

**Pedagogies of ‘Good Design’ and Handling
in Relation to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell
Collection**

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ABSTRACT

The present thesis investigates educational aspects of material culture, examining the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a case study for the teaching of ‘good design’ in post-war Britain from 1951 to 1977. The methodological approaches used are drawn from the disciplines of design history, material culture studies, educational theory, museology and sociology.

The main objectives of the thesis aim to examine ‘good design’ as an educational project, to establish the socio-cultural contexts that produced the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, to relate these contexts to the premise of ‘good design’, and to assess the Collection’s educational affordances, both historical and contemporary. In order to illuminate how the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection represented the didacticism of ‘good design’, the investigation locates the historical and educational roots of ‘good design’ in relation to specific time-frames and practices, especially with regards to initiatives driven by government. The thesis examines good design’s alignment to the terms ‘modern’/‘modernism’/ ‘modernity’ as these have been used within design history, and it demonstrates how signifieds pertaining to ‘good design’ change over time.

I have used Bourdieu’s theory of taste-formation to investigate the extent to which the formation of taste, as identified in the project of ‘good design’, had been implemented with regards to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection in order to influence social positioning and consumer choices. However, the thesis argues that the modalities of language and vision, which Bourdieusian analysis relies on, need to be extended. I have therefore considered the contribution of ‘handling’ and I have argued its importance as an educational method. The thesis shows that as education in Britain evolved from didactic models to learner-centred, co-constructive ones, the Collection’s educational pertinence shifted from the aesthetic exemplar to the handling resource.

The investigation demonstrates the significance of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a resource in itself and as paradigmatic of object-based-learning. In addition, the thesis presents a methodological example of how a poorly-documented collection may be examined, thus adding new approaches to the repository of design historical research.

ABBREVIATIONS

C.O.I.D. - Council of Industrial Design

G.L.C. - Greater London Council

I.L.E.A. - Inner London Education Authority

L.C.C. - London County Council

M.A.- Master of Arts

MOMA – Museum of Modern Art, New York

S.E.N. – Special Educational Needs

The Collection – The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

U.C.L. – University College London

U.A.L. - University of the Arts London

U.K. – United Kingdom

U.S.A. –United States of America

V&A - Victoria and Albert Museum

WWII - World War II

INTRODUCTION

The Context of the Research

The title of this thesis is ‘Pedagogies of Good Design and Handling in Relation to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection’.

In this title ‘I.L.E.A.’ stands for the Inner London Education Authority, the local education authority of the Greater London Council; I.L.E.A. was founded in April of 1965 and was disbanded in 1990. The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection (henceforth ‘the Collection’) is a body of objects, comprising, on estimate, about 10,000 individual items which had been in the administration of I.L.E.A. until its abolition. In 1990 the objects were relocated to Camberwell College of Arts where they remained during the time of conducting the research and writing the present thesis (2011-2015). Therefore in the Collection’s title, ‘I.L.E.A.’ and ‘Camberwell’, denote the two most significant institutions in the history of this group of objects. Two more governing bodies, the London County Council (henceforth L.C.C.) and the Council of Industrial Design (henceforth C.O.I.D.), were involved in the instigation of the Collection in 1951. C.O.I.D. ceased its involvement in 1956 and the L.C.C. was replaced by the Greater London Council (henceforth G.L.C.), in 1963.

Within the University of the Arts London, research has already been done which illuminated the histories of the University’s own collections (Pavitt, 1996, 1997; Backemeyer, 1999, 2000; Mahurter, 2007). However, no extensive analysis has been attempted regarding the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection’s educational role, either in the historical context or in the context of its future potential as an archive and a resource. My research aims to fill the gap and to present an example of how other possible lacunae on the government / design/ education nexus might be tackled through an examination of a collection of design and craft objects.

My research developed from the investigation of how the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection imparted the principles of good design, in relation to the historical context of good design’s use in education. ‘Good design’ had been a phrase used in the inter-war period to denote the aesthetic imperatives industrial production should follow (see for example the *Report for the*

Committee on the Production and Exhibition of Articles of Good Design and Everyday Use, also known as the ‘Gorell Report’ - Board of Trade, 1932).

The context of good design changed over time, following variations in the Collection’s circumstances, so the research identifies distinct phases in the history of the Collection, from its inception in 1951 and first displays in 1952, when it was known as the *Experiment in Design Appreciation*, to its present function as an educational resource housed at Camberwell College of Arts as part of the University of the Arts London (henceforth U.A.L.). The distinction and definition of phases led to the understanding of differentiations in the embodiment of the principles of good design and the understanding of the variances in the Collection’s significance as an educational resource across time.

In parallel to investigating aspects of good design, the research question tests the broader issue of what has been the educational value of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection in its historical context, and what is its educational value in the contemporary and future contexts. The disciplinary focus of the research is identified in design history, which I approach as an open academic field, sharing common ground with other fields within the humanities. Particular affinities are traced with the following disciplines: art history and art criticism; social history; theory of education; sociology; material culture studies; museology (museum studies) and cultural studies.

In this thesis, I refer to the Collection by its current title, and often by the word ‘Collection’ with a capital ‘C’, in order to distinguish it from other collections, except when referred to in a historical context; then I use the title that was appropriate for that time. Despite its current name, the origins of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection concern neither the Inner London Education Authority, which as a body of governance did not come into being until 1965¹, nor Camberwell College of Arts, where the Collection arrived in 1990. For the purposes of uniformity, the thesis uses the title adopted by the U.A.L., i.e. ‘I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection’, keeping in mind that this title is a convention and an historical anachronism. Even the word ‘Collection’ is an anachronism. It can hardly be applied to the *Design Education Experiment* of 1952 as an indicator of anyone’s commitment to retaining that body

¹ The London County Council was abolished in 1963 and responsibility for education was transferred to the Greater London Council, which then established the Inner London Education Authority.

of objects in the form of a collection, by which I mean there is no documentation suggesting the necessity of the objects existing as a whole beyond their educational use. That commitment would only become official after the objects had passed to the London County Council's sole responsibility in 1956. There is also need to acknowledge that the word 'collection' itself is used in a broad sense by myself in this text; this body of material culture has historically occupied diverse cultural spaces, including that of the educational aid and the archive; it is one of the aims of this thesis to disambiguate and define these distinct incarnations.

The overarching methodological concern has been the development of a critical framework that would be flexible, to allow for the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection to be examined as a field of pedagogical and design discourse over a total period of more than 60 years, accommodating the changing nature of the Collection itself and of the socio-cultural conditions that have sufficiently impacted on it. Therefore, I have been keen to ground the research in history, as this rooting enabled me to treat its development over time as an essential research component, which helped me locate, contain and describe changes in the Collection and its contexts.

Interactions with, and divergences from, design history's adjacent disciplines are discussed in detail, while attention is drawn to design history's connections with art history, testing the validity of art history as design history's 'parent discipline' (Woodham, 1995, p.23). Design history's links to art history are of relevance to the present research because they address the question of how established methodologies implemented by art history, and specifically methodologies analysing manufactured and craft objects, may be challenged via emerging methodologies implemented by design history; this is a discussion I develop in Chapter 1. My approach argues that the application of art history's dominant methodologies, prove limited and limiting in design historical projects such as the one I have undertaken. Closer scrutiny renders explicit a number of disciplinary fissures, which appear even more pronounced in the study of the two decades that mainly concern my research, the 1950s and 1960s.

Disciplinary divergences emerged particularly in relation to the term 'modern', used as an adjective to the nouns 'art' and 'design'. Despite their common ideological origins, which sought new ways to critique the human condition and produce works in response to human needs, during the 1950s, 'modern art' and 'modern design' corresponded to a different set of

signifieds. Modernism in design followed a pattern of dissemination, particularly through architecture, while modernism in fine art largely remained within the enclave of the ‘consecrated’ space of gallery and museum (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 289). Though there have been factions of art, Pop Art in particular, which sought to bridge the art/design gap, other expressions in the visual arts, especially in their more abstract manifestations, progressed towards insularity and solipsism (Greenberg, 1989). In the post-war period, modern art largely remained the reserve of those in possession of the highest cultural and monetary capital. In contrast, ‘modern’ in design, as a social project, was practised in England through the proliferation of social housing and state school-building, and thus modern design infiltrated the lives of the most disenfranchised strata of society, those lacking in cultural and monetary capital (Maclure, 1984). This development is of particular relevance to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as it was administered by the L.C.C. and later, the G.L.C. - these governing bodies were both instrumental, not only in the management of the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* (later the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection) but in the dissemination of modern design especially through public building (Jackson, 1965).

Acknowledgement of modern art’s and modern design’s distinct histories has been crucial in differentiating between the motives and approaches that informed production of individual artefacts, or groups of artefacts, as this distinction dictated the need for a corresponding differentiation of the theoretical frameworks to be utilised in my study. I show that while partisan approaches to art and design are becoming blurred in contemporary (i.e. present-day) culture because the boundaries between the spheres of art, design and craft are increasingly fluid, such divisions and hierarchies remain of relevance in the historical context that concerns my study, because they are observable as distinct approaches in the 1950s and the 1960s.

The Evolution of the Theoretical Framework: Time-Bound Complexities

One significant step towards advancing the research, has been to explain how the concept of good design emerged after World War II (henceforth WWII) as a state concern. Relevant sources reveal that in the UK, more so than in other Western countries, there existed, even before the dawn of the twentieth century, a long history of government intervention as an arbiter of taste (Bell 1963; Ashwin, 1975, 1982; Rifkin, 1988; Romans, 2005; Quinn, 2011a and 2011b).

Taste interventions implemented by government may be ascribed to the UK's position as *the* dominant industrialised nation of the 18th and the 19th centuries, and the responsibilities engendered by this position. Commercial and aesthetic anxieties, bound with considerations of international status and the prestige of industrial output, were often played out in public arenas. A notable example of such arenas were international exhibitions, of which the 1851 Great Exhibition is perhaps the best documented one. Its centenary anniversary, the 1951 Festival of Britain, is discussed as an event of particular relevance to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection (Wornum, 1851; Banham, 1976; Greenhalgh, 1988; Conekin, 2003; Atkinson, 2012).

Recourse to good design's historical roots, has been helpful in containing the expression 'good design' and assessing it as the instigating concept behind the development of the Collection. Furthermore, I addressed the challenge of establishing and paying attention to cultural and chronological boundaries that inform good design. Design history allows me to anchor the term within appropriate discourses and manage the project of good design as a historically-specific concept.

In addition, the thesis addresses overlaps between 'good design' and the concept of 'good taste'. In order to examine taste and its function as a significant element in the construction of personal and social identities, I have enlisted the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1984; 1988; 1990; 1996; Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991). Bourdieu's structuralism has been helpful in three inter-related aspects of this investigation: firstly, by providing an insight into how individual learners formulate ideas about taste in a process of complicity between objective and internalised structures (Bourdieu, 1984). Secondly, through his research for *Distinction* (1963-1968) and through the analysis of his findings in the book (Bourdieu, 1984), Bourdieu provides a sociological account of taste-production in a Western society of the 1960s, albeit in France instead of England. Despite England being the locus of my research, I have found in *Distinction* transferable elements, such as comparable patterns of stratified consumption, mirroring the methods through which English sociological phenomena may be studied. Thirdly, Bourdieu's writings on academic and sociological practice (Bourdieu, 1988), have equipped me to consider my own involvement with my research project and to address notions of reflectivity and reflexivity in the research process.

In this thesis I approach the body of objects comprising the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection with an understanding that this task does not rely on a clearly circumscribed slice of material culture.² The research task requires an enhanced reflexivity in Bourdieu's sense, recognising the effects and influence of the researcher's own relation to the object, my own position within the intellectual and academic field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, reflection has enabled me to recognise that my own interest in twentieth-century design was driven by what I perceive to be design's inclusive and democratising effect, by which I mean that I recognise good design could be ubiquitous and accessible, characteristics I discuss in contradistinction to fine art.

Design is a long-standing professional interest that has informed my academic pursuits, and particularly with reference to the social developments in post-war Europe. During my Master's Degree in design history I developed my dissertation on the subject of Greek readers³ of the mid-twentieth century. I investigated the books themselves, both as material culture evidence and as text. I discussed the circumstances of their planning, production and distribution and, using semiotics as a methodology, I analysed the symbolisms and meaning in the illustrations (Georgaki, 1996).

The Master's investigation enhanced my understanding of government as the pivotal ideological agent in compulsory education, and it allowed me to consider how 'modern Greece' was being (re-)constructed after WWII through the project of universal literacy. My dissertation argued that, at the same time as emancipating its citizens through literacy, the Greek readers of the post-war period were indoctrinating Greeks in conservative values, consistently promoting the triptych of 'nation-religion-family' as the cornerstone of post-war Greek society.

This model was being promoted in the readers, at the expense of more inclusive points-of-view. Through my MA research I realised how the function of covert propaganda embedded in education, had been internalised by myself during my years of compulsory education in Greece (1977-1988), leading to my (mis-) comprehension of Greek identity as an

² regarding the term 'material culture' I follow Schlereth's definition of objects made or modified by humans (Schlereth, 1982, p.2).

³ In this context 'readers' refers to the books distributed by the Greek state in primary education to promote literacy.

exceptionally homogeneous one. Increased reflexivity gained through research for my dissertation, disclosed how this pedagogy had affected the construction of my own identity and my *habitus* in the Bourdieusian sense (Bourdieu, 1984).

One avenue of overcoming the limitations of official pedagogy in my Master's dissertation, was to implement interviewing and to research personal and public archives (e.g. letters and diaries of teachers, the archives of the Greek Resistance Army), in order to support alternative critical positions and interpretations. The study of these sources enhanced my appreciation of how oral history could undermine official narratives - a method I was able to apply again in the present thesis, especially in relation to my investigation of the crafts as an alternative modernity, discussed in Chapter 4 of the present thesis.

The recourse to oral history discloses a crucial investigative position, which seeks to adapt an approach that distances itself from dominant models. This approach calls for further clarification: firstly, it affects the question of what 'modern/modernism/modernity' means within the remit of my investigation, as compared to how these same terms are used in art historical critique and in other areas of cultural discourse which may be seen as 'dominant'. Secondly, it bears on how I approach the handling stipulation in the use of the Collection, and the conscious attempt to shed light on previously unobserved advantages that the practice of handling affords— a pursuit which became one of the investigation's main objectives, analysed in Chapter 5.

Distance from dominant models also necessitated that Bourdieu's theoretical apparatus be implemented with caution and with acknowledgement of its shortcomings. While I placed the action of handling as central to my investigation, Bourdieu, in *Distinction*, maintains taste hierarchies evident in such differentiations as 'base' and 'noble' taste⁴, discussing Kant's judgement of taste as centred on the aesthetic and excluding sensory properties as far as appreciation of art is concerned. Bourdieu critiques and advances Kant by locating taste within sociological discourse and by drawing attention to the dependence of aesthetic judgement on the dominant modalities of language and vision (Bourdieu, 1984).

⁴ To avoid confusion note that in this discussion I don't refer to the sense of 'taste' but to 'taste' as aesthetic preference.

My research utilised these theories by examining how the pre-dominance of language and vision impact on perceptions of taste, and how they impact on the production and reception of art and design. This led to an investigation on normative attitudes towards the pre-dominance of vision and language as expressed in discourse during the two-and-a-half decades 1951-1977, when parallels could be drawn regarding the circulation of the Collection. Dominant discourse required that the aesthetics of design be judged through formal qualities accessible through vision alone (e.g. Gooden, 1947), echoing the almost exclusively visual analysis of traditional art history (for example the work of Greenberg, and before him Berenson, Warburg, Panovsky, Riegl, Wöfflin). Such disciplinary contexts allowed me to examine how art historical positions may be reflected in the legacy of the I.L.E.A. scheme.

On this basis, I decided that formulating the theoretical platform for my investigation should involve closer examination of the dissonance between fine art approaches, design approaches and educational approaches. Therefore, acknowledgement of these spheres' overlapping but distinct concerns became crucial. During the post-war period, the most influential voices in art criticism were embracing a model based on vision and language, discussing modernism (in the visual arts) as having achieved a self-referential autonomy (Panofsky, 1955; Greenberg, 1989). Clement Greenberg addressed the work of art as independent of context, advancing formalism to its logical conclusion, the reduction of the work of art to an isolated intellectual product, which followed its own internal rules (Greenberg, 1989).

The intellectual rigour with which modern art was being re-assessed after WWII, gave rise to demands for artists themselves to be involved and take part in this discourse, by being better informed of art historical contexts – this demand was delineated in the U.K. by the Coldstream committee report of 1960 (Ministry of Education, 1960). As Addison notes, by the 1960s, 'the scene was set for arguing the case for art as a cognitive and critical, as well as creative, field of study' (Addison, 2010, p.21). Being popular and influential on educational reforms of the time, the critical approach helped enrich the practitioners' repertoire. However, as a historical framing applied to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, analysis following art historical models is only partly useful, as it obscures aspects relating to experiential learning. Relying primarily on vision and language while failing to acknowledge the importance of touch or the immersive and cognitive learning afforded by accessing and handling objects, means that, ultimately, vision-and-language-based assessments are of

limited use to the study of the Collection. On the contrary, pursuing the investigation of handling's increasing importance in educational theory, liberated my methods and made possible an extension of Bourdieu's and Greenberg's restrictive canons.

The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a Subject of Research: Advantages and Disadvantages of Limited Documentation

In my thesis' title I have used the word 'pedagogy' in preference to 'education' since pedagogy etymologically stands for the practice of teaching children (word-for-word, 'leading children' in its Greek origins) though it has expanded to mean 'education' in general. Pedagogy rather than the more open-ended 'education', best represented the didactic intentions and instructional language used in the scheme under investigation, and it is this word that I have found best expresses the continuity with the 19th century's 'virtuous capitalist pedagogy' as discussed by Quinn (Quinn, 2013, p.216). The affinity to the 19th century meaning of pedagogy resides in the original scheme's intentions and methods of instruction, which attribute no agency to the learner and viewed him or her as needing to be led towards good design.⁵ This is evident for example in the Council of Industrial Design's own literature where it is mentioned that 'teachers endorse the educational value of the displays' but no reference is made to students' reception of the project (Council of Industrial Design, 1952, p.13).

The discussion on pedagogy here serves the purpose of revealing the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection's origins as a didactic scheme which placed no emphasis on testing the impact of its teachings on the school-children it targeted, but rather saw its role as 'stamping' taste on unformed minds, complying to the power/knowledge model of authority controlling learning, as discussed, for example, by Foucault (Foucault, 1982). Didactic approaches have been largely discredited with the advent of constructivism as the main theory underpinning British education, from the introduction of the national curriculum in 1988 onwards (O'Hear and

⁵ The emergence of 'pedagogy' as a loaded term, became evident in educational discourse which developed during the late 20th century, when the term was critically re-assessed and located in contradistinction to words like 'andragogy', which refers to the education of adults and advocates a more independent and self-directed manner of learning (Knowles, 1984). Though andragogy is a recent and far less established term, I find it useful as a counter-weight to pedagogy within the broader remit of education.

White, 1991). Constructivism in education views learning as the result of co-constructed events which implicate the teacher as well as the learner (Hein, 1994). However, the concept of didacticism has been crucial in my understanding of the *Experiment in Design Appreciation*⁶ as it concerns an attitude in keeping with its time, and is in accordance with the overarching theory of the pupil as the empty vessel where knowledge (and, in this case, taste) derived from higher authority, is deposited (Biggs and Tang, 2007).

The didactic model is also useful because it partly explains the information paucity present in a resource with many unknowns. An in-depth understanding of the attitudes and motivations of the Collection's instigators justifies why no attempt was made at a systemized auditing of the scheme's reception by its end users. One instance where the dissonance between intentions and practice became apparent, was the question of how extensively the Collection was implemented as a handling resource in accordance to its initial principles. Oral history produced the surprising finding that handling at the time of the Collection's circulation was limited (for an expanded discussion see Conclusion).

This finding contributes valuable evidence, which can be attributed to the canonical behaviours dictated by the school environment in the 1950s and 1960s. Though the evidence of I.L.E.A. documents unequivocally presumed handling of the exhibits (record cards, 1976), my research indicates that teachers were reluctant to allow it (Opie, 2012; Gregory, 2013), suggesting that such usage would be a transgression of how teachers had themselves been taught to behave, their limited familiarity with nascent ideas about object-based-learning, and the predominance of the visual in art pedagogy and discourse. Lack of a larger volume of qualitative feedback prevented me from drawing secure conclusions regarding the extent to which handling was implemented, despite a few publicity photographs showing schoolchildren handling, as in one example, textiles (illustration 1).

Therefore, I have identified the following five areas that impacted on the research: firstly, the lack of comprehensive documentation. The Collection came to Camberwell College of Arts in 1990, accompanied and supported by one folder of photographs depicting display cabinets, where most of the present thesis' illustrations derive from. In addition, there were: a file of

⁶ The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection's first title – refer to section 'A Preliminary Note on Titles' of the present thesis for the range of names the Collection has been known by in the course of its history.

relevant paperwork - containing report cards where the circulation of displays was documented, I.L.E.A. memos and two hand-written drafts for display panel texts, one on the topic of plastics and one on the topic of Scandinavian design. These illuminated the research but, due to their fragmentary nature, such documentation also posed new puzzles regarding the degree to which individual I.L.E.A. employees and their personal perspective shaped the scheme's taste agenda.

Secondly, the lack of a definitive catalogue: up to the Spring of 2015, no attempt at thorough cataloguing had been made, and what taxonomies I.L.E.A. had adopted are only partly observable through the accession numbers and display case photographs, since not all numbers have survived on the objects (many were on self-adhesive labels that have since perished) and not all displays are represented in the existing photographs. I have found the surviving images of exhibits, as these were photographed by the L.C.C. and I.L.E.A. (see appendix 10), the most useful primary source – yet they, too, represent a fraction of the totality of exhibits that were put together during the Collection's active period (1951-1976).

Thirdly, the disparate nature of the artefacts: this is a Collection encompassing a large spectrum of material manifestations, represented by about 10,000 objects (an estimate based on the part-unpacking undertaken from 1990 and investigation up to 2015). The great range of materials (basketry, ceramics, glass, leather, metalwork, paper, plastics, textiles, wood) and their associated techniques, technologies and production methods, impose boundaries on the scope of the investigation. The nature of these boundaries concerns the delineation of investigative fields appropriate to a PhD project, which targeted characteristic case studies of objects (pottery, Scandinavian design and plastics) that would allow the discourses on good design and its pedagogies to develop.

Fourthly, the Collection's evolving nature: research had to take into consideration that this is a resource that evolved and grew significantly across time rather than a specific group of objects that was presented in its totality from its inception, so it was a dynamic collection rather than the static archive it became after 1977. The circumstances of the Collection's foundation, implementation and storage, eventually affected all aspects of its existence: its contents, its usage, its administration, its funding, its display methods, its circulation, its storage, its conservation, its accessibility, its audience, its legal status. Finally, due to the chronic lack of dedicated staffing and space, I encountered the issue of relative inaccessibility

in its present storage conditions (2011-2015) and additional inaccessibility of a number of artefacts due to their deteriorating condition, especially those of organic origin (textiles, leather, paper)⁷.

Given this problem, I decided that one of the main objectives of the investigation would be to establish a transferable methodological strategy of how to research a partially-documented and disparate body of objects. Therefore the thesis develops a proposal of how design history can negotiate the above-listed restrictions inherent within the resource. Similar models are well-established in other disciplines, namely archaeology (see for example, Renfew and Bahn, 2012), yet the present thesis is primarily a contribution to the field of design history. It serves design history's disciplinary concerns, for example its preoccupation with aesthetics through the analysis of 'good design' but at the same time respecting the premise of studying 'all aspects of designed objects and images' (Lees-Maffei, 2010, p.1).

Pursuing design historical investigation meant that strategic decisions were made at the early stage of the research proposal to distinguish my role from that of the archivist. An archivist's concerns revolve around recording, appraising, organising, referencing, describing, storing and promoting a collection (Fahy, 1995). Though I recognised that I would need to behave as an archivist on occasion, and borrow specific methodologies (for example interpreting accession numbers and the labelling given by I.L.E.A.), it was not my intention to engage with the documentation of the Collection in the thorough and methodical manner an archivist would, but rather to produce documentation reflexively, that is according to arising needs, treating documentation not as an objective in itself, but as a facilitating stage toward the achievement of design historical objectives, that is producing criticism and contextualisation beyond the process of recording the objects. Object identification and documentation was undertaken, for example, in the compilation of the object lists for exhibitions (see appendix 11 where projects involving the Collection from 2011 to 2015, are listed.)

A tactical decision was also made to examine cohorts of objects within the Collection. On the basis of the research objectives, I selected objects that could fulfil the following criteria: firstly, items that lent themselves to object analysis and handling, and therefore presented a

⁷ Note that the covenant that passed the Collection to Camberwell College of Arts in 1990 has not been located.

low level of conservation concern. Selecting objects that could be handled has been important, as it reflected my objective of assessing the value of the Collection as a handling resource. Consequently, I have not discussed textiles or leather and have paid little attention to paper and basketry, which represent the most fragile and unstable materials. The decision to curtail my investigation of organic materials, needed to be balanced against the aim of a fair representation of the Collection, which would offer an insight into the great spectrum of products and displays, and which would include both industrial and handmade objects, local and international, traditional and innovatory, multiples and one-offs. In addition, I sought the items that matched, where possible, the photographic records because these records added a significant contextual layer that enriched and illuminated the discussion.

Having discussed in detail the disadvantages imposed by limited documentation, conservation and issues arising from the lack of fully-accessible storage, it is worth noting that the Collection is not managed by the U.A.L.'s Library and Learning Resources - unlike most of the U.A.L.'s other collections. This has emerged, for my research purposes, as an overall advantage. It has made it possible to include the objects in handling sessions, to organise travelling displays and undertake educational activities following Camberwell College of Arts' own guide-lines and observing few of the restrictions that organised museums normally need to adhere to when making their Collections available for handling; additionally, it means that the Collection remains true to its original intentions which stipulated its use as a handling resource (handling being a concern first expressed in reports discussing the intention of setting up the scheme as early as Art and Industry Council's Report of 1937, p. 50). Appendix 11 outlines the educational activities and events involving the Collection during the research period 2011-2015.

Thesis Outline

In Chapter 1, the Collection is treated as the subject of design historical investigation. The suitability of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a case study for design history is explained with reference to the definition of the discipline as seeking to 'understand design in historical context, as conditioned by and bearing evidence of, the time and place in which it was undertaken and produced' (Lees-Maffei, 2010, p.1). While attention is drawn to the need for inter-disciplinarity, the chapter explains how design history informs the concept of the 'product' in two ways: firstly, the Collection in its totality is treated as 'a product' itself, and

secondly, objects ('products') within the Collection are considered in groupings that share commonalities such as material, production method and place of origin.

This discussion also gives me the opportunity to justify emphasis on production by expanding on the limited information available regarding the end use of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, and therefore address the other end of the design history continuum, that of consumption. My argument on the lack of end-use evaluation develops to suggest a link between the rise of museum education, the culture of accountability in museum education, and the contrast between the meticulous evaluation procedures of today as opposed to the evaluation lacunae left by schemes of the past (another example lacking audience evaluation is the Leicestershire Council's circulation scheme which I discuss in Chapters 3).

Chapter 1 further reviews the significant documents and bibliographical sources that contributed to the methodological mapping of the research, and acknowledges how perceptions about design, as a discipline distinct from art, and distinct from craft, have been complicated through the evolution of design education over the last half-century which gave rise to a unified position, in the current understanding, of art, design and craft. The Chapter further considers the implications of the terms 'modern', 'modernism' and 'modernity' by drawing attention to how meaning of these concepts shifts according to the methods, historical frames and disciplinary contexts that these terms occupy.

The thesis then expands in Chapter 2 on a reflective and reflexive history of the Collection, which denotes a history written with critical awareness and the tacit acknowledgement of how I, as the researcher, do not simply re-tell, but actively co-construct its history, meaning that my actions inform its evolving story. A survey of its various titles, in correlation with the progression of managing bodies (from L.C.C. to the G.L.C. and I.L.E.A., from C.O.I.D. to the U.A.L.) reveals the changing agendas and circumstances of its use. Special attention is paid to the background of early 20th century governmental bodies and reports, which called for the 'exhibition of articles of good design and everyday use' (Board of Trade, 1932) and how the Festival of Britain in 1951 succeeded in attesting to the validity of this discussion in the public arena (Conekin, 2003; Conekin, 1999; Atkinson, 2012).

Attention on the Festival demonstrates how the project of good design re-emerged as an educational imperative and how it influenced the establishment of the Collection. Analysis of

how the Collection's range of exhibits grew, is considered in the context of the Collection's surviving photographs and papers. Text and imagery from the surviving C.O.I.D. and I.L.E.A. photographs are used to observe the changing aesthetic and conceptual interpretations of the message of 'good design' within the Collection.

The study identifies five distinguishable if not entirely distinct phases in the history of the Collection: the C.O.I.D. years (1951-1956) where the scheme was managed in a partnership between C.O.I.D. and the L.C.C.; then, once C.O.I.D. withdrew its involvement, the years of exclusive management by the L.C.C. (1957-1963); the G.L.C./I.L.E.A. (1963-1976) years after the administrative restructuring of London authorities, that saw the L.C.C. being replaced by the G.L.C. I identify the G.L.C./I.L.E.A. as the most important phase in terms of my research not only because most of the currently available information on the Collection originates from that period, but also because it represents the significant moment when the 'taste turn' away from functionalist modernism took place.

The next, fourth phase, is characterised by the years of inactivity between the Collection's withdrawal from circulation and abolition of the I.L.E.A. (1976-1990); and finally, the developing story of the Collection at the U.A.L., from 1990 to the present (2015). Within this last phase there have been sub-periods relating to administrative changes, which saw Camberwell College of Arts absorbed in a new academic configuration called the University of the Arts London (U.A.L.), while from 1988 to 2004 Camberwell College of Arts was part of the constituent of art schools that made up the London Institute.

An additional insight into how governmental bodies influenced the principles and implementation of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, is provided in Chapter 3. The investigation examines how the project functioned as a political exercise at local and national levels, embodying leftist ideals of democratising good taste by embedding such projects within educational provision. In extension of its political context, the Collection is located in relation to its cultural associations with schemes and institutions that used material culture in a didactic manner across time, especially in order to disseminate ideas about taste: these include the Schools of Design, the Victoria and Albert Museum's (henceforth V&A) Circulation Department, provincial circulating collections such as the ones at Bristol, Leicestershire and West Riding, I.L.E.A.'s picture circulating scheme and the U.A.L.'s other archives and collections, notably the Museum and Study Collection at Central Saint Martin's.

In Chapter 4, there is closer analysis of specific groups of objects. Contexts for these artefacts are provided in the photographs of I.L.E.A. displays. The images highlight the Collection as a curatorial project undertaken by the Education Authority (I.L.E.A.) and they also bear evidence to how text was implemented in the labels and the cabinets' panels. In combination with the actual artefacts that are currently housed at Camberwell College of Arts, the photographs disclose how 'good design' may be mapped, and they further illuminate the exploration regarding the manner and the degree to which the tenets of good design were sustained by I.L.E.A.

The chosen case-studies concern objects made of plastic and objects representing Finnish design. The two selected categories, British plastics and Finnish objects, are found to adhere to good design as expressed by the scheme's instigators, and to embody a canonical interpretation of 'modern' design, displaying emphasis on functionality and stylistic restraint in accordance to the aesthetics of high modernism as these are outlined in relevant sources (Farr, 1955; MacCarthy, 1979; Stewart, 1987; Woodham, 2008). Furthermore, I present the argument that both in the case of plastics as in the case of Finnish design, the bestowing of good design accolades did not always correspond with commercial viability.

Further on in Chapter 4, the discussion expands to objects that call for a re-appraisal of the Collection's alignment to modernism. Taking advantage of the strong representation of mid-century British studio craft, the investigation uses studio pottery as paradigmatic of the complexities introduced by the crafts, and how these impact on my critique of good design. In order to advance this discussion, I identify the crafts of that period as a field that lends itself to investigation through oral history sources. By using archives that hold logged interviews with the makers, I explain how oral history illuminates aspects of craft production that escape written documentation. Oral history was found relevant because this discussion concerns a close-knit group where the circulation of information has been largely contained amongst its participants, while bibliographical sources remain limited. In addition, I observe how the proximity or distance to modernism's canons, becomes apparent in the Collection through works which represent the disparate ideological camps that constituted studio pottery production during the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 5 returns to questions of methodological determinants that re-frame the Collection in

its current context. Analysis focuses on the premise that language and vision-based methods as utilised by Bourdieu, need, in the case of the Collection, to be supplemented by recognition of handling as a powerful research and learning methodology, not least because this approach honours the original intended function of the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* when it was first conceived.

I therefore consulted authors such as Fiona Candlin who aims to ‘write touch into art historical accounts’ (Candlin, 2010, p.5) and philosophers (Merleau-Ponty, 2002; Polanyi, 1967, Heidegger, Damasio, 2006) whose work addresses the body-mind dichotomy. I examine how their theories validate claims about the irreducible presence of the material object (bringing to mind Metcalf’s assertion that ‘craft cannot be dematerialised; it must first and foremost remain a physical object’; Metcalf in Dormer, 1997, p. 69), and the impact of such claims on the practice of educating through objects.

In summation, the present thesis addressed the following research questions:

How can ‘good design’ be defined in relation to its historical boundaries and in relation to the concepts of ‘modern’ ‘modernism’ and ‘modernity’ in design history? What was the impact of the good design project on the formation, implementation and legacy of the Collection, and especially in relation to its pedagogical use? How can theories of ‘making’ and ‘handling’ be researched using objects from the Collection, and how can analysis of the objects and their relevant documentation inform understandings of ‘making’ and ‘handling’? How have these theories developed in art and design educational discourse and how do they affect object - based learning today? In the process of answering these questions my research also provides an example of how a resource that is lacking documentation (e.g. catalogue, inventory, user feedback) might be tackled.

CHAPTER 1

The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as the Object of Design Historical Investigation

The Need for Inter-disciplinarity

An initial approach to the theoretical framework that I wish to implement in relation to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection indicates that inquiry in the arts, humanities and social sciences can best be conducted in an inter-disciplinary environment. Inter-disciplinarity arises as a necessity out of the complex network of inter-acting agents involved in the conception and implementation of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. Illustration 2 shows, in a schematic way, how a network of policy, practice, theories of art education, design history and consumption informed the Collection. At the heart of this network I place the Council of Industrial Design for the Collection's early phase (1951-1964), the Inner London Education Authority for its middle and more active phase (1965-1990) and Camberwell College of Arts for its latter phase (1990 to the present).

My examination of the Collection as the object of design historical investigation will rely on an initial mapping of the design history discipline, especially in relation to the disciplines of history, material culture studies, museum studies and art history. Further on, I will explain how the establishment of design history relates to reforms in post-war art and design educational provision at secondary, further and tertiary level. These reforms concerned the introduction of the Diploma in Art and Design (1963) and upgraded the discussion on the status of art, design and craft, within and outside educational institutions in Britain, especially during the 1960s.

In addition, I have conducted research in archives and collections, where the minutiae of organisational life are registered, in order to expose the nature of the interconnectedness of social relations between key agents: such agents, as seen on the diagram (illustration 2) include the Council of Industrial Design; producers and companies that had won the C.O.I.D.'s 'seal of approval', i.e. labels denoting award-winning products (Crowther, 2012); the London County Council's education officers; the secondary schools run by the L.C.C. and later by I.L.E.A.; the Geffrye Museum's education department; the Victoria and Albert Museum's Circulation department, which lent objects to the Geffrye Museum and influenced

handling and circulation policies; design shops and galleries that supplied the Collection (Greg, 1995), plus a number of people and organisations⁸.

Reference to the Collection's aesthetic agenda will aim to argue that 'good design' in the post-war period is synonymous with a specific 'modernism', a modernism which will be defined within the frame of functionalism, while when the Collection grew from the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* (a title used roughly up to the early 1960s) to I.L.E.A.'s *Design Circulation Scheme* (a title used from 1965), the mandate of good design becomes subject to a different interpretation. The contribution of popular taste and a short analysis of how this is formed in the context of a changing society, help locate this new interpretation of good design within the Collection.

Developing the idea of the Collection as the subject of design historical investigation, the research asks: how has the discussion on travelling Collections changed over time and where does it take place today? In answering this question, two important developments are examined: one, the necessity of audience feedback, redressing the balance between the provider and the audience of collections, and complicating questions of authority and the imposition of taste; secondly, the move of handling / travelling collections from the school environment to the museum environment and the ascent of museum education as yet another adjacent discipline that came to supplement and in some cases, substitute, the school.

Bringing the discussion back to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as it is encountered in its present state, I will identify the main methodological obstacles, which relate to documentation, restrictions in accessibility and the physical condition of the objects. I will argue for ways of circumnavigating these issues and seek research outcomes, which will offer approaches to a poorly documented collection. This section then offers a discussion on modernism, thus clarifying the use of the terms 'modern', 'modernism', 'modernity' within the context of design history.

⁸ By 'people and organisations' I refer, for example, to students and makers from London art colleges, more relevantly from Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts (as it was known until 1986 when it was incorporated as part of the London Institute). For example ceramicists Ian Auld (1926-2000), Gordon Baldwin (b. 1932), Ian Godfrey (1942-1992), Gillian Lowndes (1936-2010), William Newland (1919-1998), Bryan Newman (b.1935), Colin Pearson (1923-2007), Lucie Rie (1902-1995) had been either students or teachers at Camberwell and they are all represented in the Collection.

The above summary of the section hints at the complexities of the issues involved and calls for inter-disciplinary methodologies regarding the untangling of these webs. An example of the variety of methodologies used in the humanities, has been provided by Robert Miller and John Brewer in their *A-Z of Social Research* (Miller and Brewer, 2003). They collated research methods in an extensive list that included (in alphabetical order): action research, critical theory, discourse analysis, ethics, ethnography, feminism, narrative approach, modernism, post-modernism, qualitative and quantitative research, statistical testing, and visual research methods (Miller and Brewer, 2003). I offer this list as an indication of the armoury of approaches historians have at their disposal and a reflection on the mix of methodologies I have implemented myself.

History of Design and Its ‘Adjacent’ Disciplines

In this section I will situate my research on the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection primarily in the subject of History, which I view as the epistemological field where the disciplines most relevant to my topic belong, i.e. the history of design and the history of education, specifically art and design education in institutions that will include the school and the museum.

The problematic exemplified by the Collection concerned the role of government in promoting a two-fold objective: firstly the objective of improving and strengthening the output of manufacture in Britain, and secondly, creating demand for this output through the education of consumers. Though my argument will be that, as it evolved, the Collection’s objectives became less and less achievable, the initial intentions of the Collection’s instigators align perfectly with the disciplinary concerns of design history. I will demonstrate that the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection presents the design historian with an ideal research project, as the material and the implications of its use relate to core disciplinary concerns: production and consumption, modernity, collecting, exhibiting and educating through objects. Adjacent disciplines will also be enlisted for their relevant approaches, with greater emphasis on social history, cultural studies, material culture studies, economic history and craft history. I will also draw on oral history as a tool for unravelling diverse stories about the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection.

One perspective on the Collection that further confirms its suitability as the object of design historical investigation, are the texts that appeared on I.L.E.A. displays. The display cases reflect the Collection's aesthetics, which were consistent with the tenets of functionalism. One typical example of how the objects of the Collection were being treated as bearers of this design ethos, is the following excerpt from the display *Materials and Design* where pupils are urged to ask: 'Has the designer used the material in the best possible way? Would the object do its job better if it had been made in a different material? Is it pleasant to handle as well as to look at?' (*Materials and Design*, uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection archive, London, illustrations 3 and 4). Such evidence of an aesthetic theorising of the artefacts, hints at a design historical account.

While the study of panel texts as a design historical resource is essential, it must be noted that ascribing design historical methodologies to the C.O.I.D. and I.L.E.A. is a retroactive claim. These texts pre-date the discipline, which started being identified as 'design history' at around the same time that the Collection stopped circulating in 1976.

The contextualising information was produced initially by the Council of Industrial Design (C.O.I.D.), and later by Dennis Stevens and his team at the Inner London Education Authority (I.L.E.A.). These texts can be claimed for design historical writing (I refer here to the texts accompanying display cabinets, as in illustrations 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). Reading these panels, it becomes evident how the London County Council's and later I.L.E.A.'s contextual information correspond to the definition of design history, being 'a discipline interested in all aspects of designed objects and images' and which 'seeks to understand design in historical context, as conditioned by and bearing evidence of, the time and place in which it was undertaken and produced.' (Lees-Maffei, 2010, p.1). Also apt is Tim Putnam's view of design history's essential role – 'to explain the artefact' (Putnam in Bird, 1996, p.134).

The framing of the artefact in design history bears an affinity to how artefacts are considered in material culture studies, a discipline primarily developed in the U.S.A. The work of Jules Prown in establishing a method of analysing material objects has been influential in America as much as in the U.K. (e.g. Newton and Putnam, 1990). Prown himself recognises the input of allied disciplines, citing 'archaeology, cultural geography, folklore and folk life, history of art, social and cultural anthropology, and social and cultural history' but not design history which, at the time of Prown's writing was not a widely established discipline in the U.S.A.

(Prown, 1982, p.10). Later work, as that of Ezra Shales for example, introduced design history into the U.S. mix of methodologies that informs approaches to visual and material culture (Shales, 2010). Judy Attfield has argued that material culture studies has been ‘the most fruitful alliance’ for design history as it has enabled it to grow beyond narrow limits of subject (Attfield, 2000, p. 25). Attfield’s comment is pertinent because it identifies the liberating practice of freeing design history from its attachment to industrial production and the patriarchy of ‘designer-heroes’ that had defined the discipline in its early stages.

Material culture historian Thomas Schlereth offers an early definition of material culture by anthropologist Melville Herskovits: ‘the totality of artefacts in a culture, the vast universe of objects used by humankind to cope with the physical world, to facilitate social intercourse, to delight our fancy and to create symbols of meaning’ (Herskovits in Schlereth, 1982, p.2). Schlereth expands this definition further by suggesting that apart from objects made by humans, material culture is concerned also with objects modified by humans, when nature is encountered ‘in a pattern that suggests human activity’ as for example a stone wall (Schlereth, 1982, p.2).

In this sense material culture studies casts a wider net than design history, suggesting that the two disciplines overlap but diverge in their scope: in design history the focus has mainly been on the output of industrial and post-industrial societies, on artefacts that necessitated a high degree of human intervention and intentionality since ‘design in the modern sense is a feature of advanced industrial / consumer societies’ (Walker, 1989, p.126). Therefore it is logical that design history developed in the U.K., the first industrialised nation, while material culture studies developed in the U.S., a relatively new nation where ‘most artefacts “Made in America” were not elite, high-style objects but rather vernacular, folk creations’ (Schlereth, 1982, p.21). Moreover, design history has often had an explicit aesthetic agenda: early texts, such as Stephen Bayley’s *In Good Shape* (Bayley, 1979) bear evidence to that. The prevalence of the aesthetic is the legacy of modernism and can be detected in key design history texts (Pevsner, 1991 [1936]; Naylor 1973; Sparke 1986; Woodham 1995).

Design history, initially developing in the shadow of art history, ‘was practically the art history of design’ as Kjetil Fallan has argued (Fallan, 2010, p.97). Fallan meant that in its early incarnation, design history borrowed the methodologies of art history and applied them to design with little acknowledgement of the complexities and divergences between the

subject of the two disciplines, for example the coinnoisseurial chasm between the one-off and the mass-produced. However, by the 1970s, design history had advanced to a stage where it had ‘little need for an aspirant parent discipline’ (Woodham, 1995, p.23). The formation of the Design History Society in 1977 confirmed its professional independence. Clive Dilnot positions the origins of the subject a little earlier, in 1972, when the Open University introduced its course on the ‘History of Modern Architecture and Design, 1890 to 1939’ (Dilnot, in Margolin, 1989, p.224). The Open University’s pioneering course took its cue from the history of architecture and it broke ground by establishing a canon for the teaching of modernist architectural history, starting with William Morris and the Arts and Crafts and into the twentieth century up to Le Corbusier, by way of the Bauhaus (Benton, 1975).

A useful channel through which the Collection can be addressed by design history, are the activities of the Council of Industrial Design (C.O.I.D.). The Council may be seen as the instigator of the Collection but also a dominant case-study in design history. In his interview for the Voices in the Visual Arts archive, Jonathan Woodham (Woodham, 2008), himself amongst the most prolific and active advocates of the subject, recalls how he first began teaching design history through a course set up by Michael Farr who had been editor of C.O.I.D.’s *Design* magazine and had written the book *Design and British Industry, A Mid-century Survey* - a book I have used in my own research (Farr, 1955). In Britain, the discipline of design history went on to enjoy a long symbiotic relationship with the activities of the Council of Industrial Design. Much early design history writing focused on government and its interventions, and drew its sources from the abundance of reports that the Council, its predecessors (The Council for Art and Industry) and other government agents (e.g. the Board of Trade) were producing (Woodham, 1983).

The Collection is an example of such a government intervention implemented by C.O.I.D. and its place in the history of design requires no further justification. However, in keeping with the fate of other local authority collections that circulated in schools, it has not attracted the degree of attention that other government-backed design initiatives have enjoyed, for example exhibitions and design festivals (Banham, 1976; Greenhalgh, 1988; Conekin, 2003; Atkinson, 2012). My research has confirmed the fact that by and large travelling collections of this kind (by which I mean the ones circulating in schools and provincial museums in the post-war period) are rather poorly documented. The notable exception is that of the V&A’s Circulation Department which is mentioned in histories of the museum (Bryant, 2012,

Cardoso, 1997) and appears in publications and primary sources housed at the National Art Library (Robinson, 1860 and the anonymous, *V&A Museum Circulation Department: its History and Scope* of 1955).

Information on the V&A can also be gleaned from primary research in partner institutions, such as the archives of the Geffrye Museum. In a document entitled *An Outline of the Museum Activities 1935-1969*, there is evidence that the Geffrye was putting up five to ten circulating exhibits annually, the majority being travelling exhibitions organised by the V&A and the Arts Council (Anonymous, *Museum Circulation Scheme*). Another reference can be found in the minutes of the Conference on Design in Education, held at Glasgow in 1948, where Kenneth Holmes, the principal of Leicester College of Art, acknowledges the V&A's contribution to regional educational institutions: 'I must pay my tribute to the Victoria and Albert Museum for the traditional design it has sent to schools of Arts for years' (Holmes, 1948, p.39), though he laments that the museum has 'never been notable for exhibitions of contemporary design until recently' (Holmes, 1948, p.39), something that had been partly rectified with the *Britain Can Make It* show in 1946 (Holmes, 1948, p.39).

Methodological Issues in Relation to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

The task of untangling the intricacies of networks that shaped the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, as these are schematised in illustration 2, is as relevant and as fruitful for the research as the task of documenting the objects. Naturally, the inescapable materiality of the Collection already dictates certain approaches. A bibliography can be assembled solely with the purpose of investigating the variety of materials, techniques, industries, designers, producers and makers associated with the objects: Lesley Jackson on 1950s 'contemporary' and the history of British glass (Jackson, 2000, 1991); Tanya Harrod on the history of crafts (Harrod, 1999); Jeffrey Jones on studio ceramics (Jones, 2007); Yuko Kikuchi on Japanese mingei theory (Kikuchi, 2004), to mention only a handful. In addition to the printed material, there are a number of oral history sources, most helpful of which have been the Voices in the Visual Arts archive, the National Life Stories at the British Library Sound Archive and the Recording the Crafts archive at the University of the West of England (www.vivavoices.org; and www.bl.uk/soundarchive; www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/rtc/).

The sheer variety of the artefacts within the Collection (estimated to between 8,000 and 10,000 individual pieces) pull the research potential into directions as far distanced from each other as product design (for example the display *Glass and its Qualities*, illustration 5) and ethnography (for example the display *Folk Art*, illustration 6). See also appendix 10, for a full list of documented displays. The Collection's lack of an inventory and its patchy documentation, would present archivists with a long research project in itself. However, as a design historical subject, I concentrate on the contextual issues raised by the Collection's historical and pedagogical role. In this respect, I view my training and practice as a design researcher / historian less that of the archivist or the connoisseur and closer to Victor Margolin's approach: he claims that, as the man-made world continues to expand, the design researcher needs to act as a 'steward' of the artificial, in the same way all humans need to act as stewards of the natural world (Margolin, 2010, p.78).

The discipline of history in general, and design history in particular, value 'hard' data (for example chronologies and authorship of objects) and have methods of retrieving them when these are not provided (often by bibliographical or archival research). Therefore, archival work remains an important aspect of this project. The Collection itself is an archive formed of objects that act as a primary evidential data-base. Yet I am equally aware of the importance of critical inquiry and interpretation. Through readings of structuralist and post-structuralist theory I discern the mediatory role of language, and the relational position of the individual to the material world (Saussure, 1966; Levi-Strauss, 1977; Foucault, 1989, 2002). Judy Attfield has shown that design historians use both the abstractions of language and the materiality of the object in order to elucidate meaning (Attfield, 2000). Design historians are aware that the world is known through culture and 'what we know is what we need to know to enable us to take our place in a particular society or group' (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994, p. 49), our own interpretative community.

One way of using interpretative skills is by implementing connoisseurial knowledge, which may be built over years of experience and can provide the bridge between the known and the assumed. Connoisseurship places emphasis on individual experts' skilled practice and intuition. It privileges 'a practised eye, visual memory, sensitivity to quality' (Ebitz, 1988, p.208) and its paramount concern is the certification of authenticity (Ebitz, 1988). There are areas of cultural life where connoisseurship is highly regarded, as for example within the fine arts market where the placement of a work in the high-end of the production spectrum

translates to increased monetary value (Friedlander, 1942). However I would argue that in design history, connoisseurship is a contested skill, because, while design history recognises the need to implement such knowledge in order to authenticate collections, connoisseurship's associations with the elite art object problematises design historical discourses of mass production. In order to overcome this, design history implements 'object-analysis' as a preferred methodology.

The complication introduced by 'connoisseurship' is of particular relevance to my research since the 'good design' agenda is directly dependent on value judgements. Adrian Forty, replying to Victor Margolin's attack on design history's pre-occupation with good design, points out that 'far from being trivial and connoisseurish, the whole question of judging quality in design, of discriminating between good and bad design, is essential to the entire activity of design' (Forty, 1995, p.16).

In the context of my research, Forty's call for value judgements contributes a crucial distinguishing parameter: to think of the objects as simply 'designed' is not particularly helpful because the notion of design is so broad. 'Design' defies a singular taxonomy and includes the 'combined embodiment of configuration, composition, structure, purpose, value and meaning in man-made things and systems' according to Bruce Archer, former director of the Design Research Department at the Royal College of Art (Archer, 1981, p. 30). Yet to think of the objects not as merely 'designed' but as 'well designed', opens up the possibility of locating them in the taste context that the Council of Industrial Design rigorously pursued, and it also enables me to follow how this taste context was constructed by the L.C.C. (1959 to 1963, then G.L.C.) and by I.L.E.A (1965-1976).

When the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* was first put together in 1951, the C.O.I.D. and the London County Council were transparent in declaring their intention to form a canon of 'good design', deliberately excluding products that did not fall within that remit. As early as 1947 the Council of Industrial Design started compiling a card index that eventually comprised of over 20,000 objects in preparation for the 1951 Festival. Over half of these products were actually shown at the Festival, and it was from this vast pool of British-made objects that the first displays for the *Design Experiment* were put together (Crowther, 2012, p.8). The C.O.I.D. continued to produce the Stock List and eventually it became the Design Index, a database that 'became a means of influencing manufacturers' (Stewart, 1987, p.109).

As a researcher I recognise the need to be explicitly aware of such policies lest I fall into the simplistic assumption that John Walker has described as the phenomenon of the ‘relay race’ in design history narratives: the impression that ‘the baton of genius or avant-garde innovation passes from the hand of one great designer to the next in an endless chain of achievement.’ (Walker, 2010, in Lees-Maffei and Houze p. 281).

I have developed the discussion on specific examples of good design in Chapter 4. That investigation has relied on the following sources: L.C.C. and I.L.E.A. documentation, both photographic and text-based, held at Camberwell College of Arts, the Victoria and Albert Museum’s Archive of Art and Design and the Metropolitan Archives, London. Surviving I.L.E.A. display images are remarkably dense in information and I have included their full content in appendixes 1-9. In addition, primary research on the objects themselves, implementing handling and methodologies that employ object-analysis inspired by Jules Prown’s paper *Mind in Matter* (Prown, 1982); research on oral history, using the following databases: *Voices in the Visual Arts* resource, the British Library’s Sound Archive and *Recording the Crafts* at the University of the West of England Bristol as well as personal communication with members of the *Plastics Historical Society* (Oxley, 2013).

Among other bibliographical sources, I have selected issues of *Design* magazine (mainly 1951-1976) plus three relevant texts, which I consider the most helpful in terms of understanding the context of post-war British design and manufacture. Fiona MacCarthy’s *All Things Bright And Beautiful*, later re-published as *A History of British Design 1830-1970*, was written at a time very close to events that concern my thesis (originally published in 1979), by an author who enjoyed privileged access to the good design agents of the 1960s and 1970s, having been the spouse of celebrated British designer David Mellor (MacCarthy, 1979). MacCarthy’s book, one of the first dedicated design historical texts in England, compounded the narrative of strong links between the post-war good design agenda with the idealism of the Arts and Crafts.

Another helpful source which provided an early cartography of good design, was Michael Farr’s *Design In British Industry* (Farr, 1955). Though Farr’s research pre-dates most of the objects discussed in my thesis, it goes into detail on the background of industries and gives an overview of the emerging technologies, products, designers and challenges, including aesthetic ones, British Industry had been facing in the mid-1950s. In his introduction Farr

delineates the objectives of his work as being :

the re-creation of an harmonious understanding between maker and user - with the assistance of the retailer - so that the limitations and desires of each can be appreciated [...]if such an objective can be achieved, industrial art will form the basis of a new culture in which taste will become coherent, critical judgements will be everywhere implied, and a popular standard will be acknowledged as a satisfactory level of taste below which nothing should fall. (Farr, 1955, p. 32)

Farr's survey is even more pivotal because, as editor of *Design* magazine, he undertook research 'in the field' and influenced the discipline's (i.e. design history's) subsequent methodological approaches (Woodham, 2008). The third relevant text I consulted is Richard Stewart's *Design and British Industry* written in 1987 (Stewart, 1987). The date of publication of Stewart's book marks a time of uncertainty for British manufacture. He was writing from a chronological vantage point that allowed him to reflect on the shocks that the 1970s had held in store for British manufacture and he could assess how the threat of a long-term decline helped shape interventionist policies. By the time of Stewart's book, it would be fair to argue that retail, rather than manufacturing, drove design in Britain; retail which more often than not relied on imports rather than home-made goods.

British manufacturers and retailers still propagate mediocrity for a large section of a visually illiterate community, while discriminating purchasers look to foreign designs for elegance at a price [...] Of most concern is the apparent lack of the innovative, entrepreneurial spirit possessed by the Victorians (Stewart, 1987, p.229).

Stewart's analysis gives a fresh insight into the reasons why the message of collections such as the I.L.E.A./Camberwell one, may have become irrelevant by the early 1970s.

Modernism and its Interpretations: Many Modernities

The attempt to distinguish the particular 'modernity' proposed by the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* (as the Collection was known in its initial stages), stumbles on distinctions between formulations of modernism: 'modernity' as a contested temporal category, 'modernist' as an adjective denoting an aesthetic classification, and 'modernism' as an

ideology and one of the 20th century's grand narratives. Post-Marxist thinker Perry Anderson claims that in capitalist perspectives, 'modernity has been fulsomely touted as the last word in sensory excitement and universal satisfaction, in which a machine-built civilization itself guarantees aesthetic thrills and social felicities' (Anderson, 1984, p.99) and that

Modernism as a notion is the emptiest of all cultural categories. Unlike the terms Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Mannerist, Romantic or Neo-Classical, it designates no describable object in its own right at all: it is completely lacking in positive content. [...] There is no other aesthetic marker so vacant or vitiated. For what once was modern is soon obsolete. The futility of the term, and its attendant ideology, can be seen all too clearly from current attempts to cling to its wreckage and yet swim with the tide still further beyond it, in the coinage 'post-modernism': one void chasing another, in a serial regression of self-congratulatory chronology (Anderson, 1984, p. 107).

On the other side of such dismissive analyses is a historically-contained definition and understanding of modernism that keeps within the disciplinary interests of design history. For the purposes of this thesis, I follow mid-century accounts of good design, which align the term 'good design' with a particularly-defined modernism. It has become a cliché in writing about British twentieth century design to say that the pursuit of 'good design' coincided with the pursuit of modernism (Bayley, 1979; Woodham, 1983; Dormer, 1990; Greenhalgh 1990) but it is still pertinent to ask: what is modernism/modernity/modernist in design history?

I will argue that in design history, 'modernism' occupies a specific time and place. Investigation of the variations on the word 'modern' foregrounds one of the Collection's most challenging aspects: diverse viewpoints can be pursued according to subgroupings of objects selected from the totality of artefacts in the Collection. Selection can focus on objects that make the case against technology, functionalism and materialism, especially those acquired in the late 1960s. On the other hand, a different selection of objects, deriving from the 1950s and early 1960s, can equally successfully make the case for technology and functionalism. In support of this argument, a text like Giedion's *Mechanization Takes Command* (Giedion, 1948) could be drawn on, as it offers a more productive view of industrial modernity. In his work, Giedion lists ways through which technology altered the experience of being in the world, in an approach that is rather balanced towards industrialisation and its effects: not

overtly celebratory but not ascribing to the idea of industry as a de-humanizing and alienating force either (Giedion, 1948).

It is also useful to stress that in design history, modernism refers to a fairly easily observable period, the ideological beginning of which some claim to be the industrial revolution (Brewer and Porter, 1994), some as late as the end of the 19th century (Naylor, 1973), but the aesthetic manifestations are by general consensus concentrated in the first half of the twentieth century for its pioneering phase, and the post-war decades for its disseminated phase (Greenhalgh, 1990). Keeping this chronology in mind helps to consolidate the boundaries of modernism for the purpose of this thesis.⁹

It is important to note how design history differs from art history's modernism: by committing to the everyday object, the functional, the industrially-produced, design historical accounts of early 20th century largely ignored the art historical '-isms'; rather than art history, they took their cue from architecture (for example Banham, 1960 and the Open University course that has been mentioned earlier - Benton, 1975). There is however, one movement that clearly belongs to this understanding of modernity: 'functionalism'. Herbert Read's re-stated the dictum that had already been expressed in the writings and work of architects Louis Sullivan, Adolf Loos and Le Corbusier, that '[under modernity] all ornament should be treated as [sociologically] suspect' (Read, 1934, p.35). In Read's case it expresses the art historian's attempt to tackle what was for Read a new challenge, that of the aesthetics of functionalism (Kinross, 1988).

Read's is pre-dominantly an art historical approach as it attempts to argue against inherent value in machine aesthetics and to promote the appreciation of machines as an extrinsic aesthetic skill that consumers have to cultivate (and particularly through education): 'a moment arrives [...] when there is a choice between equally efficient objects of different shapes. The moment that choice is made, an aesthetic judgment has operated' (Read, 1934, p. 35). A committed functionalist would argue that equally efficient objects cannot have

⁹ In contrast, regarding the field of aesthetics and artistic production, the complex and multi-faceted realities of modernism were investigated through an array of new forms of representation, while artists tried to grasp the chaotic conditions of early 20th century Europe. There flourished a number of predominantly painterly '-isms' (fauvism, cubism, surrealism, constructivism) of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that form the foundation of an art historical understanding of 'modernism'.

different shapes because optimum functionality would invariably lead to the same shape - this is an argument that seems to escape Read. However, Read's text *Art and Industry* (1934) remains relevant, because of its ground-breaking intention to put the problematic of machine aesthetics on the British cultural agenda.

A text that could be paired with Read's account, as it was written at around the same time though it differs in that it focuses on architectural history, is Nikolaus Pevsner's *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* (Pevsner, 1936). *Pioneers of the Modern Movement* gives an early version of what modernism and its preconditions were in design, but as Dilnot has pointed out, Pevsner did not address the contradiction lurking in his work, which advocated design for the machine but combined this advocacy with the 'abhorrence of the realities of mass designing in the modern world' (Dilnot, 1987, p.225). Julian Holder in Greenhalgh's *Modernism in Design* (1990) also notes that 'in Pevsner's account Britain is often left out of considerations of Modernism. The Pevsnerian tradition had been only to credit Britain, largely in the shape of the Arts and Crafts Movement, with lighting the touch-paper, whilst leaving display to Germany.' (Holder in Greenhalgh, 1990, p.124). Dilnot argued that this transition from the Arts and Crafts to German modernism, was presented by Pevsner as a natural progression when it was in fact fraught with contradiction (Dilnot, in Margolin, 1989). Despite later criticisms, Pevsner's account established the 'heroic' modernist order in the history of design which was adopted by the Open University course 'History of Modern Architecture and Design, 1890 to 1939', which I have identified as an early presence of design history in academia (Dilnot, in Margolin, 1989).

Design Education and Its Engendering Territories

One aspect of art and design education that my thesis aims to illuminate is the tripartite of education, government and manufacture across time, but specifically during the second half of the 20th century. These spheres have been interlinked in Britain since the industrial revolution, while their allegiances and discordances have been analysed in relation to the principle of improving the public's taste (Bell 1963; Ashwin, 1975, 1982; Rifkin, 1988; Romans, 2005; Quinn, 2011a and 2011b). The word 'design' has always been a significant variable in this relationship, initially as a narrow definition of practices initially relating to drawing, and gradually expanding to encompass the totality of practices that concern production (Bell, 1963; Ashwin, 1975; Romans, 2005). The 'cause-and-effect' bond that was

formed over the long history of such links between education and production, was a result of governmental intervention and frames the ideological locus where the inception of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection belongs.

What scholars (Ashwin, 1975, Bell, 1963; Romans, 2005; Quinn 2011b) of the Victorian era have shown, is that the tripartite of government-education-manufacture aimed towards the formation of a model whereby government would provide the conditions of competent and competitive production through education, and society would reap the benefits of a robust industrial and retail state, a state that created jobs, exploited materials, applied new technologies, met consumer demand, and not least, kept the country's prestige and export volume high on the international markets. By means of taxation, this model would ultimately create revenue for the government in order for it to implement reforms that would allow access to education, including design education, thus perpetuating the virtuous cycle (Bowman, 1989).

The historical precedent of the government-education-manufacture model of the 19th century, reverberated in the late 1960s, in developments that map the preconditions that 'produced the producers', that is the designers and makers of the artefacts that were acquired by the Collection. They also map the preconditions that 'produced the consumers', that is the audience of London secondary school pupils. The effect was in two ways: firstly, in an immediate way, where secondary educational provision reflected changes in art and design education at tertiary level. This aimed to address the art/design dichotomy that was being perpetuated by the educational system. By the late 1960s, this issue was being acknowledged by influential voices in the design education establishment. For instance, Misha Black's conviction that 'there is no dividing line between the so-called fine arts and design, and compartmentalised education is therefore irrelevant' and that 'the aim of art/design education should be to produce generalists and not specialists' (Black in Warren-Piper, 1973, p. 33) are representative, in my view, of the unifying attitude that paved the way for the Crafts, Design and Technology subject in schools ('C.D.T.').

Crafts, Design and Technology marks a pivotal turn in the history of art and design education towards bridging the arts/technology dichotomy. The subject was introduced in secondary education as a replacement of the less inclusive 'Design' and aimed to make all three fields, crafts, design and technology, accessible by all in secondary education. Relevant sources offer

an illuminating trajectory of how the subject fared in secondary education during the course of the 20th century, starting with the vocational name of ‘handicraft’ and developing to ‘Crafts, Design and Technology’ before, significantly, the word ‘crafts’ was finally dropped from the title with the revised National Curriculum Order of 1992 (Baynes, 1969; Stewart, 1987; Atkinson, 1990; Banks, 1994).

During the 1980s, Conservative administrations headed by Margaret Thatcher, were keen to reap the fruit of such investment in design and craft education: Thatcher aimed to achieve economic growth for Britain through the encouragement of industrial design and worked hard to convince leaders of industry, designers and educators on this aim. Her seminar of January 1982 held at Downing Street was based on the premise that ‘good design is the cornerstone of successful business’ (Thatcher quoted in Davies-Cooper, 1993, p.47) and set in motion the implementation of many design-orientated initiatives. Illustration 7, for example, shows Thatcher browsing the then recently-launched publication, *Design Selection* at the recently opened Design Centre Shop (Stewart, 1987, figure 7.30). Specifically for the crafts, Thatcherite support for small enterprise meant that the ‘crafts became the most favoured “art” sector during the Thatcher administration’, because of their potential as small businesses (Sandino, 1991, p.76).

Possibly as a reflection of diminished input in industry, the mid-1980s was also the moment when the design profession can be said to have come into its own, paving the way for the designer as manager and consultant ‘of good design’ rather than as engineer and maker. Penny Sparke had identified the designer as someone who could develop a marketing strategy in her book *Consultant Design* (Sparke, 1983), but the professional shift was also recognised by *Design* magazine’s 40th anniversary issue, published in 1989. *Design* made the point that ‘designers now choose to describe themselves as “strategic”, having shed the lowly artist’s mantle for that of the management consultant’ (anonymous, 1989, Design 1949-1989, unpaginated). This overview of design education elucidates how new signifieds for the term ‘professional designer’ evolved over time.

Divisions in Art, Design and Craft Education and Practice

In terms of theoretical contexts, the establishment and consequent blossoming of the design historical field during the 1970s meant that design history contributed to the wider

conversation that took place between material culture, design, British society and its learning institutions at the time. Tim Putnam has suggested that the groundwork for this flourishing of the field had been laid with the DipAD (Diploma in Art and Design) courses, and their compulsory (fine-) art historical element (Putnam in Bird, 1996, p.136). These courses were established in 1963 as a result of the Coldstream committee reports.

The 'Coldstream Committee' had been the informal name of the National Advisory Council on Art Education which was first appointed in 1959 and chaired by Sir William Coldstream. These committees produced two reports, one in 1960 and one in 1970 (Ministry of Education, 1960; Department of Education and Science; 1970). In May 1961 a separate body was set up to implement the recommendations of the Coldstream council, called the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design and widely known as the Summerson Council after its chairman, Sir John Summerson. The Summerson Council was responsible for the validation of courses and examination procedures (Tickner, 2008, p.16). The catalytic effect of the Coldstream recommendations was the introduction of the Diploma in Art and Design, which Putnam sees as the vehicle through which art history reached the practitioner (Putnam in Bird, 1996).

Ultimately the new DipAD contributed to promoting and reforming the perception of vocational (in the sense of non-university) education. In a chapter contributed to Ken Baynes' *Attitudes in Design Education*, (Baynes, 1969) the Council of Industrial Design's education officer, Sydney Foott, presented the educational work of the Council, noting that

the growth of interest in recent years in careers in industrial design is astonishing...more and more boys and girls with good A-levels in physics and mathematics are choosing to do their Diploma in Art and Design rather than a university course (Foott in Baynes 1969, p.141).

Foott's comment hints at the changing status of art and design education since the introduction of the Diploma. Putnam's thesis is that out of these Diploma courses there emerged a generation of designers who were perforce engaging with art history during their studies, thus creating the pre-conditions for the birth of design history: art history was cultivating a critical capacity that students could then apply to their own and others' work, be it art, craft or design.

‘The Coldstream report brought numbers of university-trained lecturers into art colleges for the first time’ (Tickner, 2008, p.72) which partly explained the widespread resistance to the new degree from art colleges: some cherished their independence and felt no need for validation from other academic disciplines. Significantly, Putnam first published his opinion on the birth of design history in *Block* magazine, an influential journal that was produced between 1979 and 1989 by a group of polytechnic lecturers who had met at Hornsey College of Art in the aftermath of the ‘sit-in’.¹⁰ The significance of *Block*’s background is not only that it informed much of the ethos of what appeared on its pages, but that it highlights the historical moment where making, education and criticism met social discontent.¹¹

Two books which David Warren-Piper edited in the early 1970s contribute to understanding this decisive moment in art and design educational history. Warren- Piper gathered opinions from eminent voices in contemporary art and design education in *After Coldstream* (Warren-Piper, 1973) and *After Hornsey* (Warren-Piper, 1973). These publications were produced as a result of two symposia held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (I.C.A.) in London, where speakers had been asked to consider the problem of art and design education. These followed from the ‘continuous open forum’, which had been established at the I.C.A. during the summer of 1968 and involved students from Hornsey, members of the public and guest speakers (Phillips, 1997, p.16).

Though the input from several writers who specialised in diverse fields (among them Misha Black, Brian Alison, Randall Lines and Paul Oliver) makes for disparate content, the collated symposia papers converge to reveal the turmoil into which art and design education had been thrown as a result of imminent educational reform. Participants at the symposia grappled with the slippery notions of creativity, the degree to which art is ‘teachable’, critical thinking,

¹⁰ The Hornsey ‘sit-in’ is a pivotal event of 1968 when students at the Hornsey School of Art occupied the art school’s building demanding reform in art and design education. The protest ended peacefully when the local authorities repossessed the Crouch End site at the beginning of summer term (*The Hornsey Affair, 1969*, Tickner, 2008).

¹¹ At the time of writing in *Block*, the distinction between art and design history was not as clear-cut as others were suggesting: Putnam warned that ‘far from being a greener pasture free from the contradictions of art history, design history is in fair danger of becoming an academic backwater’ (Putnam in Bird, 1996, p. 135).

lateral thinking, specialism, the relevance of qualifications and exams and the relationship between universities and art colleges.

The overall mood is one of reflection and re-assessment in a rapidly changing field. Some methods and theories that were presented have since fallen out of favour (for example the ‘free association technique’ as a means to un-tapping creative potential suggested by the American academic Tom Warren - Warren in Warren-Piper, 1973, p.94), while others reverberate well after the 1970s educational debates – as Moris Kestelman’s argument of design’s struggle to be seen as art (Kestelman in Warren-Piper, 1973, p. 48). Certainly the demarcation between ‘soft options’ (often aligned with fine art) and ‘the hard grind’ (often aligned with the engineering aspect of industrial design) that Christopher Cornford of the Royal College of Art described in 1973, has remained a problematic of art and design education until very recently (Cornford in Warren-Piper, 1973, pp.107-109).

This emphasis on ‘hard grind’ subjects was reflected in C.O.I.D.’s early pedagogy of good design and it appears that one of the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* scheme’s targets was to stimulate interest in the profession of the industrial designer. At that time, this meant encouraging students to study engineering (see for example the display *Industrial Design and Engineering*, illustration 8). An overview of how Art, Design and Craft Education developed over time in the post-war period will illuminate how this aim was gradually expanded: over time, there developed a broader understanding of ‘design’ that went beyond the confines of ‘engineering’ made evident in the Collection through selection and presentation of artefacts. Stuart Maclure, writing in 1984, underlined the institutionalised nature of the technical/handicraft dichotomy in secondary school:

In curriculum terms, the technical subjects became aligned with the sciences on the one hand and craft subjects on the other, with the sciences enjoying greater esteem. This carried over into the comprehensive schools where, again, the examination system tended to militate against the development of strong technical streams (Maclure, 1984, p.241).

The debates of the late 1960s onwards, question the inevitability of a pattern whereby class background, schooling and educational choices, and the profession one follows formulate a path that is both determined and determining. To clarify: despite the social changes taking

place during the 1960s, class still determined career choices, and in the case of art and design this meant exclusion more often than inclusion (see for example testimonies in Lucie-Smith, 1975). Obvious and implicit hierarchies made fine art, and more so, design and the crafts, an undesirable future for gifted and privileged students in secondary education (Maclure, 1984). As Maclure suggests, craft subjects had less status than the sciences and within the sciences, technical education was the poor relative.

These tensions become apparent, for example, in publications such as Edward Lucie-Smith's *The World of the Maker*, a now evocative book first published in 1975. Lucie-Smith visited and photographed makers and gave intimate accounts of these individuals' work, their thinking and lifestyles. He makes compelling comments on most of his chosen makers' training and social background, e.g. 'Caiger-Smith was educated at Cambridge, though he subsequently attended art school [...] Cooper's background is working-class' (Lucie-Smith, 1975, p.57). 'Glenys Barton's background is working class - her father was a miner, later disabled.' (Lucie-Smith, 1975, p.80). This information is provided presumably as justification and explanation of the work. Of Glenys Barton, Lucie-Smith goes on to say that she is 'a ceramic sculptor, and her work increasingly tends to be shown in art galleries rather than craft-shops'. He also mentions an inscription written on Barton's wall "At all costs avoid craft!" (Lucie-Smith, 1975, pp.81-82).

Barton's dictum shows how occasionally, the delineation of territories within the art-craft-design nexus has been quite strict - whether manifest in public debate or on an individual maker's wall. In order to explain this, it is useful to enlist Bourdieu's notion of the 'field change'. Bourdieu explained the French student revolts of 1968 by claiming that a field change had occurred, whereby the old order, 'the intangible liberties and connivances which are shared by people of the same milieu, the respectful familiarity which was *de rigueur* between different generations of the same family, were abolished.' (Bourdieu, 1990, p.151).

Such divisions are also reflected in the contents and displays of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. Expressions of 'art' may not be present in the media of painting or illustrations, but a number of makers and more specifically potters and textile designers, have, through their works and writings, identified themselves as artists and their output as 'art' rather than craft. Though the establishment was slow to recognise craft as 'art', the appropriation of fine art by craftspeople was implicitly recognised by the Collection organisers who, as seen in

illustrations 9 and 10, compiled a display entitled *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*. Some of those represented in these exhibits were (in alphabetical order): Ian Auld, Gordon Baldwin, Gillian Lowndes, Bryan Newman, and Colin Pearson.

The space that artist-craftspeople were carving for themselves during the early 1970s was further broadened by exhibitions such as *The Craftsman's Art* of 1973 at the V&A Museum. The show was organised by the Crafts Advisory Committee, established in 1971, and renamed the Crafts Council in 1979. According to Peter Dormer, the Committee 'encouraged more people to see the dignity of fulfilling personal aspirations and encouraged an expanded view of what studio craft could be' (Dormer, 1992, p.19). Apart from government bodies and exhibitions, retail outlets, subsidised or private, did much to fill the vacuum between art, craft and design - Sandino singles out the opening of the V&A craft shop in 1974 (Sandino, 1991, p.75). Among suppliers of the Collection, the prominent example is Henry Rothschild's *Primavera* gallery, which is discussed in chapter 4.

Notwithstanding rigorous scrutiny from 1968 onwards, distinctions and differences between disciplines and their hierarchies had remained in place within the art and design educational experience up to the 21st century (Addison, 2003). However, recent writing has argued that what had been up to the turn of the 21st century a topical and heated debate, has given way to a more inclusive and reconciliatory discussion where negotiation over boundaries and hierarchies has become largely irrelevant. Sandino and Lees-Maffei claimed that questions of status had already started losing their relevance by the early 2000s and that examination should now focus on 'the sites of intersection which occur in objects, practices and materials; sites at which the production, reception and consumption of objects are intrinsic to an understanding of their polyvalent meanings' (Lees-Maffei and Sandino, 2004, p.210).

Not least, the debate has been reframed in view of recent technological advances. Some may argue that design has evolved into what amounts to little more than an exercise in coordinating resources and technologies, or as Chris Frayling put it, 'design has been transformed into a briefing' (Frayling in Charny, 2011, p. 30). In the meantime craft has enlisted liberating technologies such as 3D printing, which force us to re-define the ideas of 'skill' in order to accommodate machinery that complements the body and liberates it from its limitations. This new convergence in design, craft and fine art was in evidence in *The Power*

of Making exhibition, shown at the Victoria and Albert Museum (staged in association with the Crafts Council) during the autumn of 2011 (Charny, 2011).

Institutions where art and design courses are now taught, are keen to bridge art/design/craft schisms. At Camberwell College of Arts, the 'MA Visual Arts: Designer Maker' embraces this ethos (BA Visual Arts: Designer Maker, 2015), while at undergraduate level another example of such a course is the 'BA Design' offered by the University of London's Goldsmith College. The course favours 'an interdisciplinary approach, [where students] engage with a diverse set of critical and practical ideas, and are encouraged to push beyond the boundaries of traditional design specialisms' (BA Design, 2015). In that, respect some of the 1968 discussions cited above, have become irrelevant.

However, there are other ways in which events like the Hornsey and Guildford 'revolts' (Guildford also staged a sit-in in June of 1968) resonate with educationalists, as was evident in a 2011 discussion. Reminiscing about 1968, John Aiken, sculptural artist and director of the Slade School of Fine Art in London, purported that his generation (he was born in 1950) 'came to undermine the orthodoxies of what was increasingly thought as "procedures" and focus on how art school functions' (Aiken, 2011). If current provision of art and design education is, as many believe, in crisis again, with students gradually distancing themselves from the idea of art as 'a calling' and increasingly seeking ways to secure employment, it is hardly surprising that themes similar to the 1968 concerns are foregrounded once again (Aiken, 2011). Such observation give renewed resonance to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as an active teaching resource because it enables student-makers to gain insights into fields beyond production: museum studies, curating, archival research, history and criticism.

The changing socio-economic field that we encounter in the mid-2010s, brings forth a different kind of intergenerational rupture in art and design education: rather than radical and liberal, today's generation of art and design students are adopting a stance that is pragmatic, reactionary and ultimately conservative. In demanding from their courses 'experience of what it's going to be like to work after they leave' and to 'make them really grapple with some of the mechanisms and functions of the world out there' (Martin Newth in Rowles, 2011, p.235) today's students are seeking to re-establish the 'procedures' that Aiken and his contemporaries had rejected.

Andrew Bannister, the head of Fine Art Sculpture at City and Guilds Arts Schools, has identified this generational gap as a dissonance between expectations upon graduation: ‘when I was a student there was little emphasis placed on the idea of a career after art school’ (Bannister in Rowles, 2011, p.127). The ‘field change’ today seeks a continuum between the educational and professional fields, where education has become an investment and employment its return. It might surprise the 1968 generation that for today’s students, the label ‘artist’, is a profession like any other. As Dereck Harris claims, ‘in the current situation we are training young people who come with an expectation for a future career in the creative industries (Dereck Harris in Rowles, 2011, p.73).

The current educational climate suggests that the tripartite of government-education-manufacture is being revisited as a more inclusive and flexible model, where art, craft and design merge. What is perhaps ironic today is that while aspects of this capitalist design model are in crisis in the Western world (industry and employment in decline), British education in art and design itself has become the exportable product (Rowles, 2011). As long as the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection retains the potential of a teaching collection there will be scope in investigating the educational environment within which it currently functions.

The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as an agent of ‘Good Taste’

Apart from acquiring factual knowledge on the products and understanding the role of the designer, the main way in which secondary school students were expected to benefit from the scheme that eventually became the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection was the long-term objective of acquiring ‘good taste’.

As early as 1932, the Gorell report had foreshadowed this function by the recommendation that ‘as soon as funds are available a special scheme of travelling Exhibitions should be started in order to educate public taste’ (Board of Trade, 1932, p.24). Jonathan Woodham, citing from the Council for Art and Industry’s *Education for the Consumer* report produced in 1935, draws attention to the school’s pivotal role: ‘The ideal is that education authorities should give such consideration to the design of daily things, that the school will do for the mass of children what the cultured home does for the few.’ (Woodham 1996, in Pavitt, p. 16). The reports treat the subject of ‘good taste’ as a term requiring no further explanation or

justification, as if it were something that authors and readers would innately recognise. With reference to the individuals involved in compiling and acting upon these reports, it seems that the belief was that good taste was a ‘given’, a trait shared by all involved.

The aftermath of the Second World War created the conditions where the call for schools to play the role of the ‘cultured home’ could become a reality (Maclure, 1984; Samuel, 1994; Seabrook, 2002; Atkinson, 2012). During the War almost all households, regardless of class and culture, needed to be aware that thrift and their own resourcefulness would see them through the difficult times, and one can imagine how ‘taste’ was dictated by what was available. This claim is understood in Stephen Bayley’s definition of taste, as being ‘really just another word for choice’ (Bayley, 1983, p.12).¹² War shortages eliminated the element of choice, and therefore limited significantly the possibility of exercising individual taste. This state of affairs was compounded by government propaganda that placed emphasis on sparing materials for the war effort while ‘making do and mending’ on the home front. In this spirit, the Utility Scheme met the challenge of producing tasteful artefacts, furniture and clothing – according to its instigators (*Utility*, 1974, pp. 62-71).

The slippage between the terms ‘tasteful’, in ‘good taste’ and ‘good design’ reflects the mid-century tendency to use the terms inter-changeably, and encapsulates the modernist agenda. From the 1930s reports and the 1940s Utility Scheme, to the post-war design projects where the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* belonged, the discussion on taste was aligned with the principles of modernism, namely functionalism. Michael Farr summarised this in the introduction of his *Design in British Industry* (1955):

The broad aim of this book is to help towards the re-creation of an harmonious understanding between maker and user - with the assistance of the retailer - so that the limitations and desires of each can be appreciated...if such an objective can be achieved, industrial art will form the basis of a new culture in which taste will become coherent, critical judgements will be everywhere implied, and a popular standard will be acknowledged as a satisfactory level of taste below which nothing should fall (Farr, 1955, p.xxxiv).

¹² However, the taste agenda of modernism concerned choice which excluded excess.

Farr was in a position to make confident statements about reaching ‘a satisfactory level of taste’ because due to WWII’s particular circumstances, and through the implementation of the Utility Scheme, the state had poised itself as the main arbiter of taste in the 1940s - a position that it was to pursue with fervour in the next decades. The effect that the ‘spirit of the Blitz’ had on the general public’s psyche can be gleaned from interviews at the Mass Observation Archive (www.massobs.org.uk). Such resources show how the trauma of war can be seen in contradistinction to the birth of the 1950s consumer society and it is this development that partly explains the cautiously celebratory tone of the Collection’s early phase. One implication of the Mass Observation Archive, and a reason that it has proven a precious scheme, is that it gave a voice to ordinary people at a time when not much attention was being paid by historians to the documentation of the anonymous citizen’s opinion (The Original Mass Observation, 2013). Recently historians have implemented Mass Observation’s findings to present a lay person’s perspective of the mid-century experience, as David Kynaston has done in *Austerity Britain* (Kynaston, 2007).

This is in contrast to the practice of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection where there is no feedback from the scheme’s audience, namely the recipient schools. Not only is there no evidence of an officially designed assessment (evaluation) form, but there are no surviving records of structured comments from students or from teachers either. One reading of this situation is that it emphasises the vertical, hegemonic structure of a superior authority that educates in the educational model of the ‘empty vessel’, which was dominant at the time; this theory purports that students were expected to receive knowledge from the educator in the same manner that a vessel is filled (Biggs and Tang, 2007). In this scheme the recipients become a ‘silent’ audience in the history of the Collection, irrelevant to the dynamics of learning.

In the context of the Collection, lack of feedback simplified its didactic function on taste: audiences could complicate and possibly undermine the messages that the organisers had been keen to promote. This became clear from the empty boxes that ‘schools demanded’ in order to stage their own exhibitions. Sydney Foott, education officer for the C.O.I.D. and among the instigators of the scheme, briefly refers to the ‘plaster Alsatian dogs, dancing ladies, seashells and ephemera such as containers’ that the students chose to display (Foott in Baynes, 1969, p. 134, Illustration 11). This suggests that while the students enjoyed the scheme, their own

interpretation of collecting and displaying deviated from the C.O.I.D.'s target of 'well-designed' objects.

With the passing of time, the Collection's vision of good design became ever more cloudy and slippery. By the mid-1960s the pre-eminence of functionalism was under threat and even the arbiters could no longer recognise one single standard of taste. Walker describes how 'a disturbing relativity of values became evident and disagreements between different factions about what constituted good taste and good design became fiercer' (Walker, 1989, p.191). 'Kitsch' or 'camp' became desirable and absorbed into 'pop'-a word, which loosely defined the taste of a new post-war generation. The I.L.E.A./Camberwell display 'Pop, Folk, Modern' can be viewed as a response to this new perception of design but it occupies a unique place within the collecting spectrum, veering on the fashionable and the ephemeral whereas before the emphasis had been on timeless design (illustration 12). As I will show in the following chapters, this taste impasse played its role in the demise of the scheme.

Sydney Foott had written in 1969 that she hoped the 'London County Council Experiment' (as she called the scheme) would be 'a small pebble in the pond of design which may have far-reaching consequences on those who are at present an undeveloped potential force in the progress of good design' (Foott in Baynes, 1969, p. 143). Nearly half a century later my aim is to investigate the conditions and consequences that Foott spoke of, and to examine the shifts in the historical, educational and intellectual legacies among conceptions of 'good design'.

New Ideas in Art Education in the Inter-war Period and their Impact on Museum Education

Alongside design history, another discipline which has been enlisted to inform my investigation is that of 'museum studies', also called 'museology', and particularly 'museum education', which concerns the parts of museums that undertake educational functions, today more often referred to as 'Learning' rather than 'Education', to denote constructive educational approaches. These fields provide insights into how the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection has functioned as the 'museum coming to the school' and they also aid an understanding of its current educational affordances within the University of the Arts London.

Before the advent of museum education as a discipline, government agents worked with teachers, establishing relationships that would later give rise to the new profession of museum educator. One such person relevant to my research, was Marion Richardson. Richardson became Inspector of Art at the London County Council in 1930, and, although she was not directly involved with museums, she left her stamp on progressive art teachers. In her role as an Inspector of Art, ‘she had profound influence on the teaching of art, craft, pattern-making and hand-writing, particularly in infant and junior schools [...] she ran courses for teachers which were always oversubscribed’ (Romans, 2005, p. 171). Richardson’s teachings found international peers among Maria Montessori, John Dewey and Franz Cizek, as well as her British contemporary Herbert Read (Viola, 1936; Read, 1958; Montessori, 1988; Dewey, 2005). Significantly for its implications to my topic, Richardson produced a report for the Council for Art and Industry in 1934, which she entitled *The Development of Artistic Sensibility in School Children*. Some of the content of that report was replicated into the Council for Art and Industry’s *Education for the Consumer*, which has already been mentioned (Art and Industry Council, 1935).

In *Education for the Consumer*, Richardson’s influence is more apparent when the authors lament the practice of ‘Art’ in schools as being limited to just drawing and painting:

this is a narrow conception (which has had some share of the responsibility for an unfortunate divorce between ‘art’ and ‘handicraft’). Without attempting a full definition of Art, we feel that the expression should in general cover the creation of beautiful things in any material by any process or with any tools (Art and Industry Council, 1935, p.10).

Richardson’s and her international colleagues’ work laid the foundations for institutionalised revisions of the notion of creativity and its agents. Rather than training competent ‘copyists’, teachers were becoming aware of the child as a unique and independent creative force, one they started to respect, encourage and appreciate. Following closely on the footsteps of ‘Professor Cizek’ whom she had travelled to Vienna to meet in 1926, she addressed teachers whose ‘minds were ready, chiefly because of the growing respect for the individuality of the child. In art this respect is a necessity: for unless a child is expressing his own vision he is expressing nothing at all’ (Richardson, 1948, p.59). While we need to remain vigilant against conflating the notions of ‘art’ and ‘design’ in Richardson’s approach, it is worth taking note

of the expanded notion of creative approaches that Richardson advocated, which allowed for synergies between various types of ‘making’.

The freshness of Richardson’s approach was not lost on an institution with close links to the Collection, the Geffrye Museum in London. The Museum was run by the London County Council and later by I.L.E.A. Archival research has found correlations between developments in the *Circulating Design Scheme* (later the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection) and the activities of the Geffrye during the 1950s and 1960s. One Geffrye museum educator who is very likely to have met Richardson in person, was Molly Harrison. In 1935 the London County Council moved the responsibility of the Geffrye and the Horniman to its Educational Committee. Harrison joined that committee as a member of staff in 1939 and started working at the Geffrye during WWII. In addition to Richardson’s influence, Harrison was particularly enthusiastic about the tenets of education as advocated by Froebel, the German educationalist who since the early 19th century had argued for the central role of play in learning (Froebel, F. (2005) [1826]). Like Montessori after him, Froebel emphasised practical activities and games as the best way to develop children’s concepts of space and pattern. The Geffrye’s educational material mostly devised and written by Harrison, reflected her immersion in Froebelian theory. Another influence was the Sloyd educational philosophy, which was devised in Finland during the 19th century (1865) and promoted the crucial role of handicraft in children’s development.

Of Molly Harrison, Samuel says that she was

the very adventurous curator of the Geffrye Museum, Hackney, and the inventor of the idea of the ‘period’ room, [who] was taking up arms against the ‘solemn hush’ of the ‘huge marble halls’ and turning her museum into an extended workshop and place of activity learning for East London schoolchildren (Samuel, 1994, p.182).

Gene Adams who worked at both the Geffrye and the I.L.E.A. in its final years, comments how

The Geffrye during the 1940s-1960s led the field of worksheets as all the work with children put a strong emphasis on drawing in the museum. Similar activities were not offered in any other major museums or galleries in London until the 1970s when new

Education Officers began to be appointed in the various national and local museums (Adams, 1992, unpaginated).

Harrison's legacy was the Geffrye's dynamic role in matters relating to London County Council's and the Greater London Council's art and design educational policies. Both Sydney Foott, education officer for the Council of Industrial Design, and Dennis Stevens, the art inspector who oversaw the design experiment's function, had worked at the Geffrye and with Harrison. Foott was on the Geffrye museum advisory Committee from 1957 to 1969 and Dennis Stevens had been Deputy Curator at the Geffrye from 1953 to 1959 when he left to run the L.C.C. design scheme (which eventually became the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection). The Museum's archive suggest that perhaps the Geffrye was the location of the gestation of the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* since representatives of both the London County Council and the Council of Industrial Design sat on its Advisory Committee (anon., 1959).

The changing status of museums from sterile custodians of objects towards a more active and involved social role is made manifest by increased attention to their educational function during the course of the 20th century, but particularly during the 1960s, the 1970s and the 1980s. This shift from repository to educator, illuminates further the investigation of how social and educational factors influenced the implementation of the Collection, especially during its later stage (i.e. after the formation of I.L.E.A. in 1965). These three decades were a time of intense growth of interest into museum education with the effect that, eventually, the main role of circulating collections was taken over by the newly established museum education departments and travelling collections petered out.

A museum educator at the V&A during the 1960s and 1970s, René Marcoué elucidates the practice of mid-century museum education in her account, *The Listening Eye* (Marcoué, 1961). She claimed that, in the UK, interest in museum education had existed 'since the war' but that the Americans were much more advanced in this field (Marcoué, 1961, p.2). Marcoué comments this in spite of the fact that the British had shown a clear commitment to the museum as an educational locus since the 19th century:

The special function of the museum is [...] that of the school to educate the individual while all [functions] meet together on common ground in the custodianship of learning and in extending the boundaries of existing knowledge. [Brown-Goode, 1895, p. 198]

While the theory regarding the educational role of the museum was well-documented since the 19th century, the incorporation of this element in the practical, daily, engagement of the museum with its audiences came much later, and mainly after WWII as Marcousé indicates (Marcousé, 1961). On the partnership between the museum education officer and the visiting school-teacher, she says that ‘one is concerned with the training of the eye, the other seeks to explore the new vistas opened up by these visual images’ (Marcousé, 1961, p. 9). In two books, one published in 1961 and the other in 1974, she develops her approach, which is inevitably art historical as was her background (Marcousé had gained her PhD on medieval sculpture from the Courtauld). In the earlier book, *The Listening Eye*, she centres her arguments around the pre-dominance of looking:

In our view, the primary qualification of the teacher in museum education should be visual awareness and general aesthetic perceptiveness. These are qualities whether in the teaching or in the museum world. (Marcousé, 1961, p.2)

While she comments that handling ‘is a very valuable part of museum education’ and that it ‘greatly facilitates understanding and enhances visual appreciation’, she finds it ultimately impractical (Marcousé, 1961, p.18). As indicated by the title of her book, Marcousé had meant ‘looking’ through the curatorial eyes that Sandino refers to when she says that the eye for the curator is not ‘disinterested’ in the Kantian sense but ‘a specifically *embodied eye*’ (her emphasis, Sandino, 2012, p.96).

Evidence of Marcousé’s approach as art historical is borne by the illustrations of the publication taken from the V&A’s collection where she worked: the selection comprises exceptional, rare and unique artefacts, ones that represent the culmination of skill. Some examples of images from her book confirm this view: a Nicholas Hilliard miniature, a Chinese painting on silk, a Persian 13th century wall tile, a Sung dynasty stoneware pot, an ivory diptych of AD 400, a marble relief by Donatello, Chelsea and Meissen porcelain figures, a 16th century Persian carpet, a 15th century tapestry. She advises museum officers to select for educational purposes exhibits that

fulfil certain basic requirements; they should possess aesthetic value, be of some historical significance and, if possible, introduce a theme which will make the students

aware of stylistic changes in different countries at different periods of time (Marcousé, 1961, p.13).

In her later book, *Using Objects* (1974) Marcousé was involved with a project run by the Schools Council, entitled *Art and Craft Education 8-13 Project* which resulted in the *Using Objects* publication as one of three sourcebooks (the other two being *Using Natural Materials* by S. Robertson and *Using Constructional Materials* by M. Laxton; all were published in 1974). The project gives an insight into how school audiences were evaluated in museum education during this period and highlights the striking methodological difference to the highly regimented approach of later museum educators, as exemplified in Hooper-Greenhill in 2007.

Marcousé's project had been set up

to investigate art education and curriculum development for the 8-13 group [...]to determine the nature of children's creative experience and to reach a finer understanding of the conditions which encourage their creative and imaginative growth. (Marcousé, 1974, preface)

Again the selection focused on primarily elite artefacts from the Victoria and Albert Museum, as well as from the British Museum and from private collections. The group of artefacts included: a Chinese water-colour on silk, Pablo Picasso ceramics, a 16th century embroidery and sculptures from the Parthenon. A number of other natural history items, seashells, bones and skeletons from the Pitt Rivers Museum and private collections, are also represented in the books' photographs but even they are captured in a mood that evokes the singularity of the art object (see for example illustration 14, shell from Crete from private collection, Marcousé, 1974).

During her research Marcousé used the objects to prompt students into discussion and creative responses - such as the sculpture photographed in illustration 13, reproduced from the book (Marcousé, 1974). Marcousé's collation of student comments and photographs suggests an unstructured approach to analysing and reporting data. Pre-dominantly the book maps an enchanted space where pupils become transfixed by the museum object: 'The study took six weeks to reach a point of dialogue between child and object - a personal imaginative dialogue

in a world of fantasy.’ (Marcou  , 1974). In terms of early 1970s museum education, this unique and precious relationship between the child and the object, suffices as evidence of the project’s usefulness (illustration 13, Marcou  , 1974). This assessment reflects how the scheme tat became the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, was using the criterion of its physical presence in the schools as a measure of success: by merely being sent to schools, the project appeared to fulfil its educational agenda – thus administrators urged for displays to be produced at a quick pace (Carolis, 1966).

Parallel to the mushrooming of museum education, museums were further boosted during the 1970s by the proliferation of theorising of the material world, which was being undertaken by the new discipline of museology (elsewhere called ‘museum studies’ – Vergo, 1989). Like museum education, museology has itself undergone disciplinary changes in the past few decades; Lara Kriegel points out that the internal-looking museology of the late twentieth century was giving way to a study of broader museum purposes, opening the discipline to the museum’s wider social function (Kriegel, 2006). These developments have allowed museums to further establish their educational role as based in, but reaching far beyond, the institutional edifices. An insight into how museums encroached on education, is provided by Bourdieu’s notion of ‘capital’. According to Bourdieu, capital can be ‘objectified’ or ‘embodied’ (Bourdieu, 1986). Museums already possess objectified capital through their collections and their curatorial staff represent a ready pool of ‘embodied’ capital: the capital of knowledge, connoisseurship, expertise. By the 1970s, the embodied capital in the U.K. was represented by specifically trained museum educators, thus creating the preconditions for the museum’s educational ‘habitus’ – ‘habitus’ in the sense of the tendency to offer the combination of ‘objectified’ and ‘embodied’ capital within the museum locus (Moore, in Grenfell, 2008, p.105).

An educational role had been played by museums all along. From the 1960s onwards there had been an additional paradigmatic shift that allowed museums to become more inclusive and egalitarian, and to abandon at least some of their ‘boundaries’, for instance the ‘vitrine’, the glass display case which enclosed the object. The opening-up of (some) displays had notable implications in the negotiation of occularcentric versus haptic elements within the museum environment (Harrison, 1973, Chatterjee, 2008, Candlin, 2011). There are important implications of this sensory dichotomy for handling collections and these are analysed in other sections of this thesis (Chapter 5).

A summation of the causes behind these shifts is provided by Raphael Samuel in his account of British cultural history in *Theatres of Memory* (Samuel, 1994):

In the case of the museums movement, a concurrence of different causes might be hypothesised: in one aspect it can be seen as a by-product or analogue of the antiques boom of the 1960s, and the collecting mania which sent scavengers and detectorists on the trail of the humblest artefacts. In another sense, it was the beneficiary of the local government reforms of 1962, under which the county councils were empowered to appoint their own archaeologists and take charge of the museum services. In yet another – the turn to ‘hands-on’ interactive display, and living, working exhibits- it could be seen as a museological and historical parallel to that very 1960s excitement, the ‘happening’. (Samuel, 1994, p.149)

Samuel also identified the 1960s as the decade when ‘various movements, so heteroclit in their origins, partly under the impact of new techniques of retrieval and display ‘gave shape to the idea of “living history”’ (Samuel, 1994, p.190). The advent of ‘living history’ hints at the factors that made the museum an environment more widely accessible by various strata of society than it had previously been; yet certain pioneering museums, the Geffrye being most relevant here, had pursued this aim since the early 20th century. Moreover, especially in London, the role of local authorities should be stressed, especially in view of the fact that the Geffrye was set up and governed by the London County Council.

Though these changes gained momentum during the 1970s and were widespread by the 1980s, the seed for opening up museums to the public should be sought in the immediate post-war period and even the inter-war years in the case of museums within the Metropolitan area of London. More recently, museums have become sites for experimenting with novel educational approaches. Museums, being more flexible than schools due to their exemption from curriculum responsibilities, offer grounds for radical pedagogies. David Anderson, in his role as Head of Learning and Interpretation at the Victoria and Albert Museum, suggests:

We should move towards a postmodern pedagogy, which is delineated fundamentally by a discourse of radical democracy, whilst extending and deepening those democratic

values and ideals which are already embedded within a modernist project of liberal freedoms (Anderson, 2005, p.27).

Anderson views large museums such as the V&A, as ideal channels for such pedagogy because they are less regimented than schools:

Museum-based learning has something essential to offer to society – a distinctive way of thinking and learning through cultural resources that is socially and educationally richer than everyday life, and less formal and restrictive than state-controlled education (Anderson, 2005, p.28).

Such approaches suggest useful comparisons between museum education, school education and the University education system where the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection currently resides.

CHAPTER 2

A Reflective/Reflexive History of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

In this section I have used the adjectives ‘reflective’ and ‘reflexive’ in order to describe my account of the history of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. Both words denote awareness of one’s own practice: ‘reflective’ being the established educational term, in the tradition of educational philosophers as John Dewey and Jean Piaget (Dewey, 1933; Piaget, 1952; Addison, 2003). I borrow the word ‘reflexive’ from Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu’s own reflexivity in *Homo Academicus* (a sociological study he conducted on French academia) is a useful guide for practicing it in the academic environment. He explains that:

In the study I pursue a double goal and construct a double object. First the apparent object constituted by the French university as an institution, which requires an analysis of its structure and functioning, of the various species of power that are efficient in this universe [...] and, second, the deeper object: the reflexive return entailed in objectivizing one’s own universe’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.67)

Further down he sums up with the comment that sociologists often fail to recognize that their discourse ‘is not the object but their relation to the object’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.69). These comments locate the discourses I am involved in, in a methodological frame that encompasses the activity of the researcher - in my case setting out to offer theoretical accounts of an archive that has evolved as a result of the practice of others: makers, manufacturers, teachers, collectors, local authority employees, students, administrators, conservators, critics, researchers. These actions have informed the evolution of the Collection to an archive: since collecting has ceased, we are today dealing with a body of objects that, together with their documentation, form an archive. Though I am writing a history, reflection/reflexivity does not only refer to the Collection’s past. Continuing reflection/reflexivity will ensure that all those involved with the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection’s dynamic, share the understanding that it is our researching, our writing, our documenting, our exhibiting, our conserving, our teaching, our speaking of it -the totality of our actions- which define the boundaries of the Collection. More than its boundaries, involvement brings into being its possibilities for the future.

A Note on Titles

As has become already apparent, the collection of approximately 10,000 objects ‘of good design’ currently held at Camberwell College of Arts, University of the Arts London, has had several incarnations and titles. From 1951 to 1956 it was known as *the Design Experiment*, *the Design Education Experiment*, *the Design Experiment Scheme* or *the Experiment in Design Appreciation*. Under the exclusive management of London local government (the London County Council and its successor from 1963, the Greater London Council), the Collection was called *the Circulating Design Scheme* and sometimes *the Circulating Scheme for Design Appreciation* with occasional lapses into its previous titles. After its acquisition by Camberwell College of Arts in 1990, it was referred to as *the Camberwell Collection of Applied Arts* or just *the Camberwell Collection*. In one report it was *the I.L.E.A. Heritage Collection of Decorative Arts Materials* (Fone, 1994). It is today known as *the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection* -a title which combines its past history and current location.

An Introduction to the Contents of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection had been used as a circulating handling collection in secondary schools of the Greater London area between 1951 and 1976. The objects were presented in thematic displays, in travelling cases that stayed with each school for a term at a time. The cases would fold up to a box for easy transport, though their size was such (6 by 6 feet when fully opened) that a specialized contractor had to install and transport them. When in a school, cases would be stood against a wall and would open in the manner of a closet, with two panels on each side of the main display space (illustration 15).

Specific themes dictated the appearance of each set. Consider for example: a pottery bird, a statue of an old Polish woman, a piece of Thai silk, a Dutch pastry mould, a Peruvian pottery bull, a Javan shadow puppet, an Italian cane mat and ‘a poodle in a rocking chair’ (no further information provided). They might appear a random list, but they organise themselves as a display grouped under the theme of ‘Folk Art’, which included ‘all the crafts that belong naturally to people of all races’ (illustration 16). It must be noted that this grouping stands at the more eclectic end of the thematic spectrum. Overall, arrangements were more

straightforward and self-explanatory, for example *Wood – Structure and Purpose* or *Woven Textiles* (illustrations 17 and 18; see appendix 11 for a full list of known displays).

One of the first tasks in the unravelling of the Collection's history was to put the photographs of the displays in a chronological sequence. The order was derived from photographs held at Camberwell College of Arts, which bear an accession number stamped on the back, photographs at the archive of the *Council of Industrial Design* (held at the Centre of Research and Development in Brighton) and photographs from the I.L.E.A. files at the London Metropolitan archives. Some of these sources overlap, that is they are copies of the same image. Photographs were important in the Collection because they accompanied the objects to the schools and they acted as inventories. Schools could thus observe their explicit obligation to return sets as they had received them and including all the items inventoried in the picture, something not necessarily self-evident when a handling collection is concerned.

The comprehensive study of all the above-mentioned material led to my observation that as time progressed, the Collection evolved and changed. This is not surprising considering that the scheme functioned from 1951 (in practice early 1952) to 1976. Arguably, the 25 years that the Collection circulated in London schools, can be identified as the most culturally complex of the 20th century. During that period seismic shifts took place in the make-up of British society, in areas like gender equality, distribution of wealth, education, immigration –changes which occurred on a large enough scale to affect all social strata and genders. These changes were reflected in education as well as local government, the two agents that primarily shaped the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection (illustration 2).

Comparison on the basis of its two extremes, 1951 and 1976, brings forth a clear contrast in the underlying concerns that informed collecting and exhibiting practices (what would today be described as 'curatorial practices'). Early 1950s displays are transparent in their aspiration to engage students with 'modern' in the sense of the 'form follows function' aesthetic: the emphasis on materials, techniques and technologies involved, underpins the belief that this type of knowledge would be equally useful to the future engineer as to the future consumer (e.g. *Blown and Decorated Glass*, illustration 19). The interpretation of 'modern' as an emphasis on materials and methods, is evident for example, in another glass display, *Glass Making* (illustration 20); there, twelve small phials of sand and chemicals used to make glass were matched to the types of glass they produced. At the other chronological extreme, one of

the last displays, entitled *Pop, Folk, Modern*, presents a different interpretation of ‘modern’ (illustration 12 compiled in 1968, see also the discussion on ‘modern’ ‘modernism’ and ‘modernity’ in Chapter 1).

Yet it is only by direct comparison between the initial and the final groupings that we understand the divergence. When we follow the chronology and the routes of acquisition, as well as the content of texts that went with the displays, the underpinning variances become subtler; within the remit of the Collection, change was slow and hardly perceptible. The one identifiable fissure, as is discussed further down, were the I.L.E.A. years. Overall it would be fair to argue that where the Collection began might be a different place to where it ended, but there is scant internal evidence to substantiate the claim that the time in-between was one of radical transformation – if anything, a cursory examination of the photographs speaks of a static repetition of the same actions informed by the same imperatives: a commitment to show-casing good design; educational texts discussing materials, techniques and contexts, and a standard display that allowed handling of the objects.

Therefore in order to pursue small shifts that make up the larger picture over the quarter of the century 1951-1976, I need to draw both on the sparse documentation that relates to the Collection¹³, as well as refer to the external information, and particularly refer to the histories of British art education in the post-war period and that of government, local and national; these are analysed in the following sections.

Beginnings – Early Twentieth Century Initiatives and the Council of Industrial Design

Historically, the Collection’s origins, the birth of that central idea, i.e. the impetus for government to guide manufacture and consumption through aesthetic education, can be traced as far back as the Schools of Design of the 19th century (these are discussed in more detail in the section ‘Precedents and Parallel Collections’ of chapter 3). Closer to the time of the *Design Education Experiment*, there were a series of relevant governmental interventions,

¹³ The word ‘sparse’ in relation to the existing documentation reflects the loss of status of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, from a prestigious body of objects that was meticulously documented during the 1950s and 1960s, to a ‘burden’ on the system by the mid-1970s. Consequently, the scant remaining documentation hints that the bulk of paperwork relating to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection perished with the abolition of the I.L.E.A. in 1990.

especially in the inter-war period. The Meynell-Hoskin Report of 1944 (Boards of Trade and Education, 1944) identified five previous important papers that the Meynell-Hoskin committee found particularly relevant to the matter of Industrial Design: the Gorell Report of 1932, the Council for Art and Industry Report of 1935, the Hambledon report in 1936, the *Design and the Designer in Industry* report in 1937 and Weir in 1943¹⁴(Boards of Trade and Education, 1944). In varying degrees, the above-mentioned reports addressed the need to support British manufacture through education and state guidance.

Particularly the report on *Design and the Designer in Industry* recommended that a combination of designing on paper, learning about the context and handling materials in actual production environments, would complete the designer's education:

There was a fair measure of agreement among our industrial witnesses that the primary function of an art school or college is to lay the sure foundations of a sound education in draughtsmanship and colour, but that the training should also be related to the actual commodities concerned and should include the handling of the materials, some instruction in the processes of manufacture and some historical and comparative study of design (Art and Industry Council, 1937, p.50).

The Meynell-Hoskin committee, taking its cue from the above, specifically stated that its main objective was the 'establishment of a Central Design Council', thus creating the Council of Industrial Design (Boards of Trade and Education, 1944).

Another notable influence on the 1944 committee was the 1932 'Gorell Report', officially the *Report for the Committee on the Production and Exhibition of Articles of Good Design and Everyday Use* (Board of Trade, 1932). Attention must be paid to the full title because the phrases 'Good Design' and 'Everyday Use' set the agenda for the role of government in design, and specifically through the Board of Trade, the body behind these projects. Evidently influenced by the widespread appeal of functionalism on the continent, this report also marks a fresh view of how manufacture should follow (or not follow) the aesthetic imperatives imposed by high art. The authors of the report point out that 'fundamental differences

¹⁴ The Weir report on Industrial Design and Art in Industry was written by a subcommittee chaired by Cecil M. Weir, submitted September 1943 but not published.

between the technique of industrial manufacture and of handicraft make the problem of adapting design to industry a wholly different one from the production of unique specimens of artistic workmanship' (Board of Trade, 1932, p. 12).

A later report, compiled by the Council for Art and Industry in 1937, questioned the perceived 'mutual distrust between artists and manufacturers' (Woodham, 1997, p.167). It would be fair to argue that one standard manufacturing practice until then was to copy 'high art' objects or museum pieces which would then be translated into cheaper, more widely available consumer goods. As Michael Farr claimed in 1955, 'one cannot approve of imitations of period designs [...] the arbitrary invocation of antique styles is a disease' (Farr, 1955, p.36 of introduction). In contrast to this tradition, reports as the Gorell committee's recognized the independent taste-making potential of mass-produced objects per se as attested by their consistent use of the term 'industrial art' to denote the output of industry (Board of Trade, 1932). 'Industrial Art' could have a wider impact than fine art because, after all, 'for the one person who visits a museum or gallery, a thousand enter a shop to buy a cup and saucer' (Board of Trade, 1932, p.15).

While Lord Gorell's and later reports ('Hambleton' 1936; 'Design and the Designer in Industry', 1937; 'Weir', 1943) made recommendations which did not lead directly to the formation of *The Experiment in Design Appreciation*, they demonstrate the changing status of design as a variable in manufacturing and consumption. In this respect, they can be said to have delineated governmental intentions regarding education through design. Their values were reflected in the actions of men like Gordon Russell who, during the Second World War's materials crisis, found fertile ground to apply ideas of modernism and functionalism in design, as I have described these in Chapter 1. As chairman of the panel of designers behind the Utility Scheme, he felt that 'to raise the whole standard of furniture for the mass of people was not a bad war job' (*Design*, 1974, p.67). This was a view expressed in 1974, at a safe distance from the bitterly difficult war years. The quote appeared in *Design* magazine in an interview scheduled to coincide with the Geffrye Museum's celebratory 'Utility' exhibition. In keeping with industrial design's war-time momentum, 1944 saw the realization of the Meynell-Hoskin recommendation for a grant-in-aid for the Council of Industrial Design. The £50,000 granted ensured a healthy start for the Council, and by 1947 Russell had become its chairman.

Russell was inevitably involved in the *Britain Can Make It* 1946 exhibition, where over 5,000 objects were shown to a public starved of consumer goods, and he was integral to the all-encompassing success of the *Festival of Britain* in 1951. It has been argued that the five years between *Britain Can Make It* and the Festival bridged consumer expectations with consumer realities (Atkinson, 2012; Conekin, 2003). In 1946 *Britain Can Make It* offered a first glimpse of the good times ahead, but most products on display were unavailable in the shops. The Festival of Britain did not peddle a promise, but hard evidence of the remarkable recovery achieved during the previous five years. For Harriet Atkinson, the Festival succeeded in evoking a British form of modernism without negating the past:

The festival had shown the British public modernism need not be an alien concept, it put forward a visual compromise, a tempered modernism, this New Picturesque - new building, in new materials that was at the same time imbued with a sense of the past. (Atkinson, 2012, p. 196)

The Festival contributed to making the early 1950s an exceptionally optimistic time and to persuade the British that ‘design was of critical importance in the post-war period’ (Woodham, 1996, p.119). While the surviving primary sources (Festival pamphlets, catalogues, photographs, reports) paint a triumphant picture of the preferred visual idiom, i.e. the ‘contemporary’ as this was understood during the 1950s, it is not easy to estimate the actual degree of success that these efforts had on ‘educating’ the general public. The consensus among design historians (Forty, 1987; Walker, 1990; Woodham, 1997; Jackson, 1998) seems to be that by the end of the war, the pioneering phase of modernism as it had manifested itself during the early part of the twentieth century, had given way to its popularised version of the ‘contemporary’ (Greenhalgh, 1990). However, historians of the Festival have warned against presuming that ‘contemporary’ was a style that deeply impressed popular taste (Banham and Hillier, 1996; Conekin, 1999; Conekin, 2003). Richard Hoggart, in his 1950s analysis of the English working-class claimed that they ‘make nothing of Scandinavian simplicities’ (for ‘Scandinavian’ read ‘contemporary’) and he believed that for working-class people, the most aspirational style was ‘that commonly represented in drawing-room dramas about upper-suburban life – flowery chintz and bits of shiny brass.’ (Hoggart, 1992, p.128).

The Scheme Under the Direction of the Council of Industrial Design and L.C.C.

While mass audiences may have remained unconvinced, it would be fair to argue that Labour governments in particular, whole-heartedly embraced the lessons of 1951, as is evident by the post-war civil building projects underwritten by government. The appeal of modernism for governmental bodies, and more specifically for the London County Council, is apparent in the massive re-building effort during the post-war years. In order to meet housing and schooling needs, London County Council turned, among others, to the Council of Industrial Design. For example, the L.C.C.'s educational department maintained co-operation with the C.O.I.D. on the matter of furnishing schools– the Council sent representatives to the Furniture Design Panel of the L.C.C. Advisory Committee on School Equipment (Council of Industrial Design, 1952).

It is conceivable that the L.C.C. approached the C.O.I.D. as a result of the impressive educational component of the Festival of Britain but the truth is that the Council had a circulating collection on its agenda since its very inception. Paragraph 30 of the 1944 Meynell-Hoskin Report, in its turn picking up on the Weir recommendations, states that even before the war, the Art and Industry Council had been planning, in collaboration with the Board of Education, 'simple sets of exhibits illustrating the principles of good design' to circulate in schools (Boards of Trade and Education, 1944, p.9). It must be noted that the Victoria and Albert Museum's Circulation Department was invariably the model for such suggestions. The reliance on the Victoria and Albert, is demonstrated by the Gorell committee's hope that

a special scheme of travelling Exhibitions should be started in order to educate public taste outside London. Meanwhile, we hope that the travelling collections for the Department of Circulation in the Victoria and Albert Museum will meet, so far as possible, the need for this type of Exhibition (Board of Trade, 1932, p. 23).

As for the *Experiment in Design Appreciation*, while details of initial negotiations have not survived, we can assume that the initiative reflects a happy dovetailing between the wishes of educators at the L.C.C. and those of the Council –as I have shown, the Council had been anticipating such a project. The name given to the initiative deserves some attention. In those early years the scheme was referred to as the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* (or

variations of this title, see p.1). It is unlikely that the word ‘experiment’ belies the expectation that the scheme would yield measurable results. I have not been able to find evidence of any attempt to assess the impact of the ‘experiment’ in quantifiable terms; sporadic comments such as ‘the schools that have received these exhibitions have reported favourably on their reception by their pupils’ (Council of Industrial Design, 1953, p.13) do not suggest a methodical analysis of the scheme’s reception. I would therefore propose that the word ‘experiment’ was chosen merely because of its vaguely scientific and speculative connotation, as it had been used in the past, for example by Henry Cole.¹⁵

Yet ‘experiment’ is also a word representative of this time as it was, after all, the time when the world’s imagination was captured by the potential of science and technology.¹⁶ A look through Festival of Britain images and ephemera confirms that abstracted scientific patterns applied to decorative effect was the main trend. The ‘atom’ furniture and the ‘Skylon’ structure of the Festival are examples; more have been documented in sources as Lesley Jackson’s *Contemporary* (Jackson, 1998). At the same time, evolving professional fields such as marketing, were busy developing ways of predicting consumer behaviour through supposedly ‘scientific’ measurements. Today we have perhaps acquired a critical stance regarding claims of formulae that can predict spending patterns, but during the 1950s this was a topic of much academic attention, hence the success of books as Vance Packard’s *The Hidden Persuaders* (2007) [1957]. I refer to the social context in order to argue that the word ‘experiment’ had a wider set of connotations in the 1950s and was not an odd one to use for this type of social project. There is also a resonance with the word ‘experiment’ as it had been used in the mid-19th century when Henry Cole took charge of the Schools of Design ‘in order to advance new combinations of politics, economics and public pedagogy under capital’ (Quinn, 2011, p. 62).

One interesting research question regarding the early years of the experiment, is the balance of power and distribution of tasks between the Council of Industrial Design and the London

¹⁵ Cole had used it to refer to the 19th century Schools of Design as a way of the state maintaining a stake in art and design training and education as Quinn notes (Quinn, 2011, p. 69).

¹⁶ The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, defines the word ‘experiment’ as: a scientific procedure undertaken to make a discovery, test a hypothesis, or demonstrate a known fact’; (internet, *Oxford Dictionaries*); this definition encapsulates the ethos of post-war societies as it was reflected in the Festival’s exhibits, e.g. displays on x-ray crystallography and themed patterns on products (Jackson, 2008).

County Council. Documentation such as annual reports of the Council's activities, held at the Centre for Research and Development (University of Brighton) bears reference to the fact that the scheme was instigated by the London County Council and that specific authority was responsible for financing it. For example, Sydney Foott, the C.O.I.D.'s education officer, wrote in the Council's seventh Annual Report: 'The Education Section has started an experiment in design appreciation with the London County Council, which has borne the cost' (Council of Industrial Design, 1952, p.12). A set of photos held in the same archive show that the basic format of the travelling display case had been modelled on the Council's previous travelling exhibits while the later photographs held at Camberwell College of Art, show cases that have been modified. The most significant difference is that almost all of the later I.L.E.A. cases bear texts on the folding panels, some of which are quite lengthy, while earlier displays came with less text (illustration 19).

The additional text on the panels is the single most important I.L.E.A. intervention, and brings with it a wealth of contextual data that concern the present thesis. The reasoning behind the increase in text and information is given by Dennis Stevens, the I.L.E.A. education officer, who wrote in 1967, in a memo addressed to Mr FW Bodger and Mrs D. H. Loud (presumably Bodger and Loud were colleagues at the L.C.C.):

Originally a number of experimental exhibitions prepared by the L.C.C. and C.O.I.D. were circulated among schools selected by the art inspectorate. After discussions with staff and pupils, I accepted a general view that these exhibitions were over-complicated and contained too much technical data unrelated to aesthetics; at the time I was not aware that these particular schools had been selected for the reason that each enjoyed art teaching of outstanding quality. Our own earlier exhibitions were, therefore, simple in presentation on the assumption that teachers would provide much of the interpretation. Subsequent experience indicated that, in a number of schools, such simplification resulted in reduced educational opportunity (Stevens, 1967).

Stevens does not give details of what constitutes 'reduced educational opportunity', but he chose to amend this perceived shortcoming by greatly increasing the amount of labelling and writing on the panels. However it is noteworthy that Stevens chose to reduce the 'technical data' and sever technical understanding from aesthetic appreciation. It may be argued that this decision undermined the principal rule of functionalist design education, that of form

following function. The other crucial piece of information given in this memo is the initial reliance on schools that ‘enjoyed art teaching of outstanding quality’ (Stevens, 1967).

Investigating the general aims and methods of the experiment, I have identified three types of sources from which information on the early years can be derived: the photographic documents pertaining to *The Experiment in Design Appreciation* and the captions that sometimes accompanied them; the photographic documentation of other exhibits in the same vein, undertaken by the Council of Industrial Design, sometimes in association with the Council’s Scottish Committee or other regional organisations; and thirdly, written documents, published and unpublished, that involved the C.O.I.D.’s education department. Regarding the first five years of the scheme, the most reliable source are the C.O.I.D.’s yearly reports. The brief sections on education were contributed by education officer Sydney Foott and among other things, they tell us that there was a steady addition of three cases per year to the experiment.

In order to contextualise the experiment within the Council’s educational activities it is worth being aware of the parallel ways in which the Council communicated its educational objectives. As early as 1948, a photo from a wall display at the Building Centre, Conduit Street, explains to visitors the Council’s purpose and methods: ‘to promote by all practical means improved design in British manufactures’, through the offer to students and educational organisations of ‘a wide range of visual aids, such as film strips, wall cards, portable exhibits and inexpensive booklets’ (anonymous photograph, 1948). That is one Example of ample evidence that the Council had established educational approaches to showing and communicating ‘good design’ which had been already tested in other settings before the collaboration with the L.C.C., though the crucial distinction is that the above-mentioned visual resources prioritised vision, while the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* allowed the handling of objects.

The C.O.I.D.’s Sixth Annual Report, 1950-1951, confirms that the seeds for the Design Experiment Scheme had been sown in the small portable box exhibitions which had been touring during the year in 60 public libraries, art galleries and museums ‘where they have been seen by a large number of schoolchildren’ (Council of Industrial Design, 1951). These, however, did not concern only London: ‘exhibitions were lent to the Yorkshire West Riding

School Museum Service, where they were on tour for three months' (Council of Industrial Design, 1951).

An even earlier example of the educational activities of the Council that pre-dates the L.C.C. Experiment is the exhibition at Murray House, held in January 1949. That was again a 'visual aids exhibition', once more emphasizing the privileging of the visual, where boxes with information on materials, techniques and end products were shown. Of the materials available, case 6, 'Designs for Discussion' is the most striking and perhaps the most telling of the rhetoric that would be later applied to the L.C.C. experiment. The copy reads:

Here are four pairs of pottery articles of everyday use to look at and to talk about. Working out the answer to the questions will tell you why one of each pair is a good design and one a bad design. When you go shopping, look for good designs (Designs for Discussion, 1949).

On display for observation were two milk jugs, two teapots, two cups and saucers, and two dinner plates (illustration 21). The implication was that one of each was well designed while the other not. However, viewers were not to take the Council's word for it, but to be educated in how to arrive to this conclusion. This was pursued through a series of questions focusing on visual appeal rather than prompting handling, though some of these would be easier to answer via handling. Questions followed a kind of Socratic enquiry where the logic of the 'right' choice would eventually surface.

In the instance of comparing the two dinner plates, these questions were asked:

Which would be practical to use?
Which is shaped to hold food without spilling?
Which would be easier to pick up from the table?
Which would keep the salt and mustard away from the food?
Which is good to look at?
Which colouring would look fresh and clean on the table?
If a whole table were laid with each, which would look better?
Which decoration looks restful and suitable?
Which style would please longer? (Designs for Discussion, 1949).

This analysis keeps with the spirit of most educational material that the Council of Industrial Design produced in those early days, adhering to a teleological argument that concludes with the inevitability of good design.

A relevant precedent to the Council's methods of promoting 'good taste' had not changed significantly since Henry Cole's 'Chamber of Horrors' (officially the display of 'False Principles') at the South Kensington Museum, a hundred years before (1852). As Denis Rafael Cardoso has claimed

For the organisers of museums like those of South Kensington, the notion of 'good design' rested implicitly on contrast with the bad and on exhaustive explanation of the principles underlying such distinctions, especially in terms of understanding materials and techniques (Cardoso, 1997, p.116).

Following a different tactic, the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection displays of the 1960s did not include 'bad design' examples, but carried on the advocacy of discrimination through a series of questions. In the set entitled 'Materials and Design' made of three displays ('cases' in the I.L.E.A. terminology), the text invites pupils to think about the context of usefulness that informs design:

When you are deciding whether a thing is well designed it is helpful to ask yourself questions like these: does it do its job well? Is it easy to clean? Does it take up too much room when not in use? Is it likely to last? (*Materials and Design*, undated)

This remarkable consistency with the terminology of functionalism and faith in the inescapability of 'good design' is perhaps the overriding characteristic of the early stages of the scheme, the overriding criterion for object selection. So with adequate experience in the field of 'educating the consumer of tomorrow' and encouraged by the London County Council's admiration for their methods, the Council embarked on the *Design Appreciation Experiment* in late 1951, with three initial displays, *Pottery*, *Textiles*, and *Wood*. From the outset, themes were dictated by materials. It was only later, as I discuss in relation to I.L.E.A.'s administration, that mixed material displays were organized. During the whole of the 1950s, a typical display would rely exclusively on aspects of one specific material.

Wood for example, is presented thus: there is a group of various *Woods from Trees* in the form of small sample panels, and next to them, *Objects from Wood*. Schoolchildren would make the connection between the material in its un-processed form and the end products, while teachers were relied upon to discuss the tools, technologies, skills and techniques involved in such transformation. A surviving photograph, which has been reproduced in Camberwell College's *Object Lesson* catalogue, informs us: 'John Morley,¹⁷ who teaches art (and a variety of crafts, including pottery, lino-cutting, weaving, fabric printing and mosaic making) at Bow Secondary School, discusses the qualities of wood – its virtues and its limitations' (Illustration 22). Presumably Morley was one of the chosen 'exceptional' art teachers that Stevens's later memo speaks of (Stevens, 1967).

On the back of the original photograph at the Centre of Research and Development in Brighton, in addition to the typed text, there is a hand-written observation: 'particularly with the wooden objects, the first instincts of the child was to feel' (John Morley and Class at Bow Secondary School, undated). The unknown author of the note evidently felt compelled to add this observation. This revealing detail confirms that the possibility of handling was an essential part of the thinking behind the *Design Experiment*. Best example was the 1952 'Textiles' display that included a set of pieces known as 'feelies'¹⁸ (as in illustration 18, *Woven Textiles*). It must be stressed that handling remained of paramount importance throughout the life of the project. Apparently the L.C.C. and later the I.L.E.A. were not discouraged by the large amount of breakages, the need to clean fabrics and the mysteriously 'missing' items they had to replace –these actions are well-documented in the I.L.E.A. record cards of the 1960s and early 1970s. Handling necessitated large quantities of multiples and these are still present in the Collection: firms such as Arabia, Iittala, Kosta Boda, Old Hall, Wedgwood, Whitefriars, are found in significant numbers. Therefore, handling can be identified as one of the three immutable principles that remained standard for the duration of the scheme, the other two being the commitment to 'good design' and the commitment to circulating the exhibits.

¹⁷ My research suggests that this is not the John Morley who was later director of the Brighton and Hove Museum.

¹⁸ The term 'feelies' appears annotated on the back of the image (see illustration 1; Envelope 2/DC017 in the possession of the Design history Research Centre, Brighton)

Regarding the first three exhibits, the C.O.I.D.'s seventh Annual Report confirms that 'Three secondary schools have taken small exhibitions of wood, pottery and textiles respectively for use by all pupils aimed at arousing their interest in design in these materials' (Council of Industrial Design, 1952). In 1953, 'Looking at Leather' was added to the three previous displays. I observe that, again, the displays followed the blueprint of the Council's established formula: qualities of the material - techniques used - variety of end products. This was also the structure for *Glass and Its Qualities*. In addition, there appears to have been a display on metal, the image of which has not survived. The information that it had been produced in 1953 derives from the C.O.I.D.'s 8th Annual Report:

The L.C.C. has paid for a further three exhibitions designed and assembled in the Education section, on glass, leather and metal. Six schools are now included in the experiment and their teachers endorse the educational value of the displays (Council of Industrial Design, 1953).

On to 1954 and there was a new display, *Packaging*. It appears that 1954 also saw the enrichment of *Pottery* with *Hand Pottery*, a display that demonstrated examples of craft pottery from various studios throughout England. Finally, another group of craft materials, Raffia, Straw, Cane, Rushes and Willow, together grouped as 'Basket-work', were made into a set in the same year. Again, based on information from the Annual Report, 1954 is also identified as the time when the displays on plastics and paper were put together. Paper probably also covered *Packaging* –it is likely that they had been conceived as two cases on the same theme. Finally, it is not clear whether *Commercial Pottery*, the photo of which is in a different box in the archives, was produced in 1954 or later. This can be inferred by the inclusion of Wedgwood's characteristic 'Grey Tea' teapot of 1954. In any case, *Commercial Pottery* was meant as a companion to the *Hand Pottery* of 1954 (illustrations 23 and 24).

What is intriguing about the *Commercial Pottery* display is the note that 'the majority of the examples are bone china and are in the more expensive range'. This reference to cost in the C.O.I.D. caption, reflects, perhaps, the hard times that had only barely been left behind. This mentality belies a spirit of thrift to be instilled in the consumer of tomorrow -not surprising considering that some rationing continued to 1954. However, it is also consistent with the training of industrial designers where the cost of the end product is of crucial importance to its design (Woodham, 1983). In C.O.I.D.'s rhetoric 'good design' also meant 'good value' in the

traditional modernist sense, i.e. the best configuration of form, function and value; the L.C.C. continued on this rationale throughout the 1950s. In contrast, L.C.C.'s and I.L.E.A.'s 1960s purchases appear to re-define 'good value' as an investment in outstanding design and individual talent (as in the case of studio pottery, discussed in Chapter 4).

Onto 1955, and the C.O.I.D.'s 10th Annual Report for the year 1954-1955, diverges slightly from the factual reporting of previous years, in order to discuss a matter that seems to be gaining impetus by the mid-1950s:

There is growing desire on the part of education authorities and teachers for more information and material, which can be used in the teaching of design appreciation. Although this subject is not included in the General Certificate of Education, each year more schools recognise that design affects everyone's life and they come to the Council for information and guidance (Council of Industrial Design, 1955).

The concern with educating the educators is a development that will be discussed in detail in other sections of this thesis. It seems that by the mid-1950s, the C.O.I.D.'s work in education was bearing fruit, with more and more requests, which inevitably put a pressure on its resources and finances. There is, once again, the reference to the L.C.C. bearing the cost of the experiment for sending to secondary schools small exhibitions, and the cursory reference ends with the information that 11 exhibits were in circulation. The squeeze on the Council's finances becomes more pronounced in the 1955-1956 report (Council of Industrial Design, 1956):

The Council's funds no longer make it possible to produce teaching material, but it can give much guidance and information on the subject. The experiment in design appreciation initiated with the London County Council five years ago in three schools, was reviewed in the summer of 1955. In view of its success, the London County Council decided to continue the scheme so that it now covers 13 schools; two of the Authority's teacher training colleges are to be included in the forthcoming year. Eleven small exhibitions are circulated and seven schools had had blank cases in

which to stage their own exhibitions, made up either from the children's own choice of manufactured goods or their own handcraft¹⁹ (Council of Industrial Design, 1956).

The inclusion of teacher training colleges in the circulation scheme is of interest, and can be considered a reflection on the growing desire for more contact with 'good design' by all involved in education –that's essentially what had been identified in the 10th Annual Report of 1955. Also of interest is the additional dimension of the blank cases. This does not appear to have been implemented from the first years of the scheme, and there is no evidence to show to what extent it was taken up by the schools.

Despite referring to the scheme's 'success' (or, seen from the perspective of emancipation from C.O.I.D.'s tutelage, *because* of its success) the 11th Report marks the closing stages of C.O.I.D.'s active involvement in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. 1956 was a turning point for C.O.I.D.'s education sector. In April of 1956, the Design Centre opened – and together with the C.O.I.D.'s magazine *Design* (which had been started in 1949), they became the main channels of communicating the C.O.I.D.'s ideas to the wider public. Since the opening of the Design Centre, the Education Department of the Council put most of its efforts into arranging for group visits from schools and adult education bodies, with the additional task of giving these groups explanatory talks –about 300 per year according to their testimony (Council of Industrial Design, 1957). Evidently, the C.O.I.D. now had its own, self-contained means of reaching the public and it is perhaps no coincidence that the Collection passed directly into the hands of the L.C.C. from 1957 onwards.

In re-capitulation, information from the available primary sources corroborates to the following most-likely list of displays as of 1957: *Wood, Pottery, Textiles, Leather, Glass, Metal, Packaging, Paper, Basket-work, Hand-Pottery* and *Commercial Pottery*. These must be the 11 'small exhibitions' mentioned in the 1955-1956 report. This was, most probably, the totality of the sets that the L.C.C. inherited in 1957.

The L.C.C., the G.L.C. and I.L.E.A

¹⁹ In this, as in all Annual Reports, the beneficiary schools are not specifically named.

Any attempt to understand the Collection's growth in the hands of the London authorities, should include an understanding of the historical scope and the sheer size of these organisations. This is important because every time a change in the make-up of the authority structure occurred, the fate of the Collection altered course. The London County Council had been established as early as 1888 and in 1963 it was superseded by the Greater London Council. The new body reflected the hugely grown metropolitan area and took in greater parts of Middlesex as well as Essex, Kent, Surrey and Hertfordshire. 1965 was a crucial year for the Collection because it passed into the hands of I.L.E.A., a newly established committee of the Greater London Council. In total the I.L.E.A. comprised about 70 members, 40 of whom were councillors. The Collection was again re-located (to Camberwell College of Arts) when the I.L.E.A. was abolished, in 1990.

The documentation pertaining to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection is limited to what the I.L.E.A. has preserved. Very little of the L.C.C. years is available. This might result to a skewed view in favour of the G.L.C.'s input when compared to the L.C.C. years. In order to redress the balance and to form an idea of how important the London County Council had been, I have consulted Eric Jackson's book, *Achievement* (1965). It covers L.C.C.'s activities from 1939 to 1964, just before the L.C.C.'s absorption by the G.L.C. The reader soon becomes aware of the L.C.C. as the epitome of the principles on which the post-war so-called 'nanny' state developed. It was a mammoth organization in charge of Londoners' every need. Jackson's primarily factual book, covers: town planning, roads and traffic, housing, new towns, parks and open spaces, drainage and sewerage, education, the children's service (concerned with 'deprived' children), public health, welfare services, and more. It seems that you could hardly stand anywhere in the London of 1965 (taking the book's date of publication) and not physically occupy space under the L.C.C.'s /G.L.C.'s management and authority. The London County Council was indeed the principal local authority in the country and of visible ubiquity throughout London.

The Council's Headquarters occupied the grand complex of the County Hall on the South Bank. This extraordinary construction boasted 7 miles of corridors and accommodation for 7,000 staff. At the time of Jackson's writing 76,000 people worked for the L.C.C. of which a very significant proportion (18,950) were teaching staff (Jackson, 1965, p.40). Though the County Hall itself bore a different set of architectural references, by and large the aesthetic idiom favoured for new schools and social housing was modernism -an early example being

the Hallfield Primary School in London, built in 1955 (see also Maclure, 1984). Even more, the L.C.C. (and more so, the G.L.C.) did not stop at building clusters of box-like flats, including numerous high-rises, thus permanently changing London's landscape. In order to solve the acute post-war housing crisis, they extended the physical boundaries of the metropolitan area, adding satellite new towns: Basildon, Bracknell, Crawley, Harlow, Stevenage and many more (Atkinson, 2012).

Looking at the substantial numbers involved, one would be forgiven for thinking of the L.C.C. for an Orwellian bureaucratic machine. Yet the opposite impression emerges from the sources: Londoners felt proud, privileged and ultimately grateful to enjoy the benefits of this formidable structure. For example, in his study of school-building in the post-war period, Stuart Maclure speaks convincingly of public architecture's improved status among Londoners, as local authorities pumped money into 'some of the most interesting, important and useful work' of the twentieth century (Maclure, 1984, p.26). Daniel Miller remarks on the G.L.C.'s transformation from 'a populist to a genuinely popular body' -though he attributes the phenomenon to the use of marketing and advertising (Miller, 1987, p.203).

During the 1950s and into the 1960s the L.C.C. and the G.L.C. embodied the socialist illusion that Jeremy Seabrook has described from the vantage point of the early 21st century:

It appeared to be a permanent arrangement, whereby social peace would be assured. The working class would be comfortably installed within industrial society, the government would protect the least defended and moderate the grossest injustices of capitalism, while not inhibiting the creation of wealth (Seabrook, 2002, pp.55-56).

A pertinent example of the sweeping -but generally welcome- changes enforced by the L.C.C. and the G.L.C. is the introduction of Comprehensive schools in secondary education: while some pioneering Councils, including the L.C.C., had comprehensive schools since the late 1930s, this egalitarian type of institution was officially sanctioned in 1965 when the government asked all Councils to revert their schools to comprehensive. Almost all London schools gradually complied, a move that radically changed the expectations and educational realities of the less privileged, and for girls in particular (Halsall, 1973). Bright students from working-class backgrounds continued to attend grammar schools, but, arguably, what comprehensives achieved was to normalise the experience of secondary education for the

poorer classes, to alleviate the estrangement, the uncertainty, dissatisfaction and gnawing self-doubt that Richard Hoggart describes (clearly drawing on his personal experience as a scholarship boy in the grammar school environment of the 1930s):

The stigma of cheaper clothes, of not being able to afford to go on school-holiday trips, of parents who turn up for the grammar-school play looking shamefully working class (Hoggart, 1992, p. 267).²⁰

As part of this larger picture of more democratic comprehensive education, the arts and crafts were made a special feature in many schools, where subjects for special study extended to wood-work, metal-work, carving, clay-modeling, weaving, needle-craft (Halsall, 1973). The view that comprehensives boosted the arts in secondary education is corroborated by early 1970s debates in the wake of the late 1960s upheaval in art education as these were documented in two volumes, *After Hornsey*, and *After Coldstream*, both published in 1973. Randall Lines, County Education Officer in Birmingham believed that

Art has probably gained more than any other subject in the establishment of new comprehensive schools where space provision and resources enables art to go well beyond the traditional pencil and paper (Lines in Warren-Piper, 1973, p. 117).

Obviously such environments provided the ideal context for the ‘appreciation’ of objects in the spirit of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. It is against the back-drop of this optimism about art, design and craft education that the I.L.E.A.’s management of the Collection should be viewed. As I will demonstrate, under I.L.E.A. the Collection grew spectacularly in its scope and ambition. Concerning the factual details, the history of the Collection under I.L.E.A. is best gleaned from the 32 files kept at the London Metropolitan Archives. Despite it having become a very costly scheme, one that the G.L.C. had invested heavily in, at the time of I.L.E.A.’s abolition much documentation pertaining to the Collection was not deemed worthy of preservation – which is unsurprising in the context of the vast amount of responsibilities of the G.L.C., and the related paperwork these engendered.

²⁰ The state of being described here by Hoggart is akin to the Marxist concept of ‘alienation’ but more accurately to the dislocation that Bourdieu has labeled by the Greek word ‘hysteresis’ (from the verb ‘hysterein’, to fall short of), meaning the disruption to the subject’s habitus and the feeling of displacement that this engenders (Grenfell, 2008, p. 85)

The files at the Metropolitan Archives contain photographs of displays and equivalent record cards detailing purchase prices and suppliers, as well as the movement from school to school of the *Circulating Design Scheme*, as it was called during that phase of its history. I have already mentioned that record cards seem to have been amended with annotations regarding breakages, missing items, repairs and other information pertaining to the condition of the objects. A typical example is seen in the photograph of a record card held in the Metropolitan Archives (illustration 25). Seven out of the fourteen items in the list are reported as ‘missing - Owens boys’ school, September 1974’, while in another card, item 269C ‘Clear Claret Decanter’, was described as ‘chipped at lip’ (Record cards, 1976).

A handful of memos and letters also survive, mostly about the day-to-day running of the Collection. These memos give an idea of the flurry of activity that surrounded the objects during the mid and late 1960s: this is a period when sets are constantly being added to, re-arranged, copied, improved upon and generally changing. That makes it almost impossible to pinpoint precise dates and accession numbers. As a researcher I feel that the most reliable way to view this information is as a series of ‘snapshots’ of what the Collection looked like at specific moments in time. Certainly, I.L.E.A. staff were assiduous in keeping records of its Collection. A schedule of planned photographic work for 1968 involved no less than 5 different photographers, sub-contracted to document the cases.²¹ The research problem I encounter today is not I.L.E.A.’s inadequate cataloguing but the decision to destroy much of it with the abolition of the Authority, thus resulting in the fragmented nature of records.

Fortuitously, other sources held at Camberwell College complement the information and can contribute to a fuller picture of how the scheme functioned on the practical level in the late 1960s and up to 1977. An important contributor of information concerning the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, is Gene Adams, who worked for the Collection under art inspector Dennis Stevens and as an independent museum advisor after I.L.E.A.’s abolition. Among papers donated to Camberwell College by Gene Adams there is a document entitled ‘Circulating Scheme for Design Appreciation – Information’ and dated 13 February 1974. This describes in detail the frame-work for the contact between schools and the I.L.E.A.:

²¹ Listed as: John Maltby Ltd, 2423, Watford Way, NW4; Ronald A. Chapman of Enfield, Middlesex; Fox Photos on Farrington Road EC1; Harold King, 124 Green Lane, Morden; Mann Brothers, 2, Lupus Street, SW1 (List of Photographers, 1968).

The contractor (Mr Grant) visits the Head of Art, at the latter's convenience before the school receives its first exhibition, and is often able to offer valuable suggestions concerning the positioning of exhibitions in relation to the school's needs. The site of the exhibition should be selected to provide good light falling upon the exhibits, reasonable security against undue damage and loss, whilst being well clear of the 'messier' of art room activities (Adams, 1974).

While advice was given on precautions against damage, it was also stated that:

Schools will not normally be required to meet the cost of replacement of exhibits which get damaged or broken, provided that there is a reasonable explanation and that the damaged articles or pieces are returned with the case when the contractors call to collect. A charge will be made for articles which are missing (her emphasis, *ibid*).

These regulations regarding circulation and the relationship to the schools are recognized as structures inherited by the L.C.C. and by the C.O.I.D. They describe the Collection's function but they do not reflect how individual taste of I.L.E.A. members of staff shaped acquisition and circulation policies.

The team at I.L.E.A. was run by art inspector Dennis Stevens, who arrived at I.L.E.A. via another G.L.C. institution, the Geffrye Museum. According to *The Independent* obituary, (Dennis Stevens obituary, 1988) Stevens had been deputy curator at Geffrye and before that a lecturer at St. Martin's School of Art. Noteworthy is that Stevens had been educated at Camberwell (then the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts) between 1932 and 1937. The anonymous text depicts Stevens as a rare combination of practicing artist, brilliant administrator and possessor of political acumen. Stevens left his mark on the Collection. He was doubtlessly helped by what appears to have been a very generous budget (no specific figures survive), at least for some years.

In assessing his overall contribution, it must be noted that Stevens was not only responsible for the *Circulating Design Scheme*, but also for the parallel-running Art Scheme, which is discussed in the section 'Origins and Parallel Collections' below. The obituary of 1988 (Stevens was 71 when he died) sheds light on the contradiction between a highly successful

collector and the incompatibility of his vision with the practicalities of a travelling collection. Ironically, the high budget and successful purchases eventually rendered the objects too expensive to insure, leading to their eventual withdrawal from circulation in the mid-1970s (Dennis Stevens obituary, 1988). This puts into perspective Stevens's collecting policy and is a curatorial issue that will be discussed in detail in relation to specific displays in the following chapters (see chapters 3 and 4).

Stevens's collecting was appreciated by his co-workers, as is evidenced in Gene Adams' surviving testimony (Adams, 1979). According to Gene Adams, his work at I.L.E.A. is remembered as exceptionally successful by those involved; Adams not only recognised that 'the collection was made by someone sensitive to and informed about contemporary design' (Adams, 1979) but considered Dennis Stevens such a catalytic personality in relation to the fortunes of the Collection, that in 1996 she suggested that the Collection took on a new name yet, that of Dennis Stevens (*ibid*). This proposal does not seem to have been considered by the London Institute or the University of the Arts at any time. While, as Jane Pavitt has pointed out, 'Stevens developed the scheme to encompass other forms of craft and art appreciation, rather than a single set of design principles as promoted by the C.O.I.D.' (Pavitt, 1997, p.225), Adams' suggestion does not appear to take into account that despite Stevens' crucial input, the scheme had had a previous life before he became involved. I have included the suggestion as an indication of his stamp on the Collection.

Despite loyal colleagues, Stevens was often up against the bureaucratic powers of the G.L.C. There is evidence of some friction with F.W. Bodger, whose position I have not yet been able to identify, presumably a superior at the G.L.C. Education section. Bodger seems not to favour the quality over quantity approach that Stevens stood by. A memo of April 1966 most written by F.W. Bodger (signed only by his initials) complains to Dennis Stevens that:

We are not keeping up with the programme that we have been set, which is the production of one new set per technical assistant each month...it seems to me that unless we can achieve a better output the Design Scheme will never reach all the secondary schools and even at the rate set, it will take a very long time (Bodger, 1966).

Dennis Stevens provides an indignant answer where he explains the need for much more detailed information on the panels and invites Bodger to ‘compare the pictures of two early exhibitions on which our projection was based with three of our late ones.’ (ibid.) Another member of staff, Don Carolis, then takes up the issue with a note to Mr Bodger:

Concerning the sets *Pottery by Hand and Machine*...over half the items in this exhibition are one-off hand craftwork. Consequently considerable work was involved in fixing and lettering after receipt of the fifteen cases from the contractors’ (Carolis, 1966).

Further along, another time-consuming activity is pointed out:

When copies are received from the contractors they are not immediately available to schools. Cases are stencilled back and front and record cards prepared. Also when sets contain one-off items, photographs are taken of each case (Carolis, 1966).

Carolis refers to 15 cases because three cases made up one display (often described as ‘set’), and there were five copies of each prototype case created (bringing to 6 the total number of multiple cases available for each theme). This description by Don Carolis confirms the time-consuming nature of the Scheme and evokes a time before digital technology completely transformed graphic and exhibition design and decimated the production time involved.

The most accurate indication of exactly how many sets were in circulation in 1966 is provided by another memo in the same file, again from Don Carolis. He says that there are ‘58 large sets each of two or three cases’ (Carolis, 1966). He also noted that 14 original four-case sets prepared by C.O.I.D. had been withdrawn and schools received new sets. There are two observations to be made on the basis of this information: firstly that the C.O.I.D. sets had been dismantled and re-arranged into ‘new’ I.L.E.A. sets. This is in keeping with photographic evidence. Illustration 26 depicts *Timber Worked by Hand and Machine* which appears to have been a later set using objects from earlier displays, such as the ‘19th century Dutch gingerbread mould’ from display *Timber Worked by Hand*, and the ‘tablemat in teak inlaid with cane’, also present in the earlier *Timber Worked by Machinery* (Illustration 26).

Secondly, Carolis gives the C.O.I.D. sets number as 14, when I have been able to identify only 11 (listed in Chapter 2). The most probable explanation is that 3 more sets attributed by Carolis to C.O.I.D. had in fact been constructed under the L.C.C. before 1964. There is also no full record of the 58 large sets mentioned. These are understood to be all prototypes that were being copied by contractors at the time of Carolis' writing. Unless new sources surface in the future, we have no way of knowing which were those 58 sets mentioned in 1966. We can assume that multiplied by 6, the ambition was to have 348 sets in circulation by the late 1960s. Making a modest estimation of an average 15 objects per set, that would mean more than 2,000 objects in circulation. In fact more objects were bought but taking into consideration Stevens' comments about the time-consuming nature of creating multiple displays, it is doubtful whether the figure for the display cases was ever exceeded or even reached. Even an approximation of that number would make for a very significant step towards the goal of reaching all London schools and educating pupils in 'good design'.

I.L.E.A. displays

Due to the occasional re-arrangement and 're-cycling' of objects within and across displays, accession numbers, etched or marked on the object's surface, when they exist, are not always in step with the chronologies of the serial number on the I.L.E.A. photographs. To clarify: we can not conclude that a metal jug which appears in *Design in the Home* will be a later metal acquisition because it was included in the later display. It may prove to have an early accession number because it was derived from a dismantled L.C.C. / C.O.I.D. display.

Regarding the structure of the displays, my research has shown that from time to time, the Education Authority re-arranged and 'recycled' earlier exhibits by moving objects from one display or combining previous displays into new ones, sometimes with the addition of new acquisitions. This recycling seems to have occurred as the displays evolved to provide more information and represent stronger themes, a policy embraced by I.L.E.A. as opposed to the plain displays favoured by C.O.I.D. and the L.C.C. The usual practice was to employ the same object, multiples of the same object, or similar objects that would have been bought together and to include them in different exhibits over the years – though multiples were bought anyway in order to produce displays identical to each other. One such example is the Italian *Venini* glass, an object made in the early 1950s with the typical 'canna filigrana'

technique of twisted coloured rods of glass encased in crystal. It appears both in the *Glass Making* and versions of the *Looking at Glass* display (illustrations 5 and 20).²²

Underlying factors for the re-structuring of exhibits included the desire to update and enrich them. It has already been shown in chapter 2 that the very first Council of Industrial Design groupings were rather straight-forward presentations of objects, with little contextual information. Later exhibits followed a more detailed narrative provided by the Inner London Education Authority, which left less space for individual teacher interpretations. In explaining the rationale of early exhibits, Sydney Foott stated in 1952 that the purpose of exhibitions was ‘to act as a stimulus to the children and provide a focal point for their interest and enthusiasm.’ However more prescriptive text was gradually added. This should not be regarded as an intention to curtail or monitor the input of teachers but rather a response to the schools’ call for more contextual information. As Dennis Stevens argued in his memo of October 1967, ‘after discussions with staff and pupils, I accepted a general view that these exhibitions were over-complicated and contained too much technical data unrelated to aesthetics’ (Stevens, 1967).

Going back to an integrated study of the available photographs gathered from all primary sources, I feel that the composite picture of the Collection is best pieced together by following the I.L.E.A.’s own method: grouping the photographs on the basis of themes, initially of individual materials and later themes with specific foci. The time-scale goes beyond Carolis’s 1966 memo, and mostly concerns the years between 1965 and up to the early 1970s. Record cards show that some stock-taking took place in July 1976; this can be read as the month when the whole of the Collection was finally withdrawn from circulation (Record Cards, 1976).

Naturally, decisions about circulation at the Education Authority would follow cycles of school years, so it would be safe to assume that the end of the 1975/1976 school year coincided with the end of circulation for the Collection. Several record cards in the

²² The accompanying record card for this set lists this object as one of the ‘Venini Red and Green Striped Water Jug with 6 Glasses’ (record cards, ILEA/S/LR/07/010, accession number G132A); it is worth mentioning as it is the most expensive purchase priced at 18-16-0 (£18 and 16 shillings). A conservative estimate by the internet conversion site *measuringworth* equates 18 pre-decimal pounds to about £273 in 2015 (*measuringworth*, 2015). Bearing in mind that six of those sets would have been purchased, it is indicative of the scale of the project and the money involved.

Metropolitan Records have been marked with the handwritten information ‘now at EEC - All Correct 26.7.76’ in red ink. ‘EEC’ is presumed to refer to the Educational Equipment Centre(s) in Kennington (Record Cards, 1976). More dates in July 1976 appear on other record cards followed by remarks concerning the condition of the stock. This cut-off month of July 1976 limits our reliance on the I.L.E.A. sources within the time-frame of 11 years, from 1965 to 1976.

I.L.E.A. Displays Classified by Material

In re-arranging the old displays and building new ones, the I.L.E.A. opted for thematic headings rather than the C.O.I.D.’s simple serial numbers. So instead of having a display called, for example, *Metal 3*, they called it *Metals and Their Qualities*. This provided a concept onto which to anchor relevant objects and information, but at the same time confuses and impedes their retrospective listing. There are some clues in the record cards as to which number connects to which theme, but these are sporadic.

An incomplete list in a file at the Metropolitan Archives gives the following chronology for a number of the displays:

- 1964: *Metal 3: Metals and their qualities*
- 1965: *Pottery 3: Pottery Thrown by Hand and Machine*
- 1965: *Pottery 4: Wedgwood*
- 1965: *Pottery Made by Hand and Machine*
- 1965: *Pottery by Hand / Surface Decoration*
- 1969: *Glass 3: Glass-Making*
- 1970: *Wood 3: Timber by Hand and Machine*
- 1970: *Wood 5: Commonwealth Wood*
- 1971: *Materials and Design* (List of Displays, date unknown).

There is no clue why these sets were singled out for listing and no other such lists have been found. In the following paragraphs I discuss displays on the basis of material and theme, focusing on specific aspects of their form and content.

Glass Displays

Glass displays are overall very factual and close to the C.O.I.D. blueprint, stressing links to material origin and practicality of design: ‘glass is sand that you can see through [...] glass is easy to clean’ (text in display *Glass Making*, illustration 20). In order to enrich the Glass exhibits, books had been added on specially constructed hinges attached to the panels, as had been done with several other sets. For example, *Glass 3*, made up of cases *Glass Making* and *Blown and Decorated Glass*, included books with the titles: *Things we need – Glass* (1953); *English Glass* by W.A. Thorpe (Thorpe, 1935), *Glass* by R. Garland and *Glass-Craft* (Garland, 1962). A closer examination of these volumes suggests that they served the purpose of re-enforcing understanding of the material and expanded on the information already available. Thorpe’s *English Glass* (1935) covers the history of English glass from Roman times to Pyrex (a new and exciting product in the 1930s, produced by the Wear Glass works in Sunderland).

Thorpe describes his book as ‘a survey of taste in domestic and fancy glass from the second century to the present’ (Thorpe, 1935, p. vii). He also makes extensive reference to the influences of European glass especially German, French, Venetian and more recently Swedish. Specifically interesting for the Collection investigator are the numerous mentions of the long history of the house of Powell (Whitefriars). The writer comments that ‘Whitefriars was the Morris Movement done into glass, not by Morris men but by manufacturers of tradition and enterprise who understood their own job.’ (Thorpe, 1935, p.245). It is clear by its content how this book would be deemed a suitable accompaniment to the display, since both Pyrex and much Whitefriars were selected for the Collection.

Kinney’s *Glass Craft* (Kinney, 1962) is a ‘how to’ handbook, of the kind that became popular during the 1960s. It contains specific glass projects photographed in stages, exploring techniques as laminating, enamelling, staining, etching and other decorative interventions. Its relevance lies in Kinney’s claim that ‘the educator may work with glass to illustrate clearly many principles of chemistry, physics and elementary science’ but also that ‘the creative homemaker [...] may become interested in the extensive use of glass in building a new home’ (Kinney, 1962, pp.165-166), thus fulfilling the I.L.E.A. objective of giving ‘good design’ examples to the future home-maker. Kinney supports this aim while also giving information

about processes of manufacture, though as mentioned earlier, process and manufacture became less important to I.L.E.A. over time.

Metal Displays

As with Glass, metal cases were based on the C.O.I.D. format and enhanced by the addition of high-end modernist acquisitions. To take one example, *Metals 3*, explains *Metals and their Qualities* and the techniques of joining metal (illustration 28). These are listed as ‘Riveting, Screwing, Bolting, Soldering, Brazing, Welding’. They are demonstrated in objects supplied from Harrods, Heals, Liberty, the Craft Centre and two Danish firms: Jens Quistgaard and Arne Jacobsen. The inclusion of two of Denmark’s most renowned tableware designers is typical of Stevens’ collecting. He chose companies with impeccable modernist credentials: Quistgaard, a designer not as widely known today as Jacobsen, had won 6 golden awards at the Milan Triennalli and was much lauded in the U.S. (Woodham, 2004, p. 358). It also demonstrates I.L.E.A.’s consistent predilection towards Scandinavian design, no doubt encouraged by Scandinavian products’ widespread acceptance among the elite British design circles of the 1960s (MacCarthy, 1979). The relationship between British markets and Scandinavian design has been covered for example by Kevin Davies (Davies, 1997) and Lesley Jackson (Jackson in Sevaldsen, 2003); see also Chapter 4, section ‘Disseminating Modernism’ for an expanded discussion on Scandinavian influences on British design.

Wood Displays

Up to seven sets on the subject of wood had been produced. This number is derived by the reference linking the display *Wood for Structure and Purpose* to *Wood 7* in the record cards. I presume that *Basketry*, a set of three display cases, had also been classified under wood, as serial numbers on the objects begin with the letter ‘W’. As noted before, another exhibit, *Wood – by Hand and Machine*, comprising two cases, appears to be a re-incarnation of the earlier *Timber Worked by Hand* and *Timber Worked by Hand and Machine*. A comparison between the C.O.I.D.’s sets and I.L.E.A.’s re-interpretation illustrates what Stevens was trying to achieve by re-arranging previous exhibits on the basis of more educational guidance (illustrations 26 and 27). Arguably the most intriguing display in ‘Wood’ is *Wood 5: Commonwealth Wood*, which comprises of two cases (illustrations 29 and 30). The record card confirms that all objects had been derived from the Commonwealth Institute (the panels

indicate that they had been on loan by the Institute but no further details are known). Only item w48A ‘Africa Malozi tribe kneeling figure’ was bought from *Primavera* at the price of £4 (record cards, ILEA/S/LR/07/010).

One aspect of this display is its value in ‘the geography lesson’, where students were encouraged to look up on the map the countries of the objects’ origins. More intriguing are the photographic captions. In the text, we see repeated the rhetoric of the universal ‘craftsman’, the skilled worker who practises traditional skills anonymously, thus carrying the thread of humble but superbly executed work through generations, bringing to mind Yanagi’s *The Unknown Craftsman* (Yanagi, 1972). Thus organised, the display evokes Levi-Strauss’s notion of universally shared human traits –observations that laid the foundations for structural anthropology. Worth bearing in mind is that *Tristes Tropiques*, the book where Levi-Strauss first presented these ideas (Levi-Strauss, 1961), was published in French in 1955 and translated into English in 1961, so it would have been a relatively fresh influence in 1970 (when *Commonwealth Wood* was assembled). A relevant project was the inception of the *World Crafts Council*, an organisation founded in 1964, with the aim of promoting craft as an economic, spiritual and cultural resource that belonged to all mankind (Anderson, 2010, p.199). More recently, the rhetoric of human commonalities has been examined in the post-colonial context, as in Benedict Anderson’s argument about serialization: the construction of a world that was ‘made up of replicable plurals’, a focus on the affinities that brought cultures together rather than their differences (Anderson, 1991, p.184). These are themes that may be inferred from the *Commonwealth Wood* display.

In the photograph of *Commonwealth Wood*, the conclusion of the caption reads: ‘these nations can hardly be called primitive’. The word ‘primitive’ then makes a second appearance in a less contentious context: ‘all the items in this exhibition have been made by hand, often with rather primitive tools’. ‘Primitive’ according to the Oxford English Dictionary refers to that which ‘belongs to a preliterate, non-industrial society’ (Oxford English Dictionary, 2015).²³ By the 1960s, Local Education Authorities were beginning to be pro-active in the

²³ The unwittingly loaded word ‘primitive’ presents us with a window into the vast and complex discourse of institutionalized racial representations in the post-colonial British school. This issue was being picked up at the time by the nascent field of cultural studies, (amongst the most influential voices being that of Stuart Hall and his colleagues involved with the Birmingham School of Cultural

effort to dismantle ingrained racism in education and its associated language. I.L.E.A. was at the forefront of eradicating racism in schools, though its strategies were later criticized as simplistic (I.L.E.A., 1981 and 1983; Wearmouth, 2004). Yet, in effect, words as ‘primitive’ sit uncomfortably on the fence between challenging and re-enforcing the stereotype, questioning it while simultaneously asserting it by virtue of its mere re-statement.

While the research problem remains of who actually saw these displays and in what context, the assumption can be made that at some point in the history of its use, black students, most probably recently arrived in Britain, would have encountered this exhibit. Thinking of the display’s centrepiece, the Asanti stool, it should be noted that Ghanaians, most of whom belong to the Asanti ethnic group, emigrated in modest numbers to the United Kingdom post-1957, the year of Ghanaian independence. By 1971 over 11,000 of Britain’s 200,000 African-born population, were Ghanaian (Daley, 1998). In its effort to integrate such populations, the *Local Government Act* of 1966 provided grants towards the assistance of local councils with immigrant populations, declaring that

the Secretary of State may pay, to local authorities who in his opinion are required to make special provision in the exercise of any of their functions in consequence of the presence within their areas of substantial numbers of immigrants from the Commonwealth whose language or customs differ from those of the community, grants of such amounts as he may with the consent of the Treasury determine (*Local Government Act*, 1966).

Despite increased funding, and a nascent turn in attitudes, my criticism is that Ghanaian children newly arrived in London re-experienced the relationship of subjection, confronted with their mother culture’s ‘primitiveness’ as opposed to the ‘advanced’ setting of the British classroom, a perspective that apparently did not occur to the authors of the panel.

Textiles Displays

Studies) and have been more recently expanded on by post-colonial analyses (for example Giroux and McLaren, 1994).

Textiles is the most problematic material of all currently in the possession of Camberwell College of Arts. Research needs to rely heavily on the surviving documentation, as the delicate nature of the material coupled with acts of God such as flooding and the lack of attention to its conservation needs, have affected many textile objects. This is not my own latent observation. The matter of textiles conservation had been raised as early as 1979, in the I.L.E.A. report which was written by Gene Adams (Adams, 1979).

In that paper she raises conservation issues especially about the textiles, which had been folded in their cupboards in a storage manner that was ‘far from ideal’ (Adams, 1979). Every single appraisal of the state of the Collection since, has pointed out the constantly deteriorating status of the textiles (Greenhalgh, 1993; Fone, 1994). Though it breaches the scope of this thesis to speculate on the reasons for this chronic neglect, the outcome was much damage to that material. It is therefore especially appropriate to examine the displays as they have been immortalized in the photographic records.

Early textile displays show the C.O.I.D.’s influence, as in *Textiles 2* comprising of *Textiles – Examples of Printed Patterns* and case 2, *Textiles – Main Methods of Pattern Application*. The collection of textiles was much enriched in the care of I.L.E.A. The 1960s was an exciting time for textiles and textile designers, with three distinguishable areas of practice reflected in the Collection: industrially produced textiles, individually hand-crafted ones, and ‘ethnic’ material from other countries, showing characteristic patterns and methods (for example the Thai silk trim in the *Folk Art* display—illustration 6; this display is a variation of illustration 15).

As in the display entitled *Textiles from Natural Fibres*, the material was purchased and presented in lengths of three, four and six yards (illustration 31). Alongside the usual suppliers, and more prominently Liberty, there is a series of better and lesser-known individuals who are mentioned in the record-cards (listed in alphabetical order of their surnames): Deidre Baker, Claire Boyd, John Cornelius, Lynnee Crosbee, Angela Hayes, Patricia Moloney, Barbara Swales, Philip Turney. The V&A holds two pieces by Claire Boyd, while Philip Turney went on to design for Heal’s.

It is not clear how the I.L.E.A. collaborated with these individuals. Apart from exhibitions in galleries and shops, it is known through the documentation of the report cards that there were

purchases or acquisitions from college degree shows (in the case of Pauline Solven glass, we know it was bought at her Royal College of Art graduation show because it has the date of the work -1968, and 'RCA' inscribed on the pieces). There were also instances where a whole display was dedicated to graduates, as in *Textiles 4: Textiles by Young Designers* derived from the Royal College of Art. These lengths were bought at the flat rate of £10 each and the names involved were (listed in alphabetical order of their surnames): Ann Butler, Diana Moore, Suzanne Osbourn, Francis Reid, Sheila Tofts, Erica M. Willis. Camberwell College of Arts was another preferred source for textiles: In *Textiles 2* there are mentions of purchases from 'Camberwell Art School' at £4-10 shillings per length. All this information is derived from the record cards in the Metropolitan Archives (Record Cards, 1976).

It is possible that I.L.E.A.'s connection to Camberwell was through Peter Collingwood and Barbara Sawyer who taught there. Despite the proliferation of women in the practice of textiles, it is Collingwood who stands out as the defining textile craftsman/designer of the 1960s. A much-respected teacher and practitioner, Collingwood must have also been I.L.E.A.'s connection to the objects presented in the display entitled *Hand-weaving from a Greek Island*. This was a project run by a charity called 'the North Euboean Foundation' (refers to the large island off mainland Greece, most commonly spelled 'Evia' today). The panels inform us that 'in spring 1967, a leading British weaver, Peter Collingwood, visited Euboea to teach techniques and colours for a new design of rugs using rough sheep's wool.' Collingwood does not mention this project in his extensive interview undertaken by Linda Sandino for the British Library's 'NLSC Craft Lives' (Collingwood, 2003). However, the link between a well-established designer and regional production in South East Europe, must have appealed to I.L.E.A.'s sensibilities as it brought together interest in individual craftsmanship, 'folklore' or 'ethnic' practice and the preservation of age-old skills.

Pottery Displays

Arguably, the most significant material category in the Collection today are ceramic objects. Ceramic materials withstood the test of time and escaped the deterioration that organic materials like textiles, leather, basketry and paper have suffered. In addition, they are not affected by oxidation like some metals are. Therefore in terms of conservation, ceramics, alongside glass, are currently in the best condition and subsequently more readily available for object-based study. Their condition as well as the quality of pieces selected, are the two

factors that distinguish ceramics as the significant material in the Collection today. They were identified by I.L.E.A. with the letter 'P' on their accession numbers; this stood for 'pottery', a word used consistently by C.O.I.D., L.C.C. and I.L.E.A. instead of the word 'ceramics'.

At least eight pottery sets were produced by 1976, the last most probably being *Pottery 8: Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*. Other sets covered *Pottery Thrown by Hand* and *Pottery Built by Hand* (two cases of one set), *Pottery by Hand and Machine*, *Pottery By Hand - Surface Decoration*, *Pottery 7: Form in Hand-Made Clayware*, *Pottery 4 – Wedgwood*. It becomes apparent that by the early 1970s displays had been given titles that reflected thematic concerns. While some titles disclose a curatorial approach that insists on production methods and remains true to the Collection's original commitment to manufacturing processes, the text occasionally ventured into social commentary such as in *Hand-Craft Welsh Pottery*, where panel text described Wales as a 'society dominated by machines in factories and coal mines' where 'efficiency too often comes before the needs of human happiness and the activities of people with creative gifts' (illustration 32).

Pottery sets reveal strong links with Camberwell College of Art, though this can be seen as a happy accident rather than intentional, since Camberwell College of Arts took the opportunity to acquire the Collection in 1990 due to I.L.E.A.'s disbandment, not explicitly because of work by past students and staff. However, Camberwell connections can be traced throughout the Collection's history. Individuals who had contributed ceramic pieces to the Collection over the years had included students, graduates and teachers at Camberwell (some of the more prominent in alphabetical order: Dan Arbeid, Ian Auld, Ruth Duckworth, Ian Godfrey, Ewen Henderson, Tony Hepburn, Gillian Lowndes, Lucie Rie). Due to this important link and in view of the argument that ceramics has today become the significant material within the Collection, further research has been conducted on the objects and their groupings which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 4.

I.L.E.A. Displays Classified by Theme

As I have already mentioned and will elaborate on in chapter 3, the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection followed the V&A's Circulation department in aspects of its structure and implementation; therefore the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection initially categorized objects solely on the basis of material. Yet the limitations of this method must have soon become

apparent to the custodians at I.L.E.A. Emphasis on material served well enough purposes of technical understanding and the stimulation of interest in industrial design training, but was a limited way of celebrating consumption. After all, no one who walked into Habitat, Heal, Liberty, Harrods, the cathedrals of ‘good design’ of their day, would expect to see wooden ladles displayed next to wooden chairs just because of their common source material. Good design in the market-place had been displayed in aspirational settings and, to an extent, I.L.E.A. started re-producing that comprehensive contextualised look in their own sets.

While the domestic sphere had always been the primary context for the Collection, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, displays became more explicit in this pursuit. Themes that bear evidence to that are titled: *Design for Tableware*; *Design for Play – Children’s Toys*; and *Design in the Home*, comprising three cases showcasing objects ‘In the Living Room’ and ‘In the Kitchen’ as well as ‘System Furniture’ (illustrations 16, 34, 35). One of the early thematic arrangements presented plastics; *Plastics in the Home* hinted at the potential of plastics by including many types of plastic material and show-casing a variety of uses (appendixes 1 and 2 and discussed in Chapter 4).²⁴

Admiration of ‘good design’ produced by other countries had always been high on the scheme’s agenda. Many of the exhibits included in the displays came from abroad, through the channels of up-market suppliers and galleries. Such is the case of *Industrial Design and Engineering* where products were supplied not only from the British *House of David* but also *Singer Scandia* and *Singer Finmar*. Moreover, some home-related themes that showcased industrial design were exclusively focused on the achievements of other nations. Thus *Product design from Finland, Scandinavia – Industrial Art from Four Countries* and *Household things from Japan* (illustrations 36, 37, 38 and 52) revolved around the production and use of furniture, tableware, utensils and everyday objects in the named countries.

The choice of countries was not accidental: objects from certain areas represented ‘primitiveness’ (I have already discussed *Commonwealth Wood* – illustration 29), other parts of the world represented ‘ethnic/folklore’ (e.g. Mexico, Greece, Sardinia, Sicily -but not the whole of Italy) and yet others represented the paradigm for ‘good design’, predominantly

²⁴ Curiously plastics have identification numbers starting ‘G’, normally that would be reserved for ‘Glass’ only, but perhaps it denotes ‘General’ - obviously ‘P’ had already been assigned to pottery.

Scandinavia -four countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway) which were often treated as one in the language of the Collection. This international aspect is shared by the Victoria and Albert's Circulation Department which adopted a similar approach to foreign objects. The *Contemporary Scandinavian Furnishing Fabrics and Wallpapers* of 1956 as well as the *Modern Tablewares from Germany, Holland and Italy* show of the same year, promoted European modernism while exhibitions as *Sumerian Art* of 1965 and *The Crafts of Ecuador* of 1972 suggest the ethnic take on material culture (James, 1998).

In many cases the demarcation of 'primitive', 'ethnic/folklore', 'modernist/good design' is not clear-cut. The Collection thus reflects that aspect of modernism which drew on both 'the primitive' and 'the vernacular'. The trend is evidenced in the work and decorative choices of prominent early and mid-twentieth century designers, for example Charles and Ray Eames (Kirkham, 1998). In England, Gillian Naylor makes a rare reference to the L.C.C. scheme when she links it to the interior of Ernő Goldfinger's 2, Willow Road house in Hampstead:

The juxtaposition of 'folk' with contemporary design in this context emphasized its relevance to modernity, and a perceptive L.C.C. schoolchild passing Willow Road in the 1950s and 1960s would (or should) have been able to 'read' the references in the window displays (Naylor, 1999, in Aynsley, p. 99).

A similar overlap of the 'ethnic/folklore' criterion with the 'good design' one can be observed in the 'Household things from Japan' display. This 'hybrid' status of Japanese 'mingei' (folk crafts) household objects reflects the discourse that developed around Japanese material culture since the late nineteenth century. As Yuko Kikuchi has shown (Kikuchi, 1996; Kikuchi 2004) the Japanese appropriated and projected on Japanese material culture the rhetoric of the pure aesthetic as this had been expressed in occidental theories –most pertinently, the Arts and Crafts movement. The central proponent of the 'mingei' movement, Soetsu Yanagi, who, significantly had a strong presence in the West through his association with the Bernard Leach circle (and was a memorable presence at the 1952 Dartington conference on World Crafts), spoke and wrote of the criteria of beauty that informed production of anonymous Japanese goods, thus creating a new appreciation for simple, traditional design. Notwithstanding having been filtered through a westernised discourse, *mingei* theory was in turn presented to both Japanese and the West, as quintessentially

Japanese. Kikuchi puts forward the argument that *mingei*, represented Japanese modernism, and that it became the ‘Good Design’ movement of Japan:

The ‘Good Design’ movement developed in Japan as a nation-wide design movement from the 1950s onward as, indeed, it did in the West. In this continuous search for ‘Japaneseness’, ‘modern’ and ‘good design’ in design, *mingei* stood out as a point of reference’ (Kikuchi, 2004, p. 218).

Despite the emphasis on foreign examples, room was made in the Collection for British manufacture as long as it was seen through a discerning modernist, (later ‘contemporary’²⁵) screen. *Contemporary British Wood, Ceramics, Metal and Glass, British Industrial Design, Modern British Glass, Pottery, Metal, Wood and Textiles* conformed to that aesthetic. The less conventional *Modern Craftwork* and *Pop, Folk, Modern* are also representations of the British contingent in the Collection but at the same time reflect changing taste in the late 1960s. As with pottery, thematic displays, with their particular groupings and texts, offer opportunity for further research and analysis, which I undertake in chapter 4.

The I.L.E.A. Collection after Withdrawal from Circulation

I have already mentioned elsewhere that the dates annotated on report cards suggest that final stock-taking for the Collection took place in July 1976, thus marking the end for the Collection’s most significant and active phase so far. Dick Hebdige has written evocatively of the heat that Londoners were at first grateful to receive but which soon grew wearisome as July and August progressed with not a drop of rain. It was the summer when punk was born and class fissures became apparent once again (Hebdige, 1979). Against the backdrop of social and economic unrest, I.L.E.A.’s generous spending on the purchase and circulation of

²⁵ One of the definitions the Oxford English Dictionary gives for ‘modern’ is: ‘of, relating to, or designating a current or recent movement or trend in art, architecture, etc., characterized by a departure from or a repudiation of accepted or traditional styles and values’, while ‘contemporary’ is defined, among other definitions, as ‘Modern; of or characteristic of the present period; *esp.* up-to-date, ultra-modern; *spec.* designating art of a markedly *avant-garde* quality, or furniture, building, decoration, etc., having modern characteristics (opp. PERIOD *n.* 10).’ [<http://www.oed.com>] accessed 12 October 2014]

objects added to growing G.L.C. debt and resulted in pressures on I.L.E.A.'s budget. Radford explains that while ILEA was very resistant to any demands that it should suffer financial cuts, it was asked to do so by the Labour government in 1976 (Radford, 2009, p. 79). Cuts are also discussed later in the Commons (HANSARD, 1981).

The only piece of primary information on the Collection during the late 1970s, is the report dated October 1979 (Adams, 1979). The author refers to the scope, the documentation, and the state of the Collection. This document describes the Collection shortly after it was withdrawn from circulation and stored in two sites at Kennington Lane and Aristotle Road, Brixton. Adams clearly states that there 'is no catalogue of the collection (i.e. documentation that would enable a researcher to retrieve a recorded object from store)' (ibid). She then refers to the idiosyncratic accession system that had been used, concluding that 'the objects themselves, which are individually numbered in accessions order, were stored in such a way as to form in effect a catalogue.' (her emphasis – ibid.)

The implication of a Collection being its own catalogue foregrounds the nature of this project: the specific 'co-ordinates' of objects within the allocated space meant that for the accession to remain meaningful, objects should not be moved, so that the previously travelling collection had perforce become a static one. What's more, this unusual catalogue's effectiveness impinged on the keeper's personal depth of knowledge, his or her mental mapping of this 'exhibition' hidden within the storage rooms. Perhaps not surprisingly, this is how 'cataloguing' still functioned up to the spring of 2015 at Camberwell College of Arts, and partly explains why the Collection has rendered itself resistant to easy access by researchers and third parties.

In the same report Adams raises conservation issues and ends with recommendations, focusing on the usual requests for more space, improvement of the objects' physical storage, and the appointment of 'someone with relevant museological experience' (Adams, 1979). There is no later evidence that any of the recommendations were adopted. Notably one of the report's recipients is Richard Sword, then Director of the Geffrye Museum, so we might speculate that a co-operation with the Geffrye had been sought, though no concrete result seems to have come out of that effort.

There is no documentation surviving from the 1980s, and the assumption is that the monetary and political controversies surrounding the G.L.C. and its future left little room for negotiations regarding the Collection (HANSARD, 1981, 1988). By 1990 I.L.E.A.'s final abolition necessitated decisive action: in March 1990, Sylvia Denman, who held the position of Deputy Director/ Cultural Review at I.L.E.A., wrote to Margaret Buck, then Head of Camberwell College of Arts, to confirm that approval had been obtained for the offer of the 'Design Collection' to the College. The cost of transferring the objects, many of which were fragile, would be the responsibility of Camberwell College of Arts, while the I.L.E.A. would 'consider whether some contribution might be made' (Denman, 1990).

Many factors corroborate to the identification of Camberwell College of Arts as an appropriate destination for the I.L.E.A Collection. Starting with the prosaic consideration of distance (the bulk and number of the objects coupled with I.L.E.A.'s inability to pay for transfer dictated the necessity of a local site), the significant presence of Camberwell-related artefacts within the body of the Collection, the benefit of an established Conservation department, and the prospect of re-using the objects as an educational resource in an environment where the crafts were actively taught. It is conceivable that the opinion of Dennis Stevens's son might have also played a part, as Jane Pavitt found he had taught conservation at Camberwell College of Arts, following in his father's footsteps - who had also studied at Camberwell College of Arts (Pavitt, 1997).

Most probably the deciding factor though, was the London Institute's track record with Special Collections and the obvious opportunity presented to the College. At the time of I.L.E.A.'s bequest, the London Institute had acquired extensive experience in keeping Collections, most of which had grown 'organically' from the work and donations of teachers and staff and largely related to the subjects taught in each of its five Colleges.²⁶ Including the Central Saint Martins Art and Design Archive and Chelsea Library Artists' Books, there were 18 different Collections, such as the Central Lettering Record and the Tom Eckersley archive at the London College of Printing (now the London College of Communications). They made for a very convincing body of art and design heritage of which the Institute was custodian.

²⁶ The London Institute opted for University status in 2003 and it was then that its name changed to the University of the Arts London. In 1990 there were only five colleges, alphabetically listed: Camberwell, Central Saint Martins, Chelsea, London College of Fashion and the London College of Printing (later renamed London College of Communications).

The London Institute considered its 'Special Collections' as they were and are collectively referred to,

a major historical and educational resource. In almost all cases the collections are an inheritance of the founding colleges and are related to specialisms in which they have become world leaders. They are consequently a great source of pride (anonymous, *Report, Special Collections and Archives of the London Institute*, not dated).

This is not to say that all Collections were treated even-handedly. One important obstacle for the I.L.E.A. /Camberwell Collection's incorporation to the body of Special Collections, was that its administrative circumstances did not match the other Special Collections' histories which were, and still are, managed by the Library and Learning Resources section of the Institute, now University; the Collection lay outside their sphere of care. While the objects fit well in the art and design context and its narrative complemented the theory of a 'teaching through objects' ethos (Backemeyer, 1996) a clear strategy for using the Collection was never devised.

Some of these concerns were addressed by Paul Greenhalgh then Course Director of Art History, in his 'Report on the Camberwell Collection', dated October 4, 1993. Greenhalgh starts off optimistically saying that 'during the course of the last academic year the Collection has taken a major step forward' and that 'using monies from the Camberwell Trust, a significant proportion of the collection is now inventoried up to acceptable National Museum Standards' (Greenhalgh, 1993) an assertion that I view as an overstatement. Further on, he recognises the conundrum of uncertain legal status asking 'who exactly owns it? Is the College allowed to profit from it? Are we allowed to de-accession objects?' and finally he underlines the need for a curator, because 'a collection has to be staffed' (ibid).

A year later, Michele Fone, an independent advisor, produced a report of similar findings, and proposed a 'Management Strategy for the Camberwell Collection' (Fone, 1994). She quaintly refers to the Collection as the 'I.L.E.A. Heritage Collection of Decorative Arts Materials', a name not encountered before or since, and recommends for a Research Assistant to be appointed to co-ordinate plans for an exhibition. Fone's report heralded a cluster of initiatives

that culminated in the year 1996, which I understand to be the single most prolific year of Collection-related activities throughout its time at Camberwell.²⁷ With the appointment of Jane Pavitt as a research assistant initial documentation surrounding the Collection was undertaken.

Due to Pavitt's efforts, together with the encouragement and contribution of other members of staff at Camberwell, especially Linda Sandino, it was possible to organise exhibitions and raise the profile of the Collection by lending to other events: in 1995 objects were loaned to the Shipley Art Gallery for an exhibition on *Primavera*, the gallery/shop and wholesale enterprise which had been a major supplier to the I.L.E.A. More importantly, the exhibition: 'The Camberwell Collection: Object Lesson', was the first time when objects from the Collection were presented as part of the London Institute and it took place at Davies Street Gallery in September and October of 1996. It was then transferred to the Exhibition Hall at Camberwell College in January 1997.

The 'Object Lesson' display was reviewed in positive light in the specialised press (*Crafts Magazine*, *Ceramic Review* and *Studio Pottery*). In the *Ceramic Review*, Tanya Harrod called the Collection 'magnificent' and lamented that

the passing of these circulating collections suggests an end of an attempt to democratize and educate taste and to bring actual works of art, design and craft into schools and colleges (Harrod, 1997, p.29).

In September of that same year, the day conference organised by Jane Pavitt and Linda Sandino, entitled 'Education through Design', held at the London College of Fashion, attracted contributions from eminent academics working in the field of design history, museology and education. The accompanying publication *Object Lesson* remains the definitive published text on the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. Paul Greenhalgh claimed that 'a new museum' was born, a proclamation that may have proven premature but it reflected the enthusiasm and buoyancy that surrounded the events of 1996 (Pavitt, 1996). The publicity generated by the exhibition and conference led to higher-profile loans, such as the

²⁷ 1996 was also the year that William Stubbs was appointed Rector of the London Institute having previously held the post of I.L.E.A. Chief Executive between 1982 and 1988.

lending of objects for the Barbican's 1997 show 'Hans Coper and Lucie Rie'.

Meanwhile, there had been a resuscitation of the Collection as an educational tool, the very thing Tanya Harrod had underlined in her review. Undergraduates on the Conservation and the History of Art and Design BA Honours courses at Camberwell College of Arts used the objects as casework and as object-handling projects. The work of those undergraduates, though often unreliable due to their limited opportunity for research, contributed in documenting some of the most fragile and perishable materials, namely paper and basketry. Notwithstanding misspellings that I have detected in the records kept by Conservation students, and misattributions that Dr Sandino has pointed out, these pitfalls are part-and-parcel of archival research and they do not detract from the dual benefit of providing students with primary study material while producing documentation in return.

Sadly, the impetus created by these achievements was not maintained. Using the objects for educational purposes continued for a few years and I have had the chance to use the Collection to teach Camberwell students on the BA Art History of Art and Design course (2000-2001) and the Contextual and Critical Studies component on the Metalwork and Ceramics course, but the pressing archival and conservation needs of the Collection were never addressed decisively. As I explain in Chapter 3, the funding of 1996 had been allocated within the limits of those specific actions and events. Once these activities were over, there was no continuing commitment to the Collection. Consequent reports return to depressingly familiar territory of financial uncertainty and urgency for conservation, as had been described already in the papers of 1979 (Adams), 1993 (Greenhalgh), and 1994 (Fone). Jane Pavitt handed in her final report in March 1997 and while she outlined the progress achieved through the exhibitions, conferences and publications, she reminds recipients that 'following advice from the Conservation Department, it appears that some of the textiles are infested and therefore in need of urgent conservation work.' (her emphasis – Pavitt, 1997).

A more comprehensive report which has not been signed or dated but which I estimate to have been written in the late 1990s, reviewed the whole body of the 'Special Collections and Archives of the London Institute' (anonymous, not dated). It is most likely that this paper was compiled by Sylvia Backemeyer, who had been archivist for the Special Collections at that time and had been asked to compile a report by then rector William Stubbs (Sandino, 2015). Regarding Camberwell, the author concedes that 'very few records were inherited from the

I.L.E.A. and only 20% has been photographed so far'. She then advises, that all Special Collections,

should be given greater visibility generally by having more items displayed in the colleges...the Institute Gallery should be used more frequently to house exhibitions based on the collections...touring exhibitions should be considered to give the collections a higher profile across the country (Special Collections and Archives of the London Institute, not dated).

Circumstances pertaining to the storage and usage of the Collection have prevented Greenhalgh's ambitious vision from being fulfilled, though a number of projects undertaken since 2011 have recently afforded the desired 'greater visibility' Backemeyer had urged for.

CHAPTER 3

Historical Precedents and Parallel Collections

In the present chapter I will examine historical precedents and parallel collections that locate the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection in its contiguous educational and museological contexts.

The Schools of Design

The Schools of Design of the early 19th century and debates surrounding their function can be identified as the distant context that informed all government-run schemes which dealt with design education in Britain during the 20th century. Concern for the education of the manufacturing classes was much discussed in Parliament, the speakers being ever aware of competition on the continent, especially from France, Prussia and Bavaria, (but also looking to American examples – *HANSARD Arts Royal Academy*, 1835). In the 1830s, Members of Parliament such as William Ewart and Thomas Wyse painted a picture of a country that was woefully out of step with its continental rivals in terms of art appreciation, which in turn affected the quality of industrial output. Rather dramatically, Wyse stated that ‘England stood the lowest perhaps in the scale of Europe’ (Hansard, 1835).

Two years earlier, in 1833, Arthur Roebuck had explained to the Commons his vision for

framing the mind of the individual, [so] that he may become a useful and virtuous member of society in the various relations of life. It means making him a good child, a good parent, a good neighbour, a good citizen, in short, a good man (*HANSARD National Education*, 1833).

Further in his speech he underlined education’s importance because ‘no system for the regulation of the poor can be complete without embracing education as a part of the means to be employed’ (HANSARD, 1833). In order to do that, Roebuck proposed ‘1st, Infant Schools; 2nd, Schools of Industry; and 3rd, Normal Schools, or schools for the instruction of masters; separately for boys and girls’ (HANSARD, 1833).

Having put ‘Schools of Industry’ on the agenda, the British government gathered experts in the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures of 1835/6 who strived to organise such education. Keeping in mind that Arthur Roebuck was one of the several Members of Parliament with Utilitarian sensibilities, Malcolm Quinn’s reference to the Benthamite context of such efforts is of relevance:

the comments on individual sovereignty, law and public taste that Bentham made between 1780-82, provide a framework for analysing the efforts of the Benthamites and Philosophical Radicals who sat on the Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures of 1835/6, and others such as Henry Cole who followed in their wake, to find a formula for “the education of the eyes of the people by our own government” (Quinn, 2011, p.9).

It appears that the wish for the new schools was to improve on the already existing vocational education provided by the Mechanics Institute, the first of which, Birkbeck, had opened its doors in 1824. Mechanics Institutes taught drawing, figure modeling and landscape -but the Government ‘had disregarded’ their contribution (according to Bell 1963, p.48).

The lengthy report produced by the Select Committee is a ‘mine of information of the impact of the industrial revolution upon the arts’ (Bell, 1963, p.53), yet for all the exhaustive analysis, the report’s results were not universally applauded. The Schools of Design first became operative in 1837 in their Somerset House location, while more were quickly established in manufacturing centres all over England. Though they had all the good intentions of filling the educational gap identified by the Select Committee of 1835, a few years after their establishments there was much criticism of the way they functioned and the results they yielded.

It is important to note that as James Cunningham pointed out, the meaning of the terms ‘art’, ‘design’, and ‘fine art’ have changed since the early 19th century. Thus the Schools of Design could be interpreted simply as drawing schools (The Royal Academy had ‘a School of Design’ within its walls) or as schools to impart skills such as ornament and pattern-making (Cunningham, 1979, p.6). It would be therefore misleading to judge the Schools of Design based on our own 21st century perception of design courses.

Cunningham put forward the very interesting hypothesis that the true reason behind the Schools' failure to serve their expressed aims, i.e. the improvement of manufacture, was the fact that the Schools were in practice a reflection of growing interest in the visual arts, while utilitarian principles had been used merely in order to secure governmental support. He concludes that the Schools 'must be seen as cultural institutions than as technical training schools.' (Cunningham, 1979, p.10).

In their desire to simultaneously train the eye of the poor student and prevent him from higher artistic aspirations, the Schools created a dramatic conundrum: how could one justify the containment of boys of 12, some of whom would certainly be talented beyond the scope of industrial output? Bell concedes that 'it is impossible not to feel some misgivings about any educational system which begins by forbidding the pupil to learn that which he desires to know' (Bell, 1963, p.69).

While the Schools' instigators continued to support them (see for example *HANSARD Schools of Design*, 1842 where Gall Knight claims 'a decided improvement in the taste of our manufactures') perhaps the best summation of the Schools' shortcomings was expressed by Adrian Rifkin: 'of the 16,000 students who had been through the Schools of Design by 1849, no one seemed to have been clear about quite what it was that they could boast about' (Rifkin, 1988, p.95).

Rifkin's comment demonstrates that the Schools of Design patently did not fulfil their promised improvements. However, they are included in this study because they provided the British Government with a historical precedent, an experiment which aimed to use schooling as the link between government and manufacture. The rhetoric and the strategy were put in place ready to be drawn upon when intervention in aesthetic education was deemed necessary in connection to the establishment of the I.L.E.A. scheme.

The V&A Circulation Department

The Victoria and Albert Museum has close historical links to the Somerset House, the first School of Design. These links are obvious in the history of the establishment of the Circulation Department:

The origins of the Department can be traced back to 1850 when a travelling collection of works of art was established at the Central School of Design at Somerset House and lent in rotation to the provincial schools' (*V&A Museum Circulation Department: its History and Scope*, undated, p.1)

When the 'South Kensington Museum' was established two years later, Circulation became a separate department and its activities more clearly delineated. J.C. Robinson who held the position of Superintendent of the Art Collections of the South Kensington Museum, described in 1860 the purpose of object circulation –where the familiar arguments about improving the public's taste are foregrounded yet again:

the Lords of the Committee of Privy Council for Trade [were of the opinion that] if articles belonging to the Central Museum were circulated among the schools of art, and publicly exhibited, the instruction given in the schools would be aided, the formation of local museums encouraged, the funds of the schools assisted and the public taste generally improved (Robinson, 1860, p.2).

The scheme was being operated with an officer of the Science and Art Department of the Committee of Council on Education who accompanied the collection and remained in charge during the period of its exhibition in each locality, and objects were shown in glass displays. In order to cover transport costs, a penny was charged to non-student visitors (*ibid.* p.10). Illustration 39 shows 'index to classes', that is, the catalogue of objects that could be requested for exhibition in 1860.

In a later document entitled *The Provincial Obligations of South Kensington Museum* (Balcarres, 1899) which appears to be a draft for an article to be published, the author gives the numbers of the circulating specimens as 28,000 in 1894, growing to 38,000 specimens in 1897 'a figure which in point of numbers represents one quarter of the entire collection at South Kensington' (Balcarres, 1899, p. 889).

The Circulation Department grew and changed during the first half of the 20th century. Many government-run collections, including the I.L.E.A./Camberwell one, owe much of their inception and implementation to the Circulating Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum. The Museum's activities were routinely invoked in relevant documentation, for

example in the Meynell-Hoskin report, where there was much praise for the ‘excellent work done by the Victoria and Albert Museum Circulation Department, who have sent out in spite of war difficulties a series of really inspiring exhibitions’ (Boards of Trade and Education, 1944, p.9).

Yet there were distinct differences in how ‘lending’ functioned within the various organisations that practiced it. Information in the leaflet *V&A Museum Circulation Department*, which was probably written by Hugh Wakefield, attests to this. Wakefield succeeded Peter Floud as Senior Keeper. Floud is primarily associated with the history of the Circulation Department during the mid-20th century. Floud was a charismatic keeper who greatly promoted Circulation as a scholarly department (with a focus on ‘modern’ objects from late Victorian to the contemporary) between his appointment as Keeper in 1947 (having been involved as Assistant Keeper since 1935) and his untimely death in 1960 (Burton, 1999).

Floud represented the established end of the curatorial spectrum, a well-educated gentleman who ran his Department with respect to the V&A’s standing but sympathetic to the cause of disseminating art and design, in accordance to his own beliefs (Sandino, 2013). Molly Harrison’s account of her professional relationship with Floud, is telling of the relationship between the V&A and establishments as the Geffrye, where Harrison was curator. Harrison was notorious for accepting anyone into the Geffrye, and actually inviting local children to spend time there -Shoreditch being one of the most deprived areas in mid-century London. Her papers in the Geffrye archive make many references to the oblique or direct criticisms (as well as praise from other quarters) that she had received for this practice. According to her, Floud ‘thought she was mad in what she was doing at the Geffrye. They had lots of amiable but pointed arguments’. Harrison’s interview to Woollard suggests that some arguments revolved around the care and conservation of displays in view of the Geffrye’s lenient admissions policy: ‘there was a lot of opposition to Molly Harrison, who had no degree and invited in lower class visitors’(Woollard, 1992).

The Circulation Department was committed to making objects accessible throughout the UK as is evident in the policy of applying ‘a standard transport fee, irrespective of the borrower’s location in the UK’ (Weddell, 2012) while anxieties about the safety of the V&A’s objects were resolved by the tier-system developed by the Circulation Department. This divided the travelling exhibitions into five categories: the first category contained the cream of the

collections, for example small sculpture, glass, silver, ivories, manuscripts which were available for loan to the most secure venues, usually the largest provincial galleries, for three months at a time. In the second category there belonged three-dimensional material, for example 'English Pottery and Porcelain', which could also be lent for three months. In the third category there were framed original materials, displayed in show-cases. Such were the 'English embroideries' and 'Japanese Prints' that were lent for one to two months at a time. In the fourth category there were small photographic exhibitions (lent also for a maximum of two months), while the fifth category comprised of small displays each consisting of a collection of three-dimensional objects and set out in a single display case e.g. 'French Lace' (*V&A Museum Circulation Department: its History and Scope*, undated, pp. 5-6).

All these travelling exhibitions were sent out as complete self-contained units, with posters, descriptive notes and labels. However, the provision for Secondary Schools was differentiated after the War. It was noted that while before the War about 400 schools had participated in the scheme, after the Butler Education Act of 1944, the Museum had seen a huge rise in demand, with about 2,000 potential recipients, a number of borrowers that the Museum considered 'administratively impossible' (ibid, p.7). The solution was to de-centralise some of the Loans, and transfer responsibility to Local Education Authorities, noting that 'many such schemes already exist' (ibid).

The above gives a clue as to how the V&A functioned as a primer for Local Authorities in the 1950s and 1960s. Most of these collections, including the scheme that led to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, emulated the Circulation Department in its structure by favouring categorisation of exhibits on the basis of material. Circulation's affinity with local Collections is perhaps best summed up by Marina Vaizey's description of the Circulation's function as 'an alternative museum, a museum broken up into small, coherent units, and constantly on the road.' (Vaizey, 1972).

Moreover, there are throughout the history of the I.L.E.A. /Camberwell Collection, oblique or more direct references to the V&A, sporadically found in the texts on the panel of cases, as for example in 'Woven Textiles' displays where students were reminded that 'some of the loveliest woven textile in the world, including those illustrated in this exhibition, may be seen in the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington' (Anonymous photograph. 'Woven Textiles Display, circa 1965').

The parallels to the V&A Circulation Department continued to the circumstances of withdrawal of the collections: both schemes were finally abandoned in 1976, both victims of governmental cuts (Weddell, 2012). The difference being that the Circulation's disbandment was greeted by a certain amount of indignation by the media (this research has been conducted by Joanna Weddell, 2012), while the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection did not attract such attention and was quietly laid to rest in I.L.E.A.'s storage facilities in South London.

There is however, one important divergence between the function of the Circulation Department and the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection: the V&A did not allow for the handling and the casual detachment of objects from their cases. On the symbolic level, the V&A conceded its possessions to the general public -but on the literal level it retained the preciousness of the museum piece outside the reach of the non-expert's arm. This topic is further analysed in chapter 5, section 'Handling and Touch in Museums.'

Provincial Circulating Collections

I have previously isolated three characteristics which in combination make the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection a distinctive study in the history of art and design education: the criterion of 'good design', the stipulation of 'handling' and the stipulation of 'circulating'. On the basis of these three guiding principles I can situate the Collection in the context of other comparable schemes. In addition to the V&A's Circulation Department, my research has yielded four instances that present opportunity for such comparison: Council of Industrial Design travelling exhibits which predate or ran parallel to the *Experiment in Design Appreciation*; provincial circulating collections; the I.L.E.A. Circulating Pictures Scheme, and Central Saint Martin's Art and Design Archive.

Their chronologies vary, but all share a time in the second-half of the twentieth century when they were presented as collections, whether travelling or static. A brief look at the histories and contents of the above-mentioned projects will illuminate the affinities they share with the I.L.E.A. /Camberwell Collection and it will demarcate each one collection's position in the landscape of learning-through-objects. These contribute to the overall thesis' investigation about design pedagogy by demonstrating how collections and archives of objects have been

used historically in the teaching of design and how schemes comparable to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell one, have been utilised as vehicles for the formation of taste.

At the Design History Research Centre in Brighton, alongside the L.C.C. 'Design Experiment' photographs, there is evidence of other displays, which appear very similar but were not part of the L.C.C. 'Design Experiment' (Anonymous Photograph, Travelling Exhibitions, 1950). These documented travelling exhibitions that the Council circulated to the provinces (there is no list of locations), as the one in illustration 21. They pre-empted the L.C.C. scheme as they were probably started in 1950. Their thematic approach is also somewhat different. They brought objects together into four themes under the general heading *Purpose and Pleasure*. The themes were: *At Home*, *At Work*, *In School* and *Out of Doors*. Not surprisingly, text on the panels repeats the message of good design: 'these four boxes show that objects which are well designed are pleasant to use and attractive in appearance' (Anonymous photographs, Travelling Exhibitions, 1950).

By the mid-fifties, another notable C.O.I.D.-organised travelling exhibit draws attention to the fact there were established channels of co-operation between the C.O.I.D. and the Victoria and Albert Museum, in this instance through the 'Commercial Embroidery Scheme', organised by the Scottish Committee of the C.O.I.D. and circulated through the V&A, during 1956 and 1957. The Commercial Embroidery Scheme aimed to breathe fresh air into the practice of embroidery. The organisers claimed that:

This exhibition is a serious attempt to improve the standards of commercial embroidery designs [...] The art of embroidery thrives, like all the arts, on the exploration of new territory. Today, skill in embroidery has attained a high level, but this skill is too often applied to designs, which lack the freshness of line and colour of a new approach (Anonymous Photographs, Travelling Exhibitions, 1950).

The Scottish embroidery commentary demonstrates a typical C.O.I.D. attitude in the attempt to appropriate traditional skills and patterns that had been practised primarily by women, and claim them for a commercial re-fashioning. Though little information survives, evidence suggests that it was most likely through the V&A and its co-operation with the Council of Industrial Design's Scottish Committee that design examples were circulated in Glasgow schools. Such a scheme in Scotland is referenced in the speech of Kenneth Holmes, principal

of the Leicester College of Art in the Conference on Design Education held at the Glasgow School of Art, in July 1948. ‘Photographs are not enough. Like Glasgow, our local museum has long established Schools Circulation Collections of scientific objects, natural history exhibits and what are now called “visual aids” (Conference on Design in Education, 1948, p.43).

The Leicestershire scheme of which Holmes speaks, has proven one of the most successful and long-running provincial programmes of circulation in the format of travelling boxes (Leicestershire Museums Celebrate, 2012). It was first set up in 1930 with 43 boxes containing history, biology and geology ‘beauty and curiosities’ while today there are more than a thousand loans to schools and community groups. Still in great demand, the scheme is now called the Resource Box. Apart from the ever-popular natural history specimens, the Resource Box service includes a great variety of original 19th century objects such as the extensive taxidermy collection of birds and mammals, and replicas of earlier pieces of material culture (Leicestershire Museums Celebrate, 2012). Closer to the ILEA/Camberwell Collection are the ethnographic objects, studio ceramics and modern glass boxes. Leicestershire Council was one of the pioneering councils of the 1960s and 1970s in matters of education. Like the Greater London Council, Leicestershire placed great emphasis on its commitment to enriching the lives of Leicestershire students with art and artefacts (Leicestershire Museums Celebrate, 2012).

In parallel to the circulating of the Resource Boxes, fine art in the media of paintings, prints and sculpture was being purchased to ‘embellish’ schools, as in illustration 40, a screen-print by Patrick Caulfield. In the catalogue of an 1980 exhibition about the Leicestershire Collection for Schools and Colleges, Norman St. John Stevas, Minister for the Arts wrote:

As director of Education for Leicestershire, Stewart Mason saw that paintings and sculptures could and should become part of the everyday school and college environment to enable children to appreciate them and enjoy them and to provide greater opportunity for artists. He was not alone in this - indeed Leicestershire’s scheme was not the first - but the size and importance of the collection, which he inaugurated, is without equal (*Growing up with Art*, 1980, p.3).

Leicestershire Council's commitment to its art and design activities ensured the longevity of the schemes. Today the Resource Box scheme functions as one of the three bodies of artefacts that comprise Leicestershire Council's 'Open Museum', the other two being 'Artworks' (works of art for loan) and 'Moving Objects', display-ready panels and cases containing objects that cover themes investigating diverse issues, like consumption, fairy-tales, football, waste. Much in the tradition of the Council –run travelling case schemes, the boxes are sent to schools in the beginning of term and remain there for the term's duration. After delivery of the boxes, the onus is on school staff to integrate the objects into their teaching (Leicestershire Museums Celebrate 80th Anniversary of Nomadic Resource Box Scheme, 2012 and The Open Museum – Leicestershire County Council, 2004).

The I.L.E.A. Circulating Pictures Scheme

The Circulating Pictures Scheme had been a London County Council initiative to provide schools with 'a selection of works of art which will instruct, stimulate or at least interest schoolchildren and therefore play a part in the child's visual education' (Art Gallery Exhibition, 1964). It is not clear when exactly the scheme had been started. In the beginning, the collection consisted of 'good reproductions of well-known master-pieces' and by 1947 it was decided to extend the scheme through the purchase of original works (Art on the School Wall, 1964).²⁸

In the Geffrye Museum Archive curatorial files, in a letter of April 1950, L.C.C. Education Officer Graham Savage gives a clue as to when the original paintings collection started: 'I have received your application for the Geffrye Museum to be included in the circulating pictures scheme. The scheme has only just been restarted after a long interval due to the war whilst the loan collection of original paintings is of very recent origin' (Savage, 1950).

Relevant information also appeared on a press release meant to accompany the 1964 exhibition 'Collecting Art for London Schools', held at the South London Gallery. In the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection archives, there is a file relevant to this exhibition which contains press-cuttings from the local press, the *Times Educational Supplement* and *The*

²⁸ A similar scheme in the private sector, the School Prints project, was initiated by Brenda and Derek Rawnsley, who commissioned high-profile British and international artists to produce artworks for schools (Artmonsky, 2010)

Guardian where a photo was also published. The *Municipal Journal* of 17 January 1964, informed its readers that:

Camberwell Borough Council and London County Council are organizers of an exhibition of paintings, ceramics, sculptures and embroideries entitled 'Collecting Art for London's Schools'. All the items on view have been collected by the London County Council and are sent to schools in the London area where teachers can introduce the works of living British artists to their pupils. Works on view, only a quarter of the collection, contain a variety of paintings and other items (Art for London Schools, 1964).

Regarding the 'other items' on display, the hand-list suggests that these were primarily borrowed from the *Design Appreciation Scheme* – perhaps in order to present a more comprehensive exhibition. The hand-list mentions 'pottery and sculpture' by Francine Delpierre, Bernard Leach, Brian Newman, Ian Auld, Lucie Rie, Dan Arheid, Ruth Duckworth, John Eaves, Molly Winterburn and Gordon Baldwin. These are complemented by the seemingly incongruous objects that students of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection will recognise as belonging to its 'ethnographic' component: objects of various materials and descriptions identified as Mexican, Bolivian, Sardinian, Sicilian or generic 'African' (Anonymous 'Handlist Art for London Schools', 1964).

The clue as to how all these items fit the remit of 'Collecting Art for London's Schools' came in the press release where it was underlined that the premise had not been to collect 'gallery' pieces but pieces that had 'qualities which can be used in teaching and all play their part in the visual education of the child [...]. It aims, moreover, to make the child generally more visually aware and appreciative of good design, possibly a more discriminating consumer in the future.' (Stevens, 1964). In this case, Stevens' exclusive emphasis on the visual qualities of the exhibits is understood in the context of a gallery display that excluded handling.

Dennis Stevens was evidently well-versed in the language of 'good design'. He was at the time L.C.C.'s Art Organiser, the person who oversaw the running of both collections. It is the supervision of Dennis Stevens that makes this scheme particularly relevant to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell one, since it fell under the administrative jurisdiction of the same manager. It appears that the works in the pictures scheme were expected to work in synergy

with the Design Scheme to produce well-rounded, cultured individuals –reflecting the taste-formation values that had informed the Design Scheme.

The fates of the Circulating Pictures Scheme and that of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection continued to be intertwined when they were both under I.L.E.A.'s management but it appears that the systems of purchasing, distribution and use were kept separate. The 1964 exhibition has been the only example found when objects from both collections were shown alongside each other.²⁹

Central Saint Martin's Art and Design Archive

Out of the totality of the University's Special Collections, it would be fair to argue that the Central Saint Martin's Art and Design Archive is currently the closest partner for the I.L.E.A./Camberwell one, since they are both housed in the same educational establishment where they are used as teaching collections. Their main difference is that the contents and chronology of the Central Saint Martin's Art and Design Archive differ significantly from those of the Camberwell Collection. The basis of the C.S.M. archive had been lettering, calligraphy and prints –the most significant of which were produced in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, much of the material in that archive focuses on education and the implementation of a set of good design examples – these items bring it into alignment with the scope of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. The C.S.M. archive can be seen as a link between the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* and the principles of good design as these had been endorsed by the Arts and Crafts movement; it is also a link to the governmental agencies that had admired the Arts and Crafts' legacy since much of the C.S.M. archive developed as the legacy of William Lethaby and his circle (Backemeyer, 1996). The Gorell report which, as I have already shown, had been pivotal in the establishment of the

²⁹ The Circulating Pictures Scheme gained some notoriety in 1987 when it became known that some of its most valuable paintings had been sold off by I.L.E.A. Firstly the reason given behind that decision was 'because there was some difficulty storing them all' but according to two articles in *The Times* the real reason had been to raise money: 'I.L.E.A. admitted yesterday that the best had been sold and the remaining 1,500 paintings were not as valuable as any of those sold. (Thompson, 1987). The paper had interviewed Carel Weight, former professor at the Royal College of Art. who was quoted as having sold items to I.L.E.A. 'on the understanding that they would be part of travelling exhibitions to schools...then they came up for sale at Sotheby's.' ('Paintings sold by ILEA for books', *The Times*, 1987).

Experiment in Design Appreciation, cited William Morris ‘and the group of artist-craftsmen whom he inspired’ as influential to a degree that ‘can hardly be over-estimated’ (Board of Trade, 1932, p. 12).

In 1990 Head of College Margaret Buck acquired the I.L.E.A. Collection for Camberwell but shortly afterwards she became Head of Central Saint Martin’s (in 1991). C.S.M., the London College of Printing (which has been known as the London College of Communication since 1996) and Camberwell College of Arts, were able to join forces and bid successfully for a H.E.F.C.E. (Higher Education Funding Council for England) grant in 1995. They received a lump sum that enabled all Colleges to realise projects that raised the profile of their collections. Evidence based on the strategies implemented since the mid-1980s when the objects in the Archive were ‘re-discovered’ according to its curator (Buruma, 2012), suggests that Central Saint Martin’s College has been more successful than Camberwell College of Arts in terms of safeguarding the status of its collections, not least because it sought and gained Museum status in 2001. Re-accreditation was achieved in 2011 (Buruma, 2012).

The brief overview I have provided of other archives, collections and travelling schemes defines a network that links the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection with past and present projects and discloses its pedagogical role among them.

An Examination of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a ‘Socialist’ Project

What kind of politics informed and maintained the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection? Any history is by definition political. In the case of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, the input of government has been such, that to ignore the political dimension would be to greatly detract from the investigation.

Having thus introduced this section, I wish to clarify that the word ‘socialist’ should be read as carrying a neutral load, if that is at all viable for a term with strong connotations. For the purposes of this discussion by ‘socialist’ I do not wish to dilute the politics surrounding I.L.E.A. but I wish to describe that which is intended to serve society as a whole -an interpretation closer to ‘egalitarian’- than to ‘radical’. Inevitably there is an overlap between a ‘socialist’ viewpoint and Labour policies that affected the Collection, but the examination

aims to highlight aspects of the scheme that, while informed by political affiliations, had educational repercussions that went beyond such affiliations.

The Labour Party can be identified as an active agent in the formation of the Collection as early as 1945 when it won the general elections. It was on the strength of this victory that the Festival of Britain was made possible. Becky Conekin has shown how the Festival ‘created a space for an unuttered, yet unmistakable, message that the Labour Party, was the force behind Britain’s recovery’ (Conekin, 2003, p.226). That force was not simply demonstrated by the fact that Labour had been in power during the planning stages of the Festival, or the predominance of Modernist architecture as I have discussed elsewhere.

The spirit of egalitarianism, a new Britain enjoying achievements that would be shared by all, was also attested to by the mix of ‘low and high brow’ art and design on show. It was further underlined by a conscious limiting of references to the Empire, by the fact that Festival buildings would serve Londoners (and inhabitants of other cities where Festival events took place) long after the event had finished, and not least, by showcasing Labour educational reforms in the British class-rooms, as demonstrated by the New Schools Pavilion of the Festival (Conekin, 2003). The New Schools Pavilion underpinned the ‘distinctive political commitment to social welfare’ and was designed by Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew, renowned for their modernist affiliations (Buckley, 2007). Therefore the New Schools Pavilion provides the context in which the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* arose.

Prime Minister Herbert Morrison strived to present the Festival as a national rather than a party effort, and by and large he succeeded despite negative coverage by a faction of the media. Criticisms by the *Evening Standard* and the *Express* newspapers describing the event as ‘Mr Morrison’s multi-million pound baby’ (Conekin, 2003, p. 15) can be attributed to these publications’ own agenda rather than being representative of the Festival’s public reception. If anything, some felt that the festival was not ‘modern’ enough. Barry Curtis has cited Richard Hamilton, reviewing the decade in hindsight. Hamilton wrote in 1961 complaining of the Festival’s ‘onerous heritage’ as a show-case for “Britishness” that stopped short of realising the potential of function and style ‘that had enabled German and Italian design to excel in the fifties’ (Curtis, 2005, p. 126).

Whether too modern or not modern enough, the Festival was by measure of visitor numbers a very successful event. The total number of visitors at the South Bank was more than 8 million (Conekin, 2003, p. 236) – though it did not succeed to keep Labour in power and the Conservatives led government before the year 1951 was over. Examining a publication outlining Conservative policies for the future, the ‘Industrial Chapter’ of 1947, Harriet Jones has analysed the party’s seductive rhetoric based on a ‘new Conservative’ image that

identified private enterprise with a limited role for the state in the management of economic policy and social welfare, as ‘free’, ‘efficient’, ‘fair’ and ‘modern’ set against a socialist model that was ‘stifling’, ‘meddlesome’, ‘wasteful’ (Jones in Conekin, 1999, pp. 186-187)

Sensing the change in mood, the Labour leader Clement Attlee wrote to Morrison urging him to set the elections for the autumn of 1951, thus giving the Festival ‘as much time as possible to amass support for the Labour party’ (Conekin, 1999, p.234).

Despite such advice, the Festival did not manage to win for Labour the 1951 general election. Issues such as the sudden transformation of the Soviet Union from ally to potential enemy, plus people’s impatience with continuing austerity, played a part in swaying voters to the right and the Conservatives won. It was not before 1964 that the country came back under the Labour Party’s control and remained so for the rest of the 1960s. The 1970s saw Conservatives take the 1970 elections and Labour come back in 1974, before the difficult economic and social conditions of the mid-70s gave rise to the long reign of the Conservatives during the 1980s, starting in 1979 with Margaret Thatcher. In summary, between 1951 and 1979, the years that concern the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, the statistics speak of the Conservative party’s predominance, the party that led government for a total of about 17 years as opposed to Labour’s approximately 11 years.

Yet I wish to argue that these statistics are not particularly helpful either in relation to the G.L.C. or in the context of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. It is true that the alternation between the two parties in local government broadly reflected the general election results. However, there is in the history of the G.L.C., a resonance of the fact that the Council was Labour’s baby, in the same -if not even more pronounced- way that the Festival of Britain had also been a creation of the Labour Party. The I.L.E.A. in particular, was pre-dominantly

Labour-controlled even at times of Tory G.L.C. chairmanship. As John Davis has put it ‘by the late 1980s, the teeth had been drawn from municipal socialism, but the result was not the unequivocal triumph of the local new right’ (Davis in Kerr, 2003, p.113).

Indeed, histories and documents pertaining to the G.L.C. give the impression that Conservative governments during the 1970s and 1980s went along with G.L.C. policies begrudgingly, the very nature of the Conservative party being inherently inimical to public spending for purposes of social welfare, especially through the channels of organisations that were seen as wasteful and bureaucratic (HANSARD *ILEA's Future*, 1981). Throughout the late 1970s and 1980s there appears to be an escalating dissonance between the G.L.C. and Conservative governments and a sense of a power struggle for Londoners’ affections. When the Conservatives regained control in London in 1977, their accession to power was followed by decisive measures such as the school lunch cuts that evoked the ‘Margaret Thatcher Milk Snatcher’ 1971 controversy, when Thatcher had been Education Minister in Heath’s government.

County Hall, the G.L.C.’s ‘inhabited space’ where following Bourdieu’s thinking, manifestations of the symbolic relation between people, objects and the environment become apparent (Bourdieu, 1984, pp.165-166), not only housed the G.L.C. and I.L.E.A. but it was physically situated opposite Westminster. It is hardly surprising that visual manifestations of the uneasy relations between County Hall and Westminster included banners with political slogans hanging from County Hall walls, a practice favoured by later G.L.C. leader Ken Livingstone (illustration 41). By the time Livingstone came to power in 1981, there was so much acrimony between the G.L.C. and the government, that the Council’s abolition, its methodical dismemberment, the selling-off of its premium locations, I.L.E.A.’s gradual disempowerment and the final death knell in the form of the 1988 Education Act, can all be interpreted as a symbolic crushing of the left-wing politics the G.L.C. had represented as well as a desperately needed money-saving measure. The critical decision for I.L.E.A. was taken with the 1988 Education Reform Bill; it was a landmark legislative action that re-defined the National Curriculum for primary and secondary schools, with particular reference to the place of art and design and the promotion of transferable skills. The aim was to integrate the teaching of art and design across the curriculum. Amongst other provisions, the Bill dictated ‘the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority and the hand-over of education to the inner London boroughs.’ (Steers, 1988, p. 315)

Going beyond the period of circulation of the I.L.E.A. scheme provides the context within which the Authority was abolished and explains the circumstances that led to the Collection's acquisition by Camberwell College of Arts. In a related discussion at the House of Commons on 17 February 1988 Kenneth Baker, Conservative Secretary of State for Education and Science, describes I.L.E.A. as an authority which, 'has combined profligate overspending with a persistent failure to raise standards of education in its schools' while further down he refers disdainfully to I.L.E.A.'s 'charmed circle' of people who still believed in its potential. Labour's Jack Straw retorted with claims of much improvement in I.L.E.A. secondary education standard (HANSARD *Abolition of ILEA*, 1988). My understanding, reading various parliamentary debates in the Hansard files, was that the Authority's fate had been sealed years before the 1988 Act. Already in 1981, Baroness Young, then Minister of Department of Education and Science purported to be speaking for

Rate-payers on whom the very high I.L.E.A. rate bears very heavily. I think particularly not just of the domestic ratepayer, but of the industries in London which, of course, have to contribute very heavily towards this end. The Statement makes it clear that we believe that the right way to proceed is that if the I.L.E.A. is unable to meet the financial requests that we have asked of it, we shall be reviewing the financial arrangements. That is as far as I would go at this stage (HANSARD, 1981).

Considering the Festival of Britain and the I.L.E.A. as products of Labour politics, allows me to view the Collection as a left-wing project itself because my research suggests that two Labour-born institutions, the Festival and I.L.E.A. were the two main engendering forces behind the scheme - albeit at different phases in its history. This leads to additional layers of interpretation. Could for example the nearly total lack of American-produced design in the Collection be attributed to the frosty reception of McCarthyism by Labour in the post-war period? Martin Francis has convincingly argued that British politicians at the time of the Festival took a dim view of the exaggerated McCarthian stance against communism and strived to differentiate

British public life from a transatlantic other at a time when fears of American cultural annexation were increasingly to the fore as a result of the decline in Britain's world power status (Francis in Conekin, 1999, p.161).

Among other sources that confirm the unwelcome (but probably inevitable) American 'cultural annexation' is Richard Hoggart's critique of American popular culture - Hoggart refers to cheap comics as an example (Hoggart, 1992). In his attack Hoggart laments that the aesthetic of 'big-bosomed girls from Mars' had already infiltrated British youth through the reading material of American G.I.s during the War. He sensed that American visual culture (which would later be labelled 'pop') would be an increasingly important influence on British taste, despite it being 'a passive visual taking-on of bad mass-art geared to a very low mental age.' (Hoggart, 1992, p.177).

Hoggart further on in his book expands on his crucial observation about the transition of post-war Britain from a primarily literary culture to a visual one. He claims that the cheap novella geared at the working-class housewife was an escapism that still won over visual forms of entertainment during the early 1950s but this was about to change, as the whole spectrum of popular press, be it newspapers, 'glossies', novelettes or comics, helped along by new technologies of printing and reproduction, increasingly relied on visuals. However, probably the most important transition in this respect was the gradual replacement of radio by television (Hoggart, 1992, pp. 212-213).

Again, the influence of the U.S., the country which came to lead trends in TV programming and visual culture, complicated Britain's position in the global political arena of the early 1950s. This ambivalence is perhaps more accurately captured in Barry Curtis's comment that

In Britain, the gladiatorial confrontation of West and East was present in the popular imagination as remote events at frontiers and flashpoints, coinciding with a withdrawal from Empire and a sustained remoteness from Europe. In keeping with Britain's shifting national and international identity in the 1950s, the signs and scenarios of Cold War conflict were relatively subdued and repressed. Britain was [...] between aggressive austerity and assertive luxury, with fantasies of a mediating role (Curtis in Crowley and Pavitt, 2008, p.121).

In the lack of more specific evidence pertaining to the policies informing the Collection, it would be a tentative hypothesis to argue that American design was snubbed due to a nascent underlying anti-Americanism. Neither would this explain the absence of other nations, namely the very limited presence of French objects in the Collection though there has been a historical competition with France since the mid-19th century that was specifically played out in the arena of exhibitions, the context where the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection also belongs (Greenhalgh, 1990). The hypothesis of antipathy towards specific industrialised nations is offered as an indication of the insidious potential of politics and how they may, or may not, affect manifestations of material culture. A more plausible political connection between socialism and international design acquisitions can be argued on the basis of the mutual appreciation between the Labour party and its Scandinavian counterparts. This connection will be examined in the next section, discussing objects of Scandinavian origin in the Collection (Chapter 4).

CHAPTER 4

Examples of ‘Good Design’ in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

The British context of ‘Good Design’

In chapters 2 and 3 my investigation of how the Collection was instigated, utilised and compared to other schemes, established the key points regarding how its pedagogic aims were put into action: I have shown, particularly in section ‘Beginnings - Early Twentieth Century Initiatives and the Council of Industrial Design’ how the selection process of ‘good design’ was adopted through its endorsement by bodies as the C.O.I.D. and other government agencies as a method of advancing British manufacture, and how the relationship between protectionism of British design and education was advocated through events as the Festival of Britain.

One of this thesis’ aims is to locate the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection in relation to its instigators’ hope to use ‘good design’ as a vehicle for improving the public taste. I have therefore selected ‘exhibitions’ (to use I.L.E.A.’s language) or display images, which help me advance the disciplinary and research discussion on ‘good design’. In order to cover as much of a representative cross-section of the Collection as possible, I have selected British examples of mass production (*Plastics in the Home*), international examples of mass and batch production (*Product Design from Finland*) and examples of studio/hand production (*Pottery Thrown by Hand*; *Pottery by Hand and Machine*; *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*).

Even though Stevens’ 1967 comments about providing schools with more contextual information about the objects suggest a differentiated approach (Stevens, 1967), the texts found on the panels of the I.L.E.A. displays continue to place emphasis on production, in certain cases offering meticulous analysis of production technologies using industry-related language and terminology. Information on the reception of these products in the British marketplace is sparse. The issue of ‘reception’ by the general public, but particularly by the pupils, who would become ‘the consumers of tomorrow’ (Woodham, 1996), is also undocumented as I have discussed in chapter 3.

In the present chapter, I will illustrate these points through reference to particular displays. A number of images of displays have been discussed in chapter 2, as these had been captured through the Inner London Education Authority's lens. The analysis of displays in chapter 2 concerned aspects of a taxonomical evolution. Initial classification of the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* followed the established museum model of ordering artefacts according to materials. As the Collection grew, thematic displays appeared alongside material-based ones. A choice of exhibits were presented in chapter 2 with the intention of highlighting the great diversity of objects found in the Collection, establishing emergent themes, and showing the gradual progression from the functionalist aesthetic under the influence of the Council of Industrial Design, to the eclecticism observed from the mid-1960s onwards.

Here, in-depth analysis of displays will concentrate on a selection of two exhibits presented in four images (each exhibit appears as a set of two). The analysis of the displays further explores the project of 'good design' and its impact on the selection of objects and assignment of themes. In addition I will pursue some of the narratives unfolding in the contextual information included in the displays. The chosen displays are: *Plastics in the Home* (illustrations 42 and 43 , appendixes 1 and 2); and *Product Design from Finland* (illustrations 44 and 45, appendixes 3 and 4).

The rationale behind choosing plastics cases and their material for investigation relates to plastics' position as a modern material, yet an ambivalent one, one that can embody and yet at other times can be in conflict with, the tenets of 'good design'. On the other hand, Finnish design was chosen as representative of an ideal (and, as I will demonstrate, idealised) amalgamation of craft, industry and art, a combination to which British design aspired.

These being displays from the mid-1960s onwards, are presented with more detailed contextual information, casting a critical eye on aesthetics and in texts extending to arguments about the social implications of good design. Based on original research using uncatalogued documents in the possession of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection archive, I conclude that these texts were primarily written by Dennis Stevens and his team. This is probable because there are, in the I.L.E.A documentation, hand-written notes that correspond to two panel texts (*Plastics in the Home* and *Design from Four Countries*) signed by Stevens.

Alongside the text panels, articles in *Design* and the writings of Farr, McCarthy, Stewart,

Buckley and Crowther, help in the investigation of the broad picture that makes up the story of post-war British design. In this story, the project of ‘good design’ emerges as a government-funded imperative: an imperative where modernism is pitted against non-canonical design and the fickle taste of the consumer; it can also be perceived as a race against time: texts hint at an urgency to convince manufacturers and consumers of the benefits of ‘good design’ before modernism collapsed under the weight of its own untenable expectations.

This untenability becomes evident in later issues of *Design* magazine, where the Design Council (the Council of Industrial Design assumed this new title in 1972), re-defined its activities. By the late 1980s, more than 10 years after the closure of the Design Appreciation scheme, the Design Council published its intention to close down its shop. The following quote may be either interpreted as declaring defeat in the Design Council’s battle to educate the consumer, or as having completed the task:

Ordinary people on the street have had their consciousness raised about design. Much of the impetus for this came from the retail boom. So sophisticated is the consumer, that the Design Council has abandoned its product selection scheme (together with its triangular labels) and is abandoning its shop in Haymarket, the better to concentrate on its target audiences in industry and education (anonymous, 1989).

The above quotation, indicating the Council’s abandonment of product selection, which had been the main platform for sanctioning good design, may be interpreted as close to an admission of good design’s limited success, as the Design Council was prepared to concede. Within the Collection, numerous products had been specifically selected because of C.O.I.D.’s endorsement, including Melmex and Insulex plastics and Old Hall metalware. The Council had invested heavily in good design and its pursuit had been the Council’s *raison d’être* for the previous forty years. Furthermore, for more than three decades (1957-1988), the Council’s awards had been a useful compass for what constituted good design. The awards had been established ‘in order to improve design standards [...] to promote the best British designs [...] and to encourage retailers to stock [them]’ (Crowther, 2012, p.7). In this effort, they were supported by leading figures such as Prince Philip: starting in 1959 and in close partnership with the C.O.I.D., Prince Philip picked products to receive the *Duke of Edinburgh’s Prize for Elegant Design*. Between them, the Council and the Prince attempted

to define this canon:

Initially the same designers appeared to be winning year after year: David Mellor gained one award in 1957 and two in 1959; Robin Day gained two in 1957; John and Sylvia Reid gained one award in 1957 and one in 1959. The same manufacturers' names also appeared regularly: Hille, Walker and Hall, Wilkinson Sword and Wedgwood. (Stewart, 1987, p.191).

These seals of approval were by no means guarantors of commercial success. Stewart pointed out that for certain products the Council's awards spelt 'the Kiss of Death' commercially (Stewart, 1987, p. 193) - this can be said to apply for example to the *Ekco Nova* range I discuss in the next section of this chapter. Notwithstanding consumer response, the Victoria and Albert Museum collected most of the endorsed products, and smaller schemes, including the I.L.E.A scheme, also acquired many of the awarded designs (Crowther, 2012). The point should be made that the awards' earlier emphasis on domestic products encouraged their acquisition by travelling collections; later the Council and the Duke expanded the awards' scope and included such projects as cars and yachts which would make their inclusion in travelling schemes impossible.

Despite a curtailed role for the Design Council, and a sense that the late 1980s saw British design and its government-backed advocates struggle to define their function, Stewart's book ends on a positive note, citing the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design meeting, held in 1985:

Mrs Thatcher's initiative [...] has established a new programme to include design education in the school system. It has financially supported the introduction of design awareness modules in business schools. And, it has provided incentives from manufacturers to use design consultants. In short, the Government of Great Britain has made design a central force in its industrial policy. (Stewart, 1987, p. 246).

Stewart notes that by the early 1970s, the Design Council decided to remove 2000 products of their *Design Index*, the list of about 9000 Council-approved products of good design, in order to 'allay two suspicions of the public: firstly that good design is expensive and secondly that aesthetics and efficiency are somehow mutually exclusive.' (Stewart, 1987, p.224). The

indication that the public viewed, by that time, good design with suspicion, as representing a paternalism that was being rejected and questioned its aesthetics and functionality, implies also a rejection of what modernism had stood for. Ironically, by the late 20th century one could argue that modernism was being endorsed by a taste elite that embraced mid-century style in the same connoisseurial spirit that is bestowed on antiques.

I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection Display: *Plastics in the Home*

Plastics in the Home is a two-part display chosen by myself as representative of the popularisation of plastics in post-war Britain. Analysis of this group of objects will address the perception of plastics as a revolutionary development both in terms of liberating production from costly materials and technologies and in terms of transforming consumption in the domestic sphere. Plastics was therefore seen as a typically modern material and suitable for the scheme.

In keeping with the domestic focus, the set of these two displays are exclusively dedicated to plastics. *Plastics in the Home 1* and *Plastics in the Home 2*, showcase plastics for the kitchen and in novelty applications like items for interior decoration. In addition to the cups, saucers, vases, trays and pepper mills, there is the polythene waste-bin and the handful of decorative objects that may be seen to straddle the divide between decorative design and art object, such as the ‘trichromatic print on vacuum-formed poly-vinyl chloride (PVC) with reflective metalized melinex.’ (*Plastics in the Home 1*, see appendix 1 for transcript of text). The displays aim at presenting a survey of popular plastics, with the text focusing on their individual qualities. There are objects made of: ‘vacuum-formed PVC’; ‘polythene’; ‘polystyrene’ ‘thermo-setting melamine-powder in a closed mould’; ‘Perspex’; ‘melamine’; and ‘acrylic’. (illustrations 42 and 43, appendixes 1 and 2).

Providing the contextual information was a task for the I.L.E.A. art inspector and his team, who had to research and distil information on a great variety of materials and objects. Plastics appear an especially challenging material possibly because of its many varieties though it is likely that I.L.E.A. received information from manufacturers. For example, *Plastics in the Home 2* contains the *Lock-a-Block* toy (illustration 43, second shelf from the top, object on the right), which is described as ‘polystyrene children’s bricks’. However, this inclusion clashes directly with the information on the panel, which makes the point that

‘polysterene...is NOT suitable for toys’ (emphasised in original text - appendix 2). Today, we are more familiar with ‘polystyrene’ as a term in common usage that is mostly associated with the soft plastic that insulates hot drinks, produced by the conversion of polystyrene beads into ‘polystyrene foam.’ The assertion of polystyrene as unsuitable for toys is puzzling, as no reason is given, though it might relate to its brittleness.

In the same text, polystyrene is described as a type of plastic that ‘behaves well under low temperatures and is very suitable for use in refrigerators, is used for lenses and wall tiles but is inclined to be brittle, and is such a good electrical insulator that it tends to collect dust from the atmosphere’ (*Plastics in the Home 2*, appendix 2). The only characteristic found in the text that may hint to polystyrene’s unsuitability for toys is the quality of having ‘a metallic or glass like sound when dropped on a hard surface.’

Today, the *Lock-a-block* toy is easily accessible in I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection’s storage at Camberwell College of Arts. I have handled and examined this product keeping in mind Stevens’ admonition, however I found no practical explanation as to why these blocks should be unsuitable for play. Besides, one of the most successful products in the history of toys, the *Lego* block, has been manufactured since 1963 from the plastic known as *acrylonitrile butadiene styrene* (‘ABS’), a member of the styrene family, rendered less brittle with the addition of polybutadiene during polymerisation (anonymous, 2013, *Lego and Society*). The discrepancy between advocating against a material while presenting an example where it has been put into that very usage, discloses I.L.E.A.’s struggle to address the rapid evolution of synthetics and the difficulty of containing plastics within predictable patterns of production and usage, though it might also be an oversight due to the sheer quantity of objects I.L.E.A. had to administer.

By the early 1970s, when the Collection was heading towards closure, plastics had already been recognised as a revolutionary material, having conquered most areas of production and consumption with its versatility and cost-effectiveness (Meikle, 1997).

The panel text in *Plastics in the Home* points out that ‘the first synthetic moulding material produced in 1916 was called Bakelite after its discoverer, Dr. Baekeland, a Belgian chemist working in America.’ (*Plastics in the Home 1*, appendix 1). However, it was mostly after World War II that plastics technologies, alongside the strong post-war demand for domestic goods, spawned opportunities for industrialists who saw the possibility of great profit from

this emergent market (Meikle, 1997). Plastics' rapid expansion may be induced by Farr's statistics that while in 1929 8,000 tons of plastic materials were produced in Britain that figure had reached 110,000 tons by 1948 (Farr, 1951, p.123).

Especially for domestic use, melamine quickly established itself as one of the most versatile plastics (Katz, 1984). According to records of May 1966, the following were purchased for the *Scheme in Design Appreciation*: polycarbonate items from Birchware Engineering Ltd, insulated jugs from Insulex Ltd, Polystyrene boxes by British Xylonite, tray by Xlon Products Ltd and more than fifty items of melamine by Melaware. British Industrial Plastics Ltd, based in Birmingham, had a range of brand-names produced using their 'Melmex' melamine, including: Argosy, Fiesta, Gaydon, Melaware and Midwinter tableware (Record Cards, 1966). Though I.L.E.A. were keen to promote the new material, they were discerning in their purchases: the 'Melmex' range of tableware had won a C.O.I.D. award, in 1957. These purchases made their way in displays as the *Plastics in the Home* pair (see various items of tableware 'in thermo-setting melamine powder in a closed mould by Melaware-Ranton and Co.' illustration 42, appendix 1), but also in displays focusing on the best of British design, e.g. *Industrial Design and Engineering 2* (item 5, 'red plastic dish', illustration 46).

A significant observation in terms of the materials' repurposing agenda from the public domain to 'good design' education, is that many of the plastics in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection were purchased after they had been awarded 'good design' status. That's not surprising given the criticism plastics attracted as being 'ersatz' materials (Katz, 1984). As a consequence, there appears to be a greater reliance on products that bore the C.O.I.D.'s seal of approval, in line with the C.O.I.D. approval mechanism which had been embedded within the scheme throughout.

Development of Plastics, U.S. and Britain

The C.O.I.D.'s seal of approval was not only a reward for 'good' aesthetics, but a guard against the technical uncertainties surrounding production of domestic plastics, which had plagued the industry on both sides of the Atlantic during the post-war years. While Europe was catching up, pioneering research and development into melamine was being undertaken in the United States (Meikle, 1997). A testament to melamine's success is Katz's claim that

‘by the late 1950s as much as 50% of all dinnerware sold was moulded in melamine.’ (Katz, 1984, p. 13).

Meikle (1997) on the other hand, has described how the flourishing of the industry had the effect of manufacturers rushing research and development, embarking on hastily assembled projects, which yielded substandard products. Meikle has commented on the disappointment of the consumer left with such disasters as a melted strainer after it had come in contact with boiling water (Meikle, 1997, p. 166-167). The proliferation of such instances shook confidence and confused the public’s understanding of each polymer’s strengths and weaknesses.

The American experience in plastics is important because to the European, and particularly to the British consumer, the appeal of melamine and similar plastics was integrated with the post-war aspiration to reach U.S. standard of living and the desire of emulating ‘the American way’. Alison J. Clarke has shown how Tupperware (a type of polyethylene plastics containers) embodied material abundance in post-war United States (Clarke, 2001). In the United Kingdom, the spectre of ‘Austerity Britain’ lived on long after the end of the War, and Britons’ expectations for an improved lifestyle were often filtered through the desire for American goods. For example, David Kynaston points out that the first nylon stockings to appear after the War in 1946, were referred to as ‘American-style’ though they were British-made (Kynaston, 2007, p.125).

Some plastic may be interpreted as a symbolic gesture of adopting American trends and habits that were within reach, unlike other aspirational goods, for instance cars and washing-machines, which were still prohibitively expensive in Europe: a UK-made *Hoover* washing machine in 1952 was advertised as costing 42 pounds and 7 shillings after tax (anonymous *Hoover* advertising), which is the equivalent of over £1,063 today (measuringworth.com). However, the patchy performance of early plastics resulted in a climate of distrust, exploited by porcelain manufacturers who felt threatened. In 1951 the American *Vitrified China Association* issued a vitriolic report which described ‘the horrible things that will happen if we eat from melamine dishes’ (Meikle, 1997, pp. 170-171). The report referred to melamine dishes as so soft that ordinary scratches could harbour harmful bacteria, so water-repellent that they could not be properly cleaned, and so chemically unstable that they released formaldehyde (widely known as embalming fluid) when subjected to hot water (Meikle,

1997, pp. 170-171).

Though these arguments had been exaggerated, the same tactics of hyperbole can be observed in the other camp's arduous claims that melamine was an 'unbreakable' material (Retrospect, 2014). I.L.E.A.'s exhibit *Plastics in the Home 2* emphasised its economic and cultural impact by describing it as resembling 'porcelain in appearance but much lighter and very strong. Melamine crockery is not easily stained by tea or coffee if washed up straight away' (appendix 2). Indeed, its supposed endurance was one of melamine's most persistent marketing claims throughout the 1950s and 1960s: 'All the worst jugglers use 'Melmex'' claimed a British advertisement (anonymous, *Melmex* advertisement). In the *Plastics in the Home*, Melamine is introduced to the students as a material that resembles porcelain in appearance but is much lighter and very strong' (see appendix 2). Melamine was one of the first synthetics to guarantee the ability to match and even surpass non-plastic substances in longevity and durability. However, early Melamine products were not unbreakable; they did break if dropped, though, as the Gaydon advertisement demonstrates, their marketing aspired to the positioning of the material as a durable competitor to china and glass.

Having closely watched the trial-and-error development of plastics in the U.S. during the pioneering 1940s and 1950s, it became evident to the British that in order for plastics to yield profit, large investments in research and development were necessary (Farr, 1955). While early polymers were simpler thermosets and semi-synthetic, the advent of composites in the post-war years caused an explosion of the range of polymers and their capabilities. Faced with an ever-increasing range, producers needed to make the right choice for their purposes. As industries anticipated huge growth, there was generous investment in the development of patentable polymers (Katz, 1984). One such polymer was Styrene-acrylo-nitrile or 'SAN', out of which the celebrated range of British tableware, *ECKO Nova* was produced.

A Case Study of 'Good Design' in Plastics: ECKO Nova

In February 1968 about forty ECKO *Nova* items were purchased from *Primavera*, the upmarket supplier on Sloane Street (Record Cards, 1966; for *Primavera*'s role in post-war art and design see Greg, 1995). *Primavera* was an exclusive gallery and retail space which promoted contemporary design and the crafts, both British and international. In view of this thesis' objective to describe how the notion of good design was validated through socio-

cultural contexts, it is significant to note that *Primavera* stocked the range - it bears evidence of ECKO *Nova*'s distinguished status.

In I.L.E.A.'s *Plastics in the Home 1*, on the left-hand side panel of the display the text explains how plastics developed, what the role of the designer was, and the balance to be struck between purpose, aesthetic pleasure and sensible economics, hinting at the desired combination which would guarantee a good design (illustration 42, appendix 1):

The designer must think in terms of the mould, so that filling and ejection can be done easily and rapidly. If the article is to be of a complicated shape, perhaps with projections or undercuts, the mould may need to be made in more than two parts and split vertically as well as horizontally. In such a case, side as well as vertical pressure must be exerted during moulding. If metal inserts are required as in electrical components, the mould must be designed to allow the inserts to be located before the moulding material is put in and without interfering with the ejection of the finished article. In addition, the article must be well designed for its purpose and give pleasure. Much skill and arduous precision work is entailed in the making of a mould. This means that the cost of a mould is very high and can only be justified if it can be used for producing many thousands of articles. (*Plastics in the Home 1*, appendix 1)

Such thinking reflected the ethos of EKCO Ltd. By the mid-1960s, EKCO Ltd was one of the most successful British companies in the field, and by 1965 they were the largest supplier of industrial moulding in Europe. In 1966 EKCO re-furbished their factory and this resulted in a 50% increase of their capacity to process plastics; in 1967 they enjoyed a fourfold increase in export sales as compared to 1963. EKCO's designer was David Harman Powell, one of the country's best-known industrial designers amongst his peers. Born in 1933, he first worked for E. K. Cole plastics in his twenties, then moved to B.I.P. (British Industrial Plastics) before returning to E. K. Cole as chief industrial designer in 1960, by which time the company was called EKCO. Harman Powell's association with EKCO lasted into the early 1970s; in parallel he set up on his own a design consultancy in Malden, Essex and had offices in Munich, Germany (Danckwerts, 1979).

Harman Powell's credentials as a successful designer made his work sought-after in industry as well as in education: *Imperial Chemical Industries* (I.C.I.) supported his role as the first

tutor in plastics at the Royal College of Art. Harman Powell worked part-time and the post was paid by I.C.I. though when sponsorship finished in 1978, the Royal College retained the post (Danckwerts, 1979, p.14). As tutor in plastics Harman Powell contributed to plastics being a popular material in R.C.A. degree shows of the early 1970s and trained the next generation in approaching plastics as a versatile and bona fide technology. When the *Nova* range of tableware won him the *Duke of Edinburgh's Prize for Elegant Design* in 1969, Powell used the £100 prize money to commission a desk lamp made of Perspex and stainless steel (illustration 47). The lamp had 'been designed by Mr Powell with the assistance of Mr Peter Rodd of the British Lighting Corporation and made by Mr Anthony Driver of the Royal College of Art' (Anonymous photo, 1969).

Harman Powell's vision for EKCO concerned optimisation of product management, placing particular emphasis on the planning stages (Heyes, 1967, p. 47). EKCO guaranteed synergy between design and technology by involving Harman Powell in the production planning committee and on the company management committee. The nature of production in plastics rendered inevitable the designer's involvement in every aspect of the product cycle. John Heyes, writing in *Design* in 1967, estimated that the cost of '(say) nine associated products may represent an investment of more than £20,000' (Heyes, 1967, p. 46). Heyes explained that moulding tools which were made of hardened steel needed to be precise, since later refinements and alterations were virtually impossible. An additional complication was that while the margin for error at design development stage was zero, the injection moulding technique could not be reproduced in prototype. The design could not be proven right until 'the die is cast, in every sense' (Heyes, 1967, p. 47).

As a forward-looking company, EKCO understood the value of research, not only on the technological level but also on the level of the consumer. They aimed at collaborative approaches between design and technology, involving their head designer in the production planning committee and on the management committee. (Heyes, 1967). In 1965 EKCO conducted a market study asking the public what would be an ideal range for them. It transpired that the public wanted 'space-saving, stable, easy to clean and handle, nestable, stackable, modern-looking, functional and comparatively inexpensive' wares (Anonymous, 1968, *Duke of Edinburgh's Prize for Elegant Design*, p. 27). This survey was used for the development of the EKCO *Nova* range (illustration 48). In addition to the EKCO *Nova* tableware of 1968, Harman Powell's designs for EKCO extended to the *Nova* cutlery in 1970

and the 'third-generation' poly-propylene bin with plastic wheels of 1973 (similar to, but not the exact model of the bin included in I.L.E.A.'s *Plastics in the Home 2*, illustration 43). His innovative wheelie-bin design was praised in the sector's press as contributing to more effective waste disposal and collection (Anonymous, 1973, p. 5).

Harman Powell chose for the *Nova* range, not the industry standard melamine, but 'Styrene-acrylo-nitrile ('SAN') a costly new material. SAN displayed a range of qualities that represented an improvement on melamine: the end product would be rigid and resistant to fracture and staining. The design anticipated the common problem of surface chafing which all stacking plastics suffered from at the time. In the EKCO *Nova* range, the main bearing surfaces were transferred to the rims and edges and diameters of items were standardised into two groups with the saucer acting as an inter-stacking link (illustration 49). EKCO produced leaflets and advertisements, which emphasised the link between the high quality of design and the longevity of the products. EKCO *Nova* came with a guarantee for one year from the date of purchase and those perennial problems of plastic tableware - the cracking, chipping and breaking - were covered by that guarantee. The leaflet urged customers to 'simply return the damaged piece, quoting the name and address of the store, to EKCO Plastics Ltd.' (Anonymous, advertisement). There is no documentation in the company archive of how many, if any, consumers took advantage of this policy.

Production of *Nova* could be speeded up by injection moulding since this was a thermoplastic rather than a thermosetting material. Items in the Collection bear an observable 'sprue' - the industry term for the circular mark left on an object that has been made through injection moulding. Injection moulding would be cost-effective if production runs were sustained long enough to recoup the initial outlay of steel moulds. Transparent tints as well as opaque colours could be achieved in SAN, making it easier to produce a range based on various colours but using the same moulds. More importantly, moulds were designed to be as adaptable as possible: the mould used for the cup was the same as the one used for the milk-jug: the body forms of the two items being identical, while the differentiation of the cup was achieved by the attachment of a handle requiring a small separate mould (anonymous, 1968).

Harman Powell's designs attracted official recognition through the C.O.I.D. and the Duke of Edinburgh. Upon awarding the *Duke of Edinburgh's Prize for Elegant Design in 1968*, the judging panel commented on EKCO *Nova*'s avoidance of the established tendency to use

forms originally developed from ceramic materials, a tendency that the panel frowned upon as ‘ill-adapted to newer materials’ (anonymous, 1968, p. 28). Instead, they applauded *Nova* for its forms which were ‘both pleasing and entirely suitable to the material and the colours in which it can be made’ (anonymous, 1968, p. 28). They concluded that *Nova* had achieved the practical qualities of convenience and durability with shapes and colours of ‘precision and elegance’ (anonymous, 1968, p. 28). In 1970, the *Nova* cutlery also won a Duke of Edinburgh award. Despite producing a wide range of objects, EKCO chose to focus on the accolades accumulated by the *Nova* ranges in their marketing and advertising. In *Design* magazine in 1970, EKCO ran an advertisement that enlisted C.O.I.D. and the Duke of Edinburgh’s Prize to promote their disposable plastic cutlery:

The Council of Industrial Design Awards 1970 - David Harman Powell whose designs for EKCO *Nova* tableware last year won the Duke of Edinburgh’s Prize, was again selected by EKCO *Nova* to design the cutlery which this year gained the C.O.I.D.’s coveted award for consumer- oriented products. These brilliantly styled pieces represent yet another example of the designer/manufacturer co-operation which distinguishes EKCO *Nova* products in the markets of the world, and continued to advance the company’s reputation in a highly competitive sphere (anonymous, 1970).

However, the praise these designs attracted from industry and the various ‘good design’ platforms (C.O.I.D., Duke of Edinburgh, *Design* magazine), tell only half the story. Despite its image as a highly successful company, EKCO actually maintained a rather precarious financial balance led by a seasonal production cycle much affected by the slower summer months. Its fragile position in the market is attested by its turbulent history in the 1960s and 1970s, including mergers with PYE (1960) and the European *Phillips Electrical* in 1967 (anonymous, 1973).

Furthermore, both the *Nova* tableware and the cutlery have been described as ‘financial disasters’ (Oxley, 2013) as they failed to realise the sales volume EKCO needed to make them profitable. David Oxley, polymer technologist and former employee of EKCO plastics, explains that the manufacturers relied on their partnership with British Airways. Oxley’s comment about the range did not fulfil BA’s expectations of ‘posh enough for first class’ is telling of the difficulty plastics encountered in infiltrating dominant taste:

I was technical director at Ekco [sic] Plastics in the 1970s and the Nova range was running then. The material was SAN, which was quite expensive in those days and there had been a debate at the design stage as the designer wanted a thick moulding to resemble china, but the economics were such that the sales price would have been too high (the extra material costs more and takes longer to cool in the mould so you make fewer per hour) so we thinned down the walls, but kept the handle thickness as designed. Some of the mouldings are “two shot” i.e. they have different colours inside and out. This limited how thin we could make the moulding and still keep within the raw material manufacturers advised flow ratios for SAN. In fact we pushed it as far as possible, and found we could not mould the cheaper ABS in the thinner cavity moulds. However, ABS was too soft a surface so it scratched, even with polystyrene knives. Remember this was a long time ago and polymers were not as well defined as they are now.

The real reason that the Nova range was not successful was that the BA didn't like them as they were not “posh enough” for first class and too expensive for economy class passengers. In those days First class passengers used metal cutlery and the SAN cups soon scratched with metal spoons and the plates showed cut marks with metal knives. Once we lost the BA contract (they only took the first batch if I remember rightly) the volume wasn't enough to cover the costs and our domestic housewares division at EKCO couldn't get the sales up (Oxley, 2013).

Oxley's comments and the case-study of EKCO *Nova* and its highly commended products hint at a historiographical problem relevant to the rhetoric of ‘good design’: sources as *Design* magazine and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, showed a bias towards ‘well-designed’ products but could not be relied upon as predictors of commercial success, despite the effort to ‘educate the consumers of the future’ which aimed to encourage consumption of such products and sustain their production. In the untangling of narratives of ‘good design’, oral history provides a helpful counter-narrative of how these products fared beyond the Design Centre show-room.

Regarding the *Nova* range, it can be said to have been a victim of its own success: not only was SAN a superior but ultimately expensive material, but it was used in quantities only explained by the designer's wish to have thicker parts and render the end product more

pleasing to the eye and to handling. According to a 1968 price list in the company's archives, EKCO *Nova* trade customers paid 2/11 (two shillings and eleven pence) for a cup, and 1/8 for a single saucer while suggested retail prices were 4/10 and nearly three shillings respectively, making them more expensive than much of contemporary china. Three shillings correspond to between two and four pounds in 2013 prices, depending on the type of calculation followed. A 14-piece *Nova* tea-set was expected to retail at 59/11 which could be the equivalent of up to £103 today³⁰ – (Anonymous, 1968, Trade Price List).

EKCO tried to justify the high prices by relying on its good design accolades. In EKCO's marketing the argument for superiority over rivals hinges on the co-relation between the aesthetic praise bestowed upon the company's products and their durability: 'EKCO is not cheap. We know. But it lasts and lasts. And lasts. However bad you treat it' (Anonymous leaflet, undated).

The manufacturer had failed to recognise that plastics were being emancipated from a status where they acted as replacements of other materials to establishing their own market conditions: in the course of this emancipation, durability was taking second place to expendability. Despite the laurels, EKCO *Nova* was a commercial failure and a cautionary example of how the rhetoric of 'good design', in combination with its high cost, fell short of convincing consumers. The example of EKCO *Nova* suggests that the ideal of 'good design' was reflected in the marketplace through a consumer approval process that remained for most, in the sphere of aspiration - echoing the effect of 'Britain Can Make It': a range of products that were admired but were ultimately unaffordable by the majority of consumers. It is also evidence of the gulf between what the text in the *Plastics in the Home 1* purports to communicate about plastics, i.e. that in its 'good design' versions, plastic was worth higher prices, and how such objects were actually received in the open market.

EKCO Plastics and the Re-framing of 'Good Design'

It is important to note that although it is mostly associated with the production of TV and

³⁰ No exact estimate can be given for historical prices, as factors beyond inflation, such as the percentage of expenditure in relation to average wages, give a more accurate interpretation of worth. Estimates here are according to www.measuringworth.com

radio sets, post-war EKCO (in its various guises) made its money, not from the high profile commissions of tableware, but from a range of lower-profile objects, such as mouldings for the motor industry, radio cabinets, bath accessories and even shower curtains. Its designer, Harman Powell, became commercially more successful in the field of battery chargers, than dinnerware and cutlery. In a radio interview of 1986, Trevor Spero, managing director of *Stella Components*, a small group of engineering companies in Essex that had employed Harman Powell as designer, referred to him as ‘quite a genius’ (Spero, 1986). Spero went on to say that Powell’s battery design

did in fact reduce the assembly time of our 12 amp charger from something like 32-33 minutes down to slightly less than 20 minutes - a considerable saving[...] the results of this new design is such that we have a product that is easy to produce, very good-looking, strong, safe, durable, and certainly appealing to the very wide markets throughout the world (Spero, 1986).

The presenter of the radio programme, Peter Smith, made the point that while domestic items were an obvious target for a designer,

rather less obvious is a battery charger - the sort of thing that clutters up the garage of the motorist handyman. What can a designer do for something like that? Well, he can increase exports by 40%, according to Stella Components. They were among the first to take up the Government-backed design scheme, and their new model with its rugged, macho looks, is not only in almost every high street under the Halfords brand name, as well as the Selmar brand name, it’s also produced under various labels for continental markets, including the Bosch label (Smith, 1986).

The example of Harman Powell high-lights the limited focus of I.L.E.A.’s collecting, interpreting good design through domestic examples rather than components and industrial articles, even if those other items actually proved to be a better design by standards of industry and commerce.

In contrast, the EKCO Nova examples demonstrates that financially, it proved ill-advised to treat the design and marketing of domestic plastic products as prestigious, timeless objects that justified high price tags. Penny Sparke, has shown that more successful designs in

plastics were achieved by those who had embraced the material on its own terms, exploiting its idiosyncrasies (Sparke, 1988, 1993). Designs produced by the Italian firm Kartell or Verner Panton's famous plastic chair of 1967, manufactured from one single piece of plastic, investigate plastics as a material that could re-define, rather than adhere to, the aesthetic directives of good design (Manser, 1968, p. 24).

Further tensions regarding plastics and their impact on the rhetoric of good design are detectable in the *Plastics in the Home* display: on the one hand the ECKO *Nova* and *Melaware* items were officially endorsed by the Design Council and were bona fide ambassadors of good design. On the other hand, there is the somewhat odd addition of the acrylic 'kinetic art' object, described as "'Opto 1' pattern silk-screened onto Perspex to give optical effects' (*Plastics In the Home I*, illustration 42, appendix 1). The framed disc appears to pay tribute to minimalism and op art, two of the 1960s dominant movements in fine art. However, as part of the *Plastics in the Home I*, it is denied the kudos of a fine art context. Its austere, symmetrical and monochrome design may place this object safely within the aesthetics of modernism, but lack of obvious functionality, apart from its function as decoration, hints at the growing use of plastics in applications that could be construed as whimsical and frivolous and as undermining modernism's core tenets. In this respect, it would be difficult to relate the *Opto 1* object to questions testing good design practice, as for example the ones which accompanied the *Materials and Design* exhibit. The overarching aim of these questions revolved around functionality as the ultimate criterion for 'good design':

has the designer used the material in the best possible way? would the object do its job better if it had been made in a different material? [...] is there too much 'swank' about it? (*Materials and Design*, uncatalogued photographs in possession of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection archive).

Artefacts as the *Opto 1* rendered evident the inevitable subjugation of 'good design' to pop culture. Plastics, more than other materials, were being embraced by pop, and they were foregrounding new approaches to good design, challenging its established association (see also discussion on display *Pop, Folk, Modern* in chapter 2).

Plastics and Post-industrial Patterns of Consumption

Focusing on a number of artefacts from the *Plastics in the Home* displays, I have shown how plastics in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, supported the good design agenda in as far as the production side was concerned, but complicate the consumption of 'good design'. Plastics are the chameleons of materials: they were versatile and they kept evolving over the time of the Collection's active phase, therefore they are a group of materials that requires accurate framing in time. A set of qualities that might have applied to polystyrene one year, could be out-of-date by the next. The 1950s and 1960s, and even more the 1970s, established a precedent where composites kept improving, and plastics gradually encroached on all aspects of production, disrupting established attempts at classification, constantly metamorphosing and being re-invented in novel formulations that achieved characteristics that had seemed unobtainable a short time before.

The establishment of plastics as one of the world's most important industries caused significant distortion of capitalism's established economic cycle: due to high initial costs but low profit per unit and short production time, plastics necessitated high volume production, thus stirring economies towards high volume consumption.³¹ Though this became evident after the time of collecting for the particular scheme had ceased, it is a point to bear in mind in a critical framing of the material. The Collection is still being used in teaching today and it is important to recognise how current users of the objects live in an era which ascribes to plastics a different set of cultural signifieds.

I want to argue that it is partly due to the prevalence of plastics that consumption models favouring the ephemeral and the throw-away have developed. The post-war period sowed the seeds for such consumption models. It was a time when plastics liberated aspects of production e.g. they shortened time frames of production and reduced the skill and energy required. At the same time, they attracted criticism from emergent counter-cultural groups, like the green movement. Especially their environmental impact, would lead to plastics being

³¹ Advancements in polymers continues today. One current example is the on-going revolution of three-dimensional home printing, using thermoplastic powder. This technology owes much of its success to polymer-related research and development undertaken last century. The central role that plastics continues to hold has influenced the relationship to patterns of production, contributing to a post-capitalist society.

vilified during the 1960s. Interestingly, such contestations are not evident in the *Plastics in the Home* displays I have discussed. However, bibliographical sources from the 1960s onwards (see for example, Papanek, 1971; Meikle, 1997; Freinkel, 2011), are increasingly critical of the material, contributing to plastic's ambivalent position as one of the most successful, yet controversial technologies of the twentieth century. These discourses are poignantly absent from I.L.E.A.'s text panels.

Disseminating Modernism: Finnish Design in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

In terms of country of origin, Finland and Denmark stand out as the main providers of non-British items in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. This is an estimate based on my research in the Collection since full cataloguing is yet to be undertaken. This opinion is based on examination of the material in storage while I was selecting objects for exhibition and teaching purposes: a number of wooden, metalware, glass and ceramic items came with 'Made in Denmark' stamps and marks, while two Finnish manufacturers, Iittala and Arabia are represented with large sets of glassware and porcelain as well as individual pieces like vases. Two sets of displays showcase exclusively Scandinavian design in the surviving I.L.E.A. photographs: one set is *Scandinavia: Design from four Countries* and the other *Product Design From Finland* (appendixes 3 and 4). These comprise of two images each, and have been selected for discussion on the premise that in the narrative of mid-century 'good design', 'Scandinavia' has played the role of the dominant paradigm (McFadden, 1982; Naylor in Greenhalgh, 1990; Woodham, 1997; Jackson, 2003).

Out of the Scandinavian group of four different nations comprising of Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway, Finland in particular stands out. I.L.E.A. also admits the diversity in Scandinavia, despite grouping artefacts from four counties in one exhibition:

In the past, the countries of Scandinavia were often at war with each other and today, each nation has quite different characteristics. It is not true that all Scandinavian design is alike; a close look at the exhibits will show these national differences. But the striking unity of Scandinavian form in design, rather than national differences is one point of this exhibition (*Scandinavia: Design from Four Countries*, uncatalogued photograph in the possession of Camberwell College of Arts)

As a separate nation, the Finns have not as great a cultural and ethnic affinity with their neighbours, though their treatment by the international design establishment might suggest otherwise.³² Historically the country's relationship to Sweden may be described more accurately as 'antagonistic' rather than harmonious (Ahtisaari, 2014; Aav and Stritzler-Levine, 2000). In addition, what makes Finland a special case, particularly in the politically turbulent Cold War years, was its proximity to the USSR. Finland's relations to the Soviet Union have been even more ambivalent than its relations to Sweden (Aav and Stritzler-Levine, 2000). It is irrefutable that Finland's industry was greatly supported by the Soviet Union in the after-math of WWII. Davies makes the illuminating point that while sales of the *Arabia* porcelain factory continued to rise after the War, the West's encouraging reception tells only half the story. The other half is told by substantial sales of sanitary ware to the Soviet Union. Indeed he claims that between 1945 to 1952 trade was 'primarily with the Soviet Union.' (Davies, 2002, p.105).

Looking closer to Finnish design and comparing it to other Scandinavian and non-Scandinavian displays in the Collection, allows me to compare British and Scandinavian approaches to 'good design' and examine how I.L.E.A. was mapping 'good design' in relation to the Scandinavian paradigm.

Histories addressing the link between British government and design have clearly highlighted design as an instrument for competition between sovereign states (Greenhalgh, 1990). In 1837, the Government School of Design was founded largely in response to the perceived superiority of the French and Prussian industrial systems. The fact that the Schools of Design were conceived in imitation of industrial schools in France and Prussia, implies a strategy of raising Britain's standard by emulating the tactics of its competitors (Victoria and Albert

³² Throughout most of the twentieth century, the fate of Finland, a country positioned on the Eastern boundaries of the Western world, has been defined by a geo-political anxiety engendered by its proximity to the 'Eastern Bloc'. In the context of the political tension during the years of the Cold War, the balancing act between 'the West' and a major materials supplier and importer of Finnish goods as the USSR had been, adds a dimension to Finnish design lacking in the design histories of its more secure Scandinavian neighbours. Crucially, Soviet influence on Finland, and its alignment with the Axis powers during the War, excluded it from the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan has been identified as one of the vital interventions through which countries such as Greece, another country on the brink of Communist influence, were wrangled out of the Communist embrace during the 1940s. Greece had been one of Marshall Plan's beneficiaries, though note that Britain received the lion's share. Sweden, Norway, Denmark and even Iceland all received Marshall aid when Finland was left to fend for itself at a particularly vulnerable time.

Museum, 2011, p. 5).

One century later, new geo-political configurations meant that the nations posing as industrial competitors had changed, but the underlying concern that Britain was lagging behind in aesthetic refinement, remained. This concern is directly linked to the establishment of schemes like *The Experiment in Design Appreciation*, as the crucial *Design in Education* report of 1937 shows. The report aligns training students in design appreciation with the need to address ‘foreign superiority in grace and design’:

It is generally agreed that while the substantial quality of British manufactures is second to none, they often suffer from foreign superiority in grace of design. Nothing could be better calculated to remedy this state of affairs than the existence of a purchasing public trained from early youth in the capacity to choose the better and leave the worse in all that concerns form and colour. In the exercise of such capacity the transition from the painted masterpiece, rightly seen, to the tea-cup is direct - though it may be unconscious (Council for Art and Industry, 1937, p.16).

By the 1950s the design establishment in Britain had turned its attention to Scandinavia as the model for industrial and social advancement. Exhibitions such as ‘Wood Only’ at London retailers Fortnum and Manson in 1933, showcased furniture that employed traditional materials and craftsmanship to produce modern design, among them Alvar Aalto’s iconic stool for Artek. Conekin also notes that in connection to the 1951 Festival of Britain ‘Stockholm’s modernist, social democratic exhibition of 1930 was clearly a model’ (Conekin, 2003, p.47). In a discussion supporting C.O.I.D. travelling folios in Scotland and the need for raising awareness and appreciation in school-children, ‘by assimilation rather than by direct instruction’, Andrew Nairn, superintendent of Art for the Corporation of Glasgow Education Department, mentioned in passing: ‘where handcrafts flourish, the level of industrial design tends to be high - Scandinavian countries bear witness to this’ (Nairn, 1951, p. 20).

There is mileage in suggesting that appreciation of Scandinavia reflected a residual political hostility to German design. Arguably Germany had been the beacon of functionalist modernity in the applied arts during the first decades of the twentieth century (Marcus, 1997). It could be argued that in the aftermath of WWII there was a continental design vacuum that

had previously been occupied by Germany; the existence of this perceived vacuum may have advantaged Scandinavian countries. However, approaching Scandinavia as the replacement of German functionalism would be an over-simplification. WW2's persistent anti-German propaganda seen on platforms such as the popular press, was being redirected towards the increasingly hostile USSR and East Germany by the 1950s (Jenks, 2006, p.37). West German design was not denounced by the British establishment. In his book *Design in British Industry* Farr compares British wares to Germany among other countries, often finding the British products inferior (Farr, 1955). Furthermore, German art and design input into British culture continued, and in fact grew due to circumstances boosting emigration. Yet some German and Austrian-born makers and designers who had settled in the United Kingdom from the 1930s onwards, shed associations with their mother countries and hence their work has been woven into the narrative of British design and is largely seen as 'British'; the retailer Henry Rothschild, and the ceramicists Lucie Rie and Hans Coper are prominent names in connection to the I.L.E.A. Camberwell Collection (Greg, 1995; Cooper, 2012).

Moreover, German and Scandinavian design were not isolated from each other. Germany had been an important inspiration for Scandinavians and continued to exert influence in the post-war period. Examining the Danish experience, Lesley Jackson has identified 'Sweden, Germany, Austria and France' as 'the most influential countries to Danish design during the 1920s and 1930s.' (Jackson, 2003, p. 403). Appreciation of German design, alongside design from other ex-fascist states, namely Italy and Japan, was gradually restored in Britain, as relationships between these countries and Britain became normalised; an indication being articles such as 'Design in Germany Today', presented in the June 1952 issue of *Design* (anonymous, 1952, pp. 24-27; Maguire in Woodham, 1997, pp. 39).

In addition, the post-war years were a time of high productivity for Britain and a time of protectionist politics employing import restrictions and tariffs that kept imports at low numbers (Davies, 1997). As a result, foreign goods had not yet made a worrying dent in British markets. Catherine McDermott looking back to industrial design of the 1950s provides a telling statistic: 'as the end of the decade approached, over 90 per cent of goods bought by consumers were manufactured here. The threat of Bosch in Germany, Zanussi in Italy, *Philips* in Holland and Sony in Japan was still to come.' (McDermott, 1989, p. 27).

Finnish Design in Britain

Finnish design stood out of the tangled web of international design and cultural influences in the immediate post-war years. Finnish designers, who, despite their geographical isolation, had been remarkably outward-looking, often worked on international projects. Two Finnish designers singled out in I.L.E.A.'s *Product Design from Finland* (illustrations 44-45, appendixes 3-4) were Timo Sarpaneva and Tapio Wirkkala. They both had a strong presence beyond Finland, pursuing trans-national projects while remaining quintessentially 'Finnish' in their work; 'Finnish' stood for good design in a modernist aesthetic which respected craftsmanship and took its inspiration from Finnish nature. In his later career, Timo Sarpaneva developed a partnership with the *Rosenthal* porcelain factory in Germany (during the early 1970s) and worked on Murano glass sculptures with Italian craftsmen. Wirkkala had also worked at *Rosenthal* and besides he had been employed by Raymond Lowey's consultancy in the U.S. during the 1950s, and he had a long partnership with *Venini* glass in Italy.

While 'the arbiters of taste', for example contributors to *Design* magazine, institutions like the V&A and high-end retailers, had recognised its importance, in post-war Britain, preference for Scandinavian design was not yet as disseminated to the wider social strata as it would become from the mid-1950s onwards. Events aimed at the general public, as was the Festival of Britain, did not conspicuously advocate Scandinavian design and culture; the Festival was rather imbued with a "more general 'continental mood'", as Curtis suggests. (Curtis, 2005, p.127) This would soon change, as professional design circles continued to promote Scandinavian design. *Design* journal of February 1952 gave special prominence to news from Scandinavia with correspondents' reports from Finland, Sweden and Denmark. The trend continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s, with *Design* publishing numerous such reports and presentations of Scandinavian projects.³³

³³ The appeal of Finnish design reached the U.S. as well: American *Vogue* magazine of October 1952 ran an article entitled 'The Cream of Finnish Crafts' over two pages. Selected objects included a vase by Gunnel Nyman for Nuutajarvi, Kaj Franck, 'the clever young industrial designer of the Arabia Pottery Works', Tapio Wirkkala, 'one of the most promising of contemporary Finnish glass designers', and his wife Rut Bryk (Daves, 1952).

Retailers were also particularly responsive to the emerging trend. Finnish good design was imported in London by such firms as *Finnish Designs Ltd*, established in London's Haymarket (Davies, 2002, p. 106). In May 1953, the upmarket furniture store *Heal's* called its clients to view 'an exhibition of Finnish pottery and glass (shown for the first time in England) in collaboration with Messrs.' Finmar Ltd. Pottery from the Arabia Potteries Helsinki; Glass from Notsjo Glassworks.' (Anonymous, invite, 1953).

Later in the decade, several Scandinavian objects were advertised in *Heal's* Christmas promotional leaflet, entitled 'Presents for Particular People'. Among other suggestions there is a 'candle holder, stainless steel, Danish, four in gift box £1 10s 0d; Swedish decanter £4 4s 0d without engraving and £6 14s 0d; Danish pepper mill and salt pourer combined, oiled teak, Danish £3 10s 6d; lipped pan, stainless steel, teak handle, Danish, £2 10s 6d.' (Anonymous, 1958 *Presents for Particular People*). The Scandinavian trend continued with later issues of 'Presents for Particular people', always emphasising the country of origin in the captions. Duplicates of many of these objects are found in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection (for example the Danish Digsmed salt and pepper and cruet sets made of teak); it is therefore very likely that the London County Council bought from such events since both *Heal's* and *Finmar* are recorded as suppliers.

In 1960, *Heal's* had been celebrating its 150 year anniversary and commissioned designers from seven European countries to 'present a pace-setting exhibition to celebrate' (anonymous, leaflet, 1960). The designs corresponded to different rooms in a house, adding to the symbolism of European modernism as a harmonious co-habitation:

A British team is responsible for the design of the bedroom [...] Norway contributes a teenage boy's bed-sitting room, Sweden a living room, Switzerland a study, Germany a bedroom and terrace, Italy a living-room and Finland the children's room.
(anonymous, leaflet, 1960).³⁴

³⁴ The professional positions held by the designers who were involved in the project are of interest: most were prominent educationalists as well as practicing designers. They were presented as: Arne Korsmo, Head of the furniture section of 'Oslo School'[sic]; Ake Huldt, Principal of Konstfackskolan in Stockholm; Willy Gruhl, head of Interior Design of the Kunstgewerbeschule der Stadt, Zürich; Frau Herta-Maria Witzermann, Head of the Interior Design Section of the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Kunst, Stuttgart; Professor Gio Ponti, Milan Politecnico; Ilmar Tapiovaara, Head of the Helsinki School, the Institute of Design.

Heal's initiative had brought together Britain, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Sweden, Norway and Finland, in other words the torchbearers of mid-century European modernism (Denmark being the obvious omission). It is not surprising that large retailers in England had turned their attention to these small nations across the sea. Finnish design in particular had been propelled onto the world stage in a dramatic manner since the early 1950s, largely as a result of its huge success at the Milan *Triennali*, the design exhibitions that took place every three years in Italy. These exhibitions had been organised since the mid 1920s (they were established in 1923 at Monza), were suspended during WWII, and resumed in 1947. Design historians have identified the *Triennali* as a significant factor in promoting Scandinavian design (Davies, 2002). During the 1950s and up to 1968, the *Triennali* set the standard for what constituted 'the best' in international design, so it was a remarkable achievement for Finnish designers to win no less than 25 awards at Milan in 1951 (Davies, 2002, p. 101). A similar pattern of Finnish triumphs was repeated at the *Triennali* of 1954, 1957 and 1960.

In Britain, another channel for popularising Finnish design was the two major exhibitions hosted in 1953 and 1961. The first show, organised by the Arts Council, was entitled 'Modern Art in Finland' and it took paintings, sculpture, graphics and applied art to London, Brighton, Leeds, Glasgow and Dublin. More impact had the international *Finlandia* of 1961 which stayed at the V&A Museum from November 1961 to January 1962, after having visited Amsterdam and Stuttgart. The exhibition then continued to Zurich and Paris during 1963 (Davies, 2002). Burton has identified *Finlandia* exhibition as one of the seminal shows in the history of the Victoria and Albert Museum. He explains why:

First it was an exhibition of contemporary material. Second it represented the sort of contemporary design with which the museum (in other words, the Circulation Department), felt comfortable – not the 'hard' modernism of Germany, but the softer modernism of Scandinavia and northern Europe. And third, it seems to have been the first exhibition staged by the V&A (aside from 'Britain Can Make It') to have been through-designed by a professional designer, Timo Sarpaneva' (Burton, 1999, pp. 212-213).

While Finland, a country of less than five million inhabitants at the time, boasted a disproportionate number of prominent designers, Timo Sarpaneva alongside Tapio Wirkkala

were the only two that I.L.E.A.'s *Product Design From Finland* display referred to by name, providing two small photographic portraits of the designers on the top right hand corner on the main panel (illustration 45, appendix 3). Both these individuals fit particularly well in the narrative of Finnish design. Sarpaneva was younger but Wirkkala was the most prominent name to come out of the 1951 Triennale, where he had helped organise the Finnish participation and had produced the year's 'most beautiful object in the world', a laminated leaf-shaped wooden planter (Anderson-Spiry, 1992, p. 23). The text on the *Product Design from Finland* panel, links these two designers with the Iittala factory:

From the end of the 18th century the beauty of glass was frozen by tradition; imitation only led to monotonous uniformity. The Iittala factory in Finland was one of the first to employ talented artists to design new shapes which combined usefulness and beauty. Two of these designers are: Tapio Wirkkala [sic] and Timo Sarpaneva (appendix 3).

Firms presented in the displays are *Arabia*, *Iittala* and *Nuutajärvi-Notsjo* (appendixes 3 and 4). In the I.L.E.A. literature this manufacturer is referred to with varying degrees of accuracy, usually as 'Nuutajarvi', other times as 'Notsjo' - in the *Product Design from Finland* displays it is misspelt 'Notsto'.

A Critique of Finnish Modernism

Not surprisingly, when promoting Finnish design, British institutions, including the *Product Design from Finland* displays, did not care to associate the delicately hand-painted porcelain of *Arabia* with toilet bowls and cisterns. Artefacts in the exhibitions belong to either the kitchen or the living room, but not the bathroom. Emphasis in the text is placed on how co-operatives and teaching the crafts in schools has helped Finland be 'prosperous with a good balance of payments' (appendix 3).

Regarding Finland, I.L.E.A. was adopting the rhetoric of a country drawing on its own natural and human resources to reach self-sufficiency and prosperity. The synergy between man and nature had been a long-standing concern for Finland, dating back to the establishment of a national identity and its struggles for independence (1870s-1910s), therefore an attraction of the Finnish model for the British was that the Finns managed the

progression from the Arts and Crafts ideals to a modern society more successfully than England. The Finnish version of the Arts and Crafts movement took inspiration from folk and vernacular traditions to establish a distinct Finnish modernity (Ashby, 2010). It is indicative of the resonance of that patriotism that a number of artefacts, some still in production today, are named ‘Finlandia’ or ‘Suomi’, the Finnish word for ‘Finland’. The bond between the land and its people, was perpetuated within the boundaries of the country itself. While *Iittala*’s and *Arabia*’s bread-and-butter products were far more prosaic, marketing was placed on the prestigious pieces, which adhered to the narrative of artefacts born out of an independent culture, shaped by the harsh arctic nature. This symbolism is seen in Alvar Aalto’s bowl for *Iittala*, designed in the mid 1930s and still in production today (illustration 50). It remains one of *Iittala*’s trademark products and arguably one of the twentieth century’s best known designs. Its shape is perceived as a reference to organic forms reminiscent of lakes. Many versions are available today: the captions on sellers’ sites speak of: ‘unpredictable fluid curves that emulate the nature of his native Finland.’ (Iittala Alvar Aalto Finlandia Vase, 2013). It is these more expressive designs, using the iconography of the imagined Scandinavia, that have endured the test of time though this particular object appears not to have been purchased for the Collection.

Tapio Wirkkala’s and Timo Sarpaneva’s work in wood, porcelain and glass was also promoted as having been inspired by a range of natural phenomena, for example the transmutations of water, be it drops, snowflakes, or the melting ice (Anderson-Spiry, 1992, p. 23). Wirkkala himself seems to have been keen to denote his love of nature and the landscape, calling, for instance, his vase of 1951 ‘jäävuori’ namely ‘iceberg’. This association endures in the design of the *Finlandia* vodka bottle, firstly designed by Wirkkala in 1970 and more recently re-designed by Harri Koskinen in 2003; the container is still called ‘glacial ice’.

Apart from being a remarkably skilled craftsman, exceptionally successful in at least two materials, wood and glass, Wirkkala conformed to the stereotype of the northern romantic artist/craftsman. Accounts of Wirkkala’s life paint a man close to nature, who managed to ‘spend a quarter of the year in his two log cabins in Lapland’ despite a fledgling international career (Lundhal, 1989, p.25). He adhered to an arts and crafts heritage both in his work and politics, ‘no matter how elegant the products Wirkkala designed, his creative philosophy remained socialist; his desire to design objects accessible to everyone never changed.’

(Anderson-Spury, 1992, p. 23)

Being the product of the particular system, Wirkkala's socialism goes largely unquestioned. Culturally and politically, Scandinavia was admired for its unique brand of socialism which complimented well the political sensibilities of mid-century Britain. Sandino for example, has shown how Communist sympathies were very prevalent during the 1950s in the V&A's Circulation Department (Sandino and Pye, 2013). This benign socialism, founded on egalitarianism while allowing and indeed fostering individual liberties, has been used as an inspiration and a counter-argument against the brutal and restrictive socialism practiced in the Eastern Bloc. The grand narrative of Scandinavian socialism outlasted that of the Soviet Union, and it remains a potent political paradigm for European politics today.³⁵ Nonetheless, closer examination of manufacturing and design practices in Finland, foreground significant discrepancies that question the Scandinavian project, in as far as the claim for 'good Scandinavian design's' universal reach is problematised by limitations in its implementation, as the following example suggests.

The *Arabia*, *Nuutajärvi* and *Iittala* factories produced a wide range of items from the expensive to the very affordable. Helped by good wages, the majority of Finns during the 1950s, 1960s, and even 1970s, may not have been able to buy Sarpaneva's sculptural *Orkidea* design, or the hand-painted Arabia *Fructus* stoneware (present in *Industrial Design From Finland 2*, illustration 51, appendix 4) but they could enjoy products of quality, at prices within the average worker's reach. Quality is used here as a term which could function as an alternative to expensive 'good design'.

Anglo-Finn Hildi Hawkins grew up in the UK but spent her summertime in Finland during the 1970s. She has vivid memories of the attraction held by Finnish design items:

Under the pretext of buying presents for my father's August birthday, we devoted days of our summer holidays to shopping precociously for mugs, jugs, glasses, cutlery. The prohibitive cost of much of the high design of the period put it out of reach of our pocket-money budgets, but the beauty of such modern classics as Tapio Wirkkala's

³⁵ The tenacity of Scandinavian ideas has come to fore for example in the recent (2013) political debate about the duration and social value of 'paternity leave' after the birth of a child, a practice widely adopted in Scandinavian countries.

Chanterelle vases or Timo Sarpaneva's Orkidea, more glass sculpture than vase, was way too subtle for our burgeoning aesthetic senses. It was the more decorative end of the design spectrum that appealed to us; I remember coveting, but not being able to afford, Oiva Toikka's glass birds, while Birger Kaipiainen's hand-painted Paratiisi crockery, for me, still retains its air of expensive unattainability. Instead, we amassed an impressive collection of brightly coloured Arabia mugs and Russophile tea glasses, and lots and lots of candlesticks (Hawkins, 2003, p. 94).

Hawkins testimony suggests, that even in their native Finland, some of the more well-known designs were costly though there were parallel lines of cheaper alternatives to satisfy every budget. The range of products within the Finnish market ensured that there was something for everyone, but the processes of importing Finnish products in Britain and the prestigious products chosen for importation, meant that in the U.K., Finnish design was represented by expensive and exclusive items. Not surprisingly, Davies has shown that overall, Finnish design achieved rather insignificant volume of sales in Britain, and certainly out of proportion to the praise and awards won (Davies, 2002, pp. 107-108).

Moreover, closer scrutiny of Tapio Wirkkala's projects, reveals a designer whose career discloses clashes with the socialist project. On the one hand, in Finland, his *Ultima Thule* range for *Iittala* was produced at a cut-price, cruder version, sold through supermarkets in order to make it more affordable. On the other hand, among Wirkkala's celebrated partnerships was the collaboration with exclusive Italian glassworks *Venini*, which lasted from the mid-1960s to the designer's death in 1985. Wirkkala and Venini (I refer here to the founder of the company, Paolo Venini) had met at the 1951 *Triennale* and he was the chosen designer when the traditional manufacturer sought to modernise its range. In Murano (*Venini's* base) 'Wirkkala found himself faced by a very different glass heritage. Murano had made luxurious glass.' (Keinänen, 1978, p. 24). Today Venini remains an unapologetically expensive firm. Wirkkala for *Venini* designs reach over £1,000 per item and sometimes multiples of this amount at auction (Christies, 2013). Venini being an Italian manufacturer, this collaboration does not reflect Finnish design abroad, but the collaboration reveals the elasticity with which Wirkkala viewed his commitment to socialist critique of production.

A further complication is that the design industry in twentieth century Finland had, in some aspects, the characteristics of an oligopoly. I.L.E.A.'s exhibition refers to 'co-operatives'

which ‘play a great part in the national economy both in agriculture and other work; these account for one third of the countries local retail sales’ (*Industrial Design in Finland 2*, appendix 4). Notwithstanding the numerous prominent designers and their prolific output, as far as industrial output was concerned, production was actually concentrated in a handful of factories which belonged to a small number of co-operatives and private industrialists. Davies identifies two important families in Finnish industry: the Wahlforss of Wärtsilä corporation, a company in control not only of shipyards but also of *Arabia* and glass manufacture *Nuutajärvi-Nötsjö*. The other powerful Finnish oligarch is the Ahlström family who had stakes in mechanical engineering, wood-processing and the firm *Iittala* (Davies 2002, p.103).

My investigation has shown Finland as exemplary within the various nations included in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. My arguments explained how I.L.E.A. used the example of Finland, and other Scandinavian countries in order to demonstrate how design and manufacture of objects are embedded in political and economic systems, in this case systems worthy of emulation. Finland had covered much ground in achieving socialism through modernism, an objective that the Greater London Council had pursued with determination but with limited success (see also the analysis in Chapter 3, section entitled ‘An Examination of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a Socialist Project’). In this respect it would be fair to argue that Finland, alongside the rest of Scandinavia, served I.L.E.A.’s agenda, as an admirable model of disseminated modernity.

Using Oral History to Examine Alternative Narratives of Modernity in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

In chapter 2 of this thesis I made reference to the extensive representation of studio crafts, particularly ceramics, within the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. This section will address a number of I.L.E.A. displays that compose a representative picture of mid-twentieth century British studio ceramics. Among a number of pottery and crafts displays, analysis will focus on: *Pottery Thrown by Hand* (illustration 52, appendix 5) and *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 1 and 2* (illustrations 53 and 54, appendixes 6 and 7). I have further enlisted general craft groups, forming the set *Modern Craftwork 1* and *Modern Craftwork 2* (illustrations 55 and 56 appendixes 8 and 9); versions of *Modern British Glass, Pottery, Wood, Metal and Textiles* (illustration 57, 58) will also inform the discussion. These bring together ceramics and other materials, encompassing a larger sample of British craft from the 1950s and 1960s. Examination of these exhibits will establish alternative interpretations of ‘good design’ and the construction of ‘other modernities’ to complement the preceding analysis of plastics and Finnish design already covered previously.

Keeping the focus on ceramics, the above-mentioned displays contain work by the following potters (the term used by I.L.E.A. in these displays is ‘artist-craftsmen’): Arbeid, Dan; Auld, Ian; Baldwin, Gordon; Burgess, A. ; Caiger-Smith, Alan; Cooper, Francis; Eynon, Gerwyn; Fletcher, Richard; Fournier Pottery; Haberland, Barbara; Henderson, E.J. (Ewen); Hepburn, Anthony; Jones, Patricia; Leach, David; Lowndes, Gillian; Mellon, Eric; Newman, Bryan (wrongly spelled ‘Brian’ on the I.L.E.A. labels); Rie, Lucie; Wallwork, Alan; Wren, Denise. Cross-referencing this list of makers with the index of Tanya Harrod’s definitive volume *The Crafts in Britain in the 20th Century*, yields a match of 14 out of 20 names. They are : Arbeid, Auld, Baldwin, Caiger-Smith, Cooper, Fournier, Henderson, Hepburn, Leach, Lowndes, Newman, Rie, Wallwork, and Wren (Harrod, 1999). The close overlap with Harrod’s account suggests that while the inventory taken from the selected displays is far from exhaustive, it supports my claim that this selection may be examined as representative of mid-century British studio pottery and representative of the relation between ‘designer’ and ‘artist/craftsman.’ The selection also serves to illustrate how the negotiation of terms like

‘craftsman’, ‘artist craftsman’ and ‘designer’, reflects the dilemmas of classification, the ambivalence of terminology, and the difficulty I.L.E.A. encountered in responding to abrupt shifts in hierarchies and values in pottery making during that time.

The cross-over between the I.L.E.A. selection and the relevant bibliography, also confirms a key observation pertaining to the study of British studio pottery; the observation that this is a contained field, in the sense that it is determined by a handful of pivotal agents. Pottery makers developed professional and personal relationships that informed their practice: the running theme of where each maker’s loyalties lay, illuminates the story of post-war studio ceramics. Aesthetic trends and work philosophies can be rendered apparent and distinguished from one another through an examination of the contexts within which the work has been produced, considering overlaps and distinctions in the schooling, working environment and public display circumstances. This is also a field that concerns fairly recent developments, as British studio pottery has been a recognised sub-category within ceramics for about a century (Billington, 1937; Leach, 1940; Rose, 1955, Watson, 1994 ; Jones, 2007). Jeffrey Jones suggests that studio pottery appeared in the early years of the 20th century, when

a new paradigm of ceramics emerged in Britain and at its core was a belief in the self-sufficiency of the potter. No longer needing to look towards the designer or painter for validation, the maker in clay would assert that the art of the potter comes out of what he/she does...owing nothing to the particularities of other branches of the visual arts (Jones, p. 43, 2007).

Jones specifies the year 1920, when Bernard Leach returned to Britain from Japan, as ‘widely agreed to be the starting point of studio pottery’ meaning that it was then that studio pottery demonstrates self-awareness of its existence, while predecessors such as the Martin brothers who had been active in the 19th century, have been retrospectively recognised as studio pottery pioneers (Jones, 1997, p.11). Jones’ chronological boundary of 1920 probably stems from Michael Cardew’s comment that ‘the landing of Bernard Leach and Shoji Hamada on the island of Britain in 1920 was for craftsmen potters the most significant event in the 20th century’(Cardew quoted in Birks, 1992, p. 95).

As a relatively recent development that involves a small number of individuals, studio pottery objects, more than other artefacts within the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, lend

themselves to oral history approaches. Linda Sandino has identified that qualitative interviewing, especially oral history, is becoming an increasingly significant research methodology in the histories and practices of art and design. Sandino sees oral history's role in the visual arts as 'a multivalent, diverse, co-constructed practice that challenges conventional autonomous production and identities' (Sandino and Partington, 2013, p. 2). I have found Sandino's claim to be supported in the documentation of the history of studio crafts.

Craft historian Tanya Harrod implemented extensive interviewing in order to research the exhibition *The Harrow Connection* (Margrie et al, 1989) and she especially relied on interviewing to produce her text on twentieth century British crafts, *The Crafts in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Harrod, 1999). Harrod's interviews are logged in the British Library, in its Sound Archive. In addition, there are a number of recorded interviews which took place as part of the *National Life Stories* project and have been logged as *Crafts Lives* accounts, also in the British Library's Sound Archive. Harrod's interviewing is of particular interest in the present discussion as it confirms the perception of studio pottery as a field where the activities of individuals are exceptionally closely linked, forming a web of cross-influences spanning the professional and the personal. One instance that verifies this claim is when Harrod spoke to Victor Margrie, who, together with fellow potter Michael Casson had established the pottery course at Harrow School of Art in 1963 (its full title at the time was *Harrow Technical College and School of Art*, today [2013] the *University of Westminster*). When Harrod's and Margrie's discussion turned to the prospect of a new Head of Ceramics for Harrow, Margrie put forward the argument that studio pottery in England involved such a small number of people that finding suitable candidates to lead courses was problematic (Margrie, 1988).

In my investigation of this tightly-knit professional community through documented interviews, I have found that oral history provides commentary which enriches, complements and occasionally reveals 'hidden' aspects of official histories. Considering methodologies that compliment sound archives, an oral history project Dr Matthew Partington has undertaken for the *Victoria and Albert Museum*, has shown how video interviewing may provide a space for questioning established narratives and reflecting upon 'received wisdom.' As part of the web-based project *Ceramic Points of View* Partington used Tanya Harrod's and craftspeople's comments including Julian Stair and Alison Britton. Stair's and Britton's less

than enthusiastic reaction to handling a Hans Coper pot from the collection of the *V&A*, enables Partington to address the ‘taboo’ subject of quality in museum collections, and to ‘challenge the received wisdom of the ceramics world which placed Coper amongst the most significant ceramists of the modern period’ (Partington, 2004).

Another example of how oral history opens up controversial, non-canonical or ‘hidden’ aspects of conventional historiographies, are the stories of spouses and partners of makers, who play a role often overlooked in other types of documentation. Sandino for instance comments on the inclusion of textile designer Peter Collingwood’s spouse, Elizabeth, in recordings. Sandino calls Elizabeth ‘a specific “character” in the life audio story [of Peter Collingwood].’ (Sandino, 2010, p.129).

Amongst the individuals I researched in studio pottery, much would be lost had I not been aware of certain blood relations and life partnerships, for example that Margaret Hine was spouse to William Newland, Gillian Lowndes to Ian Auld or that Camberwell’s Head of Ceramics Richard Kendall had married Bernard Leach’s daughter, Jessamine, making Kendall a member of Leach’s extended circle. By scrutinising the overlap between the professional and the personal, oral history illuminates and occasionally complicates, or even undermines established ‘truths’.³⁶ This expanded knowledge not only about the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection itself, through insight of how, for example, some pieces by different makers may share an aesthetic sensibility (e.g. Hine and Newland’s surface decorations) but also in terms of understanding Camberwell College’s endorsement of Leachian values with Kendall, son-in-law of Bernard Leach as head of Ceramics (Forde, 2012).

In addition to the British Library’s *National Sound Archives* I have used the *National Electronic and Video Archive of the Crafts (NEVAC)* which was founded in 1992 in the *University of the West of England* (Partington, 2013) and has been known as *Recording the Crafts* and since 2008, and the *Voices In the Visual Arts (VIVA)* project funded by Camberwell College of Arts. Between these oral history databases, there are a number of sound and video recordings which involve makers and retailers, many with close associations

³⁶ In another example, Janet Leach, being interviewed by Tanya Harrod, is keen to disambiguate her relationship to Bernard Leach’s son David, which, in her opinion, had been mis-represented in official accounts. (Leach, 1991)

to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. I have primarily drawn on the following recordings: Ian Auld, Janet Leach, Gordon Baldwin, Ruth Duckworth, Victor Margrie, Gillian Lowndes interviewed by Tanya Harrod in the *British Library National Sound Archives* (Auld, 1988; Leach, 1991; Baldwin, 1988; Duckworth, 1987; Margrie, 1988; Lowndes, 1987); David Leach interviewed by Tanya Harrod and Michael Hughes, William Newland interviewed by Anne Hale, Gordon Baldwin interviewed by Michael Hughes and Hawksmoor Hughes, Henry Rothschild interviewed by Andrew Greg, Peter Collingwood interviewed by Linda Sandino, and Michael Casson interviewed by Anna Hale (Leach, 1993; Newland, 1994; Baldwin, 2004; Rothschild, 2001; Collingwood, 2007; Casson 1995) logged in the *National Electronic and Video Archive of the Crafts* and Sara Radstone interviewed by Linda Sandino logged in *Voices In the Visual Arts* (Radstone, 2005).

Interacting Spheres in the History of I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection: Studio Ceramics

Oral history in combination with bibliographical sources, has led me to identify three spheres within which the story of mid-century studio ceramics has developed. The first of these is the sphere of formal art and design education, usually provided by art colleges in their various transformations across time. Secondly, the network of ceramics studios or workshops, strewn all over the country, found in isolation or in local clusters, where potters worked either independently or, often, in partnerships; these ‘country potters’ as Harrod calls them (Harrod, 1999) also provided informal educational routes through apprenticeships and collaborations. Thirdly, the sphere of culture and commerce, or ‘public space’, where the works were made available to the public, including commercial and non-commercial spaces, and extending to the activities of private and state-funded organisations. This wider public space also included publications and broadcasts that contributed to the shaping of public perception regarding studio pottery.

I wish to note that I do not entirely exclude industrial ceramics from these spheres, however my research suggests that the industry only played a marginal role, occasionally providing employment opportunities for studio ceramicists (one instance was Wedgwood commissioning Lucie Rie in the early 1960s), but not impacting on the makers’ aesthetic or technical choices to such a degree that would justify the inclusion of industry as a notable influence on the development of studio pottery. Factory ceramics were in certain aspects a competitor to studio potters, who often relied on batch production of everyday goods as a

source of staple income. I.L.E.A.'s caption for *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen I* (illustration 53, appendix 6) , explains that 'some craftsmen have formed into groups to produce dinner, tea and coffee sets, also kitchen ware by hand, and they are able to compete with many machine products in the average price range, but this is difficult economically because of the shortage of skilled labour.'

Unlike factory ceramics, studio pottery is the product of relative creative independence and as Jones has argued, this 'independence' is a criterion to distinguish between work as a creative act and work as labour (Jones, 2007, p.18). Though the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection contains numerous examples of commissioned, factory-produced ceramic pieces (evident for example in the *Pottery by Hand and Machine* displays, as in illustration 63), this discussion will focus on handmade items made in alignment with Jones' 'work as a creative act' and will investigate how the inclusion of studio ceramics extends notions of 'good design' in the Collection.

Another notable influence on studio pottery were activities undertaken outside Britain and the impact of such activities on individual makers and their circles. Interactions of British potters with foreigners, either individual makers or making communities, have informed British approaches to studio ceramics and add an international perspective to the domestic production. While the most prominent example is that of Bernard Leach and his association with Japanese potters, a partnership closer to the time of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, is the long-standing involvement of Michael Cardew with Nigeria where he established potteries and 'discovered' such talents as Ladi Kwali. Ladi Kwali was an accomplished maker in clay through the African tradition of coiling when Cardew met her and trained her in throwing at the Abuja pottery in Nigeria during the 1950s (Harrod, 2013). Though there is only one piece of Cardew's in the Collection, British potters' work abroad discloses connections with other cultures and the exchange of ideas that occurred between British and local craftsmen. Products of such collaborations, though not present in the Collection, may help in the framing of the ethnic ceramic objects that did find their way into the Collection.

Regarding foreign input, reference should also be made to the European studio ceramics in the Collection. Based on my research, it appears that German studio ceramics found in the Collection were most probably acquired from *Primavera*, Henry Rothschild's gallery that was one of I.L.E.A.'s most prolific suppliers. In his interview to Andrew Greg, Rothschild

refers to the ‘German group’, which he included in his London shows (Rothschild, 2001). It is likely that I.L.E.A. bought from the German potters *Primavera* exhibition of 1968, which showcased the work of Beate Kuhn, Karl and Ursula Scheid, Margarete Schott and Gerald and Gotlind Weigel (Greg, 1995, p.22).

Tradition and Innovation in Studio Ceramics of the 1950s and 1960s

The dynamic inter-play between colleges, studios and the public arena, whether it was taking place on a local, national or international level, shaped the story of studio ceramics and this is true even when this concerned negative interactions, interactions which took the form of deliberate distancing. This is the case of potters adhering to a Leachean tradition who, during the 1950s, reacted strongly to iconoclastic trends, with criticism verging on outright rejection. The younger generation ‘complicated the standards set by Leach’ as Tanya Harrod has put it (Harrod, 1999, p. 276). Bernard Leach had been critical of potters who did not throw their own pots, but during the 1950s there emerged a dynamic cohort of individuals who embraced ceramics as a medium for artistic expression and treated the ceramic surface as an alternative to canvas. Alison Britton suggests that ‘these were inspired by Mediterranean art rather than Oriental, and made exuberant, highly decorated thrown and assembled pieces’ (Britton, 2002).

One point of focus for such practitioners was the Institute of Education, which attracted artists and craftsmen who sought a teacher’s qualification. Nicholas Vergette, James Tower, Bill Newland, Margaret Hine and Ian Auld were all involved with the Institute either as teachers or learners. One important foreign influence on these makers appears to have been the work of Pablo Picasso in ceramics. Auld suggests, with reference to his colleagues at the Institute of Education that ‘none of these people were trained pottery people. But it was all to do with the Picasso thing, wasn’t it? It was alright for painters to do pottery because of Picasso’ (Auld, 1989). William Newland, confirms Picasso as an inspiration when speaking of his work: ‘these figures are fairly typical of the sort of Picasso thrown figures of the day.’ When he is asked about the *Picasso in Provence* exhibition (mounted in 1950 by the Arts Council in the New Burlington Galleries): ‘what effects did it have indirectly on you and how did you hear about it?’ he answers ‘Well, we were called the...[AH:]Picassoettes. [WN:] Picassoettes by...[AH:] By Leach.’ (Newland, 1994).

The attraction of internationally-inspired aesthetic manifestation in ceramics was also reflected in London's gradual embrace of continental habits: as Partington has shown, the flourishing coffee-bar scene of the 1950s, became the ideal space where such work was show-cased and decoration was inspired by 'the Mediterranean, Africa and Latin America' (Partington, 2005). Two years after the *Picasso in Provence* show, William Newland and Nicholas Vergette participated in a display entitled *Ceramics in the Home* at Charing Cross underground station and as Jones notes, 'much of this work had something of a Picasso look to it' (Jones, 2000).

Both Alison Britton (Britton, 2002 – note that Britton is not represented in the Collection) and Gordon Baldwin mention that rather than an outright dismissal of traditional throwing techniques, the 'Picassoettes' intention was to break new ground. 'It wasn't very difficult to break new ground in the '50s because there was lots you could break' ascertains Baldwin though he also purports that 'Bill' [William] Newland, who taught Baldwin at the Central School, 'was a great thrower' (Baldwin, 2004). Baldwin talks about how the Central School took its aesthetic cue from Dora Billington, who directed the course and was more interested in European pottery. She looked down on Leach's Orientalism, something shared by students and staff at the Central. 'We were really rather against Bernard and the way he was doing things' Baldwin says, and adds: 'that whole ethos [of Leach and Cardew] we took with a pinch of salt, we thought we should be doing something different as Europeans' (Baldwin, 2004). One semi-public platform where such allegiances are observable, is the I.L.E.A. /Camberwell Collection: its displays bear witness to the intellectual and aesthetic variances within British studio ceramics of the post-war time.

I.L.E.A.'s Terminology of Making and Linguistic Interpretations of 'Good Design'

One crucial aspect of investigating I.L.E.A.'s approach to the exhibits as exemplars of 'good design' is the use of language and the specificities of terminology that the Authority applied to the artefacts. In the title *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*, I.L.E.A. implicitly acknowledges the problematic of craft as 'good design', opting for the word 'artist' as an adjective to 'craftsmen' rather than the word 'designer'. I.L.E.A.'s pronouncement of some exhibits as the work of 'Artist Craftsmen' foregrounds a symbolic shift in how the Authority

approached ‘good design’. In the course of my research, it became evident that the words ‘artist’, ‘designer’, ‘potter’ and ‘craftsman’ were used by the Authority to encode subtle distinctions in representations concerning the role and status of each professional group within the Collection. Though these distinctions were not consistent, there is enough differentiation to allow for a tentative decoding of I.L.E.A.’s ‘terminology of making.’

The London County Council, and I.L.E.A. itself, for the first years (1950s and up to the mid-1960s) had placed the emphasis on manufacture. Therefore the ‘designer’, in the sense of ‘industrial’ or ‘product’ designer, had been the central and dominant term used to describe makers. In the discussion on British plastics, I have shown how the designer’s contribution was presented as integral to the industrial process. The industrial designer’s relationship to other skilled workers emerges through statements like: ‘much skill and arduous precision work is entailed in the making of a mould’ (anonymous Photograph *Plastics in the Home 2*) which allows the Authority to draw parallels between the works of designers and with those of ‘craftsmen’ ceramicists. The text of *Modern Craftwork 1* (illustration 55) re-states this link explicitly: ‘within industry, the hand craftsman remains of great importance as, for instance, in mould making for plastics’ (*Modern Craftwork 1*, uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection archive, illustration 55, appendix 8).

In the field of ceramics, the word ‘designer’ is used to reference mass-produced pottery. One example is the *Midwinter* tea set in *Modern British Glass, Pottery, Metal, Wood and Textiles* (illustration 57). The set was made by the same company that later expanded to plastics (Jenkins, 2012), as implied by the example of the *Midwinter* range I have mentioned in section ‘I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection Display: *Plastics in the Home*’. In *Modern British Glass, Pottery, Metal, Wood and Textiles*, the objects are referred to as ‘industrial ceramics’ and there is a short description of the ‘designer’s’ role, underlining the particularities of working for industry: ‘Designers in pottery not only conduct researches into craft-clayware but are concerned with the equipment used in industrial manufacture, in ceramic laboratories and the photo-mechanical apparatus for producing decorative transfers’ (*Modern British Glass, Pottery, Metal, Wood and Textile*, uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection archive, illustration 57).

However when exhibits comprise of items produced either as one-offs or in batches, the word ‘craftsmen’ is preferred. As already noted, in *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*, the

Authority does not title the makers simply ‘craftsmen’ but ‘artist craftsmen’. There is also no evidence that the Authority adopted the term ‘ceramic sculpture’ which was introduced by Leach (Leach, 1978) and became commonly used in the 1960s to describe ceramics by individual makers (Jones, 2007). Looking at other displays, as for instance *Contemporary British Wood, Ceramics, Metal and Glass* (illustration 59), it becomes apparent that the single-word term ‘craftsmen’ was reserved for more traditional work as well as the work of anonymous makers. The contextual panels of *Contemporary British Wood, Ceramics, Metal and Glass* reveal the uneasiness with which I.L.E.A. itself approached some of the artefacts. The text accompanying this bold display of unconventional craftwork appears to clash with the items, hinting at disapproval for the aesthetics of the objects on show:

Long before our own time, good craftsmanship was a worldwide activity among all but the most primitive tribal groups. [...] The old craftsman, as a result of his humility towards the natural world, had the wisdom to use material in a manner appropriate to its nature. Unfortunately this is not always true today nor in the more recent past (*Contemporary British Wood, Ceramics, Metal and Glass*, uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection archive, illustration 59).

Having read this panel, and taken in the effortless elegance of Ernest Gimson’s Ash Chair which illustrates it, the viewer is then confronted with iconoclastic three-dimensional objects, among them: Bryan Newman’s ‘abstract sculptured with incised decoration’; Peter Tysoe’s welded steel sculpture, ‘Warrior’; and K. Barrell’s ‘coiled, sliced and thrown stoneware form’. While it is not explicitly stated, the strong visual juxtaposition between Gimson and the offerings of ‘artist craftsmen’ denotes that these particular studio potters’ work does not belong with the work of ‘old craftsmen’.

According to I.L.E.A., ‘craftsmen’ carrying the trait of ‘humility towards the natural world’ would more likely be associated with thrown pottery as in the items presented in *Pottery Thrown by Hand*, comprising work by such potters as David Leach, Francis Cooper, Lucie Rie, Alan Caiger-Smith and Dan Arbeid (illustration 52, appendix 5). While not anonymous, the pots in this compilation allude to the ‘humility’ ingrained in the throwing tradition of oriental masters and filtered through the writings and work of Bernard Leach. Yuko Kikuchi has argued that the Western approach (as exemplified by the work and writings of Leach, Hamada and Yanagi) was in itself spurious as far as it re-interpreted Japanese folk/everyday

(‘*mingei*’) traditions for the West but also filtered these through a Western aesthetic and thus ‘re-packaged’ them for a Japanese audience (Kikuchi 1996 and 2004). Indeed it is evident that in *Pottery Thrown by Hand* the potters’ humility does not stretch to the anonymity praised by *mingei*’s proponent, Sôetsu Yanagi, whose text *The Unknown Craftsman* (Yanagi, 1972) purported that: ‘if we were to select a hundred examples of the most beautiful crafts out of the past and present, ninety-nine percent, no, possibly one hundred percent, would be unsigned’ (Yanagi in Adamson, 2010, p. 169). In contrast, all examples in *Pottery Thrown by Hand* are named and stamped by their makers.

However, an interpretation of the term ‘traditionalist studio potter’, as defined by the history and texts of studio pottery, would reveal that not all of the potters included in the *Pottery Thrown by Hand* display can be identifiable as ‘traditionalists’. Dan Arbeid is a case in point. Emmanuel Cooper has described Arbeid’s work as ‘unconventional’ and claimed that Arbeid ‘had little or nothing to do with the prevailing orthodoxy of an eastern aesthetic of reduction-fired stoneware, which favoured the muted browns and creams advocated by Bernard Leach’ (Cooper, 2010). In the history of studio pottery, Arbeid’s is a different legacy - more clearly discernible in his coiled pots and slabbed forms. His pot in *Pottery Thrown by Hand* is a reminder that some of the most innovative studio potters of that generation were also skilled throwers : though Arbeid had received no formal training, he was a technician at the Central School of Art from the late 1950s, where, according to Ian Auld, he developed remarkably under the guidance of Gilbert Harding Green (Auld, 1988).

The exhibits in question suggest that I.L.E.A. met the challenge of more adventurous makers by radically expanding its definitions of ‘good design’ and ‘modern’. *Pottery Thrown by Hand* appears to occupy a safe territory of modernist ‘good design’ due to the artefacts’ minimal decoration, allusion to function and recognisable ‘pot-like’ form. *Pottery Thrown by Hand* qualifies Jones’ observation that, ‘in the competition for a place in the studio pottery history books timelessness won over fashion’ (Jones, 2007, p.132).

However, *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*, and more evidently, *Modern Craftwork 1* and *Modern Craftwork 2*, (illustrations 53-56) comprise a selection that renders visible the increasing desire, on the part of makers, to push the boundaries of canonical taste. Therefore the word ‘modern’ in the title of *Modern Craftwork* can be interpreted to refer to a break or an extension of the functionalist canon. In this case, ‘Modern’ can be interpreted as being

closer in spirit to the disseminated 1950s meaning of ‘modern’ in fine art, denoting abstraction and experimentation as well as the Greenbergian notion about medium specificity (Greenberg and O’Brian, 1993), rather than fitness for purpose.

The inclusion of the Perspex *Opto 1* (illustration 56) design object in *Modern Craftwork 2*, which I have previously encountered in the *Plastics In the Home* is a case in point. In *Modern Craftwork 2* the object is described as ‘pattern silk-screened onto Perspex to give interesting optical effects’ and justifies its status as ‘modern craftwork’ in as far as presenting an expanded interpretation of craft skills (silk-screening), in a novel material that supported the term ‘modern’ (illustration 56, appendix 9).

The ambivalences regarding the positioning of ceramic work in the Collection, affected not only I.L.E.A.’s officials acting as curators, but the makers themselves. Ian Auld had spoken of his guilt for veering away from convention: in his interview to Tanya Harrod, Auld says he always ‘felt a bit guilty about making slab-pots’ as he had been of the opinion that he should ‘be making round pots. It took me a long time to break from that’ (Auld, 1988). In comparison his colleague Ruth Duckworth, whose work also questioned the usefulness of labelling makers either as ‘craftsmen’ or ‘designers’, addresses the issue in a more assertive way:

I came around via sculpture, I did sculpture before I did ceramics ...it seems to me that clay is just a material and you can do with it what you want as long as what you do with it is good, and I feel, to me that’s the criterion (Duckworth, 1987).

Duckworth’s example of the porcelain item in I.L.E.A.’s *Form in Handmade Clayware* (illustration 60, second shelf, on the right) is innovative but keeping with the generic form of the thrown vessel; the artefact is illustrative of Duckworth’s approach in the early phases of her career; she also explored more sculptural interpretations of ceramics, emboldened by the atmosphere of the Central School where she taught. Auld underlines the inevitable cross-pollination amongst colleagues and draws the link between Duckworth and Arbeid, saying that Duckworth owed to Arbeid some of her more sculptural approaches: ‘Dan [Arbeid] had the idea to make them asymmetrical which is something Ruth Duckworth picked up from Dan’ (Auld, 1988).

Addressing the same dilemmas, Gordon Baldwin, whose ‘dark brown and honey glazed cross

form' dominates (a version of) *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 2* (item 3, bottom shelf left hand side, illustration 54), has discussed his ambivalence towards terms such as 'potter' 'maker' and 'artist' in his interview (Baldwin, 2004). For example, he has said of his (later) participation in the committees of the Crafts Council: 'some of it was almost a pretence because I always felt myself to be an artist...arrogantly' (Baldwin, 2004). Auld's, Duckworth's and Baldwin's varying stances speak of the makers' predicament, who weighed their desire to leave an individual mark against the demands of contesting contexts. Baldwin's comment may also go some way towards explaining why in his 2004 interview, speaking to Hawksmoor Hughes, in a rare reference to the I.L.E.A. scheme, Baldwin confuses Camberwell College of Arts with Goldsmith's:

L.C.C, ...not.. the G.L.C., the I.L.... the Inner London Education Department. They bought things in those days which they loaned to schools... and the sort of pieces which I showed to the Crafts Centre to ask them to let me in... were the sort of pieces that they had in this Collection which is now at Goldsmith's College (Baldwin, 2004).³⁷

Interestingly, during the course of the same interview, Baldwin had explained how, as a young student at the Central School of Art, he had the impression that Camberwell School of Art was looked down upon and that the Central [School of Art], with Kenneth Clark, had a certain attitude that was 'anti-Leachean' (Baldwin, 2004).

Diversity and Conflicts in Pottery Training: Ceramic Courses in Higher Education and Training Apprenticeships in Country Potteries.

In the middle of the past century, a number of Schools of Art offered ceramic courses. As Partington has argued, 'in the 1960s and 1970s ceramics was fashionable' (Partington, 2010). Studio pottery benefitted from a number of courses offered across London and regional art colleges, and its status within art education changed with the introduction of the Diploma in Art and Design in 1963. This development has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 1. Despite their rise during the second part of the 20th century, the 21st century saw falling

³⁷ Though it is beyond the scope of this investigation, I note the elasticity with which facts are served in oral history accounts; such a factual mistake would have been most probably corrected in the editing stage of other media.

student numbers coupled with the high cost of running a fully-equipped ceramics studio at a time of severe educational cut-backs (Partington, 2010). These factors have contributed to the demise of ceramics education within the higher educational sector, since the early 21st century (Forde, 2012).

Among those institutions most closely associated with the flourishing of studio pottery in the post-war period were the Central School of Arts, Camberwell School of Arts, Goldsmith's College, Harrow School of Arts, and the Royal College of Arts -all situated in the greater London area. Also in London, the Institute of Education, which I have already discussed in connection to the 'Picassoettes', proved an influential environment, training a generation of post-war potters, amongst them Nicholas Vergette, William Newland and Margaret Hine. Other courses at regional institutions, later named 'Polytechnics' like that at Bristol or Brighton, or 'Colleges of Art' like Falmouth, played a significant role but were arguably more prominent in the 1970s and 1980s, after they were granted degree-awarding powers.

Ceramics courses had been taught in educational institutions for a long time before they became 'fashionable' as Partington put it (Partington, 2010). Since the late 19th century, the Royal College of Art was one of the most respected providers, with member of staff Richard Lunn having written a popular pottery handbook in the early 20th century (Lunn, 1903). Richard Lunn also taught at the Camberwell School of Art, which ran evening ceramics classes that had been 'very influential' and were attended by the likes of William Staite Murray (Jones, 2007; Forde, 2012). Yet before the legitimisation of ceramics studies through accredited courses, there had existed a very long tradition of apprenticeship undertaken at established country potteries, a tradition that continued in parallel to institutionalised learning. In the course of the 20th century, the histories of 'country' and 'studio' pottery overlap in many instances, though Jones has argued that studio pottery

developed at an awkward angle to "country pottery" and went on to be much more successful and admired [...] The artistry of country potters and studio potters was pulling in opposite directions; the one towards a boundless and exuberant ornamentation, the other towards abstraction and a more restricted range of expression and inspiration (Jones, 2007, p. 30).

Unsurprisingly, the Leach Pottery in Cornwall was among the most popular country potteries

and it produced a string of successful studio potters. A number of Leach Pottery graduates are represented with their work in the Collection. Apart from Bernard's son, David, there is Richard Batterham, whose spouted stoneware bowl *Pottery by Hand and Machine* (illustration 63, bottom shelf right hand side) testifies to the two years he spent at the Leach Pottery, from 1957 to 1958. After Cornwall, Batterham and his wife set up their own country pottery at Dorset and he continues his long career to the present day (2013) as a country potter himself. *Primavera*'s Henry Rothschild went as far as to say that 'Richard Batterham-in a funny way he is achieving what Cardew didn't quite achieve...impeccable quality...generous design...particularly stoneware' (Rothschild, 2001).

However, Batterham's dedication to country pottery practice was not shared by other studio potters as the desired learning route. Ian Auld considers he had 'a lucky escape' when he was set up by Leach to work at Harry Davis' pottery in Cornwall, but could not take the post because of his commitments at the Institute of Education in London: 'By the time I finished at the Institute, [Davis] had taken on somebody else which I always think was a lucky escape...Because you had to break up clay for 6 weeks...he'd really make you suffer' (Auld, 1988). Practitioners close to Auld's mentality found greater scope for their potter's education to be undertaken in London establishments, of which the Central School of Art is considered to have been the most progressive.

Oral history sources indicate that practitioners, especially those who were determined to work as teachers in crafts education, were aware and concerned with the status attributed to each institution. The textiles designer Peter Collingwood, referring to the field of textiles, confided that he left Hammersmith for Camberwell 'because Camberwell was better known than Hammersmith and the Central next to the Royal College was the top one' (Collingwood, 2007). Keeping in mind the dangers of generalising, a positioning on the spectrum of experimentation in the 1950s and 1960s, would place the Central as more experimental than Camberwell, with Harrow closer to a 'hybrid' style that mixed 'the contemporary with the oriental' as Harrod has suggested (Harrod, 1999, p. 241).

In the course of the second half of the previous century, Camberwell became the location of a decisive educational 'turn' in the teaching of ceramics, a 'turn' that saw the introduction of greater freedom and individuality in the teaching of the medium. Referring to its rather conservative 1950s approach, William Newland described Camberwell as the college where

‘one-offs were not made because Leach’s son-in-law was in charge’ (Newland, 1994). Newland refers to Richard ‘Dick’ Kendall, who was Head of Ceramics at Camberwell during the 1950s. As the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection is well-stocked with objects produced by Camberwell graduates or staff, it is possible to observe the trajectory from Kendall’s traditionalism to the College’s ‘golden age’ (Lowndes, 1987) of the 1960s, by selecting examples among the artefacts in the Collection.

Lucie Rie is arguably the most celebrated individual maker in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, though the I.L.E.A. cases where Rie’s work is exhibited do not single her out as more distinguished than her peers. Rie’s reputation had not been established at the time and the pieces in the Collection are mostly functional, therefore of a different value to her one-off pieces (only two found in the Collection). In *Pottery Thrown by Hand* (illustration 62, appendix 5), Rie’s ‘coffee pot with straight handle and matt glaze with sgraffito decoration’ stands on equal footing amongst the work of David Leach, Alan Caiger-Smith, Francis Cooper and Dan Arheid. Interestingly, I.L.E.A.’s groupings did not reflect monetary differentiation in the market value of its selected craftsmen’s output.

Her involvement with Camberwell does not prove Rie’s allegiance with a Leachian tradition. She was in contact with, and a personal friend of, Bernard Leach and had for a while followed his advice to produce more substantial, heavier wares (Cooper, 2012). However Rie ultimately triumphed through her individuality; the one influence she recognised was that of Hans Coper, whom she also introduced to Camberwell as a teacher. Emmanuel Cooper described Rie and Coper as having

a common vision in seeing themselves as essentially metropolitan rather than rural, concerned with making pots for the present rather than seeking to recreate a fictional or romanticised past. Although they would be reluctant to discuss it, they identified themselves as part of the stream of modernism that looked to form rather than decoration, and to objects that reflected the minimalism and strength of architectural design (Cooper, 2012, p. 148).

While Coper was keen to be seen as ‘modern’, Rie described herself as neither ‘modern’ nor ‘traditional’:

If one should ask me whether I believe to be a modern potter or a potter of tradition I would answer: I don't know and I don't care. Art alive is always modern, no matter how old or young. Art theories have no meaning for me, beauty has. This is all my philosophy. I do not attempt to be original or different' (Lucie Rie quoted in Cooper, 2012, p. 164).

Rie and Coper taught evening classes at Camberwell and while they are not remembered as exceptional pedagogues, they left their mark on Camberwell and beyond. A younger generation of potters, Gillian Lowndes for instance, referred to her own work as having been 'a bit influenced by Hans Coper and a bit influenced by Scandinavian sculpture' (Lowndes, 1987). Lowndes studied at the Central and did not start teaching at Camberwell before 1975 - she would not have been a colleague of Coper in the College. Yet she acknowledged his influence as a prominent artist working in the medium of ceramics (I use the word 'artist' here as Coper had been vocal about his preference to be classified a sculptor instead of potter).

The case of Gillian Lowndes' career demonstrates that as acquisitions by I.L.E.A accumulated during the 1950s, the 1960s and early 1970s, there is a sense of following individual makers, growing out of their early influences, and finding their own distinct styles. Lowndes' work in illustration 54, *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 2* (top left), differs in form from the 'cup-on-base' of the mid-1980s, yet exudes the same bold originality. Alison Britton discusses that work with high regard in the V&A's *Ceramic Points of View* (Ceramics Point of View Britton, internet).

A potter who, unlike Lowndes, had met Rie and Coper while at Camberwell College of Arts, was Ewen Henderson. Henderson's 'coiled stoneware pot' dominates the *Modern Craftwork 1* exhibit (illustration 55). Henderson had studied at Goldsmith's and then Camberwell, graduating in 1968; he then became teacher at Camberwell, starting in 1970. Henderson is remembered with admiration by the iconoclastic generation of studio potters that included Angus Suttie and Sara Radstone (Radstone, 2005). Henderson's work in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection illustrates a bold progression: the Collection contains both his elegant early vessels, reminiscent in their clean and gracious lines of Henderson's teacher Hans Coper, as well as the unapologetically sculptural pieces that he became better known for. These later vessels took irregular, hand-built forms, employing his own technique in

which a patchwork of different types of clay was used.

Henderson's journey from classically-inspired to radical and challenging forms, was by no means an isolated case, but reflects Camberwell ceramic department's own journey; it also echoes the investigations of studio potters beyond Camberwell. Employing Lowndes, Henderson and Auld as a Head, Ceramics at Camberwell entered its 'golden age' which anticipated the 'new ceramics' that flourished from the mid-1970s (Harrod 1999).

Camberwell ceramics from the 1950s to the mid 1970s reveal a tight web found in the centre of the larger educational network where notions of 'value' and 'validity' in the crafts were created.

Studio Pottery in the Public Sphere and the Crafts Market

Out of the three inter-connected networks, which I refer to as 'education', 'studios' and 'public space', 'public space' presents us with the most explicit examples of how fluctuating trends were communicated to wider audiences. One such audience were the pupils who came in contact with the *Design Appreciation Scheme*, though I have referred to the Scheme as occupying 'semi-public' space because it operated within, but not beyond, the schools system.

By the term 'public space' I mean all the occasions when ceramics and criticism on ceramics reached the public: through museums, exhibitions, galleries, shops, auctions, publications and conferences (most significant of this last category was the 1952 International Craft Conference at Dartington Hall). Specialist publications like *The Studio*, were used as platforms for advocating studio ceramics, for instance the article published in 1955, written by Dora Billington (Billington, 1955, pp.18-21). In her article, Billington, reflecting the sensibilities of the Central School of Art, had spoken of a 'New Look' for British pottery, accepting of 'gaiety and decoration', thus placing some distance between this expression of British pottery and the austere designs preached by Bernard Leach.

By the mid 1960s, books as *The Art of the Modern Potter* written by Tony Birks (Birks, 1967) bear testimony to the growing popularity of the crafts and studio ceramics, but they also demonstrate how the schism between tradition and innovation had developed and reflected how the relationship between products and consumers was becoming increasingly

complicated, boosted by a proliferation of products and aesthetic choices.

By the early 1960s both creatives and the public were becoming more aware of overlap between ‘art’ ‘craft’ and ‘design’ and these terms were being appropriated by an ever-increasing variety of stakeholders who promoted conflicting aesthetics. ‘High art’ such as the visual art confined to the art gallery, was also making concessions towards design. As Lawrence Alloway noted in a text written for the catalogue of the seminal exhibition *This Is Tomorrow* of 1956: ‘common to all [exhibitors] is a suspension of the supposed purity of their respective specialisms which enables them to aim at simultaneous mastery of several channels of communication [...] a result of this exhibition is to oppose the specialisation of the arts’ (Alloway, 1956).

MacCarthy notes that by the mid-1960s design transgressions, bordering on ‘vulgarity’, had become normalised and thus gave rise to reactionary trends advocating restraint:

The 1960s was the period in which design in Britain reached its zenith of self-confidence. There was a great deal happening: an increasing public recognition and even, one might say, adulation of designers; a vast expansion in the design profession and also in design education, massively reorganised after the Coldstream Report on Art Education, from 1960 onwards. There was an obvious feeling of the new day dawning and a sudden, reckless, very general enthusiasm, even among the erstwhile caretakers of purism, for the fashionable, ephemeral and zany. British design had never got quite so near vulgarity. Maybe, indeed, the transition proved too rapid, the exuberance too sudden to be easily digested (MacCarthy, 1979, p. 143).

MacCarthy proposes that this aesthetic explosion may have given birth to a culture of sobriety and solemnity, best seen in the crafts. In expressing this opinion, MacCarthy appears to have been looking to one faction of the crafts, comprising of those craftspeople who favoured aesthetic restraint. One such example is the work of David Canter, who popularised his simple thrown stoneware through the whole-food restaurant *Cranks*, first opened in London’s Marshall Street in 1961. Canter’s vision extended beyond stoneware, to encompass a simpler and more authentic lifestyle. Though I have so far not found evidence of Canter’s work in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, I identify him as one of the agents who brought studio pottery to the mainstream. Victor Margie, interviewed by Harrod in the late 1980s,

explains how Canter's holistic vision permeated mainstream culture: 'I think David Canter was very important. I think he was very important in the *Cranks* thing. *M&S* have wholemeal food because of David Canter' (Margrie, 1988).

Canter's aesthetic, as part of his back-to-basics philosophy, was firmly grounded in the Craftsmen Potters Association's (C.P.A.) approach, Canter being one of its founding members. The C.P.A. was first conceived in 1958 'as a co-operative to sell the work of its members and to increase public awareness of contemporary studio pottery.' (CPA Ceramics, internet). The loyal advocacy of the studio potter tradition that characterised the C.P.A. can be seen in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection in the work of Michael Casson, another of the Association's founders. In I.L.E.A.'s *Form in Handmade Clayware 2*, the stoneware pot Casson produced (illustration 61, third shelf from the top, right-hand side) is a functional but also highly skilled and individual object that exemplifies C.P.A. values.

The Association represented a carefully monitored, no-nonsense approach to studio pottery and helped popularise ceramics as an 'authentic' medium. In its endorsement of 'authenticity' the Association aligned its aesthetic with the dominant anthropological, sociological and ethnographical perspectives on taste, which resisted the aesthetic cacophony of pop culture. Pop's 'cacophony' implied that up to that historical moment 'pop' was mostly found in the media of plastics, textiles and print (graphic design), though by the 1970s, another faction of the studio pottery community was applying it to ceramics as well (Britton, 2013). Michael Casson cultivated further interest in studio pottery, when the BBC's *The Craft of the Potter* aired in the Spring of 1976. In the mini-series, Michael Casson, alongside guest potters Mary Rogers and Alan Caiger-Smith who appeared in two episodes (both have work in the Collection), demonstrated throwing as well as other techniques, and thus opened up the world of the studio potter to a wider audience.

The C.P.A.'s showroom was only one of the several craft retail outlets that sprung up in London from the late 1950s and through to the early 1970s. As with the crafts making scene, the retail scene was dynamic and reflected the oscillation between tradition and innovation. What each shop/gallery stocked depended on the date, some being more daring in their embrace of unconventional work, and others, like the above-mentioned C.P.A., more reluctant. As Auld explains to Harrod:

IA: There were very few places that sold studio pottery.

TH: Heal's was a write-off?

IA: No, it wasn't a write-off but it was kinda sleepy. It was a bit sort of dusty and sort of stuffy.

TH: Would they take a slab pot for instance?

IA: Yes, I think so, but I mean, it depends what date (Auld, 1988).

Through examination of I.L.E.A.'s report cards, we know that Heal's, Primavera and The Crafts Centre were the sources of most of the studio pottery objects acquired by I.L.E.A. The Crafts Centre had been set up right after WWII, 'to be a commercially viable business, receiving official approval from the Board of Trade with the practical financial support of a capital grant of £18,000 and an annual award of £3,000' (Cooper, 2012, p. 167). The Crafts Centre was not only a selling outlet but its status meant that it could influence the rest of the market and inject cultural capital to a maker's status within the crafts. Buying from upmarket galleries, was, for the I.L.E.A., hand in parcel with the strategy of acquiring 'the best'. Additionally, it ensured that the Collection reflected sophisticated taste and that the artefacts had already achieved recognition among market connoisseurs, a filter that possibly strengthened confidence in the acquisition, especially of those works that crossed aesthetic boundaries.

It was inevitable that in the microcosm of studio crafts, a handful of individual patrons had the power to influence trends and impact on the reputation of potters. Henry Rothschild was one such individual, and he helped launch the career of many a studio potter. Rothschild had established himself as a gallery owner since 1945 and he secured works by Bernard Leach. As an early gallery owner Rothschild had a head-start in building personal relationships with important makers, anticipating, but also greatly contributing to, the flourishing of studio crafts during the 1950s. In his enthusiastic patronage of the crafts, Rothschild followed the footprints of another pioneer gallery owner, Muriel Rose, whose pre-war Little Gallery had favoured 'an eclectic co-existence of handicraft and design objects from home and abroad' (Harrod in Greg, 1995, p.9). Where Rothschild differed however, was in his 'horror of nostalgia' (Harrod in Greg, 1995, p. 10). Oral history reveals that despite his early admiration of Leach 'in the early days, Henry Rothschild was enamoured with Bernard Leach' says Ian Auld (Auld, 1988), Rothschild's Primavera developed into a haven for experimental studio potters. One such case was Dan Arbeid. Cooper suggests that Rothschild gave a significant

boost to Dan Arbeid's early career by organising for him a solo show at Primavera :

The usually staid Pottery Quarterly described his work as a "real breakthrough", writing admiringly of the coiled forms. These included a coiled vase form made from textured clay - the shape seeming to grow and expand. A further exhibition in 1963 included thrown pots as well as slabbed and coiled forms. Pottery Quarterly said they were all "impressive" (Cooper, 2010).

Apart from domestic production, the market was being expanded with imports of 'ethnic crafts', meaning objects from around the world which were produced according to traditional methods, using local materials. One such establishment was Ian Auld's shop, which he opened in 1969, inside Camden Passage, in London's Islington. The network of individuals and institutions that developed around Auld's life and career, is representative of the tightly-knit world of post-war British studio pottery.

Auld was not only a potter and merchant of ceramics, he was also a collector of African artefacts, and he had travelled extensively in Asia and Africa researching the material culture of other nations. He had studied at the Institute of Education alongside William Newland and as a teacher he set up a pottery department in Baghdad, in the mid-1950s. In England he was a technician at the Central School of Arts, later a teacher at Bristol Polytechnic and the Bath Academy; he shared a studio with, and later married ceramicist Gillian Lowndes, whom I have considered as one of the makers who are represented in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection (see for example, her 'ceramic wall plaque and stoneware bowl' in *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 1*, appendix 6). Auld eventually became head of Ceramics at Camberwell College of Arts in 1974. *The Guardian's* obituary (anonymous but possibly penned by Emanuel Cooper) describes how Auld's involvement with Camberwell College of Arts coincided with the 'golden age' of its Ceramics Department. In his capacity as Head, he

swiftly broadened the interests of a department best known for its concentration on clay bodies. Inspired by the ethos at Bath Academy, he invited (and retained) the best practising ceramicists to teach at Camberwell on a part-time basis. The quality of students who graduated during this period - including Henry Pim, Sara Radstone, Sarah Scampton, Julian Stair and the late Angus Suttie - testify to this golden age (Anonymous, 2010).

Indeed Sara Radstone remembers having been taught by Ian Auld and Gillian Lowndes though she was mostly attracted to Ewen Henderson and Gordon Baldwin's work 'that was roughly based on the vessel but sculptural' (Radstone, 2005). By the time of Auld's appointment, ceramics at Camberwell College of Arts had broken away from the Leachean canon that had informed teaching during the 1950s. While Auld had witnessed at Camberwell 'all this sort of Leach tradition of clay bodies and things, while the Central had no clay bodies at all' (Auld, 1988), by the early 1970s, diverse interpretations of studio pottery were being practiced at Camberwell. As Auld's 'slab sculptural form with sgraffito decoration' seen at the bottom right of illustration 64 (*Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 1*) demonstrates, the preference for building rather than throwing, offered alternative views of what constituted good design in ceramics;³⁸

Due to the shift in the field's aesthetic sensibility, the crafts component made the good design agenda that I.L.E.A. had initially inherited from the L.C.C. more problematic. New forms and practices were being assimilated and I.L.E.A. had to rely on retailers like Rothschild in order to ascertain what was 'good'. Considering reciprocities within the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, I note that on the one hand there are a number of displays that resist eclecticism and adhere to a clear-cut modernism; a representative example is *Pottery Thrown by Hand* (illustration 52). Items included in *Pottery Thrown by Hand* exude a discernible austere mood, though more than a reaction to vulgarity, *Pottery Thrown by Hand* appears untroubled by contemporary trends as it occupies a timeless space, that of the ancient and constant tradition of throwing. Indeed sobriety and solemnity was to be found in some of the crafts of the mid 1960s, but on the other hand so was the 'vulgarity' and 'exuberance' MacCarthy spoke of (MacCarthy, 1979, p. 143).

In the *I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection*, the mixed messages of British studio pottery are revealed when we consider *Pottery Thrown by Hand* alongside the more eclectic groupings of studio ceramics I have already mentioned, like *Individual Ceramics by Arts Craftsmen* and

³⁸ Meanwhile it's worth noting that alongside his innovative contribution to *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*, Auld could hold conservative ideas regarding authenticity and tradition. Harrod notes that when Auld and Gillian Lowndes visited Michael Cardew in the Training Centre he had set up in Nigeria, they were disapproving of the work 'as being a translation of tradition and not African' (Harrod, 2013, p. 279).

Form in Handmade Clayware 1 and 2 (illustrations 54, 60, 61).

Confronted with these aesthetic schisms, I.L.E.A. once more found recourse to language in order to explain to pupils and their teachers why these remained ‘good designs’. *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 1 and 2*, are appropriated by I.L.E.A. as good design, through captions which provide interpretations that place these works outside the parameters of functionality and which argue for a broader understanding of the modernist aesthetic.

In *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 2*, one excerpt argues that :

THE CRAFTS ARE CHANGING IN NATURE. Today, the frontiers between the visual arts are dissolving; modern sculpture and painting now overlap and the barriers are going down between the artistic crafts and the so-called fine arts. MANY MODERN ARTISTS IN CERAMICS ARE MOVING AWAY FROM ‘POTS’ TOWARDS SCULPTURAL FORM; THIS IS ILLUSTRATED BY SOME OF THE EXAMPLES IN THIS EXHIBITION (*Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 2* [original capitalisation]).

Increased reliance on interpretative texts enabled I.L.E.A. to navigate the treacherous aesthetics of the 1960s and to canonise them as ‘good design’. In these texts I.L.E.A. concedes that ‘the frontiers are dissolving’ (*Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 2*) and that the time has passed when craftsmen ‘were primarily interested in trying to make a thing of beauty and they used their skills towards this end alone’ (*Modern Craftwork 2*). In contrast, now their work was of importance not because it was a ‘thing of beauty’ but because “each item is ‘individual’ and can enrich our lives by keeping things in some sort of balance against the uniformity of the machine” (*Modern Craftwork 2*). Through such approaches that reduced the aesthetic argument about the object to the handmade and unique versus the mass produced, I.L.E.A. repackages the rhetoric of ‘good design’ by distancing it from the machine, thus constructing alternative narratives of modernity in design - narratives that could accommodate the crafts and their individuality.

This revised modernism, away from the machine had been evident in studio pottery. I have shown that it was already present in the writings of Bernard Leach, who was, in many respects a pivotal moderniser of the craft (Leach, 1962): Michael Cardew for example

identified Leach's *A Potter's Book* as the work of 'a real pioneer, breaking new ground so that others could follow without losing confidence' (Cardew, 1988, p.xv). Leach had argued for the significance of individual expression and despite the aesthetic deviations favoured by other potters, Leach's approach was a fundamentally modernist proposition as later commentators have shown (Houston, 1988).

Studio pottery's positioning within the project of modernity was validated by its claim of universality and timelessness, and is echoed in other influential texts that approach the primitive as modern (Foster, 1985). This ethos is reflected in such items as Standard Ware from the Leach Pottery. In the Leachian rhetoric, pots made by throwing on the wheel were superior because they embodied a skill seen to represent the integrity of universal standards, developed throughout the history of human civilisation (Leach, 1962).

While product design had equated the modern with the machine, in studio pottery we see an alternative but equally resonant modernity, aligning the modern with the primitive. This discussion ran in parallel to the established link between the primitive and modernism in the visual arts. Hal Foster's *The Primitive Unconscious of Modern Art* for instance, examines how dominant culture had codified non-Western imagery since the early 20th century and how this codification was demonstrable through modernism in the visual arts (Foster, 1985). As I have shown, a similar codification was being advanced by studio pottery.

I.L.E.A. as a Collector

In a discussion of public space, it is curious to omit analysis of public reception. I have already discussed in the thesis that there is precious little documentation of how the objects were received within the *Design Appreciation Scheme* (see chapter 1). While topics such as retailers, exhibitions and auctions can be researched in order to unveil public reception of these or similar artefacts made by the same makers, it should be emphasised that such an investigation would reflect market forces that did not apply to the I.L.E.A. scheme. That's despite the fact that the market and its cultural agents, not only bore direct influence on projects like the *Design Appreciation Scheme*, (by providing a network of suppliers) but were in fact influenced by the scheme in return, since I.L.E.A. was supporting suppliers with local government funds. However, this was a reciprocity that took place outside the norms of the market.

Therefore I.L.E.A., as well as the other regional school authorities which ran similar projects, e.g. Leicester and Bristol, played an unorthodox role: on the one hand they greatly supported the studio crafts market with a commitment to steady purchases. On the other hand, L.E.A.s did not have a candid relationship to this market, did not exhibit to the general public, and did not, as a rule, make their collections available beyond educational audiences. Thus the virtuous cycle of I.L.E.A., supporting the crafts through financing the market as well as through crafts education, was not made explicit. I.L.E.A.'s vital patronage was obfuscated by the educational system that engendered it. In contrast, other institutional stakeholders in this field, higher-profile collectors such as the V&A Museum for example, staged memorable exhibitions that promoted their patronage, e.g. the pivotal Collingwood/Coper exhibition of 1969 (Collingwood/Coper, 1969).

Despite the focus being on education, later criticism, as expressed for instance in the parliamentary debates discussed on pages 114-120 of this thesis, validates the impression that for some time during the 1960s, the L.C.C. and I.L.E.A. were spending in a manner that suggests a lack of accountability - though such accusations in the context of parliament debates often serve sensationalist political purposes (HANSARD, 1981 and 1988). More than a short-coming of I.L.E.A.'s, the lack of detailed evaluation regarding the effects of travelling collections, indicates a time when less emphasis was being placed on measurable results in education. I mention this as an indication of the contrast of the historical to the present situation, where evaluation is a vital component of similar projects, especially where public funds are involved. Lack of evaluation in the form of the users' feedback or other audits that would measure the scheme's impact on its intended audience was also absent from other L.E.A.s involved in similar projects at the time. However, the case of I.L.E.A. stood out because it was a symbolically significant authority, managing a big budget; indeed the country's most significant, being the largest and serving as it was, the capital city.

In addition, I.L.E.A. prided itself on being amongst the country's most liberal authorities. It was committed to supporting progressive education through use of high-quality, high-cost equipment and materials - this mentality extended to most of I.L.E.A.'s services. A notable example was its film and television service, which produced educational films in-house and, from 1977, transmitted live broadcasts to Schools over a special I.L.E.A. channel (London Metropolitan Archives, I.L.E.A. film collection). I have already shown in Chapter 3 in

section “An Examination of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a ‘Socialist’ Project”, how divisive I.L.E.A.’s policies were to become. Acquiring ‘only the best’, eventually contributed to unsustainable spending and led to the Authority’s demise, but this strategy’s legacy survives in the material culture I.L.E.A. left behind, not least in the exceptional examples of studio ceramics I am discussing here.

The selection of works from *Pottery Thrown by Hand*, *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*, *Modern Craftwork* and *Form in Handmade Clayware*, allows me to draw parallels between the actions of the Authority and that of the private collector, who practices his or her own personal taste, expertise, and on occasion, whim. Boundaries between private and public collecting were not always clear-cut in studio ceramics: one of studio craft’s most ardent advocates, George Wingfield Digby, was Keeper in the Textiles department at the Victoria and Albert Museum but was, at the same time, a private collector of studio crafts and personal friends with Bernard Leach, Michael Cardew and other inter-war potters (Birks, 1992).

Not enough is known about Dennis Stevens, I.L.E.A.’s Art Inspector, to ascertain whether he had a comparable input in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, though his ‘magpie’ collecting brings to mind another civil servant pottery collector, Bill Ismay (Leach, 1993). Stevens’ reliance on gallerists betray his active personal involvement and his networking with suppliers. As in the world of private collectors, the input of a handful of knowledgeable dealers was held in high regard and in the case of I.L.E.A. the most reliable appears to have been Henry Rothschild and his *Primavera* gallery on London’s Sloane Street. However, it should be kept in mind that I.L.E.A. differed from the collector in as far as it functioned in a relative value vacuum where notions of ‘investing’ in craft and their associated risks and rewards were rendered irrelevant.

Summary - Studio Pottery’s Interpretation of ‘Good Design’

The investigation of studio pottery in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection offers an expanded understanding of ‘good design’ – I have shown that some of the studio pottery in the Collection appears to stretch the term to a tenuous application. The story of post-war British studio ceramics is the story of a search for an identity: an identity that would be defined through endorsement or rejection of a set of received wisdom and dominant values; an

identity that was constructed singularly, pertaining to the individual, or collectively, pertaining to groups that met through alliances forged in common educational and market spaces. Bourdieu has commented on how codification of human activity not only describes, but actively constructs hierarchies. Indeed he used the very example of ‘the potters who call themselves “art craftsmen” to create ‘distinctive gaps’ and ‘advantages’ in the struggle of positioning ‘in the classifications that produce the classes’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 481). This illuminates the search for an identity that could claim for the maker a rightful position in the world of material culture, that would open up the debate about what craft stood for, that would cultivate self-determination for the maker and enable him or her to partake in dominant culture by positioning their work as they wished, be it as ‘art’, ‘craft’ or ‘design’.

The degree to which this emancipation of the maker has been successful is an issue of debate. I have shown how certain allegiances to sculptural forms, deliberately obscured great technical skill thus denying the work one of the wholemarks of craftsmanship: command of its basic technique. I have referred to Dan Arbeid, Ian Auld, Ewen Henderson and Ruth Duckworth as examples of that post-war generation who had mastered throwing before rejecting it for other forms of expression. Katherine Pleydell-Bouverie, another potter represented in the Collection, produced work that was admired for its simplicity, but she was at the same time knowledgeable in the chemistry of pottery, and it was her dedication to the unique object that, as Jones notes that ‘confirmed the status of the chemist potter as artist [his emphasis] rather than as scientist and, similarly, confirmed her status as artist rather than designer.’ (Jones, 2007, p.18).

While a number of makers (e.g. Ian Auld, Ewen Henderson, Dan Arbeid, Gordon Baldwin) consciously distanced themselves from the world of industrial design and mass production, economic conditions post-WWII pose the question whether for some other makers mass production was an unfulfilled ideal (notably David Leach). The schism that developed between those studio potters who could command high prices on the one hand, and mass produced pottery on the other, could be interpreted as an externally imposed pressure to align one’s production with fine art, with sculpture and the gallery system because it became clearer that competing with factory production of everyday wares was unviable. The dilemmas faced by the Leach Pottery in the 1950s and 1960s echo such concerns (Leach, 1993).

Unequivocally, the innovatory movement that has been labelled ‘new ceramics’ suggests a tangible strengthening of the maker’s voice which may be directly attributed to the developments of the 1950s and 1960s (Britton, 2013). Long-term success however is hard to discern, especially since the recent decline of ceramics suggests that the practice is being pushed back to the margin (Partington, 2010). With regards to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, I have shown how studio crafts of the 1960s contributed to the corrosion of the message of ‘good design’ as a message aligned with functionalist modernism. Displays from the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection give insights into how ground-breaking approaches to ceramics were appropriated by the project of ‘good design’ and how they stretched the meaning of ‘good design’ to a degree that diluted its advocacy.

As more unconventional craft objects entered the Collection (evident in displays such as those in the two cases titled *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen* – illustrations 9 and 10), lengthier interpretative texts appeared on I.L.E.A.’s side panels, indicating the necessity to extend the boundaries of ‘good design’ through the interpretative medium of language. I have shown how this language was occasionally openly critical of the exhibits and in some instances displays appeared to clash with the panel texts’ message. In its attempt to accommodate alternative narratives of modernity, I.L.E.A. was validating the content of the Collection as reflexive to the changing social and cultural contexts. Acknowledgment of these changing contexts, particularly by the acquisition of studio pottery, meant that I.L.E.A. was unwittingly dismantling the didactic apparatus it had inherited from the L.C.C. and the C.O.I.D., the same apparatus through which the message of ‘good design’ had been delivered in the previous decades. At the same time, it was re-positioning itself as a collector and promoter of studio craft. Therefore the identity of post-war British studio craft was being sustained through I.L.E.A.’s support.

CHAPTER 5

Handling As A Learning Modality

Re-introducing the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a Handling Resource

This chapter will investigate handling as a learning modality which can redress existing hierarchies in environments where learning with objects takes place, especially the School, the Museum and the University. I will show how the dominant model of vision-and-text-based learning has developed and I will examine how handling challenges this orthodoxy. I will further expand on handling, as a practice and theory in its wider philosophical and educational contexts, and as a practical educational strategy applicable to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection.

In order to address materiality, I have chosen the word ‘handling’ in preference to other terms (‘touch’, ‘tactile’, ‘haptic’) for two reasons: firstly because I want it to be inclusive of the action of holding, which ‘touch’ does not imply necessarily. Secondly, because this is the established term in the context of collections used in museums. However, as most writing on the subject refers to ‘touch’ rather than ‘handling’ (see for example, Chatterjee, 2008), ‘touch’ is also enlisted as a catch-all term. In previous chapters of this thesis I have identified the three principles that comprised the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection’s distinct educational identity: firstly, the commitment to selection of objects of ‘good design’; secondly, the commitment to circulation for educational purposes; thirdly ‘handling’ as a permissible practice. The I.L.E.A. scheme had been conceived as a ‘handling’ collection since its first displays. This is evidenced by early pictures such as in illustration 1, and supported by later displays. In the instance of *Materials and Design 2* the commentary urges students to consider how the designer has taken into account the form of the material, the object’s purpose but also whether it is ‘pleasant to handle’ (illustration 65). The historic stipulation for handling has informed my argument that, now, due to its function as a handling resource using museum-grade objects, the Collection offers a privileged approach to learning and can claim a distinct place in the history of education.

Theories of touch and handling concern all educational ages and levels - though for reasons relating to the development of language, the main focus of the discourse on handling has been early learning (e.g. Piaget, 1952). Secondary and tertiary education however form a field where theories of 'learning through objects' may yield useful information, especially since many schools and colleges in England have material culture collections used by educators. Examples in and near London besides the UAL include the numerous collections of University College London, the Royal College of Art's Collection, Arts University Bournemouth's Museum of Design in Plastics, and Middlesex University's Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture.

One way of utilising these Collections is to give opportunities for educational interactions in response to decreasing provision of studio (elsewhere called 'workshop') courses. Speaking of the U.S. experience, Michael Crawford explains why, during the 1990s, workshops shut down in many U.S. schools, more often than not to make way for computer labs. 'The workshops were good candidates for curtailment because they were expensive and potentially dangerous' (Crawford, 2009, p. 11). A similar story of cutting funds often concealed in arguments about health and safety, can be told of the British experience regarding rapidly disappearing workshops and studio space both in secondary and tertiary education (see for example Partington's discussion on ceramics in tertiary education - Partington, 2010).

During the course of my research I have become involved with projects which have utilised the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a teaching and handling resource and have looked at the University of the Arts London [UAL] as a field for active research. An account of these projects aims to locate my practice as researcher, educator and design historian and to examine existing conditions for the use of a small range of objects from the Collection. In May of 2012 I co-curated the *prospectus* exhibition at the Triangle Space of the Chelsea College of Arts, one of the University of the Arts' constituent colleges (illustration 66). *Prospectus* offered a case-study of an institution using its own resources to critically examine its practices (University of the Arts London, 2012).

It was the first time after several years that any of the approximately 10,000 objects from the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection had been exhibited and nearly two decades since the Collection was first exhibited as part of Camberwell College of Arts, in *The Object Lesson* show of 1996 (Pavitt, 1996). The scope of *prospectus* was 'to trace the history of radical

exhibitions' (University of the Arts London, 2012) within art and design education, but it was also a learning experiment since it required curators to approach exhibition-making as critical practice and as a learning device for both the contributors and the visitors. The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection fit in *prospectus's* agenda because the Collection had been conceived as an experiment in training the public's taste, through the practice of installing exhibitions of material culture in secondary schools. *Prospectus* provided a space for experimental/experiential learning; its public programme, included life drawing classes and an object-handling session, which I conducted together with Dr Linda Sandino and Camberwell College of Arts conservator David Garnett. The session invited the public to discuss their relationship with objects and to investigate how objects reflect and foster notions of 'good' or 'bad' taste.

I have also pursued handling as a learning method in the following instances: advising on handling activities in connection to the exhibition *Everyday Design* at the *Langley Academy*, a secondary school in Berkshire (March 2012); leading handling seminars during *Thingness - the Collection* exhibition April-May 2013; conducting handling sessions for the *Perception and Interpretation* project undertaken by undergraduate Photography students at Camberwell College of Arts (November 2013); assembling a handling and teaching resource for the V&A Museum's Learning Department (2012-ongoing); planning and conducting handling seminars for the *MA in Curating and Collections* post-graduate course at Chelsea College of Arts (2013-2014).³⁹

The audience for these handling activities varied; audiences included the general public (gallery visitors), design students, photography students, student curators, museum curators and educators (as in the case of the Victoria and Albert Museum) and students in secondary education (Langley Academy). One characteristic activity, undertaken as part of my involvement in the MA Curating and Collections offered by Chelsea College of Arts, revolved around the investigation of obtaining knowledge from the object beyond visual approaches (appendix 12).

³⁹ For a more detailed list of research activities involving the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection see Appendix 11

I focus on the example of this teaching because it offered the opportunity to utilise handling of the Collection as a means of knowledge scaffolding which was made possible in the duration of a two-hour session, thus proving how such activities may be accommodated within the art and design education curriculum. The activity was conducted into two parts, the first part allowing students to visually observe a chosen object from the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection; the second part asked of students to handle the object and fill in a worksheet analysing information regarding physical features such as texture, weight, marks and labels, condition (appendix 12). I then asked of students to infer information regarding what making processes, production techniques and tools might have been involved. Finally students were asked to give interpretations regarding end use and to speculate on the profile of the consumer/user of the object. This detailed analysis was then drawn upon to create a label.

The point of this activity was to instil in students the confidence to derive information from handling and to find out how information from handling extends what we can know through vision alone. My planning anticipated that knowledge from the activity would merge with the individual's prior learning and prior experience in order to produce new knowledge, therefore rendering the handling activity a 'scaffold' for learning. It was also an opportunity to see how far this knowledge could be taken without recourse to researching additional sources - now usually the internet.

The outcome of the task, a short hypothetical label (appendix 12), brought together the information elicited from the observational and handling investigations. There was no requirement for formal assessment, however I applied formative methods of assessment by encouraging discussion during the activity and by encouraging reflection on the part of the students, focusing on how handling had enhanced their engagement with the object. Oral feedback confirmed that students felt the activity fulfilled their expectations of developing curatorial knowledge, for example by making them consider the basics of condition assessment, by improving their ability to distinguish materials and techniques, by expanding their understanding of specific mechanisms and technologies, and by informing their theoretical and critical ideas on mid-century design. I have analysed this lesson because it provides a transferable model of how the Collection can be utilised as a handling resource.

Examining Linguistic and Visual Dominance in Criticism

Handling activities put into practice theories of tactility. In order to appreciate handling's educational affordances I investigated such theories and considered them as extensions to vision and text. Susan Stewart in her 'Prologue from the Museum of Touch' (Stewart in Aynsley, Kwint, Breward, 1999, pp. 17-36) reviews philosophers and thinkers who have grappled with the problem of the body and its senses, from Aristotle, Pliny, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, to Freud and Merleau-Ponty. Philosophy's usefulness in my research is that it provides the crucial vehicle of language that does not simply accommodate, but actively pursues an analysis of the relationship between material culture and the body, examining the human subject in its ontological totality. Specific works in phenomenology treat the skin and its sense of touch as the modality which allows for the all-important connection between the inside and the outside, the immaterial with the material.

Handling and holding with great intentionality and precision is a human trait: Richard Sennett has drawn from anthropologist Mary Marzke (Marzke, 1986), who has analysed 'grip' as a distinctive human facility:

First we can pinch small objects between the tip of the thumb and the side of the index finger. Second, we can cradle an object in the palm and then move it around with pushing and massaging actions between thumb and fingers...third is the cupping grip – as when an object is held by the rounded hand [...]The cupping grip allows us to hold an object securely in one hand while we work on it with the other hand.
(Sennett, 2008, p.151)

In my research 'handling' became a critical methodology, which supplements occularcentric, or vision-based methodologies. If I were to attempt the description of the core philosophical/sociological theme intrinsic to a theory of 'handling' in one sentence, this theme would be the subjective-objective duality of the individual and the world that surrounds him/her. Considering critical and theoretical frameworks that would support my research, I returned to the work of Pierre Bourdieu as a highly influential voice in the visual arts, design history and material culture. Though in sociological discourse Bourdieu is considered a structuralist (Grenfell, 2008), I recognise in Bourdieu an interest to react against

structuralism's reduction of the individual to a mere support of the structure. 'I wanted to demonstrate the active, inventive and creative capacities of the habitus and the agent,' he declares in *The Rules of Art* (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 179). 'The world cannot be reduced to phenomenology or social physics; both must be employed in order to constitute an authentic 'theory of practice'. (Grenfell, 2008, p. 43) Bourdieu's theory of practice advances structuralism and accounts for what he saw as an ontological complicity between objective structures and internalised structures.

In addition to his ground-breaking discourses on cultural fields, Bourdieu was also deemed appropriate for my research because his seminal study of class and taste *Distinction* (Bourdieu, 1984), was undertaken at the time of the I.L.E.A. Collection's circulation -though his focus had been France: 'The analyses presented in this book are based on a survey by questionnaire carried out in 1963 and 1967-68, on a sample of 1,217 people.' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.5). The historical overlap may allow for parallel discourses between the cultural and educational fields in France and the U.K. Nonetheless, my intention is to approach Bourdieu's method of analysis as a limiting model for research in material culture and I will address it with the objective of identifying, questioning and finally expanding its possibilities.

Apart from *Distinction* I have also drawn from Bourdieu's following works: his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Bourdieu, 1977) where he laid the foundations for his radical sociological approach and introduced much of his working terminology; *The Love of Art* (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1999) where together with Alain Darbel they undertook a study of museums and their audience in collaboration with colleagues from other European countries; and *The Rules of Art* (Bourdieu, 1996) where he expanded on the cultural field through analysis of primarily literary case studies.

The Bourdieusian paradigm exemplifies the two main modalities upon which art history and criticism have developed: language and vision. In the I.L.E.A Scheme the preference for these modalities are made manifest by the amount of text that supports the exhibits (see for example illustrations 52-66). As I have shown in Chapter 1, design history and material culture studies have drawn from dominant art historical theories yet I will argue that models such as Bourdieu's give reason for design historical investigations to pursue differentiation from art history and expansion of its theories. Not least because Bourdieu's insistence on the

visual, traps the method within the remit of pictorial art and its implication of the autonomous art object, a discourse largely irrelevant and inapplicable to mass production.

In keeping with Bourdieu's own methods it is revealing to comment on this thinker's own *habitus*, 'understood as a system of lasting, transposable dispositions which, integrating past experiences, functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 82), and to consider it in Bourdieu's own terms as a system that 'all products of the same structures' share (Bourdieu, 1977, p.85). Bourdieu himself has called for the 'reflexive researcher' and has investigated his *habitus* of the intellectual field in *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu, 1988). Philosophy, literature and language studies are deeply embedded in French education. As a product of mid-century French academia it is no surprise that Pierre Bourdieu's theories find recourse to Greek and Latin as philosophical languages.⁴⁰ In Bourdieu, classical philosophy has greatly been enriched with contributions from the whole history of ideas: Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Erwin Panofsky, Claude Levi-Strauss, Noam Chomsky, Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault and others, provide a complex set of references.

The point of discussing Bourdieu's own *habitus* is to illuminate the deeply rooted reliance on language that characterised his but also much of mid- and late - 20th century academic writing in Western culture. It is this taken-for-granted linguistic predominance that permits Bourdieu to write *Distinction*, a sociological treatise on taste, making little concession to the five senses⁴¹, giving emphasis on vision, though vision itself is clearly subordinate and reliant on language:

⁴⁰ Michel Foucault and other French contemporaries also use their familiarity with the classical languages in their work. Indeed Greek and Latin are still taught as a compulsory part of the humanities stream (*série littéraire*) in the French *lycée*. Therefore much of Bourdieu's own theory evolved from Greek and Latin terms, as these have been presented in the handful of philosophical texts that contained them. To keep with the example of '*habitus*' Bourdieu acknowledges that his *habitus* owes much to the Aristotelian *hexis*, to denote 'a disposition towards'. (Parenthetically in modern Greek the word *hexis* has evolved from 'habit' to mean 'dependence' often used in connection to addiction; later transmutations are of no concern to Bourdieu who uses these terms as particles of dead languages - crystalised within the ancient sources, in this instance Aristoteles' *Nicomachean Ethics*.)

⁴¹ Bourdieu does however make extensive reference to taste and its dual significance as both aesthetic criterion and physical sense. He goes on to say that the alignment of vulgar aesthetic taste with the working class is also reflected in their taste for food that is filling rather than refined (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 79-80).

one can say that the capacity to see ('voir') is a function of the knowledge ('savoir') or concepts, that is, the words, that are available to name visible things, and which are, as it were, programmes for perception (Bourdieu, 1984, p. xxv of introduction).

It is therefore not surprising that research for *Distinction* was conducted through the dissemination of questionnaires and pictures, as well as observation of respondents in their homes. In analysing the findings, Bourdieu recognizes that 'one of the difficulties of sociological rhetoric lies in the fact that, like all language, it unfolds in strictly linear fashion' (Bourdieu, 1984, p.120).

One of *Distinction's* objectives was to investigate the degree of 'aesthetic disposition' in respondents, i.e. the aptitude for perceiving and deciphering specifically stylistic characteristics (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 42-43). On the abstracted level of symbolic language, Bourdieu can argue that the use of analogy re-enforces the aesthetic disposition: 'Chateau Margaux wine can be described with the same words as are used to describe the chateau: ..noble, austere, even a little solemn....' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 46). Yet it is only through the distance imposed by language, through intentional disembodiment, that the transference can take place from a sense experience like wine tasting to the social encoding of the wine maker. It is Bourdieu's 'socially informed body' the body that either explicitly, or more often implicitly, recognises 'the objective structures of a determinate state of the social world' (Bourdieu, 1977, p.124) that can name a wine 'noble, austere, even a little solemn.' This 'socially informed body' belongs to a paradigm where the traditional five senses are only a small part of the spectrum of ways through which we connect to the world. This paradigm ignores any distinct qualities that would allow the five senses to claim primacy over other 'senses' arbitrarily drafted by Bourdieu, and which include among others: necessity, duty, direction, balance, common sense, responsibility, business, propriety, humour, moral sense (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 124).

As a postscript to *Distinction*, Bourdieu acknowledges the Western canon's long reliance on the visual, and pursues "a 'vulgar' critique of 'pure' critiques", using Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, [Kant, 1790] to assess ideas relating to 'pure' and 'impure' taste (Kant in turn had referred to Plato's aesthetic theory). The 'facile' taste of the tongue and the body are juxtaposed to the 'noble' senses of vision and hearing. It is not merely by vision that the work of art is to be enjoyed but a specific implementation of vision, one accomplishing

the ‘pure gaze’ of Kantian disinterestedness. The ‘pure gaze’ recognizes and re-enforces the autonomy of the work of art and its engendering systems. Thus the ‘whole language of aesthetics is contained in a fundamental refusal of the *facile*, in all the meanings which bourgeois ethics and aesthetics give to the word’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 488). In Kant, Bourdieu identifies ‘the progress from nature to culture’, and the evolution of social hierarchies that were ultimately made manifest in *Distinction*. An analysis of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection based on handling would involve re-habituating the sense of touch and would require a re-thinking of the established societal hierarchies of the ‘noble’ and the ‘base’ senses. Bourdieu’s observation that ‘the object which insists on being enjoyed [...] in flesh and blood [...] annihilates the distancing power of representation’ (Bourdieu, 1984, p.491) discloses how other senses may problematise a model of criticism that has been built on language and vision and suggests but hints at an approach suitable to handling manmade objects.

Notwithstanding the fact that Bourdieu’s armoury for criticism comprises of linguistic and visual tools, he has provided a useful critique of dominant art historical paradigms, investigating art as an autonomous field and testing the boundaries of this concept within sociological discourse. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* he described the art world as

a sacred island systematically and ostentatiously opposed to the profane, everyday world of production, a sanctuary for gratuitous, disinterested activity in a universe given over to money and self-interest, offers, like theology in a past epoch, an imaginary anthropology obtained by denial of all the negations really brought about by the economy (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 197).

Applying this idea on the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection would need to take into account that design, explicitly rooted in the economy, cannot be framed as ‘a sacred island’; however, sub-categories within the Collection, and especially examples of studio crafts, attempted to fulfill the agenda of the ‘denial of all negations really brought about by the economy’ by attempting alignment to the idea of opposing ‘to the profane, everyday world of production’ (Bourdieu 1977, p.197). This exposition of craft as a dubiously ‘disinterested field’ reflects *Distinction*’s closing statement and it hints to later criticism, especially in *The Rules of Art* (Bourdieu, 1996) where Bourdieu undermined the Kantian disinterested gaze by showing that the ‘pure gaze’ is always socially prescribed:

[The disinterested gaze] assumed totally particular historical and social conditions of possibility since aesthetic pleasure - this pure pleasure 'which ought to be able to be felt by any man' is the privilege of those who have access to the economic and social conditions which allow the 'pure' and 'disinterested' disposition to be durably established (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 314).

The applicability of Bourdieu's criticism relates to the Collection in as far as it exposes the elitist aspect of collecting 'the best'; this is evidenced by I.L.E.A.'s preference to shop at high-end design retailers and to acquire large numbers of studio craft items at a time when (some) makers claimed to resist economic imperatives.⁴² However, as Bourdieu has argued, the makers' pure aesthetic disposition was sustained due to the willingness of collectors such as I.L.E.A. to buy its end product. Therefore, while Bourdieu allows for the 'pure aesthetic disposition', he underlines that this is bound to a field of production, autonomous only in the sense that it 'provides itself with its own market [...] and asserts the absolute primacy of form over function' (Bourdieu, 1996, pp. 287-288). Bourdieu cites Erwin Panofsky as the instigator of an art historical tradition where the aesthetic intention makes the aesthetic object. With his work *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Panofsky, 1955) Panofsky established the determining gaze of the 'expert' as the arbiter of the moment when a 'worked-on object' became 'a work of art', thus asserting the tenacity of visual and linguistic interpretation as methods of recognising artworks.

During the post-war period, one influential critic also commenting on the relationship of the aesthetic and the social, of the avant-garde and kitsch, was Clement Greenberg, in *Art and Culture* (Greenberg, 1989 [1961]). In her biography of Greenberg, tellingly entitled *Eyesight Alone*, Caroline Jones identified how Greenberg's writing epitomised in the United States 'the visibility in modernism' which could be described as 'the aesthetic protocols required by a specific abstract paint - what may and may not be seen there according to an art world expert.' (Jones, 2005, p. xvii).

⁴² The view of the craftsman as artist who works outside social and economic constraints is inferred by comments such as Gordon Baldwin's, reflecting on his time as member of the Craft Council's committees, : 'some of it was almost pretence because I always felt myself to be an artist...arrogantly' (Baldwin, 2004).

Caroline Jones further argues that “Greenberg’s and others’ statements meshed with ‘regimes of visibility’ to construct admissible and inadmissible sites for saying and seeing, thus establishing ‘the rules of mid-century visibility’” (Jones, 2005, pp. 310-311). Jones summarises Greenberg’s ‘rules of visibility’ as:

1. Painting evolves in one direction ...artists must go forward or fail. 2. The evolution toward abstraction and away from representation is inexorable 3. Abstraction and representation are incommensurate, constituting the diachronic poles of this evolutionary trajectory. A painting cannot be fully abstract and convincingly representational; the modes of seeing are too different requiring different ‘focus’ for the eye (Jones, 2005, p. 312).

A rudimentary knowledge of twentieth century art history is enough to understand how Greenberg’s assertions relate to movements such as abstract expressionism; yet there is no hint in the above statement of the intense physicality that the production of, for example, Jackson Pollock’s abstract expressionism entailed, neither is there any acknowledgement of the fact that the 1950s and 1960s also saw the flourishing of performance art and other modes of artistic expression which expanded beyond vision and involved the whole body, movements which were to prove hugely inspirational to later generations of artists. Instead Greenberg reiterated in 1958 that ‘the human body is no longer postulated as an agent of space in either pictorial or sculptural art [...] now it is eyesight alone’ (Jones, 2005, p. xxvii).

Greenberg’s modernism drew exclusively from the fine arts. Recent writing however has demonstrated that modern art has not been as self-referential as Greenberg’s texts would suggest. For example Lynn Spigel has shown that there was, in midcentury U.S., an intricate relationship between fine art, popular culture and educating the public (Spigel, 2009). Spigel observes that the Museum of Modern Art in New York (MOMA) initiated in 1952, a project which would influence commercial and educational television on the arts and policies relevant to it. Spigel suggests that visual platforms beyond the fine arts, and especially television, were entangled in the project of modern art in a more dynamic way than previously acknowledged. She explains that cultural and commercial institutions ‘fought for power over visual culture’ (Spigel, 2009, p.177). This U.S. example of post-war taste-

formation advocated through a popular visual medium, parallels the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* in London in as far as taste-makers attempted the dissemination of 'good taste' through public platforms: in the case of MOMA it was television, in the case of I.L.E.A. a schools' programme. However while MOMA.'s project further emphasised vision as a dominant mode of transmitting knowledge, I.L.E.A. encouraged the inclusion of touch.

‘Handling’ in the Ocularcentric Museum

Prevalent ocularcentricism in museums follows ocularcentric art criticism. I have shown that Bourdieu has proven useful to design history in that he renders transparent the inter-play between culture, including material culture, and the agents that engage in its power fields. However, the representational nature of this interplay and the pre-dominance of the eye as the medium through which ‘learned decoding’ of the work takes place, prove less helpful in analyses of material culture and especially in a discussion on ‘handling’. In Bourdieusian terms, artworks which can be enjoyed through the senses of vision or hearing, need to make themselves manifest in the field of power through the meditative role of language as in art historical texts and criticism. This allows Bourdieu to speak generically in *The Rules of Art* of the methods of literary criticism as equally applicable to the visual arts, painting, sculpture and music. However the omission of the sense of touch as a legitimate candidate for such codification, creates a zone of exclusion for those cultural artefacts that are best suited to being handled, for example, the crafts, sculpture or even artworks with three dimensional characteristics like relief or thick impasto painting.

Fiona Candlin, whose research and writing pursues an explicit agenda of ‘writing touch into art historical accounts’, discusses at some length the difficulty of counteracting the traditional art historical narratives. In *Art, Museums and Touch* she clarifies that her intention is ‘to investigate why any form of legitimate tactual engagement with art objects has been sidelined within art history and visual culture studies.’ (Candlin, 2010, p.24) She cites the ‘founding fathers of art history’ when she expresses her concern that, ‘Riegl, Wöfflin, Panofsky and Berenson’s discursive separation of touch and vision, and the ensuing construction of art as a visual medium raise questions about the possibility and effects of writing touch into art historical and cultural accounts.’ (Candlin, 2010, p. 5) Specifically she identifies a pattern ‘in Wöfflin as with Riegl and Berenson (Berenson, 1980 [1896]) tactility is equated to the

childhood of civilisation and vision to its prime.’ (Candlin, 2010, p.17). Bourdieu responded to these views by advancing an anti-elitist position that questioned Kant’s progression from ‘nature to culture’ as an inevitable advancement; Bourdieu framed this progression as a manifestation of a constructed social order, serving the interests of dominant agents (Bourdieu, 1984).

Its resistance to the vision/language canon renders Museum Education a fruitful example for an investigation into the historical and educational aspects of ‘handling’. As noted elsewhere in this thesis (section entitled ‘Re-introducing the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a Handling Resource’) the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection has been utilised in ways that mirror practices in Museum Education (the field that enables visitors to appreciate and learn from Museum and Gallery Collections). This section will argue that educational departments in the museum have done much to dismantle existing orthodoxies either intentionally or as a side-effect of their activities. Bourdieu’s *The Love of Art* (Bourdieu, 1991) and *The Rules of Art* (Bourdieu, 1996), have convincingly demonstrated how the possession of cultural and economic capital has rendered certain social classes almost exclusive agents in the power field of fine art consumption. However, the more education became available to the masses, and museum education in particular, the more imprecise the distinctions concerning cultural capital possession - thus undermining what Bourdieu showed in *Distinction*, the work that has mainly informed my approach (Bourdieu, 1984).

With reference to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, it must be underlined that during its active years, (1951-1975) the scheme functioned as an infiltration of the museum in the school-room. However, as Museum Education grew, museums rather than schools, became the repositories of handling collections. This shift from school to museum is of significance because it foregrounds the symbolic transfer of power from one cultural sphere, that of the classroom, to another, that of the public museum, leaving the educational sector dependent on museum visits in order to access handling collections.

More importantly, a brief historical overview will show how traditional museums on the whole have become inimical to the practice of ‘handling’ and their handling collections, sometimes consisting of ‘second-best’ examples, are their reluctant concession to haptic education – at the same time there are also examples of institutions commissioning handling

collections e.g. the Crafts Council (Crafts Council, 2015). While Learning departments aim to promote handling, in certain cases commissioning objects specifically for handling (as in the Design Museum and Crafts Council, London) it should be noted that other Departments often resist the Learning provision in museums. Fritsch for example, claims that there is anecdotal evidence that ‘education activities [are seen as] almost an invasion by the ‘other’, using museum space in a way deemed somehow inappropriate’ (Fritsch, 2011, p. 239).

One exception to this rule is children’s museums, where touch of displays is normally encouraged, but this can be read as a practice ‘in keeping with the common nineteenth-century association of touch [in museums] with non-rational or infantile behaviour’ (Classen, 2005, p.284). The division between ‘adult’ and ‘child’ space is perhaps exemplified by the Whitechapel Gallery in London, where the L.C.C. ran in the post-war period, a scheme similar to the Design Appreciation Experiment.

In the post-war period the Whitechapel’s ‘Upper Gallery’ space accommodated a scheme of travelling exhibitions borrowing items from institutions such as the Victoria and Albert Museum’s Circulation Department, where handling was evidently allowed (illustration 67). In a report written by teacher-in-charge F.W. Slater, reviewing the Upper Gallery’s activities from 1949 to 1955, Slater wrote that an ‘Experiment’ was announced ‘to provide a regular sequence of exhibitions of painting, sculpture and the design of everyday things’ (Slater, 1956, p.1). As in the case of the Experiment in Design Appreciation, handling was allowed as it was expected that ‘by regular visits and the handling of exhibits and also practical work, an interest will be quickened in the appreciation of design.’ (Slater, 1956, p.5)

In 1951, between January and March, the Whitechapel also staged the exhibition entitled *Good Taste - Art in Domestic Design*. Though its scope was somewhat different from the *Experiment in Design Appreciation*, the objective was almost identical:

It was intended to quicken an interest in the design of everyday things by illustrating the improvement in design of modern domestic utensils. As an introduction ‘old and new’ designs were displayed which included: a flat iron, an old gas ring, a 1910 vacuum cleaner, an 1820 digester (pressure cooker) and a victorian kitchen set. There were also displays of pottery, metalware, glassware, plastic (both decorative and domestic) and sections devoted to cooking, cleaning and display of well-designed

clocks. A design quiz was arranged to be undertaken by the visiting parties. This was our most ambitious exhibition so far and was extremely popular (Slater, 1956, p.7).

The Upper Gallery's funding was withdrawn in 1970. This put an end to the co-existence between the 'adult' main gallery which followed conventional protocols of experiencing art and the 'non-adult' Upper Gallery where handling was allowed and indeed encouraged.

Yet 'touch' had been a legitimate aspect of the museum experience for everyone up to the early 19th century. Constance Classen describes that in the 18th century:

Visitors not only touched objects in museums in order to verify their true nature, however, they touched them because they wanted to experience them intimately. Sight requires distance in order to function properly, detaching the observer from the observed. Touch, by contrast, annihilates distance and physically unites the toucher and the touched. Handling museum artefacts gave visitors the satisfaction of an intimate encounter. (Classen, 2005, p. 277)

The change of attitude to handling occurred when London museums were made more accessible to the general public.

Given the established role of touch in early museums, its elimination in modern museums can by no means be regarded as a natural step in museological development [...] One key factor has to do with the public nature of museums. [...] When [museums] became public, controlling the 'quality' of the visitors became more difficult (Candlin, 2010, p.281)

A case in point is the British Museum. In 1836, the British Museum extended its opening hours (thus enabling working-class people to visit) and parliamentary records mention that a perceived consequence of the 'want for cultivation' was

the general complaint that the middle classes of this country when they go into a gallery of paintings or sculpture, despised and sometimes destroyed the works of art

exhibited, merely because they were not early accustomed to a cultivation of those arts (HANSARD, 1835).⁴³

This account of how welcoming (or unwelcoming depending on the type of visitor) large museums were in the mid-19th century started changing in the post-war period.

As one of the popular and well-respected thinkers in mid-century art education, John Dewey helped frame art education in the West as an interplay between vision and experience; in fact identifying vision as one aspect of experience and thus warning against isolationist interpretations. The distinction that has been found in models such as Bourdieu's and Greenberg's, becomes much more apparent in the museum. Museum Education, borrowing its theories and methods from education at large, often clashes with the rigorous separation of vision from touch, an artificial imposition, but one that had been well-established within the museum. Juliette Fritsch who has explored how Museum Education negotiates the interplay between text and material culture in the museum, stressed the value of recognising the museum visit as an immersive experience for all the senses and she has also hinted at the problematics of Education⁴⁴ departments that are perceived as undermining the established vision-and-text status quo maintained by other departments (Fritsch, 2011).

Entering a major museum as an individual, non-specialised visitor today, usually excludes one from the handling experience, though significant progress has been made in the past 50 years, with museums inviting the visitor to play a more active role, increasingly through the provision of 'hands-on' experiences.

These practices were first made evident during the 1960s as Raphael Samuel has discussed:

hands-on, interactive displays, breaking down the barriers separating the object and the viewer by taking exhibits out of the prisons of the glass case, seemed very much of a piece with the more generalized revolt against formality (Samuel, 1994, p.192).

⁴³ Presumably 'accustomed' means learning to look but not touch.

⁴⁴ 'Education' now is sometimes termed 'Learning': a linguistic shift indicative of museums' awareness of providing a more active education experience

The Whitechapel's Upper Gallery is an example, but others include the work of Molly Harrison, the Geffrye Museum educator who advocated handling and had said that 'second-rate objects' or copies should be used: 'Teachers know how very useful such duplicate material can be to their children and many museum directors and curators do already provide facilities for its use' (Harrison, 1970, p.28). Museums both in the capital and especially in the provinces started utilising box schemes, similar in concept and in scope to the I.L.E.A. Scheme. Yet while L.C.C. and later I.L.E.A. bought only originals, other schemes, especially those delving into historical and archaeological subjects relied on replicas. For instance, the Leicester County Council's 'Resource Box' -which inherited some objects from the 1960s school circulation scheme, has evolved to comprise

a large collection of museum objects, models replicas and natural history specimens
[...] archaeological material and replica items from the Tudor period to 18th centuries
[...] also includes objects from different parts of the world and different cultures, and
a collection of studio ceramics and modern glass. (Leicester County Council, 2014)

Molly Harrison has discussed how, as a member of staff at the Geffrye from 1939 to 1969, she had encouraged visits from local residents and as a consequence 'there were a lot of low-income family visitors – the parents brought in by their children. Craft groups included spinning and weaving, pottery and painting with drama and music for children. Teachers built up a strong relationship with families' (Harrison to Woollard, 1992). Though handling did not include the Geffrye's own collections, making workshops were offered, which enriched the visitor experience and rendered the Geffrye a place where touch informed much of the learning process. Such an attitude was deemed transgressive and Harrison mentioned that the 'the inspector of Arts, Tomlison, was very opposed to [my] policy of getting the public into the museum. He felt that such places were for those who already know and appreciated the Arts' (Harrison to Woollard, 1992).

Though outreach programmes and working with the immediate communities where museums are found is now firmly established in the ethos of Museum Education (e.g. the Tate Modern as I have experienced it and as Lahav describes in Fritsch, 2011) historical accounts as Classen's and testimonies like Harrison's hint to how resistance to non-specialist touch in museums developed, something still in evidence today. As literary critic Susan Stewart points out:

Children early on learn this rule that one must not touch works of art unless they are themselves the maker or have been granted an exceptional permission - that what in fact distinguishes the architecture of a museum from its holdings is the taxonomy of what can be touched and not touched' (Stewart in Aynsley, 1999, p.28)

Therefore the museum has become the place where collections are housed but not touched. The visitor's experience in the modern museum still relies on vision and it is additionally mediated by language as a replacement for the acts of touching and handling:

In museums today, when we turn quickly from the untouchable art work to the written account or explanation placed beside it, we pursue a connection no longer available to us - the opportunity to press against the work of art or valued object (Stewart in Aynsley, 1999, p.30).

The above excerpts suggest that the handling of objects, whether as part of travelling collections or within permanent displays, has been a carefully monitored and border-lined. 'Experts', curators and staff have been *de facto* handling objects all along, occasionally granting handling rights to visitor groups varying from scientists, students and researchers, to the disabled.

The context of the debate today concerns conservation protocols - such protocols impose hierarchies of their own and may obfuscate other power clashes in relation to touch. For example, every handling session I have conducted using the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection has begun with an introduction on handling practice according to conservation protocols (see appendix 13 for handling guidelines for the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection). At the same time, new media and new curatorial practices calling for greater audience participation and inter-activity, have challenged the 'no-handling' rule (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). Yet for all their concern with engaging the public, museums continue to keep valuable objects out of the public's hands. Consider the example of James Cuno, director of the Courtauld Institute of Art, who writes about two clay statues (attributed to Gian Lorenzo Bernini):

these are not heavy objects. They can be held easily in our hands. Their size, scale, immediacy of effect, and familiar material invite our touch: we want to hold them, to

press our fingers into their hollows, to match our fingerprints with those of their maker (Cuno, 2004, p.56).

Cuno speaks of the statues' haptic appeal which calls upon 'childhood memories of working with clay' (ibid). The language of the shared haptic experience allows him to use words such as 'we' and 'our' but conceals the fact that Cuno was only able to handle the sculpture due to his privileged position within the power structure of a specific cultural institution.

With new impetus on handling, it appears that the discourse on this contentious museological issue has come full circle. Investigating the origins of museums, attributed to the 16th and 17th century 'cabinets of curiosities' reveals that handling was common in as much as these were private collections and handling was in the discretion of the owner (Impery and McGregor, 1985). It was the transition from private to public that dictated new arrangements.

As modern-day museums continue to move towards more privatised funding, for example through sponsorship and charging for exhibitions, so does the phenomenon of the public paying to secure privileged access to collections. One aspect of such access takes the form of handling sessions, e.g. through the offer of adult learning using authentic museum objects. In relation to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, a handling resource has been created collaboratively between Camberwell College of Arts and the Learning Department of the Victoria and Albert Museum using objects from the Collection. The resource is expected to have such a use where access will be through participation in paid-for courses and events. Though the debate of how money is exchanged for access to museum objects is beyond the remit of the present discussion, it hints at the tenacity of cultures of privilege within the museum sector.

Theoretical Approaches to Handling in Education

Alongside museums, an important outcome of this research is to argue for the relevance of handling in the contemporary educational context, especially because the Collection in question is housed in a University rather than a museum. I have already discussed how educational progress can be measured by observing knowledge derived from handling sessions. This includes knowledge of materials, techniques, connoisseurial aspects such as authentication, awareness of good archival and conservation practice, and the ability to make

links to critical frameworks such as historical contexts and aesthetic theories. Furthermore, students on making courses benefit from engaging with potential models for their practice, they can scrutinise a standard of skill evident in the object, and they develop ‘designerly thinking’, that is the ability to pursue and solve design problems (Charman in Addison and Burgess, 2015, pp. 134 to 144).

The advocacy for object-based learning derives from several past theories of experiential learning which exerted varying degrees of influence in different educational systems across time (for example Froebel 1826; Piaget, 1952; Read, 1958; Montessori, 1988; Dewey, 2005). Regarding London authorities, reference has been made to educational inspectors who were in step with progressive ideas (Harrison, 1992; Richardson, 1948; Read, 1958). These ideas proposed educational systems centred on children’s needs and making use of one’s immediate surroundings. They had their roots in continental and American theories of the 19th and early 20th centuries and informed much of educational provision in England and in particular London, the city which I view as possessing the most determined agents for educational reform as far as advisors to the local authorities are concerned.

Educators and designers who had been appointed in the variety of committees that informed the gestation of the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* (e.g. Marion Richardson, Roger Fry, Gordon Russell, Frank Pick⁴⁵) were clear in their preference for experiential learning. It is however difficult and I would argue unproductive, to try to disentangle the visual aspect from the experiential / handling aspect in educational theory. As John Dewey reminds us, even paintings are made of matter: ‘the colors used in painting are not pure spectral colors but are pigments, not projected on the void but applied on a canvas.’ (Dewey, 1980, p.195) and that ‘a painter must consciously undergo the effect of his every brush stroke or he will not be aware of what he is doing and where his work is going.’ (Dewey, 1980, p. 45). He later describes how art other than painting is more than ‘the optical apparatus’:

⁴⁵ Richardson, Fry, Pick and Russell all advised government during the 1930s, their recommendations appearing in relevant reports. Fry for example, advised on the Gorrell report of 1932 and wrote in the appendix that he proposed ‘a scheme for workshops of decorative design in British industry’ and then mentioned Marion Richardson: ‘my idea is that this great source of original ideas in design should be organised through Miss Richardson and others;’ (Board of Trade, 1932, p.47). Pick was chairman of the 1935 *Education for the Consumer* report (Art and Industry Council, 1935).

While the optical apparatus may be isolated in anatomical dissection, it never *functions* [his emphasis] in isolation. It operates in connection with the hand in reaching of things and in exploring their surface, in guiding manipulation of things, in directing locomotion. This fact has for its consequence the other fact that the sense-qualities coming to us by means of the optical apparatus are simultaneously bound up with those that come to us from objects through collateral activities. The roundness seen is that of balls; angles perceived are the result not just of switches in the eye-movements but are properties of books and boxes handled; curves are the arch of the sky, the dome of a building; horizontal lines are seen as the spread of the ground, the edges of things around us.' (Dewey, [1934]1980, p. 100)

In the context of general educational theory there is more scope in analysing aspects, foci and shifts of emphasis between touch and vision, with reference to particular texts. Following Dewey's example, a researcher would be hard pressed to find evidence of either a wholly visual or a wholly experiential theory of education, especially concerning art and design. As I have argued above, historically, the physical space where a primarily visual theory of education developed was the museum, where specific contexts privileged the educational affordances of vision -a persistent paradigm discussed by Svetlana Alpers in relation to the museum function's as a place for the eyes to be trained: 'everything in the museum is put under the pressure of a way of seeing' (Alpers, 1991, p. 31).

One British educator who placed emphasis on vision was Marion Richardson, whom I have mentioned as a pivotal figure in London's inter-war cultural scene. Richardson followed Cizek's belief that the child should be free to find his/her modes of artistic expression without restrictive didacticism and keeping formal instruction minimal. It's telling to comment that while her investigations of creativity in children following Franz Cizek were almost entirely based on drawing and painting, therefore primarily visual, Richardson was also active in the committees that paved the way for the L.C.C.'s object circulation scheme which had a clearly didactic and prescribed agenda, though progressive in its own right (Board of Trade, 1932).

Continuing with the promotion of experiential learning, the 1935 *Education for the Consumer: Art in Elementary and Secondary School Education* report, names Richardson among the witnesses, alongside members of the committee Frank Pick (chairman) and

designers and artists like Ambrose Heal, E. McKnight Kauffer, and Paul Nash. The committee placed great emphasis on appreciation through the use of objects:

The chief aim of Art teaching in elementary and secondary school should be the training of appreciation, and if this training is not related to the child's personal experience, to the things that he see in the shops, in the streets and in his home it will be devoid of reality. Yet there has grown up an unquestionable dependence on pictures as the means of illustration to the exclusion of other equally important means and too much significance can be attached to them to the neglect of common objects equally deserving of thought and consideration. The schools should, therefore, be equipped with a collection of such common objects for the lessons; teachers can only develop the child's perception if there are suitable objects for the child to perceive. (Art and Industry Council, 1935, p.32)

A later report, by a committee of similar membership, advised on *Design and the Designer in Industry* (1937) and recommended that a combination of designing on paper, learning about the context and handling materials in actual production environments, would complete the designer's education.

There was a fair measure of agreement among our industrial witnesses that the primary function of an art school or college is to lay the sure foundations of a sound education in draughtsmanship and colour, but that the training should also be related to the actual commodities concerned and should include the handling of the materials, some instruction in the processes of manufacture and some historical and comparative study of design (Art and Industry Council, 1937, p.50).

Clarifications and distinctions need be applied concerning the level of education in question: this report on the education of designers was undertaken with reference to professional qualifications, which would be equivalent to what we call further and higher education today (what are classified today Levels 4 to 6, i.e. such as Diplomas and Degrees). The I.L.E.A on the other hand, cast a wider net with its concerns for educating consumers and not only future designers, so it was implemented across secondary education (with a few exceptions of teacher training colleges being involved). Therefore the Collection would teach the

equivalent of today's Levels 'Entry' and up to '4' according to the National Qualifications Framework (Gov.uk, 2015). Yet historically, most of the emphasis on experiential learning has been placed on the first years of education, what in the UK is called 'nursery' and the first years of primary school (key stage 1).

A historical perspective on criticism needs to acknowledge that the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection was assembled during a time when interpretations of the material world were deeply rooted in vision. It is therefore understandable that handling was not a parameter that could be easily accommodated within the educational structures of the 1950s and 1960s, and the Collection's advantages as circulating objects meant to be handled, were not given sufficient prominence at the time (Gregory, 2013).

My approach to handling has partly relied on the premise that educational theory has greatly shifted since 1950s didacticism towards a constructivist model that acknowledges emancipation of the learner (Rogoff and Lane, 1984; Biggs and Tang, 2007; Department for Education, 2013). The constructivist model has also found its way in Museum Education and it argues that knowledge is co-constructed in the interaction between the visitor, the museum and the exhibits, and that all of these agents should be appreciated as active in the learning process (Hein, 1998). I therefore argue that through constructivist education, handling's place may be revisited as a space where the pre-dominance of vision as the cornerstone sense of the educational experience may be challenged.

Some of the benefits of involving touch in the teaching process make themselves manifest through observation of the process, while others are not as readily detectable. In her book *The Power of Touch* Elizabeth Pye describes touch as the sense that allows for 'the interrelation of rhythm, movement, contact, proprioception, articulation and pressure', and with it 'we can perceive shape, space, size, texture, temperature, vibration and response' (Pye, 2010, p.91).

Educators in the art and design field have examined how students benefit from such experience: in a study conducted at the University of Brighton between 2007 and 2011, researchers have found that handling sessions using museum objects

benefitted the students in two key areas: an increased awareness and understanding of the physicality of objects and their making, and also a powerful long-lasting impact on their attitudes and approach to work (Boyes and Cousens, 2012, internet).

Boyes and Cousins interviewed students and were able to identify specific areas of learning that handling enabled. More specifically students

developed an increased awareness of colour, texture, weight and scale, which they felt was hard to establish in a display behind glass or from a publication. Being able to explore the pieces by turning them over, looking inside and carefully interacting with moving parts brought an increased understanding of manufacture and construction methods. The quality of craftsmanship also impacted on the students' work...

[Handling] connected the students to the wider canon of subject history, through object exemplars of the highest standing. The power of touching these gave a strong personal connection with the past, to makers and users of the object, and one student said she 'felt emotionally involved touching them, knowing their stories and knowing real people had also touched them [...] An unanticipated outcome was that nearly all the students perceived the session as an experience that made them feel 'honoured' or 'feel special in some way [which] adds a level of taking yourself seriously'. For some this was connected to the session's exclusivity, viewed as being out of the mainstream of the curriculum or general public experience, and to the 'behind the scenes' aspect of the session (Boyes and Cousens, 2012, internet).

Less obvious methods of overcoming the linguistic/visual dependence of art and design criticism to illuminate the benefits of learning through the whole of our bodies, are offered by philosophy. '*Das Dasein ist rund*', says French philosopher Gaston Bachelard, appropriating a German phrase which translates as 'being is round'.

Because to add that it *seems round* is to keep a doublet of being and appearance, when we mean the entire being in its roundness. In fact, it is not a question of observing, but of experiencing being in its immediacy. Full contemplation would divide into the observing being and being observed.[...]for when it is experienced from the inside, devoid of all exterior features, being cannot be otherwise than round (Bachelard, 1964, p.234).

In seeking theories that embrace and explain the being's 'roundness', I consider the significant contribution of phenomenological philosophers. Richard Shusterman notes that,

In the field of Western philosophy Maurice Merleau-Ponty is something like the patron saint of the body. [In Merleau-Ponty] the body is not only the crucial source of all perception and action, but also the core of our expressive capability and thus the ground of all language and meaning' (Shusterman in Carman and Hansen, 2005, p.151).

In the context of the linguistic/visual canon that I have outlined, theories that not only address the body but convincingly locate it as 'the ground of all language and meaning' acquire a significance beyond obvious physiology. Indeed they reveal that separation of the intellect from the senses.

An interest in the materiality of culture, whether this takes the form of design, craft or indeed fine art, entails an interest in the physicality of the object and thus in 'handling'. Re-framing art and design historical accounts in the context of handling and the body means addressing the long history of dichotomy between the body and the intellect. Michel Foucault has argued in his *Order of Things*, that 'the seventeenth century marks the disappearance of the old superstitious or magical beliefs and the entry of nature, at long last, into the scientific order.' (Foucault, [1966]1989, p.30) With this claim Foucault identifies that time when the 'shift occurred from the ordination of the natural world as experienced through the body to sensory information being suspect and unreliable as a means of establishing scientific order' (Candlin, 2010, p. 60). As I will discuss in more detail later, the implications of taxonomy found a symmetry in the museum experience. Tony Bennett has explained that until the Enlightenment, when collections were systematised on the basis of their visible differences, museum visitors 'had gathered to discuss, gape and browse through the collections' (Bennett, 1998, p. 360).

Constance Classen observes the social ramifications of the opposition between multi-sensory information and purified visual learning, appears entrenched in the class distinction between people who work with their hands and people who work with their heads (Classen, 2005, p.5). Manifestation of class through profession was also examined by Bourdieu, thus

interpreting the positioning of craft and in certain instances design, in relation to fine art and the subsequent hierarchies that such distinctions establish and perpetuate (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu highlighted the ways through which professional links to material culture, tie-in with accreditation through relevant qualifications and consequently prescribe social positions, so that for example the qualified engineer may obtain a licence to produce an edifice whereas a skilled but unqualified builder may not (Bourdieu 1984, p.17).

David Howes points to René Descartes as the thinker who defined the body-mind dichotomy by advocating a dualism that resulted in alienating mainstream Western thought from ‘bodily ways of knowing’ (Howes in Classen, 2005, p.27). I note that ‘bodily ways of knowing’ link to ‘learning through objects’ on the plane of the material world, and can allude to handling as a mode of learning. In William Schiff’s anthology *Tactual Perception*, Stephen Thayer says that : ‘touching things acquaints us with the world’ (Thayler in Schiff and Foulke, 1982, p. 264) but that it also

represents a confirmation of our boundaries and separateness while permitting a union or connection [...] that transcends physical limits. For this reason, of all the communication channels, touch is the most carefully guarded and monitored the most infrequently used, yet the most powerful and immediate. (Thayler in Schiff and Foulke, 1982, p. 285)

Therein lies the usefulness of ontological philosophy as a methodology that justifies the necessity of touch/handling in order to access material objects.⁴⁶ Tim Ingold has eloquently shown how the material object is of particular relevance to the crafts, and may be used as a metaphor to discuss the ontology of making. Ingold uses the example of weaving as a concept that brings together the mental and the material world. In his description the ‘roundness of being’ referred to by Bachelard, meshes with the roundness of the artefact:

⁴⁶ The particular use of the word ‘object’ in philosophy should be noted: ‘object’ commonly refers to material things but in Western philosophical tradition it has been aligned with ‘the thing which is perceived’ a thing that is external ‘from the apprehending mind, subject or self.’ These things also fulfill another etymology of the word ‘object’, namely ‘that to which action, or thought or feeling is directed, the thing (or person) to which something is done’ (Candlin and Guins, 2009, p.2). So the distinction should be made that ‘objects’ in the language of philosophy are often non-material and attention must be paid to the context in which the word appears.

the world of our experience is, indeed, continually and endlessly coming into being around us as we weave. If it has a surface, it is like the surface of the basket: it has no 'inside' or 'outside.' Mind is not above, nor nature below; rather, if we ask where mind is, it is in the weave of the surface itself. And it is within this weave that our projects of making, whatever they may be, are formulated and come to fruition. Only if we are capable of weaving, only then can we make (Ingold in Candlin and Guins, 2009, p.90).

Quotations as the above demonstrate how phenomenological philosophy may contribute to the educational discussion on handling because rather than limiting the discourse to historical and social specificities that educational research often needs as a frame of references, it proposes expanded ways of answering the question of 'what may be learnt through handling objects?' Thus it can help theories of education, design history and material culture, build philosophically informed foundations upon which more contained analyses may be constructed. This ultimately allows theories of touch and handling to contest established hierarchies in the fields of culture and education as these have been outlined in Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1984).

Merleau-Ponty in the work that is perhaps of most relevance to my research, the *Phenomenology of Perception* [1945] explains that Descartes and particularly Kant, detached the subject, or consciousness, by showing that 'I can not possibly apprehend *anything* as existing unless I first of all experienced *myself* as existing in the act of apprehending it.' (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p.144). Using objects for learning as implemented in Museum Studies and as I have done with the Collection, is only partly an intentional engagement: much of learning through objects happens on an undetected level. In order to demonstrate how learning through objects leans on pre-set patterns of engaging with the material world, it is helpful to consider how Merleau-Ponty, together with Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl contributed to a reconciliation of the rupture between consciousness and perception by means of a theory that unified and transcended the object-subject dichotomy. Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty have been the most influential on my research: Heidegger as a main exponent of ontological philosophy that aims to describe the conditions of one's being-in-the world and Merleau-Ponty as seeking to reveal the role of our bodily existence in giving meaning to the world we perceive.

It was Heidegger's teacher, Edmund Husserl who advocated the faithful description of phenomena, as opposed to metaphysical speculation. His crucial contribution has been the attempt of bridging subjective experience and the external world through the study of 'embodied agents immersed in worldly situations' (Carman, 2005, p.9). Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty built on Husserl's foundation. In both we find the idea that our conceptual thinking is 'embedded' in the everyday, in the condition of 'coping'. To the philosophers, this 'coping' is before and beyond learning. Heidegger calls it *zunächst und zumeist* (translated as 'prior and pervasive' - Carman, 2005, p.35). We are born as 'coping' infants and we are inducted to speech after already existing in this coping for some time.

Therefore Merleau-Ponty places emphasis on the child and particularly the pre-linguistic child. He sees the revelation that language brings to the child as the instrument that makes the existence of objects manifest (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2002, p. 470-475). Merleau-Ponty thus informs my approach on handling as an extension of language and never a substitute for it. Merleau-Ponty says that language is the particular cultural object which is destined to play a crucial role in the child's perception – however, there is an enchanted pre-linguistic infancy where

The child lives in a world which he unhesitatingly believes is accessible to all around him. He has no awareness of himself or of others as private subjectivities, nor does he suspect that all of us, himself included, are limited to one certain point of view of the world [...] Men are, for him, empty heads turned toward a single self-evident world (Merleau-Ponty, [1945] 2002, p.13).

Merleau-Ponty then goes on to explain how language shatters this accessibility by imposing boundaries that gradually reveal the child's environment as a highly structured and regimented space. In formulating a theory of handling, attention is paid to the prior condition, the pre-linguistic human, the condition of innocent accessibility, that Merleau-Ponty calls the 'primordial silence' (Merleau-Ponty, [1945] 2002, p.214): 'Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we fail to go back to that origin, so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence' (Merleau-Ponty, [1945] 2002, p.214).

Philosopher and motorcycle mechanic, Michael Crawford, summarises how Heidegger pursues the reconciliation of consciousness and perception.

The things we know best are the ones we contend with in some realm of regular practice. Heidegger famously noted that the way we come to know a hammer is not by *staring* at it, but by grabbing hold of it and using it. For him, this was a deep point about our apprehension of the world in general. The pre-occupation with knowing things ‘as they are in themselves’ he found to be wrongheaded, tied to a dichotomy between subject and object that isn’t true to our experience. The way things actually ‘show up’ for us is not as mere objects without context, but as equipment for action (like a hammer) or solicitations to action (like the beautiful stranger) within some worldly situation [...] For Heidegger, there is no problem of ‘re-presenting’ the world, because the world *presents* itself originally as something we are already *in* and *of*. His insights into the situated character of our everyday cognition shed light on the kind of expert knowledge that is also inherently situated like the fire-fighter’s or the mechanic’s (Crawford, 2009, p.163).

Heidegger expressed an aspect of this ‘presenting’ in his lecture ‘The Thing’ delivered in 1950. In the same lecture he uses the example of the jug as an object, to investigate the ontology of material objects.

When and in what way do things appear as things? They do not appear *by means of* human making [his emphasis]. But neither do they appear without the vigilance of mortals. The first step toward such vigilance is the step back from the thinking that merely represents - that is, explains, - to the thinking that responds and recalls. (Heidegger quoted in Candlin, 2009, p.122)

Elsewhere Glenn Adamson elucidates Heidegger’s approach:

What he wants to know is what this thing is - not how it appears to us but what it actually is. The jug as an object (that is, as we regard it or use it) has a function and a form and it is made of a particular material (fired earth). But these qualities are all derived from a fundamental ‘thingness’ which must precede any understanding of it

by a subject....Heidegger's answer to this conundrum is a poetic one; he sees the jug as constituted fundamentally by the void inside it. The jug shapes the void and is in turn shaped by it (Adamson, 2010, p.404).

and further down he quotes Heidegger himself:

the emptiness, the void, is what does the vessel's holding'..the vessel's thingness does not lie at all in the material of which it consists, but in the void that holds (Heidegger in Adamson, 2010, p. 408)

Yet as Joseph Rouse notes, this void, the vacant space, is not merely a geometrical condition: 'space as described in geometry cannot encompass orientation, movement, or significance. Only a space that is centred on and directed from the body can characterise the world perceived'(Joseph Rouse in Carman-Hansen 2005, p.270).

In the excerpts I have used, there are, overall, three elements that make up phenomenological space: the individual bodies, the inanimate material objects and the space where bodies and objects interact. My use of phenomenological philosophy aims to disclose the ontological experience as an inseparable condition to the condition of experiencing the material world. In communicating these observations, I am aware that while there is scope in enlisting language as an inescapable interpretative layer, I want to draw attention to 'handling' as a research methodology in itself, and to locate it within a framework that defines human interaction with material culture beyond the realm of language. This approach renders 'handling' a distinct and irreplaceable learning modality.

Histories of handling reveal that its inclusion in curricula and museum educational services is often associated with provision for non-mainstream users. Before the discussion on the benefits of handling had expanded to include every visitor, museum studies had looked into long-established touch schemes enabling access to visually-impaired visitors - tactile learning holds a privileged place in the Special Educational Needs ('SEN') curriculum (Davis, 2001). Though beneficial to everyone, specifically with reference to 'statemented' children (i.e. children who have been officially recognised by the state as having learning disabilities) the Department for Education has found that:

Learning from objects is stimulating for all children and can be an especially effective way of learning for children who have difficulty accessing information through other sources. Handling and exploring objects does not require writing skills, and the security of actually seeing what you are learning about can promote confidence, allowing less assured children to participate (DfES, 2012, p.10).

Distinct benefits achieved from physical interaction with material culture are explainable in view of new advances in the understanding of how the brain receives messages from the senses. Several decades after phenomenology's attempt to address the inside/outside ontological problem, science caught up by providing evidence of the body and the mind as an 'indissociable organism'. Daniel Dennett, cognitive scientist and philosopher, produced his text *Consciousness Explained* (Dennett, 1993) where he had enlisted biology, neuroscience, medicine and genetics to support arguments that had been first proposed by phenomenologist philosophers. The expression 'indissociable organism' belongs to neuroscientist Antonio Damasio: 'When I say that body and brain form an indissociable organism, I am not exaggerating. In fact, I am oversimplifying' (Damasio, 2006, p.88).

The implications of neuroscience inform my research on the interaction between body and exterior stimuli and they call for a new reading of affirmations such as Susan Stewart's: 'touch, like dizziness, is a threshold activity - a place where subject and object are quite close to each other' (Stewart in Aynsley, Kwint, Breward, 1999, pp. 35). Scientists looking at emotion, agree that touch can be literally understood as a borderline event, one that might excite or repel, since 'border crossings are either moments of anxiety or [...] something to be especially enjoyed' (Dennett, 1993, p. 414). Neuroscience has been able to explain to a degree the complexity of sensory activity and while many problems of this gradual demystification are still to be solved, one conclusion that can be drawn safely is that a discourse of vision as an individual, isolated channel of sensory input is both limited and inaccurate.

Handling in education can benefit from these theories. Despite the increased overlap between handling collections utilised in learning institutions *per se* (the school, the college, the university) and handling collections utilised within the museum, distinctions between the two types of institution are useful. Like the gallery, the museum remains a space of consecration. These are places that are 'both consecrated and capable of consecrating' (Bourdieu, 1996, p.

289). Bourdieu explains the process of consecration with reference to pictorial works, setting the paradigm for all museum objects:

The museum as it isolates and separates (frames apart) is undoubtedly the site par excellence of that act of constitution, continually repeated with the untiring constancy of things, through which both the status of the sacred conferred on works of art and the sacralising disposition they call for, are affirmed and continually reproduced. The experience of the pictorial work as it has been asserted by the site in its exclusive devotion to pure contemplation tends to become the norm for the experience of all objects belonging to the very category which has been constituted by the fact of their being exhibited. (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 294)

The school space does not fare much better in structuralist / post-structuralist rhetoric. In views expressed by Foucault ([1977]1979; [1980]1982) and Bourdieu (1984), the school is explained as a machine for creating social obedience and cohesiveness, a power field where different agents pursue their various agendas, a space of unhappy contestations. Stuart Hall analysed Foucault as advancing further than Marx and Gramsci in implementing the concept of knowledge as the most powerful hegemonical tool (Hall, 1997, p. 47). In museums, the professional area of Museum Education has done much to dismantle this perception of learning as a negative experience: today students feel positive about museums and working with museum collections in particular (e.g. Reading, 2008, p. 9).

Even in the school we can draw on less polemical models for interpreting scholarly experience. Despite underlying structures, it is worth considering the possibility of pupils and students internalising learning institutions as a haven, a refuge from the uncertainties of the wider world, in closer analogy to the home rather than to the prison. The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection is particularly suitable for such an interpretation since its main contents are domestic objects. By bringing a version of the domestic (albeit the version that favoured ‘good design’) into the school, the Collection evoked the domestic setting, and its function suggests Gaston Bachelard’s poetical vision of *topophilia*, one’s love for a place:

[the home is] the sorts of space that may be grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love. For diverse reasons, and with the differences retailed by poetic shadings, this is eulogised space. Attached to its protective value,

which can be a positive one, are also imagined values, which soon become dominant. Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. (Bachelard, 1964, p. xxxv)

The *topophilic* space encourages learning through handling. In the context suggested by Bachelard, we encounter objects that ‘are cherished’, that are not indifferent (Bachelard, 1964, p. 68). While handling objects in such spaces, students gain ownership of their learning. Educational activities which involve handling spring from, and in turn facilitate, the cultivation of a sense of entitlement. Located in this type of space, objects may become ‘tools for conviviality’ where students learn independently, as per Ivan Illich’s description: ‘crucial to how much anyone can learn on his own is the structure of his tools: the less they are convivial, the more they foster teaching’ (Illich, 1973, p.72). (The clarification is needed that Illich is against teaching.) He proposed that individuals must be allowed to educate themselves through convivial tools rather than adopt a more passive stand of being taught.

The combination of widely shared information and competence for using it is characteristic of a society in which convivial tools prevail. The techniques used are easily understood by observing the artisan at work, but the skills employed are complex and usually can be acquired only through lengthy and programmed apprenticeship. Total learning expands when the range of spontaneous learning widens along with access to an increasing number of taught skill and both liberty and discipline flower. (Illich, 1973, p.72).

Writing in the early 1970s, Illich was warning against an increasingly consumer-led society where education would become not much more than a product anyone could obtain off the shelf, without the necessity of personal agency and investigation.

One of the uses of handling in education is to resist the facile classifications that institutionalised learning calls for. As Jane Trowell has noted: ‘children aren’t born seeing the world as chopped up into ‘subjects’’ (Trowell in Addison and Burgess, 2003, p. 135). For them everything is related and connected. This resistance of ‘chopped up’ and pigeonholed learning is liberating but at the same time an impediment to handling’s appropriation by school and university curricula. Though I have discussed specific educational applications (see section entitled ‘Re-introducing the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a Handling

Resource') it's fair to argue that handling of objects lends itself to activities that foster intimate and individual learning. This is further reflected in George Kubler's observation that 'single things are extremely complicated entities, so complicated that we can pretend to understand them only by generalizing about them' (Kubler, 2008 [1962], p.36). Elsewhere, Richard Sennett referencing Erik Erikson purports that 'material reality talks back' (Sennett, 2008, p. 271).

In current educational theory, this 'talking back' of material reality may be aligned with approaches favouring constructivist education, where knowledge happens not from teacher to student, neither in the student's mind, but in the in-between space, as a learning 'event' (Biggs and Tang, 2007). In as much as learning is an elusive process, resisting neat categories that are elegantly conjured up in language, it is a process inherent in our interaction with material culture. Handling collections open up an educational space where material reality's 'talking back' may be listened to. Particularly the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection's craft objects allude to this talking back and the intimate dialogue between the body and the material (Stair, 2000).

Theoretical Approaches to Handling in the Crafts

I have already referenced a significant body of writing about art, design and the crafts which has grappled with the problem of how to write about touch and how to address that which cannot be said (Dewey, [1934] 1980; Buchanan, 1992; Hein, 1994; Dormer, 1997; Stair, 2000; Sennett, 2008; Crawford, 2009; Adamson 2010; Charny, 2011; Britton, 2013). One author who ascribes to the approach that craft resists language is Peter Dormer (Dormer, 1997). Dormer finds recourse to Ludwig Wittgenstein who, in a letter to fellow philosopher Bertrand Russell, wrote in 1919: 'the cardinal problem in philosophy was the difference between what can be expressed theoretically in propositions - language - and what cannot be expressed theoretically but only shown' (Monk, 1990, p.64). Dormer then warns: 'What can only be shown cannot be written about, and to those who think there can be a theory and a critical language of craft that is a warning worth heeding' (Dormer, 1997, pp. 229-230). Evidently, such warnings did not extend to Dormer's own writing of numerous texts on the crafts, some of which have become standard references in the field.

Indeed there is no awareness of irony in the eloquence with which craftsmen have fought the corner for touch over language. 'My principal language is touch' declared jeweller David Poston to Edward Lucie-Smith (Lucie-Smith, 1975, p. 123). Another maker, Bruce Metcalf, makes a crucial observation that delineates the boundaries of the discussion:

Craft is not infinitely mutable; it cannot take the form of the spoken word alone, text alone, performance alone, or many varieties of diffuse materialisation like fireworks, smoke and light. While art has dissolved most of its identities, craft *must* retain several limitations. Craft cannot be dematerialised: it must first and foremost remain a physical object (Metcalf, in Dormer, 1997, p.69).

Time and again craftsmen and designers have written and spoken of their relationship to their material. Richard Sennett sees material as the root of crafts' investigatory making: 'This is the craftsman's proper conscious domain; all his or her efforts to do good quality work pend on curiosity about the material at hand.' (Sennett, 2008, p. 120). Thinking of this physicality in connection to the senses, Michael Casson wrote in a letter to Peter Dormer referencing Michael Cardew:

Michael Cardew said it years ago. 'The materials and processes the potter uses are not a category separate and distinct from the expression the artist makes with them.' I read that in 1950. I was 25 and I did not understand it. Now with my own slight variations it is my creed. [...] What else would I wish to underline as being of importance to me? Yes, it must be something about the use of the senses. The physical sense of throwing, for me a wonderful amalgam of power and delicacy. The sense of touch on a pot, smooth or craggy; the sense of sight - colour and visual texture (these are why salt is so good) and the sense of sound a pot makes which tells much about form and materials and firing. Last but not least a sense of weight - apparently there is an African word that means 'good to pick up and feel right in the hand' (Casson in Dormer, 1997, p. 156).

Apart from language, craftsmen have also appropriated the other modality of the canon, vision, to showcase their work: photography for example, serves an important function in craft. Intimate relationships between craftspeople and their material were documented, for example, through photography in the publication *In Praise of Hands* of 1974 (illustrations

68-70). The publication was produced after *The First World Crafts Exhibition*, organised by the World Crafts Council at the Ontario Science Centre, Toronto. However, the relationship to the material is rarely as idyllic as publications like *In Praise of Hands* suggest. In the case of photography, visual narratives are mostly built on the expectation of selling a product, be it the book or the craft artefact as it appears in published formats like exhibition catalogues -so the impetus is for an idealised representation. As Linda Sandino has noted referring to *Crafts* magazine, 'the magazine was primarily the site for the consumption and fetishisation of handmade objects' (Sandino, 2007, p. 183).

I argue that it is in the language of oral history, when narratives of idealised craftsmanship often break down. Sandino has shown how established 'disciplinary narratives' come apart in the oral historical method of life history work: 'disciplinary distinctions, the separation of life and work, and the mono-visual lens is fractured and experience is represented in its multiple configurations' (Sandino, 2010, p. 140). In an interview with Tanya Harrod, ceramicist Ruth Duckworth had declared that she 'hated' porcelain because it was such a difficult material to work with 'and I do so much sanding on my pieces that sometimes I think "Oh my God, my lungs must be expiring"' (Duckworth, 1987). In another interview, kept at the Recording the Crafts archive at the University of the West of England, Henry Rothschild, gallerist, collector and long-time supplier to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, explained why Hans Coper's later wares were smaller in size: 'when he was very ill and he could no longer throw big pots - he threw these small ones, so there is a physical reason' (Rothschild, 2011). Rothschild's words disclose the inevitable fact that despite the mind's unhindered ambitions, the crafts are traditionally limited by what the body can 'handle'.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Tim Ingold has shown how a disregard of materiality has infiltrated approaches to material culture:

anthropologists and archaeologists when they speak of artefacts as items of so-called 'material culture' [...]the last thing they mean to suggest is that in the manufactured object the domains of culture and materiality somehow overlap or intermingle. Nothing about their substantive composition *per se* qualifies artefacts for inclusion within culture. The materials from which they are made - wood, stone, clay or whatever - are in any case generally available in nature. Even with objects manufactured from synthetic materials, culture is in no way conditional upon their 'unnatural' composition. [...] It is the form of the artefact, not its substance, that is attributed to culture. That is why, in the extensive archaeological and anthropological literature on material culture, so little attention is paid to actual materials and their properties. The emphasis is almost entirely on issues of meaning and form - that is on culture as opposed to materiality. (Ingold in Candlin and Guins, 2009, p.81)

In art criticism, Gottfried Semper adopting the architect's perspective (Semper, 2004[1862]) and later Henri Focillon, and George Kubler (Semper, 2004[1862]; Focillon, 1996 [1948]; Kubler, 2008[1962]) were among those who especially paid attention to materiality and made the case for grounded theories that acknowledge the inescapability of matter, since: 'matter imposes its own form upon form' (Focillon, 1996 [1948], p. 97). Theories concerned with materiality inform research on the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection because they are better suited to products of design and craftsmanship and they connect to the investigation of how the crafts have utilised the concept of authorship. In the crafts 'handling' concerns the actions relevant to production as well as the later interaction with the finished artefact. Therefore, at the stage of production, the intentionality of the maker and his/her relationship to the act of handling the material, emerge as a theoretical focus.

Peter Dormer further described hand-making as a cultural strategy. Dormer highlights the fact that craft, unlike contemporary art, grows directly from the human cognitive potential for fine motor control, which is another definition of skill. He claims that this potential is expressed by its agents as a cultural response to late industrial conditions. According to Dormer,

The studio crafts present an 'aesthetic in opposition': most craft artefacts do not look like industrially produced ones; they look handmade. Looking handmade is a deliberate aesthetic choice. It is quite possible to make small runs of objects on a craft basis and give them an industrial finish using about the same ratio of hand work to work with tools as exists in the average studio craft pottery. In the backstreets of Britain there are craft based workshops producing objects with an industrial aesthetic - car body panel beaters and paint sprayers, metal bashing workshops and carpentry shops are examples. One can produce simple plastic goods on a craft basis as well [...]

The studio crafts are trading on the presence of 'the hand'. The connection with the

Timothy Ingold's appraisal of how certain disciplines ignore the overlap between materiality and culture illuminates the problematic of the language/vision canon but I want to argue that it exaggerates the cultural/material dissonance. The discourse on materiality has flourished within many disciplines, including archaeology which Ingold attacked (for example, Hall and Silliman, 2006). An appraisal of handling within the discipline of Museum Studies is informed by Archaeology as far as learning from objects borrows methods developed and employed by Archaeology.

individual hand and the imagination behind it is sometimes given a near spiritual value (Dormer, 1992, p.11).

Dormer's comments shed new light on David Pye's long-standing idea of the 'workmanship of risk'. David Pye had placed distinctive emphasis on the limitations imposed by workmanship which involved the maker as a user of techniques, tools and apparatuses in which the result would not be predetermined, but was depended on the judgement, dexterity and care which the maker exercised in his work (Pye, 1968). What Dormer suggests though, is that the craftsman (*sic*) does not experience all aspects of this uncertainty as 'risk' but possibly the opposite: 'unpredictable' products are inherently culturally safe, because through their 'handmadeness' they communicate that the maker's work stands in opposition to the industrial and are, in this sense, more marketable as 'craft'.

Summative Comments About Theories of Handling

My examination of handling has started with the dominance of language and vision in theories of culture, art and design. I have shown how emphasis on the linguistic and the visual in Bourdieu and other theorists, describe a cultural power field where agents that derive their supremacy through means of exploiting and perpetuating a visually-based culture, resist the inclusion of other senses in order to resist infiltration from agencies that would threaten their dominance. Theories of handling, which can be found in aspects of philosophy, neuroscience, education and the crafts, provide a framework for discourse that counter-balances and extends the lingual-visual paradigm.

Reference to research projects including projects involving the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, draws attention to how the tensions between diverse modalities of interacting and learning from objects are implemented and how handling can re-enforce learning in tertiary education. This discussion re-frames the appreciation of good design, from being primarily depended on visually accessible attributes, to good design as a process of appreciation involving the sense of touch.

Historical analysis of the occularcentric (vision-based) museum revealed that vision and touch have not always been antithetical to each other and it has been through the discipline of Museum Education that strategies of reconciliation have emerged. Closer focus on the

I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection has provided examples of how handling can and has been utilised as a research and learning methodology in action.

CONCLUSIONS

This investigation aimed to elucidate the following research questions: firstly to examine definitions of ‘good design’ and modernism, both historically (1951-1977) and in the present day, especially with reference to education, and to critically discuss the advocacy of ‘good design’ as a pedagogy, i.e. ‘good design’ as a method of learning.

The pedagogy of ‘good design’ was expected to become manifest, in parts, through the objective of mapping ‘good design’ in relation to the project of modernism in design, during the historically and geographically-specific period of post-war England. Secondly, the intention to use examples of objects from the I.L.E.A. / Collection, in order to examine the practice of ‘making’ and production, and to examine the Collection as material culture, with reference to studio craft, industrial design and folk art. The third research objective was to analyse the pedagogies of ‘good design’ and ‘making’ as these are observed in the history and usage of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection in their historical and contemporary contexts.

Pursuing the usefulness of pedagogies beyond good design, led to my consideration of the practice of ‘handling’ within the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, and its potential as a transferable pedagogy beyond the Collection. ‘Handling’ would also enable a discussion on the educational role of museums and their positioning in relation to the pedagogies of schemes such as the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection; handling of the I.L.E.A. Collection would serve as an example of the educational affordances of learning through objects. A final objective aimed to construct a theoretical framework where little-organised and little-documented Collections may be used by design historians.

This Conclusion will summarise how each chapter within the thesis functioned to address the research questions. It will additionally signpost topics that may be developed as further research. The discussion will develop on the following outcomes: firstly, that the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection is representative of the pedagogy of ‘good design’. The research has demonstrated and described where the boundaries of ‘good design’ lie and it has examined how strategies of its implementation changed over time. I have traced a progression from C.O.I.D.’s straight-forward endorsement of functionalism to the more

complex framing by I.L.E.A., which re-interpreted ‘good design’ in response to changing contexts.

Analysis of relevant sources demonstrates how manufacture emerges as a significant commitment for British governments, impacting on cultural, industrial and educational policies that had far-reaching effects. In this thesis I have followed the advocates of such government interventions and one of my findings was that their rhetoric has proven remarkably consistent over time. Sources demonstrate a fairly uniform onus on ‘good design’, by reiterating its benefits for the nation on both the industrial and consumer levels; these sources urge the state to take on responsibility for good design’s dissemination. Moreover, this dissemination is mostly advocated through education, though the circumstances and delivery methods of education vary greatly depending on its chronology, from the School of Design in 1837, to the changes affected by the Coldstream Report in 1960, and the present-day challenges of Art and Design education within the remit of Universities (Ministry of Education, 1960 and 1962; Department of Education and Science, 1970; Warren-Piper, 1973 a; Ashwin, 1975; Cunningham 1997; Romans, 2005; Thompson, 2005; Quinn, 2008; Tickner, 2008; Rowles, 2011). In-between the Victorian and post-war pedagogies of good design, I have identified how concerns with design education were reflected in the government reports and educational theories of the first half of the twentieth century.

The argument on ‘good design’ was further discussed in Chapter 1 in relation to disciplinary concerns and the centrality of ‘good design’ in design historical discourse; it was expanded in detail in Chapter 4 where the concept of ‘good design’ was examined in connection to specific groups of objects within the Collection, focusing on industrial plastics, Scandinavian and studio craft objects.

The research undertaken in connection to ‘good design’, placed the Collection in educational and social contexts that experienced changing dynamics of taste. Identifying such contexts led to a consequent argument, which claims that later interpretations of ‘good design’ in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection are not independent aesthetic systems, but reflect socio-cultural change at large. Secondly, my research arrived at conclusions regarding the predominance of museums as the institutions where object-based-learning takes place, replacing and displacing schemes like the one discussed here. One of my research hypotheses aimed at

investigating how the project of the Collection compared to the function of the museum as an arbiter of taste and how transfer of symbolic power from the school to the museum has determined the educational experience of learning- through-objects. I have found that this transfer has been achieved through the establishment of museum education as a profession located within the ‘consecrated spaces’ of the museum and the gallery, spaces that represent cultural capital in its physical embodiment (Bourdieu, 1996). Moreover, I have arrived at conclusions regarding the Collection’s current and future value within the confines of tertiary education. The argument I make is that the value of the Collection today is derived from its use as a handling resource and as a body of museum-grade objects that retain a claim on ‘good design’ and reflect the historical contingencies of taste.

In chapter 5, I have investigated the value of handling as an educational methodology. I have demonstrated how it supports and enables the learning process and I have discussed my personal involvement in projects that have utilised handling as a teaching method (appendix 11). Value derives from handling’s juxtaposition to the dominant conceptual model that informs learning and cultural discourse, a discourse which has been identified as overly dependent on visual and linguistic modalities. My thesis argues for the affordances of handling as complementary to the dominant learning models. Therefore handling is presented as more relevant to the present Collection’s situation than the legitimisation of ‘good design’. A final outcome that the thesis offers is a transferable example to the academic community and the discipline of design history in particular, of how to investigate poorly documented collections and tackle historical projects lacking original user feedback and evaluation.

The Impact of the Pedagogy of ‘Good Design’

One of the features of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection that render it exceptional as a resource, is that it presents a rare, surviving example of the pedagogy of ‘good design’ put into action. This pedagogy, utilised ‘good design’ as a term which developed in alignment to functionalism. In Chapter 1, I have used the concepts of good design and ‘functionalism’ in accordance with the terminology of design history (Farr, 1955; MacCarthy, 1979; Stewart, 1987; Woodham, 2008). Furthermore, I identified good design with the particular strain of modernism that embraced a diluted version of functionalism’s values in its disseminated, post-war phase (Greenhalgh, 1990). However, good design and its associated variations, ‘good taste’, ‘modernism’ ‘modern’, ‘modernity’ and ‘contemporary’, have not been

understood as a closed, independent system of tautological references, but as words that work in synergy to disclose the aesthetic agenda of the scheme's instigators.

It was therefore significant to explain how the notion of good design was utilised by the government reports I have consulted. In these documents, I have found allusions to, but not a clear definition of good design (Art and Industry Council, 1937). This literature produced by the authorities, implied that good design was a type of knowledge not rendered explicit, as if its meaning was assumed and normative. Knowledge of good design and the right to partake in its dissemination, was rather determined by participation in the bona fide legitimate and legitimizing institutions and organisations that advocated it (the Art and Industry Council, the Board of Education, the Board of Trade, the Victoria and Albert Museum), of which the Council of Industrial Design ('C.O.I.D.') was arguably the most relevant. In texts produced by such bodies, good design appeared as self-evident and fixed in its meanings (Art and Industry Council, 1935).

While texts available for internal circulation among taste arbiters assumed prior consensus on good design's determining values, there have been a number of publications intended for wider audiences, and especially school audiences, that explain good design in terms of shared values, ultimately attributed to an immutable natural order. This natural order is framed in the context of 'fitness-for-purpose' as Gooden suggests to children in *This or That?* of 1947: 'what nature has done is to design everything in the best form she can for its own purpose' (Gooden, 1947, unpaginated). While I have shown that some texts used in C.O.I.D., L.C.C. and later, I.L.E.A.'s teaching, suggested a common human propensity for good design, the *Experiment in Design Appreciation* differed in its approach in as far as it underlined that understanding of good design needed to be taught. The scheme's implication was that the consumer's natural tendency to recognise and choose good design was an innate ability that had to be drawn out or else it was perceived to have been 'corrupted' and needed to be restored (Council for Art and Industry, 1937, p.16 ; Farr, 1955).

In Chapter 2, I have shown how this 'corruption' of the public's taste may be linked to the industrial revolution and the proliferation of methods and products that it had engendered.⁴⁸ It

⁴⁸ Also evident in the 18th century with the need for bourgeois distinction without noble birth via taste as restraint on excesses such as commercial, religious and individual passions.

is also in step with the Arts and Crafts legacy, which, having been a proto-modernist design philosophy, was never far from British design educators' thinking (see for example: Pevsner, 1936). In constructing 'good design's 'other', popular Victorian manufacture was framed as affected by the rapid development in technical and industrial achievements but demonstrating a-synchronicity with an aesthetic sensibility appropriate to the machine. Thus the advent of 'bad design' represented by such initiatives as Henry Cole's 'Chamber of Horrors' (Cardoso, 1997, p.116) may be contextualised in terms of the industrial revolution as far as its origins are concerned.

In the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection I have identified allusions to this insinuated corruption of public taste in, for example, *Design for Tableware 2*: one of the panels refers to cutlery in order to explain how failing to adapt the end product's form to its production methods had a negative effect both on use and on aesthetics:

[during the 19th century] there was little understanding of adapting the needs of good design to the discipline of the machine and industrial tableware tried to imitate the effects which could be obtained only by hand craftsmanship. Such factory articles seldom functioned well, they were almost impossible to keep clean and the decoration was often vulgar and over-elaborate (*Design for Tableware 2*)

Significantly, 19th century examples were represented on the panels only through imagery since the I.L.E.A. did not collect historical pieces. These images could be contrasted to the restrained, functional, 'well-designed' examples that were exhibited in the display. Therefore pupils would be guided towards an understanding of how fitness for purpose should be observed in machine-made wares and thus re-align their taste with 'good design' in order to grow up as discerning consumers. From this perspective, good design might be seen as a structuralist project, since it was advocating an a-historical consensus on ideas of beauty. In my investigation, I used Bourdeusian discourse to explain that such approaches arguing the universality of 'good design', are lacking in an understanding of taste as being co-constructed between the participating agents, their *habitus* (generally interpreted as 'dispositions') and the social fields that they occupy. The Bourdeusian perspective is structuralist in its essence but uses concepts that explain why any claim of universality is doomed to fail. Indeed, my research proposed that 'good design's implied permanence as an immutable aesthetic paradigm was a construction and was intended to serve a pedagogical device; I have shown in

Chapter 4 that, as such, it did not withstand the test of time.

In order to demonstrate this failure, I have established the correlation between ‘good design’ and the passing of time. Through my research, ‘good design’ in the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, has been re-framed as directly dependent on transient taste agendas which fluctuated in response to changing educational and social contexts. I have shown in Chapter 2, in the section entitled, ‘The I.L.E.A./Camberwell as an agent of ‘Good Taste’’, how the L.C.C., taking over the scheme from C.O.I.D. in 1958, tackled the

gulf [that] arose between the sensible, aesthetically sensitive and slightly austere ethos of the C.O.I.D.’s schools educational initiatives and the changed world in which children found themselves in the late 1950s and early 1960s (Woodham, 1996, p. 25).

In Chapter 4, I have argued how, by the mid-1960s an aesthetic turn had become further apparent, and the notion of ‘good design’ as practised by I.L.E.A., was expanded to accommodate pop design and artist/craftsmen as important agents in the shaping of taste. I made a conscious research choice to focus on a group of objects that exemplified this shift, and I have therefore directed the taste focus on studio ceramics. Examination of studio ceramics within the Collection, allowed me to consider alternative interpretations of ‘good design’ and follow the construction of ‘other modernities’, which were juxtaposed to the preceding analysis of plastics and Finnish design covered in Chapter 3.

I.L.E.A.’s progression from conventional ‘good design’ rhetoric (inherited from L.C.C. during the 1950s) to freer and more inclusive language, was, from the mid 1960s onwards, observed through the titles and texts on the exhibits’ panels, and the choice of wording used in them. One crucial example is the introduction of the term ‘artist craftsman’ as evidenced in the display: *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*.

THE CRAFTS ARE CHANGING IN NATURE. Today, the frontiers between the visual arts are dissolving; modern sculpture and painting now overlap and the barriers are going down between the artistic crafts and the so-called fine arts [*Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen*, capitalization as in the original].

The choice of language and the objects that appeared in I.L.E.A. displays, suggested that the

taste shift of the mid-1960s, was both reactive and productive. It was reactive to developments in the social milieu, such as the turn towards consumption patterns that could be characterised as ephemeral, colourful, whimsical or frivolous; at the same time I.L.E.A. was productive in its patronage of non-canonical work. In Chapters 1 and particularly in Chapter 4, I made the point of drawing parallels between I.L.E.A.'s generous patronage and the input of specialist museums such as the V&A and individual collectors/retailers such as Henry Rothschild. Pieces bought from innovative 'artist craftsmen' co-existed within the Collection with conventionally 'functional' objects. Modernism in the studio crafts was represented by the followers of Bernard Leach and those who preferred simple, traditionally-formed vessels: David Leach, Janet Leach, Michael Cardew and Richard Batterham have all contributed to the Collection. On the other camp, I have discussed examples including the work of Ian Auld, Gillian Lowndes, Dan Arbeid, Gordon Baldwin, Ewen Henderson and Ruth Duckworth as representative of modernist and expressive studio ceramics that were aesthetically and conceptually positioning themselves closer to sculpture and the fine arts.

In the same Chapter (4) I have noted that the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection has not been influential beyond the school due to its constraints of implementation, which was aimed exclusively at educational purposes. Conditions of collecting and usage restricted its influence as they were bound by the scheme's untypical ties to the art market, which rendered it a silent patron and a patron that was not visible beyond the school. In that respect, there was no opportunity for the scheme to contribute in the shaping of taste beyond its audience of school-children. Even the objective of shaping school-children's taste could not be ascertained due to the lack of evaluation, assessment or feedback. The lack of documentation pertaining to the scheme's effectiveness, allows me to speculate that despite its ambitions, the scheme had in fact little impact, though it seems to have left an impression on those students who had developed already an interest in art and design (Gregory, 2013).

A Shift of Emphasis from 'Good Design' to 'Handling'

A further conclusion this research arrived at, purports that while 'good design' had historical significance, the Collection's educational relevance today is based on its status as a handling collection within an educational institution, rather than as an exemplar of taste.

When I formulated the proposal for this research in 2011, one of the objectives was to

determine how the Collection reflected the ethos of ‘good design’ and consider whether it was a concept that could be applied to present-day educational debates. I have found that ‘good design’ as first promoted by C.O.I.D. and as I have discussed it in Chapter 2, had lost its relevance as early as the 1960s (a development I discussed in Chapter 4). Any reference to ‘good design’ today would describe a different discourse, where a unified aesthetic criterion would hardly apply. I have shown in Chapter 1 with reference to the mapping of divisions in art, design and the crafts, that today any criteria of ‘good design’ would be determinable primarily by economic variables (Rowles, 2011).

In my proposal for the PhD, I had perceived digital media as a potential threat to aspects of material culture and I was interested to investigate how that trend affected the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. I had been especially aware of how, aided by the expansion of the internet, digital media was advancing towards substituting and re-imagining the haptic experience, re-framing it as a technological challenge, posing, for example, the question: ‘how can the sensation of touch be simulated remotely’? I was therefore concerned with whether the study of objects in conventional ways was under threat, and whether ‘object-based-learning’ was being undermined in a world that might privilege digital representation over the materially present.

However, my presumptions and uncertainties regarding objects and the importance of touch needed to be revised as the research progressed. As I discussed in Chapter 1, in connection to what ‘making’ means today, growing evidence suggests that the material world reacts to digital challenges by re-asserting itself with remarkable tenacity (Charny, 2011). Thus, a complex picture transpired: alongside the process of de-materialisation that is, indeed, indisputable in some cases (e.g. books, newspapers), in other aspects, interest in the material object can be said to be undergoing a resurgence.

My approach focused on explaining a dichotomy between ‘seeing’ and ‘touch’, arguing that the Collection had to contest with a discontinuity between its stipulation for handling and the fact that it had been born and had been implemented within a culture that privileged vision and language as the dominant frames through which material culture was understood. In Chapter 5, I have argued for the importance of expanding this model, adding the dimension of touch and ‘handling’ to ensure that the research reflects one of the scheme’s most important modalities. In Chapter 5, I have relied on the work of a number of thinkers

including Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Damasio, to discuss how handling supports object-based-learning, implementing notions of ontology and phenomenology which interpret the self as constructed in the material world. Analysing their focus on the embodied experience (Merleau-Ponty, 2002), the unification of the subject-object dichotomy (Heidegger, 2010) and the role of external stimuli in the cognitive process (Damasio, 2006), gave me an insight into how educational philosophy has historically utilised the body to promote the benefits of object-based-learning (Dewey 1933 and 1980; Piaget, 1952; Froebel, 1968; Illich 1973).

It should be noted that this emphasis on object-based-learning achieved via handling serves to redress a balance, not to undermine the validity of speech and vision as interpretative and learning instruments. I used the writings of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1977; 1984; 1988; 1996; Bourdieu and Darbel 1991) to explain how emphasis on the linguistic and the visual gave rise to a dominant culture which is invested in vision and language; a culture that subsequently marginalised other senses as legitimate modalities, in all aspects of social life, including education.

Bourdieu also underlined the researcher's own agency and the need for reflection. In this spirit it is worth considering whether there is a contradiction in advocating handling as method through a wholly text-based project since the present PhD thesis relies on language to communicate its findings. In order to address this incongruity, I have pursued throughout the four years of the research a number of parallel projects that involved handling of artefacts and object-based-learning for myself and various audiences, academic and non-academic. Handling sessions were organised in the context of the following exhibitions and educational projects: *prospectus* exhibition at Chelsea Triangle Gallery 2012; *thingness: the Collection* exhibition at Camberwell Space Gallery 2013; *Everyday Objects* at the Langley Academy, 2013; *Perception and Interpretation* project at Camberwell College, 2014; *Vertical* event at Camberwell College, 2014; and seminars organised for the UAL's MA in *Curating and Collections* (appendix 11). These have confirmed the expanded opportunity for learning, through the overlap between the sense of touch and the established methods of text-based, oral and visual transfer of information. During handling sessions, I have witnessed connections and imaginative leaps that enable participants to acquire knowledge in a manner that's more direct and effective, more affective, than conventional, lecture-style teaching. These encouraging experiences signpost the scope for more specific research into the tangible benefits of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection as a handling resource. In addition, I have

been able to organise events during which the right to touch museum-grade objects, usually limited as the privilege of the ‘expert’, has been presented as an entitlement of all participants, a practice in keeping with I.L.E.A.’s aims.

Furthermore, I have implemented oral history as a research method, which, while based in language, is understood as an approach that supplements written positions. Oral history is particularly adept to pursuing art, design and craft interactions in the narrow field of mid-century studio crafts. Through examination of archives of makers’ interviews, I explained how oral history illuminated aspects of craft production that might escape written accounts. Oral history disclosed discourses relating to a small group of individuals: these were discourses that had been either obscured or altogether omitted from bibliographical sources. In relation to the Collection this became evident in the analysis of the relationships between makers, art colleges and the market of 1960s studio ceramics. Oral history has been helpful because the practice of interviewing makers goes against the dictum that ‘the work speaks for itself’ and the self-referential, Greenbergian notion of art (Greenberg, 1989). In my research I found a number of archives and a growing oral history culture, centred around makers talking about their work, even if that is retrospectively. This talking is a means through which ‘individual stories construct and reconstruct the meaning of what designers do through what they say’ (Sandino, 2007, p. 11) thus empowering the agency of the maker.

Object-Based-Learning: Appropriate and Appropriated Spaces

After considering the proliferation of object-based-learning examples in Chapter 5, the research question shifted from ‘whether’ to ‘where’ object-based-learning took place. One ancillary conclusion that emerged in relation to this question, argues that while learning-through-objects remains popular (most museums now offer object-based-learning events and often these involve handling), the physical location where it happens now privileges the museum rather than the school or the university (or hybrid institutions, like the U.C.L.’s and the U.A.L.’s Museums and Collections). Though education had always been within the museum’s scope, I have shown in Chapter 1 and specifically in the section ‘New Ideas in Art Education and Their Impact on Museum’ that from the 1950s, but more so since the late 1970s, the transfer of object-based-learning from the school to the museum was greatly accelerated through the emergence of dedicated educational departments within museums.

I have proposed that the development of Museum Education as a professional field in England flourished in parallel to the democratisation of the museum-going experience, particularly after WWII. My investigation in the operation of the *Scheme in Design Appreciation*, has confirmed that such schemes pioneered practices which were later adopted and advanced by Museum Education specialists (Marcousé, 1961; Harrison, 1973; Adams, 1989). In order to trace the source of these practices, I have considered in Chapter 3, the history of circulating collections, placing emphasis on the Victoria and Albert Museum's Circulation Department. My analysis demonstrated how the Circulation Department informed the structure and application of *The Scheme in Design Appreciation* but also a variety of projects including ones run by C.O.I.D. in London and in Scotland, and ones managed by local education authorities in the provinces (e.g. Bristol, Leicester, West Riding).

Since the mid 1970s, the growing Museum Education sector placed object-based-learning firmly within the museum (Adams, 1989; Hein, 1994, Hooper-Greenhill 1994; 2007). Interestingly, the success of this positioning relied on the adoption and expansion of practices that largely reflect how circulating collections had been utilised within schools. Such practices included: active involvement of the audience through handling sessions; linking activities between exhibits and the school curriculum; exploration of materials and techniques by activities inspired by museum examples; giving the opportunity to audiences to produce work in response to exhibits and display own work alongside the exhibits; the use of exhibits for linguistic interpretations like story-telling, presentations, performance; in short all that Hooper-Greenhill calls 'serious play' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2007).

By assuming an ever more active role for the visitor, museums have moved from entitling their relevant departments, from 'Education' to 'Learning'. The employment of specially trained and dedicated museum staff, who act as experts in learning, (if not 'experts' in the objects themselves) highlights the transfer of symbolic power from the school to the museum as far as learning-through-objects is concerned. At the same time, I have shown how projects undertaken between 2011 and 2015 using the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection are reclaiming this space for museum-type learning within an art college / university environment.

Economies of Art and Design Education and their Impact on the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

The research has shown that the project of ‘good design’ is helpful as an educational paradigm in as far as it is a resource of museum-grade objects that reflect historical preoccupations with ‘good design’ – yet as it is constrained by its historical specificity it has not been found to present models of ‘good design’ transferable beyond particular chronological boundaries (c. 1951 to c. 1965). Having broadened its scope from the study of ‘good design’, the research concludes that the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection remains an effective teaching and learning resource, once its educational value is reconfigured to place emphasis on handling.

As with any other resource, there is a crucial financial aspect that needs to be considered. I have shown that historically, funding played the most important role in determining the fortunes of the Collection. During the 1970s, the *Scheme in Design Appreciation* suffered through cutbacks and I have approached I.L.E.A.’s disbandment issue through parliamentary debates which attacked the financial impact of its operations. These debates demonstrated how vulnerable I.L.E.A.’s activities had become to criticism regarding its associated costs. New technologies and a changing educational climate, contributed too. By 1976 not only educational TV, but also early videotapes, some about art and design, had started being used in the classroom (these can be found in the Metropolitan Archives, London). Films were more cost-effective in the long run, though, significantly, they re-enforced the visual paradigm of learning as opposed to the vision-and-touch approach advocated by the *Scheme in Design Appreciation*.

Perhaps more detrimental in the decision to curtail the Collection’s funding, was the multi-faceted crisis of modernism and its demise from the position of officially endorsed aesthetic. The move away from modernism needs to be understood within the broader remit of I.L.E.A. As I have shown in Chapter 2, in the section discussing ‘The London County Council, the G.L.C. and I.L.E.A.’, I.L.E.A. had advocated progressive pedagogies that went beyond the aesthetic. These pedagogies addressed broader socio-political issues such as racial and gender equality (I.L.E.A., 1981). The social/socialist ambitions that had informed the activities of London authorities and their heavy investment in a modernist outlook had made visible the ideological ground where handling collections firmly belonged. My research has demonstrated this by drawing parallels between the Collection and examination of other L.C.C. activities, particularly school-building (Maclure, 1984).

However, by the early 1970s, both the ideology and its material manifestations came under attack. Council Housing and New Towns became ‘eye-sores’ rather than a symbol of civic pride, having failed to deliver the social utopia they had promised. In architecture, in the visual arts and in the design sector, post-modernity was being embraced with increasing enthusiasm and it mounted an aesthetic attack on the purity and constraint that modernism had represented. By the mid-1970s there was no room for ‘good design’ in the sense that L.C.C. had conceived it and the *Scheme for Design Appreciation* had become an anachronism; this aesthetic failure made possible its financial failure by weakening the case for central support.

Conclusions regarding financial impact also need to recognise how economies within the wider art and design sector, and particularly art and design in further and higher education, were developing at the same time. The most crucial change was the re-structuring of vocational courses in response to recommendations by the Coldstream and Summerson reports (1959, 1961). I have shown in Chapter 1 that this re-structuring was attacked not by outside agents, but by those inside the field, the practitioners and educators who resisted the Diploma in Art and Design. I have looked at ‘the Hornsey affair’ as a protest born out of concerns about adopting the Diploma in Art and Design (Warren-Piper 1973a; Warren-Piper 1973b; Tickner, 2008).

In recent years Camberwell College of Arts has lost its dedicated Ceramics course, a programme that had produced some of the most prominent ceramicists in the UK. Partington has discussed the demise of Ceramics Education in 2010:

In 1980 in England and Wales there were thirteen degree courses in ceramics and in Scotland there were four. In 2010 there are four courses in England and Wales and none in Scotland. Since 2000 the renowned studio ceramics courses in Bath, Bristol, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Camberwell and Harrow have all closed.[...] No matter how sound your pedagogical principles are, how excellent your teaching/research achievements are, it is the balance sheets that matter (Partington, 2010).

Indeed, ceramics is clearly resource-intensive with its spatial and energy requirements; it is an important financial commitment for the college that teaches it and the practitioner who chooses it as a vocation. My research supports the argument that the physical presence of the

student in the art school retains considerable advantages, not least the opportunity to be taught in Archives and Collections.

Suggestions for Further Research and Concluding Remarks

One constant during my research has been the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection's logistical limitations, most importantly the lack of an all-encompassing catalogue, the paucity of its surviving documentation, the lack of spatial taxonomy within the storage space, the inadequate storage conditions and limited access to the objects. In Chapter 2 I have discussed how the little documentation available was inherited by I.L.E.A., inhibiting the research of how the Collection developed before I.L.E.A. In order to combat this imbalance I have looked at the archives of the C.O.I.D. and I have also researched the L.C.C. as an administrative body; this research illuminated the years before I.L.E.A.

The most important strategy I implemented to tackle a body of numerous and disparate, uncatalogued objects, has been to focus on selected groups which I discussed in Chapter 4; elsewhere, the numerical majority of objects have been discussed in their totality. While my choice of particular artefacts was limited, I ensured that these were representative and were serving the requirements posed by research questions. In my pursuit of the objective regarding 'good design' I have involved both industrial products (plastics, Scandinavian design) and products of craft (batch production, studio ceramics, pop design) in order to argue the taste shift I identified from the 1960s onwards.

Methodologically this has been achieved through drawing on the available primary documentation and the utilisation of bibliographical, internet and oral history sources as well as archival sources in London and beyond. Most useful archives beyond the Collection and the U.A.L.'s own, have been the Metropolitan Archives, the Centre for Research and Development at Brighton University, the Institute of Education, the Geffrye Museum, the V&A Archive at Blythe Road and the National Art Library. Regarding oral history archives the research relied on the *National Life Stories* at the British Library Sound Archive, the *Recording the Crafts* archive at the University of the West of England and *Voices in the Visual Arts*. Involvement and implementation of the Collection through curating, teaching and organising events, extended the methodological spectrum to active research, and informed especially the discussion on the Collection's present and future. Therefore I was

able to investigate how it is possible to develop a methodology of researching a Collection that is presented with many unknowns. However, many more object ‘clusters’ could be pursued in future research. In Chapter 2, I have briefly discussed the ‘Commonwealth Wood’ displays and how that display constructed a representation of the Commonwealth. There is within the Collection, an abundance of objects of ethnic and folk origin, which would provide evidence of attitudes towards non-British material culture and how such discussions were framed in the post-colonial classroom.

While the proposed research aims to cover the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, findings can then form the basis of investigations into other handling collections, either in a historical or the present context, so it is a work of wider applicability. Among the number of potential projects that have emerged from the research would be a more in-depth analysis of the relationships between regional travelling collections and the relationship to schemes such as the Whitechapel Gallery’s Upper Gallery projects of the 1960s and 1970s.

This research has demonstrated that in many respects, the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection’s handicaps are also its most potent assets: the sheer quantity and variety of objects make it difficult to contain but they also establish this Collection as an unusually comprehensive survey of mid-twentieth century design, despite some significant omissions such as French and U.S. products; the presence of multiples detracts from its perceived ‘preciousness’ thus making it less ‘valuable’ in the connoisseurial sense but it facilitates educational uses and particularly handling activities; the lack of a definitive catalogue complicates any attempt to make the Collection accessible to a wider audience but it also offers an opportunity for further archival work.

Furthermore, this mapping has been dictated by the research questions and the methodologies of design history using material culture as a medium through which histories of ‘good design’ and theories of making and handling were investigated. Future research would advance the present findings towards new directions and the accumulation of more data would have the potential to render the present arguments more detailed, revealing further complexities, contradictions, inter-dependences, re-interpretations. My hope is that the arguments I have made with regards to the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection are anchored in history but at the same time they fulfil the objective of anticipating its prospects.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Illustration 1. Schoolchildren handling a textiles display, part of ‘The Experiment in Design Appreciation’, later the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection. Photograph courtesy of the Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives, Brighton, UK.

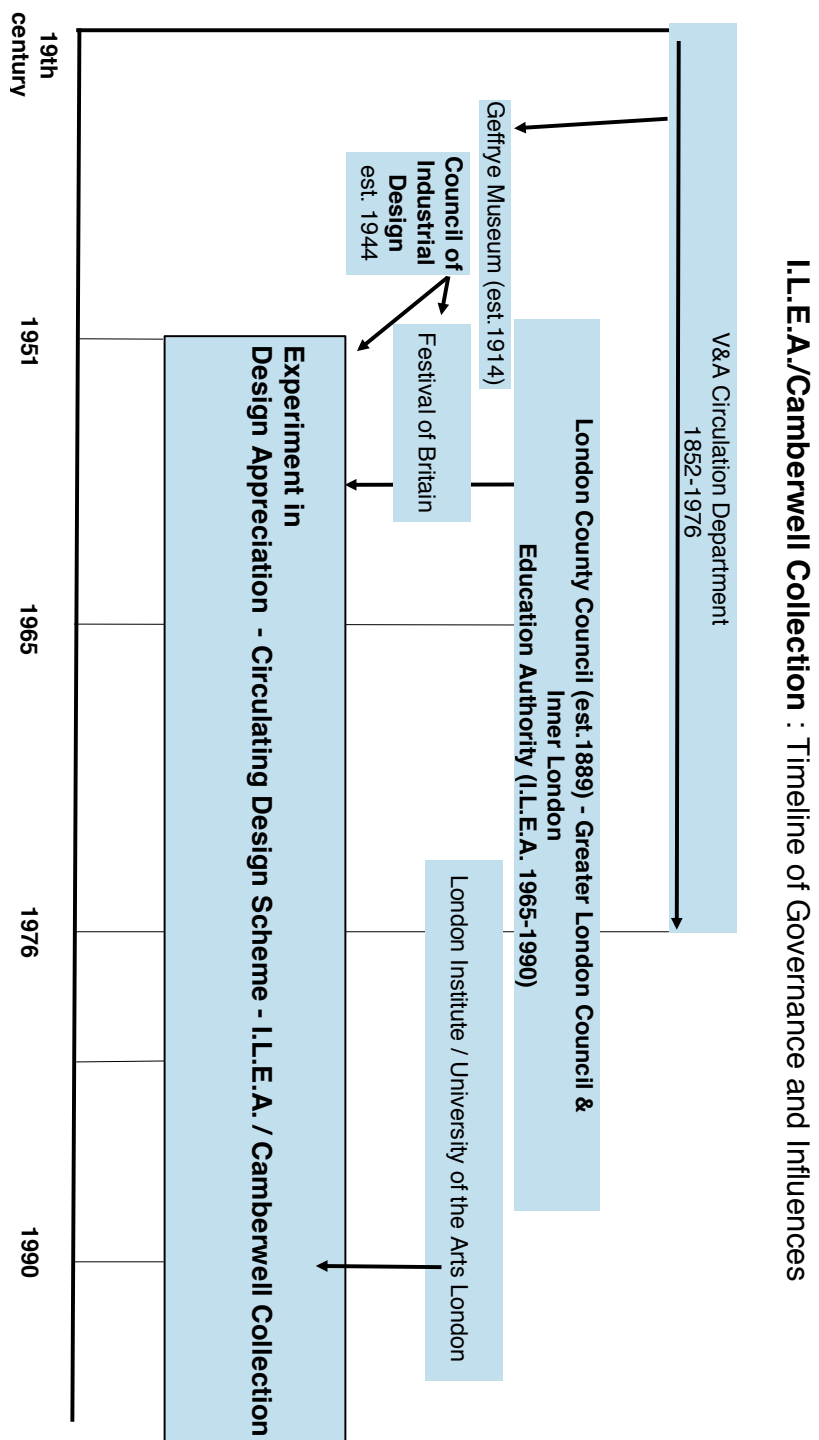


Illustration 2. Timeline charting the development of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection.

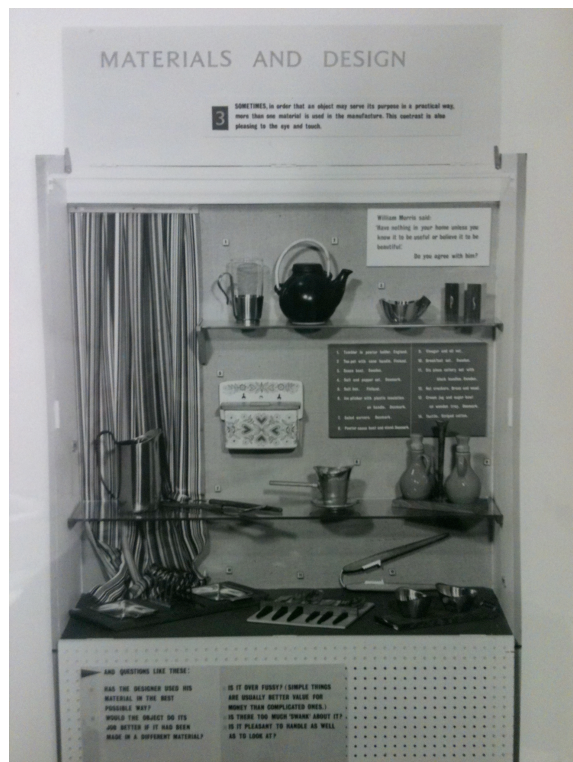


Illustration 3. Materials and Design 3. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.

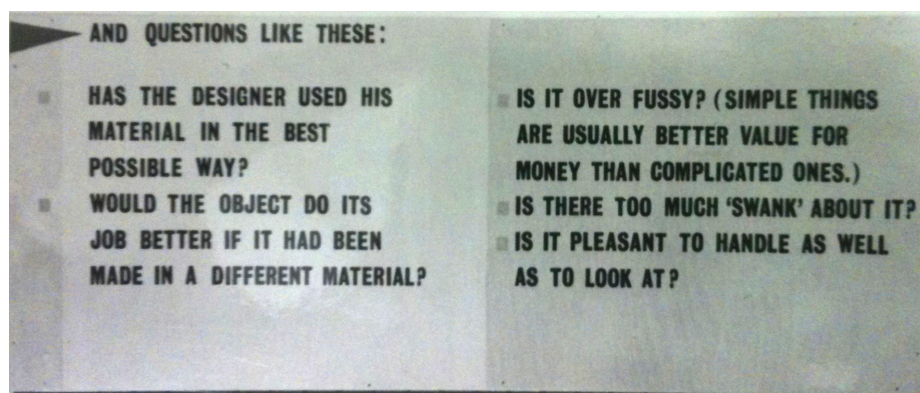


Illustration 4. Materials and Design 3. Detail from uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.

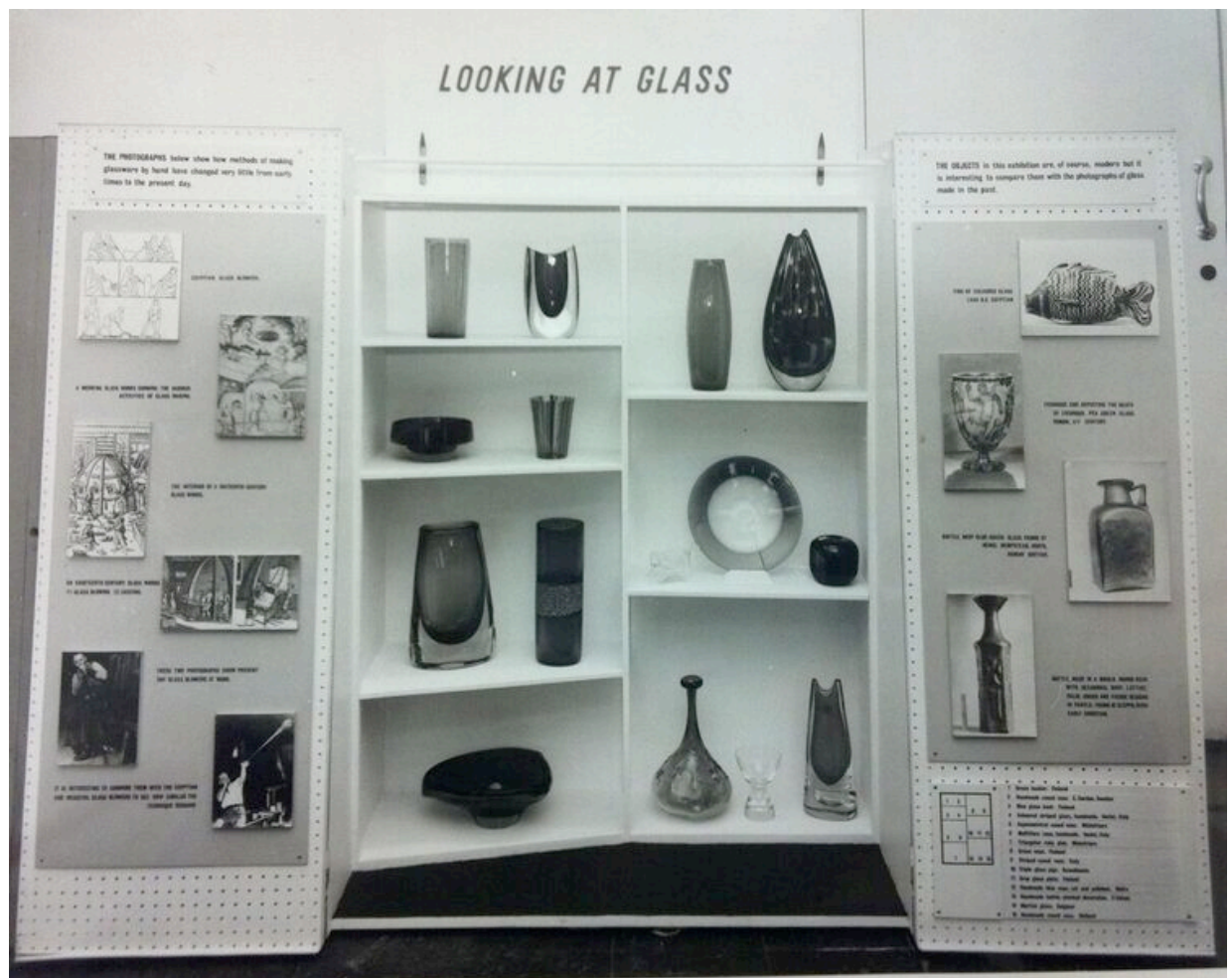


Illustration 5. Looking at Glass. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.



Illustration 6. Folk Art. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.



Illustration 7. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher visits the Design Centre Shop, early 1980s. Photograph courtesy of the Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives, Brighton, UK.



Illustration 8. Industrial Design and Engineering 2. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.

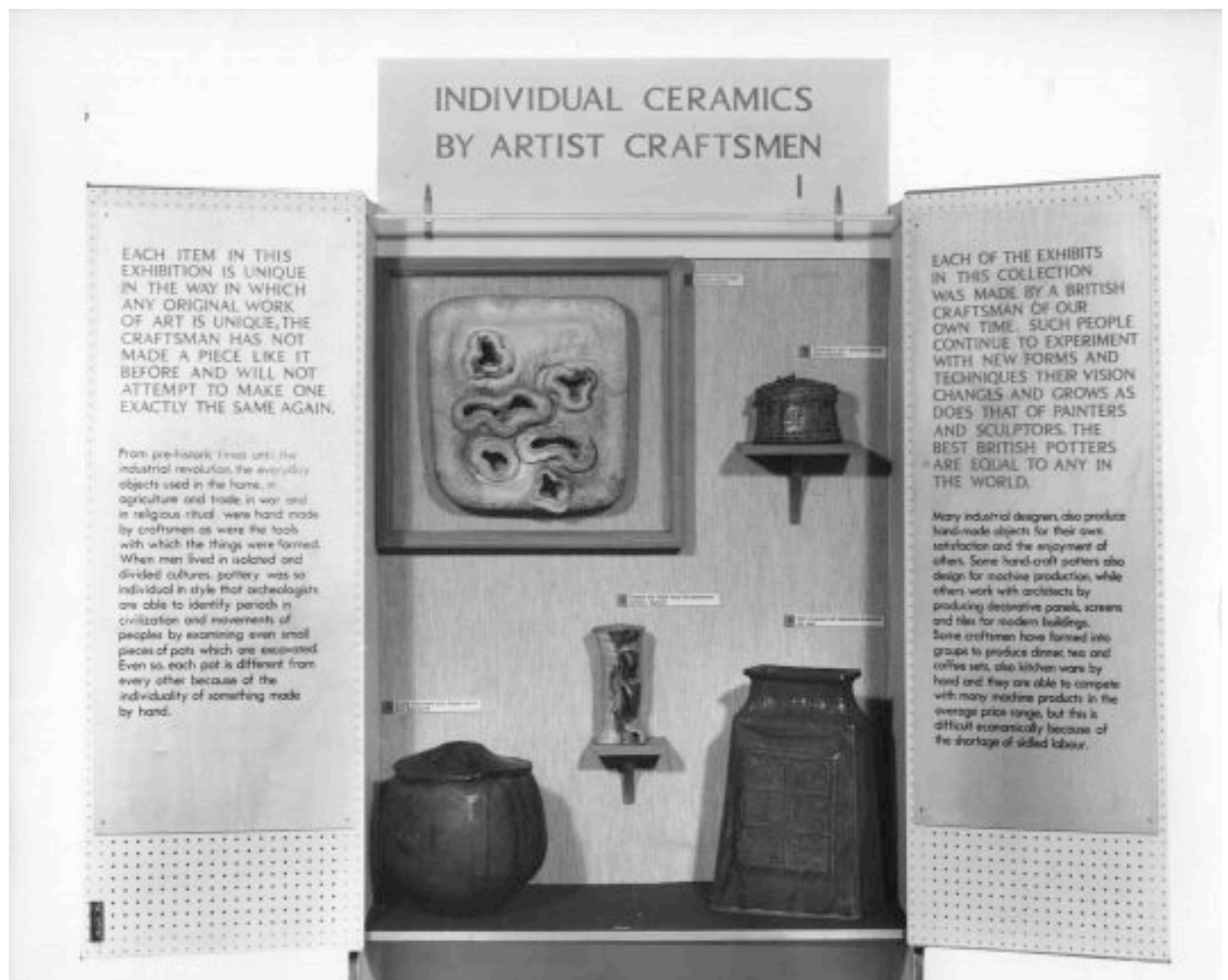


Illustration 9. Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 1. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.



Illustration 10. Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 2. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.



Illustration 11. Schoolchildren handling their own display as part of the Experiment in Design Appreciation. Photograph courtesy of the Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives, Brighton, UK.



Illustration 12. Pop, Folk, Modern. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.

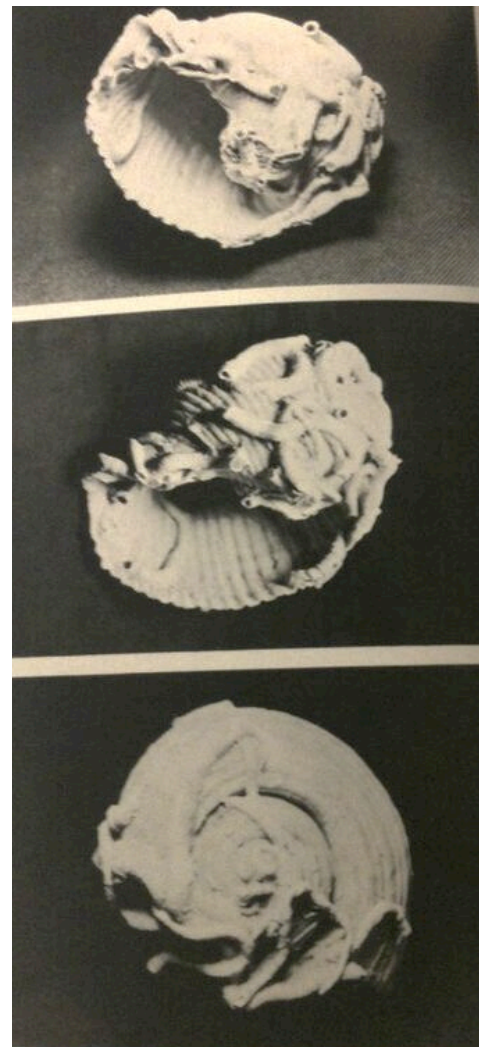


Illustration 13 and **illustration 14**. (left to right) 'look more attentively' and 'shell from Crete' (c) Henry Grant, illustrations in Marcousé, R. (1974) *Using Objects*, London: Van Norstrand Reinhold Company.

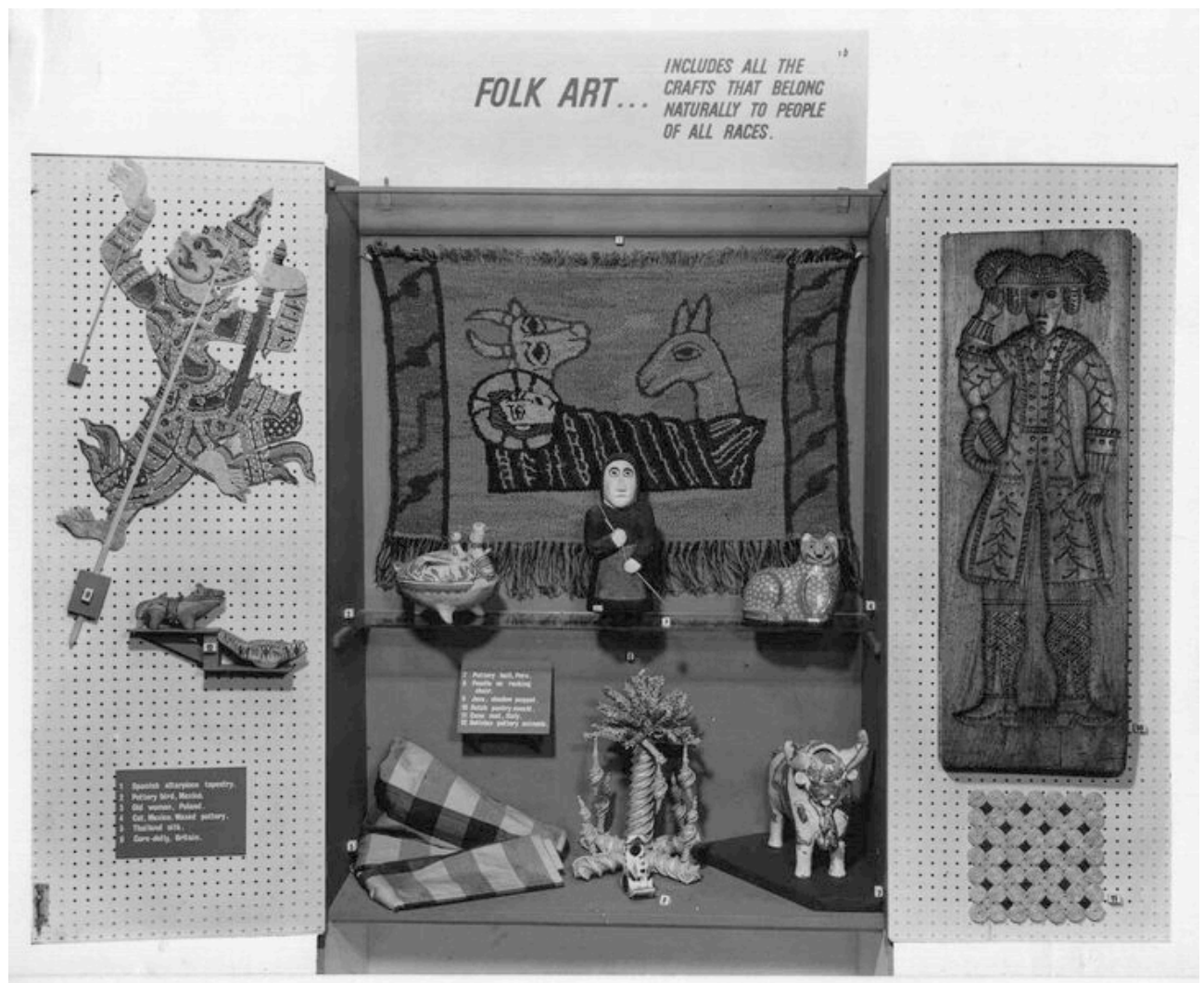


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Illustration 16. Design for Tableware 1 and 2. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.

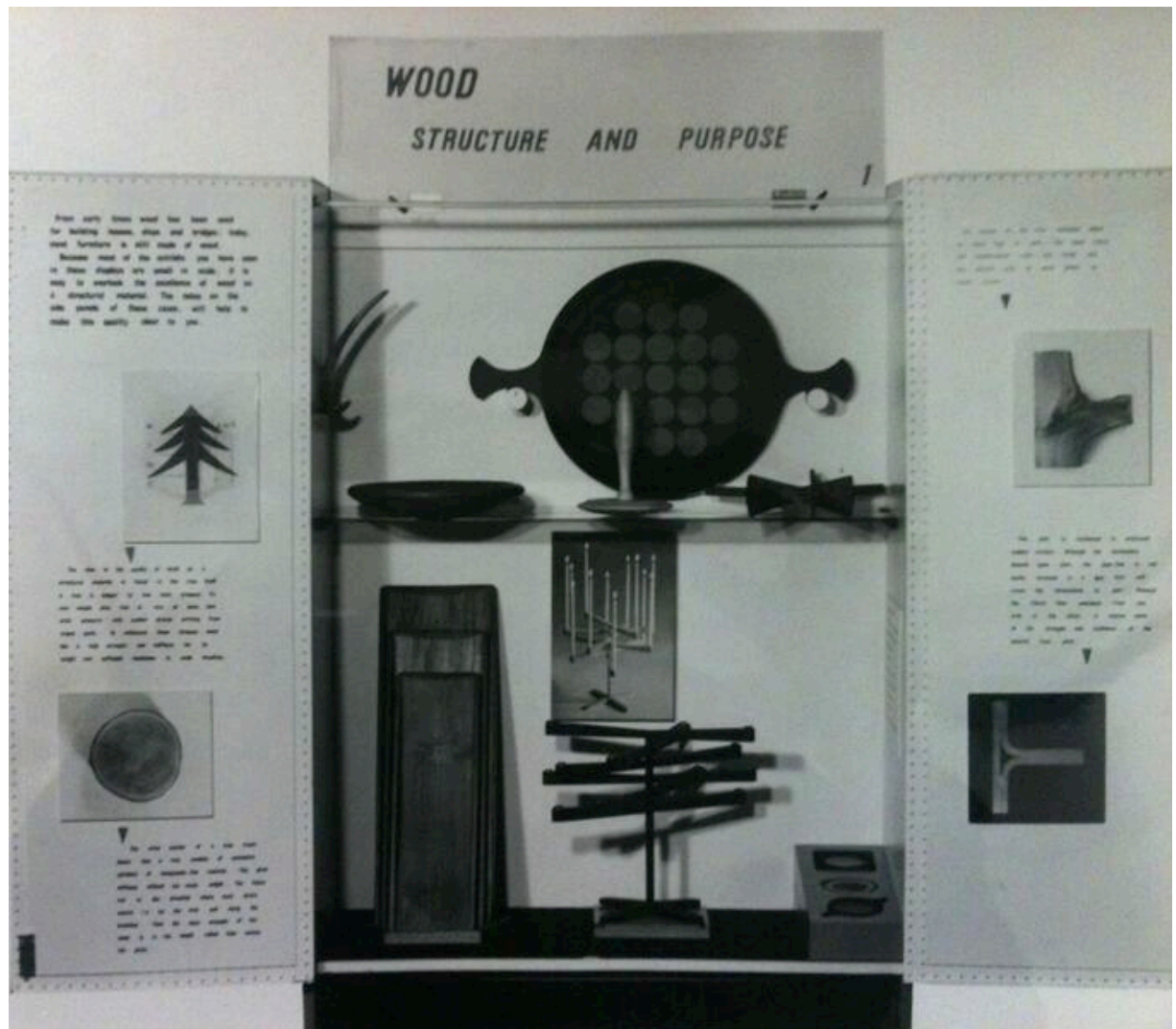


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Illustration 22. John Morley of Bow Secondary School with schoolchildren handling objects from the Experiment in Design Appreciation. Photograph courtesy of the Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives, Brighton, UK.

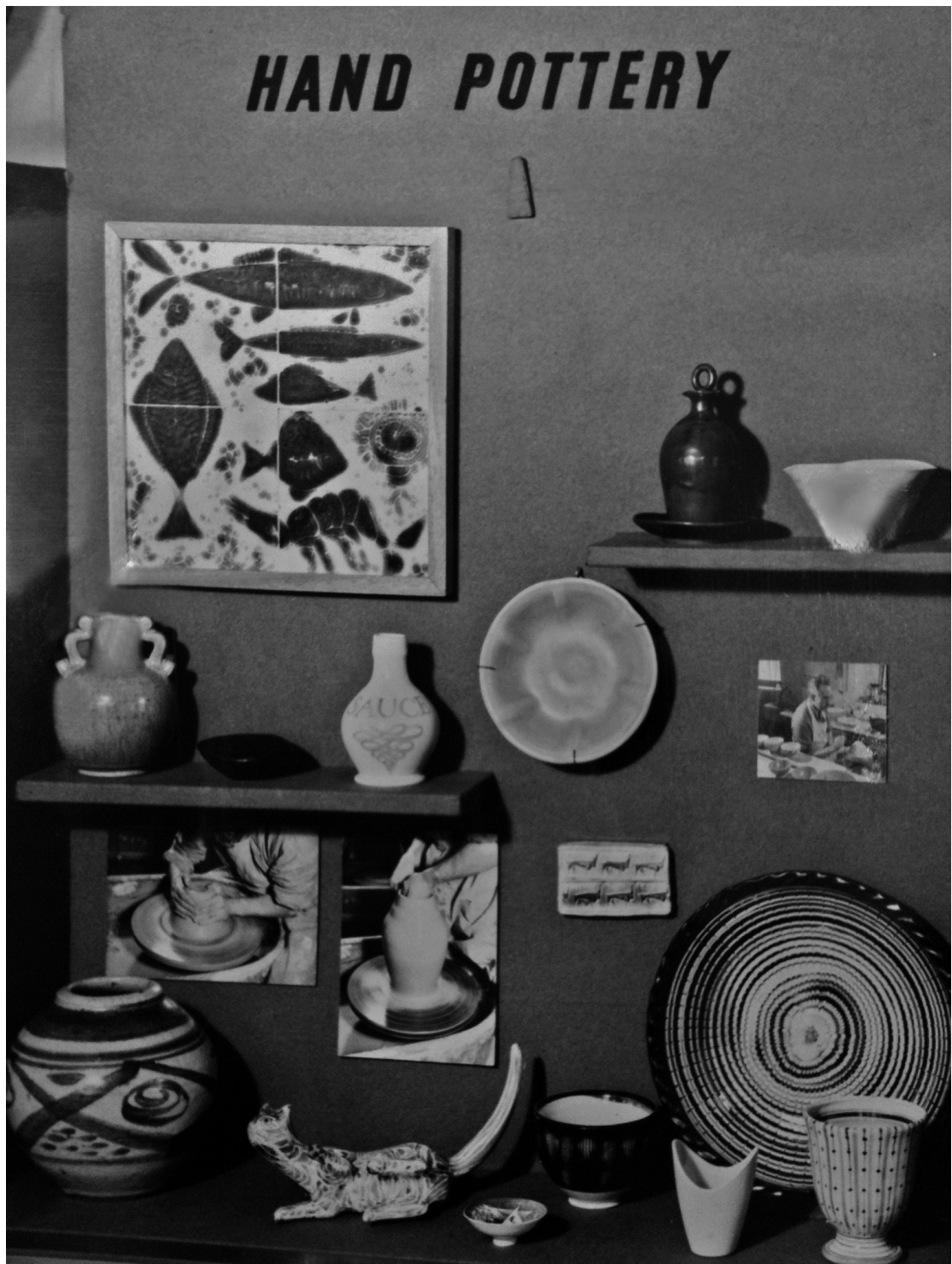


Illustration 23. Hand Pottery. Photograph courtesy of the Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives, Brighton, UK.



Illustration 24. Commercial Pottery. Photograph courtesy of the Design Council Archive, University of Brighton Design Archives, Brighton, UK.

THIS RECORD CARD IS INTENDED AS
A CATALOGUE TO ENABLE SCHOOLS TO CHECK
THE CONTENTS OF THE CASE TO WHICH IT
APPLIES AT FREQUENT INTERVALS. THE
CARD MUST BE HANDED TO THE CONTRACTOR
WHEN THE CASE IS COLLECTED FROM YOUR
SCHOOL AT THE END OF THE LOAN PERIOD.

ITEMS DETAILS OF VICTIM'S IN GROUP:		LOOKING AT GLASS Case 2	
NO	Stock No	DESCRIPTION	SUPPLIER
1	265 C	Tall Green Tumbler - Finland	Singer - Finnar
2	261 C	Clear Kosta Vase with amethyst strip missing Owens Boys Sept 74	"
3	227 C	Blue Glass Bowl - Finland	Singer - Denmark
4	254 C	Verini Tumbler - colored glass stripes - Italy	Singer - Finnar
5	267 C	Long Blue Water Jug - Finland missing Owens Boys	"
6	76 C	Large Brandy Ballon, blue with clear stem - Sweden missing Owens	Harrods
7	177 C	Triangular Ruler Dish - England	I. Powell
8	221 C	Green Vase - Finland	Singer - Denmark
9	264 C	Tapered Blue Vase, clear base - Finland missing Owens Boys	"
10	191 C	Norwegian Plate, amethyst with blue edge missing Owens Boys	Heath
11	266 C	Small Glass Bird - Finland missing Owens Boys	Singer - Denmark
12	266 C	Small, smoke colored Vase - Finland missing Owens Boys	Singer - Finnar
13	161 C	Martini Glass - Belgium	Heath
14	232 C	Blue Glass Vase - Denmark broken & replaced by 653A Blue glass missing Owens Boys vase.	Singer - Denmark

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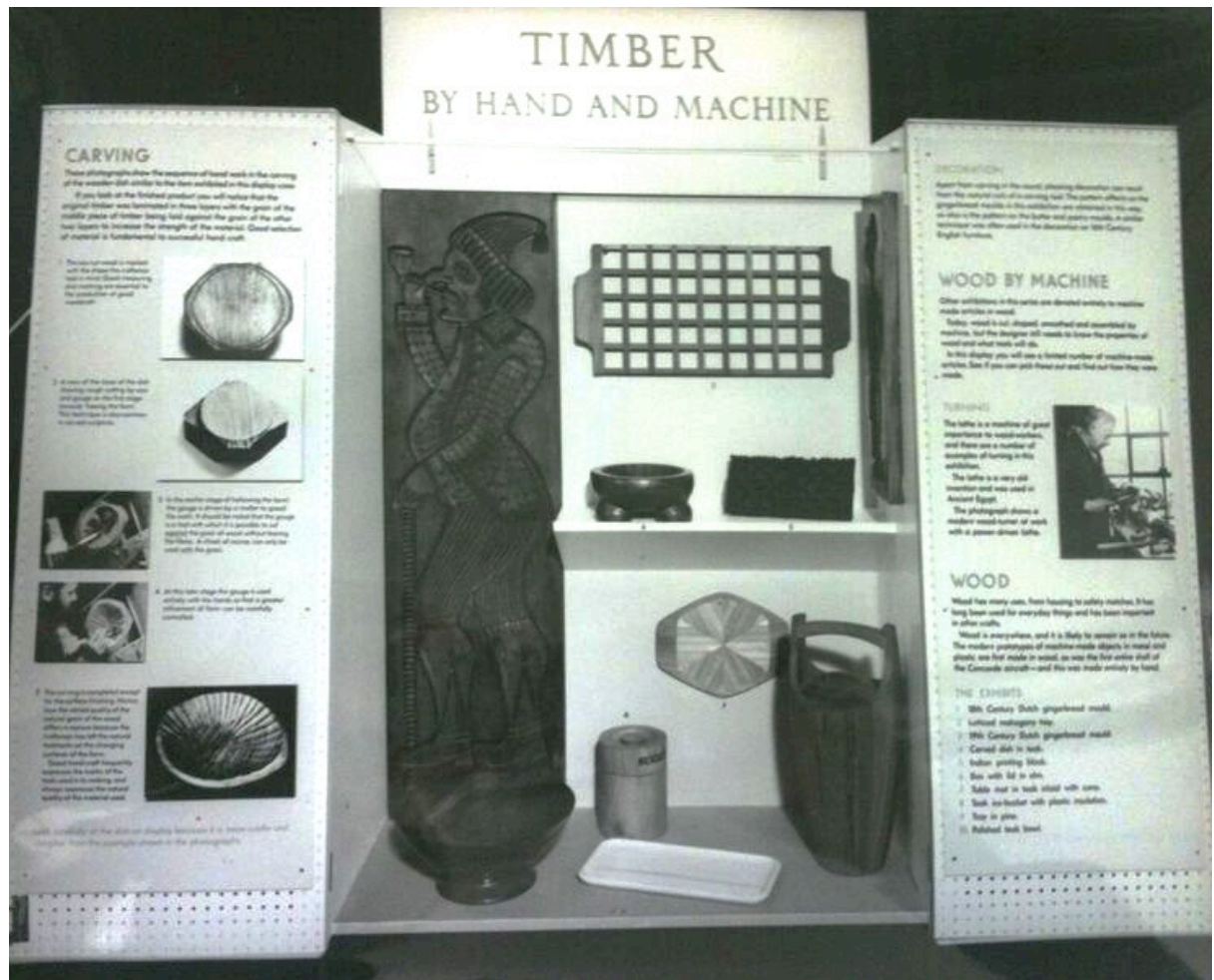


Illustration 26. Timber by Hand and Machine. Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Archives, London, UK.

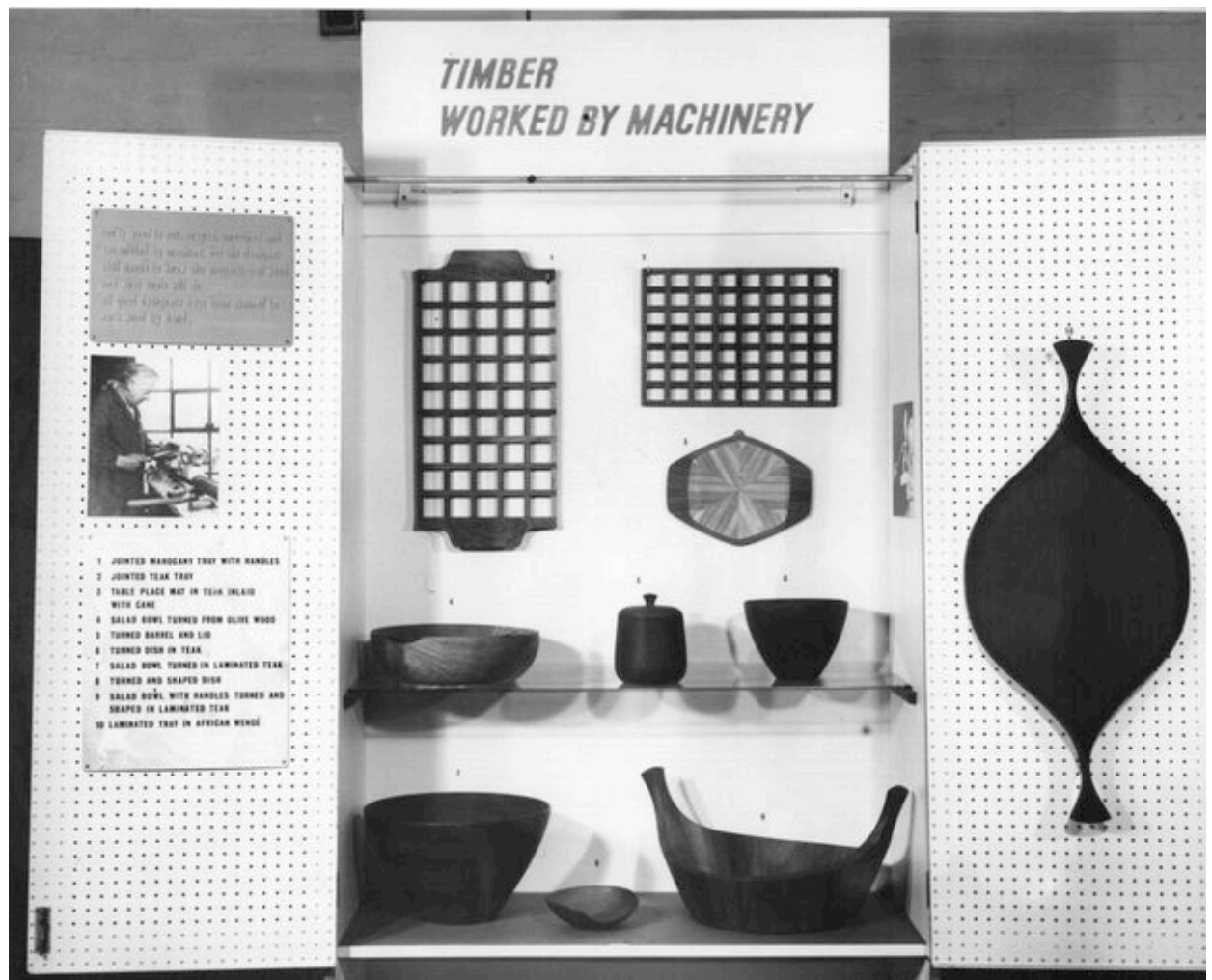


Illustration 27. Timber Worked by Machinery. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.



Illustration 28. Metals and Their Qualities. Photograph courtesy of the Metropolitan Archives, London, UK.

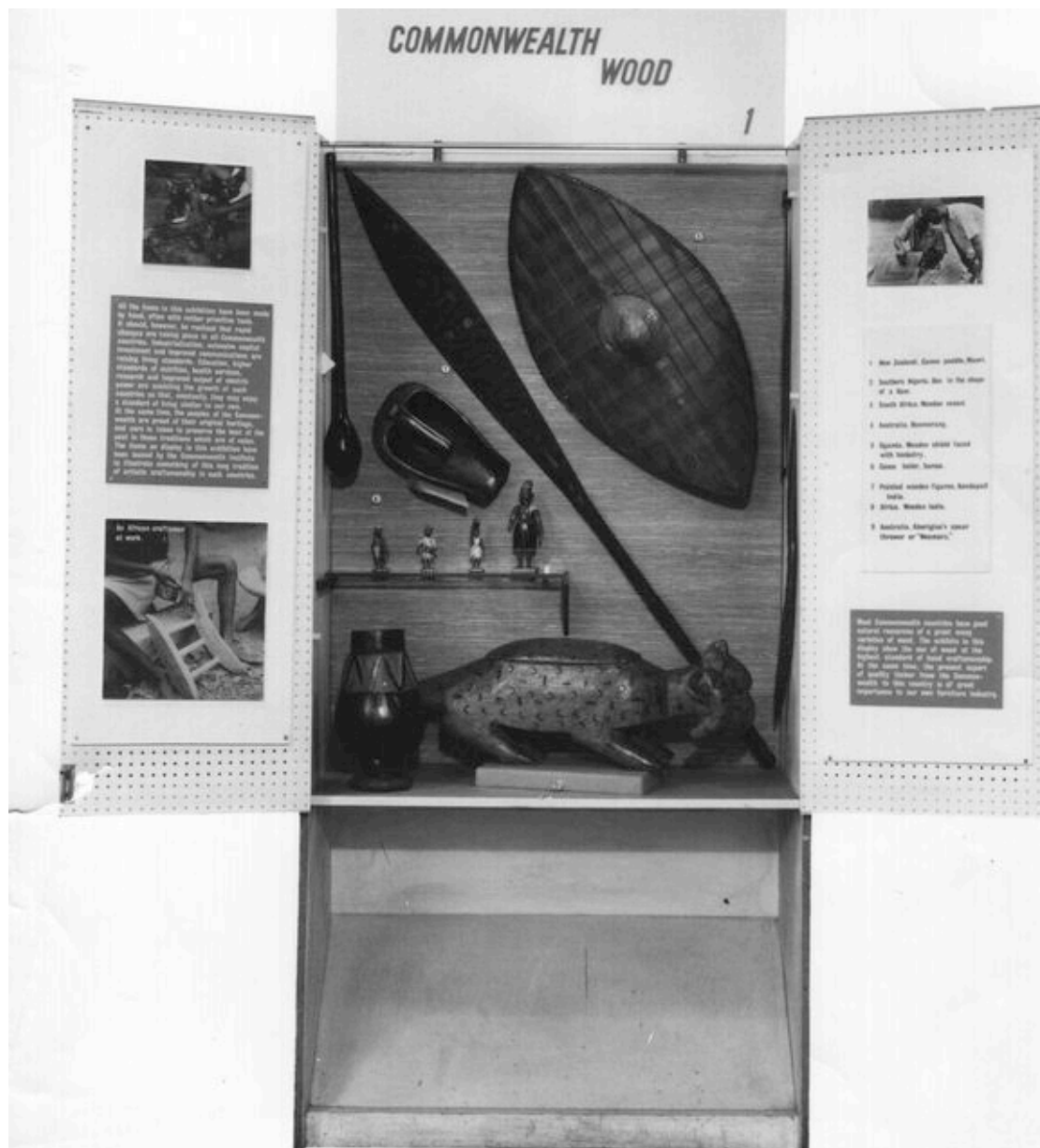


Illustration 29. Commonwealth Wood 1. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.



Illustration 30. Commonwealth Wood 2. Uncatalogued photograph in possession of the I.L.E.A./ Camberwell Collection archive, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL, London, UK.

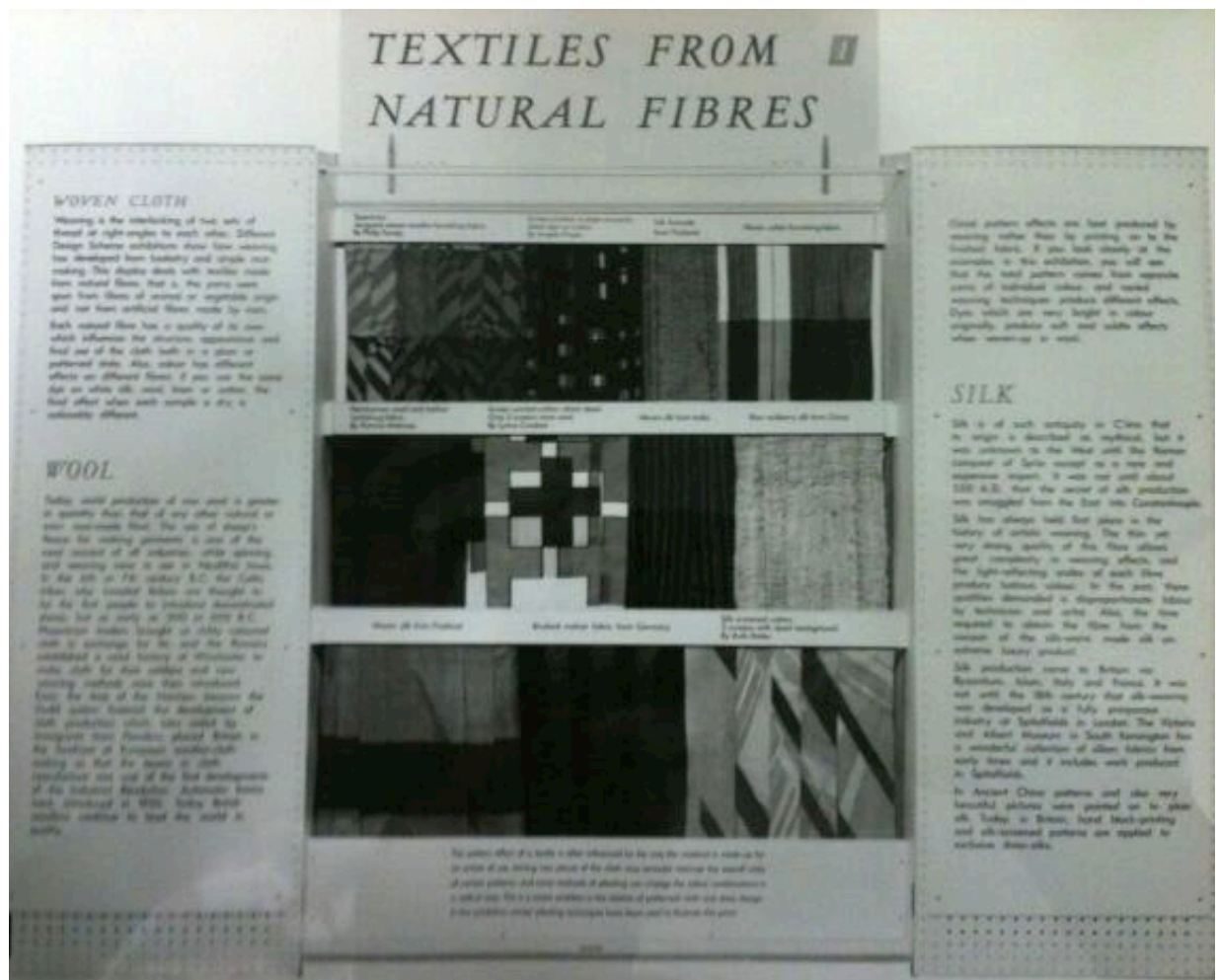


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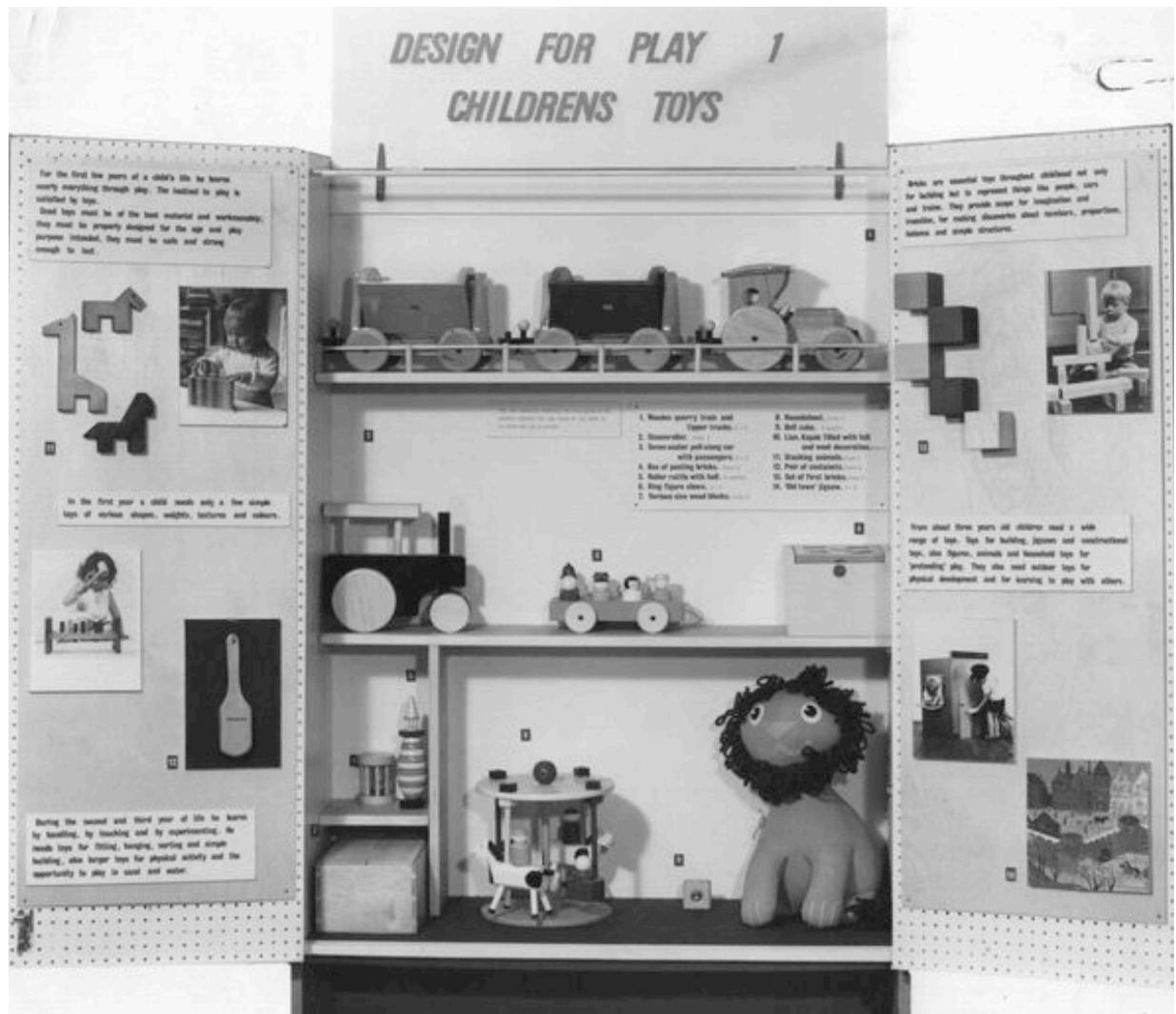


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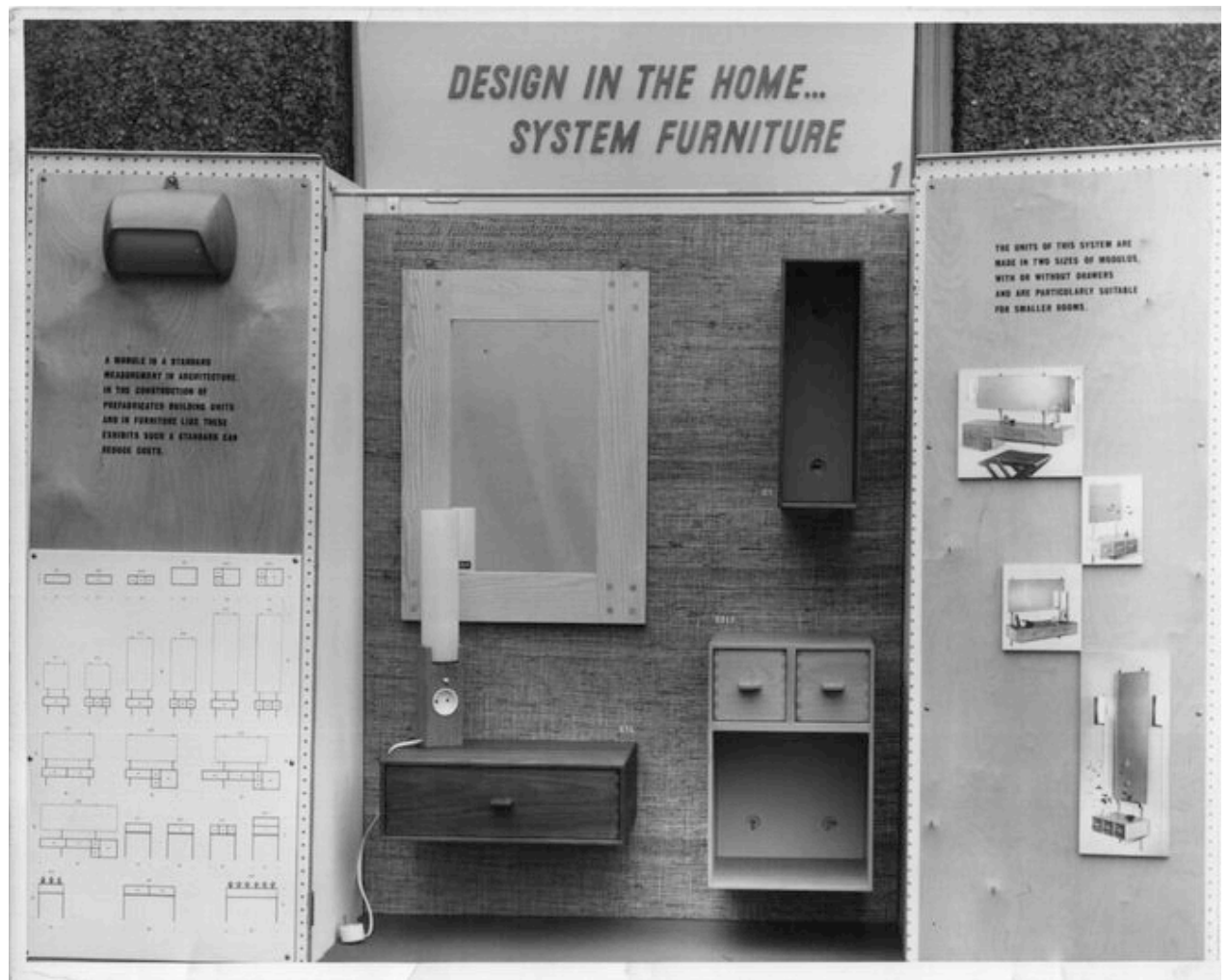


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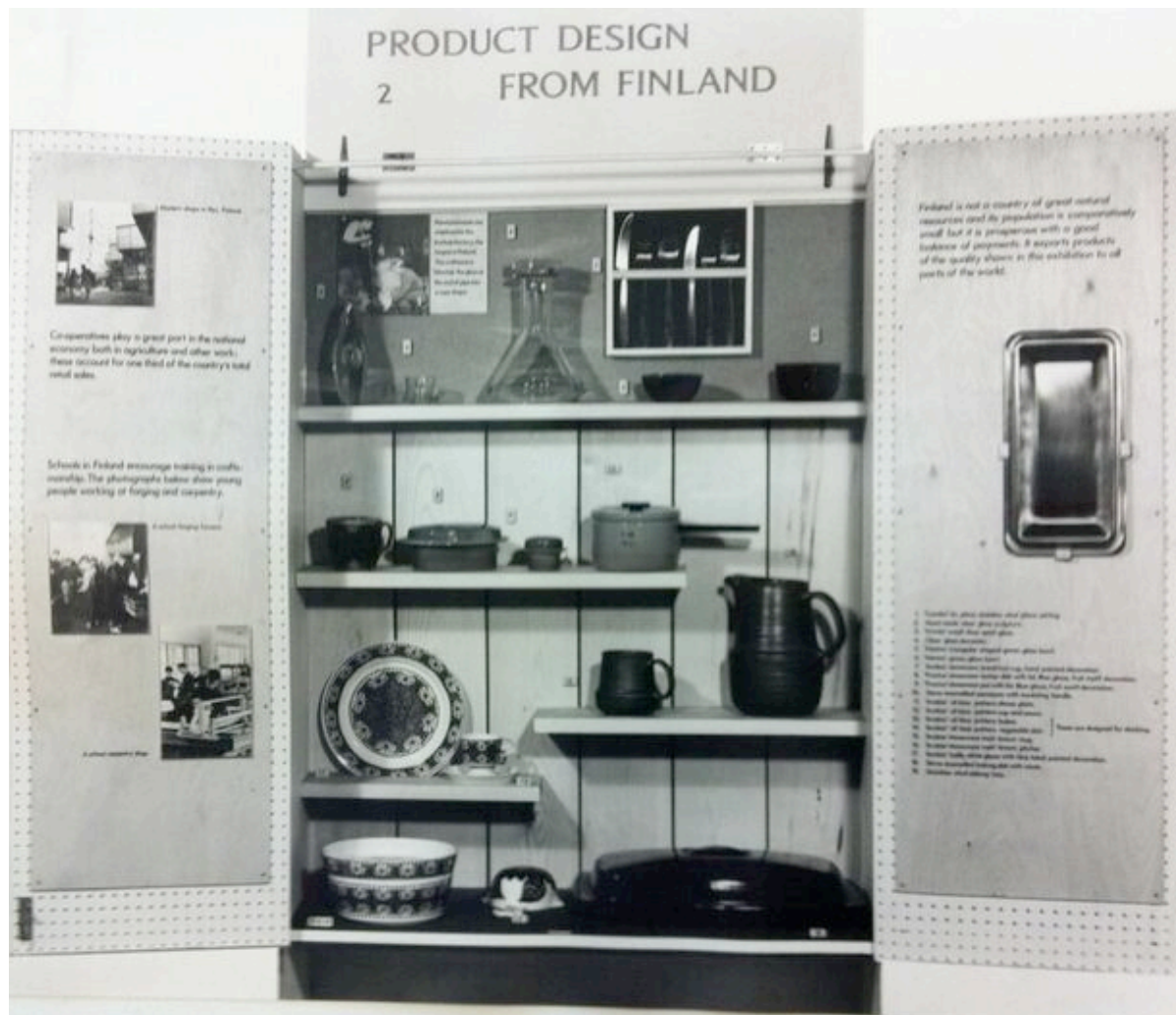


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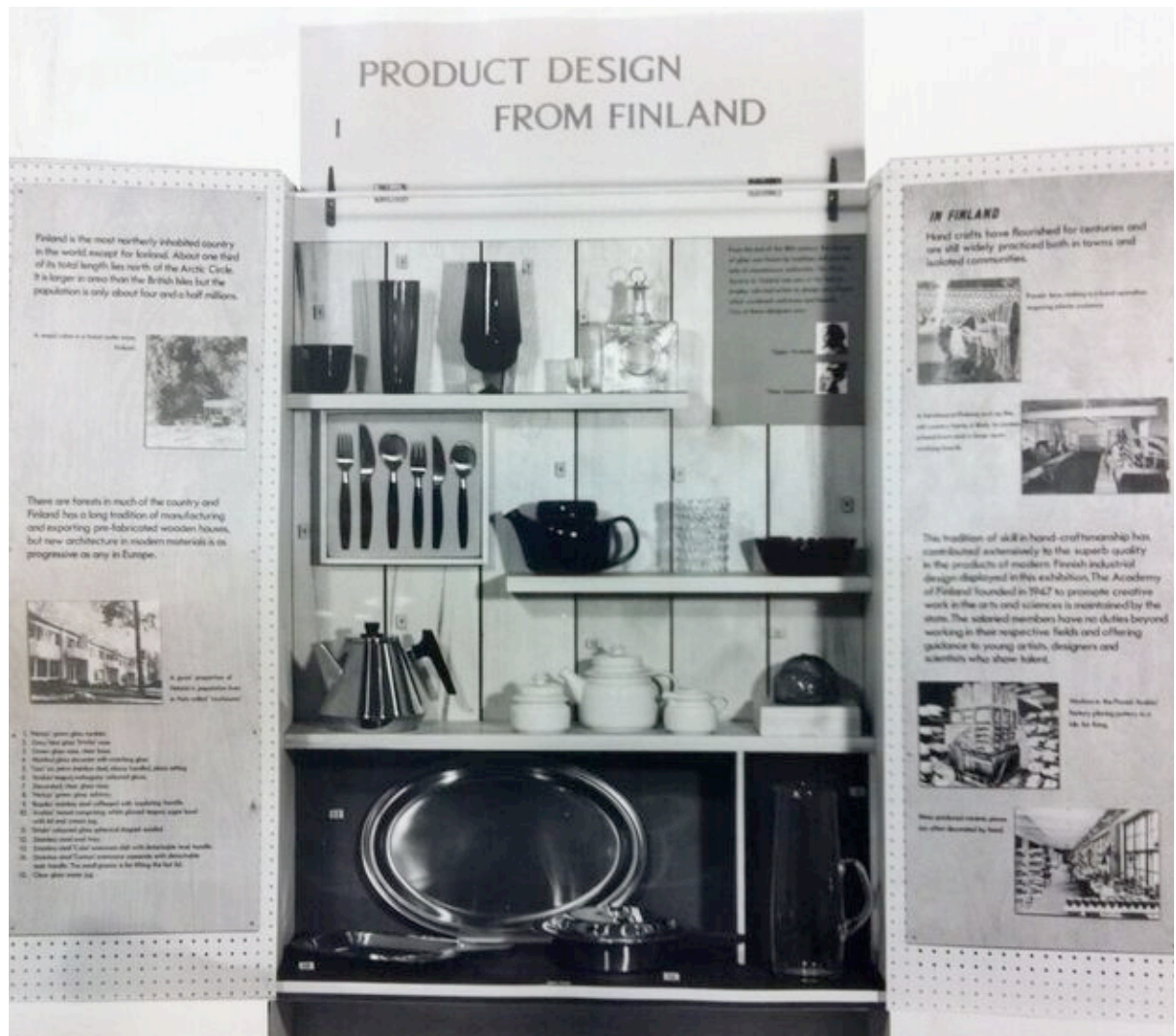


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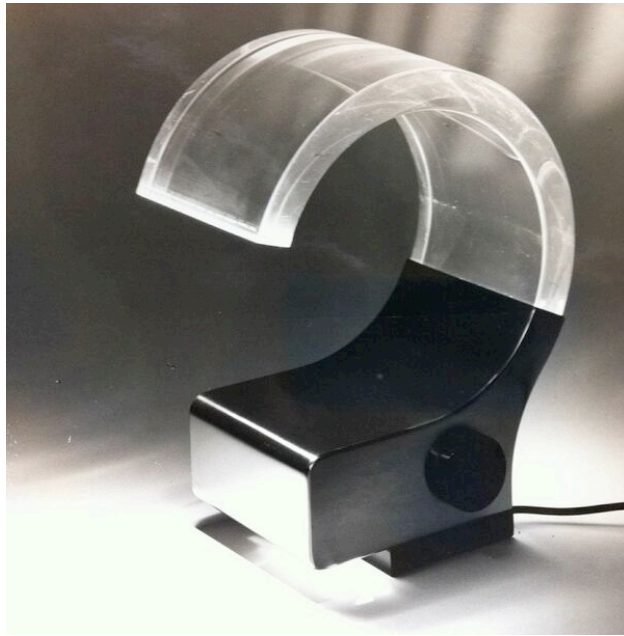


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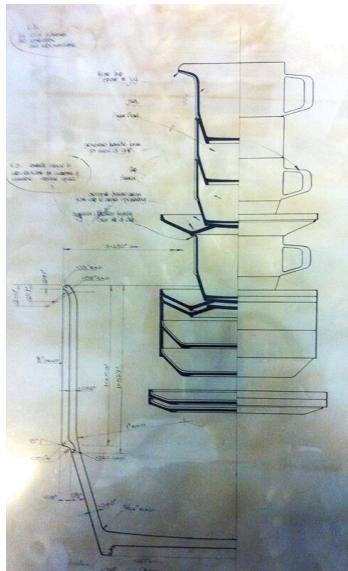


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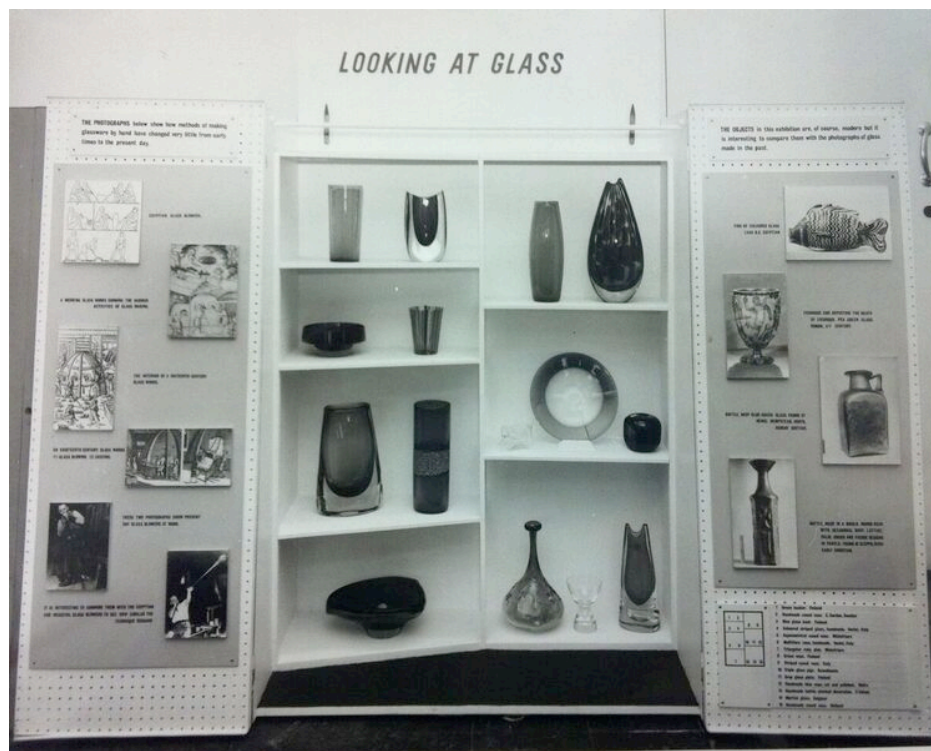


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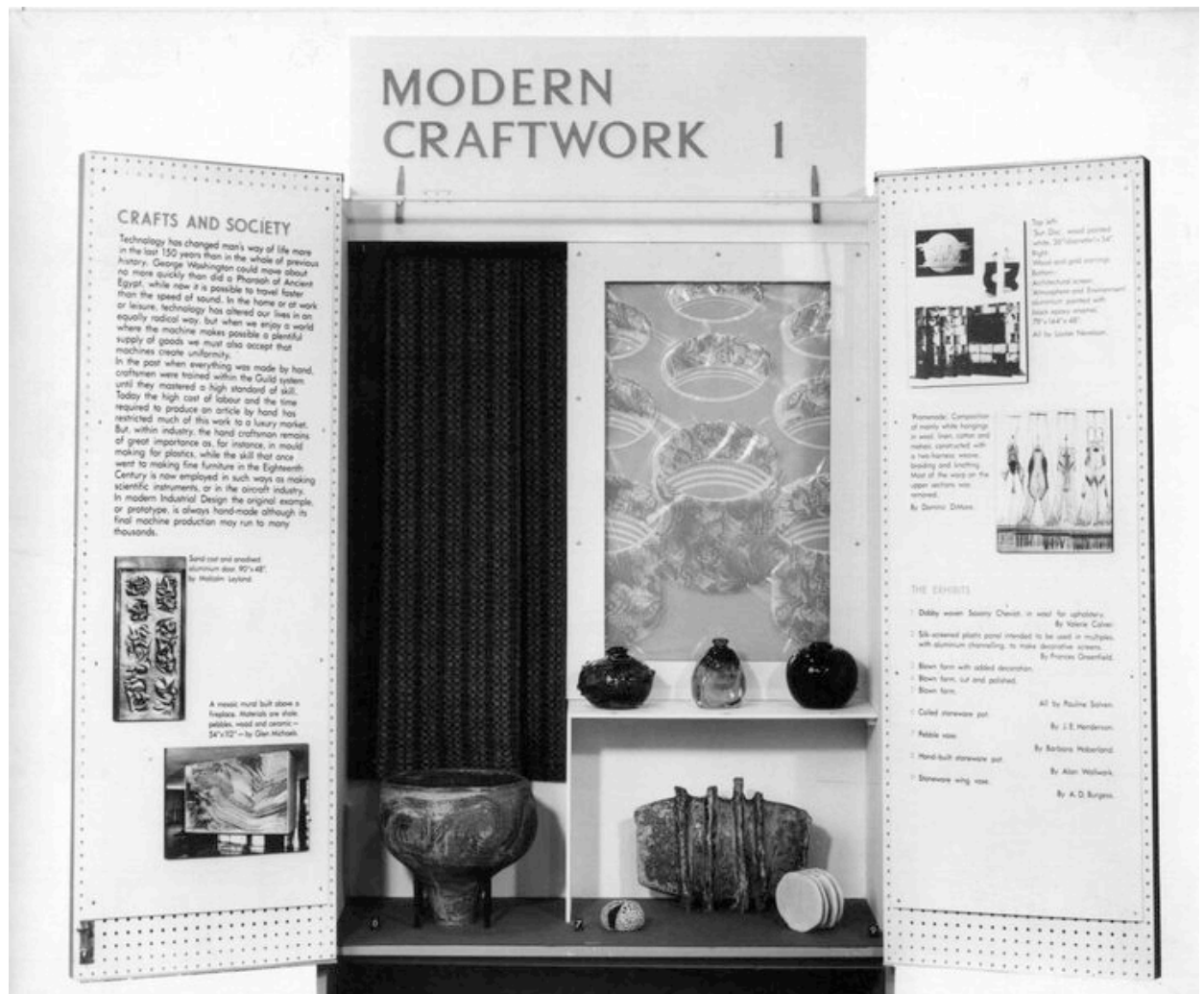


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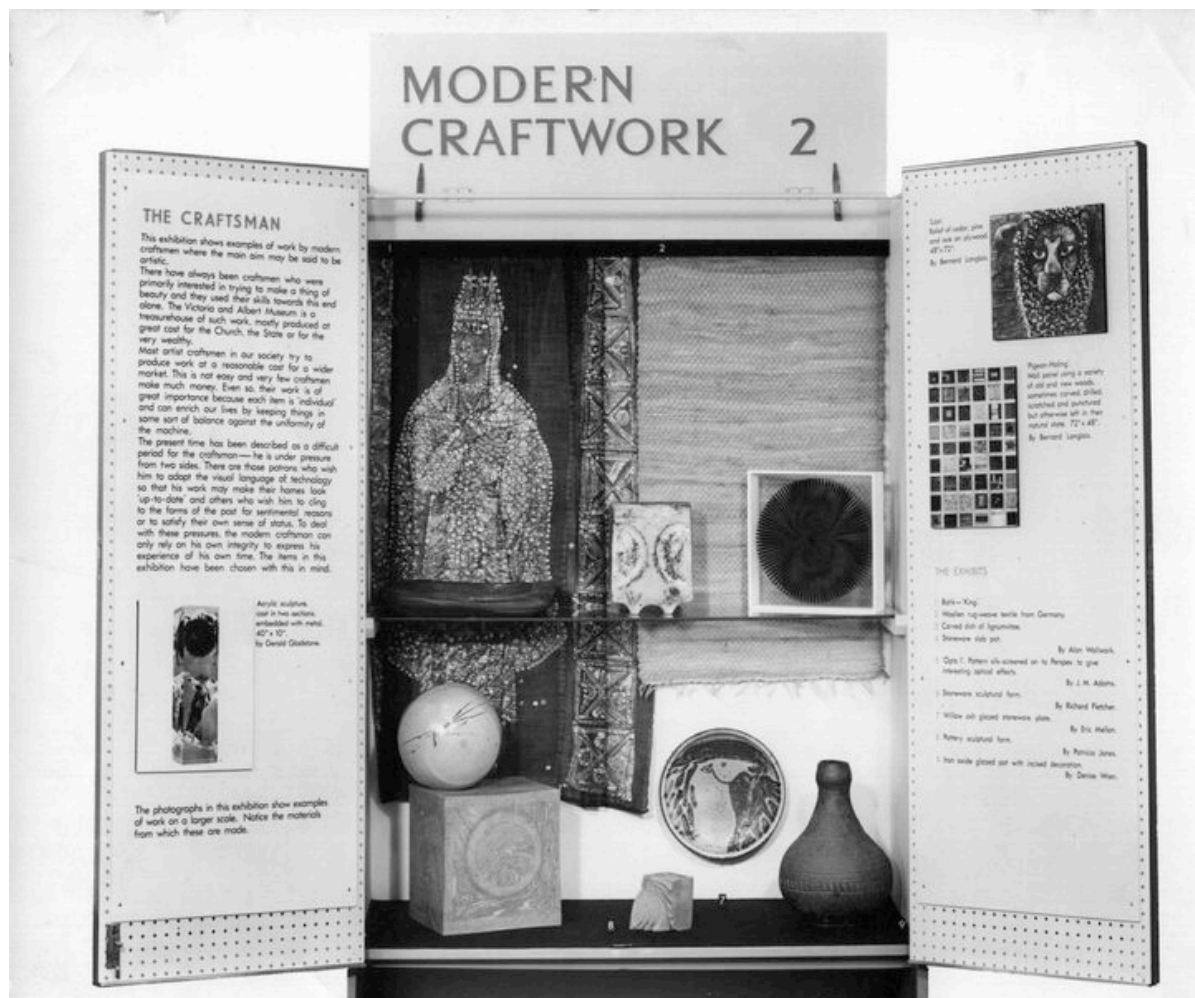


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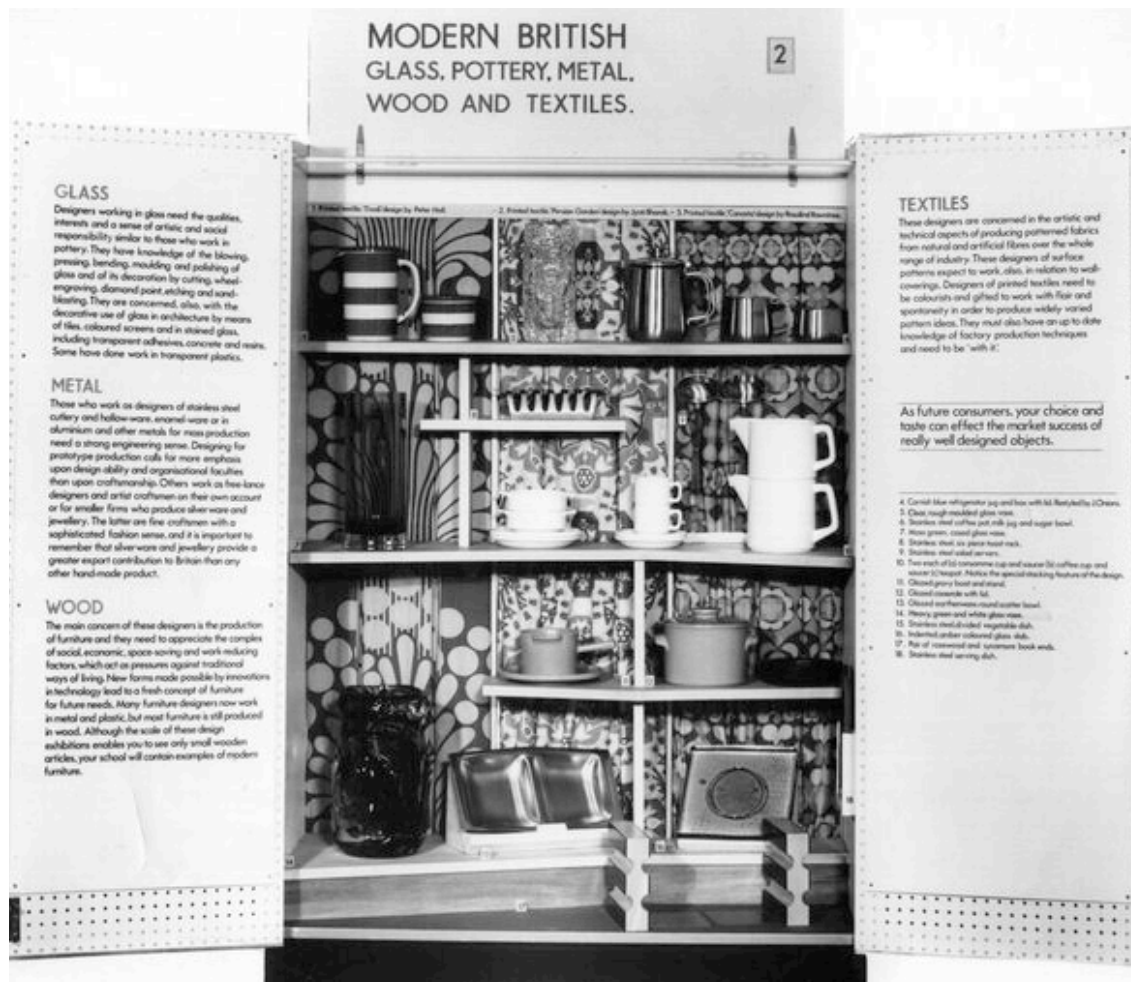


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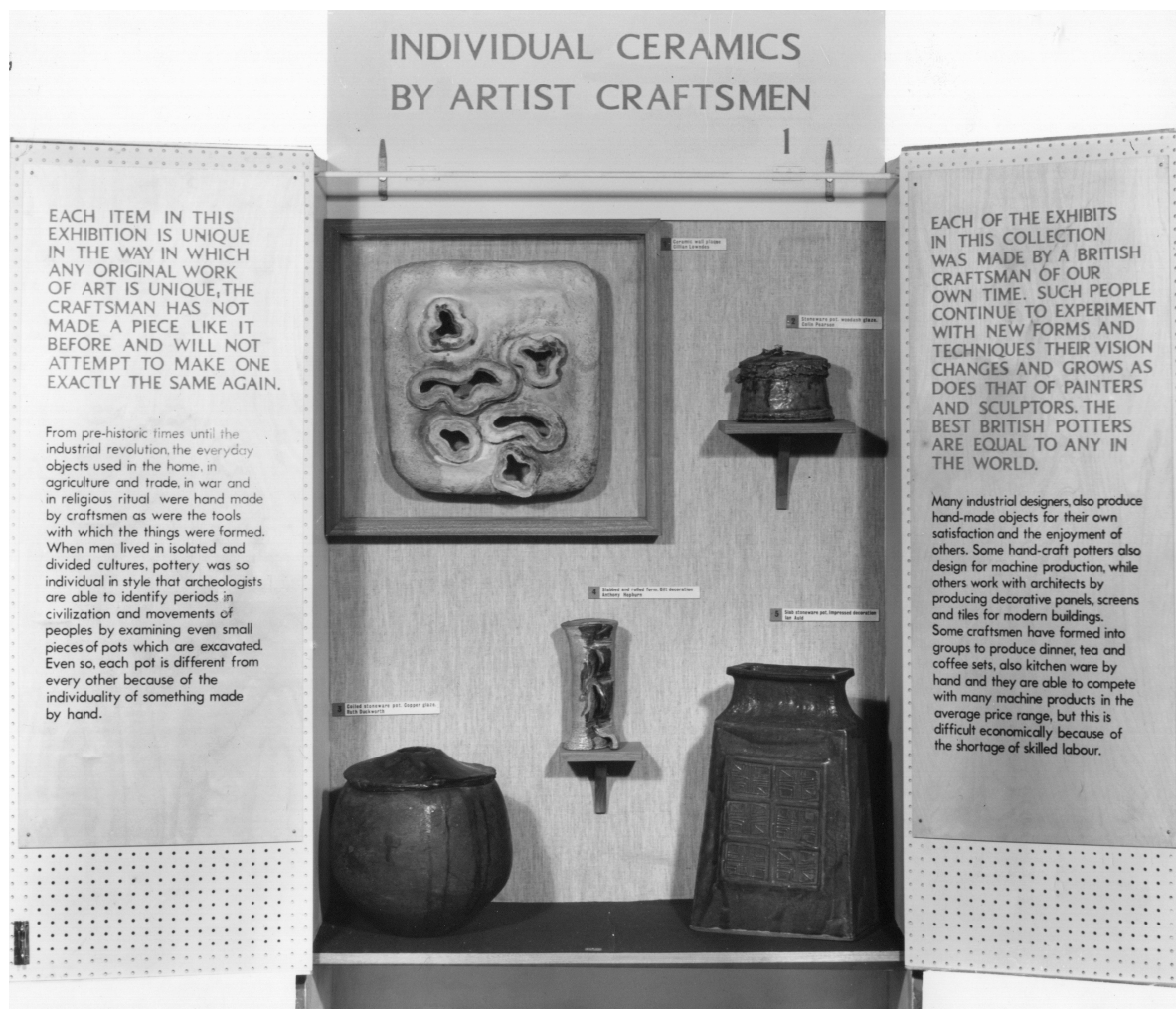


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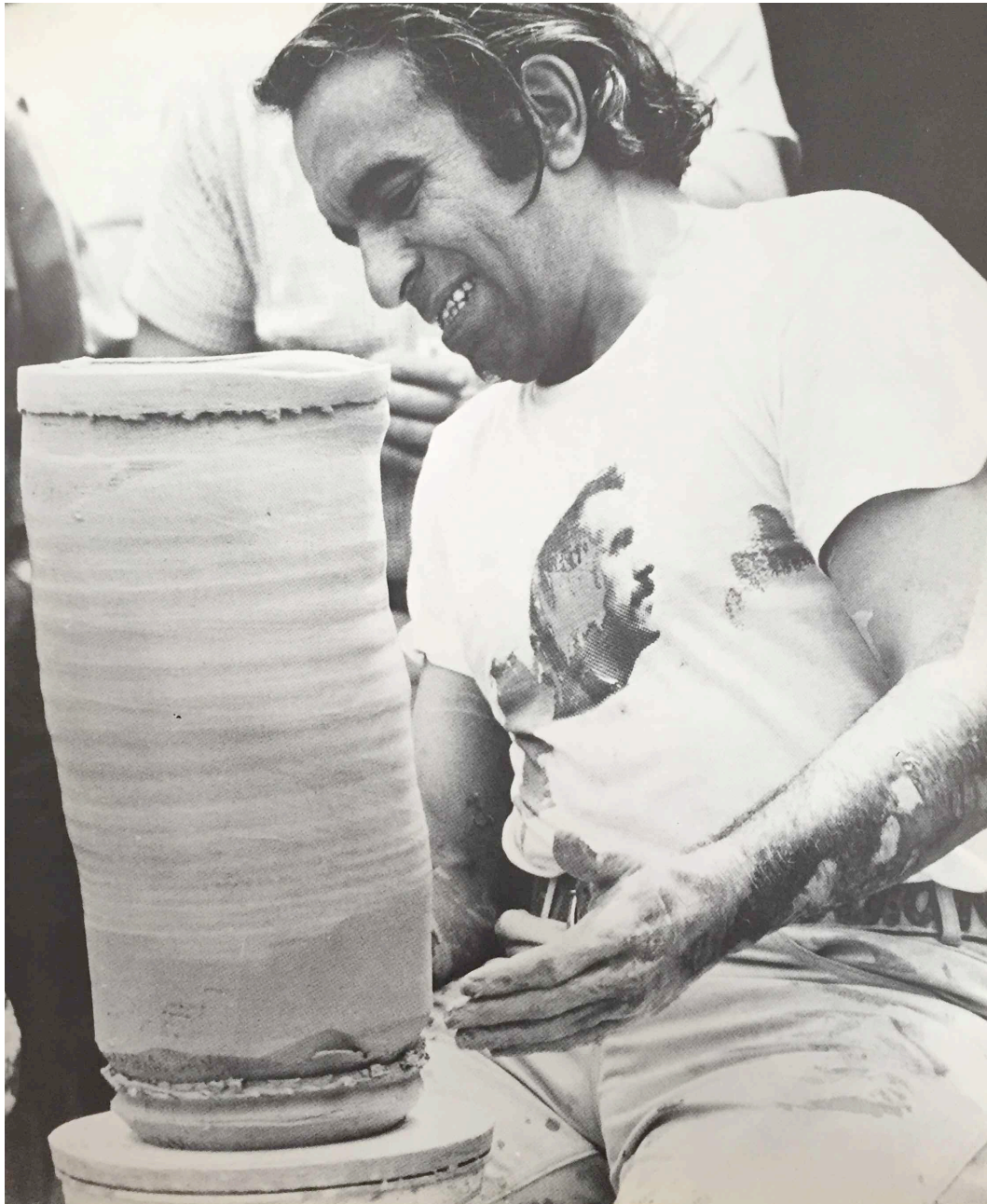


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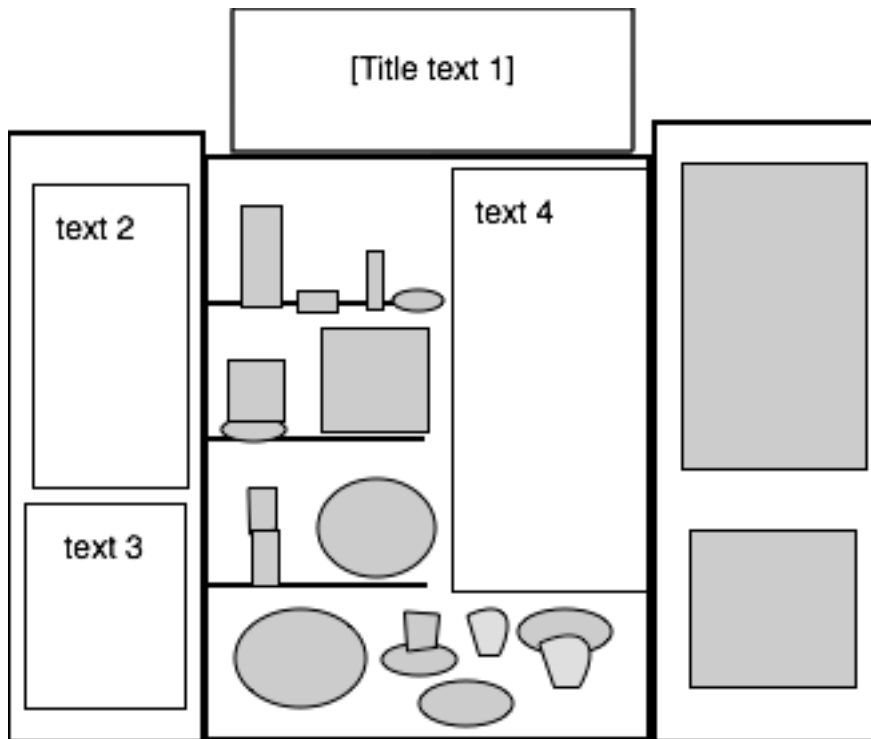
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Diagrammatic representation of *Plastics in the Home 1* display photo



[Title text 1] Plastics in the Home 1

[text 2]	Plastics
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A plastics material may be defined as a solid which can be pressed or moulded into a new shape. Damp clay, putty and dough are plastic materials. Some naturally occurring plastic materials have been made use of by man from the earliest times. Today the term Plastic describes a wide range of synthetic or man-made materials, which, although not plastic by the time they reach the consumer, were in a plastic form at some stage in their manufacture, during which stage they were moulded or shaped.

The first synthetic moulding material produced in 1916 was called Bakelite, after its discoverer, Dr. Baekeland a Belgian chemist working in America. Since then, many new

plastic materials have been created which have been applied to domestic use, to industry and to transport.

Qualities of Plastics

Plastics have some qualities not possessed by any common materials found in nature.

Plastics do not rust or decay, are not attacked by insects or vermin, and in general are not affected by moisture, oils, acids and alkalines. All plastics are practically non-conductors of heat and electricity. Some kinds can be woven into cloth which is mothproof and crease-proof. Plastics are used for things as different as life-belts and furniture.

[text 3] The Exhibits

1. Vase, dish, pepper-mill and egg-cup in thermosetting phenolic resin, from Denmark.
2. Stacking cup and saucer and jug, injection moulded polythene designed by D.H.Powell.
3. Polythene desk, bed-side and table lamp of bright or dim illumination. This mains-powered lamp may also be fixed to a wall. Japanese.
4. 'Opto 1'. Pattern-silk screened on to Perspex to give optical effects.
5. Tableware in thermo-setting melamine - powder in a closed mould.
6. Acrylic plastic try.
7. Trichromatic print on vacuum-formed poly-vinyl chloride (PVC) with reflective metallized melinex. Section of large panel shown in photograph. By Douglas Hamilton.

[text 4]

Moulding

The diagrams show the sequence of the operations in the three main methods used in factories to shape plastic objects.

Compression Moulding

The hot mould is opened, the cold moulding powder is put in and the mould is closed under many tons of pressure. The moulding time is up to about a minute and a half.

Injection Moulding

In this method the plastic material is heated until it is molten and is then injected into the

mould which is cooled by water. This machine is very expensive but with a multi-impression mould can produce over 500 objects an hour.

Vacuum Forming

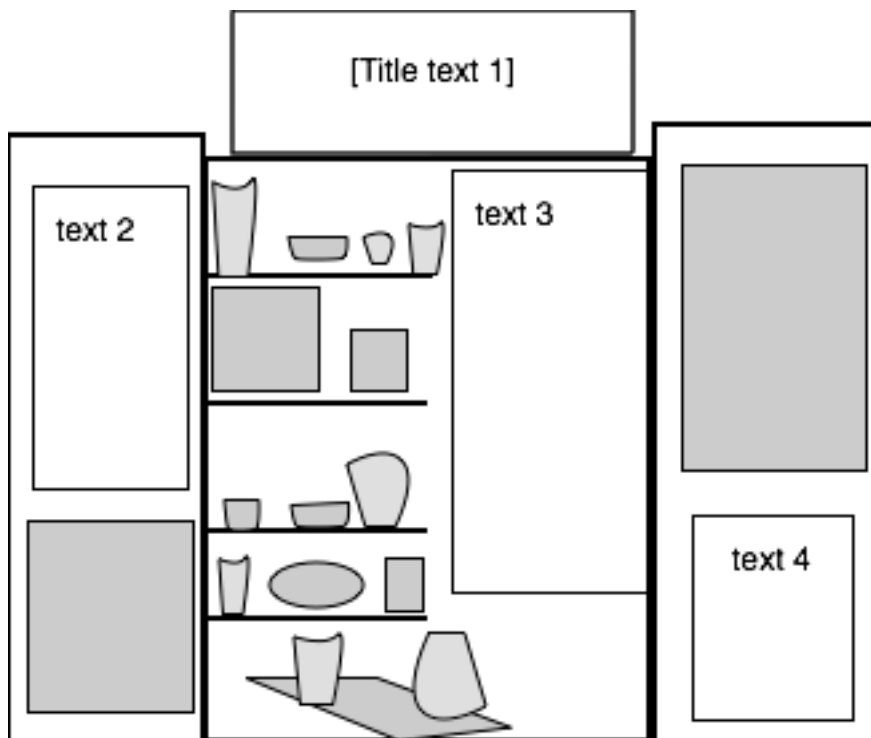
A thin sheet of thermoplastic material is clamped over the top of an open mould, a radiant heater softens the plastic which is then pulled into the mould by the evacuation of air through holes in the base, This is an economical process where small quantities of objects are required. It is also used to make such things as the door linings of refrigerators.

Thermoplastic means: able to be softened by heat.

Extrusion

In this fourth method, continuous mouldings of rods and tubes are made by extrusion from a machine which is like an elaborate version of a household mixing machine. The moulding powered is heated and forced through a die-head, like tooth paste from a tube.

Appendix 2– Diagrammatic representation of *Plastics in the Home 2* display photo



[Title text 1] Plastics in the Home 2

[text 2] Designing for Plastics

The designer must think in terms of the mould, so that filling and ejection can be done easily and rapidly. If the article is to be of a complicated shape, perhaps with projections for undercuts, the mould may need to be made in more than two parts and split vertically as well as horizontally. In such a case, side as well as vertical pressure must be exerted during moulding.

If metal inserts are required as in electrical components, the mould must be designed to allow the inserts to be located before the moulding material is put in and without interfering with the ejection of the finished article. In addition, the article must be well designed for its purpose and give pleasure.

Much skill and arduous precision work is entailed in the making of a mould. This means that the cost of a mould is very high and can only be justified if it can be used for producing many thousands of articles.

This panel is laminated plastic

Designer Robert Heritage RDI, Des RCA, FSIA

Laminated plastic board, used in table tops is easy to clean, not affected by the heat of teapots or food plates but is damaged by a hot smoothing iron or lighted cigarette.

[text 3]

Some Plastic Materials in Common Use

Polythene

Besides being a practically perfect insulator it is reasonably water repellent, is thermoplastic, proof against acids and alkalines and light enough to float in water. It is readily fabricated by injection or extrusion moulding. Polythene articles are fairly resistant to staining, do not chip or break and are easy to keep clean.

Polypropylene

Has the same qualities as polythene but is stronger, more rigid and stands higher temperatures.

Polystyrene

Is hard, stiff, and can be opaque or highly transparent. It behaves well under low temperatures and is very suitable for use in refrigerators, is used for lenses and wall tiles but is inclined to be brittle, and is such a good electrical insulator that it tends to collect dust from the atmosphere. It has a metallic or glass like sound when dropped on a hard surface. It is NOT suitable for toys.

Melamine

Used for tableware, it resembles porcelain in appearance but is much lighter and very strong. Melamine crockery is not easily stained by tea or coffee if washed up straight away.

Polycarbonate

In tableware, polycarbonate stains less and stands up to heat better than polythene but is more expensive to manufacture

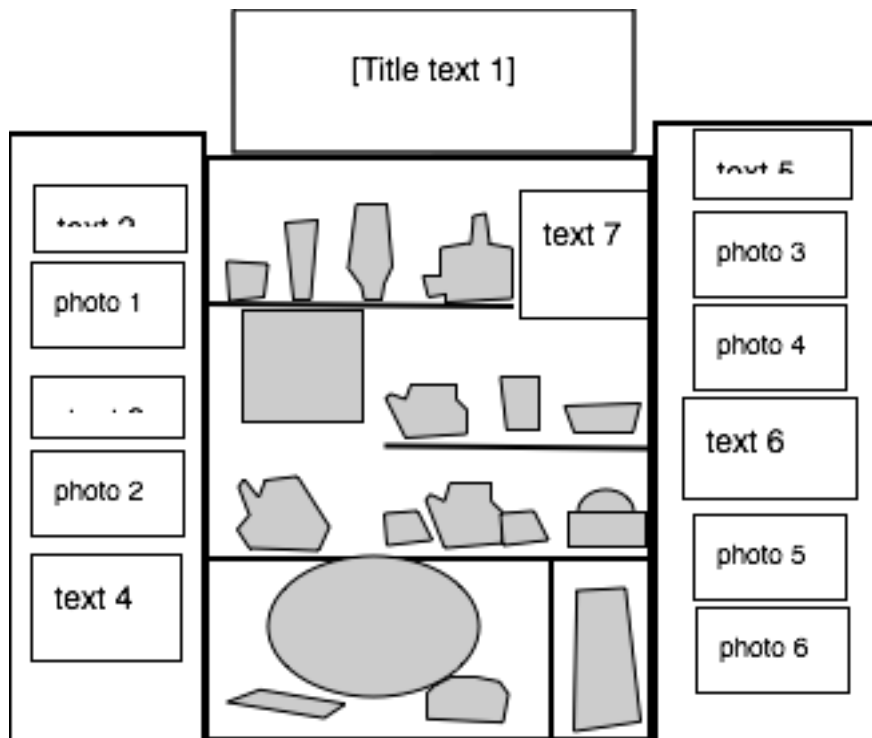
Acrylic Plastics

Can be used in many situations where glass would be dangerous, such as in contact lenses. It is highly transparent and a substitute for glass in either clear or coloured form. It is used in table-ware, rear lamps of cars, in artificial jewellery, knife handles, and for camera lenses. 'Perspex' is an acrylic plastic.

[text 4] The Exhibits:

1. Two-colour print on vacuum-formed PVC. Section of large panel show in photograph. By Douglas Hamilton
2. Tableware in polythene
3. Lock-a-blocks' polystyrene children's bricks.
4. Tableware in thermo-setting melamine-powder in a closed mould.
5. Tumbler in Perspex
6. Stacking dish in injection moulded polythene
7. Jug in melamine
8. Insulated tumbler and flask in Perspex
9. Acrylic plastic tray
10. Stacking food storage containers in melamine and clear Perspex
11. Vacuum-formed polystyrene interlocking tiles
12. Polythene waste-bin with polystyrene lid.

Appendix 3– Diagrammatic representation of *Product Design from Finland 1* display photo



[Title text 1] ‘Product Design from Finland 1’

[text 2] ‘Finland is the most northerly inhabited country in the world, except for Iceland. About one third of its total length lies north of the Arctic Circle. It is larger in area than the British Isles but the population is only about four and a half millions.’

[text 3] ‘There are forests in much of the country and Finland has a long tradition of manufacturing and exporting pre-fabricated wooden houses, but new architecture in modern materials is as progressive as any in Europe.’

[text 4]

1. ‘Notsjo’ green glass tumbler
2. Grey/Blue glass ‘Iittala’ vase
3. Green glass vase, clear base.
4. Glass decanter with matching glass

5. 'Lion' six piece stainless steel, ebony handled, place setting
6. 'Arabia' teapot, mahogany coloured glaze.
7. Decorated clear glass vase
8. 'Notsjo' green glass ashtray
9. 'Brasilia' stainless steel coffeepot with insulating handle.
10. 'Arabia' teaset comprising white glazed teapot, sugar bowl with lid and cream jug.
11. 'Iittala' colour glass spherical shaped sundial
12. Stainless steel oval tray
13. Stainless steel 'Cuba' ovenware dish with detachable teak handle
14. Stainless steel 'Canton' ovenware casserole with detachable teak handle.
15. The small groove is for lifting the hot lid.
16. Clear glass water jug.

[text 5] In Finland hand crafts have flourished for centuries and are still widely practiced both in towns and isolated communities.

[text 6] This tradition of skill in hand-craftsmanship has contributed extensively to the superb quality in the products of modern Finnish industrial design displayed in this exhibition. The Academy of Finland founded in 1947 to promote creative work in the arts and sciences is maintained by the state, The salaried members have no duties beyond working in their respective fields and offering guidance to young artists, designers and scientists who show talent.

[text 7] From the end of the 18th century the beauty of glass was frozen by tradition, imitation and monotonous uniformity. The Iittala factory in Finland was one of the first to employ talented artists to design new shapes which combined usefulness and beauty. These designers are: Tapio Wirkkala and Timo Sarpaneva.

[photo 1] (caption) A wood cabin in a forest under snow, Finland

[photo 2] (caption) A good proportion of Helsinki's population lives in flats called 'rowhouses'.

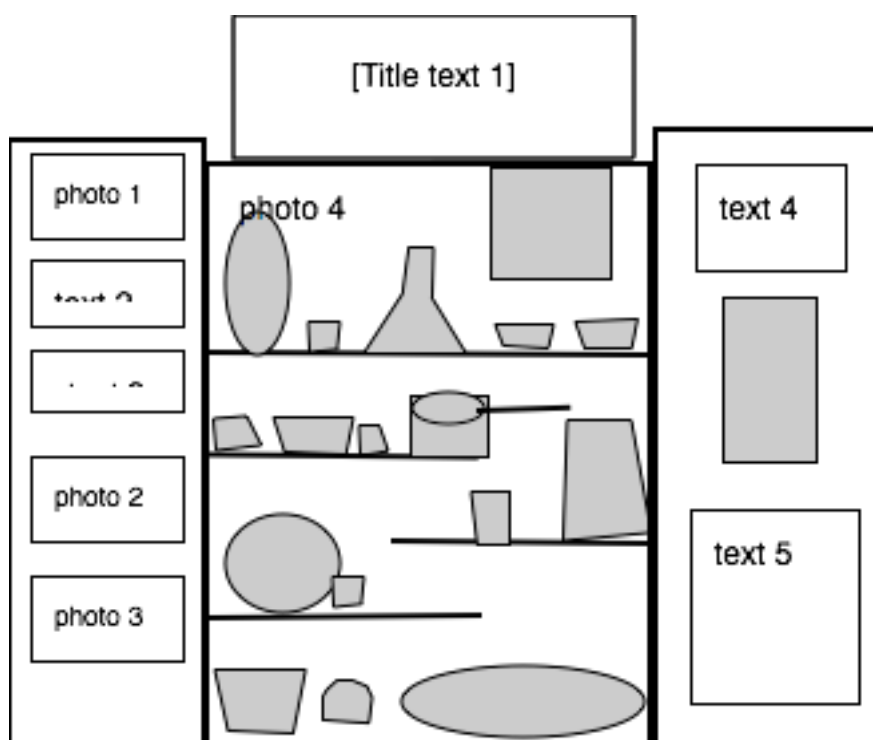
[photo 3] (caption) Finnish lace-making is a hand operation requiring infinite patience

[photo 4] (caption) A farmhouse in Finland, such as this old country home, is likely to contain a hand loom and a large open cooking hearth.

[photo 5] (caption) Workers in the Finnish 'Arabia' factory placing pottery in a kiln for firing.

[photo 6] (caption) Mass produced ceramic pieces are often decorated by hand.

Appendix 4– Diagrammatic representation of *Product Design from Finland 2* display photo



[Title text 1] Product Design from Finland 2

[text 2] Co-operatives play a great part in the national economy both in agriculture and other work; these account for one third of the countries local retail sales

[text 3] Schools in Finland encourage training in craftsmanship. The photographs below show young people working at forging and carpentry

[text 4] Finland is not a country of great natural resources and its population is comparatively small but it is prosperous with a good balance of payments. It exports products of the quality shown in the exhibition to all parts of the world.

[text 5] 1. 'Carelia' six piece stainless steel place setting.
2. Hand made clear glass sculpture.
3. 'Iittala' small clear spirit glass.

4. Clear glass decanter
5. 'Notsto' [sic] triangular shaped green glass bowl.
6. 'Notsto' [sic] green glass bowl
7. 'Arabia' stoneware breakfast cup, hand painted decoration
8. 'Fructus' stoneware butter dish with lid. Blue glaze, fruit motif decoration.
9. 'Fructus' stoneware pot with lid. Blue glaze, fruit motif decoration.
10. Stove enamelled saucepan with insulating handle
11. 'Arabia' ali blue pattern dinner plate
12. 'Arabia' ali blue pattern cup and sauce
13. 'Arabia' ali blue pattern beaker
14. 'Arabia' ali blue pattern vegetable dish [these are designed for stacking].
15. 'Arabia' stoneware matt brown mug.
16. 'Arabia' stoneware matt brown pitcher.
17. 'Arabia' ladle, white glaze and blue hand painted decoration.
18. Stove enamelled baking dish and cover.
19. Stainless steel oblong tray.

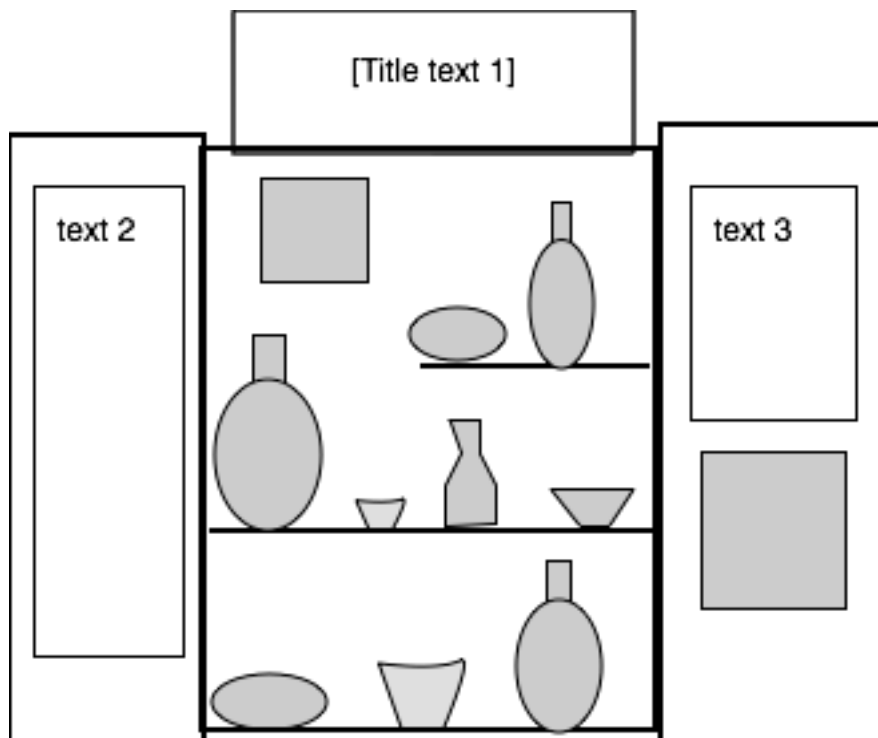
[photo 1] (caption) Modern shops in Pori, Finland

[photo 2] (caption) A school forging furnace

[photo 3] (caption) A carpentry class

[photo 4] (caption) Hand processes are employed in the Karhula factory, the largest in Finland. This craftsman's 'blowing' the glass at the end of a pipe into a vase shape.

Appendix 5– Diagrammatic representation of *Pottery Thrown by Hand* display photo



[Title text 1] Pottery Thrown by Hand

[text 2]

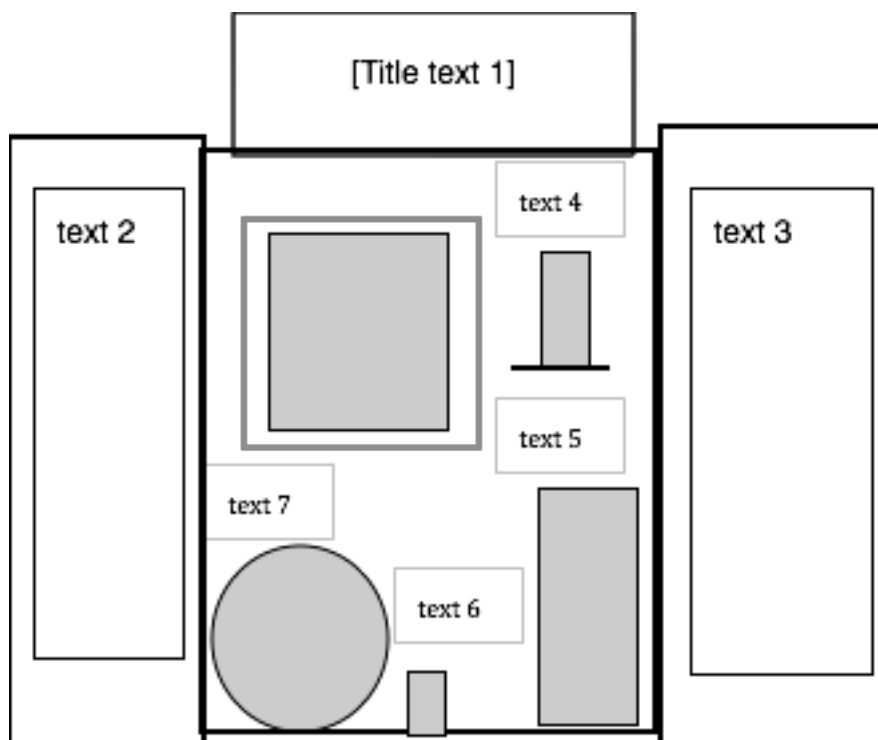
The wedged clay is centred on the wheel...with water as a lubricant it is ‘coned’ or forced upwards, then down; this upward and downward movement is repeated to remove any small pockets of air from the clay. Thumbs are inserted into the top-centre and the clay opened out. The opened clay is drawn up into the form of a cylinder. Thrown pots of all shapes are formed from cylinders...These shapes grow from inward and outward pressure of the fingers. Here the craftsman is beginning to shape the rim. The thrown pot is now ready for removing from the wheel head.

[text 3]

1. Stoneware soup bowl with handle. Glazed inside only...David Leach.
2. Stoneware vase. Wax resist decoration. Glazed inside only...Francis Cooper.

3. Large vase, brushed and incised decoration.
4. Stoneware cup, glazed.
5. Coffee pot with straight handle. Matt glaze with sgraffito decoration...Lucie Rie.
6. Decorated stoneware porringer. Speckled glaze inside and out...Leach.
7. Earthenware serving bowl. Tin glaze with majolica decoration...A. Caiger-Smith.
8. Deep bowl, two matt glazes...Dan Arbeid
9. Red lustre jug...A. Caiger-Smith.

Appendix 6– Diagrammatic representation of *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 1* display photo



[Title text 1] Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 1

[text 2]

EACH ITEM IN THIS EXHIBITION IS UNIQUE IN THE WAY IN WHICH ANY ORIGINAL WORK OF ART IS UNIQUE. THE CRAFTSMAN HAS NOT MADE A PIECE LIKE IT BEFORE AND WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO MAKE ONE EXACTLY THE SAME AGAIN.

From pre-historic times until the industrial revolution, the everyday objects used in the home, in agriculture and trade, in war and in religious ritual were hand made by craftsmen as were the tools with which the things were formed. When men lived in isolated and divided cultures, pottery was so individual in style that archaeologists are able to identify periods in civilization and movements of peoples by examining even small pieces of pots which are excavated. Even so, each pot is different from every other because of the individuality of something made by hand.

[text 3]

EACH OF THE EXHIBITS IN THIS COLLECTION WAS MADE BY A BRITISH CRAFTSMAN OF OUR OWN TIME. SUCH PEOPLE CONTINUE TO EXPERIMENT WITH NEW FORMS AND TECHNIQUES THEIR VISION CHANGES AND GROWS AS DOES THAT OF PAINTERS AND SCULPTORS. THE BEST BRITISH POTTERS ARE EQUAL TO ANY IN THE WORLD.

Many industrial designers, also produce hand-made objects for their satisfaction and the enjoyment of others. Some hand-craft potters also design for machine production, while others work with architects by producing decorative panels, screens and tiles for modern buildings.

Some craftsmen have formed into groups to produce dinner, tea and coffee sets, also kitchen ware by hand and they are able to compete with many machine products in the average price range, but this is difficult economically because of the shortage of skilled labour.

[text 4]

Glazed stoneware bottle. Applied decoration - Dan Arbeid.

[text 5]

Slab stoneware pot - Gerwyn Eynon.

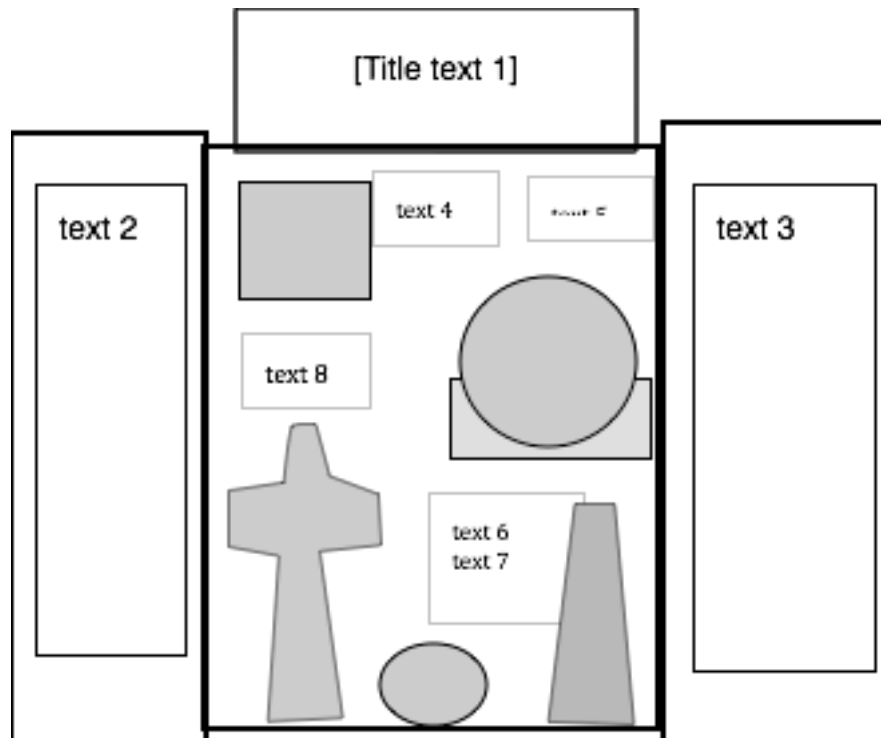
[text 6]

Slabbed and rolled form. Gilt decoration - Anthony Hepburn.

[text 7]

Ceramic wall plaque and Stoneware bowl combed and glazed decoration - Gillian Lowndes.

Appendix 7– Diagrammatic representation of *Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 1* display photo



[Title text 1] Individual Ceramics by Artist Craftsmen 2

[text 2]

We no longer live in fragmented societies of men divided and alone and most of our necessities are produced by machines in factories. Because of this, much of our pottery has lost its diversity in design and your cup and saucer is likely to be exactly the same as thousands of others. The machine has enriched our lives by a plentiful supply of goods and even if these products are often a little dull we now have enough to go round.

MODERN CONDITIONS HAVE CHANGED THE POSITION OF THE HAND CRAFTSMAN IN SOCIETY

The need for the unique hand-made object remains. Each of us is a different and unique personality. Because of its individuality, the hand-made object affirms our own individuality.

Modern artist craftsmen seek to fulfill this need.

[text 3]

THE CRAFTS ARE CHANGING IN NATURE

Today, the frontiers between the visual arts are dissolving: modern sculpture and painting now overlap and the barriers are going down between the artistic crafts and the so-called fine arts. MANY MODERN CRAFTSMEN IN CERAMICS ARE MOVING AWAY FROM 'POTS AS SUCH, TOWARDS SCULPTURAL FORMS. THIS IS ILLUSTRATED BY SOME OF THE EXAMPLES IN THIS EXHIBITION.

THERE ARE MANY NATIONAL SOCIETIES IN BRITAIN CONCERNED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE HAND CRAFTS IN RELATION TO MODERN NEEDS. THE WORLD CRAFT COUNCIL SEEKS TO FURTHER THIS AIM INTERNATIONALLY.

[text 4]

Pottery Sculpture - Brian Newman

[text 5]

Round moulded dish, slip decoration

[text 6]

Slab sculptural form, sgraffito decoration - Ian Auld

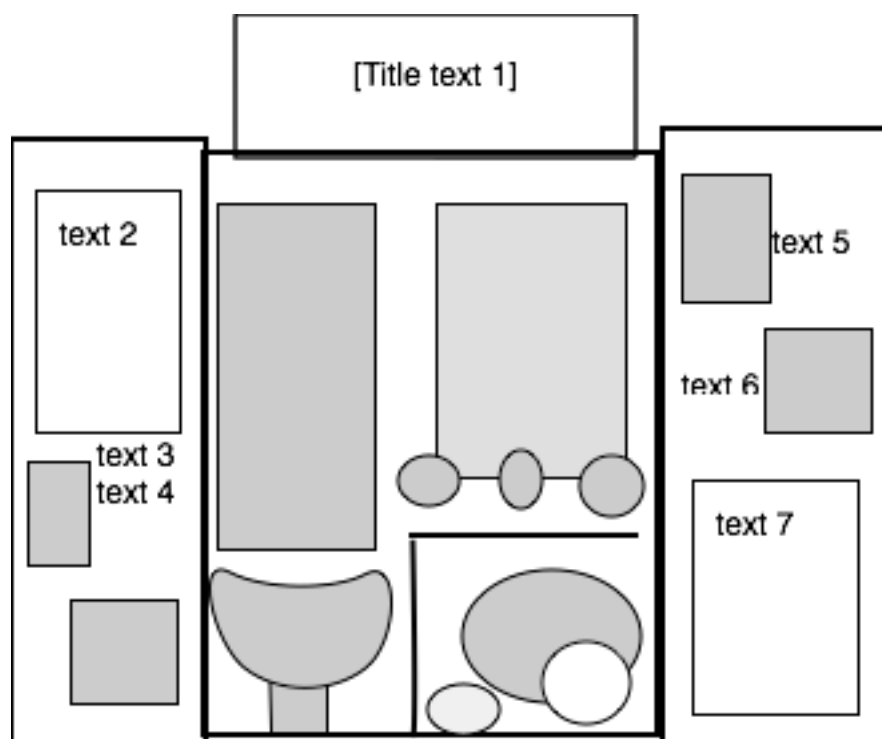
[text 7]

Press moulded stoneware pebbled pot, Fournier pottery

[text 8]

Dark brown and honey glazed cross form - Gordon Baldwin

Appendix 8 – Diagrammatic representation of *Modern Craftwork 1* display photo



[Title text 1] Modern Craftwork 1

[text 2]

CRAFTS AND SOCIETY

Technology has changed man's way of life more in the last 150 years than in the whole of previous history. George Washington could move about no more quickly than did a Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt, while now it is possible to travel faster than the speed of sound. In the home or at work or leisure, technology has altered our lives in an equally radical way, but when we enjoy a world where the machine makes possible a plentiful supply of goods we must also accept that machines create uniformity.

In the past when everything was made by hand, craftsmen were trained within the Guild system until they mastered a high standard of skill. Today the high cost of labour and the time required to produce an article by hand has restricted much of this work to a luxury market. But, within industry, the hand craftsman remains of great importance as, for instance, in mould making for plastics, while the skill that once went to making fine furniture in the Eighteenth Century is now employed in such ways as making scientific instruments, or in the aircraft industry. In modern Industrial Design the original example, or prototype, is always hand-made although final machine production may run to many thousands.

[text 3]

Sand cast and anodised aluminium door, 90" x 48", by Malcolm Leyland.

[text 4]

A mosaic mural built above a fireplace. Materials are shale, pebbles, wood and ceramic, 54" x 112", by Glen Michaels.

[text 5]

Top left:

'Sun Disc'; wood painted white, 36" (diameter) x 54"

Right:

Wood and gold earrings.

Bottom:

Architectural screen,

'Atmosphere and Environment' aluminium painted with black epoxy enamel, 78" x 144" x 48"

All by Louise Nevelson.

[text 6]

'Promenade': Composition of mainly white hangings in wool, linen, cotton and mohair, constructed with a two-harness weave, braiding and knotting. Most of the warp on the upper sectors was removed.

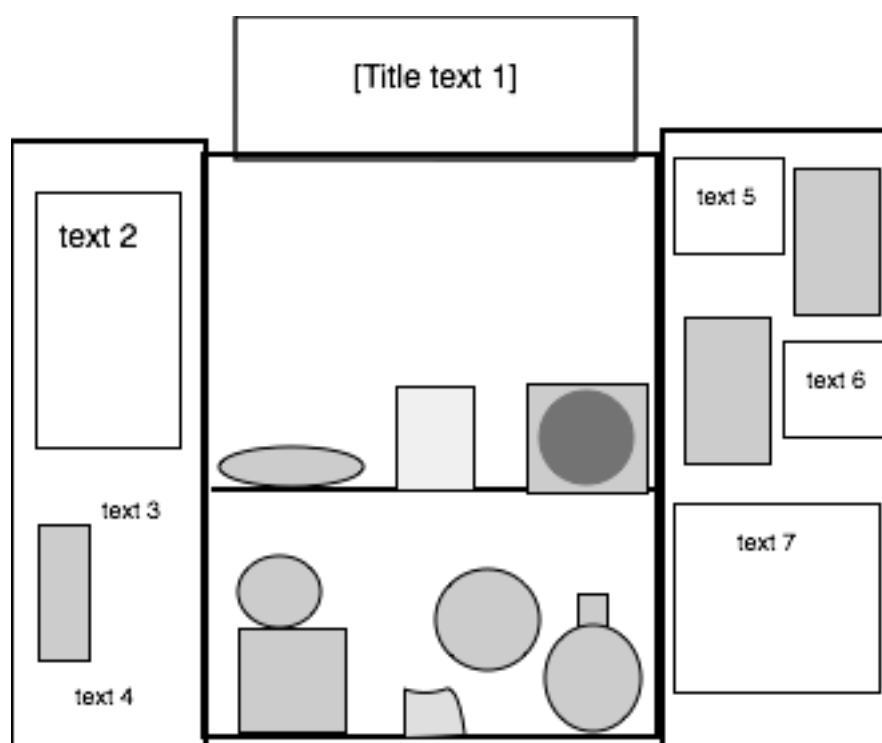
By Dominic DiMare.

[text 7]

THE EXHIBITS

1. Dobby woven Saxony Cheviot, in wool for upholstery, by Valerie Calver.
1. Silk-screened plastic panel intended to be used in multiples,
with aluminium channeling to make decorative screens, by Frances Greenfield.
1. Blown form with added decoration.
2. Blown form, cut and polished.
3. Blown form. All by Pauline Solven.
4. Coiled stoneware pot by J.E. Henderson.
5. Hand-built stoneware pot by Alan Wallwork
6. Stoneware wing vase by A.D. Burgess.

Appendix 9– Diagrammatic representation of *Modern Craftwork 2* display photo



[Title text 1] Modern Craftwork 2

[text 2]

THE CRAFTSMAN

The exhibition shows examples of work by modern craftsmen where the main aim may be said to be artistic. There have always been craftsmen who were primarily interested in trying to make a thing of beauty and they used their skills towards this end alone. The Victoria and Albert Museum is a treasure-house of such work, mostly produced at great cost for the Church, the State or for the very wealthy. Most artist craftsmen in our society try to produce work at a reasonable cost for a wider market. This is not easy and very few craftsmen make much money. Even so, their work is of great importance because each item is 'individual' and can enrich our lives by keeping things in some sort of balance against the uniformity of the machine.

The present time has been described as a difficult period for the craftsman - he is under pressure from two sides. There are those patrons who wish him to adopt the visual language of technology so that his work may make their homes look up-to-date and others who wish

him to cling to the forms of the past for sentimental reasons or to satisfy their own sense of status. To deal with these pressures, the modern craftsman can only rely on his own integrity to express his experience of his own time. The items in this exhibition have been chosen with this in mind.

[text 3]

Acrylic sculpture, cast in two sections, embedded with metal, 40" x 10", by Gerald Gladstone.

[text 4]

The photographs in this exhibition show examples of work on a larger scale. Notice the materials from which these are made.

[text 5]

'Lion'

Relief of cedar, pine and oak on plywood, by Bernard Langlois.

[text 6]

'Pigeon-Holing' Wall panel using a variety of old and new woods, sometimes carved, drilled, scratched and punctured but otherwise left in their natural state, 72"x 48", by Bernard Langlois.

[text 7]

THE EXHIBITS

1. Batik - 'King'
2. Woollen rug-weave from Germany.
3. Carved dish of *lignumvitae*
4. Stoneware slab pot by Alan Wallwark
5. 'Opto 1' Pattern silk-screened on to Perspex to give interesting optical effect.
6. Stoneware sculptural form by Richard Fletcher.
7. Willow ash glazed stoneware plate by Eric Mellon.
8. Pottery sculptural form by Patricia Jones
9. Iron-oxide glazed pot with incised decoration by Denise Wren.

Appendix 10 – List of Surviving L.C.C. / I.L.E.A. photographs of ‘Design Scheme’ displays

[in alphabetical order]

BASKETRY 1

BASKETRY 2

BASKETRY 3

BLOWN AND DECORATED GLASS

BRITISH INDUSTRIAL DESIGN 1

BRITISH INDUSTRIAL DESIGN 2

COMMERCIAL POTTERY

COMMONWEALTH WOOD 1

COMMONWEALTH WOOD 2

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH WOOD, CERAMICS, METAL AND GLASS 1

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH WOOD, CERAMICS, METAL AND GLASS 2

DECORATING GLASS

DESIGN FOR TABLEWARE 1

DESIGN FOR TABLEWARE 2

DESIGN FOR PLAY - CHILDREN’S TOYS 1

DESIGN FOR PLAY - CHILDREN’S TOYS 2

DESIGN IN THE HOME - IN THE LIVING ROOM

DESIGN IN THE HOME - IN THE KITCHEN

DESIGN IN THE HOME - SYSTEM FURNITURE

FOLK ART

FORM ON HAND-MADE CLAYWARE 1

FORM ON HAND-MADE CLAYWARE 2

GLASS MAKING

HAND CRAFT WELSH POTTERY 1

HAND CRAFT WELSH POTTERY 2

HAND POTTERY

HOUSEHOLD THINGS FROM JAPAN 1

HOUSEHOLD THINGS FROM JAPAN 2

INDIVIDUAL CERAMICS BY ARTIST CRAFTSMEN 1

INDIVIDUAL CERAMICS BY ARTIST CRAFTSMEN 2

INDUSTRIAL ART FROM FOUR COUNTRIES 1
INDUSTRIAL ART FROM FOUR COUNTRIES 1
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN AND ENGINEERING 1
INDUSTRIAL DESIGN AND ENGINEERING 2
LOOKING AT GLASS
MATERIALS AND DESIGN 1
MATERIALS AND DESIGN 2
MATERIALS AND DESIGN 3
METALS AND THEIR QUALITIES
METALS ARE JOINED
MODERN BRITISH GLASS, POTTERY, METAL, WOOD AND TEXTILES 1
MODERN BRITISH GLASS, POTTERY, METAL, WOOD AND TEXTILES 2
MODERN CRAFTWORK 1
MODERN CRAFTWORK 2
MOUTH BLOWING
PLASTICS IN THE HOME 1
PLASTICS IN THE HOME 2
POP FOLK MODERN 1
POP FOLK MODERN 2
POTTERY BUILT BY HAND
POTTERY BY HAND AND MACHINE
POTTERY BY HAND - SURFACE DECORATION
POTTERY THROWN BY HAND
PRODUCT DESIGN FROM FINLAND 1
PRODUCT DESIGN FROM FINLAND 2
PURPOSE AND PLEASURE AT HOME
SCANDINAVIA INDUSTRIAL ART FROM FOUR COUNTRIES 1
SCANDINAVIA INDUSTRIAL ART FROM FOUR COUNTRIES 2
TEXTILES BY YOUNG DESIGNERS 1
TEXTILES BY YOUNG DESIGNER 2
TEXTILES FROM NATURAL FIBRES 1
TEXTILES FROM NATURAL FIBRES 2
TIMBER BY HAND AND MACHINE
TIMBER WORKED BY HAND

TIMBER WORKED BY MACHINE

WOOD STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE 1

WOOD STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE 2

WOVEN TEXTILES 1

WOVEN TEXTILES 2

Appendix 11- Use of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection 1995-2014

Autumn 2014 - Challenging the Chintz: The Modernist Ambitions of the I.L.E.A. / Camberwell Collection; paper delivered at the Archive and Domestic or Private Space symposium, Royal College of Art, London

Autumn 2014 -Seminars and Handling Workshops for the MA Curating and Collections Chelsea College of Arts, UAL

Autumn 2014 – A Good Design? Objects from the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, exhibition at Chelsea Space, UAL

Spring 2014 - Vertical event, day of making and curating activities involving staff and students from Camberwell College of Arts' various courses, including Foundation, BA 3D Design and MA Designer Maker

Spring 2014 - Perception and Interpretation Project which used objects from the Camberwell Collection, undertaken by Camberwell College of Arts BA Graphic Design in association with Nissen Richards Studio and the V&A Museum's Learning Department

Summer 2013 - Interactivity in the Pre-digital Museum: Handling Collections and their Educational Affordances, paper at CADRE Conference, University of Wolverhampton

Summer 2013 - The I.L.E.A. Circulating Design Scheme: Research Problematics and Possibilities, research seminar at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 18 June 2013

Summer 2013 - Developing Expertise and Connoisseurship through Handling Objects of 'Good Design': the Example of the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection, paper at Experiential Knowledge International Conference, Loughborough University

Spring 2013 -Thingness: the Collection, exhibition and parallel events at Camberwell Space Gallery, Camberwell College of Arts, 22 May 2013

Spring 2013 - The Museum and the Art School as Locations of Haptic Knowledge, paper at Sensuous Knowledge Conference, Bergen Museum of Modern Art, Bergen, Norway

Spring 2012 - prospectus, exhibition held at Triangle Space, Chelsea College of Arts, London, collaborative project co-curated by post-graduate and Research students from Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon Colleges of Art, UAL

Spring 2012 - Camberwell Collection Handling Resource in partnership with the Victoria and Albert Museum's Learning Department

Winter 2012 - The I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection: 'Good Design' from the Gallery to the Schoolroom, paper at the New Voices Conference of the Association of Art Historians, University of Nottingham

Spring 2012 - Everyday Design, display of objects from the Camberwell Collection at the Langley Academy, Langley, Berkshire

Spring 1999 The Pleasures of Peace: Mid-century Craft and Art in Britain Sainsbury Centre for the Visual Arts, Norwich

Winter 1997 - Hans Coper and Lucie Rie: Potters in Parallel, exhibition at the Barbican Centre, London

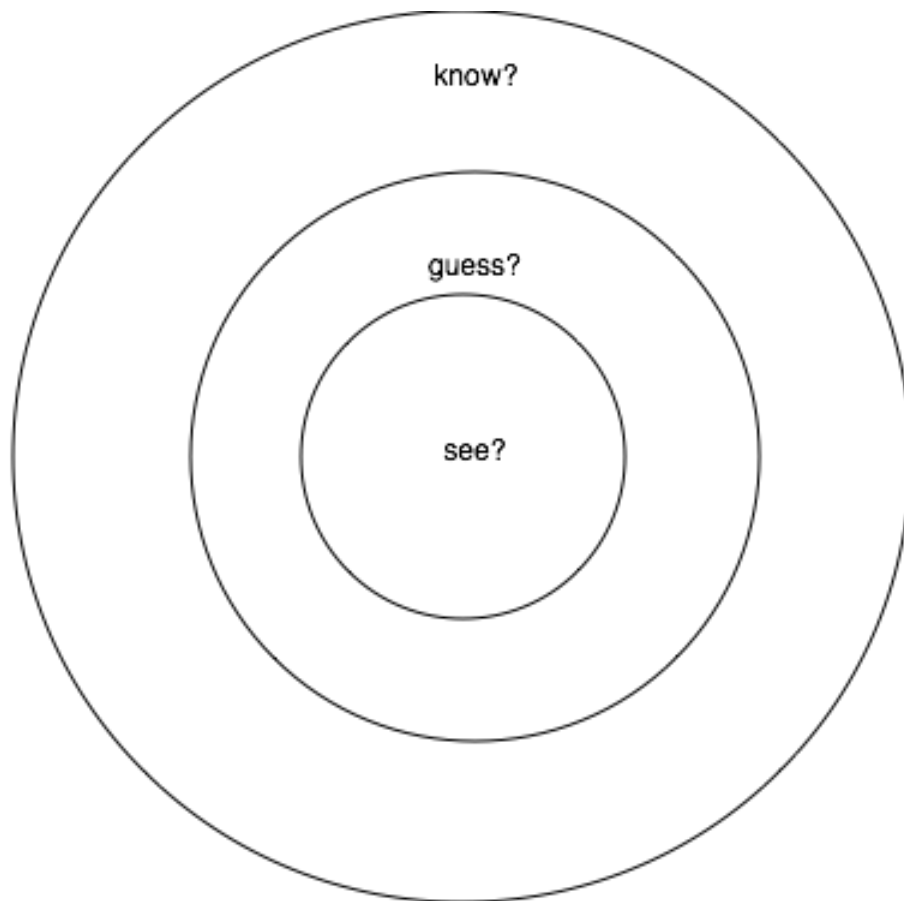
Autumn 1996 - The Camberwell Collection: Object Lesson, exhibition at Davies Street Gallery, The London Institute, London

Autumn 1996 - Education through Design, conference at The London Institute, London

1995- 1996 Primavera: Pioneering Craft and Design 1945-1995, exhibition at Shipley Art Gallery, Gateshead

Handling Objects In the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection

Activity 1.

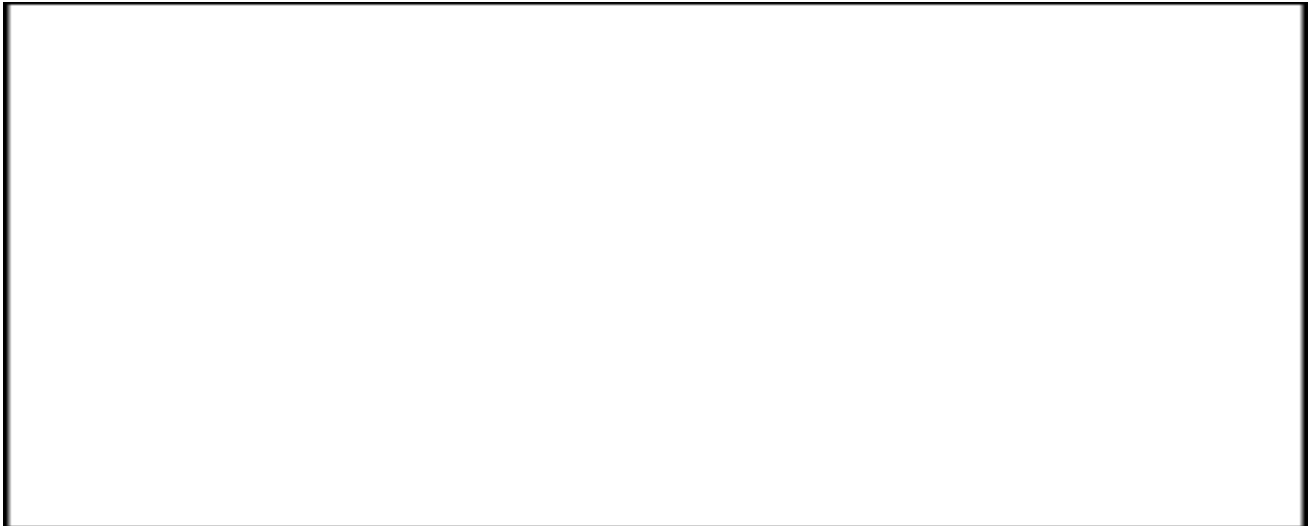


Instructions:

- In the central circle write down what *you can* see through careful observation of the object.
- In the middle circle write down what *you could* guess about the object, based on your observation and previous knowledge
- In the outer circle make notes about what *you would like* to find out about the object

Handling Objects In the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection:

Activity 2.



Handle your object and make a quick drawing or series of sketches of your object and any significant marks or logos.

1. Description

Handle the object and record observable information, e.g. what material it's made of, size, colour, texture, weight, decorative patterns, marks and labels, condition.

2. Maker

Handle the object and think about questions such as: who do you think made it? through what process? when was it made? where? what does the object suggest about its maker?

3. Function and Interpretation

Handle your object and think about questions such as: how do you think the object was used? in what circumstances? who might have used it? what can you guess about its value? what other questions do you have of the object that you cannot answer?

4. Label

Write a label of 100-150 words about your object based on the information you have derived so far.

Appendix 13 - Handling guidelines for the I.L.E.A./Camberwell Collection compiled
by D. Garnett

Handling.

- You have assessed your object and noticed its weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Generally, cupping the object is the safest way to begin when picking it up – but if the object is small, two hands might simply be awkward.
- Don't rush. The temptation can sometimes be to move quickly towards the object, or to move it suddenly. Be thoughtful in your actions.
- Don't pick an object up by a handle whether it's a cup, jug, vase or pan lid. These areas are the most vulnerable due to the mechanical strains and stresses at these adjoined points.
- Avoid over-handling the objects by using the card squares to place them on and turning these to gain an all round view.
- A few of the objects today will require that you wear protective gloves. This is because they have been assessed to be particularly vulnerable to handling with bare hands. What might this tell you about the materials used in their construction? Reflecting on today's session, think about how you might make informed judgements as to when and why to wear gloves in future handling scenarios.
- Damage which might occur to an object during handling today should be brought to the attention of a tutor. Fragments or pieces should be saved with the object for bagging at the end of the session.