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trace.space: A psychogeographical community project with members of an arts and health organisation

Abstract

In this paper we theorise a situationist psychogeographical community group work project, conducted with members of an arts and health organization. Using creative ways to improve the mental health and well-being of individuals, we draw on the concepts of trace and spaces both to map relationships between researchers and group members and project implications. This project was driven by three aims which were: to do community group-work in order to produce contributions both inside and outside of the University; to use a psychogeographical approach to playfully critique everyday life in consumer capitalist society and finally, to consider the extent to which wider personal and political changes could be enabled. To realise these aims, we put into practice a range of architectural, critical community psychological and psychogeographical methods including photo-elicitation, dice walking and site specific investigations. We also facilitated participatory workshops via the creation of artistic and reflective maps and writing poems and stories. Reflections from all the stakeholders, conclusions and implications of this work are considered in terms of individual, group and societal changes. We argue for more psychogeographically inspired work.

Key words: psychogeography, community group work, critical and community psychology, architecture

Introduction, aims and the theoretical tracings of the study

The trace of this paper begins with our three main aims which were: *to do community group-work in order to produce contributions both inside and outside of the University*; *to use a psychogeographical approach to critique everyday life in consumer capitalist society* and finally, *to consider the extent to which wider personal and political changes could be enabled through this approach*.

In this work, we aimed to work sustainably and collaboratively with fellow researchers, co-researchers, participants and the general public. We offer this work as a contribution to existing debates and research in the arena of qualitative psychology. The metaphor of tracing spaces allows us to trace ourselves, our work and our participants into a project about mapping, space and peoples' experiences of environments (Contemporary Art Engage, 2014). The idea for carrying out this project arose through discussions with Emmanouil, an architect and psychogeographer and with Bridger, a critical psychologist and psychogeographer. We wanted to volunteer at the Hoot arts and health organization (http://www.hootcreativearts.co.uk/en/index/a1) and with Out of the Blue (OOB), where we could put into practice some ideas for psychogeography informed walks as well as producing an archive of work in the format of film, poetry, maps, art and creative writing. Hoot and OOB are community organizations, not only for adults with mental health needs, but are also open to the general public in terms of providing consultancy and training for workplaces and various sessional activities. We were keen to contribute outside academia and to represent our ideas and knowledge outside of the University community. We drew on subject knowledge in the respective disciplines of architecture, critical and community psychology and psychogeography

(an approach which favours playfulness in space). We also drew inspiration from other community and participatory case based qualitative psychological research by Hodgetts and Stolte (2012). Such work provides a useful template from which to formulate a psychogeographical approach which could contribute to qualitative psychology. Social psychological research has tended to focus too much on place identities (Dixon and Durrheim, 2000).

Furthermore, we want to take seriously the points made by fellow qualitative and critical community psychology colleagues that environments are not simply 'backdrops to social processes' (Hodgetts, Stolte, Chamberlain, Radley, Groot and Nikora, 2010: 287). It is therefore important to suffuse the study of experience in context and to consider how such work can be connected with artistic and activist concerns with social change. We advocate working with and understanding groups that we do work **with** rather than **on**. This has lead us away from traditional approaches to quantitative research which may mechanically extract peoples' attitudes via questionnaires and structured interviews. In contrast, we argue for the formulation of strategies of working with groups and to draw on qualitative theoretical and practical ideas to theorise how we experience, make sense of and critique everyday environments. Critical community psychology (Kagan et al 2011) directly uses values of social justice, stewardship and community in practice and research. Meanwhile, Hodgetts and Stolte (2012) argued for case-based research to consider the relations between researchers and participants, based on nurturing and fostering relationships rather than arguably disengaged, objectivist practices from the positivist quantitative psychological paradigm. Collaboration allows us to use our academic positions to create solidarity with others outside of academia, so that we 'use our own academic

position to transform the cultural practices that we participate in' (Parker 2015; 7) in order to begin to forge new connections of our work with political practice. In line with Hodgetts, Stolte and Groot, 2014: 164), 'We need to embrace the long history in psychology of working in partnership with communities to challenge inequitable social structures and to affect change'.

In this work, we have positioned ourselves as scholar-activists. One of the most immediate challenges in doing such work is to address our roles as academics in relation to other roles that we may draw affiliation with. We do want to draw affiliation with qualitative participatory collaborative research and community arts work (Hodgetts et al. 2010; Hodgetts and Stolte, 2012) as well as with community and critical psychology researchers and practitioners (Kagan, Burton, Duckett, Lawthom & Siddiquee, 2011). However, we also want to draw affinity with arguments provided by the Situationist International and their practice of psychogeography. Their main concern was to playfully and politically critique consumer capitalist and to pave the way for new forms of society beyond the capitalist order of things by creating situations. The Situationist International were a group of revolutionary artists, intellectuals and activists that opposed consumer capitalism. Our work with Hoot and OOB was underpinned by a situationist psychogeographical framework which makes it theoretically and practically distinctive from activities by on-site volunteer project workers. In this work we want to ~~We~~ outline this approach, how it shaped the work produced and why we chose that approach. This co-production further traces our practice in translating the workshop material into an exhibition following a format relevant to Hoot members and also in

terms of enabling Hoot and OOB to draw further on such work if they so wish to choose.

Our ontological position, as writers of this paper, draws on the ideas of the Situationist International. In this work we draw on four of their main concepts which are psychogeography, participatory creativity, detournement and provocation. Barbrook (2014) argued that such concepts can be applied to critique the current conditions of consumer capitalism and to begin the consider a world beyond consumer capitalism. However, rather than applying the Situationist International's concepts and practices to formulate a method, we refer to ludic practice and gaming strategies as ways to critique the surrounding environments and to consider what needs to change in our everyday lives, both on a personal level but also in a wider social political context. Our plan in this study involved Hoot and OOB participants engaging in subjective participatory ways of making sense of themselves, other people and the wider social context. The first situationist concept to be discussed here is psychogeography:

> Psychogeography could set for itself the study of the precise law and specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviours of individuals (Debord, 1955: n.p).

The point of psychogeographical practice is to playfully and politically explore the conscious and unconscious effects and impacts of environments- how we make sense of the world and to draw on these experiences to consider how things could be beyond the consumer capitalist order of things. Pinder (2005: 4) argued that, 'chance

encounters and uncanny resonances could disrupt dominant ways of seeing and potentially reveal the marvellous buried within the everyday'. This is somewhat similar to the Freirian (1970/1993) concept of conscientisation in terms of advocating self-directed grassroots action rather than being led by leaders. However, Debord's approach to formulating a psychogeographical approach is an anti-methodological approach as he refused the institutionalization of situationist theory into academia. Other writers have also argued that psychogeography could be 'regarded as a sort of therapy, a fetishisation of those parts of the city that could still rescue drifters from the clutches of functionalism, exciting the senses and the body' (Sadler, 1999: 80). However, this project was not intended to be therapy as we are not trained therapists whom are not advocating this kind of intervention.

The second situationist concept used is participatory creativity, which refers to how individuals can work collectively and in self-determined ways to create new conditions for their lives. This underpinned the facilitation of workshop sessions at the Hoot centre. The idea of combating capitalism brings us to the third concept of detournement. Detournement is the process by which elements of text are re-used in alternative ways in order to question the accepted order of things and to produce new subversive meanings (Situatonist International, 1959). Text here is referred to as a 'tissue of meaning' so that this includes not only talk and text but anything in the world such as buildings, advertisements and television programmes (Parker and the Bolton Discourse Network, 1999). Again, the concept of detournement is key to how the workshop activities were conducted and will be returned to later in this paper.

The fourth and final concept of provocation refers to the ultra-left argument of political agitation, which is intended to provoke and inspire individuals and groups to enact social changes. One example of a provocative act is the revolutionary slogan seen in the streets of Paris in the 1950s and 1960s 'Be realistic. Demand the impossible!'. The extent to which political agitation occurred in the workshop activities is explored later in this paper.

Project tracings and the Hoot centre

HOOT and OOB's principles were respected and used as a guiding force at all stages of this project. Both organizations specialize in arts, music and other creative ways in which to enable individuals and groups to improve their mental health and wellbeing. They facilitate a range of sessional activities for adults with mental health needs such as song writing, filmmaking, photography, yoga and dance workshops. From the base in Huddersfield, Hoot and OOB bring people together from all sections of the community to build confidence, encourage creative expression and help people find their voice. Creative writing, dance and movement workshops and visual arts are on-going projects that Hoot and OOB participants undertake by various artists. Workshop participants were of varying ages, ability and fitness and had referred themselves with experiences of mental distress and anxiety. Hoot and OOB's belief is that everyone has a creative capacity to grow and develop and through supporting people to flourish as individuals can then help communities and wider society to flourish.

For the first few months, Emmanouil participated in various activity classes that were run at the Hoot centre. This was part of an important process of familiarisation with the members at Hoot and OOB. We did not want to simply jet in as academics to do research on the group. Our group work approach was to work sensitively, ethically and creatively with its members and to help foster a sense of co-production and ownership.

Emmanouil worked with paid Hoot and OOB staff including Kim Gregory (Co-director), Chris Ruffoni and Von Allen (Out of the Blue Service Managers), Dave Jordan (Support Worker) and Gerry Turvey (Sessional dance co-ordinator) to ensure that the planned activities would fit with the ethos of participation and safety. Ethics forms were approved by the Art, Design and Architecture Ethics Committee at the University of Huddersfield. Participants and community hosts were presented prior to the workshops with an information package documenting: duration and location of the project, objectives, benefits, copyrights, purpose of the project, organization, funding, data , dissemination and possible benefits. We did not want to go into the group setting and tell people what they would be doing with us. Rather we wanted to set up activities that would build on what they already participated in and which drew on our knowledge and experience base in respective academic arenas. In this way, we developed new activities for Hoot and OOB members aligned with the vision to increase participants' feelings of confidence and well-being. This vision developed into planned workshops where participants would be able to take part, have fun, start to learn new skills, contribute to making something with others and be more physically active. Hoot and OOB staff were presented with the objectives, outline and dissemination of the project and then Sophia presented a workshop to all the team

who then approved to host the events. Having taken into consideration the points previously discussed and after we got to know the group, we considered key ethical issues including Hoot risk assessments which had been formulated prior to working at the Hoot centre.

Figure 1. Terry Barnes and Emmanouil at the opening of the exhibition at the Huddersfield Art Gallery, discussing the project.

The series of open workshops were advertised via leaflets posted in the Hoot centre. The planned activities took place both in the Hoot centre as well as around the surrounding streets, along the canal footpath and adjacent footpaths. The activities could be considered as traces produced by the members of Hoot and OOB in relation to the work that they would produce as an exhibition at the Huddersfield Art Gallery.

In order to provide clear direction to the group activities and to theoretically embed the work, the following questions underpinned the sessions, based on Khatib's (1958) work with the Situationist International:

- What does it feel like where you walk?
- How do you engage with your surroundings?
- Do you notice any notable changes in ambience?
- What do you think of the environment?
- What do you think needs to be changed in the environment?
- What should the environment look like?

Khatib's (1958) work ~~is~~ was relevant to this project because these questions link primarily with the first situationist concept of psychogeography discussed previously, in terms of exploring the effects of environments and also as to what sort of environments could replace the consumer capitalist order of things. Such questions are informed by Debord's argument that it is not just about producing understandings of environments but ultimately it is a fundamental critique of how environments are set up with a view to considering what non-capitalist environments should look like (Situationist International, 1961). In sharing these ideas and theories with Hoot and OOB members we did not wish to position ourselves in opposition to them or as experts. Instead, through group activity, members would consider their own ways of making sense of and critiquing the world and that could be part of a process of participating creatively in doing psychogeographical work. The latter point here links with the second situationist concept of participatory creativity which is another important idea and practice underpinning this work. Possible themes in relation to

exploring the environment in and around the Hoot centre include consumerism, privatization, social control and surveillance in relation to towns and cities (Bridger, 2014). We ensured that we did not use academic language during the sessions so as not to potentially alienate those who may not be familiar with such terminology and to foster an ethos of a participatory creative way of working.

The workshops

The workshops ~~were~~ would be divided into five different themes which had been decided on by Emmanouil and Bridger to link with our respective knowledge about architecture and psychogeography: 1: Spirit of the Place, 2: Sculpting Paths, 3: Dice Walk, 4: Scavenger's Hunt and 5: Map Making. Before the start of each of these workshops we started off with some yogic relaxation exercises, as this was a practice that members of Hoot and OOB would already be familiar with from other classes and workshops. These activities created a relaxed environment for participants and also enabled bodies to be warmed up for the cold weather outside the Hoot centre. After the gentle movement and warm up exercises, participants were briefed about what would be done for each session and then given a structured set of playful instructions, followed by some examples or inspirational images to guide them for the tasks. Underpinning the instructions were techniques of detournement in order to lay the foundations for a critique of the environment in and around the Hoot centre.

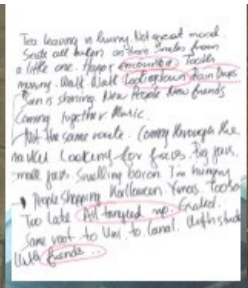
At the start of the first workshop, Emmanouil had already spent several months attending various workshops and classes at the Hoot centre, so members of that organization were already familiar with her and they knew that she was also a senior

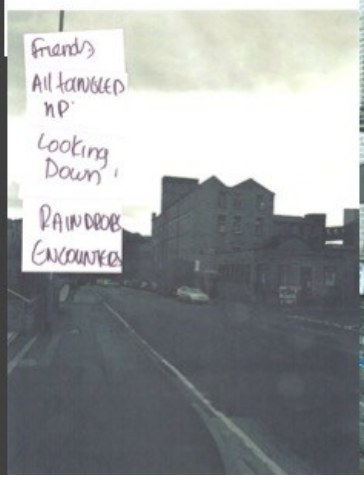
lecturer in Architecture at the University of Huddersfield and that she was planning to do some art, poetry and walking workshops with them. The first activity centred on the idea of a spiritual sense of place and individuals were asked to recall the journey that led them to Hoot that day. The entirety of this session took place in the building and was based on the idea of psychogeography and the questions produced by Khatib (1958) as discussed previously. We planned to conduct the first workshop entirely in the building, as members would be comfortable and familiar there. In that session, members were asked what brought them there and what mode of transportation they had used such as car, bus or bicycle or on foot. Particular sights, smells, routes and colours that they may have experienced were discussed alongside a consideration of chance encounters with people. Here rich descriptions of, what other people were wearing, what they wore and how they felt when entering and exiting various social spaces on their way to Hoot were elicited. Following the reflections, we asked them to write down those experiences on blank paper in a free associative manner. To facilitate this, we asked them not to pause whilst writing or to correct or cross anything out. Finally, they highlighted any particular words from the accounts they produced which seemed personally significant to them. They used a black marker pen to write each word on ~~a~~ post-it notes and stuck them onto photographs which they had taken earlier on. Finally, they composed short poems or other prose to discuss with others in the group and then the Hoot and OOB members decided which materials to present for the exhibition at the Huddersfield Art Gallery.

EXPLORATION 1: SPIRIT OF THE PLACE

ARTISTS

The disillusioned lunatic
REBECCA
TERRY BARNES
DAVID SLATER
BARRIE WALSH
L. DEVI. SEEPUJAK
RICHARD TAYLOR
ALEX BRIDGER
DAVE JORDAN





EXPLORATION 1: SPIRIT OF THE PLACE

ARTISTS

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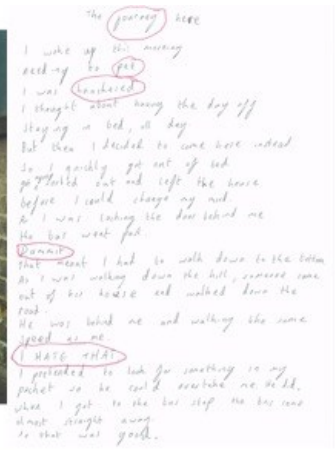


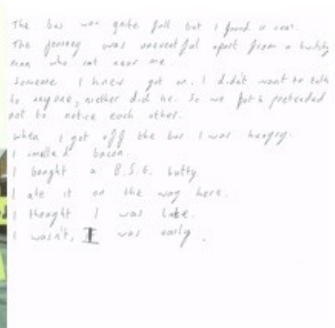


Figure 2 & 3. Work produced by Dave Jordan and the disillusioned lunatic for Exploration 1. Spirit of the Place.

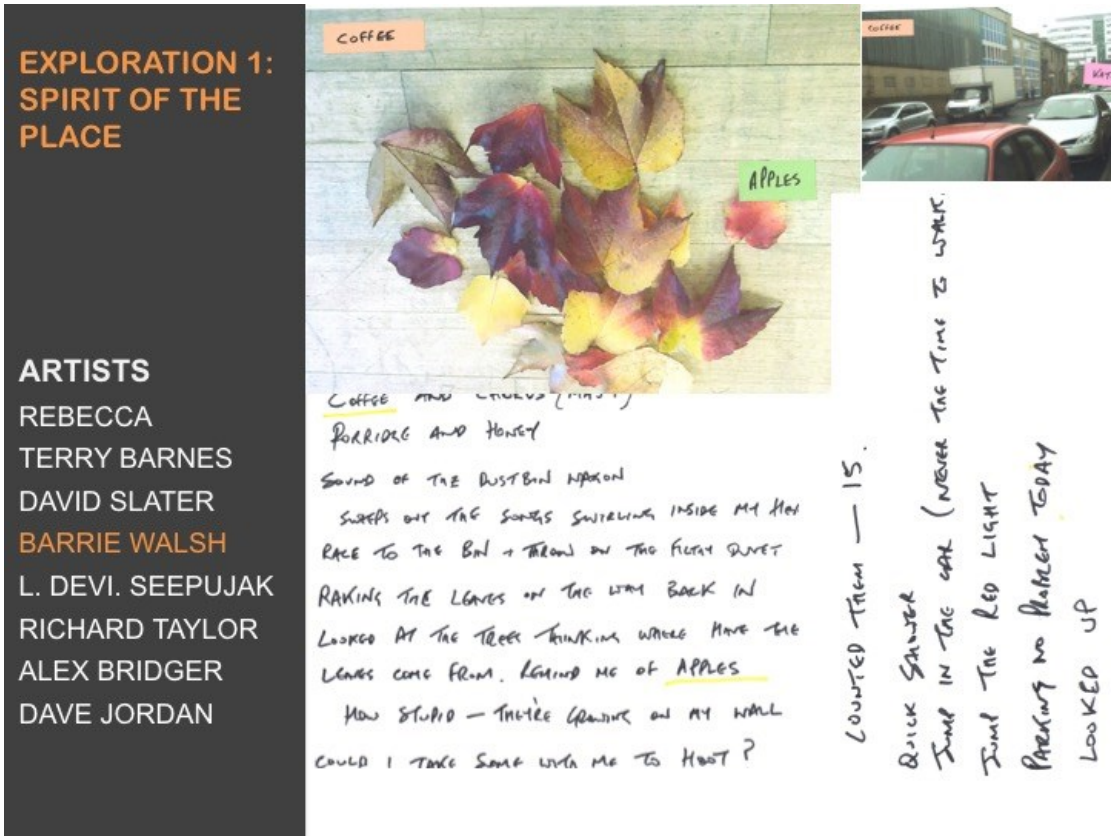


Figure 4. Work produced by Barrie Walsh for Exploration 1. Spirit of the Place.

For the second themed activities two weeks later with the same people participating, we focused on the idea of creating sculpture paths. After the group was given instructions for the task, we then went for a walk and collected objects that we found along the way that could include anything that was clean and safe to pick up such as driftwood or fabric.

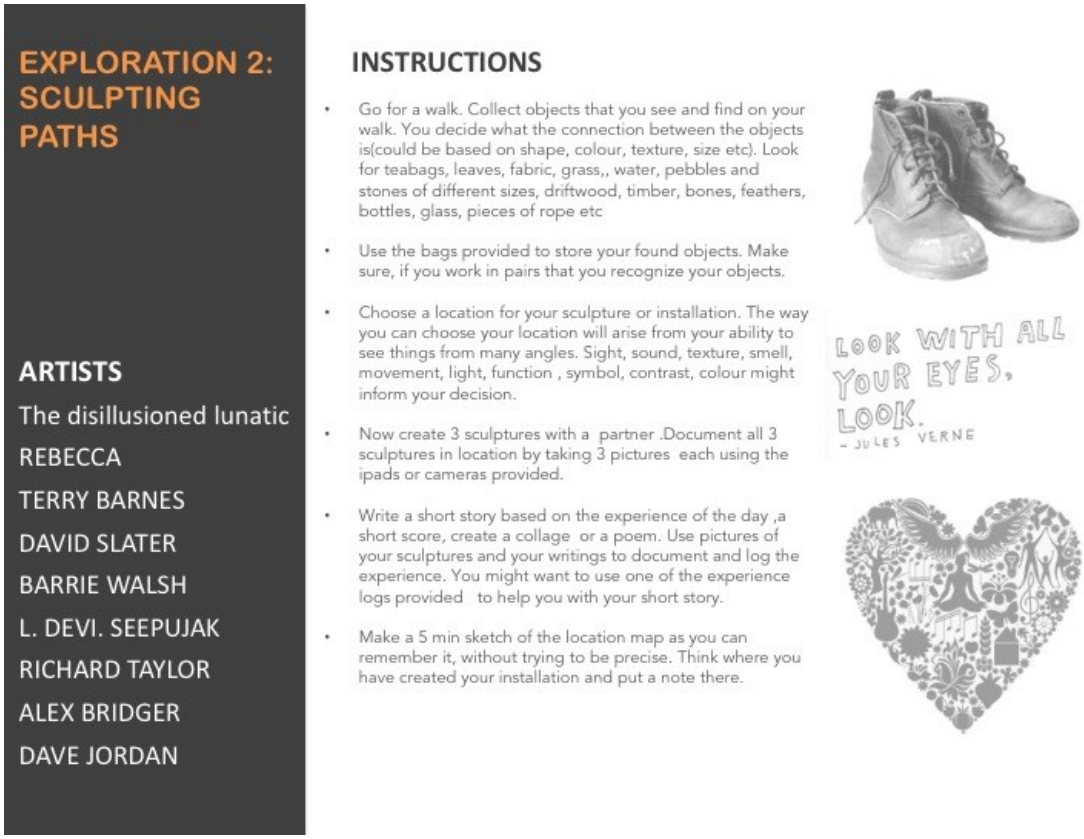


Figure 5. Instructions for Exploration 2: Sculpting Paths.

The act of searching for interesting and unusual items lent itself well to the situationist practice of the dérive:

> Dérives involve playful constructive behaviour and awareness of psychogeographical effects, and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll. In a dérive, one of more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities and all other motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there. Chance is a less important factor in this activity than one might think: from a dérive point of view, cities have psychogeographical contours, with constant currents, fixed

> points and vortexes that strongly encourage and discourage entry into or exit from certain zones (Debord, 1958: n.p).

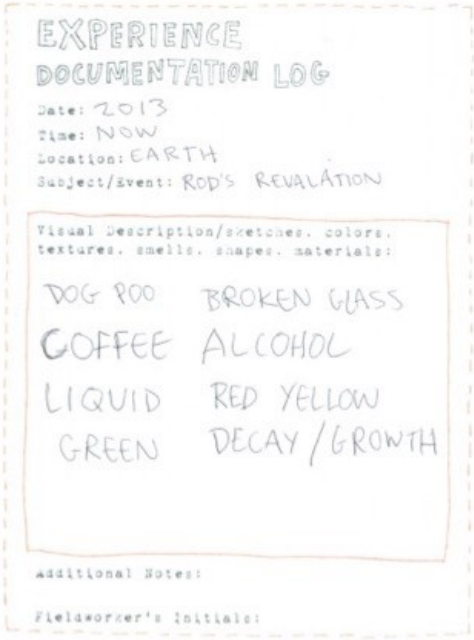
In the context of this second activity, we were actively drawn towards particular items and objects in the terrain and observing the surrounding environment. We found and stored particular items in small bags provided. Once collected we chose outdoor locations for where we would place these items which would then become sculptural installations in different outdoor places. There were no criteria presented as to what the sculptural installations should look like or where they should be placed other than they would be placed in the outside environment. The imposition of criteria would go against the ethos of working in a participatory and creative manner.

Once the participants had decided on what the sculptures would look like and where they would go, we took photographs with iPads of the sculptures and their locations. We then generated short accounts and sketches of locations of the installations. In previous work by Hodgetts (2007, 2011), he explains how giving cameras to individuals can foster productive collaborations between researchers and participants. However, he quite rightly considers the issue of transparency in giving voice to participants via such methods.

EXPLORATION 2: SCULPTING PATHS

ARTISTS

The disillusioned lunatic
REBECCA
TERRY BARNES
DAVID SLATER
BARRIE WALSH
L. DEVI. SEEPUJAK
RICHARD TAYLOR
ALEX BRIDGER
DAVE JORDAN


EXPERIENCE
DOCUMENTATION LOG
Date: 2013
Time: NOW
Location: EARTH
Subject/Event: ROD'S REVALATION
Visual Description/sketches, colors, textures, smells, shapes, materials:
DOG POO BROKEN GLASS
COFFEE ALCOHOL
LIQUID RED YELLOW
GREEN DECAY / GROWTH
Additional Notes:
Fieldworker's Initials:

EXPLORATION 2: SCULPTING PATHS

ARTISTS

The disillusioned lunatic
REBECCA
TERRY BARNES
DAVID SLATER
BARRIE WALSH
L. DEVI. SEEPUJAK
RICHARD TAYLOR
ALEX BRIDGER
DAVE JORDAN

Figure 6 & 7. Work produced by Dave Jordan and Richard Taylor for Exploration 2. Sculpting Paths.

In the third themed work two weeks later with the same members participating once again, we participated in a dice walk. The focus of this session was to use the dice to deliberately take ourselves out of the routine ways in which we would walk through Huddersfield. The dice strategy lends itself well to the third situationist concept of detournement which is a process of wandering or otherwise known as drifting as it is a playful and constructive way in which to explore responses and experiences to environments, which can lead to chance encounters and situations. The idea of treating an environment as a board game and using dice to direct our movement is quite a playful and constructive endeavour, which fits well with the ethos of situationist drifting and with participatory creativity. The numbers on the dice were replaced with instructional directives such as ‘turn left’, ‘go straight on’ and ‘initiate a conversation with the person next to you’. Each person in the group would take a turn in rolling a dice to indicate what the group would do next.

Figure 8. Instructions for Exploration 3: Dice Walk.

EXPLORATION 3: DICE WALK

ARTISTS

The disillusioned lunatic
REBECCA
TERRY BARNES
DAVID SLATER
BARRIE WALSH
L. DEVI. SEEPUJAK
RICHARD TAYLOR
ALEX BRIDGER
DAVE JORDAN

EXPLORATION 3: DICE WALK

ARTISTS

The disillusioned lunatic
REBECCA
TERRY BARNES
DAVID SLATER
BARRIE WALSH
L. DEVI. SEEPUJAK
RICHARD TAYLOR
ALEX BRIDGER
DAVE JORDAN

Figure 9 & 10. Bridger with the disillusioned lunatic, Rebecca, Terry Barnes and Dave Jordan during Exploration 3. Dice Walk.

The fourth themed walk a further two weeks on, focused on the idea of doing a scavenger hunt with the same individuals taking part again. Similar to the sculptural installation walk and after the instructions, we went for a wander and had to collect a number of items. Items included things such as: different kinds of wild plants, rubber bands, tickets, stamps, driftwood, plastic bits, leaves, grass, acorn hats, candy wrap, coins and buttons. The scavenger activities were based on ideas by Smith (2008, 2013), whereby he uses the practice of aimless wandering in order to break out of habitual ways of thinking and being in the world. These principles connect with the practice of situationist psychogeography.

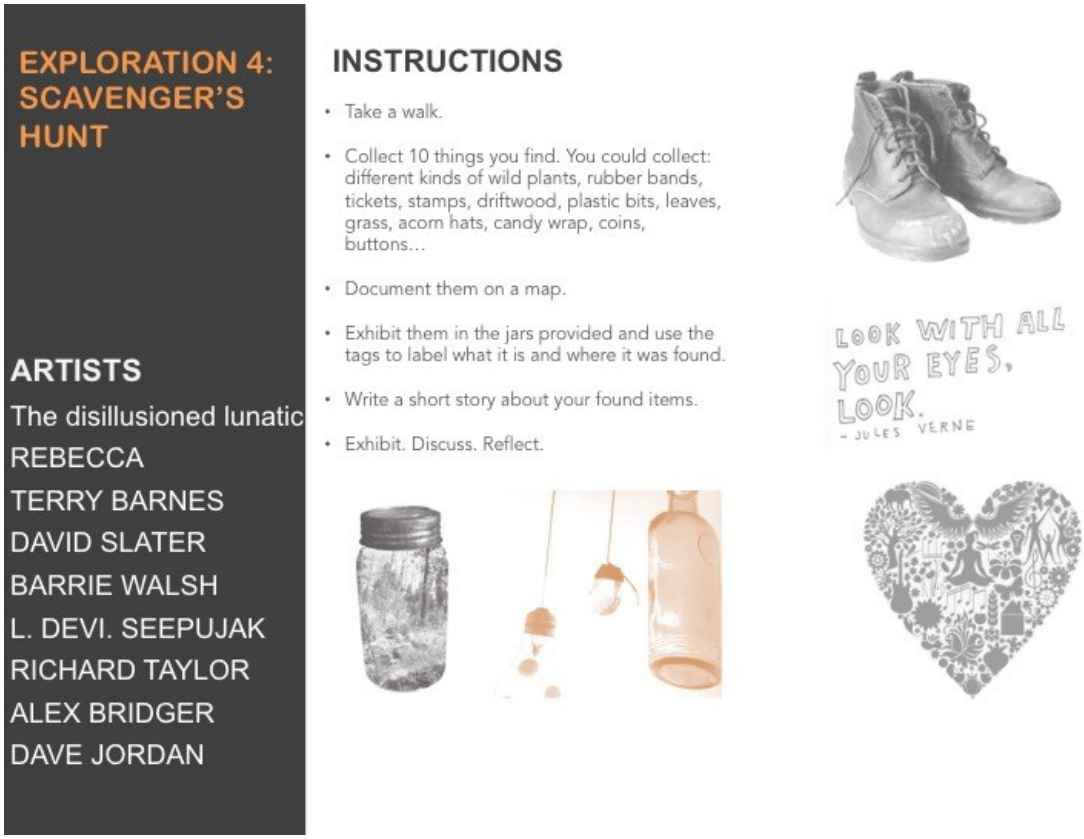
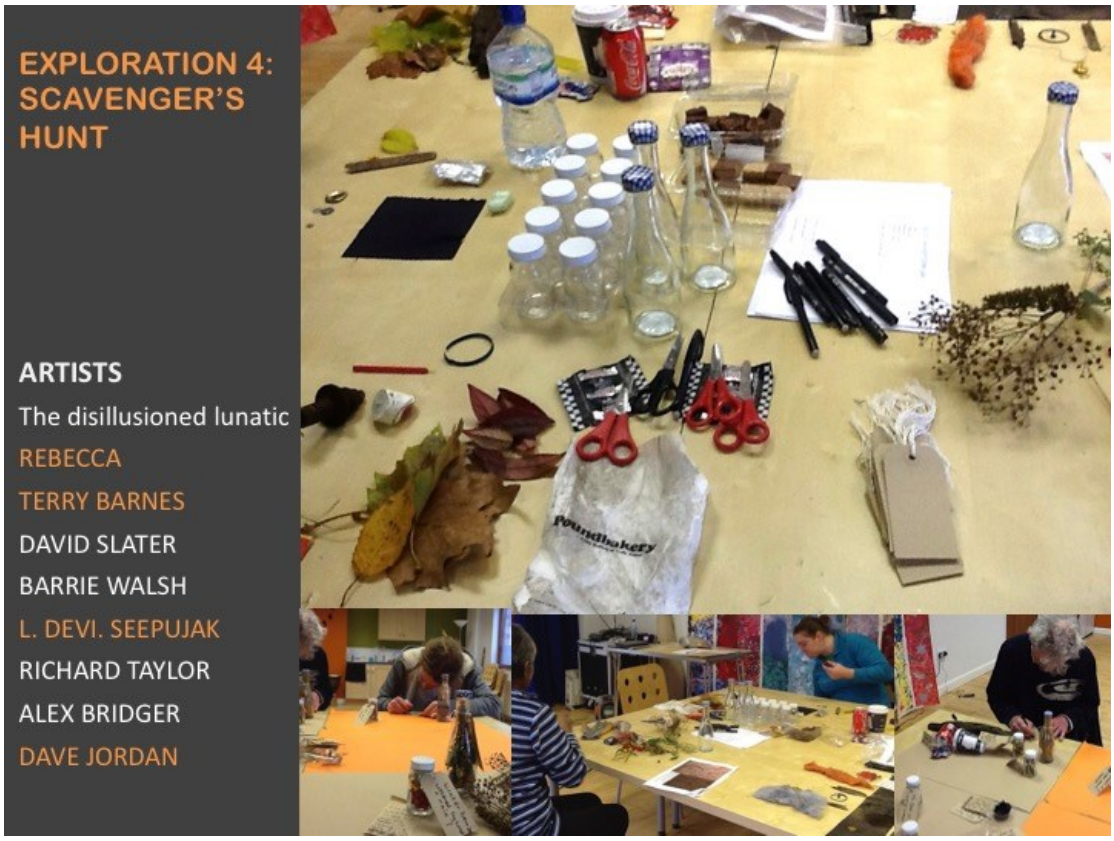


Figure 11. Instructions for Exploration 4: Scavenger's Hunt.

Once back at the Hoot centre, we put the items into jars and used tags to label what the objects were and where they were found. We all wrote short stories about how we had found the items.



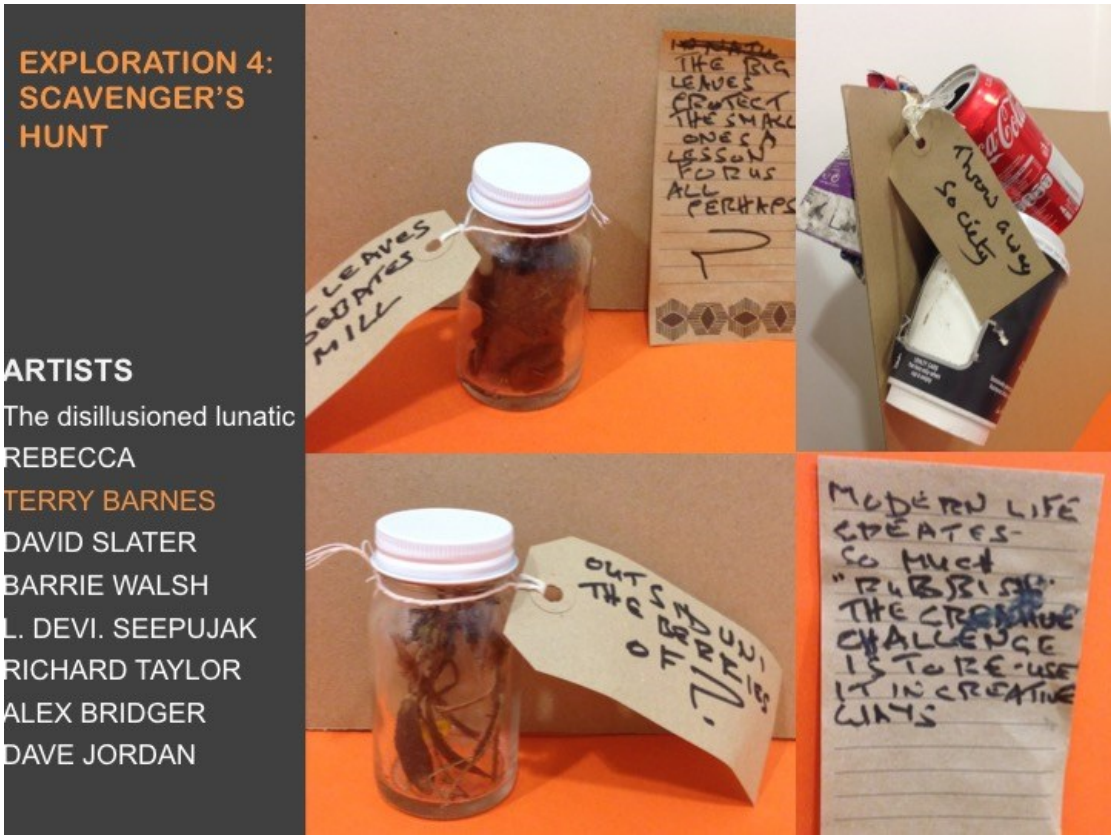


Figure 12 & 13. Producing work in the Hoot studio after Exploration 4. Scavenger's Hunt.

The Exploration 4. Scavenger's Hunt was then followed by a DIY map making session the following week. Almost of the members returned back to take part in the activities. Bridger and Emmanouil indicated to the members that the task was to write short stories about their findings, starting with a few words describing their findings and then moving to more imaginative narratives and reflections. Then the participants swapped texts and produced positive comments and reflections on each other's work.

The fifth and final session a further two weeks on, focused on creating artistic and reflective maps about the walks that we had conducted. Again most of the members took part in the final activity session. Creating artistic, political and reflective maps

was one of the main activities of some of the situationists during the late 1950s and early 1960s. They cut up and created pastiche models of new maps in order to draw attention to a range of important issues of class, power and ideology (Debord and Jorn, 1957). In the last session at the Hoot centre, we wanted to encourage the members to reflect on whatever came to mind about their responses to being in Huddersfield. We gathered together items, accounts and photographs from the activities and created pastiche maps based on experiences and what the maps represented about the walks. We also brought some maps of Huddersfield as well as maps and quotes produced by the situationists. Members were encouraged to experiment in cutting and pasting various quotes, maps and pictures to create the sorts of maps that they wanted to produced. Some of the main themes we identified were the gentrification of Huddersfield and memories of places as well as to creatively imagine alternative visions of what the town could look like. The focus of this session then was to create utopian realisations of what Huddersfield could look like under non-capitalist conditions. We returned back to the questions that had been presented at the start of this work by Khatib (1958). People responded to those questions in a variety of ways in the production of their maps and we engaged in some interesting, humorous and fruitful discussions. At this fifth and final session we as facilitators, stepped back as members of Hoot were involved in creating their own maps and visions of what Huddersfield could look like.

Figure 14. Work produced by Terry Barnes for Exploration 5: DIY Map Making.

Tracing the 'outputs', reflections and conclusions

The final layering and tracing of spaces in regards to this project involves discussion of the outputs and impact of this work. A few weeks after the activities that we had conducted at the Hoot centre, Emmanouil organized an exhibition of the work at the Huddersfield Art Gallery. The exhibition was part of the Rotor series of art works (http://transdisciplinarydialogueanddebate.com). The materials of the explorations were documented after a full discussion with the participants. We made sure that everyone's work was exhibited at the gallery and provided name information next to each exhibit piece, with consent from the producers of the works. Before gaining consent from the artists, we had to gain ethical clearance via the Management team at

Hoot and OOB in order to request that their work be exhibited at the Huddersfield Art Gallery. Curation of such large scale exhibition requires a lead in organizing and that requires some consideration of what is worthy and presentable to exhibit and what such projects are about (Bourdieu, 1990). At the opening exhibition at the Huddersfield Art Gallery, several members of Hoot attended that event. One member in particular, Terry Barnes gave a talk about the inaccessibility and exclusivity of modern art and that what we had produced at the Hoot centre was an example of a different and much more participatory approach to doing art. His talk raised an important question about whose voices are represented in this paper. Terry's talk could arguably be seen in light of the situationist concept of provocation and political agitation as he had used the exhibition space to critique the art establishment. We take note of Hodgetts, Chamberlain and Groot's (2011) concerns of anti-expert standpoints of scholars and the promotion of participants as the only real experts. Here the workshops enabled a productive dialogue across different arenas, where we co-produced new knowledge collectively and in collaboration with each other, in what we hope can be seen in the spirit of participatory creativity. Indeed, the process of conducting activities with members of Hoot and OOB outside the venue, on the canal-path, surrounding footpaths and roads, opened up a range of interesting and important discussions about everyday life under consumer capitalist conditions. The group discussed the regeneration of Huddersfield, memories of places, the mental health system as well as chatting about hobbies and personal interests in the arts, music, politics and psychology.

The following are testimonials from the participants' comments on the feedback forms that they filled in after each session. The sessions were 'un-expected and the

instructions given helped us to change perspective, made us feel creative and push our boundaries'. Participants described the sessions as: 'enjoyable', 'fun', 'innovative', 'invigorating', 'inspirational', 'playful and interesting', 'nothing similar to what they have done before'. One participant also stated that she had enjoyed the instructions which were viewed as being 'open and playful'. Participants also indicated that they had enjoyed using the dice to allow them to change perspective and they found the idea of making art out of rubbish an interesting endeavour. One participant noted that workshops allowed them to 'discover a different kind of creativity' and that it let them 'unleash a lot of emotional and personal stuff', that it helped with 'reflecting on and also in terms of 'mapping their life'. Another participant stated that 'overcoming the initial challenges of the tasks was rather fulfilling'. One other participant stated that: 'From the moment we stepped out, our mind was collecting ideas, we had a collective mind and awareness was increased. We felt we were leaving our mark. We felt like we were pushing our boundaries, creating events within events within events. We had a trigger to be creative and have fun'. One participant found the relaxation techniques to be 'highly enjoyable and set them in the mood for creating'. That particular participant felt he had gained 'tools and skills to work with in future projects'. Another participant stated that he felt 'creative' even if he could not initially draw and was 'amazed' at what had been produced.

In the spirit of the work conducted at the Hoot centre, Emmanouil and Bridger conducted a 'go-along' interview (Kusenbach, 2003). Go-along interviews are typically a useful way in qualitative research to move through various places with research participants and involve a combination of ethnographic and qualitative interview theory. In the context of this work, Emmanouil and I used the go-along

interview method to reflect on the work that we had done at the Hoot centre by walking around the places where we had undertaken the activities, using the process to recollect memories of the activities and by asking each other a range of pre-scheduled questions via a semi-structured interview approach relating to the outcomes of the work and what it had contributed to the Hoot and OOB communities. Key points that we discussed included: the importance of making sure everyone felt included in the work, dealing with our dual roles as academics and also as project workers at Hoot and in terms of the legacy and traces of the project. When we reflected on the Hoot and OOB sessions, we discussed how the participants had indicated that the activities had 'changed their perspective on things' and that it had 'changed the way they look at the town, Huddersfield town'. During the task briefings several participants had told us that they did not wish to go near the town centre as they did not view it as a welcoming place. When they expressed such points when out walking, we ensured walks would not go near to the vicinity of the town centre. It could be argued then that the theoretical underpinnings to the project had impacted on the sorts of responses from the participants involved and that the four situationist principles of psychogeography, participatory creativity, detournment and provocation had had some effects. In the final section which follows, we consider the idea of how socially just practices should inform research.

Tracing more socially just practices to inform research

In academic institutions in the United Kingdom, academics are increasingly encouraged to show evidence of public engagement activities often narrowly linked to research activities and key performance indicators. We hope that this paper has

evidenced one example of how public engagement can be put into practice. In drawing on the theories and practices from the Situationist International and our disciplinary ways of doing psychology and architecture, we have encouraged a critical questioning of the process and productive implications of public engagement activities. Attempts to do public engagement should be part of a process of critiquing contemporary social conditions with explicit concerns of creating wider social, cultural and political changes.

Our project vision was to bring together insights from situationist psychogeography in doing group work with people beyond academia. We want to plan future group work with communities outside of academia to put into practice theories and ideas from architecture, critical community psychology and psychogeography. We are not arguing that the work outlined in this paper can create radical social change. Neither does simply writing about social change equal social change. We are aware of the comments that Plant (1992: 76) has made in terms of radical academics reproducing the 'appearance of revolutionary critique while similarly reproducing the specialization of knowledge and the lucrative elitism of their roles'. Debord and the situationists were indeed opposed to the institutionalization of their theories and practices. We are aware of the inherent elitism of our roles as academics and of the alienated implications of our specialized knowledge. However, we address such concerns by doing work that detourns, provokes and questions what counts as knowledge. Subsequently, this calls into question our roles as academics setting the foundations for new forms of research that go beyond the confines of traditional academic work to draw connections with artists, activists and public artists. Local authorities as government providers are fundamentally concerned with building

communities which are inclusive to all in society and that are good places for everyone to live and thrive in. There have been many different incarnations over time, from community development in the 1970s and place shaping in the last decade, but the principles at the heart of this work are the same in terms of how to make communities liveable for all.

We argue that group activity can facilitate the 'self-realization' of individuals (Vaneigem, 1975: 186-199) and that such realizations can hopefully lead to situations that could lead to wider social, cultural and political changes. Wark (2011) argued that situationist theory can enable us to make sense of recent occupations of space such as by the Occupy Movement as well as the recent banking and Eurozone crises. There does appear to be a need to make sense of and to critique the consumerisation of modern societal environments (Zizek, 2011). Indeed, Parker (2007) argues that in order for society to change, we must work in and against institutions, structures and social systems. This paper explores an important range of questions and issues to consider in whatever work that we do, whether that be academic, activist or artistic endeavours. We hope that this paper encourages and opens up debate surrounding community group work and questions relating to personal and social changes. We hope that we have laid down the traces for further psychogeographical wanderings in the area of qualitative psychology.

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