

THE PHENOMENON OF AGE AND THE TEMPORAL EXTENSION OF PLACE

By

PAUL TUPPENY

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON

Chelsea College of Art and Design

April 2024

THE PHENOMENON OF AGE AND THE TEMPORAL EXTENSION OF PLACE

PAUL TUPPENY, UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON

ABSTRACT

Ruskin once alluded to ‘ageing’ in buildings as “the golden stain of time”, noting “there is actual *beauty* in the marks of it”.

Whilst we superficially understand the affect to which Ruskin refers, if we consider how *physical* ‘marks’ upon a building might cause us to *feel* ‘time’, the situation is less clear. We might similarly question the ‘aesthetic’ response he experiences since these marks must surely corrupt the artistry of the building.

Our whole world is characterised by changes that occur over time; we are surrounded by ripening fruit, growing trees and wrinkling skin (as well as crumbling buildings), and it seems we know objects biographically as much as by their physical qualities. Importantly, as entities change, so does their meaning and it matters to us where an object is within its change narrative (what page of its biography it is on, if you like). Consequently, our perceptual processes are pre-disposed to *chronologise* the objects we encounter and the research proposes that it is these pre-reflective perceptual ‘judgements’ that we experience as *objective age*.

The practice-based research project employs phenomenological texts and works of sculpture to investigate the “material-temporality” of natural entities and artefacts. It proposes cognitive mechanisms that might imbue physical objects with temporal characteristics and how our everyday experience of the spatial realm is temporally extended through these perceptual processes. Throughout, the *tool* of art practice secures the elusive phenomenon of age and repositions temporal sensations within the spatial arena to allow their study.

The thesis finally considers how the perceptual mechanisms through which we understand the growth and decay of Natural entities are applied to *man-made* artefacts. Here, a curious reversal is apparent where the age we experience from the *object* derives from a reflecting-back of the inherent generational structure of ourselves, the *subject*.

CONTENTS

PREFACE: *Methodology, Phenomenology and Art.* 7

LITERATURE

- ONE:** *What it is to be Old: Observations on the Phenomenon of Age.* 26
- TWO:** *Time, Change and Temporal Experience.* 38
- THREE:** *Notes on Perception Pertinent to the Experience of Objective Age.* 69
- FOUR:** *A Possible Perceptual Mechanism for the Phenomenon of Age.* 83
- FIVE:** *Age Phenomena: Meaning Affect and Emotion.* 108
- SIX:** *The Special Case of Age in Artefacts.* 120

ART PRACTICE

- Art Practice Development Diagram.* 134
- Art Practice Introductory Summary.* 135
- Art Practice Chronological Account.* 144
- Year One: Pensieri, Abbozzi and Schizz.* 144i
- Year Two: Apperceptions & Change Narratives.* 171
- Year Three: Consolidating and Communicating.* 206

CONCLUSION: *The Phenomenon of Age and the Temporal Extension of Place.* 236

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Bibliography for the current thesis document.* 254

SUMMARY PAPER: *AMPS, Prague 2023.* 265

APPENDIX ONE: *Age and Art: Essays and Fragments.* 280

- 'Age-less' Art: Can The White Paintings Authentically Exist in a World Without Bob?* 281
- The Ageing Artwork: Rauschenberg's Growing and Dirt Paintings.* 290
- The Shifting Interpretation of Material Over Time: The Sculptures of Naum Gabo.* 297
- Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion, "A Relic?"* 301
- Age as Art: Jeremy Deller's We're here because we're here and "Pastness" Affect.* 306
- Time Reversal in Umeda Ritual with Alfred Gell.* 314
- Seeing Age: "Seahenge."* 319
- An Apperceptive Artwork: Rauschenberg's cube.* 325
- Material Chronology? Rauschenberg at the Tate 2016.* 329

APPENDIX TWO: *Accounts of Artwork Production.* 335

- Up To Now (Chestnut): Fabrication and Installation.* 336
- Chronologer (Chalk and Bone): Fabrication and Installation.* 353
- Chronologer (Grown Up): Fabrication.* 359
- St. Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean: Exhibition and Installation.* 363
- Media Vita: Fabrication and Installation.* 380
- Athens.* 385

APPENDIX THREE: *Methodology Documents.* 392

- Research Schedule: Outline research chronology, events and conferences.* 393
- Confirmation literature review etc.* 396

PREFACE: METHODOLOGY, PHENOMENONOLOGY AND ART

“Creating a work of art is actually a process of making visible, transferring a phenomenon from one reality to another.”¹

Introduction: The Doubtful Species

In 2016, I undertook an installation piece in the lobby of The Sallis Benney Theatre in Brighton. The artwork carried the title *Doubtful Species*, a term taken from Darwin’s *Origin of Species*.²

My practice at that time was predominantly ‘museological’³ in its approach inspired by a deep curiosity in the very human practice of reflecting upon the material cultural output of our own species. This particular work also owed much to Nietzsche’s remarks concerning the inherent nature of Art itself:

Only artists...have given men eyes and ears to see and hear with some pleasure what each himself is, himself experiences, himself wants.⁴

In particular, it drew upon his contention that Art is “the art of “putting oneself on stage” before oneself.”⁵

The essence of the piece directly concerned this reflexive activity of which museums and other heritage venues are the embodiment in present society. The relationship to these institutions was explicitly conveyed through its adopting elements from the visual language of museums, comprising a central linear ‘bench’ carrying six vitrines and several wall panels on which paintings and other image-based material were hung as well as providing postcards and other souvenirs.

¹Christina Gschwandtner, “Revealing the Invisible,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 28, No. 3, special issue with the society for phenomenology and existential philosophy (2014), pp.305-314, p.307.

² NOTE: “The forms which possess in some considerable degree the character of species, but which are so closely similar to other forms, or are so closely linked to them by intermediate gradations, that naturalists do not like to rank them as distinct species, are in several respects the most important for us. We have every reason to believe that many of these doubtful and closely allied forms have permanently retained their characters for a long time; for as long, as far as we know, as have good and true species”. (Charles Darwin, (1859) *The Origin of Species*, Chapter II Variation Under Nature), Online Variorium of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*: first British edition (1859), p.44, <http://darwinonline.org.uk>

³ Adjective derived from “museology” defined as the systematic study of the organisation, management and function of museums. (Collins Dictionary)

⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff, Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 78

⁵ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 79.

The content of the installation centred on the fictional myth of a co-evolved sapiens hominid species that communicates with us through their artefacts. These cultural objects, fragments of Nature with only minimal interventions from their makers, were housed, propped, suspended, dissected and illuminated in the vitrines.

Surrounding the vitrine bench and hung on the wall panels were 'historic' images of the Doubtful Species themselves, executed in oil on walnut panel, and exhibited within antique gilded frames that had been partially transformed into shallow display cases.



Figure 1. Views of *Doubtful Species* at Sallis Benney Theatre 2016. The installation comprised a central bench pierced by vitrines holding the artefacts of mythical co-evolved hominids, many of which incorporated elements of decay. The legend was given additional veracity by 'historic' paintings of the Doubtful Species in gilt frames. Postcards and other souvenirs were available.

Much of the vitrine material was developed from dead or decayed vegetable matter. Some components were fresh, but these were seen to naturally deteriorate during the life of the installation. Circles and spheres featured in most of the artefacts and it was clear that our co-evolved cousins were delivering a *One Planet* message.

To some extent, the work played on the dual meaning of the 'doubtful' in its title (either the uncertainty of Darwin or the scepticism of our current society); it was clear, though, that the Doubtful Species was indeed our own and the myth of a parallel hominid civilisation merely a device to create the distance that would allow us to turn and face ourselves.

I found whilst compiling the installation how the various components seemed to embody 'Time' despite their being fixed behind glass in an artwork quite clearly of one present moment. The natural elements all held within them narratives of growth and decay and I was

conscious of how I used these material *stories* to develop the work's intended message concerning our progression toward the present epoch.

The oil paintings similarly incorporated materials and images that we judge as old, not only giving the myth temporal extension but also seeming to imbue it with additional veracity. Throughout the work, the juxtaposition of ancient artefacts and contemporary modes of display seemed to heighten the *feelings* of time that it was able to engender in the viewer, the paraphernalia of museum display performing in many ways as a sort of *now* datum.

The Origin of the Research Project

The Doubtful Species installation intrigued me as to how we were able to sense Time through a single, momentary, gaze into a museum case. I saw how our awareness of the material narratives of the objects (how they had behaved to bring them to their current state and how they might degrade in the future) might give to the world an additional, temporal, dimension, and how the object's progression through those stories adjusted the way that we responded to the exhibits.

It was apparent that these quasi-temporal properties of objects permeated the entirety of our environment and I felt the development of an understanding of the underlying perceptual mechanisms and the (emotional) affect that accompanied them could be a valuable area for research, not only in the field of art practice, but in the wider world in which we pass our everyday lives.

There were two research questions:

- *How are we able to experience a sense of 'time' through momentary perceptions of physical objects?*
- *How do these perceptual intuitions of 'material-temporality'⁶ contribute to emotional affect and mood?*

Whilst these proposed areas of enquiry were formulated with the reception of art objects and the practice of art in mind, they were deliberately left open enough to also permit a more general application of the research findings to our everyday existence.

⁶ (NOTE: The term **Material Temporality** is re-purposed from Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* trans. James Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), 168. Husserl's use refers more to our sense that objects endure.

METHODOLOGY

Defining the Experience of Objective Age

It is immediately apparent that the area of study represents a zone of *interaction*, an aspect of the interplay between ourselves, as subjects, and the objects that constitute our world; it does not solely concern the factual physical properties of the encountered object, or, indeed, our more abstract conceptions of Time, but it does propose a subjective correspondence of the two.

It seems clear that the apprehension or intuition of *change* within an object is inherent to the experience of its *material temporality*. This, in turn, enables us to *judge* things as young and old, ancient or new, through which we understand the temporal implications and qualities that such comparative values can infer. These intuitions and judgements, together with some of the physical properties of the object itself, combine to give us an immanent experience of the encountered object's '*age*', one that we feel directly as a component of our subjective view of the world. As such, the experience of age can be defined as a phenomenon, the word being derived from the Greek "phainein" meaning to show (and Phenomenon", a thing appearing to view) but in modern philosophical usage, summarised as something "experienced through the senses and processed by the mind" (first such use, 1788)⁷.

The Role of Phenomenology in the Research

Phenomenology as a philosophical approach is first proposed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in his Phenomenology of Spirit of 1807 but the term more often references the methods developed by Edmund Husserl around the turn of the 20th Century.

Edmund Husserl was, by background, a mathematician, and he strove to give greater legitimacy to his new philosophical method through a rigour more usually associated with scientific investigation. His work, which addresses a broad spectrum of human experience, is meticulous and detailed.

Phenomenology is often summarised with Husserl's phrase, a "return to lived experience, to the things themselves", but Husserl, I think, makes his point more powerfully in his later Cartesian Meditations:

⁷ Online Etymology Dictionary, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/phenomenon>

‘Phenomenological’ explication does nothing but *explicate the sense this world has for us all, prior to any philosophizing*, and obviously gets solely from our experience – *a sense which philosophy can uncover but never alter*.⁸

Jean-Luc Marion explained how *his* adoption of phenomenological methods derived from the feeling that its “down-up” approach gave greater insight into the self than traditional metaphysics which, in his view, seemed to “*create systems*” which are then adjusted to describe as “closely as possible” the concrete things that constitute human experience.⁹

Phenomenology’s inherent respect for the *subjective* self makes it useful not only in the examination of the senses and perception, but also of the domain of affect. Furthermore, it can provide rigour in reflective investigations concerning how we feel in the world, as well as offering a framework for the articulation of the researcher’s findings. In the study of art, impinging as it does so consistently on the emotional affective realm, the difficulties around accurate explication can lead to the omission of such abstruse aspects from the discourse. This seems unfortunate as artists seem to have privileged access to the phenomenal domain and the expression and validation of the *affective* areas of their practice could be viewed as an important part of their remit.

The affect associated with our interaction with objects is often described in terms of a single ‘*emotional*’ response, but it should be stressed that our reactions are usually far more nuanced than this, and will include elements of doubt, inference, and impressions. Furthermore, these subjective aspects of the encounter can *attach* as directly to the entity as its colour or shape.

In the practice of art, phenomenology can thus be as much a creative methodology as a critical approach; it can provide a means of anchoring abstract thought concerning the sensations, experiences and acts of real people. Furthermore, its overall approach overcomes commonly held dualities of mind and body, practice and theory, and the separation of solitary and shared social experiences.

One adherent of phenomenology suggests that it “is a listening to the senses and insights that arrive obliquely and unbidden;”¹⁰ less poetically, perhaps, it gives access and expression to highly subjective inner sensations within an acceptable and recognised academic framework.

⁸Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), 151.

⁹Donald Wallenfang, “Jean-Luc Marion on Phenomenology, interview with Donald Wallenfang”, 5th July 2022. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GxV0_q8NJM [my inferred emphasis]

¹⁰ Susan Kozel, “Phenomenology - Practice Based Research in the Arts, Stanford University,” Medea TV, 12 Dec 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv7Vp3NPKw4>

Phenomenology and Art

At the core of this research project lies an acknowledgement of the ability of phenomenology and art to inform one another and the fact that in many respects, they are, perhaps, one, and the same, activity; the philosopher Alva Noë holds that “...art is itself a research practice, a sister node of philosophy...” and believes that this was also the view of John Dewey who proposed that we “...make [experience] by the intelligent mediation of doing and undergoing the effects of our own action.”¹¹

As discussed above, Edmund Husserl broadly sought to return the focus of philosophical discourse to our genuine inner experience of the world which he considered the foundation of our being. Husserl considers the phenomenological aspects of art through the work of Cezanne, although other philosophers, such as Michel Henry and Jean-Luc Marion, recognise the objectives of the two disciplines as fully convergent.

Central to Husserl’s phenomenological method is the necessity of overcoming what he terms the “natural attitude”, essentially the ‘sufficient’, and in many ways superficial, understanding that is requisite to the experience of living our everyday lives:

Daily practical living is naïve. It is immersion in the already given world, whether it be experiencing, or thinking, or valuing, or acting.¹²

For Husserl this represents a barrier to revealing the true nature of the phenomena that underly and constitute the reality of our Being and both he and Heidegger after him tend to valorise this “everydayness” as a negative aspect of our existence. Husserl, though, is clear, that through his philosophical *science* we are seeking to heighten defined facets of the lived experience through the exclusion, or ‘*bracketing-out*,’ of its more mundane aspects. The projects of both Husserl and Heidegger seek to reveal the essence of our Being through the patient phenomenological dissection of experience into ‘intense’ defined components. Of course, were we to experience all our existence so vividly all of the time, given the complexity of our environments and the stimuli around us, we would struggle to disentangle and prioritise the objects and actions that require our most immediate attention. The “natural attitude”, then, is perhaps better characterised as a greying veil over our world, an abbreviated backdrop against which we are able to live more effectively moment-to-moment. Whilst this natural everyday mode grants us capacity to address the occasional extremes of a living, social

¹¹ Alva Noë, “Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton, and Paul Guyer,” in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, January, 2017, Vol. 94 No.1 pp.238-250, p.249.

¹² Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), 152.

organism, it conversely creates a void that can be filled by “adventures”¹³ in thought and action.

We should not overlook that an essential part of all philosophical and phenomenological reflective practice is the sharing and reception of insight as a cultural activity and in such adventures, art and phenomenology demonstrate shared objectives. Art, like phenomenology seeks only to illuminate our hidden reality by penetrating this everyday veil, elevating aspects of our being and “transmit[ing this] to others. The knowledge of art develops entirely within life”¹⁴ Michel Henry notes that “it is the proper movement of life, its movement of growth, of experiencing itself more strongly.”¹⁵ Henry goes further, asserting that the artist’s imagination portrays “immanent life itself;”¹⁶ “it would be a grave error to conceive art...as the means for expressing a different content from [itself].”¹⁷ Christina Gschwandtner summarises that for Henry, art “conveys the reality of our own life and can help us gain access to it via the affective sensations it produces in us, hence making us alive to the self-affectivity of our living flesh, namely of our invisible life.”¹⁸

In this, art perhaps out-performs phenomenology in achieving its revelatory objectives since, whilst the practice of phenomenology is, by its nature mediated through rational, reflective discourse, art is able to operate directly through primal affect, opening up areas of our existence that may not be accessible to traditional philosophical practices.

The French Philosopher Jean-Luc Marion came to phenomenology through the study of Modern Theology, much of his work centring on complex conceptions of “givenness” and the “saturated phenomena” associated with the idol. Interested in how art was able to translate the invisible or unseen parts of human existence into the visible realm, his position can be summarised as the belief that “creating a work of art is actually a process of making visible, transferring a phenomenon from one reality to another.”¹⁹

In *The Crossing of the Visible* he asserts that “the [artist]...grants visibility to the unseen, delivering the unseen from its anterior invisibility, its shapelessness”²⁰. Artworks thus “express something in visible form that the artist has “seen” in the realm of the invisible,

¹³ Georg Simmel, The Adventure, “Das Abenteuer,” *Philosophische Kultur. Gesammelte Essays* ([1911] 2nd ed.; Leipzig: Alfred Kroner, 1919) Translated by David Kettler, De Paul University, <https://condor.depaul.edu/dweinste/theory/adventure.html>

¹⁴ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky*, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum 2009), 18

¹⁵ Michel Henry, *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky*, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum 2009), 18.

¹⁶ Henry, *Seeing the Invisible*, 108

¹⁷ Henry, *Seeing the Invisible*, 119

¹⁸ Christina Gschwandtner, “Revealing the Invisible,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 28, No. 3, special issue with the society for phenomenology and existential philosophy (2014), pp.305-314, p.307.

¹⁹ Gschwandtner, “Revealing the Invisible,” 307.

²⁰ Jean-Luc Marion, *The Crossing of the Visible*, trans. James K. A. Smith (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 26.

something previously unseen,”²¹ an essentially new phenomenon; “[t]he painter increases the quantity, [and]...the density, of the visible, that is to say of the world’s phenomenality”²². Marion goes so far as to grant to artists privileged access to the invisible spectrum of our being and contends, even, that they are better equipped to withstand its powerful affect. In a similar vein, Michel Henry gives art “a quasi-salvific function.”²³

Because art accomplishes the revelation of the invisible reality in us with an absolute certainty, it is a salvation. In a society like ours which is divorced from life – either by being content to flee it in the external world or by stating the explicit negation of it – it is the sole salvation possible.²⁴

Marion concurs, describing the art museum as the “unavowed avatar of the sanctuary of pilgrimage.”²⁵

Whilst Nietzsche may have described our making of art in terms of a theatrical performance with ourselves as the audience,²⁶ Heidegger’s vision of art is much more essential to our being. He is no less certain of the capabilities of works of art to show to us aspects of our being in his assertion that “Art is the setting-into-work of truth”²⁷, but “[t]he [art]work”, he believes, “moves the earth itself into the open region of a world and keeps it there;”²⁸ Heidegger considers that it is the exposing of reality that underpins the work’s fascination for us:

Truth is the unconcealment of beings as beings...Beauty does not occur apart from this truth. When truth sets itself into the work, it appears. Appearance – as this being of truth in the work and as work – is beauty. Thus the beautiful belongs to truth’s propriative event. The beauty does lie in form, but only because the *forma* once took its light from Being as the beingness of beings.²⁹

Indeed, for Heidegger, the practice and consumption of art is wholly “... a world-disclosive experience...”³⁰ and he conjures a poetic image of the artist drawing-up “truth” as if water from a spring; “all creation, because it is such a drawing-up, is a drawing, as of water from a spring.”³¹ “Art,” for him, “*is* the setting-into-work of truth.”³²

²¹ Gschwandtner, “Revealing the Invisible,” 308.

²² Jean-Luc Marion, “What We See and What Appears,” *Idol Anxiety*, ed. Josh Ellenbogen and Aaron Tugendhaft (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp.152-168, p.164.

²³ Gschwandtner, “Revealing the Invisible,” 310.

²⁴ Henry, “Seeing the Invisible,” 20

²⁵ Jean-Luc Marion, *In Excess, Studies of Saturated Phenomena*, trans. Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 70.

²⁶ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 79.

²⁷ Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (London: Routledge, 2011), 131.

²⁸ Heidegger, “Work of Art,” 110.

²⁹ Heidegger, “Work of Art,” 134.

³⁰ Mark Wrathall, “The Phenomenological Relevance of Art,” *Art and Phenomenology*, ed. Joseph Parry (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), 11.

³¹ Heidegger, “Work of Art,” 130.

³² Heidegger, “Work of Art,” 131. (my emphasis).

“Strange Tools”

Alva Noë shares the view that art and philosophy are two species within the same genus, each sharing a common reflexive function. His underlying position seems to develop from Heidegger’s observation that we engage with our everyday world, and equipment in particular, without reflection, our actions and situation only entering our awareness when our expectations in those activities are disrupted in some way (Heidegger’s hammer breaking, for instance). Noë proposes that the essential function of art is to break into these unconscious everyday activity loops, revealing to us important aspects of these hidden activities. Noë extends Heidegger’s idea beyond our use of tools and other things *around* us to include our *inherent* capabilities, such as those associated with perception. These inner *skills*, which Noë terms “first-order activities”, are normally, by their very nature, hidden from our reflective selves but, through the making and viewing of art objects (a “second-order activity”), they are exposed and made visible by their being ‘tasked’ beyond their everyday applications; in Alva Noë’s words, they are “puzzle objects” or “strange tools.”³³ He explains:

Art, speaking generally now, is bound up with making, construction, doing, putting together, tinkering and manufacture. Why? Not, I propose, because artists are bent on making special things. But rather because making is so special for us. Making activities – technology in the broadest sense, but also forms of activity that are not conventionally thought of as technological or tool-using activities such as talking and looking – make us what we are. A strange tool, in my sense, is not a tool at all, and its work, its value, is in the way it unveils the way tools make us what we are.³⁴

Here, Noë shares common ground with Georg Simmel who held that “...the essence of a work of art is... that it cuts out a piece of the endlessly continuous sequences of perceived experience, detaching it from all connections with one side or the other, giving it a self-sufficient form...”³⁵ Simmel fitted his observations on art and art making into a framework concerning the human tendency toward “adventure,” which he described as “dropping out of the continuity of life.”^{36 37}

³³ Noë, “Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton and Paul Guyer,” 239.

³⁴ Noë, “Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton and Paul Guyer,” 240.

³⁵ Georg Simmel, “The Adventure” (orig.1911) in Kurt Wolff (ed.) *Georg Simmel 1858-1918*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press 1959), 245.

³⁶ Importantly, Simmel holds that adventures “intensify...the tensions of everyday life”, Steven Rubenstein, “A Head for Adventure,” *Tarzan was an Eco-Tourist* (New York: Berghahn, 2006), 235.

³⁷ “[i]n adventure,...” he noted “...the interweaving of activity and passivity which characterises our life tightens these elements into a coexistence of conquest, which owes everything...[to] self-abandonment to the powers and accidents of the world...” Rubenstein, “A Head for Adventure,” *Tarzan was an Eco-Tourist*, 235.

Art Affecting Life

The seeking of novel and unfamiliar experiences is a behavioural tendency common to humans and other species and this inquisitive behaviour is generally held to have adaptive advantages in terms of “uncertainty reduction” and “beneficial effects of the knowledge [acquired] on future choices”.³⁸ Furthermore, it has been found that the “...idea that novelty engages brain systems involved in appetitive reinforcement learning is supported by evidence that novel stimuli excite dopaminergic neurons in animals and also activate putatively dopaminergic areas in humans”³⁹ Whatever other rewards of pleasure may be available from viewing art, it seems that there may be affective reward simply for *engaging* with artworks in the spirit of adventure in which they are offered.

For Alva Noë, though, the pleasure that we clearly derive from Art is not the end of the story. Crucially for him, these artistic adventures in the “bio-cultural behavioural substrates”⁴⁰ that define us as humans, not only allow us to “know ourselves better,”⁴¹ but “loop down and affect the activities of which [they are] the image;”⁴² essentially, *the artistic “second order” activity re-organises the habitual “first order activity.”*

Alva Noë, in various presentations of his idea, makes much use of dance and choreography as an illustration of this “looping-down” but the “way that writing re-organises our experience of our own talking”⁴³ is perhaps a more readily accessible example. In support of his argument, Noë also quotes a statement from Agatha Christie’s Hercule Poirot who, when out walking, says “Yes, views are very nice, Hastings. But they should be painted for us so that we may study them in the warmth and comfort of our own homes.”⁴⁴ In this, Christie’s character calls to mind the painter William Gilpin’s 1770 journey along the river Wye, which he introduced with these lines:

We travel for various purposes—to explore the culture of soils—to view the curiosities of art—to survey the beauties of nature—and to learn the manners of men; their different polities, and modes of life.

Adding:

³⁸ Bianca C. Wittmann, Nathaniel Daw, Ben Seymour & Raymond Dolan, “Striatal Activity Underlies Novelty-Based Choice in Humans,” *Neuron*, 2008, Jun. 26; 58(6): pp.967-973, p.969.

³⁹ Wittmann et al, “Striatal Activity Underlies Novelty-Based Choice in Humans,” 969).

⁴⁰ John Protevi quoted by Noë, “Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton and Paul Guyer,” 242.

⁴¹Noë, “Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton and Paul Guyer,” 242.

⁴²Noë, “Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton and Paul Guyer,” 245

⁴³ Noë, “Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton and Paul Guyer,” 245.

⁴⁴ Noë, “Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton and Paul Guyer,” 246.

The following little work proposes a new object of pursuit; that of examining the face of a country by the rules of picturesque beauty: opening the sources of those pleasures, which are derived from the comparison.⁴⁵

Gilpin's book, which includes early aquatint reproductions of his watercolours, describes the Natural views that he encounters on his journey in terms of their compliance (or otherwise) with the principles of picturesque paintings and even, in the case of Tintern Abbey, suggests ways that the view might be adjusted accordingly (using a mallet).

Gilpin was, in many ways, simply popularising a long-standing tradition of the picturesque in the practice of painting but his work suggested to the Georgian middle and upper classes a new way of seeing the natural world even giving rise to the 'Claude glass' (named after the painter Claude Lorraine), a small, cased, slightly convex, elliptical or rectangular (sometimes obsidian?) mirror in which the reflected view was not only framed but transformed with exaggerated depth in the darker recesses and emphasised sky and cloud detail (closely resembling Gilpin's aquatints). Notions of the picturesque also changed the way these tourists saw *people*, some early guide books devoting sections on the appearance of the "peasantry."⁴⁶ Many of these ideas and interpretations, of course, remain with us in our present culture.

All of this supports Noë's stance that, whilst our art may originate in our lives, those lives will, in the end, imitate that Art.

Phenomenology as a Component of Art Practice

If phenomenology and art may be accepted as facets of the same activity essentially directed toward the "unconcealment" of truth, it seems reasonable that theoretical phenomenological practice, employed as part of the creative process, can positively contribute in the making of art. Such a stance would be particularly applicable in the realm of practice-based research and even more so where, as in this instance, the object of the research concerns the perceptual means by which art objects are received and assimilated.

⁴⁵ William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye: and several parts of South Wales, &c. relative chiefly to picturesque beauty; made in the summer of the year 1770*, second edition (London, Balmire 1789), 1-2. Gilpin even went so far as to suggest that someone take a mallet to the surviving gables of Tintern Abbey to improve their 'picturesque qualities', "Tho the parts are beautiful, the whole is ill shaped. No ruins of the tower are left which might give form, and contrast to the buttresses and walls. Instead of this, a number of gable-ends hurt the eye with their regularity; and disgust it with the vulgarity of their shape. A mallet judiciously used (but who would durst use it?) might be of service in fracturing some of them; particularly those of the cross isles, which are both disagreeable in themselves and confound the perspective." Gilpin, *Observations*, 47.

⁴⁶ "...it is only among the peasantry that one can form a just idea of Italian beauty..." Marianna Starke, *Informations and Directions for Travellers on the Continent*, 6th edition (London, Murray, 1828), p.87, "...the picturesque dresses and lovely countenances of these peasants arrest every eye..." p.89.

It is not uncommon for artists to employ practices that reduce the arbitrary forces in the production of their work by adopting non-arbitrary or “motivated”⁴⁷ process activities. These activities often become embedded or integral to the finished piece.

In an Art Forum piece concerning the phenomenology of making art, Robert Morris asserts:

I believe there are “forms” to be found within the activity of making as much as within the end products. These are forms of behaviour aimed at testing the limits of possibilities involved in that particular interaction between one’s actions and the materials of the environment.⁴⁸

He notes also that “Common to the art in question is that it searches for a definite sort of system that is made part of the work. Insofar as the system is revealed it is revealed as information rather than esthetics (sic).”⁴⁹

The main thrust of Morris’s proposition is directed towards the systematizing by artists of the physical component of artworks, but he acknowledges that as the spectrum of artistic output broadens, his observations may apply more and more to the artists’ overall *behavioural* approach as he identifies “the kind of patterning involved in a search for motivated art [that] takes place on the level of behaviour which is prior to visible formal results. Insofar as this behaviour is visible in the end results, it participates in a semiotic function;”⁵⁰ fundamentally, using Morris’s terms, there is “an ends-means hook-up”⁵¹ inherent in the artwork.

The implications here are that by the adoption of certain behaviours connected with the making of artworks, those activities become, themselves, an embodied component of the finished art object.

Clearly, an approach that stifles the hidden and ungraspable processes of the subjective creative idea is not what is envisaged, but the methodical sowing of the ground from which those ideas might emerge might well be considered such a behaviour or activity. The research project therefore proposes that the theoretical phenomenological investigations that are to be an integral part of the project are equally embedded in the art practice and the artworks that develop from it.

The Nature of Artistic Research and Findings

⁴⁷ Anton Ehrenzweig, *The Hidden Order of Art* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1967), 220.

⁴⁸ Robert Morris, “Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making”, *Art Forum*, Vol. 8, No. 8, April 1970 pp. 62-66, p. 62.

⁴⁹ Morris, “Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making”, 65.

⁵⁰ Morris, “Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making”, 64.

⁵¹ Morris, “Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making”, 64.

As with all understanding developed through artistic enquiry, any new positions that are drawn from the research carry within them an element of speculation. As a balance to this, the project has throughout sought firm footings for the findings it advances, building on the work of established and credible thinkers and referring as far as possible to primary texts. Many of these originate in the field of phenomenology, although, like many of their authors, philosophical observations are supported by contributions from the related discipline of psychology and its scientific sibling, neuroscience. Where I have referred to secondary sources, this has often been made necessary by the absence of other translations into English. Having said that, I am, like all of us, directly affected in my everyday life by the phenomenon under investigation and have, through personal reflection, been able to evaluate the applicability and veracity of these other author's conclusions, as well as my own. In this, I was aided throughout by the practice of art, of making and of interacting with the material of the world.

The role of the art practice in the project cannot, I believe be overstated; indeed, this preface began by describing one of the artworks to which it owes its inception. Furthermore, I have noted in the thesis the sparsity of preceding work directly addressing the sphere of objective age and find that this can only be through the distance that often divides traditional academic work from that of making and other technological interactions; the root of my contribution to the discussion in many ways lies in my interests *spanning* these disciplines.

In the initial stages of the research project, art was an indispensable tool in framing the "abstruse" phenomenon under investigation and as the project progressed it became a vehicle by which to test, reify, communicate, reflect upon and critically question my developing ideas. Perhaps most importantly though, the making of art has ensured that the research was always in direct contact with the raw material of its enquiry.

THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE DOCUMENT

Overall Arrangement

The document is arranged to lead the reader through the project very much in the order in which the research progressed. To this end, accounts of the literature-based research and the art were to be presented to read as parallel narratives *alongside* one another recounting as closely as possible the parallel development of the two aspects, each feeding material and insight into the other as the project developed. Whilst this arrangement might work in bound volumes, it is very difficult to read on a computer screen and the account of the Art Practice is, therefore, placed immediately before the concluding chapter in this version.

The first, introductory, chapter sets out the general research area, and seeks to define more precisely the characteristics of the phenomena that are under scrutiny. Other early chapters recount the groundwork upon which the research project was to build.

At the end of the document, a concluding section similarly draws the two sections together with a summary of the principal moments of the project and the findings that are derived from them. These conclusions are followed by several appendices documenting areas of the literature and art-practice research in greater detail.

A note concerning the title of the Research Project

The noun ‘*place*’ in the title carries many meanings and currently seems to refer most often to a specific locality. In the title of this thesis, the use relates to the spatial realm more generally in specific juxtaposition with temporality and Time, drawing on John Locke’s definition:

“*Time* in general is to *Duration*, as *Place* is to *Expansion*...From such points fixed in sensible Beings we reckon, and from them we measure out Portions of those infinite Quantities; which so considered, are that which we call *Time* and *Place*. ”⁵²

CHAPTER ONE: *What it is to be Old: Observations on the Phenomenon of Age*

The chapters discussing the text-based research are arranged on the verso pages. The purpose of this introductory chapter is to define and describe what we understand by the *phenomenon* of age.

⁵² John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding In Four Books, fourth edition* (London: Elizabeth Holt, 1700), 101.

CHAPTER TWO: Time, Change and Temporal Experience

This second chapter summarises in outline some of the thinking around the structure of *Time* but is perhaps more relevant to the research in addressing how we perceive change in the world around us and how this may determine our overall experience of temporality. The chapter makes use of research in the fields of Psychology and Neuroscience to discuss the important role of attention in the detection of the changes that underly the phenomenon of age.

CHAPTER THREE: Notes on Perception Pertinent to the Experience of Objective Age

This chapter describes in outline some of the ideas concerning perception that may inform an understanding of the perceptual mechanisms under investigation, but which also became interwoven with the art-practice research that progressed in tandem with the text-based component and, ultimately, directed its course.

CHAPTER FOUR: A Possible Perceptual Mechanism for the Phenomenon of Age

Chapter Four sets forward some of the likely components of our capacity to perceive age in the objects around us, suggesting that this ability stems primarily from an essential need to assimilate a natural environment that is in a constant state of transformation.

CHAPTER FIVE: Age Phenomena: Meaning, Affect and Emotion

The Fifth Chapter continues chapter Four's discussion of a model for the perceptual mechanisms that underpin our experience of age but looks in detail at how the perceptual inferences and judgements generate affect and colour our emotional responses.

CHAPTER SIX: The Special Case of Age in Artefacts

In this part of the document, we address the interesting implications of our universal pre-disposition to *see* objective age on the way that we apprehend *man-made* artefacts and how this stance blends with our empathic approach to Others, their actions and the world in general.

ART: PRACTICE-BASED RESEARCH

The Art Practice Chapters were designed to run on the recto leaf in the printed document in order to convey the parallel progression of the two aspects of the project. The layout has been simplified, however, to accommodate digital submission requirements.

Art Practice Development Diagram

The account of the art-practice opens with a spreadsheet that, sets-out the artworks in three broad categories and shows chronologically the links that were crucial to the development of the works and the progression of the project.

Art Practice Introductory Summary

The Art-Practice Summary begins its account at Year Two, the most fertile stage of the project both artistically and theoretically. It was at this time that I joined Chelsea College of Art and Design, leaving The University of Brighton. The summary then describes how this work was consolidated in the Third Year and then briefly sets out the groundwork artworks made in Year One.

Art Practice Chronological Account

The Chronological account describes the progression of the art-practice in chronological order, detailing with each work in sufficient detail to describe the influences they had on one another their general progression towards the larger artworks. The account shows how the pieces performed as “strange tools” (to use Alva Noë’s term) with the earliest sketch pieces helping to define the research area leading to the later works which re-align age phenomena as material embodiments of Husserl’s apperceptions and which *read-back* as representations of Time.

CONCLUSION: The Phenomenon of Age and the Temporal Extension of Place

This Chapter includes a summary of the text and practice-based strands of the project, tying them together in its account of the progress of the project and the findings that are drawn from it. In doing this, it seeks to highlight the contribution to knowledge that the research offers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliography Diagram

The scarcity of existing work dealing directly with the phenomenon of objective age made it necessary to search through works that dealt with areas that might impinge upon this research. Early in the research, I identified about a dozen regions of thought that might overlap with the project objectives and set a course to stitch these together. Whilst the final thesis does not draw upon all the texts directly, many were vital stepping stones toward an understanding of material temporality, the phenomenon of age and the role that art can play in the investigation and communication of these. This diagram shows the bibliography arranged around the convergent topics.

SUMMARY: AMPS, Prague 2023

THE TEMPORAL EXTENSION OF PLACE: THE PHENOMENON OF 'AGE' IN HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTS

This peer-reviewed paper, developed from a conference presentation at the AMPS (Architecture, Media, Politics, Society) Conference, *Prague 2023: Heritages: Past and Present – Built and Social* (published in the Conference Proceedings Document in 2024) provides a useful summary of the thesis as it stood in September 2023, although with a slant towards the built heritage sector.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: Age and Art: Essays and Fragments

Each of these essays discusses how age operates in different ways through the examination of six established artworks. These short pieces of text were originally conceived as forming part of the main body of the text but were found to be too disruptive of the flow of the research narrative. Their relation to the account of my art-practice research felt similarly cumbersome. Whilst outside the main account of the research, they provide a valuable insight into the application of its findings.

'Age-less' Artwork: Can The White Paintings Authentically Exist in a World Without Bob?

Robert Rauschenberg began producing his *White Paintings* in 1951. These works were routinely destroyed, re-finished and re-made by the artist and his assistants to such an extent that it is only the title and the accompanying *date* of their idea and their inception that remains *original* to them. It is clear that, for Rauschenberg, the White Paintings *were* this idea and that it was fundamental to the artist's intent that they be without 'age', as only an idea can be. The essay asks whether such an artwork can exist as the artist intended after their death.

The Ageing Artwork: Rauschenberg's Growing and Dirt Paintings

Rauschenberg conceived of the *Growing Paintings* when bird seed accidentally fell and germinated on a *Dirt* work in progress. Not only did these artworks exhibit the intrinsic age of natural growth, they initiated for the artist a duty of *care* that actively engaged him in their ageing. Sadly, it was a responsibility that circumstance led him to resent resulting in the deliberate destruction of the only documented Growing Painting.

The Shifting Interpretation of Material Over Time: The Sculptures of Naum Gabo

Naum Gabo and his brother Antoine Pevsner developed a manifesto demanding works that existed at the interface of materiality and pure geometry. Gabo worked with polymers to realise his ethereal conceptions. At their inception, these materials declared the future but their degradation over time has led to the disfigurement and loss of many of his works. The essay addresses the issue of *the replica* but also asks whether, given advances in the artificial materials experienced and expected by a *modern* audience, the artist's intent can be transposed to replicas that consequently lack the material novelty so important to the original works.

Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion, "A Relic?"

Like Gabo, Eva Hesse made use of unstable modern materials in her work; Hesse was fully aware of the fragility of her artworks and apologised in advance for their forthcoming degradation. Many have drawn parallels between Eva Hesse's early death and Time's slow destruction of her work. Following the Guggenheim Museum's decision to exhibit *Expanded Expansion* in a condition far removed from that intended by the artist, the essay questions the new status of the work.

Age as Art: Jeremy Deller's 'We're here because we're here' and "Pastness" Affect

On 1st July 2016, Jeremy Deller launched an artwork commemorating the first day of the Battle of the Somme one hundred years earlier. In the work, thousands of enactors dressed in World

War One uniforms emerged in locations all over the country. The work depended on the collective cultural recognition of the uniforms' *pastness* and the temporal dislocation and affect that it triggered in the public.

Seeing Age: "Seahenge"

In 1998, a circle of timber posts emerged from the silt on the Norfolk coast. In its centre stood the inverted root bole of a large oak tree. The Bronze Age structure became known as much for the modern human response as it was for the archaeologists' speculation about the intent of those who constructed it. This short text investigates our different experiences of age in an object and how, in this single monument, it is found in its many forms.

Time Reversal in Umeda Ritual with Alfred Gell

Growth and decay in the natural realm are often associated with changes in colour. This short account looks at the chromatic spectrum that tracks the lives of plants and foliage and the yearly ritual of the Ida people in New Guinea.

An Apperceptive Artwork: Rauschenberg's cube

A short commentary showing how a simple artwork translates an aspect of perception.

Material Chronology? Rauschenberg at the Tate 2016

This piece was written early in the course of the research and sets down some of my thinking around objective age with reference to a visit to the Robert Rauschenberg retrospective at the Tate in 2016.

APPENDIX TWO: DETAILED ACCOUNTS OF ARTWORK PRODUCTION

APPENDIX THREE: METHODOLOGY DOCUMENTS

Confirmation literature review

Research Schedule: Outline research chronology, events and conferences.

Confirmation Bibliography and Bibliography Diagram.

ONE: What it is to be Old: Observations on the Phenomenon of Age

“Before I learned to think in Heptapod B, my memories grew like a column of cigarette ash, laid down by the infinitesimal sliver of combustion that was my consciousness, marking the sequential present...” Ted Chiang, *The Story of Your Life*⁵³

Ted Chiang, in his 1998 Sci-Fi novella, *The Story of Your Life*, uses the visit of seven-limbed aliens (Heptapods) to investigate the implications of a “[non-]sequential mode of awareness,”⁵⁴ one where all events are experienced at once, their relationship not being perceived simply as progressions of “cause and effect.”⁵⁵

The book is the account of a linguist, Dr Banks, charged with deciphering the alien communications. In the translation of their written language (Heptapod B) she relates how, usually;

“...Heptapod B affects just my memory; my consciousness crawls along as it did before, a glowing sliver crawling forward in time, the difference being that the ash of memory lies ahead as well as behind: there is no real combustion. But occasionally I have glimpses when Heptapod B truly reigns, and I experience past and future all at once; my consciousness becomes a half century long ember burning outside time.”⁵⁶

In his novella, Chiang makes reference to Fermat’s Principle to give credence (for Humans) to this alternative experience of Time, but what actually lies at its heart are ideas of “linguistic relativity”, or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis which proposes “that the language one speaks influences the way one thinks about reality;”⁵⁷ language is, of course, the primary means by which we verify shared meaning in the world and it is largely constructed around this purpose.

In order to convey Dr Louise Banks’ increasingly alien experience of time, Chiang manipulates the tense of the passages concerning her reflections on the (tragically shortened) life of her daughter:

“I remember your graduation. There will be the distraction of having...your father and what’s-her-name there...”⁵⁸.

⁵³ Ted Chiang, “Story of Your Life”, *Stories of Your Life and Others*, (New York: Tor, 2002), pp.109-172, p.167

⁵⁴ Chiang, “Story of Your Life”, 159.

⁵⁵ Chiang, “Story of Your Life”, 159.

⁵⁶ Chiang, “Story of Your Life”, 167.

⁵⁷ J. A Lucy, “Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis,” *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, (2001): pp.13486-13490, p.1.

⁵⁸ Chiang, “Story of Your Life”, 135.

Such literary devices, however, were not available to Denis Villeneuve in his 2016 film adaptation, *Arrival*. In its stead, though, he employs the daughter's *age*. As the film develops, it becomes clear that episodes that initially appear as flashbacks are in fact *future memories*. These scenes are not presented chronologically but the narrative of Dr Banks's relationship with her child, from newborn baby to a hospitalised adolescent, coheres through the physicality of the girl *growing-up*, through her *age*; much of the story is set to Max Richter's *On The Nature of Daylight (Entropy)* and is powerfully affecting.

Kurt Vonnegut summarised the story:

Stephen Hawking...found it tantalising that we could not remember the future. But remembering the future is child's play for me now. I know what will become of my helpless trusting babies because they are grown-ups now. I know how my closest friends will end up because so many of them are retired or dead now...To Stephen Hawking and all others younger than myself I say, "Be patient. Your future will come to you and lie down at your feet like a dog who knows and loves you no matter what you are."⁵⁹

Earliest Experiences of Objective Age

Our first experiences of the phenomenon of 'age', come as infants surrounded by people clearly of our own kind but, confusingly, *different*. We are presented with people that seem to share our physical characteristics but are generally larger (although by various degrees), as well as differing in other ways. As our understanding grows, we are aware from siblings, parents and others around us, of a nuanced spectrum of growth. These incremental differences we must resolve into a single zoological type. We, of course, get bigger ourselves over time and we begin to link our conceptions of time and increasing size; my three-year-old niece once advised me "...not to have any more birthdays, Uncle Paul, or you'll bang your head on the door!"

Age in the people around us marks the beat of time throughout our lives; Proust recalls a particularly affecting encounter with age in his adulthood:

"I saw Gilberte coming across the room towards me... I was astonished to see at her side a girl of about sixteen, whose tall figure was a measure of that distance which I had been reluctant to see. Time, colourless and inapprehensible Time, so that I was

⁵⁹ Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five*, Introduction to 25th Anniversary Edition, quoted Ted Chiang, *Stories of Your Life and Others* (New York: Tor, 2002), 334.

almost unable to see it and touch it, had materialised itself in this girl, moulding her into a masterpiece, while correspondingly, on me, alas! it has merely done its work...I thought her very beautiful: still rich in hopes full of laughter, formed from those very years which I myself had lost, she was like my own youth.”⁶⁰

Beyond the realm of people, we find changes ordered by intrinsic patterns of growth in nearly every aspect of the Natural world. We are able to assimilate these transformations, in part, by the projection of our personal lived experience and they become essential to our understanding of the World and of these entities as *living* things.

We notice though, that there are also changes that occur over time that are almost the opposite of the growth that is intrinsic to living things and that seem to correspond with an entity's interactions with things *external* to it. Many of the things that constitute our environment are shaped by both the *intrinsic* changes of growth and the *extrinsic* changes arising through their interaction with other entities. Furthermore, the progress of these changes appears fundamental to the essence of the object.

If we were to examine an apple, for instance, we would see that the beheld fruit seems, for us, to *include* within it that it has progressively grown from flowers on maturing trees and also that it is available as food for only a short time before it rots or is eaten by something else. In this, the apple is as much a biography of growth and decay (accompanied by some urgency), as it is the juicy *thing* we like to eat; as Martin Heidegger explained, “[t]he “not-yet” has already been included in the very Being of the fruit, not as some random characteristic, but as something constitutive...”. Heidegger went on to emphasise that the “[r]ipening *is* the specific Being of the fruit,”⁶¹

Composing Object Stories

We have become familiar with time-lapse films that show these processes of growth and decay as smooth transitions between differing states of being but this is not representative of our real-life experience which is more complex and disjointed; many of these Natural changes, for instance, take weeks, months or years to become manifest and we certainly do not have the space in our everyday lives to sit in one place and watch them unfold before us (even if we had the necessary attention-span to do so); our experiences of Natural change are usually derived from observation episodes that are not only separated by quite considerable durations

⁶⁰ Marcel Proust, *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu: Time Regained* (London: [Penguin] Modern Library Classics, 1999), 502.

⁶¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 288 [my italics]

of time, but, since we move from place to place, may be drawn from more than one particular of a species in any number of locations.

In addition, the Natural processes that we are assimilating often effect transformations in several aspects of the object. In the case of the ripening apple, we are not able to directly *sense* the aspect of the process that we are interested in, its internal sugar level (without biting into the fruit) and so our attention is drawn to external physical manifestations that we can associate with this change such as the size, shape and colour of the apple. Usefully, we find that we are able to generalise such observations across a *range* of fruits.

Other general principles become apparent as we move through the world. We notice, for example, that the maturing of an oak tree will induce changes in its size, the geometry of its branches and the texture of its bark. Such separable manifestations of a Natural process offer indications for the chronologising of the subject entity but additionally provide bases for the recognition of underlying principles that are transferable to other entities so that, from our observations of the oak tree we can intuit that smooth bark and fewer, straighter branches, are generally associated with younger trees and thick heavily textured bark with older, more aged, specimens.

These change principles and patterns pervade the way that we assimilate and make sense of the things around us, and through this understanding of them, we are able to temporally situate our own existence.

Recognising the Central Role of Age in Our Lives

“...was the ruin still there where you hid as a child...the wheat turning yellow...not a wire to be seen only the old rails all rust...all the rest rubble and nettles ...with long white hair...just another of those old tales to keep the void from pouring in on top...black with dirt and antiquity...boarded up Doric terminus of the Great Southern and Eastern...and the colonnade crumbling away so what next...huddled on the doorstep in the old green greatcoat... like that time...the child on the stone...alone on the towpath with the ghosts of the mules the drowned rat or bird or whatever it was floating off into the sunset...the child on the stone among the giant nettles with the light coming in where the wall had crumbled away...when was that an earlier time a later time before she came after she went ...and the white hair pouring out down from under the hat...the child’s ruin you came to look was it still there to hide in again...only what was it it said come and gone ...come and gone in no time gone in no time.”⁶²

It is Time itself (“that double-headed monster of damnation and salvation”⁶³) that is the antagonist in Samuel Beckett’s one act play. It is not evoked, though, through the normal

⁶² Samuel Beckett, *That Time* (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), [my abridgement].

⁶³ Samuel Beckett, *Proust* (New York: Grove Press, 1957), 1

measurements of hours, days or years, but by the re-imagined props and back-drops to each remembered episode; the nettles are giant, recalled from the standpoint of a small child, the ruin is in the process of crumbling to nothing (and may no longer be there) and the overhead wires that gave life to the trams are gone leaving only the rails, themselves rusting away beyond use.

Beckett's monologues, all issued by a single character (Patrick Magee as *Listener*) illustrate that we not only perceptually register age in natural entities, like apples and ourselves, but also in *man-made* artefacts. Often, age in artefacts is manifest through decay in the constituent materials, although Beckett's reference to the "...Doric terminus of the Great Southern and Eastern..." conjures a type of age that is inherent in the building's *design* and not brought about through degradation.

In the course of the last half century, we have become increasingly insulated from these decay related manifestations by modern synthesised materials and a consumer culture of ever accelerating replacement where products exhibiting any signs of age are simply discarded.

This is, however, a relatively recent state of affairs. In his 1665 *Micrographia*, Robert Hooke describes the silverfish or "bookworm", a small hexapod found amongst decaying books⁶⁴ as "one of the teeth of Time."⁶⁵

Similarly, in his essay "*What is a Thing?*" Heidegger recites an ancient German colloquialism:

"It is even said that the ill-famed "tooth" of time is "nibbling" on things."⁶⁶

Heidegger actually refers to the old saying in order to argue that, whilst "things are changing in the passing of time", no one has "ever [actually] observe[d] how time nibbles at things."⁶⁷ However, in his literal reading, he misses how the adage reflects the lived experience of ordinary people for whom the maintenance of buildings and other artefacts *against* the "ravages of Time" was a part of everyday life; experimental archaeology has shown, for instance, that, in earlier epochs, the action of wood-boring insect larvae necessitated the

⁶⁴ Bookworms or silverfish are particularly partial to calfskin and the glue that bonds it to the boards although Hooke also credits them with the work of unrelated wood boring larvae)

⁶⁵ And indeed, when I consider what a heap of Saw-dust or chips this little creature (which is one of the teeth of Time) conveys into its intrals, I cannot chuse but remember and admire the excellent contrivance of Nature, in placing in Animals such a fire, as is continually nourished and supply'd by the materials convey'd into the stomach, and fomented by the bellows of the lungs; and in so contriving the most admirable fabrick of Animals, as to make the very spending and wasting of that fire, to be instrumental to the procuring and collecting more materials to augment and cherish it self, which indeed seems to be the principal end of all the contrivances observable in brut Animals. (p.210)– Robert Hooke, *Micrographia* (1665), Observation LII.

⁶⁶ Martin Heidegger, "The Thing," *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York; London: Harper and Row, 1971), 22

⁶⁷ Heidegger, "The Thing", 22.

complete replacement of wall timbers every twenty-five years.⁶⁸ For the people of such periods, it is through this perceived ‘nibbling’, through ageing, that much of Time’s *significance* and *meaning* would have been directly derived and experienced.

And yet, in the more ‘spiritual’ areas of our lives, our appreciation of objective age is very different, even evoking at times the kinds of *positive* affect that we associate with an aesthetic response. Alois Riegl in his 1903 essay, *The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development*, formalised this unexpected reaction, identifying that the physical properties associated with age have importance for us, a significance he termed “*age value*.”⁶⁹

As an art historian, it was important for Riegl to set down a clear distinction between this value, associated directly with the manifestations of *age*, and the *historical* values more normally associated with his discipline. Noting that, whilst the “historical value of... [an artefact] is based on the very specific yet individual stage... [it] represents in the development of human creation”, “*age value* is [more loosely] revealed in imperfection, a lack of completeness, a tendency to dissolve shape and colour,”⁷⁰ adding that “*age value* is derived from “nature working over time... [and is] a symbol of ...necessary and lawful decay.”⁷¹

That ‘age’ might hold a value for us was similarly recognised in the preceding century’s pursuit of the ‘picturesque’, Ruskin, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, describing age as “the golden stain of time”⁷² and explaining:

“For though hitherto, we have been speaking of the sentiment of age only, there is an actual beauty in the marks of it...”⁷³

In seeking to understand what constitutes the picturesque, Ruskin, however dismissed a contemporary “critic on Art...[who] advanced the theory that the essence of the picturesque consists in the expression of ‘universal decay’,”⁷⁴ preferring that its allure rested in its reference to the sublime, calling picturesqueness “*Parasitical Sublimity*,”⁷⁵ “a sublimity dependent on the accidents, or on the least essential characters, of the objects to which it belongs.”⁷⁶

⁶⁸ Roof timbers lasted a little longer due to the preservative effects of smoke (personal discussion with curatorial staff Castell Henllys, Wales).

⁶⁹ Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development,” *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, edited by Nicholas Stanley Price, M. Kirby Talley Jr. and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro (New York: Getty Museum Publications: 1996).

⁷⁰ Price, Talley and Vaccaro, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development,” 73

⁷¹ Price, Talley and Vaccaro, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development,” 73

⁷² John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Third Edition (London: Smith Elder, 1855), 172.

⁷³ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 173.

⁷⁴ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 173.

⁷⁵ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 174.

⁷⁶ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 174.

In the apprehension of Ruskin's "golden stain of time" (or Reigl's "age value"), we do not directly *experience* a change or *witness* it as an occurrence, but adopting the role almost of detective, absorbing in a single instant of perception the traces deposited by durational change from which we are able to *intuit* a narrative of the encountered object's transformations.

Indeed, Reigl, hints at the importance of *traceable* change for the notion of 'age value' when he notes that in a picturesque ruin "a distinct trace of the original form...must remain, since a pile of stones represents no more than a dead, formless fragment of the immensity of nature's force, without a trace of living growth."⁷⁷ Riegl's observation echoes the sentiments of Ruskin who spoke, admittedly more poetically, of the importance of there being "some mysterious suggestion of what...had been, and what...lost...[beneath] the gentle lines which rain and sun had wrought."⁷⁸

In his identification of "age value," Reigl illuminated a facet of physical objects that lies outside the realm of the formal artistic and historical qualities that his field might normally attribute to them:

When regarding an old church belfry, we...have to distinguish between the more or less localized historical memories of various forms that are awakened in us when we observe it, and the general, non-localized presentation of *time*, which the belfry has "joined in" [or "made with", *mitgemacht*] and which it reveals in its clearly evident traces of age [*Alterspuren*].⁷⁹

Reigl recognised that the representation of time's passage in the visible traces of age accumulated by the belfry is not a product of the artefact or of the viewer alone, but one in which they commune *with* one another, "...something they both "joined in" or "made with" [*mitgemacht*] each other, literally a re-presentation of time emerging within the visual dialogue between an artifact and a viewer."⁸⁰

It seems that the observing *subject* is an essential component of the experience of age in an object, not just as a passive receiver of sensory data, but through the active interpretation of the scene before them. The foundational background for the viewer's interpretation is memory.

⁷⁷ Price, Talley and Vaccaro, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development,"⁷⁴.

⁷⁸ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Third Edition (London: Smith Elder, 1855), 179-180.

⁷⁹ Michael Gubser, M., *Time's Visible Surface, Alois Riegl and The Discourse on History and Temporality in Fin de Siècle Vienna*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006), 149.

⁸⁰ Gubser, *Time's Visible Surface*, 146.

The Double Moment of Perception

Merleau-Ponty noted that “at the core of consciousness” lies the “*double moment*”⁸¹ of “sedimentation and spontaneity,”⁸² how every lived moment is accompanied by its assimilation and the laying down of memory by the subject. It is through this process that we understand our world and our own lives, in fact, Samuel Beckett’s play uses our ability to *reverse* this everyday process, using *remembered* objective age to regenerate in our imagination a temporal dimension that *calibrates our past lives*. It is actually through these reimagined episodes that we feel the temporal depth of the performer’s memories.⁸³

A Summary Recapitulation of the Phenomenon of Age

If we were to attempt to summarise our experience of objective age, we would first note its close relationship with our experience of change. We would note that for us to experience *change* in an object it must be observed in at least two differing states and it is the same with *age*. Having linked *change* with the phenomenon of age, we would, however, have to stress that age is a special category of change which is *unidirectional* and the transformations by which it is manifest are necessarily *irreversible*.

A summary of age phenomena might then focus on the central role of the *subject*, both in terms of their ‘knowledge’ and their ‘judgement’, for there can be no experience of change from one state to another without a retained, known, reference against which to ‘measure’ a transformation and there can be no feeling of age without the subject’s judgement about how the currently encountered object compares sequentially to the examples already ‘known’.

This might lead us to observations as to the way that this knowledge of examples previously encountered is assimilated and retained and how that ‘knowledge’ might be augmented by each new example that is observed. It would seem apparent that a disorderly jumble of the retained ‘images’ gathered over time and across numerous locations would not suffice as a basis for the judgements that we must make as to where the encountered object sits in a transformational sequence and we might conclude that the retained images are ordered into some sort of chronological narrative. It is here that we perhaps catch a glimpse of the core of all age phenomena, *a chronologising perceptual activity routinely performed by ourselves as the subject*. Without some chronologising activity, cognitive or *pre-cognitive*, we would be

⁸¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, (London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1962), 152.

⁸² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge, 2002), 150.

⁸³ See also Merleau-Ponty remarks on remembering “**To remember is not to bring into the focus of consciousness a self-subsistent picture of the past; it is to thrust deeply into the horizon of the past and take apart step by step the interlocked perspectives until the experiences which it epitomizes are as if relived in their temporal setting. To perceive is not to remember**” Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (2002), 26.

unable to assimilate the different states of an entity into a unified whole; the relationship between saplings and mature trees, for instance, might be lost to us completely and we might hold them to be entirely separate things. In this regard, age phenomena seem to be essential to the apparent stability of our changing world. Furthermore, it feels like this chronologising behaviour permeates our perceptual faculties through-and-through and may be applied in the apprehension of products of our own industry just as much as it is to the more primordial processes of change in Natural entities.

We might then observe that we are able, from our chronologised stores of *biographic* knowledge concerning our environment, to draw-out principles that can be applied to entities hitherto unknown in judgements about their ‘age’; if we were to encounter an unknown brown plant, for instance, we would naturally (although occasionally incorrectly) assume that it had previously been green. From this we might infer that in chronologising the world around us, our perceptual faculties select facets of its constituent entities as signifiers of the changes that are of concern to us.

In concluding this summary, we might wish to underscore the importance of age phenomena in our everyday lives, not just in the way that they lend persistence to our environment as earlier noted, but also in how they adjust the meanings that objects hold for us and, in turn, how they make us feel. Age phenomena are, perhaps, the key, or legend, to the ‘temporal map’ of our world, including ourselves, making explicit the fleeting nature of the opportunities that it affords to us and generating the swings of emotional response we experience as those opportunities approach and pass.

The Phenomenon of Age and Temporal Digressions

That the material world exhibits age seems at first to be such a pedestrian observation that it seems unworthy of research. Furthermore, age in the objects that surround us is so much a commonplace that the ‘mechanisms’ by which it is perceived are buried deep beneath our everyday lives; “[n]othing is more difficult than knowing precisely *what we see*...perception hides itself from itself”⁸⁴ Merleau-Ponty warned us. Nevertheless, the powerful employment of the phenomenon in Samuel Beckett’s play demonstrates the significance, meaning and affect that ageing objects can hold for us. Beckett’s play also illustrates the way that most narratives of human lives must include digressions that deviate from the linear succession of events to draw in causes, effects and circumstances from the past and, perhaps also, wishes, fears and anticipations for the future.

⁸⁴ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (2002), 67.

Similarly, when we ‘feel’ age in the objects that constitute our environment, we experience a chronological interjection into the linear progress of our lives; as we experience age in an object, we are flung back along a past that runs parallel with our own, or towards a future that we will share with the object.

Many literary narratives use similar devices to tell stories that fully reflect the everyday complexities of human existence. Laurence Sterne’s *Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.* is famously regarded as nothing other than a disorderly series of such digressions from the actual course of events which the reader must reconstruct from the fragments scattered by the narrator.

Although almost comic in its approach, *Tristram Shandy* gives valuable insight into the complex, non-linear relationship that we have with Time in our everyday lives. Sterne’s work is often viewed as a narrative *concerning* narrative, but Jeffrey Williams observes that the “...so-called narrative intrusions and comments actually form a linear narrative whose subject is the *composing of a narrative*.”⁸⁵

Examining Sterne’s work in the context of this research, it is useful to separate *story* from *historical* events. Gérard Genette defines these different forms of narrative as *Récit*, which he describes as “the oral or written discourse that undertakes to tell of an event or a series of events,”⁸⁶ and *Histoire*, which Genette defines as the *actual* chronological events themselves which constitute the content of the story. Genette also proposes a third division, *narration*, “the act of narrating taken in itself”⁸⁷ although Williams notes that in *Tristram Shandy*, it is “precisely...the act of narrative that forms the *récit*.”⁸⁸ In the jumbled recounting of *Tristram Shandy*’s life, there are marked differences between the *narration* (or *récit*) and the actual events of its *histoire* content. Genette terms this “discordance between the two temporal orders of story [*histoire*] and narrative [*récit*]”⁸⁹ *anachrony*. Genette terms an anachronic digression that projects forward of the narrative a *prolepsis* and one that precedes it an *analepsis*.

Interestingly, Chapter 15 of *Tristram Shandy* opens with the narrator lamenting his earlier wandering discourses which he then illustrates with line diagrams⁹⁰ which graphically show the progression of the story, the digressions (*prolepsis* and *analepsis*) appearing as loops and

⁸⁵ Jeffrey Williams, “Narrative of Narrative (Tristram Shandy)”, *MLN*, December, 1990, Vol105, No.5, *Comparative Literature* (Dec., 1990) pp1032-1045, p. 1033. [*my italics*].

⁸⁶ Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane Lewin (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982), 4.

⁸⁷ Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, 26.

⁸⁸ Williams, *Narrative of Narrative (Tristram Shandy)*, 1034.

⁸⁹ Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, 40.

⁹⁰ “These were the four lines I moved thro’ my first, second, third and fourth volumes.” Laurence Sterne, “The Life and opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.” *The Works of Laurence Sterne* (London: J. Johnson, 1803), 78.

squiggles above and below the primary line of the narrative which runs horizontally from left to right.

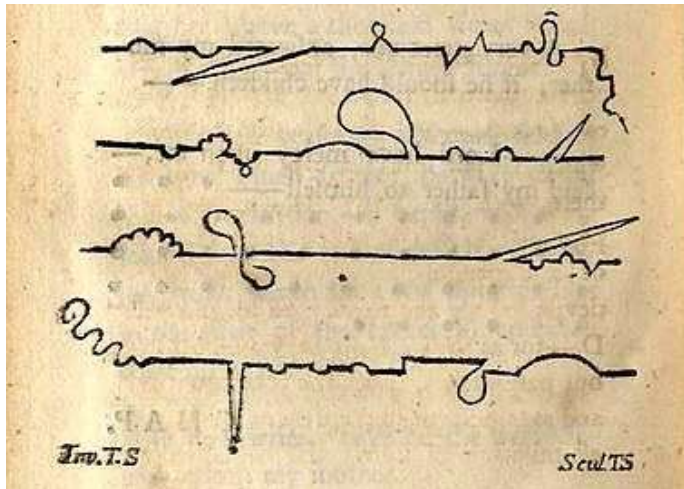


Figure 1.1

Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.* (1766)
Chapter 15 graphic showing digressions from linear narrative.

We can perhaps develop Sterne's pictograms and Genette's observations on narrative to illustrate how perceptual intuitions of *objective age* contribute to the personal subjective narrative of our progression through the world. The phenomenon of age attaches to every object a story which significantly affects its role and bearing on the primary life narrative of the subject. The moments surrounding the picking of an apple from a tree (in order to eat it) might look like the 'Shandy' diagram below:

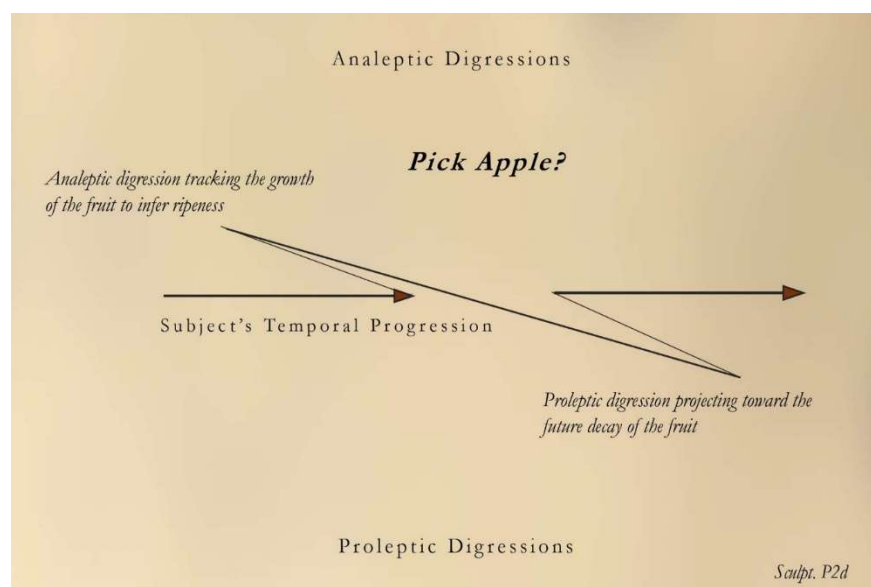


Figure 1.2

Sterne's graphic adapted to show temporal digressions centred on the picking of an apple.

Our perceptual ability to experience age in the objects around us lends to our lives a narrative complexity that reflects the diverse interactions we have with the world around us. Given the ever-changing nature of the things that make up our environment, it is hard to imagine how we might survive without the capability to map these transformations, an ability that we experience as *age* in those objects.

With the analeptic and proleptic digressions that stem from the phenomenon of age, we are able to fully engage with our environment as it changes, not only experiencing its past, but projecting its constituent objects alongside ourselves into the future. Whilst we may not experience past, present and future with the homogeneity promised by Ted Chiang's alien language, through *age*, we walk through the world 'sensing' the three of them, in *everything* around us, *all of the time*.

TWO: Time, Change and Temporal Experience

I am also aware of time accumulating in an object and how it plays a part in our unconscious perception of our environment. There are more senses than the traditional five. A sense of time is one of them.

David Nash, personal correspondence, 15th June, 2023



Figure 2.1

William Hogarth,

Time Smoking a Picture, 1761

Engraving and aquatint on paper

Time, Change, and Age

In his print of 1761, William Hogarth places Time, portrayed as a winged old man, in front of a large picture resting on an easel. The frame carries a line from Crates of Thebes:

“Time has bent me double; and Time, though I confess he is a great artist, weakens all he touches.”⁹¹

The figure of Time sits upon some broken statuary,⁹² a pipe in his hand, blowing smoke at the recently varnished picture, a “trick” of “impudent... picture dealers”⁹³ of the period designed to change the appearance of paintings to infer greater age.

⁹¹ John Ireland, *Hogarth Illustrated*, (London: J&J Boydell, 1793), p.xcvi.

⁹² Itself labelled with the motto “As statues moulder into worth.”

⁹³ Ireland, *Hogarth Illustrated*, p. xcvi

Hogarth's satire is directed at the whim of "bubble-collectors" and their prevalent passion at the time for old "Italian masters", but graphically shows the mythical relationship between Time and the changes he confers on the World through age.

Change, or a succession of changes, are fundamental to our experience of the phenomenon of *age*. Such changes must have duration and, consequently, seem to infer temporality into the object to which they attach. Conversely, it is through these durational transformations that we normally sense our own temporality, or, as Hogarth shows more abstractly, 'Time' itself.

Whilst historically, the literature addressing objective age is sparse, the problems surrounding the concept of *Time* have occupied philosophers for millennia and has filled many volumes with their hard work; the phenomenon of *age*, it seems, is historically a little too worldly to warrant such serious consideration.

Time itself seems an elusive concept if we attempt to address it in any depth; Augustine writes:

Si nemo a me quaerat, scio, si quaerenti explicare velim, nescio. ⁹⁴

(What, then is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled)

"*Time, Duration and Eternity*," writes John Locke, "are, not without reason, thought to have something very abstruse in their nature."⁹⁵

Husserl similarly observes that "as soon as we attempt to give an account of time-consciousness...we get entangled in the most peculiar difficulties, contradictions and confusions."⁹⁶

Augustine is perhaps equally well known for, his proposal that future and past only exist as facets of a *present* consciousness;

But what now is manifest and clear is, that neither are there future nor past things. Nor is it fitly said, There are three times, past, present and future; but perchance it might be fitly said, There are three times; a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future. For these three do somehow exist in the soul.⁹⁷

Augustine's 4th Century observation reflects a pervasive and innate sense that our temporal lives are orientated about a present, 'dimensionless' slice of time which he identifies as a

⁹⁴ Augustine, *Confessions*, lib.XI, cap.14.

⁹⁵ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding In Four Books, fourth edition* (London: Elizabeth Holt, 1700), 90.

⁹⁶ Edmund Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917)*, trans. John Barnett Brough (Dordrecht Kluwer 1991), pg3.

⁹⁷ Augustine, "Confessions", trans. J. Pilkington, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Schaff (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887), Book XI, section 20.

moment “extended by no space.”⁹⁸ Nevertheless, and with great insight, St. Augustine, questioning the inner nature of our *sense* of time, concludes that “time is nothing else than protraction [sometimes translated as ‘extension’]...of the mind itself,”⁹⁹ and clearly believed that there is a distinction between how we *rationalise* Time and how we *feel* it, asserting that “these three somehow exist in the soul.”¹⁰⁰

The Primacy of ‘Now’

Thought concerning the nature of our relationship with Time is dominated by the primacy of the present moment and the belief that our consciousness of Time is constituted as an array of discrete ‘now’ moments. The greatest challenge for such visions of temporality is in contriving how such moments might correspond with each other to deliver the experiences of duration which characterise our lived experience. In the Appendix to his *A Treatise on Human Nature*, Hume illuminates the difficulty of the problem pronouncing that he:

“...cannot render consistent...that [1] all our distinct perceptions are distinct instances, and that [2] the mind never perceives any real connexion among distinct instances.”¹⁰¹

Nevertheless, whilst he confesses that it is “not in [his] power to renounce either of them” or to “explain the principles that unite our successive perceptions in our thought or consciousness”, he is able to see that, were “our perceptions either [to] inhere in something simple and individual or... the mind perceive some real connexion among them, there would be no difficulty”¹⁰² in resolving that inconsistency.

Hume was aware that the problem was not “absolutely insuperable” but, nonetheless, a “difficulty too hard for [his] understanding.” It is interesting, however, that he precedes these statements with the observation:

“If perceptions are distinct existences, they form a whole only by being connected together. But no connexions between distinct existences are ever discoverable by human understanding. We only feel a connexion or determination of the thought to pass from one object to another. It follows therefore that the thought alone finds personal identity when reflecting on the train of past perceptions that compose a mind,

⁹⁸ Augustine, “Confessions”, Book XI, Chapter 26.

⁹⁹ Augustine, “Confessions”, Book XI, Chapter 26.

¹⁰⁰ Augustine, “Confessions”, Book XI, Chapter 26.

¹⁰¹ David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* (London: Longmans Green & Co. 1878), Appendix p. 559.

¹⁰² Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, 559.

the ideas of them are felt to be connected together, and naturally introduce each other."¹⁰³

Modelling Time

J.M.E. McTaggart in 1908 famously pitched the tensed construction of time (past, future, present), which he called the 'A Series', against a tenseless structure in which moments simply progress from earlier to later, naming this the 'B Series' (See Figure 2.2). In his discussion, he counters arguments in favour of the B Series, recognising that it "would (he supposes) be universally admitted that time involves change" and that even when we observe an absence of change in an object "we find that it remained the same while other things were changing"¹⁰⁴ suggesting that a "universe in which nothing whatever changed (including the thoughts of the conscious beings in it) would be a timeless universe."¹⁰⁵ In his search for a 'reality' of time McTaggart argues for the rejection of both the A series and the B series and concludes that time is *unreal*.

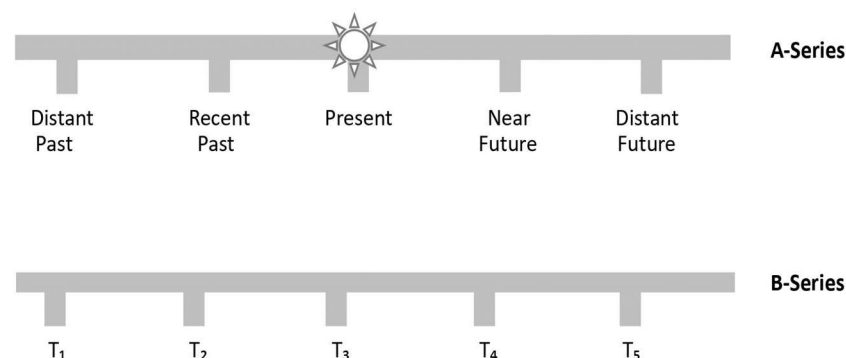


Figure 2.2 Graphic renderings of McTaggart's 'A' Series and 'B' Series constructions of Time

Despite McTaggart's conclusions, there remain several theories for the reality of time constructed upon a temporal experience tensed relative to a present moment. These model Time (1) as a moving present "spotlight,"¹⁰⁶ (2) as a growing block,¹⁰⁷ and (3) as a "shrinking

¹⁰³ [my italics] (Treatise of Human Nature London, Longmans Green & Co. 1878, Appx pg 559) It is known that Husserl was interested in David Hume's discourses, even identifying that his Treatise of Human Nature "gives the first systematic sketch of a pure phenomenology" (Husserl, E. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson. Collier Macmillan 1931, [original German 1913])

¹⁰⁴ John M. E. McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time", *Mind*, 18 (1908): pp.457-84, p.459.

¹⁰⁵ McTaggart, "The Unreality of Time", 459.

¹⁰⁶ Charlie Dunbar Broad, *Scientific Thought* (London: Keegan Paul 1923), 351.

¹⁰⁷ Broad, *Scientific Thought*.

tree.”¹⁰⁸ Additionally, theories of *presentism* propose that reality is comprised of the present moment alone, both past and future being *unreal*; Simon Prossler notes that this seems “currently the most popular”¹⁰⁹ view.

The three models are shown graphically in figure 2.3, within the obvious limitations of such simplified portrayals.

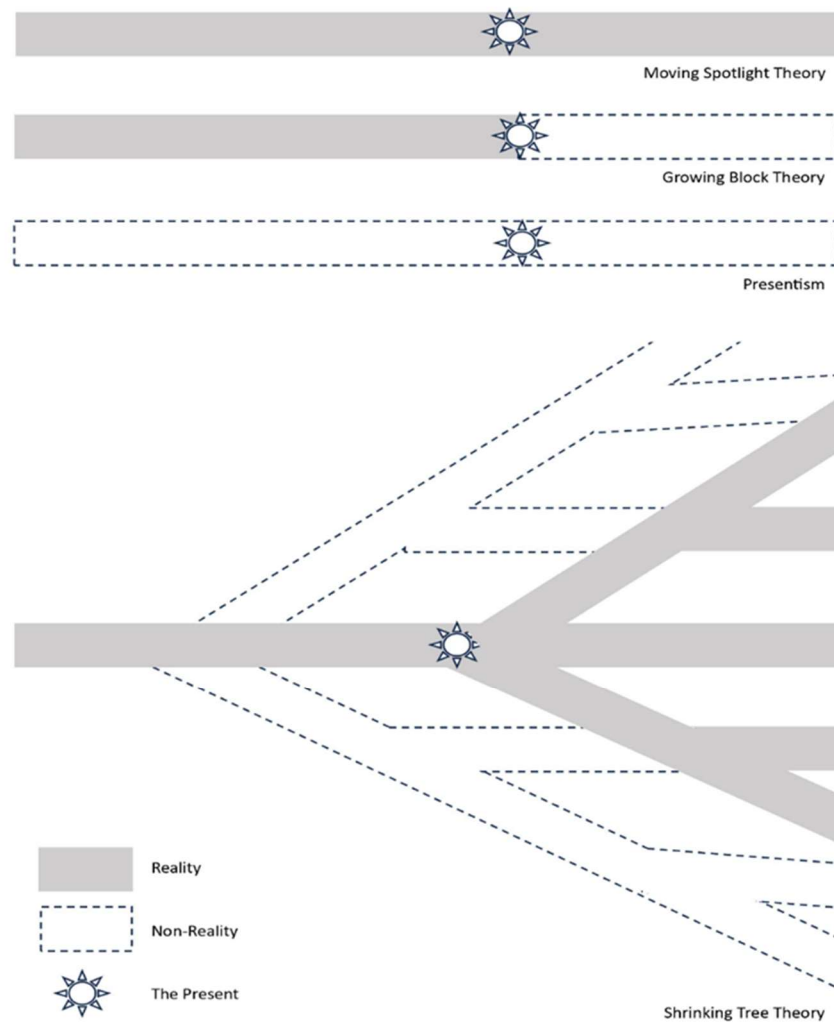


Figure 2.3 Graphic renderings of Time models

To these models visualising positions in the discussion of the nature of *real* time can be added three models giving form to theories concerning our *consciousness* of time, broadly summarised by Dainton¹¹⁰ as a) The Cinematic Model, (b) The Extensional Model and (c) The

¹⁰⁸ Storrs McCall, *A Model of the Universe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

¹⁰⁹ Simon Prosser, *Experiencing Time* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 6.

¹¹⁰ Barry Dainton, “Temporal Consciousness,” *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consciousness-temporal/>

Retentional Model. In the first of these models, The Cinematic Model (a), our experience of time is visualised as a series of snapshot moments, each in itself lacking temporal extension, but building through succession to a conscious state able to assimilate change. The Extensional Model (b) gives ‘temporal extension’ to moments of experience allowing each episode to encompass both spatial and temporal sensation. In the Retentional Model (c), whilst episodes of experience lack temporal extension in themselves, their content is able to represent to us events with durational qualities, or change, through the experience of the immediate present being referred back to retained representations of the recent past.

The models seek to give tangible form to an aspect of our lives that is elusive to reason yet profound in its experience. Central to the tense-oriented theories is the sense that the present represents a frontier at which a new reality comes into existence, referred to by some as ‘objective becoming’. It is at this ‘boundary of reality’ that all activity occurs.¹¹¹

It is often surmised that it is the intangible nature of time that leads us to employ spatial analogies in the expression of our experience; the future lies ahead of us, the past behind us and time generally passes by, although later chapters discuss a more complex relationship.

Furthermore, our experience of time *does* appear to have definite direction. In our own lives we experience a clear direction of causation, that an event in the present is brought into being by what has passed before. The direction of time can also be empirically glimpsed through the temporal asymmetry of the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which in our practical experience, might reveal itself to us through the non-reversible dispersion of heat in a metal object.

The Experience of Change

Different Types of Change: Dynamic and Discontinuous

Our experience of change seems to fall into two categories, dynamic change and discontinuous change. These, as Broad suggested, can be visualised through the hands of a clock, the movement of the second hand being directly experienced as (dynamic) motion whilst that of the hour hand becoming apparent through separate (discontinuous) episodes of sensory experience referenced to one another. As Charlie Dunbar Broad¹¹² notes: “We do not merely notice that something *has* moved or otherwise changed; we also often see something *moving* or *changing*. This happens if we look at the second-hand of a watch or look at a flickering

¹¹¹ (Peter Forrest, “The Real But Dead Past: A Reply to Braddon-Mitchel,” *Analysis*, 64 (2004): pp.358-62

¹¹² Broad, *Scientific Thought*, 351.

flame... It is also clear that to see a second hand *moving* is a quite different thing from ‘seeing’ that an hour-hand *has* moved. In the one case we are concerned with something that happens within a single sensible field; in the other we are concerned with a comparison between the contents of two different sensible fields.”¹¹³

Observations such as those of Broad must lead us to question how we can ‘observe’ motion or change within a single immediate moment of experience given that such phenomena appear to comprise a transformation over a duration or period of time, however small that might be.

The Temporal Extension of Experience and The Experience of Motion/Dynamic Change

William James noted “A succession of feelings, in and of itself, is not a feeling of succession. And since to our successive feelings, a feeling of their succession is added, that must be treated as an additional fact requiring its own special elucidation.”¹¹⁴ This led James and others, such as E.R. Clay, to set forth theories engendering the experienced present with a temporally extended quality labelled by James as the ‘specious present’, James concluding that “...we come to this antithesis, that if A and B are to be represented as *occurring in succession*, they must be simultaneously represented.”¹¹⁵ James develops the idea of a specious present: “In short the practically cognized present is no knife edge, but a saddleback, with a certain breadth of its own on which we sit perched, and from which we look in two directions into time. The unit of composition of our perception is a *duration*, with a bow and a stern as it were—a rearward-and a forward-looking end. It is only as parts of this duration-block that the relation of *succession* of one end to the other is perceived. We do not first feel one end and then feel the other after it, and from the perception of the succession infer an interval of time between, but we seem to feel the interval of time as a whole, with its two ends embedded in it.”¹¹⁶ Interestingly, James seems to hold that his specious present, which he believed extended over several seconds, carries within it a projection into the future as well as a retention of the past.

Temporal Experience as Duration-less ‘Snapshots’

An alternative view of temporal experience proposes a succession of duration-less snapshots. The model is, these days, referred to as the ‘Cinematic’ model, although as an idea it may pre-date the invention of ‘moving pictures.’¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Broad, *Scientific Thought*, 351.

¹¹⁴ William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Henry Holt, 1890), 628-9.

¹¹⁵ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 629.

¹¹⁶ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 609.

¹¹⁷ Simon Prosser (Experiencing Time) notes (p. 122, footnote 5) that Reid, in his review of Locke’s account for duration, appears to advocate something similar: “Speaking strictly and philosophically, no kind of succession can be an object of the senses or of consciousness. You can only sense what is the case now; you can only be conscious of what is the case now; and now—a point in time—can’t contain a succession. Therefore, the

To a large extent, any appeal of this cinematic model of temporal experience relies heavily on our susceptibility to the illusion of *phi* motion, the appearance of motion delivered by a rapid series of still images, (as used in television and cinema) and this mental picture perhaps discourages further interrogation of this model by those that subscribe to it. However, even in the cinematic model, to be aware of a temporally extended phenomenon, a small movement for instance, adjacent phases must, by some means, be experienced together. Cristoff Koch, though, develops this model by proposing that attached to each momentary present is a kind of metatext or *vector* which he visualises as being “painted on to each snapshot.”¹¹⁸ Dainton comments that it is almost as difficult to conceive of these ‘vectors’ as “judgements or intuitive feelings (or convictions or beliefs) bearing a message along the lines of ‘that there thing is moving!’” as it is “to see what feature of a still, static image could be sufficiently suggestive of motion,”¹¹⁹ but the suggestion that our perception of change may involve an internal cognitive aspect additional to direct sensation is nonetheless interesting.

The Experience of Discontinuous Change

Changes that occur over longer periods, Broad’s hour hand for example, can be referred to as discontinuous change. Simon Prosser questions whether discontinuous change “is part of the content of perceptual experience,”¹²⁰ arguing that the phenomenal experience of discontinuous change is “far less robust” than that of motion noting that “when one tries to introspect the phenomenology of a discontinuous change one faces the problem that the change has already occurred by the time one becomes aware of it.”¹²¹

The identification of discontinuous change is therefore in question and here Broad’s example of the hour hand is insufficient as it is an *anticipated* change sought out by the subject. Nevertheless, the phenomenal experience of discontinuous change does share many facets with that of motion and the kind of change that might be perceived within a specious present, particularly in the way that we immediately perceive such sensory experiences as change rather than simply another view, for instance.

The Role of Attention in Detecting Change

motion of a body—a successive change of place—couldn’t be observed by the senses alone without the aid of memory” Thomas Reid 1785/2002 *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press 2002) essay 3, ch.5.

¹¹⁸ Cristoff Koch, *The Quest for Consciousness* (Boulder, Colorado: 2004), 264.

¹¹⁹ Dainton, “Temporal Consciousness,” 22.

¹²⁰ Prosser, *Experiencing Time*, 128.

¹²¹ Prosser, *Experiencing Time*, 128.

Research into ‘*change blindness*’ provides some insight into the process of detecting discontinuous change. Change-blindness is a trait observed when a subject’s attention is drawn by several immanent stimuli or when change occurs very slowly. In the field of Psychological Science, Ronald Rensink notes that, whilst the *importance* of being able to detect change generally makes humans and animals “very good at it”, “we can be amazingly “blind” to...changes (in front of us) even when they are large, repeatedly made and are expected.”¹²² Rensink describes how early filmmakers found an audience might fail to notice sudden change, the entrance of a new character for instance, if this coincided with another stimulus, a sudden noise perhaps.

Results from his experimental work suggest that “the failure to see large changes...can be explained by the proposal that *attention* is needed to see change.”¹²³

Rensink remarks that his work necessitates the careful differentiation of motion and change, noting that whilst “*motion* is the temporal variation in a property at a given point in space...change *refers* to the transformation of a particular object or event over time.” He employs the example of the movement of a bird’s wing where “there is a constant structure (the bird) in which a transformation (wing movement) occurs noting the importance of *attention* “being used to form a coherent representation that persists over the course of its transformation.”¹²⁴ He reports an important finding that “only 3-4 items can be seen to change at a time” and that it appears that even these “may be parts of a single structure that corresponds to a single object” suggesting finite limits to our attention in this respect.

Attention appears to be equally important in the overall perception of a scene, Rensink reporting that “recent work supports the view that scene perception is based on a dynamic process, rather than the accumulation of detailed information” remarking that “attention appears to be allocated on a ‘just-in-time’ basis, with the representation of an object formed at the moment it is needed and dissolved once attention has been withdrawn.”¹²⁵

Rensink observes that “any dynamic variation in the world is picked up by two perceptual systems: one for motion (variation in regards to a particular location) and one for change (variation in regards to a particular structure). Both systems will generally be in play,”¹²⁶ he asserts.

¹²² Ronald A. Rensink, “Change Detection,” *Encyclopaedia of Perception*, (Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2009), 241.

¹²³ Rensink, “Change Detection”, 242.

¹²⁴ Rensink, “Change Detection”, 243.

¹²⁵ Rensink, “Change Detection”, 244.

¹²⁶ Rensink, “Change Detection”, 244.

Explanations of the role of attention in the detection of change employ the concept of a ‘transient’ response early in the sensory reception of a stimulus. In their paper, *Visual transients without feature changes are sufficient for the percept of a change*,¹²⁷ the neuroscientists, Kanai and Verstraten, demonstrate that visual transients draw our attention prior even to the binocular fusion of the scene. The transient notifies us that a change has occurred and draws our attention to a specific location but holds no other information concerning the change event.

It appears that the process can be divided into six distinct components: “(i) load the information into a memory store (such as vSTM [visual short term memory]), (ii) put it into a coherent form, (iii) hold it across a temporal gap, (iv) compare the contents of the memory to the new stimulus, (v) unload this memory, and (vi) shift processing to the next candidate item(s)” noting that results “indicate that distinct mechanisms for at least some of these do in fact exist.”¹²⁸

Object Endurance: A predisposition in favour of persistence

For change to appear *as* change, it is necessary for the object of that transformation to endure. Kant notes:

Alteration is a way of existing which follows upon another way of existing of the same object. All that alters *persists*, and only its state changes... We can say, using a somewhat paradoxical expression, that only the permanent is altered... This permanent is what alone makes possible the representation of the transition from one state to another, and from not-being to being. These transitions can be empirically known only as changing determinations of what is permanent.¹²⁹

Brian Scholl (Yale Perception and Cognition Laboratory) argues that we are actually pre-disposed to perceive objects as enduring, observing that it “is not that we *can* perceive objects as persisting despite changes to their features, but we *cannot help* but see objects as persisting...and this is because in turn our visual systems are wired to represent the relevant objects via a single updated ‘object file’ representation.”¹³⁰

Object Files in The Memory

¹²⁷ Ryota Kanai and Frans A.J. Verstraten, “Visual transients without feature changes are sufficient for the percept of a change,” *Vision Research* 44 (2004): 2233-2240.

¹²⁸ Rensink, “Change Detection”, 244.

¹²⁹ Emanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), 216-17

¹³⁰ Brian J. Scholl, “Object Persistence in Philosophy and Psychology,” *Mind and Language*, 22 (2007): pp. 563-91, p. 583.

The concept of *object files* as collations for the entities that we perceive, appears to be widely accepted, as it is that these mental files assimilate and store changes in the state of those objects.

François Recanati et al summarise how “[t]he notion of an *object file* is used in psychology to characterise visual representations of objects at an intermediate level between low level processing of sensory features and high-level placement of objects in conceptual categories or kinds. The object-filing system supports the individuation and tracking of particulars, while allowing information about their features to be stored, updated, and retrieved. It has to decide when visually encountered elements should be counted as different stages of the same persisting object, and so should be assigned the same file, and when not.”¹³¹

Recanati et al go on to record how the object features that are of predominant concern to the ‘filing system’ are spatiotemporal rather than any featural similarity, this being termed the ‘principle of spatiotemporal priority’¹³² and believe that it represents a “fundamental principle of object persistence’ in our vision. This can be demonstrated by the ‘tunnel effect’ experiment¹³³ where subjects attribute persistence to one object moving behind another even if it re-emerges as something significantly different (they cite the example of a yellow ball being perceived to ‘morph’ into a red cup when it re-appears from behind an occlusion).

Recanati et al draw comparisons with effects observed whilst studying infants, including those published by Zenon Pylyshyn, particularly his “fingers of instantiation”, abbreviated to FINST, a human capacity allowing a finite number of objects to be individually identified/indexed and tracked simultaneously. The objects in question trigger the opening of object files but, importantly, “*the features responsible for index grabbing are not themselves represented in the content of the file which is thereby opened.*”¹³⁴ FINSTs and their associated object files are described by Pylyshyn as a “brute causal mechanism” which occurs early in the visual process,¹³⁵ perhaps “the *precursors* of the mental files which philosophers talk about in connection with singular thought.”¹³⁶

Pylyshyn proposes that “we must have something like a visual indexing mechanism which preconceptually picks out a small number of individuals, keeps track of them, and provides a means by which the cognitive system can further examine them in order to encode their

¹³¹ Michel Murez, Francois Recanati “Mental Files: An Introduction,” *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 7 (2016): pp.265-281, p265.

¹³² Jonathan Flombaum, Brian Scholl & L. Santos, “Spatiotemporal priority as a fundamental principle of object persistence,” *the Origins of object knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 135-164.

¹³³ Luke Burke, On the Tunnel Effect, *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 4 (1952): pp.121-138

¹³⁴ Murez and Recanati, “Mental Files: an Introduction,” 266.

¹³⁵ Zenon W. Pylyshyn, “Visual Indexes, preconceptual objects, and situated vision,” *Cognition* 80 (2001): pp.127-158, p.147.

¹³⁶ Murez and Recanati, “Mental Files: an Introduction,” 268.

properties, to move focal attention to them or to carry out a motor command in relation to them [as and when required].”¹³⁷ This seems to correlate directly with the work of Rensink on attention described earlier. Pylyshyn notes how this equates with philosophical notions concerning non-descriptive grounding for thoughts regarding particulars. Recanati et al comment that “[m]ental files, as characterised in the philosophical literature, are devices of direct reference whose deployment makes it possible to entertain *singular thoughts*, i.e. thoughts that are about objects *rather than* about whatever possesses certain features or satisfies such and such a description.”¹³⁸

Pylyshyn goes on to observe how “under certain conditions, [we] represent some things without representing them in terms of concepts...we can think...‘that is red’...without reference to what category [that object] falls under or what properties it may have.”¹³⁹ Pylyshyn notes how philosophers often believe that demonstrative terms such as that (or this) are “eliminable” in language and thought and draws a comparison with how we perceive visual scenes remarking that “[i]f we could only refer to things in their category membership, our concepts would always be related only to other concepts (the concepts for categories) and would never be grounded in experience.” He notes that “traditionally” these concepts were held to ‘bottom out’ with direct sensory properties but current thinking is that “grounding begins at the point where something is picked out directly by a mechanism that works like a demonstrative.”¹⁴⁰

When is it ‘Now’? The Delay between Sensation and Awareness

As discussed earlier, extensional models of temporal consciousness attribute duration to the perceptual present, labelled by Stern as “presence-time”¹⁴¹ and William James/E.R. Clay as “the specious present.”¹⁴² Understandably, there has been much discussion about the duration of the specious present (James felt that it might be several seconds) whilst Prosser reports that “most contemporary advocates of the specious present suggest that its duration is a few hundred milliseconds.”¹⁴³

Experiments conducted by physiologist Benjamin Libet and others have shown that there may be a delay between our *sensing* and becoming *aware* of an event of as much as 500

¹³⁷ Pylyshyn, “Visual Indexes, preconceptual objects, and situated vision,” 130.

¹³⁸ Murez and Recanati, “Mental Files: an Introduction,” 267.

¹³⁹ Pylyshyn, “Visual Indexes, preconceptual objects, and situated vision,” 130.

¹⁴⁰ Pylyshyn, “Visual Indexes, preconceptual objects, and situated vision,” 129.

¹⁴¹ (William Stern, “Psychische Präsenzzeit [Psychic presence-time], *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane* XIII (1897): pp 325-349, p315.

¹⁴² James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 631.

¹⁴³ Prosser, *Experiencing Time*, 120.

milliseconds; between our tapping our fingers on a table, for instance, and our having conscious awareness of having done so, there can be a duration of up to half a second. This delay is not in the receipt of the sensory information but in the subject's mental processing of it into a reportable mental form. This is of course contrary to experience; we feel awareness of events as they happen and Libet's research found that once the awareness of an event is formed it is essentially back-dated to correspond with the much faster primary response of the sensory cortex. This 'back-dating' is termed 'subjective referral' by Libet. He explains:

So we have the strange situation in which actual awareness of the present is really delayed, but the content of the conscious experience is brought into alignment with the present. Subjectively, then, we do live in the antedated present, although in fact we are not aware of the present for up to 0.5 sec after the sensory signal arrives at the cerebral cortex ... the subjective "present" is actually of a sensory event in the past.¹⁴⁴

Further experiments directed at reflex response durations have indicated that these are of sufficient extension for the intervention of our conscious intent allowing us to override such seemingly innate mechanisms.¹⁴⁵

For the empirical philosopher, Daniel Dennett and neurologist Marcel Kingsbourne, these delays in the processing of sensory information form the basis for a complete reappraisal of how we view our conscious self. They note that whilst science has generally discredited Descartes' notion of a 'theatre' (located at the pineal gland in the middle of the brain) where sensory information is 'presented' to the conscious mind as if 'on stage', we have been unable to let go of the notion of the mind as a unified "*locus of subjectivity*."¹⁴⁶ Dennett proposes a model of consciousness comprising *multiple* drafts from various components of the brain. Dennett notes that his *Multiple Drafts* model accommodates the way that, whilst "spatially and temporally distributed content fixations are precisely locatable in both space and time...their onsets do not mark the onset of awareness of their content."¹⁴⁷ In his summary of the differences between this model and that of the 'Cartesian Theatre', he explains that "[t]he 'stream of consciousness' is not a single definitive narrative. It is a parallel stream of conflicting and continuously revised contents, no one narrative thread of which can be singled out as canonical – as the *true* version of conscious experience."¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Benjamin Libet, *Mind Time: the temporal factor in consciousness*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2004), 88-89.

¹⁴⁵ Libet goes on to note that endogenous conscious events such as imaginations and non-sensory feelings, which occur without fast sensory input from the primary cortex, are not referred backward but are simply felt 0.5 seconds after their initiation.

¹⁴⁶ Brian Farrell, "Experience," *Mind* 59 (April 1950): 170-98.

¹⁴⁷ Daniel Dennett and Marcel Kingsbourne, "Time and the observer: The where and when of consciousness in the brain," *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 15 (2) (1992): pp.183-201, p.185

¹⁴⁸ Dennett and Kingsbourne, "Time and the observer", 185.

The Experience of Awareness Delay

Often a complex object or a scenario requires our concentrated attention in its perception, and reflection similarly tells us that such episodes of attention may have noticeable duration. In complex situations we may notice that the object of our attention needs ‘working-on’, there seems to be a process of interrogation which, again, has tangible duration.

Whatever the theoretical duration of our sensible present, our experience of it varies significantly between situations. William James noted that whilst “things are discrete and discontinuous...their comings and goings and contrasts no more break the flow of thought that thinks them than they break the time and the space in which they lie...The transition between the thought of an object and the thought of another is no more a break in the thought than a joint in a bamboo is a break in the wood. It is a part of the consciousness as much as the joint is a part of the bamboo.” He felt that “consciousness ...does not appear to itself as chopped up into bits...[i]t is nothing jointed, it flows. A ‘river’ or a ‘stream’ are the metaphors by which it is naturally described.”¹⁴⁹ This account of consciousness whilst appealing feels at odds with our day-to-day experience; even Hume noted how “Our thought is fluctuating, uncertain, fleeting.”¹⁵⁰ Dennett similarly contradicts James, remarking that “one of the most striking features of consciousness is its discontinuity,”¹⁵¹ whilst the philosopher, Peter Fredrick Strawson, believing “Human thought has very little natural phenomenal continuity or experiential flow” if his “is anything to go by”, paints a very recognisable picture where our thoughts “keep slipping from mere consciousness into self-consciousness and out again...[i]t is always shooting off, fuzzing, shorting out, spurting and stalling...[and] constantly broken by detours – by blows - fissures - white noise;”¹⁵² to him it seems “as if consciousness is continually *restarting*.”¹⁵³

He concedes however that whilst experiences of “temporal seamlessness [may be] relatively rare,” “[t]hings are different if one’s attention is engaged by some ordered and continuous process in the world, like a fast and exciting game, or music, or a talk. In this case thought or experience may be felt to inherit much of the ordered continuity of the phenomenon which occupies it.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁹ James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 339,240)

¹⁵⁰ David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006), III.

¹⁵¹ Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained*, (London: Penguin, 1991), 356.

¹⁵² Galen Strawson, “The self,” *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. 4. (1997): 18. 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199262618.003.0032.).

¹⁵³ Strawson, “The self”, 19.

¹⁵⁴ Strawson, “The self”, 19. Although even here he adds that “it may still seize up, fly off, or flash with perfectly extraneous matter from time to time, and reflection reveals gaps and fadings, disappearances and recommencements even when there is a stable succession of content”.

THE EXPERIENCE OF TEMPORALITY

Edmund Husserl's book, *The Phenomenology of Time Consciousness* reproduces his lecture series of 1905 in which, adopting a phenomenological approach, he investigates our consciousness of time and examines in detail the way that we perceive temporal objects, "objects which not only are unities in time but also include temporal extension in themselves."¹⁵⁵

His discussions generally take as their examples experiences for which the primary sensory impression is auditory (melodies, birdsong and spoken sentences for instance) but he also conjectures that the underlying mechanisms are applicable to objects that we experience spatially, recognising in a footnote that "it is tempting to draw a parallel between...modes of... appearance of temporal Objects and the modes in which a spatial thing appears and is known with changing orientation, to pursue further the 'temporal orientations' in which spatial things (which are also temporal Objects) appear."¹⁵⁶ Given that the pervasive character of the world is one of temporally extended transformation (change), it may also be tempting to consider that the components of our environment are perceived as temporal objects in respect of changes to their *inherent* properties as well as through changes to our subjective orientation brought about by *our* movement.

Husserl in his analysis first challenges suppositions about Time, particularly excluding notions of "Objective time,"¹⁵⁷ the 'time' that we measure with clocks, noting that it is not the "task" of phenomenology to equate "the lived experience of the perception and representation [*Vorstellung*] of time...with real Objective time [or] whether time intervals [posited through time-consciousness] conform to Objective, real temporal intervals;" what Husserl accepts is not "the existence of a world-time, the existence of a concrete duration, and the like, but time and duration appearing as such."¹⁵⁸ In essence, his phenomenological exercise is directed toward the "*immanent time* of the flow of consciousness."¹⁵⁹

To illustrate the difference between Objective time and the innate consciousness of time which he is seeking, Husserl uses a spatial analogy (one of "many noted and significant analogies") describing how "consciousness of space belongs in the sphere of phenomenological givens, [where the consciousness of space is the lived experience,] in which "intuition of space" as

¹⁵⁵ Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press 2019), 43.

¹⁵⁶ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 47.

¹⁵⁷ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 22.

¹⁵⁸ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 23.

¹⁵⁹ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 23.

perception...takes place. When we open our eyes, we see into Objective space – this means (as reflective observation reveals) that we have a visual content of sensation which establishes an intuition of space, an appearance of things situated in such and such a way. If we...reduce perceptual appearance to the primary given content...[it] yields the continuum of the field of vision, which is something quasi-spatial... a continuous multiplicity... [in which] we discover relations such as juxtaposition, superimposition, interpenetration...and so on.”¹⁶⁰ These, Husserl stresses, are not “Objective-spatial relations.”¹⁶¹ Similarly, when the “phenomenological data are the apprehensions of *time* [(the lived experiences)]...one cannot discover the least trace of Objective time through phenomenological analysis.”¹⁶² Husserl goes on to show how “we must also distinguish between...“sensed” temporal [data] and a perceived temporal [data]”¹⁶³ by explaining how it is through *perception* that “red is a quality” and that “sensed red is red only in an equivocal sense, for red is the name of a real quality.”¹⁶⁴

Husserl’s “phenomenological analysis of time” employs the detailed “consider[ation of] the constitution of temporal objects,” objects that inherently possess duration. His analysis focuses on examples where change develops the content of the object over the course of its duration, such as a moving animal, speech or a musical melody, but, as earlier observed, he infers that similar inferences can be drawn for objects that are simply experienced as enduring. All of these objects “present themselves in temporal modes of appearance: as now, past and future.”¹⁶⁵ Of these, Husserl recognises *now* as a “privileged point,”¹⁶⁶ a locus for the temporal experience, that represents “a temporal fringe...[for consciousness],”¹⁶⁷ a “now is always and essentially a border point of an extent of time,”¹⁶⁸ a “continuous moment of individuation,”¹⁶⁹ “characterised above all as the new.”¹⁷⁰ In spite of these special characteristics, the now cannot exist for us independently of the past and future. Essential to this relationship of succession is a single time framework within which the different *now* components are temporally situated.

Husserl first develops his discussion of temporal consciousness around a critique of the work of Meinong and Brentano, both of whom appreciated that for there to be any apprehension of temporal passage there “must be a [unifying] act that embraces, beyond the now, the whole

¹⁶⁰ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 24.

¹⁶¹ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 24.

¹⁶² Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 24.

¹⁶³ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 25.

¹⁶⁴ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 25.

¹⁶⁵ Edmund Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, trans. John Barrett Brough, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991) xxvi.

¹⁶⁶ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, 37.

¹⁶⁷ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, 37.

¹⁶⁸ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, 72.

¹⁶⁹ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, 68.

¹⁷⁰ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, 63.

temporal object.”¹⁷¹ Meinong held that this act occurred *after* the final percept when all of the now-points might coalesce into a single object. Brentano identified, however, that the past ‘now’s’ must somehow be available in the present ‘now’ for their interrelationship to be apparent as the object develops, and not only must they be ‘to hand’, but temporally situated and ordered in their recollection so as not to present as a “disharmonious tangle of sound.”¹⁷² Brentano proposes a mechanism by which “...new representations reproduce...the content of...preceding ones, *appending* the (continuous) moment of the past as it does so.”¹⁷³

Husserl develops this proposition, introducing the concept of “fresh” or “primary memory”¹⁷⁴ which retains the succession of elapsed ‘now’s’ delivering them as an integral component of the ‘now’ perceived in the present; “...in primary memory...we *see* what is past...presentatively not re-presentatively.”¹⁷⁵ Initially, Husserl makes a clear distinction between this primary memory and recollective “secondary” memory although in a later document, *Analogy for Spatial Things, for the Appearance of Space, and for the Consciousness of Space*, he notes that we are able to recall primary memories whilst the temporal object endures, there “occurring the consciousness...of the duration’s recollected beginning...which has become obscure but is still grasped in its process of sinking backwards.”¹⁷⁶ The essential character of Husserl’s ‘fresh’, primary memory is its retention of past moments as part of the present:

Although no longer present itself, it is still present to me, but only as just past...*its being-past* is something now, something present...*something perceived*.¹⁷⁷

Husserl, along with “primary memory” (retention), identifies “primary expectation (...protention),”¹⁷⁸ “the immediate awareness of the future attending all of my experiences.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷¹ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 234.

¹⁷² Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 11.

¹⁷³ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 176.

¹⁷⁴ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 169.

¹⁷⁵ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 43.

¹⁷⁶ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 378.

¹⁷⁷ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 219.

¹⁷⁸ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 41.

¹⁷⁹ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), XL.

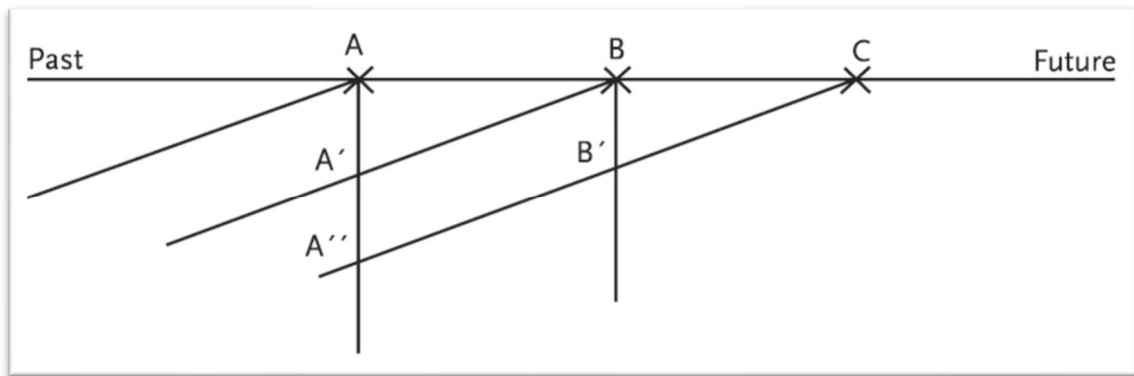


Figure 2.4 HUSSERL'S DIAGRAM (reproduced in Maurice MerleauPonty, *The Phenomenology of Perception* p484 and labelled: "From Husserl (*Zeitbewusstsein*, p22) Horizontal line: series of 'present moments'. Oblique lines: *Abschattungen* (translates; nuances/shadows) of the same 'present moments' seen from an ulterior 'present moment'. Vertical lines: Successive *Abschattungen* of one and the same 'present moment'."

It is from this this retentive approach that Husserl developed his famous diagram showing the retained "... continuity of constant changes" "running-off" from the primary 'now' stimulus. The better summary of this is provided by Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception* first published in 1945:

What is given in the first place A', A'', or A''', nor do I go back from these 'outlines' to their original A, as one goes back from the sign to its significance. What is given to me is A transparently visible through A', then the two through A'', and so on, as I see a pebble through the mass of water that moves over it.¹⁸⁰

Merleau-Ponty, considering Husserl's protentions and retentions as "... intentionalities which anchor...[us] to the environment,"¹⁸¹ notes that these intentionalities "do not run from a central I, but from [our] perceptual field."¹⁸² He relates Husserl's *Abschattungen* (translates; shadows, shading, nuance) model as follows:

I do not pass through a series of instances of now, the images of which I preserve and which, placed end to end, make a line. With the arrival of every moment, its predecessor undergoes a change: I still have it in hand and it is still there, but already it is sinking away below the level of presents; in order to retain it, I need to reach through a thin layer of time...but still it would not belong to the past...When a third moment arrives, the second undergoes a new modification; from being a retention, it

¹⁸⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 485.

¹⁸¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 483/484.

¹⁸² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 484.

becomes the retention of a retention and the layer of time between it and me thickens.¹⁸³

Merleau-Ponty concludes the account by noting that “[t]ime is not a line, but a network of intentionalities.”¹⁸⁴

Reminding us that Husserl’s diagram represents an “instantaneous cross section of time”¹⁸⁵ he further observes that “[w]hile B becomes C, it becomes also B’...”¹⁸⁶ and so on, concluding that “time, in our primordial experience of it, is not a system of objective positions, through which we pass, but a mobile *setting* which moves away from us.”¹⁸⁷ Citing Heidegger, he adds “ ‘Temporalisation is not a succession (Nacheinander) of ecstasies. The future is not posterior to the past, or the past anterior to the present. Temporality temporalizes itself as future-which-lapses-into-the-past-by becoming-into-the-present’ .”¹⁸⁸

Later he notes “[t]hat the passage of one present to the next is not a thing that I conceive, nor do I see it as an onlooker, I effect it.... I am myself time, a time which ‘abides’,” or remains stable (intransitive definition), “and does not flow.”¹⁸⁹ There is, Merleau-Ponty observes, “a temporal style of the world, and time remains the same because the past is a former future and a recent present, the present an impending past and a recent future, the future a present and even a past to come:...each dimension of time is treated or aimed at *as* something other than itself...there is at the core of time a gaze, someone through whom the word *as* can have a meaning.”¹⁹⁰

In his poetically graphic style, Merleau Ponty summarises;

“A past and a future spring forth when I reach out towards them. I am not, for myself [only] at this very moment ...[but] also at this morning or at the night which will soon be here, and though my present... [may be] this instant, it is equally this day, this year or my whole life.”¹⁹¹

Husserl applies the model as the basis for the sense that we have of objects ‘enduring’, where “the ‘adumbrations of sensation’ (the primal data of presentation for unities of sensation in

¹⁸³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 484.

¹⁸⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 484.

¹⁸⁵ (PP486)

¹⁸⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 487.

¹⁸⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 487.[my emphasis]

¹⁸⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 488.

¹⁸⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 489.

¹⁹⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 490.

¹⁹¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 489.

phenomenological time)...reproduced in the diagram”¹⁹² similarly constitute the changing or unchanging “appearances”¹⁹³ of “*physical* things.”¹⁹⁴

For Merleau-Ponty, time is not a substance that flows, it is “not like a river.”¹⁹⁵ He jokes that the only reason that the metaphor (of the river) persists is that we “surreptitiously [put] into the river a witness of its course.”¹⁹⁶ Merleau-Ponty observes that “[t]ime is... not a real process, not an actual succession that I am content to [simply] record. It arises from my relation to *things*.”¹⁹⁷ He illustrates this by noting that “the water that will flow tomorrow *is* at this moment at its source, the water that has just past *is* now a little further downstream” and that “[w]hat is past or future for me is present in the world,”¹⁹⁸ and that “[w]ithin things themselves, the future and the past are in a kind of eternal state of pre-existence and survival.”¹⁹⁹

Projecting this holistic view of time, he is critical of definitions of time that hinge on “a succession of instances of now”²⁰⁰ and of attempts to “‘explain’ consciousness of the past in terms of memories [preserved in the unconscious]... and consciousness of the future in terms of the projection of these memories ahead of us,”²⁰¹ for him, “the presence of the past in consciousness [is] a simple factual presence.”²⁰² Looking at his table, he notices how it “bears traces of his past life, for I have carved my initials on it and spilt ink on it. But these traces in themselves do not refer to the past: they are present;... a preserved perception is a perception, it continues to exist, it persists in the present, and it does not open behind us that dimension of escape and absence that we call the past.”²⁰³

Husserl’s proposal for “retentions” held-over into the present and laid ‘alongside’ current data derives largely from the notion of a wholly unified experience of the perceived *now* which does not resonate well with our actual experience. I would hold that the ‘backdrop’ against which perception situates the object of our attention does not (and cannot) update with that focus and, whilst Husserl’s model works if applied only to the intended object, the preceding discussion concerning our attention might suggest a less passive mechanism. Such a mechanism may centre upon a vectorised model of our attention where the temporal

¹⁹² Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, 99.

¹⁹³ (brought99)

¹⁹⁴ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, 99 [my italics].

¹⁹⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 477.

¹⁹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 478.

¹⁹⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 478. [my emphasis]

¹⁹⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 478.

¹⁹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 478.

²⁰⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 479.

²⁰¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 479.

²⁰² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 479.

²⁰³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 480.

experience derives from the projection and fulfilment of *protentions* rather than the successive layering of retentions.

An Extensionalist Approach

Both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty make reference to the work of William Stern, Husserl even adopting the contemporaneous psychologist's term, "Präsenzzeit", or presence-time (often translated as lived-present), to distinguish between the instantaneous now and the extended experience of the present inferred from the apprehension of temporal objects. Husserl maintained that it was a "truism that every consciousness aimed at some whole, at some plurality of distinguishable moments...encompasses its object in an indivisible time-point."²⁰⁴ but acknowledges Stern's objection to the "...‘dogma of the momentariness of a whole of consciousness’ (as he [Stern] calls it)."²⁰⁵ Husserl seems to also accept that there "are cases ...in which the apprehension [of a temporal object] is extended over a stretch of time (the so called "presence-time")...[such that] a discrete succession ...[is] held together by [a single] unitary act of apprehension" enabled, in Stern's terminology, by "a bond of consciousness."²⁰⁶

Nevertheless, Stern's 'extensionalist' approach rarely receives consideration equal to that of Husserl. Importantly for our study of *age* and *material temporality*, where observations may be separated by extended periods of time, Stern asserts, how for him;

It is a matter of indifference..." whether "...contents present themselves..." "...successive[ly] or simultaneous[ly]... [it being most important]...that the constituting elements are parts of a unitary act of consciousness."²⁰⁷

In Stern's view, then, the unifying act of consciousness is the primary generative force in the constitution of the temporal object over and above the actual temporal relationship of its component parts; that this should be so is manifest in our ability to apprehend a melody whilst holding a conversation or, indeed, comprehend a song, where many temporal objects (spoken words and tonal successions) accompany and overlay one another. In such situations, the *retentionalist* model seems cumbersome and rather at odds with actual experience, relying, as

²⁰⁴ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 22.

²⁰⁵ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 22.

²⁰⁶ William Stern, "Psychische Präsenzzeit [Psychic presence-time]," *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane* XIII (1897): pp 325-349, p329, reproduced in Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 22

²⁰⁷ Stern, "Psychische Präsenzzeit" p337 [my italics] Stern continues: "The apprehension of *identity*, *perfect likeness*, *similarity*, *difference* belongs to this series. We are therefore just as capable of directly perceiving the agreement or the difference of two successive tones as we are the agreement or difference of two adjacent coloured surfaces." He emphasises that there is no "... need here for the artificial assumption that the comparison occurs only because the memory image of the first tone exists *side by side* with the second tone; rather the whole content of consciousness unrolling in the presence-time becomes the foundation equally for the resulting apprehensions of equality and difference." ("Psychische Präsenzzeit" p337 my italics, Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time* (1893-1917), 23.

it does, on “a collection of distinctively vivid representations – “immediate memories” or “retentions” – of recently elapsed experiential phases...[giving] rise to our direct (seeming) experiences of change.”²⁰⁸ Against this, an “extensional”²⁰⁹ model would hold that our “experiences of change are themselves extended through...time in just the way one might naively suppose them to be.”²¹⁰ Stern, himself, asserts that it “appears...unjustified to take apart such a distinctive content of consciousness and dissect it into artificial elements simply because it is not completed in a moment;”²¹¹ Dainton supports this view, noting that “[a]bandoning the [retentional] dogma brings the significant advantage that temporal consciousness need no longer be systematically misleading as to its own nature.”²¹²

Stern’s proposal is simply that “...mental events that play themselves out within a stretch of time can...form a unified...act of consciousness regardless of the simultaneity of individual parts...”²¹³ It is the “...stretch of time over which a mental act can be extended...” that he called its “presence time.”²¹⁴

Dainton summarises: Stern’s presence-times are both temporally extended and experientially unified conscious episodes.”²¹⁵ He provides a simple diagram showing a “single presence-time.”

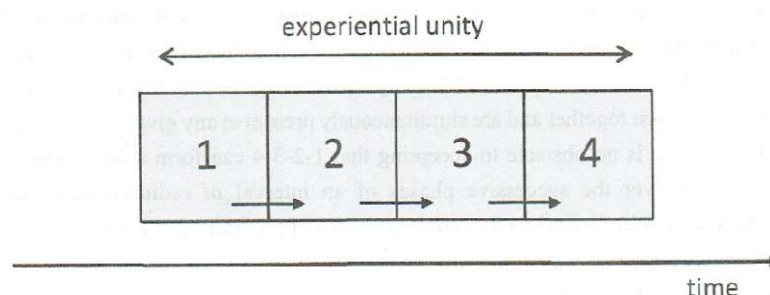


Figure 2.5. Dainton describes the diagram as “a depiction of a single presence-time, consisting of a rapid succession of brief auditory tones , 1-2-3-4. As indicated by the small arrows, each tone is experienced as flowing into its immediate successor; but the entire sequence also constitutes a unified experiential whole as indicated by the upper arrow.” Barry Dainton, “William Stern’s Psychische Präsenzzeit,” *The Routledge Handbook of Temporal Experience* (London: Routledge 2017), 108.

²⁰⁸ Barry Dainton, “William Stern’s Psychische Präsenzzeit,” *The Routledge Handbook of Temporal Experience* (London: Routledge 2017), 106.

²⁰⁹ Dainton, “William Stern’s Psychische Präsenzzeit,” 106.

²¹⁰ Dainton, “William Stern’s Psychische Präsenzzeit,” 106.

²¹¹ William Stern, “Mental Presence-Time,” trans. N. De Warren, C. Wolfe (ed.), *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Research V*, (London: College Publications, 2005) pp.310-359, p313.

²¹² Dainton, “William Stern’s Psychische Präsenzzeit,” 108.

²¹³ Stern, “Mental Presence-Time,” 315.

²¹⁴ Stern, “Mental Presence-Time,” 315.

²¹⁵ Dainton, “William Stern’s Psychische Präsenzzeit,” 108.

Stern explains: "...the four parts are in consciousness one after the other in succession; yet nevertheless, they exist within one and the same act of apprehension, within a presence-time. We do not hear the four tones at once nor do we, while hearing the fourth tone, also have the entire group of tones in consciousness on the basis of a continued presence of tones 1,2, and 3. Rather, the four tones constitute a successive unity with a common effect in the form of apprehension."²¹⁶

As with Husserl's retention/protention model, the simple auditory example is used to illustrate a much more universal application, Stern envisaging a broad spectrum of change experience, from movement, re-presented memory episodes, thoughts and physiological sensations.

For many, difficulties seem to arise in the extentional approach because the experienced present must necessarily have duration, however short, with the implication that we can never experience an *absolute now*. Stern seems, initially, to be flexible in this regard noting that "...for every temporally extended act of consciousness there exists an optimal value of presence-time...the time that is required for an impression to attain its complete mental unfolding and effectiveness, and which is apprehended subjectively as immediately befitting it", and "that optimal value is largely dependent on the contents of acts of consciousness."²¹⁷

But Stern, along with subsequent commentators, goes on to try to define the length of presence-time to a few seconds or less (Stern actually settles on 0.8 seconds²¹⁸) in order, perhaps, to mitigate the loss of the present momentary 'now', even though this in turn creates additional questions as to how presence-times conjoin to create the apparent stream of consciousness we generally seem to experience. Stern appears to have something in mind when he says:

The present is nothing comparable to a point of rest, but rather something continually in flux, one should, nevertheless, not designate it as a "moving point". It is rather an uninterrupted displacement of existing short stretches of time.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ Stern, "Mental Presence-Time," 319.

²¹⁷ Stern, "Mental Presence-Time," 341.

²¹⁸ "If I hold a pocket-watch to my ear (with a ticking interval of 0.2 seconds), I involuntarily perceive a group of ticks, each of which is the object of a thoroughly unified act of consciousness. (The impression is extremely striking: here is perhaps an observation in which unity without simultaneity – the stretch-like character of presence time – appears most compelling). This observation reveals to me that with the passive reception of an impression a group or more groups of up to four sounds are formed automatically. I am also able to make out other groupings of up to 2, 6, or 8 sounds; but always, an act of volition is here definitely required...In these instances the optimal value is around 0.8 seconds..." Stern, "Mental Presence-Time," 346-7.

²¹⁹ Stern, "Mental Presence-Time," 325.

Dainton proposes a complex concatenation of overlapping presence-times (figure 2.6). This, to me, seems an unsatisfactory resolution of the model since it reintroduces Husserl's discreet moments of *now*, only each is extended to an arbitrary duration.

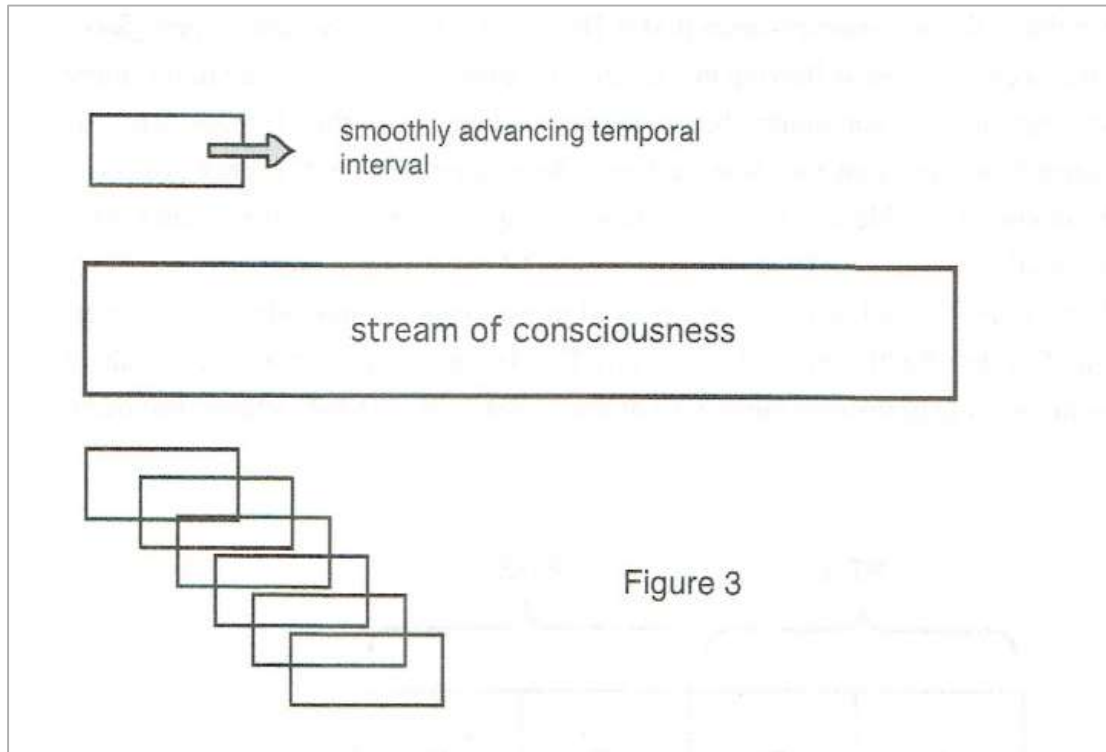


Figure 2.6. Dainton's concatenation of overlapping presence times.

Stern proceeds to address other more complex areas of our temporal experience that seem not to have received Husserl's detailed attention. One of these is what Stern terms "temporal analogues;"²²⁰ "forms of consciousness which exist within presence-times and which represent, in compressed or condensed form, events which in reality unfold over hours, days or years, rather than seconds or fractions of seconds;"²²¹ Stern explains:

The intellectual side of volitional acts does not only consist...in that I represent to myself the result and final goal of the act. Rather, while and insofar as I actually exercise an act of volition, the entire course of action is present to me, not, however, as a timeless content of representation, but as a compressed content.

Not only future events, but also past events can be projected into presence-time, for example, when the entire course of the day is briefly passed in review in our minds during the evening, for when we "bring to mind by making present again" (an extremely characteristic expression!) earlier experiences (e.g. the course of a discussion or a journey). Perhaps there also belongs here the often reported

²²⁰ Dainton, "William Stern's Psychische Präsenzzeit," 112.

²²¹ Dainton, "William Stern's Psychische Präsenzzeit," 112.

phenomenon that in instances of a sudden threat to life, years and even decades of our life flashes by in our mind in a matter of seconds.”²²²

Stern further notes that such instances of “temporal compression” are not restricted to our waking moments, their most conspicuous form being found, perhaps, in our dreams which commonly seem to encompass periods of hours or days within one short sleep episode.

More recently, Endel Tulving developed the term *chronesthesia* to define “a form of consciousness that allows individuals to think about the subjective time in which they live and that makes it possible for them to “mentally travel” in such time.”²²³ “Chronesthesia,” Tulving

General Capacity	Function
Object vision	Seeing Objects
Spatial vision	Seeing Space
Colour vision	Seeing Colours
Motion vision	Seeing movement
Audition	Hearing sounds
Semantic memory	Knowing the world
Episodic memory	Remembering experiences
Noetic consciousness	Awareness of the world
Autonoetic consciousness	Awareness of self in time
Chronesthesia	Awareness of subjective time

Figure 2.7. Endel Tulvig’s “Selected examples of General Neurocognitive capacities and their particular functions.” Endel Tulvig, *Chronesthesia: Conscious Awareness of Subjective Time* in *Principles of Frontal Lobe Function*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 312.

notes, “is closely related to...mental activities such as remembering (or recollection of) past happenings, thinking about the past, expecting, planning, and thinking about the future.”²²⁴

Tulving begins his explanation by drawing distinctions between general neurocognitive capacities, such as colour, spatial and object vision, and their respective function, such as seeing objects, space and colours. He provides a summary in tabulated form (Figure 2.7).

Fundamentally, “[c]hronesthesia is the kind of neurocognitive capability that expresses itself in individuals’ awareness of the temporal dimension of their own and others’ existence and that makes thinking about subjective time possible.”²²⁵ Whilst it may be most familiar in our

²²² Stern, “Mental Presence-Time,” 329.

²²³ Endel Tulving, “Chronesthesia: Conscious Awareness of Subjective Time,” *Principles of Frontal Lobe Function*, ed. Stuss, Donald T., Knight, Robert T. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 311-325, p311.

²²⁴ Tulving, “Chronesthesia: Conscious Awareness of Subjective Time,” 311.

²²⁵ Tulving, “Chronesthesia: Conscious Awareness of Subjective Time,” 313.

recollection of past experiences, it is also evident when we construct mental models of future happenings and events, most particularly when these stem from actions planned in the present.

Tulving's notion of *chronesthesia* is bound into more "general concept[s] of mental time travel"²²⁶ which directly link the "[r]etrieval of episodic memories...[to] the conscious reliving of past events, a sort of mental journey into the past."²²⁷ Suddendorf et al, in a similar way to Tulving observe that "[c]onceiving of future events...involves a process of active construction of events that have not yet occurred, but the more general process of mental time travel highlights the evidence that episodic memory too, is better conceived as a conscious act of construction, rather than a faithful re-enactment of the past."²²⁸ Suddendorf notes that the "slew of errors and distortions"²²⁹ we find when recalling past experiences are perhaps evidence of a *re-constructive* episodic memory. He also proposes that the adaptive advantage of episodic memory is in giving foresight, "provid[ing] information from the past for the simulation of the future,"²³⁰ and it may well be that memories de-constructed and reconfigured in this way are more readily applied to new situations.

It is, perhaps, misleading to separate episodic memory, or recollected experience, from the semantic memory that holds knowledge since the two will be fully embedded within one another both whilst being *encoded* and during their *retrieval*.

Suddendorf also "raises the possibility that the development of language itself is intimately connected with the evolution of mental time travel" recounting Pinker's assertion that language primarily conveys and shares " 'who did what to whom, what is true of what, where, when and why' ".²³¹ He notes Everett's account of the Pirahã tribes of Brazil who communicate with only "two tense-like morphemes which describe whether or not an action is in the present. In the context of this research, it is poignant that the Pirahã occupy dense rainforest that is not subject to seasonal flux and where any diachronic changes of individual plants and animals are generally subsumed by the synchronic stability of the overall ecosystem.

"Unfolding Time"

²²⁶ Thomas Suddendorf & Michael Corballis, "Mental time travel and the evolution of the human mind". *Genet. Soc. Gen. Psychol. Monogr.* 123 (1997): 133-167.

²²⁷ Thomas Suddendorf, Addis, D.R., Michael Corballis, "Mental time travel and the shaping of the human mind," *Philosophical Transactions Royal Society Biological Sciences*, 364(1521) (2009, May 12): pp.1317-1324, p.1318.

²²⁸ Suddendorf, Addis, Corballis, "Mental time travel and the shaping of the human mind," 1318.

²²⁹ Suddendorf, Addis, Corballis, "Mental time travel and the shaping of the human mind," 1318.

²³⁰ Suddendorf, Addis, Corballis, "Mental time travel and the shaping of the human mind," 1318.

²³¹ Suddendorf, Addis, Corballis, "Mental time travel and the shaping of the human mind," 1320.

Whatever the models for presence time, it is clear that an ability to extend the present into the past and future is fundamental to our grasp and effective engagement with the world.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger identifies the embodiment of past and future in the lived experience of the present as a “...full ecstatical unity of temporality.”²³²

The way the Present is rooted in the future and in having been is the existential-temporal condition for the possibility that what has been projected in circumspective understanding can be brought closer in a making-present, and in such a way that the Present can thus conform itself to what is encountered within the horizon of awaiting and retaining.”²³³

Earlier, Heidegger notes that the “character of “having been”” similarly “arises from the future...in such a way the future which “has been” (or better, which is in the process of having been”) releases from itself the Present.”²³⁴

A 2019 study of the central role of disturbance’s to our capability to constitute this “unity” as an underlying cause of mania showed also “a deep connection among temporality, inductive reasoning and self-knowledge.”²³⁵ Martin et al refer back to the early observations of Minkowski who in 1923 noted how a patient (who believed that every night he would be executed and who was unable to assimilate the unlikelihood of this event from prior experience) envisaged for himself “...the same future...giving no thought to the present or the past”. Minkowski identified “...a profound disorder in his general attitude toward the future”²³⁶ where the “time which we normally integrate into a progressive whole was...split into isolated fragments” and any “carry-over from past and present into the future was completely lacking.”²³⁷

In a later publication, Minkowski would refer to similar cases as “a disorder relevant to unfolding in time” wherein the patient’s “contact with the environment is restricted to the now; he has no present any more, since in general he no longer experiences “unfolding in time”...[he lives] in the grip of the now, in which he exists and out of which he is incapable of creating a present.”²³⁸ Heidegger similarly proposes how, without the resolve that is enabled

²³² “Circumspective making- present...always belongs to a full ecstatical unity of temporality...grounded in a *retention* of that context of equipment with which... [we concern ourselves] in *awaiting* a possibility. That which has already been laid open in awaiting and retaining is brought closer by one’s deliberative making-present or envisaging.” Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans, John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 411.

²³³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans, John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 411.

²³⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 374.

²³⁵ Wayne Martin, Tania Gergel and Gareth S. Owen, “Manic Temporality,” *Philosophical Psychology*, 32(1) (2019): pp. 72-97, p73.

²³⁶ Martin, Gergel and Owen, “Manic Temporality,” 74 (Minkowski, 1923, p.132)

²³⁷ Martin, Gergel and Owen, “Manic Temporality,” 74 (Minkowski, 1923, p.132-138)

²³⁸ Martin, Gergel and Owen, “Manic Temporality,” 75 (Minkowski 1933, p.294)

by a fully constituted present (configured with the past and a future), “Being-there is everywhere and nowhere.”²³⁹

Minkowski’s work was revisited by the Swiss psychologist, Ludwig Binswanger who developed the thesis that “temporal experience is “built-up” or constructed in part from a set of protentions and retentions [, equating approximately with Husserl’s definitions,] against which experience is measured or assessed.”²⁴⁰ Martin et al note how “Binswanger thinks of lived time as a kind of temporal “fabric” or “weave” [*Gewebes*] which makes it possible for temporal objects to appear and indeed mediates our whole relationship to our environment.”²⁴¹ This present, woven from the future and past, is key to our understanding (inductive reasoning) and assimilation of our environment:

As a phenomenon of lived experience, induction is about knitting together the lived past with the lived future. And this holds even if the subject matter of the induction is something long-past. Why? Because a lived induction is always a way of gathering up evidence from past experience and using that to project oneself into the future – whether by making some explicit prediction or as a matter of anticipating what future evidence-gathering will bring.²⁴²

DEBUNKING ‘NOW’

The chapter commenced with the observation that in our interpretations of Time, now (the present moment) is given a special significance, but I am going to conclude with some observations which seem to support Stern’s contention that the unity of a temporal object is derived from the subject’s *intentional interaction* with it, rather than the temporal proximity of its component parts.

The first objective is to contest the status that the present ‘now’ is awarded in the foregoing models of our temporal experience, not in the promotion of an entirely *tense-less* approach, but one where the present is identified wholly within the subject rather than as an absolute concept of a precise objective ‘*now*’ moment.

I will use my personal experience as an artist to illustrate how our perception of the world differs from its factual state at any moment in time.

²³⁹ The moment of vision, however, brings existence into the situation and discloses the authentic ‘there’”. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 398 “

²⁴⁰ Martin, Gergel and Owen, “Manic Temporality,” 81.

²⁴¹ Martin, Gergel and Owen, “Manic Temporality,” 81.

²⁴² Martin, Gergel and Owen, “Manic Temporality,” 87.

Not for a moment has the world been as I saw it

Phenomenological discussions concerning the experience of perception necessarily employ as examples single objects or closely cropped vignettes to illustrate their observations. The arena that constitutes our environment is however significantly more complex and this has profound implications for the way that we perceive the world and *what* we perceive.

Furthermore, it is in a state of constant transformation both within its objective self, as its constituent entities move and grow, and through alterations in first person perspectives generated by the subject as it moves and ‘feels’ its way through the world.

As we make this progress, our attention is drawn to different areas of our situation and it seems that “...scene perception is based on a dynamic process, rather than the accumulation of detailed information...” with “...attention... allocated on a “just-in-time” basis, with the representation of an object formed at the moment it is needed and dissolved once attention has been withdrawn,”²⁴³ or redirected elsewhere.

Our lived experience suggests that rather than representations being ‘dissolved’, our attention simply moves *elsewhere* and the preceding representation becomes ‘background’ (although still part of our broader phenomenal field). We are cognitively absorbed by these intended perceptual episodes, Merleau-Ponty remarking in his *Phenomenology of Perception* how when perceiving a particular component of the world we “...put the surroundings in abeyance the better to see the object, and to lose in background what one gains in focal figure...while the other objects recede into the periphery and become dormant.”²⁴⁴

Nevertheless, whilst the objects that hold our attention dominate from moment to moment, we do not perceive them as ‘floating’ in a featureless black void. On the contrary, they are held within a full ‘scenario’ where many objects appear, each object having a developed spatial relationship with the others (even those objects that are behind us). We perceive the full scenario even though at any one moment we are only processing sensible data from the object upon which we are attending. Whilst it might seem that it is only the objects to which we are attending that carry ‘meaning’ or truly constitute a ‘thing’, they do this in the context of the preceding percepts that constitute the overall scene. The scenarios through which we behold the world are thus constructed from multiple separate episodes of perception, each having tangible duration and pastness.

²⁴³ Rensink, “Change Detection”, 244.

²⁴⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 78.

In this, the development of the scene is analogous with the making of a painting or drawing since there are both temporal and intentional aspects to the development of the image; the picture evolves as a collage of component marks and, whilst a few painters build their work using a homogenous tonal approach, most figurative / representational artists choose to methodically ‘work-up’ the objects constituting the scene (adding incremental detail) one-by-one.

The analogy extends well to how the painter captures scenes which are moving or changing such as scudding clouds or where they include several humans or animals.



Figure 2.8. Oil sketch of a bay. (Paul Tuppeny 2010)

I recall sketching a straightforward landscape view of a bay. To render the sky I, as usual, identified its patterns and rhythms and, built into that structure representations of the three-dimensional forms of the *particular* clouds as they passed before me but only as the speed of my painting capabilities allowed.

The work satisfactorily recalls the scene but the image presented never *actually* existed, not even for a single moment.

Like paintings, we do not see or record everything around us; for us to fully perceive an object it must ‘acquire’ our attention. Equally, the attention it *receives* will correspond to the attention it *requires*; a person standing and approaching will command significantly more attention than their empty chair, for instance.

Like the paintings within their frames, we occupy a phenomenal field, an arena where ‘units’ of perceptual encounter are held, ‘pinned’ to a hastily ‘sketched’ framework fixing their relative spatial positions. As with the painting, the representation builds over a duration, many

of the marks showing in the final image having been placed long ago at the painting's inception.

However, our stream of perceptions differ from paintings in one very important respect since, unlike a painting, there is no point at which we can declare our phenomenal field as *complete* (and ready to hang on the wall). Any point of severing the succession of perceptions will be arbitrary and it is difficult not to conclude that *every sensible present is therefore constituted from the entirety of our lives*. Recalling Merleau-Ponty:

“I am not, for myself [only] at this very moment ...[but] also at this morning or at the night which will soon be here, and though my present... [may be] this instant, it is equally this day, this year or my whole life.”²⁴⁵

²⁴⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 489.

THREE: Notes on Perception Pertinent to the Experience of Objective Age

“... I delve into the thickness of the world by perceptual experience.”

Maurice Merleau-Ponty²⁴⁶

Whilst the notion of *age* in the environment around us is rooted in the perception of its constituent entities, it is not a phenomenon that we can experience directly as raw data from our senses. By its very nature, the making apparent of a succession of states, of *change over time*, is a primary essence of age as a phenomenon and a single momentary glance toward (or touch/smell of) an object would not be able to deliver the sensory information required for such a revelation.

The sensory data that our senses harvest from the objects that make up the world build into a complex mosaic of patches of light, sound, touch and smell. However, even once resolved through the optics and retina of the eye and other nerves, these inputs cannot *re-constitute* the things from which they emanate without the intervention of consciousness and the intentional act that we call perception.

The Conscious Act

Aron Gurwitsch, in his essay “on the *Intentionality of Consciousness*, defines consciousness as the “actualiz[ation] of a sense.”²⁴⁷ For Gurwitsch, “...consciousness is the general medium of constitution...Nothing can exist or have validity unless we experience it;”²⁴⁸ it is the “medium of access to whatever exists.”²⁴⁹ Dermot Moran summarises this position:

Consciousness is a unified ‘complex’ (Zusammenhang, Komplex), a seamless living stream involving a web of interrelated emotional and affective states, including desires, feelings, moods and so on. Acts and attitudes are founded on one another, interpenetrate and modify one another.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, (London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1962), 237.

²⁴⁷ Dermot Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality: The Gurwitsch Memorial Lecture 2018”, *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 50 (2019): pp.1-41, p.4

²⁴⁸ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 5.

²⁴⁹ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 4.

²⁵⁰ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 8.

Importantly “all activities...are pursued for the sake of living and finding one’s way within the *Umwelt* [life world]. All activities, including those of a cognitive or speculative nature, are motivated by, and essentially related to, practical human interests.”²⁵¹

So, central to any discussion of object perception, phenomenological or otherwise, is its essential nature as an intentional act directed, or ‘intended’, by the subject toward an object. For Merleau-Ponty, intentionality represents our stance and comportment toward the world in general as a vital component of our animated being. He notes:

Perception is precisely that kind of act in which there can be no question setting the act itself apart from the end to which it is directed. Perception and the perceived necessarily have the same existential modality, since perception is inseparable from the consciousness which it has...of reaching the thing itself...to see is to see *something*.²⁵²

Husserl similarly recognised the disparity between the object as it factually exists and the cognitively held ‘object’ through which our consciousness delivers that entity as a meaningful *thing*. He nevertheless asserted the interdependence of the two, observing that consciousness is always *of* ‘something’ and is fundamentally *directed* outward.

The term for this directed attention, to *intend* [something], has come down to us through translations of Husserl’s German *intendieren* and extends in application beyond its narrow day-to-day use in English (for deliberately motivated acts) to apply to all directed acts of consciousness.²⁵³ Whilst it is the factual object that succumbs to the natural processes that we ‘read’ as *age*, it is within the intended *perception* of it that the phenomenon of objective age is actually experienced.

The directed act of perception delivers to us a complete environment populated with unified objects that are meaningful and understood, “[o]ur perceptual field...[being thus] made up of ‘things’, ” our “... several senses deliver to our consciousness quantities of [raw] hyletic data about the world but the environment that we look upon is built-up not as a mosaic of light, pressure waves and chemical interactions, but as ‘things’ and ‘spaces between things’.”²⁵⁴

For Husserl, the processes of perception and consciousness begin with the ‘originary’ raw material ‘collected’ by our senses which he terms ‘hyle’, or *hyletic data* (derived from the Greek “hyle”, matter or ‘stuff’), a non-intentional layer upon which perceptual processes operate. Gurtwitsch, a Gestalt psychologist who closely followed Husserl, was uncomfortable

²⁵¹ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 20.

²⁵² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 436, [my italics]

²⁵³ The concept of the intended conscious act has been developed over centuries, Plato’s archer aiming his weapon (Theaetetus 194 a) being a graphic early metaphor.

²⁵⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 18.

with such an unstructured approach to the receipt of sensory data noting a “separation between *hyle* (matter) and *morphe* (shape, form) is not even abstractly possible, for disregarding *morphe* and concentrating on *hyle* alone entails a change in what is given.”²⁵⁵ Accordingly, Gurwitsch proposed that there are intrinsic structures within the sensory field, perhaps pointing toward an active structuring of sensory data intended (directed) as a component of the perceptual process.

It is important at the outset to describe the distinction between pure ‘sensation’ and *perception*; “[t]o see is to have colours...to hear is to have sounds”²⁵⁶ but the notion of pure sensation “corresponds to nothing in our [actual] experience.”²⁵⁷ Merleau-Ponty notes at the beginning of his *Phenomenology of Perception* that, whilst we may believe that we “know perfectly well what ‘seeing’, ‘hearing’, ‘sensing’ are,” we actually only understand them through “what psychologists call ‘the experience error’;” essentially, “we make perception out of the perceived.”²⁵⁸ He portrays the difference between the sensory data emanating from an object and what we ‘see’ with the example of a carpet illuminated from a window:

[Through perception,...] a coloured area appears to be the same over the whole of its surface, whereas the chromatic thresholds of the different parts of the retina ought to make it red in one place, orange somewhere else, and in certain cases colourless.²⁵⁹

Similarly, a *perceived* object will include facets that are not immanently sensed at all; Merleau-Ponty develops the theme using the house next door as an example. As an illustration of the extended breadth of perception over that of more immediate sensory stimuli, he describes how the house would be seen differently if viewed from the other side of The Seine, from an aeroplane or from inside and notes that the house *itself* is none of these appearances. He equates these multiple views with Leibniz’s description of the “perspectiveless position from which all can be derived,” “the geometricized projection of these perspectives and all perspectives,” effectively “the house seen from nowhere.”²⁶⁰ He questions the full sense of Leibniz’s proposition but on examining the lamp on his table he notices how he “attribute[s] to it not only the qualities visible from where [he is], but also those which the chimney, the walls [and] the table can ‘see’,”²⁶¹ and concludes:

I can therefore see an object in so far as objects form a system or a world, and in so far as each one treats the others round it as spectators of its hidden aspects”...the

²⁵⁵ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 12.

²⁵⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 5.

²⁵⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 3-4.

²⁵⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 5.

²⁵⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* 9.

²⁶⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 77.

²⁶¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 79.

house *itself* is not the house seen from nowhere, but the house seen from *everywhere*.²⁶²

Merleau-Ponty provides a very visual portrayal of what we experience when he describes “[t]he completed object [as being] translucent, ... shot through from all sides by an infinite number of present scrutinies which intersect in its depths leaving nothing hidden.”²⁶³

Merleau-Ponty proceeds to propose that percepts might in a similar way be ‘extended’ temporally:

If I contemplate the house attentively...[i]t is true that I see it from a certain point in my ‘duration’, but it is the same house that I saw yesterday when it was a day younger...It is true... that age and change affect it, but even if it should collapse tomorrow, it will remain forever true that it existed today.²⁶⁴

In Merleau-Ponty’s mind, “each moment of time calls all the others to witness” and “each present underpins a point of time which calls from all the others, so that the object is seen at all *times* as it is seen from all directions.”²⁶⁵ Referring back to earlier spatial metaphors, he notes that this temporal overview is ordered “by the same means, namely the structure imposed by a horizon”²⁶⁶ that lies between past and future.

If, perhaps, we were to summarise by simplifying the situation, we can conjure that in every instance of perception there are two ‘objects’; the physical thing that exists ‘out there’ as fact (“pure and simple” or “simpliciter” in translations of Husserl) and from which sensory data emanate, and its meaningful ‘doppelganger’ within our mind, that our consciousness ‘constructs’, *elaborating* upon the raw “hyletic” data received through our senses.²⁶⁷

²⁶² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 79. [my italics]

²⁶³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 79.

²⁶⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 79.

²⁶⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 79. [my emphasis];

²⁶⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 79.

²⁶⁷ Although I have here differentiated factual object and intended percept to emphasise the role of consciousness in the experience of ‘age’, Husserl, in his analysis of general perception goes to some lengths to describe them as integral parts, or ‘moments’ of the same ‘presence’. Nevertheless, the distinction between the two in the apprehension of ‘age’ does perhaps feel more pronounced, possibly as a reflection of the phenomenon’s essential constitution from a *succession/concatenation* of temporally separated episodes of perception.

For Husserl, there are two different types of *contents to each perception*;

1) For *Immanent contents*, it’s essential that the entire content be inherent within the stream of lived experience. For example, if I see one side of a chair, that side is something *immanent* to my lived experiences. My sense data, my perceiving of the chair, and any reflexive act of consciousness (like my perceiving that I am perceiving) are immanent because they are fully contained within my lived experience. (*continued next page*)

2) *Transcendent contents* cannot be fully given in a single act of consciousness. So an example of such a content would be the chair itself, which has many different angles that it can be seen from, and cannot be reduced to a single mode of givenness. However, an imaginary unicorn, for Husserl, would also be a transcendent content because we can imagine the unicorn from multiple perspectives, yet it remains identical throughout. A Transcendent object remains *identical* across many different experiences. A chair

The Intercommunication of Sensory Experience

In our everyday lives and through our everyday language we feel able to convey notions of what we see, touch hear or smell but all of these sensory inputs are mediated by perception; the “Pure” sensory data we receive “corresponds to nothing in our [actual] experience.”²⁶⁸ Our technologies, particularly those of lenses and cameras, give a mediated glimpse of what the “pure Sensation”²⁶⁹ of seeing *could* be like, but it is something we cannot *directly* experience.

Merleau-Ponty enacts a phenomenological investigation to discover such sensation:

Instead of living the vision, I question myself about it, I want to try out my possibilities, I break the link between my vision and the world, between myself and my vision...the world is atomised into sensible qualities...and I reach the stage of being unaware of myself as the subject of the visual field.²⁷⁰

He draws a comparison with “the colours...obtained by the painter when he half closes his eyes”²⁷¹ and similar acts of detachment, directed towards breaking the day-to-day “structuralisation of... vision,”²⁷² will be common in the practice of most artists.

Merleau-Ponty notices, though, how sensory experiences inform and “intercommunicate”²⁷³ with one another so that one “...sees the hardness and brittleness of glass and when, with a tinkling sound, it breaks, this sound is conveyed by the visible glass.”²⁷⁴ In this way, he asserts that:

The form of objects is not their geometrical shape: it stands in a certain relation to their specific nature, and appeals to all our other senses as well as sight. The form of a fold in linen or cotton shows us the resilience or dryness of the fibre, the coldness or warmth of the material. Furthermore, the movement of visible objects is not the mere transference from place to place of coloured patches [;] ...in the jerk of the twig from which a bird has just flown, we read its flexibility...One sees the weight of a block of iron which sinks in the sand, the fluidity of water and the viscosity of syrup [and hears]...the hardness and unevenness of cobbles in the rattle of a carriage.”²⁷⁵

(real or imagined) is not fully contained within my lived experience, because it can only be seen (or imagined) from one side at a time.

²⁶⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 3-4.

²⁶⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 3.

²⁷⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 264.

²⁷¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 263.

²⁷² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 263.

²⁷³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 266.

²⁷⁴ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 267. [my emphasis]

²⁷⁵ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 267.

It is through such sensory intercommunication that we perceive many of the qualities that we associate with objective age and it opens the possibility that perceptual judgements associated with age are an integral component of the processes of perception rather than reflective interpretations of the resolved percept.

With regard perceptual *judgements*, Merleau-Ponty makes reference to Descartes 6th Meditation:

“I noticed that the judgements which I was accustomed to make about these objects were formed within me before I had time to weigh and consider any reason which might have forced me to make them.”²⁷⁶

Whilst it is clear that Descartes surmises that the ‘judgements’ associated with perception are not disclosed to reason, Merleau-Ponty is critical of Descartes’ use of the term since, in his view, he is clearly “thinking of the constitution of a meaning for the thing perceived which is not prior to the perception itself and which seems to emanate from it.”²⁷⁷ Suggesting that “[p]erhaps we have not yet understood the real function of judgement in perception...” he alludes that “...the ‘inspection of the mind’ [is], not the concept gravitating towards nature, but nature rising to the concept,”²⁷⁸ and proposes that under such circumstances that “[perception] would be a judgement, which...is unaware of the reasons underlying its own formation...[and]...the perceived object presents itself as a totality and a unity before we have apprehended the intelligible law governing it.”²⁷⁹

Essentially, the ‘judgements’ that develop the hyletic sensory data into the intelligible object that we perceive are pre-rational and fully bound into the mechanics of the perceptual process.

The Notion of Noema

Husserl’s teacher, Franz Brentano noted how:

“Every mental phenomenon is characterised by what the scholastics in the Middle Ages called the intentional (and also mental) inexistence of an object, and we would call...the reference to a content, a direction upon an object.”²⁸⁰

This straightforward position, however, failed to address our capabilities to hallucinate or visualize fictitious objects (a centaur is a commonly cited example) where the directedness

²⁷⁶ Rene Descartes, 6th Meditation, AT, IX, p.60, cited: Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 48.

²⁷⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 48-49.

²⁷⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 48.

²⁷⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 48.

²⁸⁰ Franz Brentano, *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, vol.1, book 2, chap.1 trans. D.B. Terrell, ed. Roderick M. Chisholm, *Realism and the Background of Phenomenology* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960), 50.

has nothing to do with the factual reality of the object. Brentano posited that the ‘object’ was contained *within* our intentionality even though this ran counter to our everyday perceptual experience of objects, the seeming *reality* of which is an important aspect of their apprehension.

Husserl’s solution to these contradictory positions was that although every act of consciousness may be directed, there is not necessarily an *object* toward which it is directed. There is, instead, a *noema* associated with the act through which the act is directed towards its object, should it have one:

When we think of a centaur, our act of thinking has a noema, but it has no object; there exists no object of which we think. Because of its noema, however, even such an act is directed. To be directed simply is to have a noema.²⁸¹

Husserl felt that a proper understanding of the distinctions associated with the noema was “of the greatest consequence for phenomenology [and] is indeed quite decisive for its proper grounding.”²⁸² Husserl’s definitions, though, matured through the course of his extensive career and a detailed consensus of Husserl’s noema has been the source of significant scholarly debate (engaging with which would not usefully advance this particular research project).

Dagfinn Føllesdal defined the noema, in Husserl’s thinking, as “an intentional entity, a generalisation of the notion of meaning (Sinn, Bedeutung),”²⁸³ Husserl himself similarly referring to the full noema as “nothing but a generalization of the idea of meaning (Sinn) to the field of all acts”²⁸⁴ or even, simply, “ ‘Sinn’ (in the widest sense).”²⁸⁵

“Consciousness relates in and through this *Sinn* [meaning] to its object...each intentional experience has a noema and in it a Sinn, through which it relates to the object...”²⁸⁶

Noemata are therefore wholly abstract entities, Husserl comments:

The *tree plain and simple*, the thing in nature, is as different as it can be from this *perceived tree as such*, which as perceptual meaning belongs to the perception, and that inseparably. The tree plain and simple can burn away, resolve itself into its chemical elements, and so forth. But the meaning – the meaning of *this* perception,

²⁸¹ Dagfinn Føllesdal, *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol.66, no.20 (Oct. 16, 1969), [Sixty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division]: pp. 680-687, p.681.

²⁸² Edmund Husserl, *Ideas I: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. William Ralph Boyce Gibson, (London: Routledge, 2012), 201.

²⁸³ Føllesdal, “Husserl’s Notion of Noema,” 681.

²⁸⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Ideen* vol. III, *Husseliana* edition (Haag: Nijhoff, 1950, (p.89) cited Føllesdal, “Husserl’s Notion of Noema,” 681.

²⁸⁵ Føllesdal, “Husserl’s Notion of Noema,” 680.

²⁸⁶ Husserl, *Ideen*, *Husseliana* edition (Haag: Nijhoff, 1950, (316 and 329) cited Føllesdal, “Husserl’s Notion of Noema,” 682.

something that belongs necessarily to its essence – cannot burn away; it has no chemical elements, no forces, no real properties.²⁸⁷

Whilst the noema is in many ways an augmented projection of the factual (plain and simple) object, it is through the noema that we experience the reality of the tree, “...the noematic meaning[,] in sharp distinction from the object pure and simple..., belong[s] inseparably to the psychological essence of the intentional experience, ...[and is] apprehended as real.” (as opposed to the factual ‘immanent’ object),²⁸⁸ the *reality* of the tree, however, does hinge upon *its being there in the world with us*.

In his first volume of *Ideas* (1913), Husserl observes how these “...two realities must confront each other, whereas only one of these is present and possible. I perceive the thing...the tree there in the garden; that and nothing else is the real object of the perceiving “intention.” A second immanent tree, or even an “inner image” of the real tree that stands out there before me, is nowise given.”²⁸⁹ In his later *Cartesian Meditations* however, Husserl’s deeper enquiries suggest that there remains “...a core of presentation [although] it is so fused [with the predicative components] that they stand within the functional community of one perception.”²⁹⁰ The availability to us of aspects of the direct sensory presentations distinguish the perception from fantasy and are central in the valorisation of the perception’s “doxic” qualities, those concerning its believability or reliability.

For Husserl, such qualities of veracity represent just one of the ‘thetic’ aspects (or positing) of an experience which falls, broadly, into two kinds, those that concern the general type of conscious act (seeing, wishing thinking, judging and valuing, for example) plus any modifying characteristics such as clarity, evidence, probability and other figurations of doxic commitment. These thetic facets are, perhaps, ‘uppermost’ in the perceptual experience, responsible for directing our actions, and Husserl refers to “the specific sense-phase...[as] only a kind of necessary *nucleatic layer* in which further phases are essentially grounded.”²⁹¹ David Woodruff Smith suggests the formula:

Noema = Thetic content + sense²⁹²

Such a formula, whilst perhaps, belying the complex web of interrelationships between these two components and their respective constituent parts, might represent a useful summary.

²⁸⁷ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 187.

²⁸⁸ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 187.

²⁸⁹ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 189.

²⁹⁰ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 122.

²⁹¹ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 188.

²⁹² David Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 280.

The Noematic sense itself can in turn, be considered as comprising two primary components, the object itself and the predicates applied to lend meaning, to take the object ‘as’ “such-and-such” (“To have meaning, or to have something “in mind”, is the cardinal feature of all consciousness, that on account of which it is not only experience generally but meaningful, ‘noetic’.”²⁹³ Thus:

Noematic sense = “object (X)” + “predicates” ²⁹⁴

The arrangement accounts for our capability to intend upon the same object in different ways at differing moments of consciousness whilst continuing to maintain a unified overall sense of the entity, almost certainly an important aspect of the *perception of objective age*.

Developing / Working-Up the Noema

Through an account of his phenomenological practice, Husserl gives a glimpse of the way that the noema might develop;

The real object...we see it, we face it, we have turned our eyes towards it and fixed them upon it, and as we find it there in space over against us, so we describe it and make our statements concerning it. In the matter of values we likewise take up an attitude; this that we see facing us in space pleases us or determines us to action; what there presents itself we lay hold of, work it up, and so forth. ²⁹⁵

The notion of “working-up” a perceptual noema “so forth” is more important than it may at first appear, for Husserl holds that no noema is ever “conclusive”²⁹⁶ and always remains in some way “inadequate:”

In no case does a single intuition of a thing...suffice to obtain in *adequate* form the desired essence in the total fullness of its essential determinations. An *inadequate* insight into the essence is, however, always obtainable.²⁹⁷

Husserl notes, however, that the inadequacy of the noema is not a static situation that we simply accept, but that we are comported/predisposed to *resolve* its inadequacies:

No thing-perception is terminal and conclusive; space always remains for new perceptions which would determine the indeterminacies more closely and fill in the perceptual gaps. With every such advance the determining content of the thing-noema constantly attached to the self same thing X is enriched.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 188.

²⁹⁴ Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, 282.

²⁹⁵ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 189-190.

²⁹⁶ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 313.

²⁹⁷ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 312.

²⁹⁸ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 312.

Furthermore, Husserl proposes that within each noema there resides the pattern for the *ongoing* development of its resolution:

It is an essential insight of a general kind that every *imperfect givenness* (every inadequate object-giving noema) contains *within itself a rule for the ideal possibility of its perfecting*.²⁹⁹

Husserl contrasts this process of continual “limitless” development of the noema with our capacity to imbue the object with conceptual meaning:

On the other hand, we apprehend as self evident and adequate the “idea” of a Thing. We grasp it in the free process of running through the possibilities....We grasp at first the Idea of the Thing empty of all intuitional content...given “just so far” as the agreeing intuition “reaches.”³⁰⁰

Our experience of our environment is thus mediated through noemas that are constantly evolving and adjusting, not only responding to our attentive movement through the world and our changing spatial and temporal viewpoints, but directing our attention, and our intended perceptual acts, toward the enrichment of those self-same noemas. Husserl stresses the importance of these ongoing acts of perception:

The “and so forth” is an absolutely indispensable phase in the thing-noema, and we have clear insight of its necessity.³⁰¹

An implicit component of our understanding of the *things* around us is thus that there is always more to an object or a scenario than can be grasped in a single momentary perceptual encounter, and certainly more than can be gleaned from one single viewpoint. The “and so forth” thus represents what Husserl refers to as a horizon of the possibilities associated with the object.

Background Ideas, Possibilities and Sedimented Knowledge

Returning to Merleau-Ponty’s house example, it is, then, his expectation when looking from the street that the rear will possess similar qualities. These expectations direct and augment our current perception of the house gained from its street façade and imbue it with a horizon of possibilities concerning other aspects of the house. These possibilities derive from the noematic sense of my present experience combined with my background ideas concerning such objects. The horizon of a perceptual act can therefore be considered as the possibilities for the object (the Parisian house across the river) that are not secured in the current thing-

²⁹⁹ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 312.

³⁰⁰ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 313-314.

³⁰¹ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 314.

noema and any relevant background ideas concerning Parisian houses and indeed the world in a more general sense.

These possibilities are possible states of affairs in which the intended object has further properties compatible with what is prescribed by the [perceptual] act's sense constrained by its background suppositions.³⁰²

Clearly, were *all* possibilities to attach to a noema (Husserl uses the unlikely encounter with a ten-legged desk as an example) the horizon would be poorly defined and of little actual value (as well as unwieldy) and Husserl stresses that the noematic horizon restricts itself to *congruent* or “motivated”³⁰³ possibilities.

Helmut Kuhn usefully situated the notion of horizon within the broader perceptual act:

‘Horizon’ is but another name for the totality of organised serial potentialities involved in the object noema, that is, as the intended object of an “intentional” act. The “ray of consciousness” illuminates a small central sphere, the sensuous substratum immediately given to our visual, auditory, olfactory, or tactual perception. Around this focus there is a halo of potential perceptions shading off the meaning of the focal center. Nucleus and horizon together compose the percept or, more generally speaking, the “object in mind”³⁰⁴. The horizon of possibilities stir “the investigator to travel from the center through continuous lines of connection to the peripheral regions”³⁰⁵, the light of explication illuminating the horizon...necessarily stream[ing] back to the center ...[to] shed a fresh clarity over the initial aspect of the thing perceived.³⁰⁶

The underlying processes by which the noema develops are similarly contextualised by Husserl:

In principle a thing can be given only “in one of its aspects” [or sides], and that not only means incompletely, in some sense or other imperfectly, but precisely that which presentation through perspectives prescribes. A thing is necessarily given in mere “*modes of appearing*”, and the necessary factors in this case are a nucleus of what is “*really presented*”, an outlying...[horizon (Horizont) (Taylor Carmen trans p. 288)] of apprehension consisting of *marginal “co-data” of an accessory kind (uneigentlicher)*, and a more or less vague *indeterminacy*. And the meaning of this indeterminacy is

³⁰² Woodruff Smith, *Husserl*, 287.

³⁰³ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 239.

³⁰⁴ Helmut Kuhn, “The Phenomenological Concept of ‘Horizon’,” ed. M. Farber, *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl* (Cambridge Mass. Harvard University Press, 1941), 122. [cited Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 30].

³⁰⁵ Kuhn, “The Phenomenological Concept of ‘Horizon’,” 115. [cited Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 30].

³⁰⁶ Kuhn, “The Phenomenological Concept of ‘Horizon’,” 116. [cited Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 30-31].

...foreshadowed by the general meaning of the thing perceived as such...The indeterminacy...points forward to possible patterns of perception, which, continually passing off into one another, coalesce in the unity of a single perception...Meanwhile the subsidiary co-apprehended phases of the thing come gradually into the focus of the real presentation as real data...; contrariwise, what is clear passes back into the unclear.³⁰⁷

Kuhn and Husserl thus identify “background” (*Hintergrund*) as an essential part, or moment, of the object as perceived, firstly as the “objective background from which the perceived object...emerges as the glance of the Ego singles it out,” (“[which] is an *objective* back-ground in a really experienceable sense”³⁰⁸) but also as “experiences that proceed from the background of actual consciousness, such as “stirrings” of pleasure, the early shapings of judgement, incipient wishes, and so forth.”³⁰⁹ An equally important aspect of the background ideas that our consciousness brings to the perception is, then, our sedimented knowledge and empirical understanding of the world.

This shifting of data between differentiated zones of focus is a theme explored and developed by the psychologist contemporary of Husserl, Aaron Gurwitsch in his *Théorie du champ de la conscience, 1957, The Field of Consciousness*, in which he builds on Husserl’s phenomenological analysis of the conscious act. In this he claims that in every act of consciousness there exist three “domains”, the theme, the thematic field and the margin. The ‘theme’ corresponds with Husserl’s intentional object, the transcendent tree in the landscape rather than the ‘sense’ tree.³¹⁰ It is “that with which the subject is dealing...the “focus” of his attention, [which] engrosses his mind, and upon which his mental activity concentrates. Secondly the thematic field which we define as the totality of facts, co-present with the theme, which are experienced as having material relevancy or pertinence to the theme. In the third place, the margin comprises facts which are merely co-present with the theme, but have no material relevancy to it.”³¹¹

Thematic Variations

Whilst the theme is the centre of the subject’s attention, it may comprise many components. Nevertheless, it possesses, in Gestalt terms, ‘coherency’ (Gestaltkohärenz), “a functional significance of the parts for the whole.”³¹² It is located within a contextual thematic field from

³⁰⁷ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 82.

³⁰⁸ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 171.

³⁰⁹ Husserl, *Ideas I*, 172.

³¹⁰ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 22.

³¹¹ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 23.

³¹² Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 23.

which it emerges. According to Gurwitsch, the theme can undergo “modifications” within the field: enlargement, contraction, elucidation, obscuration and context replacement.³¹³ Enlargement occurs when additional items, recalled elements from one’s “life history” perhaps,³¹⁴ join with the theme. Through elucidation, obscure elements are removed from the thematic context, although Gurwitsch, like Husserl, notes that “[t]here is always obscurity somewhere in the field.”³¹⁵

CHAPTER SUMMATION

Perception is then a conscious act that is directed outwards toward an intended object, the object out there, that holds our attention. That object is brought to us in the present encounter through the sensations of sight, touch and hearing, but our senses can only deliver patches of light or fluctuation in air pressure. It is through perception that this raw sensory information is transformed into *things*. There are thus, in any perceptual encounter, the factual object out there, and the perceived object within us that we experience. This perceived object is not only the constructed image of what we see, but it is augmented, through our background knowledge of the world, to include presumptions about aspects and qualities that may not be directly ‘apparent’ to the senses, the faces of the object that are obscured, for instance. We are however able to unify moments of perception so that as we approach or walk around an object, they combine into a single apprehension of its physical form. All of our perceptions are, to some degree open ended, and include the recognition of this together with a pattern for their further development.

Without wishing to pre-empt subsequent chapters, it is clear that for us to experience age in an object, it must first draw and occupy our attention. Here perception has a double edge as it is through perception that we are able to engage with the world but it is perception that gives meaning to the objects in that world and that directs that engagement. Our attention will only be held by those objects that matter and, for us, their relevance to our purposes, will be part of them.

Whilst objects may have qualities that cause us to perceive age in them, they do not exhibit that age in themselves as, out there, they can exist only in the present; the phenomenon of age derives, therefore, from a *comparative* act in the perception of the subject observer. It is clear then that our perceptual mechanisms must employ former experience in the world to enact

³¹³ Sven P. Arvidson, *The Sphere of Attention: Context and Margin* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 58 [cited Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 24]

³¹⁴ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 24.

³¹⁵ Moran, “Husserl and Gurwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality,” 24.

these comparisons, perhaps drawing in multiple earlier moments to model a single unified object that, within our understanding, has duration.

FOUR: A Possible Mechanism for the Phenomenon of Age

Perception is the first operation of all our intellectual faculties, and the inlet of all Knowledge into our Minds. John Locke, *An Essay on Humane Understanding*, 64.

Introductory Summary

Perception is, then, a conscious act that is directed outwards toward an intended object, the object, out there, that holds our attention. That object is brought to us in the present encounter through the sensations of sight, touch and hearing, but our senses only deliver patches of light or fluctuation in air pressure; it is through perception that this raw sensory information is transformed into *things*. There are thus, in any perceptual encounter, the factual object out there, and the perceived object within us that we experience. This perceived object is not only the constructed image of what we see, but it is augmented, through our background knowledge of the world, to include presumptions about aspects and qualities that may not be directly apparent to the senses in that moment of encounter, the faces of the object that are occluded, for instance. We are, however, able to unify moments of perception so that as we approach or walk around an object, they combine into a single apprehension of its physical form. All of our perceptions are, to some degree open ended, and include the recognition of this together with a pattern for their further development.

It is clear that for us to experience age in an object, it must first draw and occupy our attention. Here perception has a double edge as it is through perception that we are able to engage with the world but it is perception that gives meaning to the objects in that world and that directs that engagement. Our attention will only be held by those objects that matter and, for us, their relevance to our purposes, will be an innate part of them.

Whilst objects may have qualities that cause us to perceive ‘age’, they do not exhibit age in themselves as, *out there*, they can exist only in the *present*; the phenomenon of age derives, therefore, from a *comparative* act in the perception of the subject observer. It is clear then that our perceptual mechanisms must employ former experience in the world to enact these comparisons, perhaps drawing in multiple earlier moments to model a single unified object that, within our understanding, has duration.

This Chapter discusses the mechanisms by which such a narrative model of an object might be assimilated and configured by our perceptual capabilities whilst addressing some of the facets of the phenomenon of ‘age’ that were identified in the Introduction. It begins with an

outline description of the process of object recognition and then considers the intricacies of perception that might enable us to infer a past into an object that we are seeing for the first time. We saw however in the Introduction, how the manifestation of ‘age’ seems to derive from a succession of ‘pasts’ rather than a single change event, and the discussion moves on to how such biographic accounts of an object might develop relative to our own purposes and also how such insights might be transferable between objects through the identification of specific ‘age’ parts or ‘moments’.

The subsequent chapter investigates the role of meaning in the experience of age and the affective colouring of the perception or how it makes us feel.

Past Marks; Rauschenberg’s White Paintings³¹⁶

In 1951, Robert Rauschenberg produced his White Paintings, a series of canvas panels coated with latex house paint, that ‘operated’ by reflecting or responding to the ambient light of their gallery surroundings. His friend, John Cage, called them “airports” for ambient accidents of light and shadow and Rauschenberg remarked that “if one were sensitive enough to read them, you would know how many people were in the room, what time it was, and what the weather was like outside.”³¹⁷ As such, these artworks were conceived to function entirely in the here and now and Rauschenberg later insisted that they be regularly repainted because, as he explained in a 1991 interview, he “didn’t want their *past* to be a mark on them.”³¹⁸

Rauschenberg was clearly concerned that evidence of his White Paintings having an existence outside the present gallery moment would interfere with the operation of their underlying concept. We can easily visualise the kind of things that Rauschenberg would have wanted to cover-up by over-painting the canvases; a yellowing of the old white paint, some dust on the canvas, or perhaps even some faint scuffs resulting from their handling. Such marks or changes, overlaying the original artwork, would be visual evidence that it is not presently as it once was, that it has changed, and that it, consequently, has a past. Rauschenberg would have known that such marks and changes, however small, would not have gone un-noticed by the viewer of his works because, as a species, we seem to be adept detectives when it comes to identifying and intuiting age in the objects that surround us.

An Outline of Object Recognition

³¹⁶ Refer to Appendix One for an analysis of Rauschenberg’s *White Paintings*

³¹⁷ Hal Foster, “Made Out of the Real World: Lessons from the Fulton Street Studio”, ed. Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume, *Robert Rauschenberg* (London: Tate Publishing, 2016), 90.

³¹⁸ Leah Dickerman, “Disciplined by Albers:” Foundations at Black Mountain College,” ed. Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume, *Robert Rauschenberg* (London: Tate Publishing, 2016), 34. For a detailed account of these works, refer to Appendix One essays.

The processes by which we recognise the things around us is generally conceived as a matching of the object we behold with the things that we *know* such that “[t]he observer’s understanding is the harmony of evidence of the object, derived from the *reflexive* judgement of the experiential data with the immanent evidence of all things related to it by the observer. This reflexive judgement of experience and evidence is a convergence of the possibilities of truth of an intentional object to the truth of an actual object.”³¹⁹

Experiential data, or “hyle,”³²⁰ in its raw state, is wholly without meaning, and simply constitutes a mosaic of different intensities and wavelengths of light when we see or fluctuations in air pressure when we hear. It is thought that these base units of sense progressively build to form the image of the thing before us. The smallest of these coalescences of sensory data are identified as “primitives” or experiential data, effectively “objects in the sense of having a ‘name’ but...[having] no meaning.”³²¹ These primitives, in turn, build to “features,” defined as being “composed of primitives and are a set of objects [that]...constitute the characters and individuating accidents of an object of meaning.”³²² These features and characteristics group through progressive classifications of ‘order’, ‘genus’ and ‘species’ into what Husserl termed *Sachverhalt*, or a “state of affairs.”

The optical scientist, John Bart Wilburn introduces an additional category of object which he describes as a composite “object of experience” and labels as “the object-horizon”. In his *Possible Worlds* object recognition model, it is employed to represent “the observer’s related experience of an object” in such a way that the “set of object horizons of an observer is his domain of experience of what it means for an object to be what it is.”³²³ In this, Wilburn makes the distinction, discussed in earlier chapters, between the “independent objects [out there] and the experience of objects [that we perceive]”³²⁴ such that “[p]erception, in the sense of object recognition, has both interpretation and understanding built into it.”³²⁵

³¹⁹ John Bart Wilburn, “A Possible Worlds Model of Object Recognition,” *Synthese*, Vol. 116, No.3 (1998): pp.403-438, p.413.

³²⁰ In many of his texts, Husserl proposes that the intentional processes of perception animate and coalesce the raw sensory data which he terms “hyle” or “hyletic” and includes colour, tone, texture and sound. Such data are not of themselves representational but they may be available to us through reflection.

³²¹ Wilburn, “A Possible Worlds Model of Object Recognition,” 408.

³²² The optical scientist, John Bart Wilburn notes that these “...features and characteristics are not restricted to a spatial relationship of extensive objects. Features also include behaviour consistent with the two fundamental contextures making up the furniture of the world; the equipmental contexture and the functional contexture.” Wilburn, “A Possible Worlds Model of Object Recognition,” 408.

³²³ Wilburn, “A Possible Worlds Model of Object Recognition,” 409.

³²⁴ Wilburn, “A Possible Worlds Model of Object Recognition,” 410.

³²⁵ Wilburn, “A Possible Worlds Model of Object Recognition,” 413.

Importantly, in any act of object recognition, the object and observer coexist in a relationship motivated by, and founded in, the observer's intention to '*know the truth*'³²⁶ of the consciously experienced object.

Traditionally, the visual recognition of objects is divided into two stages; a perception stage, where perceptual data is assimilated, and a memory stage, wherein data are matched with representation of former experience. The process is also often divided into smaller component stages, for example:

Stage 1: Processing of basic object components, such as colour depth and form.

Stage 2: These basic components are then grouped on the basis of similarity, providing information on distinct edges to the visual form. Subsequently, figure-ground segregation is able to take place.

Stage 3: The visual representation is matched with structural descriptions in memory.

Stage 4: Semantic attributes are applied to the visual representation, providing meaning, and thereby recognition.

Such 'bottom-up' hierarchies, where the brain serially analyses progressively more complex information, are by no means universally accepted and there is empirical neuropsychological evidence that the semantic meaning-giving stage enters the recognition process earlier than the above table might imply.³²⁷

Interestingly, although possibly just as an aside, several research papers describe how patients with certain brain lesions struggle to identify living things (animals, vegetables, fruit etc.) whilst having largely unimpaired recognition of non-living things, such as tools and other artefacts.³²⁸ Warrington and Shallice similarly noted that recognition of non-living things

³²⁶ Wilburn, "A Possible Worlds Model of Object Recognition," 408.

³²⁷ Recent studies indicate that there may be top-down shortcuts in which "high-level information is activated earlier than some relevant lower-level information. (Moshe Bar, (2003), A cortical mechanism for triggering top-down facilitation in visual object recognition". *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*. 15 (4): 600-609, p.600). From his research, Moshe Bar has put forward the hypothesis "that a partially analysed version of the input image (i.e., a blurred image) is projected rapidly from early visual areas directly to the prefrontal cortex (PFC). This coarse representation activates in the PFC expectations about the most likely interpretations of the input image, which are then back-projected as an "initial guess" to the temporal cortex to be integrated with the bottom-up analysis. The top-down process facilitates recognition by substantially limiting the number of object representations that need to be considered. Furthermore, such a rapid mechanism may provide critical information when a quick response is necessary." Moshe Bar, "A cortical mechanism for triggering top-down facilitation in visual object recognition". *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*. 15 (4) (2003): pp.600-609, p.600.

³²⁸ The researchers outlined as one possible "confounding factor" poor pre-morbid familiarity with animals but noted that one of the study's patients had been an active member of the World Wildlife Fund able to name a wide variety of animals. Glyn W. Humphreys, Emer M.E. Forde, "Hierarchies, similarity,

“depends crucially on determination of its functional significance”³²⁹ as opposed to more explicitly sensory properties. A formalised study of this sensory-functional distinction showed that in the recognition of living things, reliance on sensory features was about seven times that of functional attributes whereas in the recognition of non-living things sensory and functional features were present in equal proportions³³⁰. A Neuropsychological study by Christina E. Wierenga et al observed activity in different areas of the brain’s cortex during in observation exercises for living as against non-living objects.³³¹

The researchers have sought to explain the anomaly concerning the recognition of living things in terms of raw sensory requirements or the functional assimilation of equipment or tools, but they do not consider the possibility that we simply approach natural objects as a distinct category, a category where functional characteristics are subordinate to other semantic and narrative aspects. Such a position would be supported by the participants’ similar difficulty in identifying food items (fruit and vegetables) despite their *function* (as food) being foremost in their essence.

Recognising a Past Within an Object

For an immanent object to be imbued with a ‘past’ through the processes of perception and recognition it must possess specific features that are identifiable with change. For the observer to associate such features with change, the object must essentially present itself in two states; the state prior to the change and its condition subsequent to the change (presumably its current

and interactivity in object recognition: “Category-specific” neuropsychological deficits,” *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 24, (2001): pp.453-509 p. 454.

³²⁹ Elizabeth K. Warrington, & Tim Shallice “Category specific semantic impairments,” *Brain* 107 (1984): pp.829-854, p.849.

³³⁰ Martha J. Farah, & James L. McClelland, “A computational model of semantic memory impairments: Modality specificity and emergent category specificity,” *Psychological Review* 120 (1991):339-357.

³³¹ “Recent findings suggest that neural representations of semantic knowledge contain information about category, modality, and attributes. Although an object’s category is defined according to shared attributes that uniquely distinguish it from other category members, a clear dissociation between visual attribute and category representation has not yet been reported. We investigated the contribution of category (living and nonliving) and visual attribute (global form and local details) to semantic representation in the fusiform gyrus. During functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), 40 adults named pictures of animals, tools, and vehicles. In a preliminary study, identification of objects in these categories was differentially dependent on global *versus* local visual feature processing. fMRI findings indicate that activation in the lateral and medial regions of the fusiform gyrus distinguished stimuli according to category, that is, living *versus* nonliving, respectively. In contrast, visual attributes of global form (animals) were associated with higher activity in the right fusiform gyrus, while local details (tools) were associated with higher activity in the left fusiform gyrus. When both global and local attributes were relevant to processing (vehicles), cortex in both left and right medial fusiform gyri was more active than for other categories. Taken together, results support distinctions in the role of visual attributes and category in semantic representation.” Christina Wierenga, W. Perstein, M. Benjamin, C. Leonard, I. Rothi, T. Conway, *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, Volume 15, Issue 2, (March 2009): pp.169-181.

state). Both must be immanently present in the object in some way but discernible from one another.

In a script of 1932, Husserl develops his ideas concerning ‘appresentations’ or ‘apperceptions’, (informing, mediated adjuncts to concrete perceptions) to include instances where perceptual references to a ‘past’ contribute to the apprehension of the present object. He refers to these retrospective apperceptions as “ad-memorized” (*hinzuerinnert, ad-memoriert*).³³² He similarly identifies apperceptions delivering co-present objects and those which anticipate future events.

As related in an earlier chapter, Husserl uses the *perceptual completion* of a table viewed from a single vantage, from which only two legs are visible, as an example of an *appresentation*, observing how the table is cognitively *completed* by the presumptive addition of the occluded legs on its reverse face. Christian Ferencz-Flatz describes how, in the perception of the table, “...both layers of presentation and appresentation are conceived as bilaterally founded abstract components of the overall presentation,”³³³ the appresented reverse-side being impossible without the directly given front face, and the *meaning* of that visible side (as belonging to a stable piece of furniture) being incomplete without the presumed back face.

Husserl contrasts this relatively straightforward role of apperceptions when perceptually ‘grasping’ an object with what he describes as an “indication,”³³⁴ which he illustrates with the example of a hunter knowing that an animal is nearby through its tracks apperceptively conveying its co-presence in the hunter’s sphere.

Whilst Husserl uses the example to illustrate an ap-perceptually indicated co-presence, the most striking aspect of our encounters with such ‘traces’ is our apprehension of them as marks resulting from a *preceding* event, whether or not we presume (like the hunter) the continuing presence of the thing that made them. Fundamentally, the meanings that attach to such traces not only project beyond the trace object or mark itself, but *recall* an earlier interaction between entities and Husserl, in later notes, asserts that we understand such marks through an apperception of “recollection.”³³⁵

In our day-to-day lives, we often encounter such traces without witnessing their making and such ‘recollections’ are presumed in apperceptions which have the *characteristics* of ‘memory’, even though there is no actual memory to re-present. Husserl terms these as

³³² Christian Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, *Continental Philosophy Review* 45(2) (2012):pp.171-188, p.172.

³³³ Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, 172.

³³⁴ Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, 171.

³³⁵ Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, 173.

“*analogizing* modification[s] of remembrance.”³³⁶ Clearly such recollections are not founded in the actual trace (as we cannot genuinely recall events that we have not experienced) but “fantasy-illustrations” or “picturings.”³³⁷

So, for an object to exhibit a past, Husserl proposes that:

We are dealing...with a perception having a core of original presentation, a unitary perception and presentation in the broad sense, in which, to a first presenting self-given, a founded apprehension is added, an apperception that does not appresent something co-present—something that pertains to the unity of a possible mobile perception, a simultaneous present that could be originally realized in it—but instead it *ad-memorizes*, so to say, it performs a recollection by means of which, what is present to us gains the sense of something previously sprung into being (and yet still persistent).³³⁸

Husserl thus divides apperceptions into those that address *simultaneous* content (co-presentations), those that anticipate events which he calls *anticipatory* or prospective apperceptions, and *retrospective* apperceptions which deliver “ad-memorised” content.³³⁹ From our earlier analysis of the phenomenon, it seems probable that, in the perception of objective age, all of these will be in play simultaneously.

Recognising Change; A more Detailed Analysis of Apperceptions and Age

In another text, Husserl identifies the cognitive processes of identifying changes in his environment. He notices how, on visiting his “old town” there are occasionally new houses and that the church has been recently restored and he notes:

What I recognise indicates something I have seen previously, in the same context I now recognize, but still something is “different”. Also, the motivations run from perception to remembrance and from there back to perception, but I do not have to actualize any real intuitive memory; I remain in the sphere of the unintuitive, while at times certain momentary intuitions or fragments emerge.³⁴⁰

In this passage, Husserl identifies that his immanent perceptions of his hometown overlay a background horizon of recollections which is ‘available’ to his perceptual faculty without conscious remembering. These evocations point towards Husserl’s previous experience of the place, not as an additional component, but fully synthesised into the current perceptual experience; the buildings and features that are unchanged are perceived as ‘familiar’ whilst

³³⁶ Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, 174.[my emphasis]

³³⁷ Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, 174.

³³⁸ Edmund Husserl, *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1916–1937)*. Hua XXXIX. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008). Trans. Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, Endnote 7.

³³⁹ Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, 174.

³⁴⁰ Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, 174.

any adjustments that have occurred since Husserl's last visit are made explicit. In this we can see that in recognizing the objects around us, horizons of possible recollection are in play. Christian Ferencz-Flatz summarises the situation:

By simply recognizing something I am already pointed towards a potential past experience within my reach: the two are essential correlatives. Moreover,...evocative pointing is constantly modulated in my ongoing experience, since every new detail I encounter - the stairs, the front door etc,- evokes its own new potential recollections.³⁴¹

In such perceptions, we are not just *reminded* of possible past episodes of perception, our current perceptual experience is additionally directed in *anticipation* of recalled features (road layouts etc. in Husserl's home-town example). As Husserl notes, "motivations run from perception to remembrance and...back [again]."³⁴²

As we have noted above, in the application of such recollections for the generation of meaning in the world, it is not always necessary for us to have directly experienced the 'recalled' state of an object or location; *analogous* "picturings" ("analogising ad-memorizations")³⁴³ developed from background experiences can, it seems, suffice.

To these two categories of ad-memorization, "originary" and "analogous," we must make further distinctions that acknowledge that objects are subject to extrinsic and intrinsic horizons of possibilities, where change is an inherent feature to the object or the result of causal relationships between entities and their environments. Both are important in the phenomenon of 'age' although each has a specific bearing on the meanings that we derive through it.

The above distinctions refer to ad-memorizations developed from our own 'back-catalogue' of experiences. However, to these should be added intersubjectively shared ad-memorisations that refer to culturally shared experiences (Husserl refers to a piece of Kant's handwriting carrying a culturally sentimental importance) and empathic ad-memorizations that we derive from the communicated experiences of other people.

There is thus a diversity of category of ad-memorizing apperception and any (perhaps all) of which may be in operation in a particular perceptual episode. It is clear, though, that in doing so, they expand the perceptual experience far beyond that of the intended object of that perception, or indeed of the present state of affairs that attach to it:

Thus things...we encounter in our life-worldly experience are never reduced to their sheer present sense, but instead they are new or old...they are well-kept or worn out, man-made or products of nature, they seem accidental or purposeful and so on, while

³⁴¹ Ferencz-Flatz, "Objects with a past: Husserl on 'ad-memorising apperceptions'," 174.

³⁴² Ferencz-Flatz, "Objects with a past: Husserl on 'ad-memorising apperceptions'," 174.

³⁴³ Ferencz-Flatz, "Objects with a past: Husserl on 'ad-memorising apperceptions'," 174

similar observations can [b]e made with respect to their prospective delineations. Life-worldly objects are as such constantly apperceived, when actually *seen* as they are concretely given in our situational experience, not only according to their co-presented simultaneous features, but necessarily *also* in retrospective and prospective apprehensions, which define them just as well.³⁴⁴

Whilst Ferencz-Flatz relates that through ad-memorizations objects can be perceived as possessing qualities such as worn or well-kept, the example cited by Husserl, a bullet hole in a sheet of glass and the trace of an animal, would not normally be experienced, perceived or described as *age*; in fact most observers would use words like *broken* or *marked* and would not infer any corresponding *extended* duration onto the damaged object. Similarly, comparative terms such as ‘new’ and ‘old’ are not usually applied to a single change event like a bullet hole. Indeed, Husserl’s examples suggest that for us to perceive age there are either additional characteristics in the *object*, or further complexities in the mechanisms by which the *subject*’s perceptual recollections are ‘laid-down’ and subsequently ‘deployed’ in the processes of recognition and perception.

Husserl in his 1932 notation, essentially, sketches phenomenologically a *mechanism* by which recollections might combine with immanent perceptions to deliver perceptual presumptions of a particular single past event. The transformations that we identify with the *phenomenon of age* are, however, more extensive. Objects in which *age* is manifest seem to hold within them *multiple* such pasts layered one over the other, and whilst recent layers must obscure those that precede them, perception seems to make the sedimentations available to the observer like the strata of a rock.

Unfortunately, neither Husserl or Ferencz-Flatz extend their enquiry to changes which are inherent or *intrinsic* to the entity such as growth or maturation.

Intrinsic Change and Aristotle’s ‘forms’

In earlier chapters, it was proposed that our identification of the objects that constitute our world hinges largely upon the retained chronological narratives that we construct from our various encounters with them, since it is this that lends to them object persistence much more than their purely physical qualities, which are, after all, subject to change.

Plato famously proposed that objects are known through *Forms* that, existing in a separate reality, a “realm of invariable generalities” unaffected by Worldly change, and essentially providing object persistence from without.³⁴⁵ This challenging proposition was, however, rejected by his more grounded pupil, Aristotle, who felt that our understanding of how objects

³⁴⁴ Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, 180.

³⁴⁵ Brian Magee, *The Great Philosophers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 23.

persist for us, whilst subject to the processes of change, lay very much in *this* World, and was in fact immanent to those objects.

Aristotle proposed that an entity is primarily made identifiable by ‘functional organisational structures’³⁴⁶ which map out the course of its existence and which he called ‘*forms*’ (conventionally using a lower case initial). Whilst Aristotle makes clear that there must be matter upon which these organising structures operate, he believes that it is through the *forms* that we truly know the object, and he goes to some length to set out their construction.

In the first instance, Aristotle explains, there is the ‘actuality’ of the entity, its “τέλος [telos]...the state of something fully “worked-up into its perfection”³⁴⁷ or “complete by virtue of having attained their fulfilment.”³⁴⁸ The attainment of “fulfilment” is achieved through the realisation of the entity’s potentialities, through the growth and change that are the essence of its ‘nature’. In *Physics*, he explains (using various translations):

“The nature of a thing... is a certain principle and cause of change and stability in the thing and is directly present in it.”³⁴⁹

OR

“a principle of motion and stationariness.”³⁵⁰

AND

“Consequently, the alternative is to think of the nature of a thing as the shape and form of that which has in itself its own source of motion and change.”³⁵¹

This is further clarified in *The Metaphysics*:

“For nature also is in the same genus as potency; for it is a principle of movement – not, however, in something else but in the thing itself qua (in being) itself.”³⁵²

He lists as examples of potencies; “...learning, doctoring,... ripening and ageing.”³⁵³

Assimilation of the Object Biograph relative to its Actuality or Temporal Archetype

³⁴⁶ Magee, *The Great Philosophers*, 38.

³⁴⁷ Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger; A Paradigm Shift*, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 51.

³⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Aristotle’s Metaphysics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, trans. William David Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), Book V 16, 1021b24-25.

³⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 33, [Book II 1 192b20].

³⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. Robert Purves Hardie & R. K. Gaye (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1930), 1 192b20.

³⁵¹ Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. Robin Waterfield, 35, [Book II 1, 193b3].

³⁵² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. William David Ross, 90, [Meta Theta (IX) 8].

³⁵³ Aristotle, *Physics*, trans Robert Hardie & R. K. Gaye, III pt1.

Importantly, Aristotle notes that, in our understanding, the “actuality” of the entity *precedes* its potentiality to achieve that state:

“The account of the actuality is prior to that of the potentiality and that the knowledge of the former is prior to that of the latter.”³⁵⁴

Aristotle notes that this priority is not just in the apprehension of the object but also in the way that our ‘knowledge’ of it develops, stressing “actuality is..., in order of generation and of time, prior to potency.”³⁵⁵ Thomas Sheehan observes that “...[Aristotle] reads reality *backwards* as it were: he discovers what a thing is and where it is on the scale of perfection by measuring it against its τέλος, working from the *de jure* perfect back to the *de facto* imperfect.”³⁵⁶

But it is perhaps too easy from this to construe Aristotle’s proposal as a simple rendering of an entity’s temporal progression toward the flourishing of its *adult* or *mature* form. In *Metaphysics IX*, he clarifies that what he refers to as the ‘actuality’ may be related much more to the teleological *meaning* that it carries for *us* as its beholder:

“The fact is that a thing’s active function is its end and its actuality is its active function. Hence indeed the very name, actuality, has an account based on the active function, which is extended to the entelechy.”³⁵⁷

OR

“For the action is the end, and the actuality is the action. And so even the word ‘actuality is derived from ‘action’ and points to the complete reality.”³⁵⁸

Aristotle similarly infers that the potentialities of an entity are inseparable to this meaningful actuality and concludes:

“I think that all this makes it pretty clear that the substance and the form *are* actuality.”³⁵⁹

Heidegger, a passionate scholar of Aristotle, confers with this view in his discussion of the ripening of fruit in *Being and Time*:

“The “not-yet” [the potentiality] has already been included in the very Being of the fruit, not as some random characteristic, but as something constitutive” further emphasising that the “[r]ipening *is* the specific Being of the fruit.”³⁶⁰

³⁵⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 1998), 273, [Meta IX 8]

³⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. William David Ross, 90, [Meta IX pt8]

³⁵⁶ Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 50. [my emphasis]

³⁵⁷ Aristotle *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred, 274, [Meta Theta (IX) 8]

³⁵⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. William David Ross, 90-91, [Meta Theta (IX) 8]

³⁵⁹ Aristotle *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred, 275, [Meta IX] [my italics].

³⁶⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 288 [my italics]. I have tried not to use the word “Being” as it is so poorly defined in common usage

As described earlier, for an object to be intelligible to us, for us to know *what it is*, it is, during the process of perception, set against or compared, to our existing retained knowledge of that object or similar examples. Because all entities are subject to change, that existing knowledge must include the different states that the object, or others of its type, have been observed in before. Of the many states that an object may pass through, there is one particular state which has most meaning. Aristotle defines this state as the object's *use for us* or its *end* (telos), since, for him, this complete or "fulfilled" state is the most important, all of the other states are arranged as having the potential to become (or to have been) this state. The entity in question is thus 'held', or 'known', by the beholder as a biography, a narrative 'form' organised around what the beholder 'holds' as its use or the 'end' (its for-the-sake-of) for the object.

Aristotle's main observation here is that this 'fulfilled' state is insinuated onto the object by the subject viewer. However, the term *actuality* is, perhaps, in this too restrictive since it is often the case that the 'form' or 'change narrative' is assimilated for an object that (as yet) has no clear use or telos. In such situations, the fulfilled state might simply be that of our *first* encounter with the object or category. I have, therefore, in other parts of this document used the term "temporal archetype" that has developed out of this research.

Object as Biography

With Aristotle in mind, we might propose that objects do not persist for us *in spite* of change but because, for us, they *are* that change; quite simply, it is the inherent *change* in an entity that makes it identifiable and intelligible to us in its multiple states. Furthermore, this principle of change constitutes part of its reality and affords it 'stability' by making its inherent processes of change an intrinsic part of its identity, allowing it to "gather... itself into a relatively stable appearance (εἶδος)."³⁶¹

It is perhaps this assignment of a *narrative* identity to the entities which constitute our environment that makes them intelligible, with the perceptual 'judgements' concerning their potentialities relative to their "fulfilled," archetypal, state (which holds their τέλος or their end or 'for-the-sake-of') which lead us to feel age from perceptions of the physical world and which form the basis for objective age as a phenomenon.

and has formed the basis of volumes of philosophical discussion, but I think a useful summary definition is to be found in Thomas Sheehan's expression, "intelligible presence".

³⁶¹Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger*, 50.

Age phenomena would thus derive from the perceptual identification of the potentialities of an encountered particular and given meaning by the relationship of these states of potentiality to the entity's meaningfully 'fulfilled' state that is *held* by the beholder. In this perceptual process, age phenomena not only give meaningful resolution to the current percept but serve to further inform and nourish the (Aristotelian) 'form' that the beholder retains for that entity.

As such, in age phenomena, we have something of a circular process, with the beholder very much at its centre, not only making intuitive *judgements* about an entity's temporal relationship with a notionally *complete* state, but determining what that completed state *is* on the basis of the beholder's own needs, purposes and desires.

Our Temporal Situation, Our Biography

It is important, at this juncture, to remember that we are not simply observers of this world of Natural transformation, but also ourselves subject to its processes in a very direct and personal way. As such, all of our encounters with other entities will entail the convergence and inter-meshing of at least two 'actualities,' one of them being that which belongs to ourselves as the subject. The teleology of our own actuality is, however, more complex since our τέλος, (our 'end', 'fulfilment' or 'purpose') is largely concealed from us in our everyday lives.

Hubert Dreyfus summarises Heidegger's position in this regard; "...[We], Dasein[,] can have no concrete possibilities of [our]... own on which to project; [we]... can have no fixed identity; indeed, [our]... only or ownmost possibility is nothingness." This, Heidegger refers to as the "inessentiality of the self."³⁶²

Heidegger, in fact, uses the earlier cited passage concerning the ripening of fruit to illustrate the difference between the projected possibilities for ourselves and other entities (such as fruit), and uses it as the basis for his discussion concerning our "Being-toward-death."³⁶³ In this, Heidegger notes that whilst death is ultimately our (Dasein's) temporal 'end' or finish, it in no way represents a fulfilment of our '*nature*' in the Aristotelian sense since, whilst "[w]ith its death, Dasein has indeed 'fulfilled its course...[it has not] necessarily exhausted its specific possibilities."³⁶⁴ Yet, quoting from the medieval book, *The Ploughman of Bohemia (Der Ackerman aus Böhmen)*; "[a]s soon as man comes to life, he is at once old enough to die",³⁶⁵ Heidegger highlights the way that our anticipation of the "stopping" that is death nevertheless fundamentally defines our being; "Being-towards-death is the anticipation of a potentiality-

³⁶² Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (New Baskerville, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 310.

³⁶³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 288.

³⁶⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 288.

³⁶⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 289.

for-Being of that entity (Dasein) whose kind of Being is anticipation itself.”³⁶⁶ Adapting from Kierkegaard,³⁶⁷ Heidegger develops the ‘anxiety’ that attaches to human existence through this anticipation, or perhaps more accurately, concerned expectation.³⁶⁸ This anxiety is a state of mind, or mood, brought about through the ever-present threat of death and is “a basic state-of-mind belong[ing] to...self-understanding.”³⁶⁹

There is thus an anxiety underpinning our every moment and our every action, and our encounters with objects that are meaningful to us are consequently emotionally ‘charged.’³⁷⁰

It is clear that for us to understand the world with its transformational complexities, we must possess an “attunement” to, or “comportment” toward, the sequential changes that constitute its reality, not only in the ‘assimilation’ of the underlying change narratives into recognisable forms, but in their ‘monitoring’ to maintain our grasp upon a constantly changing reality. This ‘attunement’ may arise as an inherited behaviour or as a consequence of our unravelling and coming to terms with our own material temporality.

An ‘Attunement’ to Change

Although Aristotle in his list of ‘motions’³⁷¹ does not appear to make the distinction, our lived experience of change seems to fall into two broad categories, *dynamic change* and *non-contiguous change*. As noted in Chapter One, Charlie Dunbar Broad suggested that these can be visualised through the hands of a clock, the movement of the second hand being directly experienced as *motion* whilst that of the hour hand becoming apparent through separate (non-contiguous) episodes of sensory experience referenced to one another. As Broad noted:

We do not merely notice that something *has* moved or otherwise changed; we also often see something *moving* or *changing*. This happens if we look at the second-hand of a watch or look at a flickering flame...It is also clear that to see a second hand *moving* is a quite different thing from ‘seeing’ that an hour-hand *has* moved. In the one case we are concerned with something that happens within a single sensible field;

³⁶⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 307.

³⁶⁷ Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World*, 304.

³⁶⁸ “Dasein comports itself towards something possible in its possibility by expecting it...” Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 306.

³⁶⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 310.

³⁷⁰ “In anticipating the indefinite certainty of death, Dasein opens itself to a constant *threat* arising out of its own “there”. In this very threat Being-towards-the-end must maintain itself. So little can it tone this down that it must rather cultivate the indefiniteness of the certainty. How is it existentially possible for this constant threat to be genuinely disclosed? All understanding is accompanied by a state of mind. Dasein’s mood brings it face to face with the thrownness of its ‘that it is there’. But the state-of-mind which can hold open the utter and constant threat to itself arising from Dasein’s ownmost individualised Being, is anxiety.” Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 310.

³⁷¹ Aristotle, *Physics*, trans Robert Hardie & R. K. Gaye, Aristotle, III pt1.

in the other we are concerned with a comparison between the contents of two different sensible fields.³⁷²

As discussed in earlier chapters, in the field of Neuroscience, explanations of the role of attention in the detection of change generally employ the concept of a ‘transient’ response early in the sensory reception of a stimulus. Such ‘transients’ notify the subject that change has occurred, drawing attention to a specific location, but hold no other information concerning the change event. The neuroscientists, Kanai and Verstraten,³⁷³ have demonstrated that visual transients draw our attention to an *alteration* or *transformation* prior even to the binocular fusion of a scene; the capacity to notice change is thus a fully integrated component of our perceptual processes.

Coupled with this inbuilt volition to apprehend and assimilate *change* is a clear pre-disposition to perceive objects as enduring; there is certainly an empirically demonstrable *disinclination* to perceive that an object has been *replaced* rather than transformed; as Brian Scholl (Yale Perception and Cognition Laboratory) observed, it “is not that we *can* perceive objects as persisting despite changes to their features, but [that] we *cannot help* but see objects as persisting.”³⁷⁴

Biographic Object Files Summary

Scholl, as we noted earlier, goes on to conjecture that we have a propensity to assign object persistence, even in instances where reason would pronounce otherwise “...because...our visual systems are wired to represent the relevant objects via a single updated ‘object file’ representation.”³⁷⁵ Francoise Recenati similarly explained how the “...notion of an *object file*...is used in psychology to characterise visual representations of objects at an intermediate level between low level processing of sensory features and high level placement of objects in conceptual categories or kinds. The object-filing system supports the individuation and tracking of particulars, while allowing information about their features to be stored, updated, and retrieved. It has to decide when visually encountered elements should be counted as different stages of the same persisting object, and so should be assigned the same file, and when not.”³⁷⁶

³⁷² Charlie Dunbar Broad, *Scientific Thought* (London: Keegan Paul, 1923), 351 .

³⁷³ (Ryota Kanai and Frans A.J. Verstraten, “Visual Transients without Feature Change are sufficient for the percept of a change” *Vision Research* 44, 2233-2240.

³⁷⁴ Brian J. Scholl, “Object Persistence in Philosophy and Psychology,” *Mind and Language*, 22 (2007): pp. 563-91, p. 583.

³⁷⁵ Scholl, ‘Object Persistence in Philosophy and Psychology’, 583.

³⁷⁶ Francois Recenati, *Mental Files in Flux*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 265.

In summary, through a capability to notice and apprehend change in our environment, it seems that, as part of our perceptual stance towards the world, we assimilate the entities which surround us as *biographic* object files in which we order and organise their (changing) physical characteristics and qualities with reference to duration. Findings in the field of neuroscience seem, in fact, to substantiate Aristotle's notion of 'forms.'

The Experience of Age Through Shared Characteristics

An examination of the essential nature of 'age' phenomena appears at first to be problematic because the sensual stimuli, and the physical characteristics and features to which they are attributable, seem extremely, perhaps infinitely, diverse; so pervasive are the physical qualities associated with *age* in the material environment that an exhaustive list, or anything approaching one, is impossible to imagine. We are all, some-how, receptive to this enormous range of stimuli and seem able to respond appropriately when they are encountered.

Central to the identification of age phenomena as *temporal* is the characteristic, inherent in their nature, that they signify change and that such signified changes have duration, lending the phenomena a unique '*feeling*' derived from 'intuitions' or 'inferences' of temporal extension.

Age phenomena arise not through a single quality or characteristic of an entity but through the perception of a *succession* of evident material qualities or events which may, in themselves, carry little or no meaning for us. It is the manner of their being conjoined in a succession which precipitates the perceptual interpretation of the particular sense data as 'age'.

Furthermore, general principles applicable across types of entity are discernible. These 'principles permit our 'cross-referencing' of specific sense data and the broader recognition and perception of age *stimuli* in our everyday lives but also suggest that the underlying essence of age phenomena is perhaps to be found not in the sensory stimuli themselves but in the way that stimuli associated with objective age are identified, disengaged, ordered and retained in our consciousness. It is these principles, perhaps, that might form the basis for Husserl's analogous ad-memorisations as applied to age and material temporality.

Mereology and Age: Generalising Principles of Material Temporality

Our comportment towards an object is determined by its actuality, its telos or use to us (as food for instance). Often, such use is associated with a particular sensible quality or part of the object, a quality which, in the context of our investigation into age phenomena, is subject to the natural processes of change.

Thus, our attention towards an object, such as an apple, focuses on facets that are significant to, or indicative of, that use and may form the basis by which constituent parts of the object can be *disengaged* from the whole. Such disengaged characteristics may follow generalised principles that are learned through experience of former interactions.

If the object is apprehended as an agglomeration of constituent parts, those facets signifying change in the material quality that occupies our attention can be recognised. These parts of the entity must not only have relation to this material quality but must also change as *it* changes and in a way that reflects the progression of its transformation. In the case of ripening fruit, where the part that concerns us (the amount of sugar *inside* the fruit) is not directly available to our senses (unless we bite into it), progressive changes in colour have, through a symbiotic evolutionary process, become immediately recognisable through a ‘part’ (or “moment”) of the apple, namely its surface colour. Similarly, we associate the colour transitions of vegetation from green to brown with the process of perishing and the progressive thickening of plant stems with growth. Needless to say, the subjective identification of pertinent parts is not always so straightforward and must be achieved empirically through experience, although this may be directed by *discovered underlying categorical principles*.

Object Recognition by Components

Different theories concerning object recognition place greater emphasis on the assimilation of “primitives” whereby the “matching of objects in recognition is [considered]...to be a process in which the perceptual input is matched against a representation that can be described by a few simple categorised volumes in specified relations to each other.”³⁷⁷ These studies sketch parallels between our recognition of phonemes in speech and coalescences of raw sensory data that build into meaningful features. Biederman notes that 44 phonemes are sufficient to “code all the words in English [and only] 15 in Hawaiian” and asserts that the “representational power of the system [of phonemes] derives from its permissiveness in allowing relatively free combinations of its phonemes.”³⁷⁸

³⁷⁷ Irving Biederman, “Recognition-by-Components: A theory of Human Image Understanding,” *Psychological Review*, Vol. 94, No. 2, (1987): pp. 115-147, p.116.

³⁷⁸ Biederman, 1987, “Recognition-by-Components: A theory of Human Image Understanding,” 116.

Biederman's examples are restricted to non-living (non-changing) volumetric diagrams of human artefacts but the application of the principles to the natural realm is equally appropriate:

Just as the relations among the phonemes are critical in lexical access – 'fur' and 'rough' have the same phonemes but are not the same words – the relations among the volumes are critical for object recognition. Two different arrangements of the same components could produce different objects. In both cases, the representational power derives from the enormous number of combinations that can arise from a modest number of primitives. The relations in speech are limited to left-to-right (sequential) orderings: in the visual domain a richer set of possible relations allows a far greater representational capacity from a comparable number of primitives.³⁷⁹

It seems probable that the characteristics of material temporality are separated early in the perceptual process as informing features that overlay the inherent persisting characteristics of the object and that contribute to its meaning.

Parts and Wholes: Mereology of the Ageing Object

The field of mereology addresses the relationship between the parts and the wholes that they constitute and has particular relevance to age phenomena since, although overall size is an important general age signifying characteristic, many age associated sensory stimuli, especially those that are common to a number of objects or categories, relate to particular selected components or features. These component parts are identified by the subject, by us, as representative of the durational changes that are of interest; in the case of a ripening apple, as noted earlier, the component part might be the colour or texture of its skin. Robert Solokowski notes how mereology essentially allows "philosophical distinctions to be made, ...distinctions that leave objects intact physically but broken up phenomenologically."³⁸⁰

Husserl, in his *Third Logical Investigation "On the Theory of Wholes and Parts,"* examining how component parts can relate to each other and the entity as a whole, develops the principle of 'variation'³⁸¹ where a component can be disengaged from the whole through differing rates of change in the constituent parts. Whilst Husserl's investigations dealt primarily with contrasts between *stasis* and change, the underlying principles may apply equally to parts having *differing* rates or types of change; it is the relative progression of change within the component parts of an entity which often distinguishes them.

³⁷⁹ Irving Biederman, 1987, Recognition-by-Components: A theory of Human Image Understanding, Psychological Review, 1987, Vol. 94, No. 2, 115-147, p.116.

³⁸⁰ Robert Sokolowski, "The Logic of Parts and Wholes in Husserl's Investigations," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol 28, No.4 (Jun. 1968): pp537-553 p. 541.

³⁸¹ Edmund Husserl, *Investigation III # 7* p. 232, cited: Robert Sokolowski, "The Logic of Parts and Wholes in Husserl's Investigations," 540.

Horacio Banega draws our attention to an earlier work by Husserl, a little studied text entitled “*Mengen und Mannigfaltigkeiten*” of around 1892.³⁸² In this, Husserl analyses the diverse ways that components can be combined and organised in the formation of wholes. Of particular interest were ways accounting for ordinal numbers in defining sequence or order and the principle which he named “chaining” where “all the elements [in the sequence] are associated as a unity, that is, each element is immediately connected with a certain other element, and that with another and so on, so it is evident that the elements, which are not immediately connected, obtain a mediate connection: chaining.”³⁸³

If the principle of Husserl’s ‘chaining’ is supposed in the laying-down of mental object files, we might see that each of the retained perceptions within the sequence would hold not only the primary impression sense data, but ‘judgements’ concerning temporal intervals and duration which generate ordinal co-ordinates governing positions within the chronological grouping that constitutes the object file. The retained entity would thus have a temporal dimension.

The succession of changing perceptions, integrated into a single retained object narrative, models the object’s change succession.

Temporal Objects

Preceding chapters have discussed how Brentano addressed the problem of our perceiving something that is past (and therefore no longer exists), a necessary component of our perception of *succession*, by syntactically defining ‘past’ as a *modifying* attribute (as opposed to one that is genuine) similar in its sense to ‘alleged’ or ‘former’.³⁸⁴ So, when listening to music for example, the tones that we hear endure for a period and we experience not only the sensation of the object tone, but also a *Proteraesthesia*.³⁸⁵ However, whilst the sensed tone is indeed an object, the object of its *Proteraesthesia* is not the past tone but its past *sensing* i.e. “the primary object of the *Proteraesthesia* is not the primary object of the sensation, but something that belongs to the secondary object thereof, namely, ‘the modified [i.e. past] intentional relation to the primary object’.”³⁸⁶

³⁸² Horacio M. R. Banega, “Husserl’s Diagrams and Models of Immanent Temporality,” *Quaestiones Disputate*, Vol.7, No.1 (Fall 2016): pp.47-73, p.55.

³⁸³ Hua XXI 92-93 cited Banega, “Husserl’s Diagrams and Models of Immanent Temporality,” 55.

³⁸⁴ Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 2019), 29-30, Franz Brentano, *Deskriptive Psychologie*, ed. Roderick M. Chisolm, & W. Baumgartner (Hamburg: Meiner, 1982), 94.

³⁸⁵ “original association” in Brough translation, “primordial association” in James Churchill translation

³⁸⁶ Franz Brentano, *Deskriptive Psychologie*, ed. Roderick M. Chisolm, & W. Baumgartner (Hamburg: Meiner, 1982), 94.

Brentano held that we experience succession “not only when we hear a melody but even when we look at a perfectly stationary object;”³⁸⁷ “this experience shows us a past temporal stretch.”³⁸⁸

Similarly, Edmund Husserl, in his lectures concerning the phenomenology of internal time consciousness, sought to summarise the problem addressed by Brentano: “When we see, hear or in generally perceive something, it happens... that what is perceived remains present for an interval,”³⁸⁹ but, importantly added that the retained perception must be equipped with a “temporal determination” to ensure that “individual notes have their definite place and their definite measure of time”³⁹⁰ since, clearly, if all the sensed notes were “preserved as they were while ever new ones were to sound we would have a number of sounds simultaneously in our imagination [Vorstellung] but not succession[;]”... “we arrive at the idea of succession only if the earlier sensation...is continuously modified from moment to moment.”³⁹¹

This was the root of Husserl’s diagram, where past perceptions slowly ‘sink’ into a sedimentary pastness which underlies the perceptions of the present moment. (Refer to Figure 2.4).

Perhaps the most important aspect of Husserl’s solution to the problem of how we perceive temporal objects, and our time-consciousness in general, is the way that it broadens the notion of presence, what we perceive, to extend beyond what is sensed in the immediate present moment. Such temporal objects, however, whilst they are held by us to have a unity and to be a single thing, have no actual presence outside of our cognition.

The Temporality of The Physical Object

Husserl chose for his analysis in *The Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness* temporal objects derived from auditory sense stimuli, such as melodies or the spoken sentence, with the objective of developing a theory that explains, not only how we are able to perceive stimuli arrayed over a temporal duration as a unified object, but the nature of our underlying innate temporal consciousness. However, as noted before, Husserl observed;

It is tempting to draw further parallels between the modes of consciousness and appearance of temporal Objects and the modes in which a spatial thing appears and is known with changing orientation, to pursue further the “temporal orientations” in which spatial things (which are also temporal Objects) appear.³⁹²

³⁸⁷ Brentano, *Deskriptive Psychologie*, 94.

³⁸⁸ Brentano, *Deskriptive Psychologie*, 92.

³⁸⁹ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. Churchill, 30

³⁹⁰ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. Churchill, 29-30.

³⁹¹ Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. Churchill, 32.

³⁹² Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. Churchill, 47.

Husserl develops this observation to a certain extent, in one of his later lectures, entitled *Constitution of Physical-Thing Appearances and of Physical Things. Constituted Apprehensions and Primal Apprehensions*. Here, Husserl asserts that for entities, such as the copper ash tray that he has before him, to stand “before us as [an] enduring physical thing,” they must be apprehended in their unchanging (or changing) states in a manner similar to the apprehension of temporal objects (such as a melody or a spoken phrase). He reminds us how, whilst such temporal objects may be composed from a succession of received sensual data, it is perceived as single thing, a unity:

Immanent unities...become constituted in the flow of the multiplicities of temporal adumbrations...[a]nd these primal contents are bearers of primal apprehensions that, in their flowing interconnection, constitute the temporal unity of the immanent content as it recedes into the past.³⁹³

Husserl notes how the “flowing off of appearances” experienced in “phenomenological time,” “such as for example, the series of aspects obtained in the process of rotating a physical thing,” coalesce into a “temporal unity” and “appear as aspects of the same thing.”³⁹⁴

The physical thing becomes constituted in the flowing-off of its appearances, which are themselves constituted as immanent unities in the flow of original impressions.³⁹⁵

As a consequence of the temporal nature of our being, our retained knowledge of the physical object is constructed from a succession of appearances apprehended and assimilated as a single temporal unity, as a *temporal object*.

Modelling The Perceived World as a Web of ‘Temporal Objects’

Given the temporal nature of our consciousness, it is reasonable to assert that we do experience our physical environment as one comprised of *temporal objects*, although this experience may have greater depth than may initially be apparent.

The audible sound derived objects that Husserl uses as examples through most of his investigation are readily understood as possessing temporal qualities because they *happen* over a period of time and that period of time, that duration, is ‘marked-out’ by variations in the sensory data (the tones of the melody or the words of the sentence). Leaving aside changes of orientation brought about by motion (either in the object or by ourselves as subjects), most physical objects seem in individual episodes of encounter to be without variation, and if the

³⁹³ Edmund Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time (1893-1917)*, trans. John Barrett Brough, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), 96.

³⁹⁴ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time*, trans. Brough, 97.

³⁹⁵ Husserl, *on the phenomenology of the consciousness of internal time*, trans. Brough, 97.

analogy of audible temporal objects is extended, they would be experienced as a single tone, unvarying in pitch (but perhaps fluctuating in magnitude according to our relative orientation).

However, we know that most of the entities that constitute our world *do* change through slow, progressive, ‘natural’ processes and that, in a large part, it is the succession of these transformations through which *we* define them. These variations occur over a duration (a life-time) much more protracted than that of a melody or a conversation and yet we are, in the same way, able to experience the entity as a unity and retain some *perceptual constancy*.

The achievement of perceptual constancy in an environment characterised by change and in which its constituent entities transform over time requires a mechanism for the recognition of entities in a multitude of different states of their being. Husserl proposes that, in apprehending physical things, a unified object is constituted from a succession of appearances in the manner of temporal objects such as a melody.

In the assimilation of a melody (to memory), both the tonal and durational components must be retained. This, Husserl asserts, underlies our internal consciousness of time. The assimilation of ever-changing physical things similarly requires the retention of both physical qualities and the durational patterns that underpin their transformation.

In order for us to recognise an entity for which change is an essential part of its being, we must ‘marry-up’ the state that it holds in the present encounter with the corresponding state in the temporal object that we hold in our memory.

Whilst it constitutes a unity, the retained temporal object for an entity will, as noted earlier, be comprised of a multitude of assimilated perceptions from diverse and irregular earlier encounters with the particular entity or other examples from its category.

The extent and detail of the retained temporal object for an entity will directly reflect these earlier encounters but may not necessarily be complete or coherent. However, with every encounter the retained temporal object is improved and likewise our capability to perform perceptual judgements relating to age in objects that we subsequently encounter.

Since the retained temporal object is constructed largely from perceptions derived from random or chance encounters, it is not necessarily assimilated in sequence. Each perception is therefore inferred an ordinal position in the temporal object. As Aristotle noticed, the point of orientation for these ordinal locators is not the beginning or end of the sequence since, in the normal state of affairs, it may be impossible to identify such points. The point of orientation is intentionally determined by the subject as the state of the entity which has most *significance* or is most useful. It is upon this state that all meaningfulness for the entity converges. In the various translations of Aristotle’s lectures this is termed its “*actuality*” which *he* links to its

'end' or '*telos*', although, as suggested earlier, it might be better described as an entity's *temporal archetype*, given that such 'ends' may be multiple and obscure.

An entity's temporal archetype, the state in which it has most meaning for us, can be fixed-upon through individual experience or culturally. When we learn our alphabet, 'A' is for Apple and the accompanying picture is a big red apple (perhaps even with a bite taken from it). Similarly, trees in such early settings are generally portrayed as mature and in leaf (indicating that they are alive). These norms reflect the practical realities of a particular culture's environment. The retained temporal object 'grows' outward from the temporal archetype in two directions, assimilating, and temporally positioning, the entity's states that precede the archetype and which follow from it. However complete or complex the temporal object may become, the *temporal archetype* remains the locus for its orientation, although it can be adjusted to accommodate new discoveries of meaning.

The retained temporal object is in this way intentionally prescribed about an archetype *valorised by the subject* which, in turn, generates much of the meaning that we apply to the entity in its non-archetypal states.

A Diagram for the Experience of Age

On encountering an object, the retained temporal object is metaphorically 'offered-up' alongside its real-world correlate through the perceptual recognition process and an appropriate inference is 'generated' concerning the state of the particular entity encountered in relation to the retained temporal archetype. Such inferences are the basis for our experience of *age* in objects and for *age* as a *phenomenon*.

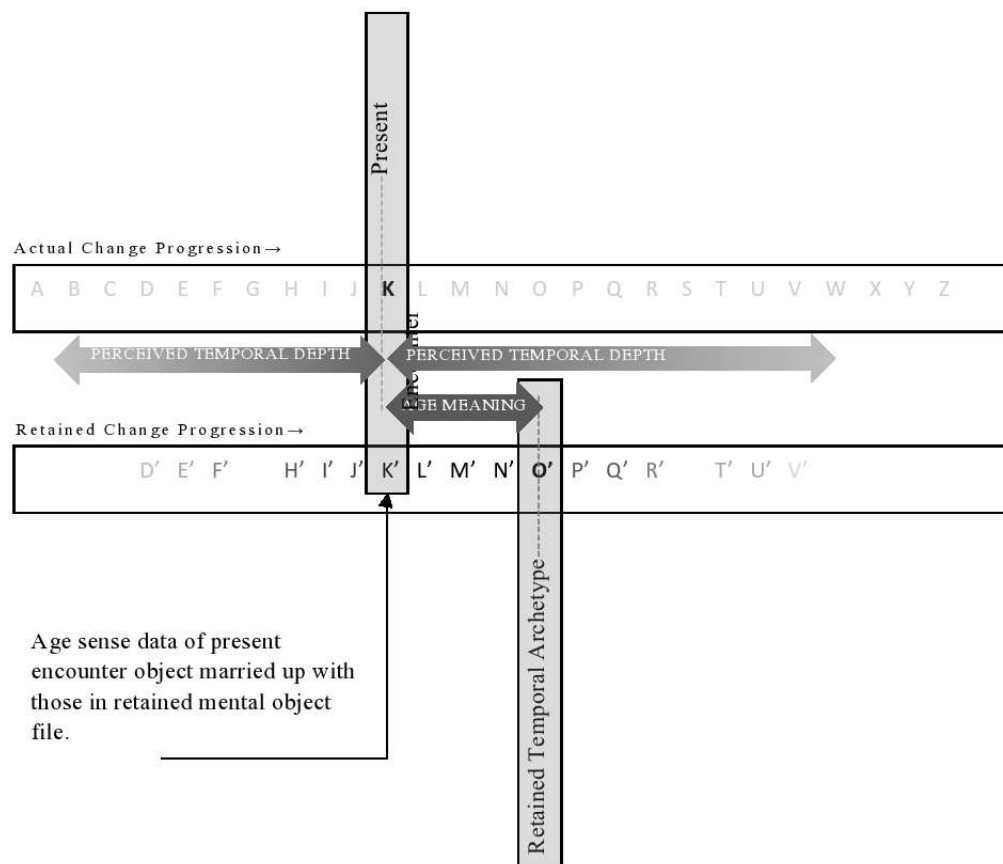


Figure 4.1. A diagrammatic representation of the proposed perception and sensing of age. The upper vertical bar represents the sense data from the encountered object. The viewer's perceptual mechanisms marry the encountered object's temporal state with the viewer's assimilated biographic model of the recognised object shown along the upper horizontal bar. The lower horizontal bar shows the held biograph with the lower vertical bar marking the temporal archetype that the viewer holds for that object. It is the narrative distance between these two that we experience as the phenomenon of age.

The above diagram shows the marrying-up of an encountered entity, an apple or a tree, perhaps, with its corresponding retained temporal object. The encountered particular appears to be in state **K** and is 'paired' with state **K'** in the retained temporal object. Its relation to the temporal archetype, state **O'** would, in the case of an apple, indicate that the encountered fruit is 'unripe' and *precedes* its archetype, and the meaning that it holds for us should be adjusted accordingly.

This process of marrying-up the encountered environment with its respective retained temporal objects lends to all of our perceptions, to our vision generally, an additional *temporal* dimension (a temporal *depth*), operating alongside its spatial counterparts (identified in outline in earlier chapters). It is also instrumental in the generation of meaning.

Pairing and Fusing: Giving the Object ‘Life’

Very much in the way of the theories of object recognition discussed earlier, Husserl, in his Fifth Cartesian Meditation, describes a process of “pairing”, a “*primal form of that passive synthesis* which we designate as “*association*.”³⁹⁶ Importantly, Husserl goes further, suggesting that, not only is the sensory data from the object compared against our held knowledge in order to recognise the object, that knowledge is then *fused* with the sensory data in the presented perception such that there is:

“...a living mutual awakening and an overlaying of each with the objective sense of the other. This overlaying can bring a total or partial coincidence, which in any particular incidence has its degree, the limiting case being that of complete “likeness”. As a result of this overlaying, there takes place in the paired data a mutual transfer of sense – that is to say: an apperception of each according to the sense of the other.”³⁹⁷

This concept he introduces in the context of our projecting our sense of our own animate living selves onto fellow Humans (since, he observes, it is only through such projections that we can have any understanding of what it is to be alive). I would contend however that the principles that he sets down would apply equally to all of Nature and, indeed, that it is the fusing of the object biography with sensory data from natural entities, that imbues them with ‘life’ and distinguishes them as *living things*.

³⁹⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 112.

³⁹⁷ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 113.

FIVE: Age Phenomena: Meaning, Affect and Emotion

“In the projecting of the understanding, entities are disclosed in their possibility.”

Martin Heidegger ³⁹⁸

This investigation of age grew from a desire to understand the apprehension and assimilation of change in the objects which constitute our world environment. The phenomenon of age is not, however, an impassive experience for us; not only do we have intense personal experience of it in our zoological selves, but it has profound affect on the meaning and values that we assign to the objects around us, both natural and man-made. We should, therefore, turn to the meaning, and adjustments of meaning, that the phenomenon of age produces in our day-to-day lives.

It is the intelligible meaning carried by the objects which we encounter that direct our dealings and actions in relation to them, far more so than a more abstract appreciation of their form or qualities. Heidegger notes:

“...what is primary and what is immediately given to us without some mental detour through a conceptual grasp of the thing is the meaningful [*das Bedeutsame*]. When we live in the first-hand world around us [*die Umwelt*], everything comes at us loaded with meaning, all over the place and all of the time.”³⁹⁹

Thomas Sheehan goes further, proposing that if “beings are the meaningful (*das Bedeutsame*), their being is their meaningfulness (*Bedeutsamkeit*), i.e., their intelligible presence to us.”⁴⁰⁰ Indeed, Heidegger remarked: “ ‘Being’ remains only the provisional term. Consider that ‘being’ was originally called ‘presence’ [*Anwesen*] in the sense of a thing’s staying-here-before-us-in-disclosedness.”⁴⁰¹

In this respect, Heidegger often makes reference to the Ancient Greek word ἀλήθεια (*aletheia*) often translated simply as ‘*unconcealedness*’ but understood by Heidegger, in the context of Aristotle’s legacy, as “*the intelligible appearance of something to someone*.”⁴⁰² Importantly, Heidegger notes that “[i]t is not the case that objects are at first present... in some sort of

³⁹⁸ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 192.

³⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger GA 56/57:72.31-73.5=61.19-28, cited: Thomas Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning: From Aristotle to Heidegger” *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, ed. Niall Keane & Chris Lawn (Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), 270-279. [my underline].

⁴⁰⁰ Thomas Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 271.

⁴⁰¹ Martin Heidegger GA 7:234.13-7=78.21-4, cited: Thomas Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 2.

⁴⁰² Thomas Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 270.

natural state, [only later to] receive the garb of value-character”⁴⁰³ but ‘intelligible appearance’, ‘meaningfulness’, is our *first* and *immediate* experience of an entity.

In his examination of ‘meaning’ in *Being and Time*, Heidegger proposes that the “phenomenon of meaningfulness” might best be found through its “kindred structures [of] reference, sign [and] relation [which] point back to meaningfulness as the root of their phenomenal genesis.”⁴⁰⁴

In his analysis of signs, Heidegger begins by examining the operation of the “rotating red arrow” fitted to “the latest automobiles,” which, at “an intersection...indicates the direction which the car will take.”⁴⁰⁵ The arrow possesses a referential structure “‘for indicating’ ” and is present with a “specific environmental ‘*in-order-to*’,” a “handy”⁴⁰⁶ utensil for indicating. Heidegger notes however:

The reference is not the indicating itself, the [indicating] is rather that to which the reference refers, *in* which reference the arrow is encountered as sign and indicating. Just as a hammer is *for* hammering, so a sign is *for* indicating.⁴⁰⁷

Heidegger also notices how, in his perceiving the arrow as a sign, as a signal, “[he] draw[s] from its indication [his] particular comportment,” observing that “the sign [itself] conveys no information.”⁴⁰⁸ Heidegger stresses that “[s]igns are encountered environmentally; signs are environmental things,” and “the environmental sign-thing, the arrow, stands in an environmental correlation of references:”⁴⁰⁹

With the use of the sign, the employment of the arrow, and the corresponding taking of the sign from the vantage of the one who understands it, *a particular appresentation of the envioning world* is accordingly...[made the object of concern].⁴¹⁰

This, for Heidegger is at the core of how signs operate, stressing that “[t]he sign is not authentically grasped [“erfasst”] if we just stare at it and identify it as an indicator-Thing;”⁴¹¹ for a sign to operate, it must “address itself to the circumspection of...[the] concerned

⁴⁰³ Martin Heidegger GA61:91.22-5=69.6-9, cited Thomas Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” “...so that they do not have to run around naked”.

⁴⁰⁴ Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1992), 204.

⁴⁰⁵ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 205.

⁴⁰⁶ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 205.

⁴⁰⁷ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 205.

⁴⁰⁸ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 205.

⁴⁰⁹ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 205.

⁴¹⁰ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 206.

⁴¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 110.

dealings”⁴¹² that constitute our purposeful day-to-day lives. In this, signs take on the garb and the role of “*equipment*.”

The peculiar character of signs as equipment becomes especially clear in ‘establishing a sign’ [“*Zeichenstiftung*”]...[O]ur circumspective dealings in the environment require some equipment...which in its character as equipment takes over the ‘work’ of *letting* something...*become conspicuous*.”⁴¹³; “...establishing a sign can, above all, reveal.”⁴¹⁴

However, signs occur not only as *manufactured* “equipment”, but also “arise when one *takes* as a sign [*Zum-Zeichen-nehmen*] something that ...already ...[exists]. In this mode, signs “get established” in a sense which is even more primordial.”⁴¹⁵

Heidegger takes as his example a farmer taking the South Wind as a sign, or “omen”⁴¹⁶, of rain noting “The south wind’s being a sign is instituted by taking it as a sign...grounded in a particular concernedness...in the everyday work of the farmer.”⁴¹⁷ He explains that:

Since signs are environmental things and their indication is instituted and this institution is concerned with indicating something explicitly, it belongs to its condition of possibility that a sign be serviceable, which means that it actually indicates. Here we have a specific kind of being...namely, being handy. The sign itself must in any case have a *superior handiness, familiarity, and accessibility*.⁴¹⁸

Heidegger notes that once an entity is interpreted as a sign, its meaningful presence to us is always thereafter held as ‘equipment.’ He is led to question how such things reveal themselves prior to their equipmental designation and proposes that we habitually identify their equipment ‘potential’, “as something ...with which we have hitherto not known ‘how to begin’”⁴¹⁹ noting that “when the equipmental characters of the ready-to-hand [useful entities] are still circumspectively undiscovered, they are not to be Interpreted as bare Thinghood.”⁴²⁰

⁴¹² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 110.

⁴¹³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 111.

⁴¹⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 111.

⁴¹⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 111.

⁴¹⁶ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 206.

⁴¹⁷ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 206.

⁴¹⁸ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 207.

⁴¹⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 112.

⁴²⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 112.

Signs-of-Age as ‘Equipment’

Similarly, with the signs employed in the generation of ‘age’ phenomena, we are always seeking qualities which make conspicuous, or have the potential to make conspicuous, changes within the entity that have a bearing on its use in the context of our everyday lives.

Whilst Heidegger makes no reference to age phenomena (generally keeping examples to a minimum throughout his works), his observations concerning an interaction between farmers, as representatives of Dasein, and the South Wind illustrates how such natural phenomena can be subsumed into the sphere of human “equipment,”⁴²¹ *“the indicating sign is grounded in a particular circumstance in which the sign and what it indicates are already handy [or ready-to-hand⁴²²] together. Both from the outset stand in a correlation of being.”*⁴²³

In his lectures of 1925, Heidegger refers to his South Wind example as an ‘omen’. However, whilst the meanings derived from age phenomena may share some characteristics with ‘omens’ in their prophetic significance, foretelling forthcoming states of an entity, they differ from them by being very much bound into the essence of the object and originate wholly from our assimilated subjective understanding of the entity rather than its relationship with a greater external divinity. Interestingly, the “omens” reference does not appear in his book *Being and Time*, which took the earlier lectures as its basis.

Nevertheless, age phenomena stitch the entities that constitute our world, ourselves included, into a complex web of interrelated successive change that causes us to apprehend the world as a unity. In this world, the new and the young, entities that possess no change legacy and no supplemental age generated trace, can acquire an almost ‘other-worldly’ appearance even when this state is not the temporal archetype for that entity.

It is important to note, certainly in the context of objective age, that the physical entity or quality that performs as indicator, as signifying element, cannot of itself constitute a sign.

Charles Sanders Peirce usefully breaks the notion of a sign into three quite distinct components:

⁴²¹ Entities which Heidegger identified as “things we encounter in concern” essentially “something-in-order-to” Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 96-97.

⁴²² Translated as “ready-to-hand” in John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson translation of *Being and Time*.

⁴²³ Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, 207.

“I define a sign as anything which is so determined by something else, called its Object, and so determines an effect upon a person, which effect I call its interpretant, that the later is thereby mediately determined by the former.”⁴²⁴

Peirce sometimes refers to the signifying element of the sign as “representation,” “representamen,” “ground” or, confusingly in the statement above, “sign.” For the discussion of age phenomena, it may be useful to adopt the term *source*, as this has some convergence with Heidegger’s Lectures of 1925, and conjures the impression that these parts or qualities of entities represent the initiation point of signs associated with objective age. In Heidegger’s example of the South Wind, the source of the sign is the perceptible meteorological air movement.

For Peirce, the ‘Object’ of the sign is what it signifies (objective might be a more appropriate term). The Object of Heidegger’s South Wind sign is the increased likelihood of rain.

Peirce’s third component to a sign he labelled “The Interpretant”. The interpretant effectively translates the sign and was divided by Peirce into three modes, The Immediate Interpretant, The Dynamic Interpretant, and the Final Interpretant.

Fundamental to Heidegger’s project are the notions of *Sein* and *Anwesen*, “being” and “presence”. The two terms may in many respects be interchangeable but, as noted earlier, in later documents Heidegger refines his notion of being as “...staying-here-before-us-in-disclosedness.”⁴²⁵

Thomas Sheehan takes the distinction further, proposing that, for Heidegger, *Anwesen* “...is the *intelligible/meaningful* presence of a thing to us, and it shows up whenever we understand what a thing currently means...[t]he statement “This is X” = “Currently this is meaningfully present as X.”⁴²⁶ Against such a definition, whilst age characteristics are absorbed within the *being* of an entity, they will act as a *caveat* to its immediate presence, adjusting its meaning both in the present moment and as its being as projected into the future by its beholder.

Sheehan also identifies the importance for Heidegger of “ ‘*the way* the thing is disclosed,’ that is, *the way* that it is meaningfully present to us within a specific set of concerns.”⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ Charles Peirce, *The Essential Peirce*, Volume 2, edited Peirce Edition Project. (Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 478.

⁴²⁵ (GA7:234.13-7=78.21-4). (Heidegger GA 7:234.13-7=78.21-4, cited: Thomas Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 271,

⁴²⁶ Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 271.

⁴²⁷ Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 272. [*my italics*]

Heidegger saw that we understand an entity through a process of “taking-as”, where it becomes meaningfully present to us through one of its possible functions, although Sheehan observes:

Things do not show up to us as what-and-how-they-are *immediately* and *directly*, the way they might to a divine intellectual tuition. Rather, their whatness and howness (their predicates) appear only to a mediating and discursive intellect, one that must...”run back and forth”...between the subject and its possible predicates, or between the tool and the task to be done, until it thinks it has “got it right” and declares “S is P” or “This tool *is suitable* for that task”. Only at that point does the alleged “being” of the thing *show up* to us.⁴²⁸

Sheehan concludes that “our very way of being ...is a bivalent matter of ‘futurity’ and ‘present-ness’ comprised of ‘being made to stand out ahead,’ illuminating the possibilities ‘of oneself, other people, and things’,” whilst “ ‘returning’ to its present self and to the persons or things it encounters in the present moment, in order to render them meaningful in terms of one of those possibilities.”⁴²⁹ For Heidegger, this “to-be-ahead-of-itself-while-always-returning (*Sich-vorwegsein als Zurückkommen*)” underlies the structure of our being, Sheehan adding that Heidegger would come to describe it simply as “temporality.”⁴³⁰

Attributing Meaning

Heidegger stresses that the meaning that objects hold for us is given in relation to our interaction with them:

“Meaning...is not a property attaching to entities, lying ‘behind’ them, or floating somewhere as an ‘intermediate domain’.”⁴³¹

So, “[w]hen entities within-the-world are discovered along with the Being of Dasein [or human existence] –that is, when they have come to be understood–[that is when] we say that they have meaning [*Sinn*].”⁴³²

In Heidegger’s model, the action of *attributing meaning* to an object necessitates the projection of ourselves, and more importantly, our needs, purposes and desires, forwards into

⁴²⁸ Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 278.

⁴²⁹ Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 279.

⁴³⁰ GA21:147.23-26=124.19-20 cited: Thomas Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger; A paradigm shift*, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 103.

⁴³¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 193.

⁴³² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 192.

the future to (pre-cognitively) *imagine a zone of interaction* with the object: “[i]n the projecting of the understanding, entities are disclosed in their possibility.”⁴³³

Thomas Sheehan summarises the situation in a diagram which he labels “How Meaning is Assigned.” (See figure 5.1)

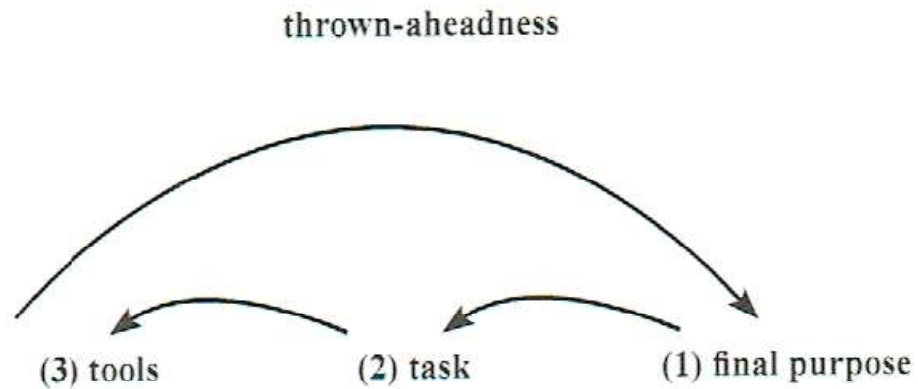


Figure 5.1 “How Meaning is Assigned” reproduced from Thomas Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger: a paradigm shift*, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 147.

Sheehan further rationalises the situation in a diagram that he simply labels as “The Open.”⁴³⁴ (see figure 5.2)

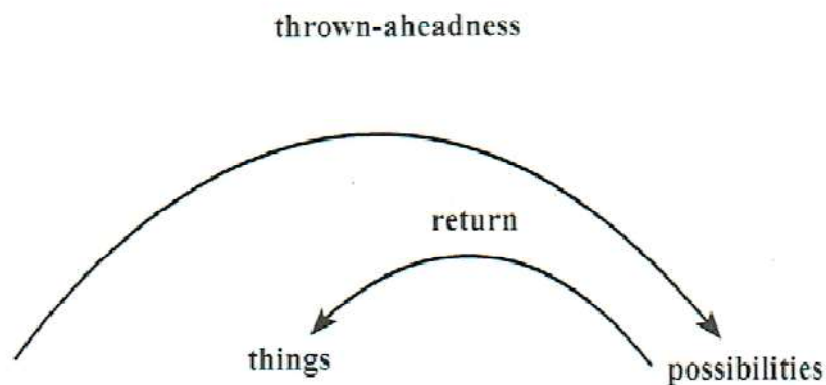


Figure 5.2 “The Open” reproduced from Thomas Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger: a paradigm shift*, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 147.

⁴³³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 192.

⁴³⁴ Referencing Heidegger’s notion of *Lichtung* or “clearing.” Hubert Dreyfus, *Being in the World*, (Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press, 1991), 162-166.

In this, Sheehan illustrates this diagrammatically where the upper arc shows “ex-sistence as stretched out beyond the actuality of the common-sense self, thrown ahead as possibility” among the possibilities of things.⁴³⁵ The lower arc represents what Heidegger labelled the “*Zurückkommen*, the “return.” These arcs should not, however, be understood as chronologically separate *acts* (the temporality of the act, and the diagram, is in its cognitive trajectories rather than in actual time); the lower arc is rather an attempt to represent our existence “*always remaining* with itself in its stretched-forwardness.”⁴³⁶ Sheehan also stresses that “this aheadness-and-return is existential and thus always-already operative...[rather than an] act that any one of us performs at will.”⁴³⁷

The simplicity of Sheehan’s diagram is useful, but the situation is more complex in a world constituted with other living things which share the “bivalent movement”. Heidegger re-frames Aristotle’s “forms” as “an exiting from itself in the essence of its being, yet without abandoning itself” and proposes that the living thing “...retains itself precisely in such a drive and remains “its self,” as we might say, in this drive and driving.”⁴³⁸ Sheehan interprets a plant as an example:

“Out of its roots and stem emerge the leaves, then the bud, which opens up as the flower, which in turn gives way to the fruit. The plant actualizes new possibilities for itself while still remaining the same plant, rooted in its ἀρχή [or principle], the source of its own growth. Its *Weg-von-sich* or being-ahead-of-itself is always a *return to itself* in the sense of remaining *bei sich*: with itself. It is ever ahead-as-returning.”⁴³⁹

If it is our broad purpose to interact with the world, projecting ourselves “ahead” so that we may “return” and give meaning to its constituents, then we must ‘carry’ the world’s potentialities alongside our own if those meanings are to be complete and durable.

In terms of the meanings that things hold for us, it is our perceptual ability to experience age that connects *our* purposes and possibilities, and the potentialities of the *environment* around us. Using my earlier terminology, it is *us*, as the subject, that determine the actuality or “temporal archetype”⁴⁴⁰ for an object and this we ascribe wholly in respect of *our* purposes. In so doing we ‘hammer’ markers into the environmental potentialities around us and we keep

⁴³⁵ Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger*, 145.

⁴³⁶ Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger*, 145.

⁴³⁷ Sheehan, “Sense and Meaning,” 279.

⁴³⁸ Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger*, 141.

⁴³⁹ Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger*, 141.

⁴⁴⁰ The term ‘temporal archetype’ is in many ways more appropriate than Aristotle’s “actuality” as that word implies an immediate and practical use. The ‘use’ of an object may not be initially apparent to us, our ‘purpose’ being be simply to *know* leaving the entity in the realm of adventure.

track of these posts through the inferences and judgements that constitute the phenomenon of objective age.

There is then, another stratum, that of the fluctuating potentialities of our environment, that needs to be added to Sheehan's diagram if it is to account, not only for the potentialities of the world around us, but for our ability to assimilate and work with them. With this additional layer the diagram might appear as shown in Figure 5.3.

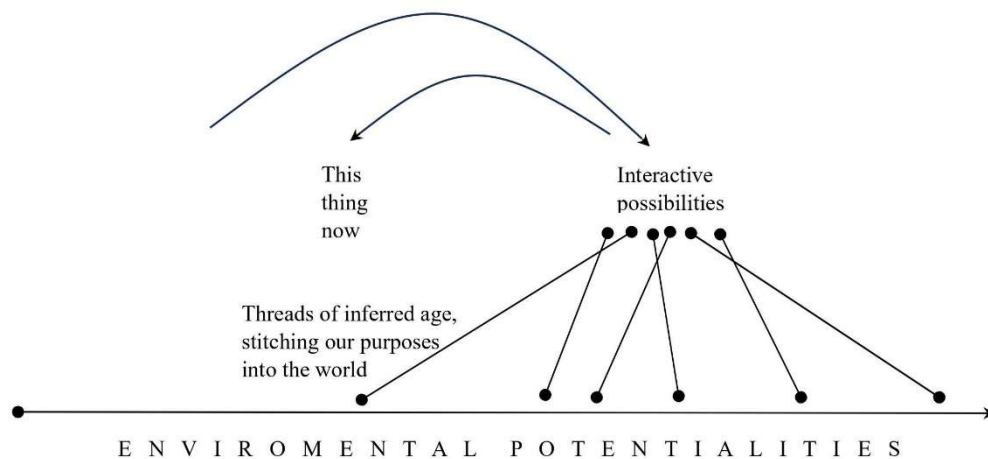


Figure 5.3 Sheehan's diagram adjusted to account for environmental flux and the showing the threads of age that both disclose this and 'stitch' us into the world.

The revised diagram, calls to mind the "anchors" identified by Maurice Merleau-Ponty:

Husserl uses the terms protentions and retentions for the intentionalities which anchor me to an environment. They do not run from a central I, but from my perceptual field itself, so to speak, which draws along in its wake its own horizon of retentions, and bites into the future with its protensions.⁴⁴¹

Affect from Objective Age

Returning to the earlier diagram concerning the marrying of encountered states with states held within the retained temporal model (Figure 4.1), we see a zone of 'age meaning' situated between the state of the entity as encountered and its corresponding temporal archetype. We have until this point been dealing largely with meanings that are, at least superficially, not

⁴⁴¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, (London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1962), 483, 484.

emotionally charged. Yet we know from our lived experience that the age phenomena that we associate with some entities can profoundly affect our *mood*. The intentionality that is bound-in with the entity's temporal archetype might indicate that such affect may arise from the relationship between the encountered entity and its temporal archetype since this is a direct reflection of *opportunity* as possibility. Consequently, an encountered particular that precedes its temporal archetype in the retained temporal model might cause positive, optimistic, affect whilst one placed after the archetype may give rise to negative feelings or those associated with loss. This is perhaps apparent in the affect generated by seasonal changes to trees where their leafless forms in Autumn and Winter are generally held to evoke feelings associated with melancholy.

It is most probable, that, in terms of adaptive evolution, our ability to experience age derives from our needs concerning food, both in relation to its ripening and its decay. It is, for example, believed that orangutans know when all of the trees across their considerable territory will be in fruit, their model of the world thus being largely determined by their capacity to make inferences about age and duration⁴⁴² relative to this important part of their diet. At the other end of the age phenomena spectrum, New World species of vultures, that are able to feed on carcasses so decayed they are not accessible to other carrion species, will spill their stomach contents in front of would-be predators as a deterrent.⁴⁴³

But it is the association of age with decaying and inedible food that may underly many of our negative feelings to *oldness* and decay. Clearly, rotten food is, in many instances, very dangerous, not only containing harmful microorganisms, but their waste toxins, and, whilst revulsion toward rotten food may be a relatively simple reflex response, it is the phenomenon of age that delivers the sense of *jeopardy* that attaches so noticeably to foodstuffs; indeed, the certainty that food will decay and the feeling of *urgency* that consequently attaches to it is, perhaps, the most prominent apperception that derives from our ability to experience age.

Feelings are generally hard to define, Husserl describing them as “the darkest part of the world of knowledge,”⁴⁴⁴ yet discussion of the involvement of emotion in the context of perceptions of age is inescapable. Clearly the feelings described above in respect of food are only experienced in the presence of their referents (or by imaginative re-presentations of them). Husserl asserts that feelings “are distinguished by the fact that they have an intentional content,

⁴⁴² Borneo Orangutan Survival (BOS) Australia, <https://www.orangutans.com.au/orangutan-facts/diet/>, sourced 22.01.24 It is, of course, entirely possible that the orangutan's world map is an entirely rational construction worked out through conscious reasoning, but given our own experience of the phenomenon, this seem less likely.

⁴⁴³ Evan Buechley & Çağan Hakkı Şekercioğlu, "Vultures". *Current Biology*. 26 (13) (2016).

⁴⁴⁴ (Hua XXVIII, 255 cited Thomas Byrne, "The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* Vol.53 No.4, (2022): pp. 455-468, p.455.

which can either be really inherent in them during their entire duration [or... during a part of it] or can be merely dispositionally excited in general. The intentional content is that content towards which the act is directed.”⁴⁴⁵ In our feelings concerning objective age, the contents of the emotional “psychic act” may be twofold comprising both a simple reflex response, and the apperception stemming from *age judgements* inferred onto the object as part of the perceptual process; if we try to imagine, for example, the vulture mentioned above, our revulsion is stirred not only by the bird’s terrible diet, but by the co-presented apperceptive sense of what that food once was. Both components of our feelings of revulsion are, however “unthinkable”⁴⁴⁶ without the referent, the feeding/vomiting vulture, being to mind or actually in front of us. Importantly, in our perception, our feelings fuse with the “theoretical object”⁴⁴⁷ introducing an “affective hue”⁴⁴⁸ and Husserl notes how an “intellectual state is perhaps never entirely free of emotional colouring.”⁴⁴⁹ Husserl goes further, affirming that the feeling and the objective content “co-determine each other as moments of one whole intention;”⁴⁵⁰ in Husserl’s words, the emotional colouring is “not a dress which is pulled over the [objective content],”⁴⁵¹ but something immanently present as part of the perceived object.

Husserl is, of course aware, that there are emotional states that are not directly intended upon an object, such as pleasure, but feels even these have their basis in interactions with objects: “The object is the ground of the feeling [state], it gives us the pleasure; the pleasure radiates from it, and I am not turned towards the object, as I am with the will.”⁴⁵² Whilst such feelings originate, Husserl believes, in a passive arousal by the object, he notices how they then seem to “fill my soul.”⁴⁵³ He notes how the two feelings are wholly interdependent, non-intended emotion being a prerequisite for the feeling directly intended toward the object. As an example, he gives the intentional act of love, noting how it is “directed to an object, and really towards the object, which arouses the pleasure. The pleasure is a presupposition, and in a certain way the foundation [for the love].”⁴⁵⁴

Importantly in the context of this research, Husserl describes how these passive and intended feeling states combine in our experiences of fear and hope where the affect derives from anticipations projecting into the future with respect to a particular event. He notes that, in the

⁴⁴⁵ (HUA XXXVIII, 179, quoted Thomas Byrne, *The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings* JBSP 2022, Vol.53 No.4, 455-468, p.457)

⁴⁴⁶ HUA XXXVIII, 179, cited Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 457

⁴⁴⁷ HUA XLIII/2, 3-4, cited Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 458.

⁴⁴⁸ Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 458.

⁴⁴⁹ HUA XXXVIII, 164, cited Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 458.

⁴⁵⁰ Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 459.

⁴⁵¹ HUA XXXVIII, 164, cited Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 459.

⁴⁵² HUA XXXVIII, 179, cited Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 459.

⁴⁵³ (HUA XXXVIII, 179, cited Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 460.

⁴⁵⁴ (HUA XXXVIII, 181, cited Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 462.

case of hope, the *act* of hoping arises only when we are directed towards a projected event and wish it to resolve in a certain way:

“The supposition (*Vermutung*) of the wished-for (*Erwünschten*) arouses joy.”⁴⁵⁵

Fear, in respect of an anticipated event, carries the reverse affect, but both emotions, hope and fear, refer to the projected event and colour its prospect with the passive feelings of pleasure and displeasure respectively.

Returning to the diagrams above (figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3), we not only project ourselves toward future possibilities, we ‘carry’ our emotions, in the form of hope and fear, along with us; just as we return to the object to assign it meaning, those emotions come back to attach their *affect*.

If we were to define the objects around us as change *stories* in which we must play a major interactive role, we can, perhaps, catch a glimpse of how our emotional engagement with an object will be directed by feelings broadly categorised as *hope* and *fear* and the corresponding passively derived affects of *pleasure* and *displeasure*. Through the phenomenon of age, we are able, by imposing a temporal archetype or “actuality” onto an object, to insinuate ourselves into that object’s biography along with our wishes as to whether the story will resolve itself in our favour. In this situation, the temporal archetypes that we hold for objects recognise that it is not the *endings* of their stories that will be happy (for us), but some mid-point where they best meet our purposes, and it would be our hope to enter the narrative *before* that particular moment passes and our *fear* that we have not.

⁴⁵⁵ (HUA XXXVIII, 181, cited Byrne, “The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings,” 462.

SIX: The Special Case of Age in Artefacts

“...it is in that golden stain of time that we are to look for the...preciousness of architecture;...there is an actual beauty in the marks of it...”

John Ruskin, *Seven Lamps of Architecture*⁴⁵⁶

Ruskin, in his 1849 *Seven Lamps of Architecture* poetically alludes to ageing in historic buildings as “the golden stain of time” and notes that “there is an actual *beauty* in the marks of it.”⁴⁵⁷

Through our shared cultural sense, we understand the affect to which Ruskin refers but we should pause, once again, to consider how *physical* ‘marks’ upon a building, viewed in a single duration-less moment of perception, causes us to *feel* Time. In this instance, we should similarly question the nature of the ‘aesthetic’ response that Ruskin identifies as accompanying the sensation since these marks, by their nature, must surely disrupt the artistry of the building’s creators.

Whilst our perceptual mechanisms are adapted to address a *Natural* World in flux, they are, of course, the same processes that we must employ in making sense of *man-made* cultural things. Exposed to the weather and other environmental factors, as well as the rigours of use, many of the products of our technicity seem equally susceptible to the *extrinsic* processes of decay that are so characteristic of the Natural world and seem, as a consequence, to invoke similar age phenomena. These manifestations of age are not only significant in the values that we place upon artefacts, but give vivid expression to our temporal situation generally and have, as we noted earlier, given rise to allusions to the “teeth of Time”⁴⁵⁸ itself.

Artefacts and Extrinsic Age

If we consider dilapidated houses that bear significant “marks” of age, whose timbers have decayed through damp and insect attack, or abandoned cars that have turned red with rust, we

⁴⁵⁶ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Third Edition (London: Smith Elder, 1855), 172-173.

⁴⁵⁷ “...the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold. Its glory is in its Age, and in that deep sense of voicefulness, of stern watching, of mysterious sympathy, nay, even of approval or condemnation, which we feel in walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity. It is in their lasting witness against men, in their quiet contrast with the transitional character of all things, in the strength which, through the lapse of seasons and times and the decline and birth of dynasties, and the changing of the face of the earth, and the limits of the sea, maintains its sculptured shapeliness for a time insuperable, connects forgotten and following ages with each other, and half constitutes the identity, as it concentrates the sympathy, of nations: it is in that golden stain of time, that we are to look for the real light, and colour, and preciousness of architecture...” Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 172.

⁴⁵⁸ Robert Hooke, 1635-1703. *Micrographia : or Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made by Magnifying Glasses. With Observations and Inquiries Thereupon.* (London: Printed by Jo. Martyn, and Ja. Allestry ... and are to be sold at their shop ..., 1665), Observation LII.

see how they elicit from us a pronounced negative emotion, perhaps even extending to feelings of threat or fear. Such extreme decay plainly interferes with and undermines the useability (or *telos*) of the artefact and, in such circumstances, negative value judgements on the part of our perceptual capabilities seem, completely appropriate. It therefore follows, quite reasonably, that early indications of dilapidation in the things we make will evoke in us graduations of this valorisation, even in situations where the functioning of the artefact is, as yet, unaffected by the decay. Ruskin's reference to the beauty of deleterious features, as well as Reigl's granting "age-value" to ancient structures,⁴⁵⁹ indicates, however, that our affective response to decay in artefacts may be more nuanced.

It is important to note, though, that Ruskin, when making these observations concerning time's "marks" upon buildings is discussing, (and is clearly quite moved by) the *history* of the edifices, believing that "the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones, nor in its gold....[but] in its Age."⁴⁶⁰ Ruskin rather stretches the point, perhaps, when asserting that, in his opinion, "a building cannot be considered to be in its prime until four or five centuries have passed over it,"⁴⁶¹ but we understand his position. From experience, we know that the *extrinsic* marks of decay on a *new* building will still evoke in us the negative judgements of value outlined earlier, yet Ruskin's observations suggest that the same defects on a *venerable* structure can conversely elicit in us an *uplifting* aesthetic response. For this to be possible, there must be additional mechanisms, beside the extrinsic marks of decay, by which an observer is able to determine that a building, or any other cultural object, is not new.

Artefacts and Intrinsic Age

These inferences of 'newness' and 'oldness' onto artefacts are as universal in our day-to-day interaction with our *man-made* environment as they are for living entities in the *Natural* realm. Yet, unlike those entities, most man-made things do not, in themselves, grow or evolve with the generative patterns of Natural things. Nevertheless, although particular individual artefacts may not transform by 'nature', *categories* of artefact do indeed seem to hold within themselves changes over time, be this through technological innovation or more fluid ideas of *taste*.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ Nicholas Stanley Price, M. Kirby Talley Jr. and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro (eds.), "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development," *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (New York: Getty Museum Publications: 1996).

⁴⁶⁰ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 172.

⁴⁶¹ "...I think a building cannot be considered to be in its prime until four or five centuries have passed over it..." Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 178.

⁴⁶² Thus, whilst an encounter with a four-wheeled metal object might outwardly resolve straightforwardly as a car, the recognition is nuanced not only by the many types and sizes of contemporary models available, but also by our preceding assimilation of developments in the appearances of cars, or 'styling', learned from earlier encounters with this category of object. The retained memory against which the encountered model is measured will include these stylistic progressions, (that have occurred over the last 130 years or so as the

Whilst the primary determinant in the processes of object recognition will be the actuality or purpose of the artefact, it seems reasonable to extend the idea, developed in the preceding chapters, of the *perceptually co-presented change-narrative* to the technological realm, such that our chronologising perceptual mechanisms apperceptively present us with an ordered biograph of the object *category* (as they do for Natural objects). These chronologising characteristics feel inherent or *intrinsic* to the artefact and are built from inferences drawn from previous encounters with the category, either directly by the subject or intersubjectively through their cultural setting.

The inferences of this type of inherent age are often informed and ordered by observations of decay and it seems that the marks associated with degradation and *extrinsic* age may be signifiers that we use to ‘decode’ an object and to *verify* perceptual judgements relating to other, *intrinsic* age characteristics. It is, I think, in their role as *evidence*, that marks of decay contribute positively to our temporal understanding of a man-made thing and to which Ruskin owes his aesthetic enjoyment of a building’s slow destruction.

“Pastness”

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger discusses how museum artefacts may, in the same way as Ruskin’s buildings, become “fragile or worm eaten ‘in the course of time’,”⁴⁶³ but asserts that the character of “pastness” or the intrinsic age that we perceive in them “does not lie [solely] in this transience,”⁴⁶⁴ which he views wholly as a component of their present situation.

In discussing our “ordinary understanding of history,”⁴⁶⁵ Heidegger’s investigation of how objects become imbued with narratives of “pastness” finds that “‘the past’ has a remarkable double meaning; the past belongs irretrievably to an earlier time; it belonged to the events of that time; and in spite of that it can still be present-at-hand ‘now’ – for instance the remains of a Greek temple. With the temple, a ‘bit’ of the ‘past’ is still ‘in the present’ ”⁴⁶⁶ and he

general appearance of automobiles progressed further from their horse-drawn antecedents) intuitively ordered very much in the same way as the successive phases of growth are arranged in the case of the apple discussed in an earlier chapter. These biographic object files are constructed from personal experience of the object category or cultural norms and, whilst they may necessarily accurately reflect historical fact, they are nevertheless always in the process of verification and development.

⁴⁶³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 432.

⁴⁶⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.

⁴⁶⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 430.

⁴⁶⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 430.

concludes that “history is that specific historizing...[by] *existent* [people]”⁴⁶⁷ relating to “man as *the* ‘subject’ of events.”⁴⁶⁸

Heidegger asks, though, how “The ‘antiquities’ preserved in museums (household gear,[and Greek Temples, presumably]...) [can] *belong* to a ‘time which is past’,”⁴⁶⁹ and how, not having changed within themselves, they are “manifestly...altered”⁴⁷⁰ in the present. In asking, then, what is actually “past” for these objects he proposes “...nothing else than the *world* within which they belonged to a context of [meaningful or purposeful] equipment”⁴⁷¹ and it is *that world* that is “no longer.”⁴⁷² “Thus the historical character of the antiquities that are still preserved is grounded in the past of [those people] to whose world they belonged.”⁴⁷³

In this Heidegger concurs with Ruskin who similarly held that the Architecture under discussion bears “... lasting witness against men...”⁴⁷⁴

THE PERCEPTION OF PASTNESS IN CULTURAL OBJECTS

Heidegger does not propose how the “world that is past” is manifest in a present perception of an object. Like so many other philosophers, he confines himself to the broader issues of Time and it is indicative that in a book of nearly six hundred pages, the discussion of objective “pastness” takes up just four of them; Heidegger even expresses his concern that the “deliberations ...[will be seen as] rather petty”⁴⁷⁵

To gain insight into how we are able to make perceptual inferences or judgements of age that reflect the “pastness” of an artefact’s originary makers, we need, perhaps, to first consider the special way that we apprehend objects made by Humans as against those that are of Natural origin.

The divergence in our approach to the two types of object is exemplified, and easily visualised in the controversy surrounding the Yonaguni Monument which lies submerged near the coast of the Ryuku Islands in the Okinawa Prefecture of Japan. Discovered in 1986 by divers seeking a good location to observe the area’s large population of hammerhead sharks, the sandstone monument comprises a series of platforms crossed by vertical monoliths and slab structures.

⁴⁶⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 431 [my italics, Heidegger uses the term ‘Dasein’].

⁴⁶⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 431 [my italics].

⁴⁶⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 431

⁴⁷⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.

⁴⁷¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.

⁴⁷² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.

⁴⁷³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.

⁴⁷⁴ Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 172.

⁴⁷⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 433.



Figure 6.1 The underwater city at Yonaguni near the coast of Japan



Figure 6.2 Underwater rock formations near Yonaguni, Japan

Since its discovery, the origins of the Yonaguni formations have been a source of debate, with several authors holding that the monument is man-made, suggesting its resemblance to ancient architecture to be more than accidental, and citing walls, roads, a pyramid and a castle, as well as a stadium and several inscriptions, as evidence of its *archaeological* status. The field of Geology, however, provides a more rational, if less exciting, explanation for the form of the rock.⁴⁷⁶

If as an exercise, we alternately conjure first the geological interpretation and then the pseudo-archaeological rendering of the same underwater object, we encounter, not only a predisposition, on our part to seek-out human activity in the world, but the startling difference in the *meaning* of the formation should the involvement of human hands be even a remote possibility. If we imagine the monument as a natural configuration of rocks, it is simply one of the many enduring spatial objects that forms part of the backdrop to our lives (the formations might be infused with shelter opportunities and threat from the shadows and caves, but that is all). A wall, on the other hand, immediately possesses in our perception the actuality

⁴⁷⁶We are, of course, as a species, always anxious “to believe the mysterious” (Cornelius Tacitus, *The History, Complete Works of Tacitus*, ed. Alfred John Church. William Jackson Brodribb. Sara Bryant. edited for Perseus (New York: Random House, 1873 reprinted 1942), Book 1) and the Yonaguni formations have been linked to legends of the lost civilization of Mu, or Lemuria, a confection of several 19th Century authors arising from early translations of a Mayan codex. Nevertheless, the field of geology provides for us a more rational explanation, noting how the rock of the area “contain[s] numerous well-defined, parallel bedding planes along which the layers easily separate...the rocks ...also [being] criss-crossed by numerous sets of parallel, vertically oriented joints in the rock...[along which]...earthquakes tend to fracture the rocks in a regular manner.” The “walls” and other vertical “structures” are explained as horizontal slabs that have rotated through processes of natural erosion. (Robert M. Schoch, (1999) “Yonugani Enigmatic Underwater Monuments” (<http://www.robertschoch.net/Enigmatic%Yonaguni%20Underwater%20CT.htm>)

and intended purpose of its builder as part of its meaning and, furthermore, the notion of that builder is foremost in our response to the object and seems even to be an inherent part of the object; as Husserl notes in his second volume of *Ideas*, these man-made things are, in some way, “*animated*” by the will of another human being.⁴⁷⁷

The embodied intention that we find in human artefacts derives directly from our ability to understand other humans and central to this, in Husserl’s philosophy, is the notion of ‘empathy’, a cognitive device whereby we project elements of our self-understanding ‘into’ Others making available to us their essence as fellow ‘animate’ (living) beings. Empathy⁴⁷⁸ opens to us “...the apprehension of the human, the apprehension of that person there, who dances, laughs when amused and chatters, or who discusses something with me in science etc;”⁴⁷⁹ Husserl notes, additionally, that we do not hold this human as a body *externally* controlled by a soul or spirit, but one in which the “...Body is...filled with the soul through and through.”⁴⁸⁰

Each movement of the Body is full of soul, the coming and the going, the standing and the sitting, the walking and dancing etc.⁴⁸¹

Husserl continues:

Likewise, so is every human performance, every human production.⁴⁸²

Thus, whilst discussing the unity of the body and the spirit in our apprehension of other people, Husserl draws our attention to a similar “...unity between the expression and the expressed...or ‘comprehensive unity’ ”⁴⁸³ that delivers man-made objects, not as simple objects to which meaning is given “in an exterior fashion but as...objects...fully animated by a ‘spirit,’ that is, by a cultural meaning, with which the [physicality of the object]...is entirely fused.”⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁷ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. Richard Rojewicz & Andre Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), 249. [my italics]

⁴⁷⁸ Empathy Definition. A note is, perhaps, required here concerning **Empathy**; the English word ‘empathy’ is an early 20th Century translation by Edward Titchener of the German term, *Einfühlung*, which literally means “feeling into”, a German expression originally used in the context of aesthetic appreciation and adopted by the psychologist Theodor Lipps (and subsequently by Husserl). Titchener’s translation unfortunately shares part of its etymology with the word ‘sympathy’ (πάθος (*pathos*, “passion” or “suffering”) and the two words, in modern usage, have become, to some extent, synonymous. Whilst Husserl’s description of *Einfühlung* implies a sharing of emotional awarenesses, its application is less *emotive* than its now accepted English translation.

⁴⁷⁹ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 252.

⁴⁸⁰ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 252.

⁴⁸¹ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 252.

⁴⁸² Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 252.

⁴⁸³ Christian Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts: A Husserlian Approach to Non-figurative Art” *Research in Phenomenology* 41 (2011): pp. 358-373 p.359.

⁴⁸⁴ Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 359.

A manuscript notation of 1930 goes further in linking the sense or meaning of an artifact directly with its fabricator as the *residue* of an action:

The remaining product is originally understood by means of empathy as made by someone...as sprung from somebody's actions, even if it is not produced in front of our eyes.⁴⁸⁵

Thus, artefacts are apprehended as expressions of an Other, or even as “analogues of bodies”⁴⁸⁶ and “mediated expressions of another subjectivity,”⁴⁸⁷ understood through “a derivative use of empathy.”⁴⁸⁸ Importantly, in the apprehension of artefacts, empathy is not employed directly as it is in our intersubjective relationships (we do not hold artefacts as animate), but it references the actions of Others that can “only be given in empathic experience.”⁴⁸⁹ Christian Ferencz-Flatz goes further, suggesting meaning is delivered through “a mediated anticipation of empathy”⁴⁹⁰ and that in perceptions of artefacts and cultural objects,⁴⁹¹ “empathic apperceptions”⁴⁹² are bound in which “appresent” their originating Others, the artefact appearing to us *within themselves* as “having been made *by* and having been made *for*”⁴⁹³ such people:

Cultural things are seen as things in their thingly properties, but at the same time they are apperceived as cultural products having cultural properties. Thus they appresent people who have produced such things for their purposes, as well as people who hold such things as purposeful, as useful for their eventual purposeful activities.⁴⁹⁴

A World Available to Everyone

We are a gregarious species and we never inhabit our world entirely alone; our essential mode of being is characterised by intersubjectivity. Again in the second volume of *Ideas*, Husserl notes how “nature is constituted as intersubjectively common...and oneself is constituted as

⁴⁸⁵ (Hua XXXIX, p.370 cited Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 362.

⁴⁸⁶ Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 362.

⁴⁸⁷ Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 362.

⁴⁸⁸ Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 362.

⁴⁸⁹ Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 363.

⁴⁹⁰ Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 363.

⁴⁹¹ Ferencz-Flatz defines a **cultural object** as “...a device generally accepted as such and specifically made for being employed by anyone in such and such a manner, according to such and such goals....A cultural object as such is a “humanised” sense, as Husserl later comes to call it, essentially implying a common world of socialised activities and goals...that requires an empathy-based apperception of the world...” Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 361.

⁴⁹² Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 363.

⁴⁹³ Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 363.

⁴⁹⁴ Hua XXXIX, p.411 cited Ferencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 364. Ferencz-Flatz here refers to Husserl’s notation concerning objects that exhibit a past (see preceding chapter), suggesting that where such objects carry apperceptions of the ad-memorisation kind, here such apperceptions might be termed “**ad-empathisations**”.

[a] member of this “Objective nature”⁴⁹⁵ and our apprehension of our environment is always held as one wholly available to others:

I *experience* the world (including others) ...not as (so to speak) my *private* synthetic formation but as other than mine alone [*mir fremde*], as an *intersubjective* world, actually there for everyone, accessible in respect of its Objects to everyone.⁴⁹⁶

And furthermore, my own being in the world is characterised as one similarly available to others:

I experience [other people]... at the same time as *subjects for this world*, as experiencing it (this same world that I experience) and, in so doing, experiencing me too, even as I experience the world and others in it.⁴⁹⁷

Our disposition toward the world is thus always intersubjectively *shared*:

In the sense of a community of men and in that of man -who even as solitary, has the sense: member of a community – there is implicit a *mutual being for one another*, which entails an *Objectivating equalisation* of my existence with that of all others – I or anyone else, as a man among other men.⁴⁹⁸

Husserl asserts that the basis for our apprehending this community is founded upon an awareness of our own being which starting “from me, from the one who is constitutionally the primal monad, I acquire what are for me other monads and, correlatively, others as psychophysical subjects.”⁴⁹⁹

Importantly, he also notes that any conception that we have of others as living organisms, be they of our own species or otherwise, must originate from *within* ourselves⁵⁰⁰ for it is only from here that we can apprehend what it is to be alive:

In this nature and this world, my animate organism is the only body that is or can be constituted originally as an animate organism (a functioning organ), the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate organism, must have derived this sense by an *apperceptive transfer from my animate organism*.⁵⁰¹

This communal experience of the world, Husserl believes, configures our perception of its constituents, appending to every moment a metatext (or watermark, perhaps) concerning the *shared* nature of its meaning:

⁴⁹⁵ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 179.

⁴⁹⁶ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 91.

⁴⁹⁷ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 91.

⁴⁹⁸ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 129.

⁴⁹⁹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 129.

⁵⁰⁰ “I myself am the primal norm constitutionally for all other men. Brutes are essentially constituted for me as abnormal “variants” of my humanness...” Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 125.

⁵⁰¹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 110.

There occurs a universal superaddition of sense to my primordial world, whereby the latter becomes the appearance ‘of’ a determinate ‘Objective’ world, as the identical world for everyone, myself included.⁵⁰²

Husserl recognises that, if people are to cohere, each member of a community must attach similar meaning to the physical and ideal objects which constitute their world and that matter to them in their day-to-day lives. He proposes that such alignments of meaning are achieved through “systems of harmonious verification”⁵⁰³ which can be viewed, perhaps, as the underlying essential purpose of all of our cultural entertainments and other shared activities:

The Objective world has existence by virtue of a harmonious confirmation of the apperceptive constitution, once this has succeeded: a confirmation thereof by continuance of experiencing life with a consistent harmoniousness, which always becomes re-established as extending through any “corrections” that may be required to that end.⁵⁰⁴

Through these constant confirmations of interpretation and meaning, communities are able to construct for themselves meaningful objective worlds⁵⁰⁵ characterised by the concurrence of its constituent members, “a community of Egos existing with each other and for each other—ultimately a community of monads, which, moreover, (in its communalized intentionality) constitutes the *one identical world*. ”⁵⁰⁶

Thus, our understanding and disposition towards the world is framed by the communities (and sub-communities) within which we live, from whole hemispheres, in the instance of our current western civilisation, through nations and down to more specific localities.

Within these communally verified worlds, our artefacts always reference Others in their meaning (or sense), both in their construction and their designated purpose, end or actuality; in his *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl writes:

These objects, in respect of their origin and sense, refer us to subjects, usually other subjects, and their actively constituting intentionality.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰² Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.

⁵⁰³ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 91.

⁵⁰⁴ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 125.

⁵⁰⁵ “The Objective world as an *idea* – the ideal correlate of an intersubjective (intersubjectively communalized) experience, which ideally can be and is carried on as constantly harmonious – is essentially related to intersubjectivity...whose component particular subjects are equipped with mutually corresponding and harmonious constitutive systems. Consequently the constitution of the world essentially involves a “harmony” of the monads...” Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.

⁵⁰⁶ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107. See also p.139, “...a plurality of monads that constitutes in itself an Objective world and that spatializes, temporalizes, realizes itself – psychophysically and, in particular, as human beings – within that world.”

⁵⁰⁷ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 92.

This refers back to his earlier observations in the second volume of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* where he identifies that all human artefacts carry the “special sense [or meaning]...[that] they” are “...animated by an intention.”⁵⁰⁸ and that this “sense is, by animating the sensuous appearances, fused with them in a certain way instead of just being bound with them side by side.”⁵⁰⁹ As such, artefacts are, Husserl says, “partially real, partially ideal ‘spiritualized Objects’.”⁵¹⁰

Artefacts and the Context of Community

It is, therefore, within the context of the community that man-made artefacts and “all cultural Objects (books, tools, works of any kind, and so forth),”⁵¹¹ receive their meaning and are assimilated; “[e]veryone, as a matter of apriori necessity, lives in the same Nature, a Nature moreover that, with the necessary communalisation of his life and the lives of others, he has fashioned into a *cultural world*.”⁵¹²

Each man understands first of all, in respect of a core and as having its unrevealed horizon, *his* concrete surrounding world or *his* culture; and he does so precisely as a man who belongs to the community fashioning it historically. A deeper understanding, one that opens up the horizon of the past (which is co determinant for an understanding of the present itself) is essentially possible to all members of that community, with a certain originality possible to them alone.⁵¹³

Husserl notes, however, that objects originating outside the community, either geographically or temporally, are, in the absence of any harmonized meaning, approached and understood differently through a more interrogative process:

I and my culture are primordial against every alien culture. To me and those who share in my culture, an alien culture is accessible only by a kind of ‘experience of someone else’, a kind of ‘empathy’ by which we project ourselves into the alien cultural community and its culture.⁵¹⁴

It is an established practice of our European civilisation to collect and ethnographically interpret the alien material culture of communities that exist *geographically* outside of our own, but deficiencies of common meaning can also occur *within* a community through the passage of time.

⁵⁰⁸ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 249.

⁵⁰⁹ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 250.

⁵¹⁰ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 251. [my emphasis]

⁵¹¹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 92.

⁵¹² Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 133.

⁵¹³ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 133.

⁵¹⁴ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 134.

This situation arises since, although a synchronous⁵¹⁵ (to use Levi Strauss's terminology) community of "monads"⁵¹⁶, comprised of "subjects...equipped with mutually corresponding and harmonious constitutive systems"⁵¹⁷ intersubjectively assimilating the environment through "systems of...verification" to constitute a single "identical world,"⁵¹⁸ appears, in many ways, to give to us all a fixed point of reference, it remains fluid in respect of the "diachronic"⁵¹⁹ changes, the growing, maturing and passing, that its individual members undergo.

So, whilst such communities possess the physical appearance of unwavering persistence, their aggregated memory is temporalized by the passing lives of their constituent individuals. In an entirely Natural setting, one which itself has the appearance of synchronous persistence, this temporalisation would pass largely unnoticed, and indeed it does with all species other than our own. However, Human communities occupy themselves in making things, creating artefacts such as tools, buildings and artworks; this 'technical tendency'⁵²⁰ is a fully integrated facet of our being.⁵²¹ These man-made 'things' emerge from the community at particular instants and effectively 'mark' the particular composition of the community at those moments. For, whilst physically the community is apparently static, its meaning-making and intersubjective "verification" moves on, following the diachronic lives of its citizens.

Artefacts or other cultural productions, will thus, when first completed, carry only the meanings intended on them by the particular individuals and community from which they derive. From that moment on, as the constituents of the community progress through their lives, new strata of meaning are sedimented over the original core intent by those that follow. Simultaneously, any original meaning erodes.⁵²²

⁵¹⁵ Claude Levi Strauss, *The Savage Mind (La Pensee Sauvage)*, (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), 66-67.

⁵¹⁶ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 139.

⁵¹⁷ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.

⁵¹⁸ "...ultimately a community of monads...(in its communalised intentionality) constitutes the *one identical world*." Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.

⁵¹⁹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.

⁵²⁰ André Leroi-Gourhan, *Évolution et techniques: Milieu et techniques*, (Paris, Albin Michel, 1973) 336-7.

⁵²¹ "The human group behaves in nature as a living organism...the human group assimilates its milieu through a curtain of objects(tools or instruments)." Leroi-Gourhan, *Évolution et techniques: Milieu et techniques*, 322, cited Bernhard Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 57.

⁵²² A physical manifestation of the iterative reinterpretation of past objects is apparent in the Pantheon Temple in Rome, originally constructed AD126, but used as a catholic church from 609 onwards. In the late Renaissance, the interior attic storey was remodelled in the style adopted by *our* culture as representative of classical Rome. Whilst it is believed that much of the original marble facing crumbled, a small section has been restored; next to the re-interpreted and culturally accepted C18th panels, the original Roman work now appears alien and unexpected (See figure 6.3).

Eventually, of course, all sense attaching to an artefact for its community will consist of strata laid down subsequent to its original construction and the object begins to adopt the character of something ‘alien’ in a way similar, perhaps, to artefacts from *geographically* external communities. As Husserl suggests, the recognition and interpretation of these historical artefacts requires an additional cognitive act of empathy.

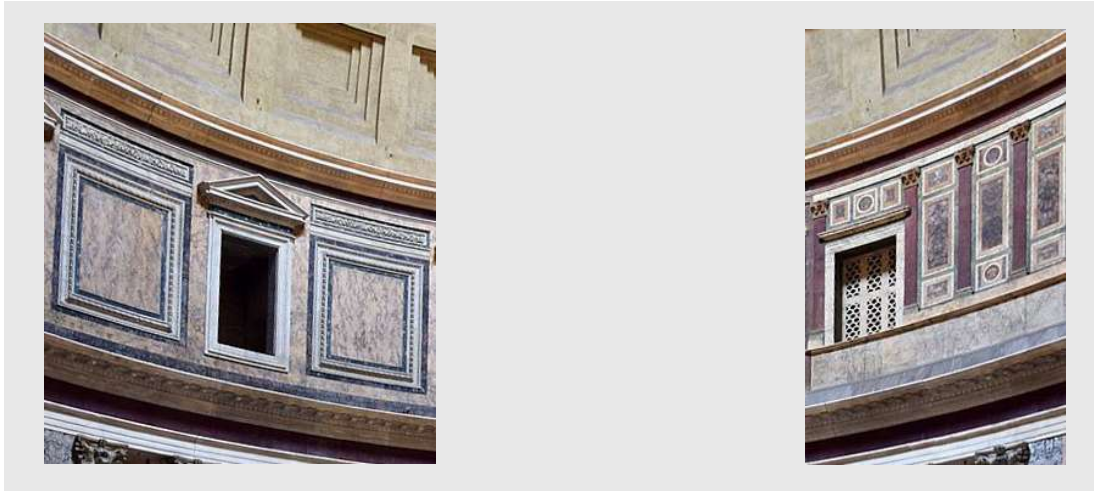


Figure 6.3 The interior of the Pantheon in Rome was refaced in the eighteenth Century in the baroque style of the time (left), a style that had evolved through successive interpretations of predominantly Roman buildings. The revised iterations of the classical architectural language have become so pervasive that the original Roman work (right), of which only one bay survives, now looks alien to the modern eye.

These ‘adventures’ beyond our everyday lives populate the peripheries of the communal biography that we carry within us and against which we measure our environment. It is unlikely, though, that the experience of age beyond the durational confines of our own, current community is quantified; phenomenally, it is experienced simply as ‘old’ or ‘older’, any precise chronology being, almost certainly, a rational construct.

Concluding

As the French Philosopher, Bernard Steigler notes that “[e]ach day brings its technical novelty, as well as the demise of things obsolescent and out of date. Innovation is inevitably accompanied by the obsolescence of existing technologies that have been superseded and the out-of-dateness of social situations that these technologies made possible – men, domains of

activity, professions, forms of knowledge, heritage of all kinds that must either adapt or disappear.”⁵²³

Our inference of intrinsic or inherent age into these things that we make differs from similar perceptual judgements for natural entities as it stems not from the object’s changing as it progresses through time, but from its pointedly *not* doing so. Age in the technical object or artefact derives from its moment of inception into the world such that this moment is an essential part of it:

“The unity of the technical object, its individuality, [and] its specificity are the characters of consistency and convergence in its genesis. The genesis of the technical object is a part of its being.”⁵²⁴

The paleoanthropologist, Leroi-Gourhan reflected on how the “human group behaves in nature as a living organism...[and] assimilates its milieu through a curtain of objects (tools or instruments). It burns its wood with the adze, consumes its meat with the arrow, the knife, the cauldron, and the spoon. Within this interposed membrane, it nourishes and protects itself, rests and moves.”⁵²⁵ To this description, Leroi-Gourhan appends “that which constitutes it intellectual capital, that is an extremely complex pool of mental traditions.”⁵²⁶ Taking the analogy of the human community to a zoological organism to its conclusion, he notes that its analysis reveals “used products, reserves, internal secretions, hormones issuing from other cells of the same organism [and] vitamins of external origin.”⁵²⁷

Steigler interprets this state of affairs as an ‘*exteriorised*’ epigenetic memory⁵²⁸ commenting that for humans, “the epigenetic layer of life, far from being lost with the living when it dies, conserves and sediments itself, passes itself down ...to posterity as a gift.... This is not a ‘program’ ...but a cypher in which the whole of [our]... existence is caught; this epigenetic sedimentation, a memorisation of what has come to pass, is what is called the past, what we shall name the *epiphylogenesis* of man, meaning the conservation, accumulation and

⁵²³ Bernhard Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 14.

⁵²⁴ Gilbert Simondon, *Du mode d’existence des objets techniques* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1958), 19-20 cited Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 71.

⁵²⁵ André Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et techniques*, (Paris: Albin Michel, 1945), 322, cited: Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 57.

⁵²⁶ Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et techniques*, 334, cited: Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 57.

⁵²⁷ Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et techniques*, 334, cited: Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 57.

⁵²⁸ Steigler questions the term, “The question is the very ambiguity of the word “exteriorisation” and the hierarchy or the chronological, logical, and ontological pre-eminence that it immediately induces: if indeed one could speak of exteriorisation, this would mean the presence of a preceding interiority.” Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 152.

sedimentation of successive epigeneses, mutually articulated.”⁵²⁹ This is reflected also in Ruskin’s assertion that “we cannot remember without [artefacts].”⁵³⁰

The phenomenon of age is fundamental to our lives in many ways and, whilst our *personal* experience of age might, at first, seem to obscure the role that objective age plays in understanding the transforming world *around* us, we see, through our interpretation of artefacts, that our own susceptibilities to those transformations can actually define our experience of that world; Ruskin noticed how the age that he saw in buildings had a “power and purpose greater than any belonging to their mere *sensible* beauty.”⁵³¹

In our experience of age in artefacts, the physical object becomes inseparable from its makers, “animated” by their human intent in its inception, but temporalized by their zoological susceptibility to Time and the Natural processes associated with age to which we must all succumb. Perversely, when seeing age in the things that we make, the *object* and the *subject* are just two ‘faces’ of the same phenomenon.

⁵²⁹ Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, 140,

⁵³⁰ “...Architecture...we cannot remember without her...” Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 164.

⁵³¹ “...the external signs of this glory, having power and purpose greater than any belonging to their mere sensible beauty...” Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 178.[my emphasis]

Natural 'forms'

Works reflecting on age patterns in the Natural realm



Mediating Artefacts

Works the reference man-made objects and technologies



Our Temporal Situation

Works that in some way address how 'age' informs how we situate ourselves in Time



Year One

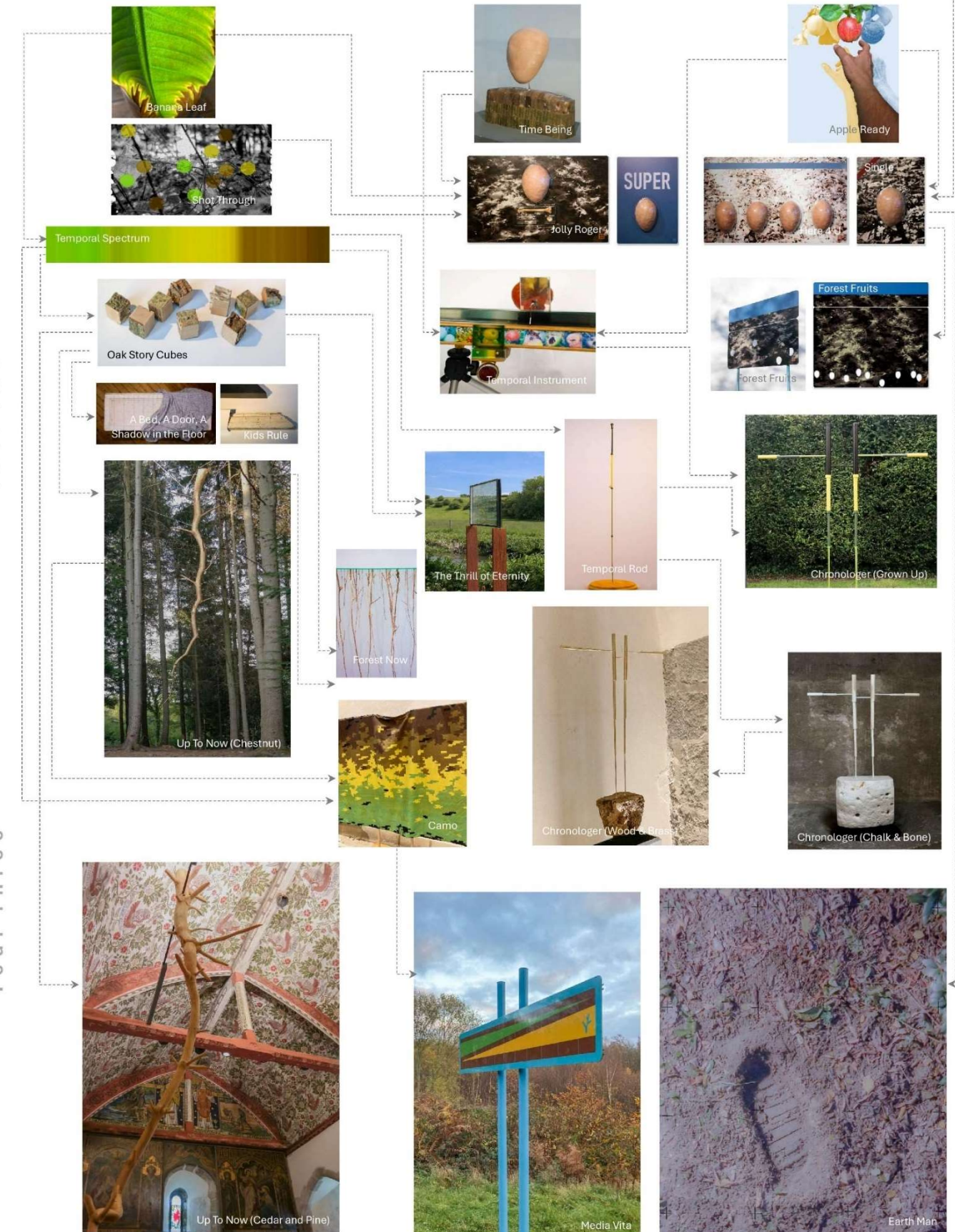
Year Two

Year Three

Year One

Year Two

Year Three



ART PRACTICE

INTRODUCTORY SUMMARY

The Installation at St Wulfran's

The project's art practice largely culminated in 2023 with the installation exhibition at St Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean, conducted as part of that year's Brighton Festival.

The approach to the exhibition had been to create a coherent installation that was not only sensitive to the building, its heritage and its congregation, but bound the artworks with those aspects to make a coherent event. The installation comprised a number of sculpture *locations* which housed artworks that developed themes that ran throughout the research. The works were individually configured and fabricated to reflect aspects of the Norman church's interior and general layout. These three-dimensional pieces were unified by a series of small paintings that presented aspects of the exterior space around the church, bringing the outside world indoors. They thus gave context to the sculptures which broadly reflected upon the phenomenon of age as experienced through the Natural realm. These image-based works adopted the format and hanging regime of the church's Stations of the Cross, quietly taking possession of the interior and drawing the various artworks together into a unified experience.



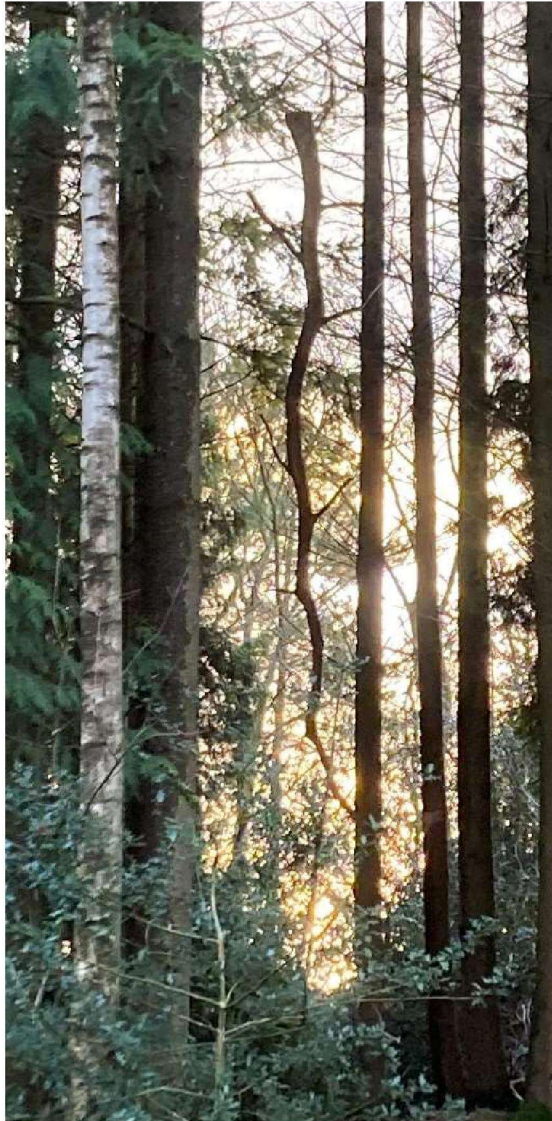
Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Cedar, pine, steel rod
450cmH x 120cmW x 100cmD

Part of the installation at St. Wulfran's,
Ovingdean

The largest artwork at St Wulfran's was the 4.5 metre *Up To Now (Pine and Cedar)*, suspended from the crossbeams in the chancel and *growing* upward toward the boarded barrel ceiling, decorated in the 19th Century with gothic foliage, mottos and birds.



Up To Now (Chestnut)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Chestnut, Douglas fir, steel wire,
1100cmH x 150cmW x 150cmD

The artwork developed a concept first realised in an 11.5-metre-high sculpture installed in a public woodland at Hadlow Down, East Sussex. The work evolved from Edmund Husserl's phenomenological observation that, in the process of object recognition, the retained knowledge with which an object is "paired"¹ in order to give it *meaning* is "co-presented"² and "fuses" with its immanent sensory data to render a *single* perception with qualities beyond those of simple spatiality. That these qualities could include an entity's biographic change narrative, was confirmed by Husserl's later work concerning objects with a past. Although it seemed clear that Husserl's notions of *ad-memorising apperceptions* could be instrumental in the assimilation of change, the concept of *age* seemed to require a concatenation of *successive* pasts.

It is through such "apperceptions"³ that trees and other living things might appear to hold

¹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 112.

² Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 122.

³ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 122.



CAMO

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Printed cotton, beech
200cmH x 180cmW x 70cmD

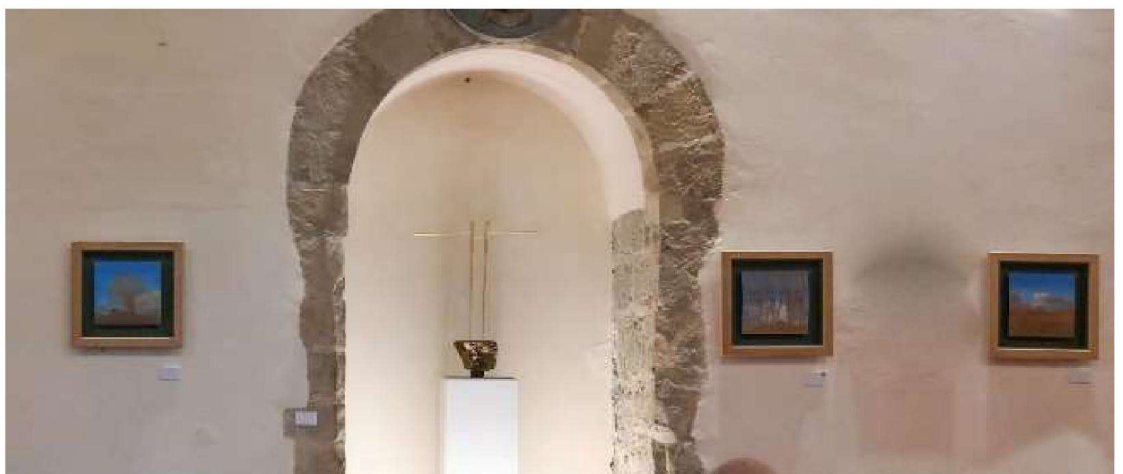
Part of the installation at St. Wulfran's,
Ovingdean

within them the *biographic history* through which we imbue them with life. Essentially, the *Up To Now* sculptures gave material expression to these perceptually co-presented biographs and, in doing so, moved elusive *temporal* phenomena into the more tangible *spatial* realm.

Also at St. Wulfran's, below the tower, stood a printed-fabric artwork, *CAMO*. This sculpture drew on earlier experiments with the temporal colour progressions of vegetation and used the design of Ukrainian Army camouflage as a basis for its abstracted representation of growth and decay. The temporal foliage spectrum remained a theme that ran throughout the research art-practice.

In a central niche, there stood a small brass figure, *Chronologer (Brass on Wood)* whose form embodied the human temporal situation at the confluence of *Time* and *age*. This too was a progression of an idea begun in the previous year.

General view showing installation of **Chronologer (Brass on Wood)** and Via Crucis Paintings at St Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean .



The *Up To Now* sculpture had highlighted an important distinction between *age* and *Time*. Time, for us, seems defined by our own purposeful activities and is generally portrayed as moving horizontally as we do. Conversely, *age* feels imposed by some greater force and its analogies are vertical. Humans seem to exist at the nexus of these two temporal axes.

Chronologer (Grown Up)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Polychrome copper, stainless steel
220cmH x 190cmW x 100cmD

The meeting of age and Time first found physical form in a life-size approximation of the human figure exhibited at a sculpture biennial in Gloucestershire. *Chronologer (Grown Up)* was constituted from four elements that grew wider as they grew





Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Bone (bovine), chalk
42cmH x 25cmW x 8cmD

Media Vita

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Polychrome steel and aluminium
250cmH x 180cmW x 90cmD



upwards and outward. The pose adopted by the sculpture held its arms out-stretched in an act of measuring. To the aligned age signifiers of height and girth was added the spectrum of plant growth, light green at the bottom, passing through yellow at mid height, to dark brown for the top sections. Different parts of the sculpture merge with the background landscape as the seasons progress, and the figure appears to measure the age of the surrounding foliage.

In parallel with the outdoor sculpture, the measuring figure was developed in bone as a sort of temporal skeleton upon which we hang *our* life-narrative and that of the people that we meet in our inter-subjective dealings. Once again the figure's arms were outstretched, measuring *us* and the surrounding world. The sculpture, *Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)*, was exhibited Wells Art Contemporary in 2022 and acquired by the Cathedral in 2023.

As part of the Brighton Festival exhibition, an outdoor work, *Media Vita*, was erected in the church field to the South of St. Wulfran's. This 2.5 metre high sculpture developed from temporal colour progression investigations, applying them to a sky-blue sign to reify the perceptual *meta-text* that watermarks our assimilations of the natural world with its capacity for cyclical change.

The work was selected for the WAC at Wells Cathedral later in 2023.



Temporal Instrument No.3

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Prior to these larger artworks, I had developed a diagram speculating that the experience of age was derived from the temporal distance between the state of the encountered particular and the state in which the object type held most meaning for us. The diagram translated to a fictional measuring device that not only graphically demonstrated the proposal but was able to deliver speculative predictions concerning the emotional affect that might arise through the perception.

Oak Story Cubes

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Oak, cloth, card, found material
5cmH x 25cmW x 5cmD

Oak cubes carry on their faces the bark of an oak tree, from sapling shoot and the stages of maturity, through to a decomposing stump, giving form to the process by which we order our random everyday encounters with the objects around us using age phenomena.

From these diagrammatic representations, I began to consider how a succession of pasts might be 'gathered' into a coherent narrative and was reminded of my children's story cubes, a set of six or nine toy dice that had different pictograms on each face. The intuitive ordering of percepts seemed central



Untitled (Human Essence on Forest Floor)

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Plywood, wax, found material
130cmH x 30cmW x 30cmD

The theme of the forest floor has developed as a motif for the natural processes which underpin our existence made manifest in a rich 'humus' of age phenomena. This is, after all, the plane upon which all life begins and falls.

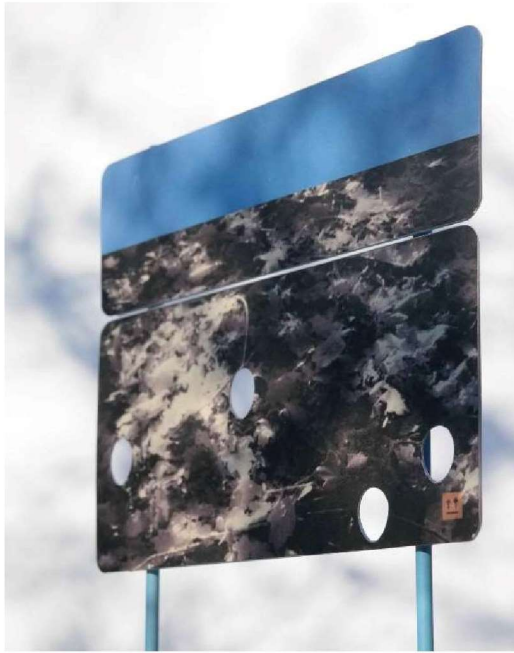
Upon the forest floor balances an inverted egg head-shape that has the colour and texture of Human skin. Life is affirmed by the uncanny balance of the egg and, whilst the leaf-litter forest floor component of the work carries within it the inherent threat of decay, the overall composition recalls that of a bird's nest and reminds us that this is also a place of nurture.

to the 'age' narrative and led to an artwork comprising several story-cubes whose faces held different age textures associated with the bark of oak trees.

Earlier Themes

At the outset of the project, my art practice seemed directed to address the temporal assimilation of our lives and the ultimate tragedy that it holds for us. These works sought to re-embed us in the Natural realm, so we might *feel* our true situation, unprotected by our technology; through these artworks, we were returned to the forest floor, the plane upon which life begins and ends, characterised by the growth and decay that underscores all of our experiences of objective age.





Fruits of the Forest (proposal)
 Paul Tuppeny 2021
 Maquette

Earth Man

Paul Tuppeny 2023

A boot-print carved into the forest floor and photographed.

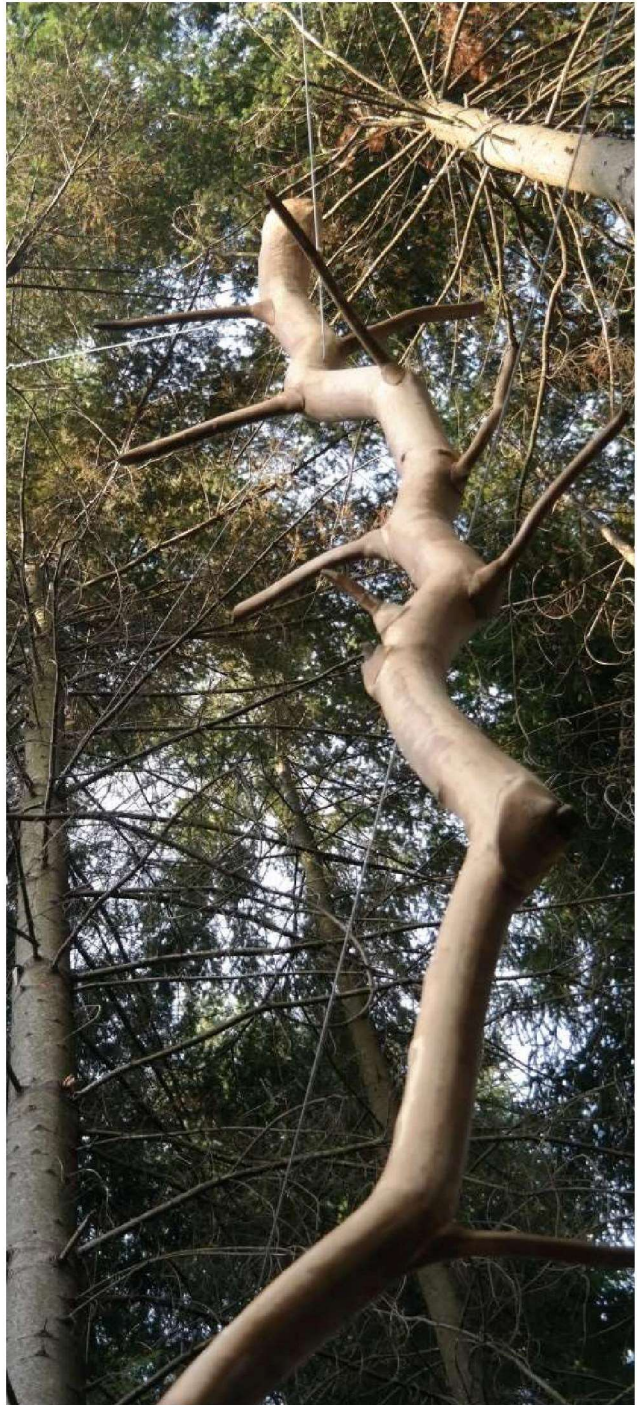


The recontextualising works of the forest floor series began with the juxtaposing of skin-cast wax essences and progressed to cut-out egg-head *shapes* that allowed the viewer to literally insert themselves into (a photograph of) the forest floor environment. I remained engaged with the forest floor theme throughout the research.

In the later stages of the project, I was able to address the mechanisms by which we might know age in *man-made* artefacts and was fascinated that our perceptions of age in these objects was effectively a projection of our own diachronic temporality.

The research showed how the phenomenon of age is an intrinsic part of our engagement and interaction with the world, folding us into its fluctuating, *living* environment and extending the sense of our existence beyond our generative cycles.

Our technological and social capabilities once took us to a world characterised by the stark absence of life; for us, The Moon is essentially age-less. For the last artwork, I reproduced at full-size a model of an Apollo astronaut's boot and *carved* a trace into a leaf-strewn patch of woodland. Photographed, *Earth Man* replicates the images taken by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin back in 1969 but in the context of our origin and our pressing contemporary concerns.



Up To Now (Chestnut)

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Chestnut, Douglas fir, steel wire,
1100cmH x 150cmW x 150cmD

SCULPTURE PRACTICE

CHRONOLOGICALLY ORDERED ACCOUNT

YEAR ONE: **Pensieri, Abbozzi, Schizzi**

(thoughts, sketches and splashes)

The research methodology held that the artistic practice and philosophical research would proceed in tandem, each informing the other in an iterative process of investigation and reflection. Whilst plotting a course through the literature, I embarked on a series of sketch works which earlier artists might have called ‘pensieri’, literally translated as ‘thoughts’ although, for me, a better interpretation is ‘thinkings’, the emphasis being very much on the action and process (rather than any final resolved position). As such, these sketch projects were carried out, not as preparations for a larger artwork, but as nuggets of knowledge working towards a more detailed understanding of the area of study.

A Stick in Time, *Paul Tuppeny 2019*

Acrylic and found material
7cm H x 70cm W x 7cm D

The piece gives physical form to our learned mental biography of a branch from a quince tree, chronologically charting the transformations undergone by a point on the stick, from young green shoot, through flowering and fruiting, and terminating with woodworm and decay. Time progresses from left to right.

Stick in Time (Quince)

Stick in Time (Quince) developed through several iterations throughout 2019 and 2020. The piece is by nature transient, the living green



leaves and pink blossom so essential to its operation lasting only a day or so before beginning to perish. The underlying objective of the work was to encapsulate the life and passing of a single branch of a quince tree. The branch is arranged horizontally following a Time axis running, in accordance with convention, from left to right. At its left end, it starts as a thin green twig and at its right it terminates as a rotten stump perforated by the flight-holes of wood-boring insects. Along its length, the branch accommodates leaf buds, blossom, full leaves, new fruit and dry decaying fruit.

The branch was exhibited in a tubular clear acrylic case which emphasised both its presence as an object complete in itself (as opposed to something simply broken from the parent tree), and its status as a man-made artefact worthy of the viewer's special attention, a necessary adjustment since the work, without proper scrutiny, looks very much like an everyday natural branch from a tree.

The essence of the piece lies in the simultaneous presentation of life and death in a single branch.

A Stick in Time,
Paul Tuppeny 2019

Detail showing blossom and last year's fruit



**1', 358" (One Foot, Three Hundred and
Fifty-Eight Seconds)**

1', 358"

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Detail showing pearlescent trail when dry.



This work sought to animate the processes of decay which, under normal circumstances, occur over extended periods that are not directly available to our senses.

The piece owes much to Rauschenberg's collaboration with John Cage, *Automobile Tyre Print* (1953) in which Cage drove his Model A Ford over sheets of white paper whilst the artist applied paint to one of the rear tyres; in *1', 358"*, fallen leaves take the place of the paper and a garden slug is the author of the linear indexical print.

As with Rauschenberg's 1953 work, the leaves were laid out in a straight line, although in this instance only 305 mm long, and a slug was encouraged to move along the line (by placing some shady shelter and food at the opposite end of the line), its single foot leaving behind its characteristic trail of slime which dried to a pearlescent linear trace across the leaves. It took the gastropod nearly six minutes to complete the distance of one foot.



1', 358"

Paul Tuppeny 2020

View of the work when fresh.

1', 358"

Paul Tuppeny 2020

The slug.



The Prescience Series of Artworks

Prescient Series: Introduction

Initial investigations into the experience of age sought to expose the underlying sense data that induce the phenomenon through simple subversions of our everyday anticipations. The first of these investigative works dealt with our natural prescience whereby our perception of the object or scenario before us has bound within it a projection of its future. Such projections, perhaps, correspond with Husserl's notion of 'protentions', although I believe that in our day-to-day lives these 'expectations' extend beyond the simple 'delivery' of time and change, but form an integral part of our practical and emotional relationship with objects and their context.

Prescient Slab: Dog and Tree

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Concrete, found material, acrylic

Case: 60cmH x 50cmWx 40cmD





Prescient Block
Paul Tuppeny 2019

Oak, kumquat leaves

10cmH x 30cmW x 19cmD

Early examples of the 'prescient' works adopted the form of base strata on which a projected event could take place. These bases were 'adjusted' in a manner that pre-empted a *happening* that would result in the depositing of another entity upon the base. For the artworks to function, the overlaying event needed to be predictable in nature but uncertain in its location and/or timing.

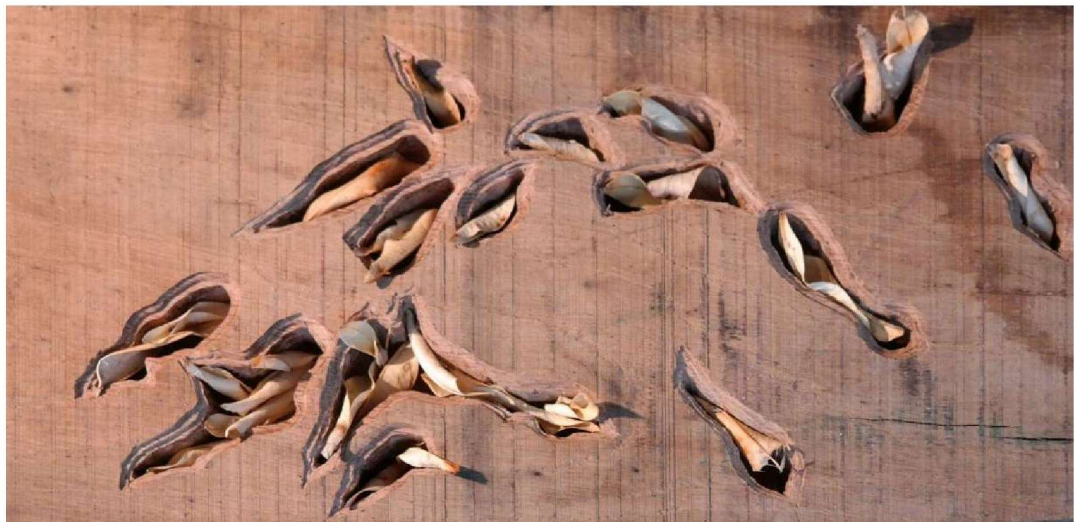
The Prescient Pavement Sub-Series

It was apparent that essential to any inference of prescience into the base stratum was an element of *unpredictability* in the overlaid event. I thus sought predictable events whose *exact* effects could not be predicted and found the random pattern of falling leaves might work as a 'vehicle' for the inversion of event strata.

The first prescient leaf-fall piece was a simple block of wood upon which I traced the pattern of fallen leaves from a small potted (kumquat) tree that had recently died. The leaf outlines were carved into the wooden block, with a small ogee

Prescient Block
Paul Tuppeny 2019

Oak, kumquat leaves



edge to signify their underlying deliberate intent, and leaves were inserted into the recesses.

Although the artwork resulting from the process was visually intriguing and had some harmony in its materials, the piece did not achieve its objective; the projected scenario of a tree overhanging a wooden block is not a common arrangement; leaves, of course, tend to fall on the ground, either bare soil, lawns or pavements.

Prescient Pavement
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Preparatory study

Concrete, found material.



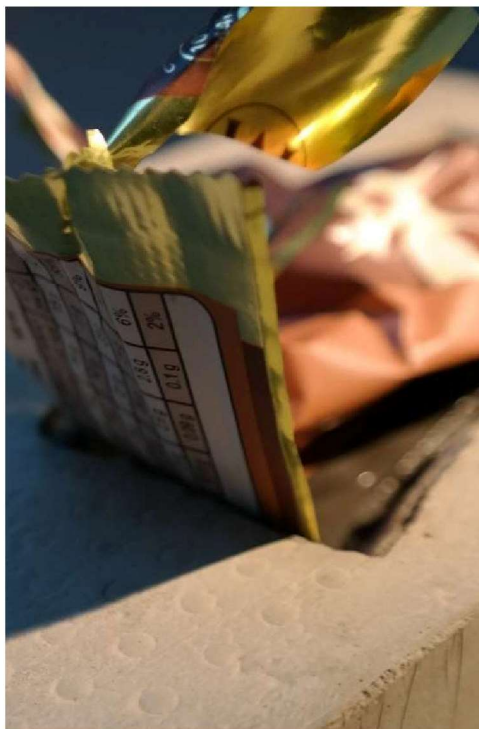
The Prescient Pavement

Drawing on this insight, I commenced a series of works in which prescient recesses were cast into concrete paving slabs. There were initially technical issues that needed to be resolved, the most difficult of which was the reproduction of the matrix of small, raised dimples that characterise the surface of the cheaper mass-produced slabs which form the pavements of most of our cities and towns.

The first work investigating the prescient pavement theme used a discarded lolly wrapper that was found in two pieces. The work was still largely experimental and executed on a small scale, the concrete representing only a small section of paving slab. As with the earlier kumquat leaves, outlines of the fallen debris were traced onto a block, but these were then

Prescient Slab: Lolly Wrapper
Paul Tuppeny 2019

Detail view.



carved into wooden die inserts and placed in the slab mould to create the required recesses.



Prescient Slab: Lolly Wrapper

Paul Tuppeny 2019

Concrete, found material
10cmH x 30cmW x 19cmD

The work resolved many of the technical issues concerning the slab casting but its small size and the fragmentary nature resulted in unreliable and possibly incorrect interpretations of the work. It was apparent that the substrate had to look like a complete paving slab, an adjusted everyday object with recesses that clearly preceded the fall event(s).

Prescient Slab: Dog and Tree

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Concrete, found material, acrylic
Case: 60cmH x 50cmW x 40cmD



The subsequent artwork, titled “*Prescient Slab: Dog and Tree*”, used a much larger section of paving slab, which meant not only that the fallen objects were more easily accommodated and given a wider expanse of context, but the dimple pattern in the slab was more apparent which related the stratum material more readily to the everyday world. The fallen components, a leaf and a small stool, were set in recesses that were geometric approximations of their respective objects. The offensive nature of the components meant that the work needed to be installed in a vitrine, which detracted from the work.



Prescient Pavement

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Concrete and found material
6cmH x200cmW x 180cmD

The 'prescient' series of works sought to isolate age phenomena stimuli by subverting the normal stratification of change events and their physical substrates; paving slabs would 'foresee' the objects that were to later fall upon them, such as sweet wrappers and leaves, and be 'fitted' in advance with recesses to receive these objects.

The final piece in the "*Prescience*" series was a section of pavement comprising several concrete full-size paving slabs installed on the gallery floor. The recesses took the form of geometricized approximations of the debris objects, which were to include mostly leaves but also a cigarette packet and a cigarette butt. The artwork would reproduce a scenario found on the pavement near my home. Although the final slab with recesses for the cigarette packet and stub failed in the mould, I felt with this sculpture, that I was as close as I would get to my objectives for this strand of my practice.

Prescient Pavement

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Concrete, found material
7cmH x180cmW x 150cmD





Prosthesis

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Oak, acrylic, wax, bronze
35cmH x 55cmW x 25cmD

A group of early sculptures sought to grasp age phenomena through the subversion of their signifier's substrate material, in one example, the flight-holes of wood boring insects transfer to adjacent human skin.

Prosthesis

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Close up view of flight-holes

Prosthesis

Age 'signs' (or sources) underly all our experiences of the phenomenon. These signifiers are often generalised over multiple entities in various situations of similar material. In instances of decay, they are manifestations of the host object's interaction with other entities in the world around it; this 'age' comes from outside the object. Almost all the markers of decay indicate the object's progression past its 'temporal archetype', the state in which it holds most meaning for us, and thus elicit negative affect in the beholder.

This artwork 'tinkered' with the generalised application of age signifiers by allowing a pattern of flight holes from insect larvae to cross to an incongruous substrate, in this instance a section of human skin portrayed in wax. This experimental work highlighted the uncanny nature of the wax skin cast. Although the worm holes in the flesh invoked some affect, the idea was not progressed past this initial sketch stage.



Apple Ready

This two-dimensional graphic was conceived as a background slide for a *Three-Minute Thesis* presentation. It sought to embody the *age* that we insinuate into natural entities through the



Apple Ready
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Image

The apple ready for picking is defined between its immature and decaying states of being. My hand is similarly framed by the younger arm of my son and the older arm of my father.

Apple Ready
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Close up of the apple's biographic narrative with its sepia toned past to the left and its ethereal future to its right.



retained mental biographs or life-narratives that we hold for them; every action represents the coincidence of two of these narratives, the story we project onto the object through the phenomenon of age and the destiny which is an intrinsic part of our existence.

The change narratives are presented in their most simple form comprising single past, present and future states; the edible, 'ready', apple (the fruit's temporal architype) is flanked by its unripe and decaying conditions whilst the present state of the picker's arm has its youthful form to one side and its aged version on the other.

The past, present and future arms are taken from my son, myself and my father, which, at a personal level, added a further phenomenal experience of age derived from the generative processes inherent in *my* existence.

Apple Ready drew my attention to the way that the fruit seemed to hold its life narrative within itself when perceived by us; it is part of its essence that it has grown from a tree. Its vulnerability to decay imbues the object with a sense of transience and, because the fruit *matters* to us as food, a sense of jeopardy. I was reminded of Heidegger's remarks that "[t]he 'not-yet' [the potentiality] has already been included in the

very Being of the fruit, not as some random characteristic, but as something constitutive” and further emphasising that the “[r]ipening *is* the specific Being of the fruit.”¹



Shooting Stick

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Oak, polychrome wax, acrylic
35cmH x 100cmW x 215cmD

A sawn piece of timber holds green leaves within its rectilinear geometry.

Shooting Stick

Apple Ready showed how the life-narrative of an object seemed to become bound in with its physical properties to the extent that those properties were interpreted in terms of *their* past and their future. Foodstuffs, which have a clear edible archetype, are particularly apt for the



Shooting Stick

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Detail of leaves

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 288. [my italics]

portrayal of the biographs inferred onto the object in the perceptual process.

Naturally derived materials, such as timber, similarly hold within our perception of them, the story of their being and their essence as (formerly) living and growing organisms. In our current civilization, wooden components of the things that we make tend to be sawn and cut into regular geometric sections, removing much of the physical and spatial characteristics of the host tree. Yet our perception of this material still holds within its associations with its former ‘living’ state.

Shooting stick explored the relationship between the two states, the machined length of timber and the living organism from which it is derived, by incorporating into the “planed-all-round” geometry a rendering in wax of green foliage as a perceptual re-presentation of its life-essence. The sense that our perceptions of ‘natural’ objects might include somehow, a presentation of the object’s essence as a *living* thing, was important and inferred that a living ‘pastness’ might be ‘constitutive’ of dead natural material just as it is for the apple discussed above.

Postcards from the Forest Floor
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Printed card

One of a range of postcards that carried in their centre a cut-out inverted ‘egg-head’ hole through which the holder can ‘re-contextualise’ their fellow humans back to the forest floor.



PANDEMIC PIECES (LOCKDOWN WORKS)

I have grouped the following artworks as *Pandemic Pieces*, not because they set out to document the crisis in any way, or even that they were intended as a single series, but because, looking retrospectively, they seem to cohere as a body inured with a pessimism that perhaps

derived from the crisis and the lockdowns by which, for most people, it was characterised.



Ascendency
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Proposed graphic for the underside of the escalators to the Leadenhall Building on Bishopsgate, London. The forest floor leaf texture is configured as a metallic repeat onto which inverted-egg heads are superimposed in linear arrays traced from the occupancy patterns of similarly sized escalators on the underground network.

It is, of course, only coincidence that my reading in the early weeks of 2020 centred around Martin Heidegger's *Being And Time* and that I should be working with the sections concerning how our "being-toward-death"² directs our comportment toward the world and, indeed, most aspects of our essential Being. Heidegger stresses how the everyday commonplace of death is offset by the "indefiniteness of its 'when' "³ and how "[e]veryday concern makes definite for itself the indefiniteness of certain death by interposing before it those urgencies and possibilities which can be taken at a glance, and which belong to the everyday matters that are closest to us,"⁴ our cultural setting effectively "covers up what is peculiar in death's certainty – *that it is possible at any moment.*"⁵

Whilst we are able to glance past the certainty of our own death, its presence is perpetually manifest in the 'structure' of the natural world around us characterised, as it is, by the generative 'argy-bargy' of its myriad constituent entities. This is even more apparent in non-equatorial latitudes where adaptations to seasonal changes force a dying-back onto many natural forms; we are, as a consequence, always "in the midst of death" to some degree.

² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 299.

³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 302.

⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 302.

⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 302.



Untitled (Plant Essence on Forest Floor)
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Plywood, painted wax, found material
130cmH x 30cmW x 30cmD

Upon the forest floor balances an inverted egg head-shape. Life is affirmed by the uncanny balance of the egg and, whilst the leaf-litter forest floor component of the work carries within it the inherent threat of its eventual decay, the overall composition recalls that of a bird's nest and reminds us that this is also a place of nurture.

Untitled (Human Essence on Forest Floor)
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Detail view of Human egg essence

It is hard in the face of Heidegger's analysis not to feel the essential tragedy of human existence. Heidegger asserts that it is the "they"⁶, our intersubjective communal context, that both demonstrates to individuals the certainty of death but also conceals its immediacy. I think, though, that the human spirit, in the absence of experience, approaches the future with an optimism which is fettered only by past experiences; without personal experience of death we are unable to grasp anything other than its *factual* reality. In this, empirical observation and the wisdom of the multitude can offer us very little, and I suspect that we are actually no more prepared than any other animal in respect of our final chapter. Like our fellow creatures, though, we have the 'wisdom' of iterative evolutionary adaptations to configure how our "pre-personal"⁷ (or zoological) selves approach (or "comport" ourselves) toward the world and its assimilation; we come into our life equipped (through the evolutionary trial and error of our forbears), to some degree, to deal with its complexities and stay alive as long as necessary.

Animate Essences and the Forest Floor

I wanted to create a work that could convey this state of affairs and portray the loneliness of a



⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 302.

⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 97.



Untitled (Human Essence on Forest Floor)
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Plywood, painted wax, found material,
bronze
130cmH x 30cmW x 30cmD

A Human egg essence, with the texture and colouring of human skin, complete with hairs (see detail above) hovers above the leaf litter of the forest floor.

The theme of the forest floor has developed as a motif for the natural processes which underpin our existence made manifest in a rich 'humus' of age phenomena. This is, after all, the plane upon which all life begins and falls.

Untitled (Plant Essence on Forest Floor)
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Detail view of plant essence

species in a world defined by 'change-towards-death;' it is, after all, the chronologising intuitions of our perception that allow us to accept and understand nature's progressions and fix our position in the flux.

The forest floor, became for me an emblem of this natural progression, a layer of decaying dead material through which lives emerge and above

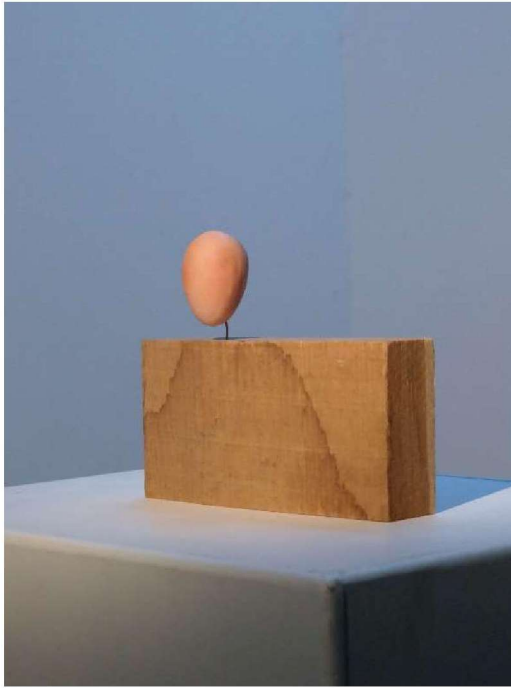




Untitled (Human Essence on Forest Floor)
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Detail view of Human egg essence

which they must strive to remain. Upon this strew of rotting leaves, would balance a living essence. The shape chosen for the essence components was an egg standing on its narrower end. Not only did the egg carry generative references, the improbability of its adopting the 'standing' stance animated it and gave it a kind of living presence that hovered over the bed of



Untitled (Human Essence Over Stained Oak Block)

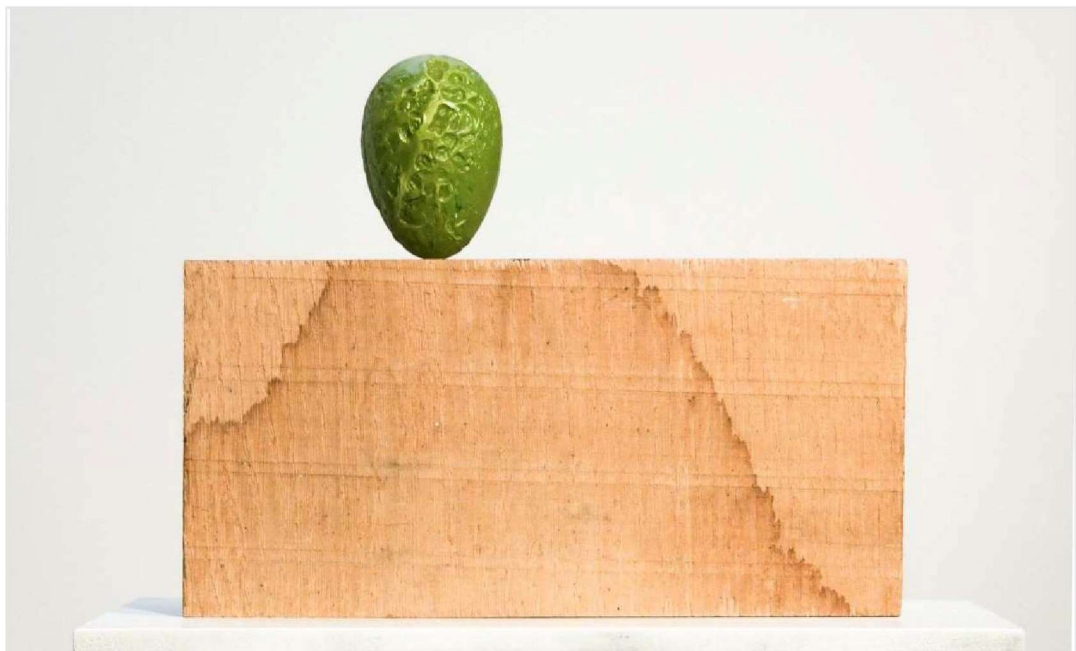
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Wood, painted wax, bronze

23cmH x 28cmW x 6cmD

leaves. The forest floor was raised upon a plinth to bring it closer to the viewer, to make its decay more apparent (close enough to smell) and to make the viewer slightly uncomfortable with its unusual proximity, a device occasionally used by Paul Thek in his *Technological Reliquaries*.⁸ The elevation of the leaf bed, coupled with the egg shaped 'essence' gave to the sculpture the air of a nest which helpfully conveyed that this represented a place of nurture as well as certain destruction.

Two egg-shaped 'essences' were made, one plant and one human. They were fabricated in coloured wax heated and pressed onto latex casts of human skin or of leaves. They were finished with a coat of oil colour manipulated to show finer variations in surface colour and gloss levels. The human essence received hairs made by inserting short lengths of heated bronze wire.



Untitled (Plant Essence Over Stained Oak Block)

Paul Tuppeny 2020

Wood, painted wax

⁸ Roosmarijn Hompe & Adelheid Smit 'Please Write!' *Paul Thek and Franz Deckwitz: An Artists' Friendship* (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2015), 14.



The Time Being
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Detail showing leaf armour.

The Time Being

The up-ended skin textured egg was very suggestive of the human head and led to a couple of experimental works using this characteristic. One of these places a larger egg, the size of a child's head on an oak block shaped to the contours of human shoulders. This was clad in a grid of squared-off bay-leaves, banded in their various colours according to their state of decay (although they seemed to quickly fade to a uniform mid-brown colour). In this work, the living essence had clothed itself in the products of the forest, a reference to our adoption of (deceased) natural materials in the technology that protects us from the forest. This is, perhaps, the first work that employed a *decay spectrum*. The foliage colour progression was developed further for several artworks and presentation slides, culminating in the CAMO artwork in Year Three of the project.

The Time Being
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Oak, wax, acrylic, found material
50cmH x 30cmW x 13cmD

We enter the world, not as complete novices, but equipped with skills and behaviours that allow us to assimilate its complexities. The Time Being appears less vulnerable having used its technological skills to dress itself in a suit built from the fabric of the forest floor.





Blister Packed: “Super” and Blister Packed: With Oak Leaves

Oil colour on wax with bronze hairs in vacuum formed PETG on bonded aluminium print.

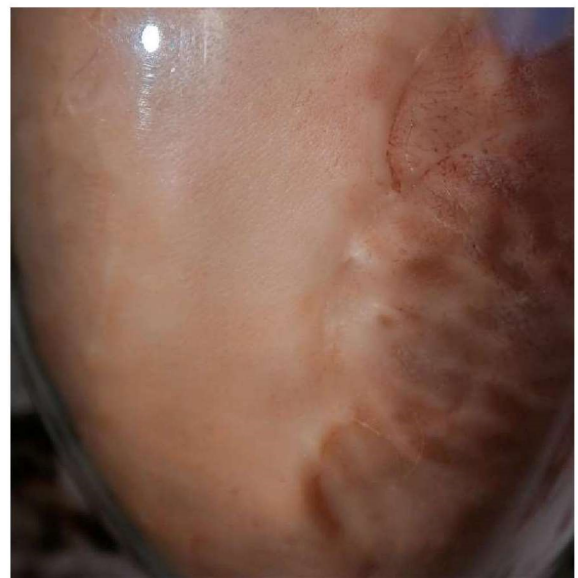
Wall display, 2021

Blister Pack Pieces

I watched a film following Neil Armstrong and the first Apollo moon landing. Most of the action sequences were conveyed using first person views and, due to the nature of space travel, were claustrophobic, cropped, and framed by the technology which permits humans to exist in environments beyond our atmosphere.

Similarly, the myth of Prometheus speaks of our dependence on technology back at ground level and I questioned whether, in our everyday lives we might not share the close-cropped vision of astronauts, experiencing the world through a visor of technology which, whilst enabling us to thrive, also partially masks the age phenomena that define our existence.

From this developed a series of works where our vulnerable flesh is packaged in technology. The pieces adopted the format of the ubiquitous blister pack in which a product is encased in a clear plastic bubble attached to a backing card which is printed with instructions and other contextual information about the object.

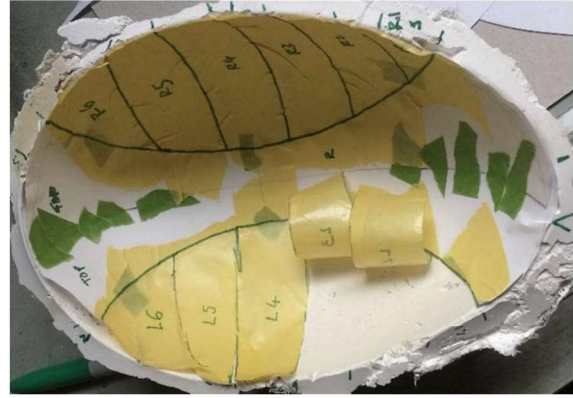


Blister Packed: With Oak Leaves
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Close-up view of Blister Pack head fabricated in painted wax and enclosed in PETG blister shell.

Blister Packed: With Oak Leaves
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Setting out the gores for the panels of silicone cast skin texture in the egg-shaped head mould.



For these works, larger (near-life-size) wax ‘egg-heads’ were required. The scaling up of the egg-shaped essence gave rise to a number of technical difficulties but a series of experiments showed that the skin texture needed to be cast into the wax for it to be sufficiently defined to show through the highly reflective ‘blister’. Clearly there were difficulties in transferring casts of skin from human body components (that are generally cylindrical) to the egg-shape mould. The adopted solution involved skin-safe silicone moulding compound being applied to the back of the hands as these held the most deeply incised and familiar skin-texture. Mesh fabric was pressed into the silicone to hold it together as a sheet when it was removed and the cast skin sheets were then cut to a complex array of gores and jointed within the plaster half-egg mould. A blend of coloured paraffin, carnauba and beeswax was developed that closely matched the colour and translucence of human skin and that held the cast surface texture (whilst releasing easily and melting locally to receive the bronze hairs). This was painted with a thin coat of oil colour that traced variations in colour through veins and arteries and gave the appearance of the slightly thin surface derma of white dead skin cells.



Blister Packed: 4U
Paul Tuppeny 2021
Painted wax, bronze, PETG, Di-bond
printed aluminium

60cmH x 110cmW x 11cmD

Wall display 2021



Blister Packed: With Oak Leaves
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Painted wax, bronze, PETG, Di-bond
printed aluminium

45cmH x 32cmW x 11cmD

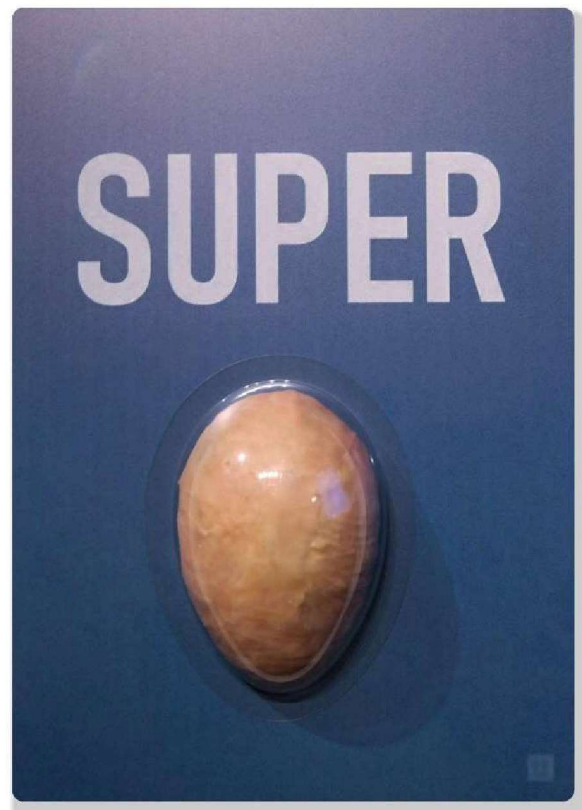
Blister Packed: "Super"
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Painted wax, bronze, PETG, Di-bond
printed aluminium

55cmH x 39cmW x 11cmD

The backing graphics were printed onto aluminium panels supplied with radiused corners. The wax head effigies, having been cast with wooden cores, were screwed to the backing board from the reverse. The plastic blisters were vacuum formed in clear PETG and adhered to the backing photograph using (carefully masked) spray adhesive.

The first of the blister pack works, *Blister Packed (with Oak Leaves)*, comprised a single head effigy against a simple monochrome image of an oak woodland floor. A red diagonal band crossed the top left corner of the backing board so that it would be interpreted more in the manner of a commercial graphic than as art photography. In the lower left corner, an arrow symbol was inserted to ensure that the work was always hung in the correct orientation.





Blister Packed: Jolly Roger

Paul Tuppeny 2021

Di-bond print, wax, found material, PETG
49cmH x 73cmW x 10cmD

In our everyday lives we experience the world through a 'visor of technology' which partially masks the age phenomena that define our existence. In this series of works, vulnerable flesh, receives a technological wrapping that also reflects the common use of blister packaging for kit products that comprise several interdependent components. A waxwork head is here accompanied by raw materials (animal, vegetable and mineral), the 'kit' of our technological existence. The title and format reference current concerns with regard to our relationship with the world as raw material and Heidegger's position whereby we view other entities wholly as resource. (Martin Heidegger; The Question Concerning Technology).

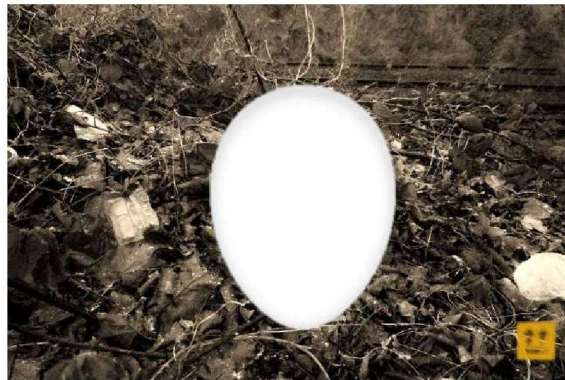
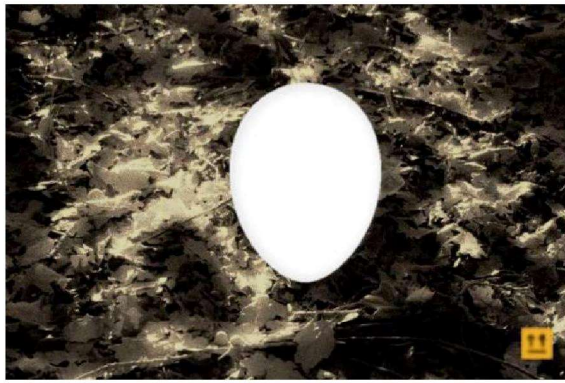
Blister Packed: 4U

Paul Tuppeny 2021



Blister Packed: Jolly Roger followed and included within the package the 'kit' of natural materials available to humanity for its technology (in the simple categories, animal, vegetable and mineral). These materials were represented by a bone, a stick and a flint. These were arranged below the wax head component. The arrangement intentionally evoked the traditional pirate flag and invites interpretations concerning humanity's abuse of these materials and the natural realm generally.

Blister Packed: "Super" set the egg-head effigy against a blue-sky backing board that carried the word SUPER. This was, admittedly, very much a departure from the forest floor context, but reflected the aspirational aspect of our technological activities; the moon is faintly visible in the top left corner of the piece.



Postcards from the Forest Floor
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Printed card

Two of a range of postcards that carried in their centre a cut-out inverted 'egg-head' hole through which the holder can 're-contextualise' their fellow humans back to the forest floor, a rich humus of age phenomena.

Fruits of the Forest (Berlin proposal) Paul Tuppeny 2021

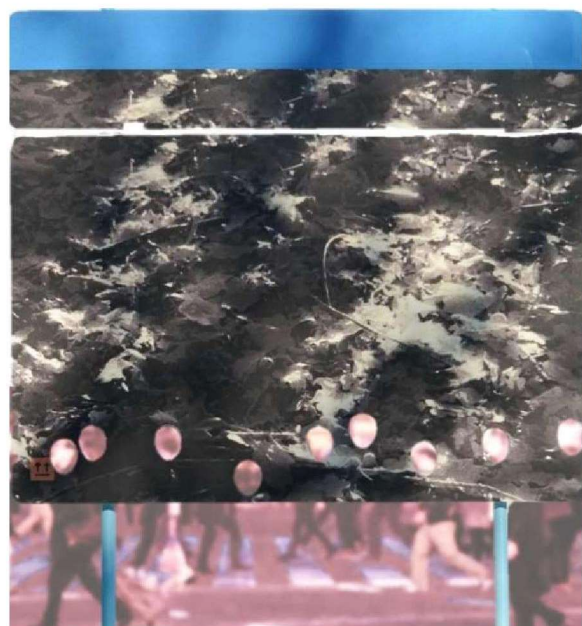
Maquette

Here, the theme of the cut-out on the forest floor progressed to larger works with which groups of people could interact. These were proposed in various sizes in both urban and natural settings.

The last piece in this series, *Blister Packed: 4U*, sought to resolve the loneliness of the single head effigy in the forest by installing four of them in a row. The work owed some of its concept and form to Jasper Johns's *Target with Four Faces* of 1968. The power balance between the forest floor background and the representation of humanity was quite altered in this work.

Head Void Signage Installations

Alongside the *Blister Series*, larger works were developed where members of the public could insert their own faces into the forest floor context through egg shaped voids cut into large road-signs that were printed with a black and white leaf strewn image. The supporting frame to the sign was coloured sky blue and a band of the same colour was introduced to the sign graphic itself. The sky blue represented the fixed, unchanging aerial backdrop against which natural change takes place. Whilst the head-shape cut-outs were placed at heights that invited the direct participation of viewers, the





**Fruits de la Forêt (proposal, C.O.A.L.
Forest, France)**
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Maquette

The project encourages a reappraisal of humanity's relationship with the natural world. In my recent work, the forest floor is adopted as a symbol of natural orientation; it is the plane from which all life pushes forward as it begins and to which it returns at its close. Sadly, our technicity often leads us to view our surroundings only as a resource and has, consequently, concealed from us our forest roots. When we view ourselves against the forest floor backdrop, our vulnerability becomes palpable once more.

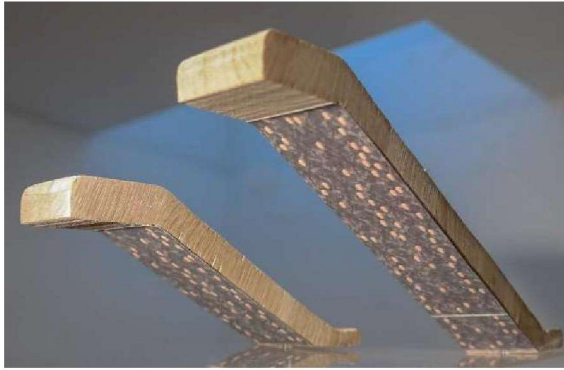
Front and reverse views of maquette.

true meaning of the artwork came through the voids' manifesting humanity's absencing itself from the Natural realm. These signage installations were proposed for both urban and rural locations.

I believe it is with the head-shaped voids in the very large portrayals of the forest floor that the pandemic works came closest to fulfilling their potential by the emphasising of our self-initiated



separation from our natural origins. The arrangement of the signs, with a large expanse of forest floor image set above the 'heads' was suggestive of the true power relationship between the two elements. A series of postcards were produced that featured the egg-head cut-out in various leaf and forest contexts.



Ascendency
Paul Tuppeny 2021

View of maquette and section of design

Ascendency
Paul Tuppeny 2021

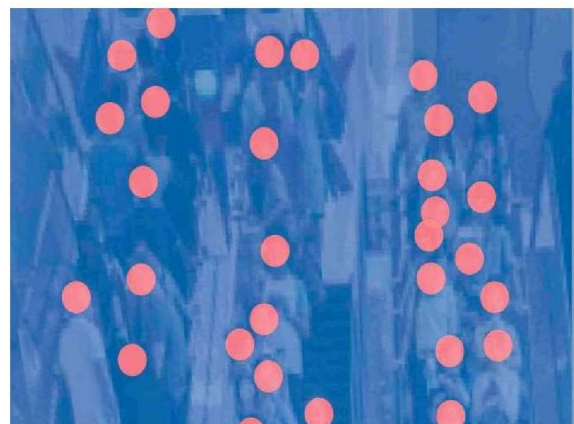
Plotting a typical array of people on
escalators

Emerging from the pandemic (and moving my affiliation to Chelsea College of Arts) this line of inquiry seemed to have reached a natural conclusion and made way for new directions.

***Ascendency: Sculpture in the City,
Leadenhall Building Escalators Proposal***

In late 2020, the Sculpture in The City program sought proposals for two-dimensional works that were to be applied to the soffits of the escalators serving the Leadenhall Building on Bishopsgate in the City of London. This submission adapted the current thread of my practice to invoke our forest origins in this intensely urban environment.

The forest floor leaf texture was configured as a metallic repeat onto which inverted-egg heads were superimposed in linear patterns traced from the patterns of people travelling on underground network escalators.





‘they’

Paul Tuppeny 2021

Marine ply & S.S. rod

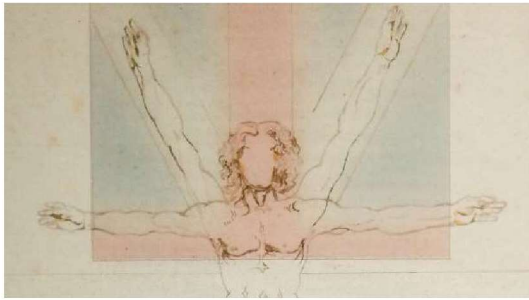
244cmH x 600cmW x 5cmD

Conceived as a technical wall through which we catch glimpses of Nature and ourselves. The physical component of the work decays at a different rate to the head-shaped voids with which we naturally identify.

‘they’ (proposal)



The proposal for a woodland estate near Barnstaple continued some of the ideas investigated with the Fruits of the Forest artworks in seeking the re-contextualising of our species. The work also adopted the visual language of the egg-head voids but here they are set into a timber wall exposed and vulnerable to the processes of decay. In this the voids, having negative materiality, represent a timeless ‘idea’ which, whilst the wood around them rots away, remain unchanged and immune to age.



Forged Ahead

Paul Tuppeny 2020

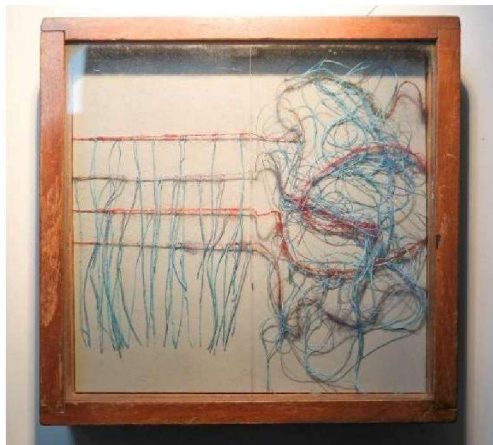
Paper, historic inks, acrylic, glass, oak

55cmH x 40cmW x 3cmD

Forged Ahead

There were in this period two artworks which sit outside the main narrative but should nevertheless be mentioned. The first of these constituted a re-rendering of Leonardo Da Vinci's *Vitruvian Man*. The figure is adjusted to overlay the geometry of the Union Flag which is sketched in outline. The work was executed on Eighteenth Century laid paper using oak gall and mulberry yellow inks. Within the oak cased frame, a coloured acetate interpretive layer overlays the drawing.

The work, a forgery, references the practice of cultural mythmaking for political purposes.



Temporal Quipu

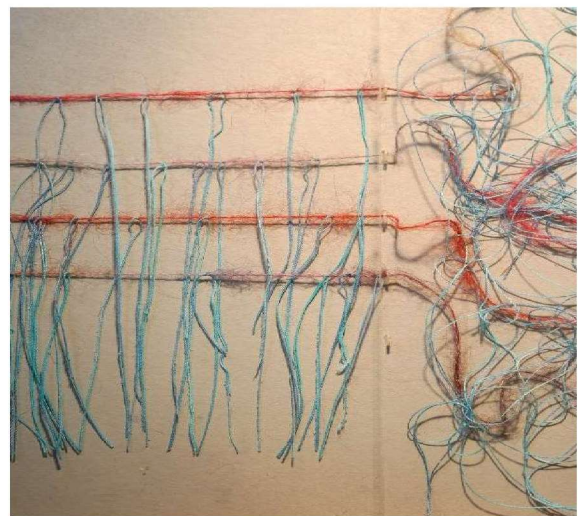
Paul Tuppeny 2020

Llama wool, cotton, glass, mahogany

30cmH x 30cmW x 2cmD

Temporal Quipu

Temporal Quipu developed from early research into our experiences of 'Time', giving form to the notion of a frontier of *becoming* where strands in the tangled web of possibilities are drawn into an aligned reality before they transition into a stable past.



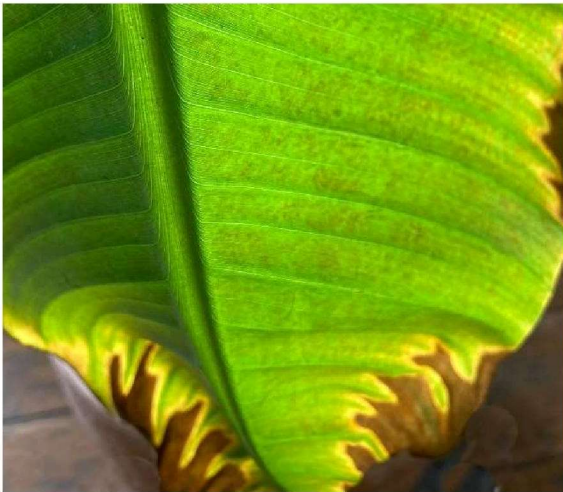
EARLY WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON (YEAR TWO)

Apperceptions and Change Narratives

At the beginning of Year Two of the research, the focus turned from our essential relationship with the phenomenon of age to the perceptual mechanisms that would make its experience open to us. Earlier artworks had revealed the central importance of the cognitive development of chronologised change narratives for the natural objects around us. They had also indicated that in every object biography there was a state that held the status of an archetype with which the object was identified.

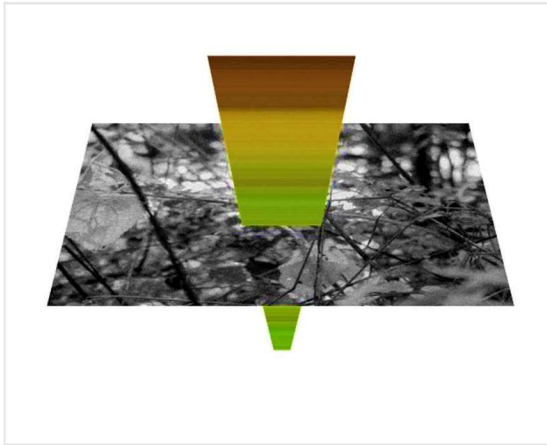
Temporal Spectrum

On commencing Year Two of the research project, I was invited to present the research at a variety of gatherings and conferences. For these I needed a graphic to convey the notion that the inferences of age that attach to our perceptions cause our outlook on the world to have a temporal dimension that operates alongside its more traditional spatial cousins. For this I sought a visual means of representing the progression of *age*. This I discovered whilst considering a banana tree in my studio. These plants do not possess a stem in the usual sense, the trunk being comprised of successive layers of wrapped leaf bases. As the plant grows, its lowermost leaves die back to their bases and exhibit, at this time, the spectrum that we associate with the seasonal changes of deciduous trees where young shoots



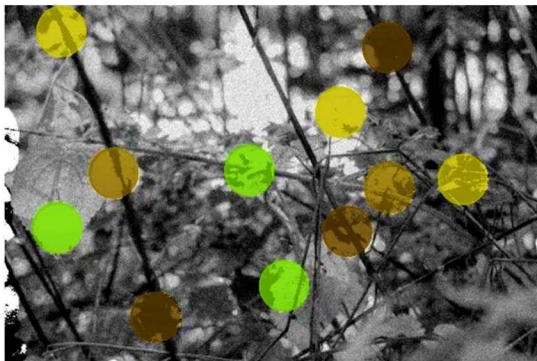
Banana Leaf demonstrating the colour spectrum of foliage life and its passing.

The colour change arises from the green chlorophyll breaking down more rapidly than the yellow/orange coloured carotenoid pigments within the leaf cells. Further reddening is caused by the production of anthocyanins in the vacuoles as starches degrade to sugars. When all nutrients have been finally withdrawn from the leaf, it is a dull mid-brown.



A Scenario Pierced by Age
Paul Tuppeny 2020

An animated Power Point presentation image illustrating how a scenario is 'pierced' by perceptual judgements of age, positioning its components with respect to their inherent time progressions and giving glimpses of their past and future.



Shot Through (with Age)

Paul Tuppeny 2020

The image speculates on how the temporal foliage spectrum might operate when 'taking-in' a typical hedgerow scene where a series of colour-coded circular 'bullet-holes' represent moments of 'temporal insight'.

start as bright green, mature to a darker green but turn yellow and then brown as they perish.

The colour change is actually brought about by the green chlorophyll breaking down more rapidly than the (yellow/orange) carotenoid pigments in the leaf cells, whilst further reddening is caused by the production of anthocyanins in the vacuoles as starches degrade to sugars. When all nutrients have been finally withdrawn from the leaf, it is a dull mid-brown.⁹

The presentation slide graphic comprised a monochrome photograph shown pierced at right angles by a similarly shaped block carrying the temporal leaf spectrum. In PowerPoint, this dynamic was animated. This diagram sought to illustrate how perceptions' intuitions of age gave a scenario a *temporal depth* that allowed the viewer, through their own perceptual inferences, access to aspects of its past and its future.

In the presentation script of these papers, I described how our objective world was "shot-through" with the temporal depth that the perceptual inferences of 'age' afforded us. The phrase was embodied in a two-dimensional work, *Shot-Through* which speculated on how the temporal foliage spectrum might operate when 'taking-in' a typical hedgerow scene using a series of colour-coded circular 'bullet-holes' to represent moments of 'temporal insight'.

Oak Story Cubes

The *Oak Story Cubes* began as an experimental investigation into our cognitive collation of

⁹ Helen Fewster (ed.), *The Science of Plants* (London: Penguin Random House, 2022), 154,155.



Oak Story Cubes

Paul Tuppeny 2021

Oak, cloth, card, found material
5cmH x 25cmW x 5cmD

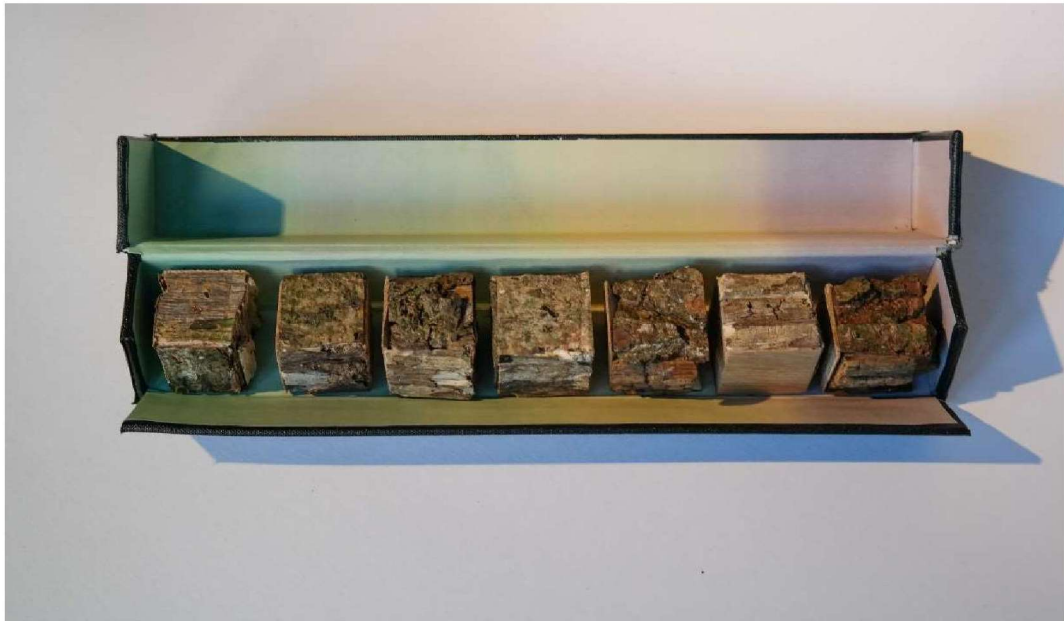
Oak cubes carry on their faces the bark of an oak tree, from sapling shoot and the stages of maturity, through to a decomposing stump, giving form to the process by which we order our random everyday encounters with the objects around us using age phenomena.

change observations using the changing textures in the bark of a tree. It was clear that such change episodes could not be gathered in real time but our retained model of trees, nevertheless, generally holds that smoother bark belongs to the younger branches and stems and that rough bark is found on older trunks and limbs. I was led to question how these inferences of youth and age might be made in respect of a texture and suspected that the answer lay in the age phenomenon that we perhaps learn earliest, that of size; it requires duration for things to grow so



it naturally follows that larger individual particulars of an object *type* will generally be older.

I conceived a set of dice, the faces of which would hold squares of bark taken from different



Oak Story Cubes
Paul Tuppeny 2021

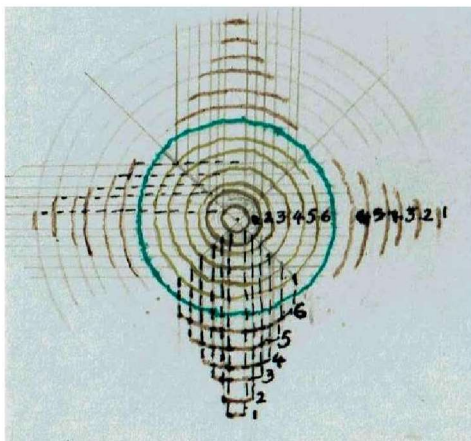
Oak, cloth, card, found material
5cmH x 25cmW x 5cmD

branches of an oak tree. The artwork is based on a children's toy where the dice faces carry pictograms which must be used by the players to tell a story.

The bark texture faces are completely divorced from any cues as to the size of the host branch or stem and yet we are immediately able to order the cubes into a chronological order.¹⁰

The dice were fabricated over an oak core, one face of which is exposed in the final cube. The dice therefore have an age-less 'obverse' representing our "enframed"¹¹ experience of oak as a 'resource'. The oak story illustrated in the cubes includes sections of decaying bark and end grain wood as its final chapter.

The oak dice work in two ways; firstly as described above, where the player, or viewer, simply puts the textures in chronological order

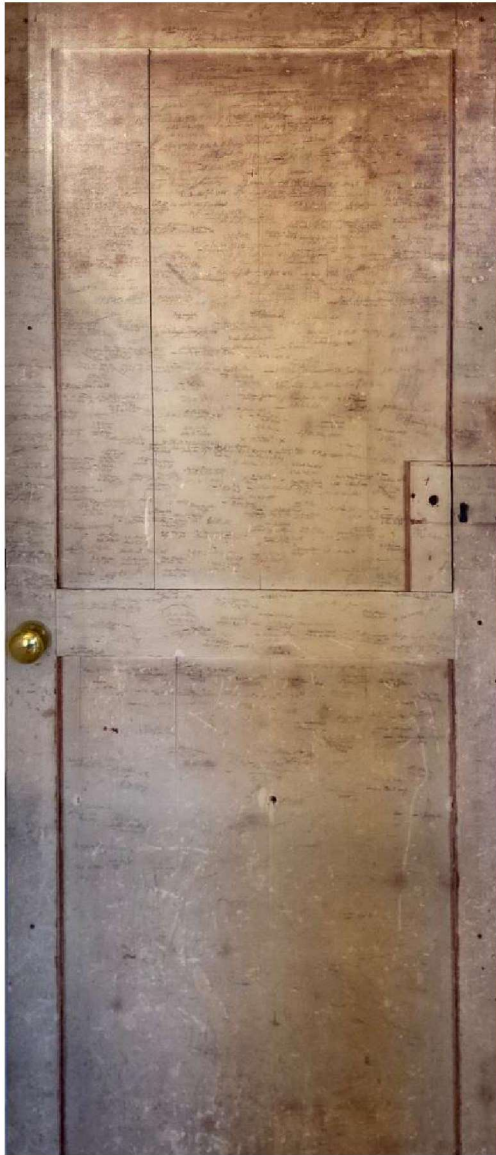


Trees essentially grow as a tower of stacked cones.

The cones develop in successive layers beneath a rind (often green) which constitutes the innermost layer of the tree's bark and the growth margin of the stem. The conical layers of wood progressively push earlier layers of the rind, now dead and brown, outward as the girth of the trunk or branch increases. This is now what we recognise as the bark of the tree. As the circumference of the wood beneath it gets bigger, the old layers of rind/bark split along the

¹⁰ Several helpers have been asked to place the story dice in order of 'age' and the general rule of youthful smoothness getting rougher as the tree matures seems to be universally 'known' (although this is derived from a relatively small sample of people).

¹¹ (Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, in *Basic Writings* p.227)



Forty Hall: scullery cupboard door

The heights of children from two of the families that owned the house are marked on the back of this door in the old scullery. The earliest mark is dated 1800, the last is from the 20th Century.

Forty Hall: scullery cupboard door

Detail view

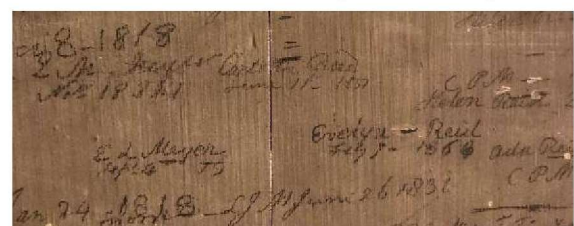
to create a linear change-story, and secondly, by removing one dice from the aligned set and throwing it, an analogy of the process of texture recognition and its insertion into, and consequent building of the biograph can be simulated in abstract.

The story cubes are provided with a hinged cloth-covered cardboard box constructed to a similar pattern as those for poker dice. The box is lined with paper printed with a de-saturated foliage temporal colour spectrum.

Kids Rule

our assimilation of age brought to mind a cupboard door in an early 17th Century manor house in Enfield, Forty Hall. On the reverse of a cupboard door on the ground floor of the house, in what would have been one of the kitchen service rooms (now the gift shop), several generations of two families had recorded the heights of their children, the earliest dated 1800 and the latest in the 20th Century. This, of course, is something that families often do, although most do not stay in the same house for hundreds of years.

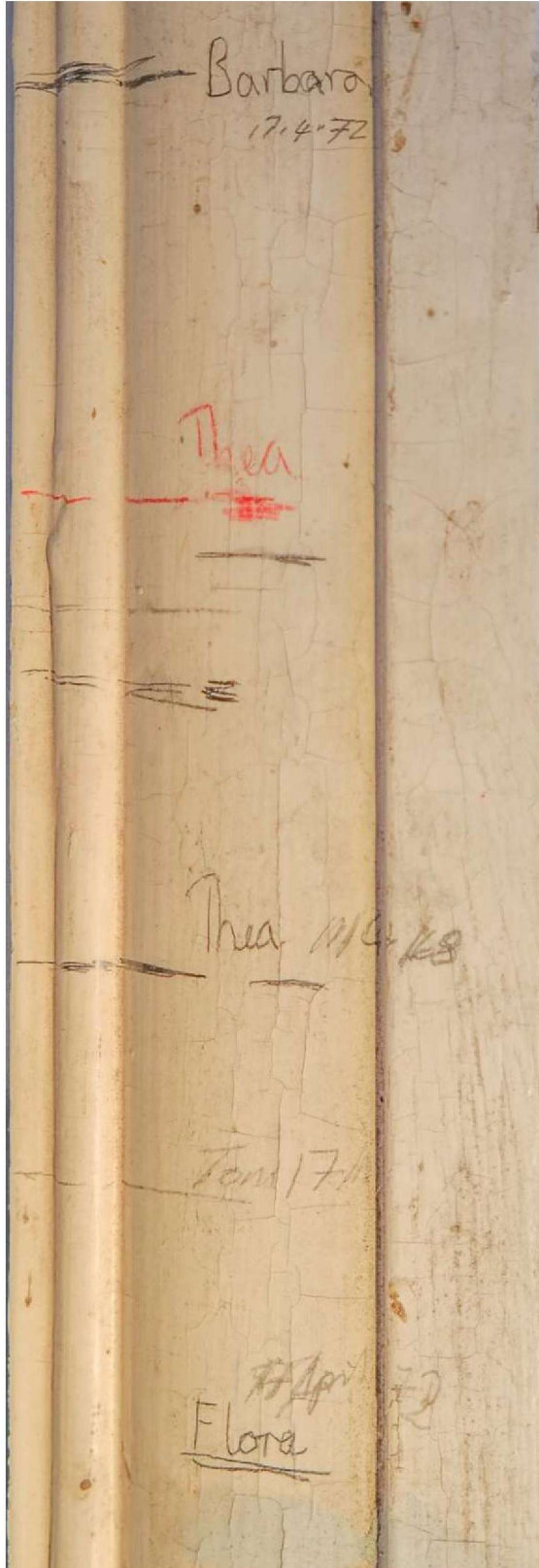
At Forty Hall, the marks on the door were generally labelled in adult handwriting. The marks that we have on *our* dining room door, however, were labelled by our children and in these marks we thus have a record of their height and of their overall development as expressed



Kids Rule

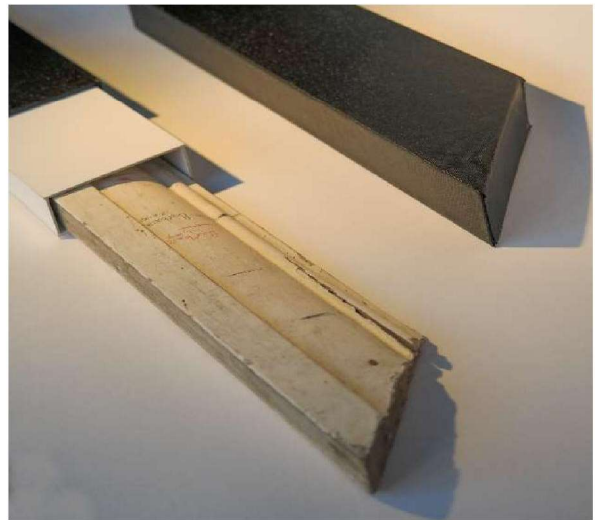
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Cloth, card, found material
3cmH x 55cmW x 8cmD



through their writing skills; these family routines align the age phenomena of height with the progression of cognitive and motor abilities.

I envisaged a quasi-technical measuring instrument that held the two aligned phenomena, one that not only operated in spatial dimensions, but, through the durational development of children, became an instrument that measured time. The instrument was conceived as a ruler (complete with the kind of cloth covered case that used to protect slide rules), only it would also express its origin as an aged section of door architrave. The markings on the ruler would need to be directly inscribed by children as there does not appear to be a graphic standard for hand-writing development that could be simply adopted. The section of architrave was held up during a street party and various children were invited to make their mark¹².



¹² This piece is imperfect; on reflection, I was too wedded to the idea of a ruler-type instrument in a fitted case and this restricted the size of the finished piece leading to my cutting away the unmarked lower portion and limiting the overall height range, both of which weaken the operation of the artwork. It probably needs to be done again, with closer supervision, at the next street party.



A Bed, A Door, A Shadow In The Floor
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Found material
35cmHx200cmW x 100cmD

A Bed, A Door, A Shadow in The Floor uses an abbreviation of the human form (a rectangle) and the abbreviation of its temporal course into three simple layered 'events' (birth, adulthood and ending) to summarise a human life in a single perceptual moment.

A Bed, A Door, A Shadow In The Floor
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Top view

A Bed, A Door, A Shadow in the Floor

A Bed, A Door, A Shadow in the Floor reworked an earlier sculpture where three stages of human life were recorded with reference to life progression in Western Societies, using the rectangular abbreviation of the human form suggested by the eponymous objects to plot a life from the bed on which we are born, through the door to adulthood, to our final destiny as a (rectangular) shadow of ourselves 'buried' in the floor. In its physical form and its title, the sculpture encapsulated a whole human life; it did this through the viewer's empathic de-coding of the rectangular components which, using Husserl's terminology, were "spiritualised objects".¹³

The main component of the work is an old cupboard door. Onto this I inscribed a pattern of lines across the door's width following the pattern found in police 'mug-shots'. The door is held about 40cm above the floor (the height of a bed) on three legs arranged and painted to be invisible in the finished piece. The horizontal door is partially covered with a blood-stained sheet which drapes down to the floor concealing the supporting legs so it appears to hover. The



¹³Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz & Andre Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989),248.

lighting of the piece was configured to cast a clean shadow on the wooden floor below the work.



Portrait of the Artist as an Old Hair
Paul Tuppeny 2022

The artist's hair.

"...the thrill of...eternity..." (Landscape in DNA) & Portrait of the Artist as an Old Hair

Whilst the main theme of the research was tending towards our reading of objective age as a means to stabilise the world through our perception, it was clear that, in terms of the larger picture, the world does not actually seem to change that much since, whilst there are individual specimens growing and decaying, there are always similar numbers at these stages in their life cycle. Levi Strauss had called this phenomenon 'synchronic' change, and it is a theme picked up in other, later, artworks. This is, of course, Nature's big trick, everything changing but everything staying the same, and it

Portrait of the Artist as an Old Hair
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Glass, aluminium, found material
30cmHx20cmW x 4cmD

Adhered to the inside face of the glass case is a hair of the artist. The DNA available from a lost hair has entered our cultural vocabulary as an identifying feature capable of solving the most complex CSI dramas. This frame holds more information about the artist than any self-portrait ever could.





"...thrill of ...eternity..." Landscape in DNA
Paul Tuppeny 2022

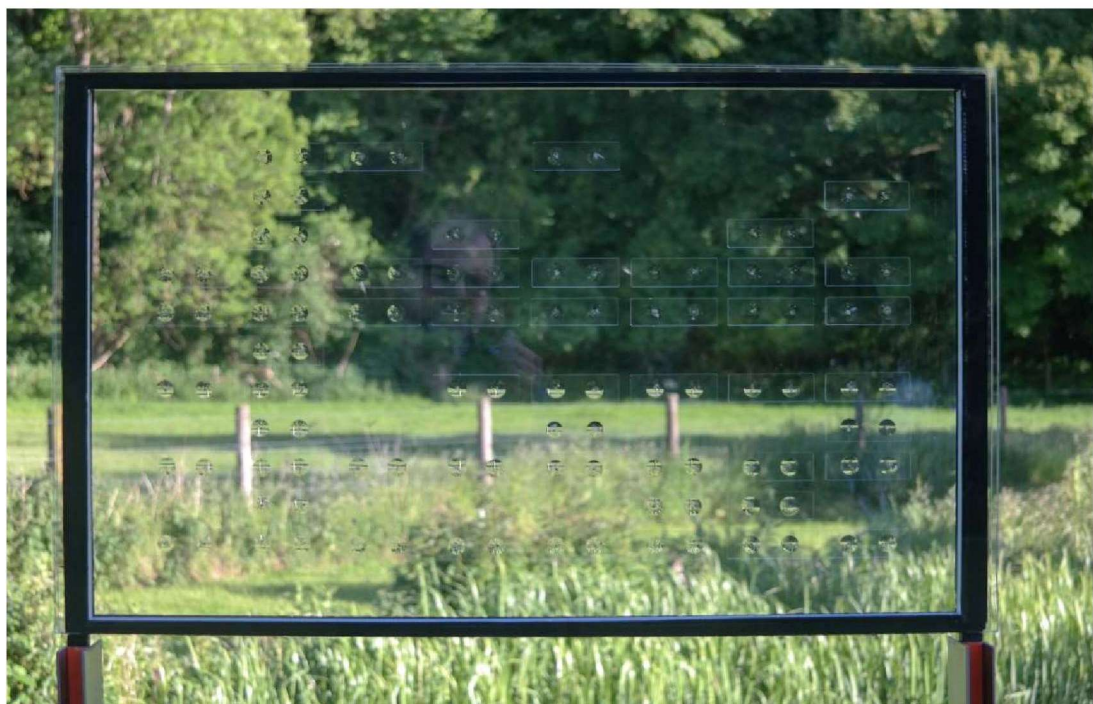
Glass, corten steel, aluminium, silicone,
found material
180cmH x 80cmW x 4cmD

performs it through the double spirals of proteins we know as DNA.

DNA is now wholly embedded in our culture; innumerable TV crimes are solved by the analysis of the DNA on a hair discovered at the murder scene; the first work using this theme was a very quick sketch piece, *Portrait of the Artist as an Old Hair*, in which one of my hairs was adhered to the interior glass of a twin-sided glass case.

I conceived of a landscape, viewed through a window and similarly fixed between two sheets of glass perhaps recalling a quote by Alexander Pope, who whilst designing his garden in 1734, is said to have noted that '*All gardening is landscape painting - just like a landscape hung up...*'¹⁴

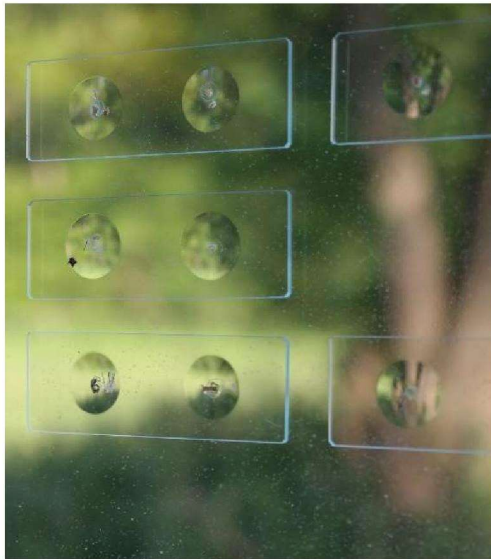
The work comprised concave microscope slides adhered to the inside of a double-glazed unit. At



"...thrill of ...eternity..." Landscape in DNA
Paul Tuppeny 2022

View through the window

¹⁴ Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men Collected from Conversation*, ed. James M. Osborn, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1966), anecdote 606



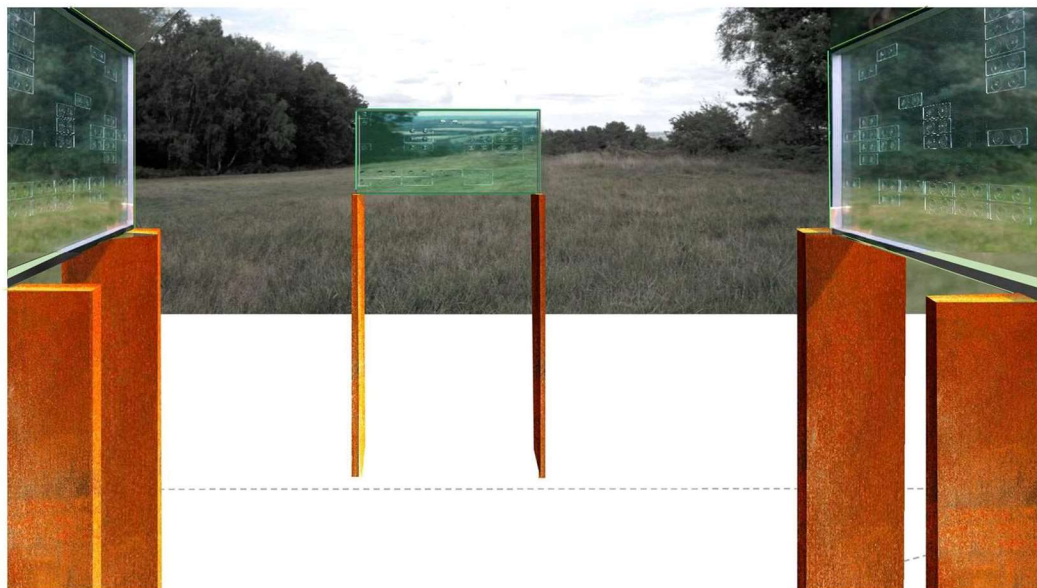
"...thrill of ...eternity..." Landscape in DNA
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Detail of concave microscope slide lenses.

the centre of each slide was a speck of DNA bearing material collected from the landscape beyond the 'window'. The concavities of the of the slides act as lenses that focus miniature images of that landscape. The work was conceived as four trilithons arranged as a small hengiform 'room.' One of these was realised and exhibited at an open-air sculpture festival in Gloucestershire.

To achieve the elemental composition of the trilithon, it was necessary to embed a structural steel frame into the double-glazed unit which was clad in aluminium to resemble the spacer bars that we are familiar with.

"Our art must render the thrill of her permanence... It must give us a taste of her eternity". (Cezanne)¹⁵



"...thrill of ...eternity..." Landscape in DNA
Paul Tuppeny 2022

The work comprises concave microscope slides held within a double-glazed unit. At the centre of each slide is a speck of DNA collected from the landscape beyond the 'window'. The concavity of the slides focuses a miniature image of that landscape. The principle is under development as an outdoor sculpture, "The Thrill of Eternity" after a statement by Cezanne.

¹⁵ Cezanne's words, from which the title derived, are taken from a conversation recalled by his friend, Joachim Gasquet, in which the artist outlines the facets of nature that he seeks to capture in his paintings (Cezanne: A Memoir with Conversations, London and New York 1991 (originally 1921))

Temporal Instrument No. 3

The experience of designating ordinal positions to the faces of the thrown bark dice gave insight into the cognitive building of our temporal models of natural objects. It is likely that these models initially coalesce around the *first* example of the object that we encounter although we later establish a state in which the



Object Biographies (apple, bark & foliage)

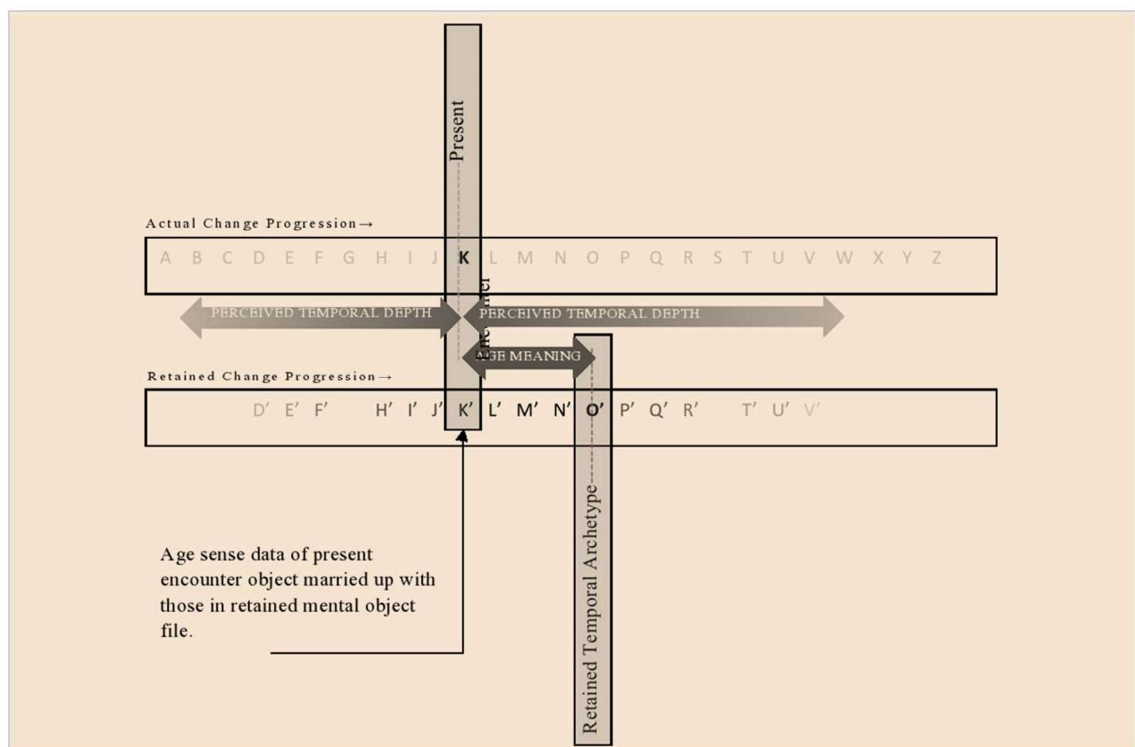
Paul Tuppeny 2021/22

The biograph strips render common entities as temporal objects and were developed for insertion into *Temporal Instrument No.3*. This small artwork ‘measured’ age as a relative temporal extension between the encountered object and its temporal archetype or actuality gave dynamic physical form to a diagram developed from elements of both the practice and literature-based research components (see below)

object holds greatest meaning and significance for *us* and this becomes the orient for the narrative. This state can also be assimilated by us through the mediation of culture; for instance, when we learn at school that ‘A’ is for apple, the accompanying picture will be a ripe fruit that is ready to eat and it is similar for trees, flowers, animals etc. These temporal archetypes then become the locus for the constantly developing biographs that we hold for the objects around us. With this insight, I returned to Aristotle’s *Physics* in which he describes how we hold “forms” for these naturally transforming objects

and that these develop around the held “actuality”¹⁶ or ‘useful state’ of that object.¹⁷

From the notion of the ‘temporal archetype’, I speculated that our experience of age centres upon perceptual ‘measurements’ between the encountered state of the object and the temporal archetype. I further proposed that the emotional affect attaching to the perception would, through primordial conditioning around food etc, generally be *positive* if the encountered object was intuited to precede the archetype in the retained object biograph, and *negative* if it came afterward.



Age Mechanism Diagram

Paul Tuppeny 2022

The diagram shows the process by which objects that we encounter are ‘measured’ against the model that we hold for it as a temporal object, essentially a biograph developed through our previous experiences of the object. It is this comparative judgement, performed as part of our perceptual processes, that we experience as ‘age’.

From this I developed a diagram proposing the perceptual mechanism that underlies our

¹⁶Aristotle *Metaphysics*, trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 1998,2004), *Meta IX*, p.275.

¹⁷ My term, *temporal archetype*, is less prescriptive in terms of our purposeful engagement with the world but it is likely that it is in agreement with Aristotle.

experience of objective age.¹⁸ The diagram, by its nature, describes only a single moment in a constantly changing situation. Its static nature made it difficult to illustrate how the relationship



Temporal Instrument No.3
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Oak, aluminium, Perspex, found material
25cmH x 35cmW x 8cmD

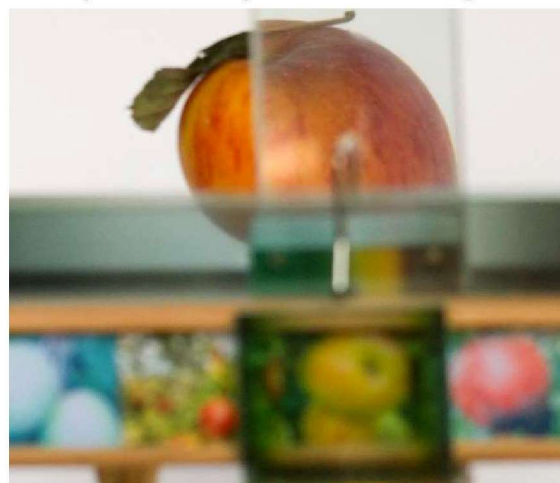
Developed as a means to animate the process proposed in the preceding diagram and to embody the dynamic nature of the perceptual process. The top slider carries a Fresnel lens in which the encountered object is framed. The lower slider selects the temporal archetype from the biograph strip.

Temporal Instrument No.3 (ripe apple)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

The view shows age perception associated with a ripe apple. The apple is held in the lens slider and the lower slider marks the temporal archetype (a ripe apple). The sliders are in alignment and no age is inferred; the ripe apple is consequently held as neither old or young.

between the encountered object and its temporal archetype might generate different affect in the viewer.

I saw potential in the translation of the diagram into a 3-dimensional scientific instrument; I initially had in my mind something like a



¹⁸ Refer to Chapter Four.

sextant, which uses a split mirror to measure azimuths, only my instrument would measure



Temporal Instrument No.3

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Oak, aluminium, Perspex, found material
25cmH x 35cmW x 8cmD

The artwork animates the perceptual process proposed in the preceding diagram, embodying the dynamic nature of the perceptual process in a piece that borrows elements the visual language associated with scientific instruments. The top slider carries a Fresnel lens in which the encountered object is framed. The lower slider selects the temporal archetype from the biograph strip.

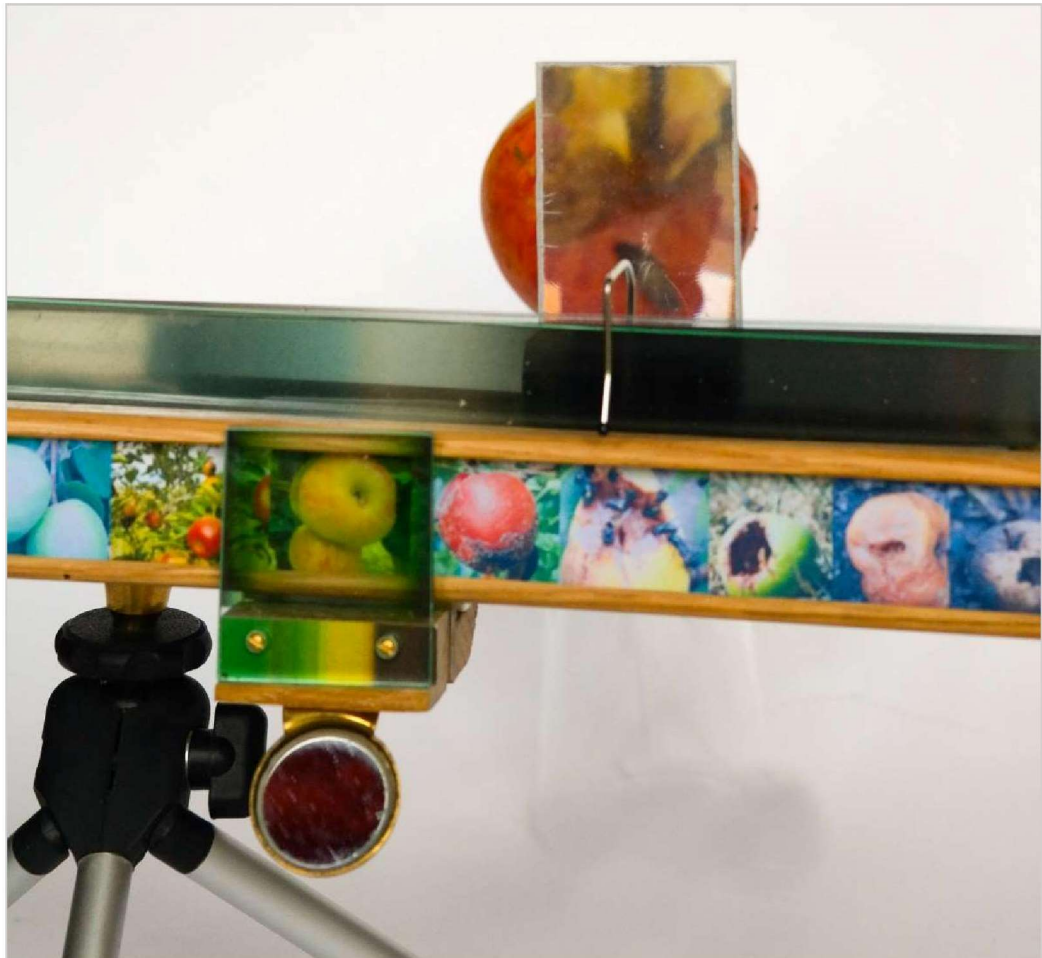
The view shows the instrument in action with a ripe apple. The glass strips on top of the cross bar shows blue suggesting positive affect.

Some alternative biograph strips for other objects are included in the foreground.

the biographic stretch between an object and its temporal archetype, essentially the phenomenon of age, and would indicate how the user might react emotionally to that distance.

The instrument has as its primary component a rectangular oak sliding-rule approximately 40cm long into which a printed paper strip portraying the encountered object's biograph can be inserted. The rule had two sliders that ran over the biographic 'scale', one for the encountered object and one for its temporal archetype; the first was fitted with a lens for looking outward whilst that for the archetype held a small mirror denoting that *this* setting originated within the user. Attached to each slider were translucent mood scales that would slide over one another in such a way that if the biographic stretch preceded the archetypal state,

they would read sky blue, but if after it they would show dark grey or black.



Temporal Instrument No.3 (rotten apple)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Oak, aluminium, Perspex, found material
25cmH x 35cmW x 8cmD

The instrument is set for a rotten apple, the upper slider indicating this on the biograph strip; the lower slider remains on the ripe apple showing this as the temporal archetype for the object. In the biograph, the encountered apple occurs after its temporal archetype and the rotten apple is read as old; the glass strips on top of the instrument show black indicating probable negative affect toward the rotten apple.

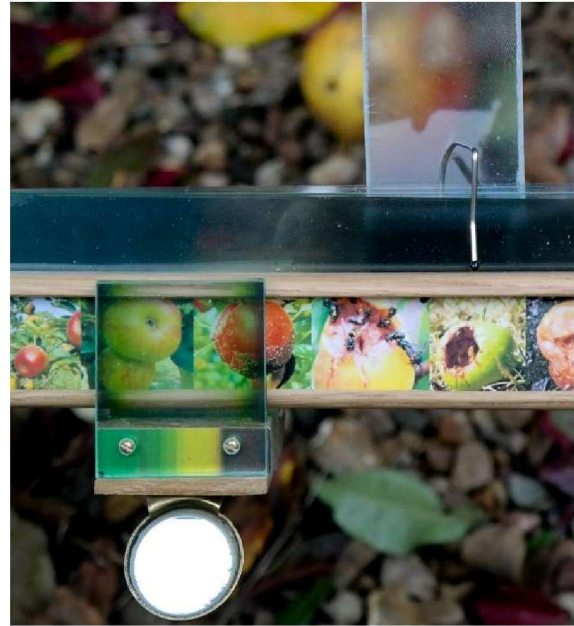
Biographic insert strips were produced for several objects including an apple, oak bark and the general green to brown foliage spectrum.

It is hard to know if *Temporal Instrument No.3* is art or simply a communication aid. It is not an attractive thing except in the presentation of the object's biographic narrative strip and here any 'beauty' derives from our understanding of the natural entity. The value of the piece for the progress of the research project came from my reflecting upon the physical manifestation of the object biograph and the way this story is held-up *alongside* the encountered object to elicit the judgements that underly our experience of age;

Temporal Instrument No.3 (rotten apple)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Oak, aluminium, Perspex, found material
25cmH x 35cmW x 8cmD

The instrument shown in action 'in the field', again identifying a decaying apple and the feelings we associate with it.



this “co-presentation” with the object recalled Husserl’s notion of “apperceptions” fusing with an object to give it meaning and suggested a new direction for my art practice.

Up To Now (Chestnut)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Chestnut, steel wire, Douglas fir
1100cmH x 180cmW x 180cmD

The sculpture viewed through the surrounding woodland.



Up To Now (Chestnut)

The work *Up To Now (Chestnut)* represents a pivotal moment in the project’s art practice since it draws together many themes investigated in earlier artworks and several key concepts that were emerging from the literature-based research.

At the core of this sculpture lies the notion of a co-presented “apperception” of age-narrative alongside an encountered object. Husserl held that objects are imbued with a past through these



Stick In Time (Quince): vertical orientation
Paul Tuppeny 2022

The earlier artwork *Stick In Time (Quince)*, described above, set out to portray Time on a horizontal axis but rotating the piece through 90 degrees so its narrative runs vertically gave insight into our experience of age.

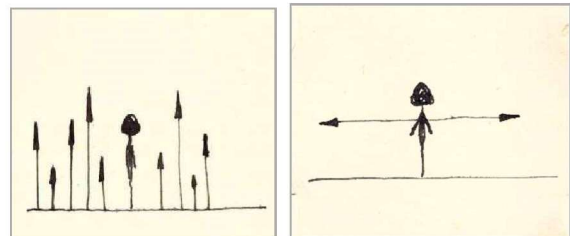
'Age' and 'Time' diagrams

These sketches were included in a magazine article describing the *Up To Now* sculpture at Hadlow Down, East Sussex and reference how our analogous experience of Age seems to have a vertical axis whilst that of Time is horizontal.

"ad-memorising" perceptual adjuncts.¹⁹ He proposed that these co-presentations fuse with the primary sense data to deliver to our cognition a fully rendered object 'animated' with all of the additional qualities that our preceding experience of the world might bring to the entity. I had extended this idea to the notion of the *biographic* object model (or file) central to the delivery of the phenomenon of age. In this, the earlier mentioned sense that the apple seems to hold its history within itself is a good example.

The concept owed much to an earlier artwork, *Stick in Time (Quince)*, which encapsulated the history of a single branch of a quince tree, complete with leaves, fruit and blossom. That work had been placed horizontally because *that* is the way that 'Time' is traditionally envisioned (going forwards and backwards etc).

Up To Now differs from *Stick in Time (Quince)* through the simple manoeuvre of setting the growing stem, and the time axis, in the vertical. This is the everyday state of affairs; it is, after all, the general habit of trees to grow upward, getting taller as they get older. For objects in the natural realm, age tends to move along a *vertical*

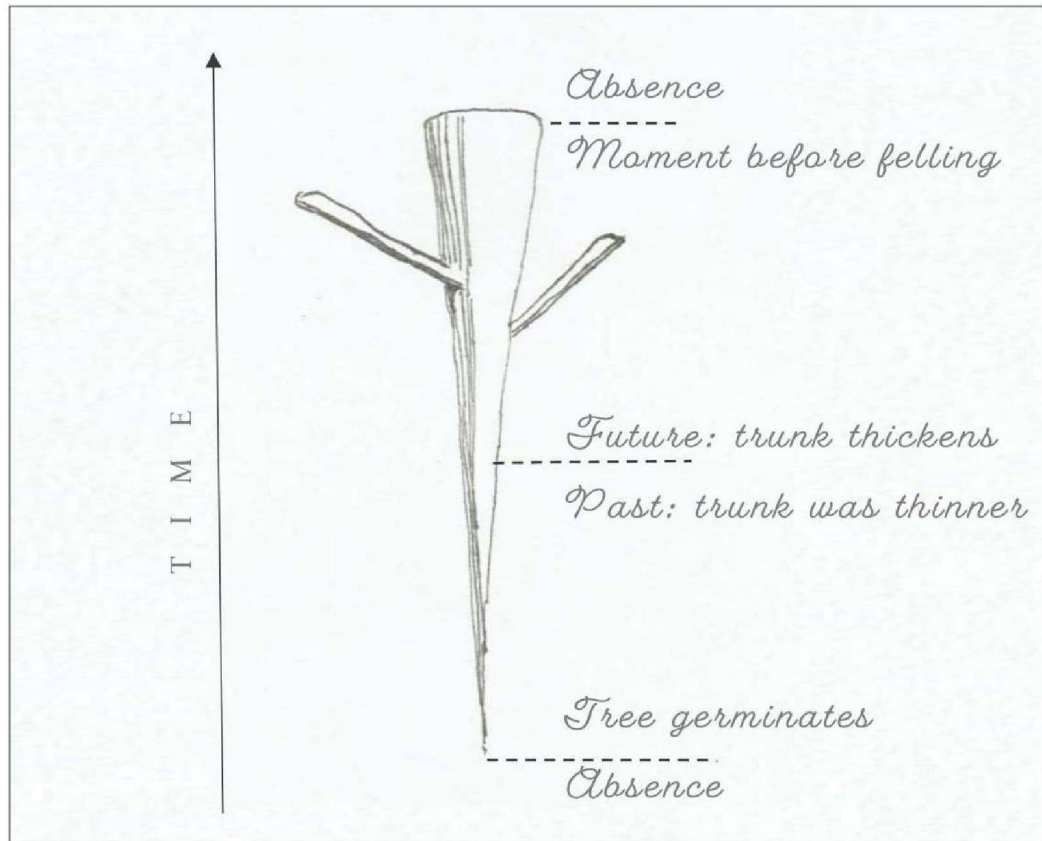


¹⁹ Husserl, Edmund. 2008. *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1916–1937)*. Hua XXXIX. Dordrecht: Springer. (Translation Christian Ferencz-Flatz, Note 7).

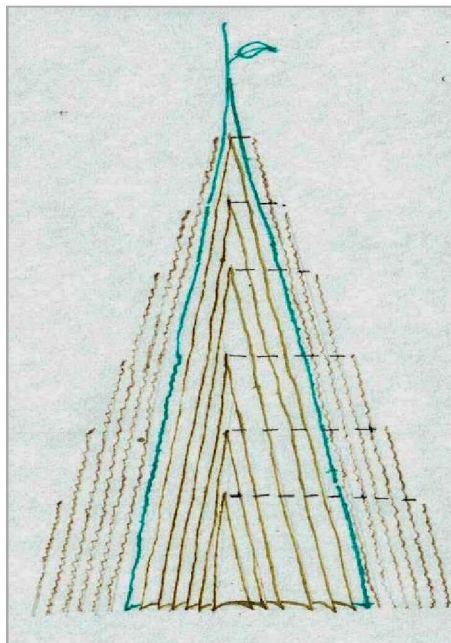
**Past present and future held in the
inverted stem.**

The diagram shows how any point on the
inverted trunk has its slimmer past below
it and its wider future ahead and above.
The upward vector is shown in the side
branches which continue to grow upwards.

axis and, in many ways, the work is situated
within a developing position which held that the
temporalities of 'age' and 'Time' are quite
distinct from one another (refer to the
Chronologer artworks description below).



**The tree grows as a succession of cones
progressively added under the green rind.**



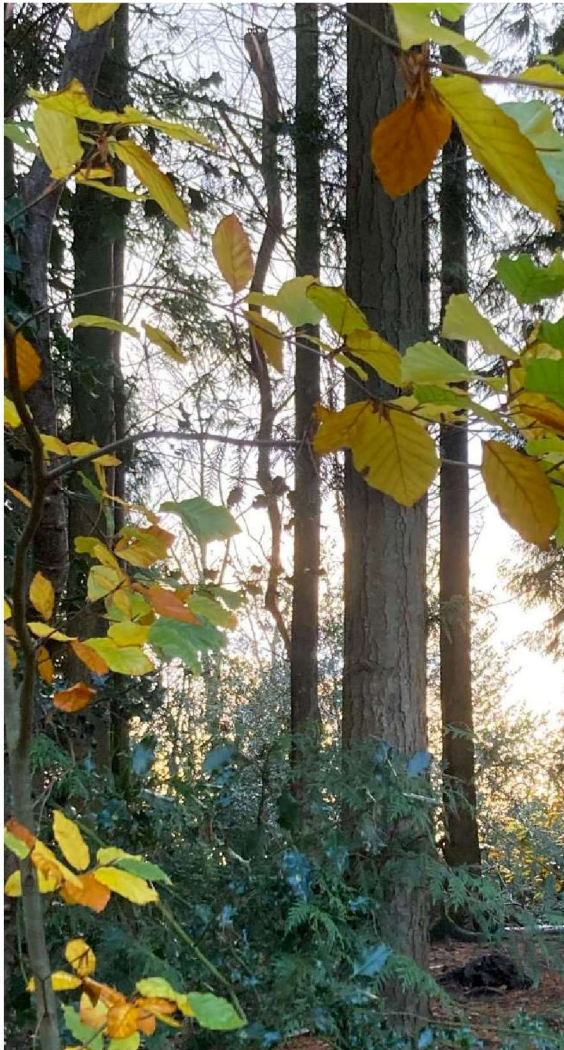
The alignment of other age phenomena with that
of the progressive increase in height presented
itself as a possibility, the most obvious of these
being the gradual increase in the stem's diameter
which is a direct representation of the tree's
growth pattern. The alignment of the two
signifiers of 'age' can be achieved through the
simple inversion of the stem (or trunk), so that it
begins at ground level as a small shoot and
terminates at the top at its widest girth. This top
termination will be with the horizontal cut that
felled the tree, the very last moment of its life.
Similarly, the tree's first moment is represented
by a small, nascent, twig emerging from the

Up To Now (Chestnut)

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Chestnut, steel wire, Douglas fir
1100cmH x 180cmW x 180cmD

The sculpture viewed through the
surrounding woodland.



Up To Now (Chestnut)

Paul Tuppeny 2022

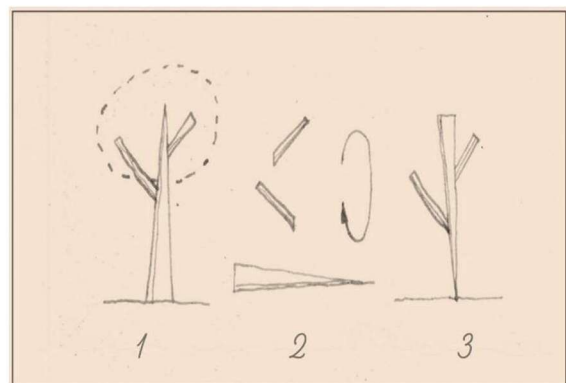
Diagram showing construction process:

- 1) The tree as existing,
- 2) The tree with all branches removed,
- 3) the stem is inverted and the branches re-attached in a skyward orientation.

ground. In this way, the sculpture has the remarkable property that any point on its stem has its thinner past below and behind it and its fatter future above and ahead. This applies equally to the *absence* that 'bookends' its existence.

The difficulty lay in ensuring that the 'Time-axis' was interpreted as progressing *upwards*; the work challenged, and needed to overpower, the accepted way of things wherein the growth vector of a tree will always be read as running from the wider girth at the base to the thin twigs at its extremities, whether the tree is the right way up or not. For the inverted tree concept to work, a further adjustment was required to make age continue to run *up* the inverted trunk.

There are, of course, other directional growth features associated with trees. Most develop a crown at their top, for instance, but it is also a general rule that branches emerge from the main stem with a geotropic trajectory that is, at least nominally, *upwards*. A rough experiment was carried out using a boxwood maquette of the inverted trunk to investigate whether the rotation of branches through 180 degrees (so they still grew skyward) would be sufficient to make the inverted tree appear to be growing, or *aging*,





Up To Now (Chestnut): Abstractions
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Boxwood maquettes:

Abstraction One: fully inverted, inverted stem with inverted branches,

Abstraction Two: inverted stem with reversed stumps,

Abstraction Three: inverted stem with single inverted branch

upwards. The maquette was presented to other students and the approach seemed successful.

For the artwork to achieve its objective as a biographic apperception of a tree, the inverted trunk would need to be suspended from two or more living 'host' trees.

Having established the overall strategy for the sculpture, additional boxwood maquettes were made with three levels of abstraction:

ABSTRACTION ONE: The first level of abstraction had fully inverted branches as well as an inverted main stem/trunk. This presented challenges for fabrication and suspension and would probably require a complex system of wires attached to several host trees.

ABSTRACTION TWO: This next level of abstraction reduced the side branches to short stumps rotated to grow upward. The length of the stumps would be restricted to that length of the branch which did not exhibit diminution as this would disrupt the overall growth inversion.

ABSTRACTION THREE: This final level reduced the vertical stem to a smooth trunk with only one side limb, a large, single horizontal reversed branch. This branch would be suspended at its end from one of the horizontal wires carrying the main stem.

Given the high costs of getting the sculpture into position, and the difficulties of finding a suitable woodland venue, only one of these, *abstraction two*, was presented and progressed, although it is clear now that the third level of abstraction was instrumental in the inception of the *Chronologer* artworks (see below).



Up To Now (Chestnut)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Chestnut, steel wire, Douglas fir
1100cmH x 180cmW x 180cmD

The sculpture viewed from the West

The first full-scale sculpture was installed as an outdoor piece at The Wilderness Wood, a publicly accessible private woodland in Hadlow Down, East Sussex. This is a managed mixed woodland comprised predominantly of deciduous trees but with a few areas of conifers and Scots pine. The selected location for *Up To Now*, was a stand of Douglas firs situated on the top of a small escarpment. A chestnut tree of 15 to 20 years was selected for the sculpture itself.

The finished piece is just over 11 metres tall. A detailed account of the fabrication and installation of this sculpture is provided in the appendices (Appendix Two).

The chestnut tree chosen for the *Up To Now* sculpture exhibited regular and visible changes in the orientation of its main stem at each side-branch node. When inverted, these meanderings gave to the work a surprising ‘animation’, the tree seemed to acquire anthropomorphic qualities, almost tangibly straining upwards as it grew.

Proposals for similar works were prepared that exploited these anthropomorphic

Burn Me Up, Burn Me Down (Valencia Province)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Boxwood Maquette

The sculpture terminated as a charred stump recording the fires that swept up the valley earlier that Summer. The anthropomorphic qualities of the stem in this proposal were encouraged.





Up To Now (Chestnut)

Paul Tuppeny 2022

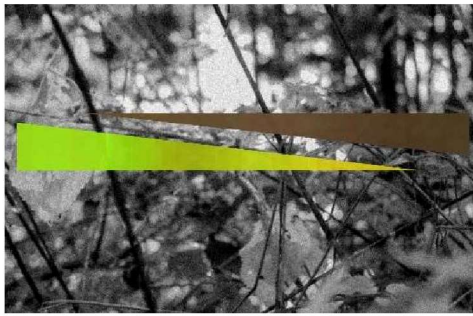
Installation Photographs: The work was suspended by first tying a sling between two of the support trees. This carried a pulley block by which the sculpture was then slowly winched up into position. Once at its final height, the suspension wires were threaded through pre-prepared holes in the artwork and secured to the four host trees. Photographs to the right show the artwork being constructed and transported to the suspension site.

interpretations. The trees in these had different 'final chapters' at their top, usually ending in natural decay (rather than being felled in a managed forest) although a proposal for a valley in the Valencia province of Spain, conceived with reference to the context of the current climate crisis, terminated as a charred stump, the valley having been severely damaged by forest fires earlier in 2022 (A more detailed account is given in Appendix Two).



Up To Now (Chestnut) *Paul Tuppeny 2022*

Chestnut, steel wire, Douglas fir
1100cmH x 180cmW x 180cmD
The sculpture viewed from the East



Hedgerow viewed as a blending scale of life and death.

This PowerPoint presentation visual was the first to adapt the graphic used for the heater controls of a car, which show the blending of warmed and un-warmed air, to a sliding device for life and its passing in the natural environment.

Foliage Life Spectrum (Saturated)

Developed from the colours of a banana leaf as it transitions from a living photosynthesising organ to a tube of largely dead material that gives strength to the plant's stem.

In this graphic, the colours have been saturated for the purposes of emphasis and to reference the visual language of measuring instruments.

Temporal Rod

A further development of the *Up To Now* theme saw it rendered in the green-to-brown temporal foliage spectrum discussed earlier. The proposal did not progress beyond a rough mock-up but was important to the development of other works.

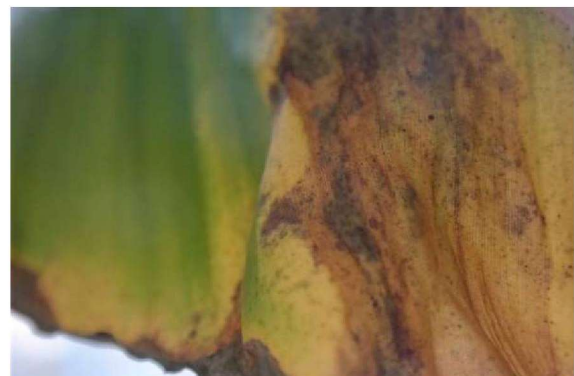
Whilst I was intrigued by the potential of applying the green to brown colour spectrum to inverted stems, the result felt like an uncomfortable mix of visual languages. After all, *Up To Now* succeeds, at least in part, because the artifice is concealed and the raw inverted trunk, even with the reversed upward-growing branches, is immediately believable as a *wholly natural entity*. The addition of the spectrum overwrote this aspect of the work and caused it to falter.



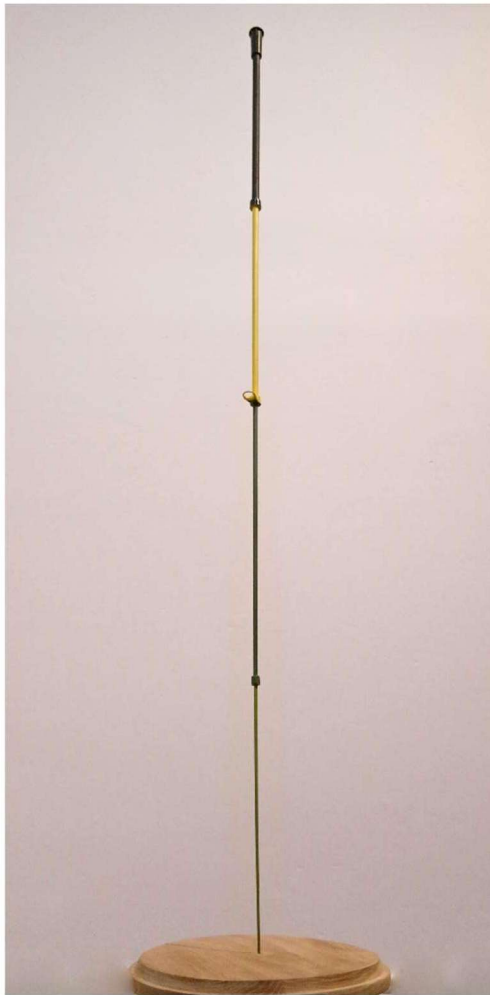
I had earlier produced a simple photographic work recording the colour changes in a banana leaf as it transitions from photosynthesising leaf to a brown remnant constituting just the latest section of the tree's slowly lengthening 'trunk'. from the vivid green of the youthful leaf,

Banana Leaf Spectrum

As the banana plant grows, the primary function of each leaf shifts from the work of photosynthesis to that of stem support structure. The broad section of the leaf turns brown and withers whilst that at its base hardens to lengthen and strengthen the 'trunk' of the plant.



through darker greens, to yellow and brown as it dies back.



Temporal Rod
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Painted carbon fibre
110cmH x 18cmW x 18cmD

The foliage life colour spectrum is applied to a telescopic child's fishing rod, a technological object that holds in its form its potentiality for growth and contraction.

The foliage temporal spectrum is in essence a human abstraction since, (banana leaves apart) the colours are not normally seen in the same entity simultaneously, although different plants may be at various points on the spectrum at one time. It seemed that, since the foliage spectrum, presented as a band of colour, is essentially artificial, an artificial support might be the most appropriate vehicle for it, preferably one that had inherent age or growth characteristics to align with those of the foliage colours.

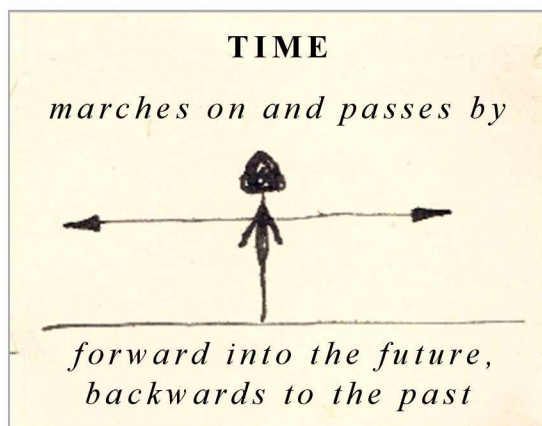
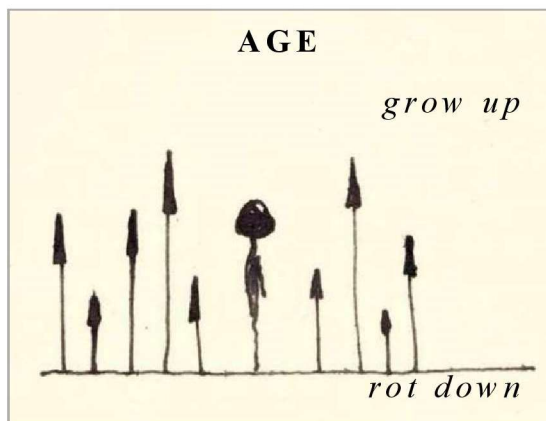
Human artefacts do not grow in the same way as we see in natural entities. Whilst human technology can move and expand, its animations are characterised by being both repeated and reversible. However, one machine, in its form and movement, approximates natural growing, and that is the *telescopic* ram. This animated artefact is readily recognisable and is, for most people, immediately identified with its *telescoping* properties (its dynamic properties are *apperceptively co-presented* within the form of the object).



Very much as a quick sketch, the spectrum colours were applied to a child's telescopic fishing rod. As with *Up To Now*, this was mounted vertically fixed to a base, the thinnest section at the bottom. Each of the four segments of the rod is painted a separate colour from the foliage spectrum.

For the viewer, the artwork holds within its ascending diameters an immediate understanding of its capabilities for growth. The bands of colour seem also to measure this growth with many similarities to a surveyor's staff. At the time of its making, I was unsure whether this piece was a "teaching aid, a diagram or a three-dimensional model of a mode of thinking."

Sketches illustrating different spatial analogies for 'Time' and 'Age'.



The Chronologer Figures

Chronologer Introduction

I wanted to make a sculpture that reflected upon our relationship with the phenomenon of age; through the research, I was describing how we walked through the world making intuitive judgements, or measurements, of the biographical progress of the objects around us whilst all the time, through our own nature as living things, inexorably following a change narrative of our own; the measurer is *measured*, the chronologer, *chronologised*.

When first considering this piece, I recalled some sketches that were developed for a magazine article explaining *Up To Now* which reflected on how we generally spoke about Time

moving horizontally, how it marched on to the future or looked backwards to the past and yet, our personal experience of it, through the phenomenon of *age*, seemed to operate very much in the vertical (*we* grow up and *things* rot down). Set against age, Time feels very much like an entirely human construct; whilst it shares qualities of inexorability and irreversibility with age, our sense of it seems to derive much more from rational reflection and inferred cause and effect; *age* feels much more primal, for some reason. Time is, in our minds, a measure of what *we* do as a species, and it is horizontal because that is the mode in which *we* travel.



Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

I came to the view that we are, perhaps, the nexus of Time and age, essentially a crossing point for the will and the purposes that we are able to impose on the natural world, and our own inescapable destiny as an integral part of it (although in a fascinating circularity, it is that destiny that sets out the purposes that we must impose).

The sculpture conveys the human form in the disposition of its 'limbs' and through the bilateral symmetry that we share with most animals. With its arms outstretched, the figure 'fathoms', measuring *Time* in both directions, to the past and future, but its *age* has less freedom, moving only in one direction, starting from nothing at the ground with both vertical members terminating simultaneously. The presence of a head is indicated only by the extension of the vertical members above what would normally be the shoulders. The ambiguity in this is deliberate since, although the sculpture

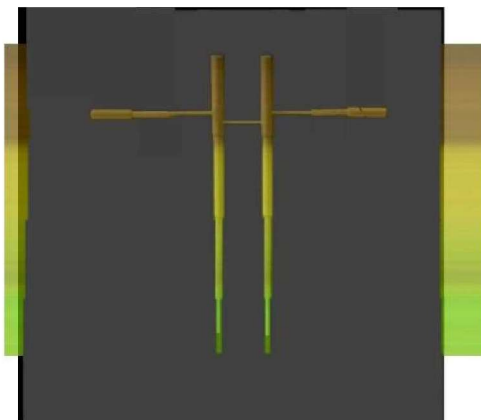


Chronologer Copper Maquette
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Maquette (montage view)

The outdoor Chronologer (Grown Up) figure was initially conceived with a Verdigris finish.

**Chronologer overlaid with foliage
temporal spectrum**



is, in part, an abstraction of the human form, it is much more a *diagram* of a ‘state of affairs.’

The first prototype maquette was made in copper tube.

Chronologer (Grown Up)

Chronologer (Grown Up) was developed and built to be exhibited at the *Fresh Air Sculpture Biennale* in Gloucestershire (I had needed to seek a number of outdoor venues for my sculptures as the direction of my practice seemed to be very much towards responses to the Natural realm and it was helpful to the research to be accepted for this *rural* location).

Responding to the site, the Chronologer would adopt some of the garb of the *Temporal Rod* sketch sculpture and would be coloured in the foliage spectrum developed for that work. The spectrum was developed to *plot* the life of a leaf but, in our Northern climate, this equates closely with the *seasonal* transformations of deciduous trees. Standing in the landscape, the figure would measure the changes happening all around it with different parts of its anatomy merging with the background foliage at different times of the year.

Whilst the sculpture’s chromatic sympathy with the landscape was an inherent part of its operation, its role as a measuring instrument was similarly important and so the saturation of the foliage spectrum colours was deliberately enhanced.



Chronologer (Grown Up)

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Polychrome copper, stainless steel armature
220cmH x 180cmW x 8cmD

The foliage colour spectrum is applied to the work in saturated bands, recalling the measuring instruments of a surveyor. The figure stands in the landscape measuring the transformations taking place around it with different parts of its frame merging with the background as the seasons progress.

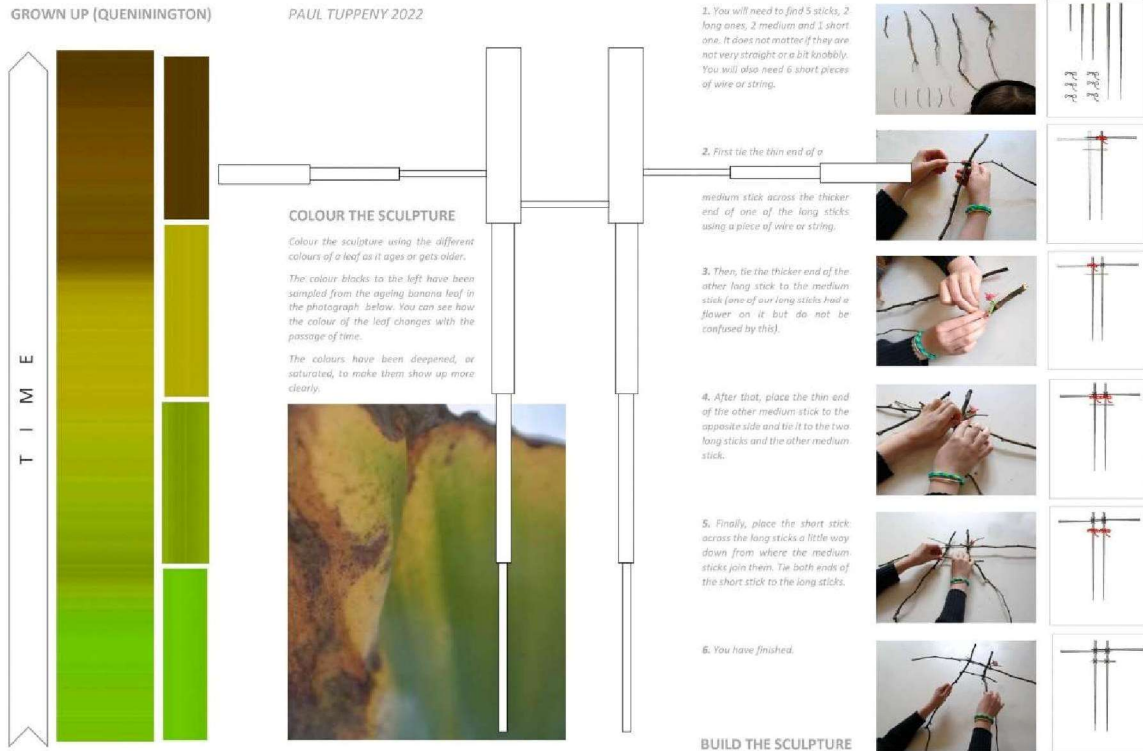
Outdoor sculpture, of course, presents special challenges with respect to corrosion and wind. Whilst it might be interesting for some artworks to degrade or corrode in themselves, Chronologer's function was to *measure* the changes in the surrounding landscape and it needed to appear as a stable locus for these natural transformations. It was resolved therefore to fabricate the telescoping form of the limbs in painted copper tube or aluminium (copper was chosen in the end because of the ready availability of transitioning components). Early maquettes had shown the importance of the limbs being absolutely perpendicular as even the slightest droop was interpreted as a gesture of the arm that would *over-anthropomorphise* the work; sadly, neither copper or aluminium would be strong enough to carry the right-angle

Chronologer (Grown Up): Fabrication

Paul Tuppeny 2022

The exposed sections of the figure were composed in soldered copper (above). These were threaded over a stainless-steel armature which gave the sculpture the strength to resist wind loads and had the necessary rigidity to achieve the perpendicular joint required for the 'fathoming' upper limbs (below).





Chronologer (Grown Up): Schools Leaflet Paul Tuppeny 2022

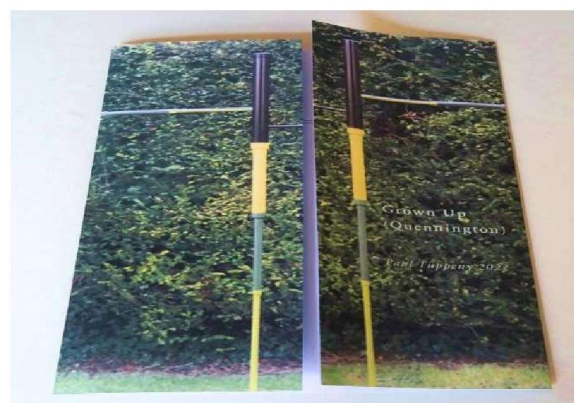
Interior of education program gatefold leaflet. Features included an explanation of the temporal foliage spectrum, an outline drawing for colouring and instructions for constructing a chronologer figure using inverted branches. To outside (pictured below) carried a photograph of the piece and an explanatory text detailing the work's underlying concepts.

Chronologer (Grown Up): Schools Leaflet Paul Tuppeny 2022

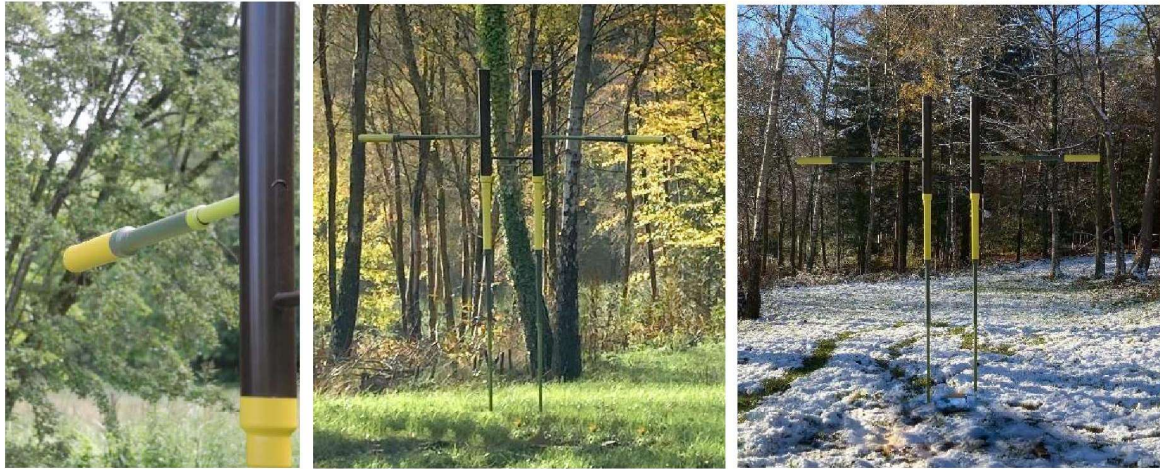
The outside cover of the leaflet.

shoulder joint and the whole sculpture needed to be constructed around a stainless-steel armature. (Refer to Appendix Two for further detail).

The sculpture biennial in which the work was exhibited ran an education program that invited local schools to visit and engage with the works. I was asked to provide an explanatory activity leaflet. This included text concerning the sculpture's structure, form and colours as well as a line drawing for colouring and instructions on how to build a version of the Chronologer using



inverted twigs. The sculpture was later installed at Wilderness Wood and photographed through the passing seasons.



Chronologer (Grown Up)

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Polychrome copper, stainless steel armature
220cmH x 180cmW x 8cmD

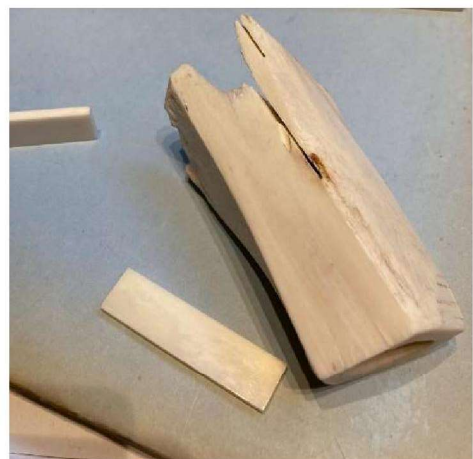
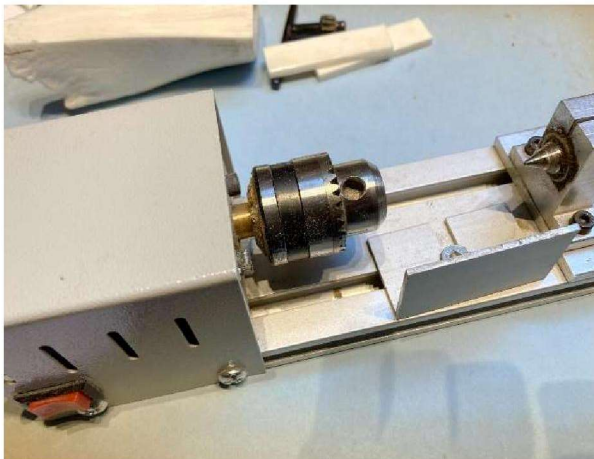
The sculpture photographed in successive
seasons at Hadlow Down.

Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)

At the same time as constructing *Chronologer (Grown Up)*, I developed ideas for a more *visceral* version that focused on the role of age in our intersubjective relationships, addressing how, inbuilt into every perception we have of a fellow human, is the knowledge that this person before us has grown from an infant and has a finite duration; alongside everyone we meet, there hangs, as a co-presentation or “apperception”²⁰, a kind of ‘temporal’ skeleton upon which we build our apprehension of them. Ominous as this might sound, it is, I believe, through this apperception that we are able to assimilate them as *living*.

²⁰ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 122.

The figure needed to be of a natural material that related directly to its purpose. I had come across the use of bone (bovine) as a material for Nineteenth Century chessmen, and this seemed suitable. Prior to the introduction of plastics, animal bone had been in common use for many domestic and scientific items; the material is durable and whilst there is some grain, it is not a dominant characteristic as it is for wood. It can be worked quite finely and will accept polishing. Traditionally, gaming pieces etc were also often finished with carmine or cochineal, a dyestuff derived from the body fluid of a small South American beetle.



Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)

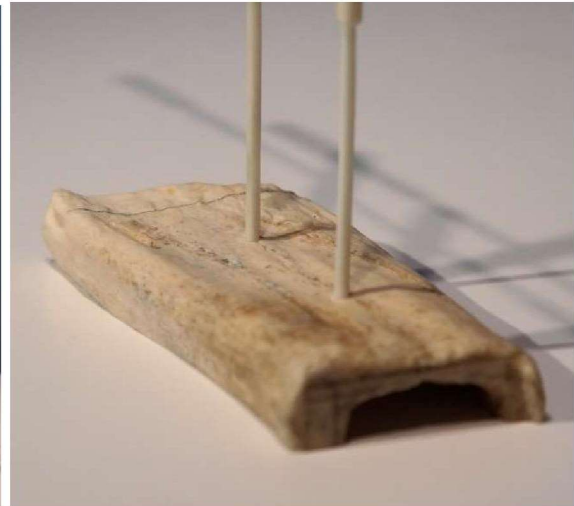
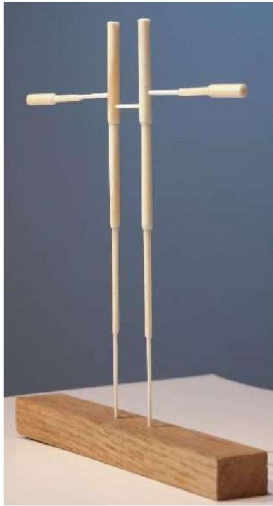
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Bone (bovine), sea-washed chalk
420cmH x 18cmW x 8cmD

Fabrication elements: The small lathe on which the bone components were turned (left) and the raw material (right)

Although very common in earlier epochs, bone was difficult to source in long lengths. In the end, much of the material would come from bones that had been given to our dog. This influenced the size of the finished sculpture; ideally it would have been a little larger. The bone was turned on a small lathe in its individual diameters and drilled, glued and jointed.

At the inception of the work, the base was intended to be in bone; I had a section of bone that had been gouged by the our dog's teeth and



Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Various base configurations: mahogany (left), historically often used with bone, and an unfinished bone base-plate (right), complete with gouges from our dog's teeth.

I was reminded of the discovery of early hominid bones that showed signs of predation from leopards.²¹ The bone stand was not only visually unsatisfactory (in both mass and form) but also in our conception of the material itself.



Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Bone (bovine), sea-washed chalk
420cmH x 18cmW x 8cmD

I deliberated for several weeks over the base for the sculpture trying mahogany and other sections of bone, but all were unsuccessful. It was clear from these experiments that the base needed to have sufficient visual mass to stabilise the vertical thrust of the figure. I also felt, on further reflection, that I wanted this animal skeleton to stand *directly* on the Planet that sustains it, without this important contact point being mediated by a 'base' whose function was solely to keep the sculpture upright. This, after all, would be a more accurate reflection of our true relationship with the world. After several unsuccessful experiments, the figure was mounted on a block of sea-washed chalk since:

- there is a co-dependency between the two materials, bone and chalk; the compressive

²¹ This, in turn, brought to mind Bruce Chatwin's observation, in his book *The Songlines*, that there was a moment in Prehistory when we ceased to be prey, an important threshold in the development of our species.





Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Bone (bovine), sea-washed chalk
420cmH x 18cmW x 8cmD

The sculpture as installed in Wells Cathedral. The artwork sits in a niche that has a shallow bowl (piscine); this is partially filled with a black painted base disc with a similarly finished block on which the piece stands, appearing to hover above the adjacent stonework.

Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Detail of the arm and chest junctions.

strength of bone is provided by calcium absorbed through our diet; this is a genuine reflection of our relationship with the planet,

- the sea-washed chalk found on the beaches nearby develops hollows which echo the forms of animal bones, some features being particularly reminiscent of areas of the skull which the figure itself does not try to portray,
- the colour of the chalk complements that of the bone and unifies the sculpture into a whole.

The chalk block base was cut with a slight wedge shape, as if taken from the crust of a sphere, and soaked in a weak PVA solution to prevent it powdering. An 'invisible' fixing block was fitted to the underside of the chalk and this was painted in a proprietary (98%) black paint.

The sculpture was exhibited inside Wells Cathedral as part of its annual contemporary art festival, W.A.C. 2022. It was displayed in a niche in the Lady Chapel that had at some date been fitted with a piscine (a shallow bowl) which I fitted at half-depth with a black wooden disk so that, with the black fixing block, the sculpture appeared to float in space.

On the recommendation of the exhibition curators and the Dean, the Cathedral acquired



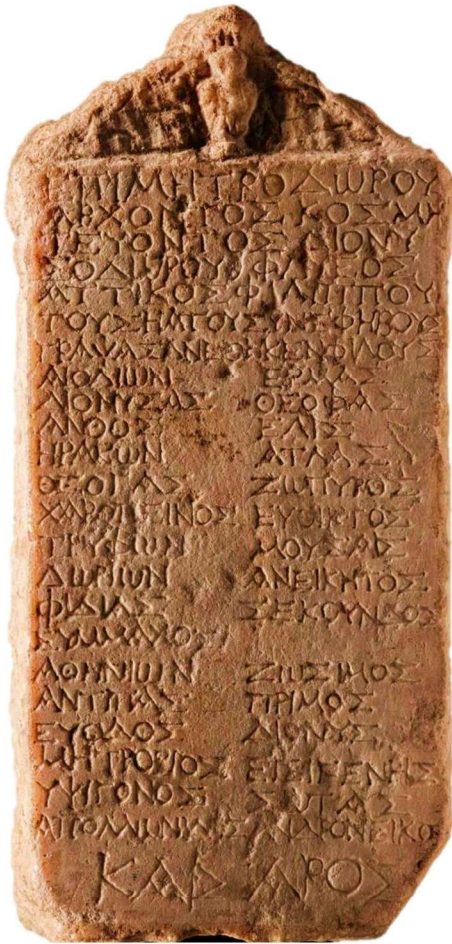
the sculpture in early 2023, the niche becoming its permanent home.

Year Three: Consolidating and Communicating

Athens (Untitled; forty-two?)

In the Autumn of 2022, I responded to an offer of a three-month residency at The British School in Athens. This seemed a very interesting opportunity, not least because I would be working in the same place as Aristotle whose texts concerning ‘forms’ were becoming increasingly central to the research project.

I had encountered age-class systems previously in Alfred Gell’s anthropological account of the *Ida Ritual* (refer to Appendix One, *Spectra of Growth: Foliage and Human Ritual*) and I was able to propose a work that centred around the highly developed Athenian example of this kind of social structure. In ancient Athens, each July, the names of all citizens reaching eighteen years old were recorded upon stone tablets that were publicly displayed in year order within a special enclosure in the Agora. Each year, the tablets would be moved onward one place until those named reached the age of sixty; there were, therefore, forty-two tablets displayed at any one time. The system was, I imagine, developed to ensure that an army could be mustered at any moment, but it also stipulated minimum ages for other duties such as marriage, military and civil leadership roles, as well as other public offices.



Ancient Athenian Ephebic Tablet (*Museum of Scotland*)

Marble
45cmH x 25cmW x 10cmD

In July of each year, the names of Athenian male citizens who were considered to have reached the age of eighteen were inscribed on stone tablets. These were displayed within or upon the Monument of the Eponymous Heroes in the Agora. Each year, the tablets would be moved along one year-space until those listed reached sixty years old.



Athens (Untitled 42?)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Montage visualisation

Early schemes (above) simply adhered 42 single examples of each age in a chronologized row; later proposals used multiple layered images of age groupings in the manner of bill posters (below).

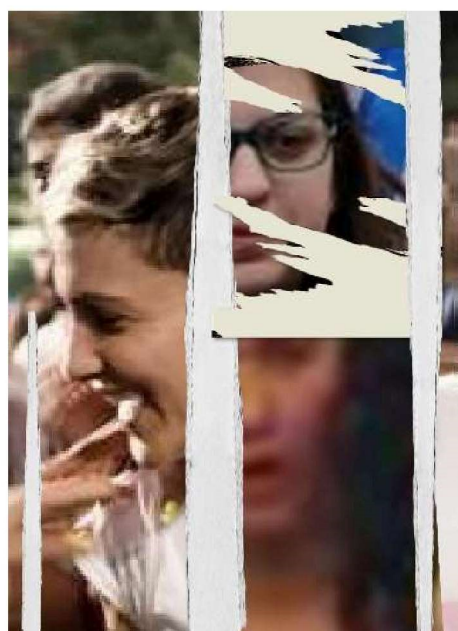
Athens (Untitled 42?)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Montage visualisation

Montage mock-up of one of the poster sites showing successive layering of individuals within the age class grouping. It was proposed that the image be taken from protests in Syntagma Square, one of the modern agora of Athens, not only as a way to sample a truly representative cross-section of the current Athenian population, but to link the work directly with the operations of a democratic state.

In terms of the research project, the Athenian age-class system tablets were an interesting physical manifestation of Claude Levi-Strauss' observations concerning the appearance of age synchronicity in large social groups. Such situations of synchronic change come about when the members of a community are recognised on the basis of a single age-related quality rather than as individuals. Such social structures appear, in some respects, to be static, as there are always about the same number of citizens of any given age, even though the individuals forming those age-groupings are actually in constant flux.

I proposed a series of forty-two poster locations featuring the faces of different age-year groupings. As with normal bill posters, the top image would be partly torn to show earlier bills. Here all the bills in each location would be of the same age-year. The photographs would not only come from magazines and other media in the public domain, but from photographs of the Syntagma Square gatherings that were openly available on social media.



The artwork would draw attention to this interesting facet of ancient Athenian life,



celebrate the people of modern Athens, whilst also having direct relevance to this research project.

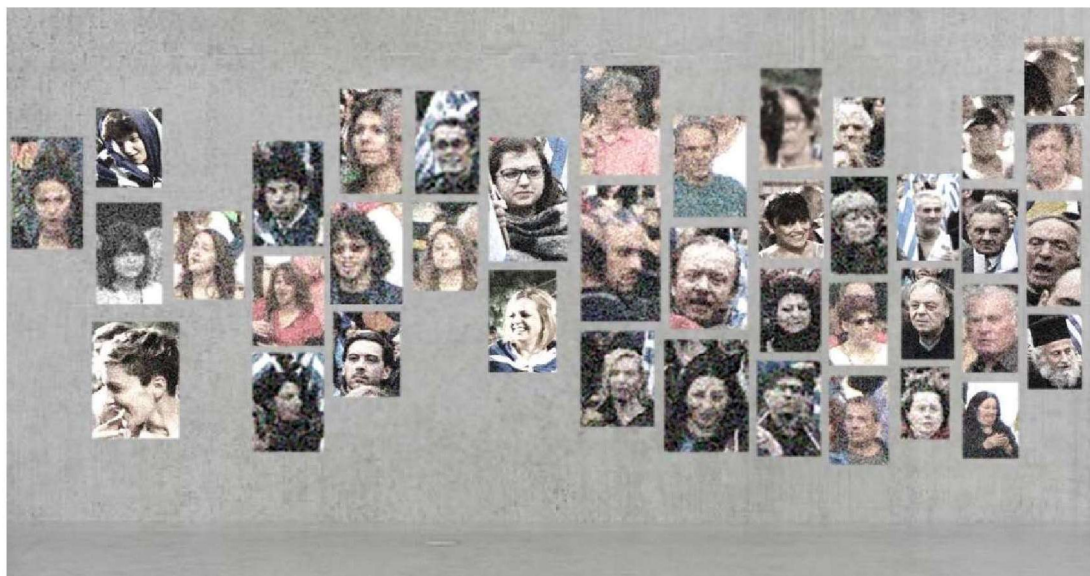
Athens (Untitled 42?)

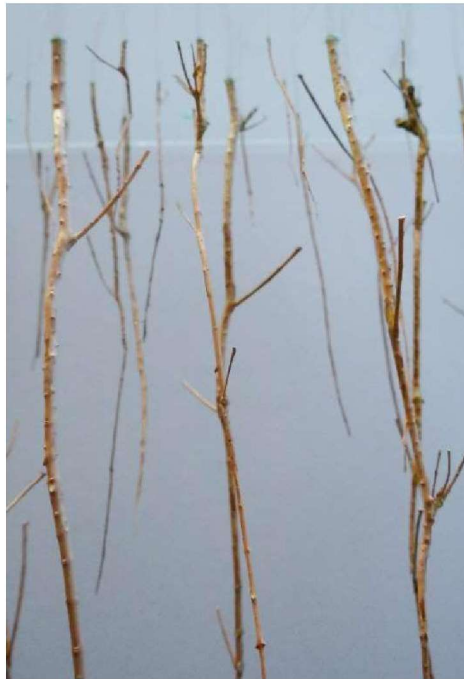
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Montage visualisation

The final iteration of the idea simply pasted age-class groupings in vertical strips. What this proposal gained in clarity, it lost in dynamism.

The proposal was not accepted and has not been progressed further. The piece remains untitled (*forty-two* perhaps?). (An account of the application is included in Appendix Two).





Forest Now
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Maquette

Whilst we know that the individual plants that constitute the forest are growing and dying, the overall appearance of the woodland remains unaltered; the numbers of plants at each age-stage remains constant, even if the individuals are in constant flux. The artwork used around 30 inverted stems (similar to the *Up To Now* sculpture) to show a temporal slice of forest life; the glass plate at the top of the piece represents the present moment, the lower extremities of the suspended stems display their different moments of nascence.

Forest Now

Forest Now was created as part of the presentation for the Athens residency. It was intended as a link between my tree-stem based work and the proposed artwork concerning age-class synchronicity in ancient Athenian society. The Athens proposal was introduced with the observation that, even though we know that every plant in the forest is germinating, growing and dying, the forest always appears the same. This is because the *numbers* of plants in those *stages* remains constant, even as individual specimens move between these phases.



Forest Now is a maquette built from over thirty inverted *Up To Now* boxwood tree stems, all of

different lengths. The top of each stem terminates at the same plane, represented by a sheet of glass in the maquette, although in the realised work this would be achieved by careful positioning of the suspended trunks. In such an arrangement, the lower ends of the stems hang at different heights; these lower termination points would thus represent the different moments of naissance, or germination, of each of the individual trees.

Forest Now (Montage)
Paul Tuppeny 2022

These quick montage sketches demonstrate the appearance of the Forest Now concept installed at full-scale.



The likelihood of *Forest Now* being realised at full scale remains remote, although I have produced some very quick montages of the artwork in the main hall of a famous art institution to get some idea of its impact.



CAMO

The visual effect of the forest's plants being at different stages in their life narrative means that the forest appears as a jumbled mosaic of different greens, yellows and browns (Refer to *Banana Leaf* above). Military camouflage tries to replicate these patterns to allow their wearers to blend with this environment. Contemporary designers of these fabrics hold that these seemingly random landscapes are actually

comprised of repeating fractals that the subconscious recognises as “neutral” and perceptually renders as wholly natural. (for further detail, refer to Appendix Two, *Spectra of Growth: Foliage and Human Ritual*) .



Section of Ukrainian Army camouflage fabric

The CAMO artwork was conceived as an artwork that re-ordered the seemingly random distribution of the colours of the forest using the principles of the temporal foliage spectrum used in the artworks described earlier. It seemed appropriate to use a pattern that inherently sought to mimic the forest mosaic as a basis for this proposal. One such pattern is the pixelated camouflage of the Ukrainian Army, a design with which we became much more familiar in 2022; I had, for a while before this, been looking for a suitable form, or ‘vehicle,’ to carry the temporal foliage spectrum. The Ukrainian camouflage pattern includes dashes of light yellows as well as the usual mix of greens and browns.

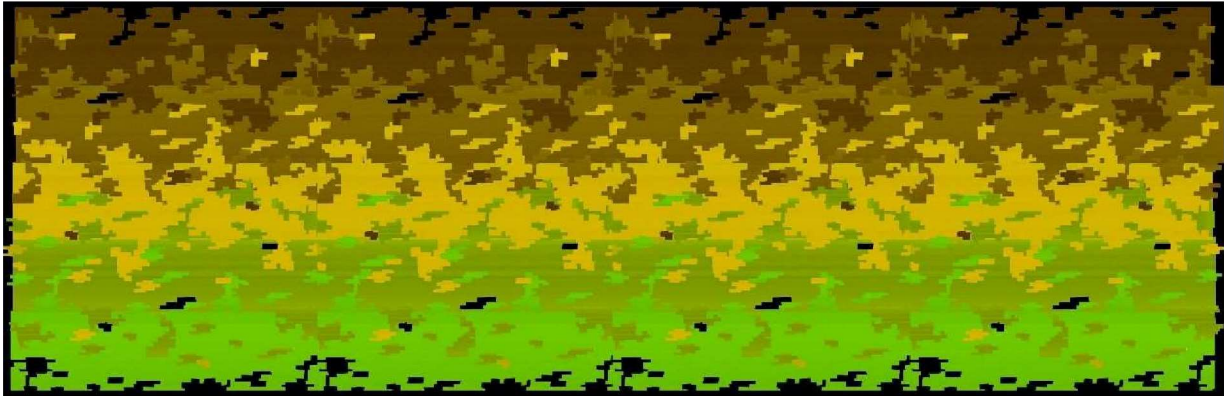
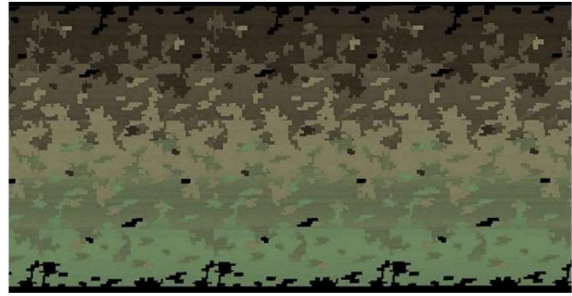


Ukrainian military vehicle carrying pixelated camouflage pattern

CAMO

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Natural and saturated versions of the CAMO fabric design.



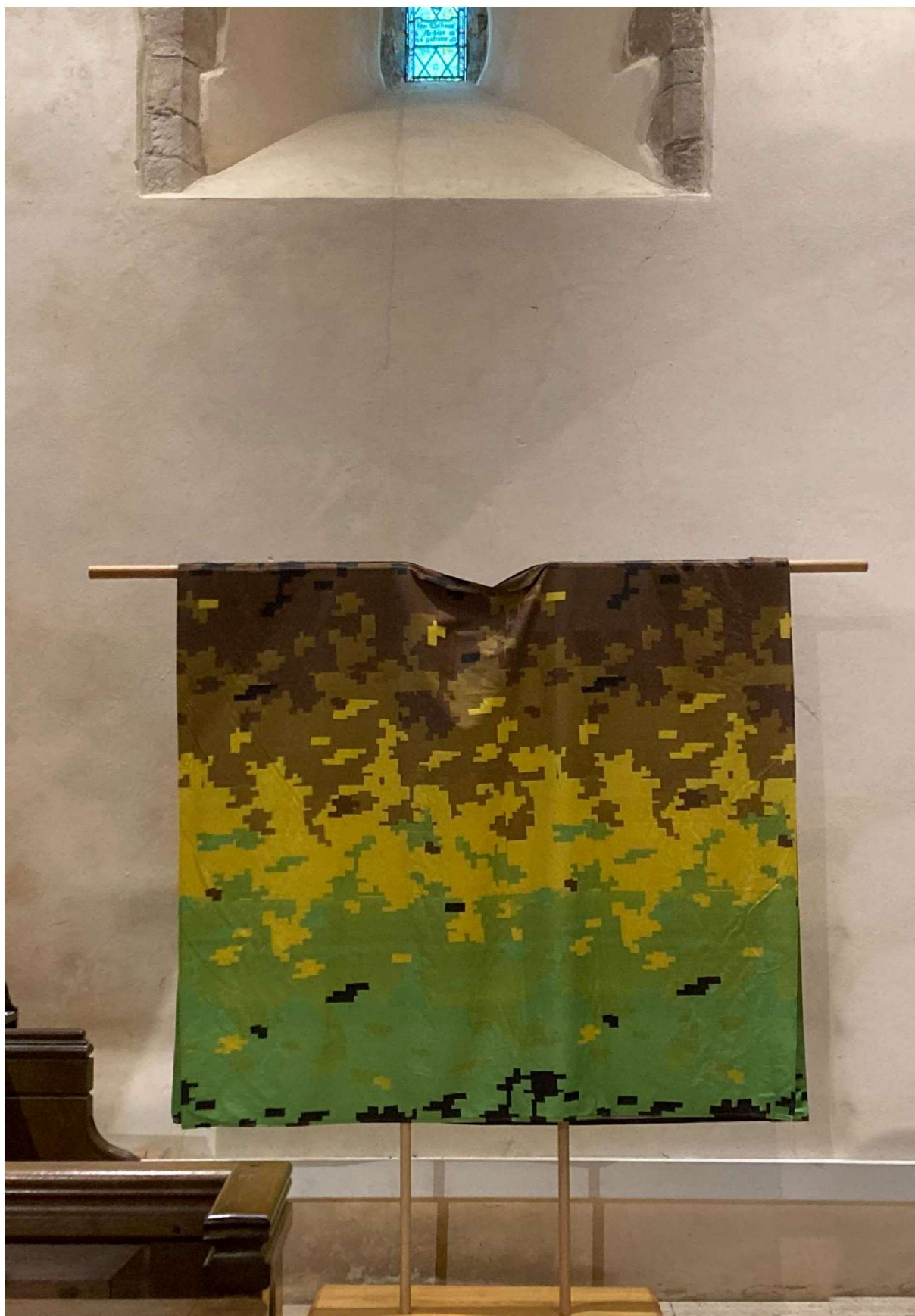
CAMO

Paul Tuppeny 2022/23

The frame installed at Ovingdean



At a time when it seemed that the Ukrainian military would soon be overrun, I considered myself fortunate to find a cap in an army-surplus shop. This was photographed and the pattern traced into digitised shapes. The colours were sampled but, as with *Chronologer (Grown Up)*, their saturation was enhanced to create some additional ‘distance’ between the work and military paraphernalia; the intention was that the work would reflect the way that our perception ‘breathes life’ into the world; army uniforms, of course, tend to deliver quite the opposite affect. The pattern was extended into a repeat and sent out for printing onto a medium-weight cotton twill. I then sewed the printed fabric into a simple cape. The wooden frame for the display adopted human form but only in an abstracted sense. The exposed areas, including the base, were built in the language of vintage shop fittings using varnished beech. The frame’s structure needed to allow for the cape’s head-opening to drape naturally making it necessary for the horizontal bar to be discontinuous.



CAMO *Paul Tuppeny 2022/23*

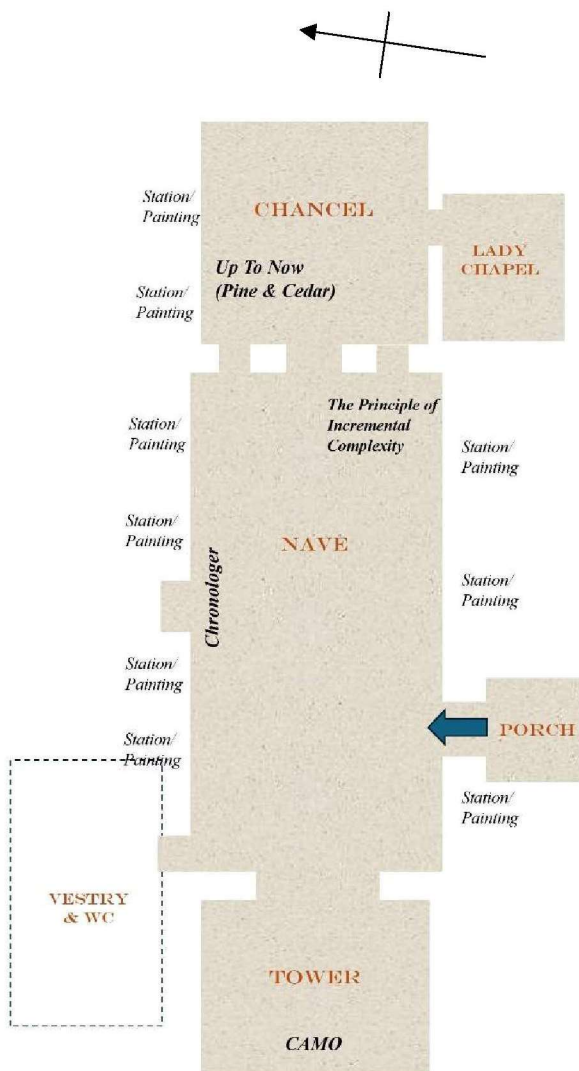
Printed fabric on beech mannequin frame
180cmH x 180cmW x 80cmD



St Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean, viewed from the field to the Southwest.

St Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean.

Schematic plan showing components of the installation. (not to scale)



The Ovingdean Installation

Whilst I had been reasonably successful in securing venues for the display of my outdoor sculptures, I had been unable to exhibit indoor pieces such as CAMO. However, early in 2023, I was invited to deliver an exhibition or installation at St. Wulfran's Church in Ovingdean as part of the Brighton Festival.

St. Wulfran's is a very small church of about 1070AD, constructed of chalk with a flint outer facing. The roof is framed in oak and boarded on the underside. In the nineteenth century the ceiling in the chancel was decorated with a stencilled pattern of foliage and birds in the 'gothic' style that was popular in that period.

Planning The Installation

The church at Ovingdean invites a mixed and inclusive congregation who appear generally broad-minded. I was, nevertheless, anxious that the exhibition should not overwhelm or offend them (quite apart from the requirement that all proposals were to be approved by the vicar and the wardens in advance). My approach was therefore to aim at a coherent themed exhibition reflecting the insights of my research but adapted to the scale and visual language of the building.

There were five areas of the church that lent themselves to the exhibition of sculpture:

- The Chancel at the East end of the nave,
- The tower, at the West end,
- The niche formed by the blocked North doorway,

The installation at St. Wulfran's, Ovingdean,
Interior view showing the North doorway
niche with Chronologer (Metal & Wood) and
four of the station pictures.

Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)
Paul Tuppeny 2022/23

Cedar, pine, steel suspension rod
450cmH x 120cmW x 100cmD

View of artwork installed in the Chancel.



- The children's area, a clear space at the front of the Nave and
- The churchyard and adjacent field.



These sculpture 'nodes' would be joined by a series of two-dimensional painted works lining the walls of the Nave. These paintings fulfilled several functions, not least that of making the exhibition 'accessible' to people who had little experience of contemporary sculpture. The paintings would also bring the outside world into the interior of the church, particularly important as much of the sculpture addressed our perception of the Natural Realm.

Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)

The largest work in the exhibition was an *Up To Now* type inverted tree displayed ascending up to the painted ceiling in the chancel. The sculpture would be situated close to a Nineteenth Century reproduction of Rubens' *Descent From The Cross*. I thought that it would be interesting if the tree responded to the painting in some way, and I sought the trunks of cedar or pine, the timbers traditionally associated with the true cross (although, once installed, no one remarked on the reference and it was consequently downplayed). The main stem was sourced from Wilderness Wood, where there was a dead Scots Pine that needed to be felled to avoid the risk of fungal transmission to other trees. I found some branches of Cedar that had been lost through wind-damage.



Ovingdean's *Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)* would be smaller than the original at Hadlow Down, there being only 4.5 metres between the floor and cross-beams in the chancel. It would, however, progress the underlying concept of an age narrative apperception in other respects. Firstly, the interior context would reference the sculpture to the place that timber holds in our culture of materials; this is, perhaps, already celebrated in the existing painted foliage decoration on the boarded ceiling. I also wanted this work to progress the sense of animation evident in some of the earlier macquette proposals as the perceptual injection of *life* seemed an increasingly important component of our experience of *age*. In addition, this iteration would seek to express the process by which the biography of the tree is composed by the viewer through separate observations that cohere through perceptual inferences.

Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)

Paul Tuppeny 2022/23

Cedar, pine, steel suspension rod
450cmH x 120cmW x 100cmD

Installation photographs showing the expandable suspension bar adjusted to precisely fill the space between the existing truss members.





Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)

Paul Tuppeny 2022/23

Cedar, pine, steel suspension rod
450cmH x 120cmW x 100cmD

Installation photograph showing the artwork's relationship to the church's copy of Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*.

I also wanted the sculpture to reflect the movement depicted in the adjacent copy of Rubens' *Descent from the Cross*. In the painting, an elliptical arrangement of figures is set on a diagonal axis from the top left to lower right of the canvas. The figures are sharply illuminated against a dark background but prominence is given to the body of Christ by the draped white sheet against which he is effectively silhouetted. As a device, this sheet both animates and focuses the attention on this slow, controlled lowering of the lifeless form.



The call for greater animation was answered by the growth habits of the Scots pine species, which although generally characterised by a straight, featureless stem, is much more varied in its phototropic and geotropic growth vectors within its crown. It is these branches that formed the raw material for *Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)*. In the final result, there is only a single branch from the cedar of Lebanon, but this has an almost talismanic quality as a consequence.

Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)
Paul Tuppeny 2022/23

Cedar, pine, steel suspension rod
450cmH x 120cmW x 100cmD

Installation photographs showing the expandable suspension bar. The wooden sections at each end of the rod were mitre profiled to fit the chamfered cross beams. The contact points were covered with felt to prevent marking to the existing structure.

Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)
Paul Tuppeny 2022/23

Cedar, pine, steel suspension rod
450cmH x 120cmW x 100cmD

Views of the artwork's fabrication showing its development around one of the more complex joints



The Ovingdean sculpture is more open concerning its status as an artefact and as an artwork. Whilst the components are entirely natural (even the 'runic' trails left by the larvae that lived under the bark) the joining of the parts of the tree is clearly a *human* endeavour, the various carpentry joints being expressed and clearly visible in the finished piece; after all, the age-narrative apperception that the sculpture represents is perceptually 'stitched together' by *us* as we attempt to grasp a world in constant transformation.



CAMO

Paul Tuppeny 2022/23

Printed fabric on beech mannequin frame
180cmH x 180cmW x 80cmD

CAMO installed under the tower at St.
Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean

**The Installation at St Wulfran's Church
Ovingdean.**

View through current (South) doorway to
blocked North doorway niche and the
Chronologer sculpture flanked by two
square Via Crucis paintings.

CAMO at Ovingdean

Facing the chancel, at the west end of the church
is the tower. Added in the Fourteenth Century, it
is separated from the Nave by a large gothic arch
which frames the square space beyond. It is
within this space that *CAMO* would be
displayed, its new context giving to the piece
additional references to a *cope* and religious
vestments more generally. Interestingly, prior to
the construction of the welfare block in the
1980's, the space at the bottom of the tower had
functioned as the Vestry.

Chronologer (Metal and Wood)

Halfway between Chancel and Tower, set into
the North wall of the nave is the 2.5-metre-high
niche formed by the blocking of the Norman
doorway. This doorway is the first feature the
visitor sees when entering the church via the
present (South) door. In this recess, a
chronologer figure was exhibited.



Chronologer (Metal on Wood)

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Brass, silver-steel, oak
48cmH x 35cmW x 8cmD

This version of Chronologer was initially inspired by Descartes' likening of the sick human body to a damaged clock but quickly adapted to the visual language of tradition artefacts associated with The Church.



The new Chronologer was inspired by Descartes' remarks in his Sixth Meditation in which he compares the human body to a "...well made...clock..." (Descartes, Meditation VI). The sculpture is made in brass and silver-steel, about twice the size of the Wells Cathedral version in bone. It is, again, turned on a lathe but the surface is left with a machined finish in the tradition of the mechanisms of clocks and other scientific instruments.

Chronologer (Metal on Wood)

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Brass, silver-steel, oak
48cmH x 35cmW x 8cmD



The base component for this Chronologer figure is a piece of sea washed oak that has clearly, at some time in its past, been worked by human hands, originally either from a ship or a pier. As with Wells, this was attached to a shaped block coated with proprietary black paint which was, in turn, mounted on a plinth with a black recess in its top face causing the sculpture to appear, once again, to hover in space, an important component in the expression of its ego centred and completed unity.



**The Installation at St. Wulfran's, Ovingdean:
The Paintings**

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Oil on walnut panel in oak frame
45cmH x 45cmW x 8cmD

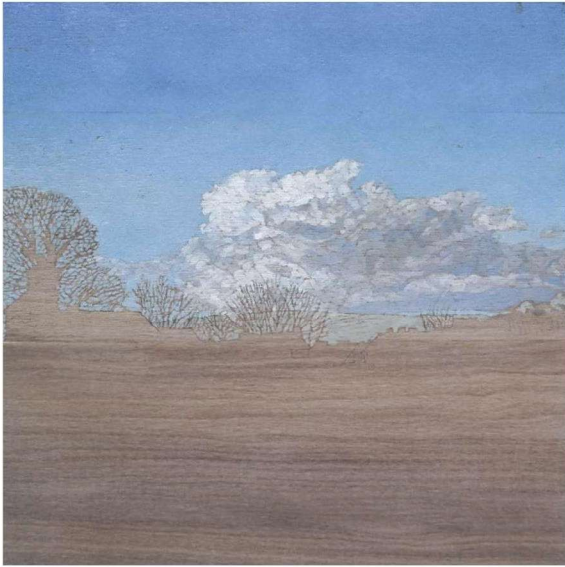
Two of the paintings installed in place of the church's stations of the cross. The paintings sought to link the interior installation to the natural world outside the building, particularly important as the main works, *Up To Now* and *CAMO*, directly referenced processes in that arena. They also subtly took possession of the whole of the church, linking the various components of the installation into a unified experience. Within themselves, the paintings investigate distinctions between perceptions of the image and the real-world materiality of the walnut support.

The Paintings (Wood For The Trees)

The paintings were executed in oil on walnut panel. They adopted the format and distribution in the church of the Stations of the Cross, a traditional series of 14 images or sculptures depicting events around the crucifixion (in fact, the hanging dowels for the exhibition artworks have become the permanent hanging points for St Wulfrans' Via Crucis pictures).

The role of the paintings was to bind the sculpture components of the show together, subtly taking possession of the building so that the exhibition would have a unified presence. They were also required to bring the outside into the church since most of the sculptures directly addressed the *Natural World*. The paintings, therefore, took as their subjects views of the grounds around the building which included the downland escarpments and the valley running down to the sea about one mile away.

These views were deliberately framed looking through the branches and trees which dominate the churchyard. In the images, the trees are left in un-painted silhouette, the bare walnut standing-in for their stems and branches. The 'images' beyond the trees were painted with broken gestures to emphasise their unreal, ethereal existence as perceptual reconfigurations wholly in the mind of the viewer. This contrasted with the real-world materiality of the exposed walnut board.



The Paintings, (Cloud and Downs) The
Installation at St. Wulfran's, Ovingdean:
Paul Tuppeny 2023

Edmund Husserl Concerning Theatre

"From the point of view of the production, of the theatrical aims and their accomplishment, we can say: As 'experience' teaches...certain things show themselves to be suited to excite a double apperception...Their perceptual appearances, or those belonging to certain circumstances favourable in this respect, easily change into other perceptual modes of appearance...And these things are then offered under such circumstances to perception or to the perceptual consciousness of conflict, and are supposed to cause us...to place ourselves on the ground of the cancelled perception, hence to inaugurate a purely perceptual fantasy. We understand this aim [Absicht] and go to the theatre in order to satisfy it."

(Hua XXIII, 517-18/619)

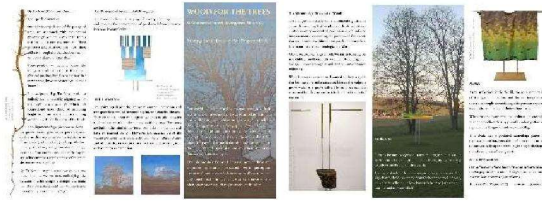
For Husserl, there are three layers of apprehension in a painting, the first, that of the "image thing", the artwork as an object in itself, secondly, the painted image as "image object" and thirdly, the represented "worldly object" that exists outside the artwork.²² Perceptually, of course, the first of these, the factual art object, is always in conflict with the other two modes of the image.

I wanted the paintings to bridge the gap between the world outside, where age progresses apace, and the interior where it seems, by the intervention of humankind, to be held in a kind of stasis. The purpose of the paintings was almost to bring worldly *Time* into the church since it is in that context that the sculptures were conceived.

Husserl makes an interesting observation concerning the way we approach artistic representations (left)²³ noting how actual perceptions must be cancelled to admit the "fantasy" percept intended by the artist. I'm not sure the translation captures the emphasis correctly ("...purely fantastical perception" might make better sense), but the *active* cancellation of a real perception in order to replace it with fantasy, and the fact that we understand this and situate ourselves to "satisfy" it, is a compelling insight into the art gallery experience.

²² (Christian Ferencz-Flatz, "The Empathetic Apprehension of Artefacts: A Husserlian Approach to Non-figurative Art", *Research in Phenomenology* 41 (2011) 358-373, p.371

²³Christian Ferencz-Flatz, "The Empathetic Apprehension of Artefacts," 367.



Tri-fold Leaflet for the installation at St.
Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean, May 2023

By leaving dominant sections of the image as 'actual' material, I wanted to challenge the viewer's ability to cancel the real perception of a wooden thing, *subject to the forces of age*, with the phantasy image, evoked by the small blocks of painted colour, that existed *outside of Time*.

In the exhibition, the paintings, of course, drew plenty of attention, partly, I think, because they are readily understood as 'Art', but also because, in the context of a small provincial exhibition, people are able to conceive of the possibility of owning them and can valorise them in the same way they do many of the other things in their lives.

The Principle of Incremental Complexity
Paul Tuppeny 2023

Birch ply, printed material
145cmH x 80cmW x 50cmD

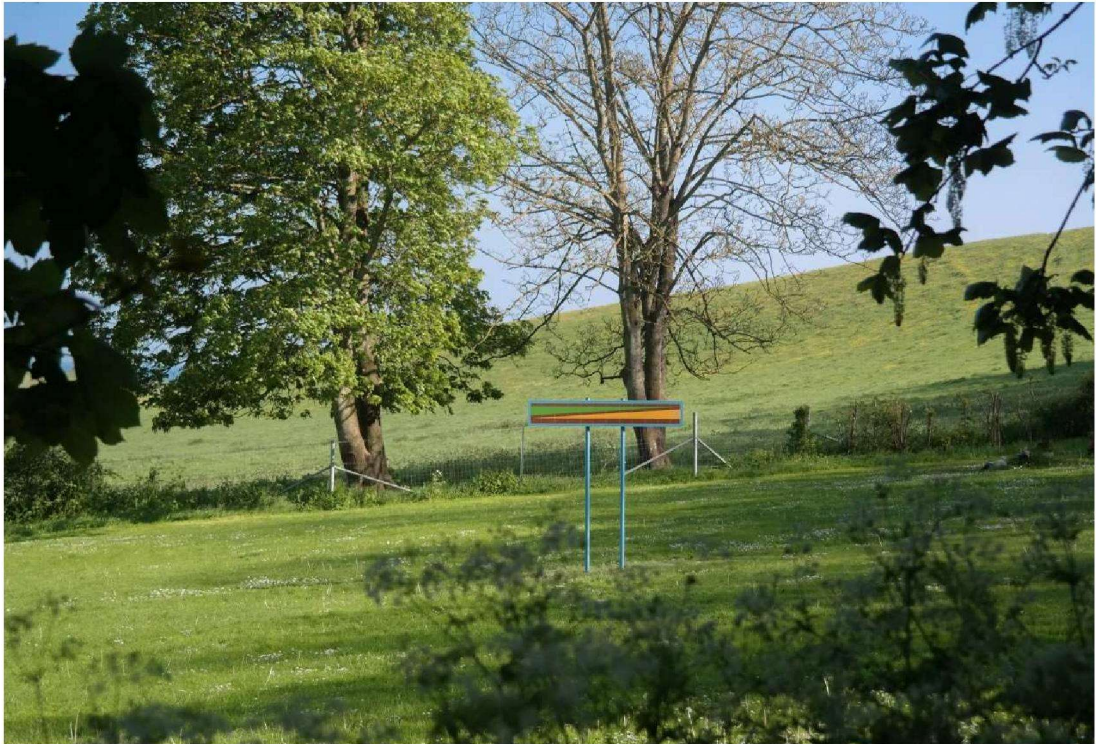


The Principle of Incremental Complexity

This work embodies one of the principal phenomena of age, that of incremental complexity. In many situations, the steady succession of events erodes original forms making them progressively more complex. In natural entities that grow, particularly plants, iterations of an underlying structure are added one to another as the overall organism steadily grows and matures; what begins as a single stem ends its life as a multitude of twigs.

This artwork, destined for the children's area, used the visual language of pre-school nursery apparatus and abstracts the imagery of the tree paintings. The piece is formed by pivoted sky-blue plywood panels, the wood grain exposed on the reverse, each panel bifurcating to carry two panels in the row above.

Undisturbed, the piece is a single slab of blue.



Media Vita at St. Wulfran's, Ovingdean
Paul Tuppeny 2023

Printed road-sign, powder coated aluminium
and steel
240cmH x 180cmW x 80cmD

Pictured in Daphne's Field, St Wulfran's
Church, Ovingdean. The trees are of different
species, that on the left coming into leaf a
month before the tree on the right.

Media Vita

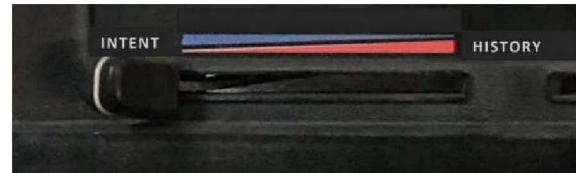
As part of the grounds of St Wulfran's, there is a
lawned enclosure called *Daphne's Field*. Whilst
this field sits outside the historic graveyard,
there are in its south-west corner around twenty
of the most recent burials. Daphne's Field opens
onto the downland that rolls towards the sea to
the South.



The underlying concept for Media Vita first
began to develop in Autumn 2022 as I looked out
over the woodland on a visit to the sculpture at
Hadlow Down. On observing the landscape, it
was clear that the annual transformation of the
trees had always been part of my perception of
it and was embedded in my apprehension of the
woodland view at that moment.

“Media vita in morte sumus”, most frequently translated as; “In the midst of life we are in death”, has become associated with our burial rituals but is believed to originate in a New Year’s Eve service in the early 14th Century.

The Fate of All Art (Paul Tuppeny 2019): A quick diagrammatic montage (based on the heater control of a car) showing the blended passage of artworks from shared intent to historical artefact.

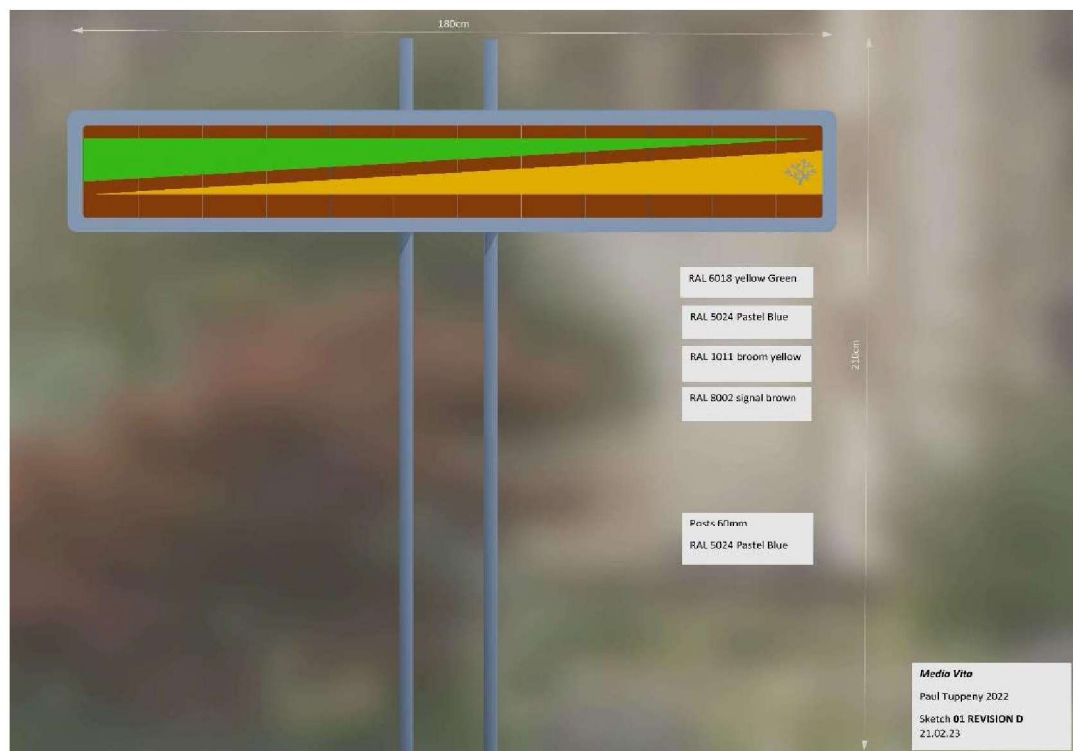


Early in the research project, I had prepared for my philosophy supervisor a graphic showing how artworks progressed from ‘intent’ to ‘history’ using as its basis the label (blue and red triangles) from the heater controls of a car.

Unfortunately, the destiny of artworks moves inexorably in only one direction, as it does for the individual leaves of the woodland. But, for the landscape itself, the generative flux of life and its passing, together with the colours that we associate with it, is cyclical.

Media Vita
Paul Tuppeny 2023

Production sketch for fabricators.





Media Vita at Wells Cathedral
Paul Tuppeny 2023

Printed road-sign, powder coated aluminium
and steel
240cmH x 180cmW x 80cmD

The reverse of the sign finished in sky-blue
but otherwise left as one of the ubiquitous
artefacts that populates our everyday lives.

Media Vita at St. Wulfran's, Ovingdean
Paul Tuppeny 2023

Printed road-sign, powder coated aluminium
and steel
240cmH x 180cmW x 80cmD

Pictured in Daphne's Field, St Wulfran's
Church, Ovingdean; it was fortunate that the
foliage state of the two trees behind the
work corresponded with the direction of the
graphic.

Our experience-based knowledge of the cyclical nature of the landscape lends to it the quality of endurance in its perception. The co-presentation of the environment's biograph as an "apperception" seems to balance the transformations that we experience in the real time hyletic sensory data; it is, perhaps, impossible for us to view the natural world without the "superaddition of this sense"²⁴ of balance (possibly even to the extent that we are unable to truly comprehend any consequence from the current crisis concerning the climate).

The sculpture, *Media Vita*, is a representation of the 'super-added' understanding which effectively 'labels' the view before us as incomplete and just a moment of the overall state of affairs; it is only one position on the 'temporal



²⁴Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 107.



Media Vita at Wells Cathedral
Paul Tuppeny 2023

Pictured in The Camry Garden to the South of the Church.

Media Vita at Wells Cathedral
Paul Tuppeny 2023

Media Vita at Hadlow Down (next page)
Paul Tuppeny 2023

In late 2023, Media Vita returned to Wilderness Wood in East Sussex to sit within the landscape that inspired the sculpture.

slider' which we apprehend through the phenomenon of age.

The artwork was conceived as the '*progress bar*' at the 'bottom of our screens'. It was, nevertheless, several months before the concept found a suitable carrier. Early proposals considered ways to present the green and yellow slider triangles as distinct objects in themselves, but it was found that when dissociated from each other, they no longer conveyed the sense of the balanced progression so important to the work.

Eventually, referring back to earlier artworks that re-purposed road-signs, I at last found a suitable physical manifestation for the piece. (Further detail concerning the fabrication is included in Appendix Two).

Media Vita was later displayed at Wells Cathedral as part of its annual contemporary art event, WAC2023.





Earth Man



Astronaut's Left Over-boot from Apollo 17

National Air and Space Museum, USA

Through our artefacts, our temporal experience of the Natural World is mediated, as well as our view of ourselves as part of that realm. *Earth Man* is a photograph of an Apollo astronaut's boot-print carved into the forest floor. It is a trace of our primordial selves, a footprint, mediated through our technology. The moon-landings are the stuff of science-legend and remain one of our closest encounters with science-fiction; Neil Armstrong's footprint is strangely both a symbol of our future and of our past.

The scale of the human ingenuity and sheer effort embedded in the Apollo boot is hard to comprehend even now, over fifty years on, and whilst the capability of our technology has surpassed this many times over, the ambition and potentialities of our species has not.

Of course, the current challenge for our species centres on this planet although it is a mission that

Earthman

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Image of sculpted trace

Using a boot-sole re-created in wood, an astronaut's foot-print was carved into the forest floor. Harsh lighting was used to imitate that of the original 1969 photographs taken by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.





Earthman

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Image of the sculpted trace

For the final rendering of the photograph, the lighting and colouring were adjusted to reflect conditions on the home planet, although saturations and luminances were set to retain a degree of alienness. The image no longer replicates the orientation of the original; the forward (upward) facing boot-print invites the viewer to place their own foot over that of the astronauts and to walk where they did.

struggles to capture our imagination in the same way as America's space program was able. By placing an astronaut's footprint on the forest floor, the artwork compresses humanity, from early forest dwelling hunter-gatherers to the sci-fi space traveller, into a single organism adhered to the world from which it evolved.

The monochrome photographs recording the landings, with their Hasselblad grid of cross hairs, have been absorbed into history and are part of our past. Aside from the red and blue flag,



Earthman
Paul Tuppeny 2023

The over-boot replica sole.

the Appollo missions were characterised by the blacks and whites of the technology and the grey dust and black sky of the Lunar destination. *Earth Man* recreates the framing of Armstrong's foot-print photo but in colour, reflecting the nature of *this* environment; whilst much of the frame is filled with yellow and brown leaf litter, there are a few glimpses of green.

For *Earth Man*, a copy of the lead over-boot worn by the Appollo Astronauts was made in wood. To recreate a 'moondust' footprint on the forest floor, it was necessary to carve out the recess before pressing the wooden sole, pasted with wet silt, into the hollow.

In *Earth Man*, there is both temporal and spatial dislocation. Our living world, made vivid through the age narratives by which we know it, displaces the inhospitable desolation of the surface of the Moon, but at the centre of the image there is the trace of a man. There is in this the sense, perhaps, of a homecoming.

NASA- Bootprint on the Lunar Surface

A close-up view of astronaut Buzz Aldrin's footprint in the lunar soil, photographed with the 70mm lunar surface camera during Apollo 11's sojourn on the moon. Image Credit: NASA

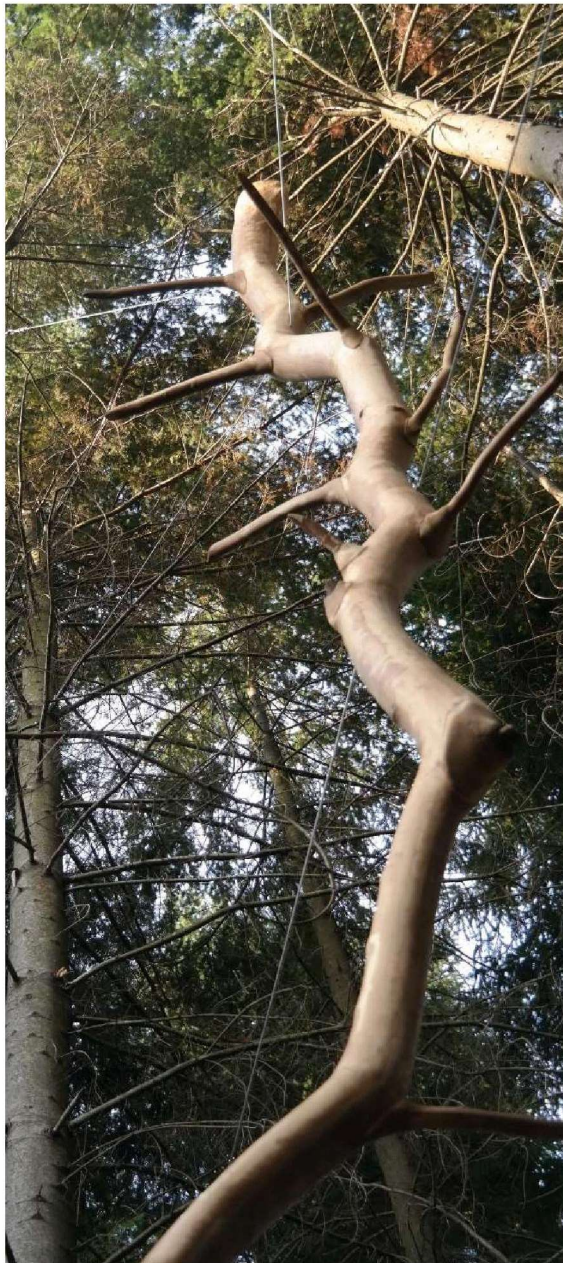


Art Practice Coda

Whilst it has been necessary to describe the art-practice and literature-based research in separate parallel accounts, they are intrinsically linked to one another, both in their actual progression and in the development of the overall *thesis*. It is clear in the above account of the art practice how aspects of existing thought have influenced the artworks but it will be perhaps less apparent how the artworks directed the traditional library-based component of the project.

With the prescient pieces at the beginning of the project, it was interesting how difficult it was to successfully subvert the many cues that we use to make our perceptual inferences of age. Reflecting on these works, their attempt to isolate one mechanism of age, as if it were something separable from *us*, appears naïve. But these pieces served a purpose by showing that our experience of age in objects is a phenomenon in which we have an *active* role. The image work, *Apple Ready*, showed an instinctive reading of this state of affairs and introduced our own age narrative as a fundamental component of the phenomenon.

During the pandemic, our own temporal situation seemed to dominate the art-practice with works that sought to find how age defined our destiny and our vulnerability within the world context. These, however, gave way to investigations into the way that our *interaction* with the world directs our experience of age which in turn moved the focus of the literature research towards more detailed phenomenological analysis of our perception.



Up To Now (Chestnut) Paul Tuppeny 2022

Chestnut, steel wire, Douglas fir
1100cmH x 180cmW x 180cmD

The sculpture viewed from below

The key artwork at this moment was *Oak Story Cubes* which seemed to reveal, in a very ‘hands-on’ way, how our cognitive age narratives might be constructed. In turn it directed the research towards the facets of perception through which



Oak Story Cubes
Paul Tuppeny 2021

Oak, cloth, card, found material
5cmH x 25cmW x 5cmD

it might facilitate the assimilation of material temporality (almost as if emulating my interaction with the artwork).

This research direction brought to the fore Husserl’s ideas concerning the fusing of background apperceptions with sensory data. This suggested that *narrative* apperceptions might be in play when we experience age, for the phenomenon is not evidenced by a singular perceptual judgement, but by the object, holding within itself both its *history* and its *destiny*.

The idea of narrative apperceptions led directly to the *Up To Now* series of sculptures. Through the alignment of material temporalities, the physical form of these works was able to elicit a temporal component as part of our perception of them.



Astronaut's Boot (Lead over-shoe)

In the area of age in artefacts, art-practice was displaced by my everyday experience of a world full of man-made things. For, whilst there are many artists quite comfortable making work that is *about* man-made things, I found that such pieces did not fit comfortably into my current way of working and felt, for me, unauthentic. It is for this reason, perhaps, that the last artwork made for the research showed only the *trace* of an artefact, the print of an astronaut's boot. That imprint was carved into the same forest floor that formed the basis for some of the earliest works of the project which had sought to situate our relationship with our ever-transforming world that we are only able to comprehend through the phenomenon of age. Quite fittingly, *Earth Man* acknowledges how our technology mediates that relationship, but then loops it back to bring our attention back to the planet whose flux not only underlies our experience of *age* but is the root of our *existence*.

CONCLUSION: The Phenomenon of Age and the Temporal Extension of Place

A Summary of the Project

This research project developed from an area of my art practice that had matured over several years. The earliest piece in this strand was called *The Resurrected Man with the Small Obsidian Mirror*, made in 2014. It was a wall-hung work comprising two identical vitrines hung side by side; the case on the left contained a gilt framed oil portrait of a man holding a circular mirror out toward the viewer with the case on the right displaying the mirror itself. The mirror on view in the second case is an ancient artefact, its frame corroded and gnarled by time, but its reflective surface is intact. The artwork's primary content rested in the mirror being contrived to give no reflection, opening as it did onto a black void, but the phenomenon of age extended the narrative in a number of ways. The condition of the mirror, as a damaged relic, speaks of something lost and rediscovered, and it gives a tangible temporal depth to the story that is being told. The mirror operates as a direct link to the man in the portrait who, through various age devices we conclude to be no longer alive. The foremost of these devices is, perhaps the gilt frame typical of many of the generations and epochs that preceded our own. This sense is reinforced by the portrait's sitter wearing military clothes and the tones and hue of the painting evoking those of a re-touched black and white photograph.

Our culture, through its stories and myths, seems grant to old or ancient objects *magical* powers or insight (the Harry Potter franchise makes frequent use of this) and this opens the viewer to the tacit *possibility* of an experience beyond everyday life. In attaching such meanings to old artefacts, it is almost as though they have somehow absorbed the speculations of the earlier cultures from which they derive, as well, perhaps, as our own fragmented understanding of those civilisations. In the artwork, the mirror, presented alongside the portrait of its former owner, in which it appears in an undamaged state, sends a message to us from beyond the grave, making its former owner (empathically) live again *through* the object.

The role of the vitrines, often described by their function as display cases, should not be overlooked, for it is these that introduce the contents as worthy of attention, as things that someone else is *presenting*, and that gently carry the viewer towards our current civilisation's familiar and established cultural contexts for things that are old and precious.

Through this artwork, the viewer was transported across time on a narrative journey led only by artefacts and I was curious as to how such temporal sense could be achieved through just

a few physical objects observed in one short gallery episode. Our perception immediately delivers these objects to us as either from the past (the gilt frame the painting and the damaged mirror) or of now (the display cases and the white gallery wall) even though we see them all in one *present* moment in the art gallery.

It is to my need to better understand this experience of age in objects that the research project owes its inception. Whilst it may have been feasible to conduct the research using only a traditional literature-based approach, the arts practice-led format has ensured that, through my capabilities as an artist, the physical objects under scrutiny were *always* the locus of the project. The arts practice was not, however, held as an object of the study, but a *tool* through which to acquire insight.

The research commenced by isolating and describing the signs and material language that triggered perceptual judgements of *age* and that were so evident in the interpretation of *The Resurrected Man with the Small Obsidian Mirror*. Simultaneously, I undertook several text-based exercises that sought to define the phenomenon and the human experience that was under scrutiny. These two approaches not only directed one another but also, in defining the many complex characteristics of *objective age*, suggested a pathway through the huge volume of literature that seemed to impinge on the subject but never seemed to address the matter comprehensively or ‘face-on’.

The progress of the research has therefore fallen into several recognisable phases, each marked by particular moments of new understanding that stem either from insights revealed through making and reflexive *art practice*, or from the observations and thoughts of others discovered through available *literature*. A summary of these phases is, perhaps, useful in understanding the course and progression of the research, the conclusions that developed from it, and the new contribution that it can offer to the field in its final speculative description of the phenomenon of age.

Material Temporality and Object Biographs

The first task of the combined art practice and literature-based research approach was to define more fully the phenomenon under study. Initially, the project referred to our experience of age in objects as “*material-chronology*” but this was shortly felt too prescriptive of the kinds of perceptual mechanisms that were being sought; in normal use, the term ‘chronology’ implies a *rational* act of temporal ordering and this is not what is actually experienced, our perception seemingly delivering to us objects with fully formed relative judgements concerning “oldness” or “newness” already embedded. It was, therefore, the *age* of the object that we directly feel,

rather than an *ordering* of its past events, although it was clear that a pre-cognitive chronologising of some sort might be a part of the process, even if not apparent to our awareness.

The term, *age phenomenon*, was then adopted to describe the experience that the research set-out to understand. It was a term borrowed from the field of material engineering, and was paired with a repurposed expression from Edmund Husserl, “material temporality,”⁵³² used to describe the temporal quality that the phenomenon of age seems to lend to the physical world.

Material temporality is a particularly striking facet of our experience of *age* in the objects around us. It is most evident in the natural things that constitute our environment which grow and decay through processes that seem completely inherent to their materiality. These natural things are in a constant flux and yet the world that we perceive and inhabit is not confused and daunting, as this could infer, but a relatively stable place in which we are able to pursue our own purposes quite successfully.

This is one of the most important *attributes* of the phenomenon of age, as it allows us to replace the *changing* physical characteristics of the natural world with an interlaced network of durable *object biographs*, which plot and predict those changes, and it is with these that we are able to truly *grasp* our transient environment; when we see a fruit or a bud, its ripening or its opening is *embedded* in our perception of it, as is its future decay.

John Locke considered what it was that constituted an oak, given that it changed shape, grew in size, shed leaves and then replaced them and he concluded that, whilst physically the plant individual amounted to an “organisation of...parts, as is fit to receive, and distribute nourishment, so as to continue, and frame the Wood, Bark, and Leaves &c,” it held that identity only whilst “partaking of one Common Life, though that Life be communicated to new particles of Matter vitally united to the living Plant.”⁵³³

Change Narratives

We are not however born with this ‘roadmap’ for the natural world; it is something that we must *learn* ourselves, even though the underlying processes for doing so seem to be pre-cognitive and hidden. I would hold that these temporally extended mental object models must derive from a perceptual capacity to order our observations of objects and, in this, our

⁵³² Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, trans. James S. Churchill (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press 2019), 168.

⁵³³ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding*, fourth edition (London: Elizabeth Holt, 1700), 180, 181.

perceptual mechanisms adopt a circular function, chronicling our observations of the changing natural world into coherent *narratives* and using those progressively more complex object narratives to order our observations of the changing world. It is, I contend, these pre-reflective comparative judgements, made through the process of perception, that we experience as *age* in an object, and that our perceptual faculties are not only predisposed to order the world in this way, but we are driven as a consequence to discover the signs that build and verify these biographic object narratives; nothing is excluded so everything we see has a ‘meta-narrative’ looking back to its past and forward into its future. In this way, the world is, for us, permeated with a *temporal dimension* that is derived from our experience of objective age.

This temporal dimension, by associating past and future duration with perceptual observations made in the present, is experienced as temporal *digressions* that run alongside the linear progress of our own life narrative in order that our interactions with the world are synchronised and aligned with its flux.

Through art practice, the elusive additional dimension was brought into the *physical* realm in the artworks, *Kids Rule* and *Oak Story Cubes*, which modelled and tested our narrative-building propensity as well as giving the temporal interpretation of their material immanent presence.

Apperceptions

It was Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological notion of the co-presented apperception that suggested a mechanism by which the judgements inferred in perception might become a *part of the perceived object* in the way we perhaps felt when we considered the fruit or buds mentioned above. For Husserl held that in the process of recognising an object, and of thus ‘taking-it-as’ a meaningful thing, the mental background with which it is “paired” (or compared) to arrive at the *match*, is presented ‘*alongside*’ the raw sensory data (the information provided directly by our senses), and fully “fused”⁵³⁴ with it into an effectively single percept of the object, one that actually holds within it the information by which it is *recognised* and that gives the object its *meaning*.

In an obscure and short notation, Husserl extends the notion of these perceptual adjuncts and describes how broken or altered objects might be revealed as such through the *co-presentation* of “ad-memorisations” of their previous or undamaged condition. He conjectured that, where

⁵³⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 122.

the object was not previously known, these apperceptions would be “analogous”⁵³⁵ derived wholly or in part from the imagination. Whilst Husserl did not extend his idea to the co-presentation of *chronologically ordered object biographies* which might confer *age* on the object, my extrapolation of the idea to include such narratives is, I believe, natural and credible.

The *idea* of narrative ad-memorisations was given a *spatial* presence in the *Up To Now* series of artworks which aligned several of the age phenomena progressions through which we *know* trees along one single upward growth vector. Apperceptions of *growth* through these signs are so powerfully evoked in us, that the sculptures are able to loop the phenomenon of age back on itself, reversing its narrative to imbue their *physical* form with qualities we actually feel as *temporal*. These artworks perhaps qualitatively demonstrated the veracity of the perceptual mechanisms that the research was starting to advance.

Temporal Archetypes

Fundamental to the change-narrative ad-memorisations that the research proposes, is the order in which they are composed, building out from the state in which the object holds most meaning for us. For Aristotle, this state represented the object’s actuality, or use, but such a narrow definition seemed to suggest that our assimilation of less useful objects, or objects that presently have no ready use, is in some way different and I do not believe this to be the case; before coming to Aristotle, I had employed the term “temporal archetype” and this seems in many ways more descriptive.

Whether or not related directly to use, these temporal archetypes are ‘imposed’ upon the object by us, the *subject*, and they refer wholly to *our* purposes. Since these archetypal states of objects are the loci around which we construct our temporal model of the world, they represent for us the fundamental bond between *our* needs and the fluctuating environment around us in which they must be met.

In the investigation of perceptual mechanisms for the experience of age, we turned to Heidegger’s notion that, in order to make sense of the things that constitute our environment, we conceptually project ourselves and our purposes forward amidst the possibilities of the

⁵³⁵ Christian Ferenz-Flatz, “Objects with a past: Husserl on “ad-memorising apperceptions””, *Continental Philosophy Review* 45(2) (2012):pp.171-188, p.172.

world, returning to the object to render it (the object) *meaningful*. This was realised in Thomas Sheehan's diagram shown (again) in figure 7.1 below.

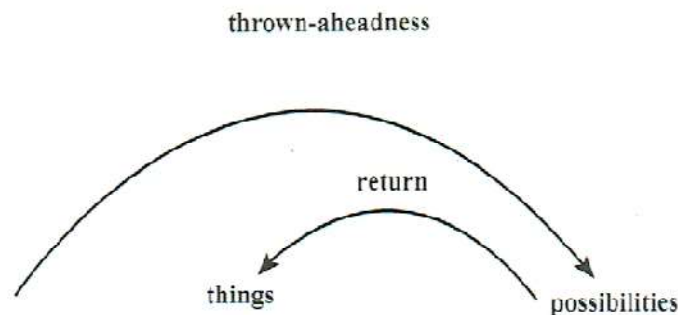


Figure 7.1 “The Open” reproduced from Thomas Sheehan, *Making sense of Heidegger: a paradigm shift*, (Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015), 147.

It seems evident that such futural projections are essential if we are to account for a natural world characterised by change. Fortunately, for the time-being at least, the changes inherent in our environment are cyclical and largely predictable, and the *object biographies* that we construct through our assimilation of objective age serve us well and allow us to grasp our environment in all its temporal complexities. The biographs do more, however, than simply *map* the transformations of the world. Since the perceptual inferences with which they are built, and the judgements they enable, refer directly back to the temporal archetypes ascribed to the object relative to *our* purposes. The research proposes that the perceptual judgements which underly the experience of objective age represent the temporal ‘distance’ between an encountered object and the archetype that we hold for it and, consequently, *the phenomenon of age thus directly corresponds to our needs, projects and desires*. Object biographies, and the experiences of age that we draw from them, thus represent the primary channels for our engagement with the world. Thomas Sheehan’s graphic illustration of how we ‘project’ ourselves forward ‘returning’ to the object to render it meaningful, was accordingly extended by the research to accommodate the fluctuating possibilities within an ever-changing world.

When Sheehan's diagram is situated within the world context of fluctuating and transformational environmental possibilities, the phenomenon of age becomes a mechanism that stitches us into the 'fabric' of that world.

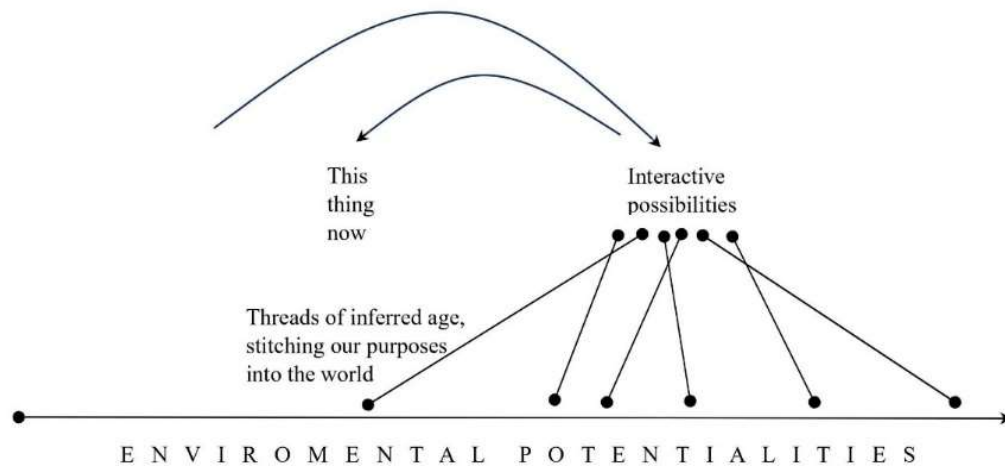


Figure 7.2 Sheehan's diagram adjusted to account for environmental flux and the showing the threads of age that both disclose this and 'stitch' us into the world.

The diagram in its extended version was observed to resonate with Merleau-Ponty's observation of the "intentionalities which anchor...[us] to an environment," "draw[ing] along in [their]... wake [their]... horizon of retentions, and bit[ing] into the future with [their] protensions."⁵³⁶

Whilst describing possible *mechanisms* that underly the phenomenon of objective age as a means of grasping the material temporality of the world, it is important not to overlook the fact that the applications of those perceptual processes go beyond *passive assimilation*, but profoundly orientate our interaction with our environment in the pursuit of our own survival goals.

In the attribution of meaning, the perceptual capabilities that interpret the material temporality of our environment allow us to 'carry' *our surroundings* with us as we project ourselves into future possibilities. With the phenomenon of age, these future moments are embedded and fused with the hyletic sensory data from the objects we encounter and become an integral part of those entities' meaning for us. Every object thus carries a durational *metatext* that, at its simplest, imbues it with qualities of endurance and persistence but also, in objects of greater significance, recount the object's past and project its future. The future of these objects

⁵³⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, (London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1962), 483, 484.

involves *us*, and our *projected* engagement with the object is as much a part of its meaning as more palpable qualities like size or texture.

Caring

In the early 1950's, Robert Rauschenberg, propelled by his belief that "a picture is more like the real world if it's made out of the real world"⁵³⁷ was constructing his Dirt Paintings in his studio at Fulton Street when some bird seed fell upon the amalgam of wet soil and glass fibre. The seed, of course, germinated and Rauschenberg saw immediately how these shoots lent additional poignancy to the "real-world" strand of his art practice at the time. He described what became known as the *Growing Painting(s)* in an interview in 1971:

"I did earth paintings, [1953 or 1954]... those paintings were about looking and caring. If somebody had a painting they would have to take care of it... I don't care what the motivation is, selfishly, unselfishly, if they're taking care of it because they're thinking more about the other person or they're taking care of it only because they're thinking about themselves, the result is the same, that they're taking care of it. And those were pieces that would literally die if you didn't water them. They were growing art pieces on the wall...and I said this is art, too."⁵³⁸



Figure 7.3. Robert Rauschenberg's *Growing Painting* 1953, photographed at the Stables Gallery in 1954.

Photo Robert Rauschenberg Foundation archive folder. 53.030

In this artwork Rauschenberg identified the central "constitutive phenomenon of human existence,"⁵³⁹ our ability to *care*. Whilst stemming directly from our engagement with a world in which things *matter* to us, with "care", we essentially "transcend...*immediate*...desire."⁵⁴⁰

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger similarly develops the notion of care, or *solicitude* [*Fürsorge*]⁵⁴¹. He even reproduces a classical myth in the body of the text

⁵³⁷ Calvin Tomkins, *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 87.

⁵³⁸ Maurice Tuchman and Robert Rauschenberg (interview for LACMA Art and Technology show 1971), *A report on the Art and Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County, 1971), 286. (SBN87587 0449) This text reproduced in more detail in Appendix One, Essay 2.

⁵³⁹ Rollo May, *Love and Will*, (New York: W W Norton, 1969) 290.

⁵⁴⁰ May, *Love and Will*, 268.[my emphasis]

⁵⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 157, 242. Macquarrie Robinson, responsible for the 1964 English translation of Heidegger's book, observes that in translating *fürsorge* as solicitude, they do not wish to convey 'caring for', as would be the literal

observing its evocation of ‘care’ as the “‘source’ of (humanity’s) Being.”⁵⁴²

Heidegger also places care as pivotal to our view of the *possible*; one commentator observing that humans are not “spectators for whom in principle, nothing would ‘matter’.”⁵⁴³ Heidegger, in this, follows Kierkegaard’s stance that *care* is essential to decision making and to consciousness generally.

Rauschenberg’s *Growing Painting* encapsulated not only our capacity to assimilate natural change, allowing us to project potentialities onto an object, but also draws-in our pre-disposition to experience those possibilities empathically.

The *Growing Painting*’s destruction came through an act of self-chastisement⁵⁴⁴ by the artist, accompanied, perhaps, by the realisation that the displacement of *living* elements from the “real world” carries, for most of us, an inescapable empathic *duty*,⁵⁴⁵ the *care* that Rauschenberg initially held as a component of the artwork was enabled through the phenomenon of age, but it was that same phenomenon that made his failure to provide enough care starkly manifest and that instilled the guilt that led him to destroy the artwork.

Being in The World Flux

From the outset of the project, the research and the art practice have been sensitive of our relationship with the natural environment, not only in our role as spectators ‘measuring’ the lives of the natural things around us, but as fully engaged participants in the world, subject to all of the forces that manifest themselves through the phenomenon of age; we too get older

translation, as this implies a ‘fondness’, but explain that it should be understood more as a social transaction, a “factual social arrangement”, noting that *fürsorge* is often used in contexts where we would talk of ‘welfare work’ or ‘social welfare.’ page 157

⁵⁴² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 242-243. ‘Once when ‘Care’ (Cura) was crossing a river, she saw some clay; she thoughtfully took up a piece and began to shape it... ‘Care’ asked Jupiter to give it spirit and this he gladly granted...Earth arose and desired that her...name be conferred on the creature, since she had furnished it with a part of her body...Saturn...made the following decision...: ‘Since you, Jupiter, have given its spirit, you shall receive that spirit at its death; and since you, Earth, have given its body, you shall receive its body. But since ‘Care’ first shaped this creature, she shall possess it as long as it lives...’ [my abridgement]

⁵⁴³ Frederick Olafson, *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 104.

⁵⁴⁴ The *Growing Painting* was exhibited only once, in 1954, and survives only as a photograph. Its destruction gives additional insight into object *care* relationships. Rauschenberg recounted this event in an interview with Barbara Rose in 1987: “I had a really good friend...I bought two beautiful white mice for him as a Christmas present...I was living on Fulton Street at the time and I didn’t have any heat. The poor mice froze to death in the night. So I broke the growing painting into bits. It was another sort of dying. The painting was having problems with the lack of heat anyway. And no one was particularly interested in it. They couldn’t see that there was more to it. There was the feeling that you have to take care of things in order to keep them going. That’s true with art. When the mice died, I killed the painting.”

⁵⁴⁵ As Husserl observed, our understanding of living things can only be derived from our personal sense of our own “animate” selves. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 113.

alongside the world that we look out upon and the feeling of urgency that originates from this is always close-at-hand; Heidegger, perhaps rather ominously, labelled it as our “being-toward-death”⁵⁴⁶ but it is an inescapable facet of our lives.

Through my art practice, I began to discern important distinctions between our temporal sense of Time and that in respect of *age*. For us, *Time*, seems to be in most part oriented and defined by the things that we and other humans do; even at the diurnal level, the true *meanings* we hold for the hours of the day stem from the activities that we perform at those times. Consequently, our spatial metaphors for Time run horizontally since this is the primary pattern of our own movement.

Age, to us, is quite different. *Age* has the sense of something imposed on the world and upon ourselves. Neither the temporality of Time nor that of age can be reversed, but it is in the latter that we truly *feel* this fact. Age does not move in two directions across the horizon in the way of Time and it does not project forward into an infinite future. With a slow exactness, age plots the world’s generative cycles; things grow up and things rot down; the axis for age is vertical, its zero datum, the floor.

Our lives are shaped in the confluence of these two temporalities, that of Time born from our will and our purpose, and that of age through which our possibilities are defined. The Chronologer artworks portray our being as the place where *Time* and *age* meet. In this, Chronologer represents the temporal ‘skeleton’ of our being and our stance toward the world.

In the Chronologer sculpture’s interior versions, the fundamental floor plane is conveyed using the visual weight of blocks of stone or wood that are conceived as an integral part of the sculpture. In the exterior manifestation, *Grown Up*, the actual ground is present in the surrounding lawn, drawn into the overall composition through its shared colour palette.

Age and the Man-Made Artefact

The phenomenon of age is the medium through which we address the flux of the world we find ourselves in, placing its imprint on all of the data that our senses provide, from the colours that we see to the physical feel of the things that we touch.

⁵⁴⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 279.

Whilst these perceptual mechanisms are clearly adaptations for life in a changing *natural* world, it is with the same cognitive skills that we must make sense of the human realm; it is through the same ‘glass’⁵⁴⁷ that we interpret the artefacts that we make.

Of course, the things that we make do not grow and change in the way of natural entities, but we still find within them pre-cognitive *intuitions concerning their age*. Some of these perceptual judgements emanate from the extrinsic degradation of the (often natural) materials from which they are made or from the inferred accumulation of ‘marks’ accrued subsequent to their manufacture, although these often serve only to show the veracity of *other* inferences relating to *other* changes that seem wholly *intrinsic* to the artefact. For, whilst particular individual artefacts may not transform by ‘nature,’ *categories* of artefact do hold within themselves transformations over time, be this through technological *innovation* or stylistic notions of *taste*. These durational transformations appear *integral* to the object, held *within* its form, and it is probable that our processes of recognition and perception are animated by biographic ad-memorisations for the object artefact’s *category* or *type*, very much in the same way as when we see fruit, trees or other natural entities.

The biographies that attach to artefacts can perhaps best be glimpsed in the work of artists like Louise Nevelson who fabricate their work in predominantly found material. Nevelson loved the chaotic human bustle of New York and made her approach to art quite clear when declaring



Figure 7.4. *Sky Cathedral* 1958, Louise Nevelson, MOMA, New York.

⁵⁴⁷ *Claude glasses* were small (sometimes obsidian) mirrors popular with 18th century tourists seeking to transform the landscape to match notions of the picturesque popularised by contemporary painters, Claude Lorrain among them.

that Paris was a “beautiful period piece but [she]...was more interested in the crap outside her window.”⁵⁴⁸ For her it seems, the sidewalk debris from which she made her work held within it the dynamism of the city and in much of her work, tall boxes appear to be *inhabited* by this “spiritualised”⁵⁴⁹ old junk. The timber components, salvaged from buildings and furniture of all periods, seem to carry within them their long history of human makers and, through the phenomenon of age, the progression and life of New York is laid out before the viewer, arrested by the artist in a single *now* moment under a temporally unifying layer of black paint.

Taking account of the fact that these man-made things do not, in themselves, grow or change, it is perhaps surprising that we are able to ascribe to their differing appearances any notion of duration to apply comparative terms such as old and older.

Martin Heidegger gave the matter of “pastness”⁵⁵⁰ his brief attention in *Being and Time* and concluded that the sense of a past that we gain from old articles stems, not from the things themselves, but from an apprehension of the people to whose world they once belonged.⁵⁵¹ He did not, however, propose how the object might *transmit* this past world to us in our present moment; for this, the project turned to some of the later work of his one-time tutor and friend, Edmund Husserl.

Husserl’s Co-Authored World

Fundamentally, Husserl held that the meaning that we give to all objects, particularly artefacts, is ‘intersubjectively’ derived and we effectively assimilate our environment as a ‘communal’ experience; Husserl even went so far as to propose that every moment of perception carries a meta-text conveying the shared nature of our world. Additionally, since we are inherently social creatures, it is important, if we are to cohere, that the objects that constitute our environment and that matter to us in our day-to-day lives, elicit similar meanings and affective responses in each of the constituent members of a community.

Husserl therefore proposes that this shared world is ‘co-authored’ by the individuals of a community into a single shared version using socialising “structures of harmonious verification,”⁵⁵² essentially those cultural activities, entertainments and communications that

⁵⁴⁸ Nevelson in Process, 1977, From the Vault films, The Metropolitan Museum, New York, 28 minutes, with Susan Fanshel, You Tube, posted The MET, Mar 2020.

⁵⁴⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz & Andre Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989), 249.

⁵⁵⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 432.

⁵⁵¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.

⁵⁵² Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 91.

are an integral part of our social living. We might reasonably expect that such a shared world would provide a stable point from which to confer un-changing meaning on the things around us.

It was noted, however, that whilst our communities may appear unchanging, their aggregated memory possesses a temporal component by virtue of the progression of the lives of its individual citizens. This temporalisation would pass largely unnoticed in wholly Natural settings, but Human communities make *things*, producing artefacts such as tools, buildings and artworks. These man-made entities emerge from their respective communities at discreet moments and are, in many ways, embodiments of the community's composition and culture at those particular instants. So, whilst the synchronic facets of changing communities lend them an outward appearance of stasis, their meaning-making and intersubjective practices of "verification" progress onward, adjusting the meaning of their artifacts to reflect the diachronic lives of its constituents.

Adopting Husserl's assertion of a co-authored "shared world," it is apparent that an artefact, when first made, will carry only the meanings intended on it by its creators' community at that epoch from which it derives. From there on, however, as generative processes bring new constituents to the community and other progress through their lives, *new strata of meaning* are sedimented over that originary intent. Simultaneously, those first *meanings* are slowly eroded.

Eventually, all of the meaning attaching to an artefact comprises strata laid down subsequent to its original construction and the object can begin to assume the character of something 'alien' and that is *temporally* distant, in a similar manner to artefacts from communities that are *geographically* distinct. Such cultures, Husserl held, are "accessible only by a kind of 'experience of someone else', a kind of 'empathy', by which we project ourselves into the alien cultural community and its culture."⁵⁵³ It is, perhaps, this that is in play when we watch historical dramas or visit museums and heritage sites, the additional empathic exertion involved in these cultural pursuits heightening our experience of the medium or of the artefact.

Our affective experience of heritage is dominated by the empathic projection of ourselves onto our forbears. The generational succession that underlies our culture is made manifest by our capability to experience *objective age* phenomenally through our artefacts but it is only their embodied human intent that gives this meaning. In the assimilation of these past cultural objects we empathically project *ourselves* backwards through history. Husserl believed that

⁵⁵³ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* Husserl, 134/135.

all artefacts are empathically understood as the residue of human intent “sprung from somebody’s actions”⁵⁵⁴ and that the community from which the cultural object originates is



apperceptively co-presented as a component of its meaning; in these objects, we see (dead) people.

Occasionally, we get to meet these ancestors *face-to-face* (above) and it is quite startling how, for us, the human form can transcend Time. The ancient context of the Roman family portrait (above) is belied only through the style of the few artefacts that accompany the group, and yet, in our search for representations of ourselves, these are the first thing that we dismiss from our perception of the people. Perversely, as Norman Bryson observed, “under certain conditions, such as those exemplified by the Keramus portrait, the image seems to... [sublime] the historical dimension altogether.”⁵⁵⁵

The people that we sense in more mundane heritage artefacts are essentially no less *real* even

Figure 7.5. *Family of Vunnerius Keramus*, portrait medallion on a cross, inscribed, engraved gold leaf, glass, c. AD 250; cross, 8th century AD (Brescia, Museo Civico dell’Età Romana); photo credit: Scala/Art Resource, NY (left). Family group with artefacts removed (right).

if a little less vivid; their existence outside the present is a purely qualitative perceptual inference derived from the unfamiliarity of the object to which their apperception attaches.

⁵⁵⁴ Hua XXXIX, p.370 cited Ferrencz-Flatz, “The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts,” 362.

⁵⁵⁵ Norman Bryson, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, (Houndmills: Macmillan Academic and Professional, 1991), 7.

Contrary to the horror aspects of the film *Sixth Sense* (obliquely referenced above), we seem to find the inclusion of these absent ancestors in our lives of some comfort and gain genuine pleasure from the “age value”⁵⁵⁶ inherent in our experiences of our heritage. These experiences are, in fact, such an intrinsic part of our everyday lives that the set designers of the iconic science fiction television series, *Star Trek*, saw that Captain Kirk may need to maintain such links with his cultural past through the inclusion of historic artefacts in his otherwise futuristic cabin.



Figure 7.6. William Shatner, as Captain Kirk, in his cabin aboard the USS Enterprise in the original Television Series *Star Trek*.

The temporal extension of the spatial realm

The phenomenon of age is fundamental in our lives in many ways. Our focus, however, on the physical manifestations that underly our *personal* experience of it often obscures the central role that *age* plays in our understanding and stabilising the world of objects that is *outside* and all around us.

I have sought in this research to propose mechanisms by which our perceptual apparatus allows us to experience age in objects, and to show how the necessities of our Natural existence *compel* us to make the pre-cognitive judgements on which it is based. This lends to our perceptions a temporal dimension which, augmenting and operating alongside its spatial counterparts, delivers moment by moment glimpses toward the past and the future. Neither the view forward or the one over our shoulder can be considered *factual*, but they are *adequate projections that relate directly to our needs*.

⁵⁵⁶ Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development," *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, edited by Nicholas Stanley Price, M. Kirby Talley Jr. and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro (New York: Getty Museum Publications: 1996).

This temporal extension of our spatial realm, of *place*, although initiated through our dealings with Nature, is transposed to the cultural sphere through the exercise of those same perceptual mechanisms on the products of our own manufacture, our artefacts. However, in these man-made environments, there is a curious *reversal* between the chronologised and the chronologise-*er*, for when we experience age in the products of our technicity, it is not founded in the life of the *object*, but in the finitude and passing of ourselves, the *subject*. Once again though, it is the intuitions of age that tie our being (and our equipment) to the world through which we progress our lives.

The research began with the objective of understanding the perceptual mechanisms by which the things that we behold in a single moment are delivered to our consciousness with qualities that are essentially *temporal* and seem somehow to refer to an object's pastness, a state that is not before the viewer at that moment and very often a condition that they may never have actually seen.

Through the practice of art, nurtured by corresponding investigations from the parallel field of phenomenology, the research has constructed a model of the perceptual processes that enable us to feel *age* in the objects around us. In this the artworks have performed firstly as tools of discovery, defining and directing the course of the research, but then as instruments of communication, discussion and reflection. Through the pairing of art and philosophy, the thesis delivers a new and unique insight into a phenomenon that has been largely overlooked.

Beauty in Age

John Ruskin noticed how we are able to find beauty in the marks of age, but the most overarching observation emerging from the project is that it is not just any sense of beauty that originates in the beholder, but the experience of age itself.

However, our inference of age upon the things around us is not purely the pleasurable act that Ruskin's remarks suggest, it is an essential mediating layer in our engagement with the world and a fully integrated component of our perceptual capabilities.

It is, though, an inescapable fact that we genuinely find pleasure in old things, many of us investing time and resources on antique artefacts that have no strictly functional value, other than to induce in us the phenomenon of age derived from the object; sometimes the use, end or actuality of an artefact is simply for us to enjoy the perceptual *age* experience that we draw from it. Indeed, this positive affect, often lends to the phenomenon profoundly aesthetic characteristics to the extent that we should, perhaps, re-evaluate our interpretation of old artworks, especially those in gilt frames; we need to separate meaning developed through

content and that derived from *age* and ask whether these things are *beautiful* or are they just *old*?⁵⁵⁷

Whilst questioning the old, we must also question the new for it is toward the *new* that our everyday valorising of artefacts more generally leans. Experience generally confers better functional characteristics on the newly-made artefact although, as we observed earlier, our perceptual inferences of age seem to be bestowed not only through usability or technological innovation but through the nuances of design or style that reflect communal ‘taste’. In this it seems that, as a species, we are somehow ‘driven’ to enact these progressive changes to the appearance of the things that we make purely to *satisfy* an inherent need to see age in *every* thing. The resultant prerequisite to manifest ‘newness’ in the new appears, superficially, to be harmless, but I believe that it is a principal factor in the last few centuries’ unsustainable patterns of consumption.

Putting aside these negative associations, our experience of age through artefacts reflects back to us facets of our being, both as members of enduring social communities and as finite

⁵⁵⁷ Note on Aesthetics: The research has sought to maintain a distance from general discussions concerning *aesthetics*. It is inescapable, though, that our experience of the phenomenon of age, particularly in our artefacts, does invoke in us reactions and *positive affect* that are associated with the “aesthetic response”, however varied definitions of that may be.

The experimental psychologist, Slobodan Marković, defines the aesthetic experience as one “qualitatively different from everyday experience and similar to other exceptional states of mind.” Within this he identifies three fundamental characteristics, “...fascination,... appraisal... and a strong feeling of unity with the object...” (Slobodan Marković, Components of aesthetic experience: aesthetic fascination, aesthetic appraisal, and aesthetic emotion, in *i-Perception*, 2012; 3(1): 1-17 Published online 2012 Jan 12. doi: 10.1068/i0450aap, p.1) In his preliminary definitions, Marković identifies three fundamental characteristics of the aesthetic experience:

1. The “...motivational, orientational or attentive aspect where the viewer is “highly focused on and fascinated by the object,
2. the “...cognitive, that is, semantic symbolic and imaginative aspect...” wherein symbolic interpretations transcend the everyday reality of the object, and... (*continued over...*)
3. the “affective” aspect in which the person has an “...exceptional emotional experience..., a strong feeling of unity with the object...” and the “...so called *Aha experience* of intellectual insight...” (Slobodan Marković, Components of aesthetic experience: aesthetic fascination, aesthetic appraisal, and aesthetic emotion, in *i-Perception*, 2012; 3(1): 1-17 Published online 2012 Jan 12. doi: 10.1068/i0450aap, p.3-4)

Interestingly in the context of this research project, he attaches parallel sub-levels of narrative information processing which include “story (theme) and symbolism (deeper meanings)” (Slobodan Marković, Components of aesthetic experience: aesthetic fascination, aesthetic appraisal, and aesthetic emotion, in *i-Perception*, 2012; 3(1): 1-17 Published online 2012 Jan 12. doi: 10.1068/i0450aap, p.1) as well as physical compositional attributes.

Very much in the same way that Alva Noë proposes that artworks extend everyday actions of visual perception, it seems that, in our collecting of antiques or visiting museums and other heritage institutions, we are similarly engaged in extending and ‘stretching’ our capacity to make perceptual inferences of age. In these activities, there is a clear correlation with the facets of the aesthetic experience described above.

individuals. In the natural realm, the phenomenon mediates in our engagement with the natural world, but through the heritage that age reveals to us in our artefacts, we can situate our individual transience and perhaps even catch a glimpse of what it truly is to be Human.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Bibliography for the current Thesis document

Altamirano, Marco, *Time Technology and Environment*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

Aristotle, *Aristotle's Metaphysics: A Revised Text with Introduction and Commentary*, Translated by William David Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924.

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Translated by Hugh Lawson-Tancred. London: Penguin, 1998.

Aristotle, *Physics*, Translated by Robert Purves Hardie & R. K. Gaye. Oxford: Oxford University Press 1930.

Aristotle, *Physics*, Translated by Robin Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Arnheim, Rudolph, *Entropy and Art an Essay on Disorder and Order*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1971.

Arrhenius, Thordis, "The Fragile Monument: On Alois Riegl's Modern Cult of Monuments." *Nordisk Arkitekturforskning*, (2003):4

Arvidson, Sven P. *The Sphere of Attention: Context and Margin*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2006.

Augustine, *Confessions*, Translated by J. Pilkington, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.

Banega, Horacio M. R. "Husserl's Diagrams and Models of Immanent Temporality," *Quaestiones Disputate*, Vol.7, No.1 (Fall 2016): 47-73.

Bar, Moshe. "A cortical mechanism for triggering top-down facilitation in visual object recognition" *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*. 15 (4) (2003): 600-609.

Beckett, Samuel. *Proust*. New York: Grove Press, 1957.

Beckett, Samuel. *That Time*. London: Faber and Faber, 1976.

Bergson, Henri, *Matter and Memory*. New York: Dover, 2004.

Biederman, Irving, "Recognition-by-Components: A theory of Human Image Understanding," *Psychological Review*, Vol. 94, no.2, (1987): 115-147

Biederman, Irving. "Recognition-by-Components: A theory of Human Image Understanding," *Psychological Review*, Vol. 94, No. 2, (1987): 115-147.

Birnbaum, Daniel. *Chronology*. New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2005.

Bradley, Richard. *An Archaeology of Natural Places*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Brennand, Mark and Margerie Taylor, "The Survey and Excavation of a Bronze Age Timber Circle at Holme-Next-the-Sea, Norfolk, 1998-9", *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, Vol. 69 (2003):1-84.

Brentano, Franz. *Deskriptive Psychologie*, Edited by Roderick M. Chisolm & W. Baumgartner. Hamburg: Meiner, 1982.

- Brentano, Franz. *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, Translated by D.B. Terrell, Edited by Roderick M. Chisholm, Realism and the Background of Phenomenology (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1960).
- Breuer, Irene. "Phenomenological reflections on the intertwining of violence, place and memory: The memorials of the ungraspable", *Studia Phaenomenologica (On Conflict and Violence)* Vol. 19 (2019): 153-174.
- Brian Magee, *The Great Philosophers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Broad, Charlie Dunbar. *Scientific Thought*. London: Keegan Paul 1923.
- Brough, John Barnett, "Husserl and the Deconstruction of Time," *Review of Metaphysics* 46 (March 1993): 503-536
- Bryson, Norman, *Vision and Painting: The Logic of the Gaze*, (Houndmills: Macmillan Academic and Professional, 1991), 7.
- Burke, Luke. "On the Tunnel Effect," *Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* 4 (1952):121-138.
- Byrne, Thomas. "The Origin of the Phenomenology of Feelings," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* Vol.53 No.4, (2022): 455-468.
- Cage, John (in an interview with Michael Kirby and Richard Schechner). "An Interview with John Cage," *The Tulane Drama Review* 10, no.2 (Winter, 1965): 52-53.
- Cage, John. "On Rauschenberg , Artist, And His Work," in *Silence Lectures and Writings*. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961.
- Cezanne, Claude. *A Memoir with Conversations*. London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991.
- Chatwin, Bruce. *The Songlines*, London: Vintage, 1987.
- Chiang, Ted. "Story of Your Life", *Stories of Your Life and Others*, 109-172. New York: Tor, 2002.
- Cramer, G. "Fractals in Camouflage and the Future of Adaptive Materials for Mobile Concealment", *Proceedings of the International Congress on Uniforms organised by the Royal Museum of the Armed Forces and of Military History in co-operation with ICOMAM Brussels, 13-15th October 2010 edited by Ilse Bogaerts & Werner Palinckx* (Brussels, 2010)
- Dainton, Barry. "Temporal Consciousness," *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/consciousness-temporal/>
- Dainton, Barry. "William Stern's Psychische Präsenzzeit," *The Routledge Handbook of Temporal Experience*. London: Routledge 2017.
- Davidson, James, "Revolutions in Human Time" in *Rethinking Revolutions in Ancient Greece*, Edited by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

- Deming, Richard. "Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College, 1933-1957," *Artforum*, 54 no.7 (March 2016), <https://www.artforum.com/events/leap-before-you-look-black-mountain-college-1933-1957-2-216924/>
- Dennett, Daniel, and Marcel Kingsbourne, "Time and the observer: The where and when of consciousness in the brain," *Behavioural and Brain Sciences*, 15 (2) (1992): 183-201.
- Dickerman, Leah. "'Disciplined by Albers:' Foundations at Black Mountain College," in *Robert Rauschenberg* Edited by Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume. London: Tate Publishing, 2019.
- Dickerman, Leah. "'Disciplined by Albers:' Foundations at Black Mountain College," *Robert Rauschenberg* Edited by Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume. London: Tate Publishing, 2016.
- Dreyfus, Hubert L. *Being-in-the-World*. New Baskerville, MA: MIT Press, 1991.
- Ehrenzweig, Anton. *The Hidden Order of Art*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1967.
- Farah, Martha J. & James L. McClelland. "A computational model of semantic memory impairments: Modality specificity and emergent category specificity", *Psychological Review* 120 (1991):339-357.
- Farrell, Brian. "Experience," *Mind* 59 (April 1950): 170-98.
- Ferencz-Flatz, Christian . "The Empathetic Apprehension of Artefacts: A Husserlian Approach to Non-figurative Art", *Research in Phenomenology* 41 (2011): 358-373.
- Ferenz-Flatz, Christian. "Objects with a past: Husserl on "ad-memorising apperceptions"", *Continental Philosophy Review* 45(2) (2012): 171-188.
- Ferrencz-Flatz, Christian. "The Empathetic Apprehension of Artifacts: A Husserlian Approach to Non-figurative Art" *Research in Phenomenology* 41 (2011): 358-373.
- Fewster, Helen (Editor) *The Science of Plants*. London: Penguin Random House, 2022.
- Flombaum, Jonathan, Brian Scholl & L. Santos, "Spatiotemporal priority as a fundamental principle of object persistence," *The Origins of object knowledge*, 135-164. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Forrest, Peter. "The Real But Dead Past: A Reply to Braddon-Mitchel," *Analysis*, 64 (2004): 358-62.
- Foster, Hal. "Made Out of the Real World: Lessons from the Fulton Street Studio", *Robert Rauschenberg* Edited by Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume. London: Tate Publishing, 2016.
- Foster, Hal. "'Made Out of the Real World:' Lessons from the Fulton Street Studio," in *Robert Rauschenberg* edited by Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume. London: Tate Publishing, 2019.
- Føllesdal, Dagfinn. "Sixty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the American Philosophical Association Eastern Division," *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol.66, no.20 (Oct. 16, 1969),]: 680-687.

- Gabo, Naum, and Antoine Pevsner, "Realistic Manifesto 1920", *Obelisk Art History*, arthistoryproject.com,
- Gallagher, Shaun, The Past, Present and Future of Time-Consciousness: From Husserl to Varela and Beyond, *Constructivist Foundations* vol. 13, no.1 (2017): 91-116
- Gell, Alfred, *The Anthropology of Time*. Oxford: Berg, 1996.
- Gell, Alfred. *The Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries*. London: Athlone Press, 1975.
- Genette, Gérard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, Translated by Jane Lewin. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982.
- Gilpin, William. *Observations on the River Wye: and several parts of South Wales, &c. relative chiefly to picturesque beauty; made in the summer of the year 1770*, second edition. London: Balmire, 1789.
- Gschwandtner, Christina. "Revealing the Invisible," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, Vol. 28, No. 3, special issue with the society for phenomenology and existential philosophy (2014): 305-314.
- Gubser, Michael. *Time's Visible Surface, Alois Riegl and The Discourse on History and Temporality in Fin de Siècle Vienna*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006.
- Heidegger, Martin. *History of the Concept of Time*, Translated by Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Heidegger, Martin. "The Origin of the Work of Art," *Basic Writings*. Edited by David Farrell Krell. London: Routledge, 2011.
- Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Basic Writings* Edited by David Farrell Krell, 213-238. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Heidegger, Martin. "The Thing," *Poetry, Language, Thought*. New York; London: Harper and Row, 1971.
- Henry, Michel. *Seeing the Invisible: On Kandinsky*. Translated by Scott Davidson. London: Continuum 2009.
- Hompe, Roosmarijn, & Adelheid Smit 'Please Write!' *Paul Thek and Franz Deckwitz: An Artists' Friendship* (Rotterdam, Museun Boijmans Van Beuningen, 2015.
- Hooke, Robert. *Micrographia : or Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made by Magnifying Glasses. With Observations and Inquiries Thereupon*. London: Printed by Jo. Martyn, and Ja. Allestry ... and are to be sold at their shop ..., 1665.
- Hopps, Walter. *Robert Rauschenberg: the early 1950s*. Houston: The Menil Foundation and Houston Fine Art Press, 1991.
- Howells, Christina, & Moore, Gerald, *Steigler and Technics*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.
- Hume, David. *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2006.
- Hume, David. *Treatise of Human Nature*. London: Longmans Green & Co. 1878.

- Humphreys, Glyn W. & Emer M.E. Forde, "Hierarchies, similarity, and interactivity in object recognition: "Category-specific" neuropsychological deficits," *Behavioural and Brain Sciences* 24, (2001): 453-509.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, Translated by Dorion Cairns. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas I: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, Translated by William Ralph Boyce Gibson, London: Routledge, 2012.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, Translated by Richard Rojcewicz & Andre Schuwer. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989.
- Ireland, John. *Hogarth Illustrated*. London: J&J Boydell, 1793.
- James, William. *The Principles of Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt, 1890.
- Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris, 'We're here because we're here,' edited by Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris. London: Cultureshock/Thames and Hudson, 2017.
- Kanai, Ryota and Frans A.J. Verstraten, "Visual Transients without Feature Change are sufficient for the percept of a change" *Vision Research* 44, (2004): 2233-2240.
- Kant, Emanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Translated by Norman Kemp Smith. London: Macmillan, 1929.
- Kleinberg-Levin, David, *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Perception, Volume 1*, London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020.
- Koch, Christof. *The Quest for Consciousness*. Boulder, Colorado: Roberts & Co. 2004.
- Kossalleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past: on the semantics of historical time*, New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 2004.
- Kubler, George, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970.
- Kuhn, Helmut . "The Phenomenological Concept of 'Horizon,'" *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl* Edited by M. Farber. Cambridge Mass. Harvard University Press, 1941.
- Lang, Karen, (Editor), *Field Notes on the Visual Arts*, Bristol: Intellect, 2019.
- Larkin, Graham. "Things Fall Apart: Graham Larkin on The Object in Transition", *Artforum*, 46 No.8 (April, 2008): 153-156. <https://www.artforum.com/columns/the-object-in-transition-187834/>
- Leroi-Gourhan, André. *Milieu et techniques*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1945.
- Leroi-Gourhan, André. *Évolution et techniques: Milieu et techniques*. Paris, Albin Michel, 1973.
- Levi Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind (La Pensee Sauvage)*. London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1974.

- Libet, Benjamin. *Mind Time: the temporal factor in consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding In Four Books*, fourth edition. London: Elizabeth Holt, 1700.
- Lucy, John A. "Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis," *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 13486-13490. Elsevier, 2001.
- Lynne, Jessica. "I got to be the Artist I Wanted to Be: Sculptor Maren Hassinger on What Success Looks Like for a Black Artist in America," *Art Net News* (July 2, 2021) <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/maren-hassinger-interview-dia-1982005>
- Marion, Jean-Luc . "What We See and What Appears," *Idol Anxiety*. Edited by Josh Ellenbogen and Aaron Tugendhaft, 152-168. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011,.
- Marion, Jean-Luc. *In Excess, Studies of Saturated Phenomena*. Translated by Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud. New York: Fordham University Press, 2002.
- Marion, Jean-Luc. *The Crossing of the Visible*. Translated by James K. A. Smith. Stanford: Stanford Uni. Press, 2004.
- Martin, Wayne, Tania Gergel and Gareth S. Owen, "Manic Temporality," *Philosophical Psychology*, 32(1) (2019): 72-97.
- May, Rollo. *Love and Will*. New York: W W Norton, 1969.
- McCall, Storrs. *A Model of the Universe*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994.
- McTaggart, John M. E. "The Unreality of Time", *Mind*, 18 (1908): 457-84.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*, Translated by Colin Smith. London: Routledge Kegan & Paul, 1962.
- Moran, Dermot. "Husserl and Gurtwitsch on Horizontal Intentionality: The Gurtwitch Memorial Lecture 2018", *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 50 (2019): 1-41.
- Morgan, Lyndsey, and Jackie Heuman, "Tate Sculpture Replica Project," *Tate Papers* no. 8, (2007), ISSN 1753-9854, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/08/tate-sculpture-replica-project>
- Morris, Hargreaves, McIntyre, *14-18Now Evaluation: 2016 Season*, (May 2017). https://issuu.com/1418now/docs/14-18_now_evaluation_report_2016_-_
- Murez, Michel, Francois Recanati "Mental Files: An Introduction," *Review of Philosophy and Psychology*, 7 (2016): 265-281.
- Nemser, Cindy. "An Interview with Eva Hesse," *Artforum* Vol. 8, No. 9 (May 1970): 59-63.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science*. Translated Josefine Nauckhoff, Adrian Del Caro, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Noë, Alva, *Action in Perception*, Cambridge M.A.: MIT Press, 2006.

- Noë, Alva. "Art and Entanglement in Strange Tools: Reply to Noël Carroll, A. W. Eaton, and Paul Guyer," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, (January, 2017), Vol. 94 No.1(January, 2017): 238-250.
- Olafson Frederick, *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987.
- Owen, Chris (Director), *The Red Bowmen*, Documentary Educational Resources, Watertown, MA
- Peirce, Charles. *The Essential Peirce, Volume 2*, edited by Peirce Edition Project. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1998.
- Phylyshyn, Zenon W. "Visual Indexes, preconceptual objects, and situated vision," *Cognition* 80 (2001):127-158.
- Prosser, Simon. *Experiencing Time*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Proust, Marcel. *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu: Time Regained*. London: Penguin Modern Library Classics, 1999.
- Pryor, Francis. *Britain B.C.: Life in Britain and Ireland Before the Romans*. London: Harper Collins, 2003.
- Rankin, Elizabeth. "A Betrayal of Material: Problems of Conservation in the Constructivist Sculpture of Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner," *LEONARDO*, Vol.21, no.3, (1988): 285-290.
- Rava, Antonio. "Robert Rauschenberg," *Conserving Contemporary Art: Issues, Methods, Materials and Research*, Edited by Oscar Chiantore and Antonio Rava. Los Angeles, the Getty Conservation, 2012.
- Recenati, Francois. *Mental Files in Flux*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Reid, Thomas. *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*. University Park: Pennsylvania University Press 2002.
- Reigl, Alois. "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development," *In Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* Edited by Price, Nicholas Stanley, M. Kirby Talley Jr. and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro. New York: Getty Museum Publications: 1996.
- Rensink, Ronald A. "Change Detection," *Encyclopaedia of Perception*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, 2009.
- Riegl, Alois, *The Modern cult of Monuments: Its Character and its Origin (1903)*, translated by Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo," *Oppositions*, n.25 (Fall 1982), 21-51.
- Robert Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making", *Art Forum*, Vol. 8, No. 8, (April 1970): 62-66.
- Rose, Barbara, and Robert Rauschenberg. *An Interview With Robert Rauschenberg*. New York: Vintage Books, 1987.

- Ross, David. *A Visitor's Guide to St Wulfrans Church in the Parish of Ovingdean*. Ovingdean: St Wulfran's Parochial Church Council, 2018.
- Rubenstein, Steven. "A Head for Adventure," *Tarzan was an Eco-Tourist*. Edited by Luis Vivanco and Robert Gordon. New York: Berghahn, 2006.
- Rubio, Fernando Domínguez. "Preserving the unpreservable: docile and unruly objects at MOMA," *Theory and Society* 43, (29th Aug. 2014): 617-645.
- Ruskin, John. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Third Edition. London: Smith Elder, 1855.
- Scholl, Brian J. "Object Persistence in Philosophy and Psychology," *Mind and Language*, 22 (2007): 563-91.
- Sheehan, Thomas. *Making sense of Heidegger; A paradigm shift*. Lanham MD: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2015.
- Sheehan, Thomas. "Sense and Meaning: From Aristotle to Heidegger" *The Blackwell Companion to Hermeneutics*, Edited by Niall Keane & Chris Lawn, 270-279. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.
- Simmel, Georg. *The Adventure, "Das Abenteuer," Philosophische Kultur. Gesammelte Essays ([1911] 2nd ed.; Leipzig: Alfred Kroner, 1919)*. Translated by David Kettler, De Paul University, <https://condor.depaul.edu/dweinste/theory/adventure.html>
- Simmel, Georg. "The Adventure" (orig.1911) *Georg Simmel 1858-1918*. Edited by Kurt Wolff. Columbus: Ohio State University Press 1959.
- Simondon, Gilbert. *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*. Paris: Presses Universitaires, 1958.
- Sokolowski, Robert. "The Logic of Parts and Wholes in Husserl's Investigations," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* Vol 28, No.4 (Jun. 1968): 537-553.
- Sol. R. Guggenheim Museum, "The afterlife of Eva Hesse's Expanded Expansion," (documentary film), Sol. R. Guggenheim (July 2022) <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/the-afterlife-of-eva-hesses-expanded-expansion>
- Spence, Joseph. *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters of Books and Men Collected from Conversation*, Edited by James M. Osborn. Oxford: Clarendon, 1966.
- Stanley Price, Nicholas, Kirby Talley, Mansfield, and Melucco Vaccaro, Allesandro, Eds, *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1996.
- Starke, Marianna. *Informations and Directions for Travellers on the Continent*, 6th edition. London, Murray, 1828.
- Steigler, Bernhard, *Technics and Time 1; The Fault of Epimetheus*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Steinberg, Leo. *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

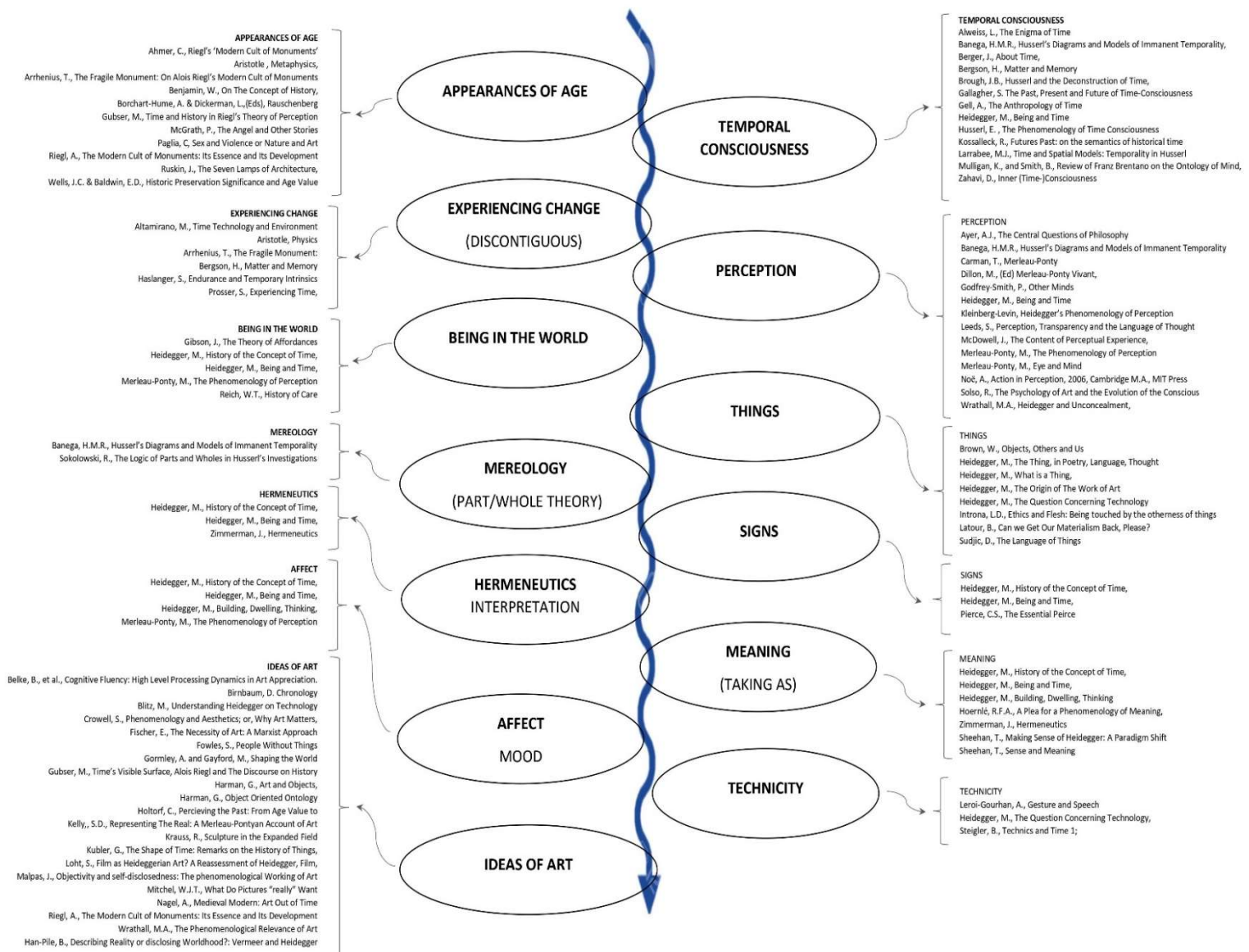
- Stern, William. "Mental Presence-Time," Translated by. N. De Warren, Edited by C. Wolfe, 310-359. *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Research* V. London: College Publications, 2005.
- Stern, William. "Psychische Präsenzzeit [Psychic presence-time], *Zeitschrift für Psychologie und Physiologie der Sinnesorgane* XIII (1897): 325-349.
- Sterne, Laurence . "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent." *The Works of Laurence Sterne*. London: J. Johnson, 1803.
- Strawson, Galen. "The self," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*. 4. (1997): 405-428. 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199262618.003.0032.).
- Suddendorf, Thomas & Michael Corballis, "Mental time travel and the evolution of the human mind". *Genet. Soc. Gen. Psychol. Monogr.* 123 (1997): 133-167.
- Suddendorf, Thomas, D.R. Addis,., Michael Corballis, "Mental time travel and the shaping of the human mind," *Philosophical Transactions Royal Society Biological Sciences*, 364(1521) (2009, May 12):1317-1324.
- Tacitus, Cornelius. *The History, Complete Works of Tacitus*, Edited by Alfred John Church, William Jackson Brodribb. Sara Bryant for Perseus. New York: Random House, 1873.
- Tomkins, Calvin. *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time*. New York: Doubleday, 1980.
- Tuchman, Maurice, and Robert Rauschenberg (interview for LACMA Art and Technology show 1971), *A report on the Art and Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County, 1971. (SBN87587 0449)
- Tulving, Endel. "Chronesthesia: Conscious Awareness of Subjective Time," *Principles of Frontal Lobe Function*, Donald T Stuss & Robert T. Knight, 311-325. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Volent, Paula. "When Artists' Intent is Accidental: Artists' Acceptance of and Experimentation with Changes and Transformations in Materials," *Modern Works, Modern problems? Conference Papers*, Edited by Alison Richmond London: Institute of Paper Conservation, 1994.
- Volkman, Toby Alice. *The Red Bowmen (Study Guide)*, Edited by Razan Alzayani. Watertown MA: Documentary Educational Resources, 1983. <https://www.der.org/resources/guides/red-bowmen-study-guide.pdf>
- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse Five*. Irvin CA: Suntup Press, 2022.
- Warrington, Elizabeth K. & Tim Shallice "Category specific semantic impairments," *Brain* 107 (1984):829-854.
- Wierenga , Christina, W. Perstein, M. Benjamin, C. Leonard, I. Rothi, T. Conway, *Journal of the International Neuropsychological Society*, Volume 15, Issue 2, (March 2009): 169-181.
- Wilburn, John Bart. "A Possible Worlds Model of Object Recognition," *Synthese*, Vol. 116, No.3 (1998): 403-438.

- Williams, Jeffrey. "Narrative of Narrative (Tristram Shandy)", *MLN*, Vol 105, No.5, Comparative Literature (Dec. 1990):1032-1045.
- Wittmann, Bianca C., Nathaniel Daw, Ben Seymour & Raymond Dolan, "Striatal Activity Underlies Novelty-Based Choice in Humans," *Neuron*, 58(6) (Jun. 26, 2008):: pp.967-973, p.969.
- Wood, Chris. "The Meaning of Seahenge," *3rd Stone (Norwich Pagan Sphere)*, no.43(2002): 49-54.
- Woodruff Smith, David. *Husserl*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Wrathall, Mark A., *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011.
- Wrathall, Mark. "The Phenomenological Relevance of Art," *Art and Phenomenology*. Edited by Joseph Parry. Oxford: Routledge, 2011.
- 14-18Now, "Meet the creatives behind 'We're here because we're here', National Theatre, 1st July 2016" NT Platform, 15thth July 2016,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJEy5Y3JFCU>

A NOTE ON THE READING FOR THE RESEARCH

The scarcity of existing work dealing directly with the phenomenon of objective age made it necessary to search through works that dealt with areas that might impinge upon this research. Early in the research, I identified about a dozen regions of thought that might overlap with the project objectives and set a course to stitch these together. Whilst the final thesis does not draw upon all the texts directly, many were vital stepping stones toward an understanding of material temporality, the phenomenon of age and the role that art can play in the investigation and communication of these.

The chart below was drawn up for the Confirmation Document



SUMMARY PAPER

THE TEMPORAL EXTENSION OF PLACE: THE PHENOMENON OF 'AGE' IN HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTS

This peer-reviewed paper, developed from a conference presentation at the AMPS (Architecture, Media, Politics, Society) Conference, Prague 2023: Heritages: Past and Present – Built and Social (to be published in Proceedings Document later in 2024) provides a useful summary of the thesis as it stood in September 2023, although with a slant towards the built heritage sector.

THE TEMPORAL EXTENSION OF PLACE: THE PHENOMENON OF ‘AGE’ IN HERITAGE ENVIRONMENTS

Author:

PAUL TUPPENY

Affiliation:

UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS, LONDON

INTRODUCTION

John Ruskin, in his 1849 *Seven Lamps of Architecture* poetically alludes to ‘ageing’ in historic buildings as “the golden stain of time” and notes that “there is actual *beauty* in the marks of it”¹.

Through our shared sense of The World, we all understand the affect to which Ruskin refers. However, we should pause to consider how *physical* ‘marks’ upon a building, viewed in a single duration-less moment of perception, can cause us to feel ‘time’. We should similarly question the nature of the ‘aesthetic’ response that Ruskin identifies as accompanying the sensation since these marks, by their nature, must surely disrupt the artistry of the building’s creators.

This paper is drawn from a research project pairing phenomenological texts and the practice of sculpture to investigate the phenomenon of ‘age’ in artworks and other cultural artefacts. It sets out possible perceptual mechanisms that imbue objects with temporal characteristics and proposes that the ‘beauty’ experienced by Ruskin is derived wholly from the operation of these cognitive processes and is something quite separate from our normal notions of aesthetic content.



**Media Vita,
Wells Cathedral
Paul Tuppenny 2023**

*Polychrome aluminium and steel
250cmH x 180cmW x 100cmD*

Perhaps the most recognisable temporal progression in our environment is the transition made by plants from green when living to yellows and browns as they perish.

The figure stands in the landscape, measuring its changes. The graphic that she holds is adapted from the sliding heater controls of a car, only here it is life and its passing that are in balance (rather than warmed and un-warmed air!).

Figure 1. Media Vita, Paul Tuppenny 2023

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Age in the Natural Realm

Ruskin dismissed the “critic...[who] advanced the theory that the essence of the picturesque consist[ed] in the expression of “universal decay””² but he would have been unable to refute that, perversely, the ‘marks’ which inspire him document ‘destructive’ changes to a building’s original construction.

Our World is, of course, characterised by changes that occur over the course of time; we are surrounded by ripening fruit, growing trees and wrinkling skin, as well as decaying buildings.

If we were to examine just one of these, an apple for instance, we would see that the beheld fruit seems to ‘include’ within it that it has progressively grown from flowers on maturing trees and also that it is available as food for only a short time before it rots or is eaten by other organisms. In this, the apple is as much a biograph of growth and decay (accompanied by some urgency), as it is the juicy *thing* we like to eat. Heidegger summarised: “The “not-yet” has already been included in the very Being of the fruit, not as some random characteristic, but as something constitutive”, further emphasising that the “[r]ipening *is* the specific Being of the fruit”.³

The “not-yet” of the apple includes its decay as well as its ripening and seems to comprise two types of change; that from within (its growing), which could be termed ‘intrinsic’, and that resulting from outside interactions (its rotting away), its ‘extrinsic’ change.



Up To Now (Cedar and Pine)
St Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Pine, Cedar of Lebanon
480cmH x 150cmW x 150cmD

The alignment of age phenomena along the growth vector gives to the piece a special quality in that any point on the trunk has its future above (and ahead of it) and its past below. Equally, at its base, as it germinates, it emerges seemingly from empty space, and at the top we again find emptiness representative of the tree's absence after being felled.

In the process of recognising a tree, the plant before us is “paired” with what we know of trees as living, growing and finite organisms. Husserl believed that these ‘recollections’ are co-presented as an integral part of the percept. The sculpture represents this part of the perceived tree, the part that is not actually there.

Figure 2. Up To Now (Cedar and Pine), Paul Tuppeny 2023

‘COMPORTMENT’⁴ TO CHRONOLOGISE

Importantly, though, the ‘meaning’ that the fruit holds for us adjusts as the biographic change-narrative progresses; our disposition toward a bitter, unripe fruit is very different to that directed upon the one in our lunchbox, and its decaying counterpart is less attractive still; our feelings seem to move from anticipation to those associated with loss, pivoting around the fruit’s useful state as food.

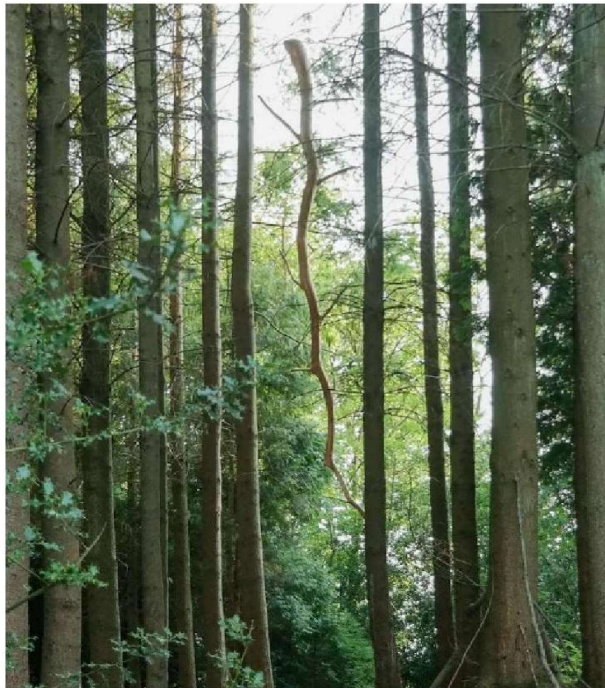
Essentially, it matters where an encountered object *is* within its change narrative (what page of its biography it is on, if you like) and our perceptual processes are pre-disposed to *chronologise* the objects that we encounter to ascertain this. These pre-reflective mechanisms deliver ‘judgements’ in this regard and I believe that it is these ‘inferences’ that we experience as the phenomenon of ‘age’.

Actuality, Potentiality and Stability

Our biographic assimilation of the world was formalised by Aristotle who similarly suggested that an entity was made identifiable by ‘functional organisational structures’⁵ which map out the course of its existence and which he called ‘*forms*’.⁶ Whilst he stresses that there must be matter upon which these structures operate, he believes that it is through the *forms* that we truly know the object.

In the first instance, Aristotle explains, there is the ‘actuality’ of the entity, its “τέλος..”⁷(telos). In our example of the apple, this is its edible state, “complete by virtue of having attained...[its] fulfilment”⁸ by realising the fruit’s potentialities through the growth and change that are the essence of its ‘nature’. In Physics, he explains:

“The nature of a thing... is a certain principle and cause of change and stability in the thing and is directly present in it.”⁹



Up To Now (Chestnut)

Paul Tuppeny 2022

Chestnut, Douglas fir, steel cable
1100cmH x 200cmW x 200cmD

This sculpture in a Sussex woodland has become known locally as “the upside-down tree”, but it is much more than this; it holds in its form the Aristotelian ‘nature’ of the tree, starting at the ground as a slim shoot, steadily increasing in girth as it grows in height until the moment of its felling, marked by the horizontal cut at its top. The age phenomena of height and girth are aligned along an upward growth vector, maintained by the ‘adjustment’ of the branches which continue to grow towards the sky.

Figure3. Up To Now (Chestnut), Paul Tuppeny 2022

Importantly, Aristotle notes that, in our understanding, the ‘actuality’ of the entity *precedes* its potentiality to achieve that state. Aristotle notes that this priority is not just in the apprehension of the object but also in the way that our ‘knowledge’ of it develops, stressing “actuality is..., in order of generation and of time, prior to potency.”¹⁰; Thomas Sheehan neatly summarises that “[Aristotle] reads reality “backwards” as it were: he discovers what a thing is and where it is on the scale of perfection by measuring it against its τέλος, working from the *de jure* perfect back to the *de facto* imperfect.”¹¹

We should not however construe Aristotle’s proposal as a simple rendering of an entity’s progression toward its adult form. In *Metaphysics IX*, he clarifies that the ‘actuality’ relates to the teleological ‘meaning’ that it carries for us, the subject:

“The fact is that a thing’s active function is its end and its actuality is its active function. Hence indeed the very name, actuality, has an account based on the active function, which is extended to the entelechy.”¹²

As such, we find that objects do not persist for us *in spite* of change but because, for us, they *are* that change; it is the inherent *change* in an entity that makes it identifiable and intelligible to us. This principle of change, chronologised against an object’s actuality and use, constitutes part of it’s reality and affords persistence by making its inherent processes of change an intrinsic part of its identity, allowing it to “gather... itself into a relatively stable appearance (εἶδος).”¹³.

The Past in the Present

Our perceptual mechanisms deliver these object narratives by inferences drawn from isolated momentary perceptions (we simply do not have the time or the concentration to watch these stories unfold in real-time) and such inferences are part of the processes through which we recognise objects.



Oak Story Cubes Paul Tuppeny 2021

Oak, cloth, card, found material
5cmH x 25cmW x 5cmD

Oak cubes carry on their faces the bark of an oak tree, from sapling shoot and the stages of maturity, through to a decomposing stump, giving form to the process by which we order our random everyday encounters with the objects around us using age phenomena.

Figure 4. Oak Story Cubes, Paul Tuppeny 2021

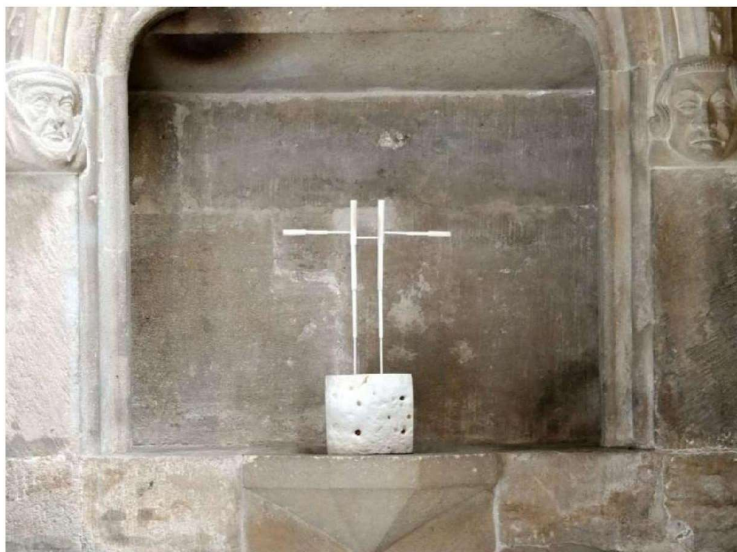
Cognitive science holds that such processes of object recognition include the matching of the visual representation of the encountered object with “structural descriptions in [the] memory”¹⁴. The philosopher Edmund Husserl, through his phenomenological investigations, went further, proposing that, in perception, the remembered object is ‘presented’ as an “apperception” ‘*alongside*’ the representation of the actual and that each is overlaid “with the objective sense of the other”, the two being “so fused that they stand within the *functional community of one perception*...”¹⁵

We regularly encounter objects that have been damaged or manifestly subjected to a change event, objects that in their current state, also present their past. In such situations, Husserl (in a separate ‘notation’) proposes that, through inference, our perceptual processes ‘co-present’ the object’s former condition, as an “ad-memorisation” alongside the immanent presentation before us. Husserl proposes that, where we have not directly experienced the undamaged object, these apperceptions are “analogous” and derived from our imagination.¹⁶

So, for an object to be intelligible to us, it is, during the process of perception, “paired”¹⁷ with retained knowledge of the object or similar examples, the actual and remembered components enmeshing into one percept. Where entities are subject to change or age, it seems that the co-presented “ad-memorisation” must comprise an ordered biograph of multiple differing or analogous states. These states are chronologically organised relative to the state in which the object holds most meaning for us. It is the interaction between the actual object and the remembered biograph with which it is paired that elicits the experience of ‘age’ in the object.

The Chronologer Chronologised

As natural entities ourselves, we are, of course, subject to Nature’s processes of change, both intrinsic and extrinsic, and our selfhood is similarly defined biographically. Events that seem to arrive from our past, an old song perhaps, old friend or a place infrequently visited, prompt introspective pairings against our own biograph which we experience with the slightly melancholy affect that we associate with nostalgia.



Chronologer (Chalk and Bone)
Wells Cathedral
Paul Tuppeny 2022

Bovine bone and chalk
40cmH x 25cmW x 10cmD

The sculpture expresses the human form as the nexus between our horizontal interpretations of Time and the vertical vectors of age, growth and decay; it is the meeting of these that defines our being. Chronologer, then, represents the temporal skeleton for all of our dealings with the World.

Figure 5. Chronologer (Chalk and Bone), Paul Tuppeny 2022

‘AGE’ IN ARTEFACTS

Artefacts and Extrinsic Age

Our perceptual mechanisms are evolved to address a Natural World in flux, but they are, of course, the same cognitive skills that we employ in making sense of *man-made* artefacts. The products of our technicity seem equally susceptible to the extrinsic processes of decay so characteristic of the Natural world and invoke similar age phenomena. These manifestations of age are not only significant in the

values that we place upon artefacts, but give vivid expression to our temporal situation generally and have occasionally even been alluded to as the “teeth of Time”¹⁸ itself.

However, if we refer back to Ruskin’s earlier remarks, we find that the affective response to decay in artefacts is not always wholly negative, especially where the deterioration does not detract from the object’s purpose or actuality. Whilst it is likely that the “beauty” that Ruskin finds derives from the exercise of the perceptual mechanisms outlined above, it may not be solely on account of the apprehension of these extrinsic interactions, but relates to their role in the perceptual decoding of a type of change that seems to come from *within* the artefact and is *intrinsic* to it.¹⁹

Artefacts and Intrinsic Age

Of course, most man-made things do not, in themselves, grow or evolve. But, whilst particular individual artefacts may not transform by ‘nature’, *categories* of artefact do indeed hold within themselves changes over time, be this through technological innovation or more fluid ideas of ‘taste’. In the process of object recognition, though, the primary determinant remains the actuality or use of the artefact and it is probable that our chronologising perceptual mechanisms present us with an ordered biography of the object *type* as part of the process, very much as they do for the apple. These chronologies are built from inferences drawn from previous encounters with the *category*.

The inferences are sometimes informed by observations of the extrinsic decay which frequently attach to the (often natural) materials from which the artefact is constructed and it is in these instances that we might find, like Ruskin, that there is ‘beauty’ in the marks of decay. It is not wholly through such markings, though, that we experience age in the things that we make.

Heidegger and the Character of Pastness

Heidegger addresses the matter briefly in *Being and Time* when discussing our “ordinary understanding of history”²⁰. In his investigation of how objects become imbued with narratives of pastness, he notices that “... ‘the past’ has a remarkable double meaning; the past belongs irretrievably to an earlier time; it belonged to the events of that time; and in spite of that it can still be present-at-hand ‘now’ – for instance the remains of a Greek temple. With the temple, a ‘bit’ of the ‘past’ is still ‘in the present’”²¹ and he concludes that “history is that specific historizing...[by] *existent* [people]...”²² relating to “man as *the* ‘subject’ of events.”²³



Figure 6. Kids Rule, Paul Tuppeny 2021

Heidegger asks, though, how “The ‘antiquities’ preserved in museums (household gear,[and Greek Temples, presumably]...) [can] *belong* to a ‘time which is past...’”²⁴ and how, not having changed within themselves, they are “manifestly...altered”²⁵. He notes, as we did earlier, that whilst such objects may become “fragile or worm eaten ‘in the course of time’”²⁶, the character of pastness “does not lie in this transience”²⁷ which he views wholly as a component of their *present* situation.

In asking then, what is actually ‘past’ for these objects he proposes “nothing else than the *world* within which they belonged to a context of [meaningful] equipment...”²⁸ and it is *that world* that is “no longer”²⁹. “Thus the historical character of the antiquities that are still preserved is grounded in the past of ... [those people] to whose world they belonged.”³⁰

Heidegger does not propose how an antiquity’s “world that is past” becomes manifest in a present perception of the object, although, in this, we may find some guidance in the later work of his tutor, Edmund Husserl.

Husserl and the Intersubjective World

Husserl held that the meaning that we give to all objects, particularly artefacts, is intersubjectively derived and we effectively assimilate our environment as a ‘communal’ experience:

“I experience the world (including others) ...not as my private synthetic formation... [but] as an intersubjective world, actually there for everyone, accessible in respect of its Objects to everyone.”³¹

We are, after all, social creatures, and it is important, if we are to cohere, that the objects that constitute our environment and that matter to us in our day-to-day lives, elicit similar meanings and affective responses in each individual. Husserl asserts that “...actual being is constituted originally by [this] harmoniousness of experience...”³² He proposes that through “...systems of harmonious verification”³³ we habitually ‘check’ the concurrence of the meanings we assign to objects; “...ultimately a community...(in its communalised intentionality) constitutes the one identical world.”³⁴

The overarching apprehension that this is a ‘shared’ world frames every perceptual episode and “there occurs a universal *super-addition of sense* [or meaning] *to my primordial world...*”³⁵ contextualising it as “identical...for everyone”; every moment is, Husserl believes, ‘watermarked’ with a perceptual co-presentation, or apperception, pertaining to the community to which the subject belongs.

For Husserl, the framework for this community is built from edited projections of ourselves since it is only through our own Being that we can conceive of other animate organisms³⁶. Consequently, the projected ‘community’ is imbued with many of the attributes that define our individual Being, particularly its temporal situation.³⁷

The Demographic Evolution of Communal Memory

Outwardly, Husserl’s community of “monads”³⁸, comprised of “subjects...equipped with mutually corresponding and harmonious constitutive systems”³⁹ intersubjectively assimilating the environment through “systems of...verification” to constitute a single “identical world”⁴⁰, would appear, in many ways, to give to us all a fixed point of reference. However, it is fluid in one important respect.

**Forest Now (maquette)***Paul Tuppeny 2022*

Whilst particular trees grow and perish, the forest appears unchanged. Similar numbers of individuals constantly pass through 'age' groupings giving the forest the appearance of stasis. Levi Strauss named this change 'Synchronic'. In the sculpture, the inverted trees are severed at a single 'now' plane; it is their points of nascence that vary.

Figure 7. Forest Now, Paul Tuppeny 2022

We tend to think of our own communities as relatively fixed entities, always comprised of similar numbers of infants, children, adults and older people, with similar offices and functionaries, even as we move between these categories ourselves. This synchronicity, to use Levi Strauss's terminology⁴¹, masks the demographic evolution of the community brought about by the "diachronic"⁴² changes, the growing and passing, that its individual members undergo.

Whilst such communities possess the physical appearance of unwavering persistence, their aggregated memory is temporalized by the passing lives of their constituent individuals. In an entirely Natural setting, one which itself has the appearance of synchronous persistence, this temporalisation would pass largely unnoticed, and indeed it does with all species other than our own. However, Human communities occupy themselves in making things, creating artefacts such as tools, buildings and artworks; this 'technical tendency'⁴³ is a fully integrated facet of our being.⁴⁴ These man-made 'things' emerge from the community at particular instants and effectively 'mark' the particular composition of the community at those moments. For, whilst physically the community is apparently static, its meaning-making and intersubjective "verification" moves on, following the diachronic lives of its citizens.

A building, or other artefact, will thus, when first completed, carry only the meanings intended on it by the particular individuals and community from which it derives. From that moment on, as the constituents of the community progress through their lives, new strata of meaning are sedimented over the original core intent by those that follow. Simultaneously, original meaning erodes.

Eventually, of course, all sense attaching to an artefact for its community will consist of strata laid down subsequent to its original construction and the object begins to adopt the character of something 'alien' in a way similar, perhaps, to artefacts from geographically external communities. Such cultures, Husserl believes, are "accessible only by a kind of "experience of someone else", a kind of "empathy", by which we project ourselves into the alien cultural community and its culture."⁴⁵ It is this, perhaps, that is in play as we watch historical dramas or visit museums and heritage sites, the additional empathic exertion involved in these cultural pursuits heightening our experience of them.

These 'adventures' beyond our everyday lives populate the peripheries of the communal biograph that we carry within us and against which we measure our environment. It is unlikely, though, that the experience of 'age' beyond the durational confines of our own, current community is quantified;

phenomenally, it is experienced simply as ‘old’ or ‘older’, any precise chronology being, almost certainly, a rational construct.



Earth-Man

Paul Tuppeny 2022/23

Earth and leaves
5cmH x 45cmW x 15cm D

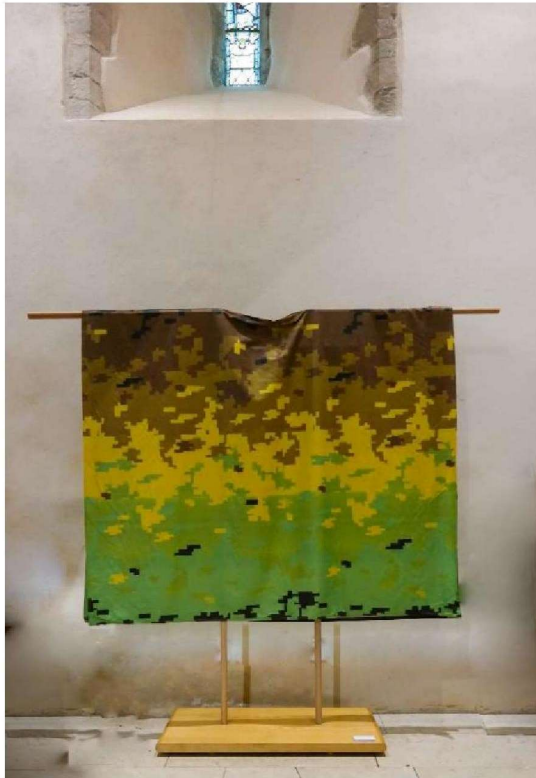
The boot-print of an Apollo Astronaut is carved into the forest floor. Age phenomena from the two worlds of man, the Natural and the artefact, collide, not on a Moon, but on the plane where life begins and ends.

Figure 8. Earth-Man, Paul Tuppeny 2023

CONCLUSION

The phenomenon of age is fundamental to our lives in many ways. Our focus, however, on the physical manifestations that underly our *personal* experience of it often obscures the central role ‘age’ plays in our understanding and stabilising of the world that is *around* us. Similarly, many philosophers have overlooked the phenomenon, preferring to invest their lives in the examination of its more glamorous parent, Time.

I have sought, though, in this paper to propose mechanisms by which our perceptual apparatus causes us to experience ‘age’ in objects, and to show how the necessities of our Natural existence *compel* us to make the pre-cognitive judgements on which it is based. As a consequence of our pre-disposition to chronologise, every moment of perception is ‘shot-through’ with a temporal dimension that augments its spatial counterparts, providing, in each moment, important glimpses to the past and to the future.



CAMO, St Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean

Paul Tuppeny 2023

Printed cotton on wood frame
220cmH x 200cmW x 80cmD

As we walk through the World, we see a complex mix of the green to yellow and brown temporalizing spectrum brought about through the generative cycles of its constituent plants and their various parts.

When images of war started to dominate our screens last year, I noticed how these apparently random patterns are replicated in designs for military camouflage.

This cloak uses a pixelated camouflage pattern to replicate nature but, here, the 'age' spectrum is ordered to run vertically up the fabric, beginning at the hem as the vibrant green of new growth.

Figure 9. CAMO, Paul Tuppeny 2023

This temporal extension of place, although initiated by our dealings with Nature, is transposed to the cultural realm through the exercise of those same perceptual mechanisms on the products of our own manufacture; our artefacts and our buildings. However, in these man-made environments, there is a curious reversal between the chronologised and the chronologise-er, for when we experience 'age' in the products of our technicity, it is not founded in the life of the *object*, but in the finitude and passing of ourselves, the *subject*.

The historic building or artefact thus acts as a 'lens' through which we are able to 'feel' our essential being, and, whilst our experience of the phenomenon of 'age' may confer no aesthetic prowess in the traditional sense, there is perhaps a kind of beauty in the way heritage objects reflect back to us important aspects of what it is to be Human.

NOTES

- ¹ John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* 3rd edition (London: Smith Elder, 1855), 173 [my italics].
- ² Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, 173.
- ³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 288 [my italics].
- ⁴ “Comportment” (*Verhalten*) rather than “circumspection” as meaning is sought through chronologising interaction, Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 67.
- ⁵ Bryan McGee, *The Great Philosophers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 44.
- ⁶ “...form [for Aristotle,] is an organised set of functional capabilities...” (very different to Plato’s Theory of Forms). Bryan McGee, *The Great Philosophers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 44.
- ⁷ Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 51.
- ⁸ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated by William David Ross (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), V 16, 1021b, 24-25.
- ⁹ Aristotle, *Physics*, translated by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), II 1 192b20, 33.
- ¹⁰ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, translated by William David Ross (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), IX pt8, Ross trans. 90.
- ¹¹ Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*, 50.
- ¹² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Translated by Hugh Lawson-Tancred (London: Penguin, 1998), Theta (IX) 8, 274.
- ¹³ Thomas Sheehan, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014), 51.
- ¹⁴ Irving Biederman, “Recognition-by-Components: A Theory of Human Image Understanding,” *Psychological Review*, Vol.94, No.2 (1987): 115-147.
- ¹⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, Translated by Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 122.
- ¹⁶ “Therefore, we are dealing here with a perception having a core of original presentation, a unitary perception and presentation in the broad sense, in which, to a first presenting self-given, a founded apprehension is added, an apperception that does not appresent something co-present—something that pertains to the unity of a possible mobile perception, a simultaneous present that could be originally realized in it—but instead it *ad-memorizes*, so to say, it performs a recollection by means of which, what is present to us gains the sense of something previously sprung into being (and yet still persistent).” Edmund Husserl, 2008. *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1916–1937)*. Hua XXXIX. Dordrecht: Springer, quoted by Christian Ferencz-Flatz, “Objects with a past; Husserl on ad-memorising apperceptions,” *Continental Philosophy Review* (2012) 45:171-188, Note7. DOI 10.1007/s11007-012-9218-9.
- ¹⁷ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 112.
- ¹⁸ Robert Hooke, 1635-1703. *Micrographia: or Some Physiological Descriptions of Minute Bodies Made by Magnifying Glasses. With Observations and Inquiries Thereupon*. London: Printed by Jo. Martyn, and Ja. Allestry ... and are to be sold at their shop ..., 1665. Observation LII.
- ¹⁹ Alois Reigl opens his description of age value by explaining how it “reveals itself at first glance [through the object’s] outmoded appearance...[caused] not so much by an unfashionable stylistic form...[but through] imperfection, a lack of completeness, a tendency to dissolve shape and colour...” Edited by Nicholas Stanley Price, Mansfield Kirby Talley, and Allesandro Melucco Vaccaro, *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications 1996), 73.
- ²⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 430.
- ²¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 430.
- ²² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 431 [my italics, Heidegger uses the word “Dasein”].
- ²³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 431 [my italics].
- ²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 431.
- ²⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.
- ²⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.
- ²⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.
- ²⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.
- ²⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.
- ³⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.
- ³¹ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, Translated by Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 91.
- ³² Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 105.
- ³³ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 91.
- ³⁴ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.
- ³⁵ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.
- ³⁶ “Since, in this Nature and this world, my animate organism is the only body that is or can be constituted originally as an animate organism..., the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate

organism, must have derived this sense by an *apperceptive transfer from my animate organism...*" Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 110.

³⁷ "...I myself am the primal norm constitutionally for all other men. Brutes are essentially constituted for me as abnormal "variants" of my humanness..." Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 126.

³⁸Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 139.

³⁹Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.

⁴⁰ "...ultimately a community of monads...(in its communalised intentionality) constitutes the *one identical world*." Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, 107.

⁴¹ Claude Levi Strauss, *The Savage Mind (La Pensee Sauvage)*, (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson,1974), 66-67.

⁴² Claude Levi Strauss, *The Savage Mind (La Pensee Sauvage)*, 66-67.

⁴³ André Leroi-Gourhan, *Évolution et Techniques* (Paris, Albin Michel, 1973), 336-7.

⁴⁴ "The human group behaves in nature as a living organism...the human group assimilates its milieu through a curtain of objects(tools or instruments)." André Leroi-Gourhan, *Milieu et techniques*, 1945, Paris, Albin Michel. 322, quoted by Bernhard Steigler, *Technics and Time, 1: The Fault of Epemetheus*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 57.

⁴⁵ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, D. Cairns trans., 134/135

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Altamirano, Marco, *Time Technology and Environment*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

Amheim Rudolph, *Entropy and Art an Essay on Disorder and Order*. Berkely: University of California Press,1971.

Arrhenius, Thordis, "The Fragile Monument: On Alois Riegl's Modern Cult of Monuments." *Nordisk Arkitekturforskning*, (2003):4

Bergson, Henri, *Matter and Memory*. New York: Dover, 2004.

Biederman, Irving, "Recognition-by-Components: A theory of Human Image Understanding," *Psychological Review*, volume 94, no.2, (1987): 115-147

Birbaum, Daniel. *Chronology*. New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2005.

Brough, John Barnett, "Husserl and the Deconstruction of Time," *Review of Metaphysics* 46 (March 1993): 503-536

Dreyfus, Hubert, *Being in the World*. New Baskerville: MIT Press, 1991

Gallagher, Shaun, The Past, Present and Future of Time-Consciousness: From Husserl to Varela and Beyond, 2017, *Constructivist Foundations* volume 13, no.1 (2017): 91-116

Gell, Alfred, *The Anthropology of Time*. Oxford: Berg,1996.

Gubser, M., *Time's Visible Surface, Alois Riegl and The Discourse on History and Temporality in Fin de Siècle Vienna*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2006

Heidegger, M., *History of the Concept of Time*, translated by Theodore Kisiel, Bloomington I.N.: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Heidegger, Martin, *Being and Time*, Translated by John Macquarie & Edward Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1962.

Heidegger, Martin, *Basic Writings*, Edited by David Farrell Krell, London: Routledge,1977.

Heidegger, Martin, "The Thing", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, translated by Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper Perennial 2001

Howells, Christina, & Moore, Gerald, *Steigler and Technics*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013.

Husserl, Edmund, *The Phenomenology of Time Consciousness*, Translated by James S. Churchill, Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press, 1964.

Husserl, Edmund, On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893-1917), Translated by John Barnett Brough, Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991.

Husserl, Edmund, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans Dorion Cairns, Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995.

Kleinberg-Levin, David, *Heidegger's Phenomenology of Perception, Volume 1*, London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020.

Kossalleck, Reinhart, *Futures Past: on the semantics of historical time*, New York, Columbia Univ. Press, 2004.

Kubler, George, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970.

Lang, Karen, edited by, *Field Notes on the Visual Arts*, Bristol: Intellect, 2019.

Leroi-Gourhan, André, *Évolution et techniques*, Paris: Albin Michel, 1973

- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, London and New York: Routledge, 1962.
- Noë, Alva, *Action in Perception*, Cambridge M.A.: MIT Press, 2006.
- Prosser, Simon., *Experiencing Time*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Stanley Price, Nicholas, Kirby Talley, Mansfield, and Melucco Vaccaro, Allesandro, Eds, *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 1996.
- Riegl, Alois, "The Modern cult of Monuments: Its Character and its Origin (1903), translated by Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo," *Oppositions*, n.25 (Fall 1982), 21-51.
- Ruskin, John, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1855.
- Sheehan, Thomas, *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift*, Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2015.
- Steigler, Bernhard, *Technics and Time 1; The Fault of Epimetheus*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Wrathall, Mark A., *Heidegger and Unconcealment*, New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011.

THE PHENOMENON OF AGE AND THE TEMPORAL EXTENSION OF PLACE

PAUL TUPPENY

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: Age and Art: Essays and Fragments

1. 'Age-less' Art: Can *The White Paintings* Authentically Exist in a World Without Bob?
2. The 'Age'-ing Artwork: Rauschenberg's *Growing* and *Dirt Paintings*
3. The Shifting Interpretation of Material Over Time: The Sculptures of Naum Gabo
4. Eva Hesse: *Expanded Expansion*, a Monument?
5. Age as Art: Jeremy Deller's *We're here because we're here* and "Pastness" Affect
6. Time Reversal in Umeda Ritual with Alfred Gell
7. Seeing Age: "Seahenge"
8. Material Chronology? Rauschenberg at the Tate 2016

APPENDIX TWO: Accounts of Artwork Production

Up To Now (Chestnut): Fabrication and Installation
Chronologer (Chalk and Bone): Fabrication and Installation
Chronologer (Grown Up): Fabrication
St. Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean: Exhibition and Installation
Media Vita: Fabrication and Installation
Athens
Burn Me Up, Burn Me Down

APPENDIX THREE: Methodology Documents

Confirmation literature review
Research Schedule: *Outline research chronology, events and conferences*
Confirmation Bibliography and Bibliography Diagram

APPENDIX ONE

Age and Art: Essays and Fragments

AGE AND ART: Essays and Fragments

1. The 'Age-less' Artwork: Can The White Paintings Authentically Exist in a World Without Bob?

Introduction

In 1951, Robert Rauschenberg produced his White Paintings, a series of canvas panels coated with latex house paint, that 'operated' by reflecting or responding to the ambient light of their gallery surroundings. His friend, John Cage, called them "airports" for ambient accidents of light and shadow⁵⁵⁸ and Rauschenberg remarked to Walter Hopps that "if one were sensitive enough to read them, you would know how many people were in the room, what time it was, and what the weather was like outside."⁵⁵⁹ As such, these artworks were conceived to function entirely in the *here and now* and Rauschenberg later insisted that they must be regularly repainted because, as he explained in a 1991 interview, he "didn't want their *past* to be a mark on them"⁵⁶⁰.

Through our shared common sense and collective understanding of our world's underlying mechanisms, we can visualise the kind of changes that Rauschenberg wanted to *obliterate*, the darkening of the household paint and discolouration and scuffs to the edges of the canvases. It is these kinds of 'marks' that might indicate that the artefact is no longer in its *first* condition and that it manifestly has a *past*.

The Inception of the White Paintings

The White Paintings (the exact number remains uncertain) 'premiered' in "a largely improvised conflation of dance, music, art, and poetry"⁵⁶¹ that later became known as John Cage's *Theater Piece No. 1*. John Cage recalled the "Happening:"

"At one end of the rectangular hall, the long end, was a movie and at the other end were slides. I was on the ladder delivering a lecture which included silences, and there was another ladder which M. C. Richards and Charles Olson went up at different

⁵⁵⁸ Hal Foster, "'Made Out of the Real World:' Lessons from the Fulton Street Studio," eds. Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume, Robert Rauschenberg (London: Tate Publishing, 2019), 90.

⁵⁵⁹ Rauschenberg interviewed by Walter Hopps and David A. Ross, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 6th May 1999. Transcript available online at www.sfmoma.org/artwork/98.308.A-C/research-materials/document/WHIT_98.308_005/#transcript, cited: Foster, "'Made Out of the Real World'," 90.

⁵⁶⁰ Leah Dickerman, "'Disciplined by Albers:' Foundations at Black Mountain College," eds. Leah Dickerman and Achim Borchardt-Hume, Robert Rauschenberg (London: Tate Publishing, 2019), 34.

⁵⁶¹ Richard Deming, "Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College, 1933-1957," *Artforum*, 54 no.7 (March 2016), <https://www.artforum.com/events/leap-before-you-look-black-mountain-college-1933-1957-2-216924/>

times...Robert Rauschenberg was playing an old fashioned phonograph that had a horn...and David Tudor was playing piano and Merce Cunningham and other dancers were moving through the audience. Rauschenberg's pictures [White Paintings Series] were suspended above the audience...a canopy of painting above the audience."⁵⁶²

A sketch later drawn by M.C. Richard⁵⁶³ placed the audience in the centre of the space suggesting a populated, lively and spontaneous environment that would be 'ambiently reflected' in the White Paintings "suspended above" them. A recent exhibition reflecting upon the students and output of Black Mountain College, called *Leap Before you Look*, sought to recreate the event as a sort of tableaux,⁵⁶⁴ although without the audience and performers, and in many ways, the urgency of Cage's account is much more evocative.

For the purposes of this investigation into the phenomenon of objective age, the format of the White Paintings' original display is important because it reversed the usual configuration of a temporally extended art object displayed against the temporally *static* white gallery wall; here



Figure A1.1 The 2016 exhibition, *Leap Before You Look*, recreating the "happening" at Black Mountain College in which Rauschenberg's White Paintings made their debut in 1951

⁵⁶² John Cage, in an interview with Michael Kirby and Richard Schechner, "An Interview with John Cage," *The Tulane Drama Review* 10, no.2 (Winter, 1965): 52-53.

⁵⁶³ Dickerman, "'Disciplined by Albers:' Foundations at Black Mountain College," 37.

⁵⁶⁴ "Leap before you Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957", Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, May 2016 reported: Richard Deming, "Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College, 1933-1957," *Artforum*, 54 no.7 (March 2016), <https://www.artforum.com/events/leap-before-you-look-black-mountain-college-1933-1957-2-216924/>

the artwork was a point of temporal neutrality suspended amidst the chaos of unfolding human events, in this instance, a student party.

A similar reversal in the temporal relationship between artwork and background is experienced from the photograph of the seven panel White Painting against the bare 19th Century brickwork of Rauschenberg's Fulton Street studio taken in 1953; again the neutral temporal extension of the artwork contrasts with the temporal dynamism of the ageing brickwork.



Figure A1.2 Robert Rauschenberg photographed with White paintings at his Fulton Street Studio in 1953

(photo Rauschenberg Foundation archive folder)

An Early Concern with Time

The work of Robert Rauschenberg reflects a preoccupation with time from his early student days at Black Mountain College. A 1948 piece entitled "*This is the First Half of a Print Designed to Exist in Passing Time*" comprised a series of fourteen woodcut prints progressively inscribed with an increasing number of lines, the first in the run being entirely black, and the last, approximately half white and half black by virtue of the numerous linear incisions made in the print blocks.

Three years later Rauschenberg had completed his first solo show (in New York's Betty Parsons Gallery, May-June 1951) which comprised works that he later described as "allegorical cartoons."⁵⁶⁵ These were largely "oil paintings with incised forms on black or white grounds,"⁵⁶⁶ although they also incorporated printed matter and other incidental material (mirrors and clumps of the artist's hair).⁵⁶⁷ The heavily sculpted surface of these works denies any illusion of *image*; they are undeniably *made* real-world things, and, if considered alongside the block prints of 1948, one feels that, for Rauschenberg, the incised designs hold,

⁵⁶⁵ Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, "Paintings by Bob Rauschenberg at The Betty Parsons Gallery, New York," Art & Archives, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, <https://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/art/lightboxes/paintings-bob-rauschenberg-betty-parsons-gallery-new-york>

⁵⁶⁶ Dickerman, "'Disciplined by Albers:' Foundations at Black Mountain College," 34.

⁵⁶⁷ Rauschenberg Foundation, "Paintings by Bob Rauschenberg at The Betty Parsons Gallery," <https://www.rauschenbergfoundation.org/art/lightboxes/paintings-bob-rauschenberg-betty-parsons-gallery-new-york>

in their 3-dimensional detail, the labour and, more importantly, the *duration* of their production.

“...(white as GOD)...”

Rauschenberg produced the original series of White Paintings in October 1951. He describes them, in a letter to Betty Parsons (asking her for another show!), as “large white (white as GOD) canvases organised and selected with the experience of time and presented with the innocence of a virgin.”⁵⁶⁸

Dear Betty

I have since putting on shoes soaked up from summer puberty and moonlike smells. Have felt that my head and heart move through something quite different than the hot dust the earth throws me. This results are a group of paintings that I consider almost an emergency. They bear the contradictions that deserves them a place with other outstanding paintings and yet they are not Art because they take you to a place in painting art has not been. (therefore it is) that is the the pulse and movement ~~the~~ truth of the lies in our peculiar preoccupation.

they are large, white (white as GOD) canvases organized and selected with the experience of time and presented with the innocence of a virgin. Dealing with the surprise, excitement and to do of an organic silence, the restriction and freedom of absence, the plastic fullness of nothing, they point a circle begins and ends. they are a natural response to the current pressures of the faithless and a promoter of institutional optimism. It is completely irrelevant that I am making them — Today is their creator.

I will be in N.Y. Nov 1st and will be at all night to ever show again for their being given a chance to be considered for this years calendar.

Love Bob
 Thank of you often [unclear] woman.
 Hello to Marjorie.

Figure A1.3 Robert Rauschenberg’s letter of 11th October 1951 to Betty Parsons describing his recent invention of the *White Paintings* which he describes as “white as GOD.”

Rauschenberg clearly considered them something of a watershed resolution of his earlier themes, describing them as “a group of paintings that I consider almost an emergency.”⁵⁶⁹ Whilst telling the gallerist that they deserve “...a place with other outstanding paintings...” he stresses that “...they are not Art because they take you to a place in painting art has not been...” and, most interestingly, asserts that “it is completely irrelevant that...[he is] making them — Today is their creator [sic].”⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁸ Rauschenberg letter to Betty Parsons, October 18th, 1951. Box 16, Folder 4, Lawrence Alloway Papers, 1935-2003, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, accession no. 2003.M.46 (quoted pg66?), reproduced Walter Hopps, Robert Rauschenberg: the early 1950s, (Houston: The Menil Foundation and Houston Fine Art Press, 1991), 230.

⁵⁶⁹ Rauschenberg letter to Betty Parsons, October 18th, 1951. Box 16, Folder 4, Lawrence Alloway Papers, 1935-2003, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, accession no. 2003.M.46 (quoted pg66?), reproduced Walter Hopps, Robert Rauschenberg: the early 1950s, (Houston: The Menil Foundation and Houston Fine Art Press, 1991), 230.

⁵⁷⁰ Rauschenberg letter to Betty Parsons, October 18th, Walter Hopps, Robert Rauschenberg: the early 1950s, 230.

To Rauschenberg, it seems, *The White Paintings* represented an abstracted temporal moment rather than an art object in the traditional sense. The history of these works also shows that in many ways, the White paintings possessed no *materiality* for the artist, such that when his career reached the status for retrospective exhibitions in 1969, the gallerist, Leo Castelli recalled (in an interview with Paul Cummings) how the works needed to be “completely redone because [Rauschenberg] had used those canvases for other paintings and you can even identify them where they are.”⁵⁷¹ It was the idea, and the date of the idea’s inception, that actually constituted the artworks.

It's Always October, 1951

This is borne-out by several ‘regenerations’ of *The White paintings* throughout the life of Robert Rauschenberg.

The first instance occurred in 1965 when the Modern Art Museum in Stockholm wished to include the paintings in an exhibition. Rauschenberg felt that it would be “...unessential and wasteful to crate and ship... [the] works”⁵⁷²

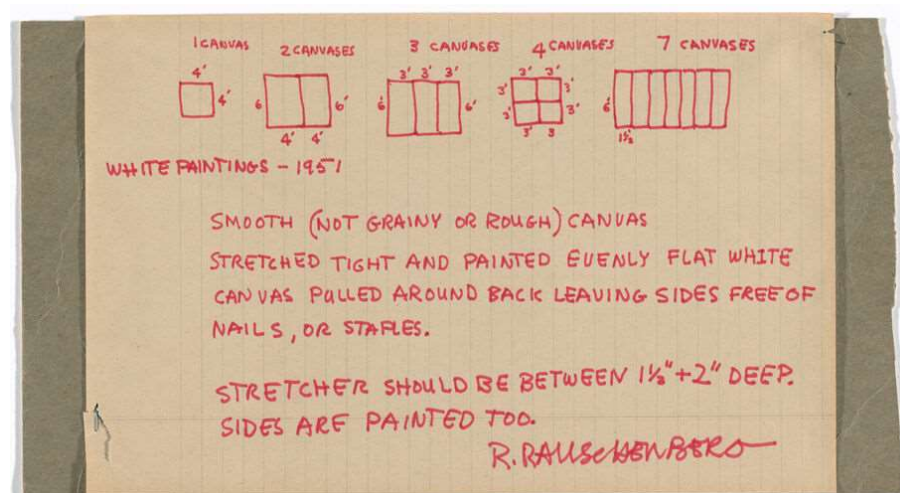


Figure A1.4 Robert Rauschenberg instructions for Fabrication of White Paintings, 1965. Gilbert B. & Lila Silverman Collection, Detroit. Image, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation.

Rauschenberg therefore produced a sketch setting down the dimensions and construction of the various white paintings so that they could be fabricated in Sweden under the direction of

⁵⁷¹ Oral history interview with Leo Castelli, 1969 May 14-1973 June 8- Oral Histories/Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-leo-castelli-12370#transcript>, page 93.

⁵⁷² Handwritten document (photocopy), labelled (on reverse) “transcribed response [from Rauschenberg] to Pincus-Witten review in Artforum (Dec 1968) (from Bradley Jeffries’ box) RR writings about his art,” [concerning the White Paintings] labelled (on obverse) SR6M scan 00008, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 381 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10003.

the Moderna Museet curator, Pontus Huttén. The sketch was accompanied by a note from his assistant, Billy Klüver:

Hey Pontus,

*These are Bob's White paintings. You are to make them in Stockholm according to his instructions. They are **not** to be labelled as copies or reproductions but simply dated 1951. When the show is over you are to send the paintings back to Bob in New York.*

*Billy*⁵⁷³

Rauschenberg two years later recalled the event to illustrate how the White Paintings were conceived to have no materiality or temporal extension through age:

There is no such thing as a 15 yr old white painting. The paintings were not to collect...the abuse and age of 15 yrs. Two of the paintings were constructed two yrs ago for exhibition @ the Moderne Museum Stockholm under the direction of Pontus Hultér⁵⁷⁴

In the same interview, Rauschenberg reveals that even the original Black Mountain works had not all been fabricated by him:

The original work never went beyond the *concept* of the painting. The paintings were the results of the execution in the most direct and impersonal manner in 1951. The ones I painted personally were done with roller + house paint to remove the hand. The others were painted by a friend, an artist, Cy Twombly.⁵⁷⁵

There are several other instances of the White Paintings being re-made by associates or assistants, in one, David White, the curator of The Rauschenberg Foundation, advises that “Hisachika Takahashi, an employee of Rauschenberg’s, will come to the [Guggenheim] museum today and repaint the four panels of the painting” adding that by “sundown, the painting should be back on exhibit looking as Bob intended it to.”⁵⁷⁶

⁵⁷³ Billy Klüver to Pontus Huttén. (Moderna Museet curator), handwritten note labelled “[1965] with sketch 65.DO42,” (Sketch instructions, Gilbert B. and Lila Silverman Collection, Detroit), folder 51.002, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 381 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10003.

⁵⁷⁴ Handwritten document (photocopy), labelled (on reverse) “transcribed response [from Rauschenberg] to Pincus-Witten review in Artforum (Dec 1968) (from Bradley Jeffries’ box) RR writings about his art,” [concerning the White Paintings] labelled (on obverse) SR6M scan 00008, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 381 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10003.

⁵⁷⁵ Handwritten document (photocopy), labelled (on reverse) “transcribed response [from Rauschenberg] to Pincus-Witten review in Artforum (Dec 1968) (from Bradley Jeffries’ box) RR writings about his art,” [concerning the White Paintings] labelled (on obverse) SR6M scan 00008, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 381 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10003.

⁵⁷⁶ Archive document, P+E:MAC:SRGM:Retro:Conservation Rauschenberg Foundation 51:004 folder

In 1993, David White recorded a separate ‘regeneration’ brought about by the Venice Biennale:

DAVID WHITE-JULY 19, '93

In 1993 I promised the single panel white painting to two conflicting exhibitions. Bob felt rather than withdraw the painting prematurely from the Venice Biennale, he chose to make a duplicate example, painted by Darryl Pottorf, to go to the exhibition “Rolywholyover a Circus” [Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles Sept 12-Nov 28, 1993 (and tour)]. When The Venice Biennale closes, Bob will use that White Painting as the support for a new painting and the ‘Pottorf Version’ will become the one and only single panel White Painting.⁵⁷⁷

Clearly, the material actuality of the White Paintings was, for Rauschenberg comprised essentially from several quite fluid qualities that in many ways contradicted each other. At their inception, he identifies the works as “*paintings*”, although he liked to think that, in their operation, they went beyond the margins of current Art practice. Their manifestation is nevertheless achieved in a wholly traditional manner wherein a painted canvas support is stretched over a wooden frame, albeit multipaneled, unframed and with painted edges “free of nails or staples.”⁵⁷⁸ There were, of course, many other ways open to the artist to achieve white panels (Rauschenberg in later works often used aluminium side panels from trucks), but it was important, if they were to carry his concept that they be identifiable as an artefact that held the *possibilities* of an art object and also that they be *situated* within an artistic tradition in the business of presenting images. There could however, for *The White Paintings*, be no doubt that the ‘held’ image was entirely transient, formed at the instant of their being beheld. Whilst some commentators have discussed how that image might simply be the shadow of the viewer or other gallery visitors, it is clear from the descriptions of Rauschenberg and his friend, John Cage, that this is an oversimplification. At the core of Rauschenberg’s concept lies our inherent understanding of ‘whiteness’ as a surface condition where *all* incident light is reflected, differing only from a mirror in its randomised dispersal of the reflected rays; conceptually, the surface reflects everything in the moment, but, by not forming an image, the work actually ‘reflects’ more than a mirror ever could, reflecting, in fact, every aspect of the viewer’s understanding of their situation at *that moment*, not just those aspects presently in view. The

⁵⁷⁷ Handwritten note on Rauschenberg Foundation Artwork Loan record for 51.003 [White Paintings], Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 381 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10003.

⁵⁷⁸ John Cage: “He changes what goes on...a canvas but he does not change how canvas is used for paintings – that is, stretched flat to make rectangular surfaces which may be hung on a wall,” John Cage, “On Robert Rauschenberg, Artist and His Work,” *Silence Lectures and Writings* (Middletown CT: Wesleyan Press, 1961), 100.

interpretation of The White Paintings as a void to be filled with the present moment is, perhaps, borne out by John Cage's statement, "the white paintings came first...my silent piece [4'33"] came later."⁵⁷⁹

As such, the white of the *White Paintings* is the concept of whiteness, a universal reflectance, rather than its physical rendering; its manifestation on a traditional canvas support is suggestive to the viewer that an image is being presented by the artwork, even though none is physically delivered. Husserl would see that the only image available to the viewer at that moment is drawn from the viewer's own *immanent* presence, overlaying the *White Paintings* as a co-presented perceptual adjunct or apperception, almost as Rauschenberg indicated *could* happen in his interview with Walter Hopps.

Clearly, any temporal extension of the surface arising from perceptual inferences of *age*, indeed any kind of 'pastness', would severely jeopardise such a response on the part of the viewer; for Rauschenberg, the White Paintings were always made, and remade, 'now'. In this lies their greatest contradiction as the 'now' that they are given is always the "today" of their inception in October 1951, not the 'now' of the viewer. Rauschenberg could have left the works untitled *and undated*, or, perhaps, provided some sort of clock for their title; the latter would, of course, have taken attention from the functioning white space component of the artwork and the former approach would almost certainly have been overridden by the conventions of gallery labelling etiquette. Rauschenberg's solution of assigning the White Paintings a date of 1951 appears, superficially, to follow convention. However, his often-dismissive approach to their *material* status, destroying or re-purposing them as circumstances demanded, suggests that the date for him was less a record of their manufacture, but rather more the marking of their *first* 'now', which, of course, was the perceptual product of their creator, Robert Rauschenberg.⁵⁸⁰

EPILOGUE

It is perhaps not surprising, given the very high monetary value of Rauschenberg's work, that the White Paintings have not been overpainted since his death in 2008 and that those recently hung in his retrospective co-curated by MOMA and TATE MODERN in 2016 -2018 exhibited

⁵⁷⁹ John Cage, "On Rauschenberg, Artist, And His Work," *Silence Lectures and Writings* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 98.

⁵⁸⁰ The school's founder, John Andrew Rice is quoted as explaining how Black Mountain sought "to teach method, not content; to emphasize process, not results; to invite the student to the realisation that the way of handling facts and himself amid the facts is more important than facts themselves. Richard Deming, "Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College, 1933-1957," *Artforum*, 54 no.7 (March 2016), <https://www.artforum.com/events/leap-before-you-look-black-mountain-college-1933-1957-2-216924/>

some yellowing of the white paint and perhaps even some signs of handling. So fundamental was it in Rauschenberg's mind that the artworks should themselves possess no extended temporal presence that one could reasonably conjecture that the panels exhibited in that exhibition were no longer the 'work' of the artist, and, in fact, not Rauschenberg White Paintings at all, the functioning aspects of the paintings being completely overwhelmed by their age and their inclusion in a posthumous retrospective.



Figure A1.5 White Paintings photographed at the Fulton Street Studio.

2. THE 'AGE'-ING ARTWORK: RAUSCHENBERG'S GROWING AND DIRT PAINTINGS

In stark contrast with his better-known White Paintings, Rauschenberg produced in the mid 1950's a series of wall mounted works that have become known as the *Elemental Paintings* through their emergence in the same period as his *Elemental Sculptures* (although Rauschenberg seems to generally refer to them as *Earth Paintings*). Amongst these were: *Growing Painting*, 1953, *Dirt Painting* (for John Cage), c.1953, *Pink Clay Painting (To Pete [Paul Taylor])*, 1953 and several '*Gold Paintings*', all untitled and fabricated circa 1953. The list should perhaps also include a replacement *Dirt Painting* (for Merc Cunningham and John Cage), made for his friends following John's death and replacing the original which he had borrowed for an exhibition but had never managed to return.



Figure A1.6 Robert Rauschenberg, *Growing Painting* 1953, photographed at the Stables Gallery in 1954.

Photo from Robert Rauschenberg Foundation archive folder. 53.030

It seems that the overall concept for the series developed from Rauschenberg's ambition to create artworks that inhabited the "gap between art and life"⁵⁸¹, Leo Steinberg suggesting that gap is bridged partly by putting the earth on the wall, "a transposition from nature to culture through a shift of ninety degrees".⁵⁸²

⁵⁸¹ John Cage, "On Rauschenberg, Artist, And His Work," *Silence Lectures and Writings* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 98.

⁵⁸² Leo Steinberg, "Other Criteria," *Other Criteria: Confrontations with Twentieth-Century Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 87.

Rauschenberg stressed in a later interview with the journalist Calvin Tomkins how he did not “want a picture to look like something it isn’t...I want it to look like something it is. And I think a picture is more like the real world when it is made out of the real world.”⁵⁸³ He acknowledged though that the “nature of some of my materials gave me an additional problem because I had to figure out how they could be physically supported on a wall when they obviously had no business being anywhere near a wall.”⁵⁸⁴



Figure A1.6 Robert Rauschenberg, *Growing Painting* 1953, photographed at the Stables Gallery in 1954

(182.9 H x 63.5W)

Photo from Robert Rauschenberg
Foundation archive folder. 53.030

⁵⁸³ Calvin Tomkins, *Off the Wall: Robert Rauschenberg and the Art World of Our Time* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 87.

⁵⁸⁴ Barbara Rose and Robert Rauschenberg, *An Interview With Robert Rauschenberg* by Barbara Rose (New York: Vintage Books, 1987), 58.

Nevertheless, Rauschenberg felt that all materials are suitable for the production of artworks, asserting in a 1987 interview that [t]here's no such thing as 'better' material. It's just as unnatural for people to use oil paint as it is anything else."⁵⁸⁵

Only one Dirt Painting survives, that given to his friend John Cage (marked on the reverse "To John, with love, Bob.") the work's material is catalogued by MOMA in New York, as "Dirt and mold in wood box"⁵⁸⁶. The box is of crude construction (39.4 cm x 40.6 cm x 6.4cm) and appears to be made from timber sections found on the streets near his Fulton Street Studio or the beaches of Staten Island, as was much of his work at this time. Whilst the work conceptually places "a frame around the stuff of the world"⁵⁸⁷ it is, in practical terms, a shallow box filled with wet mud, some of which extends over the front face of the frame (one source has alluded to the incorporation of chicken wire binding the soil into the frame although Rauschenberg elsewhere refers to "water glass" (glass fibre?) being incorporated with the mud and John Cage described how the dirt was mixed with adhesive.⁵⁸⁸ The example made for John Cage has subsequently developed a pronounced pattern of mould and lichen, which in a gallery setting, lends to the piece some of the qualities of an 'Abstract' *artwork* which, perhaps, distracts the viewer *away* from its essential 'worldliness'.

It was whilst working on a similar piece, below a birdcage, that Rauschenberg noticed the artwork starting to grow; in an interview with Barbara Rose he explained:

RR: "I did dirt paintings. I was working on one dirt painting underneath a bird cage. Then grass started growing on it and I had to take care of it. I did a piece that had to be planted for, I believe, the second Ninth Street Show. It was a wall piece. The inorganic matter was water glass. Then I mixed it with mud to support the structure of the growing plants."⁵⁸⁹

In that interview, Rauschenberg expressed his belief that this painting was his most inventive work. The artist's own response to the serendipitous inception of the piece revealed to him an unsuspected and complex relationship between the artwork and its beholder:

"I did earth paintings, [1953 or 1954] before the peak of abstract expressionism...but those paintings were about looking and caring. If somebody had a painting they would have to take care of it. It is just as simple as that. I don't care what the motivation is, selfishly, unselfishly, it they're taking care of it because they're thinking more about the other person or they're taking care of it only because they're thinking about

⁵⁸⁵ Barbara Rose and Robert Rauschenberg, *An Interview With Robert Rauschenberg*, 58.

⁵⁸⁶ MOMA/Tate wall tag 2016, 53.041, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 381 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10003.

⁵⁸⁷ MOMA/Tate wall tag 2016, 53.041, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, 381 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10003

⁵⁸⁸ Cage, "On Rauschenberg, Artist, And His Work," 100.

⁵⁸⁹ Maurice Tuchman and Robert Rauschenberg (interview for LACMA Art and Technology show 1971), *A report on the Art and Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County, 1971), 286. (SBN87587 0449)

themselves, the result is the same, that they're taking care of it. And those were pieces that would literally die if you didn't water them. They were growing art pieces on the wall, not on the ground, and I said this is art, too..."⁵⁹⁰

Care

Rauschenberg thus identified in his artwork, what the psychologist Rollo May described as, the central "constitutive phenomenon of human existence,"⁵⁹¹ our ability to *care*. Whilst stemming directly from our engagement with a world in which things *matter* to us, with "care", we essentially to "transcend...immediate self-oriented desire."⁵⁹²

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger similarly develops the notion of care as a primordial characteristic of our being but draws a distinction between care in relation to things, *concern* [*Besorgen*], from care in the context of Others, *solicitude* [*Fürsorge*]⁵⁹³. Heidegger reproduces Burdach's translation of the Care myth in the body of the text noting how "this pre-ontological document" evokes 'care' as the "'source' of (humanity's) Being."⁵⁹⁴

Macquarrie Robinson, responsible for the 1964 English translation of Heidegger's book, observes that in translating *fürsorge* as solicitude, they do not wish to convey 'caring for', as would be the literal translation, as this implies a 'fondness', but explain that it should be understood more as a social transaction, a "factual social arrangement", noting that *fürsorge* is often used in contexts where we would talk of 'welfare work' or 'social welfare'.⁵⁹⁵

Heidegger also places care as pivotal to our view of the *possible*; as one commentator notes, humans are not "spectators for whom in principle, nothing would 'matter'."⁵⁹⁶ In this regard, Heidegger follows Kierkegaard's stance that care is essential to decision making and to consciousness generally.

Rauschenberg's *Growing Painting* encapsulates not only our capacity to assimilate natural change, allowing us to project potentialities onto an object, but also draws in our pre-disposition to experience these possibilities empathically.

The growing painting was exhibited only once at the Third Annual Exhibition of Painting and Sculpture at the Stable Gallery, Jan 27th - February 20th, 1954, and the only photographs of the

⁵⁹⁰ Maurice Tuchman and Robert Rauschenberg (interview for LACMA Art and Technology show 1971), 286.

⁵⁹¹ Rollo May, *Love and Will*, (New York: W W Norton, 1969) 290.

⁵⁹² May, *Love and Will*, 268.

⁵⁹³ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 157, 242.

⁵⁹⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 242-243.

⁵⁹⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 157.

⁵⁹⁶ Frederick Olafson, *Heidegger and the Philosophy of Mind* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 104.

work come from this period, presumably taken towards the end of the show as much of the vegetation appears to have perished. Whilst the inspiration for the piece may have come from a few germinating grass seeds dropped from a bird cage, the *Growing Painting* shown at the Stable Gallery contains a diverse range of vegetation and is perhaps more genuinely a framed ‘slice’ of the ‘real world’ than the earlier Dirt Paintings.

Importantly, the installation photographs show that the *Growing Painting* was deliberately hung against a smooth white backing panel rather than the Stable Gallery’s usual bare brick walls. Whilst Rauschenberg may simply have wished that the geometry of the brick courses not impinge on the piece, it is equally likely that he recognised the need for its setting to be *temporally* more neutral in terms of its *material temporality* in order that the potentialities for change that are inherent in the artwork could come to the fore more readily.

It seems that The *Growing Painting* ‘lived-on’ in Rauschenberg’s Fulton Street studio for the remainder of the year and was still very present to Rauschenberg the following Winter. In his interview with Barbara Rose, Rauschenberg described the circumstances surrounding the artwork’s destruction:

BR: “What happened to that work?”

RR: “I had a really good friend...I bought two beautiful white mice for him as a Christmas present...I was living on Fulton Street at the time and I didn’t have any heat. The poor mice froze to death in the night. So I broke the growing painting into bits. It was another sort of dying. The painting was having problems with the lack of heat anyway. And no one was particularly interested in it. They couldn’t see that there was more to it. There was the feeling that you have to take care of things in order to keep them going. That’s true with art. When the mice died, I killed the painting.”⁵⁹⁷

Reading into Rauschenberg’s account, it seems that the *Growing Painting*’s destruction arose through an act of chastisement by the artist, both of his *self* and his *circumstances*, on account of his failure to ‘care properly’ and perhaps the realisation that the displacement of *living* elements from the “real world”, both mice and vegetation, carries, for most of us, an inescapable empathic duty; as Husserl observed, our understanding of living things can only be derived from our personal sense of our “animate” selves⁵⁹⁸ and we project this onto the world around us along with much of its associated emotional affect. Whilst Rauschenberg initially identified the “care” as a component of the artwork, the phenomenon of age made manifest its absence; uncared for, the *Growing Painting* was just a piece of desiccated scrub without the potentialities that the artist originally found appealing and that promoted responses

⁵⁹⁷ Barbara Rose and Robert Rauschenberg, *An Interview With Robert Rauschenberg*, 57.

⁵⁹⁸ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 113.

of positive affect. Rauschenberg appears to have moved on and did not produce any subsequent works that incorporated living elements.

Sadly, there are no colour photographs of the piece showing it alive and in ‘bloom’ and it is very difficult for us to conjure the affect that Rauschenberg sought from the surviving, frontal face-on, monochrome images (although there is, of course, the strong temptation to make a reconstruction).

Conservation?

The surviving 1950’s Dirt Painting, that that Rauschenberg gifted to John Cage has, of course, ‘aged’ materially since its manufacture. However, Cage, a close friend and collaborator of the artist was wholly at ease with the destructive processes, commenting:

“The message is conveyed by dirt...Crumbling and responding to changes in weather, the dirt unceasingly does my thinking.”⁵⁹⁹

Whilst the work’s intended owner clearly understood changes as integral to the work (and part of the artist’s intent), they are understandably problematic for museums and galleries, the conservator Paula Volent commenting:

“Traditionally, the conservator and the curator have attempted to keep the art object frozen in time, both as an historical and aesthetic object. However, dialogue with contemporary artists reveals that, in many cases, this approach may be antithetical to the aesthetic concerns of the artist.”⁶⁰⁰

Many collectors are able to embrace the changes that occur over time, believing that “the ageing and alterations caused by time and dirt, embellish the painting.”⁶⁰¹ Another collector describes how his Rauschenberg “made of organic materials...has its own life” and that he is “proud of the fact that the work changes”. This owner concludes that although the “work may change...on a poetic level it always remains the same.”⁶⁰²

Even if a museum is able to respect the intentions of the artist by avoiding restoration work, their very ownership may alter a work’s potentialities as envisaged by its author simply by virtue of the building’s environmental control and decisions concerning its movement, handling and display. In the ownership of The MOMA in New York, Rauschenberg’s Dirt

⁵⁹⁹ Cage, “On Rauschenberg, Artist, And His Work,” 100.

⁶⁰⁰ Paula Volent, “When Artists’ Intent is Accidental: Artists’ Acceptance of and Experimentation with Changes and Transformations in Materials,” *Modern Works, Modern problems? Conference Papers*, ed. Alison Richmond (London: Institute of Paper Conservation, 1994), 171.

⁶⁰¹ Antonio Rava, “Robert Rauschenberg,” *Conserving Contemporary Art: Issues, Methods, Materials and Research*, ed. Oscar Chiantore and Antonio Rava (Los Angeles, the Getty Conservation), 211.

⁶⁰² Rava, “Robert Rauschenberg,” 210.

Painting is certainly not permitted to respond to changes in the weather in the way that John Cage enjoyed, and it is only exhibited (if at all) *horizontally*, a pragmatic policy admittedly but one that directly contradicts the intent of the artist.



Figure A1.7 Robert Rauschenberg, *Dirt* Painting 1953.

(39.4 H x 40.6 W)

Photo from Robert Rauschenberg Foundation archive folder. 53.030

Inset: *Dirt* Painting storage arrangements.



Interview with Maurice Tuchman for LACMA Art and Technology show 1971

Whilst discussing the work *Mud Muse*,

“...this has absolutely to do with our relationship to technology – our ideas about the world as being this great big apple or something which is put here for us and if we get in trouble God is going to take care of all that. God’s not going to let anything happen to his world because after all, he made us. That’s a lot of bull....But there’s not that moral content in *Mud-Muse*.... Pure waste, sensualism, utilizing a pretty sophisticated technology....I did earth paintings, [1953 or 1954] before the peak of abstract expressionism. [3] Bill de Kooning still wasn’t selling anything; he was showing in one of the only five galleries in New York City that would show modern Americans, and I went into these earth things. There again, I didn’t want to make a big thing about that, but those paintings were about looking and caring. If somebody had a painting they would have to take care of it. It is just as simple as that. I don’t care what the motivation is, selfishly, unselfishly, if they’re taking care of it because they’re thinking more about the other person or they’re taking care of it only because they’re thinking about themselves, the result is the same, that they’re taking care of it. And those were pieces that would literally die if you didn’t water them. They were growing art pieces on the wall, not on the ground, and I said this is art, too....” Maurice Tuchman and Robert Rauschenberg (interview for LACMA Art and Technology show 1971), *A report on the Art and Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County, 1971), 286. (SBN87587 0449)

3. The Shifting Interpretation of Material Over Time: The Sculptures of Naum Gabo

The work of Naum Gabo (born Naum Neemia Pevsner) and his brother, Antoine Pevsner, represents a cornerstone of early-mid twentieth century Constructivism.

Their Realistic Manifesto of 1920 boldly rejected the endeavours of Cubism and Futurism, the only art movements even “worthy of consideration”, as simply more “delusion” and claimed: “No new artistic system will withstand the pressure of a growing new culture until the very foundation of Art will be erected on the real laws of Life.”⁶⁰³

They went further stating:

We know that everything has its own essential image; chair, table, lamp, telephone, book, house, man . . . they are all entire worlds with their own rhythms, their own orbits.

That is why we in creating things take away from them the labels of their owners . . . all accidental and local, leaving only the reality of the constant rhythm of the forces in them.⁶⁰⁴

The brothers set down five principles in which they “affirm[ed] that the tone of a substance, i.e. its light-absorbing material body is its only pictorial reality..., the line only as a direction of the static forces and their rhythm in Ejects..., [and] depth as the only pictorial and plastic form of space.”⁶⁰⁵ In sculpture, they renounced “mass as a sculptural element.” They elucidated:

It is known to every engineer that the static forces of a solid body and its material strength do not depend on the quantity of the mass. . . example a rail, a T-beam, toe. But you sculptors of all shades and directions, you still adhere to the age-old prejudice that you cannot free the volume of mass. Here (in this exhibition) we take four planes and we construct with them the same volume as of four tons of mass.

Thus we bring back to sculpture the line as a direction and in it we affirm depth as the one form of space...

We affirm in these arts a new element the kinetic rhythms as the basic forms of our perception of real time.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰³Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner, “Realistic Manifesto 1920”, *Obelisk Art History*, arthistoryproject.com,

Project 2022, <https://www.arthistoryproject.com/artists/naum-gabo/realistic-manifesto/>

⁶⁰⁴ Gabo and Pevsner, “Realistic Manifesto 1920”, *Obelisk Art History*, arthistoryproject.com,

⁶⁰⁵ Gabo and Pevsner, “Realistic Manifesto 1920”, *Obelisk Art History*, arthistoryproject.com,

⁶⁰⁶ Gabo and Pevsner, “Realistic Manifesto 1920”, *Obelisk Art History*, arthistoryproject.com,

Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner thus rejected traditional sculptural materials, along with the cultural values associated with them, choosing to work with new industrially derived products. Elizabeth Rankin summarised that their “works were intended to embody the utopian paradox of being eternally modern.”⁶⁰⁷

Naum Gabo seems to have been the first to use polymers as a sculptural medium to achieve these objectives, with some pieces dating from 1920. Although plastic had developed from the end of the nineteenth century onward, at this time the only polymers suitable for the sculptor’s planar sculptures were still cellulose based (cellulose acetate/Rhodoid or cellulose nitrate) and generally very unstable (occasionally even explosively so). Its macromolecular structure, however, lent it ductile qualities wherein it would retain its material cohesion when heated, allowing its manipulation into a wide variety of forms which it then retained when cooled. Rankin conjectures that Gabo is likely to have been drawn also to its “dematerialised nature and lack of texture.”⁶⁰⁸

Naum Gabo continued to work with plastics throughout his career, taking up the improved polymer materials as they were developed; Perspex produced by I.C.I. (Imperial Chemical Industries) in Britain (Lucite and Plexiglass in the United States) and nylon developed by Du Pont.

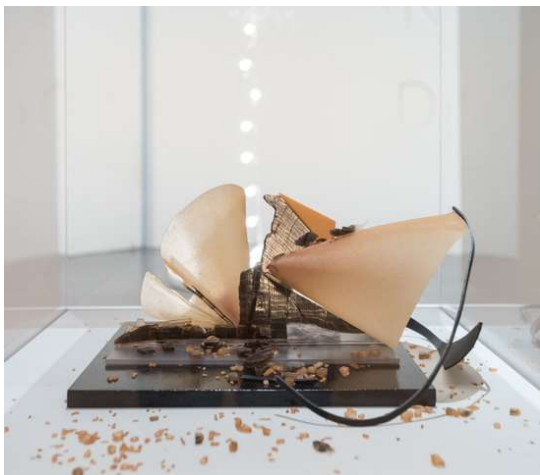


Figure A1.8. Naum Gabo’s *Construction in Space: Two Cones* (1927) in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (left) and a model presented to The Tate by the artist in 1977.

All of these early industrial materials vary in their response to light, heat, atmosphere and time, and much of the material used by the brothers has degraded. The extent of the material

⁶⁰⁷ Elizabeth Rankin, “A Betrayal of Material: Problems of Conservation in the Constructivist Sculpture of Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner,” *LEONARDO*, Vol.21, no.3, (1988), pp.285-290, p.285.

⁶⁰⁸ Rankin, “A Betrayal of Material,” 286.

decomposition ranges from minor discoloration to total disintegration, Gabo's *Construction in Space: Two Cones (1927)* in the Philadelphia Museum of Art being an example.

In this instance, the museum was prescient enough to have approached the artist for permission to fabricate a replica, a process that begun as early as 1966,⁶⁰⁹ before the original reached its current state where such a move would not be possible.

It is clear in current photographs of Gabo's work that the deterioration of the polymer components interferes with the artist's vision. To some extent, the discolouration of plastics materials is still a phenomenon of ageing familiar to many (older) modern viewers, who may 'project' onto the sculpture an imaginatively derived 'past' in which the plastic is clear⁶¹⁰ Such perceptual responses from the viewer give insight into the original intent of the artist, they will become progressively less reliable as the collective experience of polymer degradation falls away through the demographic evolution of our society. Furthermore, whilst those sections of the population for whom polymer discolouration is an accepted material process will perceive the sculptures as 'old' and *changed*, subsequent generations will view the degraded plastic sculptures and believe them to have been deliberately fabricated that way.

The Tate's collection includes forty-three Gabo sculptures which incorporate polymer components, of which seventeen are of the earlier, less stable, cellulose based products. With foresight similar to that of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Tate have embarked on an arduous process of documenting their Gabo pieces through various three-dimensional processes. By their nature, there is no single method through which they can be recorded, primarily because of the reflectance of the materials, and a combination has been employed, primarily laser scanning and photogrammetry, but with some co-ordinates having to be entered using a delicate 'touch-probe'⁶¹¹

From this computerised documentation, it will be possible for the museum to create virtual replicas of Gabo's sculptures, perhaps even correcting within their virtual doppelgangers some of the distortions and discolouration's of time. The Tate conservators, Jackie Heuman and Lyndsey Morgan go further though:

"More controversially, the accuracy of the three-dimensional data gives the opportunity to explore the creation of an actual replica using plastic sheet. We are

⁶⁰⁹ Rankin, "A Betrayal of Material," 288 and note 6.

⁶¹⁰ Refer to Chapter Four, objects with a past and Edmund Husserl

⁶¹¹ Lyndsey Morgan and Jackie Heuman, "Tate Sculpture Replica Project," *Tate Papers* no. 8, (2007), ISSN 1753-9854, <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/tate-papers/08/tate-sculpture-replica-project>

looking into the feasibility of using software manipulation to separate the three-dimensional models into their component parts and to lay them flat. This would effectively give a two-dimensional cutting pattern for plastic sheet in much the same way that Gabo used carefully constructed templates to cut out the sections of his sculptures. These patterns should enable us to construct a replica with a high level of accuracy if this were ever considered appropriate.”⁶¹²

Whilst the computerised data will permit the accurate cutting of the polymer sheet, there would remain the issue of whether to reproduce the inherent inaccuracies and evanescent properties of the sheet material itself. It is clear from the artist’s manifesto that, were *today’s* materials available to them, they would certainly have been employed in lieu of the cellulose based products; the museum would, consequently, need to decide whether to construct a replica in accordance with the artist’s *intent* or one that precisely *replicates* the original.

This also raises the issue of maintaining and re-energising the response and interpretation of the viewer. To the museum audience of 1920, a slightly cloudy cellulose sculpture would have held within it all of the promise and potentialities of the future that Gabo wished it to encapsulate. It is fair to speculate, however, that today’s visitor would find a sculpture hand-cut and constructed from such irregular materials to be quite artisan in appearance and technologically ‘underwhelming;’ this must lead us to ask whether a more accurate recreation of its original presentation and intent might be achieved if the sculpture were reproduced using current materials and techniques so that the viewers’ interpretation and response would match more closely that sought by the artist in the first quarter of the last century:

“The plumb-line in our hand, eyes as precise as a ruler, in a spirit as taut as a compass...we construct our work as the universe constructs its own, as the engineer constructs his bridges, as the mathematician his formula of the orbits”.⁶¹³

⁶¹² (Morgan and Heuman, “Tate Sculpture Replica Project,” Tate Papers no. 8.

⁶¹³ Gabo and Pevsner, “Realistic Manifesto 1920”, *Obelisk Art History*, arthistoryproject.com,

4. Eva Hesse: Expanded Expansion, “A Relic?”

In 2022, many years of curatorial debate and painstaking conservation work came to fruition in the re-exhibiting of Eva Hesse’s *Expanded Expansion* of 1969 at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

Eva Hesse first showed the work at The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in their 1969 exhibition, *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials*.



Figure A1.9. Eva Hesse stands in front of *Expanded Expansion* in the *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art, 19th May -6th July 1969. Photo: Frances Mulhall Achilles Library, Whitney Museum of American art, New York.

This installation of the work is famously recorded in a colour photograph with the artist standing in front of the work. Hesse wears a dress printed with a pattern of monochrome circles and is in every way styled to the period. The inclusion of the artist not only gives the work physical scale but situates it in *history*.

Hesse’s work was a perfect fit for the theme of the Whitney’s 1969 show, the artist remarking in a 1970 interview that:

“it’s not the artisan quality of the work, but the integrity of the piece...I’m not conscious of materials as a beautiful essence...For me the great involvement is for a purpose – to arrive at an end...I like to be...true to whatever [material] I use

in the least pretentious and most direct way...That's why my art might be so good, because I have no fear. I could take risks...I really walk on the edge..."⁶¹⁴

Hesse juxtaposed the unpretentious and direct use of a materials pallet drawn mostly from industry with a drive for her work to be manifestly "absurd" or beyond the ordinary:

"...absurdity" she said "...is the key word...It has to do with contradictions and oppositions."⁶¹⁵

Expanded Expansion was fabricated using cheese-cloth brushed with latex draped between glass fibre and resin poles. Importantly for the work, the fabric and poles are integrated into a single unity and exhibit a real concern for construction that perhaps belies the artist's claim of a direct approach to materials. Expanded Expansion is undoubtedly a complex multi-layered artwork and even Hesse had to confess:

"...I think that what confuses people in a piece like this is that it's so silly and yet it is made fairly well. Its ridiculous quality is contradicted by its definite concern about its presentation..."⁶¹⁶

At its inception, Expanded Expansion possessed an ethereal glossy translucence which seemed almost to bond the work with the white space in which it was displayed and its fabric sections would "shudder from the breeze from a passing body."⁶¹⁷

Expanded Expansion was always considered an important artwork and was shown in a memorial exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim in 1972, a retrospective at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago in 1973, entering the collection of the Solomon R. Guggenheim in 1975. In 1986 it featured in the exhibition *Transformations in Sculpture: Four Decades of American And European Art* (Sol. R. Guggenheim) but until 2022, had been in storage since 1988. Photographs of these exhibitions show the progressive discolouration of the artwork and it was eventually classified as "unexhibitable". Lena Stringari, Deputy Director and Chief Conservator at the museum explains:

"Natural latex is a polymer that ages over time through chemical processes...exposure to light, heat, oxygen...the material oxidises and can become very sticky and slowly turn hard and brittle...this happens as the chemical bonds start to crosslink...[meanwhile] the colour darkens from a light yellow to an orange or brown colour."⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁴ Cindy Nemser, "An Interview with Eva Hesse," *Artforum* Vol. 8, No. 9 (May 1970): pp. 59-63, p.60

⁶¹⁵ FOOTNOTE: About another work, *Hangup*, she said "...It's the most ridiculous structure that I ever made and that is why it is really good." Nemser, "An Interview with Eva Hesse," 62.

⁶¹⁶ Nemser, "An Interview with Eva Hesse," 63.

⁶¹⁷ Graham Larkin, "Things Fall Apart: Graham Larkin on The Object in Transition", *Artforum*, 46 No.8 (April, 2008): pp.153-156, p.154. <https://www.artforum.com/columns/the-object-in-transition-187834/>

⁶¹⁸ Sol. R. Guggenheim Museum, "The afterlife of Eva Hesse's Expanded Expansion," (documentary film), *Sol. R. Guggenheim* (July 2022) <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/the-afterlife-of-eva-hesses-expanded-expansion>



Figure A1.10. Eva Hesse's Expanded Expansion at the John Paul Getty Museum in 2008.

ArtForum, Vol.46, No.8 (2008)

So extreme was the deterioration that when exhibited at the J. Paul Getty Museum in 2008, Expanded Expansion was displayed in a corner of the gallery in three different formats; an “exhibition replica” of three panels from 2007, a two-panel original end section, and four middle panels displayed horizontally in their profiled storage crate, whose form was redolent of several sarcophagi. This presentation seemed to remove from the artwork any vestiges of the artist’s intent, and indeed many of its credentials as an artwork, reducing the piece almost to an introspective discussion concerning its own slow demise.

Fernando Dominguez Rubio remarked that “the physical transformation has been so radical that it has prompted a wide controversy in the art world as to whether this piece should be exhibited at all...” adding:

The argument is that it is no longer clear whether this artefact can still be rightfully attributed to Eva Hesse’s artistic agency...[or indeed whether it] can still be legitimately considered an “art object.”⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁹ Fernando Domínguez Rubio, “Preserving the unpreservable: docile and unruly objects at MOMA,” *Theory and Society* 43, (29th Aug. 2014): pp. 617-645, p.623.

The artist knew that the materials she was using would perish but felt the requirements of the underlying intent justified their use (even against the advice of her assistant⁶²⁰). There is an often-quoted passage from a 1970 interview with Eva Hesse:

“At this point I feel a little guilty when people want to buy it [her latex/resin artworks]. I think they know but I want to write them a letter and say it’s not going to last. I am not sure what my stand on lasting really is. Part of me feels that it’s superfluous and if I need to use rubber that is more important. Life doesn’t last: art doesn’t last.”⁶²¹

The interview acquires tremendous poignancy from Hesse’s death later that year (at the age of 34) from a brain tumour diagnosed in 1969.

It is, of course, wholly natural for many people to draw parallels between the degradation of the artwork and Hesse’s premature death. This is, in fact so commonplace a reaction, that at a conference at The Getty Center in Los Angeles, Jeffery Weiss (Director of the Dia Art Foundation) “registered his own Hesse fatigue by inviting panelists to move beyond “quasi-biographical” interpretations of her art”, later confiding:

“I have never been to an event relating to Eva Hesse when this didn’t start to happen: that people spoke of the sadness of it, on the one hand, and the poetry of the sadness of it on the other.”⁶²²

The biographical parallels may, perhaps, have had equal (or greater) pathos had Eva Hesse achieved what is now regarded as a natural age and one imagines a photograph of the octogenarian artist, dressed in the fashion of today, standing in front of her, now, wrinkled and tanned artwork of 1969.

Such empathic responses to material decay are impossible to avoid, given both the relationship of the art object with the human form and the necessity to project our own knowledge of our living selves into the artwork for us to understand them as Art, or indeed as an artefact.

For Jonathan Keats, “...the volatility of her art lends it a sense of urgency” and he urges us to “see her art while it lasts”.⁶²³

In many ways, the art document that haunts us most is the 1969 photograph of Eva Hesse standing in front of *Expanded Expansion*. It records not only the original intent in the artwork but also its temporally situated author. Linda Shearer, Curator of *Eva Hesse: A Memorial*

⁶²⁰ In the Guggenheim documentary, “The afterlife of Eva Hesse’s *Expanded Expansion*,” Douglas Johns recalls: “I made her very aware this stuff was not going to last!” <https://www.guggenheim.org/video/the-afterlife-of-eva-hesses-expanded-expansion>

⁶²¹ Sol. R. Guggenheim Museum, “The afterlife of Eva Hesse’s *Expanded Expansion*,” (documentary film).

⁶²² Graham Larkin, “Things Fall Apart: The Object in Transition”, 154.

⁶²³ Jonathan Keats, “Before Snapchat, There was Eva Hesse (See Her Art While It Lasts)” *Forbes Online Magazine*, (December 10th, 2013) <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jonathonkeats/2013/12/13/before-snapchat-there-was-eva-hesse-so-you-d-better-see-her-art-at-hamburger-kunsthalle-while-it-lasts/?sh=274ac96e19a2>

Exhibition 1972 recounts how Hesse “personified what it is to be vibrant and alive and this incredible icon of the 60’s.”⁶²⁴

Stringari admits: “We don’t know what Hesse would think... We don’t know if she would show it. You can imagine that if she lived, she would have had a huge production, and maybe this piece wouldn’t be as important as it is today.” But Stringari believes that whilst “the rubber is darkened and... somewhat rigid,...the piece is now standing...[and] it’s gorgeous. It’s very powerful. The scale and absurdity that Hesse always spoke about is still there.”⁶²⁵

Epilogue

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum invited Mauren Hassinger, a young contemporary of Hesse, to the unveiling of the restored Expanded Expansion. Although they never met, Hassinger recalls how she was “attracted to [Hesse] and her work”⁶²⁶ and was “madly in love with all of her doings and ideas.”⁶²⁷

On seeing the restored Hesse piece, Hassinger comments: “An Artist makes what they want to make while they can make it...and then they die, and that’s it. What’s so ironic is that something that was so malleable and responding to gravity, is now locked in place forever. Now she’s made a monument.”

Asked if she sees it as a *relic*, Hassinger replies simply: “Yes.”⁶²⁸



⁶²⁴ Sol. R. Guggenheim Museum, “The afterlife of Eva Hesse’s Expanded Expansion,” (documentary film).

⁶²⁵ Sol. R. Guggenheim Museum, “The afterlife of Eva Hesse’s Expanded Expansion,” (documentary film).

⁶²⁶ Sol. R. Guggenheim Museum, “The afterlife of Eva Hesse’s Expanded Expansion,” (documentary film).

⁶²⁷ Jessica Lynne, “I got to be the Artist I Wanted to Be: Sculptor Mauren Hassinger on What Success Looks Like for a Black Artist in America,” *Art Net News* (July 2, 2021) <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/mauren-hassinger-interview-dia-1982005>

⁶²⁸ Sol. R. Guggenheim Museum, “The afterlife of Eva Hesse’s Expanded Expansion,” (documentary film).

5. AGE AS ART: *Jeremy Deller's We're here because we're here* and "Pastness" Affect

In 2013, Jeremy Deller was approached by *14-18NOW* to provide an artwork marking the centenary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme, 1st July 1916; at the end of this day, often labelled as the "deadliest in British military history", 19,240 British soldiers had been killed and 57,470 injured.

14-18NOW was the official arts programme marking the centenary of the First World War delivering artworks and events between 2014 and 2018. In their evaluation documents, 14-18NOW describe the organisation as "an historical enquiry into the First World War through the arts."⁶²⁹ adding:

By reinterpreting the commemorative act, 14-18NOW projects have presented heritage on an individual human scale and enabled artists, participants and audiences to connect emotionally and intellectually with the First World War."⁶³⁰

The works were funded by The National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and arts Council England, and by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

At the outset, Deller felt that the work should be "...mobile, involved human beings, had a randomness to it..." and "...take the memorial to the public...be an intervention in their

From: Jeremy Deller To: Jenny Waldman Sent Thursday, 18th July, 2013, 10:16

Subject:

Jenny here is the idea, I have left a lot of questions unanswered but it's the bare bones which you can show to whoever needs to see it, happy to meet, J.

The Somme Memorial

The idea is for WWI soldiers to start appearing randomly around the UK in the build up to the anniversary. each Soldier will have the documented identity of someone killed in the Battle of the Somme, they will appear in public places as well as incongruous modern environments , shopping centres for example. they will not speak to the public unless spoken to and when they are engaged they will do so in character and then give the member of public a card with the wording,

My name is xxxxxxxx xxxx

I was killed at the Somme July 1st 1916

At some point in this process they might assemble en masse for a public display of some sort

The soldiers would be trained in their task, cp to Mike Leighs preparation of actors who assume roles, A great piece of research in itself

they would be recruited amongst young actors, students, soldiers, the unemployed

⁶²⁹ Morris, Hargreaves, McIntyre, *14-18Now Evaluation: 2016 Season*, (May 2017).

https://issuu.com/1418now/docs/14-18_now_evaluation_report_2016_-_

⁶³⁰ Morris, Hargreaves, McIntyre, *14-18Now Evaluation: 2016 Season*, (May 2017).

lives...not [one they were] expecting (they may not even be wanting it) but would have to deal with it in some way..."⁶³¹

His email to the project's director, Jenny Waldmam set out the initial idea:⁶³²



Figure A1.11. Preparatory montages for Jeremy Deller's *We're here because we're here*.

In the preparatory stages of the project, several photo montages were produced where original black and white images of World War One soldiers were inserted into modern everyday settings. In themselves, these images are very affecting, particularly that of a soldier seated on a 21st century railway platform. Deller referred to the images in an interview noting how close they were to what was finally achieved although, he said, "...we did not have the costumes in such a distressed state because we did not want them to be narrative really, have a narrative with them..."⁶³³

Jeremy Deller determined that the work should be a closely kept secret before the event: Rufus Norris of the National Theatre explained: "...the secrecy felt like a masterstroke, allowing as it did such a personal, honest and individual response" from the public;⁶³⁴ the work would be without the "...promises and expectations..." which normally precede such events.

On 1st July 2016, the soldiers "just appeared"⁶³⁵ amongst the public as they went about their everyday lives. Deller recognised that seeing "...the soldiers moving through a contemporary

⁶³¹ 14-18Now, "Meet the creatives behind 'We're here because we're here', National Theatre, 1st July 2016" NT Platform, 15th July 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJEy5Y3JFCU>

⁶³² Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris, *'We're here because we're here'*, ed. Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris, (London: Cultureshock/Thames and Hudson, 2017), 3.

⁶³³ 14-18Now, "Meet the creatives behind 'We're here because we're here', National Theatre, 1st July 2016" NT Platform, 15th July 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJEy5Y3JFCU>

⁶³⁴ Rufus Norris, "They Should Just Appear", *'We're here because we're here'*, ed. Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris, (London: Cultureshock/Thames and Hudson, 2017), 11.

⁶³⁵ Norris, "They Should Just Appear", 11.

UK...[would have] the maximum visual effect.”⁶³⁶ Churches and war memorials were deliberately avoided; Deller commented “...we just had to get out of heritage Britain...”⁶³⁷

The soldiers, the enactors of the work, Deller explained, “were not ghosts or zombies,”⁶³⁸ but “*represented*” a real person who had died on 1st July 1916. The enactors were “...trained a lot at stripping away artifice;”⁶³⁹ it was important that there should be no “characterisation”. The enactors would therefore not talk; Deller explained that as “... soon as you start speaking it becomes confusing for the public because you are effectively telling a story, and then it becomes like re-enactment.”⁶⁴⁰

When approached by a member of the public, the enactors of the artwork would give a card with the name, regiment, battalion and age of the WWI soldier they represented, “...all the information you’d get on a gravestone...”, Deller noted when interviewed.⁶⁴¹

The team refined the artwork using observations gained from trial events (using WWII uniforms to maintain the secrecy). From these, they learned that the way that the enactors engaged with the public needed to be carefully honed so that people were not alienated. Each participant soldier was given a ‘crib’ sheet with five golden words and four golden rules.⁶⁴²

FIVE GOLDEN WORDS

RELAXED, OPEN, ALIVE, KIND, ENGAGED

FOUR GOLDEN RULES

1. **STAY ALIVE** – keep it natural, be comfortable, don’t ever be a statue!
2. **SEEK EYE CONTACT** - be interested in the public but don’t *intimidate* them, its not a staring competition!
3. **BE KIND** to the public, don’t ever be rude!
4. **EACH CARD IS A GIFT** – make eye contact when you give it, watch the public’s reaction to it

⁶³⁶ Jon Snow and Jeremy Deller, “Avoid Sentimentality” *We’re here because we’re here*, ed. Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris, (London: Cultureshock/Thames and Hudson, 2017), 61.

⁶³⁷ Jon Snow and Jeremy Deller, “Avoid Sentimentality,” 61.

⁶³⁸ 14-18Now, “Meet the creatives behind ‘We’re here because we’re here’, National Theatre, 1st July 2016” NT Platform, 15th July 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJEy5Y3JFCU>

⁶³⁹ Jon Snow and Jeremy Deller, “Avoid Sentimentality,” 63.

⁶⁴⁰ Jon Snow and Jeremy Deller, “Avoid Sentimentality,” 63.

⁶⁴¹ 14-18Now, “Meet the creatives behind ‘We’re here because we’re here’, National Theatre, 1st July 2016” NT Platform, 15th July 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJEy5Y3JFCU>

⁶⁴² Emily Lim and Jeremy Deller, “Relaxed, open, alive, kind, engaged” *We’re here because we’re here*, ed. Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris, (London: Cultureshock/Thames and Hudson, 2017), 104.

Emily Lim explained how the team “... worked at finding a movement quality that was... purposeful - something that still felt organic, as if the soldiers were displaced, but that also gave the sense they had real direction.”⁶⁴³ This resolved into the soldiers moving in single file and practicing rehearsed “tableaux” groupings.

THE MEANING OF THE ARTWORK

It's very unclear what the intended reception of the work was. The ambition of the commissioning body, 14-18Now was the “...reshaping of the commemorative act...” and to “prompt people to be more curious about those who lived during [the First World War].”⁶⁴⁴

Jeremy Deller is illusive about the meaning of the work, stating “...the message is so unclear in a way, I don't even know what it is myself!”⁶⁴⁵ In a panel discussion, he gave some clarification saying it's “...not anti-war, as such, but there's of course some of that in it...”⁶⁴⁶

Irene Breuer notes that in acts of commemoration there are two components, “the *commemoranda* [something to be remembered]” and “commemorabilia or the vehicle through which we commemorate, may it be a ritual, a text, ... a monument [or an artwork];”⁶⁴⁷ “in commemoration, body [and] place or *commemorabilia* and *commemoranda* are essentially intertwined in a narrative structure.”⁶⁴⁸

In traditional acts of commemoration, a monument or place is “reanimated by our bodily presence in ritualised scenes of co-remembering”⁶⁴⁹, the “monuments [act] as symbolic media giv[ing] us access to the temporal drama of our existence, i.e. to our own past.”⁶⁵⁰ In Jeremy Deller's *We're here because we're here*, the place is the home country of the *remembered*, the everyday environment of the *remembered* and those *remembering*. In the development of the artwork, the costume co-ordinator, Anna Lewis, carefully drew-up the list of the soldiers to be represented from the localities of the volunteer enactor groups and replicated the uniforms for

⁶⁴³ Emily Lim and Jeremy Deller, “Relaxed, open, alive, kind, engaged,” 105.

⁶⁴⁴ 14-18NOW, Introductory description, Imperial War Museum Website, <https://www.iwm.org.uk/partnerships/first-world-war-centenary/1418now>

⁶⁴⁵ Jon Snow and Jeremy Deller, “Avoid Sentimentality” *We're here because we're here*, 66.

⁶⁴⁶ 14-18Now, “Meet the creatives behind ‘We're here because we're here’, National Theatre, 1st July 2016”

⁶⁴⁷ Irene Breuer, “Phenomenological reflections on the intertwining of violence, place and memory: The memorials of the ungraspable”, *Studia Phaenomenologica (On Conflict and Violence)* Vol. 19 (2019): pp. 153-174, p.160.

⁶⁴⁸ Breuer, “Phenomenological reflections on the intertwining of violence, place and memory: The memorials of the ungraspable”, 160.

⁶⁴⁹ Breuer, “Phenomenological reflections on the intertwining of violence, place and memory: The memorials of the ungraspable”, 158.

⁶⁵⁰ Breuer, “Phenomenological reflections on the intertwining of violence, place and memory: The memorials of the ungraspable”, 159.

those local regiments/battalions; in this, it feels in many ways as though the artwork was a ‘homecoming’ for those killed at The Somme in 1916.

RECEPTION OF THE ARTWORK

The work generated significant affect in the public whose response was very emotional, with “... many...moved to tears.”⁶⁵¹ Emily Lim recounted:

“It was a piece that asked people to stand in front of a stranger and exchange a moment of empathy and understanding, and that I think was something I never really understood about it until it happened. I remember the deputy artistic director of the National Theatre coming into the studio where we were preparing and I could see he’d been crying. I said: “What is it, what is it?” what is it? They’re all in Waterloo station and everyone’s in floods of tears.”⁶⁵²

A post on social media recorded how when the soldier was approached, he “... just reached into his pocket and gave me a card stating who he was and when he died, I almost burst in to tears in front of him.” (Creative review) A similar Tweet recorded how:

“...3 soldiers gave me cards today. I looked down and they read they had died at my age and [I] cried as they walked away.”⁶⁵³

On Instagram, another passer-by wrote: “The impact of seeing so many men dressed in their uniforms was [so] overwhelming that it brought an eeriness to a usually bustling station.”⁶⁵⁴

THE OPERATION OF OBJECTIVE AGE IN THE ARTWORK

The work essentially comprised 1400 modern enactors dressed in modern reproductions of period military uniforms ‘appearing’ amongst us in the course of our day-to-day lives. The only link between the artwork and 1st July 1916 was the ‘style’ of the artefacts, namely the clothing and other equipment.

The artefacts conjured a ‘past’, not their own past (they were made in Poland earlier that year), but that of Western Society, our “community”, in Husserl’s terminology. As Heidegger

⁶⁵¹ Claire Eva, “Reaching the public,” *We’re here because we’re here*, ed. Jeremy Deller and Rufus Norris, (London: Cultureshock/Thames and Hudson, 2017), 116.

⁶⁵² Emily Lim and Jeremy Deller, “Relaxed, open, alive, kind, engaged,” 111.

⁶⁵³ Tweet by Carrie Hope Fletcher cited Claire Eva, “Reaching the public,” 116.

⁶⁵⁴ @kirarocksu, Instagram cited Creative Review online, <https://www.creativereview.co.uk/were-here-because-were-here-by-the-cogency-ltd/>

observed, it is “the *world* within which they belonged to a context of [meaningful] equipment...”⁶⁵⁵ that is “no longer”⁶⁵⁶, that is “past”, and concluded that:

“... the historical character of the...[artefacts/uniforms] is grounded in the past of ...[those people] to whose world they belonged.”⁶⁵⁷

The inherent “pastness” of the artefacts was used to evoke in us those who the work set out to commemorate, the men who had died on the opening day of the Somme Offensive and the casualties of that conflict more generally.

The artwork uses a sort of *subject/object reversal*, where the experience of *age* stems from the temporal progression of the *subject* observer’s “community”, rather than any changes inherent in the artefact *objects*. Without this, the artwork would be unable to commemorate past lives or past events.

The project recognised the importance of the integrity of this “pastness”:

“The soldiers weren’t going to be speaking of course, so the visual picture was everything. The organisation of costumes and props was hugely complicated and totally critical. We had people wrapping digestive biscuits in greaseproof paper across the country at all hours!”⁶⁵⁸

Although Jeremy Deller and his team sought to avoid established heritage environments, such as castles and churches, many of the ‘everyday’ locations in which the artwork’s participants ‘appeared’, town high-streets and Victorian railway stations, for instance, possessed, through the phenomenon of age, temporal extension for their normal inhabitants. Crucially though, this artwork placed artefacts from the past that was being commemorated on “living, breathing human beings.”⁶⁵⁹ By their nature, these artefacts (early 20th Century military clothes and equipment) were not in the everyday lexicon of things in 2016.

There was, of course, a contradiction brought about by making the artefacts ‘live’ on the living enactors of the artwork. Normally, artefacts from a community’s past reach a condition where they are no longer useful, usually, in the case of clothes, through wear and insect damage, but sometimes as a consequence of progressions in technology or taste. Here the artefacts, clothes on “living, breathing humans”⁶⁶⁰ could not exhibit any ‘extrinsic’ age phenomena, since such indicators of a past, would ‘detach’/separate the clothes from the wearer, who could not, of

⁶⁵⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 432.

⁶⁵⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.

⁶⁵⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 432.

⁶⁵⁸ Lim and Deller, “Relaxed, open, alive, kind, engaged,” 111.

⁶⁵⁹ 14-18Now, “Meet the creatives behind ‘We’re here because we’re here’, National Theatre.”

⁶⁶⁰ 14-18Now, “Meet the creatives behind ‘We’re here because we’re here’, National Theatre.”

course, exhibit similar signs of age. The patina lent to artefacts through extrinsic age, that brought about through the artefact's interaction with other entities, is often useful to us in the understanding and assimilation of heritage artefacts, but here such age phenomena would be absent since, as Jeremy Deller observed, they would have generated an additional disruptive narrative. The artefact uniforms would, therefore, manifest "pastness" through their styling alone.

The period of the First World War exists at the fringes of our collective memory, Jeremy Deller noting:

"Importantly there's no one alive who fought in the First World War, it's possible that there's no one left who can even remember living through it. So we've lost the human connection to it, and that is an interesting moment, and potentially a difficult moment, because that's when there is a tendency to romanticise things."⁶⁶¹

We should remember that, although the participants in *We're here because we're here* seemed to "appear" from nowhere on July 1st 2016, events marking the centenary of the war had been in sway for two years prior to this day, with images of the 1914-1918 battlefield regularly appearing in our shared cultural media and the silhouette of the Great War British soldier, along with its cultural attachments, would be recognisable by many people at this time. Its "pastness" would, however, have been reinforced by the images' transmission media, generally grainy black and white photographs and hand-cranked moving film.⁶⁶²

The power that underlies the work stems from the application of empathy in the understanding of our communal existence. Husserl explains that our perception and understanding of the world is framed by the pre-supposition that it is shared with other animate beings, most importantly other people, and how, through "harmonious verification", a community constructs a world identical to all of its constituent members. Whilst Jeremy Deller actively sought to avoid explicit sentimentality in the artwork, he could not circumvent our inherent reliance on empathy in the assimilation of Others, our artefacts and the communities of which we are a part.

The central role of the 'pastness' of the historic uniforms is indisputable; a similar artwork commemorating soldiers killed in Afghanistan or even the Falklands, using artefacts contemporary to those conflicts, could not work as the enactors would blend with our everyday experience of the World. I think, in this, Husserl's observation that to connect with Others that

⁶⁶¹ Jon Snow and Jeremy Deller, "Avoid Sentimentality" *We're here because we're here*, 61.

⁶⁶² NOTE: As a parallel project, Peter Jackson's documentary, *They Shall Not Grow Old*, "edited-out" the 'veil' of 'pastness' inherent in the medium, using modern computer software to 'clarify', "colourize" and add incidental sound and dialogue to historic footage of the war, creating a documentary where the human story would be more immanent to viewers through the updating of the film medium.

are so distant (temporally in this case) requires an additional act of empathy is, to some extent, borne out by the emotional response of many of the onlookers. Similarly pronounced empathic acts are evident when we engage with historic dramas or books where the audience must push their way through differences of custom, style, language and technology to “project themselves into”⁶⁶³ the characters and find Others that are recognisable.

The philosopher Alva Noë proposes that acts of art, in their making and receiving, extend everyday actions, singing extending speaking, poetry extending writing and visual arts extending perceiving; the historically displaced narrative in *We're here because we're here* in a similar way extends our empathic understanding of *ourselves* and, in doing so, commemorated the dead of 1st July 1916 with great poignancy and affect.



Figure A1.12 A display in the museum at West Point, New York in 2016.

⁶⁶³ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 134.

6. Time Reversal in Umeda Ritual with Alfred Gell

In 1969 and 1970, the anthropologist, Alfred Gell, conducted research in the Waina-Sowanda area of the West Sepik District of New Guinea focusing mainly on the Umeda and Punda villages and their annual *ida ritual*.

The area is largely forested with small areas of bush and swamp; the ground generally suffers from poor drainage and overall poor fertility. The staple of the people's diet is sago. To this is added taro, yams, pitpit, sugar cane, other greens from their small areas of cultivation and occasionally hunted game such as wild pigs cassowaries and smaller animals. The population density is very low, approximately one person per square mile, but even so, several commentators note that the people of Waina-Sowanda are generally malnourished and vulnerable to disease.

The *ida* ritual is, ideally⁶⁶⁴, a yearly event starting as the rainy season begins in October or November. The first day is marked by the playing of several wooden trumpets and people begin to congregate “enjoying food and company”⁶⁶⁵. The men of the villages go into the forest to collect white clay, ochre pigments and magical plants and in a secluded ritual enclosure, make complex masks and paint their bodies.

“On the first night of dancing, the “cassowaries” enter the dance arena after dark: two men painted black with charcoal, wearing elongated, weighted



Figure A1.13 The Fish masked dancer, from the documentary film, *The Red Bowmen* directed by Chris Owen. Documentary Educational Resources, Watertown, MA

Figure A1.14 Waina men in ritual attire, in the fish dance sequence, Aida ritual, Umeda, 1982 (Photo M. MacKenzie)

⁶⁶⁴ The ritual does not take place in times of war or famine, *The Red Bowmen*, documentary film directed by Chris Owen

⁶⁶⁵ Toby Alice Volkman, *The Red Bowmen (Study Guide)*, ed. Razan Alzayani, Watertown MA: Documentary Educational Resources, 1983), 4. [available online: <https://www.der.org/resources/guides/red-bowmen-study-guide.pdf>]

penis gourds and elaborate masks of rattan, pandanus fringes, strings of orange fruits and waving sago fronds”⁶⁶⁶. Gell comments that their dance is “overtly intended to imitate copulation.”⁶⁶⁷

“As the “cassowaries” dance, they are accompanied by a pair of neophyte youths or “fish” painted red all over [and] armed with bows and arrows...”⁶⁶⁸. At dawn, the “cassowaries” leave and are replaced by two “sago” dancers in similar costumes but starkly different body paint, “broad horizontal bands of yellow, red, white and black, with black markings on their joints.”⁶⁶⁹. Later that morning, new “fish” dancers arrive “painted black with splashes of red and yellow.”⁶⁷⁰ “On the following morning, the cassowaries briefly reappear...with the addition of termite dancers, elegantly polychromed with elaborate yellow masks. Finally the bowmen enter...their red-painted torsos...striped with black...and bear[ing] red-painted bows and arrows.”⁶⁷¹ Gell comments:

“How body paint relates to time requires some more detailed comment. The Umeda ritual system uses colour to encode age on the basis of two powerful analogies drawn from nature. The most important of these is human skin and hair. Melanesian babies are born with reddish-golden skin which darkens progressively, and as infants they also have coppery hair, which gradually turns black. The same red →black transition is also seen in the development of plants, notably the colour changes in the spathes of palm trees (an important raw material in Umeda technology). The cassowary is the quintessence of black, in the ritual as in nature.”⁶⁷²

“In fact, as the ritual proceeds, the proportions of black to red in the body paint of the major performers steadily diminish, until we reach the red bowmen, whose body paint is all red, with the exception of black decorative lines. The general point to be borne in mind is that the body paint progression in *ida* goes from black to red, from age to youth.”⁶⁷³

“The general interpretation of the *ida* ritual...[put forward by Gell in *Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries*] was that the ritual “enacts a process of bio-social regeneration...The scenario of the ritual is the subjugation of this natural spontaneity”

Gell argues “that it is possible to see the *ida* ritual as a ritual representation of lifecycle phases occurring in a ‘reversed (symbolic) time’ ...and the accompanying explanation: Three kinds

⁶⁶⁶ Toby Alice Volkman, *The Red Bowmen (Study Guide)*, 5.

⁶⁶⁷ Alfred Gell, *The Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries*, (London: Athlone, 1975), 180.

⁶⁶⁸ Toby Alice Volkman, *The Red Bowmen (Study Guide)*, 5.

⁶⁶⁹ Toby Alice Volkman, *The Red Bowmen (Study Guide)*, 5.

⁶⁷⁰ Toby Alice Volkman, *The Red Bowmen (Study Guide)*, 6.

⁶⁷¹ Toby Alice Volkman, *The Red Bowmen (Study Guide)*, 6.

⁶⁷² Alfred Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, (Oxford: Berg, 1992), 42.

⁶⁷³ Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 43.

of time are here distinguished: the central arrow is 'duration' - the actual time in which the ritual is performed. The lower-most arrow is 'process' time: the time continuum established by organic processes, e.g. the red black continuum or, on a larger scale, the human lifecycle. The upper arrow is 'symbolic' time, here shown as the 'inversion' of both 'duration' and 'process' time. The 'inversion' of symbolic time is achieved by taking the sequence of events in process time (T'T'T'') and reproducing them symbolically in inverse order (T'''T'T') relative to the absolute standard provided by duration (D'D'D'')⁶⁷⁴

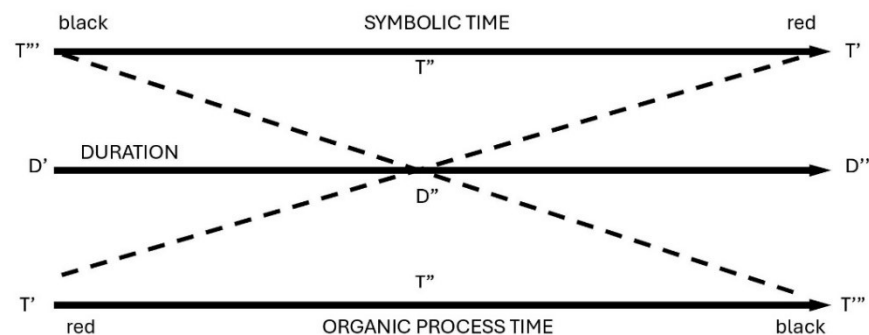


Figure A1.15 Time Inversion in the Umeda ida Ritual, copied from Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, p.49

Gell's analysis of the ida concludes "that the ritual can be understood as the 'mediation of certain 'contradictions' inherent in the notion of time itself, i.e. the 'conflict between synchrony and diachrony'- an idea I [Gell] borrowed directly from Levi-Straus and Leach. Time, I argue, has two ways of manifesting itself, diachronically, through the 'before and after' sequence of events, and 'synchronically' through the non-changing temporal oppositions that exist between old and new, senior and junior, and so on. In sociological terms, there is a basic paradox arising from the fact that social life consists of transitory events, but social structure has an abiding temporal organisation i.e. age-categories, lifecycle phases, generations, etc. These temporal statuses do not change, although the individuals who occupy them do... 'Everything passes, BUT everything remains the same'".⁶⁷⁵ He quotes from one of his earlier works:

It seems to me that the idea of cyclic or repetitive time...is an attempt to resolve this ambiguity of time, which is both a continuous process and a synchronic opposition between old and young.

⁶⁷⁴ Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 48-49.

⁶⁷⁵ Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 49.

The idea of time as an oscillation or cycle , continually repeating itself, mediates between these two inextricably related but mutually contradictory experiences of time, i.e. between social process and social structure, diachrony and synchrony. In periodic ritual, mediation is sought, and found, between the pressures of diachrony (the processes which continually submit organism to irreversible change) and the constraints of synchrony (the intelligible structure which survives all changes).⁶⁷⁶

In a later publication, *The Anthropology of Time*, Gell again discusses the “supposed ‘contradiction’ between diachrony and synchrony” but concludes that the “contradiction does *not* arise because diachrony and synchrony are not two kinds of time but necessary consequences of their being only one kind of time. Synchronic time is something of a misnomer: synchronous relationships are relations between categories in a classification system which are unaffected by time, even though the criteria on which certain categories may be based can include various types of temporal relationships (eg. an age hierarchy used for purposes of social classification).”⁶⁷⁷

Using the above example, Gell points out that individuals, such as mature married men, have the right to belong to such social classifications “because their (diachronic) histories contain events (being married, begetting children) which the histories of more junior men do not contain.”⁶⁷⁸ He notes, however, that at any one moment, “there is no temporal relationship of anteriority or posteriority between the membership of the categories ‘senior elders’/‘mature married men’/‘bachelors’ because the members of the various age categories are simply contemporaneous with one another. Synchronic Time, as manifested in a collective representation such as an age-hierarchy therefore boils down to the fact that different things (in this case, different men) have different histories, and things can be classified by their histories.”⁶⁷⁹ Gell concludes: “Synchronic time is therefore just the classificatory mechanism which arranges entities according to the real or putative events in their histories...The struggle between synchrony and diachrony, evoked by Levi-Strauss, is not a struggle between different kinds of time, but the struggle between classification systems and the real world.”⁶⁸⁰ With regard the Umeda ida ritual, Gell concludes that it is “not the reconciliation of synchronic and diachronic time, but an attempt to ensure that diachrony only throws up the normatively approved kinds of events, as defined by the synchronic classificatory scheme. The ida

⁶⁷⁶ Gell, *The Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries*, 343-4.

⁶⁷⁷ Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 52.

⁶⁷⁸ Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 52.

⁶⁷⁹ Not quite right; different men share similar events in their different histories but only certain of the more important events are classified. Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 52.

⁶⁸⁰ Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 52, 53.

ceremony does not ‘reverse’ time; what it does instead , is to manipulate the processes in a symbolic way in order to indicate a certain normative path for events...”⁶⁸¹

POSTSCRIPT

This research was carried out as art-practice preparation.

In Northern Europeans, chromatic changes in the skin are less pronounced and our more complex heritage, as well as seasonal changes in melanin levels, makes age phenomena derived from skin *colour* alone less likely to be experienced. This is not so of colour or reflectance as there is a fairly universal marked progression toward increases in textural complexity in terms of lines and wrinkles, and also in the reflectance of the skin’s outer layers. The latter gives rise to a chromatic effect and older skin generally appears less saturated in colour. The increased reflectance of the skin also reduces the extent to which it disguises the colour of the tissues beneath (it appears more transparent) and blood vessels etc tend to be more clearly visible.

I have yet to determine whether human chromatic temporal gradations reproduced in an artwork would read clearly enough to give meaningful impact.



Figure A1.16 *Father, Me, Son*: The material temporality of Northern European Human skin.

⁶⁸¹ Gell, *The Anthropology of Time*, 53. [my underline]

7. SEEING AGE: “SEAHENGE”

The emergence from Norfolk’s coastal silt of a timber circle in 1998 precipitated a broad spectrum of human response.

The wooden structure comprised a palisade of 55 roughly worked oak posts set vertically in an ellipse of between 4.5 and 5.5 metres in the centre of which was the inverted root bole of a large oak tree. The arrangement was labelled “Sea Henge” by the media but is more precisely referred to as Holme I (owing to its proximity to Holme-Next-The-Sea) and the subsequent discovery of a second timber enclosure nearby, labelled as Holme II. Dendrochronology dated the monument’s construction to the summer of 2049 BCE although it seems that the central oak was felled the preceding year.



Figure A1.17 Seahenge at Holme-next-the-Sea, Norfolk, England. Photo: Mark Brennand, Norfolk Archaeological Unit/English Heritage.

It is almost certain that for its Bronze Age Builders, the enclosure was simply an integral part of their physical and spiritual lives. Perhaps surprisingly, for its Modern audience, interpreting the monument in the context of contemporary insecurities and viewing the object across a broad expanse of time and shifting patterns of cultural appropriation, the location *re-acquired* religious significance; there was clearly something profoundly engaging in the manner of its survival, concealed for four millennia, and the visual language of the central upturned tree trunk, some onlookers even weeping as it was moved by the archaeologists. The monument

encapsulated our notions of history in all of its guises made manifest through the phenomenon of ‘age’, a phenomenon, it seems, that can be very affecting.⁶⁸²

Through extensive media coverage in early 1999, ‘Seahenge’ became something of a national sensation and attracted large quantities of visitors. Whilst contemporary commentators could only guess the original spiritual context of the structure, it became apparent that, to “...modern people, leading lives increasingly separate from the land...[the] ancient remains form[ed] a link to the past, to our ancestors, to the land with which we still feel a need to engage.”⁶⁸³

Chris Wood wrote:

“Almost everyone involved recognised Seahenge as special. For local people it was one of the mysteries of their enigmatic shoreline, a slowly emerging relic of people as far removed in the past to Boudica as she is to us today. Many in Norfolk recognised this special feel as sanctity.”⁶⁸⁴

He later notes:

“Whatever the Holme tree ring was built as, it became a modern sacred place.”⁶⁸⁵

The ‘re-discovery’ of the ruin arose from shifting patterns in coastal erosion, brought about in part by changes to nearby sea-defences, and it was clear that, in-situ, the timber enclosure would not survive beyond a few years (English Heritage 2003, Coastal Defence and the Historic Environment: English Heritage Guidance, Arkle Print.p.7). As a consequence, County archaeologists and English Heritage decided to excavate and remove the timbers to a museum where they are protected from further decay by conservation treatments and a carefully controlled

⁶⁸² FOOTNOTE: The function of the Bronze Age circle remains the subject of speculation but the most common view seems to hold that it was a place of excarnation, where the dead would be laid (upon the upturned root ‘table’) for their flesh to be removed by carrion and sea birds prior to the inhumation of the remaining skeleton. If this interpretation is correct, the structure, whilst laden with ritual associations, is very functional in its purpose of ensuring a ‘sky burial’, the root ‘table’ deterring decay from earth-bound insects and their larvae, and the palisade preventing the tearing or removal of the corpse by larger mammals. Similar structures attributed to the early Bronze Age period have been found elsewhere in the UK and Europe although these examples have post-holes in the centre (indicating a *constructed* platform) rather than an inverted tree trunk. Undoubtedly, crafting and positioning of the Holme-next-the-Sea oak root bole will have represented an extraordinary communal application of manpower (as demonstrated through an experimental archaeology exercise undertaken for a television programme [Time Team Special 03(1999)-The Mystery of Seahenge (Holme-next-the-Sea, Norfolk) aired December 29th 1999- U Tube) and it is almost certain that the builders attached some spiritual or ritual significance to the artefact.

⁶⁸³ Chris Wood, “The Meaning of Seahenge,” *3rd Stone (Norwich Pagan Sphere)*, no.43(2002): pp49-54, p.51.

⁶⁸⁴ Wood, “The Meaning of Seahenge,” 50.

⁶⁸⁵ Wood, “The Meaning of Seahenge,” 50.

environment. Many considered this as “a spiritual violation...”⁶⁸⁶ and felt that the monument’s destiny should have been left to processes of nature.

The discovery of Seahenge became as noteworthy for the public reaction against its excavation and removal as for its unique archaeological status. Many groups sought to evoke a continuity with the monument’s prehistoric builders, asserting the structure’s continuing geomantic power in the web of ley-lines and structures that cross this country. Others noted that in countries where there was such continuity of indigenous peoples, the removal of a mortuary structure would be unlikely to receive consent.⁶⁸⁷ Many also reflected on the “emergence of a monument containing a conspicuous inverted tree and humanity’s [current] destruction of the natural environment.”⁶⁸⁸

Archaeologists have noted similarities between the inverted stump and the altars of Saami peoples in Lapland who similarly invert idols made from root boles as expressions of their underworld which they hold to be a mirror of the one we inhabit.⁶⁸⁹ F. Pryor comments “One of the main insights provided by Seahenge was the evidence for the possible existence of a world...that was believed to exist below the ground”⁶⁹⁰ the exposed roots perhaps giving its Bronze Age users a perceptual glimpse of this underworld.⁶⁹¹

‘Age’ in all its guises

The notion of ‘age’ seems, in its broadest sense to give objective form to our ideas and experiences of history. Heidegger, in his *Being and Time* Chapter titled “*The Ordinary Understanding of History and...Historizing*”, first cleaves away the “possible science [of history]...” and sets out the “several ways” that we experience “pastness” and apply “...the expressions ‘history’ and ‘historical’...”⁶⁹² He outlines several ways in which we understand the terms:

- **Historical Actuality:** the literal situation of an event or object in history. Heidegger links this to a “...“science of history” (historiology)”, or our general understanding of History as an

⁶⁸⁶ Wood, “The Meaning of Seahenge,” 51.

⁶⁸⁷ Time Team, “The Mystery of Seahenge (Holme-next-the-Sea, Norfolk) Special 03(1999),” *Channel Four Television*, December 29th 1999,

⁶⁸⁸ Wood, “The Meaning of Seahenge,” 53.

⁶⁸⁹ Richard Bradley, *An Archaeology of Natural Places*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 12.

⁶⁹⁰ Francis Pryor, *Britain B.C.: Life in Britain and Ireland Before the Romans* (London: Harper Collins, 2003) 266-267.

⁶⁹¹ Mark Brenand, and Margerie Taylor, “The Survey and Excavation of a Bronze Age Timber Circle at Holme-Next-the-Sea, Norfolk, 1998-9”, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, vol. 69 (2003): pp1-84, p.68.

⁶⁹² Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2016), 430.

academic pursuit where events and objects are chronologically ordinal. (Heidegger *Being and Time*, p.430)

- history as something past and no longer of concern; Heidegger cites entities that are “understood as something *past*...” and having no “‘effect’ on the ‘Present’” as the “pre-eminent usage”, but also notes an “opposite signification” wherein the present moment is very much shaped by that “...past”.

Heidegger gives as an example the expression “...that something or other “already belongs to history”...”⁶⁹³

- History ‘available’ in the present; Heidegger refers to expressions such as “...”one cannot get away from history”.” (Heidegger *Being and Time*, p.430) and notes how the “... past has a remarkable double meaning; the past belongs irretrievably to an earlier time; it belonged to the events of that time; and in spite of that it can still be present-at-hand ‘now’ -for instance with a ...temple...a ‘bit of the past’ is still ‘in the present’.”⁶⁹⁴

- Historical becoming where the present is viewed as a derivation of the past, where “...anything that ‘has a history’ stands in the context of a becoming...As ‘epoch-making-, it determines ‘a future’ ‘in the present’. Here “history” signifies a ‘context’ of events and ‘effects’, which draws on through the ‘past’, the ‘Present’, and the ‘future’.”⁶⁹⁵

- History as change, “...the totality of those entities which change ‘in time’...[including the] vicissitudes of men...and their ‘cultures’...having regard for the way in which man’s existence is essentially determined by ‘spirit’ and ‘culture’...”⁶⁹⁶

- Natural history; Heidegger includes this as part of the above category but I believe that our experience of change in the natural world is markedly different than that for our own species. We imbue the natural world with an inherent causality and it all natural change is dominated by its overall synchronic appearance, certainly prior to the current ‘Anthropocene’ epoch and it is, in many ways, this position that disables us from taking appropriate action.

- Cultural legacy, “...whatever has been handed down to us is as such held to be ‘historical’...[often] taken over as self-evident,...its derivation hidden.”⁶⁹⁷

⁶⁹³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p.430.

⁶⁹⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p.430.

⁶⁹⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p.430.

⁶⁹⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p.430-431.

⁶⁹⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p.430.

‘Seahenge’ And The Phenomenon of Age.

In a similar way, we experience ‘age’ in objects through a number of different perceptual avenues. A beachcomber encountering the remains of the ‘Seahenge’ monument in 1997 would experience the ‘age’ of the structure in several different ways:

- ‘Seahenge’ is first temporally situated through its emergence from the ground. Archaeologists believe that the location at the time of the circle’s construction was salt-marsh set back from the sand dunes that marked the coast.⁶⁹⁸ The stumps as we see them today were subsequently protected by peaty layers and it is these that coastal erosion has recently washed away to reveal the timbers. When encountered it is experienced phenomenally as a ‘past’ object revealed within the ground through an innate understanding of event layering, ie through our retained knowledge that, primarily through gravity, successive events overlay one another.
- The monument is given additional temporal location through the manifest decay of its timber components where exposed. This situates the *materiality* of the structure within the Natural realm and lends to the object a past wherein the wood was fresh and a future whereby the members succumb to further decay. The structure is experienced as transient, its perception including an urgency and a sense of jeopardy.
- Identifiable as a man-made artefact, ‘Seahenge’ acquires age through its isolation. Frequent visitors to the Holmes-next-the-Sea beach reported that the inverted root bole was exposed for some years before the surrounding palisade. As such it simply appeared as a wholly Natural object and drew little attention. The remains were only referred to local archaeologists when it was clear that the timbers were part of a man-made structure. Recognised as such, its geographic isolation engenders age through the absence of association with present communities.
- The structure next elicits age phenomena as an unfamiliar artefact. The assimilation of the upturned central tree root bole as an integral part of the structure generates additional temporal distance and experience of ‘age’ as it distinguishes the remains from more familiar forms (the circle was initially thought to be a Saxon or Medieval fish trap but we are accustomed to

⁶⁹⁸ Brennand and Taylor, “The Survey and Excavation of a Bronze Age Timber Circle at Holme-Next-the-Sea, Norfolk, 1998-9”, 44-45.

seeing lines of poles in coastal mud from many periods) and heightens the sense that the monument is ‘apart’ from current culture.

- After the referral to archaeologists and the dendrochronological dating, the monument is culturally absorbed as being ‘very old’. It seems unlikely that we are able to directly sense four millennia and that the scientific age can only be experienced as a rational notion. Nevertheless, after 1998, our perceptions of the monument must be animated or coloured by shared ideas concerning its builders.

- To this we must add the *Natural* history of generation and growth, manifest in the the growth trajectory of the central tree stump by which we understand its inversion, and which underlies conjecture about the monument’s relationship with an underworld. Whilst this does not directly elicit the experience of ‘age’ in the monument, it is integral to our assimilating the action and intent of others turning a tree stump upside down.

We could summarise these age phenomena as:

- ‘Age’ phenomena of succession
- ‘Age’ phenomena of decay
- ‘Age’ phenomena of generation
- ‘Age’ phenomena of cultural interpretation and legacy
- ‘Age’ phenomena of cultural dislocation

8. AN APPERCEPTIVE ARTWORK: Rauschenberg's cube

At the heart of Husserl's phenomenological analysis of perception lies the notion of the appresentation or apperception, adjuncts to the originary sensual data, that 'animate' the encountered object, giving it meaning and directing appropriate affect or emotional response.

Although formulated in his earlier *Ideas*, it is best summarised I think in his later *Cartesian Meditations*:

"...appresentation as such presupposes a core of presentation. It is making present combined by associations with presentation, with perception proper, but a making present that is fused with the latter in the particular function of "co-perception". In other words, the two are so fused that they stand within the *functional community of one perception*..." ..."which simultaneously presents and appresents, and yet furnishes for the total object a consciousness of its being itself there."⁶⁹⁹



Figure A1.18. *Untitled (Elemental Sculpture)*. C.1953/1970s. Wood box with nails and lid with removeable nylon cube (remade by the artist in the 1970's after the original balsa-wood-and-fabric cube was destroyed by Rachel Rosenthal's cat).

⁶⁹⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995), 122.

If we were to approach our perceptual experience from the opposite direction, the appresentation is that part of a perception which is not directly available to us through our senses. (“distinguish noematically between that part [of the perception] which is genuinely perceived, and the rest, which is not strictly perceived and yet is there too.”⁷⁰⁰ So, if on a country walk we encounter a large field oak, our eyes collect a flat image of thousands of lamellar green shapes above a brown cylinder and our ears convey white noise of a particular pitch. But this is not what we *see* or *hear*; we see an oak tree and hear the rustling of the leaves. It is clear that a huge amount of other data has been added to that imminently provided by our senses and that this additional information is bound in with our experience of the tree in front of us.

“...the data... undergo pairing ...[and] become...simultaneously intended; we find, more particularly, a living mutual awakening and an overlaying of each with the objective sense of the other. This overlaying can bring a total or a partial coincidence, which in any particular instance has its degree, the limiting case being that of complete “likeness”. As the result of this overlaying, there takes place in the paired data a mutual transfer of sense – that is to say: an apperception of each according to the sense of the other...”⁷⁰¹

Husserl describes how, in the process of perception, the visual sense data from our eyes is ‘paired’ with our remembered previous experiences of this kind of structure and it is through this that we are able to identify it as a tree, and further as an oak tree (modern neurological descriptions of ‘object recognition’ set out a similar process). Husserl contends that the remembered material is ‘co-presented’ with the actual image, the two being fused into a single perception. His contention sits well with our actual experience of the tree; the tree we experience has a back face that is similar to the one that we see (even though it is hidden from view), the tree we experience stands against gravity and we can ‘feel’ its mass and the geometry of its structure, the tree we experience casts shadows that show its roundness of form, the tree we experience is in leaf but is clearly the same ‘thing’ that we encountered in this place last winter (even though it looked very different then), the tree that I experience is available to the experience of other people and animals etc. Of course, we can summarise all these things in a single descriptive term; ‘*oak tree*’. This is the ‘meaning’ that we give to the entity before us, our ‘taking-as’, and our emotional responses and actions stem from this meaning. The additional information does not ‘inform’ our identification of the object and then disappear, but becomes an integral component of what we see and experience.

⁷⁰⁰ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 122.

⁷⁰¹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, pg113. [Husserl uses the word sense for ‘meaning’]



Figure A1.19. *Untitled (Elemental Sculpture)*. C.1953/1970s. Wood box with nails and lid with removeable nylon cube (remade by the artist in the 1970's after the original balsa-wood-and-fabric cube was destroyed by Rachel Rosenthal's cat). Box.

Photo Robert Rauschenberg Foundation
Archive folder 53.003

Much art seeks to expose, separate or bring our apperceptions to the fore. A very clear example (and a beautiful piece of art) is to be found in one of Robert Rauschenberg's Elemental Sculptures of 1953, catalogued as:

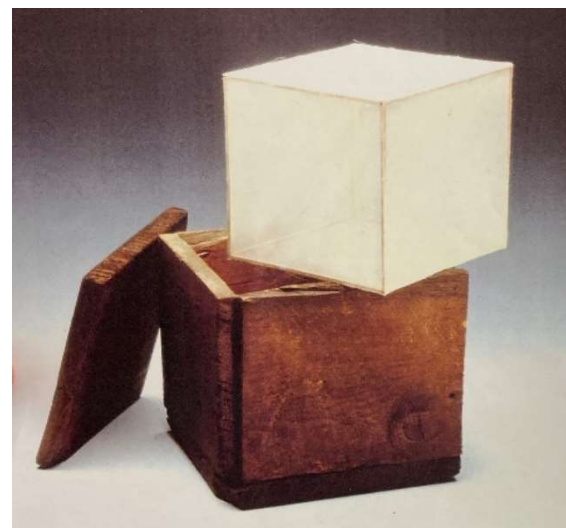
Untitled (Elemental Sculpture). C.1953/1970s. Wood box with nails and lid with removeable nylon cube (remade by the artist in the 1970's after the original balsa-wood-and-fabric cube was destroyed by Rachel Rosenthal's cat).

The artwork is essentially comprised of two components, (1) the wooden box and lid, and (2) the lightweight translucent cube (nylon or fabric on a light wood frame). The two components are usually displayed side by side with the lid of the box resting against one of its vertical faces (although it is not certain whether the artist gave any instructions in this regard). It is apparent to the viewer that the fabric cube will fit into the wooden box quite snugly.

The piece works by disentangling the viewer's phenomenal experience of the presented wooden box, or indeed any box. The box is constructed in a brutish fashion with the ends of its component planks exposed and expressed; even if the lid were on, it would be clear that

Figure A1.20 *Untitled (Elemental Sculpture)*. C.1953/1970s. Wood box with nails and lid with removeable nylon cube (remade by the artist in the 1970's after the original balsa-wood-and-fabric cube was destroyed by Rachel Rosenthal's cat). Alternative mode of display.

Photo Robert Rauschenberg Foundation
Archive folder 53.003



there was a void within. It is this void, of course, that is the essence of a box; the void as a space for putting things in is the ‘taking-as’ of the box, its *meaning*. Most of the time the space that is the meaning of the box is given only as an adjunct to the originary perception, as an apperception, as part of our ordinary experience of a box⁷⁰². But here, in this artwork, alongside the box, is that space, that apperception, that meaning. But it’s very fragile and transient compared to the box, which only adds to the sense that this is something drawn from the depths of our consciousness.

⁷⁰² Another of Rauschenberg’s sculptures, slightly later, takes up the box interior theme again. It is catalogued:

Music Box (Elemental Sculpture). C.1955. Wood packing box with stencilled text containing nails, square-headed iron spikes, and four unattached stones. (It is photographed with a Guinea Fowl feather held between the nails projecting from the back face/botton of the box)

In this work the box has no lid. It is presented with its open side vertical and the viewer sees the box’s void penetrated by large nails (of many types and periods) that have been driven through from the outside of the box. Again, the essence of the box, its interior void is given heightened expression. The nails driven through the sides of the box proclaim our phenomenal experience of the void from outside the box. The nails perform another function, developing the meaning of the void as a place for putting things. The box is turned on its side to make the space visible. Were it not for the nails, the contents (rounded stones and a feather) would roll out, but the nails hold those things and the void’s meaning is brought to the fore.

The theme is developed further by the work’s title; Musical Box. Having read the title, the driven nails on the interior evoke the tuned prongs of a music box. The viewer imagines the stones bouncing over the spikes as the box is moved from place to place, playing some sort of tune. (In this rendering, the feather is a bit of a ‘red-herring’), the box developing the sound like the body of a guitar. Again, the apperception of the box’s essential void is brought into sharp focus.

Material Chronology?

October 2019

"this is how we learn"

It was one of the many TV documentaries where the subject matter has very few directly relevant visual images and a researcher is tasked with finding anything that might fill an otherwise blank screen. We don't know why this piece of film was originally shot, but whilst we listen to a narrator's voice describing interventions by city authorities to prevent rent increases during the Great War, we watch a sepia toned group of children walking along a rubbish strewn alley between Victorian tenements. There's a girl of about five who, in the course of the footage, perhaps no more than 10 seconds long (in which the children cover around 20 yards), stops three times to pick something up. Each time, she holds it up, briefly examines the fragment, and then releases it to the floor. I am reminded of my own children and the pile of sticks, seashells and broken rusty things that lies by the front door. As a parent and a grown-up, I am frustrated by the mess, the dirty hands wiped on clean clothes and the splinters that will need to be needled out, but I know that this is how we learn.

"choosing a good stick"

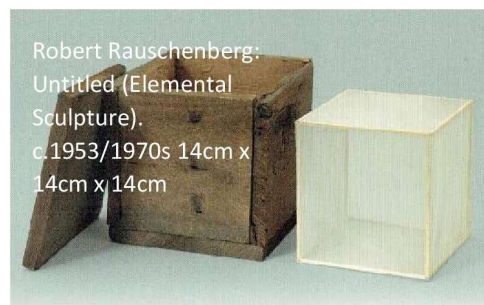
I remember myself the process of finding the least worn seashell or choosing a good stick. I still know the difficulty of breaking a branch off a tree where, even when leafless in winter, a layer of bright green beneath the bark showed that the fibres inside would bend and that there would be no clean 'snap'. Such a stick would only be mine by a laborious set of twists and turns and when finally separated would have a very unsatisfying splintered end. Picking branches off the ground carried the disappointing possibility of finding the wood beneath the darkened bark to be weak and mushy and full of small animals. The woodlice didn't bother me; they scuttled in the hundreds when you turned a rotting trunk over, all different sizes and shades of the same pattern. Sometimes though, there would be a red and white spider. These could bite; the two little holes that they left stayed red and did not go brown like other cuts.

*Robert Rauschenberg (Tate 2017)**"I think a picture is more like the real world when it's made out of the real world"*

Fifty years on from my stick collecting, I find myself in a large oak floored gallery looking at an impressive collection of artworks by Robert Rauschenberg. "I think a picture is more like the real world when it's made out of the real world", the artist is quoted as saying. The series of rooms is filled with pictures, sculptures and assemblages that almost push themselves off the white walls of this present moment by the 'reality' of their constituents.

Robert Rauschenberg: Elemental Sculpture

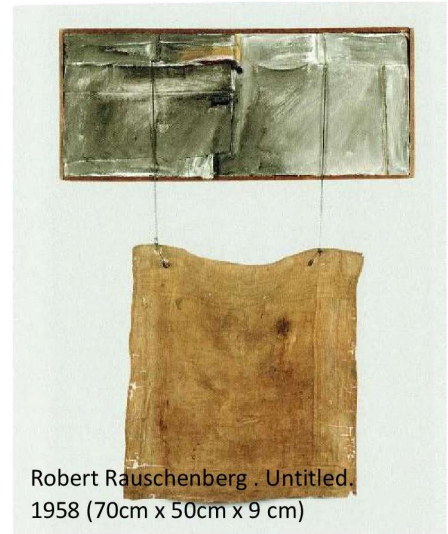
One work comprises a rough wooden box constructed with rusted nails next to which sits a translucent white cube that fits exactly to the interior of the box. A caption explains that the



cube was rebuilt by the artist in nylon following the destruction of the balsa and light fabric original by a friend's cat. I can sense the fragility of the original cube and feel that the work is quite changed by the newer replacement.

"showing its age"

Throughout the exhibition, I catch myself looking more at the material from which the artworks are made than their form as a whole. There is one work that incorporates a handkerchief size piece of cloth that has browned and is a little revolting. Another work has paint applied to a bedspread that is similarly showing its age. In my perception, the processes of time, as they have worked on the



Robert Rauschenberg . Untitled.
1958 (70cm x 50cm x 9 cm)

materials, seem to overwhelm the artworks themselves, but I am aware of the possibility that these processes form part of their artifice. These processes are certainly an inescapable facet and signifier of their material reality and seem to form a focus for my interrogation of the objects. Slightly frustrated by my mind's distraction from the 'art', I wonder why the visual 'condition' of the materials should be so important to me.

"an assemblage of preceding encounters"

I recall that a few months before the exhibition I am at my father's 80th birthday lunch and, talking to his friends, he starts to trot out the usual stories about the disasters and disappointments that, for him, seem to characterise my childhood. For me, of course, they are not funny, and these days I walk away when they begin, but I continue to wonder why they matter so much to my father. It feels that I am constructed of these stories and that when we meet he does not see me as I am now but as an assemblage of preceding encounters. To some extent, it must be the same for everything; when we see a person or a thing we can only *know* previous versions that we have met. Given that, it makes sense, I suppose, that we should seek clues as to which of these earlier objects best fits that which is currently in front of us.

"absence of reality-cues"

The white gallery displays few such clues and 'brackets' the real-world material of the artworks which seem to carry their own time with them. The gallery shares this absence of 'reality' cues with many "space-age" science-fiction movies, especially those where the science is a dominant component of the fiction and which portray a future divergent from the present through technological, modernist cleanliness. Later films of the genre, wanting to develop a stronger human story, allowed real world visual cues back into their sets

"lived-in future"

(George Lucas called it a "lived-in" future). In these films, machines drip oil and doorways are surrounded by dirty finger marks; fantastical human action seems more believable in environments where there is evidence of preceding interaction.

"chronological planes"

In the modern white gallery, Rauchenberg's works are framed by an *absence* of preceding interaction; the works and the gallery occupy different 'chronological planes'. This heightens my awareness of the visual cues associated with the artworks' materials of real-life but the awareness, whilst elevated, is not something new to me; it is part of my every-day life. Which leads me to question whether the visual cues of age that I am processing belong to the 'art' of the works or merely to their physical 'vessels'? Nevertheless, they strongly affect my interpretation of the works (those I mentioned earlier seem to comprise a *used* handkerchief and *soiled* bedding!) and it seems



Robert Rauschenberg. Bed.
1955 191cm x 80cm x 20cm

"cues of age...belong to the 'art'..?"

unreasonable to bring real-world materials into the gallery without expecting the real-world values that we place upon them to follow close behind. If the cues to material age are indeed intended to be read by the viewer, accepting that corresponding real world values will be attached, is the artist asking me to examine *those values* whilst in the heightened state of awareness that typically characterises a trip to an art gallery? This would be a reasonable objective given that in the real world outside the gallery, the consideration of visual information and my responses to it at this elevated sensory level would be unsustainable.

"real-world values"

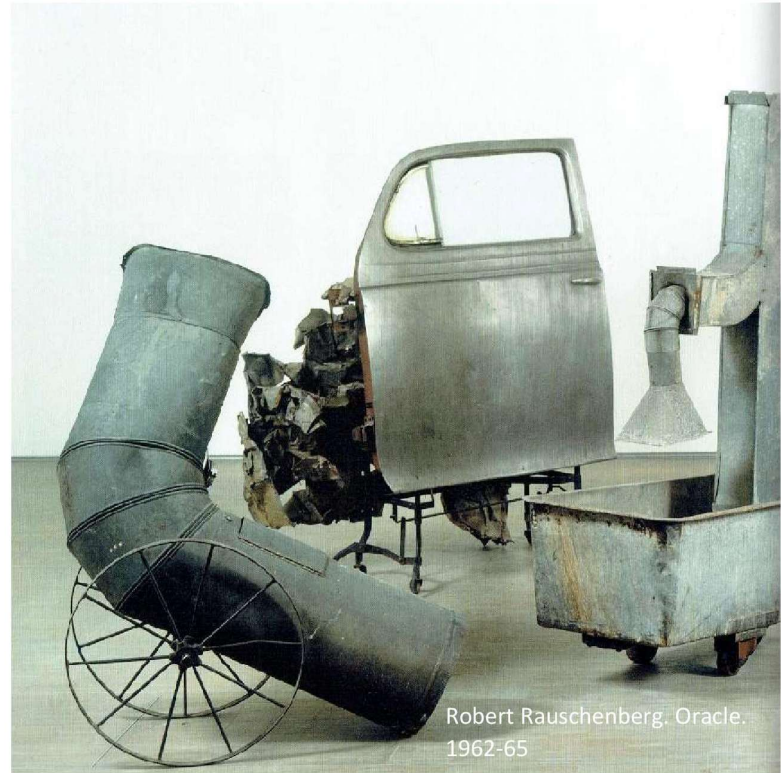
"You can tell he's the King because..."

Much temporal patina derives from processes destructive to our possessions and food and we seem to place great value on visually explicit resistance against these processes; clean environments and objects, untouched by human hands or other manifestations of temporal forces, have high status and even an 'other-worldly' quality;

as Michael Palin explained, “You can tell he’s The King because he isn’t covered in shit”.ⁱ

“accumulation of age...slowed”

The Rauschenberg artworks that I am looking at are generally over sixty years old but the level of ‘age’ that they exhibit is not sixty years of real-world age; these objects have been removed from the general flow and their accumulation of age has been arrested or slowed by conservators and a carefully controlled environment.ⁱⁱ



Robert Rauschenberg. Oracle.
1962-65

“Oracle, 1962-1965”

Further into the exhibition there is a work comprising five assemblages of found-metal components (Oracle, 1962-65). Much of the work is built from building-services components of galvanised steel that carry the surface patina commonly associated with that material. Although the work was fabricated nearly sixty years ago, material ageing of the components has been arrested by their absorption into the artworld and much of the metalwork, particularly the ducting, looks like it could have been removed from a demolition site last week. However, one of the assemblages incorporates a car door from which all paint has been removed. The door carries no surface patina to convey its age but I am immediately aware that it is old (even forgetting the context of the retrospective exhibition; Rauschenberg’s work has only recently begun to look something other than contemporary). The cues here are not decay or degradation but the physical form of the door; it carries a chrome quarterlight and the lower edge curves outward as a vestigial running board.

“the door carries no patina”

“order...into...temporal pattern”

"similarly...assimilate... technology"

I am led to consider whether our need to order the many versions of real-world components into some sort of temporal pattern similarly affects how we assimilate the products of our technology. Having noticed this particular car door, I am aware that age is the first thing that I perceive about every car; to some extent, every manufactured thing that I see is first appraised through temporal nuances of form.

"a 'now' datum"

Returning to the gallery, I notice that, whilst the white walls tend to show no patina of age they are, like the car door, not without time. The minimal white finish and detailing is broadly contemporaneous with my visit, and I locate the walls very much in the present; the walls, in fact, seem to operate as a 'now' datum against which the temporal facets of the artworks are appraised.ⁱⁱⁱ This is an additional 'dimension' to my perception, not one of matter or time, but of time held within matter, effectively a web of interlaced 'material biographies'.

"temporal co-ordinates"

Projecting this observation, I ponder the possibility that I use the interaction and interplay of the various temporal qualities of real-world objects as co-ordinates to define 'now'. In nostalgic reveries, I seem to use these temporal cues to plot a course through my memories. Taking this still further, I consider whether we perhaps carry with us an *expectation* of material change as it is such change that allows us to define and then assimilate successive 'presents' which, in turn, index our memories.^{iv}

*"pleasurable aspect...diverse
temporal stimuli"*

My experience of the exhibition leads me to wonder whether there is a pleasurable aspect to my reading of the chronological information held in Rauschenberg's materials. It is hard to separate it from the expected aesthetic responses in such situations but I know that I am drawn, along with many other people, to vintage, antique and heritage environments that carry similar temporal visual stimuli but where traditional 'art' is less prevalent. Similarly, perhaps, I notice that people seem to place a premium on environments that offer chronologically diverse temporal stimuli, the 'picturesque' village, the 'period' home or the clean modern interior populated with antiques.

".....just old"

^v

Throughout this experience, I find myself referring back to my earlier studies as an architecture student. My thesis, entitled *Political Structures*, which examined how the physical form of legislature buildings reflected the Constitution of a nation, touched on the play of expressions of longevity and 'age' in asserting of the credentials of power. Many old things associated with an established order are presented as 'beautiful' (and are widely believed to be so) and their inferred 'beauty' is important in legitimising that order. I suspect, however, that, whilst the emotional sensations we experience in the presence of 'age' and 'beauty' might be indistinguishable from one another, they derive from wholly different stimuli, and that sometimes, importantly, things that are held out as old and beautiful may be, in fact, just old.

ⁱ Monty Python and The Holy Grail

ⁱⁱ Issues of everyday values do not affect traditional artistic media in the same way as these materials are commonly either too expensive or too fragile for real world activities. The ageing of these materials seems to carry a very different value system and it is interesting how Rauschenberg often incorporates aspects of the traditional visual language of fine art into his work and the affect that this generates in the context of the other materials.

ⁱⁱⁱ I think of other museums and galleries where work is shown in period rooms and old display cases contemporaneous with the displayed work, and I feel how our experience of the exhibited artefacts is quite different in such instances. An exception to this is the current practice of showing art in old industrial premises where the 'fashionableness' of the setting seems to fix it as contemporaneous with the viewing activity, allowing it to act as a 'now' datum.

^{iv} If we do indeed use the temporal material qualities of our surroundings to define for ourselves what constitutes 'now', it is perhaps less surprising that novelty is important to us and we are driven to 're-style' the present with various 'fashions'. We use our chronology to define the present so we constantly have to re-define now; the search for novelty that drives us to perpetually 're-style' the present may not be frivolous.

^v The pleasure that we experience in nostalgia may be related to or part of this affect

APPENDIX TWO

Accounts of Artwork Production

Up To Now (Chestnut): Detailed Account of Development and Installation

Up To Now: Timeline Overview

15th December 2021 Concept maquette

15th -20th January 2022 1st maquette

24th January 2022 Visit woods to get background photos

25th-26th January 2022 First Approach to Wilderness Woods

7th Feb 2022 Presentation RNUAL

8th February 2022 Outline agreement to go ahead

15th February 2022 Presentation to Mo Throp

Feedback from fellow students; understood the concept and particularly liked the graded colour version presented in sketch form with green shoot at lower end.

16th March 2022 Clarification with Wilderness Woods and outline programme

14th March 2022 Preparation of Maquettes and montage

15th March 2022 Presentation to Wilderness woods

15th March 2022 Tour of woods to find host and site

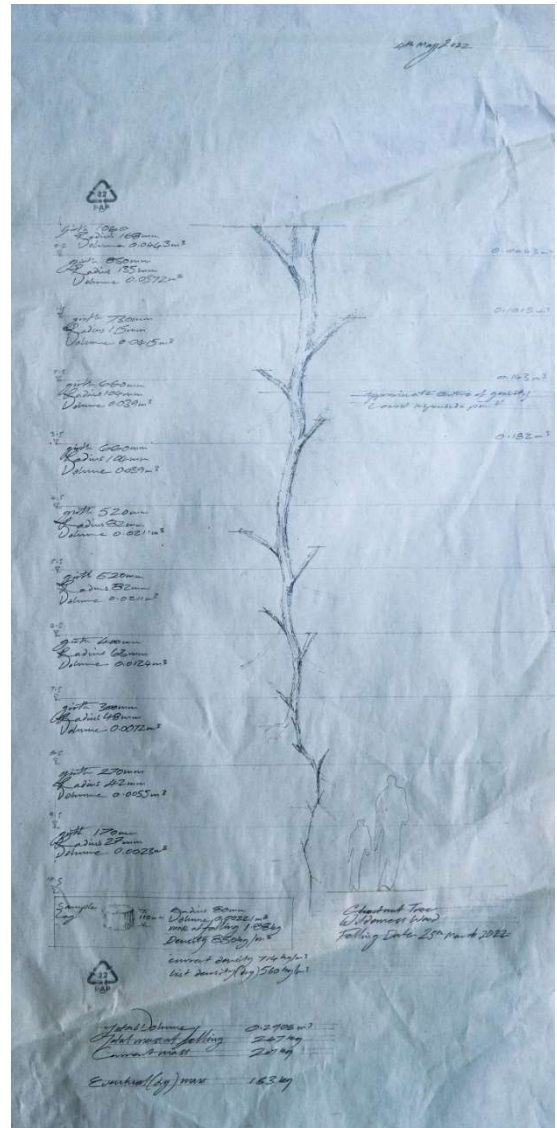
21st March 2022 Contact engineer and outline project scope

25th March 2022 Felling of Host

25th March 2022 delivered poster for cafe

25th March 2022 Measure girth of host

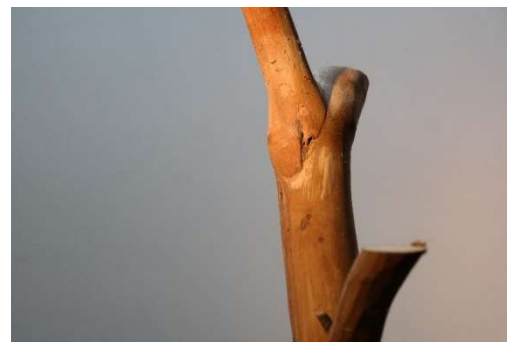
26th March 2022 Check insurance



Up To Now (Chestnut)

Preparatory sketch of branch layout based on the felled trunk with calculations of segment mass to establish centre of gravity (above)

Joint prototype (below)



9th April 2022 Calculate mass of host

10th April 2022 Re-Survey of Site
(support trees)

5th May 2022 Meeting with engineer

10th May 2022 Fabrication and testing of
kinetic model

11th June 2022 Development of jointing
for branches/mock-up

12th June 2022 Development of
finishes/mock-up

4th July move into motorhome in the
Wood

5th July 2022 Contact installer

15th June 2022 Agree completion date
for Working with Wood Week (25th July)

5th-6th July Remove branches from felled
tree

6th July 2022 Move trunk to paddock
and place on trestles

7th July 2022 Discuss installation
procedure with installer and agree
suspension materials and components

7th-8th July 2022 Strip bark

9th July 2022 Reorientate lower 3metres
and make joint

11th -14th July Reorientate branches and fabricate demountable lower tip

15th -16th July 2022 Sand smooth

16th July 2022 Apply decking oil

18th July 2022 Move to site and suspend

20th July 2020 Signage for sculpture

26th July 2022 Repair after vandalism

27th July 2022 Inauguration



Up To Now (Chestnut)

Maquette: lead and bamboo

Dynamic model to test the effect of wind
deflection in the hosting fir trees and to
establish the best orientation for the
suspension wires.

Up To Now: Conceptual Development

Chronology of Temporal Tree Inversion Sculpture

Early December 2021 (Idea)

The idea represents a return to an earlier work entitled *Stick in Time* which presented the ‘nature’ of a quince branch with the temporal axis running horizontally. This piece was made before the theoretical research had developed an understanding of how we were experiencing ‘age’ phenomena. Reflection upon this work revealed that the underlying principle of the work was the highlighting of the growth vector along the axis of the branch as a means of encapsulating the fulfilled potentialities of its unfolding life, essentially allowing the branch to speak its own linear narrative. The work was made afresh several times and included living leaves and blossom but each generation only had a convincing life of a few days. As with most of our temporal metaphors, Time moved along a horizontal axis and the work was, accordingly designed for horizontal display. This is not an unnatural orientation for a quince branch as many grow this way. A proposal (maquette April 2021) to increase the scale of the work to that of a small tree retained the horizontal temporal narrative. The tree scale sculpture was too large to make every few days to refresh its leaves but the work suffered from the inescapable fact that trees found in a horizontal/supine orientation simply appear dead. The adjusted tree was propped on metal posts but this was insufficient to overcome its overwhelming visual impact that it was simply a dead tree.

Fabricating Up To Now

The fabrication of *Up To Now* commenced in December 2021 with an initial survey of Wilderness Woods in Hadlow Down, East Sussex, with the purpose of determining a suitable location prior to approaching the owners of the woodland with the sculpture proposal.

There are in the sculpture three essential components:

- 1: The reversed tree stem hosting the phenomenological concept
- 2: The surrounding trees providing the host with context and support
- 3: The human works associated with presenting the concept (physically the suspension of the piece but socially the shared environment with all that entails)

The selection of the host tree is a fundamental component of the sculpture and whilst the sculpture seeks to disclose a broadly universal phenomenological experience applicable to

all vegetation, there are some species that will exhibit the necessary growth characteristics with greater clarity than others (although such trees may function as counterpoint to the sculpture).

1: The ‘Host’ Stem

It was in this first visit to the woodland that I first sought manifestations of our phenomenological ‘knowledge’ of trees, as temporally extended (but finite) growing organisms, in their presented physical form. Whilst coniferous species tended to conduct their growth in a largely uniform progression, the geometry of deciduous trees reflected their intermittent growth through preferential ‘selection’ of a primary spur from bifurcations at the leading tip. In young trees, bifurcations in the main stem seemed often to correspond to the commencement of each growing season. In many species, London Plane for example, the bifurcations in the branches are very regular but this is not reflected in the trunk. In chestnuts we found, however, that the trunk retained the directional changes associated with the annual bifurcations, causing its spatial geometry to reflect in a very direct manner its year-on-year growth progression.

The sculpture works by aligning two predominant age phenomena exhibited by trees; increase in height and increase in girth (other available age phenomena might include bark colour and bark texture). It is necessary that the host stem exhibit readily apparent girth increments over relatively short increases in height to ensure that the sculpture’s height remains within practical limits (my insurance ends at anything over 10 metres high!) but also to ensure that the increases in diameter are not wholly cancelled-out by perspective diminution. Here again, the rapid growth of many coniferous species excludes them as a concept host. The selection of a slow growing deciduous species was therefore determined.

No artificial ingredients

It is important that the sculpture have as few ‘added’ or ‘artificial’ components as possible if it is to authentically project the phenomenological temporal experience of the tree using the tree’s physical form. The reversal and redistribution of side branches is an important reinforcement of the vertical directionality of age phenomena associated with growth; the host species must possess multiple side branches.

The stripping of the bark

Early maquettes in boxwood were produced both with and without bark. These models were fabricated in the abstracted context of the workshop. Conversely, the actual piece is situated in a woodland that is not only open to the public, but carefully ‘managed’. The ‘meanings’ attaching to the trees in Wilderness Wood thus fall into two broad groups, as amenity when alive and as product after felling. As product, the actuality of the tree (for us) is held within the timber ‘commodity’ concealed beneath its bark. Furthermore, this sculpture depends upon the finitude expressed in the horizontal cut across its inverted base delineating the host tree as one commodified as a product from a managed forest (other versions are proposed where the host dies naturally and gently ‘fades away’ through decay). It was resolved that the bark should be removed. Here to suspension of the denuded (flayed) sculpture resonates with the hung carcasses in the butchers.

Anthropomorphic Qualities

The preliminary boxwood maquettes drew attention to our tendency to anthropomorphise any object with a vertical emphasis that is wider at the top than its base (that really does seem to be all it takes!). This was particularly pronounced in the growth pattern of the buxus which, having slower growth in its early life, had a short trunk proportionately much greater in diameter than its stems. When inverted, the subconscious inclination to ‘read’ this trunk as a head was almost irresistible. This anthropomorphism was heightened by the upward inflection of the branches, which read as raised arms/limbs. Furthermore, the inverted tree silhouette is a form quite alien to everyday cognition and our perceptual recognition is not able to wholly resolve the piece and seems to reverberate between vegetable and human forms. In the early stages, I believed that this might give the work a desirable additional dimension, developing in the viewer an empathy toward the work. I am currently of the opinion that anthropomorphism is not something that should be actively encouraged since, whilst it may generate additional interest in the viewer, it potentially over-complicates the reception of the artwork and detracts from its phenomenological intent/content.

Selecting the Tree

Whilst overtly anthropomorphic qualities could be viewed as detrimental to the interpretation of the final work some degree of ‘animation’ in the trunk was desirable

especially if the form derived from a regular growth pattern. Initially, whilst expounding the virtues of Chestnut as a building material, Dan, the woodland's owner, had thought that a large holly tree might replicate more closely the appearance of the boxwood maquette (the basis of my presentation to the staff at Wilderness Wood in early March). However, as we walked through the forest it became clear that the Chestnuts, which were after all the dominant species in this managed woodland, held in their trunks a structured and regular pattern derived from bifurcations at the leading bud that seemed to occur on a yearly basis.

Selecting The Site

The first full-scale sculpture was installed as an outdoor piece at The Wilderness Wood, a publicly accessible private woodland in Hadlow Down, East Sussex. This is a managed mixed woodland comprised predominantly of deciduous trees but with a few areas of conifers and Scots pine. The selected location for *Up To Now*, was a stand of Douglas firs situated on the top of a small escarpment. A chestnut tree of 15 to 20 years was selected for the sculpture itself.

Up To Now: Fabrication Sequence July 2022



The felled Chestnut tree has lain where it fell since March. The first task is the removal of the side branches. Care is taken to retain the 'buttressing' that naturally strengthens the junction with the trunk; it is through this buttressing that fixings for the reversed branch will be drilled. The bark is removed locally to ensure the saw cut is as close to the trunk as possible.



The trunk is then removed to the work area and placed on trestles. The remainder of the bark is carefully removed with a draw knife. An intermittent and dappled layer of chestnut coloured rind is discovered beneath the bark on what had been the North side of the trunk. I felt that this would contribute to the vibrance of the work and it is retained where possible. The bark is stripped from the branches.



The removed branches are redistributed along the trunk in ascending thickness upward (toward the wider girth), each allocated to the site of removal. The plugs for the fixings are cut including areas of red brown rind.



The branches are refixed with a glue and screws drilled through the buttressing at the base of the removed limb. Each hole has at the surface a shallow recess of sufficient diameter to receive the screw head. A plug cut from another section of the tree is then glued into the hole covering the screw.



The trunk adjacent to the branch is given a concave profile next to the branch to ensure a smooth transition in the surface between the branch and the main stem. The plugs and the joint to the trunk are sanded smooth. Whilst the joints are not 'expressed', the junction and its plugged fixings visibly mark human intervention.



A scarf joint is fabricated for the fragile slender lower three metres of the sculpture. This also marks a point where repairs can join the main trunk. It is secured with concealed brass bolts.



The whole sculpture is sanded smooth. Care is taken to retain the red-brown rind. When all of the joints have been smoothed and a coherent silhouette achieved, the work is sanded to a satin finish using 120 grit paper.



The sculpture is wiped with a coat of oil to help it retain its raw timber colour for a little longer. tunnels are drilled to receive the suspension cables which will pass right through the trunk. These are reinforced with stainless steel bars inserted into 10mm holes drilled above the cable tunnel. All upward facing end grain receives two coats of waterproof paint.

Up To Now: Installation Sequence



The main body of the sculpture has been constructed on trestles and has received a thin coat of oil with upward facing end grain being coated with waterproof paint. The spider is moved into position amid the supporting Douglas Firs and a winch is fitted to the to lift the work.



The sculpture, which weighs about 300kgs, is fixed to the rear of a small tractor with a horse-drawn log carriage adapted to carry the tapered end.



The spider cherry-picker is fully extended to install a bridging cable between the two largest Douglas Firs. A block is attached mid-span so that the winched trunk will be centred in the correct place between the four supporting conifers.



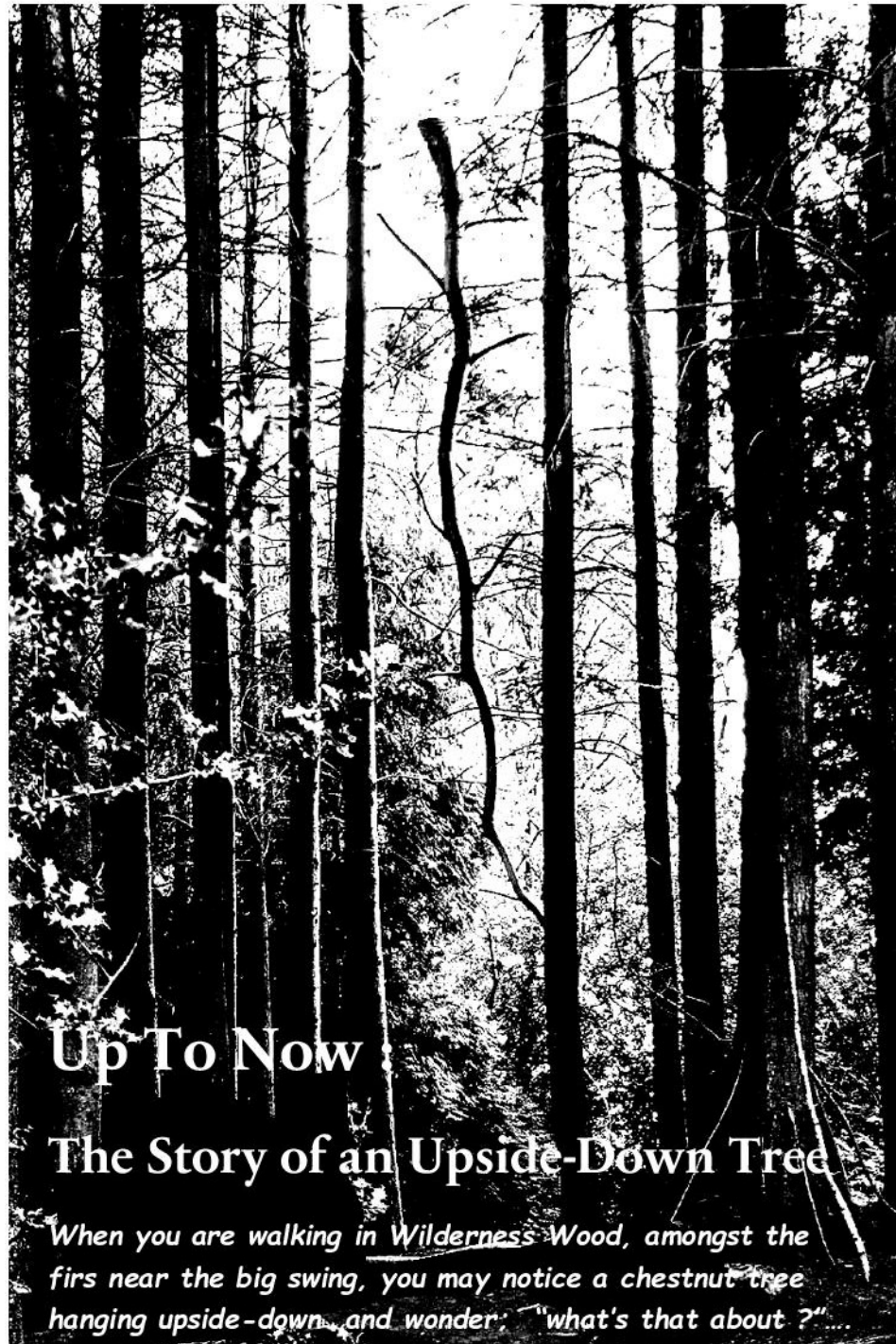
The trunk of the sculpture is slowly winched up ward from the bridge cable, the downward end being carefully 'walked' towards the suspension point; this is the manoeuvre where damage was most likely.



When the sculpture has reached its final position, the suspension cables are passed through the prepared holes and secured via loops to the four supporting Douglas firs. These are then adjusted to ensure that the weight is evenly distributed.

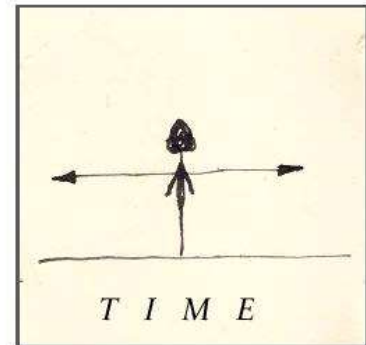
Up To Now (Chestnut)

Magazine article explaining the sculpture.

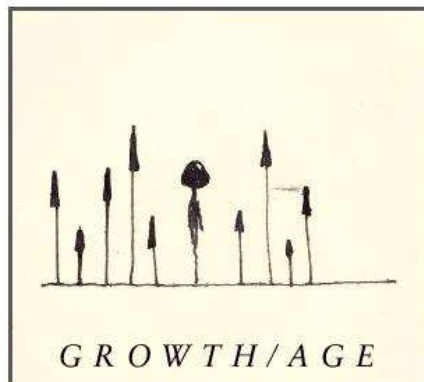


Up To Now: The 'Upside-Down Tree'

Most of our metaphors for Time portray it moving the way that we do, along a horizontal axis; it passes by, marches on, goes forward into the future and backwards into the past. However, our primary experiences of the passage of time



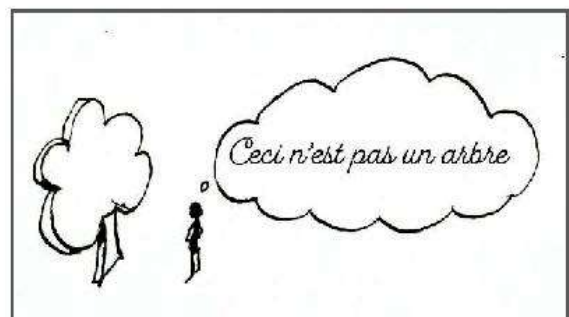
are associated with the natural process of growth (and decay) in the things that make up our environment. These predominantly operate



along a vertical axes, growing-up and rotting-down. These processes are temporally extended, taking place over periods of time, and it is through this that they become, for us, representative of Time itself. We perceive these physical-changes-over-time as 'age'.

Whilst growth, and the phenomenon of 'age' that accompanies it, manifests itself in many ways, it is comprehended with greatest strength in its upward trajectory. We learn as very young children that 'older' things, particularly people, are generally taller¹. Increases in height represent for us a dominant 'age' vector.

The capacity to grow is a fundamental essence of living things. A tree that does not grow, that just appears 'in a flash' and remains as a fully mature specimen, would evidently be without 'life' and would not be a 'tree' as we understand one. We actually know the things

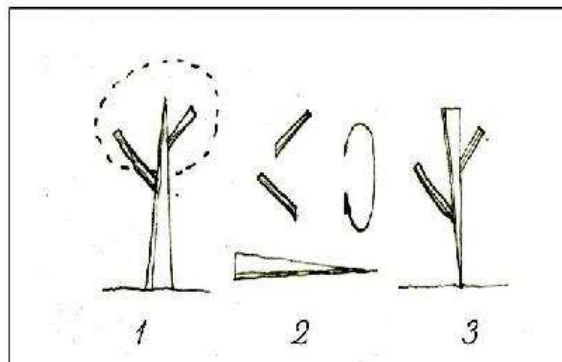


around us not just from their physical qualities or the way that they appear at a particular present moment, but also by the way that they change over time, by what Aristotle called their 'nature':

"the nature of a thing...is a certain principle and cause of change...and is directly present [with]in it"

(Aristotle Physics II/1/192 b20, pg33 Waterfield translation.)

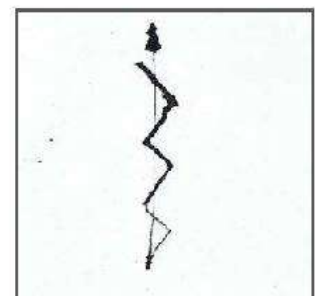
The sculpture, *Up To Now*, seeks to embody such a nature by aligning two of the 'age' phenomena by which we know trees; those of increasing height over time and the corresponding growth in girth, or thickness, of the trunkⁱⁱ.

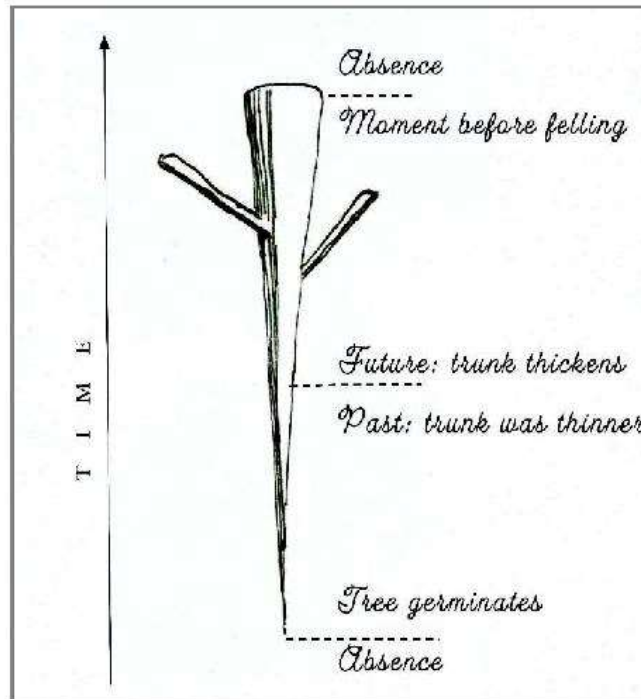


This is achieved through the inversion of the trunk of a chestnut tree, so it starts at ground level as a slim shoot, steadily increasing in thickness as it grows taller, until it reaches the height that it

was when it was cut down. In order that the apparent upward direction of growth is visually retained, the side branches are re-oriented so that they continue to 'grow' upwards.

The annual meanders in the trunk of the deciduous chestnut trunk, created as the tree grew from its progressive bifurcations at the growing tip (or terminal bud), contrast with the straight, unswerving trunks of the living Douglas fir from which it is suspended.





These deviations along the growth vector represent a chronology of the chestnut tree's life.

The alignment of age phenomena along an upward growth vector gives to the piece a special quality in that any point on the trunk has its future above it and its past below (in terms of its increasing

thickness). This applies equally to its upper and lower extremities; at its base, as it germinates, it emerges seemingly from empty space, and at the top, above the horizontal cut that felled the tree, we again find empty space representative of the tree's absence (it having now been cut down).

Up To Now represents a tree as we know a tree rather than as we see one, embodying the duration of a life using the changes that make that duration manifest and that we experience through the phenomenon of 'age'.

Paul Tuppeny November 2022

ⁱ (my 3 year old niece once warned me that "if I had any more birthdays, I would bang my head on the door!").

ⁱⁱ We could also have included changes in the texture of the tree's bark but, since Wilderness Wood is a managed woodland, it seemed more appropriate to remove the bark to express the tree's commodification as lumber for human use. In the context of a managed forest, this could be said to be its foremost 'meaning', or actuality

Up To Now: Further Developments (Wakehurst, Wells & Valencia)



Up To Now (Pine and Cedar) Maquette photo montage for Wells Art Contemporary

The project at Wakehurst corresponds closely with my current sculpture practice which develops from PhD research carried out at Chelsea College of Art into our experience of the phenomenon of 'age' in the objects that constitute our environment.

Our world is characterised by change; trees grow, fruit ripens and skin wrinkles. Yet it appears to us as stable and persisting.

Aristotle noticed that we do not recognise the objects that constitute our environment by their substance alone but also by their potentialities for change. He described these potentialities as the object's 'nature', or 'form', and held that, for us, this 'change-story' was an integral part of the assimilated entity.

By Nature: Wakehurst (proposal) Paul Tuppeny 2022

"The nature of a thing...is a certain principle and cause of change...and is directly present in it"

(Aristotle Physics II/1/192b20pg33 Waterfield trans.)



By Nature: Wakehurst The proposed sculpture addresses time and change, demonstrating by accumulating physical mass the dynamic role of carbon in growth.

The sculpture sets out to hold in a single object the life and 'nature' of a tree. It begins at its base as a slim, green shoot, steadily widening in girth as it grows taller, finally terminating at its top as a rotting stump consumed by wood boring insects. This is a tree as we *know* a tree



The sculpture begins at its base as a green shoot and...

...terminates as a rotting stump

rather than as we *see* one; it is held as a living, growing, changing organism. The phenomena by which we understand a tree's growth are aligned in a single vector along its length and, consequently, this axis directly represents the passage of time.

The proposed sculpture addresses time and change, demonstrating by accumulating physical mass the dynamic role of carbon in all growth.

Note: The maquette is constructed from Box and necessarily carries the growth characteristics of that particular plant; it is envisaged that the actual sculpture will use a tree local to Wakehurst and will embody the patterns of that species (Chestnut carries a clear growth geometry and works well).

Up To Now (Wakehurst) Maquette photo montage for Wakehurst sculpture program

Burn Me Up!, Burn Me Down!



1

Burn Me Up!, Burn Me Down!

View of boxwood maquette

ENCLAVE LAND ART
VALL DE GALLINERA

Our world is one of constant transformation, where, through natural processes, the entities around us are always changing; trees grow, fruit ripens and skin wrinkles. It is through these potentialities for change that we truly know and understand these objects; we know 'things' as much through their 'change biography' as we do by their physical characteristics.

Aristotle described these 'change-biographies' as the 'nature' of the thing:

"The nature of a thing...is a certain principle and cause of change and stability in the thing and is directly present in it."
(Physics II 1 192b20 Waterfield trans pg33)

It is in the normal 'nature' of a tree to grow from seeds, starting as single green shoots, maturing to its full size but eventually decaying as it is reabsorbed by wood boring insects and other organisms once its life has drawn to an end.

The transformation of the planet's climate brought about by the activities of humans has changed this narrative for many of the trees of Vall De Gallinera; this year, forest fires swept through much of the valley following a period of intense drought and high temperatures; *the planet is burning up; its forests are burning down.**

*The title of the sculpture references Almodovar's film *Járame!* released in English with the title *Tie Me Up!, Tie Me Down!*



Note on the maquette

The maquette is constructed in box (boxus) which has a distinctive growth vocabulary of its own. It is illustrative only of the final work. The full size sculpture will adopt and work with the growth habits of the original tree.

3



Burn Me Up!, Burn Me Down!

View of boxwood maquette

ENCLAVE LAND ART
VALL DE GALLINERA

FABRICATION

The sculpture takes as its core a small tree, one of perhaps 7-8 metres in height. The tree is felled and stripped of its bark. The branches are removed carefully, cutting as close to the trunk as possible to include the flaring where they attach to the trunk. The branches are



redistributed and re-oriented to align with the growth/time vector and affirm the direction of growth. The branches are re-attached with plugged (pelleted) screws and glue.

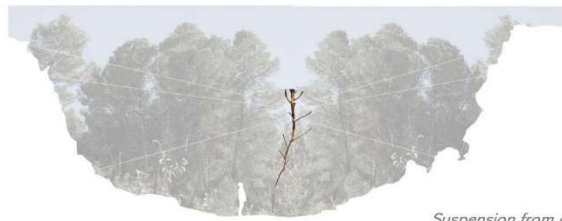


The thicker end of the trunk (and the nearby branches) will be charred using a blowtorch. A strobilus (cone) is attached to the thin end, the sculpture's nascence, if you like.

(continues...)



4

*Suspension from cliffs**Suspension from cliffs and trees**Suspension from trees and posts*

2



Burn Me
Up!, Burn
Me Down!
Montage of
maquette

ENCLAVE LAND ART VALL DE GALLINERA

FABRICATION (continued)

Holes are drilled in the thick end of the trunk to receive suspension wires. Similarly, anchor wires will pass through holes drilled in the mid-section of the trunk to prevent swaying.

Galvanised steel cable (6 to 8mm) is used to suspend the sculpture from neighbouring trees, cliffs or posts, depending on the chosen site. Assistance will be required for this stage (a small cherry-picker, scissor-lift or crane will be helpful).

Monday	07 th Nov	Select tree, select site, fell tree
Tuesday	08 th Nov	Strip bark and branches
Wednesday	09 th Nov	Rearrange branches
Thursday	10 th Nov	Refix branches
Friday	11 th Nov	Refix branches
Saturday	12 th Nov	Refix branches
Sunday	13 th Nov	DAY OFF
Monday	14 th Nov	Sanding and finishing
Tuesday	15 th Nov	Sanding and finishing
Wednesday	16 th Nov	Move to site and suspension
Thursday	17 th Nov	Suspension work/ COMPLETE
Friday	18 th Nov	Contingency day
Saturday	19 th Nov	Open doors event
Sunday	20 th Nov	Open doors event

ENCLAVE LAND ART VALL DE GALLINERA

The sculpture sets out to hold in a single object the Aristotelean 'nature' of a Vall De Gallinera tree. It begins at its base as a slim shoot growing from a strobilus (fir cone), steadily widening in girth as it grows taller but terminates prematurely at its top, blackened by the fire that ended its life. This is a Vall De Gallinera tree as we *know* a Vall De Gallinera tree rather than as we *see* one; it is held as a living, growing, *changing* organism, but one of curtailed duration. The phenomena by which we understand a tree's growth are aligned in a single upward vector which acts, in turn, as a spatial expression of the passage of time that constituted a life. Here, though, that life ends in the violence of fire.

*Charring to
top of
sculpture**Strobilus to
foot of
sculpture*

The human tendency to anthropomorphise the sculpture extends its meaning from one of forthright climate-change commentary to a resonant warning to our own species.

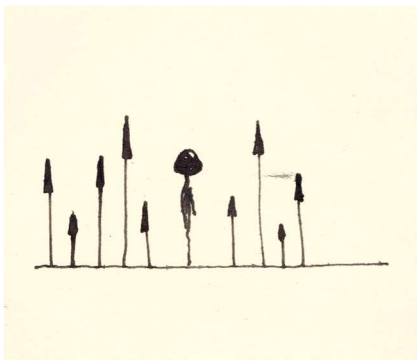
Chronologer (Chalk and Bone) Detailed Account

Conceptual Development

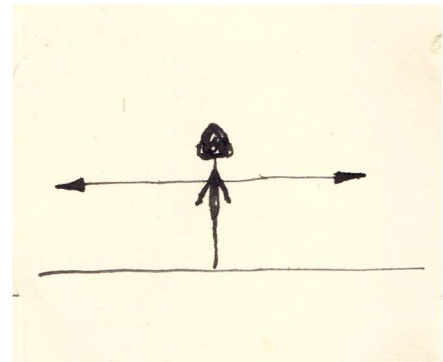
The Development of 'Chronologer'

Introduction

Most of our metaphors for Time portray it moving the way that we do, along a horizontal axis; it passes by, marches on, goes forward into the future and backwards into the past. However, our primary



experiences of the passage of



time are associated with the natural process of growth (and decay) in the things that constitute our environment. These predominantly operate along vertical axes, growing up and rotting down. These processes are temporally extended, taking place over periods of time, and it is through this that they become,

for us, representative of Time itself. We perceive these physical changes over time as 'age'.

Whilst growth, and the phenomenon of 'age' that accompanies it, manifests itself in many ways, it is predominantly comprehended in its upward trajectory. We learn as very young children that 'older' things, particularly people, are generally taller. Increases in height represent for us the dominant 'age' vector.

The capacity to grow is a fundamental essence of living things. A tree that does not grow, that just appears 'in a flash' and remains as a fully mature specimen, would evidently be without 'life' and would not be a 'tree' as we understand one (such a tree is impossible). We actually know the things around us not just from their physical qualities or the way that they appear at a particular present moment, but also by the way that they change over time, by what Aristotle called their 'nature':

“the nature of a thing...is a certain principle and cause of change...and is directly present [with]in it”

(Aristotle Physics II/1/192 b20, pg33 Waterfield translation.)

It is within ourselves that perceptions of growth (positive and negative) and the conception of time converge in the experience of age phenomena. Furthermore, we are ourselves subjected to those same processes of growth, experiencing age phenomena *internally* as well as through our outward sensory and perceptual mechanisms.

Form

The Chronologer sculptures build upon the inverted taper of the *Up To Now* series of artworks and have emerged almost



simultaneously with them. They bear a close resemblance with the *Temporal Machine (Age Phenomena Analogue)* but are not intended to appear telescopic in the same way. Here the stepped nature of their increasing girth reflects the difference between animal and plant growth patterns; whilst vegetation tends to have a single dominant direction for growth (usually upward), animals appear to us as growing their form more or less uniformly in all directions (bones thicken as they lengthen for instance and do not taper towards a leading node/terminal bud in the way that plants do). The stepping form of the struts in the Chronologer works can be viewed as representative of separate episodes of perceptual encounter.

A future Chronologer will have segments of incremental length to reflect the changing growth rate of the bones at different sizes relative to our life span since, here again, most animals differ from plants in reaching an adult form which remains stable for the greater part of their lives whilst most plants just keep growing, aspects that appear to give them ‘adult form’, such as developing a canopy, being determined by daylight distribution around the plant (a field oak takes a wholly different form to one grown in a forest). This will generate a very different silhouette.

The objective of the piece was to create an abstracted figure that was in itself expressive of our growth but also reflected the manner in which our relationship with the world is predicated on the perceptual measurements/judgements that we overlay upon it. It is this that determined the posture of the figure with outstretched arms as if in the act of measuring a fathom. It was interesting too that the figure explicitly combined the vertical vector of

growth with the horizontal axis with which we imbue conceptual time, although whether this will be read in the work is debatable.

Bone

The work was first conceived to be constructed in bone. The inspiration for using the material probably lies with a partial Georgian chess set found cheap on ebay some years ago; bone was a common material for domestic objects until replaced by Bakelite and ivory in the middle of the last century. For my purposes, the bone was sourced from the numerous shop-bought sections of cow bones that our dog has discarded around the place. Whilst these are a ready source of dry bone, their size necessarily limits the dimensions of the artwork. A small woodworking lathe was purchased for carving the cylinders which make up the sculptures.

Carmine

Unlike modern black and white chessmen, the pieces from the bone set are white and red, the red colour achieved through the application of cochineal, or carmine, a pigment derived from the blood of a Mesoamerican insect (I recalled being shown this by some children in Peru who simply had to squeeze the insect with a fingernail for the thick deep-red liquid to ooze out). Whilst cochineal/carmine has largely been replaced by artificial reds in paints etc, it remains readily available for heritage applications and for use in food.

A bone figure coated with blood seems appropriately primordial.

Two figures are thus envisaged, one bare white bone, the other blood red.

Base

Perhaps the most challenging issue with this work, as seems to be the case with all of the inverted taper pieces, is the means by which it is made upright. Early solutions were for a mahogany block that recalled the material palette in which bone was historically found. The figure seemed to call for a foundation, however, that formed an integral component of the overall artwork, rather than a plinth or pedestal. In an early incarnation, the figure stands upon a rough, uncut section of bone which appeared a solution that would deliver a coherent piece. The bone base section bore the gouges/striations from our dog's teeth. The relationship between the gnawed base and the figure conjured thoughts of the hominid skeletons discovered with similar gouged lines that initially led

paleoanthropologists/archaeologists to conclude that these early humans practised cannibalism although later researchers have agreed that they had actually stumbled upon a prehistoric leopard's lair and that our antecedents had simply been its prey. Interesting but not part of the work's underlying intent. It also still had the appearance of a base (a bit like you would find on a plastic toy soldier).

The work 'needed' to stand on a piece of the world that is measuring, ideally an object or material readily identifiable as transformed and itself a source of age phenomena. Upon the beach at Brighton are washed up pieces of coal and chalk. Both are rounded by the action of the waves but the chalk develops circular hollows, tunnels and voids, the smaller pieces often even resembling a skull.

A suitable piece of beach chalk was found and dried. It was squared-off with a saw on all but one face. The saw cuts taper inward toward the back giving the appearance that the block is a segment cut from a sphere. The taper to the sides also means that when viewed from the front, the cut faces are not visible, which gives emphasis to the sea-sculpted front face.

Two holes were drilled in the top surface to receive the figure's bone uprights. The surface of the chalk was secured with several coats of diluted pva.

Siting issues

The work was selected for the Wells Art Contemporary to be displayed inside the Cathedral. It is to be sited in a niche in the Lady Chapel. The recess sits below a cusped ogee arch with carved male and female heads (wearing 13th Century headgear) at each springing point.

The niche has had a piscina added a later date the lip of which projects beyond the face of the wall. The sculpture will therefore sit forward of the niche. The sculpture need to be raised to a level above the lip of the piscina basin. A plinth/raise was required which would sit securely in the piscina bowl, that would transition between the circular geometry of the basin and the rectangular chalk rock that forms the base of the work. This was fabricated in oak and coated with 96% absorptive black paint so that the sculpture appears to hover just above the edge of the piscina.

Feedback from Wells Cathedral

Copy of correspondence between lead exhibition curator and Dean of Wells Cathedral.

Jackie Croft 30/08/22 "Yes, I did get feedback on "Chronologer" – the Chapter would be very pleased if it can stay longer in principle as it is a lovely addition to the space. However, the piece will either need to be insured by the artist or left at own risk. Also, we will need to agree a timeframe for the loan, so we all know what to expect. I would also like the artist's name and contact details so I can write and thank on behalf of Chapter.

Jackie Croft 23/08/22 Thanks for the email and for the willingness of the artist to continue to show the piece in the Cathedral. It is one of the more beautiful pieces. Chapter Executive meets tomorrow and so I will have some feedback for you fairly quickly.

From: The Dean Of Wells <thedeanofwells@googlemail.com>
Sent: 23 August 2022 11:40
To: Bill Lloyd <bill.lloyd@mac.com>
Cc: Jackie Croft <Jackie.Croft@wellscathedral.org.uk>
Subject: Re: WAC 2022

Dear Bill

Thanks for this. And I'm so glad to hear from you that WAC has been so very well received. I'm picking that up from a number of people. Warmest congratulations to all involved.

The piece you mention is indeed very drawing in its simplicity. It has a real appeal and resonance.

I'm actually on holiday at present so I'm passing the very generous offer of a longer stay in the Cathedral to my colleagues on the Chapter Executive via Jackie Croft.

I can't say at present where the discussion might go; some will love the piece, others might just fear that spaces easily get cluttered even with very beautiful pieces. Let's see...

Do please thank and congratulate Paul Tuppeny on a resonant piece. And let's see what colleagues think. We will get back to you.

Thanks for making such a generous offer.

As ever

John

On 23 Aug 2022, at 08:05, Bill Lloyd <bill.lloyd@mac.com> wrote:

Dear John

I hope you have been able to have a peaceful summer so far and that you enjoyed the work in this year's Wells Art Contemporary exhibition. We are still receiving a lot of enthusiastic public feedback on much of the show - in particular the installations in the Camery Garden and Cathedral itself. As last year, it looks as though this category of work - site-specific to our Cathedral and unique in the UK - has again really captured people's imagination. The happiness of children in amongst the Chapter House butterflies has been a particular pleasure to see.

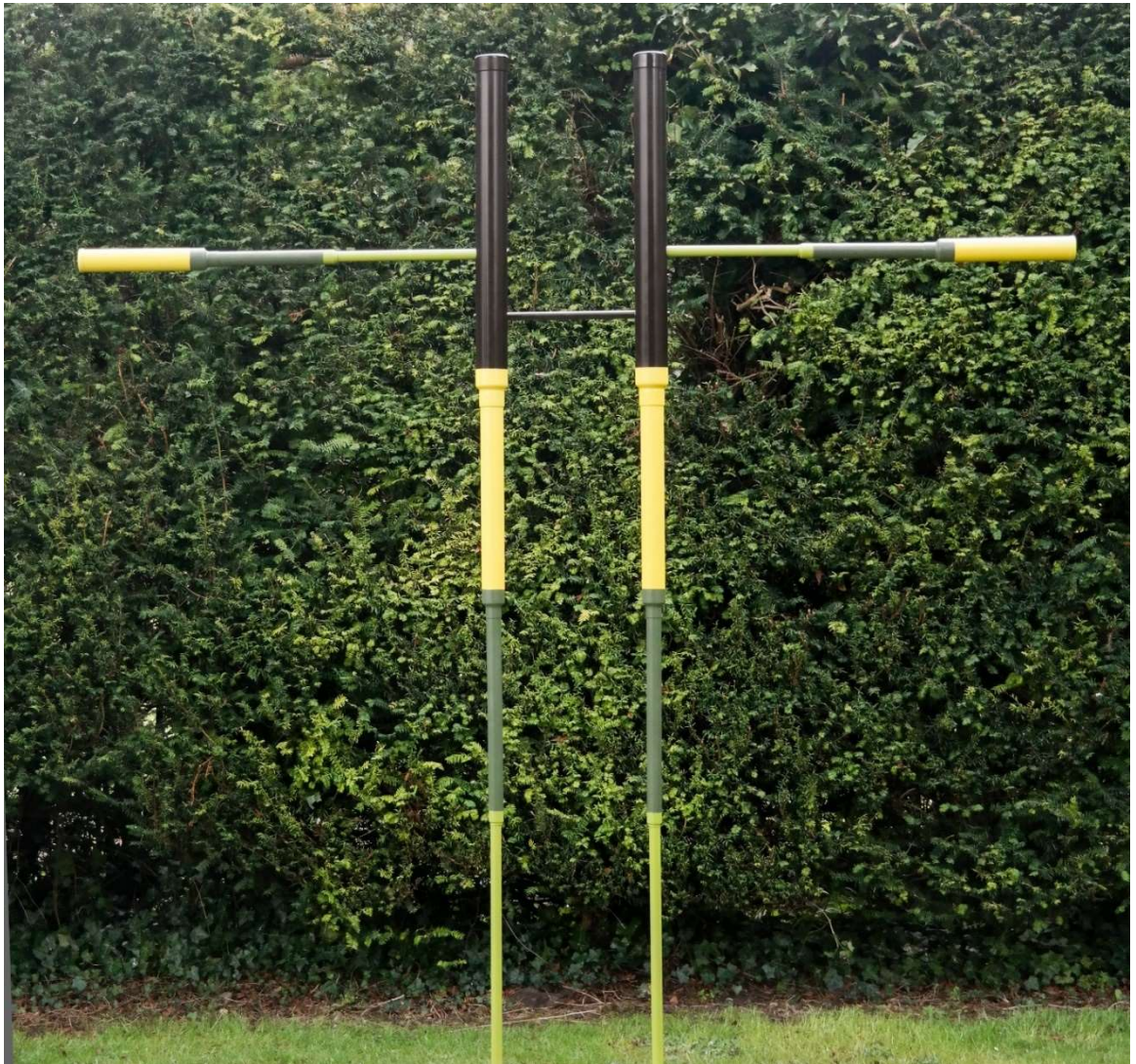
Several visitors who have come in to building for prayer have commented on a small piece called Chronologer made from chalk and bone by Paul Tuppeny. Perhaps more than much of the work, this seems to be offering a directly spiritual connection to some these visitors. It's installed in a niche on the south side of the Lady Chapel and many of us would like it to stay there for longer.

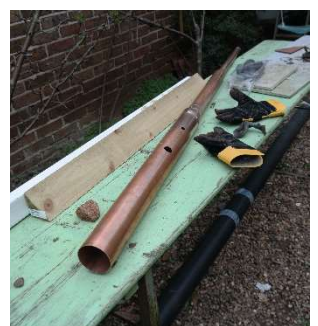
I mentioned this response to Paul Tuppeny on Saturday when he was taking a public group around the exhibition to discuss a selection of his favourite installations. He would be delighted and deeply honoured if the Cathedral would like to keep this work for longer. Is this something you might like to consider? If so, I can put you in touch.

With all best wishes

Bill

Chronologer (Grown Up): Additional Material







Grown Up (Quennington) Paul Tupper 2022

The sculpture is all about how natural things change and grow with time.

You might have noticed that the things around you are always changing: trees grow, fruit ripens and skin wrinkles. The fact is that our world is characterised by change. This could be very confusing if, for example, when we returned to a tree that we had last seen in the winter to find it covered with leaves, we thought it was a completely different tree.



However, as the Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle, noticed, we do not recognise the things around us just by their 'substance', but we also know them by their 'nature', the way that they change. He believed that, for us, this nature, or 'change-story', was a part of the object.

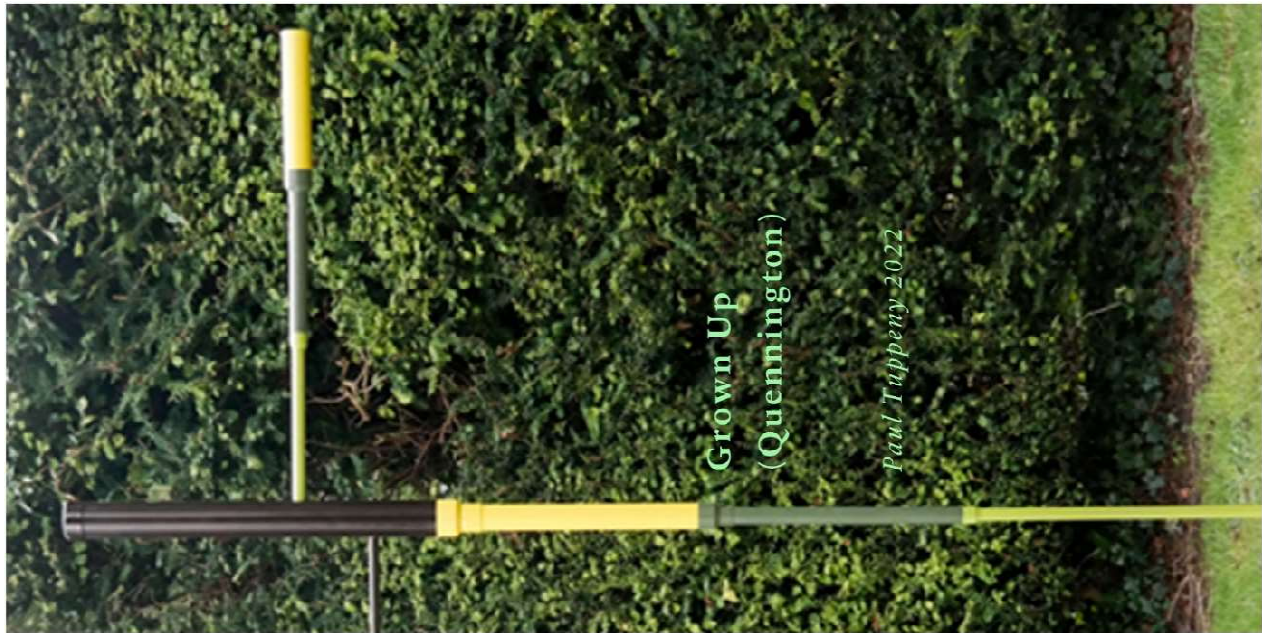
If we look at the things that we eat, a juicy red apple for instance, we can see how useful it is to know the way that things change, their nature. As you know, apples slowly grow from blossom flowers on apple trees and get bigger and bigger until they reach a point where they contain lots of sugar and they are ready to eat. After this, though, they tend to fall from the tree, get eaten by small animals and go rotten, so there is only a very short time that the apple is of any use to us as food. It is important, then, to know when this moment is coming (and when it arrives) and we do this 'by checking' (subconsciously in our minds) how far the apple has got in its 'change-story' every time we see one. It is actually in our nature to do this with *all* objects so, every time we see *anything*, we mentally 'measure' where it has got up to in its change-story. We 'see' our mind's change measurements as an object's 'age'.

Of course, people change as well. We start as babies but grow into children and then adults (who have children themselves) and eventually become old people. We 'age' like everything else.

When I made this sculpture, I wanted to show a figure that both *measures* and is measured. Like us, the sculpture grows wider as it grows taller. The arms are similarly structured but they are outstretched and suggest the act of measuring.

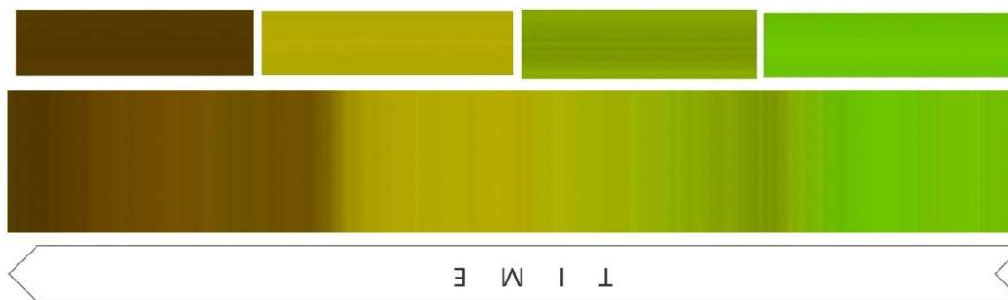
The colours of the sculpture at Quennington are taken from the changing colours of leaves as they get older. The colours are made stronger and applied in bands so the sculpture looks a bit like a measuring rod, or ruler.

Paul Tupper 2022



Grown Up
(Quennington)
Paul Tupper 2022

GROWN UP (QUENININGTON)



PAUL TUPPENY 2022

COLOUR THE SCULPTURE

Colour the sculpture using the different colours of a leaf as it ages or gets older.

The colour blocks to the left have been sampled from the ageing banana leaf in the photograph below. You can see how the colour of the leaf changes with the passage of time.

The colours have been deepened, or saturated, to make them show up more clearly.



1. You will need to find 5 sticks, 2 long ones, 2 medium and 1 short one. It does not matter if they are not very straight or a bit knobby. You will also need 6 short pieces of wire or string.



2. First tie the thin end of a



medium stick across the thicker end of one of the long sticks using a piece of wire or string.



3. Then, tie the thicker end of the other long stick to the medium stick (one of our long sticks had a flower on it but do not be confused by this).



4. After that, place the thin end of the other medium stick to the opposite side and tie it to the two long sticks and the other medium stick.

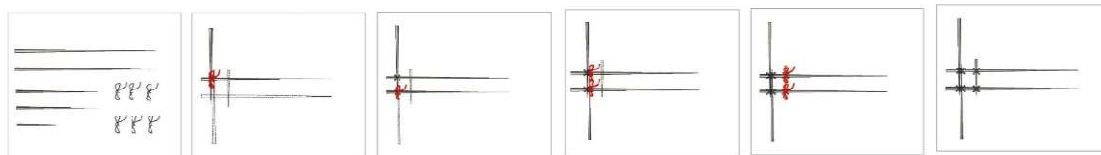


5. Finally, place the short stick across the long sticks a little way down from where the medium sticks join them. Tie both ends of the short stick to the long sticks.



6. You have finished.

BUILD THE SCULPTURE



The installation at St Wulfran's Church Ovingdean

St Wulfran's Church, Ovingdean

The village of Ovingdean nestles in preserved Downland valley a couple of miles from Brighton. Its historic heart sits within sprawling 20th Century housing developments and consists these days of four or five 17th century houses refaced in the 18th and 19th centuries to comply with the fashionable tastes of that time. To the edge of this cluster, and flanked on three sides by woodland and open Downs, sits St Wulfran's Church.

Construction on the church is recorded in the Domesday Book occurring between 1066 and 1086 although it has the general appearance of a Saxon building and may have incorporated earlier structures. Indeed, the situation of the Saxon and Medieval village is visible by the levelled tiers that step up the hill to the North of the church that once corresponded to the floors of the now vanished houses.

A plain roofed tower was added to the West end of the nave in the 13th Century. More recently, a small Lady Chapel was constructed adjacent to the chancel in 1905 and a vestry and organ loft was built against the North face of the tower in the 1980's.

The church is constructed from the local stones, chalk faced with flint (the later additions are similarly finished). The use of limestone is restricted to a few rough quoins and window openings. The internal arch to the tower is of dressed chalk and bears deep grooves from the bell rope that operates the church's single 15th Century bell.

The church bears in its stonework the fluctuating (and lowly) fortunes of the village that it served in the very minor nature of any additions or alterations made between the Early Medieval and Victorian periods.

In the 19th Century, the Kemp Family who resided in the village, prospered through the development of neighbouring Brighton and it is to this period that St Wulfran's owes many of its traditionally decorative features, the most notable of which is the painted timber ceiling in the chancel executed by a 26 year-old Charles Kemp in 1867. The decoration is a stencilled array of green foliage with red birds and flowers on a white background. It draws, to some extent upon the romanticised Gothic style made fashionable by Augustus Pugin but seems to incorporate some themes of the nascent Arts and Crafts movement. Charles Kemp went on to establish himself as a prominent designer and fabricator of stained glass and is responsible for the majority of the later windows in the church.

The feel of the interior is dominated by its massively thick walls with their meandering soft plaster surfaces, pitted and flaking on the elevations most directly exposed to the winds from the sea less than a mile to the South. The air within of the church carries a dampness emanating from the porous chalk walls. This in combination with an earlier heating system has been detrimental to the painted chancel ceiling. Heating now consists of low-level radiant panels but the congregation is actively fundraising towards restoration works for the Kemp ceiling.

There are pews and other furniture that are commonly accepted features of an Anglican church in the 21st Century. There are some areas of recently installed floor finish, even a few carpets, but there remain also features that are alien to its current use; low aumbrys once used to store artefacts associated with the practice of communion, a recessed stoup, a low window for administering to lepers who would not have been admitted to the interior of the church, the remains of a rood screen incorporated now behind the altar, exposed capitals associated with vanished structures and a blocked Romanesque doorway in the North wall which would have communicated very directly with the Saxon/Medieval village on the slope beyond the churchyard.

St Wulfran's is a functioning and inclusive church with a regular congregation of around 60 people. The church and its community have adopted a strong conservation (Creation stewardship) identity.

Planning The Installation

This is a remarkable building in which to exhibit artwork. From earlier experiences of exhibiting in heritage venues it has become clear that, for many, the building and its history will always take precedence over artist's 'insertions'. I determined, therefore, that the exhibition should have the 'feeling' of a coherent "installation" that worked sympathetically with the physical and cultural context of the host structure, rather than that of an "exhibition" of 'generic' artworks appended to it. The limited availability of time (just two months to generate the artworks) and the building's designation as a Scheduled Ancient Monument prevented any very large scale or structural interventions; the installation would therefore adopt the form of a coherent series of 'free-standing' artefacts interacting with the venue through their visual language and cultural associations. The church would continue to function throughout the exhibition period and it seemed important to the success of the exhibition that the installation work sympathetically with the structure and the congregation, who I had met and who had been very welcoming of both myself and the project.

In the context of the installation, the church divided into six main zones of intervention;

- (1) the **chancel** with the painted ceiling,
- (2) the blocked Romanesque **doorway** in the North wall,
- (3) the floor area below the **tower**,
- (4) a small area in the nave set aside as a **children's space**,
- (5) the **walls of the nave**,
- (6) and the **churchyard** outside.

The Lady Chapel was used to display several of my paintings on the theme of 'rescue' (the Rescue Series). However, these do not form part of the PhD research and are not discussed here.

At the time of conceiving the Ovingdean installation, the research project was 'generating' several themes which, when developed, would lend themselves to the various spaces within the church. The first and perhaps most obvious of these was the ongoing development of the inverted tree theme that had begun with the eleven-meter-high suspended Chestnut in Hadlow Down, clearly an artwork type that might resonate with the decoration and artefacts within the chancel, area (1).

The blocked Romanesque doorway (2) faced, almost directly, the current entrance way and porch set in the South wall of the Nave. As such, it is one of the first features that the visitor notices on entering the church. The Victorian pews run in front of the North door niche, which is approximately two and a half metres high to the head of the arch. An exhibit in this location would need to be elevated above the seating, either on a plinth or fixed to the back wall.

The area below the tower (3) has a very direct relationship with the altar where the robed priest conducted mass every Sunday morning, facing it down the building's central aisle, presenting the opportunity for a second focal point for the interior on its main axis. The space, currently quite bare, had been the Vestry prior to the construction of the current facilities against the tower's North wall. I had been working with fabric patterns that ordered the colour spectrum associated with age in plants and this seemed a good basis for the work in this part of the church.

The children's area (4) had been produced simply by the removal of one of the pews. The floor was carpeted and there was a small bookshelf with children's and other publications

(dealing with both biblical and conservation subjects). It suggested a work on a theme that I had been looking into recently that investigated our interaction with and ‘learning’ of the phenomenon of age as we are growing.

The walls of the nave (5) are of uneven plaster painted white. There are a few memorials set into them at various levels throughout the church. Consequently, there are few areas of wall that are not interrupted by windows and other features. Opportunities for large wall-based works are very limited.

The land around the church (6) falls into three broad areas, the churchyard immediately surrounding the church, the upper church yard to its West, and Daphne’s field to the South. The western edges are densely wooded. Both church yard areas are crowded with headstones and tombs and have many mature trees. Daphne’s Field is approached through the upper churchyard. There are a few burial plots situated in its Southwest quadrant but the remainder of the field is open lawn with a wildflower-meadow project progressing along the Eastern boundary. The South of the field opens onto Downland, looking down the valley to the sea under a mile away. There are two large trees, a sycamore and an ash, adjacent to the fence.

The Overall Theme of the Installation

In common with the research project, the installation carries as its overall theme that of our relationship with objective age, mainly in the objects that comprise our environment but also within ourselves. The theme corresponds comfortably with spiritual aspects of the church as a place of personal contemplation.

The various component works that comprise the installation will be conceived to ‘resonate’ with the church and its furnishings, drawing *additional* meaning and affect from the host building.

The overall theme was briefly outlined at my first meeting with Father Richard and later approved in March 2023 by the Church Wardens.

The Work in The Chancel, (1)

The Chancel is the most densely decorated part of the church. Whilst its most prominent feature is the painted ceiling, there are large painted panels from the late Victorian period against the East wall and gable as well as several large gilt framed paintings. The floor is largely carpeted in red. There is an oak rail in front of the altar which is itself painted with

the figures of saints. Behind the altar are remnants of the 14th Century oak rood screen and a Victorian ceramic frieze as well as three Medieval aumbry.

The most suitable location for a work in the chancel is in its North-West quarter as the altar dais occupies the eastern half of the chancel and there is a doorway to the Lady Chapel in the South wall.

On the North wall in this part of the chancel hangs a Nineteenth Century reproduction of Rubens' *Christ's Descent from the Cross* **CHECK** held in an ornate gilt frame of the same period.

The Chancel Ceiling.

The chancel ceiling is divided into two structural bays. The truss structures comprise large horizontal cross members carrying a central vertical kingpost below the ridge. These are buttressed by gently curved crucks which support and shape the ceiling structure and its longitudinal planking.

The horizontal cross beams (and the springing of the barrel ceiling) are 4.5 metres above floor level.

The barrelled timber ceiling was painted by Charles Kemp in 1867 with a stencil type design comprising foliage and birds in the then fashionable 'gothic' style popularised by Augustus Pugin. The main colours are green and red and the red colour of the structural members appears to date from the time of the ceiling's decoration.

Christ's Descent from the Cross by Rubens

The wall against which the sculpture will be viewed carries a 19th Century Dutch rendering of Rubens' *The Descent from the Cross* (1612-1614), the original of which is in Antwerp Cathedral. In the painting an elliptical arrangement of figures is set on a diagonal axis from the top left to lower right of the canvas. The figures are sharply illuminated against a dark background but prominence is given to the draped white sheet against which the body of Christ is effectively silhouetted as it is lowered. As a device, this sheet both focuses and animates the descent. The example in St Wulfran's is severely darkened; the church was lit only by candles and oil lamps until the 1940's.

Wikipedia

Strong vertical movement etc

Up To Now (Pine and Cedar)

I was anxious to develop the theme begun with the large tree sculpture at The Wilderness Wood in Hadlow Down in 2022, *Up To Now (Chestnut)*. The Chancel seemed an ideal situation for such a piece.

Whilst the work at Hadlow Down was conceived with the objective of creating a form as close to the natural original as possible with only small hints toward its human origins, I felt that any development of the theme should ‘shift’ the artwork closer towards the realm of artefacts, particularly as the piece represents *our* subjectively held narrative for trees (as living, growing and finite organisms).

I wanted the work to engage with the legend that underpins the religion to which St Wulfran’s is dedicated. Whilst I do not have ‘faith’, the Christian tradition had a presence in my childhood and I am open to the affect that its stories are capable of delivering.

HUSSERLIAN ‘PAIRING’ AND ‘APPERCEPTION’ OF ‘GROWING’ TREE SET AGAINST TIMBER ROOF STRUCTURE PAINTED WITH FOLIAGE AND POPULATED WITH PAINTED BIRDS

Choice of Wood(s)

In the medieval period it is likely that there would have been a great number of carved figures, representations of biblical figures and saints, populating churches. Most of these were, of course, destroyed in the Civil War (St Wulfran’s church’s only surviving piece of medieval timber carving, a remnant of the rood screen, is now situated behind the altar). Such figures do however survive in mainland Europe and I drew inspiration from the collection housed in the CHECK Museum in Barcelona which I visited in 2022.

These figures from the Romanesque and Gothic periods often appear quite crude in their current condition, with colours faded, joints opening up and the attention of wood boring insects. Closer inspection however shows a sensitivity to detail and finish which hints at the original sophistication of the carvings. These early sculptures seem to be largely in close-grained resinous softwoods. They have often been attended to with many years of polishing (after the original gessos and colouring have flaked away) which gives them a character

quite different to that at their inception, but one that is perhaps more expressive of their precious status in their respective rural churches.

I was keen to experiment with different woods as the growth habits of the originary tree plays a large part in the character of these works; as before, it was important that nothing be added to host tree that is chosen to ‘carry’ the artistic intent; any traditional ‘aesthetic content’ should emanate from the Natural object and not from the artistry. I also wanted the work to respond to the painting of the decent from the cross hanging on the wall behind my artwork. In an earlier submission to Wells Cathedral’s Contemporary Art festival in 2022 (See Chapter/page ref), I had proposed a suspended piece that represented the life narrative of the tree from which the original cross had been constructed. That particular “Up To Now” proposal terminated in a wood-wormed stump and sought to represent the normal full life cycles that constitute the background to all human stories. It seems that, by *The Golden Legend*, the ‘true’ cross was constructed from three woods, Pine, Cedar of Lebanon and Cypress although tests on some of the many reliquary fragments have shown them to be pine only.

NOTE: This seems to reference Isiah 60:13: "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box [cypress] together to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious." Whilst comprised of documents created across thousands of years, strands of the Bible are viewed as transcending time, thus Isiah’s place of my feet is interpreted to refer to that part of the cross to which Jesus’ feet were nailed.

Pine grows in a very distinct way, its branches projecting in ‘whorls’ around the circumference of the trunk rather than as single bifurcations as in the case of the chestnut at Hadlow Down. It is this pattern that gives Guiseppe Penone’s tree-based works, cut from large construction timbers, their distinctive silhouette.

Oak, which at first seemed appropriate for its match to the timbers from which the church is built, was rejected on the grounds of the weight it might impose on the ancient roof structure and the additional difficulties presented in its handling.

Sourcing the Tree

The Wilderness Wood at Hadlow Down were approached, requesting whether they had any Cedar of Lebanon or Mediterranean pine species. Sadly, they had neither of these tree particular types. However, they remarked that there were Scots Pines that had died and that they were soon to remove (the woodland’s normal policy is to leave dead trees in situ as habitat but the woodland’s tree surgeon/arborist noted that often pines can harbour fungi

which can spread to healthy trees). The tree was cut while I was at The Wood and I was able to take the top 6 metres and side-branches that made up the crown of the tree. NOTE (I did not have time to look around any further for exact species). It was free as well! Also ‘seasoned’ and consequently very light.

Constructing The Sculpture

Working with the Scots Pine presented several issues that were not encountered with the chestnut in 2022, the foremost being the habit of the species to develop a very pronounced crown structure wherein the central trunk deviates markedly from the vertical at the top of the tree. Contrary to this habit, the sculpture must express a strong vertical growth vector if it is to exhibit change over time explicitly; in short, the tree needed to be straightened out.

I had constructed the chestnut *Up To Now* with a 3 metre demountable lower section as this would be liable to damage when transporting and suspending the piece. In this instance, though, approximately four cuts would be required produce a tree that was sufficiently straight.

I had as an objective that this version of *Up To Now* would openly express its origins as a man-made artefact, just as the chronology of the tree that it represents is a construction of the human mind. Visible joints in the trunk could be accommodated within the overall concept of the work although their configuration would need careful consideration if the work was to maintain a unified appearance.

The circumferential nature of the branch growth on this species led me for a while to consider a ‘stepped’ inversion of the tree whereby the branches were not individually removed from the trunk, but the trunk, together with its branches, would be cut into sections and re-assembled in reverse order, rather like a small child’s stacking toy SEE SKETCHES. This was eventually rejected as an essential component of the joining of episodes to create the mental biography is in the “narrative smoothing” that binds them into an ontological unity. The re-stack approach would, through the tapering of the individual sections, have steps that would be difficult to carve away without destroying the integrity of the original tree. Furthermore, the Scots pine, as a species, was too irregular. Nevertheless, this approach may be worthy of investigation in the future with a another conifer species.

The Scots pine has noticeably more diverse growth patterns that leads to the twists in the trunk and branches that characterise its silhouette. The crown of the example felled at Wilderness Wood possessed such quirks and I undertook to include them in the artwork to remain true to the originary tree but also to ‘animate’ the sculpture’s growth vector.

The various components were thus selected from the felled tree, ensuring that there was sufficient taper to achieve a visibly substantive trunk at the top of the sculpture that reduced smoothly down to a slim shoot tip at floor level, a key part of the growth narrative of the work.

The individual branches were removed and carefully stored, as before.

The trunk components were laid out horizontally to set out the alignment of the various joints.

The objective for the joints was that they should be visible/expressed and appear deliberate. There would be no filling material to disguise the joints or cover any poor workmanship, very much in the manner of the Spanish Romanesque biblical figures (above).

The wood of the aged Scots pine was noticeably weaker than that of the Hadlow Down chestnut and significantly less able to accept intricate fixings. The joints were therefore morticed around oak core blocks that were later profiled to follow the radius of the pine trunk sections that they attached.

The jointed sections incorporated at the lowest extent of the piece one of the twists that are characteristic of the species. This joint was left partially unglued but was configured so that the mortice would grip the oak block when pushed together; an easily removeable lower section seemed a reasonable contingency since I was not sure how the congregation and Father Richard would deal with the conduct of Mass and Communion in close proximity to the work (I had terrible visions of vestments snagging on the artwork!)

The branches were then reattached, reversed against their original orientation so they would continue to 'grow' upward when the trunk had been inverted. As at Hadlow Down, the fixings for the branches were recessed and covered with inset plugs cut from a waste section of trunk.

As mentioned previously branches on this species grow as a whorl around the circumference of the vertical stem or trunk. The number and distribution of branches in each whorl varies and at one important junction this was such that they could not be removed individually. As a consequence, a group of branches were removed by cutting a segment out of the trunk which could then be inverted and re-fixed. This segment needed to fit around one of the oak block cores that were introduced to strengthen the joints requiring a relatively complex bit of carpentry but an engaging outward expression of the junction.

As in the 2022 work, the ends of the branches were trimmed to a horizontal line. In this rendering of the concept, several of the cuts are at a height where they are visible. The cut end grain was, therefore, coated with a 98% absorbent black paint (it is important that growth rings and dendrochronology have no reference in the work as these are rationalised interpretations rather than phenomena directly experienced through perception).

The base of the branches and the trunk at the point of attachment were 'profiled' to join in as 'natural' a way as possible and the joints were generally smoothed prior to a coarse sanding of the sections of the sculpture. After a further finer sanding, the whole work was treated with a woodworm solution. This brought back some of the red ochre colouring of the tree when collected which had resulted from the leaching of tannins.

I was anxious that the sculpture not appear 'newly-worked' and whilst the insect treatment went some of the way to remedying this, the sculpture was 're-stained' with tannins (using a solution of cider vinegar and rooibos tea).

The sculpture was then sanded using very fine 400 grit paper and sanded once again following a thin application of shellac, giving the piece a finish redolent of the Romanesque carvings discussed earlier.

The Suspension of the Sculpture.

Throughout the fabrication of the sculpture, I had been turning over in my mind the options for its suspension. The critical issue in this matter is the points of contact with the existing structure of the church, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Initially I had considered rope or wire suspension cable as had been employed at Hadlow Down but I was unable to contrive of a means of attachment to the roof structure that would not mark or damage its fragile painted finish; clearly any means involving tying or clamping to the roof structure would be liable to scar the building.

In parallel with considerations concerning the protection of the building ran considerations around the appearance of the artwork:

- (1) The means of suspension should not read as part of the sculpture whilst
- (2) the means of suspension must not appear so contrived as to distract from the sculpture or
- (3) visually detract from the roof's structure and decoration with which the sculpture must interact.

The suspension structure must also, of course, be secure and safe.

The substitution of flexible cable with rigid steel rod seemed a reasonable development of the earlier system. However, experiments showed that even solid steel rod would need to have a diameter of at least 35mm if it were not to visibly sag or deflect under the weight of the sculpture over its two and a half metre span (the width of the structural bay); it was considered that any deflection in the suspension rod would be detrimental to the overall appearance of the work, making it more difficult for the supporting structure to visually detach from the salient part of the sculpture. A steel rod of 35mm diameter and 2.5 metre length would be very heavy and visually intrusive. There were unresolved difficulties concerning the attachment of the rod to the existing roof structure.

Another solution that was considered introduced an additional timber horizontal beam. This would 'read' as part of the roof structure and the trunk of the sculpture would be 'pinned' to its face, with a short steel rod. The trunk would project about 30cm forward of the beam to facilitate the necessary visual attachment. The eccentric loading of the beam would induce a significant moment on the points of attachment to the roof structure which would be complex to resolve. Various arrangements were sketched to overcome this issue.

Ultimately a hybrid solution was adopted whereby a short length of relatively small diameter rod (18mm) passed through the trunk (very much in the manner of the cables) and was supported at each end by lengths of timber beam to which it was rigidly bolted. The assembly was slightly pre-cambered to resolve visual deflection issues. The concentric support to the sculpture's trunk permitted a very simple bearing onto the church's roof beam which was able to take advantage of existing decorative chamfers to their top edges to create a visually integrated junction. The end of the supporting beam was covered in felt to minimise possible marking to the roof structure. The rod was coated in 98% absorptive black paint. The beam sections were painted a mid-tone 'museum-grey' matching other supporting structures in the installation (SEE PAINTINGS ETC). The 'broken' appearance of the beam lends to it a slightly 'other-worldly'/ethereal nature that detaches the trunk of the sculpture from any immediately discernible means of support, the work, as a consequence, seemingly hovering over the viewer.

Media Vita

The origins of this work lie within the large scale development of the Chronologer sculpture exhibited in Gloucestershire in 2022. In that work, the Chronologer figure, which had been initially conceived as a small figure in turned bone, was reproduced larger than life size in polychrome copper. The figure expressed the human form as the nexus of 'age' and 'time', a

figure that both measures time's progress in the world around her whilst being herself measured by it.

The larger figure was painted with a temporal colour spectrum developed from the chromatic changes undergone by vegetation as they move from new life (vivid green) through death (yellow) to decay (brown). These were applied as sharply delineated bands evocative of man-made measuring/surveying instruments/staffs. Place in the landscape, different parts of the sculpture would recede into the background as the year and the sculpture's surroundings progressed through their natural cycles.

The documentation of this artwork required that sequential photographing of the sculpture be undertaken at seasonal intervals. This was done at a clearing in wooded downland from which I found myself 'surveying' the deciduous forests below. I found that my perceptual experience of the view held it as a persisting landscape where even when all seemed dead in Winter, the view was balanced by a co-presentation or apperception (to use Husserl's terminology) of its living state in other seasons. Against every inference of 'age' in the landscape there is an opposing co-perceived knowledge of its other conditions. The 'full picture' includes both life's coming forth and its regression, symbolised/signified through its changing colour. The artwork, *Media Vita*, arose from an urge to express my perceptual experiences, labelling the landscape as a place of balanced change.

Media Vita: The Car Heater Graphic

Early on in the research, I had presented my philosophy supervisor with a graphic depiction of an artwork's passage from 'art' to 'history/heritage' using the elongated blue/red triangle device that is traditionally found on the sliding heater controls of a car.

Initially, the only thing I knew about the work was that it would accommodate similar elongated triangles but in this case, green and yellow/brown.

Media Vita: The Structure/Physical Form

I experimented with a range of physical arrangements that would place the triangles in the landscape in as authentic and 'uncontrived' a way as possible. Early experiments suspended the graphic with cables or used a supporting structure (possibly patinated bronze) whose mottled surface would regress into the landscape leaving the brightly coloured triangles to the fore. The first was rejected because of its being limited to locations among appropriate

supporting entities such as trees, the second for its slightly excessive visual complexity and the fact that it might be too self-consciously a work of high ‘sculpture’.

Media Vita: The Sign

Whilst the initial concept had been to ‘label’ the landscape, it took a while for the notion of a sign to take root. The replication of a road sign presented itself as a powerful device. Again, it is a format that I had investigated before in early sculptures that sought to recontextualise people back to their forest origins where the Natural processes of change and ‘age’ held full sway.

The modern road-sign carries in its form a universal format that only differs slightly between cultures and which varies very little itself over time; indeed the format and materials in this country seem to have remained virtually unaltered for the last 70 years. As such, it is a rare human artefact that appears to exist outside of the fluctuations and developments that characterise most present-day products. As an archetype, it almost appears to exist outside of Time.

The Graphic

The graphic of the sign underwent countless permutations, balancing relationships between the triangles and various backgrounds and borders. The key components of the final design are as follows:

1) *Blueness*: Early experiments worked with the traditional “traffic grey” (RAL 7042) for the posts and the reverse of the sign. Such a direct transplant from an urban environment into a Natural landscape carried with it too many distracting associations and corresponding misinterpretations. It seemed that a simple colour shift might overcome these, signifying the piece as ‘deliberate’ whilst retaining its form as an every-day object easily subordinated by the message of the sign it supports. Green was, of course the most obvious, but this would conflict with the content of the sign itself. The sign and the landscape it labels would (occasionally) appear in the context of a blue sky and this seemed a good foil for the colours of the sign graphic. Whilst there is indeed a RAL colour named sky blue, it is too saturated for the purposes of the sign structure. RAL 5024, pastel blue, seemed the best, admittedly from a limited palette of RAL hues.

2) *Background*: Whilst most road-signs provide direction or warning, colour coded according to road type and function, there are an increasing number of signs that signify

amenity destinations. Such signs, both in the UK and Europe, have a brown background which allows them to recede against signs giving more ‘urgent’ information. The adoption of the brown background for Media Vita would deliver appropriate connotations. RAL 8002 Signal Brown.

The brown background area is crossed by 11 fine vertical lines to break-up the brown ‘Z’ shape where it is exposed and hint towards the notion of a slider scale.

3) *Border*: The border to the graphic area is an opportunity to unify the sign and its supporting posts and was designated as RAL 5024 pastel blue. A transfer print of the same colour (RAL 5024) was applied to the reverse of the sign. Co-ordinating the colours across the components would however generate special problems of its own in production.

4) *Green and Yellow*: The colour tones of the extended triangles were determined to harmonise with the sign’s brown background and its blue border. They were chosen against a schedule of RAL colours to ensure correct a rendering immune to the vagaries of the computer screen (RAL 6018 Yellow Green, RAL 1032 Broom Yellow)

An interesting facet of the sign emerges when the colour areas are joined together. Whilst the graphic concept is wholly abstract, the use of vegetation/landscape colourings suggests to the viewer a pictorial content, namely, a portrayal of overlapping hills, the distant hill of bright green grass and the foreground hill of a dry wheat crop ready for the harvest. On first noticing this I was concerned that it would distract from the artwork’s intended interpretation, but, upon reflection, felt that such an interpretation, spanning the seasons as it does, was perfectly acceptable.

5) *The Pictogram*; Referring back to the originator of the graphic, the heater controls of a car, it was noticed that these often have associated with them pictograms (for example, parallel wavy lines for rising heat and a snowflake for cold air) and the introduction of pictograms was correspondingly considered for Media Vita. Trials were made with leaf shapes and foliated/de-foliated trees but these tended to clutter the design. The inclusion of some sort of pictogram was recognised, however, as a useful route into the work for the viewer (just as they are for the controls of a car). A very simple, rounded outline rendering of a bare branch is therefore included at the wider end of the yellow (life-regressing) triangle. It is in RAL 5024, Pastel Blue.

6. *The Title*: The title of the artwork is drawn from the Gregorian Chant and graveside prayer that opens:

“Media vita in morte sumus”

“In the midst of life, we are in death” is the most common English translation from Thomas Cranmer’s Book of Common Prayer (1550) but a later 19th Century interpretation of Martin Luther’s 1524 translation by Catherine Winkworth reads “In the midst of life, behold”. The origin of the Latin text is believed to be from a New Year’s Eve service of the early 14th Century.

Media Vita Fabrication

The visible components of the artwork were fabricated by a commercial road-sign manufacturer to ensure authenticity. Difficulties arose in the coordination of colour references, the finish to the upright posts being a straightforward polyester powder coating application whilst that of the graphic part of the sign was a CMYK equivalent (these vary but we settled on 60,20,05,20 in the end). Obviously, huge thanks to DHF Products of Rowlands Gill (Newcastle) for their patience with an unusual project and a demanding customer.

Media Vita Installation

This is an outdoor sculpture, referencing the landscape that lies beyond it. I found in Daphne’s field the perfect situation looking down Ovingdean’s valley toward the sea. In addition to the wider landscape view of rolling downland, there were two large trees on the field’s Southern edge. These were presumed to be the same species when the churchyard was surveyed in the winter but at the time of installation in early May, the trees were found to be a sycamore on the left and an ash on the right. In chance correspondence with the Media Vita sign, which had the green ‘life’ triangle on the left, the sycamore was already in full leaf whilst the ash on the right had on leaves.

The sculpture was centred on the two trees and held upright by a concealed temporary timber framework dug into the chalk hillside.

Media Vita Installation (Wells Cathedral)

Media Vita was also selected for Wells Cathedral’s contemporary art exhibition, WAC 2023 (last year they had 3,500 submissions). It was to be exhibited in the Camery Garden to the South of the Cathedral’s Chancel and Lady Chapel. The site is of archaeological importance, containing graves and the remains of medieval, Saxon and Roman structures. Excavation for

a concealed support frame was not possible and a shallow tray pedestal was constructed to hold two welded spigots to receive the upright posts. This was weighted with stone blocks set in gravel. It had been originally contrived with the curators that the pedestal would sit in a flower bed, reducing its presence and concealing any levelling that might need to be done. However, the Cathedral gardeners had recently complained about exhibits in earlier years damaging their planting. The work was therefore situated on an elevated patch of lawn and whilst the base is concealed by low bushes when viewed from the front, it sadly has a strong presence when one walks around the sculpture.

Chronologer (Brass on Wood)

This work is situated in the niche formed by the blocked North doorway. It is a development of the small figure in turned bone (on a chalk base) exhibited at Wells Art Contemporary 2022 and subsequently acquired by The Cathedral in early 2023 on the recommendation of the curators of that exhibition.

The new piece develops the idea of measurement, portraying the figure in the materials of a historic timepiece. It is constructed from lathe turned brass and silver-steel. The notion relating the human frame to an instrument for the measurement of time arose both from the original concept of the theme (hence the title Chronologer) and a remark made by Descartes in his Fourth Meditation in which he compares a sick body to a badly made clock:

“A badly made clock conforms to the laws of its nature in telling the wrong time, just as a well made and accurate clock does; and we might look at the human body in the same way. We could see it as a kind of machine made up of bones, nerves, muscles, veins, blood and skin in such a way that, even if there were no mind in it, it would still move exactly as it now does in all the cases where movement isn’t under the control of the will or, therefore, of the mind.” (VI. Meditation)

Chronologer (Brass on Wood) is approximately twice the height of the turned bone original.

Each brass component is turned and drilled to receive the component below. The exposed ends have a small turned rebate to express the mode of their manufacture.

The arms were constructed using light gauge brass tube to reduce their weight and the likelihood of any deflection. The joints are threaded and the piece disassembles to fit in its own mahogany box.

The whole piece is given a fine ‘brushed’ finish with 1200 grit emery paper applied whilst on the lathe.

The figure stands on a block of oak found on a local beach. The action of the sea has given the block a very pronounced grain structure. The block is recognisable as being from a squared/planed timber section (from a ship, pier or groyne) but its gnarled and weathered form exhibits the transience of our artefacts (although it's probably over 100 years old)

The sculpture is raised to eye level on a narrow plinth, the top of which carries a recess. The base block sits on a black stand within this void, giving the whole the appearance of levitating.

The sculpture and niche are illuminated from below by a low level light fitting concealed behind a pew.

Media Vita **Media Vita**

The origins of this work lie within the large scale development of the Chronologer sculpture exhibited in Gloucestershire in 2022. In that work, the Chronologer figure, which had been initially conceived as a small figure in turned bone, was reproduced larger than life size in polychrome copper. The figure expressed the human form as the nexus of ‘age’ and ‘time’, a figure that both measures time’s progress in the world around her whilst being herself measured by it.

The larger figure was painted with a temporal colour spectrum developed from the chromatic changes undergone by vegetation as they move from new life (vivid green) through death (yellow) to decay (brown). These were applied as sharply delineated bands evocative of man-made measuring/surveying instruments/staffs. Place in the landscape, different parts of the sculpture would recede into the background as the year and the sculpture’s surroundings progressed through their natural cycles.

The documentation of this artwork required that sequential photographing of the sculpture be undertaken at seasonal intervals. This was done at a clearing in wooded downland from which I found myself ‘surveying’ the deciduous forests below. I found that my perceptual experience of the view held it as a persisting landscape where even when all seemed dead in Winter, the view was balanced by a co-presentation or apperception (to use Husserl’s terminology) of its living state in other seasons. Against every inference of ‘age’ in the landscape there is an opposing co-perceived knowledge of its other conditions. The ‘full picture’ includes both life’s coming forth and its regression, symbolised/signified through its changing colour. The artwork, Media Vita, arose from an urge to express my perceptual experiences, labelling the landscape as a place of balanced change.

Media Vita: The Car Heater Graphic

Early on in the research, I had presented my philosophy supervisor with a graphic depiction of an artwork’s passage from ‘art’ to ‘history/heritage’ using the elongated blue/red triangle device that is traditionally found on the sliding heater controls of a car.

Initially, the only thing I knew about the work was that it would accommodate similar elongated triangles but in this case, green and yellow/brown.

Media Vita: The Structure/Physical Form

I experimented with a range of physical arrangements that would place the triangles in the landscape in as authentic and ‘uncontrived’ a way as possible. Early experiments suspended the graphic with cables or used a supporting structure (possibly patinated bronze) whose mottled surface would regress into the landscape leaving the brightly coloured triangles to the fore. The first was rejected because of its being limited to locations among appropriate supporting entities such as trees, the second for its slightly excessive visual complexity and the fact that it might be too self-consciously a work of high ‘sculpture’.

Media Vita: The Sign

Whilst the initial concept had been to ‘label’ the landscape, it took a while for the notion of a sign to take root. The replication of a road sign presented itself as a powerful device. Again, it is a format that I had investigated before in early sculptures that sought to recontextualise people back to their forest origins where the Natural processes of change and ‘age’ held full sway.

The modern road-sign carries in its form a universal format that only differs slightly between cultures and which varies very little itself over time; indeed the format and materials in this country seem to have remained virtually unaltered for the last 70 years. As such, it is a rare human artefact that appears to exist outside of the fluctuations and developments that characterise most present-day products. As an archetype, it almost appears to exist outside of Time.

The Graphic

The graphic of the sign underwent countless permutations, balancing relationships between the triangles and various backgrounds and borders. The key components of the final design are as follows:

1) Blueness: Early experiments worked with the traditional “traffic grey” (RAL 7042) for the posts and the reverse of the sign. Such a direct transplant from an urban environment into a Natural landscape carried with it too many distracting associations and corresponding misinterpretations. It seemed that a simple colour shift might overcome these, signifying the piece as ‘deliberate’ whilst retaining its form as an every-day object easily subordinated by the message of the sign it supports. Green was, of course the most obvious, but this would conflict with the content of the sign itself. The sign and the landscape it labels would (occasionally) appear in the context of a blue sky and this seemed a good foil for the colours

of the sign graphic. Whilst there is indeed a RAL colour named sky blue, it is too saturated for the purposes of the sign structure. RAL 5024, pastel blue, seemed the best, admittedly from a limited palette of RAL hues.

2) *Background*: Whilst most road-signs provide direction or warning, colour coded according to road type and function, there are an increasing number of signs that signify amenity destinations. Such signs, both in the UK and Europe, have a brown background which allows them to recede against signs giving more ‘urgent’ information. The adoption of the brown background for Media Vita would deliver appropriate connotations. RAL 8002 Signal Brown.

The brown background area is crossed by 11 fine vertical lines to break-up the brown ‘Z’ shape where it is exposed and hint towards the notion of a slider scale.

3) *Border*: The border to the graphic area is an opportunity to unify the sign and its supporting posts and was designated as RAL 5024 pastel blue. A transfer print of the same colour (RAL 5024) was applied to the reverse of the sign. Co-ordinating the colours across the components would however generate special problems of its own in production.

4) *Green and Yellow*: The colour tones of the extended triangles were determined to harmonise with the sign’s brown background and its blue border. They were chosen against a schedule of RAL colours to ensure correct a rendering immune to the vagaries of the computer screen (RAL 6018 Yellow Green, RAL 1032 Broom Yellow)

An interesting facet of the sign emerges when the colour areas are joined together. Whilst the graphic concept is wholly abstract, the use of vegetation/landscape colourings suggests to the viewer a pictorial content, namely, a portrayal of overlapping hills, the distant hill of bright green grass and the foreground hill of a dry wheat crop ready for the harvest. On first noticing this I was concerned that it would distract from the artwork’s intended interpretation, but, upon reflection, felt that such an interpretation, spanning the seasons as it does, was perfectly acceptable.

5) *The Pictogram*; Referring back to the originator of the graphic, the heater controls of a car, it was noticed that these often have associated with them pictograms (for example, parallel wavy lines for rising heat and a snowflake for cold air) and the introduction of pictograms was correspondingly considered for Media Vita. Trials were made with leaf shapes and foliated/de-foliated trees but these tended to clutter the design. The inclusion of some sort of pictogram was recognised, however, as a useful route into the work for the viewer (just as they are for the controls of a car). A very simple, rounded outline rendering

of a bare branch is therefore included at the wider end of the yellow (life-regressing) triangle. It is in RAL 5024, Pastel Blue.

6. *The Title*: The title of the artwork is drawn from the Gregorian Chant and graveside prayer that opens:

“Media vita in morte sumus”

“In the midst of life, we are in death” is the most common English translation from Thomas Cranmer’s Book of Common Prayer (1550) but a later 19th Century interpretation of Martin Luther’s 1524 translation by Catherine Winkworth reads “In the midst of life, behold”. The origin of the Latin text is believed to be from a New Year’s Eve service of the early 14th Century.

Media Vita Fabrication

The visible components of the artwork were fabricated by a commercial road-sign manufacturer to ensure authenticity. Difficulties arose in the coordination of colour references, the finish to the upright posts being a straightforward polyester powder coating application whilst that of the graphic part of the sign was a CMYK equivalent (these vary but we settled on 60,20,05,20 in the end). Obviously, huge thanks to DHF Products of Rowlands Gill (Newcastle) for their patience with an unusual project and a demanding customer.

Media Vita Installation

This is an outdoor sculpture, referencing the landscape that lies beyond it. I found in Daphne’s field the perfect situation looking down Ovingdean’s valley toward the sea. In addition to the wider landscape view of rolling downland, there were two large trees on the field’s Southern edge. These were presumed to be the same species when the churchyard was surveyed in the winter but at the time of installation in early May, the trees were found to be a sycamore on the left and an ash on the right. In chance correspondence with the Media Vita sign, which had the green ‘life’ triangle on the left, the sycamore was already in full leaf whilst the ash on the right had on leaves.

The sculpture was centred on the two trees and held upright by a concealed temporary timber framework dug into the chalk hillside.

Media Vita Installation (Wells Cathedral)

Media Vita was also selected for Wells Cathedral's contemporary art exhibition, WAC 2023 (last year they had 3,500 submissions). It was to be exhibited in the Camery Garden to the South of the Cathedral's Chancel and Lady Chapel. The site is of archaeological importance, containing graves and the remains of medieval, Saxon and Roman structures. Excavation for a concealed support frame was not possible and a shallow tray pedestal was constructed to hold two welded spigots to receive the upright posts. This was weighted with stone blocks set in gravel. It had been originally contrived with the curators that the pedestal would sit in a flower bed, reducing its presence and concealing any levelling that might need to be done. However, the Cathedral gardeners had recently complained about exhibits in earlier years damaging their planting. The work was therefore situated on an elevated patch of lawn and whilst the base is concealed by low bushes when viewed from the front, it sadly has a strong presence when one walks around the sculpture.

Athens (42?) Detailed Account

Athens: Synchronic Time in an Age-Class Society

Athens Residency Proposal August/September 2022

(adapted from presentation transcript)

Aristotle's proposal that our assimilation of potentialities stabilises natural objects as single identifiable things is fundamental to our understanding of the natural entities around us that are in a perpetual state of change. However, this is not the way that the World appears when we encounter large groups of natural things as we might in a forest, for, although we might know that *all* of the trees and plants are constantly in the process of growing, maturing and dying, the woodland always appears pretty much the same. It does not (under normal circumstances) seem to exhibit overall signs of age.

This is because at any one moment, there are similar numbers of each type of plant passing through each stage of their growing and ageing processes and this creates the appearance of

a sort of stasis. It is like the Heraclitean river is passing over a weir; whilst the molecules of water that we see are all in motion, the shape of the water stays the same.



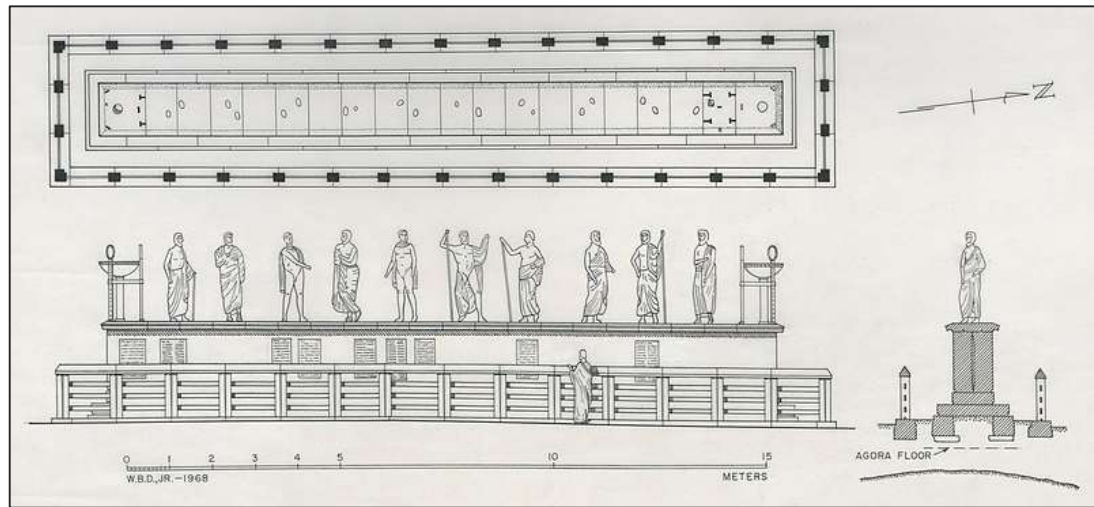
Levi Strauss described such situations as synchronic, as opposed to the diachronic time that we experience through the age phenomena associated with particular individual natural entities.

Synchronic conditions form the basis for much of our interaction with the World, but very noticeably in the way that we organise our own societies, the move to 'adulthood' in particular usually conferring significant rights and responsibilities.

The ancient population of Athens adopted a highly developed age-based social structure, anthropologists often describing it as an Age-Class Society.

Male Athenian citizens as they reached puberty were 'assessed' to determine if they were eighteen and if so were entered into the 'ephebate' where, for two years, they received military training. After one year, at a theoretical 19 years old, they were given a sword and

shield. Until thirty, they could not take public office or a command in the army. This was also considered an appropriate age for fatherhood. Various other offices and roles became open to the citizen as they grew older.



Monument of the Eponymous Heroes, Reconstruction ASCSA.net

All of this was carefully recorded, as much as a means of conscription as anything else. On becoming an ephebe, the young adult's name was inscribed, along with his classmates, onto a tablet.

Initially these were whitened boards (later bronze and marble) and they were displayed within what is now termed the monument of the Eponymous Heroes, the ten heroes that gave their names to the ten tribes into which the city's populace had been organised by Cleisthenes.

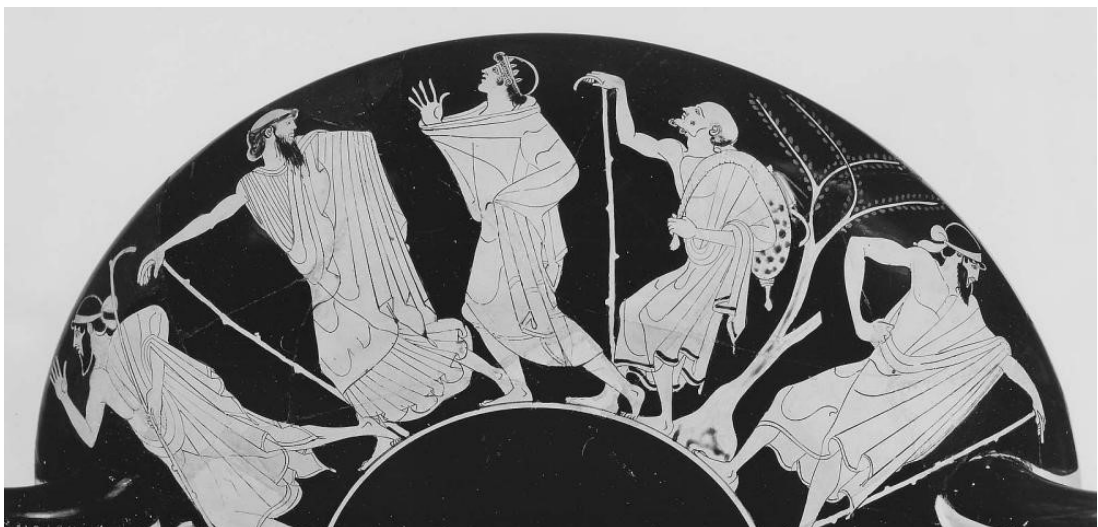
After each year, the list of names were moved on a year to a location for that new age-class. This was done until the citizen reached 60, level 42. After which I can only assume that the tablet was melted down to make the tablet for the new ephebes, a slightly alarming metaphor for old age generally, perhaps. James Davidson, in *Revolutions in Human Time*, remarks, however, that the "patterning of age set renewal fosters a sense of internal stability and continuity within a society that is ever in the process of dynamic evolution" (goldhill pg41). He notes how the "lists themselves...created a dominant image of the cycle which may have left traces in literature" referring to descriptions of "Level 42 as the 'one at the end'".



Kylix, by the Telephos Painter c.470BCE (Boston Museum)

Davidson also reports how Athenians recalled historic events not by absolute year but by reference to the passage of participants through the age classes and notes:

“To use human time to indicate a period of history, moving real people up and down the age-levels lends pathos to the past: ‘If anyone were to colour your golden hair with white lead powder, would your hair appear white...or would it be white?’ ‘Appear white’...’But when , my dear Lysis, old age has brought this same whiteness to your hair, then your hair really is...white...’ (Lysis 217d). It is almost as if each Athenian has all his Ages inside him at any



Kylix, by the Telephos Painter c.470BCE (Boston Museum)

one time, an old white-haired Lysis embryonic inside Lysis the Boy, the notable warrior ‘prophesied’ to emerge...”



Like the forest, whilst individuals aged and their tablets moved diachronically, each age position was always filled with a bronze tablet filled with the names of Athenians of that age.



Athenian males were very much defined by their physical age characteristics, particularly their beard. This drinking cup or kylix illustrates on its underside eight stages from the smooth faced ephebe, through sideburns and a short beard, to the straggly white beard of old age.

FOOTNOTE: The extent to which notions of 'age' pervaded Athenian culture is perhaps further demonstrated by the way that the height of a column was referred to as its *hēlikia*, its age.

So in the Battle of Issus mosaic taken from Pompeii, Alexander's sideburns convey that, whilst he was young (not a full beard), he was not *too* young to lead an army.

The human body exhibits 'age' to an unusual degree (James Davidson describes the characteristic as "helically polymorphic", referring to "Oedipus' sphinx with her riddle about the three species of Man")(Goldhill Osbourne pg36), and it can allow us to convey in our material culture something of the temporality of our condition.

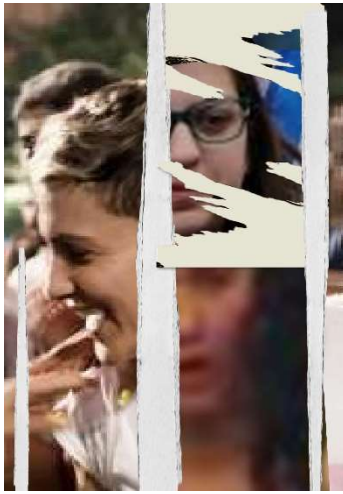
However, it seems to us that Ancient Greek sculpture is completely dominated, in the archaic and classical periods at least, by portrayals of the human figure in early adulthood. I am curious as to how it would feel, as an older person, to live in such a society that portrays itself so narrowly.; the interpersonal experience of 'age' incorporates empathic projections by the subject as part of the pre-reflective perceptual intuitions described earlier and, at face value, such a society would seem excluding of anyone other than young adults. Several authors believe, however, that the synchronic mind-set and social organisation of ancient Athens afforded a broader interpretation by the inhabitants, proposing that, for an Athenian, figurative sculptures held *all* of the potentialities of the subject (and the viewer); everything they had been and all they would become. As we found earlier, the phenomenon of 'age' derives from a joining of the viewer and the object or artwork and, as such, will be, to a large extent, culturally determined.

The administrative structure of Athenian society will be employed as a vehicle for progressing practice-based investigations and research into the synchronic aspects of our experience of age.

The Proposed Artwork

I feel that the artwork proposals should form an integral component of the overall PhD Thesis rather than responding purely to the British School at Athens residency and the city in which it is to take place. However, the Age-Class society of ancient Athens and its expression through the forty-two tablets (did Douglas Adams study classics at Cambridge?) represent a pertinent base material for an artwork that addresses the "mirage" of synchronic time discussed by Alfred Gell with respect to the ida ceremony performed in Papua New Guinea. It is also important to me that the research project be ultimately directed toward age phenomena relevant to ourselves and our society.

There is an opportunity here for the artwork to interpret and reflect upon the role that the forty-two tablets played, not only in the organisation of Athenian citizens, but in the city's *control* of its inhabitants. The tablets, after all, by listing those 'included' by the state, made



apparent who was excluded (most obviously women and foreigners) and whose rights were curtailed. The tablets were publicly displayed on the Monument of the Eponymous Heroes, a structure that is most remarkable for the marble fence that presumably prevented any unauthorised tampering with the lists of names and other legal proclamations. For the Athenian though, the tablets represented not only the expectations of the Athenian state and the responsibilities it imposed, most notably in warfare, but also its jurisdiction over its citizens; under their breath, the tablets are saying "we know who you are".

The artwork proposal was first conceived as forty-two small bill poster works stuck on a suitable wall in Athens. Each poster would portray people of the same age, the multiple layers of individuals being made apparent through tearing and peeling of the layered portraits. The faces were sourced from online photographs of protests in Syntagma Square. Whilst the photographs published on the internet are probably benign, they share a visual language with images recorded by The State around such gatherings. Recognition of these shared characteristics generated a second simplified incarnation of the work comprising a single 'surveillance' image for each of the forty-two age 'stations'.





In its final iteration, the proposal for the artwork comprised forty-two narrow vertical bands of smaller ‘surveillance’ images, each containing the age ‘sorted’ portraits of protesters. This produces a more compressed artwork and a more intense visual experience as it retains to a greater extent the energy and urgency of the Syntagma Square protests from which the images are taken. Correspondingly, it enacts more powerfully the processes that nation states practice in the monitoring, supervision and control of their populations; the arrangement of subjects by age is just an additional, and quite arbitrary, imposition of order upon the populace.



APPENDIX THREE

Methodology Documents

Research Chronology: Events, conferences and the move to UAL*Outline Research Chronology*

2019, October: **University of Brighton. Part Time.**

Supervisors: Philosophy, Dr Tom Bunyard, Art, Ole Hagen

2020, March: Lockdowns begin.

2020, June: Annual Progression Review: Passed.

2020, October: **University of Brighton. Part Time.**

Supervisors: Philosophy, Dr Tom Bunyard, Art, Ole Hagen

2021, June: Annual Progression Review: Passed.

2021, June: With my confidence in the University of Brighton eroded (see below for further details), I approached Chelsea School of Art and Design to take up the place that they had offered in 2019 with Dr Kenneth Wilder as Supervisor/ Director of Studies.

2021, October: **University of the Arts London. Full Time.**

Supervisors: Dr Kenneth Wilder and Ben Fitton

2021, November: Presentation of project output to seminar group.

2021, November: Conference Presentation: *Research within Crisis: UAL doctoral research responses to climate emergency*

2022, January: Acceptance of Chronologer (Grown Up) and Thrill of Eternity sculptures for Gloucestershire sculpture Biennale

2022, January: Acceptance for Royal Society of Sculptors exhibition at Broomhill Estate

2022, February: Block 2 RNUAL Presentation (UAL Requirement)

2022, Conference presentation: Timely Methods for Novel Times

2022, March: Presentation of project output to seminar group.

2022, March: Presentation of proposals for *Up To Now* sculpture at Hadlow Down Woodland.

2022, April: **Confirmation Interview: Confirmed as PhD**

2022, May: Broomhill Estate installation.

2022, May: Acceptance of Chronologer Sculpture by Wells Cathedral

2022, June: Abstract accepted for British Phenomenological Society Annual Conference

2022, June: Installation of Chronologer (Grown Up) and Thrill of Eternity (Landscape in DNA) in Gloucestershire.

2022, July: Up To Now fabrication and installation

2022, August: Up To Now opening and public presentation.

2022, August: Chronologer (Chalk and Bone) installation, Wells Cathedral

2022, August: Presentation of Chronologer (Chalk and Bone) to visitors at Wells Cathedral

2022, September: Presentation of paper to British Society for Phenomenology Annual Conference

2022, September: fabrication of display table and plinths for forthcoming group show

2022, September: Presentations for Residency at British School in Athens

2022, October: **University of the Arts London. Full Time.**

Supervisors: Dr Kenneth Wilder and Ben Fitton

2022, October: Group Exhibition at Chelsea College of Art Triangle space.

2022, December: Invited to undertake installation/exhibition at Ovingdean church as part of Brighton Festival.

2023, February: Chronologer (Chalk and Bone) acquired by Wells Cathedral

2023, April: Acceptance of Media Vita by Wells Cathedral

2023, April: Paper accepted for AMPS Conference, Prague

2023, April: Graduate Teaching Program

2023, May: Installation at St. Wulfran's Church Ovingdean; exhibition open

2023, June: Teaching at Camberwell College of Art, UAL.

2023, July: Installation of Media Vita at Wells Cathedral

2023, August: Paper presented for AMPS Conference, Prague

2023, September: Paper prepared for AMPS Conference publication

2023, October: **University of the Arts London. Full Time (Writing Up Status)**

Supervisor: Dr Kenneth Wilder

2023, December: Paper accepted for peer reviewed AMPS Conference publication

2024, March. Submission of Thesis

The Move to Chelsea College of Art and Design from the University of Brighton

My decision to leave Brighton University was precipitated by the behaviour of Ole Hagen, my Fine Art Supervisor, in connection with my Annual Progress Review. In preparation for the review, I had uploaded my work onto the University's PhD Manager system as required. Unfortunately, in the days leading up to the APR, that system went down and Ole had to send the documents to the panel members by email; these were large files so it was, judging from his angry telephone call to me, a time-consuming operation; he then sent the email below.

It was clear in the APR that Ole had given the panel members a negative briefing prior to the meeting; I knew both of them and they acted very much out of character; Jon was barely able to contain his fury that I had included a painting in my analysis (rather than sticking solely to sculpture).

I felt that a PhD was too great an investment of time and money for it to hang on the temper of one of my supervisors; as my philosophy supervisor said, *"there are power structures everywhere, but I can appreciate that you don't want one quite as in-your-face as this."*

I had, prior to starting at Brighton, received an offer from UAL's Chelsea College of Art and Design following an interview with Kenneth Wilder and Anathios Velios, both of whom had been enthusiastic about the proposal; the choice for Brighton University had been based on its proximity to my home and my very capable philosophy supervisor. Both of these, however, seemed minor advantages given the risks of continuing at that institution. I contacted UAL to see whether the place was still available in May 2021.



METHODOLOGY EXTRACT FROM CONFIRMATION DOCUMENT

This project pairs traditional approaches to research with the practice of sculpture to deliver understanding of the phenomenon of age in the material environment.

This world is, by its nature, constantly changing; trees grow, fruit ripens and skin wrinkles. Yet this habitat appears to us as one that is both enduring and persisting.

Central to the perceptual processes that allow us to accommodate this situation is the phenomenon of 'age', the mechanism by which, in single momentary perceptions, we apply intuitive judgements about an encountered object's past as a means of chronicling, and thus stabilising, the natural flux.

Age phenomena, are an essential part of our interface with our environment, influencing our interpretation of objects as well as the meaning and affect that they hold for us.

The mechanisms that underly such responses lie largely concealed from us in our day-to-day lives, often through their very familiarity. Nevertheless, their integration into our perceptual apparatus is such that traits evolved to assimilate a transforming natural realm are applied equally in the perception and interpretation of the things that we make ourselves, our technology.

However, one area of this technology, art, by “remov[ing] objects from the automatism of perception”⁷⁰³ , provides us with a ‘lens’ through which we might more closely investigate the intricate nature of objective age.

The project therefore comprises two interdependent components; the first, theoretical, drawing upon existing convergent literature to propose a hypothesis for the perceptual mechanisms that underlie the phenomenon of age; the second, critically engaged sculpture practice, employed as a tool generating questions, insight and giving physical form to theoretical findings.

Whilst the project uses art practice, it aims to develop an understanding of age phenomena that is widely applicable in our day-to-day dealings with the world, in the belief that, through such an understanding, and the appreciation of the role our own intentionality plays in the affect that age holds for us, we might more easily curb our drive for ‘newness’ which, to a large extent, underlies the current unsustainable levels of consumption that threaten our planet.

SECTION ONE: PROJECT DETAILS

Research Questions

-How are we able to ‘feel’ age from momentary perceptions of the material objects around us?

-In what ways does such material-temporality generate meaning and affect?

-Are these adjustments of meaning evident in our interpretation of works of art?

Research Aims

A. The research aims to develop a hypothetical framework for the perceptual mechanism by which we are able to perceive ‘age’ in the physical entities that constitute our environment.

B. The research aims to develop an understanding of how such perceptions of material age generate or adjust meaning and affect in the viewer.

Outline Methodology

⁷⁰³ (Shklovsky 1917)

The research will use established literature in the field of phenomenology to develop and support a hypothesis concerning how we are able to make perceptual judgements of age. Through the understanding of these mechanisms, the project will propose how these might adjust our interpretation of an object and, consequently, affect our emotional engagement with an entity and its context.

The project will pair this traditional research approach with contemporary sculpture practice, using our heightened responses in the Fine Art setting as a 'lens' through which to glimpse phenomena normally concealed by their familiarity in our average everyday lives; sculpture practice is a tool of the research tool rather than its object.

Objectives

1. Theoretical literature-based research component describing the mechanism underlying perceptions of age and an analysis of how this generates meaning and affect for us.
2. Develop a body of sculpture/artwork concurrent with the theoretical component, that generates and resolves questions relevant to that research, and which will consequently operate as a component of the project's communication. The theoretical research and sculpture practice will be amalgamated in a public exhibition.

Concluding Aim

The concluding aim of the project is to present and communicate a coherent theory concerning the manner in which we perceive 'age' in the things around us. The project will aim to convey the importance of these perceptual mechanisms for the way that we view and respond to the world in general.

It is envisaged that the research will contribute to an understanding of our relationship with age in our material environment, making us more comfortable with its presence and allowing us to deconstruct our over-valorisation of 'the new', largely responsible for the unsustainable levels of consumption characteristic of modern developed economies.

Original and Significant Contribution to Knowledge

The value of the research is outlined in the aims and objectives above.

A comprehensive literature review has revealed no publications or papers directly addressing the research questions. This has led to the adoption of an approach

(outlined below) where convergent areas of existing thought are drawn together to construct a hypothesis for the experience of age phenomena.

A review of doctoral databases revealed a PhD thesis of 2004 by Holger Christian Lönze entitled *Form, Material and Time* which studies, through the application of Gestalt psychology principles, the ways that cast bronze sculpture can convey time. Lönze similarly remarks on the paucity of published works concerning his area of study. His project investigates a broad range of methods by which static bronze sculpture can suggest temporality using narrative bronze reliefs and the animation of the human figure as examples. He touches briefly on temporal narratives suggested through the surface texture of the bronze and in this there is a small area of overlap in our research areas. Lönze's study is, however, a general investigation of temporal motifs in (bronze) sculpture and is not concerned with age or how particular temporal phenomena operate to generate meaning and affect (he concludes only that the research has proved useful in his own sculpture practice). In this, it differs fundamentally from this research project.

SECTION TWO: OUTLINE LITERATURE REVIEW

Defining the area of study

Our world is characterised by processes of transformation, fruit ripens, trees grow and skin wrinkles. All of the opportunities that our environment affords us are fleeting. Our habitat nevertheless appears to us as both enduring and stable.

If we were to conjure a mental picture of a common apple, for example, whilst we would probably hold before us a juicy red specimen ready for the table, it would carry with it a 'meta- narrative' of its progressively having grown from flowers on maturing trees, remaining green until its sugar level peaked when we might, for a short period, pick and eat the apples but concluding with a chapter in which they begin to fall, get consumed by other animals and finally start to rot away.

Such changes have primordial bearing on our survival and it is reasonable to view an ability to assimilate the natural processes with which they are associated as a prerequisite for all animate life (to a greater or lesser extent). For our own species, however, the perceptual skills necessary for such apprehensions of the material environment are applied beyond the basic needs of nourishment to the entities from which we might fashion shelter and tools.

We experience change both dynamically, where we see the change as it happens in a single episode of perception (a bird in motion for instance), and non-contiguously, where the change is assimilated through a number of separate perceptual events. Change from the natural processes outlined above falls very much into the latter category; we quite simply do not have the time or attention to sit down and watch these kinds of transformation happen.

We must, then, question how we are able to develop biographical narratives, like that of the apple, when there may be significant duration between perceptual encounters and which, additionally, may often take as their subject more than one particular entity? The matter is made yet more complex by the fact that many of the qualities which are of interest to us, the relative sugar levels inside an apple or the integrity of a tree for example, cannot be directly perceived but must be ascertained from convergent processes of change that affect the surface of the object or another sensory interface altogether, such as smell.

If we were to seek to identify the components of such a process of perception, we might develop the following list of ‘abilities’:

1. to **recognise** changes in our environment
2. to **isolate** specific changing qualities from the complex array of available sense data,
3. to **associate** superficial qualities with other material facets that are important to us
4. to **assign duration** to progressive change
5. to **align** successive change episodes into a progression
6. to **abstract** and ‘generalise’ such progressions so they become applicable to other entities

These abilities combine through perception to allow us to chronicle the changes in our world. We experience this perceptual process as ‘age’.

It is the phenomenon of age, and the temporality that it embeds in our material environment, that is the basis of this research project. Whilst its initial objective is to investigate the structures within which we can experience age, it seeks also to find understanding of its adjustments to the meanings we assign to objects and the resultant affect that they have for us.

In his empiricist repost to Kant, Herder commented:

“In reality, every mutable thing has within itself the measure of its time; this persists even in the absence of any other; no two worldly things have the same measure of time...There are therefore (to be precise and audacious) at any one time in the Universe infinitely many times.”(Herder: Metacritique)

It is the phenomenon of ‘age’ that permits us to understand a world spinning in such a Universe, and it is consequently a worthy subject for research.

Restricting The Search Area

The ability to chronologise the objects that constitute our environment is clearly an essential skill in a natural world that is characterised by change and, whilst largely concealed from us within the pre-cognitive processes of perception, it is our nature to make intuitive judgements of age concerning (absolutely) everything that we encounter. This extends to and includes the un-natural artefacts that are of our own manufacture. Furthermore, in common with many bodily skills essential to survival, we seem to gain positive affect from the application of this facet of perception, from experiencing age phenomena, apparent, perhaps, in the pleasure that Riegl (REFERENCE) noticed in our categorising elements of our built environment, but possibly even more evident from our preference for chronologically diverse environments and objects generally.

Perceptual judgements of age for the things that we make are not, however, based on natural processes (although these can play a part) but the available technologies and cultural norms concerning shape and colour at the time of their manufacture. These judgements, nevertheless, have their origin and their motivation in the same inherent primordial processes of perception through which we understand and assimilate natural change.

Sadly, to include a discussion of the application of age perception to the style and form of man-made objects would stretch the research beyond the limits of a single PhD. Whilst this will be a fruitful area of future study, this research project must confine itself to an investigation of phenomena of age arising from natural processes only.

Introduced Terms

Whilst the personal experience of age in our own species is widely discussed and the subject of a great deal of published material, the phenomenon of age in the entities

around us appears largely neglected. It has been necessary for this research to draw-in terms from peripheral areas:

‘age-phenomenon’ The term ‘age phenomena’ is widely used in the field of engineering to describe changes in the properties of material that occur over time. In this research, the phenomena component carries its traditional (Kantian) meaning of “objects or events as they appear in our experience [shaped by our cognitive faculties], as opposed to objects and events as they are in themselves” (Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy pp.359)

‘material-temporality’ The term is drawn from the James Churchill translation of Husserl’s “The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness” in Appendix X (pg 168) concerning “The Objectivation [Objektivierung] of Time and of the Material in Time” (“Objectivation of Time and of Something Physical in Time” in Brough translation) where Husserl investigates how things appear “as enduring” (Brough trans. pg126). In the research, the term is applied to the ‘age’ qualities that we infer into physical objects through age phenomena (which, it will be shown, allow objects to appear as enduring in spite of changes through natural processes).

Review of Literature: Procedure

The disparity between the quantity of published thought devoted to ‘Time’ (enormous) and that concerning our interface with it through the experience of ‘age’ (very small) is initially surprising.

Our experience of ‘age’ in the entities around us is such an integral part of our everyday lives that it remains largely hidden from us in our pre-cognitive perceptual processes. They are made apparent in subversions of normal experience such as Patrick McGrath’s Harry Talboys in his short story, *The Angel*. Harry is described as an angel for an epoch which can no longer sustain ideas of pure spirit, and, whilst, like all angels, he is unable to die, he is not released from the natural processes which govern the lives of all of us. Nodding “I shall show you”, he removes his jacket:

“There was, first of all, the smell; a wave of unspeakable foulness...Harry’s flesh had rotted off his lower ribs and belly, and the clotted skin still clinging to the ribs and hipbones that bordered the hole was in a state of gelatinous putrescence. In the hole I caught the faint gleam of his spine, and amid an indistinct bundle of piping the forms of shadowy organs.”

The coincidence of life and decomposition is at once revolting and uncanny provoking within us a confusion of emotions that eventually settle into profound empathy and end, perhaps, with some comfort in the 'correctness' of our own mortality. Age phenomena are not restricted just to the objects around us; we recognise as children that our own being is subject to the same changes and processes from which they originate and this awareness has a role in every ensuing perceptual episode.

Nevertheless, the study of age phenomena is a study of our interface with the surface of our environment. This surface is often dirty, smelly and unappealing whilst beyond it lie more easily defined qualities of physical materiality and more interesting areas for discussion, like Time itself.

It is this, perhaps, that explains the paucity of scholarly research in this area. With no dominant text dealing with the subject, it has been necessary to assemble an analysis of age phenomena from literature from convergent areas of thought. This 'stitching-together' is illustrated in the diagram. The themes follow a simple progression in the investigation of age phenomena:

1. The defining our experience of age in our environment,
2. The development of a perceptual structure through which material temporality in our environment might be perceived,
3. The development of a theoretical mechanism by which such perceptions generate the experience of age in our environment,

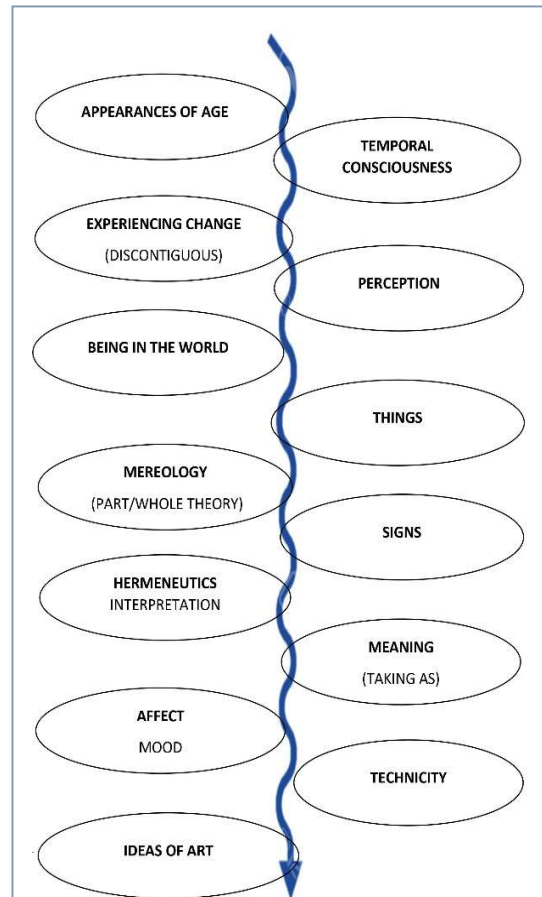


Diagram 1:

Stitching Together Existing Thought That Converges on Age Phenomena and Material Temporality (see also bibliography)

4. The development of a proposition for how age phenomena affect and adjust meaning in our environment

5. Define how those adjusted meanings cause affect in us

The project will conclude with a critical analysis of the role of age in the interpretation of works of art/sculpture with reference to the theoretical framework developed through these five areas of investigation.

Brief Review of Convergent Literature

Alois Riegl identifies 'Age Value' in his 1903 essay *The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and its Origin* describing how it "is revealed in imperfection, a lack of completeness, a tendency to dissolve shape and colour, characteristics that are in complete contrast with those of modern, i.e. newly created, works" and how the "modern viewer of old monuments receives aesthetic satisfaction not from the stasis of preservation but from the continuous and unceasing cycle of change in nature." (Riegl, Bruckner, Williams trans. Pg.73)

In a similar vein, Ruskin in discussing the nature of the 'picturesque' outlines how "the golden stain of time" delivers "an actual beauty in the marks of [age]..." (Lamps pg. 173)

Riegl however recognises that the experience of age cannot be generated by the object alone but in a 'communing' (*mitgemacht*) (Gubser pg149) between object and the viewer.

Our consciousness of time is an important component of our experience of age. I will include a brief summary of the various ways that we can conceive of time, but for the purposes of a research project seeking to understand the perceptual mechanisms through which we experience 'age', focus will be given to Husserl's phenomenologically rendered proposal summarised in his diagram of "The Continua of Running-off Phenomena" (TPITC pg 49)

Similarly, the problem of how we apprehend and assimilate a changing entity as a single object has perplexed thinkers for centuries. Plato proposed that they were known through 'Forms' that exist in a parallel reality, but this was challenged by his pupil Aristotle who recognised that objects persist, not in *spite* of the transformations that they naturally undergo, but because it is through those changes that we come to know them.

Aristotle proposed that we assimilate objects by their nature, what they do (including how they change), as much as by their physical properties. The ‘picture’ of the object is constructed about its τέλος (telos), the end to which it is viewed. Sheehan remarks that:

“He [Aristotle] reads reality “backwards” as it were: he discovers what a thing is and where it is on the scale of perfection by measuring it against its τέλος, working from the *de jure* perfect back to the *de facto* imperfect.” (Shee pg50)

This introduces the central role of ‘intentionality’ in the processes of perception more generally. Merleau-Ponty describes how:

“Perception is precisely that kind of act in which there can be no question setting the act itself apart from the end to which it is directed.”(PP436)

For Taylor Carmen, though, “Merleau-Ponty’s most important contribution to philosophy is his phenomenological account of perception and embodiment, which he argues are not mere properties of minds or subjects, but constitutive elements of our being in the world...Being embodied and perceiving a world are part of what it is for us to exist at all” (Taylor Carmen p30)

“Being in the World” (*In-der-Welt-sein*) is a term developed by Martin Heidegger through his 1925 lectures but first appearing in print in his 1927 book, *Sein und Zeit*. As a concept, its primary role is the disintegration of the subject/object duality predominant in preceding philosophical thought. The relevance of this approach in the context of this research is readily apparent and for this reason, and the general completeness of its phenomenological analysis of our situation in the World, Being and Time will form a cornerstone text for this project. Whilst it does not directly address the temporal interface between Dasein (humanity) and other entities it is useful in its insight into our own temporal and historical situation.

There are innumerable secondary texts which often seek to clarify Heidegger’s often poetic (in the original German) prose and these are invaluable in arriving at a personal understanding of the translated texts. (Advanced scholars of Heidegger take issue with his work but I have generally found convergence with my own outlook).

Thomas Sheehan’s book *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* (as well as his paper *Sense and Meaning*) go beyond explanation, shifting emphasis towards the generation of ‘meaning’ by tracing Heidegger’s thinking back through his interpretation

of the work of Aristotle who, Sheehan suggests, he regarded as a proto-phenomenologist.

At the core of the research is our relationship with 'things'. These Heidegger focuses upon in a number of texts, *The Thing*, in *Poetry Language and Thought* and *What is a Thing?*, but also in *The Origin of The Work of Art*. Contemporary theorists in this area include Bill Brown and Graham Harman. However, of special interest to this research is the *division* of 'things' into constituent components (mereology). In this, reference is made to Husserl's work preceding that concerning temporal consciousness, his *Logic of Parts and Wholes*, which represents a detailed analysis of the relationships between such elements. Horacio Banega also cites a little studied text, *Mengen und Mannigfaltigkeiten* (Quantities and Varieties) where Husserl develops the idea of what he came to term 'chaining' describing how elements may be joined to one another in a sequence or progression.

Often, the facets that we detach are, when taken within the context of age phenomena, signifiers of other qualities and properties. Embroiled within the processes that underlie age phenomena is an innate drive to discover signs within the environment that contribute to its biographic assimilation. Whilst sign theory is generally considered to have been led by Pierce, useful phenomenological accounts are provided by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty.

Insight into the interpretation of those signs, particularly as components of sequential progressions, will similarly be drawn from the phenomenological inquiries of Heidegger but will also reference the field of Hermeneutics as developed by Has-Georg Gadamer.

The field of interpretation and hermeneutics merges with Heidegger's proposals as to how objects have meaning for us. Tom Sheehan, in *Making Sense of Heidegger: A Paradigm Shift* focuses on this aspect of the German philosopher's output which he summarises in diagrams illustrating how we project our being into the future in order to generate meaning in the present.

The adjustments to meaning that age phenomena bring about, particularly in view of the projection of ourselves into the future, are evident and the research will attempt to draw conclusions on the affect or mood that they might precipitate. Certainly, through age phenomena, the meaning that we have for things will carry with it its own temporal projections, both towards the future and backwards into the past.

The final sections of the theoretical component will examine how this perceptual structure that allows us to find object persistence in the Natural World impacts our relationship with the products of our own technicity, both in general everyday settings and in the context of Fine Art. Bernard Stiegler has written extensively on our “technical tendency”, a phrase coined by anthropologist Leroi-Gourhan, and secondary texts for this philosopher offer additional insight. Heidegger’s *The Question Concerning Technology* offers a strident view of our relationship with a world “enframed” through our technological projects.

The capability of Art to deliver meaning and affect is developed in a significant quantity of literature and it will be one the tasks of these later sections to maintain a coherent approach. Whilst I have listed a large number of sources, it is intended that these will feed-into a broadly phenomenological approach.

