



PLAYSERIOUS



A two-day event for practice based/led/as researchers in the North West and beyond.

Thursday, 13th & Friday, 14th September 2012, 10am-8pm
2022, 20/22 Dale Street, Northern Quarter, Manchester M1 1EZ

Play Serious is an innovative, seriously playful and playfully serious event for practitioner-researchers. An explosion of art, critical insight and creative activity where participants will be encouraged to share their unresolved work, ask each other questions, reflect critically on how practice and research inform one another, develop connections and seed collaborations for the future. The atmosphere will be friendly, fun and fascinating and the event will be a rare and exciting opportunity. So bring your paintbrushes, modelling clay, 4b, 2b and Hb pencils, crayons, camera, 16mm projector or computer and join up to play serious!

In a Nut Shell, Play Serious aims to create a space in which postgraduate and early career practice based/led/as researchers can share their respective practices, connect with like-minded practitioners and explore potential collaborative opportunities in the region and beyond.

What? A two-day event of semi-structured and informal activities which will encourage sharing, making connections and fostering collaboration between the broader creative disciplines 'on show'.

Why? An opportunity to explore and share practice based/led/as research in an informal setting outside the scrutiny of an academic institution.

Who is the audience? The participants... and though it's not a closed event it is designed to allow 'play' within the scope of our own fields and away from an academic setting.

Who will gain from the event? The participants... and hopefully this will lead to exciting collaborations either through studio practice, producing more traditional academic texts, forging links to other institutions etc.

Future/Longevity of the event.

We envisage this two-day event as being the starting point for future collaborative projects and a substantial publication covering the event and future work (alongside the website).

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LEWIS SYKES

Lewis Sykes is an artist, musician and digital media producer/curator based in Manchester, UK.

A veteran bass player of the underground dub-dance scene of the 90s he performed and recorded with Emperor Sly, Original Hi-Fi and Radical Dance Faction and was a partner in Zip Dog Records.

He honed an interest in mixed media through an MA in Hypermedia Studies at the University of Westminster in 2000 and continued to fuse music, visuals and technology through a series of creative collaborations – most notably as musician and performer with the progressive audiovisual collective The Sancho Plan (2005-2008) and currently as one half of Monomatic - exploring sound and interaction through physical works that investigate rich musical traditions.

Director of Cybersonica – an annual celebration of music, sound art and technology (now in its ninth year), Lewis Sykes was also Coordinator of the independent digital arts agency Cybersalon (2002-2007), founding Artists in Residence at the Science Museum's Dana Centre.

He is in the second year of a Practice as Research PhD at MIRIAD, Manchester Met, exploring the aesthetics of sound and vibration.

Recent Exhibitions:

June 2012- The Augmented Tonoscope, BEAM (Brunel Electronic & Acoustic Music) Festival, Brunel University, Middlesex, UK

February 2012- The Whitney System for Whitney Evolved (group screening), Kinetica Art Fair '12, P3 Ambika, London, UK

May 2011- Modular Music Box, Netaudio London, Roundhouse, London, UK

PhD: www.augmentedtonoscope.net

Monomatic: www.monomatic.net

I think that PhD research that involves art practice - whether it's called practice as research, practice led research, practice based research or any of its other semblances - tries to argue for an alternative and artistic route to developing fresh insights and revealing new knowledge. Arguably this is because artists feel freer to produce and experiment, to follow whim and fancy or to systematically pursue a thought. In the process they make connections and linkages between things and ideas and find taxonomic, phenomenological, emotional and sometimes irrational associations and interdependencies. This is almost play.

I also think its fair to say that PhD research that involves art practice is tolerated but not embraced by the UK Academy. There's something of a reluctance to acknowledge that it is actually possible to add to new knowledge through producing art. This makes the task for artists undertaking a PhD even more of a challenge. Not only do they have to engage with an unfamiliar academic dialogue, biased towards traditional models of research based on deductive reasoning and a sequential process of analysis, synthesis, conceptualisation and epistemology, but they also have to justify their work and make explicit their own, more often than not, intuitive and implicit methodologies. This is quite serious.

Personally, I've found it quite difficult to find an appropriate bridge between these two worlds. However, it hasn't been about aligning myself with more recent 'fashionable' thinkers in order to engage with academic strategies of thought. I've sought a more elementary personal position on PhD research that involves art practice.



As a starting point, my years of experience as an artist and curator and my implicit practitioner knowledge drew me to my area of PhD study and enabled me to formulate my key method. But once I'd started to research my context in greater depth, to investigate the lineage of my practice by looking at the ideas, approaches and techniques of artists that inspired me as well as select research from a range of seemingly disparate disciplines that resonated with my study, I've started to divine a congruence between these varied perspectives which are crystallising as the central argument within my thesis.

The key point for me and critical to why art practice can add to new knowledge, is that many of those ideas I consider significant and central to my research and that will be very things that produce fresh insights and new knowledge, can only be explored through my practice. I can't deduce them through further research - the literature doesn't exist. I can only find out if these notions have validity by actually producing and experimenting, by following whim and fancy and by systematically pursuing a thought. I think this is playing seriously.

JO GREENHALGH

Jo Greenhalgh is a design practitioner who has managed a successful design business and worked as a design consultant for over 20 years.

Designing for many major Arts organisations such as The Royal Exchange Theatre and bands such as Simply Red.

For the past 4 years she has invested this knowledge into teaching, research and academic enterprise at the University, as the communication pathway leader on the Graphic design BA (hons) course at the University of Salford.

She is also actively engaged with academic enterprise events, live projects and national student competitions and has a consistent record of awards with MPA Roses Student Creativity Awards, YCN, and D&AD awards.

2003- Co- founded TheVirtualCompany.co.uk an initiative set-up to manage and deliver a wide range of innovative projects, work experiences opportunities, research and practice incubation for design professionals, educators and students.

2003- Founding member and manager of 'The Space' - an exhibition venue, and a platform for industry led projects, graduation shows, specialist research projects and exhibitions.

2005- to date- Co-ordinator of the MPA Roses student judging awards, involving organising the annual judging awards and private view.

2010- to date- Founder member and organiser of DNA - Designers Northern Alliance. Formed in June 2010. First event included an inter-disciplinary graduate exhibition between 11 North West Universities, participation from 35 design companies, portfolio surgeries and guest speakers. Continues to organise and run regular major networking events for design professionals, educators and students.

2012 March- Organised DNA Carnival.

2012 April- Invited to participate in R(G)DE Redesigning Graphic Design Education Seminar at Derby, to debate the future of design education.

2012 April- Exhibited short film 'Hidden' at Media City at Conference, The Other Child.

2012 July- Collections*2 exhibited at Media City opening show.



Now studying an MA in Creative Education she is embracing the opportunity for further practice based research and has been developing a series of artworks around the theme of collections, reflecting on her own and others obsessions with collecting, as a sense of identity.

She is also researching and developing models of good practice within the context of design education.

Work exhibited in Playserious explores and builds on earlier bodies of research, focusing on doors. Collections *3

A door is a portal between two worlds. The doors captured within the photographs, although aesthetically pleasing, challenge the viewer to look beyond and into their imagination of the world beyond.

Does it create a barrier or entrance, entice or prohibit, escape or refuge? Is the world on the other side of the door better than the

world on this side? The photographic exhibition is made up of a series of doors collected on journeys. Each door tells a story, defined by place, class, wealth, personality and taste. Each door starts out as a blank canvas, painted, embellished, cared for or abandoned until it takes on a character of its own. It is this character that has been captured in a fraction of a second as the shutter closes.

The intention is to create interaction, provoke

reaction by questioning what the viewer sees beyond the door. In an experimentation with video, illusions are created, the mind recognises a projection, but this still creates intrigue, arousing curiosity and an desire to enter the door.

www.designersnorthernalliance.org

www.designersnorthernalliance.org/salfordunicarnival

www.litfi.ac/?p=1637

www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2012/seminars/disciplines/DW129

R(G)DE presentation- vimeo.com/42073131

DNA video of event- vimeo.com/41503394

www.prezi.com/71guxc658rpm/ma-creative-education

www.macreativeeducation.tumblr.com

GARYPEPLOE

Gary Peploe works as an artist and a designer; he works with and has developed numerous video installations, both interactive and passive. His work has been shown nationally and internationally, winning a ZKM award for Urban Cycles an international collaboration between the UK and Bulgaria. He works with and develops multi synchronous narrative, often resulting in large-scale multi-screen works.

Gary Peploe graduated with a BA Honours Degree in Interactive Arts from Manchester Metropolitan University in 1997 and was awarded an MA in Creative Technology from the University of Salford in 1998. He has lectured on undergraduate and MA courses since 2001 and taught at the National School of Art in Sofia, Bulgaria. Gary Peploe is the Motion and Interactivity pathway leader of BA Honours Graphic Design at the University of Salford. He is a Director and founder of Interval an artist led organisation, which focuses on digital media practice. He is also one of the founder members of Loosecollective an innovative design agency with a 21st century business model.

Currently playing with history, narrative and flying cameras.

Research Blog : www.tally911.tumblr.com

Research Profile : www.seek.salford.ac.uk/profiles/GPeploe.jsp

Interval documentation : www.flickr.com/interval

Loosecollective : www.loosecollective.net

"It doesn't matter what you say about your work, art history will judge it on its own terms."
Marcel Duchamp.

As academics and researchers we are required to achieve 'outputs'. We are required to create 'new' knowledge and disseminate that knowledge, but I wonder, how many PhD theses are actually read by a wider audience other than the research community. PhD cohorts are instructed to do literature searches and make sure that what they're researching will be 'new', but this seems to create a narrowing of vision at times and produce an incredibly contracted focus. Every artist needs to create work and develop, it's something inherent, but sometimes perhaps artists and creatives get 'stuck' with an idea, rehash or effectively continue to make the same work.

As an academic I've taught for over 12 years. I've always practiced "do as I do." Surrounding yourself with young creative

people, having dialogues and argument is cathartic. One of the best things any tutor has said to me throughout my art education was: "You have to give yourself time to daydream." Tony Eve. It's a truism. Without that 'space' you cannot think creatively and have insight. 3M (possibly the most innovative company of the 20th century) has had it's 'research & innovation' model duplicated by Google with 'Innovation Time Off'. Something Academic Institutions should support.

Turning to the PlaySerious event in a somewhat selfish way, I'm interested in how others produce work and their own models of creation and research, the idea of sharing best practice. I'm intrigued and curious how people operate in a world of Institutions and Outputs.

So will we be judged academically? Or is Duchamp still correct? We will be judged by art history.



SUSANLIGGETT

Dr Susan Liggett is a Painter and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Glyndwr University. She studied for her Master's Degree at the Royal Academy Schools, has a BA(Hons) Fine Art from Nottingham Trent University and a PhD from the University of Wales.

Her Research interests stem from her PhD study (2008) into the creative processes of 5 contemporary painters. This research led to a collaborative practice with the artist film maker Karen Heald. Together they are working on a research project with two consultant psychiatrists in Wales. The title of this project is In-between-ness: Using art to capture the changes to the self during antidepressant treatment. It involves the artists working creatively with patients who use video to create artworks for exhibition. Together they have been invited to contribute to exhibitions including The Vending Machine: An Installation, Galleria Perela, Venezia (2011) and She dreamed of..., Leeds International Film Festival (2010). They have also contributed to various conferences including Northern Arts and Science Network: DIALOGUE (2011) and ELIA Claiming Creativity: Art Education in Cultural Transition at Columbia College (2010) Chicago, USA, both in collaboration with Prof Rob Poole and Dr Richard Tranter.

www.susanliggett.com
www.karenheald.co.uk



Liggett's paintings evoke sometimes monumental and sometimes insignificant moments in time that act as landmarks in one's recollection of experience. Photographs act as an aide but the process of painting gives life back to moments in time frozen by the camera, enabling a re-experiencing of that moment at a time when it can be more fully emotionally processed. The work explores the analogous concept of psychological resonance which according to Liggett (2008) is: "the metaphoric vibration resulting from an inner dialogue between 'subject' and 'object'." Liggett's psychological resonance relates to the stage in the creative process where one cannot articulate in words exactly what one intends to create and is the moment one is engaged in a playfulness with the art making process.

The creative process can engage one in an intuitive understanding rather than a rational understanding of world around us. Donald Schön (1983, p.268-280) argues that 'when practitioners reflect-in-action they describe their own intuitive understandings' and that 'intuitive knowing is always richer in information than any description of it', and that 'the description of intuitive knowing feeds reflection, enabling the inquirer to criticize, test, and restructure his understanding'. Liggett believes that the restructuring of one's understanding as an artist can have a therapeutic effect that can be energising and leads to the need to make new work. Also the exploration of media is the part of the creative process, which is in line with Winnicott's assertion that 'play' relates to an individual's capacity to live creatively (Winnicott, D. W., 1971.). As visual artists we manipulate materials as a result of our impulses and it is in this 'play' that the media we choose may resonate with us psychologically. For Liggett it is in the process of pushing, rubbing, pouring and scraping of paint that she feels her happiest.

References

- Liggett, S. A. (2008) Psychological Resonance and its Relationship to Site in the work of five Contemporary Painters, PhD University of Wales.
- Schön, D. A. (1983) The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action, Basic Books, USA.
- Winnicott, D.W. (1971) Playing and Reality, Routledge, London.

SARBJITKAUR

Sarbjit Kaur is a visual artist & poet. She is currently studying a Masters in Research at MIRIAD, Manchester Metropolitan University (2011-13). Using sculpture as her practice, she is exploring voices and experiences of Sikh womanhood. A powerful message is often hidden under her misleading playful approach.

Sarbjit was awarded the Albert Thomas Roberts Award for excellence on completing her BA in Fine Art (2006). And went on to have Art Residencies and exhibitions with Contact Theatre, Blackburn Museum & Gallery, Waterside Arts Centre and Apple & Snakes (2008). Sarbjit uses a range of media to create playful, dynamic and moving work, including drawing, photography, textiles and ceramics. She has exhibited nationally and internationally from a young age.

During her PGCE, she received the Student of the Year Award (2009) for her holistic teaching methods. Presently at MIRIAD Sarbjit has set up and leads 'Come Play with me' (2012) - art workshops with 'play' being used as the vehicle to create.

Recent Exhibitions:

July 2012- A Tribute to the Seasons, Climate Survivors – Manchester, UK.

June 2012- New York, New York, Allery Gallery – Manchester, UK.

Website: www.sabbikaur.co.uk

MA Research: www.sabbicreate.wordpress.com



Above:
MA Research- Questions that unbalance me: Exploring Sikh womanhood through Sculpture. Crank clay. Work in progress. 2012

Doing a practice-led or -based research degree is no easy feat. Traditional ways of approaching research to gain knowledge using a scientific objective methodology - attaining results and coming to conclusions - come eye to eye with research that can be based in feelings, direct experience, and at times subjectivity. Such research can allow for knowledge to be discovered in a playful or serious manner, often making way for new knowledge to be discovered and existing knowledge to be enhanced or added to.

I would come home from my Biology lesson and try and explain to my mother why and how water molecules would move from the onion cells she was cooking, through their semi-permeable membrane, out into the surrounding salted water. My mother had not learnt the details of osmosis. She knew though that water moved out of the onions and then turned to steam. Her knowledge was based on observation. Through experimentation, she knew how much salt, chilli and garam masala to add. She observed the ever-changing textures, smell and colors of the sauce. Her knowledge was acquired through experience. Her knowledge was tacit. The result of my knowledge and hers, concluded in the same place: a delicious meal. We learnt from each other's knowledge and it enhanced our individual insight of the small act of cooking onions.

The knowledge gained through the senses of touch, sight, sound, smell, taste and the 'sensus communis' (Aristotle in Serres: 2008: 2), have proven to be of great importance to my mum and many who have gone before her. Michael Polanyi believed that creative acts – especially ones that provoke insight, are full of powerful personal feelings. He

argued that that such exploration is charged with knowledge and truth, which should be viewed on a par with knowledge associated with the field of science (Smith: 2003). Polanyi also argues that scientific discovery and processes of gaining knowledge cannot be void of tacit knowledge. Through a practice led or based research degree, one can explore this play between and interplay of knowledge gained through science and creativity (1966: 20 – 1).

A practice-led and -based research degree does not have to be in conflict with traditional methods of research. In fact, it can often create a dialogue and produce a more holistic way of looking at the world, whether that is on a microscopic or macroscopic level. Practice-led research has given me personal insights and depth to my creativity and research, which I believe I would not have achieved so directly through another method. It is and has pushed me in ways I could not have imagined. Questions have arisen, work is being made and stories will be shared, that I know will resonate with those who choose to engage with my work on a serious or playful plane.

References

Polanyi, M. (1966). *The Tacit Dimension*. Garden City, New York, USA: Doubleday & Company Inc.

Serres, M. (2009). *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies* (Athlone Contemporary European Thinkers). 1 Edition. Continuum.

Smith, M. K. (2003) 'Michael Polanyi and tacit knowledge', the encyclopedia of informal education, infed.org/thinkers/polanyi.htm

JACOB THOMPSON-BELL

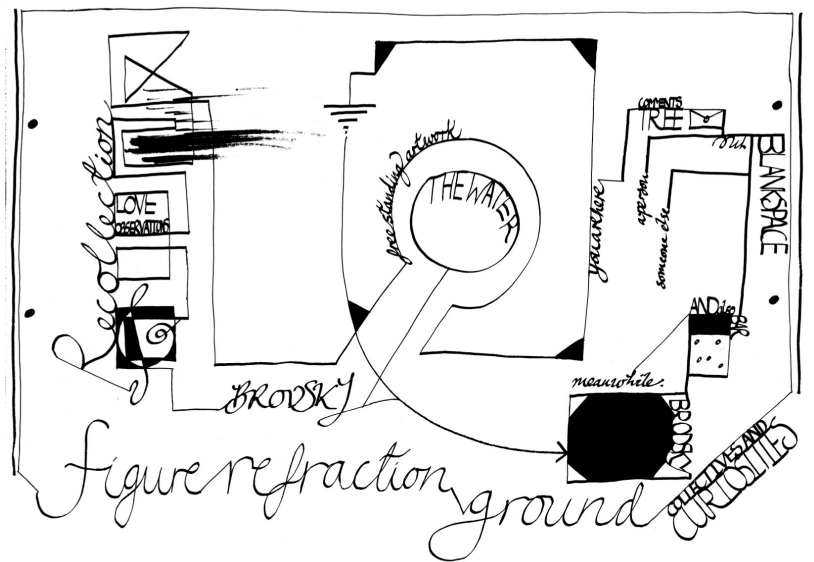
Jacob Thompson-Bell is a British composer and artist – he is one third of the group Collectives and Curiosities. His music has been performed by acclaimed ensembles and soloists, including Susan Milan's Debussy Ensemble and Odaline de la Martinez's Lontano.

Forthcoming projects with Collectives and Curiosities include an audio-visual installation at BLANKSPACE gallery in Manchester, and participation as Members in the London Symphony Orchestra Soundhub 2012 – 2013; whilst solo projects include a commission for the RNCM Symphony Orchestra and Alexandre Bloch.

Jacob also produces The Sampler e-shot for Sound and Music, and teaches theory at the Royal Northern College of Music, where he is working towards a PhD in music composition.

www.jacobthompsonbell.wordpress.com

www.collectivesandcuriosities.wordpress.com



Above: Installation Map 1 from || : figure refraction ground : ||”

idea of Play. Emphasising how artworks are subject to contextual change (each time they are re-performed or re-exhibited) is one of the primary subjects of my PhD research. In the performing arts, creative process doesn't only flow from the artist(s) to the artwork; it also flows from audiences to the artists and the work, from performers or actors in all directions, and so on. An unchanging sense of what the work is, or can be, might blind us to our own importance as an interpreter. Play Serious allows me to treat the artwork as a creative junction, one that will be responsive to the changing movements and inputs of people approaching it, myself included.

I would like to think that my work as an artist articulates feelings and experiences that aren't easily accessible through spoken or written words. A self-contained piece of music can follow a clear dramatic path which, translated into a verbal medium, would appear labyrinthine, because an engrossing musical performance doesn't always follow a logical thread. When selecting works to be heard or seen together, connections between them can be created that elude a simple true or false statement. Art is more open-ended, more like a form of play, a process that enables us to come to terms with our environment without seeking specific questions or logical answers. Clearly differentiated certainties may not always be forthcoming but a broadly changed experience of the situation in which we find ourselves will be an equally profound result. To me Play Serious sums up the way creative work engages with the world, exploring how we change our view of the world through the questions we pose of it.

For the expo, I intend to exhibit a collection of related works developing out of a single theme. The collection, which is already underway, will include musical scores, original recordings, remixed recordings, video and other media as well. The individual works comprising the collection are exhibited as evidence of an ongoing curatorial process offering reinterpretations of the original musical compositions that constitute the majority of my PhD.

Focussing on creative work as a fluid, changing process, as opposed to fixating on the “completed” artefact, is built on this

DAVID BISSON

David Bisson is an artist, designer and jeweller. He set up his studio workshop in the early 1980's and over a twenty year period developed his jewellery design and artistic practice, in addition to taking on projects and commissions for organisations such as the Countryside Commission, the TSB Young Musician Awards, the Contemporary Arts Society for Wales and the Design Council. His collection of jewellery featuring woods such as yew, holly, walnut and rosewood combined with details made in silver and 9ct gold was selected for the Design Council Index in 1984 and was sold successfully both nationally and internationally throughout the following ten years. More recently he has chosen to work with more ephemeral materials such as paper, rags, discarded wood and string; one of his collections of fashion jewellery in this medium made the finals of the Welsh Fashion Awards (London, 1994) and has since led to the creation of a wide range of work involving assemblage, collage and installation all of which utilise found objects and junk materials. In 2009 he completed his MA at Glyndwr University, Wrexham and in his final show exhibited a series of brooches comprised entirely of found objects constructed around themes arising from research he conducted into design solutions, particularly in the applied arts, inspired by Dada and Surrealist Art.

He has received a number of awards for his work including a Royal Society of Arts Design bursary in 1981, an Arts Council of Wales Special Award and Travel Award in 1984 and contributed to a number of important exhibitions of contemporary art and craft throughout the UK. In 2010 his solo exhibition project 'Surreal Displays', an installation of assemblages, ready-mades and prints comprised of objects gathered from Wrexham charity shops, received special support and funding from the Arts Council of Wales. He has recently started his third year of part-time study for a practice-led research based PhD with Glyndwr University investigating the use of junk materials and 'ready-mades' in both his own practice and that of contemporary makers.

Art and design which utilises junk and found objects is based upon earlier artistic strategies such as collage, assemblage and bricolage, now thought by many critics and theorists to be the basis of all modern art. My current research in this field is enabling me to understand better the everyday world of objects, the transformations made of them by contemporary artists and makers, and the ways in which objects seriously intended to enhance our daily lives often appear in reality to do exactly the opposite. There are now a growing number of researchers who are engaged in this rapidly evolving area of study; one intriguing question which arises is: "Do we ultimately shape objects or do objects inevitably help to shape us?"

I am particularly interested through my practice-led research in exploring and creating object works which challenge us to make sense of their relative states of usefulness. I also aim to encourage free-thinking and adventurous people who view my work to consider wearing, collecting, or just simply interacting with the things I make. I have therefore chosen to present for the Play/Serious event a carefully selected collection of 'wearable objects', many of which, although in essence 'junk' objects retrieved from the street, appear similar in some way or other to objects of contemporary art (and applied art) and which may even have aspects that resemble, to some viewers, the enigmatic works of Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray and other Dadaists and Surrealist artists of the past.

Perhaps at least one of my intentions in devising an installation comprised of everyday objects is to question, and occasionally theoretically undermine, a certain form of

modernist design practice that once prevailed and promised a future age of increased leisure time, affluence, full employment, and clean efficient living but which now, in retrospect, appears to have ushered in a world synonymous with increasing pollution, environmental damage, and societal breakdown. An additional underlying concern is the seemingly unending number of wars that have accompanied this unfolding 'progressive age' of innovation in science and perceived advancement in knowledge, an age which has also witnessed the rapid expansion of design and technology and its accompanying consumerist culture but which many of us now seek to re-examine in both playful and serious ways.



RALPHMILLS

I am about to begin a PhD at Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design (MIRIAD). I shall be researching mass-produced miniaturisation (e.g. ceramic figurines, “toys” and fairings), in working class contexts (e.g. chimney ornaments) from the nineteenth century to the present day.

I was, for many years, beginning as a schoolboy in Kent in the mid 1960s, a field archaeologist, working mostly on rescue excavations in England. As well as supervising staff and volunteers, I specialised in recording, planning, photography and illustration. My other, sometimes parallel, sometimes interwoven career has been in writing, editing and communications.

Over time my interest in the recent past has grown to include industrial and contemporary archaeology and the “mundane” material culture of “everyday life.” I enjoy, and gain much from, sharing my enthusiasms with others, both online and in person. For example I am an active volunteer with Nottingham Industrial Museum, at present redesigning their web site and carrying out research.

I have an MA in Historical Archaeology from the University of Leicester (2010), and my dissertation, *The Historical Archaeology of Miniatures*, was awarded the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology Postgraduate Dissertation Prize.

I have always been fascinated by detail. As a biologist I peered into the thronged microcosm of pond water. As an archaeologist I developed an “eye” for what others overlooked – the dust at our feet. At the moment I am researching “topsoil,” the largest archaeological deposit of all, which preserves much evidence of today and the recent past, yet has often been dismissed by researchers.

As a historical archaeologist I began looking at the phenomenon of miniaturisation – small things, scaled-down versions of things both real and imagined.

www.ralphmills.com/cv_1.html

“Domestic displays are unusually intimate, laying bare the soul...”

My research is focused on how miniature objects, despite often being described as “mundane” or “innocuous,” have been and are used by “ordinary” people. Mass-produced miniatures play “serious” roles in almost everyone’s lives as well as being elements of play utilised by both children and adults. Even when regarded (and sometimes dismissed) as purely decorative they can potentially tell us much about their owners. Used and displayed as symbols they can possess a wealth of meaning: identity, individualisation, taste, status, sexuality, faith, politics, fashion, humour, celebrity, memory and more.

Because they rarely have any utilitarian function, the most common reason for desiring and acquiring miniatures is because we like them – they possess the value of meaningfulness. We incorporate them in what I call “object worlds” which we create and in which we live and feel comfortable, and examples of which might include a teenage bedroom, a mantelpiece, a collection of figurines, a model railway or a dolls house.

Miniatures are found in C19th contexts on archaeological sites all over both Old and New Worlds, but because so little research has been carried out into their meanings and contexts, we don’t know much about what they can tell us about people who took them to the “Wild

West” or the Australian bush, or displayed them on their cottage chimney breast, or hid them in walls or carried them in pockets.

Miniaturisation is both influenced by art and influences it. Many miniatures owned by working-class people evolved from, imitated or were echoes of works of art or “artistic” subjects. “Art” and “classical” subjects, genuine and imagined, were also used to display sensuality, eroticism, sentimentality and nostalgia on C19th mantelpieces. Today, some artists utilise mass-produced miniatures within their creative vocabulary (e.g. Slinkachu, Christopher Boffoli, Guy Limone and Jake and Dinos Chapman). A few, like Ron Muech, reverse the process, reducing viewers to the role of miniatures.

At this early stage in my research I am absorbing as much as I can from as wide a range of disciplines and individuals as possible. Including art and design historians, archaeologists and contemporary practitioners, Interaction with other researchers and creatives, many of whom will utilise miniatures seriously or playfully in their lives and work, would be invaluable for me. In return I offer and am very willing to share what is perhaps a rather different approach to art, design and material culture.

www.firesofprometheus.org/miniatures_1.html



TRACY PIPER-WRIGHT

At the moment I am exploring how practice and research fit together for me, creating links and detecting synergies between theoretical ideas explored in my doctoral research and working out how they can be developed and realised through the making of art works. This process necessitates a certain amount of 'play'; of not closing down or limiting possibilities, of questioning what constitutes 'practice' and 'research' and the part that context, product and expectation play in the construction of these categories.

My practice is time-based, processual and rooted in situation; recently these situations have evolved to include found images, texts and objects. Through my PhD research I became interested in the possibilities and challenges of writing as fine art practice and this has led me to explore the nature of writing in its broadest sense, as script, action, residue, fiction, and documentary. A key feature of my research project and pre-doctoral practice involved the relationship between ephemeral events and their documentation in photographs and video. I sensed this relationship as both gap and link, a dichotomous feature of images as documentation, and a problematic of photographs as mementos, records, proofs or other time-capturing devices. Narrative forges a relationship between then and now, between the record and the act, but it is not stable, and can be broken, altered or re-invented at will. Thus it happens that a curiosity for stories and storytelling has emerged in my post-doctoral research and practice.

I am currently pursuing these ideas by playing with the links between the photographic and the real. I am investigating how narratives can be both discovered and imposed, created and lost; how we construct reality or memory from our encounters with places and events and how it might be possible to play with our perceptions or memories of 'reality' through narrative and storytelling.

inversepresence.tumblr.com
tracypiperwright.wordpress.com
randomaccumulator.co.uk
twitter.com/tracypwright

Tracy Piper-Wright is an artist, writer and lecturer whose transdisciplinary practice moves between photography, drawing, installation and text. She graduated with a BA Honours degree in English and Philosophy from the University of Hull in 1995 and after spending some years writing poetry and fiction developed a practice in photography before completing a BA Hons Fine Art degree at the North Wales School of Art & Design in 2005.

In 2007 Tracy was awarded a University of Wales Research Studentship and commenced a research degree exploring the aesthetics of temporary site specific art. Her PhD thesis 'Artefact, Situation, Encounter: Towards a New Aesthetics of Temporary

Outdoor Installation', was completed in 2011 and proposed a 'narrative aesthetic' as a means by which to understand the relationships that emerged between art work, location and audience in temporally and spatially complex art practices, and which emphasized the vital role of the audience in the creation of the unique aesthetic character of these artworks.

Tracy has exhibited in a variety of contexts nationally and internationally and has presented her research at several national conferences. She has taught at Glyndwr University, Wrexham on the BA Fine Art and MA Art Practice programmes since 2007 and is currently supervising two students undertaking practice based PhDs.



MAUD GOLDBERG

Saturday 13th of December, Laure Luxey felt a wait for something amongst the inhabitants of 2 Impasse Castillon, Vendargues, Southern France...

Sunday at midday, 14th of December 1975, was born Maud Goldberg alias Helene Tartempion.

Catherine Rozo and Jean-Pierre Goldberg, born Jean-Pierre Berne, begun their joint life of parenthood; tumult, paths separated in the early 1980s. Death found them both in 2010.

Maud, established in the United Kingdom since 1995, took all she was born from with her, what she knew and what she discovered upon the death of Catherine and Jean-Pierre.

Since her place was ascertained amongst others alike from 2007, in Fine Art, Maud has been armed with tools to dig at what she could identify and begin to place words together. Installation art became her language, materials her vocabulary and interior space her blank page. Not without tumult, the known became the unknown, a basis for more digging.

New soil was found in Manchester 2011, with Miriad.

Holding onto old tools, serial start-stop, progressively getting rid of perpetual misfits, now on a winding ascending path of hairpins, still digging, still looking, still finding, still searching with the same old tools attached to new handles.

A time to refresh the playful in the serious
A time to breathe with other players of the serious
An equaliser away from scrutiny
A jointing place for individuals travelling on the same train
In separate carriages, swapping lines and platforms
A breath, a pause to heed, propose, expose, collect, dispatch and reflect
A junction
In the midst of many avenues



Practice as I know it has its solid foundations, it is an intuitive act, a draw out of inner concerns, placed to grow amongst a wealth of sibling contexts. Practice is an impulse, an automatic language of which the etymology is searched for by its own Research. Investigate the vocabulary of that language, hunt for the root of impulse. The hunter hunts for it self, he is the hunted. Arm the Practice. Research of the other kind is a double-faced blade. It unearths further siblings, whence amongst serial masks it avails focus upon the closest. Trying not to lose the embryonic state of Practice while testing new tubes to find a match to keep growth pure. That Research starts and stalls the flux of Practice. It is a tumultuous road of questions and questionable answers. In that, Practice feeds Research, Research feeds Practice, Research divides and devises Practice, Practice devises and divides Research, Practice equal Research, Research equal Practice.

Yet to make par of that system is a practice to master. To let Practice lead Research, and

Research guide Practice, a tug war stretches the cord from both ends.

Is the stable middle of that cord a place of construction or is it stagnant? Is it this place of the in-between that permits the practitioner to find and hold the hunger to hunt?

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PATRICIA FARRELL

Saturday 13th of December, Laure Luxey felt a wait for Having completed a PhD in the Philosophy department at MMU in 2011 on poetic artifice in philosophical writing in the early works of Gilles Deleuze, I am currently interrogating poetics as an ethics of inventive making prior to interpretational meaning, involving my own practise as a poet and visual artist to contemplate areas of language-intensive and language-free production: an attempt to engage the ethical imperative of an aesthetic encounter, learning to 'read' as a practitioner. Prior to my PhD I completed the Continental Philosophy MA at MMU and the Theory of Modern Art MA at Chelsea (initiated as a student-led course for practising artists). I have collaborated with other writers and artists, including the poet, Robert Sheppard, the installation artist Jivan Astfalck, on the project B*twixt, exhibited in Birmingham, Portsmouth and Cologne, and on a visual text for performance with the dancer, Jennifer Cobbing, and the musicians, David Toop and Veryan Weston, performed in Bury and London. My most recent publication is *Seven Bays of Spirituality* (Knives Forks and Spoons Press) and I have a volume of poems, *The Zechstein Sea*, forthcoming from Shearsman Press. I currently work at Edge Hill University teaching Creative Writing.

The focus of my research is to engage with the disciplines of painting and poetry as ways of doing philosophy (conducting thought-experiments) rather than simply topics for philosophical discussion. I would, therefore, value the opportunity to watch and participate in the material behavior of language and the a-linguistic in an environment of experiment, investigation and invention: to encounter and enter into a dialogue with a multiplicity of poetic responses that would constitute making a world for a couple of days, within the (difficult and delicate) situation of reading and expressing the world, and seeing how this might evolve.

The concept of serious play suggests an ethic of experimental learning, of developing the faculties of thinking and sensibility to determine what the 'next move' might be in an uncertain game: being prepared to be surprised, allowing a production into presence of something not seen before through encounter and collaboration, forming a poetic community that temporarily groups, disperses and can regroup in a number of ways, with a number of potential forms of production.

During the event I would want to contribute to what happens as a visual practitioner participating in an aesthetic thought experiment, observing how this polymorphous activity shapes thinking and potentially develops an evaluative thrust, a situational ethics. After the event, I would want to contemplate what happened, and what could happen subsequently, as part of a philosophical interrogation of poetics as a way of production in a dynamic and problematic field of reading and expression that includes art practice, thereby developing

the work in my thesis with a view to subsequent publication in forms that involve independent research and collaboration with other art and philosophy practitioners.



Patricia Farrell *Untitled* 2008 mixed media 81 x 123cms

JOHN McCLENAGHEN

John McClenaghan has exhibited both nationally and internationally. He was one of forty artists chosen to represent the visual arts in Wales at the 2011 National Eisteddfod.

He studied Fine Art within the Environmental Art Department of the Glasgow School of Art and was awarded a Masters Degree from the University of Liverpool. He has over time become increasingly focused upon the importance of speculation and reflection within the creative process. This led to John's fascination with the nature of decision making within studio art practice. His art practice, research and teaching embody this ethos.

John taught in art schools all over the UK before joining Glyndwr University in 2000. Here, he is currently Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Fine Art and contributes to the Masters Programme in Art Practice. He is also currently an external examiner for the Universities of Lincoln and Northampton and fellow of the Higher Education Academy. John employs a range of media including painting, sculpture, digital photography and installation. He is currently working through a process of

fragmenting artworks, disrupting the outcome and enabling the audience to construct meaning in ways that are closer to practice itself.

My assemblages reorder the experience of space by restacking the elements created by the original action of, in this case, making a painting. They took on the order seen in the exposition by simulating in concrete form the results of a process of random stacking recorded as photographs months before. As we look we become aware of the recurrence of each of the 'painted' sections. We realise that the painted surface interacts with the simulation of the painted surface. The resulting artwork amounts to the residue of action and invites the viewer to reconstruct the event that created it through a forensic reading of the evidence it provides.

The work often takes the form of multiple cardboard boxes each of which has been left as a flat template, ready to be folded. They map the territory of a box in two dimensions. They await a spatial action, which through folding will allow each to fulfil its three dimensional potential. Like many boxes they carry information on their surface. In this case it is immediately apparent that they

have been cut from the surface of paintings. It may also be apparent that the paintings from which they were cut refer, to a more subjective experience of space, specifically landscape.

I employ media as diverse as painting, assemblage and digital video to explore the relationship between space, place, action and event. Implied actions on the part of the artist, in turn, place emphasis upon the embedded narrative of process.

Practice is in time. It is durational. Art objects are frozen in time. They represent practice but they are not practice. They are representations in the Cartesian sense. They stand in for that which is absent. Practice is always somewhere else.

Does the exposition of practice bring about the ruin of representation? Play Serious as an opportunity to develop strategies through which practice as opposed to artworks can be experienced by an audience.



EMMA THACKHAM

Emma Thackham is a Phd researcher with the Institute for Performance Research and The Department of Contemporary Arts at Manchester Metropolitan University: Cheshire.

Her current research project involves investigation of the term New Institutionalism in the development of curatorial strategies for a new arts centre in Northwich, Cheshire. Emma is the curator and a founder member of The London Rd Studios and Gallery, housed in the former Verdin Technical Schools and Gymnasium building until recently inhabited by Mid Cheshire College as an art college. Emma's curatorial practice as research initiates projects that investigate the heritage and future legacy of this institution and instigates work that shifts audience behaviours backward and forward between reception and participation. These concerns are echoed in her own art practice that examines authorship in the artist-curator-audience hierarchy. This work often manifests as performative art installations where Emma's role slips playfully between that of producer and consumer.

Locally Emma has exhibited and curated exhibitions in Chester, Warrington, Liverpool and Crewe. Nationally she has shown work in Worcester, Staffordshire and London and her photographic work has been exhibited internationally including Leiden, Netherlands and Gijon, Spain. She graduated with First Class Honours degree in Contemporary Performing Arts, majoring in Fine Art: Sculpture and Live Art. She has twice successfully competed to receive bursaries for her postgraduate Practice as Research with Manchester Metropolitan University: Cheshire.

Enquiries: emmathackham@me.com

For Play Serious, artist-curator Emma Thackham presents Encounters & Documents an edition in a series of performative art installations examining hierarchies, production and consumption in arts institutional practice. This generative praxis process asks questions about authorship in arts practice and explores the fetishisation of the art object. It invites engagement with these conceptual concerns as much as it questions protocols and ethics in institutional space.

Artifacts in Encounters and Documents are generated through a mail art project where the public are implicated as active performative agents who unknowingly contribute to the physicality of the installation. This interaction, that involves selecting, describing, wrapping and discarding personal artifacts, results in an invisible performance that is assembled in flash mob art installations. Objects are appropriated by the artist and re-composed by audience participants.

A kitsch aesthetic is employed in the initial object selection process, building shared narratives from the donor's and the artist's personal histories. Audience participants are encouraged to interact with the work transposing elements of their own authorship as they engage in creating new

compositions in the installation space.

The performative nature of the creative process is documented through photography and film recordings. The multi layering of the ever evolving installation and the documentation creates a discursive space examining institutional critique and the theoretical frameworks of Relational Art, Performativity, and Domesticana.

The installation has been exhibited at the Axis Arts Centre, Alsager culminating in a flash-mob installation, and a two-day event, at Soap Tank in Warrington. It evolved in the Axis Open Space, Crewe 2010 and at Blackburne House, Liverpool, during Independents Biennial Liverpool 2010. It was further developed in community workshops in 2011 culminating in a performance for Chester Perform's Up The Wall festival of art, sound and light and returned to the Axis Open Space, Crewe in September 2012 as part of MMU:Cheshire's Festival of Ideas.



TIMISHERWOOD

Initially studying Graphic Design, specialising in type design, becoming excited by the potential of visual communication but disillusioned with the reality of graphic design, deciding to make imagery and work that suited my own desires, investigating processes, mainly print and paint, always working with type, some freelance, some exhibitions, then started teaching. My teaching and practice now inform each other, allowing for a creative and productive environment in which to grow and test ideas. Currently engaged in experimental type design, I am developing a forum, called Salford Type Foundry, in which students and practitioners can share font designs, techniques, processes, research and outcomes, to be launched in the autumn of 2012.

Blog: www.timisherwood.tumblr.com

Through experimental process and concept based developments, my typographic practice is currently focused on producing bespoke typefaces designed to celebrate the beauty and diversity of the shapes we recognise and agree upon to represent our language.

Type design is an invisible craft whose outcomes affect peoples lives hour after hour, day after day. The unconscious effect that type has on its users fascinates me, and I am interested in producing site specific typefaces that respond to ideas or processes and effect

how language is received/communicated. Through my teaching practice I am able to engage students in the production of experimental typefaces, and am currently in the process of developing an organisation and website that collates these fonts and presents them to the wider world. This repository, called Salford Type Foundry, aims to give light to exciting and progressive practice in type design, showcasing a diverse range of fonts and the people that design them, also allowing space for featuring specific research by leading practitioners and showcasing current debate.



PHIL CONSTABLE

Phil Constable was born in Canterbury, Kent in 1971. A graduate of BA (hons) Fine Art, Liverpool John Moore's University and MA Creative Technology at the University of Salford.

Constable's work is project based and makes comment on architectural and rural spaces, examining loss and entropy, memory and trace. His work utilises various media from video installations, large scale vinyl installations, screen-prints and painting. Showing work nationally and internationally. Recently completing a residency at Rural Projects, New York.

He is the founder and director of Phil Constable Art/Design, a bespoke and tailored interior/exterior art & design company with a wide client base including Circle Club, 68 Degrees, Ringspun, Marble Brewrey.

Presently I am exploring the way time and place build the foundation of who we are and how this formulates a bank of memories we hold and treasure. Looking at how memories become distant, the more we refer to them the more they become faded. Like a house of cards we rebuild every time we revisit memories. Our memories are changed each time we remember; the act of remembering is an act of creation. My work is set to provoke these ideas by using a visual representation of my own past and interaction within an architectural space.

New work, Memory Space 002 uses a series of fluorescent lights, digitally converted cine film and slides taken from family history. The fluorescent lighting illuminates and interrupts the projected moving imagery intermittently, creating an environment that is in flux, shifting between the 'architectural space' and the 'memory space'.



ZOE ANDERSON

In 2000 I started my career as a multi-disciplinary artist, stemming from a degree in the innovative course at Manchester Metropolitan University, Interactive Arts, which focuses on creative problem solving. Throughout this time I had the opportunity to study at Riga's Art Academy in Latvia where I was first introduced to and fell in love with Fine Art Printmaking.

To concrete this new found love I then went on to the Royal College of Art in order to specialize further in this endeavor and gain the skills necessary to practice at a high level.

I have produced work within print for several years now and have enjoyed making and experimenting within this medium, I did however reach a point this year, when due to the research I was undertaking decide that I needed to vary my approach to work to ensure that the questions raised through research were being answered in the appropriate medium, not just the one I felt most comfortable with.

I was lucky enough in this to work with sound technicians and staff from Salford University about the possibilities of sound based work. Additionally I was given a place on a PhD course with Teesside University that is providing me with a supportive, exciting and highly innovative platform from which to allow the synergy of research to sit alongside my practice.

I am currently at the point in my practice where the dialogue between practitioners from a range of disciplines will help me to discover, discuss possibilities and solutions.



tradition especially in the visual arts of a post documentation of landscape, remaining as photograph, sketch, found object etc. Exhibition after exhibition of objects being relocated from the land and re homed within the gallery for the public to look at, out of sync and place of their original homes.

I am trying to understand how we as artists look at the experiential nature of what landscape is, how do we create as we encounter? I have been, over this last year looking specifically at endurance within landscape, how does the constant encountering of land differ between 10 miles and 100 miles of walking, how does it effect us and our psyche to travel that distance?

My current practice is concerned with phenomenology or impact within landscape. I am trying to discover what this meeting is and how we are addressing / documenting this.

I am interested in the notion of experience within the landscape, the moment our feet touch the earth and we realize it, through our bodies as object.

Another concern of mine is how we go about documenting it. There is a deep routed tradition of landscape as subject within the visual arts and literature as well as a more grounded understanding in historical and anthropological studies. There is a

Another concern is how do we make work that exists only in the moment of impact or encounter, what happens to us as practitioners who make work that only exists in that moment and not in the aftermath as documentary or reflection.

How can I engage with 'new technologies' to achieve this? What can the dialogue from cross- practitioners bring to the work?

KARENHEALD

Karen Heald is an Artist, Filmmaker and Academic Researcher. Her research within the University of Salford focuses on narrative, sensory intelligences and kinaesthetic learning through creative frameworks. She has a BA (Hons) in Visual Arts from the University of Salford, a MA in Contemporary Fine Art from Leeds Metropolitan University and is writing up her practiced-based PhD.

Her research explores time, creativity and its relationship to video, site-specificity, and the philosophical complexities of arts/science collaborations. This led to a collaborative practice with Dr Susan Liggett, Painter and Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Glyndwr University. Together they are working on a research project with two consultant psychiatrists in Wales, titled In-between-ness: Using art to capture the changes to the self during antidepressant treatment. It involves the artists working creatively with patients who use video to create artworks for exhibition. Invited contributions to exhibitions include *The Vending Machine: An Installation*, Galleria Perela, Venezia, (2011) and *She dreamed of...*, Leeds International Film Festival (2010). Contributions to conferences include *TIMELing: Time & Temporality in Language and Human Experience*, Poland (2012), Northern Arts and Science Network: *DIALOGUE*, UK (2011) and *ELIA Claiming Creativity: Art Education in Cultural Transition* (2010) USA, in collaboration with Professor Rob Poole and Dr Richard Tranter.

www.karenheald.co.uk

www.karenheald.co.uk/ablett-residency

www.birdjonesandheald.co.uk

Heald's artworks have evolved out of working both site-specifically and on residencies in Europe and Asia. Exploring her work through a variety of media, primarily video, installation and photography, she has evolved her own poetic visual language that engages with the differences and similarities between painting and film, creating a language of "painterly video" that communicates difficult social issues with subtle, oblique visual stanzas. Her work has engaged with a variety of collaborations with diverse practitioners such as artists, scientists/medical doctors and other academics.

The psychoanalyst, linguist and philosopher, Julia Kristeva's concept of the semiotic chora is explored. Kristeva's term chora is extracted from Plato (*Timeaus*, 360 BC), and the practiced-based research starts off by drawing on this notion as a preverbal and creative space that relates to rhythms, colours and trace; the infant before the use of language; the depressive and the psychotic. Using video work, the research expands on Kristeva's chora in relation

to time (*Revolution in Poetic Language* 1974, *Women's Time* 1979), and results in new concepts: 'transitory strata' and 'in-between-ness'. These 'dream films' are representations of transitional spaces of the mind; the imaginary; states between wake and sleep; reverie; the unconscious and layers of consciousness, such as that of the creative or the depressive and psychotic who travels between several time zones simultaneously. Through painterly, poetic non-linear video narratives, these transitional spaces are played out.

A gradual transition is made from an individual working mode to involving collaborations with artists and sociologists. As a progression from undertaking artist-in-residency placements, collaborations have also emerged with scientists and psychiatric patients at a NHS in-patient psychiatric unit in Wales, where Heald is an Artist in Residence/Honorary Researcher. A complex collaborative methodology has been established through the performative use of time-based media in response to 'play' people and sites.



Left: *Fragmentary, Chronicles video installation as part of the Cultural Olympiad, Adam Avion, Swansea, Bird-Jones & Heald 2012*

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University of
Salford
MANCHESTER



Manchester
Metropolitan
University