Souvenirs from the British Isles

Archiving, Curating, and Collecting in Contemporary Art Practice

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

My interdisciplinary practice-based research project utilises a theoretical framework of anthropology to explore concepts associated with economic and cultural appropriation in visual art. Through investigating the problematic history of artists appropriating ethnographic objects for use in their own work, the project considers how anthropology could be used to engage audiences in a more collaborative fashion.

This thesis also outlines the processes for producing a body of work using the museum strategies of archiving, collecting and curating. This includes aspects of documentation, interpretation, and dissemination through online and offline channels such as blogging and participatory arts.

The two main projects included in the thesis, *The Imaginary Museum* and *Souvenirs from the British Isles*, consider how audiences can be engaged through the artwork to produce their own interpretations.

The Imaginary Museum achieved this through the physical interaction of audiences collecting postcards. Through ascribing a value to the work with the inclusion of a donation box and only having postcards available within the timeframe of the exhibition, the audience began to consider the works as both limited edition artworks and souvenir of the exhibition.

Similarly, there was an element of ambiguity between the artwork and souvenir in the *Souvenirs from the British Isles* exhibition. Here the sculptures took the aesthetic of the souvenir but was presented in the style of museum artefacts which discouraged tactile engagement. This resulted in a more conceptual interaction, with audiences discussing potential interpretations of the work with each other.

Both of these works demonstrate a method of engaging with the museum format, which suggests a model for other artists working in and with collections. Through considering the museum framework as a contact zone, I also aim to suggest the possibility of a collaborative form of anthropology, which can express multiple responses and

interpretations of the work of art, whilst also addressing the more problematic aspects of cultural appropriation.

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Introduction

It was a summer's day in Italy when I first became interested in the aura[1] of the work of art. I was holidaying in Florence and decided to take the opportunity to visit the Uffizi Gallery. Unfortunately, I'd underestimated how long it would take to actually get into the museum, so after two hours of queuing, I was beginning to feel quite tired and fractious.
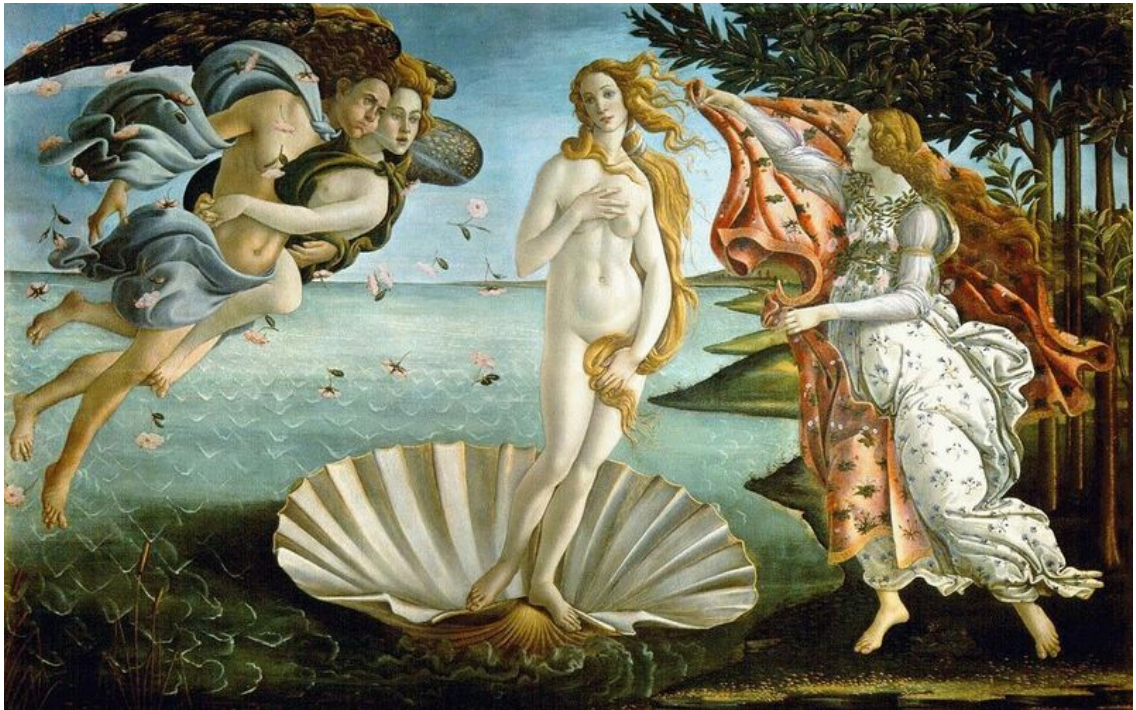
Fig. 1. Sandro Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*, Uffizi Gallery, Florence, Italy, 1482-1485.

On entering the museum, I began to ascend the winding staircase to the galleries above. At the top of the stairs I was greeted by an ornately decorated hallway, with doors leading off to the gallery spaces. The hallway was lined with portraits along the tops of the walls, and walking through the galleries there seemed to be an endless stream of gilt-framed paintings and religious triptychs, all of which were very beautiful. However, the tiredness from the waiting and walking had left me slightly less engaged than I might usually have been. It was at that point that I turned the corner into a new gallery space. There, taking up the majority of one wall of the gallery, was Botticelli's *Birth of Venus.*

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[1] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* translated by J. A. Underwood, (London: Penguin Books, 1936/2008), p.5. Here, Benjamin describes the 'aura' as *'the here and now of the work of art - its unique existence in the place where it is at this moment'.*

Despite the fact that I had rarely thought about this artwork, I was overawed by its sudden appearance. The reason I was able to recognise this work was due to the photographic reproductions that I had seen in art history books and postcards, as well as the countless cultural references in popular media. This familiarity with the work gave me a sense of engagement that had hitherto been lacking with the paintings in the other rooms, and encouraged me to spend more time with the work.

It was as a result of this experience that I began to consider how the work of art could produce this level of interest (and affect), and how its reproductions contribute to its meaning, and therefore its aura. Inherent in this thought was the idea of how audiences could be empowered to produce their own meanings, especially at a time when museums and galleries were thinking more about how they engage different publics.

This led me to explore how elements of appropriation could affect interpretations of the work of art. Through my research, I was interested in how the work of art could become its own interpretation, and how contemporary art could take lessons from previous eras when allegorical imagery was used as a way of communicating a shared vision to the audience.

Interpretation and appropriation

As with most pre-photographic museums, the Uffizi gallery had been built on a collection bequeathed by the Medicis, a ruling family of Florence. The Medicis had an interest in humanist literature, art, and poetry, and a banking legacy which allowed them to patronise artists and commission an extensive collection of Florentine Renaissance artworks.[2] Through the collection and promotion of artworks, the gallery collection at the Uffizi is therefore demonstrative of the ways that art history is created, and how particular artworks have the ability to remain in the public consciousness.

My interest in art history and collecting was consolidated by previous work in museum and gallery interpretation which I had undertaken as a practicing artist. I was particularly

[2] Peter Walsh, 'Rise and Fall of the Post-Photographic Museum: Technology and the Transformation of Art' in *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: A Critical Discourse*, ed. by Fiona Cameron and Sarah Kenderdine (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: MIT Press, 2010), pp.19-34 (pp. 23-24).

interested in applying these methods to my own art practice, and wanted to explore the possibility of producing an artwork that could be an interpretation of itself.

My initial thoughts around this idea of self-referential interpretation related to art objects that were made to be used in ritual, as these appeared to have a clear aesthetic and use value which made their meaning apparent to their users.

Art and artefact

The original title for my project, *Artist Books as Ritual Objects*, was based on the practice of artist books as a way of exploring how the work of art functioned and was interpreted by the audience. It was my belief that the tactile medium of the artist book would allow more opportunities for interaction and interpretation; a hypothesis arising from the previous projects that I had undertaken, which I discuss further in Chapter 1. However this original title was revised as my art practice moved away from exclusively producing artists' books into other mediums, and my research opened up more nuanced aspects of anthropology.

One of the reasons that I was interested in audience interpretations of artworks related to the problems that museums had in presenting and interpreting their collections to diverse audiences, particularly when these objects had been removed from their original cultural context. This issue was borne out in my initial research into the topic, which focused on the ways that artists responded to museum objects, in the form of interventions into collections.

These artist interventions highlighted that museum objects have often been misrepresented by the museum environment; their very modes of display presenting them as solely aesthetic, rather than as having any function or agency. I started to consider if there was a way to reconcile the objects with their surroundings, and if this would resonate with my aims to understand how ideas of 'ritual' could be applied to contemporary art in order to aid audience interpretation.

Due to the nature of the works I was addressing I also wanted to incorporate research into the work of art in a global context. This process quickly began to overlap with other

anthropological concerns, and so Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency*,[3] as a study of the anthropology of art, was a useful starting point in establishing an artistic methodology that I could apply to my research.

Gell distinguishes art objects in three ways: Firstly, that they are usually made to be seen; secondly, they are an index of social agency, ie. they are produced by someone; and lastly, they are technically or conceptually difficult or captivating.[4]

I wanted the objects that I produced to reveal their agency, either aesthetically or performatively, through creating an affective response in the audience, such as the one that I had felt when encountering the *Birth of Venus* painting. I was also interested in exploring these responses to assess whether the audience would react in the ways I had predicted. The ways in which the formal and aesthetic qualities of the object contributed to the agency of the work of art were also a factor in my assessment of how the object functioned.

The Wellcome Collection

The concept of understanding of the work of art through its social function was supported by my visit to the Wellcome Collection in London. I had previously heard a lot about the Wellcome Trust's programme of exhibitions that engage with scientific questions through contemporary art, and I was curious to see how that was applied in practice.

A key feature of the Wellcome Collection is a historical exhibition based on the nineteenth century collections of the founder of the Trust; anthropologist, Henry Wellcome. This introductory exhibition entitled *Henry Wellcome: Medicine Man* highlighted the links between science, religion, and magic as viewed through the art and artefacts collected from Wellcome's expeditions. Although it was a useful way of understanding the history of the field, the way that it was displayed in the manner of a Victorian Curiosity Cabinet made me feel uncomfortable.

This was due to a number of factors. Firstly, the objects were not attributed to particular makers but only framed within the context of the collector, Henry Wellcome. They were

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[3] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
[4] Robert Layton, 'Art and Agency: A Reassessment', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* 9 (2010), 447-463 (p. 448).

also grouped according to theme rather than chronologically, so it was unclear whether or not they represented the contemporary practice of the societies from which they were collected.

Fig. 2. *Henry Wellcome: Medicine Man*, Wellcome Collection, London, UK.

While I understood that this was a historicised collection of a particular collector, I felt that they produced a particularly exoticised and romantic view of the objects (and people) on display. Coupled with this, in the context of the Wellcome Collection as a whole, the *Medicine Man* exhibition appeared to present its contents in clear opposition to Western modernity and science.

However, I was also aware of the contemporary work that the Wellcome Trust collected by artists responding to the physical and social sciences, alongside temporary exhibitions and commissions. One such exhibition that I visited at the gallery was *SouZou: Ousider Art from Japan*. This exhibition presented the works of '46 self-taught artists living and working within social welfare facilities across Japan', and contained a range of work, including textiles, sculpture, drawing, ceramics, and painting.[5] Although the work drew on

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[5] Wellcome Collection, *Souzou: Outsider Art From Japan* (2013),
<https://wellcomecollection.org/exhibitions/souzou-outsider-art-japan> [accessed 21st February 2017].

the therapeutic benefits of art, the Japanese context in which it was produced valued it as equivalent to mainstream art and celebrated the work in exhibitions and collections, such as the Borderless Art Museum No-Ma.[6]

These aspects were also accentuated in the presentation of the work in London, using white cube conventions to highlight the art objects, as opposed to the biography of the maker. A film at the end of the exhibition showed the artists working in their studios and focused specifically on their processes and creative outcomes in a similar way to trained artists. Seeing this exhibition enabled me to consider the ways in which art was classified according to its different social contexts, and also influenced aspects of my later sculpture and working processes.

Other contemporary work which considered anthropological questions around individual and cultural identity was *Lesions in the Landscape* by Shona Illingworth. This multiscreen video installation was supported by a Wellcome Trust Arts Award, and considered how 'individual and collective memories influence our understanding of society' through studying the effects of amnesia.[7] Working with neuropsychologists, Illingworth considered the connections between one woman's memory loss and the effects of the evacuation of St Kilda on its inhabitants, both cases requiring elements of cultural reconstruction by others.[8] These exhibitions explored the wider context of Wellcome Trust in relation to art and anthropology.

Art in a global context

The more I considered the role of art in a global context, the more I realised that I was investigating two related but separate definitions of art. The first definition related to the aspect of art which is otherwise referred to as culture, and denotes the ways in which a society functions; and the second describes art as the production of objects of aesthetic

[6] Borderless Art Museum NO-MA, <http://www.no-ma.jp/english.html> [accessed 21st February 2017].
[7] FACT, *Shona Illingworth: Lesions in the Landscape* (2015), <http://www.fact.co.uk/projects/lesions-in-the-landscape.aspx> [accessed 21st February 2017].
[8] CGP London, *Shona Illingworth: Lesions in the Landscape* (2016), <http://cgplondon.org/lesions-in-the-landscape> [accessed 21st February 2017].

appreciation, which operate as separate from society.[9] This presented me with a challenging dichotomy.

In the first instance, my interests in gallery interpretation had suggested a clear research question around the impact and value of appropriation to contemporary art. I felt that producing a common language through the use of appropriation and reproduction could address some of the problems of people engaging with art (as with my previous experiences at the Uffizi). The appropriation of works of art could also serve as a critique of Modernity, with its models of authorship and ownership, as well creating and making visible networks of production and dissemination. Through this process I would also be able to address questions about museology and the ways that art history is made.

On the other hand, due to the subject matter I was dealing with, there was also the issue of cultural appropriation, which had been shown to be fraught with difficulties rooted in the power relationships between makers, collectors, and museums:

> The idea of cultural appropriation signifies] not only the taking up of something and making it one's own but also the ability to do so. People have always shared ideas and borrowed from one another, but appropriation is entirely different from borrowing or sharing because it involves the taking up and commodification of aesthetic, cultural, and, more recently, spiritual forms of a society.[10]

Equally, although I felt that using an anthropological framework to interpret artworks was the most appropriate strategy, I found that there were concerns about artists using ethnographic methods in their work. In particular, the role of the researcher and their impact on their subjects is embedded in an anthropologist's training, but this training is not readily available to, nor necessarily undertaken, by artists. Therefore, my work would need to consider the ethical implications of working with cultural artefacts.

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[9] Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins, 'The Anthropology of Art: A Reflection on its History and Contemporary Practice' in *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader,* ed. by Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 1-32 (p.2).
[10] Deborah Root, *Cannibal Culture: Art, Appropriation and the Commodification of Difference,* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), p. 70.

Using anthropology in my work

Despite the problematic nature of using anthropology in relation to my work, I felt that exploring the existing research into how anthropologists had addressed issues of working with different cultures would deliver answers to my questions around the ethics of appropriation.

Studies of globally comparative art histories and practices which attempt to circumvent previous problems with comparatively classifying and evaluating art objects are already inherently anthropological in nature. For example, there are studies that evaluate the agency of the object in relation to its artistic status in order to attempt to place the object back in the context of a relational network, exemplified by Gell's *Art and Agency*.

Similarly, Aby Warburg's art historical project of *KulturWissenSchaft*, which incorporated his image research *The Mnemosyne Atlas* attempted to explore the ways in which images perpetuate throughout societies, and the ways that they changed, whilst also producing allegorical associations with their previous incarnations.[11]

The concept of the work of art existing in a network of activity made me realise that I would need to make the invisible networks of creation, appropriation, interpretation, and dissemination inherent within my artwork. This reaffirmed my plans for the work to use anthropology as a theoretical framework.

The study of the relationship of art to anthropology is a broad field. Studies on art and anthropology have included artists working with or as anthropologists. They have also included anthropologists using artistic methods as attempts to represent their findings in more holistic ways.[12] Therefore, in order to maintain focus within the research project, I have concentrated predominantly on the use of ethnographic methods and concepts within the production and interpretation of my own practice.

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[11] Ernst H. Gombrich, 'Warburg Centenary Lecture', in *Art History as Cultural History: Warburg's projects*, ed. by Richard Woodfield (London, UK and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 33-54 (p. 41).
[12] Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, 'Between art and anthropology', in *Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice,* ed. by Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010), pp. 1-22 (pp. 16-17).

Key theorists who have investigated the relationship between visual art and anthropology include Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright,[13] and Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins.[14] The publications of Schneider and Wright focus specifically on the intersections between art and anthropology as a way of revealing the 'ensemble of heterogeneous discourses that [...] have much common ground' between the disciplines.[15] One of their aims was to investigate how aesthetic and formal qualities of visual art could contribute to new methodologies in anthropological work.[16] This was an aspect which, while interesting, fell outside of the purview of my research.

However, they also referenced both Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*[17] and Alfred Gell's *Art and Agency* as ways of understanding how the work of art operates, although both of these examples were less concerned with the aesthetic qualities of the work than the relational networks they the work enacts.[18] Despite this broad focus, Schneider and Wright's work enabled me to consider the ethical questions and considerations of working with and through anthropology. As Lippard describes it in Schneider and Wright's edited collection, to create an understanding of 'who exploits whom for what and why'.[19]

Morphy and Perkins also traced the development of the anthropology of art to determine the characteristics of the work of art as a global definition, citing '[t]he making of collections, the accumulation of display goods, [and] the integration of aesthetics within value creation processes', as overlapping features of art production across societies.[20]

The relationship between art and anthropology

The relationship between art and anthropology developed through the ethnographic object collections and cabinets of curiosity of the nineteenth century. However, in the

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[13] See *Contemporary Art and Anthropology (2006) and Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice* (2010).
[14] See Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins (eds.),*The Anthropology of Art: A Reader* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).
[15] Schneider and Wright, 'Between art and anthropology', p. 1.
[16] Ibid., p. 3.
[17] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les Presses Du Réel, 2002).
[18] Schneider and Wright, 'Between art and anthropology', p. 7.
[19] Lucy Lippard, 'Further Afield', in *Between Art and Anthropology: Contemporary Ethnographic Practice,* ed. by Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2010), pp. 23-34 (p. 24).
[20] Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins, 'The Anthropology of Art: A Reflection on its History and Contemporary Practice' in *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader,* ed. by Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 1-32 (p. 3).

early twentieth century the disciplines began to diverge due to the belief of anthropologists that 'the study of material culture was too closely associated with the more simplistic aspects of evolutionary theory and not central to the shifting concerns of the discipline'.[21] These problems were reiterated by the Modernists' use of African and Oceanic art as inspiration for their own artwork.[22]

This separation continued until the 1960s, whereupon anthropology renewed its interest in art due to the a new focus on symbolism and myth, and the growth of visual anthropology.[23] Morphy and Perkins highlighted the increasing focus on relational networks and exchange, detailed in the work of Gell and Schneider and Wright. They describe how from the 1980s onwards '[m]aterial culture objects were no longer regarded as passive [but] began to be seen as integral to the processes of reproducing social relations and of developing affective relations with the world'.[24]

In addition to this, Morphy and Perkins were interested in defining art in aesthetic terms, as objects 'that are used for representational or presentational purposes', and incorporating these aesthetic elements into how the work of art functioned.[25]

This combination of relational and aesthetic elements of the work of art was something that I wanted to incorporate into my own work. However, I was still concerned about my use of cultural artefacts due to the arguments against the appropriation of material culture by previous generations of artists and anthropologists.

Neomedievalism

It was then that I discovered the concept of Neomedievalism. I was introduced to this through a talk by Professor Neil Mulholland who used these ideas as the context for his own work with the Confraternity of Neoflagellants:

> Neomedievalisms are cultural practices that breathe a bouquet of premoderns as permanent rehearsals of coming events. Where medievalists may be prone to police the post-medieval weald for 'inauthentic' medievalisms, neomedievalists

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[21] Morphy and Perkins, p. 6.
[22] Colin Rhodes, *Primitivism and Modern Art* (London, UK: Thames and Hudson, 1994), p. 17.
[23] Morphy and Perkins, p. 9.
[24] Ibid., p. 10.
[25] Ibid., p. 12.

embrace the articulation and mobilisation of metahistorical 'anachronisms'. To the medievalist, medievalisms provide powerful indexes that reveal how post-medieval societies have variously imagined 'little middle ages' to suit modern agendas. To the neomedievalist, medievalisms are theory-fictions that facilitate ludic speculation on non-modern futurities.[26]

These concepts played an important part in the evolution of my practice through the potential for creative reappropriations of historical practice to resolve the inherent problems around how art was understood globally. In particular, I was interested in merging the separations between art, religion, and early science in order to enable greater possibilities for cross-cultural comparison between artistic methodologies.

These investigations into art, religion and early science began with research into alchemical symbolism and apotropaic devices in order to produce objects that were suggestive of artefacts. These included an alchemical artists' book, a video of a scroll that was 'performed' by pulling it out of one's mouth, and a print based on a tasseography design, all of which are discussed in Chapter 1, alongside other methods of approaching my research questions.

These works were all well received by their audiences and generated a lot of discussion. I felt that they were successful, in that they engaged with the subject matter and audience in a way that I had predicted. However, these appeared to be too didactic in their presentation, as people could readily understand the intentions of the work. I also became increasingly uncomfortable with equating a pre-modern era with non-Western forms of creativity. Despite this I felt that these experiments were beneficial in helping me to articulate how works of art could engage people in different ways.

Performance and participation

The concepts of audience network and engagement was becoming a key part of my study. In my aims of creating self-referential work, I needed to explore the idea of performance in my work, in addition to, or perhaps as part of, the social function of the work of art.

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[26] Norman Hogg and Neil Mulholland, *The Confraternity of Neoflagellants,* <http://confraternityofneoflagellants.org.uk> [accessed 17 September 2016].

The next step was to explore how the audience could be encouraged to 'perform' the work to some degree. Despite this performativity, it was also imperative that the objects would be ones that I produced, rather than relying on audiences to create the work. In this way, I felt that this would differentiate my work from other relational practices where the focus was primarily on the processes of audience participation, rather than the art object itself.

The relational nature of the museum was also a topic of interest, in particular the idea of the museum as a 'dead space', so described because the art could no longer be performed in the way that it was originally intended when it was created. Instead I was interested in exploring the idea that the art object was already deactivated through its fixity. It was no longer subject to the changes and developments of its creation. I had set out to challenge the fixed notion of the art object, but I was still very attached to the idea of making things. I wondered then how I could satisfy these two requirements, where the work could be both defined and mutable at the same time. In this way, I felt that the museum could offer a space where objects could be reinvigorated through networks of association. I contextualise my practice in relation to these networks through an investigation of the history of artist interventions in museums in Chapter 2.

This is followed in Chapter 3 with the first of my projects, *The Imaginary Museum*, which considers notions of museology and relationality through the production of a postcard installation. This installation was inspired by a paper given at a conference at the Henry Moore Institute in November 2013. The title of the conference was *Imaginary Exhibitions* and featured exhibitions and projects which ranged 'from the utopian to the tentative, the immaterial to the highly materialised, through to those hampered by logistics or inscribed with impossibility from their inception'.[27] It was here that I first encountered the work of André Malraux, through the presentation *Le Musée Imaginaire: Between Material Object and its Virtual Representation* by Magdalena Wroblewska.

I had already been considering producing museum artefacts in my work, but the discovery of Malraux enabled me to conceive of different possibilities of the museum, including virtual or image museums. I created a brief for artists to produce images that

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[27] Henry Moore Institute, *Imaginary Exhibitions* conference, 6-7 November 2013 <https://www.henry-moore.org/hmi/events/past-events/2013/imaginary-exhibitions> [accessed 17 September 2016].

were representative of the museum or archive, which I then produced as postcards to be collected by the audience. This collection of images invoked my previous interest in Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, as well as the potential to explore the relational networks between myself as curator, the featured artists, and audience collectors.[28]

My project *The Imaginary Museum* also utilised ideas from Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*, as referenced previously by Schneider and Wright. Relational Aesthetics describes a particular trend from the 1990s of artists producing work in collaboration with their audiences.

Either existing as a participatory exercise or an instructional work, this form of creative practice attempted to question the idea of the artist's individual genius, in favour of a more socially-engaged way of working. Echoing earlier versions of participation and collaborations in art such as the Fluxus happenings, and Joseph Beuys practice of social sculpture, these ideas reflected my interest in exploring the multiple agencies within the artwork, artists, and audiences.

The *Imaginary Museum* project was investigated through the production of four separate but related exhibitions, exploring the relationship between the photograph and the museum, the image and the object, the real and the virtual, and the postcard and monument. The postcard format supported the conceptual elements of the work through the production of souvenir like objects, which was a thread I picked up in the *Monuments and Landmarks* iteration of the project. This version was produced as part of the Heritage Show and Tell event at Leeds City Museum, but it was also the focus of a paper on art and tourism which I presented at *The Excursionist* symposium in Portland, Dorset.

These experiences led me to focus on the production of souvenirs as a kind of collaborative ethnography of a place, which describe further in Chapter 4. To continue the auto-ethnographic nature of my research project, I decided to produce a series souvenir-like sculptures, representing different cities in England. Through the *Souvenirs from the British Isles* project, I felt that I had found a potential to explore collecting without cultural appropriation. I discuss this in further detail in Chapter 4, where I also explore the

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[28] Ernst H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography,* (London, UK: Phaidon Press, 1986), p. 283.

history of the souvenir and how this has drawn together ideas explored throughout the research project.

In the following chapter, I discuss the methods I employed to undertake the PhD. This also includes an explanation of some of the practical approaches to my studio work as well as my use of online technologies to disseminate my writing and studio practice.

Chapter 1: What is Practice? Systematic Approaches to Artistic Research

In this chapter I explore the various methods that I have undertaken in attempting to engage with my research questions. As many of the methods used are bound up with my practice and the related theory, I also address some of the main topics and activities that have contributed to my study.

In the first instance I explain my choice of an interdisciplinary approach. I then define my use of anthropology as a theoretical framework. Practice-based research engages with the notion of tacit knowledge, therefore, I also describe how these ideas have permeated through both my writing and studio practice.

I have separated my practice into two sections, one which discusses my writing and the other, my studio work. The writing section explains how I approached the task of collecting and documenting information relating to the disciplines of art and anthropology. This includes my use of technology to manage the research project, and to disseminate my findings.

The studio practice segment discusses how I produced my artwork in relation to the writing aspect of my research, and to my existing body of work. Although the practice-based PhD is a discrete project, there was some necessary overlap in my practice which I brought to bear in the development of my work. In particular, this is demonstrated by my use of curating as a method of engaging audiences. Therefore, I have included a brief description of some of my previous projects as a way to give historical context to the project. I have also explored my use of collecting in relation to the work of both Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin.

Types of artistic research

There are many ways that one can approach a study in artistic research. These approaches include investigating the artwork through external methodologies, translating a subject through an artistic medium, and creating artworks as research products. Frayling (1993) separates these forms of research into three categories: research into

art, research through art, and research as art, respectively.[29] My practice-based research project incorporates elements of all three categories, which has consequently widened my understanding and application of practice significantly.

Undertaking a practice-based PhD has required the implementation of a wide range of methods and ideas across a multitude of disciplines. These include the production of artists' books, postcards, drawing, sculpture, and online writing. All of these have supported the ongoing development of my study in responding to my research questions. This multimodal approach has also resulted in an organic evolution of the original ideas, often requiring me to reassess my strategies and assumptions, before applying these new findings to my practice.

As well as the studio work and exhibiting involved in contemporary art practice, my methods for producing and disseminating work have also expanded to include writing articles, curating, and presenting at conferences. Coupled with this, the theoretical elements of the research project have required me to gain a grounding in the art historical and anthropological constructs that were relevant to my research questions. This allowed me to contextualise my practice within debates around the anthropology of art, and in relation to the work of other artists working in similar fields.

Interdisciplinarity

Addressing a range of topics during the course of my research resulted an interdisciplinary approach. Interdisciplinarity is defined as a process of integration 'by which ideas, data and information, methods, tools, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines are synthesized, connected or blended'.[30] However, interdisciplinarity in academia can be deemed 'risky'[31] due to the timescales required to understand the historical backgrounds of two or more fields of study. Even Hal Foster, who by his own

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[29] G. James Daichendt, *Artist Scholar: Reflections on Writing and Research,* (Bristol, UK and Chicago: Intellect Ltd, 2011), p. 54.

[30] Allen F. Repko, *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2011), p. 4.

[31] Claire Shaw, *Research that doesn't belong to single subject area is deemed 'too risky'* (The Guardian, Higher Education Network Blog, 21st November 2013) <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/blog/2013/nov/21/interdisciplinary-research-ref-submission-university> [accessed 17 September 2016].

admission remains committed to interdisciplinarity in art practice, suggests that there are problems with this approach:

> Today so much work that purports to be interdisciplinary seems to be non-disciplinary to me. To be interdisciplinary you need to be disciplinary first - to be grounded in one discipline, preferably two, to know the historicity of these discourses before you test them against each other […] Art needs structure, it needs constraint - enough resistance to articulate complicated thoughts and feelings.[32]

Despite its detractors, there has been a steady shift towards valuing this type of research as a way of developing new creative solutions and addressing issues which cross-disciplinary boundaries.[33] This is also due to an increased awareness of the arbitrary nature of how these boundaries are defined. The nature of these boundaries is discussed by scholar Bruno Latour where he describes how topics which are separated by discipline are, by their very nature, intertwined:

> All of culture and all of nature get churned up again every day. Yet no one seems to find this troubling. Headings like Economy, Politics, Science, Books, Culture, Religion and Local Events remain in place as if there were nothing odd going on. The smallest AIDS virus takes you from sex to the unconscious, then to Africa, tissue cultures, DNA and San Francisco, but the analysts, thinkers, journalists and decision-makers will slice the delicate network traced by the virus for you into tidy compartments where you will find only science, only economy, only social phenomena, only local news, only sentiment, only sex.[34]

Latour continues by explaining the ways in which he and his colleagues have spanned these disciplines through the use of the network as 'the Ariadne's thread of these interwoven stories'.[35]

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[32] Hal Foster, 'Trauma Studies and the Interdisciplinary:An Overview' in *De-, Dis-, Ex-, Vol. 2: The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity* ed by. Alex Coles and Alexia Defert, (London, UK: Black Dog Publishing, 1998), p. 162.
[33] Moti Nissani, 'Ten Cheers for Interdisciplinarity: The Case for Interdisciplinary Knowledge and Research', *The Social Science Journal*, 34 (1997), 201-216 (p. 204).
[34] Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 2.
[35] Ibid., p. 3.

In a similar way, it has been my intention to explore my research questions using my art practice as a method of translation. This has resulted in a narrative that travels between such subjects as the history of science, museum collections, Post-internet art, the gift economy, and travel and tourism, to name a few. Some of these explorations have yielded interesting results, whereas others were rendered peripheral through the evolution of my research. However, all these approaches have contributed to my final studio work, and have provided a rich archive which I will be able to draw on for years to come.

Even though the reasons detailed above supported my use of an interdisciplinary approach, I also realised how important it was to have a thorough and specific understanding of my field of interest. To this end, it was important to consider how I focused my study. These considerations prompted me to concentrate on the shared concerns of art and anthropology, as opposed to their wider and more general histories.

Theoretical framework of anthropology

My research was informed by a theoretical framework of anthropology, as a method of producing writing and art objects in general, as well as an object of study in itself. My choice of anthropology as an analytical method was also determined by the fact that I view my art practice as inherently anthropological.

The consideration of my art practice as anthropological relates, in part, to Hal Foster's description of the shared concerns of art and anthropology:

> First, anthropology is prized as the science of alterity [...] Second, it is the discipline that takes culture as its object, and it is this expanded field of reference that postmodernist art and criticism have long sought to make their own. Third, ethnography is considered contextual, the rote demand for which contemporary artists share with many other practitioners today, some of whom aspire to fieldwork in the everyday. Fourth, anthropology is thought to arbitrate the interdisciplinary, another rote value in contemporary art and theory. Finally, fifth, it is the self-critique of anthropology that renders it so attractive, for this critical

ethnography invites a reflexivity at the center even as it preserves a romanticism of the margins.[36]

Although Foster uses this description to challenge the use of anthropology by artists, his work enabled me to evaluate how I apply these anthropological theories in my own practice.

My theoretical framework of anthropology also draws on Alfred Gell's theories in understanding the function of the work of art in a global context. Gell's seminal text, *Art and Agency*, aimed to create an anthropology of art that considered artworks, not primarily as aesthetic objects, but as things that can 'act'.[37] His anthropological theory was developed to apply across the art production of all societies, rather than just the artworks studied under the purview of anthropology. As Gell states: 'There is no sense in developing one 'theory of art' for our own art, and another, distinctly different theory, for the art of those cultures who happened, once upon a time, to fall under the sway of colonialism'.[38]

In introducing his theory, Gell cited other attempts to rationalise aesthetic systems such as 'indigenous aesthetics', but dismissed them as attempting to assimilate non-Western art objects into Western aesthetic categories, rather than considering their own systems of production and distribution.[39] Equally, Gell's theory eschewed other interpretations of art objects, such as Howard Morphy's proposition of 'a dualistic definition [where] art objects are those having semantic and/or aesthetic properties that are used for presentational or representational purposes', in favour of 'an emphasis on agency, intention, causation, result, and transformation'.[40]

Through trying to understand the artwork within the context of its own production and reception (otherwise referred to as the social-relational matrix), Gell attempted to navigate away from the idea of any intrinsic nature of the art object.[41]

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[36] Hal Foster, 'The Artist as Ethnographer' in *The Traffic in Culture: Refiguring Art and Anthropology,* ed. by George E. Marcus and Fred R. Myers (Berkeley, CA and London, UK: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 302-309 (p. 305).
[37] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 6.
[38] Ibid., p. 1.
[39] Ibid., p. 3.
[40] Ibid., pp. 5-6.
[41] Ibid., p. 7.

Although Gell's focus rests on the agency of the object, he does concede that there is a place for aesthetics where it 'illuminate[s] the specific objective characteristics of the art object as an object, rather than as a vehicle for extraneous social and symbolic messages'.[42] It is this idea of the form of the work supporting its function that particularly interests me. This concept means that idea the artwork cannot be separated from the object as a whole, and this, in turn, can also be used in contemporary art, to engage audiences in questioning the way that objects are viewed or interpreted.

The idea of how formal elements, including display methods, can support reinterpretations of objects came to my attention through research into contemporary artists working with ethnographic collections in museums. Here, artists such as Fred Wilson, James Luna, and Amalia Mesa-Bains, explored the collection and categorisation of material culture and how these displays lent particular interpretations to the objects and their original contexts. It was these examples that influenced my interest in the processes of archiving, curating, and collecting in contemporary art practice, and led to my focus on reappropriating museological techniques in my studio work.

Tacit knowledge

Another important part of my study is the concept of 'tacit knowledge'. Tacit knowledge describes the process of thinking through doing.[43] Rather than beginning a project with a pre-defined outcome or process in mind, tacit knowledge relies on setting specific boundaries within which an artist can operate freely. Without the limitations of a desired outcome, the project is able to evolve in line within these boundaries.

Emma Cocker outlines potential tactics for developing tacit knowledge in art practice through 'not knowing', where '[n]ot knowing is an active space within practice, wherein an artist hopes for an encounter with something new or unfamiliar, unrecognisable or unknown'.[44]

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[42] Alfred Gell, 'The Technology of Enchantment and the Enchantment of Technology' in *Anthropology, Art, and Aesthetics*, ed. by Jeremy Coote and Anthony Shelton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) pp. 40-63 (p. 43).

[43] Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum, 'Preface' in *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think*, ed. by Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum (London UK: Black Dog Publishing, 2013), p. 7 (p. 7).

[44] Emma Cocker, 'Tactics for Not Knowing: Preparing for the Unexpected' in *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think*, ed. by Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum (London UK: Black Dog Publishing, 2013), pp. 126-135 (p. 127).

Practical frameworks for producing tacit knowledge can be created by following particular constraints or rules. These rules may be as simple as only using a particular medium or studying a specific topic, place, or timeframe. Through absolving oneself of responsibility or agency for these aspects of decision making, the artist creates a space for experimentation within the aforementioned boundaries.[45] In this way, the constraints and intended learning outcomes of the practice-based PhD provided a suitable framework and timescale for my artistic research.

Writing as practice

The structure that I developed for my research primarily involved the breaking down of the PhD project into weekly reports. This enabled me to document the practical and theoretical elements of the research I was engaged in, and establish a pattern which allowed me to experiment within this self-imposed regime.

This practical framework of documenting my research online emerged due to the often difficult nature of producing practice-based research within the boundaries of academic study. Some of these difficulties are outlined in *Artists with PhDs*, edited by James Elkins. Here, Mick Wilson poses a series of questions related to the difficulty in assessing a practice-based PhD:

> Should the artwork be assessed in relation to contemporary art practice or be viewed as a thesis in images? Does the theoretical or intellectual investigation take place in relation to practice or through the accompanying text? Does the artwork, like academic research, put forward a hypothesis and demonstrate a mastery of a canon or should the emphasis be placed on technical ability, and if so, how is technical ability judged?[46]

These questions highlight the difficulties situating the practice-based PhD within the broader context of the history of the PhD and of research in general. In addition to this, Elkins believes that the practice-based PhD would benefit more from an understanding

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[45] Ibid., p. 129.
[46] Mick Wilson, 'Four Theses Attempting to Revise the Terms of a Debate' in *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art,* ed. by James Elkins (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2009) pp. 57-71 (p. 67).

of artistic practice 'that does not need to rely on notions of research or the production of new knowledge'.[47]

The questions posed by Wilson show how artistic research can be considered problematic within university structures, as the practice of established and rigorous methods of documenting research based on theoretical assumptions does not necessarily support the more experimental and emergent methods of artistic practice. This issue is further conflated by the presumed division between practice and theory. This division is defined by the opposing terms of materialist and idealist, where the materialist position suggests that practice determines knowledge, and the idealist position asserts that practice is only derived through theoretical contemplation.[48]

In attempting to address this division, I have principally focused on the question 'What is Practice?' in the title of this chapter. This question recalls the title of the essay by Louis Althusser in *Initiation à la Philosophie pour les Non-Philosophes (Philosophy for Non-Philosophers).*

In Althusser's essay, he states that practice 'indicates an active relationship with the real', as opposed to a theoretical one. Thus, practice can initially be thought of in opposition to theory. However, this idea raises the issue of how practice is articulated in the real world:

> In the most elementary practice (that of the roadworker who digs ditches), there are some ideas regarding the way of proceeding, the plan to follow, the tools to use, and all his 'ideas' only exist in language—even if the human beings who use this language don't know that it is already theory. And in the most elevated theory, that of the most abstract mathematics, there is always practice—not only the labor of the mathematician on his or her problems but the inscription of his or her problems in mathematical symbols with chalk on the blackboard, even if the mathematician doesn't know that this symbolization is a practice.[49]

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[47] James Elkins, 'Introduction', in *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art,* ed. by James Elkins (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing, 2009), p. xii.
[48] Louis Althusser, 'Qu'est-ce que la pratique?' in *Initiation à la philosophie pour les non-philosophes,* Trans. by Ted Stolze (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2014) <https://www.scribd.com/document/218674538/Althusser-Que-es-una-practica> [accessed 17 September 2016] pp. 163-74.
[49] Ibid.

Practice is preceded by activity, suggesting an individual agent or author. However, the nature of practice is also social. This implies that, despite the individuality of the practitioner, any practice uses 'certain socially recognized procedures, inherited from a collective past, to a definite social demand'. This suggests a theoretical and historical context for practice to operate within. In this way, Althusser combines the materialist and idealist positions to determine practice as 'a social process placing agents in direct active contact with the real and producing results of social usefulness'.[50]

This 'social practice' which incorporates and produces theoretical knowledge is exemplified within the self-reflexive approach of documenting my activities online, throughout the duration of the PhD.

Blogging as method

My research blog is comprised of an online archive of weekly posts which captured my activities throughout the research project period.[51] This included writing about my thoughts, feelings, the books I read, and the work I made, as well as the external exhibitions and conferences in which I was participating.

When I began the PhD project, my blog posts were limited to a maximum of 700 words due to restrictions on my choice of platform. These constraints created an attainable and systematic approach to recording my work, which gave me scope to explore the possibilities of the blogging medium and build a chronological record of my activities and thought processes. But from the very beginning the blog was much more than this; it was, in itself, an integral part of my practice.

Throughout my research project I stressed an equivalence between writing and art making. In this way, the process of documenting my research through writing online was as important to my practice as the physical making of images and objects. Documenting my PhD journey through the research blog allowed me to reflect regularly on the project that I was undertaking, and provided a catalyst for my creative processes.

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[50] Ibid.
[51] Louise Atkinson, *Practice as Research (2012-2016)*, <https://www.a-n.co.uk/blogs/practice-as-research> [accessed 24 September 2016].
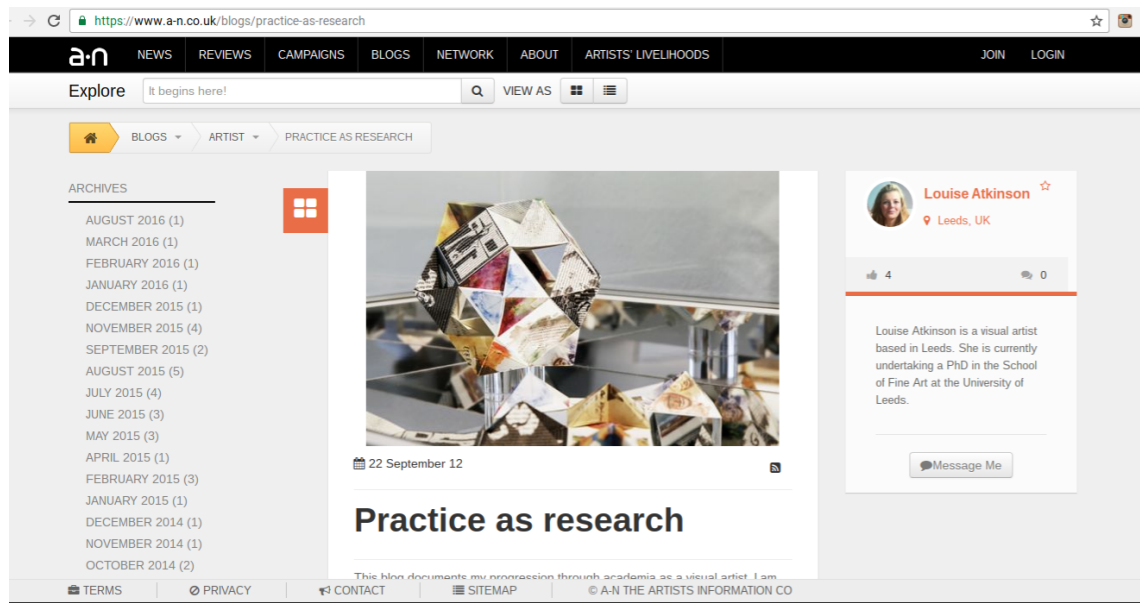
Fig. 3. Louise Atkinson, *Practice as Research*, (2012-16).

The exploration of my research topics through the practice of blogging is described by Laurel Richardson as 'writing as a mode of enquiry'. She developed this approach as a way of disrupting the conventional understanding of writing as the repetition of a thought process already conceived. These methods instead allowed her to explore writing as 'a dynamic creative process' which both 'produces meaning and creates social reality'.[52]

Elizabeth Adams St Pierre reiterates the notion of the practice emerging through the writing by describing her writing process as 'nomadic'. While many approach writing as a process of documenting that which is already known, for St Pierre 'writing is thinking, writing is analysis, writing is indeed a seductive and tangled method of discovery'.[53] Both of these processes recall the 'not knowing' of tacit knowledge previously suggested by Emma Cocker.

Richardson describes the process of writing which incorporates personal narratives as a way of 'mak[ing] sense of the world'.[54] She charts previous terms for writing which

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[52] Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre. 'Writing: A Method of Inquiry', in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research,* ed. by Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2005), pp. 959-978 (pp. 960-961).
[53] Ibid., p. 967.
[54] Ibid., p. 965.

incorporated new methods of representation such as 'creative non-fiction, faction, [and] ethnographic fiction'.[55]

Her own interpretation of this method of production is CAP ethnography, or 'creative analytical processes'. Understanding the subjective role of the researcher within the research process, she used this method to reveal how 'the writing process and the writing product [are] deeply intertwined'. For Richardson, '[t]he product cannot be separated from the producer, the mode of production, or the method of knowing'.[56]

These ideas recall Walter Benjamin in *The Author As Producer*, in which he states '[The author] will never be concerned with products alone, but always, at the same time, with the means of production'.[57] Benjamin's 'means of production' are also necessarily attached to the means of dissemination. This dissemination was a key aspect of my work both as a way to share my findings outside the university and receiving feedback from my peers. It also had had the effect of producing a narrative format to capture the aspects of research which might otherwise go unseen. In other words, it aimed to reveal the labour behind the research.

Means of dissemination

In choosing which platform to use to produce and disseminate my writing, I considered stand-alone websites such Blogger and Wordpress, which would have enabled me to collect analytical data about who was reading my posts. However, I decided to use www.a-n.co.uk, despite its analytical limitations, due to the fact that it was part of a wider creative network and would therefore be seen by a ready-made audience of artists. This meant that my writing was promoted on their website and through their social media channels, extending the reach of this network considerably.

This sharing of my research online through blogging led to artists contacting me to ask about PhD processes and how I had benefited from this methodical approach to my practice. People began to comment on my work online and in person, and started to offer suggestions of further reading and exhibitions. As well contributing to the debate and

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[55] Ibid., p. 961.
[56] Ibid., p. 962.
[57] Walter Benjamin, 'The Author as Producer' in *Understanding Brecht,* trans. by Anna Bostock (London, UK and New York: Verso, 1998), pp. 85-103 (p. 98).

understanding of art, documenting and sharing my work online enabled me to feel less isolated throughout the research process. The sharing of my work online also made me accountable to my readers and prompted regular posting.

To enable me to structure my information and manage my activities I employed the use of other online tools; specifically Google Docs and Trello. Google Docs is an online word processing tool which enabled me to create and share documents online giving me access to all my work-in-progress. Trello is a scheduling app; a private board which allowed me to create separate cards for each blog post with a link to the relevant Google Doc, and provided much-needed organisation and project management. Both of these tools supported me in scheduling my work, enabling me to easily view which work needed to be finished and when it should be posted.

Lastly, the blog enabled me to collect and store valuable data to be developed throughout this and future projects. As previously mentioned, this archive housed details of my studio practice, writing and reading. The collecting of my thoughts through the medium of writing allowed me a greater understanding of my own art practice, as well as methods of interpretation and exhibition making.[58] Furthermore, the use of the blog as a research archive enabled me to make new connections within the research.

While this written framework is presented as a linear progression, the nature of practice and artistic research is, by necessity, non-linear. The relationship between reading, writing, and making requires a constant switching between, and re-evaluation of, ideas and methods. The non-linearity of the work is also exacerbated by the time between experiencing and recording. This is known as the ethnographic moment, as coined by Marilyn Strathern, and 'works as an example of a relation which joins the understood (what is observed at the moment of observation) to the need to understand (what is observed at the moment of analysis)'.[59]

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[58] The idea of writing as a fundamental aspect of my working process, as well as a practice in its own right, has become more pronounced throughout the PhD process. This has also led to further developments such as a collaborative paper that I presented at the *Writing as Practice: Practice as Writing* conference in The Hague (June 2016).

[59] Narmala Halstead, 'Experiencing the Ethnographic Present: Knowing through Crisis' in *Knowing How to Know: Fieldwork and the Ethnographic Present*, ed. by Narmala Halstead, Eric Hirsch, and Judith Okely (New York and Oxford, UK: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 1-20 (p. 2).

Studio practice

In this section I discuss some of the work that originated from my studio practice throughout the research period. Since the making process is intrinsically linked to my thought process, the evolution of my works gives an insight into the ways in which my artistic practice developed.

I begin by describing how my search for a comparative anthropology of art led me to explore the history of magic, religion, and science. However, due to my inability to respond directly to issues of cultural appropriation within this historical context, I returned to the study of contemporary African art objects, which, in turn, led me to consider the methods of their collection and display. I discuss this in further detail in Chapter 2.

I also provide an overview of two larger bodies of work that I produced during the research project. The first of these is the artist-curator project *The Imaginary Museum*, where I curated the work of other artists to produce a self-contained postcard installation. The second is *Souvenirs from the British Isles*, which also constituted the final exhibition for my research project. Both of these projects and their motivations are discussed in more detail in Chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

Methods of production

My methods for producing artworks were varied and often relied on a combination of reading and writing, visiting exhibitions, and attending conferences. These processes provided me with the inspiration to produce the initial concepts for my work. This would be followed by a period of studio practice, where further experimentation would take place to establish the form and content of the work.

This method of art production is echoed in G. James Daichendt's *Artist Scholar: Reflections on Writing and Research*, where he states that:

> [r]ather than understanding art as a cultural phenomenon and aesthetic product, [...] art production [is] a type of inquiry, reflection, interpretation, commentary, and

thinking process that has transformed the way we understand the world and ourselves.[60]

Although my initial proposal was based on an exploration of artists' books, during the PhD my studio practice became more conceptually oriented, warranting the use of different media for different projects.

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, one of my main research questions was how to explore the benefits of appropriation in art without repeating cultural stereotypes. My studio practice therefore focused specifically on this problem, and was continually revised throughout the research period as new findings emerged. This continuous reworking of my practice again recalls the principles of tacit knowledge where the practice evolves in line with the production of the work.

As such, my methods for addressing the problems of appropriation shifted significantly during the research period. My starting point was to produce work that corresponded to ideas of a comparative anthropology of art. This was drawn from Gell's concept of art and agency, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, and focused on the production of work that 'acted' in some form. The agency of the work of art was consistent with the tactile nature of artists' books and I initially concentrated on the book form as a way of engaging the audience with the work. However, this changed throughout the project as the form and content of each body of work became clearer.

Influences and inspiration

For the conceptual element of my work, I began by framing my research within the history of magic, religion and science. This was intended as a way to reconsider art practice through a pre-modern lens before the separation of art from society, as a method of examining the work of art in a more holistic sense.

Alchemy

A central connection between magic, religion, and science can be seen in the use of alchemy, an early scientific practice, which was equal parts practical chemistry and

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[60] Daichendt, p. 5.

introspective contemplation. As Urszula Szulakowska states, '[In the minds of the alchemists], the laboratory process was believed to purify both the chemical materials and the alchemist himself, along with his environment'.[61]

Examples of alchemy in artistic practice stretch from the 16th century onwards, and include everything from images of alchemists and their environments, through to alchemy being used as a metaphor for artistic or spiritual transformation.

Alchemy as a form of spiritual transformation is evident in the work of Joseph Beuys whose aim was to adopt the role of shaman and utilise:

> a variety of primitive substances with atavistic associations such as fat, as well as abject materials such as used batteries and other domestic and medical debris. He abandoned aesthetics altogether as a factor in his work, substituting ritualized actions and emblematic structures.[62]

Beuys' use of these materials and methods was an attempt to address his own German heritage in the aftermath of World War II. Through the appropriation of alchemy and shamanism, he aimed to gain redemption for himself and humanity. However, these practices were often criticised as naive, voyeuristic, and based on flawed ideological structures.[63]

Scholars, including Madelaine Bergman and Laurinda Dixon, have used alchemy as a way for interpreting artworks,[64] and investigations into early photographic processes by artists such as Sigmar Polke, Susan Derges and Anne Hammond, repurposed alchemy as a synonym for the chemical reactions of photography.[65]

Equally, alchemy as a transformative metaphor has been applied to the artistic process itself, rather than as a specific interpretation method. An example of this can be found in James Elkins' *What Painting Is: How to Think about Oil Painting, Using the Language of*

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[61] Urszula Szulakowska, *Alchemy in Contemporary Art* (Surrey, UK & Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2011), p. 1.
[62] Ibid., p. 67.
[63] Ibid., p. 69.
[64] Jan Bäcklund and Jacob Wamberg, 'Introduction' in *Art and Alchemy,* ed. by Jacob Wamberg (University of Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006), pp. 9-20 (p.11).
[65] Laurie Dahlberg, 'The Material Ethereal' in *Art and Alchemy,* ed. by Jacob Wamberg (University of Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2006), pp. 84-100 (p. 97).

Alchemy, where Elkins discusses the relationship between painting and alchemy by considering the ways in which they both use materials and processes.[66]

Unlike the aforementioned examples, my focus specifically relied on alchemical symbols as a reference to esoteric or coded languages. Historically these symbols functioned through a consensus of understanding between alchemists, but it was my intention that the aesthetic in this symbolism implied the essence of the pre-modern without the need for additional interpretation.

Confraternity of Neoflagellents

Neil Mulholland's *Confraternity of Neoflagellents*[67] also influenced my work as it referenced ideas of ritual within contemporary art as a way of engaging audiences. These concepts, collectively termed Neomedievalism, employed the 'methods of production and interaction in the pre-modern era as a basis for contemporary geopolitical, economic and aesthetic development'.[68] These ideas appealed to me as they seemed to address some of the problematic aspects of appropriation by exploring the contemporary through a medieval lens. The notion of resituating contemporary art practice in the medieval era, circumvented the problem of authorship, through returning to a period where ideas were borrowed and remixed freely. Although these aspects didn't address the nature of cultural appropriation, they shifted the focus of anthropological study to a temporal rather than geographical one, thereby circumventing the potential for misappropriation.

Mulholland's ideas included concepts such as the 'Long Now', and the ways in which pre-modern notions of prosumer culture were re-emerging in the present day. Through considering history as a slowed down continuum, Mulholland effectively aimed to collapse the distance between time periods to show them as revolutionary rather than evolutionary. This method of considering actions, symbols and images as recurring

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[66] James Elkins, *What Painting Is: How to Think about Oil Painting, Using the Language of Alchemy* (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), p. 3.
[67] Norman Hogg and Neil Mulholland, *The Confraternity of Neoflagellants,*
<http://confraternityofneoflagellants.org.uk> [accessed 17 September 2016].
[68] Louise Atkinson, *Practice as Research (Week 5),*
<https://www.a-n.co.uk/blogs/practice-as-research/post/2607387> [accessed 29 September 2016].

features throughout time periods, suggested a useful way of presenting ritual as contemporary practice, rather than in contrast to Western modernity.

The ideas mentioned above influenced my initial artworks produced during the PhD period. These included the bookwork *Brimstone Almanac*, the video work *Mouth Scroll*, and the print work *Tasseography Alphabet*.

Brimstone Almanac

The bookwork *Brimstone Almanac* was originally produced as part of an AMBruno project for the International Contemporary Artists' Book Fair 2013 on the theme of 16.[69] My initial focus on alchemy revealed that sulphur (one of the cardinal principles) had the atomic number 16, consolidating the two ideas.

The format of the book was inspired by the use of Islamic magic squares in Western art, in images such as Albrecht Dürer's *Melancholia I*. The idea of magic squares as both a mathematical and ritual image was evident in the flexagon - a book format that I had recently encountered. This book was created from a single sheet of paper, which was cut and folded to produce a flat puzzle. The puzzle revealed hidden pages through the audience's twisting and unfolding of the paper. As a 'circular' format, the book could be continuously unfolded, reiterating its 'magical' properties. The flexagon book consisted of a square panel with four separate sides, each made up of four sections, totalling 16. In engaging the audience in the tactile act of unfolding the book, I aimed to convey an element of agency through the work itself.

The four panels of each section within the book provided a useful format in which to apply the symbolic groupings in alchemy, as they often totalled four. These included the four temperaments (melancholic, phlegmatic, choleric, and sanguine), the four humors (black bile, phlegm, yellow bile, blood), the four elements (earth, air, fire, water) and the colours which represented the four stages of alchemy (black, white, citrine, red).

To produce the book, I drew a selection of four for each of the square panels using Photoshop; beginning with the four seasons and then selecting corresponding elements,

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[69] The '16' book was also shown at the Artists' Bookmarket at the Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, (April 2013), The BALTIC, Newcastle, (June 2013), and The Bower Ashton Library, Bristol, (March 2014).

planets and metals. These images were then organised on the page and then printed digitally, before the book was cut and folded.

Observing the participation of the audience with the artwork highlighted a real sense of physical engagement with the work, rather than a solely intellectual questioning of its production, as can often be the case when people approach artworks. This suggested that it was possible to create artworks that did not require an explanation, and that they could contain an element of their own interpretation.
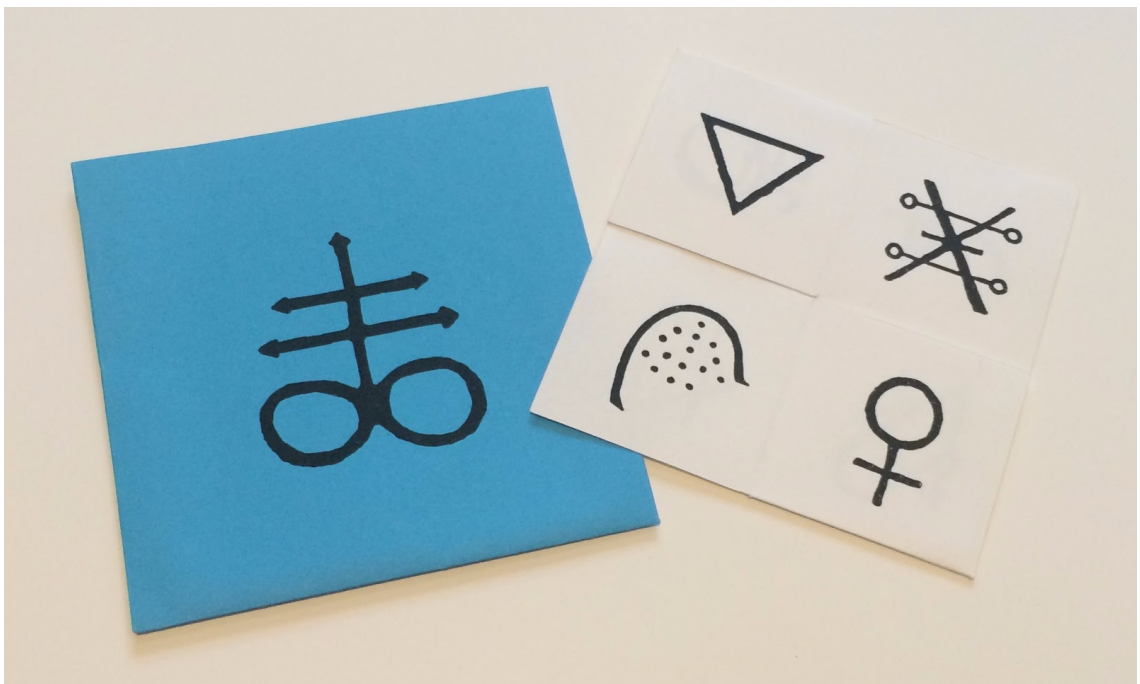
Fig. 4. Louise Atkinson, *Brimstone Almanac*, Artists' book, 2013.

Tasseography Alphabet

My previous interests in symbols and allegory developed from the 16 book, leading me to produce a further print work about symbols. This print was called *Tasseography Alphabet* and derived from ideas about divination as a tool of understanding.[70] In particular I was interested in exploring the discrepancies between symbol and allegory, and stories and truth in relation to the way that objects and images were interpreted.

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[70] This print was produced for the *Multiplied Art Fair* at Christie's in South Kensington. I was invited by AMBruno to produce work for a suite of prints, the theme, *'I'm telling you stories. Trust me',* a quote from the novel *The Passion* by Jeanette Winterson.

Potential divination tools included tarot cards and runes. However, I was particularly drawn to tasseography (or tea-leaf reading) and had found a tasseography cup with symbols printed around the inside. Here, instead of interpreting the patterns in the leaves, divination relied on the density of the leaves around particular symbols in the cup. The *Tasseography Alphabet* print used this pattern as inspiration.

Fig. 5. Louise Atkinson, *Tasseography Alphabet*, Digital print and chine-collé, 2013.

To produce the image I began by drawing 26 symbols to create an alphabet of images. As with the 16 book, I concluded that using digital methods would allow me to create a suitable aesthetic for the work. After drawing each of the images in black, I laid them out in a circular pattern outlined in red. The finished image was then printed onto brown

paper and cut into a circular shape before being pressed onto white cartridge paper, in a manner akin to chine collé. This gave a handmade element to the work and an object-like quality to the image.

Positive responses arose from the display of the print and people were inspired to create their own stories around it. They were also intrigued to know which other stories could be derived from the work.

Again, this was in contrast to previous conversations from my experience in gallery interpretation where people wanted more specific interpretations of works. This was shown through increased audience engagement, although I was still unsure of whether I preferred the didactic and instructional nature of the work.

Fig. 6. Louise Atkinson, *Mouth Scroll*, Video still, 2014.

Mouth Scroll

The final work that I produced relating to the history of magic, religion, and science was the video and bookwork *Mouth Scroll*.[71] This work consisted of a small scroll of paper which was wound around a specially made wooden support. This scroll was then exhibited next to a video work where I pulled the scroll out of my mouth.

The video was edited to suggest a continuous stream of paper emerging from my mouth in the manner of speech. Through creating the spoken word as a visible stream of paper, the work was intended to suggest tensions between writing and speaking. The continuous regurgitation of the scroll referenced a kind of magic trick akin to a magician pulling a stream of handkerchiefs out of their pocket. The scroll format was also intended to reference the typical manifestation of ancient religious texts.

Exploring questions of cross-cultural interpretation

It was my aim to address questions of appropriation and comparative anthropology through exploring the crossover of early science, magic, and religion. However, despite the fact that the works I produced received good audience feedback and engagement, I felt that not only was I not fully engaging with the possibilities and problems of cross-cultural interpretation and dissemination of artworks, but that any attempt to do so would inadvertently equate non-Western artworks and artefacts with pre-modern modes of creativity. Due to this I decided to return my focus to African art to approach to the questions of appropriation from a different perspective.

In producing my next work I decided to create a response to the appropriation of African masks by previous artists. I began by responding to the African artworks not only as aesthetic objects as the Fauves and the Cubists had, but also in terms of their social function; in other words, what the work of art did.

Aesthetic systems of African objects often use physical characteristics to convey particular meanings. These stylistic aspects include:

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[71] Louise Atkinson, *Mouth Scroll*, Video, 2014 <https://vimeo.com/86933070> [accessed 29 September 2016]. This is the second work produced in response to the *Pots that Bless* presentation at the *Charming Intentions* conference, and was shown as part of the exhibition *Book Act*, (2014) held at The Tetley, Leeds.

the contour of a mask, the proportions of the features, the use of convex or concave surfaces, the shape of the eyes and eyebrows, nose and nostrils, mouth and corners of the mouth, of ears, teeth, hairdo, scarification patterns, [and] painting.[72]

Commodity Masks

However, my focus was not on understanding specific interpretations of these objects but merely to consider how function could be implied through visual appearance. Using collaging techniques, I cut images from shopping catalogues and arranged them in a way to resemble faces. The images consisted of consumer objects in part and whole, which led me to title them *Commodity Masks*. This tongue-in-cheek title was intended to suggest an invocation of consumerism as a primary concern of Western society.
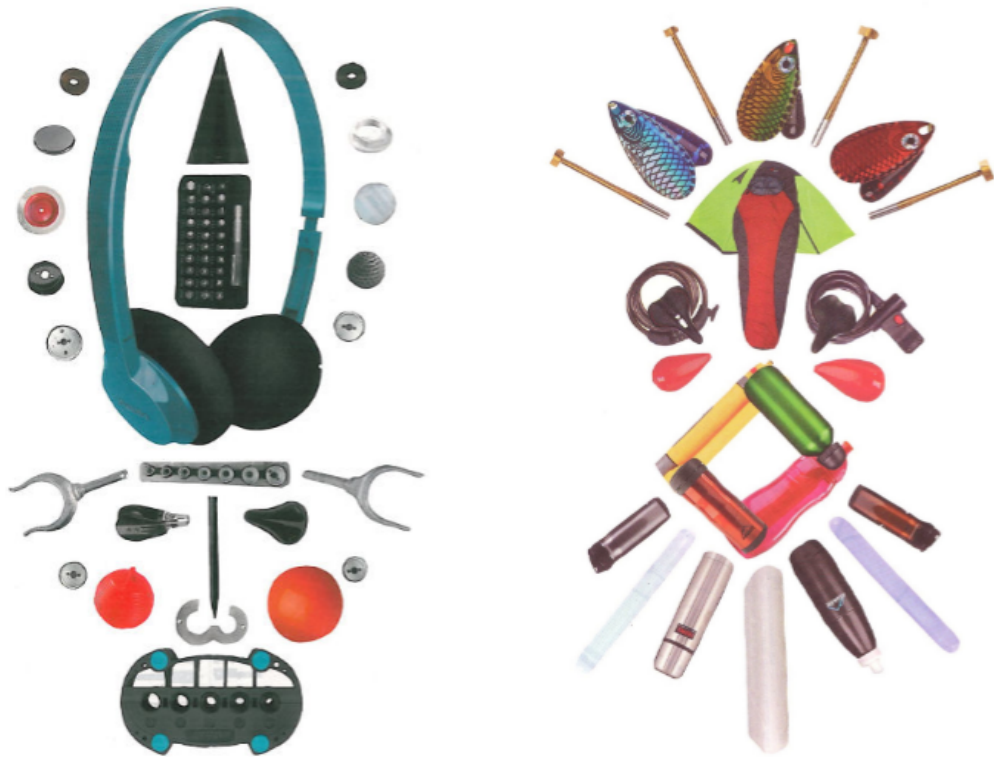
Fig. 7. Louise Atkinson, *Commodity Masks*, Collage, 2014.

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[72] Iris Hahner-Herzog, Maria Keckesi and Lazlo Vadja, *African Masks: From the Barbier-Mueller Collection* (London, UK and New York: Prestel, 2007), p. 20.

Although the images had begun to address the relationship between form and function, they were still problematic in relation to my concerns around appropriation, particularly as they reiterated the problems within museums where:

> many masks… have been, as it were, mutilated, only the appealing face or head portion having been saved. Missing are the costume made of raffia, textiles, animal hides or pelts, feathers or leaves, as well as the masker's paraphernalia… despite the fact that all of these often play a salient role in mask dances.[73]

Equally, the *Commodity Mask* images still focused heavily on their aesthetic form rather than their relational attributes. This led me to consider how this aspect had led to African artworks being classified as artefacts. I began searching online museum archives to find objects that would be considered art in an African context. The archive that I used for this purpose was the RAMM collection, specifically the objects collated under the heading 'Magic and Religion'.

RAMM online archive drawings

The RAMM online archive enabled me to find images of objects alongside the information that was recorded when the objects were accessioned. My process of using these objects in my practice involved producing a detailed graphite drawing of each of them and documenting the interpretative information provided alongside each drawing. In depicting the image and its archival information, these works attempted to subvert the interpretation of the object, by substituting its original functions for its function within the museum system. This idea was explored more explicitly through the drawings where the acquisition number was clearly visible on the object.

In this section I have discussed my general approach to producing artworks using a number of examples which detail my thought and making processes. These processes showed the evolution of my research project from the initial focus on artists' books and prints, through to a more conceptual approach that used the relationship between art and anthropology as its starting point.

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[73] Ibid., p. 14.

However, through moving away from book works and other tactile objects, I realised that the while new works I was producing considered anthropological and relational questions, they did not allow the audience to engage with the work on a physical level. This realisation motivated me to combine the two approaches through the use of Relational Aesthetics.

Relational Aesthetics describes the particular trend in artistic practice of the 1990s towards works that engaged in elements of audience participation and production. The term was coined by curator Nicolas Bourriaud, who organised exhibitions of artists working with these methods to explore an art which took 'as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space'.[74]

Through exploring these relational methods of art, Bourriaud intended to highlight the site of the work of art as 'a state of encounter',[75] and it was this encounter - between the artwork, the audience and the artist - that was investigated through my artist-curator project, *The Imaginary Museum*.

In addition to its theoretical underpinnings, the *Imaginary Museum* project was foregrounded with many years of producing immersive exhibitions and installations. In the next section I outline my previous experience to show how this has influenced my current practice.

Curating as artistic practice

Before commencing the PhD, I had already developed five exhibitions and participated in three artists' book fairs, exhibiting artists from across the UK, Europe, the Middle East, the US and Australia. Incorporating methods from mail art, relational work, and participatory work, the exhibitions addressed themes such as associations of place and memory (including how we curate the spaces we live in), hierarchies of ideas and labour, ways of communicating with each other and the audience, and ideas of home.

These exhibitions were produced primarily with artists' books and sourced through a social media group. Online platforms, such as Facebook, allowed me to connect with

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[74] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* p. 14.
[75] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* p. 18.

book artists across the Internet and enabled far greater opportunities for collaboration. However, rather than using the platform as the exhibition space, as with net art, I decided instead to utilise the group to organise offline exhibitions.

Time and Space

The first exhibition I organised in this way took place in June 2008 at The Bowery in Headingley, and the use of social media as an organisational tool enabled us to install the exhibition in six weeks, in time for the opening of the venue. The exhibition was called *Time and Space*, and referred to both the time-based and spatial qualities of the book, as well as my intentions for the audience to be able to slow down and experience the work.

Fig. 8. Louise Atkinson, *Time and Space*, The Bowery, Leeds, 2008.

This concept influenced the design of the exhibition, which was produced to simulate a living room with comfortable chairs, shelves and tables on which to display the work. The

exhibition posed the question as to how the works could encourage engagement and interaction, but, in turn, it raised many more questions and potential outcomes.

The effectiveness of this process led to my iterative curating practice which built on previous findings through subsequent exhibitions. These exhibitions took a variety of forms. Rather than setting a fixed theme for each exhibition, a loose brief would be decided on, with connections between the work, the concept and the exhibition space evolving as part of the curation process.

These exhibitions would usually be developed with either a specific site in mind, or an idea of how the work would be viewed. In this way, each work of art came together to function as a cohesive unit within an immersive environment, both strengthening the exhibition concept and enabling audience interaction and interpretation of the work, without the need for additional interpretive texts.

Home from Home

The most ambitious project produced was the *Home from Home* exhibition, a 10-room installation in a Victorian townhouse over 3 floors. The concept was a development of the *Time and Space* project, and members responded to the brief of 'home'. The brief evoked many different associations, including the experience of domestic spaces in relation to their designated public/private status, as well as the collection and curation of personal possessions within those spaces. Over 80 artists were involved in total, covering topics of of family, refuge and sanctuary, as well as associated feelings of anxiety and uncertainty relating to superstition, illness and transience.

During the installation I decided to label each room with its social function eg. living room or study. Each of the rooms was then curated around a separate idea of what home could mean. The labelling of artwork was also kept to a minimum, allowing works to sit naturalistically within the space. The domestic environment and the placing of the work in an installation style, encouraged the audience to spend longer with the work, taking time to sit and chat with other visitors. There was also a more relaxed attitude to interpreting the work, with visitors reporting that they were happy to just experience the work without requiring extra information.

Fig. 9. Louise Atkinson, *Home from Home*, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, 2011.

On reflection, these exhibition concepts, along with the relational aspects involved in the production and reception of the work, demonstrated my engagement with anthropological methods within my practice long before I started exploring these concepts in my PhD. This realisation allowed me to revise my previous research questions about the relationship between art and ritual, instead focusing on analysing the effect of the work of art on the audience.

My history of producing artist-curator projects gave me the knowledge and networks[76] to produce *The Imaginary Museum*. Throughout this body of work, which consisted of four separate iterations, was the idea of the relationship between the image and the work of art which ran through all my previous curatorial activities.

Collecting

The *Imaginary Museum* project incorporated the use of postcards as artworks as a way to symbolise the museum and its methods of disseminating its collections and raising

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[76] Building on my previous use of online platforms to connect with artists, I also co-developed a web application called CuratorSpace. This enabled me to collect submissions directly from artists and store these online.

funds. The collecting metaphor was extended through my collecting of imagery from artists and through the collecting of the postcards by audience members.

Ideas of collecting therefore became forefront in my practice, both physically, through my investigations of curating as artistic practice, and conceptually, through my increasing interest in the role of museum collections in the documentation of social and personal histories. Collecting also became a metaphor for the relationship between the social and personal, reflecting both a historical narrative of classification and a reflection of individual taste.[77]

Mieke Bal describes this convention as 'inter-subjective' whereby, although the collection is subjectively determined, '[c]ultural objects must signify through common codes, conventions of meaning-making that both producer and reader understand'.[78] These ideas reiterated my interest in audience engagement and interpretation of artworks.

My interest in collecting as a mode of practice also resonated with the historical and theoretical aspects of my research, thereby creating a reflexive research project. Two of these influences in this respect included the art and cultural historians, Aby Warburg and Walter Benjamin.

My interest in the work of Aby Warburg specifically related to his *Mnemosyne Atlas* project. This body of work consisted of a series of panels with collections of images and photographs grouped together to produce a narrative. These images aimed to trace connections across geographical and temporal boundaries in order to determine how networks enabled the transmission of ideas. As well as introducing the practice of comparative study into art history, Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* has come to be seen as both a collection and a cultural object in its own right.[79]

While Warburg embraced the possibility of images to enable new connections to be seen between objects, Walter Benjamin was more wary about the effects of the image, and particularly of the effects of the photograph on the work of art. In his 1936 essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin introduced the concept of

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[77] John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, 'Introduction' in *The Cultures of Collecting* ed. by John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1994) pp. 1-6 (pp. 2-3).
[78] Mieke Bal, 'Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting' in *The Cultures of Collecting* ed. by John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1994), pp. 97-115 (p. 98).
[79] Ernst H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography,* p. 283.

the aura of the artwork as 'the here and now of the work of art - its unique existence in the place where it is at this moment'.[80] It is this 'here and now' which Benjamin was concerned with in relation to the value of the work of art. His belief was that the speed of production and dissemination of works of art afforded by photography destroyed the uniqueness of the artwork, thereby devaluing it. This idea is now widely disputed however, with many art historians arguing that reproductions of art, in fact, produce the aura.

Both of these influences shaped the format of *The Imaginary Museum*. Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* was referenced through *The Imaginary Museum*'s mutable collections, which allowed audiences to reconfigure the work to produce their own interpretations. The possibilities for aura in the reproduction format of the postcards was also considered through the defined scope for interacting with the work, which was limited to specific places and timescales.

Souvenirs from the British Isles

Ideas around collecting continued into my final body of work in the research project, *Souvenirs from the British Isles*. Unlike *The Imaginary Museum*, which prompted audiences to collect postcards, this work instead utilised the aesthetic of souvenirs as a way to convey the concept of collecting.

The *Souvenirs from the British Isles* project consists of a series of sculptures based on the idea of souvenirs. After drawing a number a souvenirs collected from my own and others' travels, I identified a clear aesthetic, that of colourful, kitschy, miniature objects, and I aimed to echo this in my work.

The sculptures were made from paper clay, alluding to my previous use of the medium as both a support and material in my work. This medium was also intended to symbolise the ephemeral nature of souvenirs as seemingly trivial aspects of material culture.

The paper medium also gave a more handmade feel to the objects which I intended to convey an ambiguity between the often mass-produced souvenirs and the more traditional folk arts created by individual artisans.

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[80] Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, p. 5.

As I was keen to avoid the problems inherent in cultural appropriation, I made a decision to focus specifically on England as a site of enquiry. The use of England was defined by my own nationality, and allowed me to explore the historical associations of the country through heraldic and mythical imagery, historical figures, and landmarks. I used these images to produce a series of forty-eight sculptures, each representing a city in England.

As identifiers of culture, souvenirs reveal particular motifs and associations with a place. However, these objects are often the result of complex negotiations between the producing and consuming culture, such as trade, tourism, and colonisation. Therefore, the finished object often obstructs the agencies and decision-making processes involved in producing such images. The *Souvenirs from the British Isles* project was intended to reflect on these agencies by substituting the traditional souvenir objects associated with English cities with ones of my own choosing.

In producing these objects I began to notice similarities between the origin stories associated with cities, often relating to giants or other mythical beasts. The souvenirs thus came to represent both distinct and general aspects of the country. This aspect also drew the objects together as a collection, following Durost's definition of a collection as a series of representative objects. In addition, each of these objects both 'contribute[d] to and derive[d] extraordinary meaning from [the collection]'.[81]

The palimpsestic nature of the souvenirs, with their layering of historical and contemporary myths, also highlighted the possibilities for representing the rich content of a country. This strategy could therefore be applied to other regions of the world as a way of exploring how national identities are formed and disseminated. As an illustration of my process, and the concepts inherent in my work, I will describe how I produced one of the sculptures, namely the Bradford souvenir.

This object took its main inspiration from the Bradford coat of arms, in particular the image of the boar's head on top of a well. This image refers to a myth which dates back to the 14th century. Along the sides of the well the bricks are highlighted to represent the

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[81] Susan M Pearce, 'The Urge to Collect' in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan M Pearce (London, UK and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 157-159 (pp. 157-158).

building materials more commonly associated with the industrial North of England. The water motif which runs across the head of the boar is also taken from the coat of arms.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the methods and processes that I utilised in undertaking my research project. This included the use of technology to organise and provide structure to the processes, as well as more abstract strategies such as tacit knowledge and learning through doing.

The documentation of my progress online throughout the research project allowed me to reflect regularly on my work. It also helped me to map the routes that my practice had taken over the project period. Although an emergent research method can sometimes prove unwieldy, this system enabled me both to manage the potential disorder and pull together a narrative for the project.

The chronological series of blog posts enabled me to group the written information in support of my thesis. This is reflected in Susan Stewart's description of how the chronological ordering of objects distorts historical time, instead producing a fictional individual narrative which 'juxtapose[s] personal time with social time, [and] autobiography with history'.[82]

Producing my studio practice in conjunction with the writing presented an initial challenge due to the constant need to revise my plans and making in relation to new findings. This accounts for my change in direction throughout the studio practice from the history of science through to collections and finally the material culture of tourism. Equally, despite the range of topics and practical approaches, I identified a consistent use of paper within my projects, either in the production of artists' books, prints, collages, or sculptures.

The range of practical approaches I have adopted have ultimately led to a richer and more defined project. Intrinsically linked to my research project was a clear understanding of the relationship between art and anthropology. Both disciplines played a

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[82] Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993) p. 154.

huge part in my processes, and in the following chapter I explore this relationship in more detail.

Chapter 2: Between art and anthropology

When anthropology became established in Europe in the late nineteenth century, art and material culture were viewed as central to the understanding of how a society operated. Since then anthropologists have responded to artworks in various ways, including eschewing objects altogether in favour of more embedded fieldwork. However, since the 1960s, European and American anthropologists began to readdress the study and classification of cultural objects from around the world in relation to an increased interest in symbolism and exchange. In turn, artists appropriated these same objects for inspiration in their own works, and, over time, began to engage more critically with the topic of anthropology in response to critique by art historians such as Hal Foster.

In this chapter I catalogue the relationship between art and anthropology from the point of view of the artists who have engaged with these topics. I aim to show how the development of artists engaging with anthropological concerns has progressed from the original appropriation through to more collaborative and relational methods. This expands on the theoretical framework of anthropology described in Chapter 1, drawn from Alfred Gell's theories of art and agency.

Unlike much of the literature available on the anthropology of art, my interest is not focused on the study of non-Western artworks, but on applying that same anthropological theory to an understanding of Western art practice. There have also been considerable studies into the use of visual methods to present anthropological research, but this too is outside the scope of my thesis.

My use of the the term Western artworks relates, not to the specific origin of the maker, but rather the context in which the art is produced and exhibited. This draws on Morphy and Perkins' definition of art, which separates the meaning of the word art into two parts; the culture of a particular society and a specific genre of production, to represent non-Western and Western practices respectively:

> Art in the first sense is associated with bodies of knowledge, technologies, and representational practices that provide insights into the whole life world of a society. Art in the second sense has been seen as the product of a particular

stage of Euro-American history. In this sense, art is seen as disconnected from society as a whole and overdetermined by its role in the class structure of Western capitalist society.[83]

My focus on Western art practice relates specifically to my own experience as an artist in a Western context. While scholars in the anthropology of art have worked tirelessly to address the 'essentialised uniqueness of the Western category',[84] through a re-evaluation of art production globally, my aim is to examine the topic from the Western perspective by applying a more holistic approach to the values and functions of art outside of, and in relation to, a decontextualised art market.

To contextualise the use of anthropology in my art practice, I first detail the historical relationship between art and anthropology, from the anthropological perspective. I also outline the use of anthropology in art from the early twentieth century, along with the criticisms of appropriation faced by Modern artists.

Finally, I address how contemporary artists and curators have responded to these questions in their own practices. This includes an investigation of artists and curators working in museum contexts, and explores the implications for the multiple elements of appropriation which I discuss in the following two chapters.

The history of anthropology and art

Howard Morphy and Morgan Perkins describe the histories of '[a]rt and material culture [as] an integral part of nineteenth-century anthropology. As a discipline, anthropology developed hand in hand with the cabinets of curiosity, with antiquarianism, and with the widening of European horizons following the Enlightenment'.[85] The study of material culture led to the creation of ethnographic collections such as the Smithsonian, the British Museum, and the Pitt Rivers Museum.[86]

The Pitt Rivers Museum originally comprised of a collection of 30,000 objects and photographs donated by General Pitt Rivers. The collection was inspired by his experience as a rifle tester where he noticed how the weapons he used had evolved

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[83] Morphy and Perkins, p. 2.
[84] Ibid., p. 3.
[85] Ibid., p. 3.
[86] Ibid., p. 5.

through slight changes and developments in technologies.[87] Rivers' 1875 lecture at the Royal Institution showed the evolutionary development of weaponry from around the world, grouped together as a typology.[88]

Fig. 10. *Installation view*, The Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, UK.

The use of evolutionary theory to understand the development of the material culture of a society was also applied to the people of that society. Drawing on Darwin, writers such as Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) claimed that 'primitive' societies were lower down on the evolutionary scale.[89] In addition to this, anthropologists in the second half of the nineteenth century also believed that these societies were 'evolutionary culs-de-sac, arrested in their development at some nebulous point in the past'.[90]

Such ideas continued in the work of the French ethnologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, who argued that 'primitive' psychology was inferior to that of 'civilized' people.[91] This enabled

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[87] Michael O'Hanlon, *The Pitt Rivers Museum: A World Within* (London, UK and New York: Scala Arts & Heritage Publishers Ltd, 2014), p. 24.
[88] Ibid., p. 28.
[89] Rhodes, p. 14.
[90] Ibid., p. 16.
[91] Ibid., p. 17.

many anthropologists to conclude that the art produced by 'primitive' societies was the result of long-standing traditions unaffected by change or contact with other people.[92]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, anthropology began to move away from the study of material culture through object collections. This was due to a number of factors. Firstly, a new focus on fieldwork as being essential to the understanding of how a society functioned replaced the traditional collecting practices of anthropologists.[93] Furthermore, curators of ethnographic objects wanted to distance themselves from earlier evolutionary typologies associated with the classification of non-Western art objects, instead focusing on the cultural significance of artefacts from the daily life of a society.[94]

At the same time, African objects that had previously been housed in 'curiosity rooms' or natural history museums began to be classified as art, as defined by Western systems, by artists, art curators, and dealers.[95] The classification of African objects as art meant that they were separated from the cultural contexts that produced them and were instead subsumed into Western art history. Unfortunately these ethnographic objects were considered as subordinate to Western categories and were therefore classified as 'primitive' art. These artworks were also often seen as functional objects of a tradition rather than the product of an individual practitioner.[96] This process further alienated anthropologists who believed that 'primitive' art was an artificial category, created to turn ritual and functional artefacts into aesthetic objects valued by European standards.[97]

The relationship between art and anthropology changed again in the 1960s when anthropologists began to focus more on the themes of myth, religion, and ritual.[98] This change opened up the possibility for anthropologists to study non-Western art again as part of their research into societies. This was supported by the development of two theoretical strands, those of symbolism and exchange:

> Exchange theory was closely connected to studies of symbolism. Exchange is one of the ways in which value is created, and material objects are both expressions of value and objects which in themselves gain in value through

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[92] Ibid., p. 19.
[93] O'Hanlon, p. 66.
[94] Morphy and Perkins, p. 7.
[95] Vogel, p. 12.
[96] Morphy and Perkins, p. 7.
[97] Ibid., p.8.
[98] Ibid., p. 9.

> processes of exchange […] Material culture objects were no longer regarded as passive they began to be seen as integral to the processes of reproducing social relations and of developing affective relations with the world.[99]

This renewed interest in art by anthropologists was influenced by the work by Marcel Mauss on the gift, and the shift of Western art theory towards anthropological methods.

Today, there are many studies into the relationship between anthropology and art. However, while there has been renewed interest in the performativity and agency of artworks, there is a further call for anthropologists to reflect these visual methods in their own practice in response to the critique of anthropology of dealing with objects 'as if they were texts'.[100]

Primitivism

Some of the first Western artists to explore anthropological concerns in their work were the Modernists of the early twentieth century. According to Rhodes (1994), the Fauve painters André Derain and Maurice de Vlaminck were the first modern artists to acquire African works in 1906, followed by Matisse, whose visit to Africa in the same year gave him a newfound appreciation for the sculpture he saw there.[101]

These burgeoning collections were made in the context of a growing number of exhibitions in Paris of work from outside European traditions. These included exhibitions of Islamic, Japanese, and ancient Iberian art.[102] Inspired by the changes in Western art away from nineteenth century realism, modern artists began to be more receptive to ethnographic objects,[103] and to incorporate the forms and styles they saw into their own work, as:

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[99] Ibid., p. 10.
[100] Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright, 'The Challenge of Practice', in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology,* ed. by Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (Oxford, UK and New York: Berg, 2006) pp. 1-27 (p. 3).
[101] Rhodes, p. 111.
[102] Ibid., p. 114.
[103] William Rubin, 'Modernist Primitivism: An Introduction' in *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art,* ed. by William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), pp. 1-81 (p. 11).

they were fascinated by the formal dynamism and expressive power of African objects, which corresponded to their own search for simplified forms and directness and immediacy of expression.[104]

Fig. 11. Pablo Picasso, *Guitar*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1912, and *Grebo mask*, Musee Picasso, Paris.

The influence of African works on the art produced by Matisse can be seen in his still life paintings. In his painting *Pink Onions* (1906), unlike in earlier works produced in the same year, the objects become flat and simplified. This shift from the traditional perspective in which he was trained, marked a distinct innovation in his work.[105] Both his painted and sculptural figures began to borrow more from the proportions of African sculpture, as indicated by the large head and elongated neck in *Le Luxe* (1907).[106]

Picasso became interested in African Art due to its conceptual nature. One work, a Grebo mask, inspired his *Guitar* construction. In discussing his interest in the Grebo

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[104] Hahner-Herzog, Keckesi and Vadja, p. 7.
[105] Jack D. Flam, 'Matisse and the Fauves' in *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art,* ed. by William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), pp. 211-239 (p. 221).
[106] Ibid., p. 231.

mask, he paid particular attention to the flat plane of the face with its protruding features. It was these features, and especially the circular eyes, that were reflected in the hole of the guitar, which projected outwards from the centre of the work.[107]

Paul Gauguin's relationship with Primitivism was more cultural than visual. His interests in the rural folk art and customs of Brittany led him to look for inspiration further afield, in Tahiti.[108] The primitive Other was thought to live closer to nature than the increasingly industrialised landscapes of the West. This attitude idealised the 'primitive way of life' in Gauguin's mind.[109]

The difference between Picasso's formal appropriations of non-Western art and Gauguin's cultural ones is defined by Rosalind Krauss as the difference between 'soft' and 'hard' Primitivism. In the case of 'soft' Primitivism, artworks and artefacts are valued for their aesthetic qualities, whereas 'hard' Primitivism describes an interest in the cultural context of objects.[110]

Through their exploration of non-Western arts and culture, modern artists aimed to reinvigorate Western society 'by confronting it with its deepest memories'.[111] This had the added effect of showcasing non-Western art to dealers and curators who quickly subsumed these items into the art market.[112] As Arthur C Danto states:

> The works of Africa were thereafter artistically enfranchised because there was no consistent way of excluding them from aesthetic consciousness - no way of acknowledging Picasso as a master without acknowledging the mastery of African artists.[113]

Primitivism continued with the Surrealists, who had a preference for Oceanic works over African ones.[114] This was due, in part, to the work of Gauguin, whose canvases

[107] Rubin, pp. 18-19.
[108] Kirk Varnedoe, 'Gauguin' in *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art,* ed. by William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), pp. 179-209 (p. 179).
[109] Rubin, p. 6.
[110] Arnd Schneider, 'Appropriations' in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology,* ed. by Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (Oxford, UK and New York: Berg, 2006), pp. 29-51 (pp. 38-39).
[111] Rhodes, p. 17.
[112] Shelly Errington,*The Death of Authentic Primitive Art and Other Tales of Progress* (Berkeley, CA and London, UK: University of California Press, 1998), p. 64.
[113] Arthur C Danto, 'Artifact and Art' in *Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections,* ed. by Susan Vogel (New York and London, UK: Prestel, 1988), pp. 18-32 (p. 19).
[114] Rubin, p. 55.

emphasised a mythical image of Polynesia.[115] As with the Cubist work, the dealer who worked for the Surrealists also sold Oceanic works, and Surrealists amassed their own collections.[116]

However, all of these developments were based on a false premise; that of the category of so-called 'primitive' art as an essential category, traditional and unevolving. Therefore despite the changes in anthropology, at the beginning of the twentieth century

> the primitive continued to stand in Europe for the irrational, the timeless, and the natural, including the 'self' unencumbered by repressive civilisation, thus providing a kind of resource or warehouse of ideas and images that stood in contradistinction to European civilisation.[117]

These beliefs corresponded with the creation of what Shelley Errington calls 'Authentic Primitive Art', a term which she classifies as becoming established around the time of the 1935 exhibition, *African Negro Art*, and continuing until the 1984 exhibition *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art*, both of which were held at MOMA, New York.[118] Authentic objects were seen as those that were produced for traditional purposes, and free from Western influences, rather than objects which had been produced to be sold or traded.[119]

Such objects were not only classified through their labelling as 'primitive' but also in their labelling as 'art', as defined in relation to Western categories. This 'art by appropriation' describes the objects that were collected by museums throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which often consisted of a combination of materials. In the production of 'authentic primitive art' these objects tended to be stripped of their soft materials such as flowers, palm leaves, bamboo, etc, in order to become more durable.[120] This meant that objects designed to be performed in a dance or masquerade, often resembled Modernist sculpture by the time they came to be exhibited in Western institutions.[121]

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[115] Philippe Peltier, 'From Oceania' in *'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art,* ed. by William Rubin (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1984), pp. 99-123 (p. 106).
[116] Ibid., p. 112.
[117] Errington, p. 31.
[118] Ibid., p. 70.
[119] Ibid., p. 72.
[120] Ibid., pp. 79-81.
[121] Ibid., p. 84.

The visual sensibilities imposed by the West on these objects, thus removed the meanings from the work which were connected to the broader experience in which it was meant to be viewed.[122] One example shows a photograph of a Fang reliquary guardian sculpture in the Alfred Stieglitz gallery exhibition of African Art in 1914. Here the sculpture is shown bereft of its box of ancestral bones and bark, traditionally used to ward off intruders.[123]

This action of removing the context of the African works and reducing the objects purely to their aesthetic qualities was described by Jonathan Friedman as:

> a project of assimilation, a discovery of form in itself that could be transferred to the project of modern art. It was neither a return, nor a longing for the primitive as such, not a sign of the failure of modernity, but an expression of its success.[124]

In this way, the newly-classified ethnographic objects were not necessarily seen as artworks in their own right, but as complementary to the Modernist project.

The anonymity of such objects was exacerbated by the lack of attempts to ascertain authorship for non-Western artworks. As the majority of objects were originally collected as ethnographic artefacts, artistic authorship was not a consideration. However, there was also an attempt to justify this action due to the fact that many cultures did not differentiate between art and craft. Recently, it has been established that, while there is no specific word that distinguishes fine art, there are words for embellished, and decorated that differentiate ordinary functional objects from finely crafted ones. This determines that there is an aesthetic sensibility associated with these objects.[125]

Historically then, the relationship between art and anthropology has generally been an appropriative one, where artists have used artworks housed in ethnographic collections as the source material for the production of their own works, and curators have displayed ethnographic objects in contrast to their Western counterparts.

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[122] Susan Vogel, 'Introduction', in *Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections,* ed. by Susan Vogel (New York and London, UK: Prestel, 1988), pp. 11-17 (p. 11).
[123] Ibid., p. 13.
[124] Jonathan Friedman, 'Carlos Capelán: Our modernity not theirs' in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology,* ed. by Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2006), pp. 169-176 (p. 170).
[125] Vogel, p. 17.

Museum contexts

Non-Western art was not only defined by the artists and curators who appropriated it, but also by the museum contexts in which it was shown. The museum, as a product of the Enlightenment, was a public space dedicated to 'the diffusion of knowledge'.[126] However, it soon became clear that the production of museum installations, far from being neutral, reflected the attitudes of their owners.[127] Naomi Schor defines the collection in terms of its modes of classification, consisting of objects that are 'wrenched out of their contexts of origins and re-configured into the self-contained, self-referential context of the collection itself'.[128]

Artist and writer Daniel Buren considers the function of the museum to be three-fold: aesthetic, economic, and mystical. By framing and composing the work, Buren claims that the museum inscribes both meaning and value to the the work it displays.[129] Furthermore, the museum's role is to preserve its holdings for future generations, thereby creating the illusion of timelessness.[130] These conservation practices of museums can also be contrary to the aims of non-Western art, which is sometimes produced with the purpose of decaying or being otherwise destroyed after a specific period of time.

The museum reinforces its own authority, and therefore the objects it collects, by way of its history and cultural weight.[131] This leads to objects becoming 'art' due to their categorisation as such. Conversely, the objects outside of that frame are deemed to be 'not art', and are excluded from the historical canon. As such, the value and meaning ascribed to objects through their display and classification, helps to inform public opinion. As Hans Haacke states:

> Within the art world, museums and other institutions that stage exhibitions play an important role in the inculcation of opinions and attitudes. Indeed, they usually

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[126] Glenn D. Lowry, 'Foreword', in *The Museum As Muse: Artists Reflect,* by Kynaston McShine (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999), p. 6.

[127] Kynaston McShine, *The Museum As Muse: Artists Reflect* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1999), p. 12.

[128] Naomi Schor, 'Cartes Postales: Representing Paris 1900', *Critical Inquiry,* 18 (1992), 188-244, p. 200

[129] Daniel Buren, 'The Function of the Museum (1970)' in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings,* ed. by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 110-117 (p. 102).

[130] Buren, p. 103.

[131] Buren, p. 104.

present themselves as educational organizations and consider education as one of their primary responsibilities.[132]

Ivan Karp posits that '[t]he process of making, appreciating, and exhibiting art, particularly in the kind of institutions we call museums, is itself an intensely political process'. In other words, the the values and meanings of objects that the museum system produces in the name of education are perpetuated through accumulated knowledge and received wisdom.[133]

This received wisdom often relates to the classification style of the museum, which is determined by the period that the museum was established:

> [T]he Soane Museum is an example of a WunderKammer or cabinet-of-curiosities type; the British Museum has Enlightenment beginnings mixed with many later extensions; the Pitt Rivers' preserves the Victorian period; the Maryland Historical Society is typical of a local community collection; while the Seattle Art Museum among a global collection, displays artefacts formerly as 'ethnology', reimagined as 'art' in a white cube.[134]

These classification strategies set up relationships between objects in order to convey a particular message to the audience, therefore determining how the objects are understood.

Questions of display for museums exist practically as well as conceptually. For example, in the nineteenth century, African objects were displayed in the way that any other object was displayed in European museums, separated from the audience by way of a plinth or pedestal:

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[132] Hans Haake, 'Museums, Managers of Consciousness (1984)' in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings,* ed. by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 276-288 (p. 282).
[133] Ivan Karp and Fred Wilson, 'Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums' in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings,* ed. by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 330-349 (p. 338).
[134] Khadija Carroll, 'Object to project: artists' interventions in museum collections' in *Sculpture and the Museum,* ed. by Christopher R. Marshall (Surrey, UK & Burlington, USA: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 217-240 (p. 220).

Frames, pedestals, stanchions, museum guards, motion sensors and, arguably, the very structure of the museum itself are designed to keep art physically unreachable, so as not to allow for the tactile curiosity of viewers.[135]

The display case or vitrine operates in a number of ways. First, it physically separates the object from the viewer, as a way of preserving the object. This reiterates the urge to create a sense of timelessness in the collection, as expressed by Buren. In addition to this, the enclosing of the object behind glass literally frames the object, creating a purely visual spectacle.[136]

African art, in contrast was designed to be seen within the space of the viewer. However, in the the twentieth-century conscientious curators began to reexamine the way that African objects were displayed to more accurately reflect their cultural context. This had the added effect of influencing European sculptors, who began to create sculptures without the integrated plinths.[137]

Artists working with anthropology

The criticisms associated with Primitivism have continued to be addressed by artists into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Using anthropological and ethnographic methods, artists have begun to engage in dialogic and discursive practices, often involving collaboration with audiences and institutions.[138]

However, these anthropological appropriations by artists have also been subject to criticism. In particular, the use of anthropological methods by artists is addressed by Hal Foster in his essay *The Artist as Ethnographer*. Here, Foster suggests that attempts by artists to reconcile the previous appropriation of ethnographic objects, can be seen as a form of 'ideological patronage' where the artist acts on behalf of 'the cultural and/or ethnic other.[139]

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[135] Ibid., p. 228.
[136] James Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* (London, UK: Thames and Hudson, 2009), p. 15.
[137] Vogel, p. 15.
[138] Morphy and Perkins, p. 11.
[139] Ibid., p. 302.

This is caused, in part, by the assumption of an alterity located outside the artist which the 'other' can automatically access.[140] According to Foster, the study of alterity, through interdisciplinary and reflexive methods which are particular to anthropology, creates a kind of ethnographer-envy in artists.[141]

Although his concern is focused on artists reproducing the kind of ethnographic authority which they claim to oppose, he concedes that there have been instances where artists have worked with communities successfully, such as uncovering suppressed histories.

Furthermore, the essay acts as an ethical checklist for artists working with anthropological frameworks and methods. The questions raised in Foster's article are reiterated as a way to evaluate artistic practice by Kris Rutten et al. in the essay, *Revisiting the Ethnographic Turn in Contemporary Art*. These questions include 'Does this artist use 'alterity' as a primary point of subversion of dominant culture? Can we accuse the artist of 'ideological patronage'? [and] Is this artist othering the self or selving the other?'[142]

Equally, Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright describe how 'the primary divisions between [art and anthropology] often mask an ensemble of heterogeneous discourses that in fact have much common ground'.[143] This common ground is understood not just as a formal similarity between methods and practice but also 'a shared concern with the politics of representation'.[144]

There is a belief that despite the shared concerns of artists and ethnographers, that artists do not require critical data about an object in order to make use of it.[145] This was a particular criticism of artists such as Eduardo Paolozzi, whose bricolage-style installation *Lost Magic Kingdoms* at the Museum of Mankind in London, appropriated objects from the museum collections and presented alongside his own work without contextualisation.

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[140] Ibid., p. 302.
[141] Ibid., p. 305.
[142] Kris Rutten, An van. Dienderen, and Ronald Soetaert, 'Revisiting the Ethnographic Turn in Contemporary Art', *Critical Arts,* 27 (2013), 459-473 (p. 463).
[143] Schneider and Wright, 'Between Art and Anthropology', p. 1.
[144] Ibid., p. 19.
[145] R. M. Gramly, 'Art and Anthropology on a Sliding Scale', in *Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropology Collections,* ed. by Susan Vogel (New York and London, UK: Prestel, 1988), pp. 33-40 (p. 33).

[146] However, as I aim to show here, artists have become more engaged with the critical histories of objects due to these criticisms.

Addressing appropriation

As discussed previously, the histories of both art and anthropology have a problematic relationship with appropriation. Appropriation in this sense implies the 'taking something from one context and placing it into another'. However, Arnd Schneider suggests that while appropriation can and has had political and ethical challenges, it can still act as a useful 'hermeneutic procedure' in order to gain understandings between and through cultures.[147]

Schneider claims that appropriation is essential in any form of cultural exchange as a way of recognising the Other. However, this appropriation must take place within the 'historical context of different economic, social, and cultural power relations'. The idea of appropriation, particularly from non-Western cultures can suggest a romanticised and unchanging origin, rather than an ongoing development. Ultimately then, any appropriation needs to take place in dialogue with the culture with which the artist is working.[148]

While there are many ways in which artists have engaged with anthropological methods, my focus is on artists engaging with museum collections and environments, and particularly those which reference anthropological concerns in the context of the history of art. This focus reflects issues including 'the museum as a site of the West's appropriation of other cultures'.[149]

Institutional Critique

Since the middle of the twentieth century, artists interventions into museums have increased exponentially. These artist responses can be separated into two distinct practices; artists intervening in museum spaces and collections, or artists producing their own museums by appropriating institutional strategies.

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[146] Schneider, p. 31.
[147] Ibid., p. 36.
[148] Ibid., pp. 48-51.
[149] Ibid., p. 33.

Practices which engage directly with museum collections or institutional strategies of collecting are often referred to by the term Institutional Critique. Coined in Mel Ramsden's *On Practice*, in 1975, these practices were specifically interested in combining art and politics to question the function of museums, and have been explored by artists including Daniel Buren, Eduardo Favario, Julio Le Parc, Enzo Mari, Marcel Broodthaers, Robert Smithson, Louise Lawler, Barbara Kruger, and The Guerilla Girls. Institutional Critique has continued in one form or another till the present, by artists from across the globe from Buenos Aires, Rosario, Paris, Warsaw, and New York.[150]

As well as museum interventions into collections and the production of artist museums, Institutional Critique was also characterised by non-participation strategies, including artist manifestos, sit-ins and boycotts. One of the most recent of these projects was devised by artists Karen Mirza and Brad Butler. Entitled *The Museum of Non-Participation*, the project exists not as an actual museum, but as 'a place, a slogan, a banner, a performance, a newspaper, a film, an intervention, an occupation'[151] that makes withdrawal from institutions visible, active, and critical.

Other incarnations of Institutional Critique employed forms of advertising and graphic design such as billboards and fliers. These forms, known as tactical media, reappropriated marketing techniques to explore the networks of dissemination inside and outside the gallery system. With the emergence of the Internet, such techniques became even more widespread as '[a]rt is no longer restricted to material sites of exhibition or to a secondary life in printed catalogues; rather, it now circulates rapidly and more broadly than ever'.[152]

As shown previously, museums often frame acquisitions according to their own internal narratives and constructions, producing new object meanings. Artists have attempted to disrupt these spaces through the reframing of collections using reappropriating curatorial methods. Through the highlighting of power relations within the museum, artists aim to engage audiences to question the authoritative stance of the museum.[153]

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[150] Alexander Alberro, 'Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique', in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists' Writings,* ed. by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2009), pp. 2-19 (pp. 4-8).
[151] Karen Mirza and Brad Butler, *The Museum of Non-Participation*, <http://www.museumofnonparticipation.org> [accessed 17 September 2016].
[152] Alberro, p. 17.
[153] Carroll, p. 217.

The space between the works, the museum and the audience, is what is referred to by James Clifford as a 'contact zone'. The term 'contact zone' was originally coined by Mary Louise Pratt, who used it to define:

> the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.[154]

Through applying this term to a museological context, Clifford argued for the museum space as 'a site where a complex web of demands and articulations is expressed, negotiated and contested'.[155] The idea of the museum as a contact zone made it possible for collaborative engagement by a range of diverse publics. This situates the exhibition as an ongoing question of aesthetic, historical and political agendas, rather than a definitive position.

Museum interventions

Artist interventions in museum contexts make these contact zones visible as a way to engage audiences. However, it is not enough to simply place contemporary artworks in museum settings. As Khadija Carroll states 'an intervention should centre on the critical question of what is gained by bringing contemporary and historical work together and what is to be achieved'. Furthermore, artist interventions are often idiosyncratic and sensory experiences, involving tactile, sonic, or other bodily elements as a way of circumventing 'linguistically grounded perception'.[156]

Sensory interventions were typified in the Seattle Art Museum exhibition *S'abedeb - The Gifts: Pacific Coast Salish Art and Artists* (2008). This exhibition utilised sound art as a substitute for the works that were unable to be displayed due to a disagreement in the Salish community about exhibiting religious objects. Curator Barbara Brotherton invited artists Alex Schweder and John Grade to produce a commission as a way of representing the missing objects. They created an audio track featuring voices from the

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[154] James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 192.
[155] Philipp Schorch, 'Contact Zones, Third Spaces, and the Act of Interpretation', *Museum and Society,* 11 (2013), 68-81 (p. 68).
[156] Carroll, p. 222.

Salish community, and a 'healing song' by Salish artist Susan Parvel, as a way of attributing authorship to Salish culture.[157] In addition to this, they produced empty plinths which emanated sound relating to the the missing objects, such as the sound of a sacred box being carved. These soundscapes represented the objects without creating a visual spectacle of them, and encouraged audiences to consider why they weren't able to be displayed.[158]

Other artists, such as Fred Wilson have engaged in more critical responses to the history of museums. Wilson's artistic engagement with collections began when he was working in the education departments of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the American museum of Natural History, and the American Craft Museum. As he recalled: 'Being an artist and being African-American and Native American, and actually working in the museum at the time, I was in a position to notice some of the incongruities in these spaces'.[159]

Wilson exploited these incongruities to highlight how the museum framed the work of art. For example, he produced an exhibition which situated contemporary works by invited artists within a gallery which he designed to look like an ethnographic museum. This had the effect of making curators who had previously been familiar with the work in a white cube context to reassess its meaning.[160]

This project inspired him to produce interventions into historical sites and collections, the first of which was called *Mining the Museum*, and was held at the Maryland Historical Society. Working in the museum for an extended period of time enabled him to get to know the vast collection which began in 1840. In particular, he was interested in those objects that weren't on display as 'what they put on view says a lot about a museum, but what they don't put on view says even more'.[161]

He opened the exhibition with a vitrine containing a silver globe with the word 'TRUTH' carved into it. In displaying this object, Wilson aimed to confront the audience with the idea of truth and encourage them to question whose truth was represented through the museum displays. He reinforced this message with two sets of pedestals, one on either side of the vitrine. One set displayed the three busts of people who had supposedly had

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[157] Ibid., p. 226.
[158] Ibid., p. 227.
[159] Karp and Wilson, p. 330.
[160] Ibid., p. 332.
[161] Ibid., pp. 334-335.

an impact on Maryland (Napoleon, Henry Clay, and Andrew Jackson), and the other displayed the names of historic Maryland residents who weren't represented in the collection (Harriet Tubman, Benjamin Banneker, and Frederick Douglass).[162]

As Wilson recounts, it was due to his Native American heritage that he was particularly moved by the cigar-store Indian statues, which suggested the Society's idea of an Indian rather than the social reality of which he was aware. In aiming to address this discrepancy, Wilson brought in photographs of contemporary Native Americans in Maryland and installed them on the wall facing the Indian sculptures.[163]

Fig. 12. Fred Wilson, Metalwork 1793-1880, Maryland Historical Society, 1992.

References to race were also invoked through the vitrine of silverware which he collected from the museum stores. The vitrine, simply labelled *Metalwork 1793-1880*, showed fine repoussé silver next to slave shackles to represent how 'the production of one was made possible by the subjugation enforced by the other'.[164]

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[162] Ibid., p. 335.
[163] Ibid., p. 335.
[164] Ibid., p. 336.

Wilson's responses to the objects in the Maryland Historical Society, as with other artists working in similar ways considered:

> the historical materiality of the objects they present in their displays; in other words, they care about where the objects came from, who owned them, how they were stored, how they were collected, how they were marketed, how they were (or are) used in different cultural traditions, and how they were (or are) part of a given cultural hegemony.[165]

As with Wilson's projects, an interest in the historical truth of the collection and what it represents, is inherent in the work of Susan Hiller. Hiller, who originally trained in anthropology and archaeology, first became interested in collections after she compiled an elaborate assemblage of Pueblo Indian pottery shards, complete with descriptive labels.[166]

Continuing in this field, she began to work with the collections of the Freud Museum to produce an installation which would be presented inside the museum. As a former residence, she was interested in both the personal and the public memories, as well as the 'layers and layers of meaning in the present'.[167]

Hiller's installation fused together concepts from art, ethnography, and psychoanalysis to produce a 'pseudo-scientific record, conjuring up ideas of the fetish in its presentation of artifacts. Records, objects, categories, histories, motifs, memories, and modes of forgetting'.[168]

The exhibition, entitled *At the Freud Museum*, consisted of a series of archeological collecting boxes. The use of archaeological collecting boxes referenced the collecting and sorting methods involved in creating typologies and chronologies from a site. Each box contained a word and image and an object to evoke a relationship between them in the mind of the viewer. Hiller saw these items as throwaway 'fragments and ruins and discards' as opposed to Freud's collection of antiquities. However, she noticed a

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[165] Jennifer A. Gonzalez, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art,* (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2008), p. 10.
[166] Putnam, p. 71.
[167] Susan Hiller, 'Working Through Objects' in *The Archive*, ed. by Charles Merewether (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: MIT Press), pp. 41-48 (p. 41).
[168] Denise Robinson, 'Encounters with the Work of Susan Hiller', in *Contemporary Art and Anthropology,* ed. by Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright (Oxford, UK and New York: Berg, 2006), pp. 71-83 (p. 76).

connection between both collections and mortality, recognising the sense of 'trying to seek immortality and meaning through objects'.[169]

Fig. 13. Susan Hiller, *At the Freud Museum*, The Freud Museum, London, 1994.

Working within the space of the museum also informed the format of the work, which was situated within a large vitrine in the exhibition space. This had the effect of incorporating the room and its history so as not to 'falsify the proposition that the room was offering'. It also encouraged visitors to engage in more 'careful viewing' of the work by examining each box in turn.[170]

More recently, projects by Turner Prize winner Elizabeth Price have also engaged directly with questions of artists working with collections and curating exhibitions. These included *A RESTORATION* at The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and the Hayward Touring Exhibition, *IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY.*

The first of these was produced with support from the Contemporary Arts Society and opened in March 2016. In response to the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers Museum archives,

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[169] Hiller, pp. 42-45.
[170] Ibid., p. 41.

Price produced a film exploring the imagery of the 1894 excavation of the Minoan Palace at Knossos on Crete. The soundtrack for the film included a digital voiceover, which poetically described and narrated the collection of images on-screen to support the viewer in their understanding of the archive, in the manner of a tour guide. The categorising structures of the museum were also alluded to in other ways. For example:

> A sequence towards the middle of the 20 minute film has the narrator/administrator, bored by the repetitiveness of their own procedures, playfully, or reprehensibly, raiding files of images to create alternative archives for their own use. Documents float digitally out of yellow files and layer into stacks of images that mimic the museology so characteristic of Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum, ignoring geographical origin or historical period but uniting objects through use-value.[171]

In June 2016, Price also curated a Hayward Touring exhibition of historical and contemporary art works which considered the reclining body as a figure for contemplation. This exhibition, *IN A DREAM YOU SAW A WAY TO SURVIVE AND YOU WERE FULL OF JOY*, included works by artists such as Constantin Brancusi, Richard Hamilton, Jenny Holzer, The Lumière Brothers, and Carolee Schneemann, and considered how the human body had been depicted in states of 'weariness, sleep, stupor, reverie, mourning, death and erotic transport or languor'.[172]

The curation process mirrored Price's approach to art making, through 'binding together many different types of existing cultural objects', and ultimately reflected how artist-curating can be seen as extension of the artist's own practice as much as an exhibition of other works.[173]

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[171] Caroline Douglas, *Elizabeth Price, A RESTORATION, the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford* (2016), <http://www.contemporaryartsociety.org/news/friday-dispatch-news/elizabeth-price-restoration-ashmolean-museum-oxford> [accessed 25th February 2017].
[172] The Whitworth, *Elizabeth Price Curates* (2016), <http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/upcomingexhibitions/elizabethpricecurates/> [accessed 25th February 2017].
[173] Anna Coatman, *New Horizons: Elizabeth Price on the downside of video art and trying curating* (2016), <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/article-ramagazine-elizabeth-price-interview> [accessed 25th February 2017].

Support by UK institutions for artist-curating has grown steadily as indicated by the aforementioned Hayward Touring commission which has supported a number of artists in curating exhibitions including Mark Wallinger, Mark Leckey, and Jeremy Deller.[174]

Projects have also developed at more regional levels with various heritage sites working with artists to bring new perspectives to their venues and collections. These projects are often managed and supported through commissioning programmes by organisations such as Arts&Heritage.[175]

These examples indicate some of the ways in which museums and institutions have worked with artists to uncover their histories and collections through new and innovative methods. Intervention strategies can provide a benefit to museums, as they have the potential to engage new audiences with museum collections. Equally, the resources and support provided by the institution can create huge opportunities in bolstering artists' careers and visibility. This relationship however, also carries the possibility of creating a dilemma for the artist who can quickly become co-opted into the very system that they are trying to disrupt.[176]

Artists' museums

As a way of critiquing the museum without becoming co-opted into its systems of representation, artists began to appropriate museum strategies and produce their own museums. This practice dates back to the 1930s, when Marcel Duchamp first created a portable museum of his own works in miniature entitled Boîte-en-valise. The case opened out to form a mini installation space allowing its owner to curate an exhibition of Duchamp's works.[177]

Portable museum collections have also been employed by organisations such as Fluxus as a way of collating and anthologising ephemera from their various events and happenings. Collections such as the *Fluxcabinet*, the *Flux Year Box* and *Fluxkits* were produced between 1963 and 1977 by the group's founder, George Maciunas. These

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[174] Southbank Centre, *Past Hayward Touring exhibitions,*
<https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/about/touring-programme/hayward-touring/past-exhibitions>
[accessed 25th February 2017].
[175] Arts&Heritage, <http://www.artsandheritage.org.uk> [accessed 5th March 2017].
[176] Miranda Stearn, 'Re-making utopia in the museum: artists as curators', *Museological Review*: *Museum Utopias Conference Issue*, 17 (2013), 36-47 (p. 38).
[177] Putnam, p. 19.

contained photographs, musical scores, leaflets, manifestos, and other objects and images from performances.[178] The *Fluxcabinet* was a wooden cabinet with 20 drawers containing works including *Excreta Fluxorum*, a taxonomic collection of insect faeces.

Another artist museum that used the cabinet format was Herbert Distel's *Museum of Drawers*. Comprised of 500 separate compartments, the cotton-reel cabinet housed miniature works dating from the 1960s and 70s.[179] The museum was shown at Documenta V, which was held in Kassel in 1972. This was also the setting for Claes Oldenburg's Mouse Museum, a collection of miniature objects from Oldenburg's studio which were displayed in a continuous vitrine.[180]

Showing alongside Oldenburg and Distel's museum in Kassel was Marcel Broodthaers' *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département de Aigles*. Broodthaers' artist museum was first displayed at his house in Brussels where it showed empty packing crates, postcards of French paintings, and slide projections. This was the nineteenth century section of the museum.

As this section was closing, visitors were transported to the second section which focused exclusively on the seventeenth century. More rooms were presented at the Cologne Art Fair in 1971 and the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf in 1972. The Cologne exhibition focused on the the financial elements of the museum and offered it for sale, whereas the Düsseldorf museum displayed over 300 objects in vitrines, all representing eagles in relation to the title of the museum. Each exhibit was also displayed alongside a label which read 'This is not a work of art' in French, German or English.[181]

The final appearance of the *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département de Aigles* at Kassel comprised of two sections; the *Section Publicité* and the *Section d'Art Moderne*. The first section was a documentary exhibition of the previous museums, featuring catalogues and photographs. The second consisted of signs, labels and arrows pointing to fictional areas of the museum. He also painted the words 'Museum/Musee' on the window and 'private property' on the floor of the gallery. He also changed both the words and the title

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[178] McShine, p. 83.
[179] Putnam, p. 19.
[180] Ibid., p. 20.
[181] Ibid., pp. 21-23.

of the exhibition halfway through the installation, so that it was now called the *Museum of Ancient Art, Department of Eagles, 20th Century Gallery*.[182]

These installations by Marcel Broodthaers aimed to make connections between words and images in order to question their relationship not only to each other but also to the museum context. In producing seemingly contradictory or misleading signs and labels, Broodthaers intention was to disrupt the authority of the museum of a place of truth that defines what is and what is not art.[183] In a similar way, Herbert Distel's *Museum of Drawers* and Claes Oldenburg's *Mouse Museum* also questioned what a museum could be through appropriating taxonomic strategies. Furthermore, the focus of Documenta on artist museums established it as a category in art practice.[184]

Critical focus on museums continued through the collection and curation of artworks and artefacts with works such as Daniel Spoerri's *Musée Sentimental* (1977-1989), Ann Hamilton's *Between Taxonomy and Communion* (1990), Christian Boltanski's *Réserve Du Musée Des Enfants*, and Mark Dion's *Tate Thames Dig* (1999-2000), among others. [185] All of these artist museums used cataloguing and archiving techniques in response to the museum site. However, while they encouraged audiences to reconsider their relationship with the authority of the museum, many of them retained the visual focus of the original through their use of traditional methods of display and engagement.

The Museum of Contemporary African Art

In contrast, Meschac Gaba's *Museum of Contemporary African Art* aimed to engage audiences through tactile and collaborative means. The *Museum of Contemporary African Art* is a twelve-room installation which was recently bought by Tate Modern, London. The installation was produced as a response to Gaba seeing European museums when visiting France and realising that they had an ambivalent relationship to Contemporary African Art. It was for this reason that he decided to create his own museum.[186]

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[182] Ibid., p. 24.
[183] Ibid., pp. 23-24.
[184] Ibid., p. 20.
[185] For further discussion about artists creating museums see *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* by James Putnam and *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* by Kynaston McShine.
[186] Kerryn Greenberg, 'Meschac Gaba: Framing a Space' in *Meschac Gaba: Museum of Contemporary African Art,* ed. by Kerryn Greenberg (London, UK: Tate Publishing, 2013), pp. 13-23 (p. 13).

Existing as a 'dense network of sculptures, drawings, paintings, photographs, videos, textiles, architectural models, design objects and assorted ephemera',[187] the *Museum of Contemporary African Art* explores questions of ethnography through addressing the interconnectedness of Europe and Africa. Produced as a reaction against the 'Authentic Primitive Art' encouraged by his European teachers and missionaries, Gaba's museum instead highlights the concomitant modernities at play.[188]

Gaba's museum interjects between the concepts of the ethnographic museum and the contemporary art museum through challenging assumptions of African ahistoricity. At the same time, it confronts the grand narrative of the museum as a project of modernity.[189] As Gaba's museum exists as a concept rather than a geographical space, it is able to rematerialise within any institution as a form of 'counter-colonisation'. As such, throughout its development, elements of the *Museum of Contemporary African Art* were exhibited at the Praterinsel, Munich (1998), the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (2000), the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2000), and Kunsthalle Bern (2000).[190]

The project developed over a number of years, from producing the first room in 1997 until finishing the installation in 2002. The first room to be presented was the *Draft Room*, which was produced as part of Gaba's residency at the Rijksakademie, Amsterdam. This room contained a collection of found and handmade objects, most notably Gaba's trademark coins and banknotes, which he used as a way to discuss devaluation of currency in his home country of Benin.

The banknotes, which had been cut into circles, were available for audiences to purchase as badges. This mimicked traditional museum fundraising strategies, as well as acting as a form of marketing for the project. The banknotes, which had been rendered useless through decommissioning, therefore became valuable once more.[191]

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[187] Okwui Enwezor, 'The Death of the African Archive and the Birth of the Museum: Considering Meschac Gaba's Museum of Contemporary Art', in *Meschac Gaba: Museum of Contemporary African Art,* ed. by Kerryn Greenberg (London, UK: Tate Publishing, 2013), pp. 29-49 (p. 30).
[188] Greenberg, p. 17.
[189] Enwezor, p. 40.
[190] Rutger Pontzen, 'The Perfect Infiltration' in *Meschac Gaba: Museum of Contemporary African Art,* ed. by Kerryn Greenberg (London, UK: Tate Publishing, 2013), pp. 51-56 (p. 55).
[191] Greenberg, p. 14.

From its inception, Gaba had the intention to produce twelve rooms in his museum, which included more traditional aspects of museum buildings, such as the *Library*, *Museum Shop*, and *Restaurant*, alongside more playful and participatory spaces, such as the *Humanist Room*, and the *Games Room*. These spaces opened up the question of what a museum is and could be by resisting usual taxonomic systems.[192]

Gaba explored the question of religion in Africa through his *Art and Religion Room*. This room displays a Jewish prayer shawl, alongside Hindu goddesses, statues of the Virgin Mary, dream catchers, traditional African sculptures and tarot cards. As a representation of contemporary Benin, the *Art and Religion Room* highlights the range of religions practiced in the country, often simultaneously. The display of these objects in an artistic context also references the historical treatment of African objects which were used for religious purposes by European museums.[193]

Fig. 14. Meschac Gaba, *Museum of Contemporary African Art*, Tate Modern, London, 1997-2002.

Collaborative practice is at the heart of Gaba's Museum, with invited artists contributing items to the *Museum Shop*, and the *Library*. Items provided for the shop by collaborators included postcards, bags, and brooches, alongside T-shirts from each of the institutions which hosted the room. The bicycles in the *Humanist Space* were originally produced as part of the Museum of Contemporary African Art at Documenta 11, Kassel. There, the

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[192] Ibid., p. 15.
[193] Ibid., p. 18.

bikes were available for members of the public to use around the city, extending the project beyond the walls of the museum.[194]

Although not classified as such, Gaba's museum shared traits with the form of practice from the 1990s categorised as Relational Aesthetics. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Relational Aesthetics refers to the realm of artistic practice that incorporates human relations.

As such, the museum created a social space where participants were encouraged to engage with work whilst raising questions about the state of museum practice and contemporary art. In this way, Gaba's museum explored elements of participation which I had been aiming to address through my previous experiments into co-production such as in my artist book installations.

Conclusion

This chapter considered the relationship between art and anthropology from the point of view of Western art practice. There have previously been issues with artists appropriating both anthropological methods and non-Western art and culture. However, recently these strategies have been applied to contemporary art practice in order to question both the previous appropriations by artists and the general framework of Western collecting practice.

These collecting practices, which began with the WunderKammer or Cabinet of Curiosity, and progressed to the modern museum, both framed and defined the objects within them. As such, objects were taken out of context and recontextualised within the space of the collection, separating them from their culture of origin. Artists have responded to the museum through interventions into collections. Museums engaging with artists have included the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, and the Freud Museum, London.

Equally, artists have produced their own collections as a critique of the museum. However many of these examples have been more formal in their comparisons without addressing the ways to incorporate their audiences in more participatory ways. Meschac Gaba's work began to explore this way of working, which inspired me to reflect again on

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[194] Ibid., p. 19.

a core aspect of my practice; that of curating projects which engaged audiences with the work directly.

These ideas are explored in more detail in the next two chapters. The first of these explores my production of a collection of postcards through the curation of images collected from artists. These images related to the questions raised by the museum in its various forms, and to the relationship of the image to the object collections. The role of the postcard as a souvenir and in the dissemination of images is taken up in the fourth chapter which explores these issues through a series of objects created to represent cities in England. As such, the links between art and anthropology are intrinsic to the work through the production of relational networks, interpretations, appropriations, and collections.

Chapter 3: The Imaginary Museum

The Imaginary Museum is a project that I produced between March 2014 and January 2016 in response to my previous explorations and continuing practice into artist-curating. The project and its iterations consisted of a series of postcards created from digital images. All images were sourced from artists through online open calls who submitted works in response to a brief which I set in order to create a portable museum. Works were selected and installed in the various venues to investigate concepts relating to the image of the work of art.[195]

Fig. 15. Louise Atkinson, *The Imaginary Museum*, The Tetley, Leeds, 2014.

This chapter details the production of this project in two parts. The first section outlines the key concepts that developed throughout the project in response to the different image

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[195] This project developed into four consecutive exhibitions, each investigating a different facet of the artwork as image. These exhibitions were *The Imaginary Museum,* The Tetley, Leeds (2014); *The Art Library as Archive,* Leeds College of Art (2015); *Monuments and Landmarks,* Leeds City Museum and b-side festival, Dorset, (2015); and *Mapping Memory*, 42 New Briggate, Leeds (2015).

submissions and the ways in which audiences responded to the work. The second considers how these concepts were implemented and understood through the work.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to and exploration of the main influences behind this project. These include André Malraux and his concept of *Le Musée Imaginaire* in his seminal work *Museum without Walls*, and Aby Warburg's image project, *Mnemosyne Atlas*. In this way it considers the contribution that photography has made to creating new dialogues and networked interpretations between works of art, and how this relates to the *Imaginary Museum* project.

As well as referencing the work of Malraux's imaginary museum, my use of the term 'imaginary' in the title of the work was intended to convey ideas of the photographic proxy of the work of art and the connections between the works that were imagined by the audience.

The use of technology and digital images in the production of the work is discussed in relation to the genre Post-Internet art. This explores the ways in which image reproduction has developed as a medium for disseminating and analysing artworks, both online and offline.

The project draws on my research into artists utilising museum strategies to explore grand narratives within collections. As such, the installation was housed in a custom made postcard rack which became a vehicle to synecdochically represent the museum archive. This mimesis of curatorial practice therefore contextualises the project within models of Institutional Critique.

Continuing my interest in Institutional Critique, I discuss the use of participatory practice within the Imaginary Museum project. This references collaborative modes of production, interpretation and dissemination on the part of the artist(s) and their audiences.

Through the postcard format, the project also considers the associations between capital and gifting as ways of producing value and relationships. This recalls the statement by Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska: 'Objects – while acting as tools, products,

works of art or commodities – are essentially vehicles for relationships between people'.[196]

The second part of the chapter details the specific postcard images, and how my selection of the work corresponds with my intended aims.

From the Imaginary Museum to The Mnemosyne Atlas

The conceptual elements of the Imaginary Museum project derived from the phrase 'The history of art is the history of what can be photographed', which is attributed to Andre Malraux, in relation to his research into image reproduction.[197]

In his publication, *Museum Without Walls*, Malraux attempted to establish families of images through the change in scale and removal of colour in photography.[198] As such, images produced from fragments and changes in scale therefore suggested new correlations between objects. However, these similarities, which Malraux refers to as the 'fictitious arts', bore close resemblance to the Modernist 'affinity' discussed in the previous chapter.[199]

Through evaluating Malraux's ideas, I also began to consider his relation to Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, another global collection of images, but one which sought to derive genuine connections between works of art. Warburg, a nineteenth century art historian, developed a system for tracing links between cultures by comparing images and photographs derived from various different cultural sources.

The *Mnemosyne Atlas* was Warburg's final project and was produced as part of his larger body of research, which he referred to as *KulturWissenSchaft*, or the Science of Culture. This method was intended to determine the psychological dimensions of a culture as evidenced through its works of art and material culture:

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[196] Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska, 'It's the Thought that Counts', in *Capital: A Project,* ed. by Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska (London, UK, Tate Publishing, 2011), pp. 30-34 (p. 31).
[197] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'Exhibitionary Complexes', in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations,* ed. by Ivan Karp, Corinne A. Kratz, Lynn Szwaja, and Tomas Ybarra-Frausto (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 35-45 (p.42).
[198] André Malraux, *The Psychology of Art Volume 1: The Museum without Walls*, trans. by Stuart Gilbert, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1949-50), p. 24.
[199] Ibid., p. 27.

Kulturwissenschaft, the science of culture, succinctly and clearly expresses the hopes and ambitions with which Warburg approached the task of analysing the psychological makeup of a civilisation or of a milieu through any of its manifestations or what he was to call Auffangspiegel, reflecting mirrors. For this function, the decoration of a marriage chest could be just as relevant as the fresco cycles of a palace, a temporary structure erected for a pageant as revealing as a cathedral, popular broadsheets, ballads, customs, rituals, amulets, games, anything and everything that formed part of the life of a community also deserved to be considered by Kulturwissenschaft as a cue to the mental life of a civilisation.[200]

Warburg's project, the *Mnemosyne Atlas* consisted of around 1000 images pinned to 40 separate panels. Although the original panels were lost during WWII, photographs of them still exist and are housed in the Warburg Institute in London, along with his personal library. These photographs of the Atlas show his collections of images, arranged according to different arguments constructed by Warburg.[201]

However, these panels were not designed to be fixed but to be shifted and rearranged in order to allow new narratives to be created and explored.[202] These configurations of images are recognised as elevating the status of iconology in art history. This led to developments in the study of iconology through his colleagues and students including Fritz Saxl, Erwin Panofsky, and Ernst Gombrich.[203]

The relationships that emerged between these images were the foundation upon which Warburg constructed his ideas of the 'Iconology of the Interval', whereby objects should not be classified according to art historical narrative, but rather through considering 'the contrasts, analogies, tensions, and anachronisms among them'.[204] These ideas also reflect Jacques Derrida's description of the archive as 'a place of consignation, where

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[200] Ernst H. Gombrich, 'Warburg Centenary Lecture', p. 41.
[201] Ernst H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography,* p. 283.
[202] Ibid., 284.
[203] Matthew Rampley 'Iconology of the interval: Aby Warburg's legacy', *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, 17 (2001), 303-324 (p. 303).
[204] Martha Blassnnig, 'Ekphrasis and a Dynamic Mysticism in Art: Reflections on Henri Bergson's Philosophy and Aby Warburg's Mnemosyne Atlas', in *New Realities: Being Syncretic*, ed. by Ascott/Bast/Fiel/Jahrmann/Schnel, (Wien & New York: Springer, 2009), pp. 42-45 (p. 42).

objects are [...] put in the company of other objects, in a collection of signs that are meant to produce a coherent corpus, system, or synchrony'.[205]

Fig. 16. Aby Warburg, *Mnemosyne Atlas*, The Warburg Institute, London 1924-29.

The use of image reproduction of artworks allowed scholars such as Warburg to observe these correlations as never before. While images of artworks were reproduced in this manner since the development of the printing press, photography as a method of reproducing images has exponentially increased our ability to analyse and disseminate artworks.

Photographic reproduction

As Peter Walsh explains in his essay, *The Rise and Fall of the Post-Photographic Museum*, photographic reproductions of artworks enabled the possibility of large-scale acquisitions of collections for 'post-photographic' museums such as the South Kensington Museum, now known as the V&A: 'In 1855, Thompson travelled to Toulouse to photograph the Jules Soulage collection of seven hundred and forty-nine objects, rich in French Renaissance material. This was the first known use of photography to reinforce a museum acquisition proposal'.[206]

Conversely, European collections such as the Louvre, the Uffizi, and the British Museum, which were established before the development of photography, were 'founded around

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[205] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever; A Freudian Impression*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz, (London, UK and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 3.
[206] Walsh, p. 25.

existing collections of originals, previously assembled by individual collectors, learned societies, or ruling dynasties'.[207]

Photography was also instrumental in promoting the work of artists and developing new income streams for galleries, through the sale of photographic images of works of art:

> Once the original objects were acquired, the South Kensington Museum used photography and printed museum catalogs strategically to establish such names as Andrea and Luca della Robbia and Giovanni Pisano in the art history canon. The museum sold photographs of the collections to the public and circulated selections to provincial art colleges. [208]

From the advent of photography until well into the twentieth century, photographs of works of art were deemed to be the epitome of authenticity and truth.[209] Since the expansion of digital photography and imaging software, however, the neutrality of the photographic image has been called into question:

> Museums now recognize that photographs of their own collections have never been neutral representations of works of art, but aesthetic objects in themselves, carefully adjusted to fit the tastes and ideas of the photographers and their employers.[210]

As previously discussed, the effect of the image on the art object has been a subject of debate and criticism, particularly by Walter Benjamin, who argues that the artwork has an aura that the image cannot replicate.[211] However, Peter Walsh suggests that this 'aura' is in fact created through the reproduction:

> Before photography, there were no "handmade originals" because there were no factory-produced photographs of the originals. It is, as we have already seen, the reproduction that confers status and importance on the original. The more

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[207] Ibid., pp. 23-24.
[208] Ibid., p. 26.
[209] Ibid., p. 22.
[210] Ibid., p. 31.
[211] Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, p. 5.

reproduced an artwork is - and the more mechanical and impersonal the reproductions - the more important the original becomes.[212]

Equally, the reproduction postcards in The Imaginary Museum gain an auratic element, due to the necessity of the audience to visit the postcard rack over a specific period, locating the work within that particular space and time.

Artist postcards

The image becoming artwork, as in the case of artist postcards, also challenges this 'poverty of the image'.[213] Despite Benjamin's concern about the work of art losing its aura through photographic reproduction, he was a keen collector of postcard images depicting works of art. The polychrome picture postcards he was so enamoured with began to be produced around three years after his birth in 1890.[214] The postcard medium was also the inspiration for his proposed publishing project in 1924, entitled *Aesthetics of the Picture Postcard*. Even though these plans didn't come to fruition, he remained committed to collecting postcard images throughout his life.[215] These collections are preserved in his archives, which also contain eight postcard art prints of Sibyl mosaics from the floor of the nave aisles in the cathedral at Siena.[216]

Many artists have appropriated the postcard medium since the early 1900s. Jeremy Cooper describes how artists from the Surrealists and Fluxus, through to more contemporary practitioners have produced exhibitions using postcards, involving collage, installation and other methods.[217]

After the war, the postcard became the perfect medium for mail art and was often used for the dissemination of intellectual ideas, as with the work of the British Modernist group, Art and Language.[218]

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[212] Walsh, p. 29.

[213] Hito Steyerl, *In Defense of the Poor Image,* (e-flux, 2009) <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/10/61362/in-defense-of-the-poor-image> [accessed 25 September 2016].

[214] Walter Benjamin, *Walter Benjamin's Archive*, ed. by Ursula Marx, Gudrun Schwarz, Michael Schwarz, and Erdmut Wizisla, trans. by Esther Leslie (London, UK and New York: Verso, 2007), p. 171.

[215] Ibid., p. 173.

[216] Ibid., p. 303.

[217] Jeremy Cooper, *Artists Postcards: A Compendium* (London: Reaction Books, 2015), pp. 42-47.

[218] Ibid., p. 74.

Examples include the Eiffel Tower postcard collections of Hans-Peter Feldmann. The Eiffel Tower was built in 1889, and images of the structure quickly became the most popular postcard, due its feature in the 1889 Paris Exposition.[219] Therefore, Feldman's *Untitled (Eiffel Tower)* (1990), highlights both the histories of commercial photography in tourism, and also the social history of collecting.

The ephemeral nature of the postcard and its link to mail art enable it to create a changing network of social relations, which I have attempted to recreate in my installations. These social relations were explored in a number of ways in the work: through the network of artists involved in the exhibition, the relationship of the images to the brief and to each other, and the audience participation of selecting postcards to collect or send.

Post-Internet art

The relationship between the digital image and the physical artefact is the subject of the genre known as Post-Internet art. Just as Bourriaud explains in *Postproduction* that '[t]he prefix 'post' does not signal any negation or surpassing [but] refers to a zone of activity',[220] so too does the 'post' in Post-Internet, which situates the Internet as a priori:

> Post-Internet art is a term coined by artist Marisa Olson and developed further by writer Gene McHugh in the critical blog 'Post Internet' during its activity between December 2009 and September 2010. Under McHugh's definition it concerns 'art responding to [a condition] described as 'Post Internet' – when the Internet is less a novelty and more a banality' […] Post-Internet is defined as a result of the contemporary moment: inherently informed by ubiquitous authorship, the development of attention as currency, the collapse of physical space in networked culture, and the infinite reproducibility and mutability of digital materials.[221]

My interest in the term Post-Internet as a way of conceptualising my work is linked to my use of technology as a tool to support my practice, either through my methods of working with other artists, researching image archives, or writing online. In the case of using

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[219] Schor., p. 213.
[220] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World*, trans. by Jeanine Herman (New York: Sternberg Press, 2002), p. 11.
[221] Artie Vierkant, *The Image Object Post-Internet,* 2010 <http://jstchillin.org/artie/pdf/The_Image_Object_Post-Internet_us.pdf> [accessed 17 September 2016].

technologies to transform images from a digital to a physical format, these explorations can be considered a form of communication or translation between real and virtual space.

My aim of bringing together related images to explore the concept of the museum was an attempt to explore an ongoing question of curatorial strategies as art practice. This 'exhibition as question' format is summed up by Vierkant in the concluding paragraph of his manifesto of Post-Internet art:

> The goal of organizing appropriated cultural objects after the Internet cannot be simply to act as a didactic ethnographer, but to present microcosms and create propositions for arrangements or representational strategies which have not yet been fully developed [...] What matters is that in the presentation they have created a proposition towards an alternate conception of cultural objects.[222]

Post-Internet art, otherwise known as Art after the Internet, has been taken up by increasing numbers of theorists and curators within mainstream museum culture. One such curator and writer is Omar Kholeif, whose recent book, *You are here: Art after the Internet*, questions the effect of Web 2.0 on the production and dissemination of art practice.

Kholeif presents a series of practices which can be collated under the Post-Internet rubric, such as James Bridle's *New Aesthetic*,[223] a term used to describe 'the increasing appearance of the visual language of digital technology and the Internet in the physical world, and the blending of virtual and physical.[224]

Using the vernacular of the network such as blog posts and YouTube videos, *The New Aesthetic* also incorporates social elements such as likes and comments. Its purposeful evasion of traditional research formats, such as books or essays, echoes its emergent content, Bridle instead preferring to consider the project as 'a work, a conversation, a performance, an experiment' rather than defining it in academic terms.[225]

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[222] Ibid.

[223] James Bridle, *The New Aesthetic*, <http://new-aesthetic.tumblr.com/about> [accessed 17 September 2016].

[224] James Bridle, 'The New Aesthetic and its Politics', in *You Are Here: Art After The Internet,* ed. by Omar Kholeif (Manchester, UK: Cornerhouse Publications, 2014), pp. 20-27 (p. 21).

[225] Ibid., p. 27.

Another contributor to Kholeif's book, Brad Troemel, reconsiders the history of photography to the online mediation of artworks, through the use of social media. Although this dissemination method can remove context from the work, Troemel believes that this can be beneficial for artists who now have a platform for 'strategically [managing] perceptions of their work – transforming it from a series of isolated projects to a streaming feed that transforms the artist's identity into a recognizable brand'.[226]

Despite technological advancements in communication through social media and other online platforms, the links between Post-Internet art, the history of photography and global networks highlight a mode of thinking that is visible in the work of Aby Warburg.

Similarities between Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, and search engines such as Google are explored by art historian and photographer, Teju Cole, in his essay *The Atlas of Affect*. Here, Cole considers artist Dina Kelberman's project *I'm Google*, in relation to the affective image cataloguing processes favoured by Warburg and Benjamin. Kelberman's curated images, sourced from Google and YouTube, take on an automated quality, and:

> viewers have sometimes assumed that I'm Google is simply the result of a very clever computer program, a bot set free on Google Image Search and directed to Tumblr, rather than the selective record of countless hours of looking and sifting'.[227]

Finding images through the use of keyword searches, Kelberman's curation processes include both visual and semantic similarities, but exclude any intentional artistic intent.

The principles of collection-building and curation have always been essential to the humanities. However, the impact of digitisation has raised exponential possibilities for the artefacts to be presented as 'being shaped by and shaping complex networks of influence, production, dissemination, and reception, animated by multilayered debates and historical forces'.[228] These developments are collectively known as the Digital

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[226] Brad Troemel, 'Art after Social Media', in *You Are Here: Art After The Internet* ed. by Omar Kholeif (Manchester, UK: Cornerhouse Publications, 2014), pp. 36-43 (p. 40).

[227] Teju Cole, *The Atlas of Affect*, <http://thenewinquiry.com/blogs/dtake/the-atlas-of-affect> [accessed 17 July 2015].

[228] Burdick, Anne, Johanna Drucker, Peter Lunenfeld, et.al., *Digital Humanities,* (Cambridge, MA and London, UK: MIT Press, 2012), p. 18.

Humanities which created enhanced forms of curation through the use of digitised archives and databases.[229]

The Imaginary Museum's role in this is to produce an offline, tactile, and affective presentation of images that can be manipulated by audiences in similar way to their digital counterparts.

Vitrines

My previous explorations of artists working in and through museums led me to consider the models and methods they they were employing to create these installations. I was particularly interested in the vitrine, a self-contained, and potentially portable space, as a defined boundary for objects to operate within.

Although the vitrine refers primarily to a glass case which houses objects to create a visual display, my own experiences of working with vitrines involved opening up these spaces to engage participants directly.

I began by creating open cabinets and shelves to display books that I had already produced. After first designing the cabinet around the finished books, I soon started to think about how the objects could be incorporated into the cabinet itself, making the display unit part of the book.

The aim of this process was to create an installation that worked in conjunction with its display methods, while also introducing interactive and participatory elements into the work. My intention was that the display cabinet, as well as being functional, would become part of the work; as a kind of portable museum.

Collaborative practice

Audience participation in *The Imaginary Museum* was also a defining factor, encouraging spectators to become collaborators. These kinds of collaborative activities have become more prevalent in art practice since the 1960s, with artists such as Joseph Beuys

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[229] Ibid., p. 8.

proposing a manifesto for 'social sculpture' which he believed had the power to transform society.[230]

These utopian ideals have since been disregarded by artists and theorists in favour of more pragmatic 'ways of living and models of action within the existing real'.[231] Participatory arts often take the form of experience over aesthetics, with international curators and writers such as Hans-Ulrich Obrist and Nicolas Bourriaud, working with artists to organise opportunities for audiences to engage with the work in new ways. Either existing as participatory exercises or as instructional works, this form of creative practice attempts to question the idea of the artist's individual genius, in favour of a more socially-engaged way of working.

One of Obrist's core pursuits as a curator of relational art is the generative exhibition *Do It*, which has been produced in twenty different locations. In each venue, the exhibition consists of a series of written instructions provided by artists, alongside physical works produced from these instructions, or as props to be used for audience participation.

Artists represented in the exhibition included Tacita Dean, Lucy Lippard, Erwin Wurm, Yoko Ono, and Cory Arcangel. Its last iteration, at Manchester Art Gallery in 2013, was also accompanied by a historical timeline of previous interventions, giving context to the overall concept.[232]

These participatory and relational practices echo the work of Nicolas Bourriaud, described previously. Although these activities have their origins earlier in the twentieth century, Claire Bishop concludes that '[o]ne of the achievements of Bourriaud's book was to render discursive and dialogic projects more amenable to museums and galleries',[233] thus ensuring their continued support and development into the 21st century.

In this way, participatory practice has been a particular concern of Tate Modern, who, since opening in 2000, have regularly programmed large-scale installations in their

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[230] Laurie Rojas, *Beuys' Concept of Social Sculpture and Relational Art Practices Today* (Chicago Art Magazine, 2010) <http://chicagoartmagazine.com/2010/11/beuys%E2%80%99-concept-of-social-sculpture-and-relational-art-practices-today> [accessed 29 September 2016].
[231] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* p. 13.
[232] Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Do It,* (2013) <http://doit2013.org> [accessed 29 September 2016].
[233] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London, UK and New York: Verso, 2012), p.2.

monumental Turbine Hall space to encourage audiences to engage physically with works of art. Such installations included Louise Bourgeois' *I Do, I Undo, I Redo* (2000), three towers which visitors were encouraged to climb in order to facilitate new encounters between strangers, as well as Carsten Höller's *Test Site* (2006), large metal sculptural tubes descending from different floors within the gallery created as slides for audiences to enjoy.[234]

Another term for this participatory turn in contemporary art is usership. In stark contrast to the modernist ideals of authorship and ownership, usership eschews expertise in favour of the DIY and remix culture propagated by the internet.[235]

Stephen Wright's *Towards a Lexicon of Usership* explores the different facets of this practice through 'retiring seemingly self-evident terms (and the institutions they name), while at the same time introducing a set of emergent concepts'.[236] One of the main factors in Wright's 'lexicon' that particularly correlates with my project The Imaginary Museum is the concept of 1:1 scale. Wright describes initiatives utilising 1:1 scale as 'both what they are, and propositions of what they are':[237]

> When an art-informed practice is ramped up to the 1:1 scale, deactivating its primary aesthetic function and activating instead its usual or useful function, there's no sure way of seeing it as art [...] To perceive such practices as art requires some supplementary theoretical information [...] letting us know that the initiative's existence does not exhaust itself in its function and outcome, but that it is about something.[238]

The Imaginary Museum fulfills this definition through being both a museum postcard rack for people to collect ephemera, as well as an installation enacting the systems of democratising and commercialising artworks. This 'double ontology' allows audiences to approach the work on a number of levels, as they are already familiar with the process of purchasing postcards in a museum. However, as the postcards featured were

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[234] Tate Modern, Turbine Hall, <http://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-modern/turbine-hall> [accessed 5th March 2017].

[235] Stephen Wright, *Toward a Lexicon of Usership,* (Eindhoven, NL: Van Abbemuseum, 2013) http://museumarteutil.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Toward-a-lexicon-of-usership.pdf [accessed 18 September 2016] p. 1.

[236] Ibid., p. 1

[237] Ibid., p. 3.

[238] Ibid., p. 6.

themselves created and submitted by artists, the audience are also encouraged to consider the value of the postcards as limited edition artworks, rather than merely photographic reproductions.

This co-production method, involving multiple artists and audiences in the artwork, is revisited in Nicolas Bourriaud's 2002 follow up to *Relational Aesthetics*, *Post Production*, where he focuses on the co-produced and networked elements of contemporary art practice.

Here, Bourriaud details the increase in artists using appropriation, interpretation, and re-mixing of existing artworks and creative forms, a process which is made more accessible by the Internet.[239] However, despite situating the origins of this practice in the readymades of Marcel Duchamp and Dada,[240] he describes how appropriation is only the first stage of Postproduction:

> Postproduction analyzes a set of modes of production, [...] going beyond what we call 'the art of appropriation', which naturally infers an ideology of ownership, and moving toward a culture of the use of forms, a culture of constant activity of signs based on a collective ideal: sharing.[241]

Capital and Gifting

Postcards, as an ephemeral medium, can be subject to a thoughtless collection impulse. The excess of printed material available as flyers, posters, and newspapers, has conditioned the public to take and discard objects that are freely available. Bourriaud recounts an experience of an exhibition by Felix Gonzales-Torres:

> I saw visitors grabbing handfuls of sweets and cramming as many of them as they could into their pockets: they were being confronted with their own social behavior, fetishism and their cumulative concept of the world.[242]

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[239] Bourriaud, *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay,* p. 8.
[240] Ibid., p. 17.
[241] Ibid., pp. 2-3.
[242] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* p 56.

I wanted to avoid this scenario, so, unlike Gonzales-Torres, who relies on a sense of personal and collective responsibility in his work, I decided to overtly convey the idea of value within *The Imaginary Museum*, whilst encouraging people to participate.

To achieve this, I installed an honesty box next to the postcard rack, with a suggested donation of 50p per card, which was reinvested back into the project. This had the effect of mirroring the process of purchasing postcards from a museum shop, as well as slowing down the interaction of the viewers, who had to consider which cards they wanted to collect. Although the honesty box wasn't staffed, invigilators overheard visitors discussing their favourite postcards and asking if they could own the full collection, despite not having the requisite funds.[243]

These methods highlighted two related concepts within the work; those of capital and gifting. The concept of capital is of particular relevance to relational works. Nicolas Bourriaud believes that the turn towards relational and experiential works is a result of the abstraction of economic globalisation:

> Art tends to give shape and weight to the most invisible processes. When entire sections of our existence spiral into abstraction as a result of economic globalization, when the basic functions of our daily lives are slowly transformed into products of consumption (including human relations, which are becoming a full-fledged industrial concern), it seems highly logical that artists might seek to rematerialize these functions and processes.[244]

The forms of capital inherent in *The Imaginary Museum* were: the 'institutional capital' of the venues displaying the work, the 'accumulated labor and tools of production'[245] supplied by the various artists involved in the project, and the donations provided by members of the public. The value of the work was determined not only by the judgement of the audience, but also how much they were able to pay. Through negotiating these multiple agencies the project therefore aimed to disrupt a traditional capitalist agenda, whereby consumers are cut off from the production process.

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[243] As the aim of the donations was not to generate profit, audiences were made aware that this was a voluntary donation and that whatever they wanted to pay was acceptable.
[244] Bourriaud, *Postproduction. Culture as Screenplay,* p. 32.
[245] Ibid., p. 16.

The artists involved were also interested in the potential opportunities for promoting their practice through the project, as an alternative capital of sharing and liking, akin to social media.[246]

Ideas of capital have been investigated by other artists including Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska in their 2001 exhibition at Tate Modern. Introducing the programme, Lars Nittve, director of Tate Modern (1998-2001) wrote:

> With their project 'Capital', the artists have cut through and laid bare layer upon layer of micro- and macro- systems of structure, meaning and value in the museum and […] its place in society's systems of value, production and exchange.[247]

Their explorations of the histories and relationship between the Bank of England and the Tate considered ideas of capital and the gift, in particular the ways in which the institutions were established through loans and gifts of money and artworks.[248]

These explorations facilitated 'a series of encounters […] between [these] two iconic institutions and the economies they animate; […] triggered by the issue of a gift [in the form of] a beautiful limited edition artwork'.[249]

The relationship between capital and the gift has also been explored by philosophers, sociologists and linguists. Emile Benveniste considers that, as giving and taking have the same linguistic roots, then '[c]onsequently, giving is indistinguishable from the obligation to return, and thus debt'.[250] This argument is reiterated by Derrida, who describes the impossibility of the gift:

> For there to be a gift, there must be no reciprocity, return, exchange, countergift, or debt. If the other gives me back or owes me or has to give me back what I give him or her, there will not have been a gift, whether this restitution is immediate or

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[246] Troemel, p. 41.

[247] Lars Nittve, 'Foreword', in *Capital: A Project*, ed. by Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska (London, UK, Tate Publishing, 2011), pp. 6-7 (p. 7).

[248] Frances Morris, 'Gift, Economy, Trust' in *Capital: A Project*, ed. by Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska (London, UK, Tate Publishing, 2011), pp. 8-15 (pp. 13-14).

[249] Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska, 'Enthusiasts, and the Enthusiasts Archive', <http://www.ecoledumagasin.com/session17/IMG/pdf/enthusiasts_archive.pdf> [accessed 20 September 2016].

[250] Jeremy Valentine, 'I.O.U. Nothing' in *Capital: A Project*, ed. by Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska (London, UK, Tate Publishing, 2011), pp. 36-53 (p. 44).

whether it is programmed by a complex calculation of a long-term deferral or differance.[251]

Derrida's work is a development on the seminal text by Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. First published in 1925, it explored the anthropological basis of gift-giving, in particular that of the 'potlatch'.[252]

These studies have also been cited in works by theorists Lewis Hyde, and Jeremy Valentine. Valentine describes potlatch as:

> a communal festival in which the community is affirmed by the consumption of the resources on which it relies, and which in their production organises the social relations of the community itself which potlatch destroys in order for such relations to be rebuilt, thus giving purpose to the labour of production itself. [253]

This 'symbolic economy' requires an ongoing circulation of property to maintain interpersonal relationships. As Hyde describes: 'In the world of gift […] you not only can have your cake and eat it too, you can't have your cake unless you eat it'.[254]

In the case of *The Imaginary Museum*, the audience collected the postcards in return for a donation. However, this donation was not enforced or expected, but only in place to convey the idea of value to the ephemeral works. Hyde writes that 'a gift must always be used up, consumed',[255] so when donations were given, the money was collected and reinvested into the project to ensure that new exhibitions could be created.

Equally, although money was involved in the transactions undertaken in *The Imaginary Museum*, the fact that the work had been co-produced by a curated 'community of artists' created an obligation to reinvest any profit back into the project to benefit the community as a whole. Marx described these forms of 'trading communities' with the term 'interstice',

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[251] Jacques Derrida, *Given time: I. Counterfeit Money,* trans. By Peggy Kamuf (London, UK and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 12.

[252] Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies,* trans. by Ian Cunnison (London: Cohen and West Ltd, 1966), p. 12.

[253] Valentine, p. 50.

[254] Lewis Hyde, *The Gift* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2007), p.27.

[255] Ibid., p.8.

due to the fact that they 'elude the capitalist economic context by being removed from the law of profit: barter, merchandising, autarkic types of production, etc'.[256]

Hyde's work on the gift was particularly relevant as it applied ideas of economics, anthropology and folklore to the work of art. Unlike participatory practices which are produced in conjunction with the audience, Hyde suggests that art which is produced solely for the market is used up by the economic transaction, in the way that 'Capitalism [...] remove[s] surplus wealth from circulation and lay[s] it aside to produce more wealth'.[257]

However, ideas of gift and commodity aren't necessarily mutually exclusive, but an examination of their defining factors can help to establish '[t]o what degree may one draw from the other without destroying it?' [258]

The nature of the work displayed in *The Imaginary Museum* also lent itself to the sending and sharing of postcards, a traditional form of gifting to maintain communication when visiting a new place. Although I expected that people would be interested in producing their own collections, a number of people expressed how they had selected particular images as they had reminded them of someone, and they wanted to pass the postcard on to that person. Others took the postcards on holiday with them to send back to friends and family 'leav[ing] a series of interconnected relationships in [their] wake'.[259]

The implementation

To produce the exhibition, I invited artists, through an online call, to submit new or existing images relating to the idea of the museum or archive. Each of the selected images was produced as a multiple edition A6 postcard to create a collection of 18 different images for audiences to choose from.

Working with other artists was integral to the success of *The Imaginary Museum*. For the purposes of the project, artists were self-defined as opposed to being defined by having particular qualifications or experience. I felt that it was important to include images

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[256] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* p. 16.
[257] Hyde, p. 38.
[258] Ibid., p.277.
[259] Ibid., p. xvii.

produced by artists in the project, rather than any other social group, as I wanted the producers of the images and the audience to value the postcards as artworks.

The internet as a tool to facilitate relationships and interaction was also played out in the methods employed in producing *The Imaginary Museum*. Using an online platform to engage artists in the project gave me access to a much broader scope of work. Artists were able to quickly upload their information and images for me to select and download to be produced as postcards.

The Imaginary Museum

The first exhibition (*The Imaginary Museum*) was shown as part of the *International Contemporary Artists Book Fair* at The Tetley, Leeds from 7th - 23rd March 2014. My rationale for selection was to present artwork that represented a diverse range of materials and approaches to the theme. As in the case of Warburg's photographs of his Atlas panels, or Malraux's self-portrait selecting images for his museum, the focus was on images that distilled the essence of the archive into a single image, rather than photographs of individual objects.

Some of the images were of photographs taken of existing works of art, while some were produced as postcards specifically for *The Imaginary Museum*. I was interested in representing curating as art practice, therefore, the work I selected for the project responded to the theme through ideas of real and fabricated collections, museum methods and display, interpretation, and the role of reproduction in archives.

Joanna Brown's image *Twentyeight Fingers* (2012) consisted of a collection of bronze casts taken from the index fingers of creative people. These objects, through their uniqueness of form, signified the diversity of creative practice, but their uniform method reflected the museum's rigid structures of classification.

Jeni McConnell's photograph was taken from her curatorial project, *Thirty Instruments loaned by Ladies* (2013). These personal artefacts had previously been part of a performance at the Harris Museum & Art Gallery in Preston, UK, where the objects were installed as part of the performance. Through exhibiting installation and classification methods, McConnell aimed to highlight the processes which are typically unavailable to the public.

Fig. 17. Amelia Crouch, *Untitled (Primitive Physic)*, Installation, 2011

Personal artefacts were also of interest to artists Alice Bradshaw and Chris Taylor. Bradshaw's image contained selected objects from her project *Museum of Contemporary Rubbish* (2012), where she collected every item of rubbish from her art practice, and then meticulously catalogued it.

Taylor's photograph *Family Archive* (2014) featured six egg cups that were representative of a larger collection of similar objects. These objects, found at flea markets and charity shops, expressed a childhood nostalgia, represented in the eclectic assemblage of mass-produced objects.

Other postcards included in the exhibition related to existing museum collections and archives. Artists including Amelia Crouch, Heather Chou, Silvie Fisch, Emilio Macchia, Kate Morrell, and Theresa Easton explored these museums and archives through the processes of reorganisation, documentation and interpretation.

Crouch's documentary photograph, *Untitled (Primitive Physic)* (2011), was taken as part of her inclusion in the *Hunter Gatherer* exhibition at Project Space Leeds. Her installation

was a response to the Artemis object archive, a handling collection of over 10,000 artefacts and works of art. Produced as an exploration of the organisation of knowledge, Crouch process for connecting objects was 'based on visual similarity or idiosyncratic associations, encouraging the viewer to imagine their own links between these items'.[260]

The images in Chou's postcard *The Whitworth* (2014) underwent several transformations. Originally existing as a collection of prints in the Whitworth Gallery archive, they were photographed by Chou and then reproduced as limited edition screenprints, before being rendered as digitally produced postcard images.

A collection of found objects were the inspiration for Fisch's image, *Lake Treasures* (2012). Depicting objects that were collected from the bottom of Leazes Park Lake after it was drained, the image highlights the way that collections are created from disparate objects, due to the nature of their discovery.

I selected a number of artists based on their explorations of the logistics of the museum and archive. Emilio Macchia's *Bits & Pieces — Charles Nypels Archive* (2012) depicted these archival spaces through schematic screenprint image of the Charles Nypels Archive at the JvE Academie, Maastricht.

Jon Eland and Richard Shields work featured the invigilator as a key aspect of the museum space. Eland's digital image Reconstructed (2014), referenced historical re-enactments to explore 'the nature of the photographic and performative reconstruction in relation to the truth of the museum'.[261] To this end, he inserted photographs of battle re-enactments taken by a gallery attendant into the frame of the museum space.

Shields' *Attendance Figure* (2009), drew on his own experience as a gallery invigilator. Rendering the world famous and eminently reproducible painting, the Mona Lisa, in the tally marks that he used to count visitor footfall, emphasised the more mundane aspects of the management of creative objects and spaces.

Gallery interpretation was also addressed in the exhibition through the work of Kate Morell and Theresa Easton. Morrell's drawing, *Animal, Vegetable, Mineral?* (2014) 'explore[d] the tensions between the subjective and objective in the interpretation and

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[260] Louise Atkinson, *The Imaginary Museum*, <http://abcarchive.blogspot.co.uk> [accessed 29 September 2016].
[261] Ibid.

display of archaeological evidence',[262] whereas Easton's *Two Thousand Insects* (2012), was produced in response to the natural history collection of the Lit and Phil Society in Newcastle, UK.

Some of the selected works contained references to typical taxonomies of natural history such as butterflies, in the case of Louise Tett's *Accretion* (2014), and the soil samples which were carefully labelled and photographed by Trevor Borg in *Landline* (2013).

Everyday objects were classified according to typologies through the use of digital imaging in Katya Robin's *Bucket List* (2014) and Laurie Woodruf's *Trivialogue* (2014), whereas Charlotte Furness presented an image of a fabricated artefact, *The Bad Faeries Tooth Collection Kit* (2011).

Finally, Manya Doñaque submitted an image from her ongoing project, *The Museum of the Senses and Non-archivable Material* (2013). Doñaque's photographic imagery explored the possibilities for museum collections to collect ephemeral and affective materials.

Art Library as Archive

The interest generated from the initial exhibition encouraged me to continue with the project. This continuation allowed me to reflect on particular aspects and questions which had emerged from the first collection to produce a further exhibition.

The second exhibition took place in March and April 2015 as part of Leeds College of Art's *Library Interventions* programme. *Library Interventions* was a short-term residency programme which invited artists to respond to the college art library through modes of searching, collating, recording, and connecting.

This setting determined the brief for the project, entitled *Art Library as Archive* and took its concept from Barthes' description of the photograph as a 'laminated object', an object that 'always carries its referent with itself'.[263] Artists responded to questions including: Are the images of artworks, such as those found in art books, a different kind of object to

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[262] Ibid.
[263] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography,* trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1979/2010), pp. 5-6.

the original? What is the relationship of the object to its referent? and How can art reproduction be a creative act?

Focusing specifically on the relationship of photography to the work of art, the images referenced new and existing artworks, as well the nature of the art library as archive through imagined collections, systems, documentation, and classifications of art. This exhibition explored the series of supportive and contradictory networks, both within the images contained in each book, and within the overall collection and classification of the library.

The selected works were split between aspects of classification, interpretation and photographic reproduction. Artists exploring classification included Garry Barker, Bertie Smith, Katya Robin, and Paul Jex. The Dewey Decimal System was a particular source of inspiration for artists Barker and Robin. Barker's *What's my number?* (2014), was produced in response to library call numbers and a desire to create work more intuitively, without the weight of art history.

Fig. 18. Sarah Binless, *Mnemonic for Stone*, Digital photograph, 2014.

Robin's classificatory practice explored typographical elements to depict library categories in a visual format. Her postcard, *12 TYPES* (2015), showed word-images produced using Adobe InDesign, to represent categories from the Arts and Recreation section of the library.

Jex's practice explored the relationship between art and its audience. His submission for *Art Library as Archive* was a postcard depicting the chronologically organised obituaries of artists from the Guardian newspaper. *Artists Obituaries – Red* (2015) explored how the dissemination of specific artworks both shapes and is created by art history.

Bertie Smith's image, *The Paper Museum: The Collection* (2014) was of artist books exploring the theme of classification. Taking the literal book form in reference to the library, Smith's work challenged the idea of classification, and its potential to close down alternative interpretations.

The relationship of photography to the work of art was a concern of artists Aylwin Greenwood-Lambert, Martha Jean Lineham, Alia Zapparova, Mia Cuk, Sarah Binless, Malina Busch, and Julie Cassels. Greenwood-Lambert took inspiration from films featuring unknown works of art, digitally cropping and collaging the works into the image *Screen Stars (Pragmatic Arrangement ii)* (2015). This used photographic reproduction as both form and concept by questioning the authenticity of these re-photographed works as being produced by artists or simply as film props.

Photographic technologies were explored by artists Martha Jean Lineham, and Alia Zapparova and Mia Cuk (collectively known as Dust Studies). Lineham's *Postcard, photo, slide, photo, postcard* (2015) featured a digital rendering of twelve slides from Manchester Metropolitan University's Visual Resources Centre. As the title describes, the work detailed the cyclical journey of the images from postcard to photograph to slide and back again.

Zapparova and Cuk's image, *Can you imagine a being more crazed with sadness than a messenger who can deliver nothing?* (2013) was named after a quote by the filmmaker and critic, Mark Cousins. To produce the image, they photographed found glass negatives resting against white wall. The effect of the sunlight shining through the glass allowed them to capture both the negative and its projected image within the photograph.

Mnemonic for Stone (2014), by Sarah Binless, also explored the illusory nature of images. The postcard shows an image of a stone which has been bisected by a mirror. Although suggestive of a complete object, in fact '[t]he mirror creates an illusory counterpart to the visible half of the stone; it both curtails and completes it'.[264]

Malina Busch and Julie Cassels both explored affect in the colour and texture of fabric. Busch's image of one of her folded paintings, *Curl Up* (2014) aimed to capture the ephemerality of sensory memories through physical and visual means. Cassel's response to the library archive took the form of images from an altered book. This ongoing project, *Seeing Differently - Adjusted Library*, used images from art history books but eliminated everything except drapery to focus on the sensorial details of viewing art.

Artists were also keen to address questions of interpretation, through responding to existing images, or making visible the processes of creating art. Simon Parish's, *Dutch portraits 1971* (2012), repurposes found studio portraits to create original oil paintings. This shift from reproduction to original and back references the nature of image as art object.

Isabella Martin focused on objects from antiquity, producing the image/object, *Grip* (2012), in response to a goblet from Cyclades, dated 3200-2800 BC. This interpretation aimed to address the recycling and remembering of images through art history.

Louise Finney, Karen David, Shaeron Caton-Rose, and Barbara Greene took the relationship between image and text as their point of departure. Finney's image *From 'An Illustrated Accompaniment to The Arcades Project'* (2015), showcased a double page spread from an artist book made in 2013 in response to Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*.

Meanwhile, David's photograph, *UFO Museum, Roswell, NM* (2014), was the inspiration for her creative writing entitled *Tony Yellow: The Unbeliever*, an excerpt of which she supplied for the reverse of the postcard. This image with its panels of photographs was also reminiscent of Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas*, mentioned earlier in the chapter.

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[264] Louise Atkinson, *Art Library as Archive*, <http://abcarchive.blogspot.co.uk> [accessed 29 September 2016].

Caton-Rose's, *Exhibition for Beginners (Untitled)* (2015), was a digital image created as a postcard. The card presented an image alongside text descriptions supplied by audience members. These images allowed the audience interpretations to be considered as an element of the work.

Greene investigated the significance of the title in relation to the artwork. Her image, *China Hands* (2013), depicted a collection of blue and white pottery shards featuring people in 18th century dress presented in a box, and asked how the title *China Hands* impacted on how the audience viewed the work.

Lastly, artists Paul Glennon and Ruth Rosengarten explored the making of art history and exposure to artworks as fundamental to developing their own creative practice. Glennon's, *Artist Infinitum* (2015), depicted a cyclical process of mastery, making, and marketing of artwork through contextualising creative practice with art history.

Rosengarten responded to the idea of the library and practice through the collection of tickets and other ephemera related to her art practice. She then reused these objects and images in future artworks. In this way, *Paper trail: 14 years* (2015), echoed the sentiments expressed by Alice Bradshaw in the *Imaginary Museum* exhibition, creating links across the collections.

Monuments and Landmarks

Following the *Art Library as Archive* exhibition, I was awarded funding from the Centre for Practice-Led Research (CEPRA) at the University of Leeds to pursue the project further. This led to the production of the *Monuments and Landmarks* exhibition, which I curated as part of the Heritage Show and Tell event organised by the Centre for Critical Studies in Museums, Galleries and Heritage (CCSMGH) at Leeds City Museum. The exhibition and presentation took place in July 2015 and responded to ideas of tourism, public space, architecture, and memory.[265]

Images of monuments as postcards are doubly indicative of cultural placemaking, through the use of the quintessential tourist artefact, coupled with elements of local and

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[265] The *Monuments and Landmarks* project continued to be shown for a further three months in the foyer of the Old Mining Building at the University of Leeds. It was also the subject of a presentation as part of *The Excursionist* symposium, organised by b-side festival in Portland, Dorset on 9 October 2015.

global iconography. However, these images can also become the definitive example of a place.

I was interested in images which attempted to subvert the notion of what constituted a sight through reclassifying local landmarks into significant tourist highlights. An example of this was the photograph *The Aegyptian Gates* (2015) by Dr James Lattin. Lattin's image was donated from his own artistic project *The Museum of Imaginative Knowledge*, a growing historiography of the town of Angarth. This image was one of a series of unheralded monuments which make up the newly developed area of his museum called the *Department of Rural Typologies*.

Fig. 19. Lesley Hicks, *Templehof and Fernsehturm*, Watercolour, 2014.

Other artists, such as Lesley Hicks, responded by producing the watercolour image, *Tempelhof and Fernsehturm* (2014) to depict the political history East Germany in the manner of the artist on a grand tour. Anwyl Cooper-Willis catalogued the numerous electricity substations of Stoke-on-Trent, in *The Beauties of Stoke-on-Trent* (2008/2015), which she described as decorative flights of fancy by their architects.

The relationship between aesthetics and utility was also of interest to artists Katya Robin and Barbara Greene. Robin's image *Standard Jellies* (2015) referenced the imperial Standard Measures, which are set into the floor outside Sheffield Town Hall. Robin's work replicated the existing Standard Measures in jelly which were then photographed over the unused measures. Greene's photograph, *Milestone: landmark, monument, sculpture* (2015), also explored alternative readings of historical and now irrelevant measuring systems, which she augmented with a verso-text of related terms.

As *The Imaginary Museum* was inspired by the *Mnemosyne Atlas*; a network of images designed to chart the influence of Antiquity in the Renaissance, images which represented this collaging of media and time periods were also included. Rachel Sims work, *Scissors, Paper, Stone* (2013) showed an installation of cardboard architecture interspersed with a collection of stone heads from buildings which had been selected from Wakefield Museum, to show renewal and reinvention in architecture.

Ideas of the city as palimpsest were also expressed in Samuel O'Donnell's *Strata* (2013), an image that depicted the 1960s high rise flats BlueVale and Whitevale. Taken from Glasgow's Necropolis, the photograph shows the layering of history through architecture. Garry Barker's image *Monument for a Future Past* (2015) also explored the idea of modernist architecture as a failed utopian vision.

Charlie Harcombe and John Carroll explored proposed and imaginary monuments through sculpture and drawing. Harcombe's photograph *Beckett's Memento* (2013) was of a multiple that he produced. The multiple was cast in plaster from paper cups and coated with a faux granite finish. The multiple was inspired by a similar maquette that he proposed for a monument in Stoke-on-Trent. Carroll's image *Boundary in my Head* (2015) played with scale and form through creating miniature cityscapes from household items and then rendering them as charcoal drawings.

Artists such as Aylwin Greenwood-Lambert, Laurie Woodruf, and Emma Dolphin focused on the materiality and conceptual elements of the postcard itself. Greenwood-Lambert's image consisted of a sculptural construction of framed postcards of monuments, dating from 1925. The name of the work *Genuine Artefacts* (2012),

referred both to the monuments depicted and also to the postcards, which had become artefacts due to the passage of time.

Woodruf explored the Leeds landscape for inspiration, producing the digital drawing *Leeds Postcard* (2014), which featured the architecture and monuments of the city. Whereas, Dolphin utilised the postcard motif to reappropriate the landscape shaped by industry and agriculture in *Land / Mark* (2015).

These images raised questions about public space in relation to monuments and landmarks. This was reflected in the image *A Practiced Place* (2012) by Sun Ju Lee, which mimicked a topographical landscape created from layers of activity. This ephemerality also related to other images selected for the collection.

As the idea of the souvenir invoked an act of remembering, I also included memorials as a category, to reflect their instance as a style of monument. However, the examples I chose were specifically related to personal memorials such as roadside shrines to highlight the importance of photography in capturing these instances, as well as its inability to reproduce the affective experience of mourning.

These ideas were represented in Archie Salandin's sculptural work *Enough Said* (2014), which was reminiscent of a memorial wreath, and Manya Donaque's photograph *Performing Cultural Heritage* (2015), from her *Museum of the Senses and Non-Archivable Material*. Donaque's work examined the relationship between ephemeral art, live art and archives and considered the deterioration of ideas, rituals, and recordings due to the archival process. Such monuments are representative of trauma tourism, whereby sites of trauma become spaces for tourists to visit to confront their feelings about these places.

These images suggested a use associated with meeting places, which was reflected in the final two images by Fiona Grady and Simon Parish. Both of these images depicted trees, one from Leeds, UK and one from Jarkarta, Indonesia. Grady's image *In my hand* (2015) was of a re-photographed glass lantern slide of the oak tree that once stood on the site of the Original Oak pub in Headingley, Leeds. The pub as a landmark and place

of congregation became 'laminated'[266] with the idea of the tree through its naming, evoking a sense of history.

Parish's *Battered Banyon Tree* (2014) explored the idea of the Banyon tree as a meeting point in Indonesia. These trees are also seen to have spiritual and symbolic powers and Parish's drawing depicted a tree that had been attacked to challenge these beliefs.

Mapping Memory

The final iteration of *The Imaginary Museum*, *Mapping Memory*, was produced in conjunction with *The Grand Art Project* at 42 New Briggate in Leeds. This project was produced alongside, and in relation to, key themes from the *British Art Show*, which took place at Leeds Art Gallery from October 2015 to January 2016.

As curators of the *British Art Show*, Anna Colin and Lydia Yee, explained in their curatorial statement for the exhibition, there has been a resurgence in engagement with materiality after the rise of digital practices in the 1990s and early 2000s. This correlation between the real and the virtual:

> investigates new thinking around materiality and reflects on the meaning and manifestations of objects in the seemingly dematerialised reality that marks our times. Echoing recent philosophical developments, objects are considered here as active agents, generative entities, mutating forms and networked realities.[267]

The relationship between online and offline spaces reflected my practice in producing the various iterations of *The Imaginary Museum*. The call out for *Mapping Memory* requested photographic, image, or screen-based practice derived from traditional or digital photography, collage, documentary or net-based artwork. The submissions were selected due to their strong links between Post-Internet themes including (virtual) memory, cataloguing, and the translation of digital to the real.

Memory was a key feature of the images selected, describing the relationship between absent and present, and the impact of photography on preserving memories. These

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[266] Barthes, p.6.

[267] Anna Colin and Lydia Yee, *British Art Show curatorial statement*, <http://britishartshow8.com/page/curatorial-statement-1600> [accessed 29 September 2016].

ideas were expressed through the production of the *Mnemosyne Atlas* and subsequently the Warburg Institute, with its idiosyncratic cataloguing scheme.

Emma Dolphin's submission *Legends of Recall and Amnesia* (2015) was reminiscent of this schema through its examination of the 'personification of memory and forgetfulness which manifest in the form of gods and goddesses through history and ancient cultures'.[268]

Overlapping histories also featured in Barbara Greene's print from her artists' book *Under Sweeping Skies*. The resultant postcard image *Timeline* (2015) showed photographs of fourteenth to twentieth century artefacts from a Yorkshire longhouse superimposed over a blueprint of the house, alongside the will of a former resident.
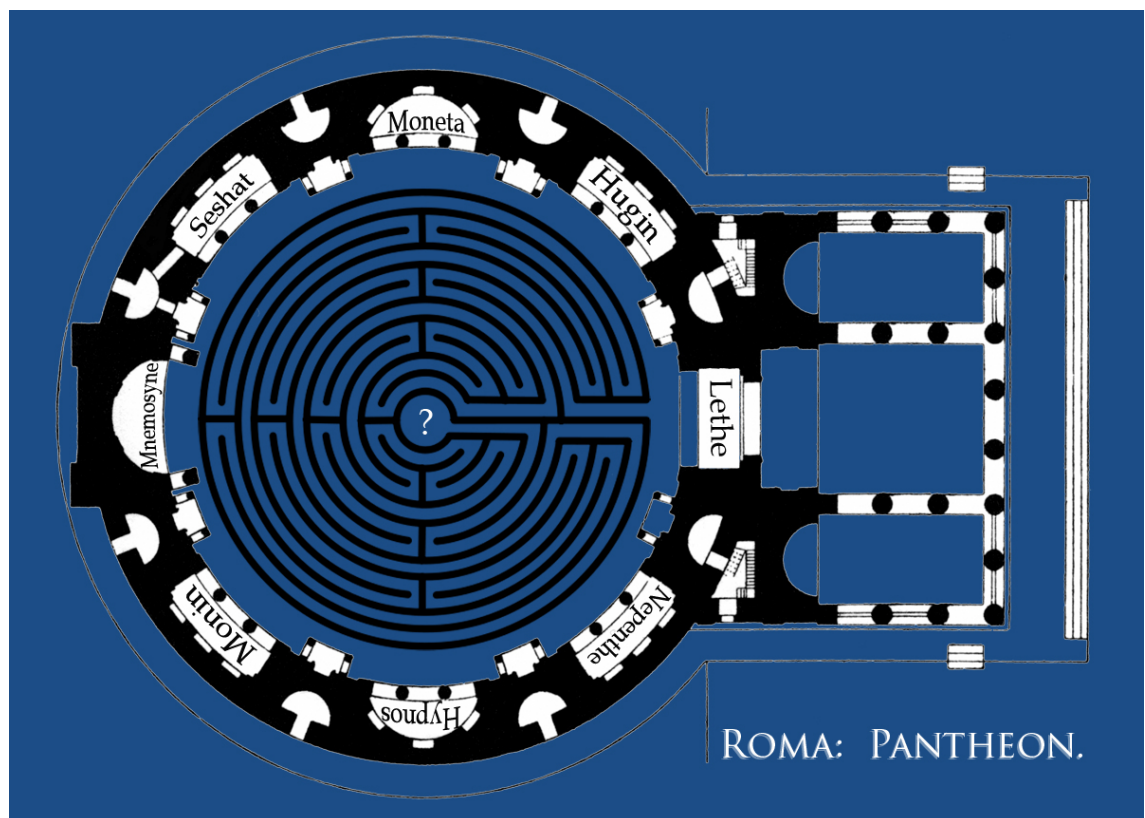

Fig. 20. Emma Dolphin, *Legends of Recall and Amnesia*, Digital drawing, 2015.

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[268] Louise Atkinson, *Mapping Memory*, <http://abcarchive.blogspot.co.uk> [accessed 29 September 2016].

Kathryn Desforges' *Presence* (2014), depicted an image from her artists' book printed on Japanese paper. The photographs printed in the artists' book documented a family home in the process of being emptied. The presence of life is depicted through objects left behind, a feeling echoed in the transparency of the Japanese paper.

Aspects of place and memory also feature in Helen Armstrong Bland's mixed media artists' book, *Reconstructed Histories* (2014). Taking an imaginative leap through images of home and family, Armstrong Bland's evokes unrealised possibilities.

Family is also explored in Joe Jefford's work *Traces* (2014), through found photography and digital media. Jefford layered the found photograph of an unknown family with digital images from eye-tracking technology to capture how this image is viewed. The image of the family slowly disappears from the frame over subsequent images, representing their fading from memory over time to be replaced by the viewer's gaze.

Memory Knot (2015) by Emma Johnson recalled the work *Traces* (2014). Depicting an image of a ball of knotted cotton rope, the work relayed the layering and entangling of memories within the subconscious, obscuring them from being accessed.

The relationship between memory and imagination was also a key theme, which was expressed through the work of Charlotte Victoria Furness and Garry Barker. Furness' digital drawing *Anatomy of the Brain* (2014), was a whimsical take on Victorian maps of the heart, whereas Barker's psychogeographical journeys through Chapeltown produced the *Chapeltown Memory Map* (2015), indicating 'possible futures, as well as significant past events'.[269]

Psychogeography, or the personal and emotional experiences of a place, formed the basis of another category in the collection. Aphra L. Z. O'Connor's *Abutment* (2015), manipulated photographs explored perceptions of space, to create kaleidoscopic patterns based on industrial landscapes.

Martha Jean Lineham took inspiration from Roland Barthes' *Mythologies*, with her image *The Blue Guide* (2014). Simulating the over-processed imagery of travel guides, Lineham collaged impossibly blue skies to create fragmented travel fantasies. Ruth Rosengarten's image *Hiroshima* (2014), merged her photographs of the Prefectural

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[269] Ibid.

Industrial Promotion Hall, otherwise known as the *Peace Memorial*, with images of origami birds to symbolise the ephemerality of life associated with the place.

The process of cataloguing in relation to memory formed another category within the collection and was represented by collections of objects collated by the artists in order to create a sense of understanding about their lives and surroundings.

The image *All I Can Remember* (2015) by Anna Fafaliou and Maria Katsika, showed a white room lined with objects seemingly painted white. This monotone inventory of objects suggested a substitute for memory, where things act as arbiters of identity.

Alice Bradshaw's image of rejected elastic bands *HOARD item #H011* (2013), recalled the image of the *Memory Knot* by Emma Johnson. As previously stated Bradshaw spent a year documenting objects from her practice that would have been discarded. This documentation of detritus elevated the objects to art status, and committed these objects to memory by virtue of photographic and digital means.

Bess Martin documented and categorised colour in her immediate environment for an ongoing research project. Six of the images were grouped together to produce *The Swatch Series* (2014/15) postcard.

Technologies in photography and art were a strong focus of the Post-Internet theme, represented by developments in the processes of industrialisation and the use of digital archives to produce photographic images. Liz Bradshaw's *Means of Production* (2014), considered the histories of technologies through documented artefacts. Sarah Binless' image *It's like it's the 70s* (2013), explored modes of viewing and technology, its comedic title referencing the sepia tones of historical photographs, which were recreated when photographing through tinted sunglasses.

Dr James Lattin explored cataloguing through photography to document fictional histories of landscapes in *The Vanishing Isle* (2015), and Paul Glennon's *Journeys* (2014), merged photographs of skies taken from aeroplanes to create overlapping realities.

Binless, Lattin, and Glennon's work was particularly relevant to the Post-Internet theme, given that their work stretched between digital archive and physical image. Binless' image was part of her co-produced project *Collaborachive*, which contained a collection

of ephemera relating to nostalgia and loss in the form of a blog.[270] Lattin's images were the result of his ongoing online project *The Museum of Imaginative Knowledge*, a collection of objects and images that explores imagined possibilities of a small Scottish town.[271] Lastly, Glennon's images traversed the real and virtual through the use of the internet as a platform to animate his photography.[272]

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the inspiration and production of my project *The Imaginary Museum* through four iterations. In devising the work, the chapter considered *The Imaginary Museum* in relation to the influences of André Malraux and Aby Warburg. Although originally inspired by Malraux's philosophy of a 'Museum without walls', the project enabled me to consider Malraux's work in more detail, to think beyond the formal associations of the imagery, and establish a clearer link with the work of Aby Warburg and his *Mnemosyne Atlas* project.

Through my use of the postcard rack to symbolise both the commerciality and dissemination of images of artworks in the museum, I aimed to implement elements of participatory practice by physically engaging the audience in the tactile experience of collecting postcards. This enabled audiences to become more involved in interpreting the works through the act of choosing; a process which was facilitated by the inclusion of the donation box which encouraged them to think more carefully about their choices. This, coupled with the fact that the images were supplied by practicing artists, positioned the postcards as limited edition artworks, as opposed to mere ephemera.

The postcard format also alluded to ideas of tourism and souvenirs, which was more explicitly considered in the *Monuments and Landmarks* exhibition, but was an element that audiences equally engaged with through sending their acquisitions to friends and family. This tourism aspect of the work became the inspiration for my next major project, Souvenirs from the British Isles.

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[270] Sarah Binless, *Collaborachive,* <http://blarchive.wordpress.com> [accessed 29 September 2016].
[271] Dr James Lattin, *The Museum of Imaginative Knowledge,* <www.imaginativeknowledge.org> [accessed 29 September 2016].
[272] Paul Glennon, *Journeys,* (2014) <www.paulglennon.co.uk/journeys/03.html> [accessed 29 September 2016].

Chapter 4: Souvenirs from the British Isles

In the previous chapters I have discussed my interests in artists responding to museum collections through interrogating the status of the art object and how it can be used as a form of interpretation. This involved contextualising my practice within aspects of Relational Aesthetics and Institutional Critique in order to critically respond to the ways in which art is collected, interpreted, and disseminated through its reproductions.

Through my practice I have worked with other artists to create reproduction postcards of their images. The process of producing these objects to be collected by the audience, in return for a small donation, introduced an element of instability into the work through the relationships that it necessitated. As objects, the postcards represented the quintessential souvenir, and the ability for the audience to collect them reinforced this notion.

However, the postcards were also an extension of my art practice, and existed as limited edition artworks which were only available as part of the specific installation for which they were made. This process subverted the conventional understanding of the mass reproduction of artworks to restore a sense of aura to the postcard.

It is this ambiguity of the art object that is at the heart of my practice, and one of the reasons for producing my final project *Souvenirs from the British Isles*. Through considering the spaces between art, artefact, commodity, and interpretation in my research, I aim to explore how the art object can be seen as an unstable category depending on its context and how it is valued. I explore this through the production of a series of sculptures which resemble souvenirs as a comment on the relationship between the relative value of contemporary art, tourist art, kitsch, and folk art.

With their intrinsic links to place, the use of the souvenir aims to question the nature of authenticity in relation to how different sites are depicted. This element of the work is in response to my research questions around appropriation and how works of art are seen as representative of regions, particularly in a non-Western context. Taken as a collection of objects, the work also continues to explore my interest in collecting and its mechanisms; the reliquary, the Cabinet of Curiosity, and the museum.

Magiciens de la Terre

The inspiration behind *Souvenirs from the British Isles* originated from my attendance at a research residency and symposium in Paris at Centre Pompidou in 2014. The symposium was centred around the 25th anniversary of the 1989 exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre*, which was originally held at Centre Pompidou and the Grande Halle at the Parc de la Villette.

Fig. 21. *Magiciens de la Terre: Retour sur une exposition légendaire*, Centre Pompidou, Paris, 2014

Magiciens de la Terre aimed to represent artistic practices from across the globe and, as with other art exhibitions, it used the World's Fair as inspiration.[273] However, although groundbreaking in the scope of the artists it represented and its geographical remit, the exhibition was also subject to intense criticism of its curatorial methods and its links to colonialism.

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[273] Pablo Lafuente, 'Introduction: From the Outside In - 'Magiciens de la Terre' and Two Histories of Exhibitions', in *Making Art Global (Part 2) 'Magiciens de la Terre' 1989*, by Lucy Steeds et al. (London: Afterall, 2013), pp. 8-22 (p. 10).

In order to represent art practice from different regions equally, the curators selected one hundred artists, fifty from 'the West', and fifty from the rest of the world.[274] Although this curatorial strategy was aimed at providing equal opportunities for artists to be selected, it was derided as simplistic and tokenistic by artists and critics alike. As Pablo Lafuente describes, the attempt to equate artworks from around the world through a universalist conception of art practice rendered the exhibition:

> oblivious to the socio-cultural and historical context in which the different selected practices emerged, and [was] therefore as exoticising; [...] the embodiment of a neo colonialist attitude that allowed the contemporary art system to colonize, commercially and intellectually, new areas that were previously out of bounds.[275]

Equally, the curatorial choices of artworks from 'the Rest', suggested strong cultural and geographical connotations, unlike the Western artists, whose work was considered as more indicative of a globalised understanding of contemporary art.

The curatorial argument for this selection was that the exhibition intended to consider all aspects of representational cultural output that were being produced concurrently across the world. However, this argument did not apply to the 'Western' artists, who were represented by well known contemporary practitioners such as Barbara Kruger and Daniel Buren.[276] Conversely, featured artists from outside the European artistic centres included the Kane Kwei coffin making workshop from Ghana,[277] and the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu from Australia, who produced sand paintings.[278]

In addition to being present in the Aboriginal work, sand painting was also represented in *Magiciens de la Terre* by Tibetan Buddhist Monks, and Joe Ben Jr, a Navajo artist, who used mineral pigments on sand in reference to the rituals of New Mexico.[279]

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[274] Ibid., p. 11.
[275] Ibid., p. 11.
[276] Lucy Steeds, 'Magiciens de la Terre and the Development of Transnational Project-Based Curating', in *Making Art Global (Part 2) 'Magiciens de la Terre' 1989*, by Lucy Steeds et al. (London: Afterall, 2013), pp. 24-92 (p. 40).
[277] Ibid., p. 58.
[278] Ibid., pp. 53-54.
[279] Ibid., p. 54.

Fig. 22. *Magiciens de la Terre, Installation view of Richard Long's Red Earth Circle and Yuendumu sand painting*, Grande Halle, Parc de la Villette, Paris. 1989.

In the case of the Navajo, sand painting is often used as part of a holistic healing process, where the patient stands in the middle of the painting and the sand absorbs their illness before being returned to the earth. In the Aboriginal tradition, sand painting is part of a larger practice of sharing origin stories, known collectively as the Dreamtime. These stories, images, songs, and rituals have developed contemporaneously with Aboriginal life, such that performances are often sold to tourists as a way of negotiating the effect of globalisation on their way of life.[280]

Many of the artworks represented in the *Magicien de la Terre* exhibition contained both social and aesthetic aspects, such as the Navajo and Aboriginal works. However, the process of co-opting the artwork into the exhibition space, necessarily deprived many of the artworks of their social and spiritual properties, leaving only aesthetic ones. This

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[280] Jennifer McNiven, *A Material and Symbolic Interpretation of Dreamtime Stories and Ritual Performance in Aboriginal Australia,*
<https://www.academia.edu/4254380/A_Material_and_Symbolic_Interpretation_of_Dreamtime_Stories_and_Ritual_Performance_in_Aboriginal_Australia> [accessed 29 September 2016].

reiterates previous criticisms of the ways in which non-Western artworks have been exhibited, as discussed in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, some of the images on show, particularly the sand paintings, were produced for a specific community purpose and as such contained potent imagery that was not allowed to be reproduced outside of its cultural context. This required some of the images to changed within the sand paintings for them to be suitable for an art audience to view. These changes made me consider how what was perceived and defined in the *Magiciens de la Terre* exhibition as a work of art was merely a recollection (drawing on the etymology of the word souvenir) of the curators' site visit in Australia. Therefore, the contextual information of the work stood in place of its social function, thus reducing it to its aesthetics.

In addition to this, curator Jean-Hubert Martin stated that the reason for participation by the Yuendumu Aboriginal community was in order to promote their continued existence and practices.[281] This raised questions around the negotiations between tribal communities and the wider population, and the ways that the relations between art and tourism had changed the context and meaning of the artwork.

The sandpainting and its shifting contexts and meanings made me consider how the same object, classified as art in each of its incarnations, was irrevocably altered. Through removing the object from its original setting and reinstalling it within the white cube, the work became contemporary art. However, it could only become this work through the removal of the more sacred elements which classified it as art in its original context. It was this ambiguity between the original work of art and its reproduction in *Magiciens de la Terre* that I wanted to explore through the guise of the souvenir.

Before embarking on the production of my sculptures I hoped to understand more about the history of the souvenir and how it related to my general research questions around appropriation, museums, and anthropology. In researching this history I considered a broad range of literature, from research into the impact of colonialism and trade on the development of a global tourist market, to how images have been used to produce and disseminate tourist sights.

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[281] Jean-Hubert Martin, *Magiciens de la Terre. Retour sur une Exposition Légendaire,* Centre Pompidou (2014).

This history spans from the Grand Tour to the World's Fairs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and shows how the technologies of reproduction such as printing and photography enabled the proliferation of souvenirs and tourist art. As the souvenir often represents the reclassification of ongoing traditions of folk practices into kitsch images and objects, I also considered the relationship between kitsch and folk art and how these genres have impacted on contemporary art practice. This investigation of traditions of practice and globalisation is continued in my research into ethnic and fourth world arts.

In addressing the nature of tourism and its impact on the changing desires of both tourists and 'hosts', this study also aims to show how multiple subjective and historical agencies are negotiated through and within the souvenir object. In addition to this, I aim to challenge the implicit assumptions of authenticity and uniqueness attributed to art objects, which has undermined the value of souvenirs as objects worthy of anthropological study.

All of these elements have impacted on my studio project *Souvenirs from the British Isles* and are discussed in relation to my work.

The history of the souvenir

Nowadays, we are familiar with the concept of the souvenir as a cheap, mass produced object which we collect on our travels in order to remember the visit, or as a gift for family and friends on our return. As the term souvenir means 'to remember', the object 'makes tangible what was otherwise only an intangible state'.[282]

These objects can take the form of pictures, either bought in the form of postcards, or taken by the tourist; 'piece-of-the-rock' objects taken from the natural environment; symbolic souvenirs which represent an aspect of the culture, such as Mexican sombreros; generic 'marker' objects like T-shirts which have no specific affinity with a place but which are inscribed with its name in order to evoke associations; and local products such as indigenous foods or crafts.[283]

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[282] Beverley Gordon, 'The Souvenir: Messenger of the Extraordinary', *Journal of Popular Culture,* 20 (1986), 135-146 (p. 135).
[283] Ibid., pp. 140-143.

These items are often seen to trivialise the breadth of experience and history that we, as travellers, have encountered. As Sarah Benson notes:

> The Colosseum, whose very name suggests the monumentality of ancient artifacts, becomes an ashtray. Michelangelo's Pietà serves nicely as a paperweight [...] Vistas of the city expand not across the horizon, but across the 4 inches of a standard postcard.[284]

However, to casually dismiss the souvenir as ephemeral or trivial, is to disregard its affective influence. As Susan Stewart states, 'the function of the souvenir proper is to create a continuous and personal narrative of the past'.[285] In the process of becoming a souvenir, the object is thus separated from its origins and instead becomes a representation of its owner. Stewart describes this effect as creating a 'measurement for the normal',[286] whereby the souvenir distinguishes a particular memory for the viewer. As such, the souvenir as a metonymic representation of an event, highlights 'the capacity of objects to serve as traces of authentic experience'.[287]

This capacity has contributed to a rich history of cross-cultural negotiation and trade exemplified by souvenirs which spans the past 500 years. Supported by developments in printing and casting, precursors to the modern-day souvenir enabled travellers from as early as the sixteenth century to collect sights and mementos in a similar way to today.[288]

Beginning with the Grand Tour, the history of tourism within a Western context dates back to the sixteenth century with wealthy gentlemen travelling to Western Europe to experience the language, customs, art, and antiquities they found there.[289]

This increased appreciation and demand for classical and Renaissance antiquities, worked to establish travel routes and guide books, making the process of travelling abroad much more convenient.[290] Due to improved infrastructure and services, the

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[284] Sarah Benson, 'Reproduction, Fragmentation, and Collection: Rome and the Origin of Souvenirs', in *Architecture and Tourism: Perception, Performance and Place,* ed. by D. Medina Lasansky and Brian McLaren (Oxford, UK, and New York, Berg, 2004), pp. 15-36 (p. 15).
[285] Stewart, p. 140.
[286] Ibid., p. 134.
[287] Ibid., p. 135.
[288] Benson, p. 15.
[289] John Towner, 'The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism', *Annals of Tourism Research,* 12 (1985), 297-333 (p. 301).
[290] John Towner, 'The Grand Tour: Sources and a Methodology for an Historical Study of Tourism', *Tourism Management,* 5 (1984), 215-222 (p. 219).

Grand Tour was opened up to middle class tourists, who were able to travel along established routes which incorporated predetermined experiences. This in turn allowed them to stay abroad for shorter periods of time which suited their smaller budget.[291]

The souvenir industry developed in parallel with this increase in tourism across Europe. Early travellers flocked to the continent to have their portraits painted by one of the many artists who had set up their business to cater to the growing trade.[292] As well as this, travellers from the landed gentry would be tasked by their patrons with collecting important works for national and personal collections.[293]

The collection of antiquities, which were less affordable or portable, in the case of architecture or large-scale sculpture, was supported by the production of cameo casts. These casts were produced by workshops such as Pietro Bracci's, and featured highlights from the Vatican collection including *Laocoön*.[294] Cameo casts were also available in the form of ready-made collections complete with a handwritten description detailing the media of the originals; whether they be marble busts, paintings, or scenic vistas.[295]

Image reproductions in the form of woodcuts and engravings were also popular with tourists. One of the foremost printmakers and architects of the time, Giovanni Battista Piranesi, produced images that would 'indelibly [shape] the vision of Rome consumed and disseminated throughout Europe by Grand Tourists'.[296] However, despite his strict use of representational methods, his prints were actually composite images of real and imaginary architecture which he called capricci. Through producing these imaginary landscapes, Piranesi 'sought to recover a holistic idea of the past'.[297]

This use of visual images to construct sites which are presented to the tourist as authentic are otherwise known as 'place-myths':

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[291] Towner, 'The Grand Tour: A Key Phase in the History of Tourism', p. 316.
[292] Andrew W. Moore, *Norfolk and the Grand Tour: Eighteenth century travellers abroad and their souvenirs,* (Norfolk, UK: Norfolk Museums Service, 1985), p. 15.
[293] Ibid., p. 23.
[294] Benson, p. 21.
[295] Ibid., p. 30.
[296] Barbara Ann Naddeo, 'Cultural capitals and cosmopolitanism in eighteenth-century Italy: the historiography and Italy on the Grand Tour', *Journal of Modern Italian Studies,* 10 (2005), 183-199, (p. 194).
[297] Ibid., p. 195.

> Place-myths are conglomerates of place-images, that is, stereotypes and cliches associated with particular locations, in circulation within a society. Place-myths need not necessarily be faithful to the actual realities of a site; they derive their durability, spread and impact from repetition and widespread dissemination.[298]

The production and collection of souvenirs encouraged a particular mode of viewing. As the souvenir industry increased, it 'establish[ed] a canon of monuments and a set of ideal vantage points from which to view them'. This canon, in turn, was represented through guide books, further cementing the role of vision in early modern tourism.[299]

The collection of visible and tangible objects was also promoted through the production of items of furniture called cabinets of curiosity. These were based on the collecting practices throughout sixteenth century Europe, which aimed to create 'a visual encyclopedia of the world through amassing examples of its natural and man-made objects'.[300] Cabinets of curiosity encouraged visitors to produce their own collections of their tour and arrange them to suit their own personal interests.

These mass-produced objects became re-imbued with authenticity through being assembled into collections. As Sarah Benson states:

> Collections of prints and casts had the twofold benefit of being both standardized (because the same reproductions were owned by hundreds or thousands of people) and customizable (because reproductions removed the objects that they represented from their original contexts and put them in the hands of people who could categorize and sort them in a variety of ways).[301]

These cabinets of curiosity therefore connect the souvenir to my previous interests in collections and anthropology, through my production of the postcard museum.

In removing the object from its context, the souvenir becomes incomplete and is therefore in need of a narrative by which to understand it. This discourse 'both attaches it to its origins and creates a myth with regard to those origins'.[302] Stewart also notes how

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[298] David Crouch and Nina Lübbren, 'Introduction', in *Visual Culture and Tourism,* ed. by David Crouch and Nina Lübbren (Berg: Oxford, UK and New York, 2003), pp. 1-20 (p. 5).
[299] Benson, p. 24.
[300] Ibid., p. 30.
[301] Ibid., p. 29.
[302] Stewart, p. 136.

the souvenir operates as a substitute for experiences which cannot be bought. In this way she claims that '[t]he souvenir displaces the point of authenticity as it itself becomes the point of origin for narrative'.[303] These ideas reiterated my conclusions when considering how the sandpainting might be viewed in the context of the *Magiciens de la Terre* exhibition.

As a process beginning with the Grand Tour, the collecting practice promoted by souvenir reproductions and cabinets of curiosity thus further fragmented and decontextualised the meanings of sights and monuments, while promoting a specific canon of objects which individually and collectively symbolized the tourist experience.

World's Fairs

The collection and categorisation of objects from around the world continued into the nineteenth century with the introduction of World's Fairs. These national trade exhibitions were set up to represent the technological innovations of the Industrial Revolution, alongside raw goods and materials from across the world.[304] As tourist attractions in their own right, they also promoted the collection of souvenirs, such as postcards, to commemorate the visit.[305]

This new form of exhibition, which began with the *Universal Exhibition* at the Crystal Palace in 1851, 'was intended as the showplace for a commodity culture based on a worldwide network of production, distribution and consumption which derived its impetus from novelty, a market driven by the desire for the new'.[306]

Rather than just being a space to purchase goods, the exhibition removed objects from the 'social and practical circumstances of their production and use', and turned them into a visual spectacle. This spectacle was intended to educate the masses about Britain's colonial prowess and the technological 'benevolence' which it bestowed upon its colonies. In this way, Britain's use of the raw materials from the colonies was associated

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[303] Ibid., p. 136.

[304] Celeste Olalqiaga, *The Artificial Kingdom: On the Kitsch Experience* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), p. 33.

[305] Schor, p. 213.

[306] Tom Gunning, 'The World as Object Lesson: Cinema Audiences, Visual Culture and the St. Louis World's Fair, 1904', *Film History,* 6 (1994), 422-444 (p. 423).

with a form of social progress which would benefit Britain and its colonial subjects alike.[307]

The exhibition, which amassed over 100,000 objects from Britain and its colonies, also provided entertainment for the masses in the form of panoramic displays.[308] The panoramas, as with the rest of the fair, was intended to create a totalizing experience, representing the world through image. As Timothy Mitchell states in *Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order*: 'The effect of such spectacles was to set the world up as a picture. They offered it up as an object on display to be investigated and experienced by the dominating European gaze'.[309]

In this way, World's Fairs continued the 'place-myth' strategies which began with the collection and organisation of images and objects from the Grand Tour. These strategies have also been the subject of a number of contemporary art exhibitions. These exhibitions include *Magiciens de la Terre* (1989), *Universal Experience: Art, Life, and the Tourist's Eye*, Chicago (2005), and *Dreamlands*, Paris (2010).

The *Universal Experience* exhibition took place in Chicago, the home of the *Colombian Exposition* of 1893, connecting it directly (and intentionally) with the World's Fairs of the nineteenth century. The *Columbian Exposition*, like similar ones in London and Paris, was produced to:

> provide nations with opportunities to demonstrate their artistic, technical and scientific ingenuity. [They also] supported a broader mission through their juxtaposition of world cultures, their encouragement of trade relations, and their promotion of advances in manufacturing and industry.[310]

Dreamlands was curated by Francesco Bonami at The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. Drawing on the histories of nineteenth century World's Fairs, the exhibition featured:

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[307] Katherine Smits and Alix Jansen, 'Staging the Nation at Expos and World's Fairs', *National Identities,* 14 (2012), 173-188 (p. 178).

[308] Ibid., p. 178.

[309] Robert Fitzpatrick, *Universal Experience: Art, Life and the Tourist's Eye* (New York: Distributed Art Publishers, 2005), pp. 201- 202.

[310] V&A, *Nineteenth-Century International Exhibitions,* <https://www.vam.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/259913/Nineteenth-Century-International-Exhibitions.pdf> [accessed 8th July 2016].

more than seventy internationally renowned and emerging visual artists…
incorporat[ing] a wide variety of themes, [including] anthropology, architecture,
authenticity, history, souvenirs, and spectacle.[311]

Dreamlands was held at Centre Pompidou in Paris, and curated by Quentin Bajac and
Didier Ottinger. This exhibition took the plethora of research into cultural studies and
tourism as its starting point in order to explore the exhibition site as tourist attraction.

Artists featured in the exhibition included Reem Al Ghaith, Malachi Farrell, Mike Kelley,
Pierre Huyghe, and Kader Attia, and their works were curated in order to create
dialogues between their different responses to the theme. This approach mimicked the
one taken by the curators of *Magiciens de la Terre* who also wanted to produce an
interactive and immersive environment within the exhibition space.

In considering the association between life and art, Bajac and Ottinger explain how:

> the pastiche, the copy, the artificial and the fictive have become facts of the
> environment in which real life is led, and they serve as models for understanding
> and planning the urban fabric and its social life, blurring the boundaries between
> imagination and reality.[312]

The *Dreamlands* exhibition contextualises my own investigations into the relationship
between the souvenir and art, that of reproduction and collection. As Bajac and Ottinger
continue:

> From 1900 to 2000, [it is] always the same models which are copied over and
> over again. In that respect, there is a great stability of mythologies: Venice, the
> Eiffel Tower, the Pyramids, Statue of Liberty etc. Does this phenomenon of
> reproduction affect [the original] in a positive or negative way?[313]

Mechanical Reproduction

The relationship between art and tourism has been explored by a number of scholars
over the last 40 years, beginning with Nelson Graburn (1976), and continuing with David

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[311] Fitzpatrick, p. 9.
[312] Aesthetica Magazine, *Dreamlands at the Pompidou,*
<http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/dreamlands-at-the-pompidou> [accessed 8th July 2016].
[313] Ibid.

Crouch and Nina Lübbren (2003), Dean McCannell (2013). These studies have covered various different facets of the subject, including an exploration of the material culture of the 'host' society, the production of the site by the tourist industry, or, indeed, the 'image-making activities' undertaken by tourists themselves.[314]

All of these studies show how places engage with tourism due to the constructed narrative surrounding them. The process of constructing tourism in this manner has exponentially increased since the development of mechanical reproduction. In particular, the ability to duplicate and disseminate imagery or scenes and art works was driven by the demand imposed by tourism, such as the cameo casts and lithographs of Italian monuments, as previously mentioned.

Walter Benjamin states that these reproductions depreciate the authenticity of the original and bring its authority into question. The original in this case refers not only to the work of art or landmark, but also to the 'landscape which passes in review before the spectator in a movie'.[315] However, as discussed in the previous chapter, it can be argued that reproductions instead reinforce the authenticity of the original by way of creating its aura, which 'derives from the relationship between the original object and its socially constructed importance'.[316]

The most typical form of reproduction is that of photography, which aims to capture a particular 'authenticity' of place and is often disseminated through mechanisms such as publishing and advertising. However, the apparent transparency of the photograph has come under scrutiny since the middle of the twentieth century through an understanding of how 'photography does the work of ideology through its techniques of cropping, framing, lighting, manipulations of scale and perspective, as well as by the choice and positioning of subjects'.[317]

These constructed ideologies created by photography apply, in particular, to the picture postcard industry, which I explored through my project *The Imaginary Museum*. It was

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[314] Crouch and Lübbren, p. 3.
[315] Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* p. 4.
[316] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, CA and London, UK: University of California Press, 1999), p. 48.
[317] Schor, p. 190.

these ideas of place and representation which subsequently influenced my work *Souvenirs from the British Isles*.

The collecting of postcards developed out the practice of 'cartes de visite' in the 1850s, a form of early calling card.[318] After the Austrian government printed the first postcard in 1869, other countries decided to emulate them, producing photographic postcards as souvenirs of national events, such as the ones available at World's Fairs across Europe and the United States:[319]

> [At the] 1889 exhibit in Paris [...] Figaro-produced postcards (known as 'Libonis') of the Eiffel Tower could be purchased and mailed on the spot. Similarly, 'the opening of the World's *Columbian Exposition* in Chicago on 1 May 1893 was the chosen event for the debut of the first American picture postcards. In units of two at a time, the public could purchase ten different aspects of the Exposition from conveniently placed vending machines for the price of five cents a time (CP, p. 17).[320]

Thus, the picture postcard developed into one of the dominant means of collecting tourist sights in the nineteenth century, and has been a popular souvenir for tourists ever since.

The production of souvenirs in a global context can be separated into two separate categories: the mass produced, brightly coloured commercial objects more typically associated with holiday trinkets, and the hand-crafted artisanal objects otherwise referred to as tourist art or 'Fourth World art'.[321] For the purposes of this chapter I have classified each of these categories as kitsch and folk art respectively, as a way of differentiating the two positions.

Kitsch

The links between kitsch and folk art were explored in the seminal essay *The Avant Garde and Kitsch* (1939) by Clement Greenberg. Here Greenberg states that kitsch developed as rural workers moved into the cities after the industrial revolution. This

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[318] Olalqiaga, p. 14.
[319] Schor, p. 212.
[320] Ibid., p. 213.
[321] See Nelson Graburn, *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World* (Berkeley, CA and London, UK: University of California Press, 1976).

resulted in the need for more populist entertainment, in lieu of traditional pastimes. Greenberg described this artform as 'ersatz culture, kitsch, destined for those who, insensible to the values of genuine culture, are hungry nevertheless for the diversion that only culture of some sort can provide'.[322]

Greenberg describes kitsch as a simulation of 'genuine culture' which borrows from 'a fully matured cultural tradition [...] converts them into a system, and discards the rest'.[323]

Examples of the relationship between kitsch and the souvenir begin in the nineteenth century in the form of glass paperweights known as *millefiori*.[324] These expensive paperweights were produced by traditional workshops in Northeastern Europe, where workers used the waste glass to produce globes containing photographs of dead relatives or landscapes. These sentimental items were given as gifts between family members, and became popular with Victorian travellers as a memento of their journey.[325]

Glass paperweights evolved into 'Victorian snowstorms'. These snow globes, as with the paperweights, gained popularity through their appearance at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris in 1878. Globes containing an image and water had been in production since the sixteenth century, but their rapid expansion in trade was linked to an increasing sense of Romanticism, and a sense of nostalgia in response to Modernity and the perceived loss of tradition perpetuated by industrialisation.[326]

Ideas of nostalgia and Romanticism are also explored by Tomas Kulka in the book *Kitsch and Art*. Through determining the conditions which produce a work of kitsch, Kulka ascertained that kitsch art should first of all depict 'objects or themes that are highly charged with stock emotions', such as crying children or cute animals.[327] These images should also be rendered with a particular amount of skill so as to be easily understood. According to Kulka, it should be clear to the audience how they are supposed to respond to the image.[328] Supporting Greenberg's statement of kitsch borrowing from culture,

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[322] Clement Greenberg, *The Avant Garde and Kitsch*, Partisan Review (1939) <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~DRBR2/greenburg.pdf> [accessed 29 September 2016].
[323] Ibid.
[324] Olalqiaga, p. 57.
[325] Ibid., p. 58.
[326] Ibid., p. 62.
[327] Tomas Kulka, *Kitsch and Art* (Pennsylvania, Penn State University Press, 1996), p. 28.
[328] Ibid., p. 33.

Kulka writes that for kitsch to be effective it should utilise 'the most conventional, standard, well-tried, and tested representational canons […] of one's time'.[329]

However, while Kulka's assessment is clear that in producing kitsch the artist does 'not substantially enrich our associations relating to the depicted objects or themes',[330] he fails to account for how the production of kitsch has fed back into the cultural system.

The consideration of how kitsch has contributed to culture was taken up in another collection, *Kitsch: An Anthology of Bad Taste* (1969) by Gillo Dorfles. Dorfles begins by differentiating between kitsch and 'bad art' in historical terms, reiterating kitsch as a modern construction:

> Before [our] period there were examples of mediocre art, works by lesser artists, by epigones and followers of great artists, works which were obviously not masterpieces; but which nevertheless were contained within the wider currents of fine art. Obviously there was even a hierarchy of artistic values, but there was no category which could be considered in a sense as art at the opposite end of the scale; something with the external characteristics of art, but which is in fact a falsification of art.[331]

Hermann Brosch reiterates the idea of kitsch as a 'closed system' which operates alongside the system of art, as opposed to being simply 'bad art'.

As with many modern forms of art, Dorfles discussed the impact of reproductive technologies on how artworks are both produced and experienced. He acknowledged the benefits of reproduction on spreading artworks to new audiences, but reiterated the arguments of Walter Benjamin in expressing the lack of a 'lived experience' between audience and artwork. According to Dorfles, this experience of the work in situ, otherwise known as the aura of the work of art, is diluted in reproductions by the lack of 'respect for faithfulness to scale and nuances of colour, for the overall feeling of the image'.[332]

However, my interest in Dorfles' work lies in the focus in how 'genuine' works of art become kitsch and vice versa, leading me to an assumption that kitsch is an unstable

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[329] Ibid., p. 31.
[330] Ibid., p. 37.
[331] Gilles Dorfles, *Kitsch: The World of Bad Taste* (New York, Bell Publishing, 1969), p. 12.
[332] Ibid., p. 31.

category. To illustrate this point, he cites the example of the Mona Lisa and other such historical paintings as examples of masterpieces 'which have become symbols of kitsch by being vulgarly reproduced and known not for their real value but for a sentimental or technical substitute of these values'.[333]

Equally, he describes how objects produced as kitsch might also be transformed through their use in artistic contexts.[334] Thus, he determines that 'we will never be altogether sure that fake marble columns, papier-mache statues, wood-of-pearl shells, and Brazilian hardstone in the shape of ashtrays, although themselves undoubtedly kitsch, are beyond recovery'.[335]

Instead, mass culture is remixed into traditional practice, as described in the work of Hitchcock and Teague, as well as into the contemporary art market, beginning with *Pop Art* in the 1960s[336] and continuing into the present by artists such as Jeff Koons and Katharina Fritsch. Koons' exploration of tourism and kitsch through appropriating consumer culture, is represented in his work *Kiepenkerl*:

> In Munster, Germany, a small statue of a Kiepenkerl, a peddler of fruits and vegetables, survived WWII and was replaced in 1954 with a larger bronze reproduction in the town square. It became an unofficial totem of the town, and miniature replicas of Kiepenkerl are popular souvenirs. As a project for the 1987 Sculpture Project in Munster, Koons recast the statue in stainless steel, which he considers the material of the masses, and temporarily replaced the original, presenting it as a symbol of individual entrepreneurship and consumerism.[337]

Katharina Fritsch's work *Display Stand with Madonnas* (1987/89) also considers the histories of art and consumerism by depicting 288 plaster casts of the Madonna, which have been reproduced from the figurines sold in souvenir shops in Lourdes. These

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[333] Ibid., pp. 17-18.
[334] Ibid., p. 22.
[335] Ibid., p. 26.
[336] Ibid., p. 34.
[337] Fitzpatrick, p. 93.

objects merge the relationship between art, religion and commodity to explore how the object's meaning changes when moving it from a religious to a consumerist context.[338]

Fritsch's work continued to address questions of place and tourism in her 2013 response to the Fourth Plinth commission *'Hahn/Cock'*. The 4.7 metre tall rooster is sculpted in her trademarked naturalistic style with a spray-painted finish (this time in matt blue), creating the sense of a sign or souvenir, rather than a monument.[339]

Both of these examples illustrate how artists have explored the links between representations of place, history, myth, and folklore, and how these elements are exploited through commercialisation. These elements were of importance to *Souvenirs from the British Isles*, and linked to my earlier explorations into commodity and transaction through *The Imaginary Museum*.

I was also interested in how the generic souvenir object became unique through artistic invention. In the case of Koons and Fritsch, casting processes were used, either through steel casting for the *Kiepenkerl* statue, or the plaster casts of madonna figurines in *Display Stand with Madonnas*. Despite the uniqueness of the installations, these processes gave the objects a manufactured finish, centring them within the realm of kitsch.

However, I was also interested to represent aspects of the handmade as associated with folk and Fourth World arts. Therefore my processes relied solely on sculpting each object separately using paper clay and then hand painting the sculptures with designs relating to motifs from the region. This differentiated my objects from work previously exploring souvenirs and created a sense of ambiguity with how souvenirs are usually produced and consumed.

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[338] Katharina Fritsch, *Display Stand with Madonnas,* (1987/89) <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/katharina-fritsch/katharina-fritsch-room-five> [accessed 10 July 2016].
[339] Laura Barnett, *Katharina Fritsch on her Fourth Plinth cockerel sculpture: 'I didn't want to make fun – but I was invited'* (2013) <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2013/jul/24/katharina-fritsch-fourth-plinth-cockerel-sculpture > [accessed 5th March 2017].

Folk Art

The re-emergence of folk arts as an influence on contemporary art is reflected in the work of a number of practitioners, most notably Grayson Perry, who explored these interests through producing artist interventions in museums.[340] Perry's exhibition *The Charms of Lincolnshire* (2006) collated objects from Lincolnshire museums, including samplers, dolls, and embroidered smocks. The artefacts were displayed 'as if they were art' along with other artworks, such as samplers produced by Perry himself.[341] This was followed in 2011 by Perry's project *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* where he curated a number of his own works alongside objects by anonymous makers from the British Museum.[342]

Contemporary folk practices in Britain have also been captured by artists such as Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane, whose *Folk Archive* (2005) developed over a six year period 'celebrates activity from a vast range of British pastimes and pursuits, and demonstrates that folk art in the UK is both widespread and vigorous'.[343]

Artist Vladimir Arkhipov's *Post-Folk Archive* also utilised an ethnographic methodology, by collecting handmade objects from the people of the West Midlands. These DIY objects took the form of ladders, birdboxes, and musical instruments, among other idiosyncratic constructions. Arkipov's exhibition, which took place at the Ikon Gallery, Birmingham in 2002, built on his previous practice of collecting items of Russian folklore over several years.

Despite this, there has been little in the way of institutional categorisation of the genre. As Martin Myrone explains:

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[340] Jeff McMillan, 'The House That Jack Built: Essay as Sampler' in *British Folk Art* (London, UK: Tate Publishing, 2014), pp. 10-15 (p. 11).

[341] Laura Cumming, *Could he be stringing us along?* The Observer (2006) <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/jul/16/art> [accessed 17 September 2016].

[342] Grayson Perry, *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman,* British Museum, London (2011) (<http://www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/past_exhibitions/2012/grayson_perry.aspx> [accessed 17 September 2016].

[343] Jeremy Deller, *Folk Archive*, (2005) <http://www.jeremydeller.org/FolkArchive/FolkArchive.php> [accessed 17 September 2016].

'Folk art' was among the categories traditionally considered beyond the remit of the Tate gallery that were brought into reconsideration in planning the new Tate gallery of British Art at the end of the 1990s.[344]

However, as the interest in folk art has grown, Tate curators began to reconsider folk art 'within categories that are usually reserved for fine art – notably figuration and abstraction', leading to the production of an exhibition entitled *British Folk Art* in 2014.[345]

In producing their *British Folk Art* exhibition, the curators at Tate Britain were keen to stress that the show would not be representative of the entire genre, but instead would act as an experiment to determine how folk art might sit within existing canonical boundaries. Equally, the term British wasn't to be suggestive of a particular native identity, but instead was used as a geographical boundary with which to source objects for the exhibition.[346]

In contrast to outsider art, which Jeff McMillan describes as being the work of 'a self taught artist working in a particularly idiosyncratic, highly individual manner, often driven by compulsion, desire or religious fervour',[347] folk art instead describes the practice of an artist or artists working within the confines of a specific community or tradition.

Ruth Kenny addresses the formal similarities between folk and outsider art, stating that both 'shaped by the use of found materials, varying levels of technical skill and idiosyncratic construction', Kenny explains that this has led to the term 'folk art' being used to denote any form of creativity existing outside of the artistic canon.[348]

Using American sociologist, Gary Alan Fine's concept of 'identity art', Kenny defines outsider art as work that 'defies the influence of pre-existing models, refusing to copy or be in any way derivative'. Conversely, folk art can be seen to operate as part of a social system. Rooted in ongoing traditions of practice, 'folk art is characterized by borrowing and the reiteration of forms that are passed down from generation to generation'.[349]

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[344] Martin Myrone, 'Afterword: Reinstituting British Folk Art' in *British Folk Art* (London, UK: Tate Publishing, 2014), pp. 134-141 (p. 138).
[345] Penelope Curtis, 'Foreword' in *British Folk Art* (London, UK: Tate Publishing, 2014), pp. 6-7 (pp. 6-7).
[346] Myrone, p. 139.
[347] McMillan, p. 12.
[348] Ruth Kenny, *'Wallflowers at the Dance of Western Civilisation': The Limits of Folk Art*, in *British Folk Art* (London, UK: Tate Publishing, 2014), pp. 126- 133 (p. 126).
[349] Ibid., p. 130.

The idea of forms and ideas being passed down through generations reiterates my interest in how appropriation aids interpretation of art objects. In addition to this, these ideas resonate with the ways in which tourist arts and fourth world arts operate.

Fourth World arts

Although tourist arts can be seen to be influenced by traditional processes, it would be incorrect to assume that these objects are not also affected by external factors. Such factors include the increase in tourism, industrialisation, and globalisation.

However, previous assumptions by researchers believed that tourist arts were not created as part of a souvenir economy, but simply collected by tourists from 'traditional' communities. Objects that were subsequently found to be produced specifically for an external market were therefore disparaged by academics and museum collections as 'inauthentic'.[350]

Scholars have since begun to explore how the processes of modernity and postcolonialism have impacted on communities, and how souvenirs can be understood as part of a complex network of desires on the part of the producer and consumer. This demonstrates what Phillips describes as 'individual acts of negotiation and cross-cultural appropriation'.[351]

Emma Poulter's exploration of West African souvenirs in the Manchester Museum also challenges preconceptions about how non-Western art has been perceived within museum contexts. In the first instance, she questioned the historical assumption by museum curators that souvenirs were 'of little or no value in [ethnographic] collections'.[352]

These assumptions neglected to acknowledge how souvenir production highlighted the complex negotiations between producer and consumer; what Poulter describes as 'the changing dynamics in operation at the interface between cultures'.[353]

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[350] Emma K Poulter, 'The real thing? Souvenir objects in the West African collections at the Manchester Museum', *Journal of Material Culture*, 16 (2011), 265-284 (p. 269).
[351] RB Phillips, *Trading Identities: The Souvenir in Native North American Art from the Northeast, 1700–1900* (Washington DC: University of Washington Press, 1998), p. xiii.
[352] Poulter, p. 266.
[353] Ibid., p. 266.

Poulter's exploration also sought to critique the concept of authenticity applied to objects in museum collections. As she observed:

> By the late nineteenth century, museum classificatory systems promulgated a restricted and regimented understanding of African peoples and their material culture whereby certain 'tribes' were understood to produce particular types of ethnographic objects. Items that did not conform to these fixed expectations were often seen to be inauthentic.[354]

Thus, museum classification systems upheld traditional notions of fixed and stable methods of production attributed to particular societies. However, these beliefs by museum curators neglected to account for the ways in which European trade and taste has influenced the production processes of traditional cultures. As Poulter explains:

> [T]he colonial presence in West Africa impacted on indigenous production, with craftspeople layering new meanings onto traditional practice (to meet colonial taste), often creating new art forms. In turn, colonial officials in West Africa appropriated these items, and so different worldviews were melded together in order to create a new sense of self in response to the changing environment.[355]

Such responses to changes in the economic climate of a region are also outlined in Susan Stewart's example of a traditional basket maker who produces miniature replicas of his items:

> [A]s the market for his full-sized baskets decreases because of changes in the economic system, such miniature baskets increase in demand. They are no longer models; rather they are souvenirs of a mode of consumption which is now extinct. They have moved from the domain of use value to the domain of gift, where exchange is abstracted to the level of social relations and away from the materials and processes.[356]

This reiterates the ways in which functional objects, such as plates and dish towels, are reduced to aesthetic items and lose their original purpose in the process of becoming a

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[354] Ibid., p. 268.
[355] Ibid., p. 276.
[356] Stewart, p. 144.

souvenir.[357] The increase in mass-produced objects also directly impacts on the need for more distinctive objects, thereby fuelling the tourist art economy.[358]

The appropriation of global influences into local products is referred to as glocalisation. This process as it relates to souvenirs describes how they can act as 'global agents in resisting, responding and interpreting global influences at local levels'.[359]

Hitchcock and Teague define glocalisation as 'the interdependent relation between local-global [which indicates] that all socio-spatial processes may be viewed as simultaneously global and local'. They also suggest that globalisation may encourage cultural heterogeneity through the appropriation of technologies and media by host societies, in order to subvert global imports.[360]

Practices of glocalisation can manifest in various ways according to different societies and products:

> First, relativisation, in which prior cultural practices are retained within a new environment, differentiated from the new culture, and second, accommodation, which is the pragmatic absorption of practices of other societies but maintaining the prior culture. Third, hybridisation, where people synthesise local and other cultural phenomena to produce distinctive, hybrid forms, and lastly, transformation, where fresh ideas from other cultures are favoured and local culture may be abandoned in favour of alternative and/or hegemonic forms.[361]

RAMM archive

My ideas around how the souvenir represents both ongoing traditions of practice as well as global influences was also reflected in my experiences of drawing artefacts from the RAMM (Royal Albert Memorial Museum) archive.

This online collection of images of works from the museum featured a range of artworks and artefacts which had been categorised as 'ethnographic'. These objects were

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[357] Ibid., p. 137.
[358] Ibid., p. 148.
[359] Jenny Cave, Lee Jolliffe and Tom Baum, 'Theorising Tourism and Souvenirs: Glocal Perspectives on the Margins', in *Tourism and souvenirs: Glocal Perspectives from the Margins,* ed. by Jenny Cave, Lee Jolliffe and Tom Baum (Bristol, UK and Buffalo, NY: Channel View Publications, 2013), pp. 1-25 (p. 1).
[360] Ibid., p. 4.
[361] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

collected from a variety of cultures as a way of understanding how those different cultures functioned. However, the one that interested me the most was the sculpture collected from Nigeria, produced in the style of Yoruba artist, Thomas Ona Odulate. According the the RAMM website, '[Ona's] fascination with colonial authority is reflected in a carving style that combines traditional techniques with modern imagery'.[362]

The artist was born in Ijebu Ode, Nigeria, and later moved to Lagos. He responded to the colonial infrastructure of Lagos by depicting the administrators, lawyers, doctors, and missionaries that he saw there. Using traditional Yoruba techniques and proportions such as large heads, Ona created woodcarvings, often producing multiples of the same objects. Many of these objects were bought or commissioned by the British, and contributed to the development of early tourist arts in Lagos.[363]

Finding this artefact in the RAMM archive reiterated Hitchcock and Teague's research into glocalisation, and how global influences are incorporated into local imagery to reflect colonial processes. It also served to highlight the ways that traditional objects and techniques continue to develop in parallel to the tourist industry.

Souvenirs from the British Isles

All of the aspects detailed above are intrinsic to my *Souvenirs from the British Isles* project. Consisting of forty-eight individual sculptures, each one relates to a separate English city. These objects stand at around 20 cm tall and are painted with bright colours to create a gaudy aesthetic, reminiscent of British seaside attractions and souvenirs. The size of the object was chosen for ease of presentation; large enough to be iconic yet small enough that they could be mistaken for real souvenirs in a tourist shop.

Building on my previous interest in postcards and gifting, these sculptures explore the ways that objects represent relationships between people and places. They depict images and creatures that are representative of the chosen locations; often taken from local folklore or heraldic sources.

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[362] *Carving in the style of Thomas Ona Odulate*, <http://rammcollections.org.uk/object/figure-58> [accessed 10 July 2016].
[363] Ira Jacknis, *Focus on the Collection: Early Tourist Arts of the Yoruba* <http://hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu/collections/focus/early-tourist-arts-of-the-yoruba> [accessed 10 July 2016].

My focus on England and English cities, in turn, relates to my interest in pursuing a more self-reflexive type of anthropology, which considers the heritage of my birthplace as an object of study. In this way I aim to circumvent the issues of appropriation highlighted in my studies of the World's Fairs and more contemporary exhibitions such as *Magiciens de la Terre*, and provide a more informed insight than I could through considering that of another culture.

During conversations around the sculptural aesthetic of the work, my peers communicated a strong sense that the decorations had similarities to objects from different countries; e.g. Egypt, Spain, and the Americas. Despite them being unintentionally reminiscent of other world cultures, the feedback highlighted how souvenirs utilised similar methods and colour palettes to create a sense of desire and belonging in the consumer.

The form and symbolism of the sculptures is derived from historical and contemporary associations of place, and considers the way in which such associations develop and whose agency these stories represent. This point is explored in the edited collection *Tourism and Souvenirs: Glocal perspectives from the margins* by Jenny Cave, Lee Jolliffe and Tom Baum, which asks 'to what extent do souvenir retailers play a role in the portrayal of place and identity to consumers, and their perceptions of souvenir authenticity and commodification?'[364]

The souvenir sculptures have been intentionally given a handmade feel. Despite the souvenir aesthetic, they appear unique with their own intentional flaws and imperfections. In this way I have addressed issues connected with mass production and authenticity.

The sculptures are produced using paper clay and painted with acrylic paint before being varnished. This handmade aesthetic, coupled with the influence of heritage imagery, links the work to the folk art tradition. However, the associations with souvenirs and contemporary tourism, also draw on modern elements of kitsch, a product of the industrial revolution which displaced traditional handicrafts.[365] My work therefore aims to explore the differences between folk art and kitsch and to define them in relation to both the tourist industry and the contemporary art market.

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[364] Cave, Jolliffe and Baum, p. 16.
[365] Greenberg, (1939).

Fig. 23. Louise Atkinson, *Souvenirs from the British Isles* (detail), Paper sculpture and acrylic, 2016.

The exhibition

The *Souvenirs from the British Isles* exhibition ran for five days from 12th December to 16th December 2016 in the Fine Art Project space at the University of Leeds. The souvenirs were laid out on three sets of shelving units, partitioned into squares, open at

the front and back. It was therefore possible to walk around and between each of the units to view the sculptures from all sides.

These units were chosen for their minimalist aesthetic which corresponded with Modernist systems of museum display, and each souvenir was raised off the shelf by a small acrylic riser to create the impression of the sculpture floating inside the square aperture. In doing so, the souvenir took on a much more artefactual appearance.

Fig. 24. Louise Atkinson, *Souvenirs from the British Isles*, University of Leeds, 2016

Though there was a brief interpretation text for the exhibition, no information was given on which piece related to which city, and it was left to the audience members to deduce this for themselves. The audience appeared to enjoy this interaction, contextualising the works within their own experiences and having long conversations with their peers and myself about the potential inspiration for the sculptures. Many had their favourites - items they seemed to identify with more than others - and everyone had clear ideas about which of the sculptures iconified which city (even if these weren't the same as the cities depicted).

The exhibition therefore highlighted the potential for audiences to engage with concepts of collecting, through the use of the museum format as a curatorial strategy, as well as the focus of the work on representations of place.

Conclusion

This chapter detailed my interests and research into the souvenir, from its emergence in the context of the Grand Tour, through to the World's Fair exhibitions. It also examined the ways in which mechanical reproduction facilitated the growth of the souvenir; both as a way of enabling the development and dissemination of images and objects, and also as a factor in eroding more traditional production techniques, resulting in the souvenir becoming a nostalgic substitute.

These concepts were further elaborated on by considering the differences between the Western development of souvenirs, and the notion of 'Fourth World Arts'. The latter, originally considered a 'stable' and 'traditional' category, has since been subject to research which has highlighted how such images and objects develop as part of an increasingly globalised industry, which is impacted by aspects of colonisation and tourism.

Through considering the souvenir as a historical record of the continuing negotiations between producer and consumer, my research aimed to highlight the importance of such objects in understanding representations of place. These representations, as depicted in my sculptures, may include historical or contemporary people, myths, folklore, or events. These also draw on my earlier interests in anthropology through my production of objects which not only portray the myriad influences and agencies within the souvenir object, but also interpolate the viewer into the artwork through encouraging their own interpretation of the sculptures.

These interpretations were created through the souvenir aesthetic of the sculptures encouraging a sense of acquisitiveness in the viewer, but one which was ultimately thwarted by the more traditional viewing positions presented by the museum display. This therefore created a more conceptual engagement with the work, suggesting the potential for affective responses to be elicited without physical interaction.

Conclusion

This thesis posed questions relating to how aspects of archiving, collecting and curating could support interpretations of the work of art. Inherent in these ideas was how the use of reproduction and appropriation in art could contribute to audience engagement and enable new connections to be conceived and revealed. My research also explored the notion of the museum as a complex network of associations and hierarchies and how this impacted on interpretations of the work of art.

My thesis began by considering the relationship between art and anthropology with an aim to produce art works which could elicit a particular response from the audience. My initial thoughts were that art works produced for a non-Western context could create a different type of audience engagement based on a shared understanding of the objects and images. I sought to utilise a theoretical framework of anthropology to suggest particular techniques and solutions which could be applied to my own art practice.

In order to apply these theoretical concepts to my practice I utilised a combination of methods, including writing regular blog posts, alongside curating and studio practice. This continuous process of writing and disseminating my research online allowed me to amass a large archive of work. The writing also operated as an autoethnographic account of my experiences as an artist undertaking a practice-based PhD. This further embedded the framework of anthropology into the research.

One of the concerns that arose within my research was that of cultural appropriation, due to previous artists using ethnographic objects as inspiration for their work without crediting the producers of these objects. In addition to this, the physical appropriation of non-Western artworks into museum collections also changed the meanings of these objects, leading me to consider the museum framework as a potential for further study. As the project developed, I began to focus more on explorations of archiving, collecting and curating.

The first project as discussed in Chapter 3 was *The Imaginary Museum*. This project aimed to produce an installation which synecdochally represented a museum structure through the use of the museum postcard rack. Through framing and categorising the

postcards within the rack, the installation created a collection of images and prompted audiences to make connections between them.

My intention was for audiences to 'collect' these postcards, but also to recognise them as artworks, which I did through assigning a concept of value to them through the addition of a donations box into the installation. This idea was also strengthened through the postcards depicting works produced by the artists who had contributed their work to the exhibitions.

Through engendering a more considered approach to the postcard images, the project encouraged the audience to discuss their postcard choices and to contact me to say whether they were keeping the work as a 'collection' or posting it to a friend. This element also encouraged the audience to think about the postcards as limited edition works of art.

Each iteration responded to the overall concerns of museum collections, photographic reproduction and engagement, but it soon became apparent that the postcard element suggested the potential for further research into art and tourism. The relationship between art and tourism was specifically represented through the iteration of the postcard exhibition called *Monuments and Landmarks*, which was commissioned by CEPRA as part of the Heritage Show and Tell event at Leeds Museum, and subsequently shown at The Excursionist conference in Dorset.

The shift in focus to ideas of tourism as a form of cross-cultural collaboration and negotiation enabled me to envisage a potential solution to to the problem of cultural appropriation in art practice, through considering how images of place are constructed in relation to cultural self-perceptions.

As I was already interested in considering how anthropological theories could be applied to a Western art context, I decided to produce a series of sculptures based on the myths, folklore and contemporary imagery of the British Isles as a form of autoethnography. These brightly coloured sculptures were reminiscent of souvenirs in order to evoke the spirit of tourism.

These souvenirs were presented within three display cases and raised on clear plastic risers to give the impression of museum exhibits. This was intended to create an ambiguous relationship between the viewer and the object, through creating a desire to

touch the work but not physically handling it due to the museum conventions imposed through the display.

Again, the audience responded in a very engaged manner, pondering the meaning and nature of each of the objects and the painted images on their surface. Audiences were aware of the concept of the exhibition due to its title and a brief interpretation panel on the wall. However, as no further information was given as to which object might represent each place, audiences who visited the exhibition were observed discussing potential suggestions for each of the sculptures.

Equally, rather than try to guess the 'correct' answer and ask me for confirmation, audience members instead suggested their own readings of the work based on particular knowledge of an area. This level of engagement was very much the intention of the work.

In opposition to the *Imaginary Museum* installation, which encouraged a more physical engagement with the work of art, *Souvenirs from the British Isles* instead aimed to present the souvenir as a cultural artefact for anthropological discussion, without the usual tactile associations intrinsic to these objects.

Following my PhD I began to think further about where I could show the Souvenir sculptures. A potential avenue for this would be to produce a touring exhibition where the collection would be shown in different city museums in England to gauge audience engagement and reaction to the work. In the meantime, I have already scheduled an exhibition in Dorset as part of the *Spirit of Portland* festival which considers the relationship between art and tourism.

The work I have undertaken throughout the PhD and since has provided a useful framework for working with anthropological concerns through museum collections and with audience participation. Therefore, my process for producing the *Imaginary Museum* and *Souvenirs from the British Isles* exhibitions could enable me to respond to other places in a similar manner. These projects could focus on smaller geographic locations or work directly with communities in that area to discover unfamiliar aspects of an area.

I have also developed my interest in images of place further through the production of a series of collages based on the concept of place myths mentioned in Chapter 4 of my thesis. Continuing from the realisation that the audience did not need to be engaged

through tactile means, *Place Myths* evokes an affective response to imagery suggestive of different landscapes and locations. Based on my sharing of these images on social media, it became apparent that audiences were, again, able to produce their own readings of the work without requiring a specific artistic intention from me.

These images are scheduled to be shown in a solo exhibition at Staithes Studios Gallery, and I am also interested in exhibiting in other sea-side locations as a particular feature of the British Isles. The work will also be shown in Saltaire as part of the Saltaire Arts Trail. I intend to continue producing more of this work in the coming months.

The ethnographic aspects of my research have led me to embark on other collaborative projects including a research project with a linguistic ethnographer working with community participants to map the linguistic landscapes of their neighbourhoods. The results of this work have led to aspects of community engagement, conference presentations, and publications, as well as feeding back into my own studio practice. This project, along with a consideration of my previous studio work has enabled me to consider my work as a form of socially engaged practice, which involves various stakeholders at different points in the production and interpretation process.

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