White Rose Research Online

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk
Universities of Leeds, Sheffield and York

Deposited via The University of Leeds.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/id/eprint/91439/

Version: Accepted Version

Article:
Graham, HC, Hill, K, Holland, T et al. (2015) When the workshop is working: The role of artists in collaborative research with young people and communities. Qualitative Research Journal, 15 (4). 404 - 415. ISSN: 1443-9883

https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-06-2015-0043

Reuse
Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown
If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
University of Sheffield
UNIVERSITY of York

Abstract:

When the Workshop is working: The role of artists in collaborative research with young people and communities

Helen Graham, Katie Hill, Tessa Holland and Steve Pool

This article comes from workshop activities and structured reflection by a group of artists and researchers who have been using artistic practice within projects aimed at enabling researchers to collaborate with young people and communities. Three out of four in the group have a background in creative practice and their own studio/workshop space.

Artists are often employed – whether in schools or research projects – to run workshops, to bring a distinctive set of skills that enable learning or collaboration to take place. Yet the role of 'workshops' in collaborative practice is under theorised. In this article we reflect on the different meanings and connotations of 'workshop' – as noun (as a place where certain types of activity happen, a bounded space) and a verb (to work something through; to make something together). Using the potential of thinking of workshops as both a noun and a verb we will then draw out the contributions artistic practice can offer the creation of a collaborative research space. Key ideas include different repertories of structuring to enable different forms of social interaction; the role of material/ality and bodies in shifting what can be recognized as 'knowledge'; and the skills of 'thinking on your feet', being responsive and improvising.

Article:

When the Workshop is working:
The roles of artists in collaborative research with young people and communities

'Workshop' is used as both a noun and a verb. As a *noun*, it has two distinct meanings. It is often used to refer to a place where things are made or fixed. As a *verb*, '*to* workshop', is used to describe the act of working something through. What holds all uses of workshop together is that there is an element of transformation: of materials, of ideas or of people. In this article we will write the two uses of 'workshop' - *workshop* as a noun and *to workshop* as a verb - into closer and deliberate relationship. We do this to argue for more specific understandings of the roles artists play in collaborative research projects working with, and alongside, university researchers and their community collaborators. While at times within collaborative and participatory research, the term 'workshop' is used relatively casually to describe research events, we suggest 'workshop' might usefully be used more self-consciously to connote both 'place' *and* 'process' and, through this, as a means of recognising the epistemic and ontological difference/challenge offered by the ways of knowing, and ways of being together, artists and makers can offer to collaborative and participatory research.

The workshop working? Collaborative and participatory research practice

We've come together to explore the question of artists' involvement in collaborative and participatory research having been directly involved in a number of research projects funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council's Connected Communities programme. The Connected Communities programme – which began in 2011 – describes itself as 'a multi-million pound research programme designed to help us understand the changing nature of communities in their historical and cultural contexts and the role of communities in sustaining and enhancing our quality of life' (AHRC online). The most distinctive feature of Connected Communities has been its focus on collaborative and participatory research: 'It aims to achieve: new insights into community and new ways of researching community that put arts and humanities at the heart of research and connect academic and community expertise' (Connected Communities online).

Now with over 300 projects funded, a wide range of methodologies and approaches to collaboration have been deployed – from archaeological digs, radical history walks to large scale collaborative board games. Yet across these different methodologies it is notable that the word 'workshop' is very often deployed. We approach the question of workshop/workshopping in collaborative research, having all run workshops as part of Connected Communities research projects. We all also run workshops regularly in other contexts too such as for art galleries, in teaching contexts as part of participatory design projects.

More specifically what we have in common is that we were all collaborators of a specific Connected Communities projects 'Ways of Knowing: Exploring the different registers, values and subjectivities of collaborative research' (2012-2013). All twelve collaborators in 'Ways of Knowing' had already been involved in other Connected Communities projects and had substantial collective experience of hosting, facilitating and attending participatory and collaborative events, workshops or meetings. We used 'Ways of Knowing' as a reflective space to understand better the kinds of 'research' and 'knowledge' made possible by different methods of staging collaboration (Graham et al., 2014).

We sought to address the epistemic questions raised by collaborative research, methods, outcomes and impacts by self-consciously deploying the different approaches members of the team had used within our previous collaborative research practice. We did this through trying out a wide range of methods from design, arts practice and storytelling to a Consensus Workshop and Socratic Dialogue. Most of these 'methods' were referred to as 'workshops'.

In the use of the word 'workshop' to describe participatory research events various things are implied and desired. At a basic level, the use of word 'workshop' signals a desire that the space created is different from those academic staples, 'conference' or 'seminar'; that the emphasis will not be on presentations and papers followed by questions and answers; that the 'knowledge' flow is not didactic or one way. You could see the evocation of 'workshop' in a research context then as a statement of intent, a wish or a hope.

Our reflections here also have one final context. They have come about as one strand of a wider programme addressing the legacy of the Connected Communities programme more generally and, specifically, of a project 'Co-producing Legacy' exploring the legacy of the role of artists in Connected Communities (Kate Pahl, Steve Pool, Helen Graham, Amanda Ravetz, Hugh Escot and Kim Marwood). In a survey of Connected Communities projects that have worked with artists - and through in depth interviews – a variety of ways of understanding why artists were originally engaged have emerged. Interviews with artists and researchers suggest that through the development and delivery of these workshops complex and unexpected relationships have emerged between the areas of study, communities and individual artists and designers' approaches to their creative practices. Within these relationships new ideas and new knowledge objects have emerged. Emerging from the wider 'Co-producing Legacy?' research project is that 'workshops' imply something more fundamental when they are included as part of research projects. That is, what counts as knowledge is opened up, and the relationship between 'knowledge' and 'sociality' is more clearly foregrounded. This raises the question of 'the work' implied in workshop/workshopping - both *what* it is and *when* it is and the need for a greater delineation of what *work* and work*ing* might mean in a research context. We hope this is a useful contribution as the role of workshops in collaborative research is relatively under theorised.

In developing this article, we recognised the need to produce a single piece of writing however we also felt it was important to draw on our personal experience to capture the way in which workshops are encounters between people and the physical world of materials and objects. The approaches we explore build on personal histories and practices of a manipulation of materials and ideas that result in the generation of something new. The workshop presents us with a fusion of histories, practices, relationships and encounters, which are best told through the stories of what happens.

Before moving on to exploring workshop as a way of staging collaboration we start by questioning the relationship between academic writing and making.

The workshop as a place for… drawing out thought

Tessa Holland

> History has drawn fault-lines dividing practice and theory […] modern society suffers from this historical inheritance (Sennett, 2008, p. 11)

Writing is the medium through which academics most commonly seek to reach an audience and legitimate ideas. I hope to say something not about creative practice itself, but about how the approaches learnt in creative practice might filter back into research, and writing about it.

My training is as a jeweller working with precious metals. Before that, my degree was in Art History, now I'm a PhD student in a Geography department. The transition from arts to social sciences came via a part-time MSc in Anthropology. This seems relevant to say because my training and life experience is with materials and process, so I view academic writing through that same lens of praxis.

As part of the Connected Communities 'Ways of Knowing' project I designed a 'workshop' using wire. The task was to form a three-dimensional model from one length of pliable copper. Each individual made a sketch (a single, scribbled line on paper) to start the process of imagining how to translate one strand of wire into a sculptural form with substance, weight, balance and dimensionality: to think about the 'transubstantiation' from concept to representation. I wanted the group to consider sensory ways of knowing, to explore the connections between skilled material practice and what is seen as academic (cognitive) practice, and to uncover underlying continuities lying beneath the boundaries of academic conventions of learning and knowledge.

At one point during the 'workshop' a conversation arose about the parallels between making a sketch and drafting an article. The intention behind a sketch is not usually that it should be considered a finished artwork. To sit and make a pencil study of (say) a vase of flowers is to investigate the phenomenon – to study the relationship between parts, to work out how to translate this three dimensional object onto a two dimensional page, how to represent space, form and colour; reflection and translucency into tonal marks of light and dark. It is intensely cognitive work. The sketch is a working document. The image that emerges on the paper is almost incidental to the thinking and learning process that is the point of the exercise. A document in draft can be seen similarly (like the one I'm working on now): playing around with the point of view, with what will and won't be meaningful to include, what to delete and overwrite, the translation of experience/field-data/memory/theory into a linear form composed of sequential letters on a page.

The opening chapter of Foucault's 'The Order of Things' offers a discussion about languages of representation. He uses Velazquez's 'Las Meninas' to compare the languages of words and painting:

> But the relation of language to painting is an infinite relation. It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say (1970, p.9).

Any attempt to fold one over the other as if they were equivalents, Foucault calls, 'an artifice'. However, creating such an artifice is not necessarily a useless exercise, indeed I would argue that all writing is such an attempt at enfolding.

If the relation of language to drawing (or painting, or making) is 'infinite', it resists the easy temptation to suppose that one is working with discrete bundles of 'knowledge' or 'truth'. It is entirely improvisatory, not in the sense that it is uninformed or 'made up', but in the sense that every mark that is made iteratively changes the relationships

between every other mark on the paper, and they all have to develop in constant interactive balance to produce a legible or composed image.

The wire 'workshop' I ran was on the morning of the second day of a 'workshop' on Socratic dialogue (Banks, 2013b). Afterwards the reflections of the academic who ran this workshop, Sarah Banks, included these comments:

> The wirework exercise (which was not in the original proposal for Workshop 2) was placed in the middle of the dialogue (start of day 2). This was not necessarily a bad thing (people enjoyed it and said they felt refreshed by it), but it did further emphasise the difference between 'creative activities' and the 'cognitive dialogue' […] There was a danger that people would lose focus on the dialogue and also (more importantly) would resent the hard work of the dialogue after the 'enjoyment' of the creative work.

Within the *Ways of Knowing* project we talked through all such responses. The comments are included here as a demonstration of how commonly 'creativity' or 'craftiness' can be dismissed as not intellectually rigorous - as something to be treated as an interlude in the 'hard work' of cognitive (read serious) thinking - not as thinking itself.

The Workshop as… a place for sorting things out

Steve Pool

I've been running workshops for twenty-five years, in schools, communities, art galleries and more recently Universities. This is the first time I've really thought about what this means, what makes something a workshop, rather than something else. Much of what I get paid for 'delivering' is described as a workshop in fact the idea of delivering is probably significant as to deliver something suggests a tightly wrapped parcel that goes from one place to another. I am asked to provide workshops that give, an introduction to, a way to interpret, a catalyst for a conversations. Workshops are often commissioned to deliver something whether this is a skill, a piece of wisdom, a challenge or a distraction. A workshop normally ends up being a thing, a thing with edges that can be described and exchanged.

I delivered the first workshop of the Ways of Knowing project. It took little more than fifteen minutes. I had developed the activity in a previous project working with museum curators to ask questions about their classification systems. Why does an object belong within a fine art collection, social history collection or decorative arts collection? We used it on ways of knowing to ask questions about taxonomies and categories of knowledge. I brought a collection of – on the surface – unconnected objects and asked the group to divide them into three piles each contained within a circle of rope. The activity took place in silence and people negotiated the task through active movement and sorting through. Loose groupings of metal object, tools, organic objects began to emerge and be refined. On a very straightforward level the aim of the workshop was to suggest that categories are imposed on things and they are in a constant state of negotiation and re-negotiation.

I had collected many of the objects from my granddad's garage soon after his death – about twenty years ago. As I looked at his driving license from 1932 I noticed that his signature changed in that year, it became cursive script rather than printed capitol letters. I had never seen my granddad write or read anything, I knew he had left school at fourteen to go into tied labour at a local farm and it occurred to me that my grandmother had started to sign his paperwork for him after their marriage. In that moment – in the Ways of Knowing workshop – I decided that I would sort out all the objects that I recognised as my grandfather's into their own distinct taxonomy. I was aware that in doing this in silence with no explanation I would be using a category that would make no sense to anybody else in a group of people I had only just met and who were already feeling uncomfortable. I deliberately put a cat amongst the pigeons with no idea of the impact it would have on the other participants. In following my own logic and acting in the moment I happily alienated half of the group and confused the other half. The idea of feeling comfortable or working out a task to be completed collectively was never the intention of the workshop. The intention was to demonstrate that we all attempt to find order and meaning in things in different ways and bring to our meaning-making contrasting experiences and histories. The fact the workshop made some of these issues apparent did little to help us work through the very different sets of expectations or desires for the broader project as it unfolded.

Workshops *in* or *as* 'research': Place in process

Helen Graham

We're trying to hold together workshop as a verb and a noun: a place and a process. But, we recognise, dangers lurk in these spatial and temporal designations – both require some excavation. Place can be 'here and now' or it can be elsewhere. Process can mean emergent and constantly becoming. It can also be conceptualised in a linear and sequential way, with a clear set of steps.

The significance of how the role of artist practice is conceived spatially and temporally is indicated by Georgina Born and Andrew Barry's recent work on interdisciplinary research. Born and Barry argue that there has been a tendency in these interdisciplinary funding initiatives to see art as being in the service of science, something in their wider schematisation of interdisciplinary research they refer to as the 'subordination-service mode':

> Prominent in the rationale for such funding was the 'public understanding of science' paradigm: that art can be used to popularise or communicate science and its social, cultural and ethical dimensions, whether through aesthetic elaboration or rendering scientific discovery exciting or palatable by expressive means. Here, artists' collaboration with scientists was expected to effect a wider social engagement, on this occasion providing aesthetic legitimation (2013, p. 15)

So art here is imagined as coming 'after science' and happening elsewhere, taking 'science' to a new audience. Yet in Born and Barry's accounts of more innovative examples of interdisciplinary research, which includes ethnography in corporate IT contexts as well as art-science collaborations, they diagnose a shift away from the epistemic as the primary framework for research towards an ontological approach which sees sociality as intrinsic to knowing: 'interdisciplinary practices whose orientation to the world cannot be grasped merely in the terms of epistemology, as though they were separate from the world with which they engage' (2013, p. 18). Born and Barry locate the genealogies of these practices as precisely flowing from the last sixty years of histories of art, specifically 'conceptual arts reworking of art's ontology': which holds 'a constitutive tension between orientations that are primarily formal and to do with medium and materials, and those that are primarily concerned with the production of political, social and cultural experimentation' (2013, p. 259). As a result certain iterations of art-science collaborations have fostered, Born and Barry argue, 'the mutual transformation of both the objects and practices of, and the relations between, science and art' and offer experimental forms 'through which the public, knowledge and their relations were expected to emerge in a different form'. That is to shift both the place and timing of knowledge.

This shift toward research as *in* 'place' and as an ontological and emergent 'process' has figured within the practice-as-research context where a key commitment is to, as Robin Nelson puts it, 'doing-knowing' (2013). The literature has been characterised by claiming for practice-as-research a different and distinct epistemology – which is clearly ontologically orientated, towards knowing through being. Words often drawn on include: emergent, generative, materialist: in practice-led research 'knowledge is derived from doing and the senses' (Barrett, 2010, p. 1). The ambition of practice-as-research is much broader than 'research about art'. Instead, as Tessa has suggested in her piece, a focus on material practices, 'praxical knowledge' (Heidegger cited in Bolt 2010) or 'material thinking' (Carter 2004; 2010) might have much wider implications for research and conceptualizing knowledge production. As Estelle Barrett lists:

> The implication that creative arts research has for extending our understandings of the role of experiential, problem-based learning and multiple intelligences in the production of knowledge; the potential of studio-based research to demonstrate how knowledge is revealed and how we come to acquire knowledge; the ways in which creative arts research outcomes may be applied to develop more generative research pedagogies and methodologies beyond the discipline itself. (Barrett 2010, p. 2)

Barrett's argument is that as art is always engaged with the world through materiality and, through the need to come into some form of dialogue with a viewer, art is also necessarily open to the world socially. This position which resonates strongly with Nicolas Bourriaud's notion of 'relational aesthetics' as 'a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space' (2002, p.14).

Deliberately contrasting practice-as-research with the kind of academic-industry partnership that focuses on problem solving, Paul Carter – drawing on his 2004 monograph *Material Thinking* – argues for forms of collaborative practice which share commitments to resisting too simple answers and that what matters comes through social relationships of knowing and being together:

> In contrast with these weak forms of collaboration, creative research, respecting the materiality of thought – its localization in the act of invention – has a different object. It studies complexities and it defends complex systems of communication against over-simplification. It explores the irreducible heterogeneity of cultural identity, the always-unfinished process of making and re-making ourselves through our symbolic forms. Its success cannot be measured in terms of simplification and closure. Exploring the reinvention of social relations at that place does not produce a 'discovery; that can be generalized and patented. It is an imaginative breakthrough, which announces locally different forms of sociability, environmental interactivity and collective storytelling. (Carter 2010, p. 18)

Carter's position signals the constant need to maintain an approach to knowing which can be within local places and constant in the process of re-making. To connect this back to Bourriaud's suggestion that the significant difference of 'relational aesthetics', is that it 'does not represent a theory of art, this would imply the statement of an origin and a destination, but a theory of form' (2002, p. 19)

Reading 'practice-as-research' literature alongside Born and Barry's work suggests that the resonance of ontological approaches to knowing more generally – beyond art practice – is spreading. The Connected Communities turn to workshops could be read as one iteration of this. Yet this raises the question, actually, of workshop 'as practice' – does every workshop offer this romantic idea of the 'imaginative breakthrough'? What types of workshopping might better cultivate this ontological work? What forms emerge from this work?

Workshop as… a place of design and creative problem solving.
Katie Hill

Within Design the focus on making and building and practical creative problem solving is at the foundation of the discipline. Workshops as both a noun and verb are a recognised part of design practice and have become a regular part of my research practice, particularly as my research has become increasingly about collaborating across different types of experience and knowledge. As the discipline of Design Research has developed a discourse around the relationship between practice and research has emerged and research plays multiple roles in Design, as part of the design process as well as a means to understand process from the outside. This was most famously described by Christopher Frayling (1993) who defined three modes of design research – research into art and design (for example historical research where the practice is the subject of research), research through art and design (where art and design practice is the process of research), and research for art and design (where research contributes to the development of art and design objects). It is common for

design researchers to locate their research in relation to practice via one or a combination of these positions. In the example of my contribution as a design researcher in this project the workshop methods had primarily been developed for projects that were 'research through design' Liz Sanders and Pieter Jan Stapper who developed MakeTools – a set of workshop tools for co-design, recent years have seen a proliferation of workshop tools for use within design research and practice processes (2013). It is not surprising that this has developed from a focus on collaboration as a way to enrich the design process and produce increasingly engaging products, to designers working directly with people to develop workshops to provide spaces for shared exploration and discovery in settings outside of design practice, and in this context in academic research projects.

Using these types of methods, my research has always been collaborative, but in the past the collaboration was more usually with other researchers or research/practice hybrids like myself. Workshops are such a 'normal' part of how I design and work through research projects that before this project I hadn't taken a step back to consider more fully what workshops are to me, what meaning I give to them and why I integrate them so habitually into my research practice.

In my training as a designer I learned a process for working through creative problem solving – in broad terms I learned to identify a need and develop a brief to address it, research what exists already and what the issues are, generate ideas, develop those ideas and focus them down to a workable solution. I learned to collaborate throughout this process, drawing in different expertise at different points – my job as a designer wasn't to know everything, but to know how to find the information needed and to respond to it. My training took me through this process over and over again, so that it became ingrained as a way of thinking and working, and has shaped how I approach research. Some of this training took place in 'the workshop' as a making space, and some of this training was through 'workshops' – focussed practical sessions to collaboratively explore a set of problems and ideas.

I immediately took to running workshops when I started work. My first creative piece of work was to run creative making workshops for service users in supported housing. Housing associations have led the way in consultation, participation and engagement through tenants participation in housing decisions, and this was for me the start of a practice of using making to engage people in articulating and working through problems and ideas in a way that complemented or provided an alternative to language based methods (feedback forms and focus groups). Then, in my first research job my first task was to organise a two-day workshop for a collaborative research project with a design agency.

From the beginning of my professional practice, workshops (as a place and a process) have been a central feature within my way of working.

Through a Connected Communities co-design and co-production of research project I worked as a researcher on a project with designers, with whom I share a practice based and workshop focussed background. Partly because of this shared background we chose

to focus on making as a method for our collaborative research, and from this designed a set of workshops that used making as a method for research. We explicitly used a recognised design process (the Design Council Double Diamond (2015)) to conceptualise the phases of the co-design of research process, making a link between designing and researching. It was these making workshops that I then brought to the Ways of Knowing project to further explore how using making methods in a research workshop could open up spaces for knowledge creation and exploration.

Reflecting on the origins of my experiences of workshops and my more recent experiences of using workshops in research, two things emerge. One is that, for me, the processes of designing and researching are close to each other and that workshops are a natural part of that. The second is reflecting on those early experiences of using workshops in the context of creating meaningful dialogue and collaboration that moves beyond traditional language based methods. The workshops embodied a rejection of traditions of professional dialogue in both academic and practice settings.

The workshop as… forms of encounter
Helen Graham

I am not an artist. Or a designer. I don't generally make things with my hands. I have been very guilty of using the word 'workshop' as that kind of unspecified hope that the events I run might break out of the highly disciplined academic mode of politely listening, sustained feats of concentration and protocols of self-conscious critical response. When I used to use 'workshop' my reference point was more likely to be Ruskin College's History Workshop or workshops as described in critical pedagogy.[i] In using the word 'workshop' I was indicating some hope for democratization of knowledge production and some kind of search for reciprocity in this endeavour.

What became clear from the first 'workshop' at our first Ways of Knowing event in Sheffield – led by Steve – was both that any meaning of workshop immediately evokes questions of how the individual and collective are structured – the types of sociality cultivated. It also seems to shift both the space and the 'timing' of knowing into the there and then. Workshopping as a verb is about those contingencies of what is possible, in that time and with those people. The different workshops we did as part of Ways of Knowing staged the relationship between people, materials and knowing quite differently.

Steve's first activity, as he has already described, was called 'taxonomies'. There was a table. Covered with lots and lots of different types of objects. Three circles of rope. We were asked to silently sort them out. Maybe at first there was a veneer of co-operation but pretty soon some people were having silent arguments, moving objects others had carefully placed in one circle in another. Then Steve reduced the circles to two. And those that cared, cared even more fiercely. And those that didn't withdrew. Or got annoyed. As one of the group who withdrew, there was probably no better way of feeling the contingency of taxonomies or the dangerous power of people wanting to impose their way of knowing on others. I'm sure those who at that moment still cared learnt something else. But what Steve calls 'the collapse' was the point

This question of form – generating the complex shock of collapse, generating shared understandings – was precisely at stake in how the Ways of Knowing mini-workshops related to each other. Later that day Katie ran her workshop based on design techniques. Katie's workshop, as she describes above, was a making workshop. Something she's described to me subsequently as deliberately using the least amount of structure necessary for the workshop to work. A primary way in which Katie structured that workshop was through an invitation – to 'make a tool that would help with your Connected Communities project' – and through the materials themselves. A whole range of things was spilled onto the table, from feathers, paper, plasticine, fluffy things, to pipe cleaners. And also wool and knitting needles. During that workshop someone, maybe Katie, started knitting and then others who could knit started knitting too. Wool was knitted with, but also ribbon and string.

We then moved onto a consensus workshop (which has been written about by Niamh Moore in our project zine (2013)). But as we did so two quite different forms of structuring and imagining collectivity started to happen simultaneously. The Consensus Workshop was structured through a movement from individual to the collective via thinking, writing, talking and listening carefully and working hard to see and build connections between individual contributions. As the more formalized process of coming to a shared understanding was in process, with all of its requirements for distributed attention and energy, the knitting escaped from the making workshop. It was passed between the people who cared about the knitting, creating new affinities. The knitting was structured by its emerging form and the practices, physicality and routines of making.

It was a distraction from the consensus process. It was, for me at the time, pretty annoying. Yet from this apparent tension in form, the knitting as produced within the Consensus Working also became a producer of a different type of meaning and became a rich source of metaphor-coming-into-being. Weaving, strands, knots, mess. As Sarah Banks (2013), one of our collaborators put it on our project blog the next day, 'it shows the intertwining of distinct strands and we can see they contribute to the whole (even if we don't quite know how – we have to look at the back to see the mess)'. Both workshops crisscrossed each other, and their structuring (their bringing into being of certain kinds of relationships between people and material) enabled and constrained different ways of knowing at the same time.

Conclusions: What makes workshop/ping work

Academic research has tended to conceptualise form in certain ways, as Tessa has argued: the PhD, the monograph or the journal article. One voice, sustained argument, long form. As such these forms configure a clear relationship between the individual and research. While sometimes this type of relationship is crucial precisely because of its scope for self-expression, collaborative research clearly demands different forms. In this, as we have shown, workshops are best conceived not as a methodological step within a traditional linear research design but as places where research, as Helen has suggested, is subject to ontological challenge through forming and reforming of social

and material relations. Perhaps the key thing here is that 'the work' is not something which happens elsewhere – to be written up elsewhere – but rather *it* is in that place and unfolding from that process, something which has always been present within design philosophies, as Katie has suggested. As Nicolas Bourriaud has put it in the context of his work on relational art practice: 'the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginative and utopian realities, but to be ways of living and models of action within the existing real' (2002, p. 13)

Steve, writing with Kate Pahl and Richard Steedman-Jones, has described the importance of the 'holding form' in collaborative and participatory research (2013). Significant here is that there is some kind of form to begin with, both defined enough yet open enough, to gather a number of differences loosely together: the place of the workshop. Yet the form of any workshop also – through the social potential of the people there – needs to be able to evolve, morph or be smashed: the process of the workshop. In this article we have set out a variety of different 'holding forms'.

There is a repeated, rhythmic emphasis at points throughout the paper reiterating that this approach retains complexity, flexibility with a constant sense of re-evaluation at its core. If *a* workshop is a holding form – a thing, with edges (or perhaps a rope loosely draped around to create an edge) – then *to* workshop allows that within that form, structures can relax.

As marks in a sketch develop in constant interactive balance; as categories imposed on things are revealed to be in a state of constant re-negotiation: so the study of complexity is allowed. Defending against over-simplification and encouraging the mutual transformation of both objects and practices allows the place and timing of knowledge to shift. Alternative ways of knowing are simultaneously (yet unpredictably) enabled and constrained in the making and re-making of ourselves.

The implication of using workshop/ping as a place and a method is to shift fundamentally both what knowledge is and when it is. There is no question, however, that if the aim is to create the potential for an ontological transformation of knowing, then some practices and approaches are more effective than others. The key principles we would draw attention to are:

> **Structuring:** What can be known is contingent on how people, things and ideas are structured – and how flexible these structures are as the workshop unfolds.
>
> **Materiality:** Using of materials and allowing for the movement of bodies (beyond sitting politely) creates space for non-verbal forms of communication and affords value and validity to the embodied knowledge necessary to work and respond to materials.
>
> **Improvisation and emergence:** A key skill of workshop leading (and participating) is to respond and adapt to what is there.

Bourriaud argues that 'form can be defined by a lasting encounter' (2002, p. 19). The question with all workshops is: what can we say that lasts beyond its boundaries of space and time? What 'holds together'? It is clear that the forms that emerge from workshops are not the same as the long form offered by writing. Rather it this sense of something holding together, something emerging – even if it is the experience of collapse, shock, affinities that crisscross – which is the workshop working. If the workshop has worked a form that has emerged in that space will somehow persist. But this is form in its widest varieties. A knot in the stomach, a remembered movement, a meeting of eyes, a word rich with specific emotions, a ball of odd fluffy wool and string with two needles poking out.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank all our collaborators on the Ways of Knowing project and Co-producing Legacy project: Sarah Banks, Michelle Bastian, Catherine Durose, Hugh Escott, Katie Hill, Tessa Holland, Ann McNulty, Kimberley Marwood, Niamh Moore, Kate Pahl, Steve Pool, Amanda Ravetz, Johan Siebers.

We would also like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Connected Communities project for funding this research.

Bibliography:

Arts and Humanities Research Council, 'Connected Communities'. Available at: http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/Funding-Opportunities/Research-funding/Connected-Communities/Pages/Connected-Communities.aspx (accessed 22nd June 2015)

Banks, S. (2013a) 'Knitting and knowledging: between metaphor and reality', *Ways of Knowing*, https://waysofknowingresearch.wordpress.com/2013/05/24/knitting-and-knowledging-between-metaphor-and-reality/

Banks, S. (2013b) 'Socratic dialogue and co-inquiry: Exploring cognitive, affective and embodied ways fo being, *Ways of Knowing,* https://waysofknowingresearch.wordpress.com/2013/05/19/socratic-dialogue-and-co-inquiry-exploring-cognitive-affective-and-embodied-ways-of-knowing/

Barrett, E. and Bolt. B. eds. (2010) *Practice as research: approaches to creative arts enquiry.* I. B. Tauris, London.

Bolt, B. (2010) 'The Magic is in Handling' in Barrett, E. and Bolt. B. (2010) eds. *Practice as research : approaches to creative arts enquiry.* I. B. Tauris, London.

Born, G. and Barry, A. (2013) *Interdisciplinarity: Reconfigurations of the Social and Natural Sciences.* Routledge, London.

Bourriard, N. (2002) *Relational Aesthetics.* Translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland. Les presses du reel, Dijon.

Carter, P. (2004) *Material Thinking: The theory and practice of creative research*. Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

Carter, P. (2010) 'Interest: The Ethics of Invention' in Barrett, E. and Bolt. B. (2010) eds. *Practice as research : approaches to creative arts enquiry.* I. B. Tauris, London.

Connected Communities, Available at: http://connected-communities.org/index.php/about/ (accessed 22nd June 2015)

Design Council (2015) '*The Design Process: What is the Double Diamond?* Available at: http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/design-process-what-double-diamond (accessed 22nd June 2015)

Foucault, M. (1970) *The Order of Things.* Tavistock, London.

Frayling, C. (1993) 'Research in Art and Design', *Royal College of Art Research Papers.* Volume 1, Number 1, pp. 1-5.

Genrty, K. (2013) 'Ruskin, Radicalism and Raphael Samuel:
Politics, Pedagogy and the Origins of the History Workshop', *History Workshop Journal*, 75 pp.187-211

Graham, H., Banks, S., Bastian, M., Durose, C., Hill, K., Holland, T., McNulty, A., Moore, N., Pahl, K., Pool, S., and Siebers, J. (2014) *'Ways of Knowing': Exploring the different registers, values and subjectivities of collaborative research.* Available at: http://waysofknowing.leeds.ac.uk/ (accessed 22nd June 2015)

Moore, N. (2013) 'Reflection on the Consensus Workshop' in Ways of Knowing Zine 1. Available at: http://waysofknowing.leeds.ac.uk/ (accessed 22nd June 2015)

Nelson, R. (2013) *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances.* Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, New York.

Pahl, K. Steadman-Jones, R. and Pool, S. (2013) 'Dividing the Drawers'. *Creative Approaches to Research* 6 (1) 71 – 88.

Sennett, R. (2008) *The Craftsman.* Yale University Press, New Haven.

Sanders, E. and Stappers, P. J. (2013) *Convivial Toolbox: Generative Research for the Front End of Design.* BIS Publishers, Amsterdam.

[i] The aim of History Workshop was, in Raphael Samuel's words, to '[democratise] the act of historical production, enlarging the constituency of historical writers, and bringing the experience of the present to bear upon the interpretation of the past' (cited in Gentry 2013: 189).