Psychologies and Spaces of Accumulation: The hoard as collagist methodology (and other stories)

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After Charcot

C- prints, collage
Rummo, two plates from the *Iconografia fotografica del grande Isterismo* (1890) dedicated to Charcot
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Taking hoarding as a model for amassing materials within art practice, this research
questions the borders of a productive or rational relationship to collation and the development of pathology.

In practice, I focus on how materials can be manipulated to reflect or imply attachments and value systems within disorder, collection and their interpretations/analyses. Using historical examples, I question how disorder is formed, spatially, aesthetically and through clinical record-keeping, making specific reference to written/visual case-studies from Charcot and Freud. I question whether disorder can ever be seen as a culturally produced phenomenon in parallel to its clinical counterpart and suggest its uses to knowledge production within the fields of Fine Art and critical theory.

I suggest hoarding – and the cultural construction of disorder - as collagist and create works, which reflect on the borders of psychopathological attachments to 'stuff'; psychologies inherent to accumulation; and conscious and unconscious spaces occupied by both object and analysis. Creating new collagist and fictive methodologies out of the construction of case histories, and through the co-option of diagnostic tools and narratology used in psychoanalysis, I write about the work and within the work.

This research questions how psychological disorder is re-narrated through fictive and visual forms within culture and via collective understandings of psychoanalytic subjectivities. I suggest how these fictions connect, accumulate and reflect back on themselves, affecting research and crossovers within psychoanalytic, spatial and cultural fields. I make links between the modern city and psychological disorder, drawing on the psychical affects of changes in urban space.

Examining collation, the construction of psychological spaces and temporality in art practice (from Kurt Schwitters' Merzbau to Michael Landy’s Break Down and Tomoko Takahashi’s collation of objects) alongside new clinical research into Hoarding Disorder, I relate compulsion and space to a rationalisation of clutter in contemporary practice.
Acknowledgements

This thesis is a, structurally unsound, building, the imagining of which could not have been possible without several invisible stage hands:

This is for Joey who has held up our own home as I threw this thesis at its walls and who now knows more about the subjects I papered it with than he ever anticipated. Without his willing ear, expertise by proxy and deftly diplomatic criticisms this would be a poorer study.

This is also for Noah who asked such useful questions and whose own thoughtfulness and insightfulness are such driving forces. And for Nancy, who arrived in the middle, and whose exuberance and clutter is a footnote to everything that is worthwhile within these pages.

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Finally, thank you to my parents. This collection of tens of thousands of words is just a small part of a limitless conversation they have initiated and continue to maintain with great passion and love. No pauses for breath.

Preface / A Reader’s Guide
Hoard and Collections: This thesis as cumulative
This practice-based research presents a perspective on accumulation that re-contextualises existing and emergent knowledge of the psychopathologies of hoarding in the contexts of the collection and urges to collect. My work straddles Fine Art and the developing area of the Medical Humanities by engaging with disorder as a culturally produced phenomenon, in parallel to its clinical counterpart, and suggests its uses to knowledge production within the fields of Fine Art and critical theory. This research is based on the premise that collation produces subjects and that, in the overlaps or fault-lines between materials, critical interdisciplinary convergences occur.

The overlapping terms, collecting and hoarding / collection and hoard, are already found rubbing up against each other across disciplines. The terms can be located in critical studies of contemporary Fine Art practices, in cultural studies on waste and ecologies, in psychiatric and psychoanalytic histories and research, and in sociological research into human behaviours in relation to objects, waste and domestic space.

Popular opinion presumes the polar existences of psychopathology (hoarding) or a seeming rationale (collection). On this spectrum the hoard can be viewed as a spatialisation of mental disorder and the collection as a rational, orderly, aestheticised pursuit (or spatialisation of mental order). Looking into the condition of Hoarding Disorder, I found it to be the only mental health condition diagnosed spatially – the hoard itself substituting the presence and account of the hoarder. I unearthed critical theoretical implications embedded in the tools of its diagnosis and then convergent histories of other psychiatric diagnoses. Photographs of staged spaces form the basis for clinical diagnosis of a hoarder and are pointed to during treatment to ascertain severity of the condition. Discovering that these diagnostic tools embedded visual imagery and evolved from staged constructions of spaces, I found them useful to knowledge production within Fine Art practice and critical theory. I applied spatial theory and ideas around object attachment and assemblage to the construction/reading of psychiatric diagnostic tools.

This PhD questions the spatialisation, performance, aestheticisation and display of diagnostic criteria inherent to psychological definitions, via this discovery of how the hoard (and its image) can be used as a surrogate for the hoarder in diagnosis. It also questions (similarly diagnostic) symbolic values or psychoanalysing of (art) objects mounted or collated in public, museological or private space.
In locating the coexistence of image-making/installation/performance across the disciplines of Fine Art and psychiatry I found myself investigating the visual and performative formations of criteria surrounding a condition as a practice. The hoard itself therefore becomes a collagist methodology - its overlaps and problematising of space implicated in the reading of a condition, the reading of place and the psychological readings of assemblage.

I do not re-classify ‘hoard’ or ‘collection’ in this thesis but, through discourse analysis, examine how order can itself be subject to perception and that overlaps, slippages and separations occur and recur, problematising the desire to seek clarity from any mono-disciplinary standpoint. Throughout the thesis I examine these terms, their relationship to the formation of diagnoses and their usages across disciplines, assessing how knowledge is shared or contradicted. Ultimately, the research question is methodological, asking **what the uses are of collage as a practice, towards an understanding of the psychologies and spaces of accumulation.**

Collage is both the methodology and the subject of this research. I am testing relationships and overlaps between materials - through discourse analysis, through practice and through producing a thesis that ultimately combines visual practice and various forms (and weights) of text. The form of the research is inherently reflexive of its subject and, in reaction to/reflection of the research, serves as its metaphorical equivalent. I am arguing for a ‘theorisation of process’ (Macleod, 2006) within the academic form.

In this way the PhD research asks a question of itself and of practice-based research more generally: Can traditional academic modes of writing be adapted to reflect and sustain practice-based enquiry? And, can an adaptive, reflexive, practice-based academic text contain the argument and theoretical weight necessary for the doctoral award? I see this project as a theoretical synthesis of art and writing, engaging materiality and metaphor within the text to shed light on its practice-based enquiry. Rather than pitting the value of writing against artwork or hierarchising the writing to become the proof of the weight of the artwork it is also the artwork. This thesis therefore shares some material traits with my visual practice, and through its volume and compilation also analyses accumulation.¹

¹ Katy Macleod asks the following, related questions of the thesis in the practice-based PhD: ‘is proof of research necessarily provided by particular forms of evidence? Is research writing independent of
Considering hoards and collections in relation to each other – with unclear boundaries drawn between the two - but prompting quite different readings, I analyse how objects gather new meanings as they converge or resist isolation. In locating new meanings emerging from joined-up things as they occur within assemblage I am asking what happens to ‘stuff’ and its classification when it is (over)accumulated. Referring to research into the agency of matter by political theorist, Jane Bennett and critical writings on assemblage (Chapter 8), I am proposing, how new interdisciplinary knowledge is formed – in the binding together of things – both purposefully and accidentally. Comings-together of terms (such as hoard and collection) are therefore essential to this research – as a part of resolving and assessing what happens in accumulation.

As a tool to assess accumulations/composite images as new wholes I sometimes use temporal line drawing in response to collage – re-gathering disparate cuttings into more homogenous pencil-drawn composites, which then fade or are eradicated. These inhabitable drawn spaces (which are drawn as very slow performances onto the walls of actual space and back into relationships with objects) are not illustrations of objects in space but are drawn from collages. Collage is therefore where all the practice-based work in this thesis begins and ends.

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the research artwork in a context where inevitably writing will be its precondition of acceptance?” (Macleod, 2006)
Via the slow growth of a meticulous, busy image and its subsequent erasure I try to iterate the transient nature of object attachments, collections and hoards: The putting up, clearing up, re-arranging and ‘churning’ (Frost, 2010 p: 27). This temporality – real
or implied through an investment in precariousness – is a feature of all the works in this PhD by practice. This includes my work of fiction, *The Detroit Project*, where it is reflected in the itinerant nature of the city-in-flux and an interpretation of ruin as a recording of a point in a demise, but still potentialised and, as yet, unfixed.

**Contents:**

This practice-based PhD contains three interconnected sections:

   2. Textual art practice: *The Detroit Project* – a theoretical fiction
   3. This academic written thesis

**Methodology:**

**Reflections:**

This practice-based PhD is inherently reflexive – mirroring its subject and content through its own structure and materials. It is in several parts and is made up of varied materials and voices so that it reflects the accumulation and collagist methodology of the central question: What are the uses are of collage as a practice, towards an understanding of the psychologies and spaces of accumulation? In this way, academic research and art practice are intrinsically connected – making a case for mutual validity and reflexivity between a thesis in one medium and one in another. The condition of language is therefore particular to this text but there are shared methodologies between the writing and art-making.

To clarify how this happens and why, I will use an example from within the thesis, which demonstrates ways in which content and methodology are shared between theory and practice:

**Churning:**

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2 I did not write up in my final months but wrote continually alongside the work, subjecting the writing to a proximity with the handling of other materials. This is a *practice-based* PhD, not a PhD about a practice. Not thinking of the text as a remove, but a distinct media shift, I wanted to think of the practice as a literal base – a place from which I set out and to which I return, as I write. I hope this is innovation and reflexivity, and that the condition of writing serves up an encounter with the subject in a material way that elucidates rather than over-complicates.
People diagnosed with Hoarding Disorder are said to ‘churn.’ (Frost, Steketee, 2010 p: 28) Items are dislodged from within a heap, examined and re-affirmed through their replacement at the top. This shuffling activity is something I have engaged in my studio as a means of building compositions selectively and counter-reductively with collage materials. The temporary dislocation of an object or element from a pile, its assessment or narrative elaboration, then its subsequent return to a mass – is a hoarding behaviour that I mirror within collage. (This is not an attempt to become the hoarder but is a noticeable shared activity between the studio and condition in relation to stuff.) This is a process sometimes fraught with doubt in my studio practice, but, it is mediated by an aesthetic and academic rationale, which I employ to (en)counter these traits and place the work within a wider context where collection, display, cohesion and the independent value of individual elements are also articulated subjects. This process is not one resigned to disorder but often mirrored within large scale museological collection as part of its economics and curatorial rationale. Tate, for example, churns too. It brings stuff up from the bottom of the pile - from its warehouses or basements - towards public display and back again. These shared traits between disorder, practice and the economies of established collection and curation are navigated in this thesis.

In the thesis I also churn material, navigating the varied activities of my research through their composite interactions on the page: Sometimes footnotes rise up the page (see footnote 50), spatialising the activity of churning - in one instance there is a pile of words interrupting the rigours of the academic form (see end of section 8.3), and sometimes a biographical voice emerges to subsume or annotate the critical one (see sections 3.8 and 4.3) with a reminder of the psychological, human subject. I also discuss churning itself in section ‘8.2C(=>) Churning’ and talk about it as specifically engaging paper, both within the hoard where it is always a feature, and in the thesis.

These activities are managed with careful awareness of how they mitigate against the assumed weight of one form of knowledge in relation to another. This is a PhD by practice and its subjects are space and the psychologies of accumulation. As such, the practice itself (collage) is never held at arm’s length from the written text and a psycho-spatial encounter with the subject is embedded methodologically.

Writing and Editing / Coming to Fiction:
Collage is implicated in the textuality of this thesis: The project evaluates writing and editing as practices tied inextricably and methodologically to thinking through collation,
refinement and accumulation. My interest in interdisciplinarity (alongside the blurry edges between assembled things) extends to a consideration of how space and stuff are written about across fields.

This writing and editing of my own feels important in that I am, as much, looking into the visual formation of psychological space and disorder as I am the ways in which related psycho-spatial terms and narratives emerge. Through discourse analysis across various fields of study/research I draw together scientific and narrative forms, specifically engaging psychiatric case notes as narratological, sharing traits with fiction (Chapter Five).

This PhD project contains a critique of psychoanalytical note-keeping as pseudo-scientific, which has been the lead-in, for me, into thinking about the weight of fictive accounts in defining a field of investigation. Freud wrote that ‘The case studies I write should read like short stories’ (Freud and Breuer, 1955, pp: 160 - 161), problematising the value of an interpretive account from within a proof-less science. The ‘fictive’ written form of the case note acts as an equivalent to the heavily authored visual diagnostic tools I mentioned earlier. Looking at the dissemination of these narratological models within psychological/scientific fields as having an impact on cultural ideas, I question whether the writing of case-studies affects how psychological disorder is then re-narrated through fictive and visual forms within culture.

My research includes - as a practice - testing collisions in forms of writing. Using the case study within psychoanalytic practice as a model for blurring the borders between fiction, experience and theory, my practice-based research includes fiction-writing alongside visual art and critical analysis. Within the thesis I reflect on this practice through an assertion of the importance of the Paraliterary (section 5.4); an examination of the book-as-object (Chapter Six), a querying of scientific-narrative modes of enquiry (Chapter Five), the insertion of a fictive theorist’s reflections (sections 5.2 and section 10.2 among others) and via an extended piece of fiction-writing, The Detroit Project.

I am therefore writing both within and about my research, testing the occupation of a fault-line between critical and literary modes of enquiry, alongside the visual.3

3 I think it is very important here to note that the structure of this thesis as a metaphorical repository in many media (in direct relationship to its subject and content) is reflective of other projects by other artists. Three examples are Ilya Kabakov, Suzanne Treister and Renée Green. A lot of the materials gathered within their works come from the immense repository already in existence in our culture.
My research is itself a collage, in many media, and has taken on disciplinary cross-contaminations as collagist. Through engaging with collation as subject and method it creates a platform for interpreting the materials within one discipline as they overlap into the specialisms of another – such as Freud’s case studies as literature, or the construction of psychiatric diagnostic tools as art-production, or the television game show as a paradigm of psycho-spatial theory.

I have, necessarily, needed to examine - alongside Hoarding Disorder - complex ways in which criteria for establishing the language, diagnostics and spatialisation of disorder have developed historically. Within this thesis, this has extended to an examination of photographic tools in relation to diagnoses of hysteria; the roles of space and the modern city in the emergence of agoraphobia; and – in relation to how we look at disorder via culture - a questioning of the borders between asylum and museum. Each of these circumstances is looked at here in relation to the building of scientific and cultural vocabularies around the newly defined condition of Hoarding Disorder, within which image-making, spatial theory, and the collation of objects are all key concerns.

**Structure:**

Much thought has been given to the structure of this written aspect of the thesis. It felt important to connect space to text, given the subject and the fact that the thesis itself is a metaphorical site of accumulated stuff. The thesis therefore takes shape (or place) in a metaphorical building. As a metaphor, it has no designs on actual space (in the same way the fictive Detroits of ‘The Detroit Project’ have no designs on the real city). Moving through the thesis is not to imagine oneself in a specific space but to notionally

With regard to Green’s archival practice - new knowledge is formed in their comings together. Her work cannot be considered as simply assemblage or appropriation. In each of her projects, Green produces works of art in different media, such as photography [Secret (1994–2006)], prints [Code: Survey], films [Some Chance Operations (1999); Wavelinks (2002), Elsewhere? (2002)], and sound [Vanished Gardens (2004), Muriel’s Words (2004)], which are integrated in installations or environments.

As a result of the complex, conceptual interconnections between the materials and projects, these usually take place over a specific duration, and in varied places, in which the same subject is presented in variable formats. For example, Import/Export Funk Office (1992), was presented as an installation in Cologne and Los Angeles, and exists also as Cd-Rom (1996); Code: Survey (2005–2006) takes the form of a permanent work installed at the Caltrans Headquarter in LA, and simultaneously as a globally accessible website.
refer to space as a subject and the book as a physical thing. The chapters are therefore a series of numbered rooms - allowing the reader to be, quite literally, located. Much of the subject of the PhD project is psychoanalytic and involves imagining spaces and objects as alleged projections or extensions of the self (echoing the way the hoard is separated from the hoarder in a diagnosis.) The form of the thesis is structured in direct reflection of this content. Rosalind Krauss writes of collage as a metalanguage that ‘can talk about space without employing it.’ (Krauss, 1986, p: 37-38)

There are points in the text where I refer directly to the architectures of its own structure - such as in section 1.0 when I introduce the application of Merz to space as a non-linear construction, or section 7.1 where I focus on Narrative Architecture (a term coined by architect, Nigel Coates) and consider, with reference to Georges Perec’s writing of space how architecture is designed as much by our experience of it as its intrinsic physicality. This is important to the hoard (and its narrative construction through psychiatric tools) because it is experienced so differently by the hoarder - to whose comfort it is integral - and a non-hoarder - whose comfort it threatens. In practice, these theoretical architectural concerns throw up questions about psycho-spatial readings and the construction of comfort/discomfort - central themes of The Detroit Project.

Chapters of the thesis are subdivided into numbered and titled sections, making it easier to self-refer within the text (as I have done above in citing section ‘7.1 Malleable Spaces’, which is about Narrative Architecture). Having organised the text in this way, I subsequently doubted its integrity - after all, this is a project about disorder and accumulation. I decided to include a second set of indices in brackets: a kind of mis-acronym - sometimes directly relating to the title, sometimes to a lost title, sometimes a missing phrase or subject from a previous, long lost edit. These subsections are a nod to methodology, intended to subsume questions about order, purpose and function, keeping them embedded in every part of the text. Sometimes new, accidental subjects are thrown up by their inclusion, such as section ‘2.7 (ACdc) After Charcot, de-cluttering.’ In other cases, I have been deliberately graphic, such as ‘4.1 (:) Socket to me’, where a plug socket sits in the title twice - once in text and once as a figure – before becoming a subject of the section.

In summary:
This body of research relates spatial theory, museology, narratology, psychiatric theory and histories of psychoanalysis. It critiques the development of criteria for establishing the languages and content of disorder. Alongside a practice-based examination of collage as integral to understanding how disorder becomes attached to objects en masse/the hoard it also engages collage as a form of interdisciplinarity. The thesis is, itself, a space of accumulation, allowing the research question to be continuously embedded methodologically.
Research spaces (2010 - 2014)
Paper collages photographed.
Overview:

There are three correlated parts to this PhD research: An ongoing visual art practice, a textual art practice and this academic written thesis.

The textual aspect of my PhD practice is in the form of a theoretical fiction, The Detroit Project. It is set mainly across two real cities, London and Detroit. However, each location is increasingly fictitious, becoming dominated by the pursuits of two principal characters whose relationships to space, collections and memory influence the cities they seem to inhabit. A synopsis of The Detroit Project is included below this contextual overview. It has been graphically formatted by designer Carolin Jap Lim and is submitted alongside this document.

I advise reading The Detroit Project prior to this academic text.
Synopsis of *The Detroit Project*

*The Detroit Project* is a theoretical fiction; a novel set mainly between two real cities, London and Detroit. However, each is increasingly dominated by the fictitious pursuits of two principal characters as their relationships to space, collections and compulsion influence and alter the cities they seem to inhabit.

In London, Nell Fuller is an artist and academic teaching at an un-named art school. In the opening chapter, Nell presents her ideas via a lecture on ‘Performance Architecture’ in which she sets a project to design a future for Detroit, suggesting Berlin as a model for architectural, cultural and social regeneration.

Several Detroits play out in the book. They are each proposals - utopian, dystopian and somewhere in-between - for a city in flight from its present incarnation in an attempt to recapture the glories afforded by music and motors. One Detroit is dominated by e-bay as a federal industry housed in the old factories and car plants.

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4 The lecture is in text form, but I have also presented it as a performance, which consists of audio, a live mime and a projection of collages - which stand-in for photographs of artists’ work and public spaces.
Another is a green belt in which the whole city becomes an urban farm. A third is a version of the city built on new medical knowledge and drug trials. A constant in these varying Detroits is Martha, the city’s mayor. Gradually it becomes clear that Martha is a psychological extension of Nell and a fiction-within-a-fiction.

The locations within the text build - as do spaces within my visual artwork - through collage, collation, taxonomy, re-positioning and co-joining elements. Martha shares with Nell a passion for collecting. Both are hoarders, convinced of the order in their growing dysfunction. Museological and valuable in some ways, their collections become increasingly chaotic and difficult to navigate. Nell’s begins with academia and ends with compulsion with its extension into the creation of Martha’s life and in its blending with her own.

Neither Nell nor Martha is falling apart in a conventional sense. The line between disorder, artistic pursuit and academia remains fragile, as does the line between collection and disorder. Keeping these boundaries fluid allows me to maintain a position of criticality in terms of how artistic knowledge is gathered through variant research paths; personal and public, scientific and psychological.

*The Detroit Project* is a mise-en-abyme – a kind of hall of mirrors in which stories within stories appear as if a collection in their own right. It is accompanied with ‘published’ texts Nell has written. These are intended to ground Nell academically and allow for her psychology to sit alongside – even apart from - her insights and capabilities.

Several books and articles by Nell Fuller are cited and referred to within this thesis, bibliographically and in the body of the text. Her, sometimes anecdotal, knowledge of the themes, practices and processes herein became essential material and her voice is inherently reflective of the collagist methodologies I have employed throughout.
Chapter One:
Introduction (The Studio)

Summary:

This chapter introduces collage as a practice and a form and focuses on the importance of a binding together of elements and undoing of the discrete. I introduce the notion that collage is determined by its fault-line or tectonic join. This activated boundary between joined-up things or ideas links a process within Fine Art practice to wider systems of differentiation and connectivity within material and conceptual realms.

A dialogue between collage and large scale material accumulation is identified and explored in the context of works by Ilya Kabakov and Renée Green. This chapter also studies relationships between collage and accumulations of material via Kurt Schwitters’ work Merzbau (1927-37) built inside the artist’s private family residence in Hannover, Germany. I expand on the principle of Schwitters’ Merz as combining ‘all conceivable materials’, towards a relationship to the hoard - with its equalizing affect on singular components within a new cumulative form.

I also look, in this chapter, at the origins of fragments within collage as having been superseded by their new emergence via re-composition, and at how an impulse towards the archaeological is not necessarily predisposed to the locating of either treasure or truth.
Introduction

1.0 (/) Fault-lines and rifts

The beginning of this thesis is necessarily an introduction to collage as a practice and a form. There is a term associated with collage that I will use throughout: ‘fault-line’, in reference to the tectonics of placement – the boundary between one element of a collage and what is placed next to it. These boundaries are sometimes invisible if two elements seamlessly appear to merge (whether due to their graphic proximities, or the faultlessness of a glue join, or a ‘paste’ action in Photoshop, or through a corrosion that alleviates a distinction). Sometimes the fault-line contains a third element – the border itself figuring as a definitive cut or tear. In three-dimensional collage or in assemblage the fault-line may be a corner, the edges of an object or a dimensional shift.

It is this discrete join or edge that lies at the crux of collage. Here – on the edge – is where decision lies and difference is extracted or pronounced. This active notification of a distinction – between two previously disconnected elements – subjects each to a negotiation and potential transformation.

But this is too simple. There are fault-lines everywhere. How do I distinguish between the boundaries between two elements in a paper collage I’m making and their relationships to the table I am working on? Or that table’s relationship to the floor, or to the ceiling of the studio below, and another person’s work? Artist, Ian Monroe, in his essay ‘Where Does One Thing End and the Next Begin?’ asks, ‘Do my own physical boundaries extend to the work I do or to the people whose memories I have made an impression upon? (...) Or, to take a much broader position, how do the various types of matter in the world remain differentiated...?’ (Collage, 2008, p:32)

In short, I am concerned with the fault-line itself – the seismic rift or ridge between the this and the that: between one subject and the next; one chapter and the other; one medium and a different medium. I know from this introductory vantage point that a thread that will, from here, run throughout this practice-based research is the topography and psychology of the join as a fault-line – simultaneously combining and pulling apart: a destabilising addition that creates new wholes by pointing out distinctions within the sum of their parts. Collage resists the limits or edges of things, hybridising and undoing the discrete.
Collage notifies us, allegorically, of the very nature of our material world, its collisions, prosthetics, territories, cover-ups, performances of difference and proximity. If everything is connected then collage is everywhere. The only rule therefore is to create or recognise the fault-line. Separateness does not figure in collage, a word (coined by Braque and Picasso), which etymologically descends from coller – to glue. No sever is present in the term, it serves only the join.

The whole world, everything which surrounds me here, is to me a boundless dump with no ends or borders, an inexhaustible, diverse sea of garbage. In this refuse of an enormous city one can feel the powerful breathing of its entire past. This whole dump is full of twinkling stars, reflections and fragments of culture: either some kind of book or a sea of magazines with photographs and texts, or things once used by someone... An enormous past rises up behind these crates, vials and sacks; all forms of packaging which were ever needed by man have not lost their shape, they did not become something dead when they were discarded.


The text above is, within the narrative of artist, Ilya Kabakov's fiction, written on a piece of paper left in an overstuffed apartment – a warehouse full of stuff: labelled, grouped and commented upon. The piece of writing is, itself, a part of this stockpiling of matter. In Kabakov’s installation (which I will return to at the end of Chapter Two), objects, ephemera and texts connect to form a portrait of a collector, in his physical absence from the site. The words and matter stand in for a life and, in their collation, form a new live whole, fictive or otherwise.

In Kabakov's dump the stuff is seemingly fixed, hovering beyond erosion, as if classification or memorial renders it preserved, star-like. This is a romantic route for kipple to take. In the novel Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? (1968) Philip K. Dick labelled as 'kipple' the perpetual, collapsing disorder that often engulfed his narratives. His was an apparition of a global spread of obsolescent objects merging blandly without distinction, flowing from every home into outer space and beyond. For Dick, kipple was the unpreventable tendency of all stuff designed for human use, making all order temporal and determining the pre-future of all things entropic.

No one can win against kipple... it's a universal principle operating throughout the universe; the entire universe is moving toward a final state of total, absolute
Kipple seems to me to be an absolutist endgame for collage – a sort of indiscriminate, immersive everything-merge. An unmanageable, whole-world hoard. And in just over two pages I went from conjoining paper to the threat of universal garbage.

The totality and banality of Dick’s kipple has much in common, cumulatively, materially, with German collagist, Kurt Schwitters’ concept of Merz – ‘the combination, for artistic purposes of all conceivable materials’ on an equal footing. (Kurt Schwitters, "Die Merzmalerei," Der Sturm, vol. 10, no. 4 (1919), p. 61; quoted in Elderfield, 1985, p. 50.) Schwitters talked of Merz as a ‘non-functional constellation of things that previously had a function’ and applied this principal to his home in Hannover where he and his family inhabited an ever-expanding über-collage, his first Merzbau. The interior ‘building’ that the chapters of this thesis allude to has a conscious relationship to Schwitters’ Merzbau as an architectonic collage: A non-hierarchical, cumulative reinvention of space according to what has been imported into it or been discovered on the outside.

Once material junk entered the Hannover house, it transformed into construction material for a ‘parallel Merz-reality’ (Berstrand, 2013, p: 90) of columns and grottoes. Traces of previous arrangements informed its qualities despite new material coalitions. As a sign, the collage fragment refers back, from within work, to a referent located elsewhere. While found objects and material began to pile up within the walls of the house, Schwitters became concerned with the concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk or Total Artwork.

Merz reevaluates the world when the artist gives form and brings every thing together on the shared image-plane. If within this frame, the equal evaluation of material marks a site of a non-hierarchical harmonious order, then the inclusivity of Merz would appear to have no limit. The work would have no outside, and Merz could, eventually, merz the world.

(ibid, 2013, p: 90)

Both kipple and Merz lean precariously towards ultimate entropy (as I will discuss in detail in Chapter 7). Neither is regarded as stable. Schwitters’ Merzbau horrified the few, overwhelmed visitors who entered it, such as gallery director, Alexander Dorner
who described it as ‘a kind of fecal smearing’ (Gamard, 2000, p: 101). Its totality, combined with the embodied nature of its domestic setting and the acts of gathering that sustained it caused a rupture in the separation of materials – it was no longer possible to rescue objects or papers from the architecture – nor even affect the separation of artist from artwork. Schwitters himself became indelibly tied to Merzbau and his own stability was written into its criticisms, as those who visited implicated his psychological safety into the precariousness of the work. Dorner commented that Schwitters had ‘bridged the gap between sanity and madness.’ (ibid, p: 101)

This psychoanalytic, diagnostic power of Merzbau led me to an interest in the hoard as a new entity – a singular noun combining many, many parts and a surrogate for disorder. At the very start of this research I became fascinated by televisual representations of hoards. Programmes such as the A&E TV series ‘Hoarders’ (2009 -) build personal narratives from deep within the hoard. The camera regularly pans around the hoard ignoring the human subject, substituting or analogising the condition of the home with the condition of its occupant. ‘Beverly has been obsessively recording thousands and thousands of hours of audio and video for decades. Her home is filled with TV's and recorders, her yard piled high with boxes of tapes.’ These panning shots of composite detritus caused me to attempt to visually separate, to categorise and anaesthetize in order to project what lies beneath. This confused me because, in my own work, I was gluing or placing things together in disquieting ways. Why then was I looking at these hoards, wanting to re-conjugate them into ordered, punctuated elements? Their unsafety (real and implied) was threatening and fascinating to me. Was it simply the amount of stuff that was luring me towards its imagined ordering or was it the way in which it was composed (or decomposing)?

Renée Green, whose work I referred to in the preface, talks of ‘negation in abundance,’ and of how ‘particular examples of attempts at collecting and the subsequent ordering of masses of material – including fictive attempts – led to a feeling not merely of wonder, but also of fatigue, attention deficit. Negation in abundance can be read as the cancelling-out effect which is possible when confronted with more than is comprehensible...’ (Green, in Von Bismarck, 2002, p: 147). Her research methods have been termed ‘archipelagic’ (by Catherine Quéloz in Green, 2009 p: 87) and her own work often refers to an impossibility to read histories or concepts in their entirety, occupying a reflective space that provokes questions about conclusive understanding. Green notes that ‘even when confronted with what may seem like a jumbled mass, once you more deeply delve into the details, you are confronted with both vastness
and specificity, along with the challenge of engaging with both… I'm suggesting on my part an engagement that's desired but that's not necessarily possible to fulfill in one lifetime.' (Green, 2009, p: 77)

And so I arrive at this idea of a mass that is so much that it contains a potential loss – of what is subsumed by the quantity and can't, potentially, be viewed, unearthed or separated or considered. We are therefore left with what can be understood through the idea of mass itself rather than an encounter with every single element within it. There is a kind of obfuscation here – not least of all, of the ground.

Rosalind Krauss describes the overlaying within collage as a rewriting of the ground itself. “Collage's very fullness of form is grounded in this forced impoverishment of the ground – a ground both supplemented and supplanted,”

For it is the affixing of the collage piece, one plane set down on another, that is the center of collage as a signifying system. That plane, glued to its support, enters the work as the literalisation of depth, actually resting in front of or on top of the field or element it now partially obscures. But this very act of literalisation opens up the field of collage to the play of representation. For the supporting ground that is obscured by the affixed plane resurfaces in a miniaturised facsimile in the collage element itself. The collage element obscures the master plane only to represent that plane in the form of a depiction. If the element is the literalisation of figure against field, it is so as a figure of the field it must literally occlude. (Krauss, 1986, p: 37)
1.1(OE) Origins and Everythings

My process begins with finding and collating papers and objects. These quiet acts of gathering and forming piles have precipitated this ever-growing investigation.

Through locating and appropriating subjects and objects for further study;
safe-keeping;
alteration;
re-arrangement;
drawing;
cutting;
cropping;
archiving;
making spatial
or, indeed, abandonment,
I started to consider psychologies and architectures inherent to different forms of

5 Labelling, mis-labelling and shelving according to collagist methodologies: I am creating material associations with the layout, indexing and taxonomies of this academic text.
acquisition, storage and attachments.

In finding a subject by sifting and cutting through piles, I have come to question my own selection and editing of materials, their breakdown and re-appropriation into new ‘wholes’, images or relational compositions. In practice I have become fixated on the manifold ways in which objects and papers gather new meanings as they converge or resist isolation.

The positions of matters strewn or abandoned until some never-moment for their re-use began to also preoccupy me. In the studio, I questioned how perceptions of value affected the psychological reading of amassed materials as they rose into gatherings from the floor or table into hybridised artworks. I wondered whether these movements between storage, use, re-use and abandonment of my own collage materials could also be applied to sources and resources in other diverse spaces, such as objects in museums, in installations, in landfill or in domestic properties. I began to seek out dialogues around the status and spatialisation of accumulated matter to support and expand on these questions arising from within my own practice.

Adam Phillips, psychoanalyst and author, writes of psychoanalysis, that it has ‘an aversion to clutter… it promotes the intelligibility of system; it repudiates chaos.’ Phillips goes on to describe the ambiguous status of clutter as something with no specifically discernible order which, somehow, leads to the construction of meaning nonetheless, through its pointing to the very ‘absence of pattern’. He writes that, ‘we can’t be sure who the joke will be on if we say something intelligible or persuasive about it.’ (Phillips 2000, p: 60) This construction of possible or plausible order and the potential for an evasion of meaning is a focus for me in my management or mis-management of materials through collage. I want, in this research project, to ask questions of the hoard – and other connected stockpiles and containers of material via the collection – towards an increased understanding of how, where and when accumulation presents as disorder.

Despite this attaching of processes and materials to content I should be clear that, from the outset, the site of my investigation was not to become the studio. The studio is a holding bay for elsewhere, a temporary container for ideas and reflections, and therefore not a site for my work’s subject. In defining the conditions for the collection and hoard, I needed to situate and spatialise them within their own inherent locations, looking in-depth at the architectures of collection (such as the museum, cabinet or
publication), alongside the (mostly) domestic locations for hoards, and the sites of psychological work (such as psychiatric institutions and practice rooms) where disorder is diagnosed. This is, in effect, a reference to the topology and history of archival arrangements, in that the overriding archival classificatory method *Principle of Provenance* (also known in French as *respect des fonds*) accepts the storage of a record, not according to its subject, but its origins. This principle allows the conditions and location of its being noticed or produced to be reflected in its subsequent arrangement.

Within collage, the point of an element's origin can remain unknown. Its severed relationship to an original location is often substituted by a new relationship drawn across the fault-line. In this way elements hold references to their past but through conjoining expose this history to the evolution of a new, potentially jarring narrative: a new origin or moment of production.

As an example, *Untitled* (1976) by Linder (overleaf), which was used for the cover of Manchester punk band, The Buzzcocks' 1977 album *Orgasm Addict* might be viewed within the contexts of histories of punk, histories of collage, histories of feminist art practices or histories of graphic design in Manchester in the 'seventies but would be unlikely to be located within histories of mail order irons or pornography of the era.

To think of shifts in *emergence* as the re-originating of any composite work allows the collagist to build a relationship with history – or, indeed its reimagining. For many collagists this is a determining factor in their engagement with materials and their re-appropriations. Martha Rosler talks of her collages as ‘works (that) ruffle the taxonomy by which we understand our world’ (Rosler, 2007 in *Collage, The Un-monumental Picture*, 2007, p: 96)
Curator, Massimiliano Gioni writes of collage as a ‘vandalic gesture’ often adopted as a ‘Trojan horse, a tactic with which to insert unexpected meanings and messages into existing images, contexts and histories. It’s (…) some kind of violation, an embezzlement of sorts.’ (ibid, p: 14)

This embezzlement (or ruffled taxonomy) as affecting the emergence of material – or the potentially transformative conditions by which something arrives or is produced in a specific time or place - is vital to this thesis. The currency of the hoard as an entity or problem supersedes independent values that could be attributed to its composite singular elements. It is therefore newly originating as a hybrid form. A singular noun (hoard) takes over the sum of its parts and through accumulation reconfigures and re-originates them, evading earlier classifications through this newly holistic indistinction.

In his autobiographic work, *Collections of Nothing*, Theatre professor, William Davies King refers to his desire to create an ‘autonomous world’ (King, 2008, p: 87) and the difficulties in being classificatory with this kind of autonomy as the goal. ‘I myself find it terribly unwieldy… Division doesn’t come easily to a man who craves wholeness.’ (ibid. p: 91) Throughout the book, and King’s recollections of what lead to the build-up of stuff that became his hoard, layers of separate items slowly become ‘lots of it (rhymes with “shit”)’ (ibid, p: 161), until this singular article overtakes the collective and
'My things make me abnormal, and I'm finding it difficult to escape it, the talisman of my abnormality.' (ibid, p: 161)

This 'it' or hybridity as assigned to an accumulation of material is pivotal to this research project and the collagist methodologies (the sticking together) at its centre. I am going to ask questions of the hoard – and other connected stockpiles and containers of material via the collection – towards an increased understanding of how, where and when accumulation presents not simply as dis-ordered but as signifying (a) disorder.

Collage here is material and textual⁶. It is subject, material and method. It is also, in

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⁶ I am considering – as textual collage – elements of the construction of this thesis, its relationship to my fiction - The Detroit Project, the structure of The Detroit Project, the structure and methodology of
its augmentation, pluralism and drive for interrelationships, a cross-disciplinary pursuit. I am interpreting interdisciplinarity here as broader than within the medium-centric, material contexts of a/my Fine Art practice (collage as paper or relief or three-dimensional or installational or virtual) but as a methodology applied to other disciplinary border-crossings and extending to a worldview which meshes edges. Connections between fields are possible with a collagist methodology because it resists the discrete but does not ignore the fault-line or rift, allowing its examination. Alongside adopting an interdisciplinary strategy materially, within the work I make – so that, for example, a drawing is also a performance and a work of fiction is also theory-driven - I am also adopting an interdisciplinary strategy towards the subject and fields navigated – so that work done in psychological fields comes to be examined through a narratological lens and knowledge production within Fine Art is applied to the construction of psychiatric tools.

Art critic, Sally O’Reilly writes that ‘Collage’s rejection of singularity, rationality and coherence is matched and, at times, superseded by mainstream media and culture at large, where channel-hopping, surfing, streaming, piece-working and hot-desking are fast becoming familiar processes… The verb, as opposed to the noun, is symptomatic of a worldview in which movement and rates of change are at least as important as form and static position.’ (O’Reilly in Collage, 2008, p: 8)

1.2D(d) Dirt Dig

I channel-hop between media: In paper collage I think hard about where there is a rip, a curl, some dirt, some tape, a fold or an overlap. In my drawing I think about these things too and where to reveal, conceal or edit out. Working with objects requires consideration of their placement, their relations, their cleanliness, their symbolism and their use value. In writing fiction I think about where there is a cut, an impasse, a subplot, a hole, a detail, a lack. I am not solely focused on purposefully joining up but also on overlapping, taking apart and reconfiguring through doubt or rejection of the emerging image/surface/combine. Concealment and revelation are integral to this research and to collagist practice. This is research in and about layers and, perhaps obvious, psychiatric, archaeological and architectural metaphorical equivalencies exist. These issues figure throughout this practice-based research and circumnavigate my edited book about hoards and collections - This Mess is a Place (2013). These structures and methods are expanded upon in Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis and referred to throughout.
the practices I have elected to discuss for their relevance to this enquiry (such as – in order of appearance - Kurt Schwitters, Tomoko Takahashi, Robert Smithson, Joëlle Tuerlinkx). It makes sense here, having introduced the idea of profundity within collage to introduce the analogy of Freudian analysis as an archaeological position, as it could relate to the hoard (as a petrifying mound) and its potential to signify disorder.

Freud’s own early affiliations with archaeology were referred to throughout his working life, although he later unpicked them in a distancing from the directness of his earlier analogy. In his treatment of Sergei Pankejeff (known as the Wolf-Man because of the pertinence of his most significantly analysed dream), he iterated,

The psychoanalyst, like the archaeologist in his excavations, must uncover layer after layer of the patient's psyche, before coming to the deepest, most valuable treasures.

(Freud, ed. Gay, 1989, p: 16)

Freud’s own collecting behaviours are often drawn into an analysis of the relationships he maintained between psyche, practice, collection and home. From the mid 1890s until he moved to London - in the shadow of the Nazi Anschluss of Austria in 1938 - Freud collected non-fragmentary antiquities. These largely fell into the categories of statuettes, rings, seal amulets and scarabs. There were over three thousand items in Freud’s collection at the time of his death, originating from Ancient Egypt, Rome, China and Greece.

At his address at Bergasse 19, Vienna, these antiquities remained in Freud’s consulting room and study, never over-spilling into the family rooms. Their separation from family life and committal to psychiatric space is much noted7, suggesting an attachment of the collection to psychological work and, beyond the rooms themselves, to the contents of the mind. These figures were the sole, mute witnesses of Freud’s analyses.

In a space where remembering and retrieval are processes integral to psychological betterment, Freud’s antiquities held court, maintaining the values of pasts remembered, whilst simultaneously referring to their renewal in the present. John

Forrester, historian of psychoanalysis, writes of two models of remembering inherent to analysis as firstly, ‘disinterring the past so as to destroy it by finally releasing it into oblivion, and remembering as a means of preservation, a lucky chance amid the processes through which the past inexorably vanishes.’ (Forrester in Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, p: 245)

As his collection grew, Freud moved it around the room – in a state of slow but perpetual rearrangement according to both new acquisitions and losses. Alongside the its constant growth he also gave away antiquities from the collection to friends and clients as gifts. After the analyst’s death this living collection froze – in its new location at 20 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 – where it has remained for six decades. John Forrester notes that ‘One feature is clear: his interest in objects was historical rather than aesthetic, and partook of a late nineteenth century museum culture.’ (Forrester in ‘Freud and Collecting’ in Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, p: 229) I would argue though that arranging things per se – according to any principle, in a location whether they are displayed or visible - is aesthetic, whether chronology or logic are the principles behind the positioning, or indeed a more deliberately visual schema.

A record was made of where each object of Freud’s stood on its last day at Berggasse 19 before being crated and moved with the family to London. This exacting removal was undertaken with the support of Künsthistorisches Museum registrar, Princess Marie Bonaparte who secured the safe transportation of all Freud’s antiquities to the new Hampstead address in 1938. In Maresfield Gardens they were rearranged exactly as they had been in Vienna – laid out by an equally safely transported maid.
In her ongoing work on contemporary art in the Freud Museum, critical theorist, Joanne Morra suggests three ‘archaeological impulses’ inherent to a study of Freud’s use of the archeological analogy. These manifest as ‘material, metaphorical, and phenomenological’ (Morra, 2013): Material, in that the site of psychoanalysis is also the site of collection; Metaphorical in that an archaeological uncovering of the human psyche is integral to psychoanalysis; Phenomenological in that Freud’s collection was itself deployed and referred to directly and indirectly (appearing as it did in both analyst and analysand’s line of vision) in the contexts of site and therapy.

These three modes of archaeological impulse, as applied to connections between collection and analysis, surface throughout my practice-based research. In particular I refer to object attachments and notions of surrogacy between object and experience. For my own purposes, though, it is the second part of Freud’s statement to the Wolf-Man about the archaeology of psychoanalysis that is most pertinent to this thesis; namely what is ‘deepest’ and ‘most valuable’. Assuming that what is most buried is of the most value is concerning to me, whether in the disciplines of mental health,

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8 From Joanne Morra (2015) in the chapter, An Archaeological Impulse: Uncovering a Museum Within a Museum in Inside the Freud Museums, History, Memory and Site-Responsive Art (pending publication Dec 2015)
9 See particularly Chapter two, Section: 2.2T(cbf) The Relations of Minds to Other Things.
museology, archives or collection. This presupposes that the age (of a thought or material) is in direct correlation to its value or status. As in much recent critique of psychoanalysis’ emphasis on awakening the unconscious, Freud’s analogy could be accused of overplaying the significance of re-surfacing what has passed or been buried.

French thinker and activist, Michel Foucault, also attaches value to the distance of time. This is not economic value but a perceived insight or illumination that develops as time passes, and recovery and emergence shape the collective archive. He writes of an ‘otherness’ and separation that the time-distance affords us towards our greater understanding of our pasts and selves:

In this sense it is valid for our diagnosis…it deprives us of our continuities; it dissipates that temporal identity in which we are pleased to look at ourselves when we wish to exorcise the discontinuities of history; it breaks the thread of transcendental teleologies…
(Foucault, 2008, p: 147)

As I go on to examine the properties and status of hoards in tandem to collections, it is useful to refer back to the notion that an archaeological impulse values digging for or uncovering lost treasure, recognising it and labelling it. To be literal, in archaeology what rises to the surface is dirty, needing to be brushed off and cleaned. Freud’s metaphor also refers to this aspect of recovery and to the changes inherent in the past through experience, interpretation and an application of the present. In both psychological and archaeological practices, the object/subject has experienced some wear, tear and review, manifesting evidence of its burial alongside its past, subsequent diagnosis and recovery. I am interested here in the the separation of feeling from telling – the idea that potentised non-linguistic truths rise to the surface where they, potentially, de-code.

In his writings about Freud in Mental Healers: Mesmer, Eddy and Freud, (first published in 1930), Austrian author and fiend of Freud’s, Stefan Zweig remarks that the analyst has to deal with,

what looks like a plot of ground on which there has been put up a notice “Rubbish may be shot here.” Out of the great heap of “rubbish”, out of this accumulated mass of unsorted vital experience, out of these thousands of
memories and remarks and accounts of dreams, the doctor has, by a psychological sifting process, to select the wheat from the chaff, or perhaps I had better say the fragments of mineral ore from the rubble. Then, by a lengthy smelting, he must extract the true metal, must separate the psychoanalytic material from the residue. He must never credulously accept the unsmelted ore of the narration as pure metal.

Zweig, 2012, Kindle edition, loc. 4389 of 5010

Despite its resonance with his contemporaries, at the end of his life Freud revisited his analogy with archaeology, referring to the complexities of these ‘rearrangements’, and that,

…psychical objects are incomparably more complicated than the excavator’s material ones… their finer structure contains so much that is still mysterious.

(Freud, Constructions in Analysis, in Freud, vol. XXIII, p: 260)

Collage too attaches discrete value systems to what goes unseen or is reconstructed to form a new whole: Obscured layers are alluded to but materially undermined through their disappearance. Some layers are kept away from the surface and their obfuscation can indicate a secrecy or un-safety in being viewed.

Digging cannot always be assumed to reveal treasure, just as cleaning cannot be assumed to de-abjectify what has been unearthed. What is typically uncovered in the deepest layers of a hoard is generally not considered of great value to anyone but a hoarder. It is often eroded matter: mould, dirt, excrement and undefined coagulated, entropic material, or simply stuff of little economic or collective value. The perceived value of the hoard is alluded to in diagnostics – the American Psychiatric Association’s definition of Hoarding Disorder is a ‘persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of the value others may attribute to these possessions’. (from the DSM-5 definition of Hoarding Disorder, 2013)

Whilst an analysis of the hoarder can value what is buried and add insight to the activity, an analysis of the hoard itself would almost invariably reveal layers of decreasing worth according to profundity. To dig down is also to move backwards psychologically and attach value once more to what is essentially waste. It is to regress to be the archaeologist of a hoard. There is also inherent, practical danger to the process of excavation.
A hoarder’s daughter I interviewed described navigation of the layers of her mother’s piles of stuff and the dangers inherent to their investigation:

My reaction times are amazing because of falling objects.
I’m good at looking for structural weakness – I know what’s going to fall. The cats are good at avoiding it. We all adapt.
(X, anonymous hoarder’s daughter, 2013)

The very real threat of excess and the precariousness of its storage makes it a self-destroying mechanism – subject to its own erosion and coagulation but also implicating human occupants and visitors in this destruction.

Archaeological metaphors used with regard to psychoanalysis (and the unearthing of valuable psychical materials) may be un-useful to understanding a hoard/excessive accumulation. Re-engagement with materials re-lives the problematised experience of their safeguarding and repeats psychological processes at the heart of its pathology. Digging reveals loss - via a changed or altered (entropic) element – which is, ultimately, non-revelatory in terms of its initial attraction and therefore could become a move backwards psychologically. There is danger in profundity in this location where what is at the bottom cannot be retrieved without practical risk.

Chapter Two:
World of Interiors (The Living Room)

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10 From *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter* (2013), Edited, Compiled and Misfiled by Zoë Mendelson, chapter titled ‘Inane Stuff: An interview with a hoarder’s daughter’
Summary:

In Chapter 2, having introduced the entropic bottom of the hoard, I build upwards and expand on its contents and value. The focus of this chapter is relationships between hoards and collection. These are drawn with attention to systematisation, nostalgia, narrative, fetish, myth-making, surrogacy, compulsion and clinical terminology. A simplistic premise is expanded upon – namely that collection presupposes a selective pursuit towards the gathering of like things and a hoard is composed of things that could not be discarded. One is therefore governed by what comes in and the other by what does not leave.

In 2013, the DSM-5 (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) classified Hoarding Disorder for the first time as a psychiatric disorder. It is the only psychological disorder diagnosed via a space (and therefore potentially in the absence of a person). This is essential to my research question and underlies the architectural/spatial context of this thesis, my work of fiction and artworks.

In this chapter the newly defined Hoarding Disorder is analysed as a container for an aesthetic proposition and records of its physicality become assigned to its diagnosis. Installation and collagist practices, which suggest an aestheticising of disorder - through staged disarray and connections to a history of assemblage – are examined relationally.

I take issue, in this chapter, with the construction of diagnostic tools assigned to disorder, where they incorporate the imaging or performance of pathologies. Examples I cite include the photography of hysterical patients commissioned by Jean Martin Charcot at the Salpêtrière in the late 19th century, and contemporary images of clutter created by clinicians and their assistants in their diagnoses of Hoarding Disorder.11

World of Interiors

2.1D(^L) Definitions of terms / A heap of language

In order to understand the hoard as a singular ‘thing’ made up of composite parts, as discussed in the previous chapter, I want to scrutinise its often nebulous relationship with collection. Part of the research question involves drawing relationships between accumulation as an activity and the hoard as a possible result of that activity. In order to do this, I need to analyse existing assumptions of what defines collection and what makes a hoard, in consideration of there being different ways to accumulate.

Throughout the thesis I will be looking at how the terms hoard and collection appear and are used across various disciplines. Anticipating this, it is sensible perhaps, to evaluate definitions centred on popular assumption and theory, via discourse analysis, then allow them to be revisited and reassessed throughout. I am not seeking to, myself, define ‘hoard’ and ‘collection’ but am assessing their uses and overlaps towards a greater understanding of how disorder comes to be defined or understood. The overlaps, distinctions and indistinctions I uncover have been important to this practice-based project and attempts to work along a fault-line or join. I have been asking myself where – if a hoard presupposes disorder - the border exists between collection and disorder.

A popularly held notion of collection would be that it implies a purposeful, authoritative, accumulation of culturally, personally or socially valued things or materials with a commonality, brought together in one location or by one body. The assumptive elements within this definition would be the notions of value, commonality and/or purpose. Collecting is part of critical, cultural discourse as a pursuit and a discipline. In personal terms, collection allows a connection to be maintained with the past – whether via a line drawn to one’s own family or childhood or to the preservation of another historical period or biography. Collection can serve as inheritance: a legacy to pass on to one’s heirs. Research is also a reason for collection, either academically or as a surrogate for lived experience. Carol LeWitt, wife of the late American artist, Sol LeWitt remarked of his collecting that, ‘Sol seems to experience things through collecting them (…) He’s the kind of person who needs a lot of information around him all the time.’ (LeWitt, Carol, quoted in Gennochio, 2004)

The experience of a collection is not necessarily a remote or indexical gathering but can be embodied and sensory. A sense of excitement or thrill often permeates collectors’ experiences of building and handling a collection – the drive or urge to collect often coming with a sense of risk – financial risk or risk of potential loss. This
drive becomes attached to the motivation to collect. The physicality of object-based collections is often noted and this aspect of collection is becoming increasingly highlighted in lieu of the transience of digital forms. Artist, Dr Lakra talks about handling an album’s cover as an important aspect of engaging with the sound. He comments that, ‘the experience was more rounded in a way. Now you just download, you don’t even have a cover… it’s not so exciting.’ (Dr Lakra in conversation with Lydia Yee, 2014 in Magnificent Obsessions, 2015)

Cultural theorist, Mieke Bal reols off Susan Pearce’s seventeen listed motivations for collection: ‘leisure, aesthetics, competition, risk, fantasy, a sense of community, prestige, domination, sensual gratification, sexual foreplay, desire to reframe objects, the pleasing rhythm of sameness and difference, ambition to achieve perfection, extending the self, reaffirming the body, producing gender-identity, achieving immortality.’ (Bal, in Elsner/Cardinal, 1994, p: 103) Bal suggests that all the motivations listed by Pearce can be subsumed under the single umbrella of fetishism, through severing the object from its original context in order to reconstitute its meaning with the use of three common tropes: ‘synecdoche, the figure where a part comes to stand for the whole from which it was taken; metonymy, where one thing stands for another adjacent to it in place, time or logic; and metaphor, where one thing stands for another on the basis of similarity…’ (ibid. p: 106).

Pearce’s list leads to the impossible: achieving immortality. Collection is seen to have a time-based contingent - as a means of generating an insurance against mortality through the apparent permanence of amassed objects and artefacts. Collection suggests mitigation against loss of this world in bodily terms, through the leaving of a trace or testimony; the building of a time capsule.

In their introduction to Cultures of Collecting, art historians and writers John Elsner and Roger Cardinal refer to collection as ‘the unique bastion against the deluge of time.’ They identify ‘all the themes of collection itself (as) desire and nostalgia; saving and loss, the urge to erect a permanent and complete system against the destructiveness

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12 Susan Pearce is a professor in Museum Studies and author of several important books on collection, including Collecting in Contemporary Practice (1997) and On Collecting: an investigation into collecting in the European tradition (1995)
13 ‘This is consistent with a popular theory in social psychology called the terror management theory TMT. TMT grows out of an existential predicament – that people, like animals, are mortal…To cope with this potential terror, cultures provide beliefs, rituals and sanctioned strategies for managing it. One of these strategies is the belief that some part of ourselves can live on after we die. Producing or amassing something of value is one way to accomplish this. Thus a collection offers the potential for immortality.’ (Frost, Steketee, 2010, p: 55)
of time.’ (Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, p: 1) For the purposes of this research it is this understanding and assertion of collection as systematised that will be a continual point of reference. It is important that Elsner and Cardinal’s description refers to an ‘urge’ though, and not to the successes of such a system.

Whilst a collection is often maintained according to principles of commonalities, taxonomies or subjects, it is assumed not to be repetitive. The collection’s authority as dependant on its internal connectivity and lack of duplication is carefully asserted by poet and critic, Susan Stewart in On Longing (1993), her book on narration, systems and the significance of everyday objects.

The collection represents a hermetic world: to have a representative collection is to have both the minimum and the complete number of elements necessary for an autonomous world – a world which is both full and singular, which has banished repetition and achieved authority.

(Stewart, 1993, p: 152)

Both Stewart and Elsner/Cardinal contend that Noah’s Ark is the mythopoeic, completist and archetypal collection, containing as it does a finite inventory to a boundaried world, within which each interdependent element both contributes to the whole and alludes to its own discovery and origins. Despite its status as myth, Noah’s attainment of the entire ‘boxed set’ suggests a Platonic ideal for collection, in that - regardless of the potential for obsession in the pursuit - the collection itself is finite. According to this model, collecting is dependent on what exists to be acquired within its contextual framework: Once all species are collected, the ark can be closed.14

Hoard, as a term, has been historically and culturally less significant (given that its economies are removed from those of established cultural value systems). The new edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), of May 2013 includes ‘Hoarding Disorder’ as a newly titled psychiatric disorder, specific to pathological acquisition and retention of items. Clinical descriptions of hoarding suggest the emergence of pathology at the point at which living space becomes

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14 This example does, of course, suggest a platonic ideal for collection. It does not allow for the collection to be flawed. This is a mythopoeic archetype – served up by Stewart and Elsner/Cardinal - and acts as a model. As an idealised view it therefore ignores repetition, storage and fragmentation of/within the collection. I will go on to talk about collections – such as Henry Wellcome’s – where this ideal is not withheld.
encroached upon to the degree that belongings overwhelm its functions. The term refers to a persistent difficulty in parting with possessions ‘regardless of the value others may attribute to these possessions’ (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

A simplistic way to separate would therefore be to note that collection presupposes a selective pursuit towards the gathering of like things and a hoard is composed of things that could not be discarded. One is therefore governed by what comes in and the other by what does not leave.

Throughout this thesis I will refer to various clinical definitions and the diagnostic criteria that have accompanied classification of this new15 disorder. The DSM-5’s definition of Hoarding Disorder includes the statement that, ‘For individuals who hoard, the quantity of their collected items sets them apart from people with normal collecting behaviors’ (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The term hoarding is therefore positioned as quantitative (‘quantity of their collected items’) and qualitative (‘regardless of the value’). The American Psychiatric Association’s definition also normalises collection. There is an implied judgement in the assumptive definition of hoarding. It is a condition that is affiliated with a certain amount of stigmatisation and, although dirt is not something included in the clinical description or diagnostic criteria it is, perhaps, the by-product conjured up by the idea of excessive accumulation and spatial dysfunction.

Most important to the clinicians regarding the separation of hoarding from collection is that normalised collection poses no apparent risk. Dr Alberto Pertusa, Consultant Clinical Psychiatrist specialising in Hoarding Disorder, writes,

> Compulsive hoarding has been defined as the excessive collection and failure to discard objects of apparently little value, leading to clutter, distress, and disability. When severe, hoarding behaviour represents a serious psychiatric problem that can be life-threatening and pose profound risks to public health.

(Pertusa, 2013, p: 1)

This quotation comes from an essay titled ‘How Hoarding Became a Stand-alone Diagnosis and How It Now Has its Own Place in DSM-5’, which I commissioned from

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15 The disorder itself is not at all new, but its naming in the DSM-5 is. Previously hoarding behaviours were noted as a subcategory of a combination of obsessive-compulsive anxiety disorders.
Dr Alberto Pertusa based on questions I posed about the disorder, its onset and diagnosis. This is a clinical research paper but was published (in October 2013) as part of a cross-disciplinary publication\(^{16}\) edited and curated by myself, an artist. As such, its terminology enters cultural, critical territories and the words collection and hoarding are coerced into new forms of engagement with each other. Constructing a definition of terms, such as this one, is also one such disciplinary, classificatory collision, forcing a consideration of where terms (and subjects) are housed and how.

These definitions (of collection and hoarding) are roaming, unfixed; altering according to where they are found, and serving to propose a methodological challenge in creating a form of storage (in the form of this research) to house them. It is in regarding the boundaries of subject-specificity and assessing the emergence of a condition that I have looked towards the Foucauldian theoretical archive.

To separate for a moment from the clinical terminology affiliated with psychiatric definition, it is very important here that I reflect on relationships between terms used within practice-based fine art research and their implications scientifically, clinically or within the social sciences. I am using terms relating to hoards and collection in both clinical, psychological contexts and in critical, cultural and aesthetic contexts. By bringing these fields together I hope to suggest methodological and material ways in which artistic practice can incorporate psychological ideas rather than have a psychological reading as Art. The scope of this PhD research suggests ways in which diverse fields reflect upon each other, and it is through reflections of methodologies and materials within psychology, critical theory, archival practice and collection (such as the writing up and filing of case studies in psychoanalytic practice) that new, cross-disciplinary and malleable definitions of terms can be established towards the production of new knowledge.

Michel Foucault’s extensive writings on the archive and overlapping systems of knowledge are integral to the cross-pollination of these ideas and their dissemination. Foucault wrote, in 1969 in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, of the potential of the archive to be viewed as a practice towards this very malleability and re-orchestration of terms. He saw the archive as a space for different layers of understanding to develop simultaneously and over time and within which evidence ‘emerges in fragments, regions and levels.’ The archive, for Foucault, is what he terms “the system of

\(^{16}\) Mendelson, Zoë, ed. (October 2013) *This Mess is a Place: A collapsible anthology of collections and clutter*, London: And Publishing.
discursivity” that configures the possibility of what can be said. Foucault regards subject disciplines as discursive formations (statements) or conceptual frameworks defining the criteria for their own authenticity. Dialogue occurs between the establishing of statements and their manipulations.

... the archive defines a particular level: that of a practice that causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events, as so many things to be dealt with and manipulated...between tradition and oblivion, it reveals the rules of a practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. It is the general system of the formation and transformation of statements.'
(Foucault, 2008, p: 146)

Something pertinent to Foucault’s writings on the archive is the notion of emergence, as discussed in the previous chapter with regard to an archaeological allegory for psychoanalysis. The conditions for noticing or coming into view of a document, discipline or subject are essential to Foucault’s analysis of the history of ideas and involve a discussion of how rupture, upheaval, integration and succession prevent over-arching chronological readings of events or histories. This dismissal of chronology as the vertebrae of taxonomy is, potentially permissive – allowing other, less rigorous and more anecdotal systems to flourish. To organise or assume systematization via chronology or precession as ‘an absolute measure’ (ibid p: 159) becomes falsely indexical and reductive – generating an entirely progressive history of ideas that presupposes separations between disciplines and imagines history as a constant step forward without rupture or error. Foucault talks of emergences and regularities, asserting that there can be no ‘totalitarian periodization’ (ibid. p: 165) in an analysis of how discourses come to be formed.

The definition offered by Foucault in The Archaeology of Knowledge is that the archive constitutes ‘systems of statements (whether events or things)’. In collage this is a gift: If the archive - a multiplicity of statements, a constantly buzzing, rupturing Rolodex - is fraught with modifications and accepts emergence as irregularity then collage maintains this understanding of archival multiplicities through its acknowledgement of a fault-line or rift in disciplines, materials or repositioned elements.17 Perhaps collage

17 Even where collagist practice does not overtly display a cut, or expose rifts or joins between elements it can usually be said to be acknowledging the process of their smoothing out – as a subject. An example of this kind of practice would be the paintings of Dexter Dalwood: There is no physical
is not anarchival (against the archive), as it may often seem to be, but a parallel
practice, also dismissing absolute measures and regularity, yet also often openly
mimicking the fractures hidden in the seeming order of established (non-theoretical)
categorising systems.

2.2R(mot) The Relations of Minds to Other Things 18

Both collection and hoard are modes of accumulation but neither is specific to what it
is that is being accumulated. Value is suggested through popular definition but there
is no key to its terms. In theory, a hoard can be composed of any materials, but
generally it is within the physical scale of what can be reasonably transported by one
person and stored domestically. Importantly, a collection need not be made up of
museological, taxonomical elements or even of objects, but can also include data or
information, such as the national census.

Both collections and hoards are dependent on some form of architecture (even
digitally) as an armature to contain them. Within practice I refer to relationships
between architecture and order alongside architecture and dis-order, beginning with
collections and physical archives themselves and referring to the conditions of their
containment and display. I do this by maintaining the armatures or mechanics of
display strategies, such as utilising existing display units, building dysfunctional
cabinet-type furniture, working with museological architectures, relating the museum
to the domestic, and co-opting the photography or classification of documents. 19

The space in which hoarding happens is integral to its definition and the DSM-5
description makes reference to impairment of a space’s function via the hoard. This
practice-based research pays specific attention to containment, and to situation and
spatialisation. It connects architectures of collections and hoards to wider notions of
functional and dysfunctional spaces within psychology, narrative and disorder. I am

18 This subheading is the title of a chapter in (19th century American psychologist) William James’
textbook, The Principles of Psychology from 1890.
19 I will point out examples of these material considerations as they are detailed in this thesis but to
extrapolate briefly here: In the work Safecarder a safe became a museological display case; in the
works for This Mess is a Place/The Piles there are co-options of museum-type cases/display units; in
Clutter Image Rating, After Charcot and all of Nell Fuller’s writings throughout my novel, The Detroit
Project, versions of published research – whether critical or clinical – are inserted into the formats or
spaces normally reserved for other disciplines.
assuming collection and hoarding as spatial terms (both within fine art practice and more generally) and will expand on this.

There is a perceived aesthetic of each accumulative mode. Dis-order, clutter, disarray, human occupation and filth attach themselves to popular notions of hoarding, aided and abetted by a current slew of television programmes, exhaustively featuring long, panning shots of the insides of hoarders’ homes. Organisation, storage, cleanliness, classification and display attach themselves readily to popular notions of collection. It is not, I hope, forgoing ethics to talk here of the hoard in aesthetic terms, more it is noticing a tendency towards echoes of these proclivities within contemporary fine art practice (from Tim Noble and Sue Webster’s hoard-like trash heaps to Susan Hiller’s ordered collections of seascapes). Acknowledging these tendencies, and reflecting upon gallery space as their shared location, becomes a part of re-defining these terms within practice as well as outside it. Aesthetic, cultural re-appropriations of hoards - and their appearance in esteemed art collections - assert the application of new value systems to the term. These aesthetic code switches between the perceived (accepted) rationality of collection and the chaos (or stigma) of the hoard have become methodological pathways for me in constructing works to reflect the psychologies and values of different forms of accumulation.

I am aware of the possibility of fetishising hoards through their aestheticisation – above, in both televisual and installational realms. There is a subtext here: With the hoard as a surrogate for disorder or symptomatic of a psychological condition then its commodification and replication needs some ethical mention or address. Adding value to the condition via the artwork could be said to confuse or belie personal experience. I do not want to bury or lose the hoarder in the hoard but it is important to acknowledge that this has already happened within the associated literature, diagnostic criteria and iconography. Once a condition can be diagnosed via a space, it could be said to disassociate, rather comfortably, from the person. I have made the decision – in this project – not to build, draw or attempt to appropriate hoards (to attempt to be or gather like a hoarder) but to analyse their value, surrogacy for pathology, proximities to collection, diagnostic criteria and occupation of space.

In Chapter Seven I will elaborate on Kurt Schwitters’ *Merzbau* and specifically address it as an armature to many of the ideas in this PhD research, positioning it as, simultaneously, collection and hoard. The notion of applying human, psychological diagnostics to a site and its contents has framed contemporary and historical
assessments of Schwitters’ work and reflects diagnostic materials in psychological fields, as I will go on to discuss. In 1919, Schwitters laid claim to the totality of Merz, writing that ‘merz essentially denotes the combination for artistic purposes, of all conceivable materials, and technically, the principle of the equal distribution of the individual materials.’ (Elderfield, 1985, p: 50) Among the assemblages of paper and wood and magazines and objects-pauvre included in Schwitters’ original Hanover Merzbau were also samples of urine, faeces, nail clippings and human hair.

I return to the wisdoms of Elsner and Cardinal’s opening chapter to *Cultures of Collecting*:

> Against the sleek amplifications engineered by scholarship and curatorial publicity that direct our admiration towards the treasure-houses and the masterpieces, we feel there is much to be learned by listening in to the quieter, subversive voices rising out of that ‘unacceptable’ residue lying in culture’s shadow.’
> (Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, p: 5)

In *On Longing* Susan Stewart asserts the differences between hoarding and collecting. Aligning ‘authoritative’ (acceptable) collection with the rational mind she suggests determining factors of this authority, such as the uniqueness of each object, systems of display and that ‘aesthetic value replaces use value’, with its value system ‘the value system of the cultural.’ (Stewart, 1993, p: 154) This idea that the museum/collected object is ‘frozen’ in a kind of exchange of values, where function is side-lined, does not actually imply the object cannot be used. It may be fit for purpose but its purpose has been altered. An example could be this Dyson vacuum cleaner in the V & A collection (below): No longer active as a cleaning appliance, it now, when displayed, has a cultural/historical function – with increased status - as an icon of eighties design.

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Hoarding individuals collect and save many different kinds of possessions but generally, the nature of collected items and the reasons given for doing so are strikingly similar to those given by most people who do not hoard. These individuals hoard items that can conceivably be considered useful and report their main motivations for hoarding are the attribution of high functional or intrinsic value or emotional attachment.’

(Pertusa, 2013, p: 4)

Being *considered* useful is far removed from being of use, or indeed being used. A differentiating factor between collectors and hoarders, which is often referred to in clinical studies on hoarding is the ‘volume and variety of things they view as ‘useful” (Frost & Steketee, 2010, p: 50). Items may be preserved in the hope of future reparation or purpose, such as a broken umbrella, rotten food or a smashed watch, but then either become subsumed by the hoard and lost to attention, or remain as souvenirs or sentiment of their former functionality. The repurposing of these items could ultimately be said to be as inert devices for comfort – a new use driven, therefore, by a need to safeguard them.
The disappearance of objects from view/purpose in the hoard is also typical of collection. Despite (or because of) a repurposing of functional objects for their cultural value, large percentages of institutional or museological collections are in storage or only visible online. These acts of disappearance create cycles of visibility akin to those of the hoard – as items are subsumed and return to favour.\(^{21}\)

I have created malleable relationships between objects for display and objects with \textit{use value} (the use originally attributed to them) in my work, referring to the object as a container for complex psychological ideas. Re-deploying defunct technologies, such as broken slide projectors and cine equipment, equipping them with false paper beams of light and drawing an imagined, projected image onto a wall in front, I am implicating the objects in ‘recollection’ of an image as memory or souvenir, whilst also referring to former use. Literally, these works ‘project’ ideas and fantasies onto the object (as well as the architecture) and refer to \textit{projection} as a psychoanalytic term.\(^{22}\) In these works I have been working with temporality, building relationships to storage and the work’s ultimate transience or disappearance. The wall drawing – in pencil – is erased and redrawn (as a non-replicable \textit{copy}) after each exhibition.

Variable installation views of \textit{Projectile} (2010 and 2012)

Working with drawing alongside objects in this way allows me to negotiate the related permanence/permanence of the defunct or repurposed object in tandem with the transience of the drawing. This series of works with the paper light beam (see below)

\(^{21}\) I have included as an appendix to this thesis a letter from the Tate gallery in response to a Freedom of Information request for disclosure of its statistics regarding works from its collection in storage.

\(^{22}\) Projection as a term used in psychoanalysis was coined by Sigmund Freud in the 1890’s and is still in current use in therapy. In \textit{projection}, a person reflects their own unaccepted traits onto others – or indeed objects – outside themselves. (Sigmund Freud, \textit{Case Histories II} (PFL 9) p. 132) Later in his career, Freud did not see the exterior object or person as wholly without the traits projected onto them/it but possessing a small measure of the attributes projected. (Sigmund Freud, \textit{On Psychopathology} (PFL 10) p. 200-1)
produced an unexpected reaction: Audiences moved around the work dodging the false beam – as if by passing in front of the light they would block or break up the drawn image. This result encouraged me to think of my wall drawings as performative in their temporality and to develop works that encouraged a view of their transience.

Detail view of Projectile (2010)

In questioning whether objects frozen in the kind of museological reverie Susan Stewart describes give up their prior uses to sentiment, status or to a kind of cryogenic stasis, I am reminded of Sophie Calle’s cumulative work, *The Birthday Ceremony* (1980 – 1993). Each year, Calle invited a number of friends corresponding to her new age to a dinner for her birthday. Each brought a gift, which was to be displayed in a locked cabinet and remain unused. Her parents occasionally gave her something of such unquestionable function (a washing machine; a cooker) that Calle needed to use it, leaving the manufacturer’s guarantee enshrined in the cabinet in its place, and thus disturbing the collector’s game. The work cannot be read as compulsive or entirely museological, as each time use value is suggested (black boots; a VCR; a television), Calle breaks in.

‘Remarks (…) Because of its irresistible utility, the washing machine is represented by a manufacturer’s warranty’

Susan Stewart also writes of a ‘new whole’ that collection establishes, through the interconnectivity or coming-together of independent elements. She refers to collections coming together through forms of organisation or systematisation. Stewart notes that: ‘The spatial whole of the collection supersedes the individual narratives that “lie behind it”.’ (Stewart, 1993, p: 153) This overwhelming ‘whole’ is, however, never more present than in the hoard, where - at its most extreme – the mass engulfs the sum of its constituent elements.

The independence of elements within a collection’s ‘whole’, according to Stewart’s model is problematic, as there are notable collections that undermine this potentially authoritative aspect of collectionism. An example is Henry Wellcome’s enormous accumulation of medical and anthropological curiosities from around the world. Wellcome did not distinguish between broken, chipped or complete objects, nor did he worry about repeats within his collection. Largely amassed between 1890 and
Wellcome’s death in 1936, this vast collection was estimated, in 1930, to contain five times the number of objects and artefacts in the Louvre. After Wellcome’s death the collection took decades to classify, inventory and value. Close to a million objects and materials, which could not reasonably be categorised as medically-related artefacts, were disposed of or dispersed to museums around the world before Wellcome Collection – as we know it today – was established. Ultimately, on his death, the collection contained much that was of little museological or scientific value. There were also notable duplications within the collection, such as some one thousand five hundred microscopes, of which only one hundred were intact. Over five tons of old photograph albums and waste paper had to be thrown out after their degradation in storage, three tons of metal were scrapped and two tons of rotten wood were disposed of. Some of Henry Wellcome’s collection was of huge museological and scientific value and he bequeathed a fortune to research but its organisation and sense-making has been posthumous. In Wellcome’s own time, the collection was largely unpacked, unseen and consisted of impulse buys and thousands of artefacts of questionable public, economic or cultural use or value. What ‘authenticates’ value in the collection, therefore, is not solely the activity of the collector, in this case, but the sifting and processing of curators and experts.

In ‘Which Shelf for the Broken One?’ Nell Fuller suggests the value of the flawed object, positioning its loss to the collection as potentially ‘revisionist’ or ‘falsely interpretative.’ She refers to the curatorial editing of collections to include only perfect examples as ‘manipulating social histories and creating a sterile past where narratives, economics and archaeologies have failed to impact on its materials.’ (Fuller, 2010, p: 13)

This collision of rationalisation and seemingly impulsive or compulsive collectionism, coupled with the formal ordering processes of research institutions and cultural economies, on behalf of a public or an author, suggests a position of reflection for artistic research. An intention within my research has been to attempt to straddle these modes, in consideration of how they relate to each other, employing certain principles of orderliness and systematisation alongside stockpiling, precariousness and chaos. This practice-based PhD emerged as much out of material investigation as a growing awareness that the prevalence of artistic practice with a methodical focus on collections and archives/the archival (Mark Dion; Sophie Calle; Susan Hiller; Andrea

23 Data from P. Johnston-Saint (1943) ‘Report on the Steps, which Have Been Taken to Dispose of Surplus Material in Stores, and the Present Position with Regard to the Collections at Willesden and Wellcome Research Institute’, Wellcome Archives/HMMM/TR/Eth/A1.
Fraser) had a leaky, bulkier twin lurking in conflated, heaps, mounds and piles of stuff (Christophe Büchel; Michel Blazy; Jason Rhoades; Laura White). Taking these interpretations of acts of accumulation as psychological reflections of human relationships to the material world and the formation of object attachments (collectively, domestically and intellectually) requires looking at why we gather all this *stuff* and what for.

The impulse to accumulate is assumed to be different between compulsive hoarders and collectors. In the literature, however, both are noted to stem from an internalised drive\(^ {24} \) and there is much to support proximities.

Psychoanalyst and writer on the psychology of collecting, Werner Muensterberger, defines collecting as a compulsive act, writing that ‘the primary motivation [for collecting is], due to an underlying experience of hurt or unsafety ... [the collector] needs the object as an antidote in order to gain ... equilibrium and self-composure’ (Muensterberger, 1995). This is closely mirrored in Randy O. Frost’s work on the background to Hoarding Disorder. Frost is an eminent psychiatrist specialising in Hoarding in the US and was one of the workgroup who facilitated its gaining a new definition in the DSM-5. In 1996, early on in his work on hoarding, Frost and his then colleague Tamara Hartl wrote of the compulsion to excessively collect that,

> the possessions provide a source of comfort and security and may signal a safe environment. Thus, each possession comes to acquire an association with comfort and safety. The thought of getting rid of the possession violates this feeling of safety.

(Frost & Hartl, 1996, p: 347)

The coherency of these links between clinical research into hoarding and cultural, critical writings on collection suggest an intellectualisation of collecting behaviours possibly dependent on the economic, cultural or social value of what is accumulated. The literature on hoarding throws up numerous accounts of the ‘worthlessness’ of items found in hoarders’ homes, from scrawled-on banking envelopes (Frost & Hartl,

\(^ {24} \) Reflected in much of the literature including: Benjamin (1931); Davies King (2008); Frost & Steketee (2010); Mataix-Cols, Pertusa et al (2010); Muensterberger (1995); Stewart (1993) and more. However, it should also be noted that object-attachment is not the only factor clinically noted in the drive to hoard: ‘The existing cognitive-behavioural theory of hoarding contains information-processing deficits, distorted beliefs enhancing problematic attachments to objects and behavioural avoidance.’ (Frost & Hartl, 1996).
1996, p: 342) to tuna fish labels (Davies King, 2008, p: 4) to ‘a piece of an old Venetian blind vintage 1950’ (Frost & Steketee, 2010, p: 137) to, in one of the most extreme cases I have read about, kilos of raw hamburger meat (Bolman & Katz, 1966). The intellectual legitimising of the compulsive act, as noted earlier with regard to Henry Wellcome’s collection, has often been cited in relation to Walter Benjamin’s understandably legitimised bibliomania. In the essay *Unpacking my Library*, Benjamin discloses that:

> Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector’s passion borders on the chaos of memories. More than that: the chance, the fate that suffuse the past before my eyes are conspicuously present in the accustomed confusion of these books. For what else is this collection but a disorder to which habit has accommodated itself to such an extent that it can appear as order? (Benjamin, 1970 p: 62)

Both the literature on hoarding and the intellectualisation of collection suggest how objects can become psychological, metaphorical surrogates for experience, narrative, memory or invested emotion. I am reminded of the word ‘recollect’ and how the nature of telling engages remembering and the internal collation of experience. The engagement of an object in this telling and meaning, affords it narrative capacities, an ability to have ingested subjectivity. This projection of self onto object is evident in museology or where private collections have been opened up and can be viewed, articulating their narratives to audiences, but narrative reflection can also be a private and self-reflective relationship. Susan Pearce writes of ‘the potential inwardness of objects’ and that ‘objects hang before the eyes of the imagination, continuously representing ourselves to ourselves, and telling the stories of our lives in ways which would be impossible otherwise.’ (Pearce, 1992, p: 47)

Questions, which recur - both within and without psychiatric practice - relate the separation of object from subject and concern an object’s potential transition into fetish. Considering how objects have the capacity to serve as traces of the authenticity of an experience, Susan Stewart notes that souvenirs can also act as surrogate experiences and facilitate a further second hand version of an experience or encounter. She writes, ‘In contrast to the souvenir, the collection offers example rather than sample, metaphor rather than metonymy.’ (Stewart, 1993, p: 135). Randy O. Frost uses the term ‘repositories’ to suggest how objects or items can house intense feelings or provoke memories. (Frost & Steketee, 2010, p: 50) In the case of a surrogate, a narrative can
be generated which is always somehow ‘beyond’ or ‘behind’ the object itself. Stewart relates this to Freud’s description of the beginnings of fetish, whereby a part of the body becomes a substitute for the whole, or an object is substituted for a part until finally, or inversely the whole body can become object.

Fragments or parts of objects or indeed objects themselves can act as substitutes or surrogates. In Freudian terms, the distance (between the body/experience and its stand-in) may be felt as loss, catastrophe or, simultaneously, *jouissance*. The souvenir is always referring to some other – physically removed - experience so it is always partial or curtailed. Stewart argues that the object is metonymic – functioning as a quotation, not a diagram. A souvenir’s narrative, therefore, is not related to the object but to its owner: It is the subject, rather than the object that offers the narrative.²⁵

In Hoarding Disorder, however, diagnosis comes via the object. It is a condition with low or poor insight. This means it is often a third party who asks for help – a neighbour or relative: Someone worried about the wellbeing of an occupant; sanitation; fire; or, often the affected value of their own next-door property. An assessment can be, and often is, made in absence of a possessor of things. Even posthumously, a value system can be attached to the objects amassed, which, through their qualities and collective ability to destabilise an environment, can ascribe a condition to the absent hoarder.

In his account of his own struggles with accumulation, William Davies King, Professor of Theater at the University of California Santa Barbara and self-confessed hoarder, writes of his wife’s eviction of his collections from the house - where he was used to seeing them - to the garage, where he was not. She had been long aware of his compulsions but it was this change in location that precipitated his own altered view of his collectionism:

> I did not like what I saw under the bare bulb in that shadowy garage. There, mixed in with my necessaries, shone forth what had doomed to me a life of collecting – that super-superfluity of sub-substance…. Now, brought out from concealment, arranged in heaps, not carelessly but also not artfully, these things looked like signs of hoarding, which is a diagnosis, not a hobby.

I would argue that it is this not-knowing that is perhaps the strongest case for the differentiation between hoards and collections, and perhaps most ethically, allows the possessor of things to be at the heart of the terminology. Collectors know that they collect. Hoarders are described as having 'low insight' into their habits. This results in the often openness of the collection to others and the closedness of the hoard to public view, visitors or services.

There is a footnote to Roger Cardinal's essay ‘Collecting and Collage-Making: The Case of Kurt Schwitters’, which reads:

I have a friend, who, for several years, has made small collages on a daily basis, storing them almost stealthily in dated albums. Such a private and serial activity partakes doubly of the collecting impulse, for the accumulation of collages itself modulates into a concerted collection, while each fresh collage is a constellation fished up from the large box, wherein the collage-maker hoards his precious store of magazine cuttings and other scraps.

(Elsner and Cardinal, 1994, p: 278, ref. 7)

This anecdote hints (once more) at the psychological spatialisation of collection and hoarding, indicating that the activity of collecting is not only doubled through the use of re-appropriated materials but also through the transferral of this material underground. Collection may be regarded as more public, and hoarding as furtive or clandestine. These ideas around the visibility of the mass amalgamated are a focus in my practice, allowing me to manipulate areas of private and open views within single works and reflect on the implications of hidden visual material or ‘evidence’ as potentially diagnostic. There is often an implication if something is hidden that, psychologically, there is something to hide.

One example of how I have worked with these notions of public and private spaces to store, display and produce is in the work Safecarder, which takes these ideas as both subject and material context. This work was proposed for Town Hall Hotel in the Bethnal Green Old Town Hall, East London, and installed in July 2010. It was selected

26 With regard to the doubling, there is evidently a flippancy in how Cardinal imagines this quantifying of an impulse (and this is – after all – a footnote to a longer text). I do, later on (in Chapter 2) discuss the relationships of scale-based diagnostics to the diagnosis of hoarding and compulsion.
by Iwona Blazwick, Whitechapel Gallery Director, artist Zarina Bhimji and Artsadmin who also curated and acted as producers. The Town Hall was built in 1911, with additions made in 1938 and again in 2010. It has kept its municipal function rooms, is intermittently deployed as a film set, but is principally now a hotel. Four of my installation works were sited at the hotel at the same time, with one having since been relocated. Safecarder is embedded permanently in an old lock-up safe from 1930, which had been part of the original building. It consists of a backlit transparency depicting a postcard rack and the safe is currently placed in a location in the hotel lobby, which echoes where a postcard rack could potentially be situated in a hotel.

The location of the work and the relationship of its content to the site could be termed site-responsive. This is a term coined by Dr. Joanne Morra with specific relation to the curation of contemporary art inside the two Freud Museums, in London and Vienna. Rather than refer to site-specificity, which indicates that a work’s permanence is tied to its location and ‘is a product of a relational understanding of, on the one hand, the gallery (white cube) as a site of exhibition, and, on the other hand, a separate space for the art outside of the gallery’ Morra chooses site-responsivity, which allows for temporal animations where, ‘rather than critically interrogating the site as their sole purpose, these interventions respond to and activate the site’. (Morra, 2010, p:19) I have co-opted the term throughout my PhD practice for its relevance to my objectives in selecting locations for the works made as part of this enquiry, and for the term’s resonances within a subject that engages the ways in which objects activate and draw upon the psychologies of space.

In its current location, Safecarder has only moved the safe a few metres from its original footprint in the building. I was interested in the safe as a space because of its redundancy, emptiness, weight and current un-safe-ty as a storage container. I imagined it as a microcosmic space within which to plant smaller, more cramped spaces – each another container in its own right. In this work I invested the safe with a new function - as a sculptural container for a partially revealed image.

Within the photographic light-box image, each postcard is a collage and five of the eighteen cards on the rack are repeated. The idea was to create an illusion of an architecture within the rack – a tower block or set of adjoining rooms. The safe is not

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entirely opened up, so the rooms maintain an air of privacy and there is therefore some degree of frustration imposed upon the viewer.

Each room would be impossible to navigate in actuality. It is an overloaded, disproportionate or flattened superficial space. I am using an examination of the hoard to inform the aesthetic of my work in a number of ways: In creating layers within a space that is inaccessible; in composing the images from discarded materials; in referring to function within objects displaced or misused – including the rack and safe itself. Some of the rooms refer to living spaces but not all are domestic. I am also incorporating the aesthetics of psychiatric space (practice rooms and institutionalised space) so as to suggest relationships occurring between different notions of what is ‘interior’. Importantly, both myself, (as author) and the viewer are looking into these rooms and not out from them. I do not want to author the work as a pseudo-analysand through an adoption of hoarding nor implicate the viewer in his/her own analysis. My interests are in how an art practice can use these ideas and in what happens to clutter when display strategies perform rationally as a concealing, organising or preserving skin over the top of it.

I first read Siegfried Kracauer’s essay The Hotel Lobby after making Safecarder. Written between 1922 and 1925, it gives an account of spatial and social readings of the hotel lobby as a non-space; a space in which (as with churches) guests congregate at the behest of an invisible host and ‘devotion congeals into erotic desire that roams about without an object’ (Kracauer, 1995, p: 178). Kracauer (through his analysis of the space’s significance to the codes of a detective novel) builds a critical portrait of the lobby as committed to a lack of inter-connectedness between its occupants, and of the significance of its aesthetic purposelessness. Adrift from the everyday the lobby can sit apart from time and act as a displacer of both external and internal dialogues with the world. Kracauer does not legitimise this experience of the lobby as a relief from the realities of life as there is no ‘new determination’ or surrogate valid form presented.

Here, in the space of unrelatedness, the change of environments does not leave purposive activity behind, but brackets it for the sake of a freedom that can refer only to itself and therefore sinks into relaxation and indifference. (ibid, p:179)
This ‘evacuation’ of situation rather than its fulfilment, is embedded in my intentions for *Safecarder*. Importantly, I wanted to create spaces within the safe, which acted as nudges or reminders of fulfilled habitation or occupancy but which had become so overcome or nuanced with displaced and overlapping materials that they were almost emptied out. In this way I hoped to test whether the hoard is also a reductive mechanism, which - through a form of horror vacui or over-filling - becomes so occupied it can no longer be read. In *Safecarder* there are so many overlapping spaces (the *real* hotel lobby; the safe in that real lobby; the postcard rack in the safe; the postcards on the rack; the spaces in the postcards; the assumption that the cards are multiple cards stacked in sets; the images of cropped or torn spaces overlapped in each collage) that there is no longer space and I deliberately create places with no apparent point of entry.
Entering a home is, of course, permitting its manifest function but access cannot be assumed to be a given with regard to living space. Hoards are hard to enter and require certain movements or gestures towards their navigation. We read space through our bodies as well as our vision with points of entry (and exit) integral to comfort. By creating collages of spaces without access I hoped to present rooms that encroach upon their points of entry – tipping forwards and throwing half-cropped objects in the way of a visitor.

In his book, *On Garbage*, sociologist and cultural ecologist, John Scanlan introduces Marcel Duchamp's transformations of objects through an examination of why these acts were radical.

The significance of functional objects to modern living is illustrated by the ease with which they soon come to be taken for granted. Duchamp was aware that in removing everyday functional objects from their intended use he was mocking the rationalization of modern life as well as the ordering tendencies of the aesthetic.

(Scanlan, 2005, p: 110-111)
Many of these readymades were lost in Duchamp’s lifetime, buried in the flotsam and jetsam of his New York apartment. They re-emerged after his death and, removed from the dysfunction of their domestic submergence, joined the museum. Scanlan describes the apartment as a ‘testament to idleness’, an ‘obstacle course’ and a ‘disorientating funhouse full of randomly distributed objects’ (ibid, p: 111). Embedded in these value judgments about space and its intended purpose are assumptions about safety. Scanlan worries, on behalf of Duchamp’s guests, whether they could have endangered

28 Roché was not a photographer but a writer (most famously of the novel, *Jules et Jim*) He took these images as a friend of Duchamp and the artist returned to them in the 1940’s reworking them. I return to them in Chapter Seven.
themselves in such a place, where normal paths were obscured and objects denied their pre-ordained functions.

Looking closely at Roché’s photographs however, it is clear that Duchamp’s readymades are conscientiously situated. A part of a hat stand is suspended in space. A porcelain urinal hangs over a doorway. Describing the oxymoron of the dusty, disorganised living space with its attention to the placement of things, critic, Elena Filipovic notes that, ‘while he might live with a mess, everything also has its place… The disorder of the room might appear careless, except that a urinal simply doesn’t get up there by accident.’ (Filipovic, 2009)

This strange interplay of lived-in-ness, mess and museum was at the centre of my intentions in building the collaged spaces for Safecarder. Each postcard contains an image of a location, which is simultaneously off kilter, over-stuffed and yet conscientiously affected and desirable.

The 2013 definition of Hoarding Disorder is framed principally by the assertion that it ‘precludes a persistent difficulty discarding or parting with possessions, regardless of the value others may attribute to these possessions.’ (American Psychiatric Association, 2010)29 The ‘value others attribute’ is framing the disorder, but the ways in which we socially value and classify objects are not standardised. In order to assess order, the disorder (and the patient), assumptions need first to be made about whose value system has been drawn upon as the standard.

2.3S(f) Knowledge Swallowed Whole: Heterotopias of Crisis

In seeking commonalities between modes of accumulation - from which to consider and evolve methodological counterparts in my art practice - I am questioning how objects, images and architectures carry ideas and psychological values. What is pertinent to this research is what happens to those values en masse, and what kinds of sublimations occur as multiple elements are swallowed up within a composite grouping, whether ordered or dis-orderly. When Michel Foucault spoke, in 1967 of

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contemporaneity, he acknowledged a multifarious network of configurations overlapping time and space. The resulting text, Of Other Spaces, which remained unpublished until 1984 (and translated in 1986), just predates the spatial overlaps and virtual worlds of the Internet and prophetically refers to the present as the ‘epoch of space’.

We are in the epoch of simultaneity: we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed.’
(Foucault, 1986, p: 22)

Foucault suggests that site and space remain to be ‘desanctified’, or released from the sacred - unlike time, which ‘was detached’ from it in the nineteenth century - and proposes the emergence of mirror-like heterotopias where multiple relations and classifications simultaneously co-exist. These are ‘placeless places’ that open up to reconstitutions of one’s own position.

The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there.
(Ibid, p: 24)

Foucault includes as heterotopias those perpetually unfolding self-reflexive places such as cemeteries, theatres and places of ‘indefinitely accumulating time’, like museums and libraries. He notes that heterotopias, as spaces must have a function, either towards the creation of illusions through which ‘every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned’ can be exposed as ‘still more illusory’ or that they notionally create real spaces that function as other: as refracted perfect worlds ‘as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled’ (ibid. p: 27)

In response I see that art making and writing can be sites of acknowledgment or interrogation of these heterotopian accumulations, creating a kind of re-mirroring, through commentary, and drawing further networks into the reflection. An example can be found in Mark Dion’s art practice, where the continued subject of the work is the museum and the roles of status and classification within collections. Within Dion’s works museology and ownership are evoked with regard to the connectivity supposed
between elements and the seemingly authenticated position of the cabinet or display. Its swallowing of any one element of the museum is as pertinent to systematised collecting as to wider aspects of spatial theory. The overlaps proposed by Dion through his re-museology of artefacts refer, through their self-reflection, to the heterotopian museums of Foucault 'in which time never stops building up and topping its own summit.' (Foucault, 1986, p: 26) Dion’s work is perhaps doubly heterotopian, with a mirror held up to the – already reflexive - container of the museum and the singularity of any one element subsumed into a network of greater contexts. Audiences and situations provide further mirroring as their own perception adds layered microcosmic reactions to behaviours, spaces and the valorisation of materials.

In Dion’s work, where commonalities and categories are drawn upon and redressed, objects and artefacts support museological tendencies through display and maintenance, subjecting the museum to questioning from within its own terrain. Colleen Sheehy, Director of Education at the Weisman Art Museum, who worked with Mark Dion on his exhibition *The Cabinet of Curiosities* in 2001, noted that ‘he likes to poke around the shaggy edges of collections, seeing them not as the totalizing visions of an arena of knowledge but rather intellectual as much as physical constructs, shaped by individual collectors and by prevailing ideas, and always partial and as representations of a subject’. (Sheehy, 2001, p: 14)

The formality of Dion’s work permits its immediate association with museology, whereas issues of overlapping, refracted knowledge stores and a sense of collective history are reflected with less formality in the work of Geoffrey Farmer. Farmer creates ambiguous and elaborate fictions through overloading, restaging and idiosyncratic editing. In one room-sized installation, Farmer cuts from a Reader’s Digest text book he found on the street, the ambitiously titled, *The Last Two Million Years*. Farmer refashions the book through cuts and spatialisation into a potted, walk-through history lesson. Through cropping, amassing and making spatial, he points out the roles of editing and selection in collating a grand narrative. Adopting a collagist approach and applying it to a generalised worldview, Farmer highlights how, through preserving and displaying certain sections, truths may become skewed. In another way a heterotopia, Geoffrey Farmer’s work offers up a mise-en-abyme, reflecting historiographic modes of recollection and authorship. Like a library or museum, this work echoes histories and knowledge but its systems of categorisation suggest a kind of dispersal or refraction of the real. As Foucault states, these are spaces ‘that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect,
neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect'.
(Foucault, 1986, p: 24)

In Foucault’s lecture of 1967, he referred to a mode of heterotopia he termed ‘crisis heterotopia’. Crisis heterotopias are ‘sacred or forbidden places’ for those in crisis – the kinds of places of confinement where pregnant or menstruating women were sent or adolescent boys to come of age. They allowed for socially permissible crises ‘to take
place "elsewhere" than at home'. Foucault describes these places as disappearing and becoming replaced by prisons or psychiatric units as ‘heterotopias of deviation.’ But perhaps there is a potential for the conversion of home to elsewhere through a series of mirrored displacements. I am interested in considering whether the hoard - as a networked space with its endless dispersal, references to ‘slices of time’ and juxtapositions - can function as a kind of heterotopia or elsewhere. It appears to fit into many of the principles laid out by Foucault, not least in its acting as a mirror of the self and capacity for ‘juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible’. (Foucault, 1986, p: 25).

The hoard is a mirror of the self in the sense that, as psychologist William James described, ‘acquistiveness’ is an instinct, fusing what is ‘me’ with what is ‘mine’, merging a sense of self with acts of possession. Jean Paul Sartre converged possession with other forms of ownership such as production and mastery or knowledge of a skill. He wrote that ‘to have’ is embedded in the basics of human experience. Lita Furby’s research into human behaviour, in the late seventies, is still seen as at the forefront of our understanding of what it means to possess. Her research points to three prevailing themes for human possession of things: Firstly, to do or accomplish something, in that the object is a tool or prop with instrumental value. Secondly, that possessions provide security, much like Donald Winnicott’s theories around the transitional object or surrogate for the mother between weaning and autonomy. The third theme cited by Furby is that possessions come to form a person’s sense of self, expanding identity through association. (Furby, 1978)

The hoard could be said to be several sites juxtaposed in that the space underneath it – the functional home - is often rendered impossible to navigate due to a lack of access and the precariousness of piles of stuff. Randy O Frost talks of an attempt to photograph a hoarder’s home, ‘It was difficult to do, as is frequently the case in hoarders’ homes, because the clutter made it impossible to get into position to capture the true magnitude of the problem (…) boxes piled nearly to the ceiling, clothes cascading from the piles, and no floor visible. Newspapers and magazines littered most of the home, especially the bedroom. N loved to read and reread them, which she usually did in bed.’ (Frost, Steketee, 2010, p: 162) In this way the hoard becomes tied – through a series of displacements of time and illusions (via the architectonics of

30 Paths through hoards are often termed ‘goat paths’ because of the sideways walking required to get through the narrow slips.
items gathered) – to other spaces of reflection, such as museums, archives and libraries. It also commands its own version of history and reflects that version back, inverted, mirrored and unreal, in that navigation of the hoard is tied to the amalgamated histories of materials kept.

It would be easy to imagine that there is no institution housing the hoard (in the way that cabinets, archives and museums hold collections) but if up to 5% of populations are apparent hoarders (Pertusa, 2013) then these domestic heteretopia are memento mori to domestic life of a sort.

2.4P(mp) Pile

In 2010 - 11 I exhibited two works as part of the touring show Pile,31 curated by Nottingham-based artist, Craig Fisher. The premise behind the show was that, rather than maintain their physical separateness, works would be situated accumulatively and in congregation, jostling one another. As such, boundaries became murkier between one artist’s work and the next, with each forced into an open engagement beyond the confines of their own authorship and intentions. Autonomy compromised, the works were subjected to an internalised power struggle, deliberately asking questions of the blurred roles of artist and curator.

Joanne Lee, reviewing the show for a-n magazine noted that,

> Out in the world beyond the gallery, piles often exist as a means of sorting and categorisation; things are brought together (temporarily) for consideration before they find a more permanent home or assignment. Such a process is made explicit in this project: works coalesce in one grouping, but other possibilities remain potent. (Lee, 2010)

For my own part, this exhibition – to which I was invited based on my research interests – presented an opportunity to propose distances between elements within object-based works and test whether they could be maintained within the show’s curatorial premise. I presented two works containing false projections (one of which was shown in Nottingham and both of which were shown in Cardiff). In Drawn Down Blind, a

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31 Pile, Surface Gallery, Nottingham (Nov 2010), as part of ‘Sideshow 2010’, then touring to Chapter, Centre for the Contemporary Arts, Cardiff, Wales (Feb 2011)
A detailed pencil drawing of a fragmented, collaged space was rolled around and hung from a curtain pole. In discussion with the curator, I selected the curtain pole to specifically fix onto the back of another artist’s work in the show. A vintage slide projector was placed onto a cardboard shipping box and arranged to ‘project’ a yellow paper beam of light in the direction of the drawing. Lying face-up next to the projector was a photograph of the collage I had drawn, cropped to the size and shape of a 35mm slide. A gloved hand appears in the forefront of the photograph and drawing, wiping its surface with a sponge. Despite the falseness of the paper light beam, it produced an invisible line of connectivity between the projector and the drawing (as in the work, Projectile), which could not be interrupted by other objects, therefore having some influence on their arrangement and proximity.

I saw this work as a consideration of dis-locating space, or thinking through how empty space could be proposed as essential within a work of composite elements, in a show about intrusions and collision. Manipulating the materials to imply their notional attachments to each other protected this work from an interruption. I had noticed with the works I have made which incorporate the paper light beams that audiences have a tendency to walk around and not ‘through’ the work, just as they would with a working projection. Working with this assumption I used the objects to hold the space between them empty.

In theory, the projector can be turned on and off, just as if it were functional. The beam could be removed, the drawing rolled up and the space between them be de-activated. In actuality, the small photograph was stolen and was not replaced for three days. The thought of this small element, breaking from the installation and now belonging elsewhere did not entirely upset the work, for me. I find myself imagining it now under a pile of stuff on someone’s desk dragging the possibility of actual projection even further away.
Pile at Chapter, Cardiff, March 2011 Installation view, includes my work Drawn Down Blind, 2010. Pencil on paper, curtain pole, C-print, projector, paper cone.

Pile at Chapter, Cardiff, March 2011 Installation view, includes my work Drawn Down Blind
*Drawn Down Blind*, 2010 (detail).

Pencil on paper, curtain pole, C-print, projector, paper cone.
2.5(Hhhhhhhhhhhhhhhv) Horror Vacui

The work below, *Waking Archive* was installed in the old Assembly Room at Town Hall Hotel, now a dining area. It is made up of a central wall drawing in pencil and twelve light-boxes inserted into original wooden cabinet features. Each light-box is a digital image derived from two moments in the progress of constructing a mechanical paper wheel, which I collaged from photographic images of interiors and elaborate sugar-craft. The imagery of interior spaces is fixed in both paper wheels. The confectionary is layered and fragmented, seeming to move through a cycle in which it can be erased through turning the wheel.

*Waking Archive* 2010, Town Hall Hotel, London (photograph Angus Mill)
My collages in *Waking Archive*, each – materially - transform one value system into another: discarded books and paper into a holistic (yet fragmented) handmade, detailed artwork. This is intended as an act of refinement: Clutter is being transformed into something *seemingly* of value. The handcrafted artwork is then made into a digital scan – a multiple, which can be reproduced infinite times digitally - reducing that value again into a potential mass or pile of material. Inserted into the closed door of an historic cabinet, designed originally for function, its value alters again. The artwork is framed and locked into a system of display, gaining status through its position. But the cabinet, which was *once* used for storage, is now functionless and clamped shut. The transformative and fluid value systems implicit within the reading of the installation makes it hard to lock down notions of what value may be and I am playing with this by starting with a mound from which to requisition select materials.
In *On Garbage*, John Scanlan uses the term ‘refinement’ to explain the editorial and experiential retelling of ‘the elements of a phenomenal world, turning the act into a creative making of the world.’ (Scanlan, 2005, p: 89) Scanlan describes how judgement, as an ‘interaction that produces differentiation’, separates aesthetic experience from ‘rational utility’ (ibid, p: 89).

To look at the world, to visualise the beauty or symmetry in things (or in their relations) is to see, ‘to make’, a mask-like appearance… However, in ‘discerning’ the well-proportioned order that we give phenomena (which produces the aesthetic realm) we groom a finely nuanced existence that conceals the possible awareness that refinement also produces a necessary residue.

(Scanlan, 2005, p: 89)

Returning to the DSM-5 and Hoarding Disorder, an aesthetic statement can be located within the new definition: A suggestion of what a hoard may look like – what its traits may be visually and perceptively:

The symptoms [of Hoarding Disorder] result in the accumulation of a large number of possessions that fill up and clutter active living areas of the home or workplace to the extent that their intended use is no longer possible. If all living areas are uncluttered, it is only because of the interventions of third parties (e.g., family members, cleaners, authorities). (American Psychiatric Association, 2010)

‘Intended use’ for space was a focus of my research at the old Bethnal Green Town Hall. I was, and am, concerned with the disabling of spaces and objects, masking original functions through filling-up and rendering useless – so that the cabinets could no longer be used for storage in the new hotel.

The image below shows a still image from the film, *Herb and Dorothy*. (Sasaki, 2009) This is Dorothy Vogel at home in New York City. With her husband Herb she amassed a collection of largely minimal and conceptual art. He was a retired postal worker and she a retired librarian. They lived for over forty years in the same, small, rent-controlled, one-bedroom Manhattan apartment. With very modest means and by using all of Herb’s salary to do so, they acquired an enormous collection of 4700 works. By 1992
the Vogel’s apartment was near collapse due to the weight of the works they kept there. Their bed was encroaching ever closer to the ceiling as they stashed more and more artworks beneath it and the floor of the apartment was bowing, causing pressure on the ceiling of the apartment below. The space was filled with cats, stacks of papers, videotapes and turtles in tanks, affecting the security and preservation of their collection. Eventually life in the apartment became risky, and, with the threat to its stability evident, Herb and Dorothy donated their entire collection (in five lorry-loads) to the National Gallery of Art, Washington. The donation to the museum, (with a value estimated well into the millions) was seen by the Vogels as a way of returning the collection to the public, as it was Herb’s civil service income that had supported its initial purchase. The apartment, cleared by the museum, immediately began filling up again.

Herb and Dorothy Vogel’s internationally valued collection has some of the traits of Hoarding Disorder the DSM-5 is describing.32 Here is an example of how clutter and collection collide and of how a fine art context can distort values within a possibly compulsive act. Initially when the Vogels began collecting, the works in which they were interested were not particularly prized or valued by other collectors in the market. Not only was conceptual, minimalist art seen as un-likeable and anti-aesthetic at the time but the Vogels were also choosing specifically small and undramatic works to collect. This was partly, of course, due to the economics of their collecting, but also in reflection of their interests and ‘eye’. The notion of value, as applied to the Vogel’s collection is therefore applied with hindsight.

Other implications of their collection as hoard correlate with its storage in the apartment. Many works remained in loose, paper packaging and others were stored dangerously close to the fish and turtles in tanks. Works hung on the walls were unframed and some ‘protected’ from light by the hanging of old towels over them. The affect of collecting impeded the Vogels’ living space and reduced its functionality. "Not even a toothpick could be squeezed into the apartment," recalls Dorothy (Dorothy Vogel in Sasaki, 2009). As with the DSM’s definition, functionality was only restored by a third party which, in this particular case, was a museum arriving to clear up.

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32 On June 24th 2013, I was invited to discuss Herb and Dorothy Vogel’s collection in the contexts of hoarding and collection on The Thread, Resonance radio with curator Ele Carpenter and behavioural psychologist Dr Gillian Ragsdale. A recording of this discussion is available at: https://soundcloud.com/resonance-fm/19-00-00-the-thread-256kbps-5
The Vogel Collection, as it was collated and stored in their apartment, correlates with some of the definitions assigned to compulsion by Randy O Frost and Gail Steketee in their 2010 book, *Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things* (and related academic/field research into hoarding), such as piles of papers, disinterest in display, many pets, potential for hurt or unsafety and a lack of functional, inhabitable space. The Vogel’s hoard therefore attaches itself to the aesthetic or physical, spatial understanding of a hoard, its economics and some of the psychologies of compulsion, but without misery or social dysfunction implied. There is an underlying question therefore as to whether it is possible to diagnose the *apartment and its contents* as a hoard without diagnosing its occupants as hoarders.
Unlike the evident misery of the hoarders described in Frost and Steketee’s patient-focused research (Frost, Steketee, 2010), the DSM-5 workgroup’s new definition for Hoarding Disorder implies a *pursuit* and a *design* long before it mentions any human impairment other than those specific to use of space, value of objects or physical location. Perhaps I can separate hoard from hoarder within my research to focus on the spatial/material aspects of these environments and whether they act as surrogates or stand-ins for psychologies – even where an occupant may be functional. In isolating space and objects in the absence of an occupant or *owner* I am researching whether dysfunction can be implicit through implied values and mis-arrangement – through the materials themselves. I am positioning the hoard as a potential aesthetic tool within fine art practice, which allows materials to *imply* compulsion and the disorderly. When I say ‘perhaps I can separate hoard from hoarder’ I am simply mirroring an ethics already suggested in the diagnostic terms of the condition: The hoard is *already* standing in for the condition - in its spatialising definition and via the existence of visual diagnostic materials requiring hoarders to point at images of rooms in order to ascertain the severity of their condition (an analysis of which will follow). I am simply reflecting – critically, materially - on what this means.

The hoarder is therefore conceptualised via the hoard – the owner/occupant subsumed into a reflection of self via objects and space. It is perhaps a *success* of the condition,
in that the stuff has affected a takeover. In separating hoard from hoarder, there are
suddenly many possibilities regarding its analysis within the terms of critical theory or
the psychology of spaces. Perhaps there is a parallel between the fear of the empty of
the outsider artist and the urge to gather, keep and fill-up of a hoarder. Is a fear of
discarded material perhaps also a form of horror vacui? When contemporary art
implies dysfunction through its co-option of material relationships, as I have described,
does it appear to do this on the part of the artist, a fictive occupant or as institutional
critique?

In consideration of some of these ideas, as a form of note-taking, I placed photographs
of hoards and artworks together (see the following three pages), as visual/aesthetic
equivalents. In the end the visual essays became a kind of game, in which it is hard to
separate the Takahashi from the trash and the Kabakovs from the crap. This was not
intended as critique of the qualitative values of the artworks but as a means of
correlating object relations between hoards and contemporary installation art with
methodological and material echoes of hoards.

To return to John Scanlan’s description of refinement and aesthetic judgement:

Artists, particularly those of the twentieth century, have taken refinement to the
non-place of the residual, to the impoverished material world of objects that
were distilled from a prior existential grooming; the aesthetic of representation
is thus overturned by the artist who takes up residence in the very notion of
plasticity.
(Scanlan, 2005, p: 90)
Visual Essay (Hoard and Artworks) 1

2011
Visual Essay (Hoardings and Artworks) 2
2011
Visual Essay (Hoards and Artworks) 3
2011
Clinically assigned traits of a hoard are not solely the misplacement or stockpiling of objects of questionable value – so cannot solely be aestheticised - but include the impairment of mobility and physical negotiation of a space. There is a transformative effect on the architecture itself. To encounter Tomoko Takahashi’s work is also to have to navigate it physically and possibly with difficulty. Writer and curator, Rochelle Steiner wrote about Takahashi’s installations that,

Because they feature objects side by side that are both related and unrelated, old and new, found and borrowed, useful and useless, mundane and rare, at first glance, her works resemble haphazard heaps. They are, more accurately complex three-dimensional collages with an internal logic… meanwhile the typical, specified use of objects has been redefined.
(Steiner, 2005)

Despite the disarray, objects in Takahashi’s works are still gathered in sets according to organisational principles. Research shows that hoarders do this too: paperwork in
piles, clothes strewn, endless unwatched videotapes of daily news shows mounted in stacks to the ceiling. (Frost & Steketee, 2010; Singh, 2013) These fictive versions by Takahashi, are talked about in terms of collection and are made reasonable; rationalised by their presence in the museum. Their altered economics, in the gallery, allows the word *collection* to be applied, despite the differing aesthetic. They are, after all, part of a larger model within the institution – a *collection* of artworks. Piles of discarded broken plastic alter in value because they are imported into a dialogue about fine art: A dialogue *about* dis-order as opposed to an actual disorder. They become orderly through association – inventories and instructions exist; prices are applied; measures are taken to document them and secure potential reinstallation.

2.6P(Se) Paradox of Spectacular Evidence

The most iconic visual descriptors of disorder are perhaps neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot’s methodically documented in-patients at the Salpêtriére hospital, Paris in the late nineteenth century. Inmates identified as hysterics *performed* their hysterical type for Charcot’s photographers, under hypnosis, and the material was then used as proof of the specifics of their diagnosis.

In his book, *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtriére*, cultural theorist Georges Didi-Huberman discusses the problem of assigning an aesthetic to a disorder. He describes Charcot’s documentary *evidence* as ‘dramaturgy’ and his archive as ‘the anchoring of photography in fiction.’ (Didi-Huberman, 2003, p: 63) The temporality of the supposed hysterical attack is very much at odds with the nineteenth century camera’s need for a still, posed model. The lie is bound, therefore, to the technology of the day.

The posed ‘model’, the studio set-up and its requirements of planning, equipment, economics and location are all a part of this dramaturgy and therefore ‘the making of representational objects from the point of departure’ (ibid. p: 62). Didi-Huberman extends this to include the ‘stage directions’ - the legend or text through which Charcot’s *evidence* was explained.

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33 Georges Didi-Huberman uses this phrase (Huberman, 2003, p: 59) in reference to photography’s slippery relationships to knowledge and resemblance.

34 I will return to Didi-Huberman’s use of the word ‘dramaturgy’ in Chapter Three, drawing relationships between museology, sociology and performance via the work of the Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman. Goffman was first to import the term from theatre to the humanities in his 1959 book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.*
This dramaturgy has persisted in contemporary clinical diagnostic models. Frost and Steketee write in *Stuff* that,

> To make sure we had an accurate way to assess clutter, we set out to develop a nonverbal measure that did not rely on the word… the result of the project was a series of nine photographs depicting clutter in each room… We use the ‘clutter image rating’ as we now call it, in most of our ongoing research. It gives us an unambiguous marker of the seriousness of the problem and clarifies the word ‘clutter’ in the world of hoarding.

(Frost, Steketee, 2010, pp: 59 – 61)

Intriguingly, Frost and Steketee did not use images of genuine hoards but constructs that they set up in student housing and photographed, later calling them ‘accurate’. In the images, clutter builds in strange ways: It gathers on the floor before surfaces are used and does not gather according to the original function of the room – so there are no plates or cups on the table in the kitchen in the initial images. Early in the sequence of images a picture on a bedroom wall goes wonky without anything coming close to knock it. This un-straightening - is not an early sign of excessive accumulation and provides an odd insight into the construction of the space.

As underlined through an examination of Charcot’s studies, Frost terming his photographic imagery as ‘unambiguous’ in its illustration of a disorder is not a new rationale within diagnostics, nor is it within the history of the photo-document. Siegfried Kracauer wrote of archived photography that it could only ever serve to authenticise or tell of the moment of its specific production rather than of the truth of the subject, from which it has been dislocated. This eradication of personal memory or experience allows that, ‘The photograph gathers fragments around a nothing’ (Kracauer, 1995, p: 56). Excluding us from its fragmented content through severed signifiers, the photograph’s image, once separated physically or historically from its subject, ‘wanders ghost-like through the present’ (ibid, p: 56).

Using photography scientifically, anthropologically, clinically or as proof is, of course, shaky ground. Didi-Huberman puts it best and in typically poetic manner when he writes:
Photography delivers us, in all senses… Its superb “materialist” myth, the filmy production of the double, in fact constitutes the passing to the limits of evidence. Exacerbated, multiplied, magnified: evidence passes into simulacrum.

(Didi-Huberman, 2003, p: 65)

**Clutter Image Rating Scale: Kitchen**

Please select the photo below that most accurately reflects the amount of clutter in your room.

Clutter Image Rating Scale: Kitchen [Internet] International OCD Foundation online.

Both Charcot’s posed hysterics patients and Frost and Steketee’s Clutter Image Rating are fictive, aesthetic diagnostic tools essential to my work in considering the separation of the materials within disorder from the documents assigned to its discussion or representation. These ideas about photography, representation and evidence reverberate in the cutting and cropping of photographic images inherent to (my) collage. The slices and re-positionings become an act of deferral or sacrilege. Collage is tampering with evidence. I can’t help wondering if tampering with untruths could reveal something more truthful.
In 2010 I made a work, which began as performance, evolved into a photographic collage and then ultimately became an object-based work with a vintage card-viewer with instructions for projection. It was shown first in France (Zoë Mendelson: *Lie Detector*, Galerie Édouard Manet, Gennevilliers, 2009) in two dimensions and then in Israel (*Waiting Room*, two-person show with Eyal Sasson, MH Municipal Gallery, Givatayim, 2010) in three. For *After Charcot* (see front page of this document), I re-performed - to a digital camera - the poses of hysterical patients, attempting to hold the pose for the time period of the shutter release for a camera of 1890. The strain - which only ever really showed on my face - is masked by collaged images of cake icing from instructional guides engaging a further form of labour-intensive practice overriding its own temporality through its photography. And also often assigned to the female.
After Charcot, 2010
C-print, index card, magnifying glass set into wooden vintage card-holder, instructions for projector.
(As installed in Waiting Room, MH Muncipal Gallery, Givatayim, Israel)

Between 2013 – 14, I continued this process of reworking clinical image-making and reconstructed the diagnostic tools made by Frost and Steketee. I created two versions of their pseudo-clinical Clutter Image Rating (see following pages). Using commercial images and catalogue photographs of ideal homes (such as from World of Interiors magazine and homcraft manuals) I created small collages of domestic interiors then set them within a grid (in Photoshop) in reflection of the format of the original. However, the consecutive proliferation of clutter is unclear and each room is entirely different.

In my versions of the Clutter Image Rating, access to all four spaces is denied and there is no route into any of them. They appear to sell or promote homeliness but the
scale and stuff disorientates. They are non-sequential with regard to clutter building –
reflective of ways my criticism reveals discrepancies in the sequencing of the original,
clinical *Clutter Image Rating*. The grid is also distorted and flawed in my attempt to
examine the unscientific. I have – digitally – pasted the collages onto a place they have
never been. The background in *Clutter Image Rating* (1) is taken from a photograph I
made of the Looshaus35 - Adolf Loos’ building in Vienna nicknamed the ‘house without
eyebrows’ because of its lack of ornament. I am creating paste-ups of clutter, which
disrupt and antagonise Loos’ (and Modernism’s) desire for functionality whilst, similarly
maintaining their desirability. The grid has a feel of having been pasted onto the marble
of the Looshaus but is, in effect a fiction, each image meeting for the first time on my
screen.

In the same city and at the same time as Freud was developing psychoanalysis, Adolf
Loos placed ornament and clutter alongside pathology and illness in his essay,
*Ornament and Crime* (1908).

Today mankind is healthier than ever before: only a few are ill. These few,
however, tyrannise the worker, who is so healthy that he is incapable of
inventing ornament.

(Adolf Loos, 1908, in Miller and Ward eds. 2002, p: 33)

My digital paste-up onto Loos’ façade is based upon the images of *space* presented in
diagnosis as images of *disorder* in keeping with Loos’ text about the dangers of excess
via the decorative. I wanted to implicate the coolness of the marble into a more
hallucinogenic and corruptive patterning. The rooms become a kind of tattoo onto the
skin of the building – a direct attack on the position Loos took on body-modification. In
*Ornament and Crime*, it becomes associated with criminality and degeneracy. *Clutter
Image Rating* (1) is a very clean image (as a smoothed down college reproduced
digitally) but belies a context of dirt and danger as does its diagnostic equivalent.

These relationships between psychical space, the development of related pathology
and stigmas associated with excess are embedded in my *Clutter Image Rating* images
alongside criticism of the diagnostic tools used to assess hoarders in the US.

In *Clutter Image Rating* (2) I followed the same principles of construction but used a

35 The Looshaus is also known as the Goldman & Salatsch Building.
photograph of a moveable room divider from London’s Barbican Centre as a backdrop for the grid of collages. The Barbican is another contentious architecture, polarising opinion and once voted ‘London’s Ugliest Building’\textsuperscript{36}. In the image, there is an awkwardness to the insubstantial wooden panel backed up against the solidity of the Brutalist concrete wall behind it. This is a purposeful reflection of the makeshift nature of the stuff piled up in the spaces in the original diagnostic images. In both \textit{Clutter Image Rating (1) and (2)} a plant creeps into the frame. This felt like a useful device for establishing a slippage in the scale of the imagined spaces (of the grid of collaged rooms) and their imposition on actual space (of the Looshaus/Barbican).

\textsuperscript{36} In a 2003 survey carried out by the Grey Group. [Internet] BBC news online. http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/3126946.stm [Accessed 2 May 2014]
Clutter Image Rating (1), 2013
Paper and digital collage
Clutter Image Rating (2), 2014
Paper and digital collage
2.8P(pp) Papers upon papers

With diagnosis coming in the forms of encounters with images printed on papers, the tools of the cure are added to the piles. Hoarding Disorder has a particular relationship to paper and information. Not read but ‘to read later’ is a typical reason for making piles and accruing papers. Function and storage again influence how the hoard's aesthetic differs from that of a collection, even if, among the hoard there may be buried items that are perceived of as generally valuable. These may be very difficult to locate in the mass. The stockpiling of information unread is central to practice in psychoanalysis. Case histories, unless seminal or contentious are rarely referred back to. An accruement of paper is inevitable, as with a hoard, but here it is filed - in an orderly, reference-based way.

Freud himself feared the uselessness of his increasing stacks of paper. This is summed up in Jacques Derrida’s *Mal d’Archive*. Derrida wrote of Freud’s fears for the archive he will leave behind as a ‘theatricalizing of archivisation’ – a cultural performance or staging of memory after its own destruction into its death or, in more physical terms, its ‘structural breakdown' as content-less print/writing. (Derrida, 1996 p: 8 – 12)

Writing about the style and value of Freud’s case studies, cultural critic, Sven Spieker also refers to their relationship to Provenance. He describes their location and storage as integral to both their intended survival as documentation and to Freud’s understanding of their subsequent legibility.

To Freud there is no question that any remnant (or derivative) has a meaning; however, that meaning cannot be gleaning unless we carefully reconstruct the operations of the place or territory that produced it in the first place. Like the nineteenth-century archive, which permits the historian to reconstruct not so much history but the anatomy of another place – the workings of the office or agency that produced its records – so psychoanalysis also aims not at the meaning of the patients’ words but the geography from which they stem. (Spieker, 2008, p: 49)

37 I return, in detail, to the relationship between psychiatry and practices of writing/filing in Chapter Five of this thesis.
In 1977, Russian installation artist, Ilya Kabakov, wrote the text (referred to in Chapter One), which later accompanied a three-room installation titled *The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away* (1983-95). As with Derrida’s assertions about Freud’s archive, the real value judgements are made once objects are left behind and the author or collator leaves. In Kabakov’s work, a character in a vacated apartment leaves behind a mass of ordinary items and collated trash. He points out, in an account among the paperwork, that the space around him, owned by no one, has become a dump materialising ominously beyond his walls. Kabakov’s total installation allows a volume of amassed, formerly discarded stuff to find order through an assertion of value posthumously afforded by its storage and labelling. Its abandonment (and former judgement as refuse) becomes tantamount to its renewed status as social history. Apparently insignificant items imbued with meaning are stuck onto taxonomical wall charts or catalogued in cabinets, labelled with meticulousness. The labels date the objects and refer to a significant occasion. These are things Kabakov took with him on leaving the USSR, now compiled alongside things he has collected since moving to the West.

In a hoard it is usually the space itself that holds intrinsic economic value – as real estate. Stuff is removed so the place can regain its value, be depersonalised and potentially sold. This is when the house-clearers move in. This is what Kabakov is lamenting by questioning the erasure of personal histories when the remains of a life go to the dump. For collection the reverse can be true. The aesthetic is that of a whole in the author-collector’s absence and their life or pursuit frames the narrative which links objects and belongings. Even where these things may have been individually treasured or sourced for their uniqueness or special nature to the collector it is the nature of their coming together that informs the value. They may even become tied to the place itself – in the case of public figures, where the estate retains its stuff as museology (such as Freud’s home in Maresfield Gardens as mentioned earlier). In the hoard it is the aesthetic of the mass that displeases or repulses – volume lies at the root of the dysfunction. In collection this volume permits connectivity: objects are strung together whether through similarity or difference. We look for reason, for order, for relationships.
The discovery that Hoarding Disorder is the only psychiatric disorder diagnosed spatially has been key to my findings in this chapter and serves as a structure for continued research: the loss of a figure now allows materials and space to take centre stage. As hoard separates from hoarder – via diagnostics, definition and supplication of self to stuff – I am freed up to consider how I might write/make via items and spaces imbued, considering how these might carry intrinsic properties relating to accumulation and disorder. I have analysed artworks by Takahashi, Dion, Farmer and Kabakov that manifest ideas around uninhabited spaces of accumulation towards a greater understanding of how museology and clutter may combine to create discussions around the psychical properties and valorisation of stuff gathered.
I have researched visual and written descriptors and documents of disorder used clinically and produced using interpretative, narratological, dramaturgical and illusory devices – such as are deployed within Fine Art and Literature. These descriptors and documents can be produced in the absence of a human subject (or indeed the absence of their insight or consent). As such, disorder becomes culturally manifested and can become a resource or site of knowledge production within a (parallel) non-clinical context.

Artworks, which employ re-appropriation or the museum/archive as their subjects become heterotopic through their intrinsic accumulations of time; their creation of illusory spaces founded on the real and their refractive constructions of worlds. As mirrors of the self and networked spaces with endless dispersal, references to ‘slices of time’ and juxtapositions, hoards can also function as heterotopias. This will lead me, in the next chapter, to interrogate the place of disorder as a subject of the Museum.

Chapter Three:
In this chapter, I relate collection to psychoanalysis through site and materials (including written case-studies and visual documentation relating to psychiatric disorder). The chapter begins with a historical contextualisation of the psychiatric institution as a site of entertainment and attraction, alongside objectifications of madness, suggesting how it and the museum are inextricably linked. Continuing from the previous chapter, this is an investigation into the ways in which disorder is translated through culture and exhibited. I refer to the cultural visibility of madness in relation to its unconscious psychical location: The historical idea that ‘outward signs encoded inner realities’ (Porter, 2006, p: 53) leading to the spectacular dramaturgy of hysterics at the Salpêtrière in the late nineteenth century.

In locating the coexistence of image-making/installation/performance across the disciplines of Fine Art and psychiatry I begin investigating the visual and performative formations of criteria surrounding a condition as a practice. I return to the idea (from the previous chapter) that an individual is absent from their own diagnosis or the image/performance of their condition, and consider via Freud, how psychiatric narrative emerges piecemeal, thus fracturing the subject. Collage – as fractal - is discussed as a method with which to interpret losses and overlaps within the construction of psychiatric narrative.

I continue to review documentary ‘evidence’ of psychological material as mythology and narrative, responding through practice. Through a reading of Cornelia Parker’s work, The Maybe (1995) I examine the presence of psychical archives in the context of the museum and ask how it may be possible to account for or exhibit the unconscious. I include an account of making the work ‘Sleepdrawing’ in relation to the
difficulties of translating unconscious material, both in psychiatric practice and in the context of the artwork.

In this chapter, I critique hysteria as visual and textual practice, taking it as a cultural term binding medicine, psychology, performance and its subsequent echoes in art/literature. Towards the end of the chapter, I suggest a cultural interpretation for compulsive hoarding, using hysteria as a model.

This chapter includes critique of collections and events specifically associated with disorder, such as museums to psychiatry, and an account of my participation in the International Madness and Arts Festival (2010).
3.0P(tmE) Taxonomising Madness into an ‘Organised Exhibition’\textsuperscript{38}

To date, this thesis has located itself between the domestic and the museum; self-evident territories for the storage and containment of hoards and collections. I would like to look, in this chapter, at ways in which the museum can be seen to house disorder as well as order, and how rationality is not always its practice. In this way I am proposing to create a context for the combined locations of dis-order and collection, linking museum to psychiatry through display, audience and site. This spatialisation of terms is of huge importance to site-responsive elements of my practice, as well as to expanding upon its content. I will focus, later on in this section, on two specific works, \textit{Sleepdrawing} (2010) and \textit{Defiled} (2010-11).

Drawing on a long history of connections between madness and its observation, towards a notion of it being viewed or played out as cultural performance, I am

\textsuperscript{38} ‘this organised exhibition of madness’ comes from Foucault referring to the display of inmates in asylums in the eighteenth century. (Foucault, 2008, p: 66)
considering how sites of psychiatry have objectified and taxonomised the patients they have housed and/or treated. This examination of a third site - the psychiatric institution - suggests a missing link, in this project, between the home (a site of the hoard) and the museum (a site of collection). Historical contextualising of the psychiatric institution as a site of entertainment and attraction, alongside the objectification of madness suggests how it and the museum are inextricably linked.

Importantly, I am going to use the word ‘madness’ in defining my subject in this chapter. I am employing a term, which can straddle past and present usages to include a set of psychological conditions and their cultural phenomenology. Madness is a word that has passed through being clinical, fashionable and has emerged into a no man’s land where it is colloquial, cinematic, artful and politically incorrect. As such it can be manipulated or re-invested. Madness has been used by historian Roy Porter, theoretically and academically from Michel Foucault to Darian Leader and within contemporary artistic practice.

Most importantly, madness is performative in a way that mental health isn’t. It is literary rather than clinical. It is not considered socially excluding to claim to feel ‘a bit mad’ or to ‘act mad’. It can be adopted, adapted and twisted, played upon and disguised. It can be aspired to in an artistic sense. I can include myself in it. Madness feels practice-based.

Darian Leader’s recent book on misconceptions and public assumptions of madness and psychiatric practices is titled, What is Madness? He refutes common practices of diagnosis, including the classificatory systems of the DSM with its ‘emphasis on surface and visibility’ (Leader, 2011, p: 31) and notes that its ‘very emphasis on using external features of behaviour to define human beings may itself be a system of psychosis.’ (Ibid. p: 32)

So, who’s looking at whom?

Historically, madness has had an audience. The very separation or consideration of minds as sane or insane denotes an act of observation of the other. (Without a comparative village there is no idiot.) In many ways, the asylum, with all its tools of containment, has also been a museum since inception, with the earliest European institutions financing themselves through regular invitations to paying visitors to come see the fools. Bequests and legacies were attracted to asylums through the ‘showing
of pitiable objects’, seventeenth century parlance for the objectified insane\(^{39}\) and they often relied upon ‘visitors of quality’ (Andrews, 2009) to remain afloat. At Bethlem, London until 1770, ‘almost unlimited sightseeing was allowed’ (Porter, 2006, p: 55), with visits thereafter minimised because of lewd behaviour - of visitors not patients.\(^{40}\)

In the early days of the visited asylum, it was not just the mad who attracted a crowd, but also the architectures of their containment: Grand frontages, sculptures and porticos brought in patronage and the curious, serving psychiatric purpose and the auspices of seductive design. Alongside the necessary generation of income through the attraction of wealthy patronage, the open doors of the European asylum also attracted a crowd hell-bent on entertainment. The earliest London guidebooks produced in the seventeenth century noted Bethlem amongst the sights to see.

In those days when Bedlam was open to the cruel curiosity of Holiday ramblers, I have been a visitor there. Though a boy, I was not altogether insensible of the misery of the poor captives, nor destitute of feeling for them. But the Madness of some of them had such a humorous air, and displayed itself in so many whimsical freaks, that it was impossible not to be entertained, at the same time that I was angry with myself for being so.


Public holidays were particularly busy times for those asylums opening their doors to visitors. Sometimes inmates would be required to perform or parade their ills through an engagement in normalised holiday activities, such as in den Bosch in the Netherlands\(^ {42}\), where warm cakes were eaten by inmates as a spectator sport at carnival times. Foucault writes, in *Madness and Civilisation*, of the ‘display of the insane’ at Bicêtre in pre-Revolution France that ‘one went to see the keeper display


\(^{40}\) Although this ‘lewd’ behaviour was logged much earlier than this: On 11 August 1699 in the Minutes of Bridewell and Bethlem Governors, it was noted that, ‘several Lewd idle and disorderly people doe frequently meet in the said hospital and from thence goe to taverns and other places to Comitt Lewdnesse and debauchery to the great Discredit of the said hospital’


\(^{42}\) *From a wall text in the permanent exhibition*. Haarlem, The Netherlands: Het Dolhuys (The Asylum).
the madmen the way the trainer at the Fair of St-Germain put the monkeys through their tricks’ (Foucault, 2008, p: 64).

Witness accounts and historians speculate that madness played to the gallery on such occasions and that, in return for food and attention, a show was put on. There are witness accounts of provocations of inmates from asylum staff and attendants, thereby implicating them in public performances of insanity as generators of both cash and public interest. Foucault writes of the continued provocation of the spectacle of madness that ‘The only extenuation to be found at the end of the eighteenth century was that the mad were allowed to exhibit the mad, as if it were the responsibility of madness to testify to its own nature.’ (ibid. p: 64)

All of this assumed that madness was something visible - to be publicly witnessed and recognised – rather than unconscious, an idea now aptly contested in law and psychiatry, as well as in common knowledge. Roy Porter describes this eighteenth century view of madness as a trust placed in ‘Nature’s legibility’ and tells of a need to see madness as self-exteriorising. ‘There were indeed inner as well as outer truths, but outward signs encoded inner realities.’ (Porter, 2006, p: 53)

The location of this entertainment and documentation of the lunatic as an exhibit did not remain within the walls of the institution. Visitors to asylums who wrote and disseminated accounts of their experiences generated a spread of interest in the insane. Social historians and sociologists, such as Jonathan Andrews, Erving Goffman and Roy Porter note the construction, amplification and characterisation of the insane in accounts of the day, giving rise to a babbling, riddling, howling impression of madness. Andrews suggests this extrapolation evolved ‘partly to reflect on the sane and the foibles of the sane’ (Andrews, 2009) outside the asylum, creating comparative reflections and moral teachings. These accounts indicate the presence of a doubling-up of the performed; an unspoken exchange of signs and gestures between the live aspects of madness as they were viewed by visitors to the asylum and their subsequent exaggerations and embellishments in narrative.

Michel Foucault wrote, in *Madness and Civilization* of madness’ ‘recognition by mirror’ in the early nineteenth century asylum, detailing how it came to view itself as simultaneously ‘pure spectacle and absolute subject’ (Foucault, 2008 p: 249) through increasing investment in the encouragement of self-observation. This refers to a transitional moment in institutional care of the insane, where a more human approach,
known as ‘moral treatment’ – steered by French physician Philippe Pinel - was slowly adopted in Western Europe. In the nineteenth century asylum attempts were made through psychological means (as opposed to the earlier chains and violence) ‘to persuade the madman of his madness in order to release him from it’ (ibid. p: 251). Holding a mirror up to madness prompted ‘an infinitely self-referring observation; it was finally chained to the humiliation of being its own object.’ (ibid. p: 251) This reciprocity, mirroring or involvement in one’s own care is often cited as the beginning of psychiatry. This fractured self cannot be entirely ‘self-referring’ - coerced as it is, not through the mirror itself, but the suggestion to look and of how to look. The reflection therefore cannot be solely that of madness and its object but also the mise-en-abyme of a complex doctor-patient reciprocal relationship where each has an investment in the other’s viewpoint. My interest here is in how this refraction and fragmentation fractures the subject, losing them to a series of endless theatrical overlaps.

In Canadian sociologist, Erving Goffman's seminal behavioural study of the sociological implications of theatre, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, published in 1959, the term ‘dramaturgy’ is first imported into the humanities from the arts. Goffman’s study implicates us all in a complex theatricalisation of self via social expectations, roles, sets and codes. He describes an unspoken expectation of the suppression of realities in exchange for the theatre of maintaining a superficial, collective agreement. Goffman notes that ‘this veneer of consensus is facilitated by each participant concealing his own wants behind statements which assert values to which everyone present feels obliged’ (Goffman, 1990, p: 20).

In Erving Goffman’s later work, *Asylums*, he imposes some of these ideas about the construction of a performed self onto the experience of being an inmate in a psychiatric institution, ruminating on the influence of the institution itself, not the condition, on the continued construction of a self in relation to social expectations, routines and environment.

The moral career of a person of a given social category involves a standard sequence of changes in his way of conceiving of selves, including, importantly, his own… (The self) is not a property of the person to whom it is attributed, but dwells rather in the pattern of social control that is exerted in connection with the person by himself and those around him. This special kind of institutional arrangement does not so much support the self as constitute it. (Goffman, 1961, p: 154)
In considering the historical construction of exchanges between inmate and observer in the vast museological galleries of Bethlem and other European asylums, it is possible to see the beginnings of a collective cultural performing of madness; an exchange between the observed and the observer, which has often masked the actualities of pathologies, complicated diagnostics and exacerbated a collective thirst for a spectacular or entertaining version of disorder.

These performances echo through history from Bedlam’s early days of welcoming visitors to see its lunatics in the 1520’s to Charcot’s dramaturgy of his ‘prize hysterics’ (Porter, 2006, p: 56) at the Salpêtrière in 19th century Paris - through his commissioned photography and theatrical Tuesday Lectures - to their, perhaps inevitable, descendants in the reality television of the present. Charcot himself termed his place of work the ‘museum of living pathology.’ As Roy Porter writes,

> So lunatics may well have ‘acted crazy’ to establish a mocking rapport with the sane, turning all into a gallery of distorting mirrors. The fact that madness became a show merely confirms how... what counted was its face. (Porter, 2006, p: 56)

In fact, Charcot’s ventriloquizing of the hysteric’s body epitomises this objectifying exchange between patient, physician and audience, placing visually symptomatic, outward-facing signs of madness centre stage. This replaced and overrode the function, validity and usefulness of the patient’s voice or account. Elisabeth Bronfen, Daphne de Marneffe and Georges Didi-Huberman writing extensively on Charcot’s portrayals of the hysteric concur that there is a tangibly fulfilled requirement on the part of each involved party, termed by Bronfen ‘this strange circle of mutual fascination’. (Bronfen, 1998, p: 195) The audience fulfils its desire to separate itself from madness in that it recognises as ‘other’ the performed attack and its symptoms; the physician is able to visualise an ‘elusive psychosomatic disorder within clearly regulated schemata’ (ibid, p: 195) employing media and means which transmit his ideas widely, and the patient can secure the continued acknowledgement of her physicians through her

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43 Jean Martin Charcot quoted in Appignanesi, 2008, p: 127
44 ‘Charcot not only prompted symptoms to something like a perpetual mimicry of themselves, he also inspired them, like a model, summoning “transferences” by throwing himself into a pantomime of symptoms before his audience.’ (Didi-Huberman, 2003, p: 239)
performance and find a means of transmitting her trauma to them.\textsuperscript{45} The hysteric’s ‘desire for attention and self-display’ (de Marneffe, 1991, p: 90) being more aptly symptomatic than the simulated writhing of the hysterical attack. Intriguingly, the hysterics were warded with the epileptic patients at the Salpêtriére, which may have contributed to some of the learned behaviours transmitted as hysterical fits or convulsions.

This idea of the visualised symptom or eye-witnessing of forms of madness has pervaded Charcot’s legacy and was referred to by Freud in his obituary of the clinician, whom he so admired:

… he was, as he himself said, a visuel, a man who sees… He might be heard to say that the greatest satisfaction a man could have was to see something new – that is, to recognise it as new; and he remarked again and again on the difficulty and value of this kind of ‘seeing’.

(Freud, 1893)

To acknowledge the audience as part of this ‘strange circle’ of attentions is to acknowledge how culture itself subsumed the spectacle of hysteria – its ‘seeing’ - and subsequently borrowed it for its own use, re-enactments and interpretations. In her book Mad, Bad and Sad, novelist and writer, Lisa Appignanesi refers to the makeup of audiences at Charcot’s Tuesday Lectures at the Salpêtriére as a ‘growing public, not only of doctors, but of writers, artists and socialites – the chattering classes who made up le tout Paris.’ (Appignanesi, 2008, p: 125)

Charcot’s Iconographie Photographique de la Salpêtriére series was published by the Bureau de Progrès Médical (Bureau of Medical Progress) from 1876. It formed the basis of a new kind of proof, where medical science brushes up against faith in

\textsuperscript{45} I am using the pronoun ‘her’ for the patient and ‘his’ for the physician in this small section. This is to emphasise gender in the majority of recorded cases of hysteria in the nineteenth century and to acknowledge my specific referral to Charcot at the Salpêtriére. From the lunatic of the 1500’s towards the invention of photography a new medium for performed subjectivities takes hold. I don’t want to gloss over gender here and will continue to address it where I bring up hysteria but it is very important to here acknowledge that my subject is the general objectification and performance of madness, whoever is being looked at. The subject is therefore not really the patient but the act of looking and how this performance is enabled and constructed. In the case of hysteria in the Salpêtriére it is important to record that the reason most of the known cases of hysterics were women is not because there were no male hysterics, nor that Charcot failed to acknowledge this. The prevalence of research into female hysterics of the time is because they were the demographic of the Salpêtriére, which housed over 4000 women in the 1870’s.
photographic technologies – and by proxy, with regard to its human subjects and their apparent coalescence, a faith in the documentation of dramaturgy or performance too. When I refer, in practice, to the aestheticising of disorder this is in direct relationship to these historical associations between madness and its visualisation or ‘seeing’. These connections continue today (from the televisual to the cinematic to the novelistic to the documentary to the museological or gallery-based – examples of which appear throughout this thesis\(^{46}\)) and create a complex analogous web between interpretive accounts and science. Within my own practice I am concerned with how disorder (and a lack of order) can become aestheticised – quite apart from the insertion of a live human subject - thus offering a psychological reading of materials and their location. In the course of this aestheticisation (and fictionalising), I am not, myself, dismissing the patient as I cannot assume I have ever had any access to her. She was dismissed a long time ago.

3.1 (M-m-fc) Mirror, museum, fracture, collage

In practice this quandary of the missing subject yet existence of a convoluted, refracted set of interpretations around its truth refers me back to the museological aspect of this enquiry. I am concerned with how the building up of evidence or materials can act as a surrogate for experience or a psychological reading. Here I want to return to psychiatry’s relationship to museology and collection.

Charcot...used the hospital’s status as a collection (the “living pathological museum”) to conjugate a style of transmitting knowledge. (Didi-Huberman, 2003, p: 239)

In the contemporary museum the human subject cannot generally appear\(^{47}\) or narrate/curate their own experience. We are (knowingly) left, instead, with a refracted set of interpretations, materials or artefacts. Whilst these are not intended to make us into psychoanalysts it is nonetheless noteworthy that the kinds of seeing, mirroring and

\(^{46}\) From Philip Seymour Hoffman’s portrayal of theatre director Caden Cotard in Charlie Kauffman’s *Synecdoche New York* to Woody Allen’s *Zelig* to the psychological visual metaphors of art-making in AS Byatt’s *Body Art*.

\(^{47}\) Exceptions in London alone with regard to the presence of a human body in the museum include Jeremy Bentham’s auto-icon at UCL; a mummified male body (c. 1200 – 1400 CE, Peru) in the Wellcome Collection and the Egyptian Mummies in the British Museum. Bentham is, of course, alone in having had a say in the matter.
diagnosing that may occur has some relationship with refractions around the human subject in psychology’s history.

This contests Foucault’s assertions that Freud ‘eliminated madness’s recognition of itself in the mirror of its own spectacle’ (Foucault, 2008 p: 263). Instead, I want to suggest that madness’s relationship to contemporary culture and a continued reflexivity between psychiatric space and the museum have continued this spectacular mirroring. Through cultural narrations of the hysteric, Freud and Charcot’s influences have actually exacerbated forms of spectacular recognition.  

Writing in 1974, literary theorist, Steven Marcus questioned Freud’s titling of Dora’s case study as a ‘fragment’ (Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria, 1905a), describing it as ‘fuller, richer, and more complete than the most “complete” case histories of anyone else.’ (Marcus, 1974, p: 265) Despite its detail, Freud wanted the case study to be viewed as fragmentary due to Dora’s treatment having been ‘broken off at the patient’s own wish’ (Freud, 1905a, 7:12): The case study includes, as conclusive, its own incompleteness. Marcus refers to Freud’s embedding of the fragmentary aspects of the process of analysis in the case of Dora, explaining that the psychoanalyst’s embracing of the term is integral to the process of collating disparate pieces of material towards an eventual holistic picture.

Everything that has to do with the clearing-up of a particular symptom emerges piecemeal, woven into various contexts, and distributed over widely separate periods of time.

(ibid, 7:12)

48 Cultural narrations of hysteria are too numerous to mention but examples include those which feature a female character driven ‘mad’ by the behaviour of a lover, such as in the portrayal of Alex Forrester in Fatal Attraction; Marianne’s manifestation of physical symptoms following her rejection by Willoughby in Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility; Michel Faber’s portrayal of Agnes in The Crimson Petal and the White. Others include narrations of the author’s own struggles with madness through the flaws of the surrounding cultural understanding, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s convalescing character in The Yellow Wallpaper; Sylvia Plath’s aching portrayal of Esther in The Bell Jar. In other examples, male authors fictionalise the madness around them such as in Arthur Miller’s play about the Salem Witch Trials, The Crucible (which also spectacularly mirrors McCarthyism) and F Scott Fitzgerald’s Tender is the Night (an arguably fictive account of his own wife’s madness). In the three examples in footnote 39, hysterical characterisation adopts the form of a prevailing trope in its mediatisation – for Kauffman it is theatricalised; for Byatt it is reflected through visual art and in Woody Allen’s Zelig the documentary (mockumentary) form becomes a madness/identity complex in itself.

Ultimately, Freud’s case study does not itself read as a fragment but implicates a disjointed logic as symptomatic of hysteria and the testimonies of his patients as broken or fragmentary. Freud sees his job as creating coherency from the parts, reproducing and unlocking patchy, non-linear narrations towards the discovery of an undamaged whole. When Freud writes, of the manner in which Dora imparts the story of her life, he rarely paraphrases or quotes her. Rather he redresses the form of her speech, giving chronology to her back-story, noting that, the ‘connections - even the ostensible ones- are for the most part incoherent, and the sequence of different events is uncertain’ (Freud 7:16) leaving him ‘filling in deficiencies’ (Freud 7:85).

Collage seems, therefore, an appropriate method with which to interpret losses and overlaps within the construction of psychiatric narrative. I am conscious, in making collage, of a form of breakdown: A collation and placement of materials, not towards their smoothing down or flattening out (or indeed mastery) but towards re-emphasis of and collusion with an illogic or disparity between fragments. The responsibility of ‘filling in deficiencies’ (which takes place in both analysis and its writing-up) is something I consider as belonging to the viewer, whose receipt of the artwork includes integral querying of the sources and connectivity of its fragments and a compulsive generation of missing content. This forensic experience of the viewer mirrors that of making the work, each side reflecting the other’s experience of the found material and questioning its content and construction.

Feminist literary theorist, Elizabeth Harries, writing in 1993, takes issue with Freud’s cleaning up of Dora’s recounts and the need to unlock or re-structure them.

They are a kind of bricolage, a gathering up of fragments, though still in a fragmentary form. He shows Dora that her dreams are made up of scraps of letters, conversations, experiences from her recent and less recent past. Dora acknowledges and collaborates in this, while resisting Freud’s interpretation of their connections and significance. Throughout the Dora essay, Freud emphasizes the fragmentary nature of the material he has to work with, and the way it resists transformation into a seamless and seemly narrative. The patient can give only a fragmentary account of her own experience; the analyst must persuade us that he has been able to transform that fragmentary account into a complete and rounded whole’.

(Harries, 1993, p: 223)
3.2 (4R) For Real (A very important note on ethics with a very long footnote to this critique of hysteria-as-cultural-performance)

Maintaining an ethical, non-othering position on hysteria is complex, particularly in the light of its skewed evidence, gendered connotations and its endless re-writings into cultural domains. Perhaps, I am disengaging wholly with a human subject, investigating instead what surrounds, taxonomises and constructs her as symptomatic or representative. The subject is not the patient but the act of looking, the construction of tools and how visual evidence is enabled and constructed. In this way I am relating the evidence to an absence of its subject – a lack, for want of a more appropriate term – and the generation of an aesthetic surrogate. In hysteria, this aesthetic surrogate is the photograph and the performance. In Hoarding Disorder, where diagnosis comes (as I have described in the previous chapter) via cluttered space and/or its fictive reconstructions, the hoard is the aesthetic surrogate, posing as the condition itself. I can never effectively address the patient, whom I cannot know through these means.

If the subject is already disguised, replaced or absent then I can only ever address their stand-in through my readings of the material.50

50 In lieu of the above, I was surprised to visit the hysteria of Charcot’s patients for myself in July 2012 when, some way into constructing this chapter, my daughter Nancy Bobcat was born. Ten hours into labour, I had a placental abruption. The burst placenta caused immediate and profound blood loss on my part and the asphyxiation of my baby. Both in trauma, we were sent to theatre where an emergency caesarean section was performed. During the section I was not told whether I had had a live birth and Nancy’s gender and condition were kept from me for twenty minutes. In the interim I felt a second, tugging removal through the incision and wondered what else they had taken out of me. Safely in recovery I was told this had been my uterus. It had been cleaned of burst placenta bits and put back. Nancy was transferred to intensive care where she was given a hypothermic suit and kept at three degrees below body temperature for seventy-two hours then slowly re-warmed. The US corporation, GE - in honour of the 2012 Olympics - had donated the cooling equipment to the hospital just two weeks before her birth. We were told in empathetic tones that the prognosis for damage to Nancy’s brain was not good. I was placed alone on a ward with mothers whose babies were glowing in bassinettes beside them. Nancy remained in the neonatal unit for sixteen days.

It is important for me to say here that we are both well now and Nancy has no long-term damage. We lived with the possibility of this for the first year but were then given the (very unusual) all clear, which feels tangibly ecstatic on a daily basis.

I am telling this seemingly tangential story because in the thick of it all I was diagnosed temporarily with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In the days between returning home from hospital with no baby in tow and putting to bed the fears for Nancy’s future I re-lived over and over again the moments of her birth and first hours of life. The flashbacks would make me cry out, feel dizzy and shake. They would sometimes overcome me in my sleep, in the street, on a bus. Blurry people in blue surrounded me, silently, impressing upon me nothing of my baby’s arrival or her safety. I re-lived what it had felt like not to be there for her while she was pumped and tubed and sedated and drained and frozen. I revisited the lucky-dip-like rummaging for my womb and the wondering what I contained and where it was all being taken. To all intents and purposes I became a hysteric of sorts. My problems were intrinsically uterine. I was visibly, audibly losing it. It was my baby who was having seizures but I seemed to be shaking. I recall a particularly dark moment watching the Opening Ceremony of the Olympics from my bed at home and seeing some of our midwives and nurses perform a dance in the stadium with twirling, whirling hospital beds. Who was watching Nancy if her carers were performing their job to a rapt audience down the road and a further billion viewers worldwide? From the velux in our bedroom I could...
3.3 (w|A) Who am I to Anna O?

Madness, as I am demonstrating, has a history and currency of being exhibited. This exhibition problematises the position of the audience alongside the physician-curator. Understanding the patient as a simulacrum for the transcription of a condition or diagnosis (or set of conditions or diagnoses) via cultural proliferations is a distancing vantage point. It feeds curiosity and speculation rather than empathy. The negotiably fictive stance of the written case study (which I discuss in detail in Chapter Five) also alleviates the audience from a direct engagement with the patient. I am intimately connected to Anna O via her presentation as example or illustration. She addresses her analyst, Josef Breuer but it is he who addresses me. I am nothing to her, yet I imagine that I have a proximity to her psychological self. This view privileges the audience in an engagement with a (negotiably) constructed human subject: a view normally associated with fictions.

In psychoanalyst, Stephen Grosz’ recent book *The Examined Life: How We Lose and Find Ourselves*, patients’ histories are recounted in a familiar, conversational tone alongside which Grosz divulges snippets of his own life:

> The first time I saw Professor James R. was on the morning of Halloween. My children were still in their pyjamas, and they told me that while I was downstairs at work they were going to make a chocolate cake with Mummy, and decorate it with icing-sugar ghosts.

...simultaneously see the same fireworks I could see live on TV. In the waiting room at the neonatal unit they looped an advert for GE where Nancy’s incubator was featured surrounded by smiling doctors overlooking its previous tiny occupant. Everything was doubling and replicating except me – I was singular, hollowed out and severed.

At some point I went to see a cognitive behavioural therapist specialising in PTSD. She suggested I narrate Nancy’s birth to her, point-by-point, which I did. She then suggested I tell it again but change one circumstance of the event to make it more comforting. This time I added my mum to the scene. She adeptly liaised between the blurry blues and reported back to us in theatre about what was happening, softly telling us that we’d had a live birth, a girl and that she needed oxygen, morphine, antibiotics, hypothermia. In the re-telling my Mum talked softly to Nancy, went with her to intensive care and slept beside me in a giant bassinette, rocking, clucking and cooing. It was over. The fictive version over-shadowed the real one and I haven’t once visualised the event since without the calm and administrative presence of my mother. Gone were the flashbacks; the dizziness; the convulsions; the PTSD.

In this brief sojourn into therapy I was helped to fashion a fictive background, which took away the painful real one. It was not difficult to move the nightmarish version of events aside and substitute an easier-to-swallow version. This surrogate reality was well received by my therapist. Her approval certainly added to its embellishments and performance. I am remembering all this as I write this chapter: remembering that madness is not very far away and that the comforts of a replacement fictive reality can be quite chastening.
Grosz uses these asides to camera\textsuperscript{51} to apparently alleviate a textbook feel to his case studies and thereby prevent a hierarchical approach to the analyst-analysand relationship. His I’m-only-human-after-all method places the analysand in a world in which their psychoanalyst also considers his relationships and emotional life. However, while this approach is intended to break down any perceived barriers in how analysis (or indeed this book) places the complexities of its subjects apart from the world looking in, it creates such normalcy around Grosz that it is difficult not to imagine a widening chasm. In the particular passage above Grosz introduces a patient’s story with an anecdote about his own family life. Professor James R. is then revealed to be a seventy-one-year-old man who, after a marriage spanning four decades comes out of the closet. Sometimes the detail of Grosz’s life is particularly irrelevant to the matter at hand, serving to further normalise the psychiatrist in relation to the stories he hears from his patients, and, as such, de-professionalises his account. At the close of the chapter about Professor James R. the author discovers his obituary some years later, which reveals that the patient had stayed with his wife.

Two years later, I was sitting in a local cafe waiting for my wife. Glancing through a copy of \textit{The Times} that had been left on the table…

(ibid. p: 80)

Knowledge of the \textit{local-}ness of the café and the \textit{wife-}ness of the person for whom Grosz was waiting is largely irrelevant to the case study. (He also goes to cafés! He also has a wife!) What this information does do though is remind us that the lives of doctors are as like those of our own as the lives of patients, thus localising madness and its borders. The constant reiteration of this reminder in \textit{The Examined Life} – whilst banal - refers endlessly to psychiatry’s past, to a certain kind of other-ing or putting on show and to criticisms of the one-sidedness of the ‘talking cure.’\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{51} I am using this term as these autobiographical insertions read as though the author steps in and out of particular modes of dialoguing with his readership. The scene-setting of the particular quote I have selected made me think of the more filmic role of a narrator stepping out of the scene, halting its chronological progress to offer an aside to his/her invisible viewers.

\textsuperscript{52} A phrase first used in English by Freud and Josef Breuer’s patient Anna O and quoted by Breuer in his case study from 1895: ‘When she was like this it was not always easy to get her to talk, even in her hypnosis. She aptly described this procedure, speaking seriously, as a “talking cure”, while she referred to it jokingly as “chimney-sweeping”’. (Breuer, \textit{Anna O}, in Gay, 1995, p: 68)
I introduced this chapter with the idea that madness is put on display - in part - to separate it from sanity and locate moral lessons through its location, visibility and containment. Stephen Grosz's stories allude to the profession's response to a contemporary attitude to psychiatry, which questions its validity in locating the mad. This response (also notable in the HBO television series *In Treatment* in the case of the complex personal life of fictional psychologist, Dr Paul Weston) allows the distance between analyst, analysand and audience to reduce and falter through the analyst's own humanity and failings. This, however, is still something of a performance. In effect, the ethics of analysis tell us that an analyst does not offer the details of their personal life in the consulting room. These titbits are there for the audience's eyes only.

'These stories are true', Stephen Grosz tells us in his introduction to *The Examined Life* (ibid. p: xi) but confidentiality precludes the correct identifying details. I am left wondering what an identifying detail might be and how a person with paranoid fantasies (ibid. p: 81) assists in the construction of self, necessary to prevent their identification in print.

In asking what separates madness from its own staging or performance I want to return here to my own re-workings of iconic images from Charcot's 'evidence' at the Salpêtrière in my series of collages *After Charcot* (2010) and my subsequent re-workings of Randy O Frost and Gail Steketee's diagnostic tool for Hoarding Disorder, the *Clutter Image Rating*, (which I discussed at the end of Chapter Two). By using surrogate spaces to assume the position of the hoard in my own *Clutter Image Rating*, I meant to create a slippage between the condition and the authenticity of the tools of its analysis.

Within this aspect of my practice, where I re-stage psychoanalytic documents, I am probing their authenticity or the implication that they contain or divulge visualising proof of the contents of disorder. With the reconstructed Charcot images, I want to remind the consumer (or audience) of this material and ask whether, when we regard madness, it shape-shifts to accommodate our gaze and what happens when we turn our backs. Does the hysteric stop her convulsing? And, in the case of the Clutter Image Rating, does the psychology student tidy up her bedroom? In practice, I am reviewing

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53 'Stories' is Grosz's own choice of term.
54 HBO’s *In Treatment* was based on the Israeli series *B’Tipul.*
documentary ‘evidence’ of disorder as a mythology, responding and then posing the ensuing artworks as ‘evidence’ of its existence as mythology.

In building a picture of madness as exhibit, analysis as collagist and the construction of disorder as narratological, I am intending to expose the nature of an exchange between the history of psychiatry and responses through culture. I do not feel I am making work about disorder, ideas in psychoanalysis and its diagnostic tools; I feel I am making work, which reflects on their existing methodologies and cultural implications as potential practice.
3.4P(obs ii p) On Being Sane in Insane Places

This privileged view of the audience’s is not only interesting in regard to its observation of and mythologising of madness and its locations but also in its assessment and location of normalcy (as primarily self-reflexive). To further iterate this interest, I want to elaborate on a case of mistaken identity.

In 1973, American clinical psychologist David Rosenhan published ‘On Being Sane in Insane Places’ in the journal Science and the psychiatric profession responded in defence of its diagnostic efficacy and competence. Between 1969 and 1972, Rosenhan and seven other people - none of whom had any previous psychiatric diagnoses – had been admitted to twelve different psychiatric institutions across the US. They had all presented with one single symptom, each independently claiming they had heard a voice saying the words ‘dull’, ‘empty’, and ‘thud.’ ‘It was agreed amongst Rosenhan’s team that the symptom was to be such an uncommon symptom as to be unknown.’

Each was admitted. Once admitted, they behaved normally with no subsequent recurrence of the symptom. Nonetheless, they were kept in the hospitals for periods of between seven and fifty-two days. Seven of the eight (a psychiatrist, a paediatrician, three psychologists, a painter, a housewife and Professor Rosenhan himself) were diagnosed with schizophrenia and were eventually released with a diagnosis of ‘schizophrenia in remission’. Incredulously, not one of them was thought to be sane by the institutions, although during their hospital stays several fellow patients apparently remarked on their apparent lack of psychosis.

The initial presentation – the one symptom – allowed a label to cloud the activity of the pseudo-patient for the duration of their stay in the unit, and thereafter. Subsequent displays of ‘normalcy’ did not retract the diagnosis, and being in ‘remission’ does not mean the pseudo-patient lost the condition. Some normal behaviours observed of Rosenhan as an in-patient were entirely clouded by this diagnostic label. When he

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56 Professor Lee Ross, dept of Social Psychology, Stanford University in Mind Changers
57 Three of the pseudo-patients were women and five were men. All eight used pseudonyms in the study ‘lest their alleged diagnoses embarrass them later’ (Rosenhan, 1973, p: 251). Seven of them remain anonymous today – all except for Rosenhan.
occupied the long unfilled, distraction-free hours on the ward by writing, he was described as engaging in ‘note-taking behaviours’ as symptomatic of his psychiatric illness.

After the study was over and its results were in print, a hospital suggested Rosenhan send them more of his ‘pseudo-patients’ and claimed to be up to the challenge of picking out the fakes. The hospital reported back that forty-one pseudo-patients had then been sent over the ensuing months. However, Rosenhan had sent them none.  

3.5 (GF) Go Figure

Consideration of these presences, performances and absences of the individual within a collective understanding of psychological disorder became implicated in decisions in my practice. At the end of 2010 I consciously removed the figure from my visual work. Prior to this I was losing figures in heaps of stuff and questioning their presence through violations in scale, perspective and form in relation to their locations.

Traces or remnants do still remain of the figure (such as sections of propped up hair in the large scale drawing Conscientious Objectophile - discussed in Chapter Seven - and fleeting images of my own hand in the animated collage Appropriated Mishap - discussed in Chapter Ten) but I am no longer as concerned with characters or an entire human presence. (By this point I had also mirrored and split into two the principal character in my fiction, The Detroit Project allowing each ‘half’ to consider herself from a distance via the other. I had been concerned that focusing on one protagonist was too much of a portrait given the ways in which I was otherwise engaging with the fractal.)

When the figure was present, it was becoming increasingly hard to emphasise that the subject of my visual work is not the complex self (itself) but the accumulation of and attachment to objects, spaces and theoretical/cultural dialogues around the

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58 Rosenhan’s initial interest in carrying out the study was less intended to unravel the diagnostic criteria applied within psychiatric care but to gain access as a patient to ‘insane places’ and assess psychiatric wards from within. In a letter, quoted on the Radio 4 programme, Mind Changers, Rosenham stated, ‘The real purpose (of the study) was to engage in a psycho-anthropological study of psychiatric hospitals.’

59 Not including my own appearance in live performances and readings.

60 In Chapter Five (section 5.2) of this thesis I discuss this splitting/reflecting at length and introduce the two characters’ relationships to each other in The Detroit Project.
psychology and pathologising of an individual. In pursuit of this differentiation, I became implicit in an act of subterfuge – masking and literally defacing the figure in order to transfer or project ideas onto their surroundings or situation. In one collage (opposite), titled Gateau Chateau (2010), I attempted to address this problem directly and somewhat heavy-handedly. The composite image shows an interior and an exterior scene. Taking an image cut from a Dutch book – found coverless in a flea market and that I couldn't understand - I added, subtracted and replaced heads, creating a social scenario where no one is looking at anyone else and human-ness is sometimes object-ness.

The two halves could be read as the same location, inside and out. In the interior, around a table set for tea, the central figure is left contemplating her own image being handed to her in sculptural form. Self-reflection or knowledge is therefore something being presented or suggested by masked or unknown others. Outside – in the grounds of a building designed for function by Adolf Loos – self-reflection is replaced by an animal instinct - non-linguistic and entirely non-subjective. Making this work was a particularly pragmatic way of addressing the presence of the figure in my works on paper. I specifically intended to consider how to direct psychological insight away from the human subject and into a location, materials and objects. The niceties of taking tea remain and extend to the table’s placement on a platter and the suspension of a projectile cake in space.
Gateau Chateau (2010) Paper collage

The Maybe, Matilda Swinton (1960 -)
Cornelia Parker and Tilda Swinton, The Serpentine Gallery, 1995
3.6 (MasM) Mind as Museum

As this research has developed, and I have considered how the figure has first been swamped and then removed in my practice, I have returned to the memory of seeing Cornelia Parker and Tilda Swinton’s collaborative work in Parker’s exhibition, *The Maybe* at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 1995. *The Maybe, Matilda Swinton (1960-)* was a display-case-cum-raised-bed in which Swinton slept for the opening hours of the show over a seven-day period. She slept among other select ‘objects’ in the exhibition – each retrieved from British museums and collections, each associated with a historical person, known or unknown, and each labelled by Cornelia Parker. Parker, describing the show, explained how Swinton’s presence enlivened the deadness of the relics:

I wanted to breathe new life into these objects by their juxtaposition and their relation to Tilda, living and breathing only a few inches away.

(Parker, 1996, p: 56)

*The Maybe* animated Swinton’s mental space alongside breathing life into the objects around her, ‘making a physical presence of her own mental absence.’\(^6^1\) Her sleep permitted a questioning of the weight of museological objects (and decisions around their collation and presentation) in lieu of the absences of their former owners or historical first-person narrations. It prompted a more self-conscious observation of Freud’s pillow or a fragment of Lindbergh’s aircraft and I found myself looking away from Queen Victoria’s stocking in case it woke and caught me staring. Swinton’s appearance in the gallery caused a friction between this exhibition of objects and other expected forms of inanimate viewing. Objects became imbued with the performance of both their former lives and the strategies inherent to their display. Swinton was no less animate or performative in her sleep – her exhibition implicated her as a dynamic agent in the social conditions and durational aspects of the museum. The reawakening or embodiment of things happened despite (or perhaps because of) Swinton’s sleep state - an affect of the experience, which remains with me some twenty years later.

*The Maybe* – through its own innate provocations of collection and display – subjected its audience to an ethical paradigm: Tilda Swinton was there because she had chosen to be, despite being contained. However, the objects were coerced into display through

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\(^6^1\) Guy Brett, *The Maybe* in Parker, 1996, p: 19
curation, preservation, the economics of ownership and cultural narratives particular to their safeguarding and assumed contributions to knowledge.

Swinton was staged in the present and, as such, continued to exist as an agent of her own display or categorisation. The rest of The Maybe was a conceit of its collection and display. The audience had a responsibility towards the activation of the materials in the exhibition – the embodiment of the artefacts via the labels explaining to whom they once belonged, and the disembodiment of Swinton as performer-becoming-artefact, now mute and recumbent.

Cornelia Parker’s exhibition was exemplar in its demonstration of how museums exhibit time itself. By suspending Swinton’s subconscious over the narration of objects it allows them to pass before our eyes, suggesting how they conjoin to form networks of cultural associations and definitions. We cannot truly consider ourselves as having had access – to either the relics or to Swinton - but, mirrored in the case in which she slept, we could see ourselves, and our own gaze reflected.

The idea of time as potentially othering – separating us from what we seek to know, interpret or understand – is as essential to collection and psychical archives as to psychoanalysis and the evolution of the case study. However, the chronology of the physical archive differs vastly from the timeless unconscious central to Freudian analysis. Firstly, the evaluative processes at work in the archive allow for destruction of repeated or unwanted materials. Isobel Hunter, currently Head of Engagement at the National Archives, wrote of an earlier job in the archive of the Water Board that,

The volume of material was vast, dumped next to our desks in large crates, and a competition developed as to who could work through the biggest number of crates a day. We saved the good files on a shiny new trolley, and chucked the rest into destruction sacks as we chanted the archivists’ mantra, if in doubt, chuck it out.

(Hunter, p: 2 of 8, in Mendelson ed. 2013)

Material retained by archives is subsequently administered, numbered, labelled and sorted and, in this way, has a legible cartography. This is in sharp contrast to the storage assigned to the Freudian psyche, within which ‘no positive decision is made to accept one psychical trace over another.’ (Spieker, 2008, p: 43) The lack of indexical system attributed to the Freudian unconscious therefore allows for ‘mnemonic
traces...stacked on top of each other without regard for clarity or readability, and crucially, without regard for time.' (ibid. p: 43) Theoretically, the placement of a sleeping Tilda Swinton into a glass vitrine highlights this reading of the differences in archival, theoretical and psychical time. The logic of the storage of things and their mutual susceptibility to organisation and indices is set off by their connection to the unconscious, as transmitted via the sleeping figure.

However, the denied public access to a psychical archive – after all, we cannot read what is happening inside Swinton - can render it ‘anarchivic’ or traceless. ‘It leaves nothing of its own behind.’ (Derrida, 1996, p: 10) This view, driven by Derrida’s Archive Fever, refers to the lack of exterior or consignment in the psyche – a fundamental requirement of the archive. The loss of the psychical archive through death (‘eradication… and structural breakdown’), ultimately means it cannot be exteriorised or consigned to a registry.

There is no archive without a place of consignation, without a technique of repetition, and without a certain exteriority. No archive without outside. (ibid. p: 11)

Hoarding Disorder and, specifically, the spatialisation of its diagnosis, upsets this Derridian/Freudian reading. By designating the hoard as a registry through which to locate the psyche of the hoarder, the unconscious becomes exteriorised. An assumed consignment has taken place in order for the psychiatric profession to locate the disorder without the presence of the patient. The criteria for this diagnosis dislodges this now quite established approach to the theory of archives and their psychical equivalencies.

Jacques Lacan wrote of the unconscious as an archive of unknown derivation or provenance,\(^\text{62}\) a ‘censored chapter’ (Lacan, 1977, p: 50) and acknowledged its archival possibilities. In the unconscious of Lacan’s ‘censored chapter’, the archive is not marked out by its provision but the work done to locate and rediscover it, amongst other known chapters. He considered that the unconscious does leave traces despite its lack of registry. These possible traces, which include monuments (namely, the

\(^{62}\) This idea is particularly useful in considering responses to psychologies using collage with found materials.
body), documents and semantic evolution, would permit that the hoard can, in fact, direct us to psychical space.  

### 3.7 (zzzzz-sd) Sleepdrawing

In 2010, as part of a group of permanent, connected works I installed at Town Hall Hotel, London, I made a large, detailed wall drawing in HB pencil above the entrance stairwell in the lobby of the building. The content of the work – early technologies for monitoring sleeping and dreaming – relates unconscious space to public, municipal space, in consideration of the Town Hall being transformed into a hotel. My intention was to locate the viewer in a practice of navigation through the building from the conscious, socialised space of the lobby to the private spaces of the bedrooms beyond the stairwell, and on to unconscious dream spaces beyond that. **Sleepdrawing** is embedded in the fabric of the building. It is intentionally very light and reflective of the greys in the grain of the marble below it, almost disappearing when in shadow at certain times of day. The drawing is at its most visible at night when the pencil marks have a slight shine and the detail becomes more pronounced in the artificial lighting of the lobby.

In the lower third of the drawing the marble flooring and some furnishings from the lobby appear. Starched, folded sheets in bundles provide a hilly foreground. A central, horizontal figure, turning in her sleep, is subsumed in a hub of archaic machines for the scientific recording of sleep patterns and dream states. Looped wiring connects the figure to the machines and the machines to the architecture. A room at the back of the scene is drawn from one of the postcards in another work, **Safecarder**, which

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63 Full quote:
The unconscious is that chapter of my history that is marked by a blank or occupied by a falsehood: it is the censored chapter. But the truth can be rediscovered; usually it has been written down elsewhere. Namely:

- in monuments: this is my body. That is to say, the hysterical nucleus of the neurosis in which the hysterical symptom reveals the structure of a language, and is deciphered like an inscription which, once recovered can, without serious loss be destroyed;
- in archival documents: these are my childhood memories, just as impenetrable as are such documents when I do not know their provenance;
- in semantic evolution: this corresponds to the stock of words and acceptations of my own particular vocabulary, as it does to my style of life and to my character;
- in traditions too, and even in the legends which, in a heroicized form, bear my history;
- and, lastly, in the traces that are inevitably preserved by the distortions necessitated by the linking of the adulterated chapter to the chapters surrounding it, and whose meaning will be re-established by my exegesis.

(Lacan, 1977, p: 50)

64 Two of the four works at Town Hall Hotel – **Safecarder** and **Waking Archive** - are discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.
stands in the lobby just in front.

The drawing is, in part, emblematic of its own making. In the looped wiring a mode of automatic drawing evolved, connecting site to mind and mind to its own monitoring. The process of making the work from a small detailed drawing to its projection onto a large wall – at first quite solitary, analogue and meticulous then very public, mechanised and gestural - is reflected in its contents: I am the invisible figure suspended on the stairwell and the mechanical objects allow supposed transmission of my thoughts into space.

Making *Sleepdrawing* entailed an enduring physical proximity to the wall, which was unsettling and added a vertiginous effect to the work. High up on the stairwell I perched on a scaffold for three weeks, the base of which took up a landing. When I looked down I saw a further flight of stairs below me but lost sight of the landing and the footing of the scaffold. The effect of this was a feeling of suspension – like being pinned to the wall. From this proximity I could see a tangle of lines but not the entirety of the work and was enmeshed in the tiny detail. These concentrated areas shrank back into the whole as I stepped down from my perch.
Sleepdrawing began with collage and a drawing was then made from that collage. I nearly always draw in this way. The fullness of the eventual drawing and its slippages in scale and space occur because of this transferral between media. What they eye is willing to accept in a collage because of an understanding about appropriation and source material is more confusing in a drawing. The singularity of the line appears to override the appropriations and it is harder to comprehend why certain objects and spaces have been permitted to rub against each other so seamlessly. In Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria Freud refers to the practice and the ‘very considerable’\textsuperscript{65} difficulties of writing up a case study - accepting all of a patient’s reminiscences as permissible material useful to analysis. Overwhelmed with psychological material, collated over a considerable time, it becomes harder to systematise and archive. These ideas around the collation, accumulation, storage and display of unconscious material are at the centre of my practice and this thesis.\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Sleepdrawing in progress, May 2010}
\end{figure}

Sleepdrawing developed as an attempt to consider how ideas around the unconscious might be tempered if coerced into inhabiting a functional space and interrupted again

\textsuperscript{65} Freud, 1905a, p: 9
\textsuperscript{66} I return to Freud’s files and case studies in Chapter Five, where I consider their build up and potential analysis as fictions.
through the mechanics of clinical study. The machines I have drawn presuppose that we can tame or translate unconscious material – tracking and tracing it, making notes. The drawing’s permanence is intended to be at odds with its subject - I became very aware of using its fragility to arrest any attempt to dominate the space, despite the large scale. As a site of collection Town Hall Hotel has a museological component but its duration is much altered: As a place of temporal residence and sleep it offered me the opportunity to imagine how a work could permeate the building as a trace.

When I came down from the scaffold, after several weeks of spending the daylight hours perched high above the stairwell, I had an accident. I was walking from my home to a shop on the day the work was completed and I fell, breaking my wrist in two. The feeling of vertigo was worse on the ground. I realised that I had become the figure in the work – not through appearing in it as drawn, but through occupying it temporarily as I drew. This was a shift in understanding for me and led to later performances of the drawing process. Later in 2010, I left human figures behind, resisting their continued physical inclusion.

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67 There are 12 artists and 1 collective whose works are included in the permanent display at Town Hall Hotel.
68 Whilst I have included several reproductions and details of Sleepdrawing here I want to note that the work is not easy to reproduce because of the lightness of the pencil and the difficulties of proximity to the work across the stairwell. The images on the enclosed disk – suited to screen viewing – are easier to see and the work is publicly accessible 24 hours a day at Town Hall Hotel, Patriot Square, London E2.
Writing on *The Hotel Lobby* in the early 1920s, cultural critic, Siegfried Kracauer emphasised the site as a space of subtraction or emptying out. He created a picture of a social space for purposelessness and evacuation – not only from the world beyond but the self that inhabited it. Kracauer observed how, ‘in tasteful lounge chairs a civilisation intent on rationalisation comes to an end’ (Kracauer, 1995, p: 178) and that ‘in the hotel lobby, equality is based not on a relation to God but on a relation to the nothing.’ (ibid. p: 179) This investigation into a ‘phenomenology of the surface’ (Thomas Y Levin in Kracauer, ibid. p: 20) has been read as a challenge to move beyond the superficiality inlaid in the quotidian spaces of Modern life. It occurs to me on reading *The Hotel Lobby* that I made a work at Town Hall Hotel, which, despite its addition to the surroundings, has the sense of being a form of subtraction. The drawing subtracts the whiteness from the wall – like a kind of erasure - and its distraction, going up the stairwell, functions as a removal from purpose.
Sleepdrawing in daylight
July 2010, (Photo credit: Angus Mill)
Poster for the International Madness and Arts Festival (Haarlem, Netherlands, 2010)
My friend Caro is a designer and is responsible for the formatting and much of the layout of the enclosed version of ‘The Detroit Project’. Caro lives in East Berlin and, for the past five years has rented a space in a large building. The studio is shared with a fashion designer and is comprised of workspaces and a meetings room. It has high ceilings and ornate plaster cornicing. When they first moved in, the area was full of artists and designers.

Recently Caro was informed that a new owner had bought the building her studio occupied. His purchase coincided with the renewal of her contract. The new contract supplied by the new owner doubled the rent Caro had been paying, meaning that she and the fashion designer must now move somewhere cheaper. Last week the new owner paid them a visit at work. ‘You’ll be pleased to know a psychotherapist is going to be renting this space’, he announced to them, ‘should you need anyone to talk to’.

On her way home Caro looked at the plaques on all the nearby buildings. She had noticed a growing number of new cafés in the area but not whom they were serving. She saw that the area now contained only psychotherapy and coffee.

Cumulative Practice / Multi-Couch therapy
From a series of photographs taken at Het Dolhuys, Haarlem, 2010

Henri Lefebvre wrote in The Production of Space that,
Social space is not a thing among other things, nor a product among other products: rather, it subsumes things produced and encompasses their interrelationships in their coexistence and simultaneity—their (relative) order and/or (relative) disorder.

(Lefebvre, 1991 p. 73).

This social-spatial exchange between order and disorder is dependant on a sharing and co-construction of spaces, which articulate their own networked codes of behaviour. Lefebvre's post-structuralist account of the on-going production of spatial and social relations towards the formation of space is constant and evolving. It implicates the social and the material in an ever-shifting dialogue.

The intertwinement of social spaces is ... a law. Considered in isolation, such spaces are mere abstractions. As concrete abstractions, however, they attain 'real' existence by virtue of networks and pathways, by virtue of bunches or clusters of relationships.

(ibid. 1991 p. 86)

In the next chapter I will examine psychical space and the spatialisation of madness more specifically but I want – here - to acknowledge the existence of sites of contemporary exchanges between the Arts and Psychiatry or Madness and the Arts. These include, but are not limited to, the following European museums I have visited during this PhD project: The Freud Museums in London and Vienna; the Museum Dr. Guislain in Ghent, Belgium (both a working psychiatric hospital and a museum to psychiatry with a programme of contemporary art exhibitions) and Het Dolhuys in Haarlem, the Netherlands (a museum of Psychiatry and psychological health). These are spaces, which are dressed up to tell of their own histories alongside an acknowledgement of contemporary, critical ideas around psychiatry and changing attitudes towards mental illness. They are or were inhabited by doctors and patients whose ghosts are maintained in the present. The theatricality of madness remains embedded in the workings of these museological environments. They each stage, light and emphasise uninhabited room set-ups towards an understanding of the workings of psychiatry. Attempts to display the unseen – that is, the workings of the mind – become transposed onto objects and spaces.
Freud’s house in Vienna contains very little of the man himself as its contents were exiled with him to London. Freud’s home in London contains a lifetime’s possessions – frozen in time – but was barely lived in by the man, who died a year after moving in. The Museum Dr. Guislain displays the mechanics of archaic psychiatric treatment – electric shock therapy, straight jackets – alongside related art exhibitions, whilst current patients, whose contemporary treatments are based on site, move through its grounds in fluffy white robes. At Het Dolhuys the dramaturgy takes the form of accumulative, collective versions of psychiatric practice in support of a single narrative. In the room of the museum designated to show private practice, psychiatry expands and becomes a cumulative, de-personalised experience with multiple couches and standing lamps placed around a carpet. The seating and fabric of the rug seem to specifically mock the Couch (parked at the Freud Museum in London)⁶⁹.

Cumulative Practice / Multi-Couch therapy
Photograph taken at Het Dolhuys, Haarlem, 2010

⁶⁹ I am here using the term the Couch to implicate Freud’s couch as a player or motif in popular understanding of psychoanalysis. The echoes (or simulacra) of the Couch at Het Dolhuys were almost humorous in their understudying of this role.
This transition from psychiatric practice to museum to social space is a knowing construction – its exuberance perhaps at odds with the quiet of psychoanalytic treatment but not out of step with the noise of the wider transmission of its materials.

Returning to Lefebvre, writing on the networked relationships between social and material constructs, it is possible to consider the construction of these museological, social, mental, material spaces as collages70:

Social space contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways, which facilitate the exchange of material things and information. Such ‘objects’ are thus not only things but also relations. (ibid. p: 77)

In drawing on the links made in this chapter between the mythologising of madness and its integration into cultural space, I am going to focus on the specific model of the 3rd International Madness and Arts Festival – held in Haarlem in 2010 - in the

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70 I want to add here, that I am also knowingly using theory as a possible material component in collage: a component, which facilitates the writing of this text and its reflexivity within its wider subject.
understanding that it connects to other instances of enforced or enabled collisions between these worlds and disciplines.

I was invited to participate in the 3rd International Madness and Arts Festival (MAF), which took place at various venues across the city of Haarlem in the Netherlands in September and October 2010. It included theatre, film, symposia, exhibitions and live works. The festival publicised itself as ‘an international and multidisciplinary festival focused on the encounter of madness with arts… Central to the festival was the encounter of (outsider) artists and professionals in art and psychiatry with the public.’71 This notion of ‘the outsider’ and ‘the professional’ ran through the debates in Haarlem, blurring usually profound boundaries between contexts of production (including studios, social space and institutions) and display (including exhibition, street, academic and treatment contexts).

Many of the ‘professional’ artists whose work was shown as part of the festival were working in ways that could be deemed obsessive, laborious or controlled. An example is Dutch artist Robin Waart whose work is focused on intense searches for hundreds of repeated quotations from film or book titles that collectively form words or systems72. Another is Marjan Teeuwen who creates digitally manipulated photographs of large-scale, labour intensive architectonic interventions she builds over months in derelict apartments73. In Haarlem I had the sense of time slowed down and recognised these elongated processes of picking gradually at long-term ideas. Intensity here seemed to translate as being about madness (as opposed, perhaps, to being about industry or faith). This was useful for me to notice and reflect upon as – in consideration of collection and hoarding – it implies that ‘too-much-ness’ has psychological implications, even where it may be expertly administrated and articulated. Robin Waart notes that,

It is hard to say whether collecting is more about gathering and ‘reading’ (con-\textit{legere}) or selection and choice (\textit{col-\textit{legare}}), each of which implies placement on either the instinctive or the intellectual side of a spectrum.

(Waart in Mendelson, 2013, p: 2 of 16)

71 I am quoting here from the pamphlets and online material distributed by MAF. Online documents and archival material is still available at www.maf3.nl The curator was Nina Folkersma – whom I later invited to write about obsessive collection for my edited book, \textit{This Mess is a Place} (2013). (See Chapter 6)

72 Robin Waart’s writing and visual work is included in my edited book, \textit{This Mess is a Place} (2013).

73 I will return to Teeuwen’s work in Chapter 7 where I consider it in relation to Smithson and entropic architectures, where I have also included images.
My own participation at MAF in Haarlem took two forms. Firstly, I was asked to make and show works as part of a group show titled Diepseel (Sublimation) at Galerie 37, in a building shared with Spaarnestad Photo, a Dutch photographic archive comprising around five million photographs. Secondly, I spent time in the archive, creating a photographic record of a transitional moment as it was packed up to be subsumed into the Na National Archief in the Hague.

For the ten days I was in Haarlem I expected to be sandwiched between the festival - and its focus on madness - and the order-apparent of the photographic archive. In this period, however, and despite its continual use, the archive slowly began to unravel. It was being dis-ordered, unpacked, repacked and repositioned for its move. The sequence of photographs I took reflects both its prior user-friendly, readable state and its transitional state. Some of the images suggest a degree of chaos in conflict with the nature of archives. The photographs themselves are reflective of the subject – in that they are a collection of photographs of a collection of photographs. There are more than three hundred images in total and they now form a slideshow titled Defiled.

Inhabiting Spaarnestad Photo briefly led me to consider its formalising effect on my body as I worked my way through the space. I was acutely aware of the behavioural codes I adopted as I kept quiet, paid attention to my footsteps, sneezes and the creaking of doors and drawers. Despite having been invited to the archive I felt awkward and clumsy in it. I noticed too that my polite occupancy of the space shifted as I entered those areas, which were dis-ordered or transitional. My self-consciousness disappeared entirely in these zones of misplacement and became more playful: Here, I stepped over boxes, leant on walls and picked at my lunch. I moved where I could find pathways.

74 From the press release for Diepseel at Galerie 37: ‘GROUP EXHIBITION ON SUBLIMATION, with Robbie Cornelissen, Ron Amir, Dan Geesin, Zoë Mendelson. According to Freud, sublimation is the ability to transform a primal sexual impulse into something that is socially acceptable. Art and other cultural values are supposed to be the result of sublimated impulses. Galerie 37 presents drawings by four contemporary artists, each of whom is fascinated by compulsive behaviour, repressed aggression, sexuality, and control that itself gets out of control. Their drawings are often painfully beautiful.’
75 My own works for Diepseel/MAF – made before the mini-residency in the archive are detailed and described in the chronology at the end of this thesis.
76 Defiled (2010 – 11) can be viewed in its entirety on the attached disc.
77 American psychologists and experts in Hoarding Disorder, Randy O Frost and Gail Steketee refer to the difficulties of moving through a hoard using the term ‘goat paths’. In their book Stuff: Compulsive Hoarding and the Meaning of Things, they describe their movements around a hoarder’s home:
I had intended for the slide show to depict the space unoccupied but, in the end, decided to include two photographs of myself lying down among the cabinets, in an attempt to give in to the quiet and stillness. On the day in question I was wearing a skirt with a horse pattern, and the clutter of the fabric added to the noise I was aware of bringing to the coded quiet.

In observing my movements, it struck me that this coded embodiment of the archive (also reflective of a collection or traditional museum) is integral to its status and position. My own movements were reflecting the conditions of the assembled materials: a kind of mimicry was taking place and shifting from room to room. I was responding, through movement and manner, to the ergonomic differences between the placement of unseen things on the inside (of cabinets, drawers, boxes, folders, files) and things on the outside (such as stacks of papers, clear bags bursting with wiring, piles of unsorted labels, abandoned book spines). The exposure of items – with potentially just as much value as what I could not see inside the drawers – caused me to react more casually and dismissively towards them. I saw them as escaped, possibly dirtied or de-valued in some way. My guardedness therefore dropped and I clattered through the space, crouching into the discontents of the archive to take photographs.

Anna Harding in the exhibition catalogue *Potential: Ongoing Archive* refers to the difference between archives and collection as a distinction around an anticipated future use. ‘An archive is a repository for the future, a starting point, not an end point. While the collector perhaps discriminates between objects, the archivist accumulates with no declaration of what specific value that material may hold for future users.’ (Harding, ed., 2002, p: 51)

The archive suppresses its contents through storage and containment. Access is assured but requires a bureaucracy of permissions and cartography. The archive is unconscious until opened or examined. The movements of my body and its supposition of a stilted, suppressed mode caused me to imagine the archive as a body, holding itself in, then expelled into corners. In *Powers of Horror* Julia Kristeva discusses transgressions of the body’s borders in terms of their revelation of the abject. Snot and

‘We moved through each room on ‘goat paths’ (a phrase well-known in the hoarding self-help world), narrow trails not more than a foot wide where the floor was occasionally visible.’ (Frost, Steketee, 2010, p: 24)
pus and shit and blood are all permissible when on the inside but affect disgust when
they exit, crossing those thresholds, which had secured their invisibility. The
containment of objects in an archive keeps them clean and prevents their undressing
within a chaos of germs or erosion or, perhaps worse still, a lack of systematisation.
The hoard, in contrast, is compiled of things let out, uncontained and abject,
transgressing the boundaries set for them by the body of the storage, then the room
and then, ultimately, the home. To consider the site as a body is particularly complex
in that the body is then also its occupant. When a hoarder is diagnosed via the hoard,
it does, in effect, become the body. Our archives too stand in for us and narrate on our
behalves. Kristeva wrote that,

The theory of the unconscious, as is well known, presupposes a repression of
contents (affects and presentations) that, thereby, do not have access to
consciousness but effect within the subject modifications, either of speech
(parapraxes, etc.), or of the body (symptoms), or both (hallucinations).
(Kristeva, 1982, p: 7)

Something bizarre occurs to borders between unconscious and conscious thought in
the spaces of museums and archives dedicated to psychiatry and at the Madness and
Arts Festival in their attempts to synthesise cultural experience, historical accounts,
related artefacts, biography, cafés, libraries and madness. There is an expectation of
(and investment in) their delivery of the theory of the unconscious to an audience
through (sometimes permanent) concrete means. Transgressions evolve and a
‘looking in’ is suggested beyond the cabinets and manifestations of museological
stillness. Storage and couches and carpets and equipment are invested with a potency
to deliver the unconscious.
Two slides from *Defiled, 2010-11*
Two slides from Defiled, 2010-11
Returning to the bizarrely overstuffed theatre of the consulting room at Het Dolhuys it becomes possible to see it as an appropriate model for a museum to psychiatry. Its walk-in collage of known terms (couch, lamp, magazine rack) allows it to exist within the logic and systematisation of real psychiatric space. Its multiplication and bringing together of those terms (so many couches, lamps, magazine racks) allows it to expand beyond the language of the profession and into the world of the psyche – to exacerbate those terms and feed a sense of engulfment. The terms of psychiatry collide here: Fantasy; projection; fetishisation; the uncanny; abjection; transference. As a means of delivery, this embodied collagist approach permits these collisions.

In abjection, what is no longer needed does not truly leave us, just as in a hoard. Kristeva’s description of the abject includes ‘the composite’ and could therefore be said to implicate the ambiguity of boundaries in an accumulation of stuff into an abject understanding of the apparent amorality assigned to a hoard. Her notion of the unclean translates to the composite and a blurring of boundaries rather than to actual dirt. There is no threat in an object but there is in assemblage:

Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object. Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us and ends up engulfing us. It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. (Kristeva, 1982, p: 4)

Considering how what is contained in a space – and the ways it is contained – affect or choreograph its possibilities for movement and a perception of rationalisation, I started to conceive of a body of works where it would be unclear where boundaries are set between inside and out, ordered and dis-ordered. My two days in Spaarnestad Photo with Madness and Arts swirling around outside were pivotal to the weaving together of ideas around the psychopathologising of the hoard and its implications to a collagist practice.

78 See photographs, Cumulative Practice / Multi-Couch Therapy at the start of this section 3.8.
A history of madness as having an audience exposes its observation/narration and some of its documentation as consistently culturally produced. For an artist or writer, therefore, the terms of engagement with madness are already in existence and its documentation or interpretation could conceivably already be thought of as anethical.

The work undertaken in this chapter has allowed me to reflect on the ways in which psychical material has been translated for clinical purposes and for audiences, implicating these purposes in direct communication with each other.

By investigating the visual and performative formations of criteria surrounding a condition as a practice I have come to understand how psychiatric narrative emerges as fractal, implicating collage and accumulation in its construction.

Chapter Four
Leading on from relationships drawn between psychical space and space of the museum in the previous chapter, this section contains an examination of reciprocal relationships between space and disorder more broadly, led by endeavours within my written practice to build or image a destabilising sense of place. This research encompasses the effects of modern space on psychological wellbeing. I detail concerns within my written practice in relation to the construction of psychical and fractal space, with specific reference to Taking Vermeer to the Cinema, a chapter of my fiction, The Detroit Project, in which a ghost of Vermeer returns to contemporary Delft.

In this chapter I build on my research into a cultural interpretation of madness through its fictionalising as self-reflecting spectacle - as argued in the previous section. I present potential mirroring devices here – analysing the make-up and materials of the mirror itself as a device which, through being held up to us, can extend a destabilizing or myth-making interior gaze, and I ask, where can it be found? To do this I assess how the mirror stage in Lacanian theory relates to site with reference to the production of social and psychical space - from Henri Lefebvre to Victor Burgin.

This chapter of the thesis includes a study of the emergence of agoraphobia as a precursor to the ways in which hoarding becomes a spatialised condition (a condition diagnosed via a space) and thus located in a fault-line between disciplines. In this chapter, psychoanalytic theory, spatial practice/theory, feminist theory and narratology are intertwined in order to establish the ways in which the modern city and psychological ideas became collaged together.

As well as building and reflecting on cultural interpretations of madness through its fictionalising as self-reflecting spectacle I am now setting it in space and questioning the production of that space as psychical. In The Detroit Project I am writing space as a subject. As I write, it evolves into as much a central character as Nell and Martha, the women at the centre of the fiction, are. The condition of its (fictional) writing reflects the historical, critical and theoretical landscape in this chapter.
4.0($) Socket to me

It is important to note here that this chapter of the thesis contains an analysis of events in a fiction. I am very aware that I am about to siphon theoretical voices to reflect upon a fictional text I wrote in much more obscured light. Theoretical fiction, *The Detroit Project*, which forms part of this PhD by practice, is not an illustration of the theoretical ideas discussed in this section of the thesis. The theory is, in fact its illustration or parallel. I wrote on a hunch then edited with increased clarity. It is with the hindsight of having written the fiction that I come now to the theory – to organise it into an appropriate form and edge its content into legible focus – not as justification but as counterpart. I am, here, embedding the fiction within the context of all the reading and thinking that has surrounded its writing. Reading Deborah Levy’s book *Things I Don’t Want to Know* (a response to George Orwell’s 1946 essay, *Why I Write*) has been essential to me in acknowledging this process. This small volume encapsulates how a writer may select subjects from webs of references that build outwards from autobiography and into the world. In *Things I Don’t Want to Know*, Levy suggests how subjects and meaning can often arrive within unconscious processes and makes a case for their organisation through collisions: where embedded personal histories entwine with knowledge and social experience. She ends with a practicality:

... when life was very hard and I simply couldn’t see where there was to get to, it occurred to me that where I had to get to was that socket. Even more useful to a writer than a room of her own is an extension lead and a variety of adaptors for Europe, Asia and Africa. (Levy, 2014, p: 108)

In this short, seemingly innocuous, throwaway ending, Deborah Levy conjures up two ancestors. The phrase ‘I simply couldn’t see where there was to get to’ coming from Sylvia Plath and the ‘room of her own’ rented from Virginia Woolf. Both authors are in the background for Levy, but neither drives the search for the socket or renders it illustrative of their earlier ruminations on writing. I am keeping this embedded critical knowledge of Levy’s in mind in the writing of this section, which exposes my own writing to the theory I may know and keep in mind but which I seek to parallel not exemplify.

4.1(Yp) Your Place or Mine? (Some men on space)
In *The Detroit Project* I refer to my principal character, Nell Fuller’s own spatially located research. Throughout *The Detroit Project* the location shifts between a probable London and several speculative, fictive versions of Detroit. This takes the form of alternate chapters in each city. An extreme location shift occurs four chapters in, when we are in neither city, and the authorial voice changes. Set in Delft, *Taking Vermeer to the Cinema* is a piece of writing inserted into *The Detroit Project*. While *The Detroit Project* is written in the third person, this inserted text is in the first person and is ‘authored’ by Nell. The context of this dislodged writing is introduced in the chapter that precedes it:

In the fictitious ‘Taking Vermeer to the Cinema’ (2008) Nell had written about visits to five European cities in which her experience had been transformed by the local insights of a dead male companion. As the resurrected ‘expert’ became her guide so did the city come to exist twice in suspended time: Simultaneously in its current post-Modern inception and in an anecdotal past evoked by memory and mis-memory. Although she wrote as herself each time, including historical details of sites and gathered misunderstandings accrued as biography for her Zombie friends, Nell had felt, ultimately, as if she wrote as them.

(*The Detroit Project*, Chapter Three: The Industrial Zone)

Like the mirror I described in the previous chapter, held up to reflect the spectacle of disorder, this inserted text acts as a reflexive device within the larger work. In this section, Nell reflects on madness and the city. This is done through an anecdotal account of a day Nell spent in contemporary Delft with a disoriented, somehow re-awakened incarnation of Vermeer. As Nell’s Vermeer becomes ‘modernised’ through his re-experiencing of Delft, so does he increasingly suffer neurosis. *Taking Vermeer to the Cinema*, drives aspects of my research into psychological space, and also invests in the psychoanalytic / therapeutic practice room as a site enclosing (or defining) disorder within the destabilised city. The text reflects theories about how the Modern city affected and catalysed disorder in its population.

The idea of moving through space with a posthumous historical companion was not new to me in writing this piece. It has been a longstanding preoccupation or fantasy of

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79 The full text of *Taking Vermeer to the Cinema* can be located within *The Detroit Project* as Chapter Four. Pages of the text are numerated as if they have been pulled from elsewhere.
mine. Its attraction as a narrative is partly that it presupposes an investment in the empirical knowledge of any present moment and implicates each party in a recounting of their time to the other. Objects and situations can become alien and dislodged from their familiar contexts. Conversations between subjects from different eras allow histories to take place in the present and pose a challenge to human progress. A further reason for my attraction to this kind of fantastical cross-century dialogue is the notion of a face-off between the pre- and post-psychoanalytic: Namely, the creation of a situation through which uses and values of self-knowledge can be questioned.

Choosing Vermeer for this treatment reflects upon how he is remembered. Very little archival information exists about Vermeer’s life, making his biography a form of archaeological unearthing or detection. There has been much historical filling-in given what is known about the culture, economics and society of Delft at the time. A lack of seventeenth century archive material is starkly contrasted with the seemingly inexhaustible plethora of Vermeer memorabilia and reproductions peppered through Delft. I was led by the notion of resurrecting Vermeer to balk at his endless reflection in the city, coupled with Nell’s critical acknowledgement of Delft as a shrine of marketing to its most infamous former inhabitant.

I counted as we walked. We passed sixteen corrupted versions of the Girl With The Pearl Earring (and one Woman Reading a Letter). Vermeer’s paintings adorned bike wheels, cushions, the walls of bagel bars and spattered collage-like onto information

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80 In writing this – and having virtually finished a first draft of The Detroit Project - I am reminded of Penelope Farmer’s children’s novel Charlotte Sometimes from 1969, which I read at around the age of ten. (A few years before I read the book it had had something of a resurrection via the song Charlotte Sometimes by The Cure.) It occurs to me that this is possibly where this cross-era conversation first embedded itself in my head as a literary possibility. In Farmer’s boarding school novel, Charlotte slips between her own moment in 1958 and another girl, Clare’s life in 1918. Although they cannot meet, as each is embodying the other, they do communicate via a diary and the book includes knowingness on Charlotte’s part with regard to the institutions and politics surrounding Clare’s earlier life. Charlotte Sometimes had an enormous effect on me and, I now see, on the fiction I have gravitated to both reading and writing over the years. Although the location remains the same throughout (and is appropriately claustrophobic), the slips in time and experience suggest possibilities for psychological disorientation across shifting versions of the present.

81 ‘The material evidence for 17th-century Dutch artists, including Johannes Vermeer, consists chiefly of depositional, business transactional and other documents drawn up by notaries and municipal clerks that force us to consider a person's life from a particular angle closer to his adversarial than to his amicable relations with his fellow men. Notorial depositional such as these give us a partial view of individual personalities not only because they emphasize the controversial side of their activities but because they are by and large woefully one-sided and incomplete. Only major events of Vermeer's life, baptism, marriage, and burial-were recorded in the vellum-bound registers of the Old or the New Church which are preserved now in the Delft archives.’

posts outside historical sites. The multiplicity of his image was ironic in honour of a painter who had had such a small output.

(The Detroit Project, Chapter Four: Taking Vermeer to the Cinema, p: 31)

On a research trip to Delft for the writing of this chapter I encountered forty-three non-paper re-appropriations of Vermeer’s works in unanticipated places and in the branding of contemporary products with (little or) no contextual relationship to the paintings superficially imposed upon them. These were all noted on a twenty-minute orientation walk around the city and rendered the city itself a kind of Museum Gift Shop. Photographs of some of these re-appropriations are included as images in the chapter Taking Vermeer to the Cinema.

It is important to the text that Nell’s Vermeer sees himself reflected through this splintering of his life’s work as accumulated around the city. I use his works (and then the medium of cinema) as literal mirrors or devices through which Nell’s Vermeer ultimately comes undone. These proliferations of self become a means through which he identifies splits in himself, which are not (just) an affect of the time-travel. The split between the success of his life in others’ eyes and its realities to himself; the split between the uniqueness and autography of his works and their flat multiplicity in reproduction; the split between the slowness of time in painting and the speed of cinema. This fracturing and the propagation of a mise-en-abyme around the characterisation of Vermeer begins early in the text when Nell finds herself picking out clothes to fit Colin Firth’s portrayal of Vermeer rather than the man himself. Through both Nell and Vermeer’s processing of these dualities I intend him to become increasingly neurotic.

82 The forty-three appropriations were: Twelve different mugs with Vermeer paintings emblazoned; One Girl With The Pearl Earring mouse mat; One painting of a bagel with the head of the Girl With The Pearl Earring; One Woman in Blue Reading a Letter scarf; One printed shawl with an image of The Little Street; One Girl With The Pearl Earring bicycle wheel; Four different satchels with printed images from Vermeer paintings; Three different coaster sets; Two different cushions; Two boxes of ‘Vermeer’ chocolate – one with the painter’s signature and another with an image of View of Delft; Six different fridge magnets; One knife block with an embossed signature of Vermeer; One Girl With The Pearl Earring picnic mat; One set of six plates with printed images of different Vermeer paintings; One advertisement for a local opticians with Girl With The Pearl Earring wearing glasses; One wrapped gouda with The Milkmaid on the plastic wrapper; One fountain pen with a printed image of A Lady Writing; One pendant with an enamel Girl With The Pearl Earring; One set of pearl earrings with an enamel Girl With The Pearl Earring.

83 British actor, Colin Firth played the role of Vermeer in a 2003 screen adaptation of the Tracy Chevalier novel Girl With a Pearl Earring (dir. Peter Webber).
In *The Detroit Project* more generally it is Nell who is split in time and space. Although – as author - she has narrative control in *Taking Vermeer to the Cinema* her own story is no less fractured. As such, her account of meeting Vermeer is a projection.

I am building on my research into a cultural interpretation of madness through its fictionalising as self-reflected spectacle - as argued in the previous section. This chapter of the PhD research poses a question about the make-up and materials of the *mirror* itself. What (device) is it that, through being held up to us, can extend a destabilizing or myth-making interior gaze? Where can it be found? I present potential mirroring devices (such as a life-size cardboard cut-out portrait) throughout *Taking Vermeer to the Cinema* and also inflict these devices upon social space throughout *The Detroit Project*. In the scope of the longer work these include a city-sponsored mural reflecting its contemporary life; the labyrinthine annals of E-bay as urban
cartography, and the globalised domestic ubiquity of IKEA. Each of these mirrors is recognisable and quotidian, manifesting a city's effects on consciousness and – within the fiction - raising questions about personal and collective identities.

I thought indoors might help so ushered my charge into a bookshop and thought of casually leading him to his section.

Inside, we were welcomed by a sideways-leaning, cut-out Vermeer. He was holding an arrow, which read, in Dutch, ‘This way to over 400 years of Delft history’. I wondered if there were too many layers of translation for Vermeer to unravel in order to find himself in this flattened out version. Explaining cardboard may help. I thought of the ‘flat daddies’ sent to the families of American servicemen in the first gulf war and what their cardboard heroism implied of the masculine-domestic. Perhaps the real thing had to be misplaced in its own space in order to be replaced by its flat-pack self. Not quite solid enough to be yet commemorative, the flat daddy’s temporal memorialising must be eerily pre-emptive. I winced to imagine sitting at the table with a static, smiling decoy of my own father. Vermeer was taking baby steps now and he moved towards the Self Help section with a fixed expression, much like his pixilated doppelganger. There were so many layers of removal here in this backless, paper version of a painted version of a painter.

(The Detroit Project, Chapter Four: Taking Vermeer to the Cinema, p: 26)

Nell’s Vermeer stumbles unknowingly into the territories of terminologies belonging to twentieth century modes of self-reflection. This particular encounter with his cardboard ‘flat daddy’ is, deliberately, a fictional construction modelled on Lacanian psychoanalytic theory surrounding ‘the mirror stage’. Here, Nell’s Vermeer is faced with his own image and forced to reconcile new forms of understanding of and connections to that image and its subjectivities. Lacan wrote, in 1949, of the ‘mirror stage’ that,

(…) the important point is that this form situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being of the subject asymptotically, whatever the success of the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve as I his discordance with his own reality. (Lacan, J, 1977)
Rather than render Nell’s Vermeer an infant – the developmental moment where Lacan’s theory originates - my intent is to write mirror stages beyond development and implicate the space in a psychical dialogue through limitless reflections. I want to initiate refractions within the contemporised city which are specifically psychoanalytic and psychological, alongside socio-political. A specific aim within The Detroit Project (as a whole) is to entwine discourses around the psychological and social production of space. This includes direct encounters between aesthetic discourses about subjectivity and representation, and urban theory about the socio-politics and production of space. Some of these ideas derive from historical debates – precursors to virtualisations of space and the integrations of feminist theory into mid-twentieth century assumptions in urban and spatial theory. I am referring to these (now ageing) discussions because they are important to the eras of the creation and subsequent abandonment of Detroit (where in Fordist times history was bunk) and to the destabilising of histories in the fictional awakening of an Old Master. I am writing through encounters with fractures in the historical narration of space and making a case for these fractures as constant, everyday negotiations in cities.

Henri Lefebvre rejects the ‘glacial surface’ of the psychoanalytic mirror as abstract, and as an underhand and captivating device onto which the body is frozen ‘rigid’. This underlines his wider rejection of psychoanalytic theory and unconscious readings of the construction of social space, in keeping with the neo-Marxism that would prohibit investment in the ‘I’ of Lacanian thought. Affording discussion of the unconscious little more than a footnote in The Production of Space, Lefebvre criticises Lacan’s use of the mirror as a prioritising of language over space saying there is ‘little justification for any systematic generalisation from the effects of this particular object, whose role is properly confined within the immediate vicinity of the body.’ (Lefebvre, 1991, p: 185)

84 At the risk of making any feminist theory a footnote, I want to be specific here… Reassertions of urban theory I have navigated in the writing of The Detroit Project have included works by Beatriz Colomina; Rosalyn Deutsche, Elizabeth Grosz and Martha Rosler. Authors I have turned to for theory on digital space and the virtual city have included James Bridle, Paul Virilio and Sadie Plant.

85 Henry Ford is often misquoted as having said ‘History is bunk.’ What he actually said was ‘I don’t know much about history, and I wouldn’t give a nickel for all the history in the world. It means nothing to me. History is more or less bunk. It’s tradition. We don’t want tradition. We want to live in the present and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today.’ Ford made these comments in an interview in the Chicago Tribune on 25 May 1916. All of which is fairly ironic given the state of Detroit’s automotive industry today.

86 I am using mirror here as both a literal mirror – with regard to the infant to whom Lacan refers in recognition of his own reflection and the separations that induces – and in reference to other self-reflexive devices to which social, modern and psychological space exposes us or implicates our subjectivities.
Lefebvre’s dismissal of the mirror as device or metaphor, and his solidifying of it as object, creates deliberate boundaries to an acceptance of the role of the unconscious in the formation of space. However, despite this lack of the psychical, it is not that there is no incorporation of mental space in his reading. The full human (l’homme totale) of Lefebvrian space lives not only in everyday, collectively perceptible space and the known space of its devisors (such as cartographers, urban planners, developers, speculators), but also in an imaginative ‘lived’ space, accessed via literature and the arts. The Detroit Project is shelved in this ‘lived’ space – as a fiction which promotes access to imaginary perceptible spaces - but also accesses its wormhole – a web of psychological and unconscious spaces, or, as the artist and critic, Victor Burgin terms it, ‘psychical space’ (Burgin, 1996, p: 47).

Burgin derives this term from Freud’s ‘psychical reality’, where, ‘between perception and consciousness’, and quite despite its immateriality, events (of an unconscious nature) can take place (ibid. p: 47). It is this taking place, explains Burgin, that allows for the allocation of ‘space’ to the terminology. Where urban theories concerning the production of space have tended to maintain the indissolubility of the spatial and social, Burgin insists that the socio-spatial cannot be torn from the psychical. He asserts that spatial consciousness has an unconscious derived through the social construction of identities and through the subject that is itself formed spatially. This subject understands the role of space and place in his own narrative. As art historian, Rosalyn Deutsche acknowledges, Burgin views ‘the politics of representation as spatial politics’ (Deutsche, 1997, p: 185). Space is itself a representation and there therefore exists "no space of representation without a subject, and no subject without a space it is not. No subject, therefore, without a boundary." (Burgin, 1996, p: 52)

It seems to me impossible that a modern discourse around the social production of space ever existed without embracing its psychological production. After all, the without and within of how we occupy our worlds are not only at the very heart of how we locate ourselves in groups to even begin to establish the social but are also at the centre of the psychological game that is the commerce which shapes our cities. Market capitalism and its promotion is an awkward bedfellow of psychical urban space and, no doubt, its very acknowledgement is at the crux of why Lefebvrian theorists of social space could not look the psychologists in the ‘I’.

Unlike Lefebvre, Michel de Certeau compares social, spatial practices with unconscious processes and walking with reverie. He connects the mirror stage to the
politics of urban space. His assertion that the child is spatially placed during the mirror stage, to identify ‘itself as one ...but another’ (De Certeau, 1988, p: 109), sets the stage for further spatial practices that that are, intrinsically, ‘to be other and to move toward the other’ (ibid. p: 110).

… This relationship of oneself to oneself governs the internal alterations of the place (the relations among its strata) or the pedestrian unfolding of the stories accumulated in a place (moving about the city and travelling).
(Ibid. p: 110)

Whilst I am less concerned with a generalising quotidian or communal version of the everyday as a form of spatial occupancy in The Detroit Project, I am concerned with repeated activities and the recurring responses of my characters – as individuals - to the worlds they both inhabit and create for themselves. As their worlds shift and change around them – siphoned through various industrial or social alterations – their collecting behaviours remain intact, inescapably so, yet their psychologies both reflect and affect their environments. In The Detroit Project I am writing space as a subject. It is as much a central character as Nell and Martha are. This is particularly true of Detroit whose incarnations – in alternate chapters – both conjure the real city in its abandonment and an imagined, subjective city in response. By making the London-based Nell a writer of cities, and not simply looked in upon as she inhabits one, I intend to make her both interpreter and interpreted. Martha (who is Nell’s reflection in Detroit) is an inhabitant of her city but is also its mayor, meaning she too comes to fashion the space she occupies. In this way both women are agents of spatial change as well as psychological subjects whose disorder is rooted in domestic space. There is a call and response between private psychical space and its inhabitant, and wider urban psychical space, with each finding its reflection in the other.

In this sense I am drawing upon heterotopias where the mythic and real conjoin in a playful co-option of both mirror stage and actual mirror. In Taking Vermeer to the Cinema, the cinema itself (‘a very odd rectangular room, at the end of which, on a two-dimensional screen, one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space’ Foucault, 1986, p: 25) is one among several heterotopias. All of these are actual spaces coexisting with their reflected, unreal reconstitutions – rendering the mirror as a place itself and perhaps, therefore, suggesting it as the actual location of the fiction. In ‘Of
Other Spaces’, Foucault refers to the mirror as both utopia and heterotopia:

The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counter-action on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground of this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect. (Ibid, p: 24)

When I first began writing The Detroit Project I searched for an existing geometric or diagrammatic model into which to imagine the text’s physicality and structure, methodologically. I remembered The Crystal Maze, a British game show I had watched in the 1990’s. The Crystal Maze (Channel 4, 15 February 1990 - 10 August 1995) was filmed in an adapted aircraft hanger in Essex and took place across a vast set consisting of four themed zones. A made-for-TV team of six players who had only just met traversed the interlinked zones in ill-fitting, genderless jumpsuits, playing complex physical or mental games in cell-like spaces.

The games were played by individual players – as selected by their team captain dependent on the task. The player’s objective was to collect a crystal as a reward for successful mastery of the task and avoid being locked into the cell for taking too long over it. Whilst in the cell a player could be watched by fellow team members, with an overview of the situation, who shouted encouragement and/or instructions from outside. This overview was doubled by the invisible presence of the television audience, also often shouting instructions (or insults) in their homes. Beyond the cells lay a geodesic crystal dome as a final port of call. Remaining players cashed in their hard-earned crystals for allocated time in the Buckminster-Fuller inspired dome, where a wind fan blew gold and silver foil around the contestants. Collecting one hundred

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87 I also drew upon Foucault’s ‘Of Other Spaces’ in Chapter Two in reference to Geoffrey Farmer’s practice and the heterotopic nature of collages and crisis heterotopias of hoards.
more gold than silver flecks won the team a (potentially horrific) prize of a holiday with five accompanying track-suited strangers.

*The Crystal Maze* map showing zones from series 4 – 6
The Crystal Maze – this strange hangar of televised running and yelling - seems to me now to be the ultimate illustration of heterotopic theory. It perfectly sums up the field of mirrored absences described by Foucault in ‘Of Other Spaces’ and is, at once, a heterotopia of deviation; a theatre; a cinema; a historical representation ‘linked to slices in time’; a temporal heterotopia functioning like a festival or fairground, and possesses a ‘system of opening and closing that both isolates (it) and makes (it) penetrable… To get in one must have certain permission and make certain gestures.’ (Foucault, 1986, p: 26)⁸⁸

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⁸⁸ Interestingly, the British Crystal Maze game show was originally based on a long-running French show called Fort Boyard. The set for Fort Boyard was built on a real fort, located off the West coast of France between the Île-d’Aix and the Île d’Oléron. It was under Napoleon Bonaparte and completed in 1857. Foucault ends his treatise on heterotopias with the image of a ship as the ‘heterotopia par excellence’ (Foucault, 1986, p: 27) and it seems Fort Boyard in its second phase of life as the site of a historically referential, mirroring, televised, almost ‘floating piece of space’ is almost too good to be true.
Writing *The Detroit Project*, I kept an image of *The Crystal Maze* cartography and clips of the game show to hand and often referred to them. They reminded me of the folding, mirroring, psychical, socio-spatial principles upheld in the world(s) I wanted to build. Particularly complex sections of *The Detroit Project* are very much led by the geometry of *The Crystal Maze* including *Taking Vermeer to the Cinema*. There is a section of Chapter Six, which takes place across two mirroring branches of IKEA and then folds into an imagined version of FÜRNI, an IKEA-a-like catalogue from the film *Fight Club*. In these complex attempts to weave collectively known real and imaginary spaces into each other I needed this diagrammatic guide as a reminder that speculative, occupied spaces containing a web of social activities and unconscious operations can co-exist with historical versions of themselves. A problem with the application of Foucault’s heterotopia as a model though is that the spaces he is referring to do exist and in that sense can therefore never be wholly applied to written space. *The Detroit Project* has to take place in *Thirspace*: Space that is simultaneously real and imagined. *The Detroit Project* is written through known histories of places but has a dislodged, speculative present and evolves as only written space can, across multiple time-space continuum and the only-just impossibilities of its existence. For critical writer and urban theoretician, Edward Soja, his theory of Thirspace is a Borgesian amalgam of ‘subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history’ (Soja, 1996, p: 57). Soja’s versions (or visions) of Los Angeles are compatible with my Detroits: strangely habitable spaces for speculative fictions, drawing as they do from what we already know and permit ourselves to imagine.

The spaces of *The Detroit Project* are a series of interconnected, reflexive sites. As a reflection on collections, hoards and collages they pile up, deriving meaning (I hope) from mass and connectivity. This pile extends what can be seen of this research (by a reader) into a network of half-seen notes and unseen digitised research beyond its visible geometries or boundaries. For example, the footnotes to this section – which include a Napoleonic fort; Colin Firth; a souvenir knife block; the phrase ‘worth a tinker’s damn’; a Canadian collagist and a feminist technologist – create their own off-stage web of perspectivaly challenged sub-footnotes. Research is not horizontal (storing things in an endless reflection of grounded space as a mirror would, perhaps, imply) but also subterranean, implicating the burial, dirtying or erosion of lost and entropic space. In order to understand the psychical powers of the hoard, the mirror
would need to be able to reach into space, to be, in some way archaeological or probing. Employing optical models for space can be said to have ‘encouraged the confusion of real space with psychical space, the psychoanalytic object with the real object.’ (Burgin, 1996, p: 67) If hoarders are diagnosed via their - often inaccessible - spaces and not their unconscious (so that their spaces stand-in for their unconscious), an optical metaphor is untenable.

Victor Burgin stated in 1996 that ‘in this changed space, this new geometry’ the abject – which nestles between subject and object - can no longer be efficiently banished. Indeed, in the shape-shifting of post-technological, perceptual and non-Euclidian space, the vanishing point to which abjection could be admonished has itself gained new perspective and ‘spaces once conceived of as separated, segregated, now overlap.’ (Burgin, 1996, p: 44) Burgin un-sticks psychical space from the space of visual perception. The abject – originally a transgression of borders - would now have to reconfigure itself to new versions of those boundaries (bodily and spatial) and entirely new geometries: ‘Our space has changed and our optical models for negotiating it are now out of their time.’ (Burgin, 1996, p: 56) He called for a new ‘realist project’, suggesting ‘psychical realism’ as ‘impossible, but nevertheless…’ (ibid. p: 56)

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By the time darkness falls on her day with Vermeer, it is clear to Nell that his thawing has been detrimental to his state of mind. He asks her ‘Where do you put your Mad these days?’ and they make their way to a psychiatric unit at the local hospital. It is here that Nell’s Vermeer is beckoned to join in a board game with ‘six other Vermeers’.

My intention was never to insinuate – by this ending - that Nell had not, in fact, spent her day with Vermeer but more to set up the city as a cryogenic location for multiple instances of this kind of resurrection and subsequent meltdown. Crucially, Nell’s Vermeer does not join a circle of six other wannabe Vermeers or Vermeer impersonators. Nell’s Vermeer joins six other Vermeers, making it very possible that they are all the man himself, as much as they may be reflective of a disorder inflicted by the city.

In that fractal location, a loss of self to one’s reflection is very possible. Writing of the mirror stage as a threshold to both the joys and despairs of self-knowledge, Catherine Clément, cultural critic and author, expounds:
The mirror phase protects and alienates; if the mirror cracks because of another round of syncope, one could just as easily not come back, and remain the other that one has become. One can go mad from it.

(Clément, 1994, p: 122)

Reading the chapter ‘The Birth of Identity and the Syncope of the Image: Lacan’ in Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture by Catherine Clément (1994) I am struck by the empathy she affords the psychoanalytic subject. It occurs to me how often psychoanalysis is referred to as theoretical or disciplinary without any reference to madness, neuroses or an actual analysand or, indeed, person as its subject – or concern. Clément’s notes on vulnerability, humanity and suffering are ethically poignant and important to underline.

Feminist readings of spatial theory are clear in their foregrounding of individual and bodily experience (as no less political or social and no less manifesting an ideology). Rosalyn Deutsche bemoans the lack of ‘direct encounters between aesthetic discourses about the politics of representation and urban discourses about the politics of space’, citing Burgin’s work on space as representation long overdue (Deutsche, 1997, p: 185). By setting The Detroit Project in speculative space that is neither virtual nor particularly technological, I return to these debates from the 1990’s where inhabited, psychical space is being addressed alongside the potential for technology to warp it. I want to reassert the ways in which objects and site manifest representation alongside and in parallel to technologies. Our physical selves - in correlation to site and objects - still exist and second lives have only added to the representational and potentially sensorial qualities of actualities.

When the set-less physical city as game show is called upon to disorientate, technology must be taken away. In BBC’s ‘reality’ television series The Apprentice – now in its tenth series - there is an unmentioned elephant in the room. In order to fulfil the tasks assigned, two teams of upcoming business entrepreneurs are given use of cars and smart-like-phones. It is never made clear what exactly their phones do. Unlike the smart-phones used by all other professionals they encounter through their mock-work adventures, the contestants on The Apprentice appear to have no access to information via theirs. These phone-like decoys appear to have the sole function of voice calls yet replicate the look and desirability of the latest gadget – a caricature of capitalist professionalism. Cut off from information, mapping and communications
beyond the team itself (their own domestic unit), yet with no reference made to this portal-lack, impractically dressed contestants must find their way through the urban space of our childhoods. In her writing on game show cartography, Nell Fuller refers to this absence of guide as a ‘perceived lack’ with direct correlation to Freudian analysis. There is ‘no actual diagnosis of this problem’ made on the show, just ‘implication and farce’ (Fuller, 2012, p: 85). Fuller refers to ‘the impossible task of gaining the keys to the city’ (ibid. p: 85) and suggests that engaging feminist urban theory and a psychoanalytic reading of the show, would superimpose contestants on The Apprentice onto urban women of the nineteenth century.

Contestants in The Apprentice inhabit a world where shops are real places that close without announcement, maps are printed papers, and complicated words on laminated sheets require a brighter public to help translate them. In this tech-free, non-virtual zone, perhaps real space – politico-socio-psychical-sensorial-critical-historical - is game show enough.

4.2 (Sf) Space Fright

The sky is a remote hope far, far above it...The street wears us out. And when all is said and done we have to admit it disgusts us.
(Le Corbusier, May 1929, p: 118)

Taking Vermeer to the Cinema relates to the body of spatial research I have discussed in a myriad of ways. It is a piece about hoards and collections in that my intent was to present a case study for psychological investment in excess and the effects of seeing oneself repeated through stuff that mounts up. The proliferation of Vermeer memorabilia swallows the painter as an individual and comes to dominate the city as a fractal, self-reflective space in which he can no longer comfortably manoeuvre. The clutter that clings to him is destabilising. The economic mores of both Vermeer’s era (with its Tulip Crash of 1637) and Nell’s (with its cultural marketing) are entwined to depict the ways in which status, stability and collection come to be associated.

The disorder experienced by Vermeer in Nell’s text is catalysed by his encounter with an altered urban space. His destabilisation builds spatially and the writing moves from location to location around the contemporised city – from exterior to interior – from café
to bookshop to cinema. In the piece I refer to the narrative origins of agoraphobia as ‘peur d’espaces’ (or fear of spaces) and allow Nell to reflect on urban modernity as, not only psychical space and heterotopia, but also a precursor to contemporary disorder.89

Watching Vermeer stepping hopscotch-style along the pavement in avoidance of things both seen and unseen, I was reminded of how French mathematician and philosopher, Blaise Pascal’s 1654 near-miss in a carriage hurtling towards the Seine had caused him to persistently find a yawning abyss by his side. This psychological-architectural void remained with him like a faithful but unwanted dog until his death eight years later. From the 1870’s Pascal’s Disease or ‘la peur d’espaces’ was often cited as the earliest model for agoraphobia and thought to have been precipitated by the changing, modern city and the new fears it presented, Freud later attached this model to hysteria. If I believed this then I was watching its acceleration.

(The Detroit Project, Chapter Four: Taking Vermeer to the Cinema, p: 25-26)

The psychopathologising of the modern city in response to growing anxiety disorders, mental disturbance and phobic fears became a popularly held notion from the 1870’s; a theory upheld by many physicians, mind doctors, social commentators and even architects of the city. The mid-to-late nineteenth century saw increased instances of this ‘street fear’, first notably defined as ‘agoraphobia’ by the German psychologist, Carl Otto Westphal in 187190. Its symptoms – often occurring in open public spaces - included dizziness, shaking, hot flushes and fear of death. Of course, it is quite possible that the recording of a surge in such anxieties correlates directly with a burgeoning psychoanalytic field: the coincidence in time and space of social and psychological analysis and modernity becomes located in this disorder. The chronologising of effects of living in the modern city is thus simultaneously spatial and exacerbated by the growth of disciplines inclined to document it.

89 In effect, Delft is a surrogate for the modern city of Nell’s ruminations. Her story is set between the cultural life of a constantly evolving London and the ruins of contemporary Detroit. As a visitor to Delft I saw it as a precarious place in which to set a pseudo-historical encounter, with its meticulous twinning of past and present.

90 The term agoraphobia – although coined by Westphal – was not in common usage until the mid twentieth century. Before then, the condition was variously termed Platzfurcht or Platzscheu (fear of public squares); Platzschwindel (dizziness in public squares); Strassenangst (fear of streets); Raumangst or Peur d’espaces (fear of space) and Topophobia.
Nineteenth and early twentieth century debates around the onset of such phobia have been written about extensively by architectural and spatial theorists concerned with unconscious and subjective readings of space. These include critical works by Anthony Vidler (Warped Space, 2001 and ‘Agoraphobia: Spatial Estrangement in Georg Simmel and Siegfried Kracauer’, 1991), Esther da Costa Meyer (‘La donna è mobile’, 1995) and Paul Carter (Repressed Spaces: The Poetics of Agoraphobia, 2002). Vidler’s studies locate a modern fear of spaces at the intersection of debates between physicians, social critics and urban planners.

"Metropolis" by the First World War had become a word that implied both a physical site and a pathological state, which, for better or for worse (…), epitomized modern life.
(Vidler, 1991, p: 32)

The anxieties of the metropolis validated urban critics who bemoaned its degradation of the social, undermining of individual responsibilities and the potential unsafety of the crowd. Famously, the Austrian architect Camillo Sitte, in his nostalgia for the traditional city square and critique of the development of Vienna’s Ringstrasse, suggested in 1898, that ‘even people formed out of stone and metal, on their monumental pedestals, are attacked by this malady.’91 The idea that a condition of modernity induces psychological trauma in statues underlines the threat to history seen by metropolitan disorder. To Sitte, a fear of spaces was sociological – a direct response to modern urbanism – and not an underlying pathology. He iterated the ‘emotional importance of walls’ (Meyer, 1995, p: 8) to social comfort and protested the takedown of Vienna’s ramparts that would open the city to becoming a metropolis, with spaces for rich and poor bleeding into one another.

Despite the attack levelled at the modern city for causing psychological disturbance among its populations, Jean-Martin Charcot and his fellow neurologist and protégée Gilles de la Tourette saw agoraphobia, claustrophobia and vertigo as hereditary, ‘neuropathic states that, in reality constitute distinct and autonomous morbid species’92. In tandem, William James suggested these spatial fears were passed to man from animal behaviours and rituals associated with hunt and prey: ‘many wild

91 Camillo Sitte, City Planning According to Artistic Principles, 1965, p: 45.
animals, especially rodents, cling to cover, and only venture on a dash across the open as a desperate measure.\textsuperscript{93}

Instances of agoraphobia have always been more prevalent among women (it is still, incredibly, referred to commonly as ‘housewife’s disease’). Over eight-five percent of cases are said to be female agoraphobes\textsuperscript{94} and, in lieu of this - and despite much of the literature of the day focusing on case studies of male patients - Freud took an opposing view to reigning positions on hereditary or spatial causes. He saw spatial anxiety as directly linked to (female) sexual ‘abnormalities’, referring to agoraphobia and anxieties around the street as specific to a romanticising of prostitution (and its inner repression as a desire), or fear of a sufferer’s own potential infidelity and choices. Thus the street as a social site and not open space with all its emptiness is the threat. Space itself was therefore symptomatic not causal. It is not hard, in fact, to see how the street could be a site of anxiety for repressed or sheltered women coming out of the home. For Freud, space could not be the root cause of anxiety to an agoraphobe as much as ‘internal danger is transformed into an external one... in his phobia he makes a displacement and is now afraid of an external situation’. (Freud, Standard edition, 22:84)\textsuperscript{95}

Leading female Freudian psychoanalysts of the first half of the twentieth century, including Helene Deutsch and Anny Katan, tended to align themselves with Freud’s thesis on agoraphobia and Deutsch does refer to ‘the temptations of the street’ as a leading factor in the agoraphobic tendencies she observed in practice. She noted ‘the street constitutes a special danger to exhibitionist impulses.’ (Deutsch, 1929, p: 65)

Expanding the idea of repression existing at the heart of spatial anxiety, Esther da Costa has described how, for Freud, ‘space per se was incidental to the disease’ (Meyer, 1995, p: 9)


\textsuperscript{94} Esther da Costa Meyer makes an important point in her essay ‘La donna è mobile’ (1995) that ‘the vast majority of these [sufferers] are white and affluent, we simply do not know enough about the extent of the disease and the forms it takes in other ethnic groups that have no access to psychiatry and lack the economic resources to stay at home.’ Meyer is essentially saying that having the disease requires having the luxury of not going out—an ethically complex statement.

Desire, thwarted by prohibition, transfers itself by metonymy to a nearby object. Urban and architectural space become eroticized through displacement – the final resting place of the repressed (and overdetermined) signified, at the end of a long metonymic chain. (Ibid. p: 9)

Importantly, Meyer repositions repressions manifested within agoraphobia, aligning them not with spatial readings, but their anchoring within capitalism. Correlations of class, gender and ethnicity to the emergence of phobias in urban space highlight the links between pathology and society. Meyer underlines Freud's 'successful' assertions of the components of the symptomatology of agoraphobia (Ibid. p: 10) but also his failure to make these societal connections, particularly with regard to women and the home. Whilst the home of Freudian analysis was not always secure, Freud did not extend this language to a gendered understanding of societal repression and the potential for anxiety compounded by the opening up of space, and choice.

Paul Carter refers in his book, *Repressed Spaces*, to an instance of Freud's own neurosis in the street. He quotes a passage from the Viennese psychoanalyst and former pupil of Freud, Theodore Reik. Reik described a walk in Vienna with Freud:

> We talked mostly about analytic cases during the walk. When we crossed a street that had heavy traffic, Freud hesitated as if he did not want to cross. I attributed the hesitancy to the caution of the old man, but to my astonishment he took my arm and said, 'You see, there is a survival of my old agoraphobia, which troubled me much in younger years.'
> (Reik, 1956, p: 260)\(^{96}\)

Reik does not gloss over this revelation, seen as a ‘personal quirk’ (Carter, 2002, introduction) by those biographers who have referred to Freud’s ‘peur d’espaces’ at all. Instead he highlights its significance to the evolution of psychoanalytic theory, ascribing Freud’s theoretical motivations to this ‘confession of a lingering fear of crossing open places’. Reik defines a ‘hidden missing link’ between Freud’s ‘primarily psychological interests and his later occupation with the neuroses.’ Placing the analyst

on the couch, Carter goes on to suggest how Freud's own repression drove his dismissal of space as a trigger for agoraphobia:

> Was it possible, I wondered, that, at the origin of psychoanalysis an *environmental neurosis* had been repressed? Interpreting his agoraphobia as a neurotic symptom concealing something else, Freud turned away from the possibility that his hesitation at the roadside was an entirely *reasonable* response to the sickness of the urban scene. The 'heavy traffic' of which he was afraid was not, in the first instance, his own unruly instinctual drives. It was due to a more mundane and measurable form of driving: the immensely increased volume and accelerated pace of traffic in Vienna’s newly enlarged roads and squares.

(Ibid. Introduction)

In my focus on agoraphobia here, I am really asking, through *The Detroit Project*: Can space make us ill? Here, there is safety in interior spaces that – certainly in Martha’s case - could fit pathological definitions of Hoarding Disorder. But I am also writing into complex, disorderly, psychical spaces outside the confines of the home - other kinds of inhabited, engaged-in spaces, such as work places, exercise classes, museums, theatres and malls (built and half-built). The city, of course, is not always the street or square as discussions of agoraphobia might imply but the *agora* itself – or marketplace. A fear of the market implies a fear of consumption. As our homes become increasingly merged with marketplaces and themselves commodified, it is harder to see the walls between outside and in. Intriguingly, instances of agoraphobia are in rapid decline.

Meyer refers to this eroding boundary between home and marketplace as ‘the fragile and illusory frontier between domestic and urban space that agoraphobes hang on to, the nerve-wracked, angst-ridden threshold behind which they retrench themselves.’ (Meyer, 1996, p: 11)

As a new disorder (or set of disorders) is classified and considered, questions are asked at the time about whether contemporary life is causing or exacerbating them into being or prevalence.97 These are questions being asked about hoarding, as they

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97 As it is where Nell takes Vermeer, I want to include a short note here on cinema and the importance of cultural interpretations of place. Paul Carter elaborates in *Repressed Spaces* that:

> Obviously, the psychoanalysts of Berlin and Vienna avoided the cinema. Otherwise they could have studied ‘street fear’ in the comfort of the dark. The ‘street films’ emanating from Berlin in
were about agoraphobia. These disorders share a relationship to lived-in space, alongside societal questions about inclusion, environment, consumption and what is public or private space. New disciplines emerge at the borders of these factors.

In the interpretation of urban and architectural space, then, as opposed to the explanation of the anxieties of the inhabitant, phobia and fear play a fundamental role. It is as if space, with all its invasive and boundary-breaking properties, takes up anxiety for its own and carries it into the realms of aesthetic theory, representational practice, and modernist ideology indiscriminately, and without regard for the “scientific” ends of the psychological inquiries that initially made the connection.

(Vidler, 2001, p: 42)

There is a subtext to the question, of whether space can make us ill and it is whether space could be said to be making us ill. This question concerns the languages and disciplines of classification. Early definitions of agoraphobia took shape in central Europe against a backdrop of the new, emerging disciplines of urban sociology and psychoanalysis. Via agoraphobia we can access how a disorder comes to be formed: That is, how language is applied and how clinical and non-clinical arguments are posited side by side. Through an engagement with each other certain coalitions were formed (drawing upon others such as literature and abstraction) and we came to think of psychical space and the city’s unconscious. This chicken-and-egg scenario prompts me to implicate pathology and disorder in a clash of historical, sociological, architectural fields, pushing our understanding of knowledge production and the formation of phenomenology. This too, then is collage.

I am thinking through Hoarding Disorder as aesthetic; spatial; collagist; museological; archival; archaeological and environmental, adding these to the production of terms

the 1920s and ‘30s – Siegfried Kracauer goes so far as to describe them as a distinct genre – add up to a modern anatomy of agoraphobia… Freed of psychologism, film was able to explore the poetics of agoraphobia, to show that the principles of agoraphobic behaviour were aesthetically coherent… And they manage this without recourse to a hypothesis of the unconscious… what the analyst regarded as a conflict to be resolved, the film-maker grasped as the catalyst of a narrative, and as in the consulting room, so in the cinema, the attractions of the street sometimes outweighed its perils.’ (Carter, 2002, kindle version, Chapter 4)

Examples of these German Street Films include: Karl Grune’s The Street, 1923; Rudolf Pabst’s The Joyless Street, 1925; Bruno Rahn’s Tragedy of the Street, 1927.

98 Camillo Sitte’s unrealised plans for the Ringstrasse in Vienna (1898) are still used in urban planning today as examples of how social ideas can translate into architectures. (Meyer, 1996, p: 8 and Vidler, 2001, p: 27 – 28)
associated with a psychological condition. The historical example of agoraphobia is a useful model for how a cultural situation becomes both implicated in the awakening of a condition into public consciousness and how that condition then itself produces culture.

*Bike with The Pearl Earring.* Photograph of a shop front, Delft, 2011
4.3 (^) Molada

Notes on becoming a hospital (an excerpt) 2011

My grandmother describes herself as Continental. She comes from nowhere – a sort of aristocratic nomad with no obvious lineage. Her three names are testament to this. As she moved she re-fashioned name to place: Dorothea in Hitler’s Germany; Dvora in Golda’s Israel; Deborah in Thatcher’s Britain. I call her Sabta – It’s a British kid’s way of saying Grandma in Hebrew.

This is not an introduction to a person; it’s more of a drum-roll to the performance of a building.

- You know what they’d shout, mostly?
- Er, no. What?
- You bastard. You bloody bastard. To their husbands. But sometimes they’d attack the nurses too.

It, apparently, never became quite normal-seeming to go to sleep as a child listening to the lullaby of women giving birth directly upstairs.

Molada, now a youth hostel, sits perched at the top of Mount Carmel. Or, at least the way it has been described to me it does. In my mind it teeters and this strong Bauhaus rock of a thing seems on the edge of a kind of vertiginous escape from itself. I’m going to assume this is because I am dreaming a place that exists so it has two ways of coming into being for me: A solid and a gas.

Amikam Toren
It was originally built as a luxury hotel with the funding of a Ms. Luba Segal who had it modelled in Bauhaus-style, like the pleasantries of home, as was typical in the exiled Euro Israel of the day. It sat there for the views and waited for its private bedrooms to be decked out in Egyptian cotton. The money fell through, just at the point of completion, and those bedrooms ended up guarding gynaecological personal histories against starched sheets.

My great-grandfather bought the hotel-hospital on its perch with his medical partner Dr. Piña Rutenberg (of the electricity Rutenbergs, you know) and it underwent minimal architectural metamorphosis to become Israel’s greatest obstetrics unit. It was marketed to its private clients as a homely venture with the doctor and his young family living on site.

The house was tucked around the back and had a shared key on a hook, which all hospital staff could use. There was no kitchen so the hospital kitchen staff fed the family. There was no laundry so the big-armed women from the hospital washhouse gathered the family’s clothes and linen, returning them starched and stiff by night time. My grandmother, who lived in this functionless flat until her late teens and the beginnings of her own training as a nurse, was not allowed into the hospital (no place for a child), which had a different entrance on the opposite side. It seemed like miles away but was the engine of their lives and soundtrack of an otherwise quiet home: A big Modernist box where women went to shout and came out with pink babies.

Amikam Toren

It worked because, even if you moaned about it, the fact remained that this wasn’t Kristalnacht. Escape comes in many forms and this was my great-grandfather’s. This was a place for the containing of a manic depressive, where she was never to cook or clean but gather routine from what was left for her to do. A place for a workaholic to be surrounded by work and women who were not his wife. A place for a building to perform two linked functions in perfect synchronicity neither giving in to the full weight of the other. Clinical-domesticity and a lumpen German steady object glued to the top of a Middle Eastern mountain, suppressing its slippery function among the olive trees.
The above was written in response to clinical, cultural and personal stories I have been told about the uncanny spaces of my great-grandfather’s hospital. Rather than include my own visual work in the text, I have incorporated two works by Israeli artist, Amikam Toren. The precariousness of the objects in Toren’s works resounds with the psychical narrations of space and object attachments with which I am concerned. These works seem to me to be constructed like German composite nouns – ready to be broken apart again into the sum of their parts yet utterly meant to be.99

Molada, near Mt. Carmel, Palestine. Circa 1937

99 Amikam and I work in the same building, a fact, which also seems relevant.
The indexical nature of the chapter headings within this thesis implicates the text is occupying a location. The aim was not only to create an imagined whereabouts for the chapters of this thesis but also to devise structural links between text/content and location as a condition for the work. I discuss the textuality of place as a consideration\textsuperscript{100} in \textit{The Detroit Project} and other writings within this PhD but it is also very present as a concern in my visual practice. Texts that appear in collages and drawings-from-collages are integral to their readings, both as a nod to the origin of these found elements and their removal from a location. Obliquely this links place and disorder somewhere other than psychical-spatial theory and through a simple dis- and re-placement of materials. This reading is \textit{beyond} the text – something that sits behind the words themselves. Also beyond the text is the scaling-up the condition of the written form provides for the work. I don’t have the capacity or economics to build an entire city to house my ideas about psychical space but the written word expands to fit.

In the large collage, \textit{How Do They Get Rid of It?} which includes objects and drawing there are two texts: There is a printed page from a book that reads ‘HOW DO THEY GET RID OF IT?’ and there is also a drawing from a poster I found slumped down in the window of a fishmonger. The poster was replete with taxonomical images of seafood and the text reads, ‘Epic: The world’s finest seafood selected especially for you.’

When I selected these pages for their inclusion in this composite work I was looking for language, which reinforced ideas around selection and removal.\textsuperscript{101} The piece was created as an attempt to build a city from discarded, flyaway materials but to make that city project possess weight of a different kind - a substance and pride. The piece came out of writing \textit{The Detroit Project} and a problem I kept coming across in addressing the physical weight of Detroit despite its fall from industrial strength. These differences in weight were complex to write. When faced with attempts to reinvent Detroit I have chosen to parallel removal and restoration with ideological counterparts. These include a version of the city that functions like a vast auction house (as an E-bay city); a version

\textsuperscript{100} See particularly Chapter Seven.
\textsuperscript{101} This is not a work about seafood so, in many ways that is a red herring.
of the city that turns to urban farming in its dereliction and a Detroit that is redefined as a site for clinical research as a social enterprise.

How Do They Get Rid of It?
(Papers, vacuum bag, bulldog clip, pencil drawing, ink drawing, tape, wood, carpet tiles, vinyl, opera glasses, insulation foam, polystyrene, cardboard, fabric, plasterboard, pom-poms.), 2013
This, largely paper-based, work, How Do They Get Rid of It? is also under threat of destruction. It responds to breath – with its unfixed elements swaying slightly – and to handling due to the whiteness and fragility of the materials incorporated. The plasterboard panel at the back is engraved with cuts and slices, meaning that if it were to be lifted it would fall easily into the sum of its parts. The only rooted, solid element of the work is a pair of sports/opera glasses that look out from the piece into the middle distance. This is not a gaze at the viewer as it is, of course, unlikely that the viewer would be lying on the floor. I toyed with positioning a human presence in this work for some time and settled on these glasses because they suggest a looking-out from inside the work. I wanted to create a space with its vision (or conscious) turned elsewhere.

The two pages containing sections of text serve as proposals or drafts within the piece. The question, HOW DO THEY GET RID OF IT? is self-effacing, calling into question the longevity of the work. On the contrary, ‘Epic: The world’s finest seafood selected especially for you’ suggests something privileged and of value. The pages are clipped and taped precariously to a collapsing board. These were words on the poster I drew in detail in order to relocate its investment in commerce and taxonomy.

In The Detroit Project, Martha is surrounded and affected by the sloganism of each new vision of Detroit she coerces into being. In Chapter Five (Farmland) where sowing seeds is community fitness, Martha struggles to align herself with the language of its promotion despite her affiliation with the ideology:

Outside, the autumn sun shone on a poster announcing the classes for the following week: Plantercise Classes. Held here daily. Get Grassroots Physical. It bothered Martha that the language was just off-grammar and a little too Reagan.

(The Detroit Project, Chapter Five)\textsuperscript{102}

Martha’s Detroit is not fixed. It changes with each chapter and, although she is inserted afresh each time, her own domestic space grows, chronologically, ever more chaotic. There is a fragility to her occupation of the city and of her home. I can keep demolishing and re-imagining them.

\textsuperscript{102} ‘off-grammar’ is very deliberately not a phrase… it needed to be an invention so as to support the slippages in language irritating Martha.
Through creating these textual and visual works which invest inaccessible, precarious or inhospitable spaces with distorted depths of field and by challenging perceptions of occupation and materiality internally, I hope to suggest that social and urban space has responded to its role as trigger of anxiety by becoming, increasingly, a knowing manipulator of its inhabitants’ psychologies.

In the interpretation of urban and architectural space, then as opposed to the explanation of the anxieties of the inhabitant, phobia and fear play a fundamental role. It is as if space, with all its invasive and boundary breaking properties, takes up anxiety for its own and carries it into the realms of aesthetic theory, representational practice, and modernist ideology, indiscriminately, and without regard for the “scientific” ends of the psychological inquiries that initially made the connection.

(Vidler, 2001 pp: 42 – 43)

4.5 (f) Bookmark

In his book *The World of Interiors* (2007), artist Marc Camille Chaimowicz creates a corruptive whole from a staged appropriation of an issue of *The World of Interiors* magazine. From opening, the book elicits its pretence of being both one thing (a glossy, familiar interior design magazine) and another (a catalogue of Chaimowicz’s works which play upon subjects in design, domesticity and the unconscious). Each seems to have become covert through its exposure to the other. Chaimowicz’s immersive, dysfunctional interiors (to be seen but not touched) become coveted spaces – sought-after apartments buried in the fabric of the magazine. Adverts turn into pastiche with erasures and collaged insertions obscuring potential sales. Copy is rendered illegible decoration through its overlaying with a mask of painted pattern. In all, this is a magazine in transition. It is becoming conscious – exposing itself. The *Interior* of the title is a careful displacement of space onto the unconscious.

Embedded in *The World of Interiors* are some of Chaimowicz’s best known works and various texts articulating the histories of his practice. Among them is a tour of his own home titled ‘This is Not a Flat’. This article is possibly the most simulacric of the catalogue. It sits perfectly within the context of the magazine and yet contains ironies, which question its source. This fakery seeps out through its emotional content:
With an old-fashioned elegance combined with a fastidious poetry, he endeavoured to make the decoration of his home portray the dullest and most trivial activities of his life as a tenant, as a single man, as a host, as a friend, as a lover, thereby creating an ideal place to shelter from the outside world. The dream enveloped the real world.
(Marie-France Boyer\textsuperscript{103} in Chaimowicz, 2007, p: 174)

A sense that Chaimowicz is an inhabitant of the text – of the book as a whole, and aspirationally also of the magazine - rather than of his flat, pervades. In the work, \textit{Dream an Anecdote}, which is included in the book, a narrative is juxtaposed with photographs of interiors and they are placed on top of a monochromatic patterned surface. The images take on a superficiality in their flatness but the narration is sentimental. The work is introduced with a text in the third person describing it:

\textsuperscript{103} There is an appropriate doubling here too, in that Marie-France Boyer is both a performer and writer.
It is perhaps a result of his growing obsessional relationship to the space and its contents that Chaimowicz dreams of its violation, an event one is tempted to read as symptomatic of an artist’s anxiety about the public misappropriation of his work.

(Chaimowicz, 2007, p: 62)

The continued narration evolves a tale of the artist’s space – which is simultaneously home and gallery - being destroyed by an anonymous woman and boys. The place becomes a ruin and, stepping in and out of the fantasy, the narration slips between the first and third person. This shift in voices complicates the locating of conscientiousness and implicates both images and text in a no-man’s land between waking and dreaming.

Attaching the unconscious to place, and a sense of place to the page underpins writing The Detroit Project. Choosing to sometimes allow Nell to write her own texts (in the first person) places the consciousness of the writing itself under scrutiny.

To write the city (as I have been doing with The Detroit Project) it is essential to view space beyond the optical, physical and social and to consider how it is also formed unconsciously. To write space is to already inhabit this realm beyond optics and function within Edward Soja’s multifarious ‘Thirdspace’

Rosalyn Deutsche wrote of the values to spatial theory of acknowledging the unconscious:

Meaning arises in the construction of representations, which do not simply reveal a prior reality but are, rather, sites where images are set up as reality and where subjects are produced. Psychoanalysis became central to the politics of representation because, as had been argued for decades, only through the concept of a subject with an unconscious is it possible to understand the workings and persistence of ideology.

(Deutsche, 1997, p 184)

From the construction of terms and ideas around agoraphobia evolving since the 1870’s - and in coincidence with the birth of the modern European city and psychoanalysis – it is possible to see how cultural, spatial, social and psychoanalytic theories can combine to form collective understanding of disorder and of combined psychical-spatial issues. Via agoraphobia we can access how a disorder comes to be shaped: That is, how definition is applied and how clinical and theoretical arguments
are found in proximity. The example of agoraphobia is a useful sample for how a cultural situation becomes both implicated in the birth of a condition into public realisation and how that condition then itself produces culture.

Employing optical models for space can be said to have ‘encouraged the confusion of real space with psychical space, the psychoanalytic object with the real object.’ (Burgin, 1996, p: 67) And, if hoarders are diagnosed via their - often impenetrable - spaces and not their unconscious (so that their spaces are surrogates for their unconscious), an optical metaphor is unsustainable.
Chapter Five
Fiction - in theory (The Library)

Summary:

Continuing from the previous chapter in an examination of the relationships between the unconscious and the written word, research for this chapter has involved writing about the work (rationally; orderly) and within the work (performatively; compulsively).

Beginning with Mieke Bal’s assertion that collection is itself a narrative I counter her view that that the collector is centre stage and posit that the collector’s agency is sometimes handed over to the movements and possible authority or takeover of things.

Drawing from Rosalind Krauss’ examination of critical theory posing as literature, I expand here upon her assessment of the paraliterary with relation to the written component of my practice.

In this section of the thesis, psychoanalysis and fiction are shelved together. Using the psychoanalytic/psychiatric case study as a model for blurring borders between fiction, experience and theory, I am creating fictive case studies in my practice. Through this methodology I am able to question how materials within the analysis of disorder become separated from those assigned to its representation. Here, I position psychoanalytic record-keeping as academic and fictive and consider collation and disorder as psycho-literary methodologies. Using Dorrit Cohn’s example, I examine the narratology in Freud’s files and their consignation to an archive. I consider how the analyst/analysand relationship implicates a ‘parodic refraction’ (Marcus, 1975 p: 307) and suggest how a fictive tendency may have merged via the analysand’s own exposure to suggestible works of fiction.
This important chapter contains a critique of psychoanalytical note-keeping as pseudo-scientific, which has been the lead-in, for me, into thinking about the weight of fictive accounts in defining a field of investigation.
In this chapter I am going to look closely at relationships between fiction and psychoanalysis and consider how they figure in aspects of my practice, with specific focus on character and collection in *The Detroit Project*.

In her essay ‘Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting’ Mieke Bal sustains an argument that collection *is* narrative. She reveals a paradox within narrative, which she then discusses through a testing of its potential reflection within collection:

> Objectively narratives exist as texts, printed and made accessible; at the same time, they are subjectively produced by writer and reader… all narratives sustain the claim that ‘facts’ are being put on the table. Yet all narratives are not only told by a narrative agent, the narrator, who is the linguistic subject of utterance; the report given by the narrator is also, inevitably, focused by a subjective point of view, an agent of vision whose view of the events will influence our interpretation of them.’

(Mieke Bal in Elsner & Cardinal, 1994, p: 98)

Bal asks if this paradox can withstand a shifting of medium so that *things* become stories and the ‘medium consists of real, hard material objects,’ (ibid. p: 99) The ensuing analysis allows many different motivational strategies within collection to perform as narrative motivations and for the collector to function as narrative agent. With regard to plot, Bal employs shifts within the status of the object for the collector to plot the direction of the narrative. She refers to the accidental ‘beginning’ of collection as a pursuit – perhaps the gift of a single object that precipitates the desire or motivation for accumulating more. The ‘middle’ is the transfer of object to object-as-sign or surrogate for meaning or significance. Towards an ‘ending’, she refers to the potential for completion of a collection, and posing the death-deferring aspects of amassing objects and their immortalising affect on the collector as potentially

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104 Included in Elsner & Cardinal, 1994, p: 97
conclusive devices, notwithstanding deterioration and amelioration.

The problems I see with Bal’s suggestion of collection as narrative lie in a distance between what she proposes – that the objects are the stories and the medium the objects – and the evolution of her subsequent narrative in which the collector is at the centre of the text. In my own work I have been negotiating ways in which it is what is collected or collated that is handed control of the narration. In The Detroit Project there are slippages between the human protagonists’ control of their lives and excesses and a sense that it is the stuff of their collections that is in charge. There are shifting degrees of psychological clarity within the text and agency is sometimes handed over to the movements and possible authority or takeover of things.

… she made something and it was full of thought but it just didn’t work in practice.

She pushed the gluey rectangle into a makeshift bin composed of a bursting bag hung from a lose nail on the door. The PVA fused with some off cuts of electrical wiring, a pamphlet on Chlamydia and a rubber foot pad from a dining chair. A battery fell out the bottom of the bag.

(from The Detroit Project, Chapter Three: The Industrial Zone)

5.1F(h/) Handling

My writing and visual practice are, imperatively, not illustrative of each other but do share a context and, despite the significant shift in materials, a methodology. Collation and compulsion are both subjects and methods within both written and visual aspects of my art practice. In the writing, boundaries between compulsion and rationality are negotiated through characters who, themselves, are grappling with their relationships to collection and clutter. The fiction is a mise-en-abyme, rendering the piece a kind of container for collection(s) in its own right, including the apparently ‘published’ texts written by its protagonist, Nell Fuller. This is not designed to make the fiction difficult to read but to allow a complex flow, commonality or thread of communication between the disparate spaces, psychologies and materials.

I am interested in the text as object – as an inert, pre-emptive thing – a closed book or set of printed pages kept in a space, in a bag, on a shelf – as well as being silently read or openly performed. My research into hoarding, collection and installation allows for this work to figure as a physical thing (whatever its contents) within an assessment
of functionless things, archived or strewn. Considering the text itself as an interactive, potentialised, provisional object, subject to stillness and physical manipulations, is important to the work and what is contained therein.

In *Double Fold*, where he attempts to rally support for the preservation of archived printed newspapers, the American writer Nicholson Baker describes how the experience of reading a printed object differs from an engagement with the same material on a screen. Although Baker is talking here of the choreographic practice of reading a newspaper, there is an equivalency with books. *Double Fold* was written before the advent of the kindle or e-reader but has a resonance now beyond Baker’s experience of the newspaper.

The size of newspapers is indispensable to our experience of their content. The newspaper reader proceeds nonlinearly, not as he would holding a typical book, but circling around the opened double-page spread, perhaps clockwise, or counterclockwise, moving his whole head as well his eyes, guided by island landmarks like photos and ads. Even the papers that have no pictures at all have a visual exorbitance, a horizon-usurping presence that microfilm’s image (which one observer in the seventies compared to ‘kissing through a pane of glass’) subverts and trivializes.


In considering the physicality and object-ness of printed material, at a moment of transformation within the publishing industry, I am including a reflexive dialogue within my writing in consideration of its own materiality. Several sections of *The Detroit Project* are physically separate inserts, written by my principal character, Nell. One chapter is visible only as an online document. These sections are reminders of the physicality of the page and its handling, as well its production, archiving, questionable authenticity and authorship. In a lecture at New York’s New Museum of Contemporary Art, the cultural theorist and technologist, James Bridle acknowledged the readability of e-books whilst also detailing what they can never serve to replicate for the reader. He suggested that part of the appeal of the physical book to audiences is its potential for physical collection - its display after reading.

105 This chapter of *The Detroit Project* consists solely of a page with a URL on it. Readers can then follow the link to continue reading, with a choice to print out or read on screen the ‘missing’ chapter.
'A sense of its ownership is really important. Feeling that a book is your own and understanding what happens to it after you finish reading it. That books are *souvenirs* in themselves and we put them on a shelf – that’s a really important part of it.’

(Bridle, Rhizome, 2012)

My principal character in *The Detroit Project* is seemingly wise to these inflections of material, as she contributes her own writings to the fiction (and, in fact, to this thesis where they are acknowledged as references). *The Detroit Project* is a reflexive work, in which fictive researcher, Nell Fuller, answers the same research question as I do here (so, she is also questioning psychologies and spaces of accumulation), but this is seen through the lens and distractions of her own compulsive activity. As I have detailed in Chapter Two, Hoarding Disorder comes with varying degrees of insight – some people who hoard have little or no insight into their compulsion. Collectors, of course, are often interested in display and are assumed to gather with intent. Nell is somewhere in-between and, as a researcher, has access to the resources of an academy, which supports her self-awareness, at least initially. Her character is constructed with the understanding that our psychologies don’t just creep on us, nor should they belong entirely to a reader’s interpretation and that there are varying degrees of insight into any human condition. Sometimes Nell *knows* how her attachments, compulsions and responses to objects are affecting her daily life. Sometimes the reader knows more.

5.2P(s) A translation comes much later than the original

Writing Nell’s psychology and insight is an activity that has been mediated by proofing and editorial advice from Dr. Alberto Pertusa. Dr. Pertsusa’s clinical psychiatric practice is focused on Hoarding and he was connected to the work group defining Hoarding Disorder for the DSM-5. His role in the writing has not been to suggest or create new material but to provide an ethical overview. His consultancy has allowed a *real* condition, its onset and its treatment, to sit behind the novelistic, fantastical elements of the work. Having a clinician’s editorial voice prevents me from unwittingly inventing aspects of disorder beyond the manifestations of an existing condition, whilst

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106 This subheading comes from Walter Benjamin’s text, *The Task of the Translator*, in which he writes that, ‘a translation issues from the original – not so much from its life but from its afterlife. For a translation comes much later than the original.’ (Benjamin, 1970, p: 69 – 82) I am using it here in reference to an analyst’s writing down of case studies after the fact.
also considering his authoritative role as psychological witness or expert. (Of course, Dr. Pertusa’s consultancy on this project has also allowed me another valuable insight beyond that of the condition: an insight into the role and voice of the psychiatrist.)

Invention is elsewhere in the writing – in other aspects of character and narrative building, in its critical-theoretical implications and, importantly, in the surrounding, metaphorical landscapes, architectures and aesthetics of the piece. Having an ethical framework for the psychological aspects of the work has, for me, supported a dynamic relationship between authentic and inauthentic experience within the work and, in wider terms, highlighted the cultural implications of the creation of fictive psychologies or case studies.

With the assumption of a normalisation of psychoanalytic language in critical and literary writing, and in everyday conversation, I want to use this opportunity to look back contextually to its evolution and development. In examining the establishment of criteria for naming and defining a disorder I returned to hysteria and the construction of methodologies for describing and establishing diagnoses. In Chapter Two I discussed the ‘dramaturgy’ of performed acts of hysteria and I found parallels between the creation of fake hoarders’ homes within diagnostic materials by contemporary clinicians and the photography commissioned by Jean-Martin Charcot of hysterical patients at the Salpêtrière Hospital in the late nineteenth century. The questionable truths (and legalities) of these visual tools and practices deployed within psychiatry are inexorably tied to writing down as a practice within the history of psychoanalytic case studies.

Using the case study within psychoanalytic practice as a model for blurring the borders between fiction, experience and theory, my practice-based research includes fiction writing alongside visual art and critical analysis. I am critiquing psychoanalytic history and theory through my writing-as-practice, creating fictive case studies in order to question how materials within disorder separate from those assigned to its representation.

107 This assertion of Charcot’s hysterics as ‘dramaturgy’ comes from Georges Didi-Huberman (2004), See Chapter Two of this thesis for a more detailed analysis.

108 Intriguingly, there is very little research on psychiatrists’ liabilities for use or creation of faulty diagnostic tools. Although this is tangential to the cultural and interpretive aspects of this Fine Art thesis, it is interesting to consider that this is an under-researched area of mental health law. The only article I have found which deals with this directly with regard to the naming and diagnosing of conditions in the DSM is: Cia Bearden, The Reality of the DSM in the Legal Arena: A Proposition for Curtailing Undesired Consequences of an Imperfect Tool, 13 Hous. J. Health L. & Pol’y 79 (2012).
Freud’s own archive is argued as fictive – the case study itself is an idea first assigned to him. Freud’s fictive re-tellings of an analysand’s experiences on (and off) his couch have been posited as a result of the time lapse between the patient’s recounting and the psychoanalyst’s writing-down. The problem, therefore, is of an interpretive account from within a proof-less science. Freud wrote, ‘The case studies I write should read like short stories’ (Freud and Breuer, 1955, pp: 160 - 161), perhaps evidence that he himself considered his writing a form of fiction. Freud’s writing has been compared to Dickens, Borges, Nabokov, Joyce and Proust among others.

Sven Spieker, in the chapter on ‘Freud’s Files’ in his 2008 book *The Big Archive* writes, ‘The question here is whether a narrative case history that is interpretive and descriptive rather than classificatory can pass for scientific.’ (Spieker, 2008 p: 48) Dorrit Cohn, whose expertise lay in the study of narrative form claims, in *The Distinction of Fiction*, that Freud is ‘asking his readers to convert to a different scientific code – a code in which texts that ‘read like short stories’ are not read as short stories’. (Cohn, 1999 p: 45) Freud’s pursuit as the psychoanalyst informs his notes and converts them - despite the narrative nature of the writing. In Cohn’s book she contests the post-structuralist view that all narratives are fictive and argues the case for a differentiation between factual and fictional narration, often within the same work where code-switching locates the reader.

Cohn argues that the linking of the psychoanalytic case study to fiction writing because of its narrative structure is too simplistic. Her understanding of the case study is that it is a telling which subsumes conscious speech and as such does not follow the usual pattern of ‘the deformed language of symptoms’ (Marcus, 1974 p: 278) so, it cannot be written like science. The argument that the writing is comparable to, imitative of, and shares tropes with late Victorian and modernist novels - as has been suggested by academic and literary critic, Steven Marcus and other writers on Freud – is put into context by Cohn. Is this not a chicken-and-egg scenario in that what the Freudian case study actually shares with the fiction of the day is a reflection of ‘psychologically damaging domestic situations’ (Cohn, 1999 p: 41) – for Freud through the confessions of his real patients and for his fiction-writing contemporaries, such as Ibsen, the lives of invented characters with psychological issues.

109 Spieker is a Professor of European Modernism at the University of California, Santa Barbara.
I want to go one step further than this and suggest that it may have been Freud’s patients who were complicit in adopting novelistic language to impart their own histories. His patients were often (in the cases of Dora, Anna O and the Wolf-Man) educated and highly literate. I am proposing that a patient’s case study (if accurately taken down) adopts that patient’s own voice and that that voice may be one for whom narrative ‘style’ is also a borrowed or appropriated form. Perhaps Freud’s case studies emerged through the voices of his literary patients alongside his own voice – in an appropriate act of counter-transference.

To take the case of Dora\textsuperscript{110} as an example: Dora’s relationship to literature, philosophy and her aptitude for writing were noted by Freud, and by others he references, in support (and sometimes defence) of her as a fantasist. Mantegazza’s \textit{Physiology of Love} ‘and books of that sort’ are cited as having ‘over-excited’ her imagination in the context of her relationship with Herr K (Freud, 1995 p: 182). Dora is apparently influenced by her governess’s literary recommendations, ‘an unmarried woman, no longer young, who was well read and of advanced views… [she] used to read every book on sexual life and similar subjects, and talked to the girl about them.’ (Freud, 1958 vol. 7, p: 36) There was a currency, around Dora, of literature pertaining to fantasy and sexual behaviour, which was being offered to her both in book form in and in discussion, which she clearly brought to her sessions with Freud. Marcus notes that ‘Freud and Dora often appear as unconscious, parodic refractions of each other.’ (Marcus, 1975 p: 307)

This ‘parodic refraction’ continued between the case study and literature of the time. As Freud’s notoriety grew and the language of psychoanalysis spread into common (intellectual) usage, so too did it enter the fiction of the day, creating a two-way conversation. Around the time Freud added his final footnotes to Dora’s case study, in 1923, Viennese literature, in particular, had imbibed his research. Arthur Schnitzler’s \textit{Dream Story} (1926) and Stefan Zweig’s \textit{Letter from an Unknown Woman} (1922), in departure from the realism of the previous century’s fiction, use the subconscious and inner thoughts of their characters as narrative constructs. Playing analyst to their characters, these writers digested their relationship with Freud (and his patients). It seems apt, therefore to suggest that this created a cyclical sharing of forms towards the narration of consciousness between analyst, analysand and author.

\textsuperscript{110} The pseudonym of Dora came from Freud’s favourite Dickens novel \textit{David Copperfield}, lest we forget the analyst also named the characters in his case studies.
French philosopher and scholar, Michel de Certeau uses Freudian theory to critique Freud’s use of narrative. In *The Freudian Novel: History and Literature* he notes that Freud’s realisation that he was writing like a fiction-writer came over him ‘as would a sickness. His manner of treating hysteria transforms his manner of writing.’ (de Certeau, 1981, p:123). De Certeau talks of a displacement towards a novelistic genre and concludes that ‘psychoanalytic conversion is a conversion to literature’.

Dorrit Cohn’s view is that Freud shapes his case studies via information obtained from his patients then employs narrative tropes in their re-telling: He ‘emplots’ therefore, rather than invents. Through his avoidance of ‘omniscient’ forms of narration (Cohn, 1999 p: 48) she sees Freud behaving more like a ‘theoretically informed (and reformed) modern historian’ than a fiction writer (ibid. p: 55). In the case study of the Wolf-Man, by addressing the reader, saying, ‘but I can assure the reader that I am no less critically inclined than he’ (Freud, 1971, p: 183) and therefore stepping back from the narrative, Freud reminds us of his position. For Cohn, this is a ‘highly emphatic version of the discursive pattern that characterises the narration of psychic events in historical biography’ (Cohn, 1999 p: 53).

The stepping back and asides to the reader employed by Freud throughout his case study of the Wolf-Man are narrative devices well understood to seduce and lead. Freud posits himself as a sceptical observer (‘I am afraid… the reader’s belief will abandon me’111), which is a pose notably unscientific in form, perhaps intended as familiar, conversational or even pedagogical. This persuasive, beckoning tone towards an unknown reader holds a lens up to the timbre of his psychoanalytic style. Throughout the case study interpretations are offered to both patient and reader as possible readings and implications of the dream and its repercussions. The Wolf-Man becomes - through his own willingness to submit to his analyst’s interpretations of his dreams and memories - co-opted editorially into the construction of a narrative where he is the lead character. Freud’s sceptical voice turns speculative, first questioning his readings of the dream of wolves (as a recollection of a sexual act), then suggesting its potential to the analysand and meeting with his acceptance, until finally announcing it as the unequivocally correct interpretation (Freud, 1971, p: 195). Readers are taken on a clue-laden journey where the analyst plays sleuth in unpicking the Wolf-man’s subconscious. As narrative devices start tumbling out of the writing-up of the case

111 Freud, 1971, p: 181
study and into suggestions within the analysis itself, I find myself asking whether it is not simply the case study that is a fiction but the actual analysis, a process so laden with the dramas of its own terms of engagement – transference, projection, counter-transference and so on - that is hard to see the wolves for the trees.

It is worth noting here that Freud’s predecessors such as Jean Martin Charcot and Pierre Janet wrote their own notes in purely clinical terms: point by point references to the body, symptoms and procedures. Notes by Janet and Charcot are not, therefore, discussed by literary theorists, and their psychological research does not contribute its evidence to Narratology, through which further perceptive layers and notions of consciousness become attributed to Freud. Here, he finds himself in the perhaps uncomfortable position of being an analysand in a literary discipline (and in the company of authors of fictions) where studies are made of how perception is affected through narrative structure.

In Dorrit Cohn’s earlier work, *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction* (1978), she summarises, through an extensive analysis of over one hundred literary works (written within the previous two hundred years) that anything, which goes on in a fictive mind can be transcribed through,

1. psycho-narration: the narrator's discourse about a character's consciousness; 2. quoted monologue: a character's mental discourse; 3. narrated monologue: a character's mental discourse in the guise of the narrator's discourse. (Cohn, 1978, p. 14)

The telling of non-verbal events and objects, that is, the narration of the subconscious, involves a continual engagement with Plato's crucial differentiation between the poet's and his characters' speeches: presentation (*diegesis*) therefore, rather than representation (*mimesis*). Evidently, in the novel form there is much that lies between what is verbal and non-verbal. To use a phrase of William James's as a generalising term for psychological states and events - it is 'mind-stuff'.

Here, I want to return to collage and my attempts through practice to generate a composite, layered approach to both stuff and psychology. William James wrote of ‘mind-stuff’ as ‘the theory that our mental states are compounds, expressed in its most radical form.’ (James, 1890, p: 146) This quote comes from a passage of text, in which James expresses his evolutionary ideas and discusses the potency of consciousness
in relation to the objective matter that constitutes the human brain. In my practice, writing-as-practice and this academic text I am acutely aware that there is a constant to-ing and fro-ing between mind and stuff and that a constituent element of my collagist approach is in seeking to create compounds.

In *The Detroit Project*, in order to refer to the differing modes of constructing a case study (and indeed psychologically complex characters), I am making collage again. I am using, and maybe mis-using, different narrative voices: adopting the codes of critical perspective, research angle, po-faced analysis, a novelistic approach and a hysterical body. My aim is not to analyse (nor be the analyst) but to keep on transferring, projecting, displacing, and converting as I do with my visual material. As well as narrating my characters’ consciousnesses, I refract their psychologies off the stuff that surrounds them and – as discussed - the complex psychical spaces they inhabit. The compound I am generating is both mind-stuff and stuff-minding.

5.3 an (additional note) On writing a relationship to hysteria

In considering how fictive minds are written alongside how case studies are developed, I have considered how to siphon hysteria (as a conceptual disorder) through narratology. Historical constructions of the hysterical have affiliations with Cohn’s psycho-narrations and quotations – from the contemporary perspective where hysteria is a disqualified condition\(^{112}\) with a performative past via Charcot’s photographic dramaturgy and its popularly mythologised, interpretative counterparts in theatre (such as Tennessee Williams’ Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire*), cinema (from Woody Allen’s *Zelig* to Glenn Close’s Alex Forrest in *Fatal Attraction*) and literature (from the character of Nicole – based on Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald - in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tender is the Night* to Michel Faber’s Agnes in *The Crimson Petal and the White*).\(^{113}\) Any links I am making with Hoarding Disorder are less psychological than they are historical and critical. I am interested in what it means to name a condition and assign definition to it. Hoarding Disorder is newly named (May 2013) and hysteria

\(^{112}\) Hysteria, now officially termed conversion disorder, is also considered to have been the umbrella (catch-all) condition framing many now separately understood conditions ranging from body dysmorphic disorder and hypochondria to post-traumatic stress disorder and dissociative identity disorder.

\(^{113}\) Interpretations within contemporary art include Australian artist, Tracey Moffat’s photographic series entitled *Laudanum* (1999) and Zoë Beloff’s practice which specifically examines the history of psychoanalysis. An important feminist literary ‘hysterie’ is the principal voice in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *The Yellow Wallpaper*.\(^{113}\)
now de-bunked to a large degree. The word ‘hysterical’ was removed in the DSM’s re-naming and re-thinking of the condition as ‘conversion disorder’ in 1980. With the psychological professions continuing to argue for or against terms and brackets in defining aspects of the human condition (which then go on to permit funding, research, diagnoses, treatments, insurance, drugs and specialisms) I am concerned with how these conditions are written, in the present and as susceptible to revisions. To some extent I am suggesting how cultural phenomena can develop around the mythologies and narratives assigned to a disorder and am questioning whether the mediatisation of hoarding contributes to its narration as separate from its actuality.

The dissociative aspects of hysteria (and its contemporary counterpart of conversion disorder) are of particular importance to writing *The Detroit Project*. In choosing to give Nell Fuller in London an alter-ego, Martha, in Detroit, I am giving her an association with the hysteric’s detachments from the self. In one way, this is another form of collection – to have another self is already clutter, which is, perhaps, rare for a collection of only two elements. I am also making these connections between the conditions in relation to the cultural performances (and colloquialisms) associated with them; how they are popularly narrated and the development of mythologies around them. I am doing things that fiction permits and which question histories of disorder and their narrations. I am not saying that hoarding is a form of hysteria or that hoarders invent other selves but merely adding to the clutter.

5.4 (N as M) Nell’s ventriloquism

The ‘quoted monologue’ of ‘mental discourse’ Dorrit Cohn refers to in *Transparent Minds*, as a possible mode of writing fictive consciousness, is something I rarely allow Nell - my aim being to subject the spaces and stuff around her to the fallout of her mental state. This has evolved as much from the relationship of site to diagnosis in Hoarding Disorder as those ideas within this research that have implicated how site and stuff themselves can articulate dysfunction.

In *The Detroit Project*, the suggestions of dysfunction as an exteriorising force, endorsing and co-opting a world of objects and domestic space, end up spiralling ever-outwards in increasing circles beyond Nell and her immediate location. The different versions of Detroit proposed in alternate chapters throughout the fiction, are extensions of Nell’s capacity to fill space and generate multi-layered realities, mixing objects and research. Martha is an extension of this too: another busy person with an
ailing parent, living semi-functionally among many coagulating things. Her condition is more advanced than Nell’s and, as she is Nell’s invention as well as my own, is doubly narrated. More clutter therefore. Martha is also written through her stuff and location but as this is channelled through Nell there is folding of time and space apparent in the Detroit-based chapters. There is also an inherent danger, both in the city’s shifting incarnations and in the encroaching hoard of Martha’s home.

He had started giving her things. A pocket card schedule from 1966 for GTW’s suburban service between Detroit and Pontiac. A plan of the original Packard Motor Car Company signed by its architect Albert Kahn, who was also famous for designing over 500 Soviet factories for Stalin. These were small and strangely nostalgic things from a practical man, which now lay under the fuzz in her handbag. Or under the towers of papers on her stove.

(from *The Detroit Project*, Chapter Five, Farmland)

My psychological portrait(s) of Nell (and therefore Martha) in *The Detroit Project*, through stuff and spaces, relate to case studies in that I juxtapose narratological concepts (that is, narrative structure and how it affects perception) with clinical authorial voices. I am creating a portrait of a person, and a condition, but without interior circumspection on Nell’s part. Rather, it remains a portrait of the world, as Nell engages with it, and she is painted in the negative spaces where that world folds onto and around her. For example, as Nell sits on her stairs to take a video call, the ways in which she props herself between objects and into the clutter become indicative of her normalising the increasingly dysfunctional space around her. There is an engulfing of Nell, a side effect of which is intended to muffle my own voice as her author. I am also made somewhat anonymous or impersonal through the shifts between spaces and types of text, particularly in those theoretical texts apparently published under Nell’s name. By never having visited Detroit, I am also, like Nell, held at a distance from a situation (though not its research) and this creates a kind of schism or dislocation. The city is both psychological metaphor and reference to a real space.
By way of explaining this authorial deflection of a subject’s self-reflection onto a space I want to offer the example of Samantha Morton’s character, Hazel in Synecdoche, New York (Charlie Kauffman, 2008) who lives in an eternally burning house. Hazel chooses to live in the house, knowing it is on fire. Her eventual death is therefore built into her present in a very literal way. The fire is also an incredible directorial conceit, framing her character into a space that is so extreme that she cannot define herself sufficiently beyond the choice she has made to live there. This type of reflection between a space and its user is employed throughout the film. Its main character, theatre director Caden Cotard, played by Philip Seymour Hoffman, is the recipient of a Mac Arthur Fellowship at a point at which his life is complex and his physical and mental health are deteriorating. He sets about making a large-scale production in an attempt to create brutal realism but it becomes an epic, obsessive mimesis of the city itself and its actors’ lives as they collide with Cotard’s own. The warehouse where the play is in development extends ever outwards and fills with doppelgangers, who begin playing each other in continually fragmented versions of reality and fiction.

In his lecture What is an Author?114 (1969), Foucault wrote of the complex position of the author to the text,

> In writing, the point is not to manifest or exalt the act of writing, nor is it to pin a subject within language; it is, rather, a question of creating a space into which

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114 *What is an Author* was a lecture presented to the Société Française de Philosophie on 22 February 1969 (Foucault also gave an altered version of this lecture in the United States in 1970). Translation is by Josué V. Harari and is (perhaps ironically) slightly modified.
the writing subject constantly disappears.

(Foucault, *What is an Author*, 1969)

This disappearance (rather than death) is integral to how I view my position in relation to Nell’s own voice and subjectivity as situation/space-defined.

In the course of writing *The Detroit Project* I have read aloud sections of the text, read sections with accompanying imagery in the form of slideshows and also performed texts in two (almost conversational) voices – my own and Nell’s. At the ICA in January 2014 I contributed a short paper to a conference, *Art School: The Future of Theory*. I realised that Nell Fuller had more demonstrable experience in talking about pedagogy than I do so I inserted her voice into my presentation. It felt important not to play her like an actor, as this could inauthenticate her voice on the subject. I considered many ways to move between my voice and Nell’s (from an audio file recording for one of us to a physical movement across the stage), before eventually settling on doing nothing except allowing each of us to refer to the other’s research or opinion each time we talked. In this way it was closest to the natural shifts in logic or persuasion, which writing permits its author in laying out events, spaces and subjects.

(The author function) does not refer purely and simply to a real individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects - positions that can be occupied by different classes of individuals.

(Foucault, *What is an Author?*, 1969)

This lecture by Foucault is perhaps an odd selection, as it now seems particularly historical. Of course, the virtual realm has since swallowed many twentieth century ideas about translations and modifications to identity and space. Contemporary writers such as Julian Dibbell and James Bridle critique the shifts in perspective afforded by a tangled web of online identities and readerships alongside the physical alterations in the book as form. They also acknowledge the proliferation of digital archiving as essential to an understanding of the growth and persuasion of these ideas. I have returned to the Foucault text though because it is at the heart of discourse around

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115 In another project I would extrapolate here to add a criticism of Foucault’s understanding of identity shifts in author’s names as un-inclusive (- all these men faking authorships/creating literary personae under other male pseudonyms…) There are many female authors missing from the text who became male writers in order to be published, such as George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans), Ellis and Currer Bell (Emily and Charlotte Brontë) and George Sand (Amantine Dupin). In these cases questions of authorship and integrity become embedded in the politics of having the right to a public voice.
trans-disciplinary practice and the book as authorative (alongside authored). His reflections on discourse as object and on the re-use and borrowing of ideas is of particular use to me in a project centred around collage and gathering:

First of all, discourses are objects of appropriation. The form of ownership from which they spring is of a rather particular type, one that has been codified for many years.

(Foucault, ibid.)

I am keen to explore this notion of the object status of discourse: Foucault asks some key questions, which remain essential to any consideration of a writer’s role; such as what is the ‘work’ and what does it include? I return again and again to his consideration of whether if Nietzsche slipped a ‘laundry list’ into a ‘workbook filled with aphorisms’ it still counts as part of his life’s work or should be edited out posthumously. It occurs to me that, in reading What is an Author? in English, there is a somewhat ironic issue here with its translation. To ask what is an author’s work in the English translation contextualises a practice as labour or graft. In the French, when Foucault asks of a legacy, ‘Parmi les millions de traces laissées par quelqu’un après sa mort, comment peut-on définir une oeuvre116?’ (Among the millions of traces left behind after someone’s death, how can one come to define what is the work?), he is not asking it of the labour but the product. Oeuvre can only be a noun, object or product whereas work cannot shake off its relationship to the act and time continuum of production. The difference between a work and an oeuvre is that the former contains the measure of toil and the latter a marketability or ownership. A writer’s ‘oeuvre’ is also collective – a life’s work – whereas ‘work’ could be a single output. I am asking therefore whether Foucault, in questioning the role of the author alongside the contents of his/her product misses a sense of the struggle or labour inherent to its translation in English. I return to Nell, some of whose oeuvre I am presenting as part of The Detroit Project, and whose laundry lists are very much included. It has continually occurred to me as important through the writing that the relationship I am building is between object and practice. These questions arising from the Foucault text have been useful in managing these ideas and locating reasons for their differentiation.

116 My bold text.
5.5C(s) Code-switching compound

In my visual work I have sometimes used a defunct projector with a paper cone as a false light beam to shed imagined light on an image or sculpture. In putting differing, disjointed narrative voices together in my writing I want to create a similar material relationship that exposes a lack, problem or dysfunction – not solely in the content of the writing which is connected to associations with objects – but also a further psychological issue - the spatial and durational problem of writing-down. The exposure of this problem (like the missing light beam in my visual practice) allows me to expose an awareness of the materiality of writing from within. This seems particularly important as there is such a physical absence of the visibility of labour in the published book-object in comparison to a visual art object.

Rosalind Krauss, in her text ‘Poststructuralism and the Paraliterary’, talks of the (then) emergence of an in-between mode within critical and philosophical discourse, where stylistic and theatrical interplay is invited in. Citing Barthes and Derrida as writers in this mode, she describes the paraliterary as a ‘space of debate, quotation, partisanship, betrayal, reconciliation’ but goes on to separate it from expectations of literature in that it is not the space of ‘unity, coherence or resolution’. (Krauss, 1986 p: 292) She argues the paraliterary as a product of modernist literature, which, through internally critiquing its own construction and expecting its readers to assume a consciously critical position, spawned its own reflection in critical texts. The text as a self-critiquing instrument is theatricalised and the reader must evoke many voices in order to gain access – the babble of a chorus comes to mind.

I am wondering, through my own practice, whether the adopting of codes within narrative and critical writing can be useful to a piece of writing which is essentially about collection, excess and disorder. It is useful for me to think about code switches as a way of making things mount up. As an object I would like the work to exist in multiple. I want the text to have a relationship to physical, potentially archival, space where it will, ultimately be stored. In this way it bears another resemblance to a case study in that it can’t resist being filed and spending most of its life closed. I want it to nod to writing as a form of visual work in both acknowledging and critiquing its own inert object-status, whilst having the potential to be called a novel and the potential to be called theory. Susan Stewart wrote,
The product of technology is not a function of a mutual context of making and use. It works to make invisible the labor that produced it, to appear as its own object, and thus to be self-perpetuating. Both the electric toaster and *Finnegan’s Wake* turn their makers into absent and invisible fictions.’ (Stewart, 1993 p: 8)

To add to this, I would like to expand on the quality of this object in relation to this labour-association. Surely, if the object or book is old enough, worn or labelled in some way it comes to represent the labour of the *reader or user* before that of its maker. There is, perhaps, a transferral of active participation (from maker to reader-user), which returns us to the idea of Freud’s patients drawing upon their own readership of fiction in the consulting room.

I bought a copy of a volume of J G Ballard short stories during the writing of this chapter. The story I was looking for was ‘The Enormous Space’ and I was searching for it because I thought I would use it to support ideas about writing habitable space and internal worlds. I bought a misprinted copy but did not realise this until I had
already taken the book home. Exactly where that story should have been was just a
space of thirteen pages in length. Inadvertently its refusal to be read, yet committal to
the archive, supported what would have been its attachment to this paper.

In an article in Metropolis M magazine in 2010, art-writer, Maria Fusco asked, ‘Should
the artist’s novel be read in the same way as the art object?’ (Fusco. 2010) And, in
tandem, whether the artist’s novel should be read in the same way as a fiction writer’s
novel. It strikes me that these questions have a stark relationship with the between-
modes I have just discussed with regard to Freud and fiction or criticism and literature.
(I would also question whether there is a way to read an art object.) Citing several
fictions, which sit in a fine art context (such as those by Liam Gillick and Keren Cytter),
she cites Tom McCarthy’s novel about re-enactment, Remainder, as a solitary
example of an artist’s crossover into mainstream fiction. For my own part, in
questioning through writing and practice how one arrives at an assessment of a
disorder, spatially, aesthetically, and through clinical record-keeping, it feels important
to hover, trying to keep the channels – and white noise - open between visual and
textual practice, defining neither as independent.

Fusco’s potted history of the artist’s novel includes Carl Andre’s Billy the Builder. She
notes that ‘there is a distinct leakage of Andre’s practice as text becomes form and yet
also discusses it.’ (Fusco, 2010) This word ‘leakage’ is useful to me: Something, which
is unconscious and congealing; resisting attempts to contain it.

The power of writing to be an expansive field is attached to this model of allowing one
mode of practice to flow into another. In Tom McCarthy’s Remainder the protagonist’s
compulsive desire to re-enact moments he felt most real is triggered by the realisation
of a sentimental attachment to a small crack in the skirting of a friend’s bathroom. He
writes, ‘I was going to re-create it: build it up again and live inside it. I’d work outwards
from the crack I’d just transcribed… And it had to be on the fifth, sixth or seventh floor.
I’d need to buy a new flat, one high up.’ (McCarthy, 2007 p: 69)

Here, the leaking from one practice into another (a potent relationship drawn between
writing, sculpture and performance) is pronounced, but what can conceivably be
physically built has no limits on the page where it would within sculpture or re-
enactment. The manifestation of McCarthy’s idea goes beyond what is economically
or materially feasible, as the medium (language) is not required to carry any physical
weight. In terms of demonstrating disorder, things can play out in their extreme and
writing becomes a vast, expansive medium through which to carry ideas about disorder: It can hold absolute impossibility. When I read *Remainder* I was left thinking how psychoanalysis has created a mythology rooted in words and interior space, which fiction replies to, as if by invitation.

In this chapter, through discourse analysis across various fields of study/research, I have drawn together scientific and narrative forms, specifically engaging psychiatric case notes as narratological, sharing traits with fiction. I have established, via the formation of story-like case studies in psychoanalysis how links between psycho-scientific thought and literature evolved. By using research within narratology it has been possible to draw connections between the reading material of Freud’s patients and the subsequent telling and re-telling of their own personal histories. In this way, culture informs scientific thought and language. It can also be seen to have (and have had) an effect on diagnostics. These ideas can be fed back into literary forms and my own writing has been informed by the narratological issues at stake in examining the case study and in what is at stake when ‘writing-down’ within psychological fields.

The ‘fictive’ written form of the case study acts as an equivalent to the heavily authored visual diagnostic tools I mentioned earlier. I am, as much, looking into the visual formation of psychological space and disorder as I am the ways in which related psycho-spatial terms and narratives emerge.

Freud wrote that ‘The case studies I write should read like short stories’ (Freud and Breuer, 1955, pp: 160 - 161), problematising the value of an interpretive account from within a proof-less science. Looking at the dissemination of these narratological models within psychological/scientific fields as having an impact on cultural ideas, I question whether the writing of case-studies affects how psychological disorder is then re-narrated through fictive and visual forms within culture.

My research includes - as a practice - testing collisions in forms of writing. Using the case study within psychoanalytic practice as a model for blurring the borders between fiction, experience and theory, I am building the case for my practice-based research including fiction-writing alongside visual art and critical analysis.

*Chapter Six*
Collapsing a Book (The Box Room)
Activity in this chapter is editorial. Here, I rummage, sort and churn. This chapter is a discussion of the editing and compilation of a cross-disciplinary publication, *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter* (2013). A summary is built into the chapter.

Collapsing a Book
The Box Room
6.1(Le) Letters from the Editor

This chapter is an edit of a paper presented at a one-day symposium, Thinking as Practice, at Central Saint Martins in February 2014.

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6.1(Le) Thinking through dis-order and editing

This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter
I originally composed this paper out of collaged together sections of passages of text I had already written but which belonged elsewhere – this thesis, conference papers, distribution materials, *The Detroit Project*, other essays, emails and notes. I added new paragraphs. I did not correct it or re-read it and I wrote it paragraph by paragraph without cutting or pasting or moving lines around. It was put together in one sitting, deliberately unedited and un-tidied up but its subject was editing itself.

For the purposes of its insertion back into this thesis I have tidied it up – largely to remove those sections I had culled from this thesis already, so as not to repeat myself here. I was surprised - in presenting this research in its untidied form to an audience - how much I allowed my voice to tidy, point out and explain. In effect, I cleaned up the paper as I spoke it.

I have included here some directions, in bold, as to how to read this chapter about editing. What is *OUT LOUD* was spoken at the symposium and remains unchanged and untidied. What is *IN HEAD* has been cleaned up, edited or added for the purposes of this written account. I anticipate an important difference in formality between what was spoken and what has been cleaned and extrapolated. The slides/visuals appear here as they did in my presentation. A disclaimer is that some statements in this chapter have already been raised within this thesis but are revisited here in the context of editing as practice.

This chapter is a deliberate nod to rummaging, sorting and churning. There is some dis-ease in its inclusion. In The Box Room I suggest editing as distinctly related to both hoarding and collecting, methodologically. By implicating cross-field collaborations in both the publication and in the method of its analysis, I embed issues around collation into discussion about the role of interdisciplinarity in the production of new knowledge. The Chapter sits apart from the others in its construction – as potentially awkward and illogical.

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**OUT LOUD:** I am going to talk about a long period of editing and compilation towards a publication – it was a period of intense labour, close looking and minutiae: sometimes just a small noiseless shuffling of syllables around a sentence to a 'just right' position. So much so, that to give this paper as an unedited text may be the most apt thinking
through of this process and its uses. I have sat down to write and I won’t now get up or alter any word’s particular position until I am done. Most important to this project about clutter and an inability to discard – I will not throw away any words.

This talk tests out loud an uneasy collage. It aptly reflects the coming-together of a book, which collapses on reading and handling. Let’s see how it goes.

My focus here is the publication of *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter*, a 200-page unbound book, which I have recently edited, compiled and misfiled.

The publication looks at the onset of Hoarding Disorder through the voices of clinicians and expands the theme to examine how relationships to objects in space inform a number of fields – from digital anthropology to fine art practice - in ways that can be seen to interrelate and impact upon each other. It is specifically concerned with the onset of pathology and the logistics of diagnosis. It contains texts and artworks by thirty contributors, including critical theorists, an anthropologist, an urban planner, a psychiatrist, a mental health nurse, an archivist and artists - including Michel Blazy, Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Tomoko Takahashi and Marjolijn Dijkman\(^\text{117}\).

The publication itself is unbound – illogical and precarious as an object, containing loose leaves, pamphlets and nominal filing systems, gathered together in no particular order. The reader is ultimately responsible for the order (or dis-order) of the piece. I had wanted its format to permit overlaps and crises of ‘usefulness’ akin to the submersion of materials within a hoard, or to the pursuit of order within a collection. I wanted to create a network of papers, which could float off from each other and reform in new – perhaps uncomfortable - configurations: A sort of rhizomatic tool with all the usefulness that could entail for its reader and a sort of congealed pile with all the abandonment and ruin that that could entail too.

This is the book [SLIDE 1], in its most collapsed form. Each copy takes 25 minutes to put together, page by page. This includes its folding, gathering, wrapping and boxing.

\(^{117}\) The full list of contributors to the publication is: Jim Bay; Carrie M Becker; Michel Blazy; Italo Calvino; Marjolijn Dijkman; Alberto Duman; Nina Folkersma; Dr Haidy Geismar; Jeremy Gill; Nat Goodden; Cecílie Gravesen; Jefford Horrigan; Dean Hughes; Isobel Hunter; Dr Colin Jones; Robert Melee; Zoë Mendelson; Florence Peake; Dr Alberto Pertusa; Daniel Rourke; Joey Ryken; Paula Salischiker; Michael Samuels; Satwant Singh; Kathryn Spence; Tomoko Takahashi; Mierle Laderman Ukeles; Robin Waart; Julian Walker; Laura White
A few pages are intrinsic to certain positions within the book – such as the indices, which are a concession to book-likeness– but most of the content shifts placement from book to book.

**SLIDE 1:**

*This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter*  
– book pages awaiting compilation.

**IN HEAD:** In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* Michel Foucault wrote of the book as we may now talk of the Internet:

The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full-stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network… its unity is variable and relative.
OUT LOUD: I want to discuss the processes of initiating, editing and printing *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology*; how its form relates to its contents and how it has come to impact on my understanding of editing as methodology and as a material practice.

Collage is the primary medium in both my visual and textual practices. There are literal cuts, overlaps and solders in my object- and paper-based works but also slices and jump cuts through time and space in my writing-as-practice, which includes fiction. Collage is, of course, a form of editing. Through cropping, altering, sticking and selecting, an overview is established of composite elements, whether words or images and whether via concealment or revelation. Editing is generally seen as a form of sense-making or a way of creating a whole. It is understood to be an ordering and improving process through which mistakes and errors are disappeared. Editing as methodology links aspects of my research in that it traverses the various media in which I work – from drawing to installation to fiction-writing - and is as celebrated in our understanding of collection as it is problematised in collective understanding of the hoard.

To consider editing as a part of collection and accumulation is to configure the activities of curation and preservation into our dialogue with an original gatherer – an author or instigator.

It would be easy to assume the hoard to be the reverse of the systematisation inherent to practices of collecting. However, the hoard is defined by what leaves – or rather what fails to leave - and not by what comes in. There may still be principles governing what enters the (usually) domestic space containing a hoard but nothing can leave without inherent difficulty. Hoarding is defined as an inability to discard, *not* through an ability to gather. This storage or excess can be a form of editorial too – a form of control exerted over content: Nothing crossed out. Nothing erased.

Part of the remit of *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology* was to attempt to dismantle and rebuild existing assumptions of what defines collection and what makes a hoard – in order to seek out the transition from rational to pathological - by creating dialogues between fields in which these questions are asked but not necessarily
mutually shared or exchanged.

**IN HEAD:** With disorder/dis-order being central to the project, I have come to question whether tidiness, ordering and sense-making need be implicit in the editing process at all. I wondered if it was possible to create and edit a publication, which, through its format and handling could straddle systematised collection and the chaos of the hoard. The publication questions whether editing, as a process, can take content and shuffle it out of order.

**OUT LOUD:** [SLIDE 2] Nina Folkersma is a Dutch curator and writer, whose essay *A Messy Collection of Thoughts, Please Throw Away After Reading* I commissioned for the book. She wrote of the hoard as a mode of *horror vacui* (a fear of empty space), noting that,

> Perhaps a parallel exists between the fear of emptiness of the outsider artist and the urge to collect of a hoarder, where the fear of throwing something away is also a form of horror vacui. And perhaps this fear of emptiness is similar to the longing for completeness, the desire to know and collect everything.

(Folkersma in Mendelson, ed., 2013, p: 4 of 8)

In allowing the publication to contain so much material and from many different sources and fields, I was keen to address excess as an editorial concern. There is no narrowing of the subject(s) here. Instead, the publication keeps doubling up on itself; revisiting ideas through different voices and the languages of varied disciplines.

Daniel Rourke, an artist and writer, whose essay for the book directly relates art practice to acts of gathering, refers to Philip K Dick’s concept of ‘kipple’ from his 1968 novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

> …the crumbling ceaseless disorder that often engulfed his science fiction: kipple. A vision of a pudding-like universe, in which obsolescent objects merge, featureless and identical, flooding every apartment complex from here to the pock-marked surface of Mars.

(Rourke in Mendelson, ed., 2013, p: 1/12)
The issue that encroaching stuff could remove possibilities of functionality ended up affecting how I put the book together. The act of reading it is ultimately destructive. Its flimsy, lightweight card cover is fragile and is dependent on its contents maintaining its shape. When the papers are taken out there’s a slump or collapse.

From an initial proposal of a small, dysfunctional pamphlet I grew the idea to a stack or pile. It would have been odd to think through excess everywhere else in my practice
At around the same time, my relationships with the collaborators on the project developed and I became aware of the importance of allocating space for its interdisciplinary voices rather than relying on my own artist’s voice as interpretative of fields within which I was unskilled. I was regularly meeting with psychiatrist Dr Pertusa, archivist Isobel Hunter and professional de-clutterer, Chrystine Bennett.

On the invitation of mental health practitioner, Satwant Singh, I visited a cognitive behavioural therapy group for hoarders and their families. The group is held once a month in London and is currently the only NHS support group in England for hoarders. With the generosity of the group I was able to hear first hand the realities and risks of the condition. There was a woman who was unaware if she still had flooring; another who had to lift her ninety-year old mother up to the ceiling in a tiny triangle of available space in order to change a light-bulb because of the lack of room for a ladder or chair; a man whose dot-com wealth of the late ‘nineties meant he could buy houses, fill them, lock them and leave them to fester. The first time I sat in on the group I became acutely aware of my position as observer. Somewhere within the project I felt I needed to stand back and facilitate rather than interpret. In a project about amassing stuff I was going to take stock. To gather stuff and see where it fell.

My letters of invitation were very short and summarised the project with minimal detail. In each case I was very specific about why I felt someone’s work was relevant and exciting to the publication. I got lots of yes’s and was hugely surprised. I have no history of editing books or publication. I put some of the successes of my initial approaches to contributors down to the power of Wellcome Trust’s logo – as something literally to trust. But there has been a currency to hoarding as a topic of late and this helped too.
My method in this process of gathering was to consider overlaps carefully. I was going to invite artists to take part based on an in-between-ness - the location of their practices somewhere between systematisation and dis-order; between over-collection and order; between waste and salvage; between trash and status. In some cases I would invite artists to include works I already knew and felt were particularly important – this was certainly the case with the inclusion of this work by Mierle Laderman Ukeles whose longstanding practice exercises the political in the mundane, and points out simple acts of labour and its dispersal. I particularly wanted to include this documentation of a performance – The Social Mirror, from 1983 - because of its overlapping commercial and social value systems – the sculptural, formal equivalencies of the trash truck and the reflection of the bystanders or viewers who are also participants and contributors in a cycle of waste we all play a role in but perhaps under-think.
I felt similarly about inviting French artist Michel Blazy’s work and being specific in my curation of it – I selected two similar works, which used the same materials (Le Grand Restaurant from 2012 and Sculpture (par Jean-Luc Blanc), 2003 – 2007). In the construction of these works Blazy piled orange peel at regular intervals onto trays for the duration of their exhibition. The stacks grew and rotted, creating microcosmic self-supporting worlds. ‘Blazy’s works are encounters between materials that aim to stretch a moment’s duration through different strategies of survival’. His works ‘ensure their own survival; they breed and recur. Consequently they fit – as artefacts - into perpetuating cycles of living matter’.118

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118 My own translation into English from a text supplied to me in French by Galerie Artconcept, Paris on behalf of Michel Blazy, 2013.
SLIDE 5:

Installation view including *Abstract No. 2* (2007), Photographs on salvaged panels
Courtesy of the Artist and Hales Gallery, London. (Included in Mendelson, ed. 2013)

OUT LOUD contd: Here is another work reproduced for *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology*. Despite their seeming disarray, objects in Tomoko Takahashi’s works are still gathered in sets according to organisational principles. Research shows that hoarders do this too: paperwork in piles, clothes strewn, endless unwatched videotapes mounted in stacks to the ceiling. (Frost & Steketee, 2010; Singh, 2013)
These fictive versions by Takahashi, are talked about in terms of collection and as such are made reasonable; rationalised by their presence in the museum. Their altered economics, in the gallery, allows the word collection to be applied, despite the differing aesthetic. They are, after all, part of a larger model within the institution – a collection of artworks. Piles of discarded broken plastic and papers alter in value because they are imported into a dialogue about fine art: Here is dialogue about dis-order as
opposed to an actual disorder. They become orderly through association – inventories and instructions exist; prices are applied; measures are taken to document them and secure potential reinstallation.\textsuperscript{119}

[SLIDE 6] In other cases, I invited artists to select their own works for the publication or create new works specific to its format and page size.

**SLIDE 6:**

Photograph Gian Paolo Cottino (Included in Mendelson, ed. 2013)

Florence Peake responded with two stills from her devised performance piece *MAKE*, in which female dancers enrobe each other in low-fi materials – such as cardboard and coloured packing tape - until they are fixed, formal and immobile – almost sculptural. They are then unwound and undone again, their co-dependency alleviated. Peake and I sat at a long table and spread out potential images she could put into *This*

\textsuperscript{119} This paragraph is edited from Chapter 2 of this thesis.
Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology – in the end selecting two – for the reason that they are moments of concealment, object-becoming, entrapment and rapt engrossment in materials.

SLIDE 7:

Kathryn Spence, *Short sharp notes, a long whistled trill on one pitch, clear phrases* - detail (2010-12)

Found wood, fabric scraps, stuffed animals, towels, mud, wax, string, thread, wire, newspaper, play money, photographs. Photograph: Ben Blackwell

(Included in Mendelson, ed. 2013)

Being an editor of images and an editor of texts have been noticeably different occupations. I have felt a tangibly tactile engagement with the visual works. The crossover for me was in making a studio visit to meet San Francisco-based artist Kathryn Spence and deciding to write a formal catalogue-type essay about her work. The essay, ‘Bye Bye Birdie’, is the only text in the book, which focuses on a single practice. It allowed me to siphon ideas which recur in the texts and practices throughout the book through an engagement with Spence’s work and to pay close attention to aspects of her work I felt could create networks within the publication:
Issues such as waste, salvage and systematised storage embedded in Spence’s work would recur elsewhere and provide echoes and disciplinary blur.

IN HEAD: I want to insert a short section from the essay I wrote about Kathryn Spence’s work. It highlights ways in which, as editor, I was seeking to document material and linguistic acts of gathering alongside each other with co-dependency. The following text – from *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology* – is reproduced in its published font and form.

Creatures emerge from banks of material with an entropic attachment to their terrain; there is a fluidity with which they appear both outlined as animate and imbued, even as ‘garbagey scraps’, creating an oscillation between their potentials for autonomy and submergence. The variant media used in each assemblage are listed with detail and almost nerdy precision:

Plywood, scraps of sheets, towels, pants, sweaters, coats, jeans, t-shirts, umbrellas, stuffed (toy) animals, and fabric, field guides, samples, swatches, string, cardboard, newspaper, plastic bags, hairpins, play money, magazine photos, photocopies, beeswax, sand, mud, feathers, pins, pencils, wire, thread, Styrofoam.

I find myself wondering now about this list of materials as negotiations in pursuit of the cataloguing of works and of their evolution, but then can’t decipher their order in relation to the work. From left to right? Alphabetically? From heavy to light? From mass inclusion to the smallest of contributions? ‘A curator called my displays ‘organised garbage’ and I was shocked’, says Spence, ‘because for me, I make these displays somewhere between my emotional life and the life of the work. They are potentially really vulnerable. ‘I realise after our conversation that I am not sure whether she was shocked by the implications of organisation or of garbage.

OUT LOUD: Throughout the project I have talked with consultant psychiatrist, Dr Alberto Pertusa who is at the forefront of research into Hoarding Disorder and whose work has been key to the conceptualisation of hoarding as an independent disorder, separate from obsessive-compulsive disorder (with which it was previously categorised). As well as writing an essay for *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology* about his research towards this DSM definition, Dr. Pertusa allowed me to include a ten-page diagnostic tool created by himself and his team at the Institute of Psychiatry, London. These loose pages are provided as a clinically blue stack. This is a formal, psycho-textual document, which possesses a very neutral tone and encourages the development of patient insight into a condition with little or none. My decision to include it is very clear to me: It is the only directly supportive mechanism in the publication and my hand has been nowhere near it. It alters very little through its inclusion, as it is already an interactive tool dependent on participatory activation and the decision to use it. These pages exist in stark contrast to an equivalent American diagnostic tool, [*The Clutter Image Rating*] which I critique as a cultural artefact in my own essay, which introduces *This Mess*.

SLIDE 8:

Zoë Mendelson, *Clutter Image Rating 1*, (2013), collage.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Both of these images are elsewhere in the thesis (See Chapter Two), hence they appear only as referential/reminders on a smaller scale here.
IN HEAD: Out loud, at this point, I note that hoarding’s diagnosis comes via the space and not the person, introduce the Clutter Image Rating diagnostic tool and explain that, in the publication, I have included this clinical tool devised by Randy O Frost and Gail Steketee; my critique of it as an image pertaining to understanding of a truth. I also show my own version of a Clutter Image Rating. As the detail is repeated from Chapter Two of this thesis I will not paste it all again here – although I do think a certain degree of repetition and re-pasting further exacerbates this web-like thinking through of editing, its relationship to collage and, in tandem, to hoarding. I included my collage Clutter Image Rating 1, as a digital print, in the publication.

I am reminded here of André Breton’s introduction to his intentions in the Surrealist romance novel, Nadja. Breton subtly separates and then re-connects psychological relationships to objects and mental perceptions of their arrangements in space:
As far as I am concerned, a mind’s arrangement with regard to certain objects is even more important than its regard for certain arrangements of objects, these two kinds of arrangement controlling between them all forms of sensibility. (Breton, 1960, p: 16)

In editing and compiling This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology I took ‘these two kinds of arrangement’ to be something of a manifesto, considering how reflections on arrangements and the psychologies inherent to object relations can and do co-exist. As such, a portion of the publication is given over to seemingly rationalised collection.

OUT LOUD: Isobel Hunter is Head of Engagement at the National Archives in Kew. For This Mess is a Place she wrote an autobiographical account of working with various archives, from the water board to Wellcome Collection. Her experience is tactile and the piece is anecdotal. It is a portrait of a job. I worked with this text a lot. It dealt with systems and order but was deeply personal. When Isobel first wrote it she was unsure of the worth of her own vocational voice in what she perceived to be an academic publication. The editorial work I did on this piece teased out the experiential, and the final, printed version arose out of much face-to-face conversation. With its mentions of handling and dirt and sifting, we felt the piece needed visual content. After some thought I included some photographs I had taken in a Dutch photographic archive in 2010. These too are misfiled as Isobel had no connection to this site or its materials. There is a layering and biographical feel to this piece, which belies its apparent factuality. I have to be careful how I fold these pages as the images have a tendency to self-erase and rub off onto my hands.

Paper is a feature of all hoards. Whilst hoarders have tendencies towards the accumulation of different kinds of things – endless piles of paper remain a constant. In the hoard a continuous tactile association – the moving of stuff from bottom of pile to top of pile, or from room to room is an activity known as ‘churning’. I considered this mode of tactility in preparing the publication and deciding on its loose format. Churning – a trait of Hoarding Disorder - has become a model for how to read and engage the publication.

IN HEAD: And, indeed, this thesis chapter.

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121 Frost, Steketee, 2010, p: 27
OUT LOUD: I am interested in the text as object – as an inert, pre-emptive thing – a closed book or set of printed papers kept in a space, in a bag or on a shelf – as well as being silently read or openly performed. My research into hoarding, collection and installation allows for this work to figure as a physical thing (whatever its contents) within an assessment of functionless things, archived or strewn. Considering the publication as an interactive, potentialised, provisional object, subject to stillness and physical manipulations, is important to the piece and what is contained therein. In considering the physicality and object-ness of printed material, at a moment of transformation within the publishing industry, I am including a reflexive dialogue with the subject of the thing in consideration of its own materiality. *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology* is a compound – made up of detachable, unfixed elements. These sections are reminders of the physicality of the page and its handling, as well its production, archiving, questionable authenticity and authorship.

IN HEAD: I took one copy of *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology* to IKEA and left it in a bedroom mock-up next to the empty book sleeves and covers.

(SLIDE 10: NOT SHOWN IN ORIGINAL SLIDESHOW)

*This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology* installed in IKEA, Edmonton
Zoë Mendelson, 2014
OUT LOUD: [SLIDE 11] (see next page)
There's an economic conundrum here too. The publication is in a limited edition of 250 copies, which denotes a certain kind of value and implies collection. But as it dishevels on handling there’s a status shift. The book contains many limited edition prints – some of which were works commissioned specifically for This Mess is a Place, such as this new composite work (see next slide) – made up of other existing works - by Dutch artist, Marjolijn Dijkman - which connect across two pages. Because the publication was funded by Wellcome Trust who care about access to the work they do, and because I don’t want to contribute to the complex financial issues which can affect hoarders’ lives or dismiss them as an audience, the book’s price is pretty low – it’s £22.50. This means a stack of limited edition prints are being sold well below their market value. This devaluation of the product is contextual and a crucial continuation of the questioning of status and ownership inside the publication.

As I have Marjolijn Dijkman’s work on the screen:
Marjolijn Dijkman collates, labels and re-organises, using existing cartographic and taxonomical tactics to re-systematise and rearrange ‘photographic registrations of the world according to personal criteria.122

SLIDE 11

122 Marjolijn Dijkman (2010) in The Age of the World Picture is a Fine Thirty-Two (At the Time of Writing), Dieter Roelstae te in a broadsheet accompanying the exhibition Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive.
Marjolijn Dijkman, Images of the ongoing project *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* – section ‘Collect’
Photographs taken by the artist, 2005 - 2013 (Included in Mendelson, ed. 2013)

**OUT LOUD contd:** In five artists’ cases I was able – because the book is unbound – to use different print methods and paper types to try to support the content with
individually appropriate methods of production. In the case of Jim Bay’s text piece, *Planets* - a piece which comprises a seemingly in-exhaustive list of exo-planets in 5-point text - we made the joint decision to print it on newsprint, the flimsiest paper available. There are multiple plays with the economics of individual essays and works in this book – weights of paper and print methods have been carefully thought out in relation to each inclusion. Ultimately, the publication is multi-disciplinary in nature and the formal decisions have been considered in reflexively.

To end, I want to bring up the book’s international contributions, which meant that aspects of translation have also been a part of my editorial role. I got very close to Nina Folkersma’s essay on over-collection, over-filling and Outsider Art, as it was a text I worked into very heavily as its editor. This was an awkwardly diplomatic act. Folkersma initially wanted to write her essay in Dutch and asked if I could organise for it to be translated. I sent out a round robin email. Did anyone know anyone Dutch who could help? Through this I discovered that I am the only person I know who knows no-one who is Dutch-with-time-to-work-on-translations. I had twenty-two positive replies. One was from an artist, Cecilie Gravesen whose work I then looked up online. Gravesen makes films and installations, questioning the transmission of history and memory. I was excited by the attachments and ritual behaviours documented in a series of her works about imbued objects and invited her to add a page to the book. This kind of growing of the publication was only possible because of its loose-leaf format. Had it been bound I would have had to prioritise the mathematics and limits of its coming together.

By the time I’d been through twenty-two possible Dutch translators Nina Folkersma had translated her own essay. I then acted as its secondary translator into the kind of English she’d have written if we’d engaged someone Dutch. The resultant text is highly collaborative but there is no outward-facing signposting of the work I’ve done on it. This feels deeply satisfying for me in the context of a practice that is otherwise exposing but also engages with temporality and disappearance. The invisibility of my editing-hand is closer to an act of reading than it is to writing.

**IN HEAD:** I am reminded of Susan Sontag’s comment on her own work: ‘to write is to practice with particular intensity and attentiveness, the art of reading.’ (Sontag, 2009, p: 263) For me, it is the editorial, digestive aspects of writing – the chopping, changing and churning - that most closely echo reading. This editing is a processing of language...
that has already been penned, as with reading, and is more collaborative than the early, preliminary moments of initiating writing alone.

Throughout the process of putting together this publication, I have been acutely aware that I have included many texts written within disciplines within which I am interloping. To edit feels like permissible trespassing: the reader locating themselves.
Chapter Seven
Puttings-up, Takings-down (The Annexe)

Summary:

Following on from an examination of the case study as fictive, and of editing as practice, I will, in this chapter, evaluate what is shared between my visual and textual practices. In this chapter writing, drawing and erasure come to exist in correlation as durational facets of my practice, relating to growth and ruin. The spatial potentiality of fiction is assessed in relation to Narrative Architecture – the idea that ‘other’ experiential existences manifest for architecture in parallel to function. This leads me to look at the production of space in tandem with the seemingly independent agency of a ruin. Examining how the hoard manifests a kind of a takeover, with its agency to both diagnose and mutate (to rot, erode and grow), I am able to afford space its own agency and accountability to become feral, wilful, out of control and potentially ruinous. Here, *The Detroit Project* will be examined as a fiction permitting the implausibility of site.

By scaling up – from the domestic to the urban – I can examine the economics and psychologies of space-production and space-agency conceptually, beyond the confines of the home and into the connected spaces that surround it, where space is also being filled and emptied.

Kurt Schwitters’ *Merzbau* is addressed as an armature to many of the ideas in this PhD research and positioned as both pertaining to the value system of collection and as a
hoard. Its simultaneous putting-up and taking-down is contextualised alongside Robert Smithson’s performative, architectural work from 1969-1972, *Hotel Palenque*, which documents the simultaneous building and destruction of a hotel in New Mexico.

The integral weight of attachments to stuff and objects is given space via my performance/drawing work *Conscientious Objectophile* (2011), within which I refer to object attachments and notions of surrogacy between object and experience. This work is performative and temporal, addressing investment, occupation and erasure through the habitation of a space.
7.0M(s) Malleable Spaces

In Chapters Four and Five I discussed the spatial potentiality of textual practices towards pointing out the existence of a limitless physical realm. In this chapter I would like to negotiate the flexibility of actual architectures or sites to, themselves, transcend space and become or seem to become fictive spaces. In associating this potentiality to transcend plausibility within writing with spatial and physical manifestations of similarly fictive territories, I will suggest how (and why) two aspects of my practice (visual and textual) consciously, and constantly, cross-reference each other.

The spatial focus in this practice-based research is on potentially alterable, malleable spaces where borders are unfixed. These spaces allow a cohabitation of fact and fiction, thrusting physical space into a dialogue with supposition or an imposition upon its logic or purpose. These spaces are pivotal to French novelist and essayist, Georges Perec's ideas in *Species of Spaces*. He links their fictive potency to the histories of their initial propositions on paper and their translation into the written word, with their own spatial contexts of maps, index cards, paper: ‘Space as inventory, space as invention’ (Perec, 1999, p:13). Perec's environment, where ‘At one time or another, almost everything passes through a sheet of paper’ (ibid p:12) and ‘space begins, with words only’ (ibid p: 13) is upheld in much recent consideration of the conceptive, uncertain nature of architecture. Architectural propositions – always positioned in some imagined future realm - are now largely funded by speculative finance.

Whilst there is a collective, colloquial bent towards imagining architecture as fixed, present, weighty, and architects as the instigators or creators of such things, they are also ruins, shanty, unoccupied, uninhabitable, burnt out, collapsed and makeshift having, of course, been consciously imagined as such by no one. Space, action and experience are tied up together in shaping public and personal narrative. In defining the term ‘narrative architecture’, Nigel Coates ascertains that,

‘In architecture the linearity of the narrative function dissolves as the spatial dimension interferes with time. In architectural space coherent plot lines or

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123 Perec worked as an archivist between 1961 and 1978 in the Neurophysiological Research Laboratory at the Hôpital Saint-Antoine, Paris – an employment which had an effect on the works he subsequently produced in which the handling and classification of papers and objects was so integral.
prescribed experiential sequences are unusual. The narrative approach depends on a parallel code that adds depth to the basic architectural language. In a conventional narrative structure, events unfold in relation to a temporal metre, but in architecture the time element is always shifting in response to the immutability of the physical structure. While permanence should be celebrated as a particularly architectural quality, inevitably we should be curious about its opposite.' (Coates, 2012, p:15)

In February 2012 I attended a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) Group for Hoarders as an observer. This group is the only NHS-supported provision of CBT specific to Hoarders in the UK. At this session several attendees described aspects of their living spaces they could no longer access and fantasized about what could potentially be revealed were the space to be healthy. One hoarder imagined she may still have carpet on her floors; another thought she could just see the edge of a microwave on her subsumed kitchen sideboard, and a third suspected he may be able to locate the keys to a home he’d locked and left, full of his belongings, the year before.

These imagined, fantastical spaces, in the three hoarders’ minds are actual spaces, composed of the real estate underneath their hoards, yet made invisible by the scale and form of what blocks or masks them. Both spaces are present on site at once. An imagined space and an actuality co-habit, each forcing the other into an unconscious reading. Where Coates talks of a relationship between temporality (as experience) and permanence (as the structure or container), he is referring to a specific mode of building – so, not a tent, a trailer, a tree-house (where, perhaps fantasy is more evidently located). It is supposedly permanent structures that seem oxymoronic with becoming fictive and it is in this dichotomy I find my practice located.

The impermanent and destabilising nature of a hoard could be said to create a narrative skin – a personally constructed variable space within a more logical, physical realm. In his introduction to Narrative Architecture, Coates discusses function in relation to this experiential version of space. He notes that the

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124 The group takes place at Wordsworth Health Centre in East Ham, London and is facilitated by nurse practitioner Satwant Singh who invited me along.
narrative coefficient resides in a system of triggers that signify poetically, above and in addition to functionality. Narrative means that the object contains some ‘other’ existence in parallel to its function.

(Coates, 2012, p: 15)

Coming to fiction writing as an appropriate interpretive medium for effectively translating ideas about object attachments, dysfunctional spaces and characters’ relationships to their living environments tallies with this logic for me. As a hoarder loses ground with the functionality of his living space, so does its invested narrative take over the location.

There are narrative architectures to be located within a hoard too: Internal micro-narrations of objects loved, times spent and attachments made, lost and given to the piles. According to Dr. Alberto Pertusa, hoards always contain attempts to clear up. These may be in the form of boxes, bags or aborted efforts to stack or categorise. In this way, there is a simultaneous building up and taking down. Objects and piles take root, altering the functionality of space and themselves evolving, eroding, collapsing or growing. Through the effects of mould, decay and weathering, both narrative and architecture (or both what is experiential and what is permanent) become entropic. This entropy often becomes my focus and my material.

7.1P(pa) Post-production Agency

The decision to locate my fiction, The Detroit Project, between the cities of London and Detroit comes from an investment in this entropic potential for materials and the narrative architectural potential of these two cities. My initial intention had been to transpose traits of hoards and collections onto two sites – one museological and one in turmoil with its matter strewn. I was looking to define these spaces through the experiences and attachments of two characters (or two facets of the same character), allowing the cities to reflect those characters’ psychologies. However, the cities themselves have evolved into more than merely reflections: As I have discussed, space itself has come to stand for the unconscious, experience and compulsion. As the characters’ domestic lives come to be defined by the spaces they occupy, so do their cities expand and contract around them.

125 From an interview I carried out on February 23rd 2013 (London).
My character, Nell Fuller, in London is confined by the rigours of her city, its demands on her time and the ways in which it has social expectations of her. I write Nell’s London as the practiced place of Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life*, in that it is socially activated through transformative human actualisation but it is a constrained version of this, affected by dehumanised spaces of commerce and the relentless repetition of its messages. Nell feels the encroachments of the social city alongside its self-promotion.

Spatial theorists of the ‘seventies considering how space was produced suggest its production as reliant on human gesture or social activation and assume urban space as social product. Perhaps any notion of the city’s own agency or ability to act alone or influentially would therefore have to be confined to spaces forsaken or cast off by modes of production. Detroit, with its ninety thousand abandoned buildings, fifty-seven thousand stray dogs and diminished population is one of these obsolete non-productive spaces. The city itself (as an agency) has a feral quality and acts as an entropic museum to its own heyday when it was Fordist and less abandoned by theoretical notions of space production.

In *The Detroit Project* I begin by aligning and cross-fading notions of the potential production of space and the seemingly independent agency of a ruin. In a London art school, Nell Fuller sets a project for her students to design a future for Detroit. This brief sets up a dichotomy which then runs throughout the work, as, on the one hand, space is produced, designed and manifested through applied thought and social intervention and, on the other, it seems wilful, out of control and ruinous.

‘Keep your eye on the space’, said Nell directing their gaze towards the burned out theatrical place in which the scene had been shot. ‘In fact, go away and watch the whole film again, even the terrible Kim Basinger bits, keeping your eye on the town. Just keep your eye on Detroit.’

And there it was. Motor City. It seemed a horrible, clapped-out, three-wheeler of a place. A battleground of the departing worlds of industry, punk and Motown. Giant burning graveyard to a needle skipping on the end of a vinyl soundtrack.

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126 Nell Fuller, as a name for my principal character, came through a desire to find a name that sounded both empty and full.
Nell had written the brief for the Detroit project at sunset in her pyjamas in the garden. Perhaps she should stop saying it was a garden as that implied there was or had ever been something growing in it. ‘Patio’ was just too pretentious and didn’t mask the swearing when she tripped over the flagstones.

This brief was a pet project she’d been harbouring for years and one she felt almost sorry to give up to others despite her curiosity. She thought of Paul Thek in devising it. As a Fine Art lecturer at Cooper Union in New York in 1978, he had asked his students, amongst an incrementally ambitious set of proposals, to: ‘Illustrate the Godhead. Add a station to the cross. Design an abstract monument to Uncle Tom’. Nell loved the idea of giving rise to frustration where she felt it could catalyze the invention of a thing in the world. Or indeed a world of sorts in and of itself. She cut and pasted images of Detroit’s heyday onto her desktop where thumbnails went to die.

She saw the city as an abandoned shell, smattered with barnacles, awaiting its next hermit crab inhabitant.

(The Detroit Project, Chapter One)

Employing strategies in my writing to connect and interweave concepts of space-production and space-agency has also allowed me to reflect on how space is filled and emptied, in accordance with my research into hoarding and collecting. So much contemporary discourse on Detroit suggests it as a blank canvas for renewal and reinvention (were its economics not so dire), aligning its emptiness with the possibilities of repopulating, rebuilding and restoration. There is an overriding belief that ‘a shrinking city is a shameful place, a place getting worse.’ (Gallagher, 2007, p: 2). In this climate, factories, stations and theatres remain decaying ruins; foreclosed homes sit untended and vacant lots stay vacant. Space is abandoned – like Pompeii, seemingly at moments of intense activity. With no money or population to re-inhabit them or reinvest in their potential they remain static and crushed or gather moss, and flames. Left to their own devices, they have a continued existence beyond production.

In his book The World Without Us, journalist, Alan Weisman writes of what would happen to our world if humans vanished. He describes how ruination takes place over time and how nature speedily takes over what man once invented. Ian Bogost summarises - comparing an environmentalist perspective with one, which already supports the agency of materials and objects - the potential for things to have their
own human-free interrelationships. ‘The object oriented position holds that we do not
have to wait for the rapturous disappearance of humanity to attend to plastic and
lumber and steel.’ (Bogost, 2012, p: 8)

In Detroit, urban tax incentives and local government initiatives - such as a move in
2009 to encourage filmmaking in the city (Binelli, 2013, p: 258; Fuller, 2010, p: 53) - as
well as independent projects, bring pockets of regeneration and renewal but then fade
away, returning abandonment to the status quo. Detroit is, therefore, a city being
invented at the same time as it falls apart and grows entropically, tangentially to
investment and social imperative. So called urban explorers arrive with their cameras,
jack knives and balaclavas to photograph the city as contemporary ruin - in a form of
culturally located risk tourism. The documents of this urban exploration shift, year on
year, as – not through any design - Detroit’s landscape changes, exposed to the
elements of weather, fauna and crime. In The Detroit Project, I refer to these spaces
as between dereliction and museology. Nell Fuller writes of Detroit as, ‘a witness to a
time sped-up, then left to wallow in its own nostalgia. A scratched, over-played record
set back on the stack: Detroit had already had too much of what it deserved and was
now to pay the price.’ (Fuller, 2010, p: 54)

7.2E(ae) Entropy and Erasure

Robert Smithson wrote, in 1972 that,

‘Nobody wants to go on a vacation to a garbage dump… Could it be that certain
art exhibitions have become metaphysical junkyards? Categorical miasmas?
Intellectual rubbish? Specific intervals of visual desolation? (...) The museums
and parks are graveyards above the ground – congealed memories of the past
that act as a pretext for reality.’
(Smithson, 1996, p: 155-6)

Ideas about space as having its own agency (and notional accountability)127 come, for
me, through installational practice both historically and in terms of my own making.
The fiction I am writing is preceded and informed by a working knowledge of, often
manual, spatial engagements. The associations I am building between architecture

127 I return to these ideas with an expanded examination of the notion of objects having agency in the
next chapter.
and narrative/the function and dysfunction of spaces within my visual and textual practices have their specific roots in two seminal twentieth century works, where entropic subversions and questions of production/agency are pivotal: Kurt Schwitters’ *Merzbau* (1931 – 1948\(^{128}\)) and Robert Smithson’s *Hotel Palenque* (1969-1972).

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*Chemlab, Detroit.* Photograph by Andrew Moore from Detroit Dissassembled (2010)

There are links between these two, very different, works – with regard to immersion, destruction and the evasiveness of materials. What is entropic about both works is within but also *without* – in that there is an ‘outside’ to each: A physical location beyond the immersive work (from which it is entered into) that cannot be ignored contextually or critically, but that the work is subsumed into and, to which, it ultimately gives up its materials.

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\(^{128}\) These dates reflect the continued and various inceptions of the Merzbau: Hanover, Germany; Lysaker, Norway; Cumbria, UK.
Earlier (in chapter one), I cited Kurt Schwitters’ *Merzbau* as an armature for many of the ideas in this thesis. Its domesticity; its destabilisation of the intended function of spaces; the constant flux of materials in its composure and its later status and value as artwork situate merzbau on an oscillating boundary between a collection and a hoard. The original *Merzbau* (1931 – 43) was an architectonic, spatial collage, with numerous nooks and grottoes, which defied the intentions and functions of the living space it occupied – between three and eight rooms (at various stages) in Schwitters’ home at 5 Waldhausenstrasse in Hanover. Whilst built with intent, it grew in response to studio activity without specific plan or intention, save that it remained playful and without attachment to meaning, ‘creating a walk-in Dada environment’ (Meyer-Büser, 2000, p: 275) and disappearing the original features of its domestic location. ‘Spoils and relics’\(^{129}\) came into the closed-off *Merzbau*, where they were embedded, processed and allowed to inform subsequent works which then went into the outside world.

From the time of its making, Schwitters referred to himself as a ‘total artist’, referring to his immersion in the activity and its space; the possibilities of its subsuming of any found artefact or remnant; its experiential effect as a ‘total artwork’ blurring disciplinary boundaries, and its inability to be separated from either the act of its coming into being or the presence of its creator. ‘Merz means creating relationships, preferably between all things in the world’, declared Kurt Schwitters in 1924.\footnote{Quoted by Karin Orchard in the exhibition pamphlet for} \textit{No Socks. Kurt Schwitters and the MERZbarn} BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, 1999.

This ‘totality’ was not new. The term \textit{Gesamtkunstwerk} or total artwork had been around since 1827 when employed by German writer and philosopher, Karl Trahndorff. In 1849 the German composer Richard Wagner defined the term as it became commonly understood and its meaning is more often ascribed to him. In Wagner’s essay, \textit{The Artwork of the Future}, he asserts that a higher truth is shared from within all art forms, which, in the affecting of their synthesis, can point to a new social order. This utopian, romantic vision of \textit{Gesamtkunstwerk} lends itself to a collagist approach and to immersive installation.

Schwitters, since his first Merz manifesto of 1919, extended his technique of collage (…) to include prose, poetry, sculpture, drama, architecture, and of course his own Merz magazine; the result was a form of intermediary art where objects situated in one practice are open to interpretation in terms of another.'

(Webster, Gwendolin in Notz, 2007, p: 49)

Each element of Schwitters’ oeuvre therefore becomes a fragment and is open for reconfiguration or re-use as material elsewhere.

This totality as a strategy, and the sharing of elements between art forms/media, is intentionally reflected upon in this PhD by practice. The material and disciplinary exchange proposed by \textit{Gesamtkunstwerk} finds its dystopian, unromantic equivalence in a hoard, where everything once separate is subsumed by the whole, and immersion of individual elements is (psychologically, spatially) unhelpful. Totality, in effect, can regress the potential for elements to find any commonality beyond their shared physical location, and the Wagnerian higher social order is far off. The hoard does become synthesised but its coming-together is entropic. Decay, ruin and spatial
dislocations ultimately prevail. I am engaging with the implications of potential relationships between entropy and Gesamtkunstwerk in my own art practice (and in examining artworks focused on collection and clutter) through creating artworks in which elements relate through overlap and a sublimation of ‘usual’ boundaries, materially and/or in translation of a figurative subject.

One work in which I focused specifically on developing an anxious boundary between entropy and synthesis was Conscientious Objectophile. This work was produced and shown between 11 June and 17 July 2011 as part of Archipelago, curated by Gary Stevens at CGP London. In the online catalogue for Archipelago, Gary Stevens describes how,

In Archipelago, fifteen installation and performance artists shared the gallery space throughout a six-week period. Simultaneously standing alone yet linked by a common space each artist marked his or her territory, camp or nest. Audiences could visit the space throughout the opening times of the gallery to see how the work had developed over time as the artists vied and negotiated with each other, built, modified or dismantled their ‘islands’.

Gary Stevens (2011), p: 1

I saw an opportunity here for engaging with the potential for meticulously building a large-scale, complex work, translating ideas about hoarding, at the same time as existing in an anxious space where the work’s potential destruction hung like a shadow. I made - and performed the making of - a forty-eight metre square wall drawing in pencil over the six-week duration of the show.

The work, Conscientious Objectophile, was a work in progress throughout its six-week span. It grew slowly, meticulously and compulsively. The performance of drawing in and onto space made public an intimate, obsessive, all-consuming activity and questioned the temporality of the piece in relation to its labour-intensity. The content of the drawing itself was a muddled heap of (arguably domestic) bric-a-brac piled into an inaccessible space. Emerging from inside the wall, each object, although crammed in and almost indistinguishable from what was stockpiled next to it, was treasured -

131 An online publication produced by Artsadmin and cataloguing Archipelago can be seen at: http://issuu.com/artsadmin/docs/archipelago_online_publication?mode=window
132 An objectophile refers to a person who has sexual – and often romantic - feelings towards an object.
laboured over and drawn with precision.

The composition of Conscientious Objectophile was drawn from first hand material, which was a new experience for me. Having spent years drawing and re-appropriating images from books, magazines and found materials in order to compose complex drawings, I broke from form with this work. It felt important to have once inhabited the spaces I was then re-inhabiting through my presence in the drawing. Imagery was appropriatised from three sites of collection/clutter catalogued on my trip to the Netherlands the previous year, when I had been a guest of the Madness and Arts Festival. These sites were a photographic archive (Spaarnestad Photo), a museum to psychiatry (Het Dolhuys) and a market. They figured in the drawing as variably permanent institutions of collection. As discussed in Chapter Three, I had been invited to make a visual record of Spaarnestad Photo as it packed up and moved from Haarlem to the Hague. The archive was being re-ordered and stored for transit, with its new location in mind. In Conscientious Objectophile images from the archive could be seen as gloves, piles of papers, abandoned outdated electrical equipment and open storage boxes. In Haarlem I worked with a curator associated with Het Dolhuys (the National Museum to Psychiatry) and went to a number of events and screenings at the museum. Some of the permanent displays – jars, brains, medical equipment and portraits – became embedded in Conscientious Objectophile. Objects from the market were the least ‘stable’ elements of the drawing, in that they were not obviously museological or useful. They included, wigs, a furry rug, bits of broken Delftware, a ‘seventies TV annual and a pile of chipped china dogs.
Throughout the exhibition (even on those days the gallery was not open to the public) I wore a pure white outfit which was part clinical lab coat and part workman’s dungarees – hoping to appear somewhere between analyst, artist, bride and cleaner. Towards the end of the six-week period, and with the drawing’s detail now manifest, I invited an audience to congregate for my ‘marriage’ to the wall. The ceremony (details later) contained allusions to the emotional weight of each composite element in the drawing. On the final day of the exhibition I painted over the work, line by line, with a tiny watercolour brush, leaving just a greyish smudge as ‘evidence’.

The slow growth of a meticulous, busy image and its subsequent erasure iterate the transient nature of object attachments, collections and hoards: The putting up, clearing up, re-arranging and ‘churning’ (Frost, 2010 p: 27). This temporality – real or implied through an investment in precariousness – is a feature of all the works in this PhD by practice, including The Detroit Project, where it is reflected in the itinerant nature of the city-in-flux and an interpretation of ruin as something recorded at a point in its demise but still potentialised and, as yet, unfixed.

Making the wall drawing Conscientious Objectophile allowed for immersion in a world,
the scale of which dominated me and whose ultimate demise defined its making. To perform this immersion and its making/drawing rather than its explanation I had to shut out conversation. In Gary Stevens’ catalogue essay, he described the work:

‘There is nothing convivial about Zoë Mendelson’s attitude to the public; strategic earpieces plugged into an i-pod cut her off as she draws in pencil, ignoring all enquiries. A huge drawing is slowly deepening and emerging from a trace on the wall, an essay on clutter and hoarding. Overworking in pencil, details are added to a large complex design, enhancing and developing the ghost of a drawing. She is too close to appreciate the whole until she steps back. Her white outfit, which presages her marriage to the wall (...) merges with the wall as she ascends a ladder to dwell on a detail high up.’

(Gary Stevens, 2011, p: 11)

Conscientious Objectophile (week five of performance), 2011

My ‘marriage’ to the wall at the end of the Archipelago show was in exploration of how an exaggerated version of the attachments in which I had been invested could play out in extreme psychological circumstances. Initially I considered I may be inventing or
proposing a mental health condition – the desire to form a human-like, apparently reciprocal union with an object or architecture. Research immediately purported that this was not the case and I came across objectophilia, which gave rise to the title of the work. I watched a documentary about Erika Eiffel, spokesperson and founder of the OS Internationale, an online community and support organisation for objectophiles (also known as object sexuals). Erika Eiffel ‘married’ the Eiffel Tower in 2007 and had a twenty-year longstanding relationship with the Berlin Wall.

New York based psychiatrist Jerry Brooker who was interviewed for Agnieszka Piotrowska’s 2008 film about Erika Eiffel, The Woman Who Married the Eiffel Tower, explained the condition in a way that echoed how hoarders often describe the comfort of their hoards. "Someone who falls in love with objects can control that relationship on their own terms," he said. "Their objects will not let them down. That is extremely attractive for a person who is otherwise often desperately lonely." (Channel Five, 2008)

Objectophiles who fall for public sites exemplify extreme cases of location having its own agency and notional accountability. With this in mind, and a desire to make public a six-week investment in a silent encounter with the gallery wall at CGP London, I wrote a short ceremony. The ‘marriage’ ceremony was read/performed by Steve Richards. He read the following text whilst I continued to draw:

This Woman to This Wall

We are here to connect this woman to this wall.
If anyone has perhaps any object, objectophile, objection to.
This person plus wiring, plus china dogs, plus boxes.
Of wigs. Plus.
Plus thick furry blanket.
This woman to a brain in a jar plus Delftware.
Plus dishes stacked. Plus transparencies strewn.
On this day a union of.
A paper towel dispenser to this woman. Plus checked floor tiles. Plus a quote

133 Steve Richards is an artist based in London who has a collaborative practice as a filmmaker with Rachel Cattle under the name The Central Polytechnic.
from Hoarders USA.
Vinyl gloves plus a paper clip. To be your lawful wedded.
Documents.
Microscope, candlestick, chairs.
Plus three cut-up figures from Space 1999.
An exchange. To have and to hold.
I now pronounce you Woman and Wall.

Conscientious Objectophile, (week six of performance) 2011
This Woman to this Wall, ceremony, 16 July 2011

I continued to draw because the relationship with the wall was the focus and because after six weeks’ immersion in this detailed process it was difficult to look away. Despite the premise of the show as an archipelago of works, I had marooned myself.

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Conscientious Objectophile, (week six of performance) 2011

This Woman to this Wall, ceremony, 16 July 2011
Produced in virtual seclusion and viewed by few, the *Merzbau* has a mythical quality. It survives now only through recount and very few photographs of it remain. As with the voyeurism of the aforementioned urban explorers, there was a kudos associated with having witnessed this cut-off location, its cultural value now hugely increased through its disappearance. The implications of the constant-ness of the *Merzbau*’s creation - it could never be finished (on principle) and was defined by being forever in-progress – are historically associated with its destruction during an air raid in 1943. This accident of its coming down is allowed to then tally in our collective consciousness with the destruction or abandonment of Schwitters’ subsequent *Merzbau* projects, in Lysaker near Oslo (lost in a fire in 1951) and then in Cumbria (abandoned for several years after the artist’s death). The instability and un-fixed nature of Schwitters’ collaged spaces – as intentional - was ultimately supported by the agency they then appeared to command over their own futures. The precariousness of the material construction of all three *Merzbau* projects created an unsafety in both experiential immersion for those who entered and, notionally, contextually, as their ultimate epitaph.

Reactions to experiencing the *Merzbau* firsthand reflect on its totality and raise questions over its perceived value as both construct and in the sum of and inclusions of its content. Intriguingly, these insider reactions often assume an agency to the space (as if it had just appeared or self-manifested) as well as making claims about Schwitters’ psychological state. Applying diagnostic criteria to a precarious, functionless architecture, and assuming it to have both no real value yet impose psychoanalytic weight, tally with the new assertions surrounding Hoarding Disorder\(^\text{134}\). Artist, Rudolph Jahns described, ‘a strange feeling of detachment that overcame me at the time. This room had quite a particular life of its own.’ (Jahns, R. 1927, quoted in Elger, 1999, p: 112) Gallery director, Alexander Dorner was less forgiving, when he said the *Merzbau* stood for ‘the free expression of the socially uncontrolled self [who] had here bridged the gap between sanity and madness.’ He added that it was ‘a kind of fecal smearing – a sick and sickening relapse into the social irresponsibility of the infant who plays with trash and filth.’ (Alexander Dorner quoted in Gamard, 2000, p: 101)

It is intriguing how Dorner sees the *Merzbau* as standing in for or articulating mental disorder, thus affording the architectonic, collaged space a diagnostic power. Dorner suggests a perceived lack of distance between the psychology of the artist-occupant

\(^{134}\) As defined in the DSM-5, May 2013.
and the artwork. The immersive nature of the work and the domesticity of the Merzbau's location highlight this, where a studio or gallery work could maintain more distance from the artist as a subject.

These psychoanalytic implications of the Merzbau suggest psychology as a 'material'. This would imply that the work does not create an analogy between art making and psychology but proposes the 'use' of psychology as an ever-present reflexive material.

I want to re-introduce the totality of the vision in Charlie Kauffman's film Synecdoche New York here as a supplementary example of this use of psychology as material. In the film, the protagonist, theatre director Caden Cotard uses a MacArthur Genius Award to build a scale model of the architectures of his life and, as he suffers a breakdown it reproduces and destroys itself endlessly, reflecting both his own disorder and the reflexive terms of its psychiatry (transferring, projecting, displacing, and converting). The architecture of the model Cotard builds does not efficiently contain or describe his interior and becomes an obsession and frustration – a condition in itself. Rather than remain a surrogate for Cotard, the model appears to leave him behind, to separate itself and assume its own unconscious.

7.3(LOL) Land of the Lost

I am aware that I have, perhaps, misused the erasures of the various international Merzbau (Merzbaux?) by allowing the ways in which they disappeared to evolve meaning around the works themselves. If the Hanover Merzbau had survived the Second World War, it may have been recovered – even returned to its maker - and been subject to an altogether different reading. It is important to this project, which focuses on accumulation and inabilities to discard, to consider how disposal and re-use/re-generation become central to understanding cultural value.

The example of the Mystic Writing-Pad and Freud’s use of it as an ‘approximation of the structure of the perceptual apparatus of the human mind’ permits an inscription of literal traces onto the unconscious.

If we lift the entire covering-sheet – both the celluloid and the waxed paper–off the wax slab, the writing vanishes and, as I have already remarked, does not re-appear again. The surface of the Mystic Pad is clear of writing and once more capable of receiving impressions. But it is easy to discover that the permanent
trace of what was written is retained upon the wax slab itself and is legible in suitable lights.
(Freud, 1925 in SE XIX, ed. Strachey, 2001)

Disappeared or missing artworks of which a permanent record survives implicate these traces onto their subsequent readings – traces, which exist in tandem with a newly superficial layer on the celluloid of the pad. Merzbau is read through its trace inscriptions (unconscious) alongside its actual documentation (conscious). For want of a further example, works destroyed in the MOMART warehouse fire of 24 May 2004 in Leyton, East London are difficult to re-imagine without the context of their destruction. These include Jake and Dinos Chapman’s Hell (1999) and the equally aptly titled The Last Thing I Said To You Is Don’t Leave Me Here (1999) by Tracey Emin.

By often incorporating erasure as ‘built-in’ to the work, I apply the strategy of the Mystic
Writing-Pad more literally. In the performance-drawing work *Conscientious Objectophile* I attached the drawing to a surface, attempted its removal and left its residual trace behind. The work operated, therefore, like a sandcastle at high tide. I have little attachment to the drawing itself as a material presence but feel an attachment to the experience of its making.

In *The Detroit Project* a new vision of Detroit is created with each chapter that is located in the city. It is possible to flick back over previous incarnations, but reading on largely eradicates them. This is a form of accumulation, which occurs within a hoard – everything remains on site but much is rendered invisible due to its burial and the contrasting proximity of its uppermost layers.

This putting-up and taking-down is a feature of Robert Smithson’s seminal work *Hotel Palenque*, except that in Smithson’s case the Hotel is simultaneously being destroyed and erected, ‘caught between the equilibrial forces of reconstruction and decay’ (Wakefield, 1995, p: 133). Smithson, Nancy Holt and their friend, gallerist Virginia Dwan stayed in Palenque on a trip to Mexico in 1969 and, turning his attentions away from the ancient Mayan ruins towards the contemporary ruin of the hotel, Smithson photographed it, terming it ‘a ruin in reverse’ (Smithson, 1972).135

Connected to the early Mayan site by the shared lineage of ruination and restoration, *Hotel Palenque* takes the form of a Nonsite, a discursive and ramshackle web of imagery, conjecture, analysis and recollection, which - like the Hotel itself - lacks either focus or direction. (Wakefield, 1995, p: 133)

Three years later in 1972, Smithson used the slides in a lecture he presented to architecture students at the University of Utah, in which he wittily narrated the ramshackle ‘de-architecturalized’ hotel (Smithson, 1972). This set of slides and the audio recording which accompanies them survive as a model for Robert Smithson’s theoretical stance on entropy and its affect on culture:

… you get this kind of really sensuous sense of something extending both in and out of time (Smithson, 1972)

135 (From audio) *Hotel Palenque*, 1969–72. Slide projection of thirty-one 35 mm color slides (126 format) and audio recording of a lecture by the artist at the University of Utah in 1972 (42 min, 57 sec)
2 of 31 views of Hotel Palenque, 1969, Robert Smithson
35mm slide transparencies, unique
It is the simultaneity of the hotel’s dual states that implicates its behaviour(s) in some of the spatial and archaeological questions I have been asking in the course of this project. The co-existence of reconstruction and decay within one site, suspends expectations of a location’s loyalty to its own time. The hotel appears to have no present – locked as it is in projections of both past and future. Perhaps the same principle can be applied to a hoard: Lower, buried levels of stuff (and sometimes the building itself) are affected by erosion and entropy whilst upper, superficial, more outwardly visible levels boast of new attentions.

The audio visual presentation Hotel Palenque has, since its performance in 1972, gained the work its specific present moment: the texture and aurality of the lecture in Utah remain embedded in the work’s connection to site, a reminder that location of an origin may not be necessarily embedded in the subject (the Nonsite) but in the place and manner it was presented. This position of the work away from the Nonsite affects an important echo of the removals and excavations in the work. It also generates questions about educational models: After all, the ancient ruin is a subject but images of a semi-derelict hotel are being projected. Hotel Palenque is twice a narrative architecture; once near the ancient Mayan city of Palenque, Mexico and once at a remove in a lecture theatre in Utah.

With hindsight there is, evidently, a further form of erasure and dislocation now present in the work. With Robert Smithson’s death - in a plane crash in 1973 - the preservation of the audio soundtrack and unique slides for the work Hotel Palenque implicate the artist’s notable physical absence from its location. Further historicised (and made ruinous) through the now historical analogue media (audio cassette and 35 mm transparencies), the work adds accidentally to its own contexts of entropy and rediscovery.

These co-existent purposeful and accidental ruins inform my understanding of Detroit as a location for a fiction. I deliberately have chosen not to visit. The city remains at a remove from my own experience – meaning that it can be misread, or derived through

136 I have made a number of works which function as meta-fictive lectures throughout this project, including a live, mimed version of Nell’s initial presentation of her brief for a Detroit Project to her own students (performed in Edinburgh and Reading in 2010). These works are included in the Chronology at the end of this thesis and their documentation is among the accompanying works within the PhD. It is not possible to discuss all works made between 2010 and 2014 within this text but I wanted to make note of the existence of these audio-visual lectures here. Importantly, for this chapter I have selected to discuss works where erasure and the narration of site were prominent.
acts of research and subjective distancing. Importantly, this is how Nell accesses Detroit and my authorship of her as a character forces her perspective upon my own.

In conclusion, artistic practices that deal with trace, temporality, ephemera and loss are subject to consideration as waste, and can – in their ultimate absence - communicate ideas about how our unconscious functions as storage. These are ideas that can be related to theory around attachments to things and to mitigating against loss and temporality through excessive accumulation.

Creating temporal work also facilitates, for me, a connection between lived-in space (the activity of the drawing) and psychical archives. In written work, whilst the medium itself is not temporal, the possibility of constructing space is infinite and unboundaried. These two freedoms – of erasure and of endless growth – are, here tied together as ways to build narrative architectures.

In *The Detroit Project* with each new version of Detroit I write (each time a chapter is located in the city), the city accumulates narrative layers. It is possible, of course, to re-read but each version essentially sits on top of the version before. These prior-sites occur within a hoard – everything remains present but much is rendered invisible due to its burial and the contrasting proximity of its uppermost layers.

To understand the hoard, as with the ruin, it is essential to view space beyond the optical, physical and social and to consider how it is also formed unconsciously and – in particular circumstances of abandonment or neglect - has the agency to grow itself entropically (as with Detroit; as with a hoard).

**Chapter Eight:**
Creating and diagnosing Hysterical Objects (The Couch)

Summary:

In this chapter, considering how the hoard is implicated in diagnostics and accumulation in the reading of the artwork, I suggest and dissect how inanimate objects may, through practice, be implicated in a co-option of symptoms of disorder and become, themselves, hysterical.

In a nod to the objectifying of the hysterical or mentally unstable patient - historically and through cultural mythology – I examine, through practice and theory, the powers of objects themselves to transmit unconscious ideas.

Referring to the agency afforded inanimate things in Jane Bennett’s research I draw together theoretical ideas around the potency of things in relation to each other through assemblage. This includes reference to *Thing Theory* (Bill Brown and Martin Heidegger). Bennett writes of a potentialising of the individual thing through the force of its activation by its coming together and suggests the possibilities of things to activate each other heterogeneously without reliance on human activation. This theoretical standpoint places assemblage where the hoard is – the human subject is removed in observing the life of stuff.

I return – via assemblage - to the nature of image-making and object assemblages to attest to psychologies. Revisiting the *Clutter Image Rating* imagined by psychologists Randy O Frost and Gail Steketee I, this time, consider it as installation, relating it to *Coral Reef* by Mike Nelson.
In Treatment (pencil, oil paint, household paint, iron-on veneer, mdf board, 2011)
Political theorist, Jane Bennett has written and spoken extensively about the intrinsic powers of *things* in relation to and in influence of humanness. She calls for a reassessment of the values applied to and embodied by things, considering that they contain an ‘energetic vitality’ (Bennett, 2010, p: 5) at odds with their often assumed inertness. It is not a spiritual affectivity or iconic proposition Bennett asserts on behalf of the things she questions throughout her research (such as waste; vitamins; electricity; foodstuffs; metal; stem cells) but rather their political agency as lively ‘actants’ (Latour, 2004, p: 237) exerting influence and with the potency to manifest change. She describes an ‘aspiration… to articulate a vibrant materiality that runs alongside and inside humans to see how analyses of political events might change if we gave the force of things more due.’ (Bennett, 2010, p: viii)

In a nod to the objectifying of the hysterical or mentally unstable patient - historically and through cultural mythology – I want, in this chapter to suggest and dissect how an
*inanimate object* may, through practice, be implicated in a cooption of symptoms and cultural narrations of disorder and become, itself, hysterical.

I came to Jane Bennett’s research having just completed a complex work and felt that her ideas around thing-power augmented and questioned visual and psychological ideas I was developing through its making. The work, *In Treatment* developed out of photographs of a collage in process and its subsequent destruction. The collage chronicled my elaboration of a textbook picture of a domestic-scale Modernist sculpture. The sculpture seemed to me to be an appropriately inert, yet philosophically laden object on which to impose a manifestation of clutter or chaos. I overlaid the image of the sculpture with other photographic images cut from books and magazines (of objects, furnishings, fabrics, bowls of fruit and other paraphernalia) in gradations, gradually obscuring it and creating a Loosian nightmare out of its demise. Adolf Loos in his Modernism-provoking anti-embellishment essay, *Ornament and Crime*, of 1908 declared that ‘humanity is still to groan under the slavery of ornament’ (Loos, A in Miller and Ward, 2002, pp: 30) and it is this *groaning* or implication of weight I was seeking to achieve through overlaying in my temporal collage.

After the object was laden with all this additional weight – the orientation of each thing remaining - I brushed my hand across the collage and let all the unstuck elements roam across its surface. The final images in the sequence have a sense of being submerged and their contents imbalanced.

I drew selected sequential frames from the photographed collages onto prepared boards and hung them in a grid. The decision not to draw every photograph allowed for the missing frames to register: It felt important to create gaps in the grid, to maintain a sense of imminent collapse and of lapses in logic. Isolating scaled-up images from within the collages – a corner of a tablecloth; a hot dog; a vase; a pair of glasses on a tabletop - I then painted them onto cut out boards as separate objects, returning them an autonomy and reason which had been stripped from them in their sublimation within the collages and drawings. These painted fragments were then placed strategically underneath the grid of wall-mounted drawings, playing off intimations of scale and weight within the composite images.
Three versions of a preparatory collage for *In Treatment* 2011
An intention within this work was to provoke an independence from the hoard for certain objects or artefacts and simultaneously create an oscillation between their potentials for autonomy and submergence. Following removal of the human figure from my imagery, \(^{137}\) I wanted to test how an object can, through practice, be implicated in a co-option of ascribed symptoms of disorder. I have previously discussed the aesthetic diagnostic criteria applied to Hoarding Disorder by Randy Frost and Gail Steketee (Frost, Steketee, 2010 pp: 59 – 61) through the creation of the ‘Clutter Image Rating’. These diagnostic images raise questions about the nature of image-making and object assemblages to attest to psychologies and it is this that I am playing upon in *In Treatment*. The creation of a grid, with clutter building from the floor is also a nod to the staging of these pseudo-scientific images. The methodology of Frost and Steketee’s diagnostic fiction and its potential for misuse\(^ {138}\) has become essential to the deployment (and temporality) of materials and the building of compositions within my work.

To return to Bennett’s assertions about the vitality of matter and to Adolf Loos’ ornamental ‘groans’, I want to invest in the power of things in overlap or in relation to each other, to further interrogate how relationships between elements compositionally and spatially can affect a psychological reading. Bennett’s research locates the assemblage as ‘living, throbbing, confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within.’ (Bennett, 2010, p: 23) She writes of a potentialising of the individual thing through the force of its activation by its coming together in an assemblage, with each ‘member-actant’ keeping its own energies, maintained despite the din. Her assemblage cannot therefore emerge as a whole or new thing, instead it is coerced through its mass into becoming ever disturbed, off-kilter and open-ended.

\(^{137}\) I’m referring to a conscious removal of the human figure in my practice generally, which I described in Chapter Three

\(^{138}\) I am speculating here that a mis-created tool could lead to a misdiagnosis or misunderstanding of a patient’s situation – most particularly their physical, spatial difficulties and the risks inherent in their living space. There is little written about the liability of mental health professionals for their use of diagnostic tools. The most specific literature on the subject - with regard to the DSM - that I have come across is Bearden, Cia, ‘The Reality of the DSM in the Legal Arena: A Proposition for Curtailing Undesired Consequences of an Imperfect Tool’, *Houston Journal of Health Law & Policy* pp: 79 – 102 (2012)
*In Treatment*, panel 1 (detail of installation), 2011

Pencil, household paint, oil paint, wood, iron-on veneer
In Treatment panel 9 (detail from installation), 2011
Pencil, household paint, oil paint, wood, iron-on veneer
Jane Bennett compares the assemblage to the electrical power grid as,

a material cluster of charged parts that have indeed affiliated, remaining in sufficient proximity and coordination to produce distinctive effects. The elements of the assemblage work together, although their coordination does not rise to the level of an organism. Rather, its jelling endures alongside energies and factions that fly out from it and disturb it from within. (Bennett, 2010, p: 24)

The photographed assemblages in the 'Clutter Image Rating' are off-kilter and unwhole. Even as theatre they appear as under-invested non-spaces, often more so than images of actual hoards - like botched school-play counterparts. I am reminded of the hyper-constructed elegance of the fiction in Mike Nelson’s The Coral Reef (2000),
where dust and strewn objects in each interconnected space within the installation are designed to belong (or to have belonged) to someone. In *The Coral Reef* (which I want to here, unfairly, regard as another kind of diagnostic tool, perhaps not of a condition but of specific urbanity and of an era), there are full dustbins overflowing onto the floor, stained mugs on stained surfaces, notes scrawled to an amalgam of selves and others. The ageing of materials is pivotal to this work.

In the catalogue for the first seminal exhibition of assemblage, *The Art of Assemblage* at MOMA, New York in 1961, curator William Seitz wrote of the necessary former life of assembled elements, that

> When paper is soiled or lacerated, when cloth is worn, stained, torn, when wood is split, weathered, or patterned with peeling coats of paint, when metal is bent or rusted, they gain connotations which unmarked materials lack.

*(Seitz, W, 1961, p: 84 – 5)*

The *Clutter Image Rating*, in contrast, seems to misunderstand how these psychological connotations may be built up. By image two of the set relating to the kitchen I would expect piles of washing up; surfaces beginning to get overloaded; coffee-stained cups; mugs and signs of eating; an overflowing bin or rubbish sack. Development of pathological clutter seems unlikely to build from the floor, amongst clean clothes, and more likely to develop out of a room’s original function or intent, first losing counter and table space then losing ground. The DSM itself makes clear that hoarding involves the impeding of functional aspects of living space. It seems imperative that images used for diagnostic purposes within psychiatry are composed with the same critical insight as has been applied, with hindsight, to the fictive associations within Freud’s case studies: Begging the question, when is it not alright to use fictive methodologies?

An analysis of art practices which coerce psychological readings alongside an analysis of diagnostic psychiatric materials such as Frost and Steketee’s *Clutter Image Rating* (and including Freud’s *fictions* and Charcot’s commissioned examples of hysterical convulsion) allows consideration of how these psychological readings may be built and what they can (be allowed to) stand for. I have drawn parallels with Mike Nelson’s *The Coral Reef* here to highlight both what is implicit within psychical-spatial understanding in order to create reflexive fictions *and* in order to create relationships between the roles of art-making and other forms of image/installation-making for a purpose.
Concurrent, parallel analyses of visual practice and psychiatric materials throw up some specific formal correlations. The principles of ageing suggested by Seitz and reiterated in contemporary practices growing out of mid-twentieth century assemblage (such as Mike Nelson; Tim Noble and Sue Webster; Tomoko Takahashi and Christoph Büchel) become integral to ownership and drawing relationships between thing-ness and object-status in any mass coagulated.

This difference is articulated by Bill Brown in his essay *Thing Theory* (2001), in which he builds on American collector and critic Leo Stein's assertion that 'things are what we encounter, ideas are what we project' (Stein, 1927, p: 44) towards the implication that things themselves don't sign but can evolve into objects through a subject-object encounter with them. Brown writes:

‘Could you clarify this matter of things by starting again and imagining them, first, as the amorphousness out of which objects are materialized by the (ap)perceiving subject, the anterior physicality of the physical world emerging, perhaps, as an after-effect of the mutual constitution of subject and object, a retroprojection? You could imagine things, second, as what is excessive in objects, as what exceeds their mere materialization as objects or their mere utilization as objects – their force as a sensuous presence or as a metaphysical presence, the magic by which objects become values, fetishes, idols, and totems.’

(Brown, in Candlin, Guins ed., 2010, p: 141)

Duration is therefore implicit in the life of the thing (and its potential – through projection onto it, or even its simple observation - for a transition to object-status). The lifespan of the objects I have suggested as missing from the Clutter Image Rating (such as a coffee-stained cup) implicate them in a process of conversion from one to the other. This durational aspect and conversion is tied to spatialisation of the thing-into-object in Elizabeth Grosz’ analysis. Things cannot be separated from their location within the conversions they perform. She notes that, ‘Space, time, and things are conceptually connected: space and time are understood to frame and contextualize the thing; they serve as its background.’ (Grosz, 2001 p: 134) Grosz attests to ‘the possibility of action’ inferred by objects coming together, assembled and coagulated. En masse they can be said to possess more of this tendency, a kind of vibration, which requires an intensified form of engagement or conversion.
This flickering between thing, object, time and space seems particularly potentised in the works of Tim Noble and Sue Webster. In one of their best-known works, *Dirty White Trash with Gulls* (1998), below, a heap of the artists’ own rubbish reveals a back-lit self-portrait projected out of the shadows of the trash pile onto the wall in front of it. Thus a flattened plastic bottle can become the bridge of a nose and a dusty stick evolves into a finger perched on a cigarette tip. The work’s inherent narcissism only adds to the way in which materials within its construction return from the grave and are activated through projection of a subject. The work alleviates the waste from an assumed endpoint and redirects it, returning poise and awakening its passivity, shedding the possibilities of disengagement attributed to former values or the significance of function. The piles of rubbish without the projection would not be devoid of meaning, but their relationships could not be as homogenously contrived.

The implications of Bennett’s view of assemblage as a living, throbbing, confederation suggest the possibilities of things to activate each other heterogeneously without reliance on human activation. She refers to Spinoza in her analysis of these comings-together, describing how ‘complex or mosaicized modes’ (Bennett, 2010, p: 22) allow things to invoke increasing power through the vitality of their interconnectedness or through relationships with each other, as independent from a solely human experience of them. Graham Harman, philosopher of metaphysics, also proposes that objects are not related solely through human use but through their own inter-relationships and uses of each other. According to Ian Bogost, Harman argues that, ‘hammer, human, haiku, and hot dog are all ready-to-hand and present-at-hand for one another as much as they are for us.’ (Bogost, 2012, p: 6)

I created a list of all the nouns in *The Detroit Project*, thereby removing their human activation. This new work, *Noun Pile* functions as a textual assemblage of things activated only by their proximities to each other and via the comma as a linguistic surrogate for the collagist fault-line. I have included six pages of this text at the end of this chapter. Bogost notes that, ‘Like a medieval bestiary, ontography can take the form of a compendium, a record of things juxtaposed to demonstrate their overlap and imply interaction through collocation. The simplest approach to such recording is the list, a group of items loosely joined not by logic or power or use but by the gentle knot of the comma.’ (ibid, p: 38)
I was thinking of notions of assemblage and subject-object activation critically as they may apply to a hoard when, in August 2011 I was invited by nurse consultant, Satwant Singh to attend and observe the only treatment group for hoarders and their families in the UK. Singh runs this hoarding support group, once a month at the Wordsworth Health Centre in East Ham, London. Two members of the group were happy to talk with me separately and discuss their relationships with the stuff built up over years of hoarding in their homes. Each echoed aspects of Jane Bennett’s research, asserting the specificity of individual objects and items to manifest energies. Each underlined their attraction to items as independently vibrant, both connected to and independent of stacks and piles of stuff, describing an ability or willingness of one element in a mass
to ‘call out’ and demand a form of attention or separation. The hoarders’ own attention to one single element was suggested to wane with its removal from the mass and its singular examination, at which point another item’s energies called out for a similar focus. Thus, a constant shuffling activity would recur in the home as elements were picked up and replaced, demanding and receding from attention as independents before being returned to the mass. What is at the top of any one heap or pile can therefore change without its height being reduced. One hoarder described this as exhausting and constantly distracting, saying she had perfect recall for every object’s ‘story’, whether it was a receipt or a marble, and however seemingly insignificant to others.139

This shuffling activity, referred to as ‘churning’ by Frost and Steketee (Frost, Steketee, 2010 p: 28) is something I engage in my studio as a means of building compositions selectively and counter-reductively with collage materials. The temporary dislocation of an object or element from a pile, its assessment or narrative elaboration then its subsequent return to a mass – a process, which informed the making of In Treatment - echoes hoarding behaviours. However, it is mediated, within my practice, by an aesthetic and academic rationale, which I employ to (en)counter these traits and place the work within a wider context where collection, display, cohesion and the independent value of individual elements come into play.

I am reflecting these ideas in my fiction-writing, questioning how objects and artworks are regarded, within the confines of public and private spaces and obsessions. In Chapter Five (Farmland) of The Detroit Project I position Martha’s domestic hoarding alongside her public commissioning of a mural for the Detroit Institute of the Arts. As she engages with the artist’s attention to detail in the mural, Martha develops an insight into her own complex relationships to the stuff that surrounds her, her abilities ‘to focus on an object and afford it a special weight or presence.’

Martha let one object-of-affection make way for the next, sometimes within seconds of it affording her an extreme enjoyment. Even in its loss to the piles in her home, it was not falling out of favour. As she placed an item on the floor of her home (or on the fridge, the washer, the bed) it was never as an act of disregard. These were acts of keep-saking, memento-making and saving. Nothing was garbage. The smallest of receipts, the most

139 These individual meetings remain un-transcribed due to the wishes of those I interviewed, leaving me in the awkwardly Freudian position of having to question my own writing-up as potentially fictive.
glorious of marbles, each had a story behind it, from when and where it was first held. The piles activated and reactivated this sense of their initial attraction. Here were mounds of object-memories awaiting disclosure.140

(From, Chapter Five (Farmland) of The Detroit Project)

This ‘special weight or presence’ assigned by Martha to the stuff in her space takes me back to Leo Stein’s differentiating between encounters and projections. With thing-ness implying a lack of projected subject, the thing-object separation occurs at a very space-specific level for Martha (and in a hoard). In a hoarder’s home, everything is object (projected upon) and nothing can ever be thing (something to encounter). What is in the hoard is an object but what is outside it, not hoarded and therefore does not (yet) find itself projected upon can still be a thing.

Ownership, Walter Benjamin writes, ‘is the most intimate relationship one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him [the collector]; it is he who lives in them’. (Benjamin, 1970, p: 69) Within non-pathological collection, the implication is that this level of attachment applies only to objects within the collection itself (let’s say souvenir spoons), as separate from other items the collector may own (such as car parts, today’s newspaper or a stuffed toy). On describing the ‘poles of order and disorder’ (ibid. p: 62) as they pertain to the pursuits of a collector, Benjamin notes that there is ‘a very mysterious relationship to ownership… also, to a relationship to objects which does not emphasize their functional, utilitarian value – that is their usefulness’. (ibid. p:62) This reflects the DSM-5’s definition for Hoarding Disorder, which isolates dysfunctional living space as a requisite symptom141.

For Heidegger, this use value is the crux of thing-ness. When he posits that, ‘The jug is a thing as a vessel – it can hold something’, (Heidegger, 1971) he also counters that it is the void inside the jug to actually get filled at that point of use and then that the act of filling up is itself a scientific displacement, of air for liquid. ‘Science makes the jug-thing into a nonentity in not permitting things to be the standard for what is real.’ (ibid.) The tongue-twisting spirals of logic in Heidegger’s analysis of thing-ness become, as I

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140 Using The Detroit Project to support academic analysis is to intentionally play with notions of fictive psychoanalytical accounts and potential mis-diagnoses.

141 Detroit is of specific relevance here (and interesting to me) as a dysfunctional living space reaching beyond the domestic. I chose to set my fiction partially in Detroit because of the qualities it possesses as open to projections, not dissimilar from those I describe here with regard to the subject-object relations within a growing hoard.
now read them, a linguistic, philosophical surrogate for churning: Endless replacements of thing for object for thing on never decreasing, ever more suggestible piles.

On re-reading Benjamin’s *Unpacking my Library* (bringing it back to the top of a pile), I am inclined to return to reconsider the notion of function in the DSM-5 description. Benjamin’s ‘utilitarian’ book collection is, as is mine, a projection. (Although we could argue the case for the ‘uses’ of literature in another thesis.) It occurs to me that, whilst the American Psychiatric Association is obviously referring to ‘function’ as the health of the space to perform as it was intended (to be able to cook in a kitchen, sleep in a bedroom, eating in a dining room etc.), there may be a case for arguing how complex psychological projection could, for some, make living more functional. Hoarders refer to the discomfort they experience when throwing things away or on being asked to dispose of their belongings, so can an assumption be made that (hazard and sanitation aside) they are in more functional space when within the comforts of their hoard? The crux of this lies in whom it is that makes decisions about worth, value or functionality and how they are made. At the start of the US television show, *Hoarders* there is an explanatory text:

Compulsive Hoarding is a mental disorder marked by an obsessive need to acquire and keep things, even if the items are worthless, hazardous, or unsanitary.

*(Hoarders, A&E TV, since 2009)*

‘Hazardous’ and ‘unsanitary’ are fairly stable conditions to assess according to logical and experiential criteria. Issues of worth or worthlessness, as I brought up in Chapter Two, are more problematic and inherently subjective (most specifically in non-economic terms). I have argued the case for the hoard as a space in which value systems are constantly redefined - as consistently heightened through constant activation of subject-object projections on the part of the hoarder - and I have discussed how a value system can be applied to objects amassed, which, through their qualities and collective ability to destabilise an environment, can ascribe a condition to a hoarder, even in their absence. It could be said that this hands the diagnosis over to the hoard. As with Jane Bennett’s notions of an agency or vitality of matter, it is things assembled (and the mode of their assemblage) which call for help or point out dysfunction.
8.2(it) In Treatment

I can equate this ‘handing over’ to object-focused performance practices where a scene is vacated and objects left to imply a psychological reading and habitation. An example would be the trace left by artefacts in the ‘lectures’ of John Bock, such as in the work Curve-vehicle incl. π-Man–(.) (2010) In the lecture, various egg-like structures – a ‘sleeping area’, ‘music pod’, ‘diagram room’ and ‘living space’ - roamed the Barbican’s Curve Gallery on a stacked vehicle where they then encountered wall-mounted insectoid pods – a clock store; a clothes shop and a noodle bar. Each space was filled with bric-a-brac, maps, clocks, decorative plates, fabrics and a plethora of other knick-knacks. Four actors engaged the makeshift set, occupying and manoeuvring the structures, communicating abstract commercial transactions. Once vacated, the set –inert and uninhabited – played host to the accoutrements of this theatre enabling an imagined version of its activation to enliven and animate the installation, with objects and spaces acting as ‘indispensable accessories of a scatologico-metaphysical quest.’ (Milard, 2010)
In the context of my PhD practice, I wanted to work with this notion of ‘handing over’ to objects and invest in the possibility that an image or object could not only imply disorder – as it may pertain to an author or subject – but potentially suffer that disorder (despite but not at odds with its inanimateness). Returning to the convulsions of hysterics in the photography commissioned by Charcot at the Salpêtrière, I studied the ‘pose’ of disorder within the imagery. To this end, I set myself a framework of criteria I noted as manifesting _around_ the figure within the photographs, which I could then apply to a new set of works with objects. These criteria were based on those orchestrations of hysteria I analysed as being conveyed or transmitted through formal aspects of the photography.

The photographs were - and are - presented in series and, in the case below, among others, form a grid, allowing a narrative to build and invoking the compositional properties of a diagram (and therefore instruction or knowledge), such as with the
Clutter Image Rating. A further grid exists here within the makeup of the seating or bed. At various points the convulsing figure dislodges the ground (upsetting its geometry) through her movements and the background manifests as unhinged or destabilised. A sheet is lost (perhaps through the figure’s motions) but is subsequently regained, questioning the authenticity of the order of the images. The figure’s underwear (or costume) is striped making her movements geometricised and further pronouncing them via its strains and pulling. I made a diagram of this grid – without the figure – leaving the mattress hysterical.

In the work, In Treatment I applied these principles to the image of the Modernist sculpture I cut from a book. This object-turned-hysteric was put through a series of convulsions designed to imitate the repeated geometry and dislodged formalities within this image from the Salpêtrière, but with compulsive hoarding as the disorder being recorded.

Rummo, two plates from the Iconografia fotografica del grande Isterismo (1890), dedicated to Charcot
Bill Brown refers, in a footnote to his essay ‘Thing Theory’, to the film Castaway (2000, dir. Robert Zemeckis, prod. Dreamworks), in which Tom Hanks’ marooned protagonist projects a companion onto a volleyball, Wilson (see below). Throughout the film, dialogue is only facilitated on the part of Hanks’ character via the willing ear of the inert Wilson, who serves as a mute and anthropomorphic co-star. In this way the ball becomes a recipient of sound; an activator of human speech. Brown refers to this projection as ‘the most thorough recent representation of how objects organize human life.’ (Brown, 2001, p: 7) It is not a mere projection though: The ball has a face and is thus humanised. It can never be the football of Michel Serre’s quasi-object, where activation is dependent on a form of contact, which does not permanently alter the ball (except through misadventure, rendering it useless) nor impose a new, unprecedented role upon it. What is exciting about Wilson’s specific mode of activation and its importance to Brown's critical insight - in the scope of practice-based research - is that projection is deployed as a psychological resource alongside the implication that Wilson’s activation comes about through some form of tampering or manipulation. The projection is not merely psychological.
screen,
overall,
overall,
dresser,
yellow tights,
desk lamp,
espresso,
papers,
rubble,
hard hat,
tights,
fat-nibbed brush pen,
scrap of paper,
...
distressed corduroy,
...
lectern,
projector,
slide,
carousel,
grey institutional carpet,
...
...
coffee,
...
pizza oven,
altarpiece,
...
...
slate,
...
video,
bird shit,
paint spillage,
shit,
weekend papers,
cardboard box,
patterned paper,
crayons,
box,
straps,
portrait,
frame,
body parts,
slide,
drawing,
Monopoly board game,
AV equipment,
remote controls,
dunkin’ donut,
...
... needle,
vinyl soundtrack,
essay,
giant models to scale,
coffee,
sandwich,
beard,
wallpaper,
gold discs,
brassy rectangles,
flooring,
leather-topped desk,
papers,
bureau,
sandwich,
censored items,
vibrator made of a badly taxidermied squirrel,
matching squirrel hair handbag,
jiffy bag,
sharpie,
tiny teeth,
watch,
coffee,
rope,
receipts,
spray cans,
green arrow,
limb,
ice-box,
Christmas paper,
weary camera,
boxes,
package,
badly-wrapped packets,
brown-edged sticky tape,
boxes,
labels,
bubble wrap,
unworn clothing,
gaudily framed paintings,
car parts,
electronics,
Berry Gordy thumbs-up sticker,
Hawaiian shirt,
tiny hamburgers,
photographs of a large family,
camera,
objects for a godly life,
'thirties bathroom fittings,
bar with engraved glass doors,
liquor,
Jugs (ceramic and silverware),
Jesus iconography,
Jewelry,
wind-up jam donut,
velveteen box,
gemstones,
garbage bin,
brown papers,
Gifts,
shelving,
manuscript,
pencil,
empty folio,
Paper swan,
handbag,

wheelchair ramps,
well-oiled side gate,
dishes,
take-out,
climbers,
bookends,
propped-up pile,
dirt,
vacuum,
bell,
mattress,
trouser leg,
catalogues,
dusted shelves,
book,
plastic sleeve,
signed poster for Rebel Without a Cause,
paper – semi-glossy,
tiny tape-measure,
pocket,
squirrel,
vibrator,
out-of-print volumes of Eastern European occult
philosophy,
pyjamas,
flagstones,
desktop,
thumbnails,
shell,
barnacles,
hermit crab,
book,
shell,
rock,
glue,
...
...
blue light bulb,
papers,
laptop,
bowl of half-finished grapes,
drawing,
retail design brochures,
shells,
pva,
crinkled biscuit,
gluey rectangle,
makeshift bin,
bursting bag,
loose nail,
pva,
off-cuts of electrical wiring,
pamphlet on chlamydia,
rubber foot pad from a dining chair,
battery,
bag,
battery,
socks,
wheat-germ,
hinge,
tiny silver radio,
cream carpet,
laptop,
grapes,
papers,
books,
paper,
lighting,
esticated threads,
objects,
objects,
hats,
beards,
...
falcons,
furry thing,
paper,
packaging,
books,
boxes,
printed text, 'Cereal',
birds, falcons, pesticide, raccoons, owls, foxes, bird, falcons, grass, technology, crops, crops, flapping poster, paper, ...
teeth, desk, local wine, trellis, frame, vines, falcons, tools, wheat, baskets of greens, vegetables, object, wine, wine bottle, fridge, washer, bed, garbage, receipts, marbles, glasses, key, chewed chicken leg, vending machine decaff, sandwich, bread, key, key, chicken leg, defrosted key, laptops, baskets of seasonal produce, smoothies, juicers,
Ted Nugent, Cat Scratch Fever cut-off vest, baggage, cocktail, glass, digital cameras, windows, headphones, script, small table, pocket card schedule from 1966, plan of the original Packard Motor Car Company, handbag, towers of papers, stove, buckwheat, peregrines, soy, mass of mess, phone, speaker, medical supplies, shoes, cheese cracker, bag of groceries, US Weekly, linoleum, TV, piles of towels, stash of dusty doors from kitchen cabinets, articles, tomatoes, potatoes, pears, herbs
Summary:

In this chapter, which focuses on the site of the gallery and a particular series of works made towards the end of the PhD, collection is an implicit part of methodology.

I examine exhibition itself as a form of assemblage and ‘churning’ as a process inherent to it. This process – of recycling attention via materials from the bottom of the pile to the top - is not one resigned to disorder but often mirrored within large scale museological collection as part of its economics and curatorial rationale. Large museums and institutions churn too. They bring stuff up from the bottom of the pile - from their warehouses or basements - towards public display and back again. These shared traits between disorder, practice and the economies of established collection and curation are navigated in this chapter.

This chapter is a narration of works (*The Piles*) made towards the end of the PhD and considers their own archiving and dissolution as integral to their content. I locate these ideas in tandem with an examination of recent works by Belgian artist, Joëlle Tuerlinckx and analyse (re)arrangement as methodology.

*The Piles* is an unsettling installation of works in that it does not want to settle. Things should seem impermanent and mobile there: a collage without glue. In many ways the medium is *exhibition* itself. Precariousness, churning and constant addition mean that both hoard and exhibition are internally itinerant and mobile despite their perceived attachments to location.
9.0(ch) Carpet Hoarder / Interruptive Objects

In May 2012 I contacted the CLR James Library in Dalston Junction, East London. At the time the library was closing and moving to a new location. I could see through the old library windows that their carpet tiles – red and grey alternate squares – remained in the empty space and would probably be discarded. I liked the idea that a future use of the carpet would somehow archive the space – as having been read – and contribute in some unconscious way to the links I was trying to make between textuality and place. The library agreed to give me 300 carpet tiles to use in a future installation.

The floor tiles were loaded into a van at the old library on 16 July 2012 and arrived at my studio where I met them. I was unable to lift much as I was scheduled to give birth two days later. The library – in a bid to get rid of all the remaining tiles – had loaded more than 2000 carpet tiles into the van. I could not lift, handle or store these in my studio and Tower Hamlets council would not take them: They were classified as industrial waste but I am not an industry.

I contacted Hackney council, as I live in the borough, but they pointed out that if I took the tiles home they could not then be re-classified as domestic waste. They would not be picked up. I was stuck. My waste had fallen between two categories and could not truly become waste. The only way to get the carpet tiles out of the van – so that the drivers could continue with their day - was to put them outside my flat, where they remained until I went into hospital two days later. The tiles filled a walled-in area at the
front of the shared property and spilled out onto the busy street.

Realising that the Olympic Torch was due to be paraded in front of the flat on 21 July with pomp and fanfare, I enlisted the help of the original drivers to take the tiles – now rain-soaked and twice their original weight – back to the library at night. This was organised from the delivery room at Homerton Hospital. The carpet tiles were dumped where they originated.

The odd lives of objects – from manufacture to use to obsolescence - are tied up in this story. The tiles had been the footprint of library research for years and somehow those footsteps ended up in wet stacks in my garden. I had intended the tiles to be a signifier of the archival, classificatory side to my project but they ended up as unclassifiable clutter. They were almost the backdrop to the public parade of a bespoke design object making its final journey to the newly built Olympic Park and, had she come home with us in that strange week in July, would also have been the chaotic backdrop to my daughter’s homecoming. The carpet tiles implicated my domestic life in a project I had, to date, kept far from my own relationship to amassing things. The feeling of encroachment was profound.

Library floor tiles piled up at the front of my flat, halfway through unloading the van, 16 July 2012
9.1(Tppppp) The Piles: A detailed consideration of one work, fractured

For the duration of this project I have been working on a ‘final’ exhibition titled The Piles. The Piles cannot be seen in its entirety as it is obscured by its own mass and difficulties. It comprises of an unfixed ‘set’, which can be viewed as inert and/or as animated through audience movement and performance. The Piles is largely made up of unwieldy bases, units and supports built to carry and display piles of paper-based research, stacked ceiling-wards; amassed objects in sets; pencil drawings on wooden supports; projections and three-dimensional collages. The bases are a response to hoarding and collection simultaneously, and to the presence of different textures and values within hoards. They are an attempt to build precarious piles onto semi-fixed architectures, and on pretences of strength (of a support) and substance.

Some of the structures allude to domestic space but as ‘rooms’ offer no access to an interior. These are inverse living or display spaces with detailed drawings, fixtures and fittings, stuffed creatures, photographs and clutter stuck onto the outside of constructions which could be architectural... or plinths, or storage. The bases in The Piles display and contain disordered and ordered arrangements and collections of objects (from cakes with inventories to glass lamps to piles of tree bark), allowing them to stand in for reasoned and apparently irrational pursuits through mechanisms of display and selection. The floor contains the footprint of the ex-library and becomes locked into a systematized, categorised world but with shifted contents and materials.

The Piles is viewed with a screen behind it, depicting the rooms/chapters within which this thesis has grown. Black and white grainy collages of these fictitious spaces, which house the chapters of this text, therefore also form a location for these mounting (and mounted) objects.

I have included many drawn works in The Piles. The drawing allows for a labour intensity and rigour to exist alongside more casual acts of gathering material. The autographic elements of the installation are important to the sense of pursuit I am keen to establish and to the authorship of the work. It is integral to the work that it is built or collated by a person and not by an authority or collective. In terms of a psychical reading of The Piles, the drawing locates a maker within the piece and embeds them there, in its construction durationally. Without this inhabitation of The Piles I would not be able to connect it to some of the compulsive, obsessive elements of its content or contexts.
This is a work permanently in-progress. It can be altered on a whim and its contents shuffled and churned. It can be the site of performance as and when this shuffling is witnessed: when works are made or drawn within the exhibition and when the space houses acts of cleaning or tidying – such as vacuuming or dusting. *The Piles* is an unsettling installation of works in that it does not want to settle. Things should seem impermanent and mobile there: a collage without glue. In many ways the medium is *exhibition* itself. I want to make fluid connections between duration, space, movement and progression. These connections were iterated by Michel de Certeau in *The Practice of Everyday Life*:

> A space exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. Space occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.
> (de Certeau, p: 117)

These ‘contractual proximities’ are particularly important to my intentions for *The Piles* in that they are interrelationships by selection, staged to occur between elements in succumbing to the affects of their display.

Here are notes on *some* isolated sections of *The Piles*. I have titled these sections individually for clarity within this text. These titles are for way-finding and are not in lieu of re-naming the work. (Further sections can be seen in the book of visual documentation. In choosing to articulate what has gone into the making of this composite work I am not making assumptions about how it is to be read. The work is purposefully open and difficult, but what has contributed to its making is specific.

**Memorial Mound:**

In a spiraling trail of internet research, I found an image of a memorial to Jean-Martin Charcot’s son, Jean Baptiste Charcot. This younger Charcot was a doctor and polar explorer who died in 1936 when his ship, the *Pourquoi-Pas?* was wrecked off the coast of Iceland. The memorial pictured below is in Ittoqqortoormiit in Greenland. It seems such a sorry thing – a sort of pile of rubble invested with drying laundry, the lean of a bike and the inescapable proximity of
domesticity. I wanted to work with this image not simply because of its composition but also through consideration of its honouring of a man whose own father’s image-making I have examined as dramaturgy.

In The Piles I have placed multiple prints of this Greenland memorial above a growing set of small piles on the ground. These other sorry memorials – to date of tree bark and ferrero rocher⁴⁴² - are collections, testing the value systems inherent to materials coagulated and are fed by my research into the status of things in a hoard. Through an assumption of collective knowledge around the objects gathered into these piles I am questioning their potential

⁴⁴² Foil-wrapped chocolates in paper cases.
monumentalism or (more probable) status as detritus. The ferrero rocher have a pop symbolism based on a television commercial from the ‘eighties where they were served with pomp in pyramidal form at embassy dinners. My version is a deliberate collapsed heap: a failed attempt at ceremony.

The photographs of Jean-Baptiste Charcot’s memorial mound are fixed to the side of a painted wooden structure. They are in frames, which tip forwards so giving the impression of precariousness or a possible crash. The bark and chocolate piles are placed at the foot of the structure on a torn sheet of newsprint.

The structure itself has castor wheels placed on the top of it – as if it has been upturned. On one façade I have painted a cross section of the geology of rock towards the earth’s
core. In Chapter One I wrote of what it would mean to be the archaeologist of a hoard – of the inherent dangers of digging and the abstractions of what lies beneath. This monument is an attempt to simultaneously regard several layers of a space at once but never be able to view its entirety. The four façades pseudo-scientifically break down different layers of a space. On one façade there is a drawing of an interior; onto another is drawn a close-up of an ornament in that interior; a third shows the geology below the home and the fourth houses the photographs and replicas of a posthumous monument to exploration.

I have drawn in detail onto two faces of the structure. One drawing is a close transcription of one of the collages in the *Clutter Image Rating* works (see end Chapter Two). By redrawing an image that is elsewhere in the space – in a different scale and medium – I hope to acknowledge the revisiting of objects and spaces and the particular ability of hoarders to hone in on a small – seemingly insignificant - detail but afford it great weight and status among their possessions.
Detail of *The Piles*, (‘Memorial Mound’) Chisenhale Art Place, 2014
Bathroom Scale:

The step-like structure I am terming ‘Bathroom Scale’ is a support for overlapping pattern and ornament. This structure has the feel of a botched DIY project and is loosely modelled on images of half-finished projects in television property makeover shows and the semi-visibility of objects and papers in hoards. Using paper collage as a methodological remit for construction of a three-dimensional structure gives a deliberate awkwardness to its lack of polish. ‘Bathroom Scale’ supports, on two chrome towel rails, a number of differently textured papers, some worn and used, and others pristine. On one rail the ‘towels’ are made up of connected pencil drawings, which hang over to join up and form a composite image. These are drawings of a collage composed of images of interlocking domestic design objects. They possess a quality and attention to detail (as does the drawing) that is not present in the overall nature of
the object onto which they are hung. Although careful and precise these drawings ‘dirty’ the notional towel.

A further drawing – onto an oddly shaped board – is propped atop the structure and suggests its escape from elsewhere. This drawing is an intensely close-up, animalistic interpretation of some sheepskin rugs in a display bin at IKEA. This origin could not be gleaned from the drawing but my intention is for it to carry a sense of texture and aliveness, removed from an original location and preserved.

The drawings and textural differences in ‘Bathroom Scale’ require close looking and a slowing down which mimics the making of the work. Although the piece as a whole gives the sense of being ramshackle it is not underinvested. Hoards are like collections in this way – they cannot be seen easily in their entirety or judged from a distance. They require investigation and attention.
Detail of *The Piles*, (‘Bathroom Scale’)
Chisenhale Art Place, 2014
Around the back of ‘Bathroom Scale’, there is a geometric design painted onto the structure. Using sample pots of leftover wrongly-mixed paints from local DIY shops I tested the colours, masking off areas which echoed shapes located within the drawings hanging on the towel rail. These repeated geometries recur throughout The Piles and, I hope, ultimately create a sense of disorientation and déjà vu. Spaces between the objects or plinths are narrow and necessitate a bodily awareness in navigating the space. A framed collage, which includes a piece of astronomical equipment is hung onto the back of ‘Bathroom Scale’. In this small, claustrophobic corridor is therefore a reference to looking out, up and away.

Detail of The Piles, (view from the back of ‘Bathroom Scale’)  
Chisenhale Art Place, 2014

**Apartment in Stockholm:**

‘Apartment in Stockholm’ is perhaps the most evidently museological ‘unit’ in The Piles, in that the structure itself has a repository for displaying material. There is little or no
tangible link between the items and objects displayed here. They adopt the pose of valued treasures and stuff accumulated connectively but beyond this pose these connections fall apart: Some square-cut foam samples; the glass bulbs from a pendant lamp; a striped paper bag; tree bark organised in lines on faux veneer shelves; boxes of Middle Eastern cakes with taxonomical paper labels; a bath plug; a PlayDoh lid; a bell jar; a pile of printed bags with a geometric ribbon design; a ball of brown hair shaped into a comma; the ‘run’ from a guinea pig hutch and more.

Among these accumulated, seemingly unrelated things is a pencil drawing of a further collage onto another shaped wooden board. The drawing includes the text ‘Apartment in Stockholm’ and its elements are cut from an interiors magazine. Everything included in ‘Apartment in Stockholm’ is positioned in a way, which reeks of strategy and contrivance. Tactics of display are intervening in the status of objects and I am playing with how they affect notions of value. For example, a purple plastic lid from a PlayDoh ice-cream kit alters in status when placed alongside some Edwardian glass lamp fixtures. Tree bark takes on the affects of sculptural significance or historical findings when placed with care as opposed to in a mound on the floor. These aesthetic relationships are consciously activated and derive meaning from the attention they are given through display.
Detail of The Piles, (various sections of ‘Apartment in Stockholm’)  
Chisenhale Art Place, 2014

Detail of The Piles, (‘Apartment in Stockholm’ in foreground), Chisenhale Art Place, 2014
Alongside having spaces and psychologies of accumulation as its subject and the constant interplay of arrangements and acts of gathering as its methodological framework, The Piles is itself archived. A fuzzy digital archive of the works, which is, for its own part, buried in pixilation accompanies the work. Using photographs of the installed pieces – prior to the laying of the flooring – I emailed the documentation as attachments then re-photographed screenshots of the attached files. The gradual erosion (a mock-Xeroxing) of these images suggested to me an entropic loss of one image to its subset, notional archive or accumulation. This Ruptured Archive of The Piles remains when all its physical elements are returned to storage.
Creating an exhibition, which has impermanence, fluctuation and a moveable set of objects and structures as its scaffold has required an examination of flux. Psychical relationships to space and objects intrinsic to the hoard are not fixed and emergence is not something that happens once but keeps on happening throughout the life of a thing. Precariousness, churning and constant addition mean that the hoard is internally itinerant and mobile despite its attachment to location. To be in progress - and to never arrive - is a requisite of working with accumulation.

Many of the paper collages I have made since 2011 have been glue-less. I have photographed or drawn these works through their evolution (as with Clutter Image Rating – Chapter Two and In Treatment – Chapter Eight) and tipped the sum of their parts into envelopes and boxes (for possible later re-use) once recorded. The works are fixed by their digitisation meaning that they exist more concretely in the archive or documentation of this project than in physical actuality. A record therefore replaces their earlier physicality.¹⁴⁴

Belgian artist, Joëlle Tuerlinckx, who works with accumulation and a constant repositioning and re-requisitioning of materials, talks of her practice as engaging with the exhibition as medium. In a project titled ‘Musée de la Mémoire Propriété Universelle®’, in Cransac-les-Thermes, France, Tuerlinckx ‘appropriates a museum instrument as is her wont, in parallel to official sources of information’,¹⁴⁵ through redevelopment of the apparatus of exhibitions. This critical museography – a strategy employed across her work - consists of press releases, posters, signs, labels, display cases, inventories, descriptions, publications and documentation. The exhibition thus measures itself, taking stock of its own paraphernalia, language and investments. It falsely ages— becomes pseudo-historical by association – and assumes the pose of exhibition-as-a-form-of-assemblage. The resulting pile up feels like less of an archive and more of a manifestation of the unconscious activities of memory-making within the brain. Clues to a constant of progress as a measure within Tuerlinckx’s work lie in its inventories and glossaries of terms. Works and processes are described in texts which themselves function as works:

MOMENT d’EXPOSITION
[EXHIBITION MOMENT]
object to be seen falling. paper rounds that one lets fall to the floor, from a bridge or a parapet (inside, from the top of a ladder).
variable diameters: other formats, more irregular or rectilinear, are also conceivable: each curvature,

¹⁴⁴ The paper collage image of each ‘room’ of this thesis on the Sitemap is produced in this way – with the exception of Chapter Three.
¹⁴⁵ Catherine Mayeur, ‘Joëlle Tuerlinckx or the Sense of Possibility’ in Tuerlinckx, 2013, p: 165
each cutting decision radically alters the drawing and the time of its fall, thus rendering the MOMENT exceptional and non-reproducible. certain MOMENTs are preserved as architecture moments. these moment-disks bear the indication of the time of their fall. (Tuerlinckx, 2013, p: 339)

Joëlle Tuerlinckx WOR(L)(D)(K) IN PROGRESS, Arnolfini, Bristol, 2014 (my own photograph)

Tuerlinckx’ unconscious archives are ‘a form of visual thinking’ (Newman, 2006, p: 34), ever evolutive and cyclical, binding exhibition and duration together. Documents and objects shown in one exhibition are transferred to the next – reconfigured and edited to the space, with their re-contextualisations dependent upon the proximities of other relative proposals. Critic, Catherine Mayeur writes of Tuerlinckx’ treatment of exhibition
as medium in her catalogue essay for WOR(L)(D)(K) IN PROGRESS?, Tuerlinckx’s 2013-14 exhibition which toured to the Arnolfini in Bristol:

To Joëlle Tuerlinckx’s mind, an exhibition is not made up of the sum of existing works, it is an overall, specific proposition, a weaving of rhizoid threads that in each case is a semantic fabric of rare density, which is always open to new configurations and relationships. It is a figure of memory or ‘figure de mémoire’ between the past and the future. If we wanted to explain all this we would end up with a volume as thick as a railway timetable.

(Mayeur in Tuerlinckx, 2013, p: 205)

Mayeur’s essay repeats twice in the catalogue: Once in a form which utilises the layout of the page and then again as though Xerox-ed and re-bound into the book, doubling up on page numbers and including a different set of images. The multiple potentialities present in Tuerlinckx’s work are made evident through their display and the cross-referential nature of placements. Croppings and snippets recur like looping thoughts and disturb each other. It is not a stretch to return to Freud’s Mystic Writing Pad and subject the act of crossing a room of Tuerlinckx’s works to this metaphorical note on the human brain’s relationship to trace.
At the very start (back in Chapter One) I related over-accumulation to theoretical questions around the emergence of an idea or document, and of archaeology in relation to both the pursuit of knowledge and psychological insight. Considering, now, the exhibition as medium and the possibilities for unstuck or itinerant collagist forms, I wonder whether the physical framework for understanding a hoard through practice is not as rooted an investigation as archaeology would infer. The surface is only temporal, awaiting burial and the lowest regions can float up at any time for reinvestigation.

By implicating devices such as overlap, movement or trace into the format of exhibitions there is immediately a problematised ‘unseen’ element. If the object or document being apparently exhibited is obscured or blocked – even in some small way – it requires digging for and there emerges a questioning of the strategies of the archive, as well as of the value of what is on display. In this obscurcation, restlessness occurs and things won’t settle – on their shelves or cabinets or in their books. Using glue now seems like a terrible mistake. Of course, I mustn’t stick things down.

By making the works for *The Piles* – and arranging them in the same space several times over four months, I interrogated these ideas about storage, churning and the exhibition as medium. Having acknowledged the importance of temporality to my wall drawings and in the construction of variable cities in my fiction-writing, I am getting closer to establishing the conditions for temporality with the heavier materials in installation.
Summary:

Continuing from the previous chapter’s examination of the possibilities for temporality in installation and the exhibition form, I consider how cleaning and clearing become implicit to both exhibition and hoard. In this chapter I delve into sorting, organising and discarding as an impositional means of clearing up disorder. I look at the stigmatisation of dirt, cultural views of disgust and ways in which scientific and socio-cultural ideas around cleanliness and the home affect our reading of the condition.

Contamination, abjection and the transgressive borders of the body are all part of this enquiry as I test the idea of a kind of purgatory between utility and banishment occupied by the hoard. This chapter is deliberately at the back end of the thesis, notionally anticipating its own remove or obsolescence. Here I examine Michael Landy’s *Break Down* (2001) and its residue – a meticulous inventory.

I accidentally create waste through the mistake printing of a Calvino text and this error informs the making of an animation, *Appropriated Mishap* (2014). This work is analysed in this chapter with regard to editorial practice, the discarding or waste products of processes and the residues of collation and collaboration.
In 2012, when I was an invited guest to a treatment group for hoarders and their family members, a member of the therapeutic team running the session set me a challenge: ‘See if you can spot the slob’, the therapist said. ‘He comes every week and he’s not a hoarder. See if you can spot him. He’s a slob.’

I needed help to spot him and didn’t feel much like playing this game. Afterwards, the challenge was explained to me. Hoarders have great difficulties managing their attachments to things and struggle with discarding items. They do not have issues with clearing up, per se. If a third party can clean and organise your home and you don’t mind throwing things away then you are not a hoarder. You are someone who does not clear up, for which there is no assigned condition or DSM categorisation. At the group session was a man who wished someone would come and help him clean up and he did not mind what they took away. He was, according to one of his therapists, ‘a slob’.

Hoarding is not, by definition, dirty or environmentally hazardous. It becomes so because such is the nature of keeping vast quantities of items and running out of space for the functions of cooking, cleaning, laundry and bathing. The stigma of hoarding is therefore attached to its by-product and not to its inherent activity. I tell this story about the man at the hoarders’ meeting because it highlights social stigma around dirt. Even a therapist, unperturbed by the conditions of hoarders’ homes, stigmatised other circumstances in which dirt and waste may accumulate.

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146 This quotation is paraphrased (placing me in the previously discussed contexts of fiction-construction here). The word ‘slob’ in this context does not originate with any fictive version. I was not allowed to take notes in the group therapy session but the use of this word was profoundly memorable.

147 Diogenes Syndrome is a separate condition, which includes the hoarding of waste; the keeping of human or animal matter, and domestic squalor.

148 ‘most individuals with Hoarding Disorder do not live in squalor… which suggests they are discrete phenomena… However, it is conceivable that squalor could be a marker of more extensive hoarding (thus preventing successful cleaning and organization attempts).’ (Pertusa, in Mendelson ed., 2013, p: 7 of 8)
In order to understand the relationship between dirt and stigma it is first necessary to look back and understand how the two were not always linked. Prior to the discovery of bacterial communication of diseases in the nineteenth century, dirt was seen, not as a potential threat to health but as ‘matter out of place’ (Douglas, 2002). This out-of-place-ness refers to the schematising and organising of where dirt could be put. Anthropologist, Mary Douglas, in her seminal work *Purity and Danger* (1966), uses the symbolic examples of shoes – even if not specifically dirty – being disallowed or out of place on a dining room table; or kitchen utensils as forbidden from bedrooms. Codes of relative systematisation, such as these, pre-date bacteriology and a contemporary understanding of hygiene. These codes around the trespassing of acceptable (moral and psychological) boundaries are social, cultural and historical – in frequent evolution. Douglas refers to dirt as a ‘contravention’ of order and indicative that order does, in fact, exist.

Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter, in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. (Douglas, 1966, p: 36)

Bacteriology and pathogenicity brought an alien element to the construction of systems around the maintenance of dirt. In effect, once dirt was no longer something that could be thought of as visible it also becomes more conceptual. As an unseen threat it has become psychologically activated as a concept – as something simultaneously known and alien. Unseen pollutants are both within and outside us, demarcating spatial, psychological, bodily relationships. From Julia Kristeva’s work on abjection to Freud’s theories on the ‘uncanny’, the semi-abstractions of disgust and borders of contamination, link ideas around space, bodies and the unconscious.

Sociologist, Carol Wolkowitz writes of these connections as exposing of ‘the fragility of the border between self and others, threatening to dissolve the self.’ (Wolkowitz, in Campkin and Cox eds. 2012, p: 17) This dissolution of self is complex in its potential application to hoarding (as contamination) as it is perceptual, seen from the outside. We see hoarders as psychologically subsumed by material but, in effect, they more

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149 I see this as distinctly related to my argument at the end of Chapter Three that there is abjection in the chaotic, transitional archive.
commonly feel dissolved without their stuff.\textsuperscript{150} The dangers come not from the psychology of its entrapment but the practicalities of its storage – such as fire, structural damage, accidents, infestations and health risks.

Wolkowitz goes on to describe how we derive pleasure from abjection and from ‘teasing our tolerance to dirt’ (ibid, p: 18). She cites Kristeva’s use of literary and cinematic horror in illustration of these attractions and adds the example of reality television shows such as \textit{How Clean is Your House?} in which two professional cleaners take on Britain’s ‘dirtiest’ homes. Interestingly, Wolkowitz does not specify the observer/voyeur relationship to this pleasure: In watching or reading there is no actual threat of transgression or contamination. As such, ‘teasing our tolerance’ occurs from a position of comfort. These cultural viewings of disgust visualise an otherwise invisible threat (of contamination) and an abstraction becomes more concrete and manageable.

Reality television shows about hoarding play upon these boundaries between a safe space (the home) and its abjection: Alleviating guilt about what contaminating threat may be unseen in our own homes, we can watch its apparent visibility in others. Stigmatising the hoarder is a way of feeling relationally clean. These oppositions are linguistic and, of course, it is not a lack of sanitation that that ultimately causes abjection but what does not esteem borders, rules and distinctions.

In his acclaimed cultural study of waste, \textit{On Garbage}, John Scanlan refers to our collective garbage as representative of the abject. He ties it to the collapses of meaning, loss of object-ness and, indeed, of self, referred to by Kristeva in \textit{Powers of Horror}. Scanlan emphasises banishment and loss of utility as the acts of abjectification allowing commodity to transition into matter, causing ‘massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness’. (Kristeva in Scanlan, 2005 p: 165)

Surely then, objects in a hoard – however chaotic, entropic and congealed - thus retain some status. They lie in-between utility and banishment. They have not been banished, could theoretically be re-used or recycled, and so never become truly abject. The home holds these cared-\textit{about} but uncared-\textit{for} things within its borders and keeps

\textsuperscript{150} Much of the contemporary bibliographic material related to Hoarding Disorder attests to this, including research by Pertusa, Frost, Singh, Steketee and others. Collation of possessions for hoarders ‘is often an ego-syntonic and pleasurable experience, producing feelings of safety’ (Pertusa, in Mendelson ed., 2013, p: 3 of 8) ‘Hoarding is often used to make an environment safe and comforting…Sometimes individuals liken their environments to the safety of a womb, where the hoard creates a sense of being wrapped in a protective blanket.’ (Singh, in Mendelson ed., 2013, p: 3 of 5)
them in, withholding transgression of the frontier and therefore withholding abjection. When we collectively regard the hoard, and in our desire to ‘tease our tolerance’ levels, perhaps we have, in effect, created a new category of uncanniness and abjection – a kind of temporal purgatory between use and waste. In this place abjection is in-waiting but cannot find a way to be expelled. My unstuck collages and temporal drawings/installations do this too. They are neither acceptably fixed or commodifiable, nor yet waste.

Objects from the Street Museum (Accidental collage, Dalston, May 2014)

10.1(wnwn) Waste Not Want Not
The connections I am establishing between temporality, disorder, hoarding and a possible subsequent theorisation of congealed stuff (towards a conceptual rationale) leads me to consider the aesthetic cure or intervention: The clear out.

Tidying up, in the case of hoarding, is largely seen as the wrong kind of psychological support, misunderstanding the issue and ensuring its recurrence. ‘Clearing up must be slow and handled sensitively if it is going to achieve any long-term effect.’ (Pertusa, 2013) 151 However, psychology aside, it can be necessary to secure the physical wellbeing of both a hoarder and their resident family, or the safety and hygiene of a property through a thorough deep clean, often enforced by law. Randy Frost and Gail Steketee describe one of these instances in their book *Stuff*, referring to the case of Daniel, whose apartment was serially cleaned by public health officials, following a legal battle to ensure his sister's safety in the home they shared. Over a protracted period, it appeared that the cleaning of the apartment exacerbated Daniel's hoarding behaviours:

The apartment filled up for a third time, forcing yet another heavy duty cleaning. In the five years after the first cleaning, Susan [the Court-appointed guardian of Daniel’s sister] arranged for a total of eight heavy-duty cleanings, at a total cost of more than $20,000, a high price to pay for one man who could not control his urge to collect junk.

(Frost, Steketee, 2010, p: 186)152

Sorting, organising and rationalising as a means of clearing up disorder, perhaps in the absence of psychological support, adds to its spatialisation. With regard to some of the art practices I have discussed throughout this thesis it also bears relation to the institutional practices of care-taking installation even when composed of strewn remnants or ephemera. These expensive, uniformed third-party subsidiary or background forms of collation, handling and stockpiling become an echo of the practices of collation inherent to the work itself, sometimes outside an artist’s own

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151 From a transcript of a conversation with Dr Alberto Pertusa. (Pertusa, interview, 2013).
152 This paragraph is typical of the form of Frost and Steketee’s book, which often reads sensationally and soap operatically. I am not convinced that this approach to narrative stems from any lack of empathy, judging from the content of the book and the extent of their research and work with hoarders, but – like their *Clutter Image Rating* diagnostic tool – is perhaps a lack of sophistication and insight into the production values and tropes within the visual and linguistic materials that support their work in the field. In Chapter Three I discussed how Stephen Grosz uses ‘asides to camera’ to talk through his psychoanalytic ideas and this book by Frost and Steketee seems similarly motivated to attract an audience via narrative devices.
remit. Despite this, decisions to document, preserve or maintain are effectively integral to a work’s ultimate reading. I have raised these ideas in relation to works by Tomoko Takahashi and Mark Dion (in Chapter Two); the posthumous, museological survival of the audio and slides for Smithson’s *Hotel Palenque* (in Chapter Seven) and the institutional critique of Joëlle Tuerlinckx (in Chapter Nine). With regard to the aesthetic cure or intervention I am focusing on here though, a more inward look is required. To see inventory, museological reprocessing and secondary acts of collation as a negotiable psychological ‘cure’ or purge requires an investment in the personal.

In February 2001, with 45,000 others, I watched rapt as Michael Landy destroyed all his belongings in a former branch of C&A’s department store in London’s Oxford Circus. The vestiges of his life slotted into ten categories: Artworks, Clothing; Equipment; Furniture; Kitchen; Leisure; Motor Vehicle; Perishables; Reading Material and Studio Material. ‘Perishables’ was the category, which most fascinated me at the time, given the circumstances. Perhaps this entire research project began there for me, with Landy’s *Break Down*, not as a maker but as a viewer, utterly immersed in the display of rituals of ownership, loss, sentiment and the politics of consumerism, destruction and its documents. Landy destroyed his seven thousand two hundred and twenty seven possessions, with an army of overalled assistants, between 10th and 24th February 2001 in an organised, mechanised compression of stuff. I returned three times to watch the sorting, weighing, categorising and noisy destruction of all the stuff of a life. The remains, weighing 5.75 tons were buried in a landfill site. Importantly, they did not, therefore, just disappear.
So much has been written about *Break Down*, both at the time and over subsequent years, that it seems to increase in weight as a work despite its conceptual commitment to becoming lighter. Landy contributed to this echo through the documents the piece now carries in its wake – a detailed catalogue of possessions; photographs of the processing and granulating of materials at their various stages of dissolution; inventories; reproductions of meticulous drawings - depicting Scalextric-alike conveyors, possessions and utilitarian modes of destruction; in-depth interviews and articles. These documentary accoutrements to the work and experience are not surrogates for what has been lost but act as memento mori. Landy’s documents of *Break Down* are sequential and diaristic, telling of an event in a life. They plan it, take their place in its destruction then revisit it. They function as evidence, mitigating against loss, both cultural or personal.

*Break Down* experimented with collective responses to non-materialist survivalism and saw through a commitment to a performed demonstration of a political ideology. My own scrawled notes from the time read like a list of components and a recipe for the activity on site:

Yellow trays.
Pay Here signs still there… remember coming here to get school socks!

Screens like airport customs… (Security? Surveillance?) weighing scales

Helpers look like Kwik Fit Fitters.

Clank clank… bloody noisy. And people keep walking into things.

Clothes – shrink wrapped. Numbers on everything

Constant rotation. woollen cat toy? batteries. Underwear.

C691 socks. Going down a slide.

Shredder… look like hand written notes going in.

So many bags… trying to guess what everything inside once was.

(From my notebook, Feb 2001)

By positioning himself as subject, Landy also exposed his own narrative through the things he once owned and their very real loss. The piece expands beyond its resonance as commentary on a collective consumer malaise. We can choose to read the act of this Breaking Down in many ways: The closure of a store; the pulverising of a personal archive; the compartmentalising of a life into its variant fragments; the putting up and taking down of a temporal, live artwork, but also cannot help but acknowledge the potential for psychological breakdown embedded in the knowledge of what attribution of self is afforded to our belongings.

The inventories, photographs, drawings and even 5.75 tons of landfill, which constitute the afterlife of Break Down act as material evidence of it having taken place. Where the artworks themselves were destroyed their image remains in digital or print form. Their status and possible permanence is integral to the work, which had waste and compression at its core. When I look at some of these documents I understand their value first hand as reminders of the sensorial loss of the event itself (the typing and sticking; the giving of directions; the accidental knockings over and clumsiness; the visceral nature of the mechanics of the piece; the desperate quiet at the end). This work and its surviving record (or proof) positions loss and storage as integral to installational practice and highlights the role of the archive to practices utilising temporality and itinerant collation. Landy’s intricate taxonomical drawings of his passport, his Paul Weller CD cover, his British Library membership card end up meaning more than these small pieces of replaceable plastic and paper ever could.

153 These items are included in Michael Landy’s series of pen and ink drawings, At a routine level, people don’t feel the need to question the validity of consumerism as a way of life, the dreams that are engendered in consumerism give meaning to people’s lives (2002).
Nell Fuller claims value for the ruptured archive or destroyed artifact in her essay, ‘Which Shelf for the Broken One’ (2010), suggesting the futility of keeping collections intact. ‘Dependency on – or, indeed belief in - an archive which always presents as apparently ‘whole’, hermetic or completist would be foolish anyway, so why not allow it more freedom to revel in its impossibilities, its gaps and its fictions.’ (Fuller, 2010, p: 13)

*Break Down* (knowingly), like Schwitters’ *Merzbau* (unknowingly), carries with it a narratological afterword, which acts as a trace reinforcing the impossibility of reinvigorating or re-performing the original work or its contents. A new value is born of these traces which underline a transience and attempts to re-consecrate attachments.

Much of what we decide to get rid of, whether performatively or otherwise, is still loitering. The ‘collection’ of rubbish by the state is a condition of psychological wellbeing imposed upon citizenship – not simply in the name of health and sanitation but also as a means of investing in psychological health through purging. We imagine our waste is gone, of course and it suffers an assumed disappearance. Like the pulverised remains of Landy’s father’s sheepskin coat and the artist’s red Saab 900, most of what we throw away does not actually go away.

The Italian novelist and essayist, Italo Calvino wrote of the relief of separation from one’s waste, that,

…through this daily gesture I confirm the need to separate myself from a part of what was once mine, the slough or chrysalis or squeezed lemon of living, so that its substance might remain, so that tomorrow I can identify completely (without residues) with what I am and have. Only by throwing something away can I be sure that something of myself has not been thrown away and perhaps need not be thrown away now or in the future… Alas the unhappy retentive (or the miser), who, fearing to lose something of his own, is unable to separate himself from anything, hoards his faeces and ends up identifying with his own detritus and losing himself in it. (Calvino, 2009, pp. 71 – 72)
10.2(PAéée) An Addendum on Editing and Waste
or, Getting Rid of Italo Calvino’s La Poubelle Agréée

This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology – the edited book I put together in 2012
– 13 - includes a new reprint of Italo Calvino’s essay from 1974 – 76, La Poubelle
Agréée. The essay is an autobiographical and socio-political look at systems for and attitudes to taking out the rubbish. At the time of writing, Calvino lived with his wife and daughter in a Paris house. The piece is specific to family life and to Paris in the mid-'seventies but has wider reverberations, taking on collective issues such as environmental concerns, the technologies of waste and societal regard for the people responsible for our rubbish and its disposal. Calvino’s particular facility for connecting the personal to the communal is highlighted in this piece and its intimacy makes it a much-valued insertion into a collective publication. I printed the text on a thick, recycled paper and folded it into a pamphlet form without staples. It is one of the longest essays in the anthology and, as such, barely holds its form upon reading. Its status as the grandfather of the works included is clear but it hovers between the elegance and profundity of its content and the imminent dispersal or ruination of its pages. A certain caretaking is needed in order for it to keep its composure.

One of the materials that could run out and whose salvaging is of particular concern to me, is paper, fond daughter of the forest, living space of the writing and reading man. I realize now that I should have begun this piece by distinguishing and comparing two types of domestic rubbish, cooking leftovers and writing leftovers, the rubbish bin and the wastepaper basket. And distinguishing and comparing the different destinies of what cooking and writing do not throw away, the products themselves, in one case something eaten, assimilated in our bodies, in the other something that, once finished, is no longer a part of me and of which it is impossible to say whether it will become food for another’s reading, for a mental metabolism, or what transformations it will undergo in passing through other minds, how many of its calories it will transmit and whether it will set them in circulation again, and how. Writing, no less than throwing things away, involves dispossession, involves pushing away from myself a heap of crumpled-up paper and a pile of paper written all over, neither of the two being any longer mine, but deposited, expelled. (Calvino, in Mendelson, ed. 2013, p: 15/16)

Incredibly, and perhaps appropriately, there was no electronic version of the Calvino text, which could be supplied by his Estate. This necessitated the accurate typing out of La Poubelle Agréée from a Penguin edition. A friend’s son, home from University, took this on, on my behalf, and I checked his version for mistakes and typos. I had a signed agreement (agréée) with the Estate of Calvino and his widow, Esther, stating that I did not have the authority to print any erroneous version. There were few
mistakes in this newly-typed version – a comma here, an added letter there, an un-italicised *poubelle*. I corrected them and created a new, cleaned-up, final copy.

When *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology* arrived from the printers in its unfolded form and I sat down to the task of transforming the flat, open sheets into booklets, I noticed that I had mistakenly sent to print the wrong copy of *La Poubelle Agréée*. I had two hundred and fifty copies (equivalent to one thousand unfolded sheets) of the earlier version with added letters, the odd out-of-place comma and an un-italicised *poubelle*.

With a sharp intake of breath and very empty pockets I sent the correct digital file to be printed, marking the now discarded box of flat, blue-worded sheets *Mistake Calvinos: ‘writing leftovers’* and pushing it into the corner of my workroom.

Several months later, after publication, I returned to the appropriateness of this waste product from Calvino’s text and began to consider ways I could get rid of the pages. It struck me that the paragraph I have quoted above contained clues to their potential dispersal and disposal. Proposing ways in which the text could be expelled, transported and afforded new status as a container for food or drink (‘food for… reading’) towards its own ingestion, I set up various possibilities for its demise. Using stop-frame animation, collage and lingering photographic stills of collaged domestic spaces, I played with regurgitated versions of the text in both form and content. The ‘character’ I charged with the task of disposing of *La Poubelle Agréée* is a surrogate for myself: An animalistic (and self-reproducing) counterpart, made of my own hair.154 This ‘figure’ inhabits the text and digests it, manipulating it through various modes of destruction such as rubbing it with soap and prising it through a shredder. The hairball is simultaneously creator, editor, mistake-maker and ultimately destroyer of the text.155

The resulting twelve-minute long animation, * Appropriated Mishap* is broken up with quotations from Calvino’s essay. It is also accompanied by a live element: an unscripted selection of readings from an out-of-print American educational book about

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154 Human hair is often kept by hoarders and in normalised collection, as a souvenir of loved ones, usually children or romantic partners. The question, ‘Do you keep body products (feces, urine, nails, hair, used diapers) or rotten food?’ is included as a subsidiary question in *The Structured Interview for Hoarding Disorder*, mentioned in this chapter and included in *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology*.

155 Kurt Schwitters kept guinea pigs in the Hanover Merzbau where they animated the work, moving through it in ways its human occupant could not. This was in mind when I animated the hairball.
waste, which I found through New York’s Re-animation Library.\textsuperscript{156} The book, \textit{How Do They Get Rid of It}, by Suzanne Hilton was first published in 1970 and, according to its flyleaf, ‘tells the progress man has made in learning to reuse things.’ (Hilton, 1970, book jacket.)

There is a pronounced difference in the quality of the writing between the two publications I quote from in the animation and its accompanying reading. The Calvino text is current-seeming, profound and elegant. Suzanne Hilton’s text is patronising, old-fashioned and generalising. It hails from an era of educational materials, which seek to tell rather than question. Both the politics of waste and the descriptions of its technologies have are now dated. By extrapolating text from this book I refer to both its physical permanence as material and its own potential to become waste.

I showed/performed this work at Artsadmin, London on 20 February 2014 and screened it for a second time on 16 April 2014 at Chisenhale Art Place - with a modified version of the improvised performance. Here are some stills from the animation and some accompanying quotes from Suzanne Hilton’s \textit{How Do They Get Rid of It}.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{156} The Reanimation Library describes itself online as ‘a collection of books that have fallen out of mainstream circulation and been acquired for their visual content. Outdated and discarded, they have been culled from thrift stores, stoop sales, and throw-away piles, and given new life as resource material for artists, writers, and other cultural archaeologists.’ [Internet] http://www.reanimationlibrary.org/ [Accessed 26 February 2013]}
my taking leave of the leftovers of things confirming their complete and irreversible appropriation

‘In a way, the wood wastes have been gotten rid of, but not as they were in the days of sending chips, sawdust, scrap lumber, and shavings up in smoke. This way we can have our cake and eat it too!’
A professor in California has been watering aluminum cans and plastic jars in his “garden” now for six years and reports not the slightest sign of deterioration.
‘When a jumbo jet becomes obsolete, disposal will be a real headache’
Screening and performance as part of *A Slip of Freuds*, curated and hosted by Zoë Mendelson at Artsadmin, London on 20 February 2014.

157 The animation (without performed elements) can be viewed on the enclosed disk
Conclusion

Conclusion to the thesis Psychologies and Spaces of Accumulation: The hoard as collagist methodology (and other stories)

In this final conclusive section, the thesis returns to the question around accumulation from which it initially set out – asking what the uses are of collage as a practice, towards an understanding of psychologies and spaces of accumulation?

This conclusion therefore summarises the relevance and significance of the form and process of collage in relation to site and pathology, as well as its most productive use within this thesis. I want to have posited how new interdisciplinary knowledge is formed – in the binding together of things – as cumulative and as collage. I see this as having been essential to this research – as a part of resolving and assessing what happens in accumulation.

I am also concerned here with the successes (or not) of the form of this research as reflexive of its subject and as its metaphorical equivalent. Have I successfully argued for a ‘theorisation of process’ (Macleod, 2006), as indeed I set out to do? This is important to assess across the triangular form of this work, which includes visual practice, a theoretical fiction (The Detroit Project) and this written thesis, with attention to their connectedness and the difficulties of maintaining coherency across these variant forms.

This thesis has included an incidental study of apparently oppositional pairs: Relationships between hoard and collection; between fiction and theory; between the conditions of language and visual art practice; between objects and the unconscious; between temporality and permanence; between the agency of a human subject and an inanimate object; between domestic space and urban space; between psychical and physical space; between waste and treasure. I began with an analysis of the fault-line in collage and return there now. This conclusion considers the fault-line again – as a framework for examining accumulation beyond its clinical or museological readings (as singular). It elaborates on the potential that collage has – methodologically, physically, conceptually - for cumulative combines that disappear the discrete. This ‘it’ or hybridity as assigned to an accumulation of material has been pivotal to this research project and produces new knowledge (through formation of a new whole).
I ask in this conclusion whether the hoard can indeed be separated from the hoarder (as the clinical model suggests) and whether, by effecting this separation, only the hoard’s surface and spatial qualities are addressed, so leaving behind the social/psychic conditions that have produced it.

Below, alongside a summary of the work done, I will make a case for the new knowledge in the thesis, discuss the future of the enquiry and reflect upon what has been learnt through this body of research.

Productive uses of collage

Collage – in this thesis – has been engaged as material, textual and contextual. It is a subject, material and method of the research. It is also, in its augmentation, pluralism and drive for interrelationships, a cross-disciplinary pursuit. In this thesis I have engaged collage as having the potential – methodologically, physically, conceptually - for cumulative combines that disappear the discrete. Alongside being a practice-based examination of collage as integral to understanding how disorder becomes attached to objects en masse/the hoard this research has also engaged collage as a form of interdisciplinarity. The thesis is, itself, a space of accumulation, has allowed the research question to be continuously embedded methodologically.

Alongside my visual art practice, I am considering – as textual collage – elements of the construction of this written thesis, its relationship to my fiction - The Detroit Project, the structure of The Detroit Project and the structure and methodology of my edited book about hoards and collections - This Mess is a Place (2013). The structures and methods within these varied aspects of the thesis are expanded upon in Chapters 5 and 6 and referred to throughout.

As a sign, the collage fragment refers back, from within work, to a referent located elsewhere. This refractive referencing has been useful in the organisation of this work, allowing a rhizomatic approach to its construction to reflect its subject.

Connections between fields have been possible through a collagist methodology because although it resists the discrete it does not ignore the fault-line or rift, allowing close examination of the join as a practice. I am interpreting interdisciplinarity here as
broader than within the medium-centric, material contexts of a/my Fine Art practice (collage as paper or relief or three-dimensional or installational or virtual) but as a methodology applied to other disciplinary border-crossings and extending to a worldview which meshes edges. In my practice, writing-as-practice and this academic text I am acutely aware that a constituent element of my collagist approach is in seeking to create compounds.

Alongside adopting an interdisciplinary strategy materially, within the work I make – so that, for example, a drawing is also a performance and a work of fiction is also theory-driven - I have also adopted an interdisciplinary strategy towards the subject and fields navigated – so that work done in psychological fields comes to be examined through a narratological lens and knowledge production within Fine Art is applied to the construction of psychiatric tools.

Collage has seemed, therefore, an appropriate method with which to interpret losses and overlaps within the construction of psychiatric narrative. I am conscious, in making collage, of a form of breakdown: A collation and placement of materials, not towards their smoothing down or flattening out (or indeed mastery) but towards re-emphasis of and collusion with an illogic or disparity between fragments. The responsibility of ‘filling in deficiencies’ (which takes place in both analysis and its writing-up) is something I consider as belonging to the viewer, whose receipt of the artwork includes integral querying of the sources and connectivity of its fragments and a compulsive generation of missing content. This forensic experience of the viewer mirrors that of making the work, each side reflecting the other’s experience of the found material and questioning its content and construction.

This PhD by practice includes visual art, a work of fiction and this written thesis. Whilst a complication of this project has certainly been in sustaining (and describing) the relationships between these elements in different media, it is ultimately through their slips and connectivity that I have understood and responded to the question. By choosing to work in these variant media across different but interlinked textual and visual forms I have argued for a new form – that of collage within a practice-based enquiry allowing process and theory to be entwined. Content and methodology are shared between theory and practice.

**The work in relation to the construction of pathology/disorder**
In 2013, the DSM-5 (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) classified Hoarding Disorder for the first time as a psychiatric disorder. It is the only psychological disorder diagnosed via a space (and therefore potentially in the absence of a person): This discovery has been at the centre of this practice-based enquiry. Clinically assigned traits of a hoard are not solely the misplacement or stockpiling of objects of questionable value – so cannot solely be aestheticised - but include the impairment of mobility and physical negotiation of a space. There is a transformative effect on the architecture itself. As a hoarder loses ground with the functionality of his living space, so does its invested narrative take over the location.

I have researched visual and written descriptors and documents of disorder used clinically and produced using interpretative, narratological, dramaturgical and illusory devices – such as are deployed within Fine Art and Literature. These descriptors and documents can be (and have been) produced in the absence of a human subject (or indeed the absence of their insight or consent). As such, disorder can be said to be culturally manifested and can become a resource or site of knowledge production within a (parallel) non-clinical context. By investigating the visual and performative formations of criteria surrounding a condition as a practice I have come to understand how psychiatric narrative emerges as fractal, implicating collage and accumulation in its construction.

In locating the coexistence of image-making/installation/performance across the disciplines of Fine Art and psychiatry I began investigating the visual and performative formations of criteria surrounding a condition as a practice. In my visual and textual practices, I reflected on the ways in which psychical material has been translated for clinical purposes and for audiences, implicating these purposes in direct communication with each other.

This research has included a critical view of psychiatric record-keeping: Using the case study within psychoanalytic practice as a model for blurring the borders between fiction, experience and theory, I built a case for my practice-based research including fiction-writing alongside visual art and critical analysis. By engaging research within narratology it has been possible to draw my own hypothesis connecting the reading material of Freud’s patients and the subsequent telling and re-telling of their own personal histories.
This critique of psychoanalytical note-keeping as pseudo-scientific, has been the lead-in, for me, into thinking about the weight of fictive accounts in defining a field of investigation. Through writing-as-practice I analysed how materials within the analysis of disorder become separated from those assigned to its representation. Through fiction and theory, I have positioned psychoanalytic record-keeping as academic and fictive and employed collation and disorder as psycho-literary methodologies.

The making of psychical space

This thesis has included a study of the emergence of agoraphobia as a precursor to the ways in which hoarding becomes a spatialised condition (a condition diagnosed via a space) and thus located in a fault-line between disciplines. Investigating the effects of modern space on psychological wellbeing included reviewing how the psychopathologising of the modern city in response to growing anxiety disorders, mental disturbance and phobic fears became a popularly held notion from the 1870’s.

As a new disorder (or set of disorders) is classified and considered, questions are asked at the time about whether contemporary life is causing or exacerbating them into being or prevalence. These are questions being asked about hoarding, as they were about agoraphobia. These disorders share a relationship to lived-in space, alongside societal questions about inclusion, environment, consumption and what is public or private space. New disciplines emerge at the borders of these factors.

Early definitions of agoraphobia took shape in central Europe against a backdrop of the new, emerging disciplines of urban sociology and psychoanalysis. Via agoraphobia we can access how a disorder comes to be formed: That is, how language is applied and how clinical and non-clinical arguments are posited side by side. Through an engagement with each other certain coalitions grew (drawing upon others such as literature and abstraction) and the notions of psychical space and the city’s unconscious evolved. Agoraphobia serves as a useful model for how a cultural situation becomes both implicated in the awakening of a condition into public consciousness and how that condition then itself produces culture.

Attaching the unconscious to place, and a sense of place to the page has underpinned the writing of The Detroit Project. Choosing to sometimes allow my character, Nell to write her own texts (in the first person) places the consciousness of the writing itself under scrutiny. She has also contributed to this written thesis: At various points in the
thesis Nell has been cited to back up an argument/point. As a fictional character she orchestrates slips between theoretical voice as concrete and the theoretical voice as utterly theoretical.

To write the city (as I have been doing with The Detroit Project) it has felt essential to view space beyond the optical, physical and social and to consider how it is also formed unconsciously. To write space is to already inhabit the realm beyond optics and function theorised via Edward Soja’s multifarious Thirdspace.

The Detroit Project is written through known histories of places but has a dislodged, speculative present and evolves as only written space can, across multiple time-space continuum and the only-just impossibilities of its existence.

Edward Soja’s theory of Thirdspace is a Borgesian amalgam of ‘subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history’ (Soja, 1996, p: 57). Soja’s versions (or visions) of Los Angeles are compatible with my Detroits: strangely habitable spaces for speculative fictions, drawing as they do from what we already know and permit ourselves to imagine.

As their worlds shift and change around them – siphoned through various industrial or social alterations – my characters’ collecting behaviours remain intact, inescapably so, yet their psychologies both reflect and affect their environments. In The Detroit Project I am writing space as a subject. Both women are agents of spatial change as well as psychological subjects whose disorder is rooted in domestic space. There is a call and response between private psychical space and its inhabitant, and wider urban psychical space, with each finding its reflection in the other.

By scaling up – from the domestic to the urban in The Detroit Project – I have been able to examine the economics and psychologies of space-production and space-agency conceptually, beyond the confines of the home and into the connected spaces that surround it, where space is also being filled and emptied. At times I have shirked from writing feelings (I find this difficult, imposing, as if they belong to the characters themselves), choosing instead to transpose their emotions onto the lives of their cities.
Examining how the hoard manifests a kind of a takeover, with its agency to both diagnose and mutate (to rot, erode and grow), I am able to afford space its own agency and accountability to become feral, wilful, out of control and potentially ruinous. To understand the hoard, as with the ruin, it is essential to view space beyond the optical, physical and social and to consider how it is also formed unconsciously and – in particular circumstances of abandonment or neglect - has the agency to grow itself entropically (as with Detroit; as with a hoard). If hoarders are diagnosed via their - often impenetrable - spaces and not their unconscious (so that their spaces are surrogates for their unconscious), an optical metaphor is unsustainable.

With the difficulties of building whole cities to augment my ideas, fiction permits me the implausibility of site. With this implausibility comes its own shortcoming, it is itself a surrogate (like any cultural mirror).

**Conditions of production: the hoard and the hoarder**

There are narrative architectures to be located within a hoard: Internal micro-narrations of objects loved, times spent and attachments made, lost and given to the piles. This enquiry has posited the hoard as a space in which value systems are constantly redefined - as consistently heightened through constant activation of subject-object projections on the part of the hoarder. I have discussed how a value system can be applied to objects amassed, which, through their qualities and collective ability to destabilise an environment, can ascribe a condition to a hoarder, even in their absence. It could be said that this hands the diagnosis over to the hoard. As with Jane Bennett’s notions of an agency or vitality of matter, it is things assembled (and the mode of their assemblage) which call for help or point out dysfunction.

Elizabeth Grosz attests to ‘the possibility of action’ inferred by objects coming together, assembled and coagulated. En masse they can be said to possess more of this tendency, a kind of vibration, which requires an intensified form of engagement or conversion. ‘Space, time, and things are conceptually connected: space and time are understood to frame and contextualize the thing; they serve as its background.’ (Grosz, 2001 p: 134)

**The form of the research/methodology as content**
Precariousness, churning and constant addition mean that the hoard is internally itinerant and mobile despite its attachment to location. To be in progress - and to never arrive - is a requisite of working with accumulation. This three-part thesis is a form of accumulation that I have attempted to navigate as a mirror to the content/subject of this thesis.

A problem of excess has presided over methodological aspects of this enquiry: In order to wholly examine the subject (and immerse myself in it) I have had to engage with the too-much-ness of it – the subject’s possibility to endlessly expand to fit. It has been difficult to juggle the different media and contexts within this cumulative enquiry and maintain a connection to its central question.

Contextually, as I arrived at the idea of a mass that is so much that it contains a potential loss – of what is subsumed by the quantity and can’t, potentially, be viewed, unearthed or separated or considered – I also arrived at this mass as a possible shortcoming of the process/form of my enquiry. Within the subject, I argued that one is left with what can be understood through the idea of mass itself rather than an encounter with every single element within it.

From this vantage point I edited and made decisions based on what was needed in order to speak of this mass as a mass (but not all of its constituent parts). Thus, everything that remains in the thesis/practice is the residue of an editorial process and yet, I hope, remains enough to signify excess as a defining feature. Each time I felt I was adding ‘too much’ to the project and losing the thread of the enquiry I talked instead of mass itself, making accumulation a constant focus/metaphor and disallowing the discrete to emerge. This ‘threat’ of excess returned me therefore to collage and the importance of hybridising to maintain the methodological route demanded by the enquiry.

New knowledge

All of the above is new knowledge in the context of the conflation of fields within this practice-based enquiry - able to emerge due to its cross-disciplinary nature - and includes, in subject list form:
• The overlaps between hoard and collection, alongside their distinctions – perhaps most particularly that collection alludes to acts of gathering and the hoard to not-leaving.

• The diagnosis of hoarding as spatial and in the absence of a hoarder

• The construction of diagnostic tools assigned to disorder, where they incorporate the imaging or performance of pathologies.

• The production of clinical tools as contributing to knowledge production in Fine Art/fiction

• Record-keeping in psychoanalysis as sharing traits with fiction – and connecting the reading matter of Freud’s patients with the subsequent telling and re-telling of their personal histories.

• Collage as dependent upon gathering, hybridity and the existence of a fault-line – paralleling interdisciplinarity.

• Connections between the emergence of two spatial conditions, agoraphobia and hoarding disorder

• The threat of assemblage and potential entropic takeover of things coagulated.

• Methodological knowledge which has evolved out of productive uses of collage to analyse the psychologies and spaces of accumulation as a fractal subject, itself dependent on collation.

Shortly after the completion of this thesis I was selected as one of thirteen Early Career Researchers in a new cohort of AHRC funded academics in the Medical Humanities, for a year’s training and collaboration. I was the only artist in the programme, termed the New Generations Programme for Early Career Researchers in Medical Humanities at the University of Durham. As part of this group I was engaging with research in The Medical Humanities via the production of knowledge in my own discipline, Fine Art practice. The rest of the cohort were academics in subjects such as History of Science, English Literature, Anthropology and Philosophy. It often occurred to me as we debated and collaborated – and especially when we organised an exhibition together at the end of the year – that I was at a material remove. We could all think through textual practice as a group but I was often also responding via glue and drawing and papers and collation and object placement. This shift allowed a mode of critique of Medicine that was often physically brutal – by existing outside language – but also more ambiguous. In this group of researchers, I was exposed to what I had learnt through the PhD - how to engage with research in other disciplines and respond
through practice. The emergent, critical discipline of Medical Humanities – with its embedded interdisciplinarity – is somewhere I can now (to my own great surprise) situate myself.
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A Chronological Account of the Research

Year One: September 2009 – August 2010

Sept 2009:
Beginning of a literature review, ongoing throughout the PhD research.
Division of the contextual and theoretical research into categories.

Began planning and writing *The Detroit Project* using the software Scrivener to create visual pin boards for collation of resources.

Dec 2009:
Wrote the first Chapter of *The Detroit Project*: Chapter One: The Lecture (London).
Created collages which are surrogates for the slides in the lecture so that the text also exists as a performance.

Planned further Chapters of *The Detroit Project* alternately set in different cities and including additional essays:
Chapter Two: The e-bay City (Detroit)
Chapter Three: The Industrial Zone (London)
*Taking Vermeer to the Cinema* (an extract)
Chapter Five: Farmland (Detroit)

Dec 2009:
Travelled to Barcelona to see *The Malady of Writing – a project on text and speculative imagination*, to support research for Chapter 5 of the PhD.

Jan 2010:
Wrote *It Won’t Fold*, a wall text to accompany Rachel Cattle and Steve Richards’ exhibition *Cosmographia* at Transition Gallery, London. The text focuses on the relationship between contextual research and visual art practice, questioning what it means to simultaneously make a thing and understand its location.

March 2010:
For the publication I made four new visual works in a series. *These Sandcastles* focused on temporality and psychology of spaces. I also included a short theoretical-fiction: an imaginary *Reading List*. 
April 2010:
Finished writing the second chapter of *The Detroit Project*.

June 2010:
Planned Chapters 1 and 2 of the PhD: and presented the ideas as my end of year conference paper at UAL.

July 2010:
Worked with Chrystine Bennett of *Cluttergone* (an organisational support agency working with hoarders in their homes) in construction of a performative, fictitious support session with objects in my own home.

From July 2010:
Installed four installations (three of which are permanent) at Town Hall Hotel, London, co-commissioned and curated by Arts Admin. The works were selected by Iwona Blazwick (Director of the Whitechapel Gallery), Artsadmin, Rare Architects and artist, Zarina Bhimji.

Works shown:

2. *Sleep Drawing* (2010) – a wall drawing above the grand stairwell (See Chapter Three)
3. *Waking Archive* (2010) – an installation of 12 lightboxes within original cabinet features and a wall drawing (see Chapter 2)

July 2010:
*Waiting Room*, Two-person show with Eyal Sasson, MH Municipal Gallery, Givatayim, Israel. The show focused on fiction and containment.

Works shown:

1.*Study for Safecarder* (2010), C-print

August 2010:
Registration of research degree approved.
**August 2010:**
Edinburgh Festival: short presentations at Inspace, Edinburgh, curated by architect, Gordon Duffy.

Work shown:

Performance of Chapter One of *The Detroit Project* - Nell’s lecture – with live mime, recorded audio and slides of collages.

**August 2010:**
Finished writing the third chapter of *The Detroit Project* Chapter Three: The Industrial Zone.
Year Two: September 2010 – August 2011

Sept 2010:
Isobel Hunter, archivist and Head of Engagement at the National Archives, agrees to assist me with my research, providing first hand experiences of archival practice.

Sept 2010:
Diepsel, group exhibition, Galerie 37, Haarlem, The Netherlands, part of the 3rd International Madness and Arts Festival (curator: Nina Folkersma). See Chapter Three.

The festival offered a platform to artists who have to cope with psychological problems and to international artists who deal with madness in their work. Central to the festival is the encounter of (outsider) artists and professionals in art and psychiatry with the public. The Festival had a comprehensive multidisciplinary programme including theatre, dance, film, music, visual arts, literature and poetry. A public meeting and educational programme opened up madness for discussion.

Works shown:

1. Sick Building Syndrome (2010) - ten connected new works on paper (collage, drawing and found papers) displayed in glass vitrines.


Oct 2010:
Returned to Haarlem, The Netherlands to research at Het Dolhyus (The Asylum), a museum of the history of psychiatry and meet its director Hans Looijen.

Gained access to take photographs and make new work in Dutch photographic archive, Spaarnestad Photo as it was packing up to move from Haarlem to The Hague. See Chapter Three.

Oct 2010:
Paper presented at Spilling the Beans at Chisenhale Art Place, Artists’ talks and panel discussion focusing on spatial relationships between practice and research.

Oct 2010:
Contacted and met with Dr Alberto Pertusa, psychiatrist, at London’s Institute of Psychiatry who agrees to help me with clinical insight into Hoarding Disorder.

Nov 2010:
Pile, a (touring) group exhibition curated by artist, Craig Fisher, Surface Gallery, Nottingham, as part of Sideshow 2010, the official fringe festival for the British Art Show 7 in Nottingham. See Chapter Two.
Pile sets out to question the conventions of exhibiting work within a group exhibition. The works interact with each other in some cases becoming ‘piled’ on top of one another. Rather than stand as works in their own right, a sense of autonomy will be lost to the curator’s vision. The collection of individual objects will become one overarching piece, a visual spectacle, where the works act as the material and start to make the definition between the artist and the curator.’

(Craig Fisher, Pile press release, 2010)

Work shown:

**Drawn Down Blind** (2010) A site-sensitive drawing hung on a curtain pole exhibited with a mock-slide of the same image as a photo-collage, laid next to a vintage slide projector *projecting* a false beam of (paper) light onto it.

**Jan 2011:**
Meetings with James Brook at *Bookworks* and Elinor Jansz and Richard Embray at *Four Corners Books* to discuss theoretical fictions from the perspective of publishers.

**Feb 2011:**
Pile, tours to Chapter, Centre for the Contemporary Arts, Cardiff, Wales

Work shown: **Drawn Down Blind** – a site-sensitive drawing hung on a curtain pole with a vintage slide projector *projecting* a false beam of light onto it and hung onto the back of a work by Craig Fisher (see pages 16, 17, 70) of these Confirmation Documents).

**Failures in the Invention of Cinema** – collage, cabinet, Super-8 projector, paper cone.

**Feb 2011:**
Planned and wrote a draft of Chapter 5 of the PhD: **Fiction in Theory (The Library)** and presented it as my Spring Term conference paper at UAL.

**Feb 2011:**
Research trip to Delft to finish and edit Chapter 4 of *The Detroit Project: Taking Vermeer to the Cinema*. Took photographs for this chapter and formatted it on my return to the studio.
From Taking Vermeer to the Cinema
in The Detroit Project
March 2011:
Artsadmin agree to executive produce and advise on a multi-disciplinary project I will make and curate – *This Mess is a Place* - focusing on the psychopathology of Hoarding Disorder and its relationship to collection.

March 2011
*And Publishing* (independent arts publishers) agree to publish a future publication, *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter*

April 2011:
Created structure of thesis with its chapter headings as rooms and began to outline the written academic text project around these divisions.

June 2011:
*Inconscients! Artistes et Psychanalyse. Part One*, a group exhibition, Galerie ALFA, Paris, France. The show included works by Araki, Bellmer and Joel Peter Witkin. The exhibition was in three parts focusing on different aspects of psychoanalytic thinking.

Works shown:

*The Proper Equipment* (drawing) was exhibited in Part One of *Inconscients! Artistes et Psychanalyse*

June – July 2011:
*Archipelago*, a group exhibition curated by Gary Stevens, CGP, London

In *ARCHIPELAGO (curated by Gary Stevens)* at CGP London, each artist marks his or her territory. They may defend themselves against the others or cooperate; trade or start a war with them. They co-exist; there is no sequence of performances. The audience can visit any or all of the islands at any time. The artists may be building something towards a performance or occupation. What remains may be the aftermath of some activity. They may build camps or nests. The features are constantly changing. The works struggle for autonomy, where they simultaneously stand alone and share a common space. (Gary Stevens, 2011)

Other contributing artists included:
Emma Benson, Ian Bourn, Claire Blundell Jones, Helena Bryant, Lee Campbell, Helena Goldwater, Michelle Griffiths, Graeme Miller, Frog Morris, Steve Ounanian, Florence Peake, Tim Spooner, Fiona Templeton, Caroline Wilkinson

Work shown:
*Conscientious Objectophile* (2011) was a work in constant progress, which built slowly,
meticulously and compulsively. The performance of a large, intricate pencil wall-drawing made public an intimate, obsessional activity and questioned the temporality of the piece in relation to its labour-intensity. See Chapter Seven.

Conscientious Objectophile 2011 (detail, durational performance)
(Marooned by Helena Bryant is seen in the foreground.)

June 2011:
First draft written of The Detroit Project Chapter Five: Farmland.

June 2011:
Confirmation documents written and edited. Presentation scheduled for 28 June.

July 16th 2011:
Performance of This Woman to This Wall, as part of Archipelago Performance (with assistance from Steve Richards) of a 'marriage ceremony' to the wall/wall-drawing at the conclusion of six weeks drawing. See Chapter Seven.

Year Three part one: September 2011 – May 2012

Work shown:
In Treatment (2011) Installation with drawing and painting on wooden panels.

September 2011: Book published on the theme of artists' responses to psychoanalysis in conjunction with the above exhibition: Inconscients! Artistes et psychanalyse (173 pages, colour, Galerie Alfa).

October 2011: Wellcome Trust awards This Mess is a Place a £30,000 Arts Award, which supports production and collaboration costs.

October - December 2011: Consultation period with:

Isobel Hunter, archivist and Head of Engagement at the National Archives

Dr Alberto Pertusa, involved in eminent research projects on hoarding at the Institute of Psychiatry. His most recent project is the development of the Structured Interview for Hoarding Disorder (SIHD), a scale to assess Hoarding Disorder.

Satwant Singh, Nurse Consultant in CBT and Mental Health and Clinical Lead who runs the only national treatment group for hoarders in the UK.

This consultation period included interviews and added to the research for Chapters 2, 3, 7 and 10 in particular as well as contributions for the publication, This Mess is a Place – A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter

January – March 2012: Planned, researched and wrote a further chapter of The Detroit Project:
Chapter Six: Extenuating Circumstances (London)

February – April 2012:
The Detroit Project to date is formatted and laid out by designer, Carolin Jap Lim in Berlin.

Chapter Seven of the academic text for the PhD is written.

This Mess is a Place website is designed (by myself) and its content created. It goes live at www.thismessisaplace.co.uk

June 2012:
Exhibited a new sculptural work at Central Saint Martins in street-facing window: Symposium of Collectors (2012) collage, projector, vintage projector stand

Year Three part two: May – August 2013

Production and development period for planned final exhibition of PhD visual practice:

Works include:
*Clutter Image Rating* (2013/2014) Collages. See Chapter Two
*The Piles* (2013/2014) Installation with drawing, collage, objects, projection. See Chapter Nine

May 2012– August 2013
Curation and editorial period for publication and launch event of *This Mess is a Place – A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter*

This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter. (Edited, compiled and misfiled by Zoë Mendelson) – is a 200-page book, (pub. And Publishing, October 2013). It includes contributions of artistic projects from Jim Bay (UK); Carrie M Becker (USA); Michel Blazy (FR); Marjolijn Dijkman (NL); Nat Goodden (UK), Cecilie Gravesen (DK); Jefford Horrigan (UK), Dean Hughes (UK); Robert Melee (USA); Florence Peake (UK); Joey Ryken (USA/UK); Michael Samuels (UK); Kathryn Spence (USA); Tomoko Takahashi (UK); Mierle Laderman Ukeles (USA); Robin Waart (NL); Julian Walker (UK) and Laura White (UK).

The publication contains essays and documents by Dr. Colin Jones (Senior Lecturer/Researcher in Applied Health and Social Sciences, Liverpool John Moores University, UK); Dr. Haidy Geismar (lecturer in Digital Anthropology and Material Culture, UCL, UK); Jeremy Gill (urban planner and theorist, AUS); Dr. Alberto Pertusa (consultant psychiatrist, Institute of Psychiatry, UK); Daniel Rourke (artist and researcher, Goldsmiths College, UK); Isobel Hunter (archivist and Head of Engagement at the National Archives, UK); Satwanta Singh (nurse practitioner and cognitive behavioural therapist, UK); Nina Folkersma (curator and critic, NL); Alberto Duman (artist, writer, UK). It also includes
documentary photography of hoarder's homes by Paula Salischiker (ARG) and an interview with an anonymous hoarder's daughter.

>This Mess is a Place< also includes a re-designed version of *La Poubelle Agricole* by the late Italo Calvino (I).

The publication looks at the onset of hoarding through the voices of clinicians and expands the theme to examine how relationships to objects in space inform a number of fields in ways that can be seen to interrelate and impact upon each other. The idea behind the form of this anthology is that practice and artistic research can co-exist with more clinical and scientific research. It is hoped this will create overlaps and crises of ‘usefulness’ akin to the submersion of materials within a hoard or the pursuit of order within a collection. The publication itself is unbound – illogical and precarious as an object, containing loose leaves, pamphlets and nominal filing systems, gathered together in no particular order. The reader is ultimately responsible for the order (or dis-order) of the piece.

**April - June 2013:**
Writing up and submission of a first draft of the academic text for the PhD.

24 June 2013
Live appearance on *The Thread* radio show on Resonance 104.4fm to discuss collection and hoarding in relation to Herb and Dorothy Vogel with producer Lizzie Johnson, curator Ele Carpenter and behavioural psychologist Gillian Ragsdale.
The discussion can be heard at:
https://soundcloud.com/resonance-fm/19-00-00-the-thread-256kbps-5

**July 2013**
Collation and labeling of ongoing work *Objects from the Street Museum (Accidental collage series)* – photographs taken in East London recording objects and furniture dumped on the street outside residential properties. See Chapter Ten.

**August 2013**
Research trip to Vienna to visit sites related to the histories of psychiatry and spatial theory included in this project. This trip included a meeting with the curator of the Freud Museum, Vienna.
Year Four September 2013 – June 2014

26 October 2013
Launch Event/Publication of *This Mess is a Place – A collapsible anthology of collections and clutter*
A launch event at Chase and Sorensen, Dalston Lane, London E8 curated by myself includes a dance/performance by Jefford Horrigan, an interactive digital work by Nat Goodden and discussion.

Works shown:

Three new works, *Aloud to Object 1 – 3* (2013) Texts to be read aloud to objects on sale at and displayed at Chase and Sorensen, a Danish furniture store and café. The retail environment is arranged to replicate living room ‘sets’ and the performances recognised their theatrical pose.
This Mess is a Place – A collapsible anthology of collections and clutter
A launch event at Chase and Sorensen, Dalston Lane, London E8
Image shows interaction with Lumber by Nat Goodden

25 January 2014:
Performance/meta-presentation at The Art School: The Future for ‘Theory’?
Conference at the Institute for Contemporary Arts (ICA), London.

The blurb for the conference with note on individual presentation:

What is the future of ‘theory’ in the Art and Design School? Variously considered as Historical and Critical Studies, Critical and Contextual Studies, art and design history, visual and material culture studies, ‘theory’ has always had an ambivalent standing, and has been embraced enthusiastically and treated with suspicion in equal measure. Recent changes are exacerbating this ambivalence: new critical tendencies, practice-led research, new forms of pedagogy, new sites for disseminating (e-flux, TED talks, Art History in the Pub, etc.), and new sites of praxis, as well as the collapse in public funding, the merging of institutions, the redeployment of staff and resource, and the rationalising of provision.

We ask, then: What purpose does ‘theory’ serve? What should be delivered, and how should it be delivered? Should ‘theory’ take place in the classroom or the studio? Has ‘theory’ become redundant, and if so why? Has a certain kind of philosophising replaced it? What are the consequences of these demarcative shifts for an artist, designer, or architect’s capacity to contextualise and ‘speak on behalf of’ their practice to colleagues,
critics, curators, gallerists, and industry professionals? And what do such shifts mean for theorists themselves?

Zoë Mendelson, as part of her practice, writes through the voice of an imagined critical theorist. In defence of material practices and in consideration of theory as a malleable material to be workshopped and handled, her future-tripping of theory sees it, like wood or paper, as a possible medium to engage and manipulate.

**January 2014:**
Back Pages, 9 page article, interview, full-colour (English/Chinese), *Pipeline International Art Magazine*, Hong Kong, issue 40, ‘The Issue about Hoarding, part 2’

**4 February 2013:**
Thinking as Practice, symposium at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London.
Presented paper - ‘Collapsing a Book: Thinking Through Dis-order and Editing.’
See Chapter Six.

**12 February 2014:**
The Playlist, an evening of music presented with a live interactive work, Noun-List, Play-List at Camden Arts Centre, London.
Three hours of songs about inanimate objects with an accompanying quiz generated by a pile of nouns.

**20 February 2014:**
A Slip of Freuds
Mendelson curates and presents an evening dedicated to objects en masse and coagulated, including books themselves.’
Works included Quiver (2013), a film by Cecilie Gravesen; On Digital Detritus (2014), a performance lecture by Daniel Rourke; A Book Chopped in Half (2013), a film by Jamie Stiby Harris and These Books Are Here For An Essential Structural Purpose. They Are Not For Sale (2014), a slideshow by Lynn Harris.

Works shown:
Shredder Dance Party (2014) Found material (A promo video for an industrial shredder set to music)
Reading of an Excerpt from The Detroit Project

The evening also included a Q&A session between myself and Dr. Alberto Pertusa, which
Zoë Mendelson interviews Dr Alberto Pertusa at Artsadmin, as part of A Slip of Freuds
20 February 2014

March 2014:
A review by Helen Sumpter of ‘This Mess is a Place’, is published in Art Review magazine.

29 March 2014:
Archives of the Future Conference: organised by Mnemoscape at the University of Westminster.
Presented a meta-fictive lecture, ‘Which Shelf for the Broken One: What the Hoard can Teach us about Acts of Gathering’, based on Chapter Seven of The Detroit Project.
The performance engaged Nell’s theoretical, academic voice from the podium and her internal voice as recorded audio. It was accompanied by projected collages and images from Spaarnestad Photo – photo archive in Haarlem, The Netherlands.

March - June 2014:
Writing up the final draft of the academic text for the PhD.
Finishing and formatting *The Detroit Project*

**June 2014:**
*The Piles*, Studio4, Chisenhale Art Place, London. Installation with drawing, collage, objects, projection. See Chapter Nine

*The Piles* included a number of public events:

07/06/2014: Hourly readings from *The Detroit Project* throughout the day.
07/06/2014: Evening: *Drawing to Zelig.*
A discussion of hysteria as cultural collage followed by a screening of Woody Allen’s *Zelig.* 'You are encouraged to draw during the screening & assist in the creation of a lost clinical document.'
08/06/2014: *Trash-talking: Projections of waste.*
Presentations & discussion of the making & contents of *This Mess is a Place: A Collapsible Anthology of Collections and Clutter* with two of its contributors, artist Alberto Duman and archivist, Isobel Hunter.

**July 2014:**
Submission of the PhD.

**Appendix:**

Letter re: Tate Storage published in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act on whatdotheyknow.com

30 April 2014

FAO: Louise Smith SENT BY EMAIL ONLY: request-205377-65da8a8f@whatdotheyknow.com
Dear Louise Smith

Freedom of Information Request - Tate reference 463

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request dated and received on 02 April 2014 (our reference 463)

I have repeated your request and provided answers below:

1. How many items does The Tate Gallery currently store that are not on display?

All 70,265 artworks in Tate’s collection are digitised and displayed online. 62,000 of these are works on paper. At any one time, some 3,000 works are on public display at Tate sites, and a further 600 works are on loan out to exhibitions nationally and internationally.

When not on public display, 80% of the Collection, (56,000 works including the Turner Bequest of 37,644 works), is easily accessible to the public for viewing on request in our Prints and Drawings Rooms. Information about access to our Prints and Drawings Rooms is available here: http://www.tate.org.uk/research/prints-and-drawings-rooms

The remaining 15% of the Collection (10,500 works) is housed in storage or in conservation studios and has limited public access by appointment.

2. How much does it cost to store and maintain these items?

We do not calculate the costs of storing and maintaining artworks in Tate's collection based on their location in the Gallery or whether they are in store or on display. We therefore do not hold this information.

Tate’s annual accounts which give information on annual expenditure can be found here: http://www.tate.org.uk/search/annual

3. Have, or will these items ever be on display?

Yes. Tate has an extensive rolling programme of loans, exhibitions and displays. Works not on display therefore move frequently in and out of storage to support programmes of regularly changing collection displays at our four galleries, for
temporary exhibition purposes at our sites and those of our Plus Tate partners, and for exhibition and long-term loans to other institutions. In addition, works on paper in the collection may be viewed by the public on request in our Prints and Drawings Rooms.

If you are not satisfied with this response to your request for information, you may seek an internal review of this response by replying in writing to this letter. Tate will respond to your request for a review within 20 working days of the receipt of that request. If you remain dissatisfied with Tate’s response following an internal review, you may seek an independent adjudication on the matter from the Information Commissioner, who can be contacted at:

Wycliffe House,
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Or you may telephone on: Tel: 01625 545 745

Yours sincerely

Kate Parsons
On behalf of the Freedom of Information Group
Chapter Four of the Detroit Project – a fiction within a fiction titled, 'Taking Vermeer to the Cinema' is printed on the ensuing pages. This is referred to in Chapter Four of this thesis.
I returned with Vermeer across the snow to the site he had left and we took it in together: The slow ebb of the dirt-ice of the Molslaan canal to the conical peak of the grassed roof of the Technology College in the (direction). He was silent and I had no sense of the man I was with. I didn’t know how long we’d have together and I needed to make the most of it. Perhaps there’d be just a minute, maybe days, maybe a lifetime. He’d already had one and I didn’t know how much he’d be up for a second shot at it, having had a fairly productive stint the first time around.

Would he be inclined to paint this, I wondered. Maybe it held none of the charm of seventeenth century Delft although I sensed that it was that century’s incarnation we both saw when faced with the view ahead. I conjured my image of the city through his presence as though he were a conduit to its existence and thought it was how I’d brought him there, and to me. There was no other place I could imagine as its painted counterpart before its reality. Perhaps Van Gogh’s Arles? Maybe O’Keefe’s New Mexico?

After a minute or so a tourist approached us. I see you’re dressed as Vermeer. Can my wife have a picture? I tried to explain photography and faltered. The camera was a digital SLR and I didn’t understand it myself. There was an awkward moment during which a picture was taken, in which I doubt anyone looked that comfortable, and the tourist sloped off. They know me here. My name is familiar. He balked at this discovery and I said nothing. I know you too.

We stood for a while and I wondered what my attempts at Dutch sounded like. The world had opened up so hugely it was probably baffling that a woman even spoke another language. Did I look terribly slutty?

A lone, old, painted barge braved the cold floes and approached down the canal. We watched it drag the thin ice with it. An old man sat at its helm and was old skool enough to give me the pleasure of a hat tip. Vermeer forced a half smile and I knew he appreciated the recognition in this gesture. He visibly relaxed. Shall I change my clothes? He asked me. If you are to be my guide in this nieuwe-Delft?

There was a branch of Esprit in the old town. It was easier if I imagined dressing Colin Firth. I was less in awe then and could handle the task through my delirium. The disquiet of my new acquaintanceship was exhausting. I searched the racks for something floaty, not too camp. Looking at the man himself Colin Firth’s had been a flatteringly cinematic portrayal. I considered taking Vermeer to buy a Dutch translation of the Tracy Chevalier novel before remembering with a flash the adultery it posthumously supposed. My present-day destitute-looking forty-three year old Vermeer waited for me outside and I hurriedly paid. He couldn’t handle the lighting and stood instead facing the facade and looking up at its aging roof.

I tapped in my PIN. A truck pulled up next door at the florist and began to unload boxed tulips, all alike and singular, pursed buds awaiting their point skywards outside the shop on tiered platforms like those of a school photograph. They were man-handled and
dumped unceremoniously in plastic buckets. I returned to the bizarre scene of a man in dirty velvet cradling armfuls of blooms, their straight crisp stalks dripping cool water in snail-slimed lines onto his sleeves. Into a dusty pocket the sales assistant slipped a little sachet of plant food. How had he paid, I wondered.

He changed into the new clothing in a canteen-style cafe where it smelt of fresh brioche and we drank sour coffee out of shiny cups. We laid the tulips out for examination on the table. How can they grow in this month, Vermeer asked me, incredulous at their availability, homogeneity and economy. They were imports, so not to disappoint the tourists, and it was not yet March. He pointed out that the tulips and coffee had arrived together, coming from Asia via the Turks. He’d never had them together before though. Do we still trade with the Turks? Tulip was a derivative of the Turkish for turban and the blooms had arrived at the botanical gardens in Leiden into the arms of a researcher into medicinal plants. They had been a gift from the Dutch Ambassador to Constantinople and came to become the focus of the world’s first formal futures market. Sold by weight, the flowers were hybridised and mutated into highly decorative strains then sold into what was considered a risk-free collectors’ market.

In seventeenth century Holland the tulip became gold-like and its economic power has since been mythologised by historians and economists. Collectors and crime were attracted alike. By 1636, wealthy merchants and craftspeople had been brought down, paying as much for a contract of unsprouted blooms as the price of a house in Amsterdam. It is considered historiographically the first speculative bubble. A floral depression of sorts ensued and in 1637 there was a Tulip Crash. It sounded like theatre and I thought of the invisibility of contemporary currency. It barely even jangled.

By Vermeer’s death in 1675, and I presumed myself to be sipping coffee with the 1675 incarnation of the painter judging by the state of his jacket (and his teeth), tulip supply had far exceeded the demand that kept the price of the bloom at extortionate levels. It was a flower once more, less a commodity and in the end very much less Turkish than Dutch.

Vermeer collected and counted. The split ends of his matted curls stuck in the coffee cup as he concentrated. He asked for a water jug and arranged the flowers several times, clicking his tongue in dissatisfaction. He was struck by their strong scent. I explained a lot of work had gone into that.

In contemporary tulip-growing it can take more than five years before the hybrider finally finds out if the flower has achieved its intended shape, scent or target colour. If the shape or colour is wrong, the hybrider must begin his work from scratch. Patience, nature and industry. Maybe it was a little like painting. I asked but Vermeer said nothing. Somewhere, in all directions of the compass from where we sat, stretched tulip fields and glasshouses. The collection was dumbed down and growing with an entire workforce dedicated to its management and promotion.

You know they’re nearly all here, your works. I said. In Holland in the museums and galleries. Worth a fortune, by the way, so you can forget the tulips. Not sure he had understood, I sat in silence with the dirtiest, most antiquated, eponymous bloke in Delft. We were an odd couple and I picked at the stems irreverently with my spoon.
Some silence later we decamped to the cobbles.

We sucked cherry cough drops I’d found sticking to the stitching in my coat pocket and Vermeer began to ask questions about science. He postured knowledge and wisdom but looked out on an altered universe. It was funny and sad in a way that made me want to tell the people we passed. There was nobody to share the joke with now that Vermeer wore camo pants and a sweatshirt with a hood. Call me Jan, he said.

As we walked I noticed Vermeer getting slower and, perhaps, self-conscious. His pace had been a balanced, undramatic, pre-televisual one when we’d taken the tulips to the cafe earlier. He’d had the enviable walk of an unwatched man. Now it felt surveilled and hesitant. There’s less sky, he said to excuse himself and measuredly put one foot in front of the other. He had seemed not to notice the cars when we had moved through the old town earlier. It was as if, like a child, with everything universally new nothing could be addressed as entirely disconcerting in and of itself. Now the terror seemed to be separating itself from the mass. There was always so much sky, Vermeer said again. (To call him Jan seemed patronising given that I was already noting his declining mental state.) He stopped and turned to me with eyes down. I never noticed so much what was under my feet before. My feet feel like they have nowhere to land as I step out. Do they really still call this Delft?

For a while Vermeer became my guide and showed me the town I couldn’t see. Paving became dirt track; an internet cafe became a brothel; a bike rack became a place lovers sat. The water’s edge became a place where clothes would be laid out to dry. Of course, he said, much was destroyed in the the thunderclap. Has there been
Another explosion? We walked to the Oude Langendijk where he had lived for most of his adult life and saw that there was a Catholic chapel where his neighbouring Jesuit church had once stood. Jesus is still here at least, Vermeer sighed. His descriptions were slow and filled with colour. They had the texture and stillness of his paintings but the tainting of a recent, four hundred-year old, loss. We dodged the endless stream of wind-tangled women on over-basketted bikes with high wheels. They careered with ambitious precision over percussively iced cobbles laughing and hanging onto children who tried to aim half-sucked lollies back into their mouths as they clung with thick gloves to the handlebars.

Watching Vermeer stepping hopscotch-style along the pavement in avoidance of things both seen and unseen, I was reminded of how French mathematician and philosopher, Blaise Pascal’s 1654 near-miss in a carriage hurtling towards the Seine had caused him to persistently find a yawning abyss by his side. This psychological-architectural void remained with him like a faithful but unwanted dog until his death eight years later. From the 1870’s Pascal’s Disease or ‘la peur d’espaces’ was often cited as the earliest model for agoraphobia and thought to have been precipitated by the changing, modern city and the new fears it presented, Freud later attached this model to hysteria. If I believed this then I was watching its acceleration.

I thought indoors might help so ushered my charge into a bookshop and thought of casually leading him to his section.

Inside, we were welcomed by a sideways-leaning, cut-out Vermeer. He was holding an arrow which read, in Dutch, ‘This way to over 400 years of Delft history’. I wondered if there were too many layers of translation for Vermeer to unravel in order to find himself in this flattened out version. Explaining cardboard may help. I thought of the ‘flat daddies’ sent to the families of American servicemen in the first gulf war and what their cardboard heroism implied of the masculine-domestic. Perhaps the real thing had to be misplaced in its own space in order to be replaced by its flat-pack self. Not quite solid enough to be yet commemorative, the flat daddy’s temporal memorialising must be eerily pre-emptive. I winced to imagine sitting at the table with a static, smiling decoy of my own father. Vermeer was taking baby steps now and he moved towards the Self Help section with a fixed expression, much like his pixellated dopelganger. There were so many layers of removal here in this backless, paper version of a painted version of a painter.

I picked up a stack of art books. One was called Vermeer’s Hat. It was in English and there was a Daily Telegraph review on the back which wouldn’t easily translate. I had no idea what the Dutch for ‘swashbuckling’ would be. Vermeer found me and I saw on his face that something had clicked. I’m remembered, he said. I nodded and smiled. Yes, and bloody everywhere. He went pale and I looked around for a seat, also wondering whether, once found, it would look like a seat at all to my companion. I thought of running away and leaving him there then coming back in an hour to see if he’d disappeared. Perhaps he’d still be deciphering the chair conundrum in the bookstore. There was a chenille sofa with saggy bum-shapes worn into its seating on which was an uneven hill of abandoned accountancy manuals. It was hardly the Platonic ideal of a chair. We removed the manuals from the sofa’s craters, handed them to a spaced-out sales girl and Vermeer sunk down into the flesh-eating material.

For a long, long while neither of us spoke. We leafed through the books and I started to feel a surge of panic. Maybe someone else
I want to have left my wife and children richer but am afraid that you know I didn’t.

I looked into my sunken lap. We thought you had spent it all on ultramarine.

So we left. A problem loomed - both psychological and practical - as we both noted the darkness outside. Vermeer had nowhere to spend the night. I was staying with a colleague just outside the city and sent an anxious text: With Vermeer. He’s real and re-clothed. Can he stay?

It would be hours before she responded: Glad you’re enjoying Delft! Do you eat fish?

Back across the Molslaan I stopped a stranger and asked what he would show Vermeer if he suddenly appeared in town. Good question. I’d take him to the cinema.

You okay then?

He surprised me.

I’m scared, he said quietly. The paintings I made got put in these books so many years later but I don’t know how they got there. Everything has shrunk or grown. My size is insecure. I must be bigger because they know me. I am smaller because I don’t know myself.
In the glow of nineteen-thirties’ interiors on-screen and off I scrutinised Vermeer’s face as light drained over and out of it. Daylight and darkness passed in the narrative in front of us and my companion’s face picked this up, his sallow, sweating skin waxing and waning in its tide. Occasionally he turned sharply, looking towards the door. After a while, without meaning to, I lost him, engrossed in the film and forgetting who I was with. Baby-sitting to one side, I succumbed. Later as the story twisted suddenly and the audience buzzed, I remembered with a jolt where I was and turned to the Master of Light. His eyes were closed and his nails had made deep calligraphic marks in the seating, edging out the foam in small, cake-like swabs. A little hill of the stuff had grown on his knees, looking like it was his own stuffing or, ruefully, the popcorn we had been denied.

I counted as we walked. We passed sixteen corrupted versions of the Girl With The Pearl Earring (and one Woman Reading a Letter). Vermeer’s paintings adorned bike wheels, cushions, the walls of bagel bars and spattered collage-like onto information posts outside historical sites. The multiplicity of his image was ironic in honour of a painter who had had such a small output.

It was a multi-screen cinema with a broken-down popcorn stand. Vermeer seemed not to care when I explained what was missing. I had prayed for Laurel and Hardy. I wanted something slapstick, apolitical and moral without dislocating special effects or emotional charge. I wanted whatever would be just one level more technological than a zoetrope.

We followed a torch into the velvet plush and all the occasion of The Movies presented itself. The softness of the arm rests; the slurping of the fat man’s coke; the green EXIT signs; the dust disco in a fine cone of projected light. This brief ninety-minute introduction to the experience of cinema seemed futile. There needed to be a workshop or masterclass, taking newcomers from Muybridge to Lynch with all the correct snacks.

Cinema for the Uninitiated.
Been in a coma? Dead for 400 years or more?

In fact, the film choices we had were not neutral enough to avoid further trauma. Perhaps I should have been relieved by this: After all, who wants a neutral time at the cinema. We slumped down in the dark with the previews and amongst the hushing I tried to explain how 24 frames made up a second of film.
Where do you put your Mad these days?
We were moving in the dark slowly, slowly, pigeon-stepping in the slush over invisible obstacles. Vermeer was pale and his eyes refuted adjustment to the street lamps. I linked arms with him as if he were blind and led my elderly charge away from the celluloid. The cyclists were now drunkenly ice-dancing around us, be-coupled, legs entwined and taking corners at speed. The film was still flickering in the cinema just behind us.

Put your Mad? I stumbled. For a moment I mistranslated. Yes, where do you put them? The lepers, the idiots, the syphilitic whores? We will say goodbye there. Then under his breath, I am too tired: a ghost. Nell, everything I recognise has vanished. I have a choice of only madness or crime.

Not painting?
I can't paint 24 pictures in a second.

It wasn't obvious where Delft put its Mad at eleven o'clock at night. I thought I could see some of them drooling in the bars we passed and there had possibly been one at the kiosk at the cinema. The question was more how to recognise one. The day was rendering me unstable myself. Vermeer persisted, stopped moving forwards and, in the cold, I gave in.

Our cab driver thought there was a psychiatric unit at the local hospital so I gave the switchboard a quick call.
He's from Delft? Yes, yes. Bring him in. You mustn't leave him in the cold tonight.
Psychiatry was housed in a new, brutalist wing where beige was the allotted colour of a healing mind. Pot plants with health-and-safety-approved leaves busied the sills and the waiting room sat empty with muffled noise seeping in from under
closed doors, numbered in regiment along the back wall. The receptionist had a petite, reassuringly dappled, land-worked face like one of Vermeer’s subjects. Her gigantic breasts mounted the counter without her leaning towards us. This is Johannes Vermeer, I began halteringly. Hard to explain but he has come back and it’s all too much. Very much too much. He asked to come here. The receptionist heaved her chest off her paperwork and ran her index finger down a ruled column in her ledger. Follow me, she sighed. We get this a lot. Workaday heels clicked down off a chair. Alarmingly much smaller than expected, she exited the booth towards us through a patched up door which had, ironically, come unhinged. Ushering Vermeer with a tiny hand squarely on his back she led him to one of the numbered doors, knocked authoritatively and pushed it open. A further beige room revealed itself, smelling of pine floor soap and the freshly laid tarmac of the car park, visible through a partially-opened, safety guarded window. My Vermeer stepped forwards and with a swift beckon from a polo-necked man with a notebook, he joined a seated circle of six other Vermeers playing a board game.