, Gallent, and Gkartzios; Julie Crawshaw, 'Island Making: Planning Artistic Collaboration', *Landscape Research*, 43.2 (2018), 211–221.
- 39 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (Perigree: New York, 1934), p. 15.
- 40 As stated by Sander in conversation with Julie and Menelaos.
- 41 In this section we are drawing on fieldnotes from the empirical activity. As a strategy to involve the reader more closely in the fieldwork experience, when using the empirical ethnographic material the tense is changed to the present.
- 42 Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council Planning Department, 'Spittal Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Strategy' (2008), p. 6.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 45 Sullivan, *Living across and through Skins*.
- 46 Crawshaw, 'Art as Rural Planning Inquiry'; Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); Harriet Hawkins, *For Creative Geographies* (London: Routledge, 2013).
- 47 Crawshaw, 'Art as Rural Planning Inquiry'.
- 48 Sander Van Raemdonck, *Guide the Guide* (Berwick-upon-Tweed, 2016).
- 49 Byrne, 'Critique of Unfeeling Heritage'.
- 50 By which we mean conversation can reach beyond the spoken word to engage the senses.

Bruce Nauman at York St Mary's

A hermeneutic enquiry into 'the intersection'

Anna Powell

Introduction

What was, until 1975, a functioning church dating back to Saxon times, St Mary's Church in the historic city of York has been used as an exhibition space for contemporary art since 2004. In 2013 it temporarily housed a selection of Bruce Nauman's celebrated works, becoming one of more than 75 venues in the UK to participate in the ARTIST ROOMS series – a touring programme showcasing collections of over 1,600 works of modern and contemporary art across a range of sites.¹

This chapter centres around a hermeneutic approach to explore the nebulous idea of the intersection of contemporary art and heritage, drawing on my own perceptions as a visitor to the exhibition several years ago. Having no particular prior knowledge about the site or its history, nor any in-person encounters with the specific works being exhibited (I was familiar with them only through photographs and publications), I draw on elements of the works exhibited to address the interpretive possibilities that exist, arguably, in part at least, as a result of their placement within what was once a religious site and subsequently a key heritage centre in the city. The chapter reflects upon the site to consider the potential impact of its architecture and associated historical-religious significance upon the viewer's experience of the works, works which were created between 1972 and 1999 and so were, for the purposes of this exhibition, non-site-specific – assuming Robert Barry's 1969 definition of the term site-specific to mean artwork 'made to suit the place in which it was installed'.² It questions the significance of this particular juxtaposition of artworks and site to suggest that the contemporary art–heritage 'intersection' might simultaneously be considered a juncture and a tangent; an infiltration and a synchronisation, giving rise to moments of confrontation as well as illumination.

Threaded through these discussions are reflections on writings which help to address the idea of this intersection further, including Nauman's own reflections on his works. It also looks back to Stephen Greenblatt's 1988 essay 'Resonance and Wonder' to examine the idea that artworks can be exhibited

in such a way that they resonate with meanings beyond their own physical properties, and/or that they can invoke a sense of astonishment or 'wonder' in the viewer, one which seizes their attention and, in turn, leads them to consider the work's wider resonations.³

Finally, the chapter recognises the fact that St Mary's is now deconsecrated and exists almost exclusively as a modern and contemporary art venue and a cornerstone of York Museums Trust. As it approaches its third decade with this changed identity, the chapter addresses the potential ambiguity in considering St Mary's a heritage space. Drawing upon Nezar Alsayyad's critique of the term 'heritage', it concludes by examining the idea that heritage might well be as nebulous a concept as 'the intersection'. It goes on to ask whether 'intersection' might, in fact, be a misleading word to use in this context, as it postulates heritage and art as two separate and independently functioning, perhaps even mutually exclusive, entities.

Part I: interpreting Nauman's works within a specific heritage context

Since the dawn of curatorial practice it has been well understood that the way art is exhibited, including the conditions and characteristics of its site, can have a significant impact upon how it is interpreted. Anthropologist Alfred Gell, in noting the relationship between viewers and artworks, underlines how 'art objects can have many [different] receptions', depending upon how and where they are encountered.⁴ This chapter does not aim to address Duchampian dialogues around the respective roles of the artist and viewer in interpreting artworks – that is, it does not aim to ask whether it is possible for the artist to perform a transubstantiative transference of meaning to the viewer.⁵ Rather, using the specific example of Nauman's exhibition at York St Mary's, it aims to explore how a consideration of the intersection of art and site might be particularly significant when it comes to understanding the relationship between the work and the viewer and, specifically, the relationship between contemporary art and what we might consider to be heritage.⁶ As noted by Michael Auping in his essay 'Metacommunicator', much of Bruce Nauman's work concerns relationships, including those that are 'psychological and linguistic', as well as those that are 'formal and material'.⁷

The exhibition of Nauman's works for ARTIST ROOMS at York St Mary's, covering a 30-year period of Nauman's oeuvre, included a selection of his neon works such as the text-based *Violins Violence Silence* (1981–1982); video works including *Good Boy Bad Boy* (1985); and works in metal and stone, such as the cast iron *Three Dead End Adjacent Tunnels, Not Connected* (1981), the bronze, silver solder, and copper work *Untitled (Hand Circle)* (1996), and *Partial Truth*, a text work carved into granite. The exhibition, according to Jennifer Alexander, York St Mary's Curator of Fine Art, provided 'a chance

to consider [Nauman's] work in the beautiful and unique architectural context of York St Mary's'.⁸ She added in an interview for *The Press*, August 2013:

At first, Nauman's pieces might seem incongruous at St Mary's, but you can see them as spiritual pieces, and in terms of the language content, churches are about communication [...].⁹

Dave Beech discusses artist Liam Gillick's concern with 'how the visual environment structures behaviour', and acts as 'a backdrop to activity',¹⁰ while Miwon Kwon considers how the meaning of works of art is, to a great extent, produced by 'the contingencies of [...] context'.¹¹ It was almost impossible, upon visiting this exhibition, not to begin understanding the works in relation to their surroundings and, as is clear from Alexander's comments, their curation took into account in no small measure their plentiful potential for opening up dialogues with the site. As suggested by Alexander, the immediate perception upon entering the building at St Mary's was one of the incompatibility of work and site and, even, a sense of unease as a result of this: the vivid neon of *Violins Violence Silence* and the repetitive, increasingly sinister indictments of the video loop for *Good Boy Bad Boy* in many ways jarred with their surroundings, simultaneously debasing and emphasising the site's serenity. This feeling was heightened by the temporary partitions installed to provide a clean backdrop for certain exhibits, which created the impression of a stage set. This remarkable sense of disparity between the contemporary and the heritage, creating the perception that the one was impacting upon the interpretive possibilities of the other, occurred in numerous ways: for me, the presence of Nauman's works brought about what I can only describe in such contradictory terms as a sort of comfortable reverence for the site, making me take note of its sturdy, enduring frankness, alongside its vast vaulted ceilings and exquisite stained glass, features which seemed to be both compromised and accentuated by the visually conspicuous artworks which began to dominate – and yet simultaneously enhance – the sensory experience of the site. The installation of the works appeared, in some ways, to present an intrusion into the site, while also presenting such a level of visual and aural contrast to it, that the attitudes and emotions that surfaced in response to the site's architecture were somehow heightened. Throughout the visit my impression of the site oscillated between this feeling of awe and admiration for the site, and a sense of its antiquation; the impression that it was somehow overshadowed by, or residual in relation to what was happening around it. At the same time, the site added something significant to the works' visual and aural impact, drawing attention to the sleek lines, polished surfaces, and manufactured materials that comprised the works, and allowing the sounds emerging from the audio pieces, as well as from the fractured voices of the exhibition's visitors, to reverberate captivantly through the atmosphere. And this was just at first glance, before their layered messages started to surface and their

possible meanings began to be gleaned in relation to their unusual setting. It was a complex dynamic.

Mieke Bal's 2006 essay 'Exposing the Public' discusses the fact that visitors will have expectations about what they might see within certain spaces, which will inevitably affect what they see when they enter them.¹² Similarly, Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar, in *Place* (2005), consider the ways in which people's preconceptions about places help to guide them in their understanding of what happens – or what usually happens – within them, and, thus, how unusual juxtapositions can subvert or in some way problematise the relationship between artwork, site, and viewer.¹³ Miller discusses how art galleries are very much coded spaces, that is, specific sorts of places where specific sorts of things happen, and where visitors will often have an idea in advance about what they might expect to see, and the kinds of experiences they might expect to have there. Miller states that everyone is 'acutely aware of the underlying norms' within certain types of space such as art galleries.¹⁴ The same could be said of heritage sites – that certain expectations are held by those who visit them about what they will encounter during a visit. It is interesting to consider, then, how the placement of contemporary art within a heritage site and the resulting amalgamation of sensory experiences that such a juxtaposition creates, might play to, or problematise, these expectations, even for

Figure 14.1 York St Mary's, interior view. Image credit: © York Museums Trust.

Figure 14.2 Bruce Nauman, *Untitled (Hand Circle)*, 1996. Phosphorous bronze, silver solder, copper, and steel. Image credit: ARTIST ROOMS National Galleries of Scotland and Tate. Acquired jointly through The d'Offay Donation with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund 2008. © Bruce Nauman/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2019.

those visitors who are aware in advance that a heritage site contains a contemporary art exhibition. This becomes further complicated when considering the merged identity of York St Mary's: simultaneously a heritage site and an art gallery.

Nauman's work *Untitled (Hand Circle)* (1996), a silver solder and copper sculpture of Nauman's disembodied hands, interlocked to form a circle and reminiscent of the symbolic Ouroboros – the serpent eating its own tail – took on specific and poignant religious and spiritual meanings in the context of St Mary's. It summoned in my mind a whole host of ideas: eternity; birth and death cycles; Creation; the hand of God; friendship; protection; humanity and incarceration. Alexander noted about this work when in situ at York St Mary's, 'According to Nauman, circles make you feel safe.'¹⁵ When paired, however, with the exhibited work *Raw Material Washing Hands, Normal* (1996), a video loop showing Nauman's frenzied, repetitive hand-washing routine, the overriding impression for both works was more one of unease, arousing suggestions of uncleanness, ungodliness, and betrayal. The eponymous artwork featuring the words *Partial Truth* (1997), carved into granite, was subject to a similar effect. Its location alongside the church's tombstones set up an immediate narrative with these objects, provoking a suggestion of memorials, ideas around honour, death, life, and the afterlife, asking the viewer to question what we consider to be fact and what we consider to be fiction, as well as presenting the seeming oxymoron that is a 'partial truth' in respect of some of these concepts.

Perhaps the most interesting example for me, within this art-heritage dichotomy, was Nauman's neon work *Violins Violence Silence*. The garish light that emanated from it, and the buzzing, hissing sound of the light tubes

Figure 14.3 Bruce Nauman, *Raw Materials Washing Hands, Normal (A of A/B)*, 1996; *Raw Materials Washing Hands, Normal (B of A/B)*, 1996. Video, 2 monitors, colour and sound. Image credit: ARTIST ROOMS National Galleries of Scotland and Tate. Acquired jointly through The d'Offay Donation with assistance from the National Heritage Memorial Fund and the Art Fund 2008. © Bruce Nauman/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2019.

as they intermittently blinked on and off, created an immediate sense of discord with its surroundings (which was presumably once a silent, reverent space) and through all the associations we might have with neon tube lighting – that which is kitsch, or cheap; advertising signage, the bar, the brothel.¹⁶ And yet, as noted by Alexander, when situated within the walls of York St Mary's, its loosely

triangular, three-sided form, generated by the positioning of overlapping pieces of text, brought to mind the holy trinity. This idea resonated further through the work situated in the centre of the exhibition: *Three Dead End Adjacent Tunnels, Not Connected*, a large sculptural piece again featuring a triangular form and comprising three elongated hollow triangular prisms, reminiscent of M.C. Escher's Möbius loops and impossible walkways. Both of these works presented a visual contrast to their medieval surroundings, and yet, when reconsidered, elements of them also seemed to 'fit' with what was happening around them. The weighty bulk of *Three Dead End Adjacent Tunnels, Not Connected* seemed to situate it as a potential permanent fixture in the space, its tarnished surfaces reaffirmed by the aged, eroded stone that housed it. When viewed with this idea in mind, the bright neon glow of *Violins Violence Silence* could perhaps also be seen to echo or reflect back – as opposed to being in competition with – the church's dazzlingly colourful feature window.

Arguably, *Violins Violence Silence*, like Nauman's other works exhibited at York St Mary's, could be interpreted, with or without the church setting, as a nod to or even a direct address to religiosity, depending what associations the viewer chooses to make with the works. Their location within the church setting, however, undoubtedly enhanced and guided the direction that interpretation might take. The complexity of *Violins Violence Silence* when shown in any context is noted by Kenneth Baker, in his essay 'Nauman Was the Man to Watch'. He states:

[*Violins Violence Silence*] links the cynical simplifications of the shop sign with a sense of society, such as we might get from news media, as an alternation among the violins of official culture, the violence of the streets, and the silence of an isolated private life.¹⁷

His assessment of this work as an interjection between high and low culture, and public and private life, is, though, increasingly interesting when considering the impact of its placement within such a heritage context: Auping further notes Nauman's interest in 'the tensions that exist when private and public spaces overlap'.¹⁸ The church is perhaps one of the best examples of architecture in which the public and the private coexist, with both very private contemplation and very public exaltation meeting under one roof. Auping goes on to explain:

Many of [Nauman's] works have explored ways of instilling 'anxieties and subtle discomfort' in a person's relationship to a space. [...] Nauman uses architecture as a metaphor for the human body, containers to be turned inside out.¹⁹

In the York St Mary's exhibition, the concurrence of Nauman's visually and aurally arresting works alongside the stark fragments of white cube,

infiltrated by the vast swathes of stone and coloured glass that interjected in each and every view, seemed to affirm these sentiments: in many ways this work, and others in the exhibition, could have been made for the space at York St Mary's, so fitting were these dialogues around the friction between public and private, and within the visual-aural peculiarities of the experience.

Kwon states that art which 'give[s] itself up to its environmental context, being formally directed or determined by it' might be considered 'site-specific'.²⁰ In many ways Nauman's work did, from a hermeneutic perspective, 'give itself up' to its environment in this exhibition; perhaps a better definition of site-specificity in this context, then, than the one referenced at the start of this chapter.

Even those pieces which incorporated text seemed to speak to – or quarrel with – the site as if they had been made to be shown there. I assumed that, from a semiotic perspective, the meanings within the textual content of these works would have had cognitive dominance over any alternative readings. I expected that this would limit their ability to be otherwise shaped by their context within St Mary's, but this was not the case. Rather, Nauman's text-based works foregrounded the precariousness of language, presenting themselves as linguistic conundrums that continually unsettled their own meanings. Like so many of Nauman's works, when their numerous interpretive possibilities were considered, these examples seemed to present a homage to a post-structuralist distrust of language. In *Violins Violence Silence*, the linguistic message, not easily legible, but impossible to ignore, immediately obliged the viewer to begin trying to decipher Nauman's intentions for the work in relation to their environment. The layout of the text confuses the way this work can be read, with the words overlapping and set backwards as well as forwards, their brevity provoking 'confusion through concision'.²¹ Was the work doing a violence to an assumedly silent space? Was the complex tripartite construction of the work a way of asking us to keep rereading and reinterpreting? Just like the non-linguistic works featured within the exhibition, the text-based works at St Mary's continually oscillated between referring to, and contradicting, their environment. Alexander recognises the changeable response in viewers as they witnessed Nauman's works, and stated, when discussing how she selected the exhibition pieces:

The spirituality element is [in some of the works] more underlying but in works like the 1985 video *Good Boy Bad Boy*, with its two television sets side by side, you have a man and a woman repeating phrases and making statements about what it is to be human. It affirms how in our lives, we all eat, we all love, we all do good and bad things, we all have fun and get bored. What's interesting in this video is that when the two actors repeat what they say over and over, they get [increasingly] angry and aggressive and that alters the meaning. It manipulates the language, and what then becomes important is the viewer's changing reaction, which is crucial to Nauman's work.²²

Figure 14.4 Bruce Nauman, *Violins Violence Silence*, 1981–1982. Image credit: ARTIST ROOMS National Galleries of Scotland and Tate. Lent by Anthony d'Offay 2010. © Bruce Nauman/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York and DACS, London 2019.

According to Auping, with its textual content, Nauman has, in *Violins Violence Silence*, ‘replaced a [neon] [...] sign with a deeply philosophical message’.²³ In other interpretations, however, including Peter Schjeldahl’s summary in his essay ‘Only Connect’, the inclusion of the word ‘silence’ in the material of the work ‘suggests no rhetoric, no conclusion, no sentiment’.²⁴ Perhaps he was alluding to its indefinability here; the fact that it evades transparency

of (singular) meaning. It could, nonetheless, be seen to resonate with its surroundings in the exhibition in question, suggesting meanings and hinting towards conclusions in multiple ways.

It seems relevant here to unpick the word 'resonate' a little further: in his essay 'Resonance and Wonder', Stephen Greenblatt discusses what he describes as 'two distinct models for the exhibition of works of art, one centred on what I shall call resonance, the other on wonder'.²⁵ He continues:

By *resonance* I mean the power of the displayed object to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world, to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which it may be taken by a viewer to stand. By *wonder* I mean the power of the displayed object to stop the viewer in his or her tracks, to convey an arresting sense of uniqueness, to evoke an exalted attention.²⁶

He discusses 'resonance' as depending 'not upon visual stimulation but upon a felt intensity', noting that 'the very term resonance suggests [...] *voices*'.²⁷ In a heritage context, the notion of 'voices' – voices from the past, traces, or ghosts – seems particularly apt. The historical church environment undoubtedly affected the ways in which the meanings of these works resonated; their dialogues with the space around them being almost audible. In the context of Greenblatt's ideas, the disparity between the characteristics of the artworks and the site arguably also added to the works' ability to provoke a sense of wonder; to captivate the viewer, with their unusual context nurturing their essence of uniqueness. In 'Raw Materials', Emma Dexter notes how Nauman's works often intentionally set in motion dialogues with their surroundings. She comments, 'An engagement with language and space runs like a continuous thread through Bruce Nauman's oeuvre'.²⁸ For me, Nauman's works were in a continuous state of negotiation with the space around them at York St Mary's, and they spoke directly of contradiction and vacillation – between religiousness and secularity, public and private, old and new, harmony and discord. Even 'art' and 'heritage'.

Part 2 – interrogating 'the intersection'

While much of my experience of this exhibition was about trying to understand, from a hermeneutic perspective, the ways in which the unusual juxtaposition of Bruce Nauman's art and York St Mary's Church functioned together, or performed to each other, what became most interesting was the fact that they simultaneously did, and did not, act upon each other in such simplistic terms. Rather, they contradicted and complemented each other continually. Interestingly, to visualise the internal architecture of York St Mary's Church without the works present was not difficult in the least; however, to imagine the emotional and sensory responses to the site with Nauman's works

removed from it – and to imagine how Nauman's works might be read in an alternative context – was much more problematic. The intersection of these seemingly disparate elements of culture had deemed them somehow perpetually connected in my mind, despite the fact that in any other context they might be so visually and conceptually disparate. In bringing contemporary art and heritage together, such exhibitions can be seen to create an altered encounter; one which subverts our prior understanding of, and undermines our expectations about, both the site and the artwork, and how we might understand and relate to them. They might be seen to destabilise each other; to jar with incongruity, and yet simultaneously to cohere, their very coexistence in one space and as part of the same exhibition and site obliging them to share the floor, both physically and conceptually. It forces them to become part of an experience that cannot, thereafter, be divided easily into two mutually exclusive ideas. Perhaps another way of thinking about this is to suggest that to take contemporary art out of the traditional gallery setting and place it within a heritage site is not so much to set in motion a complete paradigm shift for how both the works and the site might be understood. Rather, it is to expand and enhance the interpretive possibilities of an experience that can no longer be compartmentalised but must be conceived as a whole. This idea evokes Greenblatt's statement that 'resonance, like nostalgia, is impure, a hybrid forged in the barely acknowledged gaps, the caesurae, between words' and their meanings.²⁹ The notion that Nauman's art and the heritage of York St Mary's 'intersect', then, is indisputably problematic.

Nauman describes how, for him, the most interesting art begins at the point where taxonomical clarity – which he sees from a semiotic perspective as being determined by language – begins to dissolve, and he uses the term 'Metacommunication messages' to describe this moment; a term which 'suggests the existence of porous boundaries' within a communication system.³⁰ He goes on to explain:

I think the point where language starts to break down as a useful tool for communication is the same edge where poetry or art occurs. [...] I think art forms in general are most interesting when they function in a similar way. [...] Art is interesting to me when [it] doesn't read the way we are used to.³¹

Interestingly, and not dissimilarly from Nauman's comments, Nezar Alsayyad, in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage*, discusses the benefits of what he calls a 'child's-eye' approach to understanding heritage.³² He describes how 'one is directed to look at a multi-sensory apprehension of the environment, rather than a narrow cognitive, *categorical* and ocular gaze'.³³ With this idea in mind, the inclusion of contemporary art within a heritage site, such as the Nauman exhibition at York St Mary's, would, it seems, further support the notion of the exhibition being a part of that environment, rather

than – with regard to its interpretation at least – being considered separate from it. Their ideas here are also reminiscent of Greenblatt's suggestion that instability or, as he calls it, 'precariousness', is 'a rich source of resonance'.³⁴ Greenblatt, however, explains how 'resonance' is not necessarily the result of the dissolution of categories, but more a case of the art-viewing environment, in whatever form it might take, forming a relationship with the exhibited art object, one which opens up dialogues and provokes (at times self-referential) questions about artwork and site. He writes:

The effect of resonance does not necessarily depend upon a *collapse* of the distinction between art and non-art [or art and heritage]; it can be achieved by awakening in the viewer a sense of the cultural and historically contingent construction of art [or heritage] objects, the negotiations, exchanges, swerves, and exclusions by which certain representational practices come to be set apart from other representational practices that they partially resemble.³⁵ A resonant exhibition often pulls the viewer away from the celebration of isolated objects and toward a series of implied, only half-visible relationships and questions: How did the objects come to be displayed? [...] What cultural and material conditions made possible their production? What were the feelings of those who originally held [or created] the objects [...]? What is the meaning of the viewer's relationship to those same objects when they are displayed in a specific [site] on a specific day?³⁶

Nauman discusses his ideas around the dissolution of categories further, to suggest that the space where familiarity and expectation begin to collapse into new experiences is the space where true creativity happens. He continues:

If you deal only with what is known, you'll have redundancy. On the other hand, if you deal only with the unknown, you cannot communicate at all. There is always some combination of the two, and it is how they touch each other that makes communication interesting. Too much of one or the other is either unintelligible or boring, but the tension of being almost too far in either direction is very interesting to think about.³⁷

Perhaps therein lies the magic formula; the reason why contemporary art and heritage, when brought together, can be so inspiring, engaging, and, at times, infuriating – yet in ways that are so difficult to determine, or indeed to describe.

Within the particular example of Nauman's work at York St Mary's, there is the added complexity of the fact that, while unquestionably retaining what I will call its 'heritage aesthetic', that is, its medieval architecture, it is possible to argue that the church's present-day function – its exclusive existence as an exhibition space – raises questions about its identity. Is it still a heritage site,

or a contemporary art space, or both? Can it be argued that the ‘heritage’ element of the site has, somehow, been diluted as a result of its current usage being so detached from its original function? This would depend on where and how we choose to define what is being called ‘heritage’ here. Alsayyad notes, ‘Though political, economic and macro-structures shape the cultural categories and social institutions [which determine “heritage”], it is the ‘micro-level, the individual level of the personal story’ which determines the impact of what we might actually understand as heritage.³⁸ He explains further that heritage is not easily definable, but rather can be considered a sort of symbolic inheritance that is less about sites, buildings, locations even, and more a matter of personal narratives and the memories and practices which construct individual(s) histories.³⁹ He states:

The nature of [heritage, of] what is transmitted and what lasts over time is too often narrowly construed as something physical – such as built environment, properties, goods, heirlooms, money etc. Of course, what is really transmitted is knowledge [...], memories, names, associations, stories, privileges, family traditions, memberships and so on.⁴⁰

For her, heritage has ‘a meaning and range comparable to what Edward Tylor called “culture” in his classic anthropological definition’ and presumably comparable to that category within which we can locate ‘art’.⁴¹ ‘Heritage’, like ‘art’, might also, then, be considered equivalent to how Clifford Geertz describes ‘culture’, that is, as:

an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols; a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men [and women] communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.⁴²

It seems impossible to argue that a site which has at any one time been considered a heritage venue can ever escape this title and its associations: heritage status cannot be taken away from a place or object, if it is understood that the value of heritage resides in the cultural – including the historic, spiritual, social, and symbolic – values it embodies and stands to represent, rather than in (or despite) its present-day manifestation. Perhaps this is a similar idea to what Greenblatt alludes to when he speaks of ‘The discordance between viewing and remembering’,⁴³ and perhaps herein also lies a distinct difference between Greenblatt’s concept of ‘resonance’ and Walter Benjamin’s concept of ‘aura’. For Benjamin, ‘aura’, not unlike the concept of ‘numen’ discussed by Nick Cass in Chapter 12, resides in that almost religious experience that transpires when there is authenticity in an encounter – which in turn relies upon the spatial and temporal presence of the thing in question. He explains that it is the ‘presence in time and space’, and the ‘unique existence

at the place where it happens to be', that makes something impart a sense of aura.⁴⁴ Greenblatt, on the other hand, seems to be suggesting that the thing in question, whether it be an artwork or example of heritage, does not have to 'stare back at you' and announce its authenticity so bluntly for it to be able to resonate with the viewer. The 'outward manifestations of the intangible values inherent in cultural heritage' need not, perhaps, be fully present, or operating cooperatively with their original function, for them to resonate *as* heritage.⁴⁵

In his discussions about the creativity that can be discovered in the tensions between the known and unknown, the expected and unexpected, and in the breakdown of clear classifications, Nauman, rather aptly for the discussions in this chapter, underlines the conceptual proximity of what we might call 'art' and what we might call 'archaeology', the latter of which might be interpreted within the increasingly fluid conceptions of 'heritage' presented in this book. He notes that, as our perspectives about artworks change over the years, the one begins to slip into the other. His comments suggest that 'art' might become 'heritage' when our views about it become altered to a point of cognitive unavailability; in other words, when it can no longer function as it once did, and instead becomes a celebration of memory, nostalgia, tradition, and all of the other intangibles that might be said to constitute 'heritage'. He says:

After a while [...] our point of view as to how art can function changes radically enough that the work of art becomes art history. Eventually, our perspective is altered so much that its functions just aren't available to us anymore and art becomes archaeology.⁴⁶

An attempt to understand the significance of the relationship between art and heritage in order to understand how locating contemporary art within a heritage space affects our interpretation of each, is, perhaps, to enter into an impossible conundrum. In the same way that viewing and interpreting art is a very subjective experience, so too the conceptualisation of something as 'heritage' is individually determined. Alsayyad notes that heritage is personal to the point of being 'a large part of identity'.⁴⁷ He adds, 'The concept of heritage requires a sense of ownership, and the consumption of heritage requires a sense of permission'.⁴⁸ Greenblatt also discusses the relevance of 'acquisition and possession' in relation to his concept of an object's or place's 'wonder', and discusses the contradictions inherent in the fact that 'the whole experience of most art museums is about *not* touching, *not* carrying home, *not* owning the marvellous objects. Modern museums', he says, 'in effect at once evoke the dream of possession and evacuate it', which, he suggests, only adds to their desirability, and is an example of the art gallery or museum 'regulating wonder'.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Art and heritage might appear to perform to, or have an effect upon each other, each having, as a result of a multitude of factors, what the viewer might consider to be a 'positive' or 'negative' impact upon how the other might be interpreted. I propose, however, that art and heritage, when brought together in such a way as in Nauman's exhibition at York St Mary's, necessarily function with a level of cohesion, despite the frictions their concurrence might seem to create. Within the multiple interpretations of 'heritage' which exist, being concepts whose definitions rely on the equally indeterminate concepts of 'culture', 'authenticity', and 'value', their cohabitation is also, inevitably, a synchronicity as they form part of a single interpretive experience. Jonathan Harris discusses the self-awareness of much contemporary art, commenting on how often it 'demonstrates that its producers are knowing and ironic'.⁵⁰ He notes the extent to which contemporary artists produce works which intrinsically acknowledge their surroundings, with a view to 'challeng[ing] and invert[ing] assumptions about private and public space and meanings'.⁵¹ Nauman might not, at their conception, have imagined his works exhibited at a venue such as York St Mary's, and yet Harris's comments might explain part of the reason why it was that Nauman's works, in all their seeming incompatibility with their site, worked so powerfully within that environment. An environment in which, it could be said, 'both the poetics and the politics of representation [were] most completely fulfilled in the experience of wonderful resonance and resonant wonder'.⁵²

Notes

- 1 ARTIST ROOMS is jointly owned by the National Galleries of Scotland and Tate. The collection was established through the d'Offay Donation in 2008, with the assistance of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund, and the Scottish and British Governments. ARTIST ROOMS has presented works from forty major international artists since 2008.
- 2 Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), p. 12.
- 3 Stephen Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven Levine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 42–56.
- 4 Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 14.
- 5 Marcel Duchamp, 'The Creative Act', lecture in Houston, April 1957, as quoted in *Art News*, 56.4 (Summer 1957), pp. 28–29.
- 6 Joseph A. Parry and Mark Wrathall, 'Introduction', in *Art and Phenomenology*, ed. by Joseph A. Parry (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 1.
- 7 Michael Auping, 'Metacommunicator', in *Bruce Nauman – Raw Materials*, ed. by Emma Dexter, Unilever Series 5 (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), pp. 8–17 (p. 14).

- 8 Charles Hutchinson, 'Bruce Nauman at York St Mary's, Artist Rooms On Tour, York St Mary's, Castlegate, York, until November 10', *The Press*, 1 August 2013, <www.yorkpress.co.uk/leisure/exhibitions/10586742.bruce-Nauman-at-York-St-Marys-Artist-Rooms-On-Tour-York-St-Marys-Castlegate-York-until-November-10/> [accessed 5 September 2018].
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 Dave Beech, 'Don't Look Now! Art after the Viewer and beyond Participation', in *Searching for Art's New Publics*, ed. by Jeni Walwin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 15–30 (p. 20).
- 11 Kwon, p. 12.
- 12 Mieke Bal, 'Exposing the Public', in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 525–541 (p. 525).
- 13 Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar, *Place*, Art Works series (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005).
- 14 Daniel Miller, 'Materiality: An Introduction', in *Materiality*, ed. by Daniel Miller (London: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 1–50 (p. 5).
- 15 Hutchinson, 'Bruce Nauman at York St Mary's'.
- 16 See Kristina Davies, 'Neon Light Fetish: Neon Light and Signification of Sex Work', *Visual Culture and Gender*, 12 (2017), pp. 17–28.
- 17 Kenneth Baker, 'Nauman Was the Man to Watch', in *Bruce Nauman*, ed. by Robert C. Morgan (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press 2011), pp. 214–216 (p. 215).
- 18 Auping, p. 11.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 20 Kwon, p. 1.
- 21 Sam Throne, 'When I use a word... it means just what I choose it to mean, Alice in Wonderland II', *Tate Etc.*, 23 (1 September 2011), <www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/when-i-use-word-it-means-just-what-i-choose-it-mean> [accessed 9 January 2019].
- 22 Hutchinson, 'Bruce Nauman at York St Mary's'.
- 23 Auping, p. 14.
- 24 Peter Schjeldahl, 'Only Connect', in *Bruce Nauman*, ed. Dexter, pp. 191–194 (at p. 193).
- 25 Greenblatt, p. 42.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 47.
- 28 Emma Dexter, 'Raw Materials', p. 18.
- 29 Greenblatt, p. 47.
- 30 Bruce Nauman, in Auping, p. 293.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Nezar Alsayyad, *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 69–70.
- 33 *Ibid.* (emphasis added).
- 34 Greenblatt, p. 43.
- 35 Emphasis added.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 45.
- 37 Bruce Nauman, *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Word: Writings and Interviews*, ed. by Janet Kraynak (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), p. 354.

- 38 Alsayyad, pp. 68–69.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- 40 *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
- 42 Clifford Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (London: Fontana Press, 1993), pp. 87–125 (p. 89).
- 43 Greenblatt, p. 46.
- 44 Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed. by Clive Cazeaux (London: Routledge, 2011), pp. 322–343 (p. 324).
- 45 Josep-Maria Mallarach, 'Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Landscapes and Seascapes: An Overview', in *Protected Landscapes and Cultural and Spiritual Values*, ed. by Josep Maria Mallarach (Heidelberg: Kasperek, 2008), pp. 9–20 (p. 9).
- 46 Bruce Nauman, in Auping, p. 293.
- 47 Alsayyad, p. 71.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 68.
- 49 Greenblatt, pp. 49–50.
- 50 Jonathan Harris, *Art, Money, Parties: New Institutions in the Political Economy of Contemporary Art* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and Tate Liverpool, 2004), p. 25.
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 Greenblatt, p. 54.

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