

Before experiments,
measurement,
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rigorous deductions,
science is above all
about visions.

Carlo Rovelli, *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, Penguin 2016

INTRODUCTION

The Grand Parade Press is a series of publications produced by Brighton CCA and University of Brighton Creative Futures about the pursuit of knowledge and the mechanisms through which we acquire and share an understanding of our material, social and environmental surroundings.

Engaging in research, the act of investigation, is fundamental to human nature and yet what is considered of value in research is deeply contested. By interweaving research from the University of Brighton and elsewhere with the Brighton CCA programme, the Grand Parade Press articulates a more comprehensive conception of what research can be. Is it for example, only the preserve of the academic community? Is it necessarily empirical? Must methodologies be logical in their approach and what is the role of chance? How is it possible to characterise the relationship between research and understanding? How do we consider artistic practice in this context?

How to Make an Image of Something You've Never Seen begins with the idea that research can be as equally embodied by sculpture as an equation and that the processes of making and thinking are closely bound. Preconceptions, even prejudices, about the answers to these questions have embedded divisions in the ways we value different approaches to the pursuit of knowledge. A crude characterisation is the common differentiation between art and science – the one as creative, lawless and inspired, the other empirical, structured and objective.

In his book, *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*,¹ Carlo Rovelli characterises the nature of scientific research in terms more commonly employed to describe the unique value of artists; “Science begins with a vision. Scientific thought is fed by the capacity to ‘see’ things differently than they have previously been seen.” Rovelli’s short lecture *The Architecture of the Cosmos* is, he says, “mostly made up of simple drawings. The reason for this is that before experiments, measurement, mathematics and rigorous deductions, science is above all about visions.”

This award-winning scientist’s assertion is based on the fact that there is no more one type of science or scientific methodology than there is one type of art or artistic practice. Chance discoveries, systematic testing, leaps of faith, not knowing, tedium and frustration, delight and excitement are present across all disciplines. While there are certainly differences in how we choose to approach the pursuit of knowledge, they are not necessarily in opposition. Flowing from the same wellspring, they are part of a layered, complex network of curiosity and understanding which makes us what we are.

At Brighton CCA the galleries and theatre are used as sites for research and production as much as display and live performance, creating connections between centres of knowledge and expertise through a network of mutual support and collaboration. The Brighton CCA programme is inspired by examples of cross disciplinary programming and approaches to learning; from the Black Mountain College in the hills of North Carolina in 1938 through to contemporary organisations including the Arts Research Centre at UC Berkeley and the Institute for Provocation in Beijing.

Brighton CCA and the Grand Parade Press operate as a links between artists, academics, publics and students; both part of an art school and a university that itself started out as place to study the disparate subjects of drawing and midwifery. Drawing together some of Brighton CCA's early work alongside that of University of Brighton research centres with a contribution from the Arts Programme at CERN, this edition of Grand Parade Press details a range of approaches and research methodologies through commissions, partnerships and community engagement.

Brighton CCA is about shared ways of working; learning from colleagues and other organisations. So we begin here with a contribution from The Arts Programme at CERN – home of the Large Hadron Collider, and one of the most extra ordinary, ongoing conversations between creative practice and physics in the world today. This text from CERN's Head of Programme Monica Bello and artist Andy Gracie is in that spirit, detailing the vast, global collaboration which produced the first ever image of a black hole.

In October 2019 Brighton CCA staged the first UK retrospective of the Dog Kennel Hill Project *You Could Probably Turn this into Something* – a collective working across performance, dance and filmmaking. The project was both an exhibition in which to encounter their practice and an open studio which they used to collaborate with audiences in the development of new work and ideas. Included here is a text by Brighton CCA Programme Producer Polly Wright who worked with Dog Kennel Hill Project on the project, with extracts from performances and interviews with the Collective about their process.

Artist Nika Neelova has been commissioned by Brighton CCA to develop a new sculptural commission for the North Gallery expected to open to the public in October 2020, preceded by a month long residency at the gallery during which she will make and install the work onsite. As part of her preparation for this project, Neelova has been engaging with researchers at the University of Brighton's Centre for Aquatic Environments as she develops what will become a fictionalised archaeological installation, uncovering artifacts inspired by the natural world designed to help humans cope in a time of extreme water scarcity. The experimental text presented here is both a compendium of her research and an articulation of her thinking woven through a series of extracts which will inform the final work.

COMMUNAL is a participatory project co-ordinated by Brighton CCA Programme Producer Polly Wright expanding on the possibilities of using gallery and exhibition as a site for making and community building during the summer of 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the project to be migrated from the gallery online as we learn to find new ways to work and support each other during the period of lock down - generating a new layer of experimentation within the project. Presented across two chapters – Passages of Time and Make it Work – COMMUNAL starts with *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* suggested by the author Ursula Le Guin as a collaborative reading of the narrative of human history. COMMUNAL worked with a range of groups and organisations to explore this thinking. Bringing together cross generational ideas; working with literature, film, audio, print, this was a chance to participate in contemporary artistic practice, from risograph

printing to collective reading and broadcasting. We invited participants to join local organisations, artists and activists in a programme of shared activity reflecting on a shared past and collaborative future.

Making connections between artists and researchers at the University of Brighton across a range of formats is central to the Brighton CCA project. This includes a new partnership with the Brighton Design Archives inviting artists and designers to visit the collections and use them as a starting point for developing a new body of work. The first of these projects, Giles Round's *Untitled, circa 1994* was presented across both galleries from January – March 2020. Here, Archive Leader Sue Breakell and Dr Liz Bruchet, archive curator and independent researcher, reflect on this process and how artists and archives can enrich and support each other's work. In addition to our gallery based projects this edition of Grand Parade Press presents contributions from across the University of Brighton from the newly established Centre of Arts and Wellbeing to Dr Karina Rodriguez Echavarria in the School of Computing Engineering introducing her work with digital imaging. Grand Parade Press is a starting point from which to discover more. The projects included here are not a definitive catalogue of our work, they are a set of representative case studies, works in progress and experiments linked by a nuanced, inclusive conception of what research can be and how it works. While each edition will have a different focus, they will all speak of a shared ethos; a curiosity about the world and a belief in the value of engaging in new ways of working and thinking.

You can find links to further information, reading lists, videos and events on the Brighton CCA website – www.brightoncca.art

Ben Roberts
Artistic Director Brighton CCA

An Extract: Black Holes and Objectivity

Andy Gracie, Artist

Monica Bello, Head of Arts at CERN


THE BLACK HOLE IN M87

The past century has seen paradigm changes in how we observe and understand the Universe, but a remaining fundamental question is how to unify general relativity and quantum physics. One partly understood cosmological phenomenon - the black hole - lies at the heart of this question, the study of which may provide insights into this reconciliation. In April 2019, the world was enthralled by the first ever image taken of this phenomenon; produced by an international effort using data collected by a global network of radio dishes known as the Event Horizon Telescope (EHT). The image created by the EHT is of a black hole located in Messier 87, a massive galaxy in the Virgo cluster, 55 million light-years from Earth. However, in the image we are not actually seeing the black hole, we are seeing its shadow, surrounded by an asymmetric emission ring with a diameter of 0.01 light-years, or more than 14 times the distance of the Sun to Pluto. So it is not an image of a black hole, but an image of the phenomena surrounding and produced by a black hole.

While the EHT was generating this image, several NASA spacecraft were also observing the black hole using different wavelengths of light to provide supporting data. The scale and complexity of this observation, and the processing of the data into the image, throw up a range of issues. Some relate to how we see the data we get from scientific observation, or how we deal with 'filters' and 'lenses' that colour our perceptions. Others relate to the complexity of experiments at the edges of fundamental physics and the transformation of the planet into a vast, interconnected sensory system. By focussing on some of the challenging notions highlighted by creating an image of a black hole, we can shed light on how these factors shape our culture and our sense of reality.

MECHANICAL OBJECTIVITY

The philosopher of science (and founder member of the Black Hole Initiative) Peter Galison, discussed how these forms of complex observation would be possible via large scale scientific and transdisciplinary collaborations. He was also concerned with how languages could be developed that would connect scientific subcultures and establish 'trading zones' where ideas, perceptions and methodologies could come together.¹ The black hole offered a particular challenge; how to make something visual from which light does not escape? This is a conundrum of technical and experimental prowess, but also the



The image shows a bright ring formed as light bends in the intense gravity around a black hole that is 6.5 billion times more massive than the Sun. Image credit: Event Horizon Telescope Collaboration

philosophical question of how our desire to see something can colour the way we see it.

Many people prefer their information in visual form, but most scientific data comes in numbers; that's why we have graphs and spectra. Therefore the ways of translating data into the visual become critical. Our brains have evolved to interpret patterns and recognise known things from basic and incomplete inputs, and this instinct subconsciously colours our visual language. It is difficult to bypass seeing what we know and to just see. Lorraine Daston asks "was there not such a thing as scientific observation uncontaminated by theory?" A question posed against a background of fears about how preconceived ideas and subjective "lenses" might "filter" or "distort" objective empirical results.²

In order to avoid this risk Galison developed and updated the notion of 'mechanical objectivity'. In his view trained judgment supplemented mechanical objectivity, recognizing that, in order for images or data to be of any use, scientists needed to be able to see scientifically; to interpret images or data and identify and group them according to particular professional training, rather than to depict them mechanically. Objectivity now came to involve a combination of trained judgment and mechanical objectivity.

Mechanical objectivity reacts to modes of scientific observation of the 18th and 19th Centuries, where it was common to represent an idealised form of the object rather than its true character; to standardize the observed objects by eliminating idiosyncrasies. While this might work averaged out over huge data sets, it gives us no real clues as to how individual variations and particular phenomena really are. During the 19th Century the French physiologist E.J. Marey began to realise that this approach would quickly prove inadequate and foresaw the use of machines to aid us in our interpretations. While the phrase *'Let nature speak for itself'* became something of a motto of a new brand of scientific objectivity, Marey and his contemporaries turned to mechanically produced images to free scientific observation from human interference.

In *The Philosophy of the Shadow*, Galison discusses how mechanical objectivity was employed in the development of the image of the black hole. Petabytes of data were first resolved into a fairly 'dirty' image, the challenge then being to remove the noise, improve the resolution and deliver the final, more accurate version. The traditional methods in astronomy work well for objects we have seen before, but can also tend to build in the idiosyncrasies of the operator. For the image of the black hole the problem was deepened by there being no prior information on which to build the analysis and so the scope for assumptions based on best guesses became huge.

By sharing out the same data sets to different groups, and by asking them to apply all the processing tools at their disposal while being prepared to reveal something they weren't necessarily expecting, Galison proposed that the truth of the image would come out. Eventually through iterations of applications of different processing algorithms and comparisons of results, an application of mechanical objectivity revealed the image that was transmitted around the world on April 10th 2019.³

THE EARTH AS COMPLEX INSTRUMENT

In order to understand the Universe we use an ever more complex suite of ever larger instruments, hidden in ever more inaccessible and exotic places; 100m underground at the Large Hadron Collider at CERN, Geneva or 2.5km beneath Antarctica at the IceCube Neutrino Observatory. In space there are numerous radical missions as well as terrestrial observatories such as the European Southern Observatory high in the Atacama desert. Similar research and observation sites are spread across the globe in distant and surprising locations. This massive infrastructure, hidden from everyday spheres and lives, forms the mysterious and secretive nodes of a planetary techno-consciousness and the infrastructure of knowledge capital.

The German media philosopher Erich Hörl talks of the becoming-technology of the environment and cites 'Environmentality' as the dominant form of governmentality in the age of the Technocene. What he refers to is the technological deployment of sensors into the environment being so pervasive as to contribute to the development of a new contemporary rationality of power across the globe.⁴ Under discussion here is a subtle alteration of how we see and use the Earth. The ubiquity of large-scale scientific infrastructure creates a shift in our human relationships with nature, establishing the planet as both oracle and test site. The creation and dispersion of new knowledge produces a global network with its own social and political responsibilities and nuances. Through this deployment of sensors into the environment we are attempting to unravel the mystery of who and what we are, where we come from and where we are going. Through science of this magnitude we distinguish ourselves ontologically, modifying and enhancing our environment in order to understand how we got here.

These are all experiments way beyond the human scale, but when one instrument is not large enough and therefore not sensitive enough in isolation, it is networked with others around the globe. The planet Earth becomes the scale and the site of the experiment. Studying the Universe through fundamental science, and deciphering the information, requires new ways of seeing and new ways of studying the nature of being.

*"The IceCube Neutrino Observatory represents one of the largest, strangest, and most complex collaborations in the history of scientific research. The collaboration essentially spent 300 million dollars to stare into ice. Like so many ancient forms of crystallo-mancy, hydromancy and geomancy, the IceCube apparatus captures visions of another world in a translucent body. Visions looking both forward and back: tracing the outlines of dying stars millions of light-years away, or looking beyond the cosmic microwave background to see the first 380,000 years of the Cosmos."*⁵

The proliferation of particle accelerators, deep space probes, neutrino traps, dark matter detectors and networked observatories effectively extends our human sensory cortex across new domains and dimensions. While our scientific advancement has led us to the study of subatomic particles our infrastructure has grown to opposite extremes. It seems that smaller, more esoteric targets require larger and more

powerful apparatus. Thus our relationships with nature are increasingly mediated through technology of a scale and complexity that is difficult to grasp. We cannot continue viewing fundamental research stations as isolated nodes while contemporary cutting edge science demands networks, interactions and the transcending of disciplines. The siting of this machinery in exotic locations adds to its sense of mystery, almost bestowing magical properties.

HUMAN CULTURAL REACTIONS

There has been a transition in the notion of the sublime; from a phenomenon of our relationship with nature to one of our relationship with technology. As we begin to believe that we understand and control nature, our awe and fear and expectation has shifted to technology, the other great power that enables. The possibilities suggested by artificial intelligence, genetic engineering and geophysical manipulations are beyond our common understanding and our general control, becoming unknowable and yet exerting power. The technology is so advanced that few feel wholly in control of it; it often produces abstract information the borders on the esoteric. The tangible unknowable begets the intangible unknowable. The results of technology are magnificent and we submit to their allure.

The emotional reactions we have when confronted by big tech inexorably draw us towards it. We seek out those experiences bigger and more powerful than us. Thousands of people attended the Apollo and space shuttle launches. Doves attend large-scale demolitions. In the same way many are beguiled by the scale and scope of Cern. As historian David Nye points out, when attending these quasi-religious events “the event is less a matter of spectatorship than a pilgrimage to a shrine where a technological miracle is confidently expected.” The metaphor of high technology as god is tired and overworked, but it is easy to see how it came about.⁶

These massive, intra-planetary scientific constellations are probing the Universe with more power and higher resolution than we have ever known. Often the data we are receiving does not match anything we have seen before and requires a deeper rigour of perception and interpretation. To this end it is becoming accepted again that without the application of philosophy and culture to the problems of science they will be very difficult to solve and to make sense of.

It is interesting to consider a certain resetting of objectivity over the past 200 years. It is not just the precision of measurement that has needed to be constantly refined, but also the way we interpret it; from the ‘truth to nature’ approaches of the early 18th Century, through the development of Mechanical Objectivity, and finally to what we refer to as trained judgement. While such methodologies are being employed widely across all kinds of data sets from all kinds of experiments, the image of the black hole in M87 released to the world on 10th April 2019 was the moment when we were all thrilled, enlightened, and certainly awed by the results of contemporary scientific objectivity.

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| 1 | Galison, Peter. <i>Trading with the Enemy. Trading Zones and Interactional Expertise: Creating New Kinds of Collaboration</i> , edited by Michael E. Gorman, MIT Press, 2010 | 4 | Hörl, Erich. <i>Introduction to General Ecology: The Ecologization of Thinking</i> . Bloomsbury Academic. 2017 |
| 2 | Daston, Lorraine. <i>On Scientific Observation</i> . <i>Isis</i> , Vol. 99, No. 1, 2008 | 5 | Thomson, Jol. <i>Ve Vm Vt. The Ideal Cosmic Messengers</i> . <i>Technosphere Magazine</i> . November 2016 |
| 3 | Galison, Peter. <i>Inaugural Yip lecture</i> , Harvard CMSA, April 2019. | 6 | Sacasas, LM. <i>The Technological Sublime, Alive and Well</i> . April 2012 |



You Could Probably Turn This into Something

Dog Kennel Hill Project



A six-week exhibition. Two weeks of live rehearsal in the gallery. One weekend of durational performance. Three, day-long intensive workshops. Two performance lectures. And a long table discussion.

For this project, Dog Kennel Hill Project brought together their individual practices and research to survey the last 10 years of work through the captured documentation of their live material and by re-investigating shared approaches to performance and being performers.

Wayfaring Encounters, in part inspired by the writing of anthropologist Tim Ingold, is an ongoing investigation into movement and change in relation to emergent forms, perceptions and intentions within an environment. *Etudes in Tension and Crisis*, involves sequences from popular film titles, such as Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, that are re-choreographed and re-configured to consider the action of emphasised performance and role play. *Messages from the Field* is an intimate performance to an audience of one, translating actions into language through a reading of a shared field of awareness.

These and other projects from the collective's work were joined together, explored, performed and discussed during Dog Kennel Hill Project's time at Brighton CCA. *You Can Probably Turn this Into Something* was a realisation of how the collective continuously feeds itself through performance and the encounters it creates.

Brighton CCA is open for 5 hours from midday until 5pm, Tuesday to Saturday. During this time Dog Kennel Hill Project repurposed the exhibition space to host rehearsals and performances. *The material is remembering, imagining and falling apart* is a looping choreographic score for 5 performers taking place across a Saturday and Sunday in early November. Gallery visitors were invited to walk through, sit for a while or stay for the duration.

Installation view, *You Could Probably Turn This Into Something*, Dog Kennel Hill Project, Brighton CCA 2019. Photo Rob Harris.

Heni: We envisaged this performance as a distinct set of rehearsed group choreographies that exist as 'floating islands' within a murky sea of ambiguous, solitary and qualitative movement states. The islands are clear; either because they have a distinct rhythm and pattern to them or because they contain content that is extreme or charged. The logic we follow in putting things together is uncanny and we definitely orient to the absurd

You may catch a locust reverberating by the large window, you may hear the collective voices together in brief tune, you may walk between wayfarers traversing the space or watch a familiar scene performed live

Rachel: We let the pattern emerge and we look for things in the instigation of what materials we put together

Heni: I think a lot of it is a sort of desire to just be immersed physically in a thing that is sort of active so you are active and you're active with a thing, it's the immersion into something that then allows meaning to emerge

Rachel: The work is the process for thinking, the relationships, the conversations, the encounters, the dynamics

Heni: We're rehearsing live in the gallery, unpicking and revisiting excerpts from different paths, shows and practices. It's not the same casts that were in the others ones, so it's almost like we're relearning work that we've already made, we're reprocessing it so it becomes something else anyway.

Devil's Dyke is a historic landscape near Brighton. A 100m deep V-shaped valley on the South

Downs Way. A popular location for walkers, Para-gliders and on Sunday 27 October, for Wayfaring. The group using DIY tripods on the open hill-side, navigate into the woods. Inviting passers-by to offer thoughts on the practice. A form of fieldwork you could say. One dog walker discussed the axis and the easel, a contemporary take on landscape painting, framing the scene through the sculpture. Working between poetics of movement, structures of support and performing in public, the opening of practice is able to offer new perspectives to a usually lone journey.

Can you tell us where it began for you, the notion of Wayfaring?

Ben: I was commissioned for an individual research project, a response to landscape in the gallery context. I was inspired by Tim Ingold's writing about wayfaring and transport:

Travelling is not a transactional activity between one place and another but a way of being. I acquired a manner of carrying on, of combining movement and attention that I have come to call wayfaring. The wayfarer sustains himself through actively engaging with the country that opens up along the path, the traveller and the line are one of the same.¹

I had been working with material and sticks for a long period of time, an embodied practice that began with 1 or 2 poles and then became 3 together. I made a decision to keep them together. This creates a mobile landscape in flux, sensing and surveying the body but also the body within the landscape. An approach to reconsider choreography, not one point to the



Performance documentation: *The material is imagining, remembering and falling apart*, Dog Kennel Hill Project. Brighton CCA 2019. Photo Paula Puncher.

next, but process along the way; you know just enough to be getting along with.

“Are you stupid?”

“Oh you don’t think about anyone else do you. You’re just a petty little blinkered man.”

“It’s about honour”

“What are you a knight?”²

The script is between each player as they swap chairs, simultaneously arguing across the table and helping each other pick up where they have left off. They talk of land, honour, what is right and wrong, fair and unjust. This is one of the ‘floating island’ scenes called *Choreography of an Argument Around a Table*. It stems from a theatre work made in 2015/16 in which debates about sex, violence and ownership descend into animalistic chaos punctuated by haunting piano etudes.

Heni: 3 years on, and post Brexit/Trump, we are reconstructing scenes from scripts and discovering that it is now even more difficult for us to assert a conviction to the words that represent positional stances, that are so overused that they transcend meanings. The reconstructions become like empty shells where the repetition of the cruelty of language becomes a negative version of itself.

Rachel: There’s something about harnessing the energy of tension and crisis, rather than structured language and practicing, of finding these core energetic ways of being and exercising those energetic forces that come through conflict

Heni: It’s like a switch, on off on off

Jack goes to screen. Screen becomes chair. Chair goes to paper. Paper becomes Shelley. Shelley goes to Jack. Jack becomes screen.

“How do you like it?”

“Jack!”

“What are you doing down here?”

“I just ... wanted to talk to you”

“Ok let’s talk ... what do you wanna talk about?”

“I can’t really remember”³

Participants join to learn about Feigning Feigning.

Heni: Putting on a role, like a cloak.

Becoming Shelley Duvall in *The Shining* (dir. Stanley Kubrick 1980) is an act of physical appropriation. Fear is expressed as trembling spine, wide mouth, eyebrows up, shifting steps. Commitment to the details of her rhythm and tone is everything. In this way you don’t have to hold onto the story, or the pain, or the trauma that she goes through, but you can play her completely, honouring all that she means, but letting it go in an instant.

Two people, one of whom is a reader can read you a message from the field. The field is all things known and unknown sensed and felt between us. The second person acts as your translator, to help you understand the message.

“I’m taking a reading. I’m getting messages from the field”.

Ben: Through enacting and embodying these others, things we’re kind of stepping into, you get this weird thing where you actually do invest in the energy

Heni: It’s about trying to channel things that are problematic in the world; if you can play with the substance of them. It’s also about intimacy and expectations within that. What we are really reading is this electric charge that happens in a close performative set up. We have to navigate boundaries with sharp senses.

Long Table Etiquette
Language, soft or hard?
Where do participation and engagement meet, cross, overlap?
Participate in shared authority, with intuitive state of ethics and durational negotiation
Not knowing⁴

→ <https://www.dogkennelhillproject.org/>



Performance documentation: The material is imagining, remembering and falling apart, Dog Kennel Hill Project. Brighton CCA 2019. Photo Paula Puncher.

- 1 Tim Ingold, *Lines: A Brief History*. Routledge 2007.
- 2 Dog Kennel Hill Project, script extract – *Choreography of an Argument Round a Table*, 2015.
- 3 Dog Kennel Hill Project, performance notes and script extract – *Shelley on a Loop*, 2015
- 4 Participant notes from *Ethics of Participation* long table discussion held at Brighton CCA with South East Dance, 28 November 2019.

The Waves

Nika Neelova

“The waves broke and spread their waters swiftly over the shore. One after another they massed themselves and fell; the spray tossed itself back with the energy of their fall. The waves were steeped deep-blue save for a pattern of diamond-pointed light on their backs which rippled as the backs of great horses ripple with muscles as they move. The waves fell; withdrew and fell again, like the thud of a great beast stamping.”¹

Following the path of distant ancestors the human body appears in and is born in water. It learns from water and it is delivered into a liquid world where the boundaries between entities are constantly blurred. The body is not confined to or defined by its skin limits and outlines. It belongs to a larger hydraulic cycle where tears and sweat become raindrops that fall into rivers that fall into oceans that form waves that crash back on land and absorbed into the ground reemerge at a new source. The life forms are essentially liquid. All the bodies are continuously permeating each other with free flows of fluid exchange.

“Blood, bile, intracellular fluid; a small ocean swallowed, a wild wetland in our gut; rivulets forsaken making their way from our insides to out, from watery womb to watery world: we are bodies of water.”² “Our planet neither gains nor relinquishes the water it harbours, but only witnesses its continual reorganization, redistribution, and relocation.”³ “breast milk [...] or amniotic waters [...] – are material metonyms of a planetary watery milieu that interpermeates and connects bodies, and bathes new kinds of plural life into being.”⁴ “Industrially produced chemicals are found in the blood and breast milk of every single living subject. They persist across generations, forward and back...”⁵

Gestation is the first phase of the body submerged in water. The placenta is a temporary organ that mediates between the mother and foetus, assuring the continuous exchange of nutrients and gases and permitting the two entities to coexist in one body whilst preventing their fusion.

“Evidence that cells travel from the developing foetus into the mother dates back to 1893, when the German pathologist Georg Schmorl found signs of these genetic remnants in women who had died of pregnancy-induced hypertensive disorder. Autopsies revealed ‘giant’ and ‘very particular’ cells in the lungs, which he theorised had been transported as foreign bodies, originating in the placenta.”

“Within weeks of conception, cells from both mother and foetus traffic back and forth across the placenta, resulting in one becoming a part of the other. During pregnancy, as much as 10 per cent of the free-floating DNA in the mother’s bloodstream comes from the foetus, and while these



Portrait of Friedrich Kiesler
Friedrich Kiesler, 1890-1965: Inside the Endless House, Böhlau, 1997

numbers drop precipitously after birth, some cells remain. This passage of cells means that women carry at least three unique cell populations in their bodies – their own, their mother’s, and their child’s – creating what biologists term a microchimera, named for the Greek fire-breathing monster with the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a serpent.”

Cupped hands and hollow vessels historically brought water from streams to mouths, likewise the water network was the first to infiltrate the architectural body. Mimicking the waterways of the human organism the first pipes nourished architecture and connected it to its mythological and geological bases.

“The ancient Greeks thought of the world’s waters as all one system, which percolated in from the sea in deep cavernous spaces within the earth. The Naiads were a type of female spirits, or nymphs, presiding over fountains, wells, springs, streams, brooks and other bodies of fresh water.”⁶ “Fountains and springs were believed to have mystical and medicinal powers and free-born citizens were bathed in them at birth, marriage and after death. The waters in which the bride was bathed at Athens were from Calirrhoe – the fountain with nine pipes that was believed to assure a long and happy life.”⁷ “A hundred thousand years ago [...] our ancestors [...] knelt down by brooks and streams to drink. Perhaps those of a higher intellectual powers learnt to cup their hands so that drinking would be easier. The use of the hollow vessel was the next step. In time they learnt to lead water through trenches dug in the mud or sand or using a fallen hollow tree as their first water pipe.”⁸

Entire cities are now built on top of gigantic branching or looping networks of water arteries and capillaries transporting water from aquifers and reservoirs through filtration and purifications systems to individual outlets. Much like blood vessels and the circulatory system transporting blood through the body sustain life assuring the survival of tissues, the survival of the human organs within the architectural bodies connected to this network is depended on the health of the system.

“Plumbing owes its name to the material that was used to manufacture pipes in ancient Rome. Plates of lead which had been cast on smooth beds of sand were rolled into sheets which in turn were bent around a wooden cylinder. During the reign of Queen Elisabeth the first apprenticeship laws were passed compelling plumbers to serve in apprenticeship for seven years. The biggest advance came in 1760, when the pipes were cast in non corroded lead from sectional moulds with metal cores, assuring the production of continuous lengths of pipes.” “In his essay “The Plumbers” Adolf Loos wrote that “the only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges” anticipating by almost two decades Marcel Duchamp, who in response to the rejection of his Fountain by the Salon des Independents for being plagiarism, a plain piece of plumbing said



in the words of Beatrice Wood: “The only works of art America has given are her plumbing and her bridges”⁹

“Buckminster Fuller’s expanded the concept of the toilet into that of a spaceship. For him, all houses were spaceships and all spaceships were houses. Mankind was always in outer space and was destined to return one day to whatever planet it had already come from...”¹⁰

As cities grew around the water networks so did the house grow around its human organs, becoming full of folds, learning to absorb and exchange fluids. Primary architectural structures were released from traditional aesthetics. They underwent a metamorphosis to become interconnected and fused into one living creature.

“[In Kiesler’s *Endless House*] architecture becomes an infinite, uterine cave nurturing a kind of translucent body.”¹¹ “The house is a human body, a living organism with the reactivity of a full-blooded creature,”¹² “Kiesler defines the house as the sum of every possible movement its inhabitants can make within it.[...] Its primary functions are capable of responding to a wide range of functions. [...]As Kiesler writes in the *Manifeste du Correalisme* functions are contained in the primary structure of the initial cell of the projects in the same way as the multiple specialised function of organs that are already contained in the amorphous embryo of the human body.[...] For Kiesler the *Endless House* is “a living organism and not just an arrangement of dead materials. The house is the epidermis of the human body”.¹³

The house becomes a metonym for the human body and this body is perpetually sinking into our disintegrating world. The continuity of water exchange is disrupted as the temperature rises, within the cycles of droughts and floods, the body suffers from disorienting hypothermia or heath death. As the tectonic plates sink into earth’s mantle the human created environment turns to ruin and goes down into the geological layer that is the abbreviation of this era.

“In the jungle, lifeforms abolish all sense of aesthetic distance. They are in your face— you need to keep them away, frequently, to avoid fatal disease. The temperature is roughly human body temperature, constantly, so it becomes hard at the level of deep sensation to maintain a boundary between where one’s skin stops and where the rainforest starts. The jungle is an entity that comes right up to your skin and penetrates it, beaming through you like x-rays.”¹⁴ “Early naturalists talked often about “deep time”—the perception they had, contemplating the grandeur of this valley or that rock basin, of the profound slowness of nature. But the perspective changes when history accelerates. What lies in store for us is more like what aboriginal Australians, talking with Victorian anthropologists, called ‘dreamtime,’ or ‘everywhen’: the semi-mythical experience of encountering, in the present moment, an out-of-time past, when ancestors, heroes,



and demigods crowded an epic stage. You can find it already by watching footage of an iceberg collapsing into the sea – a feeling of history happening all at once.”¹⁵ “Going up that river was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world, when vegetation rioted on the earth and the big trees were kings. An empty stream, a great silence, an impenetrable forest. The air was warm, thick, heavy, sluggish ... The long stretches of waterway ran on, deserted, into the gloom of overshadowed distances ... We were wanderers on a prehistoric earth, on an earth that wore the aspect of an unknown planet.”¹⁶ “Now the tide sinks. Now the trees come to earth; the brisk waves that slap my ribs rock more gently, and my heart rides at anchor, like a sailing-boat whose sails slide slowly down on to the white deck. The game is over.”¹⁷

As the planet absorbs humanity the scenario is not necessarily game over. Species could adapt to survive, mutate, create hybrid species. Species could learn from and respond to the changing circumstances of their environment. Species could undo themselves and return to their point of origin, and their embryo phase began in water. “The blue ruin of earth is the total work of art at the end of history. The earth will be buried at sea.”¹⁸

“Be like water making its way through cracks. Do not be assertive, but adjust to the object, and you shall find a way around or through it. If nothing within you stays rigid, outward things will disclose themselves. Empty your mind, be formless. Shapeless, like water. [...] Now, water can flow or it can crash.”¹⁹

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|----|--|----|---|
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| 2 | Astrida Neimanis ‘Bodies of Water’; Introduction: Figuring bodies of water, page 1; Bloomsbury Academic, edition 2017 | 12 | Frederick Kiesler; Pseudo-Functionalism in Modern Architecture, Partisan Review, 1949 |
| 3 | Astrida Neimanis ‘Bodies of Water’, Posthuman Gestationality, page 66; Bloomsbury Academic, edition 2017 | 13 | Friedrich Kiesler 1890-1965: Inside the Endless House, Böhlau, 1997 |
| 4 | Astrida Neimanis ‘Bodies of Water’, Embodying Water, page 39; Bloomsbury Academic, edition 2017 | 14 | Timothy Morton Hyperobjects Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World. The Age of Asymmetry, page 185; posthumanities 27, University of Minnesota Press, 2013 |
| 5 | Astrida Neimanis ‘Bodies of Water’, Embodying Water, page 40; Bloomsbury Academic, edition 2017 | 15 | David Wallace-Wells, ‘The Uninhabitable Earth: Life After Warming. Disasters no longer natural’, page 134; Tim Duggan Books, 2019 |
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| 7 | ‘The History of Sanitation. Plumbing then and now’, Bridgeport Brass Company, 1927 | 17 | Virginia Woolf ‘The Waves’, page 75; Oxford University Press New Edition, 2015 |
| 8 | ‘The History of Sanitation. Plumbing then and now’, Bridgeport Brass Company, 1927 | 18 | McKenzie Wark. ‘An Inhuman Fiction of Forces’, LEPER CREATIVITY: CYCLONOPEDIA SYMPOSIUM, page 39; Punctum books, 2012 |
| 9 | ‘Are we human?’ Notes on an archaeology of design by Beatriz Colomina & Mark Wigley. Design as perversion, page 194; Lars Muller Publishers 2016 | 19 | Bruce Lee, ‘Enter the Dragon’ 1973 Film Written by Michael Allin Directed by Robert Clouse Produced by Fred Weintraub, Paul Heller, Raymond Chow |
| 10 | ‘Are we human?’ Notes on an archaeology of design by Beatriz Colomina & Mark Wigley. Design as perversion, page 194; Lars Muller Publishers 2016 | | |

Supported by Henry Moore Foundation
All images: Courtesy of the artist

→ <http://www.nikaneelova.com/>

COMMUNAL: An Exhibition in Collaboration

Brighton CCA
24 March – 14 August 2020

COMMUNAL 2020 is an events based exhibition, actively exploring the possibilities for public action within an art gallery, prioritising the democratisation of culture. Everyone is invited to participate; working collaboratively to discover the potential of a creative practice and asking questions about contemporary art. COMMUNAL is an opportunity to discover the variety of arts practice today; to meet people who work with techniques, methodologies, thoughts and others to create. It is a chance to foster cross disciplinary dialogue; to share the issues we are all facing and inspire action through making.

The first COMMUNAL programme at Brighton CCA took place in Autumn 2019 inviting proposals for the use of the temporary use of the space. Whether it was activist groups coming together, artist-led workshops, performances or screenings each session was open to the public. In a society focused on private ownership, COMMUNAL focuses on ideas of shared space, ideas and resources. Building on this foundation, in 2020 Brighton CCA is staging the second edition of COMMUNAL across two sessions. The first, *Passages of Time* coinciding with the first UK solo exhibition by Katharina Wulff, and the latter, at end of the Summer, *Make it Work*, in partnership with Outside In, a charity working with artists who face barriers to participation in the art world.



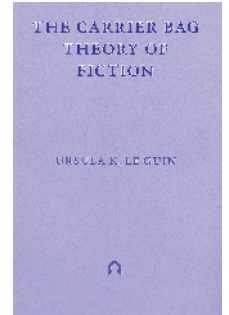
Scuola senza fine (School without end) by Adriana Monti, 1979
Image courtesy of Adriana Monti and Cinenova

PASSAGES OF TIME

‘We’ve all heard all about all the sticks and spears and swords, the things to bash and poke with, the long, hard things, but we have not heard about the thing to put things in, the container for the thing contained. That is a new story. That is news.’¹

Contemporary social and political culture is deeply rooted in the conception of the heroic individual. In her text *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, Ursula K. Le Guin suggests an alternative reading of the historical narrative of human history as something collective and collaborative. Taking this as a starting point, *Passages of Time* works in three chapters to examine alternative understandings of society’s trajectory and the models of organisation which reflected in it. The first chapter will consider the historical roots of our discourse, the second how these are manifested in the present and the third how we can effect change for the future. The project will examine why Le Guin’s message continues to resonate through time, bringing together cross generational ideas and inviting visitors to join local organisations, artists and activists in a programme of shared activity.

The Feminist Bookshop is an independent bookstore that seeks to support and promote self-identifying female and non-binary writers, creatives and entrepreneurs in all that they do. Founded by Ruth in 2019 in her front room, the bookshop gathers feminist perspectives with spoken word, life drawing, music and the book itself. During COMMUNAL the Feminist Bookshop will be transposed into the gallery with an accompanying book club and events programme. In addition, a research project and installation based on the inventory and use of books at St Peter’s Library will run alongside the exhibition.



MAKE IT WORK

For the second session of this edition of COMMUNAL, Brighton CCA focuses on the potential for the gallery to be an open resource, its place within the community and its location within an art school and university. Working with the charity Outside In and its artist members, *Make it Work* is a free programme of training, discussion and network building, addressing the challenges presented by being an artist today. From tax returns to community building, selling your time to diversifying your practice, this open source project re-imagines the gallery space as site for practical, creative support.

1 Ursula Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, Ignota Books 2019.

Conditions of Being Artists and Archives¹

Sue Breakell, Archivist Leader, Design Archives, University of Brighton
and Dr Liz Bruchet, independent researcher, archive curator and
oral historian.

In 2019 Giles Round was commissioned by Brighton CCA to make a
new body of work using the University of Brighton Design Archives
as his starting point. The result was an exhibition and series of events –
Untitled, circa 1994 – which ran from 19 January to 7 March 2020. Here,
Sue Breakell and Liz Bruchet reflect on this fruitful point of engagement.

If the archive is ‘a place of dreams... of longing and appropriation’²

And if what we find in the archive is ourselves³ and ‘the
document... only tells what the researcher wants it to tell’⁴

And if archival research is ‘taking stock of cultural merchandise,
as well as of the personal baggage often tagged onto it,
and attempting to re-establish its value anew... an activity
where subject and object are interwoven enough to become
indistinguishable’⁵

And if through that interweaving, the archive is a site of
‘fertile contamination’⁶

What, then, is the particular work of the artist? Hal Foster
famously identified ‘an archival impulse’ at work in art
practice, characterising a wide-ranging tendency, which seems
to resist definition as much as it calls for it.⁷

His description presupposes two key features of archive-oriented
art. First, these visual arts practices not only make use of the archive
as source and subject, but also as an artistic form and medium. Their
work is designed and designated for visual presentation “staging”;
the archive in its widest possible configurations and connotations.⁸
Artists combine the informational, spatial, aesthetic and temporal
qualities of archival records and archival constructs with the
platforms and modes of presentation available to them, and do so in
experimental and highly idiosyncratic ways. In the multidimensional
exhibitionary frames for contemporary art, the archival construct
has been elaborated as visual motifs, as in the much cited work of
Christian Boltanski.⁹ It has come to describe an aesthetic model, for
instance, in the ‘quantitative ensemble’ of photographic images,¹⁰
or in the sculptural accumulation of records.¹¹ It has been reworked
into the notion of a ‘living archive’ that can be re-enacted through
performance or participatory practices.¹² Archived audio and
visual records have been reformulated as multi-screen cinematic
representations of the past and preserved data has been activated as
an evolving ‘archive’ to be performed and projected in the gallery
space.¹³ Some artists have explicitly engaged with archives as a form
of artistic research, which seeks to develop and present alternative
organisation and experiences of knowledge.¹⁴



Installation view:
Untitled, circa 1994, Giles Round. Brighton CCA 2020. Photo Rob Harris.

A second presupposition: that artists' engagement with archives and the metaphor of 'the archive', pivot on the freedom to pursue archival activities experimentally. Artistic practices can reconstitute and reconfigure archival materials in ways that visually, spatially and chronologically dismantle and re-imagine conventional methods and modes of historical representation. These practices may embrace the speculative, performative or fictive qualities of archives, towards 'playful, improper use'.¹⁵ They may wilfully seek to alter or even destroy an archive, or an archival system.¹⁶ This permission is echoed in the rhetoric of alternative, 'anarchival' and 'counter-archival' models surrounding the resulting works of art.¹⁷ While artists may relish the archives designation as 'a territory, not a particular narrative', or as a 'process of objective chance' which allows them to 'construct new realities'; when posited as part of creative a practice, an archive becomes whatever an artist deems it to be.¹⁸

It stands then, that when writing about artists' approaches to the archive, we must embrace the very loosest definition of the 'archive'; a malleable construct, a symbolic vocabulary, an evocation, a quality, an imaginary, a metaphor as much as a literal collection of documentary records. Christian Boltanski suggested that as an artist, working with found archival sources, he is merely a conduit for the representation of common experiences – "it is the spectators looking at the work who make the piece, using their own background".¹⁹ The artist brings to the viewer's attention some quality of the archive that has universal potential, presented anew by the artist. What is appropriated may be archive content, or archive practices, spaces and performances, as well as the roles of archivist/steward or curator/interpreter.

And so the roles of creator, curator, consumer and custodian of the archive collapse and combine, as does the temporal separation between those activities. All viewers are one, all encounters are the same in some character. By disregarding boundaries the artist contributes to the porosity of the archival 'membrane' which, as Ketelaar describes, allows meaning to emerge from, and be added to, the archive.²⁰ In doing so the artist adopts the archive as a method and medium, defining one outcome of that perpetual state of 'becomingness'.²¹ The artist mediates between the viewer and the archive, to a greater or lesser degree, shaping the subsequent viewer's experience.

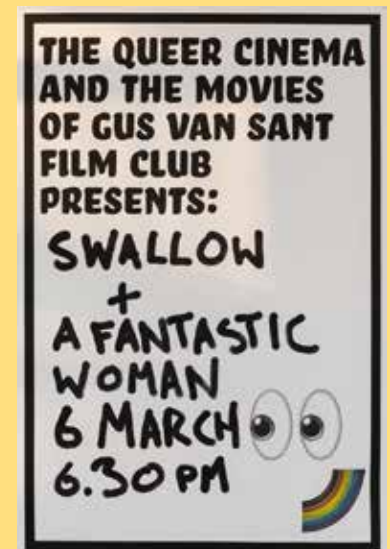
The creative authoring of archival materials also relates to artists handling their own archives. As Beatrice von Bismarck describes, 'self-archiving' may be undertaken by artists for both pragmatic and creative reasons.²² Artists may undertake archival activities as a form of institutional critique, as a contribution to the art historical record and/or to shape their practice, image and legacy including 'creative acts of resistance'.²³ The interconnections between artists and their artworks, archives and archival practices have deepened as creative practitioners, curators and institutions alike are increasingly aware of the cultural, economic and intellectual value ascribed to archives.²⁴

In the traditional model, 'the archivist, librarian and professional researcher create the maps and record the journeys into the archive that produce the images we have of the possibilities of the material'.²⁵ More recent forays by historians into archives might fill in the detail on this map: with the turn to subjective modes, their journeys may produce

travelogues, reflecting not only on the terrain, but also on their own affective responses to the experience. These accounts bring us closer to artistic practices that use the self as lens for material interpretation and allude to a creative freedom for which the archive is but the start, the jumping off point. In a similar dissolving, the notion of the archivist as a keeper of objective truth, having no opinions about the material, is long dead.²⁶ Archivists 'co-create the archive' and are 'not just the curator of what was leftover'.²⁷ The archive offers an arena of cross fertilisation and hybrid position-taking, enabling engagement between artists and archivists with artists at times adopting the archivists' position.²⁸ It can serve as a conceptual, and at times literal meeting point between creative practitioners as they work across boundaries of practice and modes of knowledge production; moving between subject positions including artist as collector, researcher, documentarian, ethnographer, and curator.²⁹ If we borrow David Balzer's definition in his polemic *Curationism*, of curators as imparters of value through the processes of selection and arrangement, then much archive-related art involves a strong curatorial practice by which the artist is 'designator and legislator of what counts as art... guarantor of the authority of good choices in culture... a magician who, through careful selection, transforms trash into gold'.³⁰

The archive emerges then as a fruitful site and source for artistic, archival and curatorial entanglements.³¹ It is a multi-modal realm of practice that can embrace the evolving skills and expertise of the 'traditional' archivist, but also be much more adaptive to a range of subjective and interpretive practices: which can be a generative, iterative acts reaching beyond the archive space and its traditional remit. 'Archiving' can be seen as a creative interpretive methodology that captures and fixes a version of a life, an event, a moment in time. Artistic practices have been integral to this shaping of the archive, as artists show us new ways to look at old things.

Hand tinted film poster for
Untitled, circa 1994, Giles Round, 2020.
Photo: Rob Harris.





Above: Friday Night Club, Brighton CCA 2020.
Part of the *Untitled*, circa 1994 exhibition by Giles Round.
Photo: Antonia Maria Nicolaides



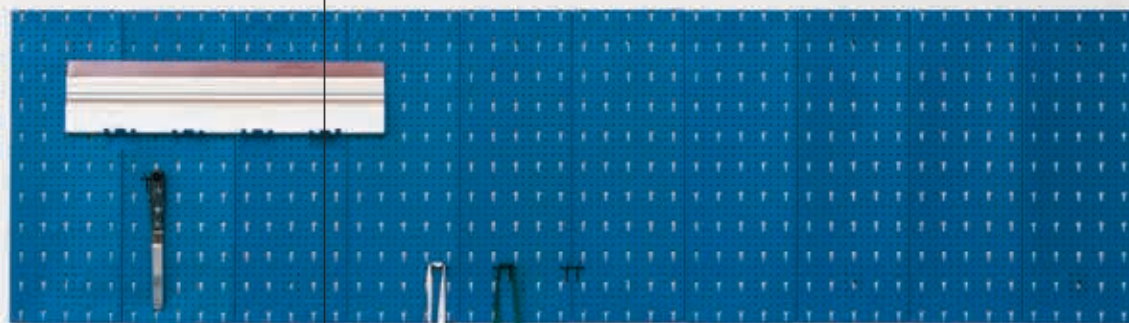
Above Right: Giles Round, *Untitled*, c. 1955/61, 2020.
Brighton CCA. Photo: Rob Harris.



Right: Installation view including set up for The Queer
Cinema and Movies of Gus Van Sant Film Club, part of
Untitled, circa 1994, Giles Round. Brighton CCA 2020.
Photo: Rob Harris.



Installation view, *Untitled*, circa 1994, Giles Round.
Brighton CCA 2020. Photo: Rob Harris



Installation view, *Untitled*, circa 1994, Giles Round.
Brighton CCA 2020. Photo: Rob Harris

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University of Brighton: Centre for Arts and Wellbeing

Duncan Bullen and others

The Centre for Arts and Wellbeing (CAW) at the University of Brighton develops research and enterprise initiatives that directly benefit the wellbeing of individuals and communities, innovating in a wide range of practices where the arts improve people's lives.

The university has a long and illustrious history in art and design practices, medicine and healthcare, and was a pioneer in community engagement and co-productive research. The Centre for Arts and Wellbeing brings these strengths together, fostering novel, vital, creative and collaborative modes and methods through which a range of health and wellbeing issues are investigated and produce public benefit.

Research in this area makes a vital contribution to contemporary cultural life for communities well beyond the university, while refining the academic understanding of how and why the development of arts and wellbeing interweave.

The Centre for Arts and Wellbeing is organised through five themes representing creative practice approaches outlined below.

The centre is led by Duncan Bullen, based in the university's School of Art centreforartsandwellbeing@brighton.ac.uk

Drawing for Health and Wellbeing

In the context of growing national and international interest in the relationship between drawing and cognition, perception, visual information and communication, we encourage critical and creative debate about drawing across a range of disciplines.

We are particularly interested in the use and value of drawing as a process in health and wellbeing contexts. Drawing research is multidisciplinary and has a range of interpretations and applications. The CAW's drawing for health and wellbeing theme facilitates and promotes drawing research, scholarship and social partnership work across the centre membership. We develop collaborative drawing research projects and partnership opportunities with individuals and organisations externally.



Year of Drawing book on display at the Marks Make Meaning exhibition, University of Brighton, 2018. Photo: Kate Davies.

Design for Change

Design has been a major strength at the University of Brighton for many decades and has contributed to developments in community cohesion, sustainability, therapeutic engagement and accessibility.

We bring a specific focus on how the principles and practices of design can be used to gain new insights into the complex challenges of health and wellbeing – both within and beyond formal care settings. The group specialises in practice-based and multidisciplinary approaches to design research and benefits from long-standing relationships with global institutions including Nagoya University of the Arts in Japan, KHIO, the National Academy of the Arts in Norway, projects in Ghana and a range of institutions in New Zealand and Australia.



Concept design for encouraging healthy movement for people with rheumatoid arthritis through micro-adaptations to everyday tasks. The toothbrush allows the user to practice grip strength exercises as part of a daily routine. Photo: Tom Ainsworth.

Making Well

Through the act of making – through our choices and uses of materials, and the ways we make our world from those materials – we are involved in critical decisions that impact upon the wellbeing of our whole society.

This theme of the Centre for Arts and Wellbeing brings academic and creative attention to making, materials and craft techniques, with research that is applied to a diverse range of fields in wellbeing, from health to climate change, and has an influence upon education, sustainability and innovation. Expert understanding comes from a range of scholarly and practice based disciplines including fashion and textiles, craft, material sciences and architecture.

Research has investigated issues such as: scabies in care homes, using textiles as a medium and working in collaboration with the Brighton and Sussex Medical School; the relationship between textiles, repetitive processes and mental health, particularly in relation to the rites of bereavement; and creative research into materials to enhance sustainability dialogues.

Inclusion Through Narrative

The ways in which individuals and societies make and communicate their stories influences identity, builds understanding and resilience, shares diversity and nurtures equality.

This theme considers how storytelling can be used to extend cross-disciplinary communities of practice across health, the humanities and the arts. It operates a programme of symposiums and a book series with Intellect. This strand has worked notably with the BAME community, survivors of domestic abuse, refugees and those with experiences of HIV and Aids.



Creative Methodologies

Creative methodologies bring people together to make use of creative tools, techniques and knowledge to understand more about the worlds in which we live, explore problems, and/or work towards solutions.

It is a rapidly developing area of research, which cuts across disciplinary boundaries, and opens up fruitful connections with partners from outside the higher education context.

These approaches can be conceptualised as a third paradigm, which sits outside the old qualitative-quantitative binary, radically changing how we think about the nature and potential of research. The Creative Methodologies stream brings together researchers from across the university who use creative methods to collect, analyse and/or disseminate data on health and wellbeing.

Our methods: are arts based, are transformative, social-justice based, use technology in inventive ways; and/or incorporate innovative mixed methods. We also work with external practitioners, artists and community partners to adopt a transdisciplinary, community focused approach to research. Our research outputs incorporate innovative, impactful forms such as poems, exhibitions, plays, dance, film and web based tools.

Case Study: The Clothes on our Backs

A collaboration between Jess Moriarty, Diversity Lewes and Brighton Museum, responding to findings from the National Union of Students' report, 'Race for equality,' that identified continuing, unresolved issues around Black Asian Minority Ethnic student participation within higher education. A series of workshops were run at Brighton Museum with university staff and students and members of the Sussex BAME community, using the museum's Khanga archive. The project found that working together, academics and community organisations can explore and challenge existing pedagogy and co-devise new curriculum that use storytelling to help HE imagine better futures and make them happen.

Part of Ignite and delivered by the University of Brighton's Community University Partnership Programme.

Absence - Mother without her child made from paper-based clay, Jules Findley, 2017.

Enabling Access and Preservation of Cultural Artworks Through Novel Digital Technologies

Dr. Karina Rodriguez Echavarria and Polly Wright

The following interview between Dr. Karina Rodriguez Echavarria, Principal Lecturer Computing, Engineering and Mathematics, University of Brighton and Polly Wright, Programme Producer, Brighton CCA, is a starting point to thinking about technological and scientific advances in relation to the cultural realm and the curator's role to care.

Dr. Karina Rodriguez Echavarria introduced Brighton CCA to her continuing research for the digitisation and care of objects and environments, primarily in the cultural realm. This work has several desired outcomes; to consider experiential access to historical artefacts and cultural artworks held by museums, to discover alternative ways to preserve collections, to democratise and decolonise objects globally and create an accessible approach to learning through novel digital technologies. This cross-sector research works to, 'influence the way museums operate with a shared long-term goal: to allow people across the world to learn and enjoy our joint history.'



Polly Wright: What has been the catalyst to try and effect how museums work?

Karina Rodriguez Echavarria: Many people think of museums and galleries as being full of objects from the past without a connection to their personal history. Our interaction with objects in the museum is often impeded by glass cabinets or physical barriers. These barriers prevent our senses from fully experiencing the significance, materiality and craft mastery which was displayed by the creators of these artefacts. It is through close contact with these objects, that we come to understand the skill that our ancestors had, especially when the tools and scientific knowledge that was available to them was far from what is available today. It is also from experiencing these historical objects that we can connect our daily lives to that of our ancestors.

PW: So, in a sense, technology can bridge the divide between the need to preserve an object and the impetus to offer visitors a more immediate experience of cultural history?

If the grandchildren of our children are to inherit these objects, then they need to be conserved. Fragile objects must be handled with care or we risk these irreplaceable parts of our history being destroyed. Our research in computational and digital technologies aims to provide alternative means for people to fully experience cultural artworks while minimizing risks to the objects themselves. At the same time we support experts in understanding how they can better protect objects from deteriorating in order to maintain them in good condition. This is not always easy, as materials inevitably degrade and understanding this process is critical to take preventive action.

PW: Can you give an example of a technology that you use?

KRE: Many people have heard of 3D technologies and may well have encountered them in everyday life through fancy computer games for example. However their potential applications are extremely diverse. So here we use these 3D technologies to accurately document the shape, and sometimes the appearance, of an object. Photogrammetry and 3D scanning are examples of these techniques. Once we have produced a digital 3D copy of the cultural artwork a wide range of possibilities opens up. For example the digital information from an artefact can be widely shared online. So the knowledge it represents is no longer locked up in a single location or even restricted to the object itself.

PW: Can this reproductive work be met with criticism?

KRE: Sceptics might argue that the value of an artefact cannot be reproduced by 3D means. But 3D technologies opens up the possibility of democratising cultural heritage and creating alter-

native meanings for objects by different groups of people. Our research examines the potential of these reproductions or replicas to engage diverse audiences of cultural institutions. For example visually impaired people can now experience custom made replicas of objects to enhance their understanding of historical artworks and children can enjoy hands on activities with replicas to learn about past civilizations. Through our research, we often observed that visitors in museums are still hesitant to touch replicas or try hands on activities with them.

PW: It feels really exciting, especially now that society continues to work with integrated technology in daily life. In her book *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa contests the view that care is something only humans do, and I find it interesting to expand this to your research, so how can the conception of the curator evolve to include advancements in technology?

KRE: The current societal debate over inclusivity, participation, and decolonisation is forcing museums to rethink what and who they are for and how they can best serve society.

Our research highlights that 3D technologies can support museums to adapt to changing social, political, financial, environmental and other challenges. For instance, creating physical copies allows museums to repatriate cultural artworks to their communities of origin, or to display objects without having to transport them across the world. It can also be a starting point for talking to different communities about repatriation and decolonisation.

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about all the sticks
and spears and swords...
but we have not heard
about the thing to put
things in, the container
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