

**Things that go 'round: A rhythmanalysis of the relationship
between a ceramics practice and domesticity using the form of the
vessel**

Angela Tait



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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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FIGURE 2 *SMALLS 2020*, ANGELA TAIT

INSTALLATION, THROWN AND PEGGED RAW CLAY WITH RIBBON

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG



FIGURE 3 *WEARABLE CERAMICS*, ANGELA TAIT 2018

THROWN STONEWARE WITH CROCHET ADDITIONS

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG



FIGURE 4 *NO WONDER (DETAIL)*, ANGELA TAIT 2018

114 STONEWARE THROWN AND EMBROIDERED VESSELS



FIGURE 5 *YARN BOWLS*, ANGELA TAIT 2019

THROWN AND ALTERED STONEWARE WITH CROCHET ADDITIONS

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG



FIGURE 6 *THE COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 64*, ANGELA TAIT 2020

THROWN AND ALTERED STONEWARE WITH TRAIN TICKETS

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

Abstract

Things that go 'round: A rhythmanalysis of the relationship between a ceramics practice and domesticity using the form of the vessel

This research starts from a hypothesis that a ceramics practice undertaken within the home is interwoven with other, everyday domestic obligations. The practitioner must also function as a person, this means some of their time must be allocated to domestic tasks such as washing, cleaning, caring, eating etc. When a ceramics practice happens in the same space as these demands, there is inevitably some overlap in the temporal experience of undertaking tasks. Lefebvre's concept of Rhythmanalysis provides a platform from which to explore the rhythms of this experience.

The research is practice-based with an existing ceramics practice as the primary method. The methodology of the research is autoethnographic, meaning the researcher is also the subject. The ethnographic position is an increasingly significant culture of working from home.

Alongside the ceramics practice is an experimental writing technique called the '*Blovel*', a portmanteau of blog and novel. The Blovel is a series of independent texts (or posts) that function alternately as reflection, a diary, and data capture. Together the 67 posts also tell the 'story' of the researcher's experience of completing a practice-based PhD, albeit in a fragmented manner. Additionally the Blovel writing is embedded within the thesis providing a text with two distinct voices: the academic and the personal. This positions the Blovel simultaneously as method and creative outcome, providing rich and thick descriptions within the thesis.

Further outcomes from the research are a performance called *Smalls* that synthesises practice-based and theoretic findings to consider the temporal (or rhythmic) relationship between domestic tasks and ceramics production, and the *Covid Clay Diary*, a series of 90 ceramic vessels made, one per day, during 90 days of the first COVID-19 lockdown in 2020. Throughout the research the vessel takes centre stage, sometimes resembling a coffee cup or other domestic ware, although often in a more abstract guise. The vessel is

conceptualised throughout as the universally understood object that bridges the public/private divide. Imagine a coffee cup that is equally at home on the kitchen counter or in the boardroom, or even on the train in between.

Ultimately the research comes together in a non-hierarchical cohesive whole. All outcomes – The performance of *Smalls*, the Blovel, the thesis and the COVID Clay diary - contribute to understanding and together draw on Lefebvre's theory to form Rhythmanalyses of their own and collectively.

There are several original contributions to knowledge:

- A body of ceramics practice that sits at the confluence of a novel combination of theoretical and autobiographical understandings of the relationship between the domestic and creative practice – via the idea of the vessel
- A new way of conducting and expressing a rhythmanalysis – via the ceramic outputs, the alternative format of the thesis and the writing in the Blovel
- An exploration and proposal of the vessel as an object that spans the public/private divide
- The Blovel, providing a new autoethnographic model that ties together method, outcome, overall narrative of the process and contribution to the thesis in a manner that wraps around the whole research process and permits the complexities of life to be brought together as a whole
- An accessible model of practice that promotes holistic and egalitarian outcomes
- An original response to the COVID-19 Pandemic by way of an object-based diary

Acknowledgements

26th February 2022

Dear All

Remember me? I'm the one who used to be Angela. That was four years ago before I embarked on this almighty project that to you must seem like a non-understandable, abstract notion but to me was all-encompassing.

This is my final text. The one where I acknowledge my support systems and promise to do what I can to regain a bit of the old me in the coming months.

First my family:

Ian – For the countless hours I've spent in my office, for the hand that slips around the door with a hot coffee during the day, for being the scaffolding that surrounds me and makes sure I can stand each day. I love you forever.

Harry – My head massager, IT guru, complex sentence and grammar fixer (irony intended) and the person who understands my humour the best. I love you forever.

Zach – For pretty much staying out of my way for four years, getting a stonking degree and an astonishing career. I couldn't be more proud. I love you forever.

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Andrew – There aren't sufficient words. I'll miss our meetings, you've been immense. Can we always be friends?

Carol – I aspire to your level of intelligence, perception, kindness and generosity.

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Ian Clegg – My critical friend, favourite collaborator and PhD twin. Taker of a million photographs. I promise we can resurrect our practice now.

Laura Pinnington – My work buddy and the person who helped me shape the ramblings into a writing practice.

I am also thankful to have been supported by each of the following:

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- The International Ceramics Festival and Moira Vincentelli
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- Birmingham City University
- My extended family at Ebor Studios and Gallery Frank, especially Kara Lyons
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- Ella Cole

To all of you, I owe a debt I can never repay, but please know I'm more grateful than you can imagine.

With everything I have left and my endless thanks.

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Research Rationale

Through this research I will question whether everyday domestic obligations have a relationship with the process - and ultimately the aesthetic outcomes - of a ceramics practice when they both take place in the domestic home.

The domestic rhythm is my own construct. It is the way I understand the experience of daily domesticity and how my making practice interacts, reflects and is informed by it. My investigation into the domestic rhythm began when my making process was dominated by my other roles of Mother, wife, housekeeper and part-time worker. My creative process was necessarily disjointed. It had to fit between the washing, school runs, bed/bath time and admin. My art-making practice evolved to work alongside these other demands, and the work I was making started to represent and reflect these rhythms.

Wash, hang, fold, put away, wash, hang, fold, put away

Cast, fettle, polish, fire, cast, fettle, polish, fire

Shop, cook, eat, shop, cook, eat

Throw, turn, dry, fire, throw, turn, dry, fire



FIGURE 7 *UNTITLED 2012-14*, ANGELA TAIT

1000+ SLIP-CAST AND SMOKE FIRED 35MM FILM CANNISTERS

Occasionally time was so restricted the work had to take place alongside other duties. A sculpture constructed from four thousand white paper fortune tellers, each folded by hand whilst cooking, during bath time (theirs not mine) and after bedtime.

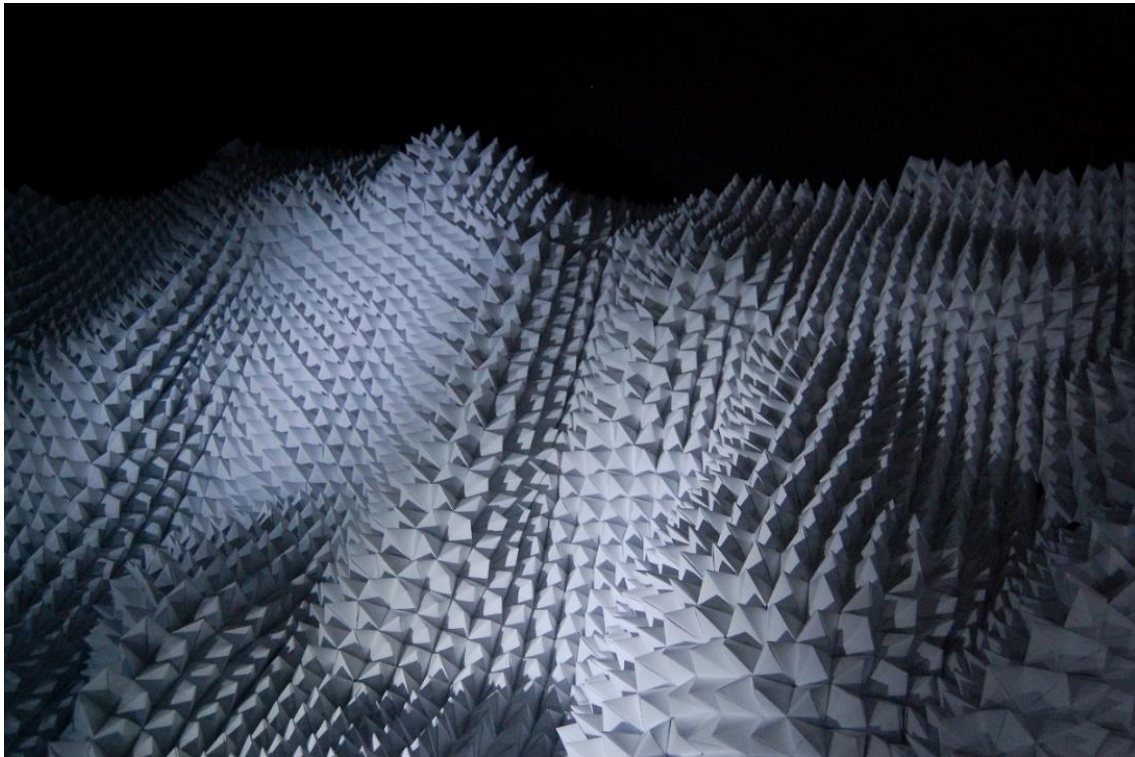


FIGURE 8 *UNTITLED 2008*, ANGELA TAIT

INSTALLATION OF 4000 FORTUNE TELLERS CONSTRUCTED FROM WHITE PRINTER PAPER

IMAGE CREDIT: CRAIG TATTERSALL

Since this work, the rhythmic process of producing multiples is often reflected in my process and the aesthetic outcomes.

As I speak to my colleagues, students, friends and peers they talk of their interest in subjects that inspire and inform their practice. But what of those things we don't acknowledge?

Squeezing a creative practice into baby's nap time or working in the kitchen to the soundtrack of boiling vegetables and a ten pence piece rattling in the tumble dryer?

As a still under-recognised area of concentration, the confluence of the domestic and creative practice is fertile ground for investigation and these ideas feed the research questions.

Ending at the start

28th August 2021

Dear Reader,

You're about to embark on my four-year journey as I stagger valiantly towards the end.

Naturally it won't take you four years! You can take a straightforward, linear route through my PhD, avoiding getting lost down rabbit holes of misleading ideas and negotiating a global pandemic in the middle. Nevertheless, it's substantial. I would advise a couple of days of carb loading and borrowing an industrial strength kettle prior to setting out on the quest.

For a full and optimal understanding of the research, it's best encountered in a logical order, so, in the spirit of infinite generosity, I've made you one of my world-famous lists.

1. **The Practice** - This is a practice-based PhD, and the ceramics practice is at the heart of the research. I've made hundreds of pieces. There's a list of everything I've made at Appendix One of the thesis. Don't read this - It's boring. Instead, look through the portfolio that I've published in a secret bit of my website. You can find it at: angelatait.co.uk/phdportfolio and the password is AngelaTaitPhD – case sensitive.
2. **The Book of the COVID clay Diary** - You'll find one of the portals is images of the COVID clay diary. There's a book that was published alongside the ceramic work. The pdf of the book is Appendix 15 of the thesis. To date I have sold one copy of the book and given away several dozen others. It's an easy read with plenty of images.
3. **The Thesis** – see below.
4. **The Blovel** – This is a sneaky 'other'. My Blovel is a sort of diary that I've been writing for four years. Once you get to this part of the list, you'll have encountered several of the entries already during your journey. It's evident in both the COVID Diary book and throughout the thesis. It is readable as a whole; you can also flick through and pick out bits

and pieces as you see fit. It's published here:

https://issuu.com/angelataitartist/docs/angea_tait_blovel_draft_2_1_october_2021

I'll leave you with a gentle warning. You're about to come with me on my journey. A PhD isn't an elegant path; it's lumpy and messy and the road is littered with failed experiments and crackpot ideas (pun intended). These bits are often polished out at the end of a PhD with the presentation of some careful artefacts and a neatly bound thesis, I haven't taken the polished route.

I make no apologies for this.

1 Chapter One - Introduction

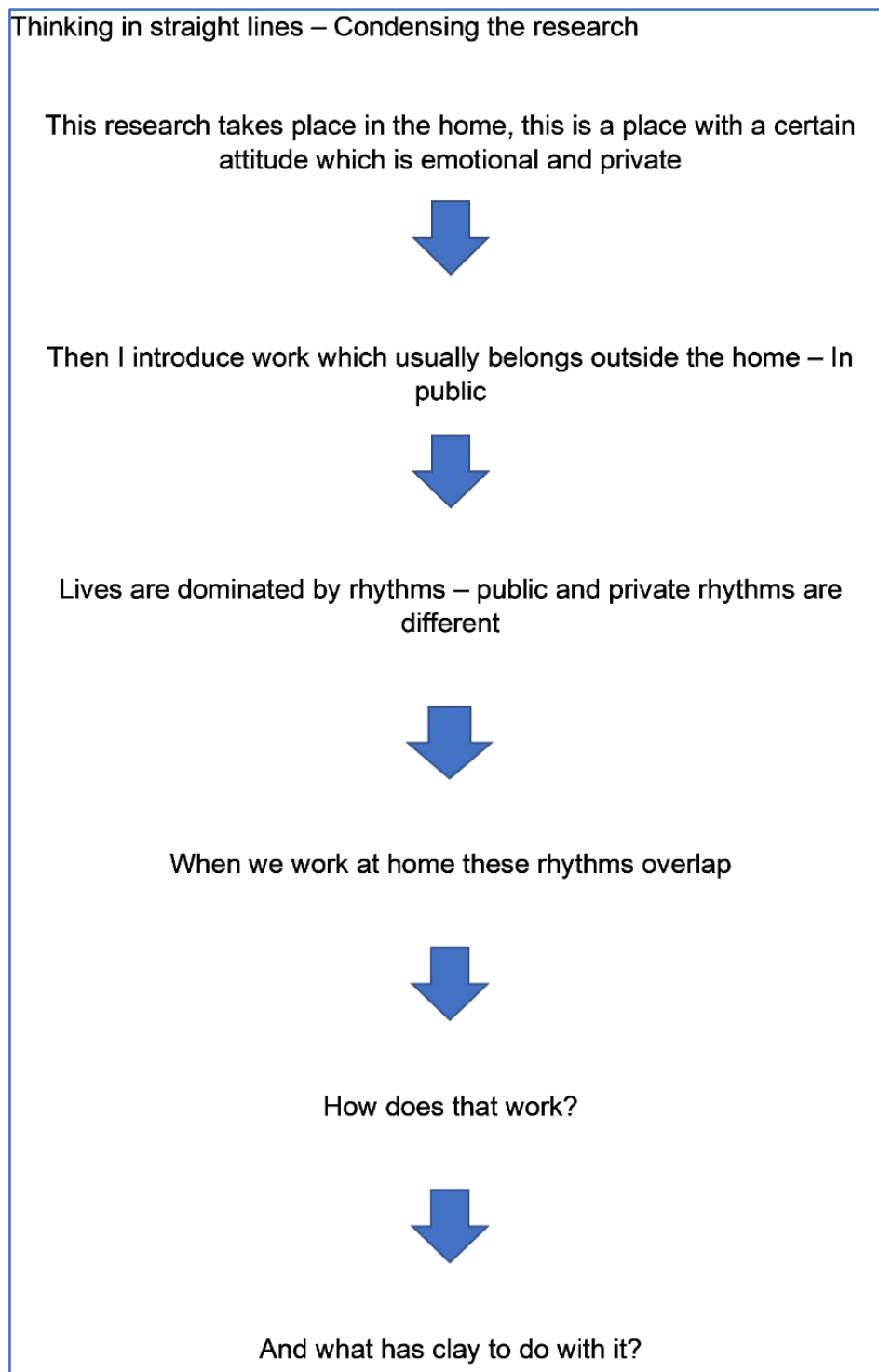


FIGURE 9 THESIS OVERVIEW

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter introduces the ideas that underpin the investigation. It sets out the research questions and aims, and rationalises the alternative format for the thesis. There is a short overview of the chronology of the research with signposting to the relevant parts of the thesis to assist navigation.

1.2 Introduction to the Research

This is a practice-based investigation that uses an expanded ceramics practice to explore the relationship between the process of making and everyday domestic life.

The research begins from a hypothesis that a ceramics practice that is undertaken within the home is somehow linked temporally with other everyday domestic obligations. The creative practitioner must also function as a person, this means some of their time must be allocated to domestic tasks such as washing, cleaning, caring, eating etc. When a work practice is undertaken in the same space as these domestic demands, there is inevitably some overlap.

The research uses the ideas proposed by Henri Lefebvre in his posthumously published book *Rhythmanalysis; Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2004) and the fundamental concept of the vessel as both recognisable object and inherently linked with ceramics production and output.

The research observes, records and reflects upon the micro-rhythms of domestic life that infiltrate a maker's practice, via the lens of that practice. It questions how a practitioner who works in their home negotiates the relationship between maintaining a practice and the obligatory maintenance tasks that sustain life. It is an exploration of the personal and intimate nature of working and living in the same place.

Increasingly there is a move towards working from home. During this research, this concept was expanded in a spectacular fashion due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This affected the research in both positive and negative ways which will be considered throughout the thesis.

The effects of the pandemic on the research will be developed through the contextual framework in Chapter Two and one of the final outcomes, the *COVID Clay diary* that is considered in Chapter Seven.

1.3 Attitude

At its core this research belongs more in the world of lived human experience rather than the traditional aloof, academic position of a PhD. From the use of the universally understandable vessel to the exposing of the emotional journey of a PhD student, this work strives for honesty and an egalitarian attitude. The personal nature of the Blovel with its intimate content and occasional humour, and the publication of it on a free digital platform helps in this endeavour, as does the posting on Instagram of the daily development of the COVID Clay Diary. There is an argument here about the positioning of PhDs and their research outcomes as publications that exclude large swathes of humanity. This research is a quiet rebellion; it aims to disarm and include. Using alternative approaches, it adds its voice to a movement that will eventually break down destructive and oppressive power structures.

1.4 The Alternative Thesis

This thesis is constructed using a format that questions the traditional model. It is broadly chronological in format, exposing a development of knowledge as it proceeds, but throughout there are two voices present.

Predominantly, there is an academic voice. This is the black text, written in the third person and following all the academic protocols of form, content and referencing. Additionally there are **orange-coloured** excerpts from the experimental writing that resulted as part of the research. This writing is called the Blovel and is fully explored in Chapter Four. The Blovel writing is not necessarily chronological but is placed to support and enhance the narrative and give the reader glances into the mind of the researcher. Along with the many

images of the work throughout the thesis, this strategy prioritises the research practice within the thesis, making the entire PhD – both practice and thesis - a cohesive whole.

These texts will be noticeable by the change of colour and the change of authorial voice to personal.

The two voices do not conform to a hierarchy. The personal voice is not embedded to illustrate ideas, rather, it takes over the thesis narrative in an unconventional way. It is not necessarily an easy or straightforward read. The alternative format demands commitment and leaps of thinking, however the dual narrative approach fulfils several important roles. It highlights the autoethnographic nature of the research, it provides the reader with a richer reading experience and importantly, highlights the creative output throughout the thesis.

It is important to note at this point the significance of this reading experience. Through engagement with the thesis and the other research outputs, a reader will be encountering a rhythmic device. Whilst this doesn't strictly conform to the rules in Lefebvre's model (see parts 2.6 and 3.7), it proposes another use for the expanded notions of rhythm this research explores. Moreover this format provides a poetic symmetry with the other outputs described in Chapters Five-Seven and contributes to the holistic nature of the research.

1.5 Introduction to the Methodology

The research uses a bricolage approach where several methods will be combined to provide an appropriate methodological model.

The methodology is built around, and relies upon an established, existing ceramics practice. This is supported by a review of appropriate literature and context (Chapter Two). In addition, the reflective and exploratory writing technique called the Blovel (Chapter Four) wraps around all the research, enabling the complexities of the ethnographic position that is being studied to be brought together as a cohesive whole.

The methodological stance of the research is autoethnographic, a position where, in this instance, the researcher is also the subject of the investigation.

A rationale for these choices and a full description is provided in Chapter Three.

1.6 Research Questions and Aims

1.6.1 Research Questions

1. What are the temporal or rhythmic relationships between a ceramics practice and domestic obligations when both things happen in the home?
2. How might the ceramics practice be used to investigate and expose these relationships?

All research shifts as it progresses. It would be unrealistic to imagine a four-year process with the depth and rigour a PhD requires not to move as practice develops or contextual understanding grows. This research is no exception – except, it also overlaps with the huge cultural shift that occurs halfway through. The COVID-19 crisis, and the acceleration of culture that comes with such a devastating and wide-ranging event, has influenced this work and brought both challenges and opportunities. One of the opportunities that transpired was the chance to use the already developing understanding to respond in a positive way to a devastating occurrence. This led to the addition of research question three.

3. How might the research knowledge and ceramics practice be used to reflect upon the experience of a global pandemic?

1.6.2 Research Aims

1. To survey and map the context of the investigation via a literature and contextual review, providing a framework for the research.
2. To investigate and understand Henri Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis and use it to develop and execute an autoethnographic model of observing personal rhythms and creating ceramics-based work.

3. To produce a substantial body of work that explores and exposes the autoethnographic findings and is underpinned by conceptual and theoretical understanding of rhythmanalysis and the vessel.
4. To investigate the lived experience of a global pandemic and national lockdown through a ceramics practice, building upon the findings from the earlier research.

1.7 Development of the Research – Chronological overview

This research started in early 2018 from a basis of an existing, decade-long ceramics practice that was primarily based on the exploration of the sculptural qualities of clay, in particular the manipulation of vessels in series.



FIGURE 10 UNTITLED (2018) ANGELA TAIT

EXTRUDED STONWARE WITH MIXED MEDIA ADDITIONS

In 2018 and 2019 the research was threefold:

- The production of several hundred ceramic works (listed in Appendix 1, described, and explored in Chapter Five)
- The pursuit of understanding through contextual and literature research (Chapter Two)
- Development of a methodology (Chapter Three)

During 2019 there was a period of mentoring in creative writing funded by the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (North West) that helped with the development of one of the research methods that was emerging from the practice, that of the Blovel (Chapters Three and Four). During this time the methodology also shifted. The tentative exploration of case studies and focus groups, whilst helpful in consolidating some ideas, became a strand of investigation that threatened to overwhelm or dilute the autoethnographic work. This

resulted in several amendments to both methods and the position of the methodology (explained further in Chapter Three).

By 2020 both the practice and the theoretical underpinning of the research had settled. This left the PhD as an autoethnographic study that was investigating the micro-rhythms of domestic and creative life using a combination of a ceramics practice, exploratory writing and Henri Lefebvre's writings on rhythmanalysis (2004). During this year, one of the final outcomes, the performance/installation called *Smalls* was developed and performed (Chapter Six). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic was underway. This provided both barriers and an opportunity to expand the research and led to another of the outcomes, the *COVID clay diary* (Chapter Seven).

2021 sees the writing up of the thesis, during which the concept of the alternative format with two authorial voices develops (part 1.4).

Overall, the research did not progress as originally planned. Anecdotally this seems to universally be the case, especially with practice-based research where creativity is naturally a process of developing ideas. What follows in this thesis is a four-year journey, both as an artist and as a researcher. The intentions change as knowledge, practice and ideas develop. What was in early 2018 a vague notion and a broad practice, twists, turns and eventually tightens into a solid understanding. There are three practice-based original outcomes that emerged and were tested and evaluated in response to the research questions. These are the *Blovel* (Chapter Four and throughout the thesis), the performance/installation called *Smalls* (Chapter Six) and the *COVID Clay Diary* (Chapter Seven).

A table documenting the annual progress, events and summary of the four years is available at Appendix 19.

1.8 Ethics

This study is almost entirely autoethnographic. The researcher also holds the position of subject and as such few others are involved. Where others are referred to, they are called by pseudonyms and/or initials.

Ethical approval has been obtained for this research from the University of Sunderland (Appendix 14).

2 Chapter Two – Contextual and Literature review

2.1 Clarifying the gap in the knowledge

This research sits at the confluence of several ideas:

- The working from home culture identified in 1.2 above and the relationship between the domestic and a ceramics practice
- The position of the vessel as object that spans the public/private divide
- The ideas of time, rhythm and routine relating to both domestic and creative tasks

This puts the research in a unique position. These ideas have been investigated individually, yet the distinct combination of subjects provides new potential that privileges practice and creative outcome.

2.2 Contextual Framework

This part of the thesis considers the first research aim and provides a framework of both existing literature and context for the themes.

It is important to note, this is not a full contextual and literature review as might ordinarily be found in a project of this kind. Rather, this establishes the boundaries of the research, what is important and what therefore rests outside the scope of the enquiry. Specific details which further contextualise the final works will be set out in the later chapters. This strategy was taken by Thomas Stoller in his PhD *Archiving the Everyday: Examining the Ordinary through Self and Ceramic Art Practice* (2019). He explains, '*the literature and contextual review is spread throughout the work and appears within the thesis in conjunction to the order with which it was examined*' (Stoller 2015, p.9). Stoller does this to keep his thesis in chronological order and provide a narrative which the reader may encounter in a linear fashion. The purpose and format of this thesis is different. The structure of two interwoven

narratives lends itself to the exploration of context as the journey unfolds. As the two voices are intertwined, one plays off against the other. The academic narrative explaining and the personal voice providing depth, context, rationale or reflection.

2.3 Themes

The contextual framework is separated into themes to provide a logical structure.

The hypothesis for the research, alongside the questions and aims identify several distinct areas that are relevant:

- Place
- Rhythm (or temporal experience)
- Work (sometimes referred to as task)
- Creative Practice

These themes have been taken from the thesis overview at part 1.1

Place

The domestic home will be considered first. It is the place where activities being researched happens. In this space both the creative ceramics practice and the domestic living occur.



FIGURE 11 RESEARCHER'S HOME STUDIO, A CONVERTED GARAGE NEXT TO THE HOUSE

Time and Rhythm

The investigation of the relationship between domesticity and creative practice takes temporal experience as its starting point. The research will concentrate upon how time is used, and days are structured when there are multiple tasks which must be undertaken, and how those interact and relate to one another. It will go on to consider the rhythms within this temporal experience using Lefebvre's philosophy of rhythmanalysis (2004).

Work or task

This research draws a distinction between work (or tasks) that belong in the public realm and that which is private/intimate/domestic. Whilst the place of both domestic tasks and creative production are the same, the position of these tasks is meaningful in different ways.

Ceramics and Creative Practice

As a practice-based investigation, the contextual framework considers existing ceramics and creative practice that explores the above themes and contexts. The review goes on to position the vessel as the fundamental form for the study.

2.4 Context One – Place

2.4.1 Literature

The most helpful sources for the understanding of the domestic are Joanne Hollows, *'Domestic Cultures'* (2008), and Christena Nippert-Eng's 1996 book, *'Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries through Everyday Life'*. Both are cultural studies texts that provide an overview of contemporary understandings about domesticity and working in the home. Hollows (2008) is the more useful of the two both due to its 12-year time advantage (which makes Nippert-Eng's text slightly dated) and its exploration of the distinctions and overlaps between the public and private realms.

Other texts come primarily from the arena of Sociology, Feminist, and Cultural Studies and help understand the 'attitude' that is speculated about in the thesis overview. Texts from the 1970s to the early 1990s, primarily from the Feminist canon have helped to contextualise the 'home' with relation to work, rhythm, and time (Rabuzzi 1982, Metzger 1977, Davies, 1990, Abraham et al 1991, Aptheker 1989).

2.4.2 The Domestic Place

This study is about, and takes place in the domestic environment; home, the place where our most intimate relationships and living takes place, where we eat, sleep and maintain connections with our families. This is a place with a complex history, but the primary understanding is that of private realm; a safe and intimate space into which a practitioner sometime draws their professional and creative lives.

In his book '*Home: A Short History of an Idea*' (1986), architect Witold Rybczynski discusses the emergence of the domestic during the early 17th century in the Netherlands. As a result of this cultural shift he concludes that domesticity is not merely a shift in the standard model of living but a new philosophical and emotional state. He describes it as:

...a set of emotions, not a single attribute. Domesticity has to do with family, intimacy and a devotion to the home, as well as with the sense of the house embodying - not only harbouring-these sentiments. (Rybczynski 1986, P.75)

This shift in attitude is important to this study and helps to clarify the 'attitude' in the thesis overview (Part 1).

2.5 The Public/Private Dichotomy

This research relies upon the understanding of a dichotomy and what effect this has upon our experience of work and place.

In her cultural studies text, *'Domestic Cultures'* (2008), Joanne Hollows explores the polarised positions that became established during the industrial revolution.

One consequence of 19th century industrialisation was the movement of production from within the home to external places. Alongside this the workforce shifted. Workers (almost exclusively men at the time) went out to work in factories and the like, leaving the women to attend to everything domestic, the duties of caring and maintenance. This promotes a cultural shift where life becomes ordered into two separate spheres, the private (in the home) and the public.

These polarised positions start to change the relationships each gender have with their home. The masculine experience is one of home as haven, a place for leisure and relaxation, separate from the (public) place of work. For the female, the home remains the workplace, or place of production. Her distinction between work and leisure is more fluid and overlapped. Different realms of home and work cease to exist for women who are home makers (Hollows 2008, p. 17). Kathryn Rabuzzi, in her book, *'The Sacred and the Feminine'* considers how this affects a Woman's perception of the home, saying:

'She will typically make a home for others, but will often have no home which is recognizably her own. For her, the place her husband and children call home will actually be a workplace, the domestic sphere. Thus for her, the important difference separating "the world" and home will not exist as it does for them.' (Rabuzzi 1982, p. 95)

The experience of the domestic as a place which has no membrane between production and home is fundamental to this study. However, an additional element is assumed here. The context for this research is a place where 'work' refers to both a creative practice and domestic tasks. Thus the creative practice is one that holds an indistinct or unfathomable position in both the public and private spheres.

2.5.1 The positioning of a ceramics practice

Both the production and the outcomes of a ceramics practice hold an ambiguous position in the seemingly binary public/private divide.

Production – the tasks of making – might take place in industrial units, educational environments, community studios or personal potteries in sheds, garages or at the kitchen table. Additionally, the outcomes of those production tasks might be publicly available for sale or exhibition or remain private. For example, mass produced plates might be used in an office canteen (itself a place which blurs that distinction between public and private), or they may end up in a kitchen cupboard and never leave the relative privacy of the family home. Conversely, works made in private garages attached by a doorway to the kitchen might be shown in galleries worldwide.

This leaves the practice being investigated in a precarious place that doesn't fit neatly on either side of the public/private divide, but straddles the two in both its production and outcomes.

The position of 'place' in this study is much more specific; a home ceramics studio in a converted garage next to the family home. This way of working is common in the realm of ceramics practice. International ceramics artist and British Ceramics Biennial 2021 AWARD winner, Steve Dixon works in a studio in his garden whilst academic and ceramic artist Phoebe Cummings at her kitchen table (Cummings 2018). This might be due to expediency, financial constraints or family and childcare convenience. In Cummings' case, she started working from home through necessity upon the birth of her children and will often construct work piecemeal in the evening hours whilst her children are in bed. She created *Nocturne* in 2017 entirely in the evening whilst her children slept, referred in the work only to flowers that bloomed at night, describing the process in relation to her Great Grandmother who would sew leather for a local factory from her home (Cummings 2018).



FIGURE 12 NOCTURNE, PHOEBE CUMMINGS 2017 AT THE AIRSPACE MUSEUM



FIGURE 13 STEVEN DIXON'S NEW GARDEN STUDIO - IMAGE INSTAGRAM 2020

8 Feb 2019

Necessarily, a good deal of my reading recently has been from the explosion of second wave feminist literature from roughly 1970-1990. My thinking has been vacillating between the excessive amount of information advising me why, as women, I am subjugated, and the fact that actually, someone has to feed the kids.

I had one of those little turning points this morning. The kind of thought that emerges and makes complete sense for a moment and then disappears before I can translate it into actual language. Mostly this happens when I'm idly pondering, on a train or up to my elbows in clay, and therefore remains frustratingly unresolved. Today I happen to be sitting reading at my desk and can use my reflective writing strategy to thrash out the vagaries into something a little more concrete.

This is fundamentally about my own position which I should probably try to put into words.

- I do the majority (but certainly not all) of the repetitive household chores.
- This is because I work part time and my research is done within (and around) the home.
- I dislike the interruptions and the demands upon my time, but I don't think someone else should do it.
- I don't like housework or cooking particularly.
- I don't feel subjugated because of this – We all have to do things we don't like.

So this research is not a crusade. I am not protesting; I'm investigating from a position of curiosity. My attitude to the domestic chore is approaching neutrality. Things have to be done, whether I'm male or female it makes no difference.

So where does this leave the feminist text lined up above my computer monitors; do they have a place within the research? Well of course. In short without these I wouldn't have the opportunity to feel ambivalent about my role(s).

I can hear the washing machine bleeping. Do I leave my train of thought to empty it or carry on mildly irritated?

Okay I went, it took 15 minutes. I did a bit of washing up, I emptied the dryer and then the washing machine and filled the dryer again. I also put the delicates on the drying rack in the kitchen. Some pots were already there. Pots and clothes together, is that a thing I can use? The two processes sharing a space like I share my time?

2.6 Context Two – Time and Rhythm

2.6.1 Literature

The relationship referred to in research question one takes as its starting point the way both domestic and creative tasks fit into the temporal space of the day. Thus the emphasis here is on the way time is used, ultimately questioning if there is a domestic rhythm that is speculated about in the preface and introduction to this thesis.

The theoretical understanding of time is derived partly from feminist and gender theory. Taking *'Women's Time'* (1981) by Julia Kristeva as a baseline to explore the binary distinction of cyclical and linear time, then building upon this theory using several later texts which take a more intimate and complex look into the way we experience time in the realm of the everyday. Much of the literature is from the fields of social sciences and cultural studies. Barbara Adam's writing (2004, 2006) and Edward. T. Hall's *'The Dance of Life'* (1984) all contribute to unpicking the problematic notions of time. Additionally, Metzger (1977), Bryson (2007), Davies (1990) and Baraitser (2008) provide deeper insights into the way time is experienced in the home.

Finally, Lefebvre's writings on the everyday and his posthumously published *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) is used to propose a way to understand temporal experience.

2.6.2 Time

For the purposes of this research, gendered theories are again being considered when outlining the theories of time that underpin the thinking. A gendered analysis was explored by Julia Kristeva in her seminal 1981 paper *Women's Time*. In this text Kristeva presents the concepts of cyclical and monumental time as, '*traditionally linked to female subjectivity*' (Kristeva 1981, p. 16) and as tangential to the patriarchal '*linear*' experience of the male. Kristeva describes cyclical as '*...cycles, gestation, the eternal recurrence of a biological rhythm...*' (1981, p. 16), in other words, relating to the essential physiological nature of the female. Valeria Bryson expands upon the cyclical nature of experience in *Gender and the Politics of Time* (2007) by relating the understanding of cyclical to tasks of caring and maintenance in the home, such as cleaning, cooking, bathing and comforting. She suggests that tasks like these never come to an identifiable end and therefore, '*a woman's work is never done*' (Bryson 2007, p. 137).

This study speculates that there is a relationship between the (as seen above) private sphere of the domestic home and the maintenance task relating to a cyclical temporal experience, and the production based, creative (public) practice giving a linear experience of time.

2.6.3 Public/Private

The following table represents an effort to categorise tasks that take place within the home. This analysis is based upon both the emotional state of family, devotion and intimacy that Rybczynski (1986) describes, an understanding of how the outcomes interact in the world and personal observation of how a creative practice functions.

Work or Task	Temporal Experience	Place
Maintenance chores – washing, shopping, cooking, caring	Cyclical – repetitive, rhythmic	Home – private, intimate, domestic
Ceramics practice – Making, production and administration	<p>Linear – there is usually a final outcome (object, exhibition)</p> <p>And</p> <p>Cyclical – repetitive, rhythmic</p>	<p>Creative production can happen in private when the practitioner works at their home, or in public at a shared studio</p> <p>Outcomes become part of the public world when published or exhibited but can ultimately become private – e.g. a cup being used domestically and never leaving the kitchen.</p> <p>Administration is almost always public because it relates to the outside world (for example, paying bills, ordering materials, negotiating sales)</p>

Throughout the thesis ‘public work’ and ‘private work’ are used to describe different types of process or task. It is simpler to consider these as a list that divides these into:

Private Work: Tasks which support and maintain the home, the self or family

- Washing – clothes, cutlery and crockery, self
- Shopping for and cooking food (and eating it)
- Cleaning
- Caring
- Responding to the needs of the family – for example, answering a phone call or picking something up for them.

This list is not exhaustive.

Domestic obligations are often a task-orientated experience of repetitive maintenance duties that is subject to interruptions, and which doesn't have definitive start and finish times.

Public work:

- Production of ceramics and other creative acts – both in the studio and other places in the house
- Administration relating to creative practice

Ceramics production tends to be done in blocks of time. It has to be an intentional act. To dress for the studio, to walk there and set up for a period of production, or to enter an office and log onto emails. The acts or tasks end in production; either of objects, an exhibition, works in progress, sales etc. This experience sits more in line with the understanding of linear time that is production based and goal orientated (Bryson 2007, p. 136).

The research hangs on this subject. The complex nature of temporal experience when a domestic rhythm of multiple, repetitive tasks coincides with a practice which might have a different, equally complex temporal time signature.

In her dissertation, *Women, Time and the Weaving of the Strands of Everyday Life* (1990), Karen Davies works beyond this simple binary and posits an analysis of temporal experiences that is indicative of our lives in a contemporary western context. She explores

the essential characteristics of cyclical time at an everyday level, reacting to rhythmic seasonal fluctuation and the resulting work which must be done. She relates:

'... Under a cyclical time consciousness it is assumed that people pace the events of their lives according to local and natural rhythms and that the future is a perpetual recapitulation of the present. A precise time measurement is superfluous. On a day-to-day level, people are not subject then to clock time but rather to a time that is process or task orientated' (Davies 1990, p. 19).

This research seeks to explore experience of time on a task-based level. Rather than the seasonal narrative considered by Davies and others before her, the work will concentrate upon the smaller, repetitive 'processes or maintenance' tasks which inform our daily domestic existence. Washing clothes, shopping, cooking and cleaning. It proposes a rather more complex temporal experience where time and tasks overlap and intertwine. This is more in line with the descriptions of Deena Metzger in her 1977 paper, *'In Her Image'*, and Lisa Baraitser's 2008 book, *Maternal Encounters: The Ethics of Interruption*. Davies (1990), Metzger (1977) and Baraitser (2008) all describe and unpick the domestic experience which is fragmented and disjointed.

Karen Davies describes women's time as continuous and men's as discontinuous because women are constantly on call for caring duties and men have distinct work and 'other' times. Baraitser further describes female temporal experience as more of a cat's cradle with multiple points of intersection; she also considers the nature of caring and how this enforces a series of disruptions which inform female subjectivity in negative and positive ways, suggesting, *'Maternal care is elicited by a "command" made by the 'other' that constantly interrupts the Mother'* (Baraitser 2008). She paints a vivid and accessible picture of temporal experience of the domestic. She talks about interruption to dailiness because caring will always override other 'important' tasks, explaining that time is encountered by women as fragmented with multiple peaks instead of a single climactic moment.

Several other texts and time-use studies come to similar conclusions. Valerie Bryson explores this often frantic and sometimes tangled female experience of polychronic time (where the temporal experiences collide and overlap). Whilst this is fundamentally a book about capitalist society and the subjugation of women by the patriarchal order, (this kind of feminist critique is outside of the scope for this study) Bryson's work is helpful in

understanding the different temporal experiences of the private and the public worlds. She bases some of her descriptions upon Edward T. Hall's 1983 text *The Dance of Life; The Other Dimension of Time*. Hall categorises temporal experience as P-time and M-time. P-time is polychronic and involves undertaking several things at ones. M-Time is monochronic, which is typified by, '*doing one thing at a time*' (Hall 1983, p. 46).

Whilst the problematic subject of gender has already been discussed, this study relies upon the home showing the distinctive characteristics of the female experience, whatever the gender of the person undertaking the tasks. Descriptions that consistently occur when reading about woman's temporal experiences are fragmented, interrupted, continuous, spiral, cyclical and rhythmic and it is these descriptors that form the basis of the research.

2.6.4 Rhythm

It has already been speculated in the preface and abstract that there is a rhythm to dailiness, and maintenance (or task) orientated domestic work. When considering the temporal experience on a micro basis, these rhythms become an important marker for understanding how time is experienced.

As an entry to the understanding of temporal rhythms, Henri Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis; Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2004) is being used. This body of theory is from the prominent Marxist thinker who posits a model of understanding the rhythms of a city based upon both time and space, that is experienced through the body of the rhythmanalyst. He describes the rhythmanalyst as an observer who positions themselves '*simultaneously inside and outside*' the place to be observed (Lefebvre 2004, p. 37). In the case of the city this might be a balcony or view from an open window. The rhythmanalyst uses their body and all its senses to understand the rhythms of a place. Whilst this model was intended for the interpretation of a large space such as a city, subsequent work with the model can give some context to the more intimate 'micro' understandings of a smaller, personal space like a home.

Many of Lefebvre's ideas correlate with the theories that are set out in the paragraphs above. He discusses repetition – rhythms and patterns of behaviour - as cyclical and linear

but acknowledges that they are often polychronic saying that they '*in reality, interfere with one another constantly*' (Lefebvre 2004, p. 18).

Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis gives this study the means to both capture and understand daily temporal experience (see Chapter Three for the method developed using these ideas).

2.6.5 Use of Rhythmanalysis in Creative Practice

Since the publication of Lefebvre's book in 2004, researchers have used the theory in their investigations. These are often sociological studies and have been known to include analysis of the domestic space in such studies as *Domestic orchestration: Rhythms in the mediated home* (Nansen et al 2009). These tend to result in a written publication, which of course, this project is in part. However, more pertinently for this study are the projects with creative outcomes.

Researcher and academic Dawn Lyon studied Billingsgate Fish Market in 2016 by using her body and senses to collect and observe the '*way that rhythms intersect, coexist and clash*' via '*deliberately wandering*' and '*letting herself get caught up in or grasped by the rhythms, noises, tensions, buzz, chill and thrill of the place*' (Lyon 2016, p. 67). She ultimately expressed her findings of the polyrhythmic complexity of the fish market by way of time-lapse photography from an elevated viewpoint which allowed her to '*take stock of the patterning of the daily activities*'. She considers this elevation (actually a gallery at one end of the first floor) as akin to Lefebvre's 'balcony'.



FIGURE 14 BILLINGSGATE FISH MARKET (TIME LAPSE STILL), DAWN LYON 2016

IMAGE CREDIT: DAWN LYON

In this PhD research, the 'inside/outside' position is more problematic. The researcher's stance as both subjective and objective observer must be mediated somehow. The Blovel writing goes some way to achieving this by giving a distance (even a temporal one) between the gathering of data and the analysis or reflection upon the experience.

Paul Simpson also uses time lapse photography in his study '*Apprehending everyday rhythms: rhythmanalysis, time-lapse photography, and the space-times of street performance*' (2012) reasserting Lyon's view that this is an appropriate method for capturing and analysing what he describes as '*the spacio-temporal unfolding of everyday life*' (Simpson 2012, p. 440).

Joe Graham's 2015 study, '*Rhythmanalysis: The Line as a Record of the Moving Present*', takes a tangential interpretation of Lefebvre's theory and uses drawing as the measuring mechanism for rhythm and the outcome representation.



FIGURE 15 RHYTHMANALYSIS: THE LINE AS A RECORD OF THE MOVING PRESENT'

IMAGE CREDIT: JOE GRAHAM

Graham argues that his line is Lefebvre's 'space'. Whilst the argument is an oblique interpretation of Lefebvre's intent (it could be argued Lefebvre anticipated a physical space to interpret rather than space being the outcome) the research gives another interpretation of rhythm – Graham contrives a linear rhythm using a metronome. This work and the ones above, provide an insight into the ways rhythmanalysis can be expanded via use of a creative practice.

The above examples also show an opportunity. There is little in the way of rhythmanalysis that has a creative practice as both its method and outcome, providing a distinct gap in the knowledge.

2.7 Context Three – Work and the Domestic Place

'Maintenance is a drag; it takes all the fucking time' (Ukeles, 1969, p. 1)

Until the late 20th century, the domestic subject was seldom considered an appropriate or serious subject for cultural investigation. Where the domestic was referenced it was done passively or from the view of an observer.

Artist Mierle Laderman-Ukeles posits the idea of the maintenance task in her 1969

Maintenance Art Manifesto, saying:

Development: pure individual creation; the new; change; progress; advance; excitement; flight or fleeing.

Maintenance: keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change; protect progress; defend and prolong the advance; renew the excitement; repeat the flight; (Ukeles 1969)

Ukeles' distinction between development and maintenance roughly correlates with the private/public divide. She sets out clearly – and vehemently at times – her distinction between the maintenance/private work she undertakes as a Woman, Mother and Homemaker and her development/public work of being an artist.

She goes on to undermine this patriarchal order with her series of *'Maintenance Art'* exhibitions, taking the private act into the public sphere of the gallery.



FIGURE 16 WASHING/TRACKS/MAINTENANCE

MIERLE LADERMAN UKELES 1973

Despite the decades since this work, these ideas still resonate, and Professor of Cultural Studies Ben Highmore advocates the use of artworks as being '*particularly suited to the description of experience*' in his paper, *Homework: Routine, Social aesthetics and the ambiguity of everyday life* (2004). He goes on to describe the '*formlessness*' of everyday routines (he is describing what has been identified here as maintenance tasks of cooking and cleaning) suggesting that temporal experience becomes '*temporarily adrift*' (Highmore, 2004, p. 308) whilst someone is experiencing these types of routines. Whereas Ukeles and other Feminist artists of early Post-Modernism were engaged in an attempt to expose rather essentialist female experience, this work aims to give form to Highmore's '*formless*'.

2.7.1 Working from home and the Pandemic

This research is timely. The way we negotiate the public world of work is in flux and has recently been subject to a culture changing transition via the COVID-19 pandemic. Even before the disruption caused by several lockdowns, home working was becoming more prevalent. For years workers have demanded more flexible working contracts in order to deal with family, work/life balance and caring commitments. Technological advances facilitate these demands. The employee/employer advisory service ACAS were already reporting significant gains for both workers and employers in their report on homeworking, *'Home is where the work is'* (2013). By 2018 sociologists Heejung Chung and Tanja van der Lippe estimated within Europe, *'one in eight workers, work from home several times a month'* (Chung and Van Der Lippe 2018). Unsurprisingly, the Office of National Statistics reported a 9.4% rise in workers who did some work from home in 2020 (ONS.Gov 2021). These ideas support the hypothesis of this study, that public working practices increasingly sit alongside the private nature of the home. How the pandemic will affect the subject of homeworking is yet to be seen, but anecdotal evidence within the academic community already suggests a hybrid model where lecturers will spend some of the time 'on campus' working face-to-face with students and other time at home presenting online teaching and undertaking planning and administration. It is likely that similar discussions are occurring throughout all industries. The pandemic appears to have accelerated the prevalence of this blended approach that builds upon the finding of Chung and Van Der Lippe (2018).

2.8 Ceramics and its Position in the Research

2.8.1 Ceramics and the Domestic

Ceramics belong in the world. They are so common as to be anti-elitist and democratic to the point of ubiquity. Cups and Plates speak the language of the everyday, their practical nature supports culture and appears in every context from the functional to the decorative and the ceremonial, and therein lies the rub.

Christopher Reed's book, *Not at Home: The Suppression of Domesticity in Modern Art and Architecture* (1996) is a substantial exploration of the rejection of domesticity throughout Modernism. Reed documents the disdain which critics such as Clement Greenberg – who called the domestic the antithesis of art - poured upon anything remotely related to the home. Thus, the egalitarian nature of ceramics problematises its use as a Fine Art medium during the early 20th century.

The 1960s sees both Feminism and Pop Art rejecting fundamental Modernist principles and starting to use the domestic as both a subject and place for art practice. These two movements provide a platform for ceramic artists to take advantage of the 'domestic' problem and start to interrogate both the meanings of the functional vessel and the politics of the gallery space.

Laura Gray's 2011 Paper, '*Museums and the 'Interstices of Domestic Life'*' explores the relationship between ceramics and the domestic. She considers projects by ceramic artists Edmund De Waal and Clare Twomey showing work in the domestic place. Her examples of the domestic are converted country houses and mansions, which were once homes, but now function as historic buildings and tourist attractions. This is a large leap from the average domestic kitchen.



FIGURE 17 CLARE TWOMEY THE HOUSE OF WORDS, BOOKS, QUILLS AND CLAY DUST

DR JOHNSON'S HOUSE, LONDON

PHOTO CREDIT: CLARE TWOMEY

More fittingly for this project, Gray also considers the practice of Anders Ruhwald whose work overlaps more convincingly with the domestic. He makes sculpture which *'mediate the domestic sphere'* (Ruhwald 2013) both through the pieces themselves and by additional material strategies in his installations. His work titled, *'If all man's products were well designed, joy and harmony would emerge eternally triumphant'* shown in Copenhagen 2007 was 'staged' in the gallery using a partially carpeted floor and monochrome satin ribbons through which the viewer walked to encounter the work. These works sit precariously on the public/private divide but even so, still remain in the gallery setting with the attached Modernist politics of the white cube space.



FIGURE 18 IF ALL MAN'S PRODUCTS WERE WELL DESIGNED, JOY AND HARMONY WOULD EMERGE
ETERNALLY TRIUMPHANT ANDERS RUHWALD 2007

As the two examples above show, when ceramicists consider the domestic and then expose their work in a public environment, those works are affected by the space. As the artist placement group asserted, *'Context is half the work'* and the politics of the gallery space or the historic setting impose their own meanings upon the work. A ceramics practice that originates in a domestic environment and speaks of that experience, is tied up with that place both physically and conceptually. This leaves this research in a place that is difficult to pinpoint; in essence it lies much closer to the domestic experience. The research achieves this by use of the vessel as its basic element. This is more in line with the scale and forms of Cindy Sherman's Madama de Pompadour Tea Service, or Edmund de Waal's vessels that Gray (2011) suggests, *'Though these works might reference domestic objects or the home they behave squarely as art objects, rather than things to be used'*.



FIGURE 19 MADAME DE POMPADOUR (NÉE POISSON) TEA SET,

CINDY SHERMAN 1990

2.8.2 The privileged position of the vessel

This study has at its centre ideas surrounding, and the physicality of, the vessel.

Through the most basic of shapes, humanity has found a carrier, a tool, a holder and fundamentally a sustainer of life, without which vital foods, liquids and medicines couldn't be held, stored or consumed.

Much is written about the vessel. Indeed, it's difficult to study ceramics without some serious consideration of the ubiquitous form. Natasha Daintry waxes lyrical about the virtues of the humble vessel in her 2007 essay, *'The Essential Vessel'*. She considers it in terms of its uses, its philosophical position as both an inside and an outside at the same time, and its various relationships with history, language and art. But this beautiful and thoughtful text, and countless others that address the subject (Cooper 2009, Racz 2017) don't fully explore the place of the vessel in terms of this study.

Vessels hold a privileged and unusual position within the world of objects. They belong in every aspect of our lives and they sit alongside us, often unnoticed or unappreciated, through every age of our lives. They discretely inhabit all our 'places' from the most private domestic and familial space to the very visible, most public of arenas. It is this physicality and sense of place that is the meaning maker in terms of this research.

Throughout human history the ceramic vessel plays multiple roles within the realm of our lives. As objects within our homes we have relationships that go beyond the merely functional. From the ritual use of the humble gravy jug that is passed from hand to hand every Sunday around the dinner table, to the decorative biscuit barrel that should hold sweet confectionary but is actually a repository for wooden spoons, we have an intimate and personal understanding of the vessel on many levels. Layered on top of these very domestic relationships are the functions of the vessel within our public lives. The communal kitchen within a workplace or a trendy coffee shop.

Consider the humble cup, which Garth Clark (1990) describes alternately as, *'the drone of the ceramics world'*, and the *'hardest working vessel'*. The cup follows us through our day, from the morning coffee in bed to the greeting of a visitor with, *'would you like a cup of tea?'* It accompanies our business meetings; it comforts and warms us through our morning

commute, and it toasts our minor daily triumphs. The vessel is an object that can hold its own place on both sides of the private/public divide. The very overlap that is being examined here.

In addition to its position within the world, the vessel can also not be separated from a ceramics practice. This relationship is so strong it is unquestionable.

The vessel's complex relationship with fine art is partly because of its ubiquitous nature. Vessels are consistently referenced in contemporary ceramics practice but also have a place in fine art practice. From the highly political vessels of Stephen Dixon's oil can works in his 2005 Manchester City Gallery retrospective, *'The Sleep of Reason'*, to Grayson Perry's pseudo-traditional urns exploring issues of culture and identity. Fine art vessels have moved away from their functional ancestors and are now more in line with Louise Mazanti's idea of the super object. In her 2011 text, *'Super Objects: Craft as Aesthetic Position'* she pinpoints certain characteristics of the craft object that are helpful to this study; the authenticity of the handmade and the fingerprint of the maker. More than this, she identifies a position in between the functional characteristics of design and the politics of the fine art world. A place where our relationship with objects is interrogated using the politics and autonomy of the gallery space (Mazanti 2011).

Maria Buszek, in her book *Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art* (2001), describes the super object as items which are,

'Alternatives to the world of things among the world of things itself, which occupy a unique position in visual culture, different from either art or design but drawing on (and even binding) both.' (Buszek, 2011, p.14).

The use of the word 'thing' in Buszek's introduction is particularly telling. She is possibly referencing Bill Brown's 'Thing Theory' developed from the ideas of Martin Heidegger's 1927 text, *'Being and Time'*. Brown proposes the difference between 'objects' and 'things' and posits 'things' are objects that have lost their use (Brown 2016).

All these ideas help place the vessel in art as an icon that references the history of ceramics practice and our relationship with those objects, which functions as a marker of all those things but is used as a foundation for other ideas. In the Handbook of Material Culture

(Tilley et al., 2013), Webb Keane considers possibilities of meaning that lie inherently within an object, saying:

'Things always contain properties in excess of those which have been interpreted and made use of under any given circumstances..... Material things thus retain an unpredictable range of latent possibilities'. (Keane 2006, quoted in Tilley et al 2006, p. 201)

When considering the vessel these latent possibilities are endless. We are left with the vessel as a universal catch all. A functional/non-functional, object/thing which is functionally necessary, sometimes decorative, holds sentimental, ritual and collective meaning yet is underestimated and often overlooked.

2.8.3 The Pandemic and Creative Practice

A devastating global event like the COVID-19 pandemic permeates every facet of society and the creative industries were significantly affected. A survey conducted by a-n found 93% of 4000+ respondents reported their practice or career had been affected by the pandemic (a-n 2020). However, artists and other creatives are resilient and will use their resourcefulness to find a way. Artist Matthew Burrows dreamed up the Artist Support Pledge that used social media platforms as a way to generate income for artists through its mutually supportive formula (#artistsupportpledge 2020) and many organisations provided funding for special commissions during the most severe parts of lockdown (University of Salford Art Collection 2020, Greater Manchester Combined Authority 2020, From the Edge: Ebor Studio Members - Your Trust - Rochdale Boroughwide Cultural Trust 2021).

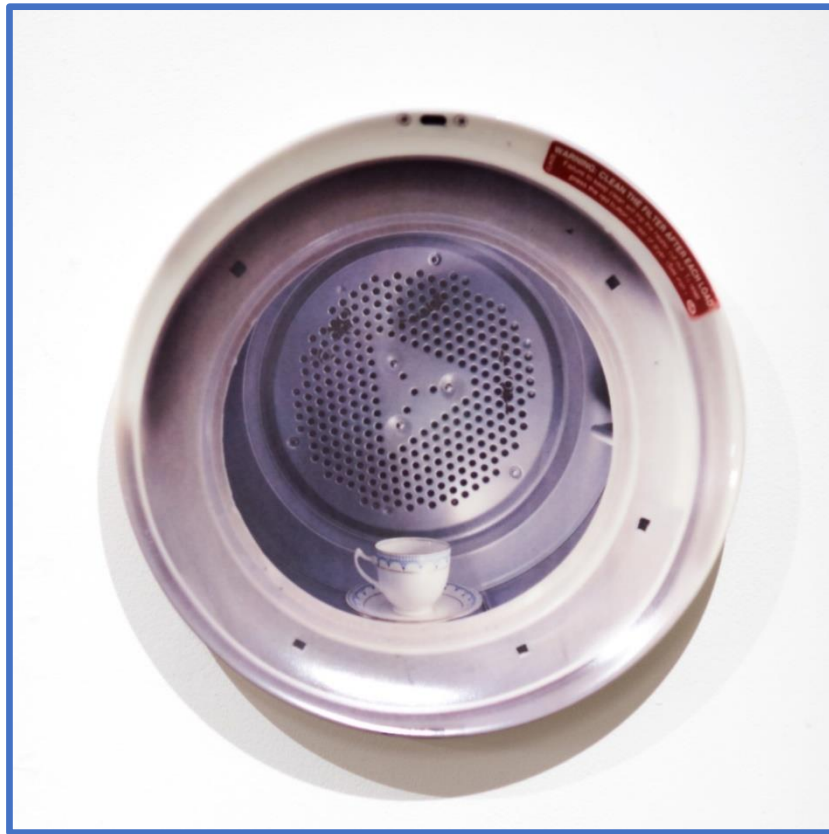


FIGURE 20 THINGS THAT GO 'ROUND ANGELA TAIT (2020)

COMMISSIONED AND FUNDED BY EBOR STUDIOS, SHOWN ONLINE AT TOUCHSTONES ROCHDALE

Galleries, theatres and museums, in an attempt to provide an alternative way of viewing and supporting their audience, provided online exhibitions using 3D scanning technology, whilst socially engaged projects that were in the pipeline and about to start were rapidly rethought and done online. Photographer Ian Clegg and writer Laura Robertson (in conjunction with Open Eye Gallery in Liverpool) altered their project, *'tell it like it is'* from a series of live photography walks to an appropriately distanced project using disposable cameras, the postal service and zoom (Open Eye Gallery 2020). All over the country, artists did the same.



FIGURE 21 IAN CLEGG ONLINE DURING LIVE-STREAMED ZOOM CONVERSATION WITH HIS IMAGES IN THE BACKGROUND (2020)

In the world of ceramics, the biennial International Ceramics Festival in Aberystwyth was drastically scaled down in 2021 to a largely online provision and small series of events on-site. The busy and vibrant 'regular' festival is planned for 2023. One of the outcomes of this research '*Smalls*' was presented at this festival (see Chapter Seven) to a much smaller audience than was anticipated.



FIGURE 22 LIVE STREAMING OF THE SMALLS PERFORMANCE FROM THE ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE DURING THE 2021 INTERNATIONAL CERAMICS FESTIVAL.

ANGELA TAIT BEING INTERVIEWED BY MOIRA VINCENTELLI

In conjunction with the COVID-affected festival, the Centre for Ceramics Art in York commissioned one of their 'Restating Clay' symposia to be live-streamed during the weekend. The symposium considered how ceramics performance had adapted during the pandemic, with the COVID Clay Diary (an outcome of this research, Chapter Eight) being presented as an example. Additionally, Andrew Livingstone described his disrupted residency on the Korean island of Jeju through his presentation '*Performing Jeju Scoria: imagined realities and extended vocabularies*'. Rather than spending time on the island as intended, Livingstone was sent a container of the volcanic material *scoria* from Jeju that he used to create a film using his research (conducted from the UK) about the location in Korea. This enforced alternative process resulting in research and outcome that was

expanded beyond its natural geographic and conceptual boundaries. Livingstone describes his experience of this remote 'site specific' research as an alternative construction of understanding partly through memory (he had visited twice before) and partly imagined, as he makes up for the absence of geographical and cultural experiences. He goes on to describe the video outcome as beyond mere documentation of the performance saying, *'Film extends a living situation and is part of the creative moment'* (Livingstone 2021).

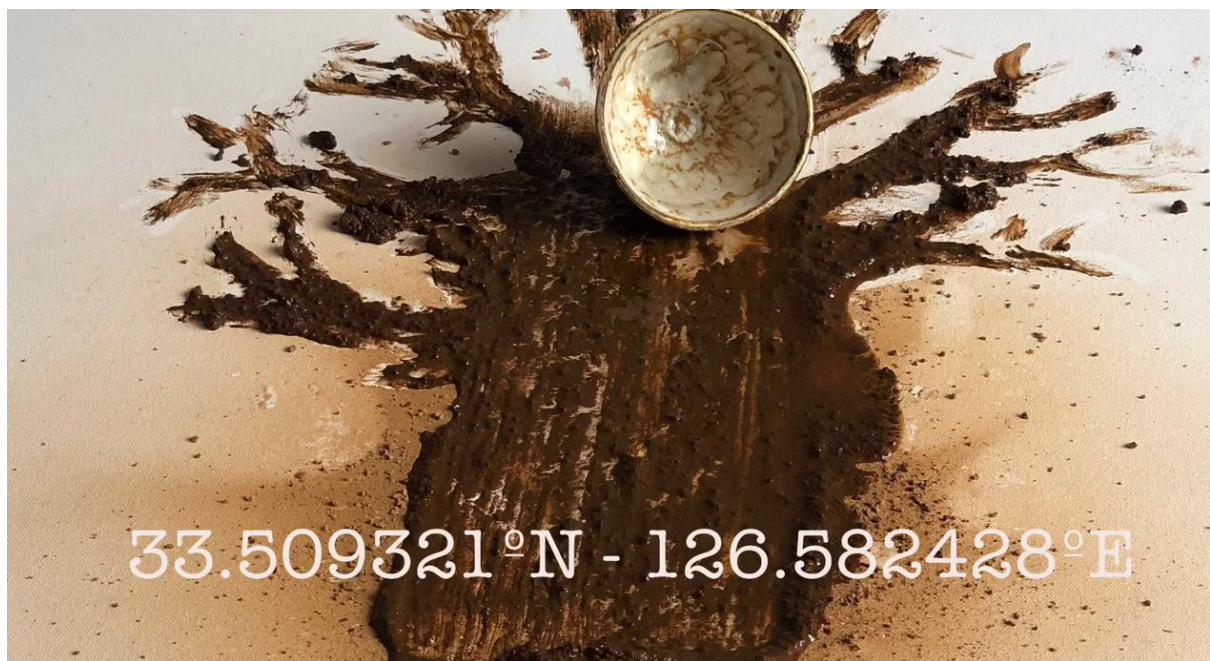


FIGURE 23 STILL FROM PERFORMING JEJU SCORIA, ANDREW LIVINGSTONE 2020

IMAGE: VIMEO



FIGURE 24 'PERFORMING JEJU SCORIA: IMAGINED REALITIES AND EXTENDED VOCABULARIES'

ANDREW LIVINGSTONE 2020

The pandemic was, of course, unexpected, yet the creative community survived and sometimes flourished. Planned research adapted rapidly as artists used their underlying problem-solving abilities to think around corners and provide innovative solutions. As seen here, methods were revised to accommodate much more restrictive times, forcing new paradigms, ways of working and eventually outcomes. Whilst devastating at the time, in retrospect, this enforced shift provides new and exciting ways of working that will inevitably contribute to future research.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter sets out the literature and previous work that supports and underpins this research. It contextualises the form of the vessel in terms of its domestic and creative potential and explores the concept of Rhythmanalysis and its use as a method within practice-based research.

Importantly, this review clarifies the gap in knowledge. There are still questions about the scope for Lefebvre's call for attention to the rhythms of the everyday. In the final sentence of her book, *'What is Rhythmanalysis'* (2019) Dawn Lyon calls for researchers to, *'experiment with the different practices and possibilities rhythmanalysis proposes'* (Lyons 2019, p. 104). Taking Lefebvre's ideas and translating them into creative outcomes has only been tentatively explored by a small number of creative practitioners leaving a chasm for exploration by artists.

Finally, the pandemic and the cultural and social disruption of the last 18 months provides a totally unique context in which to work. Artists are the observers, keepers and translators of cultural events and as such it is their place to provide perspectives on events that shape humanity.

3 Chapter Three – Methodology

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter sets out and rationalises the methodological stance of the research and the methods employed.

3.2 Introduction

This research is practice-based. The primary method throughout will be an experimental creative practice, and outcomes will be ceramics based, albeit in an expanded field.

Underpinning this practice is the pursuit of theoretical and contextual understanding through a contextual and literature review and the collection of information about the major themes of the research set out in Chapter Two.

In addition to the practice there will be a written thesis which works beyond a traditional format and supports, describes, contextualises and explains the practice-based outcomes and their relevance to the research questions.

As with any creative process, this methodology has developed, morphed and changed as ideas have developed and crystallised. The methodology for this research was not set in stone from the outset. Alongside the development of ideas came a reciprocal development in methods. This is common in the arena of practice-based PhD research. Mike Collier, in his 2011 thesis, specifically addresses this process suggesting, *'This idea, this question, changes somewhat as the thesis progresses – as I learn more about the issues I am looking into'* (Collier 2011, p. 29). Some of the original proposals for methods have been abandoned as the PhD played out. Case studies and workshops that at first seemed a significant and valuable contribution to the research, have, on reflection been side-lined in favour of a wholly autoethnographic process. Collier was discussing the changing of his ideas and therefore the eventual outcomes of his PhD, but this notion applies to the whole PhD process. The twists and turns, blind alleys and lightbulb moments of the journey are made

explicit in one of the methods employed, that of the Blovel - itself a development of the creative process – which is discussed fully in Chapter Four.

3.3 Position of the researcher

The methodology for this PhD is centred around the researcher who occupies multiple positions. Primarily, that of artist/maker, secondly (in an overlapping role) as researcher and finally, as subject of the research. As such this research is autoethnographic. Carolyn Ellis originally termed the phrase *autoethnography* in her book *The Ethnographic I* (2004). She describes a methodological stance where the researcher attempts to understand as a participant within a culture rather than a rather more detached researcher/observer. In the case of this study, the culture is that of a creative practice being undertaken in a domestic setting.

3.4 The value of autoethnography

This model for research is based upon using the researcher as subject and creator. Whilst the domestic effect upon creative practice is clearly encountered by many practitioners, this particular research is unapologetically subjective and uses the intentionally personal to investigate universal themes.

The concept as self as observable participant is adapted from the work of Thomas Stoller (2015). Stoller uses himself as the focus for his investigation into the everyday. Whilst some of the threads in his work are familiar to this research practice (such as using the self to measure the everyday), the methods and strategies (and eventually the outcomes) are very different. Stoller uses quantitative measures of his experience, a method seemingly at odds with creative practice. This research is qualitative in its scope, capturing an experience of working within a domestic landscape that relies upon description and narrative rather than numbers and quantities. This is more in line with Ellis' description of autoethnography which produces, '*stories rather than theories*' which are, '*self-consciously value-centred*' (Ellis et al 2011).

This research pushes the scope of autoethnographic research by incorporating a creative practice and outcomes. This is not totally unique, and was described by Oskay Malicki (2014) as sitting in a place between the disciplines of ethnography and artistic enquiry. Thus the value of autoethnography for this research comes from this place of multidisciplinary understanding. Gathering data about the cultural position of 'working from home' and using a creative practice as alternately the tool to gather data, the means of analysing and the final outcomes.

Autoethnography

24th July 2018

I put this into my original proposal. What a long time ago that seems, yet it's only five months. At the time I was vaguely aware that it was a way of making myself the subject of my research. It seemed like a good idea. A justifiable way of using myself as primary case study.

During a conference in Sunderland, I'd just spoken about my research. A charming chap, whose role in the organisation I couldn't quite figure out, recommended a book.

10.39am The book was called *The Ethnographic I* by Carolyn Ellis. Thankfully the library at my own university (i.e. the one I work at near to home, not the one I study at 150 miles away) has a copy. I had no idea what to expect but I'm collecting relevant books at the moment, almost to the point of being overwhelmed. I was very pleasantly surprised. Ellis writes her book as a methodological novel.

It's a pseudo-fictional narrative about an autoethnography class. Complete with characters (participants in the class) and her own narrative. This book is clever; she's explaining autoethnography by doing it.

I'm struggling for words, the first time this morning. My intention when I started was to make this piece a kind of autoethnographic account. A trial. Can I do this, is it interesting and/or relevant?

Less than a chapter into the book I've started to put little coloured post it notes onto the pages.

One of the first pieces I highlighted was an explanation.

'Autoethnography refers to writing about the personal and its relationship to culture. It is an autobiographical genre of writing that displays multiple levels of consciousness...back and forth autoethnographers gaze: First they look through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations'. (Ellis 2004)

That's the formal definition that she uses in the book. The 'vulnerable self' bit scares me.

The thing I'm really interested in is the connection with the personal which is so overwhelming in my ideas that I've been feeling traditional methods of writing don't fit terribly well. As I'm reading this book (which I read in the evening in bed, a time usually reserved for fiction) I can hear bits of my story written in my own voice.

An idea has started to form, a thesis in the form of a novel. Somewhere between a blog, a personal confessional diary, a story, a reflective text and a dissertation.

Now I've written that down it sounds like a massive undertaking, especially for someone who's not trained in writing.

11.29 I had a piece of Spanish omelette straight from the plastic box. I'd made it yesterday. I don't know if this was breakfast or lunch. I'm back at the desk with a big bowl of fruit and yogurt. Whilst I was away I emptied the dishwasher and the tumble dryer, only to discover the clothes were still damp and needed another half an hour.

The Blog/Novel – the Blovel or Blovella?

Earlier this week I emailed my supervisor: We are beginning to develop a relationship. It's difficult only speaking to him once a month but now we've actually met face to face and exchanged a few tentative personal stories, I'm starting to trust what he says and find my feet. I floated the idea of the entirely autoethnographic study.

Why does this seem like a good idea now?

1. The Domestic Ritual is my own construct. It's a very personal thing but during my conversations with other people there are some parallels starting to emerge. Talking to a colleague, he described how he's changed the medium he used when he started lecturing full time. He is a painter who went from using acrylics when he could work on his paintings

for hours at a time, to working with watercolour in the evenings when he'd finished lecturing. This way he could leave mixed colours and reuse them later. It struck me that this was the way his other obligations had imposed themselves on his work. Autoethnographic methods allows the researcher (me) to learn from the data they collect, compare it with their own experience and reflect and learn from these experiences. This gives a holistic experience and needn't exclude any other collected qualitative data.

2. My writing would be multi-layered. It would be the research with all the rigour expected from a PhD thesis, but more than that, it would be an autobiography. 'Who cares'? I say to myself, I don't even read autobiographies. But would this be a cultural insight with wider relevance?

3. Could it also be a story of the PhD journey which could help future candidates?

Floodgates, Pandora's box and can of worms – all open!

Clearly this is a study concentrating on the experience of one person, yet the value of the research is still significant. An autoethnography is not an adequate or equitable representation of a whole culture, this study does not make that claim. It does however produce a rich depth of information not possible from taking a wider view. Ellis et al (2011, 2004) call this, '*thick description*' which, they explain, helps both insiders and outsiders to understand a culture. They describe these '*personal narratives*' as a quest to, '*understand a self or some aspect of a life as it intersects with a cultural context*' and hand over the concept of generalisation to the reader instead of the researcher. In other words, the reader decides whether this speaks to them of their own experience rather than the researcher making assumptions about a wider sample.

3.5 How the methodology is constructed and rationale

The position for this research is twofold. It sits firmly in the fine art arena of practice-based research whilst also considering the social phenomenon of working from home. To

encompass both sets of ideas it has been necessary to build a unique methodology which combines ideas from the disciplines of Fine Art and Ethnography.

To this ends a hybrid methodology has been developed. Methods have been adopted from both creative practice and the social sciences. This is justified within the current climate of practice-based research as a bricolage approach, described by Gray and Malins as '*A pieced together, close knit set of practices that provide solutions to problems in a concrete situation*' (Gray and Malins 2004, p. 74).

They go on to describe the bricoleur as being able to use multiple methods to provide solutions to complex questions. This study uses both existing and new (manipulated from existing) methods to collect data and gain understandings that address the research questions.

Whilst Bricolage is a relatively new research strategy, it is a sound fit for the type of practice-based research that is being undertaken. Recent PhD studies have successfully used this strategy in similar types of endeavour (Collier 2011, Cushway 2015, Grant 2017).

This leaves a new and unique framework for research which consists of:

- Practice in the expanded field of ceramics
- A reflexive practice
- The contextual and literature review that provides the underpinning theory for the practice-based element of this research.
- Self-observation using a reflective and personal writing practice called the Blovel.

3.6 Methods

3.6.1 Ceramics Practice

This research is reliant upon an existing studio practice established over several years, and previous research investigations contributing towards a Masters in Contemporary Fine Art in 2010.

The understanding of practice-based research in this PhD is that laid down by Candy who asserts, *'If the research process is primarily based on the making of an artefact, the research could be said to be practice-based'* (Candy et al 2011). Indeed, an artefact isn't a sufficient description for this kind of studio practice. The practice will entail constant making as one idea inevitably leads to another through reflexive feedback loops, A consistent approach to making over the course of the PhD will almost certainly lead to constant output that will be narrowed and focused throughout, to develop several original outcomes.

The already established practice is fed by self-observation. The domestic/creative relationship will be mapped (further details of this process will follow later in this chapter and Chapter Four as the Blovel is described). This data will feed and support the generation of ideas and practice.

3.6.2 The position of the practice in the research

As the researcher holds a complex place in this investigation, so does the practice.

The practice will explore (and also be a result of) the relationship and tensions between the domestic obligations of working at home and creative endeavour. As such it is both the mechanism (or method) for researching and part of the subject that is being investigated.

27th December 2020

3.16pm - The strangest Christmas on record is over. If it were a crayon, it would be the medium grey one and someone would have trodden on it, breaking it into unusable pieces and grinding greasy, immovable crumbs into the carpet.

I finished work for the break over a week ago and have been endlessly procrastinating since. I know I need to get on with the thesis, but I also know I have to untangle all the messy thoughts into something linear, logical and understandable. Not an easy prospect when I don't fully understand myself.

I'm currently writing the Methodology Chapter. I thought this might be a good (and simple) place to start, but now I'm realising that I have to set out the complicated relationship

between myself, the practice and the subject I'm investigating – which all appear to be the same thing.

It's like this:

- I am the researcher, that makes me also the 'practice doer' or artist.
- Because this is an autoethnographic study, I'm also the subject – i.e. the person AND part of the cultural group being investigated.
- The research is trying to understand how a creative practitioner experiences working alongside their domestic obligations. This means that my creative practice is also part of the 'subject' too.

I think this means:

- The researcher is also the subject
- The subject is the researcher and the practice (and the domestic)
- The practice is the research method and the subject and the outcomes

This is further complicated by the alternative format of the thesis.

The Blovel is both a method for collecting data, a part of the creative practice (and the reflection and contextualising of the work), an outcome and forms part of the alternative thesis.

The thesis doesn't just set out the way that the research answers the questions but is also part of the 'work' that is being investigated.

4.23 pm Asda came and delivered another kitchenful of snacky and treaty things that we only get for the festive season, none of which when put together would make a balanced meal. I am perpetually full.

I have tried drawing the structure and placement of all the parts of the research in an attempt at a visual overview of the thesis. This has thus far been unsuccessful, but I think it's

probably the best way to describe what is going on here and worth another dose of drawing.

3.7 Rhythmanalysis and its place in the practice

One of the principal ideas that will guide the practice is that of Rhythmanalysis.

First proposed by Henri Lefebvre in the 1980's but not published until after his death in 1992, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday life* (2004 in English) is the culmination of Lefebvre's lifelong investigation into the everyday. The publication sets out his ideas surrounding using the body as an analytical tool for observing and understanding the rhythms of a city.

Rhythmanalysis - Building a Methodology in Reverse

18th October 2020

Sunday 10.27am

I know I've spoken about this before, but I'm pretty sure practice-based PhDs do not follow a simple linear format. I'm wondering if any research actually does?

Take one of my research strands – Rhythmanalysis.

More and more as I progress, this is becoming relevant, yet two and half years ago I had no idea it would be adopted into my methodology – how could I have?

This is not an exact science, indeed, it's not a science at all.

10.38 Phone rings

11.44 Rhythmanalysis: Not, on the face of it, a natural or most logical fit for this enquiry. A Marxist philosophy about understanding urban spaces - hence the reason it appears, almost accidentally, a good way into the research. I'll admit it was a while before I even understood that time (well, really how we experience time) was an essential part of the study. Having trawled through the usual suspects; Bergson's 'duree', Julia Kristeva's rather essentialist and gendered understanding of cyclical and linear time, even a rather heated and frustrating

discussion with the Tait boys about quantum physics and time, a listing in a bibliography caught my eye. Henri Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*.

Around then I was buying a couple of books a week. Odd texts that I found referenced in books and papers. The whole web of theory I was uncovering was starting to prove increasingly vast and unmanageable. I now believe I had to do this wide investigation in order to find the correct focus for the depth which was to come. After a consultation with wiki (please don't ever tell my students) I purchased a paperback version of Lefebvre's *Rhythmanalysis* and added it to the most appropriate pile on the floor in my office.

It's not the easiest read. For starters it's a translation from French to English so some of the language is clunky and a bit disjointed. Secondly, I'm an artist; I don't even claim to have a rudimentary understanding of the forms or language of philosophy – How could I? It's another lifetime's work.

Despite the barriers, some of what I read started to seep into my consciousness. The idea of the rhythm analyst using their body to understand and record movement. The amalgamation of space and time as two conjoined concepts that could be investigated together. There was definitely something going on here that could be applied.

I watched a video by Dawn Lyon, a Reader in Sociology at the University of Kent. This is a tip I also acquired from the younger Taites. They get a great deal of their information from YouTube. Whilst I'm sure a good deal of this is teenage boy trivia - like dropping caravans from cranes - they also use it for understanding intricate issues for their studies (see my above reference to the complexities of the quantum world). This particular film was a lecture about how Lyon had used rhythm analysis to understand the workings of Billingsgate Fish Market. Ultimately, she produced a timelapse film of the day which looked, felt and was conceptualised as an artwork as well as a sociological study.

Whilst not what Lefebvre intended, the investigation of the domestic using a similar strategy seems like a logical way to proceed. Considering his lifelong investigation into the quotidian, I think he would approve.

13.01 The above text has been painful and marred by distractions, only one of which was someone else's imposition on my time. I have wandered away from my desk a handful of times. I have visited the fridge, the window (on the pretext of having – perhaps - heard

something) and the toilet (twice). I have answered some work emails and looked up a potential Christmas present on Amazon. I've checked Facebook and Instagram but drew the line at Pinterest.

It's not every day the writing flows.

3.7.1 Rhythmanalysis – Rationale

Lefebvre advocates the use of the body to understand the rhythms of a place. In this study, as the researcher is the same as the subject, it is inevitable that the body will be used to understand a temporal experience.

Whilst this method isn't a comfortable fit with Lefebvre's original ideas, in essence the notion of the flaneur observing the city from the periphery, the concept is still appropriate and has been adapted for the purposes of this study.

Lefebvre also asserts that *'In order to grasp and analyse rhythms, it is necessary to get outside them, but not completely'* (Lefebvre 2004, pg. 32). This is slightly more problematic as the researcher and the research subject are essentially the same. To achieve this 'outsideness' an additional step in the process is necessary. The experience will be mediated using a recording process - a diary. The diary will observe and record and give the researcher sufficient distance to identify rhythms, themes and patterns. This diary will be encompassed within the Blovel writings.

3.8 Experimental writing as method and practice

Writing holds a crucial place in both the process and outcomes of this research project.

This section focuses on the use of the diary as research method and explains the development of a unique idea – The Blovel.

3.8.1 The Blovel

This is an experimental writing technique that rests somewhere between diary, blog, and data capture.

The Blovel evolved from a desire to document the PhD process and make it 'public'; not merely in terms of the research outcomes, but also to expose some of the thinking and to track the twists and turns of undertaking a PhD. It started life as a blog that was published online. This format rapidly became redundant at the realisation that the writing played a larger role than mere documentary evidence.

The original blog was withdrawn as the writing became a tool which held together various parts of the research.

This diary-like format fits neatly with the with the ambitions of autoethnography and the aim to provide Ellis' (2004) '*thick descriptions*'. Indeed, in the Bloomsbury publication, '*What is Diary Method?*' Bartlett and Milligan (2015, p. 29) advocate the use of dairies as research method saying, '*they can also provide important visual, semi-and unstructured and longitudinal insights*'.

The Blovel has become an integral part of the practice and will ultimately form one of the original outcomes.

Chapter Four deals with this in more detail.

3.9 The reflexive practitioner

Critical reflection will be undertaken in two ways. The first is the rather intangible 'reflection in action' as described by Donald Schön and explained in Gray and Malins as involving, '*thinking about what we are doing and reshaping action whilst we are doing it.*' (Gray and Malins 2004, p. 22). It is the thinking activity which a professional undertakes during practice, the micro decisions made whilst working, the size and shape of a thrown

vessel or the formal qualities of a sculptural piece. This will happen within the existing studio practice and is based upon years of practice and fine art education.

Secondly Schön's 'Reflection on Action' – The retrospective reflection - will follow a more formal route. This will start with the tables of outcomes (Appendix One). These tables list every piece made during the research period.

Thinking will follow an adapted form of Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb 1984). Kolb describes a cyclical form of thinking that, put simply, entails: Doing – Assessing – Planning (to do better) - Doing again. This process promotes incremental learning (or skills acquisition) and might be adapted to apply to an art practice as: Making – Reflecting upon the 'make' – Concluding and learning from reflection – Planning another make. The fact that this drives forward the practice (and the understanding of the practitioner) suggests this model should be better thought of in three dimensions, as an ongoing spiral, rather than the simple cycle suggested by Kolb.

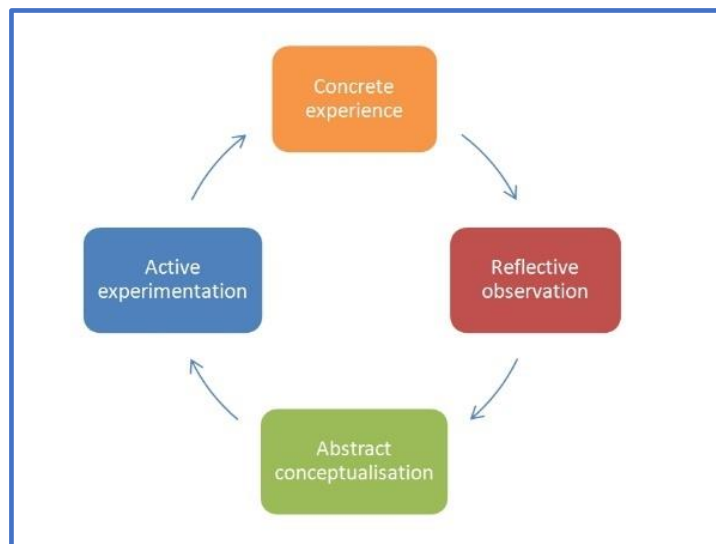


FIGURE 25 KOLB'S EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE 1984

This thinking is partly hidden - who can see a thought? – as a symptom of the practitioners inherent and personal practice, however, some of this thinking will become explicit through the Blovel.

I'm having a conflict.

23rd April 2019 - St Georges day

I have planned and made a whole process for reflection which I'm now choosing to ignore in favour of this more informal style of writing about the things I'm making, and working out ways forward in a more fluid way.

Early on I was adamant I would use De Bono as a reflective tool. I know it works, I used it for my teaching degree when I had to reflect upon 150 hours of teaching experience. I have spent time adapting the format into a tool I can use for reflecting upon my practice but now I'm finding it, well, a bit dull.

The journal (conversational) style of writing is becoming more important and useful than the more formal (and tedious!) process of placing information into a set format.

During this kind of writing, I am able to work things out in a productive manner, like the act of writing promotes the thinking and vice versa. Somehow, I'm finding I can capture those half-formed thoughts which occur to me at inopportune moments, and pin them down into something solid. A bit like some people use drawing to work out ideas.

I'm proposing a change of trajectory.

Instead of the rigid process of the thinking hats I'm going to try a more fluid approach to reflective thought. I'll be making more journal entries that will explore the way forward. They'll talk about the work I'm making and make proposals for future work - but in a style I can deal with.

The PhD process is like a wiggly line (I've stopped to draw a graph with the horizontal axis as time and the vertical as thinking and a very tangled line heading vaguely upwards). Things I'm sure about don't always work and then other things which are seemingly nothing become important. I keep telling myself this is healthy.

3.10 The Contextual Review

A traditional review of literature and contextual information written as a singular chapter or part of an introduction, has proved insufficient and out of step with the overall general philosophy of this research project. A linear and static review does not fit comfortably with the narrative ebb and flow of the two voices in the thesis as described in Chapter One. Consequently, the literature and contextual review is twofold. First is the overview of information in Chapter Two. This chapter sets out the framework within which the research takes place. This is enhanced by additional information that is bound up in the overall format of the thesis. This is achieved sometimes through the formal explanations and reflections upon the outcomes but also within the embedded Blovel entries. Whilst not in line with the historic expectations of a PhD thesis, this is not a completely unique way of doing things. Both Stoller (2015) and Collier (2011) chose this strategy as their theses follow a linear chronological narrative where the outcomes are described as they occur throughout the research. The embedding of the theoretical (contextual and literature) research in this way does not negate the importance of the underlying theory. In the case of this four-year process, the range and depth of reading, looking, investigation and probing has been extremely wide and, where appropriate, sufficiently deep and complex. To draw this into one document creates the problem of describing a three-dimensional web of ideas in a two-dimensional linear format. Each outcome from this research has its own set of contextual references. This is particularly true of the COVID clay diary which was produced under exceptional circumstances that must be considered on their own. To maintain some fluidity to the thesis and guide the reader to a greater understanding of the research and practice, this embedding of the appropriate contextual information and literature has been adopted.

3.11 Methodology Conclusion

This methodology is a unique response containing all the expected constituent parts of practice-based enquiry, but the methods of application are peculiar to the subject and personal practice of the researcher. The outcomes (ceramics practice, the Blovel and this thesis) each contain overlaps of contextual and theoretical understanding, observing,

writing, practice (making) and reflexivity. This leaves a holistic project that values transparency and where all parts of the research contribute to total understanding.

4 Chapter Four - Writing

4.1 Chapter Synopsis

This chapter starts to untangle the complicated place that writing holds in the research. It introduces the 'Blovel', a writing practice that has become the thread that connects all parts of the research, and functions alternately (sometimes concurrently) as method, creative practice and an original contribution to knowledge.

The chapter will explain the place that this experimental writing holds and contextualise it in its multiple roles.

4.2 Introduction - The Origin of the Blovel

Early in the PhD research process a blog was started with the intention of sharing the process and documenting ideas as they developed. This writing was rapidly recognised as more significant than mere 'public outlet', it was identified as an integral part of the process and one which could have more purposes than merely a digital façade. The blog was withdrawn from its public space and the writing became first a tool, then a method and eventually a piece of creative practice and unique outcome of the research.

The Blovel is an original idea. The word is a portmanteau of blog and novel, which is an adequate description of the contents; a series of individual texts (sometimes referred to throughout the thesis as entries or posts) that are ultimately amalgamated to form a whole document.

The individual texts start in early 2018 as the research project commences, and finish in 2022 when the practice-based making is long finished and the thesis is being finalised.

There are 67 individual texts. They are documented as a list in Appendix 11. They are, on average one - two pages long and took between an hour and a day each to complete.

The Blovel is published as an entire document on the Issuu digital publishing site and can be accessed here: [Blovel link to Issuu](#)



FIGURE 26 BLOVEL, FRONT COVER OF PUBLICATION ON ISSUJ

ANGELA TAIT 2021

4.3 The Blovel as Autoethnography

4.3.1 Auto-ethno-graphy

Autoethnography describes a process of self (auto) reflection through the process of writing (graphy), specifically about a cultural – or ethnographic – position. It is a method usually employed by Sociologists or Anthropologists to investigate a culture from within and is the methodological stance for this research as set out in Chapter Three. It is reliant upon the researcher's subjectivity and foregrounds their personal thoughts, feelings and stories. The Blovel exemplifies these notions through its subjectivity and the cultural position of working from home that it exposes. This said, the Blovel fulfils wider roles, it is an expanded autoethnography in that it also collects personal data that informs the practice and reflects upon the works produced.

4.4 Format of the Blovel

The Blovel is a series of independent 'posts', each can be read on its own, not unlike blog posts or entries in a journal in this respect. Cumulatively, these short texts fit somewhere between diary, blog, story and data capture. Each post sometimes fulfilling one function, sometimes more, occasionally all. The texts are broadly divided into categories, although these often overlap and it isn't always clear which category the posts belong in.

4.4.1 Types of Post

- Personal (sometimes emotional) ramblings – An autobiographical account of the experience of completing a PhD. Something like a diary entry. Sometimes light-hearted, occasionally emotional, an intimate account of the process. These texts are an honest portrayal from a researcher of some of the highs and lows of the PhD process.

- Reflections upon the work made – A story of the practice with critical analysis and contextual references.
- Qualitative data capture – Real time written accounts of a period of time that serve as the collection of qualitative data. Time stamped posts which follow the rhythm of the day and the tasks undertaken.
- Posts that don't fulfil any of the above – Poems (and concrete poetry), letters and notes to self.
- A combination of two or more of the above categories.

Eventually the Blovel forms a full (but fragmented) chronological account of the PhD which is narrative, emotional, personal, practical, descriptive and reflective. An autobiographical account which is readable in a new way, individual parts that create a whole.

4.4.2 Personal Emotional Ramblings

Feedback

17th November 2019

I opened the supervisor comments on my draft contextual review.

Now I'm sitting at my desk with fat, hot tears leaking, uninvited down my face and onto my lap.

I am put in mind of the stages of grief which just tore through my body at warp speed:

Denial – ‘It’s not my fault, I haven’t been guided well enough, I’ve never done this before, it’s someone else’s fault, I haven’t got time’.

Anger – ‘Aghhhhhhhhhh, fuck the world, I’m giving up, I don’t need a PhD, I could be doing my own thing at 4.45 on a Sunday evening’

Bargaining – I’ll work harder if I can just make progress.

Depression – the pummelled and bruised ego that wrote the second line.

I recognise a softening of my breathing and the tightness of the skin on my face from dry saltiness.

Acceptance – I’m already there... I have a half-baked plan in my head for rectifying everything

These texts expose one researcher’s experience of completing a PhD. Historically this doesn’t sit comfortably within an academic format. In the case of an autoethnographic process, where the researcher is so close to the surface of the study, it becomes appropriate, even acceptable, that the experience of undergoing that study is exposed. This is particularly true in this case, when accepting the holistic attitude described in the conclusion of Chapter Three.

These posts often resemble personal diary entries and include frustrations and big leaps forward in understanding. Written almost exclusively in the first person, they are insights into the experience of the artist/researcher.

This narration of the PhD journey was not an original intention of the research, rather it developed as a consequence of the autoethnographic process. Whilst not contributing directly to the research questions, without these details, the integrity of the whole project might have been compromised. It was clear from early in the research that it would be impossible to undertake an honest reflection of daily experience without the level of intimate details contained. It is in these texts where there is barely a membrane between researcher and subject.

4.4.3 Blovel posts as Reflective Practice

Birmingham Research Conference

20 August 2018

Friday was the research conference at the Birmingham City University. I have to admit to being a little bit (very) nervous. They'd billed the conference as a safe place for unsafe things to happen and I'd taken them at their word and invented a workshop which I was totally unsure would 'work'.

Anyway, it did – kind of.

The premise of the workshop was that the participants considered their own domestic and creative lives and how they interacted with or disrupted one another. They were to translate these thoughts onto a wet clay tile in any format they chose. A drawing, a list, a pattern....anything. Periodically I would introduce a disruption to the flow of work by imposing tasks which had to be completed. Pairing socks or wrapping presents.

This is a big ask! Thankfully the participants were researchers, academics and, most importantly, open minded creatives. They got it! Each and every one was totally generous in sharing their experiences.

Now I have the seemingly enormous task of figuring out what to do with all the information I have acquired. I am starting with a table of evidence. I am describing all the tiles made and trawling through the recording of the session to pick up the conversations I missed whilst I was facilitating. It's going to take all week.

I also need to make a document which I can refer to next time I roll out this workshop - things to remember and better practices.

Next I will photograph all the pieces, dry them and fire. My original idea was that there would be a creative outcome (an artwork) from the workshop. A scarf made from ceramic tiles perhapsbecause everyone needs one of those....??

Some decisions need to be made about finish. I am resistant to glazing. It is inelegant and distracting, however, aesthetically it will make the scarf into a better final piece. I'm going to have to figure this out.

Later

I have just endured the video and audio recording of the entire hour. This meant listening mostly to myself, and we all know how that feels. It was a very useful tool for remembering what each person said as the conversation developed. It was also useful to see the reactions to the disruptions I provided. A frustrated, 'Aghhhhh', from one participant as I made her put the clay down in order to wrap some oddly shaped Christmas gifts.

I have also photographed all the tiles from Friday. It's the first time I've looked properly since I left Birmingham. I've remembered other bits of conversation, all of which I'm frantically writing down as accurately as I can remember. I'm anticipating the preparation, overspill and analysis from this one short workshop to take a week. This has gone from being a short 'practice' into something utterly valuable and potentially beautiful.

I'm delighted!



FIGURE 27 THE CERAMIC SCARF

ANGELA TAIT 2019

4.4.4 Blovel Posts exploring Context

As described in Chapter Three, this thesis is designed to embed contextual understanding throughout and build upon the contextual framework set out earlier. Some of the Blovel texts do this in a specific way and some refer more passively to theories and artworks. Due to the first-person narrative, these references may be read as speculative, as if they were passing thoughts. However, like all elements of this research, the sum is greater than the parts. Contextual understanding is achieved via a combination of the framework in Chapter Two, the development throughout the thesis and the sporadic intervention of the Blovel.

Kate Davis - Weight 2014

8 April 2020

A film: a tense amalgamation of seemingly generic 1960s monochrome domestic imagery overlaid with the language of Fine Art - almost. The visuals are born from a film about Barbara Hepworth, the language, a mordant play on housework as an artform.

'The mass, inner tension and rhythm of this kitchen' – my mind draws a mental map of my cultural kitchen references - Martha Rosler's film, Vicki Hodgetts' Eggs to Breasts, Judy Chicago's Dinner Party and the Talky Toaster from Red Dwarf.

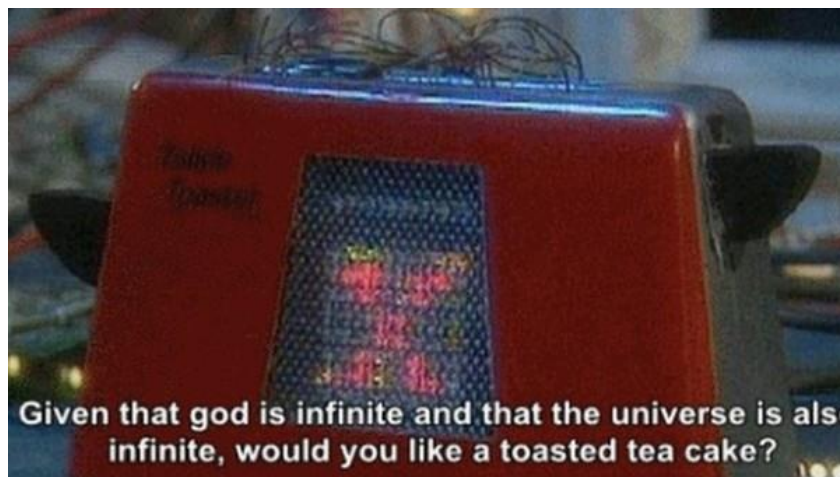


FIGURE 28 TALKY TOASTER, RED DWARF

IMAGE CREDIT: WHATCULTURE.COM



FIGURE 29 NURTURANT KITCHEN (EGGS TO BREASTS) VICKI HODGETTS 1972

IMAGE CREDIT: NYTIMES

I ponder the more assertive 1960s/70s works of Mierle Laderman Ukeles and her Maintenance Art Manifesto and wonder if she's seen this and if, like me, she has to stop halfway through to answer the door.

And what is this weight of which the title speaks? The weight of a plate in the hand or the emotional burden of the feminine. Housework mostly isn't difficult or strenuous, but it is necessary, and it is the thief of time. Does time have a mass or volume? If it does, is it fluid and not subject to the regular rules of the physics of 'things'?

[Link to 'Weight' by Kate Davies](#)

4.4.5 The Blovel as data capture

Some of the Blovel writing, particularly several posts from years one and two, are written in real time. They often commence with a time stamp that signifies the exact time of day they were started, and go on to periodically punctuate the text with further indicators of the time passing during the writing. These texts are for a specific reason within the research. They are capturing the passage of time as it transpires, allowing for the capture of temporal experience or rhythm of the day. They are an additional task that illuminate the actual jobs of work and domesticity that are being undertaken at the time.

The resulting writing exposes the 'temporal shape' of the day and the relationships between the tasks that have been established as public and private in Chapter Two. They are not always an entertaining read, but they fulfil an important function in providing information about how the day is experienced.

During his 2015 PhD thesis, Thomas Stoller uses a similar kind of data capture during his research towards his works *A Day in the Life* (2013) and *Minute by Minute* (2014). The starting points for these works was a daily record in the form of a table.

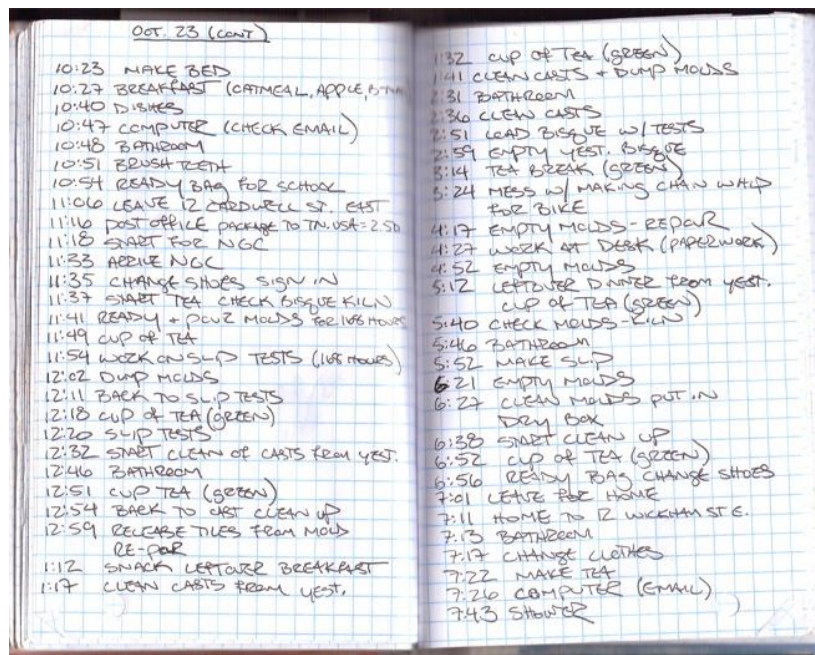


FIGURE 30 DATA COLLECTION FROM NOTEBOOK (2013) STOLLER, T.

IMAGE CREDIT: THOMAS STOLLER PHD (2015)

He then goes on to produce ceramic works which abstract information from the data collection notes.



FIGURE 31 168 HOURS (DETAIL) THOMAS STOLLER (2013)

IMAGE CREDIT: THOMAS STOLLER PHD (2015)

Stoller understands time in his investigation of the everyday via the method of the time-use diary. What Stoller omits in his data collection is the acknowledgement of the process of collecting the information. Stoller's list is meticulous in its attention to detail, except the 'doing' of the time-diary isn't accounted for. In other words, the time spent writing the diary isn't included in his list.

During the Blovel posts, the integrity of the process is explicit throughout. The writing of the post becomes part of what is being captured. Thus the Blovel again sits in the blurred overlap between process, creative practice and method.

As described in Chapter Two, one of the methods employed to understand the relationships between creative practice and domestic tasks is via Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis. Here the Blovel writing addresses one of the problematic constraints of the process. Lefebvre suggests:

'In order to grasp and analyse rhythms it is necessary to get outside them, but not completely: be it through illness or a technique. A certain exteriority enables the intellect to function. However to grasp a rhythm is it necessary to have been grasped by it; one must let oneself go, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration.'

(Lefebvre 2004, p. 37)

This is seemingly contradictory and poses a challenge to the rhythm analyst. How can a researcher be inside and grasped and also have distance for the intellect to function?

The Blovel provides a novel solution to this problem. It allows a 'distance' by being written as part of what is being examined whilst also providing a legacy document which may be revisited in the future. Thus, the researcher is both involved with the rhythm and distanced at the same time.

11.00 am - I have coffee. I also did a bit of washing up, put the washing machine on and brought the clean, dry washing upstairs with me. Another job to add to the list - sort the washing. So far I haven't taken anything else from the list, which makes the new list longer than the old one.

4.4.6 Blovel Posts, the uncategorisable post

The Blovel sometimes reflects on a wider notion of life.

Observations, distractions and tenuous thoughts abound throughout the practice (both written and ceramic). Akin to a sketchbook or journal, in which pages don't follow a linear format but might drift from thought to thought, so the writing gets distracted. This leaves the Blovel with experimental posts such as poems and letters which remain uncontextualized just like a drawing or experimental pot might. In an autoethnographic study, where stories and thick descriptions are foregrounded, these anomalies are left to hold their place, and not edited out for the sake of logic or narrative flow. Whilst this

creates a meandering narrative that regularly stays from the path, it does contribute to holistic nature of the study.

The good life

The rampant rhubarb, it's a thug

Seemed like a good idea

Growing fruit

Healthy, cheap, organic

Stew but bitterness bites, add sugar

The process comforts

Waggle, pull, satisfying pop

Hack the Jurassic leaves

Rolling chop, knife tip on the board

Give away to grateful friends

4.5 Development of the writing

In early 2019 the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (North West) provided a small professional development bursary to help improve the writing associated with this research. The funding was to provide mentoring with art critic and founding editor of the Double Negative (Critical Review Publication), Laura Pinnington.

Details of the mentoring are set out in Appendix Six.

By the time this occurred the idea of the Blovel had been formalised and 20+ posts already existed. The purpose of the mentoring was to develop both the quality and scope of the writing, understand the context of the writing and build skills which would support a future career as artist/researcher.

From Appendix 6

The concept of a disjointed narrative started to come together, I continued to write and she continued to guide. The voices I used became more and more diverse. I speculated with the voice of a dull brown moth presenting my ideas of beauty, and wrote letters from my seven-year-old self to my Mother. I played with time and voice and shape and space. I abstracted words and spoke from the heart. I put myself into a different place where I had to remember, imagine, speculate and pretend. I read more diverse literature than I had ever done, making marks on the pages, highlighting paragraphs and writing notes in the margins.

A daily fifteen-minute task for five weeks produced dozens of pieces of writing that were critiqued in weekly meetings. These short texts took multiple forms, from postcards and concrete poetry to lists and poems. Some of the writing made its way into the Blovel, most didn't (see Appendix 6 for a full list).

This part of the mentoring resulted in a wider understanding of what forms writing might take and ultimately led to texts such as *'Thinking in straight lines'* 26th January 2020 – a visual image of the thesis which condenses the questions into a single page, and the 2nd March 2020 text, *'Letter to M'*.

4.6 Framing the disjointed texts as a whole

The Blovel is autoethnographic in its nature, nevertheless, after being used as research tool, method of data capture and reflective process, these texts are eventually presented in chronological order and become a story of the PhD process. Together the individual texts form a disjointed narrative which plots the progression of the PhD. Separate texts reminiscent of flash fiction, come together to form an entire document. Yet this story makes little sense; the narrative is patchy and incomplete. Because of the sporadic nature of the writing process, ideas are discussed – sometimes in detail – and then never mentioned again, and the reader never gains a full and comprehensive picture. It is a story, but the writing meanders up and down, to and fro with no rigid format or cohesive style. The only

part of the tale that is linear is the time which is chronologically structured in date order. This said, even the dates are sporadic, sometimes two posts in two days and sometimes months between texts.

This experimental format fits into what Roberta Rubenstein calls, '*disjunctiveness in narrative structure*' (Rubenstein 1994, p. 136). Rubenstein is describing a postmodern trend in writing as she describes and unpicks the novels of Margaret Drabble who uses a host of peculiar narrative forms in her writing such as lists, interview formats and the use of a narrator. More recently, Chelsea Biondolillo (2019) writes about her own experience of compiling her book of essays, *The Skinned Bird* (2019) and the strategies other authors have used to hold together deliberately disjointed narratives. In an article for The Rumpus.Net (2019) Biondolillo describes her fight to understand the format of her own essay collection which takes on various forms and is interspersed by photographs, migration lists and scientific observations. She ultimately concludes that her essays are not joined like a single crashing wave (by which she means a linear structure which builds to a crescendo) but by themes and motifs appearing and recurring like rings in the water, widening out from the first essay (Biondolillo 2019). There follows a list of texts with deliberately unconventional structures. Many of them are memoirs, including Penny Guisinger's, '*Postcards from Here*' (2016) which is written entirely in postcards, some only a single sentence. Others, Such as '*The Way we Weren't*' by Jill Talbot (2015) are essays which take different forms, including a college syllabus and letters to the Child Support Enforcement Unit.

Whilst the Blovel doesn't specifically correlate with any of these examples of unconventional structures, they do help to position it as an appropriate format. Each of the named texts provide examples of alternative structures. They are not always easy to navigate, neither do they provide a comfortable journey where ideas are followed logically and smoothly. Rather they are demanding of time, attention and an ability to negotiate gaps. These gaps leave a place into which the reader may pour their own thoughts and ideas.

4.7 The Blovel used in the thesis

This thesis does not take a conventional form. As introduced in Chapter One there are two voices throughout. The first is a traditional third person academic voice that gives factual

accounts and holds together a broadly chronological narrative account of the four-year process. Interspersed and entwined throughout the text is a second voice, that of the researcher/subject. These texts are identified by their change in colour and form. They are primarily written in the first person and do not necessarily follow the linear time format of the rest of the text. The two texts have a non-hierarchical relationship. The orange vignettes are not embedded simply to illustrate a point, rather they take over the 'telling' in a different manner, one which has the richness and texture of an autoethnographic account.

This leaves the thesis in a similar position to the entire Blovel, as a fragmented or disjointed narrative which demands more than passive reading. The reader is forced to cut away from the safe academic narrative to have an insight into the mind of the author. This is not unlike the way a homemaker is disrupted by the finishing of the washing machine or a knock on the door. It is patchy, fragmented and disjointed, thus requiring a change in perspective. In return this strategy offers a depth of information not necessarily available in a traditional thesis.

Whilst not yet common in a PhD thesis, the use of an alternative format is starting to occur, in particular this can be seen with creative, practice-based research.

In his 2016 PhD thesis *In search of the shortcuts: walking and narrative in physical, virtual and psychological space*, Simon Woolham describes the inserting of captured conversation into the thesis as his, '*parallel text format*' (Woolham 2016, p. 16).

The 1980s and 1990s saw steady further decline with high unemployment, decaying infrastructure, crime (and the fear of crime) and drug abuse problems. In 1982 the UK's unemployment hit 12.5%, northern England exceeded 15%, unemployment in Wythenshawe, was nearer 30%.

"Remember that boiler room? I say to Keith. Yeah the boiler room that we hung out in down in the basement, it was all flooded; we used to say it was Freddy Krueger's boiler room. Do you remember when we got caught in that fire? Someone had set fire to all the polystyrene in the hall, we were all down in that den under the stage and somebody put something on top of the trapdoor, so we couldn't get out, maybe they didn't realise, I reckon they did and ran. Some people just don't think, I think it was Franny who came and rescued us." (Excerpt from *Keith and Colin* 24th March 2013)

FIGURE 32 PAGE 139 OF SIMON WOOLHAM'S 2016 THESIS

IMAGE CREDIT: SIMON WOOLHAM

This gives his thesis several voices that create what he describes as a '*cross referential dialogue*' (Woolham 2016, p. 25) as the text is dispersed throughout the chapters. He uses

the column structure as a visual signifier of the collaborative dialogue in a similar way to how this thesis demarks the two voices using a coloured font.

CJ O'Neill takes a different approach in her 2018 PhD *My, Your, Our stories; A processual investigation of artistic interventions with everyday ceramics*. She uses a bright orange highlighting tool to point out key critical moments within the text. The orange is a recurring theme within the practice-based research and therefore the colour becomes a bridge between the practice and the thesis.

Whilst both of the above examples are different in form from this thesis, they have a common intention in providing a visual or dialogic link between the practice and the academic thesis. Each of the projects use the thesis as more than simply an explanation or the academic evidence required to complete the PhD. By embedding visual clues or links within the theses, the act of producing them becomes a creative act in and of itself.

4.8 Analysis of the writing

Reflections on the Blovel

12 January 2021

7.47 am - I always start the new year with good intentions; usually food and drink related resolutions which last days and sometimes weeks. I can't remember a time when a resolution has become habit – but still.

This year I have a mammoth task. I have to write a 40000-word thesis, and what's more, it has to make sense.

Sitting at my desk in my tiny office at home has become the default position during the COVID crisis. I teach from here, I research here and I even socialise here. It's draining! So over the Christmas break I hatched a plan. I'm going to break this immense undertaking into manageable chunks. An hour a day; maybe a little more on my days off. I also have an end date for writing which is this Christmas (give or take) but I've no way of calculating if my hourly patches will add up to fit the work that needs completing.

The first thing I've done is read through all the Blovel posts – every one. I thought it would be useful to have an overview. I've never done this before, which seems remiss now, but the experience was enlightening.

By reading in a consecutive manner I have been able to pull out some of the themes that I hadn't noticed were themes. It also gave me the opportunity to map the thesis in my head. There is already a skeleton that exists as a word document, a series of headings with notes and an occasional fully formed sentence. During the read-through I added thoughts and bits of Blovel text to the framework in appropriate places; putting a bit of meat on the bones so to speak. The reading leaves me with thinking to do.

This is the time-consuming bit; I made some notes:

Starting with a thorny issue, sometimes my writing is as boring as all hell. One day I was trying to economise by dictating to Siri and wrote a long post about it. I can see now that it's virtually impossible to read and as dull as the repetition of days during lockdown. I had a little mental argy-bargy with myself. Should I leave in the post or remove it? I've decided to leave it for now. I'm allowed to fail occasionally, and I did commit to being honest in the texts – even if it does make me look daft.

Another difficulty from the read through is the disjointedness. The fragmented texts are written sporadically, as and when the time I have available coincides with me having something to say. This sometimes results in a text where ideas fall off cliffs. They make an appearance and then are never mentioned again. Even whilst I was reading, I realised this was a true and accurate reflection of both the PhD process and a creative one. It reads a bit like a good foundation course sketchbook, with ideas lying around all over the place and which gradually ambles its way to a conclusion via blind alleys and rabbit holes of experimental bonkersness.

So now I've considered the glaring concerns within the texts, I should probably interrogate the more interesting points. There are several themes that continuously recur. They make the text (when read in one long stretch) appear a little repetitive. This said, they do support one of the aims of the Blovel which is to gather data.

The first thing that strikes me is the rapid switches from one state to another. This is more aggressive than I anticipated when it's translated to words. The writing jolts in a staccato

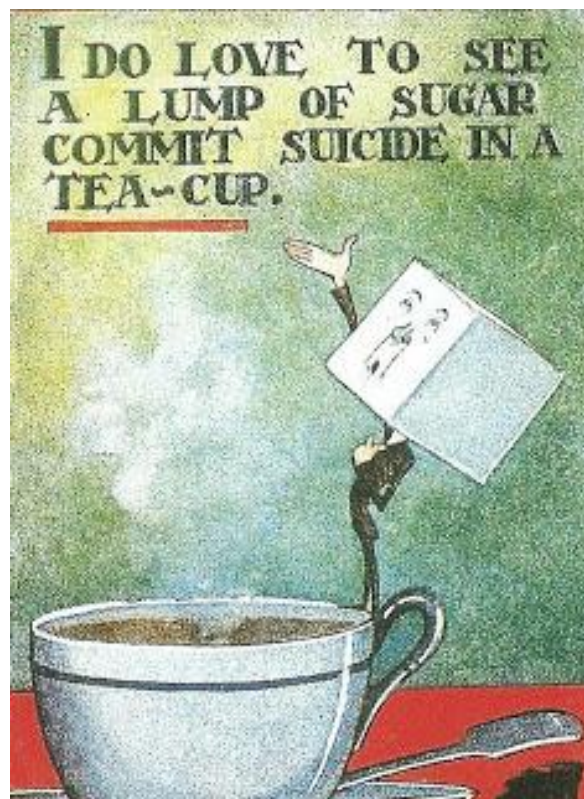
rhythm; backwards and forwards between the outwardly calm or engrossed worker to the slightly frazzled and irritated housewife who answers the door or attends to the demand from one of various buzzers and timers that punctuate the day. The electronic bleep of the washing machine interrupts the day with rhythmic regularity and I leave the realm of my creative (public) world and attend to its demand, often taking the opportunity to water the little pot plant on the stairs on the way past. After the task I resume my position in the pottery or at my desk and take a few moments to gather my thoughts after the temporal whiplash of the interruption. I recall reading a text early in my research. It spoke of the way women's daily consciousness is like a tapestry of experiences. The quote contains a list, of which I can only remember broccoli, but a similar list jumps out of the Blovel posts. Possibly a patchwork rather than a tapestry – maybe a collage even where things overlap.

There are the things I do for public work. Occurring primarily in either the studio or the office they are almost always punctuated by disruptions. Sometimes these are planned (like the sure and certain knowledge the washing machine will bleep) and some are spontaneous (like the doorbell ringing to signal another delivery of car shampoo or socks). My day consists of a series of overlaps and rapid changes in state from Mother to Artist to Housewife to Cook to Treasurer, to Lecturer to Daughter, and often two or more states intersect.

The next thing I notice is my reliance on food and coffee.

Coffee? In some ways coffee is the crux of this entire investigation. The use of the vessel right from the start is based loosely upon the coffee cup – the comfort, the conduit between both people and place. The object that makes an unnoticed transition between the public and the private and is equally at home in either. An image pops into my head. It's Boris Johnson on breakfast news taking a tray of tea out to the reporters outside his house. It must be before COVID (little did any of us know) because he clunkily handed out the steaming brews to the waiting press. The mismatched cups a reflection of the cupboard in every house in the land which contains an assortment of comical birthday gifts and freebies. I suspect most folks watching the article could lay claim to having a direct replica of at least one of those mugs; the mint aéro one with the sloping sides which came with easter eggs a few years ago or the one with crooked lettering which says, 'World's Best Dad' (replace name of relative until you have a matching mug). I digress, oh yes, coffee, puts me in mind

of a book someone gave me, 'The Book of Cups' (Clark 1990). It's a little gem which looks deceptively like one of those publications you'd pick up for a couple of quid from a big pile in the motorway service station, but is actually a lovely survey of the humble cup by prominent craft theorist Garth Clark. He begins by introducing the cup as the 'drone of the ceramics world' and then goes on to completely discredit his own theory by showing interpretations of this unpretentious vessel which range from the sublime to the ridiculous.



**FIGURE 33 ILLUSTRATION FROM GARTH CLARK'S BOOK OF CUPS
(LOOK AND LEARN / ELGAR COLLECTION) DATE UNKNOWN**

I'm now wondering if the whole Blovel makes sense at all. I occupy an odd position as both writer and reader so I don't have the objective distance necessary to figure this out and it's not the kind of thing you ask someone else to do for you. The text is at times rambling, repetitive and dull but then occasionally interesting and funny. Would anyone actually read it start to finish? As I read I hear my own voice, personal, chatty, meandering. No not my own actual voice but more like my internal dialogue – a diary – isn't that how this whole thing started?

4.9 How the Blovel interacts with practice

The Blovel also functions alongside the ceramics practice in a reciprocal arrangement of mapping, generating ideas, making and reflecting. The practice feeds the Blovel and vice versa. The information gathered through the diary-keeping contributes to the ideas for practice and once the ceramic production occurs, the writing again takes over as a space for reflection and speculation. Further evaluation of the relationship between the practices of writing and ceramic production is explored in part 5.5.

4.10 Conclusions and Evaluation

Whilst not an original intention of the study, a writing practice in the form of the Blovel has become central to this research.

It holds a complex position as:

Method

Tool of the Rhythmanalyst that allows for data capture with time stamped texts which plot the day.

Outcome

A document of approx. 35000 words that plots, describes and exposes the process and experience of undertaking a practice-based PhD and is an expanded part of the creative practice and the research process.

It is a unique method/outcome that holds together all parts of the PhD and contributes to the holistic nature of the study.

4.11 The Blovel texts contribution to the research aims:

Aim 2. To investigate and understand Henri Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis and use it to develop and execute an autoethnographic model of observing personal rhythms and creating ceramics-based work.

And

Aim 3. To produce a substantial body of work that explores and exposes the autoethnographic findings and is underpinned by conceptual and theoretical understanding of rhythmanalysis and the vessel.

The Blovel is now a fundamental part of an expanded clay practice, acting alternately as reflective tool, idea generator and outcome. It takes the form of an autoethnography in that it constitutes alternately (and sometimes concurrently) both a tool for gathering information about the culture of working from home and a narrative of the experience.

The writing proves itself a useful tool with which to take a more objective view of a very personal experience. It has helped to identify the rhythms, distractions and interruptions in process that have become fundamental to the understanding of the relationship between the public and private worlds. The Blovel enables the researcher to take a partially objective view of their lived experience and identify tiny details which are so familiar they might go overlooked without the mechanism of recording. Thus the individual Blovel texts wrap around the ceramics practice providing both the data collection that contributes towards the development of projects, and the reflective process which considers them during and after production.

In addition to providing a means to collect data the Blovel in its entirety constitutes a textual narrative that can be read as a whole, as individual texts or even alongside some of the ceramics works (for example the two texts that are embedded into the COVID Clay Diary book (see Chapter Seven).

Upon reflection, a significant and unexpected outcome of writing the texts starts to become evident. The document provides a personal insight into the *experience* of undertaking practice-based research.

There are dozens of publications dedicated to advising a research student on aspects of undertaking their PhD. Books by Russel (2008), Rugg and Petrie (2004) and Pope (2020) are helpful guides to everything from being more organised to caring for mental health during a research degree. Additionally, blogs by PhD researchers, such as the one facilitated by the University of Warwick (PhD-ing 101, 2021) provide guidance with a more personal context as the researchers relate their own experiences. These outputs, differ in their levels of formality and form, but still tend to provide advice and/or encouragement to those who follow.

The Blovel provides a different kind of insight as a result of its placement within the research. As an autoethnography, the writings are a personal experience of being inside a culture. In the case of this study the intended culture is that of maintaining a creative practice alongside domesticity, however, the subject of this study is also the researcher. As such, part of the subject being investigated is that of undergoing a PhD, and therefore a by-product of the process is inevitably going to be an investigation of that.

So four months into the PhD I find myself in an unexpected position. I'm currently questioning everything I know about myself. I'm restructuring the way I work and relearning things I thought I knew; all this from a position of fast approaching middle age. It's time consuming but I must be patient. Anyone who knows me will realise patience isn't a gift I have been blessed with.

I knew I would have to learn a great deal during my doctoral research, I just didn't realise so much of it would be about myself.

This kind of insight isn't totally unique. PhD researchers regularly publish their thoughts, advice to others and even, on occasion, their feelings about the process and their understanding of it. These are often distributed by way of the personal blog (Naylor 2020), sometimes via a publishing platform such as Charlie Pullen's 2017 *PhD diary for The Student* (Part of the Times Higher Education), and occasionally as peer reviewed articles like John Tregoning's *Coronavirus Diaries* in Nature journal (2020).

The abovementioned articles, diaries and blogs are all written for the purpose of publishing. During writing they are mediated by the idea that they are for this purpose. The difference with the Blovel is intent. The primary reason for writing the Blovel is to collect data and to reflect upon the progress or outcomes of the practice. Any references to the personal are a by-product, or secondary to the other purposes. This leaves this any additional insight as largely un-mediated, as the focus is on the other priorities. In addition to this, the Blovel's original intention was not as an elongated narrative account, hence the disjointed and patchy format. Despite this, a reader gets an overview of the entirety of the process, including glimpses of the personal life of the researcher and her personality. This is reminiscent of the way Carolyn Ellis deals with the writing of *The Ethnographic I*, in which she mentions her partner, even going into details about how they met and work together to develop the understanding of autoethnography (Ellis 2004, p. 8).

'*Can a work be both a novel and an ethnography?*' (Ellis, 2004 p.18). Ellis asks herself this very question early in her novel which then goes on to provide the evidence that it can. The Blovel leans on this very evidence.

This leaves the Blovel as a true autoethnography. It is, as Ellis describes, '*research, writing, story, and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political*' (Ellis 2004, p. 19).

The writing takes an overarching role in the research. It is the glue that binds the parts together, providing reflection, method, thinking space and eventually a story and support for the thesis. It is a strategy that takes the many parts of a research practice and connects them, and as such is a wraparound method that enables a holistic overview of what is a complex set of ideas.

The following chapters will explore the ceramics practice and outcomes, that have been made possible by the input from the Blovel.

5 Chapter Five – Ceramics Practice and Development



FIGURE 34 WEARABLE CERAMICS 2018 ANGELA TAIT

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

A Colour Manifesto

10 March 2021

Colour must be fun, vibrant, obvious and tear your eyes out at a glance

Colours should ping and ting and zing

They should ring and sing

They should pop and shock and rock

Fluorescent and neon is fine

Pinks and reds and greens of all kinds

Purples and blues and oranges, like Joseph's coat

Turquoise and yellow – together, yes please

Sometimes it infuriates like a stubborn itch

but it's never drab

Subtle doesn't belong

5.1 Chapter Introduction

As a practice-based research project, much of the first and second years of this PhD were spent in the studio. As the studio is also on the same site as the domestic life (the studio is in a garage next to the house), there is an inherent overlap between the process/place of production with the domestic.

This chapter starts by introducing the origin of the practice and then briefly overviews the outputs from the first two years. It goes on to unpick the relationship between the writing (considered in Chapter Four) and the practice.

The works produced during the research are documented in Appendix One and most were shown in the '*Work in Progress*' show at Gallery Frank in 2020 (Appendix Five).



FIGURE 35 WORK IN PROGRESS EXHIBITION 2020, GALLERY FRANK, ANGELA TAIT

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

5.2 Origin of the practice

This research did not commence from a standing start. The work made comes from a practice which is more than a decade old. As far back as 2008 the practice was forced to negotiate a complex place between the public world of (then) an undergraduate degree in Fine Art and private, domestic life as a Mother with a young family.

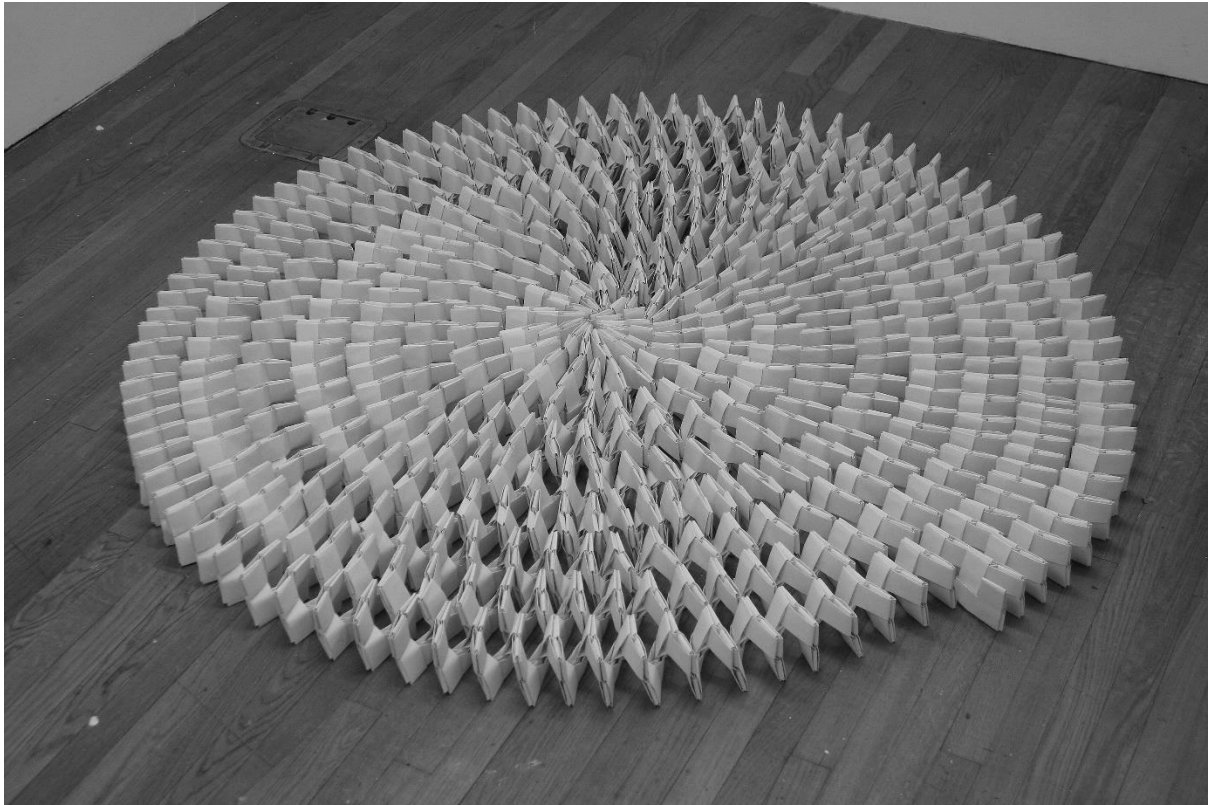


FIGURE 36 UNTITLED ANGELA TAIT 2008

FOLDED PAPER, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE

IMAGE CREDIT: CRAIG TATTERSALL

The above image shows an installation from 2008. Constructed from everyday printer paper, each piece was folded by hand over a period of several weeks. The modular construction could be managed in the 'gaps' between the demands of family life. A few pieces made whilst the potatoes are boiling for tea and then some in the evening after the bedtime routine. The material is inexpensive, plentiful and speaks of the quotidian, albeit in a rather more public or commercial way than specifically domestic.



FIGURE 37 UNTITLED (PORCELAIN AND DRESSMAKING PINS) 2015 ANGELA TAIT

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

Early in the research, works tended to reflect the existing and long-established studio practice which, at that stage, was primarily mixed-media vessels that investigate the conceptual and material tensions between ceramics, domestic fibre/textiles and art installation.

The practice that followed takes these existing influences and ideas and builds upon them whilst integrating the discoveries and observations drawn from the Blovel writing.

5.3 Framing the Practice - Observations

The following section investigates some of the recurring processes and materials within the practice and places them in context.

5.3.1 Textile pieces

One of the most pertinent lines of enquiry during this period was in the making of mixed media pieces. The additional mediums were mostly fibre/textiles in various guises. The

original rationale for the textile additions was a personal and intimate relationship with the 'domestic crafts' of knitting, sewing and crochet.

I Remember

15 August 2019

I remember... Sitting on my Grandma's knee, her arms wrapped around my skinny, four or five-year-old body as she gently guided my clumsy but willing hands to crochet a floppy necklace from the leftover scrappy ends of her balls of wool. No pattern, just the inside couple of rows of a doily or granny square attached to a single stitch chain and tied loving around my neck.

I know the gestures were gentle and loving even though I'm not entirely sure that the memory is a real one, or a narrative mythologised into personal legend by maternal storytelling. I can't feel the pressure of my scrawny thighs against an apron over older legs, or even picture a room where this might have taken place. I don't get sudden recollections from long forgotten smells and I'm not even sure I can visualise a face, yet...

I can crochet. There is no other conceivable lineage for this skill. My Mum can knit, so there's no question where this aspect of my (admittedly limited) repertoire of domestic craft skills originated; but she can't crochet – she was shown many times but just couldn't grasp it apparently. I'm left confused and a little tangled, but regardless of the origin of this knowledge or the identity of my teacher, I'm grateful for my introduction into this rich and rewarding technique.

Amongst the works from 2018-20 are pieces with hand tufted inserts using a technique employed to produce domestic rugs, many small thrown pieces with inset embroidery and an extensive series of, 'Yarn Bowls', the name a pun on the materiality of the objects and the ability of the work to hold and relate stories, like the one above.



**FIGURE 38 THROWN AND ALTERED WORKS WITH EMBROIDERY ADDITIONS MADE BETWEEN 2018-2020
WORK IN PROGRESS SHOW, GALLERY FRANK, ANGELA TAIT**



FIGURE 39 INSTALLATION OF 'YARN BOWLS' 2019, ANGELA TAIT
THROWN STONEWARE VESSELS WITH CROCHETED COTTON ADDITIONS
IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

5.3.2 Multiples or series of works

Multiples have always featured; a symptom of the fragmented day and the need to make works that are rapid to produce in small segments of time. During 2018-2020 hundreds of individual works were made (Appendix 1), many taking evident references from the world of the domestic. The series, '*Untitled (Hard Pressed)*' 2018, was a collection of thrown and ironed vessels with post-firing additions of both embroidery thread and found objects.



FIGURE 40 UNTITLED (HARD PRESSED), ANGELA TAIT 2018

THROWN AND IRONED BOWL, WHITE AND BLACK PORCELAIN WITH EMBROIDERY SILK



FIGURE 41 UNTITLED (HARD PRESSED) 2018, ANGELA TAIT
THROWN AND IRONED PORCELAIN WITH UNDERGLAZE AND KEY

The work veers towards collections or series. Appendix 1 shows groups of works made around the same time, such as the *Yarn Bowls*, *Hard Pressed* and *No Wonder* (which is explored further in part 5.4 below and Chapter Six). There are several reasons for this. The first is a tendency towards economies of scale. A Fordian understanding of the ability to make multiples by packaging the entire elongated ceramics process into its independent constituent part. Additionally, this way of working produces an outcome that isn't reliant on the single unique object, removing the preciousness of the art object and forging a link with the mass production of the everyday. Finally, the multiple plays a significant part in helping to understand the investigation at hand. Through the repetitive making of multiples or series, links start to emerge with the cyclical nature or endlessness of the domestic chore.

5.4 Work in Progress exhibition

In November 2020 several hundred individual and series of works were shown in a '*Work in Progress*' show at Gallery Frank in Littleborough. Further details are contained in Appendix 5

Work in progress show

11 November 2020

1.37pm - So, big news – there's a vaccine, or a couple of vaccines. They've been rushed through testing at warp-speed and are almost ready for rollout. This, of course, has set social media alight with speculation.

On the flip side we're right in the middle of the long anticipated second wave, the hospitals are perilously close to capacity and we're six days into a further nationwide lockdown. Some businesses are again suffering severe financial hardship and Christmas looms like a predictable spectre just weeks away.

1.58 pm - I'm sitting in the middle of my show, *Works in Progress* at the beautiful Gallery Frank just outside Manchester on the edge of the gloriously November-bleak Pennine hills. I say exhibition, but it might better be described as an exposition or, more unkindly, a colourful jumble sale. In the gallery are most of the works made in the first couple of years of my PhD research. On a rough count, 500+ individual objects exploring ideas from the quirky to the downright ridiculous. There are small thrown vessels pegged to washing lines, wearable ceramics and pots I have literally run over with my car (to clarify, this is whilst they're wet, not post-firing).



FIGURE 42 AT THINKING AND WRITING AT THE WORK IN PROGRESS EXHIBITION

IMAGE CREDIT: MARY NAYLOR

The purpose of this show is not specifically to 'show'. This is fortunate because of the restrictive circumstances we find ourselves in. I couldn't have visitors even if I wanted to. My primary purpose for putting together all the things in the same place is rather more selfish and insular. I want to sit in the middle of it – like I'm doing now – and think.

I thought I had a pretty good idea of what I'd made and what I was thinking at the time, I have endless documents, images, reflective texts as part of my 'process'. But even as I started to unpack box after crate after carton, I can start to see other stories emerge. There

are threads of thinking which have only occurred to me very recently. The last month or so I've been searching for a new title for my thesis. During the 'throwing words about' conversations with myself the word *stories* has raised its head more than a few times. At first I tried to dismiss this as an issue on the periphery, but it's been demanding more attention than any of the other more outlying themes.

What if this is the crux of everything I've done and the ideas of the domestic, temporality and the public/private world are just incidental themes?

Stories run like invisible threads through the finished works. Now, months or years after making, some pieces have inherited further meanings both from their history or from mine. Here, together in the same room, I can also identify a path through the work which is difficult to fathom at a distance.

Let me explain...

In 2018 I made a series of works I called yarn bowls.



FIGURE 43 'MAY CONTAIN NUTS' 2018 STONEWARE WITH PINK COTTON AND MASONRY

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG



FIGURE 44 UNTITLED (YARN BOWL), THROWN STONWARE AND YELLOW COTTON 2018

ANGELA TAIT

They are thrown stoneware pieces with coloured crochet additions which render them totally non-functional. They're also not understandable as decoration in a traditional sense, so they don't fit at all into any of the usual understandings of ceramics. At the time I was conscious of the double meaning of the title and the ability of a work of art to 'spin a yarn' but I didn't realise the significance of the works in a more elongated narrative. The yarn bowls would subsequently evolve into wearable ceramics where the additions became gloves and hats and scarves, thrusting both the garments and the ceramics further into a world of confused (dys)functionality.



FIGURE 45 WEARABLE CUP AND SAUCER 2019, PORCELAIN AND COTTON

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG



FIGURE 46 WEARABLE CERAMICS 2019 ANGELA TAIT

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

Later still the idea of soft fibre additions to the rigid stoneware vessels converged with another line of thinking and became the work *No Wonder*; a series of 114 tiny thrown vessels with embroidery thread additions that related to data I'd collected from my domestic chores.



FIGURE 47 NO WONDER (DETAIL) 2018, ANGELA TAIT

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

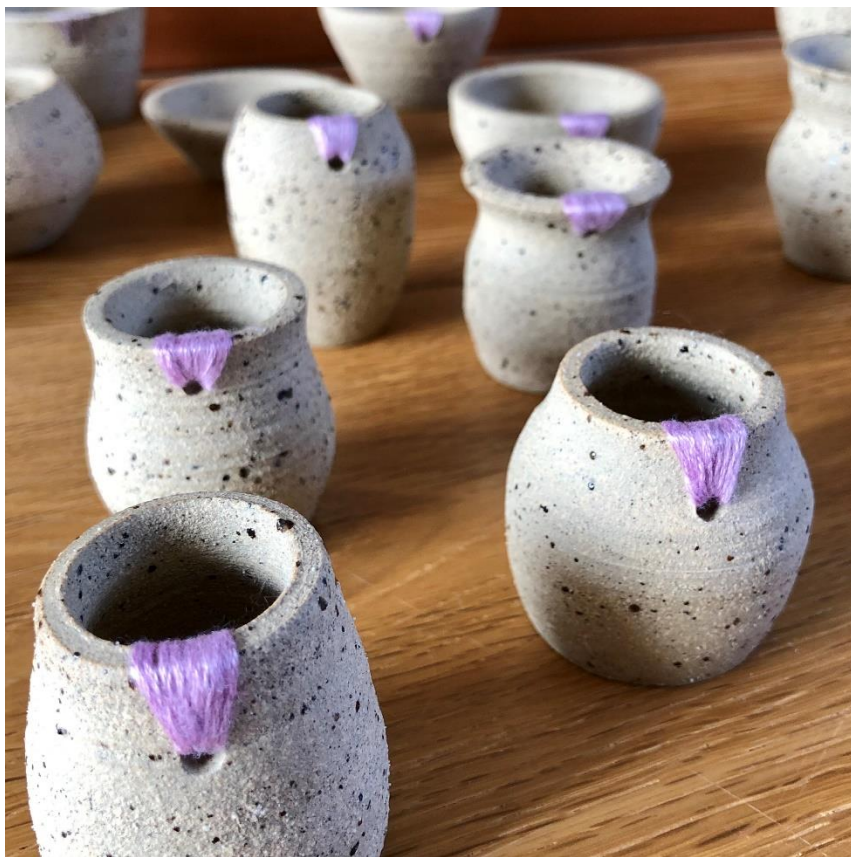


FIGURE 48 NO WONDER (DETAIL) 2018, ANGELA TAIT

The Great Grandchild of *No Wonder* is the performance and installation 'Smalls 2020' a hybrid idea which tells the story of my experience of doing the washing in the gaps between my public working life.

Smalls is explored further in Chapter Six



FIGURE 49 SMALLS 2019/20

THROWN AND PEGGED STONWARE WITH MIXED GLAZES, EMBROIDERY AND RIBBON, ANGELA TAIT

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG



FIGURE 50 SMALLS (DETAIL) 2019/20 ANGELA TAIT

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

3.28 pm I'm still in the gallery and getting cold. I have had several delightful distractions in the form of resident artists popping in for a chat. Topics of conversation have gone from art to Covid, to philosophy to Covid, to social media to mental illness and, again, Covid. Sometimes we've even talked about the array of brightly coloured works that are screaming for attention around us. These conversations almost always revolve around a story of some kind. Me explaining what my thought process was for driving over newly thrown pots, or why it's important that I make soft furnishings out of hard ceramic. I've talked about metaphor and autobiography and the difference between story and ritual. As I speak, I regularly find I'm describing things in a way which makes them easier to understand. As I search for 'better' or more accessible description I sometimes stumble upon language which I hadn't been able to grasp properly, and this helps me to slot another file in my cerebral cabinet.

3.54 pm – My fingers can no longer be relied upon. I have to stop typing and go home. I remembered I left some barbeque pulled pork in the slow cooker and it might have bypassed optimum eating consistency. Nevertheless, a productive and enlightening couple

of hours which, whilst not exactly straightening all my wrinkled thoughts, has helped clarify a few matters.

5.5 Relationship between the Blovel and the Ceramics Practice

This section starts to explore the relationship that the writing (Chapter Four) has with the ceramics practice. Initially this is best illustrated by two examples:

5.5.1 Example One – How writing promotes ideas and feeds the practice

Don't forget

23rd August 2019

This morning whilst still in bed, I was tenderly kissed goodbye with a coffee and a list of don't forgets:

- Don't forget S the electrician will be here in ten minutes...he'll need access to the gas pipe
- Don't forget the Carpet man is coming at 11....please remember to ask him about the machine.
- Don't forget it says in the diary you're seeing M this afternoon

The perpetual problem about working from home, the perception that it's not 'real work'.

Secretly I know that I'll also be interrupted at least once by a delivery. I ordered a book yesterday, ostensibly in the name of research (as in it's about ceramics) but more because I wanted it. I don't mention this as it's not the first one this week, but it does mean I'll inevitably have to get up and answer the door...

And then open the package...

And then flick through...

Might as well make a coffee whilst I'm up, and drink whilst flicking.

I rise knowing at least five other people will come and go from the house today. They're all people I like, but still, they're in my space and demanding of my time in their own way; and they'll all want coffee.

Coffee, my lifeblood and my biggest distraction, whether making for myself or for others.

My excuse and my disruption.

Update later:

I could make a coffee cup for everyone who created a rift in my workflow today?

- Husband: Excessive organiser, he brings me coffee in bed
- D (Builder) Kind and thorough ... likes coffee, used to have two sugars but now has none, likes a biscuit
- S (Gas man) – He had to go into bedroom to turn off boiler. I hadn't made bed.
- P (carpet man) – Couldn't quite remember what I was supposed to ask?
- M (goddaughter) Has had operation to reduce boobs, had to visit
- Postman – A welcome distraction today
- J (Cleaner) Indispensable, likes a chat

The series of works speculated about in the text above were made and titled, '*Don't forget*'. Seven domestically scaled cups with mixed media additions relating to each of the visitors or distractions.



FIGURE 51 'DON'T FORGET - PART J' 2020, THROWN AND ALTERED STONEWARE WITH SPONGE

ANGELA TAIT



FIGURE 52 'DON'T FORGET - POSTMAN' 2020, THROWN AND ALTERED STONEWARE, ANGELA TAIT

5.5.2 Example Two – How the writing maps and allows understanding of process

Throwing Marathon

27 August 2018

11.30 - Yesterday I fully intended to throw 114 small vessels as previously mentioned. This didn't happen. Despite being completely alone at home due to family holidays, work commitment and a fortuitous business trip, I was interrupted by friends and circumstances.

So today is Bank Holiday Monday. I'm still alone and determined. Following a series of tortuous administrative distractions, I'm ready.

I've been thinking about this idea and wondering what I'm looking for. I suppose my original hypothesis was that there is a kind of rhythm in my domestic work which becomes reflected in my creative practice. To measure this I will have to take the same approach to mapping the creation of a work that I took to the mapping of my dailiness. That means writing during the process. I have two options, either write with a pencil or take voice notes. Due to the extreme northern-ness of my accent, Siri doesn't always completely understand what I'm saying. Her misinterpretations range from bizarre to (occasionally) downright rude.

So, armed with pencil and my favorite yellow legal pad, I'm off to the pottery.

11.40 AM - There's some regular pottery admin to do. A few things I made a couple of days ago that need turning. I think I'll leave these until later to break up the throwing a little.

Radio on

Kettle on

Lights on

Heater on, heater immediately blows the pottery fuse which is frustrating, and I should probably be more worried about this than I am.

11.53AM - I wedge and prepare some clay. I'm going to throw off the hump. It's the most economical way of producing a lot of thrown vessels at one sitting. After 20 minutes I've made the first ten. Well, I say twenty minutes but it's actually quarter past 12. The actual process of throwing is quite rapid once I hit my stride. It's the constant cleaning, washing slurry off my hands, and recycling wet clay with dry, and other in between bits which take the time.

12.49PM - I've thrown 24. I'm learning as I go along. The dryer the thrown pieces are the more likely they will hold their shape when lifting off the hump. Too dry and they'll drag on my fingers and spoil. This is what Schön refers to as *reflection in action*. Reflections which are made during the process in order for alterations in that process which make it more productive.

I have a break to turn the previously mentioned four pieces. They're at that perfect consistency for turning but I've altered them after throwing so the rims aren't straight and I have to make some clay chucks to help me out.

After this I wash the tools, empty the wheel water and prepare some more clay. It's about now I start to get blasé about the throwing. This results in a few losses and me having to have a word with myself and force myself to regain concentration.

1.37 PM - I've made thirty-four and a little pang of hunger strikes. I have a little chuckle to myself as this is one of the things that came out of the Birmingham conference workshop. I recall someone saying he's always hungry and this is a distraction from his creative practice. I feel like this is relevant to the research but I'm not entirely sure how.

2.54 PM - Much longer lunch than usual. I ended up putting the washer on (there's some kind of lovely poetic symmetry here as I'm making pots to represent the washing). Then I got distracted crocheting into another ceramic piece which I'm working on. Just another row to see what the developing pattern looks like.

I've barely started again when I get a visit from a scout leader wanting some petty cash out of my treasurer's tin. He stays half an hour as he has concerns about something going on in the group which he wants my opinion on. During this time I'm twitchy to get back to work. I end up promising to chase up some of his concerns, this is an addition to my perpetual to-do list but I resolve to think about it this afternoon during the rest of my throwing.

3.57 PM - Recommence throwing

4.16 PM - Interrupted by a phone call.

6.01 PM - I've had a good run. I'm up to number 92.

7.04 PM and I've done 114. I should do a couple more to allow for thin bottoms which might crack or other potential (and probable) mishaps in the finishing process. I have decided to

try to turn all the pots. I had considered sanding the bottoms flat but I really like a nicely turned bottom and if I decide to hang them the bottoms will inevitably show.

Some thoughts about what I'll do with the pots have been swimming around this afternoon. I have decided to drill a hole in each one in order to hang it. They might not eventually be hung but the hole will render them non-functional anyway which is a personal nigggle, a legacy of the antiquated Art/craft/design debate.

I'm tired, my hands are sore from washing them all the time and I am filthy! A perfunctory tidy up and I'm done for the day.



FIGURE 53 NO WONDER (IN PROGRESS) 2018, ANGELA TAIT

This research is as much about the process of making as it is about the final objects or outcomes. The way in which things are made give clues to the relationship which is speculated about in research question 1.

The rhythm of producing small objects that are made incrementally, bit by bit, in a pattern which moulds itself around other parts of the day, fits with the findings of the Blovel which often describes disruptions and interruptions and exposes a temporal experience that is fragmented and where domestic and public tasks sit alongside one another and often overlap.

The outcomes (works produced) hold the legacy of this process. Sometimes implicitly, but often explicitly; for example, installations of multiple pieces like *'No Wonder'* 2018 that reads as a whole collection but have been made according to this sporadic and disjointed process. The ceramics made during the day and the textile additions over multiple evenings (see Chapter Six for more details).



FIGURE 54 NO WONDER (DETAIL) 2018, 114 THROWN AND ALTERED STONEWARE VESSELS WITH EMBROIDERED KEY, ANGELA TAIT

5.5.3 Themes exposed by the writing

In addition to the above examples, the Blovel writing has a broader reach in its enveloping role in the research.

The posts map the production and reflect upon the experience of making, giving concrete evidence of some of the themes that would otherwise have been difficult to grasp. Upon a full reading in chronological order there are several themes that emerge which bear relevance to, and start to understand the production of, the ceramic pieces.

The first, and by far the most prevalent, is the reliance upon coffee. The coffee cup is mentioned in a significant number of the posts – sometimes twice.

5.5.3.1 The Coffee Cup

My favourite coffee cups in the order I would choose them

19 August 2019

Morning coffee is the first delight of my day, especially if served in one of my two favourite cups.

My first choice would always be the clean white porcelain vessel that holds plenty of energy giving, hot, frothy liquid. This was a gift from a friend, someone who knows me well.

Outwardly it sports images of the hungry caterpillar and all the things he ate before his alchemical transformation. The inside reveals a sunshine as you sip; the dawning of a new day.

If the metamorphosing insect isn't available, I would choose another porcelain piece.

Purchased two years ago at the British Ceramics Biennial, this is a disappointingly generic commercial vessel with almost enough fragility to be considered elegant. Its saving grace is the design by Manchester potter and professor Steve Dixon. His naïve looking - but glorious - drawings 'medals for peace' are printed around the cup. I feel a little cheated by the mass-

produced cup, but I'm content to drink with the comfort of a positive political message and a tenuous relationship to someone I admire.

The coffee and its accompanying vessel make noticeably frequent appearances in the text. They are often a distraction, an unremarkable fleeting thought which, without the mapping provided by the Blovel, would have probably gone unnoticed. In the Blovel text, 'Frustration and Moaning' (4th February 2019) the narrative flits from a description of the day complete with a to-do list of tasks, to an acknowledgement of a personal feeling of being cold and craving a cup of coffee. This happens with regularity throughout the texts and reinforces the speculation from Chapter One that the coffee vessel isn't just universally understandable but sits comfortably on the overlap between the public and private worlds.

5.5.3.2 The Washing Machine

A second phenomenon noticeable in the Blovel texts for its regularity is the interruption caused by the washing machine. Throughout the writing the text is punctuated by a series of frustrated comments which signal the machine's mechanical double-bleep that is the call for the end of the cycle and a demand to be emptied. This is further considered in the following chapter when this information is used as the basis for the performance and installation, '*Smalls*'.

5.5.3.3 Making – an omission

Another theme that is exposed by the writing is the scheduling of the making. As described in part 5.3.1, many of the ceramic outcomes have mixed media additions that are attached or embedded post-firing.



**FIGURE 55 UNTITLED (HARD PRESSED), 2018 THROWN AND IRONED STONEWARE WITH COTTON CROCHET ADDITIONS
ANGELA TAIT**

The Blovel posts rarely consider the textile additions. This is a symptom of the time of day when this work takes place. The textile additions are made during the evening; a time that is outside of the regular or expected realm of the public, and therefore when writing doesn't happen. This is purportedly a time set aside for the family, where the domestic takes over and private intimate relationships are fostered. A knitting, sewing or crochet activity can easily be structured alongside other tasks. It is quiet, discrete and doesn't require full concentration all the time. Textile working can often go unnoticed embedded in an evening of conversations, television or even in the gaps between other tasks.

5.6 Conclusion

This work starts to focus the rather vague notions of the 'relationship' that is speculated about in the early days and establish the importance of time, rhythm and disruption as factors that link domestic and public tasks. Throughout the chapter processes, themes and production modes are exposed and the relationships between the making and the writing have been interrogated further.

This chapter has unpicked some of the information from the practice and the writing that shows patterns of making and how the work responds to its context of domestic restrictions or disruptions.

At this point it could be concluded:

- That the ceramics practice is a product of its environment in its production, aesthetic and themes. When they are done in the setting of the home, both sets of practice (the ceramics and the writing) are subject to the already complex set of rhythms that dominate domestic tasks. The planning of work into parcels of time that make the most of economies of scale appear to be present in both the creative and domestic tasks. In addition to this, the layering of the public and the private is evidenced as a kind of choreographed 'dance' which flits effortlessly and unnoticed between the two worlds, often punctuated by disruptions signalled by bleeps, rings, knocks and pings.
- Because of the above, both ceramic and written outcomes take on a distinct aesthetic. They tend towards multiples of pieces that build into a larger wholes or series.
- There is an additional 'shift' that occurs in the evening which wholly overlaps with private family time. This contributes additions to the ceramics pieces that are frequently textile based.
- The vessel is of primary concern and is still usually a thrown piece. Increasingly the forms are abstracted by a post-throwing process which renders them non-functional.

The above information and large body of practice leaves some residual ideas that will be expanded in the next two chapters via the performance/installation piece called '*Smalls*' (Chapter Six) and the '*COVID Clay Diary*' (Chapter Seven).

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FIGURE 56 SMALLS (PERFORMANCE IN PROGRESS) 2020, ANGELA TAIT

THE WINDOW GALLERY, SALFORD

IMAGE CREDIT: BABS SMITH

A haptic conversation with some clay

1st July 2019

She wedges;

You obligingly mix the chaotic mass into a homogenous and neatly aligned whole

She throws;

You create a suction bond on the static wheel, clinging hard to resist the inevitable centrifuge

She clenches;

You reluctantly shift to the centre with a little of your characteristic resistance

She squeezes;

You rise

She presses;

You lower

She repeats;

You acquiesce, content to be under the authorship of the confident hands

6.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the work '*Smalls*' which is a ceramics-based performance and installation; the title relating to both the size of the vessels made and the colloquialism 'washing your smalls'.

The chapter will plot the development of the work from its origins in a decade-old work and through its several iterations. Smalls will be contextualised in an expansion of the contextual framework set out in Chapter Two.

It will conclude with an analysis of the findings and evaluation of the work.

6.2 Origin of Smalls

Smalls has a long history. Its Great-Grandfather was a piece made in 2010 called *No Wonder* (2010). This work gave rise to a second version - *No Wonder* (2018) in the early stages of the PhD (See Chapter Five for further details).

Both are explored below via two of the Blovel diaries.

No Wonder (2010)

25th August 2018

10.20 am Saturday

My office is upstairs, and my washing machine is on the ground floor.

Those stairs are well trodden!

The family washing has a different shape from other tasks, like cooking for example.

Cooking has to be done at a certain time and often has to be watched. It is a start to finish process.

- Prepare food,
- cook food,
- eat food,
- Clear up inevitable mess.

Washing isn't like this. It's more of a perpetual or cyclical endeavour. There might be various stages of the process happening at the same time, and unlike preparing food, it's never finished. Currently the washing machine and the dryer are both on. There are also some random pieces of clean washing drying in the kitchen.

Everyone is away except for me so there's not a lot of washing in waiting i.e. dirty things, however I'm going to the gym in an hour so there soon will be. I think this illustrates my point about the perpetual nature of the chore.

So how does this fit with or alongside or amongst my practice?

Sometimes this happens in a very specific way. My piece *'No Wonder'* 2010 is a series of 147 crudely cut ceramic butterflies, each embossed with the name of a piece of washing that passed through my hands one day that summer. The title hints at the mundanity of the washing process but secretly stands for, *'No wonder the fucking washing machine is always on'*. The work is presented in a box, all the butterflies stacked against one another. There is a tension between the idea of the butterfly as a gossamer winged, free flying spirit and the rigid ceramic crammed into a small space. Visually the rhythmic image of shaking and folding of fresh smelling clothing into a basket is also referenced.

Authors note: Currently this work only partially exists due to an unfortunate incident involving clumsy potter and a floor.



FIGURE 57 NO WONDER (DETAIL), EMBOSSED EARTHENWARE, 2010 ANGELA TAIT



FIGURE 58 NO WONDER (WORK IN PROGRESS) 2018, ANGELA TAIT

2.50 PM

Following a rather frantic spin class...

An aside: This reminds me of the spin cycle on the washing machine and also the spinning of the potter's wheel. I file this information under 'm' for 'might be a useful idea one day'.

...and a much more leisurely lunch, I've just recorded the status of today's washing. There are 114 items in total covering all stages of the current cycle. 55 items in the washer (one load), 43 items out of the dryer and ready to be put away and 13 'delicates' drying. Not a massive day, I'd estimate this as an average occurrence two or three times a week.

During lunch I have quickly drawn another idea that consists of a series of extruded strips which are hung in a random but sculptural way against a wall. I vaguely wonder if I've time to extrude these before the current washing cycle finishes.

5.30 PM

The answer is no. There's never time to do anything in the pottery before the next load finishes. The place seduces you with its endless opportunities and spending less than a couple of hours in there would be like going to B and Q and only buying what you went for. On the plus side, I've thought through some of the ideas which have been floating around today. I've actually (temporarily) dismissed some things I've been playing with and decided to spend tomorrow throwing 114 small but individual pieces which (in my mind) represent today's washing. These won't have a visual reference to the original garments (although I have considered making the ones representing bras into jugs as a kind of inside joke) and so the meaning will have to be transferred in another way. I'm wondering if process might be that carrier of meaning in this case. Can I make a connection between the process of making my tiny vessels and doing the washing?

Will timings, rhythms, backwards and forward motions between parts of the making cycles provide something meaningful?

This work is initially considered in Chapter Five as part of the initial research. *No Wonder* (2018) is a series of 114 individual stoneware vessels, each thrown, turned and drilled. The pieces relate directly to the washing list (Figure 60). After firing, each pot is finished with a small, embroidered tag which relates directly to the garment it represents via a colour coded key.



FIGURE 59 NO WONDER (COLLAGED) 2018, THROWN AND EMBROIDERED VESSELS, ANGELA TAIT

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

6.3 Smalls

Smalls is a performance developed during the investigation of the research questions and as a result of the early research (and *No Wonder* 2018) described in Chapter Five.

The starting point for the performance is a week's worth of washing. Washing is identified by the Blovel writings as one of the two primary disruptions that punctuate the rhythm of the public/private day (part 5.5.3.2).

The following table was made during a week in 2018 and contains a list of tallies which documents the washing for that week. The data is categorised by type of garment and the stage in the washing cycle.

Tee towels		Socks	### ### ### ### ### ### ### ### ###
T-Shirts	###		
Joggers		Underpants	### ###
Gym Towels	###	Bread dough cloth	
Running top		Undershirt	
Jeans		Pillowcase	
Bath towel		Polo neck sweater	
Duster		Gym leggings	
Dress		Vest	###

FIGURE 60 PAGE FROM DIARY - LIST OF WASHING FROM A WEEK IN 2018

This information is then translated, piece by piece into small thrown vessels; one vessel for each piece of washing. Each mini pot is then taken and pegged onto a washing line. The lines of wet pots grow as the performance develops, in real time, in front of the viewer. As the pots start to dry and firm up, they are punctured with holes. Ribbons are threaded through the holes and left to form loops which go from pot to pot.



FIGURE 61 SMALLS (WORK IN PROGRESS), ANGELA TAIT

HOME STUDIO APRIL 2020



FIGURE 62 SMALLS, ANGELA TAIT APRIL 2020

6.4 Development of Smalls – Micro Residency

The first iteration of ‘Smalls’ was produced during a micro residency at the University of Salford in October 2019 (Full details in Appendix 2). The residency was a pedagogical experiment; an opportunity for the Fine Art students to observe the working practice of an artist, ask questions and gain an insight into a professional studio culture.

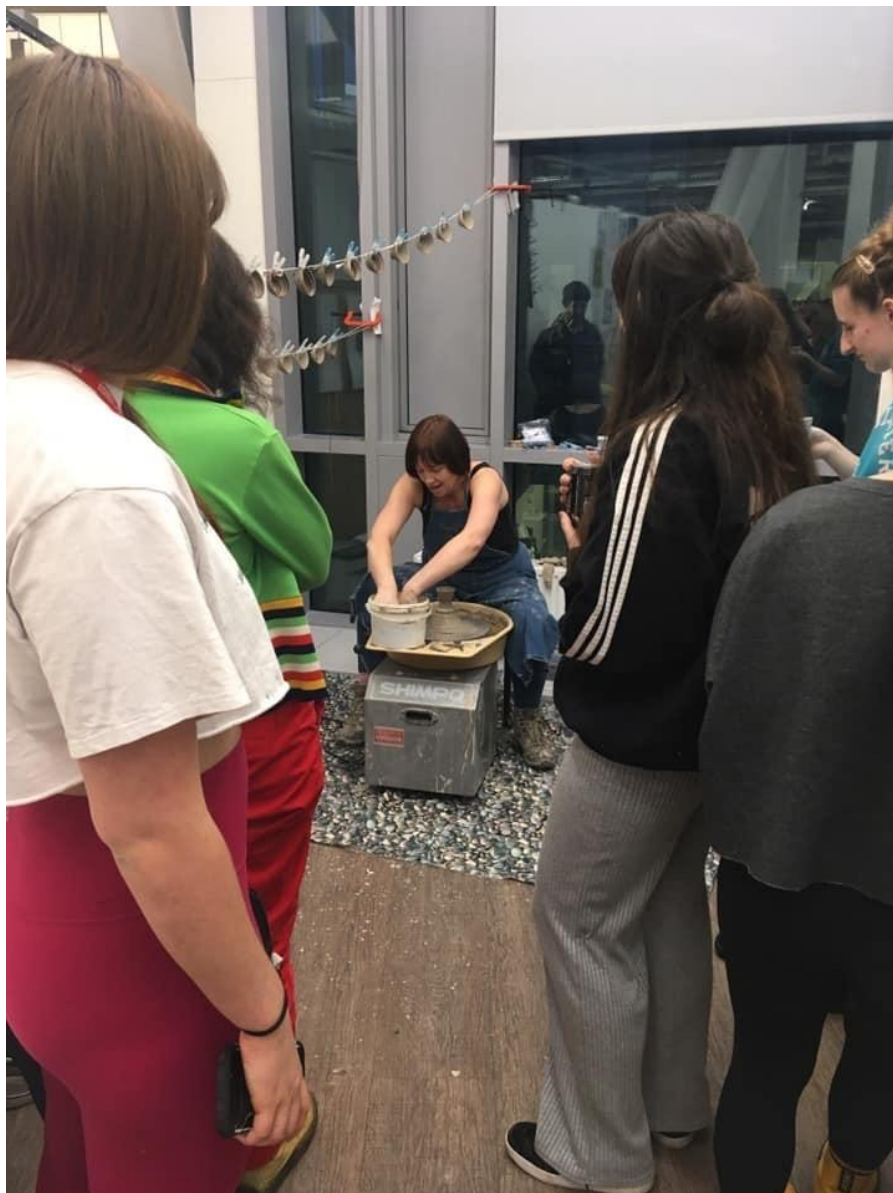


FIGURE 63 ANGELA TAIT WORKING DURING THE SALFORD MICRO RESIDENCY

NOVEMBER 2019

Amongst the dozens of works created over three days (detailed in Appendix 1 and 2) was an advancement of *No Wonder 2018*. This transpired as an amalgamation of the ideas of the peg as a symbol of the domestic, the desire to understand and expose the rhythm of the domestic chore and the need to maintain the use of the vessel as the ubiquitous form.

Due to the circumstance of the residency – no kiln and the necessity for immediate results - the original stoneware pieces from *No Wonder 2018* became unfired, thrown and pegged objects and the complex embroidery key was replaced with more playful and sculptural ribbons.

The practice and research benefitted from the removal from the studio. Explicitly, the making became a performance, consolidating some of the ideas around the experience of rhythm by introducing a time-based event where the audience were exposed to the construction of the work.

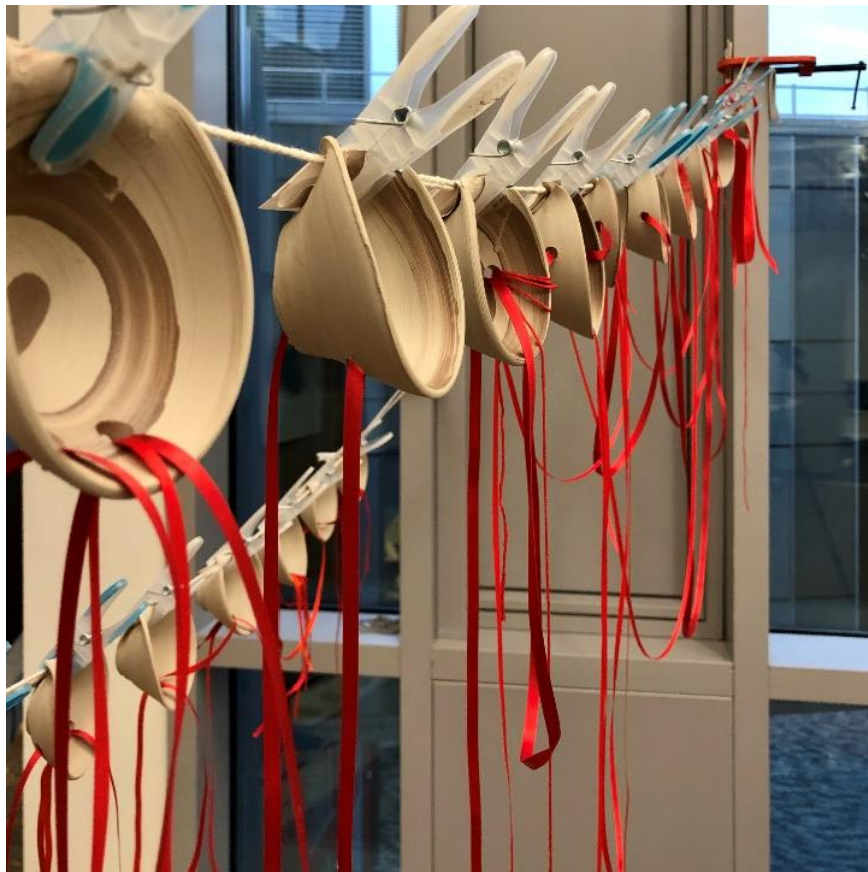


FIGURE 64 DEVELOPMENT OF SMALLS VIA THE MICRO RESIDENCY

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD 2019

In this piece the context is significant. Whilst the University of Salford is a place of work and learning and fits firmly into the category of 'the public' (part 2.5) the actual space within the studio is a small, annexed kitchen area with a sink, kitchen-like cupboards and a fridge. Under normal circumstances it would house a small table and chairs and host student lunch and coffee breaks. This space sits more on an overlap between the public world and an intimate space where private domestic acts – such as maintaining relationships and eating food – take place. It is a part of domestic culture which Hollows (2008, p. 3) describes as 'porous and mobile', by which she means the way in which domesticity exists outside of its natural arena of the home, for example the use of domestic furnishings (like sofas) in a coffee shop.

6.5 Development of Smalls – Home Studio

Iteration #2 in the development of *Smalls* took place during Easter 2020 in the home studio. This was a full-scale trial run for a public performance. This iteration took place over several days and was recorded via time lapse photography and film but was not published live. In total there were 146 small, thrown vessels with multiple colours of ribbon. The number of pieces still related to an original data source of a week's washing, but the ribbons were chosen intuitively and didn't necessarily relate to specific garments.

The documentation of this work is in Appendix 3.

This version of *Smalls* was looser in its adherence to 'rules'. Whilst the garments were still replicated one for one with the small vessels, other details were chosen with less rigidity and with more attention to the sculptural qualities of the outcome. The formal qualities of the final piece began to take priority and so choices like gauge of ribbon, colour and length of 'loops' were selected for their physicality, but with a less direct relationship to the source data.



FIGURE 65 DEVELOPING SMALLS IN THE HOME STUDIO EASTER 2020 (1)



FIGURE 66 SMALLS (WORK IN PROGRESS) APRIL 2020

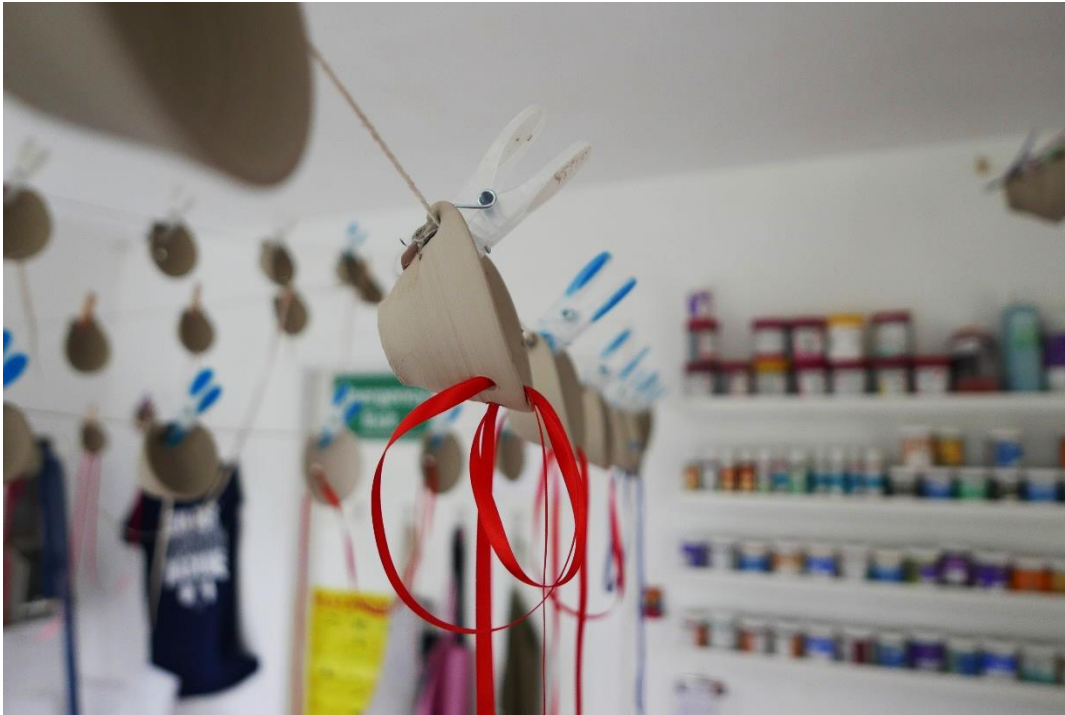


FIGURE 67 DEVELOPING SMALLS IN THE HOME STUDIO EASTER 2020

This iteration of Smalls is an advancement of the previous one in that the whole work is deconstructed at the end in a reversal of the construction process. Whilst this takes noticeably less time than the construction, it does complete the cycle of the task, as the ribbons are rewound onto their spools and the clay is reconstituted into buckets of water to be reused in future projects.

6.5.1 Interim Analysis

It was during this full-scale trial that the relationship to the research questions started to be exposed.

It is already established through the contextual framework and the writing in the Blovel that there is a cyclical nature to the maintenance task and that there is a polychronic understanding of temporal experience between the public and private tasks, where the experience of time is layered and overlaps occur.

Whilst this work wasn't available to be viewed as a performance (this was done during the initial Coronavirus lockdown), the experience of making still consolidates some ideas from the previous research. Because of the 'place' of the studio, there is still a direct relationship with the domestic during the process of production. Both unexpected and planned disruptions occurred, sometimes events which belong in the private world, such as setting alarms to remember to put food in the oven, and other tasks that are part of the process of production but have their roots in domestic understanding - washing tools, cleaning surfaces and general tidying.

The movement between tasks seems intuitive or even haphazard but is actually driven by an inherent understanding of the multiple tasks that must be achieved to fulfil the outcome and the act of 'noticing' what need doing next.

October 2019

From Appendix 4

I started to become very aware of the backwards and forwards 'dance' of the making process. Not unlike the rhythm of things that happen domestically. The layering of tasks, how they overlap and merge into one another. As I peg out some wet clay, I lean over to punch a few holes, check the dryness, pick up a piece which has wobbled itself loose. I then return to the wheel, throw some more tiny pots, do another bout of pegging and drill some more holes. As I start to pull the long lengths of ribbon through the holes, my arms start to overlap one another in a motion reminiscent of helping my Grandmother wind wool when I was a child. There are rhythms here which tug at my consciousness. The economies I try to employ when I undertake tasks in the home and the layered-ness of the process as I make micro decisions about the exact firmness of the clay or the number which go on a single line. It brings to mind the patterns of dailiness, not just in the making of things in the pottery, but also in the home. How long will the vegetables take to boil and it that long enough to check if the washing is dry?

6.6 Smalls – The Performance

Smalls was first performed live and with an audience at the University of Salford, Window Gallery in November 2020. The performance and its subsequent installation is documented in Appendix 4.

Out of all the iterations of Smalls, this one had the least capacity for overlap with the domestic. The gallery space is publicly visible 24 hours a day due to its 'shopfront' format which opens onto the university campus and the city train station. There is little in the way of visual clues towards the domestic in this typical white cube space which was custom designed for the purpose of showing art.



FIGURE 68 SMALLS, ANGELA TAIT 2020

THE WINDOW GALLERY, SALFORD

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

24th October 2020

How quickly we adapt

This week I have performed the majority of *Smalls* in the Window Gallery at the University of Salford.

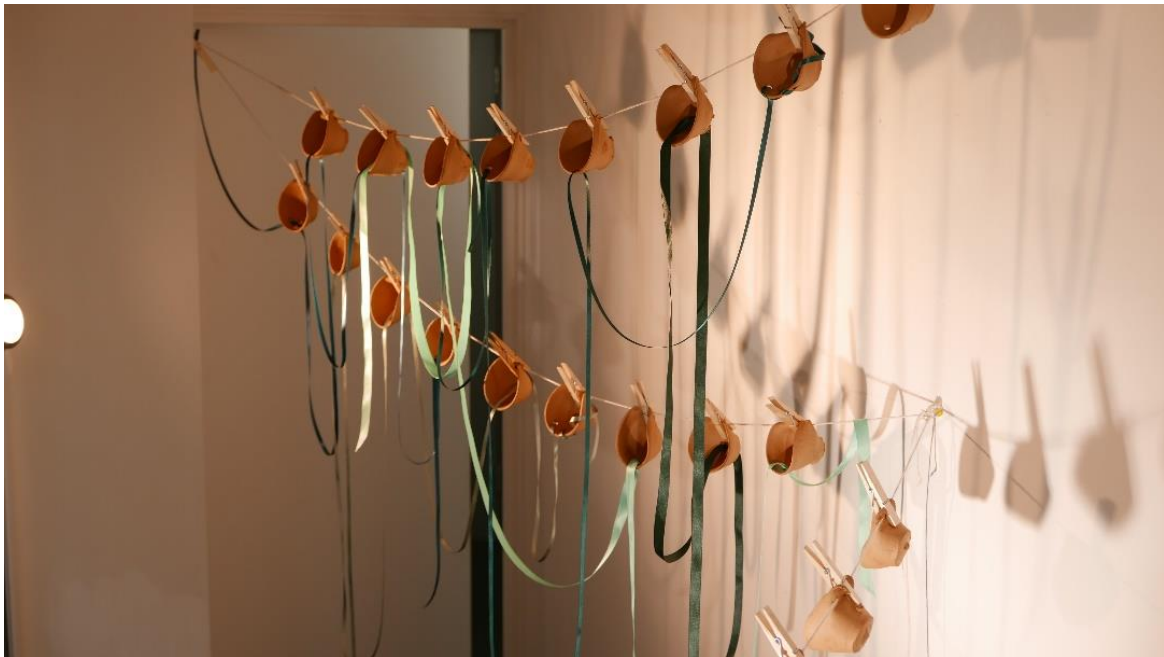
When I arrived to set up, someone had cut a big hole in the wall to access a toilet which was leaking in the next room. I question the logic of accessing the tank via a gallery which is on 24-hour show to the world, rather than go from the other side where the toilet actually is? I'm still scratching my head about this.



FIGURE 69 WINDOW GALLERY OCTOBER 2020

This discovery pretty much sets the scene for the rest of the task. Impossible risk assessments, no video camera because the student who borrowed it previously hasn't returned it on time, temperamental lights which appear to work using the force, grumpy academics at the end of their tether and a space which I'm effectively turning into an obstacle course for myself.

Despite each path through the gallery getting more and more like a scene from ninja warrior, my achievements for day one seem reasonable. I throw 57 small vessels and peg them to the lines. I start to thread the ribbons and even get an Instagram post which (on the face of it) appears to show an actual installation emerging.



**FIGURE 70 SMALLS 2020,
THE WINDOW GALLERY, SALFORD. WORK IN PROGRESS**

Day two of my endeavour is Friday. By now I've figured out a couple of shortcuts. As I sit and throw my little pots off the hump it occurs to me that I've just done that 'thing'. You know what I mean? When you figure out a way to do something which is just slightly easier than the way you've been doing things before. I believe they're sometimes called lifehacks, but I think of them as micro time-economies. Like when you put on the kettle and then empty the washer whilst it's boiling and get something out of the freezer on the way back.

Friday, I make all the tiny pots before I start to construct. I then cut the ribbon, pin all the clothes pegs to my apron and then - and only then - crawl under the existing work and start to engage in the rhythm of peg, peg, peg, thread, thread, thread. This way I spend much less

time negotiating the gallery, which by now resembles something from the krypton factor – both the mental and physical agility rounds!



FIGURE 71 PERFORMANCE IN PROGRESS NOVEMBER 2021 ANGELA TAIT

By the end of the day I've completed the throwing of the 114 'Smalls', they're all pinned to the lines and the holes are cut ready to accept the colourful streamers at my next earliest opportunity. I've run out of ribbon, I'm fairly grubby and my hands resemble raisins because they've been in water all day. On the plus side, my economical behaviour seems to have spared my 49-year-old back and the lights are temporarily behaving.

There's still a hole in the gallery.



FIGURE 72 SMALLS (2020) ANGELA TAIT

PARTIAL INSTALLATION IMAGE

This iteration of Smalls remained on show at the gallery for several months and was at the end deconstructed and the clay, pegs and ribbons all reused on other projects.

6.7 Smalls at the International Ceramics Festival

In July 2021, *Smalls* was performed at the International Ceramics Festival in Aberystwyth. Images and details of this performance are in Appendix 16.

The event was scheduled originally as a regular festival, complete with 2000 visitors from all over the world. Due to the pandemic, this was drastically scaled down to a largely online, live-streamed event with only two ceramicists working 'live' on site and performing to an audience of the local community.

Despite these setbacks the performance took place in the pottery studio and the installation grew amongst the architecture there.



FIGURE 73 ABERYSTWYTH ART CENTRE WITH *SMALLS* INSTALLED 2021



FIGURE 74 LIVE STREAMING OF *SMALLS* FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CERAMICS FESTIVAL 2021

AT BEING INTERVIEWED BY MOIRA VINCENTELLI

6.7.1 Moving forward

In addition to the previous iterations, *Smalls* has been commissioned by the Salford Museum and Art Gallery to be performed as a solo show in 2023. This attests to its acceptance in the artworld and some interest in the expanded nature of contemporary ceramics practice and the ideas generated through this research.

6.8 Evaluating *Smalls*

Smalls occupies a hybrid position in fine art practice straddling performance and installation. The first part of *Smalls* is time-based. In other words, the viewer sees the installation being

built. The artist undertakes the 'dance' (a word taken from the Blovel) of moving between tasks of a repetitive nature and even encounters the inevitable disruptions of life such as stopping to eat, answering the phone and (less predictably) being interrupted by a film crew.

The Performance

This 'performance' part of *Smalls* is a Rhythmanalysis, but in an expanded form, where instead of the outcome being a written piece, it is manifested in an artwork that replicates the observed rhythms. It fulfils Lefebvre's demands of a Rhythmanalysis in a new way.

- **Firstly the rhythm is observed.** Lefebvre's reliance on the body for Rhythmanalysis is prominent throughout his writing. He describes the need to have been grasped by a rhythm in order to understand it (Lefebvre 2004, p. 37). In the case of *Smalls*, the grasped rhythm is that of the cyclical nature of undertaking the domestic washing of clothes.

Wear, wash, peg, take down, fold, put away, wear

- **Next there needs to be some distance.** As described in the contextual framework in Chapter two, Lefebvre encourages observing a rhythm partly from the outside. He gives examples of watching from a window or a balcony. In this case, when the observer is the same person who is producing the rhythm, this is tricky. The Blovel writing gives the distance required by acting as an intermediary state between the rhythm-maker and the rhythmanalyst.

- **Finally, the rhythm is documented by its reproduction.** As discussed in the contextual framework, rhythmanalysis is customarily expressed in a written format. '*Smalls*' provides an opportunity to expand this method of presentation of data and goes a step further. Lefebvre likens the understanding of rhythm to music or the learning of language saying, '*Like in music . . . one only really understands the meanings and connections when one comes to produce them*' (Lefebvre 2004, p. 37). By reproducing the rhythms of doing the washing via a creative practice, the researcher understands the meanings in both rhythms and is able to make those connections. The viewer sees only the Rhythmanalysis and not the original source of the rhythm.

The Installation

Following the performance there is a residual installation which is static with nothing added or taken away for several days or weeks. The installation part of the work serves a different purpose and is readable in a different way. The washing lines are a recognisable symbol and hold an indicator of the domestic, as do the pegs. Here the understanding of the everyday stops and the work must be read in terms of other artworks. Again music and rhythm are referenced in the structure of the installation. The even spacing and looping soft swoops of ribbon holds a pattern of its own, reminiscent of the staves and notes of a music manuscript. There is a visual reference to the work of ceramicist Edmund De Waal who often contemplates rhythm, poetry and music in relation to his own practice. The rhythmic sculptural qualities of his installations could be read as 'visual music' and their formal relationship to poetry or manuscript pages of musical notation is often evident in the outcomes.



FIGURE 75 EDMUND DE WAAL'S THIS IS JUST TO SAY, 2011.

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL HARVEY

Indeed music is a constant companion in his making process. In the publication *Gramophone* (2017) he muses,

If I find I have to make dozens of vessels, where do you look? You look to music which has a pulse, some kind of intelligible rhythmic structure, and which has repetition as part of it because that's what making endless pots is about' (De Waal, 2017).

De Waal uses music (and by association rhythm) at both ends of his making process. As companion during production and as visual stimulus whilst composing the outcome. The same could be said of *Smalls*, where the source of the rhythm is that which has been observed previously in a domestic context.



FIGURE 76 SMALLS INSTALLED AT THE WINDOW GALLERY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD (2020)

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

Conceptually, *Smalls* draws upon the work of other artists. The idea of a creative practice replicating collected information is evident in the abstract painting practice of Rachael Clewlow. Again rhythm is visually evident in the outcome, but process is implicit in the carefully painted lines with tiny keys down the sides of the paintings.



FIGURE 77 LONGITUDINAL GEOMETRY 2017 RACHAEL CLEWLOW,

IMAGE CREDIT COLIN DAVISON

	Y/V	11:30	30/09/16	26
	O/B	11:28	30/09/16	28
	Y/V	11:26	30/09/16	27
	Y/V	14:40	29/09/16	18
	B/O	14:26	29/09/16	23
	R/G	14:24	29/09/16	22
	V/Y	14:14	29/09/16	24
	B/O	14:13	29/09/16	18
	Y/V	14:12	29/09/16	24
	B/O	14:10	29/09/16	30
	V/Y	13:44	29/09/16	21
	R/G	13:42	29/09/16	22
	I/Y	13:38	29/09/16	31
	R/G	13:36	29/09/16	12
	O/B	13:35	29/09/16	19
	G/R	13:34	29/09/16	12
	O/B	13:29	29/09/16	21
	I/Y	13:27	29/09/16	22
	R/G	13:25	29/09/16	17
	Y/V	13:20	29/09/16	26
	B/O	13:18	29/09/16	12
	G/R	13:13	29/09/16	14
	V/Y	13:11	29/09/16	14
	I/Y	13:09	29/09/16	13
	G/R	13:04	29/09/16	25

FIGURE 78 PAINTING DETAIL, RACHAEL CLEWLOW (N.D.)

IMAGES CREDIT [HTTPS://WWW.CONTEMPORARYFORWARDROCHDALEARTGALLERY.ORG/](https://www.contemporaryforwardrochdaleartgallery.org/)

6.9 Conclusion

Through the multiple iterations of Smalls, a new method for Rhythmanalysis - using Lefebvre's method - was born.

- The data is collected from the act of undertaking the washing.
- The rhythms of undertaking the washing are recorded through the writing in the Blovel.
- The Blovel identifies a cyclical rhythm that is then replicated through the practice of throwing multiple vessels and pegging them to a washing line.
- The work is finally deconstructed with the clay being reclaimed for future use.

Through these reciprocal actions, the public world of creative practice is entwined conceptually with the private world of the very intimate and personal practice of washing clothes.

From Appendix 4

Let me explain: This work is designed to translate the temporal experience of being in the home into a ceramics performance, it plays with my experience of flitting backwards and forwards between my practice and the demands of domesticity. I have observed the similarities between the way my day ebbs and flows – sometimes abruptly – between the two states and the way I construct the installation. Tasks are broken down into little pockets of industry, for example a round of throwing a dozen vessels off the hump. Then I undertake another task, this time pegging the vessels onto a line. I have more vessels to make, but the first lot I threw earlier are now leather hard and need to be drilled before they harden too much, so this takes priority. This process of 'needs to be done' and 'needs to be done now' forms the shape for the performance. It can't be set in advance. Drying might be affected by the sun coming onto the gallery thereby accelerating the need to attend to the drilling of holes and negating any chance of adhering to a preformed plan.

The evaluation of *Smalls* contribution to the research questions and aims is considered via the conclusions in Chapter Eight.



FIGURE 79 THROWN AND ALTERED VESSEL WITH EMBROIDERY 2021 ANGELA TAIT

WORK MADE WITH CLAY RECLAIMED FROM THE WINDOW GALLERY PERFORMANCE IN NOVEMBER 2020

7 Chapter Seven - The COVID clay diary



FIGURE 80 *THE MOST BORING CUP EVER (UNFIRED)*, ANGELA TAIT 2020

DAY 8 OF THE COVID CLAY DIARY

7.1 Introduction

During this research the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Whilst totally unexpected and with devastating and wide-ranging consequences, this event forced one of the themes that was starting to emerge; that of the growing discourses around working from home.

18 March 2020

Wednesday 10.38am

I'm afraid.

Well, maybe not afraid, but disconcerted, unsettled, a little perturbed. The ground beneath my feet feels unstable, a bit like one of those fairground attractions I remember from my childhood, with the sliding floors and wonky mirrors.

Yesterday the university I work for cancelled most of the face-to-face teaching due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. I walked out of the building with as much of my desk as I could fit in my rucksack; my laptop, some vital paperwork, a print I'd swapped with a colleague and as much of the library as I could carry. I abandoned my favourite mug, watered the plants and left, wondering if we'd be back in September complete with a cohort of shiny new undergraduates or if the whole place would be opened up in fifty years like a giant time capsule.

So now as I write, the financial markets are in freefall and social media is divided between predictions of the apocalypse, people wanting virtual validation of their integrity for checking on elderly neighbours and, satirical – dark, but amusing - memes. Fake news abounds and the capacity for human lunacy is astonishing. I'm trying to take the wide view with as much logical pragmatism as I can muster, applying a degree of criticality to everything I read. That said, I did panic buy three packets of biscuits yesterday in the supermarket, but who doesn't need a Jammie Wagon Wheel in a time of crisis?

On the train on my way home I hatched a plan; I feel the need to document events as they unfold. What if I keep a diary? Not the traditional written kind, but one made of objects – a cup(?) - every day for as long as necessary. The global context is larger than I can deal with. We could lose people we love; some already have. Jobs, businesses, livelihoods will

inevitably be damaged and the effects of this level of disruption might rumble on for years. But what about the minutiae? How will we remember that? The actual lived experience of a global event plotted as it unravels. If nothing else it will give me something to focus on during what promises to be a challenging time.

I'm starting today. My new year's resolutions have historically lasted on average three to four days, so I'm sceptical about my own ability to maintain momentum. Nevertheless, here goes...

The COVID Clay Diary is a series of objects made daily between the 18th March 2020 and the 15th June 2020. The timing coincides broadly with the period of the first nationwide lockdown to the relaxation of the most severe of the restrictions. Each day a clay piece was made which represented a personal, social, cultural, or political reflection of the happenings of the day. These individual works are predominantly vessels, domestic in scale and almost exclusively non-functional. The individual works function as a collection and are intended as a singular exhibition or installation.

The COVID Clay Diary was exhibited at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland during June to November 2021. There is also a publication that takes the form of a book that is transcribed in Appendix 15.



FIGURE 81 THE COVID CLAY DIARY (DETAIL)

THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE JUNE 2021

7.2 Process

The Clay diary commenced on the 18th March 2020. Each day a piece was started, usually at about 5pm after the televised government press conference and always reflecting on an event from the previous 24 hours. Because of the protracted ceramics process there were often several works in progress, drying, awaiting firings, being glazed at once. This is a regular part of the ceramics process – nothing is rapid. Despite these overlaps, there was a new object started each day.



FIGURE 82 GROUP OF VESSELS FROM THE COVID CLAY DIARY 2020

Appendix 12 documents each daily entry, along with a very brief rationale for that day.

There are ninety days to the diary but slightly more individual pieces, each day stands alone with its own narrative and presence and could potentially be viewed alone.

There are many kinds of interpretations of all kinds of subject. Most retain the form of the vessel, but the interpretation of the day varies from the explicit to the very abstract. Several have additions in multiple mediums from textiles to carpet and found objects.

Often the interpretation of a day draws upon previous bodies of work. Additions such as padlocks, domestic masonry and thread have all been used before during a diverse and experimental ceramics practice. This is also replicated in the techniques used. Sodium silicate on day 69 and the cabbage plate of day 74 are both stalwarts of years of teaching community classes for potters.



FIGURE 83 CABBAGE PLATE, ANGELA TAIT 2020

COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 74

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

Some of the works are obvious in their message. Both days 6 and 55 were three small vessels thrown off the hump. They have tags attached that reflect the government's message in the daily press conferences and on television adverts. Day 6 says Stay at Home/Protect the NHS/Save Lives and day 55 says Stay Alert/Control the Virus/Save Lives. These words have been publicly visible through every media outlet including television, social media and in public spaces throughout the UK.



FIGURE 84 COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 6 2020

THROWN AND ALTERED VESSELS WITH TAGS THAT SAY 'STAY AT HOME, PROTECT THE NHS, SAVE LIVES'



FIGURE 85 COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 55 2020

THROWN AND ALTERED VESSELS WITH TAGS THAT SAY 'STAY ALERT, CONTROL THE VIRUS, SAVE LIVES'

Other works are more obscure and difficult to grasp immediately. Day 12 considered exercise under lockdown. A once-a-day cycle, run or walk was allowed. The gyms were closed and so were playgrounds. The thrown vessel on day 12 was run over by a bicycle. This was the first time the bike had been used for years – but not the last. This piece was a personal reflection that had wider social connotations. The local beauty spots were busy with single people and family groups (bubbles) taking their state sanctioned exercise, whilst bikes were retrieved from the backs of sheds, oiled and used once more. Later the government advises that cycling to work is preferable to taking public transport (Gov.Uk, 2020)



FIGURE 86 COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 12, ANGELA TAIT 2020

THROWN VESSEL WITH COTTON ADDITION ALTERED BY RUNNING OVER WITH A BICYCLE

7.3 Exposure of the project

An artwork which is made daily needs an immediate platform for publication. The clay diary was published regularly using social media platforms, particularly Instagram. Work in progress images, short video clips and finished 'product shots' were posted each day @angelataitartist with its own hashtag #covidclaydiary. The story of the clay diary developed as another story unfolded. The immediacy of the platform allowed instant feedback and for a viewer to experience both the ideas and the process as they occurred. Subsequently, there was a book produced that accompanied the clay diary and exposed a little more about the process and thinking behind the work via two of the Blovel texts. This full publication is available at Appendix 15.

The COVID Clay diary book is available to read on ISSUU and as an Ebook published by the University of Salford.

[HyperLink to the Online publication at ISSUU](#)

[HyperLink to Ebook](#)

2020



FIGURE 87 THE COVID CLAY DIARY BOOK FRONT COVER

7.3.1 Publication of the Research

The COVID Clay Diary has been published in several guises which expand upon the use of Instagram during the making process.

National Glass Centre

The finished work was shown at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland from June to November 2021. This exhibition provided a public platform for the diary and validated its place as research. Although the show was delayed because of the ongoing pandemic and subsequent restrictions, this was a timely exposure of the project whilst the experience of the first lockdown was still very fresh in the minds of most people. Details and more images from the exhibition are in Appendix 18.

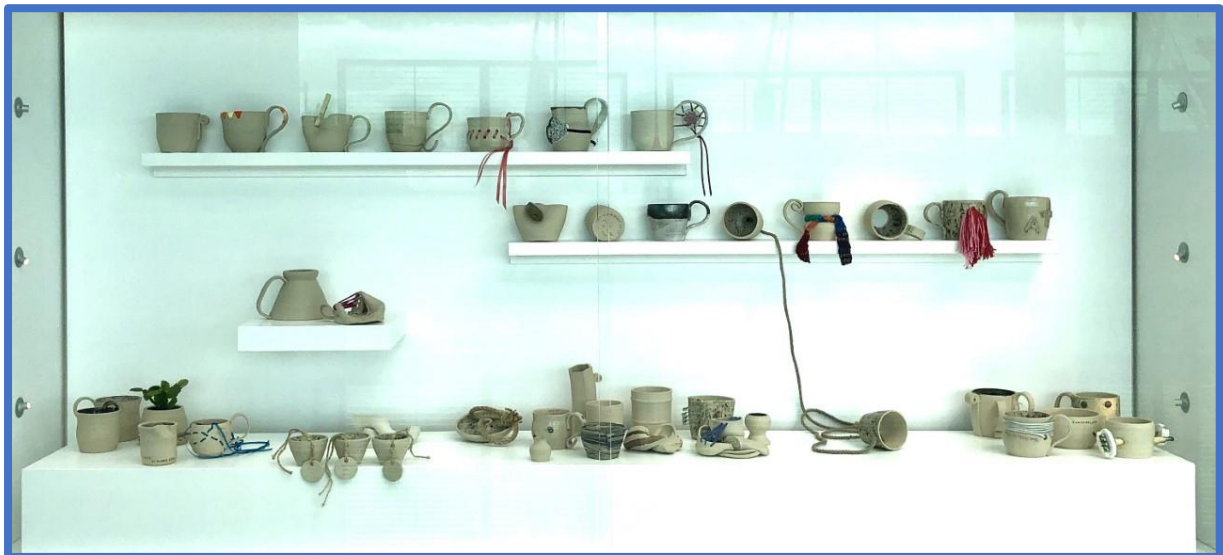


FIGURE 88 THE COVID CLAY DIARY ON SHOW AT THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE, SUNDERLAND, 2021



FIGURE 89 THE COVID CLAY DIARY ON SHOW AT THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE, SUNDERLAND 2021

The 19

The Clay Diary was also used by artist Parviz Qadir in his project *The 19*, in which he collected creative responses to lockdown from his hometown of Rochdale. For *The 19* project the clay diary was filmed by drone and placed into the context of the domestic home where it was made.



FIGURE 90 FILMING THE CLAY DIARY USING A DRONE SUMMER 2021

This project created a '*living document of people's stories*' (Qadir, 2020) and provided a legacy of creative works and a celebration of culture in the town.

Restating Clay



FIGURE 91 ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE RESTATING CLAY (CERAMICS AND LOCKDOWN - PERFORMANCE) SYMPOSIUM, JULY 2021

This symposium was commissioned by the Centre of Ceramic Art at the York Art Gallery to discuss the use of ceramic art and performance during lockdown.

The COVID Clay diary was selected as an example of both the performative nature of the medium and as a response to the pandemic.

Details of the work, including the presentation from the symposium are in Appendix 17.

At the time of writing the Centre of Ceramic Art have not yet published the recordings of the symposium.

7.4 Evaluating the Clay Diary and placing it in context

7.4.1 Literature and theory

The pandemic is uncharted territory. As the thesis is being constructed, so there is consistently new information, guidance, work being made, and words written about the experience of the pandemic. Much of this knowledge is from rapid sources such as the press, blogs and social media. No doubt in time the theory will find its way into the more removed sources; the dissertations, peer reviewed journals and (eventually) books. For the time being much of what follows will draw upon what is available. Not only does this present a very immediate interpretation of new and emerging phenomena, but it rests very much in line with the philosophy of the work; that of real lived experience.

7.4.2 Diaries

The clay diary is an artwork. It was intended from conception to be a public facing document. The term diary in this case relates to the daily process of making rather than the intimacy which might otherwise be suggested by the word.

9th May 2020

Diaries

I had one when I was a child. I seem to recall it was a birthday present from a well-meaning relative. It was pink and had a flimsy but decorative lock and tiny key. I think I wrote in it twice. The first day in my best handwriting and the second a bit less carefully. By day three I didn't really see the point and by day four it was forgotten. I'm not usually one for memories, especially not the mundane and everyday.

It is said the queen writes a diary and has done since she was a child. Oh the stories they could tell! Does the monarch even have mundane? I have been wondering if she mediates what she writes in the knowledge that these might one day become public documents, or if they're genuinely honest accounts of her feelings and experience? The clay diary is a bit like this. I am using the overarching term diary as it's universally understandable, but actually it's

a version of events that is limited by a number of factors. The first is my knowledge that the collection is intended for public display. This has a huge influence on the subjects, quality and forms I use. I am aware I'll be judged on my ability to make, the variety of ideas, and also what I think is important, so this is never going to be the repository of my innermost feelings and emotions – even if I could process them accurately in the most surreal of contexts.

Like most artworks it has its own rules that have become consolidated through the process. Originally I anticipated a daily cup. I have already established the importance of the vessel to this research, but a cup is personal. I drink coffee, no, I rely upon coffee. That hot liquid is my wake-up companion, my regular distraction when I need a break and the conduit when meeting friends – even virtually. The first couple of days were more cup-like than since. 50 days later the idea of a vessel is more abstract and subject to deviation. There has been a spectrum from the traditional thrown cup with a pulled handle to an occasional slab-built piece and the outrageously thrown and destroyed. There is even a missing day. A piece of paper with day 33 written on and a distinct clay print, but no other evidence of an object. What happened on day 33? Who knows? Did it even happen? Days are the same, one runs into another with no distinction between a Wednesday and a weekend.

*I'm starting to think about the clay diary as more akin to Judy Chicago's autobiographical works, *My Accident* (1986) and *Autobiography of a year* (1993-94) and the difference is intent. My childhood diary was secret, private, intimate, a place for speculating about childhood crushes and developing friendships. Well, not mine obviously, I doubt there was anything even remotely meaningful, heartfelt or even interesting in my two days of good intentions. The clay diary is different from this sort of intimate and private document in its intent. An artwork which from conception, expands beyond that into the public realm. It is also object based and so brings its own meaning from the physicality of the ceramic objects. These sit in the overlap between the domestic and the artworld. Clearly recognisable as linked with the kitchen through their form and size but explicitly excluded because of their non-functionality and place of exhibition in the gallery or through social media. So this leaves me with a pseudo-personal document which sits right in the overlap that I am constantly seeking; the place where public and private meet. An object-based artwork with both a visual and conceptual relationship to time and rhythm through its dailiness.*

7.4.3 Rationale for using a diary:

In their article *Object Relations in Accounts of Everyday Life* (2015) Rininen et al defend the use of diary as a document which has its starting point in first-hand experience of the everyday. This research belongs firmly in that arena. Everything about the work has its origin there, from the recording of the daily experience to the domestic understanding of the vessel. The work is made in the place which has been previously identified as 'private' but which the preceding chapters have characterised as a place in which hybrid activities of the public and private merge and overlap.

The pandemic was an event that unfolded rapidly. Each day rules, knowledge and understanding changed and grew. The format of the diary addresses this 'world in flux' with regular and systematic reflection. Because each piece is individual and represents a snapshot of time, the narrative only becomes linear when the entire collection is seen together. The daily format allowed the work to take the exact circumstances of that day and reflect upon a single issue. In effect the work is a series of individual pieces which together tell a story of a time in a disjointed fashion. This is not unlike the Blovel in its position as 'story' of the PhD.

Rininen et al use the diary format as research to gather qualitative information in their paper. Their investigation is helpful to this research in two ways. The first is the use of the diary as research tool and the second is the theme of the work which is the consideration of everyday objects. The article reinforces the idea from other writers that diaries constitute one method of making the everyday vivid and bringing small details to life (De Certeau 1984, Highmore 2001, quoted in Rininen et al 2015).

There is a difference here though. In sociological research the diary belongs to the participant and the researcher uses the diary to analyse a phenomenon (Rininen 2015, Jokinen 2004). This research is different. In this autoethnographic study the researcher and the participant are one and the same. One consequence of this strategy is an element of ongoing editing. The knowledge that this diary will be 'viewed' both via exhibition and social media makes a difference to the strategic decisions about what to make each day. Firstly each vessel needs to be reasonably rapid to make to fit amongst the other teaching and domestic obligations of each day. Secondly, the above-mentioned knowledge that the work

will bear outside scrutiny forced decisions towards safe or familiar processes. Many of the ideas have a direct relationship with previous work, the majority are thrown – a rapid making process that is the stalwart of previous works, and mixed media additions are commonplace drawing upon ideas from Chapter Five regarding non-functionality.



FIGURE 92 *COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 6*, ANGELA TAIT

THROWN AND CUT VESSEL WITH TRAIN TICKETS 2020

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

Public transport: We're actively discouraged from using it for the first time I can remember. How will I get to work? (quote from Appendix 12)

Sometimes these ideas overlap with the themes from *Smalls* and the writing in the *Blovel*. On day 54 the entry in the log of daily makes reads:

'Today has been out recognition for the domestic appliances. They work relentlessly in their endless quest to maintain us. I threw a cup, complete with handle and tumble dried it. It will have a decal of the 'no tumble drying' symbol.' (Appendix 12).



FIGURE 93 COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 54, ANGELA TAIT.

THROWN VESSEL TO BE ALTERED BY TUMBLE DRYING 2020



FIGURE 94 *COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 54*, ANGELA TAIT

TUMBLE DRIED AND FIRED VESSEL WITH 'DO NOT TUMBLE DRY' DECALS

7.4.4 Time and how we experience it

Lockdown has altered our perception of time. The diary captures some of that experience whilst providing a marker for the repetitiveness of a cumulatively felt experience.

The experience of time during lockdown

4th June 2020

10.15 – I've just arrived at my desk.

I would usually have been sitting here for two hours. The washer would be on and I'd have finished my emails and my first two coffees. Today the washer is on, I've absorbed my caffeine fix and I finished my emails – In bed.

Things are different now. There's overlap between the public facing Angela and her private self which threatens to get unhealthy. It's way too easy to let my teaching work seep into my intimate spaces. I've already addressed certain strategies for dividing up the work and home life. I am only working on lecturing in half days to avoid the endless hours of typing that leave me in a foul mood and unable to function effectively. Yet I am still reading essays at weekends and answering student messages from my phone in the evening whilst binge-watching Peter Kay's Car Share.

Our experience of time has changed. It has condensed into a 24-hour period which repeats cyclically and ad infinitum. Days tick by as we sit back and barely notice. We are passive observers of a new experience where Wednesday is like a weekend and next week is a repetition of this one. We have adopted new habits; some good – like eating together because the gym is closed and the boys can't see their friends. Some not so good, like working from bed and the increase in daytime fridge visits.

My time reference has shrunk. I am finding it difficult to look back with the knowledge that what we enjoyed, the privilege we took for granted, might not return for a long time. I also find it difficult to project forward because planning seems futile. We are painfully aware that plans change and morph, and what was relevant yesterday might very well have to be rejigged tomorrow. There's an old Jewish saying, "Mann Tracht, Un Gott Lacht" - 'Man

plans, God laughs'. We say this to each other regularly at the moment. It always brings a wry smile of understanding and often breaks tension when one of us is frustrated by something out of our control.

10.36 – I should really empty the washing machine. It's a bit early for another coffee (did I even say that?) I'm trying to drink more water in lockdown but, despite good intentions, my beverages of choice remain coffee and wine.

I have been thinking about the changing of the seasons. Not as in getting towards autumn and the frantic excess of Christmas, but the days getting warmer and the longest day which is fast approaching. It occurs to me that I am living...

10.48 – I stopped to answer an email on my university laptop. A student working with air drying clay at home wanting to know how to stop it warping as it dries.

...It occurs to me I'm experiencing life in a way which we understand as the female temporal experience. A cyclical form where days have their own rhythm but remain similar and an overriding understanding of the seasons and coming and going of the sun, the moon, the warmth and the winter. I still have a tentative relationship with a linear experience of time. I am planning for a return to the university in September. The planning is more severe than usual. Less like planning and more like writing from scratch. The trouble with this is that a 'planned for' future is uncertain. A niggling doubt remains that my (our) careful, thoughtful, documents might be obsolete before they ever have the chance to be tested.

10.58 – The washing machine bleeps.

It brings to mind a text by Matthew Taunton (2016) about the keeping of time in Modernist Literature. It talks about Big Ben chiming throughout Virginia Wolfe's 'Mrs Dalloway' and how the hour being chimed is irrevocable; but it isn't is it? What has gone before we can't retrieve, but tomorrow the same hour will chime, in some ways indistinguishable from today. Just as in one hour and 3 minutes the washing machine will sounds its electronic demand and my consciousness will be disrupted again by a trip downstairs and probably some more coffee.

Whilst academic journals about the 'time in lockdown' phenomenon are yet to emerge, journalists and theorists are already documenting our strange experience. Johnathan Freedland reports in the Guardian his experience of the bending of time out of shape, describing, '*...a vast stretch of undifferentiated time is unfurling in front of us* (Freedland 2020)'. Psychologist Claudia Hammond goes further by explaining that, '*This blurring of identical days leads us to create fewer new memories, which is crucial to our sense of time perception*' (Hammond 2020). This goes some way to helping the understanding of lockdown time perception many people felt.

It is within these discourses the diary fits. By providing a daily marker of time, the 'identical days' Hammond describes become differentiated from one another.

The diary was (and still is) a living document. During lockdown the meanings shifted and developed, even once a day was over and the cup had been made, fired and finished.

Day four was a plant pot and saucer, a personal account that spoke of the seeds planted that day and a gift of a cactus from a friend. By the end of the diary the seeds had grown and the family were starting to reap the benefits of homegrown salad vegetables. By day 74 the diary entry used the very same cabbage leaf that was planted on day four. In addition to the personal experience there is a wider cultural revolution in gardening. The national and local newspapers have widely reported advice for growing in your home (Whitbread, 2020, Topping, 2020), on a small balcony or in your garden, whilst social media pages with names like 'Wardle Gardening Club' started to appear.



FIGURE 95 COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 4, ANGELA TAIT

THROWN PLANT POT AND SAUCER WITH CACTUS GIFT 2020



FIGURE 96 COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 74

CAST FROM A CABBAGE LEAF GROWN FROM THE SEEDS PLANTED ON DAY 4

The pot made on Day 4 was a snapshot of the time. It was meaningful in its own right on that day in a very personal way. In wider society online seed sales were soaring as people contemplated a period of furlough or a protracted period of home working. Looking at it from a timely distance, meanings have changed and become more layered. A viewer approaching day 4 now is privileged with the benefit of ‘the future’ whereas when a diary is written it is of the present. Looking back additional layers of meaning emerge.

7.4.5 The public/private overlap

The COVID Clay Diary uses the ubiquitous cup as its primary form. As laid down in Chapter Two (Part 2.8.1), the cup is being used as the universal form that straddles the

public/private divide. The diary is made at a time when the phenomenon of working from home is massively accelerated. Hundreds of thousands of office workers find themselves working at dining tables, in kitchens or in corners of their bedrooms. Again the cup undertakes its discrete but persistent position as distraction from work, and plays its part on the corner of a screen on in a break in the conversation. Video conferencing etiquette is published on various technology websites and in articles (Braden, 2021, Laura, 2020) but doesn't stretch to the subtleties of whether one might drink during the call. It would almost certainly be considered rude to consume breakfast on a video call with all but the closest of colleagues, but to take a sip of tea or to cradle a cup in both hands is a perfectly understandable and polite ways to conduct most meetings.

7.5 Conclusion

Despite the unexpected nature of this crisis, it provided an exciting opportunity for the research to be pushed in an unexpected direction. The diary boosts the understanding of the relationship between the public and the private world. It is conceived and made from an intimate and personal position, but finds wider understanding when placed into a public context. It is an immediate response to an ever-changing situation recorded via a personal lens.

Taking the research in Chapters Four and Five as starting points, the Clay Diary also pursues an understanding of temporal experience. Furthermore, some of the ideas about both form and process can trace their lineage to previous work. In the Clay Diary the process of making is altered to a more rigid daily format rather than the patchwork of tasks described in Chapters Four and Five. Nevertheless, the underlying interest in temporal experience remains.

Dwelltime

Time ticks by it always does,
It never wants to wait for us,

It always wants to race us there,
And then it's gone, but why, and where? (Willis 1998)

Even before we locked down, it was clear we were about to experience something life-altering. That was the rationale for the COVID clay diary. I had a vague notion that I would make a cup every day to document my own experience and some of the wider social, political and cultural happenings.

As I write we're on day 81. I've just opened my last bag of clay - I allocated 50 kilos of a creamy coloured, slightly speckled stoneware – and I plan to stop on the 15th June (day 90) when some children will be invited back to school and non-essential shops can start to reopen.

I have made dozens of vessels; some resemble cups, others are unrecognisable, like the one I ran over with my bike because the way we exercise has changed. Many are thrown on the potters' wheel, others built from slabs with embossed detail. On day 48 I made the 'ode to denim' when I realised that I'd worn jeans or shorts for weeks and weeks. A pair of jeans was rolled over the clay to leave a relief pattern complete with pocket detail and belt loops and the slab was used to construct a rudimentary vessel shape. This piece was finished with a wash of manganese to bring out the details. Some are part glazed from a limited palette and a rare few have some gold lustre detail or fired on decals. There is narrative, abstraction, metaphor and some subtle art history references.

Since the 17th March, time has been difficult to understand. Looking back, lockdown seems like somewhere between a heartbeat and an eternity. In one way we've lost a whole season. The summer is here, the baby birds have fledged and the blossom has gone. replaced by tiny fruits ready to swell. What happened to spring and those rituals we associate with it? Easter holidays, degree shows and the end of the university year. Viewed differently we've been at home forever. Our old routines have morphed into new rituals which have become so ingrained we are almost institutionalised by them.

My time has narrowed. A 24-hour cycle is pretty much on repeat. I see the same people, work in the same place and eat the regular three meals (plus snacks). Looking back before lockdown is disconcerting. I struggle to feel nostalgia for hugging friends and traveling to

work on the sweaty packed train, because we currently have no way to know when the old normal might return. But if looking back is awkward, imagining the future is virtually impossible. We don't yet know if every child can go to school in September or when our next holiday might be. Will we be able to have Christmas dinner with our loved ones or will that be a facsimile this year mediated by a screen and an increasingly popular meetings app?

As the diary grows I start to reflect and the early entries seem like another world. Day two was called the 'Pandictionery' and considered the new language we were being introduced to; Social distancing, panic buying and stimulus packages. Today it seems ludicrous that people were stockpiling toilet roll and pasta - it seemed bonkers at the time to me anyway - and that social distancing was a new concept. Some of the pieces have new significance as time trundles along its track. On the 18th April, day 32, I made a gravy jug wearing a tiny facemask. There simply wasn't enough protective equipment for our caring staff in the hospitals and the care homes. Everyone blamed everyone else, and the issue dominated the daily news conference for several days. Nearly 50 days later and I have made a couple of dozen masks from reclaimed fabric (my Mother's old cotton shorts mostly) and it has just been announced that masks will be compulsory on public transport. Artists have adopted the mask to make political or satirical comments and wearing in public is commonplace.

It seems even the concept of time through my diary is fluid. What should be a robust daily measure, like a clock or a calendar, is a flexible and ever moving beast within which meanings are not yet settled.

This will finish; humanity is resilient and some patches of the old normal will resume. For now the timing is uncertain and so I plod, one foot in front of the other through the days, mostly smiling, but on the inside trying to process the nonsense in a wibbly wobbly world where everything we know is like a ball of slime dripping through a sieve.

(Dwell Time, 2020)

The publication of the Diary through exhibition at the National Glass Centre and via the Centre for Ceramic Art provide acknowledgement within the professional community of the

value of the research. The Diary currently has no plans for future exhibition, but the crisis is still evolving. Markers of historical events are revisited years or decades later through a more distant lens with the benefit of hindsight (e.g. the exhibition *Every Cloud: Ten years after the Bomb* at URBIS Manchester in 2006, ten years after the IRA bombing of the city). The COVID Clay Diary will become a historical document and its significance will change and grow with time.



FIGURE 97 THE COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 52, CUP FOUND WHILST OUT WALKING

8 Chapter Eight – Thesis Conclusions

8.1 Chapter Synopsis

This chapter summarises and reflects upon the overall findings of the research and maps the outcomes against the research questions and aims. It specifies the original contributions to knowledge and goes on to suggest areas for further research.

On exposing truths

15th May 2021

I'm limping towards the end of a four-year endeavour. I feel a bit like Bruce Willis in *Die Hard* complete with bloody vest and several limbs hanging off, but with the baddie's gun dangling from one filthy hand and a steely look in my eye.

Ok, that's a bit of an exaggeration, but it's been a slog.

Last time I spoke to AL he said something which really resonated. He told me the PhD was 'honest'. He said it like that was unusual; pondering this I realise it is different in a way I hadn't acknowledged. I have read plenty of theses, all of them have a similar professionalism where the grubbiness of the process is polished into a nicely 'academicised' finale. The voice of the researcher, whilst often visible, is mediated through a lens which separates the process from the 'experience' of undertaking the process. This is usually reserved for private conversations in small groups of researchers in the library, or more recently online.

Dear Reader, with me you're getting the whole messy caboodle. You know a great deal about me, you've met my little family and you know I cry big snotty tears when I hit a hurdle.

#plottwist – everyone does!

The reality of completing this process is grim. There is a constant niggle at the base of your brain – for four years!!! A conflict between wanting to go for a walk or stay in bed a bit longer and knowing there's stuff to be done. It's a guilt I can't imagine being free of. I KNOW everyone deals with this, they tell me, it's almost universally understood in the multiple forums and relationships I try (unsuccessfully) to keep up with. There are also other things which happen all the time but are glossed over by the end result. Pretty much everyone I've spoken to alters their research questions and the trajectory of their investigation during the process. I did this in spades. Hands-up, I didn't have a clue what I was investigating until I was thigh deep. I didn't know what research methods were, never mind being able to choose several. Practice-based research is a slow burn, it zigs and zags like a huge four-dimensional jigsaw with extra pieces from another one and lots of the original correct ones missing.

So I'm nearing the end and what do I know?

8.2 Summary of the Research

This research started in 2018 from a base of an established ceramics practice and an interest in the minutiae of the everyday and rhythm of the domestic task.

Using an autoethnographic methodology - where the researcher was also the subject being examined - two years of practice and reading followed. This practice created several hundred individual pieces of ceramics work and 67 blovel posts of exploratory, reflective, critical or observational writing.

The resulting final outcomes rest on a combination of autobiographical observation and contextual understanding of the position of the vessel in the everyday and Henri Lefevre's Rhythmanalysis (2004) as set out in Chapter Two. They are the Blovel (Chapter Four), the performance/installation called, 'Smalls' (Chapter Six) and The COVID Clay Diary (Chapter Seven).

8.3 Mapping the research against the questions

This PhD set out to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the temporal or rhythmic relationships between a ceramics practice and domestic obligations when both things happen in the domestic home?
2. How might the ceramics practice be used to investigate and expose these relationships?
3. How might the research knowledge and ceramics practice be used to reflect upon the experience of a global pandemic?

8.3.1 Research Aims - Overview

This section takes the aims set out in Chapter One (Part 1.5.2) and overviews the work undertaken to achieve them with signposting to more expansive details throughout the thesis.

- 1. To survey and map the context of the research via a literature and contextual review, providing a framework for the research.**

The contextual review undertaken in Chapter Two identifies several themes and concepts that frame this research. They are distinguished as:

- Place - the domestic realm and the difference between public and private
- Time and Rhythm – The understanding of cyclical time, rhythm and how that might be investigated via Rhythmanalysis
- Work – The public/private dichotomy, how tasks are categorised and where these worlds overlap
- Ceramics and the position of the vessel

Chapter two also identifies a gap into which this research fits. Sitting at the confluence of several ideas, each of which has been investigated independently, this research considers all the following through the lens of a ceramics practice:

- The increasing 'working from home' culture
- The relationship between domestic chores and a ceramics practice
- The position of the vessel as object that spans the public/private divide
- The ideas of time, rhythm and routine relating to both domestic and creative tasks

This unique positioning of the research contributes several new contributions to knowledge as described in 8.4 below.

The subsequent chapters, complete with Blovel inserts, expand upon Chapter Two by reflecting on the works made and investigating their specific contextual place.

- 2. To investigate and understand Henri Lefebvre's concept of Rhythmanalysis and use it to develop and execute an autoethnographic model of observing personal rhythms and creating ceramics-based work.**

This aim is a thread that runs through the entirety of the research. Rhythmanalysis is first considered during the contextual research in Chapter Two. Here the concept is set out with an investigation of the ways in which it has been employed previously in creative practice. During Chapters Three and Four the method called the Blovel is introduced providing a way in which to both observe and reflect upon the rhythms of work - both domestic and creative.

- 3. To produce a substantial body of work that explores and exposes the autoethnographic findings and is underpinned by conceptual and theoretical understanding of rhythmanalysis and the vessel.**

Appendix One and Chapters Five-Seven describe and explore the ceramics works made during the research. This aim is specifically addressed by the performance/installation called Smalls (Chapter Six).

4. To investigate the lived experience of a global pandemic and national lockdown through a ceramics practice building upon the findings from the earlier research.

This aim is accomplished by the work in Chapter Seven, the COVID Clay Diary.

8.3.2 Research Questions Overview

This section considers the findings in relation to each of the research questions.

Research Question One

What are the temporal or rhythmic relationships between a ceramics practice and domestic obligations when both things happen in the home?

This first research question starts from an assumption that there are two broad categories of work that occur; those of public and private as set out in part 2.5.

Throughout the practice and the Blovel reflection, similarities between domestic tasks and creative tasks were exposed. The cyclical rhythm of washing and cooking was compared to the making of a cup in the studio.

The preface to this research speculated:

Wash, hang, fold put-away, wash, hang, fold, put-away

Cast, fettle, polish, fire, cast, fettle, polish, fire

Shop, cook, eat, shop, cook, eat

Throw, turn, dry, fire, throw, turn, dry, fire

Smoke, wash, scrub, dry, smoke, wash, scrub, dry

This proved to be a naïve assumption. The data gathering showed a contradictory scenario where Fordian economies of scale were evident. The division of the tasks into their constituent parts and the multiple repeats of those parts before moving onto the next was more in line with the actual experience. In other words:

Hang, hang, hang, hang, hang

Throw, throw, throw, throw, throw

Fold, fold, fold, fold, fold, fold

Turn, turn, turn, turn, turn, turn

In this explanation the gaps between the lines are also significant and represent a time away from the task where something else takes place. In the case of lines one and three of this there is some drying time during which other jobs and roles are undertaken, in this case, turning some pots whilst the washing blows on the line. This creates a layered day where there is a 'dance' between one process and another. This might be throwing several vessels - work which is classified as public by virtue of it being a mode of employment and its future as object to be exhibited - punctuated by 'private' washing up, pegging washing, and making food.

Some of these tasks are repetitive and have a regular repetition or rhythm.

Fold, fold, fold, fold, fold, (example, taking washing out of the machine)

However, the larger picture of a whole hour or day is more complex with the repetitive parts punctuating long periods of sitting at a computer, one-off anomalous tasks like going to the post office, or unexpected disruptions which commonly take the form of the doorbell or a phone call.

Reflection in Chapter Five (part 5.5.3.3) also identified a separate and distinct space/time which contributed to the practice and format of the day in a different way. This was the 'evening shift'. The evening provides a novel space and time for making which sits contrary

to the daytime. The time which historically falls outside of the working day (usually from about 7pm) is still used for creative practice but this tends to be of a different nature. One that involves tasks which can be done on the knee (like knitting, crochet or embroidery). The experience of this is one of complete overlap between the private 'family' time and a creative practice. One does not affect or disrupt the other, the worlds exist in relative harmony and total overlap.

To understand these multiple concepts, Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis (2004) is again useful.

Table 2.1 Lefebvre's vocabulary of rhythm – summary of key terms.

<i>Linear rhythm</i>	Quantified and fragmented time, imposed by technology, industry and consumption The time of the city and urban life Closer to repetition than rhythm per se, for example dripping of water, the beats of a hammer In musical terms, measure and beat
<i>Cyclical rhythm</i>	The time of nature, 'cosmic and vital', evident in seasons and day and night In biology and the body, for example heart beats and eye movements Characteristic of rural life – cyclical rhythm is destroyed by capitalism Includes repetition <i>and</i> difference In musical terms, melody and harmony
<i>Polyrhythmia</i>	A multitude of rhythms; the effects of different configurations of rhythm
<i>Eurhythmia</i>	When rhythms combine smoothly, for example in good health
<i>Arrhythmia</i>	Discordance between rhythms, being 'out of step'
<i>Isorhythmia</i>	An 'equality of rhythms' beyond <i>eurhythmia</i> , for example in the coordination of an orchestra
<i>Dressage</i>	Process of bodily entrainment and repetition through which rhythm is learnt and becomes evident in the body over time, for example in military drills

FIGURE 98 LEFEBVRE'S VOCABULARY OF RHYTHMS

TAKEN FROM LYONS (2019) P.25

Using the table above from Dawn Lyon's, *'What is Rhythmanalysis'* (2019), the following conclusions can be drawn:

The tasks identified as repetitive and rhythmic, such as throwing on the wheel and folding clothes fit the description of linear rhythm (not through industry, and technology, but using the musical term of measure and beat). These moments of linear time tend to take part in small pockets during the day of a few minutes to an hour.

Fold, fold, fold, fold, fold, fold, fold.....

Other tasks are more cyclical in nature in that they occur periodically; these might be private or public. For example, tasks such as going to the post office might be demanded by some personal context (paying a bill or posting a birthday card) or for a public purpose (shipping an item to a client) but they lack the rhythm of regular occurrence.

One phenomenon that doesn't fit neatly into the table is the concept of the disruption. In the observance of domestic rhythm this might be the postman delivering a parcel or an urgent call requesting a school pick-up or other sporadic event. In terms of the performance of *Smalls*, this was stopping to answer questions from viewers or negotiating with gallery staff. In both public and private realms this causes a rift in the day. The nearest value from Lefebvre's descriptions is arrhythmia. To borrow another musical term they could be considered discordant events or put more candidly, wrong notes.

We are left with an experience of a polyrhythmic day which is a confluence of overlapping rhythms. This reinforces Lefebvre's theory of 'bundles' which suggests that rhythms are never singular and, as Moran (2005) suggests they exist at *'the interplay between repetition and surprise'* (quoted in Nansen et al, 2009). More poetically, the findings reflect Dana Mertzger's analysis. In one sentence she takes the minutiae of the public/private day and encompasses the lifetime scale within which it sits:

'Each day is a tapestry, threads of broccoli, promotion, couches, children, politics, shopping, building, planting, thinking interweave in intimate connection with the insistent cycles of birth existence and death'. (Mertzger 1977)

Returning to the first question, the research finds that the home is a site for overlapping, polychronic rhythms with arrhythmic disruptions. These happen not just in domestic chores and creative practice but, when the two occur in the same place, the domestic and creative rhythms are seen to have similar patterns that overlap with one another to making a complex choreography. This is characterised by rapid, often seamless, movement between public and private chore and creative task along with sporadic disruptions that are often a result of one realm intruding upon the other, for example the doorbell or telephone ringing during a period of making.

Research Question Two

How might the ceramics practice be used to investigate and expose the relationships described in question one?

The second research question is partly fed by the understanding of temporal and rhythmic experience as described above and additionally contributed to by the contextual understanding of place and ceramics practice from the contextual review in Chapter Two.

The understanding of the polychronic day and repetitive nature of both domestic tasks and ceramic production provided a starting point for several speculative works, in particular *No Wonder* 2018 (Part 6.2) and the *Ceramic Skirt* 2018.

This in turn saw the development of the performance *Smalls*, as described in Chapter Six.

Smalls captures and replicates the rhythms identified in question one. The performance exposes the polychronic nature of dividing tasks into smaller processes and then, in a broader manner the cyclical experience of time by the deconstruction of the installation and the recycling of the clay.

The form of the cup, whilst abstracted into a generic vessel, is a connecting force which both represents itself and its place as universal object, and the data gathered from the domestic chore of washing clothes.

Smalls as Rhythmanalysis

Smalls is a Rhythmanalysis via creative process (Chapter Two part 2.6). Information about the lived experience – rhythms of real life – are translated into a performance. The micro-rhythms of each throwing and pegging and threading process are entangled into a polychronic whole using the researcher's body as the both the factor which lives the experience and then exposes the analysis through a ceramics performance.

The ceramics practice is a constant throughout each stage of the process. First via the use of the cup as object/thing that is made in the studio and used in the domestic home and then during the performance as an abstracted vessel which forms the basis of the process and the aesthetic. The temporal rhythms identified in question one, are replicated during the performance. Polychronic time signatures are disrupted by live feeds to viewers instead of the postman calling. This is a discordant event nonetheless that punctuated the performance in the same way as observed in the home.



FIGURE 99 SMALLS AT THE 2021 INTERNATIONAL CERAMICS FESTIVAL

SMALLS BEING LIVE STREAMED TO AN AUDIENCE

To summarise, the use of a ceramics practice that covers the entirety of the investigation from beginning to end with the integration of the theoretical notion of rhythm analysis provides an innovative solution to Research Question Two. By exposing the process of making via the performance, the temporal nature of the underlying tasks is exposed. Thus, the originally observed rhythms are manifested in both the performance and the resulting installation (refer to part 6.8).

Research Question Three

How might the research knowledge and ceramics practice be used to reflect upon the experience of a global pandemic?

In 2020 the research was rudely interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic. Whilst devastating in many ways it did provide an opportunity to explore an extended and intense experience of working and residing in the same space.

The COVID Clay Diary (also referred to as the clay diary or the diary) was the response to this research question. The Clay Diary is a substantial piece of work made over ninety days during the first UK lockdown in March to June 2020. The Clay Diary is fully explored in Chapter Seven.

The pandemic was an unexpected occurrence. The happening of a global event of this magnitude might happen once in a century and only once (perhaps never) in an average lifetime. Whilst this event is difficult to place within a broad rhythm of a whole life (Lefebvre would classify this as an arrhythmic event), the lived experience of lockdown had its own distinctive rhythms which were very different from a regular, previously more 'normal' existence.

The COVID Clay Diary was a process-based response to this unique time period. A cup was made every day for 90 days. Each cup responded to a personal, social, cultural or political event of the day. The making of the diary created its own rhythm. The making of a ceramic piece takes several days or even weeks to complete and can have up to 13 different processes.

- Throwing
- Altering
- Drying
- Turning
- Altering
- Drying
- Bisque firing
- Glazing
- Drying
- High firing
- Decals or lustre application
- Firing
- Finishing with mixed media additions



FIGURE 100 BISQUE DIARY PIECES IN THE STUDIO, APRIL 2020

After the first few days of throwing the cups there is a regular process which entails maintenance tasks; checking the dryness of previous pieces, turning, adding handles, making alterations, stacking the kiln for firing. After about three or four weeks there is also glaze, decals or lustre to add and finally finishing with various mixed media additions. The pattern for making didn't resemble a regular studio practice. The studio work took place nearer the end of the working day, often after the government televised press briefing which lasted until approx. 4.45pm. The daily work took on average an hour and was seldom interrupted. This said, it had its own choreographed routine where tasks were grouped together for maximum efficiency.

The COVID Clay Diary uses a regular schedule of daily making and the findings from the previous research to capture some of that lived experience. It does that several ways:

- The diary relies upon the now faithful and prioritised form of the cup with its connotations of universal understanding and sense of place.
- The manipulation of the 90 cups comes from an understanding of the aesthetic and conceptual priorities of the previous work. This is manifested in ideas such as running over with a bicycle when the way we exercise changes and the multimedia additions such as textiles and masonry.
- The cups were made at approximately the same time each day. This made an additional rhythm which became embedded into the new experience of lockdown life.



FIGURE 101 COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 88 ANGELA TAIT

THROWN AND ALTERED CUP WITH BICYCLE INNER TUBE, SAFETY PIN AND BOLT



FIGURE 102 COVID CLAY DIARY DAY 51 ANGELA TAIT

STONEWARE VESSEL WITH TEXTILE ADDITIONS

8.4 Original Contributions to Knowledge

Several parts of this research have developed into original ideas that contribute to existing knowledge. These are listed and signposted below.

- Original Ceramics Practice – Part 8.4.1

- A new kind of Rhythmanalysis – Part 8.4.2
- Contextual positioning of the Vessel – Part 8.4.3
- The Method of the Blovel – Part 8.4.4
- Creative response in clay to the COVID-19 Pandemic – Part 8.4.5
- Model of Practice – Part 8.4.6

8.4.1 The Ceramics Practice as Original Contribution to Knowledge

Chapter Two identifies the gap in the knowledge which the first two research questions aim to address. This gap is based firstly upon the increasing ‘working from home’ culture which has blossomed because of technological advances and the demands of the workforce for flexible working and a better work/life balance. There is a lack of creative practice which investigates this specific phenomenon (part 1.2).

The ceramics practice throughout the investigation addresses these issues.



FIGURE 103 THROWN AND IRONED STONEWARE VESSEL WITH CROCHET ADDITIONS

ANGELA TAIT 2018



FIGURE 104 UNTITLED 2019

THROWN AND ALTERED SCULPTURE WITH COTTON

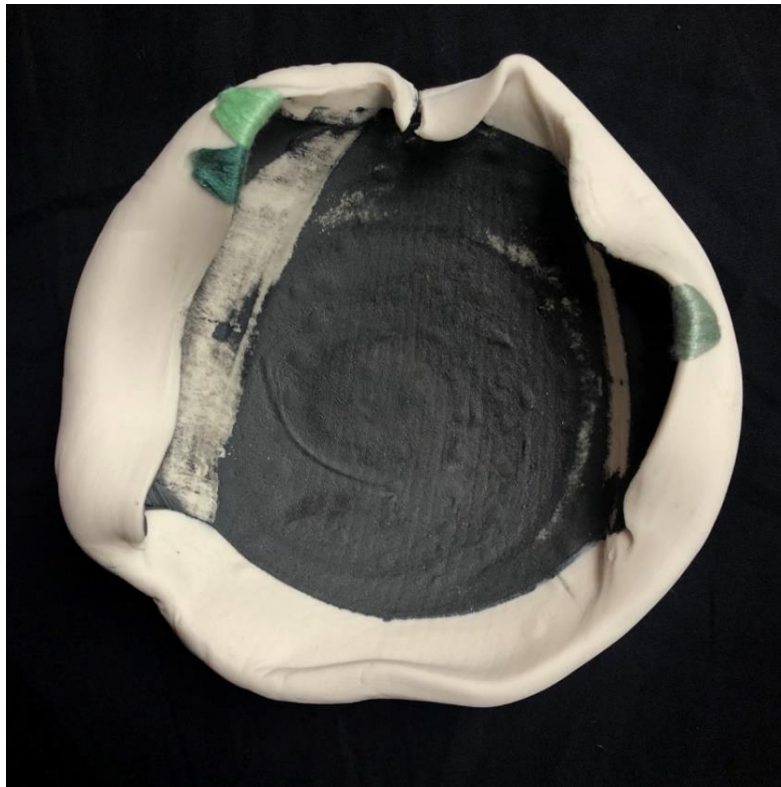


FIGURE 105 THROWN AND IRONED VESSEL 2018

BLACK AND WHITE PORCELAIN WITH EMBROIDERY SILK

The large body of work produced in 2018-2020 was a unique response to the synthesis of multiple parts of the research:

- A theoretical understanding of the private/public dichotomy and the nature of temporal experience
- Autoethnographic observation of a personal experience from within the domestic/work crossover via an experimental writing practice
- A reflective practice – also partly undertaken via the writing.

This resulted in both the *Work in Progress* exhibition (Appendix Five) and the multiple iterations of the *Smalls* performance (Chapter Six).



FIGURE 106 WORK IN PROGRESS EXHIBITION 2020,

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

Smalls builds upon the performative potential of ceramics in general. This is a genre which has developed substantially since the turn of the century with the advent of such events as the biennial International Ceramics Festival in Aberystwyth, Wales. Performance art is categorised by Jo Dahn (2015) in three ways. The Carnavalesque, Relational Practice and Craftivism. *Smalls* doesn't fit neatly into these categories. *Smalls* is discrete and quiet, and it doesn't actively involve the viewer; neither is it a protest. Rather *Smalls* is a Rhythmanalysis, something there is little evidence of in either ceramics or a wider review of creative practice.

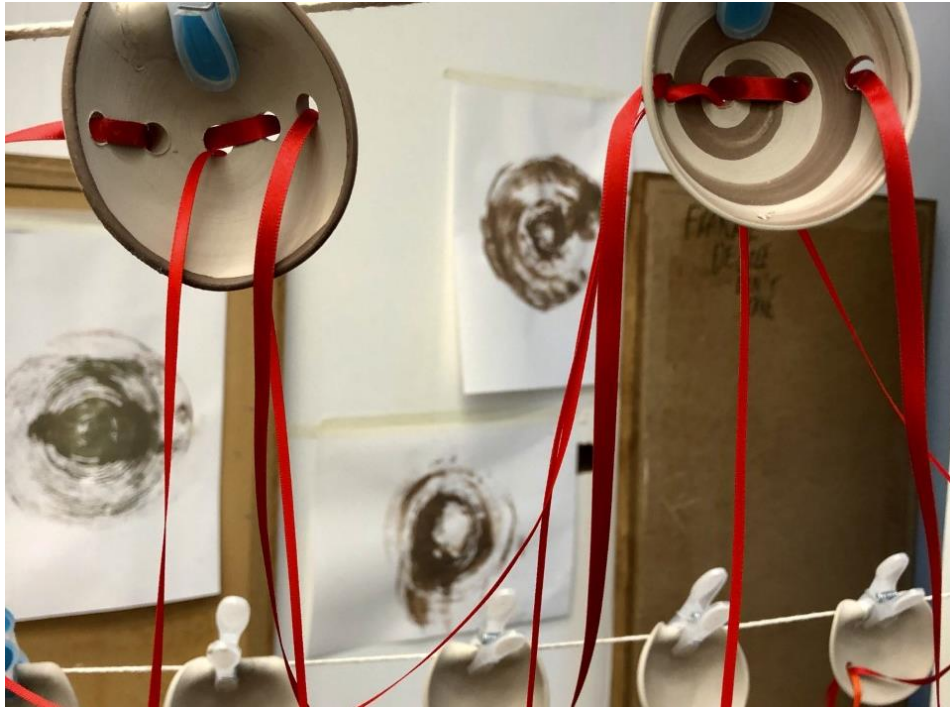


FIGURE 107 SMALLS 2019

UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD

8.4.2 A new way of conducting and expressing a Rhythmanalysis

In the final sentence of her book, 'What is Rhythmanalysis'(2019) Dawn Lyon called for researchers to, '*experiment with the different practices and possibilities rhythmanalysis proposes*' (Lyon 2019, p. 104).

This research does just that. The various iterations of the performance *Smalls* analyses the rhythms of dailiness from a position that involves both public and private tasks in the same space. It uses Lefebvre's model, originally proposed as a Marxist critique of capitalism, and adapts it into one that explores labour in a different space/time, that of the blurry line between the public and private worlds. It uses Lefebvre's (2004) emphasis on the body of the rhythmanalyst as both the receiver, analyser and re-presenter of the information. The unique characteristics of *Smalls* (Chapter Six) as Rhythmanalysis comes from the confluence of ideas:

Lefebvre's writings about understanding and recording of the rhythms of time/space using:

- Space: The domestic home and Joanna Hollows (2008) understanding of the public and private realms and the places in which they overlap (Explored in part 2.5)
- Time: The cyclical nature of how tasks are experienced both domestically and within a ceramics practice

In addition, Smalls employs the contextual positioning of the vessel as the object that spans both spaces (part 2.8.2) and the use of a ceramics performance as the means of exposing the observed rhythms.

This leaves the research in a unique position that builds upon Lefevbre's ideas about the observation of rhythm in a distinct and novel space/time, and with a creative outcome in the realm of ceramics practice.

In addition other parts of the PhD expand upon the use of rhythm in a different way. The COVID Clay Diary, the Blovel and this thesis encompass rhythms of their own. The Clay Diary in terms of its daily process of making and the ability to 'publish' it immediately during production through the egalitarian platform of Instagram, the Blovel with its discordant chronological structure and narrative, and this thesis through the ebb and flow of two authorial voices. There are rhythmic devices here that have been made possible by exploiting alternative methods of practice.

8.4.3 The Contextual positioning of the Vessel

An early work in the research attempted to summarise the overarching role of the vessel and its place on the cusp of function and concept.



FIGURE 108 HOLDER OF SOUP AND MEANING 2019 ANGELA TAIT

PORCELAIN AND EMBROIDERY SILK

This work came from a need to understand the nature of the vessel in both the public and private realms. This early thinking developed into the notion of the cup (or abstractions of the form) as primary sculptural and conceptual form for the works which followed based upon the following assumptions:

- The vessel is universally understandable throughout humanity. Every culture uses the vessel functionally, as decoration and/or for ritual purposes.
- The specific form of the coffee cup straddles the public/private divide. It is as acceptable in the domestic home as it is in a workplace (See part 2.8.2).
- Coffee (or drinks in general) are both a communicating mechanism and a distraction or disruption. This happens in both the public and the private realm. 'Would you like a coffee?' 'Let's meet for coffee.' 'Good morning darling, here's your coffee'.

By using the form of the cup throughout the research, it becomes a signifier of all the ideas above.



FIGURE 109 DON'T FORGET - PART D 2020, ANGELA TAIT

THROWN AND ALTERED STONEWARE WITH MASONRY AND BUILDER'S DETRITUS

In addition, this research pushes these notions further by exploring the link between the cup as universally understood object and its place in ceramics practice. Throughout the practice and the Blovel writing, the rhythms of domestic tasks are consistently compared with the rhythms of ceramics production, ultimately concluding that there are similarities in the cyclical and polyrhythmic experiences of undertaking both (See part 8.3.2 for full description).

Thus, this positions the research outcomes in a novel conceptual place which contributes to discourses surrounding the vessel and its place as universal object and fundamental form within ceramics practice.

8.4.4 The Method of the Blovel

Experimental writing holds a centre position as alternately (and sometimes concurrently) method of data collection, reflective practice, creative outcome and personal diary. The

Blovel is unique, it sits at every part of the research process and is the glue which binds everything together.

8.4.4.1 Blovel as data gathering (See part 4.4.5)

- The timed texts gather information that helps a researcher to understand rhythms of the everyday.
- The rich qualitative data feeds the creative practice.

8.4.4.2 The Blovel as reflective practice (See part 4.4.3)

- Texts are used as a thinking tool for exploring the ideas within the ceramics practice.
- Theoretical references are drawn into the writing creating a contextual review which develops as the thinking and making does.

8.4.4.3 Blovel as outcome

In addition to the Blovel as method, it is also a creative outcome. The whole document viewed together is a story. A narrative account of the whole PhD which exposes the personal experience of undertaking a practice-based PhD as a full document using a fragmented narrative approach.

Additionally, parts of the experimental writing are embedded into the thesis to provide an alternative and unique method of presenting the research. This achieves an outcome which is often a challenge; to make the written thesis part of the practice. A practice-based project such as this is often finally represented by a body of work and an illustrated written text which presents the work in such a way as to fulfil the learning outcomes of the PhD (Gray and Mallins 2004, Blair 2016). This thesis uses a hybrid format that stretches the concept of the traditional thesis. As such the thesis becomes more embedded in the practice and vice versa. Practice based PhDs have traditionally been forced into an academic format via historical precedent and the demands of a research degree as set out by the QAA (2018). This thesis suggests an alternative format which demands that the practice and theory belong together. It is a holistic approach which sits in line with the entire research philosophy in which everything is connected. The introduction to this thesis refers to an 'attitude' (part 1.3). It lays down a challenge; make a model of practice that is inclusive and accessible and that challenges the perceived elusiveness of doctoral study. The method of

the Blovel provides a tangible way to achieve this. As a method it is easily scalable and replicable, making it useful as a pedagogical tool which might benefit students at all academic levels. In addition, it has potential to be used by different disciplines, in particular within creative subjects where practice might be challenging to capture or disseminate, or where critical distance is required by the researcher – examples might be dance or performance.

There is another facet to the Blovel that should also be acknowledged. This is currently less tangible and will only be measurable with the benefit of time. The Blovel as a publication could benefit other PhD researchers in their early years of study, or those who are considering a path into research. The attitude of honesty which doesn't formalise or sugar-coat the PhD processes should give comfort to those encountering the inevitable rough terrain that all research projects encounter.

The combination of all the above factors leaves the Blovel as part of a new, accessible way of working that is replicable and is ripe for inclusion into other models of practice.

8.4.5 Creative Response in clay to COVID-19 Pandemic



FIGURE 110 DAY 70 THE COVID CLAY DIARY 2020, THROWN STACKING CUPS

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

The COVID-19 pandemic is a unique point in time which was experienced by the whole of humanity, and as such this phenomenon is unrepeatable. There will never be an opportunity to experience the exact time and circumstances again. Previous and subsequent pandemics have been, and will be, unique in the way that they are perceived and encountered. As such, a document of personal experience is historically significant and contributes to discourses surrounding the human experience of the crisis.

These discourses are currently in flux. There are several organisations beginning to collect documents which represent the specific experiences of the pandemic. The Science Museum are actively 'researching stories' (Science Museum Group 2020) to put together a permanent record for future generations, as are the Smithsonian (Smith 2021) and other globally important Museums, thereby proving the significance of this kind of data.

A simple internet search shows hundreds of references to diaries written during lockdown and many 'visual' accounts which are almost exclusively mixtures of drawing and text in the form of art journals and daily video accounts shared via YouTube.

The COVID Clay Diary is different. It is a series of objects which uses the previously identified 'universal' nature of the cup as a daily diary form which anchors the work in the realm of the understandable but outside of the regular perception of a traditional diary. Each daily entry to the diary is an object which holds meaning beyond its tenuous relationship to function. During those 90 days, an experience was given material form, much like Christopher McHugh describes in his paper, 'Ceramics as an Archaeology of the Contemporary Past' (2017). In his research, McHugh applies the writing of Buchli et al (2006) who assert that the cultural dematerialisation because of digitalisation of experience will confound archaeologists and the durability of the digital methods cannot be relied upon. Ceramics however have the longevity to hold these meanings for the future.



FIGURE 111 DAY 60 OF THE COVID CLAY DIARY ANGELA TAIT

Overall, this is a critically engaged work which is a unique model of research in response to a global crisis using clay. A series of archivally robust objects which hold meaning from a peculiar time, made in the present, but significant from now and onwards into the future.

8.5 Areas for additional research

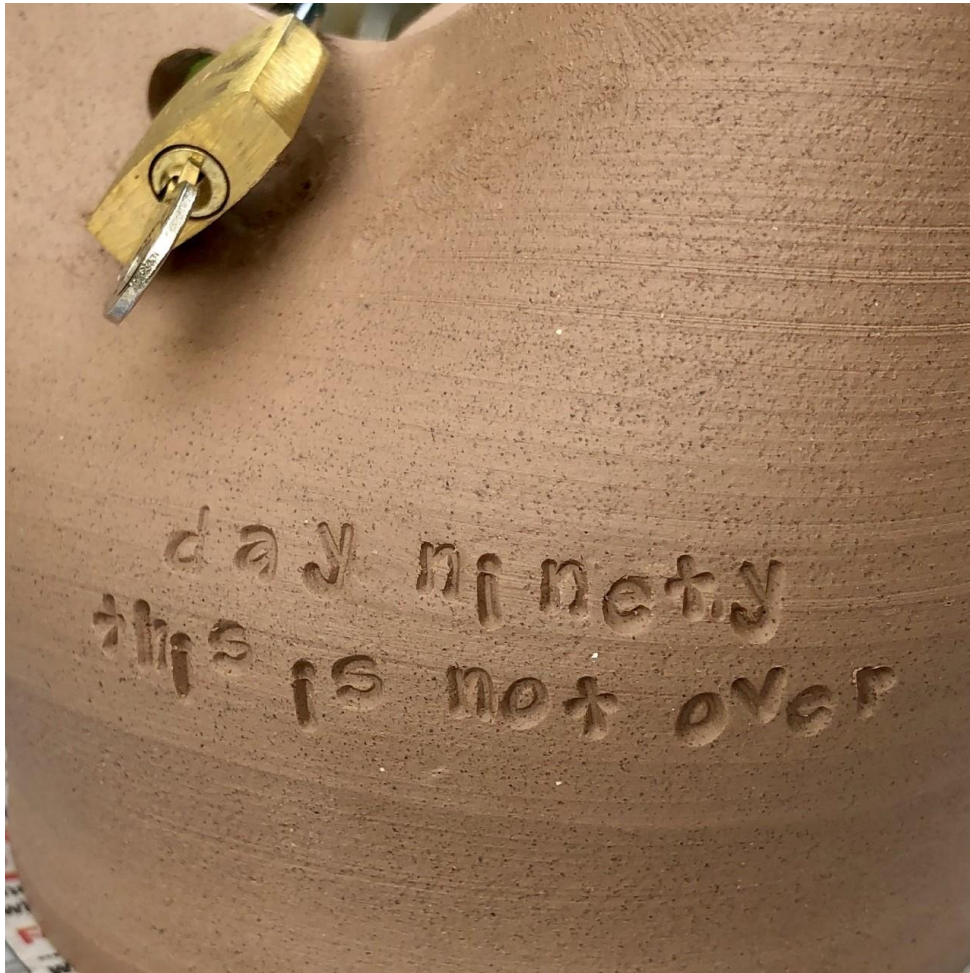


FIGURE 112 DAY 90 OF THE COVID CLAY DIARY ANGELA TAIT

THROWN AND ALTERED CUP WITH OPEN PADLOCK

This study is a starting point from which there is endless potential for expansion. Several paths for further research have already been speculated about during the thesis:

- The COVID Clay diary took place during a time of national crisis, however this method is repeatable. Another clay diary during a more normal period would provide potential to explore the rhythms of dailiness in a less politicised and turbulent time.

Additionally, the clay diary is a document recording and responding to a very specific and devastating time; one that was experienced worldwide. Two years on the

understanding of the work is one of collective memory rather than immediate recognition. As the pandemic moves into a position of history the Clay Diary is meaningful in different ways. A new reading of the work in a decade's time will provide new insights with the benefit of time

- Things which go 'round. The relationship between the cyclical motion of the washing machine and of the potter's wheel was exposed as one of the visual motifs of this research. Some more detailed investigation into these motifs could provide a pathway for future creative practice. Several of the Blovel posts speculate about a film with overlapping visuals that investigates this. There is already some progress with this via the creation of works *'Things that go 'round'* 2021. This work is a series of commercially produced plates overlaid with decals of original photography. Plans are in place to expand this.



FIGURE 113 *THINGS THAT GO 'ROUND* 2021 ANGELA TAIT

CERAMIC PLATE WITH ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY



FIGURE 114 *THINGS THAT GO 'ROUND* 2021 ANGELA TAIT

DINNER PLATES WITH ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY

As well as the ongoing investigations, this study provides potential new avenues for other researchers from the creative and other disciplines.

- The method of the Blovel is particularly suited to autoethnography which is an increasingly relevant research strategy in sociological study. In addition it is replicable, flexible and scalable. There is potential for a Blovel that is part text/part drawing or a multi-person Blovel.
- There are curatorial concerns raised within the thesis that have the potential to be further exploited. The use of Instagram for both its accessibility and immediacy provides fertile ground that would benefit future studio practice. Additionally, the subject of the domestic explored through a ceramics practice raises questions of

dissemination of future works. In other words, could the domestic place become a site for encountering the practice instead of the customary channels of museums, galleries, conferences and festivals?

- This study started life with the intention of involving multiple people through case studies and focus groups. Whilst the development of the research eventually excluded these, there is still scope to undertake this expanded research. Where this study is deep and thick, another one would be wide with several different voices. This would be particularly interesting with a cross-disciplinary engagement, tying together two sets of knowledge from Sociology (ethnography) and ceramics could bring exciting and novel investigations into the relationships between the domestic and creativity. There is a partial model that already exists from plans made earlier in this project. One which involves interviews and collaborative projects with ceramics outcomes. It is tentatively touched upon with the Birmingham Scarf made from the research workshop at Birmingham City University in 2019.

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Appendix 1 List of works made

List of works Year one

1st Feb 2018 – 31st Jan 2019

No	Work	Status	Notes
1	Yarn Bowls – Series of thrown vessels with attachments in coloured cotton crochet. Sculptural pieces intended as an installation of all pieces.	WIP	Almost all finished and photographed individually and together as installed.
2	Roadkill/school run. 4 x bowls thrown and altered by running over with a car. Finished with different coloured embroidery thread	Finished	Currently in storage at studio.
3	Roadkill cups – 5x thrown and altered cups by running over. Unglazed lavaflek and manganese.	Finished	Currently in storage at Ebor. Photographed. Promised one to ICF 2019 for cup sale
4	Untitled (Hard Pressed) – four porcelain thrown bowls with black porcelain slip. Thrown and ironed.	WIP	Finished with coloured embroidery.
5	Six ironed porcelain bowls as above with experimental underglaze elements Untitled (Hard-Pressed)	Finished and stored	One finished with a small chain and key added a couple of nuts and bolts. One finished with keyring and keys Others finished with thread
6	Untitled (pegged) series of seven extruded vessels pinched together with pegs. Satin white glaze.	Discounted	Shocking Pegs a good idea but spoiled this particular lot
7	One largish thrown vessel in lavafleck. Grippled when wet with thumbs on inside	WIP	Ugly - thrown away
8	114 unglazed stoneware thrown vessels in lavafleck. Little hole drilled in each one	WIP	One for every item of washing which passed through my hands in a day.

	'No Wonder 2018' Or 'Smalls' 2018/19		Have embroidered these with a visual key relating to type of garment and stage in the washing process that day.
9	Three thrown cups with handles, folded and pegged. Broken one.	WIP	Nice, but consider them drawings for the time being.
10	The Birmingham Scarf	Finished	Ceramic tiles made during workshop finished with crochet cotton. Photographed. Would still like to try out in public/private space (Launderette)
11	The ceramic skirt	Just an idea.	Epic fail for the time being. Would like to try making the small(s) into a skirt.
12	Hard-Pressed	drying for bisque	Made some more ironed bowls. Threw upwards and squashed in a different manner. One survived as a small shallow 'dish'. Finished with keys
13	Series of small vessels for experimenting with thread	WIP	I'll call these drawings
14	Bobble for bobble hat	WIP	Fired. Wonder about making the little thrown pots into multiple bobbles for hats?
15	Two mugs squashed to hand shape with holes for gloves	WIP	Fired, One finished and photographed. Other thrown away
16	Blanket stitch plate	Finished	Not taking this idea forward for the time being. It's a drawing for now
17	Extruded pegs	WIP	One for every piece of washing done another day. Have tried to make them into a skirt but this was the ugliest thing I ever made. Tried them spilling out of a broken jug on red ribbons.
18	Cup and saucer scarf Part of the wearable ceramics series	Restarted	Tried once. Visually the weight between the scarf and the ceramic didn't work. Have remade attachment

19	Four ugly 'hard pressed' bowls with kitsch crochet attachments	Finished	Undecided Need photographing
20	Small number of thrown vessels with cut outs for tufted pieces	WIP	
21	Porcelain to-do lists	WIP	Fired. Need finishing
22	Tumbled dried plates		Need to take from dryer sooner.

List of works Year Two

1st Feb 2019 – 31st Jan 2020

No	Description	Status	Notes
23	Four run-over (roadkill) thrown bowls with big apertures for tufted pieces	Finished	Put on back burner – Tufting is too dense for the work at the moment
24	Hat, scarf, glove, cup and saucer in white porcelain	Finished	Hat a bit big. Fits ok. Need performing and photographing.
3	Gripped bowl with thumb prints. Purple scarf and long glove	Finished	Unconvinced about the scarf. It sits on shoulders. Taken apart and reconstructed with a better form.
4	Random tufted pots - Three or four pieces with apertures in bottoms for tufted pieces.	Finished	Interesting objects
5	Approx. 100 thrown small(s) with holes turned into bases. Some finished with embroidery and one with white crochet. Black Vulcan, smooth and course.	WIP	Have tried these strung on rope like I had imagined. They just look rubbish. I have no idea what to do with them now. Packed away – some thrown away
6	Ironed sock bowl in lava fleck finished with embroidery	WIP	...No idea!

7	Ironed bra bowl in black porcelain with shades of pink embroidery.	Finished	This looks great, right on the verge of going too far.
8	Ironed lace (underwear) bowl with rainbow embroidery	Finished	Looks great...what to do with this idea though?
9	Series of smoke fired pieces with embroidery additions.	Finished.	Some making propositions for future work....clay drawings
10	Large lavaflek jug with holes for attachments	WIP	Finished with blue crochet glove and scarf. Needs photographing
11	Cast porcelain paper clay take away container. Holder of soup and meaning with blue embroidery	Finished	Interesting -
12	Stoneware bowl glazed inside with blue - with holes and 'holder of soup and meaning'	Finished	A lovely object. More of a thought or a clay drawing
13	3x porcelain paper clay to-do lists will have crochet additions on	WIP	I think these could be something. Replicas of my actual to-do lists for a period of time. Every week for a year?
14	Wearable cup and saucer with green long gloves	Finished	Need performing and photographing
15	Rounded belly jar with very long tufted maroon	Finished	This is nice.... needs work and thinking
16	One small vessel for every lost sock. Thrown and part glazed and embroidered	Finished	
17	A coffee cup for every distraction in a day. Seven cups.	WIP	Some of these are finished – two most interesting ideas to come from this body of work are: The boob cup which needs finishing with pencil crayon The carpet mug
18	Clay cushion	WIP	Collaborative piece with Ebor focus group
19	Series of about twelve thrown and ironed pieces with cobalt swirls and added drawings	Finished	Repetition


20	Washing line bowls x approx. 50 Some dipped in glaze, others holes drilled for post firing additions	Finished	Something in this ... make more
21	Washing line bowls with additions – approx. 10	Finished	Playing with additions of ribbons
22	Washing line bowls with words	Finished	There's a performance in here somewhere
23	Small sculptures, little vessels thrown and stacked and holes drilled x 2	Finished.	Too small and weigh a tonne.
24	Five taller sculptures with some drippy glaze	Finished	Definitely something in this. I like these, they're architectural and precarious and random and different and obvious and complex.
25	One larger sculpture as above with drilled holes for embroidery	WIP	Finished with orange cotton.
26	Large shallow thrown bowl with little bowls dropped in and holes drilled	WIP	Finish with Embroidery?
27	Three or four large vessels with very long tufted inserts.	Finished	What to do with these? Elegant, different, quirky super objects....but why?
28	Thrown cup with additional vessels squashed in and crochet addition	Finished	Dismissed
29	Potter's wheel drawings x approx. 20	Finished	Look better when wet but the process is more interesting than the outcome...
30	Pinned one of the above drawings to a board and put it in rain and recorded stop motion		Needs more rain. Looks great when sprayed but doesn't look natural. This could be part of the video
31	Series of thrown cups x 7. One for each interruption during a day	WIP	Some of these are better than others. Best is the carpet mug. The boob mug is going to be coloured in with pencil crayons. Others are less successful
	Series of small sculptures of multiple thrown vessels in raku. Unglazed fired to cone 6		Finished by the addition of embroidered elements creating proposals for further works. Larger pieces already made.

	Residency: University of Salford		
32	Series of approx. 30 thrown vessels installed on a washing line. Holes drilled and ribbons, textiles and embroidery thread added.	Finished	These need to 'belong' to the question more. There is a hint of the domestic about the washing line but would be nice to get 'data' from the domestic and translate into the work.
33	Installation within architecture – vessels thrown off the hump and laid along one of the I-beams in the University building		Could be spectacular. The performance of this is important. Explicit exposure of process – Video? Performance?
34	Series of about 12 thrown and pinched and pegged vessels. Stoneware fired and pegs replaced	Finished	Look rather feminine, also like tacos or fortune cookies. Repetitive process
35	Series of small vessel thrown and turned, and holes drilled for wearable ceramic necklaces	WIP	Part glazed, finished with red leather cord. Need photographing
36	Approx. 15 small thrown vessels pegged together in a small bridge shape	Finished	Should have glazed the insides and put less pegs on. Tried adding little fabric patches. Not really. Calling this a drawing.
	Post residency		
37	Thrown plate with wooden skirt hanger and holes for fibre additions	WIP	
38	Two thrown bowls (one inverted) with embroidered coloured panels - Blue	Finished	A bit of a distraction
39	Two thrown bowls One inverted) with embroidered coloured panels - pink	Finished	same
40	Series of 5 thrown and thrown towers with dribbled glaze	Finished	Shown at Brighthouse Arts Festival 2019
41	Video – things which go around	WIP	Clips made: Throwing from above Wiping pottery in a circle Washing machine spinning

42	Carpet mug 2 – Small, purple carpet sewn on	Finished	Part of the ‘people who distort my day’ series
43	Carpet mug 3 – large red clay, white glaze	WIP	Part of the ‘people who distort my day’ series
44	Approx. 20 ‘taco pots’ Thrown and pinched, lavaflek with white glaze	WIP	Tried some with crochet additions and some with ribbon

List of works Year Three

1st Feb 2020 – 31st Jan 2021

No	Description	Status	Notes
1	Grogged s/w bowl with additional vessels thrown in finished in a fan of green embroidery	Finished	
2	Thrown bowls (one inverted) with excessive runny glaze	WIP	Awaiting firing
3	Installation – Approx. 40 thrown and pegged stoneware small vessels attached to clothes airer and finished with ribbons.	Finished	Something wrong. Shape/materials/colours. Takes great images from certain angles when looks like fish scales but better in lines. Has a more accessible rhythm. 
4	Installation at Ebor studios. Same thrown pieces but attached to washing lines strung from the architecture	Finished	Better - This could be an extension of the ‘smalls’ piece made last year. Interesting how the domestic transfers to the gallery and the ceramics practice overlaps with the ideas of the home. Even has embroidery and a sorts of Edmund De-Waal-esque rhythm.
5	Drawings – From the transcripts of the interviews and focus groups so far.	Ongoing	Intention is to transfer onto decals for images on the patchwork quilt
6	Tiles – White stoneware glaze with punctured holes. Triangles, diamonds, squares	Ongoing	Intention to make a huge blanket with some decals added. Might make a diary of images and dates
7	Square tiles with some images from the transcripts	Ongoing	

8	Smalls 2020	Finished	A full-scale practice run in the home studio of the performance. Lasted three days and remained in place for four weeks
9	The COVID clay diary	Finished	100+ individual pieces documenting the COVID lockdown
10	A week of diary text	Finished	Six extruded coiled pots with text documenting the events of the week, both personal and social
11	Clay masks		Series of 8 ceramics facemasks
12	Large coil pot		Large, extruded vessel of randomly placed coils with diary text
13	Smalls 2020	Finished	Performance/Installation See appendix 3
14	Thrown and altered bowl with coloured embroidery	Finished	Back to this idea of making during the day and finishing in the evening
15	Thrown and altered bowl	Finished	
16	Thrown and altered bowl with drilled holes		Finished in a kind of spirograph pattern with thread - purple
17	Series of thrown and altered pots with holes for fibre additions	WIP	
18	Extruded square vessels with handles and cut-outs for fibre additions	WIP	Finished.
19	Extruded round small vessels with fibre additions and rubber washers	Finished	
20	Toothbrush Mug	WIP	

Appendix 2 Micro Residency Salford

In October 2019 I undertook a residency in the Fine Art studios at the University of Salford where I work as a lecturer on the BA (Hons) Fine Art. The purpose of this was twofold:

1. This was primarily intended as a learning opportunity for the students. A chance to observe a residency by a professional artist and to engage with a different kind of studio practice.
2. From a personal perspective this was a chance to take my research away from a place which is linked tightly with my home, where distractions and interruptions would be from a different source and where the only thing I had to do all day was make.

The residency lasted two full working days.

I started with a wheel, 25 kilos of clay and a small handful of other tools



FIGURE 115 THROWING AND DISCUSSION

FIGURE 116

Throughout the two days I made hundreds of thrown vessels and clay ‘wheel drawings’. It became impossible to accurately list the number and variety of works made during this period.

Excerpt from table of works made (Appendix 1)

	Residency: University of Salford		
32	Series of approx. 30 thrown vessels installed on a washing line. Holes drilled and ribbons, textiles and embroidery thread added.	Finished	These need to ‘belong’ to the question more. There a hint of the domestic about the washing line but would be nice to get ‘data’ from the domestic and translate into the work.
33	Installation within architecture – vessels thrown off the hump and laid along one of the I-beams in the University building		Could be spectacular. The performance of this is important. Explicit exposure of process – Video? Performance?
34	Series of about 12 thrown and pinched and pegged vessels. Stoneware fired and pegs replaced	Finished	Look rather feminine, also like tacos or fortune cookies. Repetitive process
35	Series of small vessel thrown and turned and holes drilled for wearable ceramic necklaces	WIP	Part glazed, finished with red leather cord. Need photographing
36	Approx. 15 small thrown vessels pegged together in a small bridge shape	Finished	Should have glazed the insides and put less pegs on. Tried adding little fabric patches. Not really. Calling this a drawing.

Wheel Drawings using slip and pigment

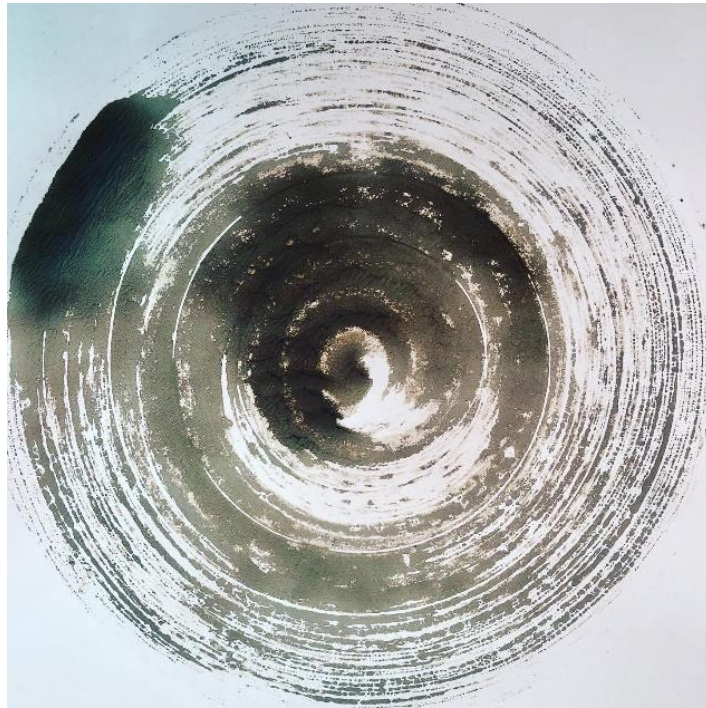


FIGURE 117 WHEEL DRAWING

SLIP AND PIGMENT ON PAPER

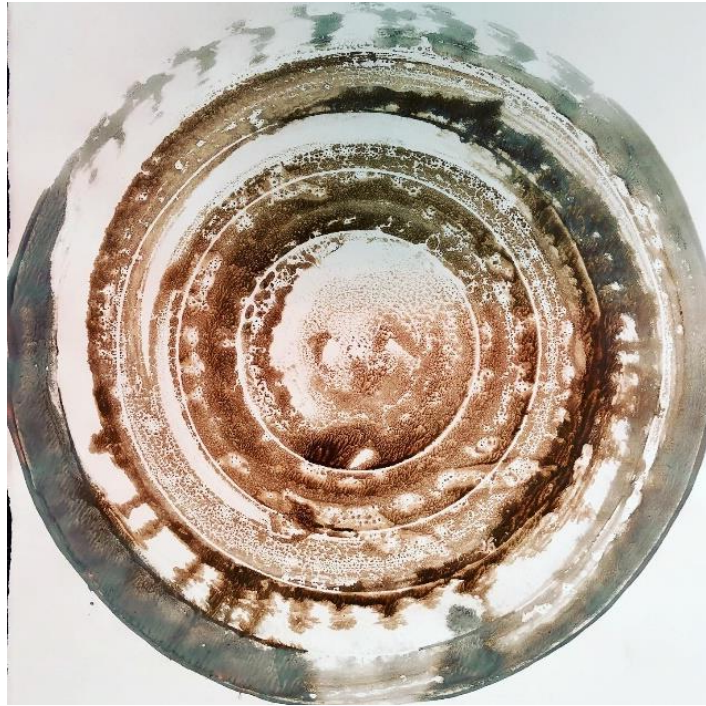


FIGURE 118 WHEEL DRAWING A2

SLIP AND PIGMENT ON PAPER

FIGURE 119 WHEEL DRAWING

Experimental Objects



FIGURE 120 THROWN AND ALTERED PEGGED VESSELS 2019



FIGURE 121 THROWN AND ALTERED 'PEGGED' VESSELS – FIRED



FIGURE 122 VESSELS THROWN OFF THE HUMP AND NESTLED INTO THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE BUILDING



FIGURE 123 THROWN AND DRILLED 'WEARABLE CERAMICS' UNFIRED



FIGURE 124 WEARABLE CERAMICS POST-FIRING 2019



FIGURE 125 THROWN AND PEGGED SCULPTURE 2019



FIGURE 126 THROWN AND PEGGED SCULPTURE 2019 (POST FIRING)



FIGURE 127 THROWN AND THROWN VESSELS 2019 UNFIRED



FIGURE 128 THROWN AND THROWN VESSELS 2019 FIRED



FIGURE 129 THROWN AND PEGGED VESSELS ON A WASHING LINE 2019



FIGURE 130 THROWN AND PEGGED VESSELS ON A WASHING LINE 2019



FIGURE 131 THROWN AND PEGGED VESSELS DRIED, DRILLED AND THREADED WITH RIBBON 2019

Outcomes

Some of the strategies used were not new to me. I had pegged thrown vessels to a washing line before and I had made drawings on paper using the wheel and slip. Much of this work was variations on my own ideas. This is common for me. The work develops in small increments.



Becomes





Becomes



The Static objects - Sculptures

The static objects (sculptures) do hold ideas of repetition and the nature of them being made from ceramic holds the presence of time for making, drying, firing etc. The residency allowed me to remake and drive forward some of the mixed media ideas I'd already been playing with.

Time

This body of work reinforces the idea of the temporal experience of the making process. The clay/ceramic components made during the day during the 'public' working time – in this case, very public. The fibre textiles additions exclusively made during the evening in an overlapping position with my 'private time'

Place

In a curious quirk of fate, the space I used for the micro residency was slightly removed from the studio in an area originally designed for sitting and eating, with a makeshift kitchen – a fridge, kettle, microwave and sink - for making cups of tea and warming up food. This set-up shows a poetic overlap with the domestic which is pertinent.

The Performance

The performance is a significant development in the practice. By placing an audience in the making process, the whole residency became a performance. In particular I was extremely conscious of how the work is made. One piece thrown and pegged, then another, then another. Sometimes throwing a few pieces off the hump and pegging them all at the same time (a little bit like you would with actual washing on a line).

Then there's the waiting to dry. At a certain level of dryness, the holes can be punched. This causes the entire line to wobble precariously.

I started to become very aware of the backwards and forwards 'dance' of the making process. Not unlike the rhythm of things which happen domestically. The layering of tasks, how they overlap and merge into one another. As I peg out some wet clay, I lean over to punch a few holes, check the dryness, pick up a piece which has wobbled itself loose.

It has been on my internal radar for a while that an idea which considers time has to be exposed using a time-based medium. This leaves me with a performance or video.

Appendix 3 Studio Performance

At Easter 2020 I undertook a trial run of the performance which is now called, 'Smalls'.

Place

This took place in the home studio.

The studio sits in a precarious place. Partly 'public' workspace due to the practice which happens here and its history as a teaching space. This said, it also has allusions to domesticity. Firstly because of its vicinity to the home and additionally in the way some tools in the pottery overlap with the kitchen – Rolling pins, pizza cutters wooden spoons.

Time

I can only realistically throw for about an hour without getting hungry or thirsty or being interrupted. In one of those happy quirks of fate, an hour and three minutes has been a theme of this research all along, this being the amount of time a regular forty-degree wash takes. These patches of work/distraction have become an additional layer of meaning within the practice and I decide to adopt them into the eventual performing of this work. This means the plan is initially to throw and peg and thread in batches of one hour and three minutes.

Structure

The performance starts with a list of garments which is extrapolated from a week's worth of washing. Each garment is represented by a single small vessel thrown on the potters wheel. Each vessel is hung on the lines which crisscross the studio using regular domestic clothes pegs. As the vessels dry, they are pierced and ribbons are threaded through the holes. The end result is an installation of 'washing lines' with the same number of vessels as garments from the original list.

The Performance in images



FIGURE 132 PRE-PERFORMANCE STUDIO APRIL 2020



FIGURE 133 THROWING BATCHES OF VESSELS OFF THE HUMP APRIL 2020



FIGURE 134 IN PROGRESS APRIL 2020



FIGURE 135 COMPLETED INSTALLATION (1)



FIGURE 136 COMPLETED INSTALLATION (2)



FIGURE 137 COMPLETED INSTALLATION (3)



FIGURE 138 COMPLETED INSTALLATION (4)



FIGURE 139 COMPLETED INSTALLATION (5)

Conclusions

In-action learnings

- Paper clay works marginally better than the regular buff stoneware
- The ribbons and pegs and numbers of vessels relate to the kinds of washing and amounts and what stage in the cycle they are at. During the practice I let this slide.
- The best laid plans – One hour and three minutes is an admirable plan, but in reality the disruptions continue and the temptation for, ‘just another five minutes’ is sometimes overwhelming.

On-Action Learning

The ideas wrapped up in the research are exposed through this performance.

- The repetition of a task
- The layering of roles
- The links between the domestic and the public – both in place and time
- All held together with the idea of the vessel – as already established
- Disruptions

Detail needs to be tighter – although the performance needs to be looser. The important thing is the way I work and the rhythm or ‘dance’ which the tasks cause.

Ribbon needs to be carefully thought through: colour, width, how it’s threaded through the vessels.

Future performance

It is important the performance has a format for the timings. Whether this gets implemented during the actual performance doesn’t really matter. Disruptions are

inevitable – as they are frequently in life. Therefore the performance will be structured into ‘sessions’ of one hour and three minutes.

The performance must be in a ‘public’ place where the making is on view and exposed throughout – a gallery?

The rigid adherence to rules is less important than the rhythm – the rhythm comes from the making and the end result.

Will be recorded, but only for the purposes of legacy and examination.

The clay at the end of the performance was recycled. The whole installation was deconstructed, but because the clay was unfired, it could be slacked down and used again. This is poetic end to a work which relies upon the idea of the cyclical task.

Appendix 4 Smalls 2020

Performance at the Window Gallery, University of Salford October 2020

The performance lasted several days. I was working in the window throwing small clay vessels and constructing the installation one hour and three minutes at a time as work and home schedules permitted.

The performance followed and built upon a similar work which was constructed at Easter 2020 (during, lockdown) in my home studio – See Appendices two and three.



FIGURE 140 WINDOW GALLERY, NEW ADELPHI BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD.

The gallery is open to the public and is accessible from the outside 24 hours a day. Whilst is it on campus, it is only a hundred metres from Salford Crescent train station and just a few metres from Salford Crescent, the main road through Salford towards Manchester.

The venue has been chosen for several reasons.

Location – This is a place which belongs to my public role. It is the building where I undertake my lecturing work and is also the place which hosted my original micro residency

which was the origin of this work. My public role here is different from the lecturing I have recently been undertaking from home. When I lecture here there are few other demands on my time, the domestic rarely intrudes.

This gallery is permanently public facing. By passing this gallery you may not choose specifically to view art (as you would entering another gallery). This gallery can be encountered by anyone encouraging a wider viewership of the work.

The venue is a closed off room with huge windows. This means COVID safety and a risk assessment are less problematic than other galleries where performer and viewer are in the same place. During the performance, COVID measures were in place throughout the country and galleries schedules were behind and had been closed for much of the spring.

Planning for the performance

- Email previous exhibition to deinstall and collect
- Transport all equipment to Salford
- Arrange PAT test for wheel with estates team 0161 295 4444
- Write risk assessment
- Collect data for washing
- Promotion
- Filming/photographing/recording
- Order materials:
 - Clay
 - Buckets
 - Pegs
 - Hooks
 - Sponges
 - Ribs
 - Hole punches
 - Wire

- Towels
- Floor covering
- Plastic sheeting for the wall

How the installation will unfold

The wheel will be positioned at one end of the gallery and washing lines set up crisscrossing the space, so they are viewable from the outside. I will sit at the wheel and throw small vessels for one hour and three minutes. During that time moving back and forward between the wheel and the washing lines pegging the thrown pieces to the line. As the first ones start to dry holes will be punched in them for the later threading of the ribbons.

Working in segments of one hour and three minutes – which is the time a regular 40-degree wash takes on the home washing machine.

There will be 114 small vessels – which is the number of items washed in one day during the early stages of the research. In earlier manifestations of the performance the ribbon colour would have been a key to the items washed and the stage in the washing cycle. This is no longer the case and the ribbon now contains the legacy of these earlier experiments but still retains a relationship with the home and ‘women’s work’.

Performance statement



Presents:

Angela Tait – *'Smalls' 2020*

Angela's practice explores the temporal relationship between our public and the private worlds by questioning, 'what happens when we work and live in the same space?'

Using collected autobiographical data from her experience of working from home, she will construct an installation over several sessions. By mimicking the cyclical repetition of domestic chores and moving up and down the gallery between tasks, she exposes the constant rhythmic movement she experiences between the disparate modes of public and private thinking.

Wash, hang, fold, put away, wash, hang, fold, put away

Cast, fettle, polish, fire, cast, fettle, polish, fire

Stir, stir, stir

Shop, cook, eat, shop, cook, answer door

Throw, turn, dry, fire, throw, turn, dry, fire

The abstract thrown vessel functions as both symbol and object. It is the ancestor of the coffee cup; universally understood, intimate – we hold it in our hands and touch it with our mouth – but equally accepted on the kitchen table as in the boardroom. It straddles the gap between the two worlds.

Angela will be working in multiples of one hour and three minutes

Development

Day one 21st October 2020

Thrown 57 small vessels

Constructed half the washing lines

Made some of the piercings to hold the ribbons



FIGURE 141 BEGINNING TO BUILD THE INSTALLATION

I spend the evening writing a Blovel post which helps me to reflect

Observations:

There's a great big hole in the gallery which I'll need to fix. Virtually no one is watching because the campus is so quiet. Those that do only stop for a few moments. It's nearly November in the North and hanging around outside is only for the brave, well kitted out or

the downright daft. I am due to undertake the next part of the performance on Friday. I'll invite the staff teams and students in an effort to create a more substantial audience.

Still, I'm learning things. The performative nature of the task works better when I enforce my own rules.

Let me explain: This work is designed to translate the temporal experience of being in the home into a ceramics performance. It plays with my experience of flitting backwards and forwards between my practice and the demands of domesticity. I have observed the similarities between the way my day ebbs and flows – sometimes abruptly – between the two states and the way I construct the installation. Tasks are broken down into little pockets of industry, for example a round of throwing a dozen vessels off the hump. Then I undertake another task, this time pegging the vessels onto a line. I have more vessels to make, but the first lot I threw earlier are now leather hard and need to be drilled before they harden too much, so this takes priority. This process of 'needs to be done' and 'needs to be done now' forms the shape for the performance. It can't be set in advance. Drying might be affected by the sun coming onto the gallery thereby accelerating the need to attend to the drilling of holes and negating any chance of adhering to a preformed plan.

Day Two 23rd October 2020

Today I took shorter breaks but still stuck to the 1 hour and 3 minutes sessions. I have softer clay which is much easier to throw. I lose more to natural wastage (the ones which are a little bit too thin around the rim and can't tolerate their own weight and so end up on the floor). Despite this I finish the throwing; 159 individual raw clay vessels, some still a little bit too wet to pierce, and the beginning of the network of ribbons.



FIGURE 142 PART COMPLETED INSTALLATION 2020

Day Three 24th October

The installation is complete. I spent most of the day walking backwards and forwards between the gallery and the outside (a not insubstantial path). The purpose of this was to check lighting and other aesthetic concerns – Too much ribbon, spacings of vessels etc.

Images from 'Smalls' 2020



FIGURE 143 SMALLS IN THE WINDOW GALLERY, SALFORD 2020 (1)

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG



FIGURE 144 SMALLS IN THE WINDOW GALLERY SALFORD (2) NOVEMBER 2020

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG

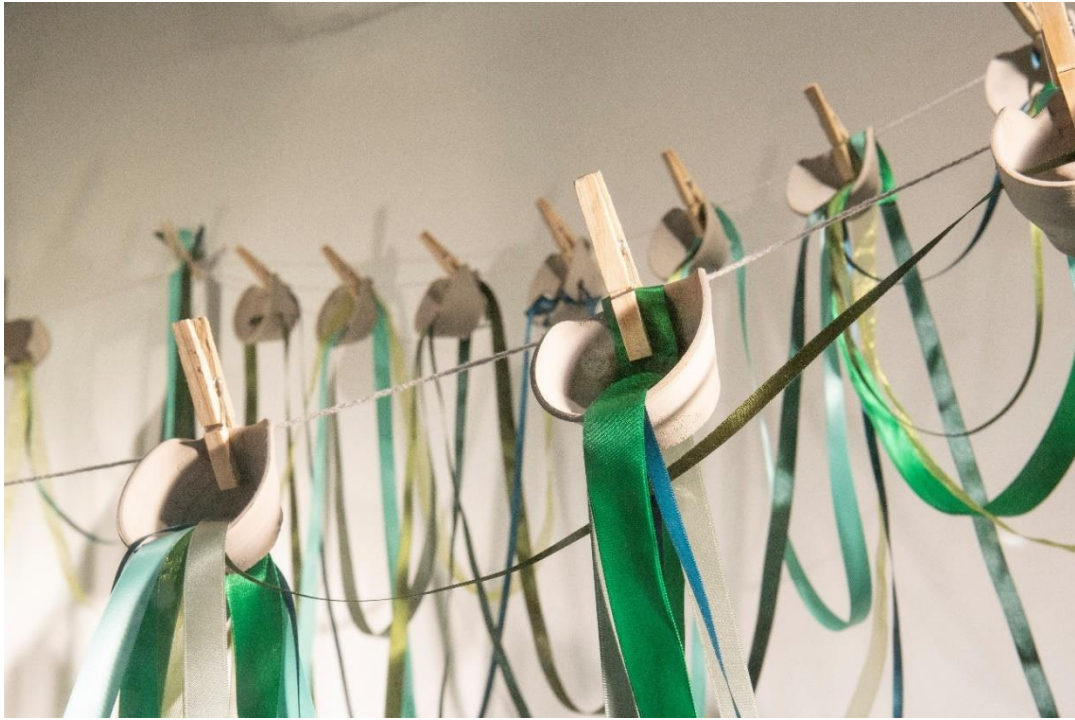


FIGURE 145 SMALLS IN THE WINDOW GALLERY, SALFORD NOVEMBER 2020 (DETAIL)

IMAGE CREDIT: IAN CLEGG



FIGURE 146 FIGURE 6 SMALLS IN THE WINDOW GALLERY, SALFORD NOVEMBER 2020 (DETAIL)

IMAGE CREDIT IAN CLEGG

Feedback

The following is retrieved from a student discussion forum which has been established via an online virtual learning platform to talk about art during a time when there is restricted access to studios and less vibrancy and cross cultivation of ideas in the student studios. The forum is called 'Let's talk about Art' and was open to level four, five and six undergraduates on the University of Salford, BA (Hons) Fine Art Programme for two weeks during the performance and whilst the installation was on show in the Window Gallery.

Let's talk about art

The following is how the discussion was introduced:

Discussion topic

This week I am starting a performance in the window gallery. I invite you all to come and watch and then use your experience to start a discussion.

Whilst, on the face of it, this appears to be blatant self-promotion (which it definitely could be), I have chosen this for our discussion forum for a number of reasons. Firstly, the best way to encounter art is in the flesh. You can see this performance 'live' as it unfolds right on campus. Secondly, you can talk to me, challenge me and ask me questions without the usual difficulty of contacting an artist, and finally it is completely different from our first subject in terms of themes, materials and process.

The performance will see me construct an installation of clay and ribbon in front of the viewer's watchful eye. On this occasion, the process of construction is equally as important at the final outcome.

This is the statement for the work - It doesn't give too much away but you can use it to start thinking:

Angela's practice explores the temporal relationship between our public and private worlds by questioning, 'what happens when we work and live in the same space?'

Using collected autobiographical data from her experience of working from home, she will construct an installation over several sessions. By mimicking the cyclical repetition of domestic chores and moving up and down the gallery between tasks, she exposes the constant rhythmic movement she experiences between the disparate modes of public and private thinking.

Wash, hang, fold, put away, wash, hang, fold, put away

Cast, fettle, polish, fire, cast, fettle, polish, fire

Stir, stir, stir

Shop, cook, eat, shop, cook, answer door

Throw, turn, dry, fire, throw, turn, dry, fire

The abstract thrown vessel functions as both symbol and object. It is the ancestor of the coffee cup; universally understood, intimate – we hold it in our hands and touch it with our mouth – but equally accepted on the kitchen table as in the boardroom. It straddles the gap between the two worlds.

Angela will be working in multiples of one hour and three minutes

Things you might think about:

Why this process and those materials?

How is the home represented in the work?

Why is the performance important - in other words, would the work be the same if the view did not see the construction process?

Responses

Question

I had two interesting sets of questions by email. I'm sharing them here because the answers might be more universally useful.

What is the significance of the ribbon connecting the vessels? Is there a reason you hung them with pegs? Is this a representation of hanging clothes? Did you choose the colours of ribbon for any particular reason?

and

- What is the significance of the green and yellow strips of ribbon?
- Did you consider other colours and alternative materials before deciding on the ribbons you have used?
- What themes and ideas helped shape this idea?
- Why have you chosen to use a uniform look i.e. each pot being the same size and distance away?

Response from AT

So starting at the top:

Ribbons: The ribbons have their origin in another work called 'No Wonder' which I made about a decade ago and then again in 2018. This is where I logged all the washing I did and made a small thrown vessel for each piece (originally a small ceramic butterfly for each). I then embroidered a tag on each one using a complex colour coded key.

Whilst developing the work, the embroidery has become ribbon (from the same domestic/women's craft context) and the key has become less rigid. What I'm finding a rhythmic motion which happens when I pull the ribbon through which is reminiscent of the folding of washing. I hadn't thought of it as family as you do, I've seen then more as ribbons of time which ebb and flow and overlap.

Colours: An aesthetic choice, when I tested this performance in my own studio, I used all different colours. The limited palette felt more refined.

Pegs and clothes: Yes absolutely! I'm investigating the overlaps of public work (in this case my ceramics practice) and the domestic. I use the washing line and pegs because they're understandable symbols of the domestic and I use my ceramics practice because (for me) they're my public work - although I do relish the fact that most people think potters make domestic functional ware and I play on that concept too.

Themes and ideas: How long do you have? Underneath all this is a story of someone who is working at home and how they experience time, which is divided between their public work and their domestic obligations. So I suppose the main themes are temporality (the way we experience time), the domestic, craft, storytelling and autobiography.

Comments From J

I have not managed to see you working in the window but I have seen the work and taken some pictures. I love the theme of your live installation as I think it similar to what I am experiencing at the moment in lockdown. I am currently between three worlds that were once very separate from each other but now I experience them mostly in the same setting, which is in the home. I am working (telesales) from home, most of my university life is at home (I have children that I can no longer ask grandparents to help with childcare due to the virus) and I have my usual home life.

Looking at your work and your description I can see a connection about the vessel and my experiences. From my perspective, I am a very busy woman with three demanding sides to my life that I need to be able to navigate and respond to each part for my life to have an

equal balance of my needs and others. The vessels (the cup) can do this in many different settings and doesn't seem out of place in any of them and is easily accepted.

I wonder why you have used the ribbon? is this the connections to the different parts of your life that even though they are hugely different they are still connected by you and your needs/demands on you, and your ability to navigate seamlessly between them? Is the home represented in the work by the seemingly mundane repeated processes we go through daily? which you have shown in the repeated vessels and the weaving of the ribbon? The mundane I think we find boring but if taken away and our routine changed can be unsettling and normality can be something we like to hold onto even if we don't realise it.

I think the performance is important in the work if you want the viewer to have a better understanding of the connection between the work and the mundane repeating of the process to create the installation.

All the above aside, I think the work is fascinating and even if it is just a repeated process it has created a beautiful installation. :)

Response to J from AT

Lovely words J and I'm glad it resonates - That's exactly what it's about for me.

The performance IS important. I'm using a methodology called rhythmanalysis. This was originally proposed to study the rhythms of cities using the researchers (or rhythmanalyst's) body to measure both time and space. I've adapted this so I'm using my own body to both measure and show (obliquely) what my experience of my own rhythms are. In short, it's about interruption and my mind flicking backwards and forwards between my public 'work' and my private obligations - Like when the doorbell rings during a lecture or the washing machine bleeps when I'm answering emails (as I write this I'm cooking sunday tea and keep having to nip down to put something else in).

The ribbons have their origin in another work called 'no wonder' which I made about a decade ago and then again in 2018. This is where I logged all the washing I did and made a

small thrown vessel for each piece (originally a small ceramic butterfly for each). I then embroidered a tag on each one using a complex colour coded key.

Whilst developing the work, the embroidery has become ribbon (from the same domestic/women's craft context) and the key has become less rigid. What I'm finding a rhythmic motion which happens when I pull the ribbon through which is reminiscent of the folding of washing. I hadn't thought of it as family as you do, I've seen then more as ribbons of time which ebb and flow and overlap.

Thanks for your comments! It's really valuable input.



FIGURE 147 NO WONDER 2018, STONEWARE AND EMBROIDERY

Comments from G

I agree with J. This installation, especially the repetition is currently my life within isolation at the minute- bloody covid! Especially working within the same space, my 'studio' is my kitchen table and due to the amount of hours I've sat there working, I've worn away the pleather on my kitchen chair.

Prior to reading the statement, I for one thought it was reminiscent of family? like how each individual pot is connected with the same string, over and over again, either way I love the installation.

I'm gutted I missed the installation live at work.

Response to G from AT

Very perceptive! The crisis and working from home so much has accelerated my thinking and my experience of this - and many other people's. I have just been listening to a podcast about the flexible working movement and how it might just benefit from the lockdown experience. I myself am not a fan of working from home, but I spoke to a friend today who's loving it.

Fingers crossed some good things come from our grim experience. And get yourself a cushion!

Comments from R

I've not had the chance to see your live-in exhibition as of yet, but hope I get to see it in passing when I next come into campus. However, I'm sure if it's anything similar to your residency within the studios last year, then it's really interesting seeing both the process and the output of your work and to also see you as a function feature within your work.

I questioned why the time interval of an hour and 3 minutes, is this average interval in which you complete domestic work? I looked into domestic labour studies and found an article that says in the 1960's the average housewife would have 2.6 hours of house work and this has since halved in the present day due to labour saving devices.

It also made me reflect on when I studied sociology in college, I had a module called 'functions of the family' and one of my favourite quotes I heard during this, that still sticks with me now is 'Women are takers of shit' (Fran Ansley, 1972), this comes from a Marxist feminist who sees women as an army of labour on reserve, just waiting to be useful in the domestic.

I think the performance is really key to your work because it almost makes me think about how much more work you could produce if you didn't have domestic duties as well, the amount of additional hours you could have dedicated to your practice? How many women become limited with their time because of the idea that they should be the domestic person within their household?

I really love your work because it always makes me think and reflect on myself, including my function within my household compared to my mother and brother and how my time seems to be taken more by domestic work as I get older, am I going to become another home maker or will I become a breadwinner?

I've really enjoyed sharing my thoughts this week, hope to share my thoughts again in more weeks to come!!

Thank you!

Response to R from AT

Thanks for replying R

1 hour and three minutes is a 40-degree wash on my washing machine. By setting that as a limit on a session working, it invokes a similar frustration when the alarm goes as when the machine bleeps, but this time it could be in the viewer as well as the me.

Whilst I know (and studies show) that women still do more than half of the housework, I don't really have an overtly political view of housework (except that the personal is political - ask any 1970s/80s feminist). I tolerate my share because someone has to do it, but I don't make a big deal out of it and I definitely don't do it to excess!!! I don't enjoy it, but I do take a perverse pleasure in hanging washing on a line. Essentially, this is an autobiographical story.

From my research I am starting to understand that everyone is affected by this to some extent. Whether you become a home maker or a breadwinner, whatever gender, it's likely you'll be a combination of both at times and it's this experience I'm interested in.

During the research I had someone tell me they were sometimes distracted or interrupted by, 'sudden desire'. I didn't delve any further into that!

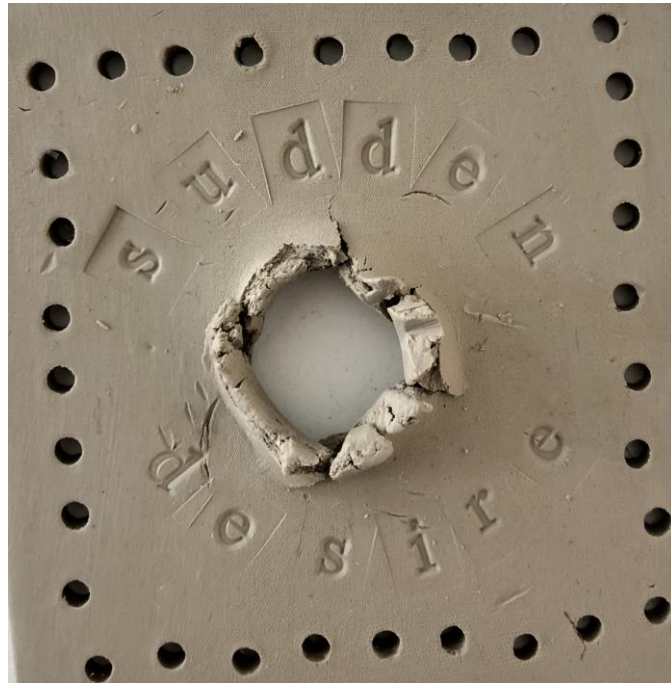


FIGURE 148 CLAY TILE MADE DURING RESEARCH CONFERENCE IN BIRMINGHAM 2018

Comments by M

Finally got round to see the exhibition. Was not able to go to the live show, nor see at soon as others had done already, so my response is delayed. Needed to do it in my time. way too much rushing around at the minute, trying to get everything in!!

I enjoyed the pots themselves. Something considered 'simple/easy' transported me to my childhood in India, making finger pots from clay we would find in the grounds around us, it had the same earthy, raw but very connected feelings. No frills or fancy patterns. But precision and an earth neatness. There was something very grounding about the pots and the humour of hanging them up on the 'washing line', the fold of clay as a gentle fold. The folds really touching.

The ribbons. Ribbons, Mayday festivals and other Pagan deities, ribbons in my hair as a young girl; plaited in my plaits, multi colours. Did you consider the ribbon colours carefully? or was it random? What appealed to you about the ribbons?. Ribbons are an innocent item, was that your intention?

Feel the window gallery was perfect for this, very impactful. One cant ignore it, you have to take a look, like a window shop of curiousness.

Also the challenging way of being 'subversive' with the clay. Challenging its use and form, made me question myself, then a whole narrative in my mind from what I thought the use of clay is/supposed to be. But you have thrown the clay then altered, like the truly gorgeous piece on instagram. It messed with my mind, challenging my cultural expectations of clay and more.

Comments by T

whilst I'm not sure if I'll be able to watch - I love the ideology behind the work and the movements remind me of Richard Serra's verb list. I hope it goes well Angela and I will try to be present if possible<3

Response to T from AT

The construction of the installation is as important (to me and the research) as the outcome, but I have images and video which can be shared at a later date.

The walking up and down the gallery is a sort of reflection of the way I experience the constant changes between public (my work) and private (my domestic life) when I'm working at home. Like when I'm working in my office and the doorbell rings and I have to break off and answer.

I love the reference to Serra's verbs. I genuinely hadn't thought of that!

Risk assessment for the Performance/Installation

Task/Activity/Environment:	Location/s, please list:	Date of Assessment:	Completed by:	Reference:
Performance in the window gallery	Window Gallery	October 2020	Angela Tait	
Please identify the following for your local area and list the specific risk controls you will implement and enforce for your area:				
Identify Hazards which could cause harm	Identify risks:	What risk controls will be in place to eliminate or control the risks?		
No. Hazard	No. Risk	No. Risk control		
1	<p>a. Virus spread by not Maintaining social distancing</p> <p>b. Virus spread by Not sanitising or handwashing</p> <p>c. Virus spread by Not wearing a mask</p> <p>d. Virus spread by transmission on surfaces</p>	1	<p>Inability to maintain 2m social distancing, could result in cross contamination leading to significant illness or death.</p> <p>Failing to sanitise or wash hands or wear masks at appropriate times, could result in cross contamination</p>	
		1	<p>The window gallery is being used to for a performance and installation by Lecturer Angela Tait between 16th October and the end of October. The resulting installation will remain as a static installation (exhibition) until the next exhibition is scheduled. The performance will entail the artist constructing the installation 'live' by throwing pots on a potter's wheel and then pegging them onto washing lines strung across the</p>	

<p>e. Creating a spectacle and attracting attention – Causing a crowd</p> <p>f. Trips, slips and falls whilst in the gallery</p>	<p>leading to significant illness or death.</p> <p>The performance might be regarded as a spectacle and cause passers-by to stop and watch and therefore not observe social distancing</p> <p>Artist might get hurt by tripping</p>	<p>gallery. The artist will move up and down the gallery periodically to install the work. This is a PhD research project and will also be filmed from inside the gallery.</p> <p>The performance will develop slowly over a few days. The artist will be in the gallery space for an hour at a time.</p> <p>The potter's wheel is being PAT tested in advance. This has already been arranged via estates.</p> <p>There will only ever be one person in the window gallery at any time except during setting up (16th October) when it will be two people who will abide by the university social distancing guidelines at all times</p> <p>Two external parties may be required to visit. One to help setting up the equipment and one to photograph the work for the purposes of the PhD. If this is the case, they will use the School of Art and Design</p>
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			<p>local induction procedure for visitors which includes:</p> <p>Notifying key parties - Buildings Manager, Director of School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping records of the visitor and attendance for track and trace purposes <p>The Artist is a lecturer at the NA building and is therefore bound by the RA for the building and understands and will adhere to the current rules at all times.</p> <p>The artist is aware of the potential of tripping over or getting hurt as a result of obstructions in the gallery and will tread carefully, keep the space clear and clean and remove any obstacles.</p> <p>No other person will go into the gallery during the performance period – even outside of the times the artist is there. Surfaces will be cleaned as necessary during</p>
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			<p>the performance – such as the door handle to the gallery from dressing room or corridor.</p> <p>The performance is intended to be watched. This will entail passers-by standing (probably for short periods) and observing from outside. This might cause them to lose sight of the social distancing rules. To combat this, clear signage will instruct viewers to maintain their own social distancing. This will be sourced from the estates team so it is in line with the general risk assessment for the university. The artist will be able to see any viewers and monitor this and address if there appears to be non-compliance. There is plenty of room outside the gallery for social distancing of viewers to be maintained.</p>
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Appendix 5 Work in Progress Exhibition

Gallery Frank - November 2020

A gallery show to put together all the works from the beginning of the PhD in February 2018 to date.

Things included in the show were all works finished and part finished except:

- A series of 20 or so wheel prints which are lost
- Any works which are final outcomes – the performance, ‘Smalls’ in all its iterations, the COVID clay diary, Blovel texts.
- Two pieces which are currently on show at other museums.

The exhibition lasted for two weeks during November 2020 but was not open to the public because of the national second lockdown.

The purpose of the show

‘Work in Progress 2020’ was intended less as a public display of works and more as an opportunity to view the narratives/themes/developments within the work. Putting the works together in the same space might draw understandings or conclusions previously unseen. The works were curated broadly chronologically.

Exposure

Due to the severe restrictions the exposure for, ‘Work in Progress’ is limited. As a pedagogical experiment there was a live broadcast from the gallery to approx. 100+ students and academics at the University of Salford during a day of research presentations. Additionally, several select invited guests have visited under strict distancing and hygiene regulations.

Images

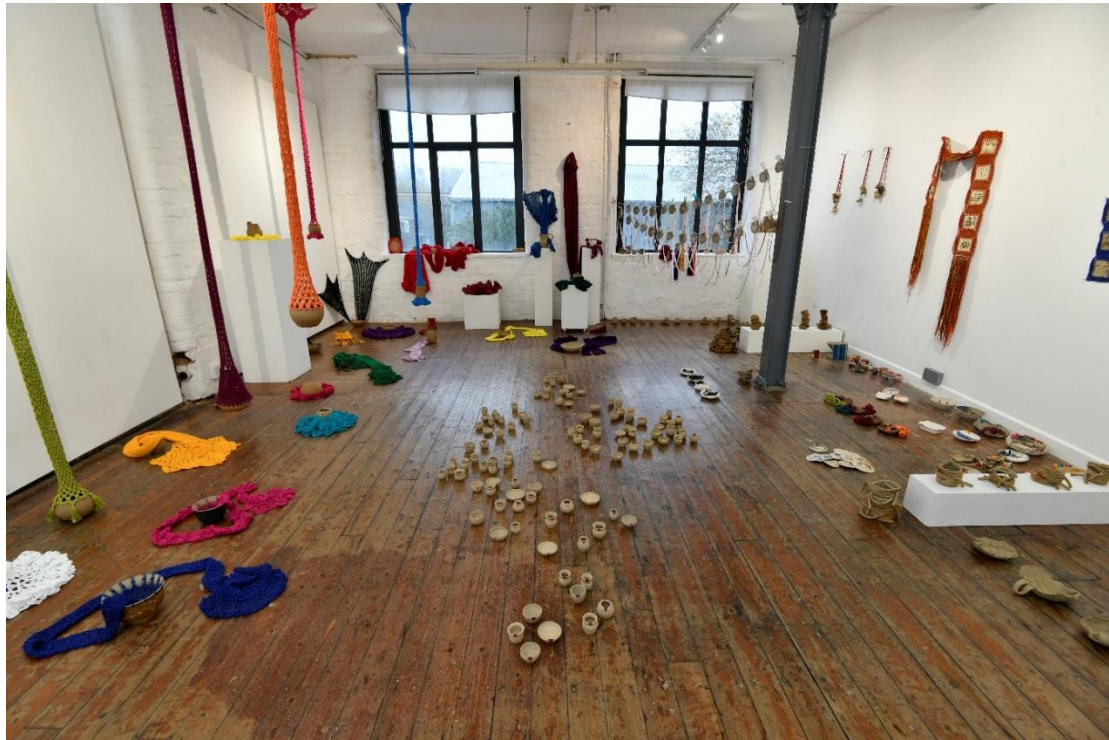


FIGURE 149 GALLERY FRANK, WORK IN PROGRESS SHOW 2020



FIGURE 150 GALLERY FRANK, WORK IN PROGRESS SHOW 2020



FIGURE 151 THROWN EARTHENWARE VESSEL WITH EMBROIDERY 2018



FIGURE 152 THROWN AND THROWN VESSELS WITH HANDLES AND THREAD 2019



FIGURE 153 NO WONDER 2018, STONWARE VESSELS WITH COLOURED THREAD



FIGURE 154 NO WONDER 2018, STONWARE VESSELS WITH COLOURED THREAD

Conclusions

Work in progress show November 2020

11th November 2020

1.37pm - So, big news – there's a vaccine, or a couple of vaccines. They've been rushed through testing at warp-speed and are almost ready for rollout. This, of course, has set social media alight with speculation.

On the flip side we're right in the middle of the long anticipated second wave, the hospitals are perilously close to capacity we're six days into a further nationwide lockdown. Some businesses are again suffering severe financial hardship and Christmas looms like a predictable spectre just weeks away.

1.58 pm - I'm sitting in the middle of my show, Works in Progress at the beautiful Gallery Frank just outside Manchester on the edge of the gloriously November-bleak Pennine hills. I say exhibition, but it might better be described as an exposition or, more unkindly, a colourful jumble sale. In the gallery are most of the works made in the first couple of years of my PhD research. On a rough count, maybe 500+ individual objects exploring ideas from the quirky to the downright ridiculous. There are small thrown vessels pegged to washing lines, wearable ceramics and pots I have literally run over with my car (to clarify, this is whilst they're wet, not post-firing).

The purpose of this show is not specifically to 'show'. This is fortunate because of the restrictive circumstances we find ourselves in. I couldn't have visitors even if I wanted to. My primary purpose for putting together all the things in the same place is rather more selfish and insular. I want to sit in the middle of – like I'm doing now – and think.

I thought I had a pretty good idea of what I'd made and what I was thinking at the time, I have endless documents, images, reflective texts as part of my 'process'. But even as I started to unpack box after crate after carton I can start to see other stories emerge. There are threads of thinking which have only occurred to me very recently. The last month or so I've been searching for a new title for my thesis. During the 'throwing words about' conversations with myself the word 'stories' has raised its head more than a few times. At first I tried to dismiss this as an issue on the periphery, but it's been demanding more attention than one of the other more outlying themes.

What if this is the crux of everything I've done and the ideas of the domestic, temporality and the public/private world are just incidental themes?

Stories run like invisible threads through the finished works. Now, months or years after making, some pieces have inherited further meanings both from their history or from mine. Now, together in the same room, I can also identify a path through the work which is difficult to fathom at a distance.

Let me explain...

In 2018 I made a series of works I called yarn bowls. They are thrown, stoneware pieces with coloured crochet additions which render them totally non-functional. They're also not understandable as decoration in a traditional sense, so they don't fit at all into any of the traditional understanding of ceramics. At the time I was conscious of the double meaning of the title and the ability of a work of art to 'spin a yarn' but I didn't realise the significance of the works in a more elongated narrative. The yarn bowls would subsequently evolve into wearable ceramics where the additions became gloves and hats and scarves, thrusting both the garments and the ceramics further into a world of confused dysfunctionality. Later still the idea of soft fibre additions to the rigid stoneware vessels converged with another line of thinking and became the work 'No Wonder'; a series of 114 tiny thrown vessels with complex embroidery thread additions which related to data I'd collected from my domestic chores. The Great Grandchild of No Wonder is the performance and installation 'Smalls 2020' a hybrid idea which tells the story of my experience of doing the washing in the gaps between my public working life.

3.28 pm I'm still in the gallery and getting cold. I have had several delightful distractions in the form of resident artists popping in for a chat. Topics of conversation have gone from art to Covid to philosophy to Covid to social media to mental illness and, again, Covid. Sometimes we've even talked about the array of brightly coloured works which are screaming for attention around us. These conversations almost always revolve around a story of some kind. Me explaining what my thought process was for driving over newly thrown pots, or why it's important that I make soft furnishings out of hard ceramic. I've talked about metaphor and autobiography and the difference between story and ritual. As I speak, I regularly find I'm describing things in a way which makes them easier to understand. As I search for 'better' or more accessible description I sometimes stumble upon language which I hadn't been able to grasp properly, and this helps me to slot another file in my cerebral cabinet.

3.54 pm – My fingers can no longer be relied upon. I have to stop typing and go home. I remembered I left some barbeque pulled pork in the slow cooker and it might have bypassed optimum eating consistency. Nevertheless, a productive and enlightening couple of hours which, whilst not exactly straightening all my wrinkled thoughts, has helped clarify a few matters.

Appendix 6 Writing mentoring from The Double Negative

In Summer 2019 I secured a small amount of funding from the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (North West). This was for the purpose of developing my writing into a format which would benefit both my ceramics practice, current research and my ongoing career.

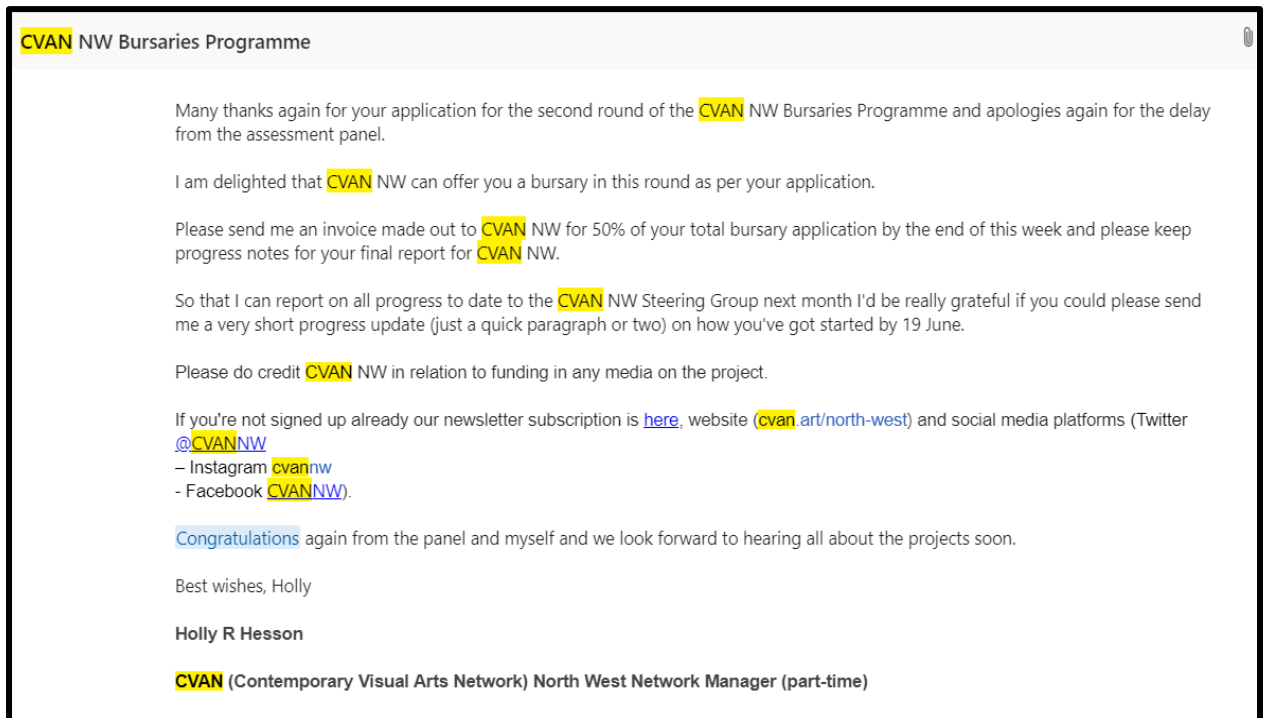


FIGURE 155 EMAIL FROM CVAN OFFERING BURSARY



FIGURE 156 THE DOUBLE NEGATIVE BRANDING

The funding paid for six sessions of mentoring with Laura Pinnington, founder and contributing editor at the Double Negative, a critical review magazine based in Liverpool. The purpose of the sessions was to concentrate on my creative writing and formalise the 'Blove' texts into something which would be useful to the research.

Each session used a different writing strategy to open up potential forms of writing.

First, I was asked to keep a diary. A short exercise every day, no more than 15 minutes of writing in as many forms as I could think of. I wrote poems and lists and concrete poetry and postcards.

Examples of the diary pieces

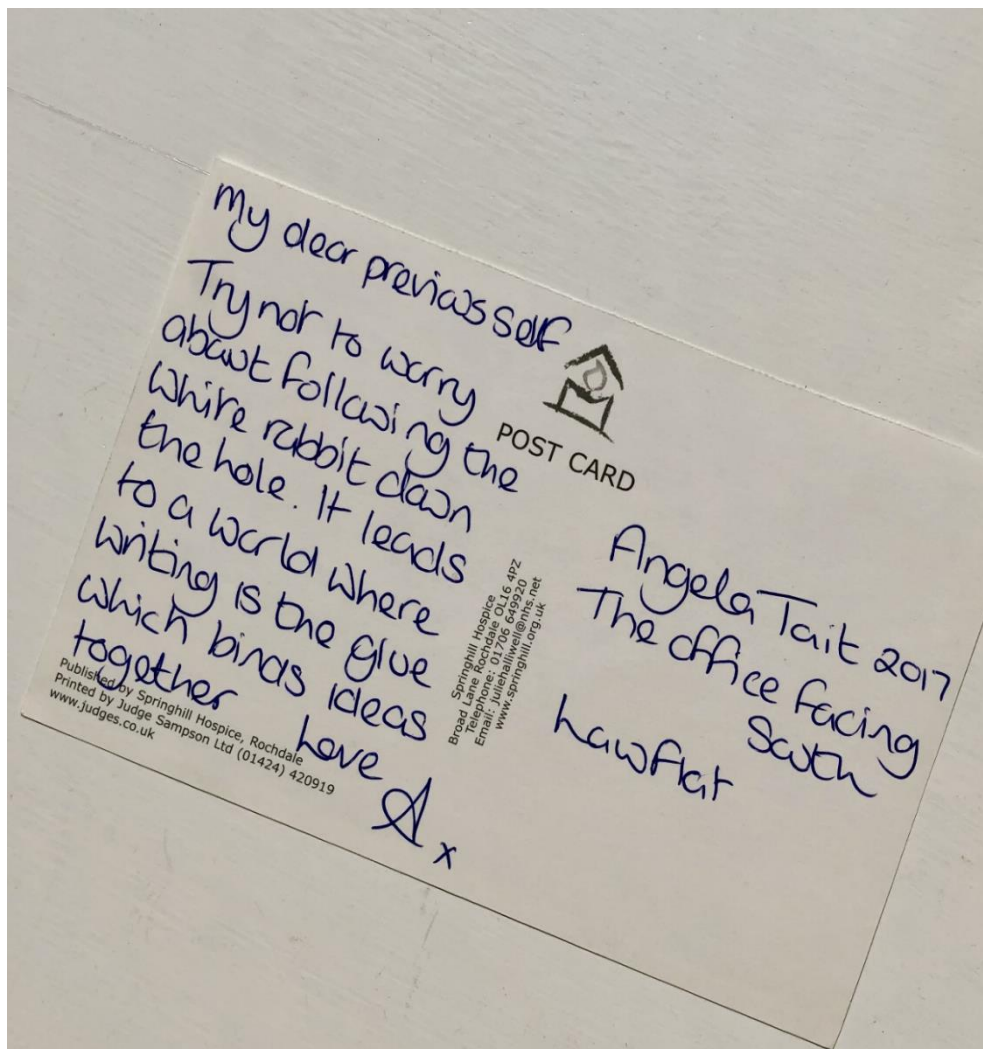


FIGURE 157 POSTCARD TO MY PREVIOUS SELF

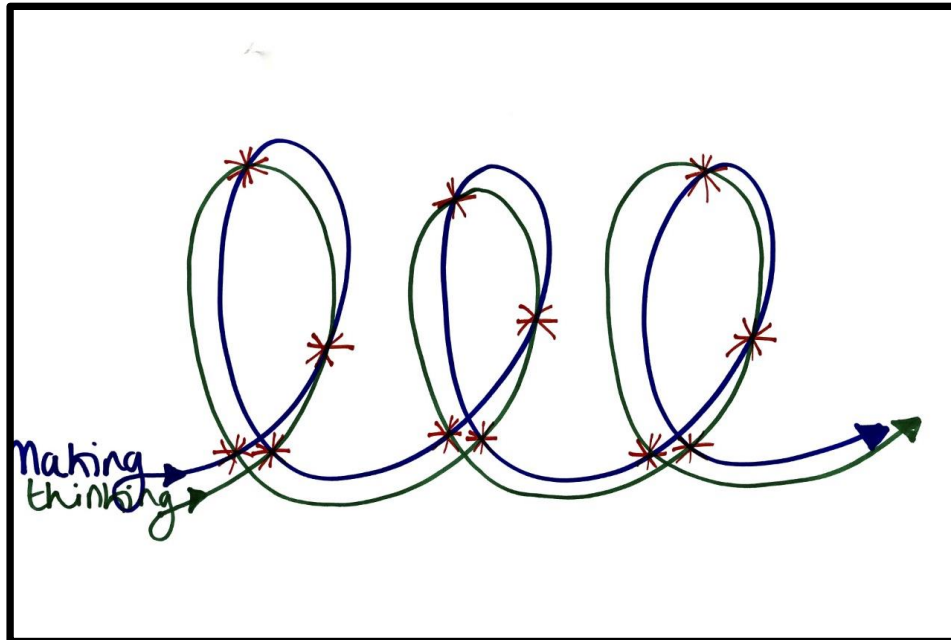


FIGURE 158 DRAWING OF MY REFLECTIVE THOUGHT PROCESS

Tuesday 16th July 2019

One of the non-routine slices of time yesterday was my walk along the Crescent to meet someone for lunch. I walk briskly, it's a habit, walking is a functional state to be endured and doesn't have a place as a leisure activity. This doesn't stop me from absorbing information as I walk.

Blossom, I can smell it but I can't see it. The scent comes from one of the trees along the river and as I move it's gone as soon as it came.

Moth thoughts

The fear of moths is mothophobia. We make children squeal and adults cringe. They call us Plummy & Fluttery and their disturbs their sense of being in control. We think that's because we belong in a world they don't understand. The nighttime place they associate with the bogey man and the monster under the bed. We're mostly brown; actually that's a bit of a myth. Lots of us are but many others are coloured in ways just as beautiful as our daytime counterparts. Even our brown species ~~are~~ are shimmering if you bother to study us. Our wings resemble ~~like~~ finely woven carpets with the most intricate patterns you could imagine. We play a vital role in your ecosystems. Pollinating flowers and as part of a healthy food chain. Whilst this isn't a role we relish, we know it's important in the grand scheme. We have a wider purpose scientifically and in education. We are an example of a unique life cycle which is used to teach ~~throughout~~ throughout the world.

Please don't hate us. A world without our many species would be as disastrous as one without the bees.

FIGURE 159 DIARY ENTRY, HANDWRITTEN



A love letter to my Son

*My Darling Zachary.... Zach, buddy, sunshine, gobshite,
son,*

You scared the crap out of me! There was a moment when I walked into the room last night when my brain couldn't rationalise what I saw and heard. A moment so brief when the world stopped so I could catch up. A millisecond later I might have squealed or sworn, I don't remember if I came to you or you came to me, maybe we met in the middle of the room. I squeezed you tight, checking you were real. We stopped for a second and then hugged again, just to make sure. It's strange when we hug these days. The hierarchy has changed now you are grown. Our arms wrap in a different order and the comforter becomes the comfortee



Week Five

Doors

There are ones we go through multiple times a day and ones we only traverse once in a lifetime. They can be so ubiquitous as to be almost invisible or so special to be a memory marker for great occasions. From a gap in a wall to knock-knock jokes, doors are consistent throughout humanity, providing a common thread uniting all people through physical and cultural understanding.

When considering doors, we immediately encounter a difficulty in classification. A door might be an object, but not always. It could just be a space, but its position as neither in or out makes that distinction problematic.

And what are the purposes of these (non) object, (non) spaces? They might be a barrier to keep out the unwanted or, like the Narnia stories, provide a portal to fantastical other worlds. They could provide anticipation for the most wonderful surprises or be the uncertain and precarious obstacle between life and death.

In/Out

Open/Closed

Enclose/Repel

Portal/Barricade

Grand/Everyday

From the hospital entrance to the Pearly Gates, we make a case for the humble door to be considered the ultimate binary construct. We investigate our fabulous Town Hall through the many doors and entranceways, considering the stories they tell and the secrets they keep.

As the weeks progressed, we talked through each piece. Occasionally Laura would send an article or something she'd read, allowing me an insight into her literary world and helping me to contextualise the writing I'd been doing. I started to read some of the texts she recommended. These were intended to help me understand the format I was playing with. I had been writing the Blovel texts because I found them useful for thinking through ideas but I had no way of understanding if it was an appropriate way of formatting a longer narrative account.

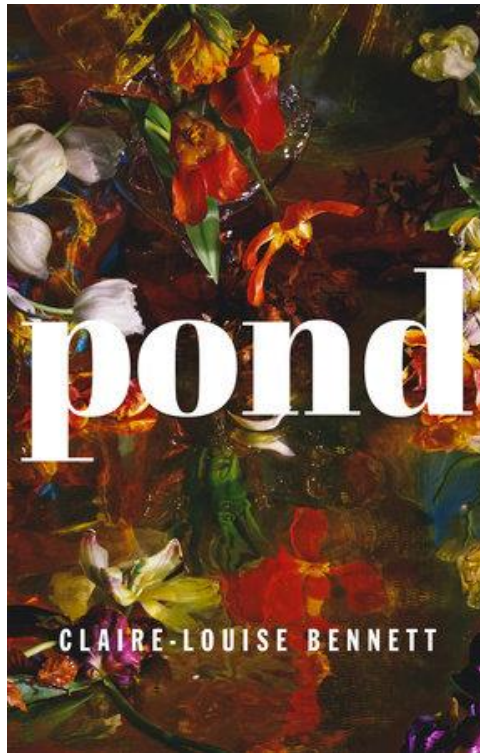


FIGURE 160 RECOMMENDED BOOK
POND BY CLAIRE-LOUISE BENNETT

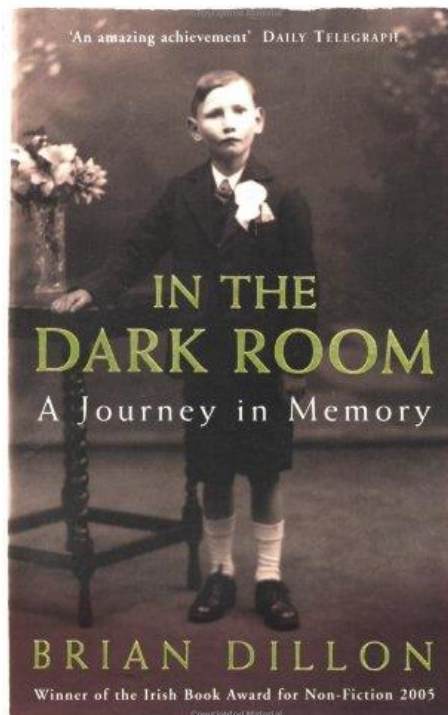


FIGURE 161 RECOMMENDED BOOK
IN THE DARK ROOM BY BRIAN DILLON

How Artists Are Using the Power of Personal Histories to Tackle the Legacy of Colonialism

Artists Barby Asante, Libita Clayton and Ashley Holmes are reimagining what it means to go back home



Starts
in 187
Person
with
personal
history
Rein
writes.

A man once told me to 'go back to where I came from'. It's something I often think about. What did he envisage? That the Home Office might clip the corner of my burgundy passport before ushering me onto a one-way charter flight? It's not that far-fetched. The ongoing Windrush scandal has seen hundreds of people deported to the Caribbean despite building their lives in the UK. Or did he imagine the journey as a pilgrimage? Could I, we, go back to where we came from by virtue of Google searches, sifting through archival documents and having painstaking conversations with family and community members? In the 1996 documentary on his life, *A Great and Mighty Walk*, the US historian and pioneer in Pan-African studies John Henrik Clarke spoke of the importance of the past: 'History is a clock that people use to tell their political and cultural time of day. It is a compass they use to find themselves on the map of human geography.' For people whose heritage isn't linear, going back home is as much a personal coming-of-age long-haul as it is a tale of remigration or diasporic return. Barby Asante, Libita Clayton and Ashley Holmes, as people of the African diaspora, are three UK artists whose recent work is about revisitation, the power of personal histories, the practice of archiving and the legacy of colonialism.

FIGURE 162 ARTICLE FROM FRIEZE APRIL 2019

The concept of a disjointed narrative started to come together, I continued to write and she continued to guide. The voices I used became more and more diverse. I speculated with the voice of a dull brown moth presenting my ideas of beauty and wrote letters from my seven-year-old self to my Mother. I played with time and voice and shape and space. I abstracted words and spoke from the heart. I put myself into a different place where I had to remember, imagine, speculate and pretend. I read more diverse literature than I had ever done, making marks on the pages, highlighting paragraphs and making notes in the margins.

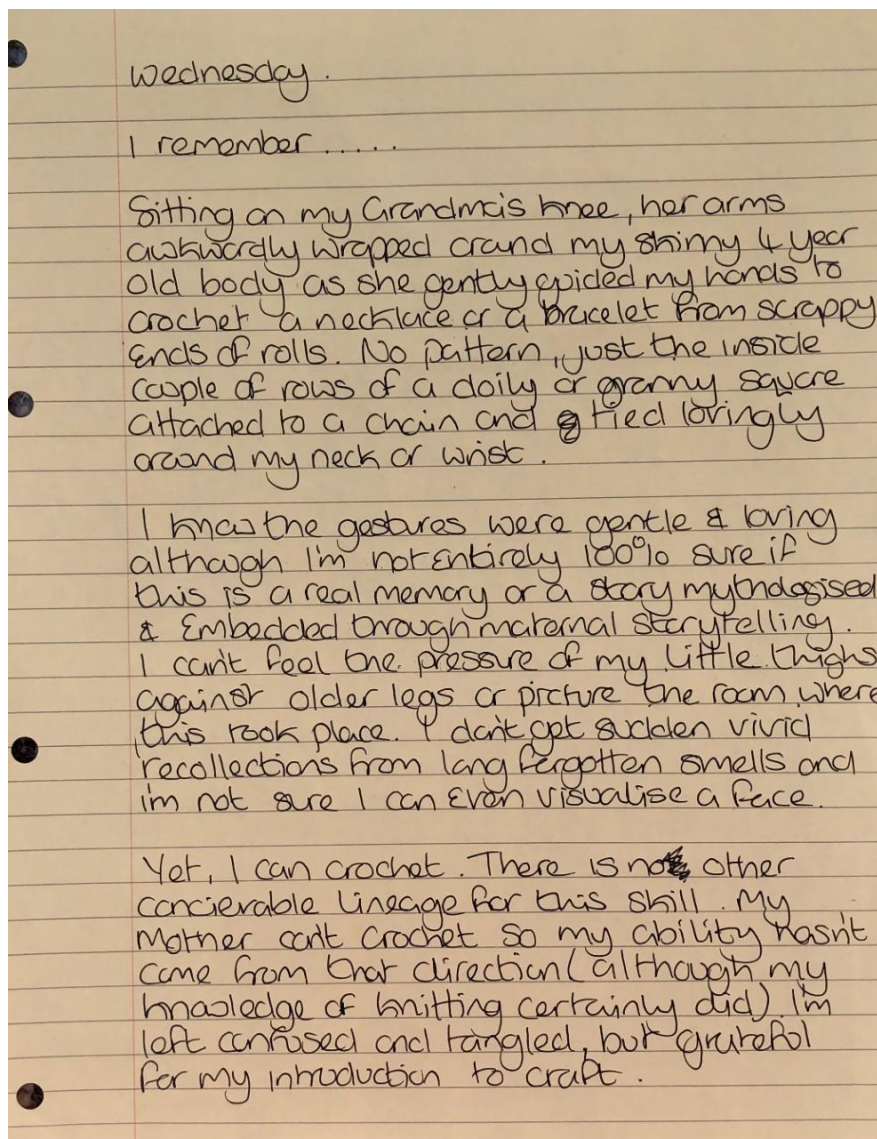


FIGURE 163 HANDWRITTEN DIARY ENTRY

Friday

Earlier this year I salvaged something from the rubbish bin. When I say the bin I don't mean the nice clean indoor bin which usually holds paper and an occasional orange peel, but the slimy outdoor bin with the broken wobbly lid and the rancid smell in the summer.

I'm not in the habit of garbage trawling. I'm not the kind of Rauschenberg-esque Artist who lingers around skips or knocks on doors asking for broken chairs or part rolls of chicken wire, but this piece grabbed my attention as I walked past and refused to let go.

The object in question was an old satellite dish. Complete in structure but without the (frankly important) ability to capture passing waves and translate them to pictures. My mind made the leap from obligatory house furniture to embroidery canvas in an instant.

FIGURE 164 TYPED DIARY ENTRY

Articles

- The Double Negative – Time for a new Model
- Sarah Manguso on Vija Celmins and The Art of Reckoning with Silence – Frieze issue 203
- 'It's about not giving up': behind Teju Cole's exhibition on America – Nadja Sayej
<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jul/23/teju-cole-exhibition-chicago-america-photography>
- How Artists Are Using the Power of Personal Histories to Tackle the Legacy of Colonialism – Kadish Morris

Diary entries:

Week one

- A poem
- A list
- A piece about picking nail varnish from toes
- A reflection on graduation day
- The fine line between kitsch and tat
- Dove Love

Week Two

- I remember
- A piece about rescuing a satellite dish from a bin
- A postcard to my previous self
- A list of then and nows – Worthy of publication!
- About thinking
- A postcard to my Mother from my 7 year old self

Week Three

- A love letter to my son
- In the voice of a moth
- Doors
- A drawing about making and thinking
- A rant

Week Four

- To-do lists
- Trying to capture thinking as it happens
- A leap in time
- About odd socks
- A blovel post about case studies

Week Five

- Northern Willow at the Whitaker
- Rhubarb – A poem
- My favourite coffee cups in the order I would choose them
- I'll bring pudding
- A list of things I need to take to dinner
- A list of things I've done today in order from public to private

Outcomes

1. A format for the Blovel – A non-linear set of texts which, although chronologically sequenced, function as independent posts.
2. Research which contextualises the Blovel
3. An invitation to contribute articles and features to the Double Negative
4. A body of work – A sketchbook of written fragments you might say
5. Something intangible - A confidence, or permission to pursue something which has been bubbling under the surface.



It takes more than a cape to be a hero.

TOPICS

COLUMNS

LETTERS IN THE MAIL

LETTERS FOR KIDS

BOOK CLUB



WHAT TO READ WHEN YOU FEEL FRAGMENTED AND SEEK STRUCTURE

BY CHELSEA BIONDOLILLO
May 24th, 2019

The process of writing, submitting, and ultimately publishing my debut essay collection, *The Skinned Bird*, was messy, frustrating, and nearly seven years long. For most of that time, the book lacked a cohesive structure. The collection includes braided essays, flash essays, researched essays, fragmented essays, photographs, diagrams, pieces that explore the deep past, and pieces that explore the recent past. Editors told me the writing was strong but the manuscript didn't hang together.

Every year or so I would reorganize the essays, taking some out and adding new work in. I tried pulling out the flash pieces and submitting them to chapbook contests. I'd take out all the photos, or else, I'd add more photos. Around 2015, I wrote the essay which is now the first in the collection, "The Critical Learning Period." It turned out to be my key. I used this essay's four-part structure as my new organizing principle. And once I'd reordered the manuscript, themes and motifs appeared and recurred like rings in the water widening out from the first essay. The disparate elements now function as I'd hoped they would: as attempts. In Jane Alison's *Meander, Spiral, Explode*, she calls this a "wavelet," structure, and describes it as using "Dispersed patterning, a sense of ripple or oscillation, little ups and downs, [which] might be more true to human experience than a single crashing wave."

Throughout the revision process, I was always on the lookout for books with deliberately unconventional structures. The books listed below all solve interesting problems, often related to fragmented texts. In each instance, the author made remarkable structural decisions. When you are looking for that which might hold you, lest you spill out all over the page, let these texts offer excellent inspiration.

Bluets by Maggie Nelson

FIGURE 165 INDICATIVE ARTICLE FROM RESEARCH

What Goes Around Comes Around.
Everything I Have Is Yours –
Reviewed



Post-internet generations have grown up with access to literally millions of songs. But, asks Angela Tait, what happens to those tracks not yet digitised? She explores a new exhibition whose scope is to address the ownership and availability of pop's yesteryear...

In a world where we consume sounds with casual immediacy, via such accessible digital platforms as Spotify, iTunes and SoundCloud, what happens to those of our relatively recent history, the soundtracks to our parents' or grandparents' youth?

FIGURE 166 WRITING FOR THE DOUBLE NEGATIVE

THE DOUBLE NEGATIVE Arts criticism & cultural commentary


ARTS DESIGN FILM MUSIC

FIELD TRIP | PLAYLISTS | CULTURE DIARY | SHOP | LITTLE BLACK BOOK

LITTLE BLACK BOOK

Choose

- #BeACritic (5)
- Architect (1)
- Art Critic (4)
- Artist (27)
- Blogger (11)
- Commissioning Editor (2)
- Communications (1)
- Copywriter (2)
- Curator (9)
- DJ (1)
- Editor (7)
- Events Programmer (4)
- Exhibition Coordinator (3)



Angela Tait

Profession: Sculptor, PhD researcher, university lecturer and general tinkerer.

Tell us about you: I'm a happy soul. I live and work in the North West sharing my time between singing loudly in my pottery studio, and lecturing at the University of Salford. I take on far too much and have difficulty with the word 'no'.

What inspires you? Cardboard boxes, rolls of coloured tape, odd socks, boxes of coloured satin ribbons, people who wear wacky shoes, and an occasional amazing student (cheesy but true).

What do you love about where you live? I live 20 minutes from the city and 20 seconds from an empty hillside.

What's your favourite local hangout? Anywhere with excellent coffee and art... My favourite day out is to Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

FIGURE 167 DOUBLE NEGATIVE'S LITTLE BLACK BOOK

FIGURE 168 SCREENSHOT FROM THE DOUBLE NEGATIVE

Appendix 7 Transcription of interview with candidate number one

58 year old Male

Lives in Cumbria

Self employed as a photographer

AT reads out statement:

I am undertaking research which considers how creative practitioners negotiate the relationship between their creative practice and other domestic obligations. The research assumes that everyone has other obligations in their life, things which allow them to function as humans. These might be eating (shopping for food, preparations etc), washing and cleaning (Clothes, bodies, houses), caring for others (children, older people, pets) etc.

I am doing this initially through looking at my own practice and secondly through collecting information from others.

Rather than a traditional ask/answer interview, I am using a model which uses conversation and discussion between us to draw out better understandings.

The outcomes of these discussions will be artworks. Conceived together and made by one or both of us.

Body of interview:

Can you please tell me about your creative practice?

No 1: Editorial and advertising photography with longstanding clients

Take photographs, organise and art direct photographic projects – consultancy

A lot of hours on site or in a studio shooting then an equal amount of time digital processing at the home office

AT: What I'm interested in here is this idea that the home is a private place but lots of people use it as a place for their business which takes it into the public realm because you've got two different roles going on. You have two different kinds of time going on. The home time and the work time and what I'm questioning it whether people have really distinct work/public time that they can negotiate into a domestic personal space.

So my second question is, Please can you describe the other obligations you have, other tasks or roles which are your responsibility which go on either in the home or in private life.

No 1: You can plan your own business, but you can't plan other things. For example...do you want examples? This weekend the garden flooded so I had to take a whole day out of my planned week.

AT: So these unexpected occurrences happen in our working life but they also happen in our private life and they have to be negotiated. How did that affect your business?

No 1: Well I lost a whole day out of my plan for this week and this is a personal perspective. Being a chap I feel obliged to do something about that whereas if I was a woman would I be expected to dig up the patio and take it to the dump and move one and a half tonnes of sand? Either I pay someone to do it or is there an expectation for me to do it?

And then halfway through the day on Wednesday I get a phone call from my neighbour who had fallen. I'm not complaining about these things, it's just what happens.

AT: So we're both in situations as parents where someone will ring up and say, 'Will you just....can you please just come and collect me from the station' and then what happens to the work which we're right in the middle of?

No1: I've been freelance for many years and I'm always expectedother people think that I don't actually work which is very strange.

AT: And if you had an office which you went to in a morning where you did your processing, would people still ring you and expect you to come around?

No 1: Yes people did treat me differently when I worked up the road and I would say, 'I'm at the studio'. Because they could relate to that.

This isn't just people who know me, it's people who turn up at the door in the daytime, they think I'm retired and that's weird because people expect you to have spare time to spend.

AT: I encounter this ALL the time. I'm always asked to do jobs. Can you just take H's car in, can you wait for a parcel?

That's interesting isn't it. Can you just?

No1: I had to have a bit of a word with the family that if there's a parcel coming you need to tell me, it's the expectation really that you are actually not working. I've had that for all my freelance careers really.

AT: And I've had it from where I actually wasn't working and slid into something which was very part time and this misunderstanding that because it's creative practice that actually it's not real work but more of a hobby.

I think the crux of what we're thinking about from yours is 'availability'. You're working from home on your computer and someone demands something of you so you have to break off. Or the door goes. Ours must go five times a day sometimes.

No1: But when you're related to someone who works full time away from home you do understand it.

AT: I've been speaking to some people who work at home who find their other obligations a pleasure, they will save up the hoovering for when they have a creative block.

No1: They're very rare though aren't they?

AT: But I think what we've drawn out is this idea of immediately going from one state to another.

I also know other people who save all the housework for a single period of time and say that they do all their housework on Thursday morning then they don't have to think about it at any other time. What I tend to do is say I have 1 hour and three mins before the washing machine is finished I'll just work and do as much as I can then I'll do that and make a coffee at the same time. I do plan but I'm constantly flitting backwards and forwards. I sometimes do two things at once as well. I might decide to go the studio because I can hang out the washing on the way. I start to get these over layering of times where work time overlaps with domestic time.

Is there a relationship between your two different lots of responsibilities?

No 1: Well I have my books all over the floor I feel there's a duality between work and domestic life. I feel like I should tidy them up before people come home.

AT: I do too (gives example).

No 1: Because I'm freelance I've never regarded a weekend as a weekend. I will be doing what I call 'leisure time' and then go and do some work.

AT: Evenings? I do evenings. I'll wander off for an hour to 'work'

No 1: I don't tend to do evenings

AT: Do you feel guilty about that?

No 1: No, because I don't do it to the detriment of the others. Sometimes things will happen late on Friday which are needed for Monday so I have to work at weekend.

AT: So how do we start to translate what we've talked about into an artwork?

No 1: ?

AT: I thought this would be easier. I genuinely thought that an idea would present itself during our discussions.

No 1: Is it collaborative?

AT: Well that's up to us. It is intended to be the outcome from the interview so must represent what we've discussed but it also needs to be by agreement between us. We can make together, or we can produce the idea together and I can make the work. This is a replacement for a traditional sociological analysis. I want the artworks to tell the stories that you've told so it could be about your flooded garden or about your neighbour falling or about the idea that time goes from public to private and back again or overlap, or about clearing up your books. What about a diary or something?

No 1: What about using the post as an artwork so instead of the postman being a distraction, he becomes a method for making?

AT: So we're talking about an artwork which relies upon time and is about the process. It's performative?

No 1: What if I'm the client and I send you a digital file of a photograph and you send me an artwork back? I could take polaroid and stick it in an envelope before I look at it.

AT: OK.

No 1: What do you think:

AT: I think it's fraught with difficulty and I love it. Let's do it.

No 1: I promise not to look at it and you can do whatever you think when you get it. You can do feedback. I don't know how that related to ceramics though.

AT: Well that becomes my problem. We've got a photography, performance project which I have to translate into ceramics. Then do I send it to you?

No 1: You could photograph it and send it back to me? I might not even know what the outcome is until it's on display in a museum. I might never know. I remember I saw a show once where a photographer had taken rolls of film but instead of showing the prints he just sealed up the undeveloped film in envelopes and wrote underneath, 'Taj Mahal' for example.

AT: I like that this is conceptual because it makes it into an art project instead of simply ceramics which relies upon objectness.

Appendix 8 Transcription of interview with candidate number two

Sigourney (pseudonym)

48 Year Old Female

Lives in Lancashire

AT reads out statement:

I am undertaking research which considers how creative practitioners negotiate the relationship between their creative practice and other domestic obligations. The research assumes that everyone has other obligations in their life, things which allow them to function as humans. These might be eating (shopping for food, preparations etc), washing and cleaning (Clothes, bodies, houses), caring for others (children, older people, pets) etc.

I am doing this initially through looking at my own practice and secondly through collecting information from others.

Rather than a traditional ask/answer interview, I am using a model which uses conversation and discussion between us to draw out better understandings.

The outcomes of these discussions will be artworks. Conceived together and made by one or both of us.

Body of Interview

AT – Please describe your creative or professional practice

S – Jewellery making from polymer clay as a business, now art journaling. Now going to be an art/textile student. I'm interested in wood blocks. More recently I'm making things for me which I don't have to be commercial.

AT - Where do you undertake this?

S -Mostly at home, on the sofa. I like to do it alongside YouTube videos and I binge watch TV series. Box sets. I've always done that, I've always watched TV or films and things whilst I make things. I like to create things on my own really but now my daughter is a maker too we make things together and run a craft group but I usually find I potter along quite quietly.

AT – This is interesting, sofa practice I've written down because I think (I'm speculating now) that a lot of women probably do this and I wonder if it comes from our grandparents knitting and a need to fulfil our time productively? We watch television every night together and IT sits and watches and I sit and passively watch with something in my hands. Finishing bits of pots, crochet, stitching, last night I was sticking decals onto ceramics. My practice has

almost led into this ability to be able to continue it in an evening. I wonder if there's something very female about his.

S – I always save something to do. I grew up with my Mum always sitting on one side of the sofa knitting and me sat on the other side making stuff and so she taught me how to knit.

AT – My mother did too.

S – And when my grandma came to stay we would buy her some crochet cotton and she'd make little coasters and things.

AT- I learned to knit from my mother and to crochet from my grandmother.

S – I never grasped it. I like things you can start and finish quite quickly.

AT – Like your beads?

S – One of the things I do is leave things unfinished. This helps me avoid creative block. I go back to it and then I'm in a creative mode to carry on. I think this comes from my Mum. She was always knitting and carried on. I make little things but I leave them unfinished.

There is some talk about S going to university in the Autumn....

AT – So far we've not talked about this idea of doing something alongside something else.

S – My dad had a shed and he was always making out of wood and metal and I could see him from my bedroom window. And I spent a lot of time in there watching him and I've learned to use wood and tools, but that wasn't something he could bring into the house. He would then be quite happy relaxing in front of the telly with the dog by his side because that was his relaxing time and Mum would be knitting.

AT – My mum knit. She would go through periods of knitting. I had handmade mohair jumpers when they were fashionable in the 80s.

S – Yes, I did.

AT – There's also something about storytelling that women do as a way of passing information.

S – Yes, you'd hear snippets of things as you were sort of growing up and somethings would come into conversation about where other relative would make things. You'd find out about family history. Not necessarily about art-based artist. I did find out about, I've tried to research it, my Mum had an uncle who used to do illustrations for vegetarian books.

AT - Do you know a name?

S – No

AT – British Library?

S – Possibly. But also, she would go on about her auntie who married a composer

Conversations gets distracted into some personal details which are irrelevant.

S – It's quite an interesting thing that the majority of my ancestors were working class and worked in the textile industry.

AT – Mine too.

(Note; The part of the North West where we both live is synonymous with the cotton industry and the fact all our grandparents worked in the textile industry isn't in itself particularly surprising)

S – I did a little map of where they all lived and they're all and my family have lived in pretty much every house in (Names local village).

AT – I don't really know what my family did. We don't have a very good communication system for this kind of information. My Mum always talks about the future, rarely about the past. We don't have lots of stories, but you clearly do. I think that sitting on the sofa with your Mum, you perhaps absorbed a lot of this kind of information?

S – Yes, I used to try to write it down when she was alive. I liked getting into the family history because if I didn't, I'd forget. There are loads of things I have forgotten. It is interesting.

AT - Maybe this is the thing that comes out of today?

AT – I have loads of notes about how we use time and your other obligations. I know you have three children who are (as all children are) demanding of your time. I think you've talked about that really by explaining you sometimes do things together. How do you deal with things like when (name of daughter) just rang you and, do they have priority? Is you work the kind of thing you can pick up and put down.

S – Sometimes I'll say, 'can I just finish this?' and just finish a crucial bit but if it's a case of, 'Mum can you come and pick me up?' I'll pretty much drop everything and go and pick them up. If I think that by not going straight away, they'll be in danger or whatever. And I have been known to get up in the middle of the night and drive all the way to Wales. But if your kids need you, they need you. And they have always known I'll be there for them; they are my priority.

AT – I think this has gone an interesting way. I have a list of other things which people have said. I didn't intend to use these unless the conversation faltered. But I just wonder if any of these triggers as something which you can relate to within the relationship between your creative practice and the other things which have to be done. Your family or the cooking or whatever. Some of the things people have said: Frustration, particularly with interruptions?

S – Erm. I think I've got used to it. I'm very patient. A lot more than I was.

AT – Do you think that's an age thing? I am.

S – I think in this day and age, with mobile phones and technology, I think it's expected that you're going to get interrupted and erm it depends what I'm doing. But I think I'm good at picking things up and putting things down.

AT – Flipping from one state to another? From the creative process where you're quite relaxed and doing something, watching television, to an immediate (clicks fingers) the door goes or you get a reminder that you have to take your car in to the garage.

S – Is that a Mother thing? We have to do this from babies, we constantly have to stop to feed the baby, play with the baby, give them attention when they cry, change their nappies. When they start school you have to do the school run.

AT – rolls eyes....the school run.

S – I hated the school run.

AT – Oh so did I.

S – It's so unnecessary, I hated everything to do with school.

AT – Mine loved school but that school run shortens your day so much and you knew that when they came back you had very little chance to do anything. You had a really short period of time.

S – So now they're older and need lifts here and there. And actually, in one way it takes the worry away from me so they don't have to go on public transport. So it's like doing the school run but it's at different times and it's for their safety.

AT – People thinking that you're not at work. This means people not valuing the creative time. Like for example, can you just..... I chose to work from home sometimes because I can mark two essays in the time I would spend travelling. Last week I was working from home and was left with a list of people who were coming...the carpet man, the electrician etc. People not valuing the fact you're working. The postman coming!!! That was my fault for ordering a book though.

S – When I was making beads in the attic I would consciously listen out for parcels. But because I'm a single mum I don't really have another adult to leave me a list.

AT – But as such you are responsible for everything!

S – Yes but I would arrange that myself at a time which was convenient. I still do that now. I set myself certain times when I do things like that (S explains how her week is structured so she doesn't overlap appointments with the time she's working) But people still don't understand that the creative part is set aside as a time which is making money, which I need! They say, you're not working Thursday and I say, 'not formally but I need to be available to make things as I need the money'.

AT – People make light of a situation when you don't go 'out' to work. I'm saying to people....I almost need to work away from the house sometimes so I don't get interrupted by people who don't understand that I have to work a full day from home.

S- I think B (eldest daughter) is experiencing that now as she's gone self-employed as an artist. She's working all the time, but she gets cross that when she's at her studio, the other people in the building interrupt her and take it lightly that she's actually doing her work and when she's at home working from home I don't expect when I get home that she washed up

or anything because she's working and I can't say, you've been at home all day because I know what it's like. But S (younger daughter) will say, 'well she's been at home all day'. And I say, 'yes but she's been working'. But she doesn't quite grasp that.

AT- Yes I am at home, so in some ways I am around for those jobs to be negotiated, and yes I do earn less, and yes IT goes out to his (makes inverted commas with fingers) 'proper job'

S – Well that the thing as well.... proper job. My son is a fine art graduate, but he's had to get a 'proper job' to fund his art practice.

AT – I'm afraid we're a culture which measures value financially. Our criteria for value is measured by possessions.

S – He has a job which he works three nights and the rest of the time he's an artist. It took him about twelve months to figure out this didn't make his art valued less.

S – That leads you to something else though...

We talk further about value of art and 'mates rates'

AT – I think we should talk about what we're going to make...what I'm going to make...what we might do jointly.

S – I'd really like to contribute.

AT – I'd love that!

S – I Have all these broken bits of pottery and I keep thinking that I could make some kind of a mosaic or something. You know you could have a mug with its handle sticking out.

AT – Yeahhhhh... that's almost representative of a disruption of time isn't it? If we start to reassemble this (draws) into something (draws more).

AT explains about the artist Yee Sookyung who makes work with broken ceramics which are reformed into sculpture using a kintsugi-like process

AT – what about a sculptural mosaic.

S – we could make things out of wet clay and embed the pieces? It would be like a big vessel, like Grayson Perry-esque or Gaudi?

AT – Something really decorative?

S – You know how we were talking about housework and not having time to do it? Things get broken don't they, and I think sometimes they're quite beautiful.

AT – Lots of people deal with reconstructing ceramics and making new sculptural forms or narratives. Problematically, clay shrinks when it's drying so if we embed these pieces it's inevitably going to crack, which actually might be quite nice?

S – Yes and we could fill that in with gold (points to drawing)

AT – SO how we going to do this? I'd love you to be involved, we can carry on our conversation, and it will hopefully draw out more understanding.

S – I think it would be really helpful for me too, to see what you're doing. What if this was wire? Or crochet or knitted? Can we add this afterwards? And perhaps if we did have cracks, we could drill holes and use beading wire and beads.

AT – I think we both need to go away and do some drawings. Say we make something (draws) a pot, this can be made any way, this can be thrown or whatever, we can drill hole in this err, before it's fired, and then those can have.

S – Gets interrupted by phone call from one of children.

AT – I wish mine would call more often! So what we're thinking is (Lists and writes down) something to do with old broken pottery plus new and it's something to do with disruption and interruption.

S – What about a broken necklace? Only because of my background in making beads.

AT – Have you seen the chandelier of lost earrings in the Harris?

S – Yes I have.....but it's still got to retain its elegance and not just be a it's like even though things could be broken they still have to retain some dignity from that.....I don't know

AT – I don't know either, but I think there's something in it. I have got a book called 'breaking the mould' about contemporary ceramics and there's a couple of pieces in there which might help us to formalise this idea. I'll do some research and you have a think and do some drawings. It might be the drawings which are the artwork in the end? Drawings of cups are a perfectly acceptable outcome for a ceramics project.

S – Right yes.

AT explains the expanded field.

It is agreed AT and S will go away and do some drawings and regroup in the near future to progress the artwork/outcome.

Appendix 9 Transcription of Ebor interviews 13th July 2019

Participants:

A H-B

KL

Researcher AT

Sessions started with an introduction to the ideas which have been under consideration and then asked the questions:

- How do you manage your creative practice in terms of other obligations, this could be housework, appointments, children (caring)?
- How do you feel about this relationship?

KL: The most prominent thing I'm thinking of now, I'm a stage of life where I'm in a fortunate position where I have very little domestic obligations to other people, which is a gigantic difference between what's been most of my adult life until fairly recently. So, I could talk at length about my past history where, you know, having to work, kids, parents, utterly different lifestyle to now. So do I talk about the past?

AT: I don't know, I think any experience is valid in terms of the research. I know that one of the reasons I asked you is because we have talked about this before and I remember you saying, 'I do my housework on a Thursday because I know I don't have to worry about it the rest of the time'.

KL: It allows you mental freedom

AT: Yes, and then you don't have to feel guilt

KL: You don't keep looking around thinking, 'oh, that needs doing, because you just think, 'it's not the day for it'.

AT: Which I think's a really healthy way of doing it (laughing). I don't do that, and I don't worry too much if things are a bit grubby. Do you still do that?

KL: Yes

AT: Housework Thursday?

KL: Not Thursday, Sunday. You work out what you can get away with. This needs doing weekly: Hoovering, dusting, so that then doesn't get done the rest of the time.

AT: So that's a completely different time stream, you know that you box off, that little time.

KL: Frees up your head

AT: Yes, I might adopt that (laughing)

AH-B: I come from a different angle in that I've started thinking recently about erm, the traditional way of you know, people used to do the washing on the Monday and so on, washing up after every meal and that doesn't really work in our house and I've started thinking about, because we've got two artists in our house and it's just sort of like, you know, should, you know like, it's thing you've got in your living room and you've got a sofa and an armchair and a telly and people come in and you just watch the telly, but we don't do that because we've just got all this artist's/creative stuff around that we just want to do so we'll make things and paint and draw and print and stuff whilst we're just watching telly and so it always looks like it's a bit of mess our house, a creative mess, and I've started thinking, well, why should we conform to other people's idea of what a house should be. If it's a living room it should be for living so we don't use our living room for just sitting down and watching the telly so it's like our studio in a way and our kitchen becomes out studio and then our bedrooms and the attic. But I've been a single mum for twenty odd years with three children who are now just over twenty, at one point there were three artists in the house.

AT: Do you do those creative things, say with B....., say whilst you're watching the television? Do those domestic things overlap? Do you try to find these pockets of time to do them all or do you set the pockets of time aside? Or do you just say, 'Shall we just?'

A H-B: Yes we tend to, the domestic stuff just gets left.

AT: So you prioritise the creative stuff? There's a hierarchy?

A H-B: Because it also started from when they were children because I was the single Mum with three young children and I thought it was more important to spend time with my kids, rather than for me to.... The house was reasonably tidy, but it wasn't, you know, I didn't have to do around with white gloves on to check that it was.

KL: DO you not have gremlins though? I think a lot about this, and I really have gremlins, you know like the rule, you always wash up before going to bed and you must always tidy the living room before bedtime, you know your mother and your grandmother and all those rules and regs that really are very oppressive.

A H-B: No, I used to feel really guilty and erm, stressed about it but life's too short for washing up.

KL: Well I admire you because I'm not... I've still got a lot of gremlins.

A H-B: But I've got over the fact that certain people who I know, erm in my family come 'round and they sort of look around and...

KL: That's the one, it's the judgement isn't it?

A H-B: Yeah, yeah and they've called it a hoarder's house, well, yes, we do have a lot of stuff, but it's stuff that we use. It's not away because why bother putting it away because you're going to be using it.

AT: You also have a lot of books.

A H-B: Oh I have lots of books

Short discussion about the spaghetti letters and how they'll press into the clay and then burn away in the firing.

A H-B: There's this new tidying up guru who says you shouldn't have more than 30 books.

KL: Oh good grief.

AT: That's ridiculous.

KL: People that don't use their house, people who just live and sleep in their house, they always tidy, you know, if you're actually living, you know doing activities in your house, you've got stuff everywhere. I think.

AT: My colleague says he's not untidy, he's just got ideas lying around everywhere.

Laughing

AT: You can't live with 30 books, I could use 30 in a day.

A H-B: I just like books.

KL: I don't like rules

A H-B: Rules?

KL: We ought to not have them.

AT: But that's because we're artists and we butt up against things, we're agitators, aren't we?

KL: Hummm

A H-B: If I didn't have to do two jobs and sort the kids out I might be tidy.

AT: I don't think we would, I'm not tidy.

A H-B: Your house is tidy!

AT: We have a lot of cupboards to put stuff in.

KL: You need stuff to be stimulated by. If you live in a sterile environment, it's not a stimulating environment, is it?

AT Rambles about home décor

KL crushes some spaghetti letters into a clay tile.

AT: So, do you delegate some of the housework? Who does it?

KL: I do it?

A H-B: I do it. S..... does some and complains that the others don't do anything but I don't think she really pulls her weight either.

AT: I don't feel so bad about mine then.

KL: No, I do it and it's partly convenience and partly control freakery.

A H-B: Yes, I can be a bit like that. Like the washing up. Even though I don't do it very often, I do do it in a certain way.

AT: Yes, I like things hung on the line the correct way up and not just pegged from a corner.

A H-B: Yeah

AT: So that's a bit like... And I get a lot of satisfaction from things hung on the line, is that just me?

KL: Yes, I agree.

A H-B I like pegging out.

AT: So there's some control and some element of satisfaction but I get frustrated because it takes my time away. But it's not just my stuff you know, there's four of us.

KL: Yes

KL: We haven't talked about the elephant in the room which is of course that it's very gendered.

AT: Right, I agree. The majority of my research is inevitably coming from the feminist cannon because as soon as we start talking about domesticity, we're into the realm of that being the private realm but also a space for women to work. As in, they're unable to separate, they're unable to have a completely private space at home because it's their workplace as well and you can't ... so again you get this layering of temporal experience where erm, men come home from work and they have leisure time because they're at home whereas women are always in the realm of work. (To KL) Now you've got a way of dealing with that as in its only housework on a Sunday, so that's how you've negotiated that. Yes, I agree, I do want to, I do want to encourage anybody to contribute to the research. I invited men. I believe that everybody has these obligations and has a different experience of them.

AT relates a tale about a colleague who is male and had contributed his experience. unrelated to his domestic life.

AT: We're in a place where feminism has a multitude of understandings but still, statistically, we're in a place where the majority of the childcare is done by women.

KL: And the domestic work, I mean the stereotype of the woman multitasking is absolutely still true.

AT: Yes I agree.

KL: I mean your friend who changed his practice yes, but has he ever noticed when the windows need cleaning?

AT: I don't know.

KL: I've never met and man who notices when the windows need cleaning.

AT: You know in our house IT... cleans all the windows, I never do it.

KL: I've never experienced a man who notices the windows need cleaning or the bath.

AT: No he wouldn't do the bath.

KL: So although I do the housework, the proper house work, the Hoovering and stuff at certain times, every single day I'm noticing whether there's dust on the back of the toilet cistern or whatever, that is in your consciousness the entire time and I don't think it is for most men. So their work is very compartmentalised and I don't think they have that bit, part of the brain which is active all the time which says, 'is that clean, does this need doing, do I need to wash the sheets, Christmas is coming, in November do I need to do shopping, I need to get cards, I need to write the card, You know I don't think that men have that constant...

AT: So we've got these females (AT draws on the clay tile and explains what she's drawing.

AT: One of the things I've noticed about myself whilst I've been doing this writing is that I put the washing machine on and it takes an hour and three minutes and I know what I can do in an hour and three minutes.

KL and A H-B: yes

AT: and I know that I have to do this in the morning so I can hang the washing outside.

KL: Always working it out (points to head)

AT: Whereas men (draws symbol on clay) Just go in one direction.

KL: True

AT: So now I'm conscious we're at a time where gender has become this fluid state, actually you can't deny hundreds and thousands of years' worth of history. It's embedded in our cultural consciousness.

A H-B: Well men they are hunter gatherers and women have babies.

AT: and women are the emotional part of the species because we have the hormones which make us such. Plus the social and cultural factors.

KL: (Describing what she's drawn on clay) So this is the pattern of kind of life tasks, this crisscross tartan and this in the middle is the creative bit and it's a layer on top which you can just about mask out sometimes but is always Round the edges, so that's kind of stolen time.

AT: Stolen time

KL: And this is the structure of creative time, and this again is the eating in there's always a threat, you're always encroached. There's always a chanceyou can't get rid of it.

AT: There's always the chance your phone might go and one of the kids says, 'can you just pick me up for the station?' or something more urgent.

KL: (describing clay again) and this is another way of looking. There's a timetable and then this line is like a pressure which expands, and the lines are keeping it at bay, so that's what that's about.

A H-B: I've been starting doing illustrations and looking at, I've got, what they want you to do at University is a lot of observational drawing and sketching so because I've got limited time, I've started to just, with a black liner, drawing stuff so like a mug or B.....sitting next to me or the TV or the computer, anything, so I've started doing all these illustrations and some of them I've turned into embroideries, just like back stitch and what have you so this is a style I'm working on at the moment so this is me keeping my head above water with all the things, so like money and the kids and the house and that's a gravestone because I work at the cemetery and this is my reflexology because I do feet and this is B.... (describes daughter's condition) which takes up a lot of my time and that's me trying to do some sewing in between and a bit of creative.

All: Talk about the drawing

A H-B: and then this one, you know if you've got a big desk for creative working, but people only actually work in this much space (small gesture with hands). So I used to make beads and jewellery and I had quite a large desk and another desk but by the time I'd got things out I actually was making jewellery on a tile not much bigger than this (points to 10 x 10cm tile).

Discussion with comparisons from others

Discussion of the washing machine, cooking and some personal examples not relevant to the question.

A H-B: When I've been doing reflexology, it's a physical thing and can be mentally and emotionally draining and you know, so do I want to go home and start doing stuff? Sometimes I just want to do something creative and sometimes I don't even want to do that, sometimes I don't do anything and I've only just got comfortable with the fact that if I don't feel like doing anything, it's fine not doing anything.

I think it's like not feeling guilty about it and if I've got a headache or something and there's stuff to be done, I think people don't look after themselves

KL: I don't think I've ever got to there, I don't think I've ever reached that position.

AT: Past guilt?

KL: Not, is it guilt, I don't know but feeling like I'm doing nothing. I do, do nothing but I'm feeling like it's wrong

A H-B: I don't do nothing that much because I always have to do something.

AT Do you think that's a symptom of this very female trait of the home being a place which is inherently a workplace? Do you think a man could come home and do nothing?

KL: Not for me, for me I think that's it's to do with upbringing. Self-improve, be constructive, contribute yeah, strive, that's mine.

AT: See I didn't have that.

KL: I did, ad nauseum

There follows a discussion of who does what in the house, pink jobs and blue jobs and separation of gender roles.

A H-B: One thing I do remember....AHB relates a tale about childhood and her Dad's shed. Which leads to a conversation about Fathers making things from wood, metal and fixing cars.

AT: Which brings us to another subject which is the one of handing down skill from parent to child which my experience is of my Mother teaching me to knit and my Grandmother teaching me to crochet.

Another 'I remember' about the gendered nature of this idea and boys learning to fix cars from their Fathers.

Others give examples of things they've learned from their parents.

There follows a long discussion about learning from parents, passing down of skill and personal recollections.

There's lots of 'I remember'

Discussion of tradition, women as storytellers and meaning being made through this.

AT: To draw to a close can I summarise what I think has come from the discussion which directly relates to what was asked in the first place, which was, 'What is your relationship between your creative practice and your domestic obligations. And I explained I thought mine was very much overlapped, very much flicking between my private and public work (if you call my creative practice public for want of a better term) in a heartbeat, multiple times a day. I think AHB you have said you prioritise your creative practice and the domesticity gets done as and when it needs to be done.

A H-B: Yes, I've always put my kids first and we create things together and that's how it's always been and that's how it is now but I always try and put the children first before, which is part of our responsibility as a Mother.

AT: Actually, what you're doing is overlapping two things and using creativity as a tool to which suits two purposes.

AT and KL: both acknowledge they would have liked this and never mastered it.

A H-B: But life is short.

A gendered discussion of life and death follows including the relationship between gender, domesticity and time.

Appendix 10 Performance Proposal



Angela Tait

I am a mixed-media ceramics artist currently undertaking PhD research with the University of Sunderland and the National Glass Centre. My research questions surround the temporal experience and rhythms of undertaking a creative practice in a domestic home. This is explored through an expanded ceramics practice which includes performance, video and an experimental writing technique called the blovel (blog/novel).

The practice-based research uses the vessel as its formal structure and starting point. The vessel being the universally understood object which spans the public/private divide. Take the humble coffee cup which belongs at the breakfast table or the conference table. It warms our hands, touches our lips and provides a conduit between people we know and strangers alike.

'Would you like a cup of tea?'



Proposal

I propose a performance which results in an installation.

The work is called 'smalls' referencing both the size of each vessel and the colloquial expression of 'washing your smalls'.

The starting point for this is a week's worth of washing. Done in the home and categorised using a mathematical process of tallies and tables. This provides data; types of garment, number of them washed and 'stage' of the process (washed, dried, folded, put away).

This information is taken to the gallery, bridging the public/private divide of home and work. There it is translated, on-site, piece by piece, into a series of small thrown vessels (one per garment) which are hung on a washing line. Each piece is handmade on a potters' wheel.

This is performed; the viewer sees the process unfold in real time over a few days, complete with all its rhythms and interruptions. The washing lines slowly fill up with raw clay vessels taken straight from the potters' wheel. As they start to dry out they are punctured with small holes to enable additions of coloured ribbon, fabric and embroidery thread to be added. The colours and materials relating back to the initial table of data – Red for pillowcases, ribbon for items which are drying etc. This is done on the 'in between' times when the throwing must be stopped to attend to the finishing. A rhythm starts to develop between the artist and the work, backwards and forwards between parts of the making process.

The finished work remains as an installation.

At the end of the exhibition the work is deinstalled as a performance. Each vessel is taken from the washing line and placed in a bucket of water. Slowly the clay will return to its previous state, the vessels will dissolve into a homogeneous mass of clay.





Logistics

This performance is flexible. It can happen in any gallery or space with places to attach the washing lines. Visually this is better if they are overlapped or criss-cross the space. The potter's wheel is small (but mighty) and runs on a regular three pin plug. The wheel needs to be set up in the same space as the washing line installation.

The resulting installation, whilst fragile, is sturdy. A piece made in October 2019 was de-installed in January 2020 and was undamaged despite being in a busy area. Future installations would be made with paper clay which has the addition of cellulose fibres giving extra stability to the raw clay pieces.

There are other works which would make a more comprehensive exhibition of the broader research including a video piece (ready by the end of 2020) called things which go 'round. This piece plays with the idea of cyclical time and maintenance tasks through the visuals of a washing machine and a potter's wheel. There will also be a patchwork quilt made from ceramic and fibre.

Time – Ideally this could happen any time between Easter 2020 and the end of 2021. The initial performance/construction of the work will take 3/4/5 days, depending upon the number of vessels which must be thrown. This time can (and should) be visible - i.e. during opening hours - as it's fundamental to the work. The resulting installation can last for any period of time in negotiation with the gallery and artist.

Budget - There is a small materials cost of the installation. As this is a PhD exposition, no artists costs are expected.

Widening Participation - I can offer artists' talks and/or workshops for any ages to run alongside the exhibition.



CV

Part time PhD researcher and lecturer in Fine Art with the University of Salford.
Contributor to critical review publications.

Selected Solo Shows

2019

Northern Willow Whitaker Museum, Rossendale

2018

The Urban Moth The Manchester Museum

2017

'As Yet Untitled' Gallery Frank, Littleborough

2016

Hoard Bank Street Arts, Sheffield

2015

Position Open Manchester Victoria Station

2015

Ordsall Hall, Salford

2014

Reciprocity/Reciprocita Littleborough/Salford/Macerata, Italy

Contact

 a.d.tait@salford.ac.uk

 07795 235745

 [@angelataitartist](https://www.instagram.com/angelataitartist)

 angelatait.co.uk



Guns to Goods



Northern Willow



The Urban Moth

Appendix 11 Blovel Texts in Date order

	Date	title	Subjects
1.	07.02.18	Commencing	Intro
2.	02.03.18	Cast fire repeat	Reflection on process, slip casting with the stain which bubbles at high temps
3.	10.03.18	Thinking through making	How I start to understand that this is about temporal experience
4.	28.03.18	Roadkill	Roadkill
5.	02.04.18	Storytelling	About buying random literature and how that fits my wider reading
6.	02.05.18	Frustration	The start of the diary, things which get in the way – Could use this in the thesis when talking about public and private work.
7.	26.06.18	How to eat an elephant	PhD process, personal, weight of work, doubt. Could fit where I talk about the Blovel being partly about the process of the PhD
8.	29.06.18	The listicle	Conference paper, an overview of the first few months
9.	09.07.18	Washing and Potting	Draw together the ideas of cycles, tapestry of jobs, time overlapping
10.	24.07.18	Autoethnography and the Blovel	First time - Timed, process, autoethnography, context, starting to think about writing the Blovel, process – Used in methodology chapter
11.	25.07.18	Dictating to Siri	Time, context – a little
12.	20.08.18	Sudden desire	The Birmingham workshop, gathering quantitative data.
13.	25.08.18	No Wonder	Timed, narrative, multiples, washing machines, cycles of time
14.	27.08.18	Throwing marathon	Timed, process, frustrations, disruptions

15.	01.09.18	Reinventing home/reinventing writing	Time, objectness, writing – how it might fit
16.	11.09.18	The Birmingham Scarf	Reflection, context, working through ideas, Jim’s scarf, the contemporary context of knitting.
17.	14.10.18	Epic fails	Failure, how ideas happen
18.	09.01.19	The Birmingham scarf	Ideas, outcome, pep talk
19.	04.02.19	Frustration and moaning	Times, a lot of other things taking up time, disruptions to the day
20.	08.02.19	Deproblematising politics	Feminist writing, setting out my agenda, pots and clothes together, thinking through methodology
21.	22.02.19	Ella’s chicken	Layering of time in the domestic
22.	05.04.19	Overwhelmed	Putting the context within the text rather than in its own chapter. Frustrations with the process
23.	22.04.19	Thinking on the outside	About my practice and where that fits into the work I make, context, confused. The vessel
24.	23.04.19	Posting about posts	The origin of the Blovel
25.	24.04.19	Wearable ceramics	Timed (sort of),
26.	01.06.19	Pulling myself together	About the process and my own doubts
27.	04.06.19	Losing sight of the goal	Figuring out my way forward, context, process of PhD
28.	01.07.19	A haptic conversation with some clay	poem
29.	08.07.19	Gender and the politics of time	Breakthrough in understanding, polychronic time
30.	23.07.19	Keeping control of the question	Reverse engineering the question
31.	31.07.19	Skip diving	Little snippet of thought about sky dish
32.	08.08.19	Thinking about writing about thinking	Planning the case study, how writing helps my understanding
33.	09.08.19	To-do lists	Process, public/private
34.	12.08.19	An autobiography in 16 lines	
35.	18.08.19	Rhubarb	
36.	19.08.19	My favourite coffee cups in the order I would choose them	Coffee cups

37.	23.08.19	Don't forget	How working from home isn't really working, coffee, ideas,
38.	12.09.19	Maintenance takes all the fucking time	Time, context, cyclical nature of washing
39.	28.09.19	Time runs away	About process, PhD experience
40.	02.10.19	Case Study one	Failure, postman, testing
41.	05.11.19	But what if?	Doubt
42.	17.11.19	Feedback	Poem, process, resilience, about the PhD experience
43.	09.12.19	Time and Patchworks	Time and its experience.
44.	12.01.20	Reflect and project	Timed, demanding focus,
45.	26.01.20	Thinking in straight lines	A visual representation of the question by diagram
46.	07.02.20	Email to my supervisor	About process, letter, context
47.	16.02.20	Thinking about making a film	Thoughts, context
48.	02.03.20	Letter to M	Context, process of the PhD, insecurity, justification for the alternative thesis
49.	12.03.20	Social Distancing	Timed, intro to diary, contextual references
50.	27.03.20	Social distancing	Timed, coffee, reflection, time, film
51.	08.04.20	Kate Davis, Weight	Reflection on a relevant work
52.	09.05.20	Diaries	Thoughts, contextual references, reflection on the work
53.	15.05.20	Internal dialogue	Unfinished, diaries (bit repetitive)
54.	04.06.20	Time during lockdown	Timed, not nearly as good as the one written for dwell time
55.	07.06.20	Article for dwell time	The sloths shoes, intro to the diary
56.	8.07.20	My postman calls me doctor	Interruptions during the day and how I flick backwards and forwards between the public and the private.
57.	23.09.20	Back on campus,	how the cup straddles the public/private divide
58.	4.10.20	Life, the thief of time	
59.	18.10.20	Rhythmanalysis	Rhythmanalysis and how some days I make my own distractions.
60.	24.10.20	How we adapt to make things economical	Window Gallery show

61.	25.10.20	Reflection and talking to critical friend	
62.	14.11.20	Work in progress show at Ebor	How threads of thinking run through the practice. Dawning realisation that the whole thing is about storytelling.
63.	27.12.20	Putting everything in its place	Untangling the roles of researcher/practice/Blovel and outcomes along with the alternative thesis.
64.	12.01.21	Reflections on the Blovel	Unfinished
65.	6.02.21	Zoomy Cups	How the cup is used during online working
66.	10.03.21	A colour manifesto	Colour and it's role. Poem
67.	15.05.21	On Exposing truths	About being honest and coming to the end

Appendix 12 The Covid Clay Diary

Day	Date	Description
1.	18.03.20	A list: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools to close • Ran outside • Scaffolding on house • Done no writing • Worried about students
2.	19.03.20	The Pandictionery New language which has become commonplace: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social distancing • Stimulus package • Lockdown • Panic buying
3.	20.03.20	Z is home, we made today's pot together
4.	21.03.20	Someone gave me a cactus and I planted seeds. Pot is for the cactus which will become part of the work
5.	22.03.20	I find myself vacillating between infinite admiration of the human spirit and overwhelming frustration at the capacity of people to be twats. Pot has handle on inside and text around body
6.	23.03.20	Every day we watch the daily briefing on the news around 5 pm. It's rapidly becoming a routine, so today's diary reflects the three plinths and has labels with the same details as we see every day. Stay at home, protect the NHS, save lives
7.	24.03.20	Lockdown. The pot has a padlock.
8.	25.03.20	Sunshine, reflecting the weather and my mood Sunshine; the weather and my mood
9.	26.03.20	Last night the owls were really loud, and the birds today are springtime super-frisky. The pot today is a birdfeeder.

10.	27.03.20	In a day with one piece of bad news after another, back-to-back meetings and tensions everywhere, I managed to peg out the washing and some of it actually dried. The pot is pegged together with a clothes peg.
11.	28.03.20	Potters' playtime has been postponed so Geoff challenged everyone to make a pot with 75 grams of clay.
12.	29.03.20	We are allowed out once a day to exercise. I own a bike – who knew? The bike came out and whilst it was out it ran over the pot.
13.	30.03.20	I asked Z what cup I should make, he said the most boring cup in the world. I think he's fed-up.
14.	31.03.20	Hexagonal cup. We're shopping for several other people. Some of the things we're asked for are a bit random.
15.	01.04.20	An example of some work I've been developing
16.	02.04.20	Today I made soup. A soup bowl and spoon reflect this
17.	03.04.20	Family poker night. The cup will have a poker chip strung into the handle
18.	04.04.20	The cup has four handles, I have been pondering the way my brain flits from ceramics to emails to cooking and meetings all in the same physical space.
19.	05.04.20	Today is reflecting upon how our relationship to food has changed. More family eating together but also more snacking and drinking.
20.	06.04.20	Today I worked and gave blood. The cup has a big A+ on the outside. Both my blood group and the highest grade we give.
21.	07.04.20	The last 24 hours have been lumpy! Family wobbles. Today's diary is four vessels (family members) thrown off the hump and then thrown together in a massy way.

22.	08.04.20	A bowl of clay spaghetti. This isn't necessarily about the crisis but working and doing and PhD my brain often feels this way.
23.	09.04.20	This is about staying in touch with friends. Two thrown vessels with holes in the bases, threaded with string to make a yogurt pot telephone.
24.	10.04.20	I made a rainbow tree cosy for the garden. Children throughout the country are making rainbows for their windows to be cheerful and support the NHS. The cup has a narrow belly for a rainbow scarf.
25.	11.04.20	Is for the huge bees in the garden. The world is breathing a little clearer with less cars and people out and about.
26.	12.04.20	Easter Sunday, has to be an egg cup
27.	13.04.20	Threads of thinking, all overlapping through holes in the cup
28.	14.04.20	Today, all I have done, all day, is type. Oh, and I put the bins out.
29.	15.04.20	Today I have been grumpy. I didn't know what to make but as I was turning a small cup it flew off the wheel head and squished. This seems appropriate.
30.	16.04.20	This morning as I was sitting in bed answering work emails, I realised how overlapped my domestic and public worlds had become. This pot is marbled clay cut and overlapped.
31.	17.04.20	The Wi-Fi went down and had to be reset. It's been patchy at times throughout this. We rely upon it so much. Today's cup is about technology and will have a charger cable embedded.
32.	18.04.20	PPE is the centre of the news. There's not enough – or maybe there is but it's all in the wrong place. Today is a jug with a mask on
33.	19.04.20	Safety pins – practically all that is holding the world together.
34.	20.04.20	It's my birthday. I'm usually really rubbish at birthdays but this one was quite nice. Wrapped in paper – which is actually a flight map – because which house has no wrapping paper but a load of old flight maps?
35.	21.04.20	Oil is negatively priced for the first time ever. The oil companies are paying for it to be taken off their hands. I made an abstraction of an oil barrel
36.	22.04.20	Endless emails. Answer ten receive twelve more. I made a bottomless cup.

37.	23.04.20	I did tutorials all day. I made my own head hurt with talking too loudly. I made a megaphone
38.	24.04.20	I deconstructed my studio installations. I have a big pile of ribbon in my studio, it's going to be embedded into the cup.
39.	25.04.20	813 dents in a cup. One for each COVID death in the last 24 hours.
40.	26.04.20	A family raku firing with appropriate cup
41.	27.04.20	I tried to take more breaks form work, but this just resulted in walking backwards and forwards between the office and the washing line. I made a bowl which was pinched together with pegs.
42.	28.04.20	The way we exercise has changed. I'm a 3 spin class a week kinda girl but I've been running, cycling and walking for miles. Today I threw a taller cylinder and trod on it.
43.	29.04.20	I started to embroider another sky dish last night. Today's cup will have a similar tufted design.
44.	30.04.20	Harry replaced the thermocouples in the big kiln. The old ones are truly jiggered but will find new life embedded into my diary today.
45.	01.05.20	I've been thinking about how my diary is mediated through the idea that it's going to be public property. Today's cup is a confession, more in line with a personal diary.
46.	02.05.20	I batch-cooked chilli and onion bhajis and salt was mentioned in three separate contexts. I made a salt pig
47.	03.05.20	Ian and I got negative COVID tests. I exercised, I spent time pottering in the garden – the bluebells are out, I baked biscuits, I drank coffee and had a walk. I'm using a mixture of open stock and custom decals to tell the story of the day.
48.	04.05.20	In praise of denim
49.	05.05.20	The new breakfast bar stools came. Harry screwed them together. One didn't fit. He unscrewed it and then had to put it back together again because the company needed pictures of it not fitting. Today's diary has useless, dangly nuts and bolts.
50.	06.05.20	Nothing much happening. It's very VERY sunny. I've made a vase with a rose bowl top for displaying garden flowers.
51.	07.05.20	I have been sewing a lot, and so have other people. The resurgence of craft is heartening.
52.	08.05.20	A found sculpture on our walk. Today's diary is a photograph

53.	09.05.20	Coloured my hair and the top of the pot pink
54.	10.05.20	Today has been out recognition of the domestic appliances. They work relentlessly in their endless quest to maintain us. I threw a cup, complete with handle and tumble dried it. It will have a decal of the 'no tumble drying' symbol.
55.	11.05.20	Three more little vessels thrown off the hump – Stay alert, control the virus, save lives
56.	12.05.20	Typewriter keyboard pen holder.
57.	13.05.20	The new normal – with its handle upside down
58.	14.05.20	Internal dialogues
59.	15.05.20	Chippy forks – I made a couple of dozen for another project but we're also trying to have take-out once a week to support local businesses
60.	16.05.20	We are communicating in different ways. Teams, zoom and House party are new language we've adopted.
61.	17.05.20	Tinfoil tray – inspired by my collaborative practice but in a wider context a reflection of the changes in the way we eat
62.	18.05.20	Earphones and my love/hate relationship with technology
63.	19.05.20	Aeroplanes. The airfield re-opened partially. We all have an opinion about planes. Mine is both personal and much wider concerns about travel and the environment
64.	20.05.20	Public transport. We're actively discouraged from using it for the first time I can remember. How will I get to work?
65.	21.05.20	Pollocks to that – reading essays about painting I made an abstract expressionist cup.
66.	22.05.20	A lumpy day. A literal interpretation with a band of manganese and a wavy line
67.	23.05.20	Oh my goodness it's windy. Made a wind instrument
68.	24.05.20	The way we consume goods has changed. Today's pot is wrapped in corrugated cardboard.
69.	25.05.20	The cracks are starting to show. Sodium silicate.
70.	26.05.20	I've changed the way I'm working. Mornings my university work and afternoons for PhD research and other things. I made a two part stacking cup.
71.	27.05.20	We had a lovely doggie visitor, so I made a water bowl
72.	28.05.20	Today is the last clap for carers, a strange and controversial ritual which has developed over the lockdown.

73.	29.05.20	I am frantically reading theory module essays. I read a lovely one this morning about Rebecca Warren, so I made a tribute cup.
74.	30.05.20	Cabbage bowl. A bit Victorian in feel. Made using the cabbage from the seeds I planted on day four. The garden is looking spectacular.
75.	31.05.20	BLM
76.	01.06.20	Found object with decals. First day of the relaxing of lockdown restrictions. We are now allowed to mix with other families in our own gardens. I have been thinking about charity shops, drinking coffee with friends and together/apartness
77.	02.06.20	Exactly the same as yesterday
78.	03.06.20	Today it rained. I had left some pots outside overnight to catch the rain. I had no idea what might happen, but I now have a pot with no bottom because it's washed away.
79.	04.06.20	Two thrown pieces, one slumped inside the other, they're marked 'Public me' and 'private me'
80.	05.06.20	We had visitors for an appropriately distanced barbeque. I made a pot with six handles.
81.	06.06.20	I made H a cup of tea and took him two chocolate hobnobs. He said, 'Thanks Mam' like I'd just given him one of my kidneys. I made a teapot. It took AGES!
82.	07.06.20	A few weeks ago I made a cup with a dent for each death reported that day. There were 818 that day and 77 today. I made another with 77 dents and which is proportionately smaller.
83.	08.06.20	I walk often. Today I collected some twigs from the recent windy weather, and I'll embed them into today's cup.
84.	09.06.20	A porcelain slip cast goblet which I have cut partly in two. This is about my inability to say no. I was approached by someone. She asked me to make a chalice (she's a vicar) and I bumbled something about speaking after lockdown and then kicked myself all afternoon.
85.	10.06.20	The carpet man came. I made a carpet mug. I last made one of these before lockdown. That overlap in time is strange!
86.	11.06.20	Nothing much happening today.
87.	12.06.20	Toasties are ace. I threw a pot and put it in the toastie maker.

88.	13.06.20	The bike features again, but in a different manner.
89.	14.06.20	Extruded square coils with embossed words of the 'new normal'
90.	15.06.20	Partial unlocking and relaxation of restrictions. Padlocks and keys.

Appendix 13 The Birmingham Research Conference

The Birmingham Research conference

During the first year of the PhD I applied to an open call to attend a research conference at The University of Birmingham.

Proposal

Ceramics and the Domestic Ritual

#thisisresearch

Angela Tait, PhD Researcher in Ceramics, University of Sunderland

The premise of my research is that there is a rhythm of domestic obligations (you know the kind of things, washing up, school runs, taking the dog to the vet because it's eaten part of the tortoise's shell...) which inform, shape and ultimately influence my (and others') art practice.

Proposal

A ceramics workshop where the participants will think about their own making process and how it has been influenced by external factors. I will ask the participants to print their own story onto small clay tiles as a narrative, story or even list.

This process will be disrupted by a series of random interruptions. I may ask them to pair a basket full of socks or wrap some oddly shaped birthday presents.

Practicalities:

I would need some space. A few desks with room to work.

I can bring all the materials (we have a LOT of socks!) clay, stamps, packaging etc
10-15 willing participants would be optimum

I'd need some time either side to set up and pack away

An hour would be ideal

Outcomes

A series of stories, lists, words which consider the disruptive nature of the domestic

A video recording of the workshop for further analysis

An artwork made from the tiles. I'll take these back with me and they'll make a ceramic blanket, cushion or similar.

Angela Tait
Ceramics and the domestic ritual

1

What's the domestic ritual?



2

How it creeps into my work



3

Today's task – consider these questions

- Do you have domestic obligations which impact upon your work?

If so

- Do your domestic obligations influence your creative practice? How?
- Do constant distractions disrupt your 'flow'?
- Do you have a strategy for dealing with this? Time planning???

4

Record your thoughts on the clay

- Writing
- List
- Drawing
- Pattern
- Diary
- Relief
- Anything else!

Please put your initials on the back of your tile

FIGURE 169 POWERPOINT FOR THE BIRMINGHAM CONFERENCE WORKSHOP

Outcomes

Birmingham Research Conference

20 August 2018

Friday was the research conference at the Birmingham City University. I have to admit to being a little bit (very) nervous. They'd billed the conference as a safe place for unsafe things to happen and I'd taken them at their word and invented a workshop which I was totally unsure would 'work'.

Anyway, it did – kind of

The premise of the workshop was that the participants considered their own domestic and creative lives and how they interacted or disrupted one another. They were to translate these thoughts onto a wet clay tile in any format they chose. A drawing, a list, a pattern.... anything. Periodically I would introduce a disruption to the flow of work by imposing tasks which had to be completed. Pairing socks or wrapping presents.

This is a big ask! Thankfully the participants were researchers, academics and, most importantly, open minded creatives. They got it! Each and every one was totally generous in sharing their experiences.

Now I have the seemingly enormous task of figuring out what to do with all the information I have acquired. I am starting with a table of evidence. I am describing all the tiles made and trawling through the recording of the session to pick up the conversations I missed whilst I was facilitating. It's going to take all week.

I also need to make a document which I can refer to next time I roll out this workshop. Things to remember and better practices.

Next I will photograph all the pieces, dry them and fire. The original idea was that there would be a creative outcome (an artwork) from the workshop. A scarf made from ceramic tiles.... because everyone needs one of those....??

Some decisions need to be made about decoration. I am resistant to glazing. It is inelegant and distracting, however, aesthetically it will make the scarf into a better final piece. I'm going to have to figure this out.

Later

I have just endured the video and audio recording of the entire hour. This meant listening mostly to myself, and we all know how that feels. It was a very useful tool for remembering what each person said as the conversation developed. It was also useful to see the reactions to the disruptions I provided. A frustrated, 'Aghhhhh', from one participant as I made her put the clay down in order to wrap some oddly shaped Christmas gifts.

I have also photographed all the tiles from Friday. It's the first time I've looked properly since I left Birmingham. I've remembered other bits of conversation, all of which I'm frantically writing down as accurately as I can remember. I'm anticipating the preparation, overspill and analysis from this one short workshop to take a week. This has gone from being a short 'practice' into something utterly valuable and potentially beautiful.

I'm delighted!

Number	Name, if known	Description of what made	Additional information they were prepared to give	Gender
1.	SH		I tried to create a negative space because having kids is a pain in the arse (3 children) and they stop me from working – and they have helped to shape me into the person I am. Tried to capture the rhythm of my making process. Has a parenting co-pilot who reminds her when things have to be done.	F
2.	CW	Big scratched hole	The overwhelming idea that I am clawing to get out, the struggle to escape the mundane thoughts, to escape those tasks that I have no obligation to do but (can't read word)..... a guilt obligation. But I sometimes think I am just clawing to get away from me. However in the effort to get out, I destroyed it.	F
3.	P	Copied the order of the misplaced letters in the box onto his tile	During conversation we talked about cleaning. He uses cleaning as thinking space. This led to a long discussion about right/left brain activity and whether the mundane/repetitive right brain activities and attached somehow to the creative right brain activities.	m
4.	JR	Built a river and a dam as a metaphor for the stopping of	This is a little reflection of my experience of studying at home with a husband who has lots to do but fewer things than me.	

		the creative flow and also put on a tea cup and wrote 'cup of tea'		
5.	L	Made a tile where he bit both sides. Next he made the 'sudden desire' tile with the hole in the middle	A musician- We talked about him being hungry all the time and eating lots. I roared with laughter and he didn't elaborate!	

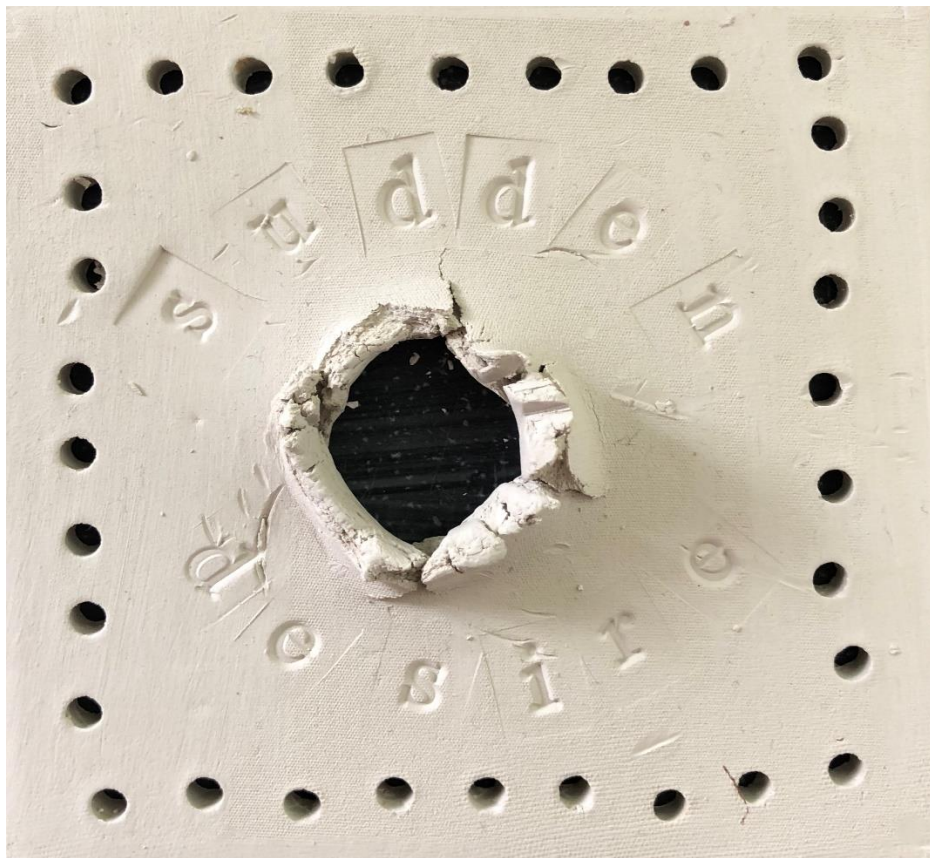


FIGURE 170 DRYING TILE BY L

SUDDEN DESIRE



FIGURE 171 DRYING TILE BY J

CUPS OF TEA

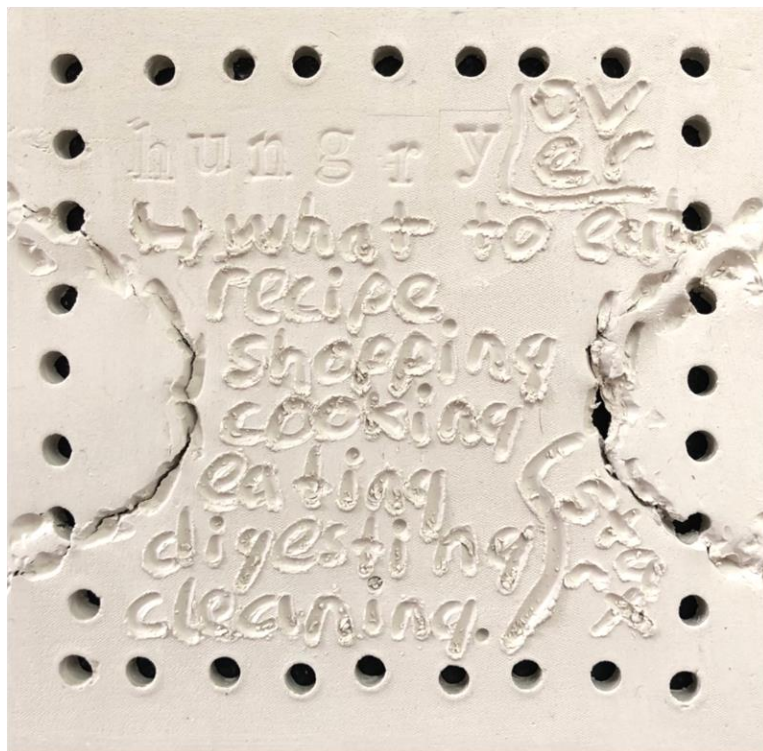


FIGURE 172 DRYING TILE

HUNGRY



FIGURE 173 FIRED TILES WITH MANGANESE WASH TO BRING OUT DETAILS

Things to remember for next time

1 hour workshop, perfect amount of time. Lots of prep in advance. Tiles took at least 3 hours over two days to make.

Set up and clear up easy enough. Very short PowerPoint presentation. Worked well on this occasion.

Participants all researchers, friendly and willing to give their input.

Made handouts not compulsory, got three filled in.

I think I should probably categorise the responses into (Maybe)

- Practical things which distract
- Emotional relationships with the domestic (frustration or using as thinking space)
- Others???

C refused to acknowledge domesticity.

'I don't know what to do/I can't be restricted by the square/I don't do housework' (C lives on a boat to get away from the standard domestic life). She refused to do tasks, 'I wouldn't do this at home so I'm not doing here'. Her strategy is to prioritise creative acts and not let domestic things get in the way.

The Birmingham Scarf

9th January 2019

This morning I reread the blog post from July when I'd just returned from Birmingham and had no idea how I was going to deal with the tiles from the workshop.

A massive six months later I have an outcome.

Towards the end of the summer I started to construct the fired pieces into a garment. As my knitting skills are what you might describe as competent (at best) I have always been drawn to making things in straight lines. Hence, many of my relatives and friends own handmade scarves which, whilst vibrant and often finished with decorative tassels and frills, are actually quite rudimentary in their construction.

The Birmingham scarf is the first creative artefact which constitutes qualitative information gathering. This pseudo functional garment holds the conversations, frustrations and thoughts of a group of practitioners who were willing to share their experiences of how their domestic obligations interact with their creative practice. Of course the next stage is analysis of the information. I currently have a stack of books up to my chin on the desk. Social research, qualitative evaluation, demystifying postgraduate research. Just finding out the strategy for analysing the information I have seems like an insurmountable task.

If I can take one lesson only from the whole of this first year of my PhD studies, it's that everything takes time and I MUST allow myself this. No short cuts or skimping. This goes against every force in my (somewhat inclined to the path of least resistance) body.

The scarf is a starting point. An idea which has the potential to become so many more. What if I make ceramic upholstery from the next workshop, or a cape, or a series of hats with ceramic bobbles? Ideas are self-perpetuating. I have one that leads to ten more. It's keeping focus and control which is rather more challenging.



FIGURE 174 THE BIRMINGHAM SCARF COMPLETED



FIGURE 175 THE BRIMINGHAM SCARF

IMAGE CREDIT IAN CLEGG

Appendix 14 Ethical Approval Letter



**University of
Sunderland**

Downloaded:
02/09
/2019
Approved:
01/08
/2019

Angela Tait
School of Art and
Design
Programme:
Research Degree

Dear Angela

PROJECT TITLE: Ceramics and the domestic ritual

APPLICATION: Reference Number 004724

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 01/08/2019 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 004724 (dated 17/07/2019).

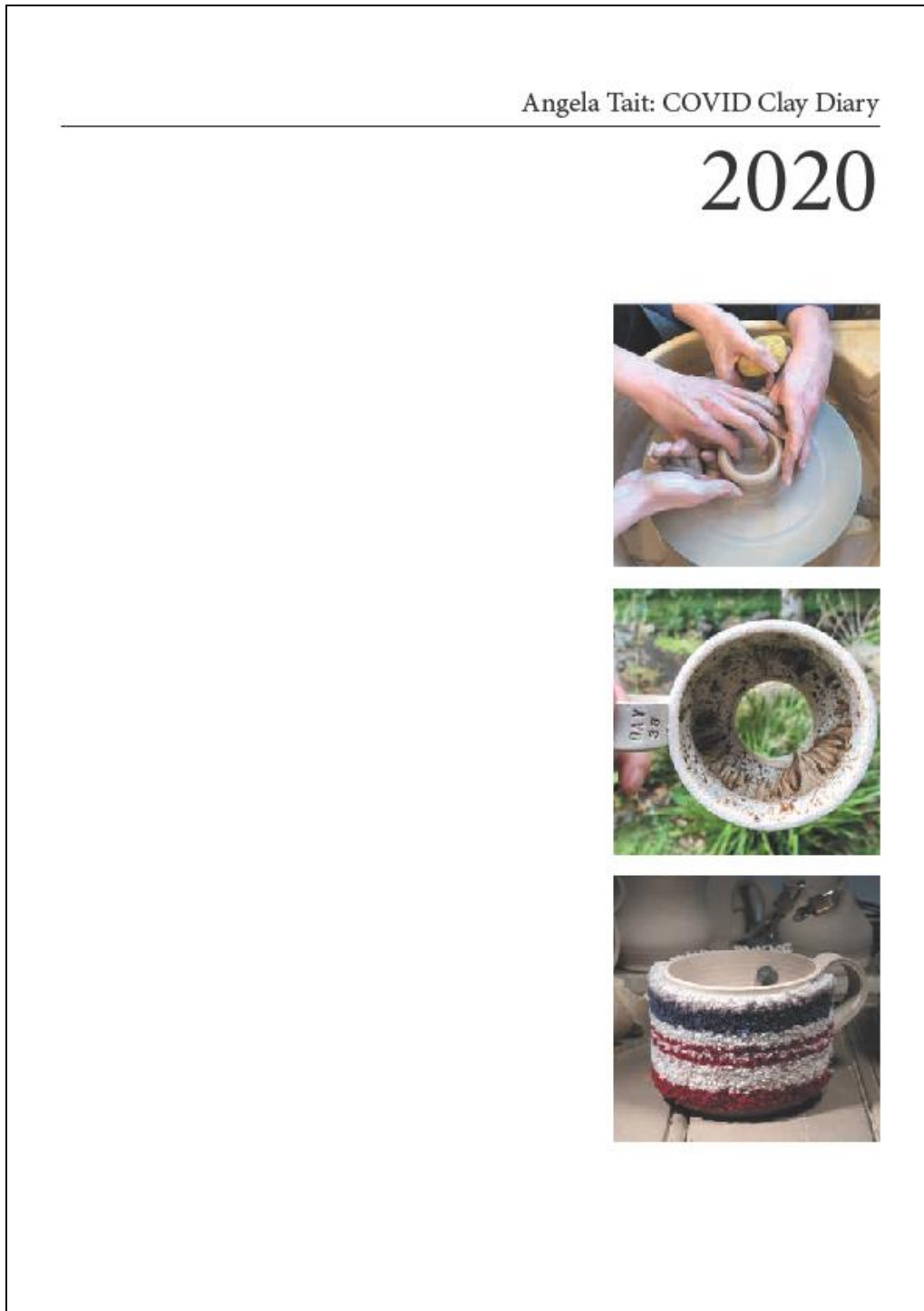
If during the course of the project you need to deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation please email ethics.review@sunderland.ac.uk

For more information please visit:

<https://www.sunderland.ac.uk/research/governance/researchethics/> Yours sincerely

Appendix 15 The COVID Clay Diary

Double-click on the image to open the publication PDF



Appendix 16 The International Ceramics Festival 2021

2nd – 4th July 2021

Smalls was scheduled to be performed at the ICF Aberystwyth in the summer of 2021. The festival was drastically scaled down because of the COVID pandemic and became a largely online event with just two artists taking part on site at the Aberystwyth Art Centre.

Smalls was scaled down to be accommodated as part of this hybrid festival. The 100+ pots were thrown in a single day inside the pottery studio whilst the installation grew outside in amongst the architecture of the building.

This performance was sponsored by PotClays



FIGURE 176 ANGELA TAIT, PERFORMING SMALLS AT THE INTERNATIONAL CERAMICS FESTIVAL 2021



FIGURE 177 ANGELA TAIT THROWING AS LIVE STREAMING IS TAKING PLACE AND LOCAL VISITORS ARE ALLOWED TO ATTEND THE FESTIVAL 2021

Periodically during the day there were local visitors to the festival and the live streaming was regular as the installation progressed.

During the day the Installation grows as the pots dry slightly, are pegged and ribbons are threaded through holes in the pots. Ribbon is restricted to a palette of reds referring to the original iteration of Smalls which took place three years before in the micro-residency at the University of Salford.

For economical and speed reasons the smalls are thrown off the hump and helped to dry a little by use of the microwave.



FIGURE 178 ANGELA TAIT THROWING OFF THE HUMP, ICF 2021



FIGURE 179 ANGELA TAIT BUILDING THE INSTALLATION 2021



**FIGURE 180 MOIRA VINCENTELLI - DIRECTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL CERAMICS FESTIVAL)
INTERVIEWS ANGELA TAIT ON THE LIVESTREAM**



FIGURE 181 PERFORMANCE IN PROGRESS WHILST BEING INTERVIEWED FOR THE LIVESTREAM

The resulting installation



FIGURE 182 SMALLS (2021) DETAIL



FIGURE 183 SMALLS (2021) DETAIL



FIGURE 184 SMALLS INSTALLATION (2021)



FIGURE 185 SMALLS INSTALLATION (DETAIL)



FIGURE 186 SMALLS (2021) INSTALLATION COMPLETE

Update, 24th November 2021

Currently the ICF are putting together the website for the limited festival that took place in 2021. This is not as yet available to view.



Ceramics Festival @ICFAberystwyth · Jul 3

...

Angela Tait has been busy setting up her installation 'Smalls' this morning with help from the public. Catch her on our Rewind - 30 Years of ICF live stream this afternoon. Thank you @potclays for supporting this performance at @aberystwytharts



↻ 2

♡ 6



FIGURE 187@ ICF ABERYSTWYTH TWITTER FEED

Appendix 17 Restating Clay – Online symposium with the Centre of Ceramics Art, York

July 2nd 2021



FIGURE 188 ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE RESTATING CLAY SYMPOSIUM

This special symposium was commissioned by the Centre of Ceramic Art at the York Art Gallery to discuss the use of ceramic art and performance during lockdown.

The COVID Clay diary was selected as an example of both the performative nature of the medium and as a response to the pandemic.

The Symposium featured Andrew Livingstone discussing his (distant) residency in Korea and Claire McLaughlin presenting her work mouth to mouth.



Ceramics Festival @ICFAberystwyth · Jun 23



Introducing our first speaker for CoCA 'Ceramics and Lockdown - Performance' on July 2nd: Angela Tait.

Angela will be discussing her COVID Clay diary made during lockdown which is currently on show at [@NGC_GlassCentre](#) until October 10th.



FIGURE 189 TWITTER FEED FOR @COCAYork

Presentation



Introduction

- Sculptor
- Researcher
- Ceramicist
- Educator

- Sometimes I have to do things like wash up or cook





The next day
the clay
diary was
born



The use of the vessel form

Day 13
The Most Boring Cup Ever



The Diary

The diary was initially personal, it was by me and about my experience.

But lots of the themes were universal.

It quickly started to become about the wider social, cultural and political events of the pandemic

Day 6

We all stop to watch the 4pm press conferences

The way we exercise

Day 12

I ran over a thrown vessel with my bike because the gyms were closed and the way I'd exercised had changed. This was both a personal and universal theme. People were out walking more than ever before because there was nowhere else to go.

*Before lockdown I didn't even know I owned a bike
#truefact*



Key Workers

Day 24

Rainbows are everywhere



The financial markets are in turmoil

Day 35

The price of oil went negative for the first time in history. This meant the oil companies had to pay their customers to take it



My world became very small

Day 54

Plenty of the cups ended up not resembling cups.

On Day 54 I threw a perfectly good cup complete with a handle and put it in the tumble dryer



I made pieces
about my
lecturing work

Day 73 – *Rebecca Warren*

Day 65 – *Pollocks to that*



By the end I
was struggling
for ideas

Day 87

Another perfectly serviceable
cup found its way into the
sandwich toaster



The beginning
and the end

Day 7 - Lockdown
Day 90 - This is not over

What happened to the clay diary next?

Artist Parviz Qadir was commissioned to collect creative responses to the pandemic

He asked me if he could include the clay diary, so Zach and I made a film using his drone to photograph the work

[Link](#)

ANGELA TAIT



Location:
Pennines



Exhibition

The clay diary is being shown in the National Glass Centre in Sunderland







Publication

There is a book in the form of an office diary

April 2020



20 Monday

Bank Holiday, UK

Day 34

It's my birthday. I'm usually really rubbish at birthdays but this one was quite nice. Wrapped in a flight map - because which house has no wrapping paper but a load of old flight maps?



21 Tuesday

Week 19: 18: 225 Ⓞ A.R. 11K. US

Day 35

Oil is negatively priced for the first time ever. The oil companies are paying for it to be taken off their hands.



22 Wednesday

Day 36

Bottomless emails - Answer ten receive twelve more.

What next?

- The diary is in the Glass Centre until October then it has no further plans.
- I have made other clay diaries since and am currently exploring ideas like this



Tomorrow

I'm working at the Arts Centre on another of my recent projects, 'Smalls'.

The performance will be broadcast live alongside the archive streaming





Update 24th November 2021

As yet the Centre of Ceramic Art are still putting together the webpage archive for this symposium and the recordings. These will be published in due course.

<https://www.centrefceramicart.org.uk/restating-clay-making-learning-communicating-collecting-contemporary-studio-ceramics/>

<https://www.internationalceramicsfestival.org/>

Appendix 18 Exhibiting the COVID Clay Diary at The National Glass Centre

In June 2021 the COVID Clay Diary was shown at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland. The exhibition was in the research space on the mezzanine level and ran until November 2021.



FIGURE 190 HANGING THE COVID CLAY DIARY AT THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE 2021

The diary was curated to make the most of the sculptural qualities of the work rather than as a linear or narrative (chronological) piece. It was accompanied by the two texts that are in the book. These served as 'bookends' to the work and were strategically placed at the start and end of the exhibition as the viewer would naturally encounter the work (i.e. reading from left to right).



FIGURE 191 THE COVID CLAY DIARY INSTALLATION AT THE GLASS CENTRE WITH THE OPENING TEXT ON VINYL



FIGURE 192 THE COVID CLAY DIARY AT THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE 2021



FIGURE 193 FIGURE 3 THE COVID CLAY DIARY AT THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE 2021



FIGURE 194 FIGURE 3 THE COVID CLAY DIARY AT THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE 2021



FIGURE 195 FIGURE 3 THE COVID CLAY DIARY AT THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE 2021



FIGURE 196 FIGURE 3 THE COVID CLAY DIARY AT THE NATIONAL GLASS CENTRE 2021

Appendix 19 Annual Progression of the Research

Feb 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencement of PhD Research • Research training – 1 week at the university of Sunderland
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studio practice – The making of several hundred artefacts (Appendix 1) • Investigation of corresponding literature culminating in a draft contextual framework • Development of the concept of the ‘Blovel’ and the writing of the first 18 texts in the Blovel • Presentation of the early research at the University of Sunderland Research Conference • Introduction to, and exploration of Autoethnography • ‘Test’ focus group exercise at the University of Birmingham research Conference (Appendix 13) •
Summary of 2018	<p>Studio Practice - is prolific but erratic. It tends to concentrate upon the idea of the vessel but shies away from the functional. Using the form and scale of the recognisable domestic vessel.</p> <p>Contextual Review - There is an incomplete contextual and literature review that identifies <i>place</i> and <i>time</i> as being fundamental factors that underpin the research.</p> <p>Methodology and Methods - The Blovel is established as an idea and the methodology and methods are laid down, although still in flux. The idea of autoethnography is formalised as appropriate to the research subject. The intention at this stage is to supplement the autoethnographic experience with case studies and focus groups to gain a wider data set.</p>

2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studio Practice – The making of several hundred artefacts responding to answer the research questions and in line with the burgeoning contextual understanding of the subjects (See Appendix One). • A further 27 Blovel texts • Research introduced at the PhD forum of the International Ceramics Festival in Aberystwyth • Mentoring in expanded writing by Laura Pinnington funded by the Contemporary Visual Arts Network North West (Appendix Six) • Two ‘test’ Interviews (Appendices Seven and Eight) • One ‘test’ focus Group (Appendix Nine) • Micro-Residency at the University of Salford (Appendix Two)
Summary of 2019	<p>Studio Practice - started to respond to the questions and the observations of domestic experience documented through the Blovel writing. Works made during the studio residency at the University of Salford help to consolidate ideas for the performance that is to follow (Smalls, Chapter Seven).</p> <p>Contextual understanding - The concept of the vessel as universally understandable object is explored and becomes a key factor in the research.</p> <p>The Blovel - The experimental writing in the Blovel becomes a substantial document and is extended beyond the diary type format of earlier into a more varied document containing poems, concrete poetry, postcards and other more expanded forms of writing. This is a result of the mentoring provided for by a small grant from CVAN North West.</p>

	<p>Methodology – Is in flux and is a messy and complex combination of studio practice, residencies in ‘other’ places’, case studies and collaborative work.</p>
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of the performance/installation Smalls with a ‘practice’ over Easter 2020 – during the first lockdown • 90+ days of making a vessel every day that becomes the COVID Clay Diary. A response to the first lockdown. • 20 more Blovel posts • Performance at the Window gallery in Salford (Appendix 4) • Work in Progress – An exhibition of all the work made in the first three years (appendix 5)
Summary of 2020	<p>The year is disrupted by the COVID Pandemic which is both positive and negative for the research.</p> <p>Studio Practice – The performance/installation Smalls has been tested in two places. The first in the home studio and the second in a public gallery at the University of Salford. The COVID Clay diary is made as a response to both the previous research and the pandemic. It is a series of vessels made each day during the first 90 days of lockdown.</p> <p>Contextual Understanding – The major development in understanding in 2020 is Rhythmanalysis and the expanded way in which creatives and makers have dealt with Lefebvre’s’ theory. This becomes the dominant theory that underpins the performance and which contextualises the Blovel as a methodological tool.</p> <p>The Blovel – This is a substantial document with underpinning theory and potential to become part of the thesis.</p>

	<p>Methodology – The case studies and focus groups, whilst informative and important in providing information to develop some of the works, have been dispensed with in favour of a wholly autoethnographic methodology.</p>
2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smalls is presented at the International Ceramics Festival • The COVID Clay Diary is shown at the National Glass Centre, Sunderland • The COVID Clay Diary book is published • The COVID Clay Diary is presented at Re-Starting Clay at the Centre for Ceramic Art in York • The Blovel is published • The thesis is constructed
Summary of 2021	<p>Practice – After delays and disruptions still being caused by the COVID pandemic, public outlets for the final outcomes are found. Smalls was performed at the International Ceramics Festival to a reduced audience whilst also being live streamed (Appendix 14). The COVID Clay Diary has its own show at the National Glass Centre in Sunderland from June to November 2021 (Appendix 16) and a paper about the diary is presented at Re-stating Clay (Appendix 15).</p> <p>The Blovel – Is formatted and published publicly (digitally on ISSUU) after the final texts are written in August 2021.</p> <p>The Thesis – Is drafted to include the finalised Methodology and Contextual Reviews. Research outcomes are evaluated against the questions and a rationale provided for the alternative form of thesis which includes excerpts from the Blovel.</p>