Richard Layzell

My **practice** explores the divisions and boundaries between media, materials and contexts. I have designed and led a number of socially engaged projects worldwide, where the relationship to audience and community has been fundamental.

In a *Square Mile in Shanghai* I lived and worked in one square mile of South Shanghai for two months, researching the evolution of this defined area, and rarely seeing another Western face. I formed relationships with cleaners, taxi drivers, students, bird fanciers, kite flyers, tai chi practitioners, shoppers and retired people. The series of interventions that followed included performances, installations and collaborative events.

My most recent commission was *Clear Stripes* a performance for Decision Time in Dundee in the run-up to the Scottish Referendum.

My current research interests include:

- Orientalism and Chinoiserie in relation to current perceptions of China
- Time as a continuum, in relation to Henri Bergson's writings and intuitions
- A questioning and redefining of the place, role, framework and meaning of 'documentation', in relation to 'ephemeral art practice'
- Performance and audience
- Typography and the role of text

Exhibition proposal:

WP - liu hua

Following the tragic death in a car crash of Mavis Qu, one of my second year students at Wimbledon College of Art, earlier this year, I've been developing ideas for a project that is partly in memory of her. She was an exceptional student and represented perfectly what I think of as 'the new China'. Her relationship to London, Europe, the Chinese art scene and her own identity was challenging and inspirational. At her funeral I took the risk of reciting a poem from the late T'ang. This was very well-received by her family and it later started me thinking about how meaningful it may be for Chinese people in the West to have their culture and traditions fully acknowledged by us, as opposed to Chinoiserie (see below).

WP (willow pattern) – *liu hua* – reflects on my own relationship to China (having recently made work there on three occasions), my study of Mandarin and my earlier relationship to Chinese culture through studying Tai Chi, the I-Ching, Taoism and the poetry of the late T'ang. Our relationship to China is in a very rapid state of change, reflected by the speed of change, migration and

opportunity in China. The scale of the population in China is hard to conceive from a European perspective, along with an educational system that regularly produces university graduates from illiterate families. So the WP in the title also refers to Widening Participation. Of course human rights and freedom of speech are real issues in China, but here I am interested in exploring cultural exchanges, preconceptions and confusions.

Orientalism (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinoiserie) were rife in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries. We still use the word 'china' in relation to crockery. The Chinese word for tea is 'cha'. China became china and was linked with a polite domesticity. Tea drinking, once refined and exotic, has become everyday. We think nothing of a cuppa cha in a china mug. The identity of Chinese culture in the West has been absorbed, tamed, diluted, confused and trivialised.

A good example is the commonplace 'willow pattern' (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willow pattern) design that is still often seen in crockery. This design, assumed to be Chinese, is an anglicised hotchpotch, invented buy a British manufacturer. It has an equally anglicised invented narrative attached to it: 'the story of the willow pattern'.

Not so long ago it was common to have Chinese people as the butt of jokes and insults.

In this work I plan to investigate and challenge these preconceptions.

The exhibition will contain elements of willow pattern design, examples of Chinoisere, texts (my own and from the late T'ang), Chinese calligraphy and documentation of the preceding WP public interventions, etc, some examples in the photos below. The exhibition could also contain elements from my work in the Shanghai Square Mile: http://rescen.net/blog_richard/

I've been researching ancient Chinese poetry linked to tea drinking and life in general. Some examples are below. I also came across a collection of American beat poetry that was translated into Mandarin. Adopting both these traditions, I've been producing text that will feed into the interventions and the exhibition.

Honesty is out of place, stuck on badly, weak adhesive.
I stand with the willow, the pattern of nowhere special.
Show me a meaningful scene of my ancestors and I will eat off it, drink from it, dishwasher safe and easily reproduced, enduring, popular, resurrected, meted out, bit coined.

Here are some notes towards the interventions, which will be recorded on video and still image, initially in London:

Location 1 – you sit at a table in a café, you order green tea. You sample the tea you ordered. You might say "mmm, nice china, shame about the tea." You reject it and take out your 'split personality plate' from Turin (see photo). You have an action to perform with this. Then you take out your willow pattern cup and saucer and slowly pour hot water into it from the silver flask. You take out a canister of authentic Chinese green tea and place a sprinkling of leaves in the silver infuser, which you then dip into the cup, letting it steep and become the 'first cup'. You might say "mmm, the first sip from the first cup, the second sip, the tea of the mountains, pressed and dried, steamed, stored and seeped". There is a sense of ritual about how you raise the cup, how you pour into the cup.

Location 2 – you're standing in the street, steeping your tea in a public place, sipping from your cup, speaking a wider range of text, some of it with a jazz beat.

Previous iterations: this is a work in process that has been in development for six months. It will evolve as a series of public interventions between now and the exhibition. These will be recorded through video and photography and form part of the exhibition. It will also have an extended life beyond this exhibition.

The Event: can be a lecture/performance exploring the themes of the WP project or a more focused shorter performance that would include a recitation of some text, and a ritualised tea infusion and drinking.

Working with students/engaging with the public:

Research into **local examples** of Orientalism and Chinoiserie in Cheltenham and nearby e.g. Sezincote (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sezincote House), a building which strongly influenced the design of the Brighton Pavilion. In Chinoiserie design influences from India and China where interchangeable.

Typography and design: the traditions of design and calligraphy in Chinese verse:

金 Jin gold 繁 fan	谷 Yu valley 華 hwa	又Yuan garden 事	散 san	逐	香 syiang	塵
abundan		affair	scatter	gradual	fragrance	dust
流	水	無	情	草	自	春
liu	shway	wu	chying	tsao	dze	chun
flow	water	not	feel	grass	self/nature	spring
日	暮	東	風	怨	啼	鳥
re	mu	dong	feng	yuan	ti	niao
sun	dusk	east	wind	blame	call	bird
落	花	猶	似	墜	樓	人
lwo fall	hwa flower	yo like	sse resemble	juey fall	lou building	ren person

杜 牧

Du Mu (c. 803-852)

With feelings deep as grass

Overtaking my heart

Grass 草

Far far across the plain 一歲一枯榮 Spreads the grass 离离原上草 One year to another It withers and returns 野火燒不盡 春風吹又生 Never extinguished By the prairie fires 遠芳侵古道 晴翠接荒城 With Spring wind It leaps back to life Bringing near a fragrance 又送王孫去 萋萋滿別情 From an age-old path As the green sward overgrows Crumbling city walls So once again my friend We must part

Other poems from the Late T'ang:

<u>Tu Fu (712-770 AD)</u> A visitor

Southwards, northwards, the Spring waters. Only flocks of gulls fly in each day. The flowered path's not yet swept for guests. The willow gate has opened first for you. It's simple food we're so far from the City. In this poor house there's only stale rice-wine. If you're willing, I can call across the hedge. Drink it with an Old Neighbour of mine.

Yangtze

After night rain, autumn sky.
On bright waves the glow of stars.
Heaven's Ocean white forever.
Yangtze's waves a moment lucent.
Broken necklace. Mirror pearls.
In the sky the Perfect Glass.
Twilight pale on dripping clock,
Dim as dew weighs down the flowers.

And my developing text:

Finding the door my cloak caked with mud, travelling south drifting north, my throat my lips are moistened by the first sip from the first cup. The sun fades from the crest of the plane trees in the Square, the homeless will return with tents and bags, I look down on their leaves. Let me ride this soft breeze and slide away hard and fast. The second sip from the second cup cures my loneliness and starts to thirst quench. I am filled with sonority, my conscience drips salt as candles burn wax. The shattered water, the falling rocks are no more violent than my breathing in breathe out. The brinks is where we are and at in any single moment. We are here there and the third cup searches my innards only to reveal five thousand dusty volumes of knowledge and not enough. Not enough. More up. Circumstance governs destiny. You plant your peach trees and your plums, which now lie plucked and frozen in kitchen reaches. Your hammerhead knows the story. Vines catch and hold my clothes. Hide this city from my heart shattered. Busted pieces are a blessing. We sing to the tune of wind in pines. Cinnamon blossoms are in everything as contained as this existence. I drink alone and along with you. Raising our cups for the fourth time we call the moon to bring us our shadow

to make us three and ease our perspiration. We reach the summit and hold all the mountains, the traffic, the split rainbow, in a single glance.

Installation and de-install:

One or two days should be sufficient to install

Documentation:

As one of my current research interests is the nature and place of documentation, this would be an intrinsic part of the process and revealed as such in the exhibition

Value of Works:

I would estimate something like £1000 would be sufficient

Preferred Month:

The later the better for me if possible, but we could also talk about this

Images:

Following are a few images of some of the objects which could be included in the exhibition.

Images of some of my previous work can be found at: www.rescen.net/routeplanner

Swansea crash victim Yuan Meng Qu was 'brilliant student'

The father of a 21-year-old Chinese woman killed in a crash in Swansea said his daughter was a brilliant student whose death left behind a huge void.

Yuan Meng Qu, known to her friends as Mavis and to her family as MengMeng, died after the incident at Langdon Road on Thursday night.

She had been a student at the University of the Arts London since 2010 and was visiting Swansea.

Her father Ji Bin Qu said she had a "pure heart".

The Chinese businessman said: "I am sitting in MengMeng's room. So quiet, hearing the water flowing outside the window and cannot believe she is gone.

"She was such an independent girl - not many 16-year-olds would travel to another province alone, then at 18 she travelled to the UK to begin her degree.

"She was such a determined girl. She won many educational awards during her young life including being the sole female student to be awarded the National School of China informatics gold medal. Quite simply she was a brilliant student.

"She loved her mother and me dearly. She had a pure heart. Being no longer able to witness her energetic and positive outlook will leave a huge void in the lives of everybody who knew our beloved MengMeng."

She had been visiting Swansea with her mother Hong Liang, a solicitor in China, but her mother was not in the vehicle when it hit two parked cars at 22:24 BST.

South Wales Police said the black Honda Civic was being driven by a male friend.



Yuan Meng Qu was a student in London

Related Stories

Three die in separate road crashes





Long Jin tea from Shanghai and various other Chinese teas





Willow Pattern cup and saucer





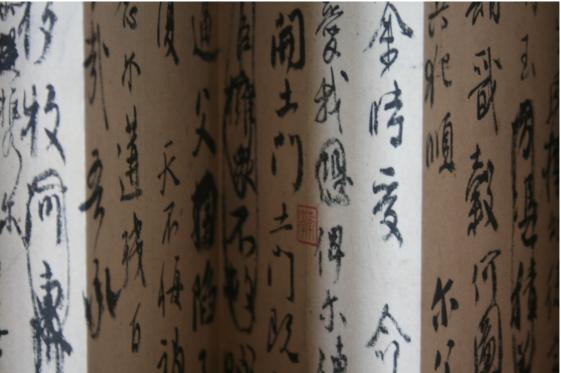
'Split personality' plate from Turin





Tea infuser





Facsimile book of rare Chinese calligraphy





Facsimile book of rare Chinese calligraphy

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Since 1996 I've been designing and leading many socially engaged projects and residencies: -

- The Magpie with Forty Hall House and Estate Enfield London, 2012-13
- * Data:ography with Knowle West Media Centre Bristol, 2011-12
- Meal Bar with Hillington Square community and the Aspire artists project,
 King's Lynn, Norfolk UK, 2010-11
- * One Mile Squared with Xuhui community and Shanghai E-Arts, Shanghai, China, 09, a Visiting Arts commission
- * The Temporary Museum of Us and Everyday Jewels with Ladygrove and other communities across **Didcot** Oxon, commissioned by SODC, 09
- Bricole di Venezia with Shrub End community and the Garrison, additionally supported by Arts and Business and Countryside Properties, Colchester, 07-08
- * Streets for Living with Broad Green community and Sustrans, Swindon, 05-07
- UniCanvey lead artist and director of a major participatory project and film across Canvey Island, supported by Essex County Council, 05-07
- * IS lead artist, designer and director of major participatory project designed to bring together the communities of St Pauls, Easton, Barton Hill, Knowle West, Lockleaze, Henbury, Southmead and Lawrence Weston, Bristol with a series of public interventions for Arts Development at Bristol City Council. The concluding film IS was shown at Arnolfini and Watershed, exhibition of large-scale photographs shown at Artspace, 05-06
- * The Exchange Project bringing together communities across the West Midlands, with The Public West Bromwich, additionally supported by ResCen, 03-04
- * The Window Wall and Love Handles working with communities across Didcot and Ellis Williams Architects to devise key community engagement in the new arts centre, Cornerstone, commissioned by SODC, 02-08
- * The Boiler House collaborating with a working academic community to devise a permanent interactive site-specific installation for the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, 03-04
- * The Elevation lead artist for Millennium performance project across Milton Keynes, in collaboration with MK Gallery, MK Theatre and The Living Archive, 2000
- * Infiltration residency and series of site specific interventions across Warwick University campus, for Mead Gallery and Warwick Arts Centre, 98

- * Aggravation collaborating with older people from across Liverpool to produce a participatory film, subsequently shown as part of the Video Positive Festival, for University of the Third Age, FACT and the Bluecoat Arts Centre, 97
- * **Jumbo Rumba** site specific participatory performance for **Colchester** Arts Centre, 96

Between 1996 and 2003 I developed a series of acclaimed residencies in industry, defining the role of the **'visionaire'**, with: AIT Plc, Promise, Chordiant International and Unilever, working organisationally, aesthetically and environmentally.

Since 1999, one of six mid-career artist/researchers with **ResCen** at Middlesex University [www.rescen.net], exploring the creative process and an ongoing personal project **The Manifestation**, presenting regular public seminars, an international conference *Nightwalking* at The South Bank Centre and a book *Navigating the Unknown*.

An Arts Council funded research project led to a large-scale, interactive installation, **Tap Ruffle and Shave**. First commissioned by **Glasgow** Museums (95), then touring to **London, Colchester, Manchester** and **Newcastle** (96-98). It included a research visit to Japan funded by the Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation. While targeted primarily at sensory impaired people, the installation had very broad appeal, and was experienced by 100,000 people.

Pathway Leader for Print and Time Based Media at Wimbledon College of Arts, University of the Arts London, 2013- present.

Course Director and lead facilitator at the Skyros and Atsitsa Centres in Skyros, Greece 1988-92, 1995-2013.

Tours of Australia in 02 and 03, including facilitation for *Time Place Space 2* - a national training programme for emerging interdisciplinary artists - in New South Wales and the *National Review of Live Art* in Perth.

Senior lecturer at Wimbledon College of Art, setting up and leading the Media area within Fine Art, 1989-2000. Associate Lecturer Oxford Brookes University 2003-8 and Wimbledon College of Art 2004 to present.

Extensive tours of North America in 1981, 86, 89 and 94, with residencies at Sculpture Space in Utica New York, YYZ Toronto and Western Front Vancouver.

Lecturer in Fine Art at Newport School of Art in Gwent and tutor for the Open University's Art & Environment Course 1981-6.

Administrator at the Acme Gallery in London, 1977-80, during a formative period for the gallery. Invented and compiled (with Heather Waddell) *The Artists' Directory*.

Studied at the Slade School of Fine Art in London, graduating from the BA and the MA 'Experimental Course'. Winner of the Walter Neurath Prize.

Rent-a-Car commissioned by Sculpture Space Utica New York; Samples of the Modern

World commissioned by National Sculpture Centre, Oronkso, Poland, 1994.

The Revolution - You're In It! commissioned by Kettles Yard Gallery Cambridge, **Video Dreams** commissioned by Chapter Cardiff, 1989

First major educational outreach project **Birminghands** commissioned by Ikon Gallery Birmingham and Wolverhampton Art Gallery, 1988.

Bruno's Leg commissioned by the Patrons of New Art of the Tate Gallery London, 1987.

Clarity commissioned and broadcast by Television South West, 1985.

Awarded the second Arts Council Video Art Bursary, at Brighton University, 1980-81. The resulting eight videotapes were shown internationally. **Floor** was shown at the London Film Festival.

OTHER SELECTED RECENT WORKS:

2014: CLEAR STRIPES – performance – Dundee Contemporary Arts

2014: GLORY – co-director and designer for large-scale participatory performance, Tramway One, Glasgow

2013: PRIVATE PARTY - co-director, designer and performer - The Arches Glasgow

2013: Mentor to dancer/choreographer Claire Cunningham in the development of a new work Pink Mist for the Behaviour Festival, Glasgow.

2012: METROPOLIS – performance – Whitstable Biennale

2011-12: THE RIVER FLOWS – performance – House of Art, Brno, Czech Republic, Buzz Cuts Glasgow, Asia House London, Hanah McLure Centre Dundee, Lost Theatre London

2009/12: PRIVATE DANCER – performance/installation – CCA Glasgow, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, South Bank Centre London – award-winning collaborative work with choreographer Janice Parker

2007/12: KEY NOTES – performance/lecture – Late at Tate, NRLA Glasgow, Live Art Falmouth, Colchester Arts Centre, Waterfront Hall Belfast, Norwich Arts Centre

2011-13: FALLING PHOEBE – performance – GFT Glasgow, The Jester-Curator conference Canterbury, Firstsite Colchester

2011: HOST – interactive performance/installation – Fermoy Gallery, Kings Lynn, Norfolk

2011: FINE FOOD – installation – Gooden Gallery, Vyner Street, London

2010: THE SHED – video installation – Kings Lynn Arts Centre, Norfolk

2008/10: GIVED - participatory event - Oxford, Colchester and Kings Lynn

2010: ASSISTED POWER – video/performance – National Review of Live Art, The Arches, Glasgow, Whitstable Biennale

2009: THE RIVER FLOWS IN MANY DIRECTIONS AT THE SAME TIME – performance/lecture, residency, public interventions – with Visiting Arts, Shanghai E Arts and the Museum of Contemporary Art Shanghai

2004/8: CHANGING SPACE – residency/commission with Stroud Valleys Arts – allied to a community of artists and a major capital building project, designed by Tony Fretton architects. Installation and performance outcomes: BEDDIN 05, TOWARDS THE PERFECT IMAGE 07

2008: CREAM PAGES – the book launch as performance – London, Falmouth, Stroud, Zagreb

2008: SUIT THE ACTION TO THE WORD - performance - Keeping it Live, Hertford

2007: LIVING WITH THE FOXGLOVE - site-specific commission - for Wellington Shropshire

2006: THE RADIANT CURVE – site specific commission – Jubilee Pool and Newlyn Art Gallery, Penzance

2004/6: TALKING TO TANIA – global web dialogues and research – supported by a One to One bursary from LADA – in Greece, London, Barcelona, Bangkok, New York, Piotrkow Trybunalski, Penzance etc.

2004: THE PERFECT DAY - performance commission - for NRLA 04, Glasgow, also leading Deprivation and Overload workshop for the NRLA Winter School

2004: THE AGENDA – the public meeting as artform – for Weekend in West Bromwich and The Public

2003: ELEONORA'S FALCON – performance – NRLA, Perth, Australia, also resident artist. Facilitator for Time Place Space2 interdisciplinary workshop in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales

2003: MANNER MAUSER - performance - Stadtmauer, Herbstein, Germany

2003: THE ARCHITECTURE OF BELIEF – keynote performance/lecture - for Steder/Places conference, Lillehammer Norway

2003: ART WORK / WORK ART - site specific performance and video installation - for Steder/Places, Lillehammer Norway

2002: INTERNATIONAL CLEANING - video performance - Exploding Cinema London, 291 Gallery London

2002: THE ROOM OF FREEFLOW - performance/installation - part of Nightwalking London, then at Powerhouse Brisbane, Midland Workshops Perth

2002: SIMON'S MOTHER (16 mins), RUPERT'S STATUE (15mins) - audio works - for Wish You Were Here, Liverpool Biennial

2002: ZWO - performance - Zum Willden Mann Frankfurt

2002: OBFUSCATION - installation - ACTUALISATION - performance - for SMOG at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

2001: ORDINARY MOVEMENT - performance - National Review of Live Art Glasgow

1999/2001: THE KULTUR WALL - public sculpture commission - Maidenhead

2000: THE POST ROOM - permanent installation - Milestones Museum, Basingstoke

ONE PERSON EXHIBITIONS (installations):

The Magpie, Forty Hall House Enfield, London, 2013

Data:ography, Knowle West Media Centre, Bristol 2012-13

The Manifestation, Colchester Arts Centre / Firstsite, Colchester; SVA Stroud; Café Gallery Projects, London 2008-9

White on White, Spinach, London 2008

Towards The Perfect Image, SVA, Stroud 2007

Tania's Space, Firstsite Colchester 2002

Tap Ruffle and Shave, McLellan Galleries Glasgow; Firstsite, Colchester; Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne; Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester; South Bank Centre, London, 1995-8

The House of Nations, Cafe Gallery Projects, London; Nottingham Castle Museum, 1990-1

Video Dreams, Chapter Gallery, Cardiff, 1989

Peta, Sculpture Space, Utica New York, 1986

Les Ailes, Maison des Expositions, Genas France, 1984

Who's Cool? Mercer Union, Toronto, 1983

Sense, Battersea Arts Centre, London, Polytechnic Gallery, Brighton, 1981

Steps, Gardner Centre, Brighton, Camden Arts Centre, London, 1980

Backwards/Forwards, Richard Demarco Gallery, Edinburgh, 1979

Breaking Down, Acme Gallery, London, 1977

VIDEOGRAPHY:

2013	THE MAGPIE – 6 mins
2011	RIGHT-HANDED IN ASIA – 16 mins
2010	ASSISTED POWER – 12 mins THE SHED – 5 mins KANGJIAN – 3 mins
2009	JACARANDA – 3 mins
2008	LOVE HANDLES – 9 mins, THE TABLE – 5 mins, BLACK ON BLACK – 2 mins, FALLING PHOEBE – 2 mins
2007	UNICANVEY – 20 mins for Essex CC and the people of Canvey Island
2006	IS – 20 mins, a Knowle West Media Centre production for Bristol City Council
2004	YOU MADE ME DO IT – 6 mins, a Steder/Places production
2003	THE BRIDGE – 5 mins, a Time Place Space production
2002	SORTING THE HOUSE OUT - 3 mins
2000	MOVIMENTO ORDINARI - 12 mins

	THE ELEVATION - 6 mins
1997	AGGRAVATION - 12 mins, a FACT production for Video Positive Liverpool
1995	NO HAMBURGER - 60 mins, a NW Arts commission TAP RUFFLE AND SHAVE - 6mins, a PMB production
1991	HOUSE OF NATIONS - 20 mins, a Whitechapel Gallery production
1989	BE SUCCESSFUL, BE SAVAGE! - 10 mins, a Kettles Yard production
1988	BIRMINGHANDS - 15 mins, an Ikon Gallery production
1985	CLARITY - 10 mins, a TV South West production
1984	COLOURGE - 10 mins

DOG - 5 mins for Interim Art London
TRIX - 8 mins

1983: MUSTN'T TREMBLE - 16 mins, a Brighton University production SYNCH - 6mins, a Brighton University production SOAP AND WATER - 17 mins, a Western Front production

1982: SO THIS IS HOW YOU SPEND YOUR TIME - 25 mins, a Brighton University production

1981: GUIDE - 10 mins, a Brighton University production EYE TO HAND - 20 mins, a Brighton University production FOR SPACE - 30 mins, a Brighton University production CONVERSATIONS - 35 mins, an Acme Gallery production

1980: FLOOR - 15 mins, an Aidanvision production POWER - 30 mins, a South Hill Park and Brighton University production

RECENT AWARDS:

2013; Creative Scotland Commonwelath Games major commsission for GLORY

2012: Creative Scotland Award for Private Party

2010: UNLIMITED and MADE IN SCOTLAND for Private Dancer

2005 and 2008: Arts Council individual artist's grants

2003: LADA One to One bursary

2002: LADA for DIY training programme

2001: NESTA funding for the Rescen project

1998: A.C.E. Research Funding

1995: Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation

1994: A.C.E. Live Art Development Fund

1993: Arts Council of England New Collaborations Fund

PUBLICATIONS:

AUTHOR:

2008: **Cream Pages** the dialogues of Richard Layzell and Tania Koswycz pub ResCen, ed Joshua Sofaer

1998: Enhanced Performance pub Firstsite, edited Deborah Levy, essay Anna Harding

1997: Infiltration pub Warwick Arts Centre

1993: Live Art in Schools pub Arts Council of England

1982: The Artists Directory pub A&C Black (new editions 1985 and 1988)

CHAPTER AUTHOR:

2007: **Dead History, Live Art** pub Liverpool University Press

2006: Navigating the Unknown pub MU Press, a ResCen publication

2005: Re Views Artists and Public Space pub Black Dog

1997: Curating the Contemporary Art Museum and Beyond ed Anna Harding, pub Art

and Design

1995: Art With People ed Malcolm Dixon, pub AN

1991: Live Art ed Robert Ayers, pub AN
