



A touring exhibition from Craftspace
curated with Helen Carnac

Catalogue edited by
Helen Carnac

Venues

The Waterhall, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery
17 October 2009 — 4 January 2010

Dovecot Studios (Innovative Craft), Edinburgh
18 January — 22 March 2010

Harley Gallery, Worksop
2 April — 6 June 2010

Millennium Court Arts Centre, Northern Ireland
4 August — 25 September 2010

University of Hertfordshire Galleries, St Albans
13 October — 20 November 2010

Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery
12 February — 9 April 2011

Platform Gallery, Clitheroe
9 May — 20 June 2011

Craftspace is a crafts development organisation working to push boundaries and perceptions of crafts practice, exhibition presentation and creative learning. We do this through a programme of touring exhibitions, research partnerships, learning and participatory projects.
www.craftspace.co.uk

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Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution

Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution considers how contemporary craft making practices embrace similar values and philosophies to those supported by the Slow Movement. Both think through where things are made and by whom and engage in ideas of provenance — being immersed in a rich narrative of human experience. Asking us to slow down, perhaps not literally but certainly philosophically, and to reflect on other and perhaps more thoughtful ways of doing things.

Time has an important emphasis in the exhibition — the works invite the viewer to question notions of time — ‘what does time feel like?’ or ‘how do I understand my own time or my place within time?’ We also hope that within the exhibition space the viewer can forget the seconds, minutes and hours of every day life, not needing to ask ‘how long did it take to make?’ but being encouraged to find a temporary place for time to think through and be absorbed by the work.

This Craftspace exhibition, which has been curated with the maker Helen Carnac, brings together nineteen international artists, makers and designers whose making practice and work connects with these ideas. In different and sometimes overlapping ways they examine the world through making and in places quietly ask questions about global and local conditions that we find ourselves in today. The exhibition aims to show that contemporary craft practice and its methodologies can generate a modern and timely response to current social debates.

- How can contemporary craft making enable social interaction and embrace collaborative practice?
- How do we think about the relationships that form an important part of making processes including those between people; people and places; materials and ideas; and the space and time that allows for things to change or be made?
- How do we understand the impact of time in making and understand time constructs that are used within the making process? These may be fast or slow.
- How can performance, which involves the public in the making of the work, challenge ideas of authorship and explore ideas of ownership?
- How can we better understand a making process if we reverse this process or ‘unmake’, literally ‘unpicking the stitches’ to reveal ideas of process, materiality and what an object may look like when it is complete?
- What do site, locality and place mean within the making process and can our personal histories transcend or go beyond our geographies?
- How can an object encourage you to slow down and to take a second look and ask why it looks or functions as it does?
- How do makers communicate ideas of making and how are these spoken about?

Foreword

Craftspace’s exhibition programme is usually themed to reflect our strong belief in the rich potential for ideas, practice and processes related to contemporary craft, to be culturally relevant and socially engaging. One of our previous exhibitions over the past five years was SELF in partnership with Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham. SELF sought to explore questions and boundaries of personal identity, individual difference and notions of ‘otherness’ through the familiar and inter-related media of jewellery, clothing and photography. From considerations of self we now move to considerations of time and place. It is our intention that *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution* creates a space for reflection and recognition of the ways in which artists and makers situate craft in the world beyond the object. Through relationships and collaboration they engage with current social and political issues. As we negotiate these pivotal times which are testing our values and questioning rates of consumption, the artist’s and maker’s voice and activism makes an important contribution to thinking through the future.

The research and development of the exhibition has been a curatorial collaboration and dialogue between maker Helen Carnac and Craftspace’s previous Exhibitions Organiser Andy Horn. It is the first time that Craftspace has worked with a maker in this way and it brings with it new dimensions of richness. Helen’s tacit knowledge of making, its associated critical thinking, practice and dialogues and her broad network has shaped the research process as well as the content and intention of the exhibition.

The explorations of the theme of slowness in the development phase through the blog, the Analogue project with artist Russell Martin, the action research community based project with the National Trust Whose Story? team in the West Midlands and Birmingham City University’s, School of Jewellery project are documented here in this catalogue. In addition Craftspace has commissioned Amy Houghton to create an online web based artwork to test for ourselves how craft can be presented on digital platforms. ‘Tweave’ uses Twitter to create a digital textile which will slowly evolve and change over the eighteen months of the exhibition tour.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with Helen Carnac. I would like to thank her for her generosity, thoughtful expertise, the insights she has brought to our work and the huge amount of time she has invested in the process of research, curation and production. Thanks are due to Andy Horn who left Craftspace in October 2008 for his vision, capacity for generating partnerships and skilful fundraising. Also to Emma Daker who replaced Andy and has worked tirelessly to manage the production phase. Thanks to the staff and Board of Craftspace for their contribution to bringing this exhibition to fruition. Thanks to Arts Council England West Midlands for funding the production and tour. Finally thanks to the artists and makers whose creativity we celebrate.

Deirdre Figueiredo
Director of Craftspace

Introduction Andy Horn

It befits the theme of an exhibition that the process of its formation covered a considerable length of time. Filed away in the office — and in the mind — are often many ideas for exhibitions, initiated in conversations, reflected off other processes of thought and action, emerging in moments of reflection. Images of certain maker's work are solicited, to provide substance to the thinking, a pooling of visual reference that might suggest a sense of consensus, legitimacy to the idea, pointers to new directions of thought.

There are makers such as Matthew Harris, whose thinking and making have an integrity and subtlety that merits an approach that handles it with equal consideration. It takes time to develop that opportunity, to provide that particular context and conceptual framework, that gives justice to the maker's intent. In the space of working, a turnover of programming, and within the breadth of the field of craft, these opportunities may be rare.

Sometimes, as in this case, an exhibition begins with an idea, worked up as a draft proposal, that is later — perhaps a year later — reviewed, reconsidered and reshaped. In this space of time, makers' images, solicited and filed, beginning as slides, become supplanted by new work, digitally recorded, extending that earlier archived conversation of first images. As ideas move forward some work ceases to fit whilst other work becomes more secure within our intentions. It demands other companions, and the net is cast wider.

It is timely, that in the two years of developing the research of this exhibition, once the theme was first agreed, that many of the arguments and philosophies of the Slow Movement and which resonate within craft practices, have come to the fore within public debate. Not only do periods of economic and social crisis raise questions about the directions of lifestyles and values, but that we are within an ongoing, long-term debate about sustainability, natural resources and our relationship to production and consumption.

The word 'revolution' for us has two meanings. We would argue that making by hand is a political statement whose thread of argument runs back to the debates initiated by the Arts and Crafts movement and political writing of William Morris, a hundred and fifty years ago. Increasingly contemporary makers

are positioning their work within the politics of production, through choice of material, the intention of the work, research and advocacy within their sectors. And so the wheel turns.

As individuals and as an organisation (Craftspace) we are interested in social and cultural contexts of making and its presentation. The philosophies and debates of the Slow Movement, still emerging, and with a growing constituency of public support and interest, both global and local, could provide a powerful connection from which to explore ideas about contemporary craft practice and its contribution to cultural thinking.

So much of this two-year research process has been about creating new territory, a shared space for dialogue and other activity. We had been considering curating a major exhibition in partnership with a maker, and we approached Helen Carnac, knowing of her research for the conference, *Carry the Can*, for the Association of Contemporary Jewellery. This conference provided a forum for which to debate the ethics of production in precious metal and jewellery industry.

One of the philosophies of the Slow Movement is about how shared activity generates social relationships and that the space of that activity can create its own locality. Part of bringing someone into a shared process is that building of trust, exploration of each individual's ideas and practice, values and personalities. It is the same with an organisation, and Helen has got to know about, and increasingly contributed to, the activities and culture of Craftspace.

The development of the blog, an online medium of communication and outreach that seemed most appropriate to the nature and form of the Slow Movement, and to our ambitions to share our, and encourage other, dialogue, has been a significant part of our research process. That it has been enormously successful in the breadth of its readership and contributions, has given further recognition of the validity and wider relevance of what we set out to achieve.

Now at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, I am delighted that we are able to launch this important exhibition, and that I have been able to follow it through from its inception to its fruition. I look forward to seeing, and hearing about, its evolution through its tour.

Introduction Helen Carnac

'...Stealthy, imperceptible, time makes its presence known by transforming our sense of it into sensation....'¹

When I began working on the *Slow* project in August 2007 I hadn't really thought at length about the Slow Movement or indeed its relationship to the crafts. As a maker who naturally thinks through the act of making and materials — what I had considered at length were notions of time, provenance, locality, process, objects, material and place — all in direct response to how we value, what we value and why — in and beyond craft.

I had previously worked around this subject matter, organising the symposium HEIM² in 2004, co-convening the conference *Carry the Can*³ in 2006 and curating the exhibition *Process Works*⁴ in 2007. After meeting with Andy Horn, who asked me to work with Craftspace to curate their new exhibition, with the broad rationale of 'slow' already in place and after further research and reading on my part, what I began to realise was that my interests were actually concepts of a 'slow' philosophy. I just hadn't termed them this way and having always been an anti-label 'type' it wasn't and still isn't my intention to sum it all up and say 'this is what it is and this is what it means'.

From the beginnings of putting the project together it was important that the experience was propounded and collaborative — that we could put ideas out there in an open space and receive thoughts back. We did this by setting up the *makingaslowrevolution*⁵ blog, which was launched in January 2008. Since then I have been surprised by the amount of attention garnered by the blog, but I think this only demonstrated a need and a want for critical dialogue and just how much interest there is in the subject matter. That the crafts can and should be considered a subject that is relevant, contemporary and has much to offer that is thought provoking in today's society is clear.

Throughout the two-year research stage of the project the landscape of our world has changed substantially. Economic and political news has been significant: a global economic downturn; increasing thought and debate about our lives and lifestyles becoming unsustainable; a new era in American politics and even a once buoyant banking system now in long-term and

perhaps terminal decline. These events have made huge impact on my progress and thinking through the subject matter. As time has continued the exhibition has seemed to me to be increasingly relevant to a wider constituency. The makers in the exhibition and the objects that they make may offer other ways of thinking through life and the human condition, perhaps showing alternatives to mainstream thinking, ways of developing new thought and how this may apply to everyday life.

Slowness and time

What became increasingly important to me over the duration of the research were notions of time and how ideas of time, timeliness, timelessness and being in one's own time seemed to offer a thread and dialogue through the subject matter of the exhibition. We had used the term Slow Revolution from the beginning — it always seemed a pertinent phrase to use but not in a simplistic or obvious way. I like the word slow in terms of its time connotations, that you can think through slow and it gives you an angle to think through fast for example and that slow could not and does not mean the same to all. Quick, quick, slow — the spaces made, rhythm and tempo, the different durations thought through and as a maker the resonance between these spaces created in my working practice. The word revolution also seems apt. The crafts can offer certain ideologies and a space for free thinking that is perhaps in some senses revolutionary but it also offers us a sense of movement, that we are turning, revolving around and around — evolving.

The makers in the exhibition are not literally slow, they are not all counting second by second the time it takes to make their work and they are not interested necessarily in skill for its own sake. Through their work and thinking they offer the space for others to interact and become immersed in time. Asking what the work means or offers in the wider context of a global space in time: where stuff comes from; why it's here; how it links us to others; what is left in the traces and marks of what we do and why this is important are some of those things.

Thinking about time literally — we construct our own sense of time by comparing events — where things happened or when and how they relate to our lives. Through this we

perceive a sense of relativity and consciously feel the passage of time. The objects in the exhibition are imbued with the marks of their maker and their lives and those that come into contact with them. By putting the work of these nineteen artists, makers and designers together in the same place I hope some sort of layered sense of time will happen through the likeness or unlikeness, the overlapping, the spaces in between and the quietness that ensues.

‘the sensation of succession and so duration imbues human experience, providing it with its unique character. We are able to compare the present held in memory with the present as currently experienced’⁶

A literal thread

As we approach the launch of the exhibition I imagine the work that is soon to be installed at the Waterhall at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery. A ‘garland’ offered by its maker Shane Waltener to the audience to add to and interact with; a ‘table’ where its maker David Gates talks of ‘table-ness’ and which laced with threads makes space to convey and acknowledge the place where conversation, negotiation and recognition take place; letters of a bygone time now unravelling in Amy Houghton’s typewriter installation; diaries once written by a Suffolk Girl and now cut in slate by Gary Breeze and to a sea of stone and Sue Lawty’s piece *Calculus*, which I imagine beginning to count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 ... 9 only to find myself lost in the space and place of the piece.

What has brought all this together in my mind is dialogue and collaboration and I would like to acknowledge all the people that have spent their time talking through and about it with me and in particular: Russell Martin, Linda Sandino, David Gates, Andy Horn, Rebecca Earley, Paul Harper, Deirdre Figueiredo, Emma Daker and everyone at Craftspace. Finally I would like to thank all the exhibitors for their thoughtful contributions, their time, generosity and for all the conversations we have had along the way.

- 1 Langone, J. (2000) in Evans, V., 2006: *The structure of time: Language, meaning and temporal cognition*, John Benjamins Publishing, p.3
- 2 HEIM (Honour, Ethics, Integrity and Morality) Symposium, London 2003 co-convended by Carnac, Yeo, Fraser and Astfalck
- 3 Carry the Can Conference London, 2006 co-convended by Carnac, Yeo and Callinicos
- 4 Process Works, 2007, Carnac and Rushby
- 5 makingaslowrevolution.wordpress.com
- 6 Evans, V., (2006): *The structure of time: Language, meaning and temporal cognition*, John Benjamins Publishing, p.24

The Exhibition

Talking Time

Linda Sandino in conversation with Helen Carnac

Linda Sandino is a design and oral historian who has written extensively about contemporary crafts. Currently, she is the Camberwell College of Arts Senior Research Fellow in Oral History at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Helen Carnac is a maker, curator and academic who lives and works in London. Drawing, mark-making, the explicit connections between material, process and maker and an emphasis on deliberation and reflection are all central to Helen's practice as a maker and thinker.

LS: So how did you find the people in the exhibition?

HC: Subject matter, breaking down areas — looking for people. Andy Horn suggested some people to start with and we were interested in values of objects broadly.

That the subject 'slow' already existed was slightly difficult but I found out various things about the slow movement — I liked the fact that it was a propounded movement, that it brought ideas to the table and so we decided to rewind from Andy's initial thoughts and start again — we set up the blog to put ideas out there and to see if people would come back to us.

But really it was also important for me to stay close to home in terms of subject matter, to what is important to me as a maker. I wanted to work with makers that were experienced and with objects that might speak to each other and it didn't matter whether the artists were well known or not.

LS: Thinking about curating and what it means — bringing things together so that they are something else, is in the spirit of what curating is about. It makes you think about things in a different way. So when we went to the Flat Time house and John Latham's art objects... it was signifying something about time that isn't linear — you have to go through it to experience it. The great thing about the David Toop piece was that it unravelled over time, generating different formats and constantly evolving.

I think if one translates the idea of embodying time in the making, in the crafts world it somehow always is seen as something to do with skill...and I think that sometime ago there was an exhibition at the Crafts Council

about decadence = skill so I am looking forward to looking at different ways people interpret time in objects and aren't just thinking about skill or demonstrating skill through objects.

HC: It's one of the strong things from all involved that they don't want to be represented by how long things have taken to make — the skill factor has to be there — it's a foundation so I wanted to work with experienced makers who had gone through this and beyond. They are not trying to tell you that they are skilful; there is instead some kind of language of making and it will be interesting to see how this comes through.

LS: What are the themes?

HC: Making and unmaking, slowing down, understanding an object in a different way, turning it upside down and wondering why it functions in a particular way and perhaps something more literal too — about the time taken, but not the hours and minutes, more pieces where the viewer is drawn in and thinks about the intensity.

I think that if I have done my job well you will see the connections between the work and a layering of time. I have found the process almost *like* making.

LS: Listening to objects — that's why I like talking to makers and artists — it's the thinking process. The other thing about the exhibition is the time factor thing. I think because time is such a conceptually complicated phenomenon that inevitably it makes you think about the work. Narrative and time and the idea that time is expanded through narrative. By telling stories and by reflecting — time becomes really tangible, which for me as an oral historian is really important. Bakhtin's notion of the 'chronotope' which is a novelistic device — the river and road are examples of the containment or expression of space and time — I think his other lovely example is the nineteenth century 'salon' as a chronotope of time and action — and I have been wondering how to apply this to artworks — I think that you can with space but I wonder if it can be used in terms of time in the object?

HC: It's interesting at this point that time is literally speeding up — things are being

completed and there is a sense of time running through, especially in the making of the objects.

LS: They are episodes.

HC: Recently in conversations with some of the makers we have talked about episodes or chapters — some of the work will be added to or change during the duration of the exhibition — the thought that when you reach a seeming end point that actually it continues and goes forward. I suppose the durational aspect of the work connects it to the maker, embodies something of the person...not just the seconds and minutes.

LS: The problem with some attitudes to the crafts is that it is thought of as either a 'product' or an 'art object'. In being interested in the narrative identity of something that is always two-fold, there is a constant aspect and one that is always changing and it's the constancy of conditions that spoke to me — it was to do with the idea of the 'promise' and the ethical side to this that I think is important. One of the things that is attractive about the crafts, or working with materials, is that at its best it can be an ethical practice and that is what also makes it political. When I have interviewed artists and makers about their work and their lives — their work and life is intertwined. When they talk about their work, they are talking about themselves, that's why the object, the work of being an artist is never a product — because they are not an object themselves. The work of being an artist is never finished and in a way when thinking about someone working it is unfinished issues and preoccupations that they are working through. I think that this idea of the maker resisting the product is something politically important that needs to be brought out — it's not something that anybody has ever worked at.

HC: For me this exhibition is about making and being a maker. I find it difficult when people try to describe making as 'product' and sometimes it seems difficult for someone not close to understand.

LS: Using it in terms of other people — not the cost of an object — treating it as an object rather than a subjective object — so not choosing work so that it matches the sofa.

HC: Trust. You don't want to guide — you want to give process time — a space to work within — to allow people to think and to think through on their own terms.

LS: Trust is time based — it's not the same as confidence — it's about the promise.

HC: It's a layering, a layered approach to things and how things build. How they relate to each other through time, like a piece of music building. Trust at points disintegrates but in that layered approach if you keep on going you can reach something unexpected. At points I couldn't get beyond thinking about a piece of work for the exhibition or a maker and one of those people was Neil Brownsword — who seems so close to place and time. There's no fake layering.

LS: Fake is a good word. I interviewed a retired curator recently and he talked a lot about the 'connoisseur's eye' — how that is no longer fashionable and the more I looked at the stories he told — I felt it's a very embodied eye — it's not one looking for a style. When you think of some design/craft exhibitions, some objects are fake because they are just a style of design or 'art'

HC: I could see something about the work in the *Taking Time* exhibition but it wasn't necessarily visual — I wasn't thinking this will go together with that and that it will all fit together.

LS: Do you think that there is a metaphor to describe the exhibition. Is it a narrative or spatial metaphor?

HC: It's a narrative...lines going through, physical lines, threads...oh.

LS: That's a chronotope!

HC: There's a literal thread, lines and threads — metaphors, conversational aspects, language and construction of language. Physical spaces, the line adapts to a physical space and perhaps becomes spatial.

LS: There is the layering and a flexible form which is not just linear, perhaps a web?



City Fabric XL_XS

Our lives take a certain time, they develop in relation to what is around us. Our lives get context through our families, neighbours, friends and local communities. The relations in our communities create an environment for us to grow into. It is the local place from where we started our own developing journey.

Our local context was shaped by being rooted in the Netherlands and Germany. A context with large freedom in personal development. Shaping our ideas and having time to develop a view on how everything works. Not only by working in a creative field but also through time being part of different communities. Now we work together as team BoomWehmeyer, bringing together a puzzle of different cultures, design work fields, views, connections and communities. Within our design work for us it is not about where design disciplines are situated or separated but how disciplines are fabricated and connected to each other. Being able to lay out new puzzles in a changing world, slowing down to make changes in our perceptions.

Seeing this puzzle or fabric around us is something that takes time, not only in design but also in looking at our locality. The local surroundings that we root from change rapidly. In some cities whole neighbourhoods move in weeks or roads are replaced overnight. These changes create a much deeper connection with our local environment, how we value the space around us, how we experience community or use objects. It also makes changes in how people experience the word locality. For one, local means the backyard and for the other, local means every place they travelled through.

In the last years, we had the chance to work and live in China, one of the fastest

changing places. This affected and rewired our connection to what personal or local means. Seeing new connections and values appear in the environment such as government planning new suburbs, local people building or repairing their own streets, material resources that decrease or change — all elements that show a deeper view on the values and fabric of our local space. To look anew at our localities or environment we sometimes have to step away and view the larger connections of how everything is fabricated to each other. In our work through design we work a lot with local material projects, social projects and different cultures. This gives us a moment to show these changes we all live in and are surrounded by. Our projects in China are connected to this. We connect not only to our space through our physical products, our clothes, or transport but also by looking at the city around us as a fabric, built together, through different times, materials, techniques and creators.

Sometimes we have to step out of our local zone to see the differences between cultures, customs and the time we need to connect, speak or work with local life. The fabric of our locality needs our personal maintenance and participation, zooming into the cityscape, seeing craft through infrastructure, materials and people, contributing different personal experiences and perspectives, expanding the puzzle around us.

The book City Fabric XL_XS contains a view on the fast changing Chinese environment of Shanghai where we work on Re:Wire, our project that connects our perceptions differently. The photos are taken by Judith van den Boom, Gunter Wehmeyer and project intern Marianne Meijer who spent the summer researching the project.



From top
Street fabric; Production fabric; Storage fabric

Facing page
Personal fabric



Core words about our practice

Conversations, Crossing, Layers, Interrelation, Curious, Engine, People, Landscapes, Activating, Bridging, Slowing, Empower, Material, Scale, Changing, Development, Social, Detailed, Relationships, Tactile, Movement, Stimulating, Awareness, Engaging, Craft, Shaping, Technology, Brainstorms, Research, Observing, Streaming, Inbetween, Passionate, Developing, Activism, Engage



Carving words into stone is a slow process. It is usually reserved for the profound message and is made to last. We expect the inscription to proclaim and commemorate and to remind us of lives that are gone. The permanence of stone has become a powerful symbol of our relationship with the passage of time and the ephemeral. My work has always been bound up with this relationship, but also in aspects of our unsung past such as dialect, as indigenous as the natural world it describes and the people who once spoke it, or language which describes work and its processes; words used to make and build things. These are personal traces we unwittingly leave behind us over time like a worn stone step or thin gold ring.

For this show I took a text from the unpublished diary of fourteen year old Anne Gathorne-Hardy dated the 9th of January 1926. Through detailed sketches and descriptions Anne reveals her precocious knowledge of ships and boats observed along her native Suffolk coast and on her travels in the Mediterranean. They capture a moment in time when sailing ships were commonplace though increasingly threatened by motorised vessels.

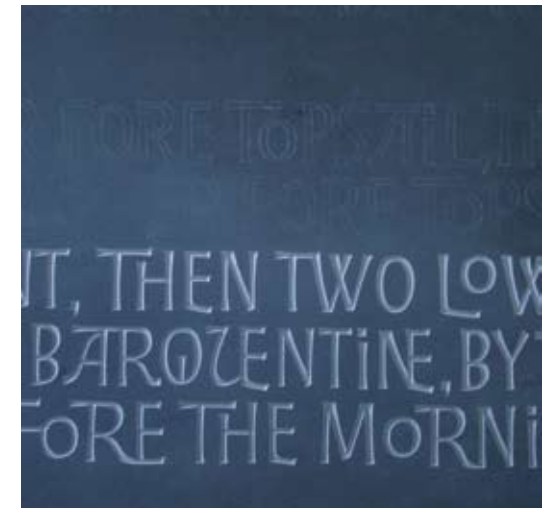
The sailing craft never cheats in the way a motor vessel does. It harnesses the free energy of the wind through the ingenuity of its design and the skill of its crew. Its beauty is a product of its functional relationship with the natural elements of wind and water and tide, and through it we too become connected to the environment. As with craftsmanship, the only price is time itself.

The text and the image are used with the kind permission of Anne Gathorne-Hardy's daughter Harriet Frazer of the Memorial Arts Charity, and through her support for the craft of lettercarving Stuart Buckle was able to complete his traditional apprenticeship in 2005.

Above from top
Sketch in Anne Gathorne-Hardy's diary from which the text for the piece was taken; Full-size drawing of the text

Facing page clockwise from top left
'Pouncing' or transferring the drawing onto the slate;
Stuart Buckle, Gary Breeze's assistant, cutting the letters;
The inscription in progress

Photos by Gary Breeze



Neil Brownsword

My creative practice continues to explore the social, cultural, and economic impact of the decline of British ceramic manufacture, as its North Staffordshire centre increasingly shifts production to the Far East. The steady closure of factories and the resulting disappearance of a unique artisanal culture are mediated via a formal language inspired by remnants of industrial archaeology. This lexicon of absence, fragmentation and the discarded is appropriated to signify the expense of human labour in an area whose economy was founded upon the skills and knowledge of its indigenous work force. The reason why clay continues to be exploited as a primary material in my practice remains rooted within personal and social histories. One of my earliest creative recollections is associated with being drawn to the innate plastic properties of clays dug from woodland behind my parent's house in North Staffordshire. Awareness of the major presence of ceramic manufacture was further reinforced by growing up in a surrounding landscape that bears the scars of hundreds of years of industrial activity. Spoil heaps from collieries that supplied fuel to the Pottery kilns and marl pits from which clay was mined for brick and tile production litter the area. Alongside this, knowledge and material evidence of my maternal ancestries employment in the ceramic industry, again paved the foundations for a career in ceramics — my formative training being as a modeller at Josiah Wedgwood's (1987) prior to study in Higher Education. These intimate connections and experiences instilled a great appreciation for the areas past and indigenous ceramic traditions which my work continues to reverberate.

By 1800 the six towns of Stoke-on-Trent paralleled China as a world centre for ceramic production, but numerous factors, including the recent economic downturn and shifts in consumer trends, have seen an 80,000 workforce at its peak plummet to less than 5,000. With the everchanging tide of fashion, the European market has been unable to compete with the saturation of cheap imports aimed at casual dining. Many UK conglomerates have resorted to outsourced manufacture, reducing costs by up to 70 percent. The now redundant wave of highly skilled employees who trained Indonesian and Chinese workforces (paid one tenth of the UK annual



Above
Spode Factory, 2009 — Photo by Neil Brownsword

Facing page
Bournes Bank, Burslem — Photo by Steve Speller

salary), find themselves with little industry left to re-apply their specialist knowledge. What happens when such incredible 'tacit' expertise finally disappears from the locale, and goods overseas begin to inevitably rise in cost as workers demand more pay and better working conditions? It is this phenomenon of global transfer and knowledge displacement, which conceptually underpins the basis of the commission for *Taking Time*. Through this, the aim is to draw attention to the effects these cycles of capitalism incur upon indigenous traditions.

Through the ongoing pursuits of salvage from sites of once prevalent manufacture, I recently uncovered a mass of abandoned ceramic tableware packaging. The sheer volume of this deposit seemed to signify the extent of former heydays of retail and consumption, and more poignantly the sudden collapse of high yield production. Rescued and subsequently lined with clay, the material's 'wetness' contorts and alters their uniformity — each yielding a unique structure, made permanent through the process of firing. The deliberate use of porcelain in their fabrication immediately imbues material status to the discarded. It also cites the endeavours of early Staffordshire potters who, in capitalising upon the replication of this 'white gold' developed major technological and material advances from which the basis of the cities economy flourished.





Take a simple bead. By design, it is connected to all the beads made before it, all those yet to come. Its ancient history, the earliest ones being shells found in Africa and made over 75,000 years ago, tell us something of ourselves. Why would our ancestors take something small, hard, and precious and subject it to drilling when it is almost inevitable that many of the shells would be destroyed in the process of being made in to beads? One answer might be in the definition of 'bead' itself: a small object that is perforated so it might be strung. And why would it need to be strung? So it could be worn. So our ancestors subjected their most precious of objects to damage in the hope that some would not break in the drilling process and could be worn. The lesson is that a precious object should be kept close.

As the ancients drilled with their simple tools, a lot was at stake. Is it any wonder then that the modern English word 'bead' comes from the Old English word 'biddan' meaning to ask or to pray. Each attempt at drilling must have been accompanied by a prayer! But really it is more than that. The shared etymology of bead and prayer also come from the long legacy

of the haptic quality of beads. Small and often round, these handheld objects have been used throughout the world as mnemonic devices. We see this in abaci and in rosaries. Beads are not the prayer or the number but the memory of the prayer and the number.

Fast forward to the present: a shop filled with glass beads and such. The glass beads sparkle and please the eye. Technology has allowed us to make glass and in turn make this durable, shiny substance into beads. These beads are connected to the memory of their ancestral shell beads. Yes the drilling process is avoided but the beaded object is imbued with the preciousness of time. Now artists buy the smallest ones available and create (perhaps even meditate) pieces that measure time.

Climb is one such piece. It is from the Calculated Gestures Series. In the series each piece is made by slowly and methodically beading gestures or movements. While *Climb* took over 120 hours to make by hand, ascending a ladder of the same height might take a matter of seconds. The hands at either end of the piece metaphorically stretch between one mindset and another, the span of a lifetime,



Clockwise from top
Handy II; Climb

Facing page
Afro Abe II

Photos by Taylor Dabney



across several generations from the first bead man made to a present day bead artist such as myself. Together, across time we have designed this work.

Now switch gears and think of how often you handle another common object, money, actual paper currency. Less and less these days it seems as we use credit cards. But pause for a moment and consider these beautifully lithographed prints that go from hand to hand. I believe that paper money holds a bit of the designer, a lot of historic symbolism, and the presence of all the people who have touched it. Like any other object of material culture, paper money has roots. It is connected to all the currency that has come before it (including beads that were used for currency) and all that will come after.

Paper money connects to value(s), trade, commerce, and the economy. Who symbolizes these on American currency? Our founding fathers, notable presidents, and great men. America is a country whose wealth was built on the backs of other men and women, enslaved Africans who were traded as commodities themselves. Abraham Lincoln is the American

president credited with freeing enslaved people of African descent. Some scholars say that Lincoln, like several early Americans, was part African. This is plausible given how many African versus European women there were in the United States at one time and how many bore the children of their European slave owners. Perhaps then Lincoln was bringing justice to his own people. Historically, a slow justice.

Afro Abe II employs an interventionist strategy on a common object. In one sense it is a nod to work like Duchamp's *Mona Lisa, LHOOQ*. In another sense, for the historians that believe in Lincoln's African heritage, the piece may be a long overdue celebration honoring the first black president of the USA. Certainly, by stitching an Afro, a symbol of African pride on the head of President Lincoln, I am intending to honor our first confirmed president of African descent and simultaneously crowning Lincoln with the hair of those he emancipated. Though the journey has been slow and long, the image of Lincoln with an Afro makes one stop and look at that beautiful lithograph with a fresh eye.

Rebecca Earley

Right

Twice Upcycled Shirt by B.Earley and Kate Goldsworthy, 2008

Facing page

B.Earley W4 Studio, 2009

Photos by Oliver Reed



Top 100 began in 1999 as a personal project that was a creative antidote to the demands of both my label and my teaching post at Chelsea College of Art and Design. I wanted to spend time in my studio making something that wasn't connected to a deadline, a client, or a budget. It was a Sunday hobby I suppose. I would wake early and go to Columbia Road or Spitalfields, look for old polyester shirts, and then go to the Brick Lane studio and design new life into them. It was a kind of therapy. It felt good to make something beautiful and unique from something stained and discarded. I relied wholly on my own aesthetic instincts in the moments before I created the 30-second over-print. It felt live, risky, exhilarating, and deeply satisfying. I would often wear the new creation out that night.

In time the project took on a life of its own. It gradually became part of my job, as my focus at Chelsea shifted from teaching into research around 2002. My personal mini-recycling project eventually became a collaborative AHRC funded 'upcycling' project in 2005.

From 2003 I began to consciously create the shirts in sets of ten, to different narratives. For each set I tried to explore new textile techniques and technologies, and to put some of the ecodesign theory I was reading into practice, (with varying degrees of success on both counts). Recently when I looked back through the thousands of files created on five computers over the last ten years, I realised I had created a huge digital sketchbook of ideas. In this exhibition I am showing some of the finished shirts from the project, as well as digitally presenting the contents of the sketchbook.

Creating opportunities for designers to discuss, reflect and collaborate is now a vital part of my practice, and so I conceived the *Conversations on (a) Slow Craft* project as a way to bring 'on board' other designer/makers. During a four-hour barge trip along London's Regent's Canal in September 2009 ten of us talked and stitched ideas about 'Time and Textiles'.





From top
March; May

Facing page clockwise from top left
June; June; July

—
Photos by Dawn Youll

An Idea of North

'When a place is found it is found somewhere on the frontier between nature and art. It is like a hollow in the sand within which the frontier has been wiped out. The place of the painting begins in this hollow. Begins with a practice, with something being done by the hands, and the hands then seeking the approval of the eye, until the whole body is involved in the hollow. Then there's a chance of it becoming a place. A slim chance.' — John Berger, (2001), *The Shape of a Pocket*, Bloomsbury, p.29

Place can be where you are or where you are not. It can be a remembered or an anticipated vision. By means of a conversation we attempted to slowly but surely identify our idea of 'place'.

Our desire as two independent makers was to create an occasion for the exchange of ideas and in doing so to lay the foundations for a collaborative piece of work. Words, correspondence and discourse all affect the shape of things. By sharing our personal observations, the narrative that connects where we are has developed. We have become part of each other's making process increasing the possibilities of our individual practice.



David Gates

Prompting and reminding us of furniture but of other things too and falling outside the usual typologies, neither table, chair nor ironing-board — possibilities come alive. The viewer recognises something; form, construction, materials, buildings, things domestic and industrial. Something, but nothing to pin down, making personal projections from memory and recollection. The viewer takes part in the process; part of the life of the object. And what does furniture do in a space? It can define a function, give a room a name, mark it out. Placing furniture in a void makes a room, it tempers the ambiguity of the space to something more defined and manners our actions within it. But this is not a static condition, 'now' is always different. In doing this we can bring alive possibilities of the future, we can dream of meals, conversations with a partner with friends, saying, hearing and seeing things; sitting alone. Eating, drinking, talking, connecting. Weaving together across the table's flat plain. Sitting, leaning, thinking, constructing reality. Assembling something concrete, real, but with the ephemerality and liquidity of sound and sight. Words and images

hanging between people in the rigid physical geometries of a room; world-making in the mutable spaces around the ambiguities of furniture.

Words around chairs play with power and position; chairman, cathedra, the electric chair and throne. Singular and only space for the one. Tables have a chance to be more egalitarian in their lives. Families and friends, lovers or colleagues around them, talk and live, brought together for a moment the complexities of the invisible traces above and around the surface drawing together and negotiating. The spaces underneath colonised by children in a parallel world of imaginative play. We bring something to the table, we confer in the boardroom, talk in the canteen, meetings happen across them. From the boardroom to family dinners, working talk at the desk, lovers trysts, on the phone, face to face and in the ether. Thoughts are spun and plots are hatched. At the workbench stories and knowledge are shared and traded over the surface of saw cuts. Tea stains, scratched names, crayons and spilled wine, initials carved, stories written woven back and forth over tables and through time itself.



Above
Work in progress

Facing page
anon(.) parts 1-6, detail

—
Photos by David Gates





39 x 25

the best of us
got to be interesting

BOOKS
layers of paper



SAME
N. GREDIAN
RE-USED

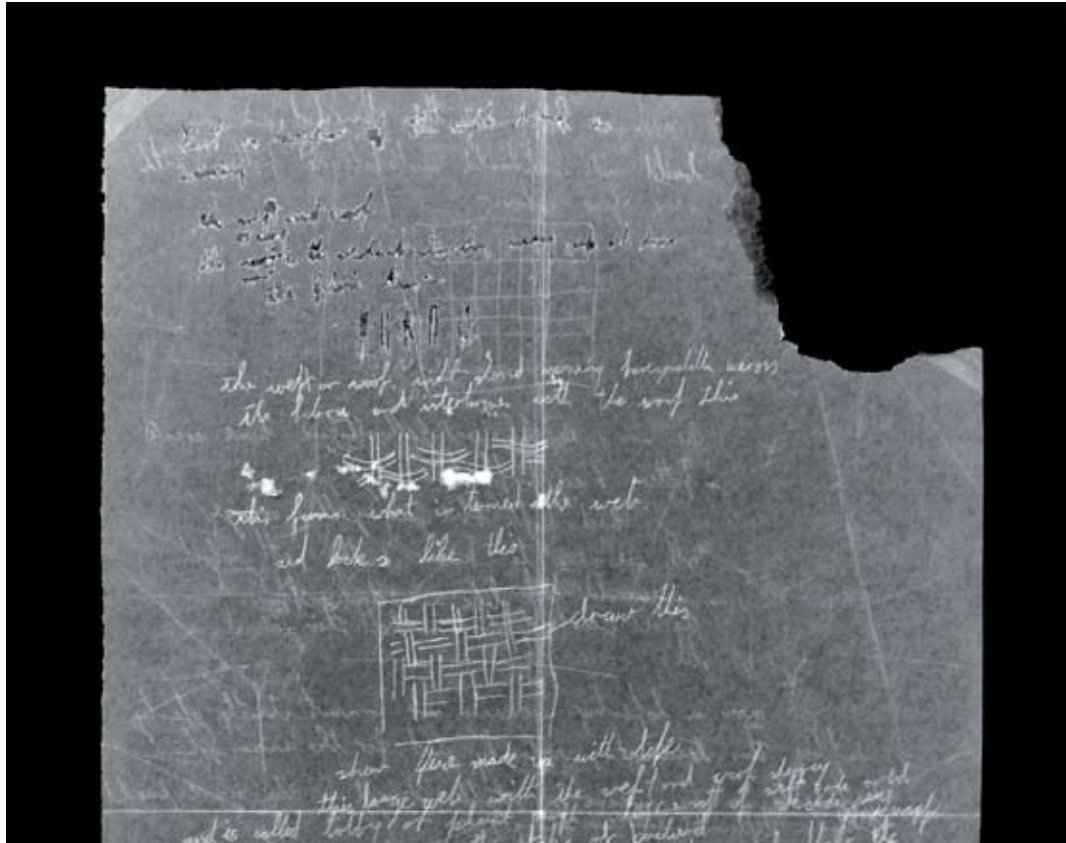
BACK - to - FRONT
FRONT - to - BACK

decomposed fragments

drawing like a cloth
cloth like a drawing

the forgotten and the





Amy Houghton in conversation with the maker and curator Helen Carnac August 2009.

HC: Tell me about the work.

AH: It's come from a place of contemplation, taking time, freezing moments and reanimating still moments and also from my connection with historical objects and writing, to try to understand why we collect. What you can read from someone's attachment to an object and what you can put onto it from your own experiences — that combination of creating and restoring the story.

Also the relationship to photography in terms of having a still moment, then wanting to access something and desiring to make it come alive. The realisation that by unravelling and unwinding a bit at a time you can find

something hidden or unknown. I guess I am a bit of a time traveller really — questioning if you can move through time in different ways is what I am really trying to grapple with.

HC: How do you make decisions about how, with what and where to work? Are there moments where you think that's exactly it?

AH: Horizontally thinking, making connections, making connections between past projects and future or current ones.

It makes me think of my experiences of the research I have been doing into Gertrude Benham (1867–1938) who was an English mountaineer, collector and traveller. I have come across her collection at Plymouth Museum as I begin a 15 month residency at the art college there. Gertrude did a lot of knitting

Facing page

One centimetre is a little less than half-an-inch, stop frame animation in progress — Photo by Amy Houghton

and stitching, painting and writing during her travels and exchanged her creations for artefacts made in the countries she travelled in. Yet there is no evidence of this work that she created in the collection, as there is a missing trunk that contained much of this. I have spoken to a relative of Gertrude's and she told me about a painting that Gertrude's cousin painted of a woman spinning in Corsica. The connection here is that Corsica was one of Gertrude's favourite places, and the textiles featured in the painting were one of the main materials of choice for Gertrude's craft. I hope to use this painting somehow in my Plymouth residency. It's those 'barely there' links that help me make connections — stitching, making, her process through her objects and through what her cousin has made — it makes me want to get closer to it and access the information it holds.

HC: You are making a piece for the 'Taking Time' exhibition which explores the Dovecot Studio's archive on the Isle of Bute. When you went to Bute in what sort of ways did the material in the archive resonate with the Dovecot Studios?

AH: Time is the resonance. I learnt more about the process; not the making of the tapestry but the process leading up to the making, so things like the cartoons drawn. The first tapestry that Dovecot Studios made, *The Lord of the Hunt*, took 12 years to make. Both master weavers involved died in World War I and so the apprentices took over. If you are an expert you can see the change in the work. There is a memorial to the dead woven into the piece which includes an image of the tapestry weavers' scissors used to cut the tapestries from the loom and which here symbolically represent cutting the thread of life. Some of the letters I have looked at in the archive are really interesting. There are diaries that document the day-to-day. Some of it can be very mundane too. For example on April 13, 1912, 'wove three inches' (on such and such a day) is what was documented.

HC: But you get a real sense of time passing, accumulation of time in the object — a nice sense of duration.

AH: Yes — in the diaries for this particular piece and in the sheer amount of whole notebooks of historical work, even in details recorded like the birds that would have been around at that time of year.

HC: What is the importance of making in your work?

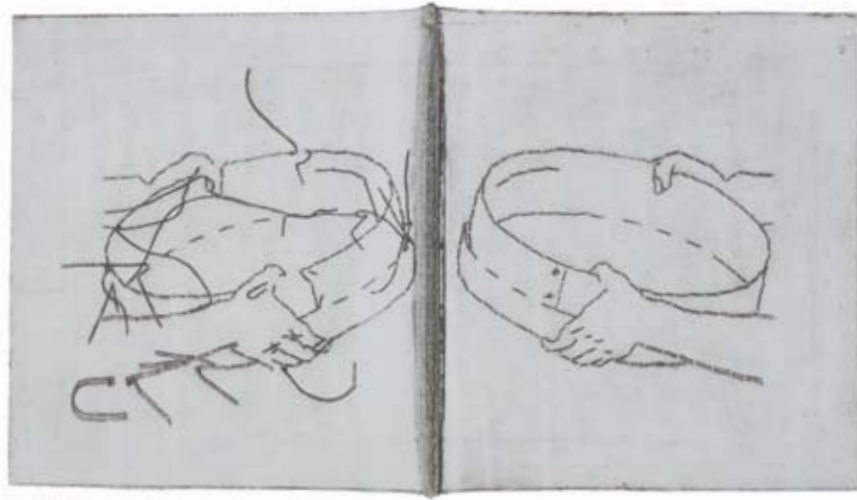
AH: I am fascinated by the process and whether that is the object itself. Historical craft. Using objects to give reality when there is a sense of lack of the real.

HC: Making and revealing?

AH: Our value and the understanding of processes and our objects, understanding the journey that something has taken in getting there.

HC: Practice transcending disciplinary. In terms of layers of practice, what sort of process do you go through when making a piece?

AH: In terms of imagination I take a pseudo-forensic approach taking apart and 'x-raying'. I know how to unpick a textile. I like the idea of going backwards — the unmaking — in going backwards you have a sense of what the person has been through. At points you will see things that only that person would have seen at the time of making and there's a real sense of physical connection. In the piece I am making for the exhibition I am looking at handwriting and how I get a real sense for that person and how they wrote... you can scrape away the ink and it disappears... you feel a process but you no longer have the object... you have taken it away but in its place you have a memory, a reminder and a new layering in time.



The Mind in the Hand

Esther Knobel in conversation with Tamar Manor Friedman, in an artist book, *The Mind in the Hand* published in Israel, 2008.

TMF: The present series, *The Mind in the Hand*, is a complex and ongoing project which is developing with two almost parallel channels of work, namely etching and brooches. Although the images in these works are borrowed from different sources and contexts — botanical, figurative, biographical — there is a most interesting recurring theme here: hands at work at a variety of tasks. It seems that in this series, you are trying to express, in the language of imagery and media, the thought behind the craft; it appears that this is a declaration regarding the meaning of craft, and in general, the meaning of your occupation as a jewelry designer.

EK: The theoretical-critical discourse with regard to ‘the meaning of craft’ captivates and preoccupies me, namely, issues of the language of the material, the latent information it contains, the non-verbal message, and the question of how to direct and impart knowledge. Is it possible to describe the process and the experience verbally?

I’m bothered by the fact that theoretical commentary is left to theoreticians who control the words, whereas the artists themselves tend to be inarticulate, locking themselves up in their mute fortresses. But despite the muteness embedded in us, I feel that we have a duty and a responsibility to think, to formulate, to teach. In this series, I am attempting to clarify the [Hebrew] term *milekhet mahshevet*, (‘work of craftsmanship’), which actually has a poetic equivalent in English, namely ‘the mind in the hand.’

Apart from the ideological issues, perhaps I also had to address my own need to define that evasive and obsessive mental state of the creative process, wherein your thoughts drive you to act, and the act pushes you to think.

TMF: Your artistic formulation never remains one-dimensional; it goes well beyond being a simple tribute to the arts or to the craftsmen, and relates to different aspects — critical, cultural, and personal — at times ambivalent and unresolved. The fact that you resort to an inventory of schematic images of working hands, which you copied from textbooks, would seem to indicate an ambivalent attitude.

EK: The term ‘do-it-yourself’ interests me in the context of the discipline in which I work.

Below

Brooches from the Mind in The Hand series, 2008, silver, iron thread — Photo by Yigal Pardo for exhibition catalogue, Esther Knobel, Long Distance Runner; 2008 Andy prize winner at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art



We’re talking about a type of demystification of a language. In the art of jewelry design, one can get entrapped in virtuosities, technical acrobatics, and the seduction of the material itself. This suggestion is indicative of doubt and irony. It is a comment on dedication to the discipline of working with the material, raising the possibility that technical expertise can become a liability; it can make the process mechanical and the labor sterile and disconnected from its direct, personal, and authentic foundation; and it can lead to limited and shallow creativity.

TMF: I find that the examination of the concept of craft develops in this series at the most primary level. The issues of giving shape to the material and choosing the technique are addressed prior to the image and idea. From the moment you decided to embroider the patterns out of metal thread embedded in a silver substrate, you initiated a transformation or translation of the language of embroidery into the language of jewelry design. In the present series of prints, this metamorphosis is even more complex and sophisticated. How did it all begin?

EK: The embroidery work began with thoughts about enamel brooches, and was born out

Facing page

Etching from the Mind in The Hand series, 2006, made from an embossing of an aluminum plate, perforated and stitched with iron thread — Photo courtesy Sienna gallery

of a dialogue with the splendid tradition of the Cloisonné technique. Instead of the meticulous Cloisonné method of creating a pattern and delineating areas of color by means of metal wire, I tried to embroider the demarcating outline with a simple stitch into a perforated plate. The motivation to liberate jewelry design from a rigid technical tradition — to refresh the field and update it — that has always been with me. Personally, there is no specific field of expertise or particular craft that I can be identified with. I very often function autodidactically; I invent techniques, I circumvent complex procedures that require great effort, and I generate my own interpretations with respect to traditional media such as enamel, inlay, niello, stamping, and etching.

Thus, in the course of my work on the prints, I developed steel thread embroidery on a metal plate as an alternative to conventional engraving and as a basis for the stages of stamping and printing. The embroidered plate that was used for embossing was then flattened with a roller; it looked like a complex work of silversmithing that involved inlay or niello. By this stage, I had charted myself an obvious path to silver embroidery.

Sue Lawty

Calculus

'...To see a World in a Grain of Sand...'
— William Blake

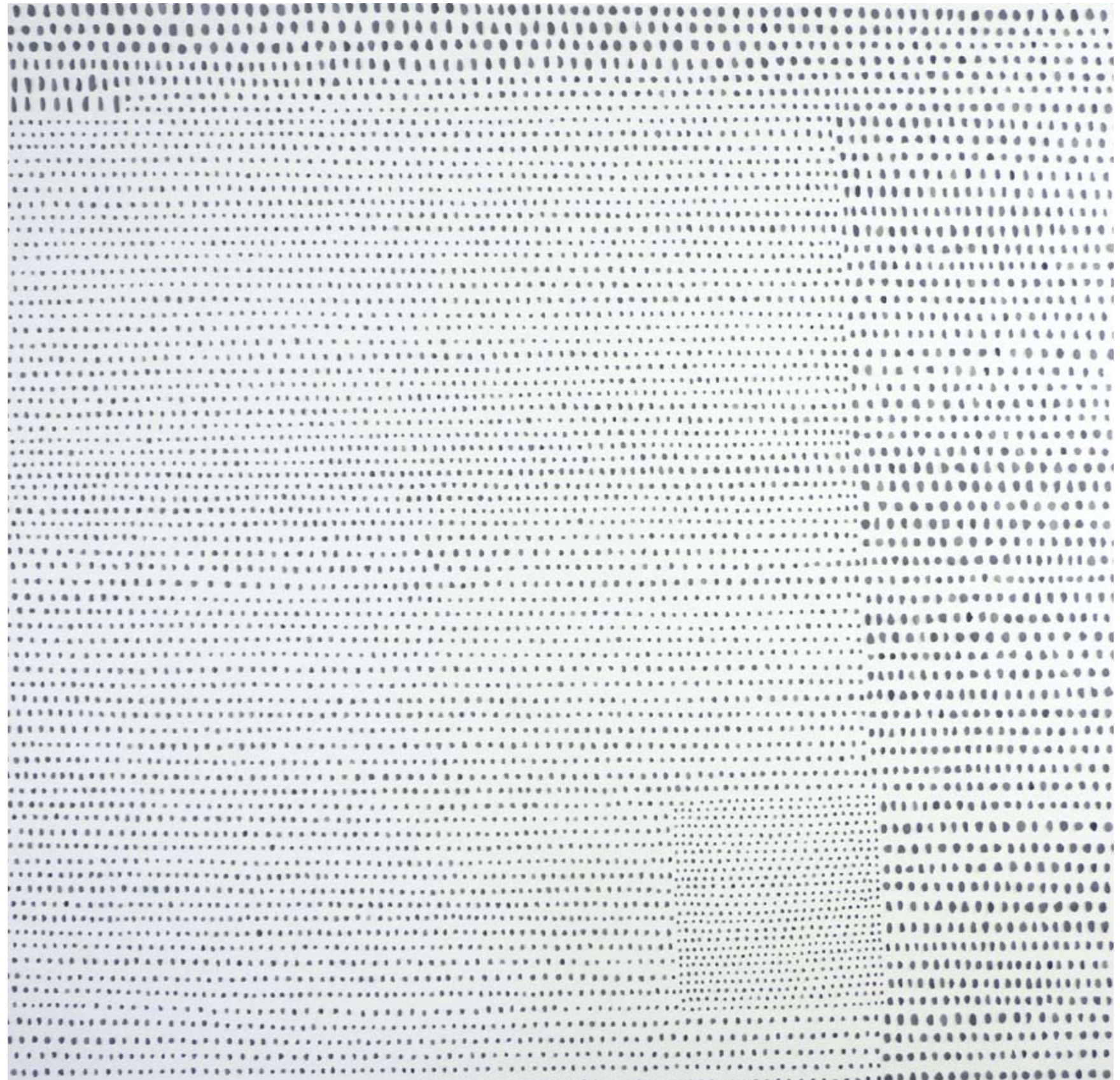
I wanted to take something tiny and insignificant; very small stones unnoticed underfoot on beach, out of context... and through repetition and scale of work, subject the viewer to be made small in their presence.

Each tiny insignificant speck of stone bears witness to the vastness of geological time. Time so immense it renders us, humankind, as the real speck; ourselves an insignificant blip in the earth's history.

The original rock would have been formed and then subsequently broken down and eroded over millions of years. Each resultant gravelly mark of stone has been rumbled and rolled, tossed and turned, pounded and shoved relentlessly in and out on tides twice a day, every day for years... until now... halted on the verge of becoming sand.

Calculus:

- the study of change (in the same way that geometry is the study of shape and algebra is the study of equations)
- a branch of mathematics originally based on the summation of infinitesimal differences.
- a particular method/system/logic of calculation or reasoning
- Latin for small stone



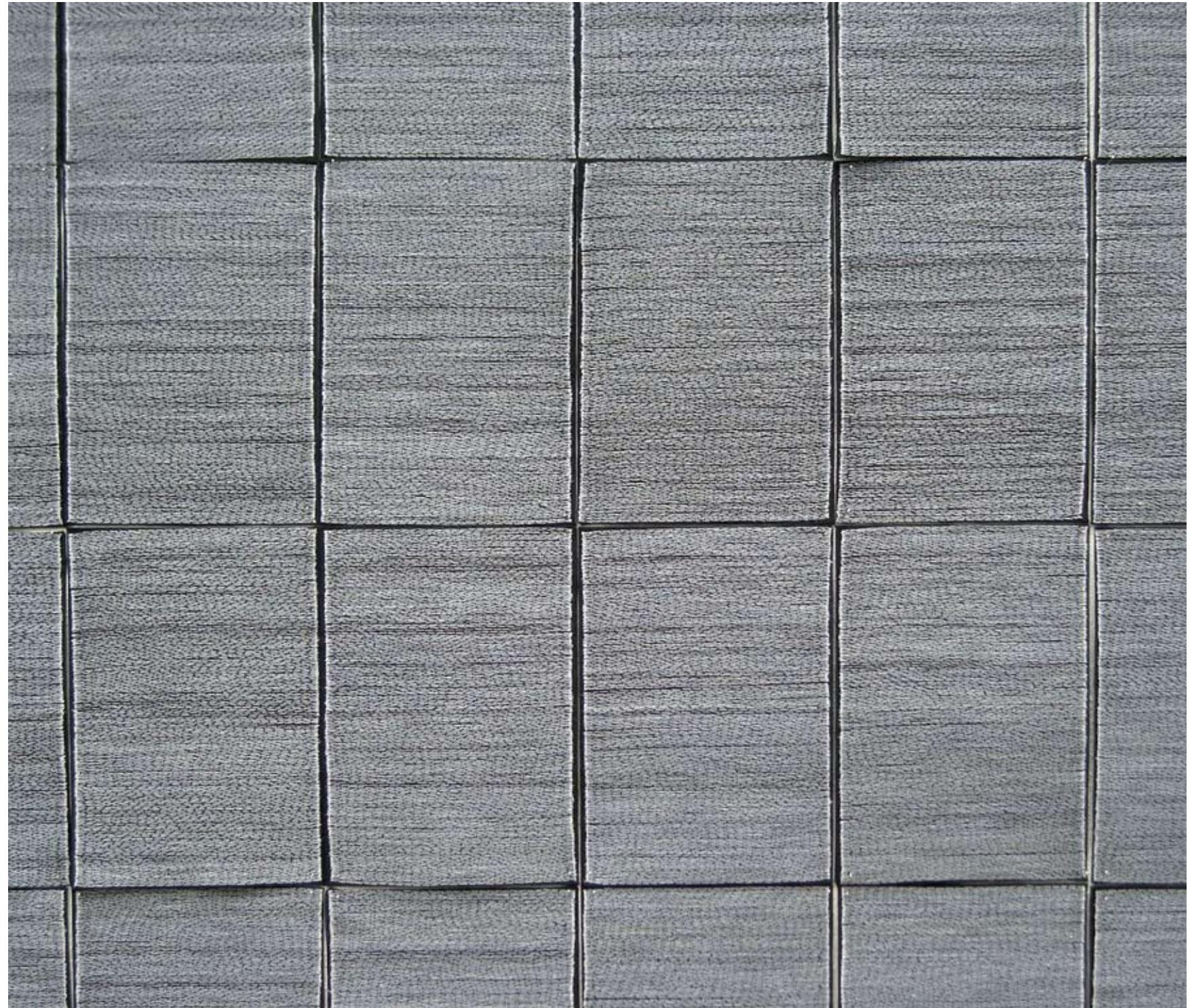
Heidrun Schimmel

Works made of thread are always time-intensive and time-consuming.

I'm interested in the endlessness of the textile thread and likewise endless rhythmical repetition of stitching. Stitching is a procedure in time, full of everlasting energy, so as writing with the needle and thread, as breathing in and out...

I take my ideas from the special conditions of textiles, such as softness, flexibility and fragility. This focus on material as matter results in forms which cannot be known or imagined exactly in advance.

Stitching by hand white cotton thread onto transparent black silk or cotton fabric: stitch by stitch, thread by thread, sometimes in many layers. My working process is very simple, very time-consuming and 'suggests alternative measurements of time and means of perception' — Mary Thomas, (Jan/Feb 1998), *Fibrearts*, p.54



Between The Lines, 2003, detail, 121x170x1cm, white cotton thread is stitched by hand onto black silk — Photo by Heidrun Schimmel

Cumbrian Blue(s) and Making a Slow Revolution

I have been working with Danish potter Ann Linnemann for over five years. Ann has a studio/gallery on Kronprinsessegade in Copenhagen, and when we first started working together, she was the Director of the International Ceramics Research Centre at Skælskør¹ in Denmark. Our collaboration was initially enabled by the institution's existence and my research and teaching there. At first it involved in-glaze decal prints on large porcelain sculptural forms. The applied patterns had their roots in the industrial language of printed china borders and floral tablewares.

Over the past four years our collaborations have continued, in an erratic but always positive direction. The distance between Copenhagen in Denmark and Blencogo in Cumbria is problematic, and our personal and professional commitments mean that many of our discussions are often digitally enabled or telephone based. However, we have also met and developed our slow conversation at a variety of locations; Portland in Oregon, at the V&A in London, in Edinburgh and in Blencogo. Because my research work has made me a regular visitor to Denmark and Sweden in recent years real time discussions and assessments of objects, forms, graphics and images have occurred each time my travels take me close to Copenhagen. As speculative objects their development has also had to fit within each of our professional practices, so at times they have rested as other pressing activities have taken precedence. This slow fermentation of ideas and objects is not always what we want as artists — enthusiasm needs to be satiated — but we are constrained by the reality of working lives and our geography. Nevertheless ideas that germinated in Cumbria and Denmark some time ago are slowly becoming a reality.

For this exhibition the intent has been to further develop garden references we used in early 2009 for an exhibition at the Ann Linnemann Gallery² in Copenhagen. The decision to use work from this series for the exhibition has influenced by a combination of events, circumstance and synchronicity.

In the early 1970s as a school student studying A level Art I was a reluctant participant in Games or PE lessons. With friends I would

regularly absent myself on Wednesday afternoons to travel into Birmingham City centre to visit Druckers Coffee shop, the Reference Library and the City Art Gallery. At the time the wonderful collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings provided the main draw — in particular Arthur Hughes *Long Engagement*. For me it was with a sense of wonder that I tried to comprehend the super-real, three dimensional foliage created in oil paints — the painter's vision and skill seemed beyond my own grasp when I tried to replicate the attention to detail in still life paintings back at school. Although I have long been away from Birmingham, the memory of that painting and its place in the City Art Gallery is still strong for me nearly forty years on. As an artist my work has moved away from painting, but I retain a fascination with the depiction and detail of landscape — in particular — its manifestation in remediated patterns on blue and white printed industrial tableware. This genre developed as part of the burgeoning print revolution in the early part of the nineteenth century, and I am fascinated by the visual language adopted and developed by engravers. I have been looking at prints and ceramics in the City Museum and Art Gallery.

On a recent visit I noticed a large porcelain vase with painted views of Copenhagen. Its caption reads: Vase, porcelain, thrown. Painted with a view of Copenhagen by Harold Henricksen Royal Copenhagen Porcelain Factory, dated 1949. Inscribed *From Copenhagen to Birmingham 1950* — so the historical link with Copenhagen is to be revived in our *Body Blue* porcelain tablewares, and this time some of the images will originate in the printed detail of Birmingham's centre.

Old maps of the city show gardens and orchards off Temple Row and Bull Street, and the formality of the church gardens mirror Kings Garden in Copenhagen, (inspiration for the first 'tree' cups).

For *Taking Time* trees (on porcelain cups) will grow in gardens with paths, borders, flower and vegetable beds — vitreous blue graphic melted in transparent glaze over hand thrown porcelain trays.

1 www.ceramic.dk

2 annlinnemann.blogspot.com



Clockwise from above
Detail map of Birmingham c.1731, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery Collection;

Underside of *Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s) Winter Trees* cup, in-glaze decals and gold lustre on porcelain, Paul Scott, Ann Linnemann 2009;

Base stamp;

Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s) Rörstrand Pattern, in-glaze decals and platinum lustre on porcelain cup, Paul Scott, Ann Linnemann 2009;

—
Photos by Paul Scott





Above
Badge Box

Facing page
Badge Box

Photos by Elizabeth Turrell

Badges

- chronicle the passing of time
- slow map of an individual's life; from childhood to old age; marking rites of passages; reading a past; marking the future
- mundane objects but precious to the individual
- maps personal, national and international histories
- common phrase 'a badge of honour' or 'badge of courage'
- a silent/unspoken message/portable communication
- a characteristic mark or symbol
- can provoke strong reactions: agreement, recognition, fear or hostility
- an emblem given as an award or honour; badges that are not for sale



Identity
Indicates membership
Declared beliefs
Fashion statement
Humour
Religion
Military
Political allegiance

Social injustice
Pro-monarchy/anti-monarchy
International protest against war
Regime change
Belonging
National or ethnic origin

Sexuality
Disability
Gender
Political beliefs
Professions
Social status
Club memberships
Trade union

Visual arts
Music
Youth culture
Commercial
Medical

Timeline

12th century

Pilgrim badges first mass-produced in Rome. They depicted St Peter and St Paul and were bought by pilgrims as a token of devotion and proof of their pilgrimage.

Members of guilds (associations of merchants or craftsmen) then started wearing badges to indicate their professional status.

12th–15th century

Pilgrim badges were naive and crudely made, while others, such as those made at Canterbury in the late 14th century, show superb craftsmanship. The number of badges produced was staggering; records show that the most visited shrines sold up to 100,000 badges a year, making pilgrim badges the first really mass produced tourist souvenir.

16th century

The pilgrim badge-making industry in England died as pilgrimages declined and later banned as the country became Protestant as the idea of pilgrimage was

regarded with superstition and as form of idolatry.

1775

Lunar Society (of Birmingham)

1786

Josiah Wedgwood — (Member of the Lunar Society) Anti Slavery Medallion in ceramic black and white Jasperware 'Am I not a man and brother?'

1807

William Wilberforce ordered 50,000 anti-slavery medals.

1825

Birmingham Ladies Society for the Relief of Negro Slave (later Female Society of Birmingham).

1840s

Invention of the dropstamp machine in Birmingham made mass production possible and enabled dies with raised retaining lines to be struck and filled with enamel. This technique was easier and cheaper than the exacting traditional cloisonné technique.

Late 19th century

One Inch Button Badges were first produced in the USA as a low cost alternative to the medallions, pendants and 'badges' of the day that were expensive to make.

1966–1976

Symbols of International Communism: Mao Badges, around five billion badges were made during the Revolution period. Chairman Mao's portrait appears on most of the badges.

1970s

The London Emblem Company started selling badge making machines.

2003

Christmas badge-making kits were widely reported as Britain's bestselling children's toy.

2008

June issue of Hockley Flyer Birmingham 'Disappointing news — WH Darby has not been given the order to produce badges etc for the Olympic Games. Apparently the order has gone to China because they will be able to distribute the items across the world!'



**The making of Garland #21
(stepping and stitching)**

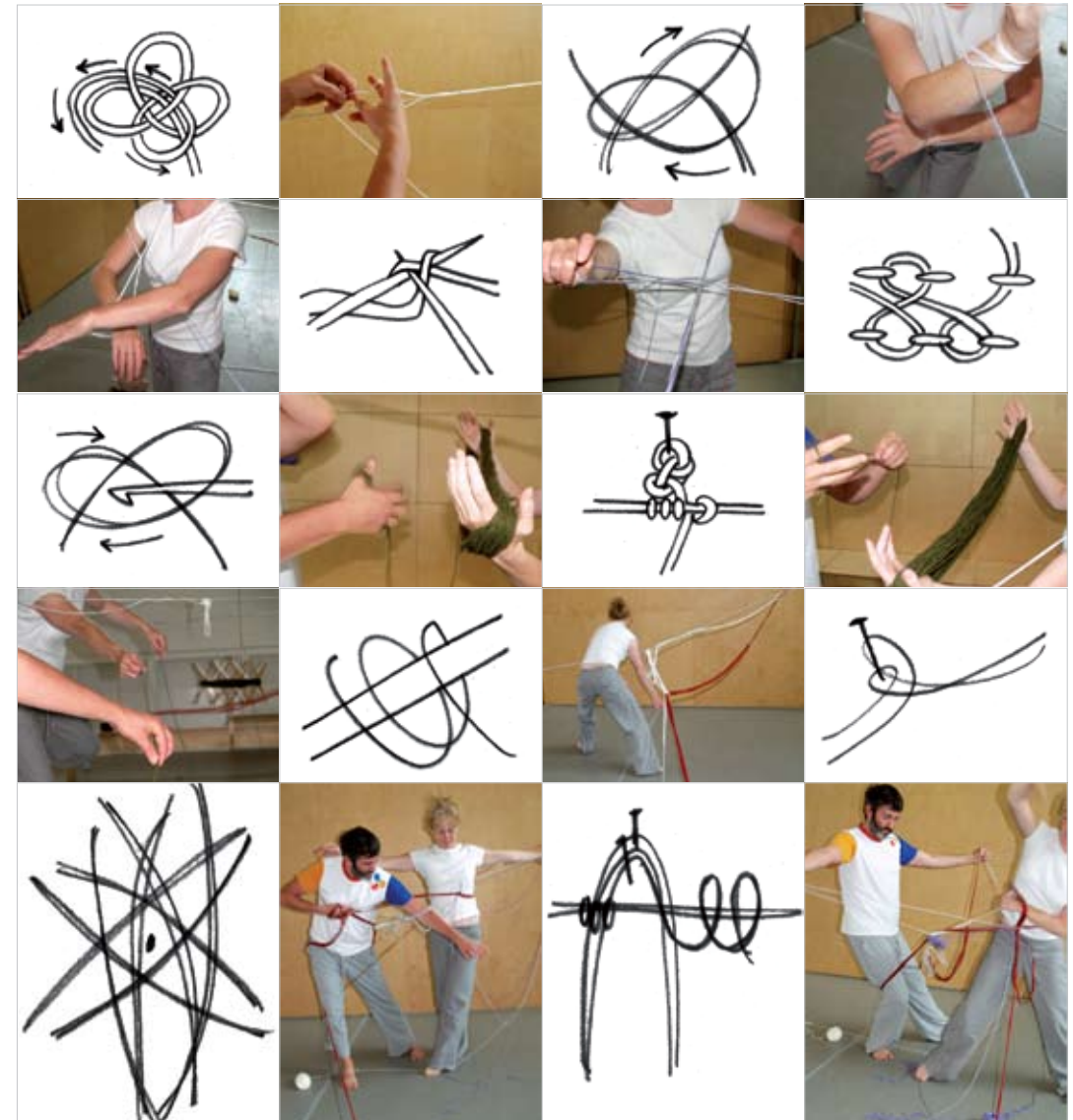
The first piece in this ongoing series was created at Tate Britain in 2006 in the context of workshops coinciding with the Tate Triennial. The idea was to have members of the public create their own artwork in response to some of the works displayed in the exhibition. Yarn, string and paper were used and various needlecraft and knotting techniques were introduced, resulting in the creation of a large woven structure installed inside the Tate galleries. Since then, *Garlands* have been installed across the UK, France, Finland and Colombia.

Having the public contribute to the making of the artwork turns the relationship between the artist and the viewer on its head. The latter becomes an artist. It is estimated that people spend approximately 30 seconds in front of an exhibit. With *Garlands*, people might engage with the work for half an hour or more, reflecting on the art around them and the craft they are practising. The time spent making is key to this engagement and reflection.

With *Garland #21*, a planned performance is to kick start the making of the piece, drawing attention to the knitting and knotting as a collective rather than an individual experience. We started by looking at how the movements made by people when weaving the previous *Garlands* mirrored in some way formation and folk dancing. We searched for a common ground in gestures associated with both dancing and stitching. We also looked at dance notation and needlecraft patterns to support this research. In essence, I gave Cheryl a stitch and she gave me a step back. The result is a series of performances that will stand as an invitation for visitors to add their own stepping and stitching to the various instalments of the piece.

Many thanks to all the performers who made this piece possible, as well Helen Carnac, Andy Horn and Craftspace for their support.

Shane Waltener and Cheryl McChesney Jones are London based artists.



Above
First stepping and stitching instructions — Photos by Nikki Ida

Facing page
Garland #17 (Compton Verney), 2008

Analogue

Russell Martin commissioned by Craftspace



Conversations on (a) Slow Craft
— photo by Rebecca Earley

Analogue was devised and conceived by Russell Martin, a visual arts practitioner who has been working exclusively within an ongoing practice of dialogue for over ten years.

This is an excerpt from a set of downloadable guidelines to help initiate dialogue on contemporary crafts and the concerns of the *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution* exhibition. The full guidelines can be downloaded from makingaslowrevolution.wordpress.com/analogue/download-a-dialogue-online-pack.

The Analogue project, which took place in the development period before the *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution* exhibition opened, was intended to contribute to discussions on the project blog, at makingaslowrevolution.wordpress.com, and to initiate live dialogue sessions between crafts practitioners and specialists from different backgrounds. It acted as a bridge between the themes and processes emerging online and the real-life experiences of craftspeople, by provoking, recording and publishing audio recordings of the various dialogues that made up the Analogue project. Analogue was a focussed platform for gathering and transmitting raw research from the lived experience of practice.

More a 'talking' programme than a 'talks' programme, Analogue sought to continue and deepen conversations happening amongst the blog community offline, encourage practitioners to get more closely involved in

the ideas around the exhibition, consider how the tenets of the slow movement coincide with contemporary crafts practice and remember the value of 'speaking to one person at a time'. The recordings of Analogue's dialogue sessions, published online, allow a broader audience to listen in, and Analogue's legacy intends to facilitate further contact between practitioners who have not so far been involved. In short, the main aim of the project is to *encourage practitioners to talk to each other*.

Analogue had three strands:

- **Out in the open** — group dialogues and panel discussions, involving practitioners and specialists from outside of the crafts. Some of these sessions took place in public for wider debate.
- **At Home** — one to one dialogues between practitioners and interlocutors from any background.
- **Download-a-Dialogue** — downloadable guidelines presenting evolving discussion themes from the blog, along with practical methodologies for initiating dialogue, for use by exhibition venues and individual practitioners who want to get involved.

Dialogue, derived from the Greek *dialogos* (*dia-* = 'through' or 'across'; *logos* = 'the word' or 'the meaning'), permits a cumulation of meanings to emerge within a group of people. It is a creative, dynamic, shared activity, requiring listening as well as communicating

one's own thoughts, and a subjugation of one's own defensive preconceptions to allow new, common meanings to emerge. It is performative and unique, non-competitive, symbiotic, cannot be repeated, and is totally reliant on collaboration. It is hard to maintain, and often does not happen at all.

Dialogue is an excellent way to:

- Seek consensus within multifarious opinion.
- Help collaborators together find direction within a project or design.
- Reinforce the idea of creative practice as an ongoing activity.
- Train oneself to listen to others and work in a team.
- Dismantle the social boundary between audiences and experts, enabling all attendees at an event to contribute to a discussion.

The project blog has provoked a number of strands or themes of dialogue including:

- The uses and abuses of different technologies — digital, manufacturing, hand-made, chemical, design-led — in the making of contemporary craft.
- Towards a notion of 'practice' as: a daily activity, which may or may not always include making; a habitual way of looking at the (physical, social, cultural) world, drawing inspiration from it; an ongoing mental creative process which includes, and is occasionally interrupted by, the manufacture of objects.
- The immateriality of an idea, and how this is translated through design processes and practice into a finished product.
- How specialists from different disciplines can positively influence how creative practice can be thought through.
- The experience of how 'time passes' during making.
- The implications of the wider slow movement on craft practice, manufacturing and design processes and commercial activity.
- How 'connectedness' — a major strand of thinking informing the wider slow movement — changes thinking about professional negotiation and social collaboration.

This is necessarily a partial list; every dialogue within the Analogue project is more complex than a simple list of topics can convey, and

many people who took part in a dialogue will have a very different list to this one. These topics, however, may form a good initial starting point for your own dialogue activity.

Creating the framework for a good dialogue can take a lot of time — a series of sessions will normally be required to make everyone feel comfortable with each other, and encourage those less confident about speaking in public to join in. Although all the dialogues in Analogue were recorded, it should also be noted that recording always changes the atmosphere of discussion, as people are less confident about making mistakes, trying out new ideas or speaking confidentially if they know their words have the potential to be repeated.

Further reading

Making a Slow Revolution — including Analogue project blog

makingaslowrevolution.wordpress.com

Contains background information on Analogue and the wider *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution* project, as well as contributions from crafts practitioners involved in the exhibition and broader themes.

On Dialogue, David Bohm

Routledge 1996, ed. Lee Nichol

Physicist David Bohm had a lifelong commitment to experimenting with dialogue in a variety of social situations, and presents his ideas and methodologies in this text.

Knots, R.D. Laing

Penguin Books 1972

Laing, a psychiatrist who wrote extensively on the experience of psychosis, explores through performative writing the ways in which human dialogue and relationships can break down.

The Slow Movement

www.slowmovement.com

Information resource on the wider slow movement, including slow food, travel, cities, schools and living.

Ex Machina conference, February 2009

www.artquest.org.uk/projects/archive/ex-machina.htm

One-day conference exploring the ways in which visual practitioners embrace and exploit new technologies in order to produce contemporary craft objects, including rapid prototyping, CNC (computer numerical controlled) milling and 3D digital printing. The above web page includes images and audio from the conference.



From left
Participants monoprinting at Wightwick Manor
— Photo by Craftspace;

Printing final wallpaper at the University of Wolverhampton
— Photo by Lukasz Gutdek

Facing page
Length of wallpaper — Photo by Richard Battye

Time in Print was a partnership between the National Trust's *Whose Story?* initiative, Craftspace, the West Midlands Caribbean Parents and Friends Association and designer Linda Florence.

The project aim was to enable the artist and participants to explore themes of *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution* by having time to strengthen relationships and develop new ones. To discover something new about their locality and to observe, reflect, collaborate and interact socially through printing.

Wightwick Manor's stunning Arts and Crafts interior with objects from around the world was integral to the project. The nineteenth century technological revolution prompted William Morris and his contemporaries to reacquaint themselves with hand skills and creative values, in danger of being lost to mass production. There is synergy with today's reaction to consumerism and the rise of digital technologies. This has resulted in renewed interest in the handmade, making Wightwick Manor an appropriate place to explore ideas around provenance and means of production.

Linda Florence led eight sessions over four months, through which the elders group developed an understanding of print techniques, the process of design and confidence to develop their ideas. From making small mono and screen prints in the scullery, they progressed to printing full length wallpapers with layered repeat pattern at the University of Wolverhampton.

The final work, seven lengths of contemporary wallpaper, demonstrate how patterns are borrowed, evolve and change over time through cross cultural interpretation. The process of working through the lens of local people's own experiences, values and cultural perspectives has deepened the appreciation of how things are made, where they come from and who produces them.

The project exemplifies how a focus on craft is able to facilitate and foster unlikely connections between people of different ages and backgrounds and between organisations within an urban locality.



'My occupation before retirement was a die caster, casting parts for hydraulic pumps. Every die had the maker's mark on it. The best satisfaction for me was going to the assembly department, picking up a pump and there was my name on it. I felt great pride, as I had actually produced something that was to sell abroad and was going to create wealth for Britain. Now this exhibition gives me the same feeling, the first part feels like it was impossible, the end part was fantastic and the satisfaction of me being in the group is just like me being part of producing the pump.'

— Mr Leslie

'The highlight of the project ... was attending a workshop in Wolverhampton University, what an achievement we have made, in our eighties to be able to attend Wolverhampton University, I am so proud of myself. I would strongly recommend the project to other members to develop skills in crafts.'

— Mrs Henriques

Acknowledgments Whose Story?

The aim of the *Whose Story?* project is to highlight previously untold stories, hidden histories and cultural heritage links within National Trust properties in the West Midlands that would inspire and interest audiences from Black and Minority Ethnic communities. It develops new ways of bringing properties to life with events to attract diverse audiences, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Whose Story? and Craftspace would like to thank the following people:

- All the participants: Mrs Burth, Mrs Gordon, Mrs Henriques, Mrs Jarrett, Mr Leslie, Mrs Leslie, Ms Martin, Mrs Maxwell, Mrs Rickard
- Linda Florence
- The West Midlands Caribbean Parents and Friends Association, Wightwick Manor staff and volunteers, Pat Dillon, students and staff from the School of Art and Design, University of Wolverhampton



Making a Slow Revolution

During the development of the exhibition there have been several projects initiated or run in connection with the exhibition and there will be more that will be instigated and held through the tour. Here is a selection of those already in action.

Blog

makingaslowrevolution.wordpress.com

The blog set up in January 2008 with the aim of sharing ideas about slowness and craft.

Badges

As part of Elizabeth Turrell's commission she has worked with Fattorini to produce a limited edition badge of the tour logo designed by Hyperkit. Established in 1827, Fattorini is a family run and owned manufacturing business, with an international reputation not only for the production of enamel badges but silverware, insignia and medals. All these are produced through a mixture of high quality traditional craftsmanship and technology in Birmingham. **www.media.uwe.ac.uk/etc/elizab.htm**
www.fattorini.co.uk

Badgingham

Inspired by Elizabeth Turrell's commission eleven MA students from Birmingham's School of Jewellery created brooches in response to their research of Birmingham and thoughts on slow craft. These will be featured in the *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution* exhibition. Alongside these pieces, Dr. Jivan Astfalck, Course Director for the MA programme, will develop an environment where young visitors will have the opportunity to contribute to a piece exploring Birmingham. Visitors will be encouraged to create a badge with the materials available — pinning their badges to a map of Birmingham will highlight where visitors come from or have connections to. **www.schoolofjewellery.com**
www.biad.bcu.ac.uk/research

Conversations on (a) Slow Craft

Rebecca Earley and the TED research group

On Tuesday 8 September 2009 a group of makers and researchers held a discussion on a barge on the Regent's Canal called 'Time and Design in Textiles', with the over-arching aim of giving time to reflect on their practice and notions of time whilst travelling slowly, eating and conversing. The project will continue throughout the exhibition tour by being passed onto other groups of makers in other disciplines, in other places and using different modes of slow transport. The ongoing aim is to discuss philosophies of slowness and making in order to generate new ideas and thought. **www.tedresearch.net**

Tweave

Craftspace commissioned Amy Houghton and Ed Holroyd to make a digital piece in response to the *Taking Time: Craft and the Slow Revolution* exhibition. Tweave was born out of a dialogue about the creation of crafts online, crafts and the slow revolution, textiles and links to communication, social networking and the development of computer technologies. Tweave also draws inspiration from the fascinating behaviour of the weaver birds who gather and build networks of intricately woven nests in large 'social groups' as well as those of us who tweet.

www.tweave.co.uk

For more information on the artists and related organisations go to:

Craftspace

www.craftspace.co.uk

Helen Carnac

www.helencarnac.co.uk

Hyperkit

www.hyperkit.co.uk

Judith van den Boom & Gunter Wehmeyer

www.boomwehmeyer.com

Gary Breeze

www.garybreeze.co.uk

Sonya Clark

www.sonyaclarke.com

Rebecca Earley

www.beckyearley.com

Ken Eastman

www.keneastman.co.uk

Dawn Youll

www.dawnyoull.co.uk

David Gates

www.davidgatesfurniture.co.uk

Amy Houghton

www.amyhoughton.co.uk

Sue Lawty

www.vam.ac.uk/collections/textiles/lawty

Heidrun Schimmel

www.heidrun-schimmel.com

Paul Scott

www.cumbrianblues.com

Ann Linnemann

annlinnemenn-english.blogspot.com

Elizabeth Turrell

www.media.uwe.ac.uk/etc/elizab.htm

Shane Waltener

www.shanewaltener.com

Russell Martin

www.russellmartin.org.uk

Amin Musa

www.aminmusa.co.uk

Linda Florence

www.lindaflorance.co.uk

SlowLab

www.slowlab.net

Slow Planet

www.slowplanet.com

The Long Now

www.longnow.org

Carl Honoré

www.carlhonore.com

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Badgemakers: Gary Speakman and Thomas Fattorini

Audience Research Audiences Central

