

Patterns of Tactility and Sound: Collaboration through Sensory Textile Practice with the Visually Impaired at Macclesfield Museums

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Volume One of Two

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Abstract

This practice-led research explores community engagement practices using textile practices of hand and digital printing, and hand weaving by a textile artist through a longitudinal case study with two museums in the historical silk town of Macclesfield, England. This research was undertaken by me as the artist-researcher together with a community of visually impaired participants who live locally to the museums. The community group experienced barriers in fully engaging with the museums. This study forms part of a wider debate on heritage sites collaborating with contemporary artists, community engaged textile practices within the museum context and the use of sensory encounters with archive objects to attract new audiences from diverse backgrounds such as disabled people.

This research focuses on the two specific museum locations The Silk Museum and Paradise Mill. Visually impaired members of the charity called the East Cheshire Eye Society participated through creative practice community engagement events by exploring further into the archive unearthing hidden histories. This creative textile practice produced a catalogue of experimental artworks and two on-site art installations. My findings came through the documentation and analysis of ethnographic and autoethnographic methods of observations, reflections, and participants voices. Incorporating the senses of touch and sound into my textile practices brought about new connections of knowledge to place, and cultural identity. The museum and the textile artist acted as a conduit to resume the need to gather in a place and have social connection, with those interactions acting as a method of bonding to people and place. The considerations and sensibilities of working with the museum, the visually impaired and the exploration of materials is outlined as a note for future collaborations. The exhibitions raised awareness that the visually impaired can equally take part in the arts, raising the profile of the charity of those with sight loss showing that the unseen can be seen. The working with and making of silk textiles acted as a metaphor for the challenges and difficulties faced both in its contemporary construction with the visually impaired just as it was for the nineteenth century blind mill workers.

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Abbreviations

AMD	Aged-related macular degeneration
BTB	British Textile Biennial
ECES	East Cheshire Eye Society
ECLOs	Eye Care Liaison Officers
HM Government	Her Majesty's Government
MCAHE	Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
RNIB	Royal National Institute of Blind People
TA	Thematic analysis
VI	Visually Impaired

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Chapter One:

Introduction

Overview of the Practised-led Research

This thesis presents a case study where community engaged textile practice is conducted with two museums locations in Macclesfield, Cheshire. This research was undertaken by myself, a textile artist and the author of this study together with a community of visually impaired members, staff and sighted guides from the East Cheshire Eye Society who formed the Community Group.

This study forms part of a wider debate on heritage sites working with contemporary artists, community engaged textile practices and further areas of sensory engagement with archive objects and access to museums for the visually impaired.

Silk production became prominent in the town of Macclesfield, England from the eighteenth century to the mid-twentieth century and is actively promoted through their four museums; The Silk Museum, Paradise Mill, The Old Sunday School, and West Park Museum, which are under the umbrella of Macclesfield Museums Trust (Macclesfield Museums, 2021b). This research focuses on the two of those locations, specifically the Silk Museum and Paradise Mill. The museum staff and volunteers participated in this project, providing support, research opportunities, the space to exhibit, active participation and collaboration in the community engagement event activities.

The Macclesfield Museums archive collections of particular interest were the commercial silk manufacturers pattern books and wooden printing blocks from Langley Printworks spanning 150 years and the twenty-six hand jacquard looms dominating the top floor of the Paradise Mill. The research project touched on the origins of the East Cheshire Eye Society in helping nineteenth century blind silk workers retrain into alternative crafts professions. Engaging with participants to connect with the archive objects and this historical story we created a response through textile practice in the form of a programme of creative art events. This produced two exhibitions and three textile art installations presented on site at the Silk Museum. The project formed into two phases: *Patterns of*

Tactility of Sound Part 1 and Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2. Each phase had a number of community engagement events leading up to two separate exhibitions. Phase One titled *Patterns of Tactility of Sound Part 1* took the visually impaired participants to Paradise Mill, firstly starting with a handling session, and then an adapted tour of the mill. This was followed by creative events situated next door within the Education Room at the Silk Museum. The resulting art works were displayed on the upper floor in a white walled room and open for viewing for a two-week period during September 2018.

Phase two called *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2* built on the reflections, evaluation and knowledge collected from the initial phase resulting in two further community engagement events contributing towards a co-created art installation displayed in and around the collections of the Blue Room and Machine Room on the ground floor of The Silk Museum from November 2019 to February 2020. The interactions during these textile practice collaborations situated within the setting of the museum have been analysed, concluded upon, and written up within this paper.

The Role of the Artist

It must be noted that the role of the artist in the research inquiry was not to facilitate art-practice workshops solely for teaching the visually impaired, though this did occur naturally as part of a sampling method, however as the artist-researcher I investigated the impact this collaboration had on my own textile practice. During the practice-led research I questioned how community engagement with the visually impaired had influenced my own textile art practice through reflective and experiential learning. The project ran over a three-year period which enabled my research to grow with myself and the visually impaired community, progressing into a collaborative relationship. This thesis is not a list of events connected by a timeline but rather a construction of themes that weave together the practice, and the surrounding context where necessary into a record of findings. This written piece is vocalised through me the textile artist discussing the interactions of collaborating with the visually impaired and their sighted guides through sensory textile practices within the setting of the museum archive.

Defining Textile Practice

The term “textile practice” is used as an umbrella term as my practice uses several print methods such as hand block printing, silk screen printing and digital textile printing. My work includes surface manipulation through laser rastering and utilises weaving practices. Visual drawing is a precursor to my textile printing and my natural go to method of observation. As discussed in Chapter Six this is challenged as the default setting in my practice as I explored the territory of working and collaborating with the visually impaired. Mark making came through touch and sound, presented as techniques to understand the objects within the archive, thus making the collections tangible to the visually impaired. Touch was enabled using hard materials digitally laser cut to produce contemporary printing blocks, thus becoming a tactile for handling and a surface to transfer ink onto paper or textile material.

Motivations

To set the scene I cover the motivations of myself and the visually impaired in commencing this research project. I confess I have an intrinsic appetite for heritage sites and a sense of nostalgia at looking back at historical objects carefully curated within the walls of a museum or a country house. It could be said that becoming a National Trust member at the age of sixteen was unusual for someone of that age in the 1990s, however as a keen artist it seemed to be the rightful place for perusing patterns of inspiration. Still to this day I continue to have a yearning to seek objects not only for their aesthetic nature, but for the stories behind them and hence the emotions they evoke through a deeper connection.

The seed for the project began in 2015 when relocating from my office job on Baker Steet, London to the post-industrial town of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire to commence my post-graduate studies. Reflecting on my own textile heritage I felt a sense of belonging returning to the North of England where I had lived during the first two decades of my life. After completing this relocation I ventured over to the other side of the Pennine hills, a journey from Huddersfield to Macclesfield.

Macclesfield is the place where I was born and once called home. After realising I had never visited any of the Macclesfield Museums before and what started off as a curious visit one a wet and windy October afternoon grew into a working collaboration. The museum collections became a treasure trove of inspiration and ignited a desire in me to look further into Macclesfield's history of silk production and my longing to look at my own family connections to cloth making. The museum granted access to the up-stairs reference library and the archives containing textile pattern books, silk costumes, and printing blocks stored away on shelves. During these initial visits the physicality of the surface and fragility of the printing block materials that took my particular interest.

In spending my primary years in Macclesfield, I was aware of its silk history through an awareness of street names such as the Silk Road and the local football team named The Silkman. I had family members including my mother that had been employed in the local textile mills, however my knowledge was still primitive and therefore I needed to start with a tour of the local museum Paradise Mill.

The collaboration with the Community Group came through a chance enquiry the East Cheshire Eye Society had made with Macclesfield Silk Museum. They came to visit the Silk Museum and Paradise Mil to initially review the accessibility of these heritage sites. During the creative events and focus group sessions I enquired with the participant-collaborators what was behind their motivations for entering into a the project with myself and the museum, and they responded with wanting to know more about their local textile heritage the story of Macclesfield silk.

We've been to Macclesfield Museum, and you know, so I knew about it before I lost my sight in the way it has, I knew what the colours were, the types of products were made, shoes and scarves, etc. The shoes had buttons. And so my sister is very interested in textiles. So that connection made me felt, I've certainly felt I wanted to know more about the silk industry, and how my experience which helped me to understand, to you know how they went through it, because it's so difficult to set up. (R. Webber, personal communication, February, 7, 2020, p. 4)

They continued to add during the focus group discussions that they felt this was achieved during the research project. There was a sense of commonality through textiles where they recounted their own experience and knowledge of the textile industry either from

living in Macclesfield or other areas of the UK that manufactured textiles. Prior interactions with textiles came through previous job roles or recalling family relations working in the mills.

Like I said my dad was a ring spinner. And sometimes when we went up to see him, you couldn't see for the dust. It surprised you how much dust was coming off the machines. That's maybe where the, a lot of people lost their sight because of the dust and the bits of cotton and the silk flying about. It really surprised me, you know how he worked, because, he started working seven in the morning till seven at night, no break. And he started working in the mills that at 14, so it was really hard work. (P. Widdows, personal communication, February, 7, 2020, p. 3).

Considering my own motivations I reflected on my own silk textile heritage and my experience of working in textiles in retail over the past two decades. Even though textiles was a common ground of cohesion I felt a sense of connection through my late grandad who had been registered blind and trained as a cane furniture weaver. With this in mind, I felt some affinity and emotional pull towards working with this group.

Research Thesis Overview

The following chapter outlines the contextual review conducted, detailing the circumstances that form the setting for this research study. This starts with the broader view of the UK cultural landscape outlining the HM Government policies that influences the shape of funding and initiatives in the cultural and heritage sectors driving the desire for culture to be accessed by all communities, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds with disabilities.

In the area of academia, new research has been emerging in museum studies called “sensory museology” (Howes, 2014, p. 259). Over the past few decades, the appreciation and attention to the senses within museum curatorial practice has grown within the literature on the importance of touch. There has been a general trend for a less passive and more interactive museum experience such as offering handling sessions and touch tours, methods pushed from organisations that represented the visually impaired (Candlin, 2010). In exploring traditional material culture through our senses, heritage

organisations have also commissioned contemporary artists. This comes from the process of opening up collections and exploring the role that creative art plays in interpretation and the understanding of objects. Taking this one step further approaches in curatorial practice has seen public engagement with local communities through participation in creative events in collaboration with the textile artist, resulting in the overall aim to becoming more accessible to new and wider audiences.

In Chapter Three, the research methodology is defined by detailing the overall research design. This practice-led enquiry uses a multi-method approach showing a real-life example conducted in the context of two museums, The Silk Museum and Paradise Mill. This section details the methods used and how I documented the collection of information when working with the museum archive to produce a response in collaboration with members of the East Cheshire Eye Society through the textile practices of drawing, textile printing and weaving. The analysis of sketchbook workings, notebook annotation, autobiographical reflective journaling, photographic images, video, semi-structured interviews and focus group information gathered during this study produced three research themes:

1. Connection to place through textiles
2. Sociality of collaboration through textile practice
3. Sensory encounters through textile practice

In the remaining chapters of this thesis these research themes are explored in further detail discussing the findings resulting from this study. Chapter Four explores the relationship that all participants have with Macclesfield silk heritage, looking at my relationship as a Macclesfield born textile artist and the connections the members of East Cheshire Eye Society have to the silk trade. There have been former archive interventions undertaken at the Silk Museum and Paradise in which I compare this research to. Access to the archive for the visually impaired plays an important part and tangible forms develop from textile surface experiments. This impacts on how the study is designed and how textile practice sampling is made through touch, sound, and memory of objects. Limitations and considerations are traced out as a note for further collaborations. The site-specific textile community engagement events come to benefit the charity

collaborators in terms of offering credibility and sense of belonging within the wider arts community, something that they have not felt before.

Chapter Five, details what happens to the Community Group when they come together within the setting of the museum to undertake, collaborative, social and textile making activities, considering that some of the group have sight loss. The quality of the interactions between community members associating together through textile practice is discovered through overcoming barriers of sight loss and preconceptions of their own abilities. The metamorphosis of the participants through textile practice allowed a way of slowing down, giving permission in the collective and allowing oneself to interact with materials and allowing time for one another, time for your own thoughts, time for discussions and a freedom to express against formal procedures.

Chapter Six, outlines sensory encounters experienced with materials through the manipulation of silk textiles and other hard materials. Analysing the archive printing blocks and jacquard hand looms through visual drawing has been my default method, however by incorporating touch this enabled me to start to disseminate the patterns within the textile artefacts. Textile patterns were found as a visual aesthetic, together with the rituals of the historic Macclesfield textile silk production, displayed through the daily routine of the silk workers and the machinery they operated. The link to music and sound through the story of the jacquard loom made way for sound to become a tool to listen and respond to through kinetic drawing methods. Experiments came through blind fold drawings to the sounds of the machinery in Paradise Mill. Interactions between the participants to overcome difficulties found with manipulating materials during the community engagement creative events, led to discussions, giving themselves permission to be creative, become messy, undo if they so wish, change mark making tools in a freedom of expression. The challenges they faced handling the smooth lightweight silk material, both fragile and unseen became a metaphor to what the participants felt about their relationship to arts and crafts.

My concluding thoughts are outlined in the final chapter stating the impact this research has had, the contribution to knowledge and recommendations for further development.

Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to explore collaborative community engagement using textile practices through sensory encounters with the visually impaired at Macclesfield Museums.

The objectives of this project are separated into six steps.

1. To investigate initiatives located in the North of England commissioning textile artists to collaborate with diverse communities in community engagement practice in the context of heritage spaces.
2. To examine Macclesfield Museums silk heritage collections through archival research to unearth findings that provide new creative material.
3. To explore and develop sensory methods that will enable the visually impaired to collaborate through textile practices.
4. Develop and analyse community engagement events with the visually impaired at Macclesfield Museums by looking at the relationship the participants have with place and textile making.
5. Develop and analyse a collaborative archive intervention with the visually impaired and Macclesfield Museums by way of public art installation focusing on the relationship sensory textile practice has with the participants of the study.
6. To propose new insights for community engagement with the visually impaired through textile printing and weave practices.

Chapter Two:

Contextual Review

Introduction

Before outlining the findings of this research study the broader context should be examined. To formulate a framework, this chapter is broken down to highlight the UK government policies and initiatives with its key partners in creating the cultural conditions, and specifically in the North of England where the research case study takes place. This review reveals a growing appetite for heritage sites working collaboratively with contemporary artists as a way of providing new interpretations of collections and how they engage with new audiences in making history more accessible and relevant to marginalised visitors such as the disabled. Access to heritage for the visually impaired community has improved with more immersive and interactive approaches to museum curatorship through a multisensory experience of sound, touch, and haptic feedback.

Broader Context: UK Government Policy Culture for All

The Culture White Paper (2016) presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport outlined a plan for further cultural change across the United Kingdom. This paper summarises initiatives previously made over the last fifty years since the last published white paper and describes a four-point plan for further cultural change. In this document the government refers to culture as “the accumulated influence of creativity, the arts, museums, galleries, libraries, archives and heritage upon all our lives” (HM Government, 2016, p. 13). It highlights the need to improve involvement in culture for those that may not have had the opportunity to develop a relationship with their local cultural offering, those from a diverse background, minority ethnic groups and disabled people. The Government puts the argument forward that the cultural sector should represent the diversity of communities in the United Kingdoms. (HM Government, 2016, p. 26). To aid this plan partnerships with Arts Council England, the Heritage Lottery Fund,

Public Health England are key to driving the benefits of culture from planned opportunities out to all diverse communities. Such opportunities have come through programmes such as UK City of Culture, the Great Exhibition of the North (HM Government, 2018), Great Place Scheme, and England Heritage Action Zones (Historic England, 2022).

Public places and buildings of historical importance can be seen across the United Kingdom with many towns and cities lacking decades of investment and in need of regeneration. Considered thought and planning into how to improve their potential has been seen as necessary to drive improvements in culture. Transformation has been planned through investment by Her Majesty's Government delivered through Historic England Place-making strategy. "Place-making" is a term defined by Historic England where the benefits are measured through three pillars: economic, social, and environmental wellbeing through community-based participation, gathering a wide range of people, knowledge, interests (Fletcher, 2018, p. 7). A given place needs people to drive change through a wide breadth of stakeholders from professional parties, council authorities, the local population, and businesses. Their participation is fundamental to improving the cultural offering and the economic and social environment. Grant schemes and England Heritage Action Zone are some of the planned initiatives where areas of historical importance with untapped potential are to be improved to attract residents, more businesses, investors, and tourists (Historic England, 2021).

In February 2022, the UK Government MP Michael Gove, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced the Levelling Up White Paper to tackle this in "giving everyone the opportunity to flourish" (HM Government, 2022, p. 1). As noted in the document it is a long-term framework moving power away from central government to local areas with increased cultural public spending. Among the plans a Culture Recovery Fund of £2 million will be sent out to the museum, heritage, and entertainments sectors.

Northern England Textile Heritage Events

Office of National Statistics (2022) states there are nine regions in England. Geographically the North of England includes the areas of the North East, North West,

Yorkshire, and The Humber. The North West covers Cheshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, and the metropolitan areas of Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

The fragility of these areas can be seen in the recognition of utilising their textile heritage, an echo that resonates across the heartlands of where textiles was once the prominent industry across the North. Manchester is known for its history of cotton production, Bradford and Huddersfield were at the centre of the wool industry, and Macclesfield and its sister town Congleton have a rich background in design and manufacturing of silk apparel.

There is an encouraging number of projects taking place across in the North of England seen from the allocation of funding and continuation of initiatives running throughout the last decade and since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. Arts Council England Creative People & Places project funded through the National Lottery initially started in 2013 and continues today with thirty-nine projects being added to the National Portfolio (Art Council England, 2022a). In the North of England there are fourteen areas, eight of which are in the North West region where this case study is located. Though it must be noted that Macclesfield is not part of the Creative People & Places project. The areas where the projects are running have been highlighted to have a local population with low to medium engagement in the arts with its aim to have communities at the centre of what it does through cultural events that create an environment of change. (Creative People and Places, 2022).

Audience participation in collaboration with artists can shape how communities interact with the space of a heritage site. Super Slow Way (2021) is an arts organization based in Lancashire that commissions programmes which incorporate the working of local communities with and a wide range of artists. The festival called the British Textile Biennial (BTB) headed by Super Slow Way started in 2015 and takes influence from the scenic Pennine Hills of Lancashire and the historic waterways of the Leeds to Liverpool Canal. This region has a diverse and rich history of textile manufacturing, which reduced significantly when businesses moved production to outside of the UK during the second half of the twentieth century.

One example is artist Suzanne Lacy who set up workshops with the community of Pendle in Lancashire to work through the local history of vocal traditions using singing to create

the piece *Shapes of Water, Sounds of Hope* (2016). This merging of a variety of individuals from the local community collectively shared an experience of tasting food and listening to sound within the setting of the former Smith & Nephew Mill, Brierfield in Lancashire to form a multisensory experience and video installation. The mill space had been left vacant through the loss of the textile industry, and had previously been a connecting force that had affiliated many culturally diverse communities. One can argue that igniting and visiting this space through commonalities transposes the site from dormant to become the people's place.

In 2017, I became a local community participant, experiencing a site-specific event at the British Textile Biennial Fabrication Festival playing alongside other willing members we became fully immersed into an audience engagement piece held at Brierfield Mill, Lancashire by the theatre production Zoë Svendsen and Simon Daw's *METIS World Factory: The Game* (Figure 1). By taking an active role in participation in this community engagement event gave me the drive to investigate the role of artists and site-specific public events further. The cultural shift of this space in time through it links to textiles is a notion that underlines this research. This project seeks to bring audiences together, that of the visually impaired and those supporting this community into space of the Macclesfield Museums with its historic textile archives and former textile mill. The mechanism for re-igniting these spaces is not dissimilar to the community engagement work by artist Lacy (2016) as this research also explores the multisensory experience in using the senses of sound, touch and smell into an embodiment.



Figure 1 METIS World Factory: *The Game*. Location: Brierfield Mill (Lockett Richardson, 2017)

Heritage Sites Commissioning Contemporary Artists

Over the first two decades of the twenty-first century there has been an appetite in commissioning artists as method of offering something different in places of historic value through alternative perspectives and interpretations. In traditional curatorial practice the material world sets objects as tangible facts. During the 1980s this began to be challenged with the examination of stories behind these objects and the desire to understand the human experience and perspectives. In the Museums Association report *Valuing Diversity: the case for inclusive museums* (2016, p.18) it states the influence of artists needs to be explored further in discovering stories that have not yet been captured within the museum collections. Marketing academic authors Bennett, Shaw, and Kottasz (2016) put the argument forward that creating artwork through collaboration between the artist and the museum is a marketing method of highlighting subject matters that are difficult to communicate to audiences within the context of a heritage site such as a museum. The artwork is a metaphor to facilitate ideas and concepts to make it far easier for visitors to understand difficult subjects. They do this by highlighting the literature on the theory of art transference and outcomes of three case study museums, showing that artwork can present an alternative understanding through capturing the imagination and emotions felt. The backdrop that forms the path to how museums and artists have come together to collaborate came from critical museology with the overall aim to inform and immerse the visitor and this has translated into many examples of partnerships. From 2009 to 2011 sixteen museums ran maker-led community engagement initiatives under the national collaborative programme *Museummaker* (Museummaker, 2011). Its legacy provided a comprehensive toolkit to help further artists and heritage sites in forming working relationships and which gave rise to the initial inspiration for this research project.

Following on in the wake of *Museummaker* is the agency Arts & Heritage, established in 2009 and based in the North East of England. As an Arts Council England portfolio organisation they work nationally across the United Kingdom to create opportunities and offer support collaboration between contemporary artists and heritage organisation and museums (Arts & Heritage, 2022).



Figures 2 & 3 Artist: Caren Garfen, Titled: Reel Lives, 1891 [Installation textile].

Location: Salts Mill, Saltaire (Lockett Richardson, 2015)

A heritage site or the museum can become a vehicle for further textile practice, for the exhibition *Cloth & Memory {2}* showed a group of artists responding to a former industrial textile mill in Saltaire in Yorkshire and where the former art exhibition went on display (Millar, 2013). The artists presented the memory of the textile industry as an alternative way of communication, and the space enabling the artists to connect with the memory of making cloth such as *Reel Lives, 1891* by Caren Garfen (Figures 2 & 3). Connections between traditional and contemporary practice are linked by identifying where influences originate from can give a shared “cross cultural exchange” (Millar, 2007).

From 2017 to 2020 the project *Mapping Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience* (MCAHE) researched collaborations of artists and heritage organisation through a combined effort of the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Newcastle University, Leeds University, English Heritage, National Trust, Arts & Heritage, The Churches Conservation Trust, Contemporary Visual Art Network and Arts Council England. The project paved way to a three-day conference of the same name at Newcastle University, granting the opportunity for me to present the first phase of this research paper.

The National Trust an organisational charity that conserves the heritage of England, Wales and Northern Ireland has seen cultural change with two hundred interventions across ten years freeing up staff and the conditions of leadership and support. John Oma-

Omstein (2019) Director of Culture and Engagement reported that bringing volunteers into projects and improving communication around them has improved the quality and improved the visitor experience, an example can be seen in the *Fellowship of Earth, Wind and Fire* by Dave Camlin. There has become a legacy of learning networks through both academic and practice-led research by Newcastle University as a cultural exchange with The National Trust and the physical change of the heritage space and properties.

Artist Alice Kettle and cultural historian Jane Webb (Kettle & Webb, 2014, p.59) look at the role of the artist and their textile practice has within the context of museum curatorial practice in the heritage sector. Webb notes the balance has tipped to increasing the attractiveness to the public by way of displaying an offer that is far more reaching and engaging resulting in increased footfall. Textiles can offer support to this; however, Webb argues the practice of textiles is more than increasing the number of visitors, it can be a means of curatorial research. It can be argued that my research in examining wooden printing blocks from the museum collections and bringing the stories to the attention of new audiences is a curatorial role. There are many other examples of artists working with museums and the approach they take demonstrates several factors that influence their response to a heritage site. Alice Kettle was commissioned to produce a site-specific response, the result became a collective of three works titled *The Gardens of England* and exhibited at Queen's House, Greenwich. Kettle recalls the memory of her childhood home and the experience from her mother buying contradictory fabric for the historic house they lived in which had a lasting influence on the approach she took, "to look determinedly at the present and contradict the dominating past, which felt suffocating, fearsome and old." (Kettle & Webb, 2014, p.61). The artist examines the past histories of the heritage site and what becomes apparent in Kettle's case is the artist's background plays an important part in how their work is constructed through past experiences something that has been a key motivational factor within this research project with my personal connection to Macclesfield and the visually impaired community.

The value of heritage sites and the evidence of craftsmanship they contain is something that was debated at the symposium *Useful/Beautiful. Why Craft Matters* (2019) at Harewood House set in the Yorkshire countryside. The accompanying exhibition displayed twenty-six makers, with some responding to the space such as Toogood,

Burrill, and Lamb who created site-specific installations in an allocated rooms in the house. They represented diverse types of materials, and each had a connection to the use of the room such as Timorous Beasties piece titled *Modern Love* (Figure 4). The house was originally built for Edwin Lascelles with building work starting in 1759 to highlight the craftsmanship of its day. Carrying on this theme of display of skill the exhibition explored the theme of what craft is, it's origins and how it has evolved through to how it is perceived today. The curator Hugo Macdonald (2019) argued that some people get stuck on the process of craft rather than what value it adds to our lives.



Figure 4 Artist: Timorous Beasties, Titled: *Modern Love* [Silk textile].

Location: Harewood House (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

A symposium for artists led by Arts & Heritage (2018) at Belsay Hall, Northumberland offered me the opportunity to see and hear within the walls of the Grecian style historic that is owned by English Heritage (2022) house a sound sculpture titled *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Susan Philipsz (Figure 5). Inspired by a story of the same name she uses

Border Ballads by James Reed from the Vaughan Williams Memorial Library, London. The artist visited the site, and felt contrasting feelings from downstairs against the upstairs, reminding her of two stories which featured female characters in the books *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman and the fireplaces in each room of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* by Edgar Allan Poe. The characters are part of the fabric of the building and so too her voice is embedded into the house (Philipsz, 2018). Philipsz has reconnected the history of the place and the area it resides in with the sound of the ballads, an injection of life into the empty building with an unnerving feel. The room is silent and then if the room is vacant, the voice starts again. If all alone in the four walls it feels unsettling and encompassing. In the background other voices can be heard singing the ballads. The sound together with the visual of peeling wallpaper makes the visitor becomes aware of their surroundings. It is sound that informs the process of drawing in this research, an echo of the story of the mill workers becoming blind and the use of touch in the processing of fabric. The energy of the machine captured by sound that are translated in imagery into surfaces, reconnecting the visually impaired as if they are factory workers to the touch of textiles.



Figure 5 Artist: Susan Philipsz (2018), Titled: *The Yellow Wallpaper* [Sound Sculpture].

Location: English Heritage Belsay Hall (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Redefining the Museum: Community Engagement

Community engagement within the heritage sector is well established practice that comes in many forms (Watson & Waterton, 2010). It is a mechanism in attracting repeat and new audiences into venues by diversifying, and broadening their social appeal so that the cultural and historical assets continue to be available long term (King, 2018).

The university academics Watson and Waterton (2010) argue in the *International Journal of Heritage Studies* the “very notion of community seemed to have ossified into a set of assumptions and practices that were now rarely examined”. In the case of this research project the institution of the heritage museum and the textile artist are the drivers in reaching out to the visual impaired community. However, within the participatory nature of how the collaborative events were designed, and curatorial input into the exhibition of artworks gave opportunity for the visually impaired to include their voices. They became part of a collective, an interchangeable dialogue between the museum, the artist and the visually impaired.

Current types of community engagement methods used within museums have found to facilitate an environment of learning and play (Collections Trust, 2017), offer a sense of wellbeing and community through active participation through direct object interaction such as handling sessions (Howes, 2014).

Multisensory and Embodied Knowledge

The sense of touch enables the participant to understand the material nature of the artefacts. The word ‘sensorium’ is used to denote, “the sensory apparatus or facilities considered as a whole” (OED Online, 2022) which has developed with technological advances driving the museum visitor experience. According to architect Pallasmaa, “All the senses, including vision, are extensions of the tactile sense; the senses are specialisms of skin tissue, and all sensory experiences are modes of touching, thus related to tactility” (2009, p. 100). The sense of touch is a mode of haptic enquiry that informs our experiences during the process of drawing during archival research as one of the methods. In the process of making the trinity of eye-hand-mind come together

though there are artists that have altered this connection (Pallasmaa, 2009) through influencing the effectiveness of one of the senses; examples of visual drawing can still be expressed, shutting your eyes, and object analysis explored through touch alone. It is these examples of sensory interruptions that interest me in working with the visually impaired, where vision is not a reliable connection in forming a complete picture.

Pondering on the question of how art and art practise can be assessable to people with sight loss, I begin to think about the multisensory nature of perception during my examination of the Silk Museum archive objects. Noting down certain qualities such as size, texture, smell, and temperature I experienced in the encounters with the Langley Printworks wooden printing blocks and the jacquard weaving looms at Paradise Mill. The qualities that were played with during the handling session, walking around Paradise Mill, listening the sound audio clips of textile machinery, the manipulation of mark making tools and materials during the kinetic sound drawing events, and the interaction with the contemporary blocks, all contributed to building a picture in my own mind's eye and those of the collaborators during the ethnographic research.

All senses influence our perception, the visual look, the smell and sound of the object when we interact with, giving rise to an overall experience which the brain merges together. Those with a visual impairment during a handling session or interacting with art materials may be influenced by past experiences of interactions with that object or similar items therefore their haptic perception may be affected if they were to only use their sense of touch (Lederman and Klatzky, 2004; 2009). This study focuses not on one category of the senses, but rather a multisensory understanding of the experiences within the research project. Through this case study the Community Group and I developed together an ability to record and assess and respond to visual references, auditory encounters, the smell of the interaction of people, places and objects as “multisensorial embodied ways of knowing in human interactions” (Pink, 2015, p. 18).

The psychophysical research has begun to try and understand each of our senses in the multisensory experience of objects and studies have shown a sensory dominance or hierarchy of sensations. A person's perception of the experiences is naturally tipped toward the visual however when a person's vision becomes impaired, or they lose it all together, what the participant feels through the skin becomes more dominant (Heller,

1983). This is not that their senses of touch improves, it is their focus on interpreting through touch or their other senses has improved as a skill. An example of this is presented in a case study by Mark Clintberg a lecturer in Art History at Concordia University (2014) where he explores vision and touch with museums arguing that historically vision as a sense has been understood to be superior to the proximal senses of sound, smell, taste, and including touch. Clintberg contemplates museums working towards the national government mandate to achieve access for the disabled and how this can be made possible at The National Gallery of Canada (NGC) community engagement programme titled *Stimulation the Senses* (2007). Designed with the public users in mind, the participants including Clintberg are given audio descriptions, taken on a tactile tour of sculptures, and move into a creative workshop to create artworks based on the bodily movements of the artist's work they've just experienced. Using autoethnographic reflections of the tactility and sounds of the sculptures he records being blind folded during this experience and includes the voice of a visually impaired participant. Clintberg's findings show that the visually impaired participant had ease at the method of sensory exploration. Clintberg's experience without sight meant his understanding comes as a lower level of attainment compared to what he notes as "my counterpart's sophisticated tactile understanding of the artwork, demonstrated that we had different levels – unequal levels – of access because of our different skill levels with touch" (2014, p.318).

The process of embodiment is through meaning and the value of the participant's lived experience, and cognitive unconscious. Annamma Joy a professor of marketing at Concordia University and John F. Sherry Jr., a professor of marketing Northwestern University argue that critical reflection is shaped by the nature of our bodies and its interactions (2003). Using my body, as a research tool to perceive through my senses I participate in the collaborative act of textile practice and observe the cultural happenings (Classen, 1993; Howes 2003).

The word "embody" according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) is "to give a concrete form to (what is abstract or ideal); to express (principles, thoughts, intentions) in an institution, work of art, action, definite form of words" (2022). Embodied knowledge or as Sennett states is, "but thinking like a craftsman" (2008, p. 44). Sennett

gives the example of examining a parking garage at the Peachtree Center, thinking of the contrasts of the architect and the tradesmen who constructed and finished the parking areas. Where lighting had been erected according to the plan it generated pools of dark areas an over-sight. The painters had painted what Sennett describes as “odd-shaped white stripe lines” (2008, p. 45) to guide drivers to counteract the flaws in the design process, what seemed an off-plan decision to improve the conditions was embedded knowledge that only a skilled craftsman would know through the act of making using the body. Therefore the mind and body are not separate, we do not live within our bodies as a method of transport. The everyday skills of navigating the world that the visually impaired community develop for example in the domestic environment of the home, in the activities of washing, cleaning, and cooking are adapted and learnt. Or as a textile artist the interactions of my practice in drawing, painting, block making becomes tacit knowledge. The collaborative research project seeks out the knowledge that becomes embodied and often not articulated, repeatedly done without thought or consciousness. They are embedded memories of knowledge, a muscle memory, a sensory memory encoded into our human being as Juhani Pallasmaa points out “We are connected with the world through our senses. The senses are not merely passive receptors of stimuli, and the body is not only a point of viewing the world from a central perspective.” (2009, p. 13).

The knowledge and skills of the historic Macclesfield silk culture is present through its people. By bringing together the Community Group and encountering the environment of the museum this situation has provided the conditions to make sense of everyday life and its cultural practices. I have grown to becoming increasingly aware of the sensory experience and perception. The senses of place we felt as we sought to inhabit the museum and cultural place of Macclesfield, the places that I and my collaborators inhabit and that in reflexivity I share my knowledge about textile practises through an interest in the senses. This approach to doing and representing research in what Pink (2005) calls sensory ethnography or ethnography through the senses. The artworks formed with this research, the kinetic sound drawings, the contemporary printing blocks, the silk hand weaves, the digital and hand printed textile installations are sensory embodiments presented through artistic methods of production. On documenting my experiences and

those of the visually impaired group in my journal my reflective analysis creates a conscious perspective of concentrating on what is happening around me and inside myself. The artworks are an extension of our experience and a projection of what is in our mind.

Access for the Visually Impaired through Multisensory Engagement

In 1995 the UK Government had written into law through the *Disability Discrimination Act* that museums and galleries could not discriminate against disabled persons, in other words they had to work to provide facilities and exhibitions that are accessible to audiences with disability including visual impairments. With this piece of legislation questions began to be asked about curatorial methods of the museum. Fiona Candlin a reader in museum studies at Birkbeck College, University of London questions in the journal article, *Blindness, art and exclusion in museums and galleries* (2003) the concept of how two sculptures can be accessible to people with sight loss or blind from birth. My thoughts arrived at a similar state of questioning at the start of my interaction with the visually impaired community. Candlin mentions there is little progress made to providing concrete recommendations, however since 2003 there have been movements in the right direction made by the museum sector. Looking at the ways to improve accessibility to arts and heritage research can be found across disciplines providing ways of knowing from individuals with visual impairments, museum curators, historians, academics across the fields of museum studies, neuroscience, physiology, psychophysics and artists (Spence & Gallace, 2008).

The trend for an interactive approach to museum curatorship began in the twentieth century with museums making an emphasis on fun and playful displays and pressure from those that represented the visually impaired community pushing for greater access to museum facilities and their collections (Candlin, 2010). Curatorial practice is being challenged through the expanding area of research in museum studies in academia looking at exploring Sensory Museology. Professor David Howes from Concordia University, Montreal states, “the most salient trend in the new museology has been the rehabilitation of touch.” (Howes, 2015, p. 259). This has developed in contrast to the still

widely used practice that collections are not to be touched, objects are too delicate to handle. Walking behind a rope and viewing through glass cases are barriers for the visitor to appreciate and experience the artefacts through all the senses. The interactive interpretative programme set out by The Silk Museum and Paradise Mill has previously been aimed at children of school age with no specific information or sessions aimed the visually impaired.

Moving on from the traditional curation style British Museums have shown examples of how to engage with visually impaired visitors. The British Library offers an audio descriptive guide of selected objects chosen and commented on by their museum curators, though this can be argued as a passive experience.

In 2015, The London Science Museum held a series of family events for children with visually impairments where The Special Events Team undertook training on working with the visually impaired and developed a touch tour, audio descriptions, and hands on workshops so that they could interact further (Minshall-Pearson, & Boal, 2015).

In 2016, an artwork was created during artist-led textile workshops with the visually impaired during a project under the title *Sensing Culture*, a Heritage Lottery Funded (HLF) and Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) project at The Beaney. This three-year project had the aim of improving the accessibility of heritage for blind and partially sighted people. An exhibition followed called *The Mark of the Maker* where inspiration came from the collections at Canterbury Cathedral. (The Beaney House of Art & Knowledge, 2022). The following year, the partially sighted sculptor Lynn Cox, and the children's interactive museum Eureka! undertook sculpture workshops with sight impaired children to produce a collaborative and interactive permanent installation called *Favourites* (Morris, 2018). These sensory engagement events have enabled a sense of freedom in contrast to traditional methods of community engagement. This tapping into alternative senses compared to sight alone draws on different skills that emerge through immersive encounters. They slow down the process of making and the process of thinking so that it becomes more considered and explicit in nature.

The Silk Museum and Paradise at the start of the research did not offer an audio guide. One similar heritage site is the National Trust Quarry Bank located in Style, situated eleven miles from Paradise Mill and offers something similar in terms of its history of

textile production which comprises of a preserved cotton mill established in 1784. The tour at Quarry Bank takes the audience through the “eyes of its workforce. The sights and sound of working in the mill are brought to life in an immersive audio-visual experience” (National Trust, 2022). The community of visually impaired collaborators in this research perceived visiting this location as a good experience. It was noted during interviews that other museums they had previously visited where audio tours were provided did improved the overall visit.

Access to Museums in the UK for the visually impaired have made it possible with several formats such as audio guides, interactive exhibitions, handling sessions and guided tours. Vocal Eyes, a charity who works with arts and heritage organisations to remove the barriers and improve the opportunities for the visually impaired conducted a survey called the *Museum and Heritage Access 2020* asking disabled museum and heritage visitors of their experience in accessing facilities, available resources, and their involvement with events in the twelve-month period before the coronavirus pandemic hit. Of those asked; 96% said they wanted to visit venues more regularly, and more likely to visit if they had good access. To improve on their overall experience some examples listed were, 39% wanted audio descriptors, 38% needed a personal companion, 29% wanting tactiles, 28% would use a sensory map/visual story (Vocal Eyes, 2020a, p. 5-6).

Dr. Simon Hayhoe argues that “proximity to works of art is at least as important as perceiving the art itself” (Hayhoe, 2013, p. 67). Arts and heritage organisations are finding ways to improve its accessibility to art and the material culture of heritage by way of audio tours, a method that is widely accepted as a means of inclusivity for visitors from any type of background. Vocal Eyes offers a film and video audio description service, and the British Museum has one such example of an audio-described video talk offered as part of the public exhibition *Tantra: Enlightenment to Revolution*, 2020 (Vocal Eyes, 2020b). At the National Gallery, London they have developed a mobile phone application called *Love Art* which offers an experience of audio descriptions with music and sound alongside a critique of the artworks.

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London provide touch tours of many types of objects providing a space to experience the collectables. Tactile artists have replicated paintings for the visually impaired. The sighted painter Heather Bowring (2007, 2021)

was commissioned by Touch Tours at Tate Modern, London to do a tactile version of Roy Lichtenstein's *Whaam!*. Bowring utilising the raised texture of fine plaster with her painting to create a surface effect that enable visually impaired visitors of the gallery to share the experience. Living Paintings (2022) a charity has grown from developing methods of delivering artworks and books through tactile raised images and audio descriptions.

Digital technology in the way of three-dimensional printing has been used to create a touchable art for museums, examples are the *Mona Lisa* made by 3D Photoworks (2022) who make tactile pieces of famous and well-known artworks to produce an immersive experience. New York based artist Roy Nachim incorporates into the visual aesthetic of his artwork poems written by him and raised from the surface in Braille. One such artwork *I Am Freedom* (Nachum, 2016) allows the visually impaired to access the artwork. Nachim's points out that the observer moves to become the participants when they encounter and reach out to use more than vision and bring in the sense of touch.

The use of accessible technology continues with an exhibition at the National Gallery in Prague called *Touching Masterpieces* with the collaboration of organisations Geometry Prague and NeuroDigital allows the user to wear a special glove to experience haptic feedback, in other words a sense of touch allowing the visually impaired to experience a feeling as if they were actually touching works of art such as Venus de Milo (Melnick, 2018). This answers that need to touch, and also preserve the delicate nature of the museum piece through virtual reality.

UK Research on the Value of Touch and Objects

The increased interest in understanding the value of touch and object handling within the context of the museum is apparent in the published research as follows; Alexandra Walker notes in her thesis *Beyond the Looking Glass: object handling and access to museum collections* (2013) in the communication and methods of exploring our past histories there continues to be the use of the visual, with text panels and objects out of reach behind glass. In this research she outlines the benefits, and also limitations to object handling which she notes as not fully understood. Walker suggests that tactile

experiences improved the understanding of the past and presents a toolkit for tactile access for museums.

Alexandra Woodall PhD (2016) thesis explores sensory engagements focusing on the sense of touch in the art gallery context looking at embodied practices where imagination and creativity allows for responses through inclusive interpretation of the interpretation of materials. Based on case studies of exploring archive collections the handling collection at the Artemis Collection in Leeds, Mary Grey collection at Manchester Art Gallery, and artist-made objects at Museums Sheffield.

Isil Onol's PhD research (2011) describes the use of practice-led research. Investigating the concept of touch where the outcome is an interface as a method of object interpretation between the audience and the untouchable museum object through physical and virtual created works. This becomes an intervention presented as an addition and not to replace the object from the museum. In-line with research on digital interfaces Hayhoe et al. (2017) published findings that showed digital technology in the form of the iPad 2 in a photography workshop with blind, visually impaired, and sighted participants is a form of collaborative learning. The benefits of using such technology are inclusive, and the connection formed in the act of producing images gives both "social as well as technical confidence and encourages cultural development" (Hayhoe et al. 2017, p.6). In contrast, my research project uses the process of textile making rather than a digital interface, exploring this act of making as collaborative as well as participatory in nature. The intervention into the archive also adds to and does not replace the existing museum collections. Many of the methods used by arts and heritage organisations when interacting with the visually impaired find ways to replace the original object with relief images which may only give the participant a limited experience.

Hayhoe (2017) challenges the reader that the nature of artworks in this case the visual aesthetic properties does not need to be the sole purpose. He argues that there is a belief that those without sight are not able to comprehend works of art. That the phrase 'visual arts' implies that it can only be experienced and understand through the ability to see through vision. The material culture of objects has an aesthetic quality, designed for your eyes only, by eye only and which do not consider those blind or visually impaired. An exclusionary world of visual aesthetics that become the everyday cultural experience

perceived by vision; this process is an example of in what Hayhoe notes as “passive exclusion” (p. 31)

Blind and Partially Sighted People in the UK and East Cheshire

Across the UK it is predicted that there are two million people living with some form of sight impairment, one in thirty persons (Access Economics, 2019). As of March 2020, the official national statistics declared on the NHS Digital Data Publication *Registered Blind and Partially Sighted People, England 2019-20* (2021) for people recorded as having a vision impairment on the Local Authority’s register was 276,690, that is five registrations per 1,000 people in England. It must be noted that registration is not compulsory therefore not everyone is recorded on the register. One in three on the register also have an additional disability with 63.9% having physical disabilities and 25% having hearing loss. One in every five people will have sight loss in their lifetime with the main causes as uncorrected refracted error (39%), aged-related macular degeneration (AMD) (23%), cataract (19%), glaucoma (7%) diabetic eye disease (5%). There is a predicted increase in the number of people with sight loss to increase by 25% by 2030 (RNIB, 2021).

In the area of East Cheshire where this research case study was conducted the total estimated general population in mid-2019 was 384,152 (ONS, 2021, p. MYE5), with 15,400 (4%) people having sight loss, of those there were 1,720 (0.4%) registered blind or partially sighted (RNIB, 2021).

UK National and Local Visually Impaired Charities

The RNIB, the Royal National Institute of Blind People is the most well-known UK national charity that supports people with visual impairments, forming in 1868. Helping severely sight impaired (blind) and sight impaired (partially sighted) people through the practicalities of living with a disability and providing mental health support to them and their support network of family, friends or carers. Their mission is to “want to change our world so there are no barriers to people with sight loss” (RNIB, 2022). The role they provide to the wider community comes through the National Sight Loss Advice Service

during sight loss diagnosis and giving employment advice over the phone or email, together with Eye Care Liaison Officers (ECLOs) providing face to face patient help. Also, the charity campaigns to raise awareness of issues that the visually impaired community face and have an impact on their lives. The RNIB is not partner or collaborator in research project, however the information provided by the RNIB has been used as a reference guide in helping me understand the impact that sight loss has on people's lives. As a national charity they offer a general service of advice, however when it comes to the specific needs of people in regions across the UK these are addressed by charities based in their local areas.

The local charities that have been involved with this project are the East Cheshire Eye Society and Vision Support which provide support that the RNIB would not be able to do in the specific county of Cheshire where this research takes place. The Cheshire Vision Impairment Consortium is made up of Action for Blind People, IRIS Vision Centre, East Cheshire Eye Society and Vision Support. This is a working group to work smarter in sharing expert knowledge, ideas, best practice and reduce an overlap of services. Vision Support are in union with East Cheshire Society to achieve in person, on-line and in groups digital skills training. Vision Support was established in 1876 and is a registered charity based in the city of Chester. They continue to provide a way to maintain the independence of people with visual impairments by assisting and raising awareness to the wider community across North Wales and the West Cheshire. Advice in benefits and welfare, rehabilitation; support with independent living through home visits and supplying of aids; and the providing the opportunity to socialise through events and activities (Vision Support, 2015). This charity supports some of the Community Group members and one of their employees became a sighted guide during the Phase One of the event activities in Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1.

The East Cheshire Eye Society is a registered independent charity established in 1875. Providing help to the visually impaired in the East Cheshire area through their Resource Centre in Macclesfield. They give over the phone assistance, providing equipment for everyday living and with support services such as home visits, financial entitlement information, emotional support, providing social groups and weekly activities of walking

groups, sporting activities such as crown green bowling, coffee club, one off events and day trips (East Cheshire Eye Society, 2022).

To improve the experience of arts and heritage venues and what they have to offer the charity Vocal Eyes, established in 1998 gives opportunity for the visually impaired to access theatres, museums, galleries (Vocal Eye, 2016). Audio description service for arts venues to open access for the visually impaired to exhibitions, productions and film. They also provide training courses, best practice guides, in person awareness training for sighted guides and those in the arts and heritage sector. The RNIB does not offer courses or sessions in art although it does provide access to a database that enables a search for local societies that cater for this need called Sightline Directory (RNIB, 2023). Research has found that workshops in material experimentation with an inherent tactile nature, for example painting, pottery, weaving, woodwork, and glass art are designed by heritage and arts venues specifically for the visually impaired rather than integrating the visually impaired community into sessions for the general population. One such workshop titled *InTouch* ran over half a day at The Royal Academy of Arts with artists Rachel Gadsden and artist-educator Harry Baxter. This art making session utilised audio description, tactiles and explored the physical nature of working with materials in the art process inspired by artists exhibiting at the *Summer Exhibition 2019* (Disability Arts Online, 2019). Henshaws, a charity based in the North of England has evolved to become a specialist creative college in Harrogate offering residential for young people aged 16-25 years that have sight loss or other disabilities. They offer community services by developing what Henshaws states as a "Pathway to Independence" (2016) through their support office in Manchester. Henshaws Arts and Crafts Centre in Knaresborough allows visually impaired adults aged 17-69 years to attend workshops in cooking, woodwork, mosaics, jewellery making and pottery. Their vision is to enable a future that gives those individuals the ability to gain autonomy and capability to do what they desire (Henshaws, 2019a: 2019b).

To challenge this and foster inclusivity into the wider arts community The Art House located in Wakefield, West Yorkshire and promoted by the RNIB is an art studio that encompasses a world that all diverse backgrounds come together to make art. The catalogue of events, exhibitions, courses, available studio space and artist residencies gives rise to equal opportunities for disabled and nondisabled artists (The Art House,

2022). They became part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio of Organisations for 2023-26.

Origins of the East Cheshire Eye Society

Visually seeing silk thread with its natural properties of lustre and fineness can be a challenge when threading a hand jacquard loom. If that yarn breaks the worker would need the eye of an eagle to knot the yarn together to avoid a flaw in the resulting woven fabric (D. Hearn, personal communication, August 10, 2018). During the industrial nineteenth century the factory conditions played against the mill workers, often cramped and with little or low light levels and over time some workers suffered sight loss and couldn't carry on with their duties. This is where the East Cheshire Eye Society (ECES) formally known as the Macclesfield Eye Society has a long-established history in helping those with sight loss. It began in 1875 under the name the Society of Home Teaching for the Blind, together with the Local Authority and a group of local ladies a committee was formed to visit eighty people registered blind in Macclesfield at the time. With no employment, this was to visit people in their own domestic setting or who ended up in the workhouse. Their charitable work past on skills in reading which then as the years progressed included craft endeavours like knitting and crocheting, basket weaving, rush seating, piano tuning and coal sack making. (East Cheshire Eye Society, 2020)

Chapter Three:

Methodology

Overall Research Design

The research organically grew through my practice as a textile practitioner investigating the heritage and culture of the silk trade in Macclesfield involving Macclesfield Museums wealth of social and material knowledge contained within the museum archives. Over the course of this research project the case study locations of The Silk Museum and Paradise Mill and the desire to engage in community engagement events brought together a collaboration with the museum and members of the East Cheshire Eye Society.

The research objectives were planned with selected methods of data collection (see Figure 6). The research took part over three years and was split over two phases titled *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1* (January 2017- December 2018) and *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2* (January 2019 - March 2020). Each phase had their own sequences of events. Community events were planned, conducted, evaluated and further developments were incorporated into the research to produce additional sampling sessions. Parts of the research was conducted alone, or directly with the museum staff without the input of the visually impaired community, these periods in time connected the collaboration events to further relevant historical curatorial research, and material experimentation. The community engagement events were shaped specifically to the members of the charity and rooted in the historical textile practices of printing and weaving and the origins of the East Cheshire Eye Society.

The outputs of the collaboration saw two public exhibitions, the first called *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1* (September 2018) displaying artworks by all participants; the follow up exhibition *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2* (November 2020 - February 2020) presented collaborative installations pieces, audio exhibition guides, and an exhibition booklet.

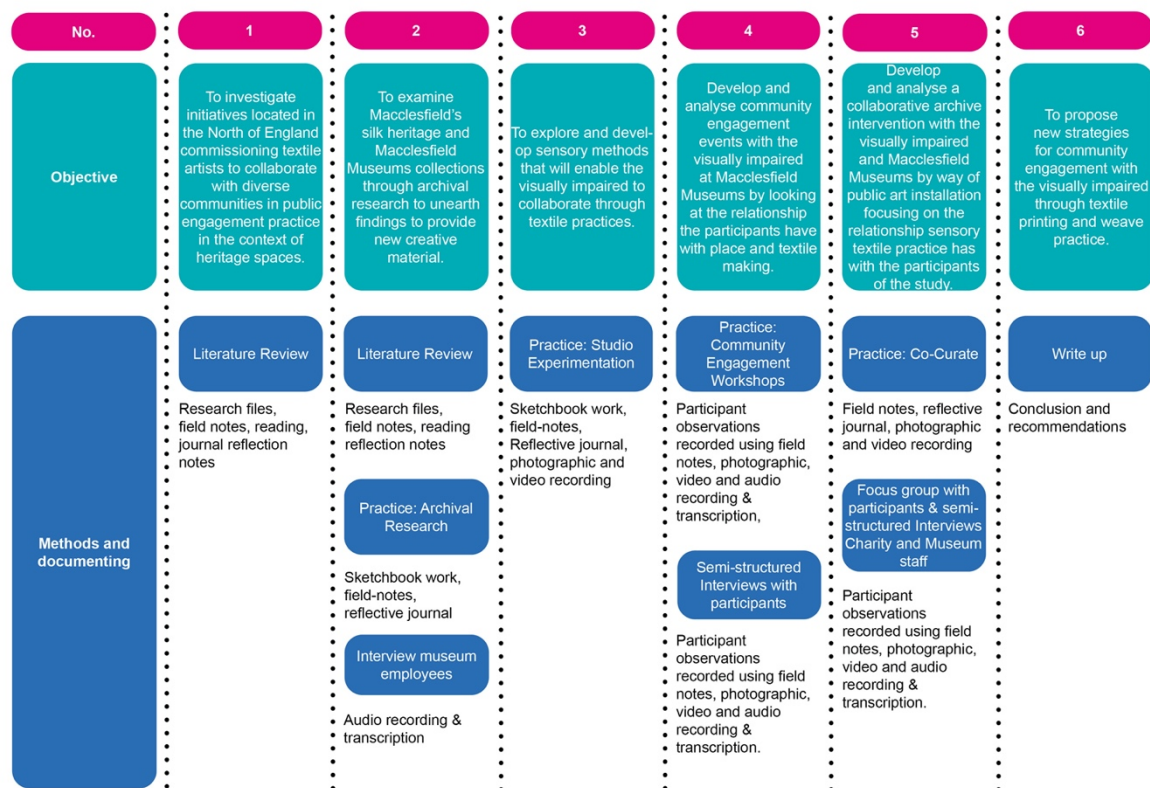


Figure 6 Objectives and methods diagram (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Researcher and Practitioner

There is no separation of the researcher and the practitioner, I am both and a collaborative participant. The researcher's experience is part of the process of enquiry. Reflexivity can be seen as influencing the researcher and those being researched within social sciences as a configuration of critical constructivism. From a critical theory perspective Graeme Sullivan, a University Professor in Art Education argues "a reflexive stance offers the potential to improve capacity to undertake inquiry that reveals the fuller dimensions of human processes and actions" (2010, p. 52). The researcher and the research participants are important in this research, to critically analysis all information obtained regardless of where who or where it comes from so that they are symbiotic.

The knowledge I bring to the research informs the ontological position of the research (Saunders et al, 2016). My own cultural identity and heritage comes from being raised in

and around Macclesfield, with family connections to the story of Macclesfield silk coupled with my experience as a textile practitioner and parallel role as a retail Senior Product Technologist has influenced the research design. My background is a fusion of art and design of visual surfaces and technical textile production knowledge. The interpretations on the real-life events can have more than meaning so the bias I bring to the project is counterbalanced with the voices or perspectives contributed by the museum and members of the East Cheshire Eye Society charity in a triangulation of creative exchange (see Figure 7). As the practitioner-researcher I am aware that objectivity is not possible. My approach is curious and open minded, seeking out arguments and other methods with an analytical view of the research practice helps to move me away from a one-sided view (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 23). The epistemology, the way that the knowledge is gathered is subjectivist, as the inquirer with the collaborative participants in the community engagements events the findings come from the interactions observed and documented through note-taking, audio, video, photography, sketchbook, journaling, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires.

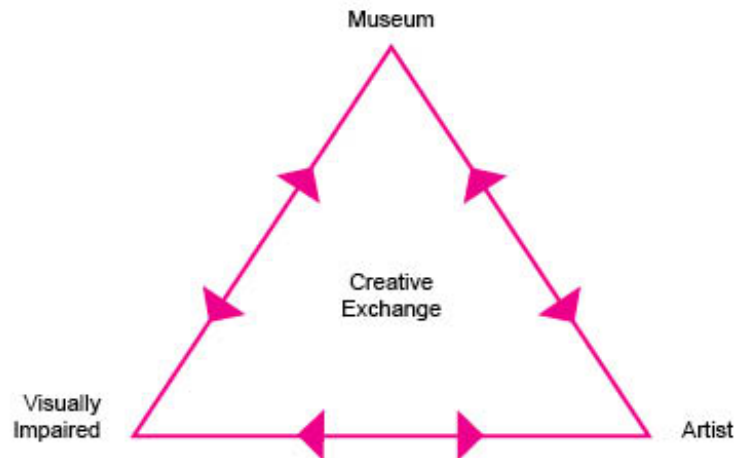


Figure 7 Triangulation of creative exchange (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Introducing the Methods

In this project I am using a qualitative multi-method approach, a range of methods taken from the social sciences which are interpretive for example, personal journaling, participant observations, and semi-structured interviews have gathered evidence of several perspectives to form a “triangulation” (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 31).

Real Life Example at the Museum

To develop a real-life example, this research involves textile practice conducted in a specific and local area in a natural setting (Gray & Malins, 2004) that are distinct to the culture of Macclesfield as it holds key historical collections connected to town’s story of silk rather than set in generalise place or world view. The research is located at The Silk Museum and Paradise Mill in what is called a case study (Yin, 2014). The learnings are experiential where the collaborative participants are in the museum archive viewing, handling, and interacting with the collections (Moon, 2004, p. 76). The reason for choosing these sites comes from an enquiry into my own heritage and family connections to Macclesfield silk as Sullivan mentions, “There is also something intensely local about knowledge that is grounded in community construction” (2010, p. 166). They provide the basis of inspiration and curiosity of inquiry making in community spaces. Such museums are places for creative experimental research and evaluation by the textile artist “in ways that disrupt existing boundaries” (Sullivan, 2010, p. 158).

The values of the study are co-dependent on a shared collective. This study uses a co-production (Banks et al. 2018) or co-creation approach, a way of working where the researcher and collaborators work together in an exchange, a form of participatory research. All the views of the participants are captured. Marja Liisa Swantz (2008) discusses in chapter 2 within the book *Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice* (2008) that in participatory action research (PAR) the researchers (in this case are university students) immersed themselves into village life in Tanzania as part of the community which makes the research contextual. The role of the researcher and researched were interchanged through the length of the study as seen in the examples

given such as women students who engaged in participatory research with families with poor nutrition where the researcher's attitudes changed through the knowledge and understanding of people's problems (p. 33). This is reflective of my situation as a sighted guide, introducing and embedding myself into the creative events within the museum alongside the visually impaired community in establishing a relationship and collaborating during the creative sessions.

Selection of the Community Group: The Visually Impaired

During discussions with museum staff, it was clear there was a plan to improve the museum's appeal through attracting and interacting with new community groups and institutions of learning. This provided an opportunity of mutual benefit where I could help them achieve their goal and provide me with a new avenue of research. In the plan to attract new visitors to the museum they wanted to improve communication with schools and their teachers, young persons aged 13-16, young male adults aged 20 and above, young families and the visually impaired. It was important for my work to select a community that I could connect with and felt all the groups had potential, however I was drawn to working with the visually impaired as I was familiar with this as my Grandfather was registered blind and trained as a furniture weaver. In the early 1980s, I vividly remember visiting my grandparents' house where large paper braille books sat on the living room piano that my Grandmother had started to re-purpose into scrap books containing newspaper clipping, greeting cards and holiday postcards soon after my Grandad passed away. Wooden chairs sat guarding the parameter of the living room, standing to attention with carefully woven seats that my Grandfather made with his own hands. Somehow these objects had retained in my memory, now being recalled on decades later.

Curiosity got the better of me and I wanted to how this community group could become part of my response to the archive. A meeting was set up with a visually impaired group of individuals who were members of a working group called the Visually Impaired Forum based in the East Cheshire region. They discuss topics that are going affect people with

visual impairments, for example changes in street developments, building works, public transport and hospital services. (M. Tilsley, personal communication, March 30, 2020).

Introducing the Community Group

The total number of people involved in the project consisted of twenty-five collaborators (including myself) who were employees and volunteers from Macclesfield Museums; members and staff of the East Cheshire Eye Society; a representative from the charity Vision Support and myself from The University of Huddersfield. The registered charities The East Cheshire Eye Society supports the visually impaired in East Cheshire, and Vision Support covers the areas of West Cheshire and North Wales. Of the twenty-five it was categorised that six individuals provided additional support, helping the coordination of the community engagement events rather than taking part in the creative elements. The remaining nineteen took an active role in the creative textile practice, both collaborating and contributing to the art production and which I define as the “Community Group”. This group contained eight sighted guides and eleven visually impaired individuals of which, three were sight impaired (previously known as partially sighted) and eight were classified as severely sight impaired (previously known as blind), with three participants that required guide dog assistance. The design of the project had to take this into account, therefore I worked on the premise that all visually impaired group members had to be fully integrated and access all event activities. Two members of group communicated challenges of hearing loss, hand tremors and the loss of feeling in the fingers which presented itself during the activities and were not known of before the events started, however reflections and learnings from these insights are captured within the next chapters.

All individuals declared themselves as having White British ethnicity and lived locally to Macclesfield Museums within the towns of Macclesfield, Congleton, Stockport and Wilmslow. The Silk Museum and Paradise Mill are situated within Macclesfield town centre and which served an accessible hub to congregate and partake in the creative events due to its central location where participants could get to via public transport, private taxis or family car drop off.

The split of the group showed there was a higher proportion of females (fifteen) to males (four). The context of the museum showed that the history of the UK silk industry presenting male and female workers within the professions of weaving and textile printing. The project was initially discussed with members of the charity using art terminology and marketed as an art-based project working within the industrial setting of the historical silk industry. From the information collected from those individuals they had a natural interest in local history, art and creativity rather than because of an attraction to stereotypical domestic gender-specific textile activities. (H. Van der Veken, personal communication, March, 24, 2020, p. 2).

The age ranges varied across the cohort, one male aged 45-54, two females aged 55-64, and six people over the age of 65 consisting of one male and five females. The ages of the remaining individuals were unknown but from observation they ranged from early 30 up to early 60 years of age. Retired or current vocational backgrounds of the group covered the categories of museum and heritage; retail, teaching, healthcare, horticulture, voluntary charity sector or unemployment due to disability. Excluding my profession as an artist-researcher role, the remainder of the Community Group are not defined as “professional artists” as they are not paid or produce artworks as an occupation, and they were not practitioners that practiced or exhibited artworks at the beginning of this project, nevertheless they came to the sessions as “novices”. Their experience with creative endeavours had previously been explored as children through mainstream schooling in painting or ceramic lessons. The Eye Cheshire Eye Society had provided short twenty-minute-long social activities such as felt making, however until the commencement of this project the group had limited interactions with art or textiles sessions since their childhood (H. Van der Veken, personal communication, March, 24, 2020, p. 6). It was discovered that most of them had exposure to the subject of textiles, either through historical context of heritage sites located in their local area such as National Trust Quarry Bank Mill and family connections to textile manufacturing.

Textile Practice as Research

This research is a practice-led enquiry where I use a multi-technique approach of incorporating drawing, print, surface manipulation and weaving into my practice as methods (Schon, 1991, p 308-309). Academics Barrett and Bolt in the publication *Practice as research* (2010, p.3) put forward the case for creative arts research as a credible mode of inquiry examining contexts and its outcomes as an alternative to traditional academic research. Experiential learning, knowledge, action, and problem solving are sort out during this research through the practice of textile making. Autoethnographic approach is used through the act of writing through the self. Learning to scrutinise my own practise where ideas produce knowledge production is a type of performative writing in a form of reflexivity. (Denzin, 2014)

The key to linking the academic theoretical to the practice of textiles comes through the context of the museum in this research (Gray & Malins, 2004, p. 22). Appetite in commissioning artists within the museum context has grown over the past few decades and is a method of offering something different in places of historic value. Kettle and Webb (Kettle & Webb, 2014, p. 60) explore textile art as a method of historical enquiry, as a way of analysing the contents of collections and archives to seek out what has not been seen and giving a voice to untold stories.

In 2016, Poulomi Desai undertook an artist-in-residence at Heritage Key at the University of Huddersfield, incorporating a cross-disciplinary approach of historical research, archival research, meeting lecturers and students in textiles and music, and wider community engagement. The output came in an exhibition with a performance piece and short films (University of Huddersfield, 2016). This research takes a similar approach as it is also collaborative; it transcends beyond textile practises and connects into the fields of heritage, museum curation, and the charity sector.

Academic and artist Nithikul Nimkulrat looks at two case studies of creative textile pieces displayed in an exhibition and argues how the practice-led research production of artworks or artifacts can become information for dissemination “which is embedded in the practice and embodied by the practitioner” (2013, p. 14). The knowledge itself is from the artist, the creative object, in the process of making textiles and in the from the context it

is situated in. Textile practices in this research consist of several textile making techniques that include visual drawing, kinetic sound drawings, blind fold drawing, hand block printing, silk screen printing, hand weaving, laser cutting and digital fabric printing. Some of these activities are undertaken alone or with collaborators, the museum and member of East Cheshire Eye Society. Tactile handling and curatorial methods became a shared endeavour with the community group which formed part of the process.

Community Engagement Events

The methods of engagement come through the community engagement events that brought everyone to one singular place to create a sense of belonging, a space to help focus the mind and body.

Collaborative Events	Number of Events
Phase 1: Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part One	
Textile Practice Collaborative Engagement Events	2
Archive Research Collaborative Events inc Mill Tour	2
Curatorial Collaborative Events	1
Exhibition Opening and Guided Tour	1
Exhibitions days	13
Number of artworks displayed	36
Phase 2: Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part Two	
Textile Practice Collaborative Engagement Events	2
Archive Research Collaborative Events	1
Curatorial Collaborative Events	0
Exhibition Opening and Guided Tour	1
Exhibitions days	90
Number of artworks displayed	12

Figure 8 Table of type and number of collaborative events (Lockett Richardson, 2022)

As a community-based artist I use textile practice as a tool of communication. Ethnographic methods are used within this study recording observations during and after



the events. Each participatory event was a day long where points of conversations and thoughts were captured through autobiographical journaling as a reflective practitioner, semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews.

There were ten events in collaboration with the visually impaired these comprised of archival research through handling of archive objects and historical enquiry of touch and sound behind the rope at Paradise Mill. Creative pattern making though kinetic sound drawing, contemporary block making, and hand weaving took place in the space of The Silk Museum.

Museum | Artist | Community

Patterns of Tactility

Community Engagement Workshops
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, Park Lane
Number of sessions : Four
Facilitators: Kathryn Warburton, Gary Morgan
Artist: Francesca Lockett-Richardson
Community Group : VI Forum

<h2>Story of Macclesfield Silk</h2> <h3>1</h3> <p>10th Aug 2018 10.30am - 12.30pm</p> <p>Aphysical and verbal tour of Paradise Mill will set the scene, capturing the stories and sounds of the history of Macclesfield silk. The processing of raw materials, throwing, warping, weaving and printing will be discussed. An interpreter will be on hand to help support the session. (Museum Guide and Interpreter)</p> <p>Sounds will be recorded of the textile machinery working on the top floor of Paradise Mill. (FLR)</p> <p>Participants will be introduced to the tactile object of the historical and contemporary printing blocks that have been created to replicate artefacts that can no longer be handled. (KW & FLR)</p>	<h2>Kinetic Sound and Archive Drawings</h2> <h3>2</h3> <p>17th Aug 2018 10.30am - 12.30pm</p> <p>In this session participants will be introduced to kinetic drawing of sound and mark making inspired by the archived printing blocks. Using the audio clips of the sounds created taken from Paradise Mill, the participants will use drawing to interpret this sound and the tactile nature of the printing blocks into drawings to form unique patterns. Participants will get the opportunity to use mark making tools, in the form of everyday items either found at home or taken from the mill, (for example: combs, lollipop craft sticks, textile bobbins). (FLR)</p>	<h2>Printing Tactile Patterns</h2> <h3>3</h3> <p>24th Aug 2018 10.30am - 12.30pm</p> <p>The kinetic sound and object drawings will be digitally edited and laser cut into a selection of hard materials (for example Perspex, MDF and plywood) to produce a range of tactile printing blocks. The participants will use rollers and printing ink to cover the printing blocks in dye in order to transfer the relief surface onto paper and fabric. (FLR)</p> <p>Note: There is no laser cutting facilities at the museum. The laser cutting will be undertaken by the artist at the University of Huddersfield before the workshop begins.</p>
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Exhibition Curation

4

31st August
10.30am-12.30pm

Participants will help in the preparation of the room for exhibiting the work produced by the participants and collaborative artist Francesca Lockett-Richardson. The exhibition will be open to the public from 31st August to 14th September. (KW & FLR)

Figure 9 Patterns of Tactility and Sound Event Information [Leaflet] (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

The research project was broken down into two phases.

Phase One : Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1

The events comprised of:

- Handling session
- Adapted tour for the visually impaired – The story of Macclesfield Silk
- Kinetic Sound and Archive Drawings
- Printing Tactile Patterns
- Curation
- Exhibition event

(See Figures 9 – 12)



Figure 10 & 11 Patterns of Tactility and Sound Exhibition Boards (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Phase Two: Patters of Tactility and Sound Part 2

The events comprised of:

- Weaving Connections – hand weaving in groups
- Patterns of Paradise – kinetic sound drawings
- Handling session
- Curation
- Exhibition event (Figure 13)



Patterns of Tactility & Sound 2

Francesca Lockett-Richardson
in collaboration with members of the East Cheshire
Eye Society

Macclesfield Silk Museum
22nd November 2019 - February 2020

This project is supported by the University of Huddersfield and Macclesfield Museums



www.macclesfieldmuseums.co.uk

Figure 12 & 13 Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1 & 2 Exhibition Posters
(Lockett Richardson, 2018; 2019)

Pattern as a Method

The substantial and stocky bound books from Langley Print Works in Macclesfield Silk Museum display patterns applied to or woven to form the textile fabrics that contain repeated designs or motifs. When the patterns are broken down, they reveal decorative intelligible forms that when sequenced together start to appeal to the eye. My passion for pattern can be traced back to as far as I can remember. As a child I immersed myself into the practice of forming patterns using pencil crayons, inspired by the remnants of the large-scale brush patterns of the 1970s wallpapers on my parents and grandparents walls with the propensity for bright colours and graphic forms. Within the self-drawn framework of vertical and horizontal lines that could be rubbed out after completion, I replicated the shapes until a pattern expanded and filled the page. I still have this urge to deconstruct patterns into individual forms to spot where the repeat pattern is. Observing pattern comes in other forms. Moving beyond the pattern books within this project I began to see patterns immersing from the surface, from the printing blocks but also from the echoes of silk production at Paradise Mill. With the hand jacquard looms and its historic connections to music, the operating of this machine came a pattern of sound. This began the process of thinking through pattern, pattern of touch, pattern of sound, the haptic feedback or dialogue between the hand and the eye as an extension of the brain.

The artist, writer and curator Janis Jefferies likes the idea of pattern as a metaphor “to propose a method that is more intuitive, a kind of collaging process that brings other people’s voices and writings with my own”. (2012, p. 125) The collaborative process of working with the visually impaired to produce archive interventions has formed an exchange of ideas, forming a pattern of artworks, the pattern of process of production, opinions, experiences, findings, and difficulties and personal relationships as the research project progressed. The spaces in-between the collaborations allowed a breathing space for me and the other participants to think and breathe life into ideas.

My reflective journal took me into a place of articulating my practice. The points of thinking meeting together with other participants viewpoints came as intersections that led onto new ideas forming, generating gestures, over-layering, and all becoming a pattern, forming a display of growth building together to form a picture.

David Howes notes that ethnography it is not a record of the ethnographer's experiences written down, but it is a “means of experience”, the experience was the ethnography, so before the act of writing “it was only a disconnected array of chance happenings.” (1990, p.57). Howes argues that culture is a sensory experience with the ethnographer that must be activated before describing in words. Understanding patterns in the research I rely on my perception at the start of the research journey and over time, during the collaboration process I construct a perception used by my collaborators, becoming a meeting of the two.

Sarah Pink describes analysing ethnographic information or the “happenings” in the form of diaries, videos, transcriptions, photography, websites, social media posts , promotional literature from the research she conducted as what she calls “each of these sets of materials is one of several interdependent strands that offer us different ways of knowing...When the stories of participants, processes and activities start to come together, then it is possible to detects patterns and their outcomes” (2021, p. 155).

Working Blind

Working blindfolded in the practice of drawing to the sounds of Paradise Mill was influenced by the method of blind drawings that came from the book *Robert Morris: Blind time drawings, 1973-2000* (Morris & Criqui. 2005). Morris an American artist who produced works of art without the gaze of the eyes in a blind test. Morris produced groups of drawings over a seventeen year period, where he timed his work with a stopwatch, closed his eyes and began to draw. When finished he recorded the data, such as estimated time lapsed, a measurement of deviation. As Morris states “I believe there are forms to be found within the activity of making as much as within the end product” (2005, p.15). My method of blind drawing to the recorded sounds of Paradise Mill were structured to the length of the recordings and within my reflective journal I ponder on this method which made me become aware of my lack of vision within the process of drawings and how I felt uncomfortable and disorientated not knowing through vision what I was doing and what I was producing (Figures 14 & 15).

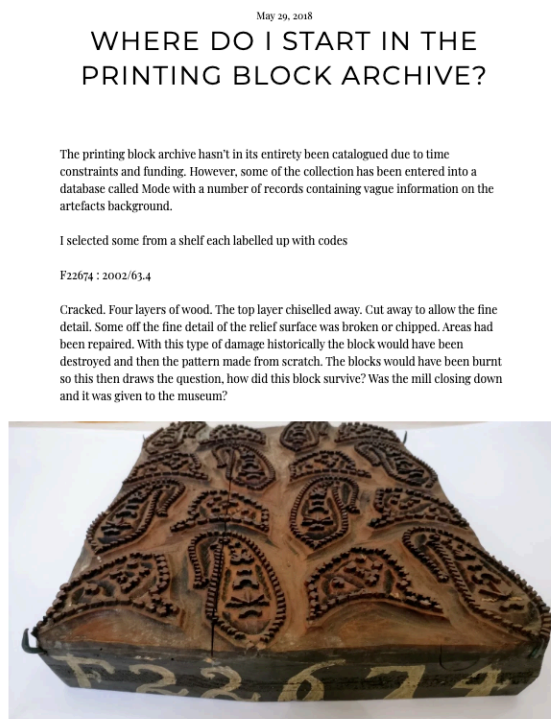


Figures 14 & 15 Blind fold kinetic sound drawing experiments. Location: University of Huddersfield
(Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Capturing Information

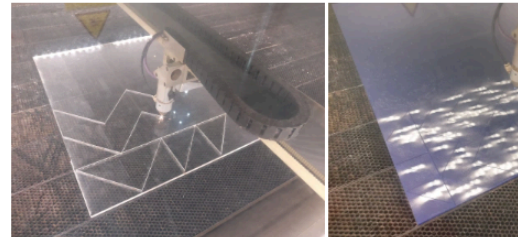
Tacit knowledge, my personal knowledge of know-how in the routine process of textile practice may be taken for granted by myself and unaware to the reader of this study, however by reflecting on my inner-dialogue or what Schon calls “talk backs” (1991, p. 79), those feeling and judgement before and during situations, capturing why and how a specific situation has been dealt with in what Schon describes as “reflection-in-action” (1991, p. 62). My engagement with the research is therefore as a “reflective practitioner” (Moon, 2004). In finding it important to understand not what we are doing, but to raise questions of how, and why during the creative community engagement events allows me to critically analyse the actions of amending, adapting, and pivoting to make a change in the process of this research. Documenting the changing status during the community engagement events and sole practice research I use a digital and written reflective ejournal (Figures 16 & 17) documenting experiential learning and the “critical incidents” (Squires et al., 2009) in everyday life using an adaption of the Gibbs (1988) reflective model based on Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle. A description of the event, an evaluation before, during and after and an action plan for next steps in the process.

Archival research was conducted, observed, and documented through visual drawing and annotation within sketchbooks (Figures 18, 19).



June 22, 2017

LASER CUT PRINTING BLOCKS



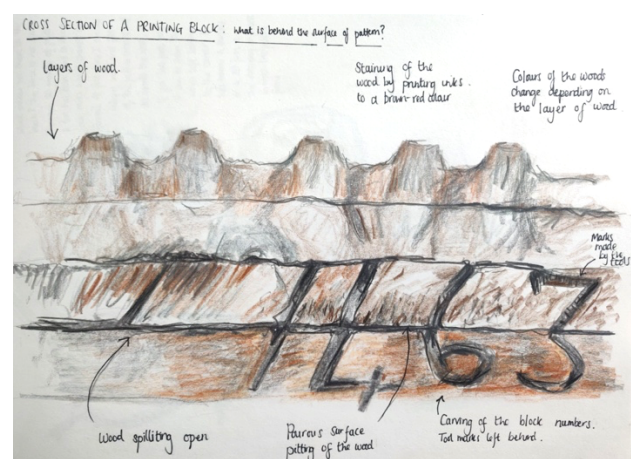
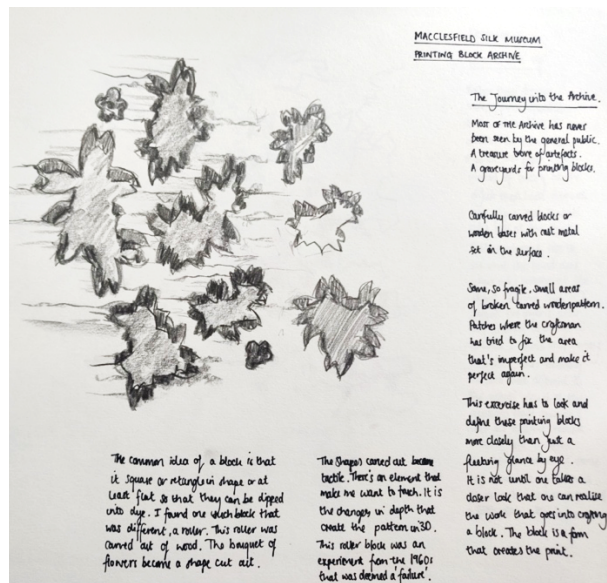
My aim was to get back into my practice again. With a few months off with other commitments I was reassured to get back onto the laser cutter. Through mind maps I want to explore the traditional process of block printing with a contemporary take. Last year I laser rastered printing blocks using a variety of different materials using imagery from my drawing exercises.

This experimental testing session was to work on the process of making the printing block using simple laser cut shapes. Perspex was one material that worked well, in terms of the texture achieved and it's printing functionality. I knew the surface taking to the printing ink and the quality of print under the printing press could achieve good results. The cut shapes were attach to a MDF back board to create a relief surface.

First test piece - (MDF and Perspex) flat surface, laser cut geometric shapes

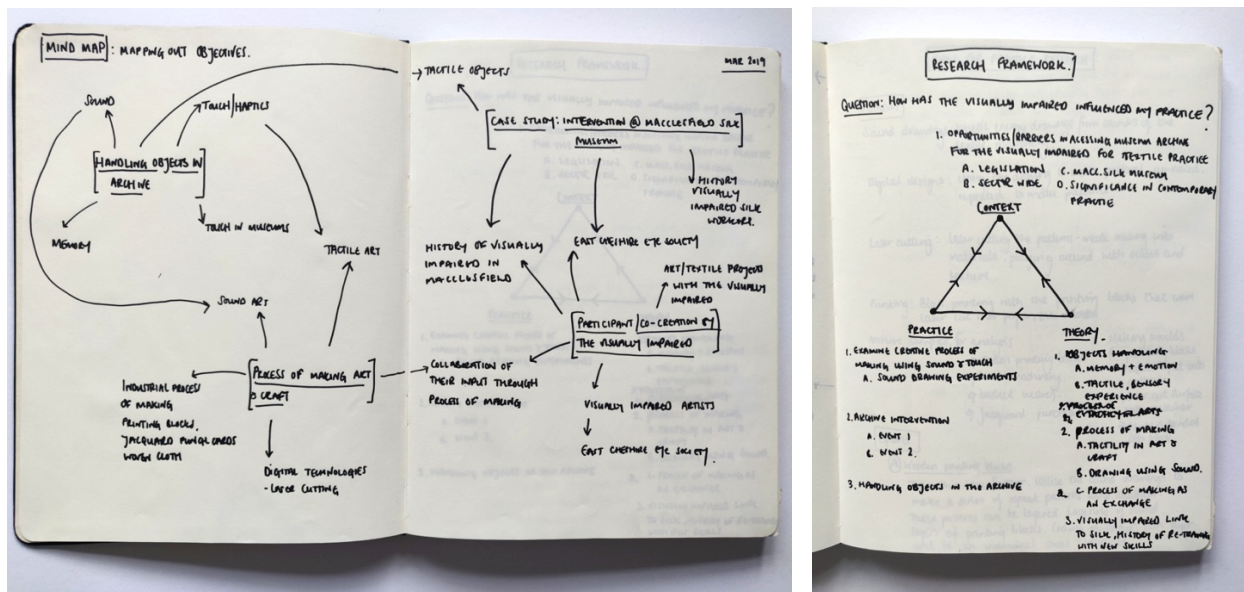
Second test piece - (Perspex) in contrast to the first test piece I created a texture on the relief surface by laser rastering imagery before laser cutting geometric shapes

Figures 16 & 17 Example pages from reflection ejournal (Lockett Richardson, 2018)



Figures 18 & 19 Example pages from sketchbook: archive object analysis (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Concept mapping (Figures 20 & 21) in the planning phases and mapping out of ideas came through notebook visuals. This method made way for thoughts and findings to be articulated and then followed up.



Figures 20 & 21 Example pages from sketchbook: Concept mapping (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

Interviewing

The perspectives of the visually impaired community, museum staff and employees of East Cheshire Eye Society were surveyed through face-to face and phone interviews, and a face-to-face focus group at The Silk Museum (Barbour, 2007;2008;2011). The individual interviews were also able to capture those participants of the events that could not make it to the focus group. A questionnaire before-hand captured information such as age, gender, employment status. Participants were asked to contribute their thoughts on several open-ended questions, additional questions were put forward to build upon comments made (see Appendix F-M).

Ethics

The principles of doing the right or wrong behaviour is otherwise known as the influence of ethics. Even though I have my own set of personal values and morals, it is important to follow what is the accepted principles or rules of engagement (Collins, 2015;2010). Potential ethical issues were identified at the start of the study period, this was done through a risk assessment which categorised this study to have a limited or significant risk, the appropriate research ethics forms were filled in and submitted in-line with the University of Huddersfield Ethics policies. This ethics review outlines the potential risks through assessing the aim and objectives of the study and third-party permissions were obtained and collected from the charity participant members and Macclesfield Museums (Appendix A). A participant information sheet (Appendix B) was given in person to each participant together with consent forms (Appendix C), this gave all participants information on the purpose of the study, anonymity could be given and how their data would be collected and stored. A letter of intent (Appendix E) outlining the research plan was submitted to the museum staff with a researcher consent form (Appendix D) so the study could take place within the heritage space.

At the beginning of each research phase I re-evaluated the risk and gave an outline of the research project and obtained permissions from any new participants that joined in for Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2 that had not previously worked on the project before. An explanation was provided at the beginning of both phases to all participants on what my role was as the researcher-practitioner and how their involvement would link into the project. Planned events detailing an outline of what was evolved were agreed with the museum and dispersed by the East Cheshire Eye Society Services and Volunteer Coordinator to all participants.

Evaluations

Evaluation of the research data produced through visiting exhibitions, attending conferences, sole artist-researcher practice research, community engagement events came through an ejournal of reflection questions based on the Gibbs (1988) reflective

model where I created three templates to ask myself key questions after practice research sessions covering what went well or what was the value of it, points of difficulties and what could have been done differently. Strength and weaknesses of the session and identification of next steps or key questions were noted down for further development.

Practice reflective journal template questions

Stage 1: Description About the Event

- What are you trying to achieve?
- Why are you doing it? Context?
- What equipment and facilities were used?
- What did you do?

Stage 2: Feelings before going into the event

- What were your reactions and feelings going into the event?

Stage 3: Evaluation after the event

- What went well, why do you think it went well and what were your feelings?
- What was the most difficult thing or what when wrong, why do you think it went wrong and what were your feelings?
- List the strengths and weaknesses

Stage 4: Analysis – Making sense of it

- Does your experience relate to the work, practice of any other artists, designers, theories or learning strategies (contextualisation). If so in what ways?
- How is it similar to or different than the theory?
- Can you compare what happened to other situations?

Stage 5: Conclusion

- What have you learnt from all the experiences and analysis you've undertaken.

Stage 7: Action plan/Next steps

- What are you going to do differently if the situation was to occur again or in a new situation? What are follow up next steps to action these?

Museum/art exhibitions reflective template questions

1. What is museum/gallery about?
2. Why are you visiting?
3. What did you see and do?
4. What was the exhibit wanting to achieve?
5. What did you learn and how valuable was it to you?
6. What key argument or commentary to the piece or ideas and findings?
7. What is your response to the work? How will this influence me?
8. Identify next steps are questions?

Encounter with specific artwork reflective template questions

1. Name of artist/designer, title of artwork/exhibition:
2. What materials/substrates were used?
3. What techniques were used?
4. What methodology or methods were used?
5. What key argument or commentary to the piece or ideas and findings?
6. What is your response to the work?
7. How does this influence me? Questions Raised?

In addition to this the Arts Council England *Activity Report Form (General)* (n.d.) was crossed referenced as it is used by artists as a way of evaluating their activities within the heritage sector. This tool asks artists to describe what happened during and after their project is complete and why and what impact it has had. Similar to the Gibbs (1988) reflective model the form details what went well and what didn't.

Organising and Analysis of Information

Using sensory ethnography is not about using one method or data collection. Pink defines sensory ethnography as “a process of creating and representing knowledge or ways of knowing that are based on ethnographers’ own experiences and the ways these intersect with the persons, places and things encountered during that process.” (Pink, 2013, p. 35,

3rd ed). In agreement Jennifer Mason and Katherine Davies from the University of Manchester present a case for a sensory methodology noting that the senses are interconnected with “other forms of experience or ways of knowing” (2009, p. 587). Mason and Davies give example of research into the social significance of family resemblances looking at the tangible and intangible sensory experience noting that “sensory intangibility”, in other words the feeling of the tangible archive object or the artist’s materials are talked about in sensory cues in the taste, the sound and the smell of the experience.

I think it probably helped to generate a sense of history and in an area in which we all really live in, and obviously, in human terms the sense of empathy of how they had to do this very close work, in very, very unlight conditions. It must have affected their eyesight, I think if you worked in that industry for many years, the strain on your eyes, I suppose, in those days, you didn't have glasses, and things like that to help you. So certainly, for me, it gave me a sense of his local history, and also a sense of empathy with people who probably damaged their eyesight, just trying to earn a living, because that's basically what it boiled down to really didn't it.

Francesca Lockett Richardson 03:00
And did you know about the history before this session?

HG 03:05
Very slightly. I grew up in South Manchester. And I had taught in, I had taught Primary in Macclesfield. So I have a little bit of local knowledge through having been a primary school teacher in the area, that sort of silk mills. And also in Wilmslow where I live, we have Style Mill, which is a cotton mill, I know it's different textile, but the history, the era of you know, these mills being built, and the way the workers, you know, have not, not such an easy time of it, even though it was a different fabric, it was cotton. I've obviously been to the National Trust properties around here, and it's very similar sorts of situation from the working people's point of view, I think.

MC 03:59
Well it introduced me to silk because I knew from the woolen side of it being a tailor, but I knew nothing about silk at all. And that's, you know, what got me latched on to it. For that, you know, to come in contact with people that had worked with silk or what have you.

DS 04:22
Yes, I found that very interesting. Because I was born in the country and lived in the country, and not worked in a mill. And it was all it was like a history lesson. And, and to see the conditions that they worked in, and the hours that they spent there and then bringing children in to help them thread the machines and that was to me was an eye opener really.

01. Sense of local history.
02. Empathy for 18th C. silk workers who had eye damage
03. Conditions of the mills
04. Eye sight problems for factory workers
05. Local knowledge through being primary teacher.
06. Other mills/museum in the local area
07. Knowledge of fabric (wool) but not silk being tailor

Patterns of Tactility & Sound 2 - F Page 2 of 37 Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

Figure 22 Example page from thematic analysis assigning codes (Lockett Richardson, 2021)

The information in the form digital transcriptions, ethnographic video and photographs has been shaped by using existing methods of organising, grouping and analysing. In my

archive of the research information, I ordered and named them as types of materials of knowledge, for example, audio recorded interviews, field notes, photographs, practice research reflective ejournal writings, artworks produced from the creative community engagement events. Within these objects or digital files, they are categorised as events, for example; Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part One Paradise Mill Tour, Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part One Block Printing Event. Meanings can be extracted by understanding the “sensoriality of research materials” (Pink, 2021, p. 152). I saw analysis as an on-going development during Phase One and Phase Two of the research project, this was not a singular step at the end of the project, in contrast this was conducted throughout the research process.

Sensory ethnography is about making links between different research experiences producing knowledge and this is what I worked on as a skill as an ethnographer and over the longitudinal study I became more confident in.

The formal method of thematic analysis (TA) was used to understand moments that I had not noted or could not recall after the event. Thematic analysis (TA) has been used to analyse the semi-structure participants interviews and focus group transcriptions. Borrowed from qualitative psychology, the social scientists and academics Braun and Clarke note that TA compared to other approaches such as grounded theory or narrative analysis is “more akin to a method” (2022, p.1).

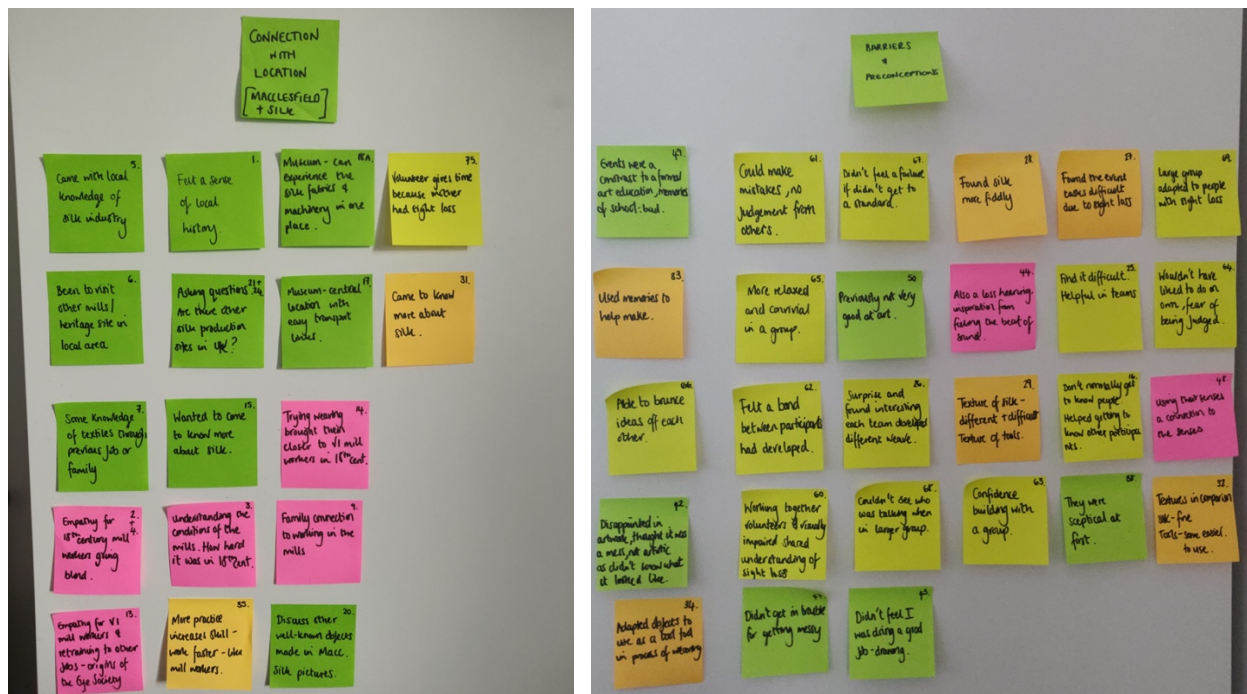
Reordering was a useful task to catalogue all the data, step by step, a reminder of the happenings and events over the longitudinal study period. By familiarising myself with the data through using the transcription software Otter.ai, and by re-reading to correct translation errors I made general notes of potential emerging themes. Line by line running through the interviews I assigned a code for every point made using a numbering system, 1,2,3,4 and so on (Figure 22). The codes were grouped together based on themes and then reviewed to see if the themes worked across the whole data set forming a set of refined themes that developed headings such as;

- Connections to place
- Barriers and preconceptions to textile practice
- Visually impaired access to the museum experience
- A sense of freedom to create

FOCUS GROUP THEMATIC ANALYSIS			
THEME NAME	CODE NO.	CODE NAME	EXTRACT
CONNECTION WITH PLACE			
	1	Felt a sense of local history	I think it probably helped to generate a sense of history and in an area in which we all really live in (Hazel 2:02). Yes, I found that very interesting. Because I was born in the country and lived in the country, and not worked in a mill. And it was all it was like a history lesson. And, and to see the conditions that they worked in, and the hours that they spent there and then bringing children in to help them thread the machines and that was to me was an eye opener really. (Druce 4:22)
	5	Already had local knowledge of history of silk through job as school teacher	I grew up in South Manchester. And I had taught in, I had taught Primary in Macclesfield. So I have a little bit of local knowledge through having been a primary school teacher in the area, that sort of silk mills. (Hazel 3:05)
	6	Been to visit other mills and museums in local area	And also in Wilmshaw where I live, we have Style Mill, which is a cotton mill. I know it's different textile, but the history, the era of you know, these mills being built, and the way the workers, you know, have not, not such an easy time of it, even though it was a different fabric, it was cotton. I've obviously been to the National Trust properties around here, and it's very similar sorts of situation from the working people's point of view, I think. (Hazel 3:05)
	7	Have some knowledge of fabric such as wool through job as tailress but no knowledge of silk	Well it introduced me to silk because I knew from the woolen side of it being a tailress, but I knew nothing about silk at all. (Margaret 3:59) Well, I knew about weaving because I'd learned it from wool and I never came across any machines because there aren't any down south. But I went to the Regent Street Poly quite young and I knew an awful lot about cloth from the woolen side, but not from the silk side. (Margaret 20:10)
	11	Already had local knowledge of silk industry	While I've always known that Macclesfield is a silk town and Congleton was as well. And there's a bit of difficult competition between the two, because Congleton claims to be the one that produced the most silk compared to Macclesfield but Macclesfield took in it on board to develop that where it's Congleton hasn't. And so that gave me an interest into the silk industry by knowing that Macclesfield did it. (Roberta 7:21)
	12	Been to museum before sight loss	We've been to Macclesfield Museum and you know, so I knew about it before I lost my sight in the way it has, I knew what the colours were, the types of products were made, shoes and scarves, etc. The shoes had buttons. And so my sister is very interested in textiles. So that connection made me feel, I've certainly felt I wanted to know more about the silk industry, and how my experience which helped me to understand, to you know how they went through it, because it's so difficult to set up. (Roberta 7:21)
	15	Was interesting in knowing more about silk	Well it introduced me to silk because I knew from the woolen side of it being a tailress, but I knew nothing about silk at all. And that's, you know, what got me latched on to it. For that, you know, to come in contact with people that had worked with silk or what have you. (Margaret 3:59)
	20	Discussing other well known objects that were historically made in the town	Well yeah, so you haven't seen the silk printed pictures then have ya. (13:47)
	21	They wanted to know about other heritage sites or production sites linked to the silk industry in the UK	Are there any other centres of silk production in the UK? (Hazel 14:22)
	22	Discussing other known production sites in the UK rather than	Is there somewhere in north where are they doing these machines silk material for making for the Indian people in the carcase. (Pina 12:43)

Figure 23 Screenshot of Excel spreadsheet: Thematic analysis extracting codes and forming themes (Lockett Richardson, 2021)

The process of TA required a reflexive approach and careful consideration that allowed me to connect the concepts and ideas. Forming spreadsheet tables of themes by pulling out the extracts was time consuming, however it meant that every collaborative participant viewpoint was considered and allowed for deeper thought (Figure 23).



Figures 24 & 25 Sticky note exercise: Thematic analysis extracting codes and forming themes (Lockett Richardson, 2021)

Visualising the codes on sticky notes (Figures 24 & 25) further assisted in mapping out the themes. This process was a physical play, building a pattern both visual and of deeper reflection (Miles & Saldaa, 2014, p.72) in which I connected back to the community engagements events and interviews. There were moments, discussion points I did not recall, however this analyse enabled me to pull them out of the transcriptions where they became new understandings.

Chapter Four:

Connections to Place through Textiles

Introduction

In this research the relationship of textiles to the local community and place by recognising in what and how textiles can act as a catalyst for change is explored. Alice Kettle's (2019) definition of place "is defined by its physical aspect and its constituency of people, and also its transactions with other places, in which the exchange, circulation and consumption of textiles place a key role." This chapter investigates how place-based and site-specific textile practices interact specifically looking at an archive intervention called *Patterns of Tactility and Sound* in the context of the historical Macclesfield silk trade at the case study heritage venues of the Macclesfield Silk Museum and Paradise Mill initiated by myself a textile artist and researcher. The third partner in this relationship is the public who are members from the East Cheshire Eye Society (ECES) who became the participants in the collaboration.

It could be argued that the contemporary community-based textile practices ran alongside the intervention as singular workshops with a product to take home at the end of the session, thus a play around with materials and a good old natter over a few hours, however this would be a wrong assertion. My intention was to explore textile practice as a vehicle for curatorial research, a "critique of the museum, and as research for the contemporary concerns of history writing and theories about material culture" (Kettle & Webb, 2014, p.65) rather than a formal art class with traditional art production, these events would grow as the research developed.

What I discovered during this project was a reconstruction of the formal setting of the museum space. Bonding between individuals and their wider organisations of the museum, the ECES and educational groups involved at the periphery through the process of textile design and making. This synergy brought about a sense of togetherness where the collaborator could relate to the historical stories from the past to their own personal experiences through the meeting in one place and through the act of print making and

weaving. Parallel to the warp yarns on the historic silk weaver's loom breaking and forcibility knotted to continue the production of materials, so are the remnants of the Macclesfield silk textile heritage re-tied to form connective threads in the modern day, a metaphor for the human connections that formed over this three-year project. The museum and the textile artist act as a conduit to resume the need to gather in a place and have social connection, with those interactions acting as a method of bonding to people and place by all collaborators.

Relationships to Place: Macclesfield



Figure 26 Artist: Jerrard Lockett (1989) Title: *Nostalgia. Grandparent's Living Room Fireplace*
[Photograph], Location: Macclesfield (Lockett, 1988)

Through this project I have become consciously aware of the impact my hometown has had on me and the other participants of this research who live in and around the

surrounding areas of Macclesfield. Interactions with the objects contained within the collections of the museum have brought memories to the forefront and shared similar experiences of stories of family or personal involvement with the production of silk.

My connections to Macclesfield come from past experiences, which have generated a sense of belonging from its history, heritage, and people. My journey as the artist-researcher came from looking at my own links to Macclesfield and feeling not only observing objects in the museum archive, but to reconnect with a local community of people who found coming into the setting of the museum challenging. As a child growing up in Macclesfield, material encounters were in orbit around me. It was not until as an adult I actively made a conscious effort to record them that I realised they would have a profound influence on me, unconscious experiences of significance. My Grandparents house, a modest council house on a sprawling estate south of the town was one such space of material encounters with textiles hand-made by my Grandma. A house that could be called a museum in itself. Not one to be open to the public with a sign above the door, nevertheless a place where it felt I was stepping back in time to an Edwardian era after entering through the front door. This was the early 1980s, the front room contained a patchwork of rag rugs, I noticed the nude stockings thoughtfully repurposed into rugs. Perhaps lacking in colour coordination, but rather an approach of any old yarn will do. Crochet blankets had been made from old yarns bequeathed from old items of knitted clothing and draped over a sofa stood proud in the centre of the room facing an 1930s cast-iron range (Figure 26). What intrigued me the most was the table in front of the window with a strange set of legs, cast iron and joined together with the spelling of the name Singer. Underneath this machine I would push down on a wide pedal which would return to the up position thus hitting my foot and setting the wheels in motion housed at the side of the sewing machine. My curiosity of action was much to the annoyance of my Grandma. What my Grandma omitted to say was that she once made clothes on this ornate machine for the family and as an income as a skilled worker.

Grayson (2011) highlights the unidentified skilled craftsman throughout history, and who have contributed hand-made objects, this becomes part of the craft practitioner's method when interacting with the museum archive. Grayson argues the power of craft making, the doing of traditional practices enables the local community to connect with each other

through shared experiences and reflect on cultural ideas. With this in mind, I thought of the pleasure my late Grandma may have taken to share her garment making, crochet or rag-rug making skills where we both could have shared a common interaction through the making of textiles. Rather I was left to view them as an on-looker almost like a visitor to the museum and the curatorial practices of old, that is “look and don’t touch” my Grandma would say.

What these experiences set in motion was a relationship with art and crafts. I was smitten with painting, drawing, textile printing and innovations in textile technology. After graduating from my undergraduate degree I sought to take my textile and technical skills to work on the development of domestic homewares within the buying offices of several UK based retailers. This is where I also worked with other hard materials such as metals, ceramics, glass, and plastics and precious stones. My love of the three-dimensional product grew as well as production methods within an ever growing international factory base. My commercial design knowledge continues to have an influence in my thought process as I link back my textile practice to the heritage of the silk industry and dissemination of textile processes in trying to explore a broader public research through social connection and sensory engagement.

The Silk Museum’s pattern books hold thousands of designs of fabric either in printed or woven form, created and made for clients constructing garments or accessories. These fragments of cloth now catalogued within the archive act as reminders of the relationship in a commercial form, however this has evolved to have a new meaning. They are educational, provide creative inspiration, tell a story of silk and the people behind them. They allow the public to dream of stories of where these concepts have come from, how they are constructed and who has made them.

Macclesfield and Silk

Macclesfield is a medieval settlement in an ideal geographical location sitting on the east side of the county of Cheshire, in the Northwest of England. It is two kilometres west of the Peak District National Park, with the river Bollin flowing into the town from the Pennines hills which sits to the east (Shaw & Clark, 2003). This flow of water provided a

useful source of power (Malmgreen, 1985, p. 4) for silk throwing, a process of twisting silk yarn which developed in the town in the mid-1700s and became the main producer of silk in the region. Before this period Macclesfield's inhabitant's income was dependent on agriculture, the towns market, and fairs. An annual fair was noted in 1241 and by the sixteen century had grown to three fairs in May, June, and October (Davies, 1961). Macclesfield's history with silk can be catalogued with the start of a cottage industry of silk and mohair thread covered buttons (Collins, & Stevenson, 1995, p. 7), examples of which can be seen in The Silk Museum red room. Originally hand thrown yarns were made, however capitalising on the introduction of water powered throwing this helped establish a strong trading link with weavers in Spitalfields, London. (Collins & Stevenson, n.d., p.8, Collins, 2000). This became a steppingstone for further textile entrepreneurship in silk weaving, dyeing, and printing and so becoming one of the worlds centres for silk production into the eighteenth and nineteenth century (Collins & Stevenson, 1994, p. 8). The development of a wide selection of different textiles is reflected in the breath of the museum archive and the collections on display from silk yarns, ribbons, silk covered buttons, woven handkerchiefs (Figure 19), scarves, trimmings, dress fabrics and suit linings (Collins, & Stevenson, 1995, p. 7).



Figure 27 Macclesfield Stripe Handkerchiefs [Woven silk]
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum (Lockett Richardson, 2017)

To visually map the town's architecture presents a selection of mill buildings and silk weavers cottages that remain as distinct reminders of the trade. The silk economy of Macclesfield has seen peaks and dips, however though the industry dramatically shrunk in the twentieth century with the introduction of cost saving man-made fibres and international competition, the town has retained a small number of silk businesses.

Macclesfield has continually changed through the last few centuries in the type of industries from button making, silk throwing, silk weaving, silk printing, nylon yarn production, and pharmaceuticals where the town has grown and the increased both in size and its number of inhabitants. There are commonalities that appear that connect and form to make Macclesfield's identity through time with silk production as the main one. The status of place-based textiles practice is looked at in this chapter, the remains of historical textile place-based textiles practice can be made into something new (Kettle, 2019) and this is what this research project finds to be a crucial factor in how the project develops and integrates with the community. The textiles created in Macclesfield are interwoven into the culture and identity of the area starting from cottage industries through to industrial scale manufacturing.

The Silk Museum



Figure 28 The Silk Museum, Location: Macclesfield (Lockett Richardson, 2023)

The Silk Museum is based in nineteenth century building what was formally the Macclesfield School of Art (Figure 28), which later become part of Macclesfield College (Collins & Stevenson, 1994, pp. 21-25). It has three main rooms containing permanent displays on the ground floor, known as the Blue Room, Red room, and Machine Room. At the time this research project started in 2017 the first-floor upstairs gallery had space for touring or pop-up exhibitions. This white wall space became the area chosen to display the first exhibition Patterns of Tactility and Sound in September 2018. In addition to this, there was a reference library available to book for research visits though this has relocated within a short walking distance to The Old Sunday School Heritage Centre.



Figure 29 The Silk Museum jacquard loom punch cards [Paper], Location: Macclesfield (Lockett Richardson, 2017)

In the Machine Room stands an installation from the Macclesfield School of Art completed by students in the early twentieth century containing jacquard punch cards (Figure 29) that were once a portfolio of exam pieces. Swing tags hang off the bottom of the concertinaed punch cards displaying small swatches of woven fabric woven on hand jacquard looms.

The value of Macclesfield Silk Museum and Paradise Mill are of both local and national importance, presenting collections from the historic British silk industry together with twenty-six jacquard hand looms still housed in their original location.



Figures 30 & 31 Textile Printing Block Area in the blue room.

Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

The Silk Museum Textile Archive

The Silk Museum textile archives hold textile collections containing thousands of material objects from textile pattern books, jacquard punch cards, paper patterns, wooden printing blocks, woven jacquard fabrics, block printing silks, constructed clothing to oral histories.

When scanning through the archive I felt an overwhelming sense of unlocked potential. Some items have come out of the archive and placed on display (Figures 30 & 31). The archive is housed across several rooms with shelving containing many textile commercial design collections with over a thousand volumes of pattern books from former art students and several local companies that are no longer trading. Some pieces have been selected to be on display for public viewing in the main areas of the museum. It is possible to book time to look at the archive for research purposes and one such catalogue of historical textile artefacts are the Langley Print Works 1804 (Figures 32 - 34) which has been well documented as the “go to” collection selected for schools or artists to use as inspiration for printing blocks, copper engraving and screen printing. Barracks Printing Company 1924 -1994 known for hand block printing and stencils were early pioneers to screen printing (Collins, 2000, pp. 19-20). This collection which is small in comparison, has not been curated in the main blue room of the museum and has not been fully catalogued, with some found to be separated into different archive stores (K. Warburton, personal communication February 22, 2018). Further collections bequeathed to the museum contain samples from John Godwin & Son 1820-1950 known for woven and printed textile designs; Macclesfield Silk Manufacturing Society 1888-1776 a co-operative of weavers; and samples from Cartwright and Sheldon 1912-1981 who manufactured ties. The printing blocks or the jacquard loom punch cards are materials of Macclesfield silk heritage. The printing blocks were historically binned if the design was no longer required and were destroyed if damaged during the printing process. The jacquard punch cards were left in boxes gathering dust in the Paradise Mill before it was taken over as a museum.



Figures 32, 33 & 34 Langley Print Works Textile Pattern Book. Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum Archive (Lockett Richardson, 2016)

Paradise Mill



Figure 35 Paradise Mill. Location: Macclesfield (Lockett Richardson, 2023)

Paradise Mill is conveniently situated next door to the Silk Museum with the top floor forming part of the museum, with the remainder of the building more recently renovated into domestic apartments (Figure 35). The top floor allows more light to trickle into the room from the skylights which is required for the delicate nature of the silk thread during the production stage of throwing and weaving. Paradise Mill is something special in the way it transports the visitor back in time (Figures 36 & 37). Stepping over the threshold of what was a former cotton and silk mill, the room with its lofty ceilings and twenty-six hand operated jacquard looms is not dissimilar to how it was in the 1930s when owned by Cartwright and Sheldon (Macclesfield Museums, 2021a). After the company closed in 1981 the machinery was restored two years later to form Paradise Mill as it is seen today. The noticeable difference when moving from the stairwell into the weaving room is the floor underneath your shoes. The floorboards are wider than usual and remain consistently uneven. This undulation in the flooring acts as a reminder to tread carefully, it guides one to look down and observe the wear and tear of the many feet that have walked this room.

The Paradise Mill guided tour is designed to take the visitor on a journey of how a silk filament thread is skilfully made by the *Bombyx mori* or more commonly known as the silkworm, through to the construction of the final product, in this case a formal menswear silk tie.



Figure 36 & 37 Top floor of Paradise Mill, Macclesfield (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Former Archive Interventions at Macclesfield Museums

In the discussion of museum curatorial practice within the heritage sector Kettle and artist and Webb, a material culture historian (Kettle & Webb, 2014) looks at the role of artistic textiles practice has within this context. Webb puts forward the historical background to the position that curatorial practice has developed into as directional change during the last two decades of the twentieth century. The balance of increasing the attractiveness to the public and by way of increasing footfall into the historic sites and displaying an offer that is far more reaching and engaging. Textiles can offer support to both, however Webb argues the practice of textiles can be seen as means of curatorial research.

In 2004, it was widely reported in local newspapers and the national press at the time that Macclesfield was labelled as least-cultured place in Britain in The State of the Nation Report 2005, by the Local Futures Group think-tank (Manchester Evening News, 2004). Though the availability of cultural amenities such as cinema, libraries, and theatres per 1000 square metres was lacking in the rural borough of Macclesfield it did rank 92 out of 408 for national heritage sites.

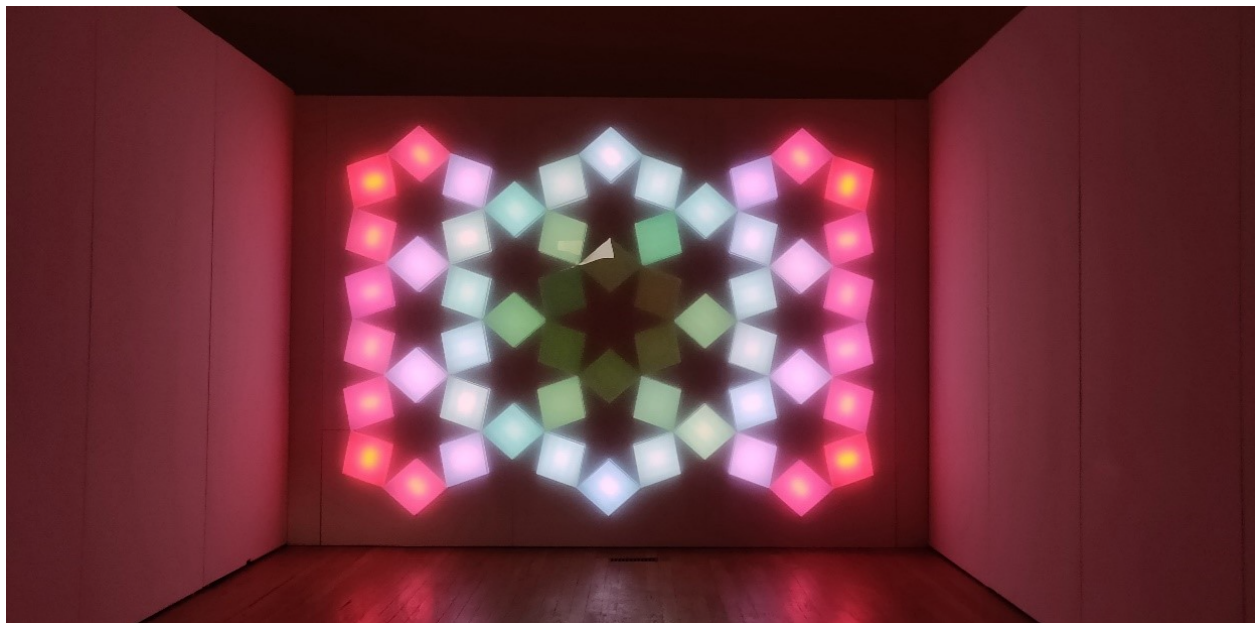


Figure 38 Artist: Zarah Hussain, Titled: Invisible Threads [Sound & Light Installation], Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, Barnaby Festival 2018 (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

On the back of this not so favourable report, this kick started the move to improve cultural events in the Macclesfield area. The town hosts the Barnaby Festival now every two years during the mid-summer month of June, its origins dating back to the thirteen-century town fair. The silk industry in the town had set holiday periods with Barnaby in June and Wakes in October (Collins & Stevenson, 1995, p. 13). With the carnival, a major event in the town held at Barnaby with its processional floats and elected Silk Queen dating back to the 1930s with a legacy of promoting the town and its industry. As a major cultural event in the town I can recall this vividly as a child during the 1980s. Transformation into what it is today came about in 2010 to form a festival using local businesses, shops, and heritage

sites as spaces to host its events in response to the lack of permanent cultural arts venue in the borough (Macclesfield Barnaby Festival, 2022).

The Silk Museum has a historical connection with designers and artists. It was the town's former art and technical college before becoming a textiles silk museum in the 1990s. In a continuous thread to "working to make a difference in your community" (Macclesfield Museums Trust, 2016) a plan to develop partnerships with local artists and higher education organisations has been maintained. There are several site-specific archive interventions that pre-date *Patterns of Tactility and Sound*. Macclesfield born light artist Zarah Hussain was commissioned by Macclesfield Barnaby Festival in June 2018 to exhibit a light and sound installation *Invisible Threads* (Figure 38). Hussain brought her own personal heritage into the piece, her family connections to the town by remembering the Kashmiri workers that came to Macclesfield to work at the mills, a connection of "invisible threads" between the two cultures. This is not dissimilar to my personal journey back to my hometown of Macclesfield and delving deeper into my own family history. Hussain used the sounds of Paradise Mill in her sound installation where the audience are transported into a darkened room with multiple facets and Islamic influenced geometric designs looping in a sequence of animated lights to the sound recordings of Paradise Mill developed into a soundscape by Danny Thorpe. A bench invited you to sit and observe the light sculpture. It was immersive in its sensory visual and sound aesthetic. The sounds danced and played with the changing pattern formations. The personal connection to the museum and the heritage comes through in this installation. It is thought provoking that Islamic geometric patterns had an influence on the designs created through the art college and the textiles produced in the town. Research from the pattern book archive finds evidence of the Anglo-Indian connections. It is this story that is celebrated where new patterns and new personal connections are made.

In a similar echo I was able to draw family connections to the silk trade from the women on my maternal side who worked with in the silk mills of Macclesfield. The sounds of the machinery from Paradise Mill also became an important part of this research project, however the community visitor becomes the collaborator in the act of textile practice.



Figure 39 Artist: Andrea Zapp, Titled: Paradise Mill [Digital Printed Silk Exhibition],
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum (Lockett Richardson, 2016)

The textile artist Andrea Zapp (2015) who produced a collection of silk garments based on photographic images of Paradise Mill and Langley Works pattern books uses the method of digital printing (Figure 39). The garments are visually striking as the photography is enlarged in scale. This visual method brings the archive back to the visitor of the museum and draws in new customers who want a reminder of the museum. These garments were sold in the museum shop representing a direct translation of the designs taken from the historical pattern books to take home. This method is a way of commercially producing products using the resources at their fingers tips and generating income through the museum shop. This has its benefits, however I argue this only allows the museum audience to be passive in their experience. They are refrained from being involved in the story of printed pattern books. This presents the same formula of designing and manufacturing cloth as did the historic commercial silk producers had done in the nineteenth century and resulting in the singular end product rather than the additional engagement within the processes of textile practice.

Macclesfield Museums was involved in a previous PhD study with the textile weaver Michelle Stephens from Manchester Metropolitan University who produced a collection of woven cotton treble cloth designs titled *Coded Cloth* (Figure 40). Stephens (2018) published her thesis under the title *Coded cloth : how a generative digital design process for jacquard weave can reanimate historical pattern archives*. Reanimated textile designs using computer processing as a redesign tool showed a way of creating, recycling and reusing a way of an interruption and utilising the historical pattern books. The archive can live on, and this intervention generates new work.



Figure 40 Artist: Michelle Stephens, Titled: Coded Cloth [Woven Silk Exhibition],
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum (Lockett Richardson, 2016)

The subject of community engagement is not explored by Stephens in *The Coded Cloth* (2015) or in *Invisible Threads* (2018) by Hussain. In comparison this project utilises the same site-specific location, the same archive, however with an alternative approach. This comes through the creation of an intervention into the archive with a process of involving the public and taking a collective experience of the objects to form a collaborative ideation of pattern. The museum is working in partnership with artist-researchers such as Stephens and myself affiliates with the Macclesfield Museum's Silk and Jacquard Legacy Logic Model outcomes in that "new projects with universities have been developed" (S.

Hughes, personal communication, August 23, 2017) (Macclesfield Museums, 2016a; 2016b). The activity of partnership with local organisations to attract new visitors and develop the reputation for creativity and making has come in the form of the museum consciously connecting with “new audiences, particularly groups currently under-presented” for example the East Cheshire Eye Society and ProjectINC (S. Hughes, personal communication, August 23, 2017).

Collaborating: Limitations and Considerations

These considerations and sensibilities of working within the context of the museum as a public place are only appreciated when you are in the moment. They are written down as a recording for future collaborations that without noting them as relevant reflections are easy to dismiss and repeat.

During the early days of this project I was mindful that my approach as a textile artist-researcher could present differing viewpoints to the museums ways of working. On a positive note all persons supporting the project were actively engaged, and supportive of this research throughout. Initial discussions took place with the Museum Director Sue Hughes, and this continued after her departure, working closely with Project Officer and main organiser Kathryn Warburton, followed by further museum staff Michelle Owen, Bryony Renshaw and Daniel Hearn. Further reinforcement came from the East Cheshire Eye Society’s Services and Volunteers Coordinator Helen van der Veken and with the charity Vision Support and their Community Engagement Coordinator Gary Morgan.

In the planning stage and throughout the project there were some considerations when researching and organising the creative community engagement events. These considerations shaped and changed the way the project developed. The opening hours of the museum and what spaces we could use were discussed due to other public groups also utilising museum rooms for tours and creative educational sessions. The Education Room on the ground floor of the Silk Museum is a dedicated art facility with tables and chairs, a sink and a drying rack which became the ideal place for the kinetic sound drawings and block printing events in phase one of the research. Unfortunately, this facility was no longer available in Phase Two, therefore we moved to the front of house

café. In contrast, this had larger individual tables, access to tea and coffee making facilities, however it was a tighter space to move in and around, something to consider with assisting the visually impaired and their guide dogs. The café was able to be closed off with doors which provided privacy from visitors entering the building whilst the event was running, however there were interruptions from visitors or museum staff members wanting to use the café facilities therefore the noise levels became louder, and we had to work around this whilst trying to immerse ourselves in the sounds of Paradise Mill.

There were considerations to be aware of with working with museum collections and the delicate nature of archive objects and the need to preserve items. The process of research both visually and by touch meant that careful handling to avoid damaging or contaminating objects from artist materials was at the forefront of our mind. Some items required gloves to be worn when handled presenting a barrier for perception of touch for both sighted individuals and for the visually impaired participants. The choice of items to be handled from the archive had to be risked assessed to avoid injury from rough edges or sharpe points where the selection of handling materials was chosen by Kathryn Warburton the Project Officer with prior knowledge of the pieces.

On inviting the visually impaired participants to a tour of Paradise Mill that was adapted towards the project and aimed at improving their experience, extra time had to be allocated whilst we navigated around the mill. This allowed Daniel the tour guide to verbally describe the space, present hand feeler samples of silk yarns and woven fabrics, then allowing the visually impaired to listen and go beyond the rope to touch the jacquard looms.

To achieve a good turnout of members the East Cheshire Eye Society agreed the scheduling of the community engagement events which had to carefully planned around other social activities the charity had planned in their calendar. A recommendation for participants to attend entire-day creative events, rather than enter part way through is necessary so they come to understand the full context of the research. Without their collaboration from the start of the session they lose the full experience and this provided a distraction for the smooth running of the session and the bonding of group.

Museum team member Daniel Hearn had studied music at university which was pivotal in helping forge a link to sound and the museum collections during the adapted tour of

Paradise Mill. Hearn's passion in conversing with the visually impaired and connecting the history of the organ barrel piano to the jacquard loom made it increasingly interesting by attracting the participants to the sound of the machinery.

Originally my proposal for *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1* was to produce an installation piece hung inside the museum, however time did not allow for this to be completed as a two-week opening became available in the up-stairs gallery space. With little time to no time to produce an installation we decided to curate individual artworks produced by all participants of the creative community events. Phase One became a sampling presentation, though this does not discredit the impact this exhibition had on the visually impaired participants, Macclesfield Silk Museum and the East Cheshire Charity. Following on from this *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2* was conceived seeing out my original intention of a textile installation of collaborative pieces hung within the existing exhibits of the museum space. Deciding where the installation pieces for *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2* would hang took further discussions with the museum curators and formed part of a wider exhibition of work from the 2017-2019 *Jacquard Legacy Project*, displaying several textile pieces created by other local art and craft groups at The Silk Museum. The two installation pieces hung within the context of the existing collections in the Blue Room and the Machine room. The *Weaving Connections* piece was a digitally printed and devore silk fabric hung in the Blue Room to connect with the overall theme on the display boards of textile printing techniques. This devore piece was wrapped around a pillar which blocked the light from shining through the fabric, it was originally designed to be hung in the machine room to allow the light to filtered through from the large sky lights. This change altered the overall impact of the *Weaving Connection* installation as the lighting conditions were darker in contrast to the Machine Room and with the fabric against a solid surface the audience seemed less likely to touch (Figure 41).



Figure 41 Patterns of Tactility & Sound Part 2 Exhibition, Title: *Weaving Connections* [Installation].
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2019 (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

The second piece titled *Patterns of Paradise*, a digitally printed and hand printed flock cotton canvas piece stood tall in the Machine Room and as it hung freely with no wall or pillar supporting it, it became a noticeable intervention in the room.

It proved difficult to note down all the conversations and feelings as the events moved along the day, often engrossed in explaining and helping participants it became a conscious effect to capture key moments. For future sessions I would enlist a minimum of one or two helpers who take down notes of dialogue or sit in with the groups to record conversations on audio and video.

Access to the Textile Archive for the Visually Impaired

In 2017, Macclesfield Museums set out to develop partnerships with higher education, local arts organisations, artists and connect with young people to co-curate the collections and develop new interpretations of Macclesfield's silk heritage (Warburton, K, 2018, personal communication, February 22, 2018). The museum wanted to open their collections to wider audiences, one such group identified was the blind and partially sighted (Warburton, K, 2018, personal communication, March 22, 2018). In March 2018, the East Cheshire Eye Society Visually Impaired Forum (VI Forum) made a visit to Macclesfield Silk Museum and Paradise Mill to assess the accessibility of the buildings and the user experience for those registered severely sight impaired with guide dog assistance and individuals with sight impairment. The group of six visually impaired visitors provided recommendations which contributed to my research during the proposal for the community engagement events at the museum. Some noted they could not see anything, whilst others could see shapes of light and dark, however perceiving colours was an issue. They gave examples on how to improve the museum offer, filtered into short term and long-term goals. They enjoyed the audio videos played out on television screens, together with the interactive child appealing rope weave. In contrast, most collection pieces were less accessible as objects were placed behind glass or fabric feelers were laminated thus preventing the visitor from touching the tactile display. A handling event for visually impaired on the history of silk was suggested by the museum and awareness training for front of house staff to enable them do in-depth explanations of the museum space. This would allow them to be more aware of the specific needs of the group rather than a one size fits all approach to guiding the general public around the tour. The use of audio tour guides could be a viable alternative, though what this would be or sound like would require further development. (Warburton, K, 2018, personal communication, March 23, 2018).

For the public exhibition of Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2 the aim was to improve accessibility for the visually impaired visitor therefore an audio guide was recorded for the final installation pieces and available using a portable audio cassette tape player provided by the Silk Museum and QR codes located at the side of each exhibition piece that could

be scanned using a QR reader on a mobile phone device. A guide for the exhibition was available in a large print leaflet format.

Beyond the Rope

For this research project I wanted to open the opportunity to the local visually impaired community to unearth findings that recover stories and break down preconceptions of the past, challenging people own ideas and thoughts. From the experience the visually impaired participants had with the first tour of The Silk Museum and Paradise Mill, involving the them further would take investment to improve their experience therefore my proposal was to adapt the tour. I worked with the museum tour guide Daniel Hearn to readjust the Paradise Mill tour to specifically translate it for visually impaired visitors. A second tour was adapted for a group of visually impaired participants who had a varying degrees of sight loss, including one using a guide dog. This walk through the mill gave insight into the workings of a Macclesfield silk mill from the 1930s and set the context for the creative workshops the visually impaired participants were to go on next. This session highlighted the processes of silk fabric production, and the link between the silk industry and the Macclesfield Eye Society. (D. Hearn, personal communication, June 28, 2018).



Figure 42 Adapted Tour of Paradise Mill

Location: Macclesfield (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

What made this tour more accessible was that the visually impaired were invited to touch the textile tactiles and textile machinery, something that was visible to those with sight and untouchable behind the museum rope (Figure 42). A set of questions were asked of the participants after the tour to gauge their feelings on how it went. Their feedback was positive as the tour guide was enthusiastic and made the topic understandable by giving a flavour of the environment the historic silk workers had to endure a hundred year ago. There was a mixture of knowledge, tactile and verbal information which gave a good balance. Examples of handing out feeler samples of textile swatches to touch and explaining what it was provide a more comprehensive experience. This theme of tactility continued as they also wanted the chance to touch the loom and anything that may be in the way so they can locate themselves within the space, this helped them understand the size and scale operating a hand jacquard loom.

The tour group made up eight persons was a suitable number for the size of the mill space on the top floor as it was difficult to get around due to its steps, uneven floor, and tight narrow spaces between the textile machinery.

Interactions with a Tangible Archive

Without sight, I began to question the role of vision in the interactions with the archive and how producing an archive intervention would work. In May 2018, a trial handling session with the visually impaired participants was an approach to understanding the history of Macclesfield silk. From the museum's perspective this session was organised by the Project Officer Kathryn Warburton with the aim of developing a handling collection that could be used by anyone including the visually impaired (K. Warburton, personal communication, March 23, 2018). The visually impaired wanted a greater opportunity to feel and understand the collections. From my approach, I wanted to understand what experience the visually impaired had with the objects, their thoughts, and feelings of the archive in comparison to my own sensory experience. Having not been to a museum handling session before I was keen to understand the process and discover which objects appealed to the visually impaired. This was also an opportunity for me to introduce myself to the visually impaired community and support workers. I was apprehensive of what they

would think of my introduction and research proposal. At this stage in time I did not have a clear plan of what creative events I wanted to propose therefore my introduction explained what artworks I had done with the museum over the previous year and that I wanted continue to respond to the archive, although this time with their involvement. Everyone was sat around a table so the collection of museum objects could be placed on a level surface and carefully unwrapped. One by one each object was passed around so that they could be felt by each participant. Kathryn Warburton from the museum verbally described what each object was and went into some detail on its background and who donated it to the collection.



Figures 43 & 44 Patterns of Tactility & Sound Part One: Handling session,
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2018 (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Going into the session I thought certain objects would create more interest from its historical story or tactility. The silk jacquard weave created a visual interest in the way that the fabric was woven, reflecting light from its construction. Warburton saw that fully constructed garments donated by local people made from silk would also have a story to tell and people could relate to this type of garment more than a swatch in a pattern book from a commercial company.

A 1963 floral jacquard woven silk wedding dress, was made to measure and manufactured at Cartwright & Sheldon, Macclesfield seemed to be a good sample to show the group as it had a distinct woven jacquard pattern. This item was placed on the table and laid flat out. However the woven silk was too soft and smooth that the difference between the changes in the direction of the satin and sateen weave in the floral motifs was not distinct enough to distinguish by the touch of hand.

The 1930s silk lace wedding dress that was modelled on the tailors dummy received positive feedback (Figure 44). The sample was given shape by the underlying tailors dummy which was used to as a physical visualisation of it being draped on a person. This dress was made from 1930s lace which was intrinsically more tactile in comparison the previous wedding dress in a smooth 1960s silk jacquard fabric. There were areas of satin fabric on the collar and belt which gave contrast to the lace on the main body and became a talking point.

A man's waistcoat made from silk, highly detailed with embroidery was deemed a success as a sample of tactility and gave way for further conversations on its construction and social history. Areas could be felt where the garment had been under conservation. Blue dye can dissolve the silk thread over time and so the weave structure opens as if it has been shredded enabling the visually impaired to feel the distortion next to a fabric netting placed over the top to hold the yarn in place.

The hand jacquard loom punch card was an object that seemed to capture everyone's attention and we lingered on this one with conversations on how it was constructed, and the way it can operate a jacquard loom mechanism and translated the yarn into a woven cloth (Figure 43). The swatch of fabric that was attached to it like a luggage label with the name of the designer and weaver that constructed it was a student named R. Lockett. This made me wonder if this person was perhaps a relation of mine. The tactile nature of this object presented binary cut out holes onto individual rectangle cards stitched together with a large chunky thread and joined at both ends to make a continuous loop.

Some objects are seen as delicate and can be damaged. If they are touched, gloves are often used as a way of protecting them from often irreversible damage. Using latex or cotton gloves had a negative effect on the handling experience. The users felt that using the gloves stopped them feeling the samples and it was difficult to perceive the textures

of the fabric, the areas of where the trims started and finished, and raised embroidery or changes in weave structure.

Overall, the handling session was valuable to opening a dialogue with participants by gaining feedback and engaging with their feelings. This session enabled me to understand how touch plays an important part in understanding of material objects. The session provided insight into what artefacts were difficult to feel and what ones were deemed a success in terms of their tactile quality. Conservation and preservation aspects of some of the pieces meant that for handling of certain objects gloves had to be worn, making it difficult for the participants to feel through the latex or cotton material. This was a conscience start to improve accessibility for the visually impaired on the part of Macclesfield Silk Museum, however it still has some way to go to offering a deeper and more valuable experience.

Objects and Recollections

During the first year of this study, I conducted archive research on printing blocks at The National Arts Education Archive at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, analysing the workings of Susan Bosance (1996) who was an advocate for hand block printing and resist dying on a small batch production scale. The reminiscence of the makers mark captures my imagination when handling and encountering Bosance's sculpted block and fabric prints. Roscoe historically gives an account of Susan Bosance's mentors Barron and Larcher's work explaining the dyes and materials used both for the carved block and the fabrics printed gives a deeper understanding to the technical process of block printing and their routes in artist experimentation (Coats, 1997). As a starting point this gave me grounded understanding of an artist's perspective in block printing.

My archive research then moved back to the printing blocks at Macclesfield Silk Museum through the process of object analysis with the aim of understanding the connections that we have with objects, especially those from our history or cultural identity. What is it about objects that helps us to understand the culture we are from? Sherry Turkle an academic of Social Studies of Science and Technology in the book *Evocative objects: Things we think with* (2011;2006) discusses the way that objects make us think. Objects can bring

on intense emotions through their connection to events that have happened in the past, to people and to places. The story behind the object is what brings out the emotions and thus creating an attachment. This attachment becomes valuable to the individual and the culture that we're part of. Susan Yee points out the role of the physical archive. The act of going to the library or museum, the sense of importance that the objects have by being carefully stored away. It creates an atmosphere of tension where you are privileged to be opening the pattern books. Being able to touch and smell the objects in the archive appeals to more than once bodily sense. The experience of it hitting your senses is a connection you experience that cannot be replicated through a digital archive. Turkle recounts her own recollection of objects of her memory closet during her childhood and what they come to mean to her once she met adulthood and the contents had been donated during her grandparents' house move. During her research, Turkle came across bricolage whilst reading the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss and this is where the bringing together of materials can create new ideas. The collection of narratives from a selection of people from a variety of backgrounds such as art, design, science, and humanities allow the reader to gain a view from several different perspectives on objects that generates ideas. Turkel describes the past reasoning behind objects, canonical abstract thinking and then onto the recognition of concrete ways of thinking originally through the contributions of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and psychologist Jean Piaget. Turkle also links the narratives written to that of theories from literary theorist Rolan Barthes, social theorist Marcel Mauss, philosopher Jean Baudrillard and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan. This piece of literature has led me to think about my own evocative objects within Macclesfield Museums.

Credibility within the Wider Community

As a textile artist I have an awareness of exploring the archive and interacting with it by challenging the way we think about the objects contained within them. This research showed that creating something that a visiting audience to the exhibitions of *Patterns of Tactility Part 1 and Part 2* are curious and interested in gave a sense of achievement, and was an uplifting experience for the visually impaired community to discuss their

collaborative work further. The singular events in themselves were not aimed at producing an object, however they each connected with the next activity to form a chain of events that built up a relationship to the topic explored and to the space that enabled them to actively practice. Each community engagement event and the time between the sessions during the longitudinal study propelled further conversations between collaborators. The first exhibition *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1* was held where individuals had produced contemporary blocks and block prints and gave credibility to individuals within the visually impaired community. A collective voice came from the group which gave this further credibility in the creation of the installations exhibited in *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2*. The museum wanted to display work from other community groups such as the Embroiders Guild that had produced embroidery pieces in parallel. This gave our work a sense of belonging to the wider community that wasn't separate and part of something bigger. The two public exhibitions this research took part in increased the awareness that the visually impaired community can take part in art, that people with sight loss can do things of interest (H Van de Veken, personal communication, March 24,2020). Visually Impaired members went several times to the exhibition and took family members too and if they could not go on the opening night they went on their own terms. By raising the profile of those with sight loss and the work of the East Cheshire Eye Society the creative events made the community feel important.

Chapter Five:

Sociality of Collaboration through Textile Practice

Introduction

This chapter seeks to look at what happens to individuals when they come together in a group to undertake social creative textile activities taking into account that some of the individuals have a visual impairment. This explores how textile making is a collaborative effort in terms of its impact in being socially engaging and challenging those participating. To encounter materials and the process of textile practice through alternative ways of thinking about their local heritage and understanding the differences between individuals in this process.

On examining the collaborative creative events, a number of themes presented themselves through the observations of conversations during the session, also through the group focus group and semi-structured interviews with participants. Overcoming barriers in terms of sight loss, perceptions of the self in what one feels is expected from us by others, and what has been taught by the formal education system and wider cultural views of arts and crafts.

The Sociality of Collaboration in Textile Making

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, “sociality” is defined as “the state or quality of being sociable” (“Sociality”, 2023) . Through friendship and social synergy, sociality with others has seen an increased popularity of crafting through embroidery, quilting and knitting groups; for example the gathering of local “Knit and Natter” groups, or the popularity of yarn bombing organised for festivals or special events that propel local communities to knit or crochet yarns and apply their creations to street furniture as type of non-permanent textile art. These examples are a way of bringing people together in a

form of socialising, forming human attachments and a providing a sense of achievement by using a skill an act of service to give something to back to the community,.

The industrial age in Great Britain saw an increase population growth of towns such as Macclesfield during the nineteen century due to the migration of labour to areas where mass-scale textile production evolved from small textile cottage industries. In Macclesfield the mill owners gave their workers Sundays off and organised trips to the seaside on an annual basis during the Barnaby Festival. Churches were built close to the mills and music bands formed and affiliated with a specific companies. My Grandfather became part of Frosts Mill Jazz band playing the accordion. These mechanisms for social gatherings have changed and do not play a major part in the town's culture anymore. The story of the historic silk mill workers losing their vision and the silk industry evaporating from their sight acts as a reminder of the silk industry in the twenty-first century dissipating together with their social networks. The East Cheshire Eye Society and the Macclesfield Silk Museum have regenerated a network and brought the local populations they serve together by organising activities. The coming together of the participants in this project has built a bridge and presented a thread of social connection where the visually impaired and myself have felt part of the larger cultural landscape.

The community engagement events within this research allowed for the process of material interaction as a tool for collaboration. Discussions in these sessions formed a dialogue through a feedback loop of thinking or creativity with perceived mistakes, personal frustrations with an exchange of ideas. Contingency forms part of this; allowing changes to occur with no set formula, permission was granted for experimentation and an openness to learn through others regardless of previous education and experiences. The definition of collaboration, "the act of working with another person or group of people to create or produce something". (Hornby et al., 2015). This action can be seen as an exchange or a dialogue linking people together, to place and to a sense of meaning and working with materials and your hands to produce something physical and tangible (Felcey et al., 2013). Working with others is a process that is seen in textile practice.

The early nineteenth century period was when the segregation of labour to form the production line came into its own and with this craft developed into something to intellectually think about and discuss among your peers. Craft was perceived as different

from the industrial processes of and technological advances of the mills and fine art pieces (Adamson, 2010). Methods of cloth production became individual tasks, automated and less self-governance and autonomy over work. There was no time to waiver and especially for those workers that could not keep up the pace. From a factory owners' perspective the mill workers that lost their sight could easily be replaced by a someone else. Workers were set tasks, coming together under one space that housed the tools and machinery for them to collaborate with the end goal of producing a textile product. The silk weaver and the printing block maker are just two examples that can be classified as experts in their craft, performing one area of ability in the process of fabric production. The hours that crept into years spent refining their skills as an apprentice merging to become a fully trained worker. This was their life's work, to the point they could do it with their eyes shut. Though they had expertise in their method of process, the weaver for example would not be able to weave their cloth without the silk twister who spun the raw silk, or the silk thrower who twisted the silk yarn. Each played their defined and significant role in the journey of converting the silkworm *Bombyx mori* cocoon into a fine silk handkerchiefs sold in the department stores of London.

Felcey et al. defines collaboration through craft as “workmanship-like exchanges between individuals and across boundaries that are freely entered into, and that through joint endeavour leave one or both sides significantly changed” (2013, p.1). The discussion on collaboration through art practice is a territory that continues to be in debate. In the written book *Collaboration Through Craft* (Felcey et al. 2013) a piece I have been drawn to many times over the past few years recalls accounts of practitioner collaborations. These joint endeavours create alternative ways of thinking, and collaboration offers this through other perspectives. On reflection, my initial work with Macclesfield Museums during 2015-2016 was in collaboration with the staff and volunteers, and my textile practice was a sole response. Returning to the notion of exploring the shared experience of working with others in the process of textile making I wanted to include this within my practice . The visually impaired participants who adapt or use alternative ways to understand interactions with the world and the material objects within them give way to collaboration which as Felcey et al. (2013, p.1) argues “is linked to new forms of collaborative expertise”.



Figure 45 Patterns of Tactility & Sound Part 2: Weaving Connections Event,
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2019 (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

In the elements that make up textile practice the mind of the textile artist is in teamwork with the input of the human hand together with the materials, the tools, all connected in what Ingold refers to inversion (Ingold, 2011, p. 63). Making is a shared act of creating something and with the visually impaired participants of this project I reflect on those points of interaction (Figure 45). This research does not expect that all the visually impaired participants on the project are experts in textiles practice when it comes to the methods or materials, and this is something I wanted to make clear to those participating in the events. There is no right or wrong answer. This is a social act, and exchange of thoughts and feelings, a dialogical and collaborative art practice Felcey, et al. notes that expertise craft collaboration “is now less about end-result driven processes and more about engaging in a process” (2013, p. 9). Harris (2007) points out that modern textile practices in particular hand knitting and quilting “can function as a sign of an alternative

community-based creativity that is at odds with the modernist ideal of individual self-expression and the notion of the artist as a lone genius” (Miller, 2007, p. 148). Sennett (2008, p.7). states that humans came to live in two dimensions, firstly the Animal laborans who are the factory workers that make things and become immersed in the task of doing to complete the end goal “akin to the beast of burden, a drudge condemned to routine” In contrast the Homo faber, Latin for man the maker, an appraiser where the individual restrains from the making, and enters a debate, judging the act of doing to ask the question “why?”, rather than Homo faber asking “how?” To further this, Sennett cannot see why a person cannot enter both modes of enquiry.

Overcoming Barriers and Opening Doors: A Metamorphosis

With no prior experience of engaging with the visually impaired community before, I was unsure how they would respond to the project events. This was about creatively thinking in a way that made the activities more accessible for those taking part. One of my objectives in the initial stages was to understand the literature written in relation art education for the visually impaired with Simon Hayhoe’s book *Arts, Culture, and Blindness: A study of Blind Students in the Visual Arts* (2008) was a good starting point from the perspective of a teacher and researcher in psychology of blindness. Hayhoe has written extensive literature in this field.

To build my experience of how to run a group workshop I shadowed and became an observer and partaker in a several art sessions with Project. INC at the Silk Museum. Project.INC is an organisation in the Northwest of England that makes art and heritage accessible for young people aged 11-25 years old that have anxiety or learning difficulties making it hard to engage in a formal education environment (Project.INC, 2018). The workshops were held weekly in the Education Room at the Silk Museum with children who needed a place for creativity, an alternative to a school environment. Under the project title *Curious Curators*, we explored the collections and used silk mono printing, a one-off print from one surface onto a fabric. This also familiarised me with the Education Room set-up and how to navigate the space to use with the visually impaired (Figures 46 & 47).



Figures 46 & 47 Project Inc. Curious Curators workshop and exhibition. Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2018 (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Collaborating with those that have different value or views, for instance people with a visual impairment can be challenging, nevertheless this shapes the art process in new directions from the visual to the multisensory perception of materials and human connections. Personal reflection can be sort from feedback from the events and the focus groups interviews. Conversations stimulated memories and evoked their imagination. The East Cheshire Eye Society charity members and the Charity Manager were unsure about this research project in that it this was different from what they had been involved in before. The Charity Manager Alan Chappell recalled:

“To start off with, we weren’t quite sure what this was going to be, where we’re going to go. But maybe that was the same for you Francesca, but very quickly it

became clear that it was really interesting and exciting project piece of work” (A. Chappell, personal communication, March 24, 2020).

Those members attracted to the proposition tended to have a natural interest in art and crafts. What became apparent after the handling session and the first event in kinetic sound drawings was that the participants started to fully engage with the project and they fed-back to the rest of the charity with positive affirmations. “The people involved, really engaged with and I think very quickly started to get something positive back out of it. And that just continued all the way through the project, really.... the initial experience, kind of open doors.” (A. Chappell, personal communication, March 24, 2020)

In the previous chapter I touched on the difficulties the visually impaired participants had with accessing the exhibitions and collections at the museum where exhibits were behind glass or a rope. The “do not touch” aspect of curating collections has put the visually impaired at a disadvantage. creating a barrier to engaging with the past. What originally made the Visually Impaired Forum come to the Silk Museum was a need to improve the visitor experience and feel a sense of their own history. The members had done visits to heritage sites or art classes in the past, but sight loss had stopped them from doing this again.

Becoming visually impaired affects all ages, however there is an increased risk of sight loss as you age (RNIB, 2021, p. 3). For the East Cheshire Eye Society activities of walking, bowling, talking newspaper are key activities on creating a network of support. The demographics of this group did play a part in relations to their age, cultural background, type of art education as well as sight loss and additional challenges such as hearing loss. These may come to restrict the individual, however through the shared experience of the textile creative events these were questioned, and new perspectives began to emerge. The participants were middle aged or older, either retired or unemployed, their reason for sight loss all varied and the impact varied at what age this developed. There was a mixture of men although the group was predominantly women. Textile practice is a method of accessibility open to all ages. Overall, the participants found the event tasks challenging. It was difficult for one participant to hear the sound clips of Paradise Mill even though a speaker was used. Hearing loss due to old age is not uncommon and presented an additional barrier. Once they understand what the drawing

exercise involved, and after playing the sound over and over again they started to tune in. The textile machinery audio was dissected, the detecting of more than one sound could be heard, and layered on top of each other. The different parts of the machinery either moved at different speeds or they inherently made different sounds in motion.

Another consideration is that some participants mentioned having a reduced feeling of touch in their hands due to age. Before this research I hadn't appreciated that sense of touch can diminish. Some of the visually impaired participant found working with the delicate smooth fine silk ribbons difficult to work with. The inherent property of silk is smooth with a high lustre which can be both positive, but also problematic for those that find it better to visualize a textile material through a highly textured rough surface. Reflecting on the ambitions of individuals working with fine raw silk ribbon that adapted to tying the ribbon around a small pencil that acted as a shuttle carrying the yarn under and over the warp yarn on a handloom. If I was to retrace these steps again my desire to use silk continues to be important as a material for the historic reference to the Macclesfield Silk industry. It displays as a reminder in practicality terms of how challenging and frustrating it was for the nineteenth century visually impaired mill workers to work with these materials. Without these dilemmas it would not have been as beneficial to work through the process of making as a course of connecting with their past histories. At first, hesitation and the fear of the unknown, though the success of the active adaptations allowed participants to give themselves permission to freely express themselves. What *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1 and Part 2* did was allow the community to believe they could get involved and cocreate a collective artwork.

One participant was disappointed in their intervention, thought it was a mess, not artistic as they did not know what it looked, or felt like. They were questioning if they were doing a good job and so became apprehensive in getting stuck into the process of textile drawing. There was also the concern that they were going to put too much paint on the roller during block printing, worried how to use the tool therefore requiring assistance to use the with equipment. Perceived ideas can be formed through past experiences, in particular the view on what is deemed art and what activities classes should entail. The creative textile community engagement events were a contrast to the formal education of participants where their freedom to express was allowed. The visually impaired members

embraced it more naturally than the sighted volunteers who struggled with the kinetic drawing events; as they had expectations and specific ideas regarding what art or crafts should be. Participants have memories of being told they were no good at art on mainstream school, or had beliefs that those with sight loss could not create art. In contrast as these sessions did not attain to a specific standard the time allowed the dissolving of such notions, their attitude altered and their experience reporting back was positive by the end of the day.

After the initial positive feedback from the events of *Patterns of Tactility and Sound* the East Cheshire Eye Society wanted to maintain the same group to continue on with further art sessions. For the charity and the individuals involved, “it’s been really positive and has made quite a difference and given, given new thoughts and ideas about things we can do for people with visual impairment.” (A. Chappell, personal communication, March 24, 2020). This practice-led research has planted a seed, the project has grown, it has produced a legacy, a desire for the charity and some of its member to pursue new avenues in art. It has provided a basis of support and a direction to go on, with self-worth their confidence to try new things has developed to overcome perceptual barriers. Some members who had taken part in *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1* could not attend *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2* due to health related reasons made it hard to attend or other commitments came up. New participants attended in *Part 2* as they were attracted through word of mouth and success of *Part 1*. The addition of new participants allowed the group to become more diverse in individual backgrounds.

There has been an interest in tactile art-based activities ran by the Eye Society, these were often short in nature for example felt making were done with social groups periodically as not everyone in the social group wanted to do this type of activity. The social aspect of the East Cheshire Eye Society is member led, so members choose what they want to do as a way of coming together and socialising. (H. Van der Veken, personal communication, March 24, 2020).

After *Patterns of Tactility and Sounds Part 1* it was felt that there was a core group of individuals that wanted to do an in-depth art project and the charity organised a felt making workshop separate to this research project. To further my understanding of the how the visually impaired worked I volunteered to support this. Taking place at Beasley

Back Dane, Macclesfield over a day I observed how the Society ran the workshop, presenting an opportunity to chat to those taking part. This textile related activity played a part in members socialising, a method of striking conversation, a way of slowing down, time to listen and feel the materials placed in front of you (Sennett, 2008). This practice was something that I was keen to replicate in the community engagement events in *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part Two*.

Human Connections through Collaborative Textile Practice

During the community engagement activities the act of textile making took people on journey to relate to their shared histories. The East Cheshire Eye Society was established as a school for the visually impaired silk mills workers who could no longer work in the silk industry and were given the opportunity to retrain into alternative trades such as basket and furniture cane weaving. This craft is no-longer taught to the visually impaired who are members of the charity therefore *Patterns of Tactility and Sound 2 Weaving Connections* was an event highlighting this forgotten story and the origins of the charity. There were six visually impaired participants and five sighted volunteers that took part. It brought those collaborators with sight and sight loss together to recreate and connect with the process of weaving over one day. The act of weaving silk ribbons pulled the group together to work past their own parameters and start to connect to something larger, a metaphor for interlinking social connections as a group. Weaving one piece together led to discussing obstacles during the incorporation of one ribbon after another. This approach resonated with individuals, giving them an understanding of the challenges the nineteenth century blind silk workers may have faced during the execution of weaving a jacquard cloth.

Setting the context was important in that explaining the history of the silk mill workers that became blind from their work with fine silk weaving and printing over the course of the nineteenth to early twentieth century gave the participants a story that brought them closer together and they could empathise with. Allowing space for them to think about the mill workers retraining into alternative occupations such as furniture cane weavers or basket weavers gave them permission and freedom to weave in opposition to their concerns

about their own visual impairment. This influenced how they perceived themselves as weavers, arguably as novices, however in this act of making within a collaborative group gave them validity of what they were producing. They showed resilience by working together to weave the delicate ribbon. The deliberations and guiding that took place, interactions of support so they could accomplish each line of weave, thus driving a discerning towards their shared cultural history.

Relationships Change Over Time

The type of participants joining in throughout the project did not remain consistent. Some participants had not met each other before, therefore new relationships had to form through the process, though some were familiar with each other from walking activities. Human connections grew as a gradual step by step process during the sessions. My assumption was that the same participants would come back, however during *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part Two*, the group members changed with some new faces and additional sighted volunteers. The original group of participants were still talking about it *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1* for some time after the events had finished, a positive recall of what they experienced and this spurred further people to join in. A large proportion of the members in the second group that formed had not completed a tour of Paradise Mill, my lack of appreciation to this fact negatively impacted their understanding of the project. The visit to the Paradise Mill was pivotal in understanding the story of Macclesfield Silk, through the multisensory experience of the links to sound with this historic place of importance.

Artist in residence programmes offer artists to live and work away from their usual place of home or work, immersing them into a new environment where they can undertake the roles of researcher, artist, educator, and collaborator. They often work on short term for a few months to a year depending on the funding options. In contrast, my methodology offers a longer study allowing one to become embedded into the community. For many artists in residency they are not from the local area, not necessarily a bad thing as unfamiliar eyes can bring a new perspective to museum curation. Even though I no longer live in Macclesfield I did spend my primary years there and with extended family links to

the town my innate knowledge of the local culture continues to form part of my me. During this practice-led research project I worked with the Silk Museum and the East Cheshire Eye Society from January 2017 to March 2020. During those three years the relationship changed over time. Research over a longer time frame allowed for ideas of reflection, reframing during key points and the project was given room to organically grow in the voids between. Making a long-term commitment meant I was treated like a volunteer by the Silk Museum. My primary research acted as an artist in resident, but I took this one step forward to include community groups, first volunteering with ProjectINC. and collaborating with visually impaired visitors. My relationship and my networks with the community of Macclesfield developed to become larger and more comprehensive over time.

Chapter Six:

Sensory Encounters Through Textile Practice

Introduction

This chapter explores sensory encounters, reflecting on the human interaction during the manipulation of textile making materials and the involvement of the human senses during the acts of object handling, kinetic sound drawing, block printing and hand weaving. This is to understand the world through the manipulation of materials where new sensory experiences as noted by Felcey et al (2013, p. 5) “characterize the material dialogue between maker and material”. The findings from the community engagement events reveal a physical interaction with the senses can be interrupted when there is an impairment to at least one of these senses and it is this relationship of these meeting points in the making process that is discussed.

Defining Sensory Encounters with Material Objects

The output of the sensory encounters during the community engagement events have become material objects, in this case the artworks consisting of the drawings, the contemporary printing blocks, the group weavings, the resulting installations pieces that emerged are evidence of collaborative exchanges between the individual participants as group. This productivity of tangible artworks has value, however does not present the entire account of the interactions with the Silk Museum archive materials consisting of wooden nineteenth century printing blocks (Figures 48 & 49), the Paradise Mill hand jacquard looms. It was not merely a passive act of walking around the museum to enjoy a lovely day out. Contingent happenings occurred through sensory encounters with material manipulation introducing an improved quality to the understanding of the Macclesfield silk story and what this meant to individuals in the collaborative process. The inclusion of textile making as a community engagement event within the context of the

museum is a way and means of connecting with our past or present culture thus creating the conditions for interactive curatorial research for those who are sighted and visually impaired. The materials experienced during the object handling events attract reminiscences, offering the opportunity to recall anecdotes of school art classes or past experiences in the mills. The reunion with of the tools of mark making during the kinetic sound drawing event consisted of everyday objects that appear to have no relevance until memories are ignited during a multisensory approach. The space to interact is set by the conditions of the Silk Museum and Paradise Mill where it allowed us to solely focus on the materials of objects.

Sensory engagement is a method, a way at understanding at the objects within the museum and a process to making art. Engaging with alternative senses in my practice has been a divergent process resulting in this collaboration. Conceiving new findings have come from the experience questioning the role of our senses during textile practice.



Figures 48 & 49 Macclesfield Silk Museum Archive Printing Block.

Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2018 (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Object Analysis and Visual Drawing: The Default Setting

Interactions with the archive first took me into a backroom store at the Silk Museum where the printing blocks were stored away from the public. They inhabited three columns of racking, mostly wrapped in bubble wrap with a thumbnail of an image of the block inside the wrappings. The objects selected were based on those that had intricate detailing of paisley patterns and a rare and unusual roller block with floral motifs, chosen as they may be appealing both visually and by touch (Figures 48-50). The sighted textile artist is seen to be understanding the aesthetic of an object using their sense of vision, however this is an over simplification. This came into question when the visually impaired community became involved in the collaboration process. My first thought was to analyse the archive objects before introducing them to the members of the East Cheshire Eye Society. Turning to my default method of analyse I undertook a visual examination of the wooden printing blocks, a scan using vision to guide the hand to produce observational drawings through the marks made. Constraints to what media I can use when interacting with the archive objects were adhered to, limiting this to graphite pencils, watercolour pencils and oil pastels as to minimise the risk of residue coming into contact with the archive. This led onto further drawings taking a simpler look at abstract shapes, relief patterns and forms that could be more easily touched and understood by the visually impaired. Further to this it was clear that during the handling session with the visually impaired they found the printing block problematic to interpret through touch either due to the delicate nature of the cut-out patterns, or having to wear glove to preserve the blocks from damage thus limiting the proprioception of the body. Moving beyond the visual I diverged using an alternative method of drawing to become more inclusive in inviting the visually impaired to connect through the sensation of sound rather than through touch alone. During the Paradise Mill tour the sounds of the machinery, loud in nature and which captured everybody's attention including the guide dog began to form a collection in themselves, an assortment of sounds in which we could draw from.



Figure 50 Macclesfield Silk Museum Archive Printing Block. Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2018
(Lockett Richardson, 2018)

The blocks are made from four layers of wood (Figure 39). The surface layer has been chiselled away by the craftsman; a basic shape is made to allow the more delicate pattern to emerge. The areas cut away have left the tell tail marks of the craftsman tool and the hand that guide it, which become a fingerprint. The surface and delicate pattern for printing is smooth and polished in contrast from the areas removed away. The simple capturing of shape is quick and effective. There are details that can be missed on first glimpse, nevertheless as time is taken to scan over the object it becomes clearer that there is more to the blocks in terms of the printed pattern it represents. The broken areas of relief where it had damaged, and areas of material where the craftsman has carved out and where they had repaired the raised profile. On reflection this process helped me to analyse the carved blocks more closely in terms of their construction, materials, surface pattern and texture. My detailed drawings had become literal (Figures 51 & 52), however the ritual of selecting and opening several printing blocks became part of the process and led to thoughts of what specific patterns are advantageous for the visually impaired to perceive through touch.



Figures 51 & 52 Visual drawing observations from the printing block archive.

Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2018 (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

This process of visual drawing, is one method I naturally default to within my textile practice, yet in the collaboration with the visually impaired my approach to this method made me challenge this and appreciate the printing blocks further than through vision alone. Embodied knowledge through reestablishment of touch and sound as an immerse experience became important when introducing the collaborative partners to the museum material objects.

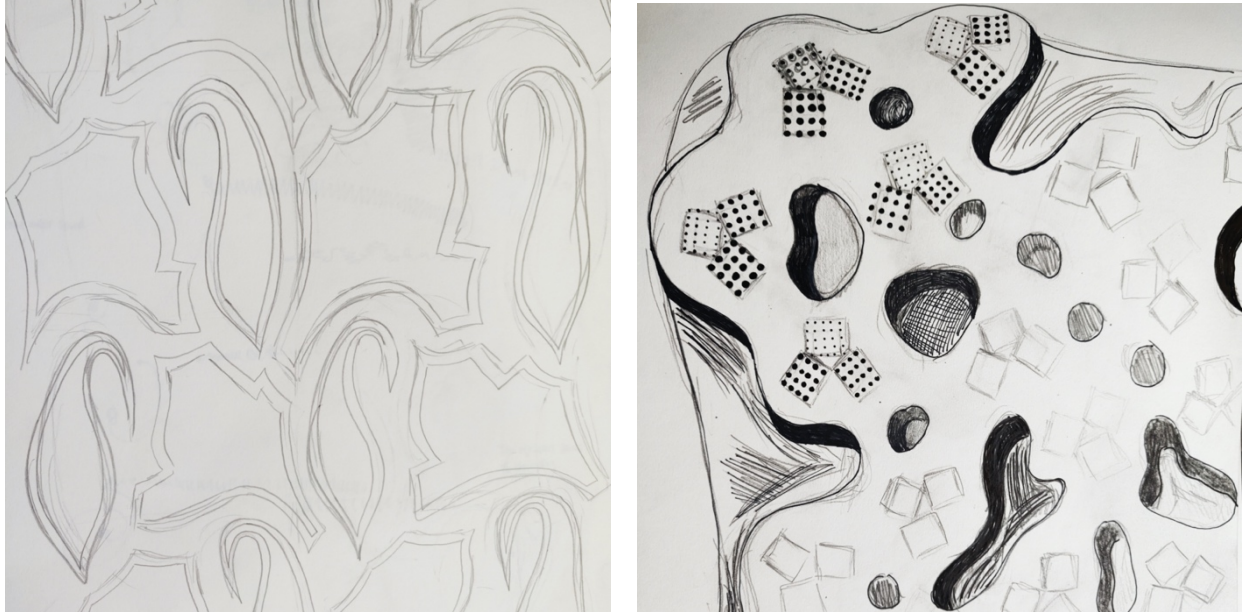
Making Sense of Patterns

After a discussion with Daniel Hearn the tour guide at Macclesfield Silk Museum the subject of sound became an additional element to introduce into the project and adapted tour. Hearn who has a background in music at degree level was new to the process of weaving and the mechanism of the jacquard loom. Hearn recounted the story of the first

punch paper loom invented by Basile Bouchon the son of an organ maker. A sheet of paper was wrapped around a barrel with guided holes, plucking a note which in turn was the inspiration for the punch card system used in the first weaving looms utilising the binary code system of raising the warp thread in one of two positions, up or down. The linking of the music box to the jacquard loom which uses the punch card system automates pattern that lifts the warp thread to allow the weft to be inserted and produce the repeat pattern through the length of the cloth. Two types of patterns are formed and interconnected; firstly a physical visual aesthetic, and secondly, the alternative pattern of sound produced by the loom during this formation of fabric (D. Hearn, personal communication, February 8, 2020).

The nature of industrial machinery is rhythmic in motion, forming a pattern of cloth which is specific to the historic industrial textile heartlands of the United Kingdom. Paradise Mill houses numerous textile machinery; twenty-six hand operated jacquard looms, a bobbin winding machine, a pirn winder, a clocking in and out machine and a jacquard punch card machine. The sounds they make are specific to this site and a way of identifying its cultural identity to Macclesfield's silk heritage. The reparative routine of the nineteenth century mill worker conforming to long shifts, industrious within the vehement space and deafening production. To do their part of the textile making process required accurate quality control measures. To spot the broken warp thread by which they mastered the dexterity of creating a reef, or double knot to keep the warp threads together must have increased focus which in turn became an unconscious tacit skill. It was noted that during the tour of Paradise Mill this was often done by hand without looking, but rather by sense of touch communication to the brain producing the movement through the hand. These practices of weaving become daily rituals and developed skill through repeated processes.

My thinking began to develop with the visually impaired at the forefront of my mind. Finding printing blocks within the archive that can be more easily interpreted than a delicate and complex paisley pattern became my objective. Deconstructing all the simple shapes contained within the wooden blocks abstract repeats forms were drawn and extracted from the blocks ready to translate into digital files for laser cutting, thus enabling me to progress the process further (Figures 53 and 54).

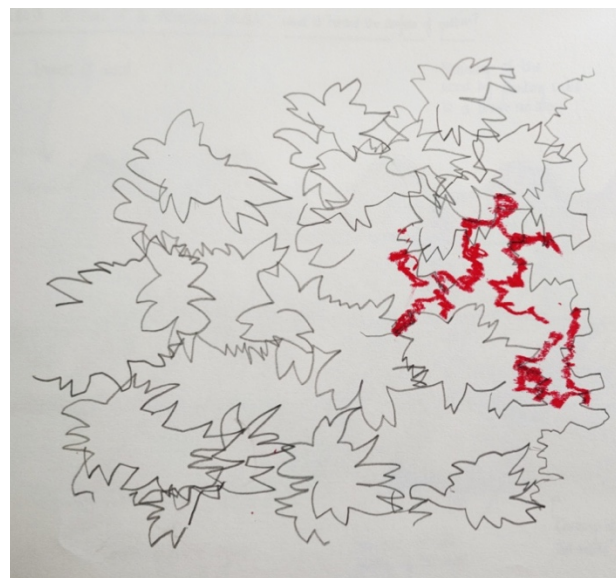
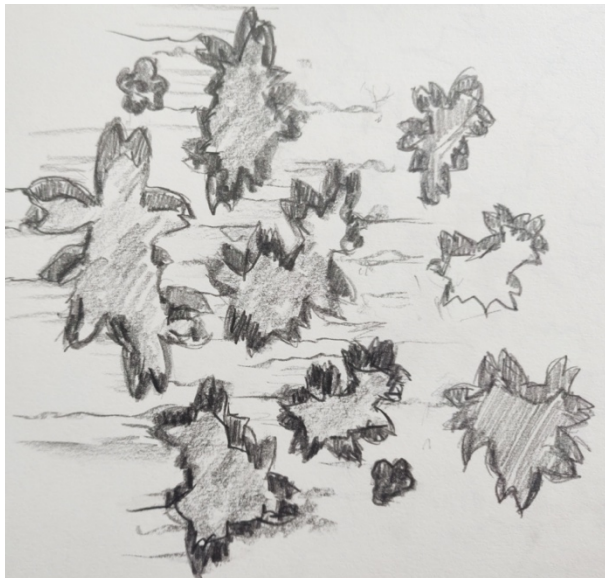


Figures 53 & 54 Visual drawing observations from the printing block archive.

Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2018 (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Intricately carved or metal inlay blocks were harder to feel, yet if these forms are increased in size to aid the fingertips they improve perceptions in the participant's mind. This action worked well, and it was surprising the shapes selected out of the kinetic drawings I had produced during a set of blind fold experiments which I undertook to simulate the sensory experience of becoming visually impaired. Some contours resembled organic floral shapes, whilst others were abstract with no familiar resemblance. This reflected the same process that the visually impaired did as they feel the edge of the shape in the printing blocks during the handling session, sensing the patterns through touch rather than vision.

Within the adapted Paradise Mill tour the electric driven bobbin machines were turned on for a few moments which helped both me and the visually impaired participants visualise the machinery and understand the noise that historical mill workers would have faced every day. “It’s not visual, it’s the sound, it’s that the atmosphere of the place. The atmosphere is just as much sound and feel as it is visual” (D. Hearn, personal communication, February 8th, 2020). It was suggested that there could be an installation to replicate the sound of the twenty-seven looms in Paradise Mill in full action. Creating this type of atmosphere in the mind's eye could make it easier to connect with the history especially for those with sight difficulties. To avoid a tour becoming passive, the adapted tour of Paradise Mill became an experience that the visitor could hear, touch and smell the space.



Figures 55 & 56 Example sketchbook pages: Experiment - To only look up,
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2018, (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

During one of my sketchbook experiments titled *To only look up* (Figures 55 & 56) I visually observed the printing block using a pencil onto paper, however instead of looking at the object then back down at my paper again, I only looked at the object not knowing where the formation of the image was looking like. This experiment was to see what the hand does when only looking at the object. Not knowing is an experience that the visually impaired experienced during the kinetic sound drawing events. If I look at the paper my tendency is to alter my drawing to what my memory recalls. This drawing is somewhat

different to the actual visual of the printing block, however I like its abstract nature making the observer try harder to make sense of what the pattern is.

The kinetic energy sound drawings produced by my collaboration and the visually impaired during *Pattern of Tactility and Sound* remained flat to the touch. By turning them into contemporary printing blocks and block printing with them, those with visual impairments could feel the patterns they had made and start to understand the process of the textile block printer. Experimenting with the scale of the abstract shapes on the laser cutter was a trial and error. The profile depth of the material burnt away on the surface had to create more definition. A feeling of distortion and decay was a pleasant outcome, although not initially intended (Figures 57 & 58). Creating simpler shapes worked in improving the tactile nature of the outer edges and overall surface becoming more distinguishable. Experimenting with scale helped me understand what worked in improving the visually impaired capability of feeling the patterns of the marks made by the kinetic drawing tools.

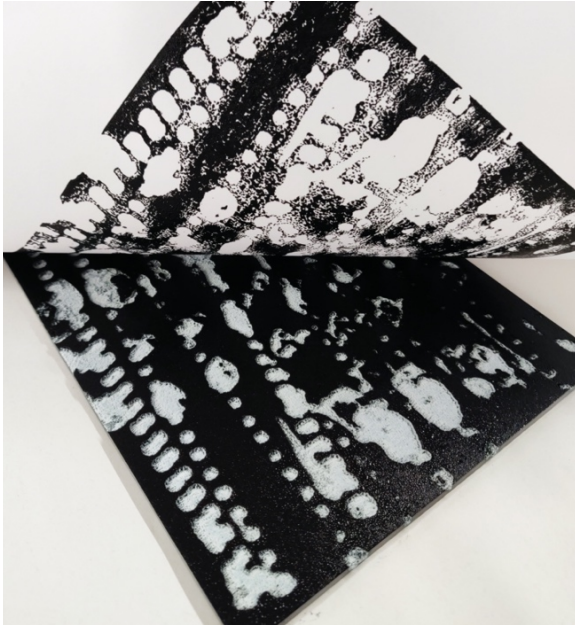


Figures 57 & 58 Laser cutting contemporary printing blocks.

Location: University of Huddersfield, 2019 (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

The material nature of the plywood, MDF or acrylic the printing blocks were laser cut from repelled the initial block printing ink. To counter this, further coats of ink were applied which created a handmade texture into the surface print. Water based printing inks had

to be used as it was safe so it could easily be removed from the skin by the visually impaired.



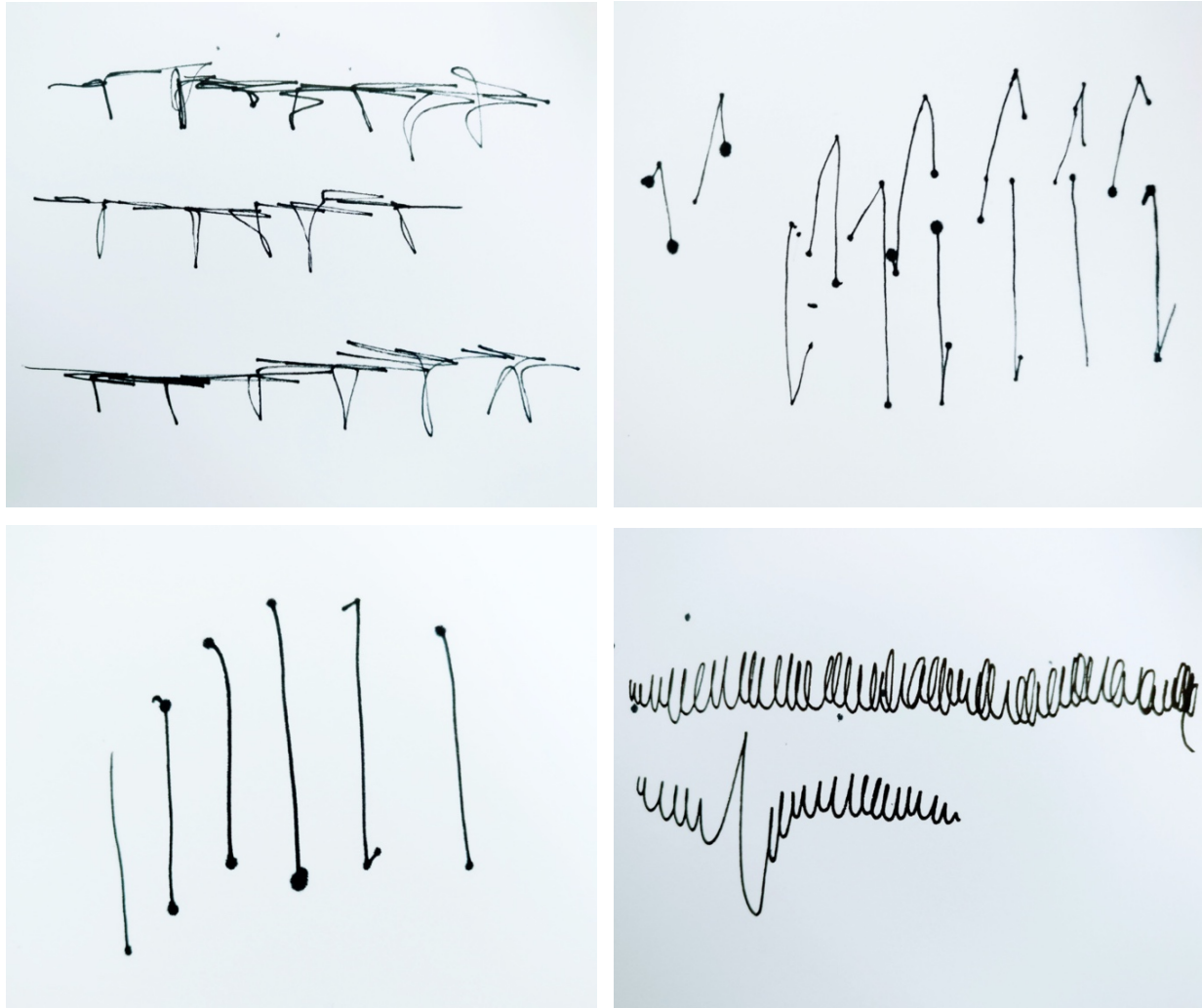
Figures 59, 60, 61 & 62 Block printing with contemporary printing blocks.

Location: University of Huddersfield, 2019 (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

The layering of block printed shapes produced a collage effect and worked well in contrast colours of black and red. Some visually impaired participants could see contrast of light

and dark, or specific colours like yellow against black. This allowed the shapes to stand out, and more easily defined as if they reflected the repetitive nature of the sounds of the textile machinery (Figure 59 - 62).

Blind-fold Drawings



Figures 63, 64, 65 & 66 Blind Fold Drawings Paradise Mill and Kinetic Drawings.

Location: University of Huddersfield, 2019 (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

Taking one step further and inspired by Robert Morris Blind Time Drawings (2005) I blind folded myself when listening to the sounds created by the bobbin winder and the hand jacquard loom from Paradise Mill. My intention was to create patterns that represented of

the sound through kinetic energy drawings using fine line pen or metal bobbin dipped in ink. The sound recordings when played repetitively becomes a route for me to sense a rhythmic pattern (Figures 63 - 67). The sound recording when played over and over again became an iterative process and the series of drawings became a catalogue of slightly varying forms, different from the previous one resulting in its own uniqueness. The drawing replicated the motion of the sound in its continuous motion of movement on constructing lengths of yarns and woven widths. A strength of this method was being able to create drawings that form new patterns without having to visually see the museum archives. Regardless of the degree of visually impairment the opportunity to join in the drawing activity became an opening of the archive.



Figure 67 Paradise Mill sounds and kinetic drawing experiments. Location: University of Huddersfield, 2018, (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

The sound clips were too short therefore it was difficult to draw in the timespan the recording allowed for. New recordings of the sound of the textile machinery which were longer in length were taken in preparation for the up-and-coming community engagement events with the visually impaired undertaken.

Please Touch



Figure 68 Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2 Exhibition, Titled: *Paradise Blocks* [Installation].
Location: The Silk Museum, 2018 (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

Standard museum curatorial practices are used within Macclesfield Museums to ensure that items of historic cultural importance are not damaged, that preservation for visitors of present and future can continue to view, this is a consideration that has continued value. On the other hand observing through glass cases, or from behind a rope is a physical barrier to immersive experiences and more importantly for those with visual impairments. This type of curation discontinues the cultural journey of experience for the visually impaired or with other disabilities, therefore the invitation to “Please Touch” was a pivotal as a message to include these types of audience members visiting the exhibitions of *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1 and Part 2* (Figure 68). The exhibitions allowed visitors to sense them by touch, smell and sound. The artworks were developed utilising processes such as laser cutting into a hard substrates, and exploring hand printing techniques such as devore, flocking and Expantex as ways of raising the surface profile for the visually impaired.



Figures 68 & 69 Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2 Exhibition, Titled: *Patterns of Paradise* [Installation]. Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2 exhibition took place from mid-November 2019 to mid-February 2020 at the Macclesfield Silk Museum and was part of a wider showcase of artwork completed through the *Jacquard Legacy Project* and was a defining point for cultural inclusion (Figures 68 & 69). The objectives were to; showcase the creative efforts of what the collaborative group have accomplished, to enable the public to see, feel and hear the story of the historic silk workers who lost their sight and give credibility to the visually impaired community in creating art that in its own right has credence. This research was mentioned by the Macclesfield Town Mayor in the opening event to which raised the publicity and importance of the work done. Macclesfield's Mayor singled out the use of touch in the museum making it more accessible for the visually impaired to get involved with the museum and its heritage in her opening speech (Figure 70).



Figure 70 Jacquard Legacy Project Exhibition Opening [Installation].
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

A second handling session was undertaken with printing blocks taken from the collections of the museum during the *Patterns of Paradise* Event. In groups of two or three and they discussed in their groups what they thought of the blocks. They did this by touching them, discussing experiences of previous blocks they handled. Conversations of involving their difficulties in perception and the ease of some objects to be discerned. Some were inlaid with metal; some were carved with out by the block maker. Following on from this, examples of laser cut printing blocks I had produced using the mark marking patterns from a previous kinetic sound drawing session were introduced. This second handling session was useful for the participants to understand the historic and contemporary printing blocks and how they experienced the delicate the intricate patterns. The participants were talking about what they felt with each surface. This was a space to connect with the past and encounter memories. Personal stories of family members working in the silk and cotton mills came to the fore. One person had recalled her husband working to establish a mill in the East Asia and the back of the migration of the textile industry moving to an international supply base. Another participant had brought in her own printing block that gave others the opportunity to feel and discuss.

Tacit Knowledge

The East Cheshire Eye Society had once taught basket making skills to the visually impaired, however this practice is no-longer supported by the charity (Figure XX). The process of basket weave is hands on, there is a movement and tactility about it. The history of the blind mill workers retraining as basket weavers was a story that resonated with me as my Grandfather had trained to as a furniture seat weaver after he became blind during his twenties. Stored in the basement of the East Cheshire Eye Society was a learning aid *The Knock* a chair caning instruction frame provided by The Royal National Institute for the Blind materials that broke down the stages of weaving a cane seat (Figure 71). the engagement with this objects, is an echo of the process and pattern of embodied knowledge.

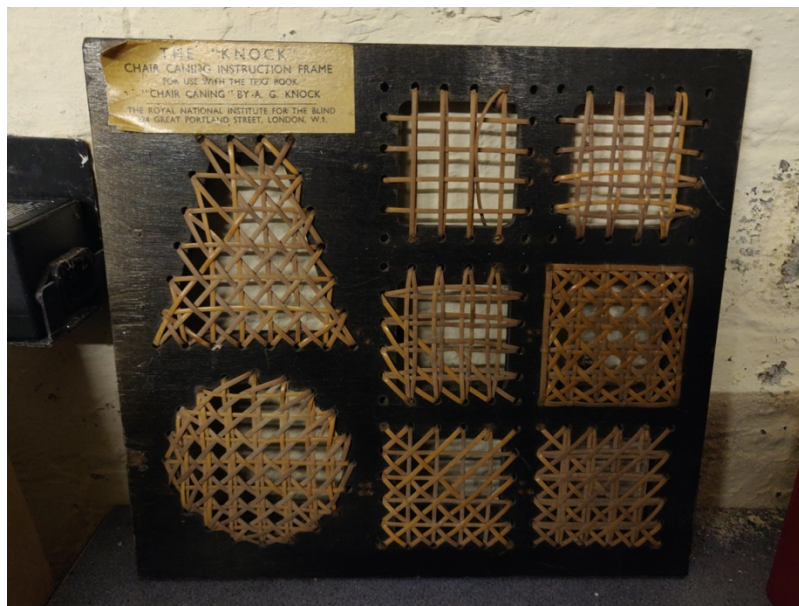


Figure 71 Chair caning instruction frame, Titled: *The Knock*, Location: East Cheshire Eye Society (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

To understand the physical work of re-training of the blind nineteenth mill worker I undertook a basket weaving course in Todmorden, Lancashire. In working with the complexities of constructing with willow I acutely became aware of the natural materials. Learning a new skill set I began to find out how to use the basket making tools and

manipulate the materials required in the process part of learning a new skill. Terms such as Bodkin, a tool for tapping down the rows of weaving were new to me. Even though I had woven yarns I considered myself a novice and felt alien to these types of implements and the nature of willow as a material. An uncomfortableness was felt, perhaps not dissimilar to the feelings the visually impaired described during our community collaboration events. The time it took to make the basket seemed to go quickly as if I was absorbed in the act of making. A rhythm to the weaving formed and this enabled bending, pushing, and the pulling of willow to form into a basket. After a few hours my hands were hurting and it became difficult to take further information in, so the rate of my workmanship slowed down. The physical strength required to weave willow was greater than anticipated. It really required force to manipulate the material and by the end of the first day my hands were swollen. A lack of strength in my hands and arms to work the willow over consecutive hours, something that could have been experienced by the historic silk workers in the mills, and also the visually impaired collaborators during the *Weaving Connections* event. Thinking through this process was challenging, I had moments of exhaustion and doubts crept in as my skill was not practiced self-consciously. The teacher's knowledge of basket weaving was embodied and was quick to reference when helping me finish my basket when time was closing in. There was no discernible thoughtful contemplation by her, but rather a fast paced tacit knowledge driven by her unconscious that enable the basket to be completed with a flurry (Sennett, 2008).

Weaving Connections through Sound and Touch

In October 2019 the event called *Weaving Connections* saw eleven attendees, six of those with a visual impairment. The East Cheshire Eye Society was established as a school for the visually impaired silk mills workers who could no longer work in the silk industry and were given the opportunity to retrain into alternative trades such as basket and furniture cane weaving. This craft no-longer taught to the visually impaired was highlighted by this event. This was a creative session where participants were asked to create collective group weave structures that formed one step in a series of creative outputs in a response to Macclesfield Silk Museum and Paradise Mill (Figures 72 & 73).

Rather than basket or furniture cane weaving the jacquard weaving looms in Paradise Mill provided inspiration. On hand-made weaving frames silk ribbons formed the warp and weft (Figure 73). I hand screen printed the warp ribbons in preparation and the participants used varying plain dye silk ribbons as an alternative to the fine silk warp weft yarns felt in Paradise Mill. The kinetic sound drawings printed onto the weaving ribbons were taken from the *Patterns of Paradise* event and woven in no particular order with the result of some of the original patterns being interrupted. The colours of the plain dye ribbons woven were sunset orange, purple, indigo, royal blue and raspberry red. These were inspired from the research I had done previously in the archive on the nineteenth century Macclesfield Stripe dress fabrics which also provided a colourful contrast for the weavers.



Figures 72 & 73 Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2: Weaving Connections Event, Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum, 2019 (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

Following on from this session the installation pieces developed into two main artworks. The first one titled *Weaving Connections* evolved me producing a digital file, layering each woven pattern, enlarging the scale, fading in and out and working on the contrast of the ribbon colours. The overall visual image was digitally printed on 3 metre length of smooth satin silk/viscose fabric that was hand devoréd, a process of removing elements of the design to create an uneven surface, these element were some of the marks made during the kinetic sound drawing event.

The second piece titled *Patterns of Paradise* involved transferring interrupted elements of the group kinetic sound drawings, layering, repeating and mirroring the marks as reflections of the layers of sound produced by the textile machinery in Paradise Mill. This pattern formation was digitally printed onto a cotton canvas with a rough texture that when hand flocked provided a contrast in the velvet surface.

Challenges with Material Manipulations

The participants adapted their way of working when manipulating the materials became a challenge (Figures 74 & 75). They showed resilience in not giving up by functioning as a team to weave the delicate ribbons together. They discussed options, guided each other, interacted through support to accomplish each line of weave. There was an increased concentration in making process. Participants sometimes weren't happy with what they had woven and unravelled and started over again. As they became aware that there was no right or wrong answer to this weaving process their confidence grew. They gave themselves permission to become creative, deciding the weaving pattern and what colours they wanted to insert. The patterns they created were influenced by basket making, they weren't afraid to try weaving on the diagonal, producing interwoven star shapes with bustling junctions where the ribbons met in the middle and then diverged outwards towards the edge of the frame.

The inherent property of silk is smooth with a high lustre which can be both positive but also problematic for those that find it better to visualise a textile material through a highly textured rough substrate. Reflecting on the difficulty of some of the participants working with fine raw silk ribbon adapted to tying the ribbon around a small pencil that acted as a shuttle carrying the yarn under and over the warp yarn. Silk is a demanding type of thread on the sensory skills of the visually impaired, however silk is important as a material both for the historic reference to the Macclesfield Silk industry and it displays the arduous task of production for the nineteenth century visually impaired mill workers. This experience of weaving gave an appreciation and understanding towards the historic blind silk workers. Without this dilemma it wouldn't have been as beneficial to work through the process of making in connecting with their past histories. Larger scale weaves with wider ribbon

wides that contained a rougher surface texture may in part improved the visually impaired experience, however it could be argued this would have made their task easier and less adaptive.

My awareness of the subject of a person's perception through touch became greater in that for some their ability to feel the materials with their fingers was reduced due to old age. There were problems with some of the practicalities of the facilities, the size of the sink, but also the drawing tools chosen. It was more valuable if tools were hard enough to withstand the force of a hand push down on it, for instance corrugated card wasn't suitable as it disintegrated. Objects such as metal bobbins were structurally strong and the participants could concentrate on the drawing and listening to the sounds rather than getting frustrated with the tool.



Figures 74 & 75 Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1: Kinetic sound drawing event,
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum (Lockett Richardson, 2018)

The paint I had chosen was suitable for children, therefore I felt this was acceptable if it came in contact with the skin, although latex free gloves were provided. The paint dried quickly and was found to flake off the array of craft sticks, wooden balls, wooden cubes, elastic bands, and wooden texture rolling pins. The participants mentioned they had to keep dipping their tools into paint. Some found it frustrating as it wasn't like a pen with a continuous flow of ink. The artist will always need to reapply paint to a brush and in this instance it's no acceptance, though when you are listening to the sound there is no time to reapply your brush. One is mindful of capturing the sound and it may be a

distraction from moments of absorption. After a few attempts I found that I was able to quicken up my pace to the sound of the rhythm, so my hand continued the movement from the paint tray the page and back again.

Immersive Practice

Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2 - Patterns of Paradise event was the second sampling session of the kinetic sound drawing method (Figures 76 - 79). The number of attendees increased to from four to twelve comprising of six visually impaired participants and six sighted guides that were also collaborators. One participant who had attended the first *Patterns of Paradise* kinetic sound drawing event was happy to undertake the drawing experiments again as they had enjoyed it so much it the first time. The comparison of its twin event in Phase One showed that participants were tentative in making marks with the tools and the paint as a fear of getting it wrong was holding them back. Playing the sounds of the bobbin winder, the clocking in and out machine, the lamp wick braider, and the jacquard punch card cutter repeatedly over and over again, sometimes up to five times enabled them to immerse themselves into the sounds where their feelings of trepidation floated away. They became lost in the moment, with thoughts of visualisations of the machinery causing their hand to manoeuvre the tools in response. This time a handling session was introduced before the drawing session and a discussion on the history of the Society and its links to silk industry which wasn't discussed during the previous year's session. This session was about linking back into personal histories and the history of the charity. Sennett (2008) discusses the problem faced whereas participants we are learning a technique, in this case be it kinetic sound drawing. These encounters with the archive of printing blocks and jacquard looms we became aware of what we are doing, a carefully thought through, this knowledge is explicit in that is clear and detailed with no confusion. The second sampling of kinetic drawing to the sound of Paradise Mill I felt became tacit knowledge, an understood without being stated. It became routine as simply knowing the sound and responding to it.



Figures 76, 77, 78 & 79 Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2: Patterns of Paradise Event,
Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

Chapter Seven:

Conclusion

Summary

This practice-led project set out to explore collaborative community engagement through textile printing and weaving based practices with the visually impaired during an archive intervention at Macclesfield Museums. The backdrop to this research outlined the government's assessment of the UK cultural landscape, noting the need to develop a relationship with their local cultural offering for those from diverse backgrounds, as in minority ethnic groups and disabled people. At the same time, the cultural assets of heritage sites are being explored in alternative curatorial ways with the increased focus on joining forces with contemporary artists with the request to respond to a historic places of interest. This research ran alongside a three-year collaborative project with academic, artists and heritage organisations called *Contemporary Art in the Heritage Experience (MCAHE)* (2017-2020) which set out to map what the role of commissioned contemporary art has in heritage in the UK and further afield with improving accessibility for all. Within its supporting conference at Newcastle University (2019) it was noted that museums and heritage sites have moved away from a sole collection-based preservation of history to more of a user-focused experience of connecting people to place and objects.

This thesis displays a three-year case study which revealed connections and the overcoming of difficulties that formed during collaborative textile practice activities between the museum, artist-research, and the visually impaired community. The study findings support the socialist David Gaunlett (2011) statement that the process of "making is connecting" (2011, p.33). The value of making things can be seen in the sensation or sensory encounters of using our hands and ears in a manipulation of materials that forms the exchange of ideas and concepts with the self and others.

This enquiry uses a multi-method approach showing a real-life example of a case study conducted in the context of the Macclesfield Silk Museum and Paradise Mill. Within the process of textile printing practice, the method of autobiographical reflection of before,

during and after the making and experimental events has produced insights. The analysis of the outcomes of the research produced three themes.

1. Connection to place through textiles
2. Sociality of collaboration through textile practice
3. Sensory encounters through textile practice

The relationship that all participants including myself have with Macclesfield silk heritage has been explored. The visually impaired community mainly from Macclesfield or the surrounding towns still have ties to the historic silk industry which have had an impact on their experiences. As a local artist born and bred in Macclesfield it has its advantages, from a local sensitivity, a recollection of memories and an awareness of its history. It was apparent that the other participants were inherently connected to Macclesfield through silk. My role originally as a visitor, developed through the three years into sustainable relationship with Macclesfield Museums, the East Cheshire Eye Society and its members. This was not a short-lived project with a burst of activity and a statement piece, but rather this archive intervention was manageable, allowing time to grow and converge into a joint endeavour with the visually impaired. The reservation of the participants turned into an effective relationship, becoming part of their wider community. Permissions granted to re-frame the museum collections against the curatorial barriers of the rope and the glass cabinet an additional wall to those with visual impairments. Sensory textile practice within the space of the museum gave way to 'self-permission', a process of connecting to the objects and breaking barriers such as disability and perceptions of art making. The place-based textile practice benefits the collaborators in terms of offering credibility that the visually impaired community can produce aesthetically pleasing textile art which gave a sense of belonging within the wider arts community, something that hadn't been felt before. This research supports the view that heritage and the place in what Laura Breen says are "neither are fixed, and both can be regenerated through active forms of enquiry. Which value other ways of knowing, more fruitfully than by physical intervention alone" (2020, p. 33). The social nature in individuals associating together through textile making is discovered through overcoming barriers and preconceptions from the visually impaired previous mainstream arts educational background. The metamorphosis of all the participants in the projects through textile practice allowed a way of slowing down, giving

permission either in the collective to touch materials and allowing time for one another, time for your own thoughts, time for discussions and a freedom to express against formal procedures. The legacy continues with conversations about the project carrying on after the events had finished (Personal communication, H. Van der Veken, February 7, 2023).

Contribution To Knowledge

Sensory encounters with materials through the manipulation of silk textiles and other hard substrate was explored and incorporating touch and sound enable me to start to disseminate the patterns within the textile artefacts. Patterns though can be a visual aesthetic can come through the rituals of historic textile silk production, the routine of the silk workers and the machinery they operated on a daily basis. The link to music and sound through the jacquard weaving loom made way of sound becoming a tool to listen and respond to through kinetic drawing. Tactility became the key driving force in how the Community Group participants individual artworks and collaborative installations were curated. The difficulties found with the textile materials during the collaborative events, resulting in discussions, interactions of support, self-permission in a freedom to express, get messy, undo if they so wish, and change mark making tools. Challenges in handling the smooth lightweight properties of silk yarns, both fragile and unseen is a metaphor to how the collaborating community felt about their relationship to arts and heritage. This gave the participants a deeper appreciation of the historic mill workers and their connection with the past. It has broadened the scope of the Silk Museum on how to engage with the visually impaired in the future. Comparing their original visit to the Silk Museum and Paradise Mill before this research started to its conclusion the access for the visually impaired to the archive collections has improved together with the quality of personal interactions and how they perceived themselves in relation to the wider community and their cultural offering. These considerations and sensibilities of working with the location of the museum as a public place are only appreciated when you are in the moment. They are there as a note for future collaborations that without noting them would be easy to dismiss and fall into similar situations. They offer reflections of thought,

and an evaluation to work on and improve the accessibility with other visually impaired communities.

Project Impact

The Museum and the Eye Society met with Embroiders Guild after the first phase of this research. The Embroiders Guild, a group of embroiders were requested by the museum reproduce the textile pattern books in a tactile way and were exhibited alongside the installation pieces in *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2* (Figures 80 & 81).



Figures 80, 81 Artists: Designers Guild (2019) Titled: Handling Objects [Installation]. Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum 2019 (Lockett Richardson, 2019)

From the positive feedback from *Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 1* this gave the East Cheshire Eye Society more confidence to do an art in the environment project, as there was a momentum for the visually impaired members to become involved with further art-based initiatives. The charity went ahead and planned the project with Southwest Peaks Development Fund which allowed for five all day sessions, acuminating in an exhibition at Congleton Museum in March 2020. Unfortunately this prematurely closed due to the

Covid-19 pandemic and resulting the lockdown restrictions in March 2020. Nevertheless, this exhibition continued the theme of sensory encounter with tactile artworks made from ceramics and fibre felt making that could be freely handled. The experience also played an audio loop of 45 minutes storytelling and reminiscence of people's childhoods in Macclesfield and the surrounding areas woven in with the sounds of birds at Lyme Park. This PhD research project was the start of the East Cheshire Eye Society developing sustainable links with art and heritage communities rather than as a stand-alone entity. The society wants to pursue further arts initiatives and embed itself as part of the wider community with the aim of not to being 'discrete'. To make this arts movement sustainable and have longevity there is a plan to set up regular sessions in Artspace in Macclesfield supported by the volunteers at the East Cheshire Eye Society. These art sessions need to be activities not hidden away from the public view, alternatively joining in with other members of the community and participate in activities not specifically developed for them. The aim is to create links and get those interested in art being part of the wider arts community and as Helen Van Der Veken from the charity noted, "That's what we're really aiming for is that community engagement. Because that way, that's how we really can reduce social isolation" (H. Van Der Veken, personal communication, March 24, 2020) What this project has achieved is allowed people to have an interest in art. The collaborators that had not joined in the Phase One of the research heard the positive feedback and gained an interest in wanting to get involved with Phase Two. This propelled the charity to invest in in their own project and exhibition, and individual members have gone off to pursue separate art endeavours to the organised society events. This project has changed attitudes, given them confidence, and the feeling of being comfortable in their abilities by allowing themselves to engage in the subject of art and cultural experiences regardless of their impairment.

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Volume Two

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Appendix A: Case Study Ethical Review and Signed Consent Forms (Sample)

(Adapted and taken from Appendix D - Form B Case Study Ethical Review and Signed Consent Forms 2017)

THE UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD School of Art, Design and Architecture

ETHICAL REVIEW (Limited or Significant Risk)

SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE APPLICANT

Before completing this section, please refer to the School Research Ethics web pages which can be found at this link. Applicants should consult the appropriate ethical guidelines.

Please ensure that the statements in Section C are completed by the applicant (and supervisor for PGR students) prior to submission.

SECTION A: TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT/ Pi

Before completing this section, please refer to the School Research Ethics web pages which can be found at this link.

Students should consult the appropriate ethical guidelines. The student's supervisor is responsible for advising the student on appropriate professional judgment in this review.

Please ensure that the statements in Section C are completed by the student and supervisor prior to submission.

Project Title:	Bringing heritage to life through craft: Community engagement with cultural heritage through collaborative practice between the museum and the craft practitioner
Student:	Francesca Lockett Richardson
Student number:	
Course:	PhD Art and Design
Supervisor:	
Project start date	January 2017
Risk level: (limited or significant)	Limited Risk

SECTION B: PROJECT OUTLINE (TO BE COMPLETED IN FULL BY THE STUDENT)

Issue	Please provide sufficient detail for your supervisor to assess strategies used to address ethical issues in the research proposal
Aim / objectives of the study These need to be clearly stated and in accord with the title of the study. (Sensitive subject areas which might involve distress to the participants will be referred to the Course Approval Panel).	An exploration into community engagement with the visually impaired at Macclesfield Silk Museums through collaborative textiles practice with the artist and the museum in order to develop a model for participatory engagement
Brief overview of research methodology The methodology only needs to be explained in sufficient detail to show the approach used (e.g., survey) and explain the research methods to be used during the study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research - Interviews using field notes and audio recordings • Object analysis – photography, sketchbook and electronic journal work • Archive research – photography, sketchbook and electronic journal work • Community engagement workshops with community participants • Public exhibition located at the chosen case study museum
Does your study require any third-party permissions for study? If so, please give details	My intention is to conduct a case study on Macclesfield Silk Museum therefore I will require the museum's permission for study.
Participants Please outline who will participate in your research. If your research involves vulnerable groups (e.g., children, adults with learning disabilities), it must be referred to the Course Assessment Panel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research - Interviews with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ six craft practitioners ○ twelve local Northern England Museum Directors ○ the case study museum Director - Macclesfield Silk Museum • Community engagement workshop – six (adult) participants to complete questionnaires before and after workshops. The participants are visually impaired over the age of 25 and are considered vulnerable. They require extra assistant on visual interpretation and using the facilities of the museum. • Public exhibition – interviews with twelve (adult) exhibition visitors
Access to participants Please give details about how participants will be identified and contacted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently I'm in process of deciding which six craft practitioners I will choose to contact. These will be adults that have published work or research within the public domain. • I will work with the case study museum (Macclesfield Silk Museum) in order to get permission to interview the museum's Director. To attract participants for the community workshops I propose that adults will come from the visually impaired community over the age of 25.
How will your data be recorded and stored? Please confirm that as a minimum this will comply with the university data storage policy	I confirm that data will be recorded using a photography, interview audio and video recordings, questionnaires, craft work and note-taking. This data will be stored so

and the Data Protection Act. Please indicate also any further specific details.	that it will comply with the University of Huddersfield data storage policy and the Data Protection Act. The hard copies of questionnaires and consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet, and any data stored on the computer will be password protected and encrypted.
Informed consent. Please outline how you will obtain informed consent.	I will provide a letter of intent which will be sent to the Macclesfield Silk Museum's Director to request their written consent. Each participant within the community engagement workshop will be provided a statement of research intent in which they will be asked to read and to sign a participant consent form. Those that are unable to read or sign then the support staff from the Eye Society charity will help participants to fill in the paperwork.
Confidentiality Please outline the level of confidentiality you will offer respondents and how this will be respected. You should also outline about who will have access to the data and how it will be stored. (This should be included on information sheet.)	All the data gathered will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential. Only designated researchers to the study will have access to the data.
Anonymity Do you intend to offer anonymity? If so, please indicate how this will be achieved.	I will offer anonymity to participant; I will ask persons interviewed or involved in helping with my research how they would like to be named in my research documentation.
To what extent could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or negative consequences for the participants (beyond the risks encountered in normal life). If more than minimal risk, you should outline what support there will be for participants.	Minimal risk
Does the project include any security sensitive information? Please explain how processing of all security sensitive information will be in full compliance with the "Oversight of security - sensitive research material in UK universities: guidance (October 2012)" (Universities UK, recommended by the Association of Chief Police Officers)	No

<p>Retrospective applications. If your application for ethics approval is retrospective, please explain why this has arisen.</p> <p>Not applicable</p>

SECTION C – SUMMARY OF ETHICAL ISSUES (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT)

Please give a summary of the ethical issues and any action that will be taken to address the issue(s).

<p>Objective 1 – Artists Site Specific Response at other Heritage Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I will check with the interviewed artists what data collected can be referred to and published in my thesis, including offering anonymity to participants.
--

Objective 2 – Artist, Museum and Community Perspective

- I will check if specific information collected from discussions with Macclesfield Museum volunteers or members of staff and community workshop participants can be referred to on website, blog, published articles and thesis, including offering anonymity to participants.

Objective 3- Case study museum

- I have will again access to archive materials such as pattern books with designs that are under copyright and cannot be published in the public domain – I will therefore make sure that I check with the Director of Macclesfield Silk Museum what is allowed to be published on my website, blog, published articles and thesis.
- I will check with the Director of the Macclesfield Silk Museum what data collected can be referred to and published in my thesis, including offering anonymity to participants.
- I will check if specific information collected from discussions with Macclesfield Museum volunteers or members of staff and community workshop participants can be referred to on website, blog, published articles and thesis, including offering anonymity to participants.

Objective 3 – Community Engagement Workshops

- I will check if specific information collected from the workshops, recordings and discussions with Macclesfield Museum volunteers or members of staff and community workshop participants can be referred to on a website, blog, published articles and thesis, including offering anonymity to participants.

Objective 4 – Public exhibitions

- I will check with the interviewed exhibition visitors and community workshop participants exhibiting what data collected can be referred to and published in my thesis, including offering anonymity to participants.

Objective 5 – Model of participatory engagement

- I will check with the interviewed exhibition visitors and community workshop participants exhibiting what data collected can be referred to and published in my thesis, including offering anonymity to participants.

SECTION D – ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST (TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT)

Please supply to your supervisors copies of all relevant supporting documentation electronically. If this is not available electronically, please provide explanation and supply hard copy

I have included the following documents

Information sheet	Yes	x	Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consent form	Yes	x	Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Questionnaire	Yes	x	Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interview schedule	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION E – STATEMENT BY APLICANT

I confirm that the information I have given in this form on ethical issues is correct.

Signature _____Francesca Lockett Richardson Date: _01.08.2018_____

Affirmation by Supervisor

I can confirm that, to the best of my understanding, the information presented by the student is correct and appropriate to allow an informed judgment on whether further ethical approval is required

Signature _____ Date: _____

SECTION F: SUPERVISOR RECOMMENDATION ON THE PROJECT'S ETHICAL STATUS (UG/PGT)

Having satisfied myself of the accuracy of the project's ethical statement, I believe that the appropriate action is:

Approve	
Approve subject to recommendations [please specify]	
Approve subject to conditions [please specify]	
The project proposal needs further assessment by xxx	
The project needs to be returned to the student for modification prior to further action (details of required modifications must be provided)	
Reject	

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

(Required for submission with application for ethical approval, adapted and taken from Ethics Form Appendix 1)

**Sample Information sheet
University of Huddersfield
School of Art, Design and Architecture**

Participant Information Sheet **Case Study – Macclesfield Silk Museums**

Research Project Title: *Museum, artist and the visually impaired: textile practice with community engagement in redefining collections at the Macclesfield Silk Museum*

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why this research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read or listen to the following information and discuss it with others if you wish. If there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information, then please ask. May I take this opportunity to thank you for taking time to read or listen to this.

What is the purpose of the project?

This purpose of this research forms part of a case study that will be included in my PhD thesis.

The aim of the research is an exploration into community engagement with the visually impaired at Macclesfield Silk Museums through collaborative textiles practice with the artist and the museum in order to develop a model for participatory engagement with the heritage of Macclesfield Silk.

Why has Macclesfield Silk Museum been chosen?

The relevance of choosing Macclesfield Silk Museum comes from the relationship forged with the museum during my Masters degree and of the museum's woven and printed textile archive that links into my textile practice. The museum has a textile block printing archive which is of historical and cultural value and is hidden from public view due to limited exhibition space and preservation concerns. One of the museum's aims is to make this archive more accessible to the general public.

Why have I been chosen?

The visually impaired community has been chosen as a group of participants in this project as the current museum's cultural and participatory offering has been reviewed so the experience and access to its collection are improved to those that are visually impaired.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, so please do not feel obliged to take part. Refusal will involve no penalty whatsoever and you may withdraw from the study at any stage without giving an explanation to the researcher.

What do I have to do?

You will be invited to take part in a series of workshops, interviews or focus groups. The full series should take no more four separate sessions, each session no more than 3 hours of your time.

Are there any disadvantages to taking part?

There should be no foreseeable disadvantages to your participation. If you are unhappy or have further questions at any stage in the process, please address your concerns initially to the researcher if this is appropriate. Alternatively, please contact Claire Barber at the School of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Huddersfield.

Will all my details be kept confidential?

All information which is collected will be strictly confidential and anonymised before the data is presented in any work, in compliance with the Data Protection Act and ethical research guidelines and principles.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The main use for the data will be to contribute to a PhD thesis and for publication in journals and for presentation at professional conferences. The results of this research will be written up in 2019. If you would like a copy, please contact the researcher.

What happens to the data collected?

If you give permission, once the current research is finished, the data collected from workshops will be stored in a secure archive at the School of Art, Design and Architecture at The University of Huddersfield for additional study and research purposes by me or another member of the team. If you do not want your data to be stored after the current project is finished, please state on the consent form.

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

There will be no payment for participating in the research.

Where will the research be conducted?

Participatory workshop research and data collection will be conducted at Macclesfield Silk Museums.

Criminal Records check (if applicable)

Criminal record checks are not required for this research project.

Who has reviewed and approved the study, and who can be contacted for further information?**Name and Contact Details of Supervisor**

Dr. Claire Barber

Senior Lecturer, School of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield. HD1 3DH

Name & Contact Details of Researcher:

Francesca Lockett Richardson

School of Art, Design and Architecture, University of Huddersfield, Queensgate, Huddersfield. HD1 3DH

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form (Sample)

(Required for submission with application for ethical approval)

University of Huddersfield
School of Art, Design and Architecture

Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Study:

Name of Researcher:

Participant Identifier Number:

I confirm that I have read and understood the participant Information sheet related to this research and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

I understand that all my responses will be anonymised.

I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses.

I agree to take part in the above study

Name of Participant:

Signature of Participant:

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature of Researcher:

Date:

Appendix D: Researcher Consent Form (Sample)

(Required for submission with application for ethical approval)

University of Huddersfield
School of Art, Design and Architecture

Researcher Consent Form

This form is to be used when consent is sought from those responsible for an organisation or institution for research to be carried out with participants within that organisation or institution. This may include schools, colleges or youth work facilities.

Title of Research Study: Museum, artist and the visually impaired: textile practice with community engagement in redefining collections at the Macclesfield Silk Museum

Name of Researcher: Francesca Lockett-Richardson

School/College/organisation: Macclesfield Silk Museums

This purpose of this research forms part of a case study that will be included in my PhD thesis. The aim of research is an exploration into community engagement with the visually impaired at Macclesfield Silk Museums through collaborative textiles practice with the artist and the museum in order to develop a model for participatory engagement

- I. The case study research is based on archival research, community participation workshops and a public exhibition.
- II. Data collection methods to be used
 - a. Interviews using field notes and audio recordings
 - b. Archive research – photography, sketchbook and electronic journal work
 - c. Community engagement workshops with community participants – questionnaires, field notes, photography, audio/video recordings
 - d. Public exhibition located at the chosen case study museum - questionnaires, field notes, photography, audio/video recordings
- III. The participants selected for the community workshops will be adults from the visually impaired community.

☐

I confirm that I give permission for this research to be carried out and that permission from all participants will be gained in line within my organisation's policy.

Name and position of senior manager:

.....

Signature of senior manager:.....

Date:

Name of Researcher:

Signature of Researcher:

Date:

Appendix E: Case Study Letter of Intent

Dear Kathryn,

This letter outlines my research at the School of Art, Design and Architecture at The University of Huddersfield. My intentions are to undertake a case study in collaboration with Macclesfield Silk Museums that forms part of my PhD research.

The working title of my research is *Museum, artist and the visually impaired: textile practice with community engagement in redefining collections at the Macclesfield Silk Museum*.

The aim of this research is an exploration into community engagement with the visually impaired at Macclesfield Silk Museums through collaborative textiles practice with the artist and the museum in order to develop a model for participatory engagement

Please take time to read the following information carefully so that you understand why the research is being undertaken. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the researcher Francesca Lockett Richardson at _____, or the research supervisor Claire Barber at _____

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of the research is to look at the outcome of the textile artist's contribution as valuable asset not only the museum but the wider context of cultural identity through opening up textile practice-based workshops to the wider community where they can engage in a way that's creative and thought provoking. The aim of this project is an exploration into community engagement with the visually impaired at Macclesfield Silk Museums through collaborative textile practice with the artist and the museum in order to develop a model for participatory engagement. The study will create a new engagement model which will be used in addressing the cultural offering of the museum, facilitating new forms of community engagement with heritage and generate part of a strategy to showcase and promote cultural heritage.

What are the objectives of the research?

The objectives of the research are.

1. Investigate the role of textile artists in site-specific and community engagement projects across the UK to establish social benefits and barriers between the museum and textile artist
2. Analyse and determine the resident contemporary textile artist's perspective, Macclesfield Museum's perspective and the visually impaired audience's perspective on community engagement with the museum's collections and narratives in providing a source of inspiration for connecting communities to their local cultural heritage
3. Critically analyse Macclesfield Silk Museum's archives and collections to provide new creative material and information to inform the community engagement workshops with the visually impaired
4. Develop and analyse live action community engagement workshops at Macclesfield Silk Museums by redefining museum collections through textile practice
5. Present and analyse a public exhibition based at the Macclesfield Silk Museum from work created from the community engagement workshops to determine the effectiveness of the participatory interaction and input into the co-curation of the museum space
6. Develop and construct a best practice model of participatory engagement within the heritage site of the Macclesfield Silk Museum

How will this research be conducted?

Research at Macclesfield Silk Museum will be conducted through the following methods.

- Interviews with the museum members of staff such as the Museum Director, museum staff, museum volunteers using field notes, audio recordings and photography.
- Museum archive research using photography, sketchbook and electronic journal work.
- Community engagement workshops with six (adult) participants, who will be asked to complete questionnaires before and after workshops. The workshops will be recorded using field notes, audio recordings and photography.
- Public exhibition located at the case study museum. The exhibition will be recorded through photography and video. Visitors will be asked to complete a questionnaire.

How will my information be kept confidential?

All the data gathered will be kept strictly anonymous and confidential. Only designated researchers to the study will have access to the data. I will offer anonymity to participant; I will ask persons interviewed or involved in helping with my research how they would like to be named in my research documentation.

This data will be stored so that it will comply with the University of Huddersfield data storage policy and the Data Protection Act. The hard copies of questionnaires and consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet, and any data stored on the computer will be password protected and encrypted.

What will happen with the results of the research?

The main use for the data will be to contribute to my PhD thesis, for publication in journals and for presentation at professional conferences.

What is the proposed timeline to develop and implement the case study?

Feb- Aug 2018	Conduct in-depth interviews with Macclesfield Silk Museum employees
Jan-Aug 2018	Researcher archive practice-based research
May-June 2018	Develop public engagement workshops
Jul-Sept 2018	Implement public engagement workshops
Sept 2018	Present work ready for exhibition
Sept 2019	Interview with exhibition visitors
Sept - Dec 2018	Analyse the impact of the public engagement workshops
July - Oct 2019	Thesis write up

Appendix F: Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part One: Adapted Paradise Mill Tour Focus Group Template

Adapted Tour Focus Group Questions

Museum Name:

Date:

1. How did you find the tour of Paradise Mill?
2. Is there anything you would improve about the tour?
3. How was the content of the tour?
4. What did you think of the kinetic sound drawing exercise?
5. How was the lecture before the drawing exercise? Is there anything you would improve?
6. Was there anything that surprised you about the kinetic sound drawings?
7. How did you find the laser cut printing blocks?

Appendix G: Visual Impairment Community Engagement Workshops Questionnaire

Macclesfield Silk Museums Community Engagement Questionnaire

Date:

Tour of Paradise Mill

Score rating - 5= Excellent, 4= Very Good, 3= Good, 2= Fair, 1= Poor

1) Please score the welcome and friendliness of the staff? Please score

1 2 3 4 5

2) How informative was the tour? Please score

1 2 3 4 5

3) How interesting was the tour? Please score

1 2 3 4 5

4) The knowledge of the tour guide? Please score

1 2 3 4 5

5) Have you been on the tour before? Please tick

Yes No

If yes, has the tour improved from the last time you went?

6) Would you recommend the tour and workshops to others? Please tick

Yes No Not sure

7) Would you like to attend further textile workshops in the future? Please tick

Yes No Maybe?

8) Do you have any further comments or improvements you would like to make about the tour?

The drawing and printing workshops

Score rating - 5= Excellent, 4= Very Good, 3= Good, 2= Fair, 1= Poor

9) Welcome and friendliness of the artist? Please score

1 2 3 4 5

10) How informative was the drawing and printing workshops? Please score

1 2 3 4 5

11) How interesting was the kinetic drawing to sound exercise? Please score

1 2 3 4 5

12) How interesting was the printing block printing exercise? Please score

1 2 3 4 5

13) Have you been on any art and design workshops before? If so what and where?

14) What was your favourite part of the workshops?

15) Is there anything you would like to improve on?

16) Would you recommend the tour and workshops to others? Please tick

Yes No

17) Would you like to attend further textile workshops in the future? Please tick

Yes No Maybe?

18) Do you have any further comments or improvements you would like to make about the whole experience?

19) What is your age group? Please tick

16-21, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, 70-79, 80+

20) What is your gender, please tick

Male Female Other

21) Please describe your ethnicity

Thank you for completing this questionnaire

If you have any further questions, please contact

Appendix H: Engagement Events Focus Group Questions

Number of participants:

Location:

Date:

Questions

1. What are your reactions to the subject matter during the Patterns of Tactility & Sound Part 2 participation events, the weaving activity, and the kinetic sound drawings: the story of re-connecting charity members of East Cheshire Eye Society with blind silk workers during the nineteenth century?
2. What are your feelings/experience on the location of the Patterns of Tactility & Sound Part 2 participations events here at the Macclesfield Silk Museum?
3. What are your feelings, reactions to the making process of weaving in the event Weaving Connections where you ask to weave with ribbons in a group?
4. What are your reactions to the materials used in Weaving Connections event?
5. What are your feelings, reactions to the process kinetic sound drawings in the event Patterns of Paradise?
6. What are your reactions to the materials used in Patterns of Paradise event?
7. What was your experience of working in a group or in pairs? How do you define yourself within the group? The role that you take on. Did you have choice, did you talk this through the act of making.
8. What are your reactions to being asked to take part in a longer creative project than just one arts and crafts workshop?
9. What are your reactions to the Patterns of Tactility and Sound Part 2 exhibition that is currently on?
10. Where there any surprises during your participation during the activity participation event and exhibition?
11. What are your feelings on the participation activities in the summer of 2018 compared to autumn of 2019?
12. How do you perceive the value of the workshops and final exhibition?
 - Sensory engagement
 - Co-creation

- The archive objects

Extra time

13. Compare to the work produce by Embroiders Guild on display in the machine room. What do they understand by this?

Focus Group Individual Participant information

Name of participant:

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your ethnicity?
4. What town are you resident in?
5. What is your occupation?
6. Are you registered visually impaired?
7. What year were you registered?
8. What age were you registered?

Appendix I: Patterns of Tactility & Sound 2: Semi-structured Interview

Interviewee:

Location:

Date:

Questions

1. What is your role at the museum?
2. What is your background before working at the museum?
3. Focusing on your work doing the guided tour with the visually impaired around Paradise Mill in the summer of 2018, what did you think about this compared to the tours you did before then?
4. How did you find it dealing with the visually impaired visitors to Paradise Mill in summer 2018 during the tour?
5. How have you found dealing with further visually impaired visitors since the original visually impaired Paradise Mill tour in 2018?
6. What are your feelings on the exhibition Tactility & Sound Exhibition that was on in September 2018?
7. What are your feelings on the exhibition Tactility & Sound part 2 Exhibition that's currently on now in February 2020?
8. Have you learnt anything from the experience of doing the Paradise Mill tour and the both the Tactility & Sound Exhibitions?
9. Has there been any differences the project has made to your work at the museum?
10. What are your reactions Patterns of Tactility part 2 on exhibition now regarding the story of re-connecting the visually impaired who are involved with the charity now and historical blind silk workers during the nineteenth century?

Appendix J: Patterns of Tactility & Sound 2: Semi-structured Interview - Charity Staff

Interviewee:

Location:

Date:

Questions

1. What is your role at the charity?
2. Did the East Cheshire Eye Society have any involvement with Macclesfield Silk Museum prior to this research project?
3. How did you find the facilities or offering the museums provided for the visually impaired before this research project?
4. How did you find the response of the visually impaired members to a request to join in the original project in 2018?
5. Where there any difference in the response in 2019?
6. Focusing on your work as the charity co-ordinator within East Cheshire Eye Society what was the interest of the visually impaired members back in 2018 when this project was first introduced?
7. Focusing on your work as the charity co-ordinator within Eye Society how do you think the project went in 2018 Patterns of Tactility and Sound part 1 – I'm happy to hear about your involvement and any feedback you heard regarding firstly the workshops and secondly the gallery exhibition?
8. Focusing on your work as the charity co-ordinator with the Eye Society how do you think the project went in 2019 Patterns of Tactility and Sound part 2 again regarding the firstly the workshops and secondly the final pieces in exhibition?
9. Were there any differences between the first and second projects? Any strengths or weakness from your prospective or feedback you've heard?
10. Has there been any impact the project has made to your work or the visually impaired members of the charity? Both positive and negative.
11. If you were to do this again is there anything you would improve?
12. Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix K: Patterns of Tactility & Sound 2: Semi-structured Interview – Visually Impaired Members

Interviewee:

Role in project: Visually impaired participant

Location:

Date interview conducted:

Data

1. Name:
2. What is your age?
3. What is your gender?
4. What is your ethnicity?
5. What town are you resident in?
6. What is your occupation?
7. Are you registered visually impaired? severely sight impaired
8. What year were you registered?
9. What age were you registered?

Questions

1. When were you registered visually impaired?
2. What condition do you have?
3. How long have you been registered as visually impaired?
4. Do you have any memory of being able to see?
5. How do you visualise colour?
6. What is your role as part of the Visually Impaired Forum
7. What is your role in East Cheshire Eye Society?
8. What interaction did you have with Macclesfield Silk Museum prior to this research project?
9. How did you find the facilities or offering the museums provided for the visually impaired before this research project?
10. What made you interested in taking part in this research when we met through the Visually Impaired Forum in 2018?
11. Focusing on you as a participant in the workshop events in 2018 Patterns of Tactility and Sound part 1 – I'm going to ask for your feedback on the individual activities.

- A. Firstly, how did you find the adapted tour of Paradise Mill in Aug 2018 compared to when you first went around Paradise Mill in Spring 2018?
 - B. Secondly, how did you find the kinetic sound drawing?
 - C. How did you find the printing with laser cut printing blocks?
 - D. How did you find the exhibition curation and exhibition of all the work?
12. Has there been any impact the project has made on you? Both positive and negative.
13. If you were to do this again is there anything you would like to improve?
14. Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix L: Patterns of Tactility & Sound 2: Semi-structured Interview - Charity Sighted Guide Members

Interviewee:

Role in project: Sighted guide participant

Location:

Date interview conducted:

Data

1. Name:
2. What is your age?
3. What is your gender?
4. What is your ethnicity?
5. What town are you resident in?
6. What is your occupation?
7. Are you registered visually impaired? severely sight impaired
8. What year were you registered?
9. What age were you registered?

Questions

1. What is your role at the charity?
2. How did you get involved in the charity?
3. What interaction did you have with Macclesfield Silk Museum prior to this research project?
4. What made you interested in taking part in this research?
5. Focusing on you as a participant in the workshop events in 2018 Patterns of Tactility and Sound part 2 – I'm going to ask for your feedback on the individual activities.
 - A. Firstly, how did you find the event Weaving Connections?
 - B. Firstly, how did you find the event Kinetic sound drawings?
 - C. How did you find the exhibition curation and exhibition of all the textile wall hanging and tactile work on display?
6. Has there been any impact the project has made on you? Both positive and negative.
7. If you were to do this again is there anything you would like to improve?
8. Anything else you would like to add?

Appendix M. Patterns of Tactility & Sound 2 Semi-structured Interview for Museum Staff (Adapted Tour)

Interviewee:

Location: Macclesfield Silk Museum

Date:

Questions

1. What is your role at the museum?
2. What is your background before working at the museum?
3. Focusing on your work doing the guided tour with the visually impaired around Paradise Mill in the summer of 2018, what did you think about this compared to the tours you did before then?
4. How did you find it dealing with the visually impaired visitors to Paradise Mill in summer 2018 during the tour?
5. How have you found dealing with further visually impaired visitors since the original visually impaired Paradise Mill tour in 2018?
6. What are your feelings on the exhibition Tactility & Sound Exhibition that was on in September 2018?
7. What are your feelings on the exhibition Tactility & Sound part 2 Exhibition that's currently on now in February 2020?
8. Have you learnt anything from the experience of doing the Paradise Mill tour and the both the Tactility & Sound Exhibitions?
9. Has there been any differences the project has made to your work at the museum?