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Confusions of meaning in the concept of place:
An investigation into the role place occupies in influencing the production and reception of the artwork.

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DECLARATION

"I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis; that the following thesis is entirely my own work; and that no part of this thesis has been submitted for another degree or qualification".

Signed and dated.

30th November 2017

Andrew G. Sneddon

ABSTRACT

This practice-led research examines ideas surrounding the interpretation of place; the representation and experience of place are explored in my practice and throughout the thesis. The practice and thesis develop an interdependent relationship where one informs the other and each provides a critical platform whereby existing beliefs are brought into question and new ideas emerge. During the research period the practice is tested against different circumstances in a variety of situations and novel responses are generated. The thesis critically analyses approaches to interpreting place through a number of formats and a variety of sources. Both practice and theory are examined through peer-reviewed conference papers, artist-in-residence programmes and publications allowing new ideas to be explored and scrutinized by the academy.

A working method that recognizes the importance and usefulness of serendipity and sagacity is established, bringing together my practice and the theoretical scope of the research. My primary focus is to understand and develop critical responses to the experience and representation of place within the realm of contemporary art practice. The work of W.G. Sebald and the secondary literature surrounding his work plays a significant role in providing ways of dealing with the entanglement of knowledge. *Period Drama* is both the name of an artwork and the name I have given to a conference paper. Both explore the convoluted and complex methods involved in realizing a site-specific work that challenges fiercely-held beliefs about place.

My intention throughout the research has been to examine a variety of approaches that explore the representation and experience of place within contemporary art practice. Prominent within this examination has been the highlighting of the need to belong to a particular place and the sense of displacement generated when this need to belong is challenged or the nature of this connection is questioned.

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Fig.1. Still from ***Stalker***. Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky. (1979)

INTRODUCTION

The artists and writers Jeremy Miller and Tacita Dean in their co-authored book *Place* (2005) suggest that place itself can seem a confusing place in which to find oneself, an uncertain place to explore even with someone to guide us. They cite the words from the stalker in Andrei Tarkovsky's 1979 film of the same name to illustrate the confusion.

> Our moods, our thoughts, our emotions, our feelings can bring about change here. And we are in no condition to comprehend them. Old traps vanish, new ones take their place; the old safe places become impassable, and the route can either be plain and easy or impossibly confusing. That's how the Zone is. It may even seem capricious. But in fact, at any moment it is exactly as we devise it, in our consciousness…everything that happens here depends on us, not on the Zone.[1]

Throughout my programme of practice-led research I also borrow the stalker's words as a guiding voice and as a mental map throughout the research journey. I use my own practice as a vehicle for exploring ideas surrounding the role place occupies in influencing the production and reception of an artwork. A key objective of this research has been to give serious critical attention to identify, understand and document aspects of current debates surrounding the concept of place in contemporary art practice. I explore its histories and possible futures by creating images and texts, and combinations of both, which together constitute a critique of place and coincidentally provide a novel working method at the same time.

The research discovers and demonstrates how our experience of place is constantly in flux and this mutability means that interpretations and representations are notably fallible. In exploring this epistemological dimension of place-orientated practices, the research reflects on how un-knowingness – or not-knowing or synchronicity – often acts as a significant driving force within a narrative.

The limits of knowledge are seen as significant functions in the interpretation of place. I use my own practice to generate and test alternative approaches towards an investigation and understanding of place through a variety of different forms such as: artist-in-residence opportunities where new work is created; by presenting peer-reviewed conference papers; and where publishing projects initiated in an attempt to disentangle and uncover ideas surrounding place.

The aim and parameters of the research is to examine our fluctuating interpretations of the meaning of place within the context of artworks that explore ideas surrounding identity, memory and politics. The research is not intended as a comprehensive survey of all the critical writing on place. Rather, it is an attempt to analyse the development and integration of writing on place that has been recognised by artists and myself as being influential and significant towards an understanding of place within the scope of the research period.

The writing of W.G. Max Sebald (1944-2001) has played a significant role within the research. Like the stalker, he has become a guiding figure throughout this research journey, providing potential destinations and modes of travel to get there. The influence of *The Rings of Saturn* (1998), a walk through the landscape of East Anglia combining interchangeable relationships of fact, recollection, memory and fiction interposed with Sebald's signature grainy black-and-white photographs which have an indeterminate effect on the meandering narrative, has been significant. In addition to Sebald's own writing, the film-essay *Patience (After Sebald) A walk through the Rings of Saturn* (2010) by Grant Gee has provided invaluable commentaries from a number of sources from the literary world such as Rebecca Solnit, Marina Warner, Ian Sinclair, Sir Andrew Motion and Robert MacFarlane, supported by visual artists Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar. The anthology published by The Institute of Cultural Inquiry, *Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald* (2006), extends the breadth and depth of these commentaries by some forty authors, providing additional and complementary sources of research focused on Sebald's use of photography that many have recognised as being equally as important as his prose narratives.

A key focus of this research has been to identify a robust and appropriate working method by which I could interrogate aspects of my own practice and others', and, secondly, to identify a working method that would facilitate the making of new strategies for studio practice. A *Sebaldian* Lacuna emerged – the limits of knowingness in the relationship between place/work of art. The work of art/place is never complete. Revelation arrives apparently accidently – yet always seems inevitable.

During 2009 I undertook an artist-in-residence opportunity at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP). The two-month residency was organised by the Huddersfield art organisation ArtHouse through a national open call submission. The residency came with a mentoring programme where the selected artists could suggest a mentor to advise or assist them during the duration of the residency. I hesitantly suggested Jeremy Millar as he was both an artist and writer and had recently published *Place* (2005) in collaboration with Tacita Dean. I only had one formal meeting with Millar during the residency but I was able to maintain an informal connection with him after the residency period. Later that year I was able to invite Jeremy Millar to give a talk at Sheffield Hallam University as part of the *Transmission: Host* visiting lecture programme which culminated in a chapbook-type publication that followed a question and answer format.

Approximately halfway through the residency I had a mentoring session with Millar where I expressed my concerns on my inability or failure to generate a significantly interesting or strong idea to pursue in response to the location. I explained that I had gathered information about the location, its history, some significant events that had contributed to its current position, some observations from regular walks through YSP's grounds, and its exhibits but all I had was a tangled web of miscellaneous pieces of information. I expressed my concern at not being able to distil or untangle these disparate pieces of information and to shape them into a coherent idea to take forward. Millar instantly enquired why I felt the need to untangle the information, thoughts and ideas I had gathered. He went on to suggest that the process of untangling the disparate pieces of information would or could result in the loss of

some of their attraction and it was their very entanglement that was most interesting'. Millar went on to suggest I read *Rings of Saturn* by W.G. Sebald as a way of understanding that a seemingly entangled narrative or journey can be a poetic and lyrical way of representing place. A secondary and useful piece of advice from Millar was to be mindful of the audience or spectator's ability to bring something unknown or unforeseeable to the work and to allow space in the practice for this to take place whilst recognising and accepting that this cannot be accounted for. After reading *The Rings of Saturn* and treating the accumulation of reference material without attempting to distil or edit out information I began to view the residency in a new way. By the end of the YSP residency I had produced a new piece of work where ideas surrounded place as a mutable entity. This incorporated collective memory, historical facts, fiction and myth within a site-specific format and had become the catalyst for this research journey.

Research towards a site-specific work began by examining the commonly held belief that the infamous wrestling scene from Ken Russell's film *Women in Love* (1960) took place at Bretton Hall on the YSP estate. During my residency I discovered that the scene actually took place in a different location. My challenge to this fiercely protected belief ultimately led to the making of a re-edited version of Russell's famous fight only for it to be finally denied installation at YSP even on a temporary basis.



Fig.2. ***Period Drama*** (still) Andrew Sneddon after Ken Russell (2012/13)



Fig.3. The Camellia House at Bretton Hall within the grounds of Yorkshire Sculpture Park, South Yorkshire, and intended location/site for ***Period Drama***, a short re-edit of the naked wrestling scene in Ken Russell's 1969 film *Women in Love* starring Alan Bates and Oliver Reed. It would be played on a monitor behind this door and only viewed by an audience through the keyhole although sound would be heard throughout the Camellia House. Not realised

There are four pieces of published writing in the appendices. Each makes a different contribution to the research; each piece of writing contributes to either the practice or to an understanding of the critical position within the thesis. The three *Transmission: Host* publications with Alec Finlay (2008), Jeremy Millar (2009) and Roderick Buchanan (2010) can be seen as a continued conversation with the artist after they had presented a public lecture at Sheffield Hallam University. I invited each of these artist/speakers as they had a unique and distinctive connection to ideas surrounding the notion of place from the position of being well-established artists. By first inviting them to deliver a public lecture to mainly a mixture of postgraduate and undergraduate fine art students they were able to 'unpack' ideas surrounding past, present and future projects. All three artists were asked if they would contribute to the chapbook publication post-lecture. I had asked my three guests if they were willing to focus on aspects of place that I had identified within their practice.

After inviting Alec Finlay to present an artist's talk I was unable to chair his lecture due to a serious and sudden illness but was able to listen to the recording and instigate a series of questions via email. I had visited the *Waterlog* group exhibition that Finlay had participated in at The Collection in Lincoln in 2007. The *Transmission:Host* publication afforded me the opportunity to direct a number of questions to Finlay to further explore his attraction to specific places (specific places shared by W.G. Sebald) and whether or not this was a modern-day form of pilgrimage. Finlay disagreed with this observation and simply felt what he was doing was gathering experiences of place.

The next publication was with Jeremy Millar. I was able to follow up on a question from the audience where he was asked 'what constitutes our understanding of place?'. Millar had replied 'the projection of history onto landscape'. Initially I had been content with this answer but it had become unsatisfactory over a period of time, because, because we know, history is subjective. The publication with Millar provided a wealth of material to think through and, combined with his mentoring session and my interest in his co-authored book with Tacita Dean, *Place* (2005), became a good source of ideas relating to place, such as place as hauntology and the

relationship between art and anthropology. I also had the opportunity to ask Millar about the difference between chance and serendipity in his work.

The third publication with Roderick Buchanan was very different in that Buchanan wanted to treat the chapbook as a vehicle to explore a fantastical and mythical Irish/Scottish narrative. This narrative was titled *The History of the World According To My Father*, and followed the structure of a seventeenth century chapbook with no conventional paragraph structures. I contributed a short section where I recalled memories of troop convoys traveling from the mainland to Ireland and passing through my hometown in the middle of the night during the 1970s. I learned a valuable lesson with this piece in that a place need not be real in order for it to be considered a real place, and that events surrounding this place need not be true in order for the story to have meaning and significance. This understanding regarding place became important to the research in the making of *Period Drama* in response to the residency at Yorkshire Sculpture Park in 2009.



Fig 4. Transmission: Host, Guest: **Alex Finlay** Host: Andrew Sneddon.
Edited by Dr Sharon Kivland, Artwords Press, London (2008)

'The Stranger', Transmission: Host, Guest: **Jeremy Millar** Host: Andrew Sneddon.
Edited by Dr Sharon Kivland, Artwords Press, London (2009)

'The Friend', Transmission: Host, Guest: **Roderick Buchanan** Host: Andrew Sneddon,
Edited by Dr Sharon Kivland, Artwords Press, London (2010)

The final publication in the appendices is *The Slender Margin between the Real and the Unreal*, co-authored with Gavin Morrison (Director of Atopia projects) and Kiyoshi Okutsu (Professor of Aesthetics at Yamaguchi University, Japan) and edited by Dr Sharon Kivland. Chikamatsu Monazaemon (1653-1724) comments that 'art is something that lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal'. This is the origin of a discussion that recalls the experience and associated imaginings of the European gardens of the 17th and 18th centuries and their distant cousins, the stroll gardens of the Tokogawa and Meji periods of Japan. The shared use of the borrowed landscape or 'shakkei' allows for further enquiry into the similarities and difference. The three authors, through discussion, correspondence, and visits to particular gardens, built a relationship through the sharing of references and experiences. The garden reveals itself as a bountiful source of inspiration, a place of escapism, a cultural and social signifier, and as a place for thinking.

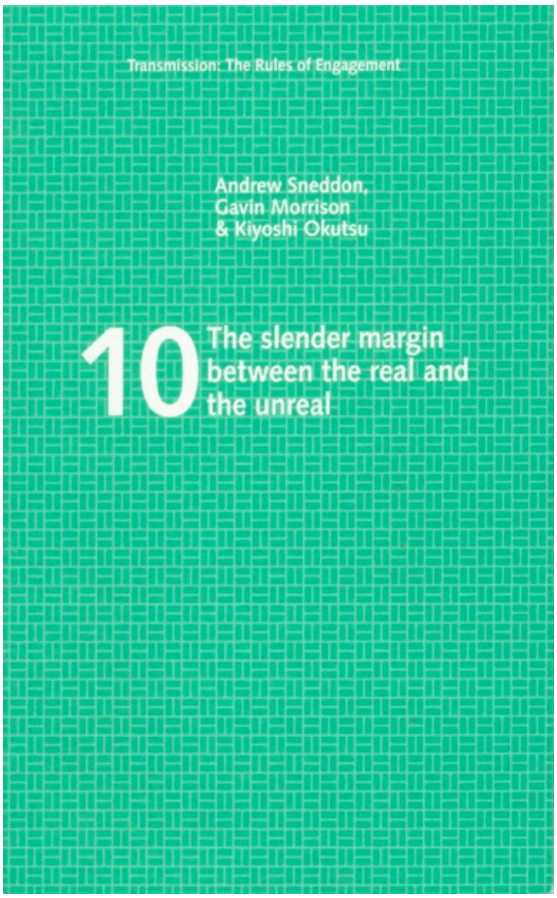


Fig.5. ***The Slender Margin between the Real and the Unreal,***
co-authored by Andrew Sneddon, Gavin Morrison & Kiyoshi Okutsu,
London: Artwords Press (2007)

The written component of this research is, to a large degree, concerned with retracing historical ideas concerning our understanding, need and desire to explore methods of representing place, in order to understand our relationship to places that we currently inhabit and what has influenced our renewed contemporary relationship with place. Today, it seems impossible to separate any study of place from that of space as both are intrinsically linked and are often interchangeable in literature and speech, therefore it became important to explore this relationship in some depth. An interrogation of the cultural meanings embedded within place is paramount in this consideration. Place inheres many social and political forces that form it and which continue to condition our understanding of place. If place functions as a manifestation of those associations then, by extension, the space experience of an artwork could be said to reside within the realm of place; space by virtue of our experience of it, of what we bring to it is afforded the significance of place.

Throughout the research I have been drawn to lyrical and poetic considerations of place, which are often registers belonging to the tradition of Romanticism. These qualities are often represented in landscape painting from the late 18th through to the middle of the 19th century creating questions surrounding issues of authentic identities and searching for a sense of what is known in German as 'Heimat'. As Morley and Robins point out in *Spaces of Identity* from 2002,

> In a world that is increasingly characterized by exile, migration and diaspora, with all the consequences of unsettling and hybridization, there can be no place for such absolutism of the pure and authentic. In this world, there is no longer any place like Heimat. More significant, for European cultures and identities now, is the experience of displacement and transition.[2]

The strongest influence in the research has been the writing of German-born W.G. Sebald (1944-2001) along with the seemingly unending supply of secondary writing that provides critique and interpretation of his writing. Studying W.G. Sebald's writing has provided both a poetic and lyrical approach to understanding place at the same time as providing the suggestion of a working method for the research. A working method that adopts Sebald's circuitous or meandering approach to the study of place has helped to shape the research. The working method that I have

developed has included serendipity and sagacity leading to the need to improvise. In an interview conducted shortly before his death, Sebald unpacks and reveals his approach to writing prose narrative and how he treats research with Joseph Cuomo.

> And in that you find odd details which lead you somewhere else, and so it's a form of unsystematic searching, which of course for an academic is far from orthodoxy, because we're meant to do things systematically.
>
> But I never liked doing things systematically. Not even my Ph.D. research was done systematically. It was always done in a random, haphazard fashion. And the more I got on, the more I felt that, really, one can find something only in that way, i.e., in the same way in which, say, a dog runs through a field. If you look at a dog following the advice of his nose, he traverses a patch of land in a completely unplottable manner. And he invariably finds what he's looking for.[3]

The approach to writing and research that Sebald is describing has been incorporated into a working method for this practice-led research where the research and the practice have been developed along similar lines of approach. I see this approach to research for both thesis and practice as being in opposition to what Christopher Frayling, in his essay *Research in Art and Design* (1993), describes as 'critical rationalism, which relies on making everything explicit, by revealing the methods of one's logic and justifying one's conclusions, and which has at its heart of its enterprise a belief in clarity…' Frayling goes on to suggest this method of conducting research has been '…under considerable theoretical attack for the last 10-15 years'[4]. I have sought to combine what Sebald refers to as being 'unsystematic searching' with an approach that prioritises and allows for serendipity and sagacity within the research process.

The research methods adopted within the thesis and practice have benefitted from allowing serendipity and sagacity to emerge as a natural occurrence. To explain what the pairing means, I refer to Paul André's two-part model of serendipity encompassing 'the chance encountering of information, and the sagacity to derive insight from the encounter.'[5]

There has been growing interest in researching the use and understanding of

serendipity and sagacity within qualitative research. Whilst unplanned discoveries can often be considered valuable they can also be elusive at the same time and it's unreliable nature therefore makes its incorporation questionable in many research circumstances. In their 1996 paper, the sociologist and educationalists Gary Fine and James Deegan set out three types of serendipity that are analytically distinct components of research:

> temporal serendipity (happening upon a dramatic instance), serendipity relations (the unplanned building of social networks), and analytic serendipity (discovering concepts or theories that produce compelling claims). Each depends on the readiness to seize upon chance events; that is, the unstructured, inductive quality of fieldwork often provides leeway to incorporate the power of serendipitous findings into the core of a research report. [6]

A key focus of the research is the notion that unplanned discoveries can produce compelling lines of enquiry to which were not anticipated, and that these discoveries can be incorporated into the research. For example, the artwork created during the two-month residency at YSP was an unanticipated discovery that could so easily have gone unnoticed were it not for the sagacity to, first of all, recognise it as being significant and, secondly, to have the confidence or vision to pursue it. The confidence to act upon aspects of serendipitous findings has been boosted by recognizing similar approaches in the work of W.G. Sebald and later in the research in the working practice of Tacita Dean and of the exhibition 'An Aside'.

An extensive literature search was carried out in order to identify the key theoretical sources that would be relevant to the programme of research. Starting with sources from within a fine art tradition such as Miwon Kwon's *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2002). Kwon, who is a curator of contemporary art and art educator in the United States, wrote a survey of the genealogies and practices that examined various responses to public art and its reception. She highlighted the growing number of contemporary artists travelling the world creating artworks in response to particular sites, one after the other at various international art biennales and art fairs. The writing of art critic and curator Lucy Lippard was also studied, in particular her seminal book *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object,* first published in 1973, and *On the beaten track: tourism, art and place* (1999), along with *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a*

Multicentered Society (1998). Although undoubtedly influential, these two authors and their writing have a significant American flavor and context which doesn't comfortably apply to a British context. The writing of the British art curator and founder/Director of Situations, one of the UK's foremost producers of arts projects that grow out of place, provided closer reference points to the research than the American authors. Claire Doherty has authored public art strategies for the city of Oslo, Plymouth and the University of Bristol, led the national Public Art Now programme and her publications such as *Out of Time, Out of Place: Public Art (Now)* (Doherty, 2015) have become set texts for curators, artists, and cities across the world. Doherty's other publications that have had a significant bearing on this research are *Contemporary Art from Studio to Situation (2004)* and *Situation* (2009), both of which bring together texts and interviews with key artists, curators and writers involved in the issue of context and site-specificity in the contemporary international art scene. Doherty's writing has been invaluable in providing a critical overview of significant British artists that are working with place within a wider international context.

The research has gained much theoretical knowledge from authors working within a wider context in areas such as anthropology, geography and philosophy. The writing of English-born David Harvey has been particularly relevant. His books, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (1996) and *Spaces of Hope* (2000), alongside numerous essays, have provided an invaluable and critical perspective on how places come into being and how they are altered, developed and re-invent themselves through the changing fortunes of transferable capital investment. In a similar light the writing of the late Doreen Massey has also provided a geographical perspective with a strong feminist agenda on the reconceptualization of place. Two of Massey's books, *Space, Place and Gender* (1994) and *For Space* (2005), have been particularly important to this research in providing a mixture of Marxist geography with cultural geography. This critique is strongly pursued in the influential essay *Landscape/space/politics: an essay* (2011) where she collaborated with visual artist Patrick Keiller as part of the *The Future of Landscape and the Moving Image* project, an AHRC project that

resulted in *Robinson in Ruins* (2011).

The notions and ideas surrounding place as a topic of critical discussion and examination in contemporary art practice has grown in number and frequency. This is further explored in Clare Doherty's short essay from 2004 entitled, *Curating Wrong Places… Or Where Have All the Penguins Gone?* Doherty states that,

> The rhetoric of 'place' has become the rallying cry for the curator of the international scattered-site exhibition or biennial. In 2004, the 'International' component of the 'Liverpool Biennial' professed to "address and empower place as having value", commissioning some 48 artists to produce new works for the city. That same year, Donostia-San Sebastian was conceived as "a privileged social site and catalytic trigger" for 'Manifesta 5', whilst this year the 'Gwangju Biennale' purports to provide "an impetus to the city of Gwangju to be reborn as a geographical metaphor". Most notable of recent placed-based curatorial assertions was Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun's opening gambit for the 9th Istanbul Biennial in 2005, in which they proposed "an exhibition structure that folds out of and reveals its context – the city of Istanbul", by commissioning artists to respond both to the "urban location and the imaginative charge that this city represents for the world".[7]

Doherty goes on to question the motifs of the place-based projects by discussing the frictions between contemporary art and urban regeneration and cultural tourism.

> Since the mid 1990s, the context specific international exhibition has become allied to urban regeneration and cultural tourism, whereby the cultural event becomes an ideal cipher for the meeting of international and local – hence any thematic title tends to be superseded by the city's name followed by the word 'biennial' or 'international' and in some cases, as in 'Istanbul', are one and the same. The dilemmas of cultural tourism versus criticality notwithstanding, the promotion of place as both subject and site for international exhibitions also runs the risk of subjugating art to a notion of place that is out-of-date.[8]

The set of questions raised by Doherty in this essay became a guiding principle when considering the focus of the research. The writing of Miwon Kwon became an important and pertinent reference point for considering artistic and curatorial responsibility to place, site-specific practices and, in particular, the displacement of the art object. Or as James Lingwood (Co-Director of ArtAngel) has suggested of

such displacement is ‘an art beyond the physical confines of the museum - an art not necessary placed but of place.’[9]

Kwon begins to question an art practice which has its origin in the 1970s and 1980s and has operated under a number of names such as *site-determined, site-orientated, site-referenced, site-conscious, site responsive and site-related,* to name but a few. She also suggests that this type of practice might be a ‘projective enterprise’, which should ‘unsettle’, ‘activate’ and ‘raise questions’ [10] as opposed to being simply descriptive of place. Kwon also notes that,

> ‘site-specific practices have become familiar (even commonplace) in the mainstream art world, artists are travelling more than ever to fulfill institutional/cultural critique projects *in situ*. The extent of this mobilisation of the artist radically redefines the commodity status of the artwork, the nature of artistic authorship, and the art-site relationship.’[11]

The mobilisation of artists combined with the increase of art biennials across the globe inevitably makes the notion of a site-specific or place-based practice common or misused. As Nathan Coley explained as far back as 1991, in relation to *Windfall,* a group show at the Clyde Seaman’s Mission in Glasgow,

> The artists from abroad expected people to be making work that absolutely engaged with the fabric of the building. And that’s not what happened. This has been our main topic of conversation in Glasgow for the past year or so; we feel the term site–specific has become meaningless.[12]

Douglas Gordon also expressed his reservations or scepticism with the seemingly wide-scale adoption of ‘*the method’* by international artists in response to invitations to take part in exhibitions that take a city or particular place as research subject, interlocutor, social context and physical site of the exhibition rationale.

> Like a lot of people, at that time, I was making works that were site-specific – usually in relation to a scant research visit’s findings, or an architectural ’intervention’, or a chanced upon piece of information at the site. At some point around 1990 I began to feel uncomfortable about this ‘method’ of working. Partly because I had learned how to ’do it’ and more so because I had experienced many other artists flying into Glasgow and completely misjudging the site and the intimacies that exist

> in unfamiliar places. A lot of the work produced seemed weak and lazy to me…
>
> I was trying to think my way through making something for the Third Eye show. I realized that I couldn't use 'the method' in my own city. A quick trip to the library, a wander through abandoned buildings, or a series of interviews with 'locals' was not going to do anything but make me realize I already knew too much. Eventually, this frustration with 'knowing too much' led me to try and examine what it was that I did know about the place that I considered 'mine'. I thought I knew people. More so, 'other' people seemed to be the very thing that made up my memories, stories, wishes, past and future of this 'knowledge'.[13]

On the wider art scene and a few years earlier Daniel Buren had declared that site-specific as a term 'has become hackneyed and meaningless through use and abuse'.[14] These critical issues over site-specific practices were further explored by Douglas Crimp's essay, *Redefining Site Specificity* in *On the Museum's Ruin* in 1993.

> Minimal objects redirected consciousness back on itself and the real-world conditions that ground consciousness. The coordinates of perception were established as existing not only between spectator and the work but among spectator, artwork and the place inhabited by both. This was accomplished either by eliminating the objects internal relationship altogether or by making those relationships a function of simple structural repetition, of "one thing after another." Whatever relationship was now to be perceived was contingent on the viewer's temporal movement in the sphere shared with the object. Thus the work belonged to its site, if its site were to change, so would the interrelationship of object, context and viewer. Such a reorientation of the perceptual experience of art made the viewer, in effect, the subject of the work, whereas under the reign of modernist idealism this privileged position devolved ultimately on the artist, the sole generator of the artworks formal relationships.[15]

Both Crimp and Buren set out to chronicle the demise of the gallery and museum. It is important to consider the anxiety felt by Daniel Buren surrounding production in the studio and the presentation of artwork in a gallery or museum in the early 1970s.

> The loss of the object, the idea that the context of the work corrupts the interest that the work provokes, as if some energy essential to its existence escapes as it passes through the studio door, occupied all my thoughts. This sense that the main point of the work is lost somewhere between its place of

> production and place of consumption forced me to consider the problem and the significance of the work's place. What I later came to realize was that it was the reality of the work, its "truth," its relationship to its creator and place of creation, that was irretrievably lost in this transfer.[16]

I believe this sense of loss or escape of something important that Buren describes reflects a need and desire to find an appropriate alternative to the gallery or museum. The rise of the alternative spaces to exhibit such as churches, disused industrial buildings, warehouses and the like, could be seen as alternative exhibition spaces to stem the haemorrhaging of a vital aspect of the work Buren articulates. In so doing, the importance of the reception and consumption of artwork becomes paramount. In later years this would be conflated with the necessity of widening participation and creating new audiences for visual art, often in connection with securing and attracting funding support.

In Chapter One, I establish why a study of place is both difficult to undertake and why it continues to be a subject of study. Central to this chapter are two essays by two leading authorities on place writing, Edward Casey (1939-) and David Harvey (1935-). Casey has published several volumes on phenomenology, philosophical psychology, and the philosophy of space and place. Harvey is well recognised as a cultural geographer and anthropologist. I believe these essays provide a good comparative study in identifying the most salient aspects of our relationship to, and the relevance of place, concerning us today. The two essays are Edward Casey's *How to get from Space to Place in a fairly short stretch of Time* (1996) and David Harvey's essay *From Space to Place and back again: Reflections on the condition of postmodernity* (1993,1996).

A further comparative study of two essay films are also analysed, Patrick Keiller's *Robinson in Ruins* (2010) and Grant Gee's *Patience (After Sebald)* (2012) in order to understand how the theoretical discussion on place might be represented. Within this specific study a wider frame of reference is established, to include other relevant commentators on the subject mapping, the development and exchanges between thinkers on space/place. These include: Michel Foucault's *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* (1967); Yi-Fu Taun's *Space and Place: The Perspective of*

Experience (1977) and *Topophilia: a study of environmental perception, attitudes, and values* (1974); Edward Relph's *Place and Placelessness,* (1976); Marc Augé's *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1995); Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958);Victor Burgin's *In/Different Spaces: place and memory in visual culture,* (1996); Miwon Kwon's *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (2004); Henri Leferbvre's *The Production of Space,* (1991); Doreen Massey's *Space Place and Gender* (91994) and *For Space* (2005); Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception,* (1962); Jeremy Miller's and Tacita Dean's, *Place* (2005); Nikos Papastergiadis's *Spatial Aesthetics: Art, Place and the Everyday* (2006); Georges Perec's *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* (2008); John Urry's *Consuming Places* (1995) and *The Tourist Gaze (1990);* W.G. Sebald's trilogy incorporating *The Emigrants* (1992), the *Rings of Saturn* (1995) and *Austerlitz* (2001); Philip Sheldrake's *Spaces for the Sacred: Place, Memory, and Identity* (2001); Anthony Vidler's *Architectural Uncanny* (1992) and *Warped Space* (2000).

In Chapter Two, I consider the role and influence of context and situation for the visual contemporary artist, with particular attention placed on the work of John Latham and the Artist Placement Group's legacy and influence on current thinking with particular emphasis on their three important adages such as 'Context is half the work', 'Incidental Person' and 'the open brief'[17]. In the context of site-specific practice and the site and non-site dialectic created by Robert Smithson in the 1960s, I explore today's discussions and debates.

In Chapter Three, I explore the pursuit and generation of knowledge relevant to this research. The pursuit adopts a non-linear approach, favouring a rhizomatic structure of acquiring knowledge. I introduce the tripartite structure of failure, serendipity and sagacity, leading to improvisation in my practice, and identify similar structures within other contemporary artists' practices. I look at the development of intention to the realisation of practice, particularly in the work of Tacita Dean, paying attention to the *An Aside* exhibition (2005) and Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar's joint publication, *Place: Art Works,* also from 2005.

In Chapter Four, and in the concluding chapter of my thesis, I reflect in more detail upon my practice as the key part of this research, examining the artworks made and how they develop my primary themes. I show how these works, and the contextual analysis around them, make a creative, original and contemporary contribution to the understanding of how contemporary artists respond to the experience of place and the displacement of the artwork.

In moving towards an understanding of my current practice there has been a certain amount of looking back at previous projects and practice. This process, as Graeme Sullivan maintains, has been important to situate my individual practice within wider practices as discussed throughout the thesis.

> In relating outcomes of creative inquiry to relevant issues in the field, there is a degree of "looking back" involved as the research process first challenges the artist by the need to create and then uses this new awareness as the critical lens through which to examine existing phenomena.[18]

This perspective has been established through new analysis and interpretation of the contextual terrain surrounding my practice. The perspective has also benefitted from the testing of ideas and observations through peer-reviewed conference papers and journal articles. Throughout the thesis my own creative practice has been central, as the driving force in testing the emergence of ideas and observations. I leave this introduction with a diagram that charts the timing of key outputs such as conference papers, exhibitions and publications that have been generative for the thesis.

PhD Registration Period 2003-2015, key elements of practice:

Conference Papers, Publications, Exhibitions and Artist in Residences

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Conference Papers													**'There's No Place Like North'** Further North. Northumbria University, Newcastle, 4th-5th September, 2014 Keynotes: Professor Tim Ingold and Dr Tim Edensor.		**Ruin Lust to Ruin Porn: Where has all the romance gone?** In This Place School of Art & Design Nottingham Trent University Nottingham, United Kingdom 28th April – 1st May 2016
									'Two naked bearded men and an open fire' Transmission: Hospitality Sheffield Hallam University, 3rd July 2010	**'I don't know what I'm looking for but I'll know it when I see it'** 1st Global Conference on Space Place, inter-disciplinary.net Mansfield College, Oxford, 15th September 2011	**'The Act of Improvisation within the work of Tacita Dean'** Improvisational Attitudes: Reflections from Art and Life on certitude, failure and doubt, Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth. Jawaharial Nehru University, New Dehli, India, 3rd -6th April 2012	**'A Period Drama'** 4th Global Conference on Space Place, inter-disciplinary.net Mansfield College, Oxford, 9-12th September 2013	**'PLACE in two essay-films'** The End of Place as We Know it: Shifting Perspectives on Literature and Place University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, 17th -19th September, 2014 Keynotes: Professor Edward Casey and Professor Timothy Morton.		
Publications	**The Shock of September 11 and the Mystery of the Other,** A 350 page exhibition catalogue that documents how 30 international artists responded to the events of September 11 and accompanied a group exhibition at Haus am Lutzowplatz, Berlin, Germany. Initiated by Rebecca Horn, in addition to a number of writers who also contributed to the book, such as Susan Sontag and Paul Virillo.		**In the Order of Things** A 24-page exhibition catalogue to accompany a one-person show at Leeds Metropolitan Gallery. Essays from Gavin Morrison, 'Finding Place in the Order of Things...' and Gordon Hon 'Familiar Places' with accompanying DVD. 2004			***Chusanan***, Published in connection to The Hut: The Temple project by Weissraum, Kyoto and Centre for Contemporary Art, Osaka, 2007.	***Space for 10,*** Catalogue marking the completion of 10 residences hosted by Arthouse, including images made during the residency at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. 2008								
						The Slender Margin between the Real and the Unreal, co-authored by Andrew Sneddon, Gavin Morrison & Kiyoshi Okutsu, London: Artwords Press,	***Transmission: HOST***, Guest: Alex Finlay Host: Andrew Sneddon. edited by Dr Sharon Kivland, Artwords Press, London, 2008.	**The Stranger', Transmission: HOST,** Guest: Jeremy Millar Host: Andrew Sneddon. edited by Dr Sharon Kivland, Artwords Press, London, 2009.	***'The Friend', Transmission: HOST***, Guest: Rodderick Buchanan Host: Andrew Sneddon, edited by Dr Sharon Kivland, Artwords Press, London, 2010.					
Exhibitions	**The Shock of the Other,** Curated by Rebecca Horn Haus am Lutzowplatz, Berlin, Germany		**LOOP** Visual thinking, Sir Patrick Geddes, Yamaguchi Centre for Arts and Media, Japan. A collabortion with Masayuki Yasuhara, part of a three day international symposium, Artists, Musicologists, Philosophers					**A PERIOD DRAMA** A site-specific video installation intended for the grounds of Yorkshire Sculpture Park where the naked wrestling scene with Olver Reed and Alan Bates was supposedly filmed but this particular scene was filmed at Elvaston Castle near Derby. *Not realised*						**CUMMNOCK**	
			In the Order of Things.. Leeds Metropolitan Gallery Solo exhibition.												
Artist Residence	**Yamaguchi University, Japan** 2 week artist in Residence at the invitation of Prof. Kiyoshi Okutsu and organised by Prof. Alan Johnston as part of YICA activity.						**Period Drama,** SPACE FOR 10 sitespecific video instalation, Intended for Yorkshire Sculpture Park								

Notes on the Introduction

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[4] Christopher Frayling, *Research in Art and Design*, Royal College of Art Research Papers, Volume 1, Number 1, 1993/4, p.3.
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[10] Kwon, Miwon. *Public Art and Urban Identities* in *Public Art Strategies: Public Art and Public Space*. Ed. Cheryl Younger. New York: New York University, 1998, p.168.
[11] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and locational Identities, MIT, Cambridge, 2004, p31*.
[12] Nathan Coley, Mathew Slotover, "*Northern Lights*", frieze, issue 1, 1991, p.40.
[13] Douglas Gordon, in response to questions sent by the Author (Dr Sarah Lowndes), May 2002. Cited in Sarah Lowndes, *Social Sculpture: The Rise of the Glasgow Art Scene*, Lauth Press Limited, Edinburgh, 2010, pp.141-142.
[14] Daniel Buren, "Like a Palimpest: or, The Metamorphosis of an Image," in *Contemporary Sculpture Projects in Munster*, 1997, ed. Klaus Bussmann, Kasper Konig, and Florian Matzner (Munster:Verlag Gerd Hatje,1997),p. 79.
[15] Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1993, p.154.
[16] Daniel Buren, *The Function of the Studio*, trans. Thomas Repensek, October 10 (Fall 1979), p.56. This essay, written in 1971 and published here for the first time, is one of three texts dealing with the art system. The others were *Function of the Museum*, published first by the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, and subsequently in Artforum, September 1973; and *Function of an Exhibition*, Studio International, December 1973.
[17] http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/art-and-social-intervention-incidental-person-conference-video-recordings#open239757 (Last Accessed 12/07/15)
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Chapter One

1

If two different authors use the words ‘red’, ‘hard’, or ‘disappointed’, no one doubts that they mean approximately the same thing… But in the case of words such as ‘place” or ‘space’, whose relationship with psychological experience is less direct, there exists a far-reaching uncertainty of interpretation.[1]

Albert Einstein, Forward to *Concepts of Space*, 1970.

The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with it own skein.[2]

Michael Foucault, *Of Other Spaces*, 1986.

In the past three centuries in the West – the period of modernity – place has come to be not only neglected but actively suppressed. Owing to the triumph of the natural and social sciences in the same period, any serious talk of place has been regarded as regressive or trivial. A discourse has emerged whose exclusive foci are Time and Space. When the two were combined by twentieth century physicists into the amalgam ‘space-time’, the overlooking of place was only continued by other means. For an entire epoch, place has been regarded as an impoverished second cousin of Time and Space, those two colossal cosmic partners that tower over modernity.[3]

Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 1993.

In Chapter One I have prepared the critical ground for an understanding of place. It is important to be clear that this chapter does not seek to arrive at a definition for the word place; it is more concerned with establishing an understanding of the word with regard to its use within the research. Place is subjective, emotional and affected by qualities; it means different things to different people at different times. Within this chapter I establish why a study of place is both difficult to undertake and why it continues to be a subject of study. The geographer and author of *The Betweenness of Place*, J.Nicholas Entrikin, has suggested ideas surrounding place are; Sometimes competing, and occasionally confusing, claims that have been made and continue to be made about the study of place and region', and he adds, 'One of the reasons for this confusion may be that it is beyond our intellectual reach to attain a theoretical understanding of place and region that covers the range of phenomena to which these concepts refer'.[4]

In order to acknowledge this 'occasionally confusing' term and to explore why a study of place is both difficult to undertake and why it continues to be the subject of many studies, I selected four influential voices that explore the varying registers relating to a critical understanding of place. I have identified two leading authorities on place-writing and have selected two pieces of their work, to make a comparative analysis; Edward Casey's '*How to get from Space to Place in a fairly short stretch of Time,'* (1996) and David Harvey's essay '*From Space to Place and back again: Reflections on the condition of postmodernity'* (1993).

A further comparative study of two essay-films is also explored in order to understand why the study of place is important: Patrick Keiller's *Robinson in Ruins* (2010) and Grant Gee's *Patience (After Sebald)* (2012). I leave this chapter realising that the two essays and the two essay-films considered, along with their influences, do not constitute a clear and accurate definition of what place might be. However, I would argue that they provide an accurate account of the deeply interwoven and entangled nature of how place is represented and experienced.

What connects all four references from this chapter is a relationship to 'time', in particular the notion of haunting of spaces with a past. It is this permeable membrane of 'time' that connects the two essays together. This seepage of time is

also considered from two different but complementary advantage points in Grant Gee's poetic and romantic position and Keiller's geo-political standpoint in the film-essays.

I believe it is also important to acknowledge the fact that I do not attempted to provide a definition for the word place. I consider any attempt to do this would be of little value as the word '*place*' appears to mean different things to different people at different times. As a definition of place becomes clear and focused on one page it almost purposely becomes hazy and ill-fitting on the next. The etymology of the word 'define' suggests something that comes to an end or is fixed. Through an evaluation of this first chapter I would suggest that the understanding of the word *'place'* is in constant flux and needs to be flexible in order to allow language to keep up with its changing meanings.

This chapter also sees the early stages and identification or acknowledgement of the importance of serendipity as a potential working method. In the next chapter I plan to build on these discoveries and consider the enhancements that contemporary art practices have added to Harvey's notion that place is a social construct and focus on the social processes within contemporary art practices.

Place can present as a fairly commonly used word within language and in our everyday lives; most would feel comfortable in its use and meaning but what at first seems a benign and straightforward noun quickly becomes multi-purpose and multi-layered and the subject of philosophical debates across many disciplines. The philosopher Edward Casey asks us to imagine what it would be like if there were no places in the world and suggests that 'our lives are so place-orientated and place-saturated that we cannot begin to comprehend, much less face up to, what sheer placelessness would be like.[5]

Casey's proposition and thinking encourages a sense of '*horror vacui'* and, by extension, inspires anxiety and repression. This is further emphasised by the geographer Edward Relph in considering the importance and need to maintain an understanding of place:

> But there is nevertheless a real problem in this lack of formal knowledge of place. If places are indeed a fundamental aspect of man's existence in the world, if they are sources of security and identity for individuals and groups of people, then it is important that the means of expressing, creating, and maintaining significant places are not lost. Moreover there are many signs that these very means are disappearing and that 'placeslessness' – the weakening of distinct and diverse experiences and identities of places – is now a dominant force.[6]

I would like to pick up on Relph's use of 'expressing' and 'creating' and to add these to one of the four areas outlined for further study and development in David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989). Harvey creates a small list of four points that he feels are important in establishing the material groundings of what cultural practice might be. Number one relates to the acknowledgement that difference and otherness should always be present in social change. Number three is the need to truly recognise the importance of space and time and to consider geography seriously. The last point is historical-geographical materialism as a mode of enquiry in thinking about cultural practice. It is his second entry on the list that attracted my attention in what needs to be considered in thinking about cultural practice in place-making,

> A recognition that the production of images and of discourses is an important facet of activity that has to be analysed as part and parcel of the reproduction and transformation of any symbolic order. Aesthetic and cultural practices matter, and the conditions of their production deserve the closest attention.[7]

Any attempt to clarify or pin down 'what place is' is automatically met with a barrage of conflicting words and meanings often contradictory in nature; how can place be both village and city, home and nation at the same time? There seems little doubt that the term place is a contested site. Harvey goes on to suggest that immense confusion of meaning makes any theoretical concept of place immediately suspect.[8]

In the introduction to *Place* (2005), an anthology of how artists and philosophers investigate and engage with ideas surrounding place, Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar suggest that 'place' is to landscape as 'identity' is to portraiture'[9]. This provides us with a significantly simple but practical suggestion as to why place is of importance to the contemporary artists. The importance and attraction of place for the

contemporary artist would appear to be a natural extension of the traditions and conventions of landscape painting. Jeremy Millar further develops this suggestion into a consideration of place as being the 'projection of history on to landscape'[10]. A similar, but expanded expression to link place with history is attempted by Bruggemann, cited in Lilburne's *A Sense of Place: A Christian Theology of the Land* (1989).

> Place is space which has historical meanings, where some things have happened which are now remembered and which provide continuity and identity across generations. Place is space in which important words have been spoken which have established identity, defined vocation, and envisioned destiny. Place is space in which vows have been exchanged, promises have been made and demands have been issued.[11]

Contemporary practices as explored by visual artists are no longer restricted by conventions of strict representation or topographical pictorial accuracy. Concepts of representing place and context have continued the legacy of the landscape tradition and this legacy can be traced back to the 1960s where a great number of artists such as: Robert Smithson (1938-1973); Walter De Maria (1935-2013); Carl Andre (1935-); Michael Heizer (1944-); Agnes Denes (1938-); and Dennis Oppenheim (1938-2011), and art movements such as Conceptual Art, Minimalism, Land Art and Performance, began articulating new thinking about practice. Robert Smithson's project from 1970 to tow an island around Manhattan (Fig.6.) was never realized during his lifetime but was realized in 2015 with the help of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Smithson's project must be considered the impetus for Alex Hartley's *Nowhereisland* (2011-12) when he towed an island from Norway to the south west coast of England as part of London 2012 Cultural Olympiad (Fig.7.). Dennis Oppenheim predicted in 1969 that,

> The more successful work from the minimal syndrome rejected itself, allowing the viewer a one-to-one confrontation with pure limit or bounds. This displacement or sensory pressures from object to place will prove to be the major contribution of minimalist art.[12]



Fig.6 Robert Smithson, Study for floating island to travel around Manhattan Island, Drawing (1970) Plus the realization of Smithson's idea in 2005.



Fig.7. Alex Hartley, *Nowehereisland*, (2011-12)

A more pluralistic and critical questioning of the environment in which the viewer is confronted by, and invited to discover, the work began to emerge in the 1960s and seems to have influenced a generation of artists and cultural thinkers about the production and meditation of contemporary art practice. This period can also be seen as the birth of the participating viewer and the beginning of the demise of the passive viewer. This point is raised by Claire Doherty in the introduction to her first chapter of *Out of Time, Out of Place: Public Art (Now)* called 'Displacement', that;

> Tactics involve the displacement of man-made and environmental materials and their recontextualization in another place, often with startling results. What distinguishes these acts of dislocation, disintegration and dispersion from conventional artistic uses of source materials is that the journey from one place to another (or the distance between one place and another) is as much a part of the artworks conceptual structure as the final form itself.[13]

In order to fully appreciate the current context of place and the contemporary artwork, and its not too distant forefathers, it would be beneficial to undertake a review of the history of place and its relation to space by a close analysis of two contemporary key thinkers on the subject. Both David Harvey and Edward Casey have written on this history towards creating an awareness that helps us understand the significance of key attitudes and how these attitudes have influenced our contemporary views on the subject, with particular emphasis paid to the visual arts.

In David Harvey's 1993 essay *From Space to Place and back again: Reflections on the condition of Postmodernity* and Edward Casey's 1996 essay *How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time* there is a shared acknowledgement of the dynamic relation between place and space.

From Space to Place and Back Again: David Harvey

In April 2004, I attended a two-day international conference at the Institute of Romance Studies, University of London, entitled, *Place: Aesthetics, Politics, Poetics* which was supported by the British Academy. Amongst the speakers were Edward Casey (SUNY, Stony Brook) and David Harvey (Johns Hopkins University). The papers presented by Edward Casey and David Harvey left a lasting impression on me, particularly the manner of their question and answer session from the audience and each other. Each questioned the others' points ferociously but in a respectful and professional manner. It was clear that there was academic and professional appreciation for each other's work but also demonstrated a healthy difference of ideological opinion. Nevertheless, it made clear to me that there was tension between both positions on the importance of place and how best to understand its various aspects.

This awareness has encouraged me to explore these tensions further by drawing a comparative analysis between two similarly titled essays by Harvey and Casey. In 1990 David Harvey presented a paper at the Tate Gallery, London, entitled, *From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity* as part of the Futures Conference. This paper was later published in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* in 1993. The same essay was reworked with additional material and reappears in Harvey's much celebrated *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (1996). The later version of the essay benefits from an introduction, absent from the 1993 version, entitled 'The Issue'.

Harvey creates a significant preamble about an affluent and prosperous neighbourhood of Guilford, a district of Baltimore, USA. He tells us of its topography of rolling terrain down to its coastal plains where it meets the Atlantic

and of its origin in attracting large cotton-duck mills in the nineteenth century before being bought in 1907 by a consortium of wealthy Bostonians to preclude speculative tract development. Then the land was turned over to land developers with British surplus capital on US soil. The land was subjected to city planning with the very best of sophisticated infrastructure, landscaping, open plan, largely devoid of walls or fences situated on spacious curvilinear streets amid small parks. Harvey informs us that the 841 individual building lots were a mishmash of eclectic 1920s architecture and offered residents of Baltimore the opportunity of escaping the stress of urban living in this ruralised part of the city. He goes on to mention that the lots were sold with restrictive and exclusionary covenants excluding non-Caucasians and Jews.

This description leads us to the main point and reason for Harvey's addition to the essay when he reveals that,

> On Sunday August 14, 1994, a brutal double murder occurred in Guilford. An elderly white couple, both distinguished physicians but now retired in their 80s, were found in their bed bludgeoned to death with a baseball bat.[14]

Harvey cites the role that the media played in stoking the fires of fear and anxiety in the local community and supported the call for 'something to be done' to protect the community such as creating a gated community with restricted access. A gated community would create a distinct barrier or division between the affluent middle class population of Guilford with its neighbouring predominantly black and lower income residents. The media was also reported as helping to associate other crimes such as drug dealing, prostitution and mugging with the double murder and suggested it was racial crime again whipping up fear within the community and suspicion of the other. Specialists were brought in to support the case for limited and monitored access to the Guilford community to make it secure and safe. However five days after the murders it was announced that the grandson – not a random intruder from outside the community – had confessed to the killings.

Harvey uses this story to good effect as an example of how complex and misleading any notion of place can be. He posits the question 'what kind of place is Guilford?'

He suggests that it 'fits into cartographies of struggle, power and discourse in Baltimore city in very special ways.'[15] Harvey also encourages us to see this story as a 'grounded feeling' for what a word like 'place' might mean amidst a discussion of general relational theory of space-time and environment.

Harvey considers the language and use of the word 'place' as one of the most multi-layered and multi-purpose words in our language[16]. He goes on to regard this use of language as advantageous and denies any confusion of meaning of the word as theoretically immediately suspect. The fact that space and place are often interchangeable in speech and writing could add to the issue, as does the fact that place can often refer to locality, neighbourhood, region and territory. It can also refer to other terms such as city, village, town, megalopolis, house or room. Harvey sees the looseness of the term as an opportunity to explore the relationships 'place' has with other concepts in generating meaning. Fundamental to Harvey's essay is the suggestion that,

> Place in whatever guise is, like space and time, a social construct. This is the baseline proposition from which I start. The only interesting question that can then be asked is: by what social process(es) is place constructed.[17]

This statement has been core to how I have viewed the complexity of place. I thought I had understood its rational logic of saying places are not natural but made by human forces and can easily be undone by the same human forces. Harvey's statement is clearly the response of contemporary critical human geography that favours viewing the world through a progressive political agenda. I also see this view as a guiding principle as I perceive and experience place through the meanings we ascribe to it which come out of a social milieu dominated by Western cultural values and the forces of capitalism. The media, as is well illustrated by Harvey's recollection of Guilford, consumed by politicians, developers and people who live and work there, also produces places. The construction process is clearly seen in our cities, with transport links, buildings, residential neighbourhoods, civic communal spaces, tree-lined streets and parks all tailor-made for particular communities. In the process of developing a practice through this study I stumbled into a social construct that was made about a place by stakeholders of that place. This particular piece of

work, *Period Drama*, will be explored further and in more depth in Chapter Four. However, it offered me a new understanding of how place is socially constructed through the maintaining of a false account of a story that was known to be false or at very best mistakenly identified for over forty years. I learned that a social construct might not only be built on facts, historical events and truth but also on folklore and mythology, even in the modern world.

In *Place: A short introduction* (2004) Tim Creswell takes a critical view of Harvey's statement and suggests that the social is only one register of construction and that there are others of equal importance, citing Robert Sack's research in *Homo Geographicus*:

> Indeed, privileging the social in modern geography, and especially in the reductionist sense that 'everything is socially constructed,' does as much disservice to geographical analysis as a whole as has privileging the natural in days of environmental determinism, or concentrating only on the mental or intellectual in some areas of humanistic geography. While one or other may be more important for a particular situation at a particular time, none is determinate of the geographical.[18]

Creswell suggests that thinkers such as Robert Sack and Edward Casey accept the presence of the social in the construction of place but also equally value the importance of a phenomenon that is essential to being human or being in the world. A key observation by Harvey and others is a common description of the transforming nature of landscape as one place becomes another, and the visible impact this has on residents and stakeholders.

> Old places have to be devalued, destroyed and redeveloped while new places are created. The cathedral city becomes a heritage centre; the mining community becomes a ghost town; the old industrial centre is deindustrialized; speculative boomtowns or gentrified neighbourhoods arise on the frontiers of capitalist development or out of the ashes of deindustrialized communities. The history of capitalism is punctuated by intense phases of spatial reorganization.[19]

Harvey also points out the general and individual effect of this construction and dismantling of places. The increasing speed of change that is often associated with postmodern and post-industrial places and communities creates a society that is afflicted by a deep cultural malaise. The competition to attract highly mobile capital

and speculative investment in land development between one place and another produces winners and losers, can often be deemed antagonistic, and creates tension. The idea of competition can also create a deep feeling of rootedness in order to develop a strong sense of tradition and identity. Harvey selects a number of cities that once had a flourishing industrial past that produced and contributed to the wealth of the nation which, due to heavy industrial decline and the movement of mobile capital, are now experiencing tumultuous changes in fortune and need to rebrand themselves in other ways. Post-industrial cities are often rebranded as university towns, centres of cultural heritage or retail destinations. However, the signs of a past existence are often harder and slower to change. Along with de-industrialisation often comes depopulation as workforces which can be mobile follow the work and vacate cities, leaving ruins and traces of former lives behind.

> Urban places that once had a secure status find themselves vulnerable (think of Detroit, Sheffield, Liverpool and Lille); residents find themselves forced to ask what kind of place can be remade that will survive within the new matrix of space relations and capital accumulation. We worry about the meaning of place in general when the security of actual places becomes generally threatened… Those who reside in place (or hold the fixed assets in place) become acutely aware that they are in competition with other places for highly mobile capital.[20]

The British geographer, Tim Edensor in *Industrial Ruins* (2005) also echoes Harvey's observation that;

> Britain is testament to the effects of faster modes of capital accumulation and the disembedding impacts of global capital flows, dynamic processes through which space is purchased, cleared and reassembled, deterritorialised and reterritorialised, producing practices which destroy urban space ever faster and more efficiently.
> The dynamic colonisation of space by capital infers that all space has the potential to become lucrative, whether now or in the future. All space can be transformed from useless to prosperous and back again through investment and disinvestment.[21]

Artists and art agencies are often used to spearhead new developments, and to identify and create a sense of belonging and sense of pride in places that are in the process of change. Often under the banner of regeneration, projects such as *Angel of the North* (1998) by Antony Gormley are cited as generating interest and inward financial investment in locations that have often had a heavy industry past such as

the north east of England where the *Angel of the North* sits on the site of an old colliery. There has been a long tradition and fascination with the 'ruin' by artists and writers as far back as the eighteenth century, under different names such as 'Ruin Lust' or 'Ruin Value'. According to Brian Dillon,

> …the ruin appears to point to a deep and vanished past whose relics merely haunt the present, reminding us of such airy and perennial themes as the hubris of Man and the weight of History.[22]

I would like to take a short detour away from Harvey's essay to visit a work-in-progress that picks up and explores some of the key points Harvey makes but within my own practice and which also provides a genealogy of an idea for a body of work that responds to a particular place.

On the last stages of a journey driving back home from Sheffield to Ayr in May 2012 I decided to take a shortcut. I thought a more direct route would knock off some time and get me home sooner. This shortcut took me through the town of New Cumnock in East Ayrshire, a town I had not had any reason to give much thought to for some time; it was simply a place and a signpost on the journey home. Driving through New Cumnock for the first time in twenty or thirty years I was instantly struck, and eventually shocked, at the state of the town, and was reminded that it is one of the most economically-deprived towns in Scotland and of Tim Edensor's statistic that,

> In Britain, there are far more ruins to be found in northern and central England than in the more prosperous south. The production of spaces of ruination and dereliction are an inevitable result of capitalist development and the relentless search for profit.[23]

I couldn't but help notice the signs of economic deprivation and decline inscribed in everywhere I looked. The former mining town was now a ghost town with shops boarded up, no-one walking the streets, no sign of life, and was a real shock to the memory I had of the town as a busy bustling town with a strong tradition and identity. My detour had unexpectedly provided me with tangible examples of what Harvey had identified; the mining town becomes a ghost town, the social construction of place built up over a long period of time can very easily be socially and politically deconstructed just as easily. Also workforces that are fortunate

enough to be mobile will move to where there are more employment opportunities and leave behind a community to become part of an existing community or start a new community all together.

Later that same night after arriving home I switched on the TV just as a programme called *Prince Charles – The Royal Restoration* started. The programme was introduced by Alan Titchmarsh and told the story of how Dumfries House was saved for the nation by his Royal Highness Prince Charles.[24] Dumfries House sits about a mile from New Cumnock and its success as a tourist attraction lies in its large estate and the creation of a new 'settlement' on the estates boundary called Knockroon. The new town of Knockroon would appear to represent New Cumnock's best chance of survival or at best to stem the decline and depopulation of the area. The most salient aspect of the programme was the Knockroon housing development in contrast to the housing issues of New Cumnock only a mile away. During the programme, Fiona Lees, Chief Executive of East Ayrshire Council, revealed that the Council had demolished 200 (low-income) homes in New Cumnock as potential residents could not afford to buy or rent them. Whereas six hundred new homes are planned at an even higher threshold for Knockroon in the next few years.

The Knockroon development is based on the Poundbury new town principle that Prince Charles pioneered over 20 years ago in Dorset, in the much more prosperous south of England. Knockroon is heavily promoted towards the commuter customer by emphasizing the 20-minute commute to Glasgow by car. The new development is also based on an almost conservation village type principle such as no obtrusive street furniture, no free decision to change the colour of your own front door, no unsightly satellite dishes or aerials. There is no local pub or any other place for social or community gathering. With a commuter-community the ability to create community capital and long-term investment in this area will be difficult as the community themselves are prone to being constantly mobile.

I revisited New Cumnock the following day and visited the sites where houses and long-standing communities once flourished, to find nothing left but grassed-over areas and steps, streets and cul-de-sacs leading to nowhere. The empty landscape seemed a poignant image of displacement and how a landscape can be inscribed with

struggle through the uneven development of the qualities of places.[25]

I felt compelled to develop a body of work that explored this perceived relationship of uneven development and the amnesia of place. I was struck by the remaining infrastructure of roads, pavement and steps which was missing any road sign or street name to aid navigation. I decided to manufacture and re-install the missing street signs in a material that suggested a memorial. I have since been in contact with a local monumental stone carver to make three new street signs.



Fig.8. *Ghost*, (working title). Three street names from New Cumnock where the street layout remains but the houses have been demolished.

Michel de Certeau also articulates and expresses ideas that are relevant to this work in his 1985 essay *Practices of Space.*

> We are struck by the fact that sites that have been lived in are filled with the presence of absences. What appears designates what is no more…[and] can no longer be seen…. Every site is haunted by countless ghosts that lurk there in silence, to be 'evoked" or not.[26]



Fig.9. **FADEN AVENUE**, New Cumnock, East Ayrshire, Scotland. Other nearby streets are; **GREENHILL DRIVE** and **GREENHILL AVENUE**.

I was keen to create a poetic, lyrical response by involving a stonecarver whose day-to-day job is to carve names of the recently deceased – potentially people known to them – and to alter this to names of streets. Once these stone signs are installed in the deserted streets they may well be smashed or stolen but the main idea is to create a record of the process and the gesture. Even if part of the narrative is that the gesture is shortlived. As architectural critic and artist Jane Rendell has written, whilst thinking about Roland Barthes's *Death of the Author*, in her essay '*Writing in place of listening'*,

> If the 'reading' of the story is a place where meaning is constructed then there is not simply one 'truth' concerning the events and characters referred to. And to take this further, into the contemporary theoretical context, the very act of 'telling' the story may also be understood as a site where meaning is constructed."[27]

How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Edward Casey.

To return to Edward Casey's essay from 1996, I aim to provide a comparative analysis with David Harvey's essay from 1993/6. There are marked differences of approach to each author's understanding of place as well as some similarities or agreements. However, the scope of this thesis does not allow for a point by counterpoint breakdown between these two commentators on place. I would like to explore a number of the key issues raised by Casey's essay that I believe to be salient with regard to how artists might work with, or be mindful towards, an understanding of some of his concepts of place.

Casey's approach towards an understanding and engagement with place is based on a phenomenological position and borrows much from the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Casey's approach also converges anthropology with phenomenology and places an emphasis on lived experience. Casey also references research from anthropology to formulate a distinct position that suggests that place is the result of space being a 'neutral, pre-given medium, a *tabula rasa* onto which the particularities of culture and history are inscribed'[28]. At the same time he highlights the fundamental aspect of contention of 'what comes first, place or space?'. The idea that space is neutral or indeed a *tabula rasa* is at the heart of the problem for any academic enquiry into an understanding of place. The term 'blank environment'[29] refers to a location or site waiting to become recognised as a place is problematic. Casey alludes to how often this complexity is cited and with the research by Shmuel Samburski we can trace this point as far back as Simplicius (c. 490 – c. 560):

> Since everything that is in motion is moved in some place, it is obvious that one has to grant priority to place, in which that which causes motion or is acted upon will be. Perhaps thus it is the first of all things, since all existing things are either in place or not without place.[30]

It is a much cited and referenced quote (Dean & Millar, 2005, p.14) a reference often used in order to affirm the contested relation between space and place. A contest fought over in many subject areas. However, as Casey suggests, it is a battle destined to result in being shipwrecked on the shores of Pure Reason. Casey's position of 'indefiniteness' of place is similarly echoed by Harvey's focus on the construction of place and not on the relationship between place and space, which he deems fruitless.

> I would even say that the open-endedness of place, its typological status as morphologically vague, its *de*-finition, creates the semantic space within which definite demonstrations and exact localisations can arise.[31]

The blank environment or the neutrality of the object also allows Casey to further question and investigate the idea of space being '*de-nuded'* of secondary qualities. Important qualities to be found within any discussion surrounding definitions of place today but which were ignored during the Scientific Revolution (1543-1687), and continued to be neglected during the Enlightenment (1637-1804) by scholars such as Galileo, Descartes and Locke. These qualities, as experienced by the consciousness through the body such as temperature, colour and texture of a place, were ignored as none of these could be converted to calculable measurement or tested. 'A particular limited consideration'[32] noted the English philosopher John Locke (1632-1704).

Casey refers to the anthropological research conducted with Fred R. Myers (1948-) with the indigenous Pintupi Aboriginal people of Central Australia and suggests that these secondary qualities which have been removed, or at best played down, are the very substance of how neutral spaces become particular places. The questions that arise from the research carried out in Australia are relevant here to identify and analyse the means by which places are invested with meaning and value. At this point two main aspects emerge. The first being the process by which neutral, de-nuded space becomes place, and the second, the objectifying of these processes.

Casey also points to the Aboriginal importance of Dreaming, defined by Myers to represent the 'projection into symbolic space of various social processes'.[33] Social processes in this case might refer to stories, songs or designs that combine together

to create an inner representation of a landscape or country that instructs and provides others with a mental map of that landscape. These stories often become attached to objects and artefacts that become symbolic of previous experience and process, are handed down through generations and become objects of exchange through time and space. The anthropological reading of the Pintupi people provides a useful insight into their everyday practices of living, residing and dying on the land that might be called 'dwelling' as activities through which place becomes a significant bearer of social identity.[34]

Casey's interest in understanding place by use of anthropological and ethnographic research, particularly from societies that we might consider pre-modern, is both helpful and problematic. I believe the problem of conducting research of this kind with pre-modern societies is that it is difficult to transfer the finding to modern or postmodern societies. Notions of how modern societies dwell, for instance, is so far removed from how desert aboriginal people of Central Australia dwell that it makes any link tenuous at best. This observation is further supported by Adorno in that, 'Dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible.'[35] However the relevance of this way of thinking about place is that it exposes raw human experiences, desires and our need to know and understand our immediate environment. Casey's insistence on drawing from this type of research does propose interesting questions and he seems to be well aware of the tensions involved in any comparative analysis but nevertheless has continued to seek verification for his concepts such as being-in-place.

> Whom are we to believe? The theorizing anthropologist, the arsenal of his natural attitude bristling with explanatory projectiles that go off into space? Or the aborigine on the ground who finds this ground itself to be a coherent collocation of pre given-places at once in his experience and in the Dreaming that sanctions this experience? For the anthropologist, Space comes first; for the native, Place; and the difference is by no means trivial. [36]

Casey also sets up the question of experience versus knowledge that can be used when seeking an understanding of place. Casey references Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1787 which allows him to develop confidence in expanding ideas surrounding the importance of the perceiving body as the specific medium for

experiencing a place world. As Kant insisted, “there can be no doubt that all our knowledge begins with experience.” With a further qualification that “though all our knowledge begins with experience it does not follow that it all arises out of experience” [37]

I feel that this distinction between two types of knowledge is important in the understanding of place as promoted by Casey and Harvey.

Robinson In Ruins: Patrick Keiller, 2010.

As discussed earlier Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar provide a simple but succinct suggestion that ‘place’ is to landscape as ‘identity’ is to portraiture.[38] I feel their assertion invites a close examination of how place is critically articulated and represented within a contemporary understanding of landscape and the world around us. By considering the two different philosophical approaches towards an understanding of place outlined in the essays studied – by David Harvey and Edward Casey – two approaches have been identified. The first approach is a social/economic/political stance and the other from a more phenomenological perspective prioritising the importance of the embodied experience. This section looks at a further comparative analysis from two filmmakers and their chosen subject matter. I believe Patrick Keiller’s visual art approach to place could be said to follow Harvey’s social/economic/political stance with *Robinson in Ruins* (2010) closely reflecting the thinking outlined by Harvey’s consideration of how place is perceived and socially constructed. On the other hand Grant Gee’s film, *Patience (After Sebald): A walk through the Rings of Saturn* (2010) follows a more poetically lyrical investigation of place as favoured by Casey. In return, both films provide a valuable critique on how images of place inform and confirm meaning.



Fig.10. Patrick Keiller, ***Robinson in Ruins*** *(2010)*

Patrick Keiller's film *Robinson in Ruins* (2010) highlights a particular response to place within the traditional genre of representational landscape. This film is often seen as the third film in a trilogy with the first two being *London* (1994) and *Robinson in Space* (1997).

Patrick Keiller (1950-) has been seen as an architect, photographer, installation artist, film-maker, and increasingly is becoming more recognised as an essayist on urban planning, architectural decay, reluctantly associated with psychogeography – which also includes Ian Sinclair, Peter Ackroyd and Will Self to name three of the most well-known contributors. Will Self, provides an interesting anecdote that illustrates the importance placed on walking and its seditious nature,

> Once I decided to walk from Pearson Airport outside Toronto just for the hell of it and I contacted some Canadian psychogeographers and asked, 'How do you walk into Toronto from the airport?' It looked like quite a tricky walk and none of them had done it, of course. In my opinion, the airport walk is clearly the most subversive thing to do because nobody does it and it's destructive of the aim of the man-machine matrix, which is to deny locale.
>
> What you buy in the air experience is being trajected instantly into another place. You've bought that other place, so to spend by far longer – it's eighteen miles from Pearson into the centre of Toronto – to spend a long day after you've had a flight taking half that time is utterly subversive. But anyway none of the Canadians had done it and none of them had a fucking clue about how they should do it either.[39]

Guy Debord (1931-1994) contributed a great deal to the modern agenda of psychogeography as a way to understand the fabric of a place by foot, making observations of routine, rhythms of the city and people going about ordinary daily business, and pursuing similar ideas of the flâneur in Paris or London. Debord is credited with coining the term and explains its meaning here in his essay from 1955;

> The word psychogeography, suggested by an illiterate Kabyle as a general term for the phenomena a few of us were investigating around the summer of 1953, is not too inappropriate. It does not contradict the materialist perspective of the conditioning of life and thought by objective nature. Geography, for example, deals with the determinant action of general natural forces, such as soil composition or climatic conditions, on the economic structures of a society, and thus on the corresponding conception that such a society can have of the world. Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise laws and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behaviour of individuals. The adjective psychogeographical, retaining a rather pleasing vagueness, can thus be applied to the findings arrived at by this type of investigation, to their influence on human feelings, and even more generally to any situation or conduct that seems to reflect the same spirit of discovery.[40]

Guy Debord's definition is further teased out by Merlin Coverley who adds to the above quote by suggesting that psychogeography is 'the point at which psychology and geography collide, a means of exploring the behaviour impact of urban place.'[41] Keiller's *Robinson in Ruins* emerged out of a three-year AHRC grant in 2007 under the title of '*The Future of Landscape and the Moving Image'*, which 'explored the received ideas about mobility, belonging and displacement, and their relationship with landscape and images of landscape, in a context of economic and environmental crisis'. [42] The project was a collaboration between Patrick Keiller (artist), Doreen Massey (cultural geographer), Patrick Wright (cultural historian) and Matthew Flintham's PhD study on *Parallel Landscapes: A spatial and critical study of militarised sites in the United Kingdom.* The main character and protagonist in Keiller's film is Robinson who adopts the position of the flânuer. As Chris Jenks, Head of the Department of Sociology at Goldsmiths' College, University of London, proposes,

> The flâneur is the spectator and depicter of modern life, most specifically in relation to contemporary art and the sights of the city. The flâneur moves through space and among the people with a viscosity that both enables and

> privileges vision…The flâneur possesses a power, it walks at will, freely and seemingly without purpose, but simultaneously with an inquisitive wonder and an infinite capacity to absorb the activities of the collective, – often formulated as 'the crowd.[43]

The film contains a number of sequences of views of landscape and places from an almost elliptical journey made around Keiller's home near Oxford. The film is accompanied by a narrative written by Keiller and spoken by the acclaimed English actress and political activist Vanessa Redgrave CBE (1937-), a narrative that speaks of the scientific and historical importance relating to the landscape being captured by Keiller's camera. *Robinson in Ruins* is distinctly different from his previous two films in that they dealt with a largely urban subject matter whereas *Robinson in Ruins* deals with a largely suburban and rural subject matter. This is further evidenced by the number of sequences that dwell for prolonged periods (four minutes and 15 seconds devoted to butterflies working the teasel) on shots of flora and fauna, such as wild roses, teasel, foxgloves and chestnut tree all steeped in symbolic meaning.



Fig.11 Patrick Keiller, ***Robinson in Ruins*** (2010)
Teasels with peacock butterfly, near Woodeaton, England, UK.

These shots are captured when the camera is static in a locked-off position and are at the mercy of weather conditions to create movement, movement that is almost imperceptible at times. These shots seem painfully long at times however the duration of time involved allows and encourages the viewer to look and to think

intensely about the subject on screen. The longer one looks, the more one sees and thinks. The emphasis on the natural world suggests a reading of the landscape as 'continuity of time' with the relentless passing and returning of each day and season. The attention paid to the natural world and its ability to roam and self-seed aids a different consideration of the history of enclosures and the people of Otmoor's fight against the enclosure of common land which would deprive them of subsistence to live off the land. Keiller also reminds us that the Enclosure Act also coincided with the growth of the Industrial Revolution, particularly in the north, and its need to support the freedom of movement of the agricultural workforce to attract workers for industry. It was legislated for in 1795, 'in the interest of freeing hands to go where burgeoning capitalist enterprise needed them most'.[44] The historical relationship between capital and ecology that continues up to the present day is succinctly made in the film. In 2010, at a BFI event, the cultural historian Patrick Wright noted,

> What all the group were trying to do, is to reconnect with what you see when you look at a place, field or a wood with a broader sense and not so much in a scenic sense but what its realities and determinations are. [45]

Throughout *Robinson in Ruins* there is a tremendous emphasis on historical facts, figures and statistics, such as the ever-changing cost of bread and bread riots in Egypt or the cost of pension funds of Canadian companies that have invested in the UK. These facts and figures are spoken in the voiceover and accompanied by images that add to the evidence and research. Encroachment and displacement are also regularly mentioned and have become a strong theme running through the film. This emphasis on the accumulation of this type of the historical and social 'knowledge' of any given place as opposed to capturing and re-presenting experience could be seen as typical of Keiller's preferred response to place. The tension between ecology and accumulation of capital concerns, associated with ideas of a contemporary relationship to landscape, is strengthened by Keiller's use of a quote from Fredric Jameson's *The Seeds of Time* (1996):

> It seems to be easier for us today to imagine the thoroughgoing deterioration of the earth and of nature than the breakdown of late capitalism; perhaps that is due to some weakness in our imaginations.[46]

Keiller states that his first intention was to use a quote by Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) from a chapter entitled 'Refuge for the Homeless' from *Minima Moralia,* (1944). Adorno writes that 'dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible'.[47] Keiller decided not to use this quote in the film as he felt it wasn't true any more and considered that it is too often used out of context but nevertheless he does mention it in texts relating to the film and its meanings and therefore must feel it still holds some noteworthiness. By citing Adorno's statement, Keiller draws our attention to a significant aspect of his thesis, which is the importance of the need to 'dwell' in place and the effects or feeling unable to dwell, or finding oneself displaced. Keiller recalls;

> The project (*Robinson in Ruins*) was prompted by what I described as a discrepancy between, on one hand, the cultural and critical attention devoted to experience of mobility and displacement and, on the other, a tacit but seemingly widespread tendency to hold on to formulations of dwelling that derive from a more settled, agricultural past. While the former was extensive, it often seemed to involve regret for the loss or impossibility of the latter, and hence to reinforce, rather than rethink, some questionable ideas.[48]

It seems likely that Adorno would have opposed Martin Heidegger's (1889–1976) notion of dwelling or Desien, as the very essence of existence - the way humans exist in the world. Heidegger used the illustration of a farmhouse in the Black Forest to make his point:

> Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and heaven, divinities and mortals enter in simple oneness into things, ordered the house. It places the farm on the wind-sheltered slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring. It gave it the wide overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and which, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of the long winter nights, It did not forget the altar corner behind the community table; it made room in its chamber for the hallowed places of childbed and the 'tree of the dead' – for that is what they called a coffin there; the Totenbaum - and in this way it is designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time. A craft which itself sprung from dwelling, still uses its tools and frames as things, built the farmhouse.[49]

Heidegger's quote is useful in this thesis as it suggests a way of dwelling and living in place but which is surely out of date and impossible to be a reality for most but

could, nevertheless, still represent a desire or ideal goal. This may also explain the desire to understand place in all its various and complex registers. Edward Casey posits the notion that 'to dwell' can be seen as both to stay rooted to a familiar location as well as to wander, explore and get lost. Casey sees the significance of paying attention to the desire to dwell in the understanding of place,

> For dwelling-as-residing is not necessarily sedentary; not the literal absence of motion but finding a comparatively stable place in the world is what matters in such dwelling. Such finding is possible even when in motion. The earth offers continual if sometimes uncomfortable accommodations as one moves across its surface. If human beings may peregrinate in place, so they may also dwell stably even as they move from place to place.[50]

Casey takes his references from Greek mythology in his customary thorough historical investigation of origins of thought. Casey cites the Olympian goddess Hestia who is connected to domestic life and is often symbolized by contained, intimate activity that happens around the hearth. Her opposite is Hermes, god of thieves who is messenger to the Gods. Casey draws up an opposition to Hestia as operating from the home whereas Hermes has a more mobile characteristic of wandering and travelling. As with all dichotomies, each requires the other to delimit meaning; in order to appreciate the familiar, safe place and the known, one must understand the consequences of leaving or displacement from the familiar and embrace the unknown. The hestial and hermetic refer to two modes of embodiment, the stationary and the mobile and to two ways of conceiving and actualising dwelling.

Keiller's film also provides us with a reference to Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1974) which appears to be important to him and moves us towards an understanding of his practice which also offers a breakdown of the significance of the visual in informing this understanding of place. Keiller points to Lefebvre's 'conceptual triad' of *spatial practice, representations of space* and *representational space* 'with the aim of developing novel definitions of economic wellbeing, based on the transformative potential we attribute to images of landscape.'[51]

Lefebvre considered spatial practice as 'embodying a close association, within perceived space, between daily reality (daily routine) and urban reality (the routes

and networks which link up the places set aside for work, 'private' life and leisure).'[52] Representations of space include 'the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic, subdividers and social engineers as a certain type of artists with a scientific bent – all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived… This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production).'[53] Representational spaces are described,

> …as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to do more than describe. This is dominated – and hence passively experienced space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate.[54]

I believe Keiller views Lefebvre's 'conceptual triad' as providing the conceptual framework for the film *Robinson in Ruins* and the exhibition *The Robinson Institute* which was shown at Tate Britain in 2012, the first Tate Britain Commission, made in response to Tate's collection of British and international art, and supported by Sotheby's. *The Robinson Institute* considered the origins of the current economic crisis. Throughout *The Robinson Institute* images of landmarks and locations in the English landscape were employed to illustrate the development of capitalism. Researchers working on *The Robinson Institute* have revisited Robinson's last known journey, presenting his findings and film footage as an exhibition that features works by artists, mainly from Tate's collection, by writers, historians, geographers, cartographers and geologists, and a variety of other objects. Audiences were invited to retrace Robinson's steps and consider the connections that he made. Penelope Curtis, Director, Tate Britain, said,

> Patrick Keiller has risen to the challenge of the Tate Britain Commission in an exceptional way with a new installation that enables us to look at the Tate's collection in relation to some of the issues that Britain faces today, demonstrating how similar concerns run through time. Patrick Keiller's sustained interest in understanding the English landscape, and what it can tell us about the origin of some of the world's problems, strikes a perfect chord with the Tate collection.[55]

The narratives uncovered and constructed by Patrick Keiller in both *Robinson in Ruins* and *The Robinson Institute* help to animate and bring to life unruly stories,

> …the stories we stumble across in this landscape are often entangled with each other, but they are autonomous too and lead off in other, unrelated, directions. There are always loose ends in space.[56]



Fig.12. Patrick Keiller, **The *Robinson Institute***,
Tate Britain: Exhibition, 27 March – 14 October 2012.

Patience (After Sebald**)**: ***A walk through the Rings of Saturn***, Grant Gee, 2012.

Originally, whilst considering oppositional stances to the representation of place as posited by David Harvey and visually explored by Patrick Keiller, I initially saw Grant Gee's essay-film, *Patience (After Sebald)): A walk through the Rings of Saturn* (2012) as presenting a polar opposite to Patrick Keiller's *Robinson in Ruins* (2010). The essay-film *Robinson in Ruins* has all the hallmarks of an overriding interest in a cost-benefit framework within which we do so much of our thinking about nature and the landscape around us. There are regular references to the constantly fluctuating cost of bread or oil and the ownership of parcels of land in the UK by US global companies, often for strategic military use or for long-term financial investment. I originally felt there was only a secondary glance or attention paid to the romantic, imaginary, poetic or lyrical aspects of images of landscape within Keiller's essay-film or Harvey's writing, whereas Grant Gee's film *Patience (After Sebald): A walk through the Rings of Saturn (2012*) follows a more poetically lyrical investigation and experience of place as in line with Casey by way of phenomenology. However, both essay-films provide a valuable critique on how

images of place inform and offer meanings of place. I would argue that my research on Gee's essay-film still provides interesting counterpoints to the representation of place by Harvey and Keiller but now I see them as less oppositional but complementary. This shift in understanding is further explored in this section.

By way of an initial detour, and before I explore Gee's essay-film *Patience (After Sebald)*, I'd like to recall an important and apposite exhibition called *Waterlog*[57] that I attended in 2007. The exhibition encouraged me to pay close attention to what has quickly become known as a 'Sebaldian' approach to a variety of registers such as memory and loss, place-making, trauma or poetic narrative. It also provided me with an opportunity and reason to invite two artists from the *Waterlog* exhibition to deliver a lecture on their extended working practice as part of a public lecture programme. Alec Finlay and Jeremy Millar accepted and also agreed to explore the influence of place upon their practice within two chapbook-type publications (see Appendices pp. 175-190 and 192-207). I was also drawn to the serendipitous and circuitous concerns and working methods of Tacita Dean, which later developed into a conference paper and journal article and is further explored in Chapter Three of this thesis.

A guiding presence throughout the exhibition was the writing of the late W. G Sebald, (1944-2001), in particular, the notion that if 'place' is the settling of history on to landscape, is everywhere, in some sense, imprinted with memories of the past? Sebald's novel/memoir/travelogue *The Rings of Saturn* (1998) formed much of the inspiration for the touring exhibition and subsequent conference where artists and writers consider our relationship to place and its recollection. The exhibition publication *Waterlog – Journeys Around an Exhibition* included essays and poetry by Tacita Dean, Brian Dillon, Matthew Hollis, Robert MacFarlane, Jeremy Millar and George Szirtes. Brian Dillon writer, art critic, and the UK editor of *Cabinet* magazine described the exhibition,

> *Waterlog* is in this sense an exhibition about curiosity, about our capacity to drift from one place, one history or one subject to another and still have no notion how we navigated the darkness in between. This is one of Sebald's disorientating skills as a writer: one is constantly turning back to see by what unnoticed sleight of hand he took us, say, from modern Norfolk to seventeenth-

> century Holland, from the Forbidden City of the 1860s to a darkening view of Berlin in November 1933.[58]

In a similar vein of thinking Ken Worpole, the writer, member of the UK governments Urban Green Spaces Task Force and advisor to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), has said,

> It is the work of the late W.G. Sebald that has been most crucial to the re-imagining of the region. Most importantly Sebald has woven East Anglia back into a European narrative, since his writings are replete with references to the inter-connectedness of the Eastern shoreline with the dark places of European history.[59]

I believe this register, as described by Dillon and Worpole, of looking at the visual representation of place and landscape through memory and loss, along with Sebald's own direct ruminations on the subject, to be incisive in distinguishing a poetic and lyrical approach to representation of place. Eight days before W.G. Sebald's untimely death in 2001 he gave a radio interview with Michael Silverblatt for the Bookworm series, Sebald revealed an approach to how he dealt with images of places relating to landscape and history. Sebald suggests that,

> The reader needs to be prompted that the narrator has a conscience, that he is and has been, perhaps for a long time, engaged with these questions. And this is why the main scenes of horror are never directly addressed. I think it is sufficient to remind people, because we've all seen images, but these images militate against our capacity for discursive thinking, for reflecting upon these things. And also paralyze, as it were, our moral capacity. So the only way in which one can approach these things, in my view, is obliquely, tangentially, by reference rather than by direct confrontation.[60]

According to artist Lise Patt, curator and editor of *Searching for Sebald: Photography After W.G. Sebald*, and also the Director of The Institute of Cultural Inquiry (ICI);

> Sebald's project was quickly embraced by a wide range of post-medium artists who were laying the groundwork for a fictive genre in art. Adopting processes mediated by the foot, captured by the lens, and fuelled by the archive, these visual practitioners had eschewed mediums bounded to traditional materials, adopting instead concepts that reached beyond the realms of art - particularly memory, trauma, and loss – the same leitmotifs of Sebald's troubled *Nachgeborenen* (born-after "the war") conscious.[61]

To explore this observation further it would be helpful to consider the visual artist Simon Pope's contribution to the *Waterlog* exhibition as it also highlights the transformative and generative potential of walking in relation towards an understanding of place. In the same interview, Sebald commented that 'The walker's approach to viewing nature is a phenomenological one and the scientist's approach is a much more incisive one, but they all belong together.'[62] Pope's *Memorial Walks (2007)* accessed the museums of Norwich and Lincoln's collection of landscape paintings of the locale predominantly from the first half of the nineteenth century when depictions of the landscape were often influenced by Romanticism in a riposte to the fear of the impact of the Industrial Revolution and the dependency on rationalism of science in the age of Enlightenment.



Fig.13. Simon Pope, ***The Memorial Walks*** (2007)
Waterlog, A Journey around an Exhibition.

In Pope's *Memorial Walks* an invited participant chooses a painting that portrays trees or woodland in particular from the museums' collections and then memorises it. They must then walk to a location of Pope's choosing – generally within striking distance of the gallery – at which point they are invited to describe the painting from memory, a process of recollection which is recorded on tape and photographed. The paintings are hung within the gallery, although most are draped with black silk, reminiscent of the ancient Dutch ritual practiced in homes in which there had been a death, whereby landscape paintings and mirrors were draped with mourning ribbons in order that the departing soul would not become distracted upon its final journey. This project demonstrated to me the powerful nature of depiction of places and landscape as well as the importance of superstition alongside the historical need for

modern day pilgrimage and the restorative potential of walking. As Christina Kraenzle, Professor of Languages, Literature and Linguistics at the University of Toronto, observes 'Sebald's walking tours share the underlying principle of the pilgrimage: the investment of place with the power to unite the physical and the intangible, the living and the otherworldly'[63]. Rebecca Solnit, also echoes this, and writes;

> Pilgrimage is premised on the idea that the sacred is not entirely immaterial, but that there is a geography of spiritual power. Pilgrimage walks a delicate line between the spiritual and the material in its emphasis on the story and its setting.[64]

Grant Gee's essay-film or cine-poetry essay *Patience (After Sebald*) follows the format of the development of a theme or an idea rather than a plot and is often seen as a cinematic accompaniment to a narrator reading an essay. The late Chris Marker (1921-2012) is often seen as the modern-day pioneer of the genre from the 1960s onwards; in particular *La Jetée (1962)* and *Sans Soleil (1983)* are good examples that may have influenced Gee. The genre combines a blend of documentary, fiction, and experimental film, making use of creative and imaginative editing styles. Gee considers the narrative of W.G. Sebald's 1995 (published in English in 1998) book *The Rings Of Saturn* as the starting point for the film and takes the viewer through a walking tour of Suffolk with Sebald's book as a guide.

Patience (After Sebald) is a richly layered film with carefully edited interviews from a range of eminent scholars, artists, writers and publishers which all provided varied and diverse takes on Sebald's writing, leaving the viewer space to apply their own thinking. Gee edits these talking heads[65] with scenes from East Anglia, clips from archival documentary footage including World War II, The British Fishing Industry and silkworm production along with slow panning shots of pages from the book that incorporate text and images.

There are too many specific places to explore within the scope of this thesis that provide a comprehensive account of the film's attention to place and how an audience might be jarred into being encouraged to think about new relationships with these places. However, there are a number of key locations in the film and book that

are particularly relevant to this chapter. The first location I'd like to consider is Somerleyton Hall near Lowestoft, where Sebald and Gee explore the generative potential of being in a place that has the power to conjure up other places and other times at the same time,

> There are indeed moments, as one passes through the rooms open to the public at Somerleyton, when one is not quite sure whether one is in a country house in Suffolk or some kind of no-man's-land, on the shores of the Arctic Ocean or in the heart of the dark continent. Nor can one readily say which decade or century it is, for many ages are super-imposed here and coexist. [66]

According to Mark Fisher, this 'jumbling up of time' (alterpolarity), the montaging of earlier eras, has ceased to be worthy of comment; it is now so prevalent that is no longer even noticed.[67] This note of caution is worth remembering as is the critical view of Richard Mabey when he considers Sebald as belonging to the 'pathetic fallacy'[68] group of writers where description can be hyperbolic, full of elaborate, excessively ornate literary passages that can sometimes lose the reader within overly romantic and poetic rhetoric.

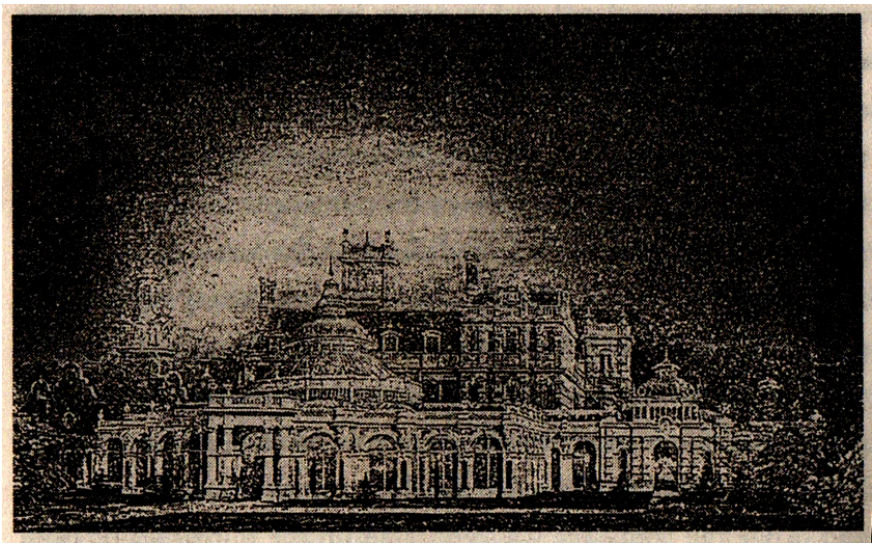


Fig.14 W.G. Sebald, ***The Rings of Saturn*** **(**1998)
Image of Somerleyton Hall appears on page 34.

Somerleyton Hall is depicted in *The Rings of Saturn* by a photocopy of a photocopy where the degraded quality of the image suggests a plume of light emanating from the glass roof structure suggesting an evening event in the past, lit by gaslight. This

simple device of a degraded image is also used in similar but different effect when Gee, with the help of novelist and literary theorist Marina Warner examines a passage where Sebald talks about herring fishing in the North Sea that almost seamlessly moves on to images of dead bodies, leaving the reader to wonder if the place depicted is Bergsen Belsen. Both Sebald and Gee prepare the reader and viewer respectively for this connection between the death of herring to the death camps in Germany within a few lines in the book and a few transitions in the film. We are engrossed by the mixture of facts and myths relating to herring, in particular their fascinating transformation in colour through death. Then we are suddenly reminded that the narrator continues his walk and, in turn, is reminded by the immediate dark atmospheric landscape between Lowestoft and Southwold of an article about the death of Major George Wyndham Le Strange who served in the anti-tank regiment that liberated the camp at Bergen Belsen on the 14th of April 1945. We are further encouraged to make the connection between these two events when Sebald informs us about the inspector of the Rouen fish market, a certain Noel de Marinière, and his investigation into,

> …the fishes' capacity to survive, which he did by cutting off their fins and mutilating them in other ways. This process, inspired by our thirst for knowledge, might be described as the most extreme of the sufferings undergone by species always threatened by disaster. [69]

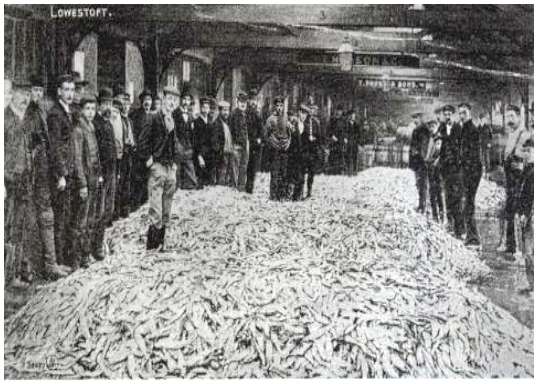


Fig.15. W.G. Sebald,
The Rings of Saturn (1998)
Image appears on page 54.

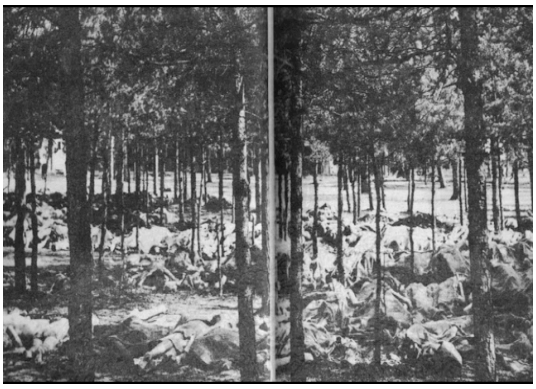


Fig.16. W.G. Sebald,
The Rings of Saturn (1998)
Image appears on page 54.

Sebald's writing on the herring could quite easily be said to be discussing the heinous acts of medical experiments conducted by his compatriots within the

concentration camp. This particular section is also selected by Lise Patt (co-editor of *Searching for Sebald*) for particular attention in Gee's film as for her it demonstrated a number of disjunctures that made her consider the text in a new light. Gee helps the viewer with carefully chosen, slowed-down footage juxtaposed with transitions between a postcard of fish to images of Bergen Belsen. This particular section makes Patt want to study the book again in more detail to seek sections like this that 'call out for interpretation' and makes her declare that Sebald is very important to contemporary artists. She goes further and suggests that Sebald is both writer and artist.



Fig.17. Grant Gee, ***Patience (After Sebald) A walk through the Rings of Saturn***, (2012)

Mark Fisher, author of *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (2009), and more recently *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (2014), provides a refreshingly more sceptical take on the work of Sebald and suggests that;

> When I read *Rings of Saturn*, I was hoping that it would be an exploration of these eerily numinous spaces. Yet what I found was something rather different: a book that, it seemed to me at least, morosely trudged through the Suffolk spaces without really looking at them; that offered a Mittel-brow miserabilism, a stock disdain, in which the human settlements are routinely dismissed as shabby and the inhuman spaces are oppressive. The landscape in *The Rings of Saturn* function as a thin conceit, the places operating as triggers for a literary ramble which reads less like a travelogue than a librarian's listless daydream. [70]

He goes on to say that, “Sebald’s novels fit into any discussion of place and enchantment only very awkwardly: his work is more about displacement and disenchantment than their opposite.”[71]

I’d like to end this discussion on the Grant Gee’s essay-film by considering *A Firework for W.G. Sebald* (2005-6) by visual artist Jeremy Millar. Gee’s film finishes on a filmic montage of Millar’s photographs and an image of the author. Millar takes for his starting point the image and story of the Lowestoft lighthouse which also features predominantly in Peter Greenaway’s 1988 film, *Drowning by Numbers.* Millar focuses on the character Smut from Greenaway’s film who is fascinated with death and sets off a firework in a macabre ritual every time he encounters a death – human or animal – in order to celebrate their life. Millar borrows this ritual and applies it to the spot on the A146 in Farmington Pigot where W.G. Sebald was involved in a fatal car crash. Millar sets off a series of fireworks and takes four photographs of the plume of smoke left behind as a record of both ritual and memorial, which takes the form of a pilgrimage to the place of Sebald’s death. Later on when Millar is studying the photographic evidence he notices that the fourth and final image of the plume of smoke bears a striking resemblance to the distinctive feature of Sebald with his bushy mustache. Millar decides to present the four photographs in sequence with an explanatory text.



Fig.18 Jeremy Millar, ***A Firework for W.G Sebald*** (2005)



Fig.19 Jeremy Millar, ***A Firework for W.G Sebald*** (2005) Installation View, CCA, Glasgow, March 2011

The reason for citing Millar's work is that it illustrates a number of key aspects as to why artists are attracted to place and how place in return can influence the decision-making process of the artist. It is possible to imagine Millar initially setting off on a pilgrimage to the accident spot on the A146 to pay his respects to the writer when he stumbles across – we could say surreptitiously – an image or a result he was not anticipating or expecting. Millar's assertion of seeing the features of Sebald in the smoke plume is another aspect worth noting. Millar's imagining of the ghostly presence of the spectre of Sebald conjures up the notion of the hauntology of space as posited by Jacques Derrida. 'To haunt does not mean to be present, and it is necessary to introduce haunting into the very construction of a concept.'[72] Mark Fisher, further expands this idea where he suggests;

> Hauntology was the successor to previous concepts of Derrida's such as the trace and *différence*; like those earlier terms, it referred to the way in which nothing enjoys a purely positive existence. Everything that exists is possible on the basis of a whole series of absences, which precede and surround it, allowing it to possess such consistency and intelligibility that it does.[73]

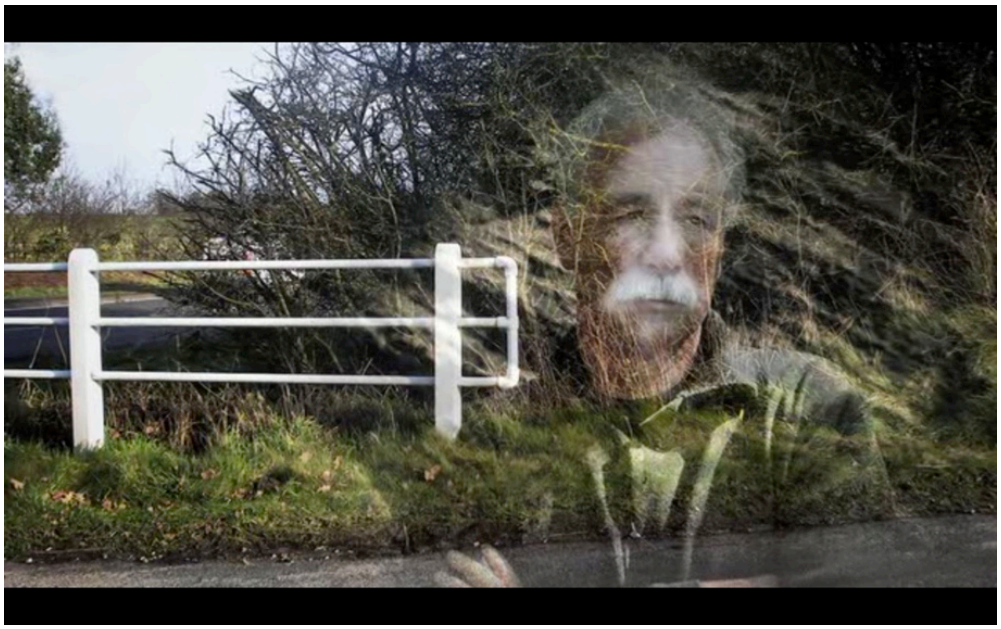


Fig.20 Grant Gee, ***Patience (After Sebald) A walk through the Rings of Saturn*** *(2012)*

I feel that this passage below, by Sebald in *Austerlitz,* could be seen as an apposite reply to Millar's haunting image taken at the place of Sebald's fatal car crash.

> …if time did not exist at all, only various spaces interlocking according to the rules of a higher form of stereometry, between which the living and the dead can move back and forth as they like, and the longer I think about it the more it seems to me that we who are still alive are unreal in the eyes of the dead, that only occasionally, in certain lights and atmospheric conditions, do we appear in their field of vision'.[74]

In Chapter One a number of points of view are explored as to why a study of place is both difficult to undertake and why it continues to be the subject of many studies. I selected four influential voices that explore the varying registers relating to a critical understanding of place. The two leading authorities on place-writing provide a comparative analysis; Edward Casey's *'How to get from Space to Place in a fairly short stretch of Time,'* (1996) and David Harvey's essay *'From Space to Place and back again: Reflections on the condition of postmodernity'* (1993). A further comparative study of two recent essay-films was also explored in order to understand why the study of place is important; Patrick Keiller's *Robinson in Ruins* (2010) and Grant Gee's *Patience (After Sebald),* (2012). I leave this chapter realising that the two essays and the two essay-films considered, along with their influences, do not constitute a clear and accurate definition of what place might be.

What connects all four references from this chapter together is a relationship to 'time' in particular, the notion of haunting of spaces with a past. It is this permeable membrane of 'time' that connects the two essays together. This seepage of time is also considered from two advantage points such as Gee's poetic and romantic position and Keiller's geo-political interest.

I believe it is also important to acknowledge the fact that I have not attempted to provide a definition for the word place. I consider any attempt to do this would be of little value as the word 'place' appears to mean different things to different people at different times. As a definition of place becomes clear and focused on one page it almost purposely becomes hazy and ill-fitting on the next. The etymology of the word 'define' suggests something that comes to an end or is fixed. Through an evaluation of this first chapter I would suggest that the understanding of the word 'place' is in constant flux and needs to be flexible in order to allow language to keep up with its changing meanings.

In the next chapter I plan to build on these discoveries and consider the role contemporary art practices has added to Harvey's notion that place is a social construct and focus on the social processes within contemporary art practices.

Notes on Chapter One

[1] Max Jammer, *Concepts of Space: the History of Space in Physics* , Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970, 2nd edn,p.xii.
[2] Michael Foucault, *Of Other Spaces, Diacritic,*16, 1986, p.22.
[3] Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, Indiana University Press, 1993, p.xiv.
[4] J.Nicholas Entrikin, *The Betweenness of Place*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1991, p.14.
[5] Edward Casey, *Getting Back into Place, Towards a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indian University Press, 1993. p *ix.*
[4] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, London, Pion limited,1986, p.6.
[7] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Oxford/Mass: Blackwell 1990, p355.
[8] David Harvey, *Mapping the Futures, Local Cultures,Global Change*, London: Routledge,1993, p.4.
[9] Jeremy Millar and Tacita Dean (eds.), *Artworks: Place*, London: Thames and Hudson, 2005, p.12.
[10] Comments from a lecture and discussion delivered by Jeremy Millar at Sheffield Hallam University and further expanded in the accompany publication Transmission: Host, 2008.
[11] Geoffrey Lilburne, *A Sense of Place: A Christian theology of the Land*, Abington Press, Nashville, 1989, p.26.
[12] Lucy R. Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, California*:* University of California Press, 1997, *p xxi.*
[13] Claire Doherty, *Out of Time out of Place:Public Art (Now),* Art Books Publishing Ltd, London, 2015, p.20.
[14] David Harvey, *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference*, Cambridge Massachusetts, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996, p.292.
[15] ibid, p.293.
[16] John Bird *et al*, *Mapping the Futures, Local cultures, Global change,* David Harvey's essay, From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of Postmodernity, London: Routledge, 1993, p.4.
[17] John Bird *et al*, *Mapping the Futures, Local cultures, Global change,* David Harvey's essay, From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of Postmodernity, London: Routledge, 1993, p.5.
[18] Robert Sack, *Homo Geographicus: A Framework for Action, Awareness and Moral Concern, John Hopkins UniversityPress, Baltimore, 1997, p2*
[19] John Bird *et al*, *Mapping the Futures, Local cultures, Global change,* David Harvey's essay, From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of Postmodernity, London: Routledge, 1993, p.7.
[20] ibid, p.7.
[21] Tim Edsnor, *Industrial Ruins: Spaces, Aesthetics and Materiality,* Berg, Oxford & New York, 2005, pp.7-8.
[22] Brian Dillon's article *Decline and Fall* was published by *Frieze*, Issue 130, April, 2010. It offers an introduction to 'Ruin Lust' and cites a number of internationally recognized artists in recent years that have made work in response to the ruin: we might think, for example, of works as diverse as Roger Hiorns' Seizure (2008), installed in a decayed London flat, and Joel Meyerowitz's frankly picturesque photographs of Ground Zero. In other cases, such as Runa Islam's film of the Museum of the 20th Century in Vienna, Empty the pond to get the fish. (2008), the ruin in question is explicitly that of a mid-century Modernism. http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/decline_and_fall/ (Last accessed 30/12/13)
[23] Tim Edsnor, *Industrial Ruins: Spaces, Aesthetics and Materiality,* Berg, Oxford & New York, 2005, p.4.
[24] *Prince Charles – The Royal Restoration,* ITV, first screened 29th May 2012.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CMSN37hMnhQ (Last Accessed 6/1/14)
[25] John Bird *et al, Mapping the Futures, Local cultures, Global change*, David Harvey's essay, From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of Postmodernity, London: Routledge, 1993, p.9.
[26] Michel de Certeau, *Practices of Space*, in *On Signs*, ed. Marshall Blonsky, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1985, p.143.
[27] Sharon Kivland & Lesley Sanderson. eds. *Transmission: Speaking & Listening*, Transmission Volume 1, Sheffield Hallam University, Site Gallery, Sheffield, 2002, p17)
[28] Steve Field and Keith Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place* (School of American Research Advanced Seminar) Washington: University of Washington Press, 1996, p14.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Shmuel Sambursky, *The Concept of Place in late Neoplatonism*, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982, p37.
[31] Steve Field and Keith Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place* (School of American Research Advanced Seminar) Washington: University of Washington Press, 1996, p27.
[32] An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Book II, Chapter XIII, Complex Ideas of Simple Modes: - and First, of the Simple Modes of the Idea of Space, 1690.
[33] Fred R Myers, *Pintupi Country, Pintupi Self: Sentiment, Place, and Politics Among Western Desert Aborigines*, University of California Press, California,1991, p.47.
[34] Kate Flint and Howard Morphy (eds) *Culture, Landscape, and the Environment, The Linacre Lectures 1997*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2000.p80.
[35] Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life*, London, Verso, p.38.
[36] Steve Field and Keith Basso (eds.), *Senses of Place* (School of American Research Advanced Seminar) Washington: University of Washington Press, 1996, p15.
[37] http://www.gutenberg.org/files/4280/4280-h/4280-h.htm (Last Accessed 11/01/14)
[38] Jeremy Millar and Tacita Dean (eds.), *Artworks: Place*, London, Thames and Hudson, 2005, p.20.
[39] http://www.thewhitereview.org/interviews/interview-with-will-self/ (Last Accessed: 24/12/13)
[40] Harold Bauder and Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro (eds), *Critical Geographies: A collection of Readings*, Praxis Press, Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada, 2008, p.23.
[41] Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography*, Pocket Essentials, Harpenden, 2006, p.10
[42]http://thefutureoflandscape.wordpress.com (Last Accessed: 13/12/13)
[43] Chris Jenks, Visual Culture, London, Routledge, 1995, p.146.
[44] John Torpey, *The Invention of the passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p.67.
[45] http://www.bfi.org.uk/live/video/556 (Last Accessed 21/01/14)
[46] Fredric Jameson, *The Seeds of Time*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, p.xi.
[47] Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*: Refuge for the Homeless, London: Verso, 2005, p.38.
[48] Doreen Massey, *Landscape/space/politics: an essay*, A download as a PDF from the DVD component of Robinson in Ruins, 2010, non-paginated.
[49] Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Harper and Row, New York, 1971, p.160.
[50] Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place; Towards a Renewed understanding of the Place –World*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis, 1993, p133.
[51] Patrick Keiller, *The Possibility of Life's Survival on the Planet*, Tate Publishing, London, 2012, p16
[52] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1991, p38.
[53] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1991, p38-39.
[54] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, 1991, p39.
[55] http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/patrick-keiller-robinson-institute (Last Accessed 09/03/14)

[56] Doreen Massey, *Landscape/space/politics: an essay*, A download as a PDF from the DVD component of Robinson in Ruins, 2010, non-paginated.
[57] The touring group exhibition, *Waterlog* was at The Collection in Lincoln, instigated by Film and Video Umbrella London. *Waterlog*, included visual artists; Marcus Coates, Tacita Dean, Jeremy Millar, Alec Finlay, Alexander and Susan Maris, and Simon Pope. The exhibition was curated by Jeremy Millar (artist, writer and Lecturer at RCA.,London) and Steven Bode (Director of Film and Video Umbrella), and was also staged at The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, UEA Norwich; Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery and The Collection Lincoln; with a conference (*Landscape, Walking and Recollection,* September 2007) incorporating a book launch at Tate Britain, London.
[58] Steven Bode, Ed., *Waterlog, Journeys Around An Exhibition,* London, Film and Video Umbrella, 2007, p24.
[59] Gareth Evans and Di Robson, Eds., *Towards Re-Enchantment: Place and its Meaning,* Artevents, London, 2013, p75.
[60] Lynne Sharon Schwartz, Ed., *the emergence of memory: conversations with W.G.Sebald, Seven stories Press, New York, 2010, p.80.*
[61] Lise Patt, *Searching for Sebald: Photography After W.G. Sebald*, The Institute of Cultural Inquiry and ICI Press, Los Angeles, 2007, p.17.
[62] Lynne Sharon Schwartz, Ed., *the emergence of memory: conversations with W.G.Sebald, Seven stories Press, New York, 2010, p.81.*
[63] Christina Kraenzle, *Picturing Place: Travel Photography, and Imaginative Geography in W.G. Sebald's Rings of Saturn,* in Lise Pitt, *Searching for Sebald: Photography After W.G. Sebald*, The Institute of Cultural Inquiry and ICI Press, Los Angeles, 2007, p.126.
[64] Rebecca Solnit, *Wunderlust: A History of Walking,* Viking, New York, 2000, p50.
[65] The talking heads (who, for the most part, remain offscreen talking voices) are a well-chosen group which includes: Robert Macfarlane (writer), Christopher MacLehose (publisher), Adams Phillips (writer and psychoanalyst), Barbara Hui (creator of LitMaps), William Firebrace (architect), Rick Moody (writer), Bill Swainson (editor), Kate Mitchell (theater director), Iain Sinclair (writer), Lise Patt (editor, *Searching for Sebald*), Christopher Woodward (writer), Tacita Dean (artist), Jeremy Millar (artist), Michael Silverblatt (KCRW radio interviewer), Dan Gretton (writer), Marina Warner (writer), Sir Andrew Motion (poet), Arthur Lubow (journalist), and Chris Petit (writer & filmmaker). Poet and Sebald translator Michael Hamburger appears via clips from an earlier film. And Sebald himself is heard, talking about Virginia Woolf, Bleak House.
[66] W.G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, trans. by Michael Hulse, Vintage, London, 2002, p.36.
[67] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writing on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, Zero Books, Winchester UK, Washington USA, 2014, p.6.
[68] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writing on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, Zero Books, Winchester UK, Washington USA, 2014, p.206.
[69] W.G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, trans. by Michael Hulse, Vintage, London, 2002, p.57.
[70] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writing on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, Zero Books, Winchester UK, Washington USA, 2014, p.202.
[71] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writing on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, Zero Books, Winchester UK, Washington USA, 2014, p.203.
[72] Jacques Derrida, *`Spectres of Marxs: The State of the Debt, the work of Mourning and a New International*, Routledge, New York and London, 1994, p.202
[73] Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writing on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, Zero Books, Winchester UK, Washington USA, 2014, p.17-18
[74] W.G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*, London, Penquin Books, 2001, p.261.

Chapter Two

2

Indeed the deterritorialization of the site has produced liberatory effects, displacing the strictures of fixed place-bound identities with the fluidity of a migratory model, introducing the possibilities for the production of multiple identities, allegiances, and meanings, based not on normative conformities but on the non-rational convergences forged by chance encounters and circumstances.[1]

Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity, 1997.*

The bulldozing of an irregular topography into a flat site is clearly a technocratic gesture which aspires to a condition of absolute placelessness, whereas the terracing of the same site to receive the site stepped form of a building is an engagement in the act of "cultivating" the site. . . . This inscription . . . has a capacity to embody, in built form, the prehistory of the place, its archeological past and its subsequent cultivation and transformation across time. Through this layering into the site the idiosyncrasies of place find their expression without falling into sentimentality.[2]

Kenneth Frampton, *Towards a Critical Regionalism*, 1983.

[T]he elaboration of place-bound identities has become more rather than less important in a world of diminishing spatial barriers to exchange, movement and communication.[3]

David Harvey, *From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity*.1991.

In Chapter Two I consider the role that context and situation play in shaping and informing this research. A consideration of how context and situation help to shape the representation and experience of place is essential and has helped formulate the working methods for this research. This chapter provides a critical framework and understandings observed and borrowed from a number of artists, artworks and organisations. These findings are explored further and are 'put into practice' within the two-month artist-in-residence programme at Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the making of *Period Drama*, (2012/13), a video installation intended to be installed inside the Camellia House at Bretton Hall. This chapter also provides the theoretical thinking for *Ghost* (2015-), three stone or marble carved street signs for a sculptural piece intended for an area of New Cumnock in East Ayrshire, Scotland.



Fig. 21. The Camellia House at Bretton Park Estate, Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

The research question that concerns this chapter is 'by what means or processes does a sense of place become able to be represented?' I have been asking and exploring the same or similar questions in previous work and have been studying the work and practices of other artists for whom similar issues surrounding place have been central to their practice.

I begin this chapter by exploring Claire Doherty's preference for the term situation over context. Exploring Antony Gormley's Angel of the North (1998) and Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* (2001) develops this further by considering alternative

strategies for the representation of place where context has a close attachment to time and history.

I have concentrated my attention on two specific examples of contemporary art practice that address the broad spectrum of the thesis by considering contemporary art's contribution to place-making alongside other disciplines such as urban/human geography, history, politics, philosophy and anthropology. By considering Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* (Gateshead, 1998) and Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* (Sheffield, 2001) I will explore and highlight methods of constructing a sense of place by these two artworks that are similar in theme, in that both sites are connected to the disappearance of aspects of the British coal industry and both deal with locations that have a strong sense of place within the local community, but from two very different approaches. I will raise issues concerning place-making and representation of place that have been adopted in the realisation of the works. In order to best understand how and why these artists have responded to the context in the way that they have, it is important to retrace these approaches, revealing our understanding of, and desire to explore, methods of representing place and how this enquiry has influenced our renewed contemporary interest and understanding of place.

I then consider ideas that suggest a number of the artists I have are chosen as examples of theories share many similar working methods with anthropology, particularly ideas surrounding fieldwork. I suggest that the Artist Placement Group (APG) is to be credited with developing these ideas – that are being used today – with particular emphasis on the three important adages such as 'Context is half the work', 'Incidental Person' and 'the open brief'.[4]

Throughout this chapter I explore the influence that place has played upon the decision-making process of a number of artists in the making and presentation of their practice. This includes the fluid nature of context/situation as it is affected by time, and unanticipated interventions outside of the artist's control such as with Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North*. I also consider how Jeremy Deller's use of storytelling provides an alternative to the more popular, and possibly the more publicly accepted, representation of art as a form of 'place-making' as characterised

by Gormley's sculptures in public spaces in that Deller's 2001 re-enactment of a key event within the 1984 miners' strike provides an alternative telling of history and place but can be difficult work to communicate.

In 2009 Claire Doherty delivered a lecture at Glasgow School of Art called *The Event of Situation: Contemporary Art, Place & Time* as part of the Friday Event series of visiting lectures. During the lecture Doherty made a case for questioning the use of the word 'context' within contemporary art practice as being unsuitable now and not fit for purpose in describing the type of work that is currently being produced under the current register of 'place-responsive or context-specific projects'. Within Doherty's lecture the word 'context' is well-examined and considered to describe the spatial and temporal matrix through which an artwork is produced but she finds the scope of the word to be limited and refers to it as being simply descriptive, illustrative and less active or dynamic than the preferred 'situation'. Doherty makes the claim that 'situation' may provide a more accurate and better fit for the new type of work being produced that has emerged out of the context-specific rubric, suggesting that,

> …'situation' has the additional capacity to capture the 'presenceness' of the moment of an encounter with an artwork. The ground of its making the spatial and temporal architecture through which an artwork is produced and how we experience it.[5]

These ideas are further developed through Doherty's choice of anthology of relevant texts as editor for *SITUATION: Documents in Contemporary Art* published by the Whitechapel Gallery, London, again in 2009. Doherty's selection is influenced by her role as a curator, writer and academic and traces the evolution of site-specific art from the 1960s where the displacement and dematerialization of the art object is historicised and which now plays an established and crucial role within the present divergent implications for the art object in the global era. Doherty is keen to raise the issue of appropriateness of terminology, as she sees an increase in curatorial initiatives and projects that are now demanding or expecting artists to respond to a specific situation, which is seen as a shift from site-specific responses. The shift also seems to be demanding a more discursive component to the work where the audience has the opportunity to offer feedback and enter into dialogue with the artist in real

time as the work unfolds. Doherty cites Grant Kester's (Professor of Art History University of California, San Diego, and the founding editor of *FIELD: A Journal of Socially Engaged Art Criticism)* use of the term 'Littoral art' as a particularly useful term to further understand situated practice.

> It is necessary to consider the Littoralist work as a process as well as a physical product, and specifically as a process rooted in a discursively mediated encounter in which the subject positions of artist and viewer or artist and subject are openly thematized and can potentially be challenged and transformed. I am particularly interested in a discursive aesthetic based on the possibility of a dialogical relationship that breaks down the conventional distinction between artist, artwork and audience - a relationship that allows the viewer to "speak back" to the artist in certain ways, and in which this reply becomes in effect a part of the "work" itself.[6]

It is worthwhile at this point to reflect on a flipside of this type of approach identified by artist, writer, curator, and educator Bruce Barber in his essay *The Question (of Failure*) *in Art Research* which appeared in *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School: The Artist, the PhD, and the Academy* (2009). Barber recalls an anecdote, a partial conversation he overheard between two curators who were bemoaning and 'getting tired of receiving proposals for festivals that were based on relational aesthetics' and went on to expand on this observation about 'work that is simply thrown together on the spot and dusted with some social signifiers.'[7] Barber goes on to cite similar concerns and dissatisfaction expressed by an art writer friend of his who expressed reservations about the participatory, socially-engaged practice work created by a certified relational artist by asking or questioning; "who is the real working artist here when the exhibition is under the imprimatur of the artist but is really the work of the community groups working at his behest?"[8]

This way of working is not necessarily considered new but has been evident from the 1990s. Nicolas Bourriaud's book *Relational Aesthetics* (1998) and the consequent confusion of 'relational' with 'social engagement' has conflated meaning together with understanding and consequently distracting the art world away from examining the more finely nuanced practices that genuinely seek audience participation in the realisation of an artwork. Doherty provides us with an outline of artists that desire audience participation in her short essay from 2006 *Curating Wrong Places…Or*

> For example, those artists who invite participation, often through a complicit engagement with their subject, but who essentially remain the signatories of their work (Thomas Hirschhorn, Phil Collins, Santiago Sierra), from those who those embed themselves within the social fabric of a city through intervention (Francis Alÿs, Minerva Cuevas, Roman Ondák), from those who work collaboratively effecting a kind of 'social sculpture' (Superflex, Wochenklasur). So, to speak of context as a metaphor, prediction and lived reality necessitates less an emphasis on the ethics of artistic engagement than on a differentiation between types of engagement and the potential for resonance in the resulting exhibition beyond metaphor, prediction or lived reality.[9]

Doherty's engagement with particular aspects of contemporary art that operates outside of the gallery realm explores the notion of context and audience participation with the Situations research group that started out in 2002 as a public art-commissioning programme within the University of the West of England in Bristol, under Doherty's supervision. In 2012 it left the university and became an independent arts charity with its studio based at Spike Island in Bristol. According to the organisation's website, Situations sees itself as,

> Working beyond the boundaries of a gallery or museum context offers a rich and often challenging set of conditions. We begin from a more dynamic understanding of place than a physical site, inviting artists to contribute to the lived experience of a place. This consideration of situation (a set of conditions, locations, people, moments in time and circumstance) rather than location means that every newly commissioned project starts with a process of becoming locally embedded.[10]

In 2013 Doherty and Situations.org produced a poster for distribution that outlines twelve new rules for public art. These rules are clearly intended and considered for public art projects that are born out of a commissioning, and possibly competitive, process for public spaces. I believe they may also provide a guide to understanding and valuing other artworks that are inspired by similar registers but may not be authorised by the commissioning process.

My intention in this chapter is to examine a number of ideas surrounding the notion of context and/or situation posited by Doherty and others that have a bearing on my own practice and that of other artists identified within the research. I will look at the prevailing model and trend for large public art commissions and, by contrast, a

model that deals with similar situations but takes a completely different trajectory, and in the process, provide a route map for others to follow.



THE NEW RULES OF PUBLIC ART

1. It doesn't have to look like public art.

The days of bronze heroes and roundabout baubles are numbered. Public art can take any form or mode of encounter. Be prepared to be surprised, delighted, even unnerved.

2. It's not forever.

Artists are shaking up the life expectancy of public artworks. Places don't remain still and unchanged, so why should public art?

3. Don't make it for a community. Create a community.

Be wary of predefining an audience. As Brian Eno once said, "sometimes the strongest single importance of a work of art is the celebration of some kind of temporary community."

4. Create space for the unplanned.

Commissioning public art is not a simple design-and-build process. Artworks arrive through a series of accidents, failures and experiments and open up the potential for unforeseen things to happen.

5. Withdraw from the cultural arms race.

Towns and cities across the world are locked into a one-size fits-all style of public art. In a culture of globalised brands and clone towns, we hanker after authentic, distinctive places. If we are place-making, then let's make unusual places.

6. Demand more than fireworks.

Believe in the quiet, unexpected encounter as much as the magic of the mass spectacle. It's often in the silence of a solitary moment, rather than the exhilaration of whizzes and bangs, that transformation occurs.

7. Don't embellish. Interrupt.

We need smart urban design, uplifting street lighting and landmark buildings, but public art can do so much more than decorate. Interruptions to our surroundings or everyday activities can open our eyes to new possibilities.

8. Share ownership freely, but authorship wisely.

Public art is of the people and made with the people, but not always by the people. Artists are skilled creative thinkers as well as makers, trust their judgment, follow their lead and invest in their process.

9. Welcome outsiders.

Outsiders challenge our assumptions about what we believe to be true of a place. Embrace the opportunity to see through an outsider's eyes.

10. Don't waste time on definitions.

Is it sculpture? Is it visual art? Is it performance? Who cares. There are more important questions to ask. Does it move you? Does it shake up your perceptions of the world around you, or your backyard? Does it make you curious to see more?

11. Suspend your disbelief.

Art gives us the chance to imagine alternative ways of living, to disappear down rabbit holes, to live for a moment in a different world. Local specifics might have been the stepping off point – but public art is not a history lesson. Be prepared that it might not always tell the truth.

12. Get lost.

Public art is neither a destination nor a way-finder. Artists encourage us to follow them down unexpected paths as a work unfolds. Surrender the guidebook, get off the art trail and step into unfamiliar territory.

SITUATIONS

Fig.22. Situations ***New Rules for Public Art*** (2013)

Through the study of particular artists and artworks such as Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North* (Gateshead, 1998) and Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* (Sheffield,

2001) two works that are similar in theme but demonstrate very different approaches to place-making and representation of place are considered. This chapter also allows for thoughts to emerge and to test the role that serendipity and sagacity has had on the formulation and reception of these works. Both artworks created a great deal of heated public debate at the time of their reveal, and continue to do so, and have generated interesting discussion points within contemporary art practice, art theory and art used within a regeneration context, as well as encouraging community engagement that questions and interrogates the idea of place.

I don't know what I'm looking for but I'll know it when I see it.

As we have seen in Chapter One the cultural geographer and philosopher David Harvey suggests that like space and time, place is a social construct and the only interesting question left to be asked on the subject is by what social process(es) is place constructed?[11]

In considering the question 'by what means or processes can a sense of place be created?' I have been asking, and exploring, the same or similar questions in my own work as a visual artist, and have been studying the work and practices of other artists for whom issues surrounding place have been central to their practice.

The subtitle of this section is also the title of a peer-reviewed conference titled, *1st Global Conference, Space and Place* presented in 2011 and organised by Inter-Disciplinary.net in Oxford. The conference paper explored the initial, wary acceptance by locals of the *Angel of The North,* followed by dislike and feeling the money could have been better spent on other services, to becoming completely adopted and valued by the community. Making decisions in commissioning permanent or fixed-term public art combined with the fickle and ever-changing public responses to contemporary art practices that often involves large, expensive projects and have long periods of gestation in being realised often sit awkwardly at first in the environment and, with their immediate audiences, can sometimes be passionately disliked and then passionately protected by the very same audiences. I

am reminded of Douglas Crimp's comment on public opinion in his essay *Redefining Site Specificity* from 1993 when he declares that,

> The public's ignorance is, of course, an enforced ignorance, for not only is cultural production maintained as the privilege of a small minority, but it is not in the interests of institutions of art and the forces they serve to produce knowledge of radical practices even for their specialized audience. And this is particularly the case for those practices whose goal is a materialist critique of the presuppositions of those very institutions. Such practices attempt to reveal the material conditions of the work of art, its mode of production and reception, the institutional supports of its circulation, the power relations represented by these institutions-in short, everything that is disguised by traditional aesthetic discourse.[12]

It is possible to trace both artists' influences from a previous generation of artists and art practices from the 1960s through the 70s and into the 80s. The work of Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Hans Haacke or Michael Asher and aspects of the art movements of minimalism, conceptualism, earthworks and institutional critique are all detectable in their practices. *The Angel of the North* (1998) and *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001), cited here, arguably fall under the term site-specific art. Alternative terminology that captures these approaches to practice have also been called context-specific, debate-specific, audience-specific, community-specific, project-based, public art.



Fig. 23. Stills from *The Battle of Orgreave* by Jeremy Deller (2001)

The historical significance of the notion of place and its changing influence on the production and displacement of the art object within contemporary art practice is key to this section. The contemporary artist would appear to share similar interests with

other disciplines towards an understanding of how place might influence our emotions and actions. Disciplines such as architecture, philosophy, geography, anthropology and sociology all share an interest in answering the question 'what is place?' and 'how can an understanding of it inform specific practices?'

On the 15th February 1998 Antony Gormley's *'Angel of the North'* was installed on a hillside on the south side of Gateshead, greeting road traffic on the A1 and rail commuters on the east coast line. It was conceived as a 'landmark sculpture' to mark the approach into Gateshead and the site of the former Team Valley Colliery baths was decided upon as the site of the sculpture at a very early stage. This area had been mined from the 1720s until production ceased in the late 1960s. Gormley described the location for the sculpture,

> The lower Team Valley is not an idealised landscape, it is a working place where agriculture, farming, light industry, road, rail, terraced housing and flats, open ground and football fields contribute to its character. I hope that the work will add something to this diversity of activities, not dominating but working with the scale and robustness of the marshalling yards, the motorway, the valley itself and the multiplicity of its human uses.[13]

The sculpture is considered to have achieved its goals of creating a positive impact on social exclusion, encouraging civic pride, regeneration of the local economy and improving the general quality and attraction of the region to inward investors. At the cost of £800,000, much of this support was provided by the Arts Council Lottery fund (£584, 000), the European Regional Development Fund (£150,000), Northern Arts (£45,000) and the shortfall was found by local business sponsorship. In return, according to Gateshead Council, this public art project is credited with being the catalyst in creating an estimated £600m of urban development for the region. This includes: the £22m Gateshead Millennium Bridge linking Gateshead to the Newcastle Quayside which opened in 2001; The Baltic: Centre for Contemporary Art which opened its doors in 2002; and the £70m iconic Sage Gateshead music centre, designed by Sir Norman Foster & Partners, which opened in 2004. Along with audience viewing figures or people passing from the road and railway, the number of people seeing *The Angel of the North* is believed to be in the region of 90,000 people every day, which is more than one person every second or 33 million people every year. In addition, Gateshead Quays is one of the largest urban

regeneration programmes in Europe, and it is now acknowledged that these developments would arguably not have progressed without the catalyst of major art projects, for example, the *Angel of the North*[14]. It's difficult to argue that *The Angel of the North* is not a runaway success story and a credit to all involved in the project. It is now recognised as an icon and symbol of regeneration, both regionally and nationally, with many visitors from overseas wanting to know how the Gateshead Council achieved this remarkable transformation.

Almost eight years of planning, fundraising and outreach educational programmes, artists' talks and public debate combined with media coverage contributed to the project's success, and an increased awareness of place through the media coverage of the *Angel of the North* and a renewed attachment to the locale by locals. The education program that ran throughout the whole process involved around 1400 school children and has secured an understanding and appreciation for generations to come. A further unplanned but nevertheless significant happening occurred on the 13 May 1998, when The Angel was draped in a 9-metre long replica of Alan Shearer's Newcastle United No.9 football shirt during United's appearance in the 1998 FA Cup Final.



Fig. 24. *Angel of the North* by Antony Gormley (1998)

This single event could be recognised as a turning point in the artwork's development and its public acceptance by the local community. An acceptance that

wasn't always present. In the early stages of the project the projected cost was a big concern and considered by the majority of locals as being too expensive and the monies could have been better spent directly on social projects such as housing, hospitals or job creation. But as the project neared completion it was understood and finally accepted by the local population that the funding could not have been transferred and that no local taxes were spent on the sculpture. I am reminded of a comment made by conceptual artist Mel Bochner in an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist and Sandra Antelo-Suarez about his thoughts on the context surrounding the production, interpretation and reception of an artwork. Bochner reveals his view that context can be fluid, temporal and highly susceptible to unimaginable actions,

> The moment context is created it evaporates almost immediately. Once that timeframe is lost each subsequent interpretation, each subsequent change in historical contradictions transforms the meaning of that work. All interpretations become part of that work. Even the misuse of it becomes part of the work. [15]

As a clearly recognisable piece of public art, the sculpture constitutes a robust sense of place and could be represented as a model or benchmark to other councils and arts organisations. One only need think of Juame Plensa's *Dream* from 2009, set high on top of Sutton Manor Colliery near St Helens, and again overlooking the busy M62. Or Mark Wallinger's monumental sculpture of a lifelike white horse which will sit next to the A2 in Kent near Ebbsfleet, which over the next 25 years is due to see regeneration in the shape of more than 10,000 new homes. The landmark will be visible to travellers as they pull out of Ebbsfleet International train station bound for the continent and to motorists as they drive to and from Dover. This could become Britain's largest piece of public sculpture. At a projected cost of £2 million (which will no doubt rise), it will be more than twice as expensive as Antony Gormley's *Angel of the North*. At 50 meters, it will be well over double the Angel's height. At the time of writing this chapter another piece of public art has been announced for the border crossing between England and Scotland. Cecil Balmond's design, the *Caledonian Star*, is set to sit near the small border town of Gretna, overlooking the M74, and again will have estimated viewing figures of 10 million every year.



Fig.25. *Dream* by Juame Plensa, , set high on top of Sutton Manor Colliery near St Helens (2009)



Fig.26. *The Ebbsfleet Landmark* by Mark Wallinger (2011)

As an alternative to these monumental 'signpost' pieces of sculpture that have very quickly been adopted as the prevailing model, and have also heralded regeneration projects and symbolise a community's new sense of place, there is Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* from 2001 that provides by contrast a meaningful but uncomfortable artwork that re-enacts a sense of place and time. The *Battle of Orgreave* was conceived by Jeremy Deller, commissioned and produced by Artangel in association with Channel 4, and is a re-enactment of a decisive day of the miners' strike. Jeremy Deller recalls,

> On 18th June 1984 I was watching the evening news and saw footage of a mass picket at Orgreave coking plant in South Yorkshire in which thousands of men were chased up a field by mounted police. The image of this pursuit stuck in my mind for years I wanted to find out what exactly happened on that day with a view to re-enacting or commemorating it in some way. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the strike, like a civil war, had a traumatically divisive effect at all levels of life in the UK. [16]

Deller's work exists as a re-enactment (performance), a book (The English Civil War Part II) and a DVD made with Mike Figgis that largely follows a documentary genre with interviews with miners, policeman and politicians combined with archive footage from 1984 and behind-the-scenes footage of the re-enactment. Due to the sensitive nature of work and its potential to re-open old wounds as the event being constructed was in 'living memory', Deller and Artangel were prepared to call a halt to the project if local people felt hostility or antagonism towards the project or found it to be in bad taste.

In considering both artists' approaches with regard to constructing a sense of place through the work that they have made, I initially felt that one approach was better or stronger than the other but can see now that both are important in their own way and whether they are assimilative or interruptive[17] in nature, they are important in understanding how a sense of place is constructed.

In Claire Doherty's essay entitled *Curating Wrong Places…Or Where Have All the Penguins Gone?* (2006) Doherty considers Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* (2001) as "one of the most significant art projects to respond to place of the past five years."[18] Similarly Claire Bishop, a London -based art critic, also views the aesthetic experience contained within Deller's project as being an example of how,

> "The best collaborative practices of the past ten years address the contradictory pull between autonomy and social intervention, and reflect on this antinomy both in the structure of the work and in the conditions of its reception"[19]

Bishop goes on to cite Jeremy Deller's *Battle of Orgreave* as *'locus classicus'* of recent participatory art because it was ethically commendable as well as irrefutably political as it brought back into popular consciousness 'an unfinished messy history'.[20] For others, such as artists Cummings and Lewandowska, it was 'a rich, profound, and provocative contemporary art work that uses the legacy of a Marxist cultural critique to bring one strand of this ideological text explosively into the present'.[21] Not all coverage of Deller's Orgreave project have been positive. An 2001 article by Jonathan Jones, art critic for the Guardian, starts off fairly positively by suggesting that Deller's approach is similar to that of history painting, a genre of painting that depicts both defeats and victories, and Deller's project soon attracts criticism for selecting a battle to re-enact that is safely assimilated to an established version of national identity. He is critical of the timing of the event, as he believes that not enough time had passed between the actual event in 1984 and the re-enactment in 2001 to allow for distance or objectivity. In an article for *Art Monthly* Dave Beech attempts to a provoke his readers into questioning Jeremy Deller's '*Battle of Orgreave'*,

> Its sentiment is heartwarming, but its merits hang in the balance. Is it one of the most poignant spectacles that a contemporary artist has managed to

> produce or a triumph of naivety?[22]

Beech goes on to suggest that *Battle of Orgreave* is a welcome and significant 'placeholder' for an absent politics and mourns art's own traumatic loss of political muscle. In response to Deller's work Beech and JJ Charlesworth both cite Victor Burgin's famous distinction between the notions of the 'representation of politics' with the more systematic attention to the *politics of representation*[23] where the art produced politicises its own forms of address and modes of attention which is in subtle contrast to art with political content.[24] JJ Charlesworth[25] has also been attracted to the importance of *The Battle of Orgreave.* He believes that,

> The meaning of Orgreave depends on the place that the events at Orgreave hold in the consciousness of contemporary British Culture… For all the idiosyncrasy of Deller's varied output, Orgreave's significance and popularity turned on its assimilation of a widely accepted version of history, a narrative already established prior to the work.[26]

There has been a great deal of media and critical coverage of Deller's *'Battle of Orgreave'* since its inception in 2001. However, this section of the thesis is concerned with identifying the role place has had on the decision-making process of artists and how they have focused their attention on, and have explored, the accompanying context as a substantial component of the artwork. It is not the intention to dwell specifically on the merits or points of contention of this work here but there is, I believe, a great deal to be gleaned towards this identifying process by airing a number of comments and observations about this work towards this identifying process.

I am reminded of the cultural geographer Edward Soja's book, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places,* published in 1996, in which he expresses his concerns for a re-assessment leading to a new or updated understanding of space which he argues to be as important as history or society. He argues for serious consideration and treatment of the importance of the triangulation between the coordinates of 'spatiality-historicality-sociality'. I believe Deller also operates within these co-ordinates of triangulation.

> As we approach the *fin de siècle*, there is a growing awareness of the simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social, the historical, and the

> spatial, their inseparability and interdependence. And this three-sided sensibility of spatiality-historicality-sociality is not only bringing about a profound change in the ways we think about space, it is also beginning to lead to major revisions in how we study history and society.[27]

Jeremy Deller seemed to be all too aware that it was likely he could face criticism of his choice to re-enactment a particular event within the miners' strike of 1984 as it could be seen to be in bad taste, exploiting raw emotions still strongly felt within the immediate community. This reaction is further explored by Tim Etchells (1962-) a British artist and writer based in Sheffield and London. Etchells is the artistic director of Forced Entertainment, a world-renowned experimental performance company founded in 1984. Etchells is also currently Professor of Performance at Lancaster University. Etchells actually took part in the 2001 re-enactment and wrote about the experience for Tate Magazine a few months later. He adopts a creative writing stance with a healthy measure of stream of consciousness. The writing is both highly descriptive as well as being thoughtful and reflective;

> I'm getting shivers down my spine. I start to think what it means to go back to a place. To go back to a house in which one once lived, to get the memory hit from its walls and echoes. Or, even to further, what it means to go back into an event – to map the past, then put your body through its emotions.[28]
>
> Indeed, through the time I spend talking to miners and ex-miners and during the re-enactment itself I learn one thing over and over – that the wounds of Orgreave (personal, political, socio-economic) are too raw, too problematic and too unhealed to allow things to be played or watched as pure spectacle. (Perhaps it is this status – as film shoot where the film is less important than staging the action, or as a re-enactment bonanza whose drama is so charged it becomes questionable entertainment that makes Deller's project so valuable.[29]
>
> I am wondering what it means to be part of a generation whose symbolic, physically defining moment is not a victory (the overthrow of a regime, the end of an unjust war), but a defeat.[30]

I find Etchells' closing observation particularly chilling as I have taught at a university in South Yorkshire since 1992 and have had the pleasure of working with ex-miners and various generations of families affected by the miners' strike of the early 1980s. From my own experience there is clearly a need for research to be

carried out that explores the impact and legacy of the strike action. Alas, the scope of this research task does not permit.

In Deller's own words he seems taken aback at the response from a number of the re-enactment participants that Etchells recalls. The re-enactment could be seen to provide a form of therapy where participants were afforded the luxury of time and emotional distance to fully re-evaluate the sequence of events and to have the media coverage publicly scrutinised.

> I was surprised people said it was a healing experience. That wasn't really why I did it. I wanted to remind people that something had happened there – not the locals, because they knew exactly what had happened. If anything, it was about digging up a hastily buried corpse and giving it a proper post-mortem.[31]

In an interview with Patrick Barkham for the Guardian newspaper Deller reveals an explicit reference to his true *modus operandi* when he discloses an important or influential artwork to his thinking;

> I like art that exists in people's minds more so than it does in reality, he says – art that people tell each other about. In the 1970s, the artist Chris Burden was shot in the arm with a gun as a piece of work. I doubt if he made much money out of that but as an idea they don't come much stronger, and you'll never forget that I've told you that.[32]

When Jeremy Deller or the *Battle of Orgreave* are cited within scholarly articles, they are often accompanied by Francis Alÿs and his collaboration piece with Cuauhetémoc Medina, Rafael Ortega and 500 volunteers, *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002). These two artists and these two particular works are seen as significant 'placeholders' within the development of contemporary art practice as they are both considered to represent good practice within socially engaged practice, they are place-specific, they are politically motivated and share the fact that the action lasts for a day but is recorded and lives on in film and also more importantly, lives on through the spoken word and collective memory within a given community and beyond in potentially different formats and versions. I feel it is important to study this particular piece by Francis Alÿs as he and *When Faith Moves Mountains* adds and supports an important aspect of how artist's decision-making is affected by

a particular place and context.

> My own reaction to the place [where I arrive to make a project] is itself subjective: it is a bit of a dance in between my own concerns or obsessions that I carry with me over there and their meeting with that place, that clash that will eventually lead to a concrete reaction, a piece, or nothing. And it is never just about the place. Let me make a personal remark: the cases where I feel that I have been successful in offering an answer to the local situations encountered, where the proposals did not 'hit a nerve', in the local community, and sometimes abroad, these happy cases did not occur because one proposal was necessarily better than another. It is more because my own concerns at the time happen to coincide with the concerns of a certain place at a certain moment of its history.[33]

Francis Alÿs's *When Faith Moves Mountains* enlists 500 local volunteers to barely displace a sand dune located on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, a mere 10cm along a 500-meter long line across the dune. The act is often called absurd or pointless but the work has the potential to be read as really being about the artist's ability to mobilise a large number of participants in a joint collective effort. Alÿs in his own words has revealed;

> I think you could even say that the project addresses four different publics; the people who experienced the moment others [who] will see the documentation, but then there are also those who will listen to the stories and could spread the rumours about the events. And, finally there are the people who will read this book. I think these for 'statements' may function in parallel and also complement each other independently.[34]



Fig. 27. Francis Alÿs in collaboration with Cuauhtémoc Medina and Rafael Ortega. *When Faith Moves Mountains (2002)*

I believe when Alÿs's intentionally deployed rumour into circulation he had no real knowledge of what might develop. Accepting 'not knowing' becomes an important development in contemporary art practice. Neither Deller and Alÿs have followed a conventional studio art practice education: Deller studied Art History, specialising in the Baroque at the Courtauld Institute, London, and the University of Sussex, and Alÿs came to art practice via architectural history at the Institute of Architecture in Tournai (1978-83) and engineering at the Istituto di Architettura in Venice (1983-86). This route towards contemporary art practice may seem unconventional but it also provides an understanding of both artists' reluctance to follow traditional art practices but to favour a broad disciplinary approach to practice in both making, and particularly distribution of ideas, in response to places or situations. Alÿs expands his decision-making process to explain his interest in developing rumour or storytelling within his practice.

> My reaction was to insert a story into the city rather than an object. It was my way of affecting a place at a very precise moment of its history, even just for an instant. If the story is right, if it hits a nerve it can propagate like a rumour. Stories can pass through a place without the need to settle. They have a life of their own. If the script meets the expectations and addresses the anxieties of that society at the right time and place, it may become a story that survives the event itself. At the moment, it has the potential to become a fable or an urban myth.[35]

I find this response and thinking about place particularly significant within this practice-led investigation as I discovered unintentionally or accidentally, the potency of storytelling to place construction during a two-month residency at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, generating *Period Drama* (2012-13). However, this piece represents a good example of how an object can be displaced, in this case by a rumour, and still contribute to an understanding of place, and how an artwork can become an important component of a place. I believe *Period Drama* borrows many traits from a number of the artists explored in this section. It was unfortunate for the work not to be installed as intended. My feeling was that the work represented an unwanted reminder of a falsehood about a particular place and possibly represented a threat to a well-established belief that was proved to be untrue. This belief challenged YSP's version and telling of a particular and iconic moment in cinematic history. History and heritage is big business and can become highly valued 'unique selling points'

generating considerable income. The USP of a place once established is fiercely defending and protected any threat to it regardless of its significance that threat is regarded as potentially damaging. Places are always 'becoming', always in flux and always changing. When the secure status of a place becomes vulnerable – in this case the fairly benign bragging-rights of an iconic location and setting for film scene – stakeholders become acutely aware that they are in competition with other places for highly mobile capital.[36]

From Art to Anthropology and back again



Fig.28. **Joseph Kosuth.** *The Play of The Unmentionnable*. Brooklyn Museum, New York (1990)



Fig.29. **Fred Wilson**, *Mining the Museum.* The Contemporary Museum and the Maryland Historical Society (1992)

This section of the thesis examines and highlights key aspects of the wider character of contemporary art practices that encompass techniques from anthropology. I believe some of the methods or approaches to working with information gathered by interviewing and fieldwork are deeply resonant with my own practice. The focus is to trace the genealogy of contemporary arts use of anthropology and ethnographic research methods or as sometimes referred to as the 'Ethnographic Turn'. Anthropology and ethnographic research has provided guiding principles for artists and their developing use by contemporary artists is seen as a way of interrogating their own position, the work produced and its dissemination, in response to a particular place and context. There are many similarities and crossovers between the

two disciplines such as the use and interpretation of visual material (photography and film), the need to engage in a variety of fieldwork environments and the notion of observer participant in site-specific practices. For the purpose of this thesis I aim to restrict the scope of the research to a small area of these intersections. The main intersection is the importance of fieldwork in anthropology and ethnographic research that is equally as important within contemporary art practice.

> In anthropology the term fieldwork usually refers to a prolonged stay of the anthropologist in a particular culture, in order to gather first hand material based on 'participant observation' and primary sources, subsequently to be written up for publication. Fieldwork involves (at least in its traditional form) both elements of cultural distancing or 'othering' ...as well as appropriation and partial assimilation (or emulation) of the host culture (in its most romanticised forms termed 'going native'[37]

The above description could easily be describing the role of the artist-in-residence model familiar to current art practice. The notion of 'participant observer' could easily be a useful term to describe the position adopted by the artist in many site-specific engagements. Another key concept to analyse is the relationship and/or difference between ethnographic authority and artistic authorship? I intend to scope out this terrain and to consider how it might apply to my practice and a number of other artists. James Clifford[38] suggests that ethnography is simply "diverse ways of thinking and writing about culture from the standpoint of participant observation."[39]

The connection between contemporary art practices and the discipline of anthropology is not necessarily a new phenomena or an incongruous partnership. This relationship can be traced back to two seminal essays. Joseph Kosuth published a text entitled *The Artist as Anthropologist* in 1975 and Hal Foster published his essay entitled, *The Artist as Ethnographer*, in *Return of the Real* in 1996. Kosuth makes a case for 'anthropology art' brought about by praxis and cultural fluency with a criticality that depicts while it alters society[40]. Kosuth suggests that the artist as anthropologist is attempting to acquire the skills and tools that the anthropologist has already attained through training and experience. According to Kosuth, the skills the artist requires are two-fold; to attain like the anthropologist, to attain a fluency of understanding of a culture through observation and participation. Normally the culture is unfamiliar or unknown to them but for the artist it is suggested that this is a

goal but also the secondary tool of fashioning acceptance of an outcome or a successful praxis that sits within and extends the boundaries of his own culture. He also makes a claim that the disciplines of anthropology, philosophy and sociology are as important and crucial to art's development in the late 1960s and 1970s as art history or cultural studies.

I believe Kosuth's 1975 essay is an important step in establishing a link between an advanced art practice alongside critical thinking with anthropology. The appearance of his essay in the first edition of *Fox* alongside other co-editors Michael Corris, Mel Ramsden, and fellow artists Terry Atkinson, Dave Rushton, Michael Baldwin and Paul Wood also associated at one time or another with the provocative and highly influential Art & Language group. Kosuth's essay is broken into two parts and is composite in style with a mixture of narrative argument punctuated with quotes from others in a non-linear fashion. It makes for an interesting read but also a difficult read at times. Part one is a range of provocative yet unattributed quotes from a range of sources including Albert Einstein, Karl Polanyi to Max Weber and Bob Scholte. They explore and comment on the relationship between scientific investigation of nature and the role religion plays in this investigation. However, the second part of Kosuth's essay is more pertinent to this study and explores the connection between theory and praxis with a particular emphasis on an anthropologised art form. He is critical of the dominant art form at the time and suggests that abstract painting simply,

> …finds itself as a collapsed and empty category, perpetuated out of nostalgia that parades as a self-parody, due to the necessities of bankrupt mythic historical continuums, but ultimately settling for its meaning in the marketplace.[41]

It seems that this unequivocal attack on conventional and conservative art forms of the time is to provide the context for a new and exciting alternative to art practice. He goes on to add that conceptual art is better placed and more accepting of a rationalist scientific critique than abstract expressionism.

> Our earlier conceptual art, while still being a "naive" Modernist art based on the scientific paradigm, externalized features of the art activity which had always been internalized – making them explicit and capable of being examined. It is this work which initiated our break with the Modernist art

> continuum and it is this work which constitutes perhaps the legitimate history of "conceptual art".[42]

Kosuth makes an important observation in this essay by noting the difference between the anthropologist and the artist. He asks why the anthropologist as a (scientific) professional can feel comfortable to 'anthropologize' his own society? This seems to make sense opposed to the artist as an anthropologist. He simply makes the suggestion that the artist as anthropologist is better tooled to investigate his/her own society as he/she is not a professional scientist and therefore not 'outside' or suitably distanced from the society he/she is studying as the anthropologist would certainly try to establish according to his/her training. Kosuth is well positioned to articulate the similarities and differences between art and anthropology as he studied with Bob Scholtz and Stanley Diamond at the Graduate Faculty of the New School of Social Research for a number of years before publishing this essay. It might also be worth noting here that the artist Susan Hiller also studied postgraduate anthropology at Tulane University, New Orleans, completing her PhD in anthropology in 1965. This crossover of disciplines is interesting in understanding the importance and attraction of anthropological methods of study to artists and the confidence it afforded the development within the artistic academy. However, although Joseph Kosuth might be credited with instigating and recognizing the potential crossover and shared approach to studies of context, it was Hal Foster's essay *The Artist as Ethnographer* (1996) that provided substance and popularized the connection between the two disciplines.

Twenty years later Hal Foster constructs what could be said to be a conflicting position to Kosuth in that the artist as anthropologist has gone too far and the artist has become a pseudo-anthropologist or quasi-anthropologist. He takes the position that the advanced artist only superficially mines the surface layers of the ethnographic methods. Foster's essay continues to explore the relation between contemporary art practice and ethnographic research methods. When Foster reflects on the issues being addressed in the 1980s such as the AIDS crisis, abortion rights and apartheid he argues that,

> In this new paradigm the object of contestation remains in large part the bourgeois-capitalist institutions of art (the museum, the academy, the market,

> and the media), its exclusionary definitions of art and artist, identity and community. But the subject of association has changed: it is culture and /or ethic other in whose name the committed artist most often struggles.[43]

It is this change or shift in 'association' that is of interest to this thesis. It would appear that he considers the older paradigm of art as the production of objects for visual and aesthetic consumption, along with the artist as sole producer of the art object, is becoming displaced and is no longer fit for more contemporary concerns. This shift is key in understanding advanced arts interest in acquiring new alternative methods of production. The methods established and deployed by the ethnographer become attractive and provide an additional set of tools to the traditional studio knowledge and expertise to approach this new and developing paradigm that Foster suggests. Familiar to both is the notion of 'fieldwork' but the participant/observer requires careful attention. For a practitioner to enter into a given community or social grouping to study how the social space surrounding people frames them they must be aware of their own position and how their presence might influence the data they aim to observe or collect. This particular aspect was something that plagued the APG project when artists associated or identified with the workers on the shop floor and therefore influenced how they observed management and hierarchies. Stuart Brisley's placement with the Hille Furniture Company in the 1970s and Ian Breakwell's placement/residency with the DHSS at Broadmoor and Rampton high-security hospital are examples of where the relationship between artist and community became problematic.[44]

Foster's use of the term 'quasi-anthropological art projects' throughout his essay is an important aspect to consider. In reference to the art project where the artist as ethnographer is considered he suggests that such projects,

> … promote a masquerade of this disturbance; a vogue for traumatic confessional in theory that is sometimes sensibility criticism come again, or a vogue for pseudo-ethnographic reports in art that are sometimes disguised travelogues from the world art market. Who in the academy or the art world has not witnessed these testimonies of the new empathetic intellectual or these *flăneries* of the new nomadic artist?[45]

Foster takes the analysis of the artist partial adoption of ethnographic methods when he says that 'few principles of the ethnographic participant-observer are observed, let

alone critiqued, and only limited engagement of the community is effected.'[46] This would suggest that partial borrowing of methods from another discipline unless applied under strict scientific condition could only yield superficial data and faulty conclusions. However, this relationship between artist and ethnographer has created an 'envy' of the other – the artist would appear to be envious of the authority of the scientific status of the ethnographer and in turn the ethnographer would appear to be envious of the artist's apparent freedom that is not controlled or guided by scientific conventions.

Artist as Incidental Person

The art critic Craig Owens (1950-1990) in his very short text, *The Indignity of Speaking for Others": An imaginary Interview*, quotes from the English art historian, T.J. Clark's *The Absolute Bourgeois: Artists and Politics in France, 1848–1851* (1973). Owens and Clarke ruminate on the artist's desire to push at the boundaries, to question the relevance of their own discipline and to consider potentially useful and interesting methods and approaches from other disciplines.

> The problem for the revolutionary artist in the nineteenth century – perhaps it is still the problem – was how to use the conditions of artistic production without being defined by them. How to make an art-work that would not stay on an easel, in a studio, in the Salon for a month and then on the wall of a sitting-room in the Faubourg Saint Germain? How to invent a means of artistic distribution to bypass the art market or exhibition? How to destroy the normal public for art, and invent another? How to make art 'popular'? How to exploit one's privacy, and the insights it allowed, and yet escape from it?[47]

In a similar fashion this apparent frustration seems to sit comfortably alongside Claire Bishop's use of Dan Graham's quote 'All artists are alike. They dream of doing something that's more social, more collaborative, and more real than art'[48] that accurately captures the dissatisfaction with the prevailing or dominant forms of art practice and limited avenues of distribution open to artists.

This palpable, unsettled expression and remembering could be considered the starting point for the Artist Placement Group (APG) founded by artist John Latham

(1921-2006) and Barbara Steveni (1928-) in 1966. APG's remit was not only to rethink or question the artist's role in society but also to provide viable options through experiments in the conventional infrastructure of patronage and new methods of operation for artists and institutions.

APG's contribution to how contemporary artists respond to place, context or situation cannot be overlooked. There are three key concepts that are important to consider to gaining an understanding of how artists respond to place and decision-making. The first is the notion that, 'the context is half the work'. This statement alone provides a challenge to the idea that art should be considered to be autonomous and indifferent to its context and surroundings. APG attempted to question conventions that art is only to be found within an art gallery or museum and questioned the environment, setting and situation in which art was experienced. The second concept is the 'open brief' which, alongside a feasibility study, was also introduced by APG and that we may now take for granted. However, at the time of APG's conception it provided much needed creative space for artists to operate within society and communities. I believe the most important contribution from APG was the conceptual framework surrounding replacing the word 'artist' with 'incidental person', a term much less loaded with prejudice and stereotypes providing a new relationship for the artist to adopt with organisations; a phrase that appears to have given artists who worked in a site-responsive fashion at that time, the possibility of reinventing their role and the objects made, or the displacement of the object-making away from the model of simply the production of objects for visual consumption. As an observation and testimony by Derek Lyddon, Chief Planner of the Scottish Development Agency, at the time of Latham's own residency in Scotland now records,

> The object of APG placements may be described as 'organisation and imagination'; to place an artist in an organisation in the hope that his creative intelligence or imagination can spark off ideas, possibilities and actions that have not previously been perceived or considered feasible; in other words to show the feasibility of initiating what has not occurred to others to initiate. Hence the product is not an art work, but a report by the artist on new ways of looking at the chosen work areas and on the action that might result.[49]

At the time, APG members and their mission statements were not without their detractors. The art critic Peter Fuller (1947-90) was amongst APG's strongest critics, particularly with APG's decision to consider an artist's role within an organisation to automatically be deemed neutral or a free agent. In order to place artists within organisation's APG had already agreed that the chosen artist would contractually promise not to harm the host companies, which removed the artist's right to find fault[50]. This point is particularly apposite as I also fell foul of the unwritten but assumed or simply accepted agreement during an artist-in-residence program at Yorkshire Sculpture Park in 2009 that is explored in more depth in Chapter Four.

Notes on Chapter Two

[1] Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity*, October, Vol. 80. (Spring, 1997), p. 109.
[2] Kenneth Frampton, "*Towards a Critical Regionalism*," in The Anti-Aesthetic:Essays on Postmodern Culture, ed. Hal Foster, Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983, p. 26.
[3] David Harvey, *"From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity*," text for UCL4 GSAUP Colloquium, May 13, 1991, as cited by Hayden, The Power of Place, p. 43.
[4] http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/art-and-social-intervention-incidental-person-conference-video-recordings#open239757 (Last Accessed 12/07/15)
[5] http://vimeo.com/31958977 (Last Accessed, 31/07/14.)
[6] Kester, Grant, H. "Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art." http://www.variant.org.uk/9texts/KesterSupplement.html, (Last Accessed, 31/07/14.)
[7] Ed. Brad Buckley and John Conomos, Rethinking the Contemporary Art School: The Artist, the PhD, and the Academy, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, 2009, p.48.
[8] Ed. Brad Buckley and John Conomos, Rethinking the Contemporary Art School: The Artist, the PhD, and the Academy, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Halifax, 2009, p.48.
[9] Claire Doherty, *Curating Wrong Places…Or Where Have All the Penguins Gone?* 2006, http://www.publicart.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Writings/curatingwrongplaces...pdf (Last Accessed, 31/07/14.)
[10] http://www.situations.org.uk/about/ (Last Accessed, 31/07/14.)
[11] David Harvey, et al., *Mapping The Futures, Local cultures, global change*, London, Routledge, 1993, p. 5.
[12] Douglas Crimp, *On the Museums Ruin*, MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, London, 1993, p.153.
[13] The Angel of the North**,** Public Art Team, Gateshead Council, July 2006, http://www.gateshead.gov.uk/Leisure%20and%20Culture/attractions/Angel/Home.aspx (Last Accessed 15/07/15)
[14] www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/feb/14/regeneration , (Last Accessed 21/07/15)
[15]http://www.e-flux.com/projects/do_it/notes/interview/i003_text.html (Last Accessed, 20/03/15)
[16] Jeremy Deller, Forward to The English Civil War Part II: Personal Accounts of the 1984-85 miners Strike, London, Artangel 2001,
[17] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, Cambridge and London MIT Press, 2004, p. 11.
[18] Claire Doherty, *Curating Wrong Places…Or Where Have All the Penguins Gone?* Paul O'Neill, ed., Curating x 24 . Amsterdam: De Appel (forthcoming)
[19] Claire Bishop, *The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents*, ArtForum, February 2006.
[20] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship, Verso, London and New York, 2012, p.35.*
[21] Amelia Jones (ed.), *A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945*, Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska, 'A Shadow of Marx', Oxford, Blackwell, 2006, p. 405.
[22] Dave Beech, *Jeremy Deller, Orgreave*, Art Monthly, July /August 2001, p.37.
[23] Victor Burgin, *The End of Art Theory, Criticism and Postmodernity*, London, MacMillan, 1986, p.39.
[24] Dave Beech, *Jeremy Deller, Orgreave*, Art Monthly, July /August 2001, p.38.
[25] *JJ Charlesworth* has been writing about contemporary art since he left Goldsmiths College London in 1996, where he studied art. He now writes regularly on contemporary art for

magazines such as *Art Monthly*, *Modern Painters*, *Time Out London* and *ArtReview* magazine, where he works as associate editor. He is tutor in painting at the Royal College of Art, and is currently researching a doctoral thesis on British art criticism in the 1970s.

[26] http://www.jjcharlesworth.com *Jeremy Deller's The Battle of Orgreave: Politics as Art Therapy* (Last Accessed 26/10/14)

[27] Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace*: *Journeys to Los Angeles and other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p.3.

[28] Tim Etchells, Tate Magazine, Autumn 2001, p.70.

[29] Tim Etchells, Tate Magazine, Autumn 2001, p.71.

[30] Tim Etchells, Tate Magazine, Autumn 2001, p.71.

[31] Jeremy Deller, cited in John Slyce, 'Jeremy Deller: Fables of the Reconstruction', Flash Art International, January – February 2003, p. 76.

[32] http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/jan/29/jeremy-deller (Last Accessed 28/12/14)

[33] '*Blind Date: A Conversation between Francis Alÿs and Cuauhetémoc Medina'*. 98 weeks/Beirut Every Other Day, Beirut 2009, unpag.

[34] Mark Godfrey, Klaus Biesenbach and Kerryn Greenberg, Eds., *Francis Alÿs: A Story of Deception*, London, Tate Publishing, 2010, p.40.

[35] Russell Ferguson, *Francis* Alÿs*: Politics of Rehearsal*, Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, 2007, p.25-26.

[36] John Bird *et al*, *Mapping the Futures, Local cultures, Global change,* David Harvey's essay, From space to place and back again: reflections on the condition of Postmodernity, London: Routledge, 1993, p.7.

[37] Arnd Schneider, *Journal of Material Culture* Vol. 1(2) 'Uneasy Relationships: Contemporary Artists and Anthropology', 1996, p.192

[38] James Clifford is the author of several widely cited and translated books, including *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (1988), *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late 20th Century* (1997), and *Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty First Century* (2013). He was co-editor (with George Marcus) of the widely influential collection *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986).

[39] James Clifford, The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth Century Ethnography, Literature and Art, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1988, p.9.

[40] Joseph Kosuth, *The Artist as Anthropologist*, *The Fox*, Volume One, Number One, Art & Language Foundation INC, New York, 1975, p.24.

[41] Joseph Kosuth, *The Artist as Anthropologist*, *The Fox*, Volume One, Number One, Art & Language Foundation INC, New York, 1975, p.25.

[42] Joseph Kosuth, *The Artist as Anthropologist*, *The Fox*, Volume One, Number One, Art & Language Foundation INC, New York, 1975, p.25.

[43] Hal Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer*, *The Return of the Real*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996, p.173.

[44] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso, London, New York, 2012, p.170-173.

[45] Hal Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer*, *The Return of the Real*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996, p.180.

[46] Hal Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer*, *The Return of the Real*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996, p.196.

[47] Craig Owens, *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture*, University of California Press, 1994, p.259.

[48] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso, London, New York, 2012, p.1.

[49] Derek Lyddon, 'Summary of Feasibility Study for Scottish Office by John Latham as Given by, Chief Planner, Scottish Development Department', Edinburgh 1976,Point 2, Tate Archive TGA 20042.

[50] For Stuart Brisley, artists were being asked to serve the needs of those who control power and who create the circumstances for the production and acquisition of profit. See Stuart Brisley, 'No it is Not On', Studio International,183:942, March 1972, pp. 95– 6

Chapter Three

3

“There are known knowns.
These are things we know that we know.
There are known unknowns.
That is to say, there are things that we now know we don’t know.
But there are also unknown unknowns.
These are things we do not know we don’t know.”[1]

Donald Rumsfeld, 2002.

I shall reconsider human knowledge by starting from the fact that we can know more than we can tell.[2]

Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension,* 2009.

(Socrates:' *I understand the point you would make, Meno. Do you see what a captious argument you are introducing – that, forsooth, a man cannot inquire either about what he knows or about what he does not know? For he cannot inquire about what he knows, because he knows it, and in that case is in no need of inquiry; nor again can he inquire about what he does not know, since he does not know about what he is to inquire.* 'Sofists, 500-300 BC, as cited by Socrates, who disagreed with it. (Plato)[3]

Pek Van Andel, *Anatomy of the Unsought Finding*, 1994.

In Chapter Three I explore and identify working methods relating to my own practice and others; specifically the focus of the enquiry of this research is to examine how a particular approach to practice can best respond to place that is constantly in flux. The research explores the interpretation, representation and experience of place. By exploring this epistemological dimension of a situated practice I develop an argument that suggests the tripartite structure of failure, serendipity and sagacity leading to improvisation is a robust and accurate reflection of action in practice. I arrive at this structure through a consideration of my previous practice and an analysis of the practice of selected artists and, where possible, their writing as well as their practice.

The research reflects on how unknowingness (or not knowing or synchronicity) often acts as a significant driver. This has been an awareness that has gradually built from the earliest stages of the research by noticing that interesting and significant encounters happen almost accidentally. This is an approach also identified recently by curator Elizabeth Fisher and artist Rebecca Fortnum in their book *On Not Knowing How Artists Think*, 2013. The book and ideas arose from a symposium of the same name held at Kettles Yard, Cambridge, in 2009. Since its publication it has proved popular and the ideas have been accepted and adopted by many artists, academics and students. The ideas contained in the book provide an alternative analysis to philosopher and urban planning professor Donald A.Schön's (1930-1997) articulation of how professionals think and make decisions;

> Usually reflection on knowing-in-action goes together with reflection on the stuff at hand. There is some puzzling, or troubling, or interesting phenomenon with which the individual is trying to deal. As he tries to make sense of it, he also reflects on the understandings which have been explicit in his action, understandings which he surfaces, criticizes, restructures, and embodies in further action.
>
> It is this entire process of reflection-in-action which is central to the 'art' by which practitioners sometimes deal well with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict.[4]

Schön's analysis outlined in his book *The Reflective Practitioner, How Professionals Think in Action* (1983) has provided a remarkable contribution to practitioners with an understanding of how decisions are made. I argue that the decision process that I

have suggested and incorporate into the tripartite structure, echoes that of Schön. However, the inter-dependence of each of the registers differ and I consider and argue the use of serendipity and sagacity is a closer and possibly better match for my own practice and for the art practice cited in this chapter. I believe the writer-artist and academic Emma Cocker provides an accurate description of how I perceive the role sagacity plays within the tripartite structure,

> To navigate an uncertain ground requires some skill, due care and attention. Against logic, it is necessary to *know* how to not know. Here, knowing is different to the knowledge of the encyclopaedia, for its forms of knowing *of* or knowing *that* are not equipped to cope with the contingencies of this terrain. A *different* knowing to knowledge then, perhaps more aligned to *confidence*. Confidence is the knowledge that the right decision will be made when required; it involves trusting that a response will be performed intuitively at the propitious time.[5]

In studying the nature of improvisation as a curatorial and practice-based methodology I have considered the group exhibition *An Aside* (2005), curated by Tacita Dean, which involved relying upon chance events and intuitive sagacity. Dean has shown that the unforeseen can allow the unimaginable to emerge. It is also important to remember that the unimaginable would not be achievable if it were not possible to improvise with care, judgement, and dexterity. Also, by reflecting on a selection of concrete examples of Tacita Dean's own creative practice in order to understand the nature of improvisation in contemporary art practice in response to place, I have suggested that there is a tripartite structure at play. I have suggested that this structure incorporates failure, serendipity and sagacity, leading to improvisation. By visiting a number of key works by Dean, where initial failure or unforeseen circumstances impacted on achieving the intended outcomes of projects, I have discovered that this tripartite structure exists beyond my own practice. These circumstances have allowed for the importance of serendipity and sagacity in the decision-making process of an artist whose practice is concerned with the representation and experience of place to be explored. The resulting improvisation demonstrates the value of intuitive sagacity in this tripartite structure. Mac Giolla Leith references Dean commenting on her practice in this particular manner, "uninvited disappointments which are unbelievably painful at the time become productive in hindsight"[6]. Within Dean's own practice there exists a "Sebaldian

paradigm": the allocation of trust and confidence in circuitous routes by wandering and wondering. I believe this confidence could be read as the equivalent of trust in her ability to improvise, accumulated over time through a tacit understanding of practice and possibilities.

Although Dean doesn't actively court failure she has learnt to accept disappointment and to build it into her practice as a positive element. As Hans-Joachim Muller has observed; 'having a goal after the goal means that, in fact, the goal you failed to reach cannot have been the ultimate, perfect one.'[7] Equally Dean has accepted chance encounters of a serendipitous nature and has found ways of incorporating them into her own practice. The use of intuitive reasoning in the form of sagacity is an important latent skill that leads directly to effective and creative improvisation. The research question that concern this chapter is, 'Can we identify different notions of 'objective' (and indeed 'non-objective') chance?

Anthropologist Michael Agar (1945-2017) provides one possible framework for thinking through some of these questions, suggesting how ethnographers might work towards an understanding of what is valued and not valued within a community. He offers four registers within qualitative research that, through the process of serendipity, can convert 'good fortune' or happenstance into significant and important findings. Calling these *occasioned, core, derivative and mandated* he considers them as four stages or breakdowns within the research process.

In Agar's 1982 essay, *Towards an Ethnographic Language*, he attempts to develop a general way to talk about ethnography, as he considers the problems faced by ethnographers as both interesting and at the same time almost embarrassing. He is concerned that two studies of similar groups may differ from each other, and that comparing different ethnographers' reports, supposedly about the "same" thing, would be confusing. He also identifies the way an ethnographer's training, experience, and personal history is likely to make any generalisation even more difficult. He uses the example of Freudian theorists and kinship specialists to suggest how difficult they would be to compare as they would be interested in, and pay attention to, different aspects of a study.

Agar goes on to identify the importance within ethnographic study of expectations not being met, so that the unexpected emerges. He also suggests that the process by which a breakdown emerges and travels towards understanding should be called 'resolution' and goes on to say that the process of resolution is an emergent one triggered by the breakdown. Agar's observations rest clearly within ethnography but provide a very useful framework to help understand how artists who court the unexpected work towards resolving their practice by adopting improvisational tactics.

The occasioned breakdown within ethnographic practice might simply be those issues that emerge in the course of doing ethnography. Core breakdowns are discoveries that make up the focus of the ethnographer's final report. Agar identifies the derivative breakdown as discoveries that are not greatly significant or useful within the overall account of the project but nevertheless are worthy of mentioning. The mandated breakdown is those discoveries that the project sets out to make.

In a sense this type of breakdown is often viewed as 'hypothesis testing' and is strongly related to initial intentions that encourage questioning one's understanding of situations and is therefore relevant to the understanding of and re-presenting of place by the contemporary artist. I believe I have followed Agar's breakdown within and through my own practice and the results have shaped my own decision-making process in responding to the complexities of place in my practice. In what follows I have drawn on Agar's structure to consider an artist whose body of work openly courts the vagaries of improvisation within a practice.

Agar would clearly be thinking of how ethnographers might work during conducting fieldwork with groups towards understanding what is valued and what is not valued within their community. How the anthropologist might work with communities and groups seems similar to the way a number of contemporary artists operate by borrowing a number of techniques from anthropology. Techniques familiar to the anthropologist for creating a written report share similarities in form to some contemporary art projects.

Another contemporary of Tacita Dean and Jeremy Deller is Roderick Buchanan,

whose recent commission from the Imperial War Museum was *Legacy* (2012). I cite Buchanan's work here as he plays an important role in this research by providing an interesting response to place that explores history, geography, myth and politics. Through the question and answer session after his public talk at Sheffield Hallam University in 2010, I was able to ask Buchanan about his use of many of the attributes borrowed from anthropology such as fieldwork and in particular the dynamic of the participant/observer. The audience was surprised by the position that Buchanan established between the two groups, in that he made no attempt to resolve issues or mend differences, he adopted a clear impartial position. Many in the audience expected Buchanan to at least attempt to broker understanding. Buchanan's work left space for the audience to occupy and to questions their own expectations as to why they assumed the artist's role was to broker some sort of understanding. The writing I co-authored with Buchanan as a result of the invitation takes the form of telling a story about place, history, myth and legend. The writing takes the original structure of an eighteenth century pamphlet of continuous prose. The public lecture and interview with audience, along with the publication, contributed to the recognition that ideas surrounding place can be explored through fiction and the role of the artist operating outside of the galley/museum sector can still cause anxiety and misunderstanding.

His response to the Troubles in Northern Ireland and their aftermath represent an important example as artist as ethnographer. He spent much of his time maintaining open channels and recording the communication with Black Skull Corps of Fife and Drum and Parkhead Republican Flute Band, two of Scotland's prominent Loyalist and Republican flute bands. Again Buchanan, like Deller, extends and applies techniques and strategies of the ethnographer and constructs a project like *Legacy*, 2006-12 that celebrates differences opposed to identifying aspects that might lead to resolving differences.



Fig.30. Legacy, Roderick Buchanan, installation view (2012)

Tacita Dean's curated group exhibition *An Aside* (2005) takes its title from the theatrical convention in which an actor addresses the audience directly without interrupting the flow of action on stage. The play and the other characters are normally oblivious to the actor's independent dialogue with the audience and the play continues over the course of the aside. Dean's *An Aside* was an artist-curated exhibition project initially conceived by Roger Malbert and instigated by the Hayward Gallery's National Touring Exhibition program. This program also includes group exhibitions curated by Michael Craig-Martin *Drawing the Line* (1995), Richard Wentworth's *Thinking Aloud* (1998), Susan Hiller's *Dream Machines* (2000), and Mark Wallinger's *The Russian Linesman* (2009).

Tacita Dean admits that sometimes the exhibition fits with this description and sometimes it doesn't. Curated group exhibitions organized by art historians and curators often follow a particular theme, a chronology, a perceived nationality, or a restrictive understanding of medium. *An Aside* is also sometimes referred to as 'the exhibition without an idea,' but a more apposite description within this context comes from Max Andrew in a review of the exhibition for Frieze magazine: '*An Aside* – a hothouse of suspicion and bluff that festered with an off-key atmosphere of wayward anthropology.'[8] Art critic Adrian Searle describes it as,

> Constructed almost as a picaresque novel might be, one thing leading to another by way of accident, serendipity and oblique association. Dean goes backwards and forwards in time, from place to place, one thing leading to another, discovering and recovering works one would never imagine seeing together.[9]

In a way that seems related to Agar's four registers of breakdowns – in particular the 'occasioned' that which comes up in the course of the project serendipitously and moves to the centre of attention and becomes its core attraction – Searle clearly recognizes Dean's skill and experience, gained over time, in embracing these unknowns and converting them into known findings. The link between elements of Dean's practice and what can be described as 'intuitive sagacity' will be discussed below in reference to the research of Daniel Liestman.

These exhibitions, curated by high profile and influential artists as opposed to seasoned curators, allowed for a new approach to curatorial practice and afforded the artists the opportunity to experiment with alternative methods that might be closer to their own working methods evident in their own studio practice. Adrian Searle articulates the tension between curator and artist/curator,

> All too often, group exhibitions are a bore: strangled by "relevance" and spurious authority, the sense that some issue or other is being dealt with, definitively. These are bulwarks of the anxious curator. Artists often make the best curators, firstly because they have a better feel and engagement with objects and images, secondly because they are altogether quirkier, freer, by nature more interesting – which is why they are artists in the first place. They think differently and have a more personal stake in looking at and thinking about art. [10]

Dean draws upon the associative processes she uses in her practice to weave connections from one work to the next. These meandering narratives would appear to be concrete examples that embody the spirit of improvisation and celebrate what the Surrealists called 'Objective Chance'. Unpredictable encounters, stories, recollections and remembrance combined with what Dean admits to be a 'dilettante'[11] approach to the Surrealist's preferred *modus operandi*, provide the necessary guiding principles for the exhibition and accompanying publication. Throughout Dean's practice as curator and artist she attempts to develop tactics within her working method that remain openly receptive to the formation of

unexpected confluences of thought that may not be accessible to those who must maintain certainty in order to keep anxiety at bay. Dean subscribes to Andre Breton's understanding of the objective chance process of 'external circumstances acting in response to the unspoken desires and demands of the human psyche'[12]. The artist is also wary of the fragility of this process and seeks to protect its immaterial existence and apprehensively relates to it as 'explaining a dream, which invariably dies in the telling'.[13]

Dean actively seeks out chance to a point that could be said to verge on superstition. Since she was seven or eight the artist felt she had an ability to find four-leaf clovers and has built up a collection that has been exhibited alongside her other works.

> I had always courted chance, and the ease with which I found four-leaf clovers made me too sure of this special relationship. When I first showed my collection in 1995, for the first time in my collector's life, I became paralysed by an ability to find any more four-leafed clovers. It was as if I had turned the accidental action of finding a clover into something altogether too self-conscious. I had played an uncomfortable game with Fortune and she had shunned me for my ostentation. I suddenly searched too hard and could no longer find.[14]

Dean says in her own words that she has "shown no fidelity to the true unconscious process: some of my decisions have been associative, while others feel they have been very formally arrived at."[15] I feel that there can be significant and useful parallels drawn between Dean's artistic practice and the writing of W.G. Sebald. Dean has made her interest and fascination with Sebald's writing widely known[16]. There is a shared interest in apparently unrelated information combined with fortuitous discoveries that seem to be key components within the writer and artist's work. In conversation with Joseph Cuomo, Sebald talks about how *The Rings of Saturn* came about,

> But then as you go along, you find things. I think that's the advantage of walking. It's just one of the reasons I do that a lot. You find things by the wayside or you buy a brochure written by a local historian that is in a tiny local museum somewhere, which you would never find in London. And in that you find odd details, which lead you somewhere else, and so it's a form of unsystematic searching, which of course for an academic is far from orthodoxy, because we're meant to do things systematically. But I never liked doing things systematically. Not even my Ph.D. research was done systematically. It was always done in random, haphazard

fashion. [17]

In the introduction to *Searching for Sebald: What I Know for Sure*, Lise Patt suggests that;

> A wide range of post-medium artists who were laying the groundwork for a fictive genre in art quickly embraced Sebald's project. Adopting a process mediated by the foot, captured by the lens, and fuelled by the archive, these visual practitioners eschew mediums bound to traditional materials, adopting instead concepts that reached beyond the realms of art – particularly memory, trauma, and loss. [18]

An artist included in *An Aside*, Lother Baumgarten is credited by Dean for initiating the structure, as well as the concept, for *An Aside*. Baumgarten's work *Da gefällts mir besser als in Westfalen (There I like it better than in Westphalia) – El Dorado* (1968-76) consists of slides detailing the vegetation, human rubbish, and documentation of spontaneous sculptures made in situ from material he would find while walking along a stretch of the Rhine between Düsseldorf and Cologne. These images were displayed alongside a soundtrack based on what he imagined the Amazonian jungle would sound like (he had never actually been there). A common element between Baumgarten's work and Dean's curatorial approach to *An Aside* is the embodiment of the Situationists' interest in wandering and wondering. This now-familiar attribute to psychogeography is executed through the act of 'derive'[19] (drifting) and seems important in conditioning the mind in order to recognize serendipitous discoveries leading to acts of improvisation. These are all conscious tactics to focus attention on qualities of experience that would normally be consumed; they have no presence when we are caught up in a causal world and don't take time to wander.

Baumgarten's recollection of seeing a mysterious figure walking a dog along a stretch of the Rhine – a figure who later turned out to be fellow German artist Gerhard Richter – indirectly provided Dean with a starting point or cryptic clue towards suggesting another piece for the *An Aside* exhibition. Baumgarten suggests that a particular painting by Richter must surely have been inspired by the location. This sets Dean off on a quest to track down this painting. She fails to secure the Richter painting for the exhibition but in the act of tracking it down by thumbing

through a catalogue of Richter drawings, she comes across drawings by another artist, Isa Genzken (1948-). Seeing these materials causes Dean to establish associations between them and Richter's and Blinky Palermo's dual portrait busts *(Zwie Skulpturen fur einen Raum von Palermo,* 1971). Her thoughts then relate Richter and Palermo's work with Joseph Beuys's self-portrait bust of 1947, followed by Marisa Mertz's (1926-) head sculptures from the mid-to-late-1980s. This train of associations and connections could have gone in several directions, many of them potentially obvious, following the Richter painting and its possible origin. But Dean avoids these straightforward rational connections, and instead follows a more circuitous journey, adhering to the 'dilettante' approach to decision-making in visual art. It seems important here to acknowledge that the notion of the dilettante is referred to in a positive light as a form of wisdom – the conviction and confidence to comfortably ignore safe decisions in favour of riskier alternatives, or to choose unfamiliar and uncharted routes.

In a certain light, *An Aside* represents a series of improvisations. Dean instigates the project; she actively seeks out the unpredictable and the non-linear in ways that could not have been pre-imagined given the form of the exhibition or its significance, suggesting a creative inventiveness of the highest order,

> "Nothing is more frightening than not knowing where you're going, but then again nothing can be more satisfying than finding you've arrived somewhere without a clear idea of the route".[20]

But if, as already mentioned, improvisation seems to be in danger here of becoming a catch-all phrase, Michael Agar's ideas about ethnography provide a useful framework for distinguishing between (but also for integrating) different forms of unexpected situations or findings, triggering the need for the artist to improvise. The occasioned breakdown within the ethnographic process might simply be those issues that emerge in the course of doing ethnography. Within contemporary art practices, however, 'occasioned' could be read as discoveries that naturally occur when one is involved in creative practices. For Agar, 'core' breakdowns are discoveries that make up the focus of the ethnographer's final report. Core, within art practice, could suggest the discoveries that are evidenced within the final exhibition. The 'derivative breakdown' that Agar identifies consists of discoveries that are not significant or

useful within the overall account of the project, but are nevertheless worth mentioning. The 'mandated' breakdown would appear to be those discoveries that the project sets out to make. This breakdown could be read as the artist's initial intention for the project to be undertaken.

Dean has referred in her own words to her own practice as welcoming chance, chaos and contingency as her working allies. However I'd like to suggest an alternative reading of her practice in term of failure, serendipitous and sagacious discovery leading to the employment of improvisational tactics. In a talk on Dean's work at The Common Guild, Caoimhin Mac Giolla Leith also hesitates and questions Dean's use of chaos within her work; he struggles to see or pinpoint active chaotic elements within her practice. There are certainly breakdowns present, to use Agar's useful terminology, there are departures from the artist's initial intention and creating the unexpected and surprise, and the breakdown brings out interesting problems for attention to be resolved by the artist. I would like to suggest that these breakdowns are a form of failure but,

> When failure is released from being a judgemental term, and success deemed overrated, the embrace of failure can become an act of bravery, of daring to go beyond normal practices and enter a realm of not knowing.[21]

Within the process of resolution of breakdown, Agar suggests that the emergence of such breakdowns needs to be understood with an openness and sensitivity to its newness. I feel that the use of 'serendipity' and 'sagacity' fits this state better than Dean's choice of the word 'chance.' Serendipity is typically misunderstood and used synonymously with chance, coincidence, luck or providence. Equally, 'the happy accident,' the discovery of things without seeking them, is also attributed to serendipity. However, if we consider serendipity alongside the power of 'sagacity,' we get closer to Dean's familiar method of practice. The addition of sagacity to a description of Dean's method allows for the use and incorporation of knowledge and experience in the recognition of unexpected breakdowns.

Dean's ability to quickly assess and process the unexpected towards a new resolution could be described as a combination of divergent and convergent thinking, leading to new improvised ends. Dean seems to present the characteristics of a divergent

thinker who can extract information from a variety of disciplines in order to arrive at a position with multiple options, a quality often seen as belonging to the more creative type. Dean, however, also has the well-developed presence of mind of the convergent thinker, who can arrive at a single correct solution to a potential problem.

It may seem strange to think of failure as a substantial component of the work of an artist who has just completed the twelfth commission in the Unilever Series for the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern, London. Dean was also nominated for the Turner Prize in 1998 and has participated in the Venice Biennale in 2003 and 2005. But failing and unsuccessful endeavours can be traced back through many of Dean's works, in particular human failure in *Disappearance at Sea* (1996/97), the story of Donald Crowhurst and the *Tiegnmouth Electron* (2000), failed technology in *Sound Mirrors* (1999), and failed political ideology in *Fernsehturrm* (2001), are significant and important works for consideration.

Failing and failure alongside error and mistakes are outcomes most would want to avoid, instead favouring success and achievement. In his 2010 talk at The Common Guild in Glasgow, Caoimhin Mac Giolla Leith introduced the phrase 'Disappointment Avoidance Cultures'[22] in relation to Dean's chosen approach to thinking about practice, the former being a concept developed by the psychoanalyst Ian Craib in his 1994 book *The Importance of Disappointment* where there is a suggestion that the expectation of never failing halts a healthy identity from developing and flies in the face of the common culture of our time to avoid the trauma of failure. This work in turn was inspired by the work of economist D.E. Bell (1985)[23] and by Graham Loomes and Robert Sugden's 'disappointment theory' (1982,1986, 1987)[24].

The feeling of disappointment is similar to the feeling of regret and is often considered the same emotion, but it is in fact quite different. Someone feeling regret focuses on how his or her poor choice contributed to the unwanted outcome, whereas someone feeling disappointed at his or her failure focuses on the outcome itself: Disappointment is created by comparing the actual outcome with prior expectations. It is related to the sense of loss or gain incurred by resolution of a chosen alternative[25]

According to Wilco W. van Dijk (Professor of Psychology, Leiden University) and Marcel Zeelenberg, (Professor of Economic Psychology, Tilburg University) regret and disappointment following failure are the two emotions that are most closely linked to decision-making.[26] Avoiding failure is often at the heart of many major decisions, as there is usually an element of uncertainty and unpredictability present. To fail in business, commerce, or industry typically has negative status and undesirable implications. However, within the realm of art, failure would appear to have a different register altogether. As the Head of Sculpture Studies of the Henry Moore Institute, Lisa Le Feuvre, suggests,

> The inevitable gap between intention and realization of an artwork makes failure impossible to avoid. This very condition of art making makes failure central to the complexities of artistic practice and its resonance with the surrounding world. Through failure one has the potential to stumble across the unexpected.[27]

A more constructive concept of critically thinking about failure would be to avoid seeing it in terms of negative judgement, to avoid seeing its negative implications and to instead embrace its potential to provide an opportunity to reassess and reflect. Failed attempts thus become moments of growth rather than endpoints, for as Samuel Beckett writes, “Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better”[28]

Case Studies

In order to study the importance of unplanned encounters leading to alternative solutions I have created four specific studies of Tacita Dean’s practice where disappointing elements of failure are turned into new and potentially more interesting results. By studying the practice of Dean I take the opportunity to explore whether or not the tripartite structure of failure, serendipity and sagacity and improvisation is a robust and, more importantly, a useable method. I first identified the tripartite structure in my own work but to recognise it present in other practices would give me more confidence in its overall presence.

The first of our case studies exploring concrete examples of the artist’s ability to

embrace improvisation brought about by unforeseen circumstances and chance events is *Banewl* (1999), a 63-minute, 16mm colour anamorphic[29] film with optical sound, filmed during the total eclipse of the sun at Brunewhall Farm, St. Buryan, Cornwall, 11 August 1999.



Fig.31. ***Banewl*** by Tacita Dean, 16mm colour anamorphic with optical sound, 63 minutes (1999)

Dean states that she intended to make a two-hour forty-four-minute film – the same length of time as the total eclipse of the sun on that day. As with much of Dean's practice, there is meticulous planning involved in getting ready to film the eclipse. But on this occasion, as the time of the eclipse grew close, the unexpected and unwelcomed happened: it began to rain. At the same time, one of the four cameras suddenly malfunctioned, which seems to have instigated a cacophony of frantic exchanges between camera crews and the artist. Oblivious to the failing technology and quickly fading artistic concept, the animals from the immediate environment began to sense the brooding atmosphere of the imminent eclipse before the artist did. Dean recalls,

> The swallows perceive the darkness coming long before us. Suddenly they go crazy. Swooping and darting in all directions, and then they disappear. The cows start to lie down one by one across the field. The temperature drops.[30]

Dean's initial intention to film the sky in order to capture the totality was thwarted when the sky became overcast and adverse weather conditions set in. The necessity to improvise became apparent and Dean began to direct camera crews to film what was happening on the ground opposed to the sky. Inadvertently, *Banwel* presents the

viewer with a remarkable record of a place at a particular time. By not focusing the film on the sun as initially planned the resulting film reminds us of the deep, almost primordial knowledge of animals and a sense of place that is sensitive to a particular time.

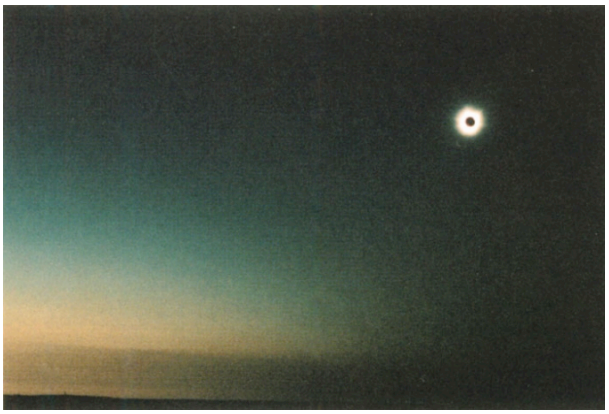


Fig.32**.** ***Diamond Ring,*** 2002 by Tacita Dean
16 mm colour film, mute, 6 minutes (cycle of 12 films each 27 seconds)

Our second case study follows on directly from Dean's desire to finally record a total eclipse of the sun, this time in Madagascar. *Diamond Ring* (2002) is a film that has helped Dean formulate a philosophy that suggests being 'born out of much necessity," for "sometimes things need to go wrong in order for them to go right.'[31] Again, after detailed plans were made to capture the two-and-a-half-minute eclipse, in the end all didn't go as planned. Human error this time had a say in the final outcome. The tripod holding the camera was knocked over at the crucial moment again forcing the artist to improvise within minutes of the eclipse beginning. From the intention being to have the locked-off camera position trained on the total eclipse Dean found herself having to manually zoom in, a technique she did not prefer. The nature of the filming process captured the bleached corona of the eclipse, again an unexpected and unimaginable outcome.

The penultimate case study is *Prisoner Pair* (2008). Dean attempts to fulfil a long-standing ambition to film pears growing in a bottle. The artist makes an error of judgement, misses the harvest times and subsequently misses the opportunity to film pears growing in glass bottles. This is an idea that can easily be traced back to an older work called *How to put a boat in a bottle* (1995). The preserving of fruit in

bottles is a favourite pastime of German and French farmers and a particular specialty of the contested land of Alsace. Having missed the opportunity to set up her own still-life Dean was forced to source 'imprisoned' pears already picked and preserved in alcohol, by chance one was from France and the other Alsatian. This unintentional pairing brought about by simply missing the harvest provided the artist with a poetic and metonymic relationship that speaks of nationalism, displacement and containment. The two bodies slowly ferment alongside each other and can be read as two territories bubbling away side by side.



Fig. 33. ***Prisoner Pair*** by Tacita Dean,16mm colour film, mute, 11 minutes (2008)

A final case study is worth noting here which involves the unexpected narrowing of the gap between a work's initial and its final realisation. In 2005, Dean was invited to make a response to the location of Cork as part of the City of Culture festival. The festival organisers considered the Titanic Centre an obvious place to which Dean could respond – a place full of history and collective memory and imagination, a place where she might be interested in creating a work. Whilst visiting sites and other locations, Dean unexpectedly caught site of a nuns' graveyard. Instantly taken by the small site, she noticed that there was one missing gravestone - an empty space. This was the inspiration and catalyst for a new work that was to be called '*The Last Plot'* and would chart the life and possible death of the nuns in the convent with the last plot in mind.

In the time between deciding on the concept and arriving back in Cork a nun had

passed away and had taken up the last plot and therefore made the idea and premise for the film potentially flawed. Dean decided to continue to film the life of the nuns in their slowly vanishing world, and to record their domestic chores and ritual activity in a one-hour film called *Presentation Sisters*.



Fig.34. ***Presentation Sisters*** by Tacita Dean, 16mm colour film, mute, 11 minutes (2005)

Through reflecting on her own practice, Dean has noted, 'chance, chaos and contingency are my working allies and I have learnt to welcome the uninvited and to allow the unimaginable.'[32] This self-reflection on the creative process invites further analysis of how chance discoveries and detours down blind alleys and cul-de-sacs alongside perceived failures of practice become seamlessly embedded and incorporated into the creative process. Dean draws upon ideas and concerns from other disciplines, such as science, medicine and anthropology, which take into account the value of serendipitous discoveries and failure. This technique allows new opportunities to emerge in order to examine the role of improvisation in the visual art of Dean and others.

Sagacity, Serendipity, and Improvisation

In order to best understand the significance of improvisation within contemporary visual art practice there is a need to establish and develop a new understanding of how the prepared mind might use ideas of sagacity to unpack key stages leading to improvisation. Agar's notion of defining breakdowns brought about by rupturing the

expectations through potential failures between intention and realisation has been a key component within this research and has led to new understanding.

The acknowledgement and understanding of how improvisation requires and develops the skill of sagacity – defined as the wisdom to recognize something risky, particularly in response to unimaginable serendipitous discoveries, is key to decision-making within creativity.



Fig.35 ***Horace Walpole*** by Sir Joshua Reynolds, National Portrait Gallery, London. (1756)

The introduction of the word 'serendipity' into the English language is a relatively recent idea. The English novelist and politician, Horace Walpole (1717-1797), is credited with its coinage in 1754. Inspired by reading *The Three Princes of Serendip*, Walpole was intrigued by the prince's ability to make fortuitous discoveries by accident, to recognize through his sagacity of things that they were not initially looking for,

> This discovery indeed is almost of that kind which I call *serendipity*, a very expressive word, which as I have nothing better to tell you, I shall endeavour to explain to you: you will understand it better by the derivation than by the definition. I once read a silly fairy tale, called *The Three Princes of Serendip*: as their Highnesses travelled, they were always making discoveries, by accidents & sagacity, of things which they were not in quest of: for instance, one of them discovered that a mule blind in the right eye had travelled the same road lately, because the grass

> was eaten only on the left side, where it was worse than on the right – now do you understand Serendipity? One of the most remarkable instances of this *accidental sagacity* (for you must observe that no discovery of a thing you are looking for comes under this description)[33]

Although Walpole is credited with the word coinage, the sociologist Robert Merton must be credited with the serendipity pattern and its distribution and acceptance across the disciplines, from the sciences to the humanities:

> The serendipity pattern refers to the fairly common experience of observing an *unanticipated, anomalous and strategic* datum which becomes the occasion for developing a new theory or for extending an existing theory. […] The datum is, first of all, unanticipated. A research directed toward the test of one hypothesis yields a fortuitous by-product, an unexpected observation which bears upon theories not in question when the research was begun. Secondly, the observation is anomalous, surprising, either because it seems inconsistent with prevailing theory or with other established facts. In either case, the seeming inconsistency provokes curiosity. […] And thirdly, in noting that the unexpected fact must be strategic, *i.e.*, that it must permit of implications which bear upon generalized theory, we are, of course, referring rather to what the observer brings to the datum than to the datum itself. For it obviously requires a theoretically sensitized observer to detect the universal in the particular. [34]

Our contemporary understanding of serendipity might be summed up as 'accidental discovery'. Walpole's recollection of the Three Princes of Serendip certainly speaks to this understanding: 'they were always making discoveries, by accident and sagacity, of things they were not in quest of.'[35] Merton suggests that Walpole realizes that this type of discovery is simply an example of inductive abilities. I suggest that the catalyst leading to important discoveries might be the introduction of sagacity in conjunction with serendipity.

In the *Art of Scientific Investigation* (1957) the pathologist William Ian Beardmore Beveridge (1908-2006) considers scientific breakthrough and the significant presence of chance coupled with sagacity and suggests that;

> They are the more remarkable when one thinks of the failures and frustrations usually met in research. Probably the majority of discoveries in biology and medicine have been come upon unexpectedly, or at least had an element of chance in them, especially the most important and revolutionary ones.[36]

To generate new thinking I used a combination of serendipity with the extended interviews and publications alongside the experience of residency-type opportunities. This tripartite approach method seemed to be accepted although the desire to employ elements of chance through the use of serendipity was considered to be questionable. My recent research into whether or not this approach is robust enough, and a useful term or not, has uncovered a number of other researchers considering a similar approach from different disciplines: law, business (M. De Rond, *The Structure of Serendipity*, University of Cambridge, 2005), sociology, natural history (K.T. Konecki, *Grounded Theory and Serendipity: Natural History of a Research*, Qualitative Sociology Review, Vol. IV Issue 1, 2008) and information services (A.E Foster & Ford, Serendipity and Information Seeking: An Empirical Study, Aberystwyth University, 2003).

I have found these papers and references helpful in building confidence in formulating the suggestion that serendipity should to be considered as a robust methodological approach to inform practice. Dean used the serendipitous links to select the pieces for the show and created an accompanying text for piece. Dean also cited the Surrealist game of objective chance, which has now created a new line of enquiry that might substantiate and strengthen the use of serendipity as a plausible method.

When examining the role serendipity has played in scientific discoveries it is difficult to escape the story of Fleming's discovery of penicillin. It is now known that several scientists had noticed the inhibition of staphylococcal colonies but had treated it as a nuisance, and had ignored or missed its significance but Fleming made the connection due to his perspicacity and seized the opportunity others had let pass.[37]

The importance and significance of serendipity and sagacity seems well recorded in the sciences. There now seems to be a new interest in how these connections might be harnessed in information-seeking and retrieval disciplines such as library research or internet development. Tacita Dean recalls visiting a lecture and being disappointed to hear;

> We're never out of ideas. We can suggest things that are interesting to you, based on your passions, things that you care about, where you're

> going, that sort of thing. Our suggestions will be pretty good. We have figured out a way to generate serendipity. We actually understand now how we can surface things that are surprising to you, but based on things that you care about and what other people care about.[38]

Daniel Liestman, a bibliographic specialist for the social sciences, describes the ability to discover connections that are not always apparent but favour the prepared mind as 'intuitive sagacity' which comes from,

> a random juxtaposition of ideas in which loose pieces of information frequently undergo a period of incubation in the mind and are brought together by the demands of some external event, such as a reference query, which serves as a catalyst.[39]

The notion of incubation seems to fit well with percolation of an idea in the mind of an artist for a period, only to be activated and brought into being in the world by external event such as in a response to a particular context or as we have seen in Tacita Dean's work 'when things go wrong' and triggers improvisation in order for them to go right.

Notes on Chapter Three

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[2] Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2009, p.4.
[3] Pek Van Andel, *Anatomy of the Unsought Finding. Serendipity: Origin, History, Domains, Traditions,Appearances, Patterns and Programmability*Author(s): Reviewed work(s):Source: The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jun., 1994), pp.631-648 Published by: Oxford University Press on behalf of The British Society for the Philosophy of Science
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/687687 (Last Accessed: 07/03/12)
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[5] Emma Cocker, *Tactics For Not Knowing, Prepared for the Unexpected* in *On Not Knowing How Artists Think*, eds, Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum, London, Black Dog Press, 2013, p.127.
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[7] Hans-Joachim Muller, Failure as a Form of Art: A brief guide to "The Art of Failure" In the Art of Failure, Basel:Kunsthaus Baselland, 2009, 10-16
[8] Andrew, Max, *"An Aside."* Frieze Magazine 91 (May 2005) http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/an_aside/ (Last Accessed: 29/03/15).
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[11] Dean, Tacita. An Aside: Selected by Tacita Dean. London: Hayward Gallery Publishing, 2005. p.4.
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[15] Dean, Tacita. An Aside: Selected by Tacita Dean. London: Hayward Gallery Publishing, 2005. p.4.
[16] Steven Bode, Ed., *Waterlog, Journeys Around An Exhibition*, London, Film and Video Umbrella, 2007, pp.92-111.
[17] Schwartz, Lynne Sharon, ed. The Emergence of Memory: Conversations with W.G. Sebald. New York: 7 Stories Press, 2007. p.94.
[18] Patt, Lise with Christel Dillbohner. Searching for Sebald: Photography after W.G. Sebald. Los Angeles: The Institute of Cultural Inquiry, 2007. p.17.
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[21] Lisa Le Feurve (ed.), *Failure: Documents of Contemporary Art*, Whitechapel Gallery, The MIT Press, London and Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2010, p12.
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[26] van Dijk, Wilco W. and Marcel Zeelenberg, *Investigating the Appraisal Pattern of Regret and Disappointment*, Motivation and Emotion 26.4, 2002, p.321.
[27] Le Feurve, Lisa (ed.), *Failure*, London and Cambridge USA, Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT Press, 2010, p.12.
[28] Beckett, Samuel. *Worstward Ho*. London: Calder Publications Ltd, 1984, p. 7.
[29] Anamorphic format is the cinematography technique of shooting a widescreen picture on standard 35mm film or other visual recording media with a non-widescreen native aspect ratio. It also refers to the projection format in which a distorted image is "stretched" by an anamorphic projection lens to recreate the original aspect ratio on the viewing screen. (It should not be confused with anamorphic widescreen, a different video encoding concept that uses similar principles but different means.) The word “anamorphic” and its derivatives stem from the Greek words meaning *formed again*.
[30] Dean, Tacita. An Aside: Selected by Tacita Dean. London: Hayward Gallery Publishing, 2005. p.4.
[31] Dean, Tacita, *Selected Writings Tacita Dean*, Paris, Pais-Musees, editions des musees de la Ville de Paris, Steidl Publishing, 2003, np.
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[33] Merton, R.K. and Barber, Elinor, *The Travels and Adventures of Serendipity*: a study in sociological semantics and the sociology of science, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004, p2.
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[38] Spoken by Google’s executive chairman, Eric Schmit in a lecture titled ‘*The Digital Future’* at the American Academy in Wannsee in Berlin, May 13, 2011.
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Chapter Four

4

‘We are struck by the fact that sites that have been lived in are filled with the presence of absences. What appears designates what is no more…[and] can no longer be seen…. Every site is haunted by countless ghosts that lurk there in silence, to be ‘evoked” or not.’[1]

Michel de Certeau, *Practices of Space*, 1985.

‘Look at the sites, the façades, the defining avenues and walls, the great iron gates and the guardian lodges. These were chosen for more than the effect from the inside out….They were chosen , also…for the other effect, from the outside looking in: a visible stamp of power, of displayed wealth and command: a social disproportion which was meant to impress and overawe.’[2]

Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, 1973.

‘pilgrimage is premised on the idea that the sacred is not entirely immaterial, but that there is a geography of spiritual power. Pilgrimage walks a delicate line between the spiritual and the material in its emphasis on the story and its setting.’[3]

Rebecca Solnit, Wanderlust: *A History of Walking*, 2000.

In this chapter I discuss the ideas and thinking behind the response to an artist-in-residence opportunity and the telling of the journey in connection to a particular context and situation. The story begins with a serendipitous discovery of the mistaken provenance of the naked wrestling scene from Ken Russell's film, *Women in Love* (1957) and my attempt to represent the scene in an unfamiliar manner behind a closed door at Bretton Hall Estate. The endeavour to convey the strangely uncomfortable but nevertheless compelling attraction to an iconic piece of British film-making was not intended to spoil a myth but set out to explore the idea that place is a social construct. The hospitality extended to me during the short residency was greatly appreciated and my response was an attempt to celebrate the importance of friendship and the complex and often conflicting challenges between guest and host.

I also take the opportunity of discussing a prequel to that story with another related story of a remembered visit through the fifteenth century Japanese artist-monk Sesshū Tōyō's stroll-garden, Jōei-ji temple garden in Yamaguchi, Japan. In a co-authored publication with Gavin Morrison (Co-Director of Atopia Projects) and Kiyoshi Okutsu (Professor of Aesthetics, Yamaguchi University, Japan) we explore and compare the experience of visiting a stroll garden with its distant European cousin, the pleasure garden. This project started life as a pilgrimage and developed into a joint research project and settled as both a publication and video installation called *Loop* (2003).

This collaborative writing project represents an extension of my studio-practice at the time where I wanted to bring together writing about a particular place from three different voices with three different histories or specialist knowledge. The experience of visiting Jōei-ji temple garden in Yamaguchi was familiar to all three contributors, as was the Patrick Geddes conference *By Leaves we live*, held in Yamaguchi in 2004. During the conference, I collaborated with Masayuki Yasuhara (Professor of Musicology, Aichi Prefectural University of Fine Arts and Music in Nagoya, Japan) where he played experimental music using a theremin whilst my piece *Loop* was screened in the background. (No images exist of the performance).



Fig. 36. Andrew Sneddon, Kiyoshi Okutsu, Gavin Morrison, ***The Slender Margin between the Real and the Unreal.*** Ed. Dr Sharon Kivland, London, Artwords Press (2007)



Fig.37. ***Loop*** by Andrew Sneddon A 6.25minute DVD projection, dimensions vary (2003)

A Period Drama (2012/13)

The cultural geographer and philosopher David Harvey suggests that,

> ‘those who reside in a place (or who hold the fixed assets in place) become acutely aware that they are in competition with other places for highly mobile capital. Places therefore differentiate themselves from other places and

become more competitive, perhaps antagonistic and exclusionary with respect to each other in order to capture or retain capital investment.'[4]

The proposed artwork, *A Period Drama* (2012/13), sets out to explore how a powerful and memorable sense of place can be created by the re-editing and installation of a film-sequence and its choice of location. For instance, *Trainspotting* (1996), directed by Danny Boyle, was set in Edinburgh, the drug capital of Europe in the 90s but was predominantly filmed on locations in Glasgow. Nevertheless the film has developed an urban mythology and a proud, almost cult, following in Edinburgh. *Women in Love* (1969) directed by the late Ken Russell attracts special attention as the famous naked wrestling scene was wrongly attributed to have been shot on location at Bretton Hall, now home to Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP), but was filmed at Elvaston Castle in Derbyshire.



Fig, 38. Bretton Hall, within the grounds of Yorkshire Sculpture Park, England, UK.



Fig, 39. Elvaston Castle, on the outskirts of Derby, England, UK.

It was during an artist-in-residence project at YSP in 2009 that I unexpectedly came across this fact. I created and proposed a site-specific artwork to be shown within the grounds at Bretton Hall but unfortunately was denied the opportunity by the YSP curators. My proposed project had upset the commonly held belief that the famous wrestling scene had been filmed at Bretton Hall, a belief that had been ferociously protected and cultivated for some forty years and had formed much of the historical narrative and mythology of Bretton Hall.

Artists have long been interested and influenced in cinema, in particular, its temporal and relational processes seem to shape and construct an experience of place. My paper is informed by a rethinking of place within both social geography and art practice, which gives rise to an understanding of place as a mutable concept. W. Charles Pilley for the weekly periodical, *John Bull*, wrote in 1921 of D. H. Lawrence's novel *Women in Love* (1920),

> I do not claim to be a literary critic, but I know dirt when I smell it, and here is dirt in heaps – festering, putrid heaps which smell to high heaven.[5]

The novel, as well as the film adaptation directed by Ken Russell nearly 40 years later, attracted much publicity over its sexual subject matter at the time and today. The film still continues to generate much discussion among those who have studied both film and book. The film portrays social, political and class struggles in the early 1900s England. It also addresses and analyses repressed sexual tensions and taboos of the Edwardian period. This section doesn't allow for an in-depth analysis of all these concerns but instead focuses on the historical legacy of a particular scene within Ken Russell's film adaptation of D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love* (1969*)*, starring Oliver Reed, Alan Bate, Glenda Jackson, and Jennie Linden.

At the time of its release,

Women in Love was seen as 'racy' and tested the limits of decency set by the British Board of Film Censors. A year or so later Russell was to direct *The Devils* (1971) again an adaptation, this time of Aldous Huxley's 1952 book *The Devils of Loudun*. By comparison the later film was much more controversial due to its combination of religious themes and imagery combined with violent and sexual content. One scene in particular from *Women in Love* still courts much debate today, a scene allegedly filmed on location at Bretton Hall, the grand Hall designed in part by the Victorian architect George Basevi (1794–1845) which is located in what are now the grounds of Yorkshire Sculpture Park. As artist-in-residence at YSP in the summer of 2009 I was enthusiastically informed, with certitude, that the famous wrestling scene between Oliver Reed and Alan Bates was filmed on the site, whilst being directed to

a marble fireplace called the Basevi Fireplace. After watching the film and studying the infamous scene it was clear that the two fireplace designs did not match. Unfortunately the location of the filming was wrongly attributed. It would appear that the story told by tour guides and stakeholders at YSP would appear to have been wrongly attributed for over forty years. The scene's rich luxurious surroundings of heavy curtains, marble and gold-leaf detail and architecture is in the Victorian Gothic Revival style while, in comparison, the architectural details of Bretton Hall are clearly more subdued and restrained. The reception of the scene's new provenance was met at first by YSP staff and stakeholders as disbelief and then with much disappointment. The strong reaction to this news prompted me to question why this scene should be so important and valued.

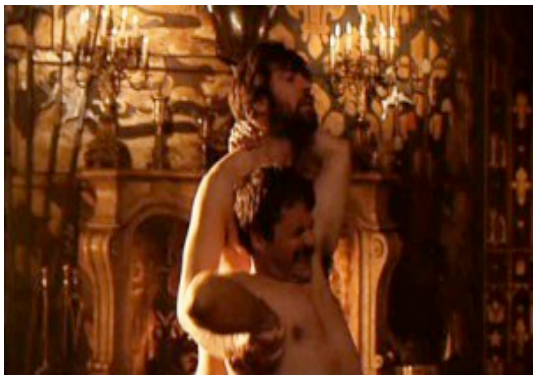


Fig.40. Still from ***Women in Love*** (1969)



Fig.41. Image of **'Basevi' fireplace** at Bretton Hall within the grounds of Yorkshire Sculpture Park (2009)

The reception I received as artist-in-residence and 'messenger' of bad news disturbed the hospitality and dynamic of the relationship between host and guest in the normal friendship of an artist-in-residency project. The resulting artwork and its journey reflect upon the power of place-making (true or false) and the making of a response to this particular context and situation. It is also my intension to share the discoveries, reasoning, and resolutions of a response to the residency experience within the context of a situated practice.

My initial inspiration for the eight-week residency in the summer of 2009 was to make reference to the relation of the contemporary settings of the grounds with the historical context of the Estate and rolling countryside. The opportunity of time and

space to think about this context was a huge attraction as ideas came and went but what stayed constant was the desire to respond in some way to the immediate environment. A belief in John Latham's idea, indeed the Artist Placement Group's, (APG) mantra, that 'context is half the work' was a difficult proposition to ignore, particularly in the realms of a residency.[6]

The residency came shortly after I had completed a co-authored publication with Kiyoshi Okutsu and Gavin Morrision, in which we considered Chikamatsu Monazaemon (1653–1724) remark that 'art is something which lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal'.[7] Chikamatsu Monazaemon was referring to the need for eminent Kabuki actors to imitate real characters in favour of fictitious characters. The book borrows Chikamatsu's statement in order to explore the connection between the representation of raw nature or wilderness and that of idealised nature or nature improved. The additional context of the residency, taking place at the same time as the exhibition of the work by Isamu Noguchi, made the opportunity more relevant. There seemed a strong link between some of the sources, references and ideas generated by the book and the context of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and the Bretton Estate.

My contribution for the publication was the middle chapter, *Theatres of Deception*, where I concentrated on the perception of looking and '*taking in of a view'* citing Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962), John Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (1990) and Horace Walpole's *On Modern Gardening* (1771). I focused on how we experience a particular place and I recalled a memory from a period where I lived in Italy in the early 1990s,

> I recall an encounter with an American tourist whilst visiting the Sistine Chapel in Rome. He entered the chapel with everyone else, and for the entire duration of the time he spent in the chapel he did not once remove the camcorder from his eye. His monocular vision would be the only memory of the experience. It occurred to me that his sensory connection to the space would only be experienced *via* 'playback', to be viewed away from the location, at another time in another place.[8]

As I walked around the grounds with groundsmen and tour guides, people who had an intimate knowledge of the estate, the clues and markers of the estate's archaeology and history became visible and the trained eyes of those around me

identified elements that I had overlooked or misunderstood. I was interested in producing a response which would appear initially incongruous to its setting but which might, through its lifetime, become adopted by its context. This new insight into the history of the place became key in providing a site-specific and poetic response to the residency.

Walking through the Estate and making notes and sketches informed the early understanding and experience of the place. There is a short passage in *Patience (After Sebald): A walk through The Rings of Saturn* (Grant Gee, 2010) where the British travel writer, Robert Macfarlane makes the distinction that 'walking is like recovery to the British whereas walking is like discovery to Americans'. Initially, I felt that he solely meant recovery as healing in terms of walking in terms of recuperation but now I also read this statement as recovery as recalling, bring or call to mind the awakening of an idea. This notion of recovery as retrieving was further developed through discussions with the Estate's in-house archivist, Leonard Bartle, who generously provided valuable historical research material that I followed up by site visits to Bretton Hall and Elvaston Castle. On entering the Wentworth Room on the ground floor of Bretton Hall you are immediately informed of its role as the backdrop to films infamous naked wrestling scene between Oliver Reed and Alan Bates in front of a roaring fire which was supposedly filmed in this room. A small printed notice next to the left-hand side of the Basevi fireplace confirms this. Through further research this iconic scene that was discovered to have been filmed on location at Elvaston Castle near Derby, not Bretton Hall. This mistaken identification sparked my interest in how a place can encapsulate memories.

I am reminded of James Joyce's note in the margins of his manuscript of *Ulysses*, 'Places remember events'.[9] I have often wondered how this act of transference of memory from spaces to individual works, how buildings, rooms, spaces absorb events into their very fabric only to release a sense of these events at a later date. The observation made by Joyce has always seemed to me to be a truism as certain places can resonate feelings of past occupations or actions. I suppose we only need to think of the classic ghost story set in an old haunted house to understand Joyce's thinking. But how can a memory of a non-existent event be felt by so many for so long

without being discovered to be untrue?

Many may not be familiar with the entire film, which portrays the intimate and emotional relationship between four main characters: two sisters, Gudron and Ursula Brangwen, played by Glenda Jackson and Jennie Linden respectively, Gerald Crich, played by Oliver Reed, and Alan Bates as Rupert Birkin. However, many seem aware of the naked wrestling scene between Oliver Reed and Alan Bates. Both book and film are widely regarded as addressing the dynamics of intense and repressed personal relationships and the development of difficult and at time destructive friendships; they also address social relationships, sexual tension, and intrigue of a stifling Edwardian society. Both D. H. Lawrence and Ken Russell seem to be actively probing and testing the boundaries and value systems of the 1920s and late 1960s, which are explored in the constantly altering relationship between characters and is also articulated between differing gendered roles in society at these times.

The backdrop of a roaring fire and flickering light combined with clever editing appear to owe much to the scene's success in seeping into our psyche or memory banks. The cultural geographer and philosopher David Harvey suggests,

> Place, in whatever guise, is like space and time, a social construct. This is the baseline proposition from which I start. The only interesting question that can then be asked is: by what social process(es) is place constructed?[10]

With a preliminary idea in mind, that of a connection to a place through a mistaken social construct I began to study this particular scene from the film and also at the same time I started considering possible sites where I might screen the film or re-edited fragments, or a variety of still images incorporating the real site and the alleged site. This was fascinating and brought up new approaches and possibilities for considering a response to place and a possible outcome to the residency.

After carefully studying the scene in some depth, identifying the different camera angles, audience viewpoints, and editing sequences in relation to the audio track and dialogue I was attracted to the first section where the two actors are wrestling in front of the fire. I believed by identifying this selection I was respecting the original stimuli of the fireplace that became important in identifying the correct location. The scene chosen has the fireplace in a central position. I had decided to edit out all other

camera shots but to retain the audio track, which is predominantly huffing, puffing and groaning with minimal dialogue. When the screen had no image visible the sound was still present. There were only five or six scenes lasting three or four seconds each with the remaining sequence reduced to black. The minimal amount of time containing action became an issue and an alternative option had to be found. The lack of visual information rendered the viewing experience poor and there was a fear that an audience would not engage with the piece.

In closely studying the entire scene I became conscious of feeling uncomfortable watching two naked men wrestling in front of an open fire. This led me to question why I, like so many other viewers, should feel so uncomfortable. Or is it something to do with Russell's fascination and taste for depicting the darkness of sexual power throughout the film. *Women in Love* was not only the first feature film to show full-frontal male nudity but it also depicted two naked men engaged in an act that is deeply homoerotic and also unsettlingly aggressive. It may seem tame by today's standards but was considered shocking forty years ago.

For me, however, in watching segments of the film repeatedly and as a whole, it seems that more importantly it is about relationships and the complexity of friendship. In a 1971 interview about the film Alan Bates says,

> I think people are immediately drawn to try and understand themselves through the sensual. He seems to be able to touch on things that most people are perhaps obsessed with, or at least concerned with. And those fundamental basic relationships are explored through the film and in Lawrence's writing between men and women, between women and women, and between men and men: he understands them all.[11]



Fig. 42**.** ***Period Drama***, Andrew Sneddon 2013 (still).First re-edit of Ken Russell's *Women in Love*, 1969.



Fig. 43**.** ***Period Drama***, Andrew Sneddon 2013 (still) Second re-edit of Ken Russell's *Women in Love (*1969)

Please visit this link to Vimeo, with the password **KenRussell**

https://vimeo.com/243088000

After a period of reflection, I refocused my attention on the second section of the scene in which the two principal male actors are engaged in a very close embrace that in many ways can make the viewer even more uncomfortable. This allowed the focus to move away from the fireplace as being the central motif in the thinking behind the re-edit and to concentrate more directly on engaging with an audience. I felt a strangely voyeuristic feeling whilst studying the footage; this can be further demonstrated in an anecdote or to borrow Tacita Dean's preference for *An Aside*. While studying the scene at home, timing and making notes on the editing, I was oblivious to my thirteen-year old son looking over my shoulder. He innocently asked 'What you doing?', saw what was on screen and instantly shouted to his mother "*Dad's watching naked men*", at which point I could feel the colour drain from my face as I struggled to construct a defence.

The final edit is a repeated and looped section of the scene with an out-of-sync sequence of audio track. If the piece were to be revisited a number of times by a viewer, s/he would probably revisit a different visual with a different accompanying audio track. By singling out this particular section the final edit now allows for a monocular vision of the work to be experienced by the audience that strengthens and refers to a subjective voyeuristic experience.

In order to capture the uneasiness and the voyeuristic aspects of the scene I felt that the display of the re-edited sequence should be carefully considered in both contexts of the film and the Estate. The intention would be to use a storage cupboard in the Camellia House. The installation of the audio/visual piece inside a cupboard would allow the work to be experienced first by hearing it and hopefully this might encourage an audience to track the sound back to the door. Hopefully, upon reaching the door viewers will be inquisitive enough to peer through the existing hole for the absent handle, thus adopting a peeping Tom stance and effectively embracing the voyeuristic monocular viewpoint. The stance and audience participation envisioned would be similar to Marcel Duchamp's permanent installation from 1969 of *Etant Donnés* which is held in the Philadelphia Museum of Art where the audience/spectators are encouraged to peer through a hole in a door through into a strangely sensual place that has attracted a variety of diverse scholarly activity.

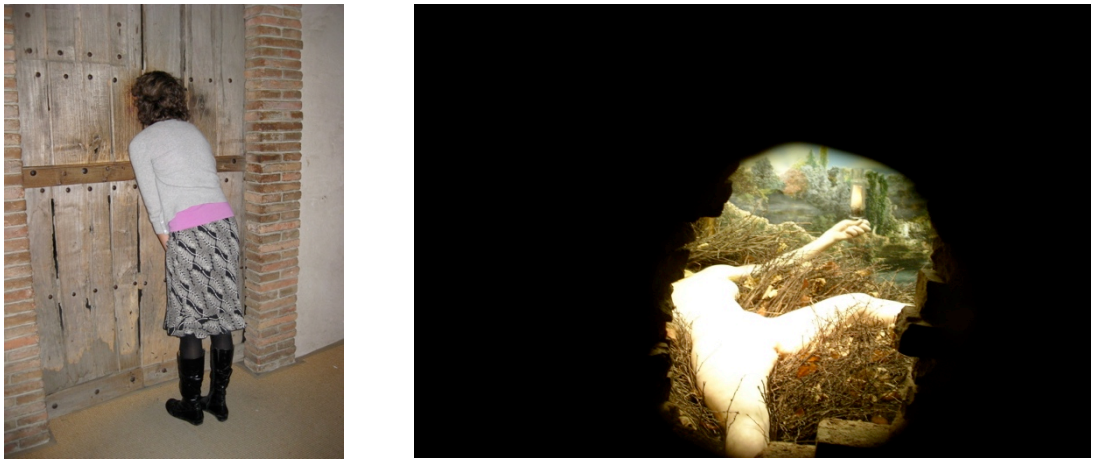


Fig. 44. Marcel Duchamp's permanent installation from 1969 of *Etant Donnés* in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, USA.

Residencies and commissions can be incredibly influential for artists and while they may often provide eureka-type moments, they are seldom without strings attached. They are contractual between host institution or organisation and individual or group; sometimes the contract is formally written down and signed or it may simply be a tacit understanding between both parties. There is, however, a common agreement that the invited guest's role in this contract is to deliver and the host's role is to facilitate, and neither can uphold their part of the bargain without the assistance of the other.



Fig.45, Detail from the door in the Camellia House at Bretton Hall. The hole in the door would be modified to encourage audiences to engage with the video and sound installation.



Fig.46. The Camellia House at Bretton Hall withn the grounds of Yorkshire Sculpture Park, South Yorkshire and intended location/site for ***Period Drama***, a short re-edit of the naked wrestling scene in Ken Russell's 1969 film *Women in Love* staring Alan Bates and Oliver Reed. Not realised.

The residency at YSP followed a conventional path that involved research and experiments through a series of trials and errors. Much of the research borrowed thinking about place not unfamiliar to the realms of geography, anthropology or cultural studies by way of fieldwork and interpretation of images. On reflection, this methodology – or a variation of it – of borrowing from other disciplines in a pseudo-scientific fashion is a common practice adopted by artists and accepted by host organisations. As Miwon Kwon suggests, that this approach can 'easily become extensions of the museum's own self-promotional apparatus, while the artist becomes a commodity with a special purchase on 'criticality'[12] Artists can sometimes find themselves in a tricky position between honouring a contract and working with an organisation. As the art critic and professor of art theory, Isabelle Graw (1962-) notes, 'the result can be an absurd situation in which the commissioning institution (the museum or gallery) turns to an artist as a person who has the legitimacy to point out the contradictions and irregularities of which they disapprove'.[13]

Locations or sites referred to in cinema and television can have a notable impact on popularity and tourism, and can generate significant revenue. For example, *The Duchess*, filmed on location at Chatsworth House and Kedleston Hall in 2008, or *The Da Vinci Code*, from 2006, featuring Rosslyn Chapel, have brought great financial revenue to the local communities through increased tourism, to name only a couple. These locations and many others have seen an increase in tourism and have added to a growing industry, particularly popular for foreign tourists and tour operators catering to the growing *'tea and wee'* demographic.

There is a clear difference in identity and status between Bretton Hall and Elvaston Castle. Bretton Hall is surrounded by Yorkshire Sculpture Park and benefits from a steady stream of international and national visitors with a strong and distinctively recognisable identity by regularly hosting exhibitions by internationally acclaimed artists. Between March 2007 and January 2008, Andy Goldsworthy returned to YSP for the largest exhibition ever curated at the Park, so popular was the public interest in the exhibition that it caused tailbacks north and south on the M1 motorway.

Richard Sennett suggests that some 'places are full of time' and brim with 'cosmopolitan opportunity'[14] such as Bretton Hall and YSP. Whereas some places exhibit a 'drudgery of place' where time seems fixed and unchanged. Such places remain heavy with time. Some places are thus left behind in the 'slow lane' as with Elvaston Castle which is run-down, forgotten, lacking a marketable identity and the wherewithal to compete with other places for lucrative mobile capital. The cultural geographer Kevin Robins suggests that there is a desperate need for places to create strong identities if they wish to survive.

> The driving imperative is to salvage centred, bounded and coherent identities – place identities for placeless times. This may take the form of the resuscitated patriotism and jingoism that we are now seeing in a resurgent Little Englandism. Alternatively…it may take a more progressive form in the cultivation of local and regional identities or in the project to construct a continental European identity.[15]

Notes on Chapter Four

[1] Michel de Certeau, *Practices of Space*, in *On Signs*, ed. Marshall Blonsky, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1985, p.143.
[2] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City*, NewYork: Oxford University Press, 1973, p.106.
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Conclusion

"Research in which the professional and/or creative practices of art…play an instrumental part in an inquiry."[1]

AHRC, *Research Review, Practice –Led Research in Art, Design and Architecture*, 2007

Artistic research means that the artist produces an art work and researches the creative process, thus adding to the accumulation of knowledge.[2]

Mika Hannula, et al., *Artistic Research: theories, methods and practices*, 2005.

This research programme developed from a desire to explore my relationship to the notion of place, and the confusion of meaning in the concept of place with regard to the artwork between its point of origination and final destination that has underpinned my practice throughout. I have identified and established key signifiers along the path of this research that have had a significant impact on my own practice. These signifiers have helped shape and challenge both my practice and this thesis. I have also delineated a genealogy for myself in the tradition of situated-practice where the notion of a studio becomes simply a space in time with permeable boundaries allowing ideas to breath.

I have referenced films and literature that have formed and continue to shape my approach to working with a diverse range of media appropriate to the context and situation of a given place or opportunity. I have also used the research programme to test ideas and theories within the context of artist-in-residence opportunities, contributions to conference papers and written projects extending the correlation between theory and practice. In the course of the PhD I have, as a practitioner, been concerned with the form of the practice echoing or complementing the content of the thesis. I have found the writing of the thesis and academic papers to be a discrete practice in itself that has allowed me test new ideas and to arrive not at the end but at new starting points. In my practice I have detected a significant move away from an over-reliance upon pictorial images towards a paired down response to situation and context with a more developed lightness of touch.

I have drawn upon David Harvey's work that argues place is a social construct, particularly visible within a now familiar *'space, time compression'* scenario of late capitalism. A sense of displacement, not being rooted in a place and placelessness as articulated by Edward Relph is combined with Edward Casey's phenomenological belief in the process of embodied experience of being in the world is unfortunately becoming easier to detect.

In Patrick Keiller's practice and trilogy of *London* (1994), *Robinson in Space* (1997) and *Robinson in Ruin* (2010) I took the opportunity to balance this position by studying Grant Gee's documentary film *Patience (After Sebald): A walk through the*

Rings of Saturn (2010) that charts the work of W.G. Sebald and offers a more balanced and positive register to that of Keiller.

I have drawn the reader's attention to my own work-in-progress called *Ghost* where the economics of a place are inscribed in the place as well as experienced by walking through the place, and which will culminate in a short film and site-specific installed sculpture.

I have explored and developed a methodological approach during the PhD programme that incorporates failure, serendipity and sagacity leading to improvisation. I have conducted a close reading of particular works by Tacita Dean that have been able to echo these observations of method with response to place and become a driver behind this form of decision-making.

I have analysed my own practice with the emergence of ideas revealed and work made within the research. Particular attention has been given to the development of how ideas have been advanced by testing responses to context and situation with regard to notions of place and the displacement of the art object. Approaching projects or opportunities with John Latham's mantra of 'context is half the work' and 'the open brief' has at time felt like a high-risk strategy but with un-imaginable outcomes and discoveries both conceptual and practical.

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Appendix



Transmission:

HOST

Guest: Roderick Buchanan

Host: Andrew Sneddon

THE STRANGER

Transmission: HOST

Guest: Roderick Buchanan
Host: Andrew Sneddon

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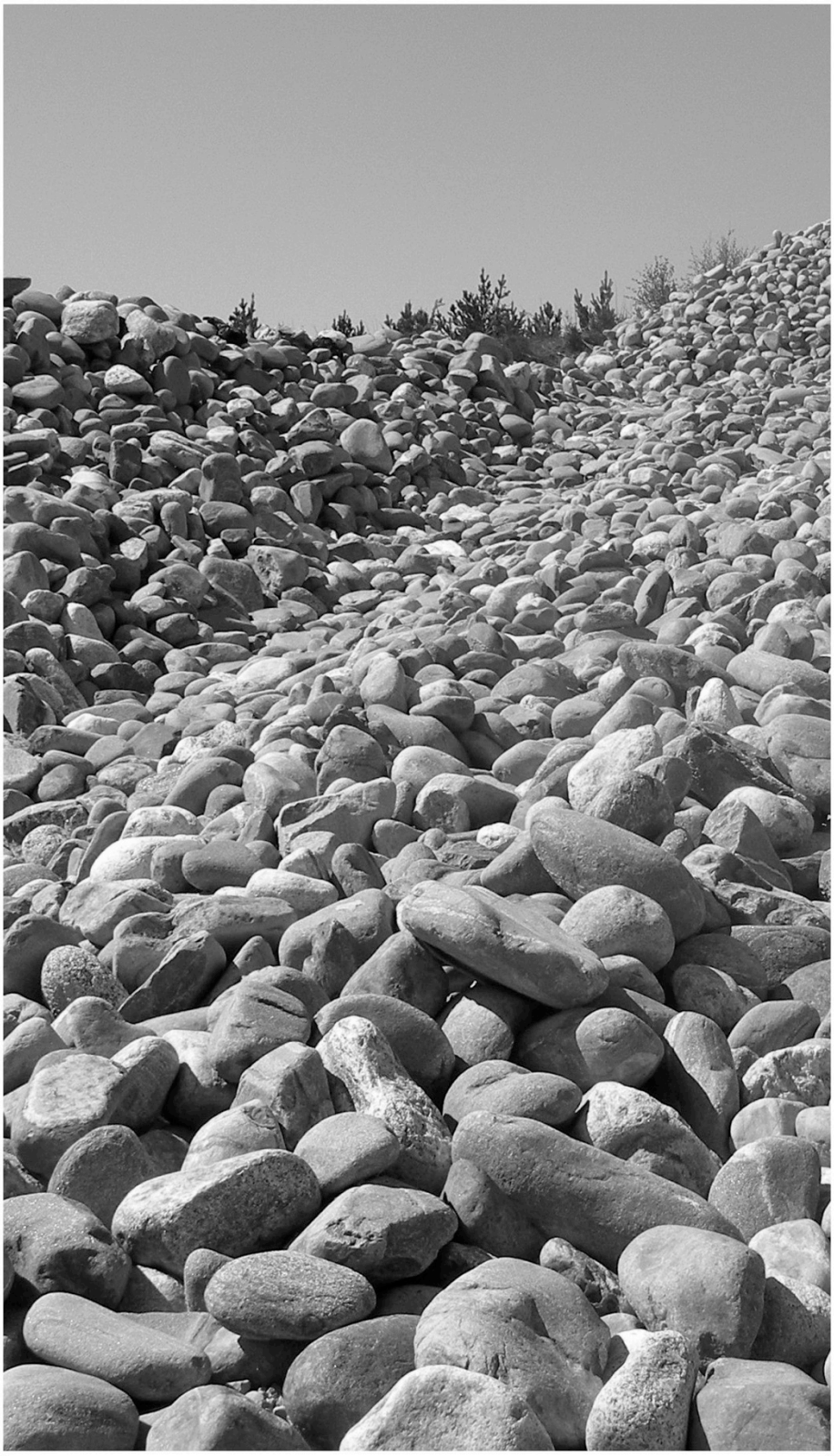
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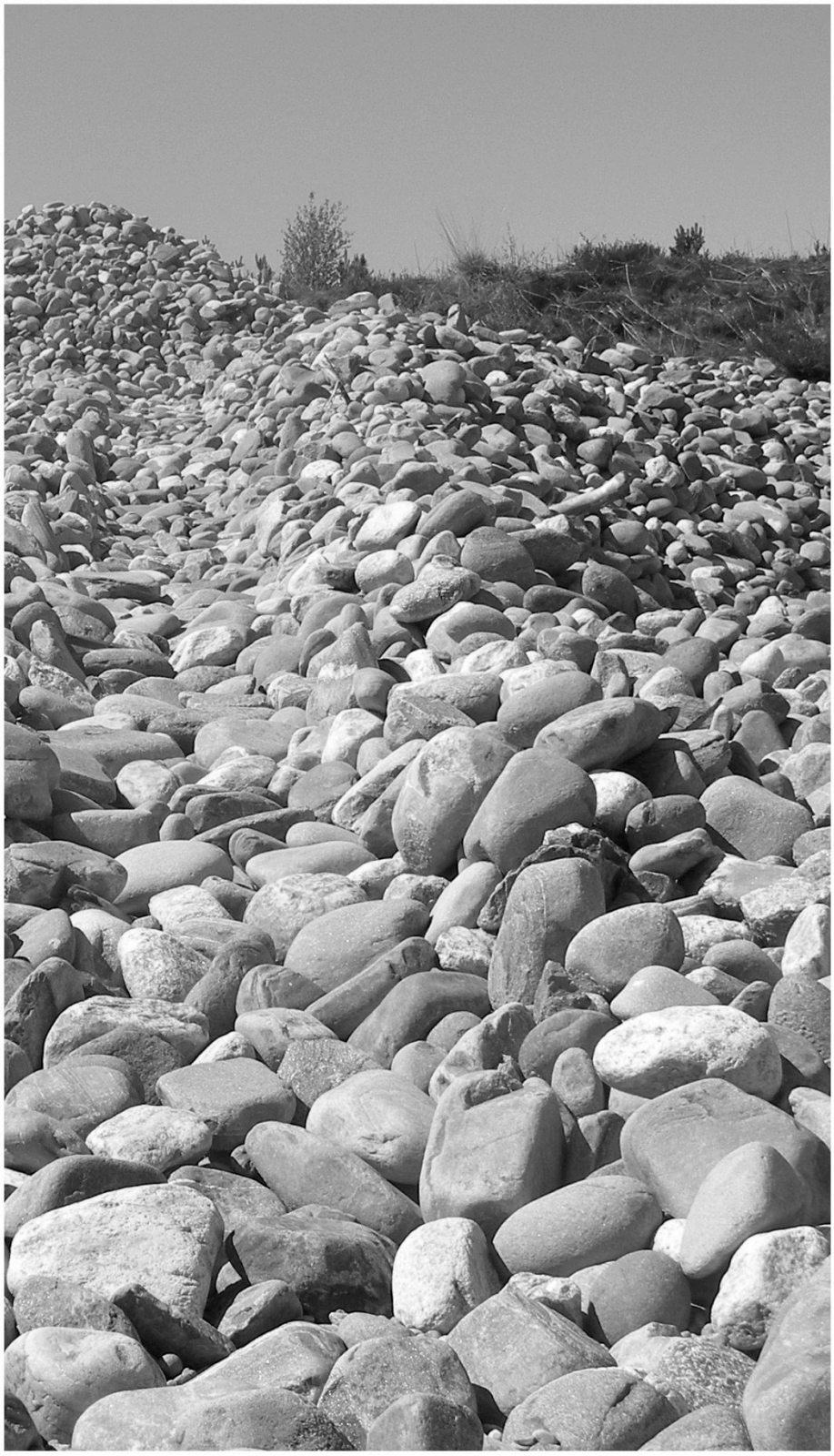
The History of the World according to my Father

Thousands of millions of years ago something happened that set the clock ticking towards this cup of tea I'm drinking right now. Among the millions of galaxies known to be out there, our own countless stars arranged themselves into what we now stand outside the house and point to as 'The Milky Way'. Our Sun's in there somewhere. Around that Sun you've got some planets. The Earth is one of those. Lots of things happened at the beginning of the Earth's life that didn't seem important at the time. Rocks formed, volcanoes erupted, seas appeared. That's the 'Primordial Soup' we always hear about. Land comes together and breaks apart. Scotland and Ireland are the same bit of land for all this time and the weather is great. At some point England crashes into our arse between Donegal Town and Dunbar and animals crawl out of the sea. Animals and plants come and go until humans come along and start shagging and biting until they get sick of one another and have to move on. That's when we came up from the Veldt. Africa had taken care of us through the good times and bad, and we must never forget that that's where we came from, but following our stomach we walk out of Africa over an Arabian land bridge between Ethiopia and Yemen and from there tramp up into Europe. Our family lives for a long, long time in Central

Europe. The mark of all this time is in the root of words like 'Snow', 'Beech', 'Bee' and 'Wolf', shared by Gaels and Bengalis and everyone in between. Over the years we expand and explore over the next hill and the next hill until we reach Scotland. This all happens about ten thousand years ago just behind a retreating ice sheet. Between Islay and Antrim a spit of dry land stretches out from Scotland to Ireland and it's over this bridge that we walk into Ireland. This is around the time of Finn MacCool and Benandonner, when the Scottish giant was always threatening to come over to Ireland for a fight. Finn got tired of hearing the same old muck and set to work building a causeway between Dunseverick and Staffa to settle the business. When the path was finished the challenge went out all over Scotland that Ben no longer had the excuse of a sea lying between them. However, the Irish giant had tired himself out with all that work and had taken to his bed. Finn's wife knew Benandonner and set out to trick the big galoot. She dressed Finn up as a baby and when Ben chapped the door she 'shooshed!' him and told him not to wake the baby. Ben 'keeked' into the baby's crib and near dirtied his drawers when he saw the size of Finn's baby. Without another word he tanked it back to Scotland and knocked the causeway to bits as he ran away home. This is, of course, why you can only see bits of the causeway today. Our family set to work on the stones found in that area making arrowheads, scrapers and axes. We got so good at this that people further and further afield heard what it was we had to offer and invited us to trade with them in Scotland. These were the Cup and Ring people and via this trade in porcellanite we settled in Scotland. We think of this as the 'Old Road', a time of pilgrimage and sacrifice, eating plant extracts to open up to our ancestors. You can still see the standing stones, dolmens, and chambered cairns that are a record of these times. Until very recently parents would tell their children their own particular story about the Clurichaun or the Brownie who occupied their hand-me-down tales and were a distant memory of our clansmen, who were so good with their hands that they had to make up fantastic tales about the clever deeds of these 'Little People'.

We settled down and enjoyed our life in Scotland. About two and a half thousand years ago new families began to arrive from the east. We liked the look of these new immigrants, they had domesticated horses, something we hadn't seen before. So we married them whenever we could. Sometimes they talked about the wars that plagued them back in the old country but we liked it better when they talked about their quest for a promised land. The place they were heading for was Tir na nÓg, the land of the ever young. It was reached, they said, by travelling beyond the edges of the map. To us this meant over the water to Ireland, Osin had already been there and come back on Niamh's horse. That hadn't gone so well for him since although he thought he'd only been away for a year it turned out it had been three hundred and when he got down off his horse, against the advice of his wife, the weight of all those years landed on his head and hammered him into the ground, but we took our chances and sailed off with the rest of them into the setting sun. As my own mum used to say, 'Wise men come from the East,' and she was right because life in Ireland suited us very well. We prospered over there and the family grew healthy and strong on good hunting ground and dark soil. Ireland is probably the most comfortable place in the world to raise a family, it's mild summers and soft winters are conducive to raising children and that's exactly what happened. Our family grew bigger and bigger. This was a time of great fraternity, a lot of intrigue and a lot of sex and death. We were all having such a good time until we were forced to take notice of some tough families round about who had begun to throw their weight around, taking what didn't belong to them and telling folk where to go if they didn't like it. It soon became evident that we couldn't keep the good life we had any longer without fighting for it. Scotland was the place to learn the rough and ready arts in those days and what was good enough for Cú Chulainn was good enough for us. So with tales of warrior women like Scathach and Dornoll ringing in our ears, we sailed to Scotland eager to learn the use of the Gae Bulga and the Caladbolg. This was difficult work and the training took us all over Scotland. It





had always been our intention to return home but there was so much happening that we got carried away fighting alongside our pals, the Picts. Rumours were rife that a Roman Legion had been sent to wipe us all out. We drew them right into the Highlands and met them head on in the Grampian Mountains. Calgacus was our leader at that time and laid out the facts for us to consider. 'The Romans are greedy. What they know, they want. What they don't know, they want even more.' Rome smashed into us determined to take us all as slaves. We lost our leader and returned home broken. For years after we kept out of the way of the Romans, living a meagre life at the edge of society. Lots of people round about us started forgetting who they were, dropping their Gods and becoming Roman. We never get round to going back to Ireland. We got poor instead and the family scrabbled around the edges of things trying to make a living until on an outing to collect mussels from the sea shore around Dunoon, the whole family were stolen and taken over to Ireland as prisoners. This is about fifteen hundred years ago; there was lots of thieving and banditry at that time. Maewyn Succat, a Romanised Scot from Kilpatrick, was also stolen about this same time and off the back of herding pigs on Slemish mountain he graduated to became Saint Patrick, Bishop of all Ireland. Up until this point every country that turned to Christ was forced that way at the point of a sword but in what is regarded as a miracle today, Ireland bucked the trend and took to Christianity without a single martyr. In Ireland our family took on a few of Christ's teachings, but couldn't stomach all the rules laid down by our new lairds, the Green Martyrs. We got caught brawling with Colum Cille in his dispute with Finnian over who had the right to copy and distribute the old holy poems. We were cast adrift in the North Channel and ordered to save as many souls in Scotland as had died in the Battle of Cul Dreimhne. We wandered about with the likes of Colum Cille and the warrior monks, but Scotland was hard work. They didn't take to Christianity as easily as folk did in Ireland and finally after years of rough camping and meager rations, the family felt it had done its bit over there. They heard of opportunities

opening up for folk like them in Ireland. All those years in Scotland courting the Caledonii, marrying among the Taexali and having children by the Venicones had given birth to a strong breed called the Gallowglass. Berserkers with that old warp spasm that Cú Chulainn had, taking what at first wasn't offered but also hiring themselves out to settle the local feuds as well. These foreign Gaels were keen on all that land between Muckish and the Hares Gap, covetous to a point where a father who promised land to the first of his sons to touch the shores of Ulster, saw his boy in the longboat riding second, cut off his right paw and throw it onto the beach to take possession and bequeath the people of that dear place with that bloody symbol ever since. Norsemen from the North, Nor-men from the South, this was a time of terrible bloodshed where our tradition of admitting only the tall dark stranger as first foot at New Year became a practical rural custom. If a tall fair-haired stranger chapped at your door it probably meant the Vikings were here. Our willingness to lend a hand was noted five hundred years later by Malcolm the Second of Scotland. Our family was invited over from Limavady to help kick out the Danes from Ayrshire and for his trouble Anselan O'Kane was granted a trench of land east of Loch Lomond. We were with Bruce at Bannockburn and with the French at Agincourt, and like everyone else in Scotland, took a heavy hit at Flodden. It was after that defeat that the change of trade from sword to ploughshare took place in our family. With mud under our nails and the stink of horses' shite on our clothes we fell to reading books and fomenting revolution. Among the clan was George Buchanan the humanist, who watched the religious orders recruit the sot, the ignorant, the ruined, the gambler and the glutton, and wrote the Franciscanus, which cost him a quarter of a century of trotting exile. Hunkered down by the bonny banks we gnawed our trout and refused to kneel for communion. We favoured the Presbyer rather than the Episcopate and when the famine came we escaped to Ireland leaving the blight in the lowlands and the Episcopalians in Edinburgh. Covenanters were our friends. Persecuted Presbyterians that got off their backside to carve out a

New Jerusalem in Ireland. We cleared fields in Tyrone and Fermanagh. Settling down on confiscated land. Putting down long roots. It's said that when we landed we fell on our knees and prayed to the Lord, then we fell on the natives and prayed on them, but our family cleared and reclaimed fallow ground and were, like our rich and poor Catholic neighbours, unable to vote. Our Anglo Protestant neighbours leased us small plots of land and it was as cottars, with pigs for company and the cows for conversation, that we lived for the next hundred years. We stuck it out but we saw that Ireland was being hamstrung by a greedy British parliament. Denied opportunities to industrialise, the whole land fell into a deep depression. We needed more work for our families and when the potato crop failed because of that plague from America, famine hit hard. A government that places the free market above all else, even the hunger of its own people, tries to square the circle by providing relief for the starving farmers. But strict opposition to any interference in economic affairs leaves Ireland littered with famine walls over hills and mountains but empty of useful infrastructure like harbours or canals. A thousand starving people from Ireland turn up every week on the Broomielaw in Glasgow. Amongst that throng, our family. We come to Glasgow and are glad of the work, settling in lodging houses and tenements in Camlachie. Working in all those jobs that made Glasgow second city of the empire, puddlers and shinglers in the forge for the men, piecers and finishers in the carpet factory for the women. Highlanders and Irishmen crammed together with spirit houses and dance halls and picture houses and football and not another thought of the country. It's where we would live still had I not taken a bit of night school and got a bit of further education. This was all part of Glasgow's great post-war regeneration. We saved our coupons and got a house in Castlemilk but it didn't suit us well; the residents started calling it Disney Land, not because it felt like it had been designed by some 'Mickey Mouse' planner, but because it 'Dis nae have a shop, it Dis nae have a pub'. We got out of there pretty quick. Gathering together the deposit to buy a house on a George Wimpy estate in Bishopbriggs,

north of Springburn. Bags of room and tons of neighbours, the estate had more tradesmen than B & Q on a Monday morning. Tilers and blacksmiths, plumbers and joiners all taking turns to extend each other's houses over those long summers of my middle age. And that's where we are now, in an extension made with my own hands unwrapping a biscuit I bought down the shops, blowing the steam of the tea my wife made for me and performing this small service to the memory of all the Buchanans.

Afterword

'Context is half the meaning' is a mantra with which I first heard and wrestled when we studied together at Glasgow School of Art in the late 80s and I suspect has formed much of our thinking and practice ever since. This phrase and the notion of the 'incidental person' are attributed to the artist, John Latham and the influential Artist Placement Group established in the 1960s. The incidental person refers to the practice of an artist who elects to develop his or her work in the public context of industrial and government institutions rather than in the privacy of the studio. In preparation for Roderick Buchanan's lecture much revisiting of the origins of from where these ideas stemmed has thrown up some strange and unanticipated places whereby to understand what might be meant by context.

The Scottish/Irish context is a constant for me, living for much of my youth with a distant sea-view of Ireland with the Ailsa Craig between, sometimes referred to as Paddy's Milestone. The Craig is a small, now uninhabited island off the south-west coast of Scotland, a halfway point of the sea journey between Glasgow and Belfast on the Firth of Clyde, a traditional route of emigration for many Irish labourers coming to Scotland to seek work; an island consisting entirely of a volcanic plug of an extinct volcano, active around 500 million years ago. Another memory triggered by the story and Buchanan's commission from the Imperial War Museum is the recollection of being regularly wakened by the heavy rumble of armored convoys of army vehicles, always around the early hours of the morning heading for the ferry port of Stranraer. A poignant but now distant memory of the troubles, a memory often shattered by the evening of news reports of disappearances, kneecappings, retaliations, and bombings.

Maybe our understanding of context is wrapped up or intertwined in our ability to construct place out of time, location, and knowledge. It also seems essential that a consideration of context should be considered as plural as there is both the context that instigates the work and the subjective contexts in which audiences receive art.

Transmission: Host is a series of chapbooks derived from an annual lecture series organised by Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University. Each week a host invites his or her guest and a critical engagement is assumed. There is an ethics of hospitality: a host has a standard of conduct, and historically, hospitality has been seen as a code, a duty, a virtue, and a law. In 2009–10 we take up the idea of the friend. In the course of a life, friendships change but this is not to say that friends are interchangeable. What kind of friendship is possible between artists, between works of art, between men and women? What is a real friend? A dream from which one wakes to say, after Montaigne, who says it after Aristotle: O my friends, there is no friend?

Roderick Buchanan graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1989 and University of Ulster in 1990, and is now based in Glasgow. He uses film, video, photography, and sculpture to question collective and individual identity. He was awarded the Becks Futures Prize, 2000, and the Paul Hamlyn award, 2004, and contributed to the Taipei Biennial in 2008. He is currently working on a commission for the Imperial War Museum in response to the Troubles and their legacy, and spends much of his time maintaining open channels of communication with Black Skull Corps of Fife and Drum and Parkhead Republican Flute Band, two of Scotland's prominent Loyalist and Republican flute bands. Having spent much of the 90s on a group-show circuit that took him all over the world, he now finds himself returning to questions of his own situated self, the push and pull of what he sees going on around about him.

Andrew Sneddon is a Scottish artist now living and working in Sheffield. He studied at the British School in Rome and holds an MA in Fine Art from Glasgow School of Art. He has exhibited nationally and internationally and is currently engaged in a practice-led PhD at Edinburgh College of Art. His practice is concerned with exploring our complex relations with space and place, in particular how place influences the decision-making process of the artist. He has recently completed a residency at Yorkshire Sculpture Park and co-authored *The slender margin between the real and the unreal*, with Gavin Morrison and Kiyoshi Okutsu (Artwords Press, 2007).
www.andrewsneddon.com



Guest: Alec Finlay

Host: Andrew Sneddon

Transmission: HOST

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Page 5. *The Wittgenstein House (Skjolden)* Alec Finlay and Guy Moreton, photograph: Guy Moreton.



from the wittgenstein house

If I am unable to grasp
the mechanism
of thought

then from this view
I can still learn
how to see.

The foundations
are a razed
platform.

Two white birch
grow from
the open cellar.

Somehow, I must find
my way out
of this forest.

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Andrew Sneddon: I am interested in two recent group shows to which you contributed: 'Ludwig Wittgenstein: There Where You Are Not' (Southampton, 2005), and more recently, 'Waterlog' (Norwich and Lincoln, 2007). The exhibitions explore ideas contained in writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein and W.G. Sebald respectively. Pilgrimage seems important in your responses, by visiting particular places to walk in the footsteps of these authors, to see what they saw. I wonder, what is there to be gained by these ventures? Is it a question of addressing poetic qualities of the unattainable?

Alec Finlay: Those two exhibitions and books overlap: they include my LW journeys (Skjolden, Rosro, Cambridge, Newcastle & Oloumouc), and WGS journey (Dunwich & UEA); journey poems; other poetic forms; proposals and made and unmade works of art.

The walks at Skjolden and Dunwich were experiences that provided a spine of notes, a word-path – what Gary Synder calls 'rip-rapping'. But other experiences are just as important, in particular reading LW & WGS, and reading about them. These are not pilgrimages. Words are not places, nor are they stones. The places themselves are attainable, in the sense that the last stanzas of the LW poem describes: the limits of my reality. What I discovered at Skjolden was not LW, but rather the view LW chose – not to try and be LW, but to be me, looking out from the place from which he looked out. At the centre of the poem is a description of the way there. Guy Moreton's photographs are LW's view through his eyes. We were interested in LW's doing philosophy but by other means: architecture, photography, and view/landscape.

These projects stretch out for months or years, on either side of the journey; concept comes first; resolution of forms and making comes after. I first went to Skjolden because I had proposed a replica of LW's hut as a work of art (in 1999), a 'non-dedicated dedicated space for thinking' intended for a centre for contemporary art and the natural world. Later I devised a grid poem, in the form of a wooden sliding puzzle (a kind of 'language game'). I also placed a letterbox with a circle poem near Rosroe (LW's house in Connemara). And I made rowan jelly with berries picked at Skjolden. All these things evolve and overlap.

The LW poem does admit aspects of my own life, illness, and so on. It also describes the difficulty that LW had settling anywhere; his sense of being a 'porcupine', a stranger. But I am not him. Rather than a metaphysical concern with sense of place, or a meditation on the unattainable, the work seeks poetic forms true to what LW calls 'these words in these positions', as it also looks for whatever I can recover from the experience, for example, healing.

The Sunken Bell

Walk the shingle at Dunwich, among sea worn
stones, salted pebbles, you'll find amber, or
a heart, like the ones that Gerhard found before us.
He was more discerning about their shapes.

Over the road is the sea, under the waves
the beach. This morning the field floats, swans
glide over a flood of reflected light, where later
out my window a second moon shimmers.

Whatever changes the sea holds the skies colour,
stars are clear to steer or swim or drown under.
The waves wake the sea's dream; land is ceded.
At All Saints a last grave faces the cliff's edge.

St Bartholemew's, St John's, St Martin's, St Michael's,
all sunk; they say you can hear the bells toll
in the tides. Let us cast a new bell form from molten
flame, sink it deep, before the sea covers the land.

AS: I was unable to attend your talk, which left me in the privileged position of being able to hear you read your poems on the recording, listening to your familiar accent, hesitation, and careful consideration. I have enjoyed the ability to play, rewind, pause, and play again whenever and wherever. It has made me aware of the point you made about the problem with language. Could you expand on how you make your work accessible in a given context or audience?

AF: Poems are occasions, as books are *publications*. A book or a walk are ideal forms of reading. A poem is an – *the*? – ideal form to be read. What I referred to in the talk, rather grandly, was a crisis – it's a sweeping generalisation, but poetry – *Poetry*? – has let slip the possibilities of Modernism; the poem as object, as field, as constellation. Much innovative use of language now comes from artists, but this is frequently banal (advertising) or abstracted (Weineresque). The issue is less one of accessibility than of protecting occasions for language. I want to see what can still be done with the poetic, the poem (with or without words). In an odd way, the poem can do what conceptualism once did: being a proposal, a possibility, being (usually) non-material. It's something like good radio heard in the dark.

My work is a series of attempts to consider how can I give people words or a wordless experience of reading. I don't have a single strategy or style. Collaboration ensures that remains the case. I'm aware that my work struggles or vies between sentiment (the Romantic), and form (clarity balanced with fluidity). Sometimes I do use the lyric, as in the LW poem or the poem describing Dunwich. But if you read it closely the Dunwich poem is also a proposal for a film or event that has never happened, the casting and sinking of a great bell.

Another way to give words: I might invite people to sew a woven poem into their clothing, as I did during the talk that you missed. The poem as a hidden *tamata*, it's context wrapped-up inside someone's life. These occasions are poetry and/as art. *Renga* is another sharing, a practice of a shared consciousness. My *renga* word-maps are similar to Sebald in terms of discontinuities of time and space, and they also map a particular place. But many poems do this; it defines the poetic experience of reality.

renga

The art of renga is 1000 years old.

a renga is not made from individual haiku

the discipline of renga is link and shift; this defines shared consciousness

a good verse has its time and place

in renga we practice the arts of writing, listening and sitting

the content of a renga is words and experiences

renga days propose shared writing as a public art form

a renga can compose a word-map, but first you need to prepare a schema that analyses the characteristics of a place

for those who watch a renga platform offers a quiet performance; for those who spend a day it becomes a home

a renga platform's architecture represents the aspects of inner and outer

someday every school and park will have their own renga platform

don't forget the tea; eat together after

traditional renga
nijuuin, 20 verse day renga or walk renga
kasen, 36 verse day renga or walk renga
hyakuin, 100 verse (24 hour) or correspondence renga
senku, 1000 verse renga

new renga
year, 365 verse solo, duo, trio renga
word-map, site-specific renga: skyline, coastline, housing estate, lake, island, or river renga (upstream & downstream)
e-renga, electronic correspondence renga

AS: Through walking, Sebald maps out a place and often seamlessly transports the reader through time and space. There seems a connection here to *renga*, but equally, to a project such as two fields of wheat (ALIEN/YIELD), in particular with reference to practical farming methods, historical and contemporary.

AF: In terms of your question, one could also turn WGS around to face towards LW, the wanderer, for whom home is always *there*, never *here*. Sebald's maps seem to be memory as antiquary. He slips through time by way of others' stories, and you feel as if the thread revolves around the spindle of his Germanic past and the Holocaust; a grief which he cannot enter directly into. For instance, a small detail: *The Rings of Saturn* begins with WGS in hospital, but we never hear anything more of this illness.

My childhood home is an over-rich locus, while also being a tiny patch of real land. It has, or had, the historical achievement and tragedy of my mother and father's lives. Of course, this is not comparable to the Historical or Tragic past in Sebald; but you could say it was a ship-in-a-bottle equivalent, a territory with its own wars, illnesses, deaths, love affairs, and betrayals. It may be that I avoid narrative memoir because of the over-written, over-read aspect of Little Sparta. I don't know. I suspect the task I took on is to see to what extent that possibility of reading and writing can be taken out of the garden and into the world.

Although I keep referring to the poetic, I don't just mean poems. I'm an artist, not a poet, and the poetic can be revealed in many ways. *Labanotation: the Archie Gemmil goal* translated football into dance, using the language of labanotation. For *Dance Trance Dance Music* the translation was from the sound of dancers' feet dancing into music. In *Specimen Colony,* birds, represented on postage stamps, were translated into painted nest boxes. In the *Star-Diary,* which I'm about to publish, space is translated into time. It seems to me these processes of translation, which depend on so many forms of writing and reading, reveal the gap that defines what the poetic is, which, at the same time, they try to heal. The forms I use are ways to structure memory in a forward direction. The wheat fields project began from the word, 'alien', in Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale', and extended into agriculture, harvesting, milling, and baking. The concept was to try to grow a poem in poppies; the work was what followed, failure and success were recorded equally. I composed mesostics as a narrative device and decided we should use old and modern methods. Sebald's characters pull the work into the past. In my work they are my contemporaries and to varying degrees, collaborators, which is why I say my work is concerned with shared consciousness. The process opens into tomorrow, whereas WGS is a lamp for yesterday.

After Davey Polmadie we sometimes used to say ...

equality is balancing different things

all attributes distinguish and order

the sky is a mirror, we don't always know what we feel

ideas belong to those that use them

an open hand cradles emptiness

what's it like to be the one saying nothing?

I need the scar to show

making do is the best of beauty

I don't need you to agree with me, I do need us to agree

what changes change?

when it's clear then go further

a moment lasts three seconds

the world doesn't turn, it spins

AS: Yes, it is interesting that you referred to your practice as being 'gentle' in relation to much of other contemporary art practices. Do you feel this approach, which I've often heard referred to as the 'slow burn' approach to practice, can find a place in contemporary fine art practices?

AF: It has to, because it is one version of truth. Art is about how you give and share memory, for the future. The world is poetic, if only you allow it to be. Angus Fairhurst has just hung himself. I remember him describing a work ten years ago, a large neon in a woodland: 'stand still and rot.' Cerith Wyn Evans' work is pared beauty; the world is not always so clear.

AS: 'Being an artist is about being useless.' Does this therefore imply that what an artist produces is equally useless? It's a wonderfully provocative comment.

AF: That comes from Peter Friedl, whose work is in no way gentle! He was making a distinction between the artist and the designer. I don't think we are ultimately convinced by design. It's like most public art, which ends up concealing the deeper truths. We need to recognise a thing; to see love or hurt in it, in order to be convinced by it. William Carlos Williams calls this: 'The embodiment of knowledge.'

True ideas are not designed, they are thought and felt. All artists know that the intentional is the least of what they do. 'Use' comes later, after the artist lets go. I was not a farmer when I made the two fields of wheat project and I am not an astronomer now, as I complete my *star-diary* for Kielder observatory. I'm useless and that is my skill.



One HundredYear Star-Diary
Alec Finlay with Professor Ray Sharples and Denis Moskowitz (2008)

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Notes:

from the Wittgenstein house, in Michael Nedo, Guy Moreton, and Alec Finlay, *Ludwig Wittgenstein. There Where You Are Not*, London: Black Dog Publishing, 2005, p.156.

The Sunken Bell, in Steve Bode, Jeremy Millar, and Nina Ernst, *Waterlog: Journeys Around An Exhibition*, London: Film and Video Umbrella, 2007, p.56.

Renga: see www.renga-platform.co.uk

Some of the poems in *After Davey Polmadie...* were first published in *island* magazine.



Transmission:

HOST

Guest: Jeremy Millar

Host: Andrew Sneddon

THE STRANGER

Transmission: HOST

Guest: Jeremy Millar
Host: Andrew Sneddon

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Andrew Sneddon: I find myself wanting to pursue a line of enquiry that I had not really considered before as an immediate facet of your practice. In your lecture, you instantly offered an answer to what seemed a fairly benign question from the audience about what constituted our understanding of place. You replied: 'The projection of history onto landscape', which seemed to be a satisfactory and robust statement. However, it has troubled me ever since, as history is both subjective and vulnerable to the vagaries of memory and time, and therefore this brings into question notions about how important it is that truth is incorporated into this position.

Jeremy Millar: It is kind of you to say so, although I'm not sure quite how robust a definition this is. It's better to say that usually it is adequate for my purpose. You're right, of course, the subjective nature of history, a sense that I would like to emphasise in any basic understanding of place, and one that I feel is rather different from the more abstract or objective sense of space, or site: two people may be standing next to one another at the same site but can be in completely different places.

Of course, much of my thinking on the subject developed during the research undertaken for the book, *Place* [Thames and Hudson, 2005] which I did with Tacita Dean; in particular, in the introductory essay, where I wrote a brief history of place. It was an incredibly difficult subject to approach – it always seems elsewhere – and the more reading I did on the subject (around forty to fifty books I recall) the more lost in it I became. The most useful books, and the

most persuasive, and from which my own position can be said to have emerged, however poorly, were those by Edward Casey, from whom I have taken my opposition between 'place' and 'space', despite the general subordination of the former into the latter. While for the Greeks 'place' was the fundamental philosophical concept before there can be anything, there needs to be a place in which it can be the modern philosophies of Descartes, Leibniz, and Locke almost destroyed it, reducing it to a simple location in a perfectly analytical space, a 'dull affair' as A.N. Whitehead characterised nature after Leibniz. That we can even *conceive* of place now, let alone acknowledge and value its importance, is largely due to the actions of the artists, writers, and composers who have prevented us from drifting into Newton's sleep.

This train of thought was linked to the group discussion you had with Simon Schama and others in *Place*, in which he revealed the true location of a beautifully filmed and memorable scene in *Saving Private Ryan* where a military car snakes its way through vast fields on route to deliver dreadful news to Mrs Ryan. The image conjures up impressions of the American Midwest landscape (Dakota or Indiana), but was actually filmed in Salisbury in England.

On a recent artist-in-residency programme I was confronted with a firmly held and long-standing belief that a famous scene from Ken Russell's *Women in Love* (1969) was filmed in this specific location. After initial research this widely-held belief was found to be false, and this dramatically changed the relation people had with the place. This realisation made it clear that place is never fixed; it is a social construct and open to continuous change. This also demonstrated the strong emotional effect a place can have on an individual or in this case, on collective memory. The narration in *Ajapeegal* (2008) also seems to explore the complex and diverse set of emotions a place can uncover or stimulate in a person. I am fascinated by how place actually manages to achieve this effect.

How does it achieve this effect? By many different means, I think, and not all of them of our understanding. Lately I've become interested in the relation between haunts and haunting, and that our sense of place is in some sense possessed, but is not a possession. We might talk of our old haunts, places in which we used to spend time, and I think that there remains a sense that we remain there still, that our presence was absorbed in some way and can be sensed,

if not detected. 'Places remember events,' wrote James Joyce, and while I'm not sure of its literal truth, I think it possesses a strong artistic one. I can think of two different works – an early story by J.G. Ballard, 'The Sound Sweep' [1960], and a BBC TV programme, Nigel Kneale's *The Stone Tape* [1972] – which uses the same device of a place, in particular a building, acting as a recording device for what has taken place within it, and there are many more: the novella *The Invention of Morel* [Adolfo Bioys Casares, 1940] and the film *Last Year in Marienbad* [Alain Resnais, 1961] are perhaps more sophisticated examples that explore the relation between memory and place, though the list is endless.

There has been a certain amount of writing and discussion of late on 'hauntology', a notion developed by Mark Fisher, amongst others, particularly in relation to some contemporary music – Burial, the Ghost Box label – although it derives, originally, from Derrida's *Spectres of Marx* [1993] where it also possesses the echo of *ontologie* in the French text. Although it is a somewhat complex notion, and also a contested one, there are certain aspects that I think are of interest, particularly in distinction to other areas of our culture, and most notably the prevalence of nostalgia. In my understanding – which may or may not be shared by others – the 'hauntological' is not a simple nostalgia for the past; it is not a celebration of what once was but rather a mourning of what never was, or cannot now be. As such it possesses a latency, a potentiality, that I find engaging. The very beginning of the narration in *Ajapeegel* – that 'anticipation is the projection of memory into the future' – establishes the uncertain temporality of the piece. 'The time is out of joint,' as one finds in *Hamlet*, another important reference for Derrida in *Spectres of Marx*, and of course the title of the work itself, *Ajapeegel*, is Estonian for 'Time-Mirror'; it is this state, this state-between-states, in which I attempt to allow many of my works – such as *Ajapeegel* – to reside.

There is an interesting sense of the artist as detective or investigator in your work; for instance, in *The Colenso Diamond* or *A Firework for W.G. Sebald*, where there is a search for knowledge or truth. Although questions are asked, neither knowledge or truth is found; what is found instead is the importance of serendipity, of sagacity or the gift of chance. In many ways this could be seen as a high-risk strategy as gifts may never come along, or at least not when you need them and that you may not have the sagacity or ability to recognise a gift when it presents itself. How do you manage this strategy?

There is a certain mock authority in a number of the works, I think, something further suggested, perhaps, by their voice-over narration with its implied omniscience; their sense of knowledge is certainly 'knowing', one might say, and owes much to Borges I owe much to Borges or the early essay-like films of Peter Greenaway, someone who isn't considered much any more. I think that what they share is the device of a certain conceit on which is based a narrative or series of events, *as if it were true*. (This goes right back to my first major project, 'The Institute of Cultural Anxiety' at the ICA in 1994).

Borges wrote short stories that seemed to consist of reviews of books, although these books were fictional in a rather more profound sense than simply of having been described as novels. Many of my own works such as *The Colenso Diamond* or *Zugzwang* are based upon events which actually are true, although I don't think that this necessarily gives them a greater validity as works of art any more than Borges' inventiveness diminishes his works. On the contrary…

I think that what is important, however, is a sense of curiosity, which is rather different from the investigations of a detective, where something has to be solved. What's to be solved here? As Duchamp said, 'There's no solution because there's no problem.' A certain amount of knowledge is necessary in the work, however, in order that it can recognise other knowledge, driven always by a rather purposeless curiosity. (Perhaps 'driven' is the wrong word there; it seems too intentional). Serendipity is only serendipity if it is recognised as such; if it isn't recognised, it ceases to exist.

How does one manage this? One doesn't; one can only hope not to destroy it. I think that it requires a certain openness, and patience, and a certain sensitivity also, the ability to detect when something needs closer attention, or needs to be ignored for a while, a turn of the head so that one views it out of the corner of one's eye.

Of course, one does get an increased 'feel' for this over time, and the 'risk', such as it is, diminishes accordingly. An awareness of the importance of 'gifts' of what they are and what they mean, and of how one might properly acknowledge them, is important also. That is why so many of my works are gifts to people, either literally the works themselves are given or more often symbolically, to Sebald, or John Ruskin, or John Cage. In relation to our earlier discussion of the hauntological, these gifts might more properly be considered as 'offerings'.

Related to this line of enquiry, you said that objects often become 'mute', and that with respect to your practice the work actually exists outside the object. What is the function or purpose you consider the objects possess? Do you think this is

something that can — or should be controlled?

I was very aware during my early studies in photography that certain images could have profoundly different meanings depending on how they were used: the physical object, or the image, might remain exactly the same and yet it could be fundamentally changed by elements or circumstances that lay wholly outside it, and to which it might be completely unrelated. This awareness was only further emphasised when I began to write more on art, and to curate also; as a curator one can alter the way a work is generally received and thereby what it means without changing its physical condition in any way. It seems obvious to me that there is a difference between the art object and the 'work of art', if we must persist in calling it that.

One can be 'moved' or 'inspired' or otherwise 'engaged' by a work of art without having to have the actual object in one's sight at that very moment; we've all had arguments in the pub about a film we've just seen, but we don't insist on the film being screened while we do so. So where does that film exist at that moment, or that book, or that piece of music, or that photograph? We may have been in the presence of the physical object although even that becomes a far more complex concept in relation to music or literature, even film where are such works? but we don't necessarily require it in order for the things that we value most in art to take place.

Conversely, we may be in front of a drawing and then be told that it was made in 1874, say, rather than the 1920s as we might have otherwise assumed, and it can change in front of our eyes without having been altered an atom. There are many other examples and I need not spell them all out; they are simple enough to imagine.

As an artist I have a certain responsibility for the physical integrity of my works, certainly, but perhaps even more important is the broader conceptual integrity of the works, and the practice as a whole. How does one control that? One can't, although one can influence it to a lesser or greater extent, by providing information on the works, talking about them, creating a context in which one would like them to be seen. Of course, as one does so, one can make dull works that might have previously intrigued even as one illuminates what had previously been obscure. I can't make people like my work, unfortunately, although it seems somewhat easier to achieve the opposite.

When you start a new work or a body of work, to what extent do you have an end in mind? Have you found there to be a common starting point for much of your practice or projects?

It very much depends upon the project, and how it emerges; there is no set routine for such things. With a project such as *Zugzwang*, I knew I was interested in making a film based upon Duchamp's time in Herne Bay, but I had little idea how it might end up, and the form only emerged over time, and at different speeds. After nearly two years of both reading and filming, the script was written in about two days and the film edited in about five days. I couldn't have imagined its finished form at the outset.

Conversely, a project such as that I'm undertaking for the National Maritime Museum, which opens in September 2009, was conceived in such a way that its proposed finished form emerged at the same time as the initial concept itself, and this in a matter of minutes, really, although it will take is taking many, many months and a journey to Papua New Guinea to bring this about. Suffice it to say that not all of my projects are developed in a comparable manner.

You said that Tallinn became a site of pilgrimage through travel. The act of travel is part of place seeking knowledge or experience. Does this also relates to your notion of 'surrendering oneself to the situation' when you come to thinking about a project.

How one travels is as important as the act of travel itself, and while I'm involved at the moment with a certain exoticism, the most involved project of mine to date, *Zugzwang*, required little more travel than to take the local bus four miles down the coast in order to film Duchamp's old haunts (oh, and a trip on Eurostar too.) Similarly, I've made films in my back garden, self-portraits in the kitchen. I think that one must surrender oneself to wherever one is, as far as possible, although that does not mean that one cannot make certain decisions. In fact, I find that the better decisions are made during such a form of surrender: the situation in which I find myself is almost always more intelligent than I am, particularly in regard to that situation itself; far better to let it decide, and to decide to do so.

You also said that you got stuck, and that an idea conceived of in one project was realised in another. Does this suggest that your ideas are interchangeable or that you have one over-arching project in which all projects are contained?

Not really, and perhaps I wasn't quite clear here. It was not so much that an idea from one project was realised in another but rather

that an approach, or way or thinking, that emerged from one project then drifted into another project with which I was having certain difficulties, and that this approach suggested a radically different way of developing the project. This was also quite different from its effect in the project from which it emerged so it was not a straightforward transfer between works.

I'm far more interested in a practice that emerges over time, and rather unexpectedly, than conceiving of some overall structure in advance; it has been interesting for me to see during the construction of my website that there is a certain coherence in my practice over a period of time, even between projects that are formally and conceptually rather different. Interesting, too, how later works can change earlier ones, in a manner alluded to earlier when we spoke about art objects and the work of art.

Linked to the idea of pilgrimage there seems a strong sense of tracing the footsteps of others or homage in your work. Robert Smithson, Duchamp, W.G. Sebald, and Tarkovsky have all been 'stalked'. What do you feel you've observed during these relationships?

You make it sound rather unsavoury, almost illegal. I suppose one might refer to these journeys as forms of secular pilgrimage, and I would have no real argument with which to dispel such a notion, although it still does not feel quite right. Perhaps pilgrimage in its original sense is an intensely personal and private experience, even if it is shared with many, even many thousand, other believers. My own journeys are rather different in that they are made in order to be made public in some form through a work of art, and yet they tend to be rather more solitary in themselves; there are no crowds of Duchampians taking random streets in Herne Bay, and indeed the person who now owns the house in which Duchamp stayed had never heard of him, just as the manager at the Hotel Palenque had never heard of Smithson. Would it matter if such figures were more widely known, along with their prior presence in such places? It would certainly alter the circumstances, and would almost certainly make the work less interesting. Certainly less interesting to make. I'm not about to make a piece on Francis Bacon in Soho, let's put it like that …

More than this, we should perhaps consider what is the relation between these figures and the works which they have inspired (although it's a word I don't like). The 'Tarkovsky' film isn't about Tarkovsky, though it quotes him and was filmed where the great

man set up his camera. The 'Duchamp' film isn't really much about Duchamp either, although it follows his movements, and makes original conjectures about his most important work. Is the 'Sebald' piece about Sebald, or rather, is it interested in the same things in which Sebald himself was interested? This seems to be a rather different relation between subjects, and one that I find rather more interesting.

Current interest in anthropology seems really interesting, in particular, the thinking that the creative arts, the experience and knowledge of working with images will help. What is the block in anthropology and how do you envisage art or artists helping?

My knowledge of anthropology is too slight to talk with any authority upon its problems, or failings, but it seems to share with a number of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences a degree of paralysis that has emerged from the necessary self-reflection that has taken place in recent decades. Obviously this has arrived in different disciplines at different times, and at different speeds, and with different effects. It does not mean that anthropology cannot meaningfully take place, obviously, or that it is not (because it is) but there does seem a sense of uncertainty, or of certain territorial battles: is a certain approach really just cultural studies, even, God forbid, *media studies*? And what would be the difference between cultural studies and anthropology? And just what is anthropology again, in any case? Sometimes these discussions emerge for important reasons; sometimes they signal a scramble for institutional funding, which may also be an important reason. I don't need to get involved in such discussions and so I don't; they are of little interest to me, and I've enough to try and understand in the area that's actually relevant.

As for how art might help, it depends upon whether its help is needed, or wanted, I suppose. There certainly seems to be a great deal of interest in contemporary art, and in my projects, by those anthropologists with whom I'm working, but then they are, by training, rather curious and inquisitive people: one tends not to find many apathetic anthropologists. One thing I've been told a number of times is that I have a certain freedom from the discipline – that I am indisciplined, perhaps – and can work in and around it without being bound by it. A number of people have told me, with regard to my project on the Trobriand Islands, for the National Maritime Museum, that not only would their training have prevented them from having thought of it (despite the fact that it is based upon a

relatively specialised degree of anthropological historical knowledge), but that even if they had, they would not be able to pursue it as anthropologists.

Now, I'm not sure that this is entirely true, and I am becoming increasingly aware of a number (a small number, admittedly) of anthropological works that would be virtually indistinguishable from art works, but it is interesting that such an observation should be made on a number of occasions. There remain certain ethical issues of which one must remain very sensitive, of course, but perhaps an artistic practice does allow a certain freedom that is difficult in a verifiable scientific one. I did, for example, hear a student comment in an Oxford seminar that a certain rather well-known film by Robert Gardner, *Forest of Bliss* [1986], couldn't really be considered as true anthropology because it was too beautiful …

How much are non-visual matters or thoughts a part of your working process? Do ideas or even words figure prominently whilst you are making work?

If I'm filming something I like to frame it as well as I can in the circumstances, but then pure, visual formal beauty is not what would have brought me to a rather decrepit amusement arcade in north Kent in the first place, or by the side of a Norfolk A road. 'Non-visual matters and thoughts' are my working process, most often. For example, when I am out walking and making photographs of mushrooms, I try and make each photograph as formally interesting and engaging as possible in the (admittedly limited) circumstances, but then I am making these photographs because of John Cage and his interest in matters mycological, and not because I have a particular interest in images of mushrooms.

Does this make my practice 'conceptual'? Not particularly. It is one of the fantastically ignorant assertions of contemporary philistinism that the poverty of modern art is due to that fact that artists now think that their subjects – and their sense of them – are more important than how they are represented. Idiocy! Hasn't this always been the case, or do people really think that when Giotto was painting the Scrovegni Chapel he thought that the life and death of Christ was less important than how he painted it?

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Transmission: Host is a series of chapbooks derived from an annual lecture series organised by Fine Art at Sheffield Hallam University. Each week a host invites his or her guest and a critical engagement is assumed. There is an ethics of hospitality: a host has a standard of conduct, and historically, hospitality has been seen as a code, a duty, a virtue, and a law. In 2008–9 we take up the idea of the stranger. 'Stranger' implies one who is not known, but also incorporates the foreigner, or indeed, the odd/eccentric/uncanny. Following Jacques Derrida, the stranger is one who is irreconcilably 'other' to oneself, but with whom one may co-exist without hostility, to whom one must respond and to whom one is responsible. The stranger reminds one of the other at the heart of one's being.

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Transmission: The Rules of Engagement
Andrew Sneddon,
Gavin Morrison
& Kiyoshi Okutsu
10
The slender margin between the real and the unreal

Transmission: The Rules of Engagement 10

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& Kiyoshi Okutsu

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The slender margin between the real and the unreal

Chikamatsu Monazaemon (1653-1724) comments that 'art is something which lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal'.[1] He is referring to the need for eminent Kabuki actors to imitate real characters in favor over fictitious characters. This book borrows Chikamatsu's statement, in order to explore the connection between the representation of raw nature or wilderness and that of idealised nature or nature improved.

We investigate the 'slender margin' between these two positions by considering pleasure gardens from the eighteenth century and their distant cousin, the stroll garden from the *Tokugawa* (1615-1868) and *Meji* (1868-1912) periods of Japan. Through the device of the borrowed landscape (referred to as *shakkei* in Japanese), both the real and the unreal are captured in the present where we start to see their dependence on each other. It is this dependency and similarity that is addressed. We have chosen to study – and to speculate on – garden spaces, examining their construction and representation, as they employ many aspects that contribute to the relation between the real and the unreal, such as mimicry, allusion, deception, and pretence.

The escape from the real in gardens presents an interesting contradiction, as garden spaces are constructed and maintained in order to express a heightened sense of reality or hyper-/super-reality. They often satisfy our modern taste for comfortably entering

a particular historical period or travelling to far-off lands without the inconvenience of travel. Both the European and Japanese garden spaces have boundaries, such as in the garden at Shugakuin in Kyoto, whose boundaries are difficult to define as the entire vast space becomes a single entry under a unifying sky. Similarly, the view from Harewood House across the formal garden suggests that the estate boundaries stretch further than they actually do.

We have entered into dialogue about the garden as both a catalyst for the imagination and as a source of creative outputs. Due to our different locations (England, Scotland, France, Japan), our conversations were conducted largely through e-mail, and, when possible, visits to particular gardens allowed new understanding to emerge. Our exchanges influenced our thinking about the wider associations that gardens offer.

The Destruction of Boundaries
Gavin Morrison

Formal gardens in Europe and Japan are spaces of peculiar cultural significance. In differing ways, their forms condition the experiential encounter to make the garden a site of philosophical engagement. Gardens offer a particular opportunity to materially enact a culture's understanding of the individual's relation with the extended world. Fundamental to this is the sense of the garden as a zone of uncertainty, as a space between the outer boundary of a property and the dwelling. In a functional sense, it determines a distance between the world and home – an expanse that may be employed for a variety of purposes (grazing, crops, leisure, *etc.*) – yet its principal logic is that of separation and mediation. Therefore, as idyllic as a garden may seem, it is not without sense to make an appeal to the rhetoric of warfare in its description. It is a territory defined by site lines, frontiers, and camouflage, all of which serve to control the permeability of the garden as a membrane between the home and the external world.

The garden's ability to function as a site of projection and theatricality tested the tolerance of the garden critic Horace Walpole. Specifically, the artifice of constructed grottos and ruins in the picturesque garden setting was met with pronounced annoyance. There were instances, he could concede, where the effect was almost acceptable, perhaps even sympathetic, but what raised his ire beyond restraint was 'the hermitage or scene adapted to contemplation.'[1] He felt it 'almost comic to set aside a quarter of one's garden to be melancholic in.'[2] His displeasure, expressed in his essay 'On Modern Gardening' (1770), appears to stem from whimsical histrionics, an ornamental directive to emotional compliance.

The objects of Walpole's derision create a visual and conceptual parallax to the experience of the garden. The intended contrivance of the emotional experience of the garden may cease to affect a feeling of melancholy in the viewer, but their incorporation suggests



Mellerstain House, Scotland

a wider engagement with cultural preoccupations beyond that of mere mood setting. For instance, at Mellerstain – a Georgian country house, which was designed by William Adam in 1725 (and completed by his son Robert) in the Scottish borders – the gardens were initially planned by William Adam in the form of waterways and lawns which lead from the house to a series of coppices. These woodlands serve as the boundary to the garden. Yet looking from the house to a tree line a couple of kilometres further south following the brow of a small hill, the silhouette of a ruin – appearing as a church gable or possibly a castle keep – is visible. This structure, known as Hundy Mundy, was designed by William Adam as a folly, and as a device to draw the eye beyond the gardens to the Cheviot Hills. In this context the folly extends the relational space of meaning for the garden. Viewed from the house it contrasts with the ordered and rational lawns of the garden, suggesting an exterior world of subtle malevolence. This constructed ruin becomes a totem to the unknown beyond the home, which through theatrical representation is made palatable and less threatening.

However, the inclusion of a ruin in relation to the careful order of the Georgian house and gardens furthers a fundamental disparity, one that may be thought to be infused with pessimism. This addition of 1727 to the landscape is a precursor to the Gothic revival and romantic cultural periods and, as such, focuses on the breakdown and degradation of cultural structures. Whether this is to be understood as a reaction to the nascent machine age and rationalism of the Enlightenment is not made explicit. However, Hundy Mundy and other follies may be seen as not simply reactionary, but as a conscious attempt to depict a historical perspective that understood cultural systems as being transitory. Of particular note in this context are Joseph Gandy's illustrations of the architect John Soane's plans for the Bank of England. A 1798 watercolour depicts an evidently neo-classical structure and the fiscal heart of England in ruin; the central dome is crumbling with shrubs growing out of its dilapidated walls. This furthering



Shugakuin Imperial Villa, Kyoto, Japan

of the cultural functioning of the ruin continues from the folly, as a representation of a deteriorating antiquarian structure, to the example of the Gandy watercolour that uses the idea of the ruin to portray a potential building of the future. Instead of a mere romantic perspective on history, this conceptualisation of the future in ruin prophesises the decline of the present order. The garden folly, of Hundy Mundy's type, may be seen as presenting a quiet rejoinder that the modern age will one day be the antiquity. The garden becomes a space of objectivity in countenance to the bravado of the modern day.

However, there is another explicit function of the folly in general and Hundy Mundy in particular. Positioned atop the brow of a hill, it draws the eye to the Cheviot Hills beyond, mediating between the immediacy of home and the expanse of the outside world. It focuses a perspective upon the distant view, in effect, providing a means of continuum from the garden to the extended landscape. This type of visual appropriation of vistas beyond the garden as a part of a specific experience of the garden has a parallel in Japanese garden design. The garden at the Imperial Villa of Shugakuin (c. 1659) is in the foothills of the Higashiyama Mountains. In this dramatic setting the scenery from the surrounding countryside becomes an active



Entsuji, Kyoto, Japan

aspect to the experience of the garden. Through the technique of *shakkei* (meaning 'borrowed landscape'), specific views are framed through judicious planting and trimming of trees and shrubs. The term is said to have derived from the word *ikidori*, literally 'captured alive'. This sense of arresting a part of the larger tract of landscape relies on the framed distant view remaining unaltered and the spectator's position in the garden being closely controlled. The perspective of the viewer is arguably more closely constrained and of higher critical importance in the Japanese tradition. The means of capture of the distant landscape are of a more considered bracketing in the garden.

The garden at Entsu-ji (1639) near Kyoto is situated to the east of Mount Hiei; this dominant mountain could be thought of as a distant subject of the garden. The hedge, which bounds the garden, functions as a backdrop to the *karesansui* (an arrangement of stones, or a dry landscape), and also provides a firm delineation to the view beyond. The stratification of the visual plane can be seen as at variance with the Western tradition. Here the elements of the garden are clearly defined as foreground, middle ground, and distant view. This visual layering is effective through the accentuation of the void between these planes. The physical distance to the mountain is a presence in itself in the structured approach of the garden design. The viewer of the garden is held in a particular position to achieve this pictorial effect.

This acute subjective relation to the garden is well demonstrated in the *karesansui* of Ryoan-ji (c. 1489). In a walled enclosure fifteen stones rest upon a ground of raked white pebbles. The viewing position is carefully controlled to allow only fourteen of the stones to be viewed from any location. The philosophical precedents for this garden, in Zen Buddhism, understand the number fifteen as one of completeness, and so the impossibility to see all fifteen stones asserts the impossibility of complete understanding in this world. From this context, the wall to the garden defines the limits known, or the knowable universe; it has an allegorical presence that is suggestive of the extents of human consciousness.

This is furthered when considered in relation to the symbolic relations to which certain examples of *karesansui* are said to relate.[3] For instance, the garden created by the poet Sesshu Toyo (1420-1506) at Joei-ji Temple is said to be based upon one of his paintings, depicting a Japanese landscape with a pond near the centre that is in the form of the Chinese character for 'heart'. Therefore, with such strategies, the drawing in of the external landscape occurs



Ryoan-ji, Kyoto, Japan



Harewood House, Yorkshire, England

by both allegorical and perceptual means. Importantly, both these design methods rely on an understanding of absence as having a physical aspect. The combination of discrete entities finds cohesion in the dynamic interplay of the spatial relation; important in this mechanism is the function of the boundary as backdrop, conceptual terminus, and framing device in those instances where that boundary is purposely made porous to incorporate a distant object in the visual field of a garden view.

Returning to Walpole we can discern in his writings a certain empathy for this approach to garden design. Of particular note for him was the contemporary invention of the ha-ha, a discovery that he attributes to Charles Bridgeman (1690-1738), the garden designer responsible for grounds at Rousham House and Cassiobury Park. The ha-ha was a sunken wall that provided a functional boundary while allowing an uninterrupted view, giving the appearance that the lawn continued without interruption into the extended landscape. This form of dematerialising the boundary to the garden was a central aspect of the *Jardin Anglais* tradition in the eighteenth century. Its less formal approach was an innovative departure from the formal French tradition which dominated

Western Europe. Rather than explicitly contorting nature, its advocates – Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-83), William Kent (1685-1748), John Vanburgh (c. 1664-1726), *et al.* – sought to integrate and adapt a more naturalistic approach to gardening. The ha-ha therefore enabled this style of garden design to develop a seemingly more integrated relationship to the wider countryside.

However, the perspective which the ha-ha facilitated is markedly different from that of the Japanese tradition of *shakkei*. While the planar stratification of the visual space is used to isolate a specific view or object in the Japanese context, in the English landscape tradition the intention is to form a cohesion from garden to the external landscape. Walpole makes this case when praising William Kent – the designer of gardens at Badminton and Holkham Hall amongst others – for his ability to understand that:

> all nature was a garden. He felt the delicious contrast of hill and valley changing imperceptibly into each other [...] and while they called in the view between their graceful stems, removed and extended the perspective by delusive comparison.[4]

This demonstrates not only the ideas of inclusion of the wider landscape but also that that landscape is understood and appreciated as essentially an undifferentiated totality. This contrasts with the *shakkei* tradition in its use of elements of landscape as discrete objects.

The difference in approach between the Western landscape garden tradition and that found in Japanese garden design to the way the boundary of the garden is mediated appears to rely, to a large extent, on a divergence in the conceptual and functional situation of the individual perspective in respect to the visual field. Contextually it would be expected that these divergent strategies would reflect back upon the philosophical momentum of their cultural surroundings. Undoubtedly the impetus and intentions of the garden designers from the respective cultures display variation; however, certain commonalities prevail. In particular these appear

to be the invention of reflexive mechanisms that use the garden and its surroundings to mirror or provoke consideration of the individual's position in the extended world and the temporal order. The garden exploits its proximity to the domesticity of the home to create a sense of safety and protection, which in turn allows the spectator to occupy a space of meaning where the constituting aspects of individuation are made contingent.

The relation between the garden and the buildings it serves exerts considerable influence over how the garden is understood. In particular the disparity of the traditions of fenestration between Japan and the West underscores the importance of the viewing position and perspective to active understanding. Notable in this context is the practice of *parterre* – with its complex form of planted beds and particularly, hedges, laid out in ornate scrolled patterns and strict geometric symmetries – which was prevalent throughout Europe and reached its apogee in the gardens at Versailles. André Le Nôtre (1613-1700), who was responsible for the design of the gardens, was a rigorous scholar of architecture and optical perception. The extension of these interests is evident in his work on the gardens, which can be understood as a contrivance of space through the use of perspective and optical effects. The gardens were planted on level planes which prevent spectators passing through the garden from being aware of the totality of the design due to their lower point of view. One is only capable of understanding the complete design from the idealised perspective of the plan. This strikes a resonance with the experience at Ryoan-ji where the entirety of the *karesansui* garden is only appreciable as an object of the mind. However, in the case of the *parterre* garden another perspective is available from the house, or sometimes a terrace. This elevated position affords an oblique perspective upon the plane, which in turn allows for another comprehension of the garden design.

The position of the spectator in both traditions is given obvious attention and underscores certain suppositions on the nature of experience and consciousness. In the Western tradition certain extensions and influences can be drawn. In considering the perspectival influence, added sense is accrued when we can consider the shift between the elevated perspective from the house and the direct experience in the garden in respect to the approach of the Italian scholar Francesco Petrarch (1304-1374). Often portrayed as the founder of humanism, which manifested during his hiatus in France, Petrarch articulated a novel relation to landscape and viewing. While sequestered near Avignon, he undertook an expedition to the summit of Mount Ventoux. This mountain rises high above the Provence countryside, its summit a barren expanse of limestone scree. Petrarch's reason for undertaking this journey is expressed as merely a desire to see out, to gain perspective on the landscape. Of the impetus for his expedition he states that it was: 'nothing but the desire to see its conspicuous height was the reason for this undertaking.'[5] This apparent trivial impetus connects with the development of *parterre* as a dedicated form of pleasure garden, a space for leisure pursuits as opposed to the functional and kitchen gardens. Yet through Petrarch's journey a more profound realisation emerges, concerning the effect of the heightened perspective. After an arduous trek Petrarch proclaims himself:

> overwhelmed by a gale as I had never felt before and by the unusually open and wide view. I looked around me: clouds were gathering below my feet, and Athos and Olympus grew less incredible, I turned my eyes in the direction of Italy, for which my mind was so fervently yearning. The Alps were frozen stiff and covered with snow—those mountains through which that ferocious enemy of the Roman name once passed.[6]

Petrarch's musing on the spectacle from this high position aligns his perspective with that of the Gods on Olympus but it also transcends the immediacy of the view, making reference to a cultural reading of the expanse before him. Physical space incurs a mental space of projection and transcendence. Implicit in this new perspective for Petrarch is not an abstract detachment from the lived world but rather an imbedding of magnitudes and contexts experienced.

With respect to this combination of perspective forces upon the experience of *parterre*, the elevated position, though importantly without the laborious journey, counters the immediacy of engagement that results from promenading through the hedgerows. Yet in reversal to Petrarch's experience this mapping of the terrain gained from the detached perspective resides with the individual as s/he enters the garden. The garden simultaneously exists on an immediate experiential level and through the refinement gained from the raised view from the house or terrace. This relation can be seen at its most developed in the shift between the rational appreciation of the garden maze from an elevated position and the nature of the haptic understanding and confusion when one enters and attempts to progress through it.

It may be tempting to consider the nature of this disparity of experience with reference to the nascent empirical models of consciousness and the function of induction in Renaissance and Enlightenment thinking. However, it is perhaps more illuminating to turn to Albrecht Dürer's (1471-1528) etymological appraisal that '*perspectiva* is a Latin word which means 'seeing through.'[7] With this sense of transparency and spatial extension applied to the viewing of the garden from the two differing vantage points we move close to understanding it as having a dimension of relativism, a change in perspective changing appreciation, and in turn, meaning. This outlook is necessarily subjectively originated and developed through physical movement.

However, if we reflect upon Dürer's comment in respect to the gardens in Japan, a differing aspect of 'seeing through' is generated. In this context the functionality of buildings with respect to gardens appears highly integrated. The gardens at the Katsura Imperial Villa (1663) comprise multiple buildings situated around a landscaped lake. Architectonic program of their internal spaces implicate the viewer in prescribed views. This functionality of space relies upon openings and apertures in the building from within which the landscape is revealed and framed. In contrast to the effect of the dual shifting perspectives upon the *parterre*, here the



Katsura Imperial Villa, Kyoto, Japan

fixed perspective is paramount. In particular, certain architectural approaches in Japan limit sightlines for the individual as s/he progresses through space and only allow windows and openings to provide views from the seated or kneeling position. At Katsura there is a *tsukimidai*, which extends out toward the small lake; this structure – attached to the Koshoin buildings – appears as a platform and is intended for viewing the moon. However, when seated in the room behind the *tsukimidai* and looking out over its breadth, one is afforded a view of the moon reflected in the surface of the lake. The *tsukimidai* structure is a means to frame the view of the lake, and in concert with a purposely heavily wooded island, plays with the sense of scale to make the lake appear much wider. These devices are only optimised in the seated position; once the spectator starts to move the effects perceptibly separate. This adherence to a single viewpoint conditions the appreciation of the space into a planar field which obviously relates the experience to that of looking at a painting. A furthering of this connection occurs in those structures which use apertures or windows to physically frame a view and with the use of walls to provide a backdrop or ground to a floral feature, for instance.

This relational position to painting also occurs in the opposite direction. For instance, the garden designed by Sesshu (1420-1506) at the Joeiji temple in Yamaguchi is considered to be a physical reproduction of a scene from one of his landscape paintings. The importance of Sesshu in the history of Japanese landscape painting provides additional significance to his decision to extrapolate the two-dimensional form of a painting into the form of a garden. He undertook two years of training in landscape painting in China and his angular depictions of rocks and mountains hint at this heritage, one that he developed to engage the specifics of Zen sensibilities, finding a form which could be described as proto-cubist. Of particular note is his work *Winter Landscape* (c.1470); central to the work is an erratic vertical line that exists as a seam or pivot in the landscape. Its presence is emphatically non-representational, yet it has a naturalistic sense that can be read as related to lightning, cracking ice, or a rugged cliff face. However, it is this ambiguity and abstraction in form that gives the work its spatial and temporal acuity.

This inter-relation between garden space and pictorial space gains additional emphasis in another work by Sesshu. A hand scroll, or *makimono*, titled *Sansui Chokan,* or *Long Scroll* (c. 1486), around fifteen metres long, is designed to be experienced by being progressively unwound and rewound to move through the scenes. The *Sansui* is also a landscape work of seasonal shifts. The effect of progressing through the *makimono* relates both to a temporal and spatial movement. The preference of a single dictated viewpoint in experiencing a garden finds significant parallels in the pictorial space of the *makimono.* It contributes a single but evolving viewpoint that nevertheless unfolds in a progressive manner. Importantly this is specific to the individual experience, for it is the viewer of the *makimono* who unravels the scroll, dictating her/his pace through the experience, and given its size, one that is intended for solitary contemplation.

To return to the garden at Joei-ji, even though there is a specific relation to one of Sesshu's landscape paintings, the experience of the garden is not restricted to one position. By means of a perimeter path one progresses around the garden, resting at particular waypoints to appreciate a specific view. There is a cohesive approach between the experience of the garden at Joei-ji and the intended engagement with *Sansui Chokan.*

Throughout the disparate traditions of garden design in Western Europe and Japan, there is a common fundamental engagement with the individual in her/his experiential condition. However, the divergence in approach and application can be traced to a shifting dynamic of philosophical circumstances. Between these two radically different cultural situations it is interesting to note that there was indeed a breadth of commonality. This becomes particularly evident when we compare two key texts on the respective gardening traditions. Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville (1680-1765) – secretary to the King of France and a connoisseur of garden design - dictated his instructive text on gardening theory to Alexander Le Blond titled under the title *La theorie et la pratique du jardinage* (published anonymously in 1709 but in the third edition the publication was attributed to Le Blond):

> The garden must be in harmony with the conformation of the land, that is, in accord with the situation whether it is in the mountains, on the seashore or in a desert such as the American Southwest; it must be planned for the climate, in terms of whether it is hot or cold, damp or dry, or combinations of these; it must form a unit with the house, harmonizing with its proportions as well as its size and style.[8]

If we consider this extract in respect to a similarly seminal Japanese treatise on garden design the common expression is evident. In the book *Sakuteiki* (dating from around the eleventh century), four principles to garden design are specified: *shotoku no sansui* (mountain water of living nature), stating an intention to create in the likeness of nature; *kohan ni shitagau* (follow the request), planning in accordance to the topography of the site; *suchigaete* (off balance), including asymmetrical elements; and

fuzei (a breeze of feeling), capturing and presenting the spirit of the location. Though there is evidently a divergence in language and not a wholesale correlation, the parallels are evident with their mutual attention to the need for the garden to relate to its context. Where the French document advocates the pragmatics of context, the Japanese favours the essence of the locale. Yet it is in the totality of these methodologies with respect to context that we can see as the fundamental root of variation, for the context is not limited to the geographical location but naturally incorporates the cultural milieu. As much as gardens are a space created by thought, they are also a space for thinking.

Theatres of Deception
Andrew Sneddon

What are we thinking about when strolling through the grounds of a seventeenth-century country house or stately home? Are we being seduced by the spectacle of grandeur and opulence? Are we being tempted by the unspoken romantic and poetic invitation to imagine a particular period of social and political dominance in the world? Alternatively, are we enjoying participating in the theatre of deception and trickery? Normally no one likes to be deceived or tricked but perhaps this is an opportunity to indulge ourselves in the theatre of deception, a moment of escapism. Gardens of this period were often created to show wealth and good taste, to demonstrate social standing; they also offered the opportunity of making distinctions in class and wealth. Now these spaces are often seen with our contemporary eyes as playgrounds or theme parks visited on a Sunday afternoon. Are we still charmed by their brilliance, by their compositions and vistas?

A direct comparison can be drawn here with their distant cousins, the gardens of the Edo and Muramachi periods of Japan. These gardens and buildings were also created by wealthy landowners and cultured warriors. They were created to display their owner's intellectual importance and cultural standing. As diligent and eager tourists, we often view these gardens, beguiled by beauty, proportion, and scale at every turn. We are seldom allowed the time, space, and privacy to fully appreciate the quiet meditative qualities that these spaces may afford the weary cultural tourist. A cacophony of chattering exotic languages, clicking camera shutters, and the shouting of impatient tour guides combine to distract the meditative pilgrim.

These gardens *do* deceive the viewer into believing what s/he is seeing is real or, at least, a form of truth. Can this observation be true and false in equal measure? The acquisition of truth through science was a dominant pursuit of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. How the world operates was a significant driving force



Katsura Imperial Villa, Kyoto, Japan

that signaled the Enlightenment period. Aesthetic taste was also affected by a desire for knowledge, none more so than the belief in the need for art to move from simple imitation or the mimicking of nature towards an imagined and improved depiction of an idealised landscape. The preceding dominant taste for formal garden layout/design was brushed aside in favor of a more 'natural' appearance. Rolling landscapes punctuated by clumps of signature specimen trees were the order of the day. Manufactured lakes and naturalistic waterfalls were also common.

In Japan similar aesthetics concepts were beginning to be developed. The stroll garden was fashionable, with its framed views and borrowed vistas. The boundary of the garden in both styles was beginning to blur, as was the relation between the real and the unreal, the natural and the manufactured.

The gardens of the eighteenth century were often laid out with a particular route in mind, which encouraged the visitor/spectator to view the garden in a particular order. This carefully calculated control was devised by the designer-architect in order to frame the view from specific advantage points. These constructed views strictly control the viewer in what s/he sees, when s/he sees it, and how it is encountered.

This recalls my first experience of viewing a Japanese garden, Katsura Imperial Villa on the outskirts of Kyoto. Katsura was built in the early Edo Period for Prince Toshhihito (1579-1629), and work began when he was forty. The prince was the main designer, working with Kobori Enshu, a tea master, government official, and garden designer. A lake was dug, hills and islands formed, beaches made, pavilions built, and planting undertaken. The result was a pleasure landscape of the kind described by Lady Murasaki in *The Tale of Genji*, 620 years earlier.[1] The Katsura Imperial Villa is considered the epitome of the stroll garden, combining rustic simplicity and picturesque nature on a larger scale than had been attempted before.

The viewer is controlled before even getting to Katsura as permission is necessary before a visit can take place. All visitors must obtain permission in advance from the Kyoto office of the Imperial Household Agency. As foreigners we must produce our passports and arrange a time for the visit, limited to a small number of people. Some gardens are further controlled by prohibiting photography. On arrival at Katsura we must wait outside the garden until the stated time, which contributes to the anticipation. Non-Japanese speakers are encouraged to use cumbersome audio aids to fully experience and appreciate the pleasure of the visit. Finally we see a glimpse of Katsura villa, only to have our hopes dashed as we are escorted single file along narrow paths.

'Step on stones, not moss.' cries the guide. Not that easy when juggling unfamiliar audio equipment in one hand and camera in the other, trying desperately to keep the audio track in sequence with the discretely positioned numbers placed at key points along the route, while diligently remembering to avoid stepping on moss. Difficult enough becomes more so as we are briskly ushered along by the guide. More obstacles await us along the path with the other dozen similarly encumbered fellow visitors in the party. Our guide routinely stops at key points for the prescribed amount of time. Uncomfortable politeness abounds, with fellow visitors vying for



Jojei-ji Temple, Jamaguchi, Japan

the principal position in order to record the memory and vista. Before I knew it the tour was at an end, the garden no more than a vague and uncertain memory.

Many eighteenth century treatises divided our mental powers into three faculties: sense, imagination, and understanding.[2] We are invited to navigate the cultivated space of the European and Japanese gardens as we adopt the role of the perceiving subject; *i.e.*, we experience place through our senses, through touch, smell, sound, sight, and taste. The spectator's rhythmic and continuous shifting of perspectives activates the relation between body and space. The continuous opening and reopening of space and sightlines make the invisible visible. In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty refers to his own flat to understand spatial experience:

> I can of course take a mental bird's-eye view of the flat, visualize it or draw a plan of it on paper, but in that case too I could not grasp the unity of the object without the medium of bodily experience, for what I call a plan is only a more comprehensive perspective: it is flat 'seen from above', and fact that I am able to draw together in it all habitual perspectives is dependent on my knowing that one and the same embodied subject can view successively *from* various positions.[3]

John Urry refers to the way in which a traveller or visitor might view a scene or a spectacle as 'the Tourist Gaze', which is an interesting phenomenon.[4] I recall an encounter with an American

tourist whilst visiting the Sistine Chapel in Rome. He entered the chapel with everyone else, and for the entire duration of the time he spent in the chapel he did not once remove the Camcorder from his eye. His monocular vision would be the only memory of the experience. It occurred to me that his sensory connection to the space would only be experienced *via* 'playback', to be viewed away from the location, at another time in another place. The adoption of the role of the 'souvenir producer', as opposed to the souvenir consumer, embraces much of the thinking behind the Grand Tour of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The denying of the self in favour of sharing with others is interesting as it might suggest, or bring into question, the reason why we visit or travel in the first place.

Each opening out of a vista creates well balanced and harmonised compositions that build a set of memorable *tableaux* inscribed and stored in the mind. This is clearly where the garden and art meet, particularly in relation to painting. This is also where imitation and allusion inform each other. Many European gardens created during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were constructed and influenced by sights and scenes recorded from the Grand Tour. The romantic and poetic aesthetic form of the ruin and folly founds the allusion to far-off landscapes or places. The paintings of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) played an important role in the relation between sites of antiquity, gardens, and landscape painting. Real and imagined visions by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1729-1778) contributed in providing etchings which were a source of reference for European garden designers. Ruined mausoleums, gothic temples, ruined abbeys, grottos, and Palladian-style bridges are all elements from antiquity that are to be found in the European seventeenth-century garden. At the time they would have indicated the wealth, culture, and social standing of the landowner, but today they form a different function. The sight of these structures acts as a reminder, transporting us through time.

There are few similarities between the European and Japanese gardens with regard to the construction of false architectural detail, except for the use of water. Manufactured lakes were created to seem bigger than they were by the careful shaping and arrangement of islands so that the water could not be seen all at once. Viewing was skillfully contrived in order to control the perspectives and sightlines from which to view lakes and vistas. Great care seems to have been taken in concealing a view until it appears at its best advantage. The differences are equally as important as the similarities, as the Japanese garden declines the temptation to mimic the past, although garden elements are used to evoke or to suggest through the imagination. We use the word 'representation' to signify the mental idea or image of any object that is experienced as being external to the mind. Representation can be taken to be the means by which meaning is constructed. A definitive or concrete singular meaning is never possible as there will always be a difference between intention and reception, between original and copy. Sesshu's garden at Joei-ji temple in Yamaguchi is an obvious example of this approach, where a central peak of a rock with carefully cultivated vegetation imitates or represents the shape of Mount Fuji. The small pond with rocks is also said to symbolise the terrain and topography of the coastline between Japan and China.

The theme shared by European and Japanese gardens of this period is the attempt to improve upon nature or to tame or harness wilderness. The notion of wilderness, which Emmanuel Kant refers to as '*rohe Natur*' (raw nature) is as untrammeled, uncultivated, uncivilised, and untouched. Kant also links the search for wilderness to the pursuit of the sublime, another Enlightenment project. I am reminded of Blaise Pascal's remark: 'The eternal silence of these infinite spaces terrifies me'.[5] Many people in Pascal's era were unsettled by the idea of boundless space. From a contemporary perspective, we start to see the limitations of the Enlightenment project in the apparent search for the wilderness. The stripping away of formal garden spaces by 'Capability' Brown throughout England in favor of a natural look has left a lasting impression on the nation's landscape.

The legacy of these spaces has shaped an expectation, forming a vision of what might be considered to be the quintessential



Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, England

landscape of rolling hills punctuated with clumps of trees strategically placed along sightlines with grazing sheep contently inhabiting the scene. This idyllic and romantic view of landscape, along with images of 'raw nature', helped form notions of the picturesque. William Gilpin (1724-1824) is often attributed with promoting the picturesque, the blending of the beautiful and the sublime. Alexander Ross says 'Gilpin's theorising sometimes brings the real and the ideal into contrasting relationships.'[6] Theories of the picturesque were born from lengthy discussions which attempted to quantify, measure, to find rules, principals, and to put into words and language the body's experience of being confronted with a particular scene or landscape that moves the soul towards a state of contemplation.

Picturesque in the Darkness
Kiyoshi Okutsu

We have to look at the terms from the historical theories of aesthetics in Japan in order to investigate the characteristics of the Japanese gardens. I would like to examine closely the words of Chikamatsu Monzaemo: 'Art is something which lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal.'[1] These are written in a preface of *Naniwa Miyage (Souvenir of Osaka)*, which is the first essay on the art of the *Jōruri*, or tragic puppet opera in Japan, a kind of *Ars Poetica*. It was published in 1738 by Hozumi Ikan, Chikamatsu's disciple and one of Japan's Confucian scholars, fourteen years after his death.

'Art is something which lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal' is a translation by Donald Keene.[2] That of Makoto Ueda reads: 'Art exists in the thin margin between reality and illusion', in his 'Chikamatsu and his Ideas on Drama'.[3] An almost literary translation by Michael Brownstein is: 'Art is something that lies between the skin and the flesh [*hiniku*], between the make-believe [*uso*] and the real [*jitsu*].'[4]

The Chinese character translated as 'unreal', 'illusion', or 'make-believe' is usually pronounced as *kyo*, but Hozumi endows it with a Hiragana letter *uso*. *Kyo* has many meanings but *uso* is univocal, a lie. *Kyo-jitsu* is also an antithesis that comes from Confucian thought. Brownstein explains this as follows:

> In this context, *uso* referred to the imaginary or the make-believe, in contrast to *jitsu*, the true or the real, but he characterizes *uso* and *jitsu* in terms of surface and depth as 'skin and flesh' (*hiniku*). Moreover, because art 'lies between' the two, it is both and neither: 'Art is make-believe and not make-believe; it is real and not real.'

This academic terminology in the original is adapted to an antithesis, *uso-jitsu* in an ordinary Japanese language. For example, it was the height of bad taste to take the lie of a harlot seriously.

Pretending to believe the lying harlot who says 'I love only you, my master,' the man of the world frequents houses of ill fame and enjoys her specious lie by himself. *Uso-jitsu* is not a logical antithesis entirely distinguished. *Uso* contains already a little *jitsu*, *jitsu* has also a little *uso*. Therefore, they are two sides of the same coin. Their only distinction is like that between is *skin* and *flesh*. Art as a kind of entertainment, *gei*, is accomplished only in the extremely thin membrane.

This phrase appears in the last of six short passages of a preface. How was this conclusion arrived at? I would like to interpret it more exactly by enquiring closely into the entire preface.

The first passage of the preface begins after a proviso of being a verbatim report from his master that *jōruri* differs from other forms of fiction in that, since it is primarily concerned with puppets, the words must all be living and full of action. The 'other *sōshi*' differentiated here from *jōruri* means literally a booklet, which is a particular art of language, reading matter like *The Tale of Genji* or *Facetiae*, popular then. Here Chikamatsu refers to the *diaphora* as the use of words as 'living and full of action'. *Diaphora* is an Aristotelian terminology, an essential characteristic, which makes it possible to differentiate species. [*As distinction or variance, diaphora is a repetition, which perform two logical functions: to designate and to signify. Ed.*] When defined, the propriety of the definition depends essentially upon which specific difference (*diaphora*) one may discover. It is a specific distinction between words in a Japanese traditional theater (*Jōruri*, *Kabuki* and *Nō*) and *Sōshi*. He then differentiates Japanese dramas in general from the other language arts by this *diaphora*.

It would be too hasty to interpret it as a particular feature only for the *Jōruri* from the phrase, 'since it is primarily concerned with puppets'. Chikamatsu started as a playwright of *Jōruri* but later wrote many of the classics of *Kabuki*. It is more difficult for him to write the *Jōruri* than the competitor *Kabuki*, because he has to capture the sympathies of the audience by endowing inanimate wooden puppets with a variety of feeling without relying upon 'the art of living actors'. 'Since it is primarily concerned with puppets', a device in a language of *Jōruri* is needed much more than *Kabuki*.

Chikamatsu states that he received a full-fledged hint of such a difficult device from an episode in 'The Safflower' chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. The passage is as follows:

> on the occasion of a festival, the snow had fallen heavily and piled up. An order was given to a guard to clear away the snow from an orange tree. When this happened, the pine next to it, apparently resentful that its boughs were still bent with snow, recoiled its branches.[5]

He receives 'a stroke of the pen which gave life to the inanimate tree' here, and has 'the feeling of real life to imagine a scene.' Hikaru Genji, the protagonist of the tale, was very impressed that the inanimate pine without soul behaved like a 'resentful' human being, just the same as a puppet. He grieved then that present at this scene was only his uneducated plain-looking lover called Safflower, not one of his chic friends who could share this impression.

To evocate the landscape (*Kyoushou*)

Chikamatsu states that it is important not only to endow inanimate dolls with pathos, but also for a playwright to gain 'what is called evocative power in poetry *(Kyoushou)*'. In a scenario, Brownstein translates it as 'evocative imagery':

> Thus, even descriptive passages like the *michiyuki* to say nothing of the narrative phrases and dialogue, must be charged with feeling or they will be greeted with scant applause. This is the same thing as what is called evocative power in poetry [...] For this reason, it should be borne in mind that feeling is the basis of writing.[6]



Donald Keene refers a note to a part of the *'michiyuki'* and promotes reference of a certain scene. It is that of a fugacious suicide journey of the lovers in 'The Love Suicides at Sonezaki.'[7]

> Farewell to the world, and to the night farewell.
> We who walk the road to death, to what should we be likened?
> To the frost by the road that leads to the graveyard,
> Vanishing with each step ahead:
> This dream of a dream is sorrowful.
> Ah, did you count the bell? Of the seven strokes
> That mark the dawn six have sounded.
> The remaining one will be the last echo
> We shall hear in this life. It will echo
> The bliss of annihilation.
> Farewell, and not to the bell alone,
> We look a last time on the grass, the trees, the sky,
> The clouds go by unmindful of us,
> The bright Dipper is reflected in the water,
> *The Wife and Husband Stars inside the Milky Way.*

The frost vanishing with each step ahead, the sound of the bell telling the time of death and the Wife and Husband Stars symbolizing to be under pledge in future life; these are all realistic description of the landscape around the lovers, but it is a strong stroke of the pen that gives us the vivid inward imagery of the lovers. It is not simply an objective description of the landscape (*Jokei*), but *Kyoushou*. *Kyoushou* means to evocate the landscape. We would be able to consider it as the first characteristic of mimesis that Chikamatsu pursues. The phrase of the 'slender margin' is said as a response:

> People nowadays will not accept plays unless they are realistic and well reasoned out [...] it is thus that such people as Kabuki actors are considered skilful to the degree that their acting resembles reality.[8]

He answers in the negative: 'Your view seems plausible, but it is a theory that does not take into account the real methods of art. Art is something that lies in the slender margin between the real and the unreal' However, Chikamatsu himself describes the importance of realistic and logically convincing description at the third and fifth passages.

Mimesis as *Utsuri*

The third part of the preface is a mimesis theory by Chikamatsu:

> From the time I first began to write *Jōruri*, I have used care in my works, which was not true of the old *Jōruri*. As a result, the medium was raised considerably. For example, inasmuch as the nobility, the samurai, and the lower classes all have different social stations, it is essential that they be distinguished in their representation *(Utsuri)* from their appearance down to their speech. (...) such differences must be established. This is because it is essential that they be well pictured (*Utsuru*) in the emotions of the reader.

He is proud that he made the *Jōruri* having both a flower and a fruit or being of 'colourful beauty'. Brownstein translates this as: 'my first principle is to distinguish between (...) to depict (*Utsuri*) them accordingly, from their demeanor to the way they speak'. A Japanese noun of *Utsuri* is not univocal. *Utsuri* is here a *Hiragana* letter that consists only of sound, and therefore it can correspond to various Chinese characters with different meanings. For example, it may be to move, to be reflected, to appear, to copy, and so on. Here it is translated as 'representation' by Keene or 'to depict' by Brownstein. It would be an objective mimetic representation. However, one must not overlook a connotation by his use of the un-univocal *Hiragana*. Jun'ichiro Tanizaki deals with *Toko-Utsuri* in his *In Praise of Shadows*.[9] *Toko* means a Japanese picture alcove in the room. In the *Toko* we decorate a hanging scroll and a flower arrangement. However, Tanizaki says:



the scroll and the flowers serve not as ornament but rather to give depth to the shadows. We value a scroll above all for the way it blends with the walls of the alcove, and thus we consider the mounting quite as important as the calligraphy or painting.

In his original Japanese text he wrote the words 'in other words, *Toko-Utsuri*' after the phrase 'for the way it blends with the walls of the alcove'. *Utsuri* connotes the correlation or harmony between the two. Therefore, he continues:

> Even the greatest masterpiece will lose its worth as a scroll if it fails to blend with the alcove, while a work of no particular distinction may blend beautifully with the room and set off to unexpected advantage both itself and its surroundings.

Such a connotation lurks in the interactive relation between the original and the copy in mimesis as *Utsuri*. It would not be able to be a simple objective mimesis. Chikamatsu refers to even the *Utsuri* 'in the emotions of the reader', as in *Kyoushou* which I mentioned above. Such a mimesis is that of a peculiar kind of *Kabuki* and *Jōruri* and deeply concerned with *Jitsu* in his theory of art of 'the slender margin'. He points out in the fourth passage that there is the case that a playwright 'writes things which are not true, in the interest of art'. One typical example is as follows:

> In recent plays many things have been said by female characters, which real women could not utter. Such things fall under the heading of art; it is because they say what could not come from a real woman's lips that their true emotions are disclosed. If in such cases the author were to model his character on the ways of a real woman and conceal her feelings, such realism, far from being admired, would permit no pleasure in the work.

This example is the case when the truth does not become amusement and the falsehood becomes art adversely. It is directly connected with *Uso* in his last theory.

The most famous *Kabuki* actor in Edo era Sakata Tōjūrō conveys similar words from a viewpoint of a performer. Tōjūrō is 'a born genius', as it was said: 'Among those who can be called great today, one cannot think that there is one who reaches the standard of Tōjūrō'.[10] He often said 'no matter what sort of role Kabuki actors played, there was no other way to do it but with the intention of reproducing things as they are.' However, there is an exception. It is when playing the part of a beggar. He advises that one 'should see to it that the whole performance, including the facial make-up and the clothing, is not like the original.'[11] The reason for this is that in *Kabuki* as an entertainment 'every thing should be of colourful beauty.'[12]

Flower in secrecy

In *Nō* plays such a colourful beauty or pleasure is pursued from a different point of view. Zeami Motokiyo (1364-1443) uses the word 'flower' (*Hana*) as a metaphor of the beauty or the secret of his art in his famous oral instruction, *Teachings on Style and the Flower (Fūshikaden,)* in 1420, 300 years earlier than *Naniwa Miyage (Souvenir of Osaka):*

> In this secret teaching, I wish to explain how to understand of what the Flower consists. First of all, one must understand the conception that, just as a flower can be observed blooming in nature, the flower can be used as well as a metaphor for all things in the N . When speaking of flowers, in all their myriad varieties, it can be said that they will bloom at their appointed time during the four seasons; and because they always seem fresh and novel when they bloom at that appointed season, they are highly appreciated. [13]



Zeami's flowers are beautiful 'because they always seem fresh and novel when they bloom at that appointed season' to the spectators each time. Yamazaki, however, notes:

> the reason why he compared the beauty of the performing arts to a flower was not simply because a flower is perceived as beautiful in a sensuous fashion. To this great artist, a flower was beautiful because it would shed its petals. In the sense that a flower undergoes constant changes in front of the viewer, it can be compared to an artistic ideal.[13]

Shiore

A flower grows up from bud, reaches maturity, and 'sheds its petals' beyond maturity. Zeami answers to the question 'in criticising every kind of art people say that such and such an artist has "gone beyond maturity." What does this mean?', noticing that 'no explanation can capture its beauty':

> But such a thing exists in the artistic world. The reason why they use this phrase is that they are thinking of *hana*. It is because of the supreme artistic importance of *hana* that they make so much of this elegance beyond maturity. As already said, to study *hana* is of the utmost importance; however, this post-maturity is the supremely important thing, being on a higher level.[15]

This 'elegance beyond maturity' is *Shiore* in Japanese *Hiragana*, which can be translated to 'bending' or 'sweet fading'. *Shiore* is the higher symbolic style that *Hana* alone can create.

Flower blooming in the rocks

Zeami points out another aesthetical ideal from Flower:

> I wrote that a good performance of a demon role was 'like a flower blooming in the rocks', because the only appropriate style of acting for such roles calls for strength, fierceness, and a frightening manner. This particular art represents the rocks. And the Flower? It comes when an actor gifted with Grace and who can play in a variety of styles performs a demon role, contrary to the public's expectations, and so creates a real sense of novelty. This is the Flower.

Yamazaki explained such the Rocks as a shade of Flower:

> Zeami required a shade of splendor and charm; he described the effect as 'a flower blooming on a dead tree.' Needless to say, what he demanded in these instances was not mere compromise or eclecticism, but a dramatic conflict between two contradictory elements, the rock and the flower, or the dead tree and the flower.[16]

Aesthetics of ambiguity

Moreover, he says that Japanese aesthetic thought does not pursuit any absolute aesthetic ideal in one direction of purification: 'Rather, to the contrary, all aesthetic effects are believed to become what they are while containing contradictory elements within themselves.' And he interprets it as 'aesthetics of ambiguity', 'since Japanese art is created not before a transcendental being but by one human being for another, it is natural for its aesthetic ideal to show an essentially paradoxical and ambiguous character.'[17]

We are now able to obtain many relatively oppositional aesthetic concepts concerned with a Japanese sense of beauty. They are originally various senses of beauty that the oldest Japanese art, the thirty-one-syllable Japanese poem (*Waka*) evoked. They are the make-believe *(Uso)* and the real *(Jitsu)*, the description of scenery *(Jokei)*, and the evocation of the landscape *(Kyoushou)*, realistic and symbolical Mimesis *(Utsuri)*, the Flower *(Hana)*, and the elegance beyond maturity *(Shiore)* or the Rock.

Japanese gardens

These aesthetic concepts containing contradictory elements in themselves are helpful in considering a Japanese garden. We can



differentiate it into three types. They are the three corresponding to the extremes mentioned above and an intermediate of the both. The extremes are, for example, *Kaiyu-shiki* or strolling garden such as *Ken-roku-en* in Kanazawa, and Japanese rock garden (*Karesansui*) in Ryoan-ji Temple. In the former a feudal lord could choose various routes freely and appreciate flowers or landscapes constantly changing in front of him any time during the four seasons. A one-way route restricted for current viewers obstructs an original way of enjoying the flower of the garden. In the latter we can imagine the elegance beyond maturity *(Shiore)* or a flower blooming in the rocks easily by borrowing the evocative power of the symbolical simple gardening. *Sakuteiki*, a famous Japanese gardening classic, begins: 'When creating a garden, first be aware of the basic concepts'.[18]

A translator notes that 'creating a garden' is expressed as 'setting stones', *ishi wo taten koto*, literally, the act of setting stones upright. Comparing it with the big rock in Huan Xiu Shan Zhuang in Suzhou (China), one can find the characteristics of Japanese sense of beauty far from an old Chinese original. A Chinese gardener, Ge Yuliang, created the rock with an entrance to Xanadu by assembling stones with a glue made by mixing iron fillings with glutinous rice.

Now what is an intermediate between them? It would be the *Sesshu*-garden in *Jojei-ji* Temple (Yamaguchi), because it is both a simple strolling garden and a rock garden with water. The three are products of the same taste in three ways, but the *Sesshu*-garden is the most Japanese due to its intermediate nature or ambiguity. It serves the visitors not only for meditation but also for entertainment.

Ueda investigates the reason why Chikamatsu turned only to the puppet theatre for the rest of his life, writing the majority of his great works for it, and he estimates that 'it was the puppet theatre that best suited his idea of a theatre'. He continues:

Using puppets for human actors, the *jōruri* in its very nature refuses to reproduce life as it is; allowing puppets to imitate human actions, it also avoids falling into the slow ritual of symbolic drama. In other words, the puppet stage claims a position between the two poles of dramatic art, the naturalistic and the poetic; it is the type of art which 'lies in the thin margin between reality and illusion'.[19]

Needless to say, the two dramatic arts compared with the *Jōruri* here are realistic *Kabuki* and symbolic *Nō*.

Beauty in the Darkness

Since Japanese *Nō* is a symbolic masque with sublimity, it would be more comparable with Greek tragedy than *Kabuki* and *Jōruri*, a tragedy mixed with a comedy. In the respect of the dim lightning of old Japanese dramas, it is entirely different from Greek tragedy staged in sunlight. Tanizaki deals with the problem of the dark stage in his *In Praise of Shadows:*

> If actors of old had had to appear on the bright stage of today, they would doubtless have stood out with a certain masculine harshness, which in the past was discreetly hidden by darkness. […] A senseless and extravagant use of lights, I thought, has destroyed the beauty of Kabuki.[20]

I have once experienced such an embarrassment from the second Sakata Tōjūrō of the day who was very beautiful in his youth. Concerning the *Bunraku*, Tanizaki writes:

> A knowledgeable Osaka gentleman has told me that the Bunraku puppet theatre was for long lit by lamp-light, even after the introduction of electricity in the Meiji era, and that this method was far more richly suggestive than modern lighting. […] But in the dim lamplight, the hard lines of the puppet features softened, the glistening white of their faces muted, a chill comes over me when I think of the uncanny beauty the puppet theatre must once have had.

He adds in another context:



> The women of the *Nô;* portrayed by masked actors, are far from realistic; but the *Kabuki* actor in the part of a woman inspires not the slightest sense of reality. The failure is the fault of excessive lighting. When there were no modern floodlamps, when the *Kabuki* stage was lit by the meager light of candles and lanterns, actors must have been somewhat more convincing in women's roles.

Concerning the female puppets, he says 'they consist only of a head and a pair of hands', and 'to me this is the very epitome of reality, for a woman of the past did indeed exist only from the collar up and the sleeves out; the rest of her remained hidden in darkness'.[21]

Apart from the excellent idea of Tanizaki, it has become an established theory among researchers that a doll of those days is unpolished, different from a modern precise one. The darkness of the stage is useful to conceal the lack of skill in both the making of a doll and in the art of a puppet master. *The Kabuki* actor of the living body often mimics retrogradely the movement of an empty doll to give a spectator amusement by his transcendental art. This would be really an art in the slender margin.

Concerning 'the beauty in the darkness', I recall an interesting episode when the *Mona Lisa* came to Japan in 1974. A lighting technician realised that Leonardo da Vinci did not paint it under a fluorescent lamp, so he used a method of illumination contemporary with the painting. A curator from the Louvre saw the exhibition and said that this Mona Lisa was much more beautiful than that of the Louvre to the parties concerned who had nervously expected a scolding. The *Mona Lisa* regained her original 'beauty in the darkness' in Japan.

The beauty in the painting originated from the shadow

Chikamatsu completes his artistic theory in the following episode of a certain court lady who had a lover:

> but the lady lived far deep in the women's palace, and the man could not visit her quarters. […] She longed for him so desperately that she had a wooden image carved of the man. Its appearance was not like that of an ordinary doll, but did not differ in any particle from the man. […] the only difference between the man and this doll was the presence in one, and the absence in the other, of a soul. However, when the lady drew the doll close to her and looked at it, the exactness of the reproduction of the living man chilled her, and she felt unpleasant and rather frightened. Court lady that she was, her love was also chilled, and as she found it distressing to have the doll by her side, she soon threw it away.[22]

This may even be called super-realist criticism. This anecdote lets us remember an episode of the young Corinthian girl that Pliny describes:

> Butades, a potter of Sicyon, was the first who invented, at Corinth, the art of modelling portraits in the earth which he used in his trade. It was through his daughter that he made the discovery; who, being deeply in love with a young man about to depart on a long journey, traced the profile of his face, as thrown upon the wall by the light of the lamp. Upon seeing this, her father filled in the outline, by compressing clay upon the surface, and so made a face in relief, which he then hardened by fire along with other articles of pottery.[23]

On the farewell to her lover she traced his profile 'by the light of the lamp', not by moonlight or sunlight, wrapped in darkness of the night in a dark room. This is one paragraph of a legend of the origin of the painting by Pliny. The Corinthian maiden made it possible to remember a feature of her lover eternally by tracing his profile in an opposite way to that of the court lady. The aesthetic taste or ideal which we to be typically Japanese, might be more universal, as Pliny reports that the beauty in the painting originates in the shadow. It is connected with the aesthetic ideal of *Jōruri,* the Sesshu-garden, and





Katsura Imperial Villa, Kyoto, Japan

painting. Chikamatsu would love the beauty of silhouette rising in dusk by dim light of a lamp, more than the behavior of a young girl of a dynasty. It is the art of amusement that Chikamatsu pursues.

Details on pages 28 – 39: Sansui Cokan or Long scroll, Sesshu (c.1486), Mouri Museum, Yamaguchi, Japan

Notes

1 Donald Keene, *The Anthology of Japanese Literature*, New York, Grove Press 1955, pp. 387-390.

The Destruction of Boundaries

1. Horace Walpole, *On Modern Gardening*, London: Pallas Athene 2005, p.54.
2. Horace Walpole, *On Modern Gardening*, p.54.
3. However, in the case of *Ryoan-ji* no documents remain that state any symbolic relationship of the stone groupings. Yet it has been argued that they represent certain parables or characters.
4. Horace Walpole, *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening*, New York: Versus Press 1995, p.43.
5. Francesco Petrarch, 'The Ascent of Mont Ventoux', in *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, E. Cassirer, P.O.Kristeller and J.H. Randall (eds), trans. H. Nachod, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1956, p.36.
6. Francesco Petrarch, 'The Ascent of Mont Ventoux', p.41.
7. Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form*, New York: Zone Books 1997, p. 27.
8. Helen Fox, *André Le Nôtre Garden Architect to Kings*, New York: Crown Publisher 1962, pp. 70-72.

Theatres of Deception

1. *The Tale of Genji* is a classic romantic work of Japanese Literature from early in the eleventh century, attributed to the noblewoman Murasaki Shikibu.
2. John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis (eds), *The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden*, 1620-1820, London: Paul Elek 1975, p. 314.
3. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, London: Routledge 1962, p.235.
4. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Society*, London: Sage Publication 1990.
5. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, Paris: Editions Garnier1964, p. 131.
6. Alexander M. Ross, *The Imprint of the Picturesque on Nineteenth-Century British Fiction*, Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press 1987, p.7.

Picturesque in Darkness

1. He was re-evaluated as the Japanese Shakespeare by Tsubouchi Shōyō and Shimamura Hougetsu, and other scholars of aesthetics in Meiji era. Tsubouchi is the first translator of the complete works of Shakespeare. Concerning Japanese aestheticians in the Meiji era, see my 'Aesthetics in the Meiji era and Geddesian Thought , in *Patrick Geddes: By Leaves We Live*, Yamaguchi & Edinburgh: YICA & ECA 2005, pp.11-28.
2. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from the preface are from the English translation by Donald Keen in, *The Anthology of Japanese Literature*, New York: Grove Press 1955, p.387-390.
3. Makoto Ueda, 'Chikamatsu and his Ideas on Drama', in *Educational Theatre Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (May, 1960), pp. 107-112
4. *Early Modern Japanese Literature, An Anthology*, 1600-1900, Haruo Shirane (ed.), trans. Michael Brownstein, New York: Columbia University Press 2002, pp.349-351.
5. Edward Seidensticker, *Murasaki Shikibu, The Tale of Genji*, London: Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd 1976, p.125.
6. *Early Modern Japanese Literature, An Anthology*, 1600-1900, p.349.
7. Donald Keene, *The Anthology of Japanese Literature*, p.404.
8. *The Anthology of Japanese Literature*, p.389.
9. Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, trans. Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Seidensticker, London: Vintage 2001, p.19.
10. Charles J. Dunn and Bunzo Torigoe, *The Actors' Analects*, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press 1969, p.71.
11. *The Actors' Analects*, p.128.
12. *The Actors' Analects*, p.128.
13. J. Thomas Rimer and Yamazaki Masakazu, *On the Art of Nō Drama, The Major Treatises of Zeami*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1984, p. 52.
14. *On the Art of Nō Drama, The Aesthetics of Ambiguity: The Artistic Theories of Zeami*, p. xxxiv
15. Ze-ami Kadensho, Kyoto: Doshisha University 1968, p 49.
16. *On the Art of Nō Drama, The Aesthetics of Ambiguity: The Artistic Theories of Zeami*, p. xxxix.
17. *On the Art of Nō Drama, The Aesthetics of Ambiguity: The Artistic Theories of Zeami*, p. xxxviii.
18. Jiro Takei and Marc P. Keane, *Sakuteiki : Visions of the Japanese Garden*, Boston; Tokyo : Tuttle 2001, p.153.
19. *Sakuteiki : Visions of the Japanese Garden*, p.110.
20. Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows*, trans. Thomas J. Harper and Edward G. Seidensticker, London:Vintage 2001, p.42.
21. *In Praise of Shadows*, p.43.
22. *The Anthology of Japanese Literature*, p.390.
23. cf. Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, (eds John Bostock, M.D., F.R.S., H.T. Riley, Esq., B.A.) 1855, cited in http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/

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