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Published paper

Pahl, K.H., Comerford-Boyes, L., Genever, K. and Pool, S. (2010) *Artists, art and artefacts: boundary crossings, art and anthropology*. *Creative Approaches to Research*, 3 (1). 82 - 101

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3316/CAR0301082>

ARTISTS, ART & ARTEFACTS: *boundary crossings, art and anthropology*

Abstract

This article attempts to present an understanding of the relationship between contemporary arts practitioners and academics through a description of a project that involved both artists and academics. It explores what the boundary crossings were in the process of doing the project, and tries to articulate what each, the artists and the academics, gained from the process of doing the project. It shows how this kind of work can both inform arts practice and also provide a new lens for academics to use in their work. It draws on a body of work that is developing around the field of contemporary arts practice and anthropology. It concludes by documenting the strengths of this way of working in terms of how each are able to inform each other's practice.

Introduction

The reified concepts 'anthropology' and 'art' have at times an almost nebulous existence, at others they are palpable, concrete worlds in which disciplinary pressures are exercised. (Schneider and Wright 2006:2)

Contemporary arts practice and anthropology have been in conversation with each other as disciplines for some time (eg Silva and Pink 2004, Schneider and Wright 2006, Ravetz 2007). However, in these interactions and intersections, it could be argued that one of the biggest challenges that each face is the way in which they represent their work. Artists tend to work in visual formats, whereas anthropologists, who tend to reside within academic institutions, use language to represent their ideas. Despite the clear overlaps in terms of a focus on the everyday, on cultural forms, and experience and a shared interest in visual cultures, developing a collaborative practice on funded projects can be challenging, as the two domains of practice are different and the outcomes are not the same. As academics, anthropologists are under pressure to write articles to keep tenure and gain government funding. Artists do not have this constraint but need to produce visual representations in order to be in work and to be recognised. Artists also are not necessarily funded for their work. In this article, two artists and two academics describe their experience of collaborative work and explore these challenges through their work on a project called 'Art, Artists and Artefacts', based in the North of England, UK.

The team

We are a group of two artists and two academics who came together for a year to collaborate on an Arts Council England funded project called 'Artists, Art and Artefacts'. This was a practice-based collaborative residency initiated by visual artists Kate Genever and Steve Pool at Artemis (Education Leeds' art and artefact school loans service, based in Holbeck, Leeds). The intention of this year-long project, funded by Arts Council England, was to enable the

artists to explore personal practice. The research, development and production aspects of this work were used to underpin a training program for Primary and Secondary school teachers with support from ArtForms [Education Leeds] and Leeds City Art Gallery. The project also involved a cross-disciplinary element, working with the two academics, Kate Pahl, an anthropologist within education, who is based at the University of Sheffield and Lou Comerford Boyes, a social scientist research fellow at Bradford University. The academics were invited to join the project as catalysts, to foster ideas and thoughts about objects, identity and to support and create mindful reflective practice. The academics were originally seen as being external to the art making process. Their role was about creating a space for reflection and providing an alternative perspective to explore the impact of the practice. The academics' role was not an attempt to 'externally' validate the artists' practice or evaluate the project. Very quickly this relationship became truly collaborative and mutually beneficial, allowing the team to develop a shared terrain and actively examine cross-boundary exploration between respective disciplines. It was through these crossings that the team all shared a sense of change and renewal and began to refer to this ironically as a process of 'othering' each other. Below we explore this process in more detail.

Border crossing: 'othering' academic/arts practice through conversations

In representing this project, we have tried to retain the sense of the voices of the artists and the academics. One of the aspects of the project we wanted to raise in this article is the question of what the academics felt when they went out of their normal academic domain. Did this make them feel comfortable? Likewise, when the artists 'tried on the clothes' of academics, how did that make them feel? Moving through unfamiliar professional territory inevitably creates some tensions, for example, the artists have found the process of writing this article interesting but frustrating, in that the audience is very different for this article than the audience for the final exhibition, and conversely the academics did not display any work in the final exhibition, but participated alongside all the other visitors. Display practices, therefore, formed a crucial part of the 'othering' experience, as well as an understanding of, and dialogue with, different audiences. In some cases, academic ideas did transfer over into display practices. For example, ideas such as 'function to meaning', described below, which was an engagement with British Social Anthropology, then transferred into visual display.

Moreover, the actual process of doing the project involved a form of 'othering' by which the academics were de-stabilised within their fields, almost shaken out of their default modus operandi, that is, their customary inhabiting of the 'space of knowledge'. As academics, epistemology was their habitual space of practice. However, in this project, they listened to the voices of the artists as the primary commentators; that is, artists inhabited the 'space of knowing' typically reserved for academic discussion. This freed up the academics: they were able to turn the spotlight on their own fields as the subject of interest, but also to have some creative challenges. The effect was like trying on each other's clothes for the day.

Research practice is often a space in which other people's voices are present, sometimes very clearly, and sometimes through the guise of collaborators or informants on an ethnographic project. Many commentators have discussed the 'othering' of informants or collaborators in research practice and argued for a practice that disrupts this through a process of writing (eg Coffey 1999, 2002, Ellis 2004, Richardson 2005). This has led to a move to more 'egalitarian relations of textual production' that could include different formats and forms for writing (Jennaway 1990:171). This mode of writing as reflexive space, considers how the text is itself a product of a fractured post modern subjectivity. Richardson (2005) argues for writing as a mode of inquiry, in which the,

.... imaginary for "validity" for post modern texts is not the triangle – a rigid two dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multi dimensionalities and angles of approach. (Richardson 2005: 963).

This conceptual framing seems to answer the need to present a version of reality that is more nuanced and complex than is normally represented within a straightforward academic article. A number of voices can then be brought to the fore. The question of representation does, however, remain complex. Pink (2009) in her discussion of the meeting points between ethnography, scholarship, intervention and art, asks this question,

Should researchers harness arts for the production of scholarship and theoretically informed applied interventions *or* forsake the conventions of scholarship and established ethnographic practice? (Pink 2009:133.)

Pink cautions against seeing this as a binary, and suggests instead different practitioners taking on different aspects of a project. In this article, we try out a more co-dependent model of writing and thinking, and explore what happens when we write and represent in this one space. This is the challenge we set ourselves.

In this article, we explore the process of doing the project, and how these crossings enriched our work. We consider how inter-disciplinary projects like this can develop an understanding of the borders between art and anthropology, the value of appropriate spaces for reflection, and offer a vision of how these crossings can be realised and sustained. The writing of the article reflects these crossings and jumps – authored by four people; it shifts in voice as it moves across the domains of practice, between art, anthropology and research practice. Images are juxtaposed with writing, and the images are annotated by the artists. The article is co-constructed from a number of sources including field notes, email correspondence, artists' statements and specifically written passages of reflective text. To find a common language for visual artists and academics and maintain an equality of voice we used a process of refinement. Steve Pool, who trained as a sculptor, recognised it as a reductive process, like chipping away at a piece of

marble to release the form inside. The process consisted of repeatedly revisiting the text/articulation of the project in conversation also with the journal article's reviewers.

In order to start this process, we now introduce each of the voices of the participants of the project. Any arts and anthropology project needs to have a sense of knowing, of how and where the participants can come together and share a common purpose. Collaborative ethnography has involved often drawing on creative writing styles that placed the process of communication and understanding in the foreground (Lassiter 2005: 63). The writing style of each of the participants also reflects their focus and interest. In doing this we then are able to articulate what each participant brought to the project and what their contribution was.

Steve Pool writes:

I am interested in objects, the idea of collecting, narratives and the manipulation of spaces. I am also interested in the disruptive role of artists and the idea that small interventions can aid reflection and lead to systemic change. My recent work is site specific, responding to the physical, cultural and emotional landscape.

Kate Genever writes:

Function is at the heart of the farming tools and tasks I document, their meaning and value being derived from this. With an intention to reveal my family's homemade bricolaged and "bodged" technologies as remarkable, ingenious and yet also poetic, I encourage the viewer to reconsider the 'practice of everyday'.

Kate Pahl writes:

I am interested in the relationship between artefacts and narratives in homes, particularly in communities with experience of migration. I have worked with a number of museums and educational settings to explore what homes can offer museums and what museums can offer homes. I am also interested in children's agency in texts and the idea of improvisations on the habitus, and my work has explored the sedimentations children bring to texts. I am currently writing a book about literacy and artefacts (Pahl and Rowsell in press 2010).

Lou Comerford Boyes writes:

I'm a research practitioner interested in reflective practice and initially came to the project to facilitate a dedicated space in which Kate and Steve could reflect about their respective practices. It soon became apparent that the space was turning into one where we could all reflect on relationships and meaning. It has also allowed me to focus on the meaning and value of creative partnerships in education projects - as well as participatory research practices - for the HE sector. I have now set up a small research project at the university which is very informed by the way the four of us worked on the Artemis project.

The experience of the project as a space to explore roles

The project involved a year-long residency for the artists at Artemis, a Leeds' based collection which consists of a miscellaneous collection of objects that were lent out to schools. Boxed and shelved artefacts were stored within a large store in central Leeds. Delicate items were displayed within Perspex boxes, whilst more robust items were sent out to schools as they are. The collection holds multiples of particular artefacts, these were often things closely associated with particular elements of the curriculum, such as the Victorians, and are therefore requested by more than one place at a time. Artemis adapts its collecting policy yearly upon requests from schools or changes to curriculum.



Figure 1 Details of Artemis Collection



Figure 2 Details of Artemis Collection

Meetings as a space for changing roles

The project began with a series of meetings. It centred on the Artemis collection. Our first meeting was taken up with looking at the project team's responses to the Artemis collection. This involved a couple of hours looking at objects together. This first encounter would shape our future discussion. We discussed the roles we would take in the project. When we began to explore our roles within the project, it became clear that what we were making was unusual and unfamiliar. Each member of the team saw a potential to question the meaning of their position within the group, to put to one side the expectations of artist/academic/intellectual and work collectively to unpick and reform roles. The residency and work produced provide a context for this interchange and are used here to illustrate how the shared space where dialogue was able to take place weaved in and out of the artists thinking,

planning and making. We met on four occasions across the project at various places, including at the Artemis object collection site, at Kate Pahl's workplace at the University of Sheffield and at her house in Sheffield and talked each time all day. The conversations were not structured, instead they grew from specific ideas the artists were exploring through their practice and in response to objects and the Artemis site. The meetings were a return to the object of exploration; our individual yet connected responses to place. Here we present an example of the conversations we had at these meetings reconstructed from notes and discussions:

Steve Pool: I suppose we would traditionally look to ourselves to find routes, through thinking around objects and meaning. There isn't really time to read around things like an academic would, here, our practice is more responsive to environment, an intellectual and emotional response to the field. I remember when you (Kate Pahl) got really interested in museums you read loads and loads of books about museums so you were in a position to talk about them, I just walk the dog and think really, really hard for an hour and hope something will pop into my head which has meaning. But this is never fixed or linear or constructed, starting points for work are always at the edges and in the shadows. The reading and talking Kate Genever and I are now doing, is helping to shape the work but I'm not sure how or if this is a positive thing.

Kate Pahl: So would you say that this project has been about re-contextualising academic ideas in the artistic domain?

Steve: I'm not really interested in recontextualising academic ideas I'm more concerned with re-appropriating the object of study.

Kate Pahl: We are looking at objects and what they mean to us and questioning the relationship between objects and their meaning and ourselves maybe? I have learnt from you or both of you that yours is a different sort of knowledge, a more embodied kind, so then I went off and read about phenomenology and social anthropology because you didn't like the over theoretical stuff and the idea of function and meaning was trying to get back to function. I read differently - I didn't go to the new cutting edge stuff, but thought deeply about what anthropologists did in the field. I realised Mary Douglas (1999) had made us all focus on meaning and I wanted to find a way of just looking at the thing-ness of stuff. Its material properties that also elicited embodied emotion. Hence Malinowski (1922) and also Sarah Pink who writes about the sensory nature of stuff in relation to ethnography in her new book *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (Pink 2009).

Steve: Doesn't this then address the nature of true collaboration, the idea that we are different but equal, there is a difference but not in value. We all bring different things? We produce outcomes for a different audience. It is this relationship to audience the requirement to put something back into the sites we work in, to have a direct impact rather than to learn from, or report on or understand, which may allow us to find a point of collaboration, which is of value in both domains.

Lou: The project has allowed me to consider and discuss in some depth the personae of 'creative' and 'academic' and has been a space in which we have been able to try on each other's clothes.

Kate Pahl: You as artists create meaning, therefore the academic domain is a point of possibility, a space for you to drive through not stay within. I think I like the idea of 'othering' each other i.e. I was able to 'other' my own work by working with you both, I began to see it as constructed from a very narrow range of being and began to think of what I call the 'emic' qualities of stuff, therefore what ordinary people like to call stuff rather than academics. I'd like to ask you, did you find yourselves 'othering' your own work?

Steve: In material cultural studies, people haven't taken a step far enough back. They are hanging so much meaning onto the object, adding layers of context, but we got wrapped up in the thing itself.

Kate Genever: I am interested in objects that are still functioning, that have not been entered into a formal collection, so they are still alive. I want to create a library of functional things, to capture them as they go on in the world. At the moment I am making drawings about items that have been used for measuring, for example I am making drawings of the sticks used for different jobs on my farm. (Kate lives on and helps run an 800 acre family farm).

Art work produced in response to the collection.

Following their early discussions, Kate Genever and Steve went on to produce some art work in relation to the collection. The shears, presented below, are an example of Kate Genever's interest in objects with a use. On her farm, she found a pair of shears used in everyday life. She also found a pair of shears from the collection of objects in the Artemis collection, that were placed in the 'Agriculture' section. By placing them together, she was able to look at them as a pair.



Figure 3: Shears used on the farm



Figure 4: Shears framed from Artemis' Agriculture section

Kate Genever writes: The juxtaposition of the real functioning pair of shears and the ones found and presented for display is to see the shift from function to meaning which tools undertake during accession to become *artefacts*. The first pair are used regularly, and are what they are whereas the Artemis pair are representations of shears and the notion of agriculture. It is this shift that is fascinating.

Artists as academics, academics as artists

How much did the artists cross over into the academic domain and how much did the academics inhabit the space of artistic practice? The artists maintained their identity throughout the project but crossed into the academic domain when they presented a paper at the Annual Association of American Geographers conference in Boston and then in the more familiar domain of artists they presented an exhibition in the Artemis stores. Conversely the crossings the other way (academics to artistic practice) were less visible but there was a refreshing shift in expectations on the academics. It was interesting that although Lou has practiced as an artist, Kate Pahl has not practiced as a visual artist but has observed artists closely in her work. Is it necessary for both to change over in the course of such collaboration? In the next part of this article we explore the boundaries between and across artists and academics.

In their Introduction to their edited book *Contemporary Art and Anthropology* Schneider and Wright consider the links and connections between anthropology and contemporary art, acknowledging the way in which.

Both have been active in criticising and extending their own boundaries, but they still involve broadly defined ways of working, regular spaces of exhibition and sets of expectations. (2006:2)

Exhibitions are sometimes used by both academics and artists to display work, and sometimes academics exhibit because they are also artists. Kate Pahl (Pahl and Pollard 2008) has used exhibitions as a display site for her work, Lou has exhibited her own abstract paintings. These professional personae in flux works both ways: Kate Genever and Steve crossed into an academic domain when they presented their work as an academic paper at a conference in Boston but the academics did not do any art during the life of

the project. Kate Genever played dress up with ideas, reading Malinowski (1922) and Douglas (1999) and she felt free with ideas and was able to recognise the borders of her academic identity. The academics enjoyed being more 'free' with ideas from anthropology and mixing it with the experience of material objects. One of the important aspects of the project was that there were no major agendas other than those created by the project team. This created a generative space for ideas and crossings. This space was also regenerative and reflective and led to deep conversations across the two domains of practice.

New ideas emerging from the project

Here we present two key ideas that emerged from the project. These ideas came from the process of the artists borrowing into the treasure trove of British social anthropology as well as aesthetics, and trying out new ideas. The 'Function to meaning' discussion described below came from Kate Pahl's interest in Malinowski and the turn from function to meaning as described by Pocock, as anthropologists shifted their focus in their practice from function to meaning (Malinowski 1922; Pocock 1975). This was picked up by Kate Genever as she reflected on her own practice in focusing on the tools on her farm. Secondly, the 'Aura scorer' was inspired by an engagement with the work of Walter Benjamin and the field of relational aesthetics.

Function to Meaning

In the course of the project, the artists became interested in the roots of anthropology and this interest centred on the turn in British Social anthropology from function to meaning (Pocock 1975:6). Functionalism can be identified with the work of Malinowski (1922), whose approach centred upon the use of objects and upon the ways in which objects were used. 'Everything that existed in a society existed for some purpose; it must have a function' (Pocock 1975:5). This focus on use coincided with Kate Genever's own art work in observing and documenting the use of tools on her farm whereby the object was stripped of any other meaning system. The focus on meaning, which embraced a more historical, reflexive perspective, and was initiated by Evans Pritchard (1956), Mary Douglas (1999) and described by Pocock (1975) focused more on religion, art and myth in social anthropology. This reflexive turn then led to an ethnographic approach that turned onto the ethnographer as the source of the meaning making and led to the questioning of anthropology as a discipline in Clifford and Marcus' *Writing Culture* (1986) in which anthropology and the written form of it, could be identified as being close to fiction. This led to the realisation that social anthropology, like art, has an interpretative framework which can itself be brought under scrutiny and the writing, or making of the object is a creative process. This reflexive turn in social anthropology, also described in work by Pink (2007) in relation to visual ethnography, was essential in the context of the interrogation of art and anthropology with people from both domains of practice.

Link to contemporary arts practice

The links, interconnections and intersections between art and anthropology have been explored more recently in art work, for example, Susan Hillier has worked both as an anthropologist and as an artist who talks about the artist as anthropologist. Hillier's shift from anthropology to art also involved a shift to a more irrational and subjective discursive space (Schneider and Wright 2006:25). Steve Pool in a recent project with Rotherham focused on a paddle from the Leeds Ethnographic collections, which he used as a focus for his work. He made a replica, which he paddled down the river Don and took the paddle around Rotherham. The paddle itself was displayed in the Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham, alongside video images of Steve's paddle journeys, including a visit to the seaside resort of Cleethorpes to take the paddle for a paddle.

Both artists brought with them a practice which explored people's relationships to the objects around them. The traditional museum both holds objects and generates meaning through display and interpretation. The Artemis collection with its very specific schools' curriculum remit presented a similar but critically different system of collecting and meaning making. Few of the 10,000 items in the collection had any record of their provenance. They presented a material representation of "Victorian England" with a flat iron or cane carpet beater or a representation of the British countryside through a stuffed and mounted badger or hedgehog. The idea that as an item was accessioned into the collection it undertook a transition from a functional object to become an object of meaning became our shared area of discussion and this shaped all the work produced. What, for example, was the resonance in meanings across the two domains? Which is most alive, a dead rabbit found in the road or a stuffed hedgehog found in the Artemis collection? How is the dead rabbit different to the stuffed hedgehog? In relation to the academics, Lou observed that she experienced the transition from a functional object (facilitating other people's reflection) to being one of the subject (or in her practice) of reflection. This meant that she could escape the reification and commoditisation of her professional being. The discussion about dead animals is here expanded upon by Kate Genever.

Kate Genever: Steve found a yam in his local shop that reminded him of a stuffed hedgehog in the collection. This find began a debate about the large amount of stuffed animals and birds Artemis holds. We talked about the shift from alive to dead and how the stuffed animals were in a kind of limbo, unable to truly die and move on. I wondered if the dead animals I find on the road were then in fact more alive? They die then get eaten or rot. So like the objects that shift from function to meaning the stuffed animals get trapped in meaning and are unable to complete the cycle of life to death.



Figure 5 Stuffed hedgehog from Artemis



Figure 6 dead rabbit found on the road

Aura scorer

Another outcome of shared knowledge and collaborative working appeared through the production of the Aura Scorer by the artists Kate Genever and Steve Pool (see Appendix 1). In his essay 'Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', Walter Benjamin suggests that all objects possess an "Aura" (Benjamin 1955). This aura relates to a number of specific aesthetic and other attributes - 'Originality, Uniqueness, Authenticity, Ritual Use and Shadow'. These major points are what Benjamin suggests we can gauge an object's authority and aura by. The idea of 'aura' with its 'New Age' connotations provided for Kate Genever and Steve an interesting vehicle to present the idea of an alternative value structure for objects. Through the direct application of the Benjamin text onto real objects through a tick box score sheet, objects could be valued accordingly. Both artists, through the use of the Aura Scorer, were attempting to make the text of practical use, whilst questioning where theory could fit within their collaborative practice.

Steve writes: It feels that the authentication of an object is a perceived role for the museum\curator. The museum transforms an object on its moment of accession and makes it a representation of itself. The idea that an object can

hold its history within the traces on its surface is almost ridiculous when spoken out loud, but for me seems implicit within the way museum objects are treated by the profession. Objects are not vessels that hold the past, yet we have a tendency to hang history on them as though they took an active role in the past. We turned to Walter Benjamin and his article, 'Making Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', partly because it presented a seminal text for us to play with but mainly due to his ideas about Aura (Benjamin 1955). It seemed important to try and do something practical with this idea, to remove it from the abstract and see if we could make it do something. We wanted to explore if we could find how big a shadow an object cast. We were concerned with an object's qualities and it's relationships to the world in all their complexities. The Aura Scorer idea has had a big impact - it's really funny that this should feature so much in this article as I'm sure it was an attempt to look clever. I love the way that this reference to theory and Benjamin has grown out of such an innocent attempt to work something out for ourselves in a practical "well let's just try it" kind of way.

Kate Genever writes: Steve and I were both interested in breaking down the aura as a concept. We had a debate in Artemis about what we thought had the biggest aura, of course we didn't really know the text so decided to read it and then try again to gauge the aura of individual objects from Artemis. We wanted to create a tool to work out an object's aura in comparison to another's, to consider why we are attracted to one thing and not another. So I broke the text down to the five points now on the aura scorer. These seemed to be what Benjamin worked out were lower in a reproduced object in comparison to an original object.

Of course it's all about value judgements - what we personally value the most. My colleague suggested that the scorer was sacrilegious - such an important text reduced to a score sheet. It seems that to her that the Benjamin text had a large aura and as such my reproduced sheet had a very low one. I suggested she was making the text revered and by keeping it as such reinforced the power of academic texts and denied access - a hierarchical nonsense. My intention was to make a useful tool - functional to both access the text and use the idea Benjamin proposed.

Link to contemporary arts practice

Kate Genever and Steve found that in discussing the objects within the collection with museum staff it became clear that the systems around the collection had a quasi-religious reverence and wanted to question why and for what reason. So they independently scored a series of objects at Artemis and compared the results. A small very soft hairbrush which they initially both gave a low score was later discovered to be made by a local brush making firm and the bristles were the owner's baby's hair. The information found on a note packed in the bottom of the brush box explained who the maker and baby were, where they lived and the dates. This information added to the aura of the brush and started a conversation about provenance and context. Other objects scored without a provenance were not as strong and so the size of the aura tells of an object's resonance within an individual.



Figure 7 Hairbrush made from human hair and explanatory note.

Steve writes: Although we started this process in an ironic way it made us recognise the value of doing something rather than just talking about doing something. All objects which are made from natural materials like stone or leather scored highly. Objects which carried traces of their history like play worn toys also scored well. We had to be able to touch and handle an object to feel like we could score it properly. It made us think about value, all the objects which were collected had been valued for their educational use, the process of individuals giving objects a value according to criteria was implicit within the collection, and is there within all collecting, but at Artemis it wasn't really very visible.

The dissemination process

As part of the project's final dissemination publication a number of people connected to the project were invited to tell us about their favourite object. We wanted a personal response to objects based on their Aura. We wanted to know how large a shadow their chosen items cast over them. We include one text here, from Anne Pennington-George, Head of Artemis and the School room at Leeds.

Anne writes: Having worked with thousands of items, choosing one is very difficult. However, I was recently given an original A.R.P. Warden's Appointment certificate, signed by the Town Clerk in Leeds and by John Tate, which I use in enactment sessions in schools. Every time I handle this tiny document, which has been lovingly repaired in the past with cellotape, I remember Ernest Tate who gave it to me because he "had one of the best days of his life" working with children telling them about his childhood in the war, and I remember how very generous it was of him to give me this memento of his father. It is an important piece of primary source evidence, but it is also personal, which makes it more special.

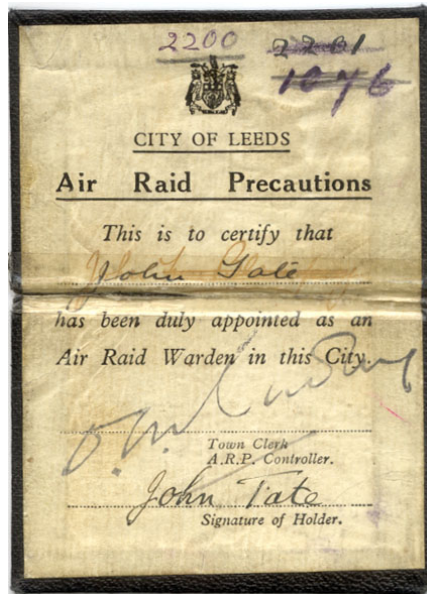


Figure 8: Anne's selected object

Sharing arts practice and anthropology across domains of practice

The writing of this article has involved sharing ideas across the domains of practice. In doing so, we have been able to reflect on what the different domains of practice gave each of us individually. In the next section we reflect on the gains this type of work has for artists and anthropologists, and consider how collaborative research across these two domains of practice can inform each other's own practice.

Steve's perspective: We grew this project from a seed of an idea. It kind of popped up one day and we found it and chased it and got some money and roped people in. This is good as it's turned out so organic. When I started the project I had this idea about domain crossing which I suppose must have originated from a book I was reading. The ethnographic books and discussion we had during the project has become subject matter, the object of the work rather than the method. So critically for me is the thought that an idea can cross domains and become changed, divested and reinvested with meaning.

The project also included an element of teacher training, which was delivered by Kate Genever and Steve.

Steve: At Artemis, when we did the teacher training, the teachers we worked with really found it hard to see how to use objects beyond very literal connections, air-raid warden's hat to teach about the war for example. Through our training program we opened up a lot of different approaches to possible uses of the collection in the classroom. I think this was because we tried to share our process, allowing teachers to unpick things for themselves and model the possible ways they could allow children to share in this process.

An example of my work is the breakfast I made (see Figure 9). It's called four representations of breakfast, none of them real. Not that it really matters, but

the piece references Joseph Kosuths, *One and three chairs* (1965). This piece is an early example of the turn to the conceptual which marked the end of the modernist period. As we were looking at function I decided that the purpose of the whole collection was to “teach” so I wanted to make a “study piece” something that a teacher could use in a lesson to talk to “A” level (final year) students about representation. I also reference Dali and Rachel Whiteread. It is such a hotchpotch of ideas encased in the hessian and Perspex boxes which brings it into the body of the collection and legitimatize it. I suppose I was inspired by the Tudor food - the model maker didn't seem to be able to stop making things - even the knife and fork and bit of wood are cast in plastic (See Figure 10).

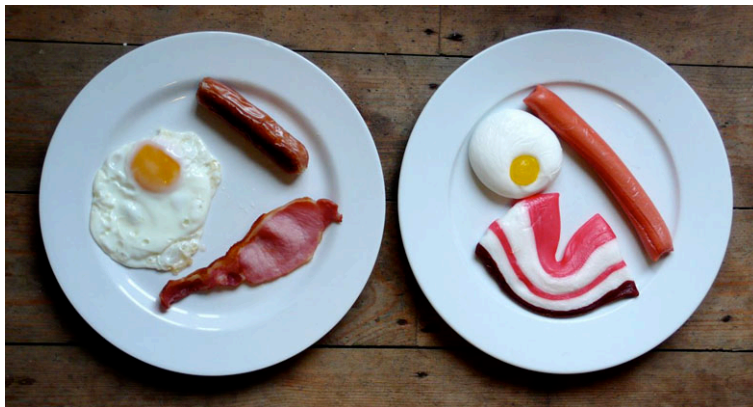


Figure 9 A real breakfast, a sugar 'rock' breakfast



Figure 10 A replica of a Tudor breakfast.

It has also taught me that there is real value in difference and it is often useful to have a role. The relationships you can build with people as an artist in residence are not the same as other work place relationships. People are usually unfamiliar with what you are there for or what you are going to do. You always have a few preconceptions and often some resistance but it's in this area of uncertainty that interesting things always start to happen. Artists can provide an outside eye. Kate Pahl has talked about participant observer ethnographic research. I think there is a clear difference between learning something and just saying it – this is an example of the latter. I have learned that it is important to be able to withdraw from the field and analyse

and present back the experience. I think it's a deeper understanding of this relationship I've gained through this project, otherwise it isn't Art or Anthropology it's just life.

Kate Genever's perspective: Initially I suppose the project was about me and Steve having some time to make and think in response to Artemis away from the usual education / community based work we normally undertake. In the original Arts Council bid we stated we wanted the residency to feed our practice as we were/are continually asked to develop work relating to it. We also wanted to work together and explore / extend the collaborative aspect of our working relationship.

I suspect I thought before I started I would go to Artemis, find and record objects that would be added to my collection of works made about home - the farm. Of course in hindsight this could not have happened, it goes against everything the objects I record are. So what happened was that Artemis acted as a lens for me to see more clearly what needs to be made of / or about home. I have referenced within my growing library Artemis' systems and its objects, but in a more oblique way. I like the relationships I have built with the people who work at Artemis and understand more clearly now that this connection to people and place is inherent perhaps necessary for my work to work. I am also interested in the lack of past narrative and therefore the meaning making you have to do with the objects at Artemis, they are transformed objects devoid of their original function, which reinforces ideas about what the tools of home are doing / being and ultimately what my work does.

As time moved on, I became interested in Artemis' kitchen shelves and their built-up-over-time quality, their haphazardness, their, 'outside of the formal archive' quality - something to do with dwelling and growth. I have been reading a lot about improvisation lately, that it is generative, temporal and its make as we go stuff. I like this in reference to the shelves and the farm tools I'm interested in but also as an analogy of this project. We have improvised and allowed things to grow and develop, alter and be adjusted. The shelves in figure 11 are the Artemis kitchen ones, where all the objects they don't really know what to do with are stored. Things that are considered unsafe or just don't link to anything in their remit. I like how they are like normal shelves, not museum shelves, like ones you have in the shed. Things are piled up on top of one another, balanced and propped. But also the cleaning products are kept amongst them, which reinforces the idea of real world-ness. I like the fact the objects are kind of ordered and the curators kind of know what's there, but not totally. These shelves allowed me to consider the shelves in the workshop at home - my father's shelves. They have the same thing going on as the Artemis ones. Ordered in an idiosyncratic way, with things kept there because they might come in and they are too precious to throw out. I made a video of my dad at his shelves, throwing things up so they balance and are stored. This video was then shown on a small screen balanced on the Artemis kitchen shelves. I was interested in extending the narrative and understanding of both sites and enabling a way in for the audience.



Figure 11 Artemis kitchen shelves

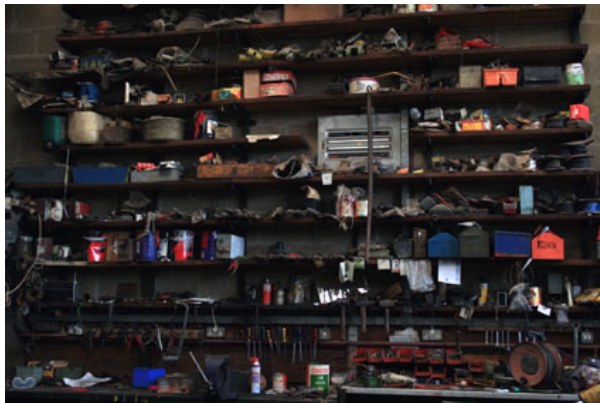


Figure 12 workshop shelves at the farm.

In terms of the training element, I feel we have done what we wanted with some compromise about what Artforms [funding partner] wanted and Artemis needed. The training like the practice has been led by the process of learning, making, reflecting, collaborating and wholly reflects the residency in many ways. As an outcome I have decided that I don't want to work within education / training as an individual most of the time. I like working with Steve, its fun, but also better more effective when we deliver work together. I like the Kate Pahl and Lou part of this project the sharing of ideas, the swapping of references and as such I have become richer, a better artist, and I hope they have become better academics. Our relationship is balanced/equal a happy sharing place, yet also critical and rigorous, which allows for an 'othering' of each other to occur. I feel this project is layered and dense - a good thing.

Lou's perspective: Is there also something special in that the project space was very democratic – we all felt this, albeit differently and about different things. This being my favourite project was not just about personalities and actively liking the other participants, although that's part of it, but for me there was a real sense of being allowed to 'be' 3D. Expectations that I structure the reflective element were generously laid aside when it transpired that I wanted a bit of space to explore some pretty personal professional culture stuff rather just than contain and facilitate the reflections of others - that latter being what I was originally contracted to do.

My experience of projects is that people are not comfortable with me being anything more or less (and I think its both) than a catalyst for their change or reflective processes. It breaks all the rules of engagement for me to step out of a neutral, catalytic role and be participator, both this, and the artists being the authors and presenters of a paper at an academic conference, models how teachers could perhaps step put of their habitual roles and chose different responses to opportunities such as the Artemis collection.

I am very excited about participatory research practices and the role of reflective conversation, which is exactly what we did. Between us we discovered meanings, meanings that were caught in the huge butterfly net of discursive exploration. Within this, the streams (or voices) are the data.

Kate Pahl's perspective: As I went through the project I realised I knew less not more about objects. I ended up writing something about lost objects for another article, as I stopped believing in their sacred status. I liked the idea of the shift from function to meaning and back to function as it stripped objects of their Aura. Working with Steve and Kate Genever gave me the freedom not to be clever, but to be instinctive. I could return to the origins of British Social Anthropology and not be worried about citations so much and being up to date. The idea of trying on each other's clothes also reflected a real experience when we went into the collection and went literally over the top with excitement – trying on old dresses and entering into a consuming relationship with objects. It was this that Steve and Kate Genever responded to when they talked of the aura scorer as this described the almost instantaneous response to objects humans seem to have.

Conclusion

These are some of the questions that the collaborative reflection generated:

- What do the domains of practice (art, anthropology) offer each other?
- What does anthropology offer to artists?
- What do artists/ contemporary arts practice offer academics?
- How can the voices of the artist and the voice of the academic be sustained in each other's domains of practice and heard in each other's representational spaces?
- Where are the boundary spaces permeable and offer possibilities?

We would like to consider the implications for practice of this kind of boundary crossing and where it is going for the field, returning to Schneider and Wright (2006). We would like to suggest that both artists and anthropologists appropriate from and represent others. They produce representations of practice and create objects. We've tried on each other's clothes and function and have moved across the boundaries of art and academia finding a shared and 'other' collaborative space. Via the collaboration we have 'othered' each other. Like Agar's 'Professional Stranger' (Agar 1996) we have become strangers to each other. At the same time, we made connections between ourselves and objects, and reached out to new audiences. Teachers have

been able to connect with objects they liked and have made connections between outside worlds and their classrooms

One outcome was that the article writing process was a struggle in terms of whose voices were represented, artists or academics. While the artists did do an academic presentation, the academics felt de-centred at end of the project which was interesting. Lou reflected that this was also invigorating; she suggested that you can build a new sense of self if you deconstruct old ones. Kate Pahl has moved into a new space after feeling de-centred which was appreciating the impact the project on her chapter on objects and emotion for the book she is writing on artifactual literacy. Lou is trialling different ways of involving people in research in which the research expert is absent.

Here the artists think about the project within the space of this article:

Steve: Don't we have to re-examine the idea of expert - it is difficult to generate a democratic space for a constructive discourse if we maintain the strange and constructed power relationship of expert and novice.

Kate Genever: May be what this article reveals and suggests is that by de-centering ourselves and wondering on the ideas and trying to look differently we no longer are the expert but something different and so I wonder if this is a semantics issue or just needs expanding more?

The process of writing is also a process involving tension. There is a tension between actual experience and experience as represented in written forms. Pink (2009) alludes to this when she considers the different strengths of writing, and visual, auditory and textual modes. Some scholars have argued for greater parity across the modes of expression. However, it could be argued that the experience of working across domains of practice creates these tensions and boundaries. One aspect of this we have explored in this article is the affordances this created. The artists used ideas in new ways to inform their arts practice. The academics explored the sensory nature of the Artemis collection which then informed their thinking. The notion of a free space, outside a normal space, which was afforded by the idea of trying on each other's clothes for the day, was potentially very liberating and helpful for each other's practice.

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Appendix 1

AURA SCORER - Score an objects aura using the pro-forma below.

The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from substantive duration, to its testimony, to the history which it has experienced. What withers is the aura in the age of reproduction.

Benjamin

W

TITLE / DESCRIPTION of OBJECT to SCORE:

RECORD THE SUB TOTAL FOR EACH ELEMENT THEN ADD TOGETHER TO FIND THE OBJECTS TOTAL AURA SCORE.

0 = empty of aura 10 = full of aura

IS THE OBJECT ORIGINAL?

[If it's a reproduction then it's not original]

0----->10 Sub Total

IS THE OBJECT UNIQUE?

[Is it unique to now?]

0----->10 Sub Total

IS THE OBJECT AUTHENTIC?

[Does it testify to the history which it has experienced e.g. patina?]

0----->10 Sub Total

IS THE OBJECT RITUALISTIC?

[Is its function honest or referential?]

0----->10 Sub Total

HOW MUCH SHADOW DOES THE OBJECT CAST?

[Not physically but metaphysically]

0----->10 Sub Total

Total AURA

