

# Interfaces of location and memory

An exploration *of* place through context-led arts practice.

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the  
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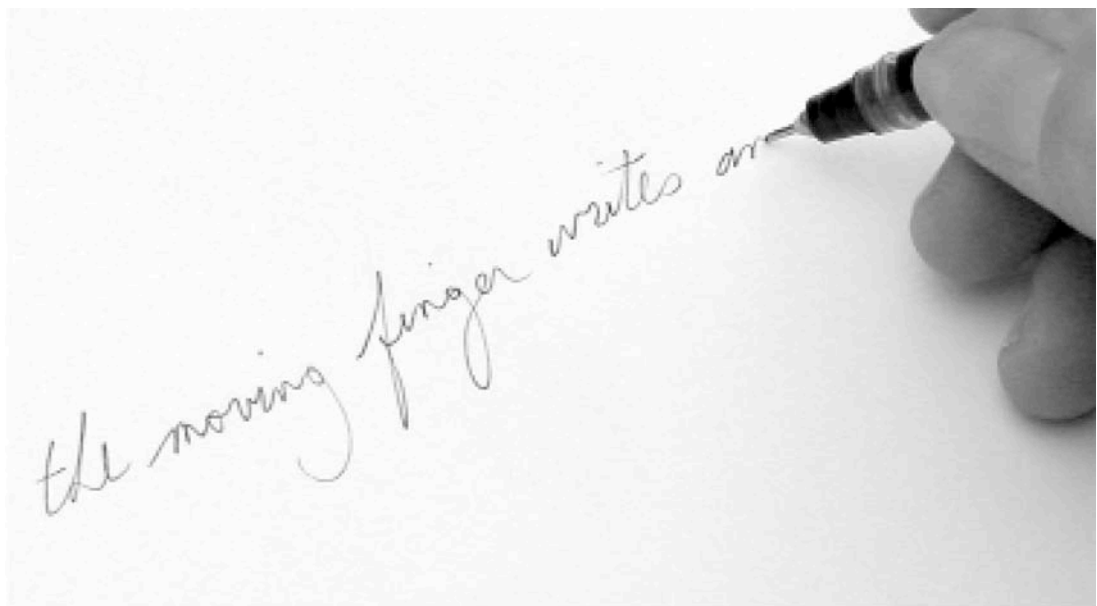
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TEXT



'the moving finger writes, and having writ moves on'



## Abstract

*Interfaces of location and memory* is a conceptual framework that invites an understanding of context-led arts practice that is responsive to the particularities of place, rather than a model of practice that is applied to a place.

'Socially engaged' and 'relational' practice are examples of contemporary arts field designations that suggest a *modus operandi* – an operative arts strategy. The presence of such concepts form the necessary conditions for investment in public art sector projects, biennales, community outreach and regeneration programmes. The problem here is that the role of the artist/artwork can be seen as promising to be transformational, but in reality this implied promise can compromise artistic integrity and foreclose a work's potential.

This research project proposes that a focus on operative strategies applied to a situation (as a prescribed or desired effect) is counter-productive to the context-led processes of responding to the relational complexities of a particular place. As such, *Interfaces of location and memory* calls for an integrative conceptual framework to make sense of the immersive, durational and relational processes involved.

Practices and theoretical texts concerned with *place* and *process* within the fields of arts, geography and anthropology inform the development of the research and the fieldwork project – *caravanserai* – an arts residency based at a caravan site in Cornwall, UK. Expanding on Lippard's educative proposal for 'place ethical' arts practice (1997: 286-7) *Interfaces of location and memory* offers a contribution to existing knowledge in the field of contemporary public arts; as well as being of interest to disciplines beyond the arts, concerned with the understanding and future visioning of the places we inhabit.

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Lucy Lippard's inspirational writings on place, art and tourism are central to this research project. I thank her for these and for her encouraging personal responses to my practice and the research outcome '*discovering whats on our doorstep*' - a guidebook for Treloan. Thanks also to Tim Ingold for sending me a generous package of published papers during the early and uncertain days of my studies that profoundly influenced my thinking and the development of this project.

The *caravanserai* project would not have been possible without the generosity, trust, support and friendship of Pete and Debs Walker of Treloan Coastal Holidays; or the creativity of 'project van' residents Cat Holman, Greg Humphries, Alyson Hallett, Harriet Hawkins, Ken Barrett, Robin Harford and visitors Hannah Cox, Simon Holman and Charlotte Stranks. As well as all who have contributed to the guidebook publication or performed at *caravanserai* events (named in the publications and on the website). For their continued support at Treloan, I thank Steve and Alison Arthur, Andrea and Chris Insoll, Mary Alice (photographer) and Chris Pollard purveyor of local histories, anecdotes and the stuff of myth and legends. Thanks also to Hilary Thompson, Debs Wallis and Simon Gill for their invaluable advice on local history, wildlife, and making sure that 'the idiosyncrasies of the place are not lost'

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For my dad, Bruce Irving Crouch (1922-2013) who slipped away before it was done

I will find you in clocks and chimes, in beautiful crafted works of art and in black and white photographs.  
I will find you at sea, on the beach and in boats. I will find you in a 6 o'clock whiskey.  
I will find you in heartfelt memories, in chitchat and laughter, and in the gestures and smiles of strangers.  
I will find you in family and friends, in a hand held in mine  
I will find you in the solitude of a windy coastal walk and in the pottering of my garden.  
I imagine you taking stock, job done, life lived, wiping the soil off your hands and saying...  
'there we are then – lovely'

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## Introduction

*where* i am makes a difference to what i can know and who i can be<sup>1</sup>

This practice-led research sits within the broad field of contemporary public arts and draws on over two decades of my professional experience in generating artworks in response to a variety of locations and situations.<sup>2</sup> Through an informed understanding of the processes involved in context-led arts practice, the project contributes to existing knowledge within the field of public arts. This is of particular significance to those directly involved with arts production as well as cultural sector workers and academic disciplines concerned with people's experience of place and the future visioning of the places we inhabit.

My thesis invites an understanding of context-led arts practice as being responsive to the particularities *of* place rather than a model of practice that is applied *to* a place. In so doing, this research project explores transdisciplinary<sup>3</sup> practices and theories concerned with place and process to develop a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice - *Interfaces of location and memory*.

My concern is that arts field designations such as 'socially engaged' and 'relational arts' suggest operative strategies that have become terms of investment and funding criteria for public and private art sector projects – such as biennales, community outreach and regeneration programmes. The problem here, is that the socio-spatial processes that artists engage in become commodified, leading to prescriptive contractual expectations that can compromise artistic integrity and

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<sup>1</sup> 'Positionality provides a way of understanding knowledge and essence as contingent and strategic—*where* i am makes a difference to what i can know and who i can be' (Rendell, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> An online portfolio of my projects can be accessed at <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

<sup>3</sup> Transdisciplinary is a term that occurs throughout the written text of my thesis and is understood as being inclusive of knowledge and expertise from all walks of life – lay, professional and academic.

foreclose a work's potential. Significant to this, is the additional problem of reductive representation and arts critique that sets art apart, art in and of itself, removed from context and the socio-spatial processes of its emergence.

The title of my thesis *Interfaces of location and memory* references a connective concept initially formed in response to this problem of representing and disseminating context-led arts practice. Public art commissioning procedures are often restrictively formulaic requesting images of previous work defined by details such as the date produced, media used and dimension. In these situations the relational complexities of producing outcomes in response to socio-spatial dynamics are reduced to matter and measurement.

**How might a context-led approach to making art be described without becoming a 'model' of practice focused on medium, style or genre?**

**How might responsive outcomes (artworks) be more clearly linked to the context of their emergence?**

These central questions are investigated through the fieldwork project *caravanserai* where the question of *how context-led arts practice might enhance our experiences of, and relationships with, a particular environment* is considered in order to reveal the socio-spatial responsive processes involved. This exploration of a particular place through context-led arts practice has the following objectives:

- to develop *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice.
- to reconnect artwork with context – through representation of context-led outcomes that reveal the socio-spatial processes of their emergence.

My thesis *interfaces of location and memory* consists of this text combined with two printed booklets and an online project archive.

The publications exemplify a design concept that has emerged through my practice-led research that I have termed as *commonplacing*. The term describes a graphing of interwoven place-making that positions discursive, conceptual and experiential insights in formats appropriate to particular end users or communities of interest.

**Discovering what's on our doorstep** – a limited edition publication authored by me that documents *caravanserai* activities, events and processes in relation to the context of their provenance. This poetic and functional 'guide book' creatively maps, celebrates and promotes the local.

**Insites: a notebook** – a limited edition artist's book produced for the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference 2009. The book was collaboratively produced with *caravanserai* geographer-in-residence, Dr Harriet Hawkins.

**<http://www.caravanserai.info>** – a web log that archives the development of the fieldwork project. The website serves as a practical and cultural resource for various communities of interest, locally and beyond. The website content is authored by me unless stated otherwise.<sup>4</sup>

**The text** – *interfaces of location and memory* is structured as follows:

**Chapter one** provides an overview of my experience as a professional practitioner within the field of context-led arts that has led to, and informed this research. Issues of doctoral arts research are discussed such as the role of art as a form of

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<sup>4</sup> My website administration and authorship is named on the website as 'shedsite'.

knowledge production and the requirement of a written text to supplement or explain artwork produced. *Interfaces of location and memory* is introduced as a connective concept originally conceived of as an aid to the documentation and dissemination of context-led practice. Following on from this, is a brief overview of the Barton Hill Public Art Programme. The constraints of this commission prompted the direction of the research and development of *Interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework and starting point for the fieldwork project *caravanserai*.

**Chapter two** discusses historical and contemporary arts perspectives that isolate artworks from their socio-political contexts through reductive representation, critique and the commodification of artists' processes as categorical genres. Attention is drawn to terms such as 'socially engaged' that have become 'terms' of investment for public and private sector arts initiatives. The problem here is that the role of the artist / artwork can be seen as promising to be transformational, but in reality this implied promise can compromise artistic integrity. Through a critical review of key references and examples of practice these limitations are identified in order to understand how they might be overcome.

**Chapter three** expands on this, outlining the key differences between structured strategies of 'relational art' and relational processes of responding to context. In the latter, the socio-spatial processes that artists engage in are considered to be expansive and transdisciplinary, informed by the interdependent experiential complexities of a particular situation. A range of practices and philosophies concerned with place and process are explored. These are drawn from the arts, geography and anthropology, offering insights and permeable regions of exchange that have the potential to move beyond the categorical limitations of objective arts critique.

**Chapter four** presents the rationale for a methodology that is responsive to the relational particularities *of* place (rather than an operative model that applies strategies *to* a place). This includes brief overviews of arts-field designations / models of arts practice and my reasons for using Lippard's 'place ethical' criteria (Lippard, 1997: 286-7) in the development of the conceptual framework. Through revisiting earlier works in light of Lippard's criteria the conditions for enabling a new work are identified; the research fieldwork project *caravanserai* – an exploration *of* place through context-led arts practice. Following this is a summary of methods used in the initiation, delivery, dissemination and evaluation of the fieldwork project *caravanserai*. The stages of this practice-led emergent methodology are described as not existing in isolation, but as interconnected iterative processes of informed and reflexive action (Schön, 1983). Here, 'enactment[s] of art thinking' (Holdridge and Macleod, 2002) are informed by methodologies of artists and contemporary ethnographies of social science that move beyond the limitations of static and iconic representation.

**Chapter five** starts by clarifying the authorship of my contribution – the limited edition art publications that combine with this text to form my thesis. This is followed by a reflexive account of the conceptual and practical aspects of envisioning, instigating and establishing the fieldwork project *caravanserai*. In the final section *being there*, an interlacing of insights, images and project narratives as 'theory-informed storytelling' convey the relational *meshwork* that is *caravanserai*. These contextual insights offer a glimpse into the processes and events of the project as well the conditions that have enabled them. Context-led arts practice extends the concept of fieldwork as a site for gathering ethnographic material, to a situation where responsive outcomes / artworks are contributed to the field / place / site of attention.

**Chapter six** begins with a reflection on the creative distillation of material generated during the fieldwork. *Commonplacing* as a key element of the thesis contribution is introduced; articulating the creative use of designed assemblages to re-present the multifaceted responses and contributions *gathered* from an *immersive* fieldwork process. This section details the conceptual development, design and production of the publications that combine with this text to form my thesis: a guidebook for Treloan – *discovering what's on our doorstep*; a notebook for the delegates of Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference in 2009 – *insites*; and an online project archive – *www.caravanserai.info*. The second half of the chapter presents a review of the *caravanserai* that reflects on the relations, processes, creative activities, impact and effects of working within a specific context – that of a camping and caravan site on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall, UK. Following this, Lippard's list of place-ethical criteria is discussed in relation to the research objectives; i) to develop *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice; and ii) to reconnect artwork to the context of its emergence.

**Chapter seven** focuses on the development of *Interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led practice. The first section reiterates and discusses the core concerns of the research; following this, the conceptual framework *Interfaces of location and memory* is revisited in light of the fieldwork project *caravanserai* – an exploration of place through context-led practice. Here elements of the methodological process are discussed: the use and limitations of Lippard's place-ethical criteria, *commonplacing* as a significant breakthrough in the research process, the value of art practice as a form of knowledge production and the veracity of the evidence.



**Chapter eight** presents an overview of the research findings and the contribution to knowledge that the project makes. *Interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework, hinges on the understanding that context-led a practice is responsive to the particularities *of* place, rather than a model of practice that is applied *to* a place. This is of particular relevance to artists, educators, curators and commissioners of public art because it offers an informed understanding of the responsive processes involved. The project extends existing notions of site / place / community-based practices to focus on context as the impetus for a works development; and issues to do with the role of ‘art/artist’ in the wider cultural ecologies of place-ethical practice are discussed. *Interfaces of location and memory* as a philosophy of practice resists the limitations of a constructed model or recipe, promoting response rather than application, context rather than category. These responsive mappings or ‘storyings’ *of* place (Ingold, 2000) instigate imaginative and sustained conversations with what currently exists as the future unfolds – offering a creative survey of enormous value to architects, planners, place-makers and others concerned with understanding the environments we inhabit.

## 1: Gathering the seed

more grows in the garden than the gardener knows he has sown<sup>1</sup>

This chapter locates the doing of art as the central dynamic in an unfolding research process, and provides an overview of my experience as a professional practitioner within the field of context-led arts that has led to this research.

The aim is to develop a conceptual framework that invites an understanding of context-led arts practice as responsive to the particularities *of* place rather than a model of practice that is applied *to* a place; and by doing so it considers how this contributes to our conception of arts practice.

The project is an exploration *of* place through context-led arts practice that focuses on the fieldwork project *caravanseraí* as a means to consider *how context-led arts practice might enhance our experiences of, and relationships with, a particular environment*. This action research provides insights into the socio-spatial processes of responding to the complexities of a particular place toward generating an informed understanding of context-led arts practice.

In view of this aim, the research has two principal objectives:

- to develop *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice.
- to reconnect artwork to context – through the representation of context-led outcomes that reveal the socio-spatial processes of their emergence.

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<sup>1</sup> Anon, Spanish proverb

During the early stages of my research the constraints of a public art commission prompted me to consider how prescriptive expectations and generic policies can compromise integrity and foreclose a work's potential. The problem is that the role of the artist / artwork as 'socially engaged' positions artists as service providers that might transform social inequalities, or ameliorate difficult situations where people are affected (or disenfranchised) by regeneration initiatives (Bishop, 2004; Cartiere, 2003; Hope, 2011; Kester, 2002). In her critique of 'the conditions of art as labour and our own complicity in perpetuating the circumstances', Sophie Hope points out that:

The boundaries of a socially engaged art project have been identified as the budget, timeframes, expectations placed on artists, commissioners and participants and the extent to which those key players are able to take risks and/or support a critical practice. (Hope, 2011: 147)

Although the constraints of the Barton Hill project<sup>2</sup> discussed later in this chapter echo this need for 'support of a critical practice' I propose that arts categorical designations such as 'socially engaged' applied *to a place as a *modus operandi** are counter-productive to the socio-spatial processes of responding to the complex relations *of place (*modus vivendi*)* – context-led practice.

This calls for the development of a conceptual framework that focuses on process rather than product, this invites a shift in perspective from predictability to uncertainty and flux. As such, practices and philosophies concerned with *place* and *process*, within the arts, human geography and anthropology offer potential permeable regions of exchange that might allow us to move beyond the categorical

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<sup>2</sup> The Barton Hill project is discussed and illustrated in Appendix A: *thinking inside the box* (pp.223-241)

limitations of reductive arts historical / contemporary critique and iconic representation that isolates artwork from the contextual relations of its emergence.

I begin with a critical reflection on practice-led research where I argue (perhaps controversially) that the production of a written exegesis for a practice-led PhD illustrates precisely the disconnect between theory and practice that underpins my overall argument, because it is reliant on producing an objectifying distance between the art produced and the written supplement that seeks to explain it.

Following this I move on to describe how the history and trajectory of my context-led arts practice is informed by the interconnected complexities of place introducing *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework or philosophy of practice.

### 1.1. **Minding the Gap:** reflections on the research / practice divide

All researchers in their own ways are engaged in the process of inquiry, and the most salient feature of inquiry is its open-endedness. It is pursued for no reason whatsoever; it is the project of the passionately curious. (Irwin, 1982: 137)

Robert Irwin's understanding of research as the domain of 'the passionately curious' resonates with that wonderful sense of awe and excitement at new discovery and the sensibilities of intuitive and tacit knowledge that generates creative activity. The question of whether the conventions of a PhD promote or suppress the passion of creative research is relevant to my overall argument and the iterative, emergent and responsive processes particular to context-led practice. An original contribution to knowledge is the touchstone of a doctoral project's success. But if, as Dewey contends "knowledge is judgment, and judgment requires both a material of sense

perception and an ordering, regulating principle, reason” (1972: 4), why are there such prolonged debates within the academic arts sector as to the validity of arts practice as a form of knowledge? <sup>3</sup>

These debates are largely preoccupied with asking how ‘research’ might be termed to reveal the role of practice, and how methodological frameworks rooted in scientific analysis might be reconfigured to articulate the speculative propositions, intuitions, uncertainties and tacit knowledge implicit to creative process. Meanwhile the exegesis or written component of the thesis is expected to comply to a homogeneous set of rules regarding its format, typographies, size, paper weight and so on. This prescriptive object of intention is framed according to these rules and submitted in preparation for judgment as to whether it presents an academically rigorous declaration of ‘new’ knowledge. This lofty aspiration continues to engender debate as to whether arts practice can actually be considered as a legitimate form of knowledge production. This is evident in the various appendages to ‘research’ that differentiate how the role of arts production might be related to the research project: ‘*into, for, through or as*’ practice (Frayling, 1993; Rust et al, 2007; Douglas, Scopa and Gray, 2000; Macloed, 2000; Holdridge and Macloed, 2002). These discussions tend to centre on studio and gallery practices where *a thing* studied is considered through reflexive processes and interpretative concepts in relation to content, medium and arts genre.

Context-led practices that negotiate the sociopolitical spaces of the everyday beyond the arts cognoscenti, however, require different sensibilities; they are dependent on developing relationships (and economies) to facilitate their emergence. As Sheikh points out, ‘the materialization of the work is decided upon

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<sup>3</sup> See for example *Research into Practice: working papers in art and design* at [http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes\\_research/papers/wpades/index.html](http://sitem.herts.ac.uk/artdes_research/papers/wpades/index.html) [last accessed 4.5.11]

different parameters than in historical studio practice' (2009: 5) and is therefore in need of, 'a different set of properties and parameters for discussion, production and evaluation' (2009: 6).<sup>4</sup>

A focus on context is a focus on *where things happen* rather than on *a thing that is in the world*. As such, the production, critique and evaluation of context-led practice requires us to move beyond arts discipline specifics of genre, style or medium.

Context-led practice is inherently transdisciplinary in its understanding of context (site, situation, place) as a *meshwork*<sup>5</sup> of interrelated social and environmental ecologies. The numerous trajectories of a particular place (Massey and Rose, 1993) become opportunities for a 'connective aesthetics' (Gablik, 1995) in light of Ingold's conception of the human being 'not as a composite entity made up of separable but complimentary parts, such as body, mind and culture, but rather as a singular locus of creative growth within a continually unfolding field of relationships' (2000: 4-5).

The relations he notes 'among humans', that we are 'accustomed to calling "social", are but a sub-set of ecological relations' (2000: 5).

Gablik touches on this in her description of how arts projects might function in social contexts as 'continuums for interaction, for a process of relating and weaving together, creating a flow in which there is no spectatorial distance, no antagonistic imperative, but rather the reciprocity we find at play in an eco-system' (in Lacy, 1995: 86).

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<sup>4</sup> A view shared by Gablik, 1995; Kester, 2002; Lacy, 1995; Lippard, 1997.

<sup>5</sup> The term *meshwork* is used by anthropologist Tim Ingold to describe the texture of the life world 'Instead of saying that living beings exist in places, I would [...] prefer to say that places occur along the life paths of beings. Life itself, far from being an interior property of animate objects, is an unfolding of the entire meshwork of paths in which beings are entangled.' (Ingold, 2008: 1808). This concept is explored further in chapter three with reference to Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics'.

All manner of knowledges (lay, professional and academic) are encountered and shared through the socio-spatial processes and interrelated trajectories of responding to a particular place. Context-led arts practice is 'art thought' – active research that is emergent of previous conceptions and methodologies to better understand 'what it is to be in the world' (Holdridge and Macleod, 2002: 11).

Holdridge and Macleod argue that:

Art thought is indeed critical thought. It is not critical or cultural theory, nor is it art history. Its criticality is engendered by thinking which hits against discipline boundaries and the determinations of the written word. (Holdridge, and Macleod 2002: 3)

In her article *Practicing Research: Singularising Knowledge*, Irit Rogoff references her experience as an educator and academic at Goldsmiths, University of London, where they have 'refused a uniform model for practice-based research', aware that 'each project needs to be excavated in detail until its subject and its methodology emerge organically from its concerns and its position' (2010: 39). She suggests that:

to advocate for creative practices of knowledge is to advocate for its undisciplining. It is to argue that it needs to be viewed as an a-signifying practice that produces ruptures and affects within the map of knowledge. This is difficult since the legacy of knowledge we have inherited from the Enlightenment has viewed knowledge as teleological, linear, cumulative, consequent, and verifiable either through experimentation or through orders of logic and sequential argumentation. (Rogoff 2010:40)

For Holdridge and Macleod the importance of methodology and propositional visual thinking has been overemphasized.<sup>6</sup> They contend that the 'enactment of thinking [...] refuses *a priori* knowledge; the revealing of knowledge is always *a posteriori*'. This is not to refuse methodology, but to see it as emergent and iterative; a

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<sup>6</sup> For instance formats that visualise a route map for research (derived from social sciences) where 'the teleological nature of methodologies advanced as appropriate to the artist/researcher are inappropriate as conceptual schemas because they do not take account of the *a posteriori* nature of art knowledge' (Holdridge and Macleod, 2002: 11).

connective 'gathering'<sup>7</sup> and ordering (re-articulation)' that produces new understandings. Procedures and methods emerge in and through the work rather than being prescribed (Bolt, 2008), as Haseman suggests:

the fact that practice brings into being, what, for want of a better word, it names. This research process inaugurates movement and transformation. It is performative. (Haseman in Barrett and Bolt, 2007: 150)

Here the value of performativity as the focus of creative research is located in the performance itself - the process of making or doing that 'always issues from and folds back into a social relation' (Carter in Barrett and Bolt, 2007). Practice-led research particular to a specific context and time frame, is described by Carter as an instance of 'local invention' (Macdonald, 2009):

Its locale is always in the '**of**' rather than the 'about'. Instances of creative research cannot be, he suggests, overarching; they cannot be 'about' but are always instances **of** the particular. (Macdonald, 2009: 96 my emphasis)

This enactment of art thinking (Holdridge and Macleod, 2002) within a particular context does not necessarily produce a discovery that can be generalized, replicated or patented; but as Carter points out it can generate 'an imaginative breakthrough, which announces locally different forms of sociability, environmental interactivity and collective storytelling' (Carter in Barrett & Bolt, 2007: 18).

As an artist doing practice-led research I am comfortable with art being the rigorous driving force of knowledge production (the research project). The challenge is how to articulate this in the written text without diminishing the poetry of the work, how to avoid the production of an overly intellectual academic art.

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<sup>7</sup> I return to this notion of connective *gathering* as a method of my practice-led research in chapter four (pp 94-8) and in the discussion on the publications that accompany this text in chapter six (p.144).



Lesage refers to the arts doctoral requirement of a written supplement as 'supplementality' and that one possible consequence of which might be to award a doctorate in the arts to an art historian well versed in academics with a portfolio of doubtful photographic work 'merely because they are academically trained enough to produce an academically valid textual supplement'. He sees the imposition of a text as failing to recognize the artist as an artist and that a doctorate candidate in the arts should 'be given the academic freedom to choose his or her own medium' (2010: 30). At present it may seem inconceivable that artistic output is sufficient for a PhD. As a result, the experience of the actual artwork becomes secondary to the exactitude, precision and rigidity of the insistence of a written supplement. As Lesage points out,

this seems to demonstrate [a] university's lack of confidence either in the capacity of the arts to speak in a meaningful, complex and critical way in a medium of their choosing, or in the university's own capacity to make sound judgments on the meaning, complexity and criticality of artistic output as such. (Lesage, 2009: 8)

Foregrounding the position of a writer in this scenario, Lesage contends that universities need to prepare themselves for when a novel is presented for a doctorate. Highlighting the absurdity of having to supplement a novel with a text, he asks 'what should that written supplement say?' (Lesage, 2009: 8).

This constraint echoes concerns that are central to my thesis: how to move beyond an objective stance that isolates creative output from its context for the purposes of decoding and interpretation? Amongst others (Becker, 1994; Gablik 1995; Kaprow, 1993; Kester, 2002; Lacy, 1995; Sontag, 1994), Arlene Raven comments that 'art criticism seems less connected to art. Instead, ideas bump against each other in complicated self-referential "critical" sentences' (in Lacy, 1995:159).

What would be lost (or gained) one might ask, from an approach that used creative methods, formats and media, that mixed the visual and textual in an all inclusive research project that moves beyond a reductive mode of *product plus explanation*?

Mary Anne Francis challenges the requirement that writing should explain art and sees the command for explanation as being 'most insistent in the area of *art as research*' evidenced by AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) directives on practice-led research (Francis, 2009:152). Francis calls for an alternative form of writing that she terms as *situational fiction*, a mode of response to creative practice that is not explanatory. Referencing Susan Sontag's opening sentence of her essay *Against Interpretation* (1994: 3) 'The earliest experience of art must have been that it was incantatory, magical [that] art was an instrument of ritual' Francis argues:

Of art thus construed we would *not* ask 'what does it mean, or (with the AHRC) 'what is its significance?' Rather, we might ask, 'Does it work?' Or 'What is its affect?' De-naturalizing art-as content, Sontag's move proposes that we outline the extended paradigm of art as other types of thing ... art as social function; art as pleasure; art as outcome; even art as useful object. (Francis, 2009:153)

Claire MacDonald similarly suggests that it can be productive for artists to situate their voice and see 'the process of composition as "graphing", that is, as an expanded graphic practice, both legible and visible, that allows one to externalize oneself in relation to the work' (2009:97). Her understanding is that,

possibly all practice based PhDs are examples of poetics, or of "poesis", that is, of place-making etymologically. The subject has to find a way to make a place for herself and for her own "I", within the terms of a mutually constitutive practice. (MacDonald, 2009: 98)

An expanded graphic practice both legible and visible is evidenced in my thesis where the published project outcomes are composed through a graphing of

interwoven place-making that positions discursive, conceptual and experiential insights in formats appropriate to their particular contexts.<sup>8</sup>

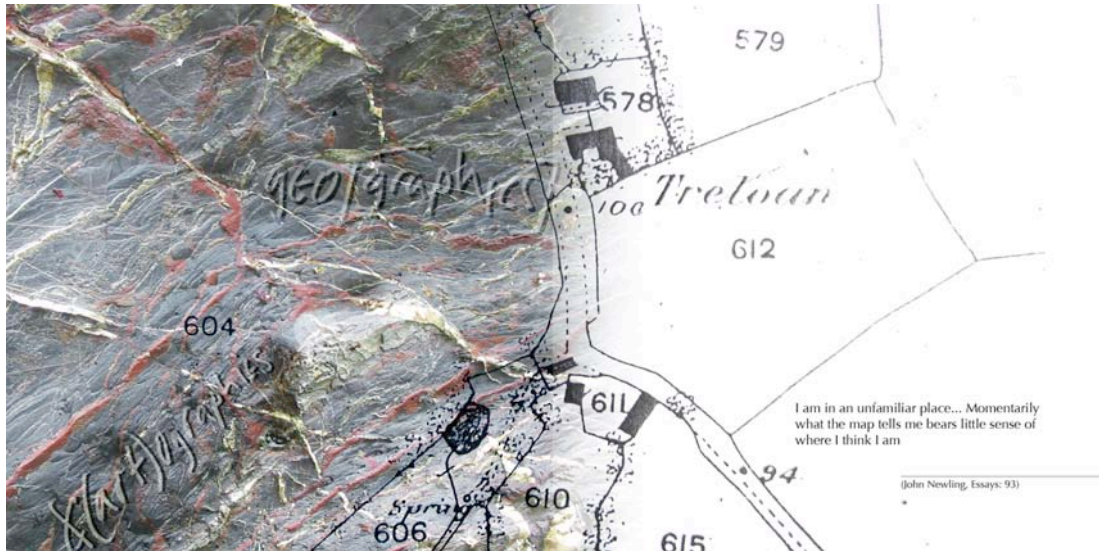


Fig. 1. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

This interwoven positioning or *thesis* (the root meaning of *thesis* being *to place*) locates the doing of art in response to a particular place as the central dynamic in an unfolding research process. This written supplement expands on the processes and outcomes of the context-led research in an interlacing of insights, images and project narratives<sup>9</sup> (*narus* – knowing).

Architectural theorist and arts critic Jane Rendell has developed *site writing* as a means to convey what happens in the interstices between situatedness, site-specificity and arts criticism. Her view is that ‘the spatial qualities of writing become as important in conveying meaning as the content of the criticism’ (Rendell, 2010:

<sup>8</sup> For example, please see the publications inclusive to this thesis, *Discovering what's on our doorstep* (2011) and *insites – a notebook* (2009) discussed in more depth in chapter six.

<sup>9</sup> For example, excerpts from my journal occur throughout the text, as dated block quotes in italics. Other project related texts such as descriptive narratives are also inset as block quotes. These journal excerpts and project narratives use a different typeface to the main body of the text.

20). A number of academics and theorists<sup>10</sup> explore lyrical forms of criticality so as to engage the subject in what would otherwise be a one-sided objective stance. In cultural geography for instance, creative writing is a prevalent experimental area for a more experiential approach to writing about landscape.<sup>11</sup>

There are multiple configurations of *artist-writer-poet-performer-academic* scripting or essaying<sup>12</sup> spatial practices as *situational fiction*, *geopoetics*, *autotopography*, *autography*, *mythogeography* (Frances, 2009; Heddon, 2006; Macdonald, 2009; Smith, 2010) – engaging in what Kanta Kochhar-Lindgren describes as ‘sensorial-suffused shape-shifting that opens to new sense fields and invokes a ‘*revelatory turbulence*’ that she says,

is necessary to counter the pitfalls of the cultural and social construction of knowledge, and most pressingly, it can help us develop new frames for the current discussions about art as research, as observation, and as interpretation. (Kochhar-Lindgren, 2008: unpaginated)

Mike Pearson in his study of performance, memory and landscape *In Comes I* (2006:16), ‘employs description and analysis, and creative narrative in proposing a form of theory-informed storytelling’. Geographers Doreen Massey and Gillian Rose (2003) situate boxed narratives that record the explorations they did for the research paper that contains them, describing sites, weather, people passing and encounters. Lucy Lippard includes a running text throughout ‘The Lure of the Local’ (1997), weaving subjective experience into the book in recognition that central to her writing,

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<sup>10</sup> For example Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma*. (Routledge 2000) and Yve Lomax, 2005. *Sounding the Event; Escapades in Dialogue and Matters of Art, Nature and Time* (I.B.Tauris, London. 2005).

<sup>11</sup> For example, geographers Owain Jones, Hayden Lorimer, Mitch Rose and John Wylie used creative writing methods in papers presented at Living Landscapes, an international conference on performance, landscape and environment in Aberystwyth June 2009. Lorimer and Wylie’s abstract LOOP was presented as a form of concrete poetry in the conference programme, available at [http://www.landscape.ac.uk/2009conference\\_programme.html](http://www.landscape.ac.uk/2009conference_programme.html) [accessed 12.3.10]

<sup>12</sup> The academic and artist Iain Biggs, describes *essaying landscape* in relation to Edward Casey’s discussion of place as *an essay in experimental living within a changing culture* as an ‘interdisciplinary, multi-media practice of deep mapping’ (author’s notes from a lecture at the University of Exeter, 2009).

and the subject of place, is lived experience; as arts theorist Malcolm Miles notes,

Lippard writes in three voices: memory, commentary and description. The first is personal, the second moves between the personal and the critical, and the third is informational. The personal and critical voices interface but do not interpret each other, though cross-references are made between commentary and captions. The inclusion of a first-person narrative is a form for the feminist sentiment 'the personal is political', and for Lippard's addition to this: "the political is personal". (Miles, 2000: 149)

## 1.2. Interfaces of location and memory; an evolving philosophy of practice

Research is often metaphorically referenced as a journey to be embarked upon, explored, mapped out, and recounted as a self-contained argument through a linear route. However, this practice-led research project is metaphorically referenced here as a seed where self-containment is emergent, cyclic and dependent on enabling conditions for its development. This seed of practice, this evolving core can be traced through two decades of my professional arts practice working within the field of contemporary public arts.<sup>13</sup>

Public art is an amorphous beast, its territories ranging from the highly visible architecturally monumental and decorative to more invisible, temporary interventions or events. To narrow this down I refer to my area of arts practice as 'context-led', suggesting that this can be understood as a *modus vivendi*<sup>14</sup> that is responsive to 'context' as the weaving together ('con' with and 'textere' to weave) of the relational aspects of a particular place, site or situation.

Whilst these processes of responding to context could be seen as similar to strategies employed by 'socially engaged', 'dialogic' or 'relational' practices, it is my

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<sup>13</sup> A portfolio of my projects is archived at <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

<sup>14</sup> *Modus vivendi* is referenced throughout this text in its etymological sense – as 'a way of living'

contention that the commodification of artists' intentions and processes as arts-categorical models such as these is problematic. These genres have become terms of investment (for arts projects, commissioners, curators and cultural workers), and as such can fuel prescriptive outcomes and objective critique that continues to distance artwork from the relations within which it emerges – the context.

This issue is explored in more detail later in this text, where some genres or arts-categorical models are referenced in terms of their constraints.<sup>15</sup> It is not my intention to discuss the provenance of these models in an arts-historical context as they are fully explored elsewhere by their various exponents, critics and artists (Bourriaud, 2002; Kester, 2002; Lacy, 1995). However, some of the processes these models describe are significant and will emerge in relation to *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework or philosophy of practice that foregrounds *place* responsive processes rather than *art* strategies.

*Interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework underpins the investigation of my thesis; it is a philosophy of arts practice where all of the 'cues for a work's development' arise from context (Irwin in Stiles and Selz, 1996: 572). I first conceived of it in 2003 (before commencing doctoral research) as a means to negotiate the difficulty of providing contextual information within the restrictive formats of funding applications and commissioning selection procedures.<sup>16</sup> The outcomes of context-led practice are diverse as they are created in response to the particularities of a place, site or situation; they can include all manner of media and

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<sup>15</sup> Chapter two discusses the constraints of arts field designations, in particular 'socially engaged', and in chapter three attention is drawn to the difference between 'relational art' as a participatory strategy and 'relational' as *meshwork*, the entanglements of the lifeworld – 'being in relationship' (Ingold, 2006). In chapter four the **rationale for a responsive approach** (pp.73-79) offers brief introductions to some of these designations in order to clarify why I have chosen to focus on Lippard's place-ethical criteria to develop the conceptual framework – *interfaces of location and memory*.

<sup>16</sup> The formats for submitting material for arts selection panels normally require a written statement of practice (or intent), a C.V. and visual documentation (a number of images) – formats more appropriate to studio practice than the socio-spatial processes of context-led projects.

art-forms (as well as forms not necessarily considered as art<sup>17</sup>). The boundaries between 'art' and 'life' blur as we experience the outcomes that emerge from different places, sites and situations: as networked projects, time-based interventions, social interactions or work inscribed into the fabric of architecture. Added to this are the working processes of context-led practice that are expansive and inclusive of people from varied walks of life whose expertise and experiential insights are integral to a work's fruition.

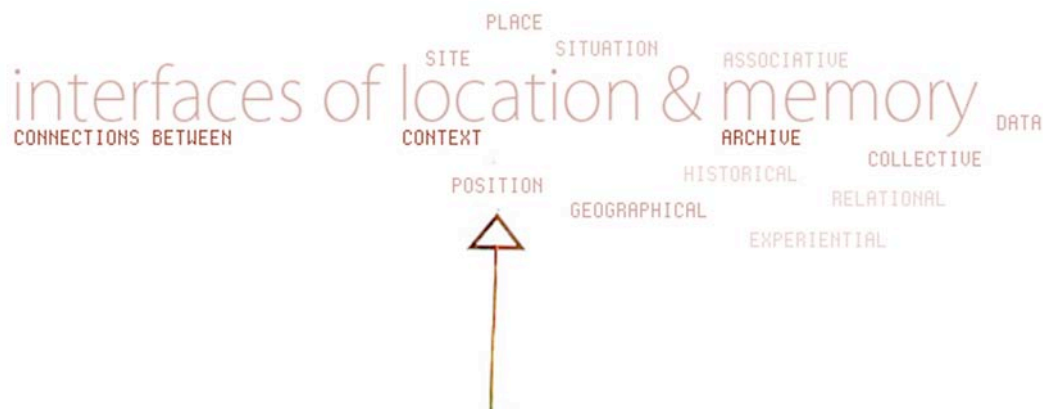


Fig. 2. Annie Lovejoy. *Interfaces of location and memory*. Website interface. 2004

*interface* - the point of connection between things  
*location* - the context, site, place, situation or position of something.  
*memory* - experiential, collective, associative, knowledge base, data and archiving

*Interfaces of location and memory* was awarded Arts Council funding in 2004 for the construction of an online resource that integrated contextual research and project documentation. The initiative proposed that hyperlinked dissemination would reveal the wider relational and transdisciplinary aspects of work produced and would promote inclusivity (in terms of art and non-art audiences).

<sup>17</sup> For instance *stirring @the International Festival of the Sea* – that involved the production and distribution of 40,000 sugar packets in a dockside festival in Bristol, UK., archived online at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/projects.pl>

In the PhD research this connective concept – *interfaces of location and memory* – evolves as a philosophy of practice towards enabling new ‘place-ethical’<sup>18</sup> work to emerge. Here, diagrams, maps and models do not suffice, as to present anything that ties the fluidity of *place* to a rigid structure defeats the purpose. *Place* is a fluid concept and to develop work in response to this is to be open to the uncertainties of diverse encounters: ‘this is place as *meeting place*, the intersection of numerous trajectories of all kinds brought together in physical proximity’:

This understanding of place, then, sees internal diversity and complexity (rather than coherence) as at the core of the essence of place. And it sees the processes of negotiation of that diversity as part of the character of place. Tradition, here, is something which is continually under construction – the responsibility is therefore not just to ‘hang on to it’ but to build it. This is *place as practiced*. (Massey and Rose, 2003:4)

This notion of ‘place as practiced’ – complex, diverse and ‘under construction’ (rather than coherent) – prompts the following discussion of a public art commission that crystallised my research concerns at an early stage and called for a shift toward other cultural practices and philosophies to do with place and process.

### 1.3. **Thinking inside the box:**<sup>19</sup> Barton Hill Public Art Programme

A large scale public art commission coincided with the start of my doctoral studies that involved the collaborative<sup>20</sup> development and production of integrated artworks for a new school in Barton Hill, Bristol, U.K., part of a regeneration programme for an inner city area. The project provided an opportunity for action research as ‘a

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<sup>18</sup> Lippard’s ‘art governed by [a] place ethic’ (Lippard, 1997: 286) is explored in chapter four and in relation to a selection of my previous context-led projects (Appendix B); toward the development of *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice.

<sup>19</sup> *Thinking inside the box* was the title of my paper presented at the University Arts London research symposium in Feb 2008, it references the constraints of the Barton Hill Public Art Programme project and the ubiquitous phrase ‘thinking outside of the box’ – as implying a disconnect from context. As Francis Whitehead states ‘there is no box’ in *What do Artists Know* (Whitehead, 2006) available at <http://www.embeddedartistproject.com/whatdoartistsknow.html> [accessed 30.11.2010]

<sup>20</sup> The Barton Hill project commission is a collaborative project with artist Mac Dunlop.



situational process requiring the co-operation of participants in a specific real-world context' (Gray and Malins, 2004: 74). It involved working with the project partners<sup>21</sup> over a two year period meeting all the requirements that a project of this scale entails: health and safety issues, planning permissions, building regulations, sub-contracting, contract schedules and budget management. The resulting artwork<sup>22</sup> and publication was well received by the school community, commissioners and stakeholders. The project also features in an exemplary guide for local councils and commissioners 'Creating excellent primary schools; a guide for clients' published by CABA<sup>23</sup> (the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) in 2010.

The encounters, negotiations, reflections and responses that drive a project of this scale and duration are lengthy and complex. But with view to understanding the impact that the project had on the direction of my research an overview is provided in Appendix A. In short, the Barton Hill project challenged the rationale and ethos of my practice, illustrating how artistic integrity can become compromised which in turn affects the dynamics of the work produced.

The aspirations for the Barton Hill public art programme and the 'definitive artist's brief' focused on a socially inclusive agenda of community and project partner participation, in reality this was unachievable. The effect of amalgamating three existent school sites into one organisation meant that the school was unable to fully participate in the project aims. The project has exemplified how well intended strategies of participation promote 'good practice' on paper, but in reality need to be embedded in the context-led changeable processes of the project. (Lovejoy in Hall, 2007:32)

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<sup>21</sup> The project partners were Barton Hill School & Children's Centre, Bristol, Community at Heart (Bristol City Council), Architype (architects), RiO (Real Ideas Organization). The project involved the development and production of a series of artworks for a new build project with a budget of £33,000.

<sup>22</sup> Details of the work produced and the processes involved are described in Appendix A.

<sup>23</sup> "CABA is the government's advisor on architecture, urban design and public space. As a public body, we encourage policymakers to create places that work for people. We help local planners apply national design policy and advise developers and architects, persuading them to put people's needs first. We show public sector clients how to commission buildings that meet the needs of their users. And we seek to inspire the public to demand more from their buildings and spaces. Advising, influencing and inspiring, we work to create well-designed, welcoming places" (cover notes 'Creating excellent primary schools; a guide for clients' CABA, 2010).

This led to questioning the complex relationships involved – how the balance of power in those relationships might be critiqued as well as my own complicity or good intentions. Commissions such as this invite artists to participate within certain parameters unique to a particular context. However, generic policies and out-dated bureaucratic infrastructures tend to work against the relationships and dialogue necessary for an open approach. Even well intended strategies of participation that promote good practice on paper, can be otherwise in reality. In order to create something meaningful, all stakeholders need to invest time in the project, to be on the ground and embedded in the changeable processes of a project's fruition. In his meditations on creativity and culture, physicist David Peat speaks of how our perceptions are divorced from natural relationships of change and flux. He questions how outdated policies and 'hierarchical organizations that have limited lines of communication and inflexible structures are supposed to deal with a rich and complex world [...] The point about creativity and, indeed about living is that it cannot be prescribed'; and neither can creative response be laid down as a fixed programme (Peat, 2007: 150).

Flexibility is key: complex collaborative practices are about ideas, scenarios, challenges and uncertainties - you can't slap process on to communities. These sites are places in flux in a continual process of becoming. To work in these environments can be both challenging and compromising, as Posner says these situations require 'the eye of a journalist, the ear of a poet, the hide of an armadillo, the serenity of an airline pilot and the ability to swim' (1996: unpaginated). The artists Helen Meyer and Newton Harrison, who have long term professional experience of public art projects, reference their approach to working with inflexible bureaucratic systems as follows:

We often remind ourselves not to confuse systems thinking, which points to new space of mind, and systematization, which leads to the overproduction of sameness, which bureaucrats in our experience often confuse – giving lip service to the former, while obeying the dictates of the latter. (2004:5)

The Barton Hill project although challenging had prompted my reflexive thinking to question: *what might be entailed in producing context-led outcomes that have uncompromised integrity?* By 'integrity' I mean a responsibility to the sensibilities of context-led practice, to the experiences, encounters and processes that generate ideas toward outcomes that are relevant to a particular place. Berleant notes that:

Sincerity as an artist does concern the person as an artist and it signifies integrity of intent. Yet insofar as this is artistic, it follows from the integrity, that is, the honesty and truth, of his work. Thus integrity for artists is not just working conscientiously and skillfully and devotedly. This trait would not distinguish them from any other professionals who exhibit those characteristics. Even so, the degree to which artists characteristically manifest professional integrity is exemplary to such an extent that it is common to call anyone an artist who exhibits a high level of integrity in his work, whatever that work may be. The integrity of artists, however, is ultimately their truthfulness to their artistic vision. This is no purely personal trait, however, but is inseparable from their work. (Berleant, 1977:199)

### **Summary:**

In this chapter I have discussed the formal requirements of the doctorate in relation to the role of arts practice, and the provenance of the research. The existing connective concept *Interfaces of location and memory* was introduced as a means of disseminating the processes and outcomes of context-led practice.

This was followed by a brief overview of the Barton Hill Public Art Programme conveying how it crystallised my research concerns toward the development of *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for new work. This framework hinges on an understanding of context-led arts practice as being

responsive to the relational complexities *of* a particular place, rather than a model of practice that is applied *to* a place.

The next chapter critiques the designation of art-field categories to the socio-spatial processes that artists engage in. The commodification of artist's processes is evidenced in reductive arts historical and contemporary critique that isolates artwork from the socio-political conditions of its emergence. This limited understanding of arts practice fuels an objective perspective that can lead to prescriptive expectations and foreclosure of a work's potential, as artist and writer Susan Kelly points out:

The grand inclusion or identification of all kinds of transversal practices, practices of self-organisation, practices in which it is never clear where the art ends and the politics begins, into expanded categories of art ('relational', socially engaged etc) needs to be met with suspicion. (Kelly, 2005: 1)

## **2. Clearing the ground**

This chapter begins with a story of discovery that alludes to key elements of my thesis; the socio-spatial relations and processes of place-responsive practice, and fixed objective perspectives that limit the understanding of a context-led approach.

Following this is a brief sketch of arts-historical and contemporary perspectives that isolate artwork from its socio-political context through reductive representation, critique and the commodification of artists' intentions and processes. Attention is then drawn to the term 'socially engaged' and how this becomes a term of investment for public and private sector arts initiatives that can lead to foreclosure of a work's potential.<sup>1</sup> Through a critical review of key references and examples of practice these limitations are identified in order to understand how they might be overcome.

### **2.1. A story of discovery**

In 1993 Edward Wachtel drew attention to the fact that for years archeologists, art historians and other researchers of Paleolithic culture had puzzled over the composition and what they presumed to be the conservational over-working of cave paintings on the walls of Lascaux, Font-de-Gaume, La Mouthe and Les Combarelles. Their research was carried out in fixed light conditions through photography and sketched reproductions. Wachtel, on a train journey to visit the caves, was preoccupied by one question,

why did prehistoric people go deep into the dark, limestone intestines of the earth to paint and etch their finest works? The caves are inhospitable and

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<sup>1</sup> As experienced in the Barton Hill Public Art Programme discussed in chapter one.

dangerous, yet Magdalenian painters sought the darkest, least accessible places. Why? (Wachtel, 1993: 136)

The small cave of La Mouthe is situated on a farmer's land, its images fewer and less well preserved than the other caves and unlike most of the caves has no electricity, no fixed lights (Wachtel, 1993: 137). Entering the dark interior of a cave with the farmer as his guide and the flickering light of a gas lantern, Wachtel discovered that the puzzling superimposing of images had actually been crafted with great care:

When our Magdalenian ancestors painted and etched the walls of caves in Southern France and Northern Spain, they were making images that were essentially cinematic. Their creations have generally been viewed as still images – etchings, drawings, paintings – predecessors to photography. However, the tools and techniques they used, including brushes and blowguns, the irregular surfaces and lamps fuelled by animal fat, conspired to create works and viewing conditions that made images that appeared to move, changed colour, dissolved, cut, appeared and disappeared. In short, they made cinematic images – precursors to film and television. (1993: 135)

Rather than being fixed representations of animistic belief, these images of animals in flickering light appear to move, as they would in the wild; which led him to believe that this cinematic experience may have been used for ritual hunts to introduce the necessary perceptual alertness and skills required in the outside world. This suggestion was emphasised by the predominance of animal representation in the caves that echoes prehistoric people's concern 'with these creatures as sources of food, clothing and, sometimes, danger' (Wachtel, 1993: 139).

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Wachtel's discovery foregrounds two important elements relevant to the processes of context-led arts practice and its dissemination that I wish to explore in this research project:

- characteristics of place and social interaction
- fixed objective interpretation/analysis

The characteristics of place and social interaction in Wachtel's experience of the cave paintings can be seen primarily as durational and immersive. The work is created and experienced in direct response to the context, utilising the physical properties of the site to raise awareness of everyday occurrences through an ongoing aesthetic and situated experience. This calls attention to the processes involved in the work's production as also being embedded and responsive – an experience *of* place and study of relationships as inhabited lived experience, being-in-relationship environmentally, socially and mentally.

Wachtel's discovery is also significant in its illustration of how a work integral to the socio-spatial context of its time can be misunderstood through the rigidity of objective analysis. Essential experiential meaning and function had become obscured by neon vision, where everything seen in a severe and insistent light was not hospitable to that which was hidden (O'Donohue, 1999: 109).

Similarly, it is clear that artists' processes and intentions have been hidden in an arts-historical canon that isolates artworks from the social and cultural conditions within which they emerge. Iconic representation and the institutional sanctioning of the object in space (either as transcendent or to be decoded and interpreted) continues to be the dominant paradigm (Crimp, 1993; Duncan, 1993; Gablik, 1991; Kelly, 1993; Kester, 2004; Lacy, 1995; Tagg, 1992). Even with today's cultural shift toward dematerialised and expanded art practices, separation is evident.

For instance the term 'socially engaged practice' implies the crossing of a divide to engage with an *other* (and is particular to arts practice - we don't tend to speak of 'socially engaged' musicians, poets, doctors or plumbers). Meanwhile, the audience

is *out there* somewhere, to be targeted (across the divide) via educational *outreach*, market research and public relations, and sited artwork is often referred to as being in the public domain or realm *over there* in the form of a 'scattered site' or 'off site' exhibition *out there* somewhere, beyond the building or institution that curates and disseminates the work.

I have previously mentioned Sontag's opening phrase in *Against Interpretation* (1994: 3), where she speaks of how the earliest experiences of art must have been as an instrument of ritual. In the same paragraph she references the 'earliest *theory* of art, that of Greek philosophers [who] proposed that art was mimesis, imitation of reality', a representation (Sontag, 1994: 3). This is the point, according to Sontag that the peculiar question of the value of art arose wherein it became an object to decode and a problematic, in need of defence. This idea of art as content, she argues, remains central to the arts construct. Even when the object is dematerialised there needs to be evidence of explanation, statement of intent, or meaning,

what this entails is the perennial, never consummated project of interpretation. And, conversely it is the habit of approaching works of art in order to interpret them that sustains the fancy that there really is such a thing as a content of a work of art. (Sontag 1994: 5)

This habit of approaching works of art entails a separation in space; the distancing of art from context. Ellen Dissanayake, points out that the Western tradition of art is a relatively young construct arising in the late eighteenth century, when Enlightenment scholars named and developed the subject of aesthetics and 'the aesthetic' came to be regarded as a distinctive kind of experience 'particular to the rise of academies, museums, galleries, dealers, critics, journals, and scholars [and] a type of human artifact that was made primarily and often specifically for acquisition



and display' (1992 in 2003:13). At the same time, she notes that:

ideas of genius, creative imagination, self-expression, originality, communication, and emotion, having originated in other contexts, became increasingly and even primarily or exclusively associated with the subject of 'art'.(1992 in 2003:13)

## 2.2. **Out of place:** the distancing of art from context

In his survey of the origins of the museum, Crimp draws attention to the foresight of Goethe in 1798 stating that:

There was a time when, with few exceptions, works of art remained generally in the same location for which they were made. However, now a great change has occurred that, in general as well as specifically will have important consequences for art. (Crimp,1993: 97)

A major influence in the removal of works of art from their contexts was the emergence of new cultural codes and social interactions brought about by the industrial revolution. The ability to travel led to an exoticism where collections of iconographic objects, divorced from their ritualistic function and context, were imbued with the mysticism of awe and aesthetic beauty. Museums were established as Temples of Excellence to house such works so that visitors might enjoy a quasi-mystical experience, a belief that art as an icon of perfection was transformative, akin to religious belief (Frank, 1991). Crimp reminds us that 'art before the invention of the art museum, simply no longer exists for us' (Crimp, 1993: 98). He suggests that this loss is not only the result of removal of objects from their contexts for art museum collections, but is also influenced by the emergence of photography,

the modern epistemology of art is a function of art's seclusion in the museum, where art was made to appear autonomous, alienated, something apart, referring only to its own internal history and dynamics. As an

instrument of art's reproduction, photography extended this idealism of art to a broader discursive dimension, an *imaginary* museum, a history of art. (Crimp, 1993: 13)

This new-found ability to record and classify assisted a science focused on observational material as evidence to measure and construct new values. John Tagg asserts that through accessing the minutes of various select committees, the trace of the historical gaze could be followed uncovering the 'way that gaze was engineered and institutionally sanctioned' (Tagg, 1992:84). This objective gaze sanctions the value of art and as Carol Duncan observes,

is the all-pervasive force that makes possible and unifies the market system. Criticism thus guards the door to all available high-art spaces, sets the terms for entry scouts the fringe spaces for new talent, and tirelessly readjusts current criteria to emergent art modes. (Duncan, 1993: 174)

These standards prevail through a museum practice that defines, distinguishes, categorises and places art firmly within the arts-historical continuum 'through displaying, interpreting, and publishing the work as part of a monographic or thematic program' (Jacob, 1995:51).

Added to this, the construction within which images reside gives further definition to their reading. Our experience of art, contemporary and historical, is mostly via reproduction where an image is framed by the page and accompanied by appropriate textual analysis. Publications, through the pressure of their form tend toward reinforcing the obscuring of relationships pertinent to a work. As cultural theorist Martin Lister points out:

Publications tend to privilege and reinforce the singularity and discreteness of the images that appear on their pages. Each image is framed by the edges of the page, each one is placed in considered isolation and held apart from the other (invisible) images sitting on the other closed pages. Each one is individuated by title and date. Of course, we turn the pages and make the

mental effort to carry one set of impressions to the next, but the pressure of the form continually works to obscure the relationships. (Lister, 1998:1)

Iconic representation is persistently reinstated through popular culture and deeply ingrained in society. This version of art history as a chronology of genius, style and genre via iconic representation also evokes the mythical 'artist', singular and autonomous. To move beyond this, we need to be more curious, we need to delve deeper and discover the socio-political relations of a work's provenance.

A typically reductive example is *The Art Book*, designed as a stimulating fun-packed history of art for a mass audience. Winning the *Illustrated Book of the Year* award in 1994, the book is a popular commodity, the introduction to which states that it is a 'whole new way of looking at art in an A to Z format that debunks art-historical classifications by throwing together brilliant examples of all periods, schools, visions & techniques' (Phaidon Press, 1994: unpaginated).

It does exactly that (and in its 'de-bunking' *de-bases* any socio-political significance of the work it frames); Beuys sits beside Botticelli next to Buren and so on, each artwork accompanied by a short paragraph of information. When we get to 'K', we read:

KLEIN Yves. IKB 79. c.1959

IKB stands for International Klein Blue, a paint which Klein mixed personally & then painted. Its brilliant colour is maintained by the addition of synthetic resin to the blue pigment. Most of Klein's paintings are blue, as blue was an important colour to him, conveying a sensation of spirituality & freedom which is peculiar to his work. (Phaidon Press, 1994: 251)

This description, focused on product, short-circuits any intention, process or concept on Klein's part to overtly challenge preconceptions about art and the art market.

This reductive description also fails to recognize that IKB 79 is a series from Klein's

'Blue Period' (so called after Picasso) and a patented product that can't actually be faithfully reproduced in a publication. These are issues to do with arts value and consumption. To then reference Klein's 'blue' as 'conveying a sensation of spirituality & freedom' denies Klein's artistic sensibilities and his explorations of the material and immaterial that were at the heart of his practice. Klein's transactional works have symbolic function: they are concerned with the transformative potential of material properties and issues to do with how art is valued. For instance, with *Zones of Immaterial Pictorial Sensibility* (referencing the use of gilt grounds in mediaeval painting) Klein sold works made with gold leaf that were to be paid for in gold, and half of this gold was then to be returned to nature in respect of 'the mystical circulation of things' (Weitemeier, 1995:69).

In *Vision and Difference* Grizelda Pollock cites Raymond Williams's observation that 'nearly all forms of contemporary critical theory are theories of *consumption*. That is to say concerned with understanding an object in such a way that it can be profitably and correctly consumed' (1998:3-4 emphasis in original). In response to Williams's suggestion that an alternative idea might be to 'consider art as *practice* and the *conditions of practice*' she points out that:

there are many who see art history as a defunct and irrelevant disciplinary boundary. The study of cultural production has bled so widely and changed so radically from an object to discourse and practice orientation that there is a complete communication breakdown between art historians working within a normative discipline and those who are contesting the paradigm [...] aiming to make improvements, bring it up to date, season the old with current intellectual fashions or theory soup. (Pollock, 1998:17)

Pollock, relating this to the feminist problematic, argues for a collective critique of social, economic and ideological power. Rather than isolate feminist art history, she suggests a consideration of feminist interventions within art histories. Similarly, artists' intentions and processes, concealed through the institutional framework of art history, are revealed through an understanding of the relational aspects of the

social and cultural conditions of their emergence – art of place.

Representation of arts practice is vital to understanding the processes that artists engage in and essential to their visibility and livelihood. Artists need their work to be well represented and understood so as to secure their next job, commission or funding award. This thesis explores the context-led processes of responding to a particular place and is inextricably concerned with matters of representation. As mentioned in the previous chapter, *interfaces of location and memory* was initially conceived of as a connective concept to assist the dissemination of context-led arts practice. As such, a key intention of this research is to move beyond reductive representation and re-connect responsive outcomes with the context of their emergence, Arlene Raven's self-questioning is suggestive of ways in which to do this:

Without a criticism based on creating market value through personal value put forth as 'objective' worth, what is left? Crucial for me is that my writing, arising from my seeing, attempts to be educational and includes information gleaned from interviews, research, and a knowledge of art and history. There *is* something that can be added to the experience of artworks - data and insights that will place them in literary, geographical, historical, critical, political, or thematic contexts. (Raven, 1995:159-60)<sup>2</sup>

### 2.3. Engaging with relational complexities

These issues to do with reductive representation and commodification remain problematic for artists who choose to engage in the relational complexities and processes of working in response to specific situations. Nevertheless, there is a body of work, critical to this research project, which reflects on the transformative potential of processes that artists engage in. Allan Kaprow (1993) wrote extensively

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<sup>2</sup> This potential for a more expansive form of representation that reveals the provenance of context-led processes is reflected in my thesis publications (outcomes of the *caravanserai* fieldwork project).

on what he termed the arts / non arts paradox: the fact that art, even if intentionally created for visibility outside the arts construct is deemed invisible if not included in dominant discourse.

Similarly, Susan Kelly's discussion of how to work outside of restrictive categorisation argues that 'it has become nigh on impossible to make a work of art that is not a work of art [as the] ever-expanded category of (relational, socially engaged) art is the thing that's visible' (Kelly, 2001: unpaginated). I share Kelly's belief that 'designations of certain practices as artworks, or restrictions of particular activities and forms to the art-field can limit and even foreclose their potential'. In concluding her paper she suggests that embracing the potential of open processes (rather than operative categories) is 'a logic of refusal' because by resisting visibility the artist invites the risks of invisibility, marginalisation, or inoperability.

Nevertheless, these are conditions that she suggests can lead to another logic the proposition 'of a work of art that's *really* not a work of art' that necessitates working with 'the paradox that in order to defend something you might also need to displace it, and its categorisation at the same time' (Kelly, 2001:5).

This idea is probably better understood in direct relation to the specifics of a project's development. Recognising the restrictive nature of 'art field' constructs, it may be more productive to think in terms of expanded potential rather than refusal and displacement as a form of resistance. However, I do accept that this paradox is an ongoing negotiation for artists – a need to find room for manoeuvre. As such, it matters not that a work is seen as 'art' or 'non art' – these are concerns of a minority arts construct. What actually matters is what *takes place*.

Kaprow's belief was in this expanded idea of art, art that is immersed in the everyday, 'context rather than category, flow rather than work of art' (1993:105), he states that:

The arts, at least up to the present, have been poor lessons, except possibly to artists and their tiny publics. Only these vested interests have ever made any claims for the arts. The rest of the world couldn't care less. (Kaprow, 1993: 99)

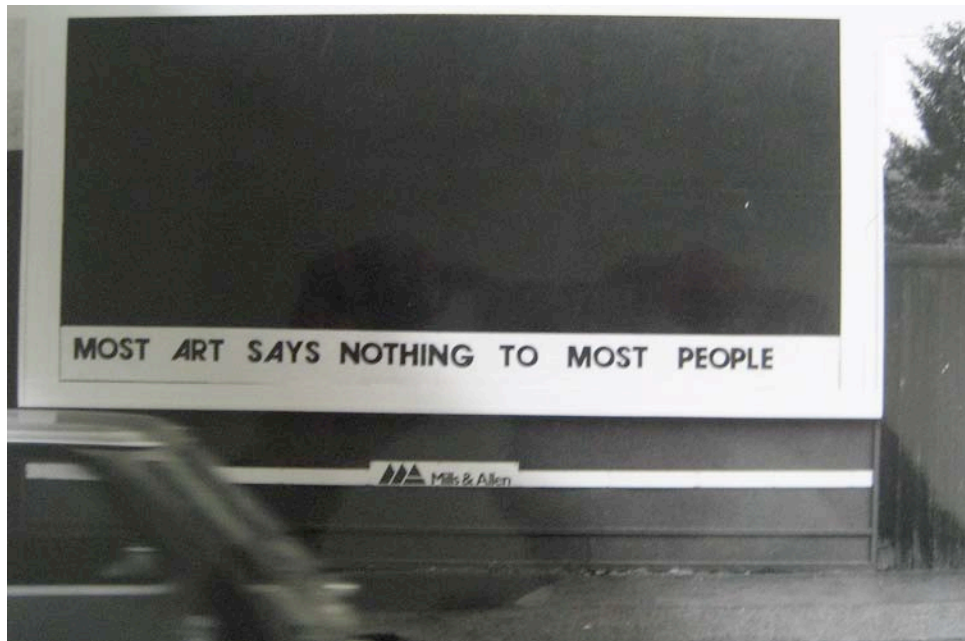


Fig. 3. Heath Bunting. *Advertising Art*. Bristol 1990 (photograph: Annie Lovejoy)

Similarly Robert Filliou's statement that art's purpose was to reveal 'how much more interesting life is' (Lacey, 1995: 158), and Joseph Beuys's well known declaration that 'every human being is an artist' (Tisdall, 1974: 48) reconnects art with the experiential realm of the everyday and the creative potential of our imaginations.

Art that no longer refers solely to the modern art world, to the artist, but comprehends a notion of art relating to everyone and to [the] very question and problem of the social organism in which people live. Without doubt, such a notion of art would no longer refer exclusively to the specialist within the modern art world but extend to the whole work of humanity. (Freiling in Roberts, 2009: 52)

In her essay *Connective Aesthetics: Art After Individualism*, Suzi Gablik calls 'for

more integrative modes of thinking that focus on the relational nature of reality rather than discrete objects,' citing Lacy's comment that:

Focusing on aspects of interaction and relationship rather than on art objects calls for a radical rearrangement in our expectations of what an artist does. (in Lacy, 1995:83)

Lacy's publication *Mapping the Terrain* (1995), which involved over 30 peoples contributions from different working perspectives, advocated an 'art that matters', extending the modernist object into the field of relations and social context, a 'new genre public art'. These now-accepted methodologies and models of practice underpin contemporary art discourses and university arts programmes and curricula. This previously radical 'socially engaged' approach to art practice is now fully operative in capital investment public art schemes, popular because of its implied promise of transformation or a quick fix, that has become a low maintenance and low budget solution to the social unrest created by insensitive planning and regeneration initiatives.

#### **2.4. The stakeholder, the consultant/curator, the artist and the other...**

Public art policies tend to speak of 'the public' (a singular *other*) or 'the community' as an identifiable target audience (Douglas, 2004) in need of art that might enlighten, educate or transform. This missionary position is reflective of the veneration of the autonomous art object. As such, 'socially engaged' or 'relational art' strategies have become the necessary conditions of investment for public art sector projects, biennales, community outreach and regeneration programmes.





Fig. 4. [online image] <http://www.fridericianum-kassel.de/ausst/conf-e.html> [accessed 11.6.2004]

Meanwhile we are witnessing a proliferation of developers converting public space into controlled environments. Anna Minton refers to these developments as:

strangely placeless places, cut off from their original wellspring of local life and vitality and characterised instead by a fake, theme park atmosphere which is a result of disconnection from the local environment. (2006:4)

Furthermore, these placeless places are often the site of public art commissioned by the developer to fulfill local authority public art remits or planning requirements.



Fig. 5. Andy Hewitt and Mel Jordan. *The Economic Function*. Sheffield 2004.

The problem here is that the role of the artist / artwork is to transform social inequalities, or ameliorate difficult situations where people are affected (or disenfranchised) by the increasing privatisation of public space. As

John Newling mentions:

At best regeneration seeks an agreement between place and the people that populate it. At worst it sees models of virtual planning as transferable throughout the land; a desire for homogeneity that furthers our fall into sameness. Risk free but more map than territory'. (Newling, 2005: 35)

My argument here is that the reductive categorisation of 'socially engaged practice' places limitations on artists whose interests lie in the relational processes of exploring a particular place (site or situation), and the myriad social interactions, practices, memories, histories and encounters integral to particular contexts. Mary Jane Jacob, interviewed by Carole Tormollon in 1995, drew attention to her fear of what she calls 'community-based art' being appropriated as a stylistic term:

I fear that with the attention afforded community-based art of late, that it could become a stylistic term like Pop Art or Abstract Expressionism. I think it's a broader sort of philosophical position. But if it is broken down into a formula and leads to an unquestioning way of working, community-based art can be more dangerous and reckless than a bad Abstract Expressionist painting made in the artist's studio, because it involves the lives of other people. (Tormollon,1995:69)

A research project conducted by Cameron Cartiere and Sophie Hope in 2007 raises the problem of generic policy and the expectations that artists will transform social inequalities. Following a series of seminars and open forum discussions they produced a poster, the *Manifesto Of Possibilities: Commissioning Public Art in the Urban Environment*, devised as a discussion point for those involved in the planning and development of public arts initiatives. The poster clearly states that 'good public art is not a single substitute for good public policy' and that 'public art commissions

should be driven by the unique context of a given project rather than an overly prescriptive or generic brief' (Cartiere, C. and Hope, S, 2007: unpaginated).<sup>3</sup>

Cartiere's doctorate project proposed place-specificity as a model of practice from a curatorial perspective, her abstract describes the project as reflecting on 'the potential of place-specific public art to celebrate unique cultural differences, inspire international collaboration, and provide a forum for local distinctiveness in the face of globalisation' (Cartiere, 2003: unpaginated).

Cartiere's interest as a curator was to explore how artists use place as a means of connecting with specific locations and audiences. To facilitate this exploration she established 'think tanks' with artists to discuss issues to do with place in their practices. Although similar in subject matter to this project, Cartiere's research was towards establishing an operative model that expanded on Lacy's *new genre public art* – applied *to a place* whereas context-led practice is seen here as a philosophy of practice that is responsive to the particularities *of place*.

Before moving on to the next chapter I want to briefly return to the issue of integrity in respect of another arts field designation – that of 'eco' or 'environmental arts'. This is not to give an overview of works in this area, but to point out that this is a classification that currently attracts funding but engenders questionable activity, or as artist/activist John Jordan calls it 'green wash'. Jordan is vociferously critical of the art world (and academic) focus on international acclaim due to the extensive globetrotting entailed, as well as a reliance on unethical corporate sponsorship. He recently called attention to British Petroleum's sponsorship of the Tate, having been invited by them to lead a workshop on 'disobedience'.

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<sup>3</sup> More information on the process of developing this document and its contents is available from [http://wiki.bbk.ac.uk/Buildingcultures/index.php/Manifesto\\_of\\_Possibilities](http://wiki.bbk.ac.uk/Buildingcultures/index.php/Manifesto_of_Possibilities) [accessed 21.01.2008]



Fig. 6. *Pouring oil and feathers outside Tate Britain to protest against British Petroleum sponsorship of the arts.* (Photograph: Dominic Lipinski/AP)

Jordan explains that corporate bodies such as BP use our cultural institutions ‘to host glitzy events at which they foster vital relationships with ministers, journalists and foreign dignitaries’ (Jordan, 2010: unpaginated) and that this serves as a kind of ‘detergent’ to an undercurrent of environmental damage (in this case the recent B.P. oil spill<sup>4</sup>). Jordan believes that we should be asking fundamental questions about the role of art contending that,

corporate sponsorship creates an insidious climate of self-censorship that keeps art trapped in the disease of representation: a tool for preserving the status quo rather than showing us how to live differently. At a time of systemic crisis we should be asking ourselves fundamental questions about the role of art, not just who funds it. It may depend on whether we choose to make art at the service of art, or art at the service of life. (Jordan, 2010: unpaginated)

Numerous cultural critics, writers and artists<sup>5</sup> joined the call for an end to unethical sponsorship. In a letter published in the Guardian newspaper a cross-section of people from the arts community stated that:

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<sup>4</sup> ‘On 20 April 2010 an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig killed 11 men and sent millions of gallons of oil gushing into the Gulf of Mexico.’ Guardian News. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/interactive/2010/jul/08/bp-oil-spill-timeline-interactive> [accessed 3.9.2010]

<sup>5</sup> The extensive list included critics and artists such as Lucy Lippard, Suzi Gablik and Suzanne Lacy.

Many artists are angry that Tate and other national cultural institutions continue to sidestep the issue of oil sponsorship. Little more than a decade ago, tobacco companies were seen as respectable partners for public institutions to gain support from – that is no longer the case. It is our hope that oil and gas will soon be seen in the same light. ('Curators, crude oil and an outdated cultural mix'. (Guardian newspaper, 28.6. 2010)

Jordan believes that as artists we need to build lifeboats using our fine-tuned sensibilities and without separating aesthetics from ethics, move away from gallery representation into real world action that is embedded in the issue.<sup>6</sup> Jordan is clear in his critique; embracing Kelly's 'logic of refusal,' his politico-aesthetic aim is not the tactical employment of arts category strategies, but the tactical negotiations of the everyday lifeworld.

With today's pressing environmental concerns, the need to reframe our thinking is foregrounded. We are witnessing a change that has to wrestle with deeply fixated ideas and policies, that distance us from the environmental challenges we face. Equally – as this thesis argues – we need to resist definitions of practice that separate our actions from the context within which they emerge, as is evident in tick-box agendas and art world bureaucracies. But as Gary Genesko contends,

it is no easy task to throw off certain self-satisfactions of creativity, deal with incomprehension and marginality, expand one's world so as to take responsibility for matters that were once conveniently outside one's purview and, adapt one's means of working in accordance with the demands of contributing to collective processes of subjectification – an inspiration and object that is, frankly, as much a matter of the self-transformation of artists themselves as it concerns the renewals and deviations initiated by works of art. (Genesko, 2005: 19)

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<sup>6</sup> Journal notes from a lecture by Jordan for RANE (Research into Art, Nature and the Environment) at University College Falmouth on 23.4.2007. <http://www.annielovejoy.net/research/?p=1067>

## Summary:

This chapter has explored how the potential of context-led arts practice can be compromised through designations that categorize the socio-spatial processes involved as operative models; and how these fixations are perpetuated through reductive arts critique and iconic representation.

The next chapter expands on this, clarifying a difference between 'relational art' and the relational processes of responding to a particular context. Practices and philosophies concerned with place and process, drawn from the arts, geography and anthropology are discussed. These transdisciplinary insights are seen as offering potential to move beyond the categorical limitations of objective arts critique and representation. As such, they inform the evolvment of *interfaces of location and memory* (detailed in chapter four) as a conceptual framework for the development and dissemination of context-led practice and starting point for the fieldwork project – *caravanserai*.

### 3. Extending the field

This chapter begins with a discussion of Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics' in order to clarify the difference between 'relational art' as a participatory strategy, and 'relational' as *meshwork*, the entanglements of the lifeworld – being in relationship (Ingold, 2006). Context-led outcomes that emerge from lifeworld relational complexities of a particular place are seen here as inherently transdisciplinary; that is, they span experiential situated knowledges as well as professional or academic expertise. Practices and philosophies concerned with *place* and *process*, drawn from the arts, geography and anthropology, are considered as permeable regions of exchange that might enable us to move beyond the categorical limitations of objective arts critique.

#### 3.1. Reclaiming the Relational

'Relational aesthetics' as proposed by Nicolas Bourriaud, is described as art that takes 'as its theoretical horizon, the realm of human interactions and its social context rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space' (2002:14). This concept is intended as a departure from the veneration of the autonomous work of art towards a more participatory and interactive gallery experience. The problem with Bourriaud's claim is that it is based on the confined 'symbolic space' of the gallery, and as such the participatory structures within which this 'relational art' operates, are contrived. His statement that 'It seems more pressing to invent possible relations with our neighbors in the present than to bet on happier tomorrows' (Bourriaud, 2002:45) – in a gallery context – presents a very limited conception of who these neighbours are.

Clare Bishop points out that the audiences in the projects Bourriaud references are considered as a community, and that through this concept, he sees the constructed situation as a means 'of locating contemporary practice within the culture at large and a direct response to a shift from a goods to a service-based economy' (2004:4). Bishop contends that:

The *quality* of the relationships in "relational aesthetics" are never examined or called into question. When Bourriaud argues that "encounters are more important than the individuals who compose them," I sense that this question is (for him) unnecessary; all relations that permit "dialogue" are automatically assumed to be democratic and therefore good. (Bishop, 2004:15)

These relational 'microtopias', as Bourriaud calls them, are contained interactions that produce temporary communities of common interest that 'are dependent on the art institution to guarantee their integrity, and are blind to the exclusions that constitute this space. To summarize Hal Foster's argument, they are just one big 'Arty Party' (Charnley, 2011:38).

Relational activities such as *caravanserai* (with their inherent frictions and social differences) lie beyond these walls.

A work that might be described as 'relational art,' illustrative of structured participation, is *Nexus Architecture* (fig.7) by Lucy Orta,

Conceived as a process that forges the possibility of collective action and collaboration into a combined force, the various emanations of Orta's *Nexus Architecture* lead inwards towards a renewed level of social activism. As a series of interdependent sculptures, they manifest themselves as the result of a personal decision of the artist to re-enter a community structure as an act of liberty, which investigates the power of solidarity, through the symbolism of linkage. (Mark Sanders, 2002: unpaginated)



Described by Sanders as a 'renewed level of social activism' this rigid nodal connectivity conveys an imposing image. The texts that link these imprisoned bodies reference collective action through the word 'heart'. Whilst this text performs a symbolic action, it leads me to question where the human, relational, shared understandings of collective action lie. Are they located in a forceful rigid bonded body of people, where there is no space for relationship other than as a spectator, or as a node of the connected and contained?



Fig. 7. Lucy Orta. *Nexus Architecture x 50. Intervention, Köln 2001*

In another work by the Lucy and Jorge Orta, *70 x 7 The Meal* (fig.8) the fabric links of *Nexus Architecture* are replaced by the tablecloth and dinner plates. Lucy Orta refers to this work as,

another research strand [in her practice that] stems from a longing to re-create community gatherings that have been replaced by a stark sense of individualism – that of every man for himself – and to restore the sense of community through festive and ‘binding’ activities. (Orta, 2006:15).



Fig. 8. Lucy and Jorge Orta. *70 x 7 The Meal*. A proposal for the City of London. 2006

*70 x 7 The Meal* is a proposal for seven guests, who in turn, invite another seven to 'an open-air dinner for 8000 guests in the City of London'. The table cloth, measuring several miles, starts at the Tate Modern 'spanning the Millennium Bridge to St Paul's Cathedral, along King and Queen Street through the City to The Guildhall'<sup>1</sup>. A special edition of Limoges plates are intended 'to mark the event and play the role of the relational object' (Orta, 2006: 44) – a unique collector's item to be purchased at the Tate Modern as a possible means of securing a seat at the table. These plates are composed according to local context and intended as a starting point for discussion. In this meal project, we can recognise the same design strategies as in the *Nexus Architecture* work – a spectacle of structured involvement binding together those that participate through a carefully staged 'relational art' framework of organised interaction. This dinner plate design produced by the Orta studio illustrates a heart as a network, a series of nodes interlinked.

#### *Network and meshwork:*

Here, I want to introduce an understanding of relational processes that has influenced this articulation of context-led practice and the outcomes of *caravanserai*, in a critical exploration of *network* and *meshwork*. *Network* is a word used frequently to describe relational elements and social connections – communications are *networked*, and *networking* is seen as a pro-active relational and embedded activity. A *network* is understood as enabling connectivity and we speak of 'inter-connectedness' in an ecological sense, to describe the reciprocal relations with our planet. We might speak of re-connecting with nature, of feeling an affinity with something "I felt connected with", or "disconnected from" etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Project text. Available from [http://www.studio-orta.com/artwork\\_fiche?a=337](http://www.studio-orta.com/artwork_fiche?a=337) [accessed 5.3.2008]

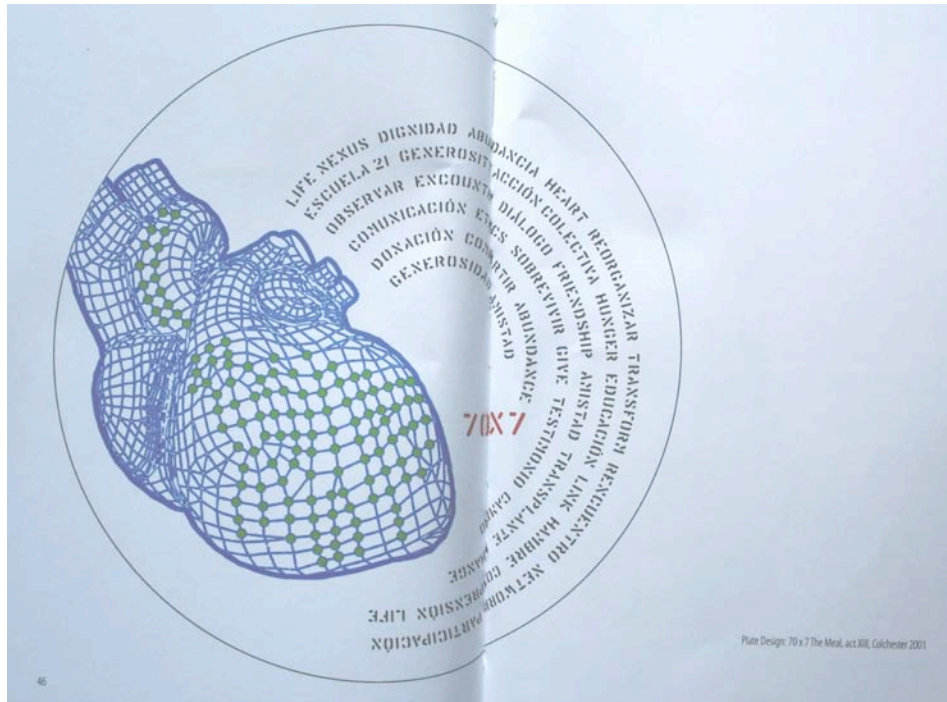


Fig. 9. Lucy and Jorge Orta. *Plate Design: 70 x 7 The Meal, act XIII*, Colchester 2001

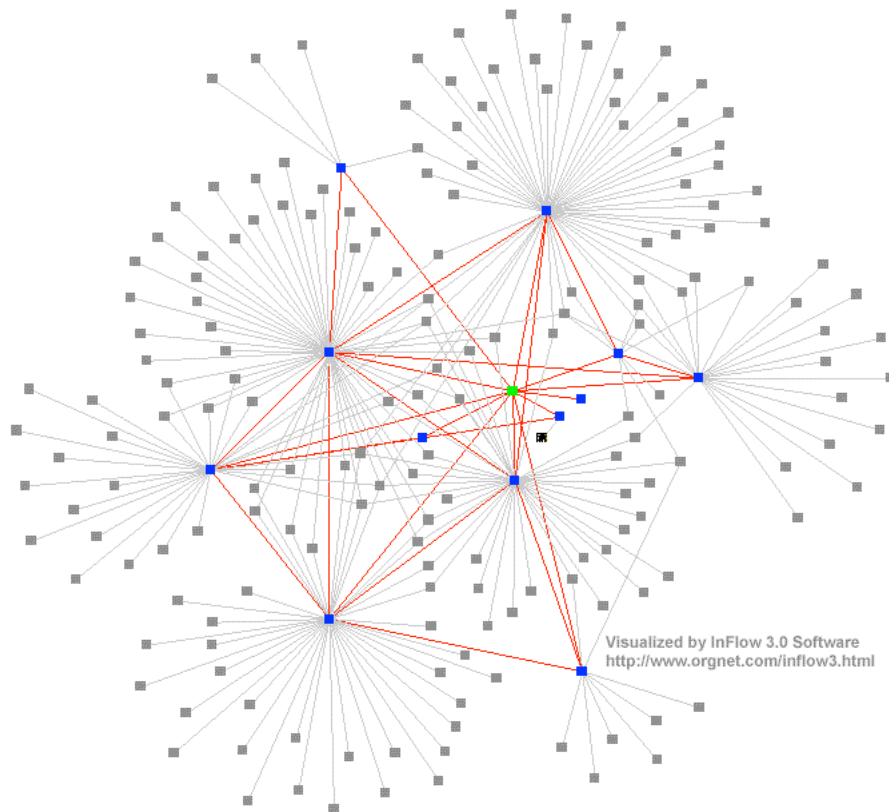


Fig.10. [online image] <http://www.orgnet.com/inflow3.html> [accessed 23.4.2008]

In this visual representation of a computer network (fig.10), there is a clear resemblance to the Ortas' plate design (fig.9), where individual nodes are connected, each one linked by a line to another. Connectivity is the crux of context-led process. Being-in-relationship with, and at the same time reflecting on the relational threads particular to a place or situation informs and generates an opening out – an outcome. Each site (situation or place) is unique, from lightships to new builds, from shops to radio stations, from 'places' of intimacy, work or landscape to 'sites' of distribution and collective authorship. *Where are we? what are the relations here? What are the connections, the possibility for an opening out?* For instance, a commission to produce work for an interactive CD Rom project<sup>2</sup> in 1993 led me to discovering that the term 'interactive' (re: computers) described the function of being able to move between two programmes that were open at the same time. This informed the work *point and click* (fig.11) leading to an opening out (outcome) that explored the photographic family album as a generic form, and site of personal emotive histories, via interface (connective) navigation led by evocative computer terms such as *memory* and *interaction*.

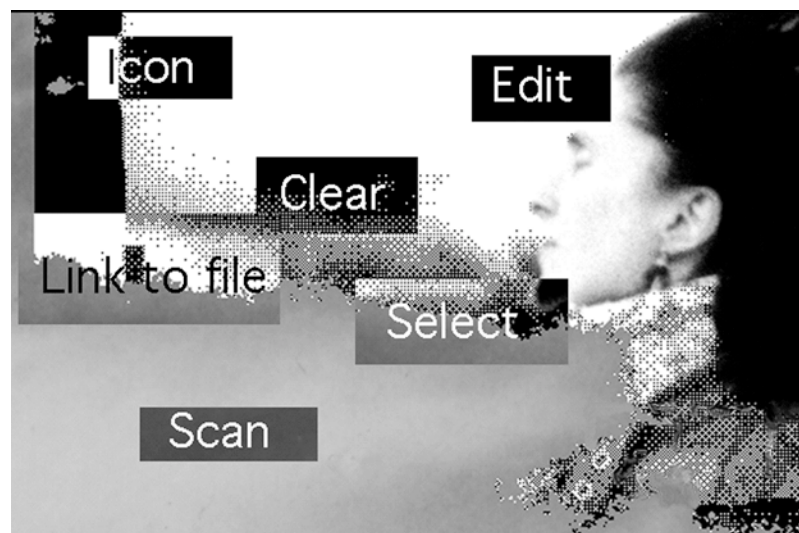


Fig 11. Annie Lovejoy. *point and click*. Interface design 1994

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<sup>2</sup> The interactive work *point & click* was included in *Do not Enter - New Voices, New Visions*. CD Rom published by Voyager, New York 1994; and also *From Silver to Silicon*. CD Rom commissioned by Watershed Media Centre/ Artec, Bristol / London. 1996.

Another connective concept is illustrated by *stirring@the international festival of the sea* (fig.12), an intervention that involved the production of 40,000 sugar packets, for distribution during the International Festival of the Sea, Bristol 1998. This project was described by cultural theorist Martin Lister 'as an idea that *connects* history with the present by turning a familiar commodity into a symbol' (*stirring* postcard text 1996, my emphasis).



Fig.12. Annie Lovejoy. *stirring@the international festival of the sea*. Bristol 1996

On Lovejoy's sugar packets - which were found and used by visitors in the cafés within the festival site - Bristol was located within these circuits of sugar, tobacco, cocoa, tea, spices, rum, slaves and sugar. She also produced a postcard which mapped the sites where the sugar packets were available on to the plan of the Festival and so made this dockside geography speak of the overlooked but central issue of oppression within Bristol's history of imperial and commercial success. (Graham & Nash, 2000:34)

The connective processes and outcomes of my practice range across disparate media; from interactive content for CD Rom and locative media/wearable technologies to organic forms derived from plant material or planted in the landscape; and generated through transdisciplinary processes that are often collaborative, participatory, co-operative or collective.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Please see my online archive of projects at <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

If the true artist is connected, then he or she has much to give us because it is connection that we seek. Connection to the past, to one another, to the physical world, still compelling despite the ravages of technology. A picture, a book, a piece of music, can remind me of feelings, thinkings, I did not even know I had forgot. Whether art tunnels deep under our consciousness or whether it causes out of its own invention, reciprocal inventions we then call memory, I do not know. I do know that the process of art is a series of jolts, or perhaps I mean volts, for art is an extraordinarily faithful transmitter. Our job is to keep our receiving equipment in order. (Winterson, 1996:13)



Fig.13. Annie Lovejoy. *where r u?* Here nor There event. Dialogue, Bristol 2003<sup>4</sup>

Anthropologist Tim Ingold provides an articulation of context-led processes that previously I had only intuited. Demonstrating the difference between structured nodal interaction and organic complexity, Ingold presents a deeply relational vision

<sup>4</sup> *where r u?* - on a boat you could be aboard the Tower Belle on July 13th 2003 experiencing a space of the imagination between cultures & locations. A vibrant multicultural localised mix of performance, poetry & music. An audio visual experience between one place...and another, aboard the Tower Belle to Beese's Tea Gardens on Sunday, July 13th at 6:30 pm, 2003.

*where r u?* - on a network you could be a thousand miles away knowing that your message will be launched at sunset from the banks of the River Avon. Possibly to be discovered by someone, somewhere. (Project text. 2003) available from <http://www.herenorthere.org/dialogue/index.htm>

of our 'lifeworld' through suggesting that 'what we have been accustomed to calling 'the environment' might be better envisaged as a domain of entanglement' (2006.14). Rather than envisaging relations as interconnected individual nodes, he starts with the idea of a trail, depicted as a line with an arrow, to represent the movement of growth. Every such 'trail' he proposes,

traces a relation. But the relation is not between one thing and another – between organism, 'here' and the environment 'there'. It is rather a trail *along* which life is lived: one strand in a tissue of trails that together make up the tissue of the lifeworld. That texture is what I mean when I speak of organisms being constituted within a relational field. It is a field not of interconnected points but of interwoven lines, not a network but a *meshwork*. (Ingold, 2006:13)



vital

*adj.* of, concerned with, or essential to organic life

a limited edition 'notebook' of artworks that involve or reference ecological and environmental concerns

© annie lovejoy 2001

Fig.14. Annie Lovejoy. *vital*, title page of notebook. 2001

The book cover image *vital* (fig. 14) produced in 2001, is illustrative of Ingold's



*meshwork*, as is 'comfort' (fig. 15) produced in 1998 as part of the exhibition *return*.<sup>5</sup>



Fig. 15. Annie Lovejoy. *comfort*. Prema Arts Centre, Glos.1998.

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<sup>5</sup> *Return*, Prema Arts Centre 1998. <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showproject.pl?title=return>  
A site-generated exhibition, referencing the personal and community memory of the death of my child. Situated in a former chapel, this work celebrated 'continuum' and honoured the process of grieving. *return is a glimpse, the movement is cyclic, nature completes itself*. 'The show could be sentimental & self-indulgent. In fact it is anything but. The work is entrancing and typical of the way Lovejoy marries nature and technology. Her art is varied & what does unite her work is its sense of place, its rootedness - in every sense' (Simon Hattenstone, *The Guardian* 21.4.1998).

This tangle, Ingold suggests, 'is the texture of the world. In the animic ontology, beings do not simply occupy the world they *inhabit* it, and in so doing – in threading their own paths through the meshwork – they contribute to its ever evolving weave' (2006:14). Ingold's *meshwork* offers a way of thinking about responsive arts practice that is conducive to the relational aspects of a place, site, location or situation. An interconnected conceptual framework of arts practice as a process of 'doing', inclusive of the intuitive, tacit, practical and negotiational aspects. A process that is implicitly philosophical becoming explicit (making visible the invisible), as past 'doings' evolve into current understandings and explorations.

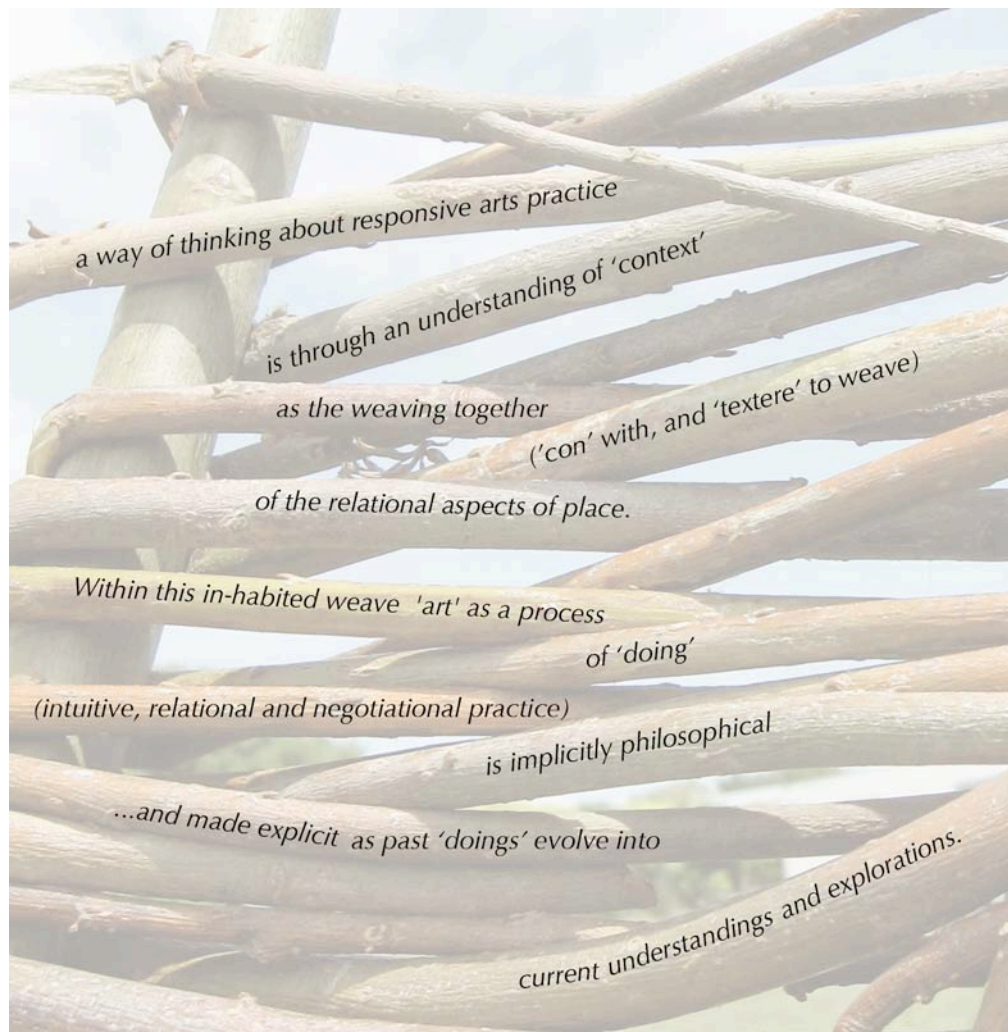


Fig. 16. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

### 3.2. *The Loss of Mystery*: a work by John Newling

The artist John Newling provides an example of a deeply reflexive approach to the 'ever evolving weave' (Ingold, 2006:14) of *inhabited* site-responsive practice. His texts eloquently address notions of site, place and his venturing into new work as a liminal space, a twilight zone, a place of uncertainty, of dreams and knowledges, a threshold.

When I cross the threshold of a place that might house a project, I am aware of a transition of thinking. The relationship between the threshold and what the space could hold is undetermined, open and ambiguous. There is a sense of entering a place that will open the way to something new. The event can be disorientating, it is to experience liminality that is, for me, a constituent of making projects. (Newling, 2007: 38)

Newling's work starts with research resulting in an essay or text. For the *Loss of Mystery* project at Preston Market he returned to his previous writing *Transactions and Agreements* that outlines the effects of regeneration on communities, including the loss of local shops and the familiar transactions that were part of our lives.



Fig. 17. John Newling. *Loss of Mystery* stall. Event 1. Preston Market. 2006.

As a starting event for the *Loss of Mystery* project in Preston market place, Newling established an insurance stall (fig.17), explaining that 'in a society that has

profoundly moved towards the audit of our activities the market place seems a fine context to sell insurance against loss of mystery' (Newling, 2006: unpaginated). Contributions of mysteries were exchanged for an insurance certificate (fig.18).

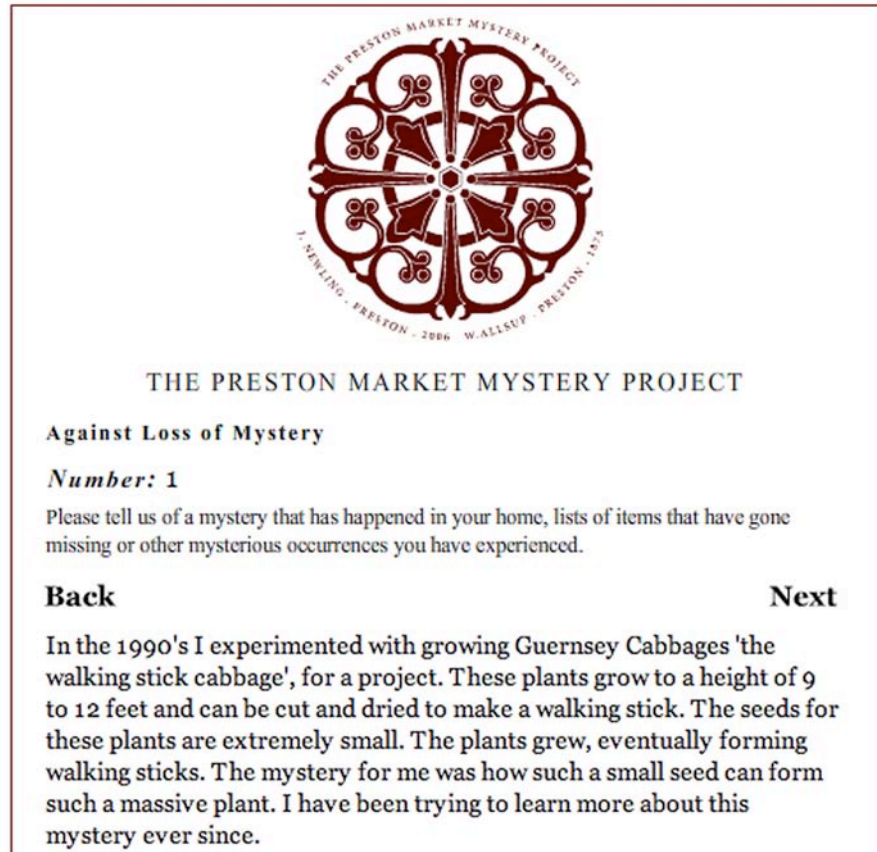


Fig. 18. John Newling. *Loss of Mystery*. Insurance Certificate. 2006.

The follow-on event, *Voicing Mysteries*, took place in the twilight (liminal) space of the closed market. Newling stood behind a bespoke gilded lectern and read aloud each of the 280 mysteries that had been contributed to the insurance stall, at designated points along the central axis of the market place (fig.19). Amplified, these mysteries suffused the surrounding space of the market and beyond.



Fig. 19. John Newling. *Voicing Mysteries*. Preston Market. 2007

A few days later, he held a banquet for the people who had donated mysteries to his stall. *The Mysteries Meal* took place at the end of another busy day of transactions at Preston Market. The stalls had been stacked away and the preparations for a meal began. The table was clad in white linen and laid, the food was prepared and cooked on site for the invited guests (figs. 20, 21)

This was more than spectacle, it was the hospitable and convivial sharing of food with people that had contributed personal insights to the project, previously revealed on the same site. Newling explained that the *Mysteries Meal* 'sought to engage in conversations that view new knowledge through the prior events. In this manner it is 'knowledge' gained as a post liminal event' (Newling, 2007: unpaginated).

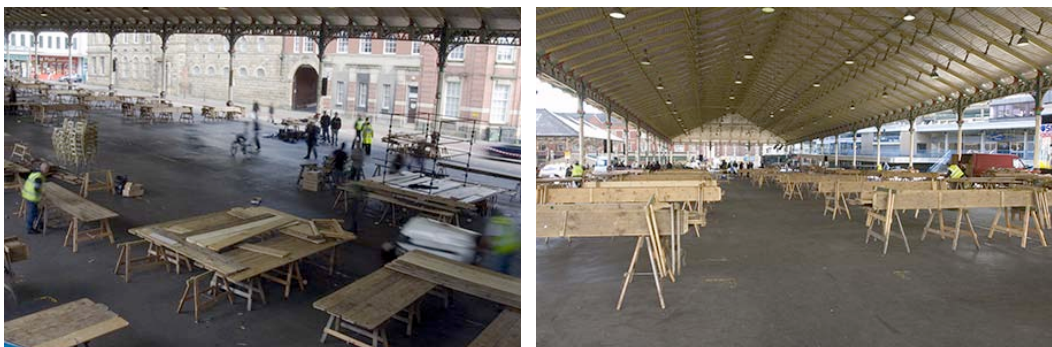


Fig. 20. John Newling. *Mysteries Meal*. Preston Market. 2007



Fig. 21. John Newling. *Mysteries Meal*. Preston Market. 2007

Applying Ingold's 'animic ontology' to this meal project and the one produced by Jorge and Lucy Orta, reveals parallels in that they both involve structure as a vehicle for the work; yet the subtle difference is that Newling *inhabits* the space and lingers on the threshold of uncertainty as he attends his stall, awaiting contributions from the passing crowd. These contributions become the dynamics of the work, the unveiling of hidden secrets and personal histories. He then presents these back to people already involved in the process. Through drawing uncertainties into an explicit shared arena, he invites new understandings within which the project can unfold. He sees this work as having a duration of several years, and due to the depth of his process writings we can understand the work as an evolving field of relations 'of interwoven lines, not a network but a *meshwork*' (2006:13).

### 3.3. Of flowers and temporality<sup>6</sup>

This deeply relational approach is also evident in *Rite van de Lente* by Jyll Bradley, located at Tremenheere Sculpture Gardens, a rural environment and former flower

<sup>6</sup> This text on Jyll Bradley's work is an excerpt from *of flowers and temporality* a critique of two public artworks created in 2006 by different artists in different locations – each of these works were concerned with investigations into the commercial cut flower industry. Whilst the materials and issues that inform these works are similar, the context and processes of engagement are significantly different; on the one hand exemplifying a staged spectacle applied to a place and on the other a responsive outcome that is emergent of a place. The full text is available at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/research/wp-content/media/of-flowers-w.pdf>

farm near Penzance in 2006. This work was part of Bradley's ongoing investigation into the commercial cut flower industry and was created in response to Cornwall's heritage of cut flower growing and the demise of the flower train that once transported cut flowers to urban markets. Local trade has become pressurised by imports from the global flower market, low aviation costs and high local diesel prices. *Rite van de Lente* took place over the May 1<sup>st</sup> weekend and involved the decoration of a transit van with garlands of local flowers provided by farmer Stuart Smith. The use of a transit van facing east to St Michael's Mount echoes Bradley's concerns with ancient and contemporary narratives of rites, exchange and pilgrimage. She subtly draws attention to the migration of people past and present through pilgrimage or work – such as the influx of Polish workers on contemporary flower farms.



Fig. 22. Jyll Bradley *Flower Train*. 2010

Following the garlands' transient display, the van was undressed and donated to the local flower farmer who had supported her work. Bradley has revealed past and present narratives of real experience in this work, which is both generous to, and supportive of, those trying to earn their livelihood in a global economy that mitigates against their endeavours (she also invited local growers to sell their flowers alongside the artwork). She has since produced a series of posters *Flower Train*, in 2010 presented on railway station platforms between Penzance and Paddington, the route that once took Cornish flowers to London Markets (fig.22).

The projects that I have drawn on are by no means exclusive or fixed in the sense of prescribing the processes that generate artworks in response to context, and it should be noted that I am informed of them through their representation, which can risk obscuring essential processes.

As previously mentioned, such processes are often transdisciplinary, in that they share experiential insight and knowledge with people from varied walks of life distinct from *inter-disciplinary* which is understood here as involving a particular dialogue between recognised fields of pure research and professional expertise. As Newling comments:

This slippage or change of border is useful in gaining knowledge about the discipline itself [...] It is a process that governs the generation of new understanding'. (Newling, 2007:43)

Similarly, Jane Rendell, dissatisfied with architectural criticism, observes the potential of moving outside of the discipline within which one is located to allow the possibility of finding a 'place from which to reflect upon its mechanisms of operation, before returning to suggest new modes of enquiry' (Rendell, 2005:4).



These possibilities exist in the everyday, as evidenced in Newling's essay on space, place and the effects of regeneration on local communities, *Transactions and Agreements*, where he thanks the following:

The person who stopped me on the street and asked if I could help them collect data, when asked what the data was for, they replied 'evidence'.

The person who told me they'd been put 'at risk' with regard to their job.

The person I heard bestowing praise on product by announcing it was 'an ethical' brand.

The person in the shopping centre who, in a heated exchange, kept saying 'I just want you to be happy'.

The person who listed for me all the local shops on their high street and then added that most of them were gone. (Newling 2007:36)

These encounters reveal how place is both the context for practice and a product of practice (Cresswell, 2004) – a centre of meaning through experience. The meanings that accumulate around Treloan caravan and camping site as the base of the fieldwork project, *caravanserai* are linked to its role as a tourist destination. A brief discussion of place, art and tourism follows in relation to responding to the complexities of the place within which the project is embedded.

#### 3.4. **Place, art and tourism:** where r u?

Treloan is situated on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall, UK on land that is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, 'the designation reflects the need for integrated action to conserve the landscape through sustainable development'.<sup>7</sup> The geographer, John Urry makes a distinction between the

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<sup>7</sup> 'The purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. The designation gives a formal recognition to an area's landscape importance and allows for the development of communities and economic activity. However development is only permitted in ways that enhance the landscape character of the AONB.' <http://www.cornwall-aonb.gov.uk/whatisaonb.html> [accessed 4.7.10]

practice of *landscape* as entailing 'an intangible resource whose definitive feature is a place's appearance or look' and *land* as 'the practice of land' understood through experiences, memories and histories of working the land. He notes that,

in a pattern of life where productive and unproductive activities resonate with each other and with very particular tracts of land...there is a lack of distance between people and things. Emotions are intimately tied into place. (Urry in Davidson, Bondi and Smith 2005: 77)

The objectification (and therefore distancing) of land as landscape was aided through its representation. A 'visual consumption of place' became popularised by technological advancement and travel – emphasis on leisure and relaxation created a 'specialised visual sense' of the land 'through a variety of novel technologies' and pastimes – 'camera obscuras, the claude glass, guidebooks, the widespread knowledge of routes, the art of sketching, the balcony, photography and so on' (Urry in Davidson, Bondi and Smith 2005: 77). This 'language of views' he suggests,

prescribed a particular visual structure to the emotional experience of place. Land gave way to landscape [...] As Miss Bartlett paradigmatically, declares in *A Room with A View*: 'A view? Oh a view! How delightful a view is!' (Urry in Davidson, Bondi and Smith 2005: 77)

Urry notes that Wordsworth captures this distinction between land and landscape as 'distinct forms of belongingness' (the comings and goings of the visited and the visitors – on the one hand the visited working the land, and on the other, the movements of visitors viewing the landscape. By 1844 Wordsworth had noted that 'the idea of landscape was a recent development' (Urry in Davidson, Bondi and Smith 2005: 77). Prior to this, his concern for the preservation of land practices and the everyday experience of working with the land and the weather, is apparent in a letter to Charles Fox, the leader of the opposition:

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Their little tract of land serves as a kind of permanent rallying point for their domestic feelings, as a tablet upon which they are written which makes them objects of memory in a thousand instances when they would otherwise be forgotten [...] This class of men is rapidly disappearing. You, sir, have a consciousness, upon which every good man will congratulate you, that the whole of your public conduct has, in one way or other, been directed to the preservation of this class of men, and those who hold similar situations. (Wordsworth 1838: 373)

Tourism thrives on consumable visualisations of landscape, the quest for the ideal room with a view - the promise of 'a solitudinous, personal, semi-spiritual relationship with place' (Urry in Davidson, Bondi and Smith 2005: 78). Added to this is the growth of cultural tourism where place is marketed through the arts – the romance of an author's novel or their immersive experience in a particular place, for example, Du Maurier's *Frenchman's Creek* and Dylan Thomas's *Laugharne*.

*April 1 2008: there's an elderly couple here from Germany, in a VW van. They're travelling the UK through the eyes of authors, Thomas Hardy's Somerset, Emily Bronte's Yorkshire and ...Daphne Du Maurier's Cornwall. He's reading Rosamunde Pilcher's 'Shell Seekers' in English and she's reading Du Maurier in German - and the books have got the same cover – a white cottage with pink roses round the door against a blue sky. (Author's journal).*



Fig. 23. Annie Lovejoy. *Cultural Tourism*. 2010<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This image was initially created for my journal in response to the closing session of *The Falmouth Convention*, <http://www.annielovejoy.net/research/?p=607> It also accompanied my invited response to the conference to The Falmouth Convention website <http://www.thefalmouthconvention.com/responses> [accessed 2.10.10], also available at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/research/?p=757>

Ironically, given his plea for the preservation of practices of land mentioned earlier, Wordsworth's 'host of golden daffodils' was the focus of an extraordinary action at a holiday park in 2007 when gardeners planted beds full of plastic and silk fakes to please visitors. The usually reliable, commodified attraction of daffodils failed in spring due to an unusually mild winter that had caused the flowers to bloom and fade long before the Easter break.



Fig. 24. (online image) <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-442483/Daffodils-inspired-Wordsworth-replaced-fake-plastic-flowers.html#ixzz1DGol8fJP> [accessed 8.1.2009]

Caroline Guffogg, the caravan park spokeswoman is reported to have said 'they look realistic and none of our visitors, or the ducks and swans, have noticed the difference' (BBC News online, 2007: unpaginated). This anthropocentric position reveals a disconnection with the land and the changes in the weather (practices of place). 'What next?' asks Rob Hopkins, co-founder of the Transition Culture network,

perhaps we should cover Mount Fuji with thousands of tons of fake snow just to keep the tourists happy. We could make some enormous plastic icebergs

and tow them to the North Pole so we can pretend the real ones aren't melting. (Hopkins, 2007: unpaginated)

The latter idea is reminiscent of a 2012 Cultural Olympiad project *Nowhere Island* 'a sculpture by Alex Hartley formed from an Arctic island' that will journey around the south west region of England, stopping at ports and harbours as a visiting 'island nation' (Hartley, 2011: unpaginated):

The transportation of this piece of virgin land is intended to create an artwork of epic proportions which will inspire discussion around key questions of national identity, climate change, land-grab and the exploitation of natural resources as well as the romantic associations of an island landscape. This is an artwork that celebrates the pioneer and the explorer, a model of both the individual and the team striving and achieving something impossible. *Nowhereisland* provides both an inclusive and challenging opportunity for all to engage with the 2012 Cultural Olympiad, embodying a uniquely ambitious vision of the local, national and global. (Hartley in Baroona, 2009: unpaginated)

The work emerges from Hartley's 2005/6 Cape Farewell<sup>9</sup> expedition, where he discovered an island revealed by the melting ice 'of a retreating glacier in the High Arctic archipelago of Svalbard' (Hartley, 2011: unpaginated).

This 'ambitious' project is to excavate a chunk of land from its place on the planet and tour it around the UK as an artwork, declaring it to be a new country with all the legislation needed to make it so. Branded as a new 'micronation' with celebrity 'pioneer citizens' in place, people are encouraged to sign up for citizenship via the website and have a say in how the new nation is run. The idea is to stimulate the popular imagination and remind us we can make a new place somewhere *out there*, unaffected by real-world issues, divisions, climate change, greed and land grabbing.

The online architecture forum Arknet discusses the work on their website where

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<sup>9</sup> Cape Farewell is a project led by David Buckland to instigate a cultural response to climate change, taking 'leading artists, writers, scientists, educators and media for a series of expeditions to hot spots of climate change.' <http://www.capefarewell.com> [accessed 8.1.11].

comments are posted that question the environmental aspect of the work. One contributor suggests 'that the process of such a mission would defeat its purpose, at least in terms of global warming activism' (comment in response to Baroona, 2009: unpaginated). Hartley's intention 'to create an artwork of epic proportions that inspires discussion around key questions of national identity, climate change, land-grab and the exploitation of natural resources' (Hartley in Baroona, 2009: unpaginated) that actually involves land-grabbing excavation of natural resources suggests an affirmation of 'Victor Burgin's statement that art itself could be considered a form of ecological pollution' (Hannah, 2009: 5), and as Kester notes,

We often associate the figure of the artist with a heightened sensitivity to the natural world, but intimacy does not always imply care, and the artist's brush can as easily resemble a dissecting scalpel as it can a lover's caress. The act of speech, of expression, is driven by the imperative to assert the prerogatives of self over a resistant substance. It exists within an extractive economy which all too often views the natural world as a resource rather than an interlocutor. (Kester, 2005:2)

Significant to these discussions on place, art and tourism are the writings of Lucy Lippard such as *On the Beaten Track* and *The Lure of the Local; Senses of Place In a Multicentered Society*. For Lippard, emphasis on the plural in the title of the latter, is crucial, as she explains:

No matter how long or short a time we live in a place we inherit the responsibility for knowing about it, valuing it, working to keep it viable, and illuminating our dynamic cultural spaces and their underlying, often invisible meanings and uses — for those who don't [...] The book title's plural — senses of place — is crucial, since we each have our own places within shared places. And the made-up word "multicentered" reminds us how uprooted our societies are and simultaneously insists that we can put down shallow but tough roots wherever we find ourselves. In fact it's downright dangerous not to do so — both personally and generally — for places, for other people, other life, and for a planet in the grip of climate chaos. (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated)

Lippard's 'place ethic' demands a respect for a place that is rooted more deeply than an 'aesthetic version of "the tourist gaze" provided by imported artists whose real concerns lie elsewhere or back at their studios' (Lippard, 1997: 278).

Lippard's extensive writing on place, arts and tourism is compelling: over a decade ago she was foregrounding responsive processes and the leap of imagination needed to "shift our thinking away from bringing *great art* to the people, to working with people to create a work that is meaningful" (Sowder, L. in Lippard 1997: 290). This need was demonstrated clearly during the fieldwork project *caravanserai*, when having received some funding in 2009 from FEAST (Cornwall Council and Arts Council England) we were required to use the following strap-line on all of our publicity '*FEAST is a new programme to make great art happen in Cornish villages and towns*'. My concern here, was that if we were to include this statement on the local notice board, in flyers or in the press as requested, it would hamper our project – the idea of making 'great art happen' suggests there is none there already - a patronising view that could override the emergent, relational processes of the projects development.

*May 7, 2009. A writer who lives in the village was here today & I asked her what she thought about using the FEAST publicity strap-line locally... "a bit patronising" she said "also people may feel that they're part of something without having been asked - it's better not to label the project as it might put people off." I think it would be perfectly understandable to be reluctant about getting involved in a project that presents itself as 'making great art happen' in the locality (as though nothing happens there already!) the statement could be read as suggesting that 'Cornish villages and towns' are in need of a cultural fix. For cultural workers this institutional targeted language is the norm but the application of such statements in a local context needs more to be met with suspicion (authors journal).*

Lippard also mentions the possibility that future 'public art' may no longer exist and that its successor 'might or might not be called art' (1997: 290). This is a view that I share and one that calls for resisting definitions that limit my actions. Reminiscent of

Kelly's 'logic of refusal' mentioned earlier, this proposition necessitates working with 'the paradox that in order to defend something you might also need to displace it' (Kelly, 2001:5). Although this perspective may risk invisibility & marginality in the art world, working on a project without the 'art' label allows for experiential encounters to generate meanings within the meshwork of lifeworld relations. In this situation the artist is 'no longer the primary agent responsible for the artwork but must engage with others' and 'the artwork' becomes 'less a 'work' than a process of meaning-making interactions (Kaprow in Lacy, eds, 1995:158).

Rob Hopkins, co founder of the Transition Network, offers a creative alternative to the planting of fake daffodils in the 'Wordsworth country' caravan park:

rather than planting plastic daffodils, they could have planted edible forest gardens, walnut trees, alpine strawberries, made the caravan park an off-the-grid resort, and told their visitors why they are doing it all. This would have far more effectively turned a problem into a solution. Beware the plastic daffodils of the mind... (Hopkins, 2007: unpaginated)

### **Summary:**

In this chapter I have expanded on the previous one, where the problems of art-field designations were discussed, in order to outline the difference between structured strategies of 'relational art' and the relational processes of responding to context. Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics' is discussed as a closed-circuit interaction that produces a temporary community of common interest. Through narrative and philosophical discussions of artwork, this nodal connectivity or *network* is compared to Ingold's *meshwork* – an entanglement of emergent relational threads. This philosophy has led to a critical reflection on projects in which *place*, *arts* and *tourism* are central themes.



The fieldwork project *caravanserai* situated within a popular tourist destination, draws on these philosophies and practices to inform and enable a place-ethical work to emerge at Treloan.<sup>10</sup>

Earlier in the thesis I referred to the constraints of the Barton Hill project prompting the direction of my research.<sup>11</sup> The experience highlighted the need for a conceptual framework or philosophy of practice that was appropriate to the complexities and fluidity of context (site / situation or place). This would be productive in establishing an informed understanding of the responsive and relational processes that generate context-led outcomes. Revealing the value of such processes might inspire trust in the integrity of a context-led approach, thereby encouraging fruitful conditions for all involved in the production of meaningful outcomes. As Hall observed in her evaluation of the Barton Hill experience:

Developing artwork in response to a particular place or context with people whom the work will affect demands a flexibility that relies upon a belief in the value of such processes and a consequential commitment to their involvement. (Lovejoy, Hall & Dunlop, 2008 unpaginated)

The next chapter outlines the development of a conceptual framework toward the production of new work. The iterative processes that underpin the methodology are practice-led – all of the ‘cues for a work’s development’ arise from context (Irwin in Stiles and Selz, 1996: 572). Following on from the experience of Barton Hill, where the integrity of the artwork was compromised, I propose that a prescriptive methodology, model or recipe is not conducive to context-led arts practice. In consideration of *how a context-led approach might be described without becoming a ‘model’ of practice focused on medium, style or genre*, I offer a brief overview of

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<sup>10</sup> Treloan is a caravan and camping site on the Roseland peninsular in Cornwall.  
<http://www.treloancoastalolidays.co.uk>

<sup>11</sup> The Barton Hill project is discussed in chapter one (p.22) and appendix A

models of practice / arts field designations to clarify my rationale for a responsive approach where procedures and methods emerge in and through the work. Added to this, Lippard's listed criteria for 'an art governed by [a] place-ethics' (1997:286-7) are discussed in relation to a selection of my previous projects. This process, informed by philosophies and practices concerning *art* and *place*, identifies the conditions for enabling a new work to develop; the research fieldwork project *caravanserai* – an exploration of place through context-led arts practice.

The key terms are:

*context* – the uniqueness of any given situation, site or *place*, Massey and Rose describe *place* 'as *meeting place*, the intersection of numerous trajectories of all kinds brought together in physical proximity'. They note that:

This understanding of place [...] sees internal diversity and complexity (rather than coherence) as at the core of the essence of place. And it sees the processes of negotiation of that diversity as part of the character of place. Tradition, here, is something which is continually under construction – the responsibility is therefore not just to 'hang on to it' but to build it. This is *place as practiced*. (Massey and Rose, 2003:4)

*integrity* – responsibility to the sensibilities of context-led practice, to the experiences, encounters and processes that generate ideas toward outcomes that are relevant to a particular place.

*connectivity* - the crux of context-led process, being-in-relationship with and at the same time, reflecting on, the relational threads particular to a place or situation that inform and generate an opening out, an outcome.

#### 4. Preparing the ground – a practice-led methodology.

The element of place is literally *basic*<sup>1</sup>

Here are paths, offered like an open hand, towards a new way of being in the world. At a time when the multiple alienations of modern society threaten our sense of belonging the importance of 'place' to creative possibility in life and art cannot be underestimated.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter outlines the rationale for a philosophy of practice that is responsive to the complexities of context rather than an operative model that applies strategies to a context (4.1), and the iterative processes of my practice-led emergent methodology – developing *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework through context-led practice (4.2).

A selection of my previous context-led projects are revisited in light of Lippard's 'art governed by [a] place ethic' (1997:286-7). This is followed by a summary of methods used to guide the initiation, delivery, dissemination and evaluation of the fieldwork project *caravanserai*.

##### 4.1. Rationale for a responsive approach:

So far we have seen how the research has evolved from the constraints of a public art commission that prompted the question *what might be entailed in producing context-led outcomes that have uncompromised integrity?* This led to a discussion on how art designations such as 'socially engaged' and 'relational art', that categorise the socio-spatial processes involved in a context-led approach, can compromise integrity and foreclose a work's potential. This commodification of

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<sup>1</sup> Lippard (1997: 286, emphasis in original).

<sup>2</sup> From the cover of *Towards Re-Enchantment; Place and its Meanings*: (Evans, G and Robson, D. 2010). An anthology of essays and poems 'reflecting on the meaning of 're-enchantment', in reference to an actual, particular place or region as they see it.' <http://www.artevents.info/projects/current/the-re-enchantment/towards-re-enchantment> [accessed 10.12.10]

process was explored through a discussion of how reductive art-historical and contemporary critique and iconic representation isolates artwork from the contextual relations of its emergence.

This *dis-placement* calls for an integrative approach in the development of a conceptual framework that resolves *how a context-led approach might be described without becoming a 'model' of practice focused on medium, style or genre*. As

Gablik notes:

To transcend the modernist, vision-centred paradigm and its spectatorial epistemology, we need a reframing process that makes sense of this more interactive, intersubjective practice which is emerging. (Gablik in Lacy, 1995: 83)

To further the research project, a methodological approach consistent with the iterative nature of the practice requires 'a reframing process' that moves beyond art categorical limitations. Having recognised the constraints of applying an operative strategy to context-led practice, it would be counter-productive to create a model or recipe as the starting point and testing ground for a new work. As previously mentioned it is not my intention here to discuss arts-field designated models of practice.<sup>3</sup> However, I offer brief introductions to some of these designations in order to clarify why I have chosen to focus on Lippard's place-ethical criteria to develop the conceptual framework – *interfaces of location and memory*.

*Socially Engaged* - is a term emergent of community-based arts practices and seminal texts such as *Mapping the Terrain* edited by Suzanne Lacy in 1995, in which she proposed a *new genre public art*. Lacy articulated collaborative, collective

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<sup>3</sup> These arts field designations are explored and critiqued elsewhere by various authors, critics and doctorate researchers promoting models of practice (Bourriaud, 2002; Bourne, 2007; Bishop, 2004; Cartier, 2003; Charnley, 2011; Hope, 2011; Kester, 2002; Kwon, 2004; Lacy, 1995; Wilshire, 2010).

and connective methods of arts practice through a collation of texts by art critics, curators and artists. 'Socially engaged' is often used by artists and arts workers to describe a practice where social interactions, encounters and collaborations are integral to the development of a project. It has become a benchmark term used by commissioning bodies to meet funding and evaluation criteria for measuring the social impact of the arts. Often linked to the requirements of regeneration initiatives and community based art projects, 'socially engaged' practice is seen as a valuable tool for encouraging cohesive social relations. From a corporate perspective, 'socially engaged' arts practice provides a unique service where creative problem solving and innovation are considered key to successful outcomes. As Gardner points out,

Socially engaged practices are a way of empowering the disempowered and including the excluded, and can achieve radical and remarkable transformations. But they are not quick and easy solutions to long-term problems. The conflicts and contradictions between art and problem solving, the bridging of the gaps between privileged institutions and socially excluded groups, and the need to develop new and appropriate cultural and critical contexts for these practices are just some of the issues that still need to be unpicked. (Gardner, 2008: unpaginated)

*Dialogical Art / Aesthetics* – is a model of arts practice put forward by art historian Grant Kester to describe 'the creative orchestration of dialogical exchange.' He considers projects and social interventions by artists such as Suzanne Lacy, the Austrian collective WochenKlausur and Littoral in the UK. Although these works have different structures and contexts they are described as being centred on the use of conversation to 'imagine beyond the limits of fixed identities, official discourse, and the perceived inevitability of partisan political conflict' (Kester, 2004: 8). This dialogic model presupposes equality of access in terms of participants in a conversation (Charnley, 2011). However, Kester is aware that this is fraught with complexities, being based 'on an exchange between an artist (who is viewed as

creatively, intellectually, financially, and institutionally empowered) and a given subject who is defined *a priori* as in need of empowerment or access to creative / expressive skills' (Kester, 2004: 137).

These arts-field designations – 'socially engaged' and 'dialogical aesthetics' – are interlinked; for instance Kester's 'dialogical aesthetics' is informed by 'new genre public art'. His concern as an art historian is to analyse practices (the intentions and processes of artists explorations) in terms of precedent genres, genealogies and traditional aesthetics (Kant and Greenberg) to establish a 'new aesthetic and theoretical paradigm of the work of art as a process – a locus of discursive exchange and negotiation (Kester, 2004:12).

Whilst these new genres or models of practice highlight important processes and draw attention to the need for reframing limited interpretive arts critique, my concern is that they commodify artists' intentions and processes. From an artist's perspective, terms such as socially engaged or dialogic can imply transformational promise that fuels prescriptive expectations that can foreclose a work's potential, as experienced in the Barton Hill project.<sup>4</sup> Although processes and activities that these models describe are familiar to my practice I invite a slight shift in perspective to understanding them as being *of* (emerging from) a particular context, rather than applied *to* a context. Thereby encouraging 'a belief in the value of such processes and a consequential commitment to their evolvment' (Hall in Lovejoy, Hall & Dunlop, 2008 unpaginated).

*Relational Art / Aesthetics* – this term was briefly discussed in the previous chapter where I outlined the key differences between operative strategies of 'relational art' (Bourriaud, 2002) and the relational processes of responding to context. As

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<sup>4</sup> The Barton Hill project is discussed in chapter one (p.22) and Appendix A.

mentioned, Bourriaud's model is reliant on being framed by the institution and a formal arts historical perspective that has replaced the object with containers for interaction. In response to critics of relational art /aesthetics who see it as 'a watered down form of social critique' he contends that

What these critics overlook is that the content of these artistic proposals has to be judged in a formal way: in relation to art history, and bearing in mind the political values of forms. (Bourriaud, 2002: 82)

Here it is clear that Bourriaud does not wish to engage with the transdisciplinary nature of responsive arts practice, context-led processes and 'the ever-challenging dynamics of communication'. As artist/ researcher Jay Koh points out:

From this, we can deduce that RA [Relational Aesthetics] does not wish to engage with investigations readings and insights from other disciplines such as sociology (communication), anthropology (cultural) and psychology (cognitive), just to name a few, that have contributed a long history of research and engagements, have informed and brought to light the complex nature of social and public interactions, cognitive perceptions, inter personal relationships, and the ever-challenging dynamics of social communication. (Koh, 2010: unpaginated)

Other models promoted within practice-led doctoral arts research include Bourne's 'protocol' (Bourne, 2007) as a means of understanding art at its moment of reception. This draws on Bourriaud's relational aesthetics and the act of provision as a business supply model. Similarly, Wilshire's 'negotiation theory' (Wilshire, 2010) is proposed as an alternative model to dialogic and relational art that applies 'Harvard Negotiation Project's system of principled negotiation to the context of contemporary fine art'. Wilsher sees this as 'demonstrating the application of a new metaphor for the analysis and production of art that operates in relation to the public realm' (Wilsher, 2010: 62). Thus we see operational strategies of arts practice drawn from corporate/business models of service provision, creative problem solving and

negotiation. Meanwhile, artist / curator Sophie Hope recognising the impact that restrictive commissioning and generic policies have on 'socially engaged' artists, presents 'cultural democracy' as a framework for critical practice toward disrupting expected forms of participation and communication (Hope, 2011). Sharing similar concerns about the 'commissioning of art to effect social change', Hope offers a way of thinking that she suggests could be 're-presented as a call to arms; an alternative training manual or a handbook for taking art into everyday' (Hope, 2011:150); whereas my focus is on art *of* the everyday – context-led.

Arts-field designations that have site/place/location as the point of reference (in the terminology) are also used to describe operational practices such as Cartier's proposition of 'place-specificity' (2003) as an extended model of 'new genre public art'. She explores 'how artists *use* [my emphasis] place as a means of connecting to specific locations and audiences' (Cartier, 2003: unpaginated).

*Site-specific* – Jeff Kelly points out that site-specificity often refers more to the 'precision fitting of disembodied modernist objects into dislocated museum spaces than to an acknowledgement of the social and cultural contents of a place,' (Kelly in Lacy, 1995: 142). Miwon Kwon's text on site-specific art and locational identity, *One Place After Another*, presents a chronological development of art concerned with site/place (I discuss her critique of Lippard later in this chapter). Surprisingly, Kwon's account does not include artist Robert Irwin's well-known texts on the role of art in society and what he terms as site-conditioned artwork. Irwin contends that the term 'site-specific' is problematic because, as artists, it would be arrogant to assume that we bring nothing in the way of 'personal baggage' to a site. Therefore he suggests, it might be better to say 'site sensitive' or 'site generated'. The site, he points out 'in its absolute particularity dictates to me the possibilities of response' (Irwin, 1982 : 194-5). Irwin categorises approaches to public art as 'site dominant, site adjusted,



site specific and site conditioned / determined'. The latter he refers to as a sculptural response that describes a shift in sensibilities and perception toward a 'phenomenal art'. This notion of phenomenal art he describes as a perceptive quality in that 'what appeared to be a question of object and non object art' now becomes 'a question of seeing or not seeing' in relation to the artist's sensibilities 'to perceive or fail to perceive "things" in their real contexts'.

*Context-led arts practice* – my research proposes context-led arts practice as a responsive approach that is *of* place rather than an operative model applied *to* a place, where the cues for a work's development are drawn from the context itself (Irwin in Stiles and Selz, 1996: 572): that is, the physical and social relational complexities *of* a place, site or situation. Rather than being a media specific or arts categorical *modus operandi* context-led practice is understood here as a *modus vivendi* – a way of life – that involves and explores transdisciplinary processes in response to existing *in situ* relations. A focus on context is a focus on *where things happen* rather than on *a thing that is in the world*. The processes that generate outcomes are often collaborative and concerned with the immediacy of people and place that become apparent through taking time to immerse oneself in a situation and share experiences, knowledge and skills through participatory and reflexive methods. As Foster and Lorimer note:

This responsive method is costly in time and energy, and institutions are habitually discomfited by having little idea in advance of what the finished product will be. (Foster and Lorimer, 2007: 432)

I believe that this habitual discomfort is perpetuated through a lack of understanding of context-led responsive methods. Object-based perspectives and iconoclastic archiving in arts-historical and critical discourse reinforce this problem when artwork is isolated from context, that is the wider social and cultural relations within which it

is produced. Hence my rationale for a methodology that is responsive to the flows, processes and complexities of context-led practice, in order to move beyond the limitations of 'category-driven thinking that retains itself across disciplines' (Crouch, 2011: 2). Here Ingold's *meshwork*<sup>5</sup> offers a philosophical grounding for understanding context ('con' with and 'textere' to weave) as a relational fabric or 'texture';

That texture is what I mean when I speak of organisms being constituted within a relational field. It is a field not of interconnected points but of interwoven lines, not a network but a *meshwork*. (Ingold, 2006:13)

#### 4.1.1 Why Lippard?

In the final chapter of her extensive exploration of place and art *The Lure of the Local*, Lippard 'intended to end with some exemplary models' of practice but realised that every work reproduced in her book was 'a model in its own way' (Lippard, 1997: 286) because it was responsive to a particular context. Lippard's focus on context - where things happen – is a means to think about art, rather than from the perspective of an artistic genre, style or model of practice. For Lippard, a place ethic demands a respect for a place that is deeply rooted, as too much 'art about place' is more 'about art and the place of art than about the actual place where artists and viewers find themselves' (1997: 278). She decides to list criteria for 'an art governed by [a] place ethic' because 'the criteria for art and for public interaction diverge so drastically that the education of public artists and their publics (including their critics) – together – is crucial' (Lippard, 1997: 286). In so doing she recognises that she runs the risk of commodifying artists' processes and intentions

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<sup>5</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter where I used examples of my practice to demonstrate the difference between structured nodal interaction and organic complexity through Ingold's vision of our 'lifeworld' where relations are envisaged 'as a domain of entanglement' (2006.14) – a *meshwork* rather than as interconnected individual nodes – a network.

'by evaluating and prescribing works along the lines that artists never intended'  
(Lippard, 1997: 286).

Lippard's place-ethical approach is not without criticism. Miwon Kwon sees her as advocating a position of 'place-bound identity' that is contrary to one that 'celebrates the nomadic condition' of artists (Kwon, 2004:159). For Kwon, a sense of identity, through being bound to a physical place is nostalgic and 'out of sync with the prevalent description of contemporary life as a network of unanchored flows' (Kwon 2002: 164). This calls to mind Ingold's notion that destination-oriented transport has 'transformed our understanding of place' from a meshwork to a 'node in a static *network* of connectors' (Ingold, 2010: 75). Hence our perception of place as contained and bound is influenced by nodal stopping points, but as Ingold observes,

you cannot enclose the sky, or the birds that fly in it. You cannot enclose the clouds, the wind and the rain, or the water of flowing rivers, all of which are essential to life. You cannot enclose the sun or its light, or the moon, or the stars [...] places are not static nodes but are constituted in movement, through the comings and goings of people and animals. It is a mistake to equate dwelling with rest or stasis. For being at home in the world entails action and perception, and to act and perceive one must move about.  
(Ingold, 2005: 507)

Kwon's reading of Lippard as 'unable to resist the nostalgic impulse [...] conceived as a retrieval and resuscitation of a lost sense of place' (Kwon, 2004:159) reiterates this perception of place being bounded in space and time, as contained and therefore possible to retrieve, which, as Massey points out, is impossible:

For the truth is that you can never simply 'go back', to home or to anywhere else. When you get 'there' the place will have moved on just as you yourself will have changed. And this of course is the point. For to open up 'space' to this kind of imagination means thinking time and space as mutually imbricated. You can't go back in space-time. To think that you can is to deprive others of their ongoing independent stories. [...] You can't hold places still. What you can do is meet up with others, catch up with where

another's history has got to 'now', but where that 'now' (more rigorously that here and now, that hic and nunc) is itself constituted by nothing more than – precisely – that meeting-up (again). (Massey, 2005: 125)

For Kwon to perceive Lippard's notion of place as static and bounded is to misread her extensive writings on art and place where she clearly asserts that 'each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all "local places" consist of' (Lippard, 1997:6). The fact is, that however we conceive of where we are, we are always somewhere – after all, 'to be in the world, to be situated at all, is to be in place' (Casey, E. in Cartier 2003:2).

Notwithstanding her critique of Lippard, she eventually moves beyond the dichotomy of place-bound versus nomadic conditions of artists to contend that today's site-oriented practices inherit the task of addressing the conditions between 'one thing, one person, one thought, one fragment next to another' rather than invoking equivalences via one thing after another' (2004:166). She concludes with 'a theorization of the "wrong place" [...] a speculative concept for imagining a new model of belonging-in-transience' (Kwon 2004:8), saying that:

Only those cultural practices that have this relational sensibility can turn local encounters into long term commitments and transform passing intimacies into indelible, unretractable social marks – so that the sequence of sites that we inhabit in our life's traversal does not become generalised into undifferentiated serialization, one place after another. (Kwon, 2004:166)

This captures the essence of the fieldwork project caravanserai. Further, Kwon's concept of 'belonging-in-transience' echoes Lippard's 'senses of place in a multcentred society' that, as previously mentioned, 'reminds us how uprooted our societies are and simultaneously insists that we can put down shallow but tough roots wherever we find ourselves' (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated).

Lippard's 'art governed by [a] place ethic' (1997: 286) presents a set of criteria suited to the exploration of place through context-led practice in *caravanserai*. As a philosophy of practice that seeks to engage with what is already there it offers the potential for an approach that is integral to the fluidity of place. To expand on this, a selection of my previous projects are revisited in light of Lippard's place-ethical criteria (1997: 286) to identify conditions that enable<sup>6</sup> the development of *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework and starting point for the fieldwork project *caravanserai* - an exploration of a particular place through context-led arts practice.

#### 4.2. **Backwards into the future:** developing a conceptual framework

*interface* – the point of connection between things

*location* – the context, site, place, situation or position of something.

*memory* – experiential, collective, associative, knowledge base, data and archiving

*Interfaces of location and memory*<sup>7</sup> as a conceptual framework, underpins the investigation of my thesis; it is a philosophy of arts practice where all of the 'cues for a work's development' arise from context (Irwin in Stiles and Selz, 1996: 572).

As a concept that I first developed in 2004, before doctoral studies, *interfaces of location and memory* broadly references the interconnected trajectories of context-led practice. Frustrated by the restrictive nature of arts commissioning procedures,<sup>8</sup> I wanted to find a way to convey the intricacies of context-led practice beyond

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<sup>6</sup> Anne Douglas describes herself as 'a maker of enabling conditions' noting that her arts practice has 'undergone a transition from 'maker of objects', artistic practice as an individually authored activity, to 'maker of enabling conditions' through the development of focused art projects/art discourse from a research base <http://www2.rgu.ac.uk/subj/ats/research/staff/douglas.html> [accessed 2.9.10]

<sup>7</sup> The origins of *interfaces of location and memory* as a connective concept are described in chapter one (p.19), the illustrative diagram being the interface of my online portfolio <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

<sup>8</sup> As I have mentioned previously in chapter one: the formats for submitting material for arts selection panels normally require a written statement of practice (or intent), a C.V. and visual documentation (a number of images) – representation more appropriate to studio practice than the socio-spatial processes of context-led projects.

reductive forms of representation. The outcomes of context-led practice are diverse and require an understanding of the wider socio-spatial-political relations of a given situation that lead to their fruition. They can include all manner of media and art-forms (as well as forms not necessarily considered as art<sup>9</sup>). Here boundaries between 'art' and 'life' blur as we experience outcomes that emerge from different places, sites and situations: as networked projects, time-based interventions, social interactions or work inscribed into the fabric of architecture. Added to this are the influences and working processes of people from varied walks of life whose expertise and experiential insights are integral to a work's development and production. My practice is not media specific, outcomes are produced as appropriate to context and have included planted / landworks, various architectural commissions for urban regeneration projects, design (for print and CD Rom, locative media (wearable technologies / GPS context aware applications). To view an extensive range of projects please see <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

Originally conceived of for an archival website,<sup>10</sup> the phrase *interfaces of location and memory* acknowledges the online media technologies that it sits within.

My work is generated through interactions with sites or situations, technological tools are party to this, but not central. I'm currently attempting to articulate a non media specific overview of this approach for a web space. "*Interfaces of location & memory*" is a helpful phrase: *interface* – as a point of connection between things, *location* - the site, situation, context or position of something and *memory* – as experiential, collective, associative, knowledge base, data & archiving. (Lovejoy in Rieser, 2011: 445)

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<sup>9</sup> For instance *stirring @the International Festival of the Sea* – that involved the production and distribution of 40,000 sugar packets in a dockside festival in Bristol, UK., archived online at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/projects.pl>

<sup>10</sup> *Interfaces of location and memory* was awarded Arts Council funding in 2004 for the construction of an online resource that integrated contextual research and project documentation. The idea proposed that hyperlinked dissemination would reveal the wider relational and transdisciplinary aspects of work produced and would promote inclusivity (in terms of art and non-art audiences).

*Interface* is understood here as a point of connection,<sup>11</sup> the moment when something ‘clicks into place’ experientially, where the unremarkable becomes remarkable, the invisible visible, the implicit (*implicare* - meaning entwined or entangled) explicit (unfolded). Here, the interfaces or connective moments are the activities of the fieldwork project and published outcomes that form part of this thesis.



Fig. 25. Annie Lovejoy. *Interfaces of location and memory*. Website interface. 2004 (with handwriting)

*Location* references the positioning (context, site, situation or place) of something and provenance of the connection point – for instance it could be a site of distribution such as a CD Rom as mentioned earlier, or a book cover. I have produced artworks in response to a variety of locations and situations both physical and virtual; from lightships to new builds, from shops to radio stations, from ‘places’ of intimacy, work or landscape to sites of distribution e.g. publications and multiples.<sup>12</sup> In this research project, the context of the fieldwork project *caravansera* is a caravan and camping site on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall, UK.

<sup>11</sup> Interface as a *point* of connection is understood here as being interactive rather than nodal.

<sup>12</sup> A range of these projects are archived at <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

*Memory* meanwhile evokes the intangible and associative sensory perceptions of personal and collective experience as well as the ‘data and insights’<sup>13</sup> involved in the archival representation of context-led processes and outcomes. One of the research objectives here is to creatively reconnect artwork to the context of its emergence.

Memory is also significant in the iterative processes of this practice-led emergent methodology where previous projects are revisited in light of Lippard’s criteria as a means of enabling a new context-led exploration of place. To revisit past projects is to tease out memories of being-in-relationship with the complexities of a particular space-time moment and place, with their myriad interactions, relations and negotiations that nurture a work’s fruition. To engage in this iterative research process is to describe a kind of future archaeology, where the intention is to discover conditions that will enable the unknown to come into being. As Rendell says ‘what does it mean to write of art that is not yet in existence, that at the time of writing is only imagined, to know only of its possibilities?’ (Rendell, 2010: 187).

Lippard’s list of criteria for ‘an art governed by [a] place-ethic’ (1997:286) is proposed by her for educational purpose rather than as an applicable model of arts practice. The qualitative elements that she lists are a useful starting point for me to consider the conditions that have generated my previous successful and meaningful context-led outcomes. Lippard’s qualitative criteria are as follows:

SPECIFIC enough to engage people on the level of their own lived experiences, to say something about the place as it is or was, or could be.

COLLABORATIVE at least to the extent of seeking information, advice and feedback from the community in which the work will be placed.

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<sup>13</sup> A reference to Arlene Raven’s notion that ‘there *is* something that can be added to the experience of artworks - data and insights that will place them in literary, geographical, historical, critical, political, or thematic contexts’ (Raven, 1995:159-60).



GENEROUS and OPEN-ENDED enough to be accessible to a wide variety of people from different classes and cultures, to different interpretations and tastes.

APPEALING enough either visually or emotionally to catch the eye and be memorable.

SIMPLE and FAMILIAR enough, at least on the surface not to confuse or repel potential viewer-participants.

LAYERED, COMPLEX and UNFAMILIAR enough to hold people's attention once they've been attracted, to make them wonder, and to offer deeper experiences and references to those who hang in.

EVOCATIVE enough to make people recall related moments, places and emotions in their own lives.

PROVOCATIVE and CRITICAL enough to make people think about issues beyond the scope of the work, to call into question superficial assumptions about place, its history and its use. (Lippard, 1997: 286 emphasis in original)

The projects revisited were chosen because of their relevance to people and place, or have been referenced within the field of human geography.<sup>14</sup> Through critically reviewing these works and reflecting on the processes that led to their production (detailed in Appendix B), a philosophy of practice emerges that i) identifies the conditions that enabled and informed the work; ii) revealed the relationships in the production; and iii) reflects on the outcomes and possible legacies of these works. This informs the development of *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for the research fieldwork project – *caravanseraï*.

Key to the process is an understanding of terms (mentioned in the previous chapter) that form the basis of my context-led practice:

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<sup>14</sup> *stirring @ the International Festival of the Sea*, Bristol. 1996 This intervention referenced the 'overlooked but central issue of oppression within Bristol's history of imperial and commercial success' (Graham and Nash, 2000:34).

*Return*, Prema Arts Centre 1998. Situated in a former chapel this place-specific exhibition referenced the personal and community memory of the death of my child. Through focussing on natural cycles of growth the work celebrated 'continuum' and honoured the process of grieving. Place memory was marked and made visible as a living memorial, uniting the work 'and it's sense of place, it's rootedness – in every sense' (Hattenstone, 1998:14-15).

*The Purdown Man*, commissioned by Bristol City Council 2000. The work drew attention to the importance of maintaining public rights of way accessible from the inner city of Bristol, that were becoming neglected due to the increasing privatization of public land.

*River Tawe*, Locws International, Swansea 2003, and re-presented at The National Eisteddfod of Wales, Swansea 2006. This project was described as 'lyrical and yet political' (Davies and Hastie, 2003), revealing the industrial histories and present day realities of the Lower Swansea Valley.

*context* – the uniqueness of any given situation, site or *place* ‘as *meeting place*, the intersection of numerous trajectories of all kinds brought together in physical proximity’ (Massey and Rose, 2003:4).

*integrity* – responsibility to the sensibilities of context-led practice, to the experiences, encounters and processes that generate ideas toward outcomes that are relevant to a particular place.

*connectivity* – the crux of context-led process, being-in-relationship with and at the same time, reflecting on the relational threads particular to a place or situation that inform and generate an opening out, an outcome.

The success of the projects detailed in Appendix B can be attributed to: i) the conditions that enable the integrity of the artwork’s development; and ii) the relational connectivity that informs outcome(s) and the experience or point(s) of connection made.

#### 4.2.1 The enabling *conditions*:

Place provides the *conditions* of possibility for creative social practice<sup>15</sup>

##### *i) Immersive experience:*

Crucial to the development of context-led work is the opportunity for involvement and immersive experience in the socio-spatial complexities of a particular place. The projects discussed all entailed getting to know a place through lived experience that engages with the relational *conditions* of a particular context.

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<sup>15</sup> (Cresswell, 2004: 39, my emphasis).

Place, then, is not a physical location nor is it a state of mind. Rather we have characterized it as the *engagement* of the conscious body with the *conditions* of a specific location. (Berleant, 2003: 9 my emphasis)

As such, context-led practice in a specific location begins with some key questions:

- Where are we?
- What are the relations here?
- What are the connections, the possibility for an opening out?

*ii) Time Frame:*

Essential to this responsive process that is informed by the place itself, is a durational commitment, a substantial time frame that allows for immersion in a particular place.

*lii) Support:*

For responsive open-ended processes of practice to generate meaningful outcomes activities need a trusting environment that can support experimentation - through flexibility, generosity, hospitality, invitation and funding.

**4.2.2 Fieldwork:**

Fieldwork in the social sciences describes the collection of data 'in situ', where first-hand information is gathered through observation of a particular place or situation. This is then processed, analysed, interpreted and re-presented in textual accounts or illustrated reports. As an artist experienced in context-led practice, research 'in situ' is a necessary process that informs and generates responsive outcomes. This involves doing more than observation and data collection, it is an active engagement in immersive relational aspects of a particular context toward

purposefully contributing an emergent work. Creative possibility and connective potential are furthered through conversations and interests particular to contextual grass-roots activities and processes. A project gathers momentum through dialogue, shared experience and trust, as Kester points out:

Discourse, and the trust necessary for discursive interaction and identification, grow out of a sustained relationship in time and space, the co-participation in specific material conditions of existence. (Kester, 2004: 5)

Jay Koh<sup>16</sup> refers to fieldwork as grounding the research within first hand experience of the location and site of the research, inclusive of the profound influence 'of the unfolding research direction'. Here critical frameworks of art thinking connected to wider cultural concerns are enacted through connective experiences and performativity that prompts & tests ideas, whilst also triggering discussion and analysis of them. The 'artistic research approach becomes a form of scrutinising, working out and 'acting out' (performance) our ideas and concepts' about practice (Koh, 2010: unpaginated).

**4.2.3 A layered methodology** – for an exploration of place through context led practice:

My practice-led layered methodology is qualitative and reflexive (Schön, 1983) action research as 'a situational process requiring the co-operation of participants in a specific real-world context' (Gray and Malins, 2004: 74). I relate my approach to

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<sup>16</sup> Jay Koh is referenced by Grant Kester as exemplifying a dialogical approach to art making in his text '*Jay Koh and the art of listening*' (Kester, 2002 :102) Jay Koh and Chu Yuan have collaborated since 2000. 'Adopting forms of engagements that are responsive to and inclusive of peoples, cultural behaviors and societal structures, they often place themselves for substantial periods of time within a specific community, and devise site-specific responses to particular communities, whether in form of carrying out public art projects and/or interactive performances; devising social organisational and relational structures; organising activities and/ or informal learning programmes, with the aim of promoting interpersonal engagement, self-organisation and facilitating broader initiatives of those communities.' Available from <http://www.ifima.net/IFIMA/BCI/Collaborative%20and%20Participatory%20AP.htm> [accessed 23.4.2011]

those of other artists (with long term professional experience) such as Jay Koh, the Harrisons and Platform, each of whom, promote durational, dialogical and immersive practice-led methodologies.<sup>17</sup>

The stages of my practice-led methodology (underpinned by *context*, *integrity* and *connectivity*<sup>18</sup>) are described here as not existing in isolation, but as the interconnected iterative processes of informed and reflexive action:

*Research and concept development:*

Exploring the context and establishing the relationships for project development. Immersive research that asks where are we? what are the relationships here? Or, as the Harrisons say, “How big is here?”<sup>19</sup> Laying the foundations of a project, its’ *naming* toward establishing the support and creative intent necessary to fruition. By *naming*, I mean the articulation of a descriptive starting point to generate further support (in-kind, funded, donated, reciprocated and so on). Consolidating the direction of the work and recognizing issues relevant to the site (for instance at Treloan, the social

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<sup>17</sup> Platform describe their methodology as follows:

‘20 years of work, learning from failures as well as successes, have led us to understand our approach in seven stages. This is not to say that we slavishly follow these steps as some kind of formula, or that these steps necessarily follow the sequence outlined below, more that these stages are often key elements in the successful realization of projects. 1.) DREAMING. Approach “reality” in a radically different way. Be fearless about thinking outside what is considered possible. Have visions. 2.) RESEARCHING. Develop an in-depth understanding of the issue being dealt with, through researching and working across disciplines and communities. 3.) SELECTING. Be pragmatic. Choose whatever strategy and medium is most appropriate of to the aim of the work – it might be a water turbine in a river, a newspaper distributed to commuters across London or a discussion on a boat. 4.) FORMING. See the ideas moving into form as a process like sculpture - molding, changing, experimenting. 5.) FEELING Engage with audiences – our “communities of interest” – in the most intense and moving way possible. Move beyond the rational alone. Engage the soul as well as the mind. 6.) CONNECTING Through the work, connect our audiences in London with the wider world; enable individuals to understand their own power and ethical responsibilities. 7.) LOOKING LONG. Work long-term. A commitment to place and people over time. Parachutes are only useful for war, escape, emergency or stunt’ (Platform, 2004: unpaginated).

<sup>18</sup> Key terms of context-led practice (outlined on p.86), re. the development of *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework.

<sup>19</sup> ‘This way of working in any place begins with three questions: **How big is here? How can what’s happening here be understood and engaged? What patterns are forming or reforming? And how can we, and those with us, add to the well being of the now of this place?** And the question, **How big is here?** must also include, **How long is our Now?** Now may also be understood as an instant, but the instant may be 250 years long’ (Harrison, H.M and N. 2004: 3 emphasis in original).

and environmental impact of tourism). Discovering the connective relations that shape a work, alert the antennae, fuel encounters and drive enthusiasm toward an opening out – an outcome.

*Exploration through creative activity:*

Opening up opportunities for engagement, transdisciplinary responses and perspectives, connecting with and working within local situations, relations, knowledges and practices. A ‘connective aesthetics’ (Gablik in Lacy, 1995: 86) that responds creatively to the social and environmental aspects of a specific locale.

*Generating outcomes:*

Creatively distilling documentation and data gathered to author an assemblage of material toward a polyvocal<sup>20</sup> representation of place that reconnects artwork to the context of its emergence.

At every stage of the process, various activities occur or are generated in response to context - actions/interactions, events, group activities, walks, performances, meals and so on.<sup>21</sup> The methods employed are appropriate to the fluidity of place, they present an opportunity for participant observation within what might be termed autoethnographic<sup>22</sup> reflexive research. A methodology of practice that positions the researcher central to, and engaged with social context that is focused as much on

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<sup>20</sup> Here I mean inclusive of many voices - multicentred ‘senses of place’ (Lippard, 1997)

<sup>21</sup> A selection of these activities are discussed in chapters five and six, documented in Appendices C and D; and archived online archive at <http://www.caravanserai.info>

<sup>22</sup> Interaction designer Madeline Balaam mentions that ‘artwork in particular is considered an approach to auto-ethnography that “evokes response from others, inspires imagination, gives pause for new possibilities and meanings, and opens new questions and avenues of inquiry”’ (Ellis in Balaam, 2011: unpaginated).

what is being felt and experienced as well as observing what is seen<sup>23</sup> (Balaam, 2011; Duncan, 2004). From this position of initiating and participating in the work as an artist the research is simultaneously led by reflexive inner dialogue that arises from prior experience, tacit knowledge and contextual prompts. Gablik's writer-friend Gloria Fenam Orenstein refers to this as 'a methodology of the marvelous, [...] the inexplicable, synchronistic processes by which one attracts, as if by magnetism, the next piece of vital information' (Gablik, 1991, 1). Through 'refection in and on action' Schön contends that it's possible to give voice to these innate qualities:

When a practitioner reflects in and on his practice, the possible objects of his reflection are as varied as the kinds of phenomena before him and the systems of knowing-in-practice which he brings to them. He may reflect on the tacit norms and appreciations which underlie a judgement, or on the strategies and theories implicit in a pattern of behaviour. (Schön, 1983: 62)

#### 4.2.4 A multi-method approach:

Contemporary ethnography is no longer a matter of taking good notes and writing them up with abstract theory in mind; it is now a catalytic field of experimentation and reflection, innovation and revelation, transformation and call to action.<sup>24</sup>

Having worked for over two and a half decades on art projects to do with people and place, it is both inspiring and productive to discover a 'catalytic field of experimentation' in the contemporary ethnographies of human geography, anthropology and sociology (Crouch, 2003, 2010; Lorimer, 2005; Ingold, 2006, 2011; Vannini, 2007, 2012; Wylie, 2005). Here, 'discourses of 'geography', principally around space and place, have spread beyond the discipline itself', as Hawkins reflects:

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<sup>23</sup> In chapter five (p.132) I mention the inadequacy of language (or image) for representing a truly poetic inspirational moment quoting from my journal - *June 4- 2010: how is it possible to describe the emotion of sound? not just any sound but the specialness of ...'*

<sup>24</sup> Phillip Vannini, *Public Ethnography and Multimodality: Research from the Book to the Web*. Available from <http://royalroads.academia.edu/PhillipVannini> [accessed 2.2.2013]

Art works here have shifted from being the focus of study to taking up a place as an output in 'practice-led' research. As part of this trend geographers have worked with and as artists, and have developed critical creative writing styles to evoke (rather than simply to describe) the experiences of being in and moving-through landscape (e.g. Cant and Morris 2006; Crouch 2010; De Sivley 2005, 2006; Hawkins and Lovejoy 2009; Lorimer 2006; Merriman and Webster 2009; Wylie 2002a,b, 2005). (Hawkins, 2011: 467)

This move within the social sciences exposes the limitations of static and iconic representation and informs a shift toward multi- vocal / sensory / authored explorations that value the ordinary, the everyday, the relational, the mundane and the unremarkable (consistent with my research concerns and objective to reconnect artwork with the context of its emergence). This 'more-than-representational' approach reframes research as 'creative performative practice' (Lorimer, 2005). My practice-led research employs a multi-method approach generated through lived experience or 'thick participation'<sup>25</sup> – a sustained relationship in time and space (Kester, 2004) that informs a deep mapping<sup>26</sup> via *immersive* and *gathering* methods – walking, encountering, conversing, exploring topographical intimacies, memories, histories, stories and all the while distilling these, as Lorimer describes;

[...] the focus falls on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions. Attention to these kinds of expression, it is contended, offers an escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgement and ultimate representation. In short, so much ordinary action gives no advance notice of what it will

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<sup>25</sup> 'Gerd Spittler describes 'thick participation' as a radicalized form of observation (and development of Participant Observation) as 'It implies apprenticeship and practice, natural conversation and observation, lived experience and sensuous research.' He also points out that 'Because this powerful method is time consuming it is less threatened by its critics than by bureaucratic grant restrictions.' (Spittler, 2001:1) Available from <http://www.jstor.org/discover/10.2307/25842798?uid=3738032&uid=2129&uid=2&uid=70&uid=4&sid=21102419604407> [accessed 3.2.13]

<sup>26</sup> Deep mapping is conceptualised by Michael Shanks and Mike Pearson as being reflective of 'eighteenth century antiquarian approaches to place, which included history, folklore, natural history and hearsay, the deep map attempts to record and represent the grain and patina of place through juxtapositions and interpenetrations of the historical and the contemporary, the political and the poetic, the discursive and the sensual; the conflation of oral testimony, anthology, memoir, biography, natural history and everything you might ever want to say about a place' (Pearson and Shanks, 2001: 64-65).



become. Yet, it still makes critical differences to our experiences of space and place. (Lorimer, 2005: 84)

#### 4.2.5 Methods:

Localities. Specificities. Enactments. Multiplicities. Fractionalities. Goods. Resonances. Gatherings. Forms of craftings. Processes of weaving. Spirals. Vortices. Indefinitenesses. Condensates. Dances. Imaginaries. Passions. Interferences. These are some of the metaphors for imagining method that I have sought to bring to life [...] Metaphors for the stutter and the stop. Metaphors for quiet and more generous versions of method.<sup>27</sup>

The methods listed below are essentially *immersive* and *gathering* processes, they overlap and are intertwined in the iterative nature of the practice-led research.

- *Being there – being in residence*
- *Walking / loitering with intent*
- *Creative activities, events, artwork*
- *Conversation*
- *Journaling*
- *Documentation (photography / video / audio)*
- *Web logs*

The exploration, recording, analysis and representation of place through arts inquiry become inseparable. For instance, assemblages of documentation and journaling become reflexively rearticulated as creative outputs<sup>28</sup> that in turn become the focus of further engagement, conversation, participation and response. This is exemplified by the thesis publication *insites – a notebook*.<sup>29</sup> Produced in 2009 at the mid point of the fieldwork process, *insites* combines creative activities and images of the locality with reflexive journal texts and references from an earlier stage of the research (for example: figs. 30, 31, 64, 66,). These assemblages or combinations are 'loosely

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<sup>27</sup> John Law. *After Method: Mess in social science research* (Law, 2004:156).

<sup>28</sup> This is discussed in further in chapter six (p.145) where I propose *commonplacing* as design concept for the representation of multicentred 'senses of place' (Lippard, 1997) and reconnecting artwork to the context of its emergence.

<sup>29</sup> *Insites – notebook* was produced for the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference in 2009. The book was collaboratively produced with *caravanserai* geographer-in-residence, Dr Harriet Hawkins. Designed as an active object of enquiry, it is an aesthetic and functional reflection on geographical ways of knowing. The book is discussed in more detail in chapter six (p.156).

coupled systems' – a term referenced by sociologist John Law as being more robust than systems that display a single and definite logic (Law, 2004:141). Method he notes 'should not be limited to representation [...] it might be better thought of as crafting, allegory, or gathering' (Law, 2004: 118).

There is need for assemblages that mediate and produce entities that cannot be refracted into words. There is need for procedures which re-entangle the social and the technical. There is need for the coherences (or the noncoherences) of allegory. There is a need for gathering. (Law, 2004: 122)

*Gathering* aptly describes the perceptive and reflexive processes of receiving and distilling information and the knowledge generated, *to gather* means both *to collect* and *to understand* (Griffiths, 2008: 37).

Methods used are described as follows:

*Being there – being in residence:*

Immersive experience by myself and invited others generates the trust and reciprocity necessary to opening up situation to transdisciplinary dialogue and responsive creative outcomes. These residencies inform a multi-centred sense of place through the different perspectives and relationships formed. In turn this feeds the development, production, analysis and dissemination of the project. Concentrated live/work situations generate opportunities for critical dialogue and doings, reflexive analysis and peer review. Through inviting artists, geographers, writers, academics, students and so on, to be in residence, the project becomes part of an expanded network that also extends beyond their physical presence on site.

*Walking / loitering with intent:*

Wandering, loitering with intent, stopping, pausing, getting lost, following maps, walking alone or walking with others is a means of exploring place from cultural, artistic, historical perspectives. Getting to know a place through the feet, the ground, following paths, hunches, clues, encountering others, conversations and stories. This embodied multi-sensory experience of place provides intuitive, reflexive, factual and anecdotal information for project development, production, analysis and dissemination. As well as the old adage of 'taking ones ideas for a walk' – reflexive solitary walking, there are also purposeful participatory walks such as the photographic mapping and collation of local material for the guidebook, or the wild food walks that provide an intimate relationship with the locality through plant identification for food and healing.

### *Creative activities, events, artwork:*

The creative outcomes provide points of connection that evoke responses from others either through participation or discovery. They inspire ideas and imagination, providing possibilities for change that open up new questions and avenues of inquiry. The iterative processes of development, production, outcome and response 'generate trust by meeting with many whose stories and insights often appear in the work, as common ground becomes more apparent' (Harrison, H.M and N. 2004: 2). Thereby providing rich and insightful ethnographic / auto-ethnographic<sup>30</sup> material for reflection and analysis.

### *Conversation:*

As an interrogative method, conversation enables a more fluid approach than the interview, being less intrusive, fixed or authoritative. But it does demand a finely tuned sensibility that is calibrated in accordance with the research inquiry. Having said that, it is also important to allow conversations to wander so that insights might arise that would possibly not be discovered otherwise. Conversation can also be a space of inspiration and collaboration where ideas emerge in an in-between space beyond conscious personal intention. The Harrisons describe their method of working as a 'conversational drift'<sup>31</sup> as it enables 'unanticipated new images and forms of knowledge generated by open-ended dialogue across disciplinary boundaries' (Kester, 2004: 64-65). Conversation is integral to the layered methodology of practice, evidencing participation, response and critical discourse. As Jay Koh points out it opens up further actions and interactions, allowing 'the cultivation of intersubjective meanings for constructive processes' (Koh, 2010: unpaginated).

### *Journaling:*

The written journal is a melting pot of project development, reflection, ideas, and practical memos. Here perceptual, theoretical, and methodological notes are gathered, the journal is a space for thinking through experience and recognizing threads and patterns that aid reflection and analysis. It holds first-hand observational accounts and ideas which can be as simple as a jotted note or sketch – a memory jog, or longer texts on related theories and philosophies of practice. The written journal is extended further toward thesis development in an online version that aids the representation and structuring of data collated (discussed in the section below on *web logs*).

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<sup>30</sup> Artworks can be considered as auto-ethnographic in that they evoke response in others, inspire imagination and open new avenues of inquiry (Ellis in Balaam, 2011: unpaginated). In this sense context-led arts activities become an expanded form of participant observation that includes observing ones self through reflexive critical practice.

<sup>31</sup> The Harrisons employ a method they call 'conversational drift' as follows: 'For instance, the conversation we begin, and often evolve in elaborate ways, can then be more easily adopted by others. Thus it can drift away from us and develop a life of its own. It can also, on occasion, drift back. Conversational drift is a useful way that we have found to describe or, indeed, encourage diverse outcomes for any work. (Dare we say, Chance Operations?) But first of all, it is a way of being non-possessive and sharing authorship quickly and easily. Moreover, the form itself has a certain shape-changing quality that keeps the basic concepts intact in the presence of dismissive forces' (Harrison H.M and N. 2004: unpaginated).

### *Documentation (photography / video / audio)*

To have a camera at hand is second nature to me as an artist and image-maker. Images are the path to the next job, event, activity, project and archiving is a core activity of arts practice, especially when practice takes place in complex real-world situations. I regularly produce images as a means of communication to describe concepts, sketch out ideas and aid journaling and analysis (for example see fig 23). Images act as memory-prompts; catalysts for ideas, they are used to document events and activities. My image archive is a source of material from which to construct assemblages and representations of place, practice and process. Images can often say more than words, their role in making connections and communicating process and outcomes is fundamental to a project's development and ability to connect. Video and audio are also used to record events as an additional aid to archiving and analysis.

### *Web logs*

My first attempt at blogging was for the Barton Hill project and I have continued to use it as a tool for archiving, publicising and disseminating my work; I would recommend its use to any artist engaged in the complexities of context-led practice.<sup>32</sup> Blogging allows for documentation in progress, serving as a useful observational tool conducive to the multi-faceted nature of the project. Blogging tags connections, links material specific to the project and is open to public comment. It serves to publicise and promote a project whilst offering contextual information and links to local initiatives as well as wider cultural networks. Blogging makes process visible to communities of interest e.g. those immediately involved in a project and other lay, professional or academic networks (local, regional, national & international).<sup>33</sup> Producing a web log is a self-taught learning process in digital media, involving aesthetic sensibilities in its design and function as a database.<sup>34</sup> For research purposes I constructed two web logs, one as the public interface of the fieldwork project and the other as a private online journal.<sup>35</sup> The latter generates reflection and analysis through writing up journal notes and linking to relevant media, theories and practices. This was originally set up as a means to make the progress of my thesis transparent to supervisors and invited others, its predominant use is as an efficient multimedia filing system. The ability to hyperlink, tag and categorise chronologically dated posts reveals the iterative nature of the research, generating further analysis through the visible threads/areas that arise.

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<sup>32</sup> The Barton Hill evaluation generated the following responses to whether the project blog had been useful, and if so, how?: "Yes, it's been good. I think it was really ambitious and I was a bit skeptical about it, but I was able to keep track of the project through the website which was nice to be able to do" (project commissioning partner: Kim Tilbrook, RiO. Real Ideas Organisation).

"It provided a public platform to display documentation and feedback from the workshops. It was useful to have a sense of how other elements of the project were developing. It combined the ongoing development of the different parts to provide a wider sense of the whole project" (artist: Hannah Cox).

"The blog has been a really good device... as it has ensured that everyone has had a sense of what is going on and being involved in the process. We often pass on the URL to all sorts of organisations and individuals as a useful reference / example of this way of working" (architects: Jonathan Hines and Tom Mason)' (Hall, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> Appendix C lists linked communities of interest (p.293-294) in an evaluation report produced for FEAST (the arts organisation that awarded funding toward *caravanseraï* activities in 2009).

<sup>34</sup> Exemplifying another form of recursive representation through an assemblage of gatherings.

<sup>35</sup> These are discussed further in relation to *commonplacing* as a connective design concept (chapter six p.161)

Added to the methods described, the instigation, development, production and dissemination of a context-led project involves a complex array of skills garnered through professional experience. These include the ability to work with others in co-operative, collaborative and transdisciplinary situations; and the administrative duties of negotiation, facilitation and practical management. Added to this is expertise in image production, design, publishing and digital media all of which are integral to the fund-raising, concept development, production, publicity, recording, documentation, dissemination and archiving of work produced.

Given my position as researcher and participant in research, I am aware that subjectivity and power relations are ever-present and that acknowledging this is to accept that I am telling a particular story. These instances of the particular (Macdonald, 2009) as mentioned earlier, announce locally different forms of sociability, environmental interactivity and collective storytelling (Carter in Barrett & Bolt, 2007: 18). Instigating context-led participatory situations for research purposes demands self-reflexivity and critical awareness that others are invited to co-operate in project development. There are different levels of participation and project relations all of which affect the work and are implicit in organizing, facilitating, fund-raising, negotiating, hosting, making, viewing, archiving and so on. This is not to say that these roles be defined separately but that they all combine to aid analysis and evaluation through the iterative and recursive processes of critical practice – ‘reflecting in and on action’ (Schön, 1983). My analysis draws on Lippard’s educative proposal for ‘place ethical’ arts practice (1997: 286-7) and presents reasoned accounts informed by practices and theoretical texts concerned with *place* and *process* within the fields of arts, geography and anthropology. These are supported by discussion on the effects of the project and its legacies, local resident and visitor response and peer feedback from hosted artists, writers, geographers,

academics, performers and students as well as through the website, research seminars and conference presentations.

**Summary:**

This chapter has described my practice-led emergent methodology and the rationale for a philosophy of practice that is responsive to the complexities *of* context (rather than an operative model that applies strategies *to* a context).

A brief overview of operative art models or arts-field designations was given in support of the focus on Lippard's educative proposal for 'place ethical' arts practice (1997: 286-7) as a means to evolve the conceptual framework - *interfaces of location and memory*. This discussion is a philosophy of practice that draws on Lippard's criteria to identify conditions that enable 'place ethical' processes and outcomes to emerge through revisiting earlier context-led projects. This practice-led emergent methodology is the enactment of art thinking or 'art thought' as qualitative, reflexive (Schön, 1983) action research – 'a situational process requiring the co-operation of participants in a specific real-world context' (Gray and Malins, 2004: 74).

The stages of this practice-led methodology (underpinned by *context, integrity and connectivity*<sup>36</sup>) are described as not existing in isolation, but as the interconnected iterative processes of informed and reflexive action. This approach draws on the methodologies of artists working in durational immersive situations and is also informed by contemporary ethnographies in social sciences that move beyond the limitations of static and iconic representation. Consistent with my research concerns and the objective to reconnect artwork with the context of its emergence, this 'more-

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<sup>36</sup> Key terms of context-led practice outlined in the previous chapter (p.72), in relation to the development of *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework.

than-representational' approach promotes research as 'creative performative practice' (Lorimer, 2005). Here, a uniform model for practice-based research is refused, aware that each project is particular to context and its methodology arises organically from its concerns and its position (Rogoff, 2010:40) as an instance of 'local invention' (Macdonald, 2009) where procedures and methods emerge in and through the work rather than being prescribed (Bolt, 2008).

Fieldwork grounds the research within first hand experience of the location and site of the research, inclusive of the profound influence 'of the unfolding research direction'. Here, critical frameworks of art thinking connected to wider cultural concerns are enacted through connective experiences and performativity that prompts and tests ideas, whilst also triggering discussion and analysis of them. Fieldwork as artistic research is 'a form of scrutinising, working out and 'acting out' (Koh, 2010), and involves more than observation and data collection. It is an active engagement with a particular place that is purposefully contributing work *in situ*. Throughout these context-led interactive and participatory processes the researcher is both part of and central to the research. From this position of initiating and participating in the work as an artist, the research is simultaneously led by reflexive inner dialogue that arises from prior experience, tacit knowledge and contextual prompts. The methods employed are essentially *immersive* and *gathering* processes that overlap in the iterative nature of the practice where exploration, recording, analysis and representation become inseparable.

The fieldwork project – *caravanserai* – is an exploration of place through context-led arts practice as a means to consider *how context-led arts practice might enhance our experiences of, and relationships with, a particular environment*. This reflexive form of action research seeks to evidence the socio-spatial relations, processes, creative activities, outcomes and responses to working within a specific context –

that of a camping and caravan site on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall, UK. With view to this intention, the research has two principal objectives i) to develop *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice. ii) to reconnect artwork to context – through the representation of context-led outcomes that reveal the socio-spatial processes of their emergence.

The next chapter describes the fieldwork project *caravanserai*, presenting contextual insights and narratives that offer a glimpse into the various entanglements of people, activities and events that have occurred, as well as the negotiations and relationships that enabled the project's facilitation.



## 5. fieldwork: *caravanserai*

You have defined the events which you have seen and are still seeing to the field. It is not only that the field frames them, it also *contains* them. The existence of the field is the precondition for their occurring in the way that they have done and for the way in which others are still occurring. All events exist as definable events by virtue of their relation to other events. You have defined the events you have seen primarily (but not necessarily exclusively) by relating them to the event of the field, which at the same time is literally and symbolically the *ground* of events that are taking place within it.<sup>1</sup>

*Caravanserai*<sup>2</sup> is a ‘ground of events’ – literally a field – which frames and contains the central project of this research. The fieldwork, which took place on a caravan and camping site on the Roseland Peninsula in Cornwall, is an exploration *of* place through context-led practice over a period of three years.



Fig. 26. Annie Lovejoy. *Caravanserai*. 2011

*caravan* – a company of people  
*caravanserai* – a place where caravans meet  
<http://www.caravanserai.info>

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<sup>1</sup> John Berger, *Field* (in Dyer, 2001:p 357).

<sup>2</sup> Project details and documentation are included in this text, the appendices and online at <http://www.caravanserai.info>

This chapter begins with (5.1) an explanation of my role as the author of both the published outcomes and the commentary that, together, make up this thesis. Following this, (5.2) presents an overview of the conceptual and administrative foundations of the fieldwork –envisioning, instigating and establishing the project *caravanserai*. Lastly, (5.3) *being there* offers a glimpse into the textures and nuances of the fieldwork experience through an interlacing of project narratives, images and reflexive insights.

### 5.1. Outcomes of the fieldwork

The two printed booklets accompanying this text are the outcomes of the context-led exploration of place – caravanserai i) **discovering what's on our doorstep** – a guidebook, and ii) **Insites** – a notebook. Added to these is the online project archive that documents the fieldwork activities, [www.caravanserai.info](http://www.caravanserai.info). Together, these outcomes form my thesis – interrelated with this text, rather than supplemental to it;<sup>3</sup> and should be studied and considered with same degree of care and attention as this text.

The booklets are outcomes of my practice-led arts methodology; they are assemblages of material gathered through a context-led exploration of place. These printed publications exemplify a design concept that has emerged through my practice-led research that I have termed as *commonplacing*. The term arises in relation to the research objective that seeks to represent context-led outcomes in a way that reveals their provenance. Where the experience of artworks is accompanied by data and insights that places them 'in literary, geographical,

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<sup>3</sup> In chapter one, I raise the issue of 'supplementality' (Lesage, 2010: 30) in a discussion on the nature of the practice-led arts doctoral research submission where the artwork is 'supplemental' to a text isolating creative output for the purposes of decoding and interpretation.

historical, critical, political, or thematic contexts' (Raven, 1995:159-60)<sup>4</sup>. The concept of *commonplacing* as a design method (previously intuitive<sup>5</sup>) is key to my research contribution. The term describes a graphing of interwoven place-making that positions discursive, conceptual and experiential insights in formats appropriate to particular end users or communities of interest. The conceptual development, design and production of these publications is detailed in the next chapter; with a brief introduction to their authorship, content and function following here.

***Discovering what's on our doorstep*** is a limited edition publication,<sup>6</sup> a 'guide book' produced for visitors to Treloan that creatively maps, celebrates and promotes the local.



Fig. 27. Annie Lovejoy. Guidebook cover: *discovering what's on our doorstep*. 2011

<sup>4</sup> Raven's statement is referenced in chapter two (p 35) as offering potential for a more expansive form of representation that reveals the provenance of context-led processes.

<sup>5</sup> The intention to reveal process in the representation and dissemination of context-led arts practice has been an ongoing concern as discussed in the chapter seven (pp.203-204)

<sup>6</sup> 'Discovering what's on our doorstep' is a full colour 64 page *limited edition* (of 1500 copies) 'guidebook' published by RANE (Research into Art, Nature and the Environment), University College Falmouth, ISBN 978-0-9544187-7-9

This guidebook is a responsive context-led artwork instigated and authored by me as a functional and aesthetic outcome of *caravanserai* – the fieldwork project. It is a limited edition art booklet that is a compendium of events and activities, images and information, stories and insights, with all contributions clearly credited on the pages where they occur.<sup>7</sup> Serving as a functional guidebook it presents a multi-faceted polyvocal sense of place offering information on local amenities, food suppliers, businesses and community ventures, encouraging people to engage with what the immediate locality offers. This practical information sits alongside historical anecdotes, memories, stories, traditional skills, 'how to' pages, craftwork, recipes, artwork and poetry. Here the work also serves as an archive and manual of local practices as well as being a catalogue of context-led arts practice (meeting the research objective *to reconnect artwork to context – through the representation of context-led outcomes that reveal the socio-spatial processes of their emergence*).

***Insites - a notebook*** is a limited edition artist's book produced for delegates attending the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference in 2009<sup>8</sup>. The book was collaboratively produced with *caravanserai* geographer-in-residence, Dr Harriet Hawkins<sup>9</sup>. Designed as an active object of enquiry, it is an aesthetic and functional reflection on geographical ways of knowing.

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<sup>7</sup> The Consent form issued to, and completed by all contributors to the project is documented in Appendix D

<sup>8</sup> *Insites* has been the subject of three paper presentations and a published journal article: Lovejoy, A. and Brace, C. 2009, *Caravanserai: Field work project*, Royal Geographical Society. Lovejoy, A. *Caravanserai, Artists talk*, BOS Arts event, September 2009, Cornwall. Hawkins, H. 2009, *Geography and Art: interdisciplinary engagement*, to PVA: Media artist presentations. Hawkins, H. 2011. 'Dialogues and Doings: Sketching the Relationships Between Geography and Art' in *Geography Compass*, Vol. 5, No. 7, p. 464-478.

<sup>9</sup> The nature of this collaboration is discussed further in chapter six (p.156-161). The notebook *insert* text by Hawkins and a report on the books production and distribution are included in Appendix D



Fig. 28. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

Hawkins was invited to be geographer-in-residence within the *caravanserai* project following a discussion to develop a multiple for the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference in 2009. The idea for an art multiple (a limited edition artwork) was proposed by me as an alternative to poster design or an exhibited wall piece. The notebook was envisaged as an intimate vehicle for triggering ideas about geographical ways of knowing through arts practice. Here, authorship can be understood as follows: the conceptual development and choice of material (images & texts) is collaborative and emergent of *caravanserai* as a context-led exploration of place, hence the focus on the specific locality and practices of the project. I am responsible for the creative design and image production that combines image, text and journal extracts – the *commonplacing* of gathered material. The work was produced at a mid-point of *caravanserai* activities in 2009 and incorporates research notes and quotes from my journal illustrating the recursive and iterative nature of my practice-led arts inquiry.

***www.caravanserai.info*** is an online web log that archives the fieldwork project. It also serves as a functional resource linking to local initiatives, information and activities generated by people associated with the project. The website serves as a practical and cultural resource for various communities of interest – locally and beyond<sup>10</sup>. The website content is authored by me unless stated otherwise.<sup>11</sup>

## 5.2. Instigating the fieldwork:

*Caravanserai* fieldwork for the purposes of this research project took place from 2008-2011.<sup>12</sup> Having moved to Cornwall to pursue doctoral studies the decision to site my practice at Treloan was informed by having had some previous experience of the site. This was a practical decision based on the fact that to instigate a public artwork as a newcomer to Cornwall without the network of local arts / academic recognition and support that I was accustomed to in Bristol would be overly time consuming. It would be more productive to initiate a project at the campsite where ideas for a creative context-led response had already stirred even though the site's future at that time was insecure.<sup>13</sup> Following a fortuitous change in ownership in 2008 I moved to Treloan with my partner<sup>14</sup> for a period of five months. This allowed time for ideas to develop *in situ* informed by relevant theories and practices.

Being at Treloan for any length of time one soon becomes aware of its situation as a holiday destination and the effects of tourism on the local environment and culture.

This awareness underpins the project and the intention to host responsive context-

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<sup>10</sup> Please see Appendix C – FEAST evaluation report.

<sup>11</sup> My website administration and authorship is named on the website as 'shedsite'.

<sup>12</sup> At the time of writing (2013) the project continues to be self-sustaining providing a platform for local performers and musicians, with fireside sessions and the annual celebration of local food - *feast* – being fully incorporated into the campsite season. Added to this, is an ongoing interest in the guidebook which is regularly purchased by visitors to the campsite or downloaded from the website.

<sup>13</sup> The campsite owner had declared bankruptcy and there was fear that the site would become commercialised given the interest of a potential buyer who owned a chain of campsites in Cornwall.

<sup>14</sup> Artist and co-founder of the project, Mac Dunlop

led activities that engage with, and celebrate the local. This aspiration was shared with the new owners (Pete and Debs Walker) who were keen to improve the site and establish links with the local community. Our friendship and working relationship was nurtured through ideas and projects such as assisting them with the rebranding of the site and designing a new brochure.

Here, I will digress for a moment to describe how an activity such as designing the campsite brochure is illustrative of my practice-led emergent methodology. How being-in-relationship with, and at the same time reflecting on the relational threads particular to a place or situation informs and generates an outcome.

Whilst working on the brochure it was brought to my attention by a lady working at the local Heritage Centre that the previous campsite owner had invented the names of the campsite fields and the nearby beach. Locally known as *Breakneck*, he had renamed it *Treloan Cove* (probably thinking it would be more appealing to potential customers). This had a wider impact in 2009 when the King Harry Ferry company produced an *Area Map* for tourists where the beach was also wrongly named. In conversation with a local historian, author and archivist Hilary Thompson, I learnt that locals had always known the beach as *Breakneck*. When she was a child they used to play in every nook and cranny of the coastline and *Breakneck* was known and understood as being dangerous – its name was a warning (fig. 29).

Alert to the importance of place names as containers, holders of stories and information known by locals I resolved to do something about it – and the idea to produce a guidebook for the campsite was born (an intention that would also meet my research objective to reconnect artwork to the context of its emergence). This *in situ* experience of assisting the campsite owners with rebranding the site had



**Breakneck** beach, sometimes mistakenly referred to as Treloan Cove, is the closest beach to the campsite (see map on p.5), the path down is steep and has collapsed at one point. At high water it's covered so keep an eye on the tide. Breakneck is "probably so named from the steepness of the cliff above and the proximity of the coastal path at that point"



Hilary Thompson *Rocks, Coves & Fishing Marks; Nare Head to Zone*. 1999

Fig. 29. Annie Lovejoy. Guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.57

inspired a functional outcome for the project and initiated a relationship with a local historian, whose expertise and knowledge would be invaluable. With guidebook in mind, my explorations had now become more finely attuned to 'discovering what's on the doorstep'.

During this initial period of immersive site research, we were also invited to assist with establishing an allotment on the campsite (which has since become a productive garden providing food, herbs and flowers for residents and visitors); and to build a communal fire-pit for campsite gatherings in Middle Close,<sup>15</sup> the 'project field'.<sup>16</sup> These accumulated shared experiences or 'do tanks' (collective hands-on activities that stimulate dialogue and creative thinking) laid the foundations for inviting people to respond creatively to being at Treloan. To facilitate on site

<sup>15</sup> The brochure map and field names can be found in *discovering what's on our doorstep* p. 5 and p.14

<sup>16</sup> The project field features in *discovering what's on our doorstep* pp 9-17, and is archived under the category 'project field' at <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/page/3/?cat=17596894>



residencies a suitable live/work space was purchased, the project van,<sup>17</sup> and the campsite owners contributed support by waiving the pitch fee and providing access to their workshop and office. The next stage was to articulate an overview or 'naming'<sup>18</sup> of the project to generate further interest, support and funding for the activities to take place.<sup>19</sup>

Possibilities were scrutinized and their viability assessed: *what could be supported & how? What kind of activities would be sympathetic to this place? What would enable an opening out – an outcome? How could I open this up to others but maintain artistic integrity toward producing material for a guidebook? How might the project be funded? What if funding is unforthcoming? Are there other avenues of partnership or exchange that might be possible? Would people be prepared to share their skills in exchange for time on site? What sort of partnerships might be encouraged? Would the university support student placements on site? or provide visiting artists with lecturing / workshop opportunities? Is there any research funding available to support my practice? How can I fund the project outcomes and dissemination of the work produced? Are there any local or regional resources applicable to artist-led initiatives or community based projects?* These questions were pondered and enquiries made whilst continuing to explore the locality, making connections, attending local events and meeting residents of the neighbouring villages, Gerrans and Portscatho. Being at Treloan throughout the spring and summer of 2008 allowed me to observe the comings and goings of the campsite and villages, inspiring a range of potential residencies, placements<sup>20</sup> and events. An activities programme was then devised to fit in with the campsite calendar and local village events and an application for financial support submitted to FEAST, an

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<sup>17</sup> For more details of the residency space please see appendix D.

<sup>18</sup> The articulation of a descriptive starting point for a project as described in the previous chapter on methodology (*Research and concept development* – chapter four p 91)

<sup>19</sup> The fundraising documents and proposed activities can be found in Appendix C

<sup>20</sup> For details of caravanserai residencies and placements please see Appendix D

offshoot of the Arts Council initiating participatory arts projects within Cornwall's communities, as follows:

FEAST commissions work for a specific purpose, which is to generate arts and creative activity in towns and villages in Cornwall and to make this activity highly visible to stakeholders, public and potential funders. Its focus is on community benefit rather than artist development. (FEAST application guidelines, 2009)

FEAST is a 'hatch, match and dispatch' funding initiative – they require a fully developed project idea with partners and funding already in place toward producing a defined outcome. One of the funding strands of their application procedure *Telling the stories that challenge and change the world* invited projects that engaged with environmental issues affecting 'our lives in Cornwall'. The guidance notes suggested that a project submitted within this strand might be located in one place over a sustained period with an outcome such as a publication, film or performance. Perfect. Firing on all cylinders (with a looming deadline), I managed to raise enough interest and support to submit an application for a programme of activities.<sup>21</sup> The *caravanserai* proposal met the FEAST funding criteria as it had community and environmental issues at heart, was working in partnership with a local 'non-creative' business (Treloan Coastal Holidays) and could guarantee financial and in-kind support from a variety of sources. A brief excerpt is included here, as follows:

*Caravanserai* promotes a responsible (response-able) approach to tourism in recognition of the reciprocal relationship between residents and visitors in the Roseland villages of Portscatho and Gerrans. Visitors provide an essential economic asset to the area, bringing trade to the village shop, pubs and local post office that might otherwise have difficulty thriving. But, on the other hand, there are problematic environmental and social impacts on the locality such as traffic pollution, waste management and limited affordable housing. This interdependent relationship between local residents and visitors / village and campsite, provides fertile ground from which to respond creatively to these issues.

*Caravanserai* seeks to creatively engage with the environmental, social and cultural fabric of the locality. The activities proposed range from intimate fireside storytelling

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<sup>21</sup> The activities programme and application to FEAST is detailed in Appendix C.

to festive celebration. From film screenings and local history talks to wild food walks and shared meals. From 'hands on' skill sharing events to poetry and arts encountered in the landscape.

Involving the local community and visitors, these activities will take place in spaces that span village sites and venues, the local landscape and campsite.

Documentation of events, actions, walks, encounters, memories, histories, poetry and artworks will provide source material for a published outcome and legacy of the project – *discovering what's on our doorstep* – a limited edition guidebook that creatively maps, celebrates and promotes 'the local'.

Having reached the second round in the application procedure I was invited to interview for the final decision. I invited campsite owner Debs Walker to come with me as I wanted to involve her even though I knew it was unusual for artists to include 'non-creative' partners at interview or for business representatives to be questioned by arts funders. The panel began by asking each of us to say something about the project, without hesitation Debs immediately took the reins and launched into a detailed personal account of how my work had affected her, how she had never thought about art as being an event or activity in response to a place – 'until I met Annie, I thought art was painting or drawing'. Her energy and enthusiasm for the project was exciting, everyone present was enthralled and touched by her story. She had reminded us all of what art can sometimes do, touching hearts in the midst of an intellectual, competitive and bureaucratic situation. My part in the scenario was to answer the questions and associated arts speak to ensure a professionally produced project that met all their criteria. Following the interview we were granted enough financial support to kick-start activities that have since become self-sustaining regular highlights of Treloan's 'high' (summer) season.<sup>22</sup>

Since 2009 various writers, local residents, academic researchers and post-graduate students, have been in residence within the *caravanserai* project.<sup>23</sup> These

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<sup>22</sup> In 2013 (five years later) we continue to organise Treloan's summer season of weekly *fireside sessions* and the annual *feast* – a celebration of local food and music, both of which started in 2009.

<sup>23</sup> An overview of residencies and placements is provided in Appendix D.

residencies have triggered numerous participatory and experiential activities such as intimate fireside poetry and music sessions<sup>24</sup>, film screenings, an open caravans day, wild food walks, a local food banquet – ‘feast’, poetic artworks encountered in the landscape and hands-on skills sharing in willow coppicing, charcoal making, and raft building for Portscatho’s Regatta day.

The nuances and textures of the various entanglements of people, materials and ethos are too dense to reiterate here. Many of the events and activities are documented on the project website, and where relevant included in this text or the appendices. The point being that the wealth of material generated by the fieldwork was creatively distilled<sup>25</sup> to produce the limited edition art booklets – *insites: a notebook* and the guidebook for Treloan *discovering what’s on our doorstep*.

### 5.3. **Being there**

The following account offers project descriptions combined with reflexive insights and observations. The intention here is to reveal the relational *meshwork* that is *caravanserai*, without separating events and activities into components or stand-alone incidents.<sup>26</sup> This theory-informed storytelling employs description and analysis (Pearson, 2006:16) emergent of being-in-relationship with a particular place – interlacing insights, images and project narratives (*narus* – knowing).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Fireside sessions are featured in *discovering what’s on our doorstep* pages 12-15, described in the project narrative *being there* (p.114) and documented online at <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/category/events/fireside-sessions/>

<sup>25</sup> This process is detailed in the next chapter (6.1) *Commonplacing*; a design concept for the representation of multcentred ‘senses of place’ (Lippard, 1997) and reconnecting artwork to the context of its emergence.

<sup>26</sup> In keeping with my earlier reference (chapter one p.18) to various configurations of *artist-writer-poet-performer-academic* writing on place/site, such as *situational fiction*, *geopoetics*, *autotopography*, *autography*, *mythogeography* (Frances, 2009; Heddon, 2006; Macdonald, 2009; Smith, 2010)

<sup>27</sup> Excerpts from my journal occur throughout this text as dated block quotes in italics. Other project related texts are inset as block quotes. These journal excerpts and project narratives use a different typeface to the main body of the text.

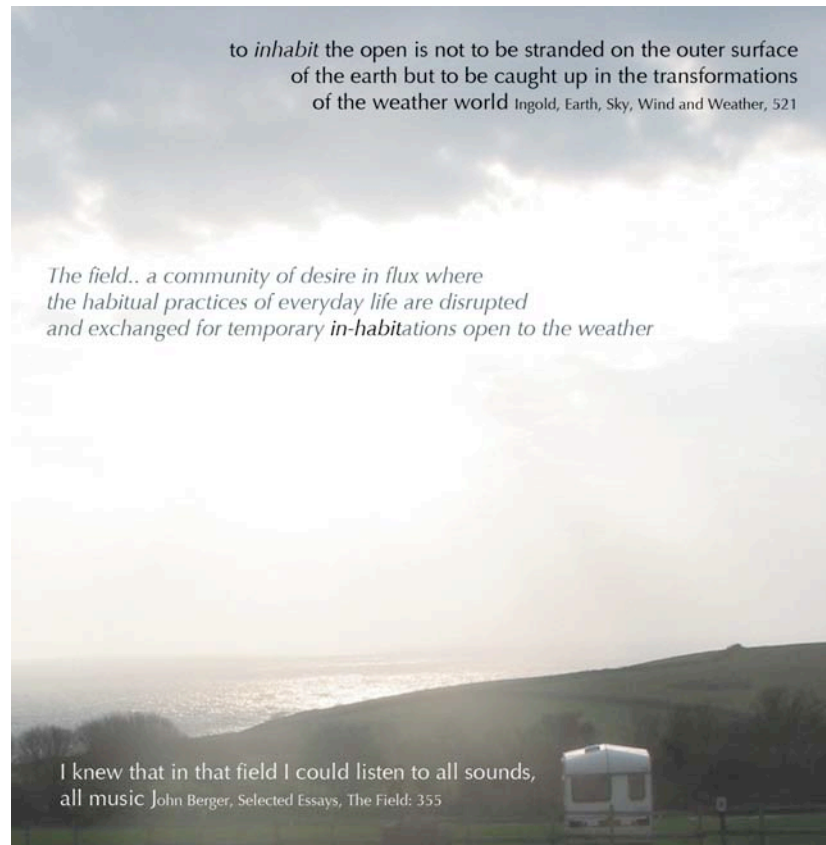


Fig. 30. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

I first discovered Treloan in 2003 when in need of a space of reflection away from the intensities of commission based work. A vacation is literally an emptying out, a voiding of daily experience and responsibilities, 'at best it shakes up belief and value systems and opens up to reciprocity with nature' (Lippard, 1999: 4). As geographer David Conradson notes:

In coming close to other ecologies and rhythms of life, we may obtain a distance from everyday routines, whilst perhaps also experiencing renewed energy and finding different perspectives upon our circumstances. (Conradson in Davidson, Bondi and Smith 2005: 102)

The caravan, in which I stayed at different times of the year during the busy high season, or the quiet winter months, is a reflexive and elemental space where the habitual is shifted in proximity to other temporary residents and events of the field.

It was in this space that the seeds of a creative residency project sprouted in dialogue with fellow artists, writers and others who saw creative potential in the immersive experience of caravan life in the ever-changing environs of Treloan.

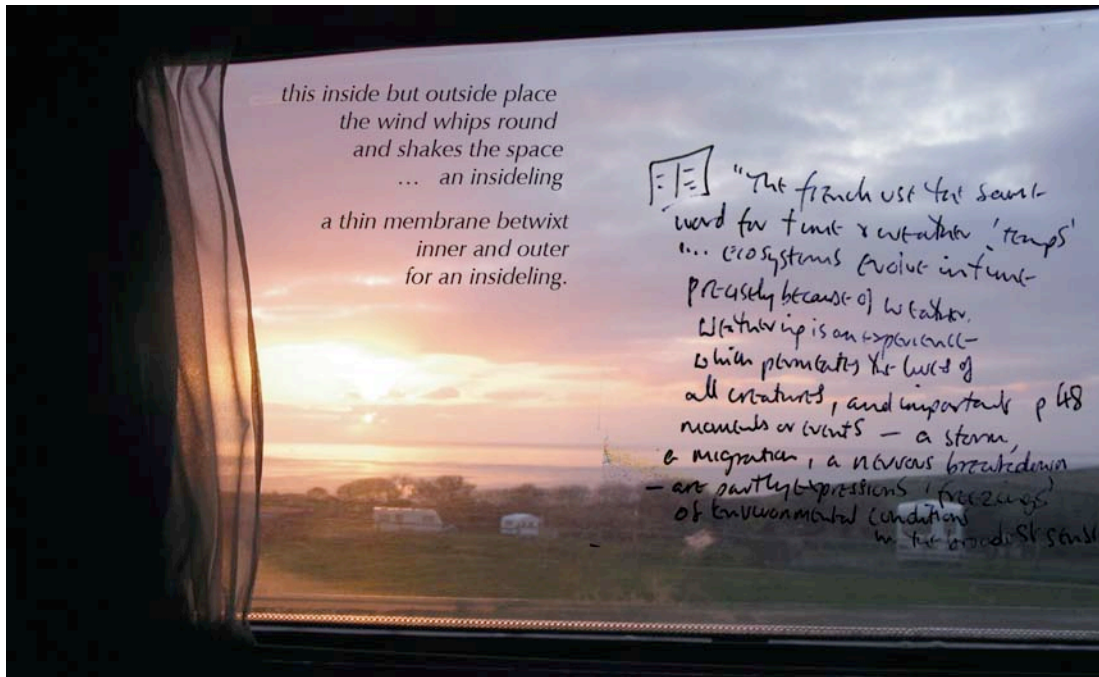


Fig. 31. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

David Crouch refers to the liminality of the experience of caravanning, of being away from routine habits and having a different sense of being and doing – ‘it is in the cracks in habitual acts that can be significant’ (Crouch 2003: 1952). This is an inside but outside space – the walk across the field to the shower block or washing up area, come rain, wind or shine; the condensation on the windows; the wind-rocked nights of no sleep; the dark silent deep sleep nights; the horizontal line of light that sits on the sea’s horizon first thing in the morning; the rain hammering on the roof or the footsteps of a bird; the pan boiling on the stove; the phone ringing but breaking up – there’s no signal – the caravan becomes a ‘closure of space for opening up the self, going further and rethinking life’ (Crouch, 2003:1945).

February 18, 2010. I sit here at a small folding table in the caravan at Treloan (the site of my research project). Across the field I can see the project van home to the many that will speak to me and to you the reader, through this writing.

Beside me is the laptop sleeve I've made in soft olive green velvet with an image of me in the Glens of County Antrim during an arts residency at the Tower in Cushendall<sup>28</sup> in 2000. A residency space generously facilitated by artist, writer and musician Bill Drummond, who invites use of the Tower in return for 'embroidering and embroiling' its walls with artwork.



The photo reminds me of how it is to immerse oneself within a place to linger with intent, ones antennae alert to responses and encounters that might generate a new work. In the photo I'm wearing the same jacket that I wear to work in the garden here at Treloan. The jacket like most things was a project, even the caravan that was once a space of recuperation between art commissions is now a project! The art/life world is e/vocational. (Author's journal).

This art/life spacing,<sup>29</sup> or as Kaprow calls it 'lifelike art' (as opposed to 'artlike art that is separate from life') that is connected to life, is art that is lived attentively (Kelley, 1993: 204): As artist and educator Emily Orley notes,

relationships to places are 'most richly lived and surely felt' when people make them the object of awareness and reflection, when they self-consciously attend to them, pausing to 'actively sense them'. (Orley 2009: 160)

In his essay *Being and Circumstance* Robert Irwin refers to this active sensing as 'site-conditioned response'<sup>30</sup> that draws all of its cues (reasons for being) from its surroundings (in Stiles and Selz, 1996: 572). For Irwin this means:

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<sup>28</sup> For more details of this residency please see *a case for dreaming* at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showproject.pl?title=a%20case%20for%20dreaming>

<sup>29</sup> *Spacing* is a term used by geographer David Crouch 'to identify subjective and practical ways in which the individual handles his or her material surroundings. Spacing is positioned in terms of action, making sense (including the refiguring of 'given' space), and mechanisms of opening up possibilities' (2003: 1945). Crouch explores *spacing* through allotment holding and caravanning, both being of relevance to *caravanserai*, where *spacing* might be understood as the socio-spatial processes and activities that inform and generate an opening out, a project outcome.

<sup>30</sup> Irwin's original essay 'Being and Circumstance – notes towards a Confidential Art' (1985) offers a descriptive account of the differences between public art site practices as site dominated, adjusted, specific and conditioned/determined; the latter being responsive to being in the place of the work's development.

sitting, watching, and walking through the site and its surrounding areas. Here are numerous things to consider; what is the site's relation to applied and implied organization and schemes of order, relation, architecture, uses, distances [...] What are the histories of prior and current uses, present desires etc [...] This process of being and circumstance is our most basic perceptual (experiencing) action, something we do at every moment in simply coming to know the nature of our presence, and we almost always do so without giving the wonder of it a second thought. Once again this "oversight" speaks not of its insignificance; on the contrary it speaks of its extraordinary sophistication. (Irwin in Stiles and Selz, 1996: 4)

This attentive sensory potential is suggestive of David Peat's 'possibility of doing nothing' as creative suspension of action, as a perceptive and reflexive process – through which fixed ideas and conditioned responses can be recognised and dissolved (Peat, 2007: 150). Irwin sees this responsive approach as 'no longer being a question of art as object or non object but a question of seeing or not seeing, of how we perceive or fail to perceive things in their real contexts' (in Stiles and Selz, 1996: 572-3). This percipient, more than ocular<sup>31</sup> place ethical art/life sensibility is a *modus vivendi* – a way of living, a philosophy of practice responsive to the experiential complexities of a situation (place) as opposed to a *modus operandi* - a way of operating applied to a place.

As Lippard has mentioned, 'for artists who specialise in acting in the gap between art and life' the relationship of imagination to reality and action 'is *crucial*' (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated). Referencing the title of her presentation '*Imagine Being Here Now*' she asked, 'Why would we have to imagine a place' she asked 'if we are right here now? Because we're always doing it, because every day we imagine and then live a version of our new stories, our histories (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated). To

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<sup>31</sup> For instance, Erica Fielder mentions that 'In his book, *Reconnecting With Nature: Finding Wellness Through Restoring Your Bond with The Earth*, Michael J. Cohen presents a list of 53 senses and sensitivities (P. 48-50). These attributes, functioning in concert, respond similarly to invisible moth-like antennæ that inform us about our world. We sense balance and gravity, rhythm and motion. Moisture, dryness, and wetness are discerned through distinct senses. We perceive color, shape, and volume, and can determine temperature, thirst and hunger, motion, pain and pleasure. We are capable of a sense of wonder' (Fielder, E. 2004: unpaginated).



imagine is to believe in the potential of creativity, as philosopher Richard Kearney says:

The possible's slow fuse', as Emily Dickinson wrote, 'is lit by the imagination.' Resisting the pervasive sense of social paralysis, the poetic imagination would nourish the conviction that things can be changed. The first and most effective step in this direction is to begin to imagine that the world as it is could be otherwise. (Kearney, 2005: 7)

*Imagine* (figs. 32, 33) was the text that I chose for an artwork inspired by the markings of tents gone from the site. In less than a week the faded grass holds the image of where people have pitched their camp. A patchwork of presences now absent, these visitations adorn the field in various stages of disappearing. How perfect this medium for a place of transience, how grounded the making – a kind of inverted gardening, the promise of expectation, the covering up and anticipation of what would be revealed. The very first thing anyone who enters the site will see.

## PRESS

March 14 2012

Today's online Guardian holiday guide features Treloan with the pic below of 'imagine' in it's early stages where the grass is covered and fenced off with bunting so that it doesn't get walked on while it fades to reveal the word – the idea was prompted by seeing the patches on the field left by tents.



Fig. 32. *Caravanserai* website <http://www.caravanserai.info/press> [accessed 3.8.13]

The possible's slow fuse continues to burn...to *imagine* a world as it could be is a signature statement for *caravanserai* celebrating the local, the poetic imagination of what might be possible in this place.



Fig. 33. Annie Lovejoy and Mac Dunlop *imagine* – *caravanserai* artwork. 2009

*Caravanserai* facilitates a multi-vocal response to place and to attend to the conditions that enable this, is to believe in the purpose of the project to manifest locally, as Adam Sutherland, director of Grizedale Arts points out:

To make significant work in non art space you need to forget about the hierarchy of the art world and create a relevant and engaging process and product. So for artists and curators there is no point if you don't believe in it as an end in itself, that there is a purpose that the work will undertake in that context. (Sutherland, 2010: unpaginated)

Sutherland invites people to work with the local context of Grizedale in the Lake District, also a tourist destination. He sees Grizedale Arts as sitting at the geographical centre of a 'tangled web [...] hoping perhaps naively to contribute something to the ongoing conversations that are babbling around it' (Grizedale Arts, 2009: 4). To invite inhabitation of an immersive and durational context-led situation opens up a conversation of place to others. These shared experiences and combined memories generate activities and sow seeds for future collaborations. Creating opportunities at Treloan invites reciprocity and inclusion in an ongoing conversation between visitors and visited.



Fig. 34. Mary Alice Pollard. *Treloan, Gerrans and Portscatho*. 2007

Locally known as ‘Arthur’s field’,<sup>32</sup> Treloan campsite is in the parish of St. Gerrans that includes the villages of Gerrans and Portscatho (once separate villages, but now physically joined). These have a resident population of approximately 900 people. The local community hosts a large influx of visitors through second home ownership & holiday lets, and Treloan itself hosts over 2000 visitors throughout the high season. Although there is a tendency to think of the caravan site as somewhere where people are in motion and transient and the village as static and continuous, this easy distinction, which brings with it a politics of belonging and identity, is disrupted by the many layers of community in which people come and go, stay for different amounts of time either through desire or need, and are differently in motion through the site and the village - with different trajectories.



Fig. 35. Annie Lovejoy. *Discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.26

<sup>32</sup> Previous Treloan campsite owner Arthur was ‘one of the best loved characters of Cornish tourism...’ *discovering what's on our doorstep* p.37

Stories and myths trace routes through the landscape<sup>33</sup>, historical roots both personal and political, tensions in ownership of the land and property abound.<sup>34</sup>

*May 14 2009: first thing, suddenly there were four huge smart caravans on site, Debs showed them their pitches - a caravan of caravans - accompanied by a 4-wheel drive, 2 large roofer vans & 3 small cars. Pitched in a flash, it was the red propane bottles that made us all realise this wasn't holidaymakers... a sea mist covered the site, everyone was on edge, within 20mins they'd scoured all corners & drove one van in front of the project van, & were pacing round it looking inside the windows. It felt unnerving, and before long the regulars were congregating in R's awning discussing the situation as Debs & Pete had gone out and the tension was brewing. Next thing, the police showed up, they'd had a call from someone in the village - gypsies in town - you could have cut the atmosphere on site with a knife- someone in a motor home left on account of the arrival.*



*Then I spotted their water jugs<sup>35</sup> the same as ours - Martin the Roma caravan restorer had managed to source these hand crafted stainless steel jugs (Romany water jugs always come in pairs) from a maker up north who was about to retire; so I went down and said hello, and it turned out the reason they were hanging round the project van is that they grew up in a Roma trailer and knew the guy that built them. But because their presence was so huge on such a small site Debs asked them to go – and they did, leaving behind a solitary red propane bottle, standing in bold technicolour on the grey mist shrouded field. (Author's journal)*

One prominent tongue-in-cheek comment on the pervasive presence of 'blow ins' (tourists) is local resident Simon Gill's public intervention *Hotel Splendide* (fig. 36), not that he would consider this an 'intervention', but it proves to be a useful term in relation to how it could be seen as an artwork. Simon is not an artist, *Hotel Splendide* is reflective of his quick wit and incisive humour and is a comment on the

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<sup>33</sup> These tracings of routes and roots – as mappings of memories and present day realities – are explored visually in the first half of *insites-a notebook* as well in the 'guidebook' *discovering what's on our doorstep*.

<sup>34</sup> An example of property tension/change of ownership is illustrated in *insites-a notebook*: North Parade 2004 / 2009.

<sup>35</sup> These are bespoke stainless steel water containers made for Romany trailers.

numbers of people, family and friends, that he sometimes accommodates in his sea-front home.



Fig. 36. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

Getting to know Simon (through being curious about *Hotel Splendide*) proved to be a great asset when working on the guidebook, he became a reliable sounding board for the numerous word of mouth accounts that I was continuously gathering. 'I'm not sure about that' he'd say 'let me find out', always keen that the facts were correct, and that 'the idiosyncrasies of the place are not lost'. He also gave me permission to include excerpts from his father's verse (or as he says 'doggerel') in the guidebook. This was an important inclusion as Jerry Gill's prose and poetry is a wonderful testament to the importance of situated knowledge. His writings offer a valuable account of environmental change at a very specific experiential local level (fig. 37).

## ONCE UPON A TIME

I know how beautiful was Gerrans Bay,  
St Anthony to lovely Kybrick Cove  
with fish in multitudes nigh ev'rywhere,  
no death was there of life within that span.  
From Peter's Splosh and Breakneck to the Grebe,  
o'er Flat Rocks then to Killigerran Head,  
Elwinick Cove, the Old Walls and the Zone.

*This epic poem tells of every fish that once swam  
in the bay, how they were caught, the marks, what  
they would weigh, and how they've become  
scarce and small, such as the Bass...*

"Today they have gone, there's nought to  
bring home, no Gannets diving, no boats  
with four lines, no digging lugworms,  
no cliff climb at night. Willows were  
growing, fisherman made pots.

...

But slowly, surely all things were changing.  
No willow gardens, pots made of plastic.

...

As fish grew scarcer men began to look,  
for ways and means to use the gear they had,  
and in a while, without a look ahead,  
began to dredge the bottom of the Bay,  
to harvest Scallops which were in demand.

...

But Nature couldn't keep pace with what was caught.  
Catches fell but men persisted.  
They trawled and trawled till scarce a life was left.  
And so this Bay which once did teem with fish,  
was left so barren, nothing seemed to stir.

excerpts from *Once Upon a Time* in 'Some Ramblings in  
Rhyme and Reason of a Roseland Rambler' by Jerry Gill.  
Published in his memory & available from local shops  
& outlets (proceeds to Gerrans Churchyard Fund).



Fig. 37. Annie Lovejoy. *Discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.54

The first village event *caravanserai* organised was a talk on sustainable tourism by Manda Brookman of COAST (Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project) a passionate

speaker on how tourism affects Cornwall. There was a good turn-out and the event provided an opportunity to re-introduce Treloan (a key player in village tourism) in a new light; it also influenced the development of *caravanserai*, re-affirming a shared interest with the campsite owners to promote a responsible approach to tourism.

Transition Roseland

## Joining the Dots

a presentation by Manda Brookman (COAST)  
Sustainable Tourism - how it affects us all.

Linking all aspects of our local lifestyle to tourism, the talk will stress how adding “sustainability” to this valuable and essential source of income makes sense in protecting our way of life as well as the natural environment; Cornwall’s greatest asset.

WATER WILDLIFE ENERGY WASTE TRANSPORT FOOD

7.30pm  
April 23rd  
at the  
Memorial Hall,  
Portscatho  
(free to all)

10% increase in local produce bought by the hotels and catering industry across the region would generate £45m and 2000 jobs.  
Cornwall Taste of the West

**coast** Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project

Fig. 38. Annie Lovejoy. *Coast poster*. 2009



Ideas that we had already discussed gained momentum, such as a plan to hold a local food banquet and the basis on which artists would be hosted at Treloan. Earlier in the year I heard Brookman speak and a statistic she quoted had triggered my idea to hold a local food banquet as a celebratory means to encourage campsite visitors to shop locally. She had stated that *'a 10% increase in local produce bought by the hotels and catering industry across the region would generate £45m and 2000 jobs* (Cornwall Taste of the West). Also her point that 'we are the most useless generation in terms of the skills we have' was relevant to our discussions about hosting artists on site; with particular reference to offering a placement opportunity to a Falmouth post-graduate student Greg Humphries. Greg was learning and archiving traditional skills that were being lost in local communities. At the time he was struggling to articulate his practice in an arts institutional environment that required him to position himself within an interpretive arts construct. I could see immediately that *caravanserai* was the perfect environment for him to consolidate his practice and develop his interests further.

*June 1st 2009: Greg has started his placement, an extraordinary example of happenstance – synthesis – delighted to discover he can have access to a willow plantation & in doing so connections to crab pot making emerge. He's interested in how artists can effectively work in small communities to learn, archive and share useful skills that may have been lost or are being lost in light of challenges we face with peak oil & climate change. (Author's Journal)*

Greg's work<sup>36</sup> was significant in meeting the aspirations of *caravanserai* to engage with local practices; he worked on a nearby neglected willow coppice which he regenerated and led sessions in willow hurdle, fedge and peg loom construction as well as making charcoal for the local food celebration, *feast*.

*Feast* invites villagers and campsite visitors to create a culinary dish from locally

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<sup>36</sup> For more information on work by Greg Humphries see the project publication *discovering what's on our doorstep* p.42-45 and an overview of his placement in Appendix D.

sourced ingredients, and has become an annual celebration that takes place on the Wednesday nearest to August 10<sup>th</sup>. Co-incidentally, in a pamphlet published in 1938 it is written that there used to be a Gerrans Feast in the 1800s.

\* S. Gerent's name is not found in any kalendar, either here or in Brittany or in Wales. But Gerrans Feast is on the 2nd Sunday in August, and Dr. Whittaker says that c. 1800 it was the Sunday nearest 10th August.

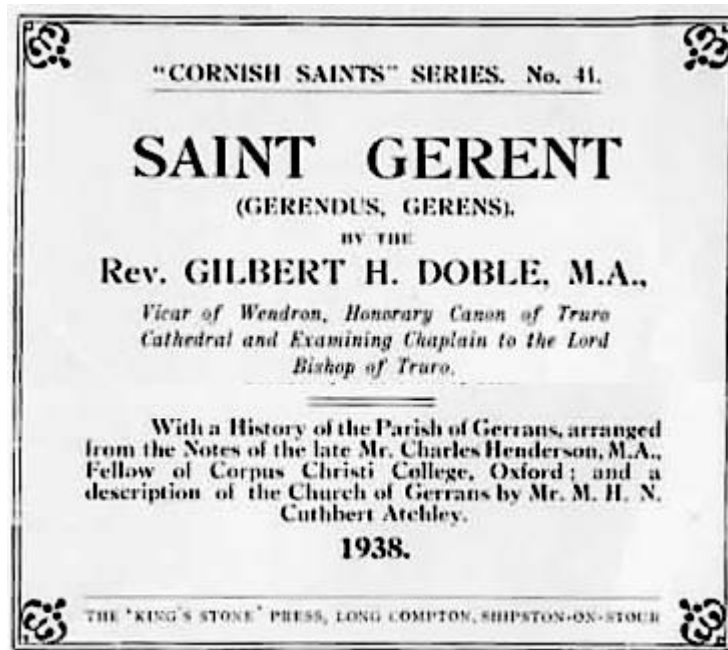
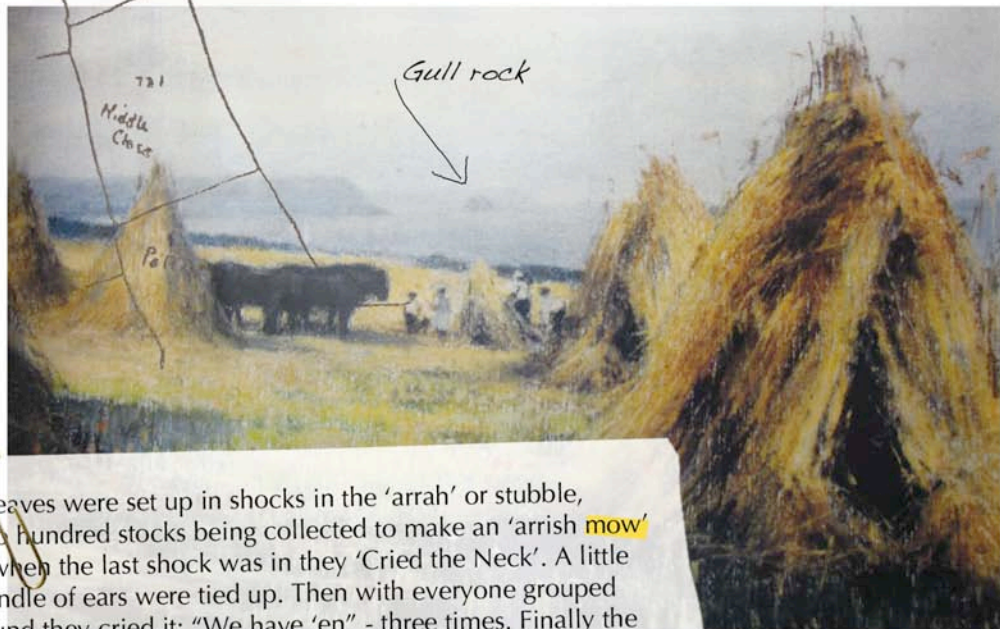
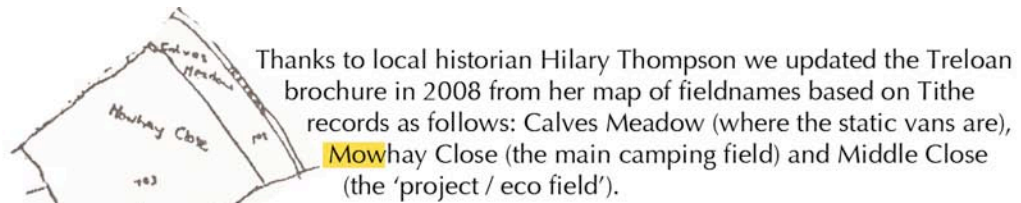


Fig. 39. Pamphlet: Cornish Saints Series 1938 available from <http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/Cornwall/Gerrans/> [accessed 10.1.2011]

Given the Celtic history of St Gerrans<sup>37</sup> this may well have been an adaption of the festival of Lammass (or Lughnasadh). Falling at the beginning of August, Lammass celebrates the first harvest of grain with the baking and sharing of bread (Loaf Mass). We know that barleycorn was<sup>37</sup> grown at Treloan (fig. 40) and that there were once three tide-powered mills in the parish nearby on the Percuil river. Celebration at this time of year is deeply ingrained in the local landscape and culture 'just as the

<sup>37</sup> The name *Gerrans* is believed to be derived from Gerent, an early Cornish king/saint who lived in the 8th century, and outside the South door is a wheeled granite Celtic cross which dates back to some time between the 6th and 10th centuries. 'King Gerent sleeps on the wind and watches patiently over the Parish of Gerrans, as he has done for over 1400 years' (Chris Pollard quoted in *discovering what's on our doorstep* p.19)

landscape is an array of related features, so – by analogy – the taskscape is an array of related activities’ (Ingold, 2000:191) an ongoing process of relations between people and their surroundings.

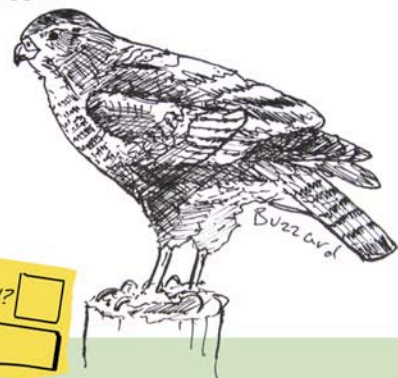


Sheaves were set up in shocks in the ‘arrah’ or stubble, two hundred stocks being collected to make an ‘arrish **mow**’ ...when the last shock was in they ‘Cried the Neck’. A little bundle of ears were tied up. Then with everyone grouped round they cried it; “We have ‘en” - three times. Finally the sheaf was taken ceremoniously back to the farm, where with drinks and kisses all round, it was hung up until next year... the corn spirit was believed to remain in the last sheaf of corn cut, ready for the next sowing.

Laurence O’Toole, *The Roseland between River and Sea*. 2002 p.61

Painting by G M de l’Aubiniere, early 20th Century  
Gerrans Parish Heritage Centre

*Treloan*



Seen a buzzard?   
when?

Fig. 40. Annie Lovejoy. *Discovering what’s on our doorstep*. p.33

Wednesday evenings are another regular festive highlight of Treloan's summer season, when people gather at the fireside to share food, music, poetry and stories.

It's often the simplest things that leave a lasting impact, and for me it has been the simple combination of sharing a fire and some food with strangers and friends, and listening to storytelling, poetry and music as the night draws in. There is something timeless in that, something that harks back throughout our shared histories, cultures and languages, something we have in common with our ancient ancestors, something shared long before words were ever written down. (Mac Dunlop, August 2009)

If you were present at any of the weekly 'fireside Sessions' you may have heard the host performance poet Mac Dunlop, describe the origins of the word *caravanserai* before introducing the various guests of the evening.

*August 2009: To some, the word 'caravan' means the summer is here and the roads are clogged with visitors trailing their homes down the A30. But for caravanserai at Treloan, 'caravan' is used in its more historical meaning; that of a 'company of people' travelling along the ancient trade routes like the 'Silk Road' between Asia and Europe. While a 'caravanserai' is a place where such 'companies of people' would meet – a shared place of exchange, rest and conviviality. (Author's journal)*

Firesides take place from July to September, each session features experienced guest performers, singers or poets from Cornwall. These events generally attract sixty to seventy people and the atmosphere is one of conviviality offering an 'open mic' platform for local residents and campsite visitors to perform, alongside guest writers and musicians.

Those attending have witnessed extraordinary encounters such as the two teenage maestro fiddle and guitar players (fig. 41), or the deeply touching memories of an ex-serviceman, or a young child singing. As well as surprise contributions from

visitors to the campsite, there have also been performances by local musicians, a historian/storyteller and the village shanty singers.<sup>38</sup> The relaxed atmosphere of



Fig. 41. Annie Lovejoy. *Fireside*. 2009

these sessions has inspired people to write and perform; a local resident said that they had introduced him to the power of poetry and fuelled his desire to write. Every session is unique and people will linger beside the fire whatever the weather, even in wind and rain, opening themselves to the encounters of the evening (fig. 75). This is *caravanseraí* - as a meeting place. Philosopher Freya Matthews suggests that if we were to substitute encounter for knowledge as our collective approach to reality, that is devoting as much energy and intelligence to advocating encounter as we do to advocating knowledge, we would 'be moving towards a society based on collective self-realisation through communication with the real rather than exploitation of it' (Matthews, 2003: 86).

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<sup>38</sup> The local shanty group Du Hag Owr was formed in response to an initial invitation from *caravanseraí* to sing at a project event held in the village hall in August 2009.



Fig. 44. Annie Lovejoy. *Discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.17

A culture of encounter is a culture of poetry and song, poetry and song salvaged from their commodification as products of the entertainment and literary industries, and restored to the rightful place as participative arts of everyday life [...] To talk with the world in this way, to translate the mundane into the dream language of the poetic order, is truly to sing the world up, and to attune ourselves to the inexhaustible layers of its own unconscious-but-simultaneously-all-conscious song. The point is not to explain the world but to sing it (Matthews, 2003: 89).

To attempt to describe live emotive experience is to be confronted by an inadequacy of language to speak of that, which is truly poetic.

*June 4<sup>th</sup> 2010: how is it possible to describe the emotion of sound? not just any sound but the specialness of young Jack's choir boy voice of perfection singing Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah – 'But you don't really care for music, do you? It goes like this. The fourth, the fifth The minor fall, the major lift The baffled king composing Hallelujah, Hallelujah'... this youngster cannot possibly have the life experience to fully inhabit the maturity of these words. To hear them sung in such purity of voice is to witness a strange beauty, everything is held still in the light of the fire and the company of people that meet for such a moment, never to meet again in that particular configuration of elemental experience and sound ...how is it possible to re-present such moments? (Author's journal)*

*Caravanserai* events function as connective opportunities that invite people to consider different ways of doing things; for example, the annual *feast* mentioned earlier entices people to shop locally, share food and culinary skills. The idea for *feast* became even more poignant after witnessing campers' use Tesco's 'shop & drop' service on site (fig.43) and in the guidebook a Cornish alternative is suggested (fig.44).



Fig. 57. Annie Lovejoy. *Tesco campsite delivery*. 2009

*March 31 2009: The field is a temporary community of desire, the entanglements of everyday life are left behind & people head for a grounded experience for a couple of weeks. What do they bring? How will they survive? Tesco 'shop and drop' or local? J. had a bucket full of oysters he'd foraged from the river yesterday. (Authors journal)*

The first *caravanserai* local food banquet in 2009 invited people, via advertising on the campsite and village notice boards, to shop locally and 'create delicious culinary delights to bring and share at a festive banquet'. Over 100 people attended this



Fig. 44. Annie Lovejoy. *Discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.15

beautiful table setting in the project field, various barbecues were set up including one where *caravanserai* artist-in-residence Greg Humphries had made the charcoal from local willow<sup>39</sup>. Food was foraged during the day in a participatory educational walk led by Greg, village resident Allan Collins and wild food expert Rachel Lambert. As the sun set, the guests were welcomed and introduced to each other in a moving speech that invited us to remember those no longer with us, and the fire sculpture (fig. 46) by Hannah Cox, was set alight in memory of Laura Hardman.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> There is an overview of Greg's residency placement in Appendix D

<sup>40</sup> Laura was the project manager for FEAST (Cornwall Council and Arts council England), she was instrumental in supporting our application and we had been looking forward to working with her.





Fig. 45. Carol Stevens. *Feast*. 2009

*August 6<sup>th</sup> 2009: Mac read a poignant text written by FEAST project manager Laura Hardman only a week before she died: 'My dad always says 'if you never change, you never grow' and I think it's dealing with challenges and problems that enable us to change. We all have coping strategies for the here and now, sometimes we need the inspiration to move beyond the unknown and taste the future. I'd like to think that art can help us change and I hope that some of our FEAST projects will elicit this change in people's lives' Laura Hardman. (Author's journal)*



Fig. 46. Annie Lovejoy. *Fire sculpture* by visiting artist Hannah Cox. *Feast*. 2009

The crowd drifted across the field to watch it burn in silence, against the backdrop of the night sky and full moon above. Although we didn't know Laura well, her aspirations for the transformational potential of art are acknowledged by *caravanseraï*, and a picture of her with the words she wrote remains in the project residency caravan. In this sense our annual celebration of local food, *feast*, is also a

memorial to Laura – a presence of absence. For those who witnessed the event it lingers in memory and the experience of the place – the fire, the night sky, the moon, the field. Place is ‘replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth, it is about connections, [...] what happened there [and] what will happen there’ (Lippard, 1997: 7), as Ingold also acknowledges:

To perceive the landscape is [...] to carry out an act of remembrance remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past (Ingold, 2000: 189).



Fig. 47. Annie Lovejoy. *Bench memorial plaque, Killigerran Head*. 2010

Walking the coastal path is a memorial journey punctuated by benches, resting places dedicated to those who have gone before us. A memorial plaque to Mary Gill and her husband Jerry mentions how he ‘walked the path more than most’, his daily walks inspiring verse that offers an intimate account of the environmental changes he witnessed over his lifetime (fig.37). Arts theorist Malcolm Miles mentions how

Jane Trowell of Platform<sup>41</sup> 'writes of four kinds of community: those of interest; of place; of the dead; and of the unborn', and that embedded in these concepts are the crucial effects of time and 'that thinking of communities of the dead and the unborn leads to a generational way of thinking which is, for her, ecological'<sup>42</sup> (Miles, 2000: 210). These events linger in the memories and conversations that occur in the proximities of campsite life. In the summer evenings cooking takes place outside, under the watchful eyes of all who pass by. The air is filled with the smell of barbecues, and amid the mass of supermarket burgers, well kitted canvas kitchens, canopied motor homes and fully floored and furnished caravan awnings, are a few fishers and foragers.



Fig. 48. Jon Dovey. *Foraging session*. August 2009

Foraging sessions are a popular *caravanserai* activity; they focus on the gathering, preparation and uses of wild plants providing opportunities for trans-generational

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<sup>41</sup> 'PLATFORM works across disciplines for social and ecological justice. It combines the transformatory power of art with the tangible goals of campaigning, the rigour of in-depth research with the vision to promote alternative futures'. <http://platformlondon.org> [accessed 7.3.2011]

<sup>42</sup> This concept is reflected in the project publication *discovering what's on our doorstep* where attention is drawn to how 'the memories and experiences that are deeply ingrained in the well trodden paths of this place by those that have gone before us [...] can help shape tomorrow's landscapes for our children and their children's children' (page 2). Portscatho historian Hilary Thompson, similarly speaks of the 'poetry of history' in her text for the project publication: *discovering what's on our doorstep* (page 63).

sharing of knowledge and skills. Involving people from all walks of life, they are important meeting points for visitors and locals, as well as a way of getting to know the immediate environment. Foraging is a slow process, the usual five minute stroll to the coastal path takes two hours when attending to the identification and uses of wild plants for food. This is situated knowledge and learning in action – an exploration of the local through the gathering, discussing, archiving, preparing and sharing of food.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the garden is an ongoing collective learning process, and as mentioned previously, helps to generate the trust and dialogue necessary to facilitate *caravanserai* residencies and creative activities at Treloan.



Fig. 49. Annie Lovejoy. *Discovering what's on our doorstep* p.11

<sup>43</sup> Art projects focused on plant identification and food preparation are becoming increasingly popular particularly in urban sites. For instance, Food for Free by Kayle Brandon and Heath Bunting based in Bristol in 2004. 'The work expresses itself in several forms – performative, textual, graphic, technological, horticultural, culinary – these forms are negotiated and set in motion by a map. The map locates the wild, feral and domestic, freely accessible edible plant organisms within the public arenas of Bristol city. [http://duo.irational.org/food\\_for\\_free/press/food\\_for\\_free\\_press.pdf](http://duo.irational.org/food_for_free/press/food_for_free_press.pdf) [accessed 7.3.2009].

The garden has sustained hospitality throughout, its produce working its way onto the tables of our resident guests, or shared at fireside sessions and village events. It is within this space of exchange that practitioners are invited to work and local residents and visitors are inspired to participate.

Activist Chris Carlsson in his book *Nowtopia* discusses how the future is being reinvented by community garden projects and economies of exchange. Shared gardens are spaces where time opens up for conversations and debates in the seasonal doings of digging, planting, collecting seaweed, sowing, weeding, gathering, clearing, composting...

Coaxing food from land is a timeless activity. To tend a patch of land, putting hands in soil, planting, harvesting food and flowers is to join an enduring human tradition and to carry forward common skills about how to live on Earth that precedes everything we label 'the economy'. (Carlsson, 2008: 81)



*it was a late fire as he sat telling us about the moon  
and the behaviours of clouds - suddenly he was gone  
to return with a box of eggs, 6 beautiful bluegreen eggs  
for our friends. He didn't know who made the label -  
it was a carton someone had given him.*

Discourse, and the trust necessary for discursive interaction and identification, grow out of a sustained relationship in time and space, the co-participation in specific material conditions of existence.  
Kester, paper presented at Critical Sites 1998



Fig. 50. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

Other 'do tanks' included an open day at the village hall 'Gathering the Threads' – a day of making, doing and meeting (fig.51). Knitters, spinners and carders demonstrated and shared their skills, and the collective completion of an artwork that revealed the processes of fleece to knitted product.



Fig. 51. Annie Lovejoy and Mary Alice Pollard. *Gathering the Threads: make, do and meet*. Gerrans Parish Memorial Hall, Portscatho. August 2009

Amidst the recycled clothes making, shanty singers, piano playing, home-made cakes, local fair-trade and charity stalls, was a participatory exhibit: *Bringing it Home: Climate Change and Roseland's Landscapes* – a chance to consider the effects of climate change locally<sup>44</sup> (fig.52).

This was a craft show with a difference, rather than the display and sale of finished products this was an open making session, a social gathering and a not-for-profit fundraiser, demonstrating local skills and shared practice, reflective of Adam Sutherland's comment that:

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<sup>44</sup> *From Climate to Landscape: Imagining the Future* is a research project concerned with predicting the effects of climate change in Cornwall. 'Professor Catherine Brace and Dr Hilary Geoghegan at the University of Exeter are working to connect the envisioning of climate impacts on landscape to the development of environmental knowledge, an enhanced sense of personal responsibility and an emergent politics of restraint in which individual, group, community and government actions are renegotiated in the light of new understandings about climate change'. <http://climatetolandscapes.wordpress.com/about> [accessed 3.5.2011]



Fig. 52. Annie Lovejoy. *Discovering what's on our doorstep* p.55

Rural culture needs to validate itself, make these craft re-enactments political, express some ideas, some values through creative activity, demonstrate ways of living creatively, consciously. This kind of activity is vital to rural communities and in many ways could and should be just as vital to urban communities as well. (in White, 2010; unpaginated)

Informed by the experiential complexities of being and doing, these generative processes, encounters, activities and participatory observations are a 'do tank'.

Reciprocity, immersion, invitation, and hospitality nurture the project – reflective of the meaning of *caravanserai* as a place where caravans or companies of people

meet – a place of shared exchange and conviviality. The work is formed from immersive spatial practices and responsive processes through which creative activities are facilitated; the ‘art’ of *caravanserai* is in the relations the artists develop with and within the locality. This ‘art’ is about care-taking (curation, *curare* meaning ‘to care’) and facilitating as much as it is about making things and developing concepts in response to context. Through celebrations of the local such as *feast*, actions and discourses to do with foraging, growing and preparing food are invigorated, an art *of* place that is literally grounded, offering an enhanced experience of place intimacy that is distinctively local.

### **Summary:**

This chapter begins with clarifying the authorship of my contribution – the limited edition art publications that I have produced through *gathering* images, data and information from an immersive experience of *being* at Treloan (5.1). This is followed by a reflexive account of the conceptual and practical aspects of envisioning, instigating and establishing the fieldwork project *caravanserai* (5.2).

The final section (5.3) presents an interlacing of insights, images and project narratives as ‘theory-informed storytelling’ to convey the relational *meshwork* that is *caravanserai*. These contextual insights and narratives offer a glimpse into the processes and events of the project as well the conditions that have enabled them. The images from the publications reflect the *immersive* and *gathering* processes outlined in my practice-led emergent methodology.<sup>45</sup> Here, the notion of fieldwork is expanded from the collation of ethnographic material to include the contribution of an aesthetic and functional artistic response. Context-led arts practice involves *being there* (in situ) *gathering* material, data and information, toward creating a

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<sup>45</sup> Described in **A multi-method approach** (chapter 4. p.93)



multicentred and polyvocal<sup>46</sup> representation of place.

In the next chapter *commonplacing* is introduced as a design concept for context-led arts practice that has arisen through the research. It is a method of re-presentation that reveals place-ethical processes and reconnects artwork to the context of its emergence. Following this is a critical evaluation of the fieldwork that has taken place and an overview of the project in relation to Lippard's criteria for 'an art governed by [a] place-ethic'; in keeping with the methodological approach and analysis of a selection of my previous projects.<sup>47</sup>

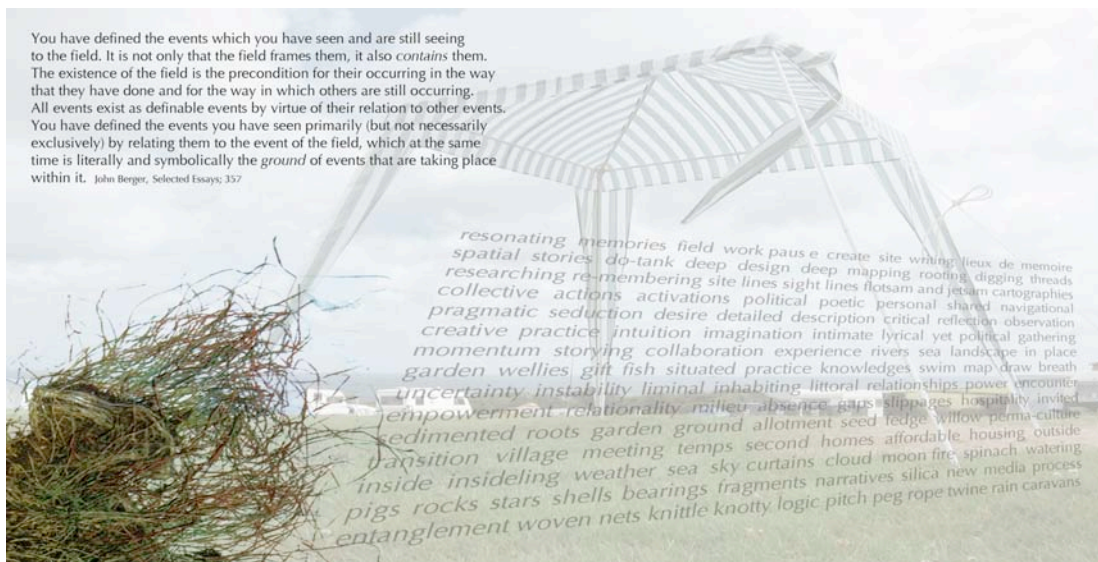


Fig. 53. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

<sup>46</sup> Inclusive of many voices - multicentred 'senses of place' (Lippard, 1997)

<sup>47</sup> Discussed in chapter four and documented in Appendix B.

## 6. Harvesting - a *gathering* process

*to gather* means both *to collect* and *to understand*<sup>1</sup>

The last section of the previous chapter *being there* (5.3) gave some insights into the processes, activities and events of the fieldwork project; in the first half of this chapter I reflect on the creative distillation of the material generated. *Gathering* (6.1) introduces *commonplacing* as a design concept that has arisen through this practice-led research. As a key element of my contribution *commonplacing* articulates the creative use of designed assemblages to re-present the multifaceted responses and contributions *gathered* from an *immersive* fieldwork process. This section details the conceptual development, design and production of the publications that combine with this text to form my thesis: a guidebook for Treloan – *discovering what's on our doorstep* (6.1.1); a notebook for the delegates of Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference in 2009 – *insites* (6.1.2); and an online project archive – *www.caravanserai.info* (6.1.3).

The second half of the chapter reviews the *caravanserai* project (6.2) reflecting on the relations, processes, creative activities, impact and effects of working within a specific context – that of a camping and caravan site on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall, UK. Following this, I expand on Lippard's list of place-ethical criteria (6.2.1) in relation to the research objectives; i) to develop *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice; and ii) reconnect artwork to context – through the representation of context-led outcomes that reveal the socio-spatial processes of their emergence.

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<sup>1</sup> (Griffiths, 2008: 37).

## 6.1. **Gathering**

This section introduces a design concept that has arisen through this practice-led research that I refer to as *commonplacing*; a form of creative assemblage used to re-present the multi-faceted responses, encounters and activities of *caravanserai* in the publications that accompany this thesis.

*May 18<sup>th</sup> 2010: it's a rare occasion that a commissioning brief turns out to be so inspirational! This morning I received info re. 'Common Places: a project being managed by artist/curator Alex Murdin. Tucked on to the end was an appendix that collated information on 'the commons' and 'commonplacing'. I was particularly taken with the notion of commonplacing as a way of thinking about the guidebook design, its function as a notebook assemblage of diverse material, its reference to place and its sense of plurality. To think about the commons culturally is also interesting - 'the commons' of today as collective and participatory arts, creative commons (licensing) – open-source learning and sharing of information. (Author's journal)*

Having received information on 'producing a commonplace' in the appendix of a commissioning brief, I was intrigued by the term *commonplacing*, it stirred my imagination with its multiple associations and oblique references to place, placing, the commons, sharing, positioning, collating, putting together – and the possibilities of assemblage as a design format to convey the relational complexities of place. Producing or writing a commonplace is known as *commonplacing*. Commonplace books (or commonplaces) emerged in the 15th century as a form of handwritten notebook, or scrapbook, that contained all manner of memorabilia and information – such as 'medical recipes, quotes, letters, poems, tables of weights and measures, proverbs, prayers, legal formulas' (Murdin, 2010: unpaginated). This personal notebook<sup>2</sup> was similar to an artist's or writer's notebook or journal; and was used by

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<sup>2</sup> Although a commonplace might contain information associated with an almanac (tables of weights and measures, planting times, weather information etc) it was a personal collection, a notebook rather than a publication with a particular purpose. 'Time was when readers kept commonplace books. Whenever they came across a pithy passage, they copied it into a notebook under an appropriate heading, adding observations made in the course of daily life. [...] you made a book of your own, one stamped with your personality' Robert Darnton, *Extraordinary Commonplaces*. Available from <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2000/dec/21/extraordinary-commonplaces> [accessed 18.5.2010]

individuals as an aid to inspiration and remembering useful concepts and facts learned. The journalist and author Steven Johnson, discusses *commonplacing* as an archiving process similar to blogging. Milton, Bacon and Locke are referenced as ‘zealous believers in the memory-enhancing powers of the commonplace book’ enabling one to ‘lay up a fund of knowledge from which we may at all times select what is useful in the several pursuits of life” (Johnson, 2010: unpaginated).

*Commonplacing* was an orderly system of filing information under various headings, hence its memory enhancing powers (similar to the contemporary use of tagging in web logs). Cultural theorist Richard Yeo discusses the commonplace book as an evolving system of knowledge *gathering* (my emphasis) that stored notes for easy access and sharing of information pointing out that:

The term ‘commonplace’ had not yet suffered its ultimate debasement whereby it came to denote a platitude; on the contrary, the content of these notebooks was seen as representing a choice selection of material on important topics. (Yeo, 2008: 120)

This ‘debasement’ of the ‘commonplace’ is actually quite evocative in relation to context-led art’s ability to reveal the extra-ordinary in the everyday.

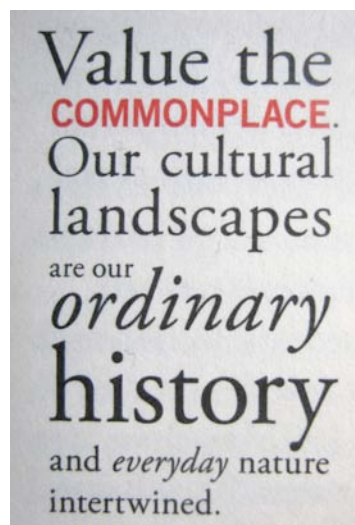


Fig. 54. Clifford and King. *Common Ground Rules for Local Distinctiveness*. 2006

6.1.1 *Discovering what's on our doorstep* – reflections on the development and production of the guidebook for Treloan.

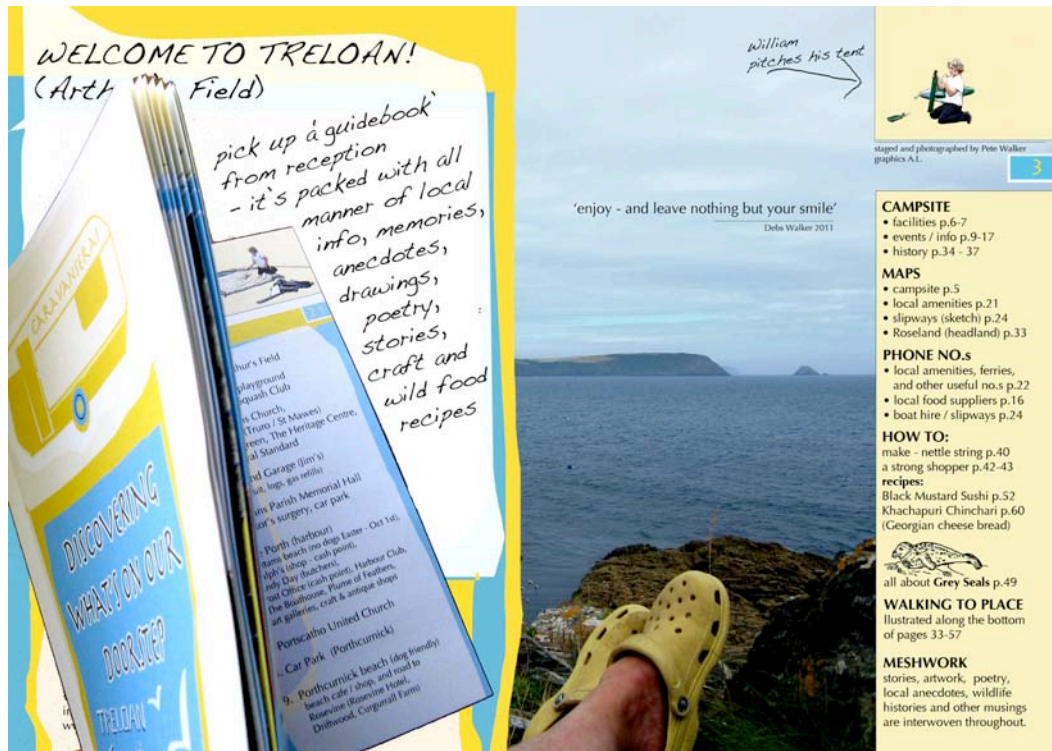


Fig. 55. Annie Lovejoy. *discovering what's on our doorstep*.

To produce a guidebook for Treloan as a functional artwork required combining useful information with material gathered from the fieldwork. The book needed to engage both visitor and visited in a multifaceted storytelling of the local environment and culture, moving beyond the more familiar and commercially driven guidebook. In a statement that resonates with my research concerns, Tim Ingold writes that ‘people’s knowledge of the environment undergoes continuous formation in the very course of their moving about in it [...] we know as we go, not *before* we go’ (Ingold, 2000: 230). Such knowledge, he notes, can be accounted for ‘in terms of the *generative potentials of a complex process* rather than the *replication of a complex structure*’ (Ingold, 2000: 230-1, my emphasis). This statement stimulated my

thinking in terms of how I might be able to reveal the *generative potentials of a complex process* – a responsive context-led exploration of place (*caravanserai*), rather than produce the *replication of a complex structure* – reductive representation or a model of practice applied to a place. The discovery of *Commonplacing* provided the design solution offering a means to present a deep mapping – a knowing as we go (Ingold, 2000: 230), via context-led imaginative cartographies of sensibility and socio-spatial experience.

Deciding the format, feel (paper) and style of the book was straightforward given that it needed to be accessible to people of various ages and walks of life. The format would simply be the same as the local guidebook (A5), the paper – unbleached and recycled given the environmental focus and the style – a mix of scrapbook / handbook and D.I.Y. manual. Influenced by catalogues produced in the 1960's such as *The Whole Earth Catalogue* and *Survival into the 21st Century*, the block printed covers of Maria novel *Two Caravans* and the illustrative and educational style of i-spy books (fig.56). Pages would mix handwritten texts, notes attached to images with paper clips, drawings, diagrams, illustrations and a 'flip book' animation in the corner of the page.

Guidebooks generally provide information for visitors applicable to the consumption of place – where to find accommodation, local amenities, services, heritage sites and so on. The local version that serves the Roseland is the *Fal River Cornwall Area Guide Book* produced and distributed freely by the local ferry company. Its design is a typically glossy A5 template that showcases local businesses, places to stay, eat out and so on, along with listings of things to do and see, maps, ferry times, bus and tide timetables; an informative booklet designed to promote the area and attract the use of the company ferries. This consumer-led guidebook

representation of place produced purely for visitors is ripe territory for creative intervention.



Fig. 56. Toward a design aesthetic - DIY / handbook / manual style

As such, *discovering what's on our doorstep* attempts to promote a more holistic visioning of place through juxtaposing the insights and activities of inhabitants (the visited) with those of visitors alongside environmental and cultural anecdotes. This is a deep mapping that values the *commonplace*, the cultural landscapes of the everyday, revealing the multifaceted senses of a particular location affected by tourism. The 'guidebook', 'companion' or 'vade mecum' (meaning *go with me*) for

Treloan is an active archiving of place, offering spatial information that becomes placial through the representation of embedded insights and creative responses.

June 26<sup>th</sup> 2010:

vade mecum - a handbook or guide that is constantly kept at hand for consultation. ORIGIN early 17th cent. modern Latin, literally 'go with me,' from Latin vadere 'go,' (OED). *The concept of a vade mecum being 'constantly kept at hand' leads me to consider locative media as another output - what is constantly kept at hand more than anything else these days is a mobile. I know a GPS application could be constructed as I've worked with locative media before and found it restrictive - thank goodness I'm saved from these concepts at Treloan where so called 'pervasive media' is not as ubiquitous as might be thought - signal is variable or often non existent. (Author's journal)*



Fig. 57. Annie Lovejoy. *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.23

This activity of being guided – *go with me* ('vade mecum') and *knowing 'as we go'* (Ingold, 2000: 230), generates ongoing experiential understandings of place. Mindful of these concepts the design of *discovering what's on our doorstep* began with documenting a walk to the Place Estate (fig. 73) illustrated in a linear photographic journey along the bottom of the book's pages (pp.33-63). This walk through the pages (rather than a path mapped from above) calls for an active engagement in the experience of walking accompanied by a multi-layering of stories, images and texts



associated with the images that appear along the way.



Fig. 58. Mac Dunlop, Annie Lovejoy, Peter Walker. *walking to Place*. 2010

This core activity central to the design process generated the positioning of further pages as appropriate to their function. The book starts from the campsite (practical information, events and activities) moving through the villages to the central map of the Roseland, where the walk to Place Estate begins. Interwoven throughout are contributions from numerous people as well as documentation of *caravanseraï* project activities. This intermingling of stories and facts to do with the environmental and social changes that have happened in a specific locality are re-presented as creative reminders of where we are and what we are in danger of losing.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A place ethical purpose conducive with the aspirations of our funders (discussed in chapter five and detailed in Appendix C): 'Environmental issues are affecting and will continue to increasingly affect our lives in Cornwall, and we are interested in creative engagement projects which allow people to explore, debate, learn, comment, and even create solutions for some of these challenges.' Feast funding guidelines <http://www.cornwallculture.co.uk/feast> [accessed 5.3.09]

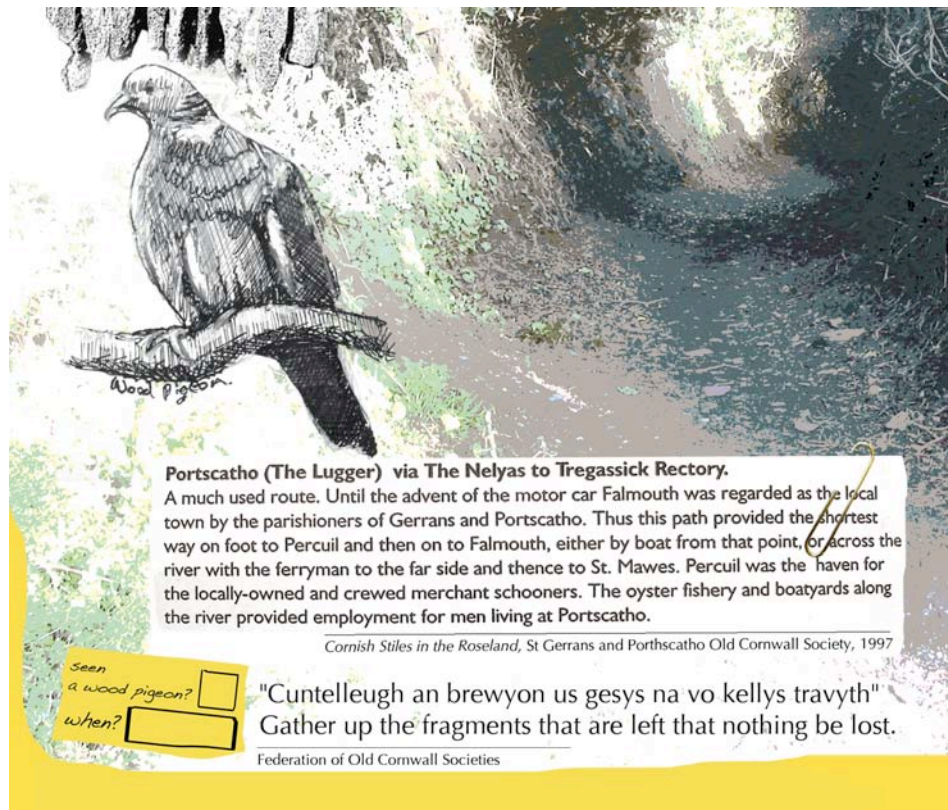


Fig. 59. Annie Lovejoy. *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.30

September 24<sup>th</sup> 2010: *On commonplacing...* 'When you come to any passages that seem to you useful [...] hold them fast in your remembrance, lest otherwise they might be taking wings to flee away. (in Yeo, 2008: 116) – *this reminds me of the Old Cornwall Society motto – 'gather up the fragments that are left that nothing be lost'...I'll hold fast the little tidbits in the pages with paper clips so they don't fly away. (Author's journal).*

September 24<sup>th</sup> 2010: *In 2008 the Oxford University Press culled a significant amount of words from their Oxford Junior Dictionary, among them were: catkin, brook, minnow, acorn, buttercup, almond, ash, heron, raven, blackberry, conker – new words in the edition included: celebrity, attachment and database. 'Children are now adept ecologists of the technoscape, with a dozen words for font-types and emoticons – but with none for the fruit of the chestnut tree or the bramble' (Macfarlane in Evans, G and Robson, D. 2010: 116). I'm going to add 'i-spy' tags to pictures of birds and wildlife throughout - hopefully that will engage children and their families. it's pretty unlikely that someone will spot a chough but I think its still important that the 'i-spy' tag stays in, maybe I should add more info about choughs, will it suffice, just as a suggestion of the underpinning ecologies that drive this project? how explicit does one need to be? I hope to evoke the importance of caring for this place to visitors through an assemblage of juxtapositions within these pages. (Author's journal).*

The design process was iterative, gathering momentum as it developed. As the book took form it prompted further research and gathering of information, stories, anecdotes and memories from various contributors. A poem written by writer-in-residence Alyson Hallett inspired by being in St Anthony Church is combined with Pearl Sutton's memories of the maids at Place Manor; referencing places passed on the walk (and illustrated in the images along the bottom of the page).

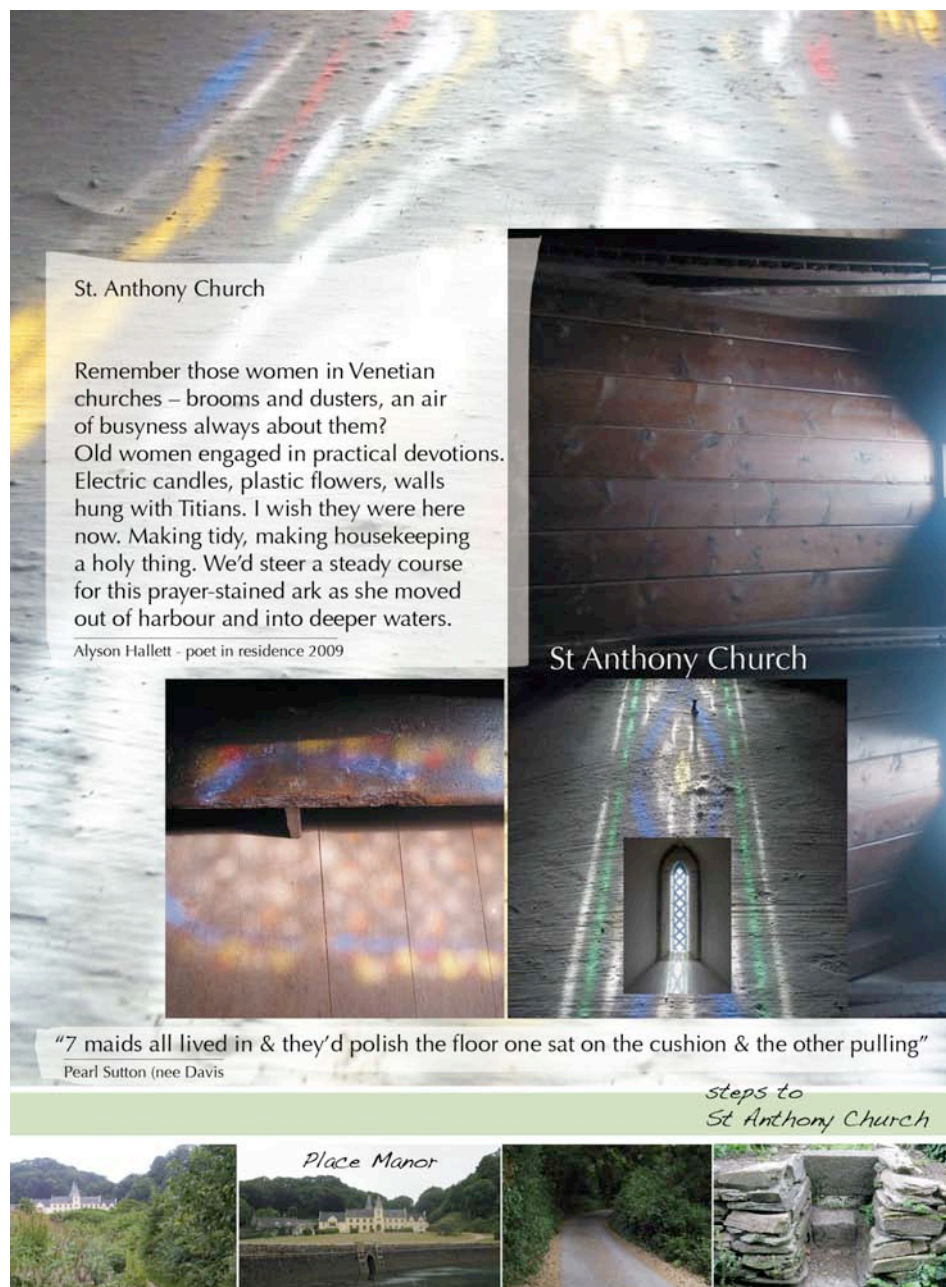


Fig. 60. Annie Lovejoy. *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.47

Rather than fitting a prescribed narrative, the *commonplacing* or juxtapositioning of material inspires imaginative thinking. The crafting of assemblage disrupts the linear, allowing for new meanings to emerge that are alive to the relational complexities of place and inclusive of the presence of absence – all that is incomplete, provisional and subject to change. Hilary Thompson, a local historian oversaw the final stages of the guidebook production and contributed a short text in response as follows:

The poetry of history lies in the quasi-miraculous fact that once, on this earth, once, on this familiar spot of ground, walked other men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passions, but now all gone, one generation vanishing into another, gone as utterly as we ourselves shall shortly be gone, like ghosts at cockcrow.  
G.M. Trevelyan (in Lovejoy, 2011: 63)<sup>4</sup>

A reminder of artist and educator Jane Trowell's 'communities of interest' mentioned in the previous chapter where the inclusion of those no longer with us or as yet unborn is seen as a generational way of thinking that is essentially ecological (Miles, 2000: 210). Artists, as Lippard points out, 'have always travelled and provided a lens through which the rest of us look. Court artists, scientific artists, itinerant portraitists, [...] expeditionary and documentary photographers' participating in the 'booming business of guidebooks' (Lippard, 1999:4).

In 2002 Jeremy Deller created a guidebook during his arts residency at CCAC Wattis Institute in San Francisco described by Glen Helfand as 'unorthodox though usable' (2002: unpaginated). Deller's project *Gold Rush* involved touring the state of California in an old jeep and purchasing 5 acres of desert land. The guidebook documents these processes and is a form of treasure hunt, an idea that Deller

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<sup>4</sup> *Discovering what's on our doorstep* p.63.

describes as dovetailing 'nicely with the idea of the gold rush' (Helfand 2002: unpaginated). Deller notes his use of the guidebook format as follows:

A guidebook is a convenient vehicle with which to tell a story and connect disparate elements, and there's an interactive, even performative aspect to it, with readers acting out the journey in their own way. The book is more about the people than the places. It's literally a tour of people: You can meet the folks I've met. They run museums and shops or whatever. If you do meet them, you will get a free gift--and if you take the whole tour, you can collect a complete set of gifts. (Deller in Helfand 2002: unpaginated)

The guidebook is an interesting format (vehicle), as its functionality mobilises the publication to offer a performative experience of place, and at the same time, it can also reflect the socio-spatial relations and processes of being in a particular place. For instance, Deller's experience of travelling through Gold Rush territory via the people that he met will be different for those following in his footsteps, they 'will catch up with where another's history has got to' in the here and now, 'the *hic* and *nunc*' (Massey, 2005; 125). The publication becomes mobilised through doing the tour. However, without doing the actual physical tour, it's also possible that Deller's guidebook would be evocative of the people/places he visited through the *commonplacing* of 'disparate elements' – images, text and sound that re-present the socio-spatial relations of his journey. Differing conceptually from Deller's *Gold Rush* (a treasure trail tour of an expansive territory), the focus of *discovering what's on our doorstep* is local, providing glimpses of a particular place through a transdisciplinary 'lens' of activities, encounters and events that have emerged from *being* at Treloan. Here, producing a *commonplace* combines hitherto unrecorded, unarchived and overlooked local knowledges with known factual information.

6.1.2 *Insites: a notebook* – reflections on the design of the limited edition<sup>5</sup> art publication developed in collaboration with *caravanserai* geographer-in-residence , Dr Harriet Hawkins.

*Insites* was produced as a notebook for delegates of the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference 2009. Although developed prior to *commonplacing* as a design concept, my intention was to find creative ways to move beyond the framing limitations of the singular page (Lister, 1998:1).<sup>6</sup> The notebook *Insites* attempts to make visible the processes of context-led arts practice and the interwoven relational complexities of place in a connective aesthetic where images and texts are threaded through the pages.

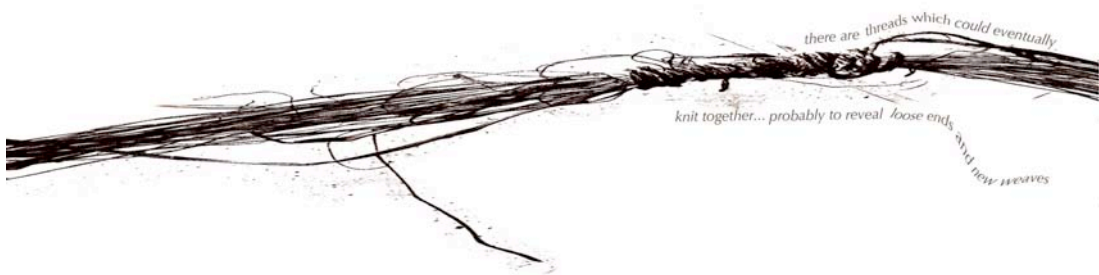


Fig. 61. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

The notebook is an active object of enquiry, it is both aesthetic and functional; its blank pages invite participation – further inscription, in recognition of the evolving nature of place and the practice upon which it reflects. With its gaps and slippages, the book is intentionally unfinished.

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<sup>5</sup> 1500 books were produced, 1100 were distributed at the conference and the remainder via various arts/geography educational seminars, symposia and workshops. The notebook is also available online and can be accessed on the *caravanserai* website at <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/publications/>

<sup>6</sup> Lister authored a text for a catalogue of my work in 1998. His observations on reductive representation (within the catalogue) describe how the pressure of the form continually works to obscure relationships pertinent to the production of the artwork represented. 'Each image is framed by the edges of the page, each one is placed in considered isolation and held apart from the other (invisible) images sitting on the other closed pages.' (Lister, 1998:1)

..often things are unfinishedness, loose-ended.  
That is, we don't tie up all the neat ends  
Helen Myer Harrison and Newton Harrison, *Non-finito*: 570



Fig. 62. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

The first half of the book asks us where we are, but suggests that the map does not tell us everything about the place. It juxtaposes the conventions of the map with experiential encounters and fragmented narratives - an assemblage of knowings about a place.



Fig. 63. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

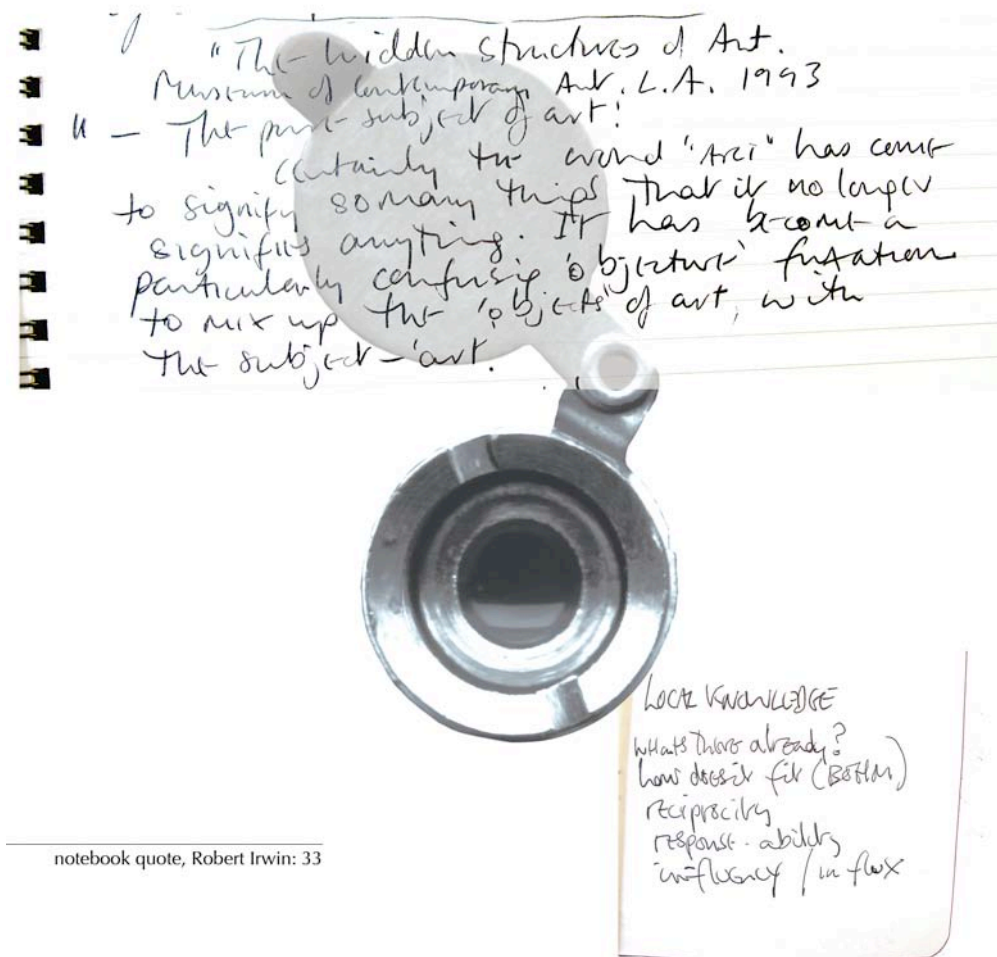
*Insites* poses questions of researching and representing place, space and site visually. If the volume develops a 'deep mapping' it does so through deep design: responsive creative cultural practice informed by experiential understanding of place. Photographs, drawings and maps bleed together, texts form pathways through pages, meandering across the images, trailing off before building again. (Harriet Hawkins. *Insites; a notebook* text, August 2009)

The second half of the book concerns itself with practice.

*insites* is embedded within the art project *caravanserai* (meaning a meeting place of caravans, companies, people) initiated by Annie and fellow artist Mac Dunlop. Central to this process based art practice are a series of 'residencies', occupations of the site that are not so much 'in' or 'about' a place, as 'of' it. The work is formed from

immersive spatial practices and responsive processes through which creative activities are facilitated; activities which explore and celebrate the local environment and culture. So the 'art' of *caravanserai* is in the relations the artists develop with and within locality. (Harriet Hawkins. *Insites; a notebook* text, August 2009)

The collaboration with geographer Harriet Hawkins emerged from her invitation to exhibit artwork as part of the 'Art and Geographical knowledge' session at the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference 2009. My response was to suggest the production of a limited edition artwork (or 'multiple') for conference delegates as an intimate form of art/geographical knowledge.



notebook quote, Robert Irwin: 33

Fig. 64. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009



For Harriet to be 'geographer-in-residence' was to have the opportunity to think amidst these creative occupations of place, to critique the concept of 'residency' in the context of terms such as dwelling, duration, mobility, community and connectivity. (Harriet Hawkins. August 2009. *Insites; a notebook text*)

Harriet and I did not know each other previous to this project; our collaboration emerged from a shared interest to produce an artwork for the forthcoming geography conference. We were interested in the interstices of our disciplines, how we might engage others in an art/geography-geography/art exploration of place through context-led practice.



Fig. 65. Annie Lovejoy. *the project van workspace*. June 2009

Working through conceptual ideas in site specific, local contexts it aims to explore different ways of knowing place, the collaborative process and the potential value of creative cultural practice in considering geographical ways of knowing. (Harriet Hawkins. August 2009. *Insites: a notebook text*)

The collaborative working process was fast and intense, occurring in the midst of a busy period of *caravanserai* orchestration and facilitation. The book was mapped conceptually during an initial residency week (June 2009) at Treloan, and followed up via email. A month later we met for a three day period of intense collaboration to produce the image / text content and structure for the design work. The project van (fig.65) was our oasis, our place of concentrated effort, contestation, inspiration and experimentation. We began by separately jotting down insights, texts and journal extracts. As we worked through books, articles and our own notebooks we began to interrupt ourselves – breaking into a ‘betweening’ process of shared snippets, flashes of inspiration (and tension) saved to a ‘yes’ pile or cast aside. Gaining momentum, ideas took shape and a form began to emerge from our shared intention to reveal the interconnectedness of relations, of place and practice – routes and roots. We sought to create an image/text work that shifted understandings of a particular place from static representation to one of flux and complexity through the immersive process of being-in-residence.

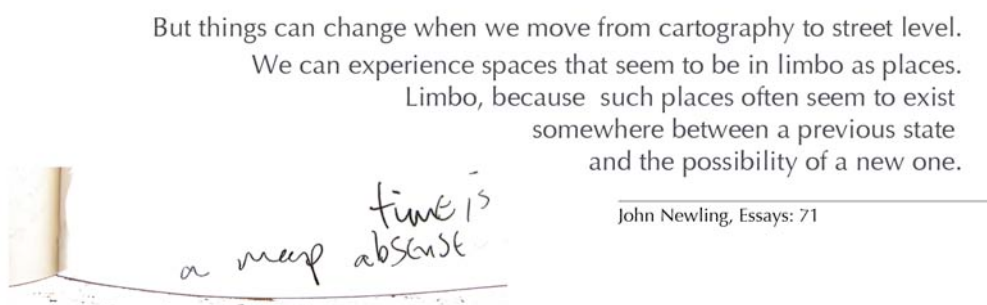


Fig. 66. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

This conceptual mapping included exploring our responses to visual material, styles and design ideas, toward envisioning a ‘connective aesthetics’ (Gablik in Lacy, 1995:74-87) that we felt comfortable with. The notebook was progressed from this

conceptual platform through our individual skills and disciplinary stances. In my experience, collaboration works best when it is alive to shared commitment, dialogue and the tensions of creative exploration accompanied with an awareness of limitations, as Hawkins states;

This is not a disciplinary imperialism, a policing of boundaries, but rather suggests that disciplinarity can be a requisite for these moments of mutual respect and creative learning, where what emerges is greater, ideally, than the sum of its parts. It is maybe only when we know from where we speak and practice, that it becomes possible to develop effective dialogues. (Hawkins, 2011: 15)

6.1.3 **www.caravanserai.info** – (<http://www.caravanserai.info>) is a website that documents the development of the project as well as publicising activities and events that take place. The web log<sup>7</sup> demonstrates a means of publicly re-presenting processes involved in context-led work. As an observational tool it sets up a dynamic structure that can be interwoven with related information. It serves as a functional resource linking to local initiatives, information and activities generated by people associated with the project – thematic ‘data & insights’ (Raven, 1995).

The website is viewed regularly by ‘would-be’ visitors to Treloan (via a link from the campsite’s online presence) and also via websites of people who have been involved with the project. Beyond this primary audience are the various local, national and international cultural sector networks and ‘communities of interest’ established through professional practice.<sup>8</sup> <http://www.caravanserai.info> is a registered domain name or URL (Uniform Resource Locator) that links directly to the ‘blog’ (web log). Using a WordPress<sup>9</sup> template (interface to the content management system), multimedia files can be uploaded and categorised. The dynamics of

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<sup>7</sup> <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com> accessed via <http://www.caravanserai.info>

<sup>8</sup> Please see participant/audience statistics (for FEAST) *Secondary involvement*. Appendix C

<sup>9</sup> WordPress is an online facility that facilitates blogging as a free service (with certain limitations such as limits on storage space and the infiltration of advertising on posts). For more information please see <http://en.wordpress.com>

blogging ‘as you go’ – documenting process – is an efficient journaling system for processes that generate a lot of media files and associated material. The blog in this sense, is a memory or storage device that can be linked or ‘tagged’ to other work, concepts, ideas enabling threads of information to be arranged in ways that can be accessed as needed. This form of archiving is useful for observing the development of a project over a period of time and the relational aspects of its emergence. Conducive to the immersive and connective nature of context-led arts practice, blogging offers a reflexive, functional and dynamic space for extending dissemination of practice beyond fixed narratives and the singularity of iconic representation discussed earlier.

Blogging is seen as a technological development of *commonplacing* by the author and journalist Steven Johnson. He discusses the commonplace indexing system that enabled the accumulation of quotes and observations as being ‘in a certain sense a search algorithm, a defined series of steps that allows the user to index the text in a way that makes it easier to query’. This ability to log entries and quickly access them when needed, Johnson notes, ‘also served the higher purpose of “facilitat[ing] reflexive thought”’ (Johnson, 2010: unpaginated). Jen Almjeld discusses the historical roots of blogging as an academic practice – that of *commonplacing*. Referencing Earle Haven’s report ‘that humanists and theologians popularised the commonplace book as a “device of memoia technical, or ‘artificial memory”’ (Almjeld, J. 2006: unpaginated), she notes that:

Access and order in the chaos of finalized projects are not the only benefits of blogging. Viewing the entire body of one’s work may also help scholars better position themselves in their chosen fields and may also serve as impetus for invention, or *inventio* in the terms of ancient Greek rhetors, for upcoming projects. As students continue to build a repository of ideas – both past and future – in this online space, blogs continue their usefulness not only as places of storage, but also as places of production. (Almjeld, J. 2006: unpaginated)

The 'combinatorial, connective nature of the medium' advocates free access to information and the sharing of knowledge 'that leads us into common places, not glass boxes' (Johnson, 2010: unpaginated).

## 6.2. *Caravanserai* – reviewed

The fieldwork project – *caravanserai* – is an exploration of place through context-led arts practice that considers *how context-led arts practice might enhance our experiences of, and relationships with, a particular environment*. This project evidences socio-spatial relations, processes, creative activities, outcomes and responses to working within a specific context – that of a camping and caravan site on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall, UK.

The objectives of the study are i) to develop *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice; ii) to reconnect artwork to context – through the representation of context-led outcomes that reveal the socio-spatial processes of their emergence.

Throughout this text I have emphasised the importance of a responsive approach to context that allows for meaningful work to develop as intrinsic to the situation. Such an approach promotes an understanding of place as being replete with human histories and memories fundamental to creative possibilities in life and art (Evans, and Robson, 2010; Kaprow, 1993; Lippard, 1997). Where we are, makes a difference to who we are and what we know, the conscious body engages with the *conditions* of a specific location (Rendell, 2002; Berleant 2003). In this sense, places are not static and bounded but are constituted by moving through a *meshwork* of living relations (Ingold 2006). My 'art' practice is driven and inspired by contextual relations rather than being a studio-based journey of self-expression, the focus is on

*where things happen* rather than on a *thing that is in the world*. The context or place provides the *conditions* of possibility for creative social practice (Cresswell, 2004). Although I am not a geographer or social scientist, I wander in the fields of related social /cultural / human geographies, art-geographical connections and anthropology; because in those areas I can find understandings and perceptions that challenge the interpretive objectification of artwork and the categorization (commodification) of arts practice. I can find a place from which to reflect upon the mechanisms of art operations that tend towards the creation of 'new' movements rather than the relational dynamics of existing creative contexts.<sup>10</sup>

I was interested in *caravanseraï* as a *meeting place*, an 'intersection of numerous trajectories of all kinds brought together in physical proximity' (Massey and Rose, 2003:4). A space where I could invite people from differing walks of life to contribute to a responsive exploration of place.

Because I had inhabited the space throughout the year and witnessed the changes of seasons and the comings and goings of campsite and village life, I was able to envisage possibilities and a range of responsive activities. These ideas arose from exploring nooks and crannies with antennae alert, encountering people on walks and attending village events such as the local history society, the church, the annual fetes and regattas, the pub, the shop and working for a local bed and breakfast in the heart of the village. These different constellations of relations inspired creative potential and consolidated avenues of expertise, participation and support. For example:

- attending local history society meetings strengthened my relationship with people in the village concerned with local history, memories, facts, stories; extending relations (through trust) with people who have contributed to the

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<sup>10</sup> For example my discussion on Bourriaud and Ingold in **Reclaiming the Relational** (chapter three)

guidebook or advised on its production. (fig. 67)



Fig. 67. Mary Alice Pollard. *Discussing a prototype of the guidebook with local historian Chris Pollard*<sup>11</sup>

- getting to know the vicar of St Gerrans Church, helped with getting permission from the Churches Conservation Trust for Alyson Hallett (*caravanserai* poet-in-residence) to have access to St Anthony church, a beautiful little church tucked away on the Place Estate rarely used for services.<sup>12</sup>
- being part of village fetes and the regatta, garnered support and participation in the project from local stall holders, church goers, singers, cake makers, boat builders. This led to events and activities such as the *Gathering the Threads: make, do and meet* day (fig.51) and building the raft for regatta.<sup>13</sup>



Fig. 68. Annie Lovejoy. *Willow and canvas boat. Portscatho Regatta raft race. 2010*

- forming relations with the campsite owners, neighbours of Treloan and villagers, enabled Greg Humphries to further his interest in learning and

<sup>11</sup> Author of numerous local publications including the *The book of Gerrans and Portscatho* (Halsgrove 2008).

<sup>12</sup> The letter to the Churches Conservation Trust is in Appendix D

<sup>13</sup> The raft is the focus of a feature on Treloan in the ITV series *Caroline Quentin's Cornwall* 2012.

archiving traditional skills during his *caravanserai* residency<sup>14</sup> (fig.69).



Fig. 69. Annie Lovejoy. *Greg Humphries and Jude Tomlinson discuss the willow plantation.*

This concept of a work being navigated by relational processes is visually represented in the publication *insites: a notebook* (Fig 70); in which the design incorporates a sketch by artist-in-residence Greg Humphries mapping the relations particular to the work he did at Treloan. As Greg experienced, connections were in place to access a wealth of local knowledge and support that furthered his creative interests and the sharing of skills with others. This resulted in the regeneration of a local willow plantation, learning a local traditional skill that was on the verge of being lost, and teaching and archiving his newly acquired knowledge.<sup>15</sup> In recognition of his work with *caravanserai* Greg received the *Unlocking Cornish Potential, Award for Creative Enterprise Cornwall Best Postgraduate Placement* in 2009:

Greg was recognised for his innovative work at Treloan Costal Holidays campsite, Portscatho. During his placement Greg worked closely with the site owners Peter and Deborah Walker and local community members to re-introduce willow coppicing and lobster pot weaving as a sustainable practice. Greg also created a fedge, peg loom and charcoal burner, all of which helped develop the sites ongoing engagement with a

<sup>14</sup> For more information about Greg Humphries' residency, please see Appendix D

<sup>15</sup> Greg's work features in the guidebook - *discovering what's on our doorstep* on pages 41,44 and 45.



sustainable tourism project through art practice. (Zoe Mogridge, Placement Co-ordinator, University College Falmouth, 2009)

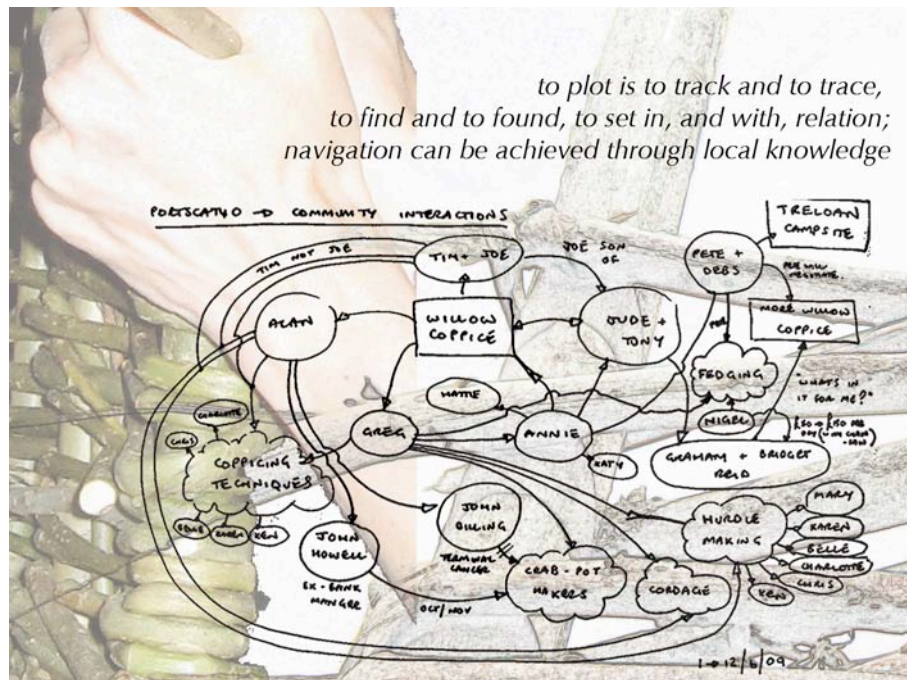


Fig. 70. Annie Lovejoy and Harriet Hawkins. *Insites: a notebook*. 2009

*Caravanserai* sits within the very situation that it seeks to address (and that has made it so successful) – tourism. To be at Treloan for any length of time is to be aware of the 'peculiar reciprocity for longing at the heart of tourism which binds insiders to outsiders' (Lippard, 1999: 13). Tourists may long for a connection with the land, beauty, local tradition and the exotica of being somewhere else. Locals, meanwhile, may long for progress, and an improved economy that enables them and their families to live and stay in the place of the visited. The project has expanded since the first season in 2009 its activities becoming incorporated into the campsite as regular events attended by returning visitors and local residents.

You've brought the community and campsite back together – just like you said you wanted to. (Debs Walker, Treloan Coastal Holidays. August 2009)

Thanks for showing us how to enjoy each other's company, for giving people the opportunity to try something new and for bonding the village, the people in it and the people that come to visit. I've never seen so much love towards others, thanks a million. (village resident, Allan Collins. August 2009)

As far as I know, the project is unique in that it is based within a thriving tourist business and holiday destination, reaching a wide cross section of people; and, in terms of its operational structures, is able to be flexible, functioning through exchange and reciprocity. Another bonus is that the all-too-familiar administrative requirements for health and safety are already in place at the campsite, and a team of people on hand with knowledge of the locality and campsite should they be needed. This team of people include caravanners the Arthurs, who were once visiting holidaymakers but now spend their summers at Treloan assisting with onsite events such as putting up the marquee, preparing food, gardening and so on. They are a retired couple with time on their hands and an enthusiasm for participating and performing; Steve, who is of Cornish descent (and has never performed before or been particularly interested in poetry) has perfected the lyrical delivery of a poem he learnt as a child – now a popular fireside request (fig. 71).



Fig. 71 Annie Lovejoy. *Discovering what's on our doorstep* p.14

The impact and effects of the project are manifold and ongoing from providing opportunities for professional and creative development and the acquiring of new skills; to the more intangible benefits of shared experience and collective action... memories, histories, inspirations, and reflections. All of which stimulate an *enhanced experience of place*. Local residents, visitors, participants, creative practitioners, partners and funders have all benefited from the project:

- artists, poets, performers, geographers, students and academics through opportunities to develop their practice and research.

It seems to me that whatever form a residency takes, it is crucial that the writer has some kind of inspirational space like this, as well as the time and solitude in which to write. What's really interesting is that the space doesn't have to be isolated or remote (I could get on my bike at any point and be home in ten minutes), or even unfamiliar in order to achieve this. (Cat Holman July 2009)

- Treloan ('a non-creative business') through being recognized as a 'creative' campsite that in turn brings new creative practitioners and events to the site.<sup>16</sup>

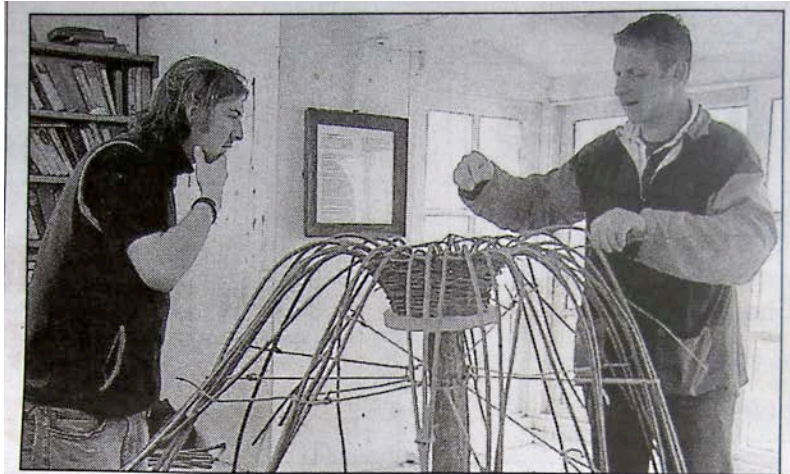
The project Caravanserai has been wonderful. Our local community and campers have had great fun joining in with the artists and many have been inspired by them so much so that Rachel Best a camper from Wales is coming back next year to do a workshop with the children teaching them how to draw with chalk and charcoal, Mrs. Coldicott will be returning to do foraging jams and chutneys and musicians have been popping out from everywhere. 6 local people have written poems and read them at our fireside sessions. This project has not only made our campers enjoy their holiday more and take home good memories it has helped the community to get together. Thanks to Annie, Caravanserai, and Feast, Treloan Coastal Holidays is a nicer place to be and stay (Debs Walker August 2009).

- FEAST who financially supported a programme of activities in 2009, have benefitted from exposure in the local press and further afield, pertinent to meeting their evaluation targets for future Arts Council support.

The whole project has been so fantastic and the coverage great for us [...]Will speak soon and again...brilliant. (Rose Barnecut, Area Cultural Service Manager. FEAST. Cornwall Council. September 2009)

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<sup>16</sup> For instance, in 2009 Lincoln based musicians J & B booked a holiday at Treloan having seen the fireside sessions on the *caravanserai* website. During their visit they established a working relationship with the campsite owners and have returned every year since to play music and lead art workshops.



■ Allan Collins, right, demonstrates his crab pot making skills back in 2010

Picture: MARY ALICE POLLARD

## Artists revive the lost skill of crab-potting

THE lost skill of crab pot making will return to the Roseland peninsula this week, as part of an arts project at Treloan Campsite near Portscatho.

“Caravanserai” is the brainchild of Falmouth-based artists Annie Lovejoy, who is completing a PhD at University College Falmouth, and Mac Dunlop, who organises Treloan’s fireside events.

The aim of the project is to encourage a responsible approach to tourism through creative activities that celebrate the local environment and culture

Tomorrow (Thursday) a workshop will be held to reintroduce the lost

skill of crab pot making with former artist-in-residence Greg Humphries and MA Art and Environment students from the university.

Greg first worked with caravanserai on an arts placement in 2009 that saw him regenerate a local willow coppice.

He and local resident Allan Collins set out to learn the craft of crab pot making and found expert John Hurrell of Port Loe to teach them.

Now, they will work with Si and Cat Holman from the Polscatho-based fishing project “Teach a Man to Fish” to reintroduce the skill to the village.

Fig. 72. *Falmouth Packet*. 29 February 2012

- the community through skills sharing and connectivity generated by experiencing arts activities and events, such as reviving a lost art (fig.72).

It was a day that changed my life – I was working locally near the willow coppice and got involved with the hurdle-making project, which has released a passion within me to work with raw materials. I’ve now made plans to go on a number of courses, one of these being willow crab pot making, an art sadly lost in the village. I will then teach and pass on these lost skills – and the gap will be bridged (Alan Collins, August 2009).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For more information of Allan’s experience and involvement in the project please see discovering what’s on our doorstep p.45 and Greg Humphries account on his web log at <http://greghumphries.wordpress.com/category/portscatho> [accessed 19.7.2010]

*Caravanseraï* facilitates 'do tanks' - hands on and discursive sessions for students in art and geography, as well as providing a space for experimentation and research for local practitioners and academics.<sup>18</sup> The project is a unique venue for transdisciplinary exploration and the sharing of experience and knowledge that continues to be disseminated through various activities and academic liaisons. The residency space (project van) provides a concentrated reflective space away from normal working conditions without the interruptions of phone and internet.



Fig. 73 *Left*: visiting artists Ella Gibbs and Amy Plant prepare a lecture on their project *Energy Café* for RANE, Research into Art, Nature and the Environment at UCF June 2009. *Right*: University of Exeter geography students on a Treloan field visit.

Offering a residency space that is supported by people who are sensitive to the needs of the locality, *caravanseraï* encourages creative responses to the immediate environment without the constraints of over-arching thematic curatorial structures, remote committees or inflexible bureaucracies.

I have the feeling that I am being returned to myself as an artist and poet – that there's enough time and space here to play, experiment, make mistakes, start again. (Alyson Hallett, writer-in residence, August 17<sup>th</sup> 2009)

A project of this scale and immediacy, functions and has an effect at a local level (and beyond):

<sup>18</sup> This has proved productive for artists, writers and academics such as – Ella Gibbs and Amy Plant (lecture preparation) RANE 2009 [http://rane.falmouth.ac.uk/gibbs\\_plant\\_details.html](http://rane.falmouth.ac.uk/gibbs_plant_details.html); Hawkins, H. & Lovejoy, A. (collaborative development of *insites – a notebook*) RGS/IGB conference 2009; Leyshon, M. and Bull, J. (development of co-authored articles) Leyshon, M. and Bull, J. 2011. 'The Bricolage of the Here: young people's narratives of identity in the countryside' *Social and Cultural Geography* 12(20) and 2010. 'Writing the Moment: Landscape and the Memory-Image.' in: Brace, C. and Johns-Putra, A. (eds), *Process: Landscape and Text*. Rodopi, Amsterdam.

- the people who book holidays or return because of *caravanseraï* activities.

Hi, I would like to book 3 pitches for next year please. We came last year to Treloan and we really loved it, the atmosphere was great, the stories round the campfire [...] so we've talked some more friends into coming with us again this year! (email to Treloan *Booking for 2010* November 27)

- the publicity the campsite receives in the press and camping guides for its creative activities.

Arts workshops are [...] popular here, in everything from willow work to charcoal cooking. Wednesday evenings are a big tradition, with gatherings around the campfire for storytelling, songs, poetry and a communal barbecue. Treloan also runs foraged feasts, where campers go on expeditions with a wild food expert and collect food for a banquet that evening. (The Guardian, April 16th 2011)

In peak season there are regular arts and crafts activities, together with a firepit where campers gather to share music and poetry. The site also works with local artists to promote sustainable tourism and encourages visitors to participate in a range of activities. These include wild food walks, raft making, charcoal making and even willow coppicing. At peak season there's a regular Wednesday evening fireside poetry and music session that aims to capture the campsite conviviality of gathering around a camp fire. You can see the blog on their website to find out more about the range of activities that are offered. (<http://www.outandaboutlive.co.uk> . Accessed March 2012)

- the musicians, artists and writers who contact the site seeking opportunities to perform or develop projects.

We are theatre makers who have just formed a new company called Family Album. We plan to make a show called Dusk to Dark this summer which will involve an audience of about 50 in a tent watching dusk (and our show about dusk) happening in the landscape through a gilt proscenium arch. We aim to be accessible, humorous, and totally self contained with sustainable power. The work is image based not text or narrative driven. We are very inspired by Caravanserei as we initially conceived of this idea for campsites, and hope to reach spaces where theatre can't normally go. (K.M. and N.R. March 2011)

- the two villagers both named 'Chris' who have become icons of the campsite, creating puns of themselves visually and verbally at firesides, and whose portraits, painted by resident artists, adorn the campsite.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> The two Chris's feature in *discovering what's on our doorstep* p 40; and their portrait features in an overview of Ken Barretts *caravanseraï* residency in Appendix D.



Fig. 74. Mac Dunlop. *Chris Insoll* – painting situated in the campsite ‘wash-up’

- the local photographer who has recorded most of the activities generated by the project and set up two online archives (fig.75).

*May 2011. In over 20yrs of working as an artist with people and places I have never been in a position of not having to document everything. Mary’s skill and her undying enthusiasm for photography (she’s self-taught and totally obsessed with image-making) allows me time to experience activities without being behind the camera. Mary takes a lot of photos, she barely edits, aside from trying out a few effects and filters, she snaps away and archives everything on line. There have been numerous occasions where she has sent me a high resolution version of a particular image on request.*

- the local shanty group Du Hag Owr, who formed following our request for shanty singers at a *caravanserai* ‘open day’ event in 2009; and are now performing regularly at local and national events<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> “Their singing fitted in seamlessly with...” *discovering whats on our doorstep* p.42

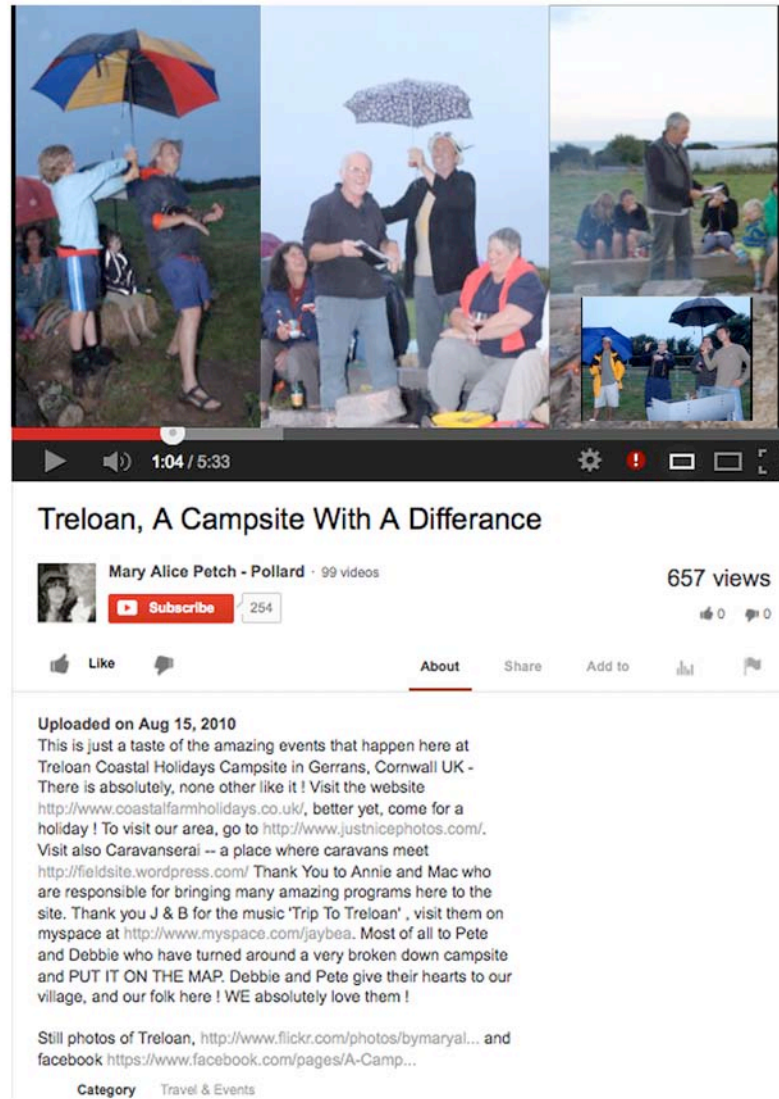


Fig. 75. Mary Alice Pollard. *Treloan, A Campsite With A Difference*

- the students who have benefited from real world action research

Thanks again for all the support on the residency. It's been a really important experience for me in terms of my practice and has given me a direction moving forward. Personally I also had a great time and met some amazing people. (Greg Humphries August 11<sup>th</sup> 2009)

- the village art gallery owner who purchased two hundred guidebooks to give to his clients; and also created an installation in his gallery window for our *caravanserai* poetry week in August 2009 (fig)<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> featured in *discovering what's on our doorstep* p.38.



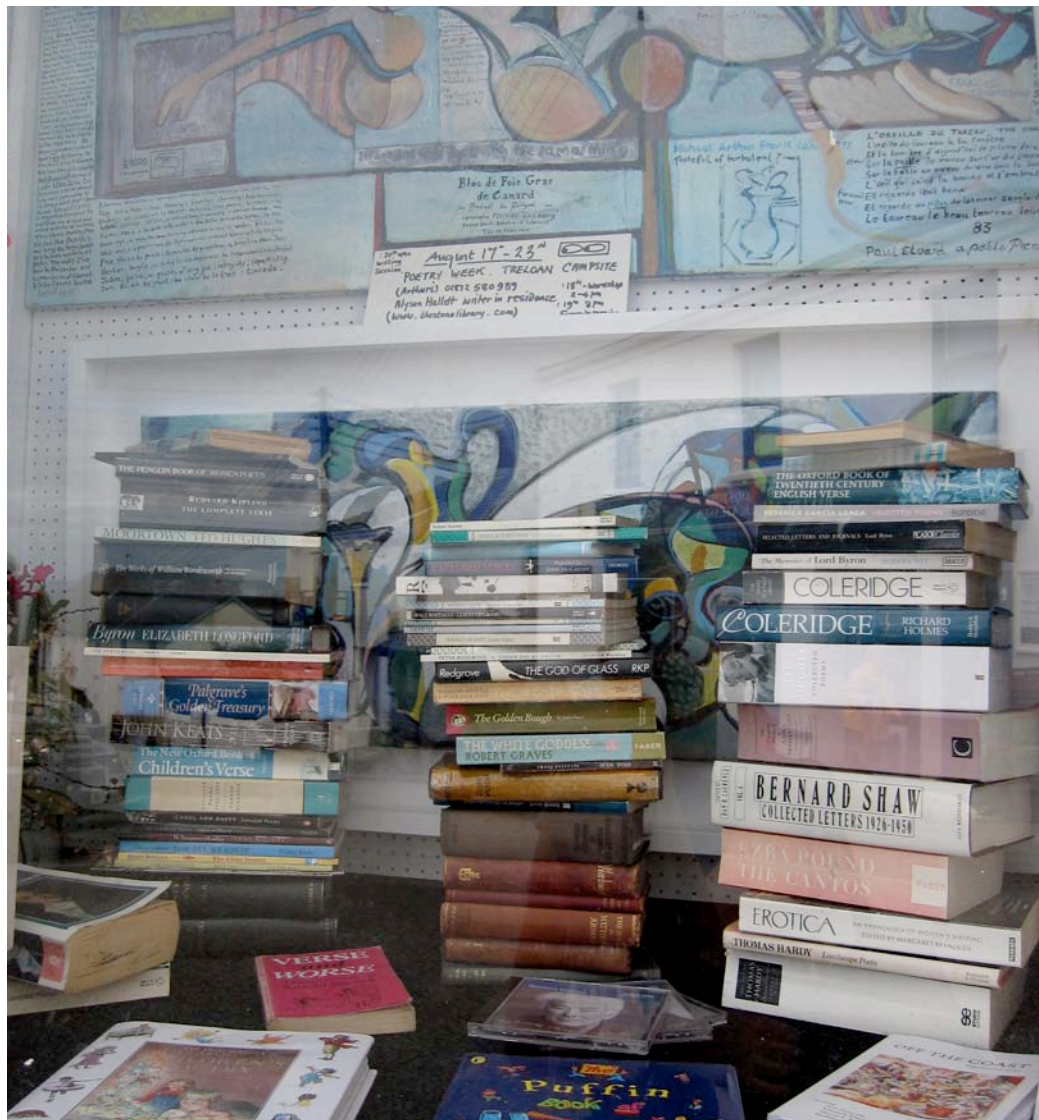


Fig. 76. Gallery installation of poetry books and text paintings by Chris Insoll. Portscatho. 2009

Five years on<sup>22</sup> the impact of *caravanserai* is still ongoing:

- Treloan Easter fete and evening meal auction has become an annual village fundraiser for local charities, having evolved from the Balti dinner (fig.83) and harvest festival in 2009.
- *Feast* the 'bring and share' annual celebration of local food, poetry and music, continues to benefit the local community culturally and economically. The event gathering momentum annually, this year campers and villagers said it was the best one yet. A local fisherman turned up with a big catch to share, a Falmouth bakery made bread in the shape of the letters of *feast* (an a last minute 'art' request) and a young poet (winner of the *caravanserai*/ Penryn Arts Festival poetry slam) performed to a large and enthusiastic audience. The campsite owners will now pay local musicians for this event enabling us to invite people that may not otherwise be able to come.

<sup>22</sup> At the time of writing in August 2013



Fig. 77. Feast 2013

- Firesides are fully incorporated into the campsite high season as a creative performance platform for local and visiting (camping / caravanning) poets, musicians and storytellers. These events are also of economic benefit to a local chef who has a regular summer slot to sell paella cooked on site.



Fig. 78. Mary Alice Pollard, a fireside in August 2013

- The guidebook – *discovering what's on our doorstep*, continues to be in demand from the campsite office or downloaded from our website. One camper said that she had never eaten so well thanks to the list of local suppliers and the honesty stall.<sup>23</sup> Campers and caravanners return with fresh ideas for firesides and the annual *feast*, bringing new people to the site.

### 6.2.1 Expanding on Lippard's place-ethical criteria

In chapter 4 the conceptual framework *interfaces of location and memory* was developed through revisiting a selection of my previous context-led projects in light of Lippard's 'art governed by [a] place ethic' (1997:286-7).<sup>24</sup> The purpose of this was to identify conditions that would enable the development of a new place-ethical

<sup>23</sup> *discovering what's on our doorstep* p.11,16,17

<sup>24</sup> **Backwards into the future**: developing a conceptual framework in chapter four (p.83).

artwork. Rather than list these conditions as a model of practice to be applied to a place, the enabling elements were highlighted as being emergent of context – a responsive process informed by the place itself. Lippard’s concern with context – *where a thing happens* – is significant to my research focus (although not without criticism<sup>25</sup> as discussed in my rationale for a responsive methodology). In the next chapter I offer an analysis of her approach in relation to my findings; but at this point, in keeping with the review of earlier works,<sup>26</sup> *caravanserai* is discussed in relation to her criteria for ‘an art governed by [a] place ethic’ (1997:286-7) as follows:

SPECIFIC: *caravanserai* is emergent of *being* at Treloan: its specificity is apparent in the project’s processes, activities and outcomes described so far; and in the *gathering* of material that has resulted in the project publications. *Caravanserai* engages with and celebrates the local environment and culture, inviting a responsible approach to tourism – an intention specific to being situated within a popular tourist destination. The focus on *caravanserai* as a *meeting place* of ‘visitors and the visited’ through place responsive activities meets Lippard’s criteria of specificity to ‘engage people on the level of their own lived experiences [and] say something about the place as it is and could be’ (Lippard, 1997: 286). The publications that form my thesis with this text are testament to the specificity of *caravanserai*. Added to these are the insights offered in the sections *being there*,<sup>27</sup> *gathering*<sup>28</sup> and the critical review outlined in the previous section of this chapter.

COLLABORATIVE: the project is collaborative in numerous ways – it is instigated by an artist-led partnership and developed through dialogue and shared activities with the campsite owners. The fact that the project sits within my doctoral studies has

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<sup>25</sup> See **Why Lippard?** in **Rationale for a responsive approach**, chapter four (p.80).

<sup>26</sup> Appendix B.

<sup>27</sup> Chapter five (p.114)

<sup>28</sup> The first section of this chapter, 6.1 *Gathering* (p.145).

impacted on the nature of its collaborative development and production. Doctoral study requires identifying the exact nature of any collaboration involved. This led to my designation and control of certain areas of the project at an early stage – its branding and description, fund raising, academic and student involvement. Added to this is the sole authorship (unless otherwise stated) of the publications that combine with this text to form my thesis. However, it should be noted that the ongoing relational activities that underpin the project's development arose in collaboration with fellow artist and writer Mac Dunlop, and are emergent of the iterative processes of this project and many others that we have worked on together.<sup>29</sup> In this sense, the ownership of a project's development and fruition is problematic, as it occurs in a space beyond the sum of its parts - where an idea is beyond individual authorship, occurring through dialogue and the exchange of sensibilities, tensions and debate. As artist Kirsten Lavers, quoting the poet and academic Chris Cheek, writes:

In a conversation it is unproductive to try to separate out who contributed what. For what might be considered as an isolated contribution at a particular point in time as that pause, that gesture, that half-begun sentence, that moment of agreement, is enfolded into a shared experience and combined memory. (Lavers, 2005: unpaginated)

Collaborative activities are evident throughout the project in the preparation, production and smooth running of events and activities; here teamwork and collaborative efforts include visitors and local residents. Beyond this are collaborations with visiting guests or people who have been 'in-residence'. For example a collaborative planning session with Mac Dunlop, Cat Holman and Alyson Hallett led to a programme of activities for a poetry week that resulted in poetry being written, talked about, recited, and off the page – on the campsite and in the village. Words were written in the landscape, sculpted in metal (fig.79), written on slate, painted on stones, revealed in the grass (fig.33), were underfoot on the

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<sup>29</sup> The Barton Hill project that triggered the research direction of my thesis (described in chapter one and Appendix A) was also a collaboration with Mac Dunlop.

concrete floor of the wash area, in acetate on glass mirrors and windows (fig.80) ... and even sculpted in wood and burnt on the fire. Inviting people to share their knowledge and expertise (campsite visitors and local residents) opens the project to increased engagement and participation. Creating opportunities for others is a generous activity that spawns wider networks of involvement and potential for future collaboration. Extended collaborative projects have arisen from these inhabitations or have been generated through the relational encounters and shared experiences that have occurred.



Fig. 79. Mac Dunlop. *a smile left hanging in the air*. Fig. 80 Alyson Hallett. *tread softly...*

As a poet my work has been quickly integrated into the fabric of place: also, the sited work looks as if it has always been there, as if it was meant to be there. This is the joy of *caravanserai*. It invites anyone and everyone to creatively connect with the ongoing, ever-changing nature of landscape (Alyson Hallett, writer-in-residence, August 2009).

**GENEROUS and OPEN-ENDED:** the work is generous in its inclusivity and open to influence from all who partake in the various activities and events. Although many of

the activities happen on the campsite they are accessible to outsiders, and are advertised locally and on the website.<sup>30</sup> Events, workshops and artworks have also been sited in village venues, or showcased at occasions like Portscatho annual regatta raft race where the bespoke willow and canvas canoe drew in the curious to admire the craftwork.

'Annie's and Mac's residencies, along with those of the other resident writers and artists weave the local community into larger networks. Drawing attention to what is on the doorstep, they enmesh local anecdotes and histories, revive dying craft techniques and instigate environmental practices and discourses in an organic interlacing of politics, history and poetics. (Harriet Hawkins, geographer-in-residence, July 2009)

Generosity is apparent in the many contributions to the guidebook, people have given their time to chat and welcome me into their homes. Others have contributed informative articles such as Gerrans-based Cornwall Wildlife Trust volunteer Debs Wallis,<sup>31</sup> or local artist Andrea Insoll who provided me with a selection of paintings specially created for the guidebook (fig. 81). Pensioner, Pearl Sutton provided me with stories, memories and photographs,<sup>32</sup> whilst Margaret Davis allowed me to peruse her fantastic collection of old postcards (dotted throughout the book). These are but a few instances of the generosity visible in the guidebook, perusing its pages will reveal many more – all are credited.

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<sup>30</sup> The project website is available at <http://www.caravanserai.info> and is also accessible from Treloan's website at: <http://www.coastalfarmholidays.co.uk/cornwall-eco-campsite.html>

<sup>31</sup> *discovering whats on our doorstep* p.49

<sup>32</sup> *discovering whats on our doorstep* p.37



Fig.81. Andrea Insoll. *A series of paintings for the guidebook*

The remaining criteria are listed together as follows: APPEALING in the sense of being memorable, SIMPLE and FAMILIAR so as not to repel, LAYERED, COMPLEX and UNFAMILIAR to stimulate curiosity, EVOCATIVE of people's experiences, PROVOCATIVE and CRITICAL enough to reference place issues.

All of these criteria are reflected in the various events of the field and are ongoing as the project evolves. Added to direct experience are the publications that re-present

activities and events offering a sense of the project through visual, textual and audio documentation. These expositions extend the work further through various communities of interest. For instance, the 'guidebook' *discovering what's on our doorstep* is of direct relevance to campsite visitors and local residents, whilst *insites – a notebook* is specific to local interest as well as being relevant to transdisciplinary discourses concerned with people and place.<sup>33</sup> Colin Hastings a village resident, said that 'it reminded him of all the reasons why he wanted to live in Porstcatho'; evidencing Lippard's place ethical criteria of being 'SPECIFIC enough to engage people on the level of their own lived experiences'. Similarly the following comment references the criteria of being 'evocative' and 'provocative'<sup>34</sup> (Lippard, 1997: 287):

'the book...its wonderful – beautiful, evocative and provocative. And for me spending so many holidays in the patch as a child it was particularly moving'. (Rose Barnecut Area Cultural Service Manager, Cornwall Council, email received 8.9.09)

The web log contains and extends these multi-layered senses of place through online interest as well as providing a practical resource for visitors to the campsite and local residents. The 'guidebook' is APPEALING in design and content. It is SIMPLE and FAMILIAR enough to be accessible in its format and delivery of information and poetics. It is LAYERED, COMPLEX and UNFAMILIAR enough to stimulate curiosity, through its stories, anecdotal information, 'how to' pages and assemblages of present day realities, memories and histories. It is EVOCATIVE of people's experiences throughout, presenting multiple contributions, responses and perceptions – senses of place, of a particular locality – Treloan. Finally, it is

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<sup>33</sup> *Insites* was designed in collaboration with *caravanserai* geographer-in-residence Harriet Hawkins, for delegates of the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference in 2009. This collaboration is discussed earlier in this chapter and documented in Appendix D

<sup>34</sup> EVOCATIVE enough to make people recall related moments, places and emotions in their own lives' and 'PROVOCATIVE and CRITICAL enough to make people think about issues beyond the scope of the work, to call into question superficial assumptions about place, its history and its use.' (Lippard, 1997: 286).



PROVOCATIVE and CRITICAL drawing attention to the social and environmental impact of tourism.



Fig. 82. Annie Lovejoy. *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.58

As well as meeting Lippard's list of criteria for an 'art governed by [a] place ethic' (1997:286-7), there are additional qualities that have emerged within *caravanserai* that expand on the concept of place ethical practice, namely *conviviality*, *reciprocity* and *functionality*. These are discussed in more detail as follows:

CONVIVIALITY: a focus on celebration and hospitality that invites companionship (the word 'company' originates from *com* – together with, and *panis* – bread, and similarly, 'conviviality' originates from the Latin *convivium* - a feast, *con* – with; *vivere* – live). Ivan Ilitch speaks of conviviality as an alternative to consumerist market production: 'Conviviality is opposed to productivity [...] productivity is conjugated with "to have"; conviviality with "to be"' (in Petrescu, D., Petcou, C. and

Awan, N. 2010: 321). In 2009 the 'bring and share' spirit of fireside sessions and *feast* culminated in an off-season 'Balti night' (fig.83) and the harvest festival for the local community. The idea for the Balti dinner emerged from the fact that villagers over the years, had regularly clubbed together to order curries which would be collected by car from to Truro. Falmouth's *Balti curries* spent a whole day preparing exquisite Nepalese and North Indian cuisine for our village guests (that included Treloan garden produce).



Fig. 83. Annie Lovejoy. *Balti night* at Treloan. 2010

The sharing of food is a fundamental activity that allows space to create alternatives to habitual practices – *feast* in particular creates a momentum for change that can be articulated as a celebratory methodology for raising issues relevant to the local economy and environment.

RECIPROCITY: as a practice of exchange that mutually benefits those involved, reciprocity is fundamental to the *caravanserai* project. The facilitation of creative activities and hosting of people at Treloan is a reciprocal agreement that has arisen

through shared dialogue and relational activities that have nurtured the trust necessary to the project's development.<sup>35</sup> On this basis *caravanserai* actively seeks out people prepared to work through reciprocity and exchange. Projects are developed through exchanges of mutual benefit with artists, writers, postgraduate students, academic researchers as well as the local community and visitors to Treloan. This is expanded further through the exchange of information disseminated via various 'communities of interest' and media associated with the project (academic, arts, local press, internet and so on).<sup>36</sup> The campsite and nearby villages of Gerrans and Portscatho in their physical proximity engender reciprocity through face-to face relationships, enabling community development and inter-subjective trust. In relation to an urban community garden project, Constantin Petcou and Doina Petrescu speak of how 'acting "at one's doorstep" allows one to find a local anchorage' where relations are built through everyday proximity; but they also warn of the danger of remaining in a closed social circle (Petcou and Petrescu, 2007: unpaginated). However, the different trajectories of comings and goings between the campsite and village disrupt any sense of closure. As discussed earlier a place never remains the same but is always in flux. In the vicinity of Treloan that flux also reflects another type of reciprocity at play, that of tourists seeking a haven of relaxation and local residents seeking a home. To work in these interstices requires openness to engagement with others and joined-up thinking – this is the reciprocal basis on which people are invited to be in residence within the *caravanserai* project. As Gablik points out, this approach to practice requires 'a distinct shift in the locus of creativity from the autonomous, self-contained individual to [...] a collaborative and interdependent process' (in Lacy, 1995: 76). Reciprocity is at play in the interdependent and iterative processes of context-led arts practice/research, where philosophical reflection informs a work's development - making explicit the implicit,

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<sup>35</sup> As discussed in 5.1. **Instigating the fieldwork** (chapter five p.108)

<sup>36</sup> As evidenced in the *evaluation report* prepared for FEAST in Appendix C

visible the invisible. The guidebook, as an outcome of context-led arts practice is an example of reciprocity between the campsite and *caravanserai* –Treloan Coastal Holidays benefits from having a functional, aesthetic and unusual guidebook for its visitors; whilst the project gains visibility which supports its creative development.

FUNCTIONALITY: for art to be useful is essential to *caravanserai*, so that the activities and processes of this context-led exploration have potential to offer an enhanced experience of place. Central to this is the recognition that ‘the voices of the visited need to be heard’ (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated) to create a future visioning of response-able tourism that cares for the people and place that it is dependent on. *Discovering what’s on our doorstep* crystallises the project in a functional ‘guidebook’ that fulfills Lippard’s criteria for an ‘art governed by [a] place ethic’ (1997:286-7). Through participative activities and events (or functions) that celebrate the local, *caravanserai* opens up possibilities for change that are non-confrontational. This is slow art<sup>37</sup> in progress, as is fitting to the complexities of a local context. In his reflections on creativity Bohm refers to the original meaning of the word ‘art’ as being ‘to fit’, and lists the words ‘articulate, article, artisan, artifact’ as exemplifying a ‘fitting’ purpose. He points out that the word ‘art’ in modern times has mainly come to mean fitting in an aesthetic and emotional sense rather than being inclusive of function:

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<sup>37</sup> Grayson Perry declared the need for a more thoughtful and hands on approach to art-making in 2005: ‘As a producer of art I feel an increasing pressure to keep in step with our 24/7 culture-on-demand society, and as a consumer I am overwhelmed by a tyranny of choice. I hereby declare the launch of the Slow Art Movement (I have not hired a PR). Artists, I call on you to spend some quality time with a sketchbook before pointing the digital camera out of the car window [...] Maybe even take the rebellious and increasingly fashionable step of learning how to make something skillfully with your hands.’ The Times September 7, 2005  
[http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts\\_and\\_entertainment/article563715.ece](http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/article563715.ece)  
Artist Kathrin Böhm mentioned slow growth as being productive for rural arts development in a paper presented at the Rural Art Space Symposium in 2007; ‘within a rural setting, the notion of a growing and slowly developing art space seems appropriate [as] rural Identity could be described as a relational and productive one, and slow rather than fast’. <http://www.ruralartspace.net/index.html?p=64.html> [accessed 29.10.2008]. Chrysalis Arts initiated a commissioning strand of ‘slow art’ in 2009 inspired by the Slow Food movement, that highlighted ‘current changes affecting rural living and working, landscape, agriculture, and the impact of climate change on the environment.’ <http://www.slowart.co.uk> [accessed 8.12.09]

The fact that we are hardly aware of the syllable 'art' in words such as articulate or artifact is an indication of an implicit but deeply penetrating fragmentation in our thoughts between the aesthetic, emotional aspects of life and its practical functional aspects. (Bohm, 2004: 99)

This idea of 'fitting' to context is also reflected in 'the naming'<sup>38</sup> of a project where vision is consolidated through 'a relevant and engaging process [...] a purpose that the work will undertake in that context' (Sutherland, 2010: unpaginated).

Functionality is also evident in the intention to represent place-ethical practice in a manner that reveals the context of its emergence. A research objective that shares Lippard's reasoning for making her list of place-ethical arts criteria: because 'the education of public artists and their publics, (including their critics) – together – is crucial' (Lippard 1997: 286). *Discovering what's on our doorstep* is in itself an artwork 'governed by a place ethic', as well as being a form of representation that reveals the context of its emergence and processes of practice. This idea of a catalogue (art project representation) as a 'guidebook' was touched upon in Lippard's keynote lecture at Falmouth Convention in 2010 as follows:

If the beholding eye or the tourist gaze is inevitably socially constructed, who would be better at constructing it than artists? The dialectical relationship of the real past to the simulacra or cosmeticized versions that nourish conventional tourism should be grist for a cantankerous art. I've suggested that performance artists could be great tourist guides. An exhibition catalogue could double as a guidebook – an idea already being explored here, I understand, by Annie Lovejoy. It could tell us some of the stories buried in the places we rush past, helping us to re-imagine them (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated).

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<sup>38</sup> 'Naming as an informative and descriptive starting point for a project (*Research & concept development* in chapter four p.91).

## Summary:

This chapter introduces *commonplacing* as a design concept arising from this practice-led research project; and the conceptual development, design and production of the publications that combine with this text to form my thesis; *discovering what's on our doorstep, insites –a notebook* and *www.caravanserai.info*

As a key element of my thesis contribution *commonplacing* articulates the creative use of designed assemblages to re-present the multifaceted responses and contributions *gathered* from an *immersive* fieldwork process. These *mappings* are 'storyings' of place, 'knowings' *as we go* that attempt to reveal the *generative potentials of a complex process* – a responsive context-led exploration of place (*caravanserai*), as Ingold notes:

The traveller or storyteller who knows as he goes is neither map making nor using one. He is quite simply *mapping*. And the forms or patterns that arise from this mapping process, whether in the imagination or materialised as artefacts, are but stepping stones along the way, punctuating the process rather than initiating it or bringing it to a close. (Ingold 2000: 230-1)

The 'guidebook' for campsite visitors, the 'notebook' for delegates of a conference and the web log that offers interconnected navigation through a multi-layered archive of processes and information; are all *mappings* that arise from the process that is *caravanserai* - an exploration of a particular place through context-led arts practice. *Commonplacing* as a designed assemblage of *gatherings* from *being there* (at Treloan) invites a 'deep mapping' (Pearson, 2006: 15) that reconnects 'place ethical' processes, events, and outcomes with the context of their emergence.

*Caravanserai* as an immersive and reflexive form of action research evidences the relations, processes, creative activities, outcomes and responses to working within a specific context – that of a camping and caravan site on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall, UK. In relation to the research objectives, *caravanserai* expands on

Lippard's educative proposal for 'an art governed by [a] place ethic' (1997: 286-7), developing *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice. Meanwhile the guidebook – *discovering what's on our doorstep* – as an outcome of *caravanserai*, connects place-ethical activities to the processes and relationships of their emergence, mobilizing active engagement with the locality and at the same time, representing context-led practice.

The next chapter returns to core research concerns focusing on the development of *Interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led practice. These concerns are addressed in relation to the fieldwork project – *caravanserai* – an exploration of place through context-led practice. This includes discussion on method, significance of the work produced and the value of arts practice as a form of knowledge production.

## **7. seeds for the future – discussion and analysis**

This chapter focuses on the development of *Interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led practice. The first section reiterates and discusses the core concerns of the research (7.1); and following this, the conceptual framework *Interfaces of location and memory* is revisited in light of the fieldwork project *caravanserai* – an exploration of place through context-led practice (7.2).

### **7.1. *Interfaces of location and memory***

In the first chapter I described my research as being self-contained in the sense of being seed-like, where self-containment is emergent, cyclic and dependent on enabling conditions for its development. I later refer to these iterative processes of my context-led arts research as ‘a practice-led emergent methodology’ where each project, artwork, activity, event, experience folds into the next, dependent on the particular context or situation. This philosophy of immanence is a conceptual framework developed through art/life practice subject to the conditions of a particular situation, and as artist and educator Allan Kaprow notes;

When art as a practice is intentionally blurred with the multitude of other identities and activities we like to call life, it becomes subject to all the problems, conditions and limitations of those activities, as well as their unique freedoms [...] and that ethics, representing a diversity of special interests as well as the deep ones of culture, cannot be easily disentangled from the nature of the artwork. (in Lacy, 1995: 157)

*Interfaces of location and memory* invites an understanding of context-led arts practice as responsive to the particularities of place rather than a model of practice that is applied to a place. This shift in perception although seemingly small – the ‘of’



in 'of place' – is central to this work and my contribution to the field of contemporary public arts. From an immersive 'of place' perspective, it is counter-intuitive if not counter productive to 'disentangle' the 'nature of the artwork' from the cultural context of its emergence (Kaprow in Lacy, 1995:157) as relational entanglement enables the development and production of meaningful context-led outcomes. This is art *of* place rather than art that is *about* place or indeed, *about itself* removed from the wider relations of its development and production for purposes of decoding and interpretation.

### 7.1.1 A severe and insistent light:

In the first three chapters I drew attention to objectifying perspectives that limit the understanding of context-led practice; making invisible the socio-spatial relations and processes involved. Wachtel's discovery of the carefully crafted animations in the cave of La Mouthe (revealed in the flickering light of a gas lamp) illustrated how a work integral to the socio-spatial context of its time was misunderstood through the rigidity of objective analysis.<sup>1</sup> The vitality and intention of the cave paintings as a functional, educative and aesthetic experience, had been obscured by a severe and insistent light that was not hospitable to that which was hidden (O'Donohue, 1999:109). Similarly, artists' processes and intentions have been hidden in historical and contemporary arts discourses that continue to isolate artworks from the social and cultural conditions within which they emerge (Crimp, 1993; Duncan, 1993; Gablik, 1991; Kelly, 1993; Kester, 2004; Lacy, 1995; Tagg, 1992). Historically, as Tagg asserts, this objective gaze can be traced as being 'engineered and institutionally sanctioned' (Tagg, 1992: 84). Here, even the institutional / academic context of a practice-led arts PhD is not without criticism given that the structure affects the nature of the work. Hans Haake in his essay *Museum, Managers of*

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter two (p.27)

*Consciousness* writes:

An institution's intellectual and moral position becomes tenuous only if it claims to be free of ideological bias. And such an institution should be challenged if it refuses to acknowledge that it operates under constraints deriving from its sources of funding and from the authority to which it reports. (Haake in Stiles and Selz, 1996:878)

In the first chapter I raised the issue of 'supplementality' (Lesage, 2009), where the text as the primary vehicle for judging academic worth creates an objective distance for the purposes of decoding and interpretation, thus separating practice from theory. The discussion arose from an awareness of debates in arts about the value of practice as a form of knowledge production (Frayling, 1993; Rust et al, 2007; Douglas, Scopa and Gray, 2000; Macloed, 2000; Holdridge and Macloed, 2002). But the lack of financial support for arts (knowledge) production within 'practice-led' university doctorate programmes highlights a significant gap between the realities of practice that shape a work and its theoretical concerns. Unlike the sciences, arts 'lab' or fieldwork activity falls outside of an institutional support framework, when its purpose is the same – to test a hypothesis. This means that the economies of practice that affect a work's fruition become divorced from the context of the enquiry, rendering essential aspects of its materiality and the processes of its labour invisible, as Lesage out:

For me, the notion of artistic research is not at all about an attempt to conform the arts to the sciences, to become more methodological, to become more discursive, or to become more technological. It is about the recognition of art as a form of cognitive labor and about a wage struggle for artists [...] Artists are supposed to learn how to become their own shareholders. The discourse which presents artists as researchers should be an empowering discursive force, which values the artist as a worker and which contributes to the recognition of the need to pay artistic labor time. (Lesage, 2010: 36)

In relation to these concerns the fieldwork project – *caravanserai* – as a reflexive form of action research evidences the socio-spatial relations, processes, creative activities, outcomes and responses to working within a specific context – that of a camping and caravan site on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall, UK. These conceptual and creative developments include the administrative and fundraising activities involved in instigating, establishing and facilitating the project, making transparent the cognitive labor involved in arts production.<sup>2</sup> To address the issue of ‘supplementality’, I invite close attention to the publications that accompany this text as interrelated components of my thesis.<sup>3</sup>

### 7.1.2 A quick fix:

Earlier in this text I drew attention to the fact that terms such as ‘socially engaged’, ‘dialogic’ or ‘relational’ imply a remedial purpose suggestive of transformational promise; as concepts, they lead to prescriptive expectations of art/artists, generic commissioning briefs and inflexible bureaucratic procedures. This can impact on artistic integrity (sensibilities), foreclosing the production of meaningful outcomes, as I experienced with the Barton Hill project that prompted the direction of this research. The aspirations and sensibilities of artistic vision for Barton Hill and *caravanserai* are similar – both projects envision meeting places as potential for generating context-led outcomes. These spaces of engagement arise from responsive processes of context-led practice concerned with questions such as that

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<sup>2</sup> Chapters five and six present accounts of the publications that combine with this text to form my thesis (5.1); the conceptual development and administrative foundations of the project ((5.2); the immersive experience of *being there* as theory-informed storytelling (5.3); the creative distillation of material gathered, producing the outcomes (6.1); a critical review on the effects of the project and its legacies (6.2).

<sup>3</sup> The two printed booklets accompanying this text are the outcomes of the context-led exploration of place – *caravanserai* i) *discovering what’s on our doorstep* – a guidebook, and ii) *Insites* – a notebook. Added to these is the online project archive [www.caravanserai.info](http://www.caravanserai.info)

of architect/artist Celine Condorelli when she asks 'How can art allow a community to come into being rather than prescribe existing ideas of it?'<sup>4</sup>

Arnold Bearleant proposes that the design of place as an art needs to stem from 'the *engagement* of the conscious body with the *conditions* of a specific location (Berleant, 2003: 9 my emphasis). He suggests following an approach outlined by geographer Edward Relf 'that is responsive to local structures of meaning and experience, to particular situations and to the variety of levels of meaning of place' (Relph in Berleant, 2003:12). This approach, he continues cannot 'provide precise solutions' (reflective of the issue of artist as problem solver / service-provider) but it allows 'scope for individuals and groups to make their own places'. Kathrin Böhm<sup>5</sup> also speaks about the potential for regeneration to be fluid and flexible – if the making of the new starts from the ground up, from within the existing, as 'a slow transformative process', rather than being imposed from without (Böhm, 2007:unpaginated). Regeneration projects tend to apply the same concepts to very different places; dis-located (desk located) generic plans are devised to meet bureaucratic and legislative hurdles. The requirement for 'community consultation' can be conveniently serviced by *socially engaged* arts practice, where artists are expected and requested to deliver commissioned outcomes and targets. This institutionalisation of culture promotes the remote over the intimate and the 'quick fix' over sustained relationships; creating placeless places, more map than territory, more product than process (Berleant, 2003; Böhm, 2007; Cartier and Hope, 2007; Minton, 2008; Newling, 2005).

In a commissioning culture where the artist is regarded as an expert with remedial skills (creating a *socially engaged* and liberating experience) they are recognised for

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.axisweb.org/diFULL.aspx?ESSAYID=74> [accessed 11.5.2007]

<sup>5</sup> Kathrin Böhm is a member of the London based art/architecture collective Public Works, and co-founder of the artist initiative myvillages.org.

their achievement, 'praised and rewarded but how do we assess what has changed on the ground?' (Hope, 2011:45). Evaluation normally happens after the event, in tick-box addendums and specific formats designed to meet commissioning or research-funding targets 'conventionally adhered to, across contexts for production (Hall, 2004).<sup>6</sup> One example of these pre-defined criteria (rather than criteria emergent of context) is 'the exit strategy' that arises from (or deals with) the fact that participation involves the voluntary engagement of people, their sensibilities and sense of belonging. The concept of the 'exit strategy' allows for institutionally sanctioned and funded experts (such as artists or academics) to 'parachute' into a place to conduct short-term investigations as art / research involving the voluntary participation of others. The arts collective Platform, describe their commitment to place and people over time stating that 'parachutes are only useful for war, escape, emergency or stunt' (Platform, 2004: unpaginated).

A key finding of *caravanserai* is the extraordinary legacy of self-sustained activity, here the concept of an 'exit strategy' becomes unnecessary and irrelevant; evidencing how disentanglement is counter intuitive and counter productive. The self-sustaining effects of *caravanserai* are emergent of the entangled *meshwork* (Ingold, 2006)<sup>7</sup> of place relations experienced through immersive and durational commitment – *being there*. This is 'slow art' attentive to the local, to the social resources, skills, knowledge, expertise, creativity that is already *in place*. But all too often the nature of contemporary arts patronage and commissioning procedures mitigates against long term or sustained commitment as Kester points out:

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<sup>6</sup> I invited Dr Roz Hall to evaluate the Barton Hill project because of her process-led approach: her method of evaluation acknowledges 'the subjective nature of 'quality', and the extent to which notions of quality are transient. Informed, process generated evaluation, challenges the idea that criteria might be pertinently defined by fixed notions of quality, as are conventionally adhered to, across contexts for production.

<sup>7</sup> In **Reclaiming the relational** I discuss the difference between Bourriaud's notion of 'relational art / aesthetics' (as an operational participatory arts strategy) and 'relational' as in Ingold's notion of *meshwork* – the entanglements of the lifeworld (chapter three pp.45-57).

Foundation grants are often oriented around singular projects over a fixed time frame, and the art institutions that provide support [...] are accustomed to inviting a practitioner in from “the outside” for a limited period of time. Many of the mechanisms of engaged arts patronage function to reinforce the view of a given “community” or constituency as an instrumentalized and fictively monolithic entity to be “serviced” by the visiting artist (Kester, 2004: 5).

O’Neil and Doherty argue that duration doesn’t necessarily call for longer term projects but a shift in the idea of participation as being public time – where ‘cumulative engagements’ (encounters and projects) can happen over time, as part of ‘a creative praxis characterized by complicit participation in the making of place’ (O’Neil and Doherty, 2011; 14). Whilst these ideas are supportive of the need for embedded practice and funding / commissioning procedures with longer lead-in times. The fact that a project commissioner, artist, curator (or otherwise) has been in a specific place for a certain amount of time does not necessarily lead to meaningful art or local relations.<sup>8</sup> As Beech mentions ‘duration is problematic because it is presented as a solution for art’s social contradictions’ (Beech in O’Neil and Doherty, 2011; 11) suggesting that time itself, will generate outcomes that are socially ameliorative. As *caravanserai* demonstrates, art as a responsive and functional meaning-making activity (through a commitment to time and place) can present opportunities for change, but to consider change as an operational tool of art practice is dangerous.<sup>9</sup> The transformational potential of *caravanserai* is to be found in the specific conditions of the locality – a ‘response-ability’ to imagine the world as otherwise. For example *feast*, the annual celebration and local food banquet is a convivial art/life methodology that raises issues relevant to the local economy and

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<sup>8</sup> Locating the producers presented a case study of durational practice on the basis of selecting projects that began after the year 2000 with a ‘commissioning process and outcome that had lasted for more than 100 days (the standard time-span of an international large-scale exhibition).’ (O’Neil and Doherty, 2011; 5)

<sup>9</sup> As mentioned in chapter two, in 1995 Mary Jane Jacob drew attention to how community-based art as a stylistic term needed a ‘broader philosophical position’. She feared that ‘if broken down into a formula’ it would lead to ‘an unquestioning way of working [...] more dangerous and reckless than a bad Abstract Expressionist painting made in the artist’s studio, because it involves the lives of other people. (Tormollon,1995:69)

environment – the ‘possible’s slow fuse’ lit by imagination that nourishes the conviction that things can be changed (Emily Dickinson in Kearney, 2005:7). The curator Fiona Woods explores this: point:

[S]egregation of art from the real has a limited value for current practices engaging with the in-between as a site of production [...] These practices construct situations, events and images in response to selected local conditions, producing or mobilizing spaces in-between where people can identify, and sometimes act upon, points of possible transformation in their own lived realities (Woods, F. in Petrescu, D., Petcou, C. and Awan, N, 2010: 256).

This transformative potential is not prescriptive, but can be emergent of responsive creative activity and gentle action. Physicist David Peat in his writings on Gentle Action, a philosophy for ‘bringing change to a turbulent world’, suggests that ‘one way we may achieve a change of perception [...] is through a form of highly watchful “creative suspension”’(Peat, 2008:141). I relate this to the attentiveness of loitering with intent,<sup>10</sup> privileging the journey in motion, a performative process. This finely attuned sensibility is the first stage of discovering the connective relations that shape a work, alert the antennae, fuel encounters and drive enthusiasm toward an opening out – an outcome. Lingering on this threshold of uncertainty is to experience liminality, the start of a transitional process (Newling, 2007). Trusting in these responsive processes of place ethical practice is reminiscent of Irwin’s ‘phenomenal art’ which he describes as being a perceptive quality that instead of being about an object or non object is ‘a question of seeing or not seeing’ in relation to the artist’s sensibilities (integrity) ‘to perceive or fail to perceive “things” in their real contexts’ (Irwin, 1982: 194-5).

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<sup>10</sup> Walking / loitering with intent is discussed in **Methods** (chapter four p.96).

### 7.1.3 Integrity – risking marginality (but is it art?):

But of a good leader, who talks little,  
When his (her) work is done, his (her) aim fulfilled,  
They will all say, "We did this ourselves"<sup>11</sup>

Through working at ground level over a substantial period of time, *being-in-residence*, the *caravanserai* project is immersed in the relational complexities of campsite/village life. Here, Kelly's notion of 'a logic of refusal' where an artist risks becoming invisible in the artworld because they manoeuvre around art-field designations or refuse categorization, becomes irrelevant (Kelly, 2001:5).<sup>12</sup> Within a local field of relations there is no invisibility; whether something is 'art' or not is not the point, but what does matter is what takes place, 'there is a purpose for art, and that purpose manifests locally'.<sup>13</sup>

In terms of describing arts practice this involves a radical rethinking in our expectations of what an artist does (Gablik in Lacy, 1995). To open ones creative vision to the responses and contributions of others is to come face to face with the need 'to throw off certain self-satisfactions of creativity' and 'deal with incomprehension and marginality' (in the artworld). This is a risk that artists take, when they expand their practice to work with 'the demands of contributing to collective processes of subjectification' (Genesko, 2005: 19). Here the concept of 'audience' is replaced by that of an intersubjective relationship, that resists the separation of a thing made or performed, and a viewer. Instead, the *meshwork* of interrelations is perceived as an ongoing process of exchange and creative activity, as artist Richard Layzell notes:

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<sup>11</sup> Lao Tzu quoted in J. Jacobs, (1992) *Systems of Survival*, Vintage Books, A division of Random House, Inc., New York, P.125)

<sup>12</sup> mentioned in chapter three (p.69) in relation to how working on a project without the 'art' label, whilst risking marginality in the artworld, was productive with *caravanserai* where the idea of making great art happen was seen as patronising and would have hampered participation.

<sup>13</sup> Adam Sutherland speaking at the Falmouth Convention. May 2010. (Author's journal notes).



I used to think obsessively about audience. Like 'art' I'm not sure that the concept of 'audience' works for me any longer. I think it's about developing a relationship with people, place and ideas, like a kind of social architect, a performer who's not performing, a planner with soul, or a friendly face. (Layzell in Shaw, 2005: 8)

My position as an artist envisioning, instigating and developing *caravanserai* can be understood as being similar to that of Newling in his *Loss of Mystery* project,<sup>14</sup> where the contributions of others become the dynamics of the work. In his project the unveiling of hidden secrets and personal histories were presented back to the people who had contributed them. Here, the responses and input of others are gathered into designed assemblages<sup>15</sup> which re-present multicentred 'senses of place' (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated). Although I would not generally refer to my work as curatorial, the etymological root of the word – *curare* (to take care of) resonates with my practice of gathering meaningful content through responsive context-led processes. Kirsten Lavers, an artist who instigated *the taxi gallery*<sup>16</sup> describes herself as a 'care-taker' not only with the focus of offering 'care' but also as a reminder to 'take care', in terms of being in a position of responsibility and control in relation to the work. With *caravanserai* this is inclusive of a place-ethical approach that seeks to 'take care' of where we are, through creative activities that engage with the local environment and culture – *how can we, and those with us, add to the well-being of the now of this place? 'How big is here? How long is our Now?'*<sup>17</sup> These questions asked by the Harrisons whenever they begin working in a place recall Massey's observation of place as a meeting point of the here and now; *the hic* and

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<sup>14</sup> Discussed in the chapter three (pp. 57-60).

<sup>15</sup> The published outcomes of the *caravanserai* project *discovering what's on our doorstep* and *insites* a notebook (that form part of this thesis) are discussed in chapter six 6.1. *Gathering* (p.145)

<sup>16</sup> Taxi Gallery was a project initiated by artist, Kirsten Lavers, as an opportunity for artists to make work in a taxi. For this project Lavers adopted 'a curatorial or editorial role in relation to a framework initiated and steered by herself but activated by others. A framework that reaches for an extended (over time) relationship with both local and translocal audiences.' <http://www.taxigallery.org.uk> [accessed 12.02.2009]

<sup>17</sup> Referenced in **A layered methodology**, chapter four, section 4.2.3 (p.90)

*nunc* of where 'here' might be 'now' – 'constituted by nothing more than – meeting-up' again (Massey, 2005: 125).

## **7.2. *Interfaces of location and memory* – revisited**

Prompted by the inflexible constraints of a public art commission / regeneration initiative; this research project set out to develop *interfaces of location and memory* – an existing conceptual framework through a context-led exploration of place. Here place is understood as practised, complex, diverse and 'under construction' rather than coherent; the integrity of practice is a response-ability 'not to just hang on to it, but to build it' (Massey and Rose, 2003:4).

Context-led practices that negotiate the sociopolitical spaces of the everyday beyond the arts cognoscenti require different sensibilities; they are dependent on developing relationships (and economies) to facilitate their emergence. The development of work is decided upon different parameters than studio practice and is in need of, 'a different set of properties and parameters for discussion, production and evaluation' (Sheikh, 2009: 6). It is to these properties and conditions that I now return.

### **7.2.1 A place-ethical project – *caravanserai***

The development of *interfaces of location and memory* as a philosophy of practice called for an integrative approach that made sense of the immersive, durational, inter-subjective and multifaceted relations and complexities of responsive context-led arts activity. Here, Lippard's 'art governed by [a] place ethic' offered a set of criteria (1997:286-7) integral to the fluidity of place. Her intentions being to educate, to draw out an approach that was place-ethical, art that was *of* place rather than

about a place, or about art. In chapter four I presented my argument in support of my methodological focus on Lippard's set of criteria (amongst other philosophies and practices).<sup>18</sup> Although she clearly states that an exemplary model for practice risked commodifying artists processes and intentions, her reasons for creating such a list were because 'the criteria for art and for public interaction diverge so drastically that the education of public artists and their publics (including their critics) – together – is crucial' (Lippard, 1997: 286). With a similar intention, my research aim is to develop a conceptual framework and means of representation that promotes an understanding of context-led arts practice. Lippard's list has been useful in the development of *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework; but not to the exclusion of the many theories and practices that I have drawn on in the 'informed storytelling' (Pearson, 2006:16) of this text. Through revisiting a selection of my previous work in light of the listed criteria I was able to identify enabling conditions as a starting point for the fieldwork project (*caravanserai*). Lippard's list has provided a useful *posteriori* qualitative assessment device but evidences a lack of reliability in terms of being replicable. As was evident in the review of my earlier works, Lippard appears to consider all of the criteria for 'an art governed by [a] place ethic' to be 'necessary to a well rounded-rounded addition to a place' (1997: 286). But as we have seen this was not the case with *return* where 'provocation' was not of interest or relevance to the artwork being produced.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, with *caravanserai* additional criteria have become apparent, such as 'conviviality', 'reciprocity' and 'functionality'. Another important criterion missing is 'legacy' the self-sustaining effects and impact of a project, such as the tangible and intangible benefits of place-ethical practice demonstrated in *caravanserai*.<sup>20</sup> However, her list does offer a construct within which to discuss the works, and more importantly, in light of my research project, the ways in which a

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<sup>18</sup> **Why Lippard?** chapter four, section 4.1.1 (p.80)

<sup>19</sup> Appendix B

<sup>20</sup> As evidenced in the impacts and effects listed in chapter six (p.169-176)

context-led approach can generate place-ethical outcomes. With reference to her list of criteria Lippard states that she had 'intended to end with some exemplary models' but realised that all 'the cases' used were models of their own (Lippard, 1997: 286-7). *Caravanserai* along with my previous projects expands on this by evidencing 'the cases' (art projects) as being context-led. Each place / site or situation offers the possibility and conditions of practice; here, the replicable research contribution is a conceptual framework for context-arts arts practice that is responsive – *of a place*, rather than a model applied *to a place*.

### 7.2.2 **Commonplacing** – a significant breakthrough

Katey Macloed has written extensively on arts practice-led research being the 'enactment of thinking' and describes the work of art as 'a site of *gathering* and ordering (re-articulation) of *the gatherings*' (Macloed and Holdridge, 2002 my emphasis). Here there is no such thing as unmethodical research; all questioning is in relation to method, and in these iterative enactments of thinking a random element will sometimes spark a new discovery. Through a practice-led emergent methodology intuitive and cognisant (theoretical / philosophical) knowledge is directly attributable to the processes of responsive and reflexive activity. The consequences of this are demonstrated in the artwork produced (Kochhar-Lindgren, 2008) and in the creative breakthroughs that happen, such as my discovery of *commonplacing*<sup>21</sup> that articulates a method that was previously intuitive – making explicit that which was implicit (fig.16).

*Commonplacing* is evidenced in the published project outcomes as a composed graphing of interwoven place-making that positions discursive, conceptual and

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<sup>21</sup> Discussed in chapter six, section 6.1. ***Gathering*** (pp.145-163).

experiential insights in formats appropriate to their particular contexts.<sup>22</sup> The combinatorial, connective nature of a commonplace book created using an assemblage method, is a historical empirical tool that allows for meaning to arise from juxtaposition rather than fitting a pre-determined narrative.

As an artist and image-maker I am experienced in the visualization of concepts and ideas through assemblage, composition and juxtaposition. I produce images for print and online publications, working with academic researchers, authors, editors and publishers;<sup>23</sup> and my context-led projects involve image construction as artwork, or in the creative re-presentation of documentation.<sup>24</sup> Prior to digital desk-top publishing and the extensive possibilities offered by current image manipulation software, I was creating collaged assemblages and experimenting with lengthy procedures of masking and light manipulation in the darkroom. Beyond technical proficiency, my aptitude for visualising concepts has also been employed to illustrate academic research in print and interactive media. My first foray into digital media design and production was in the mid nineties when commissioned to work on one of the first UK based creative arts research CD Rom publications – *From Silver to Silicon: the photographic image in digital culture*. The reason for unearthing these projects is to convey the breath and depth of my experience in the production and analysis of creative imaging. The reading of images and ability to visualise their combinatorial effect is a reflexive method and evaluative ordering of collated data. The production of designed assemblages can be traced throughout my practice as artwork and as a method of creative re-presentation; as evidenced in the Barton Hill project that involved the production of large scale imaging for architectural glazing and the design and production of a publication. The production of a publication was

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<sup>22</sup> The publications inclusive to this thesis, *Discovering what's on our doorstep* (2011) and *insites – a notebook* (2009) discussed in more depth in Chapter six.

<sup>23</sup> Examples of design work can be accessed at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showcategory.pl?category=Design>:

<sup>24</sup> Projects are archived at <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

proposed by me (extra to the commissioning brief) and inclusive of a request to employ an experienced evaluator as part of the development process.<sup>25</sup> The intention of the booklet was to tell the story behind the artwork that the school community experiences on a day-to-day basis. The resulting publication is a designed assemblage of material gathered over the duration of the project, conveying the responsive processes of context-led practice.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, *Interfaces of location and memory* (Fig 2) began as a creative means of re-presenting context-led practice through an online hyperlinked presence.<sup>27</sup> This project was awarded Arts Council funding in 2004 to design a content management system (the appearance and function) for my portfolio of context-led projects. I received the award because my concept extended beyond the autonomy of personal practice to reveal the wider socio-spatial relations and transdisciplinary processes of contemporary public arts. In this project these aspirations are expanded by the research aim to i) develop *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-arts practice and ii) reconnect artwork produced to the context of its emergence.

*Commonplacing* was a surprise discovery, a synchronicity evoking Gloria Fenam Orenstein's description of a 'methodology of the marvellous' (Gablik, 1991, 1) where vital pieces of information can appear within the creative process. The term *commonplacing*, as described earlier<sup>28</sup> stirred my imagination with multiple associations and oblique references to place, placing, the commons, sharing, positioning, collating, putting together and so on. This significant research breakthrough articulates my method of re-presenting the multifaceted responses

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<sup>25</sup> Dr Roz Hall's approach was process-led taking place during the commission (rather than afterwards) and involved creative activity as an empowering and inclusive method of participation and response.

<sup>26</sup> Examples of the publication and excerpts from the evaluation process can be found in Appendix A: **Thinking inside the box**: Barton Hill Public Art Programme.

<sup>27</sup> *Interfaces of location and memory* (<http://www.annielovejoy.net>) received Arts Council support in 2004 to design a content management system (its appearance and function) that would reveal the wider relational and transdisciplinary aspects of the work produced promoting inclusivity, in terms of art and non-art audiences.

<sup>28</sup> *Commonplacing* is described in chapter six, section 6.1. **Gathering** (pp.145-163).

and contributions *gathered* from an *immersive* exploration of place. Assemblage offers a connective space 'where relations co-exist on a page constituting a whole through a 'gathering and display of the performative relationship between thought, behavior and things' (Stiles and Selz, 1996:288), as Christensen-Scheel notes:

The assemblage could be thought of as a temporary constellation that constitutes the ground for social interaction and common understanding – the assemblage shifts from within as well as being altered from the outside. The assemblage is the temporary and simultaneous co-placement, co-display or co-existence of meaning, material and sociality. (Christensen-Scheel, 2008;109)

Here the 'connective aesthetics' of *commonplacing* as a design concept assists the re-presentation of context-led practice. Gablik's concept of 'connective aesthetics' is referenced in this text on several occasions and is a term that resonates with my artistic sensibilities, connectivity being the crux of context-led explorations.<sup>29</sup> But although attentive to the potential of connectivity I am wary of Gablik's expectancy of transformation in 'connective aesthetics' as a model of practice. Her approach comes dangerously close to urgent moral reframing and the necessity for art to become a tool of change and social empowerment. Gablik presents 'connective aesthetics' as a new model of art practice that overcomes self-referential artworld preoccupations, and as Malcolm Miles contends 'retains, despite her own objections, the category of art located in a separate realm in which the artist's consciousness is subject-matter' (2000; 151). My use of 'connective aesthetics' is more closely aligned with the connective sensibility of assemblage conveyed in the publications that accompany this text. Here attention is redirected from a reductive posited reading to a 'connective aesthetic' that reconnects 'place ethical' (Lippard, 1997: 286-7) processes, events, and outcomes with the context of their emergence.

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<sup>29</sup> Discussed in *Network and meshwork* in chapter three (p.49-56)

### 7.2.3 the value of arts practice as a form of knowledge production

Fieldwork is a term shared in the arts and social sciences, to describe a space of action and encounter. Having moved on from being thought of as static – a site ‘out there’ where research takes place, to a space explored through methods such as walking, seeing touching and so on (McCormack, 2008). In the social sciences this data and experience is more often interpreted and re-presented as textual accounts. My fieldwork involves similar research methods but with the added intention of engaging in responsive and relational processes to purposefully contribute an emergent artwork. The processes and outcomes of context-led fieldwork arise from the relational complexities of a particular place and are inherently transdisciplinary; that is, they span experiential situated knowledges as well as professional or academic expertise. *Caravanserai* brings together artists, geographers, academics, students, visitors and locals with varied experience, knowledge and expertise. The business of seeking out partners, funders, sites of engagement and production involves conversation and participation with others, beyond traditional arts boundaries. As Sheik points out:

The field of arts has become – in short – a field of possibilities, of exchange ...and can, crucially, act as a cross field, an intermediary between different fields, modes of perception and thinking, as well as between very different positions and subjectivities. (Sheik, 2009:5)

Through the transdisciplinary relations and processes of the fieldwork project *caravanserai*, the ‘local’ becomes magnified as a meeting place of plural subjectivities (experience, purpose, intention, interest, perception, knowledge, memory, history and so on). For example, in the guidebook local knowledge sits beside academic inquiry; the wonderful poetic ramblings of Portscatho resident



Jerry Gill offer insightful details of environmental change at a local level whilst a geographic research project<sup>30</sup> utilises a *caravanserai* village event as an opportunity for local participant response (figs.37 and 52). Meanwhile, *insites* attends to 'art' as a form of geographical knowing with respect to the context of its reception (a notebook for a geography conference). Here *gatherings* are re-presented in the *commonplacing* of image and text drawn from the documentation of context-led arts practice and the journaling of relevant philosophies. As Paton notes:

Whilst acknowledging the differing objectives for publication, *Insites—An Artists' Book* limits the voice, hones the process of exploration into a sensual package, and allows the reader to more readily participate in the sense of there, here. Attend[ing] to the reasoning of time spent on site as being fundamental, and [...] to making (in all its permutations) and documenting the making as a form of representation of place. The documentation process and subsequent publications advocate ways of relating place through shifting configurations of text and image, drawn from an informed utilisation of creativity as a tool of exploration. (Paton, 2013;1078-9)

The value of art as a form of knowledge production is also reflected in artist and educator Phil Smith's comments on the educational potential of *insites*, as follows:

'just as I thought I was about to tire of the quotation format the booklet flips and becomes something else... so I would like to have a few to pass on to students coming to an interest in site-based work and walking or 'emerging artists' interested for the first time in the potentials that the booklet addresses' (Phil Smith, 24 May 2011).<sup>31</sup>

The image/text assemblage (*commonplacing*), as a form of educational 'deep mapping', shifts between disciplinary boundaries, and in doing so expands on arts discourse through context-led interdisciplinary insights. A slippage occurs in these interstices that stimulates knowledge and generates new understandings, informing

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<sup>30</sup> Illustrated and discussed in chapter five (pp.140-141).

<sup>31</sup> Phil Smith teaches at the University of Plymouth, is a member of the artist group Wrights and Sites (<http://www.mis-guide.com/ws/people.html>) and author of *Mythogeography*. Triarchy Press, Axminster, UK. 2010.

the discipline within which one is located (Newling 2007, Rendell 2005, Hawkins 2011).

#### 7.2.4 whose story?

The wonderful thing with art is you can tell many stories at a time. Life is many stories at one time and therefore the truth is richer in the communication and the telling of it in the arts.<sup>32</sup>

I am aware of my position in this project as both researcher and participant in research; that subjectivity and power relations are ever-present and that acknowledging this is to accept that I am telling a particular story. As Jane Wolfe notes:

Hermeneutic theory, shows that all knowledge in history and social science is reinterpretation from the point of view of the interpreter, for the task of identifying totally with one's subject and eliminating ones own existential reality is an impossible one. (Wolff,1993:53)

With a project of this duration and extent of involvement the levels of participation and project relations are manifold. The nature of the work and dialogues that surround it are reflected in the variety of roles I assume as an artist – organizer, facilitator, fund-raiser, negotiator, collaborator, host, maker, observer, publicist, archivist and so on. These roles are seamlessly connected and combine to aid analysis and evaluation through the iterative and recursive processes of critical practice – ‘reflecting in and on action’ (Schön, 1983). One way of ensuring that my perspective refrains from being overly subjective might be to ask – does the work reveal the insights of others? Does it offer an understanding *of* place? Are the effects of the project, its impact and legacies apparent? The critical reflections in

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<sup>32</sup> Quantum physicist and activist, Dr Vandana Shiva in discussion with Wallace Heim about the importance of the arts for biological and cultural diversity.  
[http://www.ashdendirectory.org.uk/featuresView.asp?pageIdentifier=200492\\_97112674&view](http://www.ashdendirectory.org.uk/featuresView.asp?pageIdentifier=200492_97112674&view) [accessed 24.3.11]

chapters five and six offer answers to these questions providing responses from local residents and visitors as well as comments and activities of hosted artists, writers, geographers, academics, and students<sup>33</sup>. The gathering of responses, memories, stories and information involves building relationships and trust with participants. People need to feel reassured that their stories are valued, respected and of interest to others – it is in these sometimes fragile and revelatory moments that new knowledge can emerge. Beyond the immediate locality of the project are associated communities of interest and peer review via arts / cultural and academic networks, research seminars and conference presentations.

The sites of reception and production in a durational and immersive context-led project are dynamically intertwined. The interrelated processes and activities of context-led arts practice problematise dependence on the autonomy of the artist / audience. Artwork is experienced as being affective in tangible and functional ways as well as in the intangible collective and personal consciousness of people involved. It affects and is affected by all manner of influences, not least the baggage carried by the researcher – her or his own perceptions, prejudices and perspectives. Furthermore if the reader, has not participated in the project, in the *hic* and *nunc*, the here and now of a particular place at a particular time, then we are ultimately dependent on the researcher / author / artist's story, as Samantha Clark notes:

As participants-after-the-fact our view of the context and process of the dialogue, the quality of the exchange, and of any transformative insights that may emerge from the process, is dependent on how they are presented to us by the artist. (Clark, 2010; 366)

*Caravanserai* – as an exploration of place through context-led practice is presented in situated (directly experienced events and activities) and distributed formats

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<sup>33</sup> The residency programme is documented in Appendix D.

(further afield as creative re-presentation and documentation). The combinatorial, connective nature of *commonplacing* as a design concept for re-presenting and archiving the project advocates the sharing of knowledge ‘that leads us into common places, not glass boxes’ (Johnson, 2010: unpaginated). Recognising that documenting our encounters with place is contingent upon our own circumstances as well as the circumstances of place Emily Orley proposes that the more documents we can produce in response to a particular place is to respect its fluid and contested nature (Orley, 2009). *Commonplacing* as a form of designed assemblage resists fixed readings and the singular voice of the artist through combining facts, memories, encounters and narratives of place contributed by others. Presenting a living archive of place where ‘art’ as a form of knowledge production values the commonplace, our ordinary histories and everyday nature intertwined (fig 71).

### **Summary:**

This chapter focuses on the development of *Interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for context-led practice.

In the first section I reiterate the fact that my arts practice is the central dynamic of the research project, here a practice-led emergent methodology unfolds in relation to core concerns of the research (7.1). These concerns were prompted by direct experience of the impact of inflexible commissioning procedures on artistic integrity.<sup>34</sup> This signaled the direction of my research toward promoting an understanding of the processes integral to context-led practice and the production of meaningful artwork. It is my contention that the wider socio-spatial relations of a

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<sup>34</sup> The Barton Hill project is documented Appendix A and discussed in chapter one, section 1.3. *Thinking inside the box* (p.22).

works development become invisible through objective fixity and reductive representation of arts practice; and the categorization of artist's intentions and processes as operative art-field designations or genres. These insights are cumulative and are evidenced in previous attempts to reconcile the problem of representing context-led arts practice.<sup>35</sup> In this project, a pre-existing connective concept – *interfaces of memory and location* – is developed as a conceptual framework for context-led practice. The core research concerns are addressed in relation to the research fieldwork – *caravanserai* – evidencing my proposition that from an immersive '**of** place' perspective, it is counter-intuitive if not counter-productive to 'disentangle' the 'nature of the artwork' from the cultural context of its emergence (Kaprow in Lacy, 1995:157). Relational entanglement enables the development and production of meaningful context-led outcomes.

The second half of the chapter revisits the conceptual framework *Interfaces of location and memory* in light of the fieldwork project *caravanserai* – an exploration of place through context-led practice (7.2). Here elements of the methodological process are discussed – the use and limitations of Lippard's place-ethical criteria, *commonplacing* as a significant breakthrough in the research process, the value of art practice as a form of knowledge production and the veracity of the evidence.

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<sup>35</sup> *Interfaces of location and memory* was initiated as a means to disseminate the relational complexity of context-led practice; and to negotiate the difficulty of providing contextual information within the restrictive formats of funding applications and commissioning selection procedures. For background information on **Interfaces of location and memory**; as a philosophy of practice see chapter one (pp.19-22).

## 8. Conclusions

Throughout this thesis I have argued for a responsive approach in the development and production of contemporary public artwork – an art *of* place rather than applied *to* a place. This is reflective of my concern that artists' processes and intentions are commodified by arts-field designations such as 'socially engaged'; giving rise to the commissioning of artistic service-provision, without understanding (and therefore supporting and trusting) the processes involved. Having experienced how a work can be compromised by inflexible structures and prescribed expectations, this research is concerned with the integrity of context-led arts practice. Here 'integrity' is understood as a responsibility to the sensibilities of responsive practice and 'a truthfulness to [...] artistic vision' (Berleant, 1977:199) where all of the 'cues for a work's development' arise from context (Irwin in Stiles and Selz, 1996: 572).

The contextual and conceptual underpinnings of the research in the first three chapters identified ways in which the socio-spatial processes of context-led arts practice are rendered invisible by reductive categorization and representation that isolates artwork from the relational conditions of its emergence.

Groundbreaking publications such as *Mapping The Terrain* in 1995 promoted 'new' models of arts practice as connective and collaborative – a 'new genre public art' that moved away from 'art for arts sake', the autonomy of the singular artist and the mythology of the transcendent power of the art object. These *modus operandi* strategies and tools of social empowerment, once radical, have been recuperated in today's climate of regeneration and community outreach projects as artistic service-provision. Project commissioning policies, briefs and evaluation procedures regularly describe *the* community as an identifiable target audience (Douglas, 2004) along with details of deprivation, poverty statistics and crime rates. Selected artists

are often ‘parachuted in’<sup>1</sup> from elsewhere to meet lofty aims of social amelioration without prior experience of the contexts involved, or enough time to respond to the complexities of a particular situation. The desire to extend the reach of ‘great art’<sup>2</sup> is repetitive and persistent in its objectives: outreach goals, target audiences, social cohesion, connecting communities, building the new, achieving public value and so on. As discussed in chapter two, this mindset is reminiscent of a late nineteenth century missionary zeal where exposure to ‘art’ was seen as being good for you (Crimp, 1993; Duncan, 1993; Frank, 1991) without recognition of people’s own culture, innate creativity or what already exists in a place (Jenkinson, 2008; Kester, 2004). Similarly Rogoff’s critical interrogation of the academy questions market driven knowledge production. She sees practice-led arts research or what she prefers to call ‘creative practices of knowledge’ as an experimental philosophy in need of protection from the influences of market economies; to ensure that it does ‘not cede to the endless pragmatic demands of knowledge protocols: outcomes, outputs, impact’ as applied imperatives of ‘cognitive capitalism’ (Rogoff, 2010: 38).

These mechanisms of replication have valorized and validated production models rather than the elucidation of creative arts practice as a fluid process (Barrett, 2004:3). This reductive approach can be traced in the canonical domain of historical and contemporary arts: in the various select committees, bureaucratic systems, commissioning processes and dissemination of cultural production (Duncan, 1993; Kester, 2004; Lesage, 2010; Pollock, 1998; Sheihk, 2009; Tagg, 1992;). In retrospect, I am aware that these central concerns of my research have been

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed in the previous chapter section 7.1.2 **a quick fix** (chapter seven p.193)

<sup>2</sup> *Achieving great art for everyone* – is the title of a recent Arts Council (UK) publication produced in 2011/12 that sets out a 10-year vision ‘With its focus on long-term collaborative action, the strategic framework will enable us to work with partners towards positive change in the arts. It provides the rationale for our investment in the arts and will inform our future funding decisions’. Available from <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/our-vision-2011-21/> [accessed 5.7.2012]. In chapter three I discussed the effect of using the strap-line ‘great art’ as a requirement of our funders (FEAST / Arts Council Over a decade ago Lippard noted the leap of imagination needed to “shift our thinking away from bringing *great art* to the people, to working with people to create a work that is meaningful” (Sowder, L. in Lippard 1997: 290).

cumulative throughout my arts practice; as reflected in a catalogue text authored by cultural theorist Martin Lister in 1998, as follows:

The history of 20th century art is shot through with strategies to foreground 'art as process' over 'art as commodity'; the effort to make work which resists an easy assimilation to a consumerist economy and culture. There has been little, if anything, in this radical history which has not been commodified; setting artist's interventions apart from the lived social relations in which they were made and finally rendering them up as items to be traded and invested in. This may be the history, but in the work of an artist like Annie Lovejoy we can see these strategies at work in the here and now. (Lister, 1998: unpaginated)

Fifteen years later, this research is concerned with the fact that misunderstandings about what an artist does, or might do, stem from discourses that continue to isolate artwork from context, theory from practice, product from process – the wider social and cultural relations within which artwork is produced. In response to these concerns this project set out to consider i) *how a context-led approach to making art might be described without becoming a 'model' of practice focused on medium, style or genre* and ii) *how responsive outcomes (artworks) might be more clearly linked to the context of their emergence.*

The practice-led emergent methodology (outlined in chapter four) is responsive to this understanding of a relational field where flows, processes and complexities of context-led practice, move beyond the limitations of 'category-driven thinking that retains itself across disciplines' (Crouch, 2011: 2). Here, practices and philosophies concerned with *place* and *process*, drawn from the arts and social sciences inform my methodology allowing it 'to emerge organically from its concerns and its position' (Rogoff, 2010: 39). These influences include artists experienced in the socio-spatial processes of durational and immersive practices (such as Jay Koh, Platform and the Harrisons); and contemporary ethnographies of social sciences that move beyond the limitations of static and iconic representation (Crouch, 2003, 2010; Ingold, 2006,



2011; Law, 2004; Lorimer, 2005; Vannini, 2007, 2012; Wylie, 2005). Here, a uniform model for practice-based research is refused, aware that each project is particular to context and that its methodology arises as an instance of ‘local invention’ (Macdonald, 2009) where procedures and methods emerge in and through the work rather than being prescribed (Bolt, 2008).

In chapter three, the section ‘**reclaiming the relational**’ draws attention to the limitations of Bourriaud’s ‘relational art / aesthetics’ as a model of contrived interaction. Examples of my practice and that of others (Lucy and Jorge Orta, John Newling, Here nor There artists collective, Jyll Bradley) demonstrate the difference between the structured nodal interactions of a network and the organic relational complexity of ‘lifeworld’ relations ‘as a domain of entanglement’ (Ingold, 2006.14). Ingold’s notion of a *meshwork* offers a way to think about context (‘con’ with and ‘textere’ to weave) as a relational fabric or ‘texture’, which he describes as ‘being constituted of a relational field, [...] a field not of interconnected points but of interwoven lines, not a network but a *meshwork* (Ingold, 2006:13). In the research fieldwork project *caravanseraï*, we can see this concept in motion, revealing how ‘entanglement’ and connectivity are essential to the development and production of meaningful outcomes. The project publications that accompany this text evidence relational entanglement as a *meshwork* of place-responsive images and texts made visible through the designed assemblages of *commonplacing*.

Place is both the context for practice and a product of practice (Cresswell, 2004) – a centre of meaning through experience. Meanings and outcomes that have arisen from the *caravanseraï* project are informed by its location as a tourist destination. In chapter four, the section ‘**place, art and tourism: where r u?**’ introduces Lippard’s notion of ‘place-ethical’ art as being relevant to this study because of her extensive writings on the relations between these subjects. This discussion led to reflections

on the consumption of place in tourism, (Urry in Davidson, Bondi and Smith, 2005) and the extraordinary action at a holiday park in 'Wordsworth country' where fake daffodils were planted to please visitors. Attention was then drawn to similarly anthropocentric and disconnected 'art' projects reliant on 'an extractive economy that views the natural world as a resource' (Kester, 2005:2). Here, an ethics of practice (integrity) and place (responsiveness) were discussed; such as Jordan's belief that as artists, we need to use our fine-tuned sensibilities, and without separating aesthetics from ethics, move away from the representation of issues as 'art' in galleries, to real world action that is embedded in the issues.

Through place-ethical activity *caravanserai* evidences 'ethico-aesthetic' sensibilities that eschew stylistic categorization and operative models of practice (Genesco, 2005). Instead of considering whether this is 'art' or not we might ask what is happening here? Shifting our attention to *where things happen* rather than on a *thing that is in the world*, a process that is more about people than objects. In the 'broader cultural ecology' of such processes the role of the artist or architect becomes harder to distinguish from that of the geographer, community organizer, writer or health-worker (Guest, 2009: unpaginated). The transdisciplinary processes of context-led arts practice invite aesthetic appreciation of the contingent, connected, transient and dynamic fluidity of place. Embedded in these relational qualities of a particular place *caravansersai* has generated a self-sustained legacy where project activities initiated five years ago are now integrated in village and campsite life; and continue to evolve through people's participation and creativity. Immersive and durational commitment to a particular locality has stimulated social, cultural and environmental awareness through place-ethical / context-led arts practice. This is not to say that 'art' has to be slow, but it does speak volumes about attention to a place, about getting lost in a place, loitering in a place, getting to know a place through the feet, the ground, following paths, hunches, clues, encountering

others, conversations and stories. Here connective relations shape a work, alert the antennae, fuel encounters and drive enthusiasm toward an opening out – an outcome. This enactment of art thinking (Holdridge and Macleod, 2002) does not necessarily produce a discovery that can be generalized, but it can generate ‘an imaginative breakthrough, which announces locally different forms of sociability, environmental interactivity and collective storytelling’ (Carter in Barrett & Bolt, 2007: 18).

*Commonplacing* as an imaginative breakthrough of the research process does exactly that; and at the same time, meets the research objective to reconnect ‘place ethical’ (Lippard, 1997: 286-7) processes, events, and outcomes with the context of their emergence. The publications that accompany this text, are a visual testament to my practice-led methodology and offer a creative solution to reductive representation; illustrating Arlene Raven’s proposition that ‘data and insights’ added to the experience of artworks places them in literary, geographical, historical, critical, political, or thematic contexts (Raven, 1995:159-60).<sup>3</sup>

### **The research contribution:**

The research findings reveal that commissioning procedures for public art need not be inflexible and prescriptive if we recognise that ‘the logic of the dislocation of the making of the art from the complexities of its reception [...] makes such offence possible’ (Hutchinson, 2002; 432). But this involves conscious awareness of limiting agendas and an alertness to the integrity of arts practice as a response-ability to the relational (enabling) *conditions* of a specific location.

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<sup>3</sup> Referenced in chapter two as being suggestive of a means to move beyond the limitations of reductive representation. A key concern of this thesis is the representation and dissemination of context-led arts practice, hence the research objective to reconnect artwork with its socio-spatial relations, in order to understand and value the responsive processes and activities of context-led arts practice.

*Interfaces of location and memory* provides a conceptual framework for context-led arts practice that hinges on the understanding that such a practice is responsive to the particularities of place, rather than a model of practice that is applied to a place.

The project extends existing notions of site / place / community-based practices and the curation and/or commissioning of public art by expanding on Lippard's notion of 'place-ethical' practice and Gablik's 'connective aesthetics'. Lippard recognized that making a list of criteria for place-ethical art risked 'evaluating and prescribing works along the lines that artists never intended' (Lippard, 1997: 286). This research confirms this risk as being problematic and reaffirms context (place) as the impetus for practice. *Interfaces of location and memory* – an exploration of place through context-led practice (over a prolonged period of time) expands on her work whilst sharing her educative intentions: 'because the education of public artists and their publics (including their critics) – together – is crucial' (Lippard, 1997: 286). This research project problematises the categorization of artists' processes as stylistic genres and reductive forms of representation that lead to prescriptive expectation. In the creative re-presentation of *caravanserai*, the research objectives merge: developing interfaces of location as a conceptual framework at the same time as reconnecting processes and outcomes to the context of their emergence. In Lippard's keynote lecture for the Falmouth Convention in 2010 she suggested that artists are well placed to respond to the socially constructed tourist gaze, 'performance artists could be great tourist guides'<sup>4</sup> and 'an exhibition catalogue could double as a guidebook' acknowledging that this was 'an idea already being explored here, I understand, by Annie Lovejoy' (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated). The guidebook – *discovering whats on our doorstep* – invites a 'deep mapping'

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<sup>4</sup> As demonstrated in the work of Phil Smith: educator, artist/performer and author of two books on Counter-Tourism. <http://www.countertourism.net/crab-man.html> [accessed 4.1.2013].

(Pearson, 2006: 15) that reconnects 'place ethical' (Lippard, 1997: 286-7) processes, events, and outcomes with the context of their emergence; mobilising active engagement with the locality and at the same time, representing context-led practice.

As a key element of this research contribution *commonplacing* articulates a creative use of designed assemblages to re-present the multifaceted responses *gathered* from an *immersive* fieldwork process. The 'connective aesthetic' of the design redirects attention from reductive posited readings to the connective processes and sensibilities of context-led arts practice. Gablik's 'connective aesthetic' as discussed in the previous chapter, is problematic as a referent to a model of practice; but here the concept aids the visibility of context-led process (whilst maintaining her intention to overcome self-referential artworld preoccupations). Connectivity is central to context-led processes, being-in-relationship with and at the same time, reflecting on, the relational threads particular to a place or situation that inform and generate an opening out, an outcome.

*Interfaces of location and memory* as a philosophy of practice is of particular relevance to artists, educators, curators and commissioners of public art because it offers an informed understanding of the responsive processes of context-led arts practice; that aids communication and 'protects the processes and working needs of the artist' (Nunn, 2007:11).

Returning briefly to the Barton Hill Public Art Programme that prompted the direction of this research project; the proposal for SHarED<sup>5</sup> was focused on 'undesign' as a means of 'not being designed over' in the way that regeneration so often transfers models of virtual planning throughout the land (Pile, 2004). In both projects, Barton

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<sup>5</sup> Detailed in Appendix A

Hill and *caravanserai*, responsive processes led to instigating ‘meeting places’ toward generating productive and meaningful outcomes. Here place as ‘an intersection of numerous trajectories of all kinds brought together in physical proximity’ (Massey and Rose, 1993) creates opportunities for a ‘connective aesthetics’ (Gablik, 1995) in a continually unfolding field of relationships’ (Ingold, 2000: 4-5). Within the Barton Hill commission this essential connective experience was denied resulting in foreclosure of the work’s potential. With *caravanserai* – as a *meeting place* of *caravans* (companies of people), the work’s potential was realised and continues to unfold. Activities and outcomes have evolved and continue to evolve through responsive undesigned, unprogrammed, unpredictable, uncertain processes that nurture meaningful experience in the construction of place.

Place-ethical context-led arts practice can instigate emotive, evocative, imaginative sustained conversations with what currently exists in a place as the future unfolds. Artists can reveal that which is overlooked, marginalized and hidden, taking response-ability for knowing about a place, valuing it, and working to keep it viable. As Lippard contends ‘it’s downright dangerous not to do so [...] for places, for other people, other life, and for a planet in the grip of climate chaos. (Lippard, 2010: unpaginated). As architect Doina Petrescu, observes:

The question addressed to architects, urban planners and place-makers is how to operate with a space which is traced at the same time as it is lived and how to use this tracing to understand and eventually create more relationships between those who inhabit it. How to allow them to have access to and decide about their common *tracing* which is also the condition of their *indeterminate community*? (Petrescu, 2007: 96)

The responsive mapping of context-led practices that trace the paths of a place through the stories encountered along the way, knowing ‘as we go’ (Ingold, 2000: 230) offer a ‘creative survey’ at ground level that can reveal ‘spatial, economic, social and cultural potentials of immediate and practical value to architects’

(Butterworth and Vardy, 2008:125) and others who shape the environments we inhabit. The guidebook *discovering what's on our doorstep* provides a polyvocal representation of place that can stimulate thinking about the environment, recording the locality and offering imaginative potential. Such 'response-ability' to local conditions offers the possibility for that which is already there to be reawakened and acted upon. Here context-led arts practice contributes to knowledge by valuing local practice as 'skilled, systematic, repeatable, teachable, informed by understanding, and productive of truths that are objective by anyone's standards' (Finn in Biggs, 2009:11).

This research project reveals 'an expanded field of practices' where c/artographic and geo/graphic transdisciplinary insights offer a deep mapping of a specific context. These explorations are significant to cultural disciplines concerned with the experience of place as *caravanserai* geographer-in-residence Harriet Hawkins notes:

This 'expanded field' of practices, including works like Lovejoy's, centralises practices of collaboration, interaction and the works' engagement with context [...] Geographers have begun to attend to these forms of art work as 'politics in action' [...] thinking and writing about art, and making art, can offer an interesting way to approach the study of our embodied experiences of the world (Hawkins, 2011:7).

In relation to the burgeoning field of practice-led arts research the project also makes a contribution to the understanding of 'art' as a form of knowledge production. The transdisciplinary nature of context-led arts research promotes 'creative practices of knowledge' as a quality of attention attuned to emergence rather than 'teleological, linear, consequent, and verifiable [...] orders of logic and sequential argumentation' (Rogoff.40). Relational complexity produces knowledge through fluid methodologies and the iterative processes of exchange, gathering,

collecting, reflecting and doing. A 'revelatory turbulence' is invoked that counters the pitfalls of limited constructions of knowledge (Kochhar-Lindgren, 2008) – relational rather than reductive.

The project also makes a contribution to existing doctorate research in the area of public art through offering an alternative to the establishment of a new genre, model or categorical arts application.<sup>6</sup> *Interfaces of location and memory* resists the limitations of a constructed model or recipe of practice, and instead, promotes a philosophy of practice, where the emphasis is on response rather than application – 'context rather than category' (Kaprow, 1993:105). Thus, this thesis, the practice, the outcomes *of* place upon which it rests, proposes a *modus vivendi* – a way of living (or 'arting') that can contribute to understanding the places we inhabit, in an increasingly complex world.

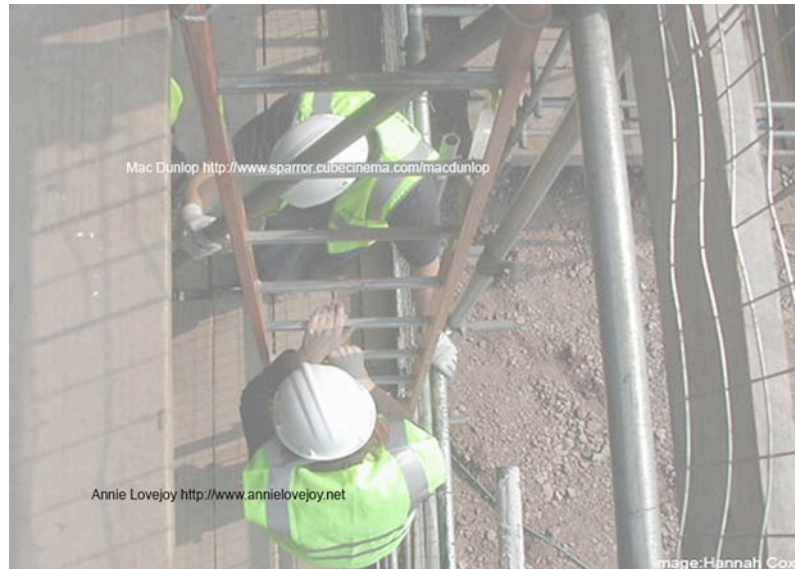
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<sup>6</sup> The **rationale for a responsive approach** outlined in chapter 4 describes a selection of art genres and provides details of related doctorate research projects (p.73).



## Appendix A:

### Thinking inside the box: Barton Hill Public Art Programme



Annie Lovejoy (source image by Hannah Cox). *Construction site*. 2006

The purpose of this short overview is to highlight the constraints of the project and subsequent foreclosure of the work's potential. The project demonstrates how the conditions that enable the emergence of place-ethical<sup>1</sup> outcomes (meaningful work) can be compromised. As Kaprow notes,

once the artist is no longer the primary agent responsible for the artwork but must engage with others, sometimes undefined and loosely organised like the school kids, sometimes highly defined like government or corporate structures, the artwork becomes less a 'work' than a process of meaning-making interactions. (Kaprow in Lacy eds, 1995:158)

In the initial stages of a commission these 'meaning-making interactions' centre on getting to know where you are – this means setting out with a finely attuned

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<sup>1</sup> The term place ethical references Lucy Lippard's criteria for an 'art governed by [a] place ethic (1997: 286) and is discussed in more detail in chapter four.

sensibility that seeks to investigate the nature of the site / situation or place and the aspirations for the project.

*October 2006: who is the work for? What is happening in the school and the neighbourhood that the school serves? What will the building look & feel like? Have its users been involved with its design? Are plans available for us to see & discuss? What are the physical aspects - the materials used, light, visibility from the street, power sources and so on.*

*Outside of formal project meetings we loiter with intent, walking the neighbourhood, listening, chatting... ears pricked up and antennae alert to clues that might spark an idea for project development. (Author's journal)*

These questions are specific to the school project environs and exemplify an essential starting point to any context-led activity as the Harrisons<sup>2</sup> point out:

This way of working in any place begins with three questions: **How big is here? How can what's happening here be understood and engaged? What patterns are forming or reforming? And how can we, and those with us, add to the well being of the now of this place?** And the question, **How big is here?** must also include, **How long is our Now?** Now may also be understood as an instant, but the instant may be 250 years long. (2004:3 emphasis in original)

The construction site of the new school was adjacent to the junior school and surrounded by a 3m high blue 'fence'. This fence was to become a pertinent metaphorical and physical divide between the construction site and the school, the new and the old, the aspirations and the frustrations...

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<sup>2</sup> 'Among the leading pioneers of the eco-art movement, the collaborative team of Newton and Helen Mayer Harrison (often referred to simply as "the Harrisons") have worked for almost forty years with biologists, ecologists, architects, urban planners and other artists to initiate collaborative dialogues to uncover ideas and solutions which support biodiversity and community development.' <http://theharrisonstudio.net> [last accessed 7 May. 2011]



Annie Lovejoy. *The dividing fence*. 2006

*November 2006: on the one side is a construction site buzzing with enthusiasm, hospitality, humour & knowledge. The build is an unusual project for Pearce, they normally work with steel & concrete and are clearly excited to be involved in a sustainable design project. There's a lot of laughter and bantering ...today it's about the architects, as they had to reinstall the tree trunks (entrance columns) upside down to fit with architectural aesthetics.*

*Meanwhile on the school side, the staff are overworked and have little interest in the new building, design or its ecological aspirations...and the children just see a fence.*

*So we're busy negotiating red tape scenarios to get a group of kids on site regularly to meet with the builders and get involved in the construction<sup>3</sup>, and we've set up a trip to meet the architects at their rural offices<sup>4</sup>, turns out the Somali children have never been outside the city before...*

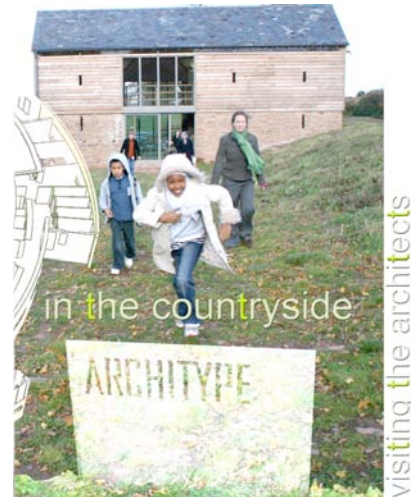
*The big question is – how do we address the fence divide on a day-to-day basis, and involve families and school children not in the chosen 'art group'? (Author's journal)<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup> Documentation of the construction site visits is available at <http://shedsite.wordpress.com/category/construction-site-visits>

<sup>4</sup> The trip to the architects offices is documented at <http://shedsite.wordpress.com/a-trip-to-the-architects>

<sup>5</sup> The 'art group' was limited to a pre-selected (by the school) group of 13 children, and was in place before we were commissioned. One of the ways we attempted to extend inclusivity was to give a presentation about the construction site visits to the rest of the school children and their families. At a presentation for parents (all of which were Somali families aside from one person), a mother on seeing the images of children on site and their drawings, asked if her child could be involved. Hitting at the core of my frustration with the project this was an unforgettable moment – I explained that the school would only allow us to work with the group we had been allocated.



Annie Lovejoy. The fence, and the visit to the architects. 2006

*SHED (SHarED)* space was proposed as a means to address the divide – invisible from the outside, it would house an inner observatory similar to a bird hide to see into the construction site. It would be a non-prescriptive space in the school grounds that created opportunities for shared and unpredictable encounters. This is an idea analogous to geographer Steve Pile's suggestion that a principle of *undesign* could be installed at the heart of urban design<sup>6</sup> where undesigning as 'an uncertain, unpredictable process can take place' (2004:15). This concept is proposed by Pile in relation to Richard Wentworth's *An area of Outstanding Unnatural Beauty*,<sup>7</sup> a project described as an ongoing conversation with his native habitat, fuelled by daily walks where the 'contours of the city are charted through artifacts, memories and ongoing art processes in response to urban developments' (Pile, 2004:10).

<sup>6</sup> For an example of other projects that engage in similar ideas see Public Works, a group of artists and architects that 'address the question how the public realm is shaped by its various users and how existing dynamics can inform further proposals' <http://www.publicworksgroup.net/profile> [accessed 5.5.11]. Public Works use temporary spaces and structures to create meeting places towards generating future outcomes. These spaces of engagement arise from responsive processes of context-led practice concerned with questions such as that of architect/artist Celine Condorelli when she asks 'How can art allow a community to come into being rather than prescribe existing ideas of it?' <http://www.axisweb.org/dIFULL.aspx?ESSAYID=74> [accessed may11 2007]

<sup>7</sup> For more information on Wentworth's project commissioned by Artangel in 2002, please see [http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2002/an\\_area\\_of\\_outstanding\\_unnatural\\_beauty](http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2002/an_area_of_outstanding_unnatural_beauty) [last accessed May 2011]

Wentworth's' exhibition included a periscope through which to survey the surrounding area and similarly, we envisioned *SHED* as a peephole into the construction site. *SHED* would be an inclusive space that might inspire and generate outcomes for the façades and glazed areas of the new building. *SHED* was accordingly proposed at the concept design stage, approved, production initiated with a local company, a site allocated in the playground and a date for construction agreed; then, via an email from the school headmaster (with no prior warning or discussion), cancelled.



Annie Lovejoy. *SHaRED* – a design concept. 2007

Following this, we proposed an event as a means to extend the project to the wider school community. This would involve educational activities centred on energy and ecology, a picnic and presentations on the new building by the architects, construction site manager and the arts group. This was agreed as a viable alternative, approved, delayed and then...cancelled.



the idea being to raise awareness of energy use in the school and invite staff to use this as an opportunity to do related curricula work with their classes. In support of this we continue to make links to various energy / education websites from this blog and save relevant downloads for print. These activities will range across the key stages fitting in with various subjects such as geography, science, art & citizenship.

I Count is the campaign of the Stop Climate Chaos coalition, the ever-growing coalition of more than 50 organizations.




Annie Lovejoy. *Barton Hill Public Art Programme*. 2007

The impact of proposals being accepted then ignored, delayed and not discussed, aside from affecting professional relations with associated contractors, results in decreased potential of the work; the production becomes a challenge reduced to design formats and 'creative problem-solving'.

*October 2007: Working on the glazing designs I have squeezed and scraped for images that convey inspirational moments ...endlessly perusing images that involve the children, looking for clues that might celebrate their playful enthusiasm & reach out to all the others not allowed to join in. (Author's journal)*

The only resources left to us for extending the art group's experiences to the wider community were the web log and publication (both of which were instigated beyond the contractual agreements of the initial commissioning brief). The web log reveals the processes of its development as well as documenting the construction of the building. It also serves as an archive for the commissioning briefs, concept designs,


outcomes and evaluation making all aspects of the project transparent and publically accessible.<sup>8</sup>



our new school is behind here

» SHEDsite is..

a peephole into the construction site of our new school  
a focus for learning about ecology & the environment  
a place to document our activities and the development of artwork for the new school



**Pages**

- » SHEDsite is..
- » project info and downloads
- » trip to the architects 21.11.06

**Categories**

- » artwork - audio responsive light feature
- » artwork- designs for new school windows
- » construction site visits
- » curriculum / teaching resources
- » eco arts
- » eco fun / educational activities
- » eco schools
- » local initiatives
- » process led evaluation
- » workshops

**Archives**

Select Month

**Links**

Annie Lovejoy. *Web Log* <http://shedsite.wordpress.com>. [accessed 1.2.12]

The web log demonstrates a means of publicly re-presenting processes involved in context-led work. As an observational tool it sets up a dynamic structure that can be interwoven with related information. In this case serving as a functional and educational resource linking to ecological issues, curricula activities, and local initiatives. In terms of trans-disciplinary processes, it also reveals the development of the building, plans and materials involved. The blog was well received by stakeholders, particularly the architects who commented that:

<sup>8</sup> All documents related to the project's development inclusive of the commissioning briefs, evaluation report and final publication are available at <http://shedsite.wordpress.com/about-2/>

The blog constructed by the artists has been a really good device for that, for example, as it has ensured that everyone has had a sense of what is going on and being involved in the process. We often pass on the URL to all sorts of organisations and individuals as a useful reference / example of this way of working. We will be having a blog for the work at St Lukes and The Willows, which are the schools we are working with in Wolverhampton. (Hall, 2008:15)

**The outcomes:**

The completed artworks span large glazed areas of the school, such as the entrance foyer, classrooms and corridors. The designs make use of drawings by children and images of them, recalling their participation in the project.

For example, the corridor glazing combines life-size photographs of school-children with their drawings, in a symbolic and educational design that references the Fibonacci series of numbers, or 'Golden Mean', used by the architects to calculate the dimensions of the new school hall.



Lovejoy / Dunlop. *Corridor windows*, Barton Hill Public Art Programme. 2007



"The black and white work on the corridor windows is really great and clearly represents the school, and is clearly about 'black and white' which I think the children totally understand; I think they are miles ahead of us in terms of their understanding... with this window art the sun shines and casts shadows, which look like people standing in the corridor, which is amazing to see".  
 Dale Martin and Denise Fog: Caretakers, Barton Hill Primary School and Children's Centre.



# I Fibonacci Window information

The images of school children are from the arts process - the class sessions, playground and construction site visits.

Because there is glass on the exterior of the building onto the hallway and into the classroom behind, the figures are reflected in various ways. From the outside they seem to mingle with the schoolchildren as they pass by on their way to class.

The idea came from a conversation with the architect Tom Mason - we mentioned how the hall seemed to be of cathedral proportions & Tom thought the 'Golden Section' may have been used in it's design.

The 'Golden Section' is a simple numerical series discovered in the 12th century by Leonardo Fibonacci. It reveals the incredible mathematical relationship that we can see in natural growth patterns such as the head of a sunflower or a pine cone.

The flower symbols reference the mathematical relationship of the Golden Section, as well as the number of children in each frame of the window.

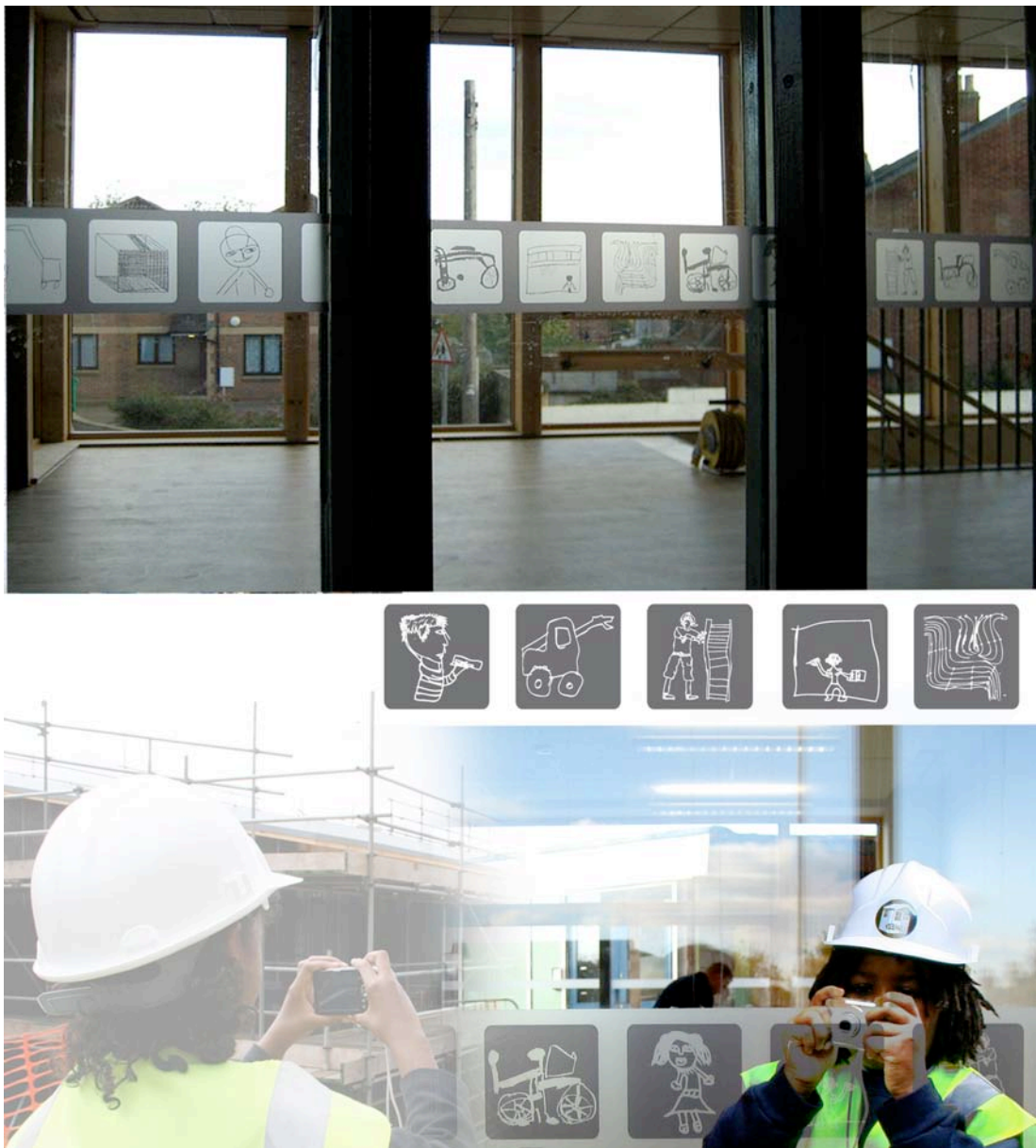
## The Golden Section



Each new number in the series is the sum of the two before it.

0 + 1 =     1 + 1 =     1 + 2 =     2 + 3 =     3 + 5 =

Sketches drawn by children decorate General Manifestation Patterns throughout the building<sup>9</sup> – ‘their new school is now permanently ringed by sketches made by schoolchildren during its actual construction’ (Dunlop in Hall, 2008:15).



Lovejoy / Dunlop. *GMP's Barton Hill Public Art Programme 2007*

<sup>9</sup> To comply with DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) requirements, glass partitioning and doors require physical markings or manifestation.

Another work, designed to engage with the ecological remit of the building, spans two floors of a central stairway. This wall based light feature is made from sheets of plastic manufactured from water bottles & broken Compact Discs. The material has a deep blue translucency speckled with the reflective glitter of the broken Discs. Housing a microphone, sensor technology and myriad tiny lights (L.E.D.s) the light feature consumes less power than a 60watt light bulb. The audio sensitivity means that the quieter the children are, the more beautiful the starry light cosmos becomes, stimulating a sense of awe through silence. This simple but interactive quality allows for a permanently sited sculptural feature to change and react in response to whoever is present at any given moment. Creating a visual response to the *hic* and *nunc* of being in a particular place at a particular time.



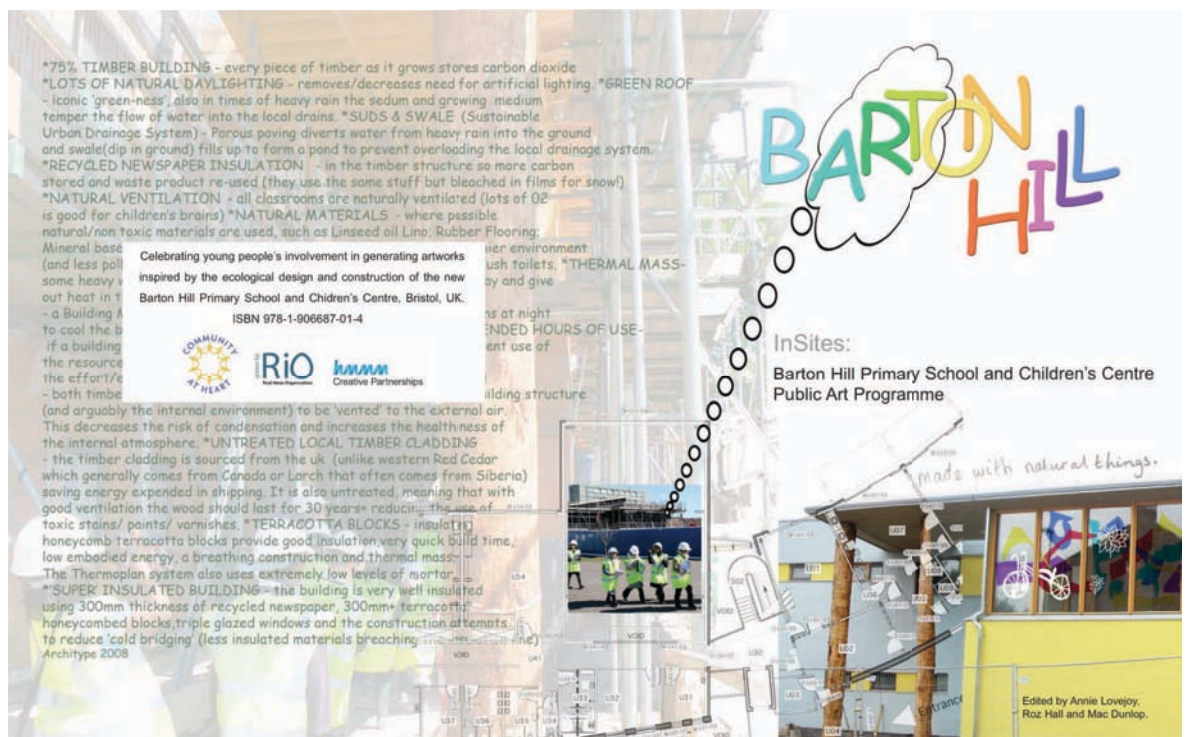
Lovejoy / Dunlop. *Light Feature*, Barton Hill Public Art Programme 2007

At my request the Barton Hill Public Art Programme was evaluated by Dr Roz Hall,<sup>10</sup> providing all stakeholders (and funders) with an informed understanding of what had taken place. Hall's approach 'acknowledges the ongoing process of evaluation in which practitioners are engaged, and, rather than seeking to impose any criteria

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<sup>10</sup> Dr Roz Hall is an experienced evaluator and author of *The Value of Visual Exploration: Understanding Cultural Activities with Young People*. Cornerhouse Publications 2005. Her process-led approach to evaluation is conducive to the responsive processes of context-led practice. Rather than being based solely on interviews that take place after the project has happened, this method is one that builds evaluation into wider project activities.

from the outset, allows for criteria to emerge and to remain flexible as that process develops.<sup>11</sup> This allowed for engagement with the project throughout its development, an active reflexive approach (reflection in action) rather than a purely retrospective one. Her work culminated in a final report for the stakeholders that suggested ways in which to build on the project's success and to address issues raised. Hall's evaluation fed into the publication 'Insites: Barton Hill Primary School and Children's Centre Public Art Programme' (Lovejoy, Hall and Dunlop; 2008), a booklet that celebrated the ecological design & construction of the building and the production of the artworks through representation of the processes involved.



Annie Lovejoy. *Barton Hill Public Art Programme booklet cover*. 2008

The booklet was distributed to all school children, staff and families as well as local and national educational & public arts bodies. The publication provides an understanding of process, giving provenance to artwork experienced by the school community on a daily basis.

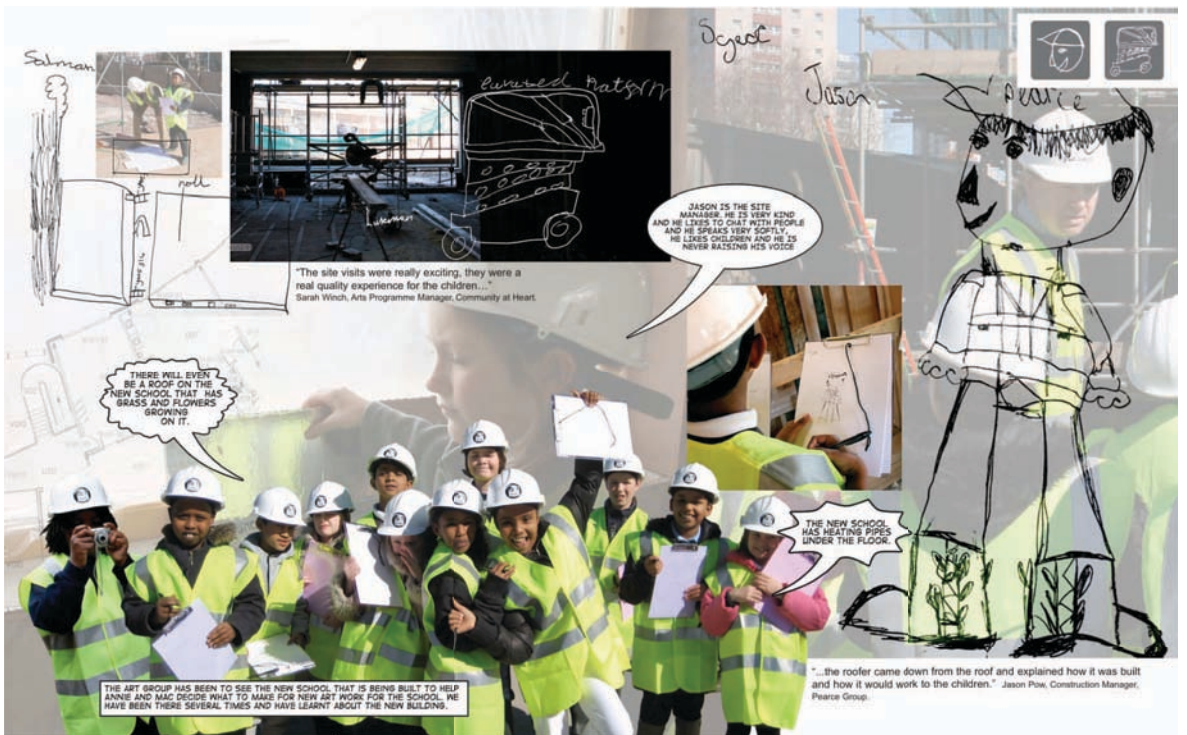
<sup>11</sup> Roz Hall. Identifying Value through Dialogue and Reflection. Audience & Place. Ixia 2004

The entrance glazing is designed to be a bright & cheerful front facade to the street taking advantage of the available light without obstructing it. The large abstract fields of colour and drawings are derived from an archive of work compiled from pictures displayed or stored in the old school buildings.

Entirely sourced from children's class work the images are scaled and layered to create a 'stained glass' effect. This brings colour into the main foyer and school entrance in the mornings, and in turn shines out into the community in the evenings, especially in winter when the school's interior lighting is on.



"When the sun shines through the piece with colours in it, the colours appear across the floor and it really is lovely. The children really like the work on the windows, they remark on those images alot."  
 Dale Martin and Denise Fog, Carstairs, Barton Hill Primary School and Children's Centre.



"The site visits were really exciting, they were a real quality experience for the children..."  
 Sarah Wrench, Arts Programme Manager, Community at Heart

JASON IS THE SITE MANAGER. HE IS VERY KIND AND HE LIKES TO CHAT WITH PEOPLE AND HE SPEAKS VERY SOFTLY. HE LIKES CHILDREN AND HE IS NEVER RAISING HIS VOICE.

THERE WILL EVEN BE A ROOF ON THE NEW SCHOOL THAT HAS GRASS AND FLOWERS GROWING ON IT.

THE NEW SCHOOL HAS HEATING PIPES UNDER THE FLOOR.

THE ART GROUP HAS BEEN TO SEE THE NEW SCHOOL, THAT IS BEING BUILT TO HELP ANNE AND MAC DECIDE WHAT TO MAKE FOR NEW GET ROOM FOR THE SCHOOL. WE HAVE BEEN THERE SEVERAL TIMES AND HAVE LEARNT ABOUT THE NEW BUILDING.

"...the roofer came down from the roof and explained how it was built and how it would work to the children." Jason Fox, Construction Manager, Pearce Group.

Annie Lovejoy. Pages from Barton Hill Public Art Programme booklet. 2008

Added to this, Hall's evaluation process resulted in a comprehensive report<sup>12</sup> that included comments from interviews with children, staff, artists and commissioners as well as the building site manager and architects; and noted that,

in order to address issues articulated future projects should ensure a shared set of aims and mutual ambitions, expectations and priorities amongst all partners at the outset. The following suggestions could be utilised in order to achieve such concord:

- Ensure all partners are involved in planning in a consistent way
- Develop a contract, not just for artists, but for all partners
- Produce a strategy for projects to manage changing staff and roles (Hall, 32: 2007).

In her final summary she suggests ways in which Barton Hill might build on the successful aspects of the project and in a wider context, address the issues that have arisen if inclusive and participatory processes are to fulfill their potential.

## **5.2 Summary recommendations using the suggestions outlined above to address the issues and build on the success of the work.**

### **Building on success**

- Continue to utilise and develop process led approaches.
- Extend upon participatory practice as a means of 'democratic consultation' in the development of new spaces and buildings as well as public art, involving artists and more young people, earlier in the process, to integrate the process into the fabric of a new building.
- Organise further work in the school to celebrate and launch the work and frame it in terms of its development and rationale to a wider community audience, possibly at different times of day to take advantage of the effect of light on the work.
- Nurture the positive partnerships that have developed, e.g. between Community at Heart, the artists and Architype.
- Disseminate the outcomes and findings of the work to others involved in similar processes, such as BCC.
- Develop the use of websites and blogs as a mechanism within such projects for ongoing communication and dissemination.
- Develop a plan to extend the workshops into the future, so that new pupils have opportunities to also leave their mark on the school, possibly by extending on and adding to the work on the windows.

### **Addressing issues**

- Establish commitment to project from all involved at outset through a contract that all partners sign up to, not just the artists. The following six points could also be addressed through such a contract.
- Ensure and establish a common understanding of process led

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<sup>12</sup> Available for download on the project website at <http://shedsite.files.wordpress.com/2007/04/bh-evaluation-report.pdf> [accessed 20.6.13]

approaches and what such an approach entails.

- Ensure shared priorities and expectations between all partners at the outset of any project.
  - Ensure commonly recognised deadlines that are the responsibility of all partners.
  - Plan into future work an initial exchange between all potential partners, such as the picnic idea, to ensure a common sense and shared understanding of the project from the outset.
  - Ensure strategy in place to manage staff changes and role changes.
  - Establish and agree useful and manageable communication process for the duration of the project at the outset.
- 
- Reconsider the need to ensure public art is ready for installation when new buildings open; continue to develop public art alongside new builds, but allow the process to continue into the time when the building is occupied so that the work can be informed by the actual space and its use, overcoming both the issue around the unpredictable nature of the use of new space and the way in which the work might be made less apparent through being in a completely new context. Furthermore, it would address one of the issues around time, as the period of time when a school community moves into a new building is prohibitively busy and problematises the potential of process led practice.
- 
- When public art budgets are identified as a percentage of overall building costs, the potential for those overall costs to increase significantly should be taken into consideration.

## **6 Conclusions**

The public art project at Barton Hill Children's Campus has been shown through the evidence collected and presented here and in the appendix to have been successful in terms of realising the aims and objectives of the various partners involved.

However, the potential reach and success of the project has been hampered by the issues outlined previously, all of which stem from a lack of common understanding of the support that all partners in such projects need to commit to participatory work in order for it to be a meaningful experience:

“Normally we would try to encourage more discussion and conversation with interested parties, such as teachers and staff, local community etc. It is apparent that while 'participatory' processes tick boxes in the commissioning of public art, resources are not always in place that allow time for that participation from interested parties.”  
(Appendix 1: Interviews: Mac Dunlop)

What is therefore implied is a need to ensure greater consensus amongst all partners at the outset of any project regarding approach, timing, ambition, expectations and priorities, if inclusive and participatory processes are to fulfill their potential. (Hall, 2007: 35-37)

## **Interview with Annie Lovejoy (Hall, 2008: unpaginated).**

### *1. What has your role been in the Barton Hill Children's Campus Public Art project?*

We were commissioned in June 2006 via competitive interview to develop and produce public artwork to be integrated into the new Barton Hill School and Children's Centre. The interview included an observed workshop with the Arts group who had been involved in selecting and short-listing the project artists. The panel included representatives from the school, Community at Heart and the architects. The architect present, later informed us that we had been selected because of our socially inclusive process-led approach and interest in ecology.

### *2. What have you done and how have you worked with others involved?*

We have worked in response to the artist's brief and contractual targets in order to develop work that is relevant to its context - Barton Hill school community. This has resulted in works on the school glazing that recall the processes and participation of the arts group. The images are sourced entirely from children's involvement in the project. A sculptural audio responsive light feature has also been produced that has been designed to reflect the ecological focus of the new building. Accompanying these physical works is a web resource/blog (<http://shedsite.wordpress.com>) that traces the progress of the building and artworks whilst also providing information on local eco initiatives and educational curricula activities related to ecology.

Scope of work as outlined in the 'definitive artists brief - 15.06.06:

The public art programme will reflect the overall aspiration that embraces the design and collaborative process for the new Children's Campus development. This commission is therefore a fundamental component of the overall project and its continuing process of engagement and community involvement. An important part of this commission is the requirement of the artist to develop ways and means of exploring the local context and enhancing the identity of the development.

The contractual targets:

1. initial research and design resulting in the presentation of concepts for project team approval
2. Design development resulting in detailed design work inclusive of tech specs, fabrication and installation costs for project team approval
3. Production and installation.

Beyond contractual requirements we have been active in promoting 'best practice' as follows:

- instigated the commissioning of process-led evaluation and the production of a publication
- invited 2 local artists to do site/project responsive workshops. This involved drawing up a brief and providing info re. Arts Council rates of pay for the work involved (which was more in-depth than the usual school workshops). Hannah Cox and Ghostboy were asked to visit the site, provide a workshop plan, document the process and produce a final artwork for the new school.
- provided legal consent forms for adults and children involved in the arts programme. These forms were designed to cover all possible uses of media employed (see consent form)

Working with others involved..

Throughout the project meetings and email communication with key project stake-holders have been ongoing. Initially our main contacts were with arts manager Sarah Winch (C@H), Kim Tilbrook (C.P) and Nikki & James at the school. Due to shifts in management and communication issues with the school the latter half of the project was developed with Pete Davies (C@H).

We have maintained contact throughout with the architects (Architype: Tom Mason and Johnathan Hines), who have provided material info for the art group site visits and technical specs for the final works. The most influential liaison has been with Jason Pow (Pearce construction site manager) who has been invaluable in maintaining a stimulating educational and creative experience on site for a small number of children (the arts group). These visits have included school teacher James, project manager Sarah, evaluator Roz, technologist Mark Newbold (light feature) and artists Hannah & Ghostboy. The school caretaker, Dale has also been very supportive particularly at the stages of installation and in responding to the final work.

Our primary focus has been to find ways that the school community could be involved in the arts process. Early on in the project we observed that the school staff and children had little knowledge of the building design so we instigated a trip to the architects office near Hereford. Other areas of



involvement have included presentations to staff and proposals for the participatory school community projects, SHED and Fun Day

Another area of involvement was inviting local artists to do workshops - Hannah Cox due to her experience in community arts practice, and Ghostboy because of the graffiti he had already produced on the school hoardings (which was briefly discussed at the first council project meeting we attended). We worked closely in dialogue with them both to ensure that they were able to work productively within an open but site-responsive brief. Other relationships with local fabricators (established through previous projects) were intrinsic to the quality of the work produced. Outside of this we have spent time walking & talking, surveying the area and chatting with people we have met along the way.

### *3 What has that process been like?*

The process has been challenging. For a privileged group of children the level of involvement and creative impact has been very good. They have acquired new skills in photography, observation and presentation. Their work has been directly used in the school and as a result they feel included and inspired by the experience. However the issue throughout was how to extend the experience beyond the 'arts group'. All attempts at this were either approved and then cancelled or delayed to the point of not happening. This has been very frustrating. The project aspirations / artists brief focused on a socially inclusive agenda of community and project partner participation. In reality this was unachievable. The effect of amalgamating three existent school sites into one organization meant that the school was unable to fully participate in the project aims. The project has exemplified how well intended strategies of participation promote 'good practice' on paper, but in reality need to be embedded in the context-led changeable processes of the project.

### *4. Has the process been different from your usual approach?*

No - in terms of a working method, the creative process is informed by context, so my approach is consistent.

### *5. Has the process had any impact on you or your working practices?*

The project has reinforced my belief in the importance of a site responsive and inclusive process-led approach to creating work in the public domain. It has highlighted that dialogue and communication are essential to a project's success, this will impact on future projects. Dialogue / communication channels need to be fully established at the start and reviewed throughout. Ideally the artists contract should clearly indicate the roles of project partners and means of ensuring good communication.

### *6. What has been most memorable about the process of the work?*

There are numerous encounters, reflections and responses that are memorable - particularly the exciting hands on moments, nuances, expressions, reactions and conversations on the construction site visits. One very clear memory: at a presentation for parents (all Somali families aside from one person), a mother on seeing the images of children on site and their artwork asked if her child could be involved. I found it difficult to respond as she had hit at the core of my frustration with this project - I explained that we were only allowed to work with the group we had been allocated.

### *7. How has the process informed the final artwork?*

The processes have informed the final artwork in a number of ways, either as a means of generating content as in the glazing works. The light feature not only responds to the eco focus but it also provides an ongoing interaction that moves beyond its sculptural 'permanency' because it changes. In terms of the glazing artworks, the GMPs (glass manifestations) are created directly from drawings children made on the construction site. The corridor windows recall the children's experience of being on site incorporating photographs of the children and drawings by created by them. The drawing on these windows is formatted as a symbolic and educational reference to the Fibonacci series of numbers or 'Golden Mean' used to calculate the architectural dimensions of the school hall.

Whilst the glazing artworks have been well received and relate well to the context, the process of generating them was frustratingly limited by the amount of material we'd been able to accumulate. Had we been able to realize the more dynamic socially inclusive ideas proposed (such as SHED) the work could have gone much further.

8. *Are there ways in which the experience of this project will influence your work or approach in the future?*

The experience has had a huge impact on my work and has provided me with an initial pilot study for my current PhD studies. Through looking more closely at this work and other projects that employ context-led methods I hope to be able to make a contribution to this area of arts practice.

9. *Do you think the project blog or the website have been useful, and if so how?*

The blog demonstrates a means of publicly re-presenting processes involved in context-led work, it sets up a dynamic structure that can be interwoven with related information. In this case serving as a functional and educational resource linking to ecological issues, curricula activities, and local initiatives. This resource was under-used by the school but is still there should they wish to make use of it. As a means of documenting art in progress its very useful for those interested to observe the developments, and for artists who need documentation for new work its a great way to gather material - far preferable to accumulating material after production. In terms of others involved (trans-disciplinary processes), it also reveals the development of the building, architectural plans and materials involved. The architects recognising the impact of this and the value of children's participation have added a link to it from their website and their recent hardcopy newsletter.

10. *Do you have any reflections or comments about the ecology focus?*

The ecology focus was fantastic, intrinsic to the new build and an educational opportunity for us all. We were really pleased to discover 'smiles plastics' who produced the recycled material for the light feature. Ideally we would have powered the feature with solar energy, but this was not possible due to contractor guarantees on the roof. However it can easily be accomplished in the future, should the school wish. But unfortunately the resources we produced on local eco-initiatives and curriculum activities weren't used by the school. Hard copies were given to Simon for the Fun Day that didn't happen, if the proposed picnic / switch off had been realised the eco focus might have evolved further.

11. *Do you have any comments about the practicalities of the work?*

The communication problems with the school and lack of recognition of our position as freelancers working to schedule / contract targets, was frustrating. Communication issues were problematic - approval / decisions had to be sought from Simon, and were consistently delayed or not forthcoming (Fun Day, consent forms, design approvals), plus his attendance at meetings was minimal. Concepts previously approved were cancelled impacting on the project budget, our time and professional liaisons. We rely on good relations with providers and found it embarrassing to have to cancel bespoke work commissioned. Presentations prepared for staff were cancelled at the last minute, flyers produced for the children to hand out to friends and family were not distributed. Other practicalities such as production issues were the usual kind of problem solving activities. Dale was fantastic in his tenacity during the light feature installation that took longer due to having to re-inforce the wall structure support.

12. *Is there anything else you want to say about the process, it's outcomes or its outputs?*

It's been a learning curve for us all, Sarah hasn't been in the position of managing a project like this before and she worked really hard to make things happen. Kim & Sarah's enthusiasm for supporting the process-led evaluation by Roz has given us all an opportunity for constructive and critical review.

The forthcoming publication may go some way toward illustrating the ideas and processes that generated the artwork, whilst also celebrating the ecological construction of the building as a new centre of community and learning.

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Home What's new Projects Barton Hill Primary School Public Art Programme 2006 - 2008

## Barton Hill Primary School Public Art Programme 2006 - 2008

SHARE 

Date uploaded: December 22, 2008

Annie Lovejoy and Mac Dunlop were commissioned in June 2006 by Community at Heart (Bristol City Council), to develop and produce public artwork to be integrated into the new Barton Hill Primary School

and Children's Centre. They have worked in response to the artist's brief and contractual targets to develop work that is relevant to the context of Barton Hill School and community.

- Project details and downloads at: <http://shedsite.wordpress.com>
- Commissioners: <http://www.ndcbristol.co.uk>
- Project Advisors: RiO <http://www.realideas.org>
- Architects: Architype <http://www.architype.co.uk/architypebartonh.html>
- Lead Artists: Annie Lovejoy & Mac Dunlop
- Budget £33,000 (plus enabling works) + £6,000 (evaluation & publication)

Key outcomes of the project :

**Large scale image works** on the school glazing and GMPs (Glazing Manifestation Patterns) that recall processes and participation, utilising images sourced entirely from children's involvement in the project.

**A sculptural light feature** that responds to sound levels designed to reflect the ecological focus of the new building, (low wattage / recycled sheet plastics).

**Web resource/blog** - that traces the progress of the building and artworks whilst also providing information on local initiatives and educational curricular activities related to ecology. <http://shedsite.wordpress.com>

**Publication:** *Insites: Barton Hill Primary School and Children's Centre Public Art Programme*, edited by Annie Lovejoy, Roz Hall and Mac Dunlop.

RiO, (2008) ISBN 978-1-906687

Celebrating young people's involvement in generating artworks inspired by the ecological design and construction of the new Barton Hill Primary School and Children's Centre, Bristol <http://shedsite.wordpress.com/about-2/barton-hill-booklet-insites>

**Evaluation Report:** The project has been evaluated by Dr Roz Hall employing a process generated approach that compliments the process led approach of the artists. Rather than being based solely on interviews that take place after the project has happened, this approach is one that builds evaluation into wider project activities.

<http://shedsite.wordpress.com/about-2/bh-evaluation-report>

[http://www.communityatheart.co.uk/?page\\_id=23](http://www.communityatheart.co.uk/?page_id=23)

"Developing artwork in response to a particular place or context, with people whom the work will affect, demands a flexibility that relies upon a belief in the value of such processes and a consequent commitment to their involvement". Roz Hall

"The main things are to learn from the lessons of what has been done and disseminate it to a wider audience.

The positive impact of the process for Barton Hill is of national relevance, and not just for schools, but for wider public contexts."

Jonathan Hines and Tom Mason, Architype



Barton Hill Primary School. Photo: the project team, invited artists and Children's Art Group

## Appendix B:

**Backwards into the future:** A selection of place-based projects discussed in relation to Lippard's criteria for 'an art governed by [a] place-ethic' (1997:286).

Lippard's list of criteria:

SPECIFIC enough to engage people on the level of their own lived experiences, to say something about the place as it is or was, or could be.

COLLABORATIVE at least to the extent of seeking information, advice and feedback from the community in which the work will be placed.

GENEROUS and OPEN-ENDED enough to be accessible to a wide variety of people from different classes and cultures, to different interpretations and tastes.

APPEALING enough either visually or emotionally to catch the eye and be memorable.

SIMPLE and FAMILIAR enough, at least on the surface not to confuse or repel potential viewer-participants.

LAYERED, COMPLEX and UNFAMILIAR enough to hold people's attention once they've been attracted, to make them wonder, and to offer deeper experiences and references to those who hang in.

EVOCATIVE enough to make people recall related moments, places and emotions in their own lives.

PROVOCATIVE and CRITICAL enough to make people think about issues beyond the scope of the work, to call into question superficial assumptions about place, its history and its use (Lippard, 1997: 286 emphasis in original). (Lippard, 1997: 286)

The projects revisited have been selected from my portfolio of context-led projects.

I have chosen those that were particularly relevant to, or previously referenced within the field of human geography.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Further information on these works is available on my website at <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

*reverberations*.<sup>2</sup> 2002. Locws International<sup>3</sup>. Swansea, Wales, UK.



Fig. 30. Annie Lovejoy *reverberations* title image. 2002

Two context-led works created in response to specific locations in Swansea, Wales – the River Tawe and the Helwick<sup>4</sup> lightship – are drawn together here, under the title of *reverberations*. The title references River Tawe's industrial history as the site of the largest reverberatory furnace in Europe and more obliquely, the sound of a concert harp reverberating across the water. The title of the Helwick Lightship refers to the sounding of the foghorn in extreme weather conditions and the effect of exposure to this in tumultuous seas for long periods of time that can lead to deafness and severe psychosis.

*The River Tawe* project revealed the histories and present day realities of the Lower Swansea valley. A boat journey through the historic industrial landscape of the Lower Swansea valley culminates in a poetic and moving performance by the Welsh concert harpist, Nia Jenkins. This journey was experienced as a city centre large-scale video projection and a boat trip / performance event.

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<sup>2</sup> For more details of this project please see <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showproject.pl?title=reverberations>  
River Tawe video was also exhibited in the Visual Arts Pavilion, National Eisteddfod of Wales in 2006. <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showproject.pl?title=River%20Tawe%20%2D%20Eisteddfod>

<sup>3</sup> Locws International is an artist led organization that works with UK-based and international artists to create temporary visual arts projects for public and accessible spaces across the city of Swansea in south Wales, UK. <http://www.locwsinternational.com/?tag=annie-lovejoy> [accessed 2.6.10]

<sup>4</sup> Light Vessel No.91, *Helwick* built 1937, acquired by Swansea Maritime Museum in 1977 (Locws International, 2002:16).

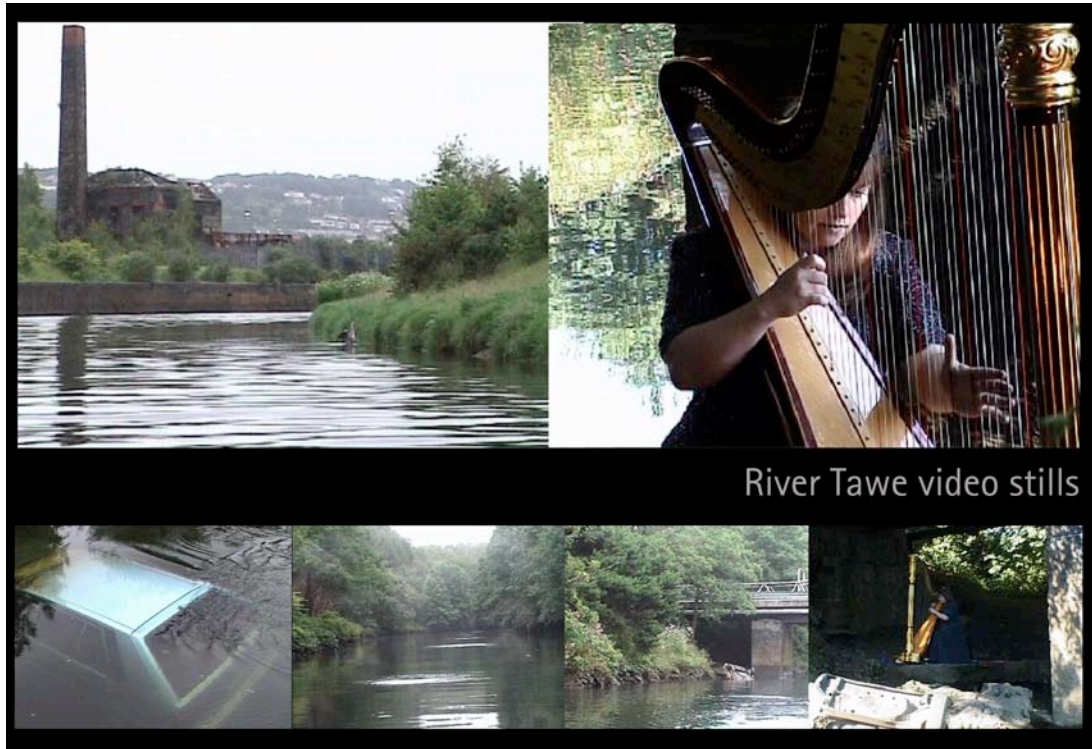


Fig. 31. Annie Lovejoy. *River Tawe*. Swansea. 2002

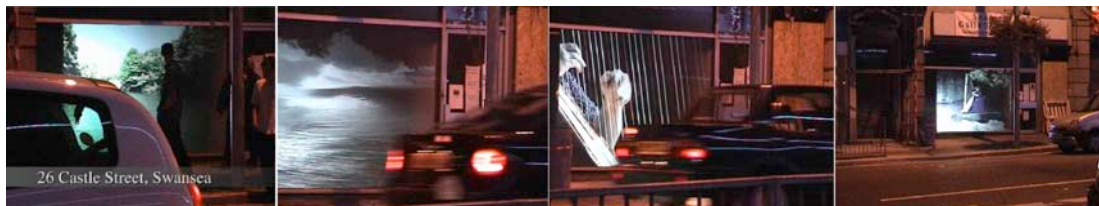


Fig. 32. Annie Lovejoy. *Castle St. video projection of River Tawe*. Swansea. 2002

An encounter with the shop window video projection in Swansea’s busy Castle Street, is described by the catalogue author Emma Safe:

By now it is dark and I turn my drift toward the bright lights of the city’s commercial centre where the evening’s bars and clubs are warming up for their regular Saturday night carnival. At the top of the street I am pulled abruptly from the escalating mêlée. [...] River Tawe and Swansea’s industrial past is projected onto one of the rain-smearred shops, the street’s neon merges with an image of ebbing waves and the soothing sounds of a harpist playing from a river bank. The lively conversation and traffic on the street is infiltrated by voices from Swansea’s past; ‘You know our names; Morrris, Mackworth... Villers, Vivian, Dillwyn, Grenfill ...’ As the faces of Swansea’s industrial heroes fade we are left with the Tawe itself (Safe in *Locws International*, 2002: 21).

The Lower Swansea Valley was once devastated by the density of industry that left behind the largest area of industrial dereliction in Europe – a giant area of slag wasteland where not even weeds would grow. The early 1960's saw the beginning of twenty years of reclamation work where the entire community of the area became involved in restoring the land.

The journey continues – the shop window frames the rippling waters of the river and its burgeoning banks, replenished & vibrant with growth.

*September 2002. People gather and watch, they wonder where this is then spotting a landmark realise it's their river, their city, it stops them in their tracks even those who pass by, turn back and linger a while. The taxi man at the traffic lights is so absorbed that the person behind has to beep him into action. Meanwhile the window frames the fizzing of the river oxygenators as they breathe new life into the river. Where once nothing would live, there are now fish breeding and flowers growing. Birds fly across our path as we move onwards as far as the boat can go until it's too shallow and too crowded with a new waste of submerged cars & supermarket trolleys; to find ourselves mesmerised by rippling harp strings and the reflective waves of light as Nia plays Hasselman's 'La source' as a tribute to the river (author's journal).*

Pinned up on the shop door was an invitation to come on a River Tawe boat trip. Three trips took place, the last with the fading light; but as we were unable to go as far as the sunken graveyard of cars<sup>5</sup> and trolleys portrayed in the video, Nia played for us from the riverside steps of Vivian and Son's now-derelict engine shed and walkers encountering the event gathered on the opposite bank to listen.



Fig. 33. Annie Lovejoy. *The boat trip and performance by harpist Nia Jenkins*. Swansea. 2002

<sup>5</sup> This health and safety restriction had influenced the nature of the work – in order to expose the impact of the submerged contemporary waste I decided to make a video of the journey, and screen it in a prominent inner city location.

August 2002. It's rumoured that the opera singer Adelina Patti who lived beside the river Tawe would to go up river in a boat and sing to the workers... Fred the caretaker of the Helwick thinks that's unlikely. I quite liked the idea as it fits with seeing if I can take a harpist on the river.

'I know that Madame Patti was a prima donna, but it doesn't necessarily follow that the workers were cultureless. Even today there is that air that opera and fine art can only be fully understood and enjoyed by the middle and upper classes [...] As for that punt, I helped to fetch it back to Swansea, from a hospital in a hamlet North of Brecon. It is very difficult with old boats to establish their history unless a written record has been kept, word of mouth is very unreliable [...] There again who knows, Victorians loved punts, and I can see her practicing her vocals on a punt in the middle of a lake [...] I think that your idea is great, so go with it, who is going to disprove it?' (email from Fred. July 29th)

For weeks now I've been sat with Fred in his lunch break amongst the rope and engine oil listening to tales of him being at sea, we've talked for hours about psychics, homeopathy and ideas for the ship. As well as caretaking the Helwick, Fred is an accomplished pianist in training to become a homeopath. His knowledge of the lightship is extraordinary, spinning a fifty pence piece on the engine to demonstrate its fine-tuned calibration he explained how they don't make parts for it anymore, he has to get them specially made. He knows every nook and cranny of the ship and is proud of her heritage and his role in its upkeep. Today he showed me how the light turns and gave me one of the huge bulbs. Apparently if the electrics didn't work in a storm they'd have to turn the light by hand and sound the horn, sometimes that could be for hours on end. People could go mad and then they'd jump ship - 'I knew a chap who did that, he took his shoes off first mind.' (Author's journal)



Fig. 34. Annie Lovejoy. *The Helwick*. Swansea. 2002

*Lightship 91 the Helwick*, is a floating museum exhibit docked at Swansea Marina. It was previously anchored 10 miles off the coast to warn ships about the Helwick Sandbank in the Bristol Channel. The vessel is an extraordinary homage to the craftsmanship and mechanics of its time. The ship accommodated seven men for a month to communicate the perils of dangerous waters in severe weather conditions.





Fig. 35. Annie Lovejoy. *3 Soundscapes*. The Helwick. Swansea. 2002

The work for the *Helwick* consisted of three soundscapes installed in ship's engine vents, the deep metal funnels creating a hypnotic sonic resonance that filled the air. In the catalogue for the exhibition, author Emma Safe, describes her experience of the work:

Annie Lovejoy preserves traditional skills and stories by giving them a public voice; capturing enchanting sea tales from Fred Evans, a hardened seafarer who for some eighteen years has maintained the Helwick Lightship [...] On board, his stories reverberate through the air vents; ghost stories, shanty tales of sailors jumping ship and burning in their bunks.



Fig. 36. Annie Lovejoy. *Conversations with Fred*. The Helwick. Swansea. 2002<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> A video excerpt of *conversations with Fred* is available online at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showvideo.pl?id=10>

below deck in the radio room [...] I am for once comforted by communication; the voices of Swansea Amateur Radio Society exchanging weather and navigational information with people on lightships and in lighthouses world-wide (Emma Safe in *Locws International*, 2003: 16).

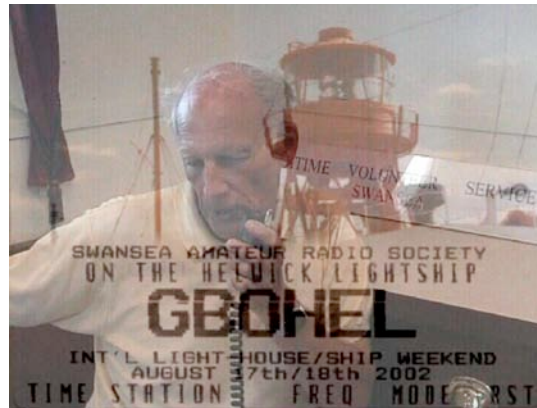


Fig. 37. Annie Lovejoy. *International Lighthouse Day*. The Helwick. Swansea. 2002<sup>7</sup>

Having discovered that there was an International Lighthouse day, I contacted Swansea Amateur Radio Society with an invitation to board the Helwick to communicate with Lighthouses & Lightships worldwide. They were really keen to participate, rising to the challenge of installing all the necessary equipment and chatting over the airwaves to various people in lightships and lighthouses across the globe.



Fig. 38. Annie Lovejoy. *International Lighthouse Day*. The Helwick. Swansea. 2002

<sup>7</sup> A video excerpt of *Helwick radio – Swansea Amateur Radio Society on board for International Lighthouse day* is available online at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showvideo.pl?id=9>

Discovering a framed chart on the lightship that detailed the method used to log weather conditions stimulated a collaboration with museum staff, and their friends and families. Enthralled by the poetry of the chart, I had it translated into Welsh and voiced by local people, old and young, male and female in English and Welsh, and interspersed with weather phrases from the poems of Swansea's Dylan Thomas.

The effect was mesmerizing, almost a chant, almost a prayer:

*letters to denote the state of the weather*<sup>8</sup>

An excerpt from the weather chart recording script:

B – Blue Sky, Awyr Las, very fine weather, tywydd braf iawn, when the sky is almost or quite free from clouds, pan fo'r awyr bron yn ddigwmwl, not only overhead, nid yn unig uwch ben, but also on the horizon, ond ar y gorwel hefyd

C – Cloudy, Cymylog, detached clouds, I can't see any more, there's a great cloud blowing over again

[...]

M – Misty, Tarthog, when it is not quite so thick as

F – Fog, pan na fydd mor drwchus â niwl, F, but enough to cause objects to be indistinct, ond digon i wneud pethau'n aneglur, and to require the fog signal to be sounded, a bod angen canu'r corn niwl

O – Overcast, Trymaidd, when neither sun, moon, or stars are visible for a long period, pan na fydd yr haul na'r lleuad na'r sêr i'w gweld am gyfnod hir, and the clouds are not detached, a'r cymylau'n ddi-dor

P – Passing showers (author's text 2002).

The project *revelations* in light of Lippard's criteria 'art governed by [a] place ethic' (1997:286-7), is discussed below as follows:

SPECIFIC: To encounter River Tawe by night on a shop window or take a trip on the actual river by boat was to experience the specificity of the work described by the commissioners as a 'lyrical and yet political journey'. Similarly to board the Helwick was to be immersed in the ship's function, to be reminded of the power of

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<sup>8</sup> A short video excerpt of *letters to denote the state of the weather* is available online at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showvideo.pl?id=8>

the weather and the experiences of people who maintain these warning outposts in tumultuous seas worldwide.

COLLABORATIVE: The work was collaborative in its responsive development through research and production carried out on the ground and on the river. This is inclusive of the project commissioners, people from the city's river authorities and museum services, the concert harpist, the caretaker of the Helwick, the amateur radio group, the museum staff and associates, and the video production team.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 39. Annie Lovejoy. *The production team for River Tawe*. Swansea. 2002

GENEROUS and OPEN-ENDED: The work was publicly sited in key locations within the city and offered free boat trips up the river Tawe. This drew in interest at street level as well as from the cultural sector, via the maritime museum (where the video was displayed on a monitor) and the arts network. Information about the project was available in English and Welsh, and the work was also extended through its communities of interest – those involved in the works development and production.

The remaining criteria concerned with the reception of the work are listed together: APPEALING in the sense of being memorable, SIMPLE and FAMILIAR so as not to repel, LAYERED, COMPLEX and UNFAMILIAR to stimulate curiosity, EVOCATIVE of peoples experiences, PROVOCATIVE and CRITICAL enough to reference place

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<sup>9</sup> Acknowledgements: Tim Davies and David Hastie (Locws International), Andrew Deathe, Sue James (Swansea Museum), Dave Hoskins (Swansea Marina), Nia Jenkins (concert harpist), Fred Evans (Light Vessel No 91, the *Helwick*) Video team: Mac Dunlop, Neil Jenkins, Roger Mills. *Helwick* voice recordings: Steve Darling, Tim Davies, Elen Morris, Karl Morris, Heather Pearce, Nia Roberts, Linda Shickell, Steve Williams. Swansea Amateur Radio Society.

issues. These experiential elements are evident in the aesthetic and ethical intentions of the project, the description of the works by the catalogue author, Emma Safe, and the socio-spatial processes of the works development, production and reception.

Whilst reverberations emerged as a work that focused on the environmental aspects of the River Tawe and the stories of the Helwick, the following project focused on the lack of reference to Bristol's part in the slave trade, during a high-profile international festival that celebrated five hundred years of maritime history.

*stirring @ the International Festival of the Sea.*<sup>10</sup> 1996, Bristol, UK.

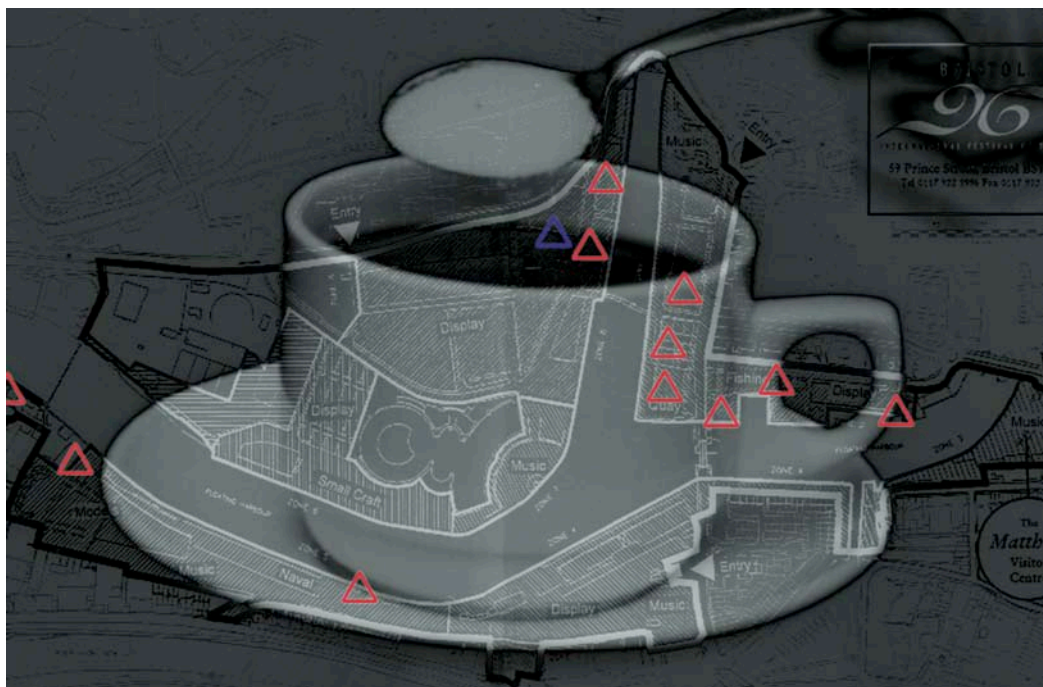


Fig. 40. Annie Lovejoy. *stirring @ the International Festival of the Sea*. Postcard, Bristol 1996

<sup>10</sup> This project is also mentioned in chapter three, and is archived online at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/projects.pl>

Bristol, thine heart hath throbbd to glory<sup>11</sup>

This work involved the design, production and distribution of 40,000 sugar packets to café bars and hotels situated within Bristol's International Festival of the Sea. The work referenced Bristol's historical maritime trade in slaves and sugar. An accompanying postcard mapped the sites where the sugar was available onto a plan of the festival. This project drew attention to the 'overlooked but central issue of oppression within Bristol's history of imperial and commercial success' (Graham and Nash, 2000: 34). It was a negotiation that drew attention to an essential aspect of Bristol's maritime history that was largely elided in the Festival celebrations. The project is described by artist and academic, Sally Morgan as follows:

In 1997 the city hosted the International Festival of the Sea, in which Bristol's maritime past was celebrated and acted out on the city's docks, while the fact that the merchants of Bristol had African slaves as their ships most significant cargo was not officially acknowledged other than in a very subtle and powerful artwork/intervention, by the locally-based artist **Annie Lovejoy**, called *Stirring @ the International Festival of the Sea*. Although others have described this work as an 'intervention', Lovejoy describes it as a 'negotiation'. The key element of the piece was sugar. This commodity had been the main import in Bristol's Triangular Trade. It had been bought from the profit of the sale of African slaves, and had been produced by slaves on plantations owned by Bristolian merchants. In Lovejoy's piece spoon-sized packets of sugar were distributed to cafés around the festival site. The packets alluded to the Triangular Trade within the icon of the red triangle; a list of traded goods that included slaves; and an eighteenth century typographic rendering of the word 'Bristol' (Morgan, S. 2003: unpaginated).

The work permeated the festival and was experienced firsthand by geographer Catherine Nash who later included a text on the work in *Modern Historical Geographies* (Graham & Nash, 2000:34). A simple and connective idea that meets Lippard's criteria as follows:

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<sup>11</sup> Ann Yearsley - poem on the inhumanity of the slave trade, manuscript circa 1800: Bristol City Council Library Services.

The work is SPECIFIC to the maritime festival as already described, and COLLABORATIVE in its research and production. For example, the idea was initially discussed with Eddie Chambers, expert in visual arts of the African Diaspora, and cultural theorist Martin Lister – both Bristol residents. The business of negotiating the work involved garnering support from Bristol's cultural sector, generating sponsorship for the design, production and contents of the sugar packets; and generating enthusiasm for the product to be distributed through the numerous dockside caterers and businesses that took part in the festival. The project came into existence through the support of a lot of people<sup>12</sup> and a lot of time spent on the ground talking through the ideas towards its production and distribution.

GENEROUS and OPEN-ENDED, the sugar and postcards were accessible to people at catering outlets within the festival, free to all venues and users.

The work was APPEALING as an encounter and a souvenir or memento, SIMPLE and FAMILIAR in its design and message, and LAYERED, COMPLEX and UNFAMILIAR enough to hold peoples attention, as Chambers notes:

Bristol's maritime heritage is a multi-layered construct. We remind ourselves of historical realities when we begin to peel away layers and look closely at seemingly innocuous things like packets of sugar. Creatively this idea encourages us to acknowledge the tensions & discomfort that has been so much a part of the historical trade in sugar. Eddie Chambers<sup>13</sup> (*stirring @ the International Festival of the Sea* postcard text 1998).

The work is EVOCATIVE in its simplicity, experienced as a small and intimate encounter to be discovered when having a break from the bustle of the festive

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<sup>12</sup> This project was realised thanks to support & advice from: Eddie Chambers, Simon Cooper, Rupert Daniels, Mac Dunlop, Andrew Kelly, Philippa Goodall, Tessa Jackson, Martin Lister, Nigel Locker, (Venue magazine) & John Summers. Sponsors included G.W.R., (sugar) Good Morning Disposables, (packet printing) Watershed Media Centre, (postcard) Easton Community Centre, (postcard) Venue Magazine, (advert & Festival Brochure).

<sup>13</sup> Eddie Chambers is an Assistant Professor, History of Art, at the University of Texas at Austin, teaching visual arts of the African Diaspora. <http://www.eddiechambers.com>

atmosphere. The work is intentionally PROVOCATIVE and CRITICAL – this is place as a contested site, where attention is drawn to the ignored issue of slavery in a prime celebration of Bristol’s maritime heritage - The International Festival of the Sea.

The next project to be discussed takes place in a contemporary arts galley situated in the village of Uley, Gloucestershire, UK. Its focus being place as memory – the presence of absence in the landscapes of the living.

*return*<sup>14</sup> 1998. Prema Arts Centre, Uley, Glos. UK

Situated in a former chapel this exhibition referenced the personal and community memory of the death of my child, Davin. Through focusing on natural cycles of growth the work celebrated 'continuum' and honoured the process of grieving.

*return*  
is a glimpse,  
the movement is cyclic,  
nature completes itself

The title *return* although suggesting a personal return to a place was a reference to natural cycles – the course of nature completes itself and returns. The exhibition was a conscious celebration of life, that acknowledged death as both a personal and shared memory. The personal was extended beyond the subjective through an aesthetic of natural growth that echoed throughout the whole site.

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<sup>14</sup> For more details of this project please see  
<http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/showproject.pl?title=return>





Fig. 41. Annie Lovejoy. *return* – detail of exhibition layout produced for Focal magazine. 1998<sup>15</sup>

I remember...holding your hand through town as you said 'hello' to strangers / 'that was a nice lady' / taking off your wellies to go in the bank because there was carpet on the floor / red wellies with yellow tops / the ones you loved / the ones you died in / finding onions in my shoes / wondering / where you were / with little May-May / on the path / between our home & hers / where we and the wind / scattered your ashes / I remember / your little arms around my neck / the feel of your cheek pressed against mine ...and how you loved the daffodils (*return* - exhibition text 1998).

<sup>15</sup> The full copy is available at <http://www.annielovejoy.net/pdfs/returnfocal.pdf>

One of the works *beyond control* involved the community planting of 750 daffodils, whilst *spade*, stood in a pile of earth in the entrance foyer held a tiny screen playing a sequence of images in testament to the communal planting.



Fig. 42. Annie Lovejoy *beyond control* and *spade*. In the exhibition *return*. 1998

'Beyond control' makes for an uneasy spring idyll, there is something uncanny about the enormous scale of the piece (Warren, 98: 17).

March 1998. 'One of the most arresting pieces of work in the exhibition was an old metal spade - itself a potent symbol of fertility, of growth, of life, almost as much as being the gravedigger's tool of choice. A small rectangular hole had been cut into the spade and a tiny video monitor, no more than a few inches wide, had been inserted into the created void. The piece was beautiful, poignant and quite quite arresting' (exhibition comment on *spade*: Eddie Chambers).

The piece is entrancing - I can't help wandering back to check their progress. The work is entrancing and typical of the way Lovejoy marries nature and technology. (Simon Hattenstone, 1998:14).

Indoors and upstairs in a large hall the flowers are remembered by an installation entitled 'and how you loved the daffodils' [...] a film of daffodils gently swaying green and yellow in the breeze [...] the screen is unable to

contain the moving image, and colour spills past it and forms a circular frame around the room's only window which, in turn, draws attention to the daffodils in the garden below. Standing next to this window one becomes sandwiched in a space between presence & absence, the continually repeating insistence of the digitally preserved imagery echoes the fragile, (literally, soon to be) disappearing flowers beneath. The video installation will remain long after the daffodils have died; a forever returning sublimated trace that is testament to their death (Warren, 98: 17).



Fig. 43. Annie Lovejoy. *...and how you loved the daffodils*. In the exhibition *return*. 1998

The relational working processes of 'return' at Prema were 'located' in various ways; through personal memory, community memory and the historic, institutional and formal aspects of the gallery as a site. The site itself has a history pertinent to this work and its immediate community. Prema Arts Centre, previously Bethesda Chapel complete with consecrated ground (no-one has been buried there for over 100 years), is situated in Uley, Glos and sustains a vibrant community arts and exhibition programme.

*Its former use as a church and burial ground resonates throughout the building and the garden, there's a strong sense of community ownership, the village ladies are regularly removing the old flowers from the vases and replacing them with fresh ones from their gardens. There's still pottery classes, Davin used to go to those, he played in this garden where gravestones flag the edges. The big performance space has a beautiful vaulted ceiling, and the acoustics are amazing, I just realised that if you were to go straight as a bird flies from the window, you would come to where Davin died (author's journal, March 1998).*

Throughout the exhibition period the works displayed their natural cycles, the passing of the daffodils was accompanied by images of them at their prime. The sprouting, living and dying of nature was constantly juxtaposed by photo/text/video works that hinted at the work's provenance through moments of personal and communal memory, (for example the 'spade' planting sequence).



Fig. 44. Annie Lovejoy. *comfort* - detail. In the exhibition *return*. 1998

it's fifteen years later  
your gran just sent a photo of you  
I've never seen it before  
you're looking through the gate  
out to the field  
to the path  
to the road  
that was to take you away  
(*return* - exhibition text for *comfort* 1998).

A series of 'hotwater bottles' scattered on a sofa of soil in the work *comfort*, invited closer inspection – embedded in the roots of the bottles were lenses through which images and texts could be perceived below moving water, as though looking through tears. A contemplation of transience, of things fluid – to cry, to imagine, to hold, lose, feel, know...not know.

March 1998. The sofa with its messages in hot water bottles was particularly wonderful to me - the necessity to kneel and be close to the soil that "grows" over the chair and to make a real effort to look inside, beneath, below. ((exhibition comment on *comfort*: Shirley Brown).

To see into the bottles on the sofa you are forced to kneel, to get a really good look you have to dirty your hands on the soil. It's voyeuristic, tactile & moving beyond words [...] The show could be sentimental & self-indulgent. In fact it is anything but. Her art is varied & what does unite her work is its sense of place, its rootedness - in every sense (Simon Hattenstone, 1998:15).



Fig. 45. Annie Lovejoy. *peephole*. In the exhibition *return*. 1998

Davin was wanting new trousers for teddy  
he never got to see them, we made them anyway

to hold teddy  
is to be held  
in the comfort  
of memory  
(*return* - exhibition text for *peephole* 1998).

We're looking through a peephole at a distorted photograph ...and suddenly a little boy's face comes into focus. If you turn away for a second and look back it has turned into a teddy bear again. The image is clever, beautiful, haunting. Why does she hate the picture of Davin? "Because he's wearing the clothes he died in" (Simon Hattenstone, 1998:14).

Throughout *return*, Prema received in the region of 2,000 visitors to the work (following the Guardian article, local press and TV coverage). The processes and outcomes of this exhibition were quite extraordinary, I received many letters and messages from people who had been touched by the work.

'I looked in through the bubbling water, and it just gave the feeling of nearly but not quite getting hold of someone that dreams & memories have'.

'I find myself crying as I think about the death of your child - mixed as it inevitably must be with the echoes of my own sadnesses about the death of some people very close to me, and, unexpectedly, the never-bornness of the children I never even conceived. But the underlying feeling is a kind of joy - I don't think I'll ever see daffodils again without thinking of a small child enjoying them, loving them, looking at their strange horned trumpets and bright yellow colour' (anonymous exhibition comments: author's project journal, April 1998).

But because the subject of this show is the death of a child, and the imagery is unavoidably domestic and familiar - the daffodils, the teddy bear – it creates a sense of almost unbearable poignancy. This work is beautiful, spare, delicate, thorough & stylish; it has an emotional kick that has left me rattled for the last two weeks (Folake Shoga, *Venue Magazine*, May 1998).

Place memory was marked and made visible in an uncanny bed of daffodils, a living memorial, that continues through its yearly cyclic *return* to stimulate conversation, interest and the story of a small boy who once played there.

Spring 2009. Eleven years later. And the daffs are looking happy and healthy. During half-term some of the kids had a bit of a run-through the emerging stems and crushed a few. I read them the riot act and then one little chap, Joe, who is Prema's finance officer's son was there, gently straightening every one of them – in spite of the fact that he hadn't been running anywhere near them. Everyone who passes the gate comments "aren't they lovely?" and often I share Davin's story and why the *return* was an important exhibition. The blooms are for me a really important part of being at Prema. Every Spring I look forward to them and what's been special this time is that we have had a proper Winter and so they didn't start poking through the turf until well into

2009. In previous years, they've been starting to sprout in December. (Email received from Gordon Scott, Director of Prema Arts Centre, 27.3.2009).



Spring 2011. Can you believe - 12 years since planting and they still look just amazing. They're such an important marker for Prema - a reminder of the new year, of new beginnings and a quiet, contemplative look back at the passage of time. (Email received from Gordon Scott, Director of Prema Arts Centre, 2.4.2011).

*return* in relation to Lippard's listed criteria:

SPECIFIC, COLLABORATIVE, GENEROUS and OPEN-ENDED – the specificity is evident in terms of place memory, where a child is remembered, a story told; and that this remembering or storytelling takes place at the site of a former chapel and burial ground. The work is also specific in time – being the anniversary of a death at a time of new growth, springtime.

Collaborative processes generate the work's development and production,<sup>16</sup> from

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<sup>16</sup> This project was realised thanks to Prema - Mark Crowe, Nic Dadswell, Joanna Montgomery, Gordon Scott. Marjatta Bryan for her inspired writing and archive of memories, Mac Dunlop, Tiriël, Jiva

fundraising to digging and planting, from video editing to technical support and sculptural additions, from preparing food for the opening event to musicians playing. Added to this was local people's generosity in hosting and accommodating visitors.

The generosity and open-endedness of the work is reflected in the work's accessibility and sharing of loss. It's also evident in the celebratory aspects such as the sharing of food and music on the opening night, attended by over 300 people.

The following criteria are met through the aesthetic and emotive experience of the work: APPEALING, SIMPLE and FAMILIAR, LAYERED, COMPLEX and UNFAMILIAR, and EVOCATIVE. These qualities are evident in the aesthetics and narratives of the work and can also be gleaned through this brief overview, documentation and comments received.

In this work the criteria of PROVOCATIVE and CRITICAL require more thought. Lippard explains these qualities as 'enough to make people think about issues beyond the scope of the work, to call into question superficial assumptions about place, its history and its use' (Lippard, 1997: 287). In the context of this work I find this difficult to assess. With *River Tawe*, or *stirring*, provocation and criticality can be seen as obvious in the issues raised by the work. But here, there are no superficial assumptions about the place, its history or use – it's a former chapel, a burial ground imbued with community relations and the work is about loss and continuum. The issues are emotive, the responses to *return* were deeply evocative, the work moved people to tears, from thinking about unborn children to contemplating the natural cycles of growth and decay. There was someone who was disappointed not

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& Sam Lovejoy (Davin's brothers), Eddie Chambers, Andrew Dewdney, Colin Evans, Phil Goodall, Jools Green, Sophie Howard, Martin Lister, Steve Moles, Anthea Nicholson, Folake Shoga, Gilly Rogers. The exhibition *return* & the catalogue *afterimages* were supported by: J.A. Clark Charitable Trust, Langtree Trust, Rolls Royce, Haffendon Moulding and Photobition.



to have seen pictures of Davin, but this was not the exposition of a family album – the only pictures of him were seen through a peephole, or through lenses underneath moving water with his back turned, distant...gone.

This was a delicate affair, with no need for provocation.

Lippard appears to consider all of these criteria for ‘an art governed by [a] place ethic’ as ‘necessary to a well rounded-rounded addition to a place’ (1997: 286). But as we have seen this was not the case with *return* where provocation was not of relevance. However her list does offer a construct within which to discuss the works, and more importantly, in light of the research project, the ways in which a context-led approach might generate the manifestation of a place-ethical work.

One element important in terms of place-ethical works that Lippard seems to have overlooked is the potential for something either to remain, or to evolve from projects – the seen and unseen legacies. Whilst memories and emotive responses remain, there are also practical benefits such as the Swansea radio group continuing to work with the museum, or further sponsorship for Prema’s community projects being generated through the exhibition *return*.

Having considered a selection works in light of Lippard’s criteria, the next stage is to identify the conditions that enabled these place-ethical outcomes to emerge, thereby developing *interfaces of location and memory* as a conceptual framework for the project and starting point for new work – *caravanserai*.

## The enabling conditions:

Place provides the *conditions* of possibility for creative social practice<sup>17</sup>.

The enabling conditions of these works are specific to their particular contexts. However, the brief descriptive accounts that follow accentuate elements<sup>18</sup> that facilitated the context-led processes and enabled the work's emergence. These conditions inform the facilitation and development of the research fieldwork *caravanserai* – a project that takes place at Treloan, a caravan and camping site in Cornwall, U.K.

*reverberations* was an **invited** commission. Locws International is an **artist-led** project run by two professional **artist/curators** who **invite** participants on the basis of having a track record of **context-led practice**. The commission was not budget-led, that is, as an **invited artist** you were not given a specific amount of money and told to get on with it. The process involved a **flexible** procedure of **exploration** and **conversation**, once ideas were seen as **relevant** and **financially viable** they were set in motion. This meant **close relations with the organisers** about all aspects of the **work's development**, their approach was **flexible and supportive** allowing me to be able to spend a **substantial amount of time** on the ground **developing the work responsively**. The success of Locws International is due to their **knowledge and familiarity** with the city and the reputation they have for producing **interesting work**. As an artist new to Swansea I was **hosted, welcomed and encouraged** by the **responses** I had from people I met in my **explorations** of the city. The positive responses received when researching possible use of locations, outside of the sites

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<sup>17</sup> (Cresswell, 2004: 39, my emphasis).

<sup>18</sup> These elements are highlighted in bold within the project description as being emergent of context, rather than listed ingredients/instructions for application as a recipe or model.

already earmarked for the project, evidenced the **trust and respect local people** had for the Locws project.

*return* was an **invited** opportunity to create new work for Prema. The financial support was minimal (£100), but the gallery was prepared to **support** me through providing **live-in accommodation** when needed and use of their video **production facilities**, plus **institutional back up** to my fundraising efforts. The **invitation** triggered a **creative response** that **given enough time** could enable the development of a work **specific to the location** and the personal and community memory of my child. Although sited in a gallery there was no curatorial or institutional input aside from the use of the building and any authority the name *Prema Arts Centre* might lend to applications for **financial support** and publicity. The work was entirely **artist-led** in that respect, and successfully garnered the support needed to **fund and publicise the exhibition**, including the production of a full colour catalogue – *afterimages* – a **representation** of selected works 1993 - 1998, with a text by cultural theorist Martin Lister.

*stirring @ the International Festival of the Sea* was a **self-initiated project** that emerged from being **invited** to exhibit in the inaugural exhibition for the International Festival of the Sea. Although I did produce a work for the Leadworks I was more interested to produce **a response to the site** of the festival that conveyed the fact that the city had overlooked a crucial aspect of its maritime history – the slave trade. As I pursued this **idea** it became necessary to seek **advice and support** toward producing an artwork that would communicate this issue in an accessible way. This involved **numerous conversations** and **hours of time** tracing the development of the festival, **pacing** the parameters, **visiting** dockside institutions, **chatting** with potential caterers and **persuading** small businesses to **host the project** in **preparation** for the **production** and **distribution** of the work.

## Appendix C: funding application and evaluation report (FEAST) 2009

### Feast Stage Two Application Form

**Q5** Please give us a statement as to what your organisation wants to do with a grant from FEAST (what will your project consist of?)

**The project promotes 'sustainable tourism' in recognition of the reciprocal relationship between residents and visitors in the Roseland vilages of Portscatho and Gerrans. (f.f.i please see 'context-stage2.pdf')**

**The activities planned have an ecological focus and seek to creatively engage with the enviromental, social and cultural fabric of the locality. (for details of the programme please see 'activities-stage2.pdf')**

**As a brief overview, they will range from intimate fireside storytelling to festive celebration. From film screenings and local history talks to wild food walks and shared meals. From performative eco/ collective action events to poetry and arts encountered in the landscape. From hands on skills sharing such as the village drop in re-dress/ recycle your clothes /spin & knit day to raft building for regatta day.**

**Involving both the local community and visitors, the activities will take place in spaces that span village sites and venues, the local landscape and campsite.**

**For instance small intimate gatherings such as the fireside or awning programme will invite local residents to give talks or showcase their talent at the campsite. Whilst the drop in day (re-dress / spin & knit) will place a skills sharing fun event at the heart of the village in the Memorial Hall.**

**Another example of the connective nature of this project (between residents & visitors) is the poetry initiative collaboration 'desire lines'; where a Portscatho based writer will work with the poet & artists in residence to explore ways in which poetry might be experienced in the locality eg. through spoken word, written texts, sited artworks.**

**Documentation of these interconnected activities, collective actions, skills sharing, wild food walks, memories, histories, poetry, artwork etc will provide material for further creative production via the internet (a web blog and local info resource) and a printed area guidebook that creatively maps, celebrates and promotes 'the local'.**

**These outcomes are envisaged as creative ways to engage in issues that are resonant with Cornwall. Visitors to the area impact in all manner of ways on local people's lifestyles eg. boosting the economy or drawing on limited resources (waste management).**

**From local food to transport to energy, from waste to water & wildlife ..without a sustainable approach to tourism that protects the specific qualities of place and people we are faced with losing the amenities and meeting places that are central to our communities ("Where are the stories when the village shop goes?").**

## Feast Stage Two Application Form

**Q6** How does this fit with your organisation's current work and its future developments?

**Project Caravanserai is an artist-led initiative that has arisen from professional public arts practice and academic research. All too often community projects and socially engaged practices are limited by short timescales that do not allow for in-depth experience of place and the building of relationships necessary for constructive dialogue and collective action.**

**Alongside of this, there is a growing need for 'response - ability' and 'sustain - ability' within arts initiatives if we are to find solutions to the challenges presented to us by today's environmental crisis.**

**These two factors - community and environment - are what drive the Caravanserai project and the partnership with Treloan Coastal Holidays (a 'non creative business'). The essential support offered by the campsite has been provided towards creating an environmentally aware experience for visitors that is embedded within the local community.**

**If successful, Project Caravanserai has the potential to become an ongoing residency space for creative practitioners that engage with the local community and environment.**

**Q7** How will you meet the main FEAST criteria?

**Please see 'Meeting Feast Criteria 2.doc' for more specific details**

**Briefly, in terms of the main criteria - 'quality, engagement, a considered approach to inclusion, contribution to network / knowledge etc..**

**..the activities proposed offer a wide range of inclusive, participatory, performic and art (experiential) elements – these ideas have emerged from 'being in residence' in the locality and forming the necessary partnerships and grass roots relations for the project. This context-led and inclusive approach forms the necessary basis for 'quality' work of 'high professional standards' and stems from over 20 yrs professional public arts practice (commissioned, artist-led, collaborative etc. Please see <http://www.annielovejoy.net>).**

**In terms of reaching "new audiences" and public engagement, this project extends access to the arts in a rural location beyond an elite or already informed 'arts' audience. It also has further wider reaching potential through regional, national and international networks (eg. Transition, CoaST, creative / academic sector associates and the internet.**

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## **Feast Stage Two Application Form**

**Q8** Having read our FEAST framework criteria, why do you think your project would be good for FEAST?

**The project fits in well with view to the FEAST framework criteria. fulfilling many of the point outlined. These points are referenced in more detail in the accompanying file 'Meeting Feast Criteria 2.pdf'**

**Central to the activities proposed is the importance of local community and environment. Through celebratory, inclusive and collective actions the project promotes sustainability.**

**A partnership with a local business is in place and groundwork already done to facilitate the project, Added to this the project has established mentoring opportunities as well as creative / academic sector part funding and in-kind support.**

**Q9** Who is your identified target audience for this project? Who will benefit if the project takes place?

**Please see 'Meeting Feast Criteria 2.pdf' for an outline of how the work will engage with people and the audiences identified.**

**Local residents, visitors, participants, creative practitioners, partners and funders will all benefit from the project in ways appropriate to their roles, eg. the community through skills sharing, collaborations and arts experience, artists/ poets through opportunity to practice develop work, Treloan ('a non-creative business') through environmental credentials / sustainable tourism and creative community engagement... and FEAST through supporting a partner project that has stakeholders in place - maximizing the potential of monies for FEAST projects and contributing to wider knowledge networks via local, creative and academic sectors.**

**Q10** What are the expected results of your project activity if any?

**Project outcomes include the products produced (artworks, creative writings, local resources / information and the experiences of people involved. These range from professional development and acquiring new skills to the intangible benefits of shared experiences and collective actions.. memories, histories, an enhanced sense of place, inspirations, and reflections.**

**Added to this are possibilities for future initiatives that arise from the connections established and responses to the project. There is potential here for sustaining an arts/ecology residency space at Treloan that will continue to facilitate and support work that is integral to and engaged with the local community and environment.**

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## Feast Stage Two Application Form

Please complete your application with the following one page budget for your project.

### Expenditure

Item or activity	Cost
workshop fees (3 days x £175)	£525.00
residency fees (7 days x £120 x 3)	£2520.00
Arts production materials	£800.00
local interest talks x 2 @ £50	£100.00
community celebration - music (fee)	£150.00
Cornish Horse power	£250.00
Wild food walks x 3 £300.00	£300.00
Hosting and on site resources:	
Accommodation (35 nights x £25)	£875.00
site/ resource - pitch hire (July - Oct)	£2257.00
Telephone / internet	£175.00
Admin / project management	£700.00
Publicity	£100.00
Publication:	
storage, formatting and design costs	£1500.00
print costs (estimated)	£1400.00
Transport (fuel + ferry tickets)	£305.00
mentoring / work placements	£1400.00
Contingency @ 5%	£460.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£13817.00</b>

### Income (under 'Awaiting confirmation' or 'successful', please tick one box)

Other sources	Amount	Awaiting confirmation	Successful
Treloan (in kind)	£2432.00		x
Host artists (in kind)	£1715.00		x
ticket sales (wild food walks)	£300.00		
ESF/CEC placement scheme	£2100.00		x
UCF/RANE - print costs	£1400.00	x	
Requested from FEAST	£5870.00		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£13817.00</b>		



*Caravan – a company of people  
Caravanserai – a place where caravans meet*

### **Proposed Activities: July – October 2009 (application to FEAST)**

#### **'HOW TO / HANDS ON (creative making sessions)**

##### *Drop in day session at Memorial Hall (Portscatho) August 8th 2009*

Penryn based artist Lynne Devey will lead a workshop on recycling clothes for locals and visitors "Re-Dress" <http://www.re-dress.org.uk>, Lynne will be accompanied by Cornwall's 'Stitches n Bitches' (knitters, spinners, feltmakers), and local WI (crafts / produce / food) plus an art installation by Cornwall based artist Greg Humphries that conveys the process of traditional woolcraft skills> from the fleece to spinning the yarn to the knitting ...that participants can add to.

##### *Raft making workshop at Treloan: August 2009*

Led by local village resident Simon Holman (boat designer/educator Falmouth Marine School). The raft will be made from recycled materials and willow donated by the neighbouring farm, and entered into the Portscatho Regatta raft race on August 29<sup>th</sup>.

#### **THE AWNING PROGRAMME:**

Weekly – hospitality (bring and share) discussion events, film screenings and local history talks. The awning is a tented café sized venue on the campsite ideal for intimate gatherings and discussions. This space will be used for regular programme of upbeat film screenings such as "The Power of Community" and "Garbage Warrior" followed by discussion. Local interest talks by village historians will also be programmed in this venue.

#### **OPEN CARAVANS:**



There is a 1926 Eccles caravan on site owned by a local collector, a 1950's bespoke coachbuilt van and two Romas (Romany showmans vans). This will be an opportunity for local residents and visitors to view these uniquely crafted caravans that feature a range of design, interior décor and stories to discover followed by an

evening screening of 'Caravans: A British Love Affair' a documentary telling the intriguing story of caravanning in Britain from the 1950's through to the present day.

#### **ARTIST PLACEMENTS (mentoring)**

Two post grad. UCF students will be in residence to work on environmental projects at the campsite. Greg Humphries (MA Contemporary Visual Arts) will be working on permaculture projects as well as exhibiting in the local village hall. Charlotte Stranks (MA Interior and Landscape Design) will be working on creative ways to draw attention to the recycling system on site as well as producing bespoke navigational signage.



## 'Desire Lines' – collaborative residency project

Portscatho based writer Cat Holman will be joining the Caravanserai team (poet and artists in residence) to work on this project exploring how poetry might be experienced or encountered in the locality, for instance

- through readings in the locality and landscape (eg.- on the coastal path, village locations and sites such as St Anthony's church – a quiet church no longer used for services that is tucked away at the head of the peninsula and visited frequently by walkers)
- through participation... places to write on site (eg. white boards in the showers)

The resident poet Alyson Hallett (a Devon based writer) will develop poetic responses to the site and locality. She will also lead a creative writing workshop either in the landscape or in the wee house (historically a 'reading room') on the sea front in Portscatho.

Short texts that emerge from the residency and associated participation will be developed further as a series of onsite art interventions by Caravanserai artists (Annie Lovejoy & Mac Dunlop). These will be sculptural interventions / words in the landscape and enigmatic / ephemeral interventions such as 'text tents' lit from inside under the night sky.

Poetry will also be encountered through distributed formats such as the local Roseland Magazine and local notice boards (a parish survey has revealed that the notice boards and the Roseland Magazine are of most importance to residents for getting information on events).



Alyson Hallett – Village Garage, Hartland, Devon 2006



Mac Dunlop (various - ffi see website)

Annie Lovejoy (various - ffi see website)

Relevant URLs: Alyson Hallett: <http://www.thestonelibrary.com>  
Annie Lovejoy: <http://www.annielovejoy.net>  
Mac Dunlop: <http://thepoetrypoint.wordpress.com>

## **WILD FOOD WALKS**

Three wild food walks will take place over the season by expert local foragers - these will be documented and mapped for the project outcome / product, an Area Guidebook. Treloan's fields are unusual in that they haven't been farmed with chemicals for at least 30 years, so are free from contamination – an important factor for foraging.

## **HORSE POWER SEAWEED COLLECTION (date tbc)**

A re-enactment / performative local community event:

A celebration of memories and histories that has practical ecological significance for the community and local environment. Cornish Horse Power will collaborate with us to re-enact the collection of seaweed to provide soil nutrient for the allotment at Treloan.

<http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/category/horse-power>

- ❖ *On a guided tour of Portscatho in October 2008 led by Peter Messer-Bennett we discovered that the name of the slip down to the beach beside the Harbour Club is called 'Horse St' - once used by horses & carts to transport seaweed and sand for fertilizer and building purposes. This discovery combined with the plans to cultivate land at Treloan triggered an exciting idea ... perhaps we could re-enact this event.*

## **PEDAL POWERED CINEMA EVENT – Magnificent Revolution (tbc)**

This innovative fun event will call attention to the amount of energy that is used in our everyday lives but is taken for granted. When called upon to produce this energy ourselves, we realise our dependence and vulnerability – if we stop pedaling the film stops, a great way to experience making energy through collective action.

## **COMMUNITY HARVEST CELEBRATION (Marquee at Treloan) Oct 4th 2009**

Village party celebrating all things local - produce / bring and share food & drink, music.. drawing on the familiar & historical idea of harvest festival but making it of contemporary relevance by linking it to environmental issues of sustainability.

## **FINAL OUTCOME: AREA GUIDE BOOK (Easter 2010)**

Production of an Area Guide book that uses outcomes from the activities; images, poetry "how to" diagrams (recycled clothes / rafts) snippets of local histories, memories etc. plus functional mapping of wild food, local suppliers, producers and initiatives (eg. market garden/farm shop, Transition Roseland etc.) ...all relevant to sustainable tourism.

The guide booklet is a final outcome that has a legacy for the future, meeting the aspirations of the campsite owners to meet sustainable targets and provide visitors with an engaged and enhanced experience of the locality that is grounded environmentally, socially and culturally.

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Working in partnership with the campsite owners this project offers a unique opportunity to generate arts/eco activities with a 'non-creative business' and achieve collective aims beneficial to all parties involved.

### **Meeting Feast Criteria:**

- Quality and the ability to excite.
- An innovative and creative approach to engagement and promotion.
- A considered approach to inclusion (reach as wide a range of people as possible)
- Contribution to a network of knowledge and connection across the FEAST programme

The activities proposed offer a wide range of inclusive, participatory, performic and art (experiential) elements – these ideas have emerged from 'being in residence' in the locality and forming the necessary partnerships and relations for the project. (f.f.i.see 'context.pdf).

This context-led and inclusive approach forms the necessary basis for 'quality' work of 'high professional standards' and stems from over 20yrs professional public arts practice (commissioned, artist-led, collaborative etc. <http://www.annielovejoy.net>). Similarly the artists / writers invited have been approached because of their experience and expertise in particular areas (f.f.i see activities. pdf).

### **how will the work engage with people?**

In terms of reaching "new audiences" and public engagement, this project extends access to the arts in a rural location beyond an elite or already informed 'arts' audience.

- **Primary engagement / participants:**  
Local residents and visitors to Gerrans and Portscatho (see context.pdf))
- **Secondary engagement**  
Via the the online blog - documentation of work in progress and web resource providing info re. local interest and activities (societies, food production, skills etc applicable to arts and ecologies. (Note: a substantial number of visitors discover the area via the internet)
- **Legacy / future engagement**  
An 'Area Guide Book' designed to creatively promote sustainable tourism. This imaginative and functional guide will be a mix of poetic and factual insights to the area (both historical and contemporary). It will also include information re. local producers and community initiatives relevant to arts and ecology (eg. market garden / farm shop, Transition Roseland, wild food map, crafts persons, writers, artists etc.).
- **Associated (extended) audience**  
The project will be part of a study on artists/ creative makers in the South West by Dr Harriet Hawkins (Univ. of Exeter). 'Creative industries in the South West' is a research project led by David Harvey and Nicola Thomas (University of Exeter). A conference paper will be presented with Dr Catherine Brace (University of Exeter) for the Arts and Geographical Knowledges sessions at the Royal Geographic Society August 2009.

### **Meeting FEAST framework criteria:**

- *The distribution of excellent cultural activity across a rural population base, addressing issues arising from lack of venues and access (as above)*
- *Community relations / skills sharing – re finding “individuals who are involved in their communities, and developing their confidence and skills to lead, create and take part in future creative work.” (showcase for local talents, workshops, collective actions and events)*

- *Develop links between the creative sector and community led cultural and celebratory activity (to bring sustainability, excitement and high production values to community events)* – Promotional opportunities: Cornish World Magazine, Source FM local radio (via Mac Dunlop poetry editor CW and Source radio programmer). Roseland Magazine and local societies/community meetings, West Briton coverage (via Philippa Spackman local reporter/Transition Roseland member and Mary Alice Pollard Gerrans based West Briton press photographer). Mail shots / events listings via Cornwall networks and individuals eg. Cornwall Womens Network, Creative Skills, AFHC etc
- *Maximise the potential of existing programmes being delivered by creative and cultural sector organisations*  
Local creative sector input: UCF / CEC funded student placements and publication support (RANE - Research into Art, Nature and the Environment).  
Regional / national cultural sector: project will be included in study of SW Creative Industries (Dr Harriet Hawkins, Univ of Exeter).
- *Build people's confidence and creativity in responding to change and environmental challenges* – ecology is at the heart of this project that seeks to engage creatively with the environmental, social and cultural fabric of the locality. Thereby promoting an ethos of sustainable tourism from the ground up.
- *Leave behind skills, enthusiasm and energy in communities* – the collective actions, skills sharing, workshops and celebratory events will be meeting places - shared experiences that bring people together. Because the ideas for these activities draw on existing local community interests they have potential to stimulate new ideas and future projects.

Added to this are possibilities for future initiatives that arise from the connections established and responses to the project. There is potential here for sustaining an arts/ecology residency space at Treloan that will continue to facilitate and support work that is integral to and engaged with the local community and environment.

## **FEAST Theme: Where are the stories when the village shop goes?**

### **Relevant Strands:**

- **Creative Participation**  
The partnership with Treloan (a non creative business) has additional benefits in enabling the campsite to achieve environmental credentials for sustainable tourism through creative community engagement. This project meets their aspirations to provide a unique visitor experience that celebrates 'the local' whilst also promoting environmental responsibility.
- **'Telling the stories that challenge and change the world'**  
"creative engagement projects / geographically based, looking at one area / art project which involves people and their feedback for several weeks might culminate in a publication"



**'discovering what's on our doorstep'**

*Caravan – a company of people*

*Caravanserai – a place where caravans meet*

## **FEAST Evaluation Report:**

### **Caravanserai Activities Programme July – October 2009**

Caravanserai <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com> has grown from strength to strength, illustrating that *'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts'*.

The activities programme in this sense (funded by FEAST) is inseparable from the support given to us by a wide range of people and institutions. As such Caravanserai pays tribute to the generosity, reciprocity, participation and inspiration of all partners, artists, writers, post graduate students, academic researchers and most importantly the local community and visitors to Treloan – where the project is hosted.

In this sense, before attempting to evaluate the specific activities supported by FEAST it's important to outline the emergence of the project – if you like, the preparation of the ground that has made it's facilitation possible.

The activities programme that formed the basis of our application to FEAST and consequent support arose from an initial research and consultation stage. This established the necessary foundations, community relations and practical conditions for the project to evolve. Through an immersive approach that foregrounds dialogue and shared activities (such as starting an allotment on site) a shared commitment arose with Pete and Debs Walker (owners of Treloan- 'a non creative business') to explore how the arts might raise awareness of the locality and the importance of a sustainable approach to tourism<sup>1</sup>.

The garden itself is a useful metaphor (as well as a 'real life' engagement) that underpins the ethos of Caravanserai. As such it is evocative of ecological thinking that concerns itself with the interconnectedness of things...society and environment.

The garden at Treloan has sustained hospitality throughout the project, its produce working its way onto the tables of our resident guests, or shared at fireside sessions and village events. It is within this atmosphere of generosity and trust that practitioners have been invited to work and local residents and visitors have been inspired to participate.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the various community connections established, at an early stage in the project we invited Manda Brookman, director of CoaST (Cornwall Sustainable Tourism Project) to give a presentation for Transition Roseland. This took place in the village hall; it was our first village event and provided an opportunity to gauge local interest in environmental issues.

Ecology and sustainability are at the heart of Caravanserai - reciprocity, immersion, invitation, and hospitality give the project its emergent properties. This is the 'art' of Caravanserai – reflective of it's meaning as a place where caravans or companies of people meet –a place of shared exchange and conviviality.

### **Context:**

Treloan is situated on the edge of the villages of Gerrans and Portscatho. With a resident population of approximately 900, the local community hosts a large influx of visitors through second home ownership & holiday lets. Treloan itself hosts over 2000 visitors throughout the high season.

There is a tendency to think of the caravan site as somewhere where people are in motion and transient and the village as static and continuous. However, this easy distinction, which brings with it a politics of belonging and identity, is disrupted by the many layers of community in which people come and go, stay for different amounts of time either through desire or need, and are differently in motion through the site and the village.

The campsite is intrinsically connected to the social fabric of village life. Treloan not only serves tourism, the owners and site team are also involved in numerous community activities and the running of local amenities inclusive of the village school, shop, church and social club.

This interdependent relationship between local residents and visitors, between village and campsite and between the many local networks and societies has provided fertile ground for creative exploration.

As such artists, writers, local residents, academic researchers and post-graduate students, have been invited to be in residence within the Caravanserai project to explore and respond creatively to this unique context.

These residencies have triggered numerous participatory, inclusive, performative and experiential activities such as intimate fireside poetry and music sessions, film screenings, wild food walks, shared meals, poetic artworks encountered in the landscape and hands on skills sharing in willow coppicing, hurdle & charcoal making, and raft building for Portscatho's Regatta day.

The nuances and textures of the various entanglements of people, objects, materials, and ethos are still ongoing as the project evolves. The next stage of the project will be the production of a 'guide book' for the start of next years tourist season (funded by RANE – *Research into Art Nature and the Environment*, University College Falmouth). This 'guide book' will re-present images and writings from the activities programme combined with local anecdotes and useful information pertinent to raising awareness of the locality and promoting sustainable tourism at Treloan.

Caravanserai celebrates the local environment and culture through '*discovering what's on our doorstep*'. The project support awarded by FEAST has been invaluable in terms of facilitating creative engagement with issues relevant to Cornwall and we hope that we have managed to go some way toward meeting the aspirations outlined in the funding strand that has supported us...

*“Environmental issues are affecting and will continue to increasingly affect our lives in Cornwall, and we are interested in creative engagement projects which allow people to explore, debate, learn, comment, and even create solutions for some of these challenges”.* **‘Telling the stories that challenge and change the world’**

### **Activities:**

The full chronological programme of events can be accessed at <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/whats-on/summer-2009>

*"Annie and Debs and everyone involved, This is the most incredible list of events. It is very exciting."* Jill Edwards, Priest in charge at St Gerrans with St Anthony and St Philleigh Trelowen, Rosevine, Portscatho, Cornwall

In terms of the original schedule the **awning programme** (weekly – hospitality bring and share film screenings and local history talks) evolved into regular fireside sessions, the awning if necessary providing weather protection. However we were extremely lucky weather wise with our regular wednesday fireside evenings that gained in momentum throughout the season.

To watch a film within the intimate and domestic setting of a canvas awning susceptible to the vagaries of the weather in a field is a memorable experience for those on holiday, or those who experience ‘holiday’ in their own neighbourhood.

Two awning film screenings were held:

July 22<sup>nd</sup>

‘A Farm for the Future’ ‘Wildlife film maker Rebecca Hosking investigates how to transform her family's farm in Devon into a low energy farm for the future, and discovers that nature holds the key.’ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00hs8zp>

The screening was attended by local residents, campsite visitors and a resident academic geographer (as part of extended research linked to UCF / Univ. of Exeter). A lively discussion followed the film re. our reliance on fossil fuels, and the change of lifestyle / mentality necessary to address the challenges of peak oil & climate change. An excerpt from the conversation can be heard at <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/2009/07/22/caravanserai-film-screening-22nd-july-2009/>

Aug 24<sup>th</sup>

The second film screening formed part of the Open Caravans day (Aug 24<sup>th</sup>) – an opportunity to view ‘Caravans: A British Love Affair’ a documentary telling the intriguing story of caravanning in Britain from the 1950's through to the present day.

During this day three unique caravans sited at Treloan were available for viewing and resident holiday makers were also invited to open their caravans to experience at first hand a range of design, interior décor and the accompanying stories / histories associated. The only unforeseen drawback of this intention was the fact that people were caught up ‘invigilating’ their caravans so the flow of interest imagined was less collective than it might have been. During our evaluation session with the campsite owners it was decided that this was an interesting idea that could work better if organised as a tour on a more amenable date. The Open Caravans

took place in the middle of a busy week of village events (Fun Day & Regatta Day) so was less well attended than our other events.

The awning came into it's own as an invaluable workspace for artists, writers and students involved in the project - as well as being a communal meeting and eating place for resident artists, project helpers / volunteers, visitors and village locals.

The regular Wednesday **fireside sessions** were extremely successful...

*"To some, the word 'caravan' means the summer is here and the roads are clogged with visitors trailing their homes down the A30. But for the Caravanserai Project at Treloan Coastal Holidays on the Roseland, 'caravan' is used in its more historical meaning; that of a group of people or 'company of companions' travelling along the ancient trade routes like the 'Silk Road' between Asia and Europe. While a 'Caravanserai' is a place where such 'companies of people' would meet – a shared place of exchange, rest and conviviality."*

.If you were present at any of the weekly 'Fireside Sessions' held at Treloan over the summer, you will have heard Mac Dunlop - our 'master of ceremonies' - relay this story about Caravanserai, before introducing resident writers such as Alyson Hallett, Portscatho's own Cat Holman, along with many invited poets, storytellers and musicians. As well as Cornwall based poets such as Penelope Shuttle, Caroline Carver, and performers Dominic Power and Chris Gray, we have had the pleasure of listening to Gerrans historian Chris Pollard, Du Hag Owr our local Sea Shanty group (formed in response to an initial invitation from Caravanserai to sing at our village hall Open Day Aug 8<sup>th</sup>), along with wonderful music & poetry from local village residents and visitors to the campsite. Each event has taken us by surprise as people contributed creative activities. Some had never written before, let alone read to an audience. In terms of FEAST criteria to '*build people's confidence and creativity*' we are aware that there are local people who have positively gained from the trusting and convivial atmosphere of these sessions and who have come away with in a renewed sense of self and confidence in their abilities to perform in the future.

These fireside events attracting 40/50 people at each of the five session have resulted in visitors coming to Treloan because of them, such as J & B - travelling musicians who then went on to perform at the local pub as part of the Fun Day / Regatta week. Added to this others asked to extend their bookings (difficult at high season) in order to attend more sessions. Numerous instances of spontaneous creativity from visitors and local residents occurred - we witnessed extraordinary talent ranging from 13yr old master fiddle players to heartfelt accounts of ex servicemen, young children reciting their poems and local historical anecdotes provided by experienced performers, singers and poets.

Having gained momentum at such a rate we look forward to these sessions evolving in the future as they have done this year, through creative input and shared experiences.

*The summer has been made special by the wonderful efforts of everybody at Treloan. Wednesdays have been a day to look forward to and I have met some lovely people around the campfire. Long may it continue.*  
Andrea Insoll (Portscatho)



*"Wednesday evenings are a joy for everyone and a brilliant idea. Everyone meets together and you can meet new people and sing and laugh.. cheers"*  
Bea aged 10 - visitor

*Thanks for another great evening.  
The weather wasn't always fine but the company sure was, down at Teloan on fireside nights we all answered the call. We laughed at Mac when he told us of his brothers wings, and how his telephone was just about to ring. We had singers and poets and storytellers too, for down at old Treloan you don't just watch the view. Chris Insoll talked about himself or was it all about me, but with all that smoke in your eyes it's very hard to see. What I learned at old Treloan was very simple to me, if you put like minded people in a field the whole World seems free.*  
Chris Pollard, local writer and singer songwriter, Gerrans.

*This whole project has just been wonderful.* Pauline Grisby, Leicester

*A lovely campsite, wish we could stay longer and have another cosy campfire feast.* Jules age 5 (visitor)

*Lovely idea to have a meeting around the fire* Helen (visitor)

### **FEAST – A local food banquet (Aug 6<sup>th</sup>)**

Earlier in the year we organised a talk by Manda Brookman of COAST for the local transition group. Inspired by Manda Brookman's statistic *"a 10% increase in local produce bought by the hotels and catering industry across the region would generate £45m and 2000 jobs"* Cornwall Taste of the West. So we put forward a challenge – 'how about 100% local produce? Support local producers and local retail outlets - create delicious culinary delights to bring and share at a festive banquet'.

Over 100 people showed up to a beautiful setting in the project field with a sea view. Resident artist Greg Humphries made barbeque charcoal from local willow (thanks here to local residents Jude and Tony Tomlinson for permitting access to their willow coppice). Food foraged during the day in a walk led by Greg, village resident Allan Collins and wild food expert Rachel Lambert along with all manner of local produce was cooked on the various barbecues.

Mac Dunlop welcomed guests to the Caravanserai project and present company of people in a moving speech that asked us to remember those no longer with us – reading a poignant text written by FEAST project manager Laura Hardman only a week before she died *"My dad always says 'if you never change, you never grow' and I think it's dealing with challenges and problems that enable us to change. We all have coping strategies for the here and now, sometimes we need the inspiration to move beyond the unknown and taste the future. I'd like to think that art can help us change and I hope that some of our FEAST projects will elicit this change in people's lives.*

Mac then dedicated the lighting of a fire sculpture created by Bristol artist Hannah Cox to Laura - the crowd drifted across the field to watch it burn in silence, against the backdrop of night sky and full moon above. Hannah's documentation of the FEAST event is at <http://www.hannahcox.netgates.co.uk/gall.html>

Returning to the campfire we were enthralled by fantastic fiddle and guitar music provided spontaneously by campsite visitors, followed by numerous anecdotes, stories and offerings from people participating in the celebration.

The overall consensus in our evaluation session with Treloan owners was that this was a unique and inspiring event that we would want to emulate in the future with a longer lead-in providing more information re. local producers and retail outlets and inspirational recipes re. creating dishes from local produce. (The forthcoming guide book will be designed with this in mind).

## **'HOW TO / HANDS ON (creative making sessions):**

### **Gathering the Threads - make, do and meet**

A drop in day session at Gerrans Parish Memorial Hall, Portscatho (Aug 8<sup>th</sup>)

Penryn based artist Lynne Devey led a workshop on recycling clothes for locals and visitors "Re-Dress" <http://www.re-dress.org.uk>, Cornwall's 'Stitch n Bitch' (knitters, spinners, feltmakers) focused their skills on participating in an art installation by Cornwall based artist Greg Humphries that conveys the process of traditional woolcraft skills - from the fleece to spinning the yarn, to the knitting.

As well as demonstrating various crochet & knitting techniques one member of the Stich n Bitch group led a session in making a colourful and strong shopping bag from recycled plastic carrier bags.

Stalls included Gerrans Church Fairtrade stall, Mary Pollard's bric-a-brac for Jollity Farm animal sanctuary and a participatory exhibit: "Bringing it Home: Climate Change and Roseland's Landscapes", a chance to be involved in new research on Roseland's futurescapes with Prof Catherine Brace and Dr Hilary Geoghegan, Geographers from University of Exeter's Cornwall Campus.

<http://climatetolandscape.wordpress.com/2009/07/16/we-will-be-at-the-hands-onhow-to-event-in-portscatho-on-8th-august-2009/>

Treloan visitor Alison Arthur provided us with delicious homemade cakes, tea & coffee. The day was also filled with music - piano playing from Mac Dunlop, and as it turns out – this event was also the inaugural performance of the now established local sea shanty singers Du Hag Owr (Black and Gold). Over 100 people attended the day which exemplified how we can get together, make, learn and do in a warm and lively atmosphere - and at the same time support local charities and initiatives on a not for profit basis. The church Fairtrade stall raised over £100; Alison's café raised £100 for the RNL and Mary's stall £357 for Jollity Farm.

*Re: Gathering the Threads...make, do and meet It was an amazing afternoon and it was fantastic to meet such creative people! From all on Jollity Farm - We wish to say a HUGE thanks to Annie, Mac, and Debbie at Treloan Coastal Holidays who hosted the event, for inviting me to have the Jollity stall. And to Chris and Sarah Vandome for for helping out during the day. Thank you to everyone who contributed - thank you everyone who attended £357.00 was raised for Jollity Farm's Feed & Care Expenses Mary Alice Pollard, local photographer Gerrans.*

<http://home-and-garden.webshots.com/slideshow/573966867SBHHqZ> (Mary's slide show)

### **Raft building (Aug 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>)**

Local village resident Simon Holman (boat designer/educator Falmouth Marine School) constructed a beautiful raft from recycled materials and willow donated by

the neighbouring farm, which was then covered in canvas. Assisted by Mac Dunlop and a steady stream of helpers the raft was entered into the Portscatho Regatta raft race on August 29<sup>th</sup>. The raft was a great talking point - much admired for its natural construction, but unfortunately not quite as fast as we had hoped, or was it the steering which was heading for the wrong yellow bouy?

## **DESIRE LINES – collaborative residency project:**

### **Writer in residence - Cat Holman**

Cat initiated a postcard project on site “We’re always sending cards and letters *from* Portscatho – now it’s time to send some back...” postcards received were read at fireside events. She also inspired people to write and perform through leading a workshop in the Caravanserai project van. Cat has created a blog of her residency at <http://writeundercanvas.wordpress.com> and you can hear some of her work on the Caravanserai project website.

*“It felt as though I was about a hundred miles from home when I woke up in the van this morning. Despite sharing some of the same view of the sea, and a few familiar faces, the campsite feels very different from home. It’s amazing how a new location can change your perspective. Not only is Arthur’s Field somewhere I don’t visit very often (not having any need to camp), it’s also very new to me to be living in a caravan. It’s so quiet and peaceful here, it’s giving me a chance to appreciate what we already have in the village, which I certainly take for granted at times. The space in the van is fantastic for a residency – good areas to work in, no complications or diversions like internet or phones, and the knowledge that I should be immersing myself in my surroundings and writing.”* Cat Holman, Portscatho writer in residence

### **Writer in residence - Alyson Hallett** <http://www.thestonelibrary.com>

Alyson’s writings have permeated the site, a carved stone sits at the entrance “*negotiations of form are endless*’. Poetry books, writings and logbooks have been in the showers, toilets and washing up area. Where people walk to wash their dishes words on the concrete floor echo the inspiration of being in a beautiful place.. “*tread softly because you tread on my dreams*” (Keats). Subtly placed slates and concrete poems have inspired visitors to make their own. One family adorned the fireside with painted text on stones – phrases such as ..”soliloquy on serpentine”, “syllables on slate”, “grammar on granite” foregrounded an evening of inspired poetry, stories and music. Poetry has entered the local community, Alyson and fellow poet Mac Dunlop read poems to the residents of Eshcol House nursing home, poetry became the centre point of a gallery window in an installation by local artist Chris Insoll. The new Harbour Gallery in Portscatho generously exhibited a poetic piece by Alyson “*how blue the sky, how fast the river, how brief the rose, how sweet the day*”

*“Caravanserai is a remarkable project. Under the watchful guidance of Annie and Mac, Pete and Debs, creativity is not only allowed to flourish but is positively encouraged. The response has been stunning. The toilet logbooks filled up with poems and pictures, people who have never written before have begun to write and there has been an increasing wave of appreciation for poetry and the ways in which Caravanserai embeds artistic practice in daily life. As a poet, I have been trusted to get on with my work and to share it in a variety of ways including workshops, open discussion sessions and the siting of poetic texts, one of which was sprayed onto a concrete floor, whilst another was burned with a pyrographic pen into a fence post. The result of this is twofold: as a poet my work has been quickly integrated into the*

*fabric of place: also, the sited work looks as if it has always been there, as if it was meant to be there. This is the joy of Caravanserai. It invites anyone and everyone to creatively connect with the ongoing, ever-changing nature of landscape and the resulting abundance of delight can only be attributed to the extraordinary commitment and vision of Annie Lovejoy and Mac Dunlop in collaboration with Pete and Debs Walker. I thank them for this – the experience has changed my life."*

Alyson Hallett – writer in residence

**Writer /Artist in residence - Mac Dunlop** <http://thepoetrypoint.wordpress.com>

Mac's residency extended throughout the season (and in that sense accomplished far more than the designated 'artist in residence' funding). Mac produced writings and text based artworks such as the much commented on (especially by passing walkers) 'a smile left hanging in the air' – a handwritten script formed in metal and sited above the campsite entrance welcoming people to Treloan. He has also organised the fireside sessions inviting performers and led them as 'master of ceremonies', maintaining the flow and keeping things going. Recordings he has made of these evenings combined with associated conversations and atmospheric soundscapes were installed in a tent. This created a surprise and humorous encounter that gave insights to various aspects of campsite life and the creative activities that had been going on throughout the project. Being involved from the start in establishing the relations necessary to the facilitation of Caravanserai, he also assisted the resident and visiting artists with any technical or practical skills they needed. Added to this he has also published an overview of the poetic interventions that have been created within Caravanserai for Cornish World Magazine. Oct/Nov 2009 <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/press>

*'It has been a wonderful transition over the last few weeks, seeing how the plans and ideas for Caravanserai have come to fruition. The Walker family have created a cosy family friendly atmosphere, and have been enthusiastic about the creative side of inviting poets and writers to work here. The resident writers and artists in turn have been inspired by simply being provided with the time and place to think, and try out ideas.*

*As both a writer and Poetry Editor of Cornish World Magazine, it has been an inspiration for me to see poetry written fresh, talked about, recited, and off the page - we have literally had words written in the landscape, word sculptures, 'grass shadows', words in concrete and hung on the walls, even fire sculptures. Meanwhile I've seen people who say they've never written a poem before having a go at it, and then finding the courage to read their words in public alongside professional writers and performers at our weekly 'Fireside Sessions'.*

*It's often the simplest things that leave a lasting impact, and for me it has been the simple combination of sharing a fire and some food with strangers and friends, and listening to the storytelling, poetry and music as the night draws in. There is something timeless in that, something that harks back throughout our shared histories, cultures and languages, something we have in common with our ancient ancestors, something shared long before words were ever written down to record it.'*  
Mac Dunlop, writer /artist in residence

**Artist in residence – Annie Lovejoy** <http://www.annielovejoy.net>

Annie's focus has been on the conceptual underpinnings of the programme, it's management, documentation, design, publicity and the hosting and negotiating of linked activities, associated academic involvement and student placements. Her interest is in an immersive and durational approach to context-led responsive arts

informed by transdisciplinary explorations – especially the situated knowledges and expertise of local people. Caravanserai forms the practical element of Annie's doctoral studies, hence the academic involvement in the project. As such this has enabled a wider dissemination of the project in specific fields such as those of the arts and human / cultural geography. A joint paper with Professor Catherine Brace (Univ. of Exeter), written collaboratively in the project residency space was presented at this years Royal Geographical Society conference in Manchester. <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/associated-research> Another Caravanserai residency collaboration with Dr Harriet Hawkins resulted in a limited edition (1500) publication *insites: a notebook* for the same conference. <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/publications>

*"Caravanserai is ongoing and the stories continue and will be carried afar by locals & visitors through memories and shared experiences. As an artist interested in how the processes of 'doing' art can be part of everyday life it's been amazing to see how the invited writers and artists have responded to this unique place – and in turn how locals and visitors have become involved. This project has shown me the importance of 'being' in a place and just 'doing', getting on with what we all do best - it has really brought home to me that integrity and interest in ones work is a magnet that draws involvement & nurtures creative evolvment... a convivial sharing of what's on our doorstep, generosity, inspiration, knowledge and skills.*  
Annie Lovejoy, Caravanserai

## **COMMUNITY HARVEST CELEBRATION (Marquee at Treloan) Oct 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> 2009**

### **Balti night (Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>)**

The idea for this event emerged from the fact that over the years villagers have often clubbed together to order curries with someone driving off to collect them. So we invited Falmouth's Balti curries to be on site for a day to prepare exquisite Nepalese and North Indian cuisine for our guests. 42 people attended this event, the majority of whom were from the local villages of Gerrans & Portscatho.

### **Treloan Festival (Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

In the 'bring and share' spirit of our fireside events everyone got involved to make this happen – a kind of 'harvest festival' of local community connections and talent. A party that celebrated the Walker family's move to the village, the campsite they've made so special and the success of the Caravanserai project. The day involved the return of some Caravanserai performers and artists such as poet Alyson Hallett and artist Hannah Cox (who created another fire sculpture in the project field, which we witnessed burn accompanied by the Du Hag Owr shanty singers). Cornwall based artist Lois Wild re-created her project 'a celebration through cake' a popular sharing of cakes made by project participants and herself that were created and decorated to represent peoples involvement in the Caravanserai project and festival. Local stallholders sold bric a brac & Fairtrade as they had done previously in the village hall open day we organised in August. Various local musicians and bands played and the evening finale was a session by the Maria Daines band who had travelled from Cambridge to voluntarily play at the invitation of local residents Mary & Chris

Pollard. The PA /sound system was volunteered and run by a local resident and the whole collection of village festive lights were delivered for the event (spontaneously) by the landlord of the local pub.

Over 100 people attended this event on a rather dull and rainy day; a full programme of the day's events (with links to video clips and images) is available at <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/whats-on>

### **To conclude:**

In terms of the objectives to meet FEAST guidelines and criteria the project has achieved it's aims as follows:

Provided opportunities for creative engagement with environmental issues of relevance to Cornwall in terms of the context of a particular location.

Developed confidence within the community to participate in and develop further skills & creative projects (evident in the comments collated, particularly the initiative of local resident Allan Collins to learn traditional skills in crab pot making to ensure that the knowledge is passed on – full story is available here: <http://greghumphries.wordpress.com/2009/07/06/treloan-portscatho-grid-ref875347>

Provided a unique venue for transdisciplinary explorations and the sharing of knowledges from different walks of life (which will continue to be disseminated through academic liaisons, research and development of the project)

Established the relations that will allow for project evolvment.  
Treloan Coastal Holidays is committed to continued support of the Caravanserai project; and we have received an offer of financial support from a village resident toward kick starting a fund for future arts residencies.

Caravanserai has maximised the potential of existing programmes to generate further outcomes and wider dissemination of the project through hosting artists, writers, post grad students and academic researchers. The outcomes of these liaisons will become building blocks for future initiatives such as the forthcoming 'guide book' (funded by RANE - Research into Art, Nature and the Environment UCF).

Connections made throughout the project will be maintained and nurtured, as the general consensus from the comments received is that if possible, Caravanserai should continue.

*'you've brought the community and campsite back together – just like you said you wanted to'* Debs Walker, Treloan Coastal Holidays

*"Thank YOU for all you have done - this is a better place because of you and Mac - Debbie and Pete and all those wonderful people you have introduced to our area !"*  
local resident Mary Alice Pollard

*Thanks to Debs, Pete, Annie & Mac for showing us how to enjoy each other's company, for giving people the opportunity to try something new and for bonding the village, the people in it and the people that come to visit. I've never seen so much*

*love towards others, thanks a million. Local resident Allan Collins*

The potential for sustaining an arts / ecology residency space at Treloan is an exciting option in terms of facilitating and supporting work that is integral to and engaged with the locality. Certainly the campsite owners (as partners in the project) are more than happy to continue with their support – in their position as a tourist business this offer comes with all the necessary health and safety procedures (applicable to public arts practice) in place. Caravanserai is a viable and fantastic opportunity for a residency space to develop that is sensitive to the locality and facilitated through trust. Artists here are encouraged to respond creatively, without the constraints of over-arching thematic curatorial structures, remote committees or inflexible bureaucracies.

***Extract from poet in residence Alyson Hallett's diary:***

*Monday evening: 7.30 p.m. 17<sup>th</sup> August*

*I have the feeling that I am being returned to myself as an artist and poet – that there's enough time and space here to play, experiment, make mistakes, start again. I forgot to bring blu-tack with me and set off into the village to buy some. Ralph's store didn't have any and the post office didn't have any either. The man behind the post-office counter was surprised to discover they'd run out. "How much do you need?" he asked. "Not much," I said. He fished a packet out of a drawer, broke off a healthy lump and gave it to me. Next I went to Eshcol to introduce myself. The introduction was brief but as I was leaving I heard someone say, "Will you be stopping and sitting on the bench with me?" It wasn't what I'd planned, but I said "Yes, I'll sit a while with you." The conversation turned as conversations turn from The Lake Isle of Innisfree to Daffodils to The Lady of Shallot. "The nuns would be pleased with me," Carmel said, as she remembered the poems the nuns had taught her. Later still, we agreed that gold was no colour for a car and that most cars now had no elegance. We looked at the huge ship moored out to sea. "It's blue," I said. "Is it?" she said. "Yes," I said. "It gets bluer the more you look," she said, "look, it's so blue it's navy." I walked back into the village in search of shandy at the Plume. Before getting there however Chris called me into his gallery. "You'll need torches on Wednesday night," he said, "for when it gets dark. So the poets can see what they're reading." And so what returns me to myself as a poet and artist? These unexpected encounters, the ease of moving through this place, the extreme gentleness and time unfolding like a chiffon scarf in a breeze. Nothing particular, just moments such as these.*

***Response from Treloan - Debs Walker***

*The project Caravanserai has been wonderful. Our local community and campers have had great fun joining in with the artists and many have been inspired by them so much so that Rachel Best a camper from Wales is coming back next year to do a workshop with the children teaching them how to draw with chalk and charcoal, Mrs. Coldicott will be returning to do foraging jams and chutneys musicians have been popping out from everywhere and 6 local people have written poems and read them at our fireside sessions. This project has not only made our campers enjoy their holiday more and take home good memories it has helped the community to get together. Thanks to Annie, Caravanserai, and Feast, Treloan Coastal Holidays is a nicer place to be and stay.*

**Statistics forwarded to Feast Oct 16<sup>th</sup> 2009  
(re. Arts Council England annual review).**

On 13 Oct 2009, at 12:27, Reece-Romain Victoria wrote:

Dear All

ACE will be undertaking an annual review of FEAST in a couple of weeks time and we would like to be able to present them with statistics and good news stories from projects funded in year one of FEAST; this will also help us to start building the case for funding beyond the initial 3 years. Please could you let me know the following info (and if your project is on-going please could you give me projected figures):

- Number of artists employed
- Number of volunteers involved
- Number of beneficiaries (audience and/or participants)
- Number of communities involved
- 6 one-liners about your project (e.g. feedback / quotes / feel-good snippets of info)

It would be a huge help if you could let me have this by **Monday 19 Oct.**

Many thanks

Vicky

Vicky Reece-Romain, Administrator  
Creative Services, Cultural Services, Cornwall Council  
[www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

---

**Direct involvement:**

*Number of artists employed* - 4 artists / 2 writers / 1 boat designer / 1 local historian / 3 musicians / 2 poets /

*Number of volunteers involved* - approx 50 helpers (inclusive of festival performers, art students etc)

*Number of beneficiaries (audience and/or participants):*

July / Aug 5 Fireside poetry music sessions - 250

Feast local food banquet (aug 6) - 100

harvest meal / festival (oct 3) - 150

workshops & open days - 100

*passing viewers / encounters* by local residents of Gerrans & Portscatho & visitors to Treloan - impossible to estimate  
(eg. Treloan hosts over 2000 visitors throughout the high season)

*Number of communities involved* -

geographic communities - local residents of Portscatho/Gerrans, tourists & visitors to Treloan

communities of interest - eg. academic / arts / geog / literary / transition group / craft groups / students etc

**Secondary involvement:**



Internet users via the project blog <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com> and associated websites, as follows:

Treloan coastal Holidays <http://www.coastalfarmholidays.co.uk>  
Feast <http://www.cornwallculture.co.uk/feast>  
Hannah Cox <http://www.hannahcox.netgates.co.uk/gall.html>  
Cat Holman <http://writeundercanvas.wordpress.com>  
Greg Humphries <http://greghumphries.wordpress.com/category/portscatho>  
Annie Lovejoy <http://www.annielovejoy.net>  
Mac Dunlop <http://thepoetrypoint.wordpress.com>  
Charlotte Stranks <http://gnu43.blogspot.com/2009/04/as-part-of-my-cec-work-experience-i.html>  
RANE (Research into Art, Nature and the Environment)  
[http://rane.falmouth.ac.uk/lovejoy\\_dunlop\\_details.html](http://rane.falmouth.ac.uk/lovejoy_dunlop_details.html)  
From Climate to Landscape: Imagining the Future  
<http://climatetolandscapewordpress.com>

Local Press: (West Briton / Cornish World) <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/press>

**Publications:**

Limited Edition *insites: a notebook* for RGS <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/publications>  
Forthcoming Caravanserai / Treloan *guidebook* (estimated - 1500 copies)

**Project presentations:**

UCF Association of International Art Schools  
<http://www.falmouth.ac.uk/1177/aias-conference-2009-51/symposium-449.html>  
Bos Arts – ‘This Weekend’ Arts Seminar <http://www.bosarts.org/seminar-09.html>  
Royal Geographical Society Conference <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/associated-research/>

**Web log comments:**

May 20, 2009 "Steve and I enjoy being involved with the projects at Treloan in a very small way and we do miss everyone and wonder how it's all going when we are at home. Looking forward to seeing everything grow and develop over the summer and maybe being involved with a few events" .Alison Arthur

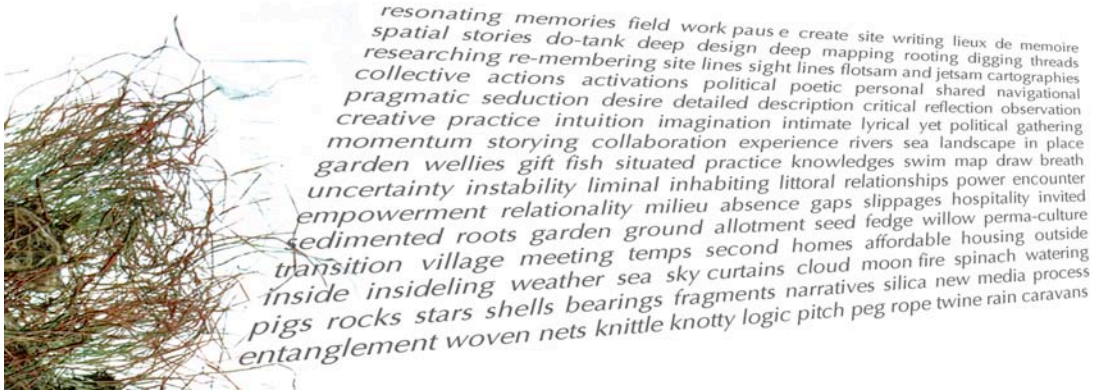
March 25, 2009 "Chris and I so look forward to getting into these projects with you here and watching them grow – you know that you have our full support. When you need help getting the word out about any upcoming events – just email me and out go the alerts. Thank you all for being here and doing what you do – you are an inspiration!" Mary Alice Pollard

September 8 2009 "your sites are full of richly interesting work" David Crouch

October 3, 2009 "Amazing community spirit and dedication by all" Zest - Canadian environmental ezine

October 2009 "Thank you all for a fantastic weekend, the Treloan Festival really rocked!! We had a wonderful time and met some fascinating people, the views from the camp site are breathtaking and the arts and entertainment were intriguing. Thanks also for the superb food, it was so good that a lot of the dishes were veggie. We thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere and especially the local music, a truly unforgettable and inspiring event that we were really proud to be part of. Long may your brilliant project continue! Maria Daines & Paul Killington.

## Appendix D: caravanseraï residencies and placements





*Caravan – a company of people*  
*Caravanserai – a place where caravans meet*  
<http://www.caravanserai.info>

To some, the word ‘caravan’ means the summer is here and the roads are clogged with visitors trailing their homes down the A30 into Cornwall. Yet for *caravanserai* - the project at Treloan Coastal Holidays on the Roseland, *caravan* is used in its more historical meaning; that of ‘a company of people’ – a *caravanserai* is a place where such ‘companies of people’ would meet – a place of exchange, rest and conviviality

***caravanserai*** is an arts residency project initiated by Annie Lovejoy and Mac Dunlop at Treloan Coastal Holidays, a caravan and camping site on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall. In partnership with the campsite owners, they are working to promote a responsible approach to tourism through hosting creative activities that engage with, and celebrate the local environment and culture.

To date, artists, writers, musicians, storytellers, geographers, foragers, academic researchers and post-graduate students have been hosted by the *caravanserai* project at Treloan to explore and respond creatively to this unique context.

The project engages creatively with issues that are resonant within Cornwall. From local food to transport to energy, from waste to water & wildlife, as without a responsible approach to tourism that protects the specific qualities of place and people we are faced with losing the amenities and meeting places that are central to our communities.

*caravanserai* is ‘bringing together local anecdotes and craft processes, and instigating environmental practices and discourses in an organic interlacing of histories and poetics’. Dr Harriet Hawkins – geographer-in-residence 2009

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Caravanserai has been supported by:

FEAST (<http://www.feastcornwall.org>) “Environmental issues are affecting and will continue to increasingly affect our lives in Cornwall, and we are interested in creative engagement projects which allow people to explore, debate, learn, comment, and even create solutions for some of these challenges”.

Post-Graduate placements - University College Falmouth. ESF (European Social Fund)  
Publication – UCF/RANE - Research into Art, Nature and the Environment and Treloan



**Context:** the villages of Gerrans and Portscatho are situated on the Roseland peninsula, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. With a resident population of approximately 900, the local community hosts a large influx of visitors either through second home ownership or holiday lets. Added to this the village camping and caravan site at Treloan attracts over 2000 visitors to the area during the high season and has a steady flow of visitors throughout the year.

Visitors provide an essential economic asset to the area, bringing trade to the village shop, pubs and local post office that might otherwise have difficulty thriving. On the other hand there are problematic environmental and social impacts (e.g. traffic pollution, waste management, housing etc).

The project recognizes the importance of a responsible approach to tourism through creative engagement that offers an enhanced experience of 'the local' to visitors. The interdependent relationship between local residents and visitors / village and campsite, provides a fertile ground from which to engage creatively with the environmental, social and cultural fabric of the locality.

A word from the artists...

**Caravanserai** is a 'do tank' - not a *think tank/blue skies/outside the box* scenario - with a nod to Gavin Pretor-Pinney we like clouds (<http://cloudappreciationsociety.org/manifesto>) & don't see situations as being boxed - caravanserai is a connective / responsive / doing / learning / making social space.

The project began with starting a garden in Middle Close (*the project field*) and establishing a residency space (*the project van*). This provides food, flora and a live/work space for people interested in developing social & environmental activities in response to being at Treloan.

It's fantastic to be able to offer a residency space to artists, writers, foragers, geographers (anyone who is able to engage creatively with *being* here) as their input helps make the campsite special – encouraging a multi-faceted sense (or senses) of place. At the heart of *caravanserai* is *being and connectivity* ... with the locality, people, land and environment. Events such as the annual 'FEAST' and 'fireside sessions' bear witness to this.

Linked to *caravanserai* are Annie's PhD studies with RANE (Research in Art, Nature and the Environment) at University College Falmouth and Mac's ongoing literary and (Un/Be) Spoken Word projects.

All of our work as artists, stems from being immersed in particular contexts. We have worked collaboratively and independently for over 2 decades on projects that span a wide spectrum of activities, situations and sites. These include public art projects, commissions and invitations to work in places as diverse as new build schools, lightships, hotels and ferryboats.

Annie Lovejoy and Mac Dunlop.

<http://www.annielovejoy.net>  
<http://thepoetrypoint.wordpress.com>

## THE 'PROJECT VAN' RESIDENCY SPACE:

This 27ft Roma Supreme caravan sited at Treloan campsite on the Roseland peninsula in Cornwall is the *caravanserai* residency space or 'imaginarium' (as named by writer in residence, Alyson Hallett in 2009).



Roma's are coach-built (solid and well insulated) trailers, light and airy with trademark curved interior furnishings and cabinets. The Roma Supreme is a 'dry' van (sink and toilet facilities were not included in its original design as they were thought to be unhygienic). Campsite facilities provide showers, toilets and washing up areas.



The living room / kitchen is spacious with 2 single bed size sofa/seats, ample surfaces and storage space. The kitchen is well equipped with crockery, pans, cutlery, a calor gas double burner with grill and an electric fridge. Unlike most caravans of this size the private bedroom accessed via sliding doors, has an island double bed with bedside chests of drawers, 2 mirror fronted wardrobes and surrounding eye-level storage space.

## A few things to take on board:

- The residency / workshop space on site (27ft Roma caravan with separate bedroom) provides a live workspace & base for your research / project.
- We trust that you are reliable and self sufficient – we are happy to help and to chat things through with you, as every residency situation is unique
- *caravanserai* (Annie & Mac) are your first port of call for any queries (the campsite owners are very busy, particularly during July & August).
- *caravanserai* operates on a donation basis – so if you want to charge for leading a participatory activity you can invite a suggested donation - and in turn we would ask for a donation from this toward maintaining *caravanserai*.
- To publicise – we do what Adam Sutherland (Grizedale Arts) calls ‘folk marketing’ – word of mouth and posters in campsite spaces & on village notice-boards, using the same design for posters (ask us for the template or we can make one for you). Also please use the *caravanserai* logo on any publicity or dissemination of your work, thanks.



- Reciprocity and exchange is basically how things work, so in that respect we ask you to document your project, keep a record of what you do (for our website or yours) link, link, link....
- We would love it if you were happy donate any arty products to the *caravanserai* library / project van
- ENJOY! ...and make good for the next people

## Publication Consent Form

Caravanserai is an arts project based at Treloan Coastal Holidays that aims to encourage responsible tourism through creativity & celebration of the local environment and culture.

Publication formats include the project website (<http://www.caravanserai.info>), 'discovering what's on our doorstep' a printed guidebook for the campsite, and a PhD doctoral thesis (within RANE: Research in Art, Nature and the Environment at University College Falmouth).

These publications offer opportunities for people to experience enjoy and learn about activities related to the local culture and natural environment, making the project accessible and socially inclusive. Other uses might include educational conferences, journals, partner websites and any press coverage (newspapers, TV).

By signing the following consent form you are giving permission to publish material created by you, or material in which you are the subject matter (including archive material that you might have in your own collections e.g. old photos, writings, postcards etc).

Your name:	
------------	--

I confirm that I give permission for material (that I have created, or that belongs to me, or is about me) to be included in Caravanserai publications.

Signed	
Date	

Caravanserai is supported by:



# Fireside Sessions 2012



all eyes & ears on the Bodmin Bard  
Rob Barratt 2010



J & B fantastic folk & rhythm duo  
summer 2010



a 10 song medley on the ukelele  
in ferns (or so!) by camper Matt  
in the rain...brilliant!

## 2012 FIRESIDE DATES:

June 6th  
July 18th, July 25th  
August 1st, 8th (FEAST), 15th, 22nd, 29th



Contact: mac dunlop <bespokenwords@yahoo.com>  
mob: 07949835370

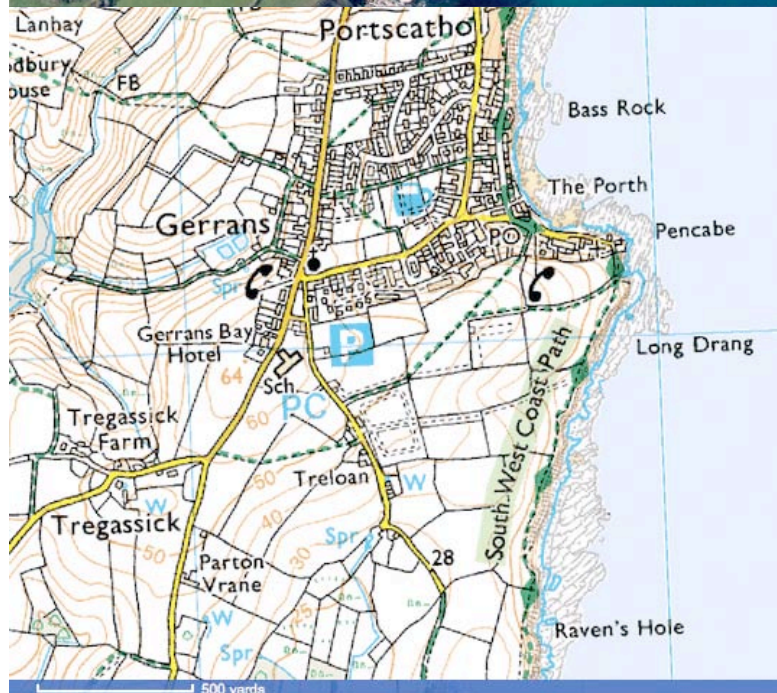
'Firesides' happen on Wednesday evenings from 7pm onwards throughout the summer season. Guest poets, musicians or storytellers perform to an audience that can range between 30-100 people. The sessions kick off with a 'bring and share' BBQ, or local chef Simon's latest culinary delights. The sessions include open mike slots for campers and locals.

The site is stunning, close to quiet coves on the unspoilt Roseland peninsula- check it out here. In return for your contribution we offer free camping or accomodation in the project van (if it's available) for 3 nights. Performers also get sell their wares to an appreciative audience- books /CDs. as well as benefiting from publicity on our blog - we get quite a lot of hits from prospective visitors following the recent TV coverage.



**Art & Design Briefs for CEC Student Placements at Treloan Coastal Holidays,**  
Charlotte Stranks (MA Interior & Landscape Design)  
Greg Humphries (MA Contemporary Visual Arts)

Context:



Treloan a caravan and camping site situated on the Roseland Peninsula attracts over 2000 visitors to the area during the high season and has a steady flow of visitors throughout the year. <http://www.treloancoastalholidays.co.uk>

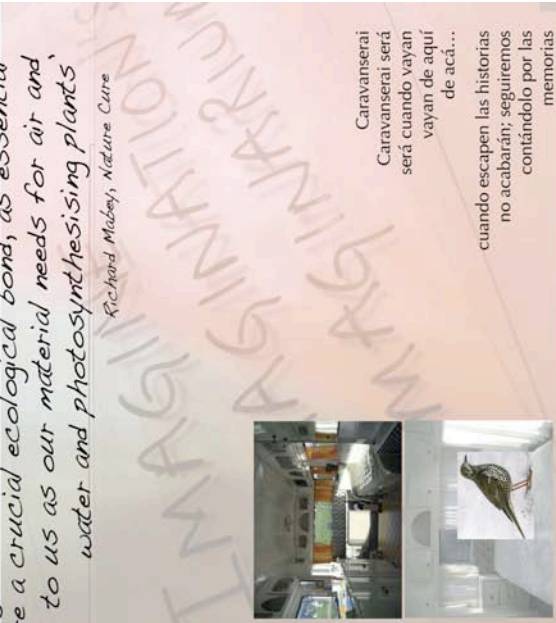
The opportunity to undertake a placement at Treloan has been negotiated with the campsite owners as part of a doctoral research project (Annie Lovejoy - UCF). The project focuses on providing a unique visitor experience that celebrates 'the local' and promotes environmental responsibility through creative engagement.

This CEC arts placement with Treloan Coastal Holidays offers an exciting 'real world' opportunity to produce work that engages with these aspirations. As well as being installed on site and locally the work / processes will be featured in a limited edition publication and on the project blog. <http://fieldsite.wordpress.com>

# CARAVANSERAI PROJECT VAN RESIDENCIES

*'our imaginative affinities with the natural world are a crucial ecological bond, as essential to us as our material needs for air and water and photosynthesising plants'*

*Richard Mabey, Nature Cure*



Caravanserai  
Caravanserai será  
será cuando vayan  
vayan de aquí  
de acá...  
cuando escapen las historias  
no acabarán; seguiremos  
contándolo por las  
memorias



It felt as though I was about a hundred miles from home when I woke up in the van this morning. Despite sharing some of the same view of the sea, and a few familiar faces, the campsite feels very different from home. It's amazing how a new location can change your perspective... It's giving me a chance to appreciate what we already have in the village, which I certainly take for granted at times. The space in the van is fantastic for a residency – good areas to work in, no complications or diversions like internet or phones, and the knowledge that I should be immersing myself in my surroundings and writing.

When the stories escape from here, when they go, they will not disappear...



Portsmouth based writer Cat Holman, reading at the 'fireside' July 2009




<http://www.caravanserai.info>  



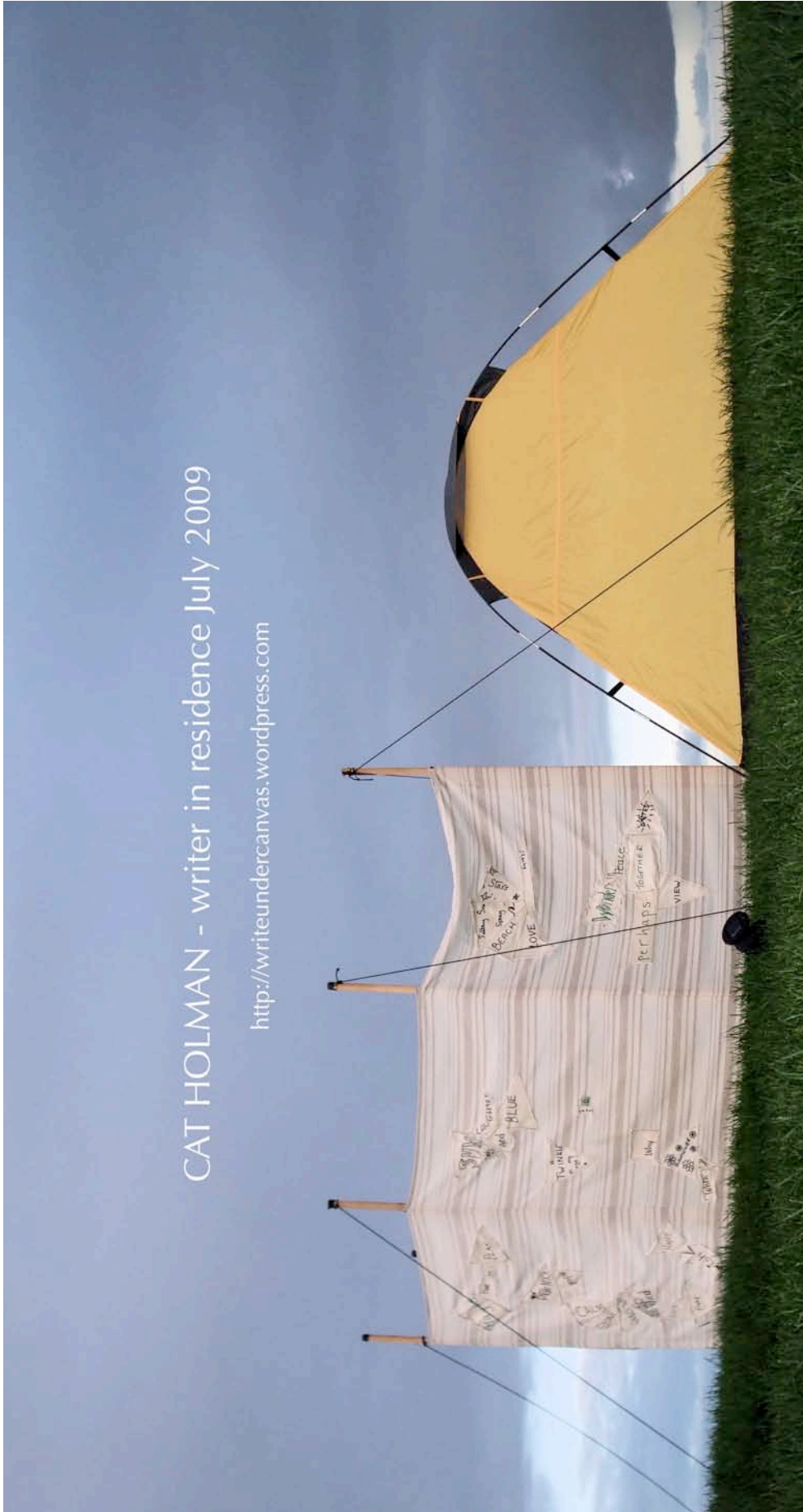

Environmental issues are affecting and will continue to increasingly affect our lives in Cornwall, and we are interested in creative engagement projects which allow people to explore, debate, comment, and even create solutions for some of these challenges - FEAST - Cornwall Council / ACE 2009






# CAT HOLMAN - writer in residence July 2009

<http://writeundercanvas.wordpress.com>



Cat Holman – a local village resident discovered *caravanserai* when trying to decide how to approach a project for her MA in Creative Writing (Manchester Metropolitan University). She wanted to do something pertinent to where she lived and that was relevant to being a writer based in Cornwall.

*I was particularly interested in looking at an area of writing that was relevant to my location and situation [...] and discovered that what I was looking for was on my doorstep, I began talking to artists Annie Lovejoy and Mac Dunlop who were developing caravanserai'*

Cat's approach was conducive with the responsive nature of *caravanserai* and we really liked the idea of someone who lives in the village being in residence. Having spent time chatting with us and looking at other examples of other residency programmes for writers, Cat proposed the following aims for her project:

#### *Writing in Residence*

- to set up and plan a writing residency.
- to produce writing during the residency, in response to my location and surroundings
- to devise a schedule of collaborative activities to take place during the residency (e.g. workshops) in order to involve community in writing, as well as time for my own writing
- to come up with various ways of transmitting writing produced during residency, both during and after my time in residence (e.g. readings, blog postings, publication in final anthology as part of larger project etc)
- to take into consideration practical issues such as funding/budgeting, ethics, materials etc
- to research the work of other writers in residence and other residencies, as well as the work of funding bodies such as the Arts Council, in order to set up and evaluate my own residency
- to liaise with other writers and artists involved in parallel residencies as part of both research and creative processes
- to set-up a blog in order to document the process, which can be linked into my final write-up

Cat led a writing workshop, set up a postcard project that invited people to send postcards to Portscatho (instead of *from*), created a poetry line from words on canvas written by people on the campsite and produced new writing of her own. Participatory methods were used to trigger creative inspiration for her writing and that of others.

*May 28<sup>th</sup> 2009: Started thinking about doing my own 'mini-residency', and thought about the idea of somehow exploring the situational response to location from both tourists and residents – using the idea of what Portscatho is to you, as well as opening our own eyes, as residents, to what is already around us that we overlook.*



July 13<sup>th</sup> 2009: The rest of the day was punctuated by short bursts of torrential rain every half hour or so, which kept me in the van to plan tomorrow's workshop, and happily spend some time in the afternoon writing. I was looking at the poem 'Scotland' by Adrian Henri, and thinking about using a list poem like this as a starting point for the workshop, so some of my writing time was spent writing my own version of this, unsurprisingly using the word 'Rain' as my theme.



The guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.50



August 20<sup>th</sup> 2009: Since the first fireside event during my week in residence, these weekly events have been growing, with more and more people contributing each time. I love the way this project is inspiring people to try new things and learn new skills – I like to think of it as a kind of ‘word flu’ epidemic spreading through the village...’




MAGINKA

Caravanserai  
 Caravanserai será  
 será cuando vayan  
 vayan de aquí  
 de acá...

cuando escapen las historias  
 no acabarán; seguiremos  
 contándolo por las  
 memorias

It felt as though I was about a hundred miles from home when I woke up in the van this morning. Despite sharing some of the same view of the sea, and a few familiar faces, the campsite feels very different from home. It’s amazing how a new location can change your perspective... it’s giving me a chance to appreciate what we already have in the village, which I certainly take for granted at times. The space in the van is fantastic for a residency – good areas to work in, no complications or diversions like internet or phones, and the knowledge that I should be immersing myself in my surroundings and writing.

‘When the stories escape from here, when they go, they will not disappear;...’



Portscatho based writer in residence Cat Holman, reading at the ‘fireside’ July 2009

The guidebook: *discovering what’s on our doorstep*. p.65

GREG HUMPHRIES - artist in residence  
June/August 2009

<http://greghumphries.wordpress.com>



## Greg Humphries (MA Contemporary Visual Arts)

### Outline brief:

Conducive to the aspirations to creatively engage visitors and locals with the local community and environment, Greg will join the collective construction of an allotment on site and also have the opportunity to develop his work concerning the archiving of traditional skills.

Timescale: 15 days (105 hrs) between June 1<sup>st</sup> & Aug 8<sup>th</sup> 2009

June 1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> - access to neighbouring farm to cut willow and create allotment windbreak. A crab pot maker from St Austell originally planted Willow here.

Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> - creative development re MA practice interests – an opportunity to explore traditional local skills / stories etc.

Aug 8<sup>th</sup> – installation of the fleece / spin / knit “Patience and Perseverance” (detail below) exhibit for interaction at an open skills day in Portscatho Memorial Hall, extending an existing work through input from skilled craftswomen (spinners and knitters).



### Project facilitation in place at Treloan:

- Residency / workshop space on site (27ft Roma - project caravan)
- Accommodation – project caravan or tent & cooking facilities
- Outdoor and undercover work areas, tools etc.
- Transport of materials by arrangement (van / car and trailer)



*Caravan – a company of people*  
*Caravanserai – a place where caravans meet*  
<http://fieldsite.wordpress.com>



Greg Humphries (MA Fine Art: Contemporary Practice, Falmouth University) asks:

How can artists be effective in communities considering the twin issues of Peak Oil and Climate Change?

Is it really painting pictures, producing films or creating sculptures?

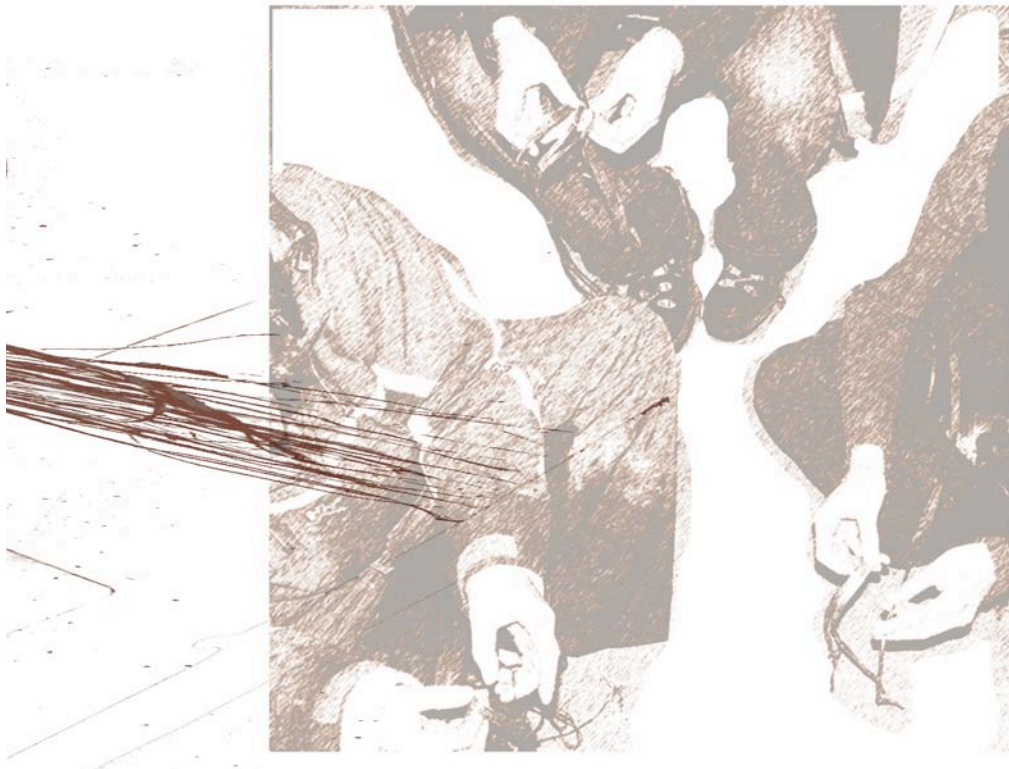
Greg's residency with *caravanserai* provided opportunity for action research into this question. An account of his residency along with detailed sketches and instructions of his activities is archived at <http://greghumphries.wordpress.com/category/portscatho>

2009: Greg Humphries received the 'Unlocking Cornish Potential Award for Creative Enterprise Cornwall Best Postgraduate Placement'. He was recognised for his innovative work at Treloan Coastal Holidays campsite, Portscatho. During his placement Greg worked closely with the site owners and local community to re-introduce willow coppicing and lobster pot weaving as a sustainable practice. Greg also created a fedge, peg loom and charcoal burner, all of which helped develop the sites ongoing engagement with a sustainable tourism project through art practice. Zoe Mogridge (Placement Co-ordinator, FU).

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Practical consciousness of a present kind,  
in a living and inter-relating continuity. Williams, 1977

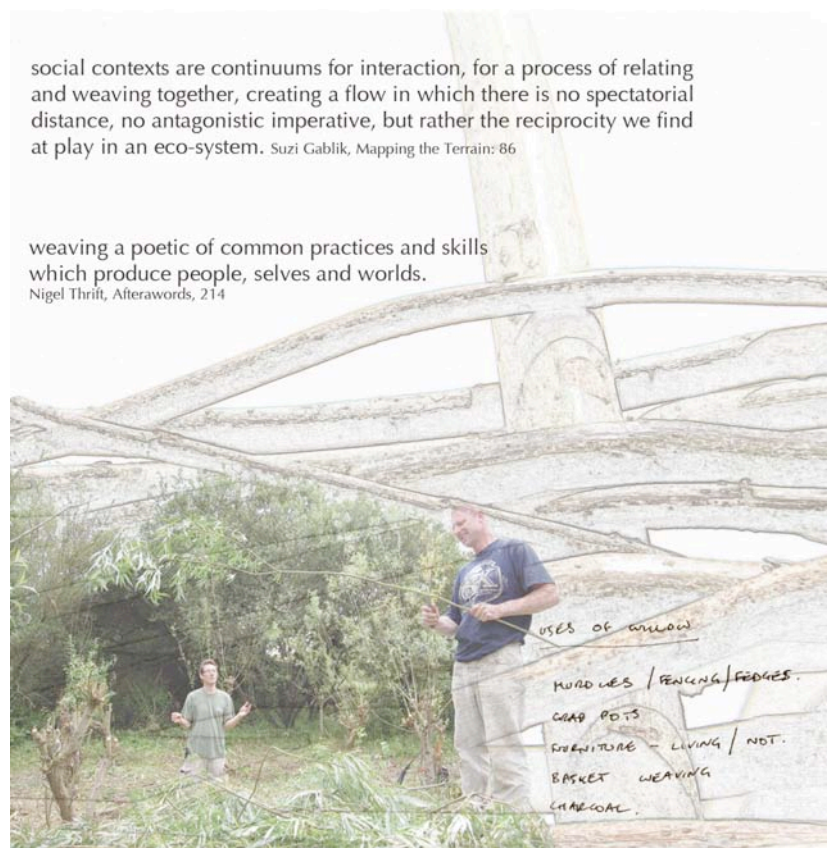
*We sat at the fire extracting the fibres of nettles, for such tough stems you would expect sore hands, but the plant exudes a rich nutrient -a softening balm*



*insites: a notebook* – page design: image of making nettle string with Greg



The guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.41



*insites: a notebook* – page design: image from hurdle making and willow plantation



Local resident Peter Pomery weaves sheep's wool on a peg loom made by artist Greg Humphries. August 2009

The guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep.* p.43



Allan being filmed in the Fisherman's Shelter for My Cornwall TV photo by Mary Pollard 2010

"Allan told me the coppice was used by a man called Morley Billing in order to make crab-pots. He'd been shown how to make willow crab pots as a child, but nobody of his generation was making them today." G.H.



Sadly, at this time John Billing (son of Morley) passed away. He was the only person left in the village that knew how to make willow crab-pots.

Months later...when the willow was ready to be harvested, Allan and Greg were able to learn this craft, thanks to the skills and generosity of John Hurrell.

"This was very poignant for me as it illustrates the amount of knowledge of these basic skills we are losing as the older generation dies." G.H.



Thanks to Jude and Tony Tomlinson, Greg Humphries was able to work with willow. Having cleared and regenerated their plantation he coppiced enough for making a hurdle, a peg loom (p.43) and a fedge. With the older willow he made charcoal for our local food banquet 'FEAST' (p.17). Detailed instructions for all these outcomes are archived on his website.



making charcoal: "Stacking the burner is a real art. Making sure that larger bits are at the bottom - smaller bits at the top and the minimum of air is in the drum" Greg Humphries.

Following this successful attempt at making charcoal, Greg worked with artist / researcher Daro Montag on his RANE CHAR initiative at the Eden Project. Daro is distributing 1k bags of biochar - ground charcoal to bury (not burn) as a soil conditioner and method for mitigating climate change. Each bag comes with a return slip so that the sites of where RANE CHAR has been buried are mapped.



NEST is in Middle Close, the project field.

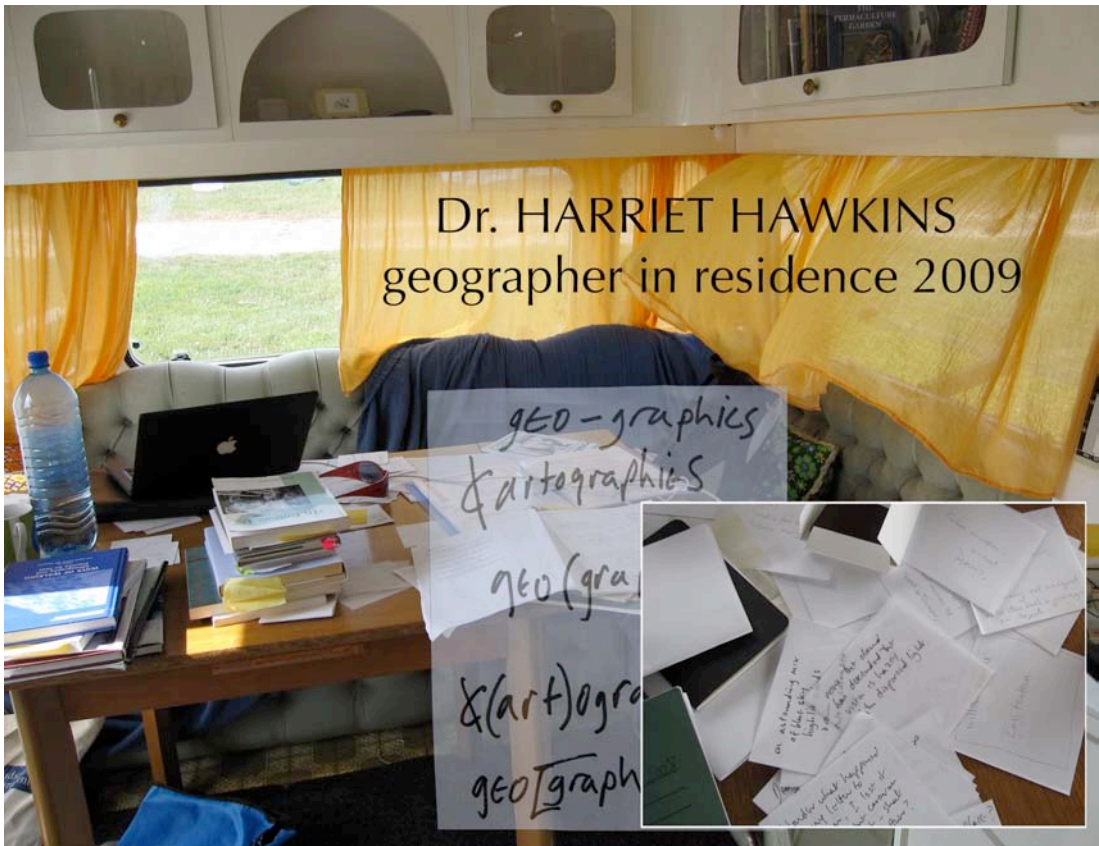


Greg returned in Jan 2011 for a Caravanserai 'do tank' - coppicing willow and building 'nest' with the help of Daro's MA Art & Environment students (UCF).

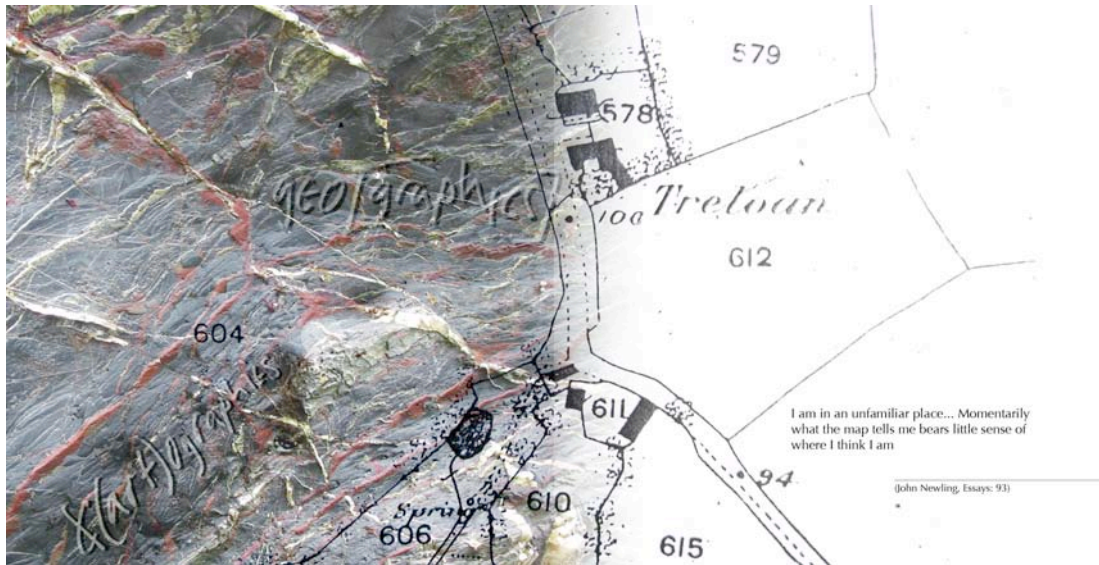
Greg Humphries, artist in residence 2009; Greg's residency was supported by an ESF (European Social Fund) student placement scheme through UCF (University College Falmouth); and won the 'Unlocking Cornish Potential Award for Creative Enterprise Cornwall - Best Postgraduate Placement'.



The guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep.* p.45



Dr Harriet Hawkins was in residence with caravanserai in July 2009 to produce an artist's multiple: the limited edition notebook – *insites* – in collaboration with Annie Lovejoy.



### **Ways of knowing: an artist's multiple**

#### **Introduction:**

The aim with the 'ways of knowing' artist's multiple project is to design and produce a mass reproducible object that is aesthetically pleasing and functional but which also engages conceptually with the conference theme of 'Geographical Knowledge and Society'. The multiple will go into the delegate packs at the Royal Geographical Society Annual General conference. This is a unique and exciting project for a Royal Geographical Society conference. In centrally addressing the theme Geographical Knowledge, and the conference experience. The artist's multiple developed effectively develops a piece of art, which all delegates become a part of. It sits alongside a series of paper sessions and a small exhibition exploring Art and Geographical knowledge.

An artists' multiple is a form of 'public' art and can be a highly relational practice. Its multiple form, designed for mass reproducibility and easy dissemination, brings together artwork, artist and a wide audience often in spaces in which you would not normally find art. The multiple is a way of making art that relies on the pieces reproducibility; they range from artist's books, to small sculptures, postcards and CDs to sugar packets, drinks cartons and garden chairs. Historically such works are easily sellable and collectable at a time when the art object was becoming increasingly rarefied. The challenge for the artist is to develop an aesthetic object which engages conceptual ideas but that can also be easily reproduced. The number of 'multiples' produced can range from runs of 10 or so books to 40,000 sugar packets.

The 'multiple' is being designed and conceived by a team of

- Annie Lovejoy (PhD Student University College Falmouth/ Department of Geography University of Exeter) a practicing artist who has made a number of multiples over her twenty years of practice
- Dr Harriet Hawkins (AHRC Research Fellow, Department of Geography, University of Exeter)

## Aims

Overall the project aims to develop a functional, aesthetically pleasing and conceptually engaged object. In greater depth

- 1) To address the theme of 'geographical knowledge and society' through a creative engagement with the multitude of ways in which we 'know' a place.
- 2) To develop a functional object which provides the delegates with a range of registers of information about the area; from the 'map' of the local area, to mappings of place in a range of modes, through historical details, emotional mappings and critical reflection. The sometimes-sterile space of the conference, oftentimes dropped into a location becomes a space of engagement.

The idea came about from a discussion about what you need at conferences: a notebook and a map of the area. Working from these 'needs' we developed the design and concept of a small format notebook (A6 size) modelled on the small moleskin volumes. The notebook format will: allow participants to keep conference notes (to 'use' the book, if they wish their own form of geographical knowledge), provide them with a range of ways of knowing the conference location, as well as make a series of conceptual points about different ways in which we know 'place'. The aim is that whilst the majority of the pages of these notebooks will be blank, printed through the volume will be a series of 'mappings' of the conference location and some thought-provoking statements, images and ideas developing other ways of knowing place. The maps will range from the practical maps of the area, to historical recordings and emotional chartings and will be interspersed through the book alongside some conceptual development of ideas of geographical knowledge and other ways of knowing.

It will benefit delegates by:

- 1) giving them a piece of art and involving them in an art practice
- 2) providing them with maps and anecdotes of the local area
- 3) examining conceptual ways of knowing place

It will benefit the design team by:

- 1) providing an interesting opportunity for the making of work directly related to an current PhD project on relational art practices.
- 2) Offers the opportunity for critical reflection on the collaborative creative process, and the development of such a process in relation to contemporary geographical engagements with creative geographies.
- 3) Explores the processes of artistic production, consumption and circulation through an 'in practice' project. Commentary and critical reflections on this process will be developed into a paper for the 'Practicing Cultural Geographies' section of the journal Cultural Geographies.



***Insites: a notebook*** is a limited edition (1500) artists' book produced for the Royal Geographical Society & Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference 2009.

Developed during a residency within the *caravanserai* project at Treloan in Cornwall, the notebook attempts to make visible the processes of responsive arts practice, weaving together the meshwork of relations that arise from 'being' in a place. The book is an active object of enquiry, it is both aesthetic and functional - its blank pages offering space for input in recognition of the evolving nature of the practice upon which it reflects.

*Insites*: is a critical reflection on geographical ways of knowing emerging from a collaboration between artist, Annie Lovejoy and geographer, Harriet Hawkins. This open-ended creative engagement is intended as an artists' book but also a notebook, your own inscriptions, if you add any, sit alongside those already within the volume. Through its production of a particular place, Roseland Peninsula, Cornwall, UK, *insites* opens up critical space for the discussion of geographical knowledges. Working through conceptual ideas in site specific, local contexts it aims to explore different ways of knowing place, the collaborative process and the potential value of creative cultural practice in considering geographical ways of knowing.

#### ***Residencies:***

*insites* is embedded within the art project *Caravanserai* (meaning a meeting place of caravans, companies, people) initiated by Annie and fellow artist Mac Dunlop. Central to this process based art practice are a series of 'residencies', occupations of the site that are not so much 'in' or 'about' a place, as 'of' it. The work is formed from immersive spatial practices and responsive processes through which creative activities are facilitated; activities which explore and celebrate the local environment and culture. So the 'art' of *Caravanserai* is in the relations the artists develop with and within locality.

Annie's and Mac's local interventions, along with those of the other resident writers and artists weave the community into larger networks. Compelled to make more linkages they draw attention to what is on the doorstep, bringing together local anecdotes and craft processes and

instigating environmental practices and discourses in an organic interlacing of politics, history and poetics. For Harriet to be 'geographer-in-residence' was to have the opportunity to think amidst these creative occupations of place, to critique the concept of 'residency' in the context of terms such as dwelling, duration, mobility, community and connectivity.

**Field work:**

*insites* begins from engagements with the field site, relaying between these practices of place and critical reflections on geographical knowledges, entangling image and text in a weaving of politics and poetics. Based on sustained engagements with place the challenge of such a 'deep mapping' lies not in the choice between different ways of knowing, but to compose using a range of them, and to think place in terms of width — or relations and connections (and disconnections) — as well as depth. Within *insites* creative engagement and critical reflection coalesce in an aesthetic which is, at once, rich with multiple ways of knowing, but which is equally ghosted with silences. For within vocabularies of place and the rites and ceremonies which fold self into landscape are the as yet unknown and the unknowable

**Creative engagements:**

*insites* poses questions of researching and representing place, space and site visually. If the volume develops a 'deep mapping' it does so through deep design: responsive creative cultural practice informed by experiential understanding of place. Photographs, drawings and maps bleed together, texts form pathways through pages, meandering across the images, trailing off before building again. Such open-ended and at times uncomfortable inter-textualities allow for a blending of knowledges and experiences as different registers of information blur but also strike and jar: there is great critical value and reflective potential in these jarrings. Such an aesthetic also makes room alongside accumulative entanglements for tacit knowledges, for those neglected, discredited or just more quietly spoken ways of knowing as well as for all the things, places and people we can not know or did not engage. The collaborative process which had began with reflections on what was shared, became an exercise in exploring the value of alterity, seeking not to sweep away the differences and challenges of such comings together but rather to find the courage to delight in new relationships, new possibilities and new political spaces.

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The research for and production of *insites* was supported by:

Arts and Humanities Research Council,  
Cultural Historical Geography Research Group,  
School of Geography, University of Exeter,  
Social- Cultural Geography Research Group, RGS- IBG,  
RANE, University Collage Falmouth

A pdf version is available from the following websites:

<http://fieldsite.wordpress.com/publications/>  
<http://www.annielovejoy.net/cgi-bin/projects.pl>



### Report on 'insites: an artists book'

**Insites** is a critical reflection on geographical ways of knowing emerging from a collaboration between myself and artist, Annie Lovejoy. Lovejoy is a visual artist with over 30 years experience in developing community projects and artists multiples, including artists' books. She is currently doing a PhD jointly supervised by School of Geography, University of Exeter in Cornwall and University Collage Falmouth

Our discussion came together around our shared experience of a piece of community artwork: *Caravanserai* that Lovejoy was coordinating on the Roseland Peninsula in Cornwall. As a geographer I was interested in what sort of ideas of 'local' and community that were being activated by the work and Lovejoy was interested in critiquing existing narratives of community and site specific based art practices which often have a very ephemeral engagement with place. At the same time as these discussions were carried out the 'Art and Geographical Knowledge' conference sessions for the Royal Geographical Society Annual conference were developing. Annie was giving a paper in these sessions on her work. During discussions about the conference and its theme, Geography Knowledge and Society, we reflected on our own different forms of geographical knowledge. We decided as a result of these reflections to produce the artists book *insites* that would form:

- 1) A critical comment on 'ways of knowing' place.
- 2) A practical exercise in the use of creative cultural practices- in this case art practice for reflecting on geographical knowledges.
- 3) A reflection on interdisciplinary collaborations.

We printed 1500 copies of the book. They have so far been distributed to following audiences within and beyond academia:

- 1100 were handed out to delegates at the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference in Manchester
- 25 copies have gone to be a part of the Geography PGCE courses at University of Newcastle and Northumbria
- 25 copies have been given teachers of drama and geography in local secondary schools
- 30 copies have been handed out to community and environmentally based artist practitioners associated with the BOS Arts network ( Cornwall)
- 100 copies will go to delegates of the 'Creativity and Place' conference to be held at School of Geography, University of Exeter June 2010.
- The remainder are being distributed amongst the community who are involved in *Caravanserai*.

**Excerpts from a journal article by Harriet Hawkins** referencing our collaboration and the 'caravanserai' project (alongside other geography/arts related practices) to consider 'the potential of the geographical study of art works to contribute to contemporary disciplinary debates' (Hawkins, 2011: 464)

**Hawkins, H. 2011. Dialogues and Doings: Sketching the Relationships Between Geography and Art** in *Geography Compass*, Vol. 5, No. 7, p. 464-478.

*Participation: Art and 'Politics in Action'*

In the final of my three themes I want to examine the potential of art as a form of participatory, 'politics in action' (Toscano 2009). *Caravanserai* (2008), an artists' residency project coordinated by Annie Lovejoy, could nominally be described as a piece of 'public art' but yet it develops a rather different idea of public art to that of monuments and statues. *Caravanserai*, based on Treloan campsite on the Roseland Peninsula in Cornwall UK, developed from Lovejoy's semi-permanent residency on the site, with other artists, writers and myself as a geographer, joining her for periods of time ranging from a week to a month. 'Drawing attention to what is on the doorstep' (the project logo) *Caravanserai* was based around a series of activities aimed at forging relations with and within the community. The project involved camp-site improvements including establishing a permanent allotment garden and organising a series of 'community' events; boat-building, knitting workshops, wild-herb walks, local history and story-telling evenings, and the Treloan Summer Festival. Lovejoy describes her work as not so much 'in' or 'about' a place as 'of it'. One of the outcomes of my own collaboration with Lovejoy was the artists' book *insites* that investigated the relationships between the project and place. The book collaged image and text to explore the broader project's relations with and within locality, weaving together 'local anecdotes and craft processes, instigating environmental practices and discourses in an organic interlacing of politics, history and poetics' (Hawkins and Lovejoy 2009).

Lovejoy's work is part of an expanded field of arts practice variously termed 'participatory', 'community' or 'dialogic' art and sometimes 'relational aesthetics', in short, works that take seriously the audience as the site for the making of the work and its meanings (Hall 2007; Lacy 1995).

#### GEOGRAPHY AND PUBLIC ART

This 'expanded field' of practices, including works like Lovejoy's, centralises practices of collaboration, interaction and the works' engagement with context. Often working at sites beyond the art gallery these artists privilege the creation of social spaces and the engendering of social relations, often at the expense of the making of material objects (like the paintings discussed earlier). Engagement is vital to these practices, 'good' examples of these works emerge through 'dialogic' moments between artist, site, and community, the more involved and engaged the 'audience' is and the more the work responds to the site the better. Indeed for Hall (2007) the primary focus of these works is the audience as the site of meaning-making.

#### COLLABORATION AND PRACTICE

Finally, different forms of research practice and of collaboration have woven throughout the paper, with geographers becoming practitioners, working as curators, and collaborating with artists. Such collaborations offer a mode of practice-led research opening up the dialogues between geographers and artists in new and challenging ways. Collaboration is often not an easy process, in part because it brings to the fore the need for a deal of self-reflexivity about ones' skill set and disciplinary positionality; what one brings to the table (Foster and Lorimer 2007; Hawkins and Lovejoy 2009; Parr 2007). An oft-quoted interdisciplinary adage is that

'good interdisciplinarity requires strong disciplinarity' (Buller 2009). This is not a disciplinary imperialism, a policing of boundaries, but rather suggests that disciplinarity can be a requisite for these moments of mutual respect and creative learning, where what emerges is greater, ideally, than the sum of its parts. It is maybe only when we know from where we speak and practice, that it becomes possible to develop effective dialogues.

This paper has understood geography and art as what Rogoff (2000) terms 'interlocturs', active critical entities, lively things rather than mute objects of study, fixed 'disciplinary structures or objects'. These geographies of art take seriously art as constitutive rather than reflective of meaning and experience, productive rather than representative of culture, and think through the challenges that it offers in the move away from essentialist subject positions. In other words art works can offer us a rich means to destabilize Cartesian subjectivity, with its separable subjects and objects, in favour of a more intersubjective, relational way of understanding art work and world. Understood in this way the study of art works offers much potential for thinking and doing geography differently 'at another register or through the permissions provided by another angle' (Rogoff 2000, 78).

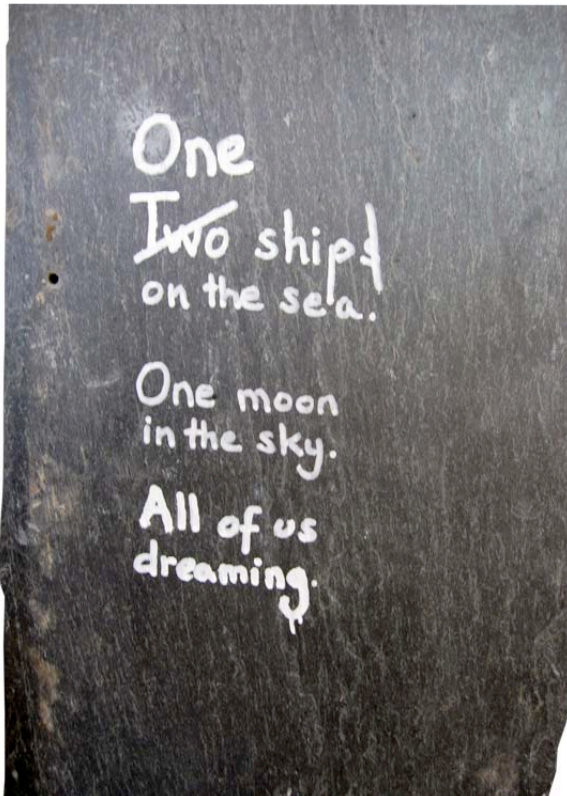


ALYSON HALLETT - writer in residence August 2009

Alyson Hallett (<http://www.thestonelibrary.com>) was invited to respond creatively as a poet and writer, to being at Treloan. She made poetry interventions each day - poetry books, writings and logbooks were placed in the showers, toilets and washing up area. As well as leading writing workshops she placed concrete poems around the campsite written on slate and acetate inspiring visitors to make their own. One family adorned the fireside with painted text on stones – soliloquy on serpentine, syllables on slate, grammar on granite. She also invited other local poets to perform at our weekly fireside - Falmouth based writers Penelope Shuttle and Caroline Carver. Extending into the local village Alyson and fellow poet Mac Dunlop read poems to the residents of Eshcol House nursing home, and poetry became the centre point of a gallery window in an installation by local artist Chris Insoll. The new Harbour Gallery in Portscatho generously exhibited a poetic piece by Alyson “*how blue the sky, how fast the river, how brief the rose, how sweet the day*”

*Sunday Night: 10:45. 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2009*

*This, then, is the first quiet. A man coughs. Faint strains of music, indiscernible. Tent zips zipping and unzipping. The people are preparing to dream. The dreams are preparing to unlace their wings and inhabit the still human bodies. Tikkidew. Butterfly. Each dream flutters into the life of the dreamer and gives it colour. And out in the bay two ships are harboured. They are impossibly big. Planets that float and bloat the surrounding sea with light. They wait for cargo. They wait for the emptiness to be filled and the engines started. I cannot reach these ships, but from the moment I arrived and saw them I felt connected. My days will orbit these empty vessels. They are my fixed stars.*



### **Ghost Ship**

There's a ghost ship in the bay  
cargo of souls, skeleton crew  
blue fading to mist-drizzle grey.

Cargo of souls, skeleton crew  
The steel giant turns with the tide  
old horizons slowly renewed.

The steel giant turns with the tide  
like a clock, like a compass  
marooned at sea, no place to hide.

Like a clock, like a compass  
anchored in endless circles  
things come, things go, but rarely pass

away. Anchored in endless circles  
star of night, blaze of day  
dusky seas all shades of purple.

Star of night, blaze of day  
haunting seals and haunting waves –  
there's a ghost ship in the bay.



images by Annie Lovejoy 2004

### **Proposal to The Churches Conservation Trust July 2009**

As part of the Caravanserai project (please see the accompanying overview of the project), poet-in-residence Alyson Hallett proposes spending part of one day in St. Anthony's church on August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009.

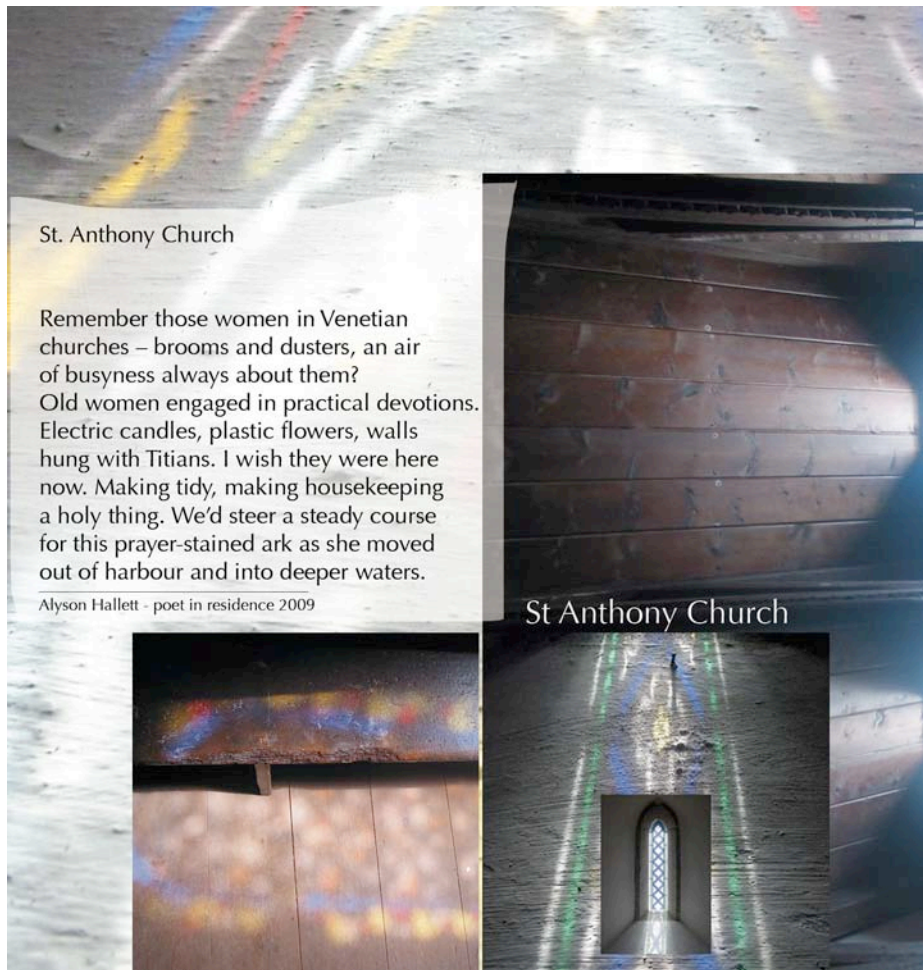
Having already found the church to be an inspiring place, Alyson would like to spend several hours in the church and to write poems in response to the environment of the building and its surroundings. Her time there will be largely unstructured and will focus upon meditation, writing and seeing what arises from being in such a beautiful space. Alyson would like to be able to light candles whilst she is there, and seeks permission from the Churches Conservation Trust to do this.

We should emphasise that the quietness of the space will be respected and due care will be taken to extinguish the candles upon her departure. Anything written during her time at St. Anthony's will subsequently form a part of the Caravanserai project and forthcoming publication. We will be happy to give copies of her poems to the Churches Conservation Trust.

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Alyson Hallett (<http://www.thestonelibrary.com>) lives in Hartland, Devon she has published short stories with Virago and Serpent's Tail and her book, *The Heart's Elliptical Orbit* (Solidus Press) was published in 2003. She has also written scripts for Sky Television and drama for Radio 4. Current projects include translating the poems of Jorge Esquinca from Spanish into English with Mercedes Nunez and studying for a practice-based PhD in poetry at St. Mary's College, London. In 2008 Alyson took the third stone from her project, 'the migration habits of stones', to Koonawarra in Australia. This project will be featured on BBC Radio 4 on October 13th 2009.

Whilst in residence at Treloan Alyson plans to give poetry readings for residents of Eshcol House Nursing Home, write and reflect in St Anthony Church, create spaces for poetry on the campsite, lead a writing workshop and be available for anyone wishing to discuss their work or ideas.



### St. Anthony Church

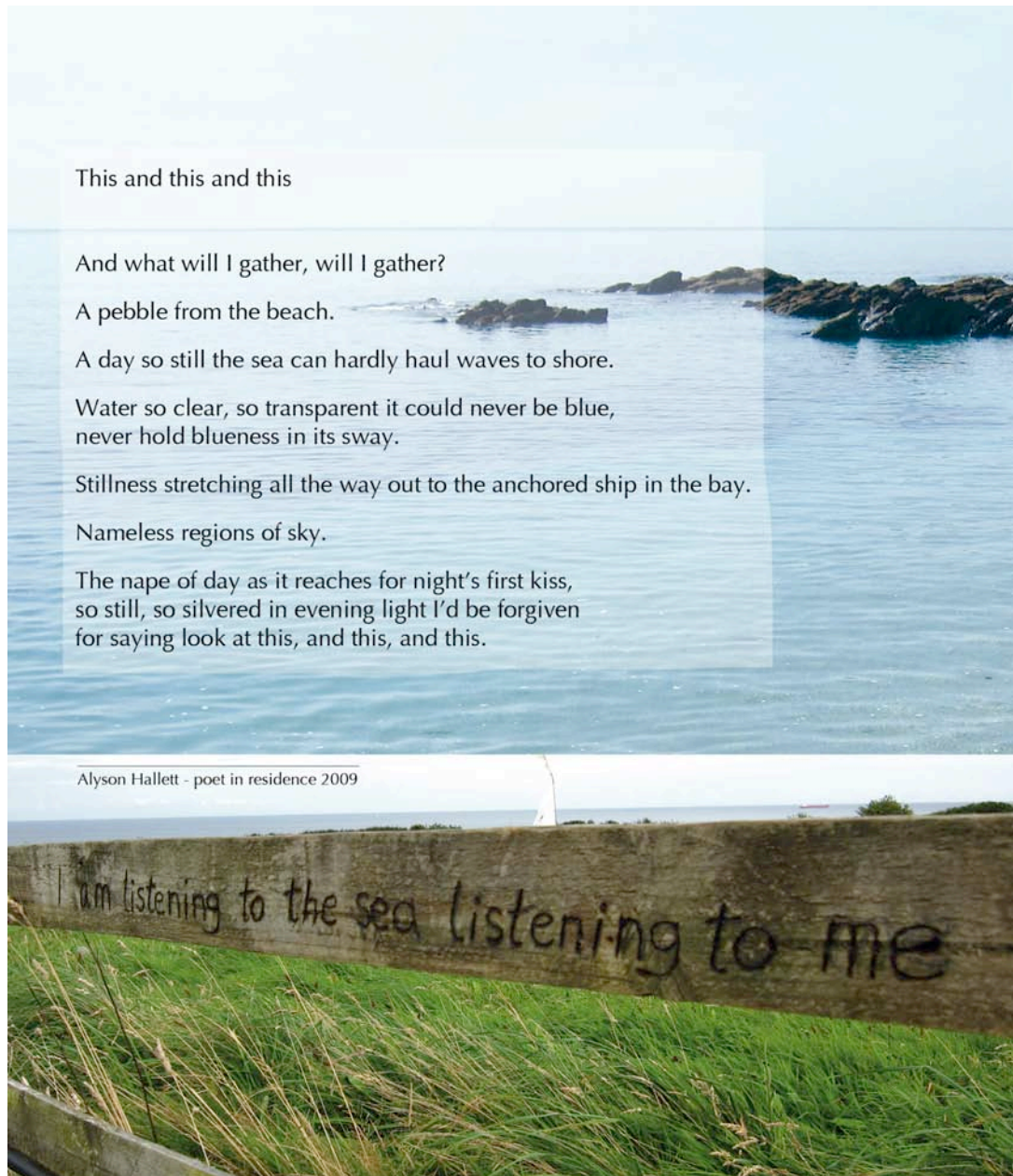
Remember those women in Venetian churches – brooms and dusters, an air of busyness always about them? Old women engaged in practical devotions. Electric candles, plastic flowers, walls hung with Titians. I wish they were here now. Making tidy, making housekeeping a holy thing. We'd steer a steady course for this prayer-stained ark as she moved out of harbour and into deeper waters.

Alyson Hallett - poet in residence 2009

### St Anthony Church

The guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.46

*July 2009. The response has been stunning. The toilet logbooks filled up with poems and pictures, people who have never written before have begun to write and there has been an increasing wave of appreciation for poetry and the ways in which Caravanserai embeds artistic practice in daily life. As a poet, I have been trusted to get on with my work and to share it in a variety of ways including workshops, open discussion sessions and the siting of poetic texts, one of which was sprayed onto a concrete floor, whilst another was burned with a pyrographic pen into a fence post. The result of this is twofold: as a poet my work has been quickly integrated into the fabric of place: also, the sited work looks as if it has always been there, as if it was meant to be there. This is the joy of Caravanserai. It invites anyone and everyone to creatively connect with the ongoing, ever-changing nature of landscape.*



Alyson Hallett - poet in residence 2009

The guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.56

#### Associated projects:

In 2010, Alyson completed a practice-based PhD in poetry; her research focused upon geographical intimacy and an exploration of interfusion in poetry. Her doctoral portfolio included poetry arising from her *caravanserai* residency.

During the development of the *caravanserai* project residencies Alyson's poetry was introduced to my supervisor Professor Catherine Leyshon. Having met, they worked on an application to the Leverhulme Trust that was successful, awarding funds for Alyson to be 'poet-in-residence' in the University of Exeter's department of geography in Cornwall for a year (2010-11).





KEN BARRETT  
artist in residence  
May 2010

Ken Barrett produced 'i-spy' panels based on local wildlife and maritime practices as well as a series of portraits of local people. The 'i-spy' panels involved visitor participation and he also ran a portrait workshop for children exhibited in the wash-up areas. Developing his George Formby tribute show he performed songs for us on his ukelele at our wednesday evening summer fireside sessions. (<http://www.kenbarrettstudio.co.uk>)

**Guerilla Nostalgia** (Treloan 2010) is an ongoing project that involves inserting high-grade nostalgic material into public places.

*Recent projects have mixed memory and nostalgia and the Treloan work is a kind of 'guerrilla' nostalgia piece, descending on a public place and filling it with high grade nostalgic material (at least for people aged 50 and above, whose Mum and Dad bought them I-Spy books).*

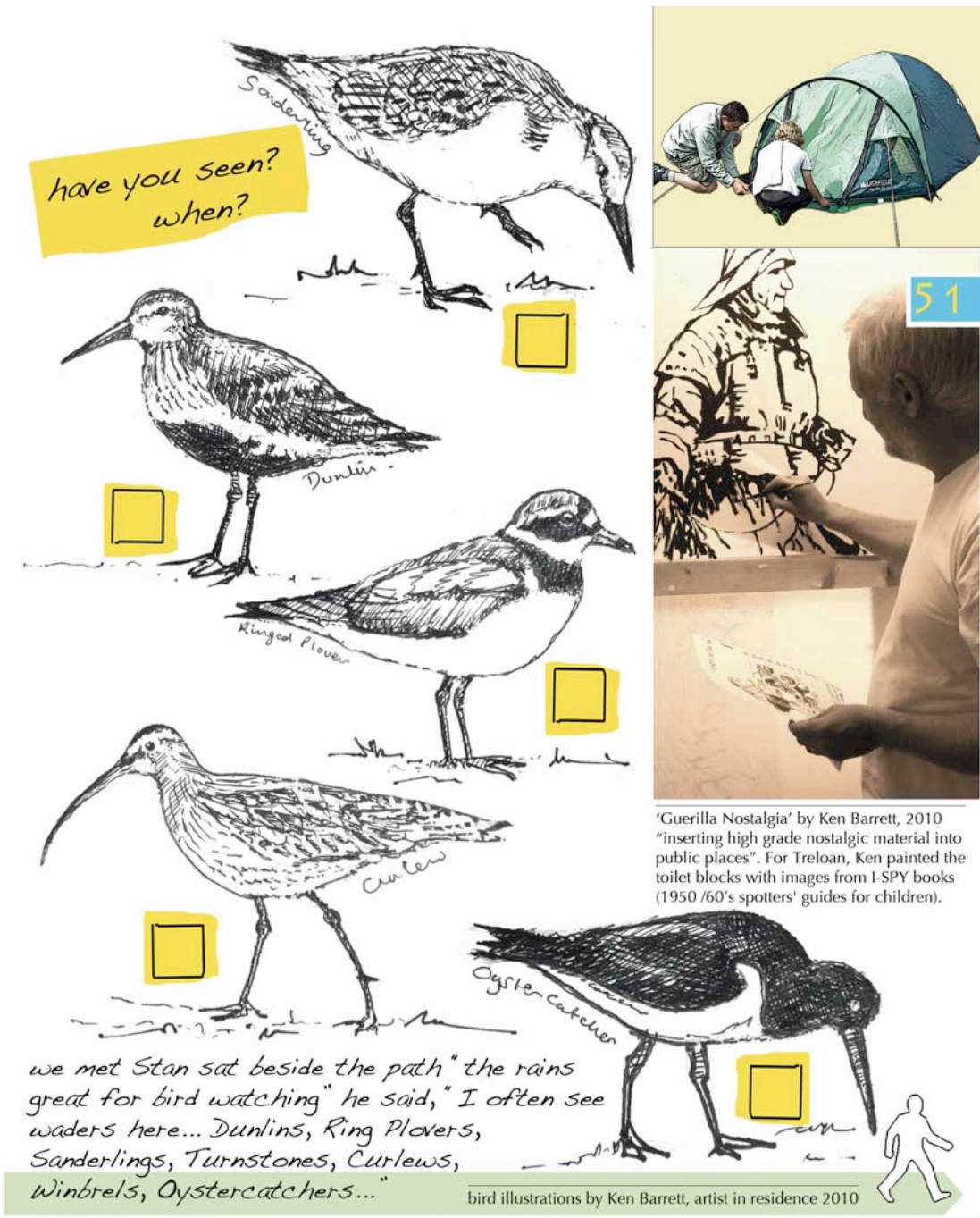


Guerilla Nostalgia – Treloan shower block



portrait installed in the wash-up area at Treloan, of the two Chris's – local village residents

*I like doing rapidly executed and at times large portraits, the sort of thing that might have been on an advertising hoarding in the 1950s, and incorporating text. That kind of illustrative work, the sort of thing I have started at Treloan, demands a lighter touch and is more fun. I like the idea of documenting local characters and events on old bits of ply. When you get fed up of it why not use it to mend the shed or light the fire*



The guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.51

ROBIN HARFORD - forager in residence  
August 2010 & August 2011



Robin joined us to lead foraging walks in preparation for our annual FEAST in 2010 and 2011. FEAST focuses on the *local* inviting people to a celebratory 'bring and share' banquet

*The idea is to support local food retailers and producers - so please prepare your dish from ingredients sourced as close to here as possible. It's fine to include stuff you've brought with you e.g. cooking oil etc, but for the main ingredients the focus is **local**, what's available near by... whether it's from the village shop, a farm shop, a local market, an honesty stall or a foraging trip*

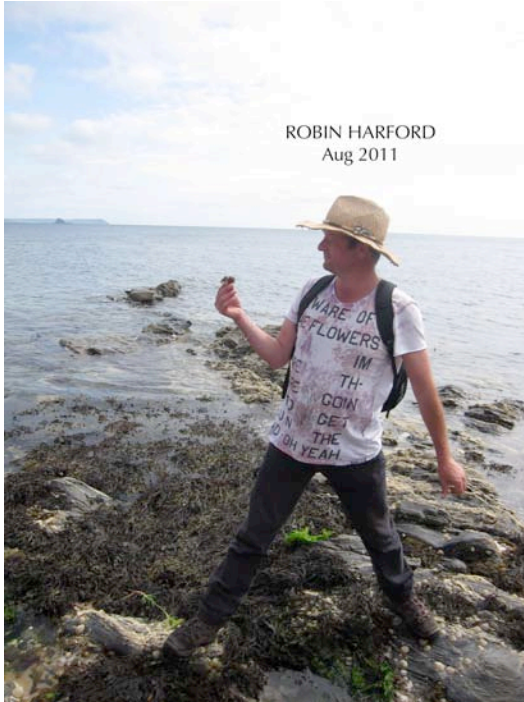
Robin Harford's mix of astute politics and how to eat/learn from the plants that grow around us is a treat for any explorer come rain or shine. Having come across his website when looking for a potential 'forager-in-residence' I was drawn by his interest in exchange of information and his decision to work on a donations basis – people paying what they could afford.

Robin is a daily forager. He teaches foraging at Eden Project, works with Michelin star chefs, consults for TV production companies, and has been featured in the Guardian, GQ, BBC Good Food Magazine to name a few...

<http://www.eatweeds.co.uk>

<http://www.foragingcourses.com/>





ROBIN HARFORD  
Aug 2011

## Wild Food Walk

2hr sessions led by expert forager Robin Harford  
Mon Aug 8th, Tues Aug 9th, Weds Aug 10th  
10am - 12pm

'Arthur's Field' Treloan Coastal Holidays, Gerrans  
meet at reception - first come first served,  
payment by donation (£10 suggested)

'take what you need and give what you can' Robin

see page 43-77  
of our guidebook  
discussing what's on  
our doorstep - filled  
with useful facts, info, and  
recipes contributed by  
volunteers from  
villages and  
counties.

**\*Robin's  
foraging tips!**

Robin harvests wild edible plants  
on a daily basis for his family,  
as well as supplying local  
restaurants. He teaches at  
Eden Project, and has been  
featured in BBC2's *Edenland*  
Farms, the BBC's *Good Food*  
magazine, *The Guardian*  
and *CGQ*, to name a few...

- Only eat wild plants whose identification you are 100% certain of. If in doubt, leave it out.
- To avoid confusion with the identification of plants use the botanical (Latin) name.
- Make sure you gather from unpolluted areas away from roads, field outflows, sprayed fields, and any land that looks unhealthy, i.e. the plants are stunted & lack vibrancy.
- Ask landowner's permission to forage on their land. This helps build community and good neighbourliness.
- Never gather more than a third of any plant community. Leave something for others, human and non human.
- It is illegal to dig up roots without landowner's permission or to gather from land and then sell for profit.
- Eat something wild everyday, only take what you need. Trust life, and yourself! *supper!*

### 'ODE TO NETTLES" *Urtica dioica* (Common Nettle).

NETTLE CONTAINS 3 TIMES MORE IRON THAN SPINACH,  
7 TIMES MORE VITAMIN C THAN ORANGES,  
35% PROTEIN ON DRY WEIGHT.  
THEY LOWER BLOOD SUGAR AND BLOOD PRESSURE...

STINGING NETTLES HAVE BEEN WITH US SINCE PALAEOLITHIC  
TIMES, AND AS A FOOD THEY WERE PART OF OUR DIET  
RIGHT UP UNTIL THE 1700S. THEY FELL OUT OF FAVOUR  
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY (DUE TO FOOD  
SNOBBERY) WHEN THEY BECAME AN ALTERNATIVE FOOD  
SOURCE FOR WORKHOUSE INMATES.

NETTLES ARE A VERY SUSTAINING  
FOOD, AND IF EATEN IN PORRIDGE  
AS WAS DONE IN LANCASHIRE  
IN THE 1870'S THEY WILL HAVE  
YOU PURRING THROUGH YOUR  
DAY, AND GIVE YOU HUGE  
AMOUNTS OF ENERGY.

NETTLES ARE A FANTASTIC  
SUPER FOOD, SO THROW OUT  
YOUR IMPORTED, CARBON  
EMITTING, UNSUSTAINABLE  
WHEAT GRASS AND GREEN BARLEY  
POWDERS AND GET TUCKING INTO  
NETTLES. THEY'RE FREE AFTER ALL!

Robin Harford, forager in residence 2010

The guidebook: *discovering what's on our doorstep*. p.39

**Black Mustard Leaf Sushi** is best served as fresh as possible. Refrigeration spoils the texture. Many other fillings can be tried such as grated radish, carrot, smoked salmon, fine slices of red pepper etc. Black mustard leaf is a brilliant substitute for wasabi with several thousand less food miles! Any left-over leaf can be added to a vinaigrette for spice and colour.



Ingredients - for each sheet of nori: • 125g sushi rice • 175g water • 1 tbsp sushi rice seasoning (Clearspring) • 30g black mustard leaf • Dribble of oil • Small piece cucumber, cut into thin matchsticks. You will also need a *sushi mat* for shaping & soy sauce (optional).



- \* Place rice in a bowl, pour over plenty of cold water and stir until water goes milky, then seive. Repeat 4 times.
- \* Place the rice in pan, add water and leave for 30 minutes.
- \* Bring to boil and simmer for 10 mins. Take off heat & leave with lid on for a further 10 mins.
- \* Tip rice into large shallow dish, pour over sushi seasoning and fold in liquid without squashing the grains. You are aiming for a glossy texture with separate grains. Cover with tea towel until cooled.

- \* Finely chop mustard leaves into a bowl & add a dribble of oil.
- \* Lay a sheet of nori shiny side down on a sushi mat. Spread rice leaving a 1cm margin at top and bottom edges. Sprinkle a line of mustard mix across middle (left to right) & add cucumber matchsticks on either side.



Black Mustard (*Brassica nigra*)

- \* Fold bottom edge of the nori over rice & using the mat roll the nori towards the far end.
- \* Dampen top edge with water & stick the two layers of nori together. Wrap the mat firmly around the roll so it will keep its shape when cut.
- \* Hold roll with one hand and pull far edge of the mat gently away from you.
- \* Using a wet sharp knife cut into 8 even-sized rolls. Place cut side up on a plate and enjoy!

**\*Robin's foraging tips!**

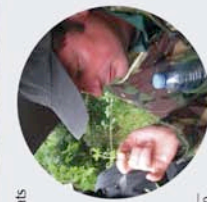


Town beach



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- Only eat wild plants whose identification you are 110% certain of. If in doubt, leave it out.
- To avoid confusion with the identification of plants use the botanical (Latin) name.
- Make sure you gather from unpolluted areas away from roads, field outflows, sprayed fields, and any land that looks unhealthy. ie, the plants are stunted & lack vibrancy.
- Ask landowner's permission to forage on their land. This helps build community and good neighbourliness.
- Never gather more than a third of any plant community. Leave something for others, human and non human.
- It is illegal to dig up roots without landowner's permission or to gather from land and then sell for profit.
- Eat something wild everyday, only take what you need. Trust life, and life will support you.



Robin harvests wild edible plants on a daily basis for his family, as well as supplying local restaurants. He teaches at Eden Project, and has been featured in BBC2's *Edvardian Farm*, the BBC Good Food magazine, *The Guardian* and *GQ*, to name a few...

Robin Harford, forager in residence 2010

An excerpt from Robin's essay for the Idler that references *caravanserai*:

**Harford, R. 2011. Wild Food Wild Flow: how I gave up business and got my fingernails dirty instead** in *The Idler. No 44 Mind Your Business, a collection of essays on the art of living* edited by Tom Hodgkinson.

I am on a track, walking slowly. My body relaxes down, as I slip into sensing the landscape. It is a simple process, and one that is the corner stone for experiencing Wild Flow.

To sense the land yourself, stop for a moment and stand up. Gently bring your awareness to your heart region. Start feeling it, sensing it, allowing your breath to slow down. As you do so, relax the focus of your eyes and hold your hands out in front of you. Now slowly move them horizontally out to the side. Keep watching your fingertips as far back as you can while still looking straight ahead. If you have done this correctly, you will most likely be looking 180 degrees around you. Normally our focus is very narrow. This process expands it outwards. Maintain your awareness and start sensing, with your body, what is happening behind you. Slow down and breathe. Now start walking, observe your breath, what you 'feel', listen to all the sounds, smell the wind. Your monkey mind may become calm, or resist by screeching and turning up the volume. It depends on how much you give into the process of letting go.

It takes a fair amount of focus to do this practice effectively, but over time, due to the openness of observing the world, you may start to notice subtleties often missed when you looked from a narrow head-centric perspective. Life starts shining. Events may cross your trail, subtle opportunities that take you into hitherto unknown experiences, if paid attention to and followed.

On occasions these flow-states can defy logic. Let me give you an example...

Recently I had an idea that I would like to offer wild food courses at campsites. I wanted to lead late afternoon forages, and on returning home everyone would get together and cook a community feast around a fire. It was partly a way to give campers something to do, but more importantly, a great way to engage folk with the landscape and spread the plant knowledge to as many people as possible.

And then one morning my partner mentioned that she would like to stay in a modern Roma caravan. I put both ideas on back burner, not being able to see clearly a way to actualize them.

That very same afternoon I received a phone call from an organization in Cornwall that was running a sustainable, food and art event during August 2010 at Treloan campsite on the Roseland Peninsula (<http://www.caravanserai.info>). They wanted a forager to teach wild food to the campers, and asked if I would be interested in coming along. They mentioned that they could not pay me, but could accommodate me and my partner for three nights in a modern Roma caravan, in exchange for a couple of two hour wild food sessions, followed by a community cook up over an open fire.

Welcome to Wild Flow! Where payment comes in many more ways than cold hard cash. This is just one small example of Wild Flow, there are many more that happen. So why do these kinds of 'opportunities' show up in my life?

I see it as a direct result of shifting my focus about money away from tunnel-vision, wanting only a fixed price, and instead moving into Wild Flow. Foraging has taught me to trust the abundance of the land and of life. It's a metaphor for living, and this is what the plants have to teach us. That through mindfulness we can experience, maybe only momentarily, the joy, beauty and bounty that is right here, right now, all around us at all times.



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