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Hireth

A narrative of time, place, space and memory through the practice of hand knitting



**An exegesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters of Fine Arts
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Abstract

Guy de Maupassant wrote; "Our memory is a more perfect world than the universe: it gives back life to those who no longer exist". (Maupassant)

The central focus of this study draws on exploring the relationship between memory, loss and the need to seek comfort through the process of knitting. This exegesis reveals how personal trauma is the impetus for the creation of my work by examining my thoughts, emotions and perceptions of the world, as a way to approach and discuss overwhelming emotional experiences. I seek connections and parallel experiences with others through the narrative threads woven through my work using the concept of Hireth: a Cornish or Kernow word which means a homesickness for a place you can never return to, a place which maybe never was. The nostalgia, the yearning, the grief for the lost place of your past. (Tabios, 2018)

The study weaves together a range of research methods, primarily my autoethnography, interviews with fellow knitters, reading and familial sources found through photographs and film, to investigate how the creation of objects can be said to "hold time" (Harris, Barnett., Bryan-Wilson, & George, 2015).

Knitting is a creative method I use to research and understand the concept of hireth. Knitted objects are imprinted with care. Knitting takes dedication, it is a deliberate act and has an intimacy between materials and maker. Time becomes imprinted in and through objects made by the intimate act of creation. Knitting by hand is slow, highly demanding and time consuming. Time is suspended, memories are reactivated and create a sense of safety, purposeful control and the familiarity of close family bonds. I come from a family of knitters so it could be said that it is in my blood. Knitting has been a dominating influence in my life. My methodology for researching and generating projects derives from using a range of media in which ideas are aligned with family history.

Knitting practice through rhythm and repetition ignites and stretches the imagination and allows for the possibility to meander into another world or place where memories are activated. My research on hireth seeks to arouse and seek reciprocal emotions and perceptions in others.

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Introduction (*raglavar*)

Cornish Gansey,

Cable patterns need extra wool. Measurements 107 – 112cm chest.

I have constructed work through experimenting with fibre and wool to uncover how textiles and particularly the act of knitting, can be used to express my sense of time, space and place. Knitting has been a method to research and express feelings associated with trauma; namely separation from home and struggling with undiagnosed dyspraxia. This will be more fully investigated in the section *Knitting and the brain*. My practice has included an exploration of a wide variety of techniques and materials - traditional and non-traditional. Sometimes I follow a prescribed pattern whilst making knitted items such as blanket (*Jenn*) or a gansey (traditional Cornish jumper or jersey). Often, I don't. I let the material dictate the method and means in the creation of the object. I like to experiment and break rules with knitting such as using under or oversized needles and textiles such as blue farming twine, not usually associated with knitting and domestic use. This often creates surprises. I can start with a concept, what I want to make but intuitively produce something; an object, an artwork that confounds my expectations. As I create, I log the emotions, thoughts and memories that are ignited through this process. This can take the form of sketches, collages, sculptures and blog entries that reflect these thoughts, feelings, emotions and memories. It is confirming to visualize concepts through the materiality of the medium used in order to project forward and consolidate ideas around my chosen topic of research. I find it useful to start with the material in hand and envisage approaches – Where does this remind me of? What place is represented by this material? What time and space are conceived? With an initial idea in hand, I turn my attention to personal memories and the history of family.

This text explores the Cornish concept of hireth. There is no direct English translation for this word but it can be understood in terms of loss and loneliness for a place you can never return to or perhaps never even existed. Research methodology has included using autobiographical and biographical accounts linked with the diaspora of Cousins' Jacks' and Jennys', (as Cornish emigrants came to be known). Personal and collective memories are explored through the history of Cornwall to define a sense of self identity and construct a sense of belonging. Knitting practice provides an approach between how time, place and space are inextricably linked to memory and identity. My research of contemporary artist influences and historical analysis of material culture has sought to examine how thoughts and emotions are universal perceptions. Where possible the language of Cornwall, Kernow has been used to emphasize the connection of time and space and as an integral component of a my identity.

Methodology (*dyghtyans*)

Through my practice of working in textiles and other materials, my research has sought to gain access into the relationship between memory, loss and the need to seek comfort through the process of creating with fibre. Sometimes the yarn I use is soft and caresses my fingers evoking memories such as a blanket I had as a small child made from soft cashmere wool – an association with softness, warmth, protection, innocence and a place of safety. I have explored how objects can be said to “hold time”. (Bennett, 2010)

My research was centred around a family object (*Image 1*) – my father's jumper that has been passed down through the generations. It has held significant importance for me as a memento of time and place over the last seventy-five years.



Image 1: Dad's original jumper, 1945

Hireth, nostalgia and diaspora

Allow extra wool when cable patterns are used. Use patterns from panels 1 – 7.

"Hireth is the link with the long-forgotten past, the language of the soul and the call to the inner self. It speaks of rocks from the earth, from the trees and in the waves. It's always there." (Bethel, 2003)

Interruption (*godor*) through diaspora

Materials: 5ply pure wool, 800g.

My history is closely linked with the history of Cornwall which is primarily one of struggle, strength and adaptability.

Emigration was and continues to be a major factor in the culture and history of Cornwall, shaping its past and future.

Cornwall over the centuries has seen vast numbers of its population emigrating to the far corners of the globe from the Americas to Africa and the southern oceans. The saying goes that "at the bottom of every hole in the world you'll find a Cornishman".

The effects of diaspora on the social and cultural heritage of Cornwall brought both benefits and devastation to the population. Reflecting my history, Cornish often emigrated with other Cornish friends or family, taking precious components of their culture with them in the form of songs, dances, language and food. Through diaspora, it is estimated that only 10% of Cornwall's population comes from Cornish ancestry. This has impacted hugely on the number of people having knowledge of and understanding of the spoken language. The Cornish or Kernow language had largely become extinct but in 2002, Kernow was officially recognised as a minority language by the European Union and efforts are being made to retain and promote the language. *Dasserghyans Kernowek* or the revival of the Cornish language, has been moved from extinct to critically endangered by UNESCO in 2009 as schools in Cornwall now offer students the opportunity to learn Kernow, encouraged by The Bards of Gorsedh Kernow, a non-political cultural group based in Cornwall. It is a heritage that makes Cornish unique and separate from the rest of Britain. Part of my practice has been to apply my emerging grasp of Kernow

contributing and upholding the traditions of Kernow. Learning a language opens up new ways of thinking, viewing the world and expressing myself.

Philip Marsden wrote:

“Language is one of the defining characteristics of humanity...it reflects the concerns, the lives of those who speak it...the soul of the people”. (Marsden, 2014)

In The Guardian article, ‘There are two Cornwall’s’, the paradise of my fantasies and the place I’ve moved to, Tanya Gold wrote:

“But strangest of all is to witness from afar your country of birth become something you no longer recognise. Then you realise that maybe the seeds of unprecedented disorder were lingering in the soil you walked on. You just never knew” (Gold, 2017).

I left the UK in 2005 like many before me, hoping for a new life, an adventure and a safe haven for my children. It was a totally selfish act and one that brought condemnation and outright opposition from family. In the fifteen years since emigrating to New Zealand, only one family member has visited.

Emigrating comes with a lot of guilt. My eldest daughter had just started secondary school, made her friends and was establishing her own life. She was very unhappy and took a long time to recover. Family ties are stretched to breaking point. It took many years for my family to acknowledge I’d made the move for good and that I had made a success of it. But the guilt gnaws at me and clinging to the past assists when dealing with the present. In a country of all new sights, sounds and emotions, hanging onto the past creates a sense of comfort and knitting is where I retreat to in times of turmoil and despair as the repetitive nature of the practice soothes and calms my brain.

My retreat to the familiar took on new heights as I sought to establish my identity separate from my family. Who and what I am and where I came from took on enormous consequences and is reflected in my work. I started reading novels and history books that are reminiscent of my childhood

Kobbya in Kernow means to break or bruise. Diaspora is an expression of *kobbya*; it’s painful and it hurts. A separation from home carries with it a burden of guilt not carried by those left behind. I missed out on important birthdays, my mother’s death, weddings, funerals – the highs and lows of family existence. Separation caused a profound sense of loneliness which is succinctly encapsulated in the word *hireth*. This expressed how I was feeling, because the feeling (*omglewans*) is indefinable. Moving abroad changes your perspective. My belief system has changed immeasurably from my childhood but questions arise, who am I now? Where do I belong? Where are my roots? It is a loneliness that all who experience diaspora can seem to acknowledge.

I don’t regret emigrating, but I regret some of the consequences of losing touch, losing a perceived sense of identity.

The history of knitting is one of diaspora

Circular needle size 2 1/4mm and 1 x cable needle.

Knit (gwia)

Knitting itself has a long and complicated history which finds parallels with the notion of human diaspora. Knitting was an important innovation because it used up scraps of precious materials and was an adaptable medium to use. Wool could be moulded through the process of knitting to fit the human body not just cover it. This implied care and individuality. Items became decorative and moved beyond functionality. Knitting was quick to learn and provided a method to communicate between makers. (Segal, [https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/Stitch by stitch, a brief history of knitting and activism](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/Stitch%20by%20stitch,%20a%20brief%20history%20of%20knitting%20and%20activism), 2017)

Trauma (*galarow*) and Mourning (*kynvan*)

Cast on 336 sts. using backward loop cast on method.

Thread in my practice is used to examine the notions of past memories and how they impact on the present. *Grandma's Dress* (image 3) attempts to remove a distance between myself and the person I never knew. I feel her loss even though I never met her because she lived through the stories my dad told me and through family photographs. I longed to meet her, knowing this will never happen caused a deep sense of sadness. I am named after her and have been told that I have a lot of her mannerisms and look very much like her. To convey these feelings, the unwearable knitted dress expresses emotional contraction. The materiality of the garment is scratchy and difficult to manipulate because the wool was designed for carpets. It didn't meld in the same way as knitting wool, pulling against stitches and hurting my wrists and fingers while knitting emulated emotional and psychological discomfort. *Grandma's Dress* (Image 2) is a piece remaining unfinished - it can never be fully realised.



Image 2: Grandma's Dress 2019 (Strotha – tighten, squeeze, restrict)

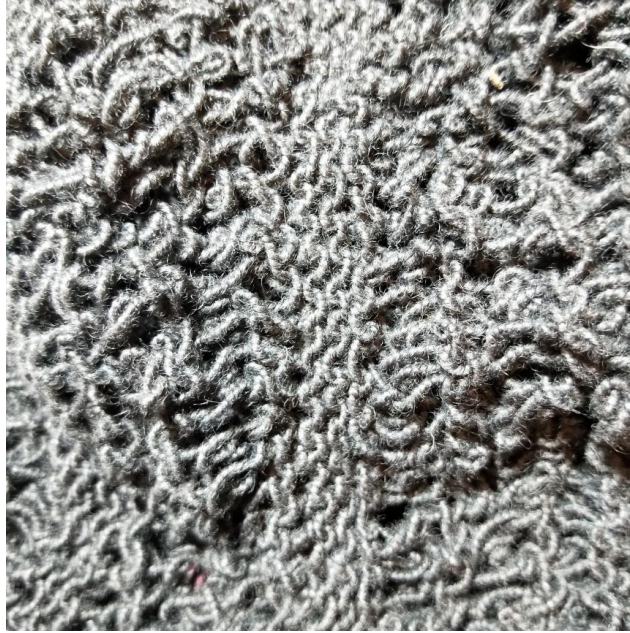


Image 3: detail of Grandma's Dress

Influences (*adwedhya*)

Rib K.3, P.3 rib on each row until work measures 8cm. increase 12 sts. evenly on the last row 348 sts. Check tension :22sts. and 42 rows to 10cm.

Louise Bourgeois

Part of my research focuses on the work of a number of female artists who work/ed in textiles.

Bourgeois's installations and assemblages were heavily influenced by family memories and childhood experiences which left indelible marks on her psyche.



Image 4: Momento Mori, Dad's identity bracelet. Photograph 2018

Bourgeois drew heavily on her earliest childhood memories as inspiration for her artistic output. Her work confronts her disturbing experiences of growing up in a dysfunctional household. It parallels many of the same themes described in this thesis in terms of her manipulation of textiles. Her purpose of

creating textile installations expressed and replicated her inner trauma by relocating emotions onto the material she worked with. Bourgeois's practice was cathartic; a methodology by which she was able to transfer the negativity of unhappy memories into the objects she created and thus alleviate emotional trauma. Art became her therapy and gave her mental stability. She said,

"I need to make things. The physical interaction with the medium has a curative effect. I need the physical acting out. I need to have these objects exist in relation to my body" (Mapplethorpe, 1988).

Bourgeois's parents' characteristics in many ways echo my own, but in reverse. Whilst my father was level-headed and reliable, my mother was volatile and emotionally charged creating much anxiety at times and the need for me to manipulate materials as a form of self-expression and therapy. Bourgeois's work can in many ways can be said to be autobiographical. Her *Cell* series draws on conflicting themes of remembering and forgetting. The artist referred to the work as cells in order to visually reflect her feelings of being entrapped and to confront her traumatic memories from a childhood steeped in emotional turmoil. The objects found in make references to home and family. She called these objects, *part-objects*. Not made by her own hands but deliberately chosen found objects reminiscent of domesticity.

"Clothing is ... an exercise in memory. It makes me explore the past: how did I feel when I wore that. They are like signposts in the search for the past." (Gorovoy, 1997).

In her installation, *Pink Days and Blue Days*, the dresses and shirts hang in a space like a laundry cupboard frozen in time. They speak of an emptiness and a sadness akin to her domestic isolation and childhood trauma. In a similar way, her work has inspired me to produce visual representatives of childhood memories. Whilst Bourgeois's work speaks of life and home through emotional trauma, my work concerns trauma through loss and homelessness. *Grandma's Dress* and *Dad's Jumper* are unwearable objects. They are unwearable deliberately because of their scale and the materials used is meant to create a feeling of discomfort. Their visual crudeness dominates the space where they hang as deliberate attempt to confront and amplify feelings of unease and anxiety.

Chiharu Shiota

Chiharu Shiota is a contemporary Japanese installation artist who has inspired me to consider how textiles can be used to draw in space. Her use of material to weave installations with thread, speaks of the burden of and collection of memories. Her threads are used to collect and connect objects together to form a place called home. The threads overwhelm and fill the space thus drawing in space. Chiharu said of her installation, *Trace of Memory*,

"when I weave these patterns they reflect how I'm feeling". (Colucci, 2014).

Shiota's work speaks of a connection from past, present and future. Her work is reminiscent of knitting with giant needles, a practice close to my heart. Her works present a feeling of unease and ambiguity which I find intriguing and at the same time repelling. I am captivated by the circulatory techniques used to create vast installation pieces weaving time and place eerily coexisting in space. After seeing her work, I was inspired to create *Grandma's Dress*. The scale, sense of isolation and suspension of time has a haunting quality which I wished to explore using a similar approach. It's a garment waiting to be possessed, suspended in time and space.

Jennifer Loeber

Jennifer Loeber is a New York-based artist whose work *Left Behind* profoundly influenced my practice and research into memory and grief. *Left Behind* documents in photos the artist's mother from the 1960s and 1980s juxtaposed with objects and belongings in a way to desensitise and cope with loss. She writes:

"When my Mom died suddenly in 2013, I found myself overwhelmed by the need to keep even the most mundane of her belongings. But instead of providing comfort, they became a source of deep sadness and anxiety. The only way I could imagine moving past it all was to focus on how to interact with these objects cathartically." (Loeber, *Left behind*, 2014)

Loeber uses objects to connect with the mother she has lost. These objects became the embodiment of her mother making the pain increase and causing depression and anxiety. Loeber used her exhibition posted through Instagram as a cathartic release from her pain, "Diminishing my own sentimentality towards the objects my Mom left behind".

"After Dad died, I felt the same need to hold onto items as a way of keeping his presence with me. Over time this need to hold on has changed in many ways influencing the way I deal with and cope with grief and loss. The story of my grief has taken the form of telling through knitting. I replace the original objects in order to form a way of disassociating myself from the pain associated with them. This allows a gap, a space in which to step back, acknowledge the pain but not be affected by it in the same way. Combined with the therapeutic methodology of knitting, it has been a form of healing. For many years I did not deal with the pain of loss and grief. Isolating myself in another country, severing contacts with my place of birth allowed me to bury my feelings in a myriad of ways in order not to have to deal with grief and loss" (Loeber, *Left Behind*, 2014).

Loeber's trauma like mine, draws deeply on her sense of loss and separation and her practice of knitting to alleviate pain.

Memory (*kov*)

Place a marker at the middle stitch of a P.3. and another on the opposite side. Continue in garter sts for the sides keeping correct tension.

In 1945, my father turned eighteen. With the usual pleasantries and greetings sent, the letterbox contained Dad's conscription papers. He readily confessed to me when I myself turned eighteen, that he had in fact cried non-stop for three days following the arrival of his orders. His thoughts turned to the actuality that his end could and would be soon and he was utterly bereft; not at the thought of death but of the life that he had hoped to live would be seized away before he had a chance to live it. It was in this moment of despair that my grandmother, a very practical and astute woman, decided to take matters into her own hands and 'shake' my father out of his melancholy. She perceptibly told him that he couldn't avoid the inevitable, but she would take steps to ensure he was at least warm and comfortable going overseas. In a time of rationing, wool was difficult to obtain in sufficient quantities to make a full jumper and so my grandmother split the quantity of wool between her coupons and my great aunt's. Between these two knitting enthusiasts, a classic gansey was produced in slate grey wool, redolent of the landscape of Cornwall. The colour was more indicative of the lack of choice available at the time and because it was a colour that was acceptable to the Royal Navy where Dad was enlisted. He wore it precisely because it brought him comfort, the ability to enwrap him and bring a sense of home in a time of war and dissolution of familial stability. The essence of the jumper was and is to provide protection and warmth and seemed at the time, a pragmatic solution to a discomfiting problem of being sent into war.

Over the last seventy-five years, the jumper has been on a continuous journey. Much to my dad's pleasure and my future existence, he wasn't killed in the war and when he finally saw action, it was in Malta at the point of liberation when German troops had no fight left in them. He returned with the jumper and wore it during winter times until he met my mother. She saw the garment had a sense of timelessness about it. The gansey style fitted nicely with the Beatnik fashions of the early 1950s which appealed to her. And so, the jumper lived on during subsequent changes in fashion, passing through my siblings until I took possession of it during the early 1980s when large baggy jumpers were de rigueur for art students. Over time I wore the jumper and always with a sense that this was Dad's jumper and gave a symbolic and allegorical meaning to being comforted whilst isolated and apart from family. It provided, through its physicality, the sense of having the protection of home.



Image 5: Dad's Jumper, 1945 Knitted by Kate Tomsett-Bunce & Elsie Tomsett-Midgeley



Image 6: Cuff detail of sleeve



Image 7: Rolled collar detail

In time my eldest daughter discovered Dad's jumper and between her and my youngest daughter contested over who could wear it and more importantly keep it. They both love wearing the jumper because it is snug, well made, strong and sturdy and the heaviness of the garment imbues a feeling of protection and care. My daughters know its story and feel privileged to wear it, amazed that it is still in such good condition. If they visit, one will send pictures to the other teasing about who owns the jumper. The jumper's value is way beyond monetary value becoming a family legacy.

It is the connection that the jumper provides to their grandfather, me to my father and the association with those creators who are no longer here that gives the jumper provenance. The jumper is symbolic of what has gone and what is past but can be held in the present as a representation of those hands that made it and the bodies that wore it. It is a catalyst for remembering and a biographical tool which tells the story of two women and one man who impacted so heavily on my life. For their story has intrigued and captivated my imagination throughout my childhood and beyond. I had a very close bond to my father and since his death nearly twenty years ago, I have still not come to terms with his mortality. We shared a special bond because unlike the rest of my four siblings, I am and have always been fascinated by family stories and legends. I never met my father's parents. Both died young and my memories of them come through talking with Dad about his childhood, looking through family photos and personal items left to him from past generations.

Place of safety (salowder)

Continue in st.-st until work measures 3cm. Increase 1 stitch on either side of the marker in gusset on every 4th row keeping pattern correct.

Where I grew up there was a large privet hedge opposite the backdoor of the family farmhouse. With a hole in the hedge it was possible as a small child to squeeze through when no one was watching and to pull the branches over the entrance, so I became invisible. Growing up in a large house full of people it was difficult to find a place and space that was quiet and where I could sit and think. This became my space and a place where I felt safe. Over time, the earth of my little den became compacted to a hard surface. The coolness in summer was bliss sitting on the hard floor. In winter, I took a cushion out with me and sat on that. Rain was kept at bay with the canopy of leaves above my head. It was somewhere where I worked, thought and contemplated. I started with finger knitting. Little pieces of wool and string

that I could find around the house and would shuffle away and spend hours winding the twine around my fingers. I liked to pull the wool tightly so that it dug into my fingers leaving red marks. Some of the wool was thick and rough causing abrasions on my hands and fingers. In one sense, this was similar to cutting. Hurting physically in order to feel. I like quiet. I like space. I like mental space; all things lacking in a family of five children, relatives and the many people who seemed to come to the farmhouse. I couldn't think. My hedge den, my knitting became my place of sanctuary where I could be alone. I would construct many pieces of finger knitting dependant on the amount of wool I could squirrel away. Between four and six years old, I had no idea what installation art meant but looking back now, I had already started to engage with this practice. Having spent hours knitting little strands of wool, I displayed them from the branches inside the hedge, adding to the display as I produced more and more. I can imagine fifty years later, whoever now lives in the house, chopping back the hedge finding rotting twisted strands of wool hanging within the branches and leaves!



Image 8: Hedge Den

Material Culture (*pyth gonisogehtow*)

Work 5 sts. at each end of needle in garter st. Row 1: K5, pattern to last 5 sts. K5., Row 2: K.5, pattern on the reverse side to last 5 sts., K.5. to set position of patt.

Through the notion of repetition and rhythm, pattern, pattern-making and constant motion, knitting has become the context and a discipline which is essential for producing my artworks. My practice involves a repeating activity often using a twisted dropped loop stitch to create huge panels out of wool and textiles. I use knitting as a form of crafting narratives around my family because of the natural bond I share with my ancestors through the act of knitting. Their history and my history combine to tell stories remembered through collective consciousness. The process of knitting is used to weave a history that could be lost. Patterns, repetition of stitches woven together, form intricate lines that are regulated and link with investigating stories through texture and form in a similar method to Shiota. Each looped stitch symbolises the transition of knowledge from generation to generation. It is a repeated story but one that reaches across time, space and place. Knitting is a story of contraction and loosening – forces pulling in different directions: of rhythm and repetition. Chui Shui Chan wrote in his article 'Phenomenology of Rhythm in Design' about the very nature of repetition and rhythm by stating;

“Phenomenology of rhythm relates to the quality of repetition and how perceivers observe the results. Rhythm, by definition, is repetition and repetition could automatically create an order to the whole

design. Such a created order is the character of rhythmic phenomena. Analytically speaking, rhythm generates some regularity, simplicity, balance, and order of composition that allows the design to develop a nature of consistency. The consistency would make the view easy to understand. In fact, after the rhythmic pattern is recognized, the whole design could be clearly comprehended. Therefore, repetition with similar movement and/or transformation rules would always generate an ordered pattern. Such created patterns could call viewers' visual attention to put more cognitive process for investigating the semantic context of the pattern” (Chan, 2012).

I use knitting to create a sense of order. It is the very necessity to engage in a repetitive task that strives for balance in my mental and physical existence. Knitting is metaphoric in terms of connection and the sense of dialogue created through the evidence of production by human hands. It makes a physical mark; it accumulates personal stories; the act of remembrance and storytelling becomes bound up within its surface.

Dad's Jumper was a piece knitted on giant needles – 35mm diameter and 1.5m long. Knitting with roving wool requires a delicate touch because it breaks easily; difficult to achieve with the size of needles used, mirroring complex and challenging painful memories. The more the jumper grew, the heavier the material was on my needles. The physical effects on my body were two-fold. Firstly, my arms, shoulders and back ached. The physical effects echoed an internal pain. The pain of losing my dad was and still is something I struggle with. Knitting a replica jumper embodies all my memories around Dad and the pain of never knowing the people who knitted the original. It caused me pain, physically and mentally. As the jumper grew on my needles, it formed a cover to my lower body. Just as I experienced intense pain, my lower body became wrapped in warmth and comfort; a juxtaposition of the extremes of comfort and pain.

I had a lot of visitors when I was knitting the piece. I was asked to explain the size of the jumper. Dad was really tall and as a child, he seemed like a giant to me. Dad wasn't around much growing up so moments with him were so precious but bittersweet, amplifying each memory. Talking about my memories eased the burden of the mental stress of losing him. The piece represents two sides, my sense of loss and loneliness and the enormity of losing someone so important to me.



Image 8: Dad's Jumper (Tas gwlanek) May – June 2019, roving wool, 2.3m



Image 9: Fish Factory Art Centre interior, Penryn, Cornwall, July 2019

Identity (*hōnensys*)

Continue until work measures 46cm with 25 sts. for underarm gusset or required measurement. 173 sts. for front and back. Place gusset sts. onto holders to work in later.

During my final year of the Masters' programme, I reflected on identity in order to construct new meanings about place and non-place. What does it mean to belong? Where and what is home? My work set out to answer these questions as I explored the notion of *hiraeth* – a longing for the familiarity and comfort of home.

“Just as imagination takes us forward into the realm of the purely possible—into what might be—so memory brings us back into the domain of the actual and the already elapsed: to what has been. Place ushers us into what already is: namely, the environing subsoil of our embodiment, the bedrock of our being-in-the-world. If imagination projects us out beyond ourselves while memory takes us back behind ourselves, place subtends and enfolds us, lying perpetually under and around us. In imagining and remembering, we go into the ethereal and the thick respectively. By being in place, we find ourselves in what is subsistent and enveloping”. (Augé, 2000)

In Brady Wagoner's work on the cultural identity of remembering he states that “memories are not independent but are part of an activity which are rooted in history, social interactions and are reconstructed” (Wagoner, 2019).. I seek to reconstruct a past because of the uncertainty of living where I have two homes. Identities are formulated through a relationship with a particular place and space. I have two places and spaces that I bond with and yet the sense of non-place creates anonymity; in essence not really belonging anywhere. Diaspora has challenged my sense of identity. My history and experiences have given a new perspective to my work because memories are not passive but create new meanings for myself and my children.



Image 8: Lenn, installation wool and mohair 2018

This first foray into the world of knitting was deeply connected to my body and what I could achieve through manipulating and working with my simple strands of wool. Knitting became intrinsically connected with the need to control and bring calmness in my world and to alter the environment in which I stood. This is the core of my practice and one that I have taken fifty odd years to recognise and embrace.

In response to this memory, I created the installation piece *Troyll*. This piece is symbolic of trying to connect past and present, of being back inside a small place and looking up seeing wool hanging down. I have deliberately created a sense of unease in the work. At once enwrapped and entrapped in its vortex-like structure. Associations of domesticity, comfort and safety with hand knitting are suspended as *Troyll* spreads out across the floor towards the viewer evoking negative emotions of tripping and stumbling. The installation also seeks to conceptualize a feeling of a net trap designed to ensnare heightening a sense of uneasiness with its denseness and twisted base. Balance contrasts against the rhythm and pattern of the wool as a conscious emphasis on creating an atmosphere of disquiet.



Image 9: Troyll, June 2019, 5 – 6m length in carpet wool

I have undiagnosed dyspraxia. As a child I was clumsy and mocked for being so. Writing at school became an absolute nightmare where handwriting was regarded as an important tool pre-digital keyboards by judgemental teachers. I remember sitting handwriting tests and being so incredibly stressed just in case I made a mistake. We weren't allowed second chances, so the first attempt had to be perfect, without mistakes. I never made it through one piece without making a mistake; a common issue with dyspraxia. My hedge den became more and more important to me at that stage and the cutting and scoring with wool across my fingers helped to ease the pain and take humiliation away.

My clumsiness manifested itself in my ability to fall over thin air, drop things constantly and bump into things and topple over when doing sports. As I grew, the more I couldn't understand why my body didn't work like my peers and siblings. Knitting was my retreat. A place where I could feel in control. Tightness helped to ease the pain and humiliation of my apparent ineptitude with practical tasks. It was only when several family members were diagnosed with dyspraxia that I realised why I was the way I was. It made perfect sense.

I reasoned early on that knitting keeps me grounded, safe, slows me down and reduces my stress levels. It also allows me "think time" and is my way of unravelling and making sense of the past. On this Masters' journey I have attempted to challenge conventional perceptions around knitting as merely a leisure activity. I use knitting as a means for control but also I am interested in how my body can be used simultaneously as a tool whilst dealing with and working out why I think the way I do; work the way I do; use craft as a means of communication. My practice explores deep personal feelings associated with the need to create reactive art because viewers are an integral part of my work. My work sets out to provoke memories and a dialogue around family stories. Vital to the success of my work is its ability to interact and inform. A response visually to communicate and interpret. How this interpretation is applied by the viewer will vary but as long as it does initiate a response and a dialogue, I consider the work successful.



Image 10: Trough, Plaster, wool, mohair, tissue and string installation, June 2019

Liza Zhang writes in *How knitting became entwined with protest*, "that freedom of "not being functional" refers to the untethering of knitting from its origins in domestic labour. Because knitting had, for some, become a choice and not an obligation, it became a means of solace, creativity, and a way to find communities, as was the case with the knitting circles of yore." I am still fighting my corner as knitting has been and continues to be mocked as domestic, traditionally gendered and trivial as an art form.

The complexity of my practice is that I endure pain in order to feel calm, in many ways similar to self-harm and this is a revelation I continue to work through. (Zhang, 2019)

Through *Trough*, my aim is to visually demonstrate how it feels to have dyspraxia. Disjointed, clumsy and not fitting right. I've used the plaster as a method of stabilizing but also juxtaposing with the softness of the wool. Memories activated whilst planning and creating featured many hours by the quay in Cornwall, looking at the heaps of fishing nets and the fishermen mending nets. The saltwater crusted the nets into solid shapes making them stiff, weighty and highly difficult to manipulate. Sadly, a practice not seen in Cornwall now – these images are only memories.

As a child, I remember scrambling down the rocks on the beach with bare feet, leaping and landing on sharp shards of rock and slate. After some time, it occurred to me that my feet were sore. I saw, stretching back over the beach, that somewhere I had cut my feet. Until that moment, I hadn't realised that I had hurt myself. My right foot quite badly and was bleeding profusely. Bloody red footprints followed me to this point in a pattern of one on, one off. "Mum, I've cut my foot, look". She told me to go and stand in the water. "Sea salt is good for wounds", she said. Searing pain shot up my leg as I waded in the shallow water and swirls of red mingled with the waves creating marbling.

It was a long walk back up the cliff to the house. Nobody had thought to bring a plaster, so I squelched up the beachhead wearing jandels (flip flops), feeling the warm, stickiness of my blood oozing out of the sides. My right foot was washed and bound. Whilst the rest of the family returned to the beach, my reward was peace and quiet. I had found some red wool which, paired with grey, I set about trying to recreate the pattern of my bloody footprints on the beach. I had watched my elder sister working with two colours so knew how to connect the two strands to form alternate coloured patterns. One knit grey, twist strands behind the needle, one knit red and so on. Working in stocking stitch was disappointing. It just looked like dots of colour not the long stride of a bloody footprint, but I turned the knitting over and saw just what I had been trying to attempt.



Image 11: Two strand knitting showing a long and short stitch in alternate colour

The footprint was represented as a knitted pattern, long stitch and short stitches. My foot was pulsing and as I knitted, I used the pulse of my blood circulating to the beat and rhythm of my heart, to regulate the speed of the knitting. Heart and fingers working in harmony. The pain associated with the physical action of knitting has and continues to be the way I process information and inform my practice.

Time (*prys*), Place (*tyller*) and Space (*efanvos*)

When armhole measures 20cm., divide sts as follows...:58 sts. for each shoulder , 57 for neck. Move sts. onto holder.

Place and space implied in my work discusses the concepts of presence and absence. Place seeks a connection to specific locations namely Cornwall, whilst space allows for a narrative to form between viewer and object. *Dad's Jumper* and *Grandma's Dress*, are signifiers of feeling disjointed and disconnected. While time is linked to space in that I reference my work to a particular period of time and a specific location, place allows for multiple readings and evokes intense emotions of loss, loneliness and the effects of diaspora. Both pieces speak of the absence of loved ones. Expressed through large scale and the materials used, *Dad's Jumper* and *Grandma's Dress* are constructed from materials which are detached from domestic use. Like Jennifer Loeber, I am still holding on, not to the objects themselves but the emotions and memories these evoke. Space represents the immeasurable and allows for multiple narratives to occur. Exhibiting my work in Cornwall had been a determining factor right from the beginning of my Masters' journey. It meant a return to and a response with the people, the environment and most importantly the past. I consciously sought an emotional response through being bound to a certain location. (Anapur, 2016)

Louise Bourgeois said;

"Every day you have to abandon your past or accept it, and then, if you cannot accept it, you become a sculptor." (Lopez, 2018)

I haven't reached the point where I can abandon or accept my past. It is the principal component of my practice and I am still processing it. My need to return to Cornwall after fifteen years was in part to face difficult memories and to reconnect with the familiar.

My collage assemblages dug deep from past childhood memories. The stones my brother and I would scramble over as children were rough surfaces, chiselled by the sea into linear striations. This ignited an intention to create an installation piece from the printed photos of family, place, time around the shore in Cornwall. I started with photographing the area, which brought up intense memories of grazed knees, sandy swimming togs and salty water. Stones made from granite, squashed over with layers of slate. How many centuries of people had sat on and climbed on its surface? What histories could be told from these rocks!

In preparation for my residency, I had brought with me a series of printed images I'd collected over time consisting of family photographs (contemporary, biographical, historical, geographic) and cultural designs as a visual expression of my cultural identity.

Looking at the rocks, shells and detritus of bits of rope, buoys etc. sparked interpretations of my new/old environment. Inspired by the shape and flow of the waves, the smell of seaweed, the call of the gulls, evoked memories and the need to create an installation inspired by the seascape. Meeting with family members I either hadn't met for many years or hadn't met at all, created a sense of anxiety. My default position is to retreat to a place of calm. I hadn't brought any wool or needles with me, so I headed straight to Falmouth to explore the wool shops. There I found a narrow-gauge wool of piercing blue which matched the blue of the sky and sea in blazing summer heat. I chose needles that were large and difficult to work with, reflecting emotional awkwardness. The wool itself gave me the familiarity and comfort of being tightly wound around my fingers. I had no idea what I was going to knit but realised that I was reflecting memories of the fishing nets so often seen draped around the harbour walls seen as a child.

Ripping and tearing paper is therapeutic. Tangled emotions were formed into a physical representation of emotions. Printed images culminated in pieces which looked like marine shells – linking the current environment to my work. It just felt right. I then used the blue I'd been obsessing about from walks around the beach and town and stitched them together to form long strings.

Another quote from Louise Bourgeois resonated with me;

“The colour blue – that is my colour – and the colour blue means you have left the drabness of day-to-day reality to be transported into – not a world of fantasy, it’s not a world of fantasy – but a world of freedom where you can say what you like and what you don’t like. This has been expressed forever by the colour blue, which is really sky blue.” (Louise Bourgeois Quotes, 2019).

Hello Cornwall (*dydh da Kernow*)

Work 12 rows in garter-st decreasing one st. at neck edge of 3rd and 7th rows keeping pattern correct. Leave sts. on holder.

Developing ideas and producing work is a creative outlet of self-expression. In order to express my intentions to others, I wish to create a dialogue with an audience because without response what would be the point? Exhibiting my work in Cornwall provided new opportunities and ideas that I hadn’t explored from the other side of the world. The Fish Factory Art Centre in Penryn, Cornwall were intrigued by my artwork based on the concept of hireth and my connection to hand crafting. Primarily my work is centred around memories associated with Cornwall – it was important to take my work back to where I was from by reacquainting myself with the environment and the people left behind. My initial ideas began to form from walking around Falmouth, hearing the Cornish accent, familiarizing myself with the tiny, narrow streets and the call of gulls overhead. I’d forgotten the light. Blissful wide skies and the scent of seaweed washed up on the shoreline. Boats still aplenty but sadly no fishing boats. It seemed mainly ferries and pleasure boats were the main inhabitants of the harbour. What was interesting to hear were the many different languages spoken whilst walking around. Russian, Polish, Spanish, Italian, French, German... Cornwall has become very cosmopolitan since my childhood!

Blue has been a constant strand in my work as thread or lines painted into collages, canvasses and photographs. Horizon line, sea, sky, rope. Seen everywhere I went, leaving a lasting impression. Blue represents the environment of the Cornish coast, it is redolent of childhood memories in and around the coast, and its associations with calmness.

Residency and the importance (*posow*) of finishing (*gorfedna*) what I started...

Complete back to match front. Do not press. Join shoulder sts. together. Work second shoulder.



Image 12: Residency board, Fish Factory, Penryn, Cornwall, August 2019

The first part of the residency comprised of preparing work for the installations. The gallery space initiated alternative ideas in order to accommodate how to display my work and hone my curating skills; a challenging part of my practice.

Time with family-initiated stories (*hwedhlow*) through family photographs, patterns, paintings and locations directly associated with my family heritage were pieced together to form a series of banners. Each made up of six A3 sheets of tracing paper, joined to form continuous strands and weighted top and bottom with sticks and twigs found around the Cornish countryside. Hung from the ceiling in multiple layers, the images formed one assemblage. The images in front revealed glimpses of what lies beneath and behind. Indicative of how memories often occur. Memories overlapping one another. Backlit with downlighting heightened the sense of translucency, allowing the installation to be read as one cohesive image. It was only at the point of hanging that I worked this out in order to make the best use of the space. Fishing line was used to hang the piece, with connotations to fishing and the sea and for the practicality of remaining invisible. Almost as if the assemblage was floating.



Image 13: Hireth, Installation Fish Factory 2019, architectural tracing paper, found sticks

The second piece took further consideration. Each strand of torn images was strung on blue sewing silk with the lower pieces falling to the floor, matching a knitted blue piece redolent of fishing nets. Multiple strands of images trailing to the floor with lengths of cotton streaming out into the room, drawing the viewer in. The pieces hung from reclaimed rounded window frames. These were discovered whilst thinking how to display the piece and were reminiscent of some of photos I found of my grandparents in the twenties and thirties. It seemed fitting and apt to add a touch of art deco shapes with photos of my grandparents on cruises from the 1930's art deco style.



Image 14 Family photos of Charles and Kate the artist's grandparents in 1932, off the coast of Malta

Frustratingly I never got to meet either of my grandparents. I can see family resemblances in the facial expressions and the way they stand and sit. Familiar and at the same time so distant and alien. The installation attempts to stitch together literally a family history. Disparate pieces being joined back together, a ritual of bonding.



Image 15: Tonn, Installation of family photos, cultural and geographical references stitched together with blue silk thread, knitted blue silk net and reclaimed round wooden window frames, 2019, Fish Factory, Penryn



Image 16: Reconnecting with family (teylu), the artist and two of four siblings, Cornwall 2019

Scale in my work is highly significant in terms of intention. *Dad's Jumper* was deliberately made to be large scale in order to emphasise, define and symbolise discomfort, loneliness and loss. Its' excessive scale in relation to the real dad's jumper affirming powerful emotions I wanted represented. It frustrated me that the viewers tended to focus on the tactility and scale of the jumper; many taking selfies in proportion to friends and relatives, diluting its potency and trivializing its impetus. Where I saw solemnity; others saw whimsy. As an artist I have had to accept that there are many ways of viewing and interpreting. I do not have the right to impose how others read my work and have to accept the fact that art is ultimately subjective. It is part of letting go and an area of my practice that I continue to struggle with.



Image 17: One Fish, Blue Fish, 2018



Image 18: Celtic Giant, 2018

Large scale knitted works of disproportionate size made using giant needles.

Knitting

Identity (*honensys*), process knitting (*gwia*) and memory (*kov*)

To make the neck, pick up 162 sts. Knit 57 sts. around neck from each holder and 24 from each shoulder seam. Work in K.3, P.3 rib for 15 rows.

Traditional knitting in Cornwall involved whole families. It was an important income generator and source of much needed additional wages. Traditional skills were passed down the generations without the use of written instructions. Knitting patterns were verbal instructions, increasingly complex and detailed and required active cognitive engagement with the task. Each village had their own patterns and each family created their own spin on these complex patterns drawing inspiration from the environment around the villages including patterns of fish, waves etc. The Cornish gansey, guernsey, knit-frock or jumper, derived significance for the owner dependant on where in Cornwall they lived. Traditional ganseys were knitted on 2¼cm needles – very small, with 5 ply wool. This is tight knitting. Fishermen required protection from the elements and this tight knitting provided that protection. Tightly knitted and dense Channel Island wool produced a gansey that would stand up against wind, rain and storm whilst out at sea. Individual patterns served a dual purpose. Most ganseys were knitted with a family pattern. Imbued with love and care, each gansey represented a family connection with and where they belonged.



Image 19: Cornish Guernseys (Cornish Guernseys & Knit-frocks, Mary Wright 1979)

Identification was important in a time when the fishing industry was more hazardous than it is today. A body washed ashore could be identified by the pattern on his gansey pointing to region and more importantly family. It was a crude but effective method by which a family could be reunited with their lost ones. Ganseys were knitted for the individual and therefore could not and would not be passed down. Many ganseys were literally rags having been worn every day throughout an adult life. Knitted in distinctive indigo blue which over time and exposure to the elements, would fade to a light blue reflective of the sky provided further connections with the blue threads in my work.

Community (*kemeneth*) and communication (*keskomunyans*)

Pick up and knit 132 sts for sleeves from armhole including 2 seam sts., 25 gusset sts. Using st.-st., decrease 1 st. on each side, every 4th row until one seam-st. remains.

Knitting became and still is a means of creating a social gathering. A place to gather and tell stories. Community and knitting go hand in hand. In Cornwall before the days of 'stitch and bitch', women gathered together to support and connect with each other. Storytelling and memory making has always been a significant part of knitting. Complex knitting patterns like St Ives Double Twist is without doubt a testament to the tenacity and skill of these Cornish women forming part of the social climate of Cornwall. I need quiet when knitting particularly complicated patterns, so I am astounded that my forebears were able to hold conversations and knit at the same time.

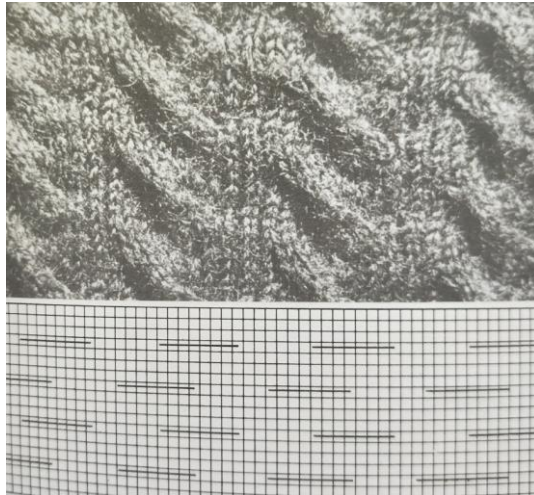


Image 20: St Ives double twist knitting stitch (Cornish Guernseys & Knitfrocks, Mary Wright 1979)



Image 21: Family knitting traditions continue in New Zealand and Cornwall 2019. Generations of knitters – the artists' siblings and children

Knitting and the brain (*ympynnyon*)

Finish gusset then cont. sleeve in st.-st., working seam-st. in garter-st. Dec. 1 st. each side every 4th row 10 times, then every 5th row until 79 sts. remain. Cast off loosely.

“Handcrafted objects are ‘charged’ with the history, narratives, and memories of their creators as well as the people with whom they interact. Yet a handmade object itself cannot tell those personal stories of its making; it can just hint at the human energy poured into its creation. Information associated with handcraft is linked through intangible means: tacit knowledge and socio-cultural context encrypt a textile” (Ryokai, 2008).

Knitting has a rhythm and a beat that perfectly works around patterns and provides connections with the past. Because of my dyspraxia, I struggle with maths and hated it as a subject at school feeling out of place when trying to work out simple equations and sums. However, knitting is about counting and patterns which hold rhythms and beats. It is through repetitive actions that patterns form connections. Human brains are designed to unscramble and make sense of the world we inhabit. The brain seeks to find patterns and sequences in order to create order from sensory chaos. Psychologists and brain scientists working in the field of mental health, are advocates of knitting being good for health. Neuroscientist, Sarah McKay discusses why knitting has been identified with health benefits.

"I'm delighted to report that neuroscience is finally catching up on brain health aspects of the trend some have called 'the new yoga'" (McKay, 2015).

Research shows that knitting and other forms of textile crafting such as sewing, weaving and crocheting have a lot in common with mindfulness and meditation. All are reported to have a positive impact on mind, health and well-being.

Knitting as a craft and a skill stimulates and uses every part of the brain at the same time. (Brody, Health benefits of knitting, 2016) Due to the repetitive nature, knitting relaxes, releasing the crafter from depression, anxiety and stress. It also lowers blood pressure and slows the heart. Why isn't everyone knitting? It is a very chaotic and frustrating day if I do not knit because it does not allow that sense of distance from the world and an opportunity to relax. No longer a hedge den to retreat to.

In the Health Benefits of Knitting published in the New York Times,

"Knitting offers an escape for the mind while providing the hands with something to do" (Brody, The Health Benefits of Knitting, 2016).

I need to occupy my hands and have something to do. It is just part of who I am and how I work and process information. As stated, knitting engages every part of the brain and this exegesis is centred around the notion of time, place, space and identity. The temporal lobe is where the mind processes memory. I am a process knitter and creator. I knit because of the benefits and the creative stimulation that is activated when.

Russell Lockhart writes in *Memory, mourning and fat*,

"It sticks. It adheres. It won't leave. It leaves traces. A memory is what sticks, what adheres in the mind. Memory is the fat of the mind". (Lockhart, 2017)

Knitting for me is an unravelling of trauma both literally and metaphorically. Knitting helps me process and make sense of my world and allows me the freedom to drift into my creative niche as a means of adaptive cognitive behaviour.

"I pick up what I have been knitting and it contains memory. I see what the day was when last I knit on this piece. My hairs get knitting into the fabric as do my cat hairs. The daydream's dreamed, the worries worried, the interior dialogues are all there, part of the fabric that I knit. Each piece carries my life knit into it: its fabric is also the fabric of my memory. I am knitting lace. I am doing analysis. There I am working on knitting lace of my life, repairing holes that don't belong, trying to work out the pattern".

Jung at Heart, Cheryl Fuller on Psychotherapy, fat, aging and whatever else comes to mind... (Fuller, 2018)

My creative practice revolves around the issue of fatness. Not physical fatness but memory fatness. A life lived in the shadow of lost loved ones.

Through reading around the subject of neuroscience, memory consists of many images collected, sorted and stored in the temporal lobe. These memories are called explicit – it is memory that must be consciously worked on in order to remember events. The hippocampus is the part of the brain involved with explicit memories and memories that specifically hold important information about our private life are called episodic.

The hippocampus, located in the brain's temporal lobe, is where episodic memories are formed and catalogued for later access. Episodic memories are autobiographical from specific events in our lives. These are what define us and make us unique. It is what gives us our sense of identity of who we are and what we are. Each person decides what is important.

The four types of episodic memories which I use in my practice are essential to the creation of my work. They are; specific (what happened and when), personal (relating to events around us), general (feelings I have about physical elements of the memory) and flashbulb (highly significant personal events). I attempt to relate to all these types through the concept of hireth. My creative work reflects a need to confront and seek a dialogue with each type. My work is deliberately meant to accost the senses

through visual – giant size and overwhelming scale with colours representative of the environment of Cornwall; scent – natural fibres contain a smell that evokes memories of wet jerseys and the sheep behind the house; touch – softness or hardness of the fibres and the oiliness of lanolin soothing and protective; and sound – from the rhythmic pattern of noise emanating from knitting needles as work is constructed, of conversations and storytelling through collective activity. Taste is closely related to smell. Whilst knitting I can almost taste the lanolin in the back of my throat. Unpleasant and pleasant at the same time. The audience is exposed to the didactic nature of my work.

“You are your memories” Dr Eric Kandel (Kandel, 2017)

My work explores the concepts of memory. Memory allows us to take all our experiences; good and bad and create a fat history that determines how we live, think and create. Long-term memories are held especially important because the brain has determined subconsciously that these experiences are rewarding and stimulating, therefore worth holding onto. What we are and who we become are determined by past experiences as Kandel describes it:

“The glue that holds your mental life together”. (Seeger, 2010)

Without memories we are nothing and cannot function because our experiences shape our very existence. “You have to begin to lose your memory, if only in bits and pieces, to realize that memory is what makes our lives. Life without memory is no life at all... Our memory is our coherence, our reason, our feeling, even our action. Without it we are nothing.” (Brunel, n.d.)

My work is autobiographical in that I explore my memories and make references to the past. *Dad's Jumper* was a replica of the original, bringing together my memories, my sibling's memories and Dad's memories of a moment in our family history, built on and producing many other memories associated with our collective past. Like Bourgeois, my intention is to confront and face head-on the reality of my father's death. For many years, particularly after emigrating to New Zealand, I had repressed my feelings of mourning and nostalgia for home. It was fear of the effects of confronting these “truths” of protecting myself by focusing on the present and future that drove me. But that which is repressed can never be repressed for long.

Whilst in Cornwall I visited the Royal Cornwall Museum as part of my research because remarkably, at the same time I was putting on my exhibition at the Fish Factory in Penryn, the Royal Cornwall was also holding an exhibition entitled *Hireth*.

The work was a series of paintings over the last hundred years, primarily land and seascapes. The overriding commentary visitors related was the fact that hireth was an undefinable feeling which could be a response to stimuli such as a colour, a smell, a sound, a taste or an image and resonated with how I felt as an immigrant and an emigrant, belonging and not belonging anymore.

My practice focuses on a moment or moments in time activated by the senses. It is the process I work through that initiates my unravelling of the past and coping with the present. When I knit, I am conscious of the rhythm of the work, linked to the beat of my heart and the rise and fall of my lungs. The giving over to others by showing my work allows the second strand of my practice, which is the need to seek audience voice. Interaction allows for alternative readings of the work I present, not just the process. I want some sense of ambiguity in my work because I don't have the same memories as others, even siblings. I want my audience to have alternative readings and different emotional responses creating a visual communication between observer and creator which reflects on identity, loss and memory. The creative process needs an interaction, a dialogue primarily because I want to provoke others to think. Deciding on what hireth means is to gain insight about myself and my creativity and to establish how my work impacts on the emotional response of others. One of the reasons I chose *Dad's Jumper* is that we all have a version of this in our past.

Casting off

Hireth creates a dilemma, both metaphysical and emotional. Some elements of my work are deliberately explanatory, others purposely obtuse. Family stories through memory are evolving, never static, creating new meanings and new identities. Esoteric as it is, my work creates vivid mental images translated into visible representations designed to order, maintain and reveal the complexity of family stories as well as to process personal trauma. I started my journey with strong plans of what and where this would lead. My practice has revealed far more than memories of the past. I have had to confront uncomfortable truths about myself and my family. At times it felt like I was dealing with an impossibly heavy burden that was crushing my spirit. I pretended I didn't hear, see, smell or feel it and developed coping methods to obliterate the pain.

My practice is me and I am it.

I observe my past as one of many who had dealt with the diaspora and separation; a common theme for the Cornish.

Knitting Litany

Most agitated hands be my salvation.
Most restless eye, look only here.
Most anxious heart, trust in the singular fact:
Something can come from nothing
The miracle turns on every stitch:
With every whispered row,
Leaves, waves, flowers, and stars
Drop from my fingertips

In this, the crest of the wave, my heart
Rises up and drops as I roll the wave
Row after row I make the wave,
Rising and dropping stitch after stitch:
There is no end to the waves
To the world in my hands:

Cockleshell, wolf's claw, wasp nest, bear's paw,
Apple leaf, lamb's lettuce, pine tree, gull wing,
Honeycomb, cloud and mountain, four sisters,
Frost flowers, summer fountain, hyacinth,
Sycamore, granite laurel, lynx eye,
Drooping elm, wheat germ, cakes and waffle,
Clover leaf, blue bell, bell rib, banana tree,
Ant egg, rosebud, terrapin, butterfly,
Barley ear, beehive, lady's lace and willow bed,
Per omnia soecula soeculorum.

Corey Wade

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Gerlyver Kernewek / Cornish Dictionary

Adwedhya – influences
Aven – images
Delatya – put back
Disserghyans – revival
Dydh da – hello/greetings
Dyhtyans - methodology
Dyjan – little piece
Elowek – elm tree
Framya – put together
Galarow – agony/trauma
Godor - interruption
Gonisogethow - culture
Gorfedna - finishing
Gorsedh – meeting of Bards
Gwia – knit
Gwlanek - jumper
Gwynn – white
Hwedhel – tales, stories, narratives
Hireth – longing, loneliness, nostalgia
Hirneth – very long time
Honensys - identity
Kampol – mention/comment
Kemeneth - community
Kernow - Cornwall
Kernowek – Cornish language
Keskomyunians - communication
Kilva – background
Kobbya – bruise/break
Kov – memory
Kynvan - mourning
Lybm – sharp
Meur ras – with many thanks
Oll an gwella – all the best
Onglewans – feeling

Posow – importance

Prys - time

Pyth – material

Raglavar – introduction

Salowder – place of safety

Strotha – tighten, squeeze, restrict

Tamm – piece

Tas - Dad

Teylu - family

Tonn – wave

Trogh - broken

Troyll – spiral

Tyller - place

Ympynnyon - brain